

BAENGOI

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This is the first part of the Sannadee duology, the second part being [Sannadee](#).

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BAENGOI

1) *Water - Samsarapho*

Samsarapho awakes

The waves rolled in inevitably. Does the sea change? In and out, in and out, up and over, up and over. Shhh....er....sh. Shh..i..sh. Shhhhhherrrr...umm...um. Each wave different as it rolls over, an apparent life of its own. Now look away, and there is the sea - it is just the sea.

This time Samphor emerged rolling in on the wave. She imagined it saying SamphorhereSamphorrr, but who would hear? It mattered little for who could see, her body transparent against the water and her silver mane mingling unobtrusively with the moonlight spattering amongst the waves. It was her time to come and clean, she was cleaning the jenns. As the bipeds settled into their own cycle of recharging some part of the jenns would be released, and she came to measure them. They told her that's what she was supposed to do.

She once asked Femphi "Why do we do this?"

"It is our food," replied Femphi with the resigned impatience of the elder.

"I know it is our food," Samphor expelled exasperatingly "but it is strange that we eat these waste products of the bipeds. Do they know we do this?"

Femphi smiled. Samphor asked again to no avail as the smile remained constant. At another time she asked why they called it cleaning the jenns, and again Femphi smiled "It is what"

".... we do" continued Samphor in her mind, but what if we didn't do it, if we didn't clean the jenns. It is cleaning being, this thought came with an impact that shattered Samphor and the waves rolled her into rocks. She gathered herself her mane having split off in several directions, and as she rolled back out to sea she thought about cleaning being, such a strange idea. She would tell Femphi and then she saw his infuriating smile so that plan was soon finished. But not the thought of measuring being, that stayed with her.

The wave echoed SamphorhereSamphorrr, and brought her back. Gathering herself she floated to a rock where she might then have been described as seated. She watched her

detached silver mane dancing on the moonlight as it was drawn towards the jenns. As the mane contacted the link she was drawn forward, a graceful magnetism attracted to the sleeping biped.

Hovering above she watched and sure enough the biped turned from side to side - her call to action. Her mane formed a chord and attached itself to the centre of the sphere of the biped, and then she found herself floating towards her host as the chord shortened like elastic returning to its original length. She hovered there briefly sensing the jenns of the biped, then she took her leave as the smile appeared on the lips of the erstwhile host. Her food ingested she felt satiated, and the jenns of her host seemed fine. She had once felt a prickliness as her mane had touched the heart of one biped, and she quickly withdrew to search further leaving a frown as it disappeared.

"Those jenns did not clean well, did they?" asked Femphi, and smiling he turned away dismissing Samphor's incessant questioning. Why does she ask about what others just do? But she appeared to perform her duties satisfactorily every time he checked.

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Sam Aaron Phillips, Sarpo to his friends, and Sap to many who tried to take advantage staggered out of the bar to be blasted by the night air. He staggered forward, his 45 degree angle looking destined to collapse, and then a part took hold as he meandered to the taxi. He was known, they made their money and he was never trouble. Soon he found himself bundled in his chair and sleep took over. He awoke as he often did with this feeling of someone asking "Aren't you fed up of this yet?", but this disquiet soon got buried beneath the alcoholic stupor and the haze drifted into sleep again. Part of Sarpo's sanity lay in hitting bottom. This had been a common practice amongst those of an earlier generation but his own rarely escaped the straightjacket of their upbringing. For Sarpo he had been fortunate - as well as being unfortunate, the misfortune had been the fortune. Aaron Phillips senior was well-to-do, and expected Sam to follow in father's footsteps - not uncommon in their stratified society where it was necessary to protect your own. A certain form was required of Sam, a code of conduct, a way to behave, that was essential so that Aaron Phillips senior was not let down, and Sam dutifully complied with this as he grew up.

But at his final stage of education, the necessary freedom required to focus on that level of work also took Sarpo away from his rigid upbringing. After having travelled he spoke to his mother once "It is hard for our society to bring up children properly as there is no consistency of standards of behaviour. In other societies you can see the advantages of family duty and the importance placed on such duty, a pressure that would mean that the

child would never go against their parents.

"But," Sam continued trying to be as polite as possible but recognising that he was deeply disturbing his mother "the standards in those societies are similar for all families. In our society our fierce egos have determined a right for all people to determine the standards that their children are raised by. There is no communal practice of upbringing, no expectation on others that they help with social behaviour. And usually this right is used in a negative sense, we have the right to bring children up how we feel but we have no social responsibility in that. Children run amok on our streets, not just poor children, whilst adults stand by and see these untrained minds causing violence and using drugs to escape the consequences of their upbringing. What can the adults do but stand by, if not the parents will attack the adults. "What are the police for?" they argue, but the police are for extreme cases and not each individual situation that the community should be looking after. No we've gone crazy.

"But some families manage to pull through and the reason is love, a love that brings a family together, a love that is not concerned with money and position but respect and consideration for each other. This love and consideration is not pampering, this love is not showering the children with possessions so that the child then appears to be well looked after. This love is not showering the child with possessions so that the child can appear well-to-do in front of their friends. It is a timeless love that for generations has held families together and not allowed parenting to be confused by the issues of ego at the time."

Sam's mother smiled and offered the platitude that his father worked because he loved us both, but she had accepted a duty long ago, a mother's duty and a wife's duty, that was not open to argument. Such matters cannot be open to that level of scrutiny, it is what is done.

Anyway Sam had moved away from what was expected, hit bottom, and sadly come up with a path that allowed him to drink. This Path was based vaguely in Truth but lacked a consistency and discipline his fate might have liked him to strive for. In later years he assigned it to meditation being erratic, a sporadic religious experience combined with occasional creative highs rather than the steady progress daily nourishment can bring.

So he dabbled in the Path, he recognised the need to follow his True Path but the truth of it had been twisted a little to allow the intrusion of alcohol. Occasional dry periods led to insights but he accepted this partial approach as a sacrifice to his needs of daily life and the stress entailed. And throughout this, a voice in the middle of the night kept asking through the haze "Aren't you fed up of this yet?"

He had found a girl who could tolerate some of his excesses but sadly she bore the cross of

wanting to save him and this formed the basis of their relationship. Sam and Alice took a holiday on an island. It was an island of great beauty, an island of dreams. The sun shone, the surf meandered in slowly of an evening. The sands on the beach were silken, not too hot, but gentle enough to glide over arm-in-arm, in between the wonderful food, a mood that only nature could create. Alice began to congratulate herself on a successful conversion whilst Sam sucked into the magic of nature.

But one evening the bubble burst as habit kicked in and Sarpo began to drink quite heavily. It snuck upon them as they had previously had the occasional drop but not enough to spoil the mood. It started innocuously.

From the terrace of the restaurant they sat there quietly staring at waves rolling in, occasionally disturbed by the warning buzz in the ear that the repellent was wearing off. Alice called over the waiter and asked for a coil to be brought, and "a beer and whiskey for me" piped in Sam.

"Are you sure?" she asked without thinking, she hated it when he had chasers. And then bit her lip, she knew the mood had changed. She kept quiet and tried to ride it out but she saw inside Sam the demon that her inadvertent comment had awoken.

Inside Sam the voices were working double time. She can't leave that dam temperance God at home. Here we are on an island paradise, everything is going well. The sea, the surf, a few quiet beers, and oh no - she has to call in the Salvation Army. Oh come on, Sam, let it ride. It was only one comment she made, and she's not pursuing it. Let it be. But sadly that comment got submerged by the next swallow, and then he pursued a tack the demon knew would cause a rift.

"Look at these girls, so pretty," his arm grandly sweeping an all-encompassing semi-circle. "Don't get me wrong, you're very attractive," he paused for effect and quickly took another drink "You are very attractive, you know," he smiled winningly, or so he thought.

In fact it did remind her of something, the first time they met. He had seen her across the bar and lurched; weaving he managed to reach her without knocking over drinks or disturbing anyone. She smiled and laughed when she thought he expected it. They exchanged numbers, she thought that was the easiest. Anyway he wouldn't remember, and if he did - maybe it was a once off.

An inauspicious start, she now wished she had given him the wrong number she had thought of doing. And now he was lauding the virtues of island girls - "they are so attentive they

make you feel wanted," she overheard that rambling. Yeah, she thought, these men are the paycheque if this is not upfront prostitution then in the long term the price will be paid.

"And they make such good wives, it's their tradition, their culture," continued the tactful politician. "It is a shame that women in our society have forgotten how to keep the family unit together. It is no good"

"Both men and women making the same demands in a relationship," she mimicked in her mind. Is it? Oh yes, it's the yin-yang. Masculine and feminine principles. Very sound, very rational, and definitely truth in it.

But not truth for her now, for this drunken slob is probably going to clamber all over her tonight. She drank a few more to combat the fumes that would descend on her, and from that moment she was waiting for the plane, the plane that would lead to a quiet separation.

Sam had missed much of what went on that night, he remembered drinking too much but the evening seemed to go pleasantly. Once back in the bungalow he needed the toilet due to the booze - exotic food combination. This gave Alice a chance to feign sleep. When Sam finally reached the bed, he looked with resignation at his sleeping companion. "No island girl would desert her man like this," he muttered drunkenly to himself "she would know her duty". He lay down beside Alice thinking of this idyll as soon his demon took over and he lost consciousness.

In the middle of the night again he woke in a haze and the voice was saying "you know better and now you have dragged me into this, have you no shame?" The drink turned him over and sent him to sleep again.

Samphor breezed in on a wave. Although the night was cool she felt good. Her friends on the wind called to her and as she rolled in she felt the trees greet her. She lay on her rock and watched the waves trickle in with the moonlight occasionally triggering a show. It was a night the bipeds called atmospheric but in reality that meant her playmates were out. She watched the wind in the trees, the branches overhanging the surf as the moonlight paraded past. In the background geckoes greeted her, such noisy creatures for their size. The chirruping, she listened again, it's the cute things that rub their legs together to say hello! She whiled away her time turning from one to the other and smiling at each in turn. She liked to take the time for all, not all her kind were like that. Was it smiling? She allowed the use of the biped word, she felt the jenns when she had finished and a smile crossed their lips. Yes she was smiling.

Nature called and she must follow. She sent off part of her mane and it alighted on Sarpho. A crow crossed her path - an omen, when she finished here she would consider the omen. As she was drawn towards Sarpo she realised that the omen concerned him. She was pulled into the sad creature. His body was full of poison, his jenns were very strong but buried beneath the poison that pervaded his being.

But he was strong underneath all of that, could the jenns help him with his poison? Sadly no, these humans do themselves so much harm.

She lay there with him feeling his pain. There was that strength underneath, she felt that as the jenns - well they were strong. To her these jenns emanated from the heart cascaded outwards so she saw these bipeds more as spherical although the edge of the sphere was not always clear - it kind of dissipated. But it was never as simple as that with these bipeds for there were always blocks, obstructions, of one form or another. Apparently they were constricted into this shape, Femphi had called it bipedal.

It was explained in their Phorlore:-

Phors measure jenns. Out in the land of solids Phors search for jenns. When the brightness goes and the silver moon enters that above our home we float into the land and join with the jenns. Once the agitation of the jenns has melted away into our own personal Phorsphere, we return to our home where the agitation floats away back and forth along the rolling waves.

Femphi had explained some Phorlore to her. "Each time we measure the jenns, something stays inside our own sphere. As we get older that part in us gets stronger and it enabled me to feel creatures other than Phors in our home."

"Other than Phors!" she exclaimed excited at hearing this the first time.

"Yes these creatures are called Silfs and have been around far longer than Phors. It is these Silfs that have given us Phorlore," he continued.

"What do you mean "given"?" she asked.

"According to Phorlore there are many creatures other than Phors, some that live in our home." Femphi explained "and some that live outside our home. The ones that live outside our home call their home "land". On this land live many creatures as in our home but the most important of these creatures is the biped for the bipeds have the jenns.

"There are many Silfs, the one I linked with was called Anieta. She said that according to Silflore when she was older she would hopefully link with Alphs who she thought were very important. But none were as important as the bipeds, and Phors are the only ones in our home that can link with bipeds."

"What did you mean "given"?" asked Samphor.

"When I linked with Anieta, I knew the Phorlore," Femphi said, this time answering her. "In that link I also learnt that Anieta was one of many Silfs who floated round our home to link with Phors like me - Phors who were old enough, ready to link. Maybe you will be ready when you are older and meet your Silf. Maybe they will be able to answer all your questions!!"

"But," Femphi continued, smiling again "the bipeds are the most important as they have the jenns."

"Why do we call them "bipeds"?" asked Samphor, she was on a good day, Femphi had never answered so much. "Are they not these funny spheres?"

He answered her with this. "This is part of Silflore that I gained from my link with Anieta".

"Bipeds are the most important creatures for they have the jenns. They do not know they have the jenns and they do not know how important the jenns are to all creatures, both at home and on land. When you go on land it is still, it does not move back and forth. On this land there are things which have shape and the shape of the creatures with the jenns is bipedal."

"Femphi, I am sorry to keep asking," asked Samphor, Femphi smiled to cover his irritation, "but what is shape and what is bipedal?"

"Honestly, Samphor," replied Femphi apologetically "I don't know. For these are words of Silflore that I don't truly understand. You must wait until you meet your own Silf when you are ready."

"But what why" stuttered Samphor more confused than before.

"Stop," Femphi imposed himself on Samphor "and listen very carefully to this. As elder I must explain some things to you, but the true way to learn is to feel, to understand of an instant, without thoughts and questions flashing across. Just instant understanding, a feeling that you know. Shape is this, bipeds are that. These are things you will know when you

know them and not before. If I tell you things before you are ready you will not know them, they will be there inside you floating around. They will not be a part of you and that is not good for Phors."

"You are right, Femphi," agreed Samphor "I had this thought that measuring jenns was measuring being, and I don't know what it means. And it is there inside me and I don't know what to do with it."

"Yes so you can see why I say that you must be ready," replied Femphi pleased to have agreement from her. "And finally let me tell you something that happened to me on one of my last jenn searches. As I floated in to complete the link I felt very strongly that this biped had 4 streams of light pointing out from where we made the link, and that above the link there was another point that attracted my linkmaker. I leave that as a thought to float around inside." He left thinking this young one was special, so many questions measuring being, what did it all mean for her? He worried about where her specialness would lead her, she was on a course he was afraid to follow.

Samphor felt her link with Sarpo, his jenns were so strong. Maybe if she worked with these jenns she would gain enough for herself that she would be able to link with Silfs sooner, or maybe even Alphs. She must work hard on Sarpo, she would only later know that she spent more time - too much time with him. She lay with him searching for his agitation, this biped had so much agitation. She tried to collect this agitation, it became harder and harder, but she determined to work at it as his jenns were so powerful.

A voice called in her head, it was Femphi from the past, "Phorlore warns us not to collect too much." She shrugged this off, that old Phor he would spoil anything, and she wanted these jenns. She kept the link going until she felt exhausted, she knew she would barely be able to carry the agitation back home.

It was time to break the link so she withdrew her linkmaker, it would not move. She applied herself more and imagined she was floating back home. Slowly she began to float away from the biped but the link would not break, and gradually she got sucked back in. She tried several times more and each time she floated a short way but she got sucked back in. Finally she gave in and lay there, her linkmaker integrated into the biped.

Then she began to feel the agitation, she realised that she had not released it and she began to feel it grow more and more. Slowly it took her over and she just felt agitation, and then Sarpo woke up thinking "you know better and now you have dragged me into this, have you no shame?" As he turned over Samphor tried to detach herself from this agitation, and

somehow by receding into her centre she was able to do so. She was a small little orb surrounded by agitation inside her own Phorsphere. Feeling helpless she cried - what did that mean? But it came to her again and she cried.

After crying she stayed still, then after a while she felt more active. She noticed that her own little orb was becoming enlivened from the agitation layer around it, she was feeding off the agitation. Becoming more enlivened she felt around her Phorsphere. She had previously noticed the small orb that she was now going to call Samphor, and then around that was the agitation some of which she could feed off. What about her linkmaker? She followed it, it was still linked with the biped. Maybe she could use that link? She held that thought for later.

Now Femphi had said she had an unusual questioning mind for a Phor, she must use it now but answer her own questions. What had happened? She had stayed too long in the link, she almost heard Femphi say "told you so". Well he was right but that didn't help her. How was she to break the link and get home?

She sensed movement, her hopes began to raise. She tried to sever the link but apart from feeling her sphere separate slightly from the biped there was no new freedom there. What could the movement be? It must be the biped. She had never felt bipeds move except for turning from side-to-side or smiling, they didn't move. She now felt a movement that was not floating. She gave into it, and began to feel this jerkiness as she was bounced from side to side. She withdrew into her orb and using her linkmaker she followed the link to the biped's jenns. That, of course, made sense now she thought of it, go to the source. Being with the jenns the jerkiness was greatly reduced, she wasn't floating nor was she being tossed side-to-side but she was moving steadily - not of her own volition. She understood, the biped was moving - she withdrew into her orb with sadness as she felt she was moving away from home.

Sam returned home with Alice, well he took her to her apartment and once her bags were inside she quietly asked him to leave, that she didn't want to be with him any more. He was tired, he'd had a long trip and to be honest compared to the island girls she didn't match up. He wanted a drink anyway, and left her there as he went to the bar with his bags. Several hours later he and his bags were dumped by the taxi at his flat and he went to sleep thinking he'd had a good holiday.

He still had some time left before he returned to work. Well today he would rest he was not feeling good after the session, and for the rest of the day he watched movies. The next day he awoke and began reading, he would get into this book and not let the booze get to him; he

turned the phone off. By the end of the day he was tired and slept a good sleep - deep and not broken by alcohol dependence.

Samphor needed to watch how this new link worked, to understand the link might give her a way home. For a long time she had felt the biped moving, then a deep sadness suddenly cut short as he moved again and this time she found herself being bombarded by barbs. She found it necessary to retreat into her orb from these barbs as they formed a layer around the biped's jenns.

After a period where the biped did not move, she found that he moved slightly then there was another period of stillness as the barbs had mostly disappeared. But she felt better during this stillness. But there was a barbish haze present, if you like essence of barbs that remained as a layer round his jenns, and even using the link she could not remove it.

She thought back to the linkmaking. By removing the agitation she could produce a smile from the biped, perhaps she could learn to produce some other reactions in him. Maybe this would find her a way home - at the very least maybe she could stop the barbs.

Samphor and Sarpo had been together for several weeks but all Sam knew was that since his holiday his hangovers had been far worse. There had been several mornings he had sworn off the booze ... but only until the evening. He had never questioned his drinking before, he held down his job and no-one depended on him so why didn't he drink? But his hangovers were affecting his work now - that was a bad sign.

For the time Samphor was connected to Sam, she had developed strange feelings and associated with these feelings new words entered her Phorsphere. Words like sadness, happiness, crying - these were words of the biped, but somehow through the link she was beginning to relate to these words. These were also associated with a vibration that she almost traced to the jenns - but not quite. The source of these feelings was not the jenns, she did not understand this as she saw the jenns as being the source of the biped - the centre of the biped's sphere, but around the jenns there was a layer she could not understand. This layer was always closest to the jenns, and now that she was so close to Sarpo she often found it a stumbling block to her linkmaker.

Sadness came to her as a quickening vibration but in the biped this vibration showed as a slump, they became a layer that blocked the jenns - but not initially. Then after several of these sadnesses, she noticed a change during their process. To begin with there was this quickening vibration, this was often caused by an interaction with something outside the biped's sphere. But then the biped seemed to hold onto the sadness, and it changed into a

layer around the jenns and this other substance that she had called menns. Yes, the biped held onto the sadness and it became a layer.

But then she made an important discovery, she found that when the vibration changed it became agitation and she was able to remove this agitation for that was the food of Phors. So she now knew how to help this Phor, was it a way to help her get home?

She had not noticed it before when working with the bipeds but the agitation was not attached to the jenns but to this layer she called menns, and she realised that she had always fed from these outer layers. Then why was it called measuring jenns? The real problem was that this biped had so much agitation attached to his menns - and that was without this barbish haze. And she knew that she couldn't cope with all the agitation.

But something told her to apply herself to the barbish haze - that was the biggest issue; that was the way home? A strange thought or feeling. Well, the barbish haze was an after-effect from the barbs that came flying in at her and the jenns. She noticed that at certain times of the day the menns layer seemed to be calling for these barbs; it wanted them, it needed them. What was causing this?

But then she was stuck. The menns layer needed these barbs, and they then became this barbish haze. She was not going to experience those barbs again, immediately she felt one she had to hide inside her little orb. That pain. What was the biped doing bringing such pain inside it?

She had found that the best time to examine the barbish layer was when the biped was still, but that was usually after many of these barbs had come into the biped's sphere. She had watched and the jenns had pushed the menns towards the barbs, and this had somehow taken the sting out of the barbs leaving this remaining haze. And this haze was attached to that part of the menns layer that the jenns had pushed out. So she eventually realised that the attachment was only with part of the menns.

Using her linkmaker she tried to connect with this part of the menns, but it did not feel comfortable - it slowed her down. She began to look inside this menns and found that there was a strong link between the menns and the barbish haze, at one area they were inseparable - the menns and the layer were the same substance. These barbs had eaten into the menns and taken it over. She touched that part of the menns, and it felt uncomfortable, worse it made her shudder. She touched it and recoiled, and as she did so she felt the biped jerk. Interesting, a direct connection to the biped. She tried again, and again the biped jerked. But this had been too much for Samphor and she had to withdraw into her little orb to recover.

That morning Sarpō awoke with a terrific headache and was not able to go to work; the drink was getting to him, he thought.

To sort out the barbs she had to disconnect the menns from the barbish haze yet at the same time the jenns was connecting the menns to the barbish haze. This did not make sense to her for what the jenns did was right, but it made sense to her that the menns-haze connection be broken. Perhaps there was more to this, she must look into what happens when she tries to sever the connection to evaluate. Yet at the same time it hurt her to do this - hurt another biped word.

She waited for the next period of stillness, and she felt happier this time there had been no increase in the number of barbs. As she felt the menns-haze link she could feel tat it was not as strong. She applied herself through the linkmaker, and she found that she was able to weaken the menns-haze link but it weakened her greatly and she withdrew into her orb.

After resting she persevered and found that the link had been weakened and the barbish-haze was thinner, clearer. Seeing inside the biped's link she could see that although the menns and haze were inextricably linked it was directional - pushing outwards. The jenns was forcing this menns to push the barbish haze away yet also that part of the menns needed the link for its existence. As she saw the link clearing, she also saw that part of the menns was moving away with the haze that was separated, it was losing its existence. The biped did not need this part of the menns layer but whilst the barbish haze continued then this part of the menns must exist. But neither were part of the jenns. These bipeds were complicated or at least they made things complicated. Still she had managed to get rid of part of the menns-haze link and separated away the barbish haze that had just seemed to float away. She was exhausted and withdrew into her orb, and the next day Sarpō awoke feeling more refreshed than he had been in a long time; perhaps since he had started drinking, part of him thought.

Disaster. The barbs came again just before the stillness, many of them and they reformed the menns-haze link even stronger than it had been before the work she had done the last stillness. She cried, how was she going to get home making one step forward and two steps back? She summoned all her anger and directed it at the biped.

Sarpō had awoken feeling good but he'd had an awful day at work. They were beginning to notice that his work was deteriorating. They knew he drank, as many of them did, but it had never previously affected his work. Now they were worried, and he had been dressed down by his line manager. This had happened just before he left work, and he decided to have a quick drink to think about it, he met an old friend and the last he remembered was being bundled into a taxi.

That was until he awoke with a start. He had had the most appalling nightmare. He was alone on an island, and had fallen asleep. From the interior a wild animal had come to him. It was not a known animal, or not that he knew. Now that he thought about it, he couldn't picture it except that at the point of waking up this huge mouth with narrow fangs was about to swallow his head.

He thought over the nightmare as is often a good thing to do to learn, and he remembered that the creature couldn't find him. He had initially been frightened when he saw the beast, its fangs had gotten closer and closer. Frightened he waited with bated breath, and the creature came closer and closer. He didn't move and his mouth was closed trying not to breathe, not to make a sound. As it came up to him it halted, its mouth moving in one direction then another, its nostrils flaring. He noticed it couldn't see, it had no eyes. He smiled inwardly and waited for the creature to pass as it duly did. It moved on and silently he breathed out. And the mouth turned about to devour him as it had smelt the alcohol on his breath

It was then he woke up, another alcohol issue, he thought. This is crazy. All his adult life he had been drinking, and now daily he was getting pointers not to drink. And this nightmare had frightened him so much he couldn't sleep, and this time he did not head for the bottle.

Samphor stirs Sarpo

When Samphor had blasted her anger at Sarpo, the jenns had glowed - she had done something right. This was contact of a sort, and she must use it - to get home. That last part added as an afterthought, how strange?

But how? As she didn't really know what she was doing she stuck with what had worked before. She had managed to partially break the menns-haze link, however the biped had taken in more barbs. But when she had blasted the biped the jenns had glowed. I must repeat that again during the stillness, she thought.

Sarpo was now more and more concerned about the alcohol issue. After his nightmare he left it alone the following night leaving the phone off the hook just in case. That next night he slept soundly and felt refreshed the next morning. And he had a good day at the office, finding himself turning down a drink after work. He stayed at home watching movies and generally resting. Previously at such times he would have felt restless, kidding himself that he had too much energy to stay in. But in reality that restlessness was the mind and body making excuses to get him to partake. As he went to sleep he smiled to himself he could not remember the last time there had been two consecutive nights without drinking - yes he

could, when he had been hit by a car after drinking. He had had to spend one night with a multi-coloured face in hospital checking for concussion, and then a week in bed recovering. He had laughed at himself, the reason they were concerned about concussion was that he had been so lively the night he was brought in - because of the alcohol. And the next day he was sober with a hangover and not so lively - and they thought he might have concussion.

That night Samphor found it so much easier to work on the link and she just prayed that the barbs would not come before the next stillness. Sadly that was not the case, and she blasted the biped even stronger than before. Yet again Sarpo had to take a day off with a major headache, only this time he resolved to seek medical advice.

For a long time he had been considering acupuncture. As part of his touching on the Path he had become aware of things Eastern, recognising that his own tradition was far too dominated by profit to be trustworthy. He began weekly treatments for the headaches but by the end of the week he was back where he started. He was told that he was wasting his money if he didn't give up the drink. Again the alcohol issue was haunting him.

