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Special Edition

December 2011 Free international online journal by citizens of planet earth



2011 Another year of living foolishly?

A special thanks to all the past and present contributors who had/have taken time out from their busy schedules to share their knowledge gratis for all to read, savour and hopefully to reflect on.



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Bobby Chinn, Hanoi, Vietnam
Carmen Roberts, Fast Track BBC,
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December 2011

Dear Readers,

The main features in this Special Edition are:

- . On the edge of survival **Randhir Khare**, an awarding winning poet and writer.
- . The Belo Monte Dam and a call for the Clean Renewable Energy in Brazil by **Atossa Soltani & Caroline Bennett** of Amazonwatch.
- . Chernobyl, a marriage proposal and climbing Mount Kinabalu **Carmen Roberts**, Fast Track BBC Carmen is getting married in December 2011. We wish her a happy and prosperous married life!
- . Eichmann To Al-Bis: Israel's Revolving Door? Natalie Wood, Karmiel.
- .The Truth in Mustard Terry McDonagh, poet, writer, playwright.
- . Generation Expat Sue Healy, an award winning journalist and writer from Ireland.
- . Bad Medicine Exclusively for Live Encounters a chapter from the recently released book, Healing with Homeopathy, by the famous **Dr. Mukesh Batra**.

We thank our readers in Argentina, Chile, Brazil, USA, Canada, Iceland, Ireland, UK, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, France, Bulgaria, Poland, Morocco, South Africa, Hungary, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Russia, Israel, China, Pakistan, India, Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, Japan, Indonesia, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand for their support.

If we have omitted any country please let us know!

The next edition will appear on February 1st, 2012.

Please share this free magazine with your friends and family.

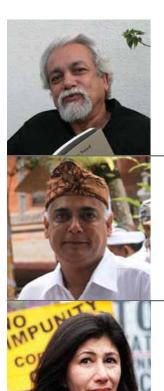
Merry Christmas and a Peaceful New Year to all

Om Shanti Shanti Om

Mark Ulyseas

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Founder of Amazon Watch. Since 1991, Soltani has been leading international campaigns in defense of the world's tropical rainforests. Before Amazon Watch, she directed campaigns at the Rainforest Action Network (RAN) to end logging in endangered ecosystems. Soltani began her environmental career in the late 1980's as Conservation Director for the City of Santa Monica, CA.

Caroline Bennett

Prior to diving into the organizational side of communications, Caroline worked as an Ecuador based photographer and multimedia journalist telling award-winning stories that shed light on social justice, cultural and environmental conservation, and the human condition. She brings an arsenal of multimedia munitions, commitment to visual storytelling and deep passion for the forests to the mission to defend the Amazon. http://www.amazonwatch.org



Chernobyl, a marriage proposal and climbing Mount Kinabalu

Carmen Roberts, Fast Track BBC

Carmen is an award winning journalist for Fast Track, BBC World's flagship travel programme since 2003 and has reported from over 60 countries. After the Asian Tsunami on Boxing Day 2004, Carmen cut short her holiday in Langkawi, Malaysia to report from the devastated resort town of Phuket. www.bbc.com/fasttrack www.carmenlroberts.com



Eichmann To Al-Bis: Israel's Revolving Door? Natalie Wood

Born in Birmingham, U.K. Natalie began working in journalism a month prior to the outbreak of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. She continued in regional Jewish journalism for more than 20 years and left full time writing to assist her husband open a bargain books business. A year ago, Natalie emigrated to Israel. wwwalwayswriteagain.blogspot.com - my.telegraph.co.uk/perfectlywriteinisrael/



The Truth in Mustard Terry McDonagh

Poet and dramatist, Terry McDonagh has published four collections of poetry; a play; a book of letters, novel and poetry for children. His work has been translated into Indonesian and German, funded by Ireland Literature

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Bali based international photographer has spent her life exploring and enjoying Asian cultures. Her work has appeared in National Geographic, Time, International Herald Tribune, Asia Spa, Discovery, Silver Krisand many more. Her books - Asia's legendary Hotels, Periplus, Bali- Island of Light -Marshall Cavendish, Indonesia - Islands of the Imagination. Periplus, Australia - the land down under - Times Editions, Singapore, Indonesia - the last paradise -Times Editions. She has held exhibitions in Singapore, Kathmandu, and Bali.



Generation Expat Sue Healy

From Ireland, journalist and award-winning short-story writer Sue Healy spent ten years working in Budapest. Graduating from UEA's MA in Creative Writing in 2009, she won the 2011 HISSAC Award, 2011 Molly Keane Memorial Award, 2010 Waterford Annaghmakerrig Award and the 2010 Ted O'Regan Award. She was highly commended for The New Writer Annual Award, and shortlisted for the Meridian, the Wells Literary Festival and the Doris Gooderson Award. She's been published in 'New Europe Writers Anthology', 'The Moth Literary Magazine' and 'The New Writer Magazine'. A prison creative writing tutor, Sue also runs her own workshops: www.suehealy.org



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Dr. Batra, LCEH, FSRH, (MED) P (LON), MDH (USA), FBIH (UK), is a homeopath of international repute. He is Founder-CMD of the world's first and largest homeopathic healthcare corporate group. Batra is a holistic healer, writer, photographer, and philanthropist. His new, cyclopedic self-help book, Healing with Homeopathy, was published September 2011.

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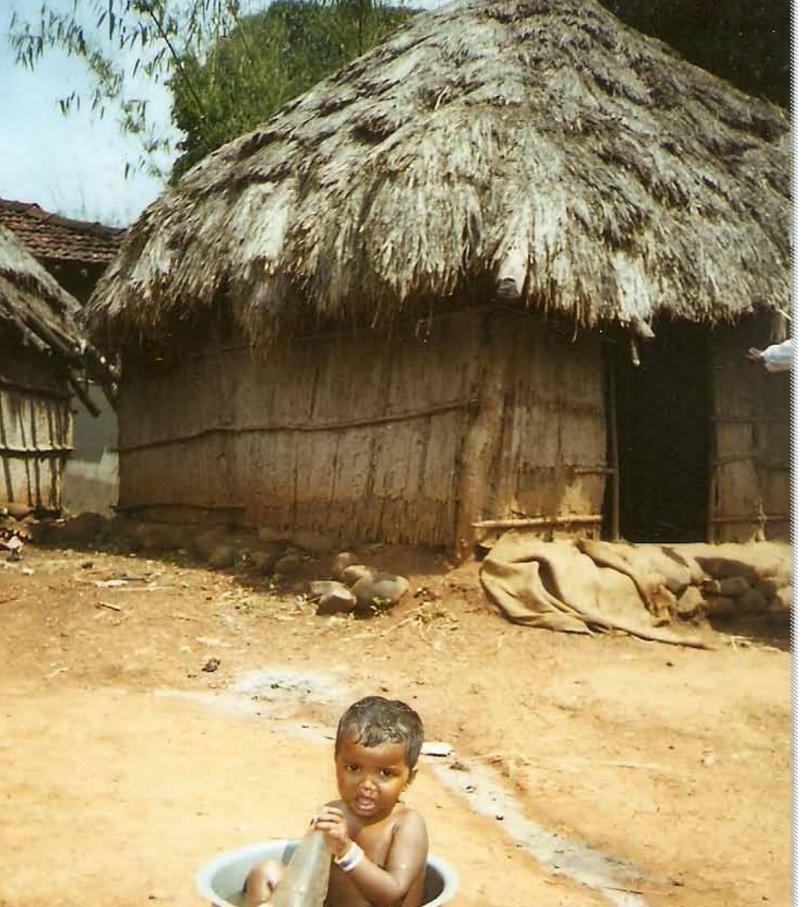
A poem for John di Martino **John Chester Lewis**

Lewis was born in Southern California and began writing poetry during university in Colorado. He lives in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia where he works on his poetry, music, and painting, when not running JL Galleries fine art. www.poempress.com - www.jlgalleries.com - www.johnniechester.com

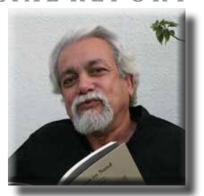
The Road to 2012 Vasumi Zjikaa

She has been a student of the Mayan Calendar for the past 13 years, sharing through workshops, lectures, seminars, sacred theatre and readings. She has worked and studied with some of the world's finest teachers including Jose Arguelles, Drunvalo Melchizedek. As a devotee of Ramana Maharshi she had her strongest awakening which led her to the Mayan Calendar and its deep wisdom. She is also an avid astrologer and student of both paths, Vedic and Western. www.vasumi.com/home.html

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Katkari child waiting for a bath Pic @ Randhir Khare



ON THE EDGE OF SURVIVAL

by Randhir Khare

The Katkaris were once hunter gatherers who ranged the Western Ghats foraging for food, hunting and keeping their community values alive. Today, they are outsiders in the lands they once preserved and respected.

The rains came. Finally. Wave after wave. Carried by the southwesterlies. Up along the coast, trailing silver sheets from Kerala onwards to the Konkan. The Arabian Sea heaving and rocking in the wind. The rains came. Finally. Turning inwards from the coast, colliding with the Western Ghats, then climbing up and over. Greening the dry craggy hill slopes. Grass, weeds, reeds, bushes, trees, moss...green, green, fluorescent green. Wild flowers flashing orange, yellow, blue, sparkles of red. Time for hunter-gatherers to harvest edible wild roots and shoots from the shrinking jungles and grasslands. Time for promises of survival.

I sat in the makeshift teashop near Malavali railway station (close to Lonavala in the state of Maharashtra), tucked into the foothills of the Western Ghats, a steady thump of rain-fists beating on the battered tin roof above me.

The chaiwallah placed a glass of steaming tea on the wooden table in front of me. "Vada pav"? he asked. I nodded.

I had just about taken the first bite of vada pav and followed it quickly with a deep sip of elaichi tea when a swarm of flies descended from the ceiling. The tabletop soon became a runway. Batches of flies would take off, hover, harass, get swatted at, swerve and land—giving another lot the opportunity to go in for the attack.

The amazing display of aerial combat entertained me whilst I munched on my well-guarded morning snack. "More tea?" shouted the chaiwallah. I nodded.

When he placed the glass in front of me, he said, "Make sure you don't put any food on the bench next to you. There's a hole in the gunny sack just behind and it'll get picked up."

"What'll get picked up?" I asked.

"The food," he said.

"How?"

RANDHIR KHAR



Resettled Katkari family, Thane Pic © Randhir Khare

"A dog or a cat or a mongoose or a Katkari will take" The others nodded in agreement. it. Zook and it's gone. Just like that. Just two days ago, a customer was sitting right here where you are sitting and he ordered a plate of four vada pavs and he put it on the bench. He got busy talking with me and then when he put his hand down to pick up a vada pau there was nothing there. Gone. All four. Just then I looked up towards the road in front and saw some Katkaris coming up from the side of the shop and climbing on to the road. One of them was eating a vada pav. So we went out and caught them. The one who was eating a vada pau handed back the half-eaten piece. The others had the paus in their mouths and we couldn't get them back. This is what they keep doing. They never come in here and order tea or buy vada pavs..." His voice trailed off.

"Because they don't have money," muttered one in. of the customers, an old sadhu on his way to the mandir near the caves at Karla. Running the palm of his right hand gently over the lawn of silver hair on his perfectly spherical pate, he sighed as if the weight of the world was resting on his shoulders.

on drink," added another customer, stuffing the hole in his face with a khari biscuit soggy with

"They should just live in the jungle where they always have. They were born junglees and will remain junglees," said the chaiwallah finally.

"But it's not their jungle any more," I said.

"Who says so?" asked the khari biscuit-slurping one.

"The forest department," I replied.

"But there's no jungle here anyway," said the one with a silver lawn on his head, "it's all gone. Junglees are junglees. They cut down all the trees. Killed all the animals and ate them up. And now that they have no jungle left they are coming out here to steal and feed."

Just then, a ragged group of men and women walked past in the rain. Pieces of jute sacking, plastic sheeting and torn cloth draped around them.

"There they go," said the chaiwallah looking at me, "Katkari field labour. I know these ones. They are Dalvi's labour. His fields are on the other side of the track but they are wandering about in this direction. And it's work time already." Then he yelled out to them, "Hoi, hoi, what you doing here? Dalvi Seth will beat you with a stick... go, go back."

They turned around and laughed, then continued walking in the rain. One of them shouted, imitating the chaiwallah "hoi, hoi." And the others joined

"See," said the chaiwallah "that is their level." "A jackal will be a jackal," said the one with a silver lawn on his head, "you cannot expect it to be a

I paid the bill and walked out into the rain. "They don't have money because they spend it all Paused for a moment, looked down the road at the ragged group retreating and headed after

> One of them stopped and looked over his shoulder, saw me waving, then nudged the others to stop.

> When I reached them, I stood there wondering what to say. I smiled. They smiled.

> Then I did an odd thing. I walked past them. Slowly. Kept walking. Turned and smiled again.

> "So where are you off to?" asked a wizened old one among them, speaking in a broken combination of Marathi and pidgin Hindi.

"Walking," I replied.

"To the mandir?" asked a younger one.

"No. Just walking."



On the edge of survival Pic © Randhir Khare

We walked in silence.

"And where are you going?" I asked.

"Just walking," said the wizened one.

"Off to get Ramu," said the younger one.

"No, Shyamu," said another.

And they all began to play around with rhyming words. Everything that even vaguely rhymed with the original word, "Ramu."

"So Ramu is your child?" I asked.

They all started laughing loudly. "It is a bakri, bae, bae, bae," said the wizened one. The others imitated him. So I added a "bae" for good measure. It turned out that they were off to pick up a small goat from a settlement nearby. To be slaughtered and eaten, of course. Two of them went off the road, slipped between a hedge and returned a while later, "Ramu" in tow. A coal black creature with large frightened eyes and a string of marigolds around its neck. Having collected Ramu, the group trudged back down the road.

I trailed along with them. "That bakri you robbed?" I asked.

