

## *Preface*

Some twenty years ago my photograph *The Birth* won a First Class prize in a contest held under the auspices of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN). I was also given the privilege to display some of my other photos in the main lobby of CERN. It gave me great pleasure to invite my good friend Sally Alderson to view them. (Sally is a British journalist. She wrote the preface for the renowned photographer D'Albert Philippon's photo collection of Léman and Geneva.) While I was waiting for her in the lobby, another Chinese man was looking at the exhibition. With a smile, he approached me and asked if I knew the prizewinner. This person turned out to be Dr. K. K. Phua, the founder and chairman of World Scientific Publishing. We have become close friends since that day.

Twenty years have gone by in a wink. Today World Scientific is one of the leading international publishers, and it is especially strong in the area of high energy physics. And I had moved to the US to work at the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory as a researcher.

In the intervening years many things have changed, but my enthusiasm for photography remains the same. To me physics and photography are like a pair of twin sisters. Physics stresses elegance. There is no formula in the world as elegant as Maxwell's equations. Physics is also concise. There is no expression in the world as concise as  $E = mc^2$ . Photography is precisely the unification of beauty and conciseness. The key to photography lies in the application of physical principles: lighting, layers, contrast and color spectrum are the soul of a photograph, and the control of time exposure determines its theme. Of course luck also plays a role in the making of a good photo. Surely a perfect rainbow in the desert is not an everyday event. But then, isn't it the same in physics? New physical phenomena are often discovered most unexpectedly. In fact, there is one more similarity between physics and photography: luck is granted only to those who are prepared. The wonders of

nature only happen at a specific time and place, and it is easy to let them slip through one's fingers.

I would like to thank Professor K. K. Phua for providing me with the opportunity to publish this collection of photographs. I am also indebted to Prof. David Kiang, Tan Hwee Chiang and the staff at World Scientific for their invaluable assistance. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Richard Vidal for writing the Introduction. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to a great calligraphy master Yiqing Liu, the Vice President of the Chinese Calligraphy Association, who wrote the beautiful calligraphic form of the book title in Chinese seen on the front cover. It is not possible to list all my friends who have provided me with encouragement throughout this project. To all of them, I would like to say "Thank you." My effort is amply rewarded if the reader has gained from this book a glimpse of a physicist's view of the beauty of nature.

*December 2006*