He slept on the problem, and as usual Samphor was working on the link - she knew she was making progress. But that night she felt the jenns were stronger pushing through the menns and the barbish haze. She reached out to it and she felt a huge charge of light as she made first real contact with the jenns since leaving home. She felt so elated that she didn't withdraw into her orb, and the next day Sarpo decided he would try to give up the drink.

It was not easy although he was helped by acupuncture treatment he was given to compensate for the withdrawal symptoms. And it was particularly difficult on Fridays at the end of the working week, but over a period of time drink became an issue of the past.

Samphor touches Sarpo's Awareness

And as it did Samphor gained in assurance. She had realised early on that the biggest issue was the barbish haze. But once the barbish haze had been cleared she found that the biped had other hazes attached to the menns and other even darker patches. She was driven to try to deal with these.

"How?" she asked herself. Somehow she had known to try and deal with the barbish haze, and now she had to look at the other hazes and patches. It struck her that the jenns wanted her to do this, and she felt a glow at that thought. Funnily enough she had not thought of home.

Now that the drink was not an issue, Sarpo had hoped the headaches would disappear. Far

from it they seemed to increase in number but lacking in the intensity associated with the drink. He had always known that he held onto issues. Rather than dismiss a boss's snide remark, he would hold onto it, analyse it and try to ensure that there was no need for the remark again. It would bounce back and forth in his mind gaining in momentum as he tried to work it out. But the momentum was with the thought itself and not the solution, he would think about the boss saying it, why to Sarpò, what was he going to do? Sometimes he would not even sleep.

But all of this was created in his own mind, for the boss had only made the comment as part of a strategy; a course in motivation had suggested a snide remark to the workers would pep them up. Of course that was supposed to alternate with positive comments, but he kept forgetting what he had said to whom. It didn't really matter.

But apart from work issues other issues arose. He began to think of Alice, he had not treated her well. They had had a nice holiday and he had then got plastered so she had walked out on him. He found that he truly liked her. Should he ring her? No, time had moved on. He suddenly felt a strong longing for her and he went with it, but soon that dissipated - a kind of release.

He began to think of other partners, and he found a similar pattern. Somehow the drink had managed to end each relationship although he had always rationalised it as something else. For each partner he dwelt on their relationship, what it had meant, and then gradually released any hurt and pain associated with it. As he did this he felt lighter and breezier, and much happier of a morning. Who needs the drink?

But the headaches remained, and he sought deeper inside himself for the solution. He traced his own timeline back, and found that he was unable to search into his childhood. They say that your early years have the greatest impact on your life, but his mind would not let him near those. Someone told him you should know why you have the parents that you do, and he tried to think of this. But he got tied up, he couldn't go back and look because the emotions were so strong. He kept thinking that it was still going on, his mother and father were still alive, and he couldn't dissociate from that. He would touch on the internal anger and frustration but would be unable to deal with it.

Once the barbish haze had disappeared Samphor had found her work easier. Each night she would map out the biped. Some parts of the menns would be attached to new hazes and multi-faceted patches, and she would plan to work on one each stillness. However gradually she discovered that these plans were wasted because at the next stillness the haze or patch would have been released. Slowly but surely this biped was beginning to express his jenns

without restriction. The menns layer was becoming more transparent, and there were fewer and fewer of these disfigurements.

However within each stillness she saw there was one patch that was deep and impenetrable, and she feared it so avoided it; it was so enmeshed with the menns in some ways much worse than the barbish haze. It was so deep it almost penetrated to the jenns. Previously she had been unable to see it through the different hazes, but now it was clear. She saw the jenns trying to express themselves and mostly without restriction but those jenns nearest this particular patch were being worn away and sucked in.

She started to link with this and jumped back. There was so much pain, it seemed to go back forever. Again she tried to link but it was too much for her and again she jumped back. This time Sarpo woke up and he felt a strangeness inside, a strangeness that was suffering pain - his pain.

His jenns pushed him forward to try to deal with his past, and he pushed inside and felt both his pain and the strangeness. He felt the strangeness was helping him, an unusual thought. He moved his mind back in time and tried to penetrate his childhood blocks. At the same time Samphor now found it easier to melt away and release these blocks. Slowly but surely this deep impenetrable patch was loosening, one moment she would be working on it and then jump back to find that the jenns were pushing the biped to work on it.

He would tire or get frightened at what he was unleashing, and she would then come in and remove his agitation. At the same time she would work on the patch herself until she had to jump back because of the pain. Gradually one then the other cleared the way, and the childhood pain was released leaving his menns free of pain and free of barbs, hazes and patches. For once he could see clearly and to reward him his jenns surged a bright light inside his head. He felt elated as did she. What did he mean? So did she?

Samphor also experienced this bright light. How could she? That was for the biped. What do you mean biped, the thought came to her. She began to answer but answer who?

How could she feel elated? She - elated? It does not make sense to think of she?

I can feel elated, thought Samphor.

I am elated, thought Sarpo.

These are two thoughts, that is not unusual, but these two thoughts refer to two Is. Now I don't know what I means

I don't know what I means either

How can he have a dialogue in his head? Was he crazy? Was she crazy?

Slowly Samphor calmed and allowed the link to function. The linkmaker was now tight with the jenns, and she began to feel their power. You must make yourself known to him, came the thought.

And summoning all her strength she felt I am Samphor, I am here with you biped.

And Sarpo wept as all the emotions, drink and everything else that had been worked finally poured out of him, and as it poured his mind cleared and he began to see inside a bright yellow orb and from this orb radiated goodness. And this orb was linked ot his heart. Yes that is me, I who am Samphor, and together they rested.

Sarpo and Samphor Truly Converse

Now that they had connected in this way, Samphor understood what it was to be a human being simply because she felt what was in his mind (menns). But for humans the concept of Phors was totally alien, and as such he could not comprehend. To understand Phors you had to feel what they felt, and Sarpo had only just reached the stage of clearing his baggage - a very big stage for humans. He wondered how he had been so fortunate that this Phor had come to help him, and something told him that together they were special.

But he needed the insight to understand her. She had explained what she did but it was all words, and these words were not her words but human words that she used to try and approximate to what was going on. But how can they explain when the words were not created for the experience of being a Phor. He had to try to feel the experience.

Normally she linked with humans at stillness, night, when he was asleep. He had to try and understand what was going on when he was awake, perhaps the words would mean something then. He lay down on the bed, and the nearest waking state that he thought he could achieve that was comparable was that of relaxation. He had at one stage attended yoga classes, and there had been a relaxation method he'd been taught. Starting with his feet he began to relax them, on the in breath relax the feet and on the out breath completely let go. He did this moving up the whole body until finally he finished by the out breath that was supposed to relax the whole body. But he knew he wasn't properly relaxed because he was so tensed up about the impending link with Samphor.

It was surprising how effective for Samphor the relaxation technique was. Once he had

finished she was able to make the link easily. And Sarpō began to understand what she was talking about. The link centred him. These jenns she was talking about - it was his heart? They were his heart's expression? His being. Yes she was cleaning his being. His mind was continually confused in life jumping here there and everywhere. It would latch onto this and that, and would then restrict his being. She was able to help remove all these latching as agitation.

He was now able to use his mind to understand what Samphor was. And it came to him, you should be doing this yourself. He smiled, of course he should. He had a mind, didn't he? He was the one that was latching onto all of this, it was his arm that held the beer, his mind that clung to the pain of memory of this relationship or that. He now understood Samphor for what she was, one of Nature's catalysts, and deep down he thanked Her for this, for he had allowed himself to sink so deep with the alcohol.

Once the linking had finished Sarpō was clear what to do, and he bought the tickets for the island. They returned there and guided by Samphor, they returned to the sea where she had first emerged. Before he slept he thanked her for her goodwill and invaluable service, my heart would never have opened without you. Samphor didn't think so, it was only a matter of time but how long?

As the tide rolled in she took leave of Sarpō. She removed the linkmaker, and feeling the movement of the waves she luxuriated again in the freedom that was the floating. She pulled the link into her mane and floated out to sea.

Later she touched on Femphi, and he smiled it had been a time. He felt a comfort, an ease with her that he had never felt before and from that moment on she never questioned and just went about her business making links and cleaning jenns.

*

"I have gone but I remain," she told Sarpō "you need me for more. I don't understand because I detached myself from the link as normal and floated off to sea. But then part of me stayed here with you and watched as the Phor left for home. Femphi always said that I was unusual - perhaps not so now."

Sarpō smiled to himself, this Phor gave him an edge, an additional sense of feeling; he enjoyed having her with him.

Sarpō steps forth with Samphor.

BAENGOI

2) *Fire - Yunio*

Yunio had a problem with anger, specifically righteous anger especially righteous anger in relation to employment. He grew up in the generation of angry young men, and it required no moulding of his Karma to become one. Initially it had not been an issue in his work as at the time they encouraged initiative and creativity, the word professional meant something and earned respect. But as time went on there grew an increased desire to mould and repress all workforces in the metropole. Yunio was never sure how true it was, but metropolitan countries started to believe creative initiative did not produce the profits they wanted.

Soon after he started work there was a boom in automation and use of computers as the scientists developed the technology. The implications of this process were still not fully clear to him, nor were they fully impacted but there was devastation of the humanity of society. Clearly manufacturing jobs were lost, and this meant families suffered. As time went on investors began to see that labour costs in their world were greatly eating into their profits. Gradually investment guided research into creating plant that required cheap unskilled labour, and although this increased distribution costs as they sought the labour their profits increased because they were able to employ such cheap labour - some even cut more costs by employing child labour.

Historically the metropolitan countries had not been in such a fortunate position. Under the feudal system many civilisations flourished but around the 15th and 16th centuries European countries began to develop more global transport and at the same time increase their military might. At that time they recognised the increased profits available through industrialisation yet at the same time knew they did not have the finances to develop that finance. Throughout this period ships roamed the globe appropriating monies for their homelands. With this money they developed industry, and with the profits from the industry developed research to improve the processes of production that fuelled the need for greater trade and an increase in the need for raw materials as well as a desire for expansion of markets.

This phase of so-called development culminated in war when these countries fought each other over the existing wealth and over the division of the markets. At the end of the second of these wars the European countries were so devastated that the US were easily able to step in and take control of the means of productions, the raw materials and the markets. During these wars there had been a development of weapons but in peace-time this development

turned to automation as a means of increasing profits. But in the US the companies had the foresight to recognise the international nature of trading, and the multinational was born. These multinationals controlled all aspects of production, and increased their profits by building the plant where the labour costs were cheap. At the same time they controlled the distribution and also the sales outlets, and this led to a world where the wealth and the food and other goods produced were on the increase whilst more people were dieing from starvation.

It was these multinationals who were fuelling the development of technology, and because their companies were so large spanning international boundaries they were able to manipulate national laws and escape the humanitarian consequences of their actions. As they increased their control of the world markets they began to control more the behaviour of their workforce, and it was this that Yunio experienced. He began work when human endeavour was still increasing the profits but soon after these multinationals realised that this endeavour required a level of education that began to increase the number of people questioning the inequities of the system. The multinationals realised that these people presented a serious risk that they were unwilling to take. The questions that their creative intelligence began to raise were beginning to raise the awareness of the workforce whose expectations began to rise at the same time - they would use those expectations later.

Meanwhile it was essential to control the workforce. By transferring the plant to less educated countries the awareness of the workforce went down whilst the profits went up. At the same time there were fewer jobs in the countries where the multinationals were based, and with the greater expectation of the workforce they were able to squeeze more work from those people who ended up in one of the fewer jobs. Although the awareness of the workforce had increased that became secondary to the need for work so the knowledge gained was effectively repressed.

However Yunio had been fortunate, he had been able to develop his awareness throughout his life because he had not been caught in the trap of expectations. He had also been involved in a caring profession, and had maintained his vocation whilst others had allowed their expectations to cause compromise. But it also meant that as he got older the righteous positions he took brought him more and more into conflict as the people in his caring profession increased their own compromise due to their expectations and desires. More and more he felt isolated as new generations growing up in his country lacked the awareness and only knew the repressed way of life. Equally fortunately Yunio's soul had grown through his conflicts, and he had the integrity to hold to his ways, the way of Nature.

But all his life he had had to deal with his anger, anger in his family, anger over his work,

anger as he saw society increasingly accept that the unfettered business giants continued to exploit people throughout the world.

Peasants and industrialised worker were a difference Yunio first noted in Marxism but never greatly studied it, however it was an issue that developed of interest as he travelled. Then he began discussing it with Mpho as he got to know her.

When Mpho met him many years ago, she had seen something in him but he sadly had not in her. And when she opened her mouth it was worse because she was full of airs and graces, and that hateful attitude of contemporary society - name-dropping. But despite all this he listened and recognised she had much to say about her own people.

Of noble birth she had left her country for the metropole where Yunio had met her, a sensible move as people of nobility died under the ensuing change of regime in her country. What happened in her country was horrific but unless you have Mpho's knowledge or others who have experienced similar situations you cannot understand the full impact on her society. For 3 or 4 years a regime came into power with the express purpose of removing the nobility and the educated classes. For this regime's particular brand of socialism the peasant was king, was natural, and all aspects of the development of capitalism must be eradicated in order to free the peasant; at least that was how Yunio understood it.

Mpho had returned to her country 30 years after she left and had been there 3 years when Yunio went to visit her. To help understand more of what she said he watched her with her people. Her manner was so authoritarian, she would order her people around as if she were in the services. She expected her commands to be obeyed and they were, yet it never seemed to perturb her people. He watched one of her staff being balled out and yet within 5 minutes that member of staff had, with appropriate temerity, asked for and got an advance. From his point of view if one of his employers ever spoke to him like that, he would have turned round and reminded them that he was a professional. And would probably have shouted angrily. But it would never happen in his work but then he wasn't a peasant.

"They are so stupid, these people; every day you have to tell them the same thing," Mpho told Yunio after she had just balled out one of her girls again. He laughed to himself about what it was. The girl had brought Yunio some butter for his bread, for bread and cheese, you don't put butter on bread and cheese. The previous day the girl had done the same thing when Yunio had been on his own, and Yunio had happily eaten the butter with the bread and cheese.

When Mpho heard this she screamed at Yunio for defending the girl, as usual with Mpho as

she was a friend Yunio let her rant on and on from the point of view of principle that never had any relationship to life; her approach just alienated her and her kind from the rest of humanity, even though most were too scared to say so owing to the politics of liberalism. And because this type of intellectual oppression was worse than any sort of dictatorship for the prevention of freedom of speech, as the weapon of vicious verbal haranguing usually ensued.

However the more Yunio watched Mpho, the more he saw what she was shouting about - and this was without Yunio being able to understand the language of Mpho and her people.

"These people are not smart," Mpho started the conversation where Yunio really began to understand, "they have never been to school."

"Your government provides schools, doesn't it?" asked Yunio.

"Yes, they do," she answered "but my people don't go."

"That is unusual for this part of the world," Yunio knew education was well respected here rather than in the metropole.

"Because the teachers charge the children," she answered with anger.

He began asking why but before he could so he knew why, corruption. He had heard that in this country the people are not paid proper wages. For example a police captain is paid \$30 a month by the government. But in order to get to be police captain, a bribe has to be paid, maybe thousands of dollars. And what does this police captain do in order to survive - recoup his employment fee. He has to take bribes, and some take more than others. It is a system of corruption that is totally institutionalised; there is no aspect of criminality attached to it. How can there be? It is a necessary part of survival at every level of society so how can it be a crime in that society? Crime is an anti-social act that destroys the fabric of a society, how can corruption be a crime when it is part of the infrastructure? It is a crime when seen by those from outside her country, people like Mpho also see it as a crime but for her it is a crime against the humanity of her people because of what the corruption was doing to her country.

"No factories will come to my country," she told him one time "how can they? When my people hear of a factory that wants to come, they all find an excuse to get a bribe. Most industrialists complain about the outlay of their plant but in this country the biggest outlay is for bribes."

"The government needs to do something about this or your people will remain poor," remarked Yunio.

"There are some good people, friends of mine, but they are all surrounded by people who are corrupt, taking bribes," she looked exasperatingly at him "what can you do?"

"How can this have happened?" asked Yunio. "Was it the regime?"

"The regime only lasted 3 ½ to 4 years before outside forces came in and destroyed them," she told him.

"So why did the government then allow this?" he asked confused "it is so short-sighted."

"Because they are not smart," she answered.

And he understood; they were peasants. At that moment many things about the words peasant and industrialised workers fitted into place. In Mpho's country the people had not overthrown the regime, the regime had been overthrown by neighbouring countries presumably afraid that the regime would attack their countries. The people had not overthrown them, they had not been oppressed long enough to learn through oppression.

But the neighbouring countries were not interested in ruling Mpho's country, they were only afraid for themselves. So there was a country without nobility, without educated people, all killed or driven out by the regime, so who was left? The peasants, and the peasants became rulers.

And what did these rulers see? Short-term gain. If they were rulers the people would have to pay them - corruption. The rulers were uneducated feudal lords taking every opportunity for short-term gain. These rulers with the military and then the police were then able to take bribes for everything to make themselves rich.

But being uneducated they had no vision. They were wealthy, and they built up an infrastructure of corruption; sadly however that was the only infrastructure they did build as they did not have the vision to see that there was more money to be gained through development. Yunio began to understand a little more about the stages of capitalism that Marx talked about. Historically to gain more wealth the feudal lords in the West needed to spend more to earn more. They could earn more by industrialising the people, it was a misguided reversing of this process that the regime had tried to create.

The more Yunio thought about this the more he was learning about the wisdom of Marx's

analysis. But theory aside what was happening in Mpho's country was a headless chicken. These people had been moving in the direction of the more developed capitalist countries when suddenly the engine of that type of development had been completely removed. The country was then not driven by that type of capitalist greed that recognises the need for investment. The river of history that moved people from feudal to capitalist continued unabated but the boat that was carrying Mpho's people had been sunk. Some people provided small boats of corruption for themselves, and saw the advantages of keeping the people without their own boat maintaining the sanctity of the profits of their own corruption.

But what was happening to the people of Mpho's country who did not have boats? They could swim a little but basically as the river of history moved on they were stuck on the riverbank. They lost their education and reverted to being peasants. So Mpho's country was a feudal country where the clock had been turned back initially by the regime but more so by those peasants who followed the regime and became feudal lords.

But the process of capitalism is beginning to grip the country again. These feudal lords have recognised that there is more to be gained by becoming a part of global capitalism, however they are not smart and have tried to take advantage of the carrots that capitalism offers. AID. At the moment there is much money coming into Mpho's country from NGO's, the contemporary missionaries. These well-intentioned people, masking the intent of their metropole, are bringing with them the aspirations that Mpho's people will become trapped by. At the moment, the boat-owners - the feudal lords - are gaining from the NGO's but these NGO's will bring with them material benefits that Mpho's people will want. Initially this is seen through tourism where many people are coming to take advantage of the undeveloped beauty of the country as well as the unspoilt natures of the people. Many NGO's decry this exploitation and quite rightly are attempting to do something about this exploitation, but all the while the conditions for changing from feudal to industrial are being built up and soon the demands of the people for those material benefits will oust the feudal lords. And soon the world of capital will have a new market.

But these theoretical generalisations are of no use to Mpho and her people now. These headless chickens are wandering around looking for the crumbs from the feudal lords and the conquistadorial entourage who are arriving in ever-increasing numbers.

Yunio became fascinated with Mpho's country from an educational point of view. Education is a process, it works like a function in an input-output machine. In the West the output of these machines is ostensibly the subjects and their qualifications. Educationalists and the powers-that-be through their politicians recognise that education is so much more, primarily it is a process whereby generation-to-generation the young people are moulded so that they

can fit into their society. For the Western countries this process is very similar, the students learn subjects and pass exams in those subjects. In order to pass those subjects they learn basic educational skills through the early learning process of parents, family and schooling. Once they have passed the exams they take on the jobs their society wants, and they become part of the global capitalist economic process.

In countries that are the non-metropolitan part of the hegemony children also join this process. For the rich they become qualified, they meet various people from the West usually by attending Western universities, and they become the new outposts of the global process; some would say satraps. Meanwhile the less powerful gain qualifications and are offered the temptations of the system, the material benefits. The process of educating minds gives them the desires of the West, and these desires then become part of the desires of the society in their own country.

To varying degrees it could be argued that all countries fit into this educational process but how much does this apply to Mpho's people? To fully understand this let us consider some of the inputs into the educational machine. In the West these inputs are generally very similar. Although the children have varying degrees of wealth in the west the parents fundamentally agree that these children will become consumers in their society. To be consumers they need money and therefore work, so the children are being educated to fulfil these roles of consumer/worker to differing degrees. Similarly in non-metropolitan countries the children are being educated to be consumers/workers, but to a lesser extent in differing countries as the potential for such consumerism is often limited. Who tells these children they are to be consumers and workers in the global capitalist system? No-one. But by the time these children start education society, through parents primarily, have presented this as a *fait-accompli*. Whilst they attend schooling, all of this consumerism trap is reinforced and so by the time they are qualified they fully subscribe to the consumer/worker lifestyle.

What is the difference with Mpho's people? It is a combination of the mentalities concerning corruption and worker. For the time she was out of her country the people had the desires of a small-scale consumer. They saw their feudal lords satisfy those desires through corruption, meanwhile they saw their families survive by farming and selling their goods at the market. In this scenario education was not considered a way out so the families never pushed for education, especially with the corruption costs of the teacher.

That is the basic status quo of the peasants in her country. But the problem is that her country is changing because of the conquistadores. Now her people want to consume more. They want more money to spend, they want to spend like "industrialised workers".

Why does the desire to consume more mean that they want to become "industrialised workers"? Here is the most interesting aspect of the situation of the peasants in Mpho's country for Yunio as an educationalist. The industrialised worker has some educational skills that are required for their functioning in industry. These are organisational skills, skills of punctuality, skills of remembering instructions, generally skills that mean that the boss can rely on tasks being completed in order for the product to be manufactured, distributed and sold. Does the peasant have these skills? In Mpho's view they don't as they are not smart.

As an educationalist Yunio recognised that one of the key hidden curriculum skills that education offers is organisation, and that the difference between a peasant and a worker educationally are these organisational skills perhaps culminating in the highest organised worker, the professional, who defines his own organisational process because he has his own motivation for working.

"Mpho, I am confused," he spoke carefully as sometimes Mpho was not patient "On a farm a peasant must be organised. Why can't they transfer those organisational skills to the workplace?"

"My people just don't," she said shortly.

"For example in a home a mother looks after the home so why can't she transfer those skills to being a maid or a domestic cleaner?" asked Yunio genuinely trying to understand.

"The women have no concept of home," replied Mpho sadly; their relationship with their partner is based on sex and procreation but they don't have a nest-comfort concept. This is why, although married, they still have primitive attitudes to their partner. If a woman looks at another man then she will be beaten. If a man goes with another woman then the wife will kill the other woman. Even a home requires organisation but my women don't do that. Our men drink and the women try to make ends meet. You cannot have a beautiful home unless you have money to pay for it, and money to buy things for it. My people don't have money."

Yunio watched the peasant children on the beach, they were so happy playing. Never in the metropole could he see the children with such joy, in fact it appeared to him his country's children were sad because from the time they were born they were always wanting and demanding. Mpho had not talked about the farming but a thought struck Yunio. These were peasants not farmers, a farmer is an industrialised worker. For centuries peasants grew their crops, fed their animals; they responded to the laws of Nature. They responded to Nature's imperative. Isn't that what Mpho's peasants did? Only Mpho took on Nature's role. These peasants were not organised. They did not remember to do ABC, they did them when Mpho

told them. They fed the cows when they were hungry. The crops grew and the peasants removed weeds when they were stopping the crops from growing. In season they planted to survive. These were instinctive imperatives that peasants followed responding to natural conditions.

As an educationalist Yunio knew that a primary educational skill to teach is that of organisation, he had always been strong on organisation as he was a well-organised person himself. The degree of organisation is a level of education starting from peasantry.

These ideas brought together two dilemmas that Yunio had been working on for his own life. He had considered business ventures in peasant countries to escape the ravages of institutional teachers whose lack of understanding of education, or participating in it, and disillusion with life often brought conflict into Yunio's life. What could be nicer than an island guest house that ran itself whilst he followed his Path of Nature? How can that ever happen when the islanders were peasants? If they were not peasants they would be feudal lords and not interested in his non-profit business.

In another time he had known peasant girls and they were so much fun because of their simplicity and lack of airs and graces. He had known these girls were not organised, and had said it was a problem the country had. But it was not. These girls were peasants who did not know how to run a home. Money was spent in the short term and month-end there was no money. At that time he had seen it as a discipline issue, and it was. But their minds were not organised, educated. From experience other locals living there had told him women must be educated but he never saw the connection between subject qualifications and running a home. However now he understood education and organisation, if it happened to him again he could help the women. But he would be foolish to let it happen again.

In the East he had met many western men who became enamoured of the peasant beauty of some of the women. Sadly even in their traditional societies many of these peasants took the easy way and earned money from sex; such women found it hard to change back to the difficulties of organised daily life. These men tried and failed with these beauties for whom life was disorganised. The men never knew that their education and consumer/worker lifestyle were in complete contradiction to an uneducated peasant, mainly because many of the men were rejecting their own backgrounds. But they could not see beyond their desires. They wanted the benefits of the undemanding peasant lifestyle whilst also keeping in part more organised minds. They never saw the fundamental conflict within themselves, and between themselves and their partners - they continually tried to grasp a dream but the reality eluded them producing great sadness and frustration.

Yunio yearned for the simple life but that was not the simple life of the disorganised peasant but the simple organised life of a man of Nature following his Path through meditation, discipline and organisation. Picture the lifestyle from outside, could you tell the difference?

When Yunio thought back he remembered discussions. He remembered a token liberal, a woman who hid behind liberalism as a way of personal development, and yet had great personal dissatisfaction. Her society proclaimed that educated women should behave in a certain way and this intellectual oppression of her gender caused her great discomfort. Many of these confused women were critical of white men with women who are not white.

"You only live with Nomatempa because she doesn't argue, doesn't answer back," ranted on Magsuz.

"I am hoping we can make a go of it," answered Yunio spiritedly.

"Some story, you only go with her because she is compliant," repeated the Magsuz line.

He gave up on this walking-talking indoctrination, the line was repeated and his words never entered her ears. He was amused by the arrogance of her and her clones. Here they stand up arguing against what they perceive as some sort of sexual exploitation by white men by classifying the women by a stereotype that was totally inaccurate - and itself a stereotype. Firstly was the implication that western women were superior and that was why these men went with local women because the men were unable to cope with the superior white women. Secondly the implication that these women were compliant. But what the women of this culture did try to do was to make a home, and a home was not a place where a man went to be lambasted by a clone's rhetoric for the sins of chauvinism - simply because he had a penis. But compliant, he and his friends laughed because how often they had failed to change the minds of their partners.