"No, no, no," they all shouted and laughed. "On loan. Take now, kill now, eat now, pay little little... after." When we passed the teashop the chaiwallah called out, "Hoi, do you know who he is? He is a patrakar. He will put your life story in the paper and then everyone will know about you."

"You are a patrakar," the wizened one asked me.

"No. I write. Books," I replied.

"And what do you do with the books you write? *Keep them in a big box?*"

"People read them."

"So if you write about us, people will read our story?" he went on.

I nodded.

"Hut saala he said jovially to himself. Then he asked, "you give these books free or people pay money for them?"

"People pay money for them," I replied.

"Hut saala," everyone said in unison.

Then the wizened one went on, "Imagine, people pay to read our story. Everyone does business with our lives and we go on like this, hut saala...." And they all laughed.

We walked on in silence for a while. One of the younger men hoisted Ramu on to his shoulders. The railway tracks had already been crossed and we ambled down along a slushy road, crossed a newly constructed expressway and headed on.

The rain had mercifully let up a bit and only a steady drizzle sprinkled around us. Not far ahead, on the other side of the expressway, the land climbed slowly up into a craggy hill, densely wooded in some patches and velvety green with grass and weeds and shrubs in others. Higher up, clouds sailed by, colliding with the rock faces, stopping, merging, dissolving and growing again. Curls of smoke from unseen huts pushed their way up from among the trees, lazily floating along till they got themselves absorbed by the gauzy clouds above.

The wizened one slowed down till he was walking beside me. The rest of the group laughed and chatted as they strolled ahead, in no particular hurry to get to Dalvi Seth's fields... that is, if they were meant to go there as the chaiwallah had suggested.

"Kishen," the old man said, jabbing his chest with his right forefinger. "Kishen." I introduced myself in the same manner.

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"Take only what you need to survive this moment. Nothing more."

He shook his head knowingly, grinned. "Mumbaiwallah?"

"Punewallah."

"Hmmmm. Mumbai is a jaadu city. I know. They took many islands and stuck them together with cement and stones and all. Now so many people living there that it has become very heavy and all the cement and stones are breaking and soon all the islands will be separate. You cannot do masti with nature. See here, we do not do masti with nature. See up there where the smoke is going up from? That's where Katkaris live. And every house is on a slope so rainwater drains off. Nothing gets blocked. Nothing, I tell you. See, everything is clean here."

"And your house," I asked, "Where is your house?"

"There in that field there," he pointed.

Sure enough, out in front of us was an open field, which was divided into small paddy seedling nurseries. On a few slightly raised areas in the middle were low slung thatched huts.

"That your land?" I asked.

Kishen laughed and slapped me on the back. Then laughed again. I joined him, slapping him on the back. "My land? Hah haa! My land, my land, my land, that is my land," he kept repeating in pidgin Hindi.

The group walking in front of us jovially joined him, "My land, my land, that is my land," they repeated over and over again.

"Then how you stay there?" I asked.

"The Seth says I can stay. I do this and that for him *because I stay there,*" he replied. We walked on.

Kishen didn't look like he had a care in the world. To hunter-gatherers, the moment is of primary importance. They are tuned to the moment, to life around them, the time of day, to the season, the signs of nature, to the language of the wilds.

And it is because they are so tuned that their senses are heightened. They are acutely aware of even the most subtle throb of life near them or around them. And it is this acute awareness of their environment that has helped them realise their position in the web of life...not as masters but as participants. This realisation and acceptance has always been the common foundation shared by all hunter-gatherer communities in the country, including the Kurumbas, Irulas, Saheriyas, the more secluded communities of Bhils and Bhilalas, the Andaman Islanders and a myriad small groups struggling to keep alive in various parts of the subcontinent.

The common attitude and approach to their natural environment has always been - "Take only what you need to survive this moment. Nothina more."

"Yes," I said. "When all the villages sprang up. Where do you think the firewood came from all these years? Don't you think it's unfair to blame the Katkaris for this?" I asked, pointing to the empty hills.

"I don't think so, because I'm right," he replied. "How do you think I became Sarpanch?"

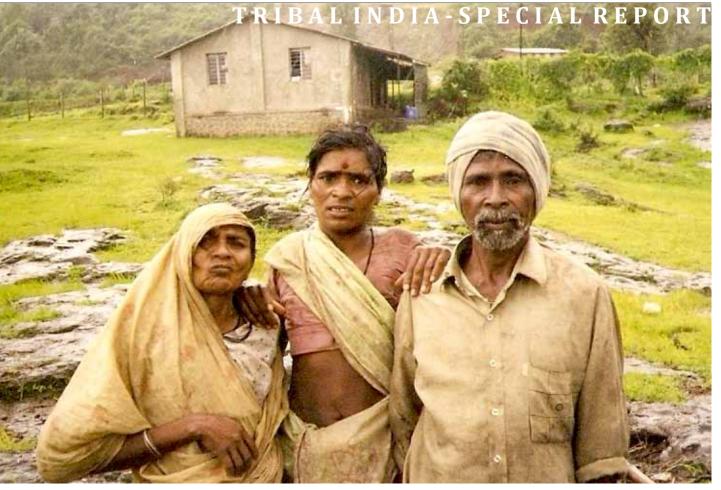
I couldn't understand the man's argument. So I stayed quiet for a while, sipping tea from an enormous glass.

He got up and left, swaggering on to the open dust track, barking commands at a group of workmen.

I watched him as he walked up the track and vanished around the corner. Then I began to think about what he had said. Sure, it was evident that he had become sarpanch because he had the support of the village heavyweights. They were the ones who had the money, social position, caste backing. He'd never be in that position if he had started supporting the cause of the Katkaris.

They had nothing to offer him. No money, no social position, no caste backing. Nothing at all.

Why should he back losing horses?



Kishan, Pic © Randhir Khare

In a society where marginalised communities have **The Katkaris have never been as interactive** nothing to "give" the ruling class, the likelihood of any type of support coming their way will always be bleak. This has been the lot of the Katkaris. Their entire way of life has always excluded, to a great extent, other communities.

Their world has always been the forest and they've lived according to the laws of the forest, moving from place to place and region to region as hunter-gatherers...taking from the forest only what they needed, replenishing on the way. Their survival inextricably linked to the survival of the forest. And in this natural rhythm of taking and giving, land ownership never appeared a necessity. The Katkaris have never believed that land can be "owned." Land, they believe, is the gift of life, to be savoured and preserved for generations to come and not raped and pillaged. It is divine and cannot be owned.

However inspiring this may seem, the very fact that they have never been a settled people and never believed in ownership of land, has left them at a distinct disadvantage. Boundaries of state and private territories have grown everywhere. Free movement without violating "someone else's" space is hardly possible anymore. Their forest abodes have been destroyed and they have been forced to live on the fringes of other community settlements like scavengers, eking a living by daily wage earning on marginal agriculture plots and construction sites and on trucks as cleaners.

and socially responsive as the Bhils and as such have always avoided confrontations. Although at some stage in the distant past they may have shared similar hunter-gatherer lifestyles, the Bhils were uprooted and forced to scatter — living by their wits in a rapidly changing historical, political and social scenario. The two aren't the same anymore, and yet they share a common fate decimation.

If the life of the Katkaris is so miserable and isolated and there doesn't seem to be any hope whatsoever, why am I babbling on about their "cause" like a soapbox orator?

I believe that the fate of the Katkaris is linked symbiotically with the fate of our forests. To survive — they need each other. And we must be able to see this need clearly and honestly and respond to it positively.

I do not suggest here that ownership of forests be handed over to communities like the Katkaris. That would be a stupid and short sighted thing to do. But I do suggest that they be made an integral part of all reforestation and forest protection and maintenance programmes. They have the traditional wisdom and skills for such work and they will be able to contribute more than adequately.

"What about food when you travel through the jungle since there are no more animals and birds?"

And my suggestions for their inclusion don't stop here. Taken further, they should be included in horticulture programmes. The idea would be to apply their forest-based traditional wisdom and skills to contemporary forest and horticulture programmes and in the process upgrade these skills.

But then, in order to set programmes like this in motion, it would be necessary for an integrated approach to "tribal and forest management."

A number of state governments have attempted the same approach but have got themselves tied into a tangle of red tape because all development programmes in our country have happened vertically — the left hand unaware of what the right hand is doing. Integrated action demands an integrated vision, a holistic approach.

Realistically speaking, even if such a holistic approach was to be adopted, the first step to be taken would be (as I had suggested in the first part of this essay) to try to understand the Katkari identity, socially, culturally, economically, religiously, ecologically. This would lead us to an understanding and awareness of the traditional wisdom and skills of these hunter-gatherers.

It is only when we have understood this that we can plan and work towards integrated programmes. Planning without understanding amounts to working on the basis of assumptions.

Coming back to that enormous glass of tea and Sarpanch Padmule's divine utterances and his subsequent departure.... I got up to leave.

The Sarpanch returned. "Did I tell you, sir," he beamed, striding back jauntily, "that I'm planning to computerise the whole village?"

"And what about your neighbours, the Katkaris?"

"What about them?" he asked.

"What about their rights?" I persisted.

"Do rats have rights? Do they? Tell me sir, do rats have rights?"

"Are you saying that they have to be exterminated? Is that your solution?" I wanted to know.

"Oh, no one has to do it for them. They'll do it themselves. They drink they eat all sorts of meats. They don't plan for the future. Because they are illiterate, they do not even know their rights and how to make use of the development funding that is available for them," Nandkumar bumbled on.

"So you're the Sarpanch here, what are you doing about it?"

"Me? Oh, I tried so hard. I even went and caught one family and got them a loan from the bank for fishing activities and got their children into school. But then what happened? They are all collecting firewood once more. An ungrateful and ignorant lot."

He pulled up his legs and crossed them, then waving his hands as if delivering a speech, he said, "There are so few of them here that it doesn't make a difference if they are here or not."

"But," I persisted, "do you see a solution?"

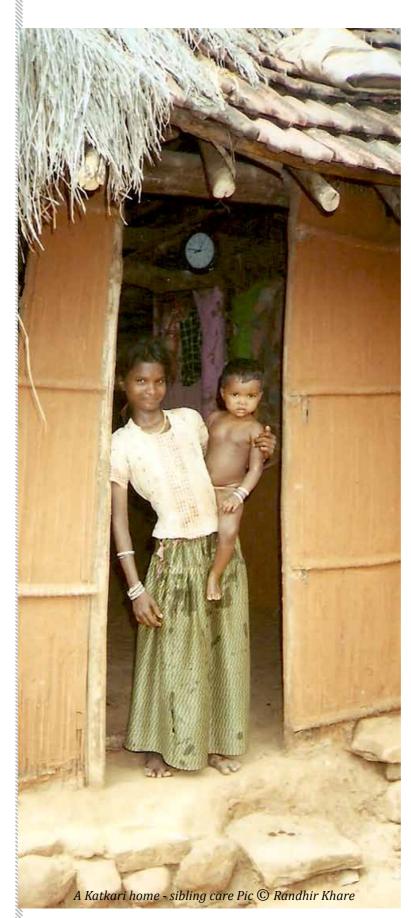
"A solution? Yes — money power. If they have money power, they have a future. What else can I suggest?"

Nandkumar's adamant refusal to even try to understand the predicament of Katkaris isn't unusual.

Similar attitudes and responses exist wherever hunter - gatherer and marginal farming tribal communities come in contact with "the others" who are "socially, technologically and economically more organised."

In fact, I would like to even stretch it further to towns and cities where so-called progressive minded people consider matters related to "tribal survival and development" irrelevant and totally out of sync with the "times"...and communities like the Katkaris, primitive, wretched and bound for extinction.

Who says so?" he asked angrily.
"But then we don't only kill and eat animals and birds.
There are plants there that we can eat and roots..."



A comment by John Wilson about the Katkaris, which was published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland in 1843, proves the point that after all this time and more than fifty years of independence, attitudes have not changed.

"They are the most degraded body of natives with whom I am acquainted...they live, as outcasts, near villages inhabited by other classes of the community. They are held in great abhorrence by the common agriculturists, and particularly by the Brahmans; and their residences are wretched beyond belief.

Their miserable units are situated where all the refuse of the village is thrown, and they have companionship with all that is impure. Looking to the position in which they are found—we can scarcely fail to associate them with the words of the Revelation — 'without are dogs and sorcerers.' "

For now, I'll let the argument lie and return to my companions and myself (along with a goat named Ramu), walking along one rainy morning in the foothills of the Western Ghats.

Kishen was still on the subject of huts. "We build our homes ourselves," he said, "with wood and twigs from the jungle. You come, I will show you. No windows. No rain can get in. No sun can get in. No wild animal can get in. Nothing can get in. When we go away in the jungle or go away to some distant field to work, we just leave all this here. On the way, we build another one. All we need is two trees. One danda from one tree to another and another danda and another and some branches and leaves and twigs and has, we are ready."

"What happens when you don't find two trees?" I asked.

"Then all we need is a big rock and we put some branches and leaves on the side and...bas," he said confidently, "we have a home."

"What about food when you travel through the jungle since there are no more animals and birds?"

RANDHIRKHARI



A settled Katkari family Pic © Randhir Khare

"Who says so?" he asked angrily. "But then we "Why are you wasting your time with these people?" don't only kill and eat animals and birds. There Can you make any money writing about such people? are plants there that we can eat and roots...," he stopped in mid-sentence, then waved his hand regally at the wooded hill and the others beyond clothed in clouds, "that is our market, our kitchen, our home. Everything. For you it may seem as if there is nothing left but for us it is still our bank."

The pride with which he spoke reminded me of that famous line from Rajpipla Bhil lore - referring to the Satpura mountain range which is the home of their High God: "To you it is stones and hills, to us it is heaven."

"Ah, ah, we have reached. Home," he said, holding me by the arm.

Just then a tall and well-built "other," wielding a six-foot bamboo lathi, came around the bend, shouting, "Where have you all been? You were to come to the Seth's fields this morning. What are you roaming around here for? You will come at once, you hear me? You hear me?"

