

2 - 12 -21: Day 1-2

ANNEYEONGHASEYO AND HAPPY LUNAR NEW YEAR FROM SOUTH KOREA!

After a surreal trip that started in Mendocino to San Francisco for PCR testing, a waiting period in a hotel at SFO for the results, and subsequent flight to Incheon, I am now in lockdown quarantine in a hotel room outside of Seoul. I had to go through six check points at the airport to get to a waiting area where a shuttle bus was going to take me to an unknown destination. It's a strange feeling to have no idea where you are going or what awaits you! The Seoul City Government had contacted me a few weeks prior with the news that the renovation of my Grandparents house 'Dilkusha' had been completed, and offered an invitation to the official opening on February 26th. With very strict COVID regulations here, a two week quarantine in a government facility is required. I had no hesitation in accepting this challenge. It's been a long road to get to this moment from when I originally found Mary's manuscript of her autobiography 'Chain of Amber' in a safe after her death in 1982. It took 10 years to get it published. Then I had a movie treatment written, shopped the treatment for years, distributed the book through a contact at the Korean embassy in SF which resulted in two documentaries and soon a third. Since 'Dilkusha' was designated a historical building and was to be turned into a museum, we have donated over 1,000 personal family items to the Seoul Museum of History, with the ultimate destination of many of them to be within the walls of 'Dilkusha'. A little over 14 months ago the Seoul Museum of History held an extraordinary exhibit of many of these items, and through that exhibit beautifully told the story of the historical events that my Grandparents and Father Bruce played a role in; The March 1st Independence Movement in 1919 which was Korea's quest for independence from the Japanese. And now here I am today. Day two in this hotel, 13 more to go. I feel lucky that I have a view and my window opens. I will have no human contact except for the occasional PCR test. Korean meals are left in front of the door 3x a day. I may open my door at those 3 specific times to get my food that is left on a low small table, and one other time between 6:30-7:00pm to put out a designated orange bio hazard garbage bag. Other than that, passing the threshold of the door will get you deported. There is a \$300 fine for use of alcohol, smoking or music which are all forbidden. There is TV and internet, so that's a plus. Usually I try my best to avoid TV, but I must admit it's going to be good company on occasion. When I first walked into my very small room, I was shocked to see 2 queen beds side by side leaving zero room for anything else. So, I stacked the mattresses

which leaves me space for a yoga mat and exercise. I filled my luggage with things I knew would make my confinement space homey. I imagined the room when I was packing and included a silk duvet cover, a cashmere throw, pillows, a gorgeous orange and red sari I bought in India, books, photos, electronic candles, neroli spray, fake flowers, tea bags, snacks, red tissue paper to hang over lamp shades, poster tape to hang the photos and a map of Seoul to study, and personal meaningful items to make an altar. I prayed for a view and any shade of burgundy curtains. I got my two wishes!!! My view is SW and overlooking a rather uninteresting section of a town that is in a valley, but the hills and forest on the sides and in the distance make for a pleasant vista. At the end of the valley is an huge amusement park called Everland, and at night the ferris wheel, roller coasters and other rides light up, reminding me of laughing happy people, and to not to lose my sense of humour. I am so grateful to have this experience that will culminate in certainly once of the most profound moments of my life on February 26th. Now I'm going to see what mysterious Korean breakfast has been left for me!

2-13-24 Day 3-4

I've been trying to imagine what the newly renovated 'Dilkusha', Hindi for 'Palace of Hearts Delight', will look like. I will go on a private tour the day before the official opening, which I am most grateful for. I will leave quarantine at 7am that morning, and the tour will be at 3pm. What a shift that will be. I came across this photo of me standing on her steps a few years ago when she was completely run down and in ruins. To think she could have completely disintegrated into a pile of unknown rubble and is now be standing tall for eternity, is an amazing realisation.

Yesterdays breakfast consisted of something that resembled ratatouille on wonder bread and some crinkle cut french fries. Into the orange trash bag that had to go! Thank goddess there was also a yogurt (flavoured, not my favourite) which I could make edible by adding a bit of fruit (you get a banana with every meal, also not my favourite) and some granola I brought from home. That and my box of English breakfast teabags will be a life saver for some kind of breakfast normalcy. Lipton's yellow teabag just doesn't cut it. The other meals are average at best, but the most unfortunate thing about them is that they are not even tepid by the time they are left at my front door. There is some sort of soup that accompanies every meal, but the only cold soup I like is gazpacho on a hot summers day preferably near the

Mediterranean Sea. I think three cold Korean meals a day might be the most unpleasant part of this, or maybe one of the best parts...if this continues, I will hopefully drop a few pounds!