Sadly Yunio did not make a go of it, and suffered serious psychological hardship trying. He later drew up categories in his mind - the peasant who desired more yet wanted to remain a peasant, a peasant with more possessions. And then there were peasants who desired to be more, to leave behind the simple responsive life and move onto a more educated Path. Yunio knew that his partner, as many others, only wanted more possessions and his hardship was caused because he accepted attachment to his desire instead of discerning the truth about his peasant girl.

On returning to UK after travelling, Yunio met a political friend and discussed his understanding of peasantry.

"This regime tried to reverse the timeline," Yunio argued.

"Yes, you cannot turn back the clock," agreed Vindio, "once the peasants have become organised as workers in an industrial class they cannot pretend to be peasants again."

"It seems strange that this organisation is gained through education systems provided by the capitalist system," remarked Yunio wickedly.

"You're right," answered Vindio not taking the bait, "but what you must understand is that the purpose of this education is not to help the peasant but to create a worker who can earn the capitalist more money."

"Whilst earning more money for the peasant," interjected Yunio.

"Yunio, what are you trying to say?" stabbed Vindio "that education is about self-realisation." They both laughed as they had previously discussed this sop that was thrown at teacher trainees as a justification for the obvious failures of education.

Vindio followed his Marxist line and did not waver. Yunio recognised this function of education and accepted it but he knew education was more than this. But that was not education that the system provided but education for life that started man on a Path of Nature. This was not however a discussion to have with Vindio.

"Are you saying that capitalism is a stage that we must go through?" asked Yunio beginning to get a picture of what Vindio discussed.

"It is essential to understand that people need to organise," began Vindio's rhetoric "because as peasants they will just be taken advantage of. People need to organise especially in manufacturing as there they have power to halt production and so affect the profits. If the profits are affected then the bosses listen.

"The bosses have educated the peasants because they know they can get more profit from them in manufacturing than they can from them in the field. But at the same time the bosses, giving them skills to increase their own profits, have also given them the organisational skills to cause their own defeat, the organisational skills that lead to collectivisation.

"And that is the inevitability. To increase the profits the bosses must impart more skills, and the more they impart the more they are creating the situation of their downfall. When the workforce recognises its collective strength of withdrawal of labour, then capitalism has died."

"I understand," said Yunio sympathetically "but in this world where workforces are in such differing levels of development"

"Yes we must educate from a class perspective," agreed Vindio. Vindio had fallen back on his own intellectual cross. We must educate, thought Yunio, but globally it cannot be a class issue. How can the workers of the world unite when their own wealth and circumstances are so different? Withhold labour in the West and the plant moves to the Third World. Vindio's perspective had been surpassed in the global era.

It's an issue about who and what we are, and maybe that includes a class perspective but it must be balanced. Was it ever?

A peasant responds, Yunio thought one evening, and then came the appalling word proactive. There seemed to be a spectrum here but care needs to be taken, responsive to who, proactive with what. The peasant farmer responds to Nature in terms of what is required to be done, and then the other end of the spectrum is proactive with Nature? What does that mean? Proactive usually has a context in business, a bit like - take the initiative to increase the profits. But is this proactive? Is this not just another form of acceptance, responding to society with some initiative? But what about not responding at all and being in a permanent state of proactivity? This is a man of Nature setting the agenda, such humanity is powerful.

What are the implications of these proactive people? They are in Nature but detached from the desires around them. Society asks them to consume and to work, these must be done but on their own terms. They make the decision about their livelihood. Some would argue that was not possible, the boss tells you what to do. But the boss has power over your actions only if you allow it. The significant issue about an employment situation is that it is based on mutual need and mutual benefit. The boss requires your labour to make a profit; this is the mutuality of the situation. Employers tolerate unions because a union in acting for the interests of its members can also act in the interest of greater productivity and profit. Of course employers and unions can function in a negative way leading to no mutuality and worker unrest.

Basically people can give labour yet still be proactive - choosing to give labour to satisfy appropriate needs. Yet employees can move on, if they have the skills that bosses need to make profits then they can be proactive. But much of this choice depends on the amount of money desired, and Nature can show you your needs are little. Such a Natural human does not have to live rough but doesn't have the financial aspirations of the king consumer. They don't have the addiction of needing to work all the time - workaholic; their decision is proactive.

Society places restrictions on people, gives them responsibilities - as such all humans respond. The more contact with society the more response is required. Yet at the same time humanity is part of Nature, there is an imperative to work together for the betterment of each other enjoying the giving that is an essential aspect of civilised life. The peasant works in a community and responds to that community. Industrialised humanity develops responsibility for the family, and functions within that consumer unit. But humans insighting Nature become solitary without the pressures of family, without the community placing demands on him. Yet at the same time as being solitary they will always have the need to give, a need that provides joy and reassurance to their own humanity.

This was enough theorising; people love and live with compassion yet detachment. But anger regularly got in the way of detachment, especially for Yunio.

It was his anger that led him to change and move forward. As a teacher he lived an almost schizophrenic life, in school the diligent teacher and on holiday developing as a Man of Nature following his own Path. Teaching was a profession of words, he was tempted to say a profession of liars but although it amounted to the same thing many had some bone of genuineness within them. He lost a friend because that friend described him as absurd for expecting people to love teaching, but you either love teaching and the children or you end up exploiting. Sadly many are exploiters but have learnt the rhetoric of love because that is what gave them career. Weigil was one such. A young man with a silver tongue that he had used to climb the career ladder far before his insight and experience merited, and he had landed in a hopeless situation - a situation wiser refused. But how does a careerist refuse power - the rungs of the ladder?

Weigil spouted the old sop that in power he could ameliorate the problems, but as usual with this sop the establishment controlled. Yes he could pretend to fight and might occasionally win, but the reality is he wins token battles. And each battle he wins the more he is trapped. He was fodder for Goldie - the pet name for the owner. Goldie played Weigil, and all the time this arrogant youth claimed a few battles - and claimed he controlled the owner. Watching this colleagues were horrified as they had seen such arrogance before, yet at the same time they feared for themselves. Weigil was not local and did not understand local ways, they had seen many such westerners. The locals wanted to improve but they had watched career after career parade before them, and vent their frustration on the locals. Weigil was no different, and so they started to do whatever Weigil wanted. But Weigil didn't know, he was too young. He imitated those that were his superiors in other situations, and told the locals to do this. They tried but failed, and what had been previously of value disappeared. Eventually Goldie saw this and dumped on Weigil, but by then Yunio was far

gone.

Yunio had managed to establish some good teaching as amidst all this career stupidity the students wanted to learn, but more and more Weigil made Yunio do stuff that was best described as a waste of time - but was far worse. After spending an evening doing such rubbish Yunio went in the next day to find Weigil had allocated him another day of rubbish. That was it, Yunio's temper got the better of him. He stormed into Weigil's office, tiraded left right and centre, packed up what he could carry and stormed off to the airport. As the plane rose he felt such a sense of relief wash over him, but this was soon followed by a great sadness for the people he had left behind - the students who could put with whatever was thrown at them but gained very little, the powerless locals who were never exposed to expertise to help them, whilst Goldie and her ilk bought their puppets like Weigil and took the heart out of the population of the country.

He blanked then as time flew by with the plane. He rested but thoughts didn't fill his head, no plans - nothing, he had escaped. It was a trap of his own making but a trap nonetheless, he had lasted as long as he did because of the kids. His health and sanity were suffering. The kids would never understand, people don't. They can cope so why can't you? In a way there is no answer to that except that you don't have to. Yunio didn't have to - he walked.

Or rather he flew, and without consciously knowing he had flown to the UK. But the UK had nothing for him. His parents had just died, and the limited UK humanity that had existed in his youth was being swallowed up by the powerful pound following the almighty dollar. UK countryside is still beautiful what little of it is left, and he drove to his place and walked.

"No more No more No more No more," he screamed to himself, or it might even have been out loud. He sat down and breathed in the air, real air or the nearest the UK could offer. "No more," he returned to the car, and saw nearby caravans. That's it, his dream - the combi with satellite, DVD, bed and kitchenette. He waited 3 months whilst it was kitted out and off he went.

That 3 months had flown by. He had thought having to wait 3 months would drive him insane but at least he could plan his trip. But first he would see friends. Glad to see him, as he them, these meetings were often strained.

"What are you going to do?" they would ask. And he didn't have an answer, and these people who had bought into structure feared for him. But what was the fear? The fear if they were doing it, or fear for Yunio. It mattered not, he was not afraid. If any doubts arose then "No More" screamed through his mind - "No More." Before he knew it, the van was ready and he

crossed the channel.

As a youth he had once left to travel the world, and had begun by going down the French coast. He had not got far before his money had been lost or stolen, so he would start from there. As a youth he had been a week at Sancal enjoying it immensely as youthful mind had begun exploring, but he had been weak and with money gone he fled home again. This time he reached Sancal he saw the same lack of freedom that he had fled from the UK, and screaming "Jamais non plus" he got on a boat for the Southern hemisphere.

Nothing seemed to happen on the boat but something very necessary changed in his mind. He learned to slow down, he had to. Not only was there nothing to do on the boat, his mind was completely messed up with speed, so messed up it was not relaxed. Many said he was in control as he managed to juggle much in an active life, and he himself judged others by their inability to be efficient. But in truth his control was superficial, he had no depth. He was spread thin as he juggled this commitment with that, staying up to the early hours to maintain that commitment. But there was no depth, no deep understanding of what happened in life. How could there be, he was too busy. Initially on the boat he tried to make himself busy, forcing early-rising for sport, developing other routines, the paper, times for coffee, afternoon tea, a stroll on the deck, but it was all an effort to fit in with a racing mind that jumped from busy to busy. After a while he saw this in himself, and he was relieved to slow down. He didn't have to get up, he didn't have to be for coffee at 11.

Soon this developed further as he began to meditate. Just watching his mind creating this and that, chattering here and there, making constructs and patterns that were totally unimportant. He even remembered, his mind speaking in a pattern without words, it was as if he was in a discussion with someone and he watched the way he spoke. Crazy patterns. Slowly he tried to unravel these patterns looking to see what was underneath. This process of watching his mind and unravelling patterns became more and more important, and gradually he slowed down. It became a daily routine he knew he wanted to keep.

F-ville, someone told him F-ville, and as the ship neared dock he was ready with his map to move on to F-ville. He then learned the joy of driving on the wide open roads. This was not something he could possibly have known before. In the UK clear road meant he could make the speed limit, but it was not about the road being clear. The nearest was a stretch of motorway over Cumbria. It was never clear as there were always cars, but being a motorway in his lane he was free to see. The hills rolled green as the m-way wound round their contours and it gave a sense of clearness. But this was a short stretch of ten miles, and how did that compare with ten miles of clear view?

He would watch as towns appeared in the distance, maybe pre-warned by a sign, and then buildings would take shape, coming up gradually and slowly disappearing as he passed them by. It was gentle driving as his foot rarely moved, and his gaze fixed his mind could gently wander or listen to music. He remembered one town. It was bright sunlight, and there had maybe been rain, but the town was highlighted against a mountain backdrop and the scene fixed in his memory. Mind you when he got to the town, it was a town. He bought petrol and a snack, but beyond that he could not remember the town. Yet lives passed, and passed on in these places, full of importance to the participants, but

He smiled, that's what they would say of where he used to live. Of course people in big cities always said their lives were more important, and whilst often they did control the lives of others it was not more important, nothing better happened and often much worse.

This part of the world had a good way to travel as here were many places where you just camped - often game parks. Providing basic amenities you could park and eat and sleep, and at night look up at the wonder of starry skies. After a couple of days of this travel he loved the freedom, and felt completely at rest.

In this camping many people would talk. Well yet again, maybe that was not true. Some people would talk, and others would pointedly keep themselves to themselves. It was a level of distrust as if they had brought the city with them, or whatever baggage had built their islands in the face place. And yet there were others for whom the road and camp opened up a freedom, perhaps a freedom they couldn't have in their daily lives. All levels of conversation could be entered into. Often people could reflect on their lifestyles, the problems in their lands and much more.

One such land was a major trouble spot, and yet he met many people from this land. And they talked. The land was South Africa, and he met the whites. He spoke to them as a white man, yet to begin with, in his heart, he thought they were his enemy, their strong accent grating against his sensitivities. It was coming to the end of white rule, and these people were beginning to understand what they had been a part of. They had become trapped in a life of lies, lies propagated by government and media, lies that presented a distorted lifestyle of the different communities and in the end creating those distortions as a form of reality.

He remembered a description of conscription, and how these guys had been in the tanks and gone into the townships. Death was not discussed but it was a possibility but repression was readily accepted. They knew no better, these white men, it was expected of their society and they did it.

More and more he met these people and he began to lose his pre-conceptions. In part they were to be admired for their lifestyle in these wide open spaces. It was as if space gave them joy. But also space made them vulnerable, and they protected themselves. And in the end that's what he saw in these crimes of South Africa, people of all races protecting their families and trying to make a living. It was unfair, it was criminal, the crimes maybe can be forgiven, but they were only protecting their families. He thought back to his own childhood. He came from a financially stable background but nothing special. Father, then mother, worked, and brought him and his brother up. What was different between his family and the family of these white South Africans?

Only the government. And yet how different was the government? In white South Africa a religious group of whites-only created a system that favoured them and didn't favour others. In the UK a group of whites are in charge, they favour themselves, their class, but do not favour others. The difference is they export their problems. The problems caused by the money deals in London don't occur in London, their knock-on effects damage the poor throughout the world, but British people remain comfortable with their homes and their excuses. We give Aid but people exploit along the line, these dictators are the problem, what about the droughts and the famines, how can we blame ourselves?

But these excuses are predicated on the mortgage and not the truth, on the comfort and not the reality, on their own version of lies and delusion. In some ways Africa had an honesty that was missing in the tiers of hiding that characterise UK life and "civilisation".

F-ville 500, then 200, 100, 20 and he was in it. In what, well he couldn't describe it as being a lot. He got lucky, a contact led to another who let him rent a house cheaply giving him a respite from his van, space above his mattress when he slept, and avoiding the horrendous hotel prices. He stayed in F-ville a while, long enough to get to know the place and one of the local girls. These girls were tremendous. On the one hand lively and pleasant, yet on the other the best description is "lump". But it was a squeeze. He enjoyed her company and her body, she began to want money; what can you say about relationships without love. Or relationships that call themselves love, but love is defined in terms of comfort and security. Of course it doesn't matter how you define love if it exists within your own community then it is understood. But as soon as you step outside understandings that are never talked about appear for one partner, and not the other. Contention, strife, whatever.

Whilst in F-ville he enjoyed the local dam, Shazeduma. This dam had a uniqueness he had never seen or heard of. For half the year the dam was full, you could drive to its edge and perhaps walk 50 yards in either direction. It was still a pleasant expanse of water, maybe fishing. However as the year wore on and the rains receded so did the water line. And the

sun quickly dried the edge of the dam, enabling his combi to drive round for maybe 10 km. What a joy that was, it was as if it was his own drive. His and the flamingos. For when the dam was low, they appeared and whilst too timorous to be approached just to be close was a wonder of Nature. Mind you he could buzz the vultures. They kept their distance but were not afraid, and he enjoyed driving through their picking buzzing them into flight.

But the greatest joy was the reeds. The water level must drop 2 or 3 metres, and reeds that were barely visible when the dam was full, grew to 10 foot shelters from the searing sun. He would drive the combi part-way round, find some reeds, and sit - ostensibly with a book, but more with the peace and neo-meditation that came from this solitude in Nature. It was this he missed most when he drove past the village on parting.

In the end this girl moved him on from F-ville, just one more unnecessary argument about money, so at the start of Shazeduma's second rains he left. He had heard of a resort. You took a boat and then jeep, and the resort manager could even take care of his combi. He went for it, tried one night, hated the reminders of the West who were staying there, and moved on. He had been out walking, there was an unused hut in the jungle. He visited it several times, and no-one had appeared. With a mat and mosquito net for cover he moved in.

He couldn't believe his doing this, Jerry was intrepid he wasn't. He was a soft teacher but he wanted the peace after the girl had driven him to distraction. What a fool he had been, but he knew why - he would never forget her body. And the smell of her armpits, he smiled to himself.

He had managed to sneak up a stove, there was some fruit he could eat, but he could go back to the resort shop every so often. Life was pleasant in his new home as he slept, ate sparingly but well, and stared at the night skies with a sense of wonder. How grateful he was to have experienced such skies.

Then one day he was pottering around, sweeping away the ants when from out of the bush came Mpho.

BAENGOI

3) *Earth - Dirr'mpho*

Dirr'mpho moved with assurance through the jungle as she did through life. Over the years she had lived here she knew what was required mainly that wariness was key. She came upon what she expected - the dwelling, there had been signs over the last mile or two where someone had left signs of their search for sustenance.

She thought back to what had brought this moment. As a young girl her expanding mind had directed her intelligence to western education. After receiving their doctrine she had happily worked in the city establishing her own business. But soon her small firm's 7-figure turnover was not enough and she began to ask why. She undoubtedly would have been termed a success but more and more she longed for her upbringing, the villages she knew, the kids proliferating with laughter in every corner of her land, the frogs with their incessant noise at night, the skies with the stars sparkling encouraging the mind to wander and search contentedly.

These longings were plaguing her spare moments. At work she was busy, she did what she did - she cared for her staff, she couldn't let them down. But at home she had nothing except the bottle, and she had seen too many of her people in the city emptying them. One day she called her staff in.

"It's time for me to move on," she announced, expecting a shocked silence. None came, they knew - they had been expecting the worse for a while as they had been covering up occasional errors. "My village needs money so I am going back to them," they feared the worst - asset strippers "but you have all helped me so I will help with a workers' buyout." The paperwork done, the mixed emotion of the leaving do, her mind ahead of her yet the opposite pulls of those who clearly appreciated her holding her back. With the exchange of meaningless contacts, the wont of good intentions that never panned out in busy city life. And she was on the plane home.

After the endless journey, major flight terminal bus to local centre where a district bus took her far away where she was collected by the village car, and regaled for days. Not only was she missed by her family but her remitted money had paid for much of the village's minimal infrastructure. She had burst into tears when she saw the borehole with its makeshift plaque - Dirr'mpho Metsemala pipe, from our sister far away.

Once back she soon learned why she had left, she felt some dissatisfaction. To be perfectly honest she was bored, and she felt she could do far more for her community. The trouble is everything she did was resisted in some ways. Sure they wanted her money but everything they discussed was short-term and needing replenishment - nothing sustainable. Take the clinic. She knew a clinic was needed but all they wanted was for her to pay to send patients to distant hospitals. "What if I trained someone to become a nurse?" But they were scared, suppose a patient died they would be blamed - cursed for life and their family.

Frustrated by her latest failure one late afternoon she took the bakkie afar and walked. As expected the track petered out, and she started walking up a hill. Part way up she scrambled out onto a rock that jutted out from the trees. Down below she could see the river, and she watched as it snaked its way gently out to the horizon - she knew it went to Pargento, and then on to the sea far away. The river was traversable to here but soon after the hills rose more steeply - even to a small waterfall. Much of that was inaccessible, and certainly not by boat. When she was young she knew a boat came here but then there was more money around. Now no-one came because the profits were too small.

Slowly the ideas crystallised. A boat to Pargento, from there a charter plane to Jarponburg, where they could connect with international flights. From her city people could be in Pargento and settled in a hotel within 12 hours. The boat trip up would be 4 hours but could be turned into a pleasure and game cruise - maybe 6 hours. And she could get her people to build a small resort. Their housing could blend naturally in amongst the trees. OK there'd have to be a swimming pool. She'd attach a clinic to the resort, and would have to provide internet for the guests that maybe she could get young people to use. Maybe she could setup something to make a small school.

It wasn't plain sailing but she hadn't been a business success by being a hick. Within a year the resort was ready for opening. She chartered a plane for the media and eco-reps, even the most reactionary smiled at the swimming pool because even from the air it was the only thing that looked badly out of place. When they considered the clinic, the internet and the school building, no-one wanted to complain.

From her uni and a few contacts from business, she gave out a few loss leaders, and within a year she broke even after wages and payments. And the next year a small profit that she was able to use to build up the school.

Meanwhile one or two of the villagers began to see the advantages, and a few came out from Pargento. She trained them up with the ultimate objective of herself not working. That never quite worked but it wasn't that long when she only had to put her head in.

As she looked at the dwelling she also reflected on Yunio's visit - if he could see her people now. At the resort her organisation was almost complete, and in the village the school was taking off. Whatever her people started from, in the end the issue was only motivation. Why learn to read when there were no books? Why learn to add up when trading was mainly barter?

She had even setup her own local currency that she financed if people wanted to go to Pargento or beyond - few did. It was more that people wanted to come to the village of Dirrum resort. In that way no slick money-lender could come in and cause problems, especially as her rates never involved any profit. Who could compete? She couldn't resist the TVs but she brought them in on her boat, far cheaper in her currency than anything people could buy in Pargento or even Jarponburg. As all transactions indirectly came through her coffers she attempted to control development, and once she was trusted with her city ways the elders worked with her in controlling the land so there was no great influx of spoilers.

So what was this dwelling?

For a while fear took over. Whilst comfortable with the jungle, she could read her signs, man was completely different. This far away from the village could be an outcast or it could simply be a traveller. She began to look around. Where was the fire? She found something but it looked barely used. How did this traveller cook? Then she saw the stove - out of place? Mosquito net - western brand?

She heard sounds of walking, and scampered out of sight. A white man came in sight, a white man. She was even more frightened. She had heard of white bush guys. They had their own code, and black people didn't fit high within it. Yet they were strangely close to Nature, but their birthright had left a distortion in their minds - the birthright of imposition.

From her hideout she watched this man - as if it was some kind of game drive. She imagined one of those appalling documentaries with the dry but knowledgeable voice. "Slowly the animal (in this case man) wandered around its camp searching for what I can only think is food. Whilst this man relied on his intellect for survival, his knife was still a magic wand that enabled him to unearth the goods that would feed the intellect." "Rubbish," she thought, and then she screamed out loud "Yunio." The man jumped up alarmed as she ran to meet him. At first he didn't recognise her as she was not wearing the business suit, and carrying her mixture of city and country airs and graces.

"Mpho, it is Mpho!" she shouted at him, willing him to recognise her. Eventually his rigid mind opened up, and he saw beyond the locks to the face of Mpho whom he had been briefly

so close to when visiting the US.

Haltingly he called out Mpho, as she smothered him in a hug. He relaxed and enjoyed the warmth of her heart and the feel of her body. After a while she let go, and sat down by his metal fire, his stove. There was a silence, and then she asked "What are you doing here?"

And that started his story, and then her story, and before they knew it their words had created a bond, far beyond any had either experienced before. Night had fallen, and his lamp added local light to the joy of the stars.

"It is too late to walk back down, I must call or they will come looking," she noted. And soon they lay in each other's arms by the fire staring at the stars. With their words having exhausted other contact grew as their essences entwined amidst the feel of Nature that abounded.

"Let me light a fire," she interjected later on, and slowly he watched as she grabbed the twigs formed them into a tent enclosing dry parched leaves that quickly lit. Once the leaves had burned and lit the kindling, she added more of the moss and dried twigs, and then placed one branch in the fire. It caught at the end. Then she added another, and the two branches smouldered away gently whilst they were there. He was not bitten once by the mosquitoes whilst they were out there.

It got late and the mood changed slightly as joy turned to passion. They moved inside the dwelling and enjoyed each other's bodies before drifting into sleep.

She awoke first, and caught the dying embers of the fire to make breakfast. Yunio emerged to find her by the fire, legs akimbo, catching the warmth needed early in the day. He pecked her cheek smelling the warmth and freshness of her newly-bathed day. He sat beside her, ate and began to think of what had happened, and how they would retain its importance.

Towards the end of the day, Dirr'mpho told Yunio that she had to return to her village, but that she would be back. And she did so. To begin with it was the next day, but her visits became less frequent, one thing or another required her attention. Yunio's calm had been destroyed. Instead of enjoying his peace too much of him was waiting for Mpho's visits. She knew this, but what could she do? She had her duties, and they were important to her - not as important as Yunio but life couldn't stop. Yunio resisted a long time but in the end he told her that she was more important than his living at peace alone. So he moved in with her.

Initially this shocked many in the village - a white man, but they found that Madame was no different in her behaviour to them so gradually he was accepted, never one of them but not

an outsider either. Her balance was almost complete and she had Yunio, and she looked after her village. But for Yunio it never was, but he compensated by regular trips to their real home - sometimes she came with him.

This lasted several years but slowly they became more and more unsettled, as the proverbial dark clouds rose on the horizon. In a sense it was physical dark clouds. For years activists had complained about the damage to the environment. Initially it had been the nuclear fear, but gradually brinkmanship dealt with that. However business continued to expand in an uncaring fashion, and unthinking people complied with its mass marketing purchasing the latest gadget and home convenience. More and more the by-products of these processes caused ecological damage, but it tended to be hidden to most people's eyes affecting the polar regions first. But soon people noticed weather changes, and of course these changes hit the precarious balance of the poor first. Whilst they were more resilient after years of hardship, they still needed their crops. When the weather caused these to fail, it sent shudders through Mpho's village. Her tourism still gave income and livelihood - often personally supplemented, but she could feel things getting worse.

The greatest change occurred with nano technology, or as she called it something-for-nothing technology. Once they discovered methods for manipulating Nature at such a small level, the scientists found they could develop more and more new gizmos to sell. Business loved nanotechnology. Product after product came off the R&D production line, into the shops, and into the consumer havens. Life was made so much easier for those that could afford it. In the West cooking almost disappeared as nano-packs of food were developed, whereby unsealing allowed the rich young executive to enjoy the taste of nano-cuisine. Soon most of the chores of life became obsolete for the rich - and not-so-rich, as profits rolled into nano-business. Clothes, cosmetics, foods, nanotricity, all used these micro-molecular manipulations and brought them into everyday life.

But the business R&D was only interested in new products, and not humanity. Increasingly new strains of cancer appeared, heart disease increased, and the West ignored the fact that they preponderated with them. Sound people had warned the world, business of the dangers of playing with Nature. The scientists never knew what they were dealing with. Sure they developed products that gave short-term benefits but what of the long-term consequences? Nano-manipulations created strength within their own molecules and such strengths produced the products. But there was never sufficient research carried out. Some warnings included nano-contact with human skin. Whilst the cosmetics gave the required beauty initially, the contact caused an imbalance below the nano-level, at a level only Nature knew and man's machines could not measure. Long term users of nano-cosmetics developed ugly facial blemishes that were the surface of cancers. Nano-foods did not provide complete

nutrition. Scientists argued that it gave the nutrients that man knew of, but again what happened below the nano-level? Who knew, and business didn't care. Cities began to develop more and more infrastructural problems, but there was always sufficient money around for business to continue so they never felt the problems. The problems moved further afield, and Mpho felt these as dark clouds.

