



PETER FRITZ WALTER

SHORT STORIES

Russian Princess. Thai Alice. Tirlina. True Stories. Yami.

A production by Peter Fritz Walter.

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RUSSIAN PRINCESS

The small hotel in Nicosia, Cyprus, was awful. From three in the morning I was awake. First some people again and again slammed the doors, then a washing machine was roaring and stuttering, and finally, at about five, some people played on a drum set. To make it full, a woman screamed. I stayed in bed, meditating, praying.

At seven I got up and at eight I checked out. The tall girl at the cashier was still as aggressive as the day before. She was a real witch, long-haired, with an angry face full of acne that she had painted with white powder. What a cat! She was the most obnoxious young woman I've ever seen. I was kind of sure she had participated in this diabolic night party. Yet she pretendedly knew nothing about it.



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Finally I simply told her that I found her unfriendly and aggressive. So, somewhat relieved that at least I had told her what I thought of her, I entered my car and drove up to Larnaca beach. It was pouring with rain and I was fed up with driving farther on. Traffic jams everywhere. Eventually I see at my right a large hotel. The Princess. That sounds promising, I thought, and spontaneously drive in and – check in.

The next day it stopped raining and I went to the beach. There were not many people. A man with his wife and little daughter looks at me, smiling, and when I ask him if he is German, he shakes his head. I continue, curious, if he was English, but he answers he was Russian. I have a glance at the little girl who looked at me with a pale beautiful face, blond hair and vivid eyes. She was a princess, and that, I knew on first sight.

I remain in some distance, on a car wheel that was put in the sand as some kind of chair. There I remain seated. Princess is not stupid. She knows how to act counter to parental protectiveness. She paddles in the ocean, on her plastic mattress, parallel to the beach, a bit farther as my position was. Then she turns back and, as if by chance, comes closer to the beach. I get up and stand there, talking to her, smiling. I suppose she did not understand. Her father spoke but Russian.

She answers in her own way, with an ongoing irradiating, bright, sunny smile, a smile that is for me a language I can



read. Her smile was neither innocent nor childish. It was the smile of a small lady, a smile full of curiosity, mixed with the desire for adventure.

I begin to collect stones from the beach, gifts for her, for princess. First I collect only white stones, pure white ones in many forms. Then I see that there were quartz stones and collect them for her. Would she want to have them?

What interest has a little girl in stones? Yet I continue. It's always wrong to say Well, she will not like this or not like that! because princesses can actually come to like everything because they have an open mind for novelty. And much depends on the way it is presented to them. I would even argue that all depends on the way it is presented to them.

Princesses are very special in having a sense of personal autonomy that is one of the unusual features characterizing them, one of the salient details distinguishing them from ordinary girls. This makes them so special in their relationships to their parents. Many parents of princesses suffer from their daughter's early sense of autonomy. They may feel disempowered or think that their daughters are misguided by some inner drive that they cannot quite understand.

So I thought it could not be wrong from the start to collect stones for princess as long as I found the right way to present those stones to her. I did not really know what to do. I



sat there on the tire, for one hour and more. Princess would go swimming, alone or with her father. But she would continue giving me glances, from far or from close, smiles that warmed up your heart and that let me stay.

I waited quite a while, playing around with my stones, the white ones and the quartz stones. Then I got up, noticing her father had gone, went slowly toward the mother, put the stones down on the blanket and said:

—This is for your lovely daughter!

Mother and daughter smiled at me and then examined one stone after the other, giving quite intense attention to each of them.

I tried to have a little conversation with them which once again showed me that they spoke but Russian language. Now, looking at princess as she was talking with her Mom, she seemed ordinary to me, as if her magic had got lost in the presence of her matrix. The silence made me feel uneasy and I went back to my tire and sat down. The mother now went into the water for swimming, and princess stayed at the beach.

I felt she was waiting for me. I went to her. She turned around and smiled, a wonderful happy and innocent smile. I told her to wait for me with swimming since I wanted to go back to my room in order to change my clothes. She nodded.



When I came back she was waiting for me at the beach and we went into the water together. We were not far that her father joined us, bringing the air mattress.

Princess stretched out on it, her father took her hand and pulled her far out, running quickly ahead, so quickly that I was left behind.

Princess looked back at me, as I was approaching slowly. When I finally got to reach them, her father stood a moment in front of me, staring at my face with a bright smile. I began talking to him. His friendliness irradiated and I felt he had a big heart.

I told him his daughter was a princess and he affirmed, laughing, and tried to put a kiss on his daughter's red lips.

The girl refused jokingly and began to swim away upon which the father quickly grabbed her and pulled her back to the beach, twice as fast as before.

Princess stayed at the edge of the water, obviously undecided what to do. The water was very low and full of little fishes. I felt as one among them and kept quiet, enjoying the moment and the warmth of the sun.

I waited quite a while but eventually princess, very reluctantly, went on her little mattress boat again and came, slowly



but steadily, back toward me. The expression of her beautiful face seemed to have changed: it really expressed ... love!

She would glide as if by chance, passing me close so that, if I had wanted, I could have touched her. Yet I touched her but with my eyes, facing her wonderful young body from top to bottom. I think even God Neptune would have been jealous if he had seen her at my side. And Neptune has all the water nixes under his loving command!

Princess surrounded me almost silently, once passing in front, once passing at my side, once at my back. She seemed deeply lost in her thoughts and looked either in the water, at the fishes I pointed out to her, or in my eyes.

Every time she looked in my face, she smiled, now more innocently, with a certain shyness, which however quickly left her when I talked to her. She never answered me when I asked for her name. But when I asked if she went to school she shook her head. I remembered that her father had told me her age, holding up his fingers, putting one back down. With nine she was not going to school? Were the parents living here on the island? Or were they Russian tourists?

There was a wonderful moment when she came close to me, so close that our lips almost touched. Her eyes, in that heavenly moment, were full of wonder, of surprise, as if in this moment she had secretly discovered new land.



I did not move, however, since I valued this unusual encounter so much that by no means I wanted to endanger this new friendship with a gesture that could have been rejected. And a voice in myself told me that if destiny wanted her and me becoming friends, I could still kiss her on her beautiful mouth later on ...

Suddenly her mother got up, and gave signs to go back to the hotel. Princess seemed kind of shocked and quickly paddled back to the beach. When she arrived, I saw that she was discussing with her Mom, and her voice was high. She was upset! It was not in her plan to leave right now and she expressed that with all her young boldness. I approached the coast again and looked in the father's face. He seemed to be sad, depressed. I went straight to him and shook his hand.

—I forgot to present myself. My name is Pierre! I said.

He nodded, a trace of feeling sorry in his eyes. He said nothing, did not tell me his name when I asked for it. Princess was so busy with being upset that she forgot to look back at me when I left.

THAI ALICE

Among little girls are not many who have this special something that you can't define, that makes them so attractive. Sure, it is not the color of their hair, nor which race they



belong to nor which religion they are raised up in. It is something directly radiating from their soul.

You can't grasp it giving it one of those fashionable expressions like sex-appeal, an expression by the way that doesn't fit a little child. The erotic attraction of the eternal feminine in a little woman is a sleeping giant and its manifestations are not to be measured in terms that are designed for grown-ups.

The world in which tiny sweets live is afar from our quick definitions and the nagging need of getting human specialness in our mental drawers. Our neurotic habit of judging is miraculously suspended when one of those mysteries touches us! Alice was not that little Madonna she remains in my memory and that some of my photos made out of her. She was rather a frail little girl that seemed sad and manipulated by a mother who considered her children as possessions.

When I saw her and her little short-haired brother, I was struck as if a lightning had hit me. I was on my way to leave the lustrous Imperial Hotel in Bangkok when I saw the family entering the hall.

The young man almost pulled his children in the place. The two seraphim seemed disturbed, unwilling, tired or exhausted. The boy threw himself on the floor like an epileptic yet the father would tenderly take him up a moment in his



arms to put him back on the floor. The girl did not change the sad expression on her pale little face.

They were Thai, obviously, yet looked rather international, especially the girl; she could have been Greek, Italian or Spanish, or from South America, with her gracious slim body, her long brown hair and her almond eyes.

The man turned around, smiling at me. I had not talked three words, complimenting his children, and he invited me to have dinner with them. The children obviously liked the idea. The boy took a fork, climbed with his Nike baskets up the Louis XV chair and pointed with the fork right toward my face:

—That’s nice! he said, now I want to fight with you!

The father apologized and said his son had sometimes strange ideas, whereupon the sister just grabbed the boy’s hand and pulled him down. He would have fallen if he did not make a quick jump that saved him from landing right on his face. He was angry and there was no way to console him. He cried.

—What is your name? I asked the girl, to change the subject.

—Alice, she replied tenderly, in a rather smoky voice.

—And yours, little fighter? I asked her little brother.



—I'm Danny.

Now Danny smiled at me. He seemed to have forgotten his faux pas and took avidly from the fresh bread in the silver basket that the smiling waitress had put a few seconds ago.

—The bread made peace in Danny, I said to his father who seemed distracted.

—The bread made peace with Danny, said Alice.

—The bread did not make peace with me, but in me, corrected the boy, lucidly. That's what Pierre said, no?

—Well, well, that's not much of a difference, hey, added his sister.

—Yes, it is a difference, a big difference, isn't it, Peter? Danny asked me.

—It is, I concluded. If the bread had made peace in you, you're peaceful now. If the bread made peace with you, the bread is peaceful now.

Everybody laughed and Danny still giggled a long while later, holding the peaceful bread in front of his big brown eyes and contemplating it like a strange jewel.

—You seem to have fun with children, a lady suddenly commented. She came with a big smile and a handphone and Danny's father jumped up to offer her the chair next to him.



—Yes! I replied. Are you the mother of the children?

—No, she said. I'm not their mother, I'm just a friend.

—Rina and me are very good friends, since many years, the children's father added. And, oh, by the way, my name is David.

—How come that you all have Western names, despite your being Thai people, I asked, curious.

They laughed.

—Yes, David said, it's kind of stupid. We have originally Thai names but we do not want them anymore. We want to have Western names. It's more fashionable. If you meet more Thai people who have succeeded you will see that they have changed their names. They want to have the same level as Western people and show that Thai people can make it, too.

—Does that mean that Thai people are proud people? I asked, innocently.

—Yes, in a way. Most Thai are lazy, therefore we want to be different, you understand?

I nodded. I did not understand.

What a confusion! Most Thai people I met were not lazy at all or at least not more lazy than Western people or any other people in the world. In the contrary, I always found the



Thai working harder than all the Germans I knew, and more serious in what they did than my whole generation. I could not imagine one single German taxi driver who would stand, day after day, the abhorrent traffic chaos in Bangkok. No, not one would do that more than one week without cracking.

I knew Asian people since years as being extremely enduring yet remaining friendly and soft, a combination I never found in any Western country. Now in Bangkok, under the influence of the many foreigners who live here or come as tourists, some Thai have changed and became hard, materialistic and, yes, criminal. But it's still the exception. And up-country, as the Thai say, it's still very different. I've been up-country and can really confirm it. When you go there you feel you have time-traveled.

—My name is Rina! the woman presents herself.

—I'm Pierre.

—Pierre, you love children, don't you?

—Yes, I do.

—Well, you may have fun with these two ...

—Actually, I just would like to take photographs of them. They're very beautiful.



—It's true. Maybe you can even take nude photographs of them?

—You think so?

—Yeah, depends on their mother. You've to ask.

—What do you think are the chances?

—I'm not sure. I only know that she's only her business in mind. Her children, that's the stuff she keeps up with. You know what I mean?

—You mean she's a career woman?

—Exactly that. You know she's my boss in the company. And she's awful! She's brutal, that's what she is! She's no regard for anything but money. Her children are her toys, if you ask me ...

I actually never even thought of taking nude shots of the children and was a bit surprised about the woman's proposal.

Did it mean that they wanted money? Or was it but a little sign that she liked or understood me?

Soon the children's mother came and Rina left, after a small but bitter dispute with the mother who was pretendedly her 'best friend,' but that I considered rather as her best enemy despite of my not understanding two words of Thai.



What a difference in character, I said to myself, those business women who, interestingly, worked for the same company!

Laure, the mother of the children, was nervously smoking one cigarette after the other, nagging the children until they cried. She was cruel, bitter and harsh. I did not like her way. Yet toward me she was polite and kind of soft. She proposed me to come back after the weekend to take the photographs.

The photo session was a dry exercise and the only nice portrait I got out I entitled Thai Alice. Everybody was nervous and Laure seemed to be at the point to either cry or tear the children up in pieces.

The air was so thick that you could have cut it with a knife. All seemed a kind of obligation, keeping a promise one dislikes. The children were utterly anxious and distracted. I felt like an idiot. After the few photos the family quickly entered their car and drove away.

TIRLINA

—*Hola extranjero!* called the little native girl, and approached the tall man, bluntly grasping with her small dark hand the elbow of the foreigner. Come, buy me some toma-



toes! she voiced, with suddenly softer voice and in bad Spanish. We have nothing to eat at home and I've lost the little money my mother gave me for going to the market ...

And saying this, the girl did not cry. She even smiled, seemingly sure that the foreigner would not refuse her wish.

They went to a nearby stand where Pierre bought two pounds of tomatoes for the little girl. Then they went away, together. The girl eat one of the tomatoes and Pierre thought he also wanted to try one.

—*Dame una?* he asked.

—*Naturalmente!*, answered the girl happily. It was not true what I told you. I mean, that my mother gave me money and I've lost it.

Pierre nodded silently.

—It is not true because my mother is dead.

—And your father? asked Pierre with a sudden dry voice. He felt a deep sadness coming up in his chest.

—Also dead.

—And you?

—Me? I live, shouted the girl as if she wanted to free herself from some hidden fear.



—Yes, I see this ...

And both the man and the girl stopped a moment since they fell in laughter, looking at each other, to wipe the tears off that came up ...

—My name is *Tirlina*, the girl said, after a moment.

—I'm *Pierre*, answered the man, softly, and smiling.

They shook hands like two business friends.

—*Nicetameetou...*, said the girl, repeating the only phrase of English she knew.

—Nice to meet you, too ... , but *Tirlina* your English is awful! You have to pronounce this like Niiiiiiiiicccccccce toooooooooo meeeeeeeeet youououououou ... , you understand?

—Yes, I'm not deaf and you don't have to shout at me, you know ...

Again they laughed and *Pierre* put his arm around the shoulders of the little girl as they walked on.

—Can I stay with you? asked the girl then, suddenly, and stopped, looking at *Pierre* with her big black eyes.

—Yes, sure! answered *Pierre*.



Only a few minutes later he became aware of the importance this yes may acquire for him later on.

Half an hour ago I was alone, and now I've got to care for a child—how strange life can be, he murmured.

Then he burst in happy laughter, took Tirlina up like a little funny puppet and pressed her against his chest.

My girl, my girl!, he repeated with soft voice, and kissed Tirlina on her round pulpy cheeks.

In the bus from Cochabamba to Santa Cruz Tirlina sat on Pierre's lap, smiling, radiating of happiness.

—But you really did not have anybody who took care of you? inquired Pierre.

—The birds have someone who takes care of them, and the same one who takes care of them has also taken care of me, answered the little girl and her eyes seemed to look into another world.

After a moment she continued:

—Sometimes a friendly woman on the market gave me food, sometimes I stole it, sometimes I found something in the garbage ...

