

Anastasia Novykh

Sensei of Shambala. Book III.

All events and characters in this book are the author's invention. Any coincidences of characters' names and positions with that of real living or deceased people as well as to events that took place in one's life are purely accidental and absolutely unpremeditated.

Annotation.

Man longs for **Light**. **Pure Light** preserves the **Primordial** in itself, That, which man was created from. For he is the Emitting Light, proceeding from the **Source**. But man often perceives Reflected Light as Emitted one. Blinded by it, he thirsts for Truth, not understanding that it is merely a distortion of it. But only a true **Eye is able to behold** the essence!

This book was written based on the personal diary of a former high school senior girl reflecting events of summer, 1991.

Prologue

Darkness enveloped the Creature from all sides. Only an imparting voice and gleams of light made an illusion of its presence.

“Coming of darkness they wait for in fear,
Guessing the date of the ending of times,
But ‘tis in shadow that devil’s born near –
Of their thoughts, where God was confined.

When gates of dungeons are boarded cruel,
One, seeing the dark, forgets ‘bout the light.
Even his spirit in this disbelief duel,
Merging with dark, chooses ban as the right.

Millstones of thoughts grind all in an instant.
Grains of the wild are tuned into dust.
Meanwhile, the dark there paints perfect idols,
Eclipsing eternal sacrament with ‘new’ from the past.

But he, who with almighty soul, within –
Seeing the light, tears off cover of dark,
He in one faith will be blessed with the aeon
And will open the doors into the worlds unmarked.

By hand of God – inscribed was the secret,
But ‘twas concealed from the curious eye.
Thus only he, who heeds sounds of sacral,
Will get to know His great power divine.

Mysterious sign runs there through time,
That’s hastening its impetuous speed.
The judge’s on earth and he draws final line,

The last chance is given to men as a gift.

The soul's shivering, will in her sparkling,
The torch's lit from candle that knows not decay.
The one giving light, begotten in Freedom,
In destinies of the centuries pierces the rays."

* * *

Amazing is this world. Each of its moments is unpredictable, and each resolute step in it is a step towards the unknown as you don't know what follows after. You can dream, build plans for the future, but life will invariably make its amendments, whether you want it or not. It's as if you are taking part in a game with multiple tests. Pass all tests, and you'll get your dream. But the question is, whether the dream is worthy of all these ties and hardships. The question is: what you dreamt of?

Curiously enough, as though by some unknown law, the same trouble repeatedly happens to all people: if a person's dreams go around the level of existence, then, after going through all chain of trials towards the cherished goal, the realized dream does not afford the expected satisfaction for some reason. What's more, it becomes empty and useless in time. But the energies are expended, and the best years are gone. So, this person loses heart once more, and then directs all his energies at achieving a new goal of existence, while in essence he only does the same 'been there, done that' again. And such a hollow game goes on up to his death. At the end,

however, there's a sad result: lost everything he could, no vital forces left, and all around seems meaningless repetition of one and the same stupid blunders, only already made by other people. Eventually, there comes the old bony lady Death and like a croupier in a casino, with feigned smile, she remarks about your total loss: 'Sorry, little human, looks like it wasn't your day today'. But the most striking thing is that in this moment everyone thinks to himself that he is the only such loser of a kind. And he doesn't even understand, poor soul, that he is but one grain out of billions of the like, who, thanks to their stupid dreams, got caught in exactly the same way in the global system of deceit, advertising sign of which says: 'They lived like the rest and they died like the rest.'

But few do know that there are other ways in life round this all-devouring crater of existence. And their guide is spiritual goals. It doesn't mean that a road for them will be even and comfortable. Rather the contrary, continuous pits and bumps throughout your entire life, continuous tests and trials of your willingness to achieve the only cherished dream – to come to God as a mature creature. The way is hard. But if you concentrate on inner core of belief and harden it day after day, there happens a miracle: overcoming difficulties turns into fascinating stalking, problems turn into hazard warnings on your life track, unexpected meetings and events turn into guide signs of the right course. And it all turns out to be very simple! All what's required is not to be tempted by stupid dreams of existence and avoid turning into its wide roads, leading to a trap of the global deceit.

Curiously enough, but in respect of such a course of life too, as if by some unknown law, for people aspiring to the spiritual there happens one and the same story: with honor and dignity, going through years of their life, retaining love for God through twists and turns of existence, they find unknown divine power, soulful gratification, and inner peace. They fear not Life; nor they fear Death. For Life to them is but a temporary refuge for Soul; for Death to them is the Door to everlasting life, into the world of God. And the point is that spiritual people not only believe: they know about realities of the higher world. While those, who find comfort in thought about existence, being in the global system of deceit, are not even able to believe, for not only they cannot see true reality behind the shroud of existence, but they even cannot adequately hold their own lives. To each his own, though: what one chooses, that he gets.

* * *

We woke up around noon. The sun was already quite high in the sky. It was a clear day. The sea was calm. After yesterday's storm the shore looked certainly impressive. Surprisingly, the part of land, which yesterday's element fell upon with such phenomenal ferocity, was not just clean. In fact, it was refreshed in a way. The border of the renewed land laid along the winding line, that was drawn by the sea itself, consisting of seaweed, wreckage, and all kinds of rubbish of civilization ejected by the storm. It seemed that the sea mocked people by piling the land with waste of their own.

After all, the sea is able to stand up for itself, for its coastal vast. A single heavy gale – and such tidiness, a pure primordial cleanness!

Part of the land that did not suffer from water looked a sorry spectacle, including the place where our tent camp was. But this chaos was nothing compared to our impressions of the previous night's events. It's not enough that my organism, having lost its habitual sleep and wakeful regimen, was in utter run-down condition, like a car after an accident, in addition to that my thoughts went off-scale with emotions, replay yesterday's plot of demonstrations and stories of Sensei. At that, these impressions were so vivid against the background of general indisposition of my body that it seemed to have happened just now. It was as if there had been no those hours of sleep, separating us from the reality of Sensei's world that amazed us.

It was evident that I was not the only one being under power of impression of the last night's events, because the first thing the guys talked about after the 'morning' exercise were the events that took place the night before. Along with that play on words of various impressions we set to introduce proper order in the camp territory, after having a hurried dry rations meal. There was lots of work. But owing to concerted efforts under the guidance of Sensei, everything went swimmingly. The elder guys engaged in thorough fortification of the tents and grooming the cars. The others took part in garbage collection around the camp territory, washing and well-drying of their clothes, that suffered yesterday's gale. After we displayed make-things-hum

camphood activities, stretched lines between the tents, and hung our belongings, our camp started to look like a gypsy camp.

The group ‘hummed’ like a disturbed beehive. Here and there were heard conversations and discussions of what was seen and heard from Sensei last night. And since, when cleaning up the camp, I happened to be now at one group of guys, now at another, I was able to hear their impressions.

“My, can you believe what power a thought possesses!” Kostya reasoned while cleaning along with us a part of the beach littered by the gale.

“Yeah, Sensei did some top-class performance yesterday!” Andrew responded.

“You bet!” Ruslan nodded. “How did he... There we sat, then bang, and such a storm! I thought it was the end of the world! Soaked to skin.”

Andrew smiled.

“You’re such an egoist. As if you are the only one who got soaked, and all the rest chanced to be dry.”

“Um, that I meant generally speaking,” Ruslan hastened to put himself right.

“Ah, what of our wet clothes compared to such, to such...” Yura tried inspiredly to express his feelings, but was loss for words.

Kostya, tidying up his parcel, picked up a dry twig and tasted it. But immediately pulled a face and spat it.

“Ugh, how disgusting!” he threw it to the pile of litter and wrinkling his nose pronounced: “How only was Sensei able to make bitter wormwood sweet?”

Noticing his mimic, Andrew laughed and said merrily: “You should’ve tasted it when you were given it, instead of putting on an act.”

Kostya ignored the friend’s banter and in perplexity tried to come down to brass tacks.

“I don’t get it. May be it *seemed* to me that it was sweet?”

“Why, yeah!” Andrew voiced with irony. “And it seemed to me as well as it seemed to other guys. I’m sorry, but I’m yet able to tell pepper from sugar.”

“Yes, but how did he do that?!” Kostya could not calm down, evidently being in two minds between his disbelief and what he personally saw and even tasted.

“How, how?” Andrew mimicked his intonation. “What do you eat me for? There’s Sensei, go ask him.”

Andrew put another pile of litter away into the reed. When he returned, Kostya presented him with a new ‘genius conjecture.’

“May be it was a mass hypnosis?”

“Well, I reckon we could be hypnotized. But the sea? It doesn't care a spit, it’s sea, you know!” Andrew shattered his theory off-hand.

“Yeah, the sea can spit alright,” seeming to have heard only the last words, Ruslan echoed, while dragging the litter for the common heap.

The guys smiled, and Andrew cheerfully produced: “Come to think of it, we’re all very lucky to have met Sensei. Only one night, and we could see and get to know so many things, as we wouldn’t have been able see in our entire lives!”

“Well, suppose, we learnt not so much as we saw,” parried Kostya. “Personally, I still don’t get it, how he did that.”

“Well, a Philosopher, indeed! Your head is useful only for crushing the philosopher's stone,” Andrew chaffed him. “It’s all right, grow up, and you’ll get it.”

“It’s like *you* understood something,” Kostya made caustic remark in return.

“In theory – yes. I just need to master it in practice,” Andrew laughed.

“No way, practice cannot be trusted to Andrew yet,” Ruslan announced merrily. “He’s such a fella: let him start, and no one will get to stop 'em then.”

The guys burst into laughter. After finishing my work, I went to lend Tatyana a hand. She was busying herself with cleaning the garbage near the tents, that the elder guys, Eugene and Stas, were securing. As it turned out, conversation of the elder guys was in the same spirit. The difference was they talked quietly so as not to attract attention.

“... And don’t say, as soon as I recall that storm, it still gives me the creeps,” Eugene shared with Stas in embarrassment, drawing another cord of a tent. “How long did Sensei hold the cup with sea water in his hands? Only a minute?! And such a storm rose after! Honestly, I thought it will wash us all away. Even said goodbye mentally to my people.”

“You weren’t the only one to say goodbye,” Stas noticed.

“This is getting beyond the joke. It’s a serious power... You know, only now I’ve realized how serious is everything Sensei tells us about and tries to teach us. Do you imagine what responsibility it is to possess such knowledge?”

“Don’t say. If it falls into bad hands...”

“Hands are ok, anything but heads,” Eugene pronounced. “Head is the cause of all troubles. So, we ought to work with our own heads more seriously to clean the garbage out of it. Now a dirty thought would still get in once in a while.”

“Yes indeed, no matter how careful you are, sometimes it sneaks in, good-for-nothing.”

“That means we’ve got to go into it more thoroughly. Spiritual work is far more important than all our small-minded life.”

Eugene fell silent, driving a tent peg into sand. Then he looked at the sea and pronounced pensively: “I didn’t sleep today. That wave was before my eyes all the time. Man, if Sensei hadn’t stopped the sea at that time, nothing of this would have been here, can you imagine?”

“Exactly,” Stas nodded sadly. “This understanding just gives me creeps.”

“Haw,” Eugene gave a deep sigh and headed for another tent with Stas.

Carried away with cleaning, Tatyana and I unwittingly approached the cars where Sensei, Nicolai Andreevich, Volodya, and Victor were. All four were trying to bring Nicolai Andreevich’s Volga into a proper condition, tinkering with its motor.

“Andreich, I can't put my finger on how did you contrive to start it up last night?” Volodya said laughing.

To that Nicolai Andreevich answered: “If you want to survive you'd start up something else.”

Men laughed. When the laughter faded, Volodya uttered: “Well, we sure had a memorable night yesterday.”

“And above all, so many impressions!” Nicolai Andreevich agreed to him.

Sensei lit a cigarette. Meanwhile Victor, taking advantage of everyone's moment of respite, hastened to open his mind to Sensei.

“I haven't been able to sleep till morning. I wondered. How could that ever be possible that people, being near the Saint, at Agapitus himself, exchanged his Teaching so rashly for this everyday life,” Victor looked around contemptuously and pronounced with emotion: “for this clutter?! This is all temporary! It's instants! It's as good as changing a momentary satiety for an eternal hunger. No, this I don't understand... How on earth could people come down to such a baseness, to change the world of God for this illusion of existence?”

“Well, what would you want,” Sensei said with a shadow of a sad smile. “People are people. They question even the very existence of God, and you talk about Eternity. That's why they choose what they see, and not what they feel in their soul. They are people... At times they change their mind three times a day. And you talk about some global choice of theirs. The life of the masses is similar to a stream: wherever it flows, there they are carried away with the current...”

Suddenly loud shouts were heard on the beach. There, to common laughter of the guys, Eugene was being chased by Stas holding that particular Eugene's cup in his hand, which the guy had used to bring seawater the other day. The lad, pursuing his friend cried with laughter: "It's you favorite cup!"

To that, adroitly dodging him, Eugene yelled: "Take it away from me! I have an allergy to this cup. Away with it I said! Or I'll shove it into one place of yours and break the handle!"

Sensei smiled looking at this scene, put out the unfinished cigarette and got under the bonnet to sort out the motor. Other men hastily joined him. I tried to listen to their mutter, intending to hear continuation of the conversation. But only technical terms regarding possible malfunctions of the car reached my ears. Having realized there would be no sequel, my persona resolved to camphood activities.

A bit later all hands set out to preparing lunch. Our younger company – Andrew, Kostya, Slavik, Tatyana, and I – were appointed to peeling potatoes. Nicolai Andreevich and Sensei continued fiddling with the car. And the rest – Eugene, Stas, Victor, Yura, and Ruslan, led by our special squad soldier Volodya – went to gather some brushwood for campfire, at the same time trying to find inflatable boat that had been obviously carried away by the hurricane wind last night.

Five people for peeling potatoes is, of course, a funny affair. Those who did not succeed much due to absence of everyday practice were, naturally, reluctant to participate. But

on the other hand, you can't just lose face in front of your comrades. So, the compromise was found in humor.

Everything started with Kostya. It's not for nothing that his was nicknamed Philosopher. At first, he honestly and in good faith endeavored to take the peel off an unmanageable potato (incidentally, he himself chose the largest one). But as he took the third one, his enthusiasm exhausted rather quickly. Stubbornness changed for apathy, followed by scanning of the ugliest potatoes with fanciful processes. Suddenly inspiration condensed upon the Philosopher. Like a true master, he began to design entire images of those potatoes, though it was more like picturing in our fancy. Thus, there emerged Venus Tauride, a one-eyed pirate, who with additional Kostya's carving also became a one-legged stump; an Horror creature as a space alien. After which it came to a portrait of Andrew in old age. To that Andrew carved an approximate Kostya's physiognomy out of a potato, saying that it would definitely become so in the most near future if the latter would resume playing horse like that. But this excited Kostya even more, and, enthusiastically, he started finding 'portraits' of each one sitting around. It appeared that Andrew was lucky to have his sculptural image. Subsequent master portraits Kostya eloquently associated with our alleged former or future lives. He made efforts to select such uglies that the orator was nearly showered with rotten potatoes and peels. If it was not for Nicolai Andreevich passing by, Kostya would have made a correspondence to the image carved by Andrew for sure.

“My, my!” Nicolai Andreevich smiled ironically looking at potato peels lying around Kostya. “Cleaning, cleaning, and now littering again?”

“We’ll tidy up in a moment,” Tatyana replied for all.

“Ah, local engagements, I see,” psychotherapeut observed.

“No, it’s just preventive control,” Andrew responded with a smile.

“Preventive control,” Kostya mimicked grinning. “How only have you been able to find such smart words in your head?”

For that another good handful of peels from Andrew flew at him. Kostya attempted to avoid with laughter and declared addressing to Nicolai Andreevich: “I’m, like Nostradamus, revealed them their future straight from the shoulder. And they – treated a prophet with rotten potatoes!”

“It’s all right, Kostya,” Nicolai Andreevich cheered him up. “Nostradamus had harder times.”

“Alas, lot of persecution falls upon the Great!” Kostya declaimed.

“No need to envy the Great,” Andrew chaffed him. “We’ll pursue you as it is alright.”

Everyone laughed and returned to their chores. Soon the elder guys came. The inflatable boat, fortunately, was found. Though it was lacking two cushions, but it was all right. As for the brushwood, things were more complicated there. After the last night’s gale, not much had been able to get dry.

“With such a supply we won’t be able to cook even a soup,” Victor resumed looking at a sorry pile of dry brushwood.

“Gotta buy a primus stove, though,” Eugene uttered with humor, mimicking a character of a popular ‘Gentlemen of fortune’ movie. “The campfire appears to be quite lean.”

“Are there any whole potatoes left?” Victor asked glancing at a bucket of peeled potatoes.

“Yes, there are some,” I said looking in a parcel.

“Alright. Let’s bury them into the sand under fire. If something doesn’t cook until ready in the fire, at least that one will pan out.”

So was decided. Actually, we didn’t worry much about the meal. Our trip to the market the day before and resupply enabled us to do without hot food that Nicolai Andreevich had been persisting on, apparently being mindful of our health. We lit a campfire, preliminarily digging unpeeled potatoes in the sand, and attempted to cook a soup, already losing hope to make a second dish with such a supply of wood.

During this rather comical process of prolonged cooking when Kostya and Tatyana were on duty at our pottage, someone noticed a beautiful white yacht gracefully gliding across the sea along the coast not too far away from us. Everyone chucked their petty work and crowded on the beach, gazing at this snow-white miracle against the light blue of the sky and the navy of the sea. Only Sensei and Nicolai Andreevich were tinkering under the Volga’s bonnet with passion.

“It's lucky for some,” murmured Ruslan enviously. “People are yachting.”

“Who cramps your style?” Victor sempai asked. “An inflatable boat's over there, go sail.”

“Aha, but this's a boat, and that – that's a *yacht!*” Ruslan drawled, as if taking delight in the very word “yacht.”

“Yeah, I wouldn't mind sailing that baby too,” Eugene agreed to him suddenly.

“Beauty,” Stas nodded.

Folding his arms on the chest, Kostya did not fail to express his opinion too: “I haven't seen such a thing even on a TV.”

Looking in the direction with suspicion, Volodya voiced: “That's strange. I wonder where it came from to our neck of the woods?”

“I guess it's some new Russian patriot monkeys around,” Eugene responded satirically.

“A fine new Russian,” Volodya uttered. “From the yacht's appearance he's got to be at least an owner of an oil-refining company.”

“Well,” Victor sighed. “We won't ever live like. And if we do, then not for long. Alright, let's go. Had a look, and that'll do. Why cherish wishful thinking? Anyway the horizon and the sky will be clear again in ten minutes or so.”

But as soon as we were about to disperse at Victor's advice, the yacht suddenly stopped right in front of the camp. This again riveted our curious sight on the yacht. People on the vessel begin to bustle about. Apparently they lowered a lifeboat portside, as because in a few minutes a no less

beautiful boat heaved from behind the yacht. It was an unusual boat, with fretted sides and oars as if made in antique style. There were six people in it. One of them, dressed in white suit and wearing a snow-white hat, unlike others was standing, peering at the approaching shore. When the boat came up closer, we were able to observe its passengers more thoroughly.

At the fore of the boat, there sat a man dressed in black garment, his back turned to us. The man wore funny little thin pigtail on a half-bald head. He sat there like a mummy, without stirring, without turning, as if he couldn't care less about what was going on there on the shore. In the center of the boat there were four sailors-oarsmen all in full white dress with navy decoration. At the other end of the boat there stood that man in a white stylish suit, from all appearances, the owner of the yacht. His garment accentuated athletic built of his figure. The white hat was pulled over his eyes, concealing them in a mysterious shadow. His head was slightly tilted to side. His jacket was frivolously unbuttoned. His hands were dug in pockets. The man stood steadily in the boat, never caring a bit that he could easily fall overboard from accidental swinging.

We watched the scene, not knowing what was actually going on. Only Volodya, having sized up the situation adequately, pronounced: "There's something strange about it. Gotta call Sensei."

When Sensei and Nicolai Andreevich came by, the boat was already quite near the shore.

“Who could it be, Sensei?” Stas enquired voicing everyone’s question.

“Well, we are kind of guests, you know,” Sensei answered somewhat sadly and enigmatically, wiping soiled hands with some rag.

Unlike us, such a visit did not surprise Sensei one whit. And as it seemed to me, he treated this event as a trivial one, as if such luxurious yachts came by us every day.

“What d’you mean guests?” akimbo Eugene got on his hind legs.

“On a nature reserve’s territory?” Nicolai Andreevich specified the question.

“Well, kind of like that,” Sensei said, looking carefully now at the approaching lifeboat, now at the process of cleaning his hands.

“But this reserve is only a paper’s reserve! There, how many campers there were at the beginning of the spit.” Victor objected, who specialized in jurisprudence. “Who would ever need this strip of sand in these latter days? Who would guard it, spend money on this desert plot?”

“That’s right too,” Volodya concurred with him. “At any rate, even if this spit was purchased by some small Soviet chief, would he sail about on such an expensive yacht? No, this no inspection for sure.”

“Who knows,” Sensei shrugged his shoulders.

“I’m telling you, he’s a new Russian!” Eugene reminded his version again, looking closely at the man, standing in the lifeboat.

“What would he need in our wilderness place, among us, aborigines?” Kostya asked, surprised. “Had I had such a yacht, I’d have stopped only in eminent health resort.”

“Why, it’s such exoticism here with us!” Andrew smiled.

I looked around and thought: “That’s for sure, our exoticism was really impressive.” It’s not enough that everything around was a mess after the raging element, the entire camp was hung about with our warm sweaters and pants, which made it look like a refuge for the homeless.

“No, really, what do they need?” even Yura could not contain himself.

“What, what... They ran out of gasoline,” Eugene cracked a joke as usual. “Look, how well they row, haven't they got a good pair of lungs!?”

The guys laughed.

“That’s how it is with our generosity of soul in everything,” Nicolai Andreevich smiled. “Buying yachts, generously celebrating, and ending up in the morning with nothing to pay for gasoline.”

“That’s true,” Volodya nodded, laughing with the rest.

When the ship's boat came up, two sailors hopped into water and pulled it up towards the shore on the sand. The passengers got off.

Contrary to our expectations of the coming ‘negotiators’, the man in the white suit without beating about the bush, as they say, and without eminent introductions of his figure, headed our way first. He seemed to be in his forties. Average height, likable looks. His manly and at the same time charming cast of features could be called ideally regular. An

impeccably groomed elegant suit, apparently tailor-made, perfectly harmonized with good-looking tan of his face and hands. On the middle finger of his right hand there gleamed a massive golden finger-ring with an oblong red ruby, adorned with blue stones at its sides. Alongside his confidence and calmness, all appearance of the stranger radiated some indiscernible superiority. From a distance there came a breath of an exceptionally pleasant aroma, probably of his perfume.

To the left of him, at arm's length, there minced along, like a shadow, a short man in black Chinese kimono. His was definitely of an Orient origin, resembling rather a Chinese or a Mongol. Narrow eyes, broad forehead. Half of his head along with its top was clean-shaven, and this bald spot glared as if polished. The remaining at sides jet-black hair was plaited at the back of his head in a neat little thin pigtail. An affable smile was as if imprinted on his face, his eyes cold and showing no emotion. Unlike his boss, the man inaudibly moved with a slinky gait, stepping barefooted on hot sand.

Coming closer and catching sight of Sensei among us, the yacht's owner smiled broadly. He had a charming prepossessing smile. To our unspeakable amazement, this man approached Sensei and greeted him as an old acquaintance in that mysterious for us, melodious language that resembled signing of the birds. Sensei answered something back and shook him by the hand with a trademark grin. It seemed to me that Sensei was not very glad about this meeting. I thought it was, probably, due to not very good news that seemed to have been voiced in the language unintelligible for us. In any case, this awkward tension could

be sensed only at some intuitive level as both Sensei and that man spoke with each other smiling.

After exchanging a few unintelligible remarks in the bird language, suddenly the stranger addressed Sensei in the Russian language, and without the slightest accent at that.

“I see you are not alone as always? Can the youth be still interested in the East?” he uttered with a friendly smile, surveying our group with either a derisive, or piercing, or studying look.

“As you see,” Sensei answered.

The stranger smiled.

“That’s yesterday. It seems that the trendsetter nowadays in the West.”

“Well, every man to his taste.”

“Not that it’s essential..,” and making a pause the unwelcome guest added in a stage tone: “It went clean out of my head, any fashion slowly gets accustomed to in this country.”

“Exactly.”

The man looked at our group again, slightly letting his eyes linger on Tatyana and me.

“Well, introduce me to your friends.”

Sensei tittered and asked meaningfully: “And how should I introduce you?”

“Oh, you’re right,” nodded the man vividly, beaming another broad smile. “My title sounds very long now. So, let’s dispense with formalities, courage, and long preface. As they say, Brevity is the soul of Wit...”

And right off the bat he offered me his hand and introduced himself: “Ariman. Or you can simply call me Arik!”

In my fright I even recoiled.

“Nastya,” mumbled I in a hoarse unnatural voice, slipping up at a push.

But then a quite comical situation took place. From habit I started to shake his hand firmly, at the same time trying to repress quiver in my body that came from fear. Meanwhile, the man attempted to put my hand to his lips and kiss it. But apparently such awkwardness perplexed him. Finally, he managed to fix my hand jerking in a convulsive handshake and press it against his lips. A display of such gallant manners completely put me off my stride of habitualness. I felt not only my cheeks flushing, but even the tips of my ears blushed. My persona promptly dropped my eyes and, ashamed of my own manners, wished to sink into the ground, or rather the sand.

As with Tatyana, he managed to do everything much easier and more graceful. Evidently, observing my unsuccessful ‘handshake,’ she was able to prepare to such salutation. But when the man passed on to greeting men, suddenly our indefatigable wisecracker Eugene was the first to offer his hand, being original as always. The guy dropped a curtsey and, like a woman of reputation, held out his hand as though for a kiss, apparently hinting the ladies’ part how it should be done. At that he inserted in a fine voice: “Eugene,” although, immediately straightening up and changing position

of his arm for a handshake, he added in a mannish voice: “But you can call me simply Gene.”

Such a comical behavior set everyone laughing loud, including Sensei and Ariman. Even the Chinese man for the first time ever permitted himself a frank smile. Eugene’s prank somewhat defused the tension of an uncomfortable situation of initial constraint.

When Ariman got to know everyone, Eugene pronounced in a businesslike tone, motioning to the sumptuous yacht: “That’s quite a boat.”

“I like her too,” Ariman smiled and surveying the coastal strip said: “I see you’ve had a nice gale here.”

“Yes, brought dirt of sorts,” Sensei nodded.

“Been cleaning up half a day,” Victor standing by, engaged in conversation.

“Why, haven’t you caught yesterday’s storm?” Nicolai Andreevich asked in surprise.

“Yesterday’s?” Ariman repeated. He glanced at Sensei in some underhand way and replied: “No, I haven’t. I was far from this place.”

“A pity,” Eugene voiced a sympathetic phrase all of a sudden. “It’d be fascinating to see if she were able to survive such elements.”

Ariman grinned and proudly pronounced: “As far as I remember she survived even Atlantic storms, not just some ...” he intended to say some word, but evidently changed his mind and uttered, motioning to the sea: “tempest in this pool.”

“H'm, a sound old tub,” Eugene shook his head appraisingly.

That’s when I sensed a nasty smell of burning spreading through the air. The others seemed to have noticed it too, but, probably, did not determine its source straight away, and, with their looks showing ‘culture’, kept taking paying no attention to the queer odors. At last Ariman couldn’t hold it any longer and muttered: “Hey, guys, I smell something’s burning, isn’t it?”

“Soup!!!” Tatyana recollected suddenly, and along with Kostya she ran for our would-be pottage.

In the meantime, Eugene make it out like nothing had happened and, with important look, in a voice of a hospitable host declared: “Care to dine with us, good sir?”

Some of us could not contain ourselves and burst out laughing, realizing that our lunch was a complete failure. Ariman appreciated his joke too and answered: “I’m deeply obliged. But I have a counter-offer for you. I invite you to share my noon meal. I’d be pleased if you did me such honor by your presence.”

“Oh, that we ever always welcome, with the utmost pleasure,” Eugene answered with animation for everyone and endeavored to pour out his thanks in a similar grandiloquent manner: “We’d be delighted to do you such honor. As for us it’s also an honor to do you an honor by our honor in sharing your noon meal by our collective.”

Such pun set everyone laughing loud again. In the meantime, Eugene, to the boot of all that, with a stately air, as he could, make a bow before the ‘dear guests’. Laughing with

others for a while Ariman held up his hands: “Well, can one resist an ardent speech of such a born orator?! I’m glad you’ve accepted my offer with such dignity.”

Everyone laughed again, taking it as another joke. Meanwhile, Ariman gave a quick look to the Chinese and said quietly: “Veliar, organize.”

Upon hearing the name of the Chinese, I was somewhat surprised. For it did not match his image completely. If he were some Shing Hu, Chiang Shi it would be all right more or less. But Veliar – it was too much for such a reserved and sulky person as he was.

On receiving the task, the Chinese bowed to Ariman respectfully and hastily retreated towards the lifeboat. While he was giving orders to the sailors awaiting there, Victor asked Ariman: “Is your friend keen on orient martial arts too, judging by calluses on his hands?”

“Yes, he’s a good master,” Ariman remarked proudly.

“What style does he perform in?” queried Victor inquisitively.

“Oh, a little bit of this and that,” Ariman replied evasively and inquired with animation: “Why, is there a mood for limbering up?”

“It’s possible,” Victor replied modestly, shrugging his shoulders.

“Yes, yes, there is!” Eugene responded cheerfully, hearing their conversation. “Mood’s present in multiple quantities!”

“Well, if there is, then no problem,” Ariman smiled.

I looked in the direction where the lifeboat was. To my amazement, after getting the arrangements from Veliar, the sailors took a detachable engine out of the boat, and fixing it to the stern, quickly cast off from the shore. The Chinese hastily made his way back as a faithful dog returns to its master. Ariman started explaining something to him in a foreign language.

“Oh?!” Eugene said in surprise and asked Sensei quietly: “In what’s he mumbling there?”

“It’s Wu – one of Chinese dialects,” replied he.

“A-a-ah,” drawled the guy as if he knew it, but had forgotten.

“What’s he saying?” queried Volodya who was standing near.

But as soon Sensei was about to answer him, Ariman turned to the collective and made a polite excuse: “I’m sorry. He doesn’t understand all words in Russian. I had to explain the matter in his native tongue... Well, let’s warm up?”

“What? Right now?” Eugene mouthed in amazement.

“Of course, why tarry? Veliar is burning with desire too,” Ariman replied with a smile and either in jest or in earnest added: “While the lunch is being prepared, we’ll be able to decide the winner.”

This idea was actively supported by the guys as it wasn’t their habit to neglect an opportunity to spar once in a while, especially with an unknown partner. We walked away from our camp a little. The guys began to warm up. Seeming to have the most burning desire to participate in the battle, Eugene came up to Sensei and Ariman, who were aside

conversing about something. Examining calluses on his fist that was about the size of Veliar's head, he asked Ariman: "Um, is it ok, if I bump him off accidentally?"

And with a crooked smile the guy motioned his head in Veliar's direction. Indeed, against the background of Eugene's stalwart-built, the Chinese looked like a Lilliputian.

Ariman grinned and nodded approvingly: "Go ahead, there're still lots of them in China."

Veliar jogged to and fro in anticipation of the first rival, jolting his hands a little, as if relaxing them. He seemed to have sensed something, while Eugene was inquiring Ariman about his persona, as when the satisfied guy resumed stretching, Veliar gave him an unkind mocking eye.

After the warm up, the guys grouped around an improvised sand ring. Burning with desire, Eugene was the first one to come out. A mischievous twinkle could be seen in the eyes of Veliar as if the Chinese was glad to see exactly Eugene as his sparring partner. After making conventional ritual bows, on Ariman's clap the combat began.

Eugene appeared to be so sure of his victory that he decided to deal shortly with the Chinese. Facing him, like a bear against a nimble polecat, he tried to grab him with one hand, probably, in order to bump him off simply like a fly with another one. But the man knew better. As soon as the guy had a chance to catch his agile opponent on the kimono on his chest, Veliar adroitly pulled his hand to him and downwards, threw Eugene as if he was as light as feather and in such a way that he made a full somersault in the air. People let out a whoop of surprise almost all together. Eugene fell

down, immediately made a quick roll thanks to worked out technique and sprang to his feet. But while his body acted automatically, he, judging by his bewildered look, could not believe that some little Chinese fellow was able to overturn his pretentious Greatness.

This circumstance only stirred Eugene up still more. He spread his arms wide apart, as if holding a fishing net and, making zigzag rushes on half-bent legs, started to approach Veliar. The latter made several withdrawals, as though he was indeed afraid of Eugene's trap. But then, making a swift bounce, the Chinese jumped, imitating while in flight a number of telling blows in the head, and immediately after landing he withdrew aside to a safe distance. His kicks were so close to mark that Eugene, who had not bargained for such impudence, was taken aback for a moment, losing precious instants of combat. Meanwhile, wasting no time, the Chinese leapt towards him again and performed a mighty roundhouse back heel, and so unnaturally powerful for his short stature, that Eugene instantly fell on his back, throwing his feet over head. Taking advantage of such a position of his obstinate opponent, Veliar playfully slapped Eugene's seat of honor. To a chuckle of the crowd, Eugene sprang up as if scalded, rubbing the certain part of his body on the go. Obviously this disgraceful slap was worse than a slap in the face for him. Judging by his scowled look, he quit deceiving himself with foolish dreams of a walkover and got ready for a serious sparring.

In the next blow Eugene tried to put all his might, but Veliar promptly changed his technique for aikido and using

the opponent's force sent him flying, in conclusion adding a kick in his rear end for edification purposes. That's when people wouldn't hold their laughter any longer. In the meantime, Eugene rushed for another attack, raising his leg for a powerful "Mawashi" in the head. But Veliar went to squat quickly and knocked him with another back heel. The guy tumbled on his back again. But in addition to all that Veliar imitated a kick in the groin. And so naturally at that, that a sympathetic moan "O-o-ouch!" could be heard among the man's part of the audience.

It was probably the last straw to break the camel's back for Eugene. Leaping to his feet, he carried out a whole series of blows. But no matter how hard he tried, pushing himself to the limit, his arms and legs only cut through air, as the Chinese, who knows how, evaded blows literally by a shave's distance from Eugene's crushing fists. Above all, despite lightning speed of his opponent's performance, Veliar had time not only to avoid strokes, but to strike back efficiently. In a phrase, it became clear to everyone that had it been a real fight, Eugene wouldn't have had a ghost of a chance. However, Eugene was bursting into action over and over again, disregarding his obvious loss. Ariman, probably, taking compassion on him, clapped his hands once, thus discontinuing the fight. Eugene was so upset about what had happened that, his head dropped with shame, he walked our way even ignoring ritual bows. Veliar, on the other hand, absolutely without any malice, followed him with a polite bow, and made a bow to Ariman as if he were the most

magnanimous and all-forgiving being in the whole wide world.

After such a combat our fighters became tense. The Chinese man was indeed a virtuoso in the use of his body as well of the holds. His technique was not similar to the one Sensei taught us.

Stas and Victor volunteered to go second, two against one. But this circumstance only excited Veliar and added a zest to this battle still more. After making ritual bows, the guys positioned themselves against the Chinese at an angle of about 90 degrees. The latter stood sideways, keeping both opponents within eyeshot. The fight began on a clap. Victor was the first to attack Veliar, striking a straight “tsuki”. Making a fast approach, in cold blood, Veliar intercepted the attack right at the moment when Victor applied energy to a blow and already could not veer its course. In addition to that the Chinese man not only intercepted the attack, he redirected it at Stas, who had just run up. Our fighters suddenly came into collision and tumbled down together, inevitably obeying the laws of physics. Meanwhile, Veliar stepped back complacently, not even trying to strike subsequent blows at them. He just mockingly contemplated their attempts of speedy unlocking, like the rest of the laughing audience, though. The guys stood up and endeavored a simultaneous cross-attack on Veliar. The latter swiftly got into defense, jumping aside. And wasting no time, he immediately made a fierce counterattack, with some incomprehensible abrupt cries, which – either because of their loudness or word combination – created unpleasant sound and seemed to deafen

even the spectators, evoking not only fright, but also some very disagreeable feelings around stomach. Obviously, our guys did not expect such audio support during the attack, though, as well as the audience, frightened with these shouts. This told upon Veliar's attack the following instant, as our guys suddenly found themselves lying one on another again. This time the audience was in no mood for laughter, and nor were our fighters.

While, his arms crossed behind him victoriously, Veliar was observing his opponents recovering their feet, Stas and Victor seemed to have exchanged a few words as when they took combat stance, their fighting tactics changed completely and became more serious and professional. Veliar went into defensive action at first. But after taking some severe blows in torso and head, he instantly revised his technique. The Chinese took some unordinary stance, crouching very low to the ground. And from this position he started counterattacking aggressively and swiftly. His body moved so elastically, smoothly, and at the same time at lightning speed, as if he was no human, but some dark whirlwind. It was as if he was doing everything without a pause to take a breath. In each of his rigorous counterattacks the Chinese imitated several blows in lethally critical areas, including eyes, larynx, groin, heart, and other ones. It could give the impression that he simply gambled with their lives.

Despite not a bad training of the guys, no matter how much effort they put into it, they still considerably lost to Veliar both in technique and in tactics of performing the combat. The struggle was so tough and aggressive, so close

to real combat conditions that even the air seemed to electrify because of such tension. As for me, I was on pins and needles all the time, feeling keenly about the guys. Veliar, as a rule, used illegal blows that, as if mocking his opponents, he simply did not bring to an end. It was very clear to everyone that his one careless movement would mean a guaranteed fatal outcome to his rivals. Evidently our fighters knew it as well as in contrast to Veliar they had a hard time holding the fort.

The spectators were electrified: some in feeling anxious about their friends, some in genuine admiration of such a fight.

“Look, such a technique?!” Andrew gave Kostya a nudge at his side. Then, addressing to Sensei and keeping his eyes fixed on Veliar, he added: “Cool! Sensei, what art is it?”

“This is no art,” Sensei said with disgust, being in an unnatural tension, tenaciously keeping an eye on our guys, who attempted to defend themselves against aggressive attacks of the Chinese. “It’s a school of ‘assassins’. Ninjutsu style.”

“It’s a very strong school!” Andrew muttered admiringly, captivated by the spectacular fight.

“It’s a very lowdown school,” Sensei retorted.

“Oh, why so categorically? Each has priorities of his own,” Ariman joined in the conversation, overhearing Sensei’s unflattering commentaries. “Besides, we are visiting not only your amicable country, but also quite dangerous places all around the world,” he said, as if justifying Veliar’s actions. And evidently in order to relieve the tension of the situation for good, suddenly he nominated himself for

sparring partner. “If this style irritates Sensei so much, then I can personally demonstrate the styles you are more accustomed to. Let Veliar rest for a while.”

Ariman clapped his hands and stopped the sparring. Probably, it was out of regard for Sensei, that he declared a ‘draw,’ although it was clear who had won. The fighters made ritual bows. Veliar headed towards Ariman, who gave him a sign. And our guys, panting, sweaty, covered with scratches, walked toward us, rubbing their bruises on the way. Volodya and Eugene started patting them on shoulders encouragingly. A quiet discussion of the fight began among the elder guys. Notably, having seen the mastery of Veliar from outside, Eugene did not look as depressed after his loss any more. On the contrary, he cheered up somewhat, probably, after the acknowledgement that he undertook to overcome such a strong opponent alone, as if saying, if I had lost, I had gained experience, at any rate.

In the meantime, without a shadow of tiredness and even without a sign of short-windedness, Veliar stood by Ariman as a thoughtful servant, accepting his hat, jacket, and the necktie that Ariman took off getting ready for sparring. With his immutable smile, the Chinese radiated such tranquility that it might seem he’d gotten out not from a tough sparring, but from a profound contemplative meditation. Meanwhile, observing rapt discussion among our guys with a hardly perceptible grin, Ariman rolled up the sleeves of his fine snow-white shirt. And even neglecting to take his watch and his big golden finger-ring with a red ruby, which judging by their look were very expensive, he got into the ring and

invited all-comers, without limitation of quantity, to participate in this sparring.

Admittedly, at first he fairly confused our guys with his snow-white clean appearance. As even Veliar, who fought well, could not avoid turnovers and topsy-turvies on the sand. But he wore a black kimono: shake it off, and marks of falls become not so noticeable. But there? Ariman simply puzzled us. But while the elder guys kept silent, not knowing what to expect from Ariman after Veliar's demonstration of his techniques, the junior guys, frankly speaking, were astonished.

“Maybe it's better to take the watch off?” Ruslan advised, motioning to Ariman's luxurious Rolex. “What if they break accidentally?”

The man smiled ironically, looking at his watch and uttered: “Oh, it's nothing! Come to think of it... you suggested a curious idea. Let's complicate the task for me. The first attacker able to strike me a blow – any one at that so long as it reaches the target – will receive this watch as a gift. And the one who strikes me down, will get this yacht and all her little boats into the bargain,” Ariman waved his hand nonchalantly towards his posh vessel.

A whoop of amazement could be heard from our group.

“Deal!” Ruslan, Kostya, and Andrew exclaimed excitedly kind of in chorus.

The boys darted out into the ring, casting greedy glances at the attractive watch.

Seeing that the elder guys somewhat hesitated about going in, Ariman said: “I promise you only clean fighting and

using only the styles known to you. No restricted blows will be on my behalf. Let's do classics! You on the other hand may attack me at will, as you desire.”

“There's something I don't like about it,” Victor uttered cautiously to Volodya. “Looks like there's some sort of trick.”

“We'll check it out,” Volodya said quietly in a bass voice. “In any case, we could do with some extra experience.”

The elder guys gathered, conversed about something in whispers and got into the ring. Notably, Victor and Stas, who had just been participating in the fight, came out too.

“It's not prohibited to act against you as a group, is it?” Volodya inquired.

“And in any composition and any combination at that,” Ariman emphasized with contented look.

Eugene glanced at the snow-white yacht, spat out heartily on the sand and pronounced warningly: “That's it, Ariman! From here you'll return home by foot.”

“With pleasure,” replied he with a smile.

The elder guys became alerted at such an Olympic composure of their opponent. The younger guys, on the other hand, became relaxed, probably assuming that while Ariman is distracted by attacks of professionals, they will surely be able to strike that cherished blow in the value of a Rolex. Nine of our guys came out into the ring, so Tatyana and I, Sensei, Nicolai Andreevich, and Veliar stayed behind as spectators.

The guys surrounded Ariman in a circle. Stas and Victor placed themselves in the front, Volodya and Eugene at sides. Eugene even stood a little behind so as not to get in the view of his opponent. And the rest: Ruslan, Andrew, Kostya, Slavik, and Yura situated themselves behind Ariman, probably, considering it to be the most advantageous position for achieving their goals. After the ritual bows were made, the fight began on Sensei's clap. Virtually simultaneously, Volodya, Stas, and Victor began to near Ariman in light imperceptible steps, making feints at their opponent. But Ariman stood calmly, looking somewhere through them, as if gazing nowhere. As I understood, by those abrupt feints the guys tried to detract the opponent's attention on themselves, irritating his peripheral vision. Seizing an opportunity, they advanced into a real attack. Stas aimed his *Mae-tobi-geri* at head, Volodya and Victor attempted strikes at Ariman's torso. At the same time, Eugene, who had remained motionless till then, rushed under Ariman's feet from behind. Theoretically, they employed infallible tactics, as under such pressure Ariman would definitely step back while defending and, naturally, would stumble over Eugene, who rushed under his feet; and the yacht would be guaranteed for the guys. However, contrary to all expectations, Ariman made an effortless backflip. Landing behind Eugene, immediately, right when his feet touched the sand, Ariman made a swift step back and right, giving way for a throng of boys, who darted into battle along with the elder guys. As a result of such a swift and sudden movement of Ariman the elder guys, stumbling over the massive Eugene's body, piled upon him,

and on top of them fell those, who attempted to strike Ariman from behind and continued attacking inertially. Thus, there came about a whole pile of stirring bodies. Everything happened virtually in a second. Slavik lagged behind the attackers and was left practically alone against Ariman's back. However, he kept his head and made an attempt to strike him from behind. But Ariman slightly turned around, caught the guy's hand and turned him round in such a way that he touched down on all fours. And giving him no chances to recollect himself, Ariman picked him up by a collar of his T-shirt and a belt of his shorts and threw him into the common pile. Observing such ridiculous inadvertence of the guys, Sensei and Nicolai Andreevich, simply burst out into loud laughter, infecting us with their laugh too. Even Veliar afforded a generous smile, watching the occasion with pride.

The guys began scrambling out of this shameful heap. The last, spitting the sand, battered all over, there raised Eugene. If you could have seen his face in that moment. It bore a lot of resemblance with a sand mask of some aborigine, with two chinks instead of eyes. After standing up the guy did not shake it off for some reason, but started seeking out the one who ironed him to the sand like that. But apparently having realized that there was no way to find the one guilty, as the whole warring party took part in being the press, Eugene attempted to freshen up himself in a jiffy. He shook the sand off his face, trying to relieve his head and hair of that little squeaky soil, which made his hairstyle look like Mohawk. And turning his militant look at Ariman, who was

barely stifling his laughter, he thundered like an Army trumpet, putting all his offence into words.

“Now, that’s it! The yacht will be ours for sure!”

And the guy dashed into battle. The others followed in disorder. But Ariman, like a toreador, gracefully dodged the attackers, while demonstrating the classics of martial arts. He acted very quickly, virtually imperceptibly, without striking blows, using only graceful aikido style throws. That gave an impression that the guys simply flipped softly on their own, when getting close to him. Ariman performed all this in such an easy, unconstrained, and elegant way that it indeed produced a fascinating rapture.

As soon as it became clear to our fighters that a spontaneous assault is useless, they reorganized again under guidance of the elder guys and endeavored an attack already in an organized way. The guys surrounded Ariman in three semi-circles in staggered order. They stood in such a way that there were strong fighters in every row. The first four included Volodya and Victor at the sides, the second row consisted of three, Eugene taking the middle, and in the last pair there was Stas. In this formation they started approaching Ariman, pushing him to the sea. When the strip of dry sand ended, Ariman stopped. And the show began! Andrew and Ruslan, being in the first row, were the first to attempt an attack. As soon as Ariman busied himself with them, Eugene gathered speed and with a battle cry “Hi-yah!” he leaped in a kick *Yoko-tobi-geri*. He flew beautifully indeed, just like in a movie. However, Ariman casting away another opponent, had time not only to avoid Eugene’s kick

easily, but he also gave Eugene a slap at the guy's fanny with the back of his right hand, exactly with the finger-ring. It caused Eugene to alter his "Hi-yah!" into a shrill "Hi-eina!" and overshooting Ariman, he crashed into the water. He got up wet through, frowning and puzzled, intensively rubbing his seat of honor that had suffered in the bright cause. Eugene began to walk out of water slowly, getting round the zone of action, where the guys flipped over and over again around Ariman. The guy was lame in the right leg. When he limped up to us, continuing rubbing his hurt back, one could see tears welled up in his eyes. Obviously, he was hurt badly. He held his own, however, keeping his feelings within.

When the guy came by, Nicolai Andreevich asked jokingly: "Why, Eugene, have you given up?"

"Me?! Never in all my born days! I've just thought... Why should I need this yacht, anyway, all the more in the city?"

We laughed to such a decision of the guy, who, after Ariman's slap, changed his mind so hurriedly. Following Eugene, after having a nice bit of rolling around and sand-eating, the guys began to break off the fight one after another. Their bygone enthusiasm dried up quickly, the more especially as Ariman, who had been dispatching the guys without effort, looked quite fresh and full of pep, as if he had just come out into the ring. Meanwhile, it was too much for our drop-out failed fighters even to rise from the sand after those aeriels. As is known by common rule, don't kick a man when he's down. That's why nobody aspired to stand up. Silently, they only sympathized with their comrades, who

persistently kept attacking Ariman. The fewer the fighters were, the more demonstrative and beautiful were Ariman's pitches to wear them out. His movements, speed, and technique matched those of Sensei. At long last, only Volodya kept on.

Walking around his opponent, Ariman cheerfully chaffed him: "Do you really want to win that watch or yacht that much?"

"What good will they do to me? I just feel bad for my state."

Ariman grinned.

"So, that means you don't give up?"

"Russians never give up," Volodya said in bass.

Ariman sighed and uttered with a smile: "Oh, those Russians to me! Alright then..."

Volodya attempted a fierce attack. It seemed he threw his only remaining energy into it. Cutting whistle out of air, he started swaying his arms and legs. If only a single blow had reached its target, Ariman wouldn't have liked it one bit. But, as they say, fate decreed otherwise. Ariman dodged the strikes surprisingly easily and playfully repelled his attack. Then, he improved the occasion by throwing Volodya up in such a way that the latter somersaulted several times in the air and took a swift flyer, risking to break his neck. But Ariman aptly spotted for him. Owing to it Volodya landed on the sand softly and tenderly, without any traumatic consequences. It wasn't enough that Ariman helped him to touch down safely, he squatted next to him and inquired: "Well, how's that?"

Volodya, staggering slightly, assumed a sitting position out of the recumbent one, closed his eyes tight and shook his head: “Now that’s enough alright!”

“Well, enough is enough,” replied Ariman merrily.

He clapped him on the shoulder in a friendly way. Apparently, out of politeness, considering the condition of his last opponent, he stood up and made a ritual bow to him and to Sensei.

Our excited audience gave a storm of applause at the scene. By his mastery, courtliness, lack of malice, and sparing technique Ariman simply won the hearts of the young fighters. A heated discussion commenced, during which the guys began to set themselves to rights.

“Fantastic!” out “activists” kept crying contentedly. “Wouldn't it be great if we learnt to perform like that? Ariman didn't even soil his shirt. Such mastery!”

The hero of the occasion put on his tie, jacket, and hat unhurriedly, even though the heat was sweltering.

“Great! Your technique is the same as Sensei's,” Stas observed, addressing to Ariman.

“Well... We had one Teacher, you know.”

This notion of Ariman aroused genuine interest among the whole group, as it was the first time we heard something about Sensei's Teacher. The elder guys exchanged glances. Meanwhile, Victor asked Sensei: “Sensei, would you by chance wish to spar with Ariman?”

Sensei smiled, looking at Ariman.

“I would and for a long time. But no matter how many times proposed him, he just wouldn't accept.”

Everyone looked at Ariman in a mute amazement.

“No way,” he replied with a smile, straightening his tie, “gramercy. It’s an honor for me, of course, but... to each his own in this world.” And, evidently, so as not to develop this topic further, he said hastily: “Well, as the Germans say, you can postpone a war but never a lunch. I see that everything’s already set. Ladies and gentlemen, I kindly ask you to dine with me.”

Everyone turned around with wonder following Ariman’s welcoming gesture. We completely forgot about the lunch with all the excitement. I frankly considered Ariman’s return offer as a joke to Eugene’s clownery. Even if my mind suggested a possibility of realizing this idea, it would produce an imaginary picture of some table with snack sandwiches, sausages, soft drinks, and fruits at most, brought over from the yacht. That’s, so to say, the furniture of my impressions, picked up from the movies about thrifty rich folks. But what we saw just took us aback, for it surpassed any of our expectations.

Not far from our camp there emerged an entire comfortable installation in the form of a huge stretched marquee of pink silk, set right on the shore. The top of the marquee was silvery lustrous, as if covered with some thin foil. Behind the translucent silk there could be seen a big white table, covered with colorful dishes. We did not believe our eyes. Our breath took a walk with such a beauty. The only person among our group, who was not surprised at this decoration, was Sensei. He simply sighed, looking at the

marquee, and said to Ariman with a smile: “Well, you’re always in your usual style.”

The man smiled contentedly at the impression produced on the company and answered Sensei with laughter: “I can’t help it. It’s my habit.”

“This all is, of course, splendid, thank you, but... You picked the right time to arrive. It’s as if you knew it’s my fasting day today,” Sensei said half in jest.

“Really? Oh, that’s a pity,” Ariman uttered, keeping his smile. And slightly raising his hands in a give-up motion he added: “Knowing you, I don’t even insist. But at least stay at the meal for a while, let the guys taste my treats. I bet they’ve never tasted those things in their lives yet!”

“That’s for sure!” Sensei smiled ironically and, shrugging his shoulders, he uttered: “It isn’t hard for me, I’ll stay... And they are already mature and have the right to decide for themselves.”

Ariman smiled contentedly once again. Letting a glance at our amazed company, listening to the talk, he spoke in a quick and, as it seemed to me, deliberately loud manner: “Don’t worry, I’ve considered everything, there will be no alcoholic beverages there.” Addressing the guys, either in jest or seriously, he uttered: “Honestly speaking, I’m glad that I’ve finally chanced upon a non-drinking company. I’m so tired of all those endless presentations, fourchettes, dinner parties, and business meals. You can’t imagine how sickening it is to see all those moneybags drinking till beastly drunk, all those carpet elite dying of boredom. Alexander

Sergeevich Pushkin said well regarding this in the seventh chapter of 'Eugene Onegin':

'But all in the drawing room await
Talk that is vulgar, stale and flat.
All is so pale and indifferent,
That even the slander is drear and spent;
In dry and fruitless interchange
Questions, news, rumors seem to range
But stir not a thought through the whole day,
Not even by chance or accident.
The languid mind is never wakened,
Or emotions roused by a joke half meant.
And even amusing idiocy
You will never meet in "Society".'

"Haw, those centuries or this one – nothing has changed in this environment... So, dining with your company, guys, believe it or not, is an honor and a big pleasure for me."

Ariman, what they call it, zinged us with his remark. I even felt for this man in a sense, so satiated with high society that he had a longing for engaging in common life. But at the very moment of our fascination for Ariman's words, Eugene produced another howler. He nodded his head in a dignified way and spake with emotion, rubbing his hands in anticipation: "Why not dine? Eating, especially at somebody's expense, is always a pleasure."

Everyone, including Sensei and Ariman, burst our laughing again.

Suddenly, we heard a beautiful, invigorate music, coming from the yacht. The cantilena was played by fiddles. Like a mild, playful light breeze it resounded around the entire coast.

“Oh?! Mozart, ‘Little Night Music’,” Sensei uttered with a smile and looked askance at Ariman.

Ariman made a helpless gesture and, as if justifying himself, said: “It’s been two hundred years already, but it always sounds like for the first time.”

We headed towards the shining marquee walking past our tents. Compared to this aerial chic installation, our camp, with all those sweaters and trousers hung for drying and Kostya’s attributes of civilization, looked like a “tramp refuge.” The shame was overwhelming, and, probably, it was not only with me. The other guys, seemed to feel somewhat embarrassed, gazed now at the ground, now ahead, avoiding the sight of our beggary, squalid camp. The contrast was surely striking.

Overcoming the minute of shame, we came up to – what Kostya managed to name it – the “alien construction”. Two sailors-stewards stood near the entrance, each holding a big jug in one hand; a towel and aromatic liquid soap in the other hand. So, each one could do a pleasant ablution and dry their hands on a fluffy snow-white towel.

It should be noted that it was quite hot outside, in fact, it was the heat of the sun. But as soon as we entered the marquee, a pleasant cool fanned our faces. Apparently, there was a noiseless air-conditioner working somewhere in the marquee. In the middle there stood a long square table, covered with snow-white tablecloth. As it turned out later, it

was made of several plastic knockdown tables. It was surrounded with figured arm-chairs of ivory color, made of the same material as the table. Even the sand was covered with some curious transparent plates, probably knockdown as well, which created a peculiar fancy floor. Not far from the big table there was a small supplementary cupboard-table, which, as it turned out later, served as a mini-fridge.

Both the big and the small tables were covered with dainty viands. We didn't know where to look first at such an abundance of dishes. That was an excellent spread! Meat dishes, fish, cut vegetables, salads with sea inhabitants, canapés, several types of caviar. Not only black and red caviar, that recently appeared in shops at a fabulous (for us) price. There also was dark-grey, wine red, orange with red gleams, and even quite an unusual – grey caviar in a gold jar. In the form of a truncated pyramid, there was an entire pile of huge red lobsters in the middle, decorated with rich, fresh greenery and figured lemon slices that wrapped black or green halves of olives. Besides, not only this dish, but everything else was just flawless in terms of decoration: from puffy flowers to entire paintings of nature, fanciful ornaments of vegetables, fruits, greenery, and colored sauces, created by skilful fantasy of the cook. It all looked so appetizing that the sight of this table covered with viands made one's mouth involuntarily watering.

A whisper of admiration ran through our company: “Oh my!”, “I haven't seen anything like that even in my sweetest dream”, “Cool!”. Unlike others, Eugene, who despite being amazed at table appointments and diversity of food, remained

quite impassive. Looking at such abundance of caviar, he clicked his tongue in a businesslike manner.

“Yes, there’s all, but I see no overseas aubergine one,” and mimicking priest-like voice, he pronounced with sympathy: “Impoverished are folks on the top, oh, so impoverished...”

Veliar, who evidently took his words in earnest, cast an inquiring glance at Ariman, ready to rush to fulfill the guest’s wish. But Ariman stopped him.

“Don’t worry. It’s a popular joke in this country,” he explained. “They have a perestroika going on now, that’s why shops have only aubergine caviar.”

The Chinese man flapped his eyes in astonishment, apparently being surprised at such a queer food ration of these people, who, for all their slender well-being, yet were trying to build the radiant future, keeping body and soul together on aubergine caviar. He did not quite seem to understand the joke, smiled a trademark grin, and, making a polite bow, stepped back.

“That’s not true!” Eugene retorted with laughter. Feeling that his national dignity had been hurt, he stated proudly: “We have a squash one too!”

Everybody laughed to Eugene’s patriotic humor and, on Ariman’s invitation, started to take their seats around the common table. It happened so that by habit we sat at sides of Sensei, as if taking an all-round defense. Ariman, who lingered, giving some orders to Veliar, was the last to follow the guests and correspondingly taking a vacant chair, sat just across Sensei. When everyone took their seats, Eugene could

not make himself comfortable in his arm-chair. Stas grinned at his twisting about and asked: “Why are you wiggling?”

“That chair’s turned out to be kinda hard,” Eugene replied.

“Stand up then,” his friend suggested with a smile.

“Right,” agreed Volodya, sitting at Eugene’s other side, and counseled: “this way you’ll be able to fit in more.”

Stas looked at the appetizing dishes near them on the table and uttered: “No way. He’d better sit and not wiggle.”

They laughed quietly. Eugene, finally taking a comfortable position – crossing his legs and leaning his elbow on the right arm, – set at ease and “bared his teeth” in his affected smile in response to the guys’ remarks. That rendered them shaking with laughter even more.

Like a hospitable host, Ariman started to lavish upon the treats, stirring the guys’ appetite still more. He presented various dishes, answering in passing to the questions of amazed guys.

“What caviar is this?” Victor inquired at the wine-red caviar near him.

It was in a small crystal bowl. The bowl itself consisted of four sections: there was sour cream in one of them, dairy butter in another, grated cheese in the third one, and in the fourth one there was the caviar itself.

“This is trout caviar. It’s saltish to the taste, that’s why it’s better to have it together with cultured milk foods.”

“How about this one?” Victor motioned at a beautiful bowl of large-grained orange caviar with red gleams that was near trout caviar.

“That is keta caviar – the most tasty and high quality of all salmon caviars,” Ariman replied. After a pause he added: “But I would most recommend you to taste that sort of caviar.” He motioned at large-grained silver caviar in a small golden jar. “This is very rare and expensive caviar. White sturgeon caviar. In order to get it they catch belugas, whose age approximate to one hundred years. Because of its value the caviar is packed up in small jars of pure 24-carat gold, such as this one. Taste it, it has a very peculiar delicate nut flavor. Gourmets of the modern times assert that this is the tastiest caviar in the world.” Ariman fell silent, glancing with a subtle smile as our entire company fastened their eyes upon the hitherto unseen jar of pure gold, and with such an expensive caviar in it too. Addressing to Sensei, Ariman boasted: “See, I even brought it too! I’ve no idea what else could surprise you. Perhaps you’d agree to taste this treat all the same?”

Sensei smiled and answered politely: “No, thank you. Everything looks really appetizing...”

“...And tasty,” Ariman stressed out.

“I don’t doubt that one bit. But, unfortunately, I can’t... Fasting day... You know me.”

Ariman gave an affected sigh.

“Oh, well, and I tried so hard,” and he uttered with a smile either addressing to the guys or speaking to himself. “Such an iron will! He said ‘no’, it means ‘no’... And I brought this caviar all the way from Persia...”

“What Persia?!” Sensei smiled, as if bringing him to senses.

Ariman looked at him blank and checked himself.

“Did I say Persia? What a sclerosis! But, of course, from Iran!” When Sensei and he stopped laughing, Ariman lamented: “Could you believe it, such a beautiful name this country had had for 2’458 years! And there you go – in 1935 they changed this lovely name, Persia, for Iran. Apologies for great reformers indeed! Cyrus the Great would’ve turned in his grave if he’d heard this news.”

“And who was Cyrus the Great?” Kostya inquired.

“Well, what have we come to!” Ariman smiled bitterly. “Young people don’t even know who Cyrus the Great was. Once, Cyrus the Great was a great ruler in the East. He founded the first Achaemenid Empire by defeating the Median Empire, conquering most of Southwest Asia, including the mighty Babylonia (Syria and Palestine being its parts) and much of Central Asia. That’s some charisma a man had! By the way, do you recall Balthazar’s feast from the Bible? During Belshazzar's feast (whose biblical name is Balthazar), the son of Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon, there appeared a fire writing on the wall: ‘*mene mene tekel upharsin,*’ which foretokened the fall of Babylon on the same night. Now, Balthazar died right in 539 BC exactly during the capture of Babylon by the Persians, that is, troops of Cyrus the Great.”

“How do we know all that?” Victor said with a smile in excuse for everyone. “I wish we could sort out our own history at least.”

“And this, in a way, is a part of your history,” Ariman pronounced. “Because, you know, where do the Persians as a

people originate from? From the tribes of Aryans, who began to migrate from southern regions of the present Russia to those regions starting from 2'000 BC. Come to think of it, you favorite prophet, Zarathustra, who lived in the first half of the 6th century BC, was born in those lands too. So, during its time Persia offered a considerable mite in the order and reorganization of the world. Well, all right then, as Marcus Tullius Cicero used to say, history is merely a life of memory.” Then, with laughter he added: “So, let’s leave our ruins alone and turn to the beautiful present.”

Everyone laughed again. Ariman made a pause, listening to a new Mozart’s melody coming from the yacht that harmoniously complemented this festive lunch. Then he addressed to the guys again, making a slight hand gesture, demonstrating fullness of choice.

“Treat yourselves, don’t be shy. Enjoy your present. Take advantage of it, while still so youthful and fine. When else would you have such a chance?! There you are, flesh of sturgeon in a *béchamel* sauce, stuffed quails, *foie gras* in cognac sauce, *sugatazushi* ...”

“Beg your pardon?” Eugene queried, peering at that unintelligible, beautifully served dish with some original proportional fish-shaped pieces.

“*Sugatazushi* is a sushi; it’s a dish of Japanese cuisine. It consists of boiled rice stuffed into mackerel, sliced. Try it with soy sauce. It’s delicious! By the way, I recommend you to have this food exclusively with wood chop-sticks. They are made of natural material. It’s considered that it doesn’t damage food’s energy. Try to gain not only physical pleasure

out of food, but, in the first place, aesthetic and spiritual one. Like the Japanese. The principal philosophy of the Japanese meal lies in communion with the beauty of nature and coexistence with it in full harmony...” After a short silence Ariman disclaimed: “Bush clover in blossom waves / Without spilling / A drop of dew.”

He recited this uncommon poetry with such oratorical inspiration that everyone involuntarily listened spellbound to it. Taking a pleased look round our enchanted company, he spoke again.

“Isn’t this a beautiful *hokku*, written by Bashō... this great Japanese poet of the 17th century? And how would you like this poem? ‘Gust of fresh wind, / A fish leapt with a splash... / Ablution in water’.”

He made another pause, perhaps, for the audience to appreciate the meaning of what he had said. But looking at our puzzled faces that showed not the slightest clue about Japanese poetry Ariman made a faint smile. He turned his eyes to Sensei, probably, the only one understanding what it had been all about, and then continued conversing with us.

“The Japanese are to a large extent amazing and mysterious people with remarkable traditions. Their philosophy as well as food is simultaneously light and nourishing... By the way, before eating I would advise you to make use of *oshibori* aroma,” Ariman suggested after a short pause.

We gazed at the table, looking for that very *oshibori*, thinking it to be one of the dishes. Apparently, noticing that our eyes were running every which way in search of what he

had mentioned, Ariman smiled faintly once again, pretending he hadn't seen our confused looks, and continued his narration as if nothing had happened: “*Oshibori* are wet towels that lie in front of you. Again, following the Japanese traditions, washing hands before a meal is considered to be a godsent act of removing negative energy. Aroma raises appetite. Food becomes much tastier and wholesome because of that.”

Our folks finally discovered those *oshibori* in front of their noses and started wiping their hands on those show-white wet towels, spreading very pleasant delicate orient aroma. I must say, it was the first time in my life that I saw not only that many exotic dishes, but also such a peculiar petty detail as these wipes.

“I advise you to try these truffle dishes as well,” Ariman continued showering praises on his table.

“Are truffles mushrooms or something?” Ruslan queried Stas in a low voice, sitting near him. But Ariman overheard his remark.

“Truffles are not just mushrooms,” the master of the ‘banquet’ replied instead of Stas. “They are the most expensive and elite mushrooms in the world. Here, this dish is made with Piedmont white truffle, named no other than the White diamond... And this dish is made with Perigord black truffle, the so-called Black Perl. Taste them and you’ll appreciate how delicate their aroma is. It can drive mad any true gourmet. These two kinds of truffles are the favorites in the high cuisine...”

As Ariman kept lavishing praise on exotic dishes of cookery art, hitherto unseen by us, the guys, timidly at first

but then with more confidence, went for it. Veliar stood near Ariman and gave orders in his native tongue to the two sailors-stewards. He saw to it vigilantly that the food, which his master's guests set their gaze on with a particular longing, appeared on their plates in the twinkling of an eye.

During the consumption of food by the majority of those present (excluding Sensei, Nicolai Andreevich, and my persona, suffering from unintelligible malaise of the organism), there occurred some casus to the guys. For example, Kostya, sitting not far from me, wanted to try oysters that were near him. He put a couple of them on his plate. The steward came running right away and added several pieces of lemon on his plate. Kostya threw a perplexed look at them and exchanged inquiring glances with Andrew. But he only shrugged his shoulders slightly, showing that it was probably meant that way. Hence, lest he should show his ignorance in this delicate matter, our Philosopher decided to taste an oyster first and then, probably, a lemon, since it was put. But as soon as he touched the oyster with the fork, it jerked slightly. In his fright our Philosopher even shrank back giving an amazed shriek: "Why, it's alive!" By doing that he caused a commotion among our company, but then it quite set everyone laughing.

"Of course, it's alive," Ariman replied smiling. "This way it is much tastier than in any of its cooked variants. Squeeze some lemon juice on it. Detach oyster's foot with a fork. Then suck it out safely of the shell with the lemon juice. And you will feel exceptional bliss of this taste."

Kostya looked with suspicion at the living creature on his plate once again. Meanwhile, Ariman already speaking to everyone, declared in a stately manner: “Konstantine made a magnificent choice, worthy of a refined gourmet and aesthete. For among the variety of oysters he chose this kind. It’s *Persebes* himself! They are also called ‘sea truffles.’ They are the most high-priced mollusks, since it’s very difficult to catch them. They grow on sunken rocks in places difficult of access... Oysters are motionless mollusks, hermaphrodites, that cement...”

While Ariman was narrating about the way of life of these mollusks, Kostya tried to accomplish what Ariman had advised. Swallowing his saliva convulsively, he took a lemon piece lying near the oyster with care and started folding it squeezing the juice. He did it so cautiously, as if fearing that mollusk would bite off his finger. His fixed look seemed to be that of a chemist, performing a dangerous explosive test. When there necessary amount was accumulated, a drop fell on the mollusk, and it contracted in reflex. This action of a tiny organism made Kostya jerk on the chair, but he did not scream this time – it’s something at least. Continuing with this procedure that evidently wasn’t quite pleasant for him, he did as Ariman had said. And with a squeamish and verjuice countenance, as if he was faced with swallowing two pounds of slugs with a dozen of lemons, he sucked this poor oyster out of the shell at one stroke. What can you do? As they say, in for a penny, in for a pound. He was to play the role of a ‘refined gourmet’ all the way. After that agonizing procedure Kostya puckered like a cornichon.

Andrew, who had been watching the process of oyster devourment in an underhand way, cheered his friend up quietly with a smile: “It’s alright, it’s alright. What got into mouth, is healthy throughout.”

“Aha,” Kostya muffled: “It’s creeping thought my gullet!”

Andrew grinned and put in some black humor: “Why, what were you thinking? You gulped down that poor breather wholly, and now that monster would eat you from inside.”

“Not on your Nelly,” Kostya remarked sarcastically. “I’ve got strong nervous and digestive systems.”

Following that agonizing procedure, the guy started taking other food after the ‘bliss of this taste’, bolting it down almost without chewing.

“Well, how was it?” Tatyana, sitting between us, mocked him quietly.

Kostya washed the food down with some drink and answered her in inaudible mutter: “Catch me trying that imm... that motionless hermaphrodite again!..”

“I see,” Tatyana chuckled.

At that moment Ariman drew his attention to him and asked with a pleasing smiley: “Did you enjoy it, Konstantine?”

The guy instantly feigned a happy look on his face and answered hastily: “Oh, yes, very tasty! I’ve never tried anything like that! It’s really delicious!”

Tatyana and I could hardly keep our countenance, caused by such a sudden transformation of Kostya’s face from sour-peevisish to contented-sugary expression. It seemed that if he

had been standing, he would have been making bows from the waist. When Ariman was distracted by conversation with other guys, Kostya threw a withering look on the second oyster, lying on his plate in beauty. But then his face brightened and he suggested looking and Andrew with insidious smile.

“D’ye wanna to try? It is *so* tasty!”

“No sir, thank you. I wasn’t signing up for a flayer,” Andrew said with a smile.

At that moment Eugene drew everyone’s attention to himself. After trying several dishes, he obviously grew bolder in gustation of good. Pointing at big crayfish lying on a huge plate in the middle of the table, he asked Ariman: “These crayfish must be from Chernobyl? A new gigantic kind?”

Ariman chuckled.

“No, these are langoustes. My recommendation. Very tender meat.”

He cast a glance at Veliar, and the latter made swift arrangements. The steward-guy laid a langouste on a separate plate that was on a tray with special cutting instruments and served it to Eugene.

The latter looked askew at all that set and declared openly: “What do I need these surgical armaments for? I’m no sadist, nor a dentist. I’m not gonna torture this dead animal. Am I a maniac, or something?!” Placing the lobster bravely by hand on his plate and observing it in passing, Eugene added: “Besides, judging by his red look, I guess, he’s already confessed everything to your cook.”

Everybody burst out laughing. Ariman grinned too and gave an approving nod to the steward, who was somewhat confused at such unheard-of treatment of food items. He seemed to become interested in how Eugene was going to dress the lobster without instruments, as after moving aside he started watching this amusing guy with curiosity. Meanwhile, far from being embarrassed by his behavior, Eugene started handling the lobster in his own manner, applying all his mastery to getting its 'tender meat'.

At first, like everyone else, hearing eulogies about the dishes, I put on my plate some seafood salad standing nearby and, of course, a small spoon of the much-praised silver caviar. The plates, by the way, were very unusual. They were light, porcelain, and with painting depicting some plots with half-naked nymphs. Besides, judging by the plates of my nearest neighbors at the table, each plate's painting had a different the plot. But they were sustained in one style.

When that delicious food filled my plate and I was about to try it, suddenly I felt such a wave of nausea and inner discomfort that it nearly turned my stomach. Hastily, I put down my fork back on the table, dropping my eyes on the floor. But the lines of the transparent floor seemed to become animated before my eyes and slowly at first, but then faster and faster they started whirling into some sign, which made me feel even worse. My head began to swim, and my breath quickened. I shut my eyes and clawed hold of the plastic arm-chair with all my strength, fearing that I would fall into a faint. The dizziness passed immediately though. Taking advantage of this temporary relief, I tried to concentrate on the solar

plexus, on my ‘lotus flower.’ This simple meditation, once given to all of us by Sensei, became a peculiar first-aid in extreme cases. So far, it never failed me. And indeed, doing this meditation within a minute brought me into more or less normal state. My breath became steady, and I even managed to relieve somewhat that nauseating condition. I opened my eyes. Luckily, almost nobody noticed my temporary indisposition. The group was carried away by eating and talking with Ariman. Only Sensei glanced at me somehow kindly, which made me feel even more peaceful inside. But he instantly looked away, commenting upon another Eugene’s joke with humor. I breathed a sigh of relief and settled back in the arm-chair, trying to avoid looking at the food or the floor, because of incomprehensible “oddities” of my organism.

At that moment Ariman, who seemed to have caught the eye of Sensei in my direction, asked me suddenly: “And why don’t you eat? Try something, all’s very tasty.”

His words brought me into the public eye, which made me a bit uncomfortable.

“It’s tasty, really,” affirmed Tatyana tucking away a small shish kebab made of basking-shark, praised by Ariman.

At the sight of this meat my malaise regained strength again. Fearing to go out of it the second time, I uttered, trying not to look at the food: “No, thank you, I’m feeling a bit funny. I’ll just sit.”

“May be you’d like some dessert?” Ariman asked with caring.

As soon as he said that, Veliar snapped his fingers. One of the stewards immediately took a small beautiful bowl of ice

cream out of cupboard-fridge and put it before me with promptness before I had time to answer something. Our entire group fixed their amazed gazes on this dainty. In those years it was the first time that we saw such ice-cream. It was a three-colored jumbo, covered with honey colored aromatic syrup, decorated with a strawberry, some exotic nuts, pieces of dark chocolate, and a pair of decorative beach umbrellas.

“Make yourself at home!” Ariman cheered me with a smile.

I was simply taken aback at such excessive attention towards my persona.

“Thank you. But I...”

That moment I was saved by inexhaustible humor of our guys that shifted everyone’s attention to Stas and Eugene. When Stas saw Eugene making a long arm for another langouste, he bantered on him quite loudly.

“You’ve stuck to these jointed-legged ones, you really have!”

Eugene looked at him in surprise and answered: “I’ve no idea, how they walk, but they are certainly tasty.” The whole crowd burst out laughing. Meanwhile, the guy continued talking pun as if nothing had happened: “No, Stas, seriously I tell you, we’ve got to go to Pripyat and catch some of these delicious mongooses.”

“Not mongooses, you country bumpkin! Langoustes!” said Stas.

“Oh,” Eugene waved his hand: “What’s the diff!”

“A big one,” Stas chuckled. “Mongooses are carnivorous land mammals in a kind of fur coat. Whereas

langoustes are bare jointed-legged invertebrates, living underwater.”

“Holy moley!” uttered Eugene to the common laughter. “It’s not enough that they walk any odd way, someone’s undressed them too. Can you believe such a living? Poor souls, with bare rear into cold water every day! Creeps!”

At these words Eugene shuddered affectedly. Everyone rolled with another fit of laughter to such a sympathetic speech of the guy. Then the conversation changed for funny stories about crawfish.

“It’s like in that joke,” Victor smiled. “A client in a restaurant, looking at the served crawfish, asks the waiter: ‘Why this crawfish has one chela?’ The waiter answers: ‘He fought with another one in the cauldron.’ So, the client played it cool and said: ‘Well, give me the winner then!’”

While our company was amusing themselves with stories, fortunately saved from the public eye and such an obtrusive treating of the host, I slightly moved the ice-cream aside, which despite looking very good, arouse a completely different reaction in my organism. Though, the same was with the rest of food.

“Are you alright? You don’t want it?!” Tatyana said quietly in surprise.

“Do you want it?” I offered in the same low voice, having found for myself a saving escape from the awkward situation.

“Alright.” She pulled the ice-cream towards her and remarked: “You must be really unwell if you turned your favorite dainty down.”

I only nodded in response, being surprised myself at such a firm refusal of ice-cream, and in such an unwitnessed and untasted kind at that. However, during that time my persona experienced such a revolution in my body that I could not do otherwise.

“Why wouldn’t you taste some viand?” after laughing to another joke Ariman asked Nicolai Andreevich. “Perhaps, you’d like something special? My cook is very skilful in cooking. He’d fill any of your orders.”

Nicolai Andreevich, who before that time was somehow listlessly contemplating the food, put on his plate by stewards, livened up somewhat and replied politely: “Oh, please, don’t bother. Everything is remarkable and appetizing indeed. It’s just... my gastritis made itself felt at the wrong time. I know myself, at this time I’d better forbear from food at all.”

“Then, perhaps I should offer you a pill? I have very good pills. Pain would vanish instantly, like by magic.”

“I appreciate your kindness. But I’ve already taken mine just before your coming. It’s not desirable to mix them with other ones or with food. That’s all right,” he added with humor: “I’ll try to survive this abundance.”

“Gosh, Sensei, what have you done to people?” Ariman uttered with a smile.

“Well, look who’s talking,” Sensei replied in the same manner and they both laughed to this joke understandable, probably, only to them.

It should be said that Ariman, although he showered refined praises on the dishes in every way possible, practically did not touch them. It appeared that they were of the same

interest to him as regular daily food for us. That is, lack of any interest. As it seemed to me, his attention was more riveted on Sensei and his circle.

Ariman told lots of funny stories which had happened to him during his voyaging on the yacht. Judging by his narration, he had been to quite a few places around the world. The guys listened spellbound to his stories. No wonder! What did we know about the world? At bottom, only scanty fragments of what was offered to us on the TV. Now, here was the living witness, who had not only been abroad, but to many countries at that, and in society of world's famous people too.

Unfortunately, I was not even trying to remember what Ariman was saying, carried away with going over what had actually happened to me. It had been the second day already as my organism showed signs of a 'breakdown', which was not like it. Besides, our psychotherapist suspiciously complained of his stomach too. Eventually, I accounted everything for that yesterday afternoon. Nicolai Andreevich and I must have eaten some food that got spoilt lying in the sun. On the other hand, there were no evident signs of a poisoning. "Going haywire" in making wild guesses, I decided to distract myself from this purposeful activity as well as from sad inner feelings and started listening to what Ariman was telling with such enthusiasm.

"...Maldives do have some beautiful spots, but they're so dreadfully boring. If it weren't for all those underwater entertainments like diving... By the way, the most important thing in diving is what?"

Ariman made a pause, contemplating us with a smile.

“The beauty of the underworld and its inhabitants,” Stas voiced merrily.

“No. The main thing in diving is that a quantity of submersions corresponded to the quantity of emersions.”

“A-a-ah, well that goes without saying,” the guy agreed, laughing together with others.

“It’s a joke, of course,” Ariman continued. “To tell you the truth, even diving becomes boring in time. Because soon you already get to know every single one of those reefs and know virtually all those mantas, morays, Napoleon fish, and local sharks by ‘face’.”

“How come, by ‘face’?” Ruslan didn’t get it.

“Aw,” Ariman waved his hand. “You see, local diving instructors feed those fish on the sly to attract more tourists. Fish are happy, of course, no need to hunt. The food, one can say, falls from heaven, and in one and the same place and time at that.”

“Full free lunch!” Eugene complemented his words, setting to another langouste.

The group laughed unanimously again.

“Joking apart, it’s a business for the natives,” Ariman observed.

“And where those Maldives are located?” Ruslan could not grasp the geography.

“In the Indian Ocean, 400 miles south of Sri Lanka.”

“I see,” the guy said thoughtfully making out like he really knew where Sri Lanka was.

“Diving is great, or course,” Ariman went on. “Previously I was happily keen on extreme kinds of sport: mountain climbing, sky surfing, surf-riding, and rafting...”

“Rafting? What is it?” Andrew uttered in surprise.

“It’s paddling down the mountain river in a kayak. Imagine – seething water flow, ice-cold splashes. And there you are, skimming among all this at breakneck speed, hardly having time to maneuver around the boulders, fear rounding your eyes, fixed on another obstacle-mountain. Takes breath away! It’s great of course! But I was quickly bored by it... What only have I not tried in my life. Motor racing, car racing. And those are like an incurable disease, really. If one truly falls under influence of these kinds of sport – that’s it, consider him lost. It’s impossible to quit. Like a drug addict, you will be drawn by speed, noise of engines all the time. You will be daydreaming and nightdreaming of it all the time, until you get into the driving seat and feel that unforgettable release of adrenaline into the blood... Nevertheless, I dealt with this ‘decease’ of mine soon enough. Then for quite a bit of time I was into hunting. First, safari in Africa, then underwater ‘safari’ in Australia...”

“Eugene and I are into this kind of sport too,” Stas boasted.

“Yeah,” echoed Eugene. “Though, we didn’t go as far as Australia. That spoty of our small globe is too far by half away from our great and mighty place-of-residence. We’ve got some interesting places of our own too, where even Mother Nature has never dropped at. We’ve got such an

exoticism of fauna that Australia with its piranhas simply is not in it.”

Stas nudged him slightly and observed quietly: “Come on, Euge, piranhas live in the Amazon. And the Amazon is South America.”

“All the more so, what do we need that Australia for,” the guy declared in a loud voice: “If there are no piranhas in it?!” Then he added importantly: “In fact, I hold that such countries as Australia exist on the map in order to lay stress on the magnitude of territories and resources of such a huge region as ours, in such an affluent and unbounded country as ours.”

Everybody laughed, and Ariman remarked jestingly: “Are you by chance suffering from national megalomania, sir?”

Eugene goggled at him and uttered: “No suffering from anything, sir! Everything is alright with my nationalities: I’ve got an entire list of them in my kin. And everything is okay with my mogilalia too: stammering absent. So, it absolutely bothers not my Mania,” and he qualified with a chuckle: “...Over a trifle like that.”

The guys rolled up with laughter again. Stas said chaffing his friend: “Finally his mania found a worthy definition,” and when everybody stopped laughing, he resumed the interrupted topic of the conversation: “Well, we haven’t got much spread for an underwater hunting here, indeed. You know, dabbling at modest local rivers and sometimes here, at the sea. But transparency of water around here is awful.”

“What kind of life is it? A turbid puddle rather,” Ariman said sympathetically and added with infecting inspiration: “But Australia, you can’t imagine how clear the water around it is! What rich diversity of fish!”

“I bet!” Stas sighed enviously.

“And what price Great Barrier Reef! In a word, magnificent underwater world. A real hunting with dangers and adventures!” The folks glanced at Ariman admiringly, being in reality of his captivating story. “...Undoubtedly, this is all interesting, if it’s your first time. But to be honest, in time it gets boring. So my passion for underwater hunting gradually changed into fishing. But again fishing is, like, for diversity of leisure. By the way, speaking about fishing,” Ariman addressed to Sensei. “Last time I fished with Finns on the Aland archipelago in the Baltic Sea. I liked it. With a spinning rod I trolled around 30-40 fish every hour, them being large. That’s going some, that’s something like fishing! There is one ‘but’ though... You catch a lot, but you can take only one. I had to let go the others,” Ariman said with a smile and laughed together with Sensei. “What can you do, if only sport fishing there is on those islands? But to look at it differently, local Alands are good men. Couldn’t think better I give you that. Their heads work like a calculating machine, that’s why they live an affluent life. They are able to be economical!”

After a small pause Ariman continued his story: “Yeah... Well, in general one’s got to relax with skill. The worst relaxation is idleness. Not my words, this was found out by scientists as far as two centuries ago, the ones that nowadays

are called neurophysiologists. Such is the way of human, that the best relaxation for one is switching from one kind of activity to another. If you don't plan your leisure skillfully, there will be neither fresh energy, nor new impressions, and nor subsequent effective work. Recently, I took a liking to calm relaxation, though, I do like traveling around the world.”

“Yes, I wouldn't mind doing some tourist trips too,” muttered Kostya dreamily.

Ariman smiled.

“No. Tourism – it's tritely. As a rule it is all predictable, a collective gallop around ones and the same spots with sly-boot guides. A bunch of stereotyped photos against ones and the same attractions, and for the sole purpose at that – to brag about being there in front of relatives and friends. No, what I like more is to gain impressions from visiting spiritual, cultural centers of civilization, finding pleasure in immersing into unknown life, meeting interesting people. I read a lot about those places at first, but when I visited them personally... It turns out that there is a big difference between what you read or heard from someone,” at those words Ariman slightly nodded in the direction of Sensei: “...about that place or that famous person. And it's a different pair of shoes when you visit those places and talk to people, whose names are on the lips of the whole world. It's not that you just obtain information. In fact, you really touch upon history, upon powerful energy of those places and people. In my opinion, this means a lot for personal spiritual growth. I've seen many spiritual centers. And I came to a conclusion that in actual fact virtually every serious religion is held up by

seeds of true knowledge. These seeds of knowledge are like drops of different streamlets. Yet the source of all their waters is one spring.”

Ariman made a meaningful pause so that our collective could appreciate this phrase at its true value and go to its root.

Then he carried on: “I had the honor of conversing with many interesting people, favorites of mankind of the current time. Including world’s spiritual leaders. Now, for instance, with Dalai Lama. I’m telling you, it’s altogether different to read ‘bout him in some magazines and to spend several evenings in person with Dalai Lama, when you can talk to him in a relaxed atmosphere, discuss topics that are of interest to you.

“Or in India, for instance, I had an opportunity to converse for an entire week with the very Sathya Sai Baba, this legendary person of contemporary East. He is considered a god by many people. He’s a remarkable man. Although he hadn’t read books, he easily cites Bible, Qur’an as well as some philosophers of the past and present times. He reads the thoughts of people easily. He is able to transform one object into another without difficulty. But what I liked most was how he materialized objects. Just imagine, he simply passes his hand over the air and there appears haze.” At these words Ariman passed his hand over the air. Out of the blue for us, a light milky-white haze indeed appeared in the air, resembling a smoke trail of a cigarette. We were struck dumb. Meanwhile, Ariman continued his fascinating story. “And then he just goes and takes a cookie out of it.”

Inconceivably for us, Ariman started taking cookies out of the smoke, as if from some invisible pocket. We just stiffened in astonishment, afraid to stir. At first, I thought it to be a kind of trick. Perhaps, Ariman was imperceptibly taking the cookies out of a cuff of his snow-white shirt, or something. But when Ariman drew out of air enough cookies to fill an entire vase, I became lost completely: there was no chance of hiding that many biscuits in a sleeve.

“How are you doing that?!” expressing a common rapture Ruslan uttered, his eyes blazing with curiosity, staring at a second living ‘Sathya,’.

Satisfied with the effect produced on us, Ariman took out the last cookie, solemnly placed it on top of the pile, and handed the vase around the table. The guys began tasting the cookies with amazement, noting different taste of the cookies: lemon, apricot, peach. While the vase was handed around, Ariman answered Ruslan’s query.

“Oh, this is very complicated. Sai Baba had been bringing it home to me for an entire week.” Ariman smiled and said shrugging his shoulders: “Although... Perhaps, it’s because I’m so ungifted...”

He glanced at our fascinated collective. At that time the vase came to Nicolai Andreevich. Seeing that his face creased slightly, apparently from a pain in stomach, Ariman immediately said: “For those who abstained from food, I do not offer due to the state of your well-being.” And throwing a quizzical glance at Sensei he added as if in justification: “It’s a pastry after all.”

Sensei smiled and Nicolai Andreevich passed the vase on. Actually, I was going to taste this newly-brought-to-light sweet ‘miracle’. But as soon as the vase reached me, to my disappointment, new urges of sickness arose in my organism. I had to hand the vase quickly to Tatyana so as to avoid anything unexpected.

When all who wished to taste did so, Ariman went on with his story: “So, guys, listening to hearsays and seeing the reality are two big differences. For example, you went to Italy and together with other tourists of the group are visiting places accessible for everyone on the hill *Monte Vaticano*, extolling the Pope of Rome to the skies in your thoughts. Now, when you meet him in and person and have tea together in his cabinet, access to which have only some of his suite, it’s quite another cup of tea. And there you ask him your questions and hear his Holy opinion..”

“With the Pope of Rome himself?!” Ruslan murmured with enthusiasm, his eyes wide open.

“Yes,” Ariman replied simply as if it went without saying. Keeping silent for a short while he added: “After conversing with him, you really understand that he is a great man! He differs from others by his outstanding talent, charisma. And you leave any doubts that he indeed bears the seal of benediction of the apostle Peter himself. This is the man who loves himself and respects himself so much as to make others love and respect him too. So, when you visit such places in person and meet people of the first magnitude, you start seeing things differently.”

“Visiting Vatican – it’s awesome!” an exclamation of rapture escaped Ruslan. “How is it there?”

Ariman smiled, looking at the fellow burning with curiosity.

“It’s great!” he said. “Vatican is one of my favorite places of visit. You can’t imagine what treasures of culture and art are accumulated there. What price a St. Peter’s Basilica, (which, by the way, is reckoned the largest among Christianity churches in the world) and it’s main decoration – *Pietà* – mother Mary grieving for the loss of her son, and, of course, a bronze statue of Peter himself. And what of the Sistine chapel?! It’s a genuine masterpiece, embodiment of the greatest Renaissance masters. What virtuosity, what revolutionary for those times anthropocentrism, boldness of solution on the frescoes of Michelangelo. And what Borgia Apartment, what *Stanze di Raffaello*! You can’t name them all! Vatican is rich for remarkable sights. There are many museums, palatial buildings. It has something to look at. But this is only a small, visible portion of what is actually stored in Vatican. As for things that are concealed from the public eye, believe me guys, those are much more valuable and interesting.

“And how beautiful Saint Peter’s Square is! It’s the visiting card of Vatican, indeed. Imagine a huge ellipse, embraced by his colonnades at sides, with 140 saints standing on top of them and the coats of arms of Alexander VII, who in fact was the initiator to making this square. And in the center of the square there is a needle-shaped obelisk.”

“Needle-shaped?” Victor asked with surprise. “Why is it there?”

Ariman answered somewhat reluctantly.

“Well, this has to do with a story from Caligula times, when Caligula himself brought this Egyptian ‘needle’ obelisk to Rome, while Nero placed it in his circus at first. And the circus of his was right on the spot where the Basilica of Saint Peter is located now. And it was no sooner than in 1586 that the stone ‘needle’ was re-erected on *that very place*, where it has been standing up till now on the square.”

Ariman, probably, pondered over something as he stressed the final words. Nicolai Andreevich seized an opportunity and immediately asked him a leading enquiry: “Which place?”

Ariman started, but as he was about to say something, Sensei answered instead of him.

“On that place, Peter was crucified, upside down at that.”

Saying that, Sensei looked at Ariman.

“Is it the one who denied Jesus three times?” Victor qualified with Sensei.

“Yes.”

But unlike Sensei, who spoke his tired “yes,” Ariman retook the initiative of the conversation and said in a slightly raised tone: “Yes! It is the Peter himself, who showed devotion to Christ and His Teaching during all of his subsequent life. It is the Peter, who was the great saint, a real stone of faith, on which the entire Catholic Church was built and is still holding. It is the Peter, who is the First Bishop of Roman Christians!” After a short silence he added in a more

leveled tone, but not without faints of admiration: “In a word, Vatican is Vatican indeed! How many times have I been there, I can’t stop being amazed at the greatness of this Eternal City, the greatness of this country. By the by, Vatican is the smallest state in the world, it’s area making up 44 square kilometers and population of a little less than a thousand people.”

“Only a thousand?” Andrew wondered.

“Yes, mostly priests and nuncios...”

“Who?” Stas asked. “Nuncios?”

“Heads of diplomatic missions of Vatican” Ariman explained.

“Ah, am...bassatards that is,” uttered Eugene jokingly stammering, as if putting Stas wise.

The guys beamed around. But Ariman only permitted himself a condescending smile and commented his joke: “These ambassadors are among the cleverest people. Owing to their incessant work as well as all those who have holy attitude towards Vatican, this small country exerts such an influence on the world, which could be envied by any huge leading nation.”

“Well, that’s no wonder,” Nicolai Andreevich squeezed out a remark, he seemed to be tormented by pain in stomach. “Vatican is the international center of Catholicism. It’s the location of residence of Pope himself.” Then he asked with a smile: “And you are probably a catholic?”

“Who me?” Ariman looked perplexed. “No. I don’t belong to any of the world’s religions. But I treat the Patriarch of Rome with great respect. In fact, Catholicism is

one of my favorite religions. You can't imagine how much the Catholic Church did for the world in its past! Not only in the past. Even presently it exerts considerable influence on the world. The Catholic Church has at its disposal a huge strictly disciplined army of clergy, numerous monastic orders, missionary societies all around the world. Political parties of different countries, various public associations, which in whole endow it with sizeable income from church people, are related to it. Moreover, Vatican possesses capital investments in large international monopolies, including those in the USA, Great Britain, Switzerland, France, Spain, and countries of Latin America. It also co-owns a number of major concerns. To say nothing of the fact that Vatican is a large landowner in Italy, Spain, Germany as well as other countries and earns vast profits from rent of those lands. And now the influence of the Catholic Church is actively extended to the East. I simply admire their clever leadership and methods they use for dominating the world.”

While our company listened to Ariman attentively, he made a meaningful pause, looking at Sensei with exultant air. Then he went back to the initial topic, laying stress on a general conclusion: “As you see guys, when you mean something in this society, all doors are open for you. If I had been a simple workman, would I've been able to have an opportunity of being admitted to the presence of such dignities? Certainly not. Unfortunately, money decides everything in this world. I guess Philip II, father of Alexander the Great, was right when he said that there was no castle wall that cannot be stepped over by an ass loaded with gold.

Money opens up possibilities, and that's true. In fact, it's true for possibilities of spiritual development too. Who are you without money? Nobody. No one would look your way. To have health – you need money, to have dwelling and food – you need money. Even if you want to have an opportunity to enjoy spiritual knowledge of the world, it requires a considerable amount of money so as to be able to visit and see everything by yourself. Now, in order to have at least a hint about it, you still need some amount of money, at any rate to buy a cheap book.” Ariman smiled and pronounced: “Unfortunately, in our world free is only cheese in a mousetrap.”

Nicolai Andreevich shrugged his shoulders and said: “I think everything is in man. If his head is screwed on right, he will be able to earn his living.”

“That's right,” Ariman stressed. “But the question is, how much can one earn?”

“Well, how much,” Ruslan butted in to the conversation: “enough to afford a book for sure.”

Ariman laughed victoriously and declared: “That's enough for you because you are still young and haven't settled down to married life yet. But as soon as you get married and have family, that's when you'll understand the real value of money.”

“No way,” Ruslan parried “I'll die single.”

Ariman waved his hand.

“Common spirit of youth. It's just that you haven't met the person in you life, whom you would immediately forget all your promises of bachelor's life for. A single man is

always seeking family relations, likewise a married man seeks solitude. Such are the realities of life.”

“Yes, in a way you are right, everything needs money,” Victor uttered sadly, looking round the marquee.

Noticing his look, Stas observed with a grin.

“We ain’t gonna live like that,” and with a feigned sigh he added: “I’d like to, though.”

“Why, who prevents you from living like that?” Ariman replied. “Your country has vast opportunities of earning serious money nowadays. It would be a sin to let such a chance slip.”

“Yes, but how it can be earned?” Victor asked.

“There are lots of ways to earn big money. A few know about them, though,” Ariman emphasized intriguingly.

Eugene hemmed.

“Why yeah, but those who know keep silent. Not merely silent at that: silent from greed to avoid bringing about competition.”

At these words the guy looked at Ariman cunningly. But he answered in a philosophic manner, as if this remark did not concern him a bit.

“If a man is sensible, they will rise sooner or later. But if they don’t have entrepreneurial spirit, no matter how hard you explain it, you can’t expect anything sensible. How is it by Gavriil Romanovich Derzhavin: ‘An ass remains an ass indeed, / Although you shower one with stars; / Where one should act with mind and wit, / It only flutters silly ears’.”

Ariman cited it with such an expression that it involuntarily caused the guys to laugh at his joke. When the

laughter stopped, Ariman uttered quite seriously: “I own large corporations. They are held up and developed exclusively by clever, talented people, who got the vision of what I advised them in their time. That’s why they achieved success. So, you see, guys, I am a generous man...”

“Who would ever doubt that,” with a smile Sensei said in a low voice.

“...If you like, I can share the know-how, since you were so lucky in your life as to meet me,” Ariman proposed to the guys.

“We do!” Victor immediately expressed the “public opinion” with a smile.

Ariman leaned back in his arm-chair and looking at Sensei now cheerfully, answered to Victor: “No problem. We’ll talk about this matter, but a bit later. And now – my dessert of the house...”

It should be noted that during the talk Veliar’s assistants made a change of dishes on the table. Prior dishes were brought out from the marquee and handed to the sailors. In turn they gave the assistants some sort of white boxes. In the course of the conversation there appeared on the table a tea set with amazing paintings on its every piece, obviously a continuation of the dinner set theme, followed by various pastry, candies, and fruits. So, when Ariman stopped speaking, the table was already shining with new crockery. Looking at such a sweet abundance, our company fetched a sigh. Everything was elegantly adorned and looked a real chef-d'oeuvre. The guys seemed to be ready to eat everything with their eyes, but stomach allowed not. That’s why wide-

ranging testing was ventured only by our ‘heavyweight’ eaters: Victor, Volodya, Stas, Eugene, Ruslan. The others confined themselves to a cup of tea with the most tempting fancy cake to their taste.

As for me, I couldn’t but mentally reproach myself for the fact that an ‘oddity’ like this had happened to my organism at such a wrong time. True miracles of confectionery art there were before me! And I couldn’t even touch a cup of tea: so awful it felt inside.

Ariman noticed Andrew reaching with lust for a bowl with fancy cakes near him.

With a smile of a good-natured host he encouraged the guy: “An excellent choice. Incidentally, this Napoleon cake was made according to ancient recipes with addition of one-hundred-and-twenty-year-old cognac. It’s exactly so that it was served to emperors’ tables.”

After such an advertisement the number of people willing to try this fancy cake, made in accordance with ancient recipes, increased considerably.

“How is it?” Ariman asked Andrew when the latter finished eating the cake.

“It’s very delicious!”

“They must be fabulously expensive too,” Stas observed looking at mouth-watering pastry in front of him.

Ariman grinned.

“Of course! If I weren’t rich, would I be able to have them?”

When the guys went in the gustation process substantially, Ariman addressed Sensei motioning at his untouched cup of tea.

“Sensei, you’ll love it. It is green tea of good quality.”

“I don’t doubt that,” Sensei agreed. “Thank you... But, alas.”

“To refuse such a tea,” Ariman shook his head with a smile.

“Can’t help it, cultivating a strong willpower.”

“How much more?!”

“Some extra will ever do no harm,” Sensei smiled.

They laughed. Sensei’s answer cheered me up somewhat. One always wants to associate oneself with a strong, forceful figure.

“It’s lucky for some people,” Eugene uttered with a chuckle, looking Sensei’s way. “Well, I do have power.” He doubled his fist demonstratively. “And will.” He inflated his breast. But immediately after that he breathed out, deflating like a balloon and voiced: “But now willpower.”

To the laughter of other guys he took a gulp of tea and stretched his hand for another Napoleon fancy cake. Give the glad eye to this appetizing pastry, he added: “In fact, no money too. It’s good that there are god men in the world.” And addressing the fancy cake, Eugene said: “Otherwise, I wouldn’t have tasted you. So, my apologies, Napoleon Bonapartich...”

At these words he bit a good half of the cake, which set the guys laughing again.

“Well,” Victor said pensively. “Which ever way you look at it, everything needs money.”

“And who devised it, that funny paper?” Andrew shrugged his shoulders, unfolding another chocolate he took a fancy to.

“The Chinese,” answered Ariman in a carefree way.

“The Chinese?” the guy looked surprised.

“Yes. Chinese Emperor of Tang Dynasty in 650 issued first paper money ‘nao jiao’ with a face value of 10 000 yuan-nao. It was printed on a quality paper and could be easily transported. Besides, it could always be exchanged for copper money. That’s why this type of money quickly gained popularity. Afterwards, this fashion was adopted by the Persians, the Japanese, and so it began to walk around the globe.”

“And before that, was it copper money?” Kostya inquired.

“Different ones: copper, silver, gold. Metallic, to put it in one word,” Ariman replied.

“And who invented coins?” our Philosopher got carried away by questions.

“But again, the Chinese. The first coins appeared in China in the 12th century BC. They were cast. Then only some five centuries later there appeared chased coins in ancient Greek colonies.”

“My, the Chinese are so smart, I wouldn’t have suspected,” Eugene said with sarcasm and eyed at Veliar who at that time, standing behind Ariman, looked at the guests with pride and arrogance.

“Every nation consider themselves clever,” Ariman shrugged his shoulders. “Romans, for example, assign invention of coins to their gods Saturn, Janus, and king Pompilius. The Greeks argue that a coin was invented no other than by their hero Theseus together with king Pheidon, ruling in the 7th century BC.”

Ariman made a pause and drank some tea. Suddenly Sensei, who had been exchanging insignificant phrases with Ariman so far, engaged in polemics with him.

“Yes, but the main point is not who invented coins, but what they mean. As claimed by the linguists, who came down to bed-rock of the word *coin*, coming from the Latin, *moneo*, *monui*, *monitum* means ‘reminder’, ‘warning’. Even the Latin verb *moneo*, *monui*, *monetum* means ‘to advise’. By the way, since we’ve touched linguistics, the word ‘capital’ also comes from the Latin word *caput*...”

“Didn’t get it,” Eugene moved, hearing a familiar word. “Do you mean ‘Hitler kaput’?”

And the guy made a cross in the air. We laughed, and Sensei answered with a smile: “Well, perhaps, it brought ‘kaput’ to Hitler. But if we are speaking about the translation of the word ‘capital’, then *caput* means ‘head’.”

“Ah, clever, you mean,” the guy made a conclusion.

“Quite the opposite,” Sensei shook his head. “It means cattle head.” Seeing surprised looks on the guys’ faces – they even stopped chewing – Sensei explained: “You see, cattle was a monetary unit in the past. And it was calculated by heads.”

Having said that, Sensei looked with contented air at Ariman, and we too hastened to turn our heads towards him. As it seemed to me, a shadow of confusion flashed across Ariman's face. But as soon as he was favored with attention, Ariman immediately produced a charming smile and said merrily:

“Surely there was time, when money walked on four legs. But it's good that those are bygone times. Or else I would've been tired out counting my 'capital' by heads.”

“Yeah, such capital would mean only loss,” Volodya observed with loud laughter. “It's not enough that it demands food, it also spreads some specific smell.”

“There's no denying that!” Ariman exclaimed as if Volodya has hit just the spot of his reasoning.

He exchanged glances with Sensei, and they burst out laughing again, as if these words had a wider sense than it was said. Ariman stopped laughing and said:

“O-oh, my, what only served man as money: from cow skulls in Borneo to human skulls in Solomon Islands, from bars of salt in Africa to brick tea in China and Burma. They even used cocoa beans in ancient Mexico. But what's more interesting, even in those times there were 'counterfeiters' of a sort that falsified beans,” Ariman chuckled. “What only people haven't tried as a means of payment: tobacco, rice and corn seeds, dried fish, hides, cattle, people.”

“Yes,” Sensei uttered somehow sorrowfully. “Money differed, but the attitude towards it remained the same...”

“In principle, nothing has changed,” Ariman agreed with him.

All became silent for some time, until Volodya said: “Well, as for the ‘capital’, Sensei, you really struck me there. Who’d have thought! So, it turns out that Marx wrote a book about ‘head cattle,’ huh?”

The elder guys burst out laughing.

“Well, if we approach dialectic materialism in the work of Carl Marx named *Capital* from this perspective,” Sensei smiled, “then it really turns out that the concept has a totally different implication. You see, objective reality is determined by conscience there. People create their history by themselves, and the impulsive causes of their activities are determined by material conditions of social production. The society is treated as a unitary mechanism, which is akin, in this respect, to cattle, in structure of which productive forces determine productive relations and patterns of ownership. That subsequently calls forth the class structure of society, politics, morale, religion, philosophy.”

“My saint aunt, Sensei!” Volodya uttered admiringly with a smile. “Do you still remember the Capital?”

“Well, still have a lot of steam in the hut,” Sensei laughed.

“And berries in the bu...,” Eugene attempted to put in his ad-lib, but faltered leaving the rest unsaid. Nonetheless, he was quite understood by everyone, which caused another wave of laughter.

Volodya sat smiling, but then, apparently matching the words of Sensei with a new interpretation, he laughed, infecting the others with his rolling laughter.

“You don't say, how everything coincides,” he said, rubbing away his tears brought by laughter.

“Why, was the cattle money in Rus too?” seeming to understand the laughter in his own way, Yura asked Ariman.

“Yes,” he answered with indifference.

“Incidentally,” Sensei observed, “Cattle was more of a ‘foreign currency’ in the Ancient Rus. As the ancient Slavs were generally agricultural tribes. Beside them there lived stock-breeding tribes of steppe regions, who exchanged their cattle for the Slavs’ produce.”

“But the word ‘cattle’ denoted ‘wealth’, ‘property’,” Ariman showed his knowledge of the Russian history. “It was later that there took place a differentiation of notations for animals and money.”

But Sensei challenged it: “‘Profusion of property’, ‘excess’, ‘surplus’ – yes, that what availability of ‘cattle’ meant. But not ‘wealth’ as such. You see, initially by ‘wealth’ Ancient Slavs meant ‘God and you’, ‘God in you’, ‘In God is you,’ and it implied spiritual wealth, which is available only to man and is his true valuable.”

“Well, at any rate, it’s good to be wealthy in that sense and the other!” Ariman generalized.

“That’s for sure,” Victor agreed.

“But in order to become rich,” Ariman continued his thought, “one has to learn to respect, love money, and also to count, save, and take good care of it. That is, to conduct accounting and reporting. Simply speaking, one has to master economics. Economics is the necessity of any civilization. Economics is the art of economy management, be it small or

big, the essence is the same. Economics originated in the ancient Sumer, you know. It was Sumerians who taught the world this great art...”

Sensei smiled and said: “Well, to be completely honest Ariman, you’ll have to agree that the Sumerians taught the world not only economics, but bureaucracy too. Beginning from planting, they started a separate clay plate for their every fruit tree, a record card of a kind, where they annually recorded the quantity of gathered fruits from this tree.”

Tatyana sniggered and murmured to me: “It’s good that sea-buckthorn did not grow in those regions. They would’ve never done with counting those little orange berries.”

Meanwhile, Sensei continued: “...When the tree grew older and its yield fell, a public individual addressed the superior force with a request to cut down this tree. An appropriate ‘inspector’ wrote such permission on the same clay plate, finishing the text with a note that the trunk of that tree is warehoused.”

Volodya cheerfully said in a bass: “It’s like in that English joke: ‘The more they help you in your garden, the less the degree it’s your garden’.”

“Absolutely right,” Sensei burst out laughing along with the others.

“Well now, I didn’t realize that such a bureaucracy in the Ancient Sumer,” Nicolai Andreevich uttered and joked: “Not that’s where all the roots of sheer red tape and formalism are coming from!”

The guys laughed, while Ariman shrugged his shoulders and remarked: “As the saying goes, take care of the pence

and the pounds will look after themselves. So, this Sumerian example is merely an indicator of order and economics...”

Later he delved deeply in historical examples about people, who had been able to scrape up a fortune starting with a minor sum. When Ariman finished his story, Eugene declared with a content look on his face: “Well, economics apart, but the lunch was delicious!”

But Ariman observed: “Money creates opportunities. For example, hadn’t I had enough money, I would’ve never learnt, that there were such masterpieces of cookery art. Everything is learnt by comparison... So, guys, it’s better to be young, healthy, and rich than old, poor, and sick.”

“...Yep, with store teeth,” Victor added, and everyone laughed again.

Having eaten their fill, the folks lounged impressively in their chairs. After such a sumptuous lunch, stroking his paunch Eugene delivered: “Yeah, Ariman, you sure pleased us with this lunch of yours. Well, you kinda... drop by... more often...”

“Certainly,” said Ariman with a self-satisfied smile, throwing a glance at Sensei.

Eugene made an unintentionally loud hiccough and, as if making excuse, voiced: “Oh, that’s tough really. How about shaking down this food-abundance by intensified rowing through waves?”

“Well, why dissipate energies in such a way?” Ariman uttered. “We may occupy ourselves with more refined water amusements, if you don’t mind, of course.”

The intrigued group supported this idea with enthusiasm. However, Ariman did not go into details of proposed water amusements. He only mentioned that he had another surprise for us. Thankful for the delicious lunch, the satiated company poured out of the marquee and plunged into bright warm sunny light of the beach. Some of us ran to their tents to change clothes, including my persona. It is noteworthy that I got out of the marquee in some “crazy” state, as if I had been done up. By the time I dragged myself towards the tent, Tatyana had already sprang out of it in her swimsuit.

“Come on, let’s go,” she hurried me and ran towards Kostya, who was agilely getting out of his tent.

“I’m coming,” I had only enough power to utter, crouching into our girlish “luxury suite”.

I decided to lie down a little in order to quite this qualm. But as soon as my head touched on the pillow, I dropped into sleep at once. I woke up only when the sun was setting down. Surprisingly, I felt so incredibly well, as if nothing of what happened to me in the morning had ever actually taken place. Peeping out of the tent, my persona so-to-say took in the scene. The marquee was gone. However, our beach turned into a comfortable holiday center. There were about ten white stove benches. Five of them were occupied by Nicolai Andreevich, Volodya, Sensei, Ariman, and, judging by black kimono, Veliar. Far away, the yacht was still wallowing. Two men were steaming around in jet skies in the sea. They were Stas and Eugene. They were rushing around boundless waters like crazy, as if they were sprightly bullocks that broke loose. Further in the sea there was cleaving through the

waters a motorboat with a big banana-shaped air cushion attached to it. Judging by the figures on it, the rest of our company mounted that attachment. They were dressed in bright orange life jackets: Slavik, Kostya, Tatyana, Ruslan, Yura, Andrew, and Victor. The motorboat was wiggling, making steep turns, which rendered the company fall shout-and-scream into water en banc from time to time. When the boat approached to take this crying-and-shouting floating cargo out of the water, everyone persistently clambered, like ants, on to that air cushion, taking their former seats, and then attempted to stay in that thingamajig at high speed.

Having changed my clothes, I freshened myself up and joined the vacationers on the beach. When my persona sat down on an empty beach bed near Nicolai Andreevich, Sensei noticed my appearance and said, drawing everyone's attention: "Oh, you woke up sunshine. Well, how do you feel?"

"Thank you, already well," I replied.

"That's wonderful," slightly raising his shades, Ariman uttered contentedly, as if laying aside responsibility for some fault. "Would you like to ride?" he motioned towards the motorboat with a big banana attached to it and with our riders on it.

Just at this point the boat made a loop, the banana overturned, and our guys took a flyer out of it like seeds out of a ripe sunflower.

"Oh, no, thank you. I'd better sit here," pronounced my persona, imagining myself in their place.

“Well, it’s is up to you,” Ariman made a helpless gesture and putting his shades back on his nose, he turned to the sea.

The men continued their conversation about the yacht, which I seemed to have interrupted by my appearance.

Eugene and Stas came up to the shore, finishing their ride with synchronic steep turns on the water right near us. The waves beautifully diverged in a circle, forming two peculiar vortexes with our racers in their center. Dragging their jet skies out on the sand, the guys approached Sensei. Their eyes blazing with such excitement obviously showed that the entertainment added a sizeable portion of adrenaline into their blood.

“That’s tops! What a speed!” Eugene shared his impressions. “Such a maneuverability. Takes breath away!”

“Cool!” Stas confirmed. “That’s what I call equipment. What a motor!”

“Sensei, do you wanna try? It’s a pretty good wow!” Eugene proposed quickly. “I get a blockbuster kick out of such speed!”

The men laughed to so sincere village expressions of the guy.

“No, thank you. There is no good for me to be a blockhead,” Sensei responded with laughter. “By the way, perhaps, it’s about time to wind up, if you want to be on time at the extrasensory show.”

“We sure do!” Eugene said with a heightened dose of liveliness. Addressing to Ariman, already on familiar terms for some reason, he uttered: “Man, you won’t regret it. Such

a cinema – you haven't ever seen. It's a local exotic attraction."

Everyone burst out laughing again. But then Eugene noticed appearance of my persona among the resting party. And since Sensei refused riding, he stuck to me as so-to-say a new object that's unsophisticated in all that pile of amusements.

"Yo! Nastyuha! Lemme give you a ride, quick as the wind!"

"No way," I chuckled. "I only stopped reeling, and here you are offering to shake me up again."

Stas pulled his friend by the hand.

"Eugene, stop that, stay! Why pester the lady? Let's go change. Or we won't make it to the 'concert of all concerts'."

Eugene beamed and to make things look funnier, looking back at the jet skies that he had liked so much, he started whining. Meanwhile, Stas was dragging him aside as some mangy dog from a sweet brain bone. When everyone laughed at the sight of this *mise-en-scène*, Eugene scratched the back of his head.

"Eh, no luck... It would be awesome to buy one like that!"

"Well, where would you run it around then?" Stas smiled. "Local girders or gutters at home?"

"Why, it will be awesome!"

They laughed again.

"Well, let's wrap it up," Sensei suggested addressing the men.

Ariman nodded. And, perhaps, quite by chance they both turned their heads in different directions addressing their assistants and said almost simultaneously: “Call the others.”

While Sensei directed at Eugene, Ariman addressed to Veliar. There seemed to be no need for our guy, as well as for the Chinese, to repeat the words twice. But if Veliar took a tiny portable radio, lying nearby, in a civilized manner and brought it to his mouth, Eugene immediately made such a deafening signal whistle that I hardly managed to cover my ears so that my ear-drums wouldn't burst. One should have seen Veliar's face at that time. His hand that had already pressed the communication button sank slowly, and his eyes conveyed such an utter astonishment at the sight of this musical whistler, as if the Chinese saw a living native of the dinosaur era. Ariman, who did not expect such thunderous audible signals from the guy, looked at him with amazement and then began shaking quietly in a fit of silent laughter. The whistle of our guy apparently reached the addressee, as far as the motorboat not only turned sharp round, in addition to that an abrupt flaming speech of its driver in a foreign language could be heard from Veliar's radio, with tough insertion of specific 'Russian expressions.' Having finally realized that he was already been spoken to, Veliar came to his senses and hastily started saying something in reply. On hearing him Ariman roared with laughter together with Sensei. Stas and Eugene looked at them and enthusiastically supported their infectious laugh. In passing Eugene tried to find out what had happened, and Sensei replied: “The man just enjoyed your

whistle. He said he hadn't heard such a cacophony in his entire life."

Eugene, who seemed to have heard an unfamiliar word in Sensei's answer, did not know if he should be happy or not. He chuckled and boasted with a sort of shyness: "Um, I can cross-stitch too, you know."

The men rolled with laughter. After laughing for a while they started packing up without waiting for a motorboat to arrive. As for me, I went to my tent in order to change appropriately for our afternoon adventures.

When I was about to put on my sportswear, there flew into the tent Tatyana, shivering all over, blue-lipped, bright-eyed, but judging by her mood, with redundancy of cheery emotions. She began to change quickly, at the same time sharing her impressions of all that package of water attractions that Ariman arranged for them. Incidentally, her laugh became somewhat funny, I'd say nervous, like a person who was strongly frightened, but attempted to change this fear into laughter, so as not to look a coward before the others. No wonder, after such a tour! I think, if I had turned upside down a couple times on that banana at wild speed, it is unknown how I'd have laughed after that.

Everyone was ready-fitted in half an hour. Ariman offered to sail up to the boarding houses on the yacht, Nicolai Andreevich expressed his opinion about driving up in cars. But Sensei said that personally he would like to walk a little way, accentuating the value of walking for every person's health. No one raised objections. Walking, then walking it is. All the more the weather was marvelous, and pictures of

nature looked sensationally beautiful against the background of the approaching evening setting. Even Ariman didn't hesitate to agree with Sensei's suggestion.

“For health, so for health it is.”

Ariman changed into his tracksuit and jogging shoes, which made him look like us. Even Veliar was in splendor of a sportswear instead of his kimono. But while Ariman wore his clothes comfortably, paying no attention to it, Veliar on the other hand was pulling down his sportswear all the time, straightening its folds. Judging by his look, he was extremely dissatisfied with the fact that he had to climb into such an uncomfortable fabric of the West instead of his comfortable kimono. Though, he showed his silent displeasure only when he was not in the view of his boss.

All hands went off, leaving our camp up to two sailors from Ariman's yacht. At first, carried away with simple talks mixed up with funny stories, we happened to go close together. But then in private conversations our collective divided and stretched somewhat. Ariman, surrounded by Victor, Stas, Eugene, Yura, and Ruslan, walked in the front. Volodya and Veliar, walking separately, walked behind. Then there strolled our group: Andrew, Kostya, Tatyana, I, and Slavik. Closing the file there were Sensei and Nicolai Andreevich, who discussed on some psychology topic.

“Man, it's been a while since I had a good time like that,” Andrew said merely.

“You bet!” Kostya agreed readily. “That was groovy!”

“Ariman is a cool man all the same!” Slavik joined in a wave of enthusiasm.

“I’ll say!”

“Such a vacation I’ll never forget,” Andrew uttered rapturously.

“That’s unforgettable for sure,” Kostya nodded. “When we get back home...”

“Oh, don’t remind me,” Tatyana moaned. “After such heavens, and into our bleak reality.”

“It’s alright,” Kostya cheered her up, “Our day will come too some time.”

“Yeah, right, in a couple of decennials, and not ours, but those of their descendants’,” Andrew motioned toward Ariman and Veliar with laughter. “As for us, like my father says, our table will be served only with an ash-tray at that time.”

The guys laughed sadly. During our talk we could hear bits of conversation between the elder guys and Ariman. Since our sad laugh ceased soon, plunging us into a cheerless picture of our evident future, we heard Ariman saying: “...’Homo faber’ Man the Maker – that’s how a modern man is called. And it’s true... It’s characteristic for human nature to take an interest in world’s riddles. His aspiration for guessing them also does make sense. Even the fact of searching for the answers to these questions speaks about man’s desire to live better...”

“Yeah, live better,” Andrew repeated after Ariman and voiced jokingly: “In our case this ‘better’ turns out to be like in that anecdote: ‘Well that’s a nice kettle of fish, we’ve started to live well just now, but then presto, the money is already gone’.”

“Yep, it’s always like that,” Slavik confirmed with laughter. “Chronic shortage, I’m telling you!”

“Not chronic – inherited,” Kostya specified. “Shortage of money is a contagion that’s transferred hereditarily.”

The guys roared.

“You said it,” Andrew nodded. “See the life pass in sheer money hemorrhoids. But life’s so short.”

Then we heard an unusual poem from Ariman: ”Skirt of the Rose tore down with the wind. / The Nightingale reveled in garden first light. / Ravel thee too, for the Rose is instantaneous. / Whispers the young Rose: ‘Admire! I’ll die...’ “

“Oh!” Kostya roused himself. “That’s Omar Khayyám himself. Well, well...”

And Kostya hastened to join the listeners of Ariman, leaving our company behind. Looking at Kostya’s hasty withdrawal, Tatyana sniffed discontentedly: “Hum, that’s some...”

Before she could finish the phrase, Andrew chuckled and followed him with an emotional remark: “On departing, he left many true friends behind him. For he was a true... egoistic traitor.”

We laughed. It was not but in five minutes, however, that the ranks of ‘egoistic traitors’ were successfully complemented by Slavik, and by Andrew himself, because the elder guys entered into a very interesting conversation with Ariman. Tatyana and I had nothing to do, but come closer, so as at least walking wouldn’t be so boring. Catching up with

Volodya and Veliar, pacing a little behind the company, we could hear each word of Ariman clearly.

An interesting talk started when one of the guys reminded Ariman about his promise, back during the lunch, to enlighten them about business and about the way to start it properly.

“What I’m about to tell you,” Ariman pronounced, “I’ve said and explained to many peoples in different countries. They were eoples of different races, estates, and nationalities. And believe me, the majority of them...” He pondered for a moment, and then said: “Yes, almost all of them, save a few...” There Ariman turned slightly. It seemed to me that he gave a slanting glance at Sensei, who walked behind and conversed with and Nicolai Andreevich.

“So, almost all of them refocused their lives and achieved their aims by becoming rich and respected peoples in the society. Of course, there were very famous individuals among them, who made considerable success in business and became my assistants. In fact, now they head the world’s largest companies. But, you know, in the beginning they were simple people, just like you. However, they attended to my words, to what I’m about to tell you now.”

Ariman stopped speaking. Our guys quieted down.

“The true power of transformation hides in the strength of subconscious, in your firm belief and steadfast thought of consciousness in achieving your aim. I have no doubt that Sensei told you a lot about it. But I don’t think that you’ve heard how you can materialize thoughts into concrete actions, making your dearest wish come true.

“People think that this world is cruel and unjust. Why, for example, one works little, if at all, but has everything? Why do others labor hard, morning till evening, and have only pittance in their pockets? Why do some people have wealth and esteem, while others suffer hardships and live almost below the poverty line? Some have luxurious castles in European capitals, they have yachts, and cars of the latest models; while the others are forced to eke out their miserable existence in bunk houses, and ride crowded buses to work, at the best? Why are good men tormented by terrible illnesses, while hardened criminals live needless lives, and have good health too? Why do some get over deadly diseases, and some die because of those diseases? Will you say the world is unjust?”

“Well, yes,” obviously because everyone kept silent, Eugene nodded. Then he advanced a slogan. “Today, as they say, you’ve gone past injustice. And tomorrow? Tomorrow, injustice won’t go past you.”

Ariman grinned.

“Oh, no, guys, in truth, the world has nothing to do with it. The world lives in strict conformity with certain laws. The problem is in man’s mentality, in using the strength of his subconscious. For our subconscious has inexhaustible capabilities. But the question is, do we use them? No. Why? Because we doubt ourselves all the time, we are annoyed with ourselves all the time. But tell me, if a man doesn’t love himself and doesn’t respect himself, how can he make others love and respect him, and reckon with his opinion?” The guys walked in silence, some hung their heads, some were looking

at Ariman. “Let’s take a simple banal real-world example. There are two classmates. One was a model in everything – studies, company. The other was always playing the second fiddle, being lazy and untalented. But the time passes, and the second guy becomes director of a plant, and the former – a clear head – becomes a worker on that plant, sweats his guts out from morning to night for a crummy salary. Why does such a casus take place? Injustice? Not at all. The schtick of this paradox is that the second guy, though inconspicuous in outward appearance, had inner self-assertion, a golden thread of self-esteem. Besides, he did not doubt absolutely what he was doing. The first guy, on the other hand, despite outward entourage, lived with inner fears and doubts about his actions. Doubts, however, imply properties of destruction, but not of creation by any means.”

“Yes, doubts are the first enemy,” agreed Victor. “And it becomes so habitual...”

At that moment Eugene, who walked behind between Ariman and Stas, and, probably, looking to replace Stas, sighted a widening gap between them. Immediately he tried to push his friend aside in order to be closer to Ariman.

“Exactly, precisely,” said the lad, taking up Victor’s opinion, at the same time trying to wedge in the place of resisting Stas. “This enemy becomes as habitual as a friend. While a friend is worse than an enemy: the closer he gets, the pushier and more importunate he becomes.”

Stas did not bear such an impudent Eugene’s onslaught from the rear and had to yield to his persistence.

As for Eugene, he exulted and voiced, probably, addressing his words to Victor rather than Stas: “I’ll tell you more. He is a genuine wicked creature! For a friend always aims even at your lawful place.”

Finding himself behind, Stas hummed and added, looking at Eugene with reproach: “That’s what ya call it, a wicked creature came to stay there for three days, but drove your out for an entire century.”

Walking in reverie and paying no attention to all those battles of local importance, Victor said with a smile: “That was an accurate observation! Doubts settle down in our heads exactly like that. You hit the nail on the head!”

Stas grinned.

“Duh! All I can do is hit the nail on the head at such dimensions of those who listen, but do not hear.”

But Victor was not taking any notice of his words now, as he told Ariman: “But how to root those wicked ones out of head?”

“Doubts spring up from ignorance. Ignorance causes distrust. And nothing destroys belief so much as distrust,” explained Ariman. “Distrust is an antipode of belief. Doubts are your subconscious fears. Each individual suffers from their own fears, inconstancy, psychology complexes. Overcoming all these is especially difficult for those born in simple families of modest means, where parents were as much of a loser as the majority of population. It’s difficult because since their childhood these people had been observing a continuous example of how to survive, instead of how to live high.”

“Absolutely right,” noted Stas, making a quick step towards Ariman and taking his place back, while Eugene loafed about in self-satisfaction. Then Stas declared with a smile, looking sideways at Eugene, who became dumb at such an impertinent trick on his behalf. “There’s one law in such families, if you survived, supersede the other.”

“Those born in such families, as a rule, dream only of wealth,” Ariman continued acting as if he didn’t notice that castling between the friends. “But because of their loser complex, they don’t know and don’t admit even the thought of how they can actually become rich. Most of peoples are limited in their minds by their own fears. That’s why they don’t live, but stay alive.

“Though, note that man is born free of fears. Now, recall yourselves when you were young. Since early childhood you have been inculcated fears that are absolutely groundless. The goal of your parents, *per se*, was one – to save you from troubles. Taking care of you, they imposed their psychological types on you, but according to fact they crafted a convinced loser out of you with a whole complex of ‘don’t’, ‘I can’t’, ‘I can’t afford it’. Is it not so? Indeed. Really, if you reach back in your minds and explore the past years, you will recall a countless number of times, when you were told ‘don’t’, when they suppressed manifestations of independence, expressions of individuality. How many times have you heard from your parents, when they returned home after work, that their boss is a fool, an idiot. Nonetheless, that ‘idiot’ was their superior, while your parents – being so smart – worked for him. In other words, little by little a model of

imitation was lodged in your subconscious that you – being as smart as your parents – are sure to be supervised by fools. That's why, growing up and subconsciously accepting this model as axiom, you condemn yourselves to slavery. Believe me, I've seen quite a lot in my life. Even if a man is a genius, but cannot make up his mind on his own, so there he is, employing for an idiot, who has no knowledge, but has his own willpower, volition. Volition means much in this world.

“But the days of your childhood are just the preamble to forming your fears. The older you get, the more complexes of fears bring new circles of your acquaintances. Then there goes subconscious suggestion that you'll never pull off anything worthwhile, that your attempts to achieve something have no sense, that sooner or later you will be done for, become sick and feeble. You are being impressed on that the world sinks in a gloomy abyss, that the end of the world is imminent, that life is perdition in hell, and that you are but a loser in it.

“Eventually you grow up, and, based on all this negative complex, they begin to develop new fears in you by the instrumentality of surrounding society, newspapers, television, intensifying the feeling of hopelessness and despair in you. So, you don't control this flow of negative information, letting it into your subconscious without hindrance. You start to believe everything you've seen and heard, thus, assuming – through strength of your belief – the nightmarish reality of your existence. But if one looks into it in a global scope, one will observe that all this is done in order to grow an obedient slave out of you. For there is one law in

this world: either you become a free man, a slave owner, or you will be a slave of a free man.

“Just look at how this world is organized. It is ruled by a small group of people, ‘powers that be’, who make billions of people work for them. Do you think these ‘powers that be’ trust television or newspapers? Of course not, because in fact they are the makers of those events that you see, for everything occurs according to their scenario in order to hold in continuous awe and servility their employees – that is, yourselves. As for television and press, those are merely public heralds of their ‘royal decrees’. Should the slaves want freedom and democracy, they shall get freedom and democracy and in such a way that these slaves have never dreamt of. The heralds play such a farce that a man, let alone his unwillingness of such a democracy, would gladly kiss his fetters, if only everything remained at least as it had been before. It’s like in that joke, you know. If you want to make someone happy, first deprive him of everything he has and then return at least a half. In the grand scheme of things, all wars, revolutions, struggle for freedom, for democracy – all these are lies, beautiful tales, written by the ‘powers that be’ for the slaves to imperatively believe in. But the fact is that at the bottom of all these events there is simply money, big money.

“If the slaves want to feel the national pride, here you go, the heralds are right on the spot. If they want to experience the excitement of scandals, public denunciations – as much as you like, all sizes, all colors. You see, people are paltry in their everyday inclinations. Nothing arouses more interest in

them than somebody's tragedy. The 'powers that be' will work any kind of doomsday for you, anything you like, just be a slave, go with the crowd, be like others and think like others. They are few in number, but they manipulate well. As for the slaves – well, slaves they are. The origin of servility is descended from one generation to another, and there are very few of those who can break out of this vicious circle. That's why there have always been and will be the castes of rulers and the crowds of slaves.

“Listen to me, guys! For you not become a part of this crowd, you should change your intellectual servitude. Start to have self-respect, so as to make others respect you later on. The entire view of the world begins and ends in your own minds. Thoughts are your weapon. Ignore any negative suggestion, don't give it the strength of your belief. Your belief must be directed precisely at the achievement of your goal. Inscribe a golden formula in your consciousness: prosperity, success, good fortune. Don't let them pull the wool of ignorance, fear, and superstition over your eyes. It's a mere provocation of those who wish to command you. Think independently! Learn to make all decisions independently! And remember, if you don't dominate the others, somebody will dominate you, *tertium non datur*. For any power is held on the strength of suggestion that you support with your own belief. Don't be that rabbit, who seems to feel like staying alive, but at the same time sticks his head into boa's mouth. Remember – this is your life, one and inimitable! It does not belong to anyone but you. You are a full-fledged Master in it. And only you make decisions in it!

First of all, divest yourselves of those groundless fears, blind preconceptions, that torment the entire humankind. Divest yourselves from clichés and social frames created by clever people for the servile crowd. Instead, believe in yourselves, in indisputable realities of life. Snap out of illusions. Wealth is power.”

We walked in silence, absorbed with fascinating frank and powerful speech of Ariman.

“... Everyone has a chance of breaking through to real freedom, happiness, wealth. What’s so bad about your family being prosperous enough that even your grandchildren will live in easy circumstances? What’s so bad about having money that you can spend on traveling round the world, visiting spiritual places? What’s bad about being in your own yacht in the middle of the ocean against the background of the most beautiful sunset, doing your meditation in peace and harmony, making your spiritual progress? As you know, a multitude of opportunities lay in reach of a wealthy man. If you want it, progress spiritually, or visit holy places, or converse with famous people, enjoy yourself on your own villa, on your own islands. The doors of ‘powers that be’ are open before a wealthy man. With equal friendliness he will be received by Dalai Lama, the Pope, or the President of the United States if you like.

“You are always being told fairy stories that it’s bad to be rich. Being rich is good! It’s bad to be poor! Poverty is an illness that is inoculated artificially. Remember this, whichever country or city you come to in search of improving your life, if you don’t have enough money for a reasonable

living, you will remain the slave all the same. For in any country, under any rule, the rich govern the poor, and the poor work for the rich. It was like that, it is like that, and it will be like that. Your freedom depends exclusively on the size of your capital. The wealthier you become the more independent and free you are. The rest of what's told to you is a sheer fairy story. Guys, don't draw vain illusions for yourselves! Wake up and live the right way. The strongest live, not survive in this world. For the whole world is ruled by money nowadays.

“By the by, slaves are artificially inculcated not only with poverty, but, as I was already saying, with fear too, which clever people utilize to make billions. I'll give you a simple example of how leading pharmaceutical companies earn colossal sums on consciousness of slaves. They merely create a little world-wide ballyhoo around some disease. And that's all. It is exactly their initial investment that will return them a hundredfold profit.”

“I don't get it,” Victor said with surprise. “How's that?”

“It's simple. For example, they created the AIDS problem and ensured a stable financial profit for themselves by selling expensive medicine, which, if judged fairly, doesn't solve the problem for a diseased person. Next, it didn't take much announcing around the globe about a possible tuberculosis epidemic threat to make a mint of money on that for them. I won't be surprised if they invent (by the time they run out of standard ideas) some kind of mutated flu virus, transmitted to humans from animals or birds.”

“How can they possibly invent such a virus if it maybe does not naturally exist?” Stas asked shockingly.

“Ah! See? Even you say ‘maybe’. And uncertainty is an indication of intellectual servitude. Complement this fact with some purchased opinions of several scientists of world-leading virology laboratories, and you’ll trust this information implicitly. What’s crucial for them is that you believed. Then your fear and reflexes of self-defense instinct will do a lot more than all conventional medicine ads combined. No worries about the virus, though. If a blank cannon-shot doesn’t impress or stir the crowd enough, it will be changed for real ammo. So, if Mother Nature doesn’t create such virus, people will help her. And all in the name of earning billions from selling virus vaccine.

“All in all, those guys are great! I admire their brilliant developments in advertising and arrangement of sizable capital influx. What’s important, everything is relatively honest: you care about your health, they care about their purses. Although, by curing one illness with their medicine, you gain three new illnesses free of charge. As a result you become their hostages, their perpetual sponsors. Is it not a brilliant idea of unending capital replenishment at the expense of your fear, impressionability, and servility?! It’s a big business. But big business is power. All free people tend to rule over someone lest to become that someone to be ruled over.”

That information was not only shocking for us, it came as a bombshell. Emotions gave way in the elder guys.

“Holy mackerel!” uttered Victor.

“That’s a swindle to all swindles!” mouthed Stas.

“Gee whiz! Those jerks,” Eugene raged, without mincing his words. “Me, buying another pill? Nothing doing!”

Ariman grinned and waved his hand at Eugene.

“As they say, if you want to live, you’ll buy, and also thank them and bow low too. There’s no escaping this addiction, because it’s reality. In order to be independent, you’ve got to live your life in such a way as to make the others depend on you. It’s easier than you think guys. That’s because any person has vast possibilities, for he has an almighty ally and assistant, which, if needed, will remove mountains and dry up oceans. It’s his subconscious. 99.9% of peoples in the world don’t use it properly, clogging it with silly things. It always surprised me. A man, who can achieve considerable financial heights in this world, conquer the peaks of this world, only wastes the strength of his subconscious on some preposterous trifles. It’s not enough that he defines those petty goals for it, he also creates heaps of obstacles, immediately hoisting them as a command into his subconscious, that ‘I won’t reach it’, ‘it’s impossible for me’, ‘I cannot afford it for myself’, and so on.

“It was shocking for me to watch how people dissipated the strength of their subconscious carelessly, dreaming of some petty things, consumer goods, while at the same time they could’ve used this great strength to achieve substantial success in life, an entire fortune. But many people persistently give priority to small things, giving up the greater. Instead of earning a million, they dream of pennies. And at

the same time they envy the rich all the time, in essence doing nothing to achieve similar success in their own lives. That's why their lot is life in poverty. And why? That's because at the bottom people are small-minded.

“That's why society is divided into classes, into the rich and the poor. People unite with those, who are like them, who think like them, and, therefore, who live in an environment corresponding to the limits of their thinking. However, if a poor man is placed into rich people environment, he will think as the rich in time. So he will ultimately change his mentality and start earning his own capital. By the way, it was proven by many experiments. In other words, the roots are in man's mentality and the scope of his thinking.”

“How can one switch over to rich man's mentality, if, for example, elite environment is not available for one at the moment? Are there any other ways?” Victor enquired.

“Undoubtedly, there are. Everything is in your hands,” Ariman answered. “After all, the above-named method is artificial. But there is a natural way to become rich. It's owing to it that many of those, who now represent the group of the powers that be, reached the summit of the world Olympus. In order to achieve it, you have to start from the most elementary thing: believe in yourself and your abilities. Believe without doubts – and everything you wish will come true. As soon as you learn to use the strength of your subconscious in a proper way, luck, health, wealth, and power will come to you on their own. For now, you need to understand, go deep into, and examine in the ways of using the strength of your subconscious. Don't waste a single

minute, don't put it off till later, but do take good care of yourselves here and now to release yourselves from the oppression of poverty, need, and disappointment forever.

“The most successful method is in effective formulation of a prayer, which I'll give you a bit later. The key to its strength lies in belief. What is belief in the law of life, anyway? It's a clearly formulated thought, which you support in your subconscious during a certain period of time until it comes true. You don't know yourselves and your capabilities. Deep layers of your subconscious conceal not only infinite strength, but also a wide variety of your capabilities and abilities. They store an entire informative base of all sorts of ideas. As a matter of fact you are a genius, but you don't know it. As soon as you learn to listen and to control your subconscious, you'll be able to gain financial independence, become the master of your own destiny and live happily in safety and plenty.”

“Can one really achieve it only by using the strength of one's subconscious?” Ruslan doubted.

“Yes, one can. I myself was a witness to what I'm telling you. I saw people use strength of their subconscious to rise from the very bottom to the top. I saw how people used strength of their subconscious to become healthy and rich. They simply tore the fetters that shackled them. Owing to their belief, their subconscious led them out of bondage of material, household, and physical problems.”

“So, subconscious is something like a lever?” Kostya specified in businesslike tone.

“No. Subconscious is a point of support. While belief is a lever that can turn the whole world. There are no accidents in this life, guys. Everything that happens in your lives is the product of your subconscious and is as a result of your uncontrollable thoughts. That’s why it swings you from right to left like a boat on the waves. In reality, guys, you’re producers and directors of your whole life. You gave an order to your subconscious – it executed. But you have infinite possibilities for creating posh, spectacular movie stories named you life. Subconscious is, say, your golden fund in a Swiss bank, which you can have for anything. But common people act the fool. They are unaware not only of that account, they know not even about that Swiss money too. The reason is nobody informed them about it. So they live in their drab daily routine, filming cheap stories amid cheap beggarly scenery, worrying about their every penny, and being unaware of their real capabilities. So, don’t be such fools! Make the most of these treasures and live high. You life is one and only!”

Ariman made a meaningful pause, as though he wanted the guys to think over and try to grasp what he had said.

Suddenly, Volodya said in a bass: “Yes, life is such a short term. You try hard to make a good use out of it, to manifest yourself spiritually, but then you know the rest. Life circumstances push you to the wall...”

“Remember, it is exactly your thought that is the initial cause of creating your life circumstances,” Ariman said in a didactic tone. “It’s exactly your thought that leads to manifestation of soul. Currently, educated people know that

soul as such performs various functions, and, therefore, she is seen as two completely different spheres with their own distinctive features and powers. There's a number of scientific definitions to them: superficial self and deeper self, objective and subjective thinking, consciousness and subconscious. But in order for you to understand things easier, let's stop at the terms of consciousness and subconscious that are more comprehensive for you.

“Now then, soul is identified by a single package of interaction between consciousness and subconscious. There is a differentiation in the East between small self and big Self. Small self is our mind. Big self is the subconscious. I'll reveal you a big secret, guys. In truth the big Self is our consciousness, it's what we feel ourselves, for it is the script writer, director of our life. That's what we are. As for the small self, it's what we don't feel, and it's in the depth of subconscious. It is the doer. Whichever program we put into it, so it will do.”

Volodya, who had joined the company by that time, shrugged his shoulders and said doubtfully: “Is that so?”

Ariman grinned.

“Guys, I've had an opportunity to study thoroughly everything that has to do with spiritual development of man both in the East, and in the West, since remotest antiquity till modern times. I've had an opportunity to look through such historical documents that aren't available for everybody. That's why I know what I'm saying. Believe me, what is well-spread among the masses is far from always being true. Because for the elite of mankind, which pays for all this

myths-making, the masses are slaves. If real historical facts were revealed to people, for instance, at least about the life and the teaching of Jesus, Buddha, and so on, the mighty power of those, who keep these facts in secret, would collapse.”

“Oh, I don’t know,” Volodya said in bass again.

But Ariman, paying no attention to his doubts, continued speaking: “In order to learn how to manage one’s subconscious, belief is needed. Belief is above all. But sole belief is not enough to achieve your goals. You also need to have rigorous inner discipline of thoughts. You need to be an ideal manager of your own self. It’s like in managing an enterprise. If a manager is not exacting, no subordinate will hasten to execute his orders. Instead they will act slovenly, ‘maybe I’ll do, maybe I won’t’. With such a discipline production will eventually collapse, and the enterprise will go bankrupt. However, if the manager will be stern and exacting, no subordinate will dare disobey him and will efficiently perform all tasks set before them. As a result the whole enterprise will benefit. Same is here. Your big Self, that is, your consciousness, must give orders to small self, that is, subconscious, stringent specific orders, things will work out for you. If you don’t do this, you’ll be completely harried by fears and doubts. Therefore, there will be no order in your mind. And you’ll become a loser, a poor manager, who honestly pays salary to his subordinates for virtually undone work, thus, wittingly dooming his enterprise to bankruptcy. A great deal, if not all, depends on superior. You were given good employees. Your subconscious, like disciplined

personnel, reacts to your every desire, to mood of their superior quite keenly. Do make use of it. Don't restrain from stringently ordering them to work. Only then your enterprise will enrich itself, become competitive, and this will make others treat you with respect. In other words, your inner orders, in essence, will change the environment of your existence: instead of poverty you'll get abundance; instead of sick body – healthy one; instead of your superstitions and fears – wisdom and calmness; instead failures – success. You'll come out a winner from all angles – material, spiritual, and intellectual.

“For the small self is like a sailor in an engine room, owing to whom entire submarine is set in motion. He doesn't see and doesn't know, where the submarine is going. He simply listens to the order his captain gives him. And the whole crew, by the way, submits to captain's orders, that's why the vessel travels in a desirable direction, owing to captain's capable management and, as a result, the concerted work of the whole team.”

“That's as it may be,” voiced Stas. “But what if I give a wrong order? Or there will appear some insuperable hindrance.”

“Never strike any attitudes for yourselves that a hindrance is insuperable. For any situation there is a way out. There are no impasses for your subconscious. It has a multitude of expedients. All you need to do is take notice of its optimal solution in ambient reality. Do you remember how it's with Buddhists? One of their methods in their philosophy

is recollection. A splendid technique. So, apply it to your case, to achieve wealth and success.”

“What’s this method of recollection?” Andrew hastened to ask Ariman.

“Buddhists don’t seek to solve complex problems by means of logical reasoning of every possible way in their consciousness. They simply make their subconscious work at recalling this decision, as if it had already been made. As a result of such emancipation of mind, positive, calm thinking it happens that fear, feeling of hopelessness disappear, and without your hindrance-doubts, your subconscious gives out the only right in all respects decision.”

“In other words, there’s activated what we call, intuition?” Andrew specified.

“Yes. Just don’t impede work of your subconscious, don’t give contradicting orders to it in form of doubts regarding favorable outcome of this solution. Don’t give it attitudes like ‘I can’t do that’, ‘I’m not going to make it’, ‘I am a victim to a fraud’, and so on. The more fears you picture for yourselves, the more they will come true. It’s because your attitudes and doubts for subconscious imply another task to be realized. By doing so you are building a Chinese wall in front of you, and grow negative complexes in yourselves too, which, in turn, create all facilities for nervous breakdowns and development of various chronic diseases. Doubts are like steam that comes out for a short time, but then disappears. Hence, don’t allow boiling in order to avoid puffs of steam and to prevent precious water, which is knowledge, from vaporizing. Control your thoughts.

“Remember, there are always variants of solutions, and there’re plenty of them. Just relax and give your subconscious a command to find the optimal variant of a solution. And be sure, the solution will be found. As for you, just do your best to relax and forget about this problem. Enjoy your life in full! But don’t dare rushing things, doubting in the strength of your subconscious, or else you’ll go round in circles. Order a command Instead: ‘I’ll make it,’ ‘I can afford it,’ ‘I’m the winner,’ ‘I’m strong.’ That is, only affirmative, only positive for you. The solution will emerge soon, at the same time preserving your health and nerves.

“And do watch over accuracy of giving your attitudes. For example, if you want to acquire a firm, instead of saying ‘This firm will be my’ say ‘This firm is already mine.’ And it will be so. As a matter of fact the formula of your prayer materializes into action.”

“What should you do if doubts are eating you all the time? What can be done in order to exterminate doubts in yourself, so as not to hinder subconscious?” Ruslan asked.

“If doubts arise, reinforce your commands to your subconscious. Repeat these formulas diligently until they implant into your consciousness. For example, in such formulation: ‘I have no fears, no doubts, for I am the Master, and all my thoughts submit to my command. All doubts disappear. I command my thoughts to be calm and submit to me.’ During this time you can associatively imagine, how the waves in your head settle down in the ocean, which is your consciousness, and perfect calm sets in by the force of your mighty commands. By the way, all these formulas are to be

said with 100% confidence, as if cutting access to panic, despair, and all negative feelings. Go asleep with such thoughts, wake up with them, live with them your whole day.

“Your consciousness must be like a huge watchdog, its strength and confidence scaring away all the negative in order to safeguard your house – subconscious – against harmful impressions. It has the strength and power to choose, whom it lets in the house and whom it doesn’t. So, if the choice is yours, choose only positive things, happiness, prosperity, success, and wealth. Control what you’re thinking. There can be no formlessness in your thoughts. All your desires are to be expressed loud and clear and have to have steadiness in being achieved.”

“Well, it may be so,” Eugene uttered seriously. “But it’s still hard to believe that my subconscious is able to achieve such goals. If it’s so strong, why didn’t it show itself somehow, even in those problems, where I’d really like to have positive outcome?”

“It’s because you didn’t set it in motion; you didn’t use the strength of your belief. You don’t even have full understanding what subconscious is. Subconscious controls such a complex structure of living matter as your organism. It controls all of its physical functions, emotions, and its condition; takes care of its safety. Can you really think that subconscious won’t be able to cope with problems, which are child’s play if compared to the vast control it exercises over your body? You can’t even imagine the real volume of its work. Supporting life in your body is like supporting life of millions of galaxies!

“Subconscious always keeps watch of its Master’s interests. It keeps vigil all the time. Fatigue is not characteristic of it. It’s not enough that it controls complex inner processes, taking place in your body, it also carefully records full flow of external information. Now, for instance, would you like to receive evidence of the strength of your subconscious?”

Our guys shook their heads willingly. Ariman stopped. Following him, our entire company stopped, crowding in dense circle around him. Only Sensei and Nicolai Andreevich, absorbed in their conversation, walked somewhat behind the collective.

“Then, close your eyes and concentrate right now,” Ariman proposed. “Give yourselves a clear mental order to recall our entire conversation down to the smallest details tomorrow.” I decided to give myself such order just for a laugh, because I was certain that I wouldn’t be able to recall everything to the smallest details, for sure.

“Get ready, give a volitional impulse that tomorrow, as soon as you wake up and open your eyes, your consciousness shall call to mind all my speech down to the smallest details, all you have already heard and yet will hear from me today. You shall clearly remember every word. Moreover, you will remember my words not only tomorrow, but every time you come across things in your lives that I revealed to you.”

Ariman snapped his fingers distinctly. His snap was quite loud and clear. It was so sudden that I started almost out of my skin and opened my eyes in fright. I felt some unpleasant acerbic taste in my mouth, as if I took a bite of half

of a lemon at one stroke. This caused abundant salivation. Judging by crooked faces of other guys, it seemed that not only I experienced such sensations.

“Well, have you given an order?” Ariman asked with a smile. The intonation of his voice softened.

“Ugh!” Volodya spitted, surprised at such unexpected gustatory sensations. “What’s that? It’s like I ate a lemon.”

“Same trouble with me,” uttered Victor.

“Oh, I forgot to mention,” Ariman check himself. “This effect is accompanied with such a taste, as if you’ve eaten a lemon slice.”

“That’s a fine kettle of lemons!” Kostya pronounced sarcastically, spattering lavishly aside, together with Andrew.

“Now be sure that tomorrow morning, as soon as you wake up, my speech will pour in your thoughts like a stream,” said Ariman contentedly.

Eugene spitted expressively in the sand and said with a grin: “We’ll have a look at that stream. Though, perhaps, only a few drops of it will trickle through my weirs and dams.”

Ariman smiled and gazed in his eye, saying: “It’s good that you have weirs and dams. For knowledge is like water. When water makes, dams appear. But when there’s too much water, the dams are broken through. The words I said will be like a spring flood, which will burst through all your weirs and dams, and will stream swiftly in your thoughts like a torrent, carrying away all obstacles on its way, during the whole day tomorrow.”

“Wow,” voiced Eugene, after hearing such a sophisticated philosophic speech of Ariman. “My ears fell before such expressions.”

Our guys laughed. At that time Sensei, who came up together with Nicolai Andreevich, put his hand on Eugene’s shoulder in a friendly way and uttered: “It’s when a pumpkin ripens, leaves fall away. These words have the full meaning of life, as said a great master and Chinese thinker of the 17 century, Chen Chiju.”

Sensei turned his eyes to Ariman and they laughed merrily, leaving our smiling company in a bit of perplexity. Only puzzled Eugene said: “Do what? I didn’t get it.”

But then our crowd went off again, following Ariman. When Stas walked past Eugene, he patted his head saying: “It’s all right. You’ll get it when the pumpkin ripens!”

When our company slightly calmed in joking about that, Kostya asked Ariman making an effort to grasp crucial points of the interrupted conversation: “In other words, to put it bluntly, we need to convince ourselves that our wish will come true no matter what, right?”

“Right. You consciousness chooses the wish, while subconscious carries out all, what you believe in. Subconscious is unable to think logically, it’s proven by numerous psychological experiments, including hypnotic experience. In hypnotic condition, man’s personality changes in such a way that’s wanted by hypnotist’s consciousness. It’s because subconscious trusts in all what is suggested to it implicitly. What is suggestion, anyway? Suggestion is a catalyst of immense strength that you’ve got to learn to

control and operate. A man, who mastered suggestion, makes his way to leadership in everything, including business.

“Suggestion is purposeful mental influence and awakening of certain beliefs, which are accepted and executed as veritable ones. In order to drive away all fears, you are to practice autosuggestion continually, that is, to exert influence upon your subconscious by purposeful thoughts. In addition you must formulate your mental command clearly. It’s not like ‘I’ll give all best of what I have, for it’ or ‘I’ll give all my money, to get it.’ Because later on, you’ll actually get what you’d wanted, but as you had promised you’d lose all your best or would give all your money, as you unwisely assented to express in your orders. You see, subconscious doesn’t understand jokes and sayings. It acts precisely according to the pattern of thoughts you set for it.

“Suggestion technique is very simple. Basically, it’s similar to meditation and prayer. The difference is you don’t sit in it, foolishly passing away the time, doing nobody-understands-what and trying to achieve nobody-knows-what. Instead, you clearly define goals and tasks for yourself. In order to remove doubts and fears, like I was already saying, you must bring your consciousness to relaxed and peaceful state. In principle, physical relaxation soothes one’s soul and makes it much more susceptible to suggestion. In this state, reiterate your report, your order insistently. For example, if it concerns health, say: ‘I am healthy. I am full of happiness, calmness, self-confidence.’ If it concerns business, assert: ‘I am rich. I have lots of money. I am master of the situation. I am full of calmness, lucidity, self-confidence. It shall be as I

say.’ If it concerns private affairs, you should say: ‘I am beautiful and smart. I look brilliant. My body is charming. I am master of my own destiny. It shall be as I command.’ These postulates should be repeated slowly, calmly, in inspired mood, 5 to 10 times in succession. Do such prayer-meditations at least three times a day: morning, day, and evening.

‘I’ll say once more, you must learn to use autosuggestion first of all. It’ll prove useful not only for your becoming a strong personality, but also for you to avoid being a puppet in strange hands and avoid suggestion on the third hand. Say, you private accountant made up his mind to cheat you. And, believe me guys, that happens a lot in business. Anyway, here’s this book-keeper who found a loophole for stealing from your pocket thinking of a way he could dupe you and enrich himself. So, he tells you stories and suggests though straw men, that your firm will have serious troubles very soon and that you’ve got to take urgent measures and do this and that. It’s better to spend up now, but then you’ll be able to avoid unnecessary expenses, allegedly. If you’re weak and gullible, this report will awake fear in you, and you’ll take this suggestion at its face value, while your ‘lieccountant’ will get rich in the near future. But if you are strong and self-assured, then all attempts of negative suggestion on the third hand will simply fail. So long as there’s absence of fear in you, confidence in your own powers will enable you to size up a situation objectively.

‘Power of suggestion played a key role in destinies of peoples at all times. By using power of suggestion not only

can you become Master of your own self, but, moreover, you can subdue others to your power. I'll tell you guys, in confidence, that such a trick is used quite often in business. He, who is better in suggestion, wins.

“You are not only to defend yourselves from suggestion, but use it actively if you want to become Master not only of your own destiny. Particularly, any advertisement in business is based on suggestion, alleged necessity of a man to buy this or that good. The more successful your suggestion was, the more your financial profit is, and, therefore, your wellbeing too.

“Suggestion is utilized in misinforming competitors and in enlarging spheres of influence. For example, you want to get yourself a nice small efficient firm. To do that, you artificially create some troubles for it in an underhand way in advance. Then you come as a good friend to its manager and communicate.” At these words Ariman changed in a way, as if indeed he walked into somebody's room and uttered in a benevolent manner: “I've heard you are in serious trouble?” And changing his tone, he added on his behalf, as a voice-over: “This will make him recall his problems at work.” Then he pronounced with sympathy again: “There's some talk that a large company is about to acquire you.’ And you tell him the name of a competing company. At this moment in that manager's consciousness, if he is a weak personality – and in most cases it is so – there instantaneously turns on imagination with forthcoming events in aggregate with his own fears and apprehensions. Then you strike him another blow: ‘You changed color, are you ill?’ Naturally, the latter

would try to hide his feelings. Then, you simply add: ‘I came to you as an honest and upright businessman, since I cannot pass by such injustice. I came to offer you a helping hand as in this situation, if you ask me, it’s reasonable to...’ And you put forward your plan of building a ‘joint’ business, which will protect his form imaginary danger. Now, you can rest assured, given proper suggestion, the client himself will entrust the destiny of his firm into your hands, and will thank you for such a service.”

The guys produced satisfied smiles, as if, owing to Ariman’s excellent acting, they indeed got into the boots of a clever firm acquirer.

“Here the strength of suggestion is applied depending on the temperament of the person you came to.” Ariman continued to train them his course of “the real businessman”.

“What if that firm holds firmly on the market?” Victor enquired slyly.

Ariman grinned and said: “Even the steadiest wagon may tip over, given a proper obstacle is skillfully made for it. Much turns on how confident you are in yourself. Because if you chance to come across a business ‘shark’, no one knows, who would eat whom. Though it’s worth noting, that among ‘sharks’ too wins the one, who has greater self-confidence and greater strength of suggestion.”

Seemingly, in order to draw a line at his brilliant acting technique Ariman declared: “As you see, guys, you’ve got to build your life on your own. Remember, no one in this world does a thing for nothing or gives money for nothing. All is in your hands. This world is much simpler than it seems, you

know. You've heard these scriptural assertions more than once: 'Believe and you will be rewarded', 'Knock, and it will be opened to you'. Dare! For this world is tailored for you and all in it is yours! So use it, don't miss your chance and opportunity. It's silly to suffer and whine all the time about things going so bad, and, thus, driving yourselves in hellish living conditions by your own thoughts. Where does that get you? Many people in this world consider themselves nearly martyrs. Foolishly and groundlessly they hope that someone up there will reward them. Delusively they dream, like, alright, it's bad for me here, but somewhere there I'll be happy. Let me ask you a question: where is – 'there'? Now, how about here? People don't know what they want. Only epithets 'later' and 'some day'. And I tell you, these are the slogans of weaklings, weak-willed souls unsure of themselves. Their lot is poverty and slavery! For a man's life is a result of his prevailing thoughts. If a man is strong, if a man is full of self-confidence, he can take everything here and now. He will create himself a heaven on earth on his own. For he who knew heaven on the Earth, will live eternally on it!"

Listening to Ariman spellbound, we suddenly found ourselves on the boarding houses territory.

"Oh!" Volodya exclaimed, looking around. At that time we stopped right near the summer cinema. "It's seems we've already come to the place."

Our company started to look around with surprise. Indeed, the conversation shortened the trip, as if we hadn't walked at all, but shifted in space instantaneously. Even my

feet weren't sore, though we had marched full 5 miles on foot. Time seemed to be utterly missing. All the guys noticed that and were surprised at such a phenomenon yet again.

Many people have already gathered near the cinema. The senior guys hurried up and went to buy tickets. And our puzzled company remained to stay aside and gathered round Ariman. Sensei and Nikolai Andreevich who were going lot behind us, also came closer, stood still not far from us and continued their conversation.

We were staying 'stunned' reflecting on what we just heard from Ariman. Suddenly our attention was drawn by one man. Judging by his cloth and golden heavy chain on his neck and ring on the finger it was clear that he wasn't a poor man. The man was slightly drunken, though, like a company he belonged to. A woman stood near him, it was evidently his wife as she was grumbling all the time something at him. Suddenly they raised a heated debate. As a result this man began to thread his way to the cinema entrance through the crowd waiting for a performance. He was pushing roughly the people and all the time he was turning back to his company shouting that he would prove now to everybody that this Vitaliy Yakovlevich is a charlatan and parvenu, and he began threatening that he would throw away that 'freak' from the stage, and not just throw away but would 'beat him black and blue so that he would not bullshit all'.

People became indignant with such an impudent behaviour of this mutineer. But it seemed that this drunken man didn't notice anybody except for his friends. The closer he was to the entrance, the more aggressive were his

expressions and actions. Having turned back by chance, I noticed that Ariman looked somehow strangely at Veliar. The last one didn't utter a word and at once dissolved in the indignant crowd. And almost in a few instants there happened something extraordinary. It looked like that the raged man stroke with force against some invisible barrier which has thrown him back like a rubber ball. The man fell in a convulsive fit, that's why the whole crowd immediately calmed down. Veliar unnoticeably slipped through the crowd of idlers gathering round the man and as if nothing happened took his previous place behind Ariman, with such a puzzled expression on his face as if he missed the most interesting part. And when the startled by this accident people began murmuring either out of condemnation or regret, Veliar even showed some concern by this case, shook his head and muttered something sad and sympathetic in Chinese.

The people were shocked and puzzled not for long. The scared company of the man hurried up to render him help. They brought this obese man to the nearest bench, not far from us. Nikolai Andreevich couldn't stay indifferent as a doctor. He felt the man's pulse and after he made certain that the man didn't need any special help, he again joined us. The initiator of this accident began to slowly come to consciousness.

"How did he happen to get into it?" smacking his lips uttered Ariman looking with naughtiness at the man stretched out on the bench. "He fell in a fit."

"Well, it's a very familiar 'fit'," grinned Sensei looking at Veliar.

The Chinese noticed his gaze, shifted a bit behind Ariman obviously for his figure not to be so noticeable.

Meanwhile our doctor didn't pay attention to all the subtle details of this dialogue and said, "He should drink less."

"Right you are," supported him Ariman grinning and exchanging looks with Sensei. And he added quietly, "He should have kept his mouth shut."

The man looked around at people surrounding him with lustreless gaze and fixed it on his company. Then he raised himself a little, grabbed his head with hands and spoke hoarsely with surprise, "What has happened?"

"What do mean 'what'?" got surprised Ariman who stood not far from him. And with a frightening voice he answered, "You faced the power of a sensitive! Have you felt yourself now which energy power he possesses?"

The man looked blank perplexedly. His company obviously also didn't quite get what had happened and as if confirming the words of Ariman stood silent and gloomy. During this prolonged pause the senior guys came to us already with tickets. They threw a glimpse at this mute scene and called us, "Let's go quickly otherwise we will be late and all seats will be occupied by others!"

Veliar looked in wide eyed astonishment first at the guys, then at Ariman who in his turn wasn't confused by such a declaration of the guys. Evidently Veliar didn't quite understand our reality: how was it possible to buy tickets and to be afraid that someone would occupy the seats? But since Ariman took it calmly and followed the guys, Veliar

obediently moved after him, without receiving the answer to his mute question. We hurried up to the entrance through which was slipping the crowd of spectators wishing not to miss the begin of the performance. It happened so that the majority of our group lavished care upon Ariman and Veliar as our guests and moved on along the row. This chain was enclosed by Tatyana and me. And we were already followed by Nikolai Andreevich and Sensei. In this order we took our seats.

For want of anything better to do I looked around. Sensei and Nikolai Andreevich continued to discuss something so quietly that I heard only some scraps of phrases. Lending an ear to them I didn't understand anything. That's why I switched my attention, like Tatyana, to Ariman who sat together with Veliar surrounded by the guys. I was curious how Ariman would react on our reality, total crowd, crush, so uncomfortable seats designed for labour class. Since if to take into account the luxury he was used to, he should not like it too much. But, to my surprise, Ariman behaved like a haunter. He told with enthusiasm some next funny story happened to him in Japan and it seemed that he even didn't pay attention to that old-fashioned bench with worn out numbers and peeled off dye we were all sitting at. The same thing couldn't be said about Veliar who, judging by his puzzled gaze obviously took it all like a nightmare.

The performance began. I should say that the repertory was somewhat changed in comparison with our visit the day before yesterday. Some stout plump woman of fifty years old was first to come to the stage. She started fervently to tell

about the extraordinary abilities of the sensitive, about his unbelievable capabilities. It turned out that Vitaliy Yakovlevich had successfully diagnosed in due time such a serious equipment like airplanes and spaceships. Due to it he often saved lives of astronauts. He said there are certain documents which are kept by the official authorities on this fact. Just before it was all kept in secret. But nowadays it's possible to talk about it publicly. Vitaliy Yakovlevich seems to possess unique force able to cure! And she paid special attention to the case of miraculous healing of a little boy the day before yesterday who regained his sight and began to talk after the long period of silence in view of all people right after the performance of this 'great sensitive'. She said that before the great power of Vitaliy Yakovlevich recede even such awful diseases as cancer or AIDS. That this 'great magician' makes a precise diagnosis even on big distance, looks through time and space, can teleportate things and people. He is able to raise from the dead like Jesus raised Lazarus. On saying this the woman emphasized that many cases of resurrection were officially notarially registered. She praised Vitaliy Yakovlevich with the most colourful epithet, compared him with very Jesus Christ and called him a new Messiah, Saviour, and reassured spectators that we live at the same time with one of the best God's reincarnations. On this pathetic note she declared the entry of Vitaliy Yakovlevich.

Heated by this fiery speech the public greeted with cheers. Vitaliy Yakovlevich entered the stage. Exorbitant arrogance reigned on his clean-shaven glossy face. With arrogant grin he cast an eagle look at many-coloured crowd of

people who applauded him not sparing themselves. Vitaliy Yakovlevich made a kind of amiable smile. Having enough enjoyed ovations he appeasedly waved with the hand, like a generalissimo, and began his ‘great speech’. This time he didn’t want to strain himself and to hold a big ‘fluid-and-space’ lecture and limited himself to twenty minutes of non-stop self-glorification of his own achievements in this ‘by nobody before him deeply investigated sphere of highest knowledge of cosmic laws. Beginning to enjoy declaring his own victories he was walking along the stage with proudly thrown out chest and arrogant gaze. Who would have thought that half a year ago this man was pacing back and forth in our spots hall in front of our group looking like a bum, with dirty spoons hanging on his naked torso, and was telling us tales?!

“When the energy of cosmic fluid got accumulated in me supernatural powers opened up in me. This divine light dawns up once in one thousand years only the chosen ones. In previous thousand years it were Buddha, Jesus Christ. And now this light of messiah dawned up on me... I received the invaluable gift of not only magnetism, clairvoyance, but of thoughts-reading, healing, raising from the dead, total recovery from fatal illness. I’m the first one in the world who heals through the all-penetrating omnipresent double flow of fluids which is the primary reason of the whole energy and informational field of the great Universe. My divine gift recovers body, human aura and changes human life. Divene Providence covered me, enlightened and opened to me secret knowledge. On their basis I elaborated my own method of

spiritual development, ten stairs on the staircase of perfection...”

Then Vitaliy Yakovlevich started with grandiloquent vague explanations of advantages of his system using not quite clear esoteric terms. And in the end he declaimed, “... Since people like me who were able to unite the mortal body with the great spirit, the spirit of the universal reason, possess the allmighty of God!”

After his speech people gave again wild applause. I was surprised when I have seen that even Ariman applauded, and our guys as well together with him. It left a puzzle for me whether the guys had done it in jest, or they just copied Ariman. Having enjoyed the applause Vitaliy Yakovlevich ordered to bring to the stage some copper basin with water, soap and white towel which was at once placed by the woman-presenter on the stool in the middle of the stage. Vitaliy Yakovlevich explained to public that it's necessary for his hands to be always clean, he said that due to such sterility he is able to more clearly perceive the human aura, and to execute complicated energetic operations which require ideal energy cleanness. Vitaliy Yakovlevich grandly came to the basin with water and in an emphatic manner slowly washed his hands under the silent contemplation of the curious public. I don't know why but this too feigned scene caused in me association with historical ablution of hands by Pontius Pilate after the declaration of verdict to Christ.

Having wiped dry his hands with the towel he began to invite to the stage all those who wished it, they have already crowded in a queue before the performance near the stairs

leading to the stage. The first was a short man. Because of his plump figure and round sticking out belly he looked like a ball. Most part of his round head was covered by bald spot instead of hair. Big glasses falling down to the flat nose supplemented his appearance.

The man was given a microphone, and he started to complain in public about his poor eyesight and permanent headache. Vitaliy Yakovlevich made a reassuring gesture, took a microphone and declared that he was going to 'patch up' the aura of that man where he saw black broken through holes in the area of head and eyes. He promised him that in some time his health would be recovered since first the spirit is healed, the aura is patched and then the body. The 'great sensitive' passed the microphone over to his assistant. Having asked the man to close his eyes Vitaliy Yakovlevich began to intensively wave his hands over him making passes of different aerial configuration.

Suddenly when the sensitive with clever and concentrated air 'patched' the aura in the regions of eyes of the man, the patient began to easily swing back and forth following his hand like magnetized. The amplitude of his deviations increased and soon it became so unnatural that the body deviated with the angle of almost forty five degrees relative to the floor, thus breaking all laws of physics. The audience gasped unanimously with surprise. Vitaliy Yakovlevich heard the gasp of the audience, bent a little the head and having seen this paradox seemed to be stricken himself by this event not understanding what had actually happened. Continuing to swing the man he stared with

curiosity at his body which seemed to fail to be a subject to the law of gravity.

I threw a covert glance at Sensei. And noticed that Sensei gazed somehow strangely towards Ariman. It roused my curiosity and I also turned my head to that direction. Ariman was more than serious. He stared straight at the stage. His face looked like a stone monument. Only the lips moved slightly, evidently whispering some words. I felt somehow uneasy. Nevertheless our guys interested in the ongoing events didn't take aside their eyes from the stage waiting what was going on next. I followed their example.

Vitaliy Yakovlevich changed the direction of his passes and began to wave his hand over the man's head up and down. At this moment in the presence of all this more than one hundred kilogram heavy man began to easily rise up and down like a rubber ball thrown against the floor. First he just somehow unnaturally rose on his toes as if there was no weight in him. The first shocked exclamation went as a wave from the front rows. Soon we also saw that it turned out that Vitaliy Yakovlevich raised his hands a little bit higher than his usual passes and in some unclear way pulled the man away for about ten centimeters from the stage floor. Apparently this obstacle embarrassed the sensitive himself since the next moment he raised his hands higher and the man was in the air already for twenty centimeters. Some spectators even stood up from their seats. It seemed to me that the first instants Vitaliy Yakovlevich, judging by his face and embarrassed gaze looking for some devices around the man, was himself in some confusion. Holding his hands in the same

position he began to nervously fumble with his leg the empty space between the man's shoes and the floor. The leg cautiously fumbled the floor like a minefield. Obviously all this process of such a clear manifestation of supernatural abilities shocked himself not less than the spectators. But just in a few instants there was no trace of his total confusion. He forced a smile and turned his gaze to the audience trying to grandly nod with his head. Delighted spectators applauded. Inspired by wild ovation Vitaliy Yakovlevich once again played to his audience rising the man in the air up and down. Apparently this unsolved trick started to amuse him not less than other spectators. Finally having saturated enough his self-satisfaction he again put the man down to the stage and ordered to wake up.

It seemed that this plump guy really slept deeply since when he opened his eyes he began to blink and narrow his eyes on seeing the light. The man put off the glasses, rubbed his eyes. Then it seemed that his memory finally cleared out since he began to touch his head and to shout happily that his headache's gone and what is most important his sight is completely recovered. Having declared it to the audience he ran up to Vitaliy Yakovlevich and began to intensively shake the hands of the sensitive out of gratefulness and trying to reach his face and shower with kisses. The sensitive moved back from this sudden wild delight of the man. The audience again burst out in applauses. Slightly bending and smiling to audience Vitaliy Yakovlevich meanwhile tried to pull out his hands with movements of disgust from the plump hands of

that man and to get rid of his persistent wish to shower the sensitive with kisses at least to that parts he was able to reach.

The timely help from this excessive gratefulness of the fan came from the woman-presenter. She came to the man explaining him something and at the same time trying to remove him from Vitaliy Yakovlevich. But the man obviously didn't want to release his hands. However the woman happened to be not only persistent but the true virago. Seeing that the situation becomes lingering and hopeless she used her safe tactics. Throwing out her breast the woman pushed her way breaking by her massive body the handshake of the men, like an atomic ice-breaker at navigation. Such a pressure could make fall even fortress walls not just this 'ball'. Having broken mercilessly the chains of the handshake the woman went in a ram attack on the man in passing telling him something through the artificial smile. The plump man fearfully moved back and then completely reconciled himself to his fate when the virago forced him to go to the stairs of the stage, having covered by her massive body the passage and all possible gaps to the adorable idol.

Having got rid of the obtrusive man Vitaliy Yakovlevich sighed with relief and again began to bow before the applauding audience. Then he went to the copper basin and made the ablution of the hands. But if the first time his movements were slow and for show, now he cleaned them up with such a disgust as it they touched not the intellectual man but some scalawag and swine-herd. He rubbed his hands for long with a snow-white towel and having finally cleaned them he turned back to the spectators waiting for him. He

murmured something unclearly about the previous heavy healing as an excuse and again proclaimed his confusing energy and fluid speech which caused rare applauses of the audience which seemed not to understand anything.

With a noble gesture of the hand Vitaliy Yakