

Tanshui

Being in Life

Second Book

MARIBOL SOLE

Self-help and sharing book
Of the origins of the ancient art of Tanshui

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to the Tanshui and to all
those who are following this path.
May the written word unveil
what the mind conceals
And the soul claims.

**... continued from the first book:
"The Inner Journey"**

Chapter 1

I collected the papers and with a tinge of sadness placed them back in my backpack. I looked around in the hope of seeing the Master. I still sensed his presence and was sure I would see him appear at any moment. I waited for a long time, but in vain, so I took my husband by the hand and reluctantly walked away from that place. Perhaps it was yet another test, one he loved to subject me to. I searched for him with my eyes among the trees and along the path, but not a shadow of him. Absorbed in my thoughts I walked with my head down and almost without realizing it found myself in front of the hotel.

As soon as we crossed the threshold I greeted the staff with a nod. I wore the mask of indifference so as not to give the very attentive and kind staff a chance to investigate or ask me questions.

We had just been moved to the central block of the hotel because of a problem that had arisen with the plumbing, only a few minutes later we were pleasantly surprised that the room was much nicer than the other. The day passed slowly. As we prepared for dinner, we heard the murmur of guests coming from outside. They were standing outside, sitting at tables

scattered around the garden and enlivening the evening. Their voices blended with the roar of the sea and the rustle of the wind, and before long they would be absorbed by the notes of music.

I looked out from the balcony to watch the view. The sunset was really lovely, the candlelight created a very intimate and cozy atmosphere, even though the entertainment was taking place outdoors.

We came down for dinner and sat facing each other. I sighed as I lifted my gaze to the moon. I was struck by the branches of the trees that moved by the sea breeze caressing our faces, my heart opened.

After dinner I took off my shoes and went for a walk by the pool.

I brushed against the water with my toes and a shiver ran down my back, the wind had picked up, so I covered my shoulders with a shawl.

I lay down on a crib and with my nose in the air began to observe the star-covered sky.

I noticed a large bright circle moving around the moon, staring at it for a few moments pushed me to the edge of my thoughts, and in a few moments I was transported on a timeless journey.

Chapter 2

I found myself in a place similar to now, but it was as if I were watching the scene on a screen placed before my eyes. *I saw coming out of nowhere a slim little girl with an olive complexion; she might have been about twelve years old. Her long black hair was gathered in two large braids tied at the ends by two white bows. She looked like she was on her way home from school. Waiting for her in front of the house was a stout gray-haired man with a huge mustache, whom I guessed to be her grandfather, while an older woman helped her out of the heavy bag loaded perhaps with books. The little girl rushed into the house to go drink water directly from a large green amphora. The hut was dark, with walls without plaster, and was sparsely furnished, with very little furniture and the floor partially covered with carpets. The man coughed, holding a handkerchief in front of his mouth, while the woman repeatedly called out to the little girl, but she, sitting on the floor and absorbed in her own world, continued to play and ignored her. At that point the woman stood in front of her and shouted, shaking her by the arm, "Govindaaa." Her voice echoed in my head as well, and when the little girl lifted her head to look at her, our gazes met."*

I gasped at the touch of a hand brushing my hair. I opened my eyes and still confused mumbled something.

I was lying on the ground. "Love, what happened to you?" still groggy I acknowledged, lapping at my upper lip with my tongue, a sweetish liquid, "I don't know," I replied, "I probably fell asleep and fell." I had hit my head against the hedge, and an elbow was also slightly bruised. When the wound began to bleed profusely he said, "you're losing a lot of blood, you need to go to the doctor right away," "but it's too late," I replied, "I'll see him tomorrow."

We quickly made our way to the reception area where I was given first aid. We went back to the room and I let myself fall on the bed thinking back to what had happened, he lay down next to me and hugged me, whispering, "I guess your fainting is because of what happened today," "maybe," I replied, "and maybe it's also good that you have a hard head," "maybe," I said, smiling.

I suddenly remembered the packet of papers I had in my backpack and was tempted to get up to get it, but I hesitated, I had the distinct feeling, that making that gesture would reopen a wound in me, and since I still had a fresh one in my head, I decided to put it off until the next day. I abandoned myself to sleep, but in my eyes were still the eyes of that little girl.

The night passed peacefully, and in the morning we

decided to have breakfast in the room.

The waiter knocked on the door and I let him in, asking him to place the tray on the small table on the terrace. I longed to lose myself for a while longer in the infinite space of the horizon and be lulled by the sound of the sea. The soft light of the rising sun created the perfect backdrop for the fishermen, busy rearranging their nets on the beach. The blue sea lapped at my thoughts, which like waves floated through my mind.

However, the silence was interrupted by the crackling of a car engine. It was the market gardener, who had just stopped in front of the hotel entrance to deliver vegetables. The scents of vegetables and fresh fruit began to spread, intoxicating the air I breathed. The sense of smell, thus stimulated, was sending such an array of messages back to the brain that I myself was struggling to decode. I sniffed the pineapple I was already savoring: it was sweet and fragrant; I let the juice run through my fingers; I adored the local custom of eating with my hands, and I, without any inhibitions, could enjoy the food with all my senses. Master, had taught me to discover joy in small things and to love the simplest gestures. Such new awareness was making appreciation and gratitude for life grow in

me. I was finally living the present with greater intensity, without the constant need to have to do something to fill the void. Savoring the present was the greatest lesson, but also the most difficult. And now I was there, with my whole self, immersed in that gesture, in that smell, in that taste, in that extraordinary feeling of being here and now. That was the essence of centering that I had learned from the Master. I was that moment and that moment was me. I had merged with reality, which had absorbed me in a gesture overflowing with sensation and awareness. Gratitude was its consequence.

The Master, had revealed to me the ancient secret of Self Presence, through Centering, and it was like pressing the pause button on the timeline, to lengthen life.

One day the Master said to me, "*When I observe you, I see so many workers on the assembly line of other people's ideas. Who are you as you act? How and for whom, are you living your lives? You must free yourselves from the manipulations and chains of acquiescence.*"

At the recollection of those words I got up, opened my backpack and pulled out my clipboard.

I scattered all the papers on the bed. I searched my bag for my reading glasses and ... darn! What had they

looked like? I remembered, I had sat on them on the plane. When my husband came back and saw me he burst out laughing, "Honey, your glasses are all crooked."

He slipped them off me, and quickly tried to straighten the delicate frame, which was made of a thin orange metal. I put them on again, and at the sight of the Master's writing, I felt my stomach tighten in on itself. Those papers I held in my hands were all I had left of Him. I skimmed them, hoping to find some clue.

The home page read as follows:

"Dear sister, I suppose you feel confused and disoriented. You will need to be alone. This is good, everything is already written and I am closer to you than you think.

The language of the Fathers supports you and daily practice will help you make the necessary space.

Through your heart, your body and your mind, you will regain control of yourself and regain the thread left unfinished long ago.

There is a right time for everything. When the elements are in balance you will be too, and that is why you will take many steps. Nature will do the rest. Do not proceed without experimenting first, otherwise the steps will not be real steps, but only illusions projected by your mind. I know you have already begun to remember why you are here.

You will rejoice, you will suffer, and you will have to overcome

trials and little deceptions that come from the mind, but useful for your soul to become stronger and more decisive on the way forward. Remember, however, that you will not be able to delegate others, because this journey is your own. For this reason you will stand on the sidelines, to reflect and process everything in your inner self. At times you will feel lonely and be gripped by despondency and sadness. These emotions will try to pull you away from the right path.

Experience and transform some aspects of yourself without distorting your true nature.

Perform the daily exercises I taught you, meditate and purify yourself.

Read and proceed by following my directions and doing what needs to be done. When you feel ready, go to Mrs. Ambika's workshop.

On the counter in front of the entrance you will see a small emerald statue, leave a note and your offering in the box.

On the card write your name and date of birth, and she will understand.

Come back the next day and listen to what he has to say. If you prove yourself worthy and wise, he will give you an important manuscript."

Chapter 3

My husband and I were staying in a hotel, but we had already taken steps to find a house to rent. I was still confused and wondered what kind of project I should do without the Master.

When he came out of the shower, I asked him if the place was to his liking and if he would like to go into town to make some purchases.

As soon as we left the gate, we were surrounded by numerous children, asking for offerings to purchase flowers to be used in the *mandala* compositions. It was a local custom to create beautiful, fragrant designs on the ground, using flower petals of different colors. A very heartfelt occasion was approaching, which would last about ten days, and one could already sense the frenzy of preparations in the air. All this fervor brought me back with my memory to Christmas Eve, to the candles, lights and decorations on the streets downtown, when the *tuc tuc* arrived. We spent the next half hour observing how everyday life unfolded, with no real boundary, between the house and the street; there was no privacy and no modesty, because everything took place in the open.

I saw a woman washing a baby in a basin in front of

the house: I looked at her, she responded to my gaze with a motherly smile, showing a row of very white teeth, while the baby, completely naked and soapy was crying at the top of his lungs. Further ahead, however, some kids, were swinging on a makeshift swing among the trash, using the tire of an old wheel as a seat.

Skinny dogs, who all looked alike, slept by the side of the road, while men in shirts and dhoti, a piece of cloth wrapped around their waists, chatted among themselves. The city was teeming with people, colors, foodstuffs, aromas and scents they had never smelled, but also from cars, motorcycles and smog. The traffic was a frenzy diluted by music, giant billboards and the colors of colorful objects displayed everywhere.

A fruit cart, accessorized with amplifiers, played deafening music, which made the negotiation between us and the tuc tuc driver very difficult. It was used this way, almost as a form of entertainment, and usually ended with the driver's words being, "are you happy?" I later learned, that it was very important to them that the customer pay a fair price for the service received, I think that was the reason why they were always so willing to deal.

I noticed with surprise that if you crossed someone's eyes, they invariably responded with a smile. Perhaps

it happened less in the city, but in any case, I did not sense the same irritation and sadness that I saw printed on people's faces on the subway back home.

My attention, was drawn to an alleyway that offered neatly aligned stalls set up with all sorts of household goods and trinkets at decidedly inviting prices. One could tell that the different businesses were zoned; if one was looking for a particular item, in order not to get lost all day in the search, one had to go to the right area of town. I bought a pillow and two very light, hand-woven washable rugs.

As our eye wandered through the colors of the street, we were caught by the scent coming from a tiny restaurant behind us, it was such an intense scent of stewed vegetables and spices that it invited us to go in without hesitation. We ordered some rice with vegetables, and as the waiter walked away with our order, my husband's face took on a strange expression, "did you see him too?" he asked in a whisper, "what?", I replied, "the waiter," he said still with his eyes wide. "Of course I saw him, what a question," "did you notice he had red nail polish on his toenails?" I turned around in curiosity to ascertain this oddity, but he was now too far away and I could not see him. He, intrigued, proposed that I look at his hands as well.

Increasingly amazed, he noted that the fingernails on his hands were also lacquered red. The man, with dark hair and a very black moustache, erect shoulders and a strutting attitude, had diverted my attention from the details, which my husband had caught instead. I realized, in fact, that what had previously impressed or amazed me was now something I did not notice.

