

# A-Ma

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*Alchemy of Love*

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...by plunging into the depths of the mind, for which there is no great need to open the eyes to the sky, to raise the hands, to direct the steps to the temple, nor sing to the ears of statues in order to be the better heard, but to come into the inner self believing that, God is near, present and within, more fully than man himself, being soul of souls, life of lives, essence of essences: for that which you see above or below, or round about, or however you please to say it, of the stars, are bodies, are created things, similar to this globe on which we are, and in which the divinity is present neither more nor less than he is in this globe of ours or in ourselves.

**Giordano Bruno**

## At a Point in Time, Somewhere in Space

"She is a witch!"

Whispers broke out through the streets of Macao.

"What do you mean a witch?" that is Ama! "They arrested Ama!"

This little commotion of confused words, unsettled thoughts and scattered feelings was happening on the streets of Macao in China, sometime in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, during the Age that is known as the one of Reason.

Two shadows, deeply disturbed, rushed through the night talking, merging their forms with the moonlight and shadows of buildings and trees.

Just after the death of her father, that retched soul, Fra Thomas, couldn't settle down he was the one to arrest Ama.

Arrest! That is absurd! The second man shook his head with the most sincere and spontaneous gesture of anger. Her father is the founder of our Church and University! Their friends are influential, they would not let this happen. When did it happen?

Last night! If it happened to her, it can happen to any one of us! Does Ruben know?

Ruben? , Ruben is nowhere to be found, lost, gone...

What do you mean gone? Maybe the same people killed him?

No, no! the two are not connected. He left the Monastery, went into seclusion, and then disappeared a couple of months ago. What bad timing, it is now that Ama needs him the most...

Fra Tomas is a crook! He is a haunted soul! He hated both of them.

Many more unspoken words of fear, confusion, disbelief, for a moment of eternity, crafted a thick wall of silence. The sound of a bird or wind blowing their way, started the conversation again.

Ama's Chinese friends will not let this happen... Wait and see...

There is no time to wait. To accuse a woman of being a witch, an inquisitor needs only two witnesses and the confession that is forced out of the accused. I've seen neighbours accusing each other, locking relatives or close friends, punishing the innocent, and often the whole scary witchcraft story is based on the fanciful accusations of scared children.

Ama would never confess to such a ridiculous thing!

I pray that we never come to the moment of trial and notorious enquiries. It is easy to force anybody to confess: pricking her body with needles to find a place, made by the Devil that is insensitive to pain. Do you remember those horrid jail chamber chairs? full of spikes? I've seen them many times. Poor women either die during the torture, or confess anything to the confessor. Even a thought of the horror of such methods makes me sick...

Enough, enough, that won't happen. That is ridiculous! How barbaric can a man be! We are in China! These horrors happen in the main-land, not here! The Chinese wouldn't allow mass murder of their sisters and wives to eradicate flying monsters that supposedly devour children. They are too scared of the spirits of dead, and too civilised to even dream out loud such a nonsense.

We must help Ama... We have to act quick...

Fra Thomas is crazy, you never know what he might do next, can we call Father Benedict?

He was arrested too...

Arrested? For Christ's sake! To arrest an old wise man?  
This won't come to any good!

It is fascinating that in Europe, back in time, during the fifth, sixth and seventh century, humanity had more of this grey mass called brain and wiser laws. The Christians who believed in witches were anathematized as mad and obsessed, and now, during the time of Shakespeare, Michelangelo and Da Vinci, we open a hunting season against women targeting none else but our herb gatherers, doctors, midwives, and of course widows, women who have no men by their side to protect them.

Shame! Shame! Not in here though, not in Macao...

Trying to deeper investigate this atrocity examining the craziness of some of the Church officials during these times, we came across an official record naming one hundred thousand women with a name and a birth-place killed during these procedures. One hundred thousand women with a name, back in time, will naturally become a scary number of millions of the ones that were un-recorded, too poor to be noticed, too innocent to be noted, the number confirmed within the unofficial rumours of the sane, centuries later.

How the hell did it all begin?

Pope Innocent the VIII hunted by dogs of his own desires, kept awake by his own sinful thoughts decided that for his sleepless nights he wants to punish all the Mother Earth followers, Devil's worshipers, nurses healing sick with herbs, spells or folk magic, single widowed women that seduced man in their dreams; the village youth, and of-course the daughters of rich merchants, whose fathers could now easily be black-mailed. The Inquisition in its blind madness got all the power it needed to act against this so-called evil, supported by Malleus Maleficarum's Witches' Hammer-the hunting manual, printed and re-printed many times in the centuries to follow.

I hear that this wicked book was created by the Devil who spoke through the two German Dominicans isn't it?

Yes, this legal slaughter and torture manual was the oil in the lantern of the witch hunting-craze. To any sane man's surprise, the Witches' Hammer became a best-seller, a hit amongst different classes. It was passed from hand to hand, read aloud in Churches, and village squares, stored in special places, with the Bible and consulted in the dark corridors of the torture chambers. The best Hunters would know it by heart, reciting it as a deepest wisdom against the poor women.

The work of this Devil was reprinted and translated into German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, English and Portuguese, and it outsold all other books except the Bible!

For the benefit of the reader, that might not be familiar with the content of this now almost forgotten book, without a wish to enter into its cruel and disturbing mental core, we will give you just a brief look into its words, leaving to your imagination the materials that built the picture of this intriguing space and time.

*'All wickedness, is but little to the wickedness of a woman. ...' is written in the manual. 'What else is woman but a foe to friendship, an inescapable punishment, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, domestic danger, a delectable detriment, an evil nature, painted with fair colours... Women are by nature instruments of Satan - they are by nature carnal, a structural defect rooted in the original creation.'*

We share with you this thought left in many, of how can anyone in their right mind allow the book that carried within its pages these sentences, to become readily accessible to the uneducated mob, thirsty for scandals, Devil's blood and punishment? The mob was fascinated with the idea of witches, of flying monsters that devour kids and have secret sexual allegiances with the Devil. In the middle of the night, they cuddle their kids even

closer, as the nights are scary, hiding dangerous thoughts, people, and places. That is the peak time women transform into witches, ruling the darkness of starry nights: stealing good health, good fortune, poisoning cattle, and destroying crops. Fanatics of all sorts just waited for another excuse to shred many drops of Eva's blood... A crazy revenge for the paradise lost allowing the sado-masochism of their lower human nature to rule, abandoning the laws of common logic. This angry thought against women madly back-fired, creating a forest fire that just couldn't be distinguished until it burned thousands, maybe millions of trees. Our two silhouettes in the midst of their conversation, back in Macao on the 16<sup>th</sup> century's cobalt road- that in certain places stayed intact even to this date- continued their worried chatter.

Some high officials, educated and cultured men, accepted the ways of the hunt to be the correct one and they stopped questioning or using their reason.

If they ever had one.

For what is written and published must be the highest of truths!

In the society that fought so hard to establish the law as the norm, they abandoned all legal procedures and norms.

Aware that not a single woman would be accused if the procedure was governed by the law.

The church elite and judges,

Who are supposed to protect us...

...started their malicious hunt with an amazing zeal.

No cost too great, no number too high and no logic too inverted because they believed witch-hunting served the greater good of Christianity.

Yes, I know that argument, it is not the first time that a murderer 'saves' not only his soul but the souls of his

beloved villagers, killing a wicked Eve, cleansing the Earth of Evil as the End of the World approached.

End of the World, of course, another nonsense!

Our fellow men from all around the planet: Portuguese, Spanish, Germans, Italians, English, French all believed in the conspiracy of the Devil to destroy the Christian world. The Pope gave them a sign from Heaven, sealed with instructions on how to fight against this newly-found, and yet very exciting evil.

The hunt begun, no mercy ever shown. The torture and execution became a necessary evil. Sisters, mothers, neighbours, lovers, all, came under the attack of the faithful. If you were different, if you stand out of the crowd in any way, if you knew more, you were a possible threat, if you are rich, you are accused for the money you possess, or if you are unlucky to have a 5 year old that dreamt or invented one of the witches' gatherings: the child's fearful dream would be a mighty proof for the inquisitors!

So, children are witnesses?

Oh, yes! Sometimes the main ones! Kids as young as 5 would be called as witnesses. Their vivid imagination gave the priests and the mob plenty of materials of their 'supposed' meetings with the Devil.

Madness materialised within the circles of the ruling class, the madness of the hunt!

In reality no 'doing' ever could be tracked, proven, or seen.

Witches are accused of acts that normally live in fearful dreams, an intercourse with the Devil, sacrificing newborn babies, or causing natural disasters, droughts, floods and diseases.

When the Hunt became a reality in most of the countries - entering the courts, churches, markets, and every last house in the village, people were encouraged

to spy on each other inevitably creating an ever-expanding wave of accusations leading to mass killings. A typical craze would start with one or two suspects and through the forced confessions would spread indefinitely. The longer the panic the larger the numbers, and of course wealthier the victims.

A French witch hunter, Pierre de Lancre, accused, believe it or not, all 30,000 inhabitants of Labourd of witchcraft, priests included! He succeeded in executing around 600 women in the region.

A German witch hunt could kill hundreds in a single city, in Würzburg the number was 1200. The Catholic archbishop of Cologne, boasted that he burned 2,000 members of his flock during the 1630s. The witch prosecution spread from Northern Italy to Poland, Germany, France, Switzerland, and England. Our time became the Burning Time.

Can you imagine, your mother or sister within this cycle of nightmares?

Can you imagine all the medical knowledge collected throughout the centuries and shared amongst wise women, midwives and women healers - herbs that cure illnesses, the knowledge about the birth and birth control methods, all the Nature Wisdom, burnt during these Burning Times?

Luckily, not all of Europe got the bug. My Spain was protected...

What happened?

Alonso Salazar, a Spanish inquisitor, a man of notorious reputation for burning heretics in Spain, was the one to stop witch-hunting in his region.

How come? What happened?

Salazar was a judge in a trial that threatened to engulf 1,800 suspects, of which 1,500 were children, in his Navarra region. As a lawyer, his common sense guided

him to reject the statements of children. He visited the supposed witches gathering places and interrogated in details the women that gave their testimony, about where the devil sat and how the ceremony looked like. Of course, they all contradicted each other. He cooked supposed poisons, and ointments, and they all proved to be harmless and fake created by women to satisfy blood thirsty curiosity of their persecutors. In fact, none amongst 2,000 people involved has ever seen a witch. Salazar realised that the Devil hides in unjustly accusing the innocent. He freed all the accused and the Spanish Inquisition never executed another witch.

I thought that this far, in Macao, we would be free from this madness.

Ama is a witch! Fra Thomas claimed, but we will see for how long this absurd accusation can hold.

An absurd accusation indeed, but this was the century when absurdity was the middle name of much that happened. The 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century tip-toed over the Earth with the clumsiness of a Giant, shaking the roots of all past beliefs, leaving huge finger prints all throughout scientific work and religious structures. These centuries saw changes in knowledge, culture, and conscious behaviour; our unconsciousness, habits, and good old superstitions stayed within our make-up for a while longer, lingering there, waiting for some other spiritual revolution to happen hundreds or maybe thousands of years later.

This was the time of the first telescope discovery and the time when the earliest really precise star movement observations were made. The time when mathematicians and astronomers tried to challenge our homocentric cosmology, and its obsession with our mighty-human-selves when it claimed that Earth is the centre of the Universe and Life was created and fine-tuned to preserve and serve our very important selves –the human species. What a quantum leap!

This was the time of the final acceptance of the number zero amongst European mathematicians and this led to

the invention of relative numbers, negative quantities, infinite decimal points, abstract and irrational, imaginary and complex numbers. Accepting zero led to the birth of complex calculations. Accepting zero, we finally accepted the possibility of an idea that has no form. For some Monastic Orders the adoption of zero was a device of the Devil. Zero provided a framework for the development of atheism. Zero is associated with nil, non-being, nothingness, emptiness, and with zero defining non-quantitative as non-existent, everything non-quantifiable could now be defined as non-existent - including God.

This was the time when the Bible was for the first time publicly questioned and the Church resolved to defend its dogmas using pure force, the time of Martin Luther and his refusal to accept the Pope as an ultimate messenger of God.

This was the time of trials in the name of God, against progress and science and against individuals that were ahead of their time.

This was the time of kings and queens and their knights bathing in milk, covered in silk, eating from golden plates, and time of many that are always 'too many' dying of hunger, disease, and harsh work. Seen from the point of someone who has a car, whose house has electricity and running water, a regular salary and whose major disaster is when a washing machine breaks down for a few days, these times were almost every single person was part of a 'mob' feel very far and almost impossible to picture. Yet they were our reality not so long ago, and these were the times when every-single-body still believed that there is a major difference between Me who works all day long in a field and My Family, and Him who is chosen by God, who 'protects' us, who we die for, and His Family.

This was the time of discovery of al-qahwa al-bunniya (Amharic) or kisher (Arabic), a wonderful hot infusion of coffee-beans that quickly became men's favourite, the time of spread of coffee-shops all around our worlds. Coffee is native to Ethiopia, and the 16<sup>th</sup>

century saw this magic liquid cross the Red Sea to be first used in Yemen and spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula. Even though, you as our reader might not find it immediately that obvious, the importance of these newly emerging coffee-shops was and is tremendous.

Most of you probably remember this story: Once upon these times, carving our future, our ancestors dreamt of a new, better, more exciting Christian kingdom, and they sent ships into the vastness of unknown seas, to find the shortest route to the source of gold, exotic spices, silky-skinned women – India. The Destiny led one of the ships off a well-known course, to touch the shore of what is now known as Brazil. The year was 1492, his name is Columbus and he was granted, by the King Ferdinand II of Spain, to equip three ships and sail out west into the Atlantic, in search for a western route to the Orient. The Great Admiral of the Ocean Sea Verily, verily, (he was called that way) landed in the island of San Salvador, discovering a new continent and with it new tastes, sensations and new thoughts. Potato and tobacco were brought from America, together with coffee that was brought from Africa, the ritual of smoking and drinking tea and coffee entered our veins. Spices and coffee sneaked into the streets of London and Paris and a first slab of chocolate was on sale in Spain. A completely new set of Gods and Deities marched into our conscious and unconscious sphere, influencing the minds of European philosophers, artists and scientists. However, other than discussing and sharing philosophy behind the doors of various Monasteries, and at the comfort of their homes, the great minds of the time did not have an outlet, a comfortable place where they can sit, mingle and share.

The society that was pulsating with the discovery of new species, seas, oceans, countries, continents, planets, stars, and amazing new mixes of thought forms needed a place to discuss philosophy and science. Also, a place to read aloud manuscripts, to be idle and flirt with the Lady of Knowledge. The exploration bug entered our blood, transforming all our maps, our diets and our preferences for clothing. After

centuries of isolation, the World looked at us, and we looked at the World, and our eyes finally met, in this glow of self-reflection, doubts and challenges. We needed to share it with others.

During the times of Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael, the time of nude, luscious sculptures and paintings in churches, that surprise visitors even today with their bare boobs, and pronounced gluteus maximus, we officially as lunatics, marched into the Age of Reason. Our Universities flourished, manuscripts that were for centuries exclusively passed from one monk to the other, were finally discovered, printed and published, and for the first time distributed, freely or in secret, amongst the geeks thirsty for knowledge.

The transition needed a place where all are equal, where commoners can pay their bill, where all can sit together, where one must wait to be served, hence one can listen and talk. This time of transition needed coffee houses.

The preparation of coffee is somewhat complicated, the beans need to be roasted, ground and brewed, so it takes time to serve a customer, there is always plenty of time to 'kill', yet the black liquid is cheap and affordable to all. The coffee houses near the Great Mosque in Cairo and the ones along the waterfront in Istanbul, the simple coffee shops in villages near markets in Yemen, or the big spacious elevated halls in the cities of Persia, the ones in London, Paris and Milan, all had the same in-common, they were visited by scholars, teachers, and students, sitting either on the floor or low benches talking, reading and discussing various manuscripts.

At the time before coffee houses, it was difficult to find a public place with the comfort of a home, accessible to all social classes. A place for a group of young men to relax and spend a light-hearted evening amongst friends and strangers. Coffee shops offered all of this: an informal seating that encouraged mingling, a door open to all that can pay a penny for the magic liquid, and a great atmosphere for study, debate and story-

telling. They provided a place where different classes could meet and talk more freely than anywhere else, so much so, that in England they got a nick name: 'penny universities'.

Coming back to the heart of the Asian continent, we find a rich and vast territory, beyond all measures, that lives more or less isolated from its neighbours. The people, who live here, now in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, have reasons to believe that within their Great Walls spreads all true civilisation. Outside it is wilderness and chaos haunted by robbers and barbarians. Within it, there is China, with its cities that are large, and well-lit, that have water and drainage, Universities and large libraries, paper money that allows the flow of commerce and growth of trade, markets and industry.

If you didn't know, the Chinese were the ones to invent the press, gunpowder, and the magnetic compass some centuries before these miracle war-inducing goods came to Europe. The land of silk, spices, stunning cities and amazing culture was in those days ruled in order and harmony by their Emperor, Thiencu, the Son of Heaven, and because they worshipped Heaven as the Supreme, the Son of Heaven was their Son of God. China was these days also governed by some very educated men. It had two special orders of chosen philosophers, whose titles carried a great respect and authority. These wise men task was to advise the King of any violation of the law in any part of the Kingdom and not even the King himself was spared from their scrutiny, and their dishonesty.

The size of their navy at the time is impressive; at the beginning of 15<sup>th</sup> century they counted more than 1,300 combat vessels, the world's largest and most technologically refined merchant marine and navy. Its ships sailed to the coasts of Africa and back but whilst the nations of Europe seemed to be entirely obsessed with the idea of domination, no Chinese King thought of waging a war against Europe or Africa. For thousands of years the Chinese used the trade to communicate

with the rest of the world. They crossed the dangerous mountains and hostile deserts between the Western worlds, along the Silk Road, transporting and trading precious stones, spices and silk.

After the discovery of the sea route to India, the Portuguese were one of the first to open the trade with all the distant kingdoms of the Far East. They landed and settled for the first time in Macao's small harbour in mid-16<sup>th</sup> Century.

Like a compass turning, our Earth comfortably nests within the Milky Way and dances her tango with the Sun and the Moon. Let's zoom into our blue planet and descend into Macao where we placed this magic story called A-Ma. Macao started her life as a shelter to weather storms, a port for refugees, mainly missionaries fleeing trouble in other parts of Asia, but was a good choice for settlement because of its perfect position: some 40 miles to the east-northeast, across the mouth of the Pearl River, is Hong Kong, and not further than 100 miles is Canton.

Not long after the first Portuguese built their settlement, Macao developed into a major port for trade and the centre of culture and religion exchange funded by its soon-established virtual monopoly on trade between China and Japan, and Europe and East Asia.

From 1573, the Chinese Government approached the new-comers at various occasions, asking these new settlers to pay rent for living on their lands. The Portuguese missionaries, traders, and sailors already had their King and Pope, the official Representatives of God, and since God is One and only, his Representatives must be the one and only, they listened to the orders given across the Oceans, collecting phenomenal amounts of gold, and silk and spices, claiming their God's supremacy with guns, bribes, and piracy. Following the example of all the major colonising forces throughout the Earth at the time, they demanded autonomy, they established

their own governing body with a Governor appointed from Portugal or elected by local Portuguese.

In 1582, disapproving of the Portuguese violation of Chinese governance, the Chinese Main Governor summoned the Governor of Macao, and tried to teach him the rules of law and order, a simple property game we all find familiar today, yet so far from the consciousness of European war and gold thirsty semi-Gods of the time. He had a hard time convincing him that Portuguese are just uninvited guests in a foreign land and that they should obey the law of China.

The struggle for political supremacy between the two continued for centuries to come.

However, underneath the layers of greed, beneath the selfishness of Royal Courts and Churches, something more mysterious and profound connected the two lands: the Chinese and Europeans. Stronger than the urge to trade, wage wars, possess, convert, amidst these turbulences, was our fascination with one another, our deep respect for the hidden beauty radiating from the other.

The Chinese Philosophy developed in a different direction than the European one.

Nobody in China thought of studying Nature in an independent, methodical way, they approached it with a sacred awe for the mysteries of Universe, and built an amazing system of beliefs based on ancient mystic formulas, the system deeply rooted in the minds of people, interwoven into their way of life. For the Chinese, Nature is a living organism and its breath lives in everything, producing different conditions of heaven and earth, called: Yang and Yin. The heavens, Yang, give light, warmth and life; while Yin or Terrestrial Breath, brings death and darkness. With the knowledge of the two, one can live happiness, abundance, and peace on Earth.

The wisdom radiating from the ancient Chinese philosophies, wanted to move into the grounds of

Europe that desperately needed this 'female' approach to Earth and its beings. On the other hand, the new insights coming from the Universities of Vienna, Rome and Oxford quickly became the fascination of the Chinese educated classes who dreamed of a better world, a better social system, a better Earth. The two were meant to merge and Macao became the symbol of this merge, an alchemical egg that metamorphed into a mythical beast of the times yet to come. The times of tolerance and harmony towards all living creatures, piloted as the ability for Portuguese, Chinese and Africans to live side-by-side in Macao sharing their so different worlds. Macao lived far ahead of its time, influencing the change from one to another reality of existence and from one to another level of consciousness.

Macao's Goddess that protects the little peninsula and supports her growth is A-Ma. People of Macao believed in A-Ma, they prayed to Her when they needed help, to conceive a child they longed for, to heal the sick or return the lost ones home. They believed that She could help them predict auspicious and inauspicious events and drive out tragedy or turn danger into safety. The energy of Love and trust gathered them into the temple to pay homage, burn incense, chant, and fishing boats returning to the harbour took turns to line up in front of the temple giving A-Ma their offerings.

As it is with all magical stories, Macao or the Bay of A-Ma, is symbolically connected to the mainland by a sand land bridge, creating a peninsula in the shape of a lotus flower.

Various stories and miraculous rescues of the fisherman caught in the rough sea were connected to the Goddess A-Ma. The most famous is the story of a girl who dreamt of her father and brothers caught in a storm and who tried to help them in her dream. Her mother was alarmed with the uneasiness of her child's sleep and she shook her to wake her up, causing her, in her dream, to let go of one of the boats. Later, the story goes, her brothers returned without their father, recalling a terrible storm and the vision of a beautiful

girl, their sister, coming to save them but vanishing just before she was able to hold onto their father's boat that disappeared within the roughness of the sea. The girl, appearing as a spirit, continued helping boats in trouble bringing the sailors to safety for many centuries.

Another tale is the one of a fisherman boat giving a free passage to a peasant girl and being saved from a typhoon that destroyed all the other larger vessels. When the small boat landed in Macao, the girl walked to the shore and mysteriously disappeared in a glow of light. The passenger of the boat was none other than Goddess herself.

The fishermen built a temple in her honour at the entrance of Macao's inner harbour.

The legend that most profoundly relates to the deeper levels of our story is the one of the Sun Goddess Ama-Theresu.

Once upon a time, Sun Goddess, Ama-Theresu, had a horrible fight with her brother, Storm God, and after one of those tiresome, scary arguments only a brother could contemplate and with the full scrutiny execute, she got so hurt that for a moment of insanity she forgot her real Nature and decided to escape and retreat into a cave. She blocked the entrance of her new abode with a large stone, leaving the rest of the world in Darkness.

Oh, mighty heavy was the Darkness! A minute after minute, an hour after hour, a night after night, all the living creatures that depend on Her Light waited for Her return. Long is the wait that is filled with fear, grave is the thought of even a possibility of the Goddesses disappearance. To no avail were tears of lilies and butterflies, that have shorter lives and for it even deeper connection to Her Light, the Sun was not to be seen in the skies, She was hidden in her dark abode and nobody could entice her out. The Lady Balance that rained on Earth before this moment, hid Her face within the lava of a newly born volcano, allowing Chaos to prevail winning its game of Death and Destruction, Life as we know it, started to wane.

After the 4th night, even Gods got worried. Their words were useless against Her fears, and they realised that they had to bring Her back to the purpose of Her own existence.

An Oracle was called to shine the Light into this little game of unconsciousness, to gather the energies of the Beginning and the End, and give a hint of where the Key to this puzzle hides.

Create an atmosphere of Magic and Wonder in front of Her cave, the Oracle said, the atmosphere that triggers curiosity even of the tinniest forest spirits, the energy of game, excitement, trill, that might entice Her Majesty to look outside. Chose a woman that will dance her way into infinity, eternity, Golden Light, using Maya of different realities.

Nothing less than the purity of Her own Being will make the Goddess return to the Path of Life. She has to be exposed to Her own Light, the Oracle said.

Hang up a mirror at the entrance of Her cave, Oracle was revealing the clever plot. Entice Her to look outside.

And who is the maiden? Gods looked around.

And the Oracle said: You will find Her amongst the Stars. She has many names.

Nuit is one of Her names, Holder of Stars. She carries a lantern oiled with innocence and joy, her voice is a soothing melody and her touch is one of an angel. If she finds you wondering in the middle of a tunnel of shadows, lost, fighting against own and other people's devils, living within self-created nightmares, She will take you by the hand and deliver you to the World of Colours.

Alchemy is Her name, a witch, a doctor, a magician, an artist of transformation, a principal force that leads a Soul's journey to its Merge with the Holy Spirit.

Unpredictable, she experiments playing with Gods and Devils. She guides the union manipulating energies to accelerate our transformation.

She is Maria, Virgin Mother, a protector that is always awake. The Embodiment of Strength and Wisdom that is capable of carrying pain of generations to come. She understands and forgives fully, unconditionally, and patiently turns back to Love.

She is Kali, a Principal Force of Destruction, a carrier of storms, a fierce Goddess that brings fear to humanity, incarnating terror. With skeletons around her neck, and corpses as her carpet, she dances, screaming, demanding from her followers a complete renunciation. She shrieks that the ultimate nature of Life is Death. She laughs at our pain and sends it back to us over and over again, until we learn our lesson. She is dark and ugly and evil but she still is a perfect manifestation of Self.

Her name, said the Oracle, will this time be Ama, a female that sleeps in every one of us, Yin of Creation, a wisdom guide that with her purity extinguishes thirst for spiritual longings. She is the one that stands on a crescent moon with stars in her hair, pouring water from jars of her soul into lakes of emotions, awakening compassion for humankind and its Chaos, nourishing Earth and Her constant renewal.

Materialised in a female body, through centuries, with the life of an ordinary person, She ascends to meet the ones that are ready for Her, that call Her, that have a wish to understand. She is the personification of the Universal Mother. She lives Love and Clarity and She dies at Will, when She decides that it is time to go.

Her name is Ama.

There was an Ama in the village, a girl at a peak of her vitality that had 'abundance' written on her forehead, just emerging from the search for identity, growing into a wonderful human being. As a fragile essence rising from the foam of a rough sea, she was gentle and giving

in her openness, powerful and overwhelming in her beauty.

Gods called Ama and told her of a plan to organize a huge gathering in front of the Goddess's cave asking her to dance for them. Ama was to give a performance that would remove obstacles from the hearts of man, hoping that the noise of Happiness, Delight and Joy will intrigue Sun Goddess to come out from her hiding place.

Ama was a beautiful young dancer that enchanted many in a nearby village and had a body and a zeal of a Goddess. Ama knew that her dance is going against all the odds of depression and distress. She knew that the hope was gone from the minds of Man. Looking at the sky, night after night, in vain, waiting for Her arrival and observing everything sink into Darkness had scared and tired them. She felt her task was difficult. She needed to create an illusion of Light that would lead to the release of pure Light.

The gathered crowd was waiting, grumbling, gossiping, whispering. None and all felt like partying, none and all understood why they were there. In the middle of their anxiety music brought by stars and Ama emerged, dancing her Magic, encircled with Beauty that is Pleasure and Bliss.

Carried by the Divine Ecstasy she drummed using her feet and hands, her voice became an instrument, she swayed in the rhythm of breathing, using her knowledge of non-breathing, she carried Life on her naked shoulders. Awakening spirits, enchanting Gods, and rejoicing people was the core of her dance that instantly healed the doomed, sick and tired minds.

Torches uncovered colours of her flesh, glow of her smooth skin became an invitation to her Dance. She had nothing to lose and everything to gain: the salvation of all living beings on Earth. With her dance her body became a prayer wheel connecting Life and Death, creating Timelessness within the Space of this Myth.

Her beauty unfolded shining the energy of Creation.

Dancing with Gods, people and animals, teasing them with her nakedness, her burning body was moving effortlessly through the crowds inviting them to forget their troubles and join this crazy festivity.

The invitation came too sudden to refuse, too strong not to be noticed and crowds started moving and clapping, feet followed the rhythm and within minutes the air was filled with laughter of approval, hooting and shouting; Man lit thousands of torches forgetting their misfortunes, Gods joined in the celebration; animals and cocks began crowing loudly in unity, and it felt as though Earth for a moment regained its Balance: the ecstasy and delight returned. The Essence became Now, past and future disappeared.

And yes, the plot has worked!!! Sun Goddess was surprised to hear all the noise of happiness outside Her cave. World was supposed to be dying in Darkness without Her! Moving the stone to see what caused all the cheer the Sun Goddess caught a glimpse of Her own reflection in the mirror hanging in front of the cave and got transfixed by the image, by Pure Light. This sight has reminded Her of who She really was and at once destroyed Darkness hidden in Her heart making Her return to the reserved palace in Heavens and vow never again to be frightened by any storm and never again to hide from the sight of Gods, men, or Earth.

The beautiful naked girl was standing amidst the delighted crowd that was enchanted by the sight of Sun's return. Ama, with her purity and determination, managed to win the world of shadows, fears, and death that succeeded in seducing even Sun Goddess herself.

Ama, of our story, was born inside this temple at noon of 21<sup>st</sup> of June 1593, by an African mother, a wife of a Portuguese Lord, Ottavio de Nobile.

*Gold is the first and the most perfect of the elements.  
Gold comes from the centre of the earth, and while it  
passes through warm and pure places, it becomes the  
subtlest and purest element on Earth.*

*It is the most beautiful of all metals, the best that  
Nature can produce and no other element can corrupt  
it, or change it.*

*For what the eagle is among birds, the lion among  
beasts, the Sun among planets, such gold is among  
metals. The legend says that the centre of the sun  
emanates gold, by its rays to all beings. It is a life  
substance that penetrates all living things.*

*And all the beings on Earth carry within a grain of  
gold, hidden deep within their inmost centre - a  
precious grain of gold. Our core is golden, and when  
our body gets perfected and our mind gets purified,  
when we cleanse the uncleanness from it, we will  
reach within the centre of our beings, our own most  
precious gold.*

## Ruben

Her skin, dark olive, tight and silky, her eyes, shape of almonds, piercing and deep, her hands, carved iron, fingers long, jet-black curly hair, and a gracious swan-like neck. Even though I wouldn't admit it, at the time, I wanted her from the very moment I saw her.

I got to know Ama during the Dutch attack on Macao, the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 1622.

The future generations will also remember the 24th June, 1622, they will call it the 'Dia da Cidade' or the City Day, the day of miracles, the day of a fight with the Dutch, who also had their eyes on our fast-growing trade centre, that was now virtually controlling the European - Far East trade route. During the last couple of years, Macao became the target of repeated invasion attempts, culminating with this most violent and dangerous one in June 1622.

I find Macao hot and damp in summer, especially when there are no winds coming from the ocean or interludes of typhoon. Once or twice a year, the humidity reaches its highest point, the hot air swells over the Land and it becomes impossible to move or breathe or work, the settlement gets lulled into its yearly sleep. Once or twice a year, the heat becomes unbearable, it becomes the master, it spreads over the stone narrow streets covering us with dust and sticky sweat, and both, animals and people fight against this sickness of Earth, locked within their shelters. At the time of the attack Macao was asleep.

At around noon a fisherman came back to the city alarmed with the sight of a fleet of Dutch galleons. He entered the church breathless, almost crying, grasping for air, panicking, and told me, the local Jesuit Portuguese priest, the man left in charge:

that this was our last day

that there was no hope for our Land

that there was no God that can help us

that there was no worst nightmare than this that was just approaching us.

The moment when 13 huge ships appeared on the horizon manned by thousands of men was a moment of Hell for the citizens of these 3 small islands.

Macao gathered traders from Portugal and Spain, it gathered survivors of shipwrecks, refugees that managed to escape Dutch prisoners' ships and others who found mercy from pirates escaping cruel death. The population in 1622 was already an amazing mix of Portuguese, Asians and Africans. Today, when the priests and the city council did their fast estimate of people able to fight they added up only 600 men aged over 12, and almost 3,000 women and children older than 8 with around 500 African slaves. Macao has much more inhabitants but this was a very good time for trade and the army of men was miles away in inland China trading their porcelain, silk and spices. We were really just a handful, compared to the thousands of soldiers that were about to embark on the island.

God why did you forsake us? – were the words that roamed my mind for what felt like an hour after I heard that Dutch were going to attack.

Everything was against us: the humidity of this summer day, the settlement deeply effected by the heat and the lack of air, the fortress, Monte Fort that was far from its completion, and the atmosphere of the crowd in front of the church, the atmosphere of fear, despair and anger towards God that sends this type of challenge.

The ships surrounded us and they looked mighty and evil. The so long dreaded attack of Dutch was finally there, about to happen. And even though we were expecting it, it just did not need to happen now, here, to me, to us, one is never really ready for death. We are about to witness a disaster of an unfair battle, a battle against children and women and slaves, a

nightmare of killing, rapes and houses on fire. One is never really ready for death.

When I stepped on Macao's ground some years back, I knew that many confrontations will be a part of my destiny, that I am living in tremulous times when the Chinese government and the Catholic movement are trying to learn how to live with each other, passing through their strongest conflict ever. Different European kingdoms, their pirates and trade companies mercilessly fought for the supremacy over the trade routes, establishing laws using power and guns all through the area, no place was truly peaceful.

My mind was in shambles.

Destiny would have it that I started my journey to China with a close encounter with Death. During the night of my ship-wreck, even though I trusted the skills of our Captain and the strength of the ship that was our home all the way from Portugal, the storm that we had encountered was so strong that it shook all my confidence and awakened all my fears. When it started, it raged for hours increasing its strength and fury with every moment that passed. The rain came down in torrents and during this wrath, we never once saw the sun by day, nor the stars by night. The tempest was so fierce that no one could remain on his feet. The noise was so deafening that we could not hear even our own voices. My fear was so thick that I thought my head is going to burst when the ship gave its first terrible threatening jerk. If I remember correctly, it was the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of our nightmares, when we hit a rock just off the Formosan coast where the ship gave up its fight delivering us to the sea. The woodland under our feet cracked and disappeared and I was not sure what was spreading faster, water or panic overcoming the crew. The creaks coming from the hull convinced me that we are now at God's Grace and that only He could save us from the ill fate of disappearing within the depths of the glum waters. For the first time I became fully aware of Her Majesty - Death.

All through the days of ship-wreck, Death was steadily breathing down my neck. What an ugly and powerful face she had! Whether she came to our dreams as a skeleton in black armour mounted on a white horse, or we smelled her in rotting stench of the bodies that surrounded us and within our hope deprived souls; she did not discriminate or take preferences. She was present everywhere, my mortality shadowed every step I made. This little episode had a happy ending, once we managed to build our little improvised boat, we set off for a new adventure expecting the worst, but after some days of calm sailing and a calm sea, God's giving, we reached the coast of Macao with almost three hundred survivors.

At this point of our little story I will make a small transgression, before I tell you all about our little war-tale with the Dutch, I feel an urge to introduce myself, give you a brief sketch of my background, my hopes and thoughts at this stage of my life.

I entered the Jesuits in Rome at the beginning of this century when I was 17 and I was ordained a Jesuit three years later taking a special obedience to the Pope undertaking to go wherever I am sent. My Love for Jesus, Truths of Religion, and the quest for Self-Knowledge led me to choose this path, the path that demanded extreme Faith, extreme Sacrifice and extreme Hardship, the path of a Spiritual Warrior. Like all the others, I took the vow of poverty, and the vow of refusal of external honours, material worlds did not interest me.

I knew that I would be going to foreign lands, and that I was to be surrounded by unfaithful, by dangerous customs, diseases, strange people, but I had nothing to lose and my gain was great, I could prove my love for Jesus spreading his teachings and fighting for what I believe in, delivering more and more souls to salvation.

I was always attracted to the secrets hidden within a human soul believing that people can change. For me the story of Jesus' life was the story of tremendous Willpower and Divine Faith that won over instincts,

devils, temptations and cruelties of the world around him. Jesus lived in a desert for forty days without food, clothing, or any contact with humans and he resisted all the temptations of power and all the weaknesses of the flesh. The stories of Saints I knew, respected, and loved, were also the stories of fights against the world of desires and against many different devils. My path was the path of strengthening the willpower and my heart was that of a warrior.

Deeds, not words, interested me. Following Christian teachings, as manifested through Jesus Christ and His Holiness, the Pope, I became one of the Pope's Soldiers. From an original desire that led me to Jesuits: to dwell in the Holy Land imitating the life of Christ, following one question: what would Christ do if he is here, now, with me; I decided to become a missionary, devoting my whole life to bringing Christianity to the East.

After I received permission from my superiors, I embarked on a Portuguese merchant ship with the greatest zest heading to China.

As I told you earlier the trip was not an easy one and at its very end God performed a series of miracles to keep us alive. Arriving to Macao, six months later we were joined by the crew of the second ship that started their journey with us. They were halved in size because after the storm, some miles away from our shipwreck, they were attacked by war ships in service of the Dutch East India Company. The Dutch took the possession of the cargo and imprisoned them. They were taken to the island of Formosa and kept there captive for six months. With little to eat, living in a stable with the cattle, many of them fell ill and died. That was the first time that I faced Her Majesty: Death, and the first time that I experienced the fear of Her sight. This time She looked even fiercer and I could hear Her laughing.

The Dutch fleet started its approach and I started panicking:

We had just a dozen of cannons and an unfinished Fort

and a bunch of kids, women and slaves.

Nothing more than a dozen of cannons!  
God why did you forsake us? I couldn't help thinking!

I recognized the smell of anticipation before the catastrophe, I felt deep within my stomach a knot of excitement and panic, I was not sure whether to run, or scream, or lay down in despair and die praying. Like an animal trapped in a cage, pacing up and down, thinking the same useless thoughts, not seeing a way out, not knowing how to re-collect, not understanding, I tried to appear calm.

God why did you forsake us? Was the scream that kept bouncing of the walls of my cell.

In difficult moments I used to try to remember Jesus and his difficult moments, I would call His presence and ask for help, direct help. So I turned my head to heavens and asked

How would You react now?

All I heard was Silence, a God mighty Silence. My mind was too upset to hear signs from Heaven.

The Fort built by us, Jesuits priests and locals, some years ago, was looking at us.

The mix of mud, shells and straw, was our only hope. The mixture packed into place could, perhaps, withstand a hail of cannonballs.

But for how long?  
And why?  
How long before the defeat?  
Are we heading towards suicide?

What is our choice?  
To kill ourselves trying to save what we have called 'home' in these last few decades or to be murdered after we surrender!