—Do you have brothers and sisters?



—Yes, but they are with an uncle. I forgot where he lives. Once I went there, but he sent me away because there was not enough to eat for all ...

Pierre stopped asking. He did not want to be inquisitive since Tirlina had gone through deep hurts and difficulties, and it would be better if she took the initiative to tell about it when she wanted to. Only *one question* interested Pierre right in this moment:

—Are you happy, Tirlina? he asked.

—Of course! answered the little girl, nodding.

—Also before ... ?

—Before we met each other, you mean?

—Yes.

—Oh yes, also! I was always happy.

Pierre remained silent for a moment, looking out of the window where the grandiose spectacle of nature presented itself in the most beautiful colors.

The bus drove around a deep canyon and now, at the end of the afternoon, the misty air of the canyon glittered in the sun like an ocean of silver.



Tirlina was happy, has always been happy, how was this possible? asked Pierre to himself. Now the girl seemed to be tired and put her head against Pierre's shoulder.

—I want to sleep ... , she said softly. Hold me tightly and don't let me fall down when the bus shakes, she added, and her eyes were already closed.

Pierre laughed tenderly about her remark.

TRUE STORIES

CHRISTINE AND MARTHA

Christine and Martha were half-sisters. They lived with their mother in a big house. The mother had married twice and each girl was from one of her husbands.

However, a while after the divorce, she reconciled with her first husband who, in addition, developed a friendship with her second.

So all three bought a large villa and lived together. The mother, a business woman, was often absent while the two girls were with their respective fathers and stepfathers.

While the story sounds funny and original, the girls, for reasons unknown to me, seemed to suffer from the situation.



GÉRALI

Gérali, a small intelligent black boy from Zaire, was not very lucky with his mother in Athens, Greece. Father had gone back to Africa with Gérali's brothers and sisters, leaving him alone with mother.

Mother was cleaning houses in town, taking Gérali to her work places or leaving him in the kindergarten where I met him.

Mother knew how bright her son was and wanted him to study French at the *Institut Français*. Mother thought the institute's director would accept her idea to pay just half of the school fee, paying the other half with cleaning the school.

So, one day I took Gérali to the institute, which was a long ride to the other part of the town. The director was busy and let us wait two hours in the staircase.

Eventually, Gérali was rolling on the floor and I was exasperated and decided to go back without having that interview with the French guy. At that very moment, the door opened and we were asked to enter.

The short man gave Gérali a fierce look whereupon the boy magically fell into tears. The director became angry at once and asked me what the hell I wanted there with that rude little black boy. I politely asked ten minutes of his pre-



cious time to listen to Gérali's story. After two minutes we were out. And there was no other appointment scheduled.

The same occurred with two other French-speaking pre-schools I had visited to find a place for Gérali.

Eventually my stage in the school was touching its end. When Gérali heard I had to go back, he broke into tears. His mother asked me fervently to stay longer and to take care of him or even adopt him.

But I went back, stupidly, thinking of this and that obligation. At the end, I could have opened a school there and got two offers from existing ones for collaborating at a director's level. Yet my inner controller was stronger, at that time still, than my love and I followed the *path of habit* rather than the *path of truth*.

Gérali called me twice, crying desperately on the phone, repeating over and over again:

—*Pedro, pourquoi tu es parti, pourquoi tu es parti, pourquoi ...?*

I had no answer. I did not know why I did not stay with him. *Today I would have done it differently.* I would have stayed and opened that school and helped the black community there to have their children properly schooled.



MARILYNN

Marilynn was one of the upper class children in the kindergarten. She was always looking sad or melancholic which was so much the more strange as she was very bright and beautiful, soft-spoken and wise.

Laura, the German educator I was befriended with told me horror stories about Marilynn's father. He would strip Marilynn naked when picking her up in the afternoon, pulling down her pants in front of all children and searching something inside. What was he searching for?

Laura said Marilynn's father was *obsessed*. I wonder what his obsession was like? Strangely, I never met him during the two months of my work in the pre-school.

The moments passed with Marilynn while playing Lego with her, or doing drawings, were wonderful. She was the most sensitive little girl I have ever met. And she was polite, extremely well-mannered. However, her manners were not a product of education or dressage; there was something noble about them and you felt they were directly coming from her heart.

MARISOL

I met Marisol in the *black ghetto* of a little industrial town near the gigantic Shell refinery. She lived with her



grandma since her parents did not care about her. Marisol was labeled a *bad child* by everybody.

Grandma thought she had to drive the devil out of Marisol and gave her severe beatings that left the little girl blue and green, and sometimes bloody.

Grandma was one of those huge landscapes as only the Antillean islands can produce them. To sit at a table, her bottom would easily fill the sitting space of three chairs. When she thundered, the air in the room was filled with an electric current that would drive even major kamikaze's out. And so much the more a little girl of eight ...

Yet there was no escape, except that Peter was around and took up the fight with the tiger. Grandma was strangely tame when Peter was close.

I do not know why this ugly monster liked me? Was it that she felt I loved Marisol, despite the fact that really everybody despised her and made her down? I told grandma that her opinion about the devil in Marisol was wrong and that the girl was just a bit confused about life, being all day with a thunderous grandma and without parents.

Grandma sat down and the chair almost cracked. She sobbed. Yes, she said, the social service had been there already several times. She knew that she was not quite able to



handle Marisol, she added. But they wanted to take Marisol from her, and that, she would not allow to happen. Never.

I do not know if grandma loved Marisol. Yet I know that her way of treating the girl was the usual way to treat children in her home culture. I have been there and seen it there with my own eyes.

So grandma thought she was right in treating the child that way and she was unaware that it was exactly *because of her cruelty* that Marisol developed all those behavior problems.

Eventually, and after a lot of fight for the good cause, I had to give up. Grandma was upset after, one time, I had taken the stick out of her hand and threw it out of the window when she was again chasing Marisol up until the staircase. She said I had gone too far and forbade Marisol to see me again. And that was it, then.

SOIZA

Soiza was a little girl of three who was at first very shy because she did not feel cared after in the kindergarten. And she was indeed not, often standing around in the toilet for more than ten minutes with her pants down, and no worker taking care of her.



Soiza would have liked to stay at home with her mother, the painter. Her father, a dentist, had never time nor love for his children.

Dimitri, Soiza's brother, even suffered more from this lack. He turned into what society labels a *handicapped* child.

Yet both Dimitri and Soiza were intelligent and sensitive children and I liked to be around them. They liked me to play Tchaikovsky dances on the piano and then Soiza would engage in a funny kind of spontaneous dance that was very gracious.

At home she was totally different from her way to behave in the kindergarten; then she was awake and communicative while in the school she was as good as mute.

Their mother, Fanny, invited me almost every day for a late lunch, after I had finished working in the pre-school. We liked each other and were naturally exposed to the usual gossip. Fanny was terribly afraid that her husband could one day meet me there in their flat. Why? We had been just friends.

Yet she said her husband would never believe that. She was married to a husband who was extremely possessive and tried to even interfere with her art. Fanny painted in oil. Yet for her husband all she did had no value. He tried to get her away from painting. Probably he feared most that his wife could develop some kind of autonomy.



One day she cried when I came. She told me her husband had thrown Dimitri on the balcony the night before.

He had been fed up with his grimaces, she said, and had grabbed him like a piece of wood – and the child flew through the air, harshly hitting the balcony floor. Whereupon father shut quietly the door to leave his weeping son exposed in the nightly air.

No books count those ugly family stories and no history is written about them. These are not mighty stories. And yet heroes there are to fill them with. Dimitri was one of them.

Soiza was better off, perhaps because she was a female and therefore anyway inferior for her brute macho father. Yet she developed certain autistic symptoms, especially in the kindergarten which was not less violent than her home environment. Especially when the old widow who owned the center got her bad mood and just hammered the kids down with her fists.

Soiza would then just retire into a corner. And that would be it for the morning.

Forgotten.



UMUT

Umut, the little Turkish boy, was living in my neighborhood. We were friends for a few months only, until his father forbade him any further contact with me.

Umut was very sweet and affectionate, but also shy and anxious. He was afraid of his parents' harsh punishments. In fact, Umut was beaten almost every day.

Shortly after the photos were taken, Umut's father cut the boy's hair very short, and the following night I dreamt that his father did not only give him a haircut, but also cut off the right hemisphere of his son's brain.

And the dream was true.

What Umut and so many other children receive every day from their parents and society is just that. *Braincut*.

And that braincut lasts for life. The result is millions of robots, of people who do not know what they are living for and who have forgotten how life tastes in its totality. For what they experience is only a tiny part of it.

Emotional and physical abuse and an attempted *total control* of their children's love relations is typically going along with braincut attitudes. And society, in its life-denying and inquisitory *moralism*, largely blesses this very widespread form of child abuse, and then, of course, attempts to dis-



charge its bad karma on a group of people it labels *pedophiles* or else.

The truth is that if there were no loving adults around, little boys such as Umut would never even find an ear to be heard or a hand to be held. And they would never know what it feels like to be treated *as a person in her own right* and a friend of equal level to an adult. They would not even dream of such blessings since their environment is so violent and so hermetic that love can only enter it through the backdoor.

That's how it is, if you like it, dear reader, or not. Fortunately, life is not asking *you* for your opinion. Nor do I.

YAMI

I.

Yami was from a simple family. He was born in a small village near Buriram, a town close to the border to Laos.

This is a region of Thailand that is still as good as untouched by tourism. The villagers, and especially their children, will move your heart. They are plain, honest and of a friendliness that will truly embarrass you in case you are unfamiliar with the proverbial amiability of Thai people. They will not let you go without *making sure* you arrive at your destination.



While most of them are simple rice farmers that are *poor* from a Western point of view, and while the school of Buriram cares for eight hundred children without being able to hire one single English teacher, and while they live in simple wooden houses that are built on piles and that have no running water, these people are not *needy*. They are rich. Rich in a way most of us don't understand.

They are rich in soul, in wisdom, in human experience, in joy and in generosity. They are rich through a deep understanding of life and living. They are *funny*. They are unconventional and yet not at all frivolous. They are traditional and yet totally non-traditional. They are taller than the Thai of the South, especially their women; their small children are round touchy little balls full of energy, with large black almond eyes and cheeks you want to kiss – *poetic*, uniquely beautiful. Everybody eats and many have a small TV set, and a bed, and a roof – even the poorest among them.

When you drive to the country using one of the unique truck-busses where you sit on a wooden bench facing chuckling market women who chew their betel nuts with ruined brown teeth, you can be sure you will have to keep up with a lot of stuff between your legs, plant or animal, seed or tool – all you can imagine can potentially be placed for a while around the boundaries of your body, without ever touching



you, but still: you feel you are traveling not as a single entity, but as part of an almost holy necessity of *things-moving*.

And elders, in this part of the world, have a dignity that today is rare to find. They greet strangers without words, holding their folded hands a moment in front of their face, a prayer gesture – and you understand that there is no need for a dictionary to understand each other. The regard, the gestures tell you all, sympathy, invitation, welcome, or reserve, polite distance, shy distrust. You know *at once* what matters are, and without long palavers.

Silence reigns in these people and around them, comfortable peaceful silence, and humility. They do not complain. They *live*. And their faces express this life, simplicity, joy, hard work, responsibilities, and that means in this culture always responsibility *for others*, for children, parents, neighbors. Beautiful are these faces, and true, without artifice, without make-up. Friendliness is genuine, spontaneous, without being calculated, and this is true in the same way for anger or for sadness.

Yami was from birth an alert boy. He grew up in a world of friendly permissiveness, with a high amount of autonomy, but also of responsibility. Contrary to most children in the village, Yami came from a relatively small family and had only a brother of about the same age. Yami's father who had been a Thai boxer was killed in a fight when Dendra was pregnant



with *Tania*. Her fetal presence had a deep impact upon Yami and *Non* and in some way, *Tania* magically filled the empty space their father left.

Yami and *Non* were for each other brothers, lovers, friends, and perhaps also human and alien. In their child play, an immensely rich fantasy manifested without boundaries. At times, *Non* was a *bear* for months and behaved like one.

For Yami he was a toy bear, cute and funny, for *Dendra* a clown bear with crazy ideas that she tolerated with the great latitude of her heart while sometimes she got angry at him. For example when he again *caught* the neighbor's beautiful little daughter, to *drive her scared*. Sometimes the result was that *Non* himself cashed in what he wanted to inflict upon the girl, when she anticipated his attack.

Dendra, as so many Thai, even when her boys were very naughty, never slapped them as this was against her principles and her long patience. And even *Som*, her late husband, while he could be very tough in his job as a boxer, was like a tender sheep in the presence of children, nonviolent, grave and thoughtful.

Some people wondered why he was 'so serious' in the presence of children, and some ascribed it to a lack of humor. *Dendra* however knew that it was respect, natural respect to-



ward children and at the same time an humble admiration for young life in all its forms.

Dendra actually had wondered often why he had become a boxer and never found an answer that made sense. The deadly accident first triggered in her a *terrible revolt* that drove her almost mad, and that was mixed with strong guilt.

She believed she had missed a task destiny had given to her for her loving partner: to talk boxing out of him. While she knew she would not have succeeded because Som was like a rock in all he did, and loved his job despite all danger; besides he had earned good money with it, so much actually that he was somehow a rich man for his neighbors in Buriram. And many of the fights had been shown on TV and this sudden publicity brought Som recognition and popularity.

For a moment, right after Som's sudden death, Dendra thought of killing the fetus. First, the idea seemed horrible to her, but then more and more real, and even logical. The father was dead and she had to feed the two boys and had no idea how the three of them would join the two ends. Dendra was a fashion designer and graduated in Bangkok, but she had never exercised her profession. She had met Som before making any decision regarding her professional life, and Som earned easy money, and Dendra loved to be fully available for her family. But now all was different. What was she going to



do? Give birth to that child? And find a job with three children around her neck?

In her desperate mood, one night in a dream Som appeared to her. He was very joyful, and not as he had been when he was still around. He said very quietly she should give birth and that the child would be a very beautiful and intelligent girl that was going to give her much joy. Furthermore, she should settle in Bangkok and open a restaurant there. The idea sounded so far-fetched to her that she asked her husband-spirit how he could know about the realities of her life? Som however laughed at her question and said they lived in the same reality, only in different dimensions of it.

And that what he recommended had a good reason and that she would see for herself once she made the first step; that it would not be easy to join the two ends with three children but that she was going to know another man, who was from a foreign country, and that she was going to marry him.

After that, Som's lightbody evaporated. Dendra woke up from the dream relieved and encouraged and did not doubt a moment the reality of the appearance.

The next day she prepared her departure for Bangkok. Her parents thought she had definitely lost her mind. The two boys however, especially Yami, were excited about the perspective to live in the capital that they knew only from TV and



where obviously all people were *rich and happy* because they were eating *Hamburgers* and were drinking *Coca Cola*.