I am getting to know the daily life around the immediate streets just beyond my window in the hours of early morning light. I remark a fastidious young man raising three colourful umbrellas in the middle of picnic tables in front of his emart24 market. A methodic elderly man tending to his Onggi kimchi pots on his large partially covered terrace off a top floor apartment. Police officers on the corner hanging out at a distance and chatting. I haven't seen any of their cars or ambulances move. All is silent and calm. My room is a bit set back in the building so I can't really see much to the left or right, but my straight ahead view is my saving grace. Especially the distant view. It's amazing how you can suddenly find things interesting to see when your options are few, especially when at first glance everything looked a bit glum. I really wish I had a pair of binoculars, I would love to get to know every corner of the valley. I am reminded of when my Grandmother Mary was imprisoned in Dilkusha by the Japanese for 6 months. My Grandfather was also imprisoned, but in a building across the valley. Dilkusha was high on a hill above Seoul with unobstructed views across the valley. Mary kept a telescope hidden from the soldiers, and she would secretly take it out to observe the building he was in and its grounds. She discovered that there were certain times that the prisoners were allowed out in the yard to exercise. She could make out Albert who was very tall, and would stand apart from the other men by a tree in hopes that Mary would see him. One day she was waving an orange pillow in hopes that he would see her, and she accidentally threw it over the balcony and it fell to the ground below. Subsequently Mary learned that Albert thought she had fallen off the balcony, so he was extremely pleased to see her when he was released from incarceration. When I accepted the idea of this quarantine, I thought about the fact they had both been imprisoned for 6 months. I figured if they could do that, I could certainly do two weeks of confinement.

It seems my compass reading was off that first day and I'm more NW facing than SW facing, so I won't be having as much sun in my room as I had hoped. Today I am really paying attention to the light, and have found that if I open my window a certain distance starting at a particular hour, I can reflect the sun back into my room off the glass and metal frame. Such a thrilling discovery! At some point towards the end of the day, I will have the last glimmer of direct sunlight coming in through the

window and onto my one comfy chair. I'm looking forward to that moment!

From the front door to the wall by the window is about 12 paces. Yesterday an hour or so of walking back and forth yielded over 6,000 steps. That, a bit of yoga, stretching and resistance exercise bands will make up part of my daily exercise routine. It will be interesting to explore different kind of classes online...pilates, tai chi, qi gong, yoga etc. and mix it up!

"The longest most exciting journey is the journey inward."

Om Mani Padme Hum, the mantra of the Tibetan god of compassion is a six syllable invocation of protection. At the heart of this mantra is the seed syllable "Om" which represents the underlying unity of all things. I find it very soothing for my meditation and complete relaxation. It's in these quiet moments I feel Albert, Mary and Bruce right here with me. We are doing this together, guiding each other on a quest to come full circle. To complete. I've done a large part of my role in this, but there is still more of my Grandmother's story to be told. The time is now, things are coming together. I can't wait to reveal more!

2-15- 21 Day 5

I might have thought that being shut in solitary confinement for 2 weeks would give one the desire to sleep a lot to try to accelerate time. I never really pondered the question before arriving. Well, it's quite the contrary. I'm sleeping very little, but over all just enough. About 5-6 hours at night and a short nap in the afternoon. It doesn't feel like jet lag...it's just an excitement and curiosity about the day ahead. I don't want to wake up and have missed the sunrise. I want to see my view come to life each day. I would be disappointed to miss that. I like to wake up in the darkness and put on and light my electronic and scented candles (whiskey & woodsmoke) flick on the switches of my lamps; the shades tinted with red tissue paper. It's cozy and romantic. I have decided to romanticise solitude!!!