My eyes saw beyond and from a completely different perspective than before. This perhaps made me indifferent toward anything that might once have seemed different. I had literally turned my views upside down and considered life in the East to be normal and in the West to be madness. Probably for this reason down here, away from the usual environment, I felt more relaxed and peaceful. I was finally free to be myself, to be myself in every moment of the day, no judgments, no suppositional or malicious looks, I experienced detachment and even some healthy indifference. I was certain that if I decided to lie down on the sidewalk I could do so without being judged a homeless person, a weirdo or a drug addict, but simply a person who was resting and nothing more.

Upon returning to the hotel, exhausted from the heat and humidity, I felt the need after a cool shower to lie

down on the bed to rest.

I closed my eyes, breathed deeply, and in a few moments found myself projected back into the inner vision.

I saw the same little girl again. She was now wearing a long, black dress; even the ribbons that tied her hair were dark. Grandfather was dragging her along a path in the forest, while she, clinging to his hand, cried, emitting faint wails. They reached a clearing in the center of which stood a large tree; a man dressed in white, with a beard and long gray hair was waiting for them. Upon their arrival he approached without a word and began to scrutinize the little girl. The creature held by her grandfather's hands, wriggled whimpering. The man spoke to the elderly man, who, holding a handkerchief against his mouth, was coughing conspicuously. At the end of the negotiation, I saw, as if in a slow-motion movie scene, the little girl's hand pass from one man to the other. Ella, paralyzed with fear, seemed not to understand what was really happening to her. I saw her big black eyes pleading for help. She seemed to me like a wounded gazelle before a hungry tiger. My heart stopped, totally absorbed in her look of dismay. It was hard to feel and share the realization with those who know they no longer have a chance. The elderly man vanished swallowed by the bush and she realized that even if she screamed with all the breath in her throat, no one would hear her.

I was abruptly brought back to the present by someone who was insistently knocking on the door. Still frightened and drenched in sweat, I got up and opened it.

The waiter just stood there with a tray in his hand. I wondered why on earth he had come, since none of us had called him. He told me that the manager was welcoming us and wished to see us privately. I replied that we would gladly meet him later, thanked him, and said goodbye. Meanwhile I realized that my husband had not yet arrived, looking out from the balcony I saw him conversing with a man. I decided not to wait for him and drink my tea before it got cold while enjoying the treat the waiter had just brought us.

Chapter 4

Later I learned that the plumber reported to him that there was a house for rent only five kilometers away and that we could move into it within a few days. So we decided to see if that house might be the right fit for us, so the next morning we went to visit it. Recently painted, it was on two levels and above the roof had a large and spacious terrace. Surrounded by palm trees and surrounded by jungle, it seemed to be a quiet place, but not overly isolated either. I longed for the opportunity to experience the silence to be in the company of myself as much as possible. Now, I was more and more convinced, that the Master's words, were keys to open doors that I would have preferred to keep closed. Why was it precisely now that I was having these visions? Probably because much of my awareness was coming from the past and it would have been foolish to deny the evidence.

I was who I was because I had seen death in the face, because I had struggled against illness, because I had rebelled against patterns; because I had torn off the shackles of conformity and had not succumbed to the belief system in which I had imprisoned myself.

Freedom had saved me, cured me of myself, of the

hypocrisy of believing I was what I was not and living a life that was not my own.

Back at the hotel I resumed reading his words, "*You will realize that you do not understand some things and when you think you have found an answer, you will doubt it. Your logic will be subverted so that the castle of the mind will collapse and from under the rubble of falsehood your soul can rise again. When the soul sings victory, you will be suffering terribly, for you will still be identifying with your false self, the mental representation of yourself. While you will believe it is the end, for your soul it will be the beginning, she will dance on your rubble, eager to experience her revenge. If you want to walk by logic alone, life will become an endless series of blows that will come down on your hard head, until you ask your soul for help. When you give your consent to the design, it will manifest. The soul and the Source are pregnant with each other. Do not continue to resist your soul's will.*"

I lifted my gaze and spontaneously uttered these words, "well dear soul, now I resolve that your will be done and that this will make me happy, yes, I do, now your will be done and this will make me the happiest person on earth!"

Those pages slipped from my hand, while the other clutched the bedspread tightly. I sank my face into the pillow and wept. I tried to fight back, but I lacked

strength. I felt my body sinking into an abyss and realized I could hardly breathe, it was like I was underwater and lacked oxygen, I lacked air and I lacked Light. Without the Master, I could no longer feel the energy of the true light. My inner drive toward Spirit after the Bliss experience was so strong that I would do anything, anything to feel that way again. In that awful feeling of total discouragement, I understood that I was doing it wrong, that that was not the right attitude, much less using another person to get at one's purpose, however pure and spiritual it might be. One should not lose one's identity, one's way, no, that was not right. I understood that these were absurd forms of attachment and obviously I was there to transcend them.

The wind blew the window wide open, I saw the horizon line disappear in the distance. The sky and the sea had merged into a whole, the whole that now wanted me alone, while I did not want to be.

I needed to reflect to understand who I was, and a period of adjustment would certainly benefit me before making any decisions for my life.

That same day, in the final part of my meditation, I saw the mysterious child again.

Now she appeared older, perhaps about fourteen years old. She

sat on the ground with other girls in the shade of a large tree. Her surroundings had changed: the lush jungle had been replaced by a barren and sinister landscape, which at dusk sent back an eerie feeling. Govinda kept a book resting on his lap and occasionally lifted his gaze to the elderly bearded man. I heard someone call him "Baba," and he, who was wearing a red headdress on that occasion, nodded in response to the two men standing to his left. They were holding a large tray on which candles had been placed. All the little girls got up, and one by one went to fetch their little light. During the lesson, suddenly Govinda turned around, staring straight into my eyes she made a strange gesture with her hand smiling at me. She rotated it several times and very quickly from right to left keeping her fingertips pointing toward the sky, as if that movement was to signify that she did not understand or did not care.

I inhaled deeply and the image disappeared, but her eyes and smile remained imprinted in my mind throughout the day. I had no idea what the meaning of these visions was, but the emotions I felt were truer than those I experienced in real life. It practically happened that the scenes took shape independently like clips from a movie projected on a screen. I also did not feel that sense of serenity that usually came from meditation, but on the contrary, I was seesawing between emotions and feelings that I had not felt for

a long time or perhaps had never felt. I wondered what was happening to me and how had I lost control of myself? Why was I sensing feelings that did not belong to me? And who were that man and that little girl?

I decided that I would not mention it to anyone until I had some idea of what was happening to me.

After a week we moved into the new house and began to purchase the furniture and things essential for our survival.

The owner was very kind and helped us with the paperwork that in a system so different from ours seemed to be another mystery to be unraveled. Patience was one of the virtues that the Orientals had cultivated much more than us, adjusting to that system forced us to change our attitude toward people and life.

I went back to reading the Master's notes, there were two identical and rather large tanki, the instructions said, "*Rest your feet here and purify yourself. From the feet discharge the excess of what you have accumulated.*"

I took the papers and did exactly what the Master said. I felt a crazy sensation, I felt myself being sucked downward, at one point I even felt pain, tingling, pins pricking under my feet and then cool, like fresh air coming out of the soles of my feet.

How was it possible that from two sheets of paper one could hear all this? They were basically like two vacuum cleaners. No! It can't be true!

If I were to tell about it I would be taken for a fool!

How am I going to share this?

Perhaps by having others try it as well....

Will be the only way.





Chapter 5

Now I felt lighter, evidently something was gone, discharged, eliminated!

My husband meanwhile was blowing off steam in a different way. He was putting his manual dexterity to good use, building a clothesline out of some plastic electrician's ducts, a providential job. I especially appreciated it when, because of the sudden monsoon rains, he spared us from running to the terrace to pick up our laundry, with the risk of slipping down the stairs.

Some time passed, and to be more independent we decided to buy a second-hand scooter. Gradually the locals got used to our presence. They would see us whizzing by on our motorcycles and greet us, but I still did not feel ready to have more intimate contacts with the local people. I wanted everything to happen naturally and as spontaneously as possible. For now, adjusting to the weather, the food, but especially the palm-tethered speakers broadcasting the priest's sermon at 4:10 a.m. was already a lot for my taste.

I sat on the porch, I had the feeling that I had done that gesture countless times, in my heart everything was familiar. Suddenly the silence was broken by

music in the distance accompanied by repetitive singing. I sensed those sounds, modulated by the direction of the wind, caressing my ears. In that peaceful state a great joy opened my chest: it was Govinda.

This time I saw her on the shore of a lake happily chasing after another little girl. They chased each other and when one reached the other, they laughed. I saw them clasp hands and give rise to a carefree twirl. They held their heads back, and their gaze turned toward the sky. Small steps moved their feet pointed at the ground, while their slender bodies indulged in a circular motion sustained only by the strength of both of them.

The image faded, but that festive round continued in my head and heart. I allowed myself to be won over by that fresh and graceful feeling of youthful carefreeness, forgetting the difficulties of adulthood. I accepted that gift wholeheartedly, and in that joyful flow I went up to the terrace, picked up two coconut leaves and brought them into the house. I sat on the ground and proposed to my husband to help me weave them into two placemats. I had never done anything like this and did not know where to start, but I was certain that together we would succeed. As my hands moved, becoming more and more expert, I thought of Govinda and smiled.

I was happy for her and I was also happy for the other girl. I felt love for both of them, but I did not understand how this vision could take on such intensity.

When the work was done, we looked with great satisfaction at our placemats, which actually seemed to have turned out quite well. I went out to the terrace for a breath of air, and brushing my still sore forehead, I wondered if the visions were to blame for the blow to my head, when I was distracted by some cackling from the street.

"Hello, hellooo." The school bus had stopped pulling up to the gate of our house, giving way to a car. Some little girls, noticing my presence, took to calling out to greet me. I responded with a wave of my hand, and as they leaned out the windows, I could see their radiant faces. Their smiles lit them up like a beacon, making their complexions glow and enhancing their beauty. They appeared so genuine and pure, but most of all so different from the girls my eyes were used to.

My heart felt intimately connected to theirs. I saw Govinda in them again and suddenly longed to confide in someone. I yearned to know who that child was and whether anyone knew her. But on what basis or elements could I have described her or talked about

her? I went to the room and resumed reading the pages written by the Master, they were numbered and I noticed that two sheets were missing. I checked further, but could not find them. I decided in any case to continue and to my amazement read what I had just experienced.

"It is only by releasing tension that the heart is lightened and opened to the harmony of life; man's chains are heavy to drag, release them."

The 7 small marks lined up formed a sequence, I wrote them down on three separate sheets of paper which I placed side by side. I lay down on them as they were written by the Master. I lay there for about ten minutes. Initially they worked at a very subtle and delicate level, almost imperceptible, but after a few minutes they increased their purifying power. I released a blockage behind my left shoulder and in my lower back and later some tension in my stomach. I actually felt much lighter. I did as the Master suggested, and that was to reinforce that cleansing with an affirmation, "I free myself from everything that disturbs me."