She had tried to control this nano-infiltration but her young people, especially those that went West for education, brought back stories of wonders and gadgets. To begin with the village ignored these stories preferring the wisdom of the elders who still backed Mpho. But gradually these things appeared and people's resistance was broken down by the labour-saving. She had just returned from the clinic where her team were unable to cope with the latest cancers her people were developing.

She was in tears, and Yunio tried to console her. But what could either do? They understood enough of this nanostrophe to know the outcome. Her doctors always advised traditional diet and avoidance of nano-products but young rejected this advice. And their bodies could cope more, it was only as they got older. And meanwhile their youthful greed was damaging the health of older in the family, especially those who listened to their educated family. After a sad and gloomy night Yunio announced that he was going home; this did not surprise Yunio. But it did surprise here when he insisted he go alone. She felt the worst, but in what way?

As soon as he got out of the village he felt his grief implode on him; a heavy darkness entered his mind and showed in tears. He left his paths, and bashed into tree and branch as he couldn't take his focus from the pain inside. He just walked, collided, walked until eventually blood impaired his physical visions, and he stopped. He scanned the area and found a stone under a tree, and just sat. How long? He never knew. The pain inside seemed to take over, and he just felt he was pain. But the pain was not physical, it was internal. And the pain wasn't his, it was outside it was Nature's pain. She was screaming stop playing with me, stop messing with me, let me do my job. He let rip a dramatic scream that scared and startled the jungle. The birds flew, and nearby startled animals jerked and ran. Voles scurried, and the ants stopped what they were doing and ran to their queen fearing for her.

But the scream cleared him and focussed his mind. He - they? - had to move away, had to go to the city to see, to find out, to know what to do. Assured he returned to the village and the answer was they.

BAENGOI

4) *Air - Namzo*

Namzo sat by the window measuring the moment, no doubt he would reflect on this with unerring frequency. He watched the little girls play. First there was ragamuffin Churzo, his elder sister's girl, and her cute-looking friend, Dagon. Ah, Dagon was so beautiful. Tonight her mother had given her two pigtails with pink bows tied functionally in figure 8 bows. But her mother had also given her a sweet satin dress, she was the picture of oriental child-like innocence. Together they made a mound of earth, and began walking clockwise around it - this was the wont of his people. He smiled and then wandered.

He did not remember the first time he had wandered around the hill, but all of his village didn't remember - it was their birthrite. After birth his mother would suckle whilst his father looked on. Close family and elders looked in, the birth of a child mattered to his people - it was celebrated. The night would pass and at first light his father would wrap the child and with chosen elders walk silently around the hill. It was the time to choose a name. For some this was just ceremony as the name had been chosen for a long time, but with his father it was different - they had been unable to decide.

First with the elders they stopped at the shrine of power. For years his people had known of the power of this place. The hill formed a cliff face and as you approached you could feel its presence, standing underneath open hearts were awestruck. Far too often his people would congregate here, and their very presence marginally softened the potency. In the end the elders built a shrine. For his people a shrine meant gold, and there was a gold spire resting on a square with eyes staring in all directions, and beneath that there was the stone platform painted white all lying on a purple plinth. Oh, and of course there was the obligatory sitra. Some say they are sayings of the chosen one, their first guide Anhoc the Rising. Some would argue that Anhoc did not write down so it couldn't be his, maybe they were written by his first acolytes. Whatever at least this particular sitra was authenticated as coming from Anhoc. Different ones, later ones led to much argument and division.

But this sitra, the Namyana sitra, was revered by all as authentic Anhoc. So all over the kingdom the Namyana sitra was displayed, as it was on their shrine on a gold plaque just below the eye that faced all the world.

Yemdoc raised the infant to the shrine praying for a fitting name, then bowing before it the

infant held gently but firmly above his head. His forehead touched the ground and he murmured several times in prayer "Guide me Anhoc, give me the name of power that my child will carry."

He rested quietly then the elders moved further round the well-trodden path. Next the hill indented and the rockface made a smooth curvature. Yemdoc gently touched the child to the smooth face quietly pleading to Anhoc to give him wisdom.

Beyond this was the hole, the hole of sanctity. All his village climbed up through this hole as a form of natural rebirth re-emergence. But next to it was a smaller hole, a hole that the whole village only experienced once in the birthrite. Murmuring "Anhoc connect me with unity", he pushed the infant gently through the hole and then moved to the top of the rock to collect him. The infant was strangely silent even though he had briefly left his father's arms.

The ritual proceeded as did the walk, the walk they all performed in their village. And eventually they reached the semsoc stone where Yemdoc again bowed down.

One of the elders prompted Yemdoc. The hill has told me this child is important to our people and I name the child the name of the hill Namzo. Here is my son, Namzo, he is a symbol of our village the living instrument of the hill of power.

The elders looked aghast this sounded sacrilege, and they knelt below the stone of the seers. They prayed to the semsoc stone, and after a long period of time they stood and said the hill has spoken and has spawned Namzo, may the child have the strength to bear this name of great power.

Looking at the sweet-faced Dagon, Namzo reflected on his birthright. Many times he had watched elders seek something outstanding but to no avail. Namzo often appeared more average than average. And his average nature stared at the sweetness as she grabbed up her satin skirt and using it as a basin filled it with gravel. She chased the ragamuffin and eventually heaved up her skirt and tried to empty the gravel on Churzo. She immediately got a handful back and their dirty faces lit with glee. Namzo still stared at their faces admiring the beauty and his reverie was disturbed as from behind he heard a huge clatter of stones on the wall. He waited they did it again. That was his wake-up call he had to start his pilgrimage.

Moving to the edge of the village he stared across the plain he had often walked, at the mountains in the distance. These mountains had power as did all mountains but these were the mountains that were known as the roof of the world, the roof where the world's chi

gathered, the Gaic chi. He looked fondly at this source, a source his people had sprung from, a source that would guide his movements. Across the plains he walked feeling the wind off the lake taking him to his new life. He thanked the wind and asked of it "where are you taking me?" It seemed to say onward and upward, and his eyes were drawn to a gull that was directing his traffic. He felt comfortable with the sign, no questions were needed.

Focus was necessary, what was he doing? Where was he going? And to get that focus he needed to be attuned, to know the signs that nature would give him. He paused, his mind had been wandering. Bringing it back to rest in his heart he breathed in deeply and focused on the word walking. With his hands curled his gaze moved forward with his pace, step-by-step, until there was only walking.

And he walked in what could only be called "walking", his mind resting yet focused unwavering with his pilgrimage until soon he arrived at the foot of the mountains where he allowed his body to rest. Touching his bottle to his lips he felt the crispness of the lake water revitalise him, its strength coursing through him. There seemed little need to ingest food but he wasn't to be fooled. He needed rest as he had walked most of the day, his village far behind him, his intent so determined none of the neighbouring folk had questioned him.

The sun had begun to fall towards the distant horizon across the lake, an orange beam across the surface pointing to its final rest for the night. The lowness of the sun and the richness of the evening hue reminded him that light was growing dim, and he needed to prepare himself for night. Gathering wood and moss he fashioned the elaborate fire, moss inside a small cone of twigs upon which would rest further moss whose slow burning would ignite the outer cone. Then under the nearby tree he found the lanidier plant growing, and he broke off three of the stems. Lighting these he placed them in the ground in front of the fire. Soon the fragrance of the lanidier contrasted the strong smell of the fire and as he sat back on his haunches he let both scents flavour his nostrils as he nourished the being that had brought him so far, the being that had given him the name of power, Namzo.

Although Nature's calm was disturbed by the occasional scurrying, Namzo's mind focussed on its own stillness. After such a day as this there was little residual disturbance from the day, and that soon melted away as the power of stillness took over. Remaining still this power washed over him, and he simply remained still. After a while it was time to eat and he stood up and stretched. Slowly as the stiffness went he felt the power suffuse through his body needing little nourishment from the nuts and curd he had brought with him. Laying back he looked up at the clear skies wandering from star to star on his own little journey of recognition, and sleep came.

At night he dreamed as the celestial powers sought amongst themselves to advise him of his journey, this journey that would unite all the kingdoms through its many turns. Little of their discourse reached him at this stage except he was awakened in the middle of the night as a deer told him that he must follow the foot of the mountains for a number of days keeping the lake to his right until he would be told to climb. In the morning he woke to find no sign of a deer near his camp, but when he sat before the remains of the fire and lit the three lanidier he was simply reminded that he must follow the foot of the mountains with the lake at the right, and he smiled as it felt right. Holding the stillness steady he revitalised as he began to feel the sun rise to his left, hours later he saw the golden disc rise through the gaps in the peaks as a confirmation that Namzo had started on another day.

As the day drew on the rains came. To begin with he thought he would just walk through them but as they persisted he took time out. The mountains seemed to move in and out of the lakeside, and he was now quite close to them. He had found a tree that offered good shelter even though he was already wet. It was quite warm so he did not feel the cold and he began to watch the rain on the lake. At a distance the rain slanted in as a grey cloud but nearer he saw the individual drops strike the surface and appear to bounce off. It must be strange to be underwater in rain!

He sat there and his mind wandered. Even in the rain there was peace and he was able just to drift. He felt part of his mind questioning his actions. Why was he travelling? Why had he left the village - his home? But he dispelled the comforts this tormenter flashed in front of him. This was his quest. Deep inside he had a quest-guide and he was to follow. There was no real question except the occasional temptation. He went back to admiring the rain, there was peace in that.

Towards the end of the day the rain subsided. He could have pressed on but after yesterday's long trek there was no need. He had severed the immediate cord, he could not turn back without much effort and personal failure. He moved up the mountain slightly and sought a cave. It seemed to take a while but only in the mind's eye, and soon he had started a fire and was ready for the evening's nourishment. He had carried with him three of the lanidier sticks, and placing them in the ground he lit them and knelt before them. Soon the process of being still had taken hold, and he was just quiet. After a while he then ate his dried tofu, and was ready for sleep and lay down.

The next morning he awoke and moved to the edge of the cave and looked out at the wonder of the lake, it is a joy just to stare out at such natural beauty. He paused his indulgence, lit his sticks and calmed his mind - morning meditation was always better for him. His being then nourished he ate, and moved down to the lakeside and walked. Today he would walk

further rain or no rain. Later in the day the rains did come but not as heavy. As dusk drew in he found a cave and settled for the night.

This daily routine turned into a week yet still he journeyed, but his questioning mind was getting louder and more uncomfortable. There was a peace in the walking, the lake, the mountains - the stillness of the wide open space, of nature clearly in charge, together with his willingness to accept that. But even despite that his mind was disturbing this - more and more. People so far were not a great part of his quest. Soon the occasional person began to see that he was a stranger, they were clearly civil but mountain people keep to themselves - they respect space, human and natural.

But that night his mind disturbed him too much. The depth and peace of open air sleeping was broken that night. In that moment of time that almost seems eternal before his disturbed sleep was broken, his deer appeared. It spoke to him about resolve, about his quest and about his Namzo birthright. As he awoke he knew that it was time for him to move up the mountain, and that morning he started to climb thanking the lake as he began to leave it behind. To begin there was a slightly worn path upwards that he followed but as he followed his mind disturbed him. It was not the chatter of disturbance but it seemed a deeper voice. He stopped to listen to it but it did not come into focus. But as he moved off he found that he had left the path behind. He started to feel the cold but it was not really discomfort. He noted the warning and focussed on his walking, and suddenly noticed an ease of climbing.

As time went on, although fairly early, he looked around ready to settle for the night. Out of the way he found a cave, this time much deeper and going well inside he found signs of earlier visitors. The place for fire had already been chosen and he only needed to find the fuel. He lit the fire early and found that the alcove he was sat in became warm very quickly, the shape seeming to keep the heat from escaping. It was early so he had more time to meditate and he took advantage of this, but this time his guide stepped in.

The deer simply said "You are the Guide who will be lost.", and then disappeared. He awoke, shocked, and heard noises in the cave. These noises turned to little squirrels, who came towards his fire. They all sat up on their hind legs grasping acorns in their front paws nibbling away at their fruit. In between nibbling one said "You are the Guide who will be lost.", as did another until there was a chirpy chorus. Then the chorus stopped as soon as it started, and a clap of thunder sounded terminating as the squirrels scampered off. This time he really awoke holding to the ominous "You are the Guide who will be lost."

He shivered but it wasn't cold, and he felt blank except for this one thought. It had a sharpness of fear, all else was blanked but this one powerful thought that had control of his

attention.

Slowly he calmed, and gradually sleep took over. Awakening he was still dulled, and couldn't shake this feeling even with meditation. He moved off, and climbing a little further he found himself moving over a trough in the mountains, and descending through the scramble of rocks and tufts he saw Karenza, a small village in the distance.

It took him most of the day to reach Karenza as once he had scrambled clear of the rocks the valley stretched for miles. Soon he found that he joined a small mountain stream, and initially he zigzagged with it as the bank seemed more solid than the watery grasslands away inside. But after what seemed hours of zigzagging the stream went underground and not too far away he saw a path that he made a bee-line for. Initially difficult as he often stumbled against stones, the path then widened and soon it became easy, almost nonchalant, strolling along. His gaze wandered as he began to see the mountains receding especially as he descended slightly more quickly, and he felt a pang in his heart as this loved familiarity began to disappear.

Soon other travellers greeted him as they were moving towards Karenza, and warily he reached the outermost building seeking a hotel for shelter. He needed food, and perfunctorily consumed fighting off exhaustion. Although it had not been his longest day he felt most tired and the bed in the scanty hotel room quickly beckoned and he fell into a deep sleep that lasted well into the morning.

It seemed that entering Karenza was like changing worlds. The first that hit was the need for money. Those from the mountains who had travelled when young told him of such a need and had given him a little, but he needed work for that would soon be spent on the hotel. There was a festival in the town of Traneza, several days away, and he found work looking after the livestock that were being taken to the market.

Traneza reinforced the change in world view that he had to undergo, and soon he realised that if he were going to survive this new world he needed what they called education. That required a further move and he travelled to Lhanido where he managed to enrol in a college. He had no skills except for the livestock so he found himself looking after a shop during the night, and getting a few hours sleep after college in the evening.

And this became his existence for several years until he was qualified. What a strange word "qualified". He had been forced to go through certain written rituals. Teachers would say to him to write his own thoughts, but when he did that he failed until he learned that what he was supposed to write were the teacher's thoughts reworded. Once he knew the game he

soon shone, whilst not being stupid these teachers only went so far with their minds. He began to understand why. Although academia was supposed to be the knowledge and wisdom for these cities, in fact it was far from that. Knowledge, yes, but it was the knowledge of the hierarchy, the knowledge of those that had become successful academics. These with success could not be questioned, and it was this that he had begun doing. Once he knew that he could attribute to these guardians of academia, and occasionally add to their bibles.

He soon discovered that wisdom was not a requirement or wisdom as in the terminology he had learnt in his tradition. These academic wise men were not applying the wisdom of their insight to problems but were quoting from others, and acting as a sort of conduit of current academics to tinker with the boundaries of existing thought. When he first realised this he was devastated at the waste of human minds. Instead of delving into problems examining it from all angles and reaching an insight into the solution, these people only used intellect - a process of logic and reason that took them to great depths of minutiae but never gave them the fundamental understanding that insight could. Occasionally so-called genius would come along, and not having been so sucked into the system as others still had sufficient of their insightful mind awake to create new wisdom. Whilst these people were occasionally wanted, they were also perceived with fear as if there was too much wisdom the erstwhile holders of the seat would soon lose those seats. Unwittingly these seat-holders conspired to ensure that only their ilk managed to hold the seats. Geniuses would be sidelined as crazy, disorganised, not co-operative, and marginalised in the system whilst seat-holders managed to acquire the knowledge these geniuses had on offer.

Seeing this Namzo developed a strategy for success. Working on a problem insightfully he would determine a situation. Instead of then using intellect for its purpose - providing the flesh on the bones of insight, he would then determine an appropriate starting point in established academic thinking and then work back to his insight. This would often take hours and hours of convoluted thinking, but once so done it was then completely accepted by establishment - as he was one after their own heart. Very quickly he gained success in the system as he continually watched for the academic leaders and then determined starting points within their work that would lead to the insights he had gained. By accrediting them with his understanding they saw no threat in him, and he gradually rose in the ranks.

But he suffered as he became sucked in. There were certain social rituals that the system required he perform, and part of this was the requirement to take drugs. Why in the world of minds are you expected to take substances that will destroy them? He soon discovered the balance required to do this, it was another gatekeeper exercise. Consume a certain amount of the substance, whether alcohol or illegal substances, but always appear in control. It did not

matter whether you were in control, you just had to appear to be in control. This had its perks as there were sexual benefits for being the establishment that he soon learned - new researchers, colleagues for whom intellect was never enough but rather than learning insight sought passion as a substitute.

So this is how his life went. For years he subsumed his insight into intellect, addled his brain through socially-acceptable substance abuse and partook of the passions in a genteel way until eventually he was part of the establishment. He had become lost.

BAENGOI

5) *Combine - Uulaccio*

Uulaccio Dinkanataporn was a negotiator in a world that used negotiation for gain. Even if it meant war, the self-interest of the forces in play continued on their ill-conceived path irrespective of the consequences to human life or the planet. Uu had an ability of analysing the situation, and brokering deals so that both parties felt they had gained, usually because they recognised that the cost of war was too prohibitive - financially rather than in human life.

Uu's life had a fundamental sadness. Everyday he faced the prospect of dealing with people whose egos were driving the world to disaster, and he knew that his tenuous position was all that stood in the way of the deaths of hundreds, even thousands. Why were these people so misguided - so inhuman? Most people were just happy living day-to-day but these select few were repeatedly running headlong into disaster - disaster that was so unnecessary. He never worked out whether there was something different about these select few, or whether most would follow for personal gain, he also didn't know why he was different although he knew he had no choice.

But he knew there were others who lacked the choice, and needed to work for the general good; it was human Nature at its best. All his life he had sought to bring such people together, and he hoped that some would choose like he to influence the world's decision-makers. But he knew that was such a fruitless task. The power these decision-makers had corrupted both themselves and those that came in contact with it. So few can remain immune to the corruption by finance or by status, and if that was not enough then they played on your sense of justice and achievement for peace. So difficult.

He knew many caring people who ere not sufficiently grounded, especially amongst the young. Aaggh, the young were so easily fooled. Firstly the young are arrogant, especially the educated young. They don't even see how they are played with arrogance. They attend the schools the system creates, and because compassionate people are intelligent they become successful by the measures the system sets forth. But they fail to see that those very successes distort, instead of having to apply themselves intelligently to their studies they learn to apply themselves in the way the system wants. The success and distortion creates arrogance but because all in the system are the same way they don't see a problem.

Once outside the education structures business plays on their arrogance, they allow them to see themselves as important, and suck them in. Once they are in their arrogance soon goes as bosses only promote subservience, by now they are financially trapped and the process is complete.

Then there are those who reject the system, how much better are they? Their intelligence perceives the system for the corruption it is, but their intellectual arrogance asserts itself and they see their own knowledge as superior. Soon they start preaching to older and wiser, and their egos alienate those who would be allies. Most ridiculous is what happened in his youth on the left in the West. Firstly the intelligence of these youth noted the Natural truth that in this world we should all be treated justly - in some sense equally. They perceived that Marxist analysis of the economic system demonstrated the disastrous consequences of the capitalist economic system, and offered a possible challenge by recognising that the issue was marginal costs and that labour could fight for them - without labour there is no profit. Then these intellectual youths would pontificate on this analysis, both on platform and in small groups. Working class unite, revolution of continuous change, and similar slogans flew out of the mouths of these babes, and adults sympathised with views and felt abrasive at their condescension. After all most working adults felt the unfairness, they worked all hours for just about enough money to feed their families whilst the rich took all the profits and played golf.

And what was the choice these young offered? Violence. Revolution. And in some parts of the world, the voice of revolution was listened to. And in many cases such revolutions gained some success. But far too often, these revolutions had their own egos in charge and the revolutions lost track, and directly or indirectly hurt the people they were fighting for.

Nicaragua had been one. For years they had been damaged by the US who treated the country like a playground, propping up the right wing who paid them off with treats such as gambling and prostitution. But throughout the twentieth century the people sickened of this, and sought change through the barrel of the gun. The Sandinistas took democratic control, what can be more democratic than poor people expressing their injustice by fighting for themselves? Sadly the situation did not end there, that could never be allowed. The capitalist world championed by the US feared such control, so blockaded the country economically and politically. Who do neutral countries choose to trade with, the mighty dollar or a small country? Internally they were also destabilised so that they could not become self-sufficient. This again was easily managed. The ousted dictator had been sucked into power, and sought by any means to regain power. His personal guard had carried out atrocities whilst in power so they were detested. They were not now safe. Recognising this the US paid them. Military aid was sent, and part of this aid paid for hired soldiers, the guys who had previously

committed atrocities - the Contras. For a decade the revolutionary government tried to make progress, improving schools and hospitals, whilst at the same time fighting off the US-funded contras. Throughout Nicaragua everyone knew this was the situation, whilst the revolution was in charge the US would enforce a trade blockade and fund these displaced mercenaries. In the election a candidate stood up and said I have an agreement with the US that if I am in power there will be no blockade and no funds for mercenaries. Common sense voted for this woman, and the revolution ended. Was it worth all the violence? Only Nicaraguans can judge. The revolution had got rid of the US puppets from government, only to find them as a danger in opposition. In the end the people sought no violence in preference to a more just political system - were they wrong?

In the USSR a people's revolution ousted the regimes that had grown out of the tsars. But this revolution led to much hardship and poverty. Meanwhile from outside financial pressure was exerted to destabilise this people's movement, and the revolution sought to restrict the influence of this finance. More and more a siege mentality grew up, and the egos of the leaders identified themselves as the revolution. Backed up by a political creed the leaders defended themselves in the name of the revolution, and soon there was an effective dictatorship, egos in charge. They fought against the finance to defend their country meanwhile removing the liberties of the people they originally claimed they were fighting for. Finally some theorists came to power claiming it is time to reflect on what is happening in the country, and open up and consolidate their system. They saw that the people were repressed. Despite improving the living conditions of many the people did not feel as if they had the choice. Despite an education process that attempted to counter the inroads of finance, when the people were offered openness they embraced it. Now they too have reverted and are controlled by a neo-tsar who encourages much of the excesses associated with such. Finance has made the inroads that it wanted, and there is now a government they can make profits from.

The twentieth century in China has got to have been the most devastating for any country ever, violence in China has been horrific and one can only feel sympathy for its people. The majority of Chinese people in the nineteenth century were poor peasants who had had a succession of emperors. At the beginning of the twentieth century European invaders attempted to gain trade control, whilst Japan then followed up and invaded China first. Brigands fighting brigands and foreign powers interloping built up a stern resistance that then crystallised into Maoism. But Maoism was just an emperor with a different political creed, and soon millions died in the guise of this creed - a tool for maintaining the emperor's power. What was significant was how this emperor misused the arrogance of youth, and it was the young people with their arrogance who caused such devastation whilst maintaining the emperor in power. Eventually history again took over, and now again with the pretence

of political creed finance has manoeuvred into power but there is potential sadness for the world as this finance is dividing the world. Will such a division of power continue to exist harmoniously? In China they are unlikely to argue. Their people have been devastated by the shellshock of the twentieth century, and are unlikely to seek any sort of change whilst there is any form of trickle-down benefit to comfort them against the memories their families tell them of.

Coming out of his analysis Uu thought, finance and greed has created the oppression but have any forms of violence against the finance produced anything other than hardship? He felt saddened again. After all he spent his life negotiating with the people who created this violence. He sought influence with the cartels who, because of his class, accepted him to a certain extent as one of them. He was one of them so he knew that violence was never an answer, and these cartels didn't want violence. They used it heartlessly, but they never wanted it. To them profits were profits whether in peace or war, and in fact in peace profits were better so long as sufficient people didn't know the lie of the land.

What Uu most wanted was his network, he hoped that people would work with him in trying to steer the world back onto its Natural Path. Some hope, he mused, but he continued with his efforts. And peoples of all ages came to him, some were just interested, others who were genuine; he worked with both - the negotiator in him. Sad to say many young came and disrupted. Most young people just followed. They knew that what life had to offer them was going downhill. Many sought escape, and if his organisation did not offer such an escape then he was connected to people who did. For most of the young escape was enough, they had been disenfranchised by the powers within their society. But for others escape was not important, life needed to change, and they came to Uu to try to change him, to try to make him more active. Whilst he had always said that peace was an active process, that activity did not mean war against the real powers. Yet that was what these young wanted, they wanted it simple - remove the powers that be. Of course as these powers were so few in number they had learnt to protect themselves - mostly through anonymity. They worked through governments, but never were government; governments were their puppets - yet even the governments were not truly sure of who was pulling their strings. Some names, CEOs, were obvious but what was the point in targeting them? Remove one CEO, and the next was just the same. To reach the position they had to play the game, and in the game they were always being watched, others were always looking for weakness to take them down. These people became inured as they learnt self-protection, and effectively became rich clones. Remove one, and a new clone appeared. Western education highlighted the need for individualism, and people than believed the myth of genius and individuality, but whilst there were exceptional people the reality is that it was the situation, the circumstances, that created the process, created the individual genius. Adam Smith did not start free trade, he

just coined the term. The economic powers at the time were seeking greater wealth for themselves, hid behind the process of wealth for their nations, and Adam Smith turned up with the words that gave it academic credibility. Society was just ready.

Yet because these young people had been recently educated they sought individual targets. They wanted plots against government A, system B, and cartel C. Uu wanted none of this disruption, and excluded such people. He was often rude, and told them to come back when they had grown up. This, of course, saddened him because their hearts were in the right place and they had the energy, but because of its negative flow it was too destructive. His organisations moved in the direction of active peace. Because his people understood that there was a unity of purpose and a strength in this direction, intentionally limited, time and effort was not wasted. When the energies of these young arrived trying to force a change I direction, energy was wasted bringing them into line.