The gang walking in front of us scattered.

"Come back, will you? Come back at once," the man shouted, banging his lathi on the road, "what will I tell the Seth?" Then he turned to Kishen who stood cowering near me, "You are an elder, can't you beat some sense into their heads? But then you are no better. You come along now. Sir, please explain to him. Just because he has enough money just now, it doesn't mean that he should not do any work. Please explain." He stopped for a moment and looked at me quizzically. "Who are you, Sir?" he asked "Social worker?"

I shook my head.

"Professor?"

I shook my head again.

"You do not look like a Party type so you must be a patrakar."

"Writer, Lekhak".

frantically. Kishen had evaporated, vanished, while we were talking. "See, they are very smart at slipping off. What to tell them." He headed off towards the first hut. He stood outside the hut and rapped on the low thatched roof with his lathi. "Oh, come on out, come on out, come on out. You hear me? Come on out...." I walked up to him and said, "Why don't you go in."

But that is your business...," he looked around

"Go in?" he asked, almost choking. "Go in? You just have to stand here to get the smell. This place stinks. It stinks. Don't go near that door," he warned.

"Where's the door?" I asked.

"Down there," he pointed.

I moved closer and saw a small square doorway a few feet off the ground. One would have to crouch to pass through it — going in or coming out.

"Kishen!" I called out but there was no reply. So I went even closer and bent down to peer in. Then the smell hit me, square in the face. I don't know how to describe it. At first it seemed like the stench of something rotten, like meat or dead rats. And I recoiled. I paused, then bent down again. "Kishen!" I called out. A muffled voice responded and it sounded somewhat like, "Come on in."

As I got accustomed to the stench, it didn't seem like that of dead rats but an overpowering smell of moist, musty earth that had not seen daylight or felt fresh breeze ever since the hut was built. Added to that was the smell of perspiration and uncured goatskin.

"Don't put your head inside," warned the man with the lathi, "you'll get sick."

"Kishen," I said softly, ignoring the warnings of the "other", "Can I come in?"

"Yes," he said.

TRIBAL INDIA-SPECIAL REPORT



Open rock shelter for hunter-gatherers Pic © Randhir Khare

So I crawled in.. My eyes slowly got accustomed And so we set off. to the dim light thrown by an oil lamp which stood hut was packed with people. Somehow, everyone had decided to heave their way in. There was a giggle, a grunt, the goat started bleating, a baby cried. The "other" stood outside rapping the thatched roof with his lathi and calling out to them. Then we heard him leave.

After a while, Kishen said, "Now he is gone, we will go out."

I was the first to make it through the small square hatch. Followed by others. Outside, I stood there gasping for fresh air, afraid that I was going to puke and offend everyone present. But thankfully, I didn't. I held my composure, washed my face and was myself again. "You are living on the Seth's land, how can you not do his work for him?" I asked Kishen.

"This is another Seth and that is another Seth," he said.

And everyone laughed.

In a small clearing, near Kishen's hut, two children played with the goat, feeding it leaves and stroking its back. The small flimsy garland of marigolds around its neck had snapped and there was a trail of petals from the doorway to where it stood.

"You saw my house?" asked Kishen. "You like my house?"

I nodded.

"You want to go to jungle houses on the hill?" he raised his eyebrows. "You want to?" And before I could answer he called out to one of the younger men, "Hoi Anand re you are going to Babu's house, eh? You are going, eh?"

"Yes, now."

"Take him with you."

in one corner and I was surprised to find that the Anand broke into a trot across the electric green field towards the base of the craggy wooded hill. I stumbled along behind him, trying furiously to keep pace. "Chalo, chalo" he shouted, without looking back. "Chalo, chalo"

> Then he reached the first big boulder and scaled up along its side, reached its shoulder and hopped along from boulder to boulder like a mountain goat. I followed, trying the same hop, step and jump but went sliding all over the place. Sanity prevailed and I quietly followed the wellused path that went weaving off between the shrubs...upwards. Somewhere from high above came Anand's voice, "Chalo, chalo".

> When I finally reached the first shoulder of the wooded hill, two huts emerged from the foliage. They were silent. No sign of anyone. Further up the slope towards the next shoulder, other huts were partially visible. Smoke rose from them. But I still couldn't see any people.

> I couldn't see myself climbing up all that way, over slippery rocks and an almost vertical jungle path streaming with slush. "Chalo, chalo" Anand called again.

> The rain saved me. I heard it coming a few minutes before it arrived. It was like a giant rock exploding after being hit by a thunderbolt. The first blast of water hit the side of the hill horizontally. Trees and shrubs were momentarily flattened and then sprang back again in slow motion as the velocity of the wind decreased and the rain slipped into a steady downpour. Then the next blast came, the rainy wind striking a nearby hill, bouncing off its side and glancing sideways, horizontally along the hill on which I stood, like a knife across a victim's throat.

> "Chalo, chalo" I could still hear Anand's cry, "Chalo, chalo" Blown away by the wind, across the rain-swept Western Ghats...till only the cry and squeak of whipped branches could be heard.

RANDHIRKHA



Sunil's upgraded home and family Pic © Randhir Khare

The wind finally broke through a tree barrier Most importantly, their acceptance of me had and knocked down one of the huts nearby. nothing to do with the hope of receiving bakshish It tilted, fell over and disintegrated, sections of any kind. It was merely an expression of a natural quickly scattering through the foliage...reeds and leaves and thatch leaping into the air like streamers.

Fortunately, it was an abandoned hut and no one was hurt.

I crawled into the other hut that was left standing. Some time later, Anand joined me. He jabbered away about the storm and the wind and how I wouldn't have been stuck there if only I had exercised some courage and gone up the slippery vertical hillside. I swallowed my pride and sat quietly.

Evidently, no one was in the hut. Anand said that the man of the house had died in the jungle some time back and the woman had taken her children and gone to stay with some relatives. She would return, perhaps with another man, leaving her children with a relative.

Whilst I sat there in silence, the man talked on, letting loose a stream of information about their marriage, birth and death rituals, hunting, fishing, eating habits, bows, arrows...the words came thick and fast. He was, in his own way, taking me through a Katkari package tour. At first I wanted to silence him — the rain and wind and the rooty dark inside of the hut with its pri-mordial assault on my olfactory organs had been so unsettling that I was When the rain lessened to a drip, we walked out. becoming disoriented; his fuselage only added to the turbulence. But then I realised that he was so used to those sorts of conditions in the wilds that it hadn't occurred to him that I was undergoing I nodded. some sort of trauma.

And the more this realisation grew on me, the went down between the trees along the other more I became aware of the fact that I was privileged. There was I, a "nobody" in their community, highway. Then y accepted in without suspicion. They needn't have railway station." made the effort. Kishen needn't have shared so taken me all the way up the side of the hill. slipped away silently.

respect for and acceptance of another living being.

It became increasingly obvious that they were spontaneously expressing and demonstrating very strong community values and community etiquette... all of which had been nurtured and developed down the ages. Although to many of the "others" they were uncouth, unhygienic, animal-like, uncivilised, unreliable, it was evident that they were more humane, just, uninterfering, unprejudiced and nurturing than all their neighbours put together. They were themselves and didn't pretend to be anyone else. Living close to nature, they had learnt the value of sharing. They had learnt to be inclusive and not exclusive.

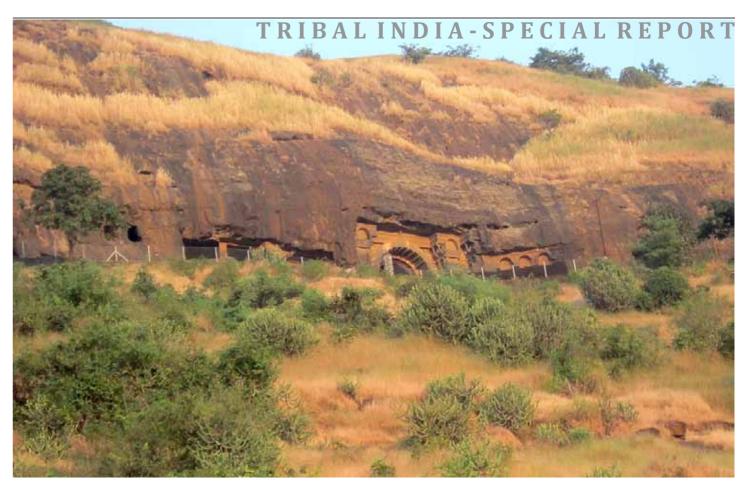
Sitting there in the damp darkness of the abandoned Katkari hut in the Western Ghats, I listened to the rain beat mercilessly down on the thatch and the leaves of the trees and grass all along the hill slope, and the rocks too, and on the hills nearby harbouring Katkari families...and the other hills of the ghats all the way down the coast along the Konkan region...and across to Thane and Raigad. This was their home. This is their home. Their land. Their forest. Their birthright.

Sitting there, with the fetid odour enveloping me, I felt suddenly humbled.

"You are going to Pune?" he asked.

"Go down that way." He pointed to a path that side of the hill. "It will reach down in front of the highway. Then you walk across and there is the

much of his life with me. Anand needn't have Before I could thank him he was gone. He had



High among the crags, the Buddhist temple more than 200 years ago in the homelands of the Katkaris Pic © Randhir Khare

I stood there, alone, breathing in the wet air, heavy with the aroma of broken green leaves and branches. Then I picked up the path and wandered down. Half-way, I decided to change direction and instead turned left down another track and headed off along the side of the hill towards the village of Bhaje where it sloped off and rose again, touching the shoulder of another craggy hill which housed the prayer caves of first century B.C. Buddhist monks.

The hills all around echoed the sounds of waterfalls, some streaming and dripping, others bouncing along... and still others straight-dropping hundreds of feet, exploding on large slabs of glistening rocks below and streaming with foamy mouths downwards to the fast-flowing rivulets in the valley below.

The jungle was alive with an amazing variety of butterflies, some flashing blues and reds and yellows... others with deeper hues of purple and black. A painted spur fowl dodged across the path and white breasted kingfishers echoed their shrill, haunting cries along with the wind that had settled to a soft moan.

I sat for a while on the roughly hewn floor of the Buddhist prayer hall. Wet clothes clinging to my skin. Gradually, very gradually, the turbulence inside me settled like silt in river water. I knew of course that it would not be long before the ide came in again and swirled the silt to rise...but for then, for those few moments, I knew I could be still, would be still.

Two thousand years and more ago, the Buddhists had come here to seek solitude in the wilderness, to carve prayer caves from nature's rocky flesh...to meditate on nature's myriad metaphors.

Two thousand years and more ago, they had come, to celebrate the universal spirit of non-violence.

Two thousand years and more ago, they had come, to reflect on nature's lessons of unity in diversity, of the equality of all forms of life — however big or small...irrespective of colour, appearance, feeding habits, growth patterns and seasonal variations.

Two thousand years and more ago, they had come to the forest kingdoms of the Katkaris, to find peace, salvation.



2011 - Another Year of Living Foolishly?

This year is grinding to a close and then hope will begin for the New Year. So what will it be? More wars? Genocide? Child abuse? Women beating? Extinction of another species? New insidious revelations that expose the all pervasive criminality of international politics and sections of the Media? There is so much to choose from. It's like a supermarket out there with all kinds of manmade disasters available on the shelves, one has simply to reach out and grab one.

2011 is ending on a note of negotiated delusions with the climate change conference in Durban. What happened to the good old days when we used a blanket instead of a heater? All this talk of saving the world is pointless. Everything is done half-heartedly. Let's make a resolution for the New Year to decimate the planet. Destroy all our natural resources, pollute the rivers and farm the seas to extinction. At least we would be doing one thing properly.

On one hand we talk of peace, love and no war. On the other hand we bomb, rape, pillage, annex and subdue nations with money, military power and retarded religiosity.

For instance, let's take a quick look at Afghanistan. The British couldn't control the tribes in the 19th century, the Russians failed miserably and the American soldiers with their assorted comrades in arms, poor souls, are dying by the dozen along with faceless unarmed civilians. I suppose life is cheaper by the dozen. Hasn't anyone got a clue about what the Afghans want?

And what about certain parts of the Middle East? Do you think they will run out of people considering the number of killings that are taking place? Education there is history – like the death of a six year old killed by a stray bullet. It stems from the barrel of a gun. The pen is for signing death certificates.

Statistics are essential in war zones. They can always be rearranged to suit one's perceived objectives. The little numbers represent people; mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, relatives and friends. A neat way to manage these numbers is to write in pencil so that an eraser can be used judiciously.

And while the death toll in war ravaged countries rise, a hysterical caucus threatens Iran not to go ahead with its nuclear program, while watching China systematically and violently dismantle Tibetan culture.

Africa, the Dark Continent, what can one say about its peoples and their ancient civilizations that have slowly been corrupted by large corporations and foreign governments meddling in the affairs of the states: Buying and selling governments on mammoth proportions? Oh for the days of Idi Amin. Remember Entebbe and the blood baths? Everything is so quiet now, no excitement and drama except for piracy off the coast of Somalia, theft of natural resources and other inconsequential happenings.

What about the sub-continent, India? Do they still abort female foetuses? Burn women who don't bring enough dowry? Continue to kill tigers for their body parts to be used in aphrodisiacs? And do millions still exist on the threshold of life and death? And is the arrogant Indian Middle Class growing to newer levels self indulgence?

Forgive me, I missed that little country to the west of India; Pakistan. Poor chaps they've had such a tiresome year with the constant ebb and flow of political violence and religious fundamentalism peppered with suicide bombers that probably the common folk want to migrate to India... can't really blame them. All they desire is to live in peace to pray, work and procreate.

Now let's see who is left on the black board? Hmmm...Chavez seems to be holding forth. And what about the indigenous people of the Amazon who are fighting a losing battle with the powers that be to stop the plunder of their home, the rainforest, the green lung of mother earth? South America appears to be lost in translation. We never seem to get a lot of news from there except for soccer, drug lords and the Mayan Calendar that ends in 2012.