Chakra Balance - Purification

Starting from above **observe tanki and inhale, exhale** mentally **repeat** the word:

- **Chief** (continue in the same way for each tanki)
- **Front**
- **Throat**
- **Breast**
- **Stomach**
- **Belly**
- **Sacred**

Repeat this cycle two more times, then close your eyes by inhaling and exhaling repeat: **"I free myself from..."** for example: anger, sadness, stress... or **"from everything that bothers me."**

If you lie down or place a hand on top of Chakra Balance you will relieve yourself of heaviness quickly. Placed under the pillow, it releases during sleep from tension, the painful past and Karma.

Chapter 6

I don't know for what reason those exercises and experiments gave me such an eagerness to enter more into myself and live life fully. My eyes shone, so I wanted to see them always; full of enthusiasm, love, trust and hope. These were the energies I needed, the food with which to feed my soul, which had finally and timidly come out of the cage where I had locked it up for years. Now the harmonic symphony of silence encircled her head, love dressed her in pink, hope spread her wings, and trust would help her fly again.

Because now she trusted me, our hearts were intoxicated by our energy and the wonderful opportunity to be together. If the mind crushes the soul's aspirations, it brutally breaks her wings, and conflict becomes the bread and butter. Our ego sometimes needs to be redeemed by life in order to still believe what lives in us. Love cannot be understood, understood or possessed, but simply experienced.

Dualism helps us understand our emotions, such as joy after sorrow, laughter after crying, healing after illness, forgiveness after a wrong suffered, and so on. I suddenly understood that I wanted suspension, that

subtle transition between one opposite and the other, to capture the origin of the dynamic balance that holds life together. I wanted what lay between the opposites. The key had to be there, in the interval that holds the two opposites together. Our limitation lay perhaps in not recognizing them as one experience; perhaps the separation was a momentary illusion of the mind.

If I hate it is because I loved, if I suffer it is because I felt joy, if I cry it is because I was happy, if I wake up it is because I slept. They often occur as seemingly disconnected experiences, but they were meant to exist perhaps to teach us how to be transcended.

I understood that nothing can be done to change this law of nature: opposites are the common thread of our lives, they are the two sides of the same coin. That medal I now wished I could hold in my hands.

I sighed, and without realizing it I whispered to myself, "I love you, I love you, I love you."

I felt the need to speak those words and leave them hanging in the air.

Chapter 7

The white car was waiting in front of the gate. The hotel manager had asked if we could pose for photos to be included in their brochure. These were photos

related to the wellness practices of the hotel's medical center; we were to pose pretending to be the guests receiving the treatments. We arrived at sunset, had dinner and stayed in a very nice and spacious room: our bed was huge and embellished with a gold bedspread;

In the morning, after breakfast, we were ready for the experience. The photographer and his two assistants prepared to set up the photo shoot, while we were entertained by the doctor and the hotel manager.

When my turn came, I was led into a room, by a rather elderly lady, who was in turn accompanied by two young women; as I undressed I heard giggles and phrases said under my breath, which further increased my embarrassment. Arriving to remove my underwear, the older one made a leap to cover me with a towel and handing me two pairs of paper panties.

I walked out of the room with the enthusiasm of a condemned man accompanied by an escort. The lights were bright and I half-naked in front of those strangers felt terribly uncomfortable. I thus spent the most embarrassing two hours of my life, feeling completely separated from myself. I was tired, cold, and hungry, but to my dismay I was informed that we were not yet finished, so I went to lunch in a bathrobe

and anointed by countless oils and essences. My husband, blessed him, had already finished and asked me how it was that I still had all my hair smeared red and my face tinted green. I imagined myself walking into the dining room of a luxury hotel like that at our place, at that idea I burst out laughing. I was actually realizing that each new experience constituted a step toward liberation that led me to self-acceptance; it was as if a subtle plan was taking shape to help me get to the center of my feminine being.

As we drove home, I paused to think back on the morning we had just spent and realized that living the model life must not have been as pleasant as it appeared from the outside. My back, because of the wooden bed was sore, my hair, despite several washes, remained greasy for days.

Then, finally in bed, out of the blue I felt my stomach close, I had a feeling of imminent danger. I squinted my eyes and the little girl appeared to me again.

At that scene it was pouring rain, and Govinda stood at night tied to a tree, soaked, her hair long and shaggy, wearing a white dress that reflected the faint light. Although it was dark I saw clearly that her terrified eyes were staring at something in the darkness. They were stray dogs surrounding her as she tried to keep them at bay by kicking with her feet. It must have been

some kind of sadistic and horrible punishment. I felt a deep sense of helplessness and frustration that I could not help her.

The vision disappeared and I was filled with dismay-I was literally shaking with fear. I reacted by running down to the kitchen and starting to look for something to eat in the pantry. I was hungry, very hungry, which I satisfied by grabbing the bag of cashews. My husband was downloading pictures, while I, still very tense, approached him trying to tell him something, but I realized that I was not yet ready to confide.

Chapter 8

That night I fell asleep without realizing that I had left the window open, just the one on my side of the bed. The fresh air had literally frozen the sweat on me, and in the morning I woke up with a big sore throat and fever. So I decided to stay in bed. I saw through the window a barefoot man with a cow on a leash, walking slowly and occasionally turning to look toward the houses that lined the road. He lifted his head and caught me looking at him, waved at me, and I waved back. Fatigue caused by constipation kept me in a kind of drowsiness and without realizing it I slipped back into inner vision.

I first saw Govinda's long hair. Sitting on her back, she seemed quiet as her friend combed her hair. She was trying to gather her hair into a thick braid, while the other little girls pushed her around teasing her. I noticed that Govinda was not responding to the teasing of the other little girls, she was gesturing to her friend and her friend was sending them away. Suddenly I realized I had never heard her speak and like a bolt of lightning a thought crossed my mind. Only now did I understand the reason for it!

Only now did I understand why Govinda did not speak, why Govinda was unable to speak.

Govinda was not even able to hear.

Because Govinda was deaf and dumb!

I read it in her eyes, when a veil of sadness seemed to darken her face and all her loneliness moved from her to me, and then again, from me to her.

I sensed a deafening silence, a violated intimate space, and a sense of unease and helplessness pervaded my soul. I continued not to understand why I had to experience sensations that were not mine, emotions and feelings that did not belong to me, why was I experiencing them as if they were mine?

I was totally heartbroken at the idea of how frustrating it must be not to be able to communicate, I was experiencing that feeling of deprivation in my whole being.

Stepping out of that vision, my gaze was caught by a yellow and blue butterfly resting on the window sill. I wondered if she, as I did, was also watching me. Beautiful and silky, she was moving her wings in slow motion, opening and closing them very slowly.

She offered herself in all her beauty, standing firm on her paws well clinging to the windowsill, while the wind and rain were again raging behind her back.

I picked up the packet of papers again and saw peeking out a tiny bookmark on which a tanki was drawn. I

turned it over and over for a few moments: it had been painted with natural colors, perhaps henna, a little faded, but the design was still recognizable. I instinctively laid my hand on it and felt a sense of joy pervade me.



The butterfly flew away and I returned with my attention to that room, to myself and to my discomfort.

As soon as it stopped raining, I asked my husband if he could scooter to the pharmacy to get me some medicine and also some honey.

I waited for him eagerly and immediately took two tablespoons of honey when he returned.

He also handed me an aspirin and syrup. When he re-entered the room holding a glass of water, I had unluckily already swallowed the aspirin and the syrup as well. He shrieked, "nooo! Have you taken it yet?"

and I replied, "what?", "the aspirin", "yes, why?", "it's effervescent! You should have put it in the water first!" By then the damage was done. Before long I began to have stomach cramps fueled by that extra-strong syrup-in short, a deadly mix!

My being hasty had led me to commit a serious imprudence; I had thrown fuel and fire into my stomach, and together they had started a big fire.

And so, in addition to a fever, a sore throat and an insistent cough, a stomachache had also set in. I arrived the next morning completely exhausted, when, at the crack of dawn, another clip of the film manifested before my incredulous eyes.

I noticed that I suddenly calmed down, became immobilized, and something prepared me to become a spectator of a virtual projection. I learned to let go.

I saw many girls scattered in a dark room with light pink painted walls and a gray floor. They were sitting on the floor, carrying food to their mouths that they picked up with their hands from wooden bowls. Govinda was sitting with the others. As soon as she finished eating, she got up and went outside. She headed to a large washhouse located in the courtyard. At first she rinsed her hands and face, then picked up an amphora, and barefoot went to fetch water. The spring gushed directly from a cleft in the rock of a nearby relief. The small stream, where

Govinda kept her feet submerged, seemed to have carved out a bed in the shape of an esse. The stream gently furrowed the grassy ground following the natural morphology of the landscape; I could see stones and large boulders surrounded by shrubs, a large dark rock towered round and imposing in the background. On his return, Govinda poured water by filling two large basins.

The girls came out one at a time holding the bowls they were stacking on a table placed at the side of the wash house. It was dusk; oil lamps illuminated the scene.

Govinda began to wash the dishes, using sand that she spread and rubbed on the pots and pans. She dipped them on the left and rinsed them on the right, her little friend helping her by drying the bowls and stacking them on top of each other. Some of the little girls played and ran, others amused themselves around the fire burning leftover food, until one of them grabbed a small pot and running to the wash basin, dipped it in the dirty water. Then she positioned herself behind Govinda and dumped the dirty water on her white dress.

From white to brown was an instant. Some of them laughed out loud, others pointed their fingers at her, and still others silently waited for her reaction.

Govinda stopped, stopping what he was doing. She took the bowl of dirty water in her hands, turned to them, lifted it up and defiantly and very slowly spilled it all over herself.

Now it was she with her big black eyes staring at them, enjoying

provoking them, while they still astonished remained motionless and incapable of any reaction.

Govinda, completely wet and dirty, stood with her feet immersed in the puddle created on the ground, slowly advancing toward her astonished audience. The very light dress adhered completely to her body almost like a second skin. She stood there practically naked in front of everyone.

She appeared like a little marble goddess. I would have liked to take her by the hand and carry her away from there, while her expression conveyed thoughts and words such as, "Every day you mortify me, but I can do it better than you, I am better than you even at this!"

Those thoughts came to me like a boomerang at full speed. I understood that I had just grasped the essence of the feminine, the extraordinary strength of the woman who, unable to escape, is able to transform everything, convert evil into good and every day give birth to herself.

I had the opportunity to see true beauty, the beauty of the soul, the beauty that bursts within you and that you cannot avoid revealing to the world, even when you want to disappear. Govinda was poetry without rhyme, a mysterious force disguised as fragility, surrendering to its powerful divine essence.