I have had a loner side to me since childhood, so solitude comes easily to me. I didn't grow up with a lot of people or activity around me. I grew up with my nose in a book, dreaming...I guess that's why I always wanted a big and adventurous life, and idolised my grandmother Mary and the life she had lived. When I contemplate it, I really have spent an extraordinary amount of time on my own; always having had long

distance relationships and no children, has made it so. Moving to Paris 21 days after my 20th birthday, not knowing a soul or speaking the language, was a very solitary endeavour. Not understanding what's be said or being understood in a foreign land can be very lonely and desolate. You have to learn to enjoy being alone with yourself, (something I didn't particularly care for as a child) amuse yourself, enjoy meals alone, movies alone, walks alone, traveling alone...I had a lot of people around me in the 80's scene, and yet I was very much alone too. Being in this little hotel room in South Korea, reminds me of some places I lived in my early days in Paris and also a couple of downtown New York City apartments. That's why I knew what to bring to make me feel happy and at home in this small space. Experience.

It's a rainy, misty morning and I can hear the sound of wheels on slick streets. I am thankfully 3 long blocks from a major thoroughfare, so the noise is distant. No umbrella's up across the street this morning. Although very happy to have wifi, in this one valley alone I see two G5 towers which is a bit unnerving. Although one is on the next block over right in my direct view, I choose not to see it, and direct my gaze to the hills and mountains beyond.

This quarantine is a lesson in time management. I have never been very good or disciplined in that, although I do seem to get a lot done on occasion, and like most women, I am a good multitasker. I can be a bit of a procrastinator and wait to the last minute to get it done kind of girl. I always admired that Father Bruce did certain things for a particular amount of time and then he stopped, read, exercised or rotated projects and circled back around. I would frequently think to myself that I should be more like him. Well now is my chance. I don't walk for one hour now, I walk about 5 times 1,500 steps. In no particular daily order, 1 hour of reading, 2 episodes of Netflix, 30 minutes of yoga, Zoom or WhatsApp with friends, a meal, then a cup of tea and just staring out the window at my surrounding. Meditation, some monotonous online banking or bills, day dreaming, writing, clean the room, email and so on...circle back around. The days seem to be zipping by!

I have been exchanging texts with Kayleen, my liaison with the Seoul City Government for all details relating to my stay and the upcoming opening of Dilkusha. I have been informed that because of the current COVID regulations, on the day of the private tour I may have just four guests. On the day of the opening, only one guest. Good thing, as I have invited 5 people to accompany me on one day or the other so that

will work out perfectly. I have been pre warned that I have to give a speech and multiple interviews to the press. That will be easy to do with my heart so full of gratitude, appreciate and love for all that people have done to help me get to this place and time.

The cloudy day has departed and sunset is here. I am comfy in my corner chair by the window. I remember a favourite quote and thought..."The point of power is always in the present moment. The present moment is really all there ever is to experience everything. So if our point of power is always in the present moment, then we can really be, do, or have anything that we give our full attention to...The only impact we can make is in the present moment and future present moments."

I think of the name Mary gave her home here in Seoul, "Dilkusha'..." Palace of Hearts Delight". I see that even my little room here can be my 'Palace of Hearts Delight' if I so desire to make it be, I do, and so it is.

2 17 - 21 Day 6-7 Snow and other surprises!

It's a snowy morning outside my window. Clear blue skies frame the surrounding mountains. It will be a sunny but chilly day today, with a high of 34 degrees. Yesterday was filled with surprise, and therefore my sleep was filled with dreams and visions of future moments in time.

It was late morning, and I was comfortable in my chair enjoying some ginger tea and starting to practice a bit of Korean, (I can't seem to retain much unfortunately, and my vocabulary remains dismal), and my phone rang. An unknown Korean number showed up across the screen. I couldn't imagine who would be calling me here that I didn't already know. I answered the phone and a man named Chris introduced himself. He was obviously Korean, and his English was very good. Many Koreans are fluent in English, and have an excellent grasp of the language. He very politely presented himself as the Chief Strategy Officer of BTC Communications of Seoul, Korea, and explained that BTC is short for Bridging The Cultures Communications. He asked me if I had received an email from him on February 12th, which for some reason I had not. BTC he further detailed, is the national organising agent for the Korean Government. As this agent, BTC is planning to conduct a nation-wide ceremony with President Moon on March 1st, 2020 for the anniversary of the 'Independence Movement of March 1st 1919'. March 1st is commemorated in Korea for the major revolt against

Japanese colonialism in 1919. He mentioned something about requesting my participation, The Declaration of Independence, and filming...He said he wanted to send a film crew to Mendocino right away. I told him I was in Korea, which came as quite a surprise to him. In fact we discovered that I am quarantined not far from where he lives. I was invited here by the Seoul City Government, not the South Korean government, so they were unaware of my presence here in the country. It all sounded a bit confusing, so I suggested he forward me his email which would clarify his request.