Let's leave all this violence for some whale steaks. The Japanese are so considerate to the world at large. For a country that prides itself on rejecting nuclear weapons it has a rather odd way of showing its respect for the environment. I am referring to the mass killing of whales for scientific purposes. Actually you must admire their concern. Ever considered the fact that they maybe ridding the oceans of monsters that take up so much space and are a serious health hazard to humanity?

I think Japan's neighbor China has the right approach. It has dispensed with the cumbersome concept of Human Rights and its implementation. In its place totalitarianism with a small dose of plutocracy has been suitably installed.

There are many countries that lecture China on its Human Rights. Wonder who has a perfect track record? The world's last Superpower? A superpower that continues to interfere in the affairs of other nations ... at times actually sending troops and bombing unarmed civilians along with perceived enemies of the State?

I suppose the term 'collateral damage' is more palatable than the word... murder.

Civil liberties are essential for the survival of a nation and so is the health of its people. In some areas of society where commonsense has been the victim, Nature has found a way of retaliating by inventing diseases like AIDS and Swine Flu, infecting millions and helping to keep the population in check.

And once again, as we have done in the past, this Christmas and New Year we shall all sit down to sumptuous meals, drink whatever fancies our taste buds, shop till we drop and pamper our overweight children and pets. It's the season of happiness, love and family especially for the homeless, injured and maimed children of wars, missing women in Afghanistan and elsewhere, asylum seekers, political detainees and the fringe folk of the planet. They will surely be very happy and content with what they see, hear, feel and touch this festive season.

From genocide to environmental disasters it has been a roller coaster ride through many countries and peoples and cultures and religions. This journey will end only when we truly comprehend the reason as to why we have been put on this planet by a power far greater than we can ever imagine.

Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year to all.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

ATOSSA SOLTANI & CAROLINE BENNETT



The Belo Monte Dam and a Call for Clean Renewable Energy in Brazil

by Atossa Soltani & Caroline Bennett, Amazon Watch







©Amazon Watch/Caroline Bennett

The controversial Belo Monte Dam on the Xingu River has led to serious debate about Brazil's energy matrix. There is mounting evidence that Brazil does not need the ecologically and financially costly Belo Monte Dam, nor the other 60 large dams slated for the Brazilian Amazon over the next 20 years. Brazil could meet its power needs through less harmful energy alternatives and energy efficiency.

The Brazilian government is predicting a business as usual scenario of doubling of its energy demand by 2020 to sustain current rates of economic growth. With the country hosting the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Earth Summit in June 2012, the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics, this initiative is timelier than ever.



©Amazon Watch/Christian Poirier

Currently Brazil gets less than 1.3 percent of its electricity from wind and solar energy while 80 percent of its electricity comes from 450 hydroelectric dams. The Brazilian government plans to continue its reliance on hydropower by adding 60-70 new large dams on tributaries of the Amazon River in Brazil, Peru, and Bolivia over the next 20 years. This plan spells disaster for the rivers and forests of the Amazon.

"Clean" Energy?

It is a myth that large dams are "clean renewable energy." In the tropics, large dams are methane factories generating significant global warming gas emissions produced by decomposing vegetation from their large reservoirs. Methane is 25-50 times more potent than CO2, bringing emissions from large dams on par with those of a coal power plant!

The Brazilian government is moving ahead "at any cost" with plans to build the third-largest dam in the world and one of the Amazon's most controversial development projects, the Belo Monte Dam on the Xingu River in the state of Pará. The project dates back to Brazil's military dictatorship and the government has attempted to build it through a series of national investment programs including Brasil em Ação and the Program to Accelerate Growth. Original plans to dam the Xingu have been greenwashed through multiple public relations programs over the course of two decades in the face of intense national and international protest.

In order to feed the powerhouse of the Belo Monte Dam complex, up to 80 percent of the Xingu River will be diverted from its original course, causing a permanent drought on the river's "Big Bend" and directly affecting the Paquiçamba and Arara territories of the Juruna and Arara indigenous peoples. To make this possible, two huge canals 500 meters wide by 75 km long will be excavated, unearthing more land than was removed to build the Panama Canal. Belo Monte's two reservoirs and canals will flood a total of 668 km2 of which 400 km2 is standing forest. The flooding will also force more than 20,000 people from their homes in the municipalities of Altamira and Vitoria do Xingu.



©Amazon Watch/ Antoine Bonsorte

Hydroelectric energy is touted as both a solution to Brazil's periodic blackouts and as a "clean development" approach to global climate change. However, experts such as Philip Fearnside of the National Amazon Research Institute (INPA) have calculated that the forests flooded by Belo Monte's reservoirs will generate enormous quantities of methane, a greenhouse gas that is 25 times more potent than CO2.

At Great Cost

Belo Monte will also attract 100,000 migrants to the region. However, at the height of construction, only 40,000 jobs— and only 2,000 of them long-term—will have been created. The remaining labor pool will be driven to resort to illegal logging and cattle ranching, the two main causes of deforestation in the Amazon. In addition, new migrants may fuel social tensions as they look for work, pushing into indigenous territories and protected areas to carve out a livelihood. Meanwhile, the needs of those who do find jobs will add pressure to an already weak infrastructure and social services in the largest cities.

For the Xingu's poor farmers, temporary employment created by the dam is not a viable replacement for lost agricultural lands and the river's fish supply. Considered an "obstacle" to business interests, indigenous peoples are particularly vulnerable. Mega-projects typically confront indigenous communities with disease, loss of food and clean water sources, cultural disintegration and human rights abuses by illegal loggers, migrant workers and land speculators. The indirect and long term impacts of Belo Monte are of even greater concern as other unsustainable industries such as aluminum and metal refineries, soy plantations, logging, and mining expand into the area.

The original plans for damming the Xingu River included six dams: Kararão, Babaquara, Jarina, Ipixuna, Iriri, and Kokraimoro. However, when the indigenous people of the Xingu rejected the dams and defended the river in 1989, the government changed their approach: the name Kararão (a war cry in Kayapó) became "Belo Monte," the name Babaquara became "Altamira," and so forth.

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At the Second Historical Encounter in Defense of the Xingu in May 2008, the government announced it would only license and auction one dam complex, "Belo Monte," which in reality is three dams: the main dam at Ilha do Pimental, a complementary reinforcement dam called Bela Vista, and the main turbine house at Belo Monte do Pontal. However, because of the dramatic variations in the Xingu River's flow between the rainy season and dry season, the government knows that building Belo Monte is economically unviable unless more dams are built upstream. Earlier plans for Belo Monte called for four additional upstream dams: Altamira, Iriri, Pombal, and São Felix.

The possible future upstream dams would impact Kayapó indigenous territories, flood the lands of peoples such as the Araweté, Assuriní and Arara, and cause extensive damage to forests and fisheries across the region.

Who's Energy?

The government claims that Belo Monte's cheap energy will power the houses of Brazilian families. In reality, only 70 percent of Belo Monte's energy will be sold for public consumption. Meanwhile, the remaining 30 percent has been purchased by state electric utility Eletrobras to resell to inefficient and energy-intensive industrial mining and other operations. The government has planned a \$40 billion investment in mining expansion for the Amazon region through the year 2014.

The heavily subsidized electricity from Belo Monte and other hydroelectric dams planned for the region would power the expansion of export-oriented mining at the Vale corporation's Carajás iron mine and Salobo copper mine, Alcoa's Juriti bauxite mine, and Anglo American's Jacaré nickel mine, among others. Meanwhile, Brazilian citizens would continue to pay among the highest energy tariffs in the developing world in exchange for electricity from perhaps the most inefficient dam in the country's history.



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Clean, Renewable Alternatives

Solar and wind energy production currently face obstacles of access and await grid-connectivity laws, currently pending adoption by the Brazilian congress. A shift from centralized to distributed renewable power generation and efforts to promote new investments in solar and wind energy, increase the efficiency of Brazil's network of existing power plants, reduce transmission losses, implement smart grid technology, and investments in demand side energy efficiency have the potential for providing the clean, reliable energy that Brazil needs to fuel its economic development without further harming the Amazon's rivers and rainforests. A low hanging fruit in energy efficiency would be to provide alternatives to individualized electric shower heaters. These systems consume 8 percent of all Brazil's electricity production and around 18 percent of the peak demand.

To address the looming threat from dozens of large dams planned for the Amazon, Amazon Watch is embarking on a new initiative to green Brazil's power sector together with a consortium of Brazilian and international NGOs and policy experts.

The first product is a forthcoming compendium articulating more climate and biodiversity-friendly alternatives for meeting the country's energy needs. The initiative will also enlist renewable energy champions from inside and outside Brazil, convene roundtables, and engage in media and advocacy campaigns to stir public debate. "Clean Energy Champions" will be invited to participate in a high profile energy summit—timed with the 20th Anniversary of the Earth Summit in Rio next June—and to make specific commitments in the form of investments, technology, policy recommendations, and new thinking towards the goal of greening Brazil's power sector.

Solving Brazil's energy issue is key to safeguarding the Amazon. The time is now. Amazon Watch welcomes foundations, policy experts, investors and clean energy companies who want to join this exciting initiative. For more information, visit www.amazonwatch.org.



Amazon Watch is a nonprofit organization founded in 1996 to protect the rainforest and advance the rights of indigenous peoples in the Amazon Basin.

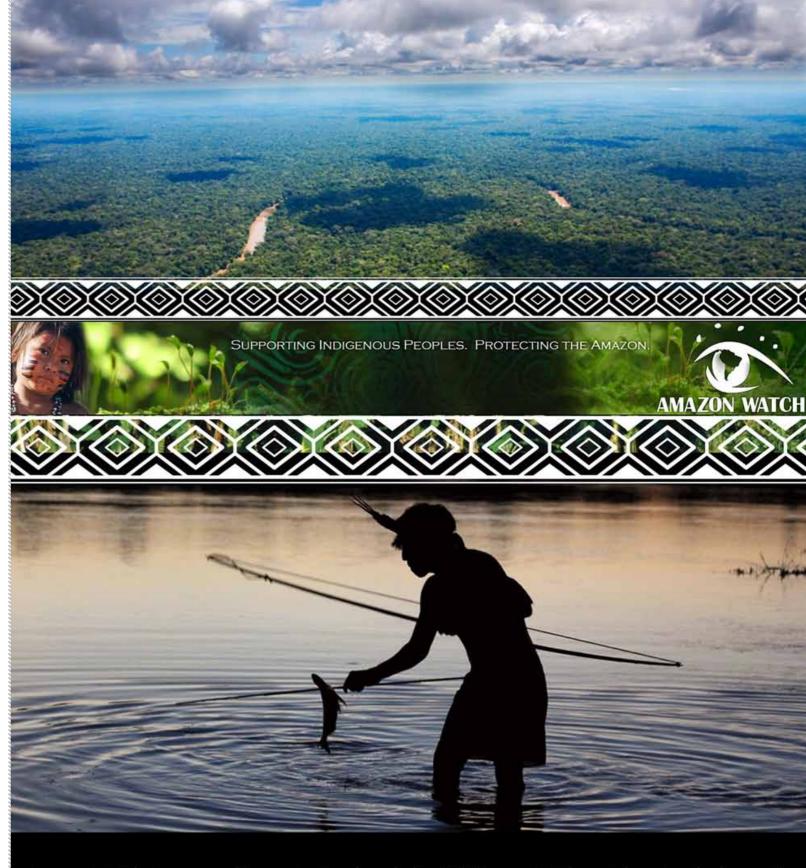
We partner with indigenous and environmental organizations in campaigns for human rights, corporate accountability and the preservation of the Amazon's ecological systems.

We envision a world that honors and values cultural and biological diversity and the critical contribution of tropical rainforests to our planet's life support system.

We believe that indigenous self-determination is paramount, and see that indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contribute greatly to sustainable and equitable stewardship of the Earth.

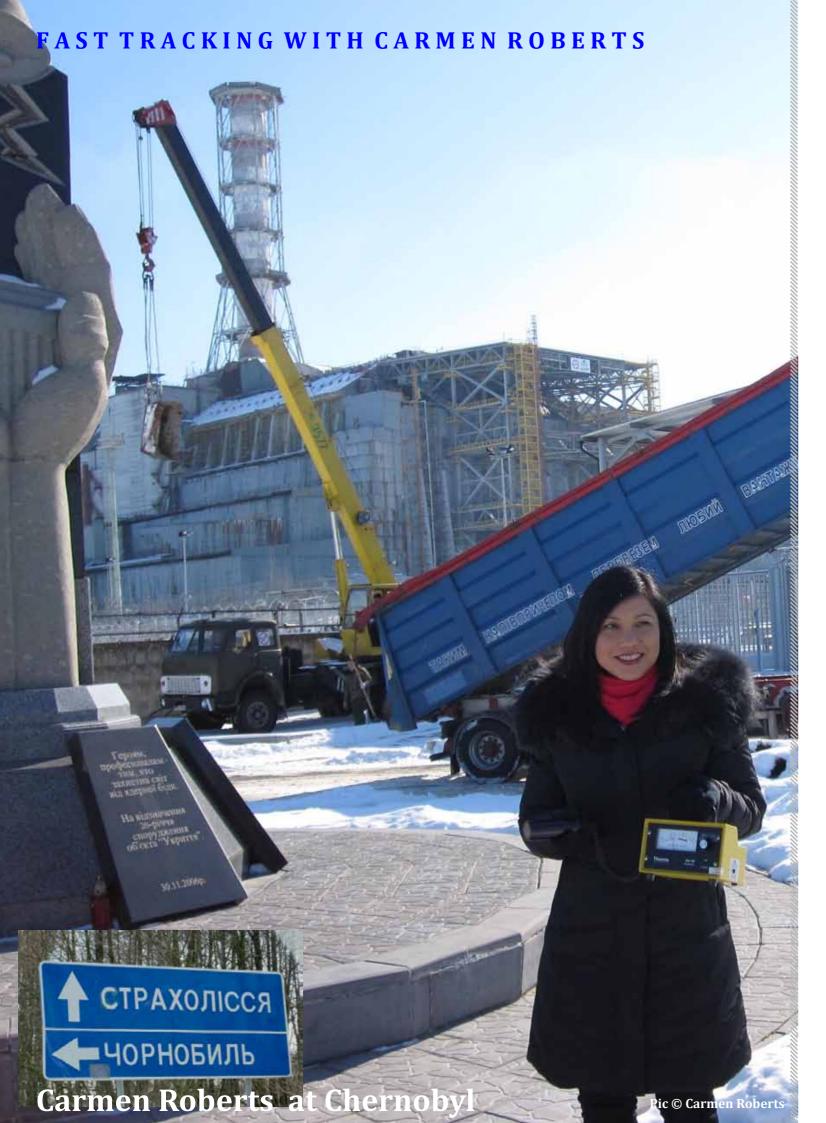
We strive for a world in which governments, corporations and civil society respect the collective rights of indigenous peoples to free, prior and informed consent over any activity affecting their territories and resources.