What was equally frustrating with their single-mindedness was their lack of discipline - together with their youthful educated egos. Initially he allowed them to remain because of the strength of their heart, their compassion, but in discussions they were single-minded. Often powerful as speakers they would continually bring the discussion back to their agenda. Whilst Uu's organisations would be seeking strategies for active peace, these individuals would be seeking more violent methods for targeting their criminals. Some of his organisation, less mature - less worldly-wise, would be sympathetic, and soon these youth had created division. Once there was division, Uu gave up with them.

He did however need to cope with them so he established a Charter for Active Peace. This was a useful thing to do because, although his agenda in establishing the charter was excluding disruption, it led to a unity of his organisation as they worked through their understanding of this Charter. Revision after revision of the Charter occurred as they tried to finalise it, and this in itself disengaged the interest of impatient youth, but once the Charter was finally in place his organisation had become far more united, having lost disgruntled on the way and sorted out the unsure in the process. By including an exclusion for those propagating violence and by insisting that all affiliated to his organisations signed the Charter, much unity was created.

At the founding public conference of the Charter Namzo wandered in. Active Peace was a fundamental concept to his people, and the use of the term attracted him out of his academic entrapment.

At first Namzo was bored with the rhetoric, whilst Uu was a good speaker his content was the usual political speak. And what was the point with politics, the people with power did

what they wanted and said what was needed so those without power could pretend everything was OK. However as he listened more and more he realised that Uu was not a man telling people what to do. As Uu explained more and more about the development of the Charter, he realised that Uu was a listener he was clearly a very wise man but all he focussed on was the listening. So Namzo listened, and learned - and his academic arrogance had not expected to learn. And the more he listened the less that part of his mind had control, and slowly a deep sadness pervaded his being as he understood that he had lost his way, that he had become trapped by the very tricks he had used to gain his status. He had been trapped by his own mind.

Yet he must set that aside as Uu was still talking, and he began to focus more and more on the need for peace, and as he listened to Uu's analysis of the world he saw the dangers. And again he saw his traps, how he had conned himself into academic acceptance and power. His mind drifted and he watched as the small decisions piled up into his trap. He looked at his academic justification itself, use of insight to take him ahead of the game. This had been what he had done - initially, he had manipulated the situation in order to gain power whilst still maintaining true to his beliefs. But that was not how things progressed, and he was shocked at how he had conned himself, and how rationalisation had snuck in with its bogus claims.

After a while the insights had dried up - much the same way his meditation practice had waned and fell away. But he didn't need that, he said to himself, his intelligence would carry him through. Little did he see that it was not intelligence telling him that but intellect. Soon what he was deducing as new insights were in fact revamped old insights, old understandings clothed in new terminology. He remembered his professor pressing him for new work, and under threat he had even attempted to rebuild his meditation skills. But his mind was disturbed and spinning, little chance of any insight connection there. So he looked at his work and he started deducing looking for something new. But instead of stepping outside and searching for the new, he used his deductive powers to move sideways. He searched for connections that were rephrasing, coined new words, reshaped existing ideas, and connected these with high-powered rhetoric that were the tools of academy. He had something new.

When he presented it to his prof, she was pleased - new work. But as she read it, she saw the connections the tricks of her trade, the approaches and processes that she had used to get her seat. She smiled. It was good enough to present as new, given what else was around, so she sanctioned submission to the various magazines. But her smile was deeper than that, because she realised that Namzo was not a threat, was not the threat that his individuality was to her early on. He was now one of them.

She tested this by asking him to write a critique of one of her papers. This she had never done before because she was afraid his sharpness would pull apart her own processes, and show to others in that clever way he had of saying but not saying how shallow her own conclusions were. His critique was favourable; it highlighted her processes as genius rather than what they were - reason, and then proceeded to celebrate her importance within the field. Excellent she thought, this man was now no threat and she could promote his papers, publications and speaking without any question.

At that moment in Uu's talk Namzo recognised these interchanges as being a significant change in his life, where he had lost truth to position and right to power. He looked at the Charter as Uu quoted it "Peace is not a passive process of not doing. It is necessary to resist the paths to violence by holding to truth and integrity." The Charter continued as did Uu, but all that Namzo saw was that he had not followed his own truth, had let slip the integrity that had been so important to his people in the village, and had not resisted the path to power offered by his prof. Whilst no direct violence ensued he knew that he contributed to the process of violence by his acquiescence. Nature gives us roles to follow and within those roles there are always choices of truth and integrity against acquiescence to existing authority and our own desire for power. He slumped forward in his seat devoured guilt and shame, and taken over by a level of humility that he had not felt since leaving the village.

Some guide.

Having signed up as a member of the Charter organisation, he left the meeting humiliated, and rushed home determined to use the tools his upbringing had given him. He closed his door and began to meditate. This time it was not a choice based on false desire to keep in with the prof, it was a cleaning out of all the rubbish that had accumulated over the years. He sat there, and slowly what felt like dark filth descended from his mind and pushed its way out through his anus into the earth. Soon he saw a pinpoint of light deep within his mind, and he sought it. It disappeared. Let it be so he did, and the light grew from inside and poured outside into the room. Now not so bright it diffused throughout the room, leaving a gentle glow, a presence, an awareness, that held his attraction, his concentration. Again letting it be he bathed in this diffusion, and slowly it disappeared as he drifted off to sleep. He then saw the deer in a dream, and it just started up the mountainside. Who was the guide, himself or the deer? He smiled at Nature, and woke up clean - cleansed, comfortable now with who he was. He, the deer, remembered where he had regained his soul, and for him the Charter for Active Peace organisation became central to his life.

He did know stuff, his village had taught him, but he had also learned in this civilised life

that there was suspicion, suspicion founded on the knowledge that much in this part of the world created by man was sourced by arrogance. He had done that himself. Arrogance was something he mustn't demonstrate so working in the organisation he took care. He developed a routine prior to meetings of focusing on his heart, drawing his being into his heart, and concentrating on humility. The heart was naturally humble but focussing on the thought developed a pervading sense of non-aggression, non-assertiveness, a complete lack of desire for personal power. What mattered only was the propagation of the Charter, or rather what the Charter symbolised.

Like everywhere else in this world that man manipulated this organisation was also driven by ego. He watched as individuals vied for power, vied for Uu's attention, became sycophants of the righteous. Whilst it was better than power-seeking, this sycophancy was also little more than ego. The purpose of this ego was to be a part of Uu's world, and not being a part of Peace. Because the rhetoric and communal actions were peace-oriented the movement gained pace with this sycophancy adding, but it was diffused energy - not focussed on the heart but on dissipating aspects of mind. However despite the time it took he never allowed sycophancy to take over. He soon knew Uu but because his actions came to the leader's attention.

The one time he did allow sycophancy to surface was when he offered genuine flattery. He had been attending an Executive meeting of the Organisation, and Uu was making a rare visit to discuss recent negotiations concerning international manipulations in Africa. "If you want to talk egos then you have to listen to some of these African leaders," he burst out laughing as he thought of some of the preposterous people, "Africa is so difficult because of its tribal history. These people for centuries have accepted instruction from their leaders without question."

"Yet black people in white society generally refuse all instruction," mentioned an Exec member.

"Please be careful of stereotyping," warned Uu cautiously "Isn't that ironic though? Many will obey instructions of their leaders forthwith yet a significant proportion of descendants are known to reject law in western society whether that law has a moral basis or not. The legitimate excuse of the oppressed is not a reason to be immoral, morality has to be the basis of unity in this world, and the basis and practice of any freedom struggle.

"Unfortunately when the law doesn't treat you with a moral face your own face turns to rejection, to individual codes that soon get twisted by deprivation and peers.

"However in Africa black people run their own countries - at least to a certain extent," Uu returned to theme.

"At least to the same extent as the puppet leaders in the West," came from the table.

"Yes that too is an amusing irony," Uu smirked "many intellectuals in the West supported by African activists describe African leaders as puppets yet western leaders are not classified as such. And the profession of some western leaders was acting."

The table laughed with Uu's irony.

"These African countries are run by leaders whose pomp and ego defy normal description. There is the case of Mugabe whose rhetoric brought him to power, such an educated man who understood the needs of his people and how the political system had sent invaders into his continent, labelled vast tracts of land after their own egos - Mugabe's own land was named after Cecil Rhodes, and had even piggy-backed their exploitation on the back of the earnestness of missionaries," continued Uu after they quietened.

"It sounds as if you are sympathetic," piped up one.

"You cannot be a negotiator from a position of ignorance - unless you are not negotiating but using negotiation as a tool of oppression. The way Mugabe came to power was legitimate and democratic. He was born of a people who had been dominated and exploited by white rule, and out of this came Mugabe and other legitimate leaders.

"But at some stage what he stood for became his own ego, and not the interests of his people. No analysis is complete, and there is some truth in all. After his country was independent there was a civil war, resolved in the end but with scars and great division. His own people were in difficulties after the years of colonial exploitation and the civil war, and there was a significant group of white people still living there. These whites provided business links and mostly gained from it themselves. Also the agreement that ended the colonial rule had restricted access to the land for a long period of time.

"By this time his rule had been undermined, perhaps his principles had waned or he had succumbed to other pressures and pleasures, but by the early 90s every vestige of his reason for struggle appeared to have gone. Troops were sent abroad to defend his land, rash promises of land were made to the troops who sought recompense. And the economy went downhill.

"More the people suffered but he was still their leader, and this mattered for a long time. By

the time they sought an end to his leadership he had become so used to power he couldn't relinquish it, it was part of him in his old age.

"But he was true to one thing, he was not going to be a puppet. And this is perhaps what destroyed the economy. If he wasn't going to be a puppet, then the West were not going to trade, maybe this isolation made his policies so entrenched. Around him fellow leaders all gave into the pressures of the western bank accounts, enjoyed the pomp and adulation of their people, and watched as the people toiled for years to provide a meagre living for their families and great wealth for the transnationals and their cartels.

"It is these I have recently negotiated with. You listen first to their anti-western rhetoric knowing it is only political capital. Then you look for what they truly want, how they can be bought, and then how the other leader can be bought. Of course neither can truly admit their own greed, so you have to deeply listen to their rhetoric to determine the particular needs of the people that the leaders want.

"Sadly there is no deep listening for negotiation, in other words no true desire to resolve the problems. But of course the problems don't exist within their own countries. In this world of trade they need to trade. Will they be forced into trading isolation as Mugabe's country?

"And of course the prices of the goods that they trade for are ridiculous. They get less than 5% of the price of a jar of coffee, yet they harvest it and put it on the boats. Who gets the money? Transnationals who own the distribution and retail. Ludicrous.

"But," he paused "a reality. And it is in this framework of financial domination that I am forced to seek negotiation, would that there were true deep listening for resolution of issues?" But we are back to the anonymity problem, who would we actually negotiate with, who controls the purse strings?

Afterwards Namzo went up to Uu "I was fascinated by your discussion of negotiation, of deep listening," ventured Namzo "People appear to be running all the time avoiding listening, playing their job games." Some of his self-critical resentment showed here.

Uu sensed his anger, and a bit more "Thank you, Namzo." He paused, and "we have never talked, have we? Where are you from?"

Namzo saw his ego flattered, but couldn't avoid it. He explained his story.

"Very interesting," said Uu carefully "there is much knowledge in the mountain villages that we have lost, much tradition - although I do believe they make an effort to keep tradition

alive in monasteries."

Namzo concurred "They do but at times the monks become weighed down with daily duties, and forget their purpose."

Uu smiled "How right, but at least it is there? What do we have here in the metropolis?" They both looked sad.

Uu parted "We must always remember our roots. Keep up the good work." Perhaps Uu knew of him, Namzo thought.

Soon after, a request from Uu led to Namzo begrudgingly accepting the post of Executive Secretary, he knew it meant work.

At the next meeting Uu made a surprise visit, and announced that he had asked for Namzo, leaving no doubts in the minds of some sycophancy who had been debating resistance.

After "I am not sure why you have asked for me, Uu," thanked Namzo, "but I will do what I can."

"I know you will," Uu replied assuredly "but I want you to take special care in looking out for astute new members - even recruit people you know are committed. True People of Peace."

"As matters worsen, we might well need to change direction - to avoid disaster," muttered Uu quizzically.

Namzo nodded accepting his task, although not in truth comprehending all Uu had said.

And matters did worsen. The banks got greedy. They had already taken advantage of fears of terrorism heightened by the media. Under the pretext of restricting money flow regulations were brought in to make it difficult to open accounts. Once done this prevented people from moving accounts easily, so the banks started increasing the cost of accounts - service charges. They started with offshore accounts where rich people left their money and were not concerned with charges, and once they found that worked they turned to everyday working accounts - current. The charges were minimal, nothing to really complain of, and because of the banking cartel these were applied across the board. Once they saw how successful this was, they increased the charges significantly. The old had always complained as they had the time, but now even working people started saying the charges were too high. Some started to say it was time to stop using banks, and some tried but people didn't use

cash any more - dangerous because of increased crime. And crime increased even more when more, especially the old, people started to carry cash; security guards were employed for pension queues .

New mini-banks sprouted up for wage-earners offering cash for pay cheques. These worked well, and it significantly affected the banks. These mini-banks could not afford security, and the police had to be brought in. But the banks were well in with the government and began applying pressure to close the mini-banks. At the same time banks increasingly applied pressure so that payments had to be made by direct debit. Banks became tied to retail networks, and soon the only way you could pay at these superstores was by direct debit. Again the byword was security, your money is much more secure with direct debit, but in truth the only security that was offered was your being secure in the knowledge that the banks were taking advantage of you and you could do nothing about it.

In the end the government bowed to the financial pressure and mini-banks were closed. It started with the hue and cry of security at the mini-banks so the government increased taxes to pay for policing. But that didn't deter enough people so eventually the bank cartels setup bogus mini-banks and absconded with funds. The government then said that organised crime was involved with mini-banks so they setup stringent regulations for establishing mini-banks. But in practice these regulations were either too strict or it cost the mini-banks too much money to comply with the regs, and they were eventually closed down. Immediately bank charges went up again, as it had cost the banks much money in lobbying and less reputable actions.

Insurance was no better. It became a requirement for more and more purchases to be insured prior to purchase. Soon your hp agreement automatically had an insurance clause within it. Initially people didn't object to insurance, after all if something went wrong you got your money back. Until that got tested more and more, and fewer and fewer people were able to claim on faulty goods or make any other legitimate claim because of "escape clauses". Insurance just raked it in. Many people complained that the government had made regulations requiring insurance, should they then not make sure insurance complied? But to little avail, most of the management boards of the insurance companies were ex-politicians.

In themselves these had little impact, but the knock-on affects were serious. More and more organisations sought government people-entrapment regulations. House sales required builder certificates, plumber certificates, electrician's and so on, and all these came at a price not for the certificate but for the cost of repair to reach government Health and Safety standards. Increased regulation came at a price that people were forced to pay or they couldn't sell. And increased pressure was placed by business. Consumer groups tried their

best but a seat on their board didn't pay well.

Simply to live in normal society became more and more difficult, buying a house, paying the bills etc. all had their hidden costs created by the government. Wages escalated to pay for the increased charges so there were fewer jobs. Government became increasingly backed by business so it was not necessary to worry about being popular. Whilst MP's still had salaries their real income lay in future board positions so less and less interest was paid to elections. Increasingly lobbying took place with all MP's - paying for silence in opposition, and the reward of the political business partnership were high.

Accountability had always been a difficult requirement of democracy, now it wasn't even discussed. The people became more and more alienated, and as usual turned on each other. Working people forced to work longer and longer to comply with regs began to resent even more those who weren't working. Pressure was increased to remove the welfare state. This naturally increased crime, increasing the cost of security and so on. Fewer could keep up with these costs, and more became unemployed and descended into crime. And violence.

Action for Peace became more and more anti-government with each new regulation.

BAENGOI

6) *Decline*

The decline they discussed happened. In the cities matters got worse and worse yet they claimed they were living in a happy place. Gang life increased as the poor turned to crime to achieve the lifestyle the media portrayed. And more and more of the cities became land that people fought in.

The wealthy tried to escape this land but their children had been brought up on the images that attracted the poor to crime. The young rich were also attracted to these no-go areas where their money bought drugs for themselves, and maintained the violence amongst the gangs as they fought for the rich pickings.

But none of this mattered to the wealthy yet they had their own problems to solve. The brinkmanship their greed had brought them to previously was now losing control. Previously nuclear proliferation and climate catastrophe had been avoided at the last minute by the manipulation of the cartels. And throughout they had maintained their spoils, but they never dealt with the fuel issue. For centuries they fought wars and manipulated the fossil fuels keeping the profits flowing and filling their own coffers. But fossil fuels were a finite resource that they could control, what was to replace it?

Whilst they had maintained economies based on control of oil, marginal groups had developed machines that functioned under sun and wind. These were sources that couldn't be controlled - they were not finite. In the hot climates people started to use the sun as a source of energy, then the wind, then the sea and even hydro. People's demands far outweighed what the cartels could control as oil prices soared. And as less and less depended on oil, people developed means of maintaining their lifestyle by the use of natural power.

At one stage there developed a natural cartel. All the companies who produced the machines that harnessed these energies clubbed together and tried to increase the prices on the machines. But it was never the machines that had given the control in the 20th and 21st centuries it was the fuel. But the fuel was free. And soon people realised they didn't need the expensive machines.

Except in the cities. They maintained some control there as the cities had moved so far away from their natural origins that the cartels could still keep a grip. But in the cities more and

more were poor - and even the rich were complaining as security cost them so much.

This natural cartel managed to convince people through the usual media ploys that fashion and lifestyle existed in the cities using their expensive machines - combining wind and sun power in an apartment block whilst the gangs destabilised. Transnationals developed more and more advanced technology using the natural power, and so still managed to control through consumerism.

But soon people began to move away. Older people recognising how awful their lives in the cities had become soon opted for the country. Of course they brought their old habits with them, they had had a lifetime of modern technology, but they could maintain that technology in rural settings with cheaper machines - and the fuel was free.

Seeing this the cartel through the government started to appropriate the land, and hiked the prices trying to make it more difficult for people to move away. And this held sway for a long time as an uneasy balance existed for those controlling the land and the machines that used natural power. But vast amounts of land were owned by the oil cartels, and without the profits from the fuel they had no source of income except the land itself. Wars broke out as the natural cartel based in the west forced a religious war so that they could control the land that had once been the source of oil and controlled for them.

This meant that more and more of the land had to be centrally-controlled vastly increasing the military outlay as more and more bases were needed for global security.

But very soon a world that was controlled by 5%, became a world controlled by 1% and then 0.1%. With fewer targets there was an increased likelihood of so-called terrorist attacks. Back-to-the-land political movements worldwide sprang up, and more and more these organisations infiltrated and killed the 0.1%. These movements were resilient as they were funded by ex-city finance from those who had moved out. Although the usual hotheads gravitated to these movements, their rhetoric and aggression could not deter a popular base - because so many people in the world just belonged to the land.

Too much money had accumulated in too few hands. Somehow the city-oriented cartels needed to ally themselves with those middle-classes who returned to the land. But they couldn't manage this because to maintain their control they had to increase the cost of the land. They attempted to divide the rural communities by offering those leaving the city cheaper land under a false tied arrangement - cartel connections. But then the city poor tried to muscle in on this, and they began to lose control of the cities as the gangs started to move away. They increased the prices again as the middle classes allied with the rural poor.

The final nail in the coffin was that the rural poor started to control the drugs. The drugs that controlled the gangs and the cities had always been controlled by the cartel. But the peasants who controlled the drugs began to think that they could control the cartel. Previously the cartel had controlled the fuel that was necessary for the distribution of the drugs, but with natural fuel and machines built independent of the cartel the drug barons controlled their own distribution direct to the gangs.

There was a difference between the drug barons and the cartel, the purpose of the cartel was brinkmanship to maintain the lifestyle of the rich and famous - stabilising the global dictatorship whereas the drug barons got greedy for themselves.

And then the cartel got foolish. Recognising that the drug barons were getting beyond control, they targeted the richest and sent the military to destroy the land and drug crops. This polarised existing tensions. Afraid the drug barons formed their own alliance and allied themselves with the rural community. The cartel was losing control of the cities and the country, and began to rely more and more on the military. The military realised that the force behind their power-base, the cartel, was losing control of the situation, and they became divided as some sought power through the drug barons and others sought power through the cartel.

War broke out between the finance cartel and the drug cartel, but very quickly the finance cartel was defeated as they were not in control of any resource - except money. As they were nearing defeat, the infrastructure started to break down and then they knew they could not retain power. Fearing the worst they debated the nuclear stockpile but that too had become divided amongst the generals. They destroyed what they could but some still fell into the hands of the drug barons. Their alliance of financial greed then watched as the criminal greed started criminal warfare. City gangs once manipulated by the cartel allied themselves with their suppliers and added to their criminal armies. As these warring factions became more and more delineated, clear targets started to emerge and soon nuclear weapons were used by the drug barons. This broke down the only infrastructure that still existed - that provided by the drug barons and the supply lines. And what was not destroyed by nuclear bombs became waste ground as vestiges of the barons' armies and their associated gangs fought for whatever spoils of food and technology remained from the Drug Wars. The decline had fallen, what was to rise?

BAENGOI

7) *Breakdown - Up the mountains*

They were in Dhamma room 2 of Uu's ashram. As the decline had developed, Charter for Active Peace had become a target for certain of the gangs. "Which peace of action do you want?" - their supposed humour as the boot went in. Increasingly Uu and his followers needed more security to maintain their centre in the metropole until eventually that security became the target and therefore creator of violence. Uu had decided they must move to a more peaceful place. Mpho had suggested her village but in these difficult times an increase of strangers of different races would threaten the bit of peace she had managed to create. Eventually Uu found a home in the foothills of the Himalayas.

As the decline grew so did his ashram, not always attracting the best sort - some were just fleeing and his haven meant little more than a place of safety. But of course as more of the wrong sort were attracted so violence soon followed. Those fleeing from the gangs soon brought the gangs with them, and many such soon encouraged increased security and Uu could foresee the haven becoming a fortress, an enticement to violence.

It was a kind of meeting - maybe an impromptu gathering would describe it better. Whilst the ashram still paid lipservice to Uu as the founder his wishes were now not part of its action - its *raison d'etre*. Security meetings proliferated and funds were democratically allocated through such meetings, and Uu had sadly given up the ghost. He had started talking with Namzo who told him that Mpho and Yunio would arrive at the ashram soon.

"It is time for the good people to decide," Uu told Namzo "there is little hope for this place."

Namzo looked at him puzzled "Good"

"I asked you to note like-minded people," interrupted Uu.

"And I have," answered Namzo "I mentioned Mpho and Yunio. Naro is good-hearted, and Sarpo has fluid mental strength unmatched elsewhere." At Sarpo's name Uu cast a glance, almost daggers, he was tired, trust Namzo's judgement.

Uu held up his hand "No list is needed, you can contact them?" he asked.

"Mostly they are here," continued Namzo "Mpho and Yunio are amongst the last to arrive -

they have to travel far."

There was a pause, "to decide what?" Namzo broke the silence.

"I don't really know," gasped Uu in frustration.

Just then they saw the TV, and first bomb had been dropped in the US.

Uu's head bowed in tears as the frustration of a life of fighting became wiped away with this culminating act of greed "It won't be long now for this to spread," he muttered between sobs "they will now want us to live in a bubble and defend it," he sighed as he pointed to the main hall gathering.

They both knew that would be no solution, the safety would only increase their target appeal. Even if they didn't break it down the mental processes of insular apartheid would lose the peace of mind needed for development. Another bomb went off as satellite cameras showed mushroom clouds erupting across the US.

Naro came in to tell Uu but his tears told her he knew. She half muttered "They say London is next. Will it come here?" she asked, hoping for a negative.

The best she got was no answer, and silence again.

"Decide on what?" asked Namzo again.

"How can you stay here?" asked Uu, and smiling at his own dogma "there is no future here only clinging to the past."

"But if not here where?" asked Namzo resignedly. He looked at Uu who was nodding with despair, and then he stared past Uu at the portrait on the wall. They were in the deer room, the deer a symbol of peaceful flight. And the deer that came to you to say you were the guide, a voice deep inside emerged.

Namzo shook his head with the clarity, Uu, surprised, asked "What are you staring at?"

"Nothing," answered Namzo slowly as the silence gained its ground. "And the just as suddenly he broke out of his stare and said "it is not nothing. The deer is a symbol, it came to me in the mountains on my way down telling me I am a guide."

At last a smile of hope appeared on Uu's face "Wait for Mpho and Yunio, and then go back

up and find your deer." They both continued to a smile - simple really, find the deer.

The next day Mpho and Yunio arrived and rested a couple of days, but the mushroom cloud had gathered and was slowly crossing the ocean. Namzo was forced to wake them "You must travel again," he then explained briefly as to what was happening in the ashram and what uu had suggested. Although still tired they knew enough not to argue, and were soon ready.

They came into the courtyard of the ashram to see Namzo talking with Uu, and a crowd had gathered round as they saw the backpacks.

Namzo supported Uu by the arm ready to lead him off, and many in the crowd started to follow. Despite what had happened recently at the ashram, Uu was still their leader. Uu had debated leaving but with the crowd reaction he knew his place was at the ashram.

Tears broke into Namzo's eyes as he feared what Uu would say.

"I am too old, I cannot go where you go," he announced to Namzo "I will slow you down." Uu turned to the crowd "Namzo has decided that it is not safe here, and will lead you to safety up the mountains."

Keido said "Where will they go?"

"That is for Namzo to decide," answered Uu, "he is from the mountains he will guide them."

"But why will the mountains be safer?" asked Keido "the mushroom cloud will still reach up into the mountain. We are much safer if we protect the ashram, create our own atmosphere and wait for the cloud to dissipate." Uu looked round, and he could see that Keido's words fell on fertile ears "I still believe Namzo's path is best but you must decide for yourselves." "If Namzo knows the way, you will go with him?" asked Keido.

"No I am old I will slow them down," said Uu slowly. Then he heard shouts of "we will carry you" amongst his supporters.

"No that is not the way," he said. "I support Namzo in his task, and I hope many of you will go with him but I will stay here."

He could see many were with Keido, and he could see many of his followers were going to stay because he was. "I am the past, Namzo is the future," he thought "those that stay are of the past."

He made one exception as he saw Naro clinging to his side. He saw Sarpo nearby and saw in him the strength he had been unwilling to accept at their first meeting. He knew Sarpo would join Namzo. Stroking Naro's long beautiful black hair, he smiled and said "you must go with Sarpo. Namzo needs Sarpo's help, he is strong," and with his other hand he gently wiped away Naro's tears and protestations. Soon a small band, including Naro, left the ashram behind as they began their long pilgrimage into the mountains.