The vision of her acerbic but beautiful body faded,

leaving me with the memory of how she had used it. Such a firm and determined action awakened in me a strong desire to fight back, to find the strength to get out of bed. I realized that I was still terrified by the memory of a long illness, which in the past had held me hostage to my body for over a year. For this reason, the fever frightened me greatly, because a time not so long ago, it had taken everything from me. At that very moment, I promised myself that it would never scare me again. I decided that day that I would fight back, that I would emerge from the vortex of self-pity with the will and strength that only in me I could find. From the outside came the usual catastrophism and that hospitals were swarming with cases due to monsoon fever, but I continued to cultivate my healing process, with will, optimism and confidence, in a few days I was well.

Chapter 9

For many more days we remained locked in the house. Monsoon rains raged and the wind did not allow us to hold an umbrella open for more than a few seconds. Since I had just recovered from the sickness that had struck me, I tried to endure a few days of isolation and not abuse my strength.

Those temperature swings could cause me to relapse, while I wished to return to normalcy, to my spiritual quest as soon as possible and perhaps go to the Ambika store. Resuming my reading, I realized that the Master was pointing me to open a small envelope attached to the next page.

This excited me so much, because I was sure I would find something of Him. I was quite amazed to see that it was a silver medallion bearing the engraving of a tanki. A beautiful gift that showed me that He had thought of me and still remembered me. With one hand I touched it and sensed that I had one more step to go before I met Ambika; I would go to her if it stopped raining.

I remembered a curious statement by the Master: *"If you want to be strong, choose an opponent stronger than you, defeat him and you will be unbeatable."*

I always thought that this was a male-oriented teaching, but in time I discovered that it liberates from the insecurity that has been passed on to us women over the centuries. Being called the 'weaker sex' has branded us, made us believe that we are not strong, autonomous and independent. It made us vulnerable, in some countries victims of violence and abuse, or ornamental flowers without any voice or rights. The plagiarism that had been perpetrated for centuries on our false need for security and acceptance had to end. It was time to face my enemy! The big problem, is that when we are going through an experience, we cannot be objective or rational. We get so caught up in it that we fail to see the pitfalls and dangers we are facing, and it is only after suffering the consequences that we understand it. It takes great strength to break certain chains. And it was only at the end of a controversial experience that I realized that I had faced an extreme test, a test of mental, physical and spiritual strength. My whole being was placed under an anvil and dragged into a deep abyss. Despite experiencing such a difficult situation that I cannot recount, I did not lose my course. Clutching the rudder with all my strength I managed to get out of a plagiarism, which was aimed at taking what was most precious to me. It was easy to

end up in the newspapers and on every billboard, to have the minister of culture as a guest at the opening of the association, to see photos and full-length posters of me, and that would have been just the beginning, if I had not rebelled and responded to those constant exhortations, "if you don't do this it means you are not spiritual," or, "if you don't attend this event it means you are not pious enough." I knew who I was and was becoming in the name of a phony spirituality what I hated most. The Master had clearly written to me not to delegate my trials to others, and so I did. I was in the city center having lunch in the usual restaurant. I got up and went out. The street was swarming with people. I picked up the phone and called this dark character and shouted at him with all the breath in my throat that I would not go to the meeting and that he would never see me again. The man replied that there were already about 80 people waiting for me, then he blackmailed me using the usual phrase, namely that if I did not do what he said it meant I was not spiritual enough. As people had stopped to look at me, I shouted to him, "I wanna be a porn star," on the other side I heard silence-and I attacked. I returned to the restaurant still shocked by what I had just said. I began to laugh, at first

hysterically and then liberatingly, I was crying and laughing, I couldn't hear anything. I looked at my husband and said, "You will see that he will never call me again." I had realized who my enemy was and I had beaten him, destroyed him incinerated! I told my husband that I had ended the partnership and that I no longer had any intention of being subdued by that stalker. He, knowing me well, was just waiting to see when I would break free from all this madness. I was in a foreign country, I knew I would have to suffer retaliation, and I guarantee there was, and very heavy ones, but nothing, nothing is worth more than one's freedom. For my desire to spread I had lost sight of myself, my serenity and my self-respect. This sneaky ego test had been passed and now I had to get back to pointing the rudder on the right course.

A couple of troubled weeks passed, but slowly everything returned to normal, thanks in part to my husband who sacrificed so much of his love to see me happy and fulfilled. He was definitely stronger than I was, which is why I admired him so much. Although he was a few years younger, he was more mature than that little girl who lived in me.

I closed my eyes, blaming all the fatigue I had accumulated during that time, I had entered a parallel

space to discover myself and a lost truth. At that thought my consciousness opened and as in a book I read there again.

I saw Govinda sitting cross-legged under a large tree; eyes closed and hands in her lap, she seemed suspended from the ground. She was enveloped in a great light that bathed her face softened by a barely noticeable smile. I noticed that a few meters away, behind a hedge, the gray-haired man was watching her and smugly stroking his beard. Despite his sullen appearance, I could read in his eyes, that in his own way, he appreciated her much more than the others. Govinda's silent world intrigued him and for that reason he seemed to be studying her. She showed herself to be serene, while he, sullen, looked to me like a hungry wolf. But hungry for what? I wondered what he was looking for in her and especially what he was hiding. A man came up behind her, he turned around, and for the first time I got a good look at his face. His terrible eyes, startled me to the point, that I was catapulted out of the vision.

I could not banish that look and began to fidget and wander around the house. I almost fell down the stairs. I was alone in the house. My husband was at his yoga class and it would have been trouble if I had slipped down the stairs in his absence. That day, after the experience I had just had, I was urged to get out, to run away from there. I dressed quickly and ran outside

without having a specific destination: I just wanted to walk and get some air. I was seized by the strange urge to go, to run, to escape, and so I quickened my pace; the impulse was to look for something, I felt I had to reach a specific place, but which one? Where could that place be? I skirted the right side of the road, scanning the landscape in the hope of finding some clue, any sign that might guide me. The heat was unbearable and I sensed that a storm was brewing again. I slowed my pace as the road, now uphill, was becoming so strenuous that it resembled climbing. I stopped at the sight of a path, and without much thought, took it. I walked for a few minutes observing the beautiful vegetation, when suddenly my attention, was caught by a song coming from a speaker attached to a tree. I looked up to see which direction it was coming from. Following the gentle rhythm of those mantras, it led me into a clearing. I reached a small temple and some women gathered in prayer. I sensed that this was not the right direction and decided not to approach them, so I retraced my steps. I resumed the path I was on, and although I was reluctant to stray from the main road because of my poor sense of direction, I continued along that path with some agitation. It almost seemed as if I wanted to get lost,

to be guided only by my intuition, my soul, my heart. The path narrowed, as did my view, limited by the shadows created by the dense vegetation; I was gasping from the heat and my eyes were watering from the sweat dripping from my forehead. I paused to gather my hair, and when I lifted my head an extraordinary scene opened to my view. On my left appeared an enchanting pond covered with water lilies, in front of it a large ovoid cliff with a waterfall and a stream. On my right, however, I saw a hill bordered by small vegetable gardens and a handful of houses where chickens roamed undisturbed. Two dogs barked playfully in front of the threshold of a dwelling, while a child amused himself by rolling a hoop with a stick; a gust of wind, a sigh, and there before my eyes, half-hidden by the foliage, I saw a flight of steps made of stone pebbles. I paused to look at those steps, marred by time and wear and tear, I wanted to feel whether I should go up them or not; I gave myself a few seconds to decide, when I was certain of the direction, I turned around to try to remember the way I had just walked and make sure no one was following me. As a human presence I noticed only a young man in jeans and a white T-shirt, sitting on a boulder at the edge of the pond, dangling one leg

back and forth while smoking a cigarette. He was looking around circumspectly and I speculated that he was sneaking a smoke. He smiled at me and I smiled back at his greeting. A little later a noise behind me startled me: it was an elderly woman who was dragging huge leaves. On seeing her so skinny and hunched over, it was spontaneous for me to go up to her to help her, but even before I could accomplish my purpose, she had already caught up with me. She grabbed me unexpectedly by the wrist, and perhaps in amazement, I saw a kind of claw instead of a hand.

A jolt ran through my whole body, and while I tried to wriggle out of it, she kept shaking me as if she wanted to get me away from there. With one hand she was holding her leaves and with the other, perhaps without even realizing it, she was holding me.

It was obvious that I did not understand her, yet she persisted in talking to me. When she asked me the fateful question, "Your name?", I answered "Maria," "Like Mother Maria?", "Yes, like Mother Maria." I don't know for what reason she immediately stopped talking and began to look at me in a different way. I calmed her down and with some pleasantries walked away, wondering what she had wanted to tell me.

Many natives had converted to Christianity, and I

would see them parading every Sunday morning in front of the house, with their Bibles under their arms and dressed to the nines.

However, I still had not gotten used to seeing Jesus represented everywhere, like an entertainment star. I saw him towering above the supermarket checkout counter surrounded by Christmas lights, engraved on the doors of houses or painted on passing trucks and taxi drivers' dashboards. In short, in a Hindu country, Jesus was represented everywhere and much more than in ours. This I found curious.

I slowly resumed my walk, took a few more steps, but a strong uneasiness took hold of me. I began to tremble, and my sweat, at first hot, suddenly turned icy cold. I felt a sword pierce my chest, a pain so sharp that it took my breath away. Frightened, I wondered what was happening to me. I thought of a fainting spell due to the pressure or the great heat and stopped.

I tried to breathe, but the constriction in my chest was getting stronger and stronger. I then decided to reverse direction and began to slowly descend the steps, when suddenly I was overwhelmed by suffering and a sadness mixed with despair. It was tremendous, a pain from which I could not escape. I remained motionless and as soon as it hinted at fading, I tried to

quicken my pace by clasping my hands against my chest. From the severe pain my eyes filled with tears, but in spite of all that was happening to me, I could see from above and as a whole the panorama below.

In a state of complete anguish and with my vision fogged with tears, I recognized the pond, the rounded rock, and the s-shaped stream, and my head began to spin. I sat down on a step and without almost realizing it began to shout, "Why? Why? For what reason? For what reason did you do this to me?" I could feel Govinda in me. She was crying and railing at someone, shouting, "Why? Why? Why?" and I was also repeating her words.

I felt the pain, anger and sense of helplessness almost burst through my heart.

When I was on the verge of exploding, I decided it was time to stop, to let go of all that pain that was not mine and had become almost uncontainable.

The cloud-darkened sky was preparing for rain. In a few minutes the first drops of water fell; and I, with great difficulty resumed walking, just wishing to get off the merry-go-round of emotions before I hurt myself. I was angry, enraged, sad, frightened and exhausted; I phoned my husband and asked him to join me on the motorcycle on the main road at the third bend after

our house. Within seconds the rain turned into a downpour, buckets of water mixed with sand came down on my face like slaps. My eyes were burning and walking in that state was difficult.

I stood on the side of the road trembling and frightened. My husband struggled to recognize me, "Get in!" he said, "You're only hurting yourself, do you understand that or not? Are you going out of one thing and into another?"