We commit, in the spirit of partnership and mutual respect, to support our indigenous allies in their efforts to protect life, land, and culture in accordance with their aspirations and needs. For more information, please visit amazonwatch.org.



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For more information visit www.amazonwatch.org





Chernobyl, a marriage proposal and climbing Mount Kinabalu!

by Carmen Roberts, exclusively for Live Encounters.

From nuclear radiation, marriage proposals and moving countries, 2011 will go down as a year of big changes and environmental extremes, both in my work and private life.

I began the year in a steady, full-time staff job at BBC World in London. It was my tenth year at the BBC, my seventh year working on the 'Fast Track' travel program and I'd already clocked up 70 countries in my passport (but many more for my bucket list).

On a personal level, I was in a long distance relationship. My boyfriend at the time was living in Singapore. This might sound tough, but thanks to my job and his family commitments we managed to see each other roughly once every 4-6 weeks. As anyone who has endured a long distance relationship will attest, it can be trying, on even the strongest of unions. So, after a wintery morning, surprise proposal, it was confirmed that I would move to Singapore.

But before my arrival in the humid climes of the city-state near the equator, I had one last overseas trip - to Ukraine. Now this is a country I'd not been to before, and I was very excited at the prospect.

The days were bright and sunny in the capital Kiev and the light reflected beautifully for the camera from the golden domes of the cathedrals. But once you left the confines of the hotel, the mercury plunged well below zero degrees Celcius, there was snow underfoot and the Siberian winds blowing across the continent cut right through my body. Thermal underwear, snow boots and a thick coat didn't seem enough. Maybe my blood was already beginning to thin.

One of the things that Ukraine is famous for, or maybe it's more appropriate to say infamous, is Chernobyl – the site of one of the world's worst nuclear accidents. This year marked the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant explosion and in a bid to boost visitor numbers, the Ukraine government had begun to officially allow tourists to visit the site (unofficially tours have been happening for the last 10 years).

Chernobyl is a two-hour drive from the capital Kiev and I set off with a translator, Geiger counter and my cameraman Justin, who'd bought new shoes for the occasion (he had read on a blog site that you should throw away your footwear after visiting Chernobyl).

It was a moving journey. We visited Prypiat - once the thriving hub of Chernobyl, now an eerie ghost town. School text books with pictures of Lenin, childrens' toys and even the odd shoe were left strewn across the dust-filled classrooms at the local school - signs that people here had left in a hurry. I interviewed an elderly woman who'd lived in Chernobyl all her life and she told me how she would never forget the horror of that devastating day in April 1986.

Ironically, the day I arrived in Singapore was the day the earthquake struck Japan and caused a catastrophic accident at the nuclear power station in Fukushima. And so out of respect, the Chernobyl report was shelved for a few months.

WATCH THE VIDEO: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/fast_track/9475764.stm





Adjusting to life in Singapore hasn't been so hard, if you don't count the heat and humidity. I was, after all, born here. I have a multitude of Singaporean aunties who are and stop or deter illegal logging. marvelous cooks, and I've enjoyed chowing down on all my favourite Peranakan dishes like poh piah (local spring rolls) and laksa (spicy coconut noodle dish). I've now got to curb my eating if I'm ever going to fit into a wedding dress at the end of this year!

Now that I'm based in Singapore, I'm mainly covering travel stories from Asia for the Fast Track program.

In May, I ventured into the jungles of northern Sumatra in Indonesia to visit an elephant camp.

But these weren't just ordinary elephants. Many of the herd had come from areas in Aceh where elephants often retaliated, destroying fields, houses and sometimes, whole villages.

The Indonesian authorities were then forced to **attention**. round up the rogues and move them to government camps. The group of seven elephants we visited in the Gunung Leuser National Park had been rehabilitated and trained to carry humans, and they have been instrumental in the local tourism efforts in Tangkahan.

The elephants, together with their mahouts, and sometimes the odd tourist, regularly patrol the jungle around the village of Tangkahan, to try

This tiny, remote village - a bumpy, three and a half hour drive from Medan - was practically built on the logging trade in the 1980s.

But ten years ago, with the help of local NGOs and the tourism authorities, the community banded together to help protect the surrounding forest. And so the elephant patrols began.

Before I climbed on board these magnificent beasts, I was lucky enough to help bath them in the nearby river. The mahouts, or elephant trainers, will give you a scrubbing brush, as their grey charge lies on her side to let the ritual begin.

humans encroached on their land and these wild The skin was leathery and tough to touch, and it was little disconcerting to be brushing with such force, yet clearly the elephants enjoyed the vigorous scouring, dousing and overall

> The patrol itself, was a slow plod across rivers and into the dense jungle.

The mahouts had also brought along fruit, for us to feed the elephants. I'm in awe at the dexterity of

the trunks that can clasped a tiny chunk of pineapple from my hand and minutes later, uproot a small bush.

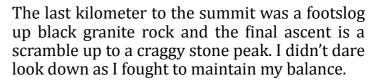
At times the terrain was quite steep, I was hanging on for dear life, and yet I was amazed at how nimble and deceptively light-footed these large creatures seemed to be as we traversed ravines and gullies with ease.

A few months later, I was again in the rugged outdoors, this time, it was a more strenuous adventure. Together with a local cameraman, I climbed one of the highest mountains in south east asia, Mount Kinabalu on the island of Sabah, in Malaysia. This is a journey I had been wanting to do for some time now, but I'd clearly underestimated the climb.

The first day was six kilometer uphill walk, on a natural stair master - steps that had been built or carved into the mountain.

Around 100 tourists a day make this 8.7 km uphill pilgrimage to see the sunrise from the ironically named Low's Peak, 4,095 meters above sea level.

The next morning, it was a brutal 1:45am wakeup call, and we began the uphill trudge toward the summit, our steps smaller, slower and much steeper than the day before.



But it was a relatively clear, crisp morning when we finally reached the summit.

Low's Peak is a confined space at the top of one of the highest mountains in south east Asia and there was literally a human traffic jam as tourists from all around the world jostled for photographic position in front of the humble, wooden sign to signify they'd made it.

The rain soaked clothes, aching leg muscles and chattering teeth all seemed worth it, when I finally glimpsed the sun peaking over the clouds like a golden aura.

Walking down, the scene was dramatic and moody, as we inched across barren black rock set against a misty, pale-blue sky, like a fairytale villain's lair.

But we were only half way through our journey. A few hundred meters downhill, a mountain top obstacle course awaited us. If the journey to Low's Peak hadn't been enough for my jangling nerves, walking off a cliff tethered to a wire, with the odd metal rung beneath me was surely going to send me over the edge, metaphorically.

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Watch this video: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/fast_track/9573850.stm

Via ferrata literally means 'iron bridge' in Italian and it was first used in World War I for troops to cross the Alps. There are hundreds of via ferrate in Europe, but only one in Asia and at 3,776 meters, it's currently the world's highest.

Just before eight o'clock I stepped into the climbing harness, clipped on my carabiners and tightened my helmet. I peered over the ledge and spotted a small step, no bigger than the palm of my hand, 10 meters below.

"Just lean back and walk down the rock," our Mountain Torq trainer John encouraged.

For someone who is afraid of heights and hasn't done any mountaineering, this is a frightening prospect.

My legs were shaking involuntarily beneath me, part exhaustion and part fear, and yet I couldn't move. I secretly wanted to hug the side of the cliff face and cry like a baby, but ultimately, pride spurred me on.

I concentrated on looping the rope over the hook firmly rooted into the mountain, and clipping the carabiners one by one to the other side of the wire cable with my foot balancing on a metal rung, all the while trying not to look down.

In fact, the views below were stunning - rolling, lush green hills and valleys in perfect contrast to the black and grey rocky peaks. I imagine this is as close as I'd ever get to rock climbing.

The hardest part of this adventure was actually getting down the mountain. My legs were aching and a recurring ankle injury had flared up again, so it was a slow slog down hill beneath a light shower of warm rain.

Although every muscle in my legs screamed in agony for a week afterwards, looking back at the photos and video footage, I've a huge sense of accomplishment, mixed with a tinge of disbelief.

Once my body had recovered, I was off again, but this time on an urban adventure in Japan. We filmed two very different reports in Tokyo.







The first was part of a new video series for the bbc.com/travel website called 'Going Local' – as the name suggests, I was given a series of challenges to complete in Tokyo without the help of a guidebook, just relying on the locals who live there. The series is under wraps for now, but hopefully I'll be able to share more about it next year.

The other report was for Fast Track about the country's efforts to bring back tourists after the devastating earthquake and nuclear accident. A highlight was a visit to the site of the soon to be opened SkyTree and an interview with the architect Shigeru Yoshino.

This magnificent structure is set to be finished in May 2012, and will be the tallest broadcast tower in the world and the second tallest building, after the Burj Khalifa in Dubai.

The tower was barely damaged during the earthquake and has since proven to be a beacon of hope for Japan in these dark days of tourism.

Filming these days has changed a lot, especially with the introduction of new high definition cameras. Gone are the days of carrying around tapes and the possibility that you could tape over footage or worse still, tape damage.

But with these new cameras come new challenges, downloading footage each day on the road onto a hard drive seems all too easy, and it is, except when there's a technical glitch. This is what happened on our trip to Tokyo and we realized that we'd lost 3 hours of crucial footage as my colleague Inga and I were on our way to the airport. So after more than two weeks on the road, I had to turn back, re-book the hotel and break the news to my fiancé that my return home would be delayed by a day.



My next trip is purely for pleasure and there won't be a TV camera in sight. We are off to Phuket in December for our wedding – a befitting way to finish an action-packed year and cement my new life in Asia!

KARMIEL

Eichmann To Al-Bis: Israel's Revolving Door?



As Israel's darling boy began to readjust to life at his Mitzpe Hila home, the western Galilee experienced a near-reprise of the forest fires of 10 months ago.

Moreover, the national moral and political agonising over Gilad Shalit's release in exchange for 1,027 Palestinian terrorist prisoners became akin to that of a near-half-century ago over whether to execute one Nazi - Adolf Eichmann.

But just as the sudden brushfires near Kibbutz Yassur and Moshav Ahihud at first merely annoyed disgruntled motorists in diverted traffic, even those most against the prisoner swap joined the general rejoicing in Shalit's return.

"I'm happy to hear that Gilad Shalit is alive and well," said Frimet Roth, whose daughter, Malki was among those murdered in the 2001 Sbarrao Pizzeria bombing in Jerusalem.

"That's a great relief and happy news. But it's accompanied by other feelings, the difficult ones. There is sorrow, anger; we're having a hard time understanding and digesting it. There is also fear. I'm very scared." Mrs Roth insisted that her objection to the exchange, including the release of many terrorists, was based on reason, not emotion.

I know what she means. An outing to Fort Yechiam - quite near to Shalit's home and coincidentally on the day he was released - could have turned into personal tragedy when neighbouring picnickers discovered an unattended backpack next to where we were seated at lunch.

A security man was called. The bag contained nothing nasty but we wondered why it had been left there and shuddered briefly when we considered the implications.

NATALIE WOOD



But there is no reason, only an ugly parody of emotion from illogical antisemites like The Guardian newspaper's Deborah Orr, who performed an extraordinary cerebral somersault by claiming that Israel's prisoner swap was based on racism; that one Jewish life was worth more than 1,000 Arab lives. She wrote:

"It's quite something, the prisoner swap between Hamas and the Israeli government that returns Gilad Shalit to his family, and more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners to theirs... [which is] an indication of how inured the world has become to the obscene idea that Israeli lives are more important than Palestinian lives."

It's clear that Orr, while married to someone from a Jewish background, simply doesn't want to understand the Jewish psyche: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whatever his legion faults, thought as much like a father as a politician when he took the advice of his security chiefs and accepted the Hamas deal.

Yet Dr. Yaakov Hasdai, a respected Israeli historian and retired army colonel, has advised that while Israelis may rejoice in Shalit's return as private citizens, "as a society and a nation, we need to look at our situation and do some soul-searching as to where we stand."

In an interview with the Israel Hayom newspaper, Dr Hasdai suggested that freed terrorists who had been on life sentences and subsequently re-arrested for planning or engaging in terrorist attacks should then be given the death penalty.

"We cannot have a situation where prison is a revolving door. This needs to be said unequivocally: released terrorists can take advantage of their second lease on life, but if afterward they return to their misdeeds, then that is the end of the road."

Rt Col Dr Hasdai is much admired in top Israeli circles. If his ideas are accepted, terrorists like Wafa al-Bis may fulfil their wish for martyrdom.

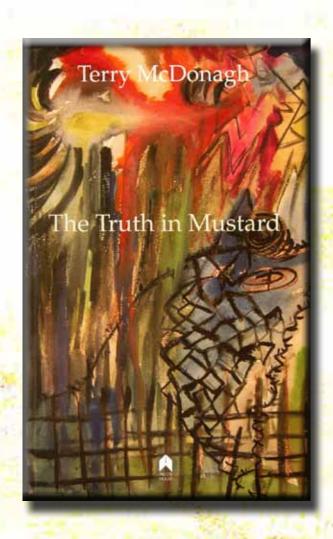
The day after her release as part of the Shalit deal she told cheering schoolchildren on the Gaza Strip that she hoped they would follow her example:

"I hope you will walk the same path we took and God willing, we will see some of you as martyrs."