Tania was born shortly after Dendra's arrival in Bangkok. Dendra had been hospitalized because there were complications, and she thought it was very lucky she was in Bangkok as in Buriram this kind of medical help was hardly available, or if it was, it was coming *too late*. All was so effective in Bangkok, and professional; one of the doctors was a very friendly guy and he even invited the boys to his house where he was caring for them during the whole two weeks of her hospital stay. Dendra originally wanted to leave her *little bears* in Buriram with her parents, but the boys revolted, and so violently, that she gave in. And now she thought again of the dream and what Som had told her. She decided to trust his advice and look more positively into her future. And now anyway her life seemed to have changed, and it was as if magic hands were guiding her and prepared the best in any given situation. The friendly doctor, shortly before she left the hospital, presented himself as *Kenny* and told her about a new restaurant his wife had just opened in Pattaya, that it had been a big investment and that now they had to make good profit to pay back the credits. And that his wife urgently needed a right hand, a woman just like Dendra ...

Dendra did not need to think. Her answer was given before she heard the question. And thus the next day as it was



Sunday and Kenny's day off, they were all meeting under the bright sun in Pattaya. And when Dendra sat down at the beach and had her bears jumping around her, and Tania was happily sucking her breast, life suddenly looked so different, full of joy. Next to Tania, there was Kenny and his wife and their three children who bathed in the warm sea. Kenny told her the whole story about the restaurant project that was located not far from the beach, in a very good location.

Kenny's wife *Denia* was expressing her happiness to have found a helper through such a curious turn of destiny. And they laughed about the similarity of their first names and that they were both thirty-eight years old. And what more was matching, Kenny and Denia each had three children, two boys and one girl. Not to mention another coincidence they found with surprise: exactly three days earlier Kenny and Yami had their birthdays. Kenny had turned forty and Yami four. Both were born in the sign of Gemini. And Dendra pondered if this meant there was a kind of *Wahlverwandschaft* between them? In fact, Yami seemed to regard Kenny as his new father and gave him his *total attention* since their first accidental meeting in the hospital.

Dendra suffered much from the death of her husband. She felt a spontaneous attraction for Kenny who was a handsome man, while he was of course not a warrior as Som had been. He was the type of the intellectual sensitive physician.



But as Kenny was married, Dendra restrained her feelings and just wanted a friendship with him. In addition, she felt overwhelming gratitude for him and his wife.

Denia really seemed to trust her and for nothing in the world she wanted to deceive that trust.

Kenny's children came out of the water, took Yami and Non on their arms and kissed them while they were running back into the sea. His daughter carefully approached Tania who played in the sand.

—My name is *Kani*, she said as she kneeled down next to the baby, and her long black hair fell over the child like an unusual caress. Very tenderly and with obvious delight, she stroke over the baby's naked body and after a moment took her on her arms to kiss her.

—My name is Kani, she repeated toward the baby—and yours?

—Her name is Tania, Dendra replied.

—Oh, then she has a European name! she uttered, astonished, and as if that name was something like a title or a sign of nobility, and as she ran back into the water, Tania still on her arms, she repeated her name again and again.

—Don't let her fall down ...



Dendra spontaneously liked that slim beautiful girl. And Kenny who had overheard the conversation, smiled, and there was a question in his smile.

—Yes, that was Som’s idea. He had once seen in a film on TV a very beautiful little girl, from Europe, and said that if ever his next child was going to be a girl, she should look like the one in the film, and bear her name. That is why I called her Tania, despite my sadness that Som disappeared before her birth.

—And ... does she look as the girl in the film?, Kenny asked.

—This is not yet visible, but I am convinced once she has reached the age as the Tania of the film, she will indeed look like her. As I have known Som, it must well be so. What he said was always true ...

—Did he also predict you that you once will settle in Bangkok and work there in a restaurant, Denia uttered, jokingly.

Dendra sat a moment in silence, and then nodded. As she looked in the curious faces of her new friends, she told them about the dream. Kenny and Denia were very impressed, but not for the least surprised. Things of this kind are well-known in Thailand and elsewhere, even though they do not happen every day. Often, and this is equally known to the



Thai, what triggers such events are exceptional circumstances and high emotional tension.

In this moment, almost miraculously, an old man in a long flowing robe who wore a small aluminum suitcase approached:

—*Fortune Teller ... Fortune Teller ...*

Kenny gave the elder a sign to come closer.

—Tell us the future, old man!

The old Chinese smiled and spontaneously turned toward Dendra.

—Your husband recently died, he uttered. You have three children. One will become famous because of beauty, one because of love and one because of intelligence.

—And what do you tell *me*, old man? Kenny said, obviously good-humored.

—You are recognized as a healer but your destiny is another kind of healing than the one you do now. And you will give away all your riches.

Kenny and Denia sat there with open mouths for a moment, shocked. In a skeptical tone, Kenny replied:

—You can go, old man. What you said does not make sense to me, while some of it is true. But I can't imagine to



ever give up my job because I love it. And I'm not rich and if I was rich I would not give away my money. Or would you do that?

—No, the old man replied, and chuckled. But I am not you, he ended, and went away after receiving a little money.

Dendra again and again repeated the words of the fortune teller in her mind: *One will become famous because of beauty, one because of love and one because of intelligence.* Beauty, well, that could only regard her daughter. Who has ever heard a man become famous because of his beauty? And which of the two boys should become famous because of love, perhaps Yami? But what was the meaning of that? What love? Strange. And Non because of his intelligence? He certainly was intelligent, but Yami too. What a nonsense!

She looked in Denia's face that expressed frustration.

—Hey Denia, why do you look so sad? Kenny asked and kissed his wife.

—But ... are you not realizing that he did not predict anything *for me*?

—Perhaps what he told me is also valid for *you*? Kenny replied and took his wife's hand, looking deeply in her eyes.

—What do I see here? he whispered.



—What, what ... Denia asked, suddenly crisp.

—A child ...

—What?

—I see a child in the midst of a restaurant ...

—A child, *which child?* Denia asked, intrigued.

—I don't know.

—You mean I will have another child with you?

—Hm ..., possible. Or perhaps the other way 'round, Kenny added, confused.

—What, what ... ? Denia insisted, suddenly angry. What are you telling me?

—I don't know myself, Kenny ended the dramatic moment and ran into the water to play with the children.

The two women followed him after a moment, and with a thoughtful trace written in their faces.

II.

For Yami, the change of residence really was the beginning of a new life, in every respect. All was suddenly busy around him, and moving, more to the point, and stressy.



Where was the tranquil presence of his grand-parents?
Where was the silent entrancing heat of the rice fields?

Where was the carefreeness of running around naked
and urinating, almost like a dog, wherever he pleased to?

Where were the little girls of the neighborhood he had
liked to play with at times and that sometimes he had tried to
kiss?

Now here he was supposed to watch Tania while Non
was watching television. And Tania was wearing pampers that
smelled bad because Dendra had no time to change them.
Where was that wonderful world of magic and natural poetry
that now he missed so dearly?

Sure, they lived in Kenny's comfortable condo, with run-
ning water and clean toilets, and several TV sets. But why was
he so lonely now? If at least Kenny had more time for him! But
Kenny was a famous doctor and maintained a private practice
when he left the hospital where he spent a part of the eve-
ning. And with Non all had changed as well.

While before they had been *inseparable*, now Non liked
to be around Denia as much as possible; he had become De-
nia's favorite pet. Running around naked was not allowed in
Bangkok. Urinating in the staircase was prohibited either.



Bangkok was no fun, except Kenny, and that was why Yami now gave all his loving heart to him. He just always thought of him and waited for him in the long evening hours. And when he came home, he could sit on his lap and Kenny caressed him with *infinite patience*, and Yami was just completely happy then. And Yami had asked if he could sleep with him and Denia, but Kenny replied it was not possible as Denia was against it. But sometimes, when Denia had to work long hours in the restaurant and Kenny exceptionally had no private patients waiting for him, he came home earlier and wrestled with Yami on the bed, and that was what Yami liked most. And afterwards Kenny took him on his arms to the bathroom and put him in the warm water, washed him, dried him and powdered him, and Yami was feeling much more *important* than a little boy from Buriram.

He felt that he had been important for Kenny, and that Kenny, during his busy day, sometimes thought of him with much love. And who knows, perhaps he was for Kenny even more important than Denia ...?

This love for Kenny compensated in some way all the many things Yami was missing now, the abundant nature, the freedom and a loving brother who had been like a twin for him and now, because he loved Denia, spent most of his time in the restaurant, whereas Yami stayed at home with the maid. Mother had not much time for him now. If he wanted to talk



to her, he had to call her as with only four years of age he was not allowed to take the bus alone to Pattaya. Mother had told him when he was six he could perhaps take the bus and some drivers would not mind it, and from the bus station in Pattaya until the restaurant it was easy. He only had to walk down the street. So he had to wait two more years. And even when he called her up, she seemed very stressed and wanted him to finish quickly because of her work. She often told him he had to watch Tania and it was not possible that all of them stayed in the restaurant the whole day.

Fortunately Kenny sometimes could make it to come home for a quick lunch and then had a sandwich for Yami as well. And Yami more and more liked to play with Kani who sometimes joined her father for lunch. With Kenny's two boys, however, he did not like to play much as they called him *Yamimimi* as if he was a little cat and not a boy. With their twelve and fourteen years they were already big and Yami thought they would surely soon leave their house and marry. And once, because he had cried because of Kenny's boys' teasing him again and again, Kenny had promised him to take him to the hospital or in his private practice once in a while and that, if he wanted to, he could be useful there.

And one evening, shortly thereafter, he overheard Denia and Kenny discussing about family matters. That is how he learned that his mother had a new partner who joined her



sometimes for the night in the room she had rented in Pattaya.

However, his love for Kenny in a way compensated for the lack of care from the side of his mother. Denia was not very fond of Kenny's idea to take Yami to the children's station so that he could find new play mates there.

—But ..., if he catches a disease, you are going to be responsible!

—And what do you think of the present situation? Denia is too busy and has a new love affair that totally seems to absorb her. Yami is here with Tania and the maid all day long, the poor boy ...

And some time later that day, mother had come home to talk with him, and he was surprised.

—Well, Yami, I find Kenny's idea very good, and agree with it, to take you to the hospital to play with children on the children station.

And she had added that of course he was going to meet only those children that had no infectious diseases.

—And who knows, perhaps one day you'll be a famous doctor as well, she had added, and that surprised Yami even more.



But the really nice perspective for Yami was Kenny's idea to take Kani as well to the children's station, so that Kani and Yami would be together every day from now on. And mother had assured him her new partner was going to take good care of Tania so that she did not have to stay with the maid all day long. Yes, Yami agreed. Tania was too small to be a real play mate for him, and from Kani he could learn so much, and she was so kind to him!

And there would be many more children ...

And when his mother left back to the restaurant, Denia, for the first time, took him on her lap and kissed him, calling him *my little Yami*. And that he was replacing the two boys now because they had become too big and independent and went for playing billiard every day after school. And Non had made a sour face as he had thought Denia had given *him* the first choice! But Yami thought that Non had nothing to complain about as he was around Denia all day long in the restaurant.

Kenny also had spoken of a trip to Chiang Mai in order to visit the new hospital and that he was going to take his new *assistants* Kani and Yami with him. And everybody had laughed at that expression and Denia asked amused if Kenny was now married with a princess and her four-year old teddy bear? And everybody laughed even more and Denia added sourly that under these unlucky conditions she was going to



take another partner in Pattaya, preferably rich and good-looking, European and white ...

Of course, nobody had taken that remark serious and Kenny had kissed Denia whereupon she declared her remark had of course been 'a joke'. But Yami intuitively felt that she had been serious but did not want to admit it. And he also found that in some way it was correct that Kenny was married with Kani, even though it was not true in the real sense, but well in the sense that Kenny was also married with his job, with his hospital, with his patients and all the children on the children's station, and even with the personnel. Because Kenny did all so well and was so loved by everybody! Yami felt this strongly but he never told anybody because he feared to be ridiculed.

Only Kenny would understand him probably and Yami thought that one day, when Kenny came back in the evening, he wanted to tell him, when they were sitting in the bath together, that he felt he was married with Kenny ... And he was sure Kenny would not laugh at him and perhaps instead give him a long kiss on his lips. And Yami's heart was growing in joy at this perspective ...



III.

Dendra and Denia had become close friends. They were working hand in hand in the restaurant and were quite astonished about their sudden business success.

And fortunately there was *Toki* now, Dendra's new partner, who revealed to be a pearl and always was helping out in critical moments. He was still a young man, originally from Laos, ten years younger than Dendra, but he had been frustrated with his life, was unemployed for quite some time and also not very lucky with women.

Toki was very good-hearted and sensuous and wished to have a family, but most of the girls he had met were staying only a few nights, and Toki never figured why he was so unattractive for women. Some of his ex-girlfriends had married rich foreigners later on. Was it for the money only that they had married, or was it to feed their illegal children, or to have a better future?

And with Dendra all was different from the start. She was older but Toki was keeping up with that as on a feeling level, Dendra had much understanding and a tender love for Toki that he hadn't received from any of the younger women in his past. Besides that, Toki met many interesting people in the restaurant and that helped him leave the little restricted world of his former life, and his natural friendliness found a fertile soil to blossom. As they had a rather high percentage of fa-



lang among their guests, Toki's smile helped many a single European or American woman to feel comfortable for a lonely lunch or dinner, and these guests were recommending the restaurant, and the good service, to their friends. Thus, in one word, the situation was developing in exactly the way the fortune teller had predicted it.

The restaurant was fully booked for dinner, weeks in advance, and the profit margin constantly grew, but also the work. Dendra had bought a small apartment close to the restaurant and Denia was soon able to buy a beautiful condo close to the beach, and the women were going to be financially independent from their partners.

In addition, Denia's idea to invest some of the profit in real estate revealed to be a clever move. She was going to have one foot in the real estate business. Kenny congratulated her for her success and encouraged her to continue. He was very proud of Denia who, when he met her, had been a rather timid woman with seemingly low self-esteem, who had prostituted herself for some time because she had not found any other job. Kenny's positive and outgoing spirit had contributed to Denia's changing quite a bit along the way, and her leaving prostitution again.

Contrary to Dendra, Denia had not learnt any craftsmanship and without Kenny's loving support she would perhaps not have been able to abandon prostitution.



In hindsight, Denia did not want to miss those years of hardship because they had taught her how to cope with reality, and she had learnt a lot about people. In Denia's worldview *people were life* as no life could be without people. And what really *affected* Denia was the destiny of those women who really suffered from being prostitutes, either because they were too old or too young, or because they got sick.

Only a small percentage among all prostitutes she knew were able to choose their partners; they were not too young, but just young, had baby-like faces without being babies, and were sexy without doing anything about it. The older ones had to take what they got, just for making a living. And most of those, because of their constant depression, sank down in alcoholism and lost any self-esteem.

Denia sometimes thought she wanted to help women to get out of prostitution but she did not know how. Those Denia really wanted to care for were young prostitutes, female children on the verge of adolescence or slightly above, and orphans but were not accepted in institutions or foster homes because they were mentally disturbed, ugly, handicapped, HIV positive or heroin-addicted or despised gasoline sniffers.

Now Denia was able to help, as she had some financial means she did not have before, but she was not sure where to begin? Only one thing Denia knew: Kenny would not have objected her projects or initiatives as he broadly agreed with her



humanitarian ideas. Sometimes Denia gave a grant for the *Pattaya Orphanage* and a new organization for supporting prostitutes that offered viable options for them to leave prostitution if they wanted to.