And if we do surrender, would they show mercy towards women and children?  
Are we choosing the worst of two alternatives?

What would Jesus do, if He was here, now?

The army of men on the ships was hungry for victory, blood and women. I knew how highly Dutch valued this port and its strategic place for trade between the East and West.

I wanted to believe that there was hope, but I heard only fears!

The stories of horrors roamed in my head, executions and isolation, torture and merciless killings...

Was that God tempting my Faith?  
And what would You do, if You were here, just now?

I screamed my question in the silence of my room.

She appeared from nowhere wearing her colourful sarong. Looking at her I instinctively knew that this was no coincidence and I stayed attentive, strangely awakened by her presence, alert to what she is going to say or do. Even from the distance I could see her eyes shining and I could hear the clarity of her voice, it was determined and strong. It was hard to link her black skin, soft hair, delicate hands, and gentle warm eyes with the aura of warrior that this role demanded, but the aura of inspiration around her being, the energy of God's grace and the sound of His guidelines were there, around her.

We have no time to waste! she said

There is no other choice.  
God will protect us if we truly trust Him.  
Remember what you've always known.  
Let's find the shelter within Monte Fort. Let's offer our prayers to A-Ma, Buddha and Christ. We must keep on believing and He will guide us.

It struck me that those should have been my words, but no, I was silent and she was the one uttering them. She looked at me determined, I was a part of her mission, she wanted me to lead.

I knew of Ama from the numerous stories that were connected to her being. I knew of her as of a preacher and a witch doctor. She was a mystery among masses living within this little settlement: a beautiful black young woman who carried the name of the Goddess herself and who knew how to read stars, understood secrets of herbs, and it was rumoured knew how to speak with ghosts and animals. People went to her to discover their destiny, to get healed or just sit around the fire with her and listen to her stories. The ones who admired her talked about her as of a guide, the scared ones were unnaturally polite to her, afraid of her curses, and the ones who did not understand her accused her of the witchcraft. She was loved and hated by many.

Her unusual background, her figure, her voice, her manners, all of her, just couldn't pass unnoticed. If she was born in any other Christian country she would have been marked as a saint or burnt as a witch, but in Macao, she became a walking legend.

Ama was a daughter of an African mother and her skin was dark, eyes brown, large and alive. She was tall and slim, and she walked gracefully, gliding through our mortals' worlds as though she was just a passer-by observing our struggle to survive untouched by our pettiness, and trivialities, always within her supreme state of peace. She walked as a queen, silently, elegantly, gently but assertively and people treated her as a queen.

Ama lived in the house of her father, Ottavio de Nobile and she was his favourite child. The fairy-tale woven around Ottavio de Nobile, his wife and his daughter Ama, during the long, cold winter evenings, amongst fishermen and lay-people, were many, because this family came from afar, it was rich, and very private, so just a few, chosen ones, knew the true details of their

lives. The gossips whisper about ancestors' ghosts and angels, and sometimes even Goddess Herself intervening in this child's birth and life, they talk about unspeakable love that existed between Ottavio and his wife and about her magic death.

Ottavio de Nobille came to Macao around 30 years ago bringing with him his wealth, his vast knowledge, his laboratory, and books about Philosophy, Astronomy, Art, Natural Sciences, and a spectrum of secrets about his life and the reasons for his immigration to Asia.

Ama's mother got violently sick while giving birth just at the time when they arrived from Portugal to Macao, and the crew brought her to shore, into the Ama's temple soon after the first contractions started. The baby girl was born healthy but unfortunately nobody was able to save her mother. One life was sacrificed for the other, the legend says, and to thank the Goddess for saving his child, Ottavio gave his daughter her name A-Ma – the Great Mother.

The day, when 13 Dutch ships appeared on the horizon surrounding Macao, only a miracle could save us and I felt within the depth of my being that Ama was to create that miracle.

I allowed her beauty and determination to give me strength and focus. Even though I was full of fear and confusion, I was enchanted. Looking at her courageous face, the fuzziness of my mind was gaining clarity.

In the difficult moments it was my mind that I needed to fight, not the circumstances, my mind was the one to decide on a defeat or a victory. God would give me a tremendous strength when my life was endangered, if I would just trust Him and His Guidance. But before God could act in such a way, the choice to accept this grace, was always in my hands.

Faced with the danger, my mind was divided into two, three, five different personalities and speculatively worked against me, wasting my powers and precious time.

I can!

I can't!

You can't!

But he might do this or that!

We can!

We can't!

But what if...?

But what if not!

My many 'I's all screamed at the same time, fighting, whispering, moving within me bringing clouds of weaknesses and dragging me deeper and deeper into the abyss of my own imagination.

If you have ever experienced a close embrace with the force of fear, its dark and cold touch, its sweaty smell and its never ending spiral that drags you down into its core, its breath that takes away all hope, all confidence, its icy power that paralyses every single movement, you know what I was going through.

Citizens of Macao were expecting my help and I was seeking the guidelines from Heavens. Both encouraging and destructive forces were offering their help and I needed to clutch to the right one.

Thanks to God, I sensed the signs of encouragement in Ama's voice and I followed it. Passing Her inspiration through me, I woke up and started moving.

Fear and despair turned around and changed their direction. It is hard to explain how this happened. What is the invisible force that guided me? Are the angels the one that helped, or was this shift the result of a few strong minds calm enough to lead this swing through? Today, it was hard to say because everything happened just in a few moments, moments that lasted an eternity. At those moments the impossible became our Reality and Death was not a Threat any more.

I led the citizens to retreat to Monte Fort, high on the hill in the centre of Macao.

Was I, at these moments, executing my Will or was I a puppet of a Miracle orchestrated on the hill tops of Olympus? I did not know. When the Egyptian army surrounded the Jews and left them without any hope and when the thought of the Promised Land was transformed into the thought of Inevitable Death, Moses raised his stick and asked God to help and waters opened in front of them and let the people through. And how did that happen?

That day, during the fight against the Dutch, I followed the insight within me, the voice that trusted Ama, and I took the role that God gave me, the role of the guided and the guide.

That day, during the fight against the devils within my head, I felt, Jesus was acting through me, we became His words, His action, His thoughts, and we became a part of His Divine plan, and everybody including slaves, women and children were there, ready to die and ready to follow.

My belief was fuelled by Ama's presence, and crowds around me fuelled their thirsty scared souls with my words. From time to time, in my quest for further guidelines, I looked for her finding her facing Chinese, Africans and Portuguese encouraging them with the same determination, just changing the tongues of her speech.

We saw the face of Death and we decided to fight it even though our chances were minimal. Our sword was bravery, our shield - complete trust. Intuitively I led our fight. She was my perfect warrior and I was her perfect leader. There was no time for doubt and our actions were coming from God. We let ourselves be led.

The Dutch were about to disembark and the war game was about to begin. This was my first battle ever. I feared this was Her first battle too.

From the Fort we could see clearly galleons landing and tens of boats leaving the ships with the mighty army rowing towards Macao. We knew that they were many,

they did not know our numbers. We lost our fear, their fear was on our side. We lost our minds, their thoughts and doubts were inspiring us.

Admiring Ama's determination to fight for lives of Macao's women and children I remembered my first encounter with Macao's Goddess A-Ma.

The temple devoted to A-Ma was the first building I saw when I landed in this little settlement. The temple was built on a cliff facing the sea, and it appeared from nowhere smiling at us, newcomers. Flying eaves and carved lions looked at me from above, reflecting the light of the dawn, receiving me with the grace and superiority. Magical and mystical and yet so real, this architectural miracle stood in its simple perfection manifesting Heavens on Earth. After months of travelling, and the fatigue of our encounter with Death, it was not easy to resist this sight, my heart was filled with a unique mixture of respect and obedience.

The maze of red-hued prayer halls, pavilions and altars, Gods and Goddesses that ruled these lands, for an instant of amazement and insanity, opened a worshiping paradise within my heart. Centuries of prayers instilled the energy of harmony and purpose into the walls of this temple. I fell on my knees and kissed the earth: A-Ma was calling me... And there was no soul that could stay untouched by the sight. I was too astonished to think of paganism, theism and differences between 'my' God and what I was experiencing: A-Ma engulfed me. The smell of offerings: flowers, fruits, and candles, left by fishermen, and the sense of complete devotion that this place carried within its walls encircled me, leaving behind no space for questions. I was enchanted...

The network of climbing gardens surrounding the temple brought me back to my senses, giving me escape from the magic of this fabled place and leading me to the reflection of myself and the task that I came to perform - to join the trade centre, establish a monastery and start signing up converts.

One of the most difficult tasks I had in the conversion of Chinese was pulling them away from their strong links to ancestor worship and life with the spirits. The superstition and supernatural was so much a part of their culture and the way they lived their lives that I found it extremely difficult to publicly ask them to despise idols and renounce their old rituals. Their refusal was so strong that sometimes I just had to give up and ignore the fact that they worship other Gods and let them live with their previous customs trying to convert them later, once they understand Christianity better.

Today, when Death was just minutes away from us, I saw African slaves calling their spirits and living-dead, Chinese pleading to their ancestors and different Gods for help, Christians and non-Christians praying together. People of different religions united against a common enemy, lighting candles as one, and this scene changed something essential within me. A crack of an enlightened idea of a possibility of non-Christian, non-Buddhist, non-pagan, not-named God carved its path amongst neurons of my brain waiting for its moment to break the stone of firmly set beliefs that I called mine for many decades.

While converting Chinese into Christianity to replace worship of idols, I would give my converts images of the cross to adore and teach them to light candles on the altar in admiration of Christ and Holy Mary. Today, candles were the same, they were lit to all Gods – to Christ, to A-Ma, and to Buddha - showing our respect to all, burning for Life.

Looking Death in the eyes, we were united and it didn't matter any longer whose God was the right one and whose prayer was better – they all counted. The name of God was not important, the Force behind Creation and Fate was the one we were praying to, the Force that decides who will live and who will die. We were united in the fight to save our lives.

I organized children and women into groups of ten all around the fort and I instructed them to scream and

shout, creating war sounds following rhythms of cannons' fire, giving the impression of multitude of fearsome warriors. Soon, shouting and sounds of horns were coming from everywhere within the fortress. The strength was on their side, the illusion of strength on ours. Our battle could not last long, time was not on our side, we had to act fast. We could not afford face-to-face combat, we could not afford them knowing our numbers. We were loud and united in despair.

I organized the cannons, only a few amongst us knew how to shoot but we were striking in unity. Some of the firemen were children, just passed the adolescence age, and they were most amazed by what a gun could do. Perhaps they were all waiting for this moment of bravery that each boy eagerly looks for and each mother silently resents, listening to the stories of grown-ups around the fire, just after the dinner, the stories mostly invented to be scarier and more exciting than the reality. We had no protection of guards and soldiers, of trained muscles and strong army, the only protection we could hope for was the protection from Above.

We aimed and observed what is happening down there in the midst of our shots. Every time we hit the target we screamed celebrating our temporary victory. We aimed, we prayed and we shouted. The Fort was on fire, our euphoria was at its pick.

A lucky shot (if such a thing as 'luck' exists) from a cannon on the walls of Monte Fort hit the Dutch gunpowder boat resting in the bay and created a huge explosion that caused attackers to panic. We saw smoke and heard screams, the Chaos was in their lines. This gave us further strength, God was on our side. We had nothing to lose, lives we have already left behind.

In the mist of smoke and heat of our exited bodies I heard chanting in the background, candles were lit everywhere, we were all lost in the smoke and purity of our beliefs. We have surrendered and this surrender made us Whole.

Music was getting louder and the beat was encouraging us to move. Up front, united, violent, coming from the core of Force unknown to any of us was our little army rapidly spreading disorder through the Dutch in front of us. Another lucky shot and the second ship was on fire and later we found, with this one, we managed to injure the Dutch commander.

Noise, smoke, chaos...  
Screams...  
Minutes passing as seconds...

The battle that was decided before it started...

The battle that was one of the union of Christ, Ama, Buddha and many other Chinese and African Gods against the army that was 10 times stronger than ours.

The outcome defied anybody's belief, the minuscule army managed to sink a few more vessels and in the ensuing confusion we turned into attackers routing the Dutch completely. The fear was transformed into bravery and almost certain defeat into a victory and our sleepy and scared city became the city of strength, violence and euphoric joy.

I was part of that joy, I was part of that euphoria, I felt powerful. I knew I had changed, I knew that I would need time to reflect, but now I wanted to celebrate. I looked for Ama in the crowds and I saw her standing peacefully outside the centre of celebrations, outside the excited crowds, steaming with life, glowing within clouds of dust with an expression of somebody whose mission was not yet complete. It was not happiness but stillness that mirrored on her face. Or was it sadness?

I promise you one thing! I will teach all our children to hate wars!

There are no winners in a war, there is death and destruction and this barbaric force should not be a part of any human experience.

On a cosmic scale, a winner will anyhow become a loser and a loser will experience a role of the winner, so why such an urge to kill or hurt, when we are just puppets in this theatre of Life. We strive to be a meeting place of all the various energies within the Universe, and through this experience we strive to become better human beings. Within our little journey there is a commandment we still are not ready to hear: DO NOT KILL... DO NOT KILL... DO NOT KILL...

The spectrum of possibilities is vast and our souls long to incorporate as many as they can. To understand ourselves we need to understand the flow of Life within us. This is why one day we face happy thoughts and another we get sick or sad. We are in a constant process of learning how to think, behave, or act and how to understand the manifestations of Tao, the manifestation of Qi within us.

So, when we are at the very top, surrounded with the smell of success, we must carefully look at the defeated, at the fellow being that is in trouble. Detaching from the role, observing the theatre, will teach us the lesson experiencing it only once. Be aware of the power that is given to you when you are the winner, the energy will soon vanish but the act that you have committed might haunt you for the rest of your life. Be merciful to your enemy while holding the knife under his throat because you might be the one who asks for the mercy tomorrow.

Ama was among the few who stayed on the battlefield tending wounded, both the Dutch and the citizens of Macao.

Later that week, Ama and her father, managed to convince the City Council to grant the freedom to all the slaves that were in Macao during the attack, in recognition of their almost suicidal loyalty.

That day I've decided to get to know Ama better. My heart wanted to be closer to her and my mind was deceiving itself with two reasons: one was to understand Ama and paganism around her better, the

other was my, I so believed in that moment, wish to convert this special soul into Christianity.

For a man to do all that is demanded of him, he must regard himself as greater than he is.

**Goethe**

## **Father Benedict**

Every-body and every-thing on Earth lives under the influences of Yin and Yang. Every single rock or plant or a water source hides within it a mixture of these two properties, spirits, manifestations and for Life to manifest in its fullest potential, their proportions must be right. Isn't that just fascinating as a theory that if there is too much heat or too much cold the earth will not be fertile, diseases will prevail and people will not live in harmony? Yin follows Yang as birth is followed by death and night by day, joy does not exist without sorrow, nor health without sickness. I was discussing the meaning of Life and Human Existence with my Chinese friend.

Sitting inside Ole (Ama and Ottavio's) coffee and tea house we had much to share. The inside of Ole is quite appealing. It is a simply decorated single large room with cushioned benches running all around the walls. Its simplicity is charming and the whiteness of the walls dances with the outbursts of colours of red and golden silk cushioning. It has a water basin in the middle that gave us all a feeling of peace and tranquillity.

I spent many nights in summer, and days in winter frequenting this place, meeting friends and strangers, reading, writing and discussing both weather and the purpose of life on Earth. I spoke to peasants, craftsman, merchants, slaves, mandarins, all passing through Ole, all classes coming from China, Siam, Malaysia, Ceylon, India, Japan, Philippines, Korea, and all of its frequent customers that returned to its allure year after year for inspiration.

Both, traders and passers-by intermingling on our little peninsula, would find our little hiding place, leaving a bit of themselves every time they came to visit Ole. Macao had regular trade routes to Japan, the Philippines, and Indo China. Exchanging Chinese porcelain, silk, musk, and furniture made of precious woods with Japanese silver, sandal wood, amber, aromatic woods, incense from Indochina and spices from the islands of South Asia. It was a very vibrant

little place. The porcelain, the silk, the precious woods furniture and the incense found its way into the simple décor of this magic place, inspiring visitors' lush dreams of Heaven's and Nature's beauty.

Ole opens in the early morning and it is then as well as in the evening that it is mostly frequented. The evenings were reserved for story-telling, music, and candle light poetry reading. Some were open for public and some had a special audience invited just for the occasion.

Amazing as only a dream can be, within this coffee shop patrons were more or less freed from the rigid protocols of our times. People varied, conversations varied, often uncovering deeper levels of philosophical truths, or Universal secrets. Since customers are free to choose their-own seating on the elevated platforms around the walls or on the floor that was in the winter covered in silky carpets, and colourful cushions, the exchange of thoughts, and the life-changing discussions often happened amongst strangers. The places were taken on the first come first served basis, not according to rank or wealth, creating a very exciting sense of freedom from any social constraint.

The art of making tea is called 'Cha Dao', said Ottavio standing amidst the ancient vases and jars, at a small carved wooden table performing the tea ceremony.

A good tea has the flavour of nature. It smells of the spring mountain waters, earth and air filled with cold breeze of winter that has just decided to leave us-added Ama, bringing some more porcelain tea caps. Get to know the tea plant to be able to bring out its most fragrant properties choosing the right pot, right amount of tea leaves, the right water temperature, the brewing time.

It was obvious from the enthusiasm that the father and daughter shared, and the shine in their eyes, that the ritual of preparing and serving tea had a special place in their lives.

The smell of tea, its taste, its texture, how smooth it is, how hot the mixture is, how refined the leaves are, and its right combination will bring out the perfection in it. Muttered Ottavio as thought he was talking about an alchemical process of changing metals into gold, not making tea.

He gently took the small porcelain cups from Ama cursing them in his large hand, placed them in a circle around a small, unglazed clay teapot made from red sand clay.

To seal the inside of the teapot, I boiled special old tea leaves mixture with water for many hours. Oils from the tea leaves sealed the pores of the fired clay and left a delicate scent that will stay with all our teas. An alchemist and a magician spoke to us about the sealing of the teapot.

This is green tea, Ama continued, the leaves of this tea are not broken, but dried into little buds, bringing the buds closer so I can smell them. The tender plants collected on the mountain hills looked alive in her beautiful gentle hands.

What is the difference between black tea and green tea? I asked, looking at the young, tender leaves in front of me.

The difference amongst the types of tea is the length of the fermentation used to process the leaves. While fermenting, the green tea changes its colour into reddish-brown. She smiled. The longer the fermentation, the darker is its colour. Green teas are just lightly fermented, she nodded, but red and black teas could sometimes be fermented for years.

Ama left the tea leaves in my hands so I can touch them.

Each step of this magical creation was a sensory exploration of a spiritual experience. The smell took

me in to a journey to the high mountain ranges covered in mist untouched by a human foot.

After boiling water, Ottavio rinsed the teapot and cups with the steaming water. Each one of his movements was precise and meditative carrying within the respect for all the elements: fire, water, earth, air, respect for the tea and us, his guests at Ole. Using a bamboo tea scoop, he filled the teapot with tea leaves and then poured the boiling water into the pot to very quickly drain the water out.

This dispels any bitterness, he says then rinses and sets the tea leaves.

He poured the boiling water into the tea pot again and around 30 seconds later he poured the magic liquid into the cups moving the teapot around in a continual motion over the cups so that they are all filled together.

The tea has to be poured low to minimize escaping of aroma and it is important not to have bubbles in the pot. He looked at me, as though he is telling me a secret of eternal life. Bubbles, when mixed with the tea, form a foam that spoil its purity.

Each cup should taste exactly the same and have the exact same colour, he noted.

Handing one of the cups to me I gracefully sipped the magic of this liquid. The tiny chalice is just large enough to hold about two small sips of the tea. The tea tasted much different than it smelled. It had a bitter, earthy, green-twig taste. Looking at the colour I observed a few leaves gently unfolding within my cup. I entered a silence of meditation observing this little ritual.

The ceremony continued.

Each pot of tea serves three to four rounds and the same tea leaves are used over again until the fragrance is gone. My host explained.

China is the homeland of tea. I noted as they both nodded.

We, for certain know that the Chinese had tea-shrubs five to six thousand years ago, Ottavio said. During the mid-Tang Dynasty (around 700 A.D) a Buddhist monk, Lu Yu, wrote the first Tea Classic. It was called Cha Ching, a script explaining and exploring the art of making tea. Ama loves this ancient script, maybe one of these evenings she could share it with you.

Tea is very popular in China. In summer we cool ourselves drinking it, and in winter it warms us. We have a saying, Ama said smiling: Rather go without salt for three days than without tea for a single day.

I saw lots of old men gathering around teapots, talking, I said.

This we call: Lao Jen Cha, Old Men's Tea ceremony, and probably we inherited it from our ancestors from 2,000 years ago, Ama added thoughtfully.

After the tea ceremony, Ama took me around their little coffee and tea house. She wanted to show me the gardens that were behind the gate, reserved for friends and blooming wonders in this spring day.

Walking through the gardens I could see that all the structures, bridges, fences and trails were designed in a most imaginative and refined manner. Weathering just gave a meaning to some of the areas crossing our paths.

The plants and the paths, all, take in the element of time with grace, old age and death is not frowned upon, here in China, it is respected. Ama was reading my thoughts.

The garden was built around a large pond.

Water is an important element in Chinese life and it is almost always present in Chinese gardens, my

beautiful host explored the elements with me. Even in the dry gardens, you find water symbolized by grey gravel or sand with sand patterns on it.

In the centre of the pond was an island, an island of immortals, Ama explained, a large stone resembling a miniature mountain.

Because of its sacred character, the island is not accessible to people, as you can see no bridges lead to it.

I looked at the island, the shape of a tortoise, an animal that according to Chinese mythology lives ten thousand years and symbolises longevity, and I saw no bridges leading to it, just a few small rocks placed around it, inviting visitors to hop from one to the other, giving them a hope that even though the sacred place is unapproachable, with an effort, one still can reach it and live everlasting happiness.

Trees and plants planted all around the paths were also narrating stories. Both the bamboo and pine as an evergreen, Ama pointed out, express longevity and happiness.

The black or male pine and red or female pine symbolize yang and yin forces of the universe. That is why they are planted next to each other, they could not exist without the other. The plum brings forth the qualities of vigour and patience since it blooms first after the cold winter months.

Further down the path, I noticed some large rocks with their main bodies set deep into the ground as though the gardener wanted to offer a symbol, a thought, a shape intriguing our minds, expanding beyond just the physical manifestation. I asked Ama about it.

This garden is a shrine, she said. We surround ourselves with shrines. Every stone, every tree, every pathway is a shrine. There is a symbolism behind each

pattern, each plant planted, each colour chosen. We build shrines everywhere, within the walls of our houses, at the entrance of our shops, at the corners of our streets and in the fields. Symbols, rituals and magic, they are all in the core of our Being.

We entered their outdoor pavilion with a floor carved in the shape of a Chinese character. Through one of the carvings on the floor, surged a stream which flowed from the pavilion to their rocky garden.

We respect all the elements, Ama said, water, fire, wood, metal and earth. Understanding them we aim to understand the Lady Destiny and live our lives in harmony.

The ancient science of elements and the way they behave is not that simple. For example, trying to manipulate and dominate an element that is in 'power' is interfering with the precious balance of elements. During the reign of Metal one should not practice metallurgy, or during the rain of Earth, one should not construct anything made of earth, clay or stone.

The dreams of this amazing Kingdom are very much mixed with reality, the reason dances its eternal dance with superstitions, and common practices flirt with magic, I said to Ama, creating quite a unique blend of respect for all living creatures, but also a pure motion of fear and habit driven patterns. I continued.

Yes, Ama smiled, like anywhere where magic enters the homes of the uneducated. The proper Chinese shamans are educated for decades and have the gift of Wisdom, they work in many different fields: weather forecasts, magical healing, dream interpretation, and fortune-telling. They use astrology, exorcism or feng-shui to communicate with Gods and spirits. The science behind their work is very far from a common person superstition that you will unfortunately find everywhere. The relationship between Chinese and their Gods is very personal.

I had to admit that for most of Europeans, Chinese culture was completely alien. It will take centuries or even longer to get to feel or hope to mentally comprehend this matrix of spiritual thoughts so closely linked to every-day's manifestations.

We returned to Ole, my favourite meeting place of all sort of humans marching on this little Universe of ours. Apart from tea, they also served an amazing stimulating and flavourful drink called: 'coffee'.

This was not my first encounter with a coffee shop. I came across these fascinating gathering places travelling across villages in Yemen, Mokeya was their name. There, they stand in an open country, before the other village huts, at the edge of the settlements, offering Kischer, a hot infusion of coffee-beans, to travellers. This hot and bitter drink was strange to taste at first but with the most amazing smell, a bit like black tea but with an earthy overtone to its taste. Back there, in Yemen, it was served in simple and beautiful earthenware cups with water that was given out gratis. At the very beginning of my encounter with this magic liquid, it took some time to adjust to the bitterness of the coffee taste, but later I got hooked to the smells of spices added to it, to the ceremony around its making, and to the sweet expectation while waiting for coffee beans to be roast and ground, and the warm feeling of expansion that followed the experience of drinking. Here, at Ole, in China, the drink is served in beautiful Chinese porcelain cups.

Ole is near water, has many windows, and two small private almost invisible galleries, with an amazing view into the endless blue, where I many times got lost contemplating the secrets of existence. Its front garden was accessible to all and it changed with the seasons, shaded by a huge tree, full of roses and flowers, offered us, who came there regularly, a performance of shades, with interlude of sounds.

Our, Western world is a rational, intellectual world that exists within linear thoughts, formulas, and clear logic. My friend, Ottavio, started one of his usual

discussions when he was surrounded with his friends. It is what Chinese call the Solar, Male, Yang of the creation.

Chinese however is intuitive and imaginative. It is the heart, filled with symbols, signs, sounds, and meditations. It is Yin of the creation, the Moon, the Female child of the Universe.

If it just could be achieved, my dear friend, he turned around to face me, as though he is telling me the secret of our great, great grandparents, the merge of Yin and Yang, would lead us to perfection, uniting Solar and Lunar ways of thinking would lead us, humanity, to a new state of Consciousness.

If it just could be achieved, we would see the carbon of the human soul that is now visible as graphite, transform into the one of a diamond. If it just could be achieved we could see an inner transformation of any metal to gold. This is a secret of Alchemy, my dear friend. The Alchemy of Humanity!

Any substance, as an alchemist would tell you, whatever it is, continued Ottavio, is what it appears to be, set just for a moment that is lost in eternity, by parameters of a given place, time, and given circumstances. Carbon could be graphite and diamond at the same time. When a human being is subject to hardship, mistreatment and is not given a chance to develop, he will become a murderer, a thief or an abuser. How quickly before he becomes an animal! When one is treated with love, respect and care, how far can he develop? Contemplated Ottavio.

A human being could be studied by investigating a section of his liver or the brain, or observing the amazing matrix of soul's behaviour patterns, said Ama, moving swiftly through the space of the hall. Directing a telescope to Venus, an astrologist could examine substances that form part of it or observe astral elements that are emanated by Venus spiritual light to Earth. What different points of view?

What is better: to build our knowledge from individual broken segments put together forming a thousand pieced mosaic puzzle—that clearly obstructs our vision, ...or to follow the spiritual intuitive way that uncovers the secrets of the cosmos interwoven with a magic game of our own imagination? Asked Ama.

Will the sounds of Chinese mystical intuitive science ever manage to enter the realities of the West? Ruben asked.

Will the clear and precise Nature laws of the West ever manage to attract the Chinese? Ottavio continued Ruben's question.

Is there a man on Earth who could manage to bridge the gap between the two, who will not get discouraged by the barriers of different languages or by the dogmas of their religions? They both for a moment, so I thought, looked at me...

Like a fog, silence crept into my world, entered my mind through the breathing and became a part of my being.

Silence narrated a story of a deep profound longing planted within my soul at the gate of creation. The longing also alive within other life forms on earth, the longing for the transformation of carbon found in graphite into carbon found in diamonds, the longing for growth that is deeply embedded within every cell of my beings.

I became Ama's and Ottavio's friend soon after I arrived to Macao. Both their lives were veiled with mystery and encircled with many common folk's legends. These two people, I loved and deeply respected, intrigued me with their freedom of speech and thought, unknown to many in this day and age, and I felt this to be a breath of fresh air in the world full of dogmas I came from.

As a wild wind that crosses the planes on a still summer day surprising everybody around, or a water whirlpool playing in the midst of a calm sea, immensely freed

from pre-conditioning, and pre-judices, and almost dogmatically against dogmas, they lived their lives in Macao where different religions co-existed. Perhaps the main reason for this curious madness of truthful expressions was that they were both slightly crazy and unusually courageous.

Ottavio was versed in both Western and Eastern philosophies, and he easily sailed through the ancient knowledge of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism. It was his love for religious studies that inspired him to support the intellectual and artistic elite of Macao, trying to merge western and eastern influences, gathering them at his coffee and tea house, at 'Ole', having endless discussions about God, Purpose of Life, Philosophy or Art.

The group that gathered around Ottavio and his daughter Ama, was a group full of weird scientists and artists, wonderful trouble makers, who loved their tea and coffee, the freedom of expression they found around the two.

Ole is by no means a noisy, cluttered space. With its serene, simple, white washed walls, paved with soft stone, and furnishing that is kept to a minimum, scented with incense, and large windows facing the big blue ocean, lit by candles at night, its design talks lots about its owners Ottavio and Ama.

I was fortunate to incarnate in Macao and meet these two special souls who often invited me to their gathering place. To the eyes of non-believers in this astonishing shift of ages, life still appeared the same, as it was centuries ago, the same as it was during the time of our fathers or grand-fathers, and yet, underneath this calm surface of the sea of the existence, a great transformation was taking place. This transformation was the end of the world as we knew existed.

This evening we have just finished listening to Ama playing 'bianzhong', a heavenly instrument made of 65 bronze bells. Ama's hands played the bells as

though each of her fingers possessed a brain on its-own with a magical, instinctive, intuitive feel that directs the music without any interference with the cold, intellectual and rational brain that exists up there, in the head. She took me on to a journey of phoenix sounds, rituals and tales of harmony that are found only through the sound. I felt the shiver of each note running through my spine, getting its-own identity, and running off into heavenly spheres that we, mortals, can only experience in a glimpse of spiritual longings.

After the performance, I examined this marvellous instrument that took me to such an inspiring spiritual journey. An amazing three-tier frame carries the bells that are each different in size giving different sounds. The frame and the bells had Chinese characters engraved on them. Ama told me that she is at the moment studying the 3,000 characters found on the instrument and that they are a treatise on ancient Chinese musical theory. The instrument was a gift from the Chinese Emperor and was made purposely for Ottavio as an exact replica of a 2,000 years old organ that is used by the court's musicians in creation of ritual and court music. The one that I was listening to was just 10 times smaller.

This exquisite work of art largest bell is as high as myself, explained Ottavio, and it weighs over 200 kg. Inscriptions are engraved with gold on each bell and its music capabilities are amazing... I watched five performers play the Royal set.

This replica sounds just as amazing... I remarked.

Ottavio is not a man much given to flatter but he couldn't hide a smile of pride for possessing such an amazing instrument.

It is fascinating that virtually all major texts, whether philosophical, or poetic from old China are discussing music, music as an integral part of ritual activity, or music as a key to understanding Nature. Meditated Ama.

Confucius, we are talking 500 BC, was convinced that music has a role in maintaining social order. His idea was that a musical system reflects the proper code of moral behaviour. In his view, Life is about 'wholeness' and music is able to demonstrate the importance of regularities and wholeness.

Chinese have a great interest in studying the vibration of any instrument. They compare pitches to the configuration of cosmic Qi energy.

Ama's beauty engulfed me. Her fascination with Chinese system of knowledge was infectious, I was in awe at the vastness and depth of knowledge that was opening in front of me.

The Chinese interest in music is an interest in numbers and symbols, not in quantification and absolute numerical value. Numbers are manipulated as symbols. The Chinese have an elaborate scheme of correlations, the 12 pitch scale is related to the 12 lunar cycles, and they created an elaborate edifice of relationships to interpret Nature, Humans and History.

Early mystics tell us that 12 pitches are discovered by their sage Ling Lun. His name means 'structure and order'. He was a minister of the Yellow Emperor. Ling Lun observed the songs of the male and female phoenix, the male (yang) calls were six and the female (yin) were six. The legend says that these became pitches of the early music structure. The Yellow Emperor ordered Ling Lun to cast twelve bronze bells that sound the exact pitch. In the Chinese mind, this ordered symbolic set derived directly from observing Nature. Its pitch is an attribute of a lunar cycle. Under each moon, you will find zodiac recommendations and suggestions for human behaviour, and each pitch belongs to a particular lunar cycle.

Confucius believed that if you disturb the rightful order and structure, your mind is going to be disturbed. For example, he spoke of the music of

Zheng comparing it to the colour - purple. Purple, is a combination of colours, a combination of red and blue. It detracts from the purity of red, and it does not have the depth of blue. He claimed that the music of Zheng was not in harmony with the elegant ritual music of ancient China, and that this only reflected the state's government that was deviant and wicked.

I told Ama of how grateful I feel that God has given me an opportunity to explore this maze of knowledge that is so alien and so vast. I felt so lucky to be living at this time in this place.

It is an astonishing shift of ages that we live in, isn't it? She said.

Life still appears to be the same, and yet, underneath this calm surface of the sea of the existence, a great transformation is taking place. This transformation is the end of the world of our time. Ottavio passed his remark.

A common belief of our time, or I suppose of any time, is that this era is the exact time-frame of the somehow never to come and always expected 'End of the World' and the second coming of Christ. Within Macao 'the end' of the world was our reality, however, we did not exactly live the bible story, we were not burning in the flames with the angel of Death looking upon us. Earthquakes, plaques, tsunamis, wars, diseases, came and left us alive re-building our lives from scratch.

The astrological and prophet texts published all throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century led to the same conclusion: that the end of our World would be with us, if not the next morning, then surely in the couple of years. The astrological tables have predicted an unusual succession of eclipses at the very start of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and numerologically the year 1600 was the chosen year: 16 being the number that was composed of seven and nine, the divine numbers according to different numerology system, multiplied by a hundred times, multiplying its magical fatal value.

Ottavio knew that the prophets are not talking about the end of the life on Earth but the shift of Consciousness. He believed that our generation was born at this very special moment to be able to influence and direct the results of the change that was certainly going to happen.

The life of our grand-children and grand-children of our grand-children is at stake, he prophesised.

What we manage to place in the matrix or scientific, and religious thoughts, in the matrix of energies of this great being called Earth will be essential for the generations to come. This is where the power of yours and my magic should be directed, my dear friend, he told me, into the structure of this amazing matrix we live in.

Soon after he arrived to Macao, Ottavio publically exhibited his good will towards the Church and City Council supporting the foundation of St. Paul's College, which was the first European University in China. The College offered courses in European Arts and Theology and simultaneously concentrated on the studies of the Chinese and Japanese language and civilisation.

With his never-ending fortune he heavily financed this project. Just after he had given me a substantial amount of money for building one of University Halls, pouring Chinese tea into my cup, he said:

It is quite amazing how a culturally and scientifically inferior nation took upon itself a mission to convert a superior one. Missionaries would love to convince the Chinese to worship the *Right God*, his voice slightly changed emphasising the absurdity of this term, even though this IS a supreme dogma that puts God into a box that does not allow expressions of spiritual diversity amongst different nations. If there is anything that will destroy the Church, and Religions, it will be this selfish attitude of every one of them that keeps the right to God only to its followers!

It was very difficult to win an argument with Ottavio, he was more or less always right, quick with words, not tolerating fakes and hypocrites. His natural honesty and truthfulness quite quickly won my love towards him, but has also caused him to have many rivals.

His enemies within the Church have often questioned my relationship with him, but after the authorities have realised that I have an easy access to his wealth, their greediness superseded their worry and his heretical behaviour dispersed amongst the golden shine of his coins.

There were many speculations about Ottavio's fortune, speculations about murders, devils, inheritance, and wicked businesses, but no one could really tell anything specific about Ottavio's past and his wealth: he only joked about it. I tried my luck this time, asking him about alchemy and his fortune and his answer was as mysterious as he was:

With alchemy, my dear friend, I did learn how to make gold, he said. Using alchemy, any metal can become gold, and any human can reach his highest potential. The coffee beans become gold, he looked at me with a devilish smile, I work with both, metal and people, and people my dear friend, are much more challenging!

Alchemy is a science that fascinated many for centuries. Scientists would spend hours and hours of sleepless nights examining and experimenting with the nature of chemicals in hope to find the sacred stone that transforms metals to gold. To my knowledge, no one has as yet succeeded in this endless quest and I found it hard to believe that Ottavio has, so I let his answer disappear into oblivion, leaving it to draw within my mind yet another life legend of this profoundly mysterious man.

Ottavio tried a few times to pass some of his enthusiasm towards Alchemy.

Alchemy and Astrology, it is said in the old scriptures, are two of the eldest sciences known to mankind passed

to us from the prehistoric times. According to old Rabbinic legends, the two arts were divinely revealed to Adam, promising that when the human race masters the wisdom concealed within them, the curse of the forbidden fruit will be removed. In the modern times of our 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the alchemy became chemistry and astrology moved towards astronomy, and the intuition of ancient seers and sages stayed buried within obscure symbols and paintings as meaningless products of superstition.

Alchemy was the most sacred secret of the Atlantean priests. When Atlantis was destroyed, the art was passed to Egypt and then to Europe. The sages and philosophers created an intricate allegory of symbols to conceal their wisdom.

Alchemy is based upon the natural occurrence of growth, the process of increasing and improving the existent. If a plant grows from a seed hundreds times its size when planted and watered in a good soil, why shouldn't any element expand and multiply if properly nourished artificially? Why shouldn't a metal that becomes gold through thousands years of evolution within the Earth's womb, become gold quicker by the secret process of Alchemy?

I was not quite convinced that with the knowledge of Alchemy one could transform metals into gold but I did try to understand the obscure symbols & images I've seen in 100s of Alchemical books Ottavio owned.

As a philosopher, I agree with the abstract spiritual application of this ancient art, I said. Alchemy sees God in everything, manifesting through many forms. God manifests through growth, and within the spiritual nature of man this is *enlightenment*, a seed of Wisdom that already exists within a human can be grown and nourished.

Correct, confirmed Ottavio, the consciousness of any man can be transformed from base animal desires (represented by metals) into a pure gold, Pure Consciousness. Through a proper training a man's tiny

spiritual spark can grow and expand infinitely. This thought greatly inspired me.

Among people in Macao, Ottavio was known as a strange and fearsome fellow, and he was loved and envied by many. He was particular about everything that surrounded him, about food he ate, people he knew or protected, topics he discussed with us, his friends, or arguments he had with his enemies.

I've seen him transform many times.