We arrived home completely soaked and as soon as we were dry, I decided to spill the beans. He, extremely intuitive, had realized that I had been hiding something for a long time and was just waiting for the right moment for a confrontation and said, "I've seen you do a lot of stupid things lately!" I knew he was right and kept quiet. I let him talk for a while and then I began with, "you get to the point where you want to achieve a goal, you want to know the truth and..." and he froze me and said, "and, and, and what? Do you fall and get hurt? Or do you get sick? Or maybe you get plagiarized by dishonest people?", I rubbed my face and replied, "yes, you're right, let's end this please, I'm tired. Let's eat something and take a rest. Tomorrow I will go to the store of the woman Master pointed out to me. Maybe she will be able to tell me something

more, or confuse me completely, at this point I don't know who to believe or even why I am here."

Chapter 10

The next morning I got ready and hailed a cab. I bargained with the driver for a flat rate for the entire morning and took the opportunity to do some shopping as well. When he arrived, I noticed that his face was strangely familiar. I told him the address of the store and then asked if he could kindly turn down the air conditioning. The man tried several times to strike up a conversation, but I, who had little desire to talk, did my best to avoid any talk. I looked out the window, trying to evade his gaze, which I discerned lingering on me from the rearview mirror. I thought back to a trip I took not so long ago. I was sitting on a train, going over material for a course, but the man sitting across from me was constantly moving around, causing me to lose concentration. I felt disturbed by his agitated behavior and couldn't get anything done. Resigned to the obvious impossibility of not being able to continue reading, I closed my eyes and fell asleep. I dreamed of a battle set in the Middle Ages. I could distinctly see banners, gleaming swords, and wounded victims of the tumult of the clashes. In the background I noticed a burning palace and in the large lobby a woman with long blond hair. She wore a white

gown and stood dismayed and petrified at the carnage. At that point I saw a soldier with a large sword striding toward her and without any mercy piercing her belly. I was startled awake and surprised to find myself on a moving train. When I came to, I saw that my neighbor across the street was gone. He had probably gotten off the train while I was asleep. Still a little shaken by that strange dream, I thought that maybe I had let myself be influenced by the man's appearance, but who wouldn't? I was traveling alone, sitting in front of a fully shaved and tattooed, sinewy man wearing a camouflage suit. As soon as I concluded my remarks, he came back in holding his cell phone to his ear, waved to his interlocutor, and took his seat again; from that moment on, to my surprise, he never stopped talking to me.

He told me that he was a professional soldier, a mercenary, who had spent half his life in the war and carried with him a load of trauma and human history that was certainly uncommon. I realized only later that I was collecting the confessions of a man who had killed for a living, and I, who was even careful not to step on ants, had remained impassive listening to him. He told me about the grueling trainings, the endless sleepless days, the amphetamines, his role as a sniper,

what it feels like the first time you kill someone and then about indifference, the inability to feel any real feelings anymore, the months spent in the desert, amid remorse and loneliness; and finally about love and the decision to stop with that life and do something in the social. It was as if that avalanche of words slid over me without my being able to feel anything; despite the scope and intensity of that surreal dialogue, I found myself immune to his emotions. He was returning to his parents completely unaware of his work, to whom he had bought a house, no indeed, a whole hill. But toward the end of his story something happened that turned the situation completely around.

Very calmly he added, "I left everything, I changed my life, but the Order, not that, to that I swore allegiance." At those words I felt a wave of very strong energy rise from my feet and immediately after, a tremendous discomfort. Here we go again! Karma again, the cursed past chasing me and wanting to be transcended. Looking me in the eye, he said, "I have decided not to kill anyone anymore, but you know, from the Order you cannot get out easily, because there are secrets that cannot be revealed."

At those words I shuddered and instinctively brought both hands to my belly, as if to protect myself from

him; his outburst on the Secret Order continued without hardly letting me breathe, the past mixed with the present, as the train sped by and my heart pounded. I felt pain, so much pain and sadness, and then a sense of nausea, of physical suffering, of restlessness. I hated that man and immediately forgave that man who had hurt me, so much hurt. I felt the wonderful energy of forgiveness, the grace of forgiveness, starting from my heart and going to him. Forgiveness that freed me from that journey into the past that happened in the present. It all happened very quickly and unconsciously. My heart overflowed with compassion and I began to relax more and more, when suddenly, a slowdown shook us and he realized he had arrived. He took my hand and said, "Thank you for listening to me and not judging me, good luck." Without warning, the past had shown up and gone back where it came from. I sat there, immersed in a whirlwind of sensations, perhaps too many to handle all at once. My gaze followed the past moving away from me from the window, as the train indifferently resumed its rush into the present. Life, now relieved of another burden, could continue with lighter baggage. With one less fear, one less pain, one less tension.

Now I was on another train, on another journey, and my existence was proceeding in a strange and unpredictable direction: but how to avoid it? Could I perhaps throw myself off the moving train? Then what is the use of running away, if everything takes us where we are headed? After all, mistakes, encounters and experiences will perhaps be the only realities that teach us something authentic. I had to accept that.

When we arrived in town, I had him drop me off in front of the store and told him I would call him. I went into Ambika's store, actually calling it a store was a bit of an exaggeration, although, by the standard of the place, it could be considered nice.

The most colorful fabrics and garments were piled on top of each other on the shelves, some were even piled on the floor. Upon entering I immediately recognized the typical insecticide smell, characteristic of stores of that type;

At the sound of the bell hanging on the door, a young woman peeped out from behind a curtain. As I approached, she recognized me and immediately ran toward me with an affectionate outburst that was as welcome as it was unexpected. It was the same girl, who had made for me, the turquoise dress commissioned by the Master. Fortunately, she spoke

English and we were able to chat. I asked if Ambika was her name, and she replied that it was her grandmother's name. I noticed the statuette and cassette on the counter and had confirmation that I was in the right place. I slipped the card in. I told her that the Master had asked me to look for Ambika and if she perhaps knew anything about Him. Ella answered no and advised me to return after lunch to meet her grandmother.

I left the store and walked to the main street. What a mess! Still no sidewalk because of road works. So it was really dangerous to walk without risking being run over.

To obviate the heat and the dangers of the work in progress I entered several stores, mainly those with air conditioning. I made a few purchases and then headed for a restaurant I already knew. I thought I would not feel uncomfortable going back there alone. A waiter recognized me and was very kind and considerate toward me, as opposed to the owner, who had turned out to be rather gruff and even stingy, as I learned from the waiter that he kept tips! That day then I witnessed a scene somewhere between the surreal and the grotesque. The restaurant was always very dimly lit; while I waited for my second course, to pass the

time I began to look around, straining to spot some detail worthy of attention. Suddenly I saw a large mouse dart across the room passing under the table of a quiet family.

The rat made his way to the front door that had been left open because of the heat and went out. The four astonished diners all stood up while the head of the family, a very distinguished gentleman, began shouting in the direction of the owner. The other responded in kind to him, while the customers and waiters were all in obvious embarrassment. People began to raise their voices agreeing first with one and then with the other, although I did not understand a single word, I guessed that the family annoyed by the incident intended to leave the place without paying. The owner did not agree at all and tried to excuse himself by shouting his reasons louder than they did. Perhaps I was the only one who did not complain. I finished eating what I had started and when I went to the cashier, to my surprise, the owner apologized and strangely did not charge me anything.

I walked out a little dazed and before reaching the store I took a short walk strictly in the shade. Although I had taken great care not to walk in the hot sun, I still arrived sweating. I sat for a few minutes on a stool

placed at the side of the counter, wiping my face with a paper towel.

The girl gave me a few minutes, then asked me to follow her to the back, where Grandma was waiting for me.

A small woman with straight white hair, gathered behind the nape of her neck, appeared to me; she was wrapped in a golden yellow robe and sat in front of a cup of tea. She greeted me in the conventional way with folded hands, and I greeted her back. She had blazing eyes, a rather fair complexion and bare feet with small toes; her wrists were adorned with many golden bracelets. With her hand she motioned me to sit opposite her; after the usual pleasantries, she showed me a fine cashmere scarf and many more beautiful ones. Silks embroidered with gold threads and embellished with pearls were used to make wedding dresses; those made of synthetic blend fabric for ordinary women and cotton for girls and teenagers. She asked me my name and what I knew about the manuscript and her, I told her the truth: "nothing." Ambika crossed her fingers bringing her hands to her lap, assumed a thoughtful expression, then raised her index finger and repeated the same two words a few times, "One, ten, one, ten (one, ten)." The last phalanx

of his index finger was slightly bent, perhaps due to arthritis.

He went on to say, "The ten aspects of the one are in the woman who will open all the doors. One has the key to the others that already contain her."

They were incomprehensible words at the time because I was not yet ready for what I would learn in the future. I lowered my gaze showing my obvious difficulty. She, who had every appearance of wanting to conclude her introduction, looked at me and with a disarming smile said, "Soon you will understand."

"Dear, remember that without the one the doors will remain closed. If the Master has chosen you it is because he has been following you for a long time and know that he is still very close to you, closer than you imagine."

I interrupted her to ask where he had gone and how come he had disappeared into thin air, since I had to do something with Him or for Him. She clapped her hands loudly and I gasped. "You still don't get it? Soon you will know the truth, but it is I who must prepare you for this truth, otherwise you will be blown away at the first breath of wind. There are forces that do not want to allow our awakening and the truth to surface, and it is for this reason that we have always been

harm; he sought you out to protect you, but you cannot avoid what you yourself wrote to yourself." I thought back to recent events and sighed. To his words I responded with a question, "May I ask what I wrote to myself?"

She did not answer me, but leaning against the wall, she stood up slowly and asked me to follow her. The long, narrow backroom had been divided by a dark orange curtain, on which I noticed a large golden design. Ambika gently peeled back the curtain; I followed her with some awe.

I was immediately struck by a row of images lined up above a shelf, made visible by five small candles. Because of the poor lighting, the red tone prevailed over the other colors, an intense sweetish scent intoxicated me. It was the best incense I had ever smelled. To my right I noticed a small inlaid wooden closet, while on the floor a Persian-style rug housed large pillows in iridescent colors; these few things constituted the only furniture in that tiny room. Ambika separated one figure from the others and placed it in the center; she remained for a few moments in recollection, then took the tray in her hands, laid the five candles and incense on it, moved it slowly making small circles to the right and left. She

instructed me to remain behind her with folded hands and in silence, so I did.

He chanted a prayer, I think, and then he put the tray back on the shelf, sat me down on a pillow and said, "I'm going to initiate you into hand yoga and do what Master asked me to do. You are not to touch the manuscript until we are finished, and he pointed to the closet."

I replied, "All right, we will do whatever Master has decided, but know that I will stay here two more months, then I will stay one month at home and return." "That's the right time, don't worry. We will do it this way: you will arrange for me to see you every three days, for eleven more times; if all goes well we will suspend the meetings and I will deliver what you came for." I nodded, because deep down I knew I had to close this circle. I felt very strange, maybe the famous emptiness had come; I was like emptied of everything, I didn't care anymore. I was not interested in knowing, in seeking or being found, in interpreting or understanding; I no longer had any desire, I no longer even felt there. Surely that was the right time to leave everything behind and proceed with my journey. Ambika called her granddaughter and immediately turned the pages of the calendar and said, "I want you

both here together at 2:30 p.m. on the twenty-second of July," and I simply replied, "All right, thank you, I will be there."