Bis, a member of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades was imprisoned for 12 years in 2005 for planning to blow herself up with 22lbs of explosives sewn to her underwear. She was caught red-handed by Israeli guards at the Erez border crossing on her way to Beersheba's Soroka Hospital.

From Eichmann to al-Bis – is this Israel's future revolving door?

TERRYMCDONAGH



Dear Readers,

I come from Ireland but live in Hamburg, Germany. I am including poems, one of which is set in Bali when I read at the International Writer's Festival in Ubud in 2004. At that time a selection of my poetry was translated into the Indonesian language by INDONESIATERA, Magelang, Java. I had a wonderful trip.

However, I would like to begin with Wolfgang Borchert's declaration of love, in his own words, to his city of Hamburg. He was an author who died of hepatitis on November 20th, 1947 at the age of 26 in Basel, Switzerland

His play, Draussen vor der Tuer – The Man Outside – opened on the night after he died in Hamburg. What is interesting about Borchert is that he was drafted into the army and sent to the front, but he was court-martialled three times for insubordination.

His Declaration:

That's more than a heap of stones, roofs, windows, carpets, beds, streets, bridges and lamps. It's more than factory chimneys and the hooting of traffic – more than gull's laughter, trams screaming and the thunder of railways – it's more than ships' sirens, crashing cranes, curses and dance music – oh, it's infinitely more.

It's our will to be. Not to be anywhere and anyhow, but to be here and only here between Alster stream and Elbe river and only to be here, as we are, we in Hamburg!

Wolfgang Borchert: Hamburg. wwww.goethe.de

Terry McDonagh
Poet and Dramatist

In a Doll's House

Day after day, year in year out, life after life, you and I sit like puppets, or stand at the horizon unable to trust our wings.

We make low, uneasy sounds behind frosted glass or we toy with balloons hoping to find a second wind.

Former lovers saunter along the street below like links in a chain of empty cups – like glitzy eyes dancing in tandem.

I had a full pipe and swagger then, but we grew weary searching for each other in sweat shops, data banks, meditation classes and crossfire.

You used to be a good kisser. I had my newspaper in my tweed pocket. We were a repeat performance turning left, left, left, left, left - only left.

My car was bigger than yours. You were more brunette; better on the phone to Indian summer resorts – things like that.

We've moved on to become decorations in an earthenware pot – a place where birds of prey can't stop laughing, and when you

think that - in our day - The Beatles sang love, love, love, love is all you need...love is all you need.

In a doll's house next door, a healthy boy is getting singing lessons to make him more tenor, to make him more base,

to suppress his love of singing songs, to make him one of us. I cannot wait for you God, but I feel born again.



PO E T R Y T E R R Y M C D O N A G H

Lady of Japan

I met a lady on a quay in Japan and we never spoke a word but we smiled and sang of lost love and of flowers in the spring wind.

She pointed up to their mountain without as much as a whisper.

I saw her people in colour and she was a seaman's bride.

I am not a seaman, nor do I ever want to be, but
I met a lady on a quay in Japan and we never spoke a word.

Lovely Women

Rubens' women were round and fat.

Beckham's wife is very thin.

Rubens' women are alive and well.

With Beckham's wife you cannot tell.

As Real As Life Gets

In the city, there are coats on people and jackets on pegs in shop windows. There is paint on walls in suburbs,

names above buildings and women on something in a goodville park. The city seems safe, but as sure as

there was a time before cars, some judges go to lunch in brothels; a policemen walks up and down dreaming

of a cosy bar with ladies and weapons to trade; a tormented professor of philosophy sits next to

breezy troublemakers in a coffee shop. Hints of a real world fall into focus like the blue of a pool

seen from up high. An elderly lady leans across into her neighbour's garden to pinch a sprig with a smile.

Visiting crowd leave facts and figures on beaches in July. Wind blows up the river and waves roll in

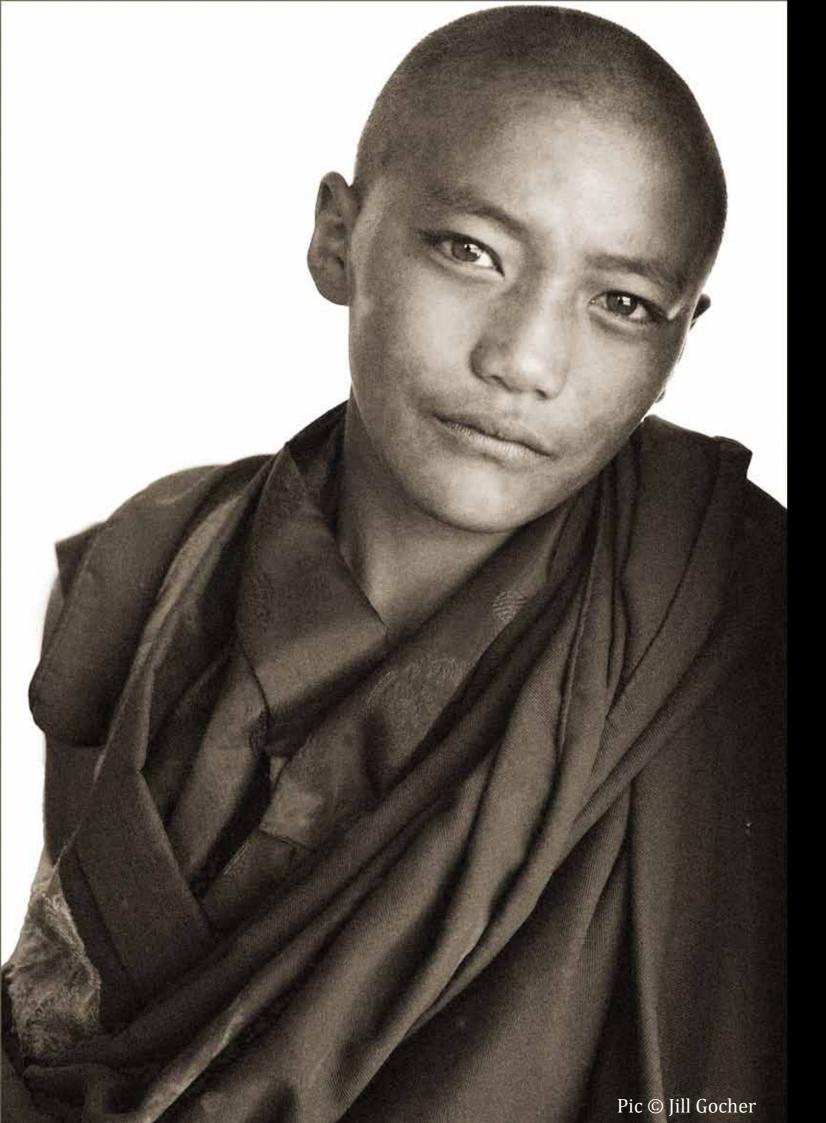
with the tides. Symbols have meaning for some. Colour blindness sees what it sees and not every singer

is happy. A boy and girl receding into the woods, or a child on cloud nine with ice-cream is as real as life gets.

Proverb

To know the road ahead, ask those coming back.

There were few to ask.



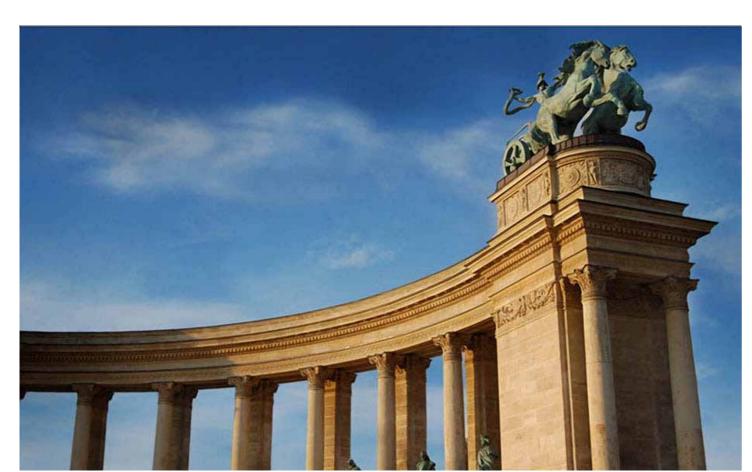
"What motives me to take photographs?

The answer to this is my continual quest to portray the beauty of people or a situation.

When photographing people I try to get past the fasçade and to make a connection with that person; to get through to the Self, the soul and the essence of that person."



Jill Gocher
Photographer
Bali, Indonesia



©Nannette Vinson, an American photographer/artist based in Budapest. nannettevinson@yahoo.com

Generation eXpat by Sue Healy

"You're an expatriate. You've lost touch with the soil.

You get precious. Fake European standards have ruined you.

You drink yourself to death. You become obsessed by sex.

You spend all your time talking, not working.

You are an expatriate, see. You hang around cafés."

- Chapter 12, 'The Sun Also Rises', Ernest Hemingway



Pic © Mark Ulvsea

SUE HEALY



For those of you who view youth travel as all backpacks, gap years and Goa – think again. Facing tough economic times and a competitive employment market, today's twentysomethings are increasingly likely to have their first foreign exposure on the company account – and advance on the career ladder while they're at it.

Youth has always sought adventure and fresh pasture and this fact has not changed. A decade ago however, traveling in your twenties meant 'finding yourself' and chilling out on beaches. Today's economic environment and its bleak outlook re jobs, means that the latest crop of graduates are a nervous generation. In light of this fact, gap years can appear frivolous. While travel is still the aim of many young people, the more ambitious and future-focused are not willing to scupper their chances of a good corporate career for a year of chilling in Thailand.

In the harsh light of this sober new world, it is not surprising that one of this year's YouTube sensations 'Gap Yah', mocked the figure of an over-privileged Western youth traveling the developing world, waxing moronically about his adventures on "a spiritual, cultural, political exchange thing" all the while getting drunk and stoned and arrested a lot. It is clear that many of today's graduates believe such aimless, hedonistic youth travel will prove detrimental to their C.V.s. However, graduates are alive to the fact that international career experience can give a candidate a strong edge over the competition. Therefore, they opt instead for a bona fide, responsible and well-paid foreign postings within the framework of a multi-national company, thus combining career ambition with youthful adventure.

"The job arena is very cut-throat these days" observes Kristina Jilly of Budapest based recruitment company, Focus Consulting, "young people interested in a high flying career cannot afford to be seen to have 'taken a year off', they have to show something for their time out, having done proper work with an established NGO or having learned a language, for example".

An Australian of Hungarian descent who relocated to Hungary in the mid-nineties, Kristina describes international corporate experience as a selling point that stands out on a C.V., "There has been a marked increase in young Westerners making inquires as to job opportunities on the Budapest market over the past three years – mainly in the areas of Finance/Accounting, I.T., and Business Processing. Exposure to, and ability to work within, other cultures suggests flexibility and intrepid character, traits needed in management. Also, management in Central and Eastern Europe tends to be younger than in the West, so perhaps applicants view our region as a shorter route to management level."

The former Soviet Block countries are an interesting study regarding the shifting figure of the young expatriate. In the 1990s, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the region saw an influx of young hipster expats, all wanting to pen the great American/British/Irish novel. Some hung-out, taught English, partied, went home. Occasionally, others, on-hand to stumble into jobs as the region was taking shape, ended up in careers almost despite themselves. There was an element of the random, the arbitrary about it all. No more.



Today, the twentysomethings moving to Central/Eastern Europe come in suit and tie, with briefcase in hand, they know exactly where they are going, what they're doing and how long they are going to spend in the region before they get onto the next rung of the ladder, and the next posting. They're focused, work hard and they are glad of the opportunity. And the corporate world is happy to have them onboard.

Traditionally, a term abroad was the domain of older, middle-to-upper managers. Only they, it was believed, had the wealth of experience and sound judgment required to run far-flung offices. After all, these postings were autonomous positions in isolated places and HQ would have little control or ability to monitor operations to any great degree. Understandably, companies would have baulked at the idea of sending in a recent graduate to oversee such operations. However, thanks to modern technology such as the Internet, video conferencing and Skype - regional and foreign offices can be run, to a certain extent, from headquarters, thus a young assignee does not have to be entrusted with more responsibility than his/her experience can cope.

Another factor contributing to the global rise in young, single expats is the low relocation costs they entail. There is no family to relocate, no large family home to rent (an apartment will do) and no kids needing expensive education in the international schools. Young professionals are usually happy with a short-term posting and are more flexible and open to being moved on quickly if needs be.

Interestingly, another reason more and more young people favor assignments abroad, is because a number of them were themselves once 'Third Culture Kids' or TCKs. TCK is a term coined in the 1960s by psychologist Dr. Ruth Hill Useem to describe the phenomena of the child who grows up globally in culture(s) not their own. As Generation X matured, the first studies of TCKs entering adulthood came into the public domain. It was noted that many adult TCKs crave the buzz of a relocation and new environment every few years and a disproportionate number of them enter the foreign services or seek overseas assignments. From "army brats" to the children of diplomats, NGO workers and multi-national corporate managers, TCKs form a distinct demographic and many of the new generation of corporate travelers are TCKs who want to keep on the move.

TCKs are possibly best equipped, or prepared for, the downside of the foreign assignment. Life for the young expat abroad is not all bright-eyed wonder at new experiences. For the young and single the first few months of relocation, without family as support, can be a lonely experience. Great demands are made time-wise on them professionally and many of them get little opportunity to experience and interact with the local culture and population. Experts stress the importance of creating a human support network when abroad and seeking out others in a similar situation.