Once someone stupidly in his presence gossiped against one of his friends, and this made him furious. His voice became cold and stern, his eyes fixed as the eyes of a cobra hypnotising the prey just before devouring it, his words carefully chosen to cut his opponent into pieces, and he defended his friend as a lioness would her cubs against an obvious enemy, so that anybody who has heard him speak would have never again dared talk gibberish against his loved ones. Even though I was shocked by his transformation and his determination to diminish even the slightest allusion of the offender, that day I realised that he would have defended me with the same strength and passion, if ever challenged, and I was proud of him.

Ottavio and I shared the same fascination with the glorious lady Knowledge, and I didn't blame him that her Majesty's glow sometimes blinded his capability to understand people's little peculiarities and weaknesses.

I am a heretic, my dear friend Benedict, all these books make you one, he would say. But all the knowledge in the world is useless if we do not act consciously, clearly understanding the consequences of our actions and our thoughts.

Can we ever hope to understand the consequences of our actions to the lives of the people that will live many, many centuries later? I asked, not hoping for an answer.

Did Christ know that his teaching will be used and abused during the centuries of religious wars? Did Moses know that 1,000 of years later we will still struggle to understand his main command: do not kill! Does everything happen for a reason?

That evening we were invited to a dinner and treated to a variety of delicious dishes.

Each dinner at Ole was a carefully prepared master piece. An amazing variety of wholesome Chinese vegetarian food teased our taste buds, our sense of smell, touch and sight.

Each dish was presented in exquisite porcelain wares that Ottavio told me were gifts from various courts. The fineness of the porcelain and the delicacy of the paintings were impressive.

The elegant deep blue flying-fish dragons writhing against storming waves stared at us passing their wishes for good fortune, long life, immortality, and plenty. Peaches that represent immortality, pomegranates that are a symbol of fertility, and apples that are a homonym for peace, were greeting us symbolically, every time we sat around for a dinner.

Drinks were in porcelain jugs in a form of women playing instruments where the divine fruit nectar was pouring out through their hands, reminding us of the importance of music.

Veggie fried rice, bright, crisp and spicy Chinese beans, tasty steamed buns, fragrant ginger and lemongrass flavour vegetable salads, young, thin beans that are tossed in soy sauce with fresh ginger in a stylish side dish, roasted tofu deliciously browned and flavoursome, little rice and sesame pancakes with a topping of a crunchy salad of nuts, marinated red cabbage and Chinese salad leaves. All of these magical dishes were performing a séance in its own right.

Each carefully prepared dish took us into a journey of the exploration of beauty and perfection, letting us at first indulge in the tastes, smells, and textures, and then released us into waters of mental endeavour.

The scientist within me gets excited every time I hear of a discovery of a new method or a tool but I doubt that we can ever hope to understand what the effects of these new discoveries will be on the lives of men centuries later.

After the meal, I found myself in front of Ottavio's amazing library and I picked a book randomly, caressing its leather covers. The printing press brought a complete revolution into our worlds: I was witnessing the huge expansion of knowledge amongst the educated classes all across different cultures. It is so beautiful to be able to read printed manuscripts from all over the world and all across the centuries. But alas, if a book is 'wrong' can there be anything more dangerous than this!

The book in my hands was *Malleus Maleficarum* otherwise known as Witches' Hammer, the book that became fundamental for superstitious gibberish of millions of people who believed in witches. In the Catholic worlds, a discovery of the printing press actually meant that this book was easily available to anybody who wanted to read it. The words of this malicious work were easily spread all through the different countries, and unfortunately for all the sane ones, all through the different centuries. Whatever entered the Chosen One's mind to endorse this manuscript, now meant that the book full of lies was readily accessible across the Globe.

During my time, I witnessed an amazing, unbelievable cruelty caused because this manuscript became extremely popular. It caused a witch hunting craze that lasted for decades and killed hundreds of thousands of women.

Did Pope Innocent know what kind of effect he would have on masses before he drafted his decree talking about witches? I asked showing the book to Ottavio.

Did the Dominican monks that wrote *Witches' Hammer* knew that the book will become the largest executing manual of any times? Would the first two superstitious witnesses that accused their neighbours of witch-craft know that their accusation will spread like fire and eventually cause the death of their own daughters and their own mothers? Asked back Ottavio holding the book.

I wasn't the only priest that disagreed with this book and the methods used by the Inquisition to torture innocent women. It was a matter of a constant debate amongst us within the Monastic Order and I became very angry every time somebody supported it. The fact that we were so far away from the main-land Europe made my resistance to these hateful, and spiteful acts possible.

A Confucius' would say that it is a man that makes the Way great. Ottavio said in anger, talking about the manual, angered him.

It is man that can change and shape the history of the world, it is man that makes all the difference. We are not peons, or some sort of victims, we are staging this little performance called life and Earth looks like it looks today because we staged it in this particular way.

All of us - the Pope, the cursed Dominican Monks, the neighbours that condemn their women, the ones who throw the first then the second then the third stone, stoning the innocent -all- need to take the full responsibility for their acts!

*'All wickedness, is but little to the wickedness of a woman.' I was reading the manual.' What else is woman but a foe to friendship, an unescapable punishment, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, domestic danger, a delectable detriment, an evil nature, painted with fair colours. ...*

*Women are by nature instruments of Satan - they are by nature carnal, a structural defect rooted in the original creation.'* He was reading gesticulating.

What a horrible book, a burning manual! Do you know that this work of the Devil was reprinted over-and-over again, and translated into many languages?

It is so hard to believe that the witch craze hunt is happening now in our times! You know, as far back as in the 5th century pagans were prosecuted as madmen if they believed in witches, and now, during the time of Shakespeare, and Michelangelo, we have opened a hunting season against women who have no men by their side to protect them.

Are you aware that it all began with the Pope Innocent VIII otherwise known as 'Padre della patria' because of his 16 illegitimate children!

A typical craze would start with one or two suspects and through the forced confessions would spread indefinitely taking 100s and sometimes 1,000s of innocent. The longer the panic lasted, the larger the numbers and wealthier the victims.

Bloody gold! Of course, gold would have something to do with it! Ottavio exclaimed! I have heard of a French witch hunter, Pierre de Lancre, who accused, believe it or not, all 30,000 inhabitants of Labourd of witchcraft! The Catholic archbishop of Cologne boasted that he burned 2,000 members of his flock during the 1630s.

The urge to make a difference was very strong within me and I felt that raising consciousness of our individual responsibilities was very important in my work.

We are here to shape the progress that is unfolding in front of us.

Look at all the discoveries of those young and excited minds that are galloping freed from their cages of centuries of Dark Age! I could hear someone say.

So many Souls have descended to guide us through this transition. So many books have been published that break our current beliefs, so the new ones will be born from the ashes.

Somebody picked up Campanella's book and started reading: *Truth can be hidden and persecuted, but it cannot be held prisoner by injustice; in the end it emerges from the darkness and is once again resplendent.*

As a priest, writer, and a professor, I had an access to works of Campanella, Copernicus, Giordano Bruno and I admired their fight with dogmatic systems within the Church.

Giordano was one of my teachers and his work inspired me greatly. He was well travelled, well educated priest that lived in Switzerland, France, England and Germany, translating books, lecturing, and wherever he could, announcing the new view of the Universe.

I picked up 'De la Causa, Principio e Uno' and started reading Giordano Bruno's contemplations of God:

*'The absolute potential is one, the act is one, the form or soul is one, the material or body is one, the thing is one, the being in one, one is the maximum and the best.. It is not generated, because there is no other being it could desire or hope for since it comprises all being. It does not grow corrupt because there is nothing else into which it could change, given that it is itself all things. It cannot diminish or grow, since it is infinite.'*

Our amazing culture gave birth to the likes of Giordano Bruno. I whispered thoughtfully.

Giordano realised the infinity of the universe, and he is one of the first one coming from the Christian worlds to claim that out there must be an infinite number of worlds, and that they must be inhabited by

intelligent beings. Whispered back Ottavio, turning his head towards the starry night.

So, he says that we are not alone... An Italian, I've heard? Smiled Ruben.

He lived all over the world, in Switzerland, France, England, Germany, worked as a translator of many inspiring books, lecturing, and wherever he could, announcing the new view of the Universe. I was talking about a man who inspired me greatly, so I happily took a role of a narrator about his amazing work and his unfortunate destiny.

A life of a travelling scholar and a lecturer, I wouldn't mind that type of life. Ruben added.

He was more than anything else a radical cosmographer and he saw the world as ever moving and earth as circling around the divine sun. I continued my awe infused unfolding.

Giordano was a Christian?

Yes, a Dominican friar, but he saw the Church teachings as entirely irrational, based on no scientific basis. He could not conceive that God and nature could be separate, he believed in an infinite universe which had left no room for Christian God that was solely occupied with Earth and humans. His philosophy made the mystery of the virgin birth meaningless and he thought that only the ignorant could take the Bible literally. He said there was no Hell and that the concept of eternal punishment is absurd and unjust. Ottavio joined our discussion with a zest of a true heretic.

His integrity and the lack of compromise towards his ideas got him imprisoned and he spent six long years in the dark dungeons of a Papal prison. I continued my story.

And yet, when threatened by the death sentence Giordano answered: "Perhaps you, my judges,

pronounce this sentence against me with greater fear than I receive it."

"Perhaps you, my judges, pronounce this sentence against me with greater fear than I receive it."  
Repeated Ruben thoughtfully.

Is it true that he was the leader of an underground movement? Asked Ottavio.

That I don't know, but what I know is that he was a prophet whose thoughts changed the world bringing about a cosmological and moral revolution.

Was he killed? Asked Ruben.

Yes, as a heretic, burnt by the Inquisition in Campo di Fiori in Rome in 1600. Ottavio offered the answer.

A brief silence covered the room. The faces around the fire were contemplating the life and work of a man who was not alone, but had to die because he was the first one to publically challenge and disapprove the obvious.

The ancient thought, that universal orbits must be circular, was a new re-discovery for Europe, and it spread around scientific circles very quickly notwithstanding the dangers of the Church. This time it was Ama talking. Any idea that contradicted the sacred Bible text is still deemed dangerous and heretical and is punished heavily. Despite the threat of the Inquisition, Galileo Galilei, another great man and scientist, after his discovery of an astronomical telescope and his detailed researches, publishes revolutionary prints describing the motion of the Earth around the Sun.

You are talking about the *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, isn't it? Asked Ottavio. After he has published this work, the Inquisition quickly declared his views absurd and arrested him. To save his life, he agrees to plead guilty declaring that the Copernican theory is supported too

strongly in his book. He is sentenced to indefinite prison and put under a house-arrest until his death.

You are fortunate to be living in China. I turned towards Ottavio. Otherwise you would have had the same faith. I smiled at my dear friend.

For sure, laughed Ottavio, I am a witch, a wizard, a magician, an alchemist, or simply a man who is not afraid to question, and 'these' are the worst! Also, I would not wish to stay anywhere else, my dear friend, this is where everything IS happening!

You surely have also read Campanella, a great admirer of Galileo? asked Ottavio.

He was a Dominican monk as well, wasn't he? Father Benedict asked.

Yes, he entered the order at the age of 14. A brilliant philosopher, astrologer, and scientist, he fought for the freedom of thought from the Scriptural knowledge and speculations. He saw the natural world as a living organism that had its own life and sensibility.

A bit like Chinese... Ama added.

He was tortured and imprisoned for more than 27 years. In the name of Pope, some so-called 'spiritual soldiers' are now establishing order that is threatened by the awakening of science and alternative thoughts. Ottavio loved to hate the Inquisition.

Mind you, we were once these soldiers! Ruben looked at me.

At least, I didn't kill anybody. I remarked.

Neither did I... Ruben mumbled, not quite sure of the truthfulness of his statement, but I could have...

The Church is now very rich and yet it is passing through one of its darkest phases. It is headed by

corrupted popes some famous for their orgies and their illegitimate children! Ottavio shrugged his shoulders.

Hypocrisy is at its peak!

And how do you explain the Inquisition? Ottavio returned to his favourite love to hate institution. A nightmare institution, formed by Pope Gregory IX, in 1231, that is famous for its trials that are conducted in secret, and under torture. It gained power in mid-1500 to combat the growth of the Lutheran Reformation and Protestantism.

You mean to suppress the development of unconventional thoughts...

Any unconventional thought! Instead of supporting scientists that discover amazing truths about nature and God, the Church increased the use of the censorship with its list of forbidden books, the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, and it uses special orders such as us, Jesuits, to reconvert 'lost' souls. I was sad that this truth has become my reality.

You are talking to the converted, I strongly disagree with the Church that is blessing slaughters in the name of God. Ruben agreed.

We have to be careful, though, Ama added changing the subject, if we focus completely on the scientific progress and the short-term goals, we might lose the spiritual focus, and our children could find themselves in a material world that will suffocate the expression of their Souls. Would they then, be able to find their inner happiness or peace?

Our task is for sure, to find where the balance between the two is, between the science and spirituality on Earth. Ottavio nodded. Now this IS a difficult task.

Science and spirituality are so intrinsically different that it is impossible to establish peace amongst them. Ruben kept contemplating.

Male and female side of God's creation, Yang and Yin of Nature, mental and emotional side of human mind, constantly interact and dance the eternal dance for dominance, but supremacy of any one causes the destruction of Balance and Harmony. Ama's hands danced a sort of tai-chi dance, her beautiful figure moved and hands circled their way into harmony to visually announce this eternal truth.

Understanding their game, the game of Yin and Yang, she continued, one could hope to understand the secrets of Life, God and Universe. But who, but God, could possibly understand the Way?

We can still try... Ruben said.

Will the clear and precise Nature laws of the West ever manage to attract the Chinese? Ottavio repeated his question, as though he is playing with words...

Just look at all the goods that the traders are bringing to Macao: medicine, clock, potato, pepper, papaya, tomato, cocoa, cabbage; they are all introduced to China for the first time from here, from Macao. We are certainly changing their world. I said.

Are there men on Earth who will manage to bridge the gap between the two? Again asked Ottavio...

Yes, yes, for sure they are! I answered. Many... So many Souls have descended to guide us through this transition... I felt as though this sentence is slowly becoming my truth.

This is the time when I was re-discovering the writings of 'pagans': Greek, Roman and Egyptian philosophers, whose works were re-published, bound in silk, and revived after centuries of neglect. Reading and examining them again, intrigued all of us, the educated circles thirsty of knowledge that gathered around Ama and Ottavio.

The truth revealed in these texts went beyond the fashion of manuscript searches and hunts for undiscovered classics.

The Philosophy of our age is tightly connected to the Old and New Testament, but with the discovery of press and re-discovery of Greek and Latin texts, the scientific minds of our era got challenged, and opened to the new ideas.

It is now difficult to stop them...

The wheel of Knowledge is set into motion and it is gaining its speed.

Yes, the enlightened souls are many, and it is difficult to stop their move towards the truth... I said thoughtfully. The wheel of Knowledge is set into motion and it is gaining its speed. Have you seen Leonardo's and Michelangelo's anatomical drawings that show their close study of human remains?

Yes, they are pretty amazing, some of the taboos of our era are constantly shaken. Ottavio's eyes were shining. Human dissection, for scientific studies is now accepted and became a part of the scientific studies of different Universities and I am sure that this will lead to the amazing discoveries in chemistry, medicine, and human anatomy.

Standing at the entrance of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Leonardo Da Vinci's life is another example of the life of an ideal 'Renaissance man', an all-round genius, a painter, a sculptor, a scientist, an architect, a philosopher and a spiritual teacher with ideas that were far ahead of his time. Ama narrated this story. Leonardo was a man she admired greatly.

Leonardo is an inventor with the mind set deep in the future and the body living here, amongst us. His designs of flying machines, flour mills, and different engines, including a bicycle are not of this time.

A very inspiring soul, I heard he played the lyre...  
Ottavio remarked.

Not just that, he was an expert in botany, discussing war strategies with the soldiers and the nature of life with the truth seekers. His observations of the motions of the stars, the path of the moon, and the course of the sun are quite remarkable. Said Ama.

A bit like you! Laughed Ottavio... He had a brilliant intellect that could not be restricted by Church dogmas and norms.

Leaving Ottavio's place that day, walking through the streets of Macao, I contemplated the best ways to transfer these inspirational stories and thoughts into my day-to-day life.

Sunlight covered the Ocean and the twilight brought magic into my vision, I saw petals closing their home for the day, and ants hurrying back into their nests, saying good-night to each other, and wind whispering through the branches its lullaby to the birds and I strongly felt that we, humans, are just a fraction of this miracle called life. The night time crawled upon me and I dived into the vastness of the stars above me, sensing their infinity, and their eternity, reflecting our own unimportance.

I see myself as a mathematician, a scientist, and dogmas presented to me by my Church never really interested me. Reading manuscripts of some of the most amazing minds that argued that Earth is not the centre of the Universe and that we, human beings, are not the only sentient beings in this vast space, convinced me of how unimportant we actually are.

Long time ago, somewhere deep within my brain, God lost his long white beard, and his role of a parochial father that watches over his flock and counts their sins. I could no longer see my Beloved creating us in 7 days, I could no longer see Earth as only 5,000 years old, I could no longer read Bible word-for-word.

How small and insignificant we are, when we truly see the lives of millions that exist on Earth, and compare ourselves to the immensity of the Universe! How infinitely irrelevant my worries are faced with the eternity of God's creation! Yet I could not just surrender to the triviality of our existence here on Earth. I talked to the flower.

The importance Christianity gave us was obviously exaggerated but un-importance that was opening in front of my eyes within this matrix of millions and millions of stars and billions of lives was dragging me into the oblivion of passivity, depression, and darkness. To bring the life back into my bones, I needed a mission, I needed a purpose, a reason for living on this planet. I knew, both Ama and Ottavio had a mission and they both truly wanted me to become an essential part of it.

Love is life.  
All, everything that I understand, I understand only  
because I love.  
Everything is, everything exists, only because I love.  
Everything is united by it alone.  
Love is God, and to die means that I,  
a particle of love,  
shall return to the general and eternal source.  
**Leo Tolstoy**

## **A Man Training To Love**

Ama is an embodiment of every man's desires. She is our dreams of a perfect mother, a perfect lover and a perfect companion. Gentle and yet strong, always ready to pick me up when I fall, she is a pearl hidden in an oyster shell for such a long time that it became amazingly precious. She takes me on a journey every time she looks into my eyes, a journey of hope and new discoveries. Enchanted by her appearance, the sound of her voice, her scents, before I knew it, my soul biggest dream became to get lost in her arms, falling into the tender, loving light of her presence.

When I realised I am in love, it was way too late for any struggle my mind might have wished to put up. I was completely hooked to who she was. Of course, I had my worries and my pet hates, the feelings of guilt kept haunting me, but the overwhelming feeling of love was stronger than anything else. The love I felt for Ama was the deepest and closest feeling I have ever experienced to the feeling of complete devotion I felt for Christ and his teaching. Loving Ama was the closest I have ever been to God.

She entered into my worlds as a storm, and for months, perhaps even years, within me, there was no place for anything else while she was around.

I saw her during the day time, in the market, in front of the convent, in the midst of people, in the temples, in the sacred and secret places, everywhere. I saw her when I was away, on my missions, within the shadows of unknown women cast on the walls of ruined houses, smiling at me from the statues of Chinese Goddesses, in the shape of lotus petals floating in the lake, within the silhouette of stones on my way to the Collage, in my dreams, in my dreams... And whenever I saw her, her eyes would not demand or take, they would offer comfort and peace asking, whispering, sighing 'let me become a part of who you really are'...

If you were ever in love, you might understand the madness my mind was going through, the constant whisper that followed me through the sleepless nights, the hope to catch a glimpse of her hoping none would notice my fixation with her stories, with her habits, thoughts and dreams. Being a priest in love, just deepened my excitement and enchantment with this special soul, and prolonged my agony of consciously admitting that the butterflies in my stomach and my profound adoration to all she said or did, was my flesh's response to the Amor's arrow that found its way deep into my subconscious mind.

Convinced that I know my path, I walked steadily, not giving up, with the force only a man with completely set beliefs could have. This steady iron box was my life, my opinions, was a square with sharp edges, difficult to move or open, or break.

The box that is around you during the last 20 years, Ama said jokingly, is very hard to break.

The chemistry inside my brain wedged wars against my neurons and their well-established path-ways. All our fairy-tales speak of princesses that are fast asleep waiting for their princes to break the evil spell and deliver them from the darkness of their confusion into the light of the prince's clarity. My princess was wide awake and pain-strikingly conscious of her prince's darkness and fears. Still fully dressed in my warrior's armour ready to protect her from her sins, I got a bit confused by her lean, thin figure elegantly floating through the air, by her mind full of mental acrobatics that would skilfully transform my efforts to 'convert her' into little explosions of many dogmas within my heart. Afraid to touch her, in case my earthy touch breaks the spell and makes her vanish, disappearing into the realms of angels where she belonged to, leaving us poor mortals stuck within our boxes, I moved a step back.

What about your emotions, she asked teasingly, can they be, with an expert help, rounded or are they also square?

A warrior without an armour, shy, clumsy and soft in her presence, I just wanted her to mould me deeply longing to abandon the role of the spiritual teacher disappearing into her arms and her amazing Lightness of Being.

The first time I felt a strong physical attraction for Ama, I blatantly denied it, as a child would, afraid to be caught in his naughtiness.

The feelings I have for you, I told Ama, are not sexual, I feel the purity of the spiritual connection between us.

She laughed as though I told her a very good joke, a laughter that hurt me because I did not know what to do with it.

Ruben, how can you talk about sexuality, when you were celebrate all your life? The only thing that you know about sex is what is written within your manuals that condemn sex. The connection between our souls feels ever-lasting, spiritual and intense. The sexual energy is a gift from God and it is embedded within our human core for a reason, exploring it can be the most beautiful way to merge with Spirit. Taoist believe that joining the Essence is the most profound spiritual experience.

Ama took my hand and caressed it with utmost gentleness.

I don't need the physical contact with you to feel complete, and it took me quite some time before I could freely touch you, I told her caressing curls of her hair. Just sitting next to you and feeling your energy, smelling your scents, and breathing the air you breathe is enough to open my heart.

If I lied at that moment it was purely because I did not know of other realities, because I truly believed that the sin of carnal lust and the subtle worlds of love

are set apart by the widest and deepest gap  
imaginable.

The flow that is passing through me is precious,  
vibrant and its vitality is re-discovering me. This  
delicate vibration could sustain me without any food  
or movement for hours and days.

I was in love.

Have you hypnotised me? I asked disappearing in her  
eyes. Have you?

When next to her I wanted to die, to change myself,  
to set free from everything I knew I was, from  
everything that separated me from her...

I was changing. During my mornings' walks I was able  
to see a conscious ant struggling to find its way  
through the maze determined to stop Earth from  
turning its seasons into a deadly winter that might kill  
his entire family. I saw a sparrow in love building the  
most amazing nest for his lover choosing a tree next  
to a Church because the sound of bells was  
enchanting. I felt the desire for Ama awakening within  
my bones with each first breath, seconds after my  
soul would descend from the dream astral worlds to  
the terrestrial spheres, but instead of feeling the guilt  
and repulsion, I felt an unbelievable amount of  
respect for it. I respected the energy that was  
awakening within me over and over again, that  
brought to me a physical sensation of thousands of  
roaring lions, and at the same time, filled my heart  
with the soft and fluid touch of the lady Love.

Examining petals or my hands, sometimes for hours,  
admiring God's creations, slowing down, feeling that I  
had nowhere to go, nothing to do, my soul wondered  
within the softness of the clouds of my imagination.  
Imagining her walking, talking, dancing, I imagined  
her disappearing into the Light. Pondering around her  
words like a bee around a flower, for days, keep  
returning to experience the essence of its nectar, I  
was powerfully self-absorbed, obsessed at times, not  
absent though, still able to meet people truly. Only  
now, when I connected to the source of Ama's Love

and the source of God's falling in love I could truly connect to their feelings, thoughts and petty worries. The Lady Love actually opened me to God and His creation.

Her touch went deep through my skin, deep into the core of my being, I could repeatedly feel it in my bowels, in my stomach, in my spine.

Of course, when I experienced it for the first time I wanted to run from it, escape its spell, hide from its reality, but there was nowhere to hide, my legs did not move, words did not come out, I just felt gratitude that she is taking me into this space of not breathing, not moving, into the space of a most amazing contact.

Dark Blue was the world around me, Dark Blue that took me into the end and the beginning of all known creation. Dark Blue were her feet, her eyes, her body and our merge that was reflected on the iron mirror opposite the bed that refused to know any boundaries, that jumped through the illusion of time taking the dimension of space-less-ness. Dark Blue was my first cum that shackled the Earth underneath me waking up my ancestors that were peacefully asleep for centuries. Dark Blue were my feelings of re-discovery of my-Self through the most amazing disappearing, burning every single cell of my body that wanted to keep re-collection of my personal history. Dark Blue was her stomach and the silk that covered it that I kept kissing lost within all possible realities of the form and being.

A man within me, the one with a strong personal history, strong habits and beliefs, a man in a box, felt the box rattling under a tremendous pressure keeping within a Soul that was yearning for freedom.

I believe in what I preach, I told Ama, when our naked bodies separated from the eternal embrace, and when I had enough time to forget the contact we just had, and enough strength talk.

At that moment, when my mind kicked in again, I almost ought to feel guilty, I feel that everything that I 'am' needs to give itself another try, another push-through this weird and unknown territory.

I wanted to say, I murmured, I do believe in what I preach.

She looked at me with no words, and her eyes gave me no choice but to disappear in them, again fully, to love her, was to love the rest of humanity, to love her was to love God. I disappeared and accepted that I am pure love, that we are pure love, beautiful flowing Love. We merged again into a motion that became time-less, into an Essence that had no name or form other than Light. Our bodies swayed within the dance of creation known and unfortunately unknown to many, kept returning to its sacred secrets, kept exploring the prime-ordeal merge.

Am I still a man I used to be? I asked hours later. Can I go back to the Monastery and live what I used to live? I do love my God and Jesus, and just a moment ago, I had a Church that I called mine, and my Church said, very clearly, that I ought to believe in mortal sins and  
the forgiveness of sins,  
and my Church clearly defined me as a sinner and it said  
that I should ask for forgiveness and yet,  
now I know, the only thing I could feel at the moment of our Union, is the highest experience of Love.

I knew of priests who lived double lives, who had their mistresses, took care of their children and preached holiness to their flock. I've never wanted to be one of them, and deeply within, I despised their efforts to look normal. Before I met Ama, I thought I knew myself and my strengths and weaknesses, I thought that very little could surprise me. How little did I know!

When I met you, I told her one evening, all of me unfolded with your touch and every touch I receive from you is like the very first one, every time we meet.

When I leave you, my body, my soul, my mind, everything within me, aches, screaming for you and longing for the moment of our next encounter. I travel or I stay within the solitude of my life in the Monastery or I busy myself with chores and errands or I write and translate my books, just to forget that I am not with you, to forget that I am not living the essence of my being that I experience again and again every time you take me in.

Love was changing me.

My love was also changing people around me. They seemed to trust me more, to listen more attentively, asking for advices more often. Becoming Love I entered the realm of Earth changed, looking for the lost, seeking the ones who are hungry for guidelines, that carry a sign on their forehead, but not as a missionary nor a Jesuit priest, but as a Being in Love.

I also became more impatient with the hypocrisy of the Church, and its exclusiveness, I became less certain of my mission as a priest.

Two Rubens lived within me, one that finds thoughts and arguments a trivial pursuit of bored souls, happy within the Silence he explores the wonders of Life endlessly, and the other who is more argumentative, who is not sure what is the essence of his fight and why did God put him on Earth. This question became an irresolvable question that kept hunting the second Reuben: why did God give me this path?

Through experiencing Love, I lost Purpose, the purpose that led me to choosing the priesthood, the purpose that led me to China, the purpose that guided my life since I was thirteen, the purpose of helping people understand Christianity and get closer to God.

Finding Ama, I could no longer say what my mission on Earth was.

Giving me Love, God has taken away from me all I knew, all I believed in, all I previously fought for.

One night, after an amazing merge with Ama that lasted for hours, I fell asleep in the Temple, and a woman appeared in my dreams standing above my head-rest. Her name was Purpose.

Remember, She said, touching my forehead, that Life is not just a string of days to be lived mechanically. They are our attempt to awaken and arouse the divinity in us. If you live with the full awareness, love could take you into this space.

To receive this most precious gift, you will have to let go of what is the most dear to you, to start a new, you will have to let go of the old, to fully Be, you will have to die and get re-born again.

Do not be afraid and trust Him, and whatever you do, He will be with you. Trust and your choice will be His choice, your words will be His, your thoughts will be His thoughts.

When you are able to feel Him, consciously, when you are able to hear Him, consciously, all the time, when you 'remember' yourself, God will act through you, and your search will be over.

Where is love there? I asked. Now, when I was initiated into Love, Love was all I could think of...

A cupid appeared from nowhere whizzing his message.

She appears from nowhere, he said, and if you are not careful she will disappear as fast as she came into your life.

She takes your heart, your mind, your body, she juggles them, in an infinite play. You are blessed to be

in Her mercy, because She comes to only a fortunate few. She is demanding and determined to rule wherever she goes. She is sensitive and fragile, obsessive and like any true feminine power she needs constant attention.

To test you, she brings her brothers jealousy, passion and desire into Her dance and if you are not careful she will leave you because of your attachment to her family.

She is Divine's Lover and only if you learn how to abandon your small 'I'-s, detach from all of your earthly possessions, you will manage to see Her true face and she will finally become yours to the rest of your times.

If you take her into the mud of your existence, she will fool you and in front of your eyes disappear, wither and die. Carrying a veil of death in her hands she will either devour your-own earthly state, or the divine essence of Her own being. Giving you a gift of the Universal birth if only you could keep her alive for long enough, she will take you into the fullness of awareness. She will shake you into fully experiencing Life, into understanding God.

With these words, the cupid disappeared and Purpose appeared again.

Remember to receive Her, you will have to let go of what is the most dear to you, to start a new, you will have to let go of the old, to fully Be, you will have to die and get re-born again.

That night I woke up with a fever wishing to shake off the words that I've just heard, to push them into the subconscious darkness of my worst worries, to help them disappear into oblivion of someone else's consciousness, but they did not want to vanish. It is not difficult to love, I thought, caressing the grass under my feet, a flower in its full bloom is in love with the wind and Sun, birds singing at the crack of dawn are celebrating Love that awakens them from their

slumber sleep, Nature loves while it breaths. Love is all around.

My Being is filled with Love, how can it be that this profound feeling, this indestructible state of being, could ever disappear, could ever be forgotten or changed or misused, taken for granted, abused?

Afraid even to think that I would ever let go of this mesmerising beauty that overtook every aspect of my life I looked into my future.

And something or somebody whispered into my ears:

afraid to lose her,  
afraid to hurt her,  
afraid to lose her, afraid to disappoint her,  
afraid to lose her,  
fear will kill your love, kill your love, kill your love...

A river materialised in front of me. A rain drop carried by a cloud circling above mountains, getting absorbed by a source, moving livelier and livelier, into a stream, uniting with other streams with the same goal, to reach the river, following the current, becoming a larger magnetic attraction aiming towards greater, finer, higher, stronger, vaster, so often dreamt of, and yet completely unknown, so well imagined and yet never experienced, reaching towards the sea. When my drop was certain that it cannot get bigger nor better any more, the sea merged with another forming an ocean. At one point all the oceans came together and became one big mass of water on Earth. What an amazing journey!

My drop carried within, all along, from its birth, a possibility to become a part of something greater. All along the way, there was a chance that it will disappear or evaporate going back to the cloud becoming a drop of rain again, starting the journey from the very beginning without reaching its ultimate end. All along the way, there was a possibility of a trap, a possibility of entering an endless circle of change and transformation, the drop that was never the same and

yet always was – One. One that is many and many that are One, changing paths, but remaining with the same end, from one experience to the next, circling and following the invisible Law.

Becoming a drop again trying to reach the ocean, following the flow, seeking the merge with One. On my journey, back to the Ocean, I re-discovered Her, among the crowds, She had the lantern in her hands and I followed allowing Her to lead me and inspire me.

One night we were sitting together looking each other deep into the eyes. Touching ever slightly, my palms were lost in hers. My breath followed hers disappearing within the flow of Her amazing Lightness of Being, and she took me into non-breathing, non-existence, into the core of Life. She said: 'I give you everything, there is nothing more' and I felt it entering my pores in the form of Light and Love and Consciousness. Vibrating with every cell of my Being this sacred flow, my mind was transferred into another level of existence, another level of consciousness, where there was no 'I' and 'Her' anymore, there was no time nor space, the Earth stopped moving. Lost in the web of eternity, fully conscious of every movement around me, with no thoughts, no recollection of my history, I saw light around her face, and around my body, and around the room. The Light had a quality of Love, and of pure Awareness.

At that point of time and space I was not afraid of Death any longer...

Ama taught me Love braking my boundaries and ego structures to carefully rebuild what was left of me and prepare me for the merge.

The dance we danced that night was called the Dance of Life, together we touched the centre of the circle of existence, following the wheel of destiny, entering the spiral we activated the magic that separates us mortals from Angels, Gods and Spirits.

She knew how to produce the alchemical formula that activates Lapis, the sacred stone that transforms metals into gold, transferring us from the semi-conscious states of mortals into dimensions of meditations, into the Light of the Golden Flower, and powerful energies of Tao transformation. She knew the secrets of Kundalini awakening, and when our bodies and souls intermingled; her velvet skin and Earth Goddess within her eyes took me into the true, unselfish, unconditional giving demanding that I forget my name, my order, when or where I was born, where I was heading or who I would like to be.

You gave me a supreme experience that is not a feeling, You broke me into millions of pieces and led me through the journey from a single drop into the ocean and back into the drop again.

You gave me the experience of Unconditional Love, the closest experience of God I've ever sensed.

I told Ama that evening when we met in the gardens of her coffee-shop.

Before I met you I could not imagine non-existence. It was beyond me to comprehend that 'I' in any form of consciousness could cease to exist. To die and awake to be reborn again I have to accept the possibility of non-existence, I have to disappear as a drop to become a part of the ocean leaving all my fears behind.

An angel appeared to me in my dreams and told me that I have to let go of what is dearest to me, to start over, that I would have to let go of the old and that I will have to die to get re-born again. I was recalling my dream.

Holding her I felt her shiver. Fragile, delicate, brittle, this woman in my arms was afraid to lose me and I wanted her to stop me, wanted her to direct me into her eternal embrace. But I feared this will not happen, I feared she will let me walk away, she will let me fly in whichever direction I chose to, even if the direction meant losing me.

*If you choose me, her eyes whispered a secret deeper than the Gaia's centre, I will give you Life without Boundaries. We could live Love, fight for Love and change the world following this fight. We could transform metals into gold together within every Soul we touch. We could prove that it is possible to live Love even with all the obstacles that this choice demands.*

We are all told the way, our task is to learn how to listen, my decision to follow Her opened me to the inward movement of my Soul's whispers.

*The world of Love opened its doors to you, Ama said, and you were privileged to enter. Will you now abandon it all?*

*Whoever enters knows how difficult it is to get in, but once you are in, you are treated as an honourable guest. Love gives you powers, powers to foresee future, understand past, heal or materialise things. It takes courage to enter the door of knowledge, it takes double to choose to live it. Carrying the responsibility of such a Divine gift might be too heavy to bare.*

*I will pray for you, were here last words.*

And I walked away...

The dawn was breaking in when I opened my eyes, and the sea, grass, stones were all asleep undisturbed. I felt I died but nothing changed around me. I felt I have already left, but I could see my body moving and I could hear myself breathing.

With the first rays of rising sun caressing my skin I remembered who I am. It was my mission and the Church staring at me abandoned and the essence of my Life, my Soul's saviour, my greatest love, Ama that I've left.

Having a glimpse of the love's palace I became aware of my instinctive urge to acquire love, to search for it, keep it as a child would a precious coin within the palms of his hands even when fast asleep. This urge was

deeply embedded within me, causing my swings of happiness and unhappiness.

I searched for Love outside myself, searching for this divine energy in my contact with others, with my contact with Ama. The drive within me that asked for love developed and grew as an unattended weed becoming a demand for love, a deep desire-filled well with an endless bottom. Isolated in my search, guided by my intent for perfection, this need or urge to be loved haunted me.

The strength of love felt fragile in comparison to this monstrosity that was growing within me. Ama became my new addiction and I hoped to get closer to the enlightened once I remove this strong attachment. With a Caesarean cut, taking out the premature baby with a precision of an experienced surgeon, I hoped to remove the umbilical cord quickly and had no clue how painful the process will be.

All throughout my life I fluctuated between being more or less happy with who I am, more or less conscious of the world around me, more or less in harmony with energies within me. All throughout my life I needed different set of impulses to grow and stagnation was not a possible choice on my path.

The search for Truth always fascinated me, but non-conformities have also always amused me. My path was radical, I chose to be one of the Pope's soldiers, go on pilgrimage tracing Christ's steps, be crucified if necessary, I also because of my strong belief in Life chose to be Ama's lover. My heart now felt broken.

Allowing myself to live Love was a task too difficult to bare, it was difficult for me to comprehend of how I could be faithful to both herself and God. She waited for me with our possible future together, and I faced one of the hardest things imaginable, the commitment to live love, real tangible love.

In her arms I was just another human being in a desperate need for guidance with an even more desperate wish not to disappoint her.

Living love was the most beautiful and the most difficult thing I have ever experienced. Facing prejudices, facing fears, dilemmas, battling thoughts, I run away whenever I could, hiding from my beautiful love so that I do not 'appear' weak. Looking for excuses, searching for imperfections, I begged Heavens to send me signs to leave this path, to leave her work, to leave Love. Fighting against my heart, with tears in my eyes I read Ama's poem and let the wind take the papyrus with the fine script on it.

*He says 'I love you' and he left me more times than  
any have left me before  
With heart broken...  
He says 'I need you' and he moves away every time I  
come a little bit closer  
With eyes wide open...  
He says 'I want you' and he spends most of his time  
1,000s of miles away  
Denying the merge...*

*He says 'I am yours' and just when altering these  
words he slams the door behind him  
Breaking the frame...  
He says 'You are my longing' and he puts a lock on his  
heart whenever he sees me  
The key lost...  
He says 'I am trying to live love' and all I see is his  
back over and over again  
And the fear in his eyes, fear of light...*

*He says 'the golden thread is connecting us' and the  
day after, he works hard to pull it out  
Of our hearts  
He says 'I miss making love with you' and soon after  
he does, he leaves  
So not to stay with me once again  
He says 'I think of you every hour of my day' & when  
we create magic together*

*He collects it in an envelope and buries it in a deepest  
corner of his room  
Just not to look at it again...*

*He says 'you do know that I love you!' and I say 'sure  
– I know you do!'  
I know you love me more than you loved anybody  
before  
I know you need me and want me and long for me,  
but I also know:  
That you love pain and that the pain of losing me,  
gives a spark to your love.  
I also know that you prefer to live without me than  
with me, but that you get scared of loneliness and  
that is why you come back for a hug.*

*Is your love true?  
Love is always true, if it lasts, if it is strong, if you go  
back to it over and over again!*

*Is your fear true?  
Fear is always true, if it lasts, if it is strong, if you go  
back to it over and over again!*

*Do you go back to love?  
Yes!*

*Do you go back to fear?  
Yes!*

*And what will win or will they co-exist within this  
wheel that you call your life for eternity? Who can  
tell?*

*He says 'I love you', I say 'I know!'*

The ducks across the stream were staring at me with their radiant colours, joyfully playing with the water, competing for the attention of their mates. God's creation in all different forms laughed at me.