The girl looked at me surprised, but in turn nodded. Grandma took from a fruit basket a small banana, handed it to me and said in a peremptory tone, "If you eat it after lunch it will make you digest, but only these small ones, understand?" I smiled, said thank you and goodbye. I put my offering in the box and as soon as I was outside I called the taxi driver who arrived in a very short time.

Once home I took a shower and waited anxiously for my husband to tell him everything. When he arrived I noticed that he was quite tired, perhaps for the first time I realized that he was really making many sacrifices to learn the ancient discipline of yoga. He told me about his day and that in the afternoon he had even substituted for the teacher in an intermediate class and in English to boot. I guess it must have been quite a trial for him! I told him about my meeting and that I would have to begin a short journey before I could have what the teacher had left me. Lying on my bed I thought back to Ambika's words and those two numbers echoed in my mind. One, ten, one, ten, why did they sound so familiar? Of course! How stupid,

only now did I understand: one ten were the numbers of my birth date, maybe it was just a coincidence, a stupid coincidence, or Master had referred it to her, who knows!

I closed my eyes and fell asleep.

Chapter 11

Early in the morning I resumed reading the writings left to me by the Master and came to a new passage, in which He gave me a remedy that would help me get rid of excess stress. Master had transmitted to me Tanshui and some practices to help me in His absence. I had just begun my exercises, when in a relaxation, I let myself fall on a pillow and be carried away once again by the inner vision.

I saw Govinda; she was sitting in a circle with the others before the priest. He sat in his large wooden chair; to his right were garlands of flowers lying on a mat, to his left a tray filled with scrolls. He called the girls one by one, adorned them with a mala of flowers, and handed them a scroll. I heard some names such as Sadini, Kumari and finally Govinda, who approached him, accompanied by Shila. Slowly the ceremony ended and each of them thanked by joining their hands on their foreheads. The wind was blowing hard, I could tell by the way their hair and saris waved in the air. I watched them all clapping and singing together as the sky grew dark and ominous, until many clouds overlapped the last rays of sunshine.

The priest stood up and his helpers immediately lifted the large chair and carried it away. As they walked away, it began to rain, and the little girls collected their scrolls and quickly headed

under the canopy of the house to protect their gifts; all except Govinda, who sat in the rain, rocking her torso back and forth to the rhythm of her silent chanting. She lifted her gaze repeatedly to the sky as the kajal dripped down her face. Then she stood up and began to dance in the rain, heedless of her feet sinking deeper and deeper into the mud and her party dress becoming soiled. The other girls watched her from the porch, while she, with closed eyes, continued her dance. For a moment I thought she was crying, but perhaps it was only rain, because suddenly her face suddenly lit up with happiness. She rotated on herself continuing her dance alone; later she began to smile raising her arms toward the sky, spinning on herself and laughing, and the more she laughed the more she stretched toward infinity. Shila ran up to her and so did the others. They all came together forming a circle around her and participated in that improvised dance. They understood that nature, through the sound of the wind, was giving them music to dance to, the rain, on the other hand, was scanning the rhythm to be followed; just letting go was enough to achieve happiness, relying on the heart and nature, this was enough to feel alive.

They were so bright and carefree that that mood could not help but rub off on me.

When everything seemed to reach its climax, Govinda collapsed to the ground. I saw her motionless and lying in the middle of the mud, her eyes averted and her limbs stiffened, and a strange

smile plastered on her face. It was clear that something was happening to her and she was no longer there. The girls approached, forming a huddle around that cold, stiffened little body. They touched her and shook her several times as the priest's two assistants made their way over and quickly took her away.

The vision vanished, leaving me with a sense of apprehension about its fate, I became anxious about wanting to go back up that hill and climb to the top of that staircase to find out what was there, but an inner voice suggested to me to let it go, not to press on, and that the past was past. It was clear to me that I was very close to something, I could feel it, I knew it, I sensed it.

Chapter 12

The days passed quietly and local people began to invite us to their place. It was very inspiring and interesting to see how families from different religions were hanging out with each other without any problems.

Then also came the fateful day of my first meeting with Ambika. I decided that this time to go into town I would call a *tuc tuc*. Being the first date I did not know how long I would have to entertain myself at Ambika's, and it did not seem nice to keep a taxi driver waiting. Arriving at the store I crossed the threshold with a bit of a heartbeat. The store was closed to the public, and that was probably the reason why Ambika wanted to see us together and at that hour. We went to the back, I took off my shoes, and Saniya motioned for me to follow her to the little room beyond the curtain. At the sight of that curtain a slight apprehension took hold of me, it was as if I sensed that in the act of opening it and going through it, I might cross the threshold of time and space. By now I was certain that that design was the Master's. Once beyond I felt I was in a parallel dimension, the exceedingly small environment sending back to me on

the contrary an unexpected feeling of space, freedom and serenity. The first meeting was introductory and ended with a hand gesture (or mudra), water and an affirmation.

Still dazed, I received from Ambika the task of performing the exercises, three times a day, morning, afternoon and evening. This would serve to fortify in me the first inner quality that I needed to awaken and integrate. With Saniya I would do some stretching positions on a particular mat that I later understood I had already experienced in Master's notes. I thanked them both and went out; as soon as I reached the opposite side of the street I lifted a hand to stop the first free cab and return home. The clock on the driver's dashboard read sixteen fifteen, so the meeting had lasted roughly an hour and thirty: how come it seemed so much shorter? The time had practically flown by!

That evening I was quite cheerful and proposed to my husband to go out and celebrate. We decided together to spend a quiet evening at the beach village. After dinner he accompanied me to a lovely store and gave me a silver ring with a garnet and also some crystals. I thought back to an extraordinary design of the Master's for purifying stones. I could have used it to

cleanse the crystals and the ring and wear it the next day.

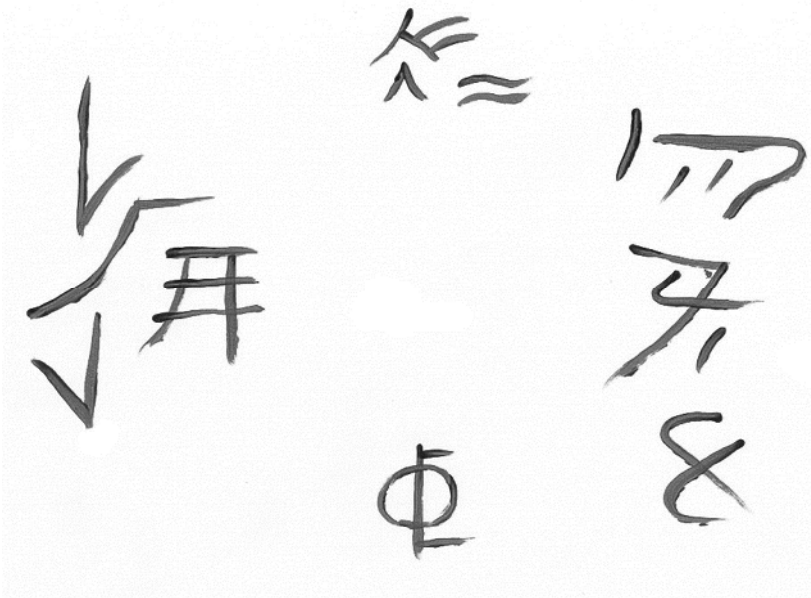
We resumed our walk; the sea at night was very striking, black and mottled with the lights of fishermen's boats reflecting on the water.

We sat and chatted while breathing in deep breaths of the salubrious and pleasantly fresh air of the sea breeze; I felt as if I had gone back in time.

We felt free to be ourselves, in total simplicity, and that evening I understood that he, too, was beginning to appreciate more the place that had challenged us so much, but also made us free to finally be ourselves.

Cristal Cleaner

Place the crystal or jewelry in the center of the circuit
for 5 minutes to return it to its original purity



Chapter 13

The water in the small lake near the house was clear and very inviting. For several days I had wanted to dive, but every time I was about to go down into the clearing something prevented me from doing so. That morning during my daily walk, I stopped to look at the inviting pond.

I ran my gaze over that clear body of water until I saw a dark, elongated shadow moving just below the surface. If I could see it from that distance, it meant that its size was considerable. Perhaps it was a snake, or a snake, either way it was something not very reassuring. If the water had not been so transparent most likely I would never have noticed it; heck even a seemingly tranquil pond hid its pitfalls!

Fortunately I still had good eyesight and most importantly I was centered, otherwise who knows what could have happened to me. Probably nothing, maybe just a scare, but fortunately I had had the opportunity to choose what to do. I reached a large rock behind the temple near the house.

From there I could enjoy a truly wonderful view: the jungle, the verdant hills, the sea and the endless sky. Sitting there I had the opportunity to contemplate

nature and my Self at the same time. As soon as I closed my eyes, a vision interrupted the stillness of my meditation.

Govinda appeared to me, and the sight was disconcerting. I saw her huddled on a mat in the corner of a dark room; she was dirty, her hair short and shaggy. She kept her gaze fixed on a window through which a faint light was coming in. The glimmer of light illuminated an empty bowl placed to her left. Her gaunt arms were marked by several wounds; a dirty, rumpled dress barely covered her; her eyes lost in emptiness seemed absent. The door opened and Shila entered, accompanied by one of the attendants; she carried a tray on which were laid a bowl of rice and another filled with water in which floated a lotus flower. The girl took a cloth, dipped it in the water and, to Govinda's total indifference, began to wash it. It seeped from her eyes and battered body that she had been locked up for a long time. Shila began to clean her by passing the damp cloth over her body that had been made fragile by the ill-nourishment and violence she had endured. When she moved on to her legs, I glimpsed two large chains locking her ankles, and I understood the reason for her immobility. The pain I felt tore through me. Her gaze was dull and devoid of energy, and her resignation was a slap to my soul. She was in a catatonic state staring at the bars of the window that separated her from freedom, even though there was no freedom for her out there. I grabbed just in time the

slipper that had slipped off and was sliding down. I looked at the sea in the distance with a heart as heavy as a boulder; a little girl who was playing with her brother a few meters from me greeted me. She approached and wanted to put on a little bracelet she had made for me at all costs, and only when she succeeded did she leave satisfied. I noticed that in the meantime her father was photographing us and I let him. Although after all I had been through the last thing I wanted was to be photographed. In the meantime my thoughts were on Govinda and I had only the desire to save her, I absolutely had to do something, but what?

That inertia prompted me to get up and get busy; I went home and started writing some notes on the meditation practice. My husband arrived around eighteen o'clock; he was very tired and had to study yoga. Now, when he prepared his classes, he would take a disciplined and strict attitude and woe betide anyone who teased him or made fun of yoga.