For a long while they walked in silence. Every so often one or the other would look back trying to catch a glimpse of the ashram, but in truth fearing letting go of the past. Most were people who were estranged by Keido's security, and Namzo thought not all were sorted. He could foresee problems.

Once they moved higher the mood seemed to lighten as if with a gradual lessening of atmosphere, perhaps the mountain was giving them strength in their quest. Or maybe Nature was giving them energy to attract them to Her work. Namzo had not spoken to Yunio and Mpho, so he moved closer to hear their story.

Once they had returned to Mpho's village they knew their days were numbered, both had recognised that their future had become linked to the ashram - to Namzo. For Mpho this was much harder, Yunio was attached to her and so it was his village. But the village was not a part of him in the same way. More than family it was as if she had roots in the earth. They had only travelled a couple of months but matters had worsened greatly. Another of the village seed had travelled and returned, but his return had not been fortuitous for the village.

He sought progress. Still young he did not see the wisdom of the elders, he did not understand why they supported Mpho so strongly. Unable to influence them directly he sought help from the village youth. Why do you work so long in the fields? Why do the women spend long hours on traditional cooking when they can buy cheap processed goods? Many such questions that Mpho had not needed to address because her changes had fitted seamlessly into the traditional life the elders wanted to keep.

On their return Modise had split the village. The young sought the changes because they didn't understand how they would fully impact. This will still be our village just making life easier. The Elders knew the harm that would come. One change would lead to another but worse they knew that once the young moved away from the tradition there was little hope. Young people guided by themselves or by greed or whatever lose their way quickly, tradition kept them in tow. And happily. Occasionally people left the village like Mpho and Modise, but whilst some complained they just got on with it, and were far more concerned about their mate than rocking the boat, changing tradition. Elders feared the worst but were

unable to persuade, it was Mpho's money. They saw it as a sign of the times that Modise had so quickly insinuated himself into their psyche.

"Namzo, when we returned, everyone was so angry. No sooner had we returned that one person after another came to our house to put their case, the division was awful," Mpho told him.

They paused for breath as they reached the crest, and a valley opened before them. In fact the valley would take them down again, and Namzo didn't feel right about that. He asked everyone to wait as he looked around. He moved downwards a little to get a feel of where they were, and he knew that following the downward trend of the valley was the wrong way.

He began to look round. To the left was an undulating ridge, on the right a similar ridge, and both almost met in the distance sucking them into following the path down the valley. It all seemed to point that way. Yet in the distance on the left there seemed to be a niche, a little v in the ridge; it was there they needed to go.

He returned to the group and showed them where they would go, and so everyone moved off behind him, happily this time.

Once walking again, Namzo told Mpho "Changes naturally show themselves in division, harmonising the divisions is the way of stability."

"Of course but we saw there was something sinister about this situation," Yunio said pointedly. "We had met challenges from the modern world before, and we had coped with it. Most people who return to the village reject modernity it's just they want to bring bits of it. After a while they slow down, began to enjoy what they returned for, and accept the village life for what it is. It is then and only then that we would work with them to get the Elders to accept some of their thoughts. In this way the village maintained its harmony, and yet moved forward slightly but with a togetherness."

"But we had not seen what this Modise was about," said Mpho in an embittered voice.

"And we didn't see until it was too late," said Yunio wistfully.

"He was with one of the Gangs," Namzo said before Mpho could.

"Yes," she answered "he had been escaping one of the Gangs after ruining a drugs deal and as a way for getting back in with the Gang he had persuaded them there was this hideaway. And one day soon after we returned a new boat arrived at our beautiful village to destroy it."

"At first these people seemed content with staying in the resort," continued Yunio. "We kind of knew what they were, but there was no great harm. Too much drinking, some drugs that we tried to discourage, but the villagers put up with it - especially some of the lazy girls who had been listening to Modise."

"Then there was an Incident. One of the girls got raped by 3 of the gang, and the father sought vengeance and was knifed. This showed many of the villagers what was in their midst, and they decided to kick out the gang," continued Mpho with tears in her eyes as her mind recalled the body of this innocent man hacked to death around the back of the resort.

"We tried the peaceful way. Mpho held off the village, and I went to the gang to ask them to leave - we were closing for annual maintenance. They laughed at me We will do the repairs now."

"That was it, years of Mpho's hard work destroyed in months. The gang became entrenched, and even as the villagers attacked the callous use of superior firepower meant there was great carnage," Yunio recounted.

"Then one morning Yunio saw another boat on the horizon, and we knew it was time to leave," Mpho told them sadly. "We went to the Elders and said what our plans were, but they didn't want to leave. They encouraged others to join us but most were intent on fighting to save their way of life."

"But their way of life had been destroyed the day Modise had walked back into the village," Yunio analysed "Several people came with us, but most stayed in the ashram as they had travelled far and couldn't understand our objections. Tshepiso and Nandito are with us now," Yunio introduced them to Namzo.

"How sad for you especially, Mpho," Namzo consoled "I know what your people meant to you. But," he continued sadly "I have heard many similar stories with recent admissions to the ashram. It seems that many people had found little havens like yours to survive the recent ravages misguided humanity has dragged us into. And then slowly they had been brought back into the fold of corruption. "Whether it was gang members succouring favour or businessmen realising they had failed to control what they had created and seeking an island of hope, chaos always followed these escapees. They were never happy in their new homes, they always sought to change. And the change they brought with them was devastation. A sad state humanity has gotten itself into," he remarked wistfully. They fell silent, and he moved off ahead as he saw the path's necessity to climb.

On his own Namzo began to enjoy the walking. Although this was far from his land, the country was beginning to take the shape he had loved when young. He began to focus on walking, watching where he placed his feet and feeling his body as he moved along, his hands curled gently. He had forgotten this feeling of being one with walking, and it filled him with a sense of unity with all around him. He heard a crow squawk, and looked up and smiled; it was like he was being welcomed back - and a brief gush of wind made him smile.

After the path moved upward it began to move along the ridge just below the crest. He paused wanting to see around the valley. The beauty, just looking and taking in, he wondered how he had let himself be taken so far away from this. Slowly the rest of the group joined him, and he could see that some of the faces were drawn - he had been walking fast. These were not mountain people, he smiled to himself. He apologised "I am going home," he gestured expansively to the vista, and some understood "from now on I will rest more often." He was greeted with some exhausted nods and smiles.

As they started again he told them that we were going to cross over the ridge at the end of the valley, and then look for a suitable place to camp. One of the older members came up to him. Blenbu said "I used to love hill-walking, the peace and seclusion, getting away from the rat race, getting into oneself," Namzo nodded agreement "but as I got older the bags became too much and I used to just walk near where I stayed."

"Yes I think some would not have come if the modern equipment was not so light," Namzo added.

"And the provisions," there was the silence of agreement that happened often when walking.

"I was a teacher, you know," said Blenbu "when younger we would go with the children into the hills it was so good to see their ill-discipline harnessed by nature. But in the end that stopped as trust was broken between teachers and parents. The parents began to lose control of their kids - even good parents. They would always compare. Timmy might be rude, but at least he isn't one of the gangs. But even good Timmy needs discipline, and when out on trips they have to do exactly what I say or it is dangerous. One time we were walking near cliffs. I told them stay on the path, no talking and concentrate on walking whilst we do this difficult bit. Most of the kids did as they were told but one fool decided to look over the edge. He slipped his footing, and fell down to a ledge 10 metres below. Whilst my prefect controlled the rest, climbed down, tied the fool to me, and climbed back up again. I was furious and screamed at the idiot, and made him walk by me for the rest of the trip so I could make sure he didn't risk himself again.

"But that wasn't the end of it," said Blenbu wistfully.

"After the weekend I was called into the head's office, and there were the boys' parents. The head told me that I had traumatised the kid, first by letting him fall over the edge, then when he did all I did was shout at him, and then finally I victimised him by stopping him from enjoying the trip. I tried to explain but this was a biased tribunal, the head was only interested in succouring favour with the parents, and they were exorcising their guilt about his poor behaviour by being caring and coming to school. No sense of right or wrong, no desire to make the boy learn for his ill-discipline. The head gave me a discipline warning, and I never took kids out again."

"Yes it's a sad indictment of what was happening before the gangs took over," agreed Namzo "people who knew what was naturally right often came into conflict as the world stepped further and further away from its natural roots."

Again there was a pause, and Namzo added "Uu always used to say. Take every decision seriously as if it was your last." Blenbu smiled as he remembered old folklore that said "make your decisions as if death is waiting just behind your left shoulder."

They reached the ridge and as they crossed over Namzo looked for somewhere to rest. "I must scout ahead awhile, please wait for me."

"Can I help?" asked Blenbu.

"No, sorry," answered Namzo shortly, and then smiled at Blenbu "Not this time", realising his error at the same time as the asset.

Namzo left the group sheltered at the side of the ridge beneath rocks. At this height it wasn't that cold but he had made sure they all had lite-fleece gear - they had needed them in the winters at the ashram. But now in late Summer at this altitude no such was necessary, in fact he had to warn some of the dangers of the sun when they had started to remove the shirts. He noted already the ones who were not listening.

He had left the group because he had wanted to get a feel for what was next. Walking along the ridge he had begun to feel at home, but what had grown in his mind was the knowledge that he didn't know where he was going. The rational part of his mind was throwing doubt at him. "Follow a deer," it mocked "who are you kidding?" Whilst he recognised his own demon, nonetheless the doubt had soil to seed, and he did question whether Uu was right in his trust. At the same time he thought of the responsibility, it is OK to be a guide as a dream symbol, but in reality what did it mean? At the least he saw himself as the future of the

ashram and Uu's legacy - big burdens.

A short glance away he saw a sapling near a rock, it was as if the place was calling him, and he moved over to see flattened ground - nature's seat. He rested and immediately fell deeply into a dream - a nightmare. His dream flashed from a huge cloud that had formed over LA and was drifting across the US bringing death and destruction with it. And then he saw the group - smaller in number walking in high altitude in his own land, but in a part that was new to him - and then he was looking up from a valley surrounded on all sides by huge mountains with snow barely visible at the top. And he was woken by a squawk as the crow told him to get back to the others.

He returned, and pointed in the distance "we will find the night's camping there."

"Why don't we stay here?" asked Sma who was tired.

"Here is OK now," he said "but later it will become to exposed and we are better off where I said as there is natural shelter."

At this, he started walking to finish what could have been endless discussion, he could see the signs - some just enjoyed discussion for its own sake. He knew in the end he would have to confront their intellects in the hope that underneath nature had strength to control - in a number of cases he thought not. There had been plenty at the ashram who were just seeking shelter and had not been attracted by what Uu offered. Whilst most stayed attracted by Keido's apparent common sense that gave the intellect security, some had still chosen to leave with Namzo. And he felt they were not in tune with him, with their quest.

"It is only half an hour," he called back. And very quickly he made time reaching their night's place. The ridge undulated not only at the top but at the side. The path zigzagged following the shape of the mountain, and after a while he reached a place where the path straightened and the mountain still zigzagged. The path formed a D with the side of the mountain and between was a small area of sheltered land ideal for a night's camp. As the people arrived he directed them to suitable areas for the tents, and noted those that dithered in their choice - whilst others made a bee-line and settled. Knowing minds it is easy to see human behaviour, he thought.

He had established his own tent at one end of the D, and when Blenbu arrived allocated him the other end - his realisation was good Blenbu was an asset.

After they were settled in he noticed that people were naturally forming groups. Knowing there were seeds of division in this he thought long and hard about trying to do something

about it, but in the end felt that over-organisation might lead to unnecessary tension and a bad reaction. He did however call people together after they had eaten.

"Tomorrow we will continue along this ridge, and towards the end of the day I expect we will start to climb and it might begin to get cold," he told them.

"Where are we going?" asked Sma, just recovering from the day's trials.

"We are going to find a place up high where we will be safe," answered Namzo, his vision flashing through his mind.

Sma nodded but he could see dissatisfaction. In fact he was surprised she didn't pursue the matter, and of course how could he answer? He didn't know himself. Tell them all about the deer, the vision, how would that go down especially after a day on their feet. He went over to Blenbu, "Please watch over the camp, we are just going around that corner"; he pointed to the next alcove. Blenbu nodded.

He went to Mpho and Yunio, "we must talk"; they nodded. And then to Sarpo, who glanced at Naro "she is tired".

"Let her rest," said Namzo "Everyone will sleep soon."

They walked out of the camp, and at Namzo's direction they gathered kindling and some wood for a small fire. Once lit, Namzo began to discuss his concerns.

"I cannot answer their questions," said Namzo bluntly.

"About what?" asked Mpho.

"Where we are going," smiled Sarpo, getting a quick glance from Namzo.

"Yes, that's it exactly," mumbled Namzo.

"So what are we doing?" asked Yunio.

"We are heading up to the mountains - my home," Namzo told them.

"There has to be more than that," Mpho said assuredly "otherwise Uu would never have sanctioned this."

"A little," Namzo answered meekly "We were discussing this, and I saw a picture of a deer

on the wall, and I told him that is my guide."

"Well, that's strong enough for me," answered Sarpo laughing - as did they all. Then there was silence, and then Sarpo broke in "It is, you know, it is strong enough for me". The others nodded and smiled, and Namzo felt assured.

"There was one more thing. Today I had a vision. We were climbing up higher. There was much snow - even a blizzard maybe. And" he paused his description "the group was much smaller."

They sat in a triangle around the fire, Namzo, Sarpo and Yunio curled round Mpho as if on a toboggan. There was a gentle peace, a unity that needed no words. The power struck Namzo's heart first, not surprising as it was near his homeland, and he could barely contain his elation. Then it moved through to Sarpo but he was unmoved, after his experience with the sylphs (check), and finally through Mpho and Yunio whose hearts were physically close - as well. And back to Namzo. After his initial elation he thought to himself, calm, remain calm, let it happen, let it come in. And then he sensed the others, and it was as if he was guiding them, and his becalming thought moved through them with the power. As they calmed the power seemed to gain in strength, and they all experienced an elation far beyond anything they had known before - and then just as suddenly the power subsided.

And around there was stillness that was full. He could almost feel it, thought Namzo, and he heard "I know what you mean". It was Sarpo. Namzo looked at him with surprise, and he smiled. I said nothing, the thought came to Namzo. He was still a bit dazed and Sarpo checked Mpho and Yunio. Their togetherness was almost telepathic but direct contact and with Sarpo they too were taken aback. Sarpo smiled, it was just meant to be.

We are together, thought Namzo to them all. They relaxed and felt the stillness consolidate their experience.

It seemed they had been there a long time so Sarpo got up, began to explain, and they laughed. He went back to the tent to check on Naro accidentally waking her. "I'm sorry I was away so long," he apologised. Half-dazed she looked at her watch, "half an hour" she mumbled and turned over to sleep again.

Only half an hour, he thought, and he too put his head down to rest. And the morning soon came.

Most woke with the day - refreshed, as is the wont of sleeping out. Naro and Sarpo washed, made ready for the day, and then began their meditation together. Sarpo felt good, and soon

he felt Namzo, Mpho and Yunio with him. They let the mountains come into them, and after a time Namzo got up knowing where to lead. Any doubts within the other three were now completely dispelled, what was happening to them was beyond any training their egos had received, but they were sufficiently aware to let nature take them. With the state of the world they knew this group was important, and there was something to happen for the four of them.

Back at the ashram matters had worsened quickly, in fact the same day the group had left. Uu knew he didn't have a strong grip but hadn't realised how much he had grown to rely on Namzo and others who had left. Within two days Keido had altered the balance, and Uu's voice had become relegated to that of the old and time past. The first thing that Keido did was to form a security council which naturally excluded Uu because of his views. This council immediately setup plans to create a bubble - well Keido and friends already had the plans made. They called it the Homeland Security Bubble. Their design was sound theoretically - self-sustainable agriculture, a generator to maintain the atmosphere, spare parts and machine tools to create new parts from an integrated foundry. But it required the efforts of sound-minded people, and whilst Keido was genuine in his way unknown factors would come into play.

After the Security Council had been huddled together for two days Keido called the ashram together, and put forward the plan for the Bubble. Immediately Uu squirmed, he felt the beginning of his end, and he looked around and saw a few who were similarly uncomfortable. He called them together "you should leave and follow Namzo. Namzo was heading to his land, Suivo you know his land, try to follow them." Having seen previous preparations this troop of 5 were soon ready, and they left quickly and quietly in case the Security Council reacted - maybe Keido would not approve of their going.

Suivo tried to make quick time but he knew to catch up two days would be hard. But at least the five were prepared for the march, and perhaps that would give them the gain they needed.

For Namzo the next day passed gently. Once away from the ashram there was less need for speed, instinctively he had been worried that some would want to return. With a gentle day passing there were few complaints and even Sma became happy in the mountains. But as the day drew to a close, the mood changed as they went higher. What had been a leisurely stroll became a gasp with every step. Although he had hoped to go further, after an hour Namzo saw a suitable sheltered plateau-esque, and they rested for the night.

Blenbu met with Namzo after they had settled. "It will get more difficult won't it?" he asked.

"Much worse," answered Namzo laconically.

"As will the complaints," added Blenbu, and Namzo nodded resignedly. "I already think there are regrets, I heard people talking last night. They don't know what your plans are and they don't understand."

"Sma said 'I can understand getting away from the ashram as that will attract the gangs, but once away why don't we just settle? Find a village, form our own village and settle.'" Many nodded, but Nandito said we must go high to avoid fallout from the bombs. A few agreed but someone threw in a big spanner 'if there was fallout height won't matter', and there was silence, not of peace but discontent."

"It stopped them as they saw me listening," finalised Blenbu.

"Thank you," said Namzo gratefully "much as I thought, problems are only a matter of time." Blenbu agreed. He ate with Blenbu, and then stood to leave "Thank you, you are a real help," and was pleased at Blenbu's flattered smile. Blenbu watched as Namzo walked off, followed by Sarpo and then Mpho and Yunio. He saw them go in different directions but he knew it was to the same place. Their business, he thought, feeling a bit excluded.

Namzo had moved off a fair way this night before he found a suitable spot, and then lit the fire to guide the others. Once round the fire they calmed themselves, breathed in the mountains, and felt the completeness of their unity. Namzo focussed his mind on his conversation with Blenbu, and they knew his concerns. Mpho was pleased about Nandito, she knew her as a treasure. They rested together gathering in their strength and the strength of the mountains consolidating themselves for a good rest. The time passed and they returned to sleep.

BAENGOI

8) *Splinter*

Mpho woke the next day with mild trepidation, and when Yunio asked she could not explain. They began to meditate together and soon their energies became one with the source. Yunio felt the concern, knew it was real but was unable to feel more. When they felt Sarpo and Namzo nothing more was added, but the concerned reality weighed heavily on them all.

Namzo set off slowly but this time the burden was his own and not the concern for others, no-one objected the slower pace suited the more difficult terrain.

They began climbing and after a while weariness took over and people tried to concentrate on the walking. Mpho stopped and looked up to see Uu in the distance. She pointed but Yunio saw nothing. She ran to the spot, but it was a tree. She sat tired from the exertion and the voice of the teacher spoke to her "Trouble is in the ashram far quicker than I expected. Please don't be concerned but there are some people following you." She saw the image of Suivo and friends beginning their trek up the mountains, and then it all faded. Immediately Namzo and Sarpo knew they must go down so Namzo asked Blenbu to take them up further pointing to a meeting point much higher, and then camp. Knowing Mpho and Yunio would help Blenbu, the two went down to search for Suivo.

Knowing roughly where Namzo would be aiming for was one thing but to know which route he took was completely different. Suivo wanted to avoid settlements knowing there were risks, sadly these places of erstwhile bonhomie and human kindness had been drastically altered by prevailing contact with the jetsam and flotsam of humankind that wandered the world fleeing the turbulence manifesting itself in the world's major conurbations. Not only good fled but renegade individualists whose self-interest would not allow its own criminality to be subjugated by the gangs. As the gangs became powerful such mavericks found themselves more and more eschewed from society, both rejected by the gangs and not wanted by the good people of society either whom they exploited where possible. So these criminals sought pastures new. Rural communities whose common code within reason had been courtesy and help soon became prey to these opportunists who feigned what was needed to take advantage. No, settlements were not going to be safe, thought Suivo, but we need to track Namzo.

But maybe he could look for outlying croppers, if they were treated well maybe Suivo's troop could pass. So off he set, not looking for humankind but not avoiding either. Early on he stuck to the paths, even the 20 or so that Namzo led did not leave a trail on paths; and there were no alternative signs. Once out of sight of the ashram the obvious happened leaving Suivo in a quandary, the paths divided and he chose the right as he felt sure there were human settlements that way - to the left was more bleak.

They soon reached an outcropping, and the farmer was barely cordial. No, he hadn't seen any sign. Suivo moved on to where the next farmer was equally brief and much less than unhelpful. At the third they thought their luck had changed as this time the residents seemed pleased to see them. Old times thought Suivo, not knowing his luck had changed - but for the worst.

"They didn't come this way. We saw them in the distance and watched," pontificated Gohok gesticulating back towards the fork in the path "who were these strange people?" I said to Mia". The wife obligingly nodded.

"So we should return and take the left turn that way towards the mountains," Gohok agreed and smiled. But then he insisted they stay and eat ahead of their long journey. Suivo readily agreed, and soon the five had ate their fill. Thanking Gohok profusely they offered some fare but were gently but firmly refused. So on their way again they retraced their steps, only to find their way blocked by a group of farmers. Suivo recognised the two they had earlier met.

Suivo went to talk but beyond perfunctory greeting nothing else was offered. Indicating he wished to return along the path he saw that they intended to block it. He could see following the path back was not going to happen. Maybe Gohok could help them with a route to rejoining Namzo, he turned and saw that just in front of the gate of the outcropper was another group of farmers, a phalanx of peasants. This is what he had feared even though he had been lulled by Gohok's demeanour.

Suivo moved away from the path and decided that he would have to risk crossing the valley, and hope they could find a way across the river. In places it was invisible from where he stood, but up close? And the land near the river, surely it was marshy?

Then Libro suddenly ran towards the first group of peasants, and started on at them angrily "We want to follow the path around," she told them in no uncertain terms "let us through."

"These are our lands," muttered one of the larger and more intimidating of the phalanx "you are not going to cross them." He held his staff across his body in a clear sign of no entry.

Libro's anger was far stronger than her common sense, so instead of taking heed she pushed at the staff turning the farmer, knocking him off balance. Not expecting this from a slip of a girl he fell and lost balance - as well as losing face. She slipped past him and turned to call to Suivo to follow her. The man now equally angry stood up, and with his staff struck her across the head knocking her down dazing her. She stood feeling a swaying inside her head, would she faint? Again the man with his staff sideways pushed her to where Suivo and the rest had remained watching. After a couple of yards she fell to the ground, began crawling and stopped.

This had turned quickly. From one second when the stupid girl was endangering them all with her belligerent sanctimony, thought Suivo, the next she was struck, dazed and falling to the ground. She didn't deserve that either, he thought. Telling the others to wait there, he and Tanbo went to carry the girl. As they reached Libro he pointedly moved his body between her and the farmers, his back to them, demonstrating that he had no intention of moving towards them. They picked up the girl, and carried her back so that they were five again.

Laying her down he wiped the blood from her temple, a small cut but a large bump. That would be sore for a while, he thought. He wanted to give her time to rest but he heard a shout. The two phalanx of peasants were now stood menacingly as one, and they were gesticulating with staffs in the air. He continued tending the wound but the noise increased and he saw the men moving towards them slowly.

Calling Tanbo over again they started carrying Libro, and although they walked slowly they still increased their distance from the men - they were not after them they were chasing them away, he realised. "If we keep going we will be OK. They see us threatening them somehow," he concluded.

They continued slowly away, and soon the men had disappeared in the distance. And at this they rested.

Suivo looked at Libro, she was still slightly concussed but soon all she would have is a bruise and a headache. They had not sought serious harm, he realised they were only firing warning shots to protect their homes. Righteous indignation and ire at such instincts was intellectual delusion, he thought, he could see their point. Even in these times some people hadn't got over the arrogance of miseducation.

He wanted to rest but they were now in an exposed region, and the nearest shelter was the wrong side of the valley. He was tempted to move further round beyond the outcroppings they had encountered, but he knew they would be watched. And if confronted this time

would be more than a heavy tap on the head. So he resolved they had to seek shelter on the other side of the valley, meaning they had to find a path to and across the river.

It was necessary to test the lie of the land, especially with the injury, so the other 4 rested as he moved across the valley seeking a way - a path. He had expected a man-made path but soon decided there would be none - whether myth, tradition or just custom, these people did not cross to the other side. Why?

He needed to forge his own route so sought the highest ground in the valley in the hope of meeting the least marsh; not so easy as marshland abounded. This done he tested his proposed path, and found that it was difficult but traversable if he stepped on the clumps of thick grass. This decided, he returned to the group who then recommenced their trek. Libro struggled but was stoic, Tanbo and Suivo took turns to support her as the other two were also struggling - not very suited to this land, Suivo thought. After an hour of slow walking they had crossed the mile or so that meant they had reached the river.

As they neared Suivo's heart sank, it was far wider than he had thought. At this point it was not passable, so they must follow along the bank. But which way? Gohok had told him that Namzo had followed the ridge on the other side of the valley, that is where they must aim for. But they also sought shelter so Libro could rest. He decided that the river would be easier to cross higher up, but he must avoid the peasant-croppers.

At this they moved up the bank, and thankfully the river did thin. They continued on up but Suivo was conscious that this was bringing him nearer his erstwhile unwilling hosts. Not knowing exactly where they were, he decided that they must now look for the best place to cross. Shallow and slow-moving, he thought. Up ahead he saw that the river held a small fall, yes that looked good. Not necessarily shallow but below the fall the water was quiet and would have formed a good place to swim in former times. Tentatively he tested the pool, as he thought - quite calm. And he swam out a way, yes traversable he thought to himself. He swam back and told the others to cross.

"If we walk higher," asked Mosi "won't we reach the entrance to the valley and can follow the path round?"

"That might have happened," answered Suivo "if we hadn't antagonised the residents. I am sure they are watching us." Mosi was thinking, she wanted to argue more, but she was unsure.

"The water is safe here," wheedled Suivo.

"Maybe so," said Mosi haltingly "but I can't swim."

Suivo smiled, he was irritated but it wasn't a real problem at the moment. "OK," looking at Tanbo he decided "I will carry Libro, you can help Mosi?" Tanbo nodded. Turning to Kereng he could see there was muted agreement, no problem there.