But whatever the disadvantages, the upside remains – traveling as part of a career plan not only advances the graduate professionally but also allows them to become aware of global interconnectedness and acquire a wide perspective – which in turn is a valuable commodity in the employment market. And, of course, the experience of living in a foreign culture remains fun and interesting, for the most part.

It would appear much has changed since Ernest Hemmingway's Paris of the 1920s. The young expatriates of today are no longer idly hanging around cafes drinking, talking and flirting. In fact, modern generation of expats is doing quite the opposite – they're working, working hard, and with a definite goal in mind. As the world continues to shrink and opportunities to combine travel and career increase, globally mobile young professionals look like they are here to stay, well, at least until their next posting.

HEALING WITH HOMEOPATHY

Editor - Recently I interviewed Dr. Mukesh Batra on the side effects of senseless self medication and the rampant misuse of over the counter drugs by pill popping hypochondriacs and others. But instead of publishing this interview I have decided to reproduce exclusively for you dear readers an excerpt from his book, **Healing with Homeopathy by special permission of Dr. Mukesh Batra and Jaico Publishing House.** This book was released in September 2011.

Bad Medicine by Dr. Mukesh Batra

When asked what he wanted to be when he grew up, a child responded, "It is easier to tell you what I don't want to be."

I intend to answer the question of "Why homeopathy?" similarly, by showing you what system of medicine you should not be following.

What holds the key to your choice of medical options is the question, do you want to feel better, or do you want to g et well? Can medicine achieve both? If so, what kind of medicine?

From the moment we are born, medicine dominates our life. Knowingly or unknowingly. Do you know, for example, what is in the intravenous (IV) drip given to you at the time of delivery, or to your newborn? Nor are you likely aware of the toxic additives in the injectibles babies are tickled with even before they start to cry when they enter an unfamiliar world. The doctor never tells you simply because you don't ask him. Hardly his fault.

Yet, it is vital to understand what we are doing to ourselves, and, worse, what we are allowing to be done to us in the name of modern medicine.

Open Dangers

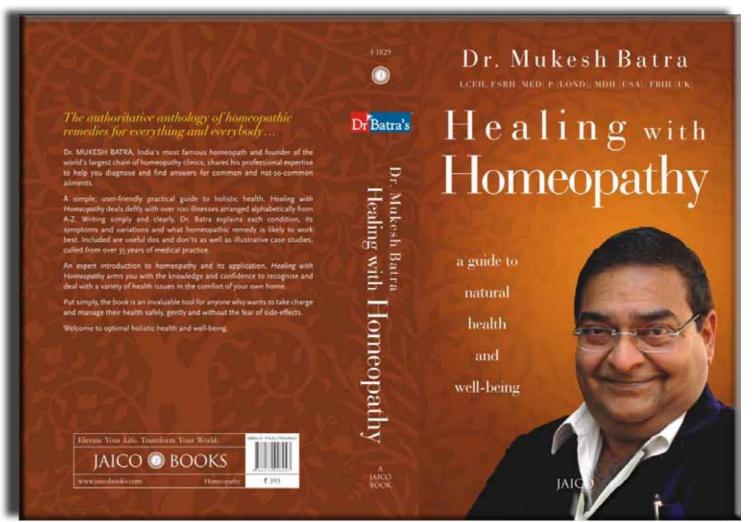
'Medicalisation' is the name of the game. From anti-analgesics, anti-pyretics, anti-spasmodics, anti-allergens, and antibiotics to vitamin supplements and vaccines, there's a whole buffet out there. With plenty of takers.

Let me illustrate the point. You have a bout of fever. You visit a doctor. You are prescribed a certain medicine. You take it. You get well. From then on, the chemist becomes your medicine man. Whenever a fever, infection, or similar illness strikes, off you go to him for the same medicine without understanding its sphere of action, or side-effects. So, you could be taking antibiotics even for viral fever or viral infections against which they are completely powerless.

Medicine Deaths?

The Journal of the American Medical Association reports that there are more than two million medication-related reactions annually in the USA alone, resulting in over one lakh deaths.

Not only are the drugs you are unwittingly pumping into yourself not helpful, but they could actually be causing you great harm. For one, they can cause gastric problems — diarrhoea or constipation. To overcome each, you pop either an antacid or a laxative. Over time, their effects reduce, so you increase the dose. So, taking one medication is forcing you to take another, and the more you have of one, the more of it you need. The result of this bizarre situation is compromised health for you, and a burgeoning bottom line for the INR 1,12,500 crore antacid and INR 90,500 crore laxative industry.



© Dr. Mukesh Batra

And, we haven't yet even started on all the other over-the- counter (OTC) medicines.

There's a pill for every ill. OTC medication is easily available, widely used, and practically useless. We are guilty of consuming huge quantities of nasal drops, throat lozenges, pimple creams, and all manner of lotions and potions that may not kill, but certainly cannot cure. The OTC medicine market, currently pegged at INR 20,25,000 crore, is thanks to you, growing at an astonishing annual rate of 20 per cent.

Most surprisingly, your doctor is nowhere in the picture. He cannot and does not know that you are having medicines all on your own. Often inappropriately.

There are many illnesses that do not require medical intervention. Self-limiting illnesses ease and disappear on their own. For example, a simple cold simply needs you to rest for a day or two. Instead, we attack it with an array of strong drugs. These not only fail to cure the cold, but actually weaken the body's natural defences.

A stress-induced headache is only a passing symptom that resolves with rest and sleep. Nobody allows this to happen; instead they bombard it with painkillers. The result is a pattern that becomes repetitive — a habit or dependence on anti- inflammatory medications along with the risk of their numerous side-effects. Most medicines — right from anti- pyretics and anti-inflammatories to antacids — adversely impact our immunity.

Apart from ineffective and unnecessary medication, there is also the danger of overmedication. The tendency to simply prescribe medicines and often too many medicines, in order to satisfy or reassure patients, is on the rise. There is greater emphasis on alleviating symptoms rather than curing the disease.

It is ironic that it is this overuse of drugs that is making more and more people sick. Drug-induced illnesses are known as iatrogenic illnesses.

To cite just one example - high blood pressure along with its packages of symptoms is labelled an

to endlessly and ineffectively treat impotence without addressing its cause. without investigating the real cause, which may be a possible side-effect of anti-hypertensive Research is hardly ever focused on how to prevent medication.

What does this mean? Conventional or allopathic techniques. The fundamental objective in the process is medicine is far too focused on treating illness to 'manage' pain and destroy apparent symptoms rather than preventing it.

Medicine Excess

The widespread use of antibiotics entitles them drugs to lower blood pressure levels. Nowhere in to their own discussion. First, the background. Our natural intestinal florae are com- posed of the blood pressure in the first place. lactobacteria. These are 'good' bacteria which not only help us to digest and absorb food, but also • High cholesterol: Conventional medicine uses protect us against ingested harmful 'bad' bacteria. When you have a healthy intestinal flora, it takes without figuring out the reason for those raised microbial imbalance in the body, it takes just a problem lies elsewhere. handful to cause illness.

At the onset of any bacterial infection, the patient depressive individuals with toxic, anti-depressant is routinely advised a course of antibiotics to destroy drugs. This merely masks emotional and psychoor inhibit the growth of bacteria. When antibiotics logical issues, which could even be a result of simple are prescribed appropriately, they are effective. nutritional or dietetic imbalance (for instance, a When inappropriate or overused, they have a lack of Omega-3 essential fatty acids). downside.

(fungal infection). Other side-effects include aller- nutritional and financial deficiencies, and psychogies, stomach upset, diarrhoea and vaginal yeast logical issues in the onset of illness. infections in women. Studies also evidence that antibiotics are about nine times more likely to suffer from asthma.

Apart from antibiotics, there are other powerful drugs natural intestinal bacteria. This provides the perfect breeding g round for parasites and harmful bacteria causing dysbiosis and recurring infections.

The Wrong and Wrong of It

Conventional or modern medicine defines health simply as the 'absence of disease'. A physical condition premature babies.

medication (anti-hypertensive drugs) causes im- illness. The remedy? To 'attack', 'fight' and potence. However, it is not uncommon for doctors and 'demolish' the obvious symptoms of the disease,

> the illness, for instance, cancer, but only how to assail it with powerful medication and invasive rather than treat the illness from the root. Some examples:

- High blood pressure: Conventional medicine uses the process does it address the cause that elevated
- drugs to synthetically reduce cholesterol levels millions of salmonella bacteria, for instance, to levels. In reality, raising its cholesterol levels is cause infection. When you have dysbiosis or a self-protective response by the body. The real
 - Depression: Conventional medicine "bombards"

Conventional medicine overlooks the role of the One major side-effect of antibiotics is candidiasis environment, water and air quality, social factors,

children who frequently receive broad-spectrum A majority of our modern diseases are the result of lifestyle and psychosomatic factors. However, doctors continue to try and 'fix' them with medication rather than addressing the cause. Take for example, water. Polluted rivers and lakes used in long-term therapies that kill or suppress our as well as over-chlorinated tanks and reservoirs are health hazards. Man-made water resources with their hard water content are triggers of heart disease, kidney stones, and premature greying of hair. Similarly, noise can be injurious to health. Loud music has been blamed for deafness, while there is evidence that expectant mothers living close to airports, a high decibel zone, give birth to



Workers in closed concrete office spaces with no access to fresh air or proper ventilation, exposed to long hours of electromagnetic radiation from machines, fall ill frequently. They are actually 'sick' — from working, or living, in isolation from natural surroundings. A doctor cannot cure Sick Building Syndrome (SBS), it needs an architect.

Toxic Burden

Not all of us realise that it is the chemical nature of materials used to build and furnish our homes and offices, for example, chemical paints, that are feeding directly into the toxic burden our bodies must bear somehow - can we treat them with medicines?

Similarly, the increased toxicity levels from modern gadgets in our modern homes cannot be combated with medicines alone.

Then there is stress, depression and aggressive behaviour that can sometimes result from excessive TV viewing, especially among children and youth.

Environmental, sociological, psychological, and psychosomatic issues cannot be addressed by drugs alone.

Did You Know?

Today's Wonder Drugs ... Tomorrow's Killer Drugs. Ten years down the line, the miracle drugs of today will often be debunked as medical garbage due to increased side- effects or aftereffects. They are replaced by other wonder/killer drugs.

The cycle continues...

When modern vaccine therapy was first introduced during the last century, it spectacularly improved our ability to prevent illnesses - from polio to flu.

All seemed well and good until studies began to reveal major side-effects along with collateral damage. Many conventional physicians themselves are of the view that vaccines suppress our immunity, leaving us vulnerable to a number of illnesses. The latest debate relates to the new swine flu (H1N1) vaccine, Tamoxifen, which thanks to its alarming side-effects, is said to be a case of the cure being worse than the disease!

Medical drug disasters are again an offshoot of modern healthcare.

For example, the contraceptive pill was hailed as the greatest invention after the evolution of the bicycle. If the latter 'engineered' the Industrial Revolution, the former brought about a social revolution, transforming sexual attitudes and reducing unwanted pregnancies and abortions. Decades later, the same pill is suspected to be a carcinogen.

Similarly, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) were regarded as a miracle, a panacea for pain, until it was found they caused gastric bleeding and haemorrhage. Why, even the good, old streptomycin, long touted as a boon for tuberculosis, was found to cause deafness. In fact, many of the medicines that are still in use and freely available in India like Novalgin and others - have long been banned as health hazards in the West.

The same is the case with medical theories.

Obesity Multiplies into Diabetes

Thirty years ago, the rates of obesity and type-2 diabetes were stable. However, when health authorities in the US, for example, started debunking foods containing fats and cholesterol and recommended eating more carbohydrates, obesity increased from 15 per cent to 25 per cent within a span of 10 years. Today, it continues to rise at a whopping 40-45 per cent, worldwide. Consequently, type-2 diabetes became an epidemic as a result of the increased number of obese children who developed it.

Technological Miracles: Where Safe isn't Safe

Computerised tomography (CT scans), a huge technological advance, widely used to detect deviations, including tumours, expose patients to large amounts of radiation that have been shown to increase the risk of cancer. Studies published in The Archives of Internal Medicine link CT scans to increased risk of cancer. One has predicted that a single heart scan at age 40 could result in cancer in one in 270 women and one in 600 men.



The younger the patient, the higher the risk.

delivers the equivalent radiation of hundreds of chest X-rays.

The Specialisation Spectre

Specialisation and super- specialisation are the new Likewise, a sleeping pill. It leads to a state of medicinal specific body parts separately. Not only does this lead of them, serious. to the absence of a holistic overview of the patient's physical symptoms, specialists ignore emotional health health issue. and well-being.

Did You Know?

per cent of diagnosed prostate cancers could be AIDS. left untreated with little harm. Yet, millions of men are subjected to painful radiation, nauseating Since it is apparent that medical technological advances hormone treatments, and prostate removal and, worse still, death.

With too many cooks, there is not only more chance **The 'Sickening' Pharma Industry** of spoiling the broth, but there is also less interaction and involvement with individual patients. This has Pharmaceutical drugs or medicines don't actually the expense of your health and wallet.

Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

traced to a specific bacteria or virus. What makes practice today. MCS and SBS so difficult to 'trap and tag' is that there are thousands of chemicals interacting in as More and more studies are finding that an increasing wavs.