We got ready to scooter into town to buy a blanket. We went to a downtown bazaar with the intention, once we arrived, of stopping for dinner as well. I bought a warm, soft green fleece blanket with cream-colored leaves drawn on it and some hair dye. As I

rode around the city, I had the opportunity to see more things, and if I wished, to stop and browse. As I looked around I spotted a Chinese restaurant and proposed that we stop. He agreed, and I was very happy. We parked and entered the restaurant. Red lacquered doors decorated with embossed gold dragons and extremely kitschy ambiance, just the way I liked it. We were seated at a table near the window and ordered, on the waiter's advice, some dishes. We waited an endless time and when the rice noodles finally arrived, they were bland and sticky and to be honest I would have gladly thrown them against the wall opposite. Instead, my husband was satisfied with his rice and vegetables and enjoyed them while witnessing my protests about the two inedible and completely tasteless courses! I asked for soy sauce, but nothing changed, and when he noticed that I was beginning to stare at his vegetables he exclaimed, "but is it possible that you always order things you don't like?", "I don't do it on purpose," I replied, "I always get the opposite of what I expect!", "whatever, have some of my vegetables, otherwise we'll make night here."

I walked out of the restaurant practically fasting, so we stopped at a bakery-type place, which was rather nice

and had a few tables outside.

We noticed that it had clouded over in the meantime and decided to hurry home. To get there first we were forced to do a real slalom between cars, avoiding carts, bicycles and rickshaws. We launched ourselves into a mad chase through the delirious traffic of a city that never sleeps.

Not to mention the buses! Many kept the doors open letting passengers leap off as they ran, so you would suddenly find them in front of you putting their and our lives at risk.

Actually, that somewhat reckless adventure amused me to no end. My husband was so good that as we arrived briskly at a traffic light, some kids applauded us.

Arriving home we found a surprise. A very shabby and hungry black kitten was waiting for us on the doormat. We immediately looked for food to feed him and let him sleep where he was. From then on he was our cat. The next day I stayed home to take care of him and to do the cleaning and laundry. Since I did not have a washing machine I had to wash our clothes and towels by hand, and for the sheets I waited for him. Not that it was difficult to wash them, but it was somewhat difficult to wring them out and lay them out. Me on

one side and him on the other, we would turn the sheet in the two reverse directions until we had no more strength, that was the spin cycle. We also had to be on the alert all the time taking care of the weather and worrying about sudden rain. Never did I regret the washing machine more than in those months. After hanging laundry, considering that the weather allowed me, I did my exercise routine on the terrace.

I thought of the tour de force my husband underwent despite the heat and great humidity by doing more than six hours a day of yoga! I, on the contrary, was cooked after half an hour.

Back in the house, I allowed myself a fresh shower, changed and began to arrange the bedroom. In the back of the closet I found a box I had purchased some time ago with a dozen small containers of scented oil. Perfume, even the most intense perfume, faded in the heat, and for this reason essential oils were widely used. I chose a jasmine one and rubbed it on the back of my left hand. I smelled it several times and felt an intense sensation of well-being, closed my eyes and instinctively my hands joined in front of my chest, from there I soon saw Govinda and the group of girls who had now become adults again.

They were sitting in a circle holding their hands each in different

positions. They were most likely mudras; Govinda, on the other hand, was with folded hands. They emanated light and seemed to be very serene. A sense of peace pervaded me. Suddenly the vision became clearer and I saw Govinda perfectly. Her hair barely touched her shoulders and a shawl covered her still scarred arms. Her pain was concealed by a fake smile, it was a red brushstroke over a purple canvas, the eye could only linger on her and her enigmatic smile. In her eyes, joy and sorrow had the same intensity. Her magnetism was so powerful that I could not tear my eyes and attention away from her, my thoughts from her, my heart from her.

His energy swept over me like a cyclone, shaking my soul to the core until it felt real.

Chapter 14

The next day it was pouring rain and I searched my bag for the number left for me by the taxi driver. He arrived early and rang my door: at the sight of him I winced.

Oh my God, he looked just like--in fact he looked just like--he looked totally like one of the janitors I was seeing in my visions!

My breath got so stuck in my diaphragm that I had a hard time getting out and into his cab.

The build was identical and the face and eyes were the same. Every time he looked at me from the rearview mirror, disquiet rose. I pretended to be tired and asleep and almost instantly Govinda appeared to me.

He was in a circle along with the others. The priest was sitting apart in front of the two helpers forming a kind of triangle. The awareness that he was absorbing their energy came to me strongly. They, young and helpless, to please him, were unsuspectingly consenting to feed his dark energy and power. I looked at Govinda and she seemed strange. She moved obsessively back and forth. That child had become a woman in her early twenties, with long black hair and a sky-blue robe. The priest clapped his hands three times and Shila touched Govinda, while the two shirtless men with their hips wrapped in leopard

skin at a nod from the priest stood up and approached the girls. One of them came up behind Govinda and the other behind another girl. I deduced that something bad was about to happen and became alarmed. Govinda, bravely raised her arms and immediately brought her clasped hands in front of her chest. She began to press them firmly while squinting. Finally I saw her contract all the muscles in her face and then relax and smile and enter a state of ecstasy. The priest then raised his hand and stopped the man who was grasping her. At that moment, as if by magic, I could feel her state. Her bliss came to me and invaded me completely.

He came forcefully entering me from every pore of my skin, and it was something unique and extraordinary for me. I felt his ecstasy, and I even thought I would faint. Govinda stood up and walked toward the priest. He removed his red headdress and bowed his head before her; Govinda put both hands on his head and...

A very sharp and sudden blow threw me against the back of the taxi driver's seat. I staggered and did not understand what was happening. We had been rear-ended by a car on the highway, and behind us three other vehicles had been involved. From peace to chaos.

The fright was as great as the discomfort I felt at having to break something I had already felt, but in a

totally different way.

It was really embarrassing not to be able to show any discomfort or concern about the incident. I was fine, in fact very fine.

I got out of the car laughing, while everyone around me was screaming, I could not act naturally, I was pervaded by a feeling of fullness and total fulfillment, and I felt too good to get worked up and go over to the other side of the fence.

I took another cab and arrived at Ambika's after the agreed time; she understood the reason for my delay, but also that I was different, very different; after the meditation we proceeded with the teachings, which were very deep and full of joy.

The following day we took a break and went to visit a tourist resort that was about an hour away from us. At first that place seemed very welcoming and inviting, but as we continued our exploration we understood that their main occupation was to sell the tourist anything!

It became quite burdensome to have to defend oneself against the constant proposals, especially when they appealed to guilt.

Lunchtime arrived and we stopped to eat at a very nice place. Near the cash register a sign read, "Italian

cappuccino."

I said, "come on, shall we take it?" and he said, "but if you don't even drink it in Italy!", "exactly, maybe it's different here."

I called the waiter and ordered it. Perhaps because the milk had a more intense and genuine taste and the coffee was lighter, I must admit that I liked it very much.

We returned from that hippy-style place in good spirits, but without a shadow of a doubt we both preferred tradition to fiction.

Chapter 15

The next morning I decided to start experimenting in earnest with the teachings left to me by the Master; I wanted to feel deeply the effects of the practices, both on the physical and emotional levels. I compared Tanshui to a recipe book: it would be impossible to prepare a dinner using them all at once! I had to try to rearrange them and line them up. It was as if I had to rely on a current to direct and guide me, but above all I had to give myself time to experiment.

One thought contributed to my inner turmoil: I wanted to open an envelope that was at the bottom of the folder. I was seized with the desire to transgress the order that had been imposed on me by the Master. Sitting on the bed I slipped the envelope out of the binder and held it in my hands for a few seconds. It was heavy and yellowed. I untied the yellow ribbon binding it and looked for a pencil to help me open it, stuck it in a crack, but too much eagerness and curiosity drove me to give a sharp blow and break the envelope completely and its contents spilled out!

Old and faded images scattered on the bed blanket now stood there, all around me.

On the back they bore a rather complex tanki, by now

I had learned to recognize them, moreover they all came with an inscription. An intense rose scent pervaded me, I ran outside to see if anyone had lit incense, but when I returned to the room I noticed that only in that room could it be smelled, how strange I thought, maybe only I smell it.

On the envelope a single note: Omkitan. On the back of the postcards under the tanki was a sentence in a language unknown to me. I decided to have someone knowledgeable decipher those writings.

So that afternoon I went to a bookstore to compare different scriptures, but almost every book was written in the characters of the local language, and the search was totally fruitless.

I put one of the postcards back in my bag, but I noticed that the man in the store was watching me. Feeling a little embarrassed, I took a couple of CDs from a shelf and carried them to the cash register; pulling out the postcard again, I asked him if he knew a translator.

Very courteously he gave me the name of a professor at the university who had translated several books, including into Arabic, and showed me one he took from a shelf with the man's name on it. He did not have a phone number, but if I had asked at the

university they would surely have given it to me.

The college was located on the opposite side of town and it was now too late to go there, not to mention that the heavy traffic would further slow me down. I called a cab again and made my way back home. Once there, I continued my exploration through the Master's teachings, and although it was a virtual path, several resistances arose, especially when I was close to taking steps; therefore, I had to work hard to continue my journey.

I was eager to show my husband my discoveries, although each time in his eyes I did not read the astonishment I expected, but on the contrary I saw a subtle anxiety and concern about me. I only now understood his difficulty in following my inner motions, processes that alternated with such rapidity and overbearingness that at times they left even me breathless.

Now I needed to more consciously and maturely analyze my experience in order to go deeper.

"First open your heart and then open your mind, this is the right attitude so that you can be in life." These words resonated with me like a warning, the order of a mother telling her child, "First finish the gruel and then eat the ice cream."

Obviously between the two options I also preferred the second one, but I was aware, that as in all things, there was a logical order and timeframe to be followed.

Chapter 16

A flush of heat swept over me, the energy was so strong; Govinda was an adult, but not yet free, I sensed it from her eyes, from that gaze that rested on me. The process had reversed, now she was leading the game, she was watching me and no longer me her. Her scent tiptoed into my nostrils and as her vision faded I could hear her thoughts. I quickly took pen and paper and began to write. She spoke to me through time and I wanted to write so that I would never forget that extraordinary experience.

"Delicate maiden of the future who you will write of me, I am grateful to you because you will give voice to her who never could utter a word. Thou shalt not for this experience feel wonder or shame. Bless you for finding me. One day you will tell the truth."

I put the pen down on the table and hopped around in circles, I could hear his thoughts clearly and no longer needed the visions, maybe I had finally recovered from the blow to the head, maybe I was better off now!

I quickly got ready, hailed a cab and headed for the university. Upon arrival I asked if it was possible to speak with Professor Singh. I was seated in a small room behind the library, and after about half an hour I was led to a classroom where a lecture had just

ended. Behind the desk a middle-aged man, wearing a Western suit and a turban from which a thick dark beard emerged, was tidying up some papers. I approached him and asked if he could help me understand the message written on those postcards. I handed him one and he examined it carefully, then exclaimed that it was an ancient Middle Eastern language. We went to the library together, and once there he looked for a dictionary, which he showed me. The alphabet corresponded exactly to the writing on the back of the postcards. He gave me a demonstration of how to decipher the first few words using English so that I could continue the translation independently on my own, it was very few words and if I couldn't do it I could still ask him.