The first part of the email reiterated what he had already told me and then the rest proceeded as follows...

“If I briefly describe our nation’s relationship with your Grandfather, 102 years ago your Grandfather, Albert Wilder Taylor wrote an article about our Independence Movement, and because of his article, the World recognised our strong indisputable desire for independence. And to express out nation’s deepest gratitude, and to remember your Grandfather’s dedication, we would like to re-focus on our “Declaration of Independence”, which was written in 1919.

With respect to that, I am writing this email to you, as the Granddaughter of Mr Albert W. Taylor and a good friend of Korea, to ask our sincere request that we film you reading the “Declaration of Independence” for us to use for our ceremony on March 1st with President Moon.

It will be televised nationwide, and I am sure that it will serve as great momentum for our nation to overcome the harsh situation here in Korea. Please consider our sincere request and share your positive feedback to me. Once you accept our request, then we will provide all the necessary instructions, including an English transcript of the “Declaration of Independence”.

By the way I obtained your contact information from “Seoul Museum of History”. I believe you have had an unforgettable experience with them since 2016 by donating numerous priceless historic memorabilia of your Grandfather Albert W. Taylor, as well as that of Mrs. Mary L. Taylor author of “Chain of Amber”.

I of course accepted their request as an honoured and humbled friend of Korea and explained I would be here in quarantine until the 25th, but

would be available to film that afternoon. I have read portions of their Declaration of Independence before on the radio. It is a beautiful document, and quite long...I now wait to hear back from Chris about what's next. Life can be so unexpected. Always expect the unexpected!

2 18 - 21 Day 8 - 9

Eight nights behind me.... Just over half way through the quarantine. It seems hard to believe, as the days just seem to have melted into one another, and now here I am. If I didn't have a calendar, I wouldn't know what day it was.

I've been thinking so much about Mary and her home imprisonment. I have been re reading the 'Chain of Amber', and just came across a few paragraphs that spoke to me, especially now.

"Minutes, hours, days and eventually weeks were ticked off the grandfather clock...to hear the hours strike was all that really mattered to me, marking off the march of time. During those first few days, I found myself wandering from room to room in search of something I could not name. Suddenly I saw one of Bruce's pipes (she called my Grandfather Albert, Bruce). Then I knew what it was! I was missing smoke! I crammed his pipe with tobacco and retreated to my room. A few puffs were enough! I decided then and there to make this one room my home from then on. The psychological effect was remarkable. From it's south windows, I looked over the Pekin Pass Road and the prison... I had my breakfast in bed, my lunch in the alcove facing south, tea facing west, and dinner, when there was anything to eat, as near to the fireplace as possible. And so I made a pattern for my existence. I was not at liberty to leave the grounds or have any contact with outside persons". As my dear friend Alene commented, I am living a lot of parallels in my life with Mary these days.

Yesterday, I was rewarded with my first visually distant contact with the outside world. My friend Mijin who is a documentary filmmaker and has produced two of the documentaries about Dilkusha, my Grandfather and my families historical connection to Korea, dropped off a care package for me at the reception here in quarantine world. I was able to wave to her from my 8th floor window and say hello. That felt good. I am about 40 minutes outside of Seoul, so it's quite a trip for her to do this for me. I am forever grateful. She delivered the box early afternoon,