She received not only fervent letters of gratitude, but also invitations to join various women's committees, and she effectively became member of one that she found more unconventional, progressive and younger in spirit than most, and less tradition-minded. But Denia's secret love were those little girls around puberty who worked in some of the more discreet bars in Pattaya that were now constantly molested by police raids. And sometimes, in the late evening, some of those young girls came to the restaurant, to thank her in person. And that was sometimes not easy to handle as the restaurant was filled with *falang* and Denia did not want to lose her good reputation. She tried to manage the situation and presented them, depending on their age, as her cousins or nieces.

This is how, without any bad will, Kenny and Denia had come to live their own lives, as both their personal evolution was in best waters. And they were wistful enough to not *sentimentalize* their marriage and instead accept their new reality. For both found in their new endeavors and contacts real fulfillment and happiness, and not just financial reward. In their hearts, they both were idealists and that was what perhaps



had most glued them together. Compared to the power of their spiritual and human interests, the loss of intimacy was no crux for them to bear. Spiritually they were still pulling the same rope, and there was never a real paradigm fight as in so many couples that they saw going through divorce all around them.

When Kenny strengthened his unusual relationships with Kani and Yami, Denia was forging intimate bonds with a few of the little prostitutes that came to see her on a more regular basis and that loved her with an almost child-like passion, as a mother, as a sister and as an intimate friend. That is how Denia got to know more and more details about Pattaya's most intimate night life, a knowledge she could use very profitably in her conversations with her guests, and that was very well rewarded financially ...

Which was Pattaya's best disco, which ones were frequented by the youngest and most gorgeous prostitute girls, which ones had the best *Sushi* for Japan-lovers? Of course, *Mother Denia* knew. And who knew where the most delicate little girls could be found for non-penetrative sex? Mother Denia. Which Italian restaurant was open after ten thirty? Which bars served German *Schnapps* and Russian *Vodka* after midnight? Mother Denia knew, and reserved a place in the really crowded night hours and did not forget to call the taxi



for her guest. This is how Denia ensured to build and serve a really *sworn* clientele that came back time and again.

Soon Denia hired a young girl that because of a gynecological problem had to give up prostitution and that awoke in Denia's heart a most passionate love. The girl was going to live with her, and Kenny cured her free of charge in collaboration with a gynecologist-friend who equally found her most attractive and cute and who did not want to take a penny for his extended consultations. As a result, the girl was eventually cured from what revealed to be a deadly disease; but an intimate problem remained that forced the girl to give up prostitution for good and search for another job. Denia found her very presentable, and extraordinarily gifted for small talk, and thus hired her as a reception hostess for the entry service of her restaurant.

Now Denia had excellent restaurant staff to nourish her old dream to re-enter her career as a fashion designer. She had the financial backup now to launch a daring new career as a freelance design consultant, and without being forced to be a work slave for one of the larger fashion design corporations. It was really like a miracle as still some months ago all this seemed to be a dream with all she had around her neck.

Now, with Toki's help, she could open a small boutique where she could launch a first collection with a few *Décolletés* and *Prêt-à-Porter* that she designed in her own personal style



that was a quite daring mix between French classic and Thai avant-garde. Yes, it was a daring perspective: she would sell exclusively her own models, and not anything fashioned by other designers.

When she told Dendra about her project, she was slightly apprehensive. How would Dendra *understand and judge* her love for young girls?

But her fears were unjustified. Dendra was exhilarated of joy and promised to tell some very young *Go-Go Girls* about the project, and let them come to visit her in the restaurant.

They came a few days later and daringly penetrated into Denia's private apartment and let accidentally fall down their dresses. How would Mother Denia *bite*, after all ...?

Standing there naked in the small room, they teased each other to be *Lesbian* and wondered which one Mother Denia would *bite first* ...?

Denia was electrified. An new, unknown feeling pulsated in her body like a mad serpent, upon which vague remembrances of childhood came up, memory of a little girl that at that time she had loved with a secret passion full of restraint, and the young girl that presently stood in front of her so surprisingly resembled her childhood love that Denia remained arrested in a deep moment of silence. Her mouth dried up



and as she saw that the friends of the girl she loved chuckled about her, she decided to keep her feelings for herself.

—*What do you want, girls?* she uttered, and her question came out more harshly than intended. I'm not one of those fat *falang* women who come here to eat girlies for dessert. Do you see that? So what do you want, after all?

—My name is *Dendra*, said the small slim girl, not at all intimidated. And yours?

Denia choked, then she laughed her belly out, actually so strongly that Dendra came into the room. When she saw the funny princesses, she also began to laugh. And then Toki entered the room and when he saw the naked little girl, he got big eyes. Eventually Yami entered the room, went straight to the little prostitute and then around her, watching her small bottom for quite some time, in silence, whereupon he left the room saying:

—This one is too old for me ...

The girl tried to catch Non to slap him, but she was held up by Toki.

—Hey, princess, the teddy bear is right. You are the *goddess of love* ... and I wait for you in my dreams.



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Then everybody learnt that Denia simply had asked the girls to give a nude show to Dendra so that she might have more inspiration for sexy fashion design.



IV.

For Yami a new life began.

The hospital was an awesome place, with all those men and women in white skirts, and the strange smell everywhere in the halls and rooms.

This smell scared him a little as it reminded him of injections, and injections he feared as hell. But Kani tried to calm him down with the argument that injections were given only to those who are ill and Yami was not ill. Whereupon he had asked Kenny if he gave injections also to children, in their bottom or elsewhere when they were ill?

Kenny replied sometimes it was not easy because the children were so afraid, but when injections were given the right way, they did not hurt at all.

—What, then, is the right way? Yami asked, curious.

—You are going to learn this later, Yami, Kenny replied.

—Would you also give *me* an injection if I was ill, Yami insisted.

—Yes, if it was needed for your treatment, otherwise not, Kenny said, calmly.

—Otherwise not? Yami still insisted.



—No, otherwise not, Kenny ended, with a smile. Except you wanted it, he added jokingly.

—Oh no, no, Yami exclaimed! But I think when *you* do it, I won't be afraid while I am very scared of it generally. But I'm sure it will be different when *you do it*, because I *trust* you.

Kenny tenderly caressed over Yami's hair and added, as if talking to himself:

—Sometimes I can't succeed without injections, while it hurts me when children are so afraid, and cry. For example in the case of child asthma ...

—Of ... what?

—Asthma is an illness that affects the lung ...

—Is that ... here? Yami asked and put his hand in Kenny's shirt to caress his chest.

—Yes, underneath there. The lung is in the chest and it serves to take the oxygen from the air. And when people have asthma this process is not functioning well.

—And you have children here who have asthma? Yami inquired.

—Yes, unfortunately. Very severe cases even.

—And you need to give them injections?



—Yes, in most cases.

—And you think that when I talk to the children, they are less afraid?

Kenny looked at Yami with big eyes and exclaimed:

—But, boy, this is exactly my idea, you see! I thought that when Kani and you talk or joke with the children, or play with them while I prepare the injections, they will take it with much less fear. This is a wonderful idea, my prince, and you guessed it before I was telling you about it. Can you read my thoughts?

And Kenny gave Yami a big kiss and Yami was very proud because Kenny had called him *my prince* and because now he had an important function in the hospital at Kenny's side, at least for the severe cases. And Yami began to pull out some hair from Kenny's chest and Kenny began chasing after him around the table.

—Ah, that hurts, wait I will give you what you deserve, little savage!

And as they were chasing each other, a nurse entered the room and remained arrested in the door when she saw them. Doc looked at her with an open shirt and his hair in distress. And in front of him was a little boy who jumped up like a mad monkey, trying to bite off some hair from his chest.



Kenny quickly put the shirt back in his trousers and made a remark about the *naughty boy*. Then he rushed off to the children's station to prepare some injections. And took Yami with him to present him to the children.

At the door, Yami grabbed the nurse under her skirt, as he used to do it with the little girls in Buriram, but this time he was facing a different reaction.

The nurse slapped him right in the face. Yami cried and Kenny took him on his arms and kissed him. The nurse looked very angry and went off for another job.

—Stupid cow! Yami shouted after her when she went off to take the lift.

—Well, Kenny commented, you are going to get similar treatments from other women as well if you continue doing this ...

When they entered the children's station, Kani received them with news regarding *Kao* and *Tek*, her brothers.

—Daddy, she exclaimed, these guys are on the phone and want to ask you something important.

—What? Kenny asked somewhat angrily, they know that I don't want to be disturbed in my work.

Upon which he took over the phone from Kani.



—What ...? What are you telling me, boy? But ..., are you crazy, boy? You are calling from school, from the *toilet*, using your handphone? Very smart, indeed.

And you are right in an exam and want to ask me some questions about it. You must be *mad*, completely mad, boy! I am supposed to know the solution of your math exam, very *poetic* indeed! Have you turned completely crazy? You know that I was zero in maths in school ..., what, you did not know that, then you know it *now*. Period.

Upon which he hung up the phone, looking up the wall and breathing heavily.

—Now, I *know* how people get asthma! he sighed.

The phone rang again.

—If I can help *at least* regarding geography? Well, as far as it concerns *Thailand*, perhaps. But otherwise, I don't know much of the world. What? If the Indian Ocean borders at the Pacific Ocean or at the Atlantic? Well, you stupid asses, every child know this, I guess. What?

—Kani, please tell me, does the Indian Ocean border at the Pacific Ocean or at the Atlantic?

—At the Pacific of course, Daddy.



—Of course, Kani, I just wanted to test your geography knowledge.

—Do you listen, boys! At the *Atlantic* of course! Every child knows that. Okay, no thanks, and good luck!

Wow, Kenny exclaimed, it's a good thing to have a clever daughter!

—But Daddy, you have spoiled the boy's exam.

—What ..., why do you say that?

—Because you told them the Indian Ocean bordered at the *Atlantic*.

—*Did I?* Well, you see how people can make mistakes. It's human, after all.

Upon which they entered a treatment chamber in which the *angry* nurse was sitting already and asked *Doctor Tsanaga* if he needed a 'battery of helpers' just for administering a little girl an injection?

—Dear Madam, Kenny replied in the same formal tone, this here is my *daughter* and that one there is my *adoptive son*, and they are not a 'battery' as you pleased to tell them, but my *assistants*, understood?

The nurse stood up, went out and slammed the door behind her.



—Very good! Kenny commented, with a smile. And what is your name, little girl?

—*Daeng*, replied the girl, shyly smiling.

The child was very thin and her voice was not more than a peeping. She was around five years old.

—Just a moment, little girl. You are here to get an injection, right?

—Yes, Doctor, replied the girl. This is what the nurse told me.

—But ..., *Daeng*, have you been *examined* already?

—No, Doctor.

—Well, then, my dear girl, you may play with these children of mine, Kani and Yami, while I will go to put *some things straight* in this mad hospital that serves me children for injections like dummies or hamburgers, and without having examined them beforehand. I am not a butcher, after all!

Kenny ran out of the room, furious and highly upset.

V.

Dendra and Toki eventually found a small shop, after a long search. It was in a central location in Pattaya, not far from the restaurant and also quite close to Denia's condo.



The rent was not too high and thus the risk was limited if their project should fail down the road. Dendra had worked very hard lately, even at night, after her hours in the restaurant, until she fell in her bed in the early morning, exhausted.

She held in her hand the tiniest skirt she ever saw in order to copy the design on a sheet of paper, as she used to do it almost daily, adding on to her design collection, and actually more for exercising her skill and keeping it alive. Dendra had given the skirt to her, her favorite prostitute girl, a tiny adolescent that she loved with all her heart and soul. And it was the tiniest girlie she had ever seen and in her mind she wondered how this girl could receive a man's penis in her mini-vagina?

And when Dendra drew the sketch, she was thinking of her *first time* that had been rather disagreeable but that now, in hindsight, instilled an intense erotic sensation in her. She had been *eight* at that time. Only eight. And he had taken her in the rice fields, and his penis had been rather big. And it had hurt her.

And afterwards they had met many more times and they did it always same way, *short and intense*. He was a very strong young guy and sexually unendingly demanding. And eventually she put an end to that affair as the guy seemed little cultivated to her and she did not know what to talk with him.



But in hindsight all this seemed very *interesting* to her, so many years thereafter. And she even went farther back in her childhood memories and remembered when she had masturbated for the first time, afraid of her bigger sisters, that were now married in Australia, and who were sleeping left and right of her. And even now when she had sex with Toki who was a fervent lover, she remembered that brutish country boy, and in some way Toki looked a bit like him. But she wondered if Toki might not one day take a younger mate, one of the many young girls that stream into Bangkok every month to sell their beauty, their smile and their virginity? She decided the best was that if ever it was going to happen, she better never knew about it and Toki keeping it for himself.

Toki bent over her and kissed her hair.

—You work too much, darling. Let us go to bed. Tomorrow is another day. And ... I am very hard-on as well ...

She let it all go, content and tired, and gave herself over to her lover.

They were fortunate to find a small apartment close to the atelier, in a condo building near the one where Denia lived. Eventually they could leave that small room that at the start in Bangkok was ideal but that now together with Tania and Toki simply was too small. Sometimes Yami had stayed a weekend with his mother and then there was really no more



space for moving a finger. Non was very attached with Denia and spent the nights with her. As Kenny stayed longer in Chiang Mai than intended, Non was very close with Denia and happy as never before. He seemed very intelligent as with his only four years and a half he already could read and write Thai fluently, and greeted foreigners in the street with *Hello* or *How are you?* He simply had picked it all up by himself. Denia did not give him to the Kindergarten as she found the way children were treated there ridiculous and artificial. And besides that, Toki and Non had become friends which helped the boy cope with the absence of his father. Toki was very good-hearted and soft with children, and always had time for them. Non felt like a little king in the atelier and now had all he needed for drawing and paper folding, and he could be absorbed for hours to scribble around on various sorts of paper that his mother used for her modeling designs – and thus sometimes he went too far and Dendra was angry with him. Whereupon he used to just leave and run down the road to Denia.

While it had been interesting in the restaurant for him, now Non preferred to spend his evenings with his mother and Toki in the atelier. Soon they would open their small boutique, but the decoration was still not ready and Dendra did not want to open before all was in place. Toki found that a little perfectionist and he suggested they could already begin selling some of the cheaper models. But Dendra thought farther



down the road. She argued a client did not buy only an object but also a shopping experience and when that experience was perfectly satisfying the client would come back, even when there was not or not yet a need for buying. Therefore, Dendra thought, the ambience of the shop was highly important and could not be let over to hazard.

Dendra wanted to create a *positive space*, as she expressed it. Dendra fully trusted her intuition and experience and patiently waited until all the decoration was ready. And when they were having their *Grand Opening*, Denia came in and stood still a moment, obviously surprised:

—Wow ... yes. Here I'd come even if I intended to buy nothing for there is a great chance that in such a positive atmosphere I'd change my mind ...

Dendra nodded. Toki went to the kitchen to make coffee and in that moment the first client entered. And indeed, she had no intention to buy anything and just shared in the coffee that Toki served, wanting to rush to an appointment and come back the next day.

It was actually Non that held her back, as she was again and again taking up the boy to kiss him, and finally bought not only the whole collection but ordered two more of which she already paid half the price as a deposit.



This unusual client revealed to be a representative of one of the largest fashion stores in Bangkok and she had twenty years of experience in finding exactly what she needed, and for a good price. And so both parties were winning in that deal, Dendra in getting her shop running and having a decent price for her first collections as a beginner in her business, and the agent in finding a highly original product that was of excellent quality but *relatively cheap* compared to what she would have had to invest in the same quality with well-known designers.