Addictive Medicine

It is also a fact that even a single well-administered Bad medicine is good medicine for pharma groups. brain scan, routinely used on patients to spot a For example, you have a self-limiting cough or disstroke, or aneurysm, especially in accident victims, turbed sleep for a few days. You gulp a cough syrup that contains codeine, an addictive substance. Over a period of time, you get used to the substance, so much so you will have to increase its intake to feel better.

medical mantras. By definition, specialists examine dependence and subsequent side-effects - some

physical condition, but it also over-looks the What causes you to have an allergy might send your psychosomatic or mind-body connection, which often colleague home with a headache - even when the holds the key to the illness. Too focused, as they are, on same chemical combination is the trigger for either

The paradox is that modern medicine has not been able to impact a host of simple afflictions like acne, allergies, and irritable bowel syndrome Men screened for prostate cancer have a 2.04 per (IBS) or many degenerative chronic illnesses like cent risk of dying from the disease. A man who arthritis and backache as well as serious, 'headdoesn't get screened has a 3.00 per cent risk. 70 line-grabbing' diseases like diabetes, cancer and

have not provided a cure-all or panacea for every with the end result being impotence, incontinence ill, let us return to an old adage. The less the medicine, the better it is.

led to lowered levels of patient satisfaction. Unlike the treat the illness or disease - they only manage the erstwhile family doctor, you now have the general apparent symptoms. What they also do is cause practitioner who is only too keen to refer you to a harmful side-effects and with long- term use, lower specialist or two. Call it 'networking' of sorts - at your natural immunity. This means that you are more 'open' or susceptible to more illness - a state that would require more drugs. It is a vicious cycle.

It must be emphasised that drugs, in any form, are Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS) is today a more or less toxic. The more powerful the drug new medical diagnosis. Unlike other ailments and (chemical), the more toxic it is. Yet, putting more just like SBS (Sick Building Syndrome), it cannot be and more people on medication is a common

many ways, affecting different people in different number of people are turning hypertensive in our hypertensive in our stressful world.

Just like hotels, private hospitals want There is a holistic system of medicine that shows full occupancy. And unlike hotels, they retain the prerogative to decide the length of your stay. So, you will find hospitals not ready to discharge patients during weekends, even though the doctors have their weekly-off on those days. Extending your stay is a great way to boost profits.

Nor do these hospitals lean in favour of good, competent doctors as these do not rope-in large numbers of patients for extended hospitalisation. Instead, hospitals prefer doctors with the talent to fill beds. This is what it takes to run plush establishments and rake-in profits.

Private hospitals also want operation theatres to be booked for a certain number of days. So, surgeries are often performed more for the hospital's health than yours. There is the additional advantage that the patient will need hospitalisation to recoup.

Nor do hospitals or their doctors take responsibility for your treatment. You are asked to sign a consent form without which they will not proceed. You have no choice. So, God forbid, if something goes wrong, the hospital cannot be held accountable.

Writes Dr Robert Mendelsohn, Professor of Medicine at the University of Illinois, USA,

"I do not believe in Modern Medicine. I am a heretic. I believe that Modern Medicine's treatment is more dangerous than the diseases they are designed to treat. I believe that more than 90 per cent of Modern Medicine could disappear from the face of the Earth - doctors, hospitals, drugs, and equipment — and, the effect upon our health would be immediate and beneficial... For the hospital is the temple of the Church of Modern Medicine and, thus, the most dangerous place on Earth... There is plenty to be afraid of."

Let us instead build a new faith. There is no need to fall sick. After all, being healthy is the body's natural state. And, recovering one's health can be done naturally.

you how. At once safe, sane, humane, gentle, and free from side-effects, it is simple and also natural medicine.

Homeopathy

Effective, affordable, non-invasive, easily administered and pleasurable to partake, homeopathy is the medicine for today and tomorrow. Choose it for optimal health and holistic well-

Text and Pics © Dr. Mukesh Batra

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JOHN CHESTER LEWIS UBUD



Birds of the heart for John di Martino

The deluge forces itself upon his conciseness He stops what he is doing Opens the single black and green Tropical leaf patterned curtain just to the right of his piano The cascade outside makes for fuzzy or blurry viewing As if everything was merely giant cashmere impressionism He spies a solitary bird joy ridding the trampoline drafts Arching and spinning while diving and lifting to Damp melodies harmonizing pulse within rhythms In visual unison to the dancing branches and leaves Then suddenly, without him ever really noticing The entire performance of nature's teary ballet Syncopates with his breathing Pulsating with his beating in Aum Like the birds of his heart He lets the silence speak While the etheric dance of remembrance Reverberates in bright yellow flashes That touch the lotus atop its tower of water Psalms Trane'd within the prime echo Bursting through open windows Sound and water peaking together Into a controlled articulate rage Where soldiers skip to their marches Rolling in turns like migrating geese Who later in high altitude valleys Wait and drink with the elk Until the grace written in rain prevails As multiple herds' glide down perilous boulder cliffs Each step creating its own love of curiosity That descends into a fragile whisper atop the high plateau Vibrating in praise, ascending unto the heavens Like well balanced lovers Contradiction is his seduction Creation his ancestry Tomorrow already past He bathes in the power of peaceful delicate yin Where floating pirouettes baptize the land And as the rinse continues, it loosens its focus Until slowly, he transfers back into previous conciseness Much of the rush lingers in waves While the duration of entering as one fades away And the storm lets him venture back into his day





The Road to 2012

by Vasumi Zjikaa

At the moment I am traveling with a group of 16 women through different Mayan Temples in Southern Mexico and sitting meditating at different spots in these temples and having very strong experiences, as we dedicate ourselves to exploring the 'Stargates' that are anchored at these sites. Many very strong revelations are being received as well as journeys beyond the 3rd physical reality into other dimensions, times and spaces while sitting there. These experiences bring to us many personal and planetary revelations. So far we have traveled to **Palenque**, **Calakmul**, **Tulum** and **Coba** and the journeys are intensifying as we move along, each experience feeding into the next.

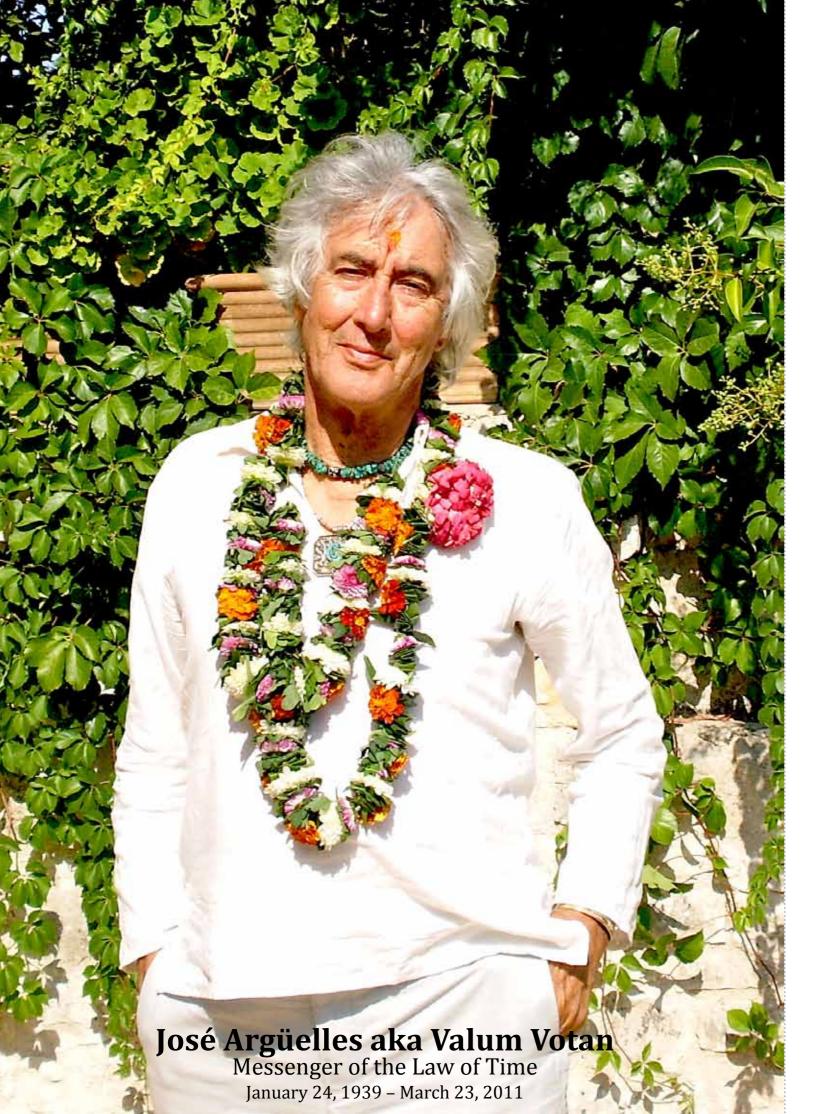
Calakmul is an ancient Mayan site of temple structures that house an incredible temple that anchors the ancestors and connects to the 20 Suns or pulses of light in the centre of the Earth... Today we did a deep meditation anchoring into the Sun in the centre of the Earth – the 1st Sun; then to the Sun in the centre of our Hearts – the 2nd Sun; then the 3rd Sun, our Solar centre; the 4th Sun, Hunab Ku in the centre of the Pleiades, Alcyone; and then the 5th Great Central Sun, or Universal Centre.... The meditation was very powerful and it felt like the 5th Sun got anchored down into our hearts, denoting the time of the 5th Sun, as prophesied by the traditional Maya, Hopi etc... It was very powerful for us and when we opened our eyes there was a group of 13 Eagles close above us in the trees...

During the meditation I called in all beings on the planet who were ready to shift in their hearts from the 4th to the 5th Sun... It felt to me that all the wisdom that is held in the centre and under the Earth in hiding will now be brought to the surface and into the hearts of humanity... as we move from the 4th dimension and awakening our time light consciousness, to the 5th dimension of Christ Consciousness and unconditional love...

It also felt like there could now be true peace between humanity and all creatures of the planet and this was reflected to me through telepathic communication with one of the Eagles that were there as I climbed to the top of the ancestral temple to transmit my heart to all of creation...

I send huge gratitude to Qala Sri Ama www.qalasriama.com for channeling this work through, and for her courage, strength and loving heart in opening her being to guiding us all in these deep initiations...

As we herald in the greatly prophesied year of 2012 the activations intensify for any that are doing deep work, and for those that are simply living their physical lives it is reflected in the Earth changes... Wherever our attention is focused change is afoot as we move into one of the greatest times of change on our planet... Many light workers and meditators are having experiences of assisting souls that have been caught in the etheric webs of fear, to release into the light through love, as we do the same for aspects of our own multi-dimensional beings...



THE ROAD TO 2012

VASUMI ZJIKAA



The Dreamspell, a New Time system based on the Mayan Calendar yet held in stone in Palenque throughout the dark ages, being released by archeologist Alberto Ruz in 1952, with the opening of the tomb, and decoded through synchronicity, and presented to the world by Jose Arguelles is a beacon of light matrices with which to understand the times we are in, on both a personal and planetary level. It points to our personal and planetary Spiritual purposes for being here... The year runs from July 26th with the heliacal rising of Sirius with the Sun, to July 25th, the Day Out of Time, the celebration of forgiveness of all debt and karma for each year.

This year is named White Rhythmic Wizard – the Rhythmic tone denoting the 6th tone of 13, and the White Wizard the 14th of 20 Suns... The 6th Rhythmic tone represents the physical plane and denotes a time to find balance and address the inequalities that are so obvious on our planet, we see this reflected in the Occupy Wall St movement that has spread to every major city of our planet, and all the other uprisings of the people to share the message that the imbalance in the wealth of our planet is not ok... It can also reveal to us personally where the imbalances and inequalities are in our own lives, the ways we are living where we are not honoring the balance of our own bodies and environments, and how it feels when we address this and come into balance and equality with all that is around us...

The 14th Sun, the White Wizard represents the capacity to be receptive to anchoring a timeless reality, after the pressure of last years sense of intensity with the Red Overtone Moon year, where the power of the Waters on the planet brought rain to so many parts of our Earth, this year the level of catastrophe is less in our consciousness as those of us that are aware anchor increased volumes of frequency transmitted through our Solar Sun from the **Galactic Centre, Hunab Ku** (Mayan name for Galactic Centre)... These frequencies are assisting to anchor and stabilise our planet and ourselves...

It is time on our planet that these understandings are becoming more widespread as increased numbers of people awaken and allow the reality of expanded levels of consciousness to become part of their everyday existence... This is the awakening of the people beyond the confines of the limited perceptions we have been programmed by in the major paradigm with disharmonic calendars and a monetary based system that has robbed the people of their fundamental values... This is now being amended as we head towards 2012, the r-evolution will not be televised and yet we all feel it deep inside.

Through the revelations brought through by following a harmonic time measure such as the Dreamspell or Mayan Calendars, Jose Arguelles found that the basis of society is the calendar that measures our time. This time is based on a disharmonic measure, 12 months of differing days, we would never use a ruler where each inch is a different measure, as it would be difficult to build anything, so saying time is of the mind, and space is of the physical dimension.



Our time is measured disharmonicaly and mechanically and we programme our lives to it every day. The minds primary job is to look for pattern and when as kids in school we were introduced to a time that did not hold pattern, we all thought it strange and yet gave our power of intelligence away to those that had given away their power of intelligence before us, in the thought that they knew what they were doing, hence we are as the people looking at the Emperor with no clothes, admiring his fine garments. It is about Time to awaken from this mass hypnosis and look to the roots of our feeling of not fitting in, of being outside of the natural harmonic pattern of the universe, of wondering why we do not fit in, and look to our measure of Time and change it. 13 months of 28 days (4 perfect weeks) equals 364 days, 1 Day Out of Time, aligns to the Earths passage around the Sun of 365 days and we may realign our minds into the natural pattern of knowing our-cell-ves as part of the perfect patterning of creation, where we do fit in, and life realigns to the natural harmony we are here to live.

I offer deep gratitude for this understanding and for the life work of Jose Arguelles, passed this year on March 22, who was embodied on this planet to research Time and bring to us the greatest understandings since we realized the Earth was not flat. He has revolutionized our concepts of Time and our capacity to live in tune with the natural geometries of our Universe. These understandings are sweeping the globe just as Occupy Wall St seeks to readdress the balance, so to will this understanding bring us back into our planetary right to align in natural time that brings us back the values that honour the Earth we are standing on...

I give thanks for your understanding of this writing and your willingness to share it with others...

For the Earth and all her inhabitants...

Blessed be

Vasumi Zjikaa

Follow her daily blog www.1320sync.wordpress.com on the frequencies of the Dreamspell and other revelations.