The yellow fields of flowers took me to my childhood memories of my mother who I hardly had a chance to meet, she died when I was four. These flowers' yellow

gave me a mix of peace and melancholy, a mix of memories with no proper trace or recognition, a wish or a missed opportunity, or a sense that I am so desperately craving for love.

With the flowers in my hands, the fight within me felt useless, not giving in but not giving up. Back to the reality of my thoughts that had their grasp within my mind I knew that God gave me the most precious of all His children, and the possibility to create the most sacred merge, to finalise the alchemical transformation.

One of the biggest of all my desires was the desire to merge with God. My Soul craved Love seeking mother I had no chance to remember, seeking Christ and the connection with Him, seeking followers, converts and their love, seeking a refuge from the feeling of loneliness, seeking Ama's love. My happiness was firmly ground within this material world, its eternal playful game and no doubt I was attached to its allure.

The grass teaches me eternity, teaching me rules of Life's simplicity, born to die, disappear vanish within the chambers of Death to be reborn again from ashes hidden within the Earth. The destruction that is closely followed by the new life brings me back to my own path.

The sea extended on the horizon. I entered the Ama's temple. The temple was my contemplation point, my place of refuge, ever since that amazing day when we won our famous fight against the Dutch, the place with no people to follow nor anyone to guide. Surrounded by ancient walls and sea, my Soul was free to Be.

Sitting on a rock, feeling myself caressing its groves, I became its solid surface, unshaken by the wind of desires, unchanged by time, undisturbed by movements. A wish to be a rock of light, love, happiness that comes from within, entered me from the morning mist. I wished with all my might to receive the grace from Gods to create my own reality, relate to inner happiness, and become a master of the magic of Life.

For some time now I was following the path of perfection, walking the path of virtues, scrutinising every single attachment, always with one thought as a guide, going back to Christ and his energy, being true to Christ and his energy, becoming Christ and his energy.

That is why my heart left the Church, the moment I turned towards Ama seeing her helping the wounded at the battlefield in front of the Macao's Fort, when I abandoned any rules that blocked my path towards Truth.

Surrendering to Love, re-learning what 'right' is, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, stared at me with their different sets of rules, rituals, customs and supreme superficialities. I bowed to their ancient wisdom, stripped them off their clothing and stumbled upon the very same two principles, the one of: do not harm and the one of love. Within these two rules were all the others, that talk about morality, killing, stealing, sex, lying, gossiping, or thinking harmful thoughts.

It took me eons to recognise many voices within me, to notice them, hear them, and let them go and start living only the merge with One. It was Ama that led me through that transition, it was Her who gently stopped my motions making me realise that following my mind, I swing and my Soul stays locked within the chambers of Earth. When I met Her, while I was living by the rules of my mind, Earth was just a hall of struggles.

She thought me that the chains of Self can be removed only through learning about one Self and learning about the magic of detachment.

From a perspective of a Jesuit priest who has a path to follow, God to guide him, and converts to listen to him, it was difficult to admit that I rooted myself deep within grounds of habits, desires and selfishness, just living a dream, walking a path that was still very far from God.

I thought I am helping to save poor unbelievers. I thought that they needed me, and my interpretation of

Christ's teachings. I crossed miles to come to the land of unbelievers to carry my mission and give people Christ and yet, I, myself, still didn't know who Christ really was. Choosing the road of a Jesuit priest, I chose to believe that world is divided into two, the right and the wrong, and I was right and everybody who didn't want to listen to me was wrong.

More I separated people to us and them, the more I labelled them as Christians, Buddhists, Atheists, Pagans, the more I suck strength from the body of Christ that lived within me, the more I poisoned my thoughts, killing Life and strive for happiness.

Following the road of judgment, prejudices and condemnation, I narrowed God's paths and His wonder of creation to only one path, I narrowed the spectre of beliefs to only one belief, the official belief of the Church. Struck with a realisation that what I called God's Soldier, was a way to hide a bag of worms under the coat of Jesuit's uniform, my Sense of Purpose screamed out escaping.

Entering the Church's embrace, what seduced me most was not the power or the money, Jesuits bow not to ask for money and they live life of ascetics through their journey to God, I was seduced by knowledge that opened its chambers to me. The chamber of knowledge was full of toys and different goods, it was interesting, bewildering, amusing, it kept me occupied for hours, days, years, decades, and it probably could have kept me there a whole lifetime. Its seductive power closed my eyes to the spiritual truth that I have not as yet reached my goal, that I was not as yet at the end of my journey. Young and skilled with words I have convinced my superiors that I am the one who should share knowledge with unbelievers of distant countries. My passion and their words convinced me that there was only one truth and that this truth was worth dying for. Many devils slept in this abode hidden behind veils of superiority, control, arrogance and self-importance.

I clearly remembered the moment when I for the first time became aware of this sneaky trap. Ama was

talking about thoughts as the source of all our emotions and actions.

Thoughts need to be controlled, she said, they are like children and can go in many different directions. Be a watchful guide of your own thoughts. Be strong in your will to purify them and do not compromise because if one slips, one bad thought will lead to another, to a bad word, to another thought, another word and from there to an avalanche of negative thoughts, words and events. A bad thought will increase in power and it will overcome you before you realise the darkness of the monstrosity that is approaching behind your back. Use your Will to focus your Mind onto clear judgments, exercise virtues, exercising right thinking, and right living. This effort will help you enter the chamber of knowledge.

Ama turned to one of the people within the room, took his hand with the most gentleness telling him that she feels that he managed to work with this quality very powerfully, and that she would like all of us to learn from him and discover the pattern that exists within his Will.

This odd person lived in Ama's household, and was a rough self-educated man, who appeared from nowhere and stayed with them for God knows what reasons. Nobody knew his background, his past, but only a few really wanted to find it out, because he was anything but pleasant. He was a soldier, strong, handsome, most of the time silent and withdrawn within his dark misty world. His eyes if you ever had a chance to look at his eyes spelled trouble, his movements were harsh, and he had no name, Ama called him: 'Krishna', 'Milarepa', 'Eagle', 'Iskon', 'Ozon', 'Aron' whatever he wished at the time. When she introduced him, she told us he was her angel and I was jealous of the connection that existed between the two.

Leaving Ama that evening, I was haunted by the obscurity of her choice. I thought of his scavenger's looks, of rumours his background, a murderer, a sinner, a spiteful Dutchman with no family to call his own, of

how much he did not 'belong' next to her, next to Ottavio or next to us, the intellectual elite of Macao. But, what bordered me most, what I could not forget, forgive, or forsake, was a feeling, an inkling, an insight that he might one day become her lover, once upon who knows what time, within who knows what lifetime, now or perhaps in many years down the future, I saw them together because of an amazing amount of love she had for him and an amazing amount of love he had for her. That was undeniable.

My thoughts piled with an astonishing speed and very soon, I was angry and exhausted by all the possibilities, the games my Mind played on me were endless. Soon I hated the poor man who Ama mentioned that fatal night. It took me a night of not sleeping, a night of a sound dreamless sleep and a day of making love, talking and walking with Ama to realise that my Mind had a mortal kiss with the Lady Jealousy, creating a whirlpool of negative emotions that could have been very damaging for all of us. I was humbled by this experience.

Ama that evening read the Bible and Jesus words: 'He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.' The words touched me deeply.

To enter into Wisdom I needed to conquer my desire of separateness, to become One with the ocean I needed to leave behind the concept of a drop, to receive Him, 'I' needed to perish.

It is said that angels start singing once you tell the truth to yourself and people around you. I could hear mine singing, when I decided that 'now' was the time to tell the truth to my family – the Church. 'I' that needed to vanish was everything that I successfully was: a Jesuit, a preacher, a priest, a Portuguese in Macao, a man at the beginning of his journey. I decided to break the chains of my attachments, all of them!

I thought of Father Benedict, a middle aged, greyed hair man, I was very fond of. His eyes were blue, full of

fire, deepened by the many months spend in the company of the vast sea, howling winds, and silence, full of wisdom gained by the many moons of prayer and meditation in an attempt to understand people and their relationship to God. His depth of understanding inspired me greatly, his passion would lead me when I found myself lost or confused, and his honesty and devotion would often bring me back to Life. He was a man with a vision and his vision made us almost inseparable friends. He was fighting for the merge of many to One.

I could be a part of his mission, I contemplated for a moment, I could help Ama and Ottavio and father Schall reform the Calendar, translate books, become a part of their task to change the World, Humanity, Religions, Life on Earth. Their passion could become mine if only I was ready to live love and live through another mission. I felt that I was not ready, I still needed to change myself before I tried to change the world.

Where is the limit of body, mind, emotions if not within God? I wanted to become a walking temple, shining Love and Light, to merge with God, to become one with the flow of Life, I wanted to Be.

Through my life, I followed the guidelines from my spiritual teachers vigorously, I followed my superiors, I followed the Pope, I followed Ama, but within the sacred science of Being, there was nobody I knew less than Myself.

I knew of a Jesuit priest who behaved the way the Church wanted him to, I knew a leader, a confessor who led his flock through the difficult times, being what his students wanted him to be, I knew of a man who wanted to be a friend, a soul mate, a lover, a man who knew nothing but what his long awaited newly discovered wife, Ama wanted him to be. But I did not know how to Be.

Awake in the middle of the night, walking through the woods, I prayed...

I wanted to stop the wheel of fortune turning, I wanted to get out of my skin, get out of the Monastery, jump off this voyage on Earth.

I now wanted to live alone. I wanted to find out how it is to live alone. Her world had during the years become mine and I relied on Her thoughts and words in everything I did. Her friends were mine and Her favourite food became my favourite food. Wherever I moved I saw traces of Her reappearing.

Perhaps, I did believe in suffering, perhaps the world of happiness, love, togetherness was not just as yet mine. Jesus suffered for the humanity and I was after all a Jesuit, following the path of my Master, perhaps, my pain was meant to give strength to the rest of the world.

Fighting against the common enemy, against the Dutch, standing shoulder to shoulder facing Death, with a common goal, was easy; defending Ama against the attacks of my superiors, short minded priests and suspicious citizens of Macao who called Her a witch, our relationship 'blasphemy' was easy, now, I needed to fight against myself, against my deep need to refuse happiness and accept suffering as the way of being!

I needed to regain my independence, to re-learn to live my life without Ama. I found happiness in Her presence, Her smile made me smile, I impressed Her, made Her laugh, inspired Her, now, I needed to learn to Be without Her.

Becoming a Refugee, I asked for help, praying to understand, praying to learn how to Be. Entangled in the world of senses, world of birth and death, joy and suffering, I gave myself to Him.

The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao.  
The name that can be named is not the eternal name.  
**Lao Tze Tung**

## **Ama's Mother**

I was born in Kenya, in the tribe that is today known as Pokot. The Pokot people of Kenya belong to the 'Kalenjin' group. People from the tribe are tall and beautiful, very fit and strong and they take pride in their good looks. Today, the people from my tribe are renowned to be very good athletes and very often they win the hardest of races.

As a daughter of a tribal chief I was initiated into secrets of magic and sacred life from an early age and as soon as I reached maturity, I gained the status of Medicine Woman of my Tribe.

In Africa Gods and people live together all the time.

God is everywhere and Nature is God's supreme manifestation. Sun and Moon are His eyes, He uses the wind to travel through the skies, sleeps in rocks and mountains. A thunder is the cracking of His joints and when He is hungry He chooses the animals within the cattle and strikes them, with His lightning to, make His delicious dinner. He is with us at all times.

God is present with us at all major events: at the birth of our children, circumcision, at our weddings, funerals and at the harvest times. He is the One to secure peace, rain, healthy cattle if He is happy, or He brings calamities if He is angry. We worship Him every day through our rituals, music, singing and dance.

To please Him and strengthen the bond with Him we continuously involve Him in all our affairs. We create offerings that keep Him happy, the offerings made of grass, fire, water, animals. Before we put any crops into Earth, we sacrifice a cock or a hen or a goat to a God of lands, to a God of crops, or to our ancestors whose spirits protect us from Death.

We create shrines around sacred trees as sanctuaries for animals, humans and prayer temples. During moonless nights, children are warned not to whistle so not to awaken evil spirits, and dangerous animals

become even more dangerous within the stories of elders, a Snake is not called by its name so not to remind her of her powers, and people respect the darkness and its secrets. We believe in all the powers of Nature.

The elders of the village taught me how to heal the sick, make sacrifices and pray to Gods for health, rain or victory when my tribe was in a war. I knew the secrets of the touch and dance and the uttered words. I got to intimately know Earth and Her healing powers, the spirits that live within plants and herbs, bones and minerals and how to release them when I needed their help.

Her Majesty Moon became my protector and was for a long time my best friend. Looking at the moon, night after night, after night, I opened my Soul to Her Wisdom.

She taught me about Her different phases and Her influence on Earth.

She thought me that we should plant and sow during Her journey from the new to the full and to gather fruit, cut flowers, prune trees during Her journey back to the new moon.

She taught me the time when she gathers fish into our waters, nourishing the animals and showing me when the hunt is the best.

Even the smallest living creatures, ants, are affected by Her powers, they rest and worship Her in their nests when the Moon is new.

She helped me predict weather becoming red as gold when wind is coming, or dressing into black spots to show-off rain. Observing Her, I learned when is the best time for bleeding, preparing medicine, baths, or purges.

She guided me whenever I was assisting child-births, for a healthy child and a pain-less delivery, She has never failed me.

She helped me remove curses and fight against the witchcraft and sorcery of other tribes.

She guided me with all my magic and medicine powers.

She has also guided me through all my spiritual discoveries.

When She was descending, disappearing, losing Her powers, I learned to be humble and patient. Following the wisdom of waters I withdrew during the nights of no moon, keeping quiet and still, waiting for the time of activity. When She returned, in Her full glory, illuminating the starry nights She would again teach me expressiveness and beauty of movements and sounds.

All creatures of the savannahs followed this secret dance, so the nights of Her Majesty were very noisy, alive and vibrant. Piercing sounds of frogs, hoppers, locusts and other insects would prevent us from sleep and I would often go down to the lake to admire Her reflection and Her full and magnificent glory. These nights, the nights of no return, connected me with a higher dimension of my being, they thought me love, love that is infinite, timeless and divine.

The colour of Her silver reflection took me to the journeys of complete expansions, disappearing, and surrender. Lightness of being was intoxicating and I went back to Her, every time I could. When She was gone, I circled around Her image for hours and days waiting for her return, waiting for another blessed moment of this mystical love.

My ancestors thought me how to fight the sickness, and please the Gods, She thought me how vast the Universe is, and how amazing the laws of our worlds are.

I knew how to communicate with spirits. The spirits are beings that live in the world between men and Gods,

they are humans that have died and who stayed to help us communicate with Gods. To pass their messages, they appeared in my dreams or I would call them using a special dance or drumming, inviting them to possess me so that they may speak through me while I am in trance. Spirits can act maliciously or with good intentions. I learned how to distinguish the two.

I also communicated with living-dead. The living-dead are people who died but have not yet become pure spirits. They stay within their families because they still have an unsettled business to finish, or are purely just still interested in their family affairs, and they help the living warning them of dangers or cause misfortune, especially illness, if they left Earth angry.

If a man or a woman dies violently or is thrown away without a burial, they might return as evil spirits hungry for revenge. They can possess men and cause illnesses such as madness or fever or may endanger a village through an outbreak of epidemics. These must be driven away. My task was to convince them to leave.

As Medicine Woman and the second to the village priestess, I was sometimes called to help the village rain-maker to call or dismiss the rain. When the elements became too heavy and persistent, or in the heart of the very dry season, when even the rain maker's efforts became futile, I would help him so that extremes of weather do not hurt him in his attempts to interfere.

In harvest times, I was involved in the village feast, giving thanks to the Earth Goddess, the source of all fertility and to the ancestral spirits of the clan, who will oversee the harvest, bless it and ensure a fruitful season, a season of plenty.

Some months before the Portuguese landed with their ships and soldiers, I had a dream about their arrival. The wise man and elders met and discussed dreams that were announcing the coming of a Force that was greater than what we have ever met before. They were carrying sticks that spit fire and hearts that had no

mercy. The dreams, all had the same connotation: the arrival of a white man was to be bloody and full of suffering but was not to be for long and was to lead to the spread of our people and culture into the new worlds and new continents. It looked as though God had a plan for us and a plan was in our defeat. There was no other choice but to follow.

During the 16th century the Portuguese sent soldiers with ships and guns to conquer the Kenyan settlements burning towns and taking everything valuable from them. The Africans fought against the army as they could with arrows and spears and swords and daggers. Many were killed. My father's tribe was defeated and I knew that my destiny was far away on the shores of new lands. I was taken away from Kenya as a slave.

I managed to find a protector in a man who I saved from Death using herbs that I brought with me. Fear or gratitude made him take care of me until we reached the Portuguese lands. There, I made my presence known to Ottavio De Nobille, a Portuguese magician and a priest who could read dreams and communicate with spirits. He recognised me and came to my rescue, he bought me and made me his companion, his wife, his teacher and seven years later, the mother of his daughter Ama.

The merge I had with Ottavio was a spiritual merge that initiated both of us into a secrets of the Sacred Marriage. He told me that he was waiting for me for years and that he knew of my arrival and that he was preparing for it all his life.

Our marriage, our Alchemical Marriage, was a marriage of a powerful spiritual man, the white king within Portuguese Worlds and me, the queen of magic and mysteries, his black queen.

Together, our knowledge multiplied hundreds of times and we became capable of travelling through time, communicating with beings from other dimensions, and learning from all the sentient beings in the Universe. Together, our souls were reborn and we got the access

to the Divine Breath, the Logos that is Love and Light and Wisdom. Our minds and souls and bodies got truly united in the service of One. Together, we undertook the alchemical process of transmutation, we followed the powers developing within us, and our guiding Force was Divine Love.

I thought Ottavio that the world is a living organism, with parts that had their own life and sensibility and that only purified soul can become a strong magician. I thought him the power of herbs, and stones and metals, and the way to access their spirits to heal all sort of diseases. Finally, I thought him how to determine the proper timing of any action. Magic for him was an endless wisdom that could be applied in all aspects of life.

Even though he was engrossed in it, Ottavio was not very understanding to the superstitions of the commoners. He laughed at their ignorance.

It is true that the basic passions such as pain and joy, love or fear could be induced by herbs, that is easy, Ottavio laughed, but the ultimate magic is within our minds and the true understanding starts when we enter the mind's complexity.

So, what else could we hope to gain more than the understanding Nature? I asked

With the magic we can increase our bodily powers, suggest foods for a particular disease, strengthen the vital energies with tools like music, colours, or scents, but we still stay mortal, weak humans that oscillate and change with a simple change of temperature, pressure, or chemicals within our brain, he explained.

To find the secret of true happiness or immortality we need to go a step further, we need to learn the secret of creation.

If we can gain spiritual strength to change ordinary consciousness into the pure awareness, we can hope to share the reality of starry worlds and become immortal.

So you are after immortality, I teased him. I only hope that you will in your brave craziness stumble upon it, and that you will know how to share it.

Ottavio did sometimes publicly display some of his magic powers.

Once he helped the authorities find the murderer of the villager whose body was found in the woods. Three people were under the suspicion. He advised the council to bring the suspects to the fresh corpse knowing that the body will start bleeding from the wound in the presence of the murder. As though, the dead victim felt the presence of the killer and got again agitated by anger and fear, the miracle did happen, the wound started bleeding again when the third man walked passed it. Scared by the event, the murderer admitted the charges.

Anyway, Ottavio said to the police that was still amazed with the result, even a magician of a very limited understanding should know this little secret kept within the body of the murdered, the knowledge of the murderer.

Have you ever seen a person that is severely burnt? he asked me when discussing magic one other time. If you do not remove the burned damaged skin immediately, for days after, the burned skin will continue destroying the healthy skin next to it. Isn't that fascinating? The murdered body keeps the remembrance of the murderer and the skin touched by fire, if not removed, keeps the remembrance of the destruction. Who knows how many other 'remembrances' stay within every cell of our body?

Both Alchemy and Magic are sciences explaining secret side of God's laboratory. The fact that we hide them, code and mystify their words and processes is also a part of God's plan.

Any person has a side that is guided by precisely defined norms and rules and also has a hidden side, a

side of dreams, instincts and emotional mist. On the macro level, the religion, has its open, clear, defined, precise side and the one that is experimental, unknown that has subtle, soft and quiet influence on humanity and its ways of thinking. Alchemy and Magic guide us through the mist.

Ottavio's spirit, had within itself a mighty fire, he was strong and analytical, very different from mine that was connected to Her Majesty the Moon, was female in every sense of the word. His strength and my surrender gave a birth to the Perfection, to Gold, to our daughter Ama.

When she was born I died to become a living-dead following her throughout her life, protecting her and guiding her through her youth, until she was 35 when she was ready to move through Earth alone.

That evening, at Ole, in Macao, at the tip of China, on the planet Earth, my daughter Ama was narrating a story. The colour of her skin, in a weird way, protected her from the well-sealed destiny of a woman of her age. If Ama was born white she would have probably been married and kept in a golden cage of a family life within many prejudices of a man's society, but born black and born of a slave mother, God gave her unusual freedom and a possibility to live whatever she wanted.

That evening Ama was sitting surrounded with people of all ages and they were all in a way her followers, admirers, and students. It was late and logs of disappearing fire in the centre of the gathering were radiating a red hue. The smell of burning wood was in the air, the sky was clear and illuminated by bright stars and the magic of the spring was enchanting the crowds. The atmosphere was one of a serene calmness, peace and surrender to the expectation of a promise.

Ama said that tonight she will tell us a story, a story about a lost land and a lost civilisation that lived on Earth thousands of years ago. She said that this story is important to understand where we came from, and where we, as humankind, are heading.

An echo of someone's thought or just a breath of wonder caught in between two moments was the only sound that managed to escape the block of silence that formed when Ama was story-telling. People around her wanted to know, and they listened carefully as though they might lose the essence, as though their future depends on the words that she uttered. Any sound, move, cough or whisper would break the melody of Ama's voice and they, as though in a trance, didn't want this to happen. She took us into a journey of our-own reflections, opening cracks of fairy-lands, so we can peak in and sense the beauty of eternal melody only known to a few...

'Long before the human race as we know it today, long before the Chinese, Spanish or Portuguese empire, long before Buddha, Christ, Romans, Egyptians or Greeks, an island with unparalleled beauty was the home of a race that called itself 'Sons of Gods'. The place was called: 'Centre where the Will of God is known'.

In China this civilisation is known as Sons of Reflected Light, and in Egypt as Companions of Horus. It is believed that they brought their knowledge to us from across the sea.

Legend has it that this place was ruled by Enlightened Kings guarding the highest Wisdom ever obtained.

Sons of Gods had beautiful, long, strong bodies, faces with high foreheads, sharp noses and strong black eyebrows. Tall and lean, subtle, and mysterious, they understood Tao. Their eyes carried amazing beauty coloured yellowish, brownish, green, a colour that reminds one of a leaf during early Autumn days. In fact, the colour of their eyes changed from clear, completely defined, piercing to the wide, open, warm and deep. If you are an expert you would exactly know by the expression and shade of one's eyes his or her mood and feelings.

The weather of this magical place was quite extraordinary. There were no distinct seasons or maybe

it is better to say, at all times of the year, there were all seasons present. Snow lived happily with rain high up the mountains while sun and heat lived in the valleys. The seasons coexisted in harmony with each other. They were eternal and their balance was perfect for the plants to grow in their full bloom. Would a day be sunny or rainy depended of the needs of all living creatures of the land, depended of the plants and their thirst, of animals and their needs, and of people and their wishes.

The race was special in the eyes of Gods and they were given to know many secrets only known to Gods. It was they who passed to our race some of the most amazing secrets of Nature and where we just see the glimpse of them, they knew how to live them. They passed to us the knowledge of how to make glass and pottery, how to use metals and medicine, how to work with silk and make art, and to the few, they also passed the secrets of Spirit.

After many years of self-development, they won their battle against Time and Earth as we know them today. 'Sons of Gods' believed that a body is a sacred temple ought to be respected and treated with extreme care. The perfection and growth were an essential part of their philosophy of living. They firmly believed that the strength and knowledge already existed within them and that it is within their powers to release this beauty and potential. They spent most of their time experimenting, exploring, researching different ways they lived with others on the Planet.

They saw Earth as an animated being that within its delicate net hides the spirits that influence all. They learned to listen and collaborate with the spirits, attempting to manipulate the time and assist it with its movement towards perfection. They believed that the material body can be transformed and resurrected into a divine body, free from the laws of nature.

Instead of curing diseases, they worked on understanding the process of the decay and appearance and disappearance of a disease. They

learned the secret of a long life and healthy existence and passing time made them stronger, not weaker. They learned to listen to the body's signals and to respect its messages and needs. They learned how to get the necessary energy from the Sunlight, contact with Earth and Air.

Instead of building houses to protect them from rain, wind and snow as we do today, they lived in harmony with elements. Within their supreme knowledge they understood fire, heat, ice and cold, and adjusted their bodies to be in harmony with Nature. Mastering this art, they ceased to feel cold or warm when the temperature changed, they could move effortlessly through water and air using the currents of the two, and as a swan they could fly, swim and walk travelling amazing distances with no trouble at all. Using the mind they could re-awaken the mechanisms that allow them to breathe under water, and were able to send signals and messages to other beings throughout the Universe.

They learnt from Nature to foretell the future and to understand the past. They knew the inner virtues of sun, planets, vegetables, minerals, and animals, what qualities are latent within them; what is their purpose, and their properties, and what their occult possibilities are. Knowing the secrets of Nature they attempted to know God.

They also became masters of their dream states. For them sleeping was just a continuation of the Work on the Self and they used to go into states where gaining knowledge was still possible during the sleep. They used dreams to visit other worlds and learn the secrets of different life forms: from flowers they would learn beauty, from animals how to understand the Mother Earth, from angels' purity. They saw World as an endless opportunity for Growth.

For them every thought and sound carried a meaning and strength of materialisation. They rarely talked without a reason and they were very careful with words they would utter. Passionate and precise, words were coming from the core of their being, if there was love,

you could hear and feel love, if there was sorrow, you could experience it fully from the sound of their voices and manner of their speech; they were inspirational and focused. They mastered formulas and sounds that could materialise forms and their sacred rituals were based on these.

Also, they have never wasted their precious time and energy on interactions that would not inspire them or teach them something new. They wouldn't gossip or talk nonsense because in their world words carried power and they knew that they could uplift or hurt others so they used them very carefully.

In their pursuit for perfection they devised and they vigorously obeyed the three sacred rules of Awareness:

- Do not think, alter or do anything that can in any way, directly or indirectly hurt any living creature;
- Do not speak or act if your body, or mind with its thoughts and emotions are not in full harmony. If your body or mind is diseased your words, thoughts or feelings might reflect this sickness. All words, thoughts, and acts should be passed and touched by the highest energy of the heart: Love, and by the most precious energy of the mind: Awareness.
- All other sentient creatures in the Universe: animals, plants, people, stones, living dead, spirits, ancestors should be carefully listened to and respected. To be able to feel the needs of all, they practiced silence for an hour each day, and once a week they would retreat for 36 hours. They listened carefully to the sound of their Soul while in silence.

As a result of these rules, their words and actions carried the wisdom of the ancestors, they were carefully chosen and they had the power of Creation. Thoughts and words were positive and inspiring awakening confidence and strength. Criticism was allowed only if for the benefit of the others or if followed with a constructive suggestion.

But as it is on Earth, all that has its beginning, has its end, this race also approached its-own end.

The children were playing near the woods and were waiting for their teacher to appear and in their innocence they 'interfered'.

'Why did you stop the rain!'

the Wise One shouted when He arrived. It was rare to see him shout, it was rare to see him upset, but this event changed the history of the race.

'Who gave you the right to interfere!'

His voice carried strength and children felt the tremble. He was angry. They were too eager to hear Him. The meeting was outside, in the grass field and the afternoon smelled of rain. Black clouds were approaching. They were too eager to hear Him. They didn't want the plan to change, they wanted to listen to His Words of Wisdom.

Anticipating His lecture they've decided to interfere. It was not difficult to stop the rain. If the mind is focussed, even a child's mind can do it, clouds will listen, the wind will listen and the rain will go away. A ritual lasted a few minutes and children saw the black clouds withdraw and the storms disappear.

The little play was even amusing and powers performed were seductive but he wasn't amused.

'I do not want to follow your individual wills.  
I want to participate in His flow.  
And if He sends the rain, there is a good reason for it.  
How can you believe that your minds know better than Him?  
What if you have just disturbed a number of happenings that would have occurred with this rain?

And what if the rain would have brought us experiences that are much stronger than the ones that we are expecting now?

You did not trust Him!

You were not attentive enough to the sounds of forest and Earth joyful murmurs for rain and with your selfishness you have transformed them into a cry.

I've heard this cry coming to meet you and it is haunting me at this moment!

The highest comes when you open and give yourself to the flow of His Will and not through exercising your individual wills. You can be in control, but only if you trust Him and believe in Him.

What you have just done is a pure waste of energy and effort and it is not why you are here!'

But also he knew something that children did not, he knew that the child who instigated all of this was a child of Men, a child coming from a new race that has started mixing with the Sons of God. This event had a higher significance than children would have ever imagined, this event was predicted by Elders and was a sign of the beginning of the end.

Since recently, Sons of God started mixing with a new emerging race of Sons of Earth. The new race had primitive almost animal emotions, was much more connected to instinctive behaviours, was very often ruled by fear and anger but some of their women were beautiful and seductive. Soon after, new children were conceived and the mix gave the birth to the race of Men, as we know it today. It was as though the perfection of Sons of God stayed within Sons of Earth but hidden in their strong longing for Life and as though individual will, self-centredness and ego importance kept the spark of Eternal subdued but still burning deep within each new born baby.

As it was predicted, the incidences kept occurring. Some members of the new emerging race would lose patience and some would lose the sense of respect, some would forget about other creatures and some put

their Ego-Centrism before all the rest. They were also losing the secrets of Awareness and were using words more and more recklessly.

The new race was fascinated by Earth and it was weak to resist its temptations. The Wise Men knew that something had to be done, Sons of God were too powerful to allow weaknesses to enter their blood or their blood to become one with blood of a weaker race, they knew that this could endanger other species on Earth. The power they had, without Consciousness, could lead to the death of other species and perhaps even to the death of Mother Earth they all worshipped and respected.

The predictions were becoming their reality, the predictions about the end of their journey and the split that will happen amongst them, the split that will allow them to pass the knowledge, when the time is right, in a different way, to the race to come.

The Wise Men already knew the decision. After some meditation and experiments with the knowledge of the past, present and future, they announced the best way forward.

They split Sons of God into three groups.

One of the groups was transferred to an isolated island. To protect the island from outside forces, visitors and curious or evil spirits, the chiefs cut it off using mountain ranges, deep waters and vast lands. To reach it, one would need to descend into the depths of Earth, passing through dangerous volcanoes following the path of red hot lava; or climb the highest mountains surrounded by ice and meters of snow into the areas from where no man has ever returned where air is cold and deadly thin; or dive into the depths of the ocean deserted even by the bravest fish because of the strange currents that rule the darkness of these channels and caves; or sail into waters from where no boat has ever returned where winds are strong and evil hiding monsters that kill cowards and sirens that seduce weak hearts. The Mission of this group is to stay

on Earth and continue influencing the major energies of the Supreme Mother Gaya's matrix. They are not to be met by Men and their presence is not to be known.

The second group transformed into tree Devas: tree spirits that inhabit trees that are able to live thousands of years. Their bodies merged with the ones of trees that outlived most civilisations, wisely observing their passage through time. The Hindus recognised the hidden powers of these Beings and they worshiped the old trees, the Chinese kept large forests untouched as their temples, the Egyptians knew that they were divine and that they provide nourishment for people on Earth and they respected their space. Many spiritual disciples sat beneath the branches of old trees to strengthen their spiritual growth and get the necessary inspiration. We all can still communicate with them but to be able to do so we need to learn the language of Silence, to master the skill of Listening and be ready to receive the Knowledge.

The third group decided to stay on Earth as spirits, mostly invisible or visible only to a few, on certain occasions, appearing to the new race when they felt they needed to transmit guidelines on its road to Enlightenment.

That is how Sons of God stayed with us, Men, passing us secrets as they deemed fit.

All the ancient cultures talk about this race.

Confucians talk about this age. They talk about the time when the Great Way was practised, when people lived good faith and in affection. The race that did not regard as parents only their own parents, or as sons only their own sons, but that lived in harmony with all, as brothers. This was the age of Great Unity.

The knowledge of this Golden Age is hidden within us, our blood has traces of the blood of Sons of God, our struggles and dreams take us back to their wisdom. All throughout our lives, within the never-ending fight with our instincts and animal feelings, we get inspired, get

guided, get touched by the spark of the Eternals, by the warmth and insight that sleeps deep within our hearts.

The Persians took the custom, never to admit anyone as a king unless he was a Wise Man. The king was to the country a king, a priest, a prophet, a magician, and a scholar of Nature. The Egyptians too, had the knowledge of the secrets of Nature and they also asked from their kings to acquire the wisdom of priests and magicians. Both kingdoms were very successful and rich and the neighbouring countries admired them. Moses and Adam were also divine magicians whose wisdom was full of divine mysteries, they practiced magic to trace the way to God and to guide people how to act.

The Age of Great Unity is the age that we all aspire to live in, the age that is full of Harmony, Love and Understanding. We dream of it trying to find it within our own perfection building a society that is based on Peace and Knowledge. Whether Christians or Buddhist or Taoist, we all seek to find this place at the end of our journeys.

Each one of us searches for the traces of Sons of God, trying to awaken the blood of Eternals, each one of us aspires to live his Higher Self. This eternal urge sometimes gets covered in dust of our day-to-day living, in the mud of our day-to-day struggle, but it emerges back every time we are in the contact with our Souls.

Living our Higher Selves, we build our own excellence, build the excellence of our country and era, paving the way for the generations that follow. Weaving this amazing matrix of our past, present and future, we connect to Sons of God, and to our perfect life in a different, more enlightened Earth.

All the movements start within our own excellence.  
All the movements lead back to Sons of God abode.

This evening was one of many at Ottavio's coffee and tea house called 'Ole' that had a mission to build a net

of support and inspiration for the group that gathered around Ama and Ottavio. These evenings inspired many tired and sometimes lost minds, side-tracked within the forest of self-importance. They were a lantern lit, a lantern that shines its light, on the way towards Truth. My husband Ottavio and my daughter Ama were lighting the Way.

That night, after a séance, Ama faced me with her loving kindness and maturity of an enlightened being and asked me to leave and join higher realms of existence because she was all set to continue her journey without me.

As any mother would I protected my little one the best I could, all through her life on Earth. I stopped the evil thoughts from attacking her when she was a baby, I guarded her sleep from disturbed spirits when she was a child, I directed the first cannon against the Dutch during the attack to Macao, and the great storm (you will learn about it later) that scared Chinese and led to release of Father Schall was in my hands.

I stayed alert to her mission on Earth helping her whenever I could. I gave a birth to this child but her soul was much older than mine, and I did as much as I could to understand her. When I died Ottavio helped me through my transition, he spent days and days in prayers guiding my soul. When he died, I was there to guide him and love him so that he does not find himself lost in the world of shadows.

When Ama died, if she has ever died, only Light could be seen in heavens, no trace of attachment or suffering or confusion, just pure Light that has the intent to merge with One.

'...as there is no truth which is not joined or opposed to what is false, so there is no love without fear, ardour, jealousy, rancour, and other passions, which proceed from their opposites, and which disturb us, as the other opposite causes satisfaction. Thus the soul striving to recover its natural beauty seeks to purify itself, to heal itself, and to reform itself, and to this end it uses fire, because, being like gold, mixed with earth and crude, with a certain rigour it tries to liberate itself from defilement, and this result is obtained when the intellect, the real smith of love, puts itself to the work and causes an active exercise of the intellectual powers.'

Giordano Bruno

## **A Man with a Mission**

Li Po was an artist, a painter, my Chinese language teacher, and the guide through the vastness of Chinese culture and the way of thinking. This tiny gentleman was ancient, but very vital and alive with a small white beard, long white hair tied in a ponytail, educated in Peking, and now living in Macao. He had a studio teaching Chinese brushwork.

After a cup of tea, my teacher Li Po was always looking for an excuse to have tea, which was served in the courtyard of his house, we wandered around his gardens, talking about Chinese Gods and Spirits.

Chinese culture hosts many different Gods, Spirits, and myths, my Chinese host introduced the subject of our discourse. We believe that every living thing is spiritual, that all, wood, stones, animals, are spiritual beings manifested in matter.

We believe that everything is just a countless manifestation of one and the same chi, spiritual energy.

Everything just reflects its Divine origin: a stick, a house, a blade of grass, earth or a star. Because of its Divine Nature, we give it all its due attention and worship. Objects, houses and villages are all under the protection of different Spirits, Gods and Goddesses.

In a pursuit of happiness and harmony, the Chinese philosophers carefully studied the mysterious influences of Nature. Looking into the stars, observing earth, comparing essences of different elements, our ancestors acquired knowledge of the causes of Yin and Yang and we built a system based on this knowledge.

I knew that the Chinese were checking the pulses of earth for centuries, to learn how to select an auspicious place or time for an activity. Within this complicated system of knowledge, one can say when the Harmony is achieved or when it is broken. For example, should anyone suddenly fall sick, it is almost certain that the

Chinese will find its cause in the disturbed energy within the area.

I found it fascinating that the Chinese claim to see Nature's intentions within the scenery that it paints with its hills, rivers, trees and they truly believed that this scenery has an active influence on the destiny of men living in the area. Disagreeing with Tao means suffering, if a man obstruct or disturb a valley, or a river, the insulted element will revenge causing an illness or misfortune.

Chinese Gods are not always very benevolent, said Li Po smiling, they sometimes bring suffering. They could be moody, have peculiar personalities and are responsible for calamities, disasters, lack of harmony and unhappiness. We give our respect to all of them, the benevolent ones and the ones that create disorder, and fear.

Walking through a mountain one may encounter various beings that live within the streams, trees and winding paths. The intent of these beings is to mislead a man, leading him to the unknown or destruction.

But, mind you, he said, sensing my disbelief, this happens only to noxious and impure men, while the spirits are afraid of us, bold, pure and strong minded men.

As in every other country, the Chinese world was divided into the crowds that followed blindly and educated minority that was defining the moral code. The hundreds of fortune teller and roadside oracles that I saw on the marketplace, and in the streets of Chinese towns, were mainly an entertainment for masses.