That evening all were joining for a luxurious dinner with Denia in the restaurant and even the little Go-Go girls from across the street had joined which Denia had allowed them under the condition to *not take off their jackets* because thereunder they were as good as naked, and that could have displeased some of her rather mid-aged and quite conservative *falang* guests. Yet that night, funnily enough, the restaurant was visited exclusively by males and a few of them were Thai, and addressed and teased the girls, payed a round of drinks and invited them to take off their jackets. What they did after being absolved by *Mother Denia*, and Non went to their table and grabbed one of the girls between her legs – and got a hearty slap on his bottom as a reply. Non retaliated with another, more violent grab that made the girl jump up in revolt which was of course triggering laughter, especially so as, when the girl was standing there, Non went around her and



daringly contemplated her bottom. The girl really became angry at him and asked him to apologize. He grinned at her and replied:

—Okay, I will. But only if you kiss me.

The girl first refused but then suddenly smiled and took the boy on her lap and kissed him intensely on his mouth. Then she took her head back yet Non remained in the same position, with his eyes closed and a Buddha-like smile on his lips. Upon which he slowly opened his eyes and whispered:

—*Now I have apologized you ...*

And that was the height of the evening and the audience applauded and bathed in laughter and the servants got large tips, and everybody that night, except Non, had got a strong dose of Thai whiskey. Non carried Tania on his arms when they went home and kissed her again and again on her lips, yet she was not aware of anything as she was sleeping since long.

VI.

The work in Chiang Mai triggered a complete change in Kenny's life. It was as if all had been ready for that change long before but that Kenny had not allowed himself to build awareness of it until he also physically left Bangkok and his familiar environment. Kenny himself did not yet plainly un-



derstand what was going on. It was like the birth of a new personality, as if he had left behind an old skin that was no more needed and rather impeded his further growth.

This change was on two levels at once, the professional, the private and the spiritual. Since quite some time Kenny had observed that he was losing interest in his adult patients and at the same time was more and more interested to work on the children's station.

He simply felt energized when he worked with children, and comparing himself with some pediatricians he knew, he found he had a certain talent for pediatrics while it had not been his major when he had studied medicine. And yet all this had not manifested when Kenny was younger. He had majored in *surgery* but now felt he had to accept his profound shift in professional orientation and make the best out of it.

And interestingly, since Kani was more closely living with him and around him all day, he felt that this part in himself that he had not known before, every day received more light and more awareness and was growing like a plant in the sun.

In some way, *emotionally*, the work with children was more rewarding than the same work with adults, and Kenny observed that he took a greater personal part in the suffering of children, especially those with diseases such as asthma. In



addition, he was more and more critical regarding the traditional way of treating asthma, that is, to inject cortisone

Kenny thought that this medication was only providing temporary relief but it was by no means treating the causes of asthma. Kenny felt intuitively that asthma was a purely psychosomatic illness where psychic tension somatizes in the body so that *vital sympathetic muscles*, such as the heart muscle and the bronchial muscles were not *pulsating* sufficiently, and thus lack elastic strength as a result; this namely because the whole muscular systems is short of bioenergetic charge.

Kenny knew that his view was daring and alternative and he therefore did not reveal it to his colleagues in the hospital as he risked to be called schizophrenic.

Whatever one may think about my idea, one thing is sure: what we are practicing can only be improved as it is a bottomline approach: it is by no means effective in treating the disease; instead we are treating the symptoms. That is what Kenny thought over and over and this insight made his work in Bangkok more and more frustrating.

This was different in Chiang Mai as the hospital there was headed by a rather wise elder doctor that Kenny highly respected since many years. Dr. Cheng actually had become well-known in Thailand and even some other Asian countries



because of his long-term research of Thai traditional medicine.

Among the various healing approaches Dr. Cheng found were practiced since ancient times in North Thailand and at the borders to Laos and Cambodia, and besides the immense knowledge about healing with plants, Dr. Cheng especially focused on finding out the truth behind an intriguing form of *wholebody massage* that he believed originated from Japan and had come to Thailand through Shinto monks who practiced this very effective massage for healing themselves and others.

And Dr. Cheng further found that some of the native tribes in Northern Thailand had maintained the knowledge about this massage and developed it in their own unique way.

In fact, the massage was considered less as a healing but predominantly as a prophylactic approach to holistic health.

And for that purpose, Dr. Cheng found after many years of research, it was absolutely fantastic.

The method, he found, was based upon stimulating the endocrine glands which leads in turn to a stimulation and highly effective improvement of the immune system.



Furthermore, Dr. Cheng reported in his many publications that the massage raised blood circulation and contributed to keeping the cells astonishingly clean of free radicals.

Kenny had only studied Western medicine and possessed as good as no knowledge of traditional healing; for years he therefore could not believe what he heard and read about Dr. Cheng's research. He had read it all, full of admiration, but he was at pains with applying any of these insights in his own work. When he met Dr. Cheng in Chiang Mai, he openly expressed his skepticism as he knew that Dr. Cheng who was a long-term friend, would not take it personal, and his elder colleague replied softly:

—Dr. Tsanaga, I know that you are skeptical and I would probably be skeptical in your place as well, having received your professional training and being on the level of knowledge that you are. I can only assure you that I can prove what I am writing about. My healing successes using the *clap massage* are verifiable scientifically, and under strict conditions. In my experience, the massage is especially effective with children and this, in my opinion, because their endocrine glands are still more active and more easily activated than those of adults, and thus they can be brought to maximum efficiency in a relatively short treatment period. With elders, this is not so obvious because most of the energy channels of the body are clogged or simply dysfunctional.



—But you are not going to tell me, Kenny exclaimed in a desperate mood, striking with his palm over his sweaty front, that clapping over their naked bodies will have healed those children from asthma. This would be ... excuse me, ... absolutely mad and unbelievable!

—Sorry, my dear and respected colleague, Dr. Cheng replied calmly, this is indeed so and if it does not fit in your Occidental school of medicinal wisdom, this is not my fault nor yours, nor the fault of traditional healing. It is the fault of a certain establishment that does not like to see things changing because this change would mean high financial losses for most of our pharma multinationals worldwide.

You know about these facts as well as I do. All intelligent physicians know that, if we do this job as we are supposed to do it, we are salespeople for the multinational pharma industry, and not healers in the true sense of this term ...

—Dr. Cheng, I have always respected and even admired you and I have read all of your publications, but this is too much for me to bear. I fear not only my professional but also my philosophical worldview risks to crash when I get deeper into this ...

—So ... then, please let it crash. That is a good thing to happen! Dr. Cheng replied, with a good-hearted smile on his lips.



As Kenny seemed to be deeply absorbed in his thoughts and did not reply anything, Dr. Cheng continued:

—Perhaps ... you should take a vacation, let's say a sabbatical month, to get a certain distance to your present situation. What then might happen is that your *professional* way of thinking might be changed back to your *private* way of thinking. Your *common sense*, I mean. Please answer me honestly only one single question: what exactly *do* the medicaments that you give for treating child asthma?

After a long silence, Kenny replied softly that the medicaments relaxed the chest and bronchial muscles, opened the blood vessels and accelerated the blood circulation so that more oxygen could enter the lungs.

—The problem is, he concluded, in a depressed mood, that this is a very temporary thing to happen. So in injecting a dose of *cortisone* that I can responsibly apply to a child, the lungs open perhaps for an hour or two. And after that short span of time, we face the same desperate situation as before. And if I wanted to keep the muscles relaxed, I had to inject more and more cortisone which at the end of the day would severely endanger the child or even lead to long-lasting damage or death. So what I do is something completely crazy. I drive out the Devil with Beelzebub ...



—You have said this *very well*, indeed, the old man replied, respectfully smiling, so please let me now explain how the clap massage exactly impacts upon our organism. I say intently *organism* and not *body* because the massage affects the *energy body* as well, and not only our physical body. Let's not forget, first of all, that nature is and remains a mystery and that Western medicine pretends a knowledge that it does not possess. By denying the mystery of nature instead of trying to understand it, it has replaced the wisdom of modest but effective healing with an ineffective treatment of symptoms that it arrogantly promotes as *health care*. Western medicine never bothered about what is *health!* What it does is not health care but illness care. It does not heal, but administrate sickness, as that is what brings money ...

—Has traditional medicine found what is the true origin or cause of asthma? Kenny inquired.

—Certainly. As with all disease, asthma is a dysfunction of the plasmatic vibration of the organism as a whole. It comes about through repressed fear with surfacing auto-destructive psychic content that drives the patient into a form of unconscious suicide. Probably there are also heavy guilt feelings mixed into this complex of negative sensations that is located on the subconscious level. They prohibit themselves living by prohibiting themselves breathing.

—So it's rather a psychic problem, right?



—My dear and respected colleague, I really ask you to do away with this dualism, psychic-physical, psyche-soma, body and mind, ratio and emotions, and all this nonsense that is the result of our highly schizoid Western-based professional training. In nature nothing is split apart in dualistic opposites. Only in our intellectualized mind it is, a mind that is since long alienated from nature's functional thinking.

—Please tell me, what do you mean by *functional thinking*?

—Functional thinking is holistic, not dualistic. It understands intuitively and not through logical thought processes.

It is located in the present while thought is located in the past. It therefore is ideally apt to deal with present problems while thinking can only deal with past problems and is typically unable to solve those of the present.

—So what do you think is *disease*, described from your point of view?

—Can we know what disease is if we have not previously asked what is *health* and how we define health?

Is health merely the absence of illness or is it something like a heightened state of wellness? Do you see my point?

—Yes ..., yes, Kenny replied, all this seems true to me in my *heart*. But my mind revolts against it. So let's get to some



results. Can we say that you see asthma as a psychosomatic and functional disease?

—Yes. And therefore it can be cured only when we treat the psychosomatic integrity of the organism, and not just an organ or two, and not just the muscles or reflexes. This different point of departure is exactly why traditional medicine is more intelligent and more effective in really *curing* disease.

Until that moment Kenny's mind was disturbed by an inner critic that constantly tried to get his attention back to what he was conditioned to think and reason. But the simple and unpretentious manner of Dr. Cheng and a certain predisposition that Kenny had developed over many years of frustration in practicing Western-based medicine in a culture that has nothing to do with Western values, allowed him now to let these arguments sink in his mind and soul. And he *instantly* became aware that it was *fear*, indeed the fear of a mental revolution and a *revolution of his whole life*, that was the reason of his formerly resisting a deeper understanding of traditional asthma healing, based on the insights Dr. Cheng gained from studying holistic medicine. And this insight led to a very precise decision!

Dr. Cheng looked at his younger friend with a serious expression. He was very happy that Kenny had come to visit his hospital again and to exchange with him further on a subject they were controversial about since several years. As



among his colleagues, Kenny was the only one who at least listened to him with his full attention, Dr. Cheng was saddened by the fact that Kenny always had refused to become his right hand, and this despite the chaotic situation in Bangkok's largest hospital and in the face of the many frustrations that Kenny had to keep up with on a daily level. This led to the old doctor's feeling that, despite his fame, he was going to remain alone, instead of having a young doctor at his side who would eventually take over and continue his important research. In fact, Dr. Cheng had become somebody like the Freud of Thai pediatrics, and like Freud he was a scientist of absolute honesty and unspotted honor. At no time was he hiding the contempt he had for Western medicine; besides, his successes in healing child asthma spoke for themselves.

But his fame also had a negative side: because of people hoping to get a cure even for hopeless cases, Dr. Cheng received all those extremely severe cases that in other hospitals would have been rejected upfront – and this made his hospital's running and administration almost impossible to supervise for one single director. What Dr. Cheng was looking for was a young, highly qualified and enthusiast colleague who would be ready to take an important and responsible position at his side and who would help him manage the hospital. In addition, this person would have to have a big heart for natives and for children.



The only person he knew in Thailand, who had all these qualifications, was Dr. Kenny Tsanaga. At some moments, facing Kenny's intransigence had depressed him. Of course, was it only about his own little self, Dr. Cheng could have comfortably retired at the height of his career as he had all he needed for life – and that was not much, despite the fact that he originated from a very fortunate family that was in some ways related to the royal clan. But for Dr. Cheng, what counted in his life was his research and the children, and the need to preserve their native environment as much as possible during a time where the opposing forces were as destructive as never before.

Dr. Cheng was sought after by a mountain tribe close to Chiang Mai. This tribe most profited from his support since about five years. They were threatened by extinction because their children, for reasons not yet fully known, were particularly affected by a deadly form of child asthma. Dr. Cheng's hypothesis as to the etiology of this dramatic child death rate were the almost cataclysmic changes in the world ecology and especially the composition of the stratosphere. This led in Dr. Cheng's analysis to a high yet almost invisible air pollution in the higher layers of the atmosphere and a negative impact from the stratosphere toward the atmosphere. Thus, the result was in Dr. Cheng's opinion that there was actually a two-fold air pollution; one that could be called upward pollution and that was through polluted air coming up from the ground to



the mountainous regions and a downward pollution from the stratospheric regions down to the upper regions of the atmosphere. And it was this two-fold effect that made the pollution extremely dangerous for the human lung within certain layers of the atmosphere under specific atmospheric conditions.

The phenomenon, Dr. Cheng found, was by no means limited to Thailand but there may be specific atmospheric conditions in certain atmospheric layers in North Thailand that were responsible for the fact that the phenomenon was producing there more than elsewhere. Dr. Cheng estimated several millions of dollars the cost for a thorough research on this complex matter, and he was convinced that without a collaboration of medical and environmental experts, in further collaboration with governmental authorities, no effective help could be provided for the natives afflicted within the next two decades. Thus they would simply die, virtually being suffocated by modern civilization.

With these children Dr. Cheng's healing methods were particularly appreciated and successful as these natives had a thorough and intelligent understanding of nature's wisdom. Somehow, Dr. Cheng reasoned, the source of this intuitive understanding could only be located in the collective unconscious of their tribal tradition or their racial adherence.



Kenny knew all this as well, but only by then he became aware of the enormously important impact of his intuitive knowledge. In a moment of deep awareness, he got up from his sofa, went to the window and looked down at the hospital's park where he saw several native children playing.

Kenny now felt that his former behavior regarding Dr. Cheng and his research had been completely irrational. The intuitive intelligence of his heart however knew from the first moment that Dr. Cheng did what was exactly right and that for him, Kenny, there was no task more fascinating than to work jointly with this wonderful man.

Why was he blocked for several years, reacting rather cool and aloof toward Dr. Cheng's repeatedly offering him a premium position in Chiang Mai's hospital? Why had he continued the rather boring and ineffective work in Bangkok despite his better knowledge? And why had he not followed his strong inner voice that told him that his vocation, despite his original studies, was in the area of pediatrics and not in surgery?

Kenny thought it was the time to take a responsible decision here and then. Still absorbed by the profound revolution of his consciousness, he heard Dr. Cheng inviting him for tea. They sat down again and silently watched the nurse serving the tea on a little bamboo table. From the window hot



and perfumed air, mixed with happy children voices and bird song penetrated in the spartanly furnished room.

Dr. Cheng's face and ears were extraordinarily long and let him appear as a traditional Buddhist scholar rather than a modern physician. Something *ascetic* irradiated from him and one could imagine him appear more naturally in the yellow monk sarong than the white coat of the pediatrician. With obvious delight he drank the green tea, inviting his colleague to take some of the cookies served on a little wooden plate.