but I had to wait until 8pm, the appointed hour for deliveries, to receive it. Honestly, it felt like Christmas! My most prized item in the box? A requested pair of binoculars. My second week here is about to get a whole lot more interesting!! Now I will be able to get to know my surroundings past the first few blocks outside my window in greater detail. I can't wait for sunrise so that I may explore the valley with a new pair of eyes! Mary had her telescope, I have a pair of binoculars! Another new coveted possession is a mug for hot drinks. I like to drink a lot of hot water and tea, and the small paper cups (not made for hot drinks) that they provide, have frankly been annoying. There was one larger cup, (actually made for hot drinks), that was here upon check-in. I have treated it with kid gloves and recycled it diligently all week long. It leaks, and so I have had to use these useless small cups (the kind you get in a dentists office to rinse your mouth out with), underneath the larger one to catch the ever increasing drips. Mijin got here just in time, as I was up to 4 small cups under the big cup! She also brought me some packaged soups and a second mug so that I may have something hot to ingest other than tea and water. So many days of cold meals is getting old. Other gourmet delights include a box of Belgian chocolate covered biscuits, butter waffles, chocolate chip cookies, individual packages of quality coffee, a bag of macaroons and some yummy looking nut bars. There goes the sugarless diet, and I don't care...I have enough goodies for weeks! I can't wait for 4pm tea time, though I think those butter waffles will be delicious with coffee for breakfast this morning!

This kind gesture by my friend made me think of another passage from Mary's book about her confinement. "From time to time, long braids of eggs were found by Nom Doo pushed through a door or laid on window sills. No one was ever found who would admit to being the donor, but I am sure these things came from poor Koreans in the houses round about, who made great sacrifices in sending them. Later on Kondo San, the only Japanese employee in my husband's office, saw to it that I had a regular supply of rice, and Natalie sent me some canned goods by her sons who walked boldly up the drive." Thank you Mijin, for being my Natalie!

Well, I did hear back from Chris the VP of BTC Communications agent for the South Korean government about reading the Declaration of Independence...What could be more unexpected than the original request to be filmed reading the Declaration to be aired for the March 1st Independence Day Celebrations with the President? Well, that I

would be asked by The Blue House, Korean version of The White House, to read a section of the declaration LIVE on stage on March 1st with the President for a nationwide televised event. So, needless to say, I am staying a little longer here in Seoul to do that...Of course because I brought so much stuff for my quarantine hotel room in my suitcase, I didn't bring clothes to wear for this sort of event! Oh well, all black again and in my down jacket. The event will be outside and it will be cold, it is what it is!!

2-22-21 Day 10 -11

“Cocoon: To cocoon is defined as to cover something, to keep it safe. To cause to be isolated or protected from harsh, dangerous, or disturbing realities; insulate.”

We've all been in a bit of a cocoon recently, and have had isolated to some degree to deal with our present situation in the world today. For me, this imposed quarantine in South Korea has taken isolation to a whole new level. It has forced an inner introspection and deep thought to the fore front of my everyday existence and activity. One of my favourite quotes “There is nothing more constant than change” – Heraclitus, 535 BC, rings in my ears. Life change is all about constantly adapting and revising the way you go along your journey. Twenty or so years ago I wrote a song called “Mind Change” and an album of the same title. I should reread my own lyrics.

As the days wind down to me leaving my cozy nest, I feel beyond grateful for this experience and what lies ahead. It will be a new chapter in my life. I am so ready to leave some residual negativity of my old life behind me. I have never lived in fear of failure, in fact my failures have pushed me to chose growth, again and again. I guess I needed this time to remember that I need to keep pushing forward, and to always remain open to the moment that is unfolding at present. I knew I had to be here in Korea for a number of reasons, but some new opportunities have been revealed to me that I did not anticipate. A new sense of purpose resonates inside me. I have my ancestors to thank for this moment in time; they created the foundation for me to build and grow upon. What a gift that is.

When I leave quarantine on the 25th at 8am, I will have to hit the ground running, as I will go from total isolation to a flurry of non stop activity until I leave South Korea on March 2nd. I will relish every last minute of

these precious solitary moments, and ready myself to greet the outside world with a renewed sense of enthusiasm and optimism!

2-25-21 Day 13 -1 4

'Land of The Morning Calm'. Korea earns that name well. For 14 days with the exception of one lovely snowy day, the weather has been dead calm, with cloudless blue skies. Yesterday was my last day and night here in my quarantine cocoon. In an hour I will be leaving here and freedom awaits just outside my door. From here I will take a car to my hotel in Seoul. There, I will have a couple hours to organise myself before an early light Italian lunch with Mijin and Seeme, producers of two documentaries concerning Dilkusha and my families history. Today we will continue filming 'Three Returns' (working title) It documents the return of my Grandfather, my Father and now me, to Korea. They have been filming this particular documentary for quite a few years now.