Soon they reached the other side, and now another problem it was getting cool - late in the day, they needed shelter and fire. They were still inside the valley but having moved higher the distance to the ridge was far less. Despite murmurings from Mosi and Libro, Suivo and Tanbo prevailed and they forced another hour as they reached the base of ridge where they found an alcove of natural shelter. Whilst Kereng sought to Libro and Mosi rested, Tanbo and Suivo gathered wood for the fire that Suivo started with the neckflint he carried after seeing Namzo with same.

Soon they settled to the warmth, and gradually the evening wore on. Libro had been sleeping, and when she woke she asked "How will we meet with Namzo and the others?" she asked.

"A good question," answered Suivo pondering his answer, but she drifted off and Suivo was left to ponder his answer within his own mind. Soon he began to feel tired and he left the answer to the night and sleep.

The next morning they moved up towards the top of the ridge, and very soon the path crossed them.

Namzo and Sarpo had rushed down the mountain, found the gap in the ridge, walked round a bit, and soon after night fell. They left it as late as they could, but needs must; they planned to wake early to get a fresh start. They figured there was only one source of digression - the choice on entering the valley, so they headed to where the paths diverged. Very soon they saw Suivo's bedraggled five following the path on the ridge. Being careful Namzo had seen the group from a distance, and they had climbed further up the ridge to get a better look at the party. It was only when Sarpo saw Kereng, Naro's friend, were they sure this was who they were looking for. They then descended down to the group who were immediately defensive as from a distance they couldn't recognise Namzo - they weren't expecting him.

After greetings were passed Namzo encouraged them back onto the path, as they still had much to do to get back up to the rest of the good ashram. He thought the situation now much better, at least they were in touch.

As they walked Suivo told Namzo and Sarpo what had happened, and his story gave them

not one ounce of surprise. Both made a mental note to avoid local outcroppings if possible. Sarpo simply asked "who is this Libro and Mosi?" Suivo smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

Soon after Suivo finished his tale, they moved out of the valley and started the steep ascent. Sarpo took them up and Namzo moved to the back to observe the new group. Obviously Libro was flagged as a problem, but what about the others? Why hadn't they joined them in the first place? Namzo needed to push them hard but at the same time Libro still had an injury - although it was better after a night's sleep. He could see she was struggling as was Mosi. Tanbo helped Libro and she readily accepted it - a good sign, but Mosi needed continual assurance from Kereng. There were elements in his own group they would easily align with unfortunately.

A strenuous day passed without incident, and as they found a spot to camp food was prepared and Suivo's group appeared tired and all seemed to repair to sleep. Namzo and Sarpo took this chance to take leave, and found a quiet place to sit. Soon the peace of the night sky took over, and within this they sought the mental calm that brought contact. As expected they found Mpho and Yunio joining them, and felt comfort knowing the Blenbu had gotten the group to where Namzo suggested. They had arrived early so there was some disgruntlement at time being wasted so they agreed for tomorrow to move further up slowly so that by the end of the day the two groups would be one. At this the four sought mental silence, and became rejuvenated in their contemplation. Finishing they returned to the camp, not noticing Suivo hiding a small distance away.

The next morning Namzo led them off early, the longer the groups were split the more possible dangers. A small group of seven might be picked off by outcroppers, whereas 25 huddled together would not be such a target. However the terrain was steep so it was unlikely that there would be problems.

Sarpo spoke with Kereng, "You decided to join us now," he smiled.

"I couldn't leave Mosi, I promised her mother," she said briefly. Sarpo looked at her glancingly, truth, no assumed attitudes, and much unsaid. He had always liked her. Most of Naro's friends were Uu sycophants, whilst he was a great man it was not a trait Uu had liked; mind you he didn't like disagreement either. Kereng would help Naro, he thought.

Knowing she would not ask, "we will meet the others higher up - we arranged a place; probably by the end of the day," Sarpo volunteered, and she smiled.

"Naro will not enjoy the walking," Kereng said after a while.

"Why?" asked Sarpo.

"At school she had a bad break; although it healed well her joints give her pain sometimes," she explained.

He was going to say "she never said", but they both knew that was not her way. Sarpo then felt a silence, this was not a small revelation.

They walked on for a while as Sarpo sought to understand, and this was broken gently by Kereng who said "I am pleased to now be with you and Naro." Her gentle voice soothed Sarpo, and he focused again on the walking and the steep terrain.

The day was hotter than normal, and this gave Blenbu an excuse to finish walking early. They made camp in the shade, and the group was in good spirits as the sun brightened their demeanours. Just before dark, they saw 7 people pop over the near horizon, and Blenbu went over to greet Namzo all feeling glad they were one again - at least for a short while.

BAENGOI

9) *Disunity*

Mpho woke in the middle of the night, a cold sweat dripping down her back, fear in full flow as she had just dreamt of demise. The group were walking round a shallow ledge carefully one-by one. Beneath was a ravine, and falling meant certain death. They were all bedraggled, fatigue obvious in every step, yet they needed to continue. And then the scene changed. She saw a few in front - Namzo, Sarpo and Yunio being ones she recognised, and then a rockfall behind her. To her the rockfall seemed insignificant but she watched as Suivo began to fall. She looked down there was nothing behind her, she was the last - and then she awoke.

She turned to Yunio who listened and comforted, but beyond recognition of the portent could offer little in understanding.

The next morning, she relived the dream in her mind, and the four shared. Namzo shared his own concerns about some of the group fuelled by the new additions, but Suivo, why Suivo? Libro, Mosi, Sma but Suivo. In front of her Mpho had seen others, other than the four, but how many? All four resolved to watch for signs of division, especially with Suivo.

Again Suivo had watched - now seeing four together, not two.

That day Blenbu led them up the mountain, not too fast but planning to walk a whole day. Libro was clearly not 100% but was fit enough not to hold them up. He noticed Kereng close with Naro, Mosi joined them part of the way but had linked with Libro. Sarpo had taken a backseat with Naro, but Blenbu saw concern in his face. By the time of the first break it was clear to Blenbu that Naro was struggling, welcomed the rest, but said nothing.

They had wanted Blenbu to lead as the four had wanted to mix with the group. Namzo immediately attached himself to Suivo and Tanbo, they had clearly formed a deep bond. "We were so relieved when you found us, we had no idea whether we would actually find a way of joining with you," said Tanbo clearly grateful.

"Yes, what brought you down to us?" asked Suivo cagily.

"It is hard to put in words," said Namzo, and paused.

There was silence broken by Suivo who asked "please try".

"It is the same as I felt when I agreed to bring the group up the mountain, I told Uu that I felt strongly I should do it and he agreed," started Namzo. "When we awoke that morning we discussed my feeling"

"We?" interrupted Suivo.

"Mpho, Yunio, Sarpo and myself," answered Namzo openly "we felt it best that Sarpo and I should come down the mountain."

"How did you know we would be there?" asked Tanbo.

"We didn't," lied Namzo "I just felt that we had to come down."

"That's a strong hunch," remarked Suivo, almost innocently.

"It does sound like a hunch, doesn't it?" smiled Namzo "but hunch belittles the strength of feeling. After all by your reckoning my hunch to leave must have been right, because you soon followed."

"That is certainly true," answered Tanbo "but things changed very quickly after you left."

"How?" Namzo enquired, curious to get flesh on the bones of Mpho's vision.

Suivo explained about Keido, the security council, the Homeland Security Bubble as they called it, and both Sarpo and Namzo squirmed. "That is exactly how Uu had foretold," said Namzo sadly.

"But so quick!," said Sarpo surprised.

"Maybe so. Uu muttered about becoming too reliant on others," added Tanbo "I guess he meant you."

Namzo thought about this but didn't answer. After a while he asked "Why didn't more come with you?"

"Perhaps they saw nothing wrong with the bubble?" suggested Suivo.

They walked on in silence - Namzo fearing the worst for Uu, and Suivo silently dissatisfied with Namzo's answers. After a while Namzo moved on to talk with Sma, leaving Suivo and

Tanbo alone. Suivo then voiced his disquiet to Tanbo. He mentioned their sitting alone at night, "Maybe they have communication devices?" he offered.

"Maybe, but" started Tanbo adding logically "they have no reason to hide them from us."

"It appears they are hiding something," mooted Suivo. Tanbo vaguely nodded, whilst there was something up it didn't really matter. The two groups were together, that was all that really mattered. But he kept his counsel, he could see that was not what Suivo wanted to hear.

The rest of the day went similarly for all four, and by the end of the day disquiet had grown alarmingly in each. Once the group had settled the four went off to seek the solace of the night and what inspired it. Once they had sat they began to seek the peace but it did not come easily, for each the disquiet was acting as a block. Sarpo knew this block although his had been created by alcohol. He managed to convey a letting go, initially in himself, he sought out Mpho whose earth foundations gave her greater strength to fight the vagaries of mental turmoil. She then worked with Yunio, and between them they brought the more cerebral Namzo in line.

This is not a matter to go unchecked, voiced Namzo. In silence the thought crystallised amongst the others, can we work with the rest of the group? And as one they tried. Slowly they extended their joint minds out into the night, and sought out the camp. From above they observed, and it was as if seeing many eggs of different colours. Some the colours were brash and defensive, whilst others the colours were mellow and inviting. They targeted one, but Sarpo halted them; Naro was not an issue - nor Kereng, as they moved towards her. Tanbo's colour invited them but there were sharp edges that seemed to exclude them. Moving inside they brought calm, security and trust, and almost visibly saw the sharpness smooth out invitingly. With becalmed edges they sought to encompass the residue, and understand it. There was much they understood. They felt his anger, an anger they had all felt. Not just anger at what had become of the world, that was how it initially manifested. But as they moved into the deeper anger they saw separation, separation from his heart, separation from the world - Nature, a separation whose edges were being mellowed with each step up the mountain. In time they traced this back to Tanbo's home, it was born there - his family were corporate. But it became rooted in the school and with school friends. Throughout his life he was on the fringes, and to be accepted he had to accept much that did not come naturally. In lessons he was successful but each use of his intelligence seemed to create a barrier within, a barrier that divided his intelligence. They worked on this man-made barrier and it helped greatly to calm him as the barrier and anger began to subside together. That was enough, they thought. Shattered they returned to rest before going back to camp.

And as they did, they saw another egg not far from where they were sat. Namzo and Sarpo separately, together, knew it was Suivo. He was bright, defensive, with some dark blemishes, and these blemishes were growing with anger. They knew, he felt excluded. Maybe this was the issue with others. "We can talk to Blenbu about this tomorrow," announced Namzo "his words will be clearer than our interpretations." At this they went back to the camp, careful to avoid where Suivo was sitting.

Sleep helped all in recovery from the walking, and with the four their additional exertions. When they joined to link that morning they made no efforts other than to breathe in the energy the mountain provided, and reconnect with the calm that underlies it all. The serenity of mountain air, the peace and quiet that wafts across, all created a unity that seemed unbreakable and powerful, yielding a feeling that the mountains gave all power but helped more the four whose link seemed to make contact more direct. There was a buoyancy in the camp that morning. It was a gentle day, and the conning sun spread a broad glow all around - although cold was prevalent. There was much talk, and excitement that seemed to be generated by the new day. Yet there was more. Sma spoke with Namzo, "This is a peaceful place," she said appearing to make conversation. "Yes it is," Namzo answered "these mountains have many such calm spots."

"I could imagine people could live pleasantly in such places," she supposed.

"Yes many do," he replied "but they do need herds."

"Is the land good for planting?" she asked.

"Not really," he spoke openly but feared the questioning. "The winters destroy most crops."

"Presumably we are going where the crops can cope in the winter months," she asked.

He hesitated feeling the trap closing in. "I intend going higher and seeing what is there," he mumbled.

"Higher up the winters will destroy any crops," she beelined, and his silence was answer enough. She smiled at him and walked back to finish packing.

Once walking Namzo spoke with Sarpo, "this goes from bad to worse".

"We cannot force people to go with us," he answered "they must choose."

"But they will die," he lamented "that wind will come up wiping all life with it." They had

discussed this wind before. The fury of the bombs created this wind, and in its fury the wind brought the nuclear fallout that would kill all life in its path and devastate the planet.

"But there will be doubters," they left it at that.

Namzo moved off and spoke with Blenbu as planned.

Blenbu was pleased to have time to talk to Namzo. "I am grateful for all your help," began Namzo, noting the glow in Blenbu his words seemed to bring "it is good to know when I am busy that we can rely on you."

"I am happy to do what I can," smiled Blenbu through the flattered glow "we are all in this together."

"Are we?" asked Namzo "Does it seem that way to you?"

"Yes it does," answered Blenbu "we all came here to get away from the problems and find a way through this appalling situation."

"But we feel there is a sense of unease," probed Namzo.

"Maybe there is," answered Blenbu warily "Can I ask who is "we"?"

"Mpho, Yunio, Sarpo and myself," replied Namzo.

"Yes," continued Blenbu "maybe I should have asked why "we"?"

"Why," muttered Namzo.

"Namzo, I trust you; I don't know but I trust you." Then he paused "Well I went to learn from Uu, and he told us to leave with you and I trusted him so I trust you. But it's more than that, what you're doing feels right and I am glad to help. But", he paused wondering how to phrase it "some of the others are asking why the four of you have become self-appointed leaders and following you is one thing but following the other three that is different."

"And some, although not as many, are asking where we are going?" He waited, collecting himself. "They are saying it was right for us to follow you away from the ashram, but now there is some distance, maybe we should look to settle down here - or maybe lower down. Why this endless journey upwards - upwards where there is no food, no plants, no buildings and no land for growing."

At this last he knew the source of that one but did not comment. Blenbu had articulated Namzo's suspicions clearly confirming almost everything. "What do you think about what they are saying?" asked Namzo.

"I trust you so I am prepared to do what you say," he answered "but when they ask me I just tell them I am happy with you. If the four of you make decisions together I will go with that because I trust you. When they ask about the land I don't answer."

He paused, then "I remember Uu's teaching, trust in Nature, and Nature will look after you. Uu gave you his trust, for me that's almost like saying trust in Nature, Namzo is Her messenger."

Namzo looked amazed at what Blenbu had said, he had obviously thought much about it. Or maybe there had been many questions whilst he and Sarpo had sought for Suivo's group. He then smiled gratefully to Blenbu and said he must think. "As you wish," muttered Blenbu simply.

That was the issue, he realised so completely, trust. He had trust in Nature, in his guide, in what the mountains gave him. He trusted the four of them together, for he knew them in a way no-one else could know. Uu had trusted him, and in a way had handed that trust onto Namzo.

But in others how strong was that trust? He then thought more about this. Trust was significant in the breakdown in society that had brought them to the ashram. Trust had been broken amongst people. People had grown to distrust the government, children distrusted parents and elders, parents distrusted teachers, in fact every social bond had a high element of distrust. Looking at this from the outside he could see that the distrust had been earned, the government's interest was the corporations and not the people, parents bought into the corporate society that did not help their own children, in turn the parents objectified their own failures on the teachers who provided fodder for the corporations. The objective conditions for social distrust abounded. But not in the ashram, not with Namzo, so their feelings for him had not built the distrust, people had brought it with them. And he realised that it was the miseducation, the intellectual distrust of all that was not in the realm of the intellect, within the confines of reason. What Namzo, the four of them, were doing was not reasonable, did not appeal to reason - in fact he, Namzo, could not explain where they were going - how unreasonable!

He knew. Intellect scythed through trust when trust did not worship at Pirsig's church of reason. He had seen this so often in his work but for him trust had come first. He had been

brought up with trust in Nature, teurkao cheurnan rao, in mountains we trust was second nature to all his people. Only when he came down and began lecturing did he start to question that trust, after being mocked regularly as a hick. And the people on this journey were not brought up in trust, they had grown up in the miseducation of intellect.

Yet somehow all had found a way out and had then found their way to the ashram. They had begun to trust in Uu, and Uu had used that trust to teach them to trust in Nature. Somehow Namzo had to convince the others that as Blenbu described him "Namzo was Nature's messenger, trust in Nature."

That night the four met, and the concern previously expressed was confirmed by all; what Blenbu had told Namzo had been received much the same by the other three. After a discussion they sat and allowed themselves to feel the mountain and the night, and soon their minds began to feel clear. Together they let the boundaries that separated each to dissolve as they allowed Nature to fill them. Once complete they withdrew and allowed their mental language to separate them - a separation far less substantive than experienced in their bodies. With this communication they realised that they needed to win trust, not for themselves but in Nature, although at present that amounted to the same thing. How far did they go in letting others understand their link actually depended on whether the others were able to accept the link. Tanbo had shown he could, but was that true of everyone? But even with Tanbo they had not been able to open the link so that he could be a part of them. If they felt excluded if they were not part of the four, how would they react to exclusion when more became included? The very attempts to make them included could lead to their separation.

Sma was to be a test case. It was quite clear she was significant in creating the disunity, they decided to try and cleanse her. As with Tanbo they moved above the camp, and sought her out. She was not sleeping but sat alone by her tent apparently enjoying the night. Her colour was not inviting - although bright it was harsh and gave a feeling of rebuttal. They moved down to sense her, to feel how to connect, and the colour changed. The aggressive brightness of rebuttal increased, and the colour almost felt a barrier in itself. Still they pursued their objective, and moved closer, and they jolted. Sma physically reacted. She stood up, and began looking around as if expecting to see something - did she expect to see them?

Concertedly they withdrew because the contact was not without pain either, and as they withdrew exhaustion took over the link so they quickly sought refuge in their bodies. We need sleep. Suivo looked on puzzled as the four almost staggered back to their tents to collapse into a deep recuperating sleep.

The next morning they all woke from a deep sleep, a sleep of exhaustion but also a sleep of necessary deep cleansing. Sma awoke with a jolt from nightmare. She remembered invasion, she remembered a wind passing and faces in the wind, unknown faces, faces that became bolts of light that swirled around her and gradually seeped into the surface of her mind. They floated around and she watched from deep inside. But as this light swirled from the back her own face brightly coloured came round and forced these swirling lights away. And it was at this she awoke - feeling invaded, but it was as if she watched the invasion - and in the watching there was no fear.

Later she found Suivo whom she had known at the ashram. Previously they had discussed his luck at leading the five to join with them again. He had described Namzo's feeling that there was something more, and had conveyed his ill-ease that resonated with Sma's own. Today she began gently "Is your luck still holding?" she smiled.

"Better than Namzo's hunch," he laughed with her. "let's walk", and they moved to where Suivo had watched the night before. They sat down together viewing the distant landscape with awe. "This is beautiful country," he spoke quietly as if the quietness of his voice harmonised with the landscape. "Nothing beats mountains for making you feel small, making you feel who you are," he sounded like Blenbu, he thought.

"They are," answered Sma "but this is not land to survive in - this is not growing land. We are too high. And we are struggling with altitude."

"That will pass, the discomfort will pass," answered Suivo thinking how fortunate he was not to have symptoms. He remembered a time when he had been to altitude. Diarrhoea everyday - two or three times, shortage of breath, and yet somehow he felt invigorated. He remembered it passing - slowly.

"Yes, maybe it will," she retorted "but why are we going through it? Why is it necessary to move so high?"

"Because that is where Namzo leads us," he knew his answer was hollow, how could it have substance, he didn't understand it himself.

She was silent knowing there was nothing needed saying.

The silence was broken as bodies emerged in their direction. Suivo pulled Sma gently down, and with finger crossing his closed lips he motioned silence and whispered "Just watch."

Of course there was nothing to watch. The four moved to a quiet sheltered spot, and sat

motionless. "No need to go closer," whispered Suivo "that is all they do - sit." He quietened her puzzled expression, and pointed at them. They remained motionless. Inside her something said "remember your dream", but this soon vanished as her ego showed her anger, frustration and exclusion which her intellectual mind gratefully jumped on. Suivo saw rising anger and moved her away back to the camp. Out of sight of the four her anger quickly subsided, but memory of it soon jolted her negative patterns of thinking into an aggressive response.

"So they are there together", she burst out face reddening slightly "p....plotting."

"I find what they are doing strange," he smiled "exclusive even but plotting? How can that be? They don't even talk, every morning and evening they go off together and sit motionless, some form of group meditation. Friends together - meditating?" "Do you meditate?" she asked.

"Not really," he answered "I like sitting out - staring at the stars, feeling the mountains, but meditate - agghh it's just uncomfortable the mind swirling around jumping from one thing to another. It is disturbing."

Surprisingly she was silent. As soon as he had said the word swirling, her mind had engaged, and she knew her dream was connected to the four. But how? She would never know.

For a long while she remained quiet bemusing Suivo who was patient enough. Instead he allowed his mind to journey out amongst the stars, touching the sky enjoying the wide open spaces. He had only first begun to enjoy such things when he joined the ashram. The problem had started with his older brother, in his family he was expected to follow him. But when their mother died the older brother was distraught, as his father. The father gave up as keeping two young boys straight in their neighbourhood whilst maintaining a job was difficult. As the older brother left the tracks Suivo followed. And then his brother was shot at a drugs deal, and it was expected that he would shoot the perpetrators. But he didn't want to. He loved his brother and he didn't want him dead, but the drugs deal wasn't straight. His brother had laughed saying these rich kids were easy to swindle, maybe most were but his brother had found one with a gun. This rich boy knew nothing, he wasn't there. When the deal went wrong, his brother just continued to laugh and the boy became angry. He pulled out the gun but he could hardly hold it. He waved it around as if threatening. That looked even more comical, and his brother laughed louder. And the gun went off, his brother rushed him. It went off again, and he lay on the ground as blood started to ooze out into the darkened room. The rich kid freaked and ran leaving the gun, Suivo ran to his brother and cried. He thought to chase and ran to the door, but there was no sign. Head dropped in grief

he headed home to his father. The story gave him no surprise, he was resigned to the inevitable. "Please Suivo, don't do anything - let it lie," he asked his younger son but there was no heart in it. His father was so beaten he expected to be ignored, and Suivo knew to change. His duty lay with the beaten man, not with his own self-interest, and for the rest of his father's life he took care of him. Sadly that time was only a few years as the grief and drink had worn away any of life's desire. But in drunken moments he would slur appreciation at his younger son's sacrifice. After clearing up what little duty was required in his estate Suivo began to travel, and his mind opened up his journey took him to the ashram.

Whilst travelling he had felt a sense of adjustment, that he was beginning to turn his life around, but it wasn't until he reached the ashram that he began to think of what he felt as peace, that same peace he was now experiencing as he let his mind wander amongst the stars. He was drawn back as Sma woke from her brief slumber - after her silence she slept. Her composure regained she began to pass judgement again.

"Whatever they are doing over there it is not for our benefit," she attacked "why do they leave camp if there is not something wrong?"

"It's nice here away in the peace and quiet," shrugged Suivo, although suspicious he was far from overt criticism - after all Namzo had led them here and had found Suivo's group below. His actions were beneficial by whatever means. "They are friends, they can do what they want," accepted Suivo "are we to judge how they are to be friends?"

"You are very tolerant concerning our future," she harangued.

"You might be right," conceded Suivo "but I need far more convincing than your own anger. I have seen how anger can destroy lives. I have shown you, but for me it is time to go back to the camp. Are you coming?"

Looking frustrated she briefly nodded her head in agreement, and they went back to their respective tents. That night Suivo dreamed of stars and anger as if they were weighed on a huge balance. He woke up as he found himself the pivot as he found himself weighed down by all. Would he see it?

The next morning Sma followed the four and confronted them. It was nothing but vitriol and frustration, but as Mpho tried to console her she could see that Sarpo and Namzo were just distancing themselves. Yunio had seen her patience before - a virtue he admired, and so he just watched the anger wash against her and just brush on by. At the end she failed, unusual thought Yunio, but left it at that as he watched Sma storm off. They all knew that

storm was not rested.

After their link that morning their agreement was to let the storm take its course. There was no appeasing Sma, they wondered how she had found her way to the ashram in the first place. At one stage Mpho had asked Sma what she wanted from them, and she had said "To be included and to be part of the decision-making."

"But we don't make decisions," Mpho answered "Namzo decides where we are going, he knows. But wait," she interrupted herself as she tried to be calm Sma's mind "We did make one decision together. I told them that I thought there was a problem in the ashram, and because of this Namzo and Sarpo decided to go down."

"But you didn't tell the others this, did you?" retorted Sma.

"What could we tell them?" replied Mpho patiently.

"More than you have told me," snapped Sma angrily.

"You don't see," began Mpho losing it a little. "There is nothing to tell, I had this feeling and Namzo and Sarpo acted on it. Namzo tells us which way to go we act on it. It is just trust. What more is there to say?"

"Do you believe in trust?" asked Mpho.

At this Sma snapped and allowed the storm in her head to blow "First you insult me by saying I can't see. Well I do have eyes, you know, and I can sense when they are being blinded," she blurted "and as for not trusting people have to earn my trust, I have learnt not to give it to all and sundry."

"And how can we do that?" she asked.

"By telling me what is going on! By including me!" she angered, the mental storm was fully blown now and she was beyond control. It would not allow her to sit, and that is when she ran off.

She had run back to her tent and found her two closest friends, Ikhti and Mai. She told her version of what happened how they had intentionally held the truth from her. It is time we stood up to them, Ikhti and Mai agreed; they were tired and exhausted at this higher altitude. And they were going up, it could only get worse.

As the group were setting off, the three of them ran up to Namzo and demanded to know where they were going.

"We are following the path upwards until we find a safe place," he answered best he could.

"And where is that safe place?" asked Sma.

"Up the path, and across a ways," answered Namzo truthfully "that is all I know."

"That is not enough," she shouted, "We," pointing to Ikti and Mai "are not going with you."

"I think it is better you come with us," replied Namzo calmly "but it is your choice."

"How reasonable of you! Our choice indeed!" she screamed "we can choose to go blindly or not go at all."

She turned to the rest of the group. "I have asked and asked and get no answers. Where are we going? He doesn't say - a safe place? What safe place, where is it? What is the name?" She turned to Namzo "Answer these questions," she demanded.

Namzo looked at the group. He could see many doubts. "I trust Namzo," shouted out Blenbu "he has got us this far and we are OK."

"But he is taking us higher and it is just getting harder and harder," Ikti said "and the higher we go the less chance of surviving," he continued.

Some heads nodded at this. "Why can't we find a good place to farm here without going higher and higher where it gets bleaker and bleaker?" asked Mai.

"We cannot farm here," answered Mpho, and she watched as Tshepiso and Nandito agreed. "We were farmers in our village, Mpho's village," presented Tshepiso "it is too high here. If you want to plant you must go lower - near where Suivo was found, and they won't allow you." He watched as Suivo nodded.

"We could go down, and find somewhere," Ikti proposed.