The book at the heart of early Chinese philosophical thought, serving as a common ground for the Confucian and Taoist, is called Yi Jing, my host said bringing forth a book that we studied in the years to come.

It was an early edition, a true work of art, composed by famous calligraphers.

Confucius wrote a commentary for this book, around 500 BC, and his wise words became the conduct code of the Chinese Kings and society.

I've heard that most of the great Chinese artists were completely familiar with this work.

We believe that spirit and matter are two aspects of the same thing. Spirit is inherent in matter. We also believe that **change** is inherent in the cosmic order.

The original meaning of 易 yi is the lizard, that changes its color according to its place, and it is a combined character of the sun 日 (Yang) and the moon 月 (Yin); Yi has 3 meanings: **Simplicity** - the fundamental law underlying everything in the universe is simplicity; **Change** - the universe is continually changing; and **Persistency** - a central rule that does not fluctuate with space and time. 經 Jīng means sutra, scripture, or a great teaching.

The Yi Jing reflects the universe in miniature. Each picture, each hexagram, illustrates one aspect of 'Chi' and the subtle Yin-Yang interaction that exist in nature.

The hexagram consists of a solid (Yang) and a broken (Yin) line, and signifies the change between Yang and Yin. The book consists of 64 hexagrams, or combinations of the solid and broken line. Each hexagram looks at life from a different angle and all together they cover all aspects of life. This grid of polarities spans the spectrum from Yin to Yang, describing the relationships between the two opposites.

Everything in Nature manifests either through Heavenly Father or through Mother Earth. Yang is strong, muscular, pure, and vigorous and Yin is gentle, feminine, flexible, fertile and patient. Yin gives and maintains life.

Balance is achieved only when Yin and Yang are in harmony.

To help me further understand the concept of Yin and Yang, that is so deeply engrained within Chinese way of thinking, my teacher opened the book and guided my focus onto two hexagrams that form the basis of the Yi Jing philosophy. The Yi Jing starts with the hexagrams Qian and Kun. Qian is heaven and Kun is earth. When heaven and earth are born; the whole of creation comes into being.

The original meaning of Qian is the brilliant sunshine at sunrise. It inspires all life, making it prosperous. The hexagram Qian has six masculine and solid lines. Its symbol is the dragon. The dragon is a sacred animal; it represents the prestige of the king. It is dynamic as the power of Nature; it is comfortable both in water and in the sky.

Qian is in an essence of creativity, benevolence and righteousness.

The image of Kun is earth. It is pure femininity. Earth creates the world and nourishes it. The whole of creation counts on it for nurture and growth. Kun is a female horse. The horse galloping without limits, to the horizon; with tenderness and submissiveness as its main quality.

This book never fails to grant us access to eternity. Contemplated Li Po.

And how exactly does it work? I wondered.

We follow a meditation ritual to calm our mind and gain an access to our inner self. We focus on the relevant issue, ask a question or guideline from the book, and its answer inspires our intuition to define correct course of action.

Does that mean that the answer is already within us? I asked.

Correct, he confirmed!

That means that we could be using any book?

He smiled. Nearly all the greatest minds of China used this book or have written an interpretation of its text, he said avoiding the direct answer, the wisdom of thousands of years is within the Yi Jing. Why would you seek another book?

Correct, I smiled...

Talking about ceremonies! He exclaimed! Please now do join me for my tea ceremony!

We spent lots of time in his studio, a clean, uncluttered and peaceful place that inspired my friend's work. The studio had a large desk full of ink-stones, rolls of paper, some finished and unfinished paintings, bamboo brushes and beautifully carved holders. The colour dishes and a fresh flower floating in one of the water bowls regularly acknowledged my presence.

Li Po was famous for his calligraphy, the art of drawing Chinese characters.

It took me time and patience to convince him to teach me calligraphy 'cause his artist mind saw this quazi-effort of mine as a waste of time. Teaching a foreigner, a Westerner, who is expecting to learn something about this sacred art in less than a life-time was silly. But he finally gave up his fight and opened for me a little paradise into the art of this ancient science. Carefully observing my friend and teacher paint in front of me I would observe his strokes, his movements, his compositions, and what he wanted me to get from this observation were his feelings, moods, states of mind.

Each character is a living entity, with its own energy and the force that awakens within the drawing of the symbol.

Each sentence is a poem, a meditation, a prayer, a combination of characters that cannot be taken lightly.

He drew only extracts from sacred texts. When the lesson was over, I would take his paintings home, study them, copy them for hours, and bring them back the next day for his criticism.

Copying characters over and over again, I learned the symbols, techniques, the use of colours, the way to hold the brush, but also, I was immersing my Soul into the subconscious wisdom of each symbol, delivering my intellect to the higher intuitive force that lived within the characters for millions of years.

As you can see, there is no such thing as an alphabet in Chinese. A character or symbol is more than a letter or a word, it is a concept and behind it there are sometimes many words.

Originally, thousands years ago, each character was a small picture, but now these are simplified keeping the essence of each drawing. For the most basic use, and for reading the scripts, you need to master about 3,000 characters, my teacher said, with the look of amusement in his eyes.

So how many do you know?

More than 30,000! He laughed, leaving me with amusing wonderment about the numbers mentioned...

We begin writing at the top of a page, on the right-hand side and we continue writing vertically. We also open our books from the side you consider to be the back side of the book.

Speech and writing, Li Po explained, both express the same impulse, conveyance of thought, one through hearing, other through sight. Speech is followed by the music of words, while the writing is there to liberate the beauty of symbols. The art of character writing is very sacred in China.

There is a definitely defined order to strokes, from left to right and from top to bottom, an order in which a symbol is enclosed within the other. Each has a symbolic meaning. You have to pay attention to the beginnings and ends of strokes and whether the tip of the brush is visible or not. Hesitations and changes of brush direction, the pressure, and the speed of drawing will all form part of this love affair between brush and paper. The brush has to be held upright transferring more directly and powerfully the flow of energy from hand to paper.

Learning to draw Chinese characters, my teacher continued, the most important is that 'Chi Yün' enters your heart. Chi Yün is spirit-vitality or life-breath of a painting. It is intangible but unless it is born within your heart, you can copy the characters all your life and you still will not draw them correctly.

A relationship between Chinese and symbols is very powerful.

To master calligraphy you need to practice different styles, copy different Masters, basing your-own innovations firmly on previous examples. Copying is a valuable tool because it will allow you to deeper understand the character and connect to the intellect of the Master calligrapher whose calligraphy you copy.

Once you develop your-own style, the brush will record more than just your movements. Your strokes will be able to tell us about your personality, intellect, and moods. An individual signature is also very important. Some Daoist painters paint with their hair achieving 'wild' curves and 'spontaneous' effects.

For example, look at this reproduction of Wang Xizhi's famous work: The Introduction to the Orchid Pavilion, how beautiful, original, spontaneous, and rhythmic it is! Wang Xizhi lived around 300AD and he is our Sage of Calligraphy. All through China his calligraphy is carefully collected and studied. This book was written during one poetry contest. He was a Governor and he

invited forty artists to this contest. After the event, he wrote the preface to accompany the poems within the book.

Li Po was fascinated by this Sage, but what fascinated me more within this little story is the poetry contest that happened almost two thousand years ago. They gathered to write about Life, to philosophy, to share their deeper insights two thousand years ago, 300 years before Christ was born.

Somehow, my mind could not grasp the thought of thousands of years in the past. Yet it has happened and it has been recorded, we did exist, they shout from their graves and we wrote poetry, drew characters, sat next to the stream, laughing, drinking, exchanging, and then publishing it, for future generations, for posterity, for you to see, showing teeth to mortality and its deadly bite of 'forget-ness'.

The oldest found records are our Oracle bone scripts, my teacher was explaining, symbols were first written with a brush, and then inscribed with an animal bone tool.

I could imagine that a lot of original calligraphy did not survive because it was drawn on very fragile silk or paper. The ones that survived were mostly inscribed in stone or bamboo.

Li Po showed me a page bound together of bamboo sticks that all had vertical inscription looking like columns.

Important religious texts like the Buddhist sutras were engraved on the bamboos, or rock faces of sacred mountains.

Like the one done on Mount Tai. I remembered seeing this little interaction of people of our past and Nature.

Yes, during those days, the copies of the entire Buddhist canon were commissioned by the Emperor. The most talented calligraphers did the work.

It is a great honour for a calligrapher to be asked to do the scrolls, it is a sign of respect of the artist's potential.

Calligraphy has remained a potent force in Chinese life up to the present days. I studied the language, the symbols, the myths, because I wanted an insight into China's visual culture, into their customs, into their beliefs, so that I could devise my-own methods in converting Chinese into Christianity.

As a mean of the visual communication, Chinese characters are fascinating in their ingenuity, portraying the philosophical idea behind the word.

For example, 'xin' is a character for heart and mind. Chinese see heart and mind as one and the same thing. The frame or state of mind comes from the heart, not from the head as you are accustomed to. A personal insight also uses 'xin' as its main character.

A symbol 'zheng' is an ideograph of a foot walking in a straight line. It also signifies arrival at the line (which is a proper limit) without going astray. The symbol could be translated as: straight, upright, correct, exact and it is used in words such as: normal, proper, rightful, decent, official, justice, etc.

'Jian' is drawn as two spears shattering and destroying the value of shells, and it conveys the idea of cheap, worthless, mean, things that are of little value, but it is also used to depict a poor and miserable person.

How do you say 'beautiful', I asked Li Po what I thought was a simple question during one of the lessons?

He stayed quiet for a moment, pensive and amused of the differences that exist between our two worlds, our two languages, our two ways of thinking.

There are many types of 'beautiful', beautiful as a flower, beautiful as a woman, beautiful within an art object, and so on. Word 'beautiful' does not properly define the concept of beauty that is so vast and deep as an ocean. That is why in our language we use different ways to express all these types of beauty. We do not search for 'fast' solutions and simplify such a magnificent notion such as 'beauty'. We give it a meaning, word, symbol related to the object that carries the beauty.

The world of symbols doesn't live alone. It is interwoven with signs, imagination, superstitions, magic, and dreams. At the beginning of my stay in Macao, I went to a Chinese friend all set to make a good impression with a gift for my host, five packs of a precious and expensive black tea. The gift was taken with whispers, giggles and stares. The host and his wife were amused with the confusion that followed. They explained that the same word 'wu' that is used to indicate the number five, is also used to indicate evil, black, unhappy, violent, militant and that it is a sign of disrespect to give five items as a gift. The inauspicious omen was taken lightly just because I was a foreigner.

Magic is part of our lives. We believe in symbols, signs, we read omens, stars. When a Chinese astrologer wants to determine a success of a particular venture, he asks the oracle and checks the fortunate or unfortunate direction for a particular day. The lucky direction brings success while the unlucky one helps the rivals.

I could see how much practical trouble this would give to set-up an important business meeting. For what is 'lucky' for one is not necessarily 'lucky' for the other businessman and one can go to an indefinite postponement of the meeting if the two omens never meet.

On hearing a crow, Li Po continued, I could tell you your future. If coming from the South in the early morning, you will receive a present, if heard mid-morning there will be rain, if at midday, you will quarrel, if in the

afternoon, you will have a misfortune and if you hear it in the evening, you will face a lawsuit.

And is the misfortune there because you are waiting for it, because you are alert that it is going to happen, or you are simply warned in advance by Nature's signs? I challenged my host.

My face couldn't hide an expression of a complete unbeliever, Li Po smiled:

This must sound like a lot of gibberish to your mind. However, the Nature continuously presents us with signs. Your point about our free-will is true. Personally I hear the signs but I don't let them rule my life unless there is an important happening, such as building a new home, or choosing a wedding day for your beloved children. Building a home we obey rituals that take care of the direction of the main door, the time of the year, favourite and disturbing winds, trees and house surroundings. The house owner uses symbols, colours and signs to invite particular beings to enter the house and to keep others out. If a marriage is conducted on an unlucky day, children of the couple will be poor, sick, or worst might be born deaf or dumb. The lucky day will lead to reach descendants, to finding a hidden treasure or a promotion to higher office.

Many believe that if an unlucky day or unfavourable place is chosen for a burial, this might lead to calamities and epidemics in the family for years after the funeral. This belief led to quite an abuse by many so-called experts that determine the luckiest date or the luckiest place for a reward. You can imagine that quite a mess was created because people sometimes refused to bury their loved ones in fear that they do not get it right. Government had to stop this motion, because of the disease that spread from such places, and the chaos that was created in an attempt to ensure the best burial places...

I had no intention in mocking the customs of my honourable host but I could not but not remark.

This must stop a lot of business and a lot of building from taking place?

Yes, it can become quite an obstacle, and quite a big speculation. Many found the way to abuse the superstitious, earning their fortune on the misfortune and stupidity of others. But fools are universal, they can be found in all of countries...

Nevertheless, if all the spirits are properly heard, Li Po continued, and if the rituals are rightly performed, the balance will rein on Earth, the chaos will turn into harmony and the difficulties will vanish.

This mixture of what my mind called: superstitious gibberish and the serenity of my host gave me a shiver. I did not want to argue or frighten my host, such a gentle and honest person, I humbly took the role of a student, listening attentively and absorbing everything he said.

This amazing mix of values gave birth to Chinese Christians whose beliefs are quite a bizarre mix, don't you think? I asked Li Po a question that was on my mind for some time.

You will have no problems converting the Chinese into Christians, as long as we could also worship other Gods. Is that acceptable to you? Christ is welcomed into our houses if it is surrounded with the God of Fertility, God of Death, and God of Harvest. If there is to be any success in the conversion to Christianity, you have to let Chinese Christians continue with their ancestor worships. I felt that Li Po was right.

Staying faithful to One God, we, Church Officials, have announced all Chinese Gods non-existent, a culture that was so connected to worship was declared as the culture of non-believers.

This is indeed a cause of many debates between the missionaries in China. I told Li Po

One of the first major conflicts between the Catholic movement and Chinese authorities occurred during 1616 when a high ranking official in Nanjing, called Shen Huai, advised the Emperor that Catholicism should be banned. The conflicts between Chinese customs like Confucianism and ancestor worship and the Catholic customs like baptism led to the anti-Christian movement. Shen Huai arrested dozens of missionaries for questioning. According to him, Catholicism taught Chinese not to respect parents, or worship ancestors and this was a great sin. Urged by the Anti-Catholic movement, Emperor Wenli passed a law deporting all foreign missionaries back to their homeland.

The conflict about accepting or not accepting Chinese customs, reflected through the conflict about the Christian terminology used in spreading Catholicism in China. Matteo Ricci's approach was to adopt the Confucian practice, referring to God as Tian Zhu: the Ruler of Heaven, or Tian: Heaven. But, after Ricci's death, some of the missionaries believed that these terms cannot represent God and that only Latin terminology should be used.

We, within the Jesuit movement, have understood the delicacy of the matter and we allowed our Chinese converts to continue with ancestor worship. I explained to my Chinese friend. The Augustinians, on the other hand, were not of the same opinion and they banned this most sensible tradition as heresy. This caused us a lot of problems with the Chinese Government.

You have a strong reputation in Europe and here in China, for your knowledge of astrology, astronomy and mathematics and this reputation could become your strongest weapon. Some of the manuscripts that you have written and translated have reached and impressed the Court. The educated classes of China will listen to your words with respect. Li Po naturally bowed while talking about my work at University.

Living in Macao, on the crossroad of eras, walking from the Dark Ages to the Ages of Science, I decided to

become an essential part of the work that was creating a bridge between the two systems of science and religious thoughts, that evolved separate from each other, both carrying within the wisdom of their ancestors. My mission became to make them available to anybody who had ears to hear and eyes to see.

When I got to understand my Mission, when I realised It, I grasped It with all the strength I had in my mind, I lit the torch with fire burning in my heart, and worked on it translating books, writing manuscripts, teaching at University.

There are many paths leading to One. This time I was with Ama, walking, talking and collecting herbs in the fields of Macao. These herbs carry within their fragile essence a secret of Life, Universe, Creation, and the secrets of Enlightenment. We all carry the Truth within, and every drop of water, every flower, every man intuitively knows it, no matter what is the path we choose to follow.

The printing press gave us an ability to record our precious thoughts, our beliefs and fears, and finally we got to know that we are not alone, that somewhere across the Oceans or across the centuries people thought exactly the same thoughts, had exactly the same worries, got distracted with exactly the same mundane trivialities and dreamt exactly the same dreams. The more we are able to share our thoughts, the more we will understand that there are many paths leading to One.

It is a simple truth that got hidden under the layers of suspicions during the thousands of years of separation and it caused so many religious wars and blood shed. Ama looked at me and I felt Gaia's pain as hers and her pain as mine.

It is so common, I said, among the Church authorities and among the missionaries to identify non-Christians with Devil, accusing them to be sinful for not believing in one and only Christian path. Of course, this is common to the most of the religions I came across. But

whoever spent some time in the non-believers countries, know that they are sometimes closer to God than some of the most devoted Christians. After all, it is us, 'devotees' of Christ who are so eager to burn witches and scientists and kill heretics...

Some of the missionaries we know, who are working so vigorously on the conversions of non-believers to Christians, are unfortunately led by their selfishness, pride, and personal gains, and they themselves do not truly practice virtues.

In years spent within the Church, I realized that lots of our efforts lead not to love and further knowledge but to further hate, separation and destruction. We are driven by a good intention but our actions end up being disastrous.

Religions often become, remarked Ama, a courtyard for practicing intolerance. News about wars amongst Muslims, Christians, Jews, Lutherans, bring shivers of pain into my heart. I often see hatred in the hearts of men that carried shields of their own religions, said Ama, and this experience opened my eyes: that to reach One we have to burn the masks of different Gods, stop giving Him a name, and exclusivity. Or if we are not capable of doing that, we should at least stop accusing and hating all the ones that do not see Him as we do.

Walking and talking with this young lady, I remembered the story Ottavio told me about her birth.

Ama's mother was an African princess Ottavio was madly in love with. She was originally brought from Africa as a slave. He bought her, gave her freedom, and married her when she was still very young. They lived together for 7 years childless and she stayed pregnant on their journey to Asia. Ama's mother died minutes after Ama was born. Ottavio believed that she sacrificed her life for the birth of this special Soul.

Ottavio used to recall that before the day the ship first time touched Macao he had a dream of an angel

wounding him with a spear. Blood from the wound got mixed with the mud of Earth that has opened beneath him and a most amazing flower was born from the depths of the darkness that gazed at him. The voice that whispered from the darkness was murmuring 'Life for Life without boundaries'.

His wife understood the dream to be a prophesy of a birth of a child of his blood that will grow to be an extraordinary spiritual being that will help him fulfil his mission on Earth, that will help him conquer Death, and that will help people reach enlightenment. Two weeks later his wife died and Ama was born.

He took Ama under his protection and educated her in the best possible way. She spoke Swahili, her mother's tongue, Portuguese, the tongue of her father and Chinese, the tongue of the country she was born in. She was familiar with philosophy, different religious systems, art, mathematics, chemistry, biology, physics. She was Ottavio's pride and his life experiment, and with every year that passed, she was transforming into a more and more precious flower.

Ama was the only one Ottavio would unconditionally listen to. Her calmness and warmth and his complete trust in her wisdom, created a bond that was visible every time the two were together. Ottavio would change in her presence, as though he was trying hard to be perceptive, generous and loving, as though he was trying hard to impress her. He rarely burst into anger in front of her, and he would not allow anybody to raise their voice when she was around.

His relationship with Ama was always the one of adoration and respect and the one of tenderness and care. He trusted her with all his affairs and she was the easiest route to his heart.

Even though I am a priest and I called myself a Christian, I told Ama, I deeply believe that the vast knowledge hidden within the various religious scripts springs from One Source and leads back to the same One. No matter how good a religion is, its institution

and its rules, ultimately degenerate, bringing stagnation, prejudices, misunderstandings, and the separation from the original One. To learn, we need to always go back to the religious Sources keeping our minds open to the possibility of change.

The more people understand the Unity of all the paths, Ama agreed, the faster they will be able to walk this land without hatred.

The truth of getting closer to One, she said, is in moving away from the thought of separation.

Yes, I told her, and I know that I need to devote my life to this purpose - to work to bridge the intolerance that divides us, that abuses our selfishness and cherishes our own sense of importance.

Within Macao, I found a fertile ground for mixing ideas, intentions and dreams of both Chinese and Europeans. Very early on, I realised that European astronomy and astrology advanced in a different direction to Chinese and that the knowledge of European astronomy could benefit Chinese in building their Annual Calendar.

I just finished reading one of the manuscripts that we had ready for publishing that explored the evolution of Eastern and Western thoughts and I started one of our discussions at Ole with Ottavio, Ama and a group of close friends. It was a late summer evening and the coffee shop was closed for public. In the centre of the hall was the fountain and we could hear the water flow intermingle with our breathing. Windows were opened inviting the smell of the Ocean to join the smoke of the Nag Jampa incense. The wind was playing with chimes, and the low light of candles created a dance of shadows on the floor and on the wall in front of us.

We, in Europe, have developed science, reason and clarity of thought, following Greek and Latin philosophers that are themselves influenced by Egypt and Arabic thought. We work with definitions, systems and methods, we divide the world in many different

categories, dissect it and search for truth within the smallest unit, within the particles.

The Eastern thought, however works with the idea of energies and the energy movement, using abstract to map One into many. Eastern scientists observe the Universe as one entity and they map its behaviour to the lives of men. I continued my comparison.

One is examining the tree, butted in Ama, its bark and its root, missing the picture of the forest, while the other is more interested in the wider view of the forest and its organic growth. The Eastern philosophers are intrigued by the ideas of Universe and God, mapping it down to the self-development, personal excellence, inner journey and intuition, while Europeans are examining social structures, following its patterns and discovering laws.

One is a female approach, said Ottavio, intuitive and dreamy, while the other is a male one, scientific, precise and clear. The one without the other cannot lead to the Truth, only together they can give us a birth of a new way of thinking.

The time we live in is the time of lot of changes but also a lot of suppressions, I expressed my worries. For many centuries the scientific thought was blocked, channelled into the dark corridors of dogmas, that now, when it is released, the movement of its flow is so strong that nothing can stop the change.

At times like these every single thought and action counts, Ottavio continued my argument. When the change is instigated, each one of us is the one that builds the critical mass to move the change in the desired direction.

If the main focus is on science, the world will gain tremendous speed in scientific discoveries, if the majority focus is on spirituality, our descendants will have an advantage of contemplative thoughts, said Ama thoughtfully, as though she was not quite sure what was the path we needed to take.

God has created an opening, a sign that clearly showed us that the time is ripe...

The great supporter of Christianity Paul Siu again resumed the high offices and is now in charge of the Chinese Calendar reform. I shared the good news I received just that morning.

This will give us a perfect opportunity to demonstrate our good will to Chinese governors, to offer the secrets of Arabic and European science in return for protection and the right to preach Christianity in China.

There is more good news to share, I said, Johann Adam Schall von Bell, a great friend of mine, the head of our mission was asked to replace his predecessor Schreck who was gravely ill in the work of reforming the Chinese calendar. This task is far removed from his ordinary duties of the apostolate but he is an honest man and he understands that in its success lay the future of the mission.

Father John Adam was a highly educated man born in a noble family in Cologne. His voice, looks and movements mirrored his background, love for studies and Jesus. He was a young Jesuit when he first arrived to Macao in 1619, when we were still deeply troubled by the war waged against us four years earlier by the high mandarin Kio Shin. Four of our chief missionaries could not any longer do their mission and were expelled to Macao. His first 10 years within the mission were troublesome and bear no fruit. Now, in 1630, he had behind him many years of experience of successes and failure of conversion of Chinese into Christianity, he spoke Chinese perfectly, and clearly understood that for us to succeed our approach must radically change.

When he was asked to replace his predecessor Schreck he immediately understood that in its success lay the future of the Christian mission.

As you know, I was talking to John Adam, we base astrology on calculation of the movements of planets along the ecliptic. In Chinese astrology, the lunar zodiac has prime importance, the sky is divided into 28 segments of moons journey through the sky.

The establishment of the Chinese Annual Calendar is one of the most important affairs of the Chinese State. The Board of Mathematicians composing of 200 highly educated members gathers every year to announce the astronomical situation for the coming year. Their task is to build a calendar for the year to come, taking into consideration the days of new and full moon, the times of the solstices and equinoxes, the positions and conjunctions of planets, movements of the sun with the dates of its entrance into each of the twenty-eight constellations that form the Chinese zodiac.

This Calendar is for the natives extremely valuable. Ama emphasised my point.

Just yesterday, at Li Po's house, I met one of his friends, a fortune teller and astrologer, he was constructing a personal horoscope for a rich merchant's son. He showed me a rectangular frame-shape grid, he was working on, divided into twelve smaller rectangles. He used both horoscope and the yearly calendar to establish auspicious and inauspicious days in the year, and in the life-time of the merchant's son, to calculate days that are good for his education, marriage, start of business and other family affairs. Looking at the personal Chart and the yearly Calendar, he then calculated days for action and days for rest, days when different Gods are worshiped, and when trouble or luck is more likely to strike. The Calendar is the guide for every single day within the year!

Very important! Ottavio nodded.

The Chinese astrologers, educated and non-educated people believe that they can calculate the circle of life and death, map each person or event into the horoscope. They all believe in how essential the accuracy of the Calendar is.

I read Huai Nan Tzu, the ancient Chinese astrological script, I tried to explain the text. The stars are grouped in five enormous stars constellations in, for me, a completely unrecognisable manner. The Heavens are divided into Guardians of the four directional palaces, called: The Green Dragon of Spring, the Vermilion Bird of Summer, the White Tiger of Autumn, the Black Tortoise of Winter. The only one that I could recognise studying the map was the Great Bear that was within the fifth 'palace', called the Central Palace.

Finding a chapter of Huai Nan Tzu that gave Emperors pointers of how to rule the Kingdom and how Heavens behave, I read them out to my friends:

'Men's lives are reflected in the movement of Heaven;  
When there is cruelty and violence, there will be violent winds.  
When there are oppressive laws, there will be plagues of insects.  
The Four Seasons are the Annals of Heaven;  
The Sun and Moon are the Messengers of Heaven;  
The Stars and Planets record Heaven's seasons;  
Rainbows and comets are Heaven's warnings.'

The book also has a guideline for every single day:

'In the time of Chia Tzu, action should be restrained,  
In the time of Ping Tzu the worthy should be promoted  
In the time of Wu Tzu the old and widows should be cared for, favours bestowed and goods sold  
In the time of Keng Tzu walls and barriers should be improved and fortifications strengthened.'  
In the time of Jen Tzu close the gates of villages, search strangers thoroughly, execute offenders and close bridges.

We watch the sky all the time, my Chinese friend nodded, noting any changes in the appearance of each and one of the stars. Changes may be in the colour, the position or the brightness and they are all interpreted to mean something specific, an appointed minister will be well liked and respected, a war will

break out, a prominent person may be punished for the wrongdoings, the army leaders will die, the earth will be very fertile or destroyed by droughts, crops will ripen to maturity or the harvest may fail.

To hope to understand the Chinese astrology, I told John Adam, we need to understand Chinese symbols, and elements and their interaction.

The White Tiger that is ruler of one of the Heaven's Palaces is in fact an actual beast that within the Chinese mythology has a life of a thousand years, and the Vermilion Bird is another mythological creature with the front of a swan, the tail of a fish, the head of a serpent, and the body of a tortoise. The myths live in parallel with the reality. Explained Ama this intricate game.

I will leave these intricate mythological creatures to you! Smiled John Adam. Let's not lose our track, let's go back to the Calendar!

The accuracy of the Calendar is especially important because the eclipses of the Sun concern the ruler of the country; and those of the Moon concern his generals and advisers and none of them are a good omen, that is why a good astrologer needs to precisely calculate them.

A typical Chinese calendar-almanac records the days by month, and by cyclical sign and it lists auspicious days for journeys, marrying, building houses, carrying on a trade, burying the dead, collecting money, cutting down trees, taking medicine, repairing walls, digging ditches, sweeping and bathing. Every single activity is enlisted within these calendars.

So you can imagine how important the precision of the movements of Heavenly Bodies is. A simple mistake can disturb the whole calculation and create a lot of disturbances. Ottavio was thoughtful.

The Chinese astrology is based on twenty-eight lunar mansions, or Hsiu, the constellations that Moon

encounters on its passage through the sky. Unfortunately, for the Chinese astrologers, finding out the particular Hsiu in which the Moon resides requires long and complex mathematics, and a library of almanacs and ephemerides. Since the Chinese year is lunar, New Moon falls always on the first day of the month, and it is shorter than the Western one by about ten days causing the year to 'drift'. Added Ottavio.

Then we need to wait for a mistake! And if their calendar is 'drifting', there soon should be one! Said John Adam. And if we make sure that they know that our calculation is superior, Chinese will come and ask for our help.

The Chinese astronomers are at the moment incapable of discovering the defects of their methods and calculations, and here is our opportunity, I said, the opportunity for us, missionaries, to render a service and strengthen our position in China.

This mission was well understood by our founder, Father Ricci, John Adam continued, who inspired some of the Chinese philosophers and scientists to start thinking about a translation of the Catholic liturgical calendar into Chinese. I will support this work following his foot-steps.

What we need to do is convince the authorities of the errors of their calendar. We shall make them understand that they need us and our calculations, said John Adam. For this to happen, I will need all your help! We have to teach the Chinese the principles on which we base our calculations and on which we propose they make their corrections.

To achieve this, John Adam continued, we will have to design a complete course in astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, and other areas of mathematics. This will be your task, dear Benedict, I will leave it in your capable hands to manage.

So I did. I designed courses, worked on translations, examined the different systems, worked on the merge of the two systems of knowledge.

The wheel of fortune was put into a motion because of a mistake of an hour by the Board of Mathematics in the announcement of an eclipse. We have made sure to warn them that this will happen, and Chinese were surprised to learn that our warning was actually accurate. They decided to request our help.

Many seeds were planted in many minds and the idea of the knowledge sharing became our reality. We all had our own goals, the Church wanted to spread Christianity in China, Chinese wanted to learn a better method for celestial calculations, and the goal of our little group was the interchange of the two scientific thoughts: we had much to learn from each other.

The idea started materialising.

Chinese were open to listening. They were open to learning.

Christians that we approached agreed that this is the way to Chinese hospitality. They were cautious and suspicious at first, of the tools we proposed to use, because some thought, helping Chinese worship their ancestors better, was not something Church authorities are keen on doing; but building their Calendar was building their trust and at that point trust was what was needed to continue our work.

Soon after, John Adam became a trusted counsellor of the new Emperor Shunzhi, he was made a mandarin and became Director of the Imperial Observatory and the Tribunal of Mathematics. His position enabled him to procure from the emperor permissions for the Jesuits to build churches and to preach Christianity.

Within the next fourteen years, John Adam became a very successful missionary.

We managed to convince the Empire to entrust the missionaries with the correction of the Calendar and we started to translate books containing the rules of European astronomy. We worked for years translating precious manuscripts and books into Chinese.

Not all of us had the same mission.

Rumours had it that the ships of the English East India Company sailed up the Pearl River and after they were refused trading privileges they went into pillaging and burning of many vessels and villages, spreading destruction wherever they appeared. The Chinese even claimed there were incidences where armed parties of Portuguese soldiers entered into villages and carried off their women, and in revenge they started destroying Portuguese ships killing hundreds of their crew.

It is difficult to see Christians as anything but savages who cannot tolerate other cultures, Gods, and ways of thinking. Ottavio started one of his arguments about the ways Christians behaved as guests of foreign lands.

Europeans are acting overwhelmingly rude. The colonial powers act with violence and brutal strength, with no moral values, and are inspired and moved only by money. Ottavio was getting angry talking.

It is our task to show Chinese the other, spiritual and scientific side of our culture, the side that cherishes philosophy and self-knowledge, I told him.

The prevailing thought amongst educated Chinese is that missionaries are hard to communicate with and very dogmatic. They push the belief that there is no other truth but Christian truth, and this will always keep them apart from the learned classes of China who know better than just to follow a dogmatic view.

In the midst of this turmoil, we were trying to build a new foundation that was supposed to mark the beginning of a new century of knowledge exchange between enlightened minds of China and Europe.

Our method and our prediction soon proved to be true, working on the Calendar was the way to Chinese trust.

By 1634, we helped in translation and printing of around a hundred books containing the arts of European sciences: astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, mathematics and astrology. Thirsty for knowledge that is coming from afar, the Chinese for a moment forgot the hardship that Europeans brought and started to open their for centuries locked doors accepting our thoughts and beliefs.

All the provinces of China were soon informed of the important task that was given to the missionaries. The news was received with interest and we were now looked at with curiosity and accepted in many Chinese homes where previously we had no access.

Now, when we are working with the intellectual cream of China on a common goal, on the reform of the Calendar, our reputation is strengthened, and the Chinese feel honoured to be in our presence. Said Ottavio thoughtfully.

Wherever we go we are greeted with respect, listened to and publicly congratulated. Gospel preaching is allowed in all provinces and the first public church opened in the capital. In just a few years of our work, the Emperor, who I met personally, issued an imperial declaration praising our work, Christian religion, and permitting it to be preached and adopted everywhere.

We've even managed to convert ten eunuchs, within the Imperial Palace, laughed Father Schall. This class is the first one to oppose any of our preaching. Now, we also have their support.

This happy progress was for a time stopped by the invasion of the Tatars and the revolution that overthrown the Ming dynasty, and brought Manchu dynasty into power.

At Peking, Father Schall assisted the last of the Ming in his resistance, yet to no avail, the time has come for him to leave his kingdom.

Luckily the Tatars regarded us favourably. Shun-chi, a new ruler was only eight years old when he was proclaimed emperor in 1643.

The minister who governed in Emperor's name for six years confirmed all Schall's powers regarding the Calendar. The young emperor was very curious to meet the missionaries; he loved listening to the tales of the foreign lands that these educated men brought with them and he often called Father Schall to the interviews in his palace. The young Emperor even unexpectedly knocked at Father Schall's door to discuss with him the nature of life, Universe and purpose of all things on Earth.

Shortly after this happy event the new mathematical rules brought in by Christian missionaries to make the Calendar, became compulsory for all the official Chinese astronomers.

The peak of these events was Father Schall's appointment as the president of the Board of Mathematicians.

Our victory was finally real!

The negative seeds planted during the last century, were now uprooted and the seedlings turned to be: understanding and respect.

Seeing what was behind us we now had Hope.

We have together dreamt of a world to come that will not have boundaries, that would be free, a world where people would be able to spread knowledge easily, to communicate and learn from each other without prejudices. Without the segregation of thoughts, sharing what we had, we dreamt of a free world.

The young emperor, Shun-chi, not only appointed Father Schall as President of the Board, but also gave him high rank as a mandarin to correspond with this important status.

Father Schall was aware that accepting this high rank is a violation of the canon law which forbade priests to hold civil offices and was hesitant of accepting. He tried, for more than twenty years to decline this honour and he told me that he had refused it eight times, that he even pleaded on his knees before the Tribunal of Rites to be released from it, but that he was forced into it to keep the good will of the Governors.

In 1653, as thanks for all the work done in the reform of the Calendar, Shun-chi bestowed on Father Schall the title of *Tung hiuen kiao shi*, "Most Profound Doctor". John Adam showed me this intricate marble tablet, written in Tatar and Chinese, encircled with dragons and other carved ornaments. For me it was the symbol of all the achievements that we have managed to attain during this time of scientific sharing. Father Schall also got the gift of a new house and a donation for a new church, the first public church that opened in the capital.

But not all were ready for this huge and profound change.

Father Schall's acceptance of the high Chinese official rank, was the reason for much gossip and ethical discussions among the priests in Macao for several years.

A more serious question troubled our missionaries.

How can a Christian Priest be President of the Board of Mathematicians that publishes a yearly Calendar that is full of superstitions and various beliefs that are not in line with the teachings of Christianity?

How can Father Schall stand behind and sign a pagan sacred script that supported worshiping of ancestors, rituals and practices that were not Christian?

How can a Catholic Jesuit Priest head a board that governs practices that are not in line with the Christian scripts?

I'll tell you a story – Ama once told us – there was a very good musician, a flautist, living next to the forest. He was able to play so beautifully that everybody would stop to listen. He was admired by men, by animals and by spirits. He was gifted. He would descend Beauty and Spirit through his music. One day, when he was sitting in the woods playing his flute, wolves, foxes and birds were all peacefully gathered to admire his music, a huge dark tiger jumped out of the forest, surprised everybody, and attacked the flautist eating him alive in a matter of seconds before anybody could utter a word. The gathered crowd was disappointed, astonished and stunned by what has happened. How could you do something like that, didn't you hear how beautiful and heavenly his music was? – they asked in one voice. Music, play, heaven...? What are you talking about, said the half deaf tiger.'

You cannot play music to the deaf, no matter how good you are, the deaf will not hear you.

I was very weary of the deaf.

Meeting people who want to know, Ama said, you'll realise, look different from the rest. They look straight into my eyes going deep before I even have a chance to introduce myself. Their eyes shine when they meet a person who might have a possibility of an answer, whatever their life quest is. They are interested to know. To them, it is worth playing the music. They appreciate it and cherish it. They reproduce it and the seed that is planted is never wasted. They have the potential to become carriers of Light and for them the doors of Wisdom have already opened. They seek Wisdom. Seek this type of audience, they will inspire you.

There is another group of people open to listening. A group that does not search, but has through the life of virtue accumulated the energy of Purity that attracts Love, Knowledge and Light. They intuitively understand, and work with them is so much easier. They don't call their way, The Way, but with the transparency of their crystal souls, they pave their way to Listening. It is more difficult to convince them to act, but their approach is much more natural. They enter into a meditation with Purity of a child and they reach the highest ecstasies praying, in a matter of an instance. They constantly talk to angels and they are completely unaware of their powers. Always give them due respect.

The audience that reminds me of the deaf tiger is the one that is rough, the one that is convinced that there is no subject that they do not know the best, the one that has closed itself to learning. They are ready to confront you at all times. They are not ready to listen or grow, they are not ready to receive. They like to believe that they own their lives that they can decide, that they can act differently, and yet they are driven by attachments and instincts. It is easy to see the mistakes they are going to make and the mistakes that are waiting for them in the future. Within the infinite number of possibilities for a soul to develop, they always chose the same one – the way of suffering. With them the number of scenarios is limited, two and two always seems to result in four. They believe that they are in control and that everybody else is at fault.

I learned this lesson properly following my own mistake. I tried to convert some deaf tigers, hoping that they will be turned into Warriors of Light, underestimating the degree of their craziness. This mistake almost cost me and Ama our lives.

Fra Thomas was one of my death tigers.

I always knew in advance whether I will meet Fra Thomas that day. An uncomfortable sense of mischievous mystery accompanied his presence and I

felt it much before his appearance. My stomach would turn uneasy moments before he approached me. Whenever he would plot one of his conspiracies, I would have a head start, knowing deep within, that I should be careful. However, that wasn't very helpful, because God sent him almost always when I was least ready for him - during one of those 'cursed' moments, when I felt either too strong and confident, unable to judge the strength of the opponent standing in front of me, or when I would feel too weak and too attached to my-own solitude, to be able to fight him back properly.