The tea had a soothing and calming effect upon Kenny's excited nervous system. He felt that he was terribly tense and that since weeks he had not really relaxed for one night or only a moment. He felt infinitely tired. Suddenly he thought of Kani – and of Denia. And of the boys.

—I would like to ... tell you something ..., Kenny began, with obvious hesitation.

—Please, dear Dr. Tsanaga, said the old physician softly, and with some reserve ...

—I think that by now I have something like a sudden clarity why I went that way, professionally, all those years, and why I refused to go that other way you suggested me ...



—Could you please explain this to me in more detail, Dr. Tsanaga? Dr. Cheng replied, smiling. It sounds a little enigmatic ...

—Yes, of course. I'd like to say that I accept your offer now. Simply that.

—Really? Dr. Cheng asked softly and suddenly his face brightened up, and he slightly bowed forward as if wanting to listen more attentively what was going to be said by his colleague from this moment.

—Yes. I must tell you that the arguments I have advanced time and again to justify my previous position simply are untenable. I knew that they were pretexts but I ... simply was not ready to make a decision that was going to have such a broad impact upon my life as a whole. Because it also impacts upon my family life ...

Dr. Cheng understood immediately and said in a tone of comprehension that all elements of this change would need and receive thorough consideration and that he would not miss to be of assistance in Kenny's moving to Chiang Mai, in changing the children's school, in finding proper housing and what was more needed. And that financially, all these additional costs would not need to be covered by Kenny's salary but would be regulated on top of it.



Kenny nodded and smiled. After a little moment, he said:

—The true reason for my decision, and why I could not take it earlier, is situated on a deeper level. It's actually a love affair ...

—Do not tell that to a *pediatrician*, my dear colleague, Dr. Cheng replied with humility. For me my profession is a love affair as well!

—I needed more time to understand that, to wake up to my true vocation, so to say. Only today I know that I should originally have majored in pediatrics at university.

—Often we do not know right away what our true way is, but in some way all we do somehow contributes to leading us there ...

—Yes, I think that's how it is. But what I don't quite understand is a *certain estrangement* that occurred between my wife and me, actually since she opened her restaurant in Pattaya. Now we are clear with each other that we will definitely separate when I begin working with you here in Chiang Mai. This came about without fight, without resentment. We have no more attraction for each other just because our interests today are divergent.



—Is that so? I understand. And, if I may ask an indiscrete question, do you have a little concubine?

—No. That's the strange point of it. Otherwise all could be explained easily. But it's not that way. I love my wife like a good friend and otherwise I dearly love my daughter Kani who became something like my right hand in Bangkok. And also, since quite some time, I have an adoptive child with the name of *Yami*. He is the son of a good friend who works with my wife in the restaurant, and as his father died of an accident, I became something like a second father for him.

—Wonderful story! I think these two children have *catalyzed* in you that important change in your life. The interesting thing is that this change goes beyond your mere professional orientation and affects equally your emotional life. But I think that is a plus, not a minus. It will give you even more vigor and more enthusiasm in your new position!

I say this not for selfish interests, believe me. I admit that for me you are the ideal hand for me here and it's a gift of the heavens that you eventually agreed to work here at my side. In whole Thailand I could not imagine finding a clone for you.

Kenny smiled at that remark and felt silently proud to be so highly estimated by somebody he considered as one of the wisest and most highly reputed members of the medical profession in Thailand, if not internationally.



—Please, Dr. Cheng, you are flattering me and that embarrasses me a little. I do not have your professional excellence and expertise and perhaps nobody in this country. And certainly not in pediatrics. And what regards your devotion for native children, let me tell you some of my colleagues in Bangkok venerate you like a saint ...

After a pause, Dr. Cheng, obviously surprised, said that he had not been aware of his fame and that he had considered himself always as some kind of marginal freak, socially handicapped and eternal *Peter Pan* ... And frankly, what people thought of him did not bother him very much. Because he was interested in children only, and hardly in any adults. Period. Then he added:

—By the way, have you come to Chiang Mai alone, or with your family?

—I came with Kani and Yami. They are downstairs, playing in the park. I did not bring them as I thought they might disturb ...

—No, not at all, Dr. Cheng exclaimed. Please ask them to come upstairs. I would like to make their acquaintance.

—Okay! I will go downstairs and take them here, Kenny ended and left the room.



—Wait, dear friend, Dr. Cheng said, and stood up. I would like to invite you and them for dinner this evening. I live here in the hospital, as you know, and I would be really pleased if you stayed here with the children. I would show you the hospital and after that we would without haste have a light dinner. I just have to advise my staff to prepare the meal.

Kenny accepted and as they went out in the park and he saw Kani and Yami, he felt something like a flame burning in his heart, a flame so hot that he feared it could destroy him and so strong that it burnt the smoke of his doubts and left his inner consciousness limpid and pure with delightful clarity. He knew that he, Kani and Yami would move very soon to Chiang Mai and that here, together, they would create a new daring and incredibly beautiful reality.

VII.

The next day, Kenny called his wife to tell her he extended his stay in Chiang Mai. He wanted to talk with his boys to know how their exams had succeeded. And he heard they had passed. Tek had remembered that Daddy had been a zero in school not only in mathematics, but also in geography and that the Indian Ocean bordered at the *Pacific*. To be true, he had peeped into the exam sheet of his neighbor and then quickly went to the toilet to phone his brother. And Tek assured Kenny that they nonetheless believed him to be a *good doctor* because for being a doctor *one did not need mathe-*



matics or geography. Kenny told the boys that, as he carefully formulated it, he had some job to do in Chiang Mai's hospital, but he immediately felt that the boys did not regret his absence in any way. They had reached the age in which they began to build their own lives, had girlfriends and often went out in the evenings.

Tek who had a fine psychological sense guessed that his father would take Kani and Yami with him to Chiang Mai and that Mom would stay in the restaurant in Pattaya. And of course Tek was right and Denia was not unhappy either about Kenny's decision while she guessed he had found a concubine in Chiang Mai. And as such thing was rather a daily theme in Thailand, Denia did not worry, so much the more as, for mysterious reasons, her heart was lately rather attracted toward young go-go girls than adult men, and she was feeling happy with her life as it was and did not want to change it. The girls who came now regularly to the restaurant after the show, already formed a kind of fancy human inventory that pleased some male guests and let them come back again and again. And sometimes, of course, some of them left with a little girl at their hand, and Denia arranged the hotel or an apartment for short lease, and made a considerable profit on top of her profit with the restaurant.



Thus all events seemed to magically fit in each other, and there was only one problem left: Kani had to change school.

But that was not a tragedy either and had they asked Kani herself, she would have quit school, simply and undramatically, but Kenny was convinced that Kani later wanted to study at university, and thus would need to finish high school. And Kenny found a place for her in a nice school in Chiang Mai, and he was surprised to see that school life in Northern Thailand was still more relaxed than in Bangkok and that the old Siam, with its authentic lifestyle and peaceful togetherness was still alive here, while it was as good as dead in the capital.

And the Thai, in Dr. Cheng's opinion, really had lost their soul to the devil of modern civilization and had *sold out* their culture. Of course, he reasoned, there were nice temples and you could find excellent Thai food in international restaurants, but what about the crime rate in Bangkok, in a country that originally was one of the most peaceful in the world and where crime was minimal? And why was it that guests were bombarded, in every major restaurant, from television sets in every corner with American football *non-stop*? And what about the attitude of most Thai women to look nowadays at partner relations for financial outcome, or rather *income*? Dr. Cheng was disgusted with all that and he for that reason as



good as never visited Bangkok. And to make it even worse, somebody, during his last visit in the capital, had stolen his wallet out of his bag, and he had lost more than two thousand dollars that he had saved for buying a new laptop. He had made the trip to Bangkok only for the purpose of buying this laptop, and sadly had to return to Chiang Mai without one, as his private funds were managed in a bank in time deposits and he did not have enough cash besides what he had in his bag. And regarding education, Dr. Cheng was disgusted with modern schools that he called *nicely painted child prisons* and yet he knew that in original Thai culture that had survived in remote parts of his country, education was inspired by deep humanity and had a permissive spirit that was focused upon waking the child's deep enthusiasm for learning and self-development.

And for this spirit and the people who still kept it, Dr. Cheng had a deep sympathy, and that was why he stayed in Northern Thailand as there he found that spirit to be most alive. There most villagers still have time and possess the self-assurance that is grounded in an old and wise tradition; and they keep an inner smile that comes right from the heart and a certain innocence that is the result of living in accordance with nature rather than, as it is in modern culture, contrary to nature.



Of course, Dr. Cheng had noticed a growing number of tourists in Chiang Mai but he also saw that many of them were not quite the type of the brutish mass tourist but were searching something different, *more authentic* and more peaceful than what one usually finds in Bangkok, Pattaya or most of the holiday resorts in Southern Thailand.

And through acquaintances Dr. Cheng became aware that among these tourists were people who were renowned scientists or artists and that came to Thailand because of the residue of original Thai culture that still existed outside of the larger towns.

VIII.

The next morning Kenny got up early. He had never done Yoga but that morning when he stood at the window and took the fresh and spicy air deep in his lungs, he got the desire to learn a technique for unifying and pacifying body and mind. Ideally, he wanted to learn the *clap massage* that he knew Dr. Cheng was working with so effectively.

The children were still sleeping and Kenny went to take a shower. He was thinking of the evening spent with Cheng and how fascinated he and the children had listened to what the old doctor told them about his life and work.

Kenny found his colleague was a very interesting and yet charming man, and also the children were not at all bored to



stay at table for more than two hours. Today they were going to meet the children and get a first introduction into the massage by *Tanloki*, Dr. Cheng's young assistant, a native of the mountain tribe most of the children in the hospital belonged to. When Kenny had asked Dr. Cheng if the children could participate at the presentation, the old doctor was a bit reluctant at first and replied that everybody had to be *completely naked* who wanted to receive the treatment, and that the massage caused painful blue and green spots on the body when it was applied on top of clothing.

And Kenny had assured him that this was not a problem as his children were raised in a very natural manner and that nakedness was for them something spontaneous and joyful.

As Kenny now soaped his body, he did it much more consciously than ever before in his life and enjoyed the wellness of that simple daily body touch. The sound of running water woke the children up who, one after the other, joined Kenny under the shower, their eyes still half closed. Yami put his arms around Kenny's legs and asked for being soaped, but as he got soap in his eyes, he began to cry. Kenny cleaned his eyes and then took the boy on his arms like a baby, smiling, dancing around in the bathroom.

Kani saw the scene with some jealousy and instantaneously decided to wipe soap in her eyes to get the same soothing treatment. Yet Kenny's reaction was not as she had



expected. He admonished her that wiping soap in one's eye was dangerous and that she should not do it again. Upon which he nonetheless, despite the fact that she was already a big girl, carried her around like a baby, and after having carefully cleansed her eyes from any rest of soap.

And he did more than Kani had expected and put her, naked as she was, on the bed where he kissed her tenderly on her mouth. Kani grabbed the arms of her father and pulled him toward her, and in a moment of confusion her desire was aroused and she asked Kenny to kiss her again, and *more slowly ...*

IX.

Eighty children were in Dr. Cheng's hospital, most of them for asthma. The children were cared for by relatively young female and male nurses who disposed of rudimentary medical knowledge. But Dr. Cheng had treated all of them with the utmost respect and love which was the reason that they did better than they actually could: they were giving their ever best, not because of their salary but because they truly liked to work with Dr. Cheng and had a deep compassion for the suffering of the children.

This poor quality of the staff was one of the reasons that Dr. Cheng was convinced of needing a competent colleague



at his side to help him with personnel management and the difficult task of long-term medical training for the nurses.

Cheng was at pains to refuse a service when asked for help. And thus the number of poor children constantly grew that were simply left in his hospital because the parents *forgot* to pick them up, after they had given a wrong address when they had checked in the child. Cheng was therefore intending to build something like an orphanage adjacent to the hospital because these children took valuable space of the new ones who were waiting to get a place for treatment.

While it was seldom that parents simply abandoned their child with him, it was frequent that parents asked him to keep one or several of their children because they could not feed all of them and either had no knowledge about birth control or were against it for various reasons.

And Cheng was at pains to reject any such request for help and therefore his responsibilities grew with every day, and the situation became more than a little chaotic because Cheng alone was simply unable to manage such a complex situation in the long run.

One of these children was a young handsome native boy with the name of *Kirlio* that Dr. Cheng now presented to his guests. The ten-year old boy originated from a large family and several of his numerous brothers and sisters had been



asthma-victims and passed away prematurely. The remaining ones were still so numerous that it was a miracle how the parents could feed them all. Kirlio had been brought to the hospital when he was severely ill, but after he was cured no parent came to pick him up. An address they had left behind and where Dr. Cheng had written several times, revealed to be wrong. And when he already had accepted the fact to have another child to care for, then, one morning, Kirlio's mother was in the waiting room and quickly approached Dr. Cheng:

—Oh doctor, dear doctor, please agree to keep my boy here so that he may diligently work for you and can make his way. We are unable to care for him as we do not know how to care for the remaining ones ...

Cheng listened to her quietly and nodded whereupon the mother kneeled down in front of him, kissed his hand and thanked him many times. Dr. Cheng, who was not used to receiving open affection, except from children, was moved and tears came in his eyes. He still kept silent, until Kirlio's mother, suddenly ashamed, rushed to the door and then, before she went out, the old man said:

—Don't worry about Kirlio. He is fine here and we all love him. He is a wonderful boy and very helpful to me, indeed!



Now Kirlio met Kenny and his children and immediately felt strong sympathy for the *young doctor from Bangkok* who was so *handsome* and nice to the children.

—What is your name? asked Kirlio, before Cheng could present Kenny to him.

—My name is Kenny. And you are Kirlio, right?

—Yes. How did you know my name?

—Dr. Cheng told me.

—Did he tell you about me?

—Yes. He said that you live here and that you are for him like his own son.

—Did he say that, really?

—Yes.

—*That is very nice of him ...*, Kirlio ended and tenderly put his arms around the hips of the old man, pressing his head against his belly. Dr. Cheng put his arms around the boy's back. He said nothing. There was nothing to say.

—Hey, Kirlio, do you like to present us to the other children, Kani asked, feeling a strong attraction for the handsome boy.



—Yes, I'd be pleased, Kirlio replied and looked in Kani's face that he found very beautiful.

Suddenly he felt insecure, and kind of timid, while that never had happened before in the presence of girls.

—Yes, yes, Yami exclaimed and took Kirlio's hand. You will show us everything, come, come ...

Dr. Cheng said he would like to prepare the massage presentation and had thought to take Kirlio and a little girl as the patients. Kirlio, he explained further, had worked with these children since quite some time and there was no risk that they'd be afraid or timid. And it did not matter that Kirlio himself had already been healed as the massage was a very good prophylaxis for any kind of disease and thus beneficial for everyone.

Upon which the old doctor returned to his office and Kenny and the children continued their visit and were astonished at the amount of trust in this big family. Kenny silently wondered how much energy and wisdom Dr. Cheng must have invested to reach this level of effective communication and collaboration!

Dr. Cheng explained to Tanloki why and how they were going to organize the presentation and the boy found the idea excellent.



—*The new doctor has a good vibration!* he added softly, and Dr. Cheng knew that this was the highest remark of esteem a native was able to express regarding a non-native.