I said goodbye, thanking him and taking care not to give too much explanation on the matter. It took me about two hours to translate the thirteen writings.

I looked at the clock hanging on the wall: it was already two o'clock in the afternoon and I remembered my appointment with Ambika. I catapulted toward the snack vending machine and then to the first passing tuc tuc. By now I was well on my way: it was the eighth meeting and my energy and awareness were also expanding, and still I was fine with both women who

were accompanying me to discover the secrets of feminine energy.

When I returned, I decided to surprise my husband and went to the Yoga Shala to pick him up. He was delighted and suggested that we go to the beach for a swim together. We took a swim and as soon as we had dried off we opted for a fresh yogurt at a beach bar. Before we scooted back together, we stopped at the supermarket to buy some fresh vegetables and fruit; by now we were practically vegetarians and vegetables had to be gotten strictly fresh! Loaded with bags it was quite a feat to get home on the uphill road!

The faithful and always very hungry black kitten was waiting for us on the doormat at home. I decided to reward his patience by giving him some kibble I had just bought. We had named him Whistle because his meow was very shrill and whistle-like. After a restorative shower I prepared the vegetables. Before we went to sleep we noticed that Whistling was lying on the steps; he looked very distressed and when I approached, I could smell a strong fishy odor emanating from him; I deduced that he had found some leftovers by rummaging around in the garbage and hungry as he usually was, he had ingested them with the thorns. He stood just outside our door lying

down and exhausted to the point that I thought he was dying. I took a damp cloth to clean his little face and gave him a few strokes to hearten him. I lifted him up and laid him on the mat. I knew very well that animals, especially wild animals, have the ability to heal themselves, so I waited patiently for him to regurgitate. My husband suggested that I go rest and that he would relieve me, and I followed his advice. After about an hour spent tossing and turning in bed, I went downstairs barefoot to see if Whistler had recovered. Through the half-open door I saw my husband holding Whistling in his arms. Whistle opened his eyes and plumply jumped down; I decided not to intervene and ran up to the room unseen. After a few minutes the front door closed and I heard him climb the stairs and enter the room. He gently lifted the sheets and then slowly lay down by my side and embraced me. At half past four, as usual, we were already awake. We rushed to see how our friend had spent the night.

As soon as I opened the door, Whistler did a few laps by rubbing himself around my ankles and then literally jumped into my arms. The somewhat shrunken and frail kitten we had known had become more robust and seemed to have recovered perfectly. He could face

his adventurous life in the jungle and occasionally visit us for food and some cuddles.

I by now had reached the end of the notes in which the Master was explaining the history of those images. The work with Ambika was aimed at the awakening of the feminine and a challenging and strenuous energetic and sometimes physical cleansing.

The day also came when I had the last of my visions. It was dawn, and the soft light gave a glimpse of the mist that rose above the lush nature each morning. My vision came to life from that fairy-tale scenery, somewhere between dream and reality. I felt my body become heavy, and a complete loss of mobility characterized that event that usually did not portend itself so strikingly.

I saw Govinda walking through the jungle among the branches of the trees. A distinguished man approached her and began to speak to her, but since she was unable to hear, she brought her hand to her heart and began to cry. They looked into each other's eyes, then he stroked her head and wiped away a tear, letting her know that he would help her. I understood from her expression that it was time to leave her prison and escape from that dark presence that was taking away her and the other girls' life energy. With great gentleness, she picked up a white flower and handed it to him and immediately walked away. I saw her with the other

girls who had now become women. Govinda showed them a gap in the very high fence and that if they wished they could escape together with her. I understood from their reactions that not all of them wished to adhere to her plan. I saw one of them perhaps the most frightened running away. After a few moments Govinda was led by the two servants into the elder's presence. This time the priest did not punish her; rather, to my amazement, after having her adorned like a princess, he made her sit on his seat. He washed her feet and wiped them dry, sprinkled them with petals, placed a golden veil on her head that hymned her changed fate. In a flash she showed me her life. Now she had a room just for her, a woman who looked after her needs, and many ceremonial clothes to wear when, from her large chair, she bestowed blessings on those who waited for her in long lines. Now she was a little goddess, a wax doll, with pink cheeks and red lacquered lips, a lifeless, expressionless face.

I couldn't go on, I grabbed a book and threw it against the wall, my heart was split in two. "No! It can't end like this, this is not how it was supposed to end, not like this, not like this!"

Chapter 17

Two months had already passed and my husband had made several friends; being more expansive than me and having more contact with the outside world he

had managed to fit in and adapt. I, on the other hand, hung out with few people and continued with my exercises and meditation. Arriving at the last meeting, a great sadness pervaded me. For me, the time had finally come, and to know whether or not I was ready to receive what I had come for. Once at Ambika's, she took a few sprigs of jasmine flowers and stuck them in my hair. She made a short prayer in the space in front of the room where it was our custom to meet, put a necklace of fresh flowers around my neck and handed me a key. A silence laden with trepidation fell.

Pointing me to the tent, he waved me in alone. No explanation was necessary; it seemed to me that I had experienced that scene many, many times. The fateful moment had arrived.

Trembling with the idea that later things would change and that I might never be the same person again, I quieted my mind and took the necessary step to go beyond that tent.

Inside I was greeted by a pleasant and intense rose scent; red petals scattered on the floor led me to the inlaid cabinet. A strong desire to kneel down and pray pervaded me; the tealights, arranged to form a triangle, were framed by three rows of yellow, white and red colored rice. After a few minutes I took courage and

got up, slipped the key into the closet door. One turn and it opened. Inside were three empty shelves and on the middle one a yellowed tome and an envelope resting on top. It was a manuscript without a cover and I had the feeling that it was part of something ancient and precious, pages held together in a very rudimentary way. I took the envelope in my hands and opened it; the few lines on one sheet opened my heart wide: "*Dear sister, walk in Light and Truth.*"

I clutched that piece of paper in my hands as the Master's words echoed through the room, "walk in the Light and in the Truth," I laid the paper on my forehead and then on my chest and wept, took the manuscript and without opening it I clutched it tightly to me.

I carefully closed the closet and went out.

Ambika had disappeared, while her granddaughter waited outside for me with a grimace and curiosity. She held in her hands a cardboard box that her grandmother had left for her for me to lay the text in so that I would not waste it. I read in it an inscription made with a blue marker: "From Maria." I thought it was a mistake and that she had actually meant to write "for Maria."

We hugged for a long time, and when I walked out I

still had goose bumps; even on the way I continued to feel strong emotion in waves. I needed to walk and release the tension. I sensed my heart beating fast and in my mind like a movie I was reviewing all the scenes that had characterized our brief but intense encounters.

I suddenly felt invested with a great responsibility, even though I was not yet aware of what I was holding in my hands. I hailed a cab and abandoned myself in the back seat as I had not done in a long time. I was exhausted. After about 20 minutes the taxi driver woke me up, "Madam, madam, is that your home?" I nodded and a little groggy I looked for the money and paid him; I staggered out of the cab.

I greeted the kitten who was waiting for me, "Hi Whistling all right? Do you want your food?"

I went into the house and brought him out some water and some leftover food. "Here you go Whistle, go ahead and eat."

I went back into the house, stretched out on the couch imagining that I had a big television set in front of me. I had an extreme need to watch a movie that was not my life; I was tired, so tired that I wanted to disappear or dissolve into the ether.

Within a few days we were supposed to leave, on the

one hand I longed to go home, but on the other hand, deep inside myself, I knew I would miss this.

I clutched the pillow tightly and sniffed it. I wanted to breathe in that smell for the last time, that typical smell of dampness, of clothes that never dry, of morning dew, rain and jungle.

My heart opened.

Chapter 18

From the fifth-floor window of my kitchen I noticed that the moon was already high despite the fact that it was only eight o'clock in the evening. As usual I was late in my preparations, but so were my guests and so everything became perfect. I filled the bread basket and carried it into the hall skating on the marble floor. The table was set, but something was still missing. I took some candles from the buffet and scattered them around to create some atmosphere. I walked over to the desk and opened the drawer to look for a lighter and saw the manuscript. At the time I could not imagine the value of its contents. The lightness with which I was dealing with the most difficult and significant passages of my life was perhaps the key to not being overwhelmed by events. The revelations contained in that bundle of papers were beyond my expectations. I read only the first few lines, the words began to dance across the pages, as my heart felt rumbling in my rib cage. At that very moment I had confirmation and absolute certainty, that if I decided to make that information public, my life and the lives of others would surely change.

May your soul be freed from the chains
of hypocrisy and give credit to one's essence.

Maribol Sole

THANKS

I thank my teachers, my husband, my students, friends
and all those who have helped and encouraged me to
share Tanshui.

Tanshui has accompanied me on a journey of inner
awakening, transformation and manifestation of what I
now consider to be an art and a guide to a happier and
more fulfilling lifestyle

Glossary

Ajna - Sixth chakra best known as the "third eye."

Bindu (Bindi) - This is a Sanskrit term meaning point. It is also a small devotional ornament affixed to the forehead.

Chakra - Literally means "wheel" or *vortex* in Sanskrit. It is a term used in Indian philosophy that views chakras as energy valves connected to the endocrine glands that link the physical body to the outside world.

Dhoti - This is a traditional garment worn by men in India. It is a rectangular piece of cloth that is tied around the waist and comes down to the feet, like a sarong.

Guru - Sanskrit term identifying a teacher or preceptor. It comes from the roots *gu* "darkness" and *ru* "vanish," thus taking on the meaning "*He who dispels the darkness.*"

Mala - The literal meaning of the word is circle. It can be a wreath or an Indian rosary, composed of a precise number of seeds (108) and is made of natural materials. Similar to the Western rosary wreath, it is used as a tool for mantra repetition or for the practice of other forms of spiritual exercises.

Mantra - A term derived from the combination of the two Sanskrit words *manas* (mind) and *trayati* (liberate).

Mantra can thus be thought of as a sound that can free the mind from thoughts.

Mudrā - Literally: "seal." It is a gesture that is used to achieve benefits on the physical-energetic level.

Namastè - Means "I bow to you," and is derived from the Sanskrit: *namas* bowing, reverently saluting and *you*, to you. However, a spiritual significance is associated with this word, so it can be more fully translated as *greeting (I bow to) the divine qualities in you.*

Panjabi - This is a traditional Indian garment; it is a wide, knee-length shirt and is worn by both men and women over comfortable pants.

Pranayama - The word Pranayama is formed from Prana (breath, life, energy, strength) and Ayama (length, control, expansion). Its meaning is therefore control and extension of the breath.

Prasad - Blessed food.

Sannyasi - Person who renounces worldly life to devote himself completely to spiritual contemplation.

Satguru - Its meaning is: "master of perfection" or also enlightened master; his task is to initiate the souls of disciples to lead them toward enlightenment.

Shaktipat - Consists of the Grace received from the Guru.

Sitar - Indian stringed instrument.

Tachat - Mat used for sitting on.

Tanki - ideograms, pictograms

Tuc tuc - Ape car used as a cab

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