Following a short break after lunch we will proceed to 'Dilkusha' for press interviews and then the private tour with my allowed four friends; Peter and Diana Underwood, (Peter's Grandparents and my Grandparents were friends here in Seoul and Peter and his lovely Australian wife Diana live here), Brother Anthony, (who has done extensive research on my family history and translation of family documents for the Seoul Museum of History), and Hosung Kim, a well known South Korean film producer that I am working with here in Seoul. In a few short hours I will have the sun on my face, a breath of fresh air in my lungs, and above all, I will see Dilkusha restored to her former glory.

The March 1st. Independence Day televised event was an incredible experience!!! I have just received an email from my Blue House (Korean White House) liaison Chris. I am attaching here the part of the show filmed from the TV my my friend Diana.

He writes

"...Our ceremony was a big hit. The entire nation loved it, and our government wants to send you a gift as a token of appreciation. To see your Oscar act, please see around 13 minutes...it really was Oscar Female Act Nominee performance..." LOL...

That morning, I had barely slept a wink before arising at 4am for a 5:30 AM pick up by Chris. The show was at 10AM. It was cold and pouring

rain. After a short drive to Tapgol Park, we made our way through extensive security to my heated tent where I waited for further instructions. We had one rehearsal around 7am. Around 9:30 the VIP guests started to filter in. The audience area limited to 50 people was covered with a tent, the stage was not. President Moon and his wife were in the front row. They made us all wear 'made in China' raincoats, which I was not thrilled about, as I was already wearing my down jacket rain coat, so now I have two raincoats on. Really attractive LOL!!!! Anyway, the show went off without a hitch. I definitely had Bruce, Mary and Albert there with me. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience, as exhausting as it was. After the show I walked back to the hotel in the still pouring rain and arrived soaking wet, but so happy to have the stress of doing this type of live event behind me. I had a well deserved delicious western lunch at the hotel steak house, best meal in over two weeks. Caesar salad and seafood chowder with lobster!!! During my solo lunch, three Koreans came up to greet me and say they had seen me on TV and thanked me profusely. What an honour to know they felt so strongly, and that it meant so much to them for me to have read part of the most profound document of their nations history.

That evening at 9:30 pm my film producer friend Hosung and his wife Kumjoo kindly picked me up to take me to the Incheon airport an hour or so away for a 1AM the following day flight. I'm running on fumes at this point! International travel is gratefully a solitary experience these days. Barely a sole in the airports, security lines, halls, boarding gates or on the plane itself. You feel completely safe at all times. I had a great flight on KLM to Amsterdam with a 4:30 AM arrival on March 2nd. There I had a 5 1/2 lay over before my flight to Barcelona. At 12:30 we landed in Barcelona, a usually bustling airport. I had an 8 hour layover there in an empty and silent hall. Only a handful of flights were coming in and out. At 8:30 PM I took off on my flight to Ibiza. This flight had quite a few passengers on it as there are only two flights a day on Vueling. I landed, went through health and paperwork controls without issue and picked up my luggage.

My faithful friend Jose left my pickup in the Ibiza airport parking lot, and with my spare key in hand I made my way to the truck. I loaded my extensive, as usual, luggage into the cab, please everything through long, had gone smoothly. I put the key into the ignition, but it would not work or unlock the steering wheel. Oh no!!!! The spare key, I had never used, actually does not work!!! I had to call poor Jose, already in bed to come and bring me the other key he had in his possession for his to

come and rescue me. This is during a pandemic state of alarm curfew on the island. Before long I was on my way. I noticed he turn left out of the airport as I turned right. I realised he was going to take back road to get back to his house as no one is supposed to be on the roads. I precede on my more direct route will I realised what was going on. Hadn't really crossed mind until I saw I was the only car on the road. I prayed I would not get stopped by the police although I don't think I would have been fined as I was driving home from a flight coming in that evening. Still, I was not up for a police stop and check point. As soon as I was about a half way point and in the middle of the island, I headed off on a back road route myself, in the pitch black of the late night. I still eventually had to come out on a stretch of road with two roundabouts. This is where there are checkpoints...I was relieved to see no police as made my way through that stretch. Once Im off the asphalt road, I still have 10+ minutes up my mountain dirt road to get to my little off the grid house, which I did with any problems. Now here I am on top of my mountain looking out onto the Mediterranean Sea. Was I really just in South Korea?