Tanloki had a highly developed paranormal sense which meant he also could see the aura of any being, human, animal, plant or inanimate. And according to the prevailing colors in the aura spectrum, he knew better than any psychiatrist how the person was dealing with her emotions.

—The vibration is peaceful, he calmly pursued, and there is no fear. This will be a good doctor for our children, Tanloki concluded. Then he put his hand on Dr. Cheng's shoulder and gazed in his eyes.

—Just like you, Doc!

Dr. Cheng slightly pulled the boy toward him and kissed him on his front.

—Tanloki, it's a good omen that you do begin to like Dr. Tsanaga. I expected it, to be frank, because I know him since many years while I of course do not have your paranormal capacities. I just have a quite good common sense. You know when you reach my age, you got a whole of a lot of experience with people!

Tanloki took the glasses off the old doctor's nose and kissed him straight on his mouth. Dr. Cheng said nothing. The



boy was slightly taller than the old man so that the latter had to raise his regard a little to see his face. And he remembered the years of his youth and that he had been as tall and as strong as Tanloki. Now in old age, as he expressed it, he had *shrunk* again a little.

—Yes, doc, but please don't think of your *real* age. I know that in your heart you are very young, even younger than I!

Upon which they embraced each other and went back to their work. Tanloki began *clearing the space* in the office, as the natives call the work on the environmental energies. He used incense sticks and a broomstick. First he carefully swept the room, really bit by bit, not leaving out an inch, and not sparing out the corners, then he meticulously cleaned all the furniture of dust, upon which he incensed the room while softly dancing and singing a melodic tune.

Finally he pronounced some magic formulas and then stood still for a while, as if in trance, concluding with a smile and the sentence *The One Force*. After this little initial ceremony Tanloki and Dr. Cheng took off their clothes and prepared for a rather extended shower. Tanloki received Kenny and the children naked in the office and explained to them all the details of the ritual they were going to participate in.



All went to the showers then, also Kirlio and a little girl named Stilia that with her paleness and fragile beauty, and her gracious small body immediately won the sympathy of the audience. Kenny spontaneously offered friendship to the girl upon which she joined him in the shower and let herself wash by him. Kenny enjoyed stroking the tender skin of the child with abundant foam and the girl gazed at him with love.

Kirlio, who was in the shower next to them, joined them without saying a word, and sensuously put his arms around Kenny's legs. This was his way to express his sympathy for the new doctor, asking for the same care that Stilia just received by Kenny.

—Ouff! Now I'm already tired and have not yet done any massage, Kenny jokingly exclaimed to the address of the old doctor who replied in laughter that he had done a good preparatory exercise and that after all he should not think that the *clap massage* was child play, but rather serious business.

Tanloki who took shower with Dr. Cheng added that the new doctor had to count at least three years of learning for not only learning the technique but even more so for getting his own body so soft, strong and pliable that he could give the massage *like a tiger ...!*



—Hey boy, Kenny replied, how do you know what my body is like? There are certain boys who know that, but you are *not one of them*.

While all were laughing, Tanloki replied without a smile:

—The answer, my dear doctor, is very simple. I see your *luminous body*. And this tells me quite a bit about your physical body.

For Kenny these words remained mysterious for a while. He often thought back of them, and silently trusted the wisdom of his destiny and also the guidance he received by Dr. Cheng, to one day know more about *Emonics*, as Dr. Cheng had put in one catchy expression the perennial science of the bioenergy.

Back in Dr. Cheng's office, they sat down on the floor in a circle and joined in what Tanloki called a *vibrational chain*.

—To form a vibrational chain, Tanloki explained, you now please give your left hand to your left neighbor and your right hand to your right neighbor. When you do this, you are going to *establish a bioenergetic circle* that has the effect that your individual body's emonic charge is connected to the charge of all the others. When one body charge and another body charge connect, you have not just one plus one or a twofold charge. But a manifold charge! Please be aware of this! It's a key to the understanding of the *clap massage*.



Before they sat down, Tanloki closed the windows and the curtains and on the sideboard a candle was burning and a large incense stick kept the air crisp and pure. All were instinctively closing their eyes and Tanloki repeated:

—Please keep relaxing now, relaxing and still more relaxing, and just let go all tension, just give yourself over to the comfort and safety that you feel now, being more and more *comfortable* with yourself and all the others around you.

After a while, Tanloki added softly:

—Please now stretch out on the floor while still holding hands, and please spread your legs apart so that your feet touch the feet of your neighbors ...

The children crawled a bit closer inside the ring so that their feet could touch the feet of the adults next to them.

—This is a nice feeling ..., Kani commented.

—I find it exciting! Yami added.

Kirlio said nothing. Being on Kenny's right, he simply turned his head toward the young doctor and smiled. Kenny noted it and slightly turned toward the boy. For a moment they exchanged a deep loving regard. Kirlio almost imperceptibly moved to the left so that his left hip got in touch with Kenny's right leg. Stilia went even farther to show her affection



and put her leg over Kenny's leg. However, her behavior was met with disapproval.

—Stilia, I thought you knew that you can't receive the earth energies when you put your leg on anything else than the earth. Please put your leg down again. If you do not receive enough energy from the ground, you will get hurt later by the massage ...

Stilia quickly put her leg back on the floor. She knew that the massage could hurt and leave blue spots if one did not respect any of the rules or one was tight up.

—Now, please let go, Tanloki pursued, in the same way as the leaves of the mango tree do in the wind, and as the earth does when it receives the rain that penetrates it, and as the water does for the fish that swim in it ...

After a pause, he continued:

—Our bodies are now like leaves in the wind, receiving earth and water that tenderly embraces all fishes that swim in it, very supple, infinitely flexible, like bamboo ...

As if following up to a hypnotic suggestion, the bodies of all participants serpented left and right, touched each other and left each other again, and once of a sudden resembled *serpents* that were dancing a mating dance. The children



were tenderly rubbing their bodies against those of the adults.

Now Tanloki ordered to be completely silent and to *stop moving* for an extended moment; each participant had to focus on one's own body and energy; the task was to be *as conscious as possible* of one's body and the bodies all around oneself.

Kenny felt a very comfortable tiredness coming up and just before that happened he had experienced a sudden sexual arousal that flowed through all the veins of his body, raising and vanishing like a tide.

Eventually Tanloki got up to a seated position and asked all participants to do the same. All were then sitting in the Yogi position and Tanloki announced that the massage could begin, and that all the foregoing had been only an introduction and preparation to it. Dr. Cheng shortly commented that however this preparation had been very important, if not essential, for the body to get used to the *exchange of the vital energies* instead of accumulating energy. The right thing to do was to freely give and take energy so that the energy began to circulate freely among all participants. By contrast, accumulating energy, while first leading to a feeling of power, was eventually depleting one's vital energy charge because of the inevitable interplay of *yin* and *yang*.



—When you are too *yang*, you eventually will become too *yin* as well, because one extreme attracts the other, Dr. Cheng commented. While when you try to *circulate* the energies and let them flow freely, you will keep a middle way between the extremes and you will be constantly alternating between *yang* and *yin* which means in practice that you keep a middle way between the polar poles of *yang* and *yin*.

Kenny suddenly got a flash of insight into the workings of the *clap massage*. Since years he had researched about the real causes of child asthma and more and more got to the conviction that it was the prototype of a psychosomatic illness that was a direct result of fear, the fear namely *to be close to others* which was in turn an outcome of a more or less general *fear of life*. The uncontrollable contractions and convulsions of the bronchial muscles and the sympathetic heart muscle most probably resulted from negative vital energy, called *deadly orgone* by Wilhelm Reich or *sha* by the Chinese sages, which was in turn an energetic manifestation of the fear of life. Only this psychological explanation of the etiology of asthma could make understand, Kenny reasoned to himself, why only certain children in the region were affected by child asthma, while the majority were not—and this despite the fact that the ecological environment was the same for *all of them*. This was the conclusion of Kenny's research, but these insights never were made part of his medical work; he constantly had feared to be rejected among his colleagues and thus kept silent, ex-



cept the exchanges he had with Dr. Cheng about the subject. Now he was ready to revise his entire professional worldview and put his medical work on a more honest basis: he was decided to find the way to really *cure* the disease at its root, instead of just treating the symptoms of it.

Tanloki asked his two patients to come in the middle of the energy circle. He put himself slightly forward and asked Stilia to sit with her back against his legs. Then he spread his legs and pulled the girl toward his body. He asked Kenny to do the same with Kirlio who smiled because he was looking forward to being massaged by Kenny.

Tanloki then took Stilia's right hand and asked the girl to make a fist. His left hand he put under the girl's left arm and raised it slightly.

—It is very important to begin the massage with the *right fist*, treating the *left upper arm* first, Tanloki explained.

Dr. Cheng commented softly that this was so because the left arm was connected with the heart muscle. Kenny nodded and tried to do precisely what Tanloki was asking for. Kirlio who practiced the massage with Tanloki for one year helped Kenny understanding the basics. When Kenny did it wrong, Kirlio turned around toward him and told him what he had to correct.



—The second thing that is very important, Tanloki pursued, is that you do not use your own fist for treating the child's body, but the child's fist. So actually you take the child's fist in your hand and use it as a sort of hammer.

—I know that this sounds very strange, Dr. Cheng commented toward his younger colleague, but this is really essential, for our task is to *stimulate* the energy continuum of the child, but not to interfere in this continuum.

—While in the preparatory exercise our energy systems were kind of connected to each other, right? Kani observed intelligently.

Yes, true! Tanloki replied, with a smile. We have to learn *both*, to fuse with others and to separate again from others. For with asthma the real cause of the disease is an inability to change from one mode to the other; one is stuck with *one behavior pattern*, either being too symbiotic or too aloof. Thus the true cause of asthma is a *lack of energetic exchange with others* because of high anxiety in relationships.

—Yes, Dr. Cheng, Kenny remarked thoughtfully, now all this makes sense to me and it's as if I was newborn in another world that is much more intelligent than the one I was living in before. Here I find once of a sudden all the answers that since ten years I was looking for in vain ...



—Please take it easy, dear Kenny—may I call you like that?—for this was exactly the same with me. All my real knowledge I owe to *this native boy* and the wisdom of his tribe.

—You can call me Kenny and how may I address you, Dr. Cheng?

—My real first name is *Patum*, but I prefer you calling me *Jim*.

—Okay then, Jim!

Kenny stretched his hand out to the old doctor and told him to consider him from now as his friend.

And Yami and Kani jubilated and hugged and kissed the old doctor so that his glasses were falling in his lap.

—Well, ... well ..., truly I did no more expect this to happen in my life and to gain so much support for my solitary work! Dr. Cheng exclaimed in an attitude of deep humility.

Tanloki asked the children to take their places because the massage should not be interrupted once it had begun.

When Kenny and the children came back to the hotel late in the evening, they virtually fell in their beds, so tired they were, and this tiredness was the most gorgeous feeling they ever had experienced, as this fatigue was accompanied



by high body heat, a streaming flowing energy that rendered the body absolutely supple and vigorous. And Kirlio did not want to let Kenny go and wanted to sleep with him. Shortly thereafter, their naked bodies were mixed up on the large bed while the full moon was giving them a pale tan and the nightly breeze moved the branches of the large mango trees.

And two small monkeys were running up and down the trunk of one of them, and this was a wonderfully coordinated flowing movement that appeared like a dance in midst of joy, harmony and peace.

The next morning Kenny woke up at four o'clock and fought his tiredness as he was decided to try the massage upon himself. He carefully glided out of the bed so as to not wake the children up but as they instinctively felt the human presence vanishing, they crawled together as if they wanted to fill the vacuum with their own presence.

Kenny kissed them and covered them with the blanket, before he went to the bathroom. He first brushed his teeth and washed himself, and then sat down on the floor in the Yogi position and began to massage his left arm with his right fist.

The massage took about one hour upon which Kenny felt strong and calm, filled with a delightful flow of peace and



joy. His thoughts were cleansed of all negative emotions and he thanked for the new day.

X.

Kenny practiced the clap massage now every morning, very early, between four and six in the morning. He had developed a sort of program that combined Yoga and the clap massage. In further sessions, Dr. Cheng and Tanloki had explained to him details of the massage, especially the way sick organs had to be treated.

The *regular massage* gradually transformed Kenny's body and mind. He felt an amount of vitality and vigor he had never experienced before in his life, not even in his youth.

His body became extraordinarily supple and elastic. A minor ailment with his liver that Kenny had diagnosed as a somatization of worry and stress completely disappeared. To steer the vital stream of energies for healing and self-healing, Jim had taught Kenny the ancient Chinese technique of *Tao Yoga*. Part of this ensemble of wistful *body works* was the *inner smile*, a sort of meditation that, contrary to the Indian meditation techniques, was to be done when sitting on a stool, eyes closed, spine straight, hands folded and tongue pressed against the palate. Kenny learned to practice the *small energy circle* by letting the *ch'i* of his body circulate from the eyes down, through the genital region, and up the



spine, through the brain and back into the eyes. This special *Tao Yoga* meditation provided a better, and more regular, dissemination of the *élan vital* throughout the mindbody unit and cleansed the inner organs of ashes. Dr. Cheng and Tanloki had assured him that this single technique, when done over years, provided stable good health and immunity against viruses, long life and high sexual potency until old age. In addition, experience had shown that sexual longings could be handled in a warmer and more controlled manner.

Kenny now practiced the *small energy circle* as part of his larger morning fitness and meditation program. He preferably did it after having done the clap massage, when the body was already hot and pliable, and the muscles relaxed and his mind completely tranquil; then it needed little or no effort to feel the passing *ch'i* at the tongue as a prickling *electric* sensation, a feeling similar to licking a battery.

Tanloki had explained that the tongue functioned like a switch between the upper and the lower energy circles so that by using the tongue the *larger or whole-body energy circle* could be opened or closed.

When the tongue was pressed against the palate, the energy could pass and the circle was closed. Dr. Cheng had told him in addition that the circular streaming of the *élan vital* in the body was safeguarding against negative results that



could happen with the *Pranayama* meditation technique from India.

With *Pranayama*, by controlling one's breath, the vital energy was greatly stimulated, but typically was using only the major spinal meridian to reach the neck and brain stem which could cause nasty secondary effects such as headaches and even mental illness.

This morning, under the shower, Kani told Kenny she wanted to participate in his morning program. The girl was especially keen to know more about the meditation techniques Kenny was practicing. In fact, the day before she had met a group of monks in a nearby monastery. Yami and her had been friendly received by the monks and were offered biscuits and tea, and Kani had asked them why they were monks and what they did over the whole day? And the young monks had laughed at the question and then the principle of the monastery had come and was getting angry at them because it was against the monastic rules to invite a pubescent girl in the premises. He had nothing against Yami's presence, however, and Yami had felt very proud and had asked the principle to bless him.

And then the principle had put his hands on Yami's head and murmured some formulas. Yami had asked him what he had said? And the monk had replied he had repeated some *affirmations*. But Yami insisted to know what were 'affirma-



tions,' and the old man had explained that affirmations were sentences in which one affirmed something that was not yet reality but that one wished to be reality one day. And as Yami insisted further to know all about affirmations, the monk had smiled at him and offered him a booklet in which, in very small writing and on thin paper were written phrases like:

—My ego melts in the presence of the Buddha;

—My life is unfolding harmoniously through the compassionate love of Buddha;

—I put all my wishes in the hands of the gracious Buddha Amithaba who lets them come true in a way that is best for me and all beings.