"All land will already be farmed," answered Mpho "It is not free land."

"Well then we go and talk to them," said Mai defiantly.

"They won't listen," answered Libro, pointing to her temple.

"We must make them listen," said Libro.

"However difficult that is," intervened Sma "it is better than being led up to Namzo's safe death, altitude and certain death."

"I am certain there is a place for us," confirmed Namzo "we just have to keep going to find it."

Mpho stepped forward again. "It is time for us to go," she informed them "please choose and may you have the best of luck."

"Let's all go," cheered Blenbu, and he went over to his friend, Mai, to encourage her to follow them and reluctantly she did. That was enough to remain united for the time being.

Just to cement the disunity that day illness began to strike. By lunch time both Ikti and Naro were suffering in their different ways, Ikti began to feel deep nausea and Naro's joints were causing her such pain she was forced to complain to Sarpo - he immediately called the group to a halt. They had made good time, Namzo acknowledged. The next day became a rest day as Ikti's also accumulated a severe headache that incapacitated her giving Naro time to rest her joints. Whilst most took the rest day to relax and enjoy the mountains, the divisions led to unrest in certain quarters. Mpho watched as Mai cared for Ikti, and Sma sought out Suivo.

"Please don't start, it is beautiful up here," he interrupted her "Enjoy the mountains. Breathe in the air, it is thin but refreshing."

"I understand," she said, ignoring Suivo's glance "but we need to talk."

"Why?" he shouldn't have answered her.

"We are being led to our deaths," she answered melodramatically.

"I don't think so," he muttered "we definitely have been led from our deaths at the ashram."

"Maybe so," she half-heartedly agreed "but that doesn't make us lemmings."

"Whether you trust Namzo or not" he began.

"The four of them!" she interrupted with vitriol.

"And Blenbu?" he added "whoever you trust I don't think they are going to say any different."

"You believe them?" she demanded.

"What is there to believe? We follow Namzo or we go down," he explained calmly and logically.

"There s more than they say, why do they keep meeting?" she countered.

"I just don't know but their track record is good. Namzo took us from the ashram at just the right time, he and Sarpo met my group at just the right time," he paused "I cannot ignore this," he continued.

"You were suspicious before, " she interjected.

"And I still have suspicions," he stopped her, and as she started running off again he held up his hand "but I have some trust. For some reason you cannot trust, and that is seeding all this anger in your mind." He looked at her, and watched as even more anger rose to fill her mind and spilt into the rest of her. It showed as deep frustration, swirling around inside - sniping, creating bitter thoughts, vitriol and even hatred. He turned away - he felt a blast coming.

"Please wait Suivo," she called out attempting to be calm.

He hesitated as he felt her efforts to control herself. "Will you take us down?" she smiled sweetly, a smile that had won her much admiration in the past.

He couldn't believe the question, and "Please don't answer now, think about it. Think about Ikhti, if she stays up here she will die," she knew that would hurt and it did. Suivo walked away disturbed. That night Mpho's dreams brought everything to the fore. She woke Yunio "We don't have long left."

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"We must escape the cloud," she quivered, he could see she was shivering with fear. "There is a cloud from the West that is devouring all before it."

"You mean the gangs escaping?" he suggested.

"No this cloud has devoured the gangs, there is literally nothing left in its path," she poured

out still driven by the fear.

"And the ashram" she cried, as she remembered the cloud reaching the ashram and watching it incinerate "the cloud destroyed it."

She sat there shivering as Yunio with his arm round comforted her. He rested his lips on her head, as she tried to bury herself inside the strength of his chest. He rubbed his hand up and down her spine, and slowly he felt her shivering becalmed. "It is urgent now," she pronounced "Namzo and Sarpo must know." Off they went to find them.

Sarpo was tending to Naro as Namzo watched on with a worried expression. They could see tears in Sarpo's eyes as they saw how swollen Naro's knees and ankles were. It must be hard for her to walk, they thought. She must not hear this, thought Mpho. They waited attentively showing genuine concern. When Kereng came they politely excused themselves.

As soon as they left the tent Yunio started "There is urgency now," and Mpho recounted her dream. "There is no doubt with this cloud that down is not an option," Sarpo quickly summarised "as you said all along" looking pointedly at Namzo.

"Whether I did or not this is not what I wanted to hear," he spoke with sadness "all that we knew devoured."

"Will be," interposed Mpho forcefully "we don't know when. And I would guess we have time to reach the deer's paradise, but we must force the pace."

They looked at Sarpo as he nodded, his concentration elsewhere.

That night the group split. Mai persuaded Suivo to take them down. Ikhti and Sma joined him. Libro had never fully recovered so she readily agreed as did Mosi. This dragged Kereng in. Naro spoke to Sarpo "Your place is with the other three, I know there is importance with the four. Uu knew as well. I want you to promise you will stay with them whatever happens to me." And at that she fell asleep again. The next morning the four linked and watched as Suivo led this group down. They forcibly held Sarpo as they helped control his grief as he saw Naro descend; in silence they watched Suivo lead them to their death. Applauding Suivo's sacrifice, they mourned erstwhile friends.

BAENGOI

10) Trust

The real struggle began as the next day they asked Blenbu to force the pace whilst they consoled Sarpo. Now that those remaining had all accepted the situation there was a comfort in the group even though they were physically more stressed. Sarpo was gravely disturbed but not deeply. His relationship with Naro had grown out of his habit of relationships, even when drinking he had always found himself in a relationship; some might say because he was drinking he became attractive as a challenge. But he had met Naro after he had been straightened out, and he felt comfortable with her. And she with him. As they grew together her own interests had taken her to Uu, Uu being one of her countrymen, and he had gladly gone with her as they were good people.

But it was never his decision, his Path; it was always hers. This was not a bone of contention but a reality that he was comfortable with; it did leave a gap, a gap he never understood. Whilst at Uu's ashram he met many good people and this gave him strength - mind with mind heart with heart, but the gap remained. The gap had only been filled with the link, that first day with Mpho, Yunio and Namzo, from then on there was no gap only increased strength, meaning, and a deep irrefutable knowledge that he was doing the right thing.

Naro had sensed this and one day when they were walking she had told him "My time with you especially at the ashram has been the most consoling of all times, I have been so happy, so fulfilled."

He smiled at her deeply, not being good with flattery. "Thank you," he said genuinely.

"But this journey with Namzo is beyond you and me," she said and he looked at her warily "it is so so what word can I use? Important." There was a silence, "That doesn't say it," she finalised.

He nodded, giving her time he waited.

"Remember, you and I, us, we cannot get in the way," she reiterated, and turning to him she forcefully pulled his face into hers. She stared down at him as he was slightly off balance and made him promise that the journey was most important.

As she lay there with pain shooting through her from her joints he remembered, and that

night when she had told him his place was with the other three, he had felt a resignation. They had been good together, but it was temporary - they were not or never could have been family and now it was time to part one way or another. She made her final decision for them; her decisions had brought him here, he would trust in them one final time.

But however much he knew there was still a sadness in her going, and for most of the day he laid his heart bare to Mpho, in between the condolences of other travellers. Those that had stayed with Namzo instinctively knew Suivo had taken them to their deaths; better them than all of us, thought Nandito - as did others.

By the evening Sarpo was exhausted physically, and drained by his outpourings. Soon after food he apologised and prepared to his bed. It felt uncomfortable but the remaining three linked. Once they realised that Sarpo was grieving well, they began to consolidate their views of the new group. There was a sense of contentment, compliance and completeness. The link knew there was harmony, that however they dealt with it their new group accepted what was happening. It was what Nature intended.

"We have to work more with this group," they thought "they will need our help."

"We can help as well," Namzo's deer streaked past the linked three, and sped off into the distance. And with that the link was broken and they went to sleep.

Next day Sarpo was drained but joined them, and quickly juiced up with the link. They were now united again, and concertedly they began the day. "Today or tomorrow, we will reach the plateau, and the walking will level off, but not for long the plateau is not our journey's end," Namzo confided.

In fact it was early into the following day that the group forced themselves over another craggy valley when to their surprise they found this wide sandy green plateau as far as the eye could see. It was so beautiful Tshepiso hoped it was the end of their journey.

"I wish it was," said Namzo wistfully "this is the land of my fathers'. But this land is not safe" From the cloud, he thought. "but we can enjoy the plateau as we cross it. It will also give me a chance to regain my mountain lungs, the lungs I was born with."

"If your lungs have been struggling what will happen to the rest of us?" Tanbo asked jokingly.

After a while Blenbu said seriously "we can all acclimatise our lungs". True but a bit of a dampener, thought Mpho

As they crossed the crisp open plateau all felt good, even braced against the cold. With the third day lessening the attachment to the discontented, they all moved ahead in the comfort of each other's company. They made good time, and by the end of this day they could see a distant lake and mountain crags behind them. "Easy times over tomorrow?" smirked Tanbo as they sat to their evening meal.

That night they approached the link with a comfort and abandon, the pleasure of the plateau had eased their guard. The thinner atmosphere, even the sand itself with its interspersed green, seemed to offer comfort as they travelled. There was an easiness about the whole scene, Sarpo had even occasioned to think the whole group could still have been with them.

Their link added greater harmony to this general goodwill spoiled almost immediately by a vision of the dark cloud welling up from Mpho's mind. They knew it was nearer. Namzo's deer appeared to all "we will help you all, do not worry", they watched as it disappeared into the night.

They took the chance to overlook the camp, and all was peaceful. Tshepiso, Nandito and Tanbo had formed a bond, and the other five had then naturally inclined to each other. All were Naro's people, and had joined out of love for Uu. They took pleasure in the simple things, and their contentment was a pleasure to perceive - especially after the disruptive assertions Sma had made. They took a closer look. Gium, Bper and Faa were sleeping. The sleep was peaceful, their colours were gentle, no barbs or difficult edges, and yet they were not open to the link's presence. Outside their tents Ging and Yo's conversation remained uninterrupted, unaffected by the link. The link thought this strange, but the deer told them not to worry we will look after them.

They moved farther afield and tried to move the link towards the lake. The further from their bodies the less they appeared to sense. As they neared the lake they began to see a shimmering effect hovering over the lake, and Sarpo thought back to his contact with the Phors. Then the lake and the shimmering united as one, and all they could sense was lakeness, a wide expanse of lakeness that told them two days and pointed to an apex at the lake's edge. That was where the climbing would start again. They settled again and began to physically enjoy the lake and plateau, this world offered so much joy and yet humanity just sought every means to destroy it. They sat there into the night letting their minds drift into the distance enjoying the night and the stars.

The next morning they decided to link in the camp, and caused little disturbance. The others sat with them initially and the combined clam prepared them well for the day. But the link

was the link, the four of them. Even Tanbo had lost his edge, but was still separate. The trust in the group allowed all to perceive that meditation benefitted, and that was enough. For two days they enjoyed the calm that took them round the lake to the apex ready for their climb.

Many eyes watched their progress.

They had decided to camp early ready for the haul up into the heights of the planet. For the first time snow that had only been a pleasant contrast to distant black pinnacles of splendour now became a prescient hazard, treading in snow and ice would be a new experience for some. Not immediately though, maybe by the end of a day's walk. They called the group together to ensure that all were organised ready for the snow and ice. In truth this was only a confirmation of equipment they had pulled together under Namzo's guidance when leaving the ashram. Blenbu thought back to his days in the Dales in Winter, invention had taken the challenge out of such climate - thankfully for this group, he mused; equipment was neither heavy nor bulky, taking away some of that strain.

But pulling the group together gave Namzo a chance to impress upon them the need for alertness. Up higher the ground could give way, shale would add a hazard especially if covered in snow. But the discussion was more concerned with morale than a need for what was said, they had been walking together long enough. It was verbalising the trust, thought Namzo, and smiled. No dissent meant that all left the meeting comfortable and were not stressed before an important night's sleep. Most joined the link to meditate but Gium, Ging and Yo rated sleep more important. Soon they were all bedded down, but Mpho's night was disturbed by the encroaching black cloud.

Bright sun greeted this climb, but it was not a sun of warmth. They moved off in single file ensuring that they could see two people within 10m, in some cases three people with some such as Ging and Yo being couples.

Towards the end of morning misty rain descended, a rain that was steely and bitterly cold to their bared faces. Visibility shortened and it was sometimes difficult to see two in front. Namzo made them reduce walking distances causing occasional bunching. Late afternoon after a miserable day they reached a place to camp, so Namzo called it - to Mpho's concern as she was beginning to feel the cloud's presence. The link knew of her concern in no uncertain terms that night.

That night her uncomfortable dreams turned to nightmare. She saw the ashram, and the cloud. From inside the ashram she felt the smugness of Keido as the distant cloud was sighted. He even gloated over Namzo's group, the bubble is the only protection against such

man-made disasters. They prepared to batten down the hatches, and inner and outer seals were double-checked. No nuclear entry here, he thought. But he was wrong. As the gangs had appeared in the West survivalists had planned their own bubbles, even deep bunkers. For the gangs this was an affront to their control, so they applied their chemists to the task of destroying the seals. Sadly some of these chemists were experts and very soon chemical bombs were used along with the nuclear type to destroy the opposition. The gangs were now long gone but their history was stored in the cloud. Quickly corrosion and radiation consumed the ashram leaving a destructive waste, the slow amorphous giant drifting in its slow gentle but sure pace - undeterred now by anything man put in its way. The cloud's climb up the mountains began as if Nature was determined to wipe out all the bipedal miscreants who had forgotten their roots, their birthright.

Aware of Mpho's nightmare the link pressured the group to press on. Earlier this day the steely rain bit into their skin, the rain driving needles into whatever skin was open to the elements. The wind was powerful, and as they walked they felt its desire to scoop them into its stream. No joy left in the walking as all focused on the next step occasionally glancing up to see the requisite two companions. After two or three hours of this Namzo found rocks that provided marginal comfort, and they got some respite. He knew that there was not complete comfort but he need to know how they all were. Apart from misery and fatigue there was nothing worse, he had great hopes for all.

Intake of food gave some invigoration, and onward and upward they moved thoughts focused on the next step, eyes focused on where they placed their feet. As the day ended the wind cooled as did the rain and sleet, there was almost clarity of view. That night they linked gaining some sustenance but Namzo was so concerned about the worsening conditions it dampened any possible joy. He had never seen such wind. The next day they awoke and linked. Namzo asked them to join him in determining the day's journey. They focused their attention on upwards, and all they could feel was wind-power. The wind just blew them and blew them, it even seemed to want to blow the link away. The deer spoke "we need the wind, you will understand". Mpho turned back and they joined her. In the distance they saw the cloud beginning to pour over onto the plateau, chasing a small dust cloud they feared could only be dying animals.

The next morning the deer appeared before Namzo and stayed with him. It was a mountain deer but even she was beginning to struggle with the wind and rain. Before his eyes it transformed to a fox-like creature, the nearest he could think of was a stone marten. But this was no forest dweller. It had a dark shaggy coat similar to the yak, clearly suited to providing warmth short stubby legs with powerful tensile claws, and a stubby but sturdy body so strong he imagined now wind could budge it. "Now follow me," Marten said.

The wind was now incessant, a gale that could move houses, thought Namzo. He feared for the others. He turned to look back. "Let them be," Marten said "we will look after them." By now he was exhausted with the elemental battering. He had told them to keep close. The visibility was so close if he went back he couldn't see them; he had to trust in his friends in Marten's friends. He even tried to link but there was something about this wind that prevented even that.

"It will get worse," Marten said "follow me closely." So Namzo focused on the creature's tail, and walked bent double trying to brace against the wind. He made slow progress until a gust almost took him with it. "Onto your stomach," Marten said "if you try to walk the wind will take you. Onto your stomach." Namzo lay down and crawled. His guide slowed and Namzo crawled. In fact although slower this was a bit easier, as on his stomach the wind had little purchase. He seemed to crawl for hours patiently following his hope, his mind too shattered to think beyond his movement. He even gained a rhythm. Left hand forward, right hand forward, pull, scramble with the legs and slide. His mind began to focus steadily, left hand, right, pull, scramble, slide. Slow but sure - left hand, right, pull, scramble, slide. He was so intent he didn't notice the steep slope gentling. And then without realising he found himself in a tunnel. He felt trapped "Calm yourself, Namzo. This is safe," Marten quietened "This is meant to be, have trust." He dismissed his fear, almost as if dismissing the world he was leaving. Blenbu trusted him, put his trust in Nature. Becalmed now he continued his routine - left hand, right, pull, scramble, slide. It had become so much of a habit, he began soon to forget the tunnel. This seemed to go on for more hours as he followed the marten's tail, but he followed the routine until eventually the marten led him into a cave where he lay down exhausted. The marten said "wait", and at that exhaustion took him into sleep.

Meanwhile Mpho and Yunio were climbing the visibility gone, they halted and called out Namzo. No response. Namzo, they called, but no answer the wind took their shouts and spread all before it. They tried linking together but could find no answer. "We must trust," they said, and began walking. Without realising they bumped into Namzo. "Follow me" he uttered briefly, and bent double he moved forward. They too followed shielding themselves best from the wind. "We must now crawl", and slowly they made progress. "Follow a routine," he told them, and they too developed their own crawl "concentrate on it". Once the mind focused on the pattern, they continued near exhaustion yet keeping it sufficient distance as if over their left shoulder. Namzo took them into the tunnel, felt their panic, and becalmed it "Remember the routine," he commanded. On they continued until they fell into the cave. "Wait, I must go," and at that he went, leaving them exhausted in sleep.

BAENGOI

11) Arrival

Namzo awoke first. He remembered arriving exhausted in the cave, and collapsing as the marten disappeared. He looked around. On the ground lay his friends, he counted. 11, they were all there. He thanked Nature, the marten and his friends. He wanted to wake them and shout for joy, to celebrate with them, but exhaustion - let Nature recover them. He looked round the cave as a guide would, and there was a tunnel. Their journey wasn't over, but at least that wind and rain were not now their companions. He had half expected a deer or marten to appear, but maybe now he must trust in himself. He heard sound.

Mpho and then Yunio awakened. He went over to them. "By Nature you are safe," he smiled.

"We followed you, without you we would be dead now," Yunio thanked Namzo, wondering at Namzo's puzzlement.

"Yes we seemed to get separated. We had almost given up and Yunio said we must trust in Nature. We started up the mountain again, and there you were. You led us here. Thank you. Thank you," she kissed him gently on the cheek but began crushing him with her embrace.

Once she had relaxed her grip, he simply said "I didn't lead you", and he told his story. Mpho and Yunio remained quiet - astounded.

And the others slowly began to awaken. You could see the groups beginning to chatter as in their excitement they explained how they came to the cave. And then in unison they came over to him, Namzo had been all their guides. What did it mean?

"Who knows?" answered Namzo with a smile. "If you are our guide, what do we do next?" Laconically he pointed to the tunnel, "let us rest here for a while there is no rush."

Blenbu came to Namzo. "Perhaps I should tell you this again," he began with a smile "when we" his face showed a question "when we entered the tunnel I thought I heard rocks falling - and I had felt snow."

"Maybe an avalanche," Namzo asked and Blenbu nodded. "We are the last," sighed Namzo deeply, as memories flooded in. It was so final.

They rested that day but by nightfall knew they had to move on - they were running short of food. The supplements were tiny - intentionally so, whilst the wind and scrambling had taken all else people were still left with some. It would be better to find real food - even if they weren't running out. And there were no food sources in the cave - too high up, he thought. Maybe the occasional marten would appear but how could they now eat them? And as for water, some had managed to keep their packs but they would soon run out. And he didn't think the cave would provide that either, but who knows with their luck?

At their link that night Namzo made this clear, as well as conveying the finality of their situation. They were alone, this 11. None would follow, and they could not return. At least the wind couldn't follow either. They had a collective vision. The joined minds of the four left the cave, and moved up through the pinnacle of the mountain. This was far so their image was not detailed but they still felt the blast as they emerged into the wind. The wind blew the link and they panicked yet Namzo calmed them. "Go with it" he impressed on them, and the four became centred in the wind. It blew them and blew them carrying it with them, it was as if they were enmeshed inside this tube of wind. "Will it ever stop?" they thought, and then to came to them. It wouldn't, that is what would save them from the legacy of the greed and gangs. The wind will save them, the wind will blow away the poison greed had let loose on the earth. And as they realised that the wind had brought them back full circle to the pinnacle of the mountain where they were deposited and quickly sought the comfort of their bodies.

They were safe.

But will they live?

Their link had taken much out of them this time, and they went back to sleep. Mpho had watched Namzo stagger a little to begin with, but recovery was quick. That night she dreamed of them in their cave. She dreamed of the cloud, but this time the cloud had faces popping out. She saw gang colours, and she watched as these youths pushed towards the cave and the wind blew them back. Keido's face appeared "Let me in, I am one of you," he pleaded.

"We cannot," she cried "It was not our decision, you made your bubble."

"It was useless against the cloud," his hands gestured despair and forlorn hope.

What made you think you were better than Nature, Yunio thought beside her.

"We must move up," the colours called out. And working in unison for once they sought to move up. The wind blew them back, they went around and the cloud got caught in the wind. After a while it was brought back to the cave entrance, and around again. She awoke thinking how many times they would circle?

The next morning the whole group came together, knew about the food and the need for water. This invigorated their step, and they quickly went out through the tunnel to their new life. As Namzo took them down the tunnel, Namzo stumbled; no-one noticed but Mpho. They walked for an hour and the tunnel began to get small until the group needed to crawl.

"I will go ahead and check," Namzo told the group. Who would argue after all he had come back for all of them before? Mpho was puzzled, looked at him, but let it go.

Onto his stomach he moved along the tunnel, then began to feel a wind sucking him to the end. He felt the cold as he got closer, its icy grip tearing at him, his feet and toes beginning to tingle. And then that stopped. He reached the end of the tunnel, and it was blocked. No it can't be blocked, how had he felt the wind? He could imagine the panic if the others had been with him - blocked in a tunnel. He began to scrape away at the entrance knowing there was a way out. He made slow progress as he moved the earth behind him. Scrape, scoop, pull, slide the earth. Move that small rock. After what seemed hours he had moved little more than his torso but it was enough for him to feel the wind for real, how had he felt it before? It was guiding him.

Out of the cave the wind blew him to the right, and it seemed to be directing him down a path it had made. But it was blocked. He moved the stones and marked a cairn; that will make Blenbu happy, he thought of the cairns of his dales. The wind continued to move him down, and he made more cairns to mark his trail back to the cave. After a while the wind started to dissipate as he moved lower and lower, and then as the wind seemed to stop the land levelled out. He moved along the moonscape, and marking his trail he moved across. He was getting near the edge, he felt an expectancy. Over the edge he saw it, the lake - the water they needed. He ran over. The lake was huge. Nearer he ran. A waterfall, and the lake emptied out into a stream that lower down became a river. Their new home.

He had done it. He had found their new home. He had the water, the food must follow the water. He called out to them, Mpho. Yunio and Sarpo. He traced his mind back up the path past the cairns through the cave entrance he had made, scrambled along the tunnel to where they were - getting agitated. He found the three together, imposed his mind into theirs, and showed them the lake, the waterfall, and the river. They screamed for joy together their journey almost over. "Tell Blenbu to start along the tunnel," he told the link "I will meet

you."

"It has been a long time," Sarpō told the group "Blenbu take us down the tunnel. It is what Namzo would have wanted." Unsure he did as he was asked, and the others followed in trust.

Meanwhile refreshed Namzo climbed to the waterfall. He had swum, the water was cold but so refreshing, he wanted to dive off the water. He climbed up - a little difficult, and reached the top. He dove. He aligned his posture - graceful to the last, he thought. A thudding pain hit his chest. Time froze in mid-air, as the pain sped across his body. And then stopped. He hit the water, and he gratefully gave his life to the new land - his job done.

By the time Blenbu had reached the end of the tunnel, Namzo beckoned him. He pulled him to the cairns, "Lead them with the cairns if you lose sight of me," Namzo told Blenbu. The 10 emerged from the cave, and followed Blenbu down the wind-made path. Namzo showed Blenbu the moonscape and they gleefully followed Blenbu across the scape. Blenbu saw Namzo at the edge of the moonscape pointing. In his head he heard "To the lake". He looked around, Namzo had gone. They reached the edge and saw the lake. He turned around, and saw Mpho in tears. Namzo was gone, she knew. He had led 10 to the new land, his mission done.

They reached the lake and took their fill before the sadness of their loss hit them. Resting by the lake the three remaining of the link joined in sorrow. Their link initially was engulfed in sorrow, and their joint grief initially worsened that process, but after a while it gave them strength they knew Namzo had fulfilled his purpose, and in one lifetime that is something to be measured. "Please don't feel sorrow for me," Namzo appeared before them and joined in as if a normal link. They welcomed him, and his feel calmed their tears. Their comfort as four felt natural, and Namzo pointed to Tanbo as his replacement in the link. Yes, Blenbu was dependable but dour. His message conveyed, his presence moved off to the new land, the land he had brought them to, the land that was their future.

Soon sleep took the three, and when they awoke they found the group ready to move and Blenbu directing traffic. Comfortable with this and refreshed with mountain water, thoughts of food and security reached into their consciousness, it s time for comfort after their long journey. They readied themselves and followed Blenbu. Blenbu hugged the river bank as it descended. Time passed quickly as danger had passed and their descent was hastened by te surety that they were going to find their new home - trust gave them power. The terrain greened quickly, and soon they head a strange moan, and not far to their right was this huge yak-like creature with its matted coat. Man must follow, they thought.

Hugging the twists and turns of the bank they continued to make quick time, There were hills ahead and the river was taking the group to these hills. Accepting they followed their watery guide and saw that the river had gouged a valley between. They followed through the green channel, and soon descended further More of the yakkies appeared, and watched their progress. Then amongst a herd of these yakkies appeared a biped. And then several more coming over to meet them. Their faces shone with smiles, no fear, and they beckoned to the group to follow them. They took them to a small hill to their right, and they began to climb, up and over, and there in the distance was a village. Down the hill they rushed almost running, and soon gained greater energy as the children rushed out to greet their only strangers.

As they approached the village appeared more like a town and the children and the farmers were still directing them. Blenbu turned and saw that children had held of the hands of Gium, Bper and Faa skipping whilst others ran around them. The joy was infectious, and there were smiles on all their faces.

And then before them was this ornate building, a centrepiece of the town. They were ushered to an entrance, and as they reached it the children backed away sill cheering. Only one farmer took them into the central hall, and motioned them to sit. And as they waited from a door behind the altar an old man walked out and sat before them. He extended his arms towards them, said "Sannadee", and they had been welcomed to their new home.