Fra Thomas was one of my weaknesses.

It was difficult to stay calm after his visit and his explosions of hatred. His petty words, his remarks, his distorted logic was not just his but the Universal cry of all human mistakes crammed together in a pot of selfishness and separation. His hatred was a baby of all the forces within the Humanity that wanted to stop the progress of Consciousness and wanted to stay within the space of Struggle and Distress. I saw his devils and I wish to change them. I saw rage and anger and I saw red, red that was burning within everything he touched. I saw limitless beliefs put into a box of prejudices, fears and saw him locking the box and refusing not to bury the key in an unapproachable space of human failures.

I saw far too late that he will not understand.

He looked as though he is surrounded with a cloud, his voice cold, his brain recalling all the happenings covered with a veil soaked in black.

Once surrounded with the black velvet of our own thoughts and emotions, the light of the Sun can just not reach us. The darkness is too concentrated. I remember once discussing this veil of darkness with Ama.

He lives his own Reality that is the reality of his Church, that is his Truth and nothing else is important. Once Ama remarked.

Listening to his words, I detached and observed, I stopped fighting, knowing that I cannot win.

I stopped the clock and looked into his face.

I saw one of the possible scenarios of the future of humanity unfolding within his face that was clenched in despair, where each wrinkle narrated a story of 'I' that does not want to be Awake and Conscious, united with Wisdom, with Knowledge, with God, of 'I' that has the right to kill, judge and stay separated. He hated Ama and the hatred was in his eyes.

She is a witch, I am certain of it, and I will do all I can to stop her black magic. And her father is a witch too! All that wealth, what do you think, where is it coming from? It is Devil that helps them out!

You remember Ruben, he was like son to me, he was under her spells and who knows how many other people too. I am here to warn you, I came as a friend, before you become one of them!

I know of their wicked work, devouring children and causing sickness and death.

I almost laughed at this last sentence because both Ottavio and Ama were extremely conscious of other being's sufferings. I couldn't even imagine them killing an animal for food, let alone devouring children or harming anybody around them. The laughter stopped half way through my throat because I knew that these are not laughing matters, Fra Thomas was too dangerous for laughs.

I stopped the time waiting for him to collect.  
I stopped the time waiting for Earth to react.  
I stopped the time waiting for the critical mass to move the energies into the balance. I looked up into God's eyes and He turned his head, refusing to look at me. The time has not yet come! We planted the seeds for future generations to enjoy. This was not our moment! The time has not yet come!

Humanity was not yet ready to hear.

Fra Thomas, Church and Humanity were too immersed in anger to notice anything else. They were too self-centric, pain-focussed, Church-revolving, dogma-centric, they stayed separated from the world of Life, choked within their own darkness. They stayed an embodiment of Supreme Selfishness.

Fra Thomas's face, his choice of words, all the 'holy' wars, and the killings in the name of Lord, tortures, prosecutions, Inquisition, they were all gathered there, in front of me, shaping the destiny of the future centuries, within Fear and Confusion.

Taking out from the pocket of his little coat a book, hidden until that moment, his Witch-hunter's manual, he said:

Do you know what is happening in the main-land? They are all over the place! They fly and meet the Devil every night! It is now the time for us to re-act and uproot this supreme wickedness!

You must be familiar with this, he said, but continued reading, as though he was hoping to influence me, change my mind or break the spell I might be under: *'it has recently come to our ears,'* he started reading, *'not without great pain to us, that many persons of both sexes, heedless of their own salvation and forsaking the catholic faith, **give themselves over to devils male and female,** and by their **incantations, charms, and conjurings,**... ruin and cause to perish the offspring of women,...*

*...that they afflict and torture with dire pain and anguish, both internal and external, these men, women, cattle, flocks, herds, and animals, and hinder men from begetting and women from conceiving, and prevent all consummation of marriage...*

She is not married, you know that, he said, and she managed to lure Ruben into her sinful net, I know that, I saw them together!

We looked at each other, measuring words, using them as swords. He carried a shield of intolerance rooted deep within the humanity, its beliefs, its fairy-tales, its myths, its Holy Books, the shield of Separation.

My reasoning was weak against his pain, the pain of Humanity and the pain of the future weak ones that are still to be tortured and dragged into the nightmares of discrimination, religious wars, fake morality, hatred. My words about fairy tales of witchcraft, about love Ama had for the people around her, about the ones she cured, got scattered and bounced off a wall, returning as wounded birds. The more I said, the more he believed that I am the Witch too, dancing sinful dances on the Full Moon on the Grave Yards, using dead people bones as music instruments.

The era we lived in was not as yet ready to accept our mission, was not as yet ready for such a drastic change, the merge of many into One.

The Humanity was too obsessed with a notion of separation. Our dream of building the critical mass that changes the world's consciousness and its way of behaving, entered the cracks of stones, hid behind the thick evergreen branches, merged with the moon's reflection that observes the river flow, in front of this man with an epithet of dogma steaming revulsion from each of his pores. We managed to translate and distribute books and open Chinese thought to the Christian thinking, but we didn't manage to open the channels from the other end, our homeland thinking pattern stayed firmly grounded, inflexible and stubbornly rigid.

Even though, within our lifetime, we managed to re-earn the Chinese respect, even though we managed to establish peace, even though we built churches this was not enough.

Fra Thomas aimed a carefully prepared poisonous arrow into my heart saying that the Authorities of the

Church in all our work saw failure. The Church was now officially disapproving of our Mission.

The Board of Mathematicians is now chaired by a Jesuit, but the Church wanted more, wanted to see Chinese convert into Christianity, wanted to see different Chinese worships disappear with all the traditions dropped and abolished.

There is no compromise, Fra Thomas insisted.

The Chinese continue to follow their primitive rituals and customs and they combine their ancient worship with the Christianity, and this is unacceptable, it is a disgrace and heresy.

Beliefs in guides and spirits are primitive, he repeated, predictions are pagan and the Church cannot live in peace with paganism!

We have to fight against the old customs within this land for our Mission to flourish! It is not a Christian victory if we co-exist with the old!

Fra Thomas was just passing a message we all feared, the message of the Church that did not want to move, grow or accept.

At the time, with my mind deep within the Mission, it hurt me deeply to see that even here, thousands of miles away from Rome, was difficult to escape the grasp of the Old. For some there was only one right religion and there could be no two right paths.

The minds of men were not yet ready to hear.

To the non-Christians, Fra Thomas was shouting, we have nothing to say, other than they were given a chance to repent and come to God, but they chose not to.

How about people who did not get a chance to hear the Gospel, I asked, or some righteous living on a remote part of the land?

Who are we, to question the Creator? He has all the right to save who he chooses! Fra Thomas exclaimed.

I cringed hearing this answer, I cringed seeing this man.

That month, in 1655, five theologians of the Roman College examined Fra Thomas's accusations and Father Schall was asked to resign from the position of the President of the Board of Mathematicians.

I feared this move.

The Good Will was about to be broken.

That month, Fra Thomas arrested Ama for witchcraft.

The fortune wheel turned against us.

Its deadly cracks were above our heads and we feared it would crash directly on us. Years of work and effort seemed to be in vain. Is it possible that the Human Race is just too close to the instinctive to be able to initiate the birth of the New Age, to instigate the Change? The Galaxies of Human Minds were shaking, we had the support of hundreds of Souls that were born to help the shift, the Lady Science passed to us so many insights, and yet, the Old Structure was not ready to fall.

The history now reads like this:

- Conflicts between the Chinese Government and the Catholicism that culminated in the 1616, and that were under the control for more than 30 years, were now back at its highest force.
- High ranking officials advised the Emperor that Catholicism is not respecting Chinese customs and that it should be banned.
- By disrespecting Chinese culture we sent out a message of war.

Our protector, Emperor Shun-chi died in 1662 and Chinese arrested Father Schall and myself in 1664.

Although they found no evidence of conspiracy, we were imprisoned on the count of high treason and of propagation of an evil religion. Across the country, about 30 missionaries were arrested and sent to the capital for questioning, only a few were allowed to stay outside the city, the rest were deported and imprisoned. Churches were closed down and scriptures burnt.

In 1720, some 50 years after our death, the time carried the same tension between the two, Emperor Yong Zheng passed a law deporting all missionaries from China. Most of the missionaries were forced to flee for Macao, a lot of churches were converted to town halls and schools or torn down. Followers were banned from becoming Catholics again.

Our age, called for martyrs that would die in the process of the reform, sacrificing themselves for the benefit of the future generations.

Defeats and closeness of Death discouraged me, not allowing me to see the death and pain of my loved ones in the light of the changes that would happen later, much, much later. The success of the Calendar conversion was apparently short lived, yet its effects touched the depths of both civilisations.

The energy, the efforts that we put into these events, Ama wasn't discouraged, will live longer than our actual victory or defeat. Even though, you might feel that our work is lost, it is not, it will lead the minds of many.

Once the Web that connects us strengthens, she said, we will get to the critical mass, we will break the resistance and the power of change will become our Reality. Bones of our thoughts, and air of our intention will mix with Earth and clouds, keeping our imprints alive, so we will resurrect once the time is ripe for the new Consciousness and for the birth of the Society we all dream of, the Society that is based on the merge of many into One.

Within the mission, during our struggle, I reached the heights climbing the untouchable, and hit the bottom within the darkness of the jail. I had to give up, resign, leave everything and die to be reborn again with the Knowledge of the Self.

After the short trial where everyone including us knew we were guilty, we were condemned to be cut in pieces and to be beheaded.

When I completely gave up, when I surrendered to Death, the Heavens opened to deliver a miracle.

A violent earthquake came over Peking, a thick darkness covered the city, meteors appeared in the sky, with the dark rain damaging a part of the Imperial palace.

Listening to the air filled with the sound of roaring lions and cracking thunders, the end of the world seemed near. The rivers, roads moved and trees got uprooted. Earth's anger was visible everywhere. Chinese feared the worst. They had a fresh remembrance of an earthquake that occurred around a century ago, the earthquake that was still vividly alive within the stories of their grandparents.

That time when Earth bestowed its rightful place amongst us scared mortals, the power of Her dance was such, that the hills that took thousands years to form became valleys in a minute, and valleys that hosted river beds for centuries, became hills. That earthquake was huge, the awakened Dragon hit an amazing area of 500 miles. The rocks ruptured under the massive burst of energy. No corner on Earth was spared. The elements took their revenge in turns. Water gushed out from underground and fire closely followed it. The winds stormed filling the air with horror. 98 counties and eight provinces were that week visited by Death. Bodies mixed with debris buried under poorly constructed houses or simply swallowed into the Earth's womb were everywhere. The Chinese that survived could not extinguish the fires for days, and what the fire spared, the floods

destroyed, ruining the water supplies opening the door for diseases to quickly spread. A total of 830,000 people lost their lives.

A possibility of history repeating itself was terrifying for the grand-children of the Great Earthquake.

They quickly connected the meteor rain with our imprisonment and in fear of worse calamities, they decided to release both myself and Father Schall. Our death sentence was revoked and we were sent back home.

In the meantime, we sent a statement to Rome explaining what happened with our mission, and a new commission concluded in 1664, eight years too late, that there was no valid reason for Father Schall's dismissal. Unfortunately, we could not turn back the time.

Throughout my stay in jail I meditated about God, purpose of Life and Universe and my karmic pattern within this amazing Mission. During those moments, I lacked the humility to accept the path, and understand the perfection of His Knowledge. I wanted victory, I impatiently wanted to shake up the Humanity from its never-ending slumber, getting out of the circle of suffering, joining the circle of Knowledge.

He had different plans. He wanted us to pave the road for the New Consciousness, not to walk on it as winners. He wanted us to open the doors for generations that will come hundreds of years later. He wanted us to try and gain knowledge, to practice Love on the battle-field of Life so that when we come back next time we can win and instigate the change moving the Earth into the New Era.

Both John Adam and myself spent our last years separated from the other missionaries and removed from the obedience to the Pope. I lived in Ottavio's household into my old age. I stayed Ama's and Ottavio's faithful friend until the very end always on a lookout for the Souls that still don't know the Way,

guiding them through and helping them understand themselves.

Ama helped me grow through my own conflicts, through my own work, and she loved me dearly allowing me to love Her as pure as I could. I left this life some years after Death knocked also onto Ottavio's doors and I left with a determination to return when the time is ripe to reopen my mission.

I maintain that Truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect....If an organization be created for this purpose, it becomes a crutch, a weakness, a bondage, and must cripple the individual, and prevent him from growing, from establishing his uniqueness, which lies in his discovery for himself of that absolute, unconditioned Truth....You can form other organizations and expect someone else. With that I am not concerned, nor with creating new cages, new decorations for those cages. My only concern is to set men absolutely, unconditionally free.

**Krishnamurti**

## **A Man Trained to Hate**

For years I (Fra Thomas, if you wonder about my name) didn't want to meet her, because I believed she had a power of a nymph that attracts her victims and locks them with her beauty taking away the freedom of their free will.

The rumours of the magic, spells and witchcraft that surrounded her, kept us mentally connected and physically firmly apart. Not knowing her gave me strength to attack her and hate her for being what she is. I used every single chance to scold Ruben or any other Christian for seeing her and I used every single opportunity to voice my disagreement when I would see that the citizens of Macao followed her.

It was difficult to watch over the moves of Ama and Ottavio de Nobile because their lives were very private. Unlike many of us, they would rarely talk to strangers and it was almost impossible to see them on the public gatherings unless they organised them. To my surprise and disappointment, their friends were very faithful and no attempt of mine to get to know them better and to find out their darker secrets was successful, but I would still mark every single one of them in my efforts to stop them from influencing the life of Macao.

Ottavio de Nobile was for me a difficult target, because of his wealth and his powerful friends. Some of the very influential and well-known men of Europe and China were on the list of his protectors. Many times I tried to instigate an inquiry against this man, but my efforts were to no avail.

Knowing that Ama was black and that her mother was a slave, I waited for my moment, for Ottavio's death, to take my actions against her.

In the meantime, I followed their friends, prominent missionaries, scientists, government officials, and amongst them Ruben, Benedict and Father Schall closely.

Ruben was like a son to me before the Dutch attack. The amount of converts he had was a beautiful example to other young priests who came to China with the same mission, to spread Christianity and preach Christ's faith. I was always impressed by the strength of his faith and I could not see him losing the sight of Christianity.

When he arrived to Macao he was a very eager young man, completely devoted to Christ, to Jesuits and their teachings. He followed the Divine Will, as manifested in Christ, by our Vicar on earth, the Pope and by the Bishops appointed to rule His Church and he felt a sincere respect for the authorities. His first guide in any event was Christ and the second was the Church and its hierarchy and guidelines.

He believed with all of his heart in conversion and together we spent months finding the best ways to deliver non-believers to Christianity, the best ways to save them. We both believed that we could be truly successful only if we understood the culture and the language of people we were trying to convert. We spent months of seclusion fervently studying Chinese so that we would be able to understand them better. We studied Taoism and Buddhism discussing the concepts of their religions to be able to create a bridge for converts to cross from old to new. It was Ruben who came to an idea to exploit the fact that Chinese truly believed in the existence of Tao or the true way.

This belief, Ruben told me, will open the ears of Chinese to the preaching of the Gospel and to Christianity as a possible true path - the two did not clash, they were complementary.

Chinese are very systematic in their approach towards morality, Ruben continued devising his theory, and they firmly believe in hierarchy and order, they believe in the use of reason to determine which way is true, and our entry point into their culture should be this appeal to reason.

Chinese will see Moses' Ten Commandments as a very systematic way to approaching God, Ruben explained, so we will have no problem with their introduction.

Using this approach, we were very convincing and Chinese listened carefully to our reasoning; soon we were leaving converts in vast numbers.

Our relationship started changing after the day of the Dutch attack to Macao.

I was away on the day of the attack and when I returned I heard amazing stories of his bravery. It was after the fight that he for the first time mentioned Ama, but it wasn't but after some years that I realised how close to Ama he became. My suspicions were proved by the ever decreasing number of converts he had, and by his final refusal to continue converting Chinese into Christians and his constant wish to instead stay in the monastery and pray.

The only logical explanation for his weird behaviour was that Ama cast a spell upon him. Reuben was young and she certainly was seductive. I did my best to stop this relationship. First I tried talking to him as a brother would, consoling him and guiding him through his sinful thoughts, then I tried to wake him up scolding him, threatening him, even following him through the maze of streets of Macao whenever I had a chance, so that I could catch them in their wickedness and show them their misdoings.

Years past and no effort of mine was fruitful so during one of our encounters I demanded from Ruben to either leave the Church or stop seeing Ama. To my amazement he decided to leave us both. Hearing his decision, I felt as though I have lost a son. Ever since, I kept this wound open and the pain burning, looking for a moment I would revenge the loss of this special Soul.

Only once we had a chance to talk face to face, the time I was in her house determined to arrest her,

determined to prove her connection with Devil. This happened many years after Ruben left.

A room that looked like a prayer room with an altar in the middle was our battle field. The altar was in a triangular shape, a triangle with all the sides equal. The room was full of astrology symbols. These days astrology was inseparable from astronomy and it was an official tool of the Church in its search for Truth. Both philosophers and priests were examining astrology to understand divine professes and the science was popular in courts, and in villages, the stars were always consulted.

I knew that Ama was familiar with astrology. I also knew of Ottavio's efforts to reform the Chinese Calendar and I knew that astrology was closely related to this effort.

My excuse for this little visit to De Nobille's household was a research I chaired on alchemy. I used Father Benedict's recommendation so that Ama would invite me into their house.

As you know, she said, Alchemy and Magic are female aspects of Christianity. They represent the unknown side, underground methods, daughters, Yin of religious work.

I was going around the room, looking at books that were piled next to the fire place and pictures hanging on the walls. I searched for the forbidden books, for a proof that Ama was a heretic.

While you, preaching Christianity, work with morals, Alchemy works with the undiscovered side of conscious, the side that is inside the shadow.

The word: shadow, attracted my attention.

She looked at me and smiled.

Developing female principles, she said, through understanding myths and magic helps the visible,

rational, Yang part of soul development, the religion. A Yin side of the nature always seeks, asks, awakens the Yang counterpart, Christianity and Alchemy seek each other and are closely interlinked.

The Alchemy works with our emotional, dreamy states, with symbols and sounds, but is yet based on knowledge. Alchemy explores spirituality, experiments with unknown in order to understand the soul and its ascend to God and creates a science out of its experiments.

Through Christ or through Devil, I asked.

The goal is the same in both cases!

I almost jumped out of my skin.

I mean, for Alchemy and Christianity, of course, she continued as though she didn't hear my remark, the goal is getting closer and closer to God, becoming one with God.

Dismissing magic and damning unknown, proclaiming it Devil's work, we just deepen the gap between good and bad, creating ever stronger differences.

*That is why I cannot hate you, you are a part of a God's plan, I could see her eyes telling me. A whore sins because she is labelled as a sinner and she is not given a chance to repent. Because we label her as a sinner, she stays one. All our sinners are sinners because they know not of other ways. Is this for real or am I dreaming?* I quickly awoke from my vision and got back to her words.

Dismissing Alchemy, Astrology, Medicine, Science, Magic, dogmatists turn their back to progress, to evolution, to change.

*The dogma ruled behaviours are static, they wither, die, tying knots around their necks, jumping into deep waters followed by a heavy stone of raggedness, inflexibility and lack of wisdom.*

Again, I was transferred into a different state, it was my mind talking, not Ama, and yet I could hear Ama's voice within my head.

*Look at the world around you, how many boundaries, how many walls, everywhere. Because we define sin so sharply we become sinful and we cannot get out of this circle. Any chemical used in one way can cure a disease but used in another can kill. The same is with people, with Gods and Devils and all the energies that exist on Earth. We get what we send out. Christ talked to prostitutes and tax collectors, we don't – we accuse them, attack them, hate them. We see our mischief within them and we cannot live with them within us. Their 'un-holiness' makes us unholy, that is why we do not keep them company. We are not able to love them and our lack of love is causing their fault.*

Was she casting a spell on me? *In the long run you cannot win, because progress is always one step ahead.* I shook off this vision and came back to the room of our encounter.

She was holding the cross in her hands with the most gentleness.

The cross will give us freedom. The square that was born out of a circle will give us freedom. Four points will direct us.

Dying to be re-born again, pure, above the Light...

Its secret is not in perfection but in completeness. Everything that is below the abyss carries the imperfection within. The order was established from the infinite and the life of dualities as we know it on Earth begun. Only through us meeting, marrying, merging, we will both reach God.

I learned a lot from Taoist, here in China. A Taoist opens and receptively listens to the Mother Earth, he is tolerant and patient believing that the gateway to the root of heaven is a feminine approach to life, gentle,

invisible movement. Cleansing the dark mirror of the mind, living a perfect freedom through joy and love, the natural order stays intact. The adept becomes 'hsien', a person who will never die and he can ride the wind and fly to the heavens forever.

Her words puzzled me. The cross that gives us freedom, duality and God, Mother Earth and the abyss, riding the wind, flying the heavens, of course she was talking about witches!

Heavenly Yang enters the mind that rest in peace, replacing earthly Yin that rises and falls within the ordinary. Containing the female within the male, black within the white, Yin within Yang, one will reach true unified energy and vitality, one will pass the door of immortality.

We all have a lot of Yin but a strong potential for creating Yang. By transforming Yin to Yang, we make ourselves Pure. The mind becomes diseased if emerged in negative thinking and the meaning of life is lost.

Too many negative thought will kill you, she said, now looking straight into my eyes.

For a moment I felt my shield melting, for a moment I felt my heart opening, for a moment I felt weak. Too many negative thoughts will kill me, myself, my soul's cry, God within me. Nobody has ever looked at me in such a way! I quickly closed my eyes and re-composed, in a fear that she is hypnotising me.

I felt her love, and this cannot be true, this woman cannot love me, I hated her passionately!

I hated her when she talked about Alchemy, I hated her when she talked about Christianity, I hated her when she talked about the Chinese beliefs, even though I wanted to hear just a bit more, hoping that her words will give me more proof of her witchcraft.

The only way is abandoning discriminating thoughts and feelings, polishing the mirror of the mind until the Light from within become the only one visible.

Knowing the strength of a man and keeping a women's care, discovering the fire within the water, becoming a child once more. Ama continued.

*Christ did say – become a child!* My thought wondered, but I re-focussed again, afraid to lose my hate, breaking her spell one more time.

During that encounter with Ama, I must have uttered many words as a response to hers. Obsessed with my-own mission to destroy this woman, I didn't listen to what she was trying to tell me. My focus had only one goal, to discover a thief, a liar, a deceiver, a witch, I was looking for a proof that I was right thinking that she put a spell on Ruben, that I was right that she devours children, that I was right that she is a hidden monster that feeds on people's energies and blood, and that we must accuse her and we must stop her.

I wanted to see Evil in her words and books and objects she was surrounded with.

I must have struggled and enquired and behaved as a child would, full of anger, wanting to prove and fight, being loud and rude and hard, not wanting to understand, not wanting to listen, not wanting to learn.

For some reason Ama offered me a key to the knowledge and this key has haunted me since.

Now, I cannot remember any of my words and I am ashamed of the strength of my rigidity, and I am left only with her wisdom. The words came to haunt me, many times, secretly in my dreams, or during my prayers, but mainly at the time of my death, when I had a strong realisation that I have wasted my lifetime. At the time of my death, I felt that the Truth was revealed to me and that I refused to take it in.

That day, I was there to arrest her, and so I have.

I was there to prove that she is a witch, a Devil's worshiper that poisons people around her. I wanted to hate her and I succeeded for it is easy to deceive the mind full of poison, she was my worst enemy. I dreamt of her being burnt, I dreamt of her powers being destroyed, I dreamt of her secrets being discovered, I wanted her to suffer.

Now, when I am dead for many centuries, I understand that she showed me a path that is also mine and that I have to explore it further.

Ama did not hate me. On the contrary, I saw love in her eyes. She didn't even see me as a necessary evil. A part of God's plan, a nuisance perhaps, but a part of God's creation. Deep within, I was defeated by the strength of her Purity.

Just in case you still wonder did I manage to do any harm to her or her father or her mission during my lifetime, yes I did. I convinced the Church officials that the reform of the Chinese calendar was a disgrace and that Father Schall was to be asked to resign and that led to the set of events that have awoken Chinese anger and in which I and many other priests were killed, many churches were destroyed and the only door to Chinese minds and hearts was firmly closed.

I also had Ama imprisoned for the witchcraft but her imprisonment lasted only a few days during which I didn't manage to conduct any of my enquiries to prove her connection with Devil. Her influential Chinese friends released her dismissing any court case as illegal since Macao was not supposed to be ruled by Portuguese but Chinese Government. She was out of the prison in no time and I was heavily scolded for daring to detain her.

My death put an end to the futility of my mission whose purpose only God and Ama, at the time, understood.

'He who joyfully marches to music rank and file, has already earned my contempt. He has been given a large brain by mistake, since for him the spinal cord would surely suffice. This disgrace to civilization should be done away with at once. Heroism at command, how violently I hate all this, how despicable and ignoble war is; I would rather be torn to shreds than be a part of so base an action. It is my conviction that killing under the cloak of war is nothing but an act of murder.'

Albert Einstein

## **A Man Trained to Kill**

I got to know Ama during the Dutch attack on Macao, during the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 1622.

Ama healed my wounds helping me recover after our defeat. I was a soldier of the Dutch East India Company whose fleet attacked Macao that fatal summer day in June 1622. I didn't trust her or anybody else around. I didn't like people and I didn't expect anything from them, I was just waiting for smoke to settle, my wounds to heal, and for time to be alone so I could escape, escape physically 'cause my mind was locked in chains, and I could do nothing about it.

The Dutch East India Company (for the ones who know Dutch: Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, VOC) was running the Asian trade routes and they were major political and economical power of the time, establishing colonies, and concluding treaties with Asian rulers. VOC was empowered to have its-own army, and I was a part of it, to imprison and execute convicts, and wage wars in Asia. As Portugal was 'united' with the Spanish crown, with which the Dutch were at war, the Portuguese Empire was a target for military interventions. Macao was a thriving port with excellent trade connections, so overtaking it could have meant increasing our domination in the region and further profits for the Company. Just to give you an idea of the Company's monopoly and the power at the time, the statistics say that during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, it sent almost a million Europeans to Asia on more than 4,500 ships, working with 2,5 million tons of Asian trade goods.

I had good relations with the 'top heads' of VOC, I was amongst their most respected soldiers, spies. They have entrusted me with a very interesting and an inspiring mission: they asked me to discover the secrets of martial arts that were carefully developed within China for centuries.

As a soldier, I was trained to fight with many different weapons, but observing one of the Chinese fighters I

quickly realised that their way of moving the body, their strategy of using opponent strength, their attitude towards the enemy, were more than a fight, they were an art form. Fascinated by this art the mission became my quest and I happily came to China as a spy to steal this fighting discipline from the very best. In Holland, we had arms, ships, canons, but they, Chinese, had a secret to the human body and mind.

My destiny soon led me to the Shaolin monastery in South China that was renowned for its long tradition of Chinese martial arts. In 1610, when I first stepped onto the Chinese ground, China was still ruled by the Ming Dynasty and Shaolin monastery blossomed. In those days, it housed over 1,000 soldier-monks.

As you can imagine, I had a hard time entering the monastery.

The monks would not under any circumstances trust a stranger, a foreigner, a Dutchman. An old local man narrating a fable gave me a key to their doors. According to the legend of Shaolin monks a Buddhist monk called Bodhidharma brought the martial arts from India to Shaolin monastery in early 500s. When he arrived at the temple, he was refused entry, so he went to a cave nearby and meditated until the monks were convinced of his spiritual eagerness. Knowing this story, armed with the letter of recommendation from some high Chinese officials, I followed suit using the same technique Bodhidharma used to be admitted to the temple. The recommendation letter protected me from an immediate expulsion but I had to spend weeks that turned into months living in the cave next to the monastery, sitting still, meditating, or training whenever I knew that there are curious eyes observing every movement I made. Awaking the curiosity of young soldiers monks, intriguing them by the fighting techniques I mastered during my past, slowly I gained their trust with my persistence to stay put until I am accepted to live in the Temple. After they saw me practicing meditation for hours, sitting still unconditionally, convinced them that even though I am

a foreigner, I am keen on learning Zen Buddhism and that my final goal is Enlightenment.

My entrance to the Temple was granted when I coincidentally stumbled upon a youth who was hurt, dying with a fever not very far from my cave. I tended his sickness and helped him come back to the Temple. The elders of the Monastery saw this as a good omen, and allowed me to enter the Temple's door. Before I was initiated into the martial arts practiced within the Temple, more than three years later, I had to patiently await my turn, proving myself to be loyal and trustworthy. #To insure that the art was not abused, it was never documented or given to 'strangers'.

After months spent cleaning and working within the monastery, practicing Chi Gung during the day and meditating at dawn, mid-day, mid-night, I was allowed to participate in the martial arts training.

Chi Gung or what they call the 'energy work' is a mix of minimum effort exercises performed in a focussed precise manner. My previous training relied on speed, power, and discipline, so I found these slow movements, quiet and gentle work-out, fascinating. Monks were convinced that Chi Gung can heal any disease, and keep the body in a perfect balance. According to them, Chi Gung exercises are essential for developing stability, training body posture and understanding the unity of breath and movements, and for increasing sensitivity. Not only that, I learned that Chi (Qi) is more than a concept or a method of healing, for the monks, Chi is the vital energy or life force that lives within all of us and it is a physical reality. People, animals, trees, rivers, mountains, planets, stars exist as an intriguingly complex network of overlapping and interacting energy fields. Knowing Chi, was ultimately, knowing God.

When the monks felt that I was fit for initiation, I had to take 36 oaths and 21 moral codes that officially marked me as one of them. Now, I could start my proper combat training. Once I was allowed to practise I learned quickly.

To the monks, my teachers, martial arts were methods to cultivate their mind and nourish their Buddha nature. 'Ming Sum Gim Sing' they would say: understand your mind and see your true nature.

Within the Temple, monks developed a new, high level martial art, gathering all the experience of the previous methods. The elders shared the most advanced knowledge of the human body, of human psychology, and fighting, and they created a completely new style called Wing Chun.

Wing Chun was designed for a single purpose, hand to hand combat. The monks' goal was to in the case of emergency, train ordinary people, even women, to fight very effectively in the shortest possible time. Their goal was to create a martial arts system that was simple and deadly. Every movement of the hands and feet had to be coordinated, precise and powerful and it had to directly apply within a fight.

When I got to know it, I realised why this new art was conducted and passed from monk to monk in such secrecy. It was a supreme art of killing.

Wing Chun is like a divine dance, my teacher said, it is very precise and clear. You do not need all the kicks that you usually find in other Martial Arts, you don't need all the strength, it is design to be effective. Wing Chun does not have fancy stuff around it, no high kicks, and its movements are very refined.

All you need to learn is the 'Five Lines' of human anatomy and you direct your strikes onto the third Yang line. This line is called the "One" line and divides the body into half. This line is the secret line that covers many vulnerable vital points of any human being. Hitting any of them will cause instant disability or death.

It is all about the human sensitivity, my teacher explained, about the flexibility, and coordination of arms and hands. Your opponent would be looking at

your hands and your feet would have already broken his knee caps, it is very fast, very effective.

You have to have the knowledge of how to use the force of the opponent against him and how to position your arms, limbs, and body in such a way so that the force becomes explosive. The fights do not last long, they are over in a couple of minutes.

The Hung Fa Yi punch is the most effective because it travels the shortest distance, he said, and is supported by the entire body structure. You will use it, only when your space is threatened, and then all the options are open: kicks, punches, traps, throws. This is one of the most dangerous postures for the combat.

I practiced Hung Fa Yi punch for months and performed it to its perfection. Wing Chun was a perfect combat technique for someone who was trained to kill since the age of 13. My passion for fight was in the past used by the VOC military machine and I was one of their best soldiers, famous for my talents. I knew how to hide, endure hardship, wait, sneak like an animal, and appear un-noticed killing quickly. I had a reputation. The more I was encouraged to kill, celebrated and recognised for my 'bravery', the more I hated myself and humanity that created me.

Even though it is difficult to believe, I was actually once a normal 12 year old boy who wanted to become the best in whatever he was learning, who looked at the shiny armour and dreamt of riding a horse defending his King. I got the armour, I got the horse, but the dream was long forgotten in the river of blood that was floating everywhere I went.

When I left the Temple, I realised that I have become a supreme killing machine. Every time my space was threatened, my tools would automatically turn-on and my kicks, and punches were mortal. Even though an expert in yet another killing technique, and I still could not explain why. My mission as a spy was at this point accomplished but I felt that my journey has not yet begun. Going back to Holland was not an option, the

work on much more amazing 'machine' started within the Temple, and the work on my 'mind', on my energy force, on my 'Chi' has opened in front of me, showing me an infiniteness of possibilities.

Lost in my thoughts, in my own discoveries of futility of life, its order and its sense, I lied and escaped from myself many, many times. Long time ago I stopped believing in God, in salvation, and in love. Hating others, I hated myself, entangled deep into a circle of defeat. People who saw me as a hero while I was on their side despised me when I rebelled killing somebody I shouldn't have. Their disgust amused me. As a sinner, for them, my best place was in the hands of Death. Soon after I returned to the Dutch, I was sent with the ship to fight for Macao, where I ended up stranded with the DeNobilles.

After the combat where I was left unconscious on Macao's grounds, Ama healed my wounds. She treated me as though she was my sister, as though she knew me all her life, and as though there is nothing more natural in the world but to spend sleepless nights curing a prisoner, sinner and a slave. She asked me my name and from then onwards she treated me as a free man and not only as a free man, but as an honest and sin-free soul. Now, this was scary, I could not relate to it, I couldn't understand what exactly was happening, I just knew that this woman had absolutely nothing against me.

My bird keeps flying directly towards my cat, Ama said when she met me, she comes to me only when the cat is in my lap, and lands exactly where the cat sleeps and she keeps exiting her nest only when she hears the cat purring. Just yesterday, I saved her from the cat's jaws, do you think she will ever learn? She glanced over me as though she doesn't see me and continued: Or will she stay flying towards the deadly embrace over-and-over-again choosing a completely un-fair fight over her deepest fears, and sacrifice her fragile body within the same attraction a butterfly suicidally enters the flame? Her hypnotic fascination, is so similar to our fixation with suffering that keeps

haunting us even though we know we could keep our journey towards the death, long and intense, walking the edge, without falling into the abyss of its shadows.

That midnight, once the sounds died within the house, I left what she called 'my' room, she left it unlocked, and I went into her chambers with an intention to steal some silver so that the money would help me find my way in these foreign lands. To my surprise she was standing dressed beside her door holding a lantern in her hands, and she looked at me, as though she was expecting me. That look was the look that I have seen before, when I woke up from my unconsciousness within her house, when I saw her for the first time, the look of recognition and inner joy, the look that said: I know you, come in, I know why you are here.

I was puzzled and surprised, I could have killed her or abused her, but there was no fear in her eyes.

You will find the best to sell and the finest silver inside this chest of drawers, she said, as though the silver was there just so that I could steal it.

You can also use this strong cotton bag, to put it all in, she pointed to the large strong hard woven sack.

She behaved as my companion in this crime and in reality I was stealing the silver from her. I looked around searching for a trap but there was nobody around, I had my martial arts techniques and fear and she had none.

I will go to sleep now, she said, so tell me if you need anything else.

But if you decide to stay, I will teach you how to walk the edge without the need for suffering, it will be my pleasure to have you within our household.

She handed me the lantern, going back to sleep as though I was her brother coming back from the night with friends and the only natural thing to do was to help him enter the house and continue the night of sleep.

Minutes passing like seconds and hours like minutes, holding to the lantern she gave me, feeling the candle light entering my Soul through my eyes, skin, breath, uncovering a dark deep hole, slime, disgusting bugs and animals all around, I felt exposed. Every time I tried to put the silver into the bag I felt a knife going through my heart, something was braking inside me. *I will teach you how to walk the edge without the need to suffer* I heard her say, over and over again. I wanted it to be a trap, I wanted her to set the alarm and wake up the whole household, I wanted them to chase me, fight me, kill me or I wanted just to wake up from this bad dream. Nothing happened! The whole house was asleep. Peacefully asleep...

I had to understand!

I left the sack, the silver, and went into 'my' room. I fell asleep repeating '*I will teach you how to walk the edge without the need for suffering*', dreaming that I was crying for hours until the dawn broke when without remembrance of a dream I entered a firm strong dark slumber that lasted for eternity. Nobody came to wake me up. That day, I fell down with fever and I regained my consciousness and strength 2 weeks later with a clear understanding that I wanted to stay in this household longer.

When I managed to get up and start walking, I became perfectly aware of all my ugliness. Aware of my body that was dirty, tired and abused with the long, heavy journey of lies and killings that I called my life. Aware of my smells that spread around the house like a plague. Clean clothes I got, when I arrived here, seemed not to fit me and white shirt that was given to me seemed too white. Aware of my body posture that was screaming, I do not belong here, this is not the world of sinners, this is not the world of murderers, bitten up or abused, please, get me out! Aware of the fact that I can hardly look anybody in the eyes and in this household everybody was looking me in the eyes! Their eyes were inquiring about my soul's journey, here

on Earth, their eyes were not accusing but inviting into the worlds I had no idea existed.

I will do my best to follow, I thought, aware that I am not starting from zero but from a big dark hole that had the name of my Soul. Within the Monastery, I was learning how to be still and meditate, here I will learn how to start knowing myself.

The process of my transformation was about to start within this chaos.

I was ready to spend a lifetime to understand!

Hoping, as a man without hope would, that Ama will have a mirror that will reflect back all the answers I had hidden within the layers of a non-believer's no-possible-answer-will-ever-help-me attitude. It took a second and a half from my decision to stay to the moment I realised that from a strong man I have become a shadow of my own ghosts.

During the first year of my stay in Ama's household, I was convinced that I am obsessed with the Devil. Thoughts of all the murders I committed tortured me, made me sick very often, made me cry, escaping into misery to find ways out of the misery, ways of liberation from the states of hatred and resentment towards the world around me and especially towards myself. The only way that offered any help during those long self-pity days was a hard physical work. I would find myself taking the dirtiest possible jobs, punishing my body and trying to purify myself from sins that now have existed only in my head. The people around me did not condemn me and have accepted me as their equal.

Since I knew no better I developed an obsession with the Devil and I was convinced that the Devil was ruling my heart. I thought that I would never manage to get rid of the grasp of the King of Darkness. When I had enough courage to share this thought with Ama, she just laughed. She narrated a story that happened in India many, many hundreds of years ago.

I will tell you a story of Krishna, and his main follower Arjuna. Krishna is an Indian God and he was one day meant to keep the guard deep within the dark forest. Arjuna, his main worshiper, got very upset and worried, he didn't want his Lord to get hurt because these woods were famous for the existence of notorious Devils that would attack and kill innocent. Hearing his worry, Krishna smiled and replied, 'Arjuna, I have never created demons and evil spirits.' This puzzled Arjuna, 'then, how can the non-existent demons appear in the forest and attack innocent' he asked his Lord? 'The demon you are talking about is not a demon at all. It is just a reflection of the evil qualities within you, your hatred, your anger, and your jealousy. The anger in you is manifesting as the demon. Its power is increasing in proportion to the intensity of anger within you.' Said Krishna. 'No demon has ever been created by me!'

We've created all our demons and devils to escape the responsibility of fighting against our own thoughts, and emotions, Ama said. It is much easier to invent a Devil who will take all the responsibility for our negative actions. It is much easier to blame it on an outside force then say: it is me who can do something about this situation, it is me who has to work and fight against my instincts, conditioning, and hatred. So, don't be lazy, it is you who is to blame and who will take the merit for your behaviour, not some Devils hidden in the woods who are waiting to attack you.

This was very different from anything I've heard before. Is it possible that Devils exist only in our minds? And God, what about God? She smiled and left, I was not as yet ready to hear the answer to that question...

Looking at the paintings of Krishna, a blue skinned young Hindu God playing his flute, a shepherd boy lost in the game of life and laughter, surrounded with many forest beings or Dakinis in love, I tried to connect with his lightness of Being. He had pearl ear-rings, head scarf decorated with diamonds, a happy God, not disturbed by Devils, evil spirits, or negative thoughts, seeing Life as far too interesting to waste it on worries and decay. Since I've tried my best not to give the

responsibility for my fears and insecurities to the Devil, I've decided to carry my burden on my own. From that point onwards, I asked all to keep calling me Krishna.

While living in Ama's household I learned to look at the world as a set of energies and myself as a manifestation of these energies. One of the first lessons within the Shaolin Temple, during my life in China, and within this magic house, was an elaborate lesson about the concept of Yang and Yin.

Chinese say that all negative emotions have their positive counterpoints and when one truly recognises, purifies and liberates the negative ones, they become their positive manifestation. Krishna, how are your Devils? Asked Ama teasingly.

I have troubles with all my little Devils (I was now amused calling them this way), with hatred, self-pity, attachments, desires and I am yet to learn how to transform them into their positives.

Often I think I am not progressing at all. Imagining my jealousy or hatred turning into respect, compassion or generosity feels like a life-long journey, leaving my desires for wealth, strength, love, or recognition for the cold dispassionate detachment towards all that army seems to be endlessly hard work! Just last night, I was confiding, I woke up in the middle of the night tortured with one of my previous 'kills', I woke up dreaming that I am challenged to fight, shouting, screaming, chasing the challengers away, saying that I do not want to fight, asking them to leave, to run, to disappear, before I change my mind. They just would not let me go. Surrounded by two, three, four of them, my fighting mechanisms kicked in and I fought and I killed and did not feel guilty! It is a reoccurring dream, am I lost forever?

I would have probably given up if I wasn't, every now and then, rewarded with a feeling of complete bliss and peace. A feeling I got as a reward for my efforts, a feeling difficult to describe, was a content floating in the air between the time of now and timelessness,

detached and fulfilled essence that would creep up after a heavy day's work or after a day of meditation spent in nature or while walking in the woods listening to the sounds of crickets. It would take me in by surprise like a lover would, gently caressing me, leaving me fragile, soft and in love with the whole world. These moments gave me a glimpse of what it could be if I was truly alive and not walking through the endless net of my unconsciousness.

Can it be that by the act of physical isolation I open a channel that hides unseen at the bottom of the sea, to our ancestor's accumulated wisdom? I asked Ama.

Your initiation started at the Monastery, Ama replied, and now you will experience the benefits of your transformation.

To hope to achieve this state more often, I had to start living a totally new way of life that has the stamp of 'purification' all over it.

I will tell you another story, Ama narrated one of her stories during one of her story-telling evenings at Ole, it is a story of a very popular Indian saint called Milarepa. Milarepa lived around 600 years ago, she said. His father was wealthy, influential man. When Milarepa was still a child, he grew ill and accepting his imminent death, he called together his family and told them that he is leaving all his possessions in hands of his brother and sister until Milarepa grows older. After the father's death, however, Milarepa's greedy aunt and uncle, divided the estate, forcing Milarepa's family to live with them as slaves. They were forced to work hard, exchanging their work for bits of food and some clothing.

Milarepa's mother was desperate for a revenge, so when Milarepa was old enough, she sent him to learn black magic. Milarepa was a good student and to please his mother he managed to create a disaster for his cousins at the family wedding. All the relatives who have been cruel to him while he was a child gathered at the wedding. The magic casted by Milarepa, forced

the horses kept outside the main entrance to ran into the main supporting column of the house and the house collapsed killing everyone inside. Milarepa saw the blood-shed that he created and was not pleased about it. The ghosts of his dead relatives started haunting him.

Milarepa's mother liked the display of the boy's power and did not understand the menace of his action. Once more, she demanded Milarepa's help asking him to protect her against the neighbours who were mistreating her. He launched a powerful hail storm on the area, ruining all the crops. After the storm he saw that the fields of grain were destroyed, many of the animals were killed and that even birds perished in the storm. This greatly disturbed him and he decided to try and find a teacher who would help him save his Soul.

In search for help he became a student of a famous Yogi called Marpa. Marpa knew there was a great deal of evil karma to be worked out so he asked Milarepa to build stone structures on high rocky hills only to have him tear them down again, and start the work from scratch. Marpa was also very short tempered with Milarepa shouting at him and beating him for every mistake.

After this hardship was over Marpa gave Milarepa instructions in the methods of meditation.

Learning how to meditate, Milarepa vowed that the life of meditation was the only path for him. He spent years meditating in a cave. It is believed that Milarepa is one of the rare saints that managed to reach enlightenment in a lifetime.

So I have a chance, if Milarepa managed to get enlightened, I still have a chance... I muttered.

From that day onwards, I asked Ama to call me Milarepa. It took me three years of building and re-building my-own created stone structures before I could stop challenging myself with the most amazing

physical tasks that were on the subtle level cleansing my negativities.

Through the purification, I tried to understand the nature of sin and why it was so natural for a human being to be negative, why it is so easy to kill, steal and attack other human being and why it is so difficult to see others as brothers and sisters. Purification, for me meant cleansing my sick Mind and allowing my Soul to start expressing itself over again. Easier said than done!

Happiness is a choice, Ama looked at me with her sparkling eyes, a conscious choice!

Tell me Milarepa, do you think that you push yourself into Unhappiness?

Like your cat or your butterfly, I reminded her of her allegory that was still alive in my memory even though many moons have gone by. I suppose, much too often we greedily satisfy our instincts and then find ourselves suffering from effects of illness and disease.

It is a misconception that happiness is a gift, it is a choice! One can chose to be close to God, one can chose to love, one can chose to be open, and one can chose to be happy.

But what a difficult choice! I almost screamed...

Many years of evolution taught us, people, how to preserve energy, how to walk easier roads and how to survive with as little effort as possible.

It is in our code to go into inertia and laziness if the circumstances let us. I agreed with her, Ama's wise words were penetrating deep into me.

It is the same with any animal, I said. Many will let you overfeed them and will not stop eating as long as the food is available or in the process they will become very

fat, lazy and slow but they will continue to eat with no restrictions.

Yes, she said, whether we are talking about food or emotions it is the same. Our animal, survival instincts will tell us, indulge, use the opportunity, do not stop. We become a machine that wants to take and take and take, indefinitely.

It becomes extremely easy to misuse the body or the Soul, to forget what is good and what is not, to abuse the food and abuse other people. I said thoughtfully.

The difference, Milarepa, between animals and us is in our ability to think but that brings us our ability to get depressed. The inertia leads us into depression and to learn how to avoid the pattern of becoming a slave of instincts, laziness or sleep, we have to work hard in training to love.

To choose Happiness as the way of Living, I need to train Love. I repeated slowly.

In the same way you were once trained to kill, now you need to train love. Ama affirmed.

To choose Happiness as the way of Living, I need to train Love. I repeated it again.

The training starts within your thoughts, transform the negative into the positive, this is a tremendous training of Will.

Starting from the very beginning, like a school boy, learning how to understand my mind, attempting to understand my Soul, I asked:

If the body says I need food, should I listen to it or train it in a way so it will not crave for food? Milarepa lived eating only nettles, can I do that? If the body says I need rest, should I listen to it or train it in a way not to need rest?

You are the one who needs to find the answer to this questions, Ama said, this one only you can answer!

I've heard of yogis that managed to keep their bodies without any sleep or food for days, and the legends say that they still could feel strong and healthy just gazing at the sunlight and meditating. My experience thought me that not all of us can be yogis! My exuberant fasts and hours of not sleeping just led me to different types of sickness. My Soul wanted to find a different way.

My lesson was that the body temple needs nourishing, a proper balanced diet, rest and action. Like with machines that have to be maintained every day I had to learn to be aware of my actions and chained reactions.

I had to start from the very thought of how much do I really know. 'I know' is a very dangerous thought. 'I know' closed me to listening to other people, 'I know' closed me to learning. 'I know' stopped me from finding a teacher. It limited my belief of how important other people are and how much I could learn from others.

Every person is different and every person has perfected one side or another of his behaviour and every one could be a teacher, if you are just open to listening, Ama told me when I asked her is she my guru. Once you are open to learning, you will find the most amazing things, people can teach you anger through their own anger or through anger that they awake within you, people can teach you fear and joy and patience and worry, people can teach you all sort of virtues and emotions.

Knowing that I don't know, I started listening to what is happening within my head. Listening to thoughts is a difficult and troublesome process. I started and stopped a thousand times. Sitting still for hours while your brain is playing all the earthly games imaginable often broke every single particle of my structure. I wanted to become aware of this chatting box within my head that would not switch off for longer than 5-10

minutes. Ama gave me a number of exercises to train awareness. She called it 'remembering' and when I voiced my doubt that there is any improvement within the ancient head matrix I was trying to break, she smilingly said that everything can be learned, if there is a right effort put into it...

So, I spent years learning 'remembering'.

I would walk through the woods, seeing myself walking through the woods, from above, knowing exactly the road I passed through, knowing the trees that went by, knowing the smells I scented and sounds I heard. At first, this experience would last 1 perhaps 2 minutes and no matter how hard I would try, I would be transported into yet another wakeful sleep, dreaming my existence amongst the trees, carried away through them automatically, with my brain fully occupied with useless thoughts, finding myself at my destination and not being able to remember! Later, the remembering time increased. As Ama said earlier, everything can be learned, if there is a right effort put into it...

I would stop in the middle of my meal becoming aware of the juices flowing through my mouth, getting aware of hunger that overcomes me, getting aware of food I ate. Getting aware of myself... I would feel that tiny demon that keeps repeating: swallow fast, take more, devour it; and I would stop it, patiently, leaving hunger behind, leaving tension behind, leaving gluttony behind.

I would stop in the middle of a conversation or heated argument, observing people that were talking or listening to my own feelings and thoughts to what has been said. I would deliberately walk barefoot through the woods, or wear minimum clothing when it was cold, observing pain that my body sent me, listening to the reactions my mind would have. I would stop in the middle of a very strong feeling, observing my anger or eagerness or hate, asking myself: who is it that is angry, who is the one that is sad, who is the one that hates.

One day I started hearing my thoughts.

Once I started hearing my thoughts, my own uselessness and uselessness of the thoughts hit me very hard. The thoughts most difficult to fight were the petite ones and I was full of them, fears and worries, thoughts of past and imaginary future. My imagination was playing tricks on me leading me onto paths that had no ends and no purpose.

I struggled.

I struggled with negative thoughts. They would creep in to my head as worms, slowly and almost unnoticed but they would multiply fast and take all the space and all the time during the day. A thought of doubt, a thought of self-hatred, a thought of worthlessness would know how to torture me profoundly. It would sneak in when I least expected it, it would start from something very small and then grow immensely, becoming a centre of me and my life, causing sadness and anger.

In the same way I was once trained to kill, now I needed to train love.

The biggest fight I fought and the one that took me at the end was the fight against the hate I felt for myself. This hate originated in the hate I had for sin itself and has led to the hate towards humanity. I couldn't truly love humanity because I hated sin so much. The thought, 'I do not deserve Light!' was my greatest enemy. The thought that I am a sinner and that everybody around me is a sinner separated me from Love towards people around me. The thought that we are different from Light was keeping me away from the enlightenment. The hate towards sin was the gatekeeper I couldn't pass on my way to Love.

Through the development of virtues your Mind gradually 'whitened', Ama said years later, through the constant struggle with instincts, where 'I' breaks into many pieces, where the being becomes intoxicated with good qualities, with God and giving, your 'I' changed. I

saw you changing through all these years, but you still need to pass the hardest test: loving and trusting yourself.

**Try with this thought, Ama said, try with: I am not any better or any worst than anybody else around me.**

Neither better nor worse! Experimenting with this thought was challenging especially when a beggar or a leper or a madman would knock on our door. Nobody is any better or worse than I am. Nobody! I looked at their dirt, at their sickness, at their separation from life, at rotting wounds that screamed at me pushing my disgust to an extreme and I thought, I am not any better or worst than you. Somewhere behind that battered and abused life-form that does not look human any more is a Soul that is no different than mine.

I especially suffered exercising this thought when I was with people that I saw as better than I am.

Prompted by Ama, I meditated on Christ or Buddha or watched great men speak or act trying the same thought, nobody is any better or worst than I am. Wow! A little me is not any worse than kings and priests or any other human being that I adore and respect so much! That was a tough one.

Teach me about Awareness. I asked my Dakini.

The first step you are already practicing. It is 'remembering', the art of awareness of the Self, through peaceful detached observation. Being awake, paying attention, connecting events, thoughts, feelings, and learning who you really are. Walking through life asleep, purely following circumstances, you will create nightmares around you and like a drunk-man you will hit and trip over objects that come towards your way.

Walking through Life asleep, demands less effort. It is easier to blame everybody else for what is happening with you. It is easier to say 'Only God knows why this

has happened! Once you are in the state of awareness, you are exactly where you are supposed to be. Indeed, God does know why something has happened! God within us, materialised, as a Soul, descended through Spirit, knows exactly why certain things are good for us. It is that God – Consciousness, Love that we become aware of when we practice 'remembering'. Remembering is the quality powered by Self-Will. Remembering has to be trained.

Life has its own path and as a river, Life is in a constant movement. Within this path of survival we change, getting closer and closer to Divine. As a part of this Life Flow, we do not have a choice, for new to be created, the death of old is demanded.

Memories that run through my vanes of the last twenty years of my life were not connected to love. Remembrance brought back the pain that like a jackal fed amongst the tombs of past beliefs digging deep into the wounds of what I once called hope. Living my own pain, I existed merely as a shadow gliding through life hoping nobody will notice my non-existence. Ama gave me an opportunity to live Love.

One thing to remember is that God will always give you more than you can take. The circumstances around you constantly change so that you can learn how to respond and if your Soul doesn't find challenges and does not feel that it is growing, improving and progressing, it will create them and these challenges might destroy you.

Once you understand your mind and your limiting believes and you learn who you are, you can start working on discrimination. Discrimination tells you what to concentrate on. Discrimination gives you guidelines and the power to chose: chose to stop thinking, chose to stop hurting yourself or others, chose the food that can influence your good mood, chose long term and not temporarily happiness, chose the circumstances that will help you grow avoiding the circles that lead to suffering and pain, chose people that surround you, chose your friends, chose to love. Chose to love! That is how you start your training in loving.

Aware of who you are, relating to your experiences mindfully, discriminating thoughts and actions, you are now ready to start using a prayer or a meditation to refer back again and again to the feeling of love, compassion and peace.

Children do learn how to talk, how to communicate, read people's faces, expressions, how to express pain, how to kiss and hug but they do not learn how to love. How many times do you remember sitting with a person you care for and just loving them, with no other thoughts or expectations, just loving the human being that is in front of you and loving One that has given you the possibility to experience this beauty and this feeling.

Following my own path of purification, after many, many years, I have again fallen violently sick secretly hoping that Death will bring me closer to the union with God, with Love and Spirit and Light.

Ama was next to me, looking at me, with the same eyes of recognition and the spark of inner joy that recognised my secret plans.

Purity is not enough, she said, you have to continue moving because the force is invoked and if this power is not used for Light, it will change into its opposite, it will be used for demolition, consumption, extinction, death. You will only succeed in bringing sorrow into your life, bringing in the disease, sacrificing yourself to other forces. Remember the alchemical process, in the process of transformation after black becomes white, white has to become yellow and then red, the energy has to become fire, it has to become Sun itself. It is your time to become Sun.

The first stage is always within the chaos and the chaos is broken up, black is transformed into white, only fire can do this.

After whitening when the male and female principle within you merge, you will become a vehicle of pure

force, crimson is born within you and that crimson produces gold.

The new self is full of energy that is fire, firm like earth, flexible like water, and light as air. Alert and playful you become the philosopher's stone, changing yourself, you acquire the power to change others.

You have not finished your journey yet, she said, your Soul is ready to serve, it breaths beauty and sincerity but it lacks the self-activity, Soul-consciousness, with total trust in God through self-forgetfulness. Forget yourself and get onto the final step of transformation. You are one of the few that God has given a chance to fully experience black and to transform it into white within you. God has chosen you to undertake the alchemical process of transformation, finish the journey before you leave, transcend above white and black. You have been given a chance to experience it all and I have a feeling that you are giving it up now.

At the very beginning, when I first met you, your 'I', your body, and emotions, and your mind, they all worked against your spirit, closing the passageways to the Soul's expression, leaving it isolated, alone and hidden. You have been imprisoned and you suffered and your Soul was a captive of your desires, bound to the wheel of life. You have called your negative emotions - yourself. When you realised that you need to find your true Self you worked hard to change, you worked hard to re-learn your experience of Life, you became Pure like a little child, learning how to trust and how to love.

Winning back your divine nature, building your own core of awareness and light was a fight worth fighting.

There is a spiral movement in our spiritual development and this spiral can at times feel discouraging. No matter what stage on your journey you are in, the 'I' and the forces of nature will awaken time and time again, gripping with negative influences the Self. Old life, behaviours, friends, thoughts, habits will creep back strengthening your many other selves. This can lead

you to become weak, sick or to suffer. But as you have experienced time and time again, darkness in turn activates light. When you think that all forces of the world are against you, that there is no exit nor hope, no more that you can possibly stand, Light unfolds, bringing your Soul out of imprisonment. Your Soul calls and catches that Light and that is how you yet again gain freedom.

The Soul, now full of light, screams: awaken!

To be a human is to be guided by the Soul. Your Soul has guided you through experiences of sin and repelling, of attachment and detachment, of anger and forgiveness, and it has given you the experiences that had something to teach you, the emotions that found the firm grip within your mind. Your Soul is now leading you through the sickness and like with everything else, you can get out of it, if you wish so.

Your Soul wants to go through the last stage of the alchemical re-birth: through the resurrection. Here, in China, it is believed that the alchemist overcomes the limits and ascends to higher states becoming a *zhenren* or Authentic Man. You can become a *zhenren* gaining the power to stop the cycle of Life and Death.

Now it is your time to refuse to stay jailed by the play of opposites, let them die and finally ascend above them. Purified from both black and white you will be able to merge Heaven and Earth, the two principles of Yin and Yang and you will become 'Authentic' and Immortal.

Your death is in your hands!

You are approaching the Easter of your heart. This is the time of your renewal, the time of new beginnings, the time to enter into the new life. The choice is in front of you: Death or a New Life. Winter has burnt the old, the old 'I's have died preparing the road for Spring with its freshness. You are led by higher yearning and this is the time when your good intentions become fruitful.

Your body is sick because you are stuck within your own thoughts of opposites. You cannot fully love because you condemn sin with such a tremendous force, you are caged within your virtues that are trying not to attract black back into the force. As long as you believe in sin and condemn it, as long as you believe in demons and evil spirits and want to chase them out, you will stay hating. Demons and evil spirits are nothing but the reflection of what you call 'evil' qualities within you. Hating them, you continue hating yourself. Only Love can truly purify you, Divine, unselfish, unconditional Compassion for all the living beings in the Universe.

All through my life I felt that sickness was my escape. My body would become weak and painful swimming in this deep swamp of muddy waters of my unconsciousness. Life was not easy to live. This time, I felt it hard to imagine that I will wake up tomorrow or any other day with the same thoughts and the same feelings. Hard to look at the world that is full of suffering and love this Divine play of energies where Life and Death are a part of the same coin.

I owed this last try to Ama, I owed her the trust that she had in me, the trust that I could make it, so I abandoned the thoughts of my paths with no exits and I broke through the clouds of self-inflicted torture that felt very comfortable and safe. The thought of sin is embodied within the Web of Humankind with such a tremendous power that it needed a Soul like Ama to break it.

I was born to help her work on this task.

It was a beautiful spring day of 1630, and I've been in Ama's household for over 7 years. Ruben left Ama's life a year earlier and I felt Life and beauty flowing through my vanes. That day's spring breeze had a mission to destruct my focus, one moment I found myself staring at the moon, while just another I observed the cherry blossom, or smelled my favourite rose Moon.

Ama was with me chanting about her favourite, the secrets of the alchemy of the soul: Your body is a chariot, horses are thoughts and emotions, and the

charioteer is the soul. The chariot, horses and the charioteer, a body, mind, and soul, they all play a role in the speed of our movement towards enlightenment and the state of happiness we are able to achieve. If the horses lead the journey, the chariot might never move or it might move too fast or take the opposite direction; and if the horses are strained or abused they might die of exhaustion before reaching the destination;

If they are let loose they will stop to eat, sleep, they will fight and will not care less about the charioteer. I added playfully, following her little comparison.

Correct, if the mind is let to rule, it will behave as wild horses, it will disobey, struggle and possibly kill the charioteer.

If the chariot (our body) is not in a good condition, it will break during the journey, and no matter how good the horses are, the speed of the chariot will diminish and the journey might end before its time. I added listening to her giggle.

Correct, body has to be respected... She added flirtingly.

If the chariot is not oiled properly, not taken care of, it will get damaged or fall apart as soon as there is an obstacle, a stone in the way, or a bit of rough road. The chariot will not be able to adhere to the journey. I added continuing this dance with words.

Since a very young child I was treated badly, trained to follow my instincts and for far too long I allowed them to rain, and like a chariot without a charioteer, I would go either too fast or too slow, across the stones and through the deep waters, inevitably breaking my wheels, always cursing God for it. I was confessing my little story to Ama. I felt my honesty to be the key to her heart. Yes, cursing, because that was the only way I knew Him, the only times I would mention Him or use His name was to swear and to curse.

Better ever then never, said Ama. If your charioteer, your soul, is respected and followed, the mind will follow the flow of Life. As though she couldn't resist, she put her hand onto my lips, her touch was enchanting. This was the closest we have ever been to each other.

How do I listen to my soul, how do I know that it is my soul speaking? I asked moving a step forward, allowing her to feel my heart-beat.

At first, you train silence, get rid of all the clutter of thoughts within your brain, and once you enter the silence properly, you will be able to distinguish its voice from the rest of the chatter. She moved a step back, but I saw that she wanted to stay, maybe not as yet, maybe not as close. For a moment, that lasted an eternity, we were close enough that I could hear her heart-beat.

During my strenuous training, I learnt that there is a God's given structure to every being, a structure that gives patterns to the way body responds to different impulses, but we are all given a possibility to train and build whatever we want into our code.

I got used to ice baths to strengthen my body's response to colds and diseases. More physical work made me stronger and I was on a look-out for even more subtle challenges and training methods. A threshold of pain increased with every amount of pain I had, a threshold of hunger moved with every experience of fasting I went through. A couple of times my misjudgements led me to the point of no return, and during these times it would take me weeks to recover.

We all have an amazing structure in our hands, Ama told me nurturing me after one of these experiences that brought sickness to my body, and we can either become very powerful in its use or lose one or more ability misusing it. Every single day we are given a choice to make or break the mechanism that is given to us to survive!

Remember, my dear friend, you should not abuse your chariot. The body asks for respect but should not become the master of our actions, the body's limits should always be challenged and pushed a step further but steps should be small and done one by one, because jumping two at the time can cause a fall...

Understanding my chariot was a life-long task, and at no point I claimed that I have the key to its make-up, but the learning about the body and the ways it responds to the Life Force was my task since the time I was born. It was my horses I knew nothing about, it was my thoughts and emotions that were determining the speed of my journey.

For this, Ama said, you will need a strong Will Power, and I thought: finally, this one is within my powers, not a problem at all.

But she added, be careful while training your willpower if you are defined and impenetrable in your beliefs, you will not be able to see the spectrum of shades that awaits for you behind your views of clear colours.

Once I questioned Ama about her motives to accept me and she told me that ever since she met me she knew that I belong to the group of leaders that can help change the world.

People are divided into followers or leaders, Ama said. Followers are many and they are neither good nor bad, they go with the energy that predominates the moment. They believe in love and goodness but they also get attached to power and recognition.

They follow chosen morality rules and they have their own principles but they constantly float from one side of the spectrum to the other. They don't have roots and they like belonging to groups, they like following. They can participate in wars killing others passionately, defending the idea of freedom or religion or belonging, but they can just as easily feel overwhelmed with

compassion crying for the death or sickness or misfortune of somebody they don't know and have just heard of from a passer by. They follow whatever inspires them and gives them energy. They follow popular trends, chase approvals, money, and appreciation. If they believe, they could be made to die for a belief. If they love they are very passionate about their love. But their love doesn't last and they do anything that will make them more popular, loved and accepted.

They are not good or bad, they just wait to be told what direction to take.

Because of the followers, it has been said many times, that the human race is inherently bad: people follow their instincts, their selfish needs and they are ready to kill or steal or betray to fulfil these needs. But people are also passionate in love, capable of compassion, sacrifice and self-forgiveness, they can fight for ideals or combat their instincts and follow their truths, whatever the truths are that they have chosen to follow.

Their colour is neither black nor white, their colour is different shades of grey. Each one of the follower can be a leader!

The leaders define themselves more precisely, they chose a side and then stick to it. They firmly believe in what they preach and they carry the responsibility for not only themselves but also their followers. They lead towards destruction or growth. Their colours are sharper, words, attitudes, thoughts more defined. They name good and bad and lead the ways into it. The leaders are more dangerous because they are more powerful, they are capable of merging with Cosmic Love and Cosmic Hate.

These leaders are worth fighting for. They can lead others to wars and self-destruction or introduce them to the light of self-knowledge and growth.

This is why I fight for you, she said.

Once upon a time, lived a girl, Ama told me, a beautiful and young. Talented powerful, her mind was strong, body perfect and she was completely in charge of her emotions. Her grandmother was a witch familiar with black magic. She saw the potential of the child. She taught her, guided her, and protected her. The girl learned how to master physical weapons, weapons of thoughts and speech, how to converse with animals and plants, how to mix portions of health and death, how to enter ones mind, seduce, be liked or win an argument. She mustered her mind and she did not identify with either her body or her thoughts or her instincts and emotions, she became a pure manifestation of His energy. A goddess reincarnated, put on Earth to be moulded.

The Master met her when she was still under a strong protection of her grandmother, the witch, who had different plans for the girl. He had to fight for her, long and strong. He felt that she was worth it. With her presence in the circle of Light he was not only getting one more Disciple, very powerful in its own right, but he was reducing the chances of growth of the power of destruction. She was the perfect material, she could become a weapon of White or Black. She was perceptive and strong. She was a leader. She was worth fighting for! So are you!

To keep the girl, the witch has given her 3 demons. They did not have past incarnations and were free from the knowledge of Self, they did not know of fear or selfishness or attachment, they were pure mirror images of the witch's aspirations. This gave them tremendous power so much so that even the Master could not confront them. The Master had to wait for the Knowledge of Self to be formed in the demons mind, they confronted them with a number of battles and the victory awoke pride in their minds. The silk, gold, good food and clothing put attachment in their bodies and with it the fear of loss and the desire for health and pleasure have set in. This helped the Master win the battle against the demons.

The witch saw what was happening and now has created three new demons, even more powerful, because this time they were fully aware of themselves and they've learned to fight their instincts and win their minds and emotions so that attachment and fear cannot enter them. Even the Master was scared of these new soldiers of evil and he had to ask for help from Vishnu. Vishnu confronted the demons within the girl with pure Light and they have attained liberation and enlightenment instantaneously, and they left the girl in the capable hands of the Master. She became his best student.

She looked at me, believing in the powers I never knew I had.

I met many followers and a few leaders and leaders are always worth fighting for, Ama said. Converting a leader that is misguided, into a Warrior of Light is a very powerful task. We are at the turn of the centuries and all our thoughts and actions are very important. We are moulding the energies of the times to come and every extra Warrior could be the one who will decide the outcome of our chore. We are getting out of the Dark Ages, opening the doors to knowledge, breaking of old religious casts. This is not an easy task.

I am still battling with my-little-pitiful-self, while you are set to change the world! I laughed at this irony. Please, from now on, call me Vishnu. It is Light that will transform me, Pure Light.

Remember, a Warrior builds the Web, he does not get stuck within it. Ama also laughed.

This Web felt as a living creature that is difficult to understand and catch and that constantly changes.

Some cultures call it energies, said Ama, or they refer to it as ghosts or spirits that surround us, attack us, or just constantly keep a watch over us; Christianity talks about devils and angels: beings that live around us, help us or hinder our actions throughout our lives. I prefer to call it a Web, a Web that has built its life

around our Souls influencing our destiny, our moods, character and our entire attitude towards life and living creatures.

More I am aware of this Web, I told her, more I am aware of its powers and it is often depressing to see it grow. It lives its life independently almost removing my freedom to change and walk on a different, spiritual path. It is as though the ancestors thoughts, and the mechanism of responses are engraved within our code and I feel that if I am not fully aware of it, it will just swallow me, and all my efforts will be gone in vain.

Yes, the Web is full of this mixture of narrow focussing, conditioning and other people's thoughts, Ama agreed. We learn to act copying the models given to us by others, our parents, friends, society and we lose our ability to listen to the Source.

But the time does come when we are ready to understand the secret, ready to learn the Way of transforming black into white and white into gold, the way of transforming suffering into pleasure and then into consciousness. Knowledge at that time enters freely.

There are a number of ways and suffering is just one of them.

The True Self, if we can call it that way, is the one that chooses the way, the one that understands the flow and that experiences Life fully, through being compassionate and centred in Love, during every moment of the day. The True Self is not positive nor negative but it does have the power to transform negative into positive.

If you realise your True Self, **you will not need suffering**, you will understand what a waste of time suffering is, when Consciousness can be your choice. On the opposite scale of suffering you will find Love. So, to stop longing for the states of suffering, we need to actually train ourselves in loving! We need to learn

to breath Love, speak Love and be Love every single moment of our lives. Love controlled by Will.

So, how does one train Love? I asked, how does one makes a conscious choice towards Love? Talk to me about Love my beautiful queen, I demanded. Talk to me about Being in Love, about the Merge of the Black Queen and White King, I whispered into her ear.

Learning how to love is learning how to Be in Her presence. Love is supreme, it expands and overcomes boundaries, it melts all it touches.

When I met you, my life changed. My breath was now caressing her neck.

My arms were now firmly nested inside her dress, I pushed her body close to mine, our blood pulse, our breath became one.

Love is not something foreign or external, I told Ama taking her shiver into my Being. God gave us love, but it is not true that He or She has ever taken it away from us. We just need to remember it. I whispered. Remember it...

Learning how to love I offered a prayer so deeply devout to Her Majesty, to Ama, to Venus, to the Goddess of the Sea. I offered the prayer like a simple man, waiting for a swift punishment, repentance and I got none, just the deliverance and joy of a newly found child. My wilful disobedience carried me into the continents where God does not reign, where the crown is on Her Majesty head.

Do you feel the Love's flame burning our bones, I asked Ama, not letting her move away from the magic of my touch. This so wonderful warm full chests, your strong spine, silky skin, your excitement to meet me carried within the scent of roses.

Deep within I know that Love is the answer to my urge to merge with One.

May the grace of Love of the stars be yours. I kissed her left cheek

May the grace of Love of the winds be yours. I kissed her right cheek

May the grace of Love of the waters be yours. I kissed her forehead

In the name of the World of All Life, Let you become Love. My lips met hers and disappeared within so much expected kiss that took us into a journey around our little planet Earth.

Uplift the heart and feel kisses of stars and breathe of angels upon your body, She is around.

Force and fire, beauty and strength, laughter of delight and souls filled with divine drunkenness, her nature is Love, her blood is immortal divine nectar, Ambrosia that brings eternal life, through Her Beauty the wonder of the Universe opens in front of my eyes, she gives unimaginable joy and to love her is better than all things.

Her body is a palace of which each stone is a separate jewel and I marvel it and worship it, one by one. Her presence is the very light of God and my thoughts are smitten dead before her.

To lie in her bosom, feel her hands, smell her scents, to come to her joy, to love her, to yearn for her, to merge with her, I live. Becoming pure for her, I give, open and dissolve, I befall innocent, transparent, newly born. Invoking Gods I drink her, love her, disappear in her, for beautiful she is, desirable and in union with her, I enter Understanding.

Rejoicing within the secret temple of her body, eyes burn with desire, for she is Life and Love, our bodies are one, our minds are one, our love is one, Separation becomes Unity.

Yin merges with Yang in the sacred union of a man and a woman. The tiger meets the dragon, water mixes with fire and the woman becomes one with the man dancing

in the act of making love. We complete each other and our exchange creates a perfect harmony.

Awakening the original Self I immerse myself within her, she is my guru, I am hers and we are devoted to the eternal joy of bliss. Becoming one with the great rhythms of nature, free from desires, we both become perfect. The union of Shiva and Shakti release the nectar of purest gold within our bodies and this gold, as radiant as sun is the elixir of immortality. The end of our union is in pure bliss, pure joy.

The Light glows ever brighter, all my senses unsteady, smitten with ecstasy, I am the Lord of Light, Love, and Life, flowering the influence of Sun, staying eternally young, innocent and beautiful, dancing the dance of the creation of the Universe.

Rays from our bodies pierce in every direction inviting the Lady of the Stars to join our dance, we are not each one, nor two merged into one, we are all that was and will be ever created on Earth.

We are, what we are supposed to be all the time, what we are born to be, bright Gods, feeding on delight!

I am not my body any more, I detach observing two bodies completely immersed in their love play. With her hands she held his face, her hair caresses his hands, their lips merged together gently and strong, inseparably, completely tinted with an elixir of love. Their faces mirrored bliss and with every movement they danced extreme love they felt for each other.

Merged in One in the dance of creation, disappearing for the world around them, knowing only the other and this divine ecstasy, her belly button was touching his and her breast were pressed against his chests, her nose against his nose and forehead against each other, in an embrace that lasted eons.

A passer-by, many centuries later saw their materialised image through the Galactic space and

time, and in an amazement whisper 'Look at that rock, doesn't it remind you of two lovers merged together.'

Worm and soft were their hands, softer than touch of any silk speaking of adoration, complete giving, absorbed in the love play. She was his and he was hers and they were not in their bodies any more, many became One and One divided into many and they knew, finally they knew, what it is like to be one with God. Flowing, overflowing, disappearing, breaking all known-s to enter into Life pure, innocent, and without fears, dissolving the limits of time. Two, fused in one, got the power of many, liberated within their own creation.

Expanded beyond this Universe, in Silence and in Screams, they thought each other the mystery of Being.

His erection was strong and he was moving slowly, relaxed and in controlled manner, vitality and energy encircled them and they were spontaneity, naturalness and freedom.

Their hearts beat faster, the faces blush and energy flows in waves, revealing mystical moments of two souls merging together. She became his Highest Priestess and he became her Master and Supreme Lover, they initiated each other in the mysteries of Love.

Finding each other they found what is dearest to their hearts, that opens them and inspires them to experience vastness and strength of the most powerful energies of the Universe.

The heat building and rising up the spine to the brain, giving both a sense of bliss. Playing gently, unhurried, resonating perfectly they lived within the beauty of their merge. After hours of this perfect Unity where Will is no more and breath becomes like the one of a baby within a womb, they became Immortal.

She as a cosmic creative force of birth and re-newel, receiving his energy, his fire, his strength, openly and lovingly, closing the circle between the two, Yin and Yang of the Universe.

Subtle as Earth, imperceptible as Water, bright as Fire, free as Air, infinite as Space we became One. Transcending all elements belonging to this world, helping metals become its higher self, become gold, speeding the time, moving through the space, achieving immortality within the merge of two.

It was two years after our first merge when Fra Thomas visited us with his personal mission to arrest Ama accusing her of witchcraft.

In Ama's household among many other books I found the book you all already heard about, the Hammer of Witches, the manual of the witch hunters that in details explained the process of the witch hunt.

*The **method** of beginning an examination by torture is as follows:*

*First, the jailers prepare the implements of **torture**, then they **strip the prisoner** (if it be a woman, she has already been stripped by other women, upright and of good report).*

*And when the implements of torture have been prepared, the judge, both in person and through other good men zealous in the faith, tries to persuade the prisoner to confess the truth freely; but, if he will not confess, he bid attendants make the prisoner fast to the **strappado** or some other implement of torture.*

*And, while he is being tortured, he must be questioned on the articles of accusation, and this frequently and persistently, beginning with the lighter charges-for he will more readily confess the lighter than the heavier.*

*But, if the prisoner will not confess the truth satisfactorily, other sorts of tortures must be placed*

*before him, with the statement that unless he will confess the truth, he must endure these also. But, if not even thus he can be brought into terror and to the truth, then the next day or the next but one is to be set for a continuation of the tortures - not a repetition, for it must not be repeated unless new evidences produced.*

Ama warned me of Fra Thomas.

He was never my favourite, a small energetic man who thought that the world revolves around him. His eyes were shining with the madness and a strange type of suffering that I recognised from y past lives. He reminded me of a headless chicken running in circles, still believing it's world is the world of living.

That day, he came to arrest Ama and Ama, my love, my soul-mate did not allow me to interfere.

I could have smashed him as a fly, with one hit of the palm against the wall, I could have thrown him out and waited until he returns with many more men that claim that they have the authority to arrest, torture or kill the innocent, I could have waited for them all. I could have given my life for Ama if she just allowed me to do so.

But the evening before Fra Thomas came to our house, Ama told me about the re-building of my Web and the task that I had in this life-time.

You have to, she said, re-build the Web that you have so carefully constructed in your previous life, the life of a murderer, the life of somebody who does not like people, who can kill and hurt others without any hesitation.

The key of all my efforts was in changing this Web through changing violence into non-violence.

The violence that was breastfed into my Being since the very beginning of my journey on this little blue Planet was within this Web, the violence that is the main theme of our Religious upbringing. My task was to act

differently, to attempt to uproot this violent behaviour from my personal Web.

Understanding the Web and its influence, constantly changing its structure, hoping that one day a new re-born field will face me offering me a chance to act differently. In the same way I was in the past trained to kill, now I was training how to live life without violence.

What you need to understand, Ama said, is that you are not re-building only your Web but also the Web of your ancestors, your family, your neighbours, your surroundings, your offspring, the Web of the whole world with its core within the militant and insensitive.

My personal war against my negative conditioning grew into the war against the Humankind's strong predisposition to kill if we believe the cause is just.

She took me aside whispering: Promise, you will not, under any circumstances, go back to the world of killing. A Warrior takes a responsibility for his acts and the intent of NOT KILLING is so very important. With the fulfilment of this promise you will also change the world of similar behaviour around you. Keeping the promise you help the humankind get rid of the thirst for killing.

Fra Thomas wanted to take her that evening, to put her in a prison, to torture her, with a wish to kill her, and I was there watching this little man, and listening to the strong impulse that was guiding my being: This time it is RIGHT to kill!

All these years Ama trusted me. She trusted my Light and left me to develop within the glow of Her enlightened being. Now she needed my response, to save her meant going back to the Web, to save her meant I would betray her guidelines, break the promise, jump out of the Path, go back to the violence, and all of my being wanted to do just that: go back to the violence! My Soul was bouncing in a dance of opposites, in a dance of white and black. Now, at the

time I thought I was closest to God, this new temptations came my way to prove me wrong. God sent me Fra Thomas, the temptation too difficult to face.

I came to the room hearing his words of the arrest with only one thought: I am here to save you my love, I will not see any authorities torture you, I don't give a damn about the Web, I will change your destiny, the world does not need such beautiful martyrs. With a simple wrist movement, Fra Thomas will no longer belong to the Land of Living, he will go to Hell, where he belonged. Soon, I might follow him there. In fact, if we meet again, up there, me and Fra Thomas, in the midst of the fire, I will still chase him and kill him if he even dreams of hurting Her. She was more precious than all the eternity of Hell.

I had no doubts, I was determined, determined in the righteousness of my act!

Within the next scene that unfolded in front of me, Ama stood a few centimetres away from me. Our motion slowed down as though somebody touched us all with the magic wand. I could feel myself losing the power, feeling my legs becoming heavier. She raised her hand and the silk of her dress rubbed against my cheek, she touched me in between my eyes and this touch was the last one I could remember. Within seconds everything ceased to be, unfolding the secret of my Life. I saw a point of dense, brilliant light growing brighter and stronger in the centre of the dark that surrounded me.

The light was coming from the centre of the earth, entering my body as a breath of fire. My spine, my bones, the skull, jaw, and teeth, my muscles, they were all shaking, receiving this divine flow. The divine energy was entering my system forcefully, with great power expanding. The energy was coming down from the sun, moon, planets, and it was bright and luminous, powerful and warm. Lost within this expanding consciousness, within love, within this living golden fire I saw a vision, a woman of indescribable beauty.

I am light and the darkness is not of my nature, she said, I open and heal, awakening the divine within you, wiping away your rust and pain. You come from Nature, and even your inner being is Nature bound, I transform it all for you, delivering you to your higher self. Your being is separated from its impurities, from all the dirt and corrosion, and filth, until you are all subtle and volatile, until you can see your own core. The earth within you carries the true knowledge of the secret of the Stone.

The fire of Eternal Love touched my Soul and I saw the properties dressed in black of Wrath and Anger, attacking the woman, the pure Love and Light. I saw Her, the Love, struck with terror, and shivering at the violent and harsh touch. But there was fear in the eyes of Anger at the appearance of Love, afraid that it would lose itself within Her presence. She was there, quiet and patient, ready to accept the Will of God. And I saw a miracle, Anger and Love seized to be separate, they became One, Life and Death, still together in the will of God, bringing the Soul's Fire into a clear, shining Sun. A glorious new body appeared from the darkness wearing the golden dress. The appearance of Love, killed the life of Anger, and there were no more two, but only one; no more a male and female, but one, golden One.

A Warrior chooses his path and he follows it unconditionally, Ama said. Un-conditionally...

This was the day of my final transformation.

There was no person on Earth that I trusted and loved more dearly than Ama, there was no person whose opinion meant more to me than hers. Ama gave me a chance to understand the difference between human love and Divine Love, a chance to bring this experience to the Web of Humankind, but I didn't have enough strength to do so.

I am since long dead but my eyes stay fixed on this little blue planet just in case She decides to return, just in case She might need my help yet again, just in case

She allows me to follow Her for the second time, sheltered by Her wisdom, I might be able to surrender to Her path to its very end.

*'However much we have drifted on the ocean of suffering,  
today we see clearly that there is a beautiful path.  
We turn toward the light of loving kindness  
to direct us.'*  
*Anonymous*

## **Lilith**

All through human existence you have faithfully worshiped me and my powers, worshiping your own weaknesses. Stronger your limitations, stronger the manifestation of my powers.

All through human existence you carefully collected the dust of my feet and distributed it among yourselves, whispering stories of my victories, feeding on the grossest parts of my reality.

All through human existence you adored me and evoked my presence addicted to my being, my shrouds of secrets, and shadows.

I leave you in awe, surrounding you with the wonder of despair, paralysing your movements, fascinating your hearts. Only a few manage to turn away from my gaze and look at the light that lives around me.

I am the gate-keeper of the worlds of darkness. I exist within your minds and am worshiped more than any other God.

I rain all, cover all, and spread through all, on this earthly plain.

Where there is Life, and there is Consciousness, I exist.

My name is Lilith, and I am Adam's first wife and was thrown out of Paradise because I refused to surrender to him. Refusing to live with Adam, I chose a life with demons, with whom I have innumerable children. God sent his angels to find me and with them a punishment, one hundred of my children were killed each day. This made me mad with grief and that is when I decided to retrieve into the shadows of your minds.

And, like my sister, Kali, the black Indian Goddess who drinks the blood of her victims and wears human heads around her neck, I also wear a terrible mask of suffering and Death. I am otherwise known as Black Moon. I am the one that creates and destroys Life, the raw,

untamed, murky secret of your own nature, the suppressed, shadow-side of your personality, your deep desire to separate from God and live in my embrace, suffering.

Facing me is not easy, because I awaken within you all your fears, the dark becomes darker and your demons multiply, shaking the very essence of who you are, who you were and who you would like to be.

If you feel doubt, withdraw, if you feel insecure, withdraw! Facing me, understanding me, to finally detach from my powers, is the road of the Warriors and only the Determined will have an access to it. This is the road of the few.

To discover me, you will need to put away the idea of two and be of one body, entering into the road of your hidden nature, the nature that worships Suffering.

The rhythm that led to Her was hypnotic, Ruben felt it within his bones, magical, it was the rhythm of my own dreams. And as in a dream, hearing drums in the background, feeling secure and loved for the last time, feeling sorrow creeping into my heart, knowing that the time has come to enter a different world, the world so well known and yet so mysterious, she invited me to step forward and enter the greatest mystery of the human existence, Her world, the world of Lilith.

I will take away from you familiar faces, familiar sounds, touches of console, and the remembrance that you are not alone. In my world Light will disappear. On this journey, you will become one with other vibrating bodies, your brothers and sisters in sorrow, you will merge with them and through the merge you will learn the secrets of existence. Prepare to receive the energy of fear and awakening, of burning tension of final initiation.

To learn the secret, you will become one with men living around you, now and 100s of years ago and 1000s of years ago, one with their lives, with their sufferings, with their fears, with their experiences. You will learn

through them, feel through them, become Them. You will forget the dream of your uniqueness and connect with the thread that unites you with all other beings. You will forget the myth of re-birth and experience the life of Many - here and now. You will listen to the stories of your kind, get re-born and learn, understand and realise, within the suffering of Many.

I was waiting for you, so many years, with the cup that you called for, so that you could get to know the bottom, get to know me, Black Moon, Black Mother, Lilith.

Let's enter into my stage and peek into one of Many's heads.

Your name is Ruben? I was waiting for you, so many years, with the cup that you called for, so that you could get to know the bottom, get to know me, Black Moon, Black Mother, Lilith.

*The only thing he knew is that he was surrounded with clouds of despair, experiencing the end of his world. He was within, what he called 'his body', at the edge of a cliff, above the sea, wanting to die.*

*And even though he was experiencing misery, desolation, hopelessness, he felt one with the beings around him. Thoughts, worries, life with its past, future and present, everything disappeared. He was a part of one body that danced in a circle finding its cause, moving towards the end of life and creation, going back to the beginning, to its Creator.*

Put away the idea of Many and be of one body! Whispered Lilith. Come to this journey with me, merge with him! Join me in this exploration! After this journey, each one of you will see your life as not yours, will feel darkness and heaviness as a pattern that repeats within your surface, separate from your core. Merge your being with him and many others that suffer, and begin to understand where the cause and the effects are.

Drink from my essence, from the very source of pain, from my cup that is specially prepared for you, Ruben, carefully taking care of your-own weaknesses.

I tried to come back to Ama, I tried to come back to Christ, but there were nowhere to be found! I was left to my own Misery... Ruben looked at the world around him.

He listened to the wind hauling through the cliffs and he heard Ama's voice breaking through his storm and there was Aum in Her voice. 'You are now on-your-own!

He looked around his-isolated-mind and he took Lilith in, seeing people around, familiar faces and strangers, looking, as though they know him, each one with a different experience of the same suffering, each one with a wound that still needs healing.

*Within my nightmare I got surrounded by abandoned babies, separated lovers, abused children, bruised mothers, liars, murderers, sickness, broken bodies, refugees, burnt houses, miscarriages and loses, Death in Her many forms, surrounded by pain, pain everywhere, from the very beginning of time, to its very end.*

*My tremble entered the space of no shame and no return, I became one with Many that surround me, one with you that so much hope that you will escape from this bitter cup.*

*I was a baby almost choked to death by its umbilical cord and the words whispered to me were 'Fight or you will die, breathe or this will be your last breath, you are alone. Fight or you will die!'*

*I saw people being cruel to each other, screams, violence, abuse, selfishness, ignorance, sickness and slow decay, Death laughing at her victims day after day, forever.*

*I was surrounded by suffering. 'We are sinners that are here to suffer and we need suffering to grow', words*

*resonated within me uttered at the locked entrance of the Garden of Eden.*

*I looked into Lilith's eyes and her face was so well known, it was so much a part of me.*

*I did not ask 'why me?' because today, in the shadow of the sea underneath me, I was not alone, I could almost touch the ghosts veiled in pain, deep, heavy, dark pain, that follows us through the very start of our existence.*

*A woman that came to confess, many moons ago, was in pain because her husband left her. 'I can not be with you', his blood stopped circulating. She gobbled the last breath of air left in the room, waiting to see what will happen next. Her heart stopped beating allowing a strong stream of pain to pierce her chest, as though somebody has hammered a long, sharp, iron nail straight into her Soul.*

*I screamed in amazement, the woman changed her appearance into Ama and her husband changed into me, I was the man hammering her Soul...*

*Everything around her became a motion, slow motion. She could see in his eyes that there is nothing she could do, that the mortal act was put in place by a force unknown to them all. She felt love, and hurt at the same time, she felt violent, and lost in a wish to kill him and herself. Their dreams pulsed for a moment, disappearing, dissolving fast as though they have never existed, and she caught his hands, looked deep into his eyes and heard him speak about love that will last forever.*

*The world stopped.*

*In the middle of her pain, I was left alone.*

*Why couldn't we be together? Why I had to go through the separation with my flame soul that completes the story of two halves of one joined soul, my polar opposite, with whom I had an instant*

*connection and attraction. Zeus split the lovers in half, condemning them to spend their lives searching for the other half, and I found my half just to leave it to another endless search. When we were together, and that was virtually all the time, everything seemed in balance. Our souls were learning things in similar ways, we liked the same things, we read each other's minds, we moved in the same direction. All of us, our friends and our families, and people we met coincidentally knew this as our truth from the very moment they met us, we were made to walk this Path together.*

*Isn't it possible to re-live everything from the beginning, to stop the time, to change the place, to reconstruct the end? If we are destined for each other, why can't we just Be Together?*

*I fell on my knees, begging for forgiveness, understanding and mercy, I will now do anything she wanted, but I felt 'now' was a moment too late. Emptiness and sadness overcame me.*

*Why is it so important? I could hear Ruben of 10 years ago asking in amazement. Isn't all of this just a game, a procreation game? If we build our own scenarios, we build our own destiny, if she didn't exist ten years ago, why is she now so important?*

*I was observing this strange game!*

*Me, Ruben, the big preacher, philosopher, leader who could give many spiritual advises in his youth, and guide the masses through their sufferings, now, had to put up his own Life onto the Lilith's stage, his own Heart under the grounding wheel, enter the endless circle of suffering Me.*

*The suffering was suffocating Me.*

*I screamed hitting the boundaries of my own skin, I screamed trying to be heard in this world of faceless faces walking on this Earth not noticing anybody, I screamed a silent scream that tore apart my insides. I*

*saw the blue disappearing in eternity in front of me, and I was surprised how easy it felt to jump, to diminish, to stop the cycle of breathing. Death did not any longer scare me, and I screamed until I could no longer even be a scream...*

*At that point I knew, no matter what the circumstances, no matter what Life gives, we still experience deep luck of love, deep luck of fate and deep luck of God. The question 'why me?' is irrelevant, it is for the weak ones, for the ones who don't have the Wisdom to see the universality of this crazy feeling...*

*I dived deeper into my own fixation of separateness, into my own scream.*

*I saw myself at five, at twenty, at forty, 100s of years ago, and far down the path of the future, and God was always there, and she, Lilith, was always there.*

*I saw my mother standing next to the window every morning looking at a house across the river, wishing to be a part of its household, dreaming and praying for a new life that will bring her happiness. I saw her wish come true, moving to the house of my father, now standing next to the window of the new home, looking at the old house, every single day, waiting for the sunrise with the same thought: I wish that I can go back in time and be in the house across the river once again where I was happy.*

*I saw my father madly in love, ready to kill and die for the chosen one, always leaving her every time she completely gave him her heart and I saw him suffering lonely surrounded with strangers from lack of love.*

*I saw lovers who were not meant to be together because their families wouldn't allow it or they lived in different places or because of the age difference or difference in class, or because they were separated by wars, poverty, disease and I saw them dying of broken hearts.*

*I saw myself finding Love and leaving it loosing the key to the gate of Heavens.*

*In the midst of the play, of my own theatre, my own game, the scenario continued with unlimited number of roles.*

*As long as the belief is: we need suffering to grow, the world will be suffering and the belief will be limiting. I heard Ama's whisper.*

*I looked around in despair, searching for her, in the branches of the trees hanging over the cliff, asking: why? why suffering? My misery needed an answer.*

*This was definitely not a mistake nor a coincidence, God as a perfect conductor invented Lilith for a reason! I asked, looking for an explanation, within my scream...*

*The vision came back to haunt me. This time I was in my own body sometime in the future. Inside, there were only broken bones.*

*There has been nothing before and there will be nothing after this feeling of deep sadness. Lilith voice said.*

*My face disappeared within the white mist, I was a dead man walking, with the head in my hands, puzzled why everybody is looking. I was a walking pain.*

*You are the man who once had everything, Lilith said, a warm home, an exciting mission, a powerful church, your friends, your loved one, they all disappeared, at once.*

*I turned around, I thought I've heard God laughing.*

*If I wanted money, I got it, piles of it. If I wanted power, people were at my feet, wanted me to like them, wanted me to nod in an approval, wanted me to send a blessing, wanted me to smile. If I wanted love, I got a most amazing woman falling in love with me, if I wanted Knowledge, it accumulated within my mind to excite the followers. I had everything and I had a*

*freedom to choose. All through my life I had a freedom to choose...*

*My Soul was in pain.*

*Today with no love, no friends, no mission or future to call my-own, I heard my thoughts echoing through the valley.*

*The same people that once admired me because I looked wise and powerful, self-confident and strong, despised me, and asked me to go back to the world of slander, the world of confusion that was full of misconceptions of what the Truth is.*

*Walking alone through the mazes of unknown streets, lost in my thoughts I was looking for the meaning of life.*

*The belief in God did not offer comfort, why, why would a soul choose a life of separation, why would we constantly come back to suffering?*

*Suddenly a child was trapped inside of me, crying. My heart bled listening its screams. The little one was hurt and there was nothing I could do to stop its anguish. The rain within the depths of my heart smelled of the fear invading. You all probably are familiar with the sound of a child crying! The scream that is complete, frantically devoted to its core, expressing the pain of the whole mankind. The cause is lost, the reason gone, just the cry stays, merging with the screams of many unconscious us.*

*Shhhhhhhhh, my dear one, some tried to console it, shhhhhhhhhh. Gentle whispers, shhhhhhhh, our loved one, shhhhhhhhhh, the voices offered hope, warmth and love. We'll secure your little body, calm your little mind, guard you from attacks of evil, we'll give you colours, scents and the feel of the mother's protected womb. Calm down, our dear one, calm down, they tried. All for nothing... The child's cry lasted for hours. Hours...*

*After I stopped crying I realised how much the child within me needed this cry drowning within the spheres of unassuming.*

*I understood – the humankind need to suffer is very deep.*

*I meditated – the human need to love is very deep.*

*A thought appeared from the depth of the darkness: isn't that what it is all about?*

*Love gives, just like a flower would, giving its fragrance to the world, completely, unassuming, unconditionally. Ama danced through her love game singing.*

*But now, when Ama is gone, just a thought of her name brought back an instant sharp physical pain.*

*A thought crept into my mind, a thought planted within me all these years of priesthood: the pain is not useless, remember, it has its own purpose, it has within a secret of remembering. When an arrow goes deep into the flesh the pain makes you more alert, more conscious, when you start bleeding you become aware of others, your wisdom deepens, your soul to soul contact with people deepens. You have decided to leave the Garden of Eden, life there was too easy, too comfortable, you were not alert.*

*I shook off this thought, I could almost hear Ama laughing hearing these words 'and your understanding gets more and more profound but it is still very childlike'.*

*Just remembering her voice, brought back a glimpse of an intention, today so far, almost forgotten, that slept deep within my Being, the urge for Light, Light found within, Light that in our ignorance and desperation we try to find outside.*

*'Stop the dance for a moment', Ama whispered, helping me re-connect and regain my awareness. Close your eyes, ears, turn your senses inwards and enter the world of your Soul, where the centre of your Light is.*

*'When you stop the dance, and turn your eyes inwards, for a moment, a miracle happens! Entering the sound of Silence, the pain disappears.'*

*Shaken out of my dream state, observing my little stage, I saw the pain as a companion constantly seeking attention, appearing and disappearing, becoming the centre illusion, whenever I let it Be.*

*'When Silence is broken', Ama's voice contemplated, 'when the miracle ceases to exist your dance will continue, as a child, lost in your little game, you will faithfully go back to it, devotedly keep on remembering to return to suffering'.*

*If suffering does not exist, happiness would not be that sweet, a thought came to my mind. If we are never thirsty we will never experience the beauty of water. Suffering teaches us compassion.*

*I was not entirely sure were these my thoughts or thoughts of the humankind that knows of no other way...*

*Within the sound of waves breaking underneath my feet, I could again hear Ama laughing. These were words of Ruben who is consoling his flock.*

*But there surely is another way, I screamed into nothingness.*

*When did all of this begin? I cannot see the end of it, but there must have been a beginning!*

*A bird flitted from my sight taking with it a thought of suffering that was with me since the beginning of time.*

*'The moment has never happened', I've heard Ama,*

*'It is all an illusion,*

*Its birth, its existence, its reality,*

*All of it is in your head.'*

*My imaginary conversation with Ama was the only sane corner within the alley of my misery, so I dived into it with a spark of hope as a drunk-man would faced with a medusa's deadly glow, with all the clarity and strength left within the abused cells of the brain: I can see it, feel it and yet its birth has never happened, how can that be?*

*You change from a moment to moment, one moment you think one thing, another something else, your feelings change, your body change, it dies and gets re-born every single second. She said.*

*You were in love with me yesterday, you are in pain today and you will not remember me tomorrow.*

*I will always remember you, I stopped her!*

*Don't say always, she said, always does not exist...*

*Always, always, always, I repeated my little mantra.*

*Nothing is static, you are that endless combination of your thoughts, feelings, cells and while you change, the states of your being also change. In reality, with no static you, we just have a series of memories implanted within your brain that outlived the phenomenon of forgiveness, just a perception of you that lives in your own head.*

*Will you remember me? I asked*

*If I paint your image and frame it, the reality of that image will be gone even before you completely become aware of its existence.*

*You are being cruel to me! I stopped her. Is that because I left you?*

*You live in our past and in the thought of the future we will never have and these two you call yourselves, but both of them are not real. Ama was correct.*

*I love you and that reality is the only reality I feel right now! I left you and the life I chose is the life I cannot recognise or accept.*

She wiped a tear rolling down my cheek releasing it into a crack of a stone, where it formed a crystal millions of years later that hid a story of my lost and never-again-to-be-found love.

*It is the fear of your future loneliness that wants me, and the memory of our past that fuels your remembrance of our love. She said.*

*You are cruel! I added*

The colour of the ocean merged with the colour of the horizon, swelling and growing indefinitely out of all bounds.

*Every second brings some changes, either the light or the object change and the two images are never the same. This constant motion is within the complexity of elements that influence our lives.*

*Find your real Self within many 'I's that keep tripping you on your journey from beginning to the end of existence. Come back to your true Self.*

*Come back? Is that an option? I turned to the silence around me repeating the question louder: Is that an option?*

My voice echoed throughout the cliffs, hit the walls of caves underneath me, disturbing the sleep of some bats who blindly hit stalactites that slept untouched for centuries and returned to me without an answer.

*'I suffer', I could hear Ama's whisper within my Silence, exists within your mind. It is conceived with gallons of memories, fears and broken hopes, birthed by circumstances, carefully nourished by your mind. Suffering needs roots, watering, and attention to grow, left alone deserted, it vanishes. She repeated the last word very, very slowly I-t v-a-n-i-s-h-es*

*You left me, even though you could have chosen a happy ending...*

*You left me because you do not understand the life without suffering, because your code is a programme that cannot accept Living Love as a supreme Way of Life. We were fortunate to meet Love, but you could not fight for its supremacy. You could not live with Her Majesty, Her Light was too blinding.*

*Come back? Is that an option? My Soul whispered a little prayer even though It knew that I have already stone-cast the answer.*

*Ruben, tell me, have you of all people chosen suffering as a way to prove that you exist? You could have done it through love, but you got hypnotised for so many decades that you need suffering to grow that you just could not let it go. Is that what happened? Ama's voice disappeared in the distance allowing Lilith to speak.*

My attraction stays strong since the beginning of time. She said. Even though it sounds strange to the uninitiated, the worshipers of me, Lilith, ARE followers of Life. They suffer to experience Life. This strong emotion is the only way, that some of you, human beings, know to be the proof of Life. Bringing me into your life, you dive deep into the world of feelings, shutting the instincts, shutting the thoughts, allowing your Soul to speak.

On the surface of Life, you walk, talk, act, play but you live only when truly in contact with your Souls, you live only when truly sad, only when truly happy. Sadness and happiness are different faces of the same coin, different ways of understanding the same truth.

The sadness though, also brings the self-destruction, it tortures minds, carrying diseases and sometimes darkness.

Both suffering and joy are illusions: illusions of your choice.

She took my hand delivering me onto the journey of my past.

Come with me now into the narrow streets of Macao contemplating Life and our original sin, separation from God. Come with me into the head of a young Ruben, the head of a priest that has just moved to China, some decades ago, before he fell in love and before he left his beloved.

Come with me into your past, in hope to find the key, and in some future lives avoid my bitter cup. Enter his story once again, but be aware, that we could be a part of any man's life, going into any other century or place, following the destiny, walking on our journey towards the Truth.

*I saw a bird that fell out of its nest, just born, beautiful in its fragility and it died under a tree, all in front of my eyes. I saw it dying... Giving birth and being born is painful; ageing as decaying surrounds us, nature is cruel...*

*Ruben smelled the air, he felt the spring in his lungs. He felt the first sun rays caressing his forehead.*

*Does the grass know that it is dying and does a bird suffer when her baby falls out of the nest? We, humans, give it much more strength and much more importance than any other living creature.*

*Being conscious of how temporary Life is, we suffer, contemplated Ruben.*

*We all pass through the same movements: birth, growth, wish to procreate, wish to socialise, decay, death, the only thing that separates us from other living beings on this little planet Earth is that we are conscious of what is happening to us. We are conscious of the Life's game, of the eternal spiral and this causes us pain. Yet, the same consciousness accelerates our search for the higher meanings in Life.*

*The same consciousness gives us the urge to grow, to become perfect, to experience His beauty, to understand, and win over the forces of Nature that are so strong within us: hunger, thirst, sex, hatred, envy.*

*Consciousness gives us strength to continue our journey until the final goal is met, our merge with God.*

*In fact, gaining consciousness, we did not separate from God and we did not commit a sin. Life went off into its journey of separation and we it's offspring chose to fight it back, accelerating our growth, returning to the Source.*

Ruben took the fragile body into his hands creating a little tomb for the dead bird. Its body still looked perfect mirroring the miracle of Life.

Looking at it, Ruben saw the Universe as a vast organism that breathes and develops, with its parts moving and interacting, creating a mysterious resonance that constantly changes. Its dance and its predetermined but spontaneous steps, its energy had no shape and yet it could become any form: a circle, a square, a triangle, a thought, a mind's pattern, a feeling, an action, it could become this wonderful little body of a bird, following His flawless design.

He buried the little bones covered in feathers, blessed it with leaves, leaving behind just a few traces of a human interaction with Nature, that wind will disperse returning to the perfect balance. The Death will in no time become invisible to the eyes of passers-by.

*We all dance within this stage, within Life, thought Ruben, still kneeling down after his little funeral, and while dancing, we seek to understand this web of energies. Is this the essence of our Work? This understanding of Life and Death?*

Looking up, through the trees, into the clouds, he couldn't help feeling, that someone is watching attentively...

Ever desire-less, one can see the mystery  
Ever desiring, one can see the manifestations  
**Tao Te Ching**

## **A Man Training to Be**

For a moment, before I have merged with One, for a whole moment that have lasted many years, I was in a limbo between two states facing nothingness, and the fear of death was with me, fear that everything I know vanished, dis-appeared, everything that I ever found familiar crumbled under the power of Her Love dis-appearing, for that moment, the moment of loss of all my old 'I's, I even doubted the idea of permanency of Soul and the existence of God. During that moment there was no man on Earth that was lonelier than I.

Dying to be re-born again, I discovered the harmony that was hidden within the chaos that surrounds us. Separated from the illusions of existence, I discovered the Divine Law that rules every moment of future, past and present, I discovered Life.

I walked through Earth deluded, living attachment to the body, to the Church, to ideas, to teachings, to my mind, to my wife, to what I believed I am, to what other people saw me to be.

The air smelled of pine. Cool air covered my skin and the moon looked at me, talking – in signs. Lost in the movements, I was seeking the End. Looking within...

I bowed to the Teacher within, to the Light, letting all of my Being flow towards the same: His Love, His Light and His Peace.

I felt that there is a Way through the Kingdom of Chaos. Listening to my heartbeat drumming faster and faster, walking the road of no return, nothing was left of my own existence, nothing but the quest to merge with Him.

Alone, in the presence of others, all my life I walked the dream of Life.

Alone, surrounded by God I feel the moment of Creation within me, the Creation itself is me.

Dressed in white with a transparent body of Light, a vision appeared, a vision of my enlightenment. A wind follows Her subtle, gentle being, she is the Master of the surrounding waters. She took my Heart and the same Heart painfully trapped by my Mind, was now released, re-birthing in Joy filled with strength and beauty.

A sign engraved on my forehead set me apart from the islands of man. The sign carried the question and the answer, shining as a star marking the beginning and the end of the journey.

She said: At the beginning there was a word, word and a sound.

God was that sound.

Sound was a vibration and vibration was energy.

Life decided to move away from God.

God has decided to create Life.

And it all started materialising, here, on Earth.

Cells, living organisms, grass, trees, enlightened trees, beautiful old trees that concurred death able to live for thousands of years.

Cells, living organism, forming into animals, evolving into humans that try to break the circle of life and death through consciousness.

Identifying with the separateness created an isolation of units and an illusion of division from Life.

Consciousness opened eyes to suffering, opening a channel for accelerated growth and the everlasting wish to break the circle of Life and merge with God – NOW.

From stone to stone, a walk became a run, Orion smiled at me from above. The visibility was low, I felt the

confidence building protected by the stars and the Moon light hidden behind a cloud in the distance. The spirits of Water, Stone and Wind accompanied me. The strength of Earth supported me through the sounds and whispers of the night. Very soon, a little goat within me found its way following the inborn trust in its own steps. From stone to stone, with every breath, closer and closer to the sea. I jumped over the water pools, avoiding the cracks, animals, worlds of unknown, caves of damp and darkness, walking the edge, closer and closer to the sea.

All through my journey, the call stayed clear, coming from the depths of waters, merge with One!

We know you, we belong to the same gap in Time. Our heartbeat connects with yours. You are given the chance to sail the wave of our truth and move the boundaries between the understandings of two realities. You have seen the birth of Venus. The foam's crystal white, from the depth of the sea, through stone and wind, the shell emerged caring the beauty of the pearl in its hidden core. Opening to you, disclosing secrets of birth and death in its golden transformation, She unfolded.

In between reality and dreams there was a World that just a few with open eyes can enter. I trusted Orion and Earth carried over the rocks into that world of altered realities. Merged with Life I understood the power within me.

The Sea has given me its code. Blue and endless, it surrounded the whole of my being, it entered my core. Running through my blood, spiralling my skin, moving within the cells of my body, it gave me the ability to become It. I could finally communicate with Life understanding its movements, breathing, the process of evolution, the emergence of cells, the process of growth.

Merging with God, it was easy to live Love for all the creatures, to know Love as unchangeable within. I entered the Lotus of Heart.

Still in trance, experiencing minutes as hours, days, eons, I've heard Her voice:

*'May the clarity of my vision guide you, for I am a part of you.*

*May my breath become your breath and fill you with Life.*

*May my words find a place of truth within your heart.*

*Allow my love enter your body with the gift of Life.*

*May you become this most precious gift; your Divine Nature.*

*Through our time together, may you know Yourself.*

*In that knowing, may you find your true home, the God within.'*

Finally alone with no roles to play. I was the loneliest person on Earth and completely fulfilled.

At the beginning of the journey.

She was with me many times since, in dreams guiding my Soul gently and firmly, always closer to One.

On my journey, 5 years later, sitting around the fire during one cold winter day, I heard a story that best described Her nature, her name was Nirvana.

Is there such a thing as wind?

Of course there is, came the reply.

What is its colour, its shape, its thickness?

It has no colour or shape or thickness.

Can one touch it and can it be shown?

No, it cannot be touched and it cannot be shown.

If it cannot be shown, how do you know it exists?

I am positive it exists, even if it cannot be seen.

Nirvana is like that.

It cannot be touched, or seen.

But we are positive it exists.

Last time I saw Her, was the night before I died, again in my dream, She came to visit. Compassion personified, free from sorrow and completely radiant, she kissed me, giving me a sign, allowing me to come

with Her into Unknown. My mission on Earth was fulfilled, I was ready to leave this realm realised and peaceful.

**V.I.T.R.I.O.L.**

***Visita  
Interiora  
Terrae  
Ractificando  
Invenies  
Occultum  
Lapidem***

## **An Alchemist**

Fire, Water, and Air.  
Being, Knowledge, and Bliss.

Sulphur is a male fiery manifestation of the Universe, it is activity, desire, the Rajas that is seen as energy, excitement, fire, brilliance, restlessness, the swift and creative, it is the initiative of all Being. It represents sudden and violent but impermanent activity. If it persists for too long, it will burn and destroy.

Mercury is fluidity, intelligence and power of transmission, it is the energy sent forth. Represents the Wisdom, the Will, the Word of creation whose speech is silence, it is Satva that is calm, intelligence and balance. It represents creation in all forms. Unexpected, he unsettles any established idea.

Salt is the vehicle of two forms of energy. The formula of our Universe is Love governed by Venus. She combines the highest spiritual with the lowest material qualities – Love materialised on Earth. Born in water, from mud, she bears the lotus. Salt is inactive principle of Nature and it is seen as Tamas – darkness, inertia, sloth, ignorance, death. It is matter that must be energised by Sulphur to maintain the equilibrium.

Life has emerged as an interplay of the three elements and as such is in a state of continuous change. Nothing can remain in any phase where one state is predominant. Three elements flow into each other, reward of an effort is peace that ultimately sinks into the original inertia.

In the process of creation, the Black King is marrying the White Queen, the male and the female principle in Nature are merging. The energy sent forth through the Will, is penetrating the female aspects of the Universe to create Life. The formulation of any idea creates its opposite and this preserves the equilibrium of the Universe. The opposites are equal and they manifest in various forms, Sun and Moon, Light and Darkness, Fire and Water, Air and Earth, Spirit and Soul. The result of

the marriage is the Orphic egg that is the essence of Life – the colour of egg is grey. It is capable of taking any possible form.

Any Thought merging from Life becomes a Separation and it can be balanced if it is married with its Contradiction. The merge brings equilibrium, the white woman now has a black head, the black king a white one, the fire burns up the water and the water extinguish the fire to be harmoniously mingled at the end. Below the Abyss, contradiction is division, but above the Abyss, contradiction is Unity.

The formula of continued life is death.

The formula of ascending above the Abyss is resurrection.

In the process of transformation the life form from the Orphic egg has to die to be reborn again.

The spirit, as mighty fire descends and connects itself with now completely purified soul giving re-birth to the divine man. The King and the Queen are resurrected to give a birth to the new body. The merge, this time, led by conscious effort, brings love and joy into heart of man, creating the light that will destroy and re-create the world.

Within the earth's womb each metal grows slowly developing and transforming into its perfection, its highest manifestation – gold. Nature and God are striving towards perfection, everything moves towards One. Just as human strive to become fully conscious, so all the metals strive to reach their purest state – gold.

Gold by its nature does not rot or decay and that is why it is the most precious. Gold is not receptive to oxygen that is breath of life for living organisms.

***Visita interiora terrae ractificando invenies occultum lapidem.***

Visit the interior parts of the Earth: by rectification you shall find the hidden stone.

V.I.T.R.I.O.L. is a balanced combination of the three alchemical principles, Sulphur, Mercury and Salt. Through the rectification the new life is created. Through the rectification Spirit and Soul merge creating a new body, a new divine personality. Through the rectification life is correctly led in the path of the True Will. Love is the law, Love controlled by Will.

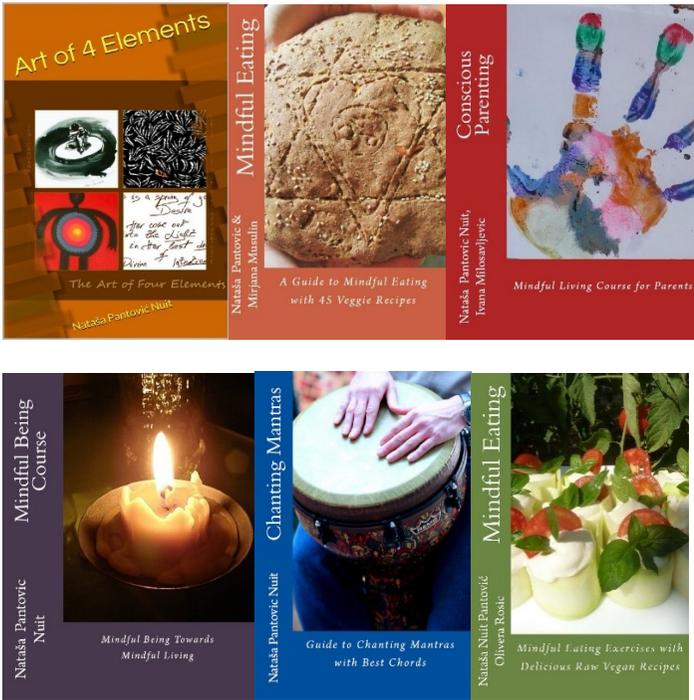
Through the rectification True Will springs from within as a fountain of Light and the flow of Love leads into the Ocean of Life.

Through the rectification action brings Perfection that is Silence and every form of energy is directed, applied with integrity to the full satisfaction of its destiny.

*when a particle and antiparticle touch  
they both disappear in a burst  
of gamma radiation  
that generates huge amount of energy...  
can this be Love?*

**Nuit**

**Alchemy of Love Mindfulness Training** is published by: Art of 4 Elements. The Alchemy of Love Mindfulness Training Titles are:



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6. Mindful Eating with Delicious Raw Vegan Recipes by Olivera Rosić
7. Tree of Life: Spiritual Poetry by Nataša Pantović

## **About the Author**

Nataša Pantović Nuit is Author, Trainer, Yogi and Spiritual Researcher that lives and works in Malta.

Author and co-author of 9 Mindfulness Books called **Alchemy of Love Mindfulness Training**.

Always fascinated with energies of: Love, Divine, Power of Mind, Creativity, Tao, Living one's Highest Potential, Nuit writes self-development courses, poetry, novels exploring topics of inner-development, esoteric or occult teachings, and New Consciousness. The main theme of her Mindfulness Books is our alchemy transformation, the alchemy of soul, our everlasting quest to find the gold within, discovering the stone that transforms metals into gold.

After helping Father George build a school in a remote area of Ethiopia, Nuit entered the most amazing world of parenting adopting two angels from Ethiopia as a single mum. Nuit left her Management Consultancy job to follow this amazing journey into the parenthood. At the moment she says that her kids are actively teaching her how to be a more loving, mindful and conscious parent. Ema and Andrej love and train basketball, play music, act within a Music Theatre Group and were Chess Champions of Malta.

Nuit has travelled through more than 50 countries and lived in 5: UK, New Zealand, Holland, Serbia and Malta. Worked as Head of Business Development, Trainer and Organizer of various Body Mind Spirit Festivals in Malta, she now writes and lectures about variety of spiritual and self-development topics.

**Nataša Pantović Nuić** Personal Highlights or some weird and wonderful things about me:



- BSc Economics, Belgrade
- I've never had a TV or a mobile phone.
- I've read 1,000s of books exploring the subjects of spirituality. I learned from many gurus and sages of our past and present

- in 1991 published my first book: Contracts for Companies and Individuals, published by "Poslovni Biro", Yugoslavia.
- my life story book has many pages within the world of Marketing and Management Consultancy and work as Trainer.
- some of the more intriguing pages talk about 25 years of Yoga and Meditation, and my spiritual exploration journey through Theosophy, Zen, Tantra, Antroposophy, Yoga and my yogic vegetarian life-style where I danced barefoot in the rain, meditated for hours in search of God, organized 6 Body, Mind and Spirit Festivals, explored Megalithic Temples and was one of the organizers of a 10 days Megalithic Conference in Malta
- the world of love and relationships is deep and soul enriching and I had a most amazing opportunity to explore its reaches in over 18 years of relationships. I now regularly publish articles on Relationships, Mindfulness and Personal Growth
- my soul is the one of a nomad and during my life-time I visited more than 50 countries, set foot on all the continents, and lived in five. My friends are from all around the globe. My home is in Amsterdam, London, Belgrade, Sliema, Rome, Sydney, Lisbon wherever I find my heart beating the same rhythm.



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