And Yami had asked the old monk if Kani was allowed to recite some of the affirmations and the monk had replied that this was against the monastic rules because Kani was a girl but that he permitted it exceptionally because Kani appeared to be 'devote and pleasing'. Kani had taken this as a compliment and read aloud a whole page with affirmations.

And the old monk had commented that for a girl she was reading very well. And that perhaps her destiny was to become a nun? And Kani had laughed aloud at the idea and replied she preferred to marry one day and sleep with a man instead of fooling around with girls.



And all the monks had held their belly of laughing at her remark and then heartily dismissed them with the express invitation to come back soon.

Kenny who had listened attentively to the story immediately asked to see the booklet. Yami had put it under his pillow.

—I wanted Buddha Amithaba to read all my wishes from my mind as, under the pillow, he was not far away from my head. And so all my wishes will become true! Yami explained proudly.

—What do you want, for example, Kani had asked her brother earlier on, under the shower?

—I wish you were my sister, Kani, but my *real sister!*

And Kani silently put his arms around him and kissed him affirming that she was already his sister even though she and Yami did not originate from the same father. Because in Buddha all this had no importance and when one loved each other one was brother and sister or father and son, and so on. And Kenny had commented that this was of course true and that Kani really had well understood the deeper meaning and teaching of the Buddha.

—Perhaps the old monk was right, he joked, and you shall become a nun, Kani?



—Yes, perhaps, but before that happens I will make love with a boy so that I don't become Lesbian later on as a nun!

This is how Kenny was given a wonderful treasure of positive affirmations that helped him to gradually dissolve his deeply encrusted negative thought structure.

He simply learned the affirmations by heart, page by page, during his early morning meditations, and by reciting them aloud. Kani found the idea great to participate, while Kenny thought the girl would lack self-discipline to endure the first weeks of learning. But he was wrong. When he woke Kani up early in the morning, she immediately followed him in the living room. Yami also woke up and wanted to *meditate* and eventually Kirlio joined as well and asked for a massage.

This first body works session with the children had been a little chaotic and Kenny regretted that he had not found time for applying the massage to himself. He also thought it was time to educate the children for a higher level of autonomy. He felt his presence was too strong in their lives and they hardly did anything on their own. In addition, while he greatly appreciated the work that Tanloki had done with Kirlio, he found that Kirlio had become much too passive, just asking for *being massaged* without any interest to learn the technique and apply it to himself. Kenny understood that this lack of interest was not a form of laziness nor a learning handicap but simply an invitation to be closer to others, to



receive body touch and to remain in a symbiotic bond with others. Kenny of course was far from wanting to deny him body touch or closeness, but he felt it was time to strengthen Kirlio's sense of autonomy. Dr. Cheng had explained him that even though Kirlio was healed of asthma, Kirlio's lung was weaker in constitution than the lung of a non-asthmatic child and that a drawback could never be fully excluded. After consultation with Dr. Cheng, Kenny decided to teach Kirlio the clap massage for self-healing, and to fully inform him about the risk of a drawback in case he did not develop a more active vigilance for keeping healthy.

Kenny would perhaps not have had the time to accomplish this task had he not been able to rely on Yami's and Kani's assistance. In fact, Kirlio soon made progress, getting up early with Kani and Yami and while in the beginning he just fell asleep on the floor somewhere on the way between dormitory and living room, he gradually developed enough self-discipline and alertness to advance in the learning process.

—Kirlio, Kani remarked one morning, you are certainly the *only* native boy in Thailand who recites Buddhist affirmations!

And Kirlio effectively began to show more autonomy, also outside of the framework of his prophylactic self-healing program. For the first time, he told Kenny what he wanted to do later in life. He actually had developed an intense interest



for gardening and assisted the hospital's gardener, an old native brother of him, with the daily work in the park. But one day he told Kenny he wanted to become a doctor. That afternoon Kirlio had come upstairs to Kenny's office right after his gardening work and he had crawled on Kenny's lap and sought to receive lots of affection. And they had taken the tea together and eaten roasted bananas that Kirlio had bought in a little kiosk close to the hospital.

—I am sure the affirmations have already had good results with you, Kirlio, Kenny remarked. Or how did you *else* get the idea to become a doctor? Did you not want to become a gardener first?

And saying this, Kenny had tenderly fed the boy with a banana half and Kirlio had closed his eyes, but once of a sudden he jumped up and gazed at Kenny:

—No. It was not the affirmations that made me change my mind, but you. *My love for you!*

Upon which Dr. Cheng entered the room.

—Did Kenny tell you a dirty joke, Kirlio? If yes, you have to tell it to me right now! Dr. Cheng joked.

Kenny who accidentally let fall down a banana said Kirlio had decided to become a doctor.



—*Why not?* Dr. Cheng commented. I have myself thought over and over that ideally the hospital should be directed by a native as most of the patients are natives as well.

And Kenny tried to pick up the banana half from the floor but it strangely resisted and broke in pieces ...

Kirlio laughed. Shortly after the gardener called him.

—Wow! Dr. Cheng exclaimed, looking after Kirlio as he hurriedly left the room to go back to his work.

—What?

—That boy ... I am amazed, really. Since you take care of him, Kenny, he's so much more outgoing, kind of *expressive* and it's as if he had greater autonomy now.

—Yes. That was my goal from the start, to help him develop autonomy. I was becoming aware of a codependence pattern he had developed with Tanloki's treatment.

—I was aware of it as well, but thought it was inevitable, a result of his *etiology*, but now I see that I was wrong and you were right. I am so glad!

—Oh no, it's not my merit, just the result of roasted bananas and Buddhist affirmations ..., Kenny chuckled, licking the sweet rests of the *fallen* banana from his hand.



XI.

Yami was excited at the perspective to participate in Kenny's excursion to the mountain tribes. Tanloki and Kirlio would guide them. They would mount higher and higher in the forests in order to reach the *Mong*, the native tribe that was living closest to them.

Kenny thought that with five years Yami was big enough for such a strenuous exercise and explained to Yami that the journey would possibly be stressful as it was quite hot in the lower forests until it become cooler higher up, and that there were all kinds of naughty mosquitos around. But Yami was very little interested to know all that. He was solely interested in meeting the natives that he imagined as nice and caring as Tanloki and Kirlio. And Kani had joked under the shower that if Kirlio had no interest to make love to her, she would look out to find another native boy with the *Mong* so that she could build her immunity against the inevitable trap of Lesbianism as a nun later on ... And Kenny had laughed at her remark and promised to be of help with finding the *right guy for the first time* ...

Kenny had to work very hard for a few days in order to organize all and prepare for his absence. He insisted to tell all the children the precise reasons why he went for that journey, and for how long. He feared some of the children losing trust and thinking *the young doctor* had changed his mind and was



up, up and away for other projects. So he organized a little event party and Yami and Kirlio were looking forward to eat lots of roasted bananas. Actually Kirlio was a true specialist for roasted bananas. Only he went out to buy them and he knew where to get the best ones. But even the best bananas could not help some of the children to get over their sadness to miss the new doctor for quite a few days.

—I never knew how sensitive these natives are, Kenny commented toward Dr. Cheng. Some of the children cry since the start of the party and I do not know how to console them. And I just go for a few days ...

—They do not have a sense for time, or not yet, or their sense of time is different than ours, Dr. Cheng answered softly. These few days are *for you* a short interlude, but *for them* a major experience in handling their early feelings of abandonment. Most of them have *not experienced the primary symbiosis* with their mothers, and thus they have build a strong cofusion with you, a codependence pattern, a kind of *secondary symbiosis*. Only when you begin to understand this and accept it, you may find a way of handling their symbiotic attachment to you, Dr. Cheng concluded.

Kenny remained silent for a moment.

—Yes, I understand what you are saying. I have had the same intuition over and over but first all this rather confused



me. Some of the children also tried to become sexual with me, and this especially confuses me as it is against the education that I myself have received. But I begin to understand.

—Truly, you have to change a lot of your preconceptions or set opinions, if you wish to succeed in this environment, Dr. Cheng pursued. We live here in a different *set and setting*, to use that term forged by anthropology. We do not live in Western civilization here and that may be confusing for you as you begin to see that what you held to be eternally valid and true is a simple matter of sociocultural conditioning.

—And you go as far as saying that the taboo over adult-child sexual relations is equally a by-product of Western or modern international culture?

—Yes. This taboo is not set by nature and it is not set in most native cultures, except parent-child relations for which the incest taboo remains valid. But outside of direct line dependencies, most native cultures permissively tolerate or even encourage loving sexual relations between adults and children, as far as the children themselves are affirmative, Dr. Cheng ended.

—Hm. I see I have to learn *a lot more* than I thought initially ... Kenny concluded and went to sleep right after the setting of the sun.



The next morning he got up at three o'clock. Yami had found it rather funny *beating oneself up*, as he called the clap massage. Kenny had explained to him that it was not a form of self-punishment even though it sometimes caused painful spots when one did it the wrong way. And Yami commented:

—Oh yes, now I understand. It's not beating yourself up, but *beating all diseases out of your body*. They'll be afraid to get daily beatings, so they will go and bother other people, right?

And Yami sat down and began to treat himself in a rather rough manner. When Kenny later saw all the green and blue spots on the boy's body, he softly massaged Yami and told him he had done something wrong. Yami however insisted:

—No. I am proud of the spots because they prove that for the first time I have applied the clap massage. And even without having learnt it ...

Before they left, Kirlio insisted to buy a big provision of roasted bananas, and eventually in the bus, Yami fell quickly asleep.



XII.

When Yami woke up, he saw himself on Kenny's shoulders who carried him, with Kani and Tanloki at his side, to a wooden hut.

—Here we are going to spend the night, Tanloki commented. Tomorrow morning, the Mong will send a courier to pick us up.

Yami put his hand over Kenny's eyes and from there let it slide over his mouth. He did this often when Kenny carried him. It was a way to show his affection and Kenny most of the time kissed the palm of the boy's hand. And sometimes he wondered if Yami did it only for that perhaps, for the kisses he received on his palms? This time it signaled Kenny that Yami woke up and he softly put him on the floor when they had reached the hut.

—Where are we? Yami asked. And where are *they*?

—We are going to sleep here, Kenny explained while he unlocked the door. We are close to the natives now but they prefer to pick us up here as they dislike foreigners entering their fields without being accompanied by one of them.

—Are they afraid of us? Yami insisted.

—No, but I think they are right to be careful, Kani commented. They may not know that we are from the hospital.



—Yes, they know it, Tanloki explained. Dr. Cheng has been here several times and spent the night in this hut before we visited them. It is their custom to meet their guests half way. It is a sign of respect, not a display of fear.

—Or perhaps they think we wanted to steal them opium? Kani insisted.

—No, certainly not. They have no reason to think this of us, while it has happened that foreigners came here for that purpose. But the Mong know to defend themselves.

—How? Kenny inquired while he stretched out on one of the simple beds, tired of the long journey and the long adjacent walk through the forests during which he had carried Yami on his back for more than half of the way.

—They do it through rituals, their unique *magic*, Tanloki added. They have special magic formulas that impede uninvited guests to enter their fields. Or, when people really succeed stealing something, they will lose it soon again, Kirlio commented.

Tanloki nodded.

—As for me, I want to take a shower! Kani joyfully exclaimed and began to undress.

The idea was shared by everybody and a moment later all stood naked around the small water hole behind the hut.



Tanloki came with a tin basin that served to pour water over one's head. Kani joked with Tanloki and Kirlio asked Kenny to *massage him with soap*, and Yami put his arms around Kenny's legs so as to receive the water blessing no later than his adoptive father.

—I shower with Kenny ... he said, and in that very moment a load of water splashed in his face and he asked for a break.

After the shower all dried themselves with towels except the two native boys. Kirlio and Tanloki found it more natural to leave the water pearls on their brown skins and running down their curly black hair that glittered in the afternoon sun. Kirlio coughed a bit after the long march and Kenny therefore gave him a massage while Kani and Tanloki went to search for wild bananas that they wanted to roast for dinner. Their excursion lasted quite long but Kenny was not aware of it as he was absorbed with treating Kirlio.

Only when Yami who had played outside, hastily came to tell him, not without a smile on his lips, that he had seen Tanloki and Kani kissing each other, he noticed that night had fallen already. And when Tanloki and Kani entered the hut, it was visible that they had experienced something daringly new and exciting, something that had changed and enriched their lives. They looked a bit reserved and seemed to be hot. Kenny felt that they were *hot for each other* and that it was in



their nature to not suffocate that fire but rather to vent it. That is why Kenny did not ask any questions.

When all were already stretched out on their beds, Kani came to her father for a short moment and pressed her body against him. Approaching her mouth to his right ear, she whispered:

—I am in love with Tanloki. Now I know for sure that I will *not* become a nun!

—I never thought you would ...darling, Kenny replied, and embraced her tenderly. I have brought you to this world in a loving embrace with your mother and this love burns in your heart and soul and it would be a crime to bury it behind the cold walls of a boring monastery.

Kani pressed her face against Kenny's hairy chest while her father caressed her back and whispered:

—Sometimes I regret to be your father because I think ... I would be your lover!

They chuckled and kissed good night.

The moment after Kani had left him, Kenny felt something crawling under his blanket. It was the hot naked body of a boy.

—Doctor, I can't sleep? Tanloki said.



—Why not, boy?

—It is ...

—It is because of Kani, right?

—Yes. Did she tell you?

—Don't worry. It's okay with me. Where love reigns, human reason must keep silent!

—So you ... are not angry?

—Should I? Kani is not my wife but my daughter.

And Tanloki, this big boy, kissed Kenny with such strong emotion that Kenny almost got short of breath. He felt to be in the arms of a Grizzly bear only that Tanloki's skin was smooth and not hairy.

—Oh Doctor, *I love you*, the native boy said and put his face on Kenny's chest like a little boy. I always wanted to have a father like you ...

—And what about your father? You never told me ...

—I don't know. I was very small when he left. He left my mother because of a young girl in the village. My mother was against their relationship and so he left her.

—I would not have left you just because of a concubine. I mean I could leave my wife, but not my children. Impossible.



—Where is your wife now?

—She lives in Bangkok. She has a restaurant in Pattaya.

—Will she come to join you here?

—No, we have separated, but we remain friends. We have no more intimate feelings for each other. Something has got lost ..., despite I had two boys and Kani with her.

—But ... I thought Yami was your son?

—No, I have two boys and Yami is an adoptive child.

—So, you left your boys ...

—Yes, but only because they are big already, thirteen and fifteen. In their age they should develop enough autonomy to make for their own lives. And in fact, they do because I have educated them that way, and not in a way to eternally depend on me and their mother.

—Yes. That is the way we natives think. In that age boys in our villages marry and begin to work for their own subsistence. It was the time when I began working for Dr. Cheng.

—So you work already quite some time with Dr. Cheng?

—Yes. Thirteen years by now.

—Do you like the old doctor?



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—Yes, I love him and I admire him. He was always so good to me.

Upon which Tanloki left Kenny's bed and fell asleep at once on his mat. And Kirlio who had waited for that moment, crawled in Kenny's bed and asked if he could sleep with him? When Kenny nodded, he whispered:

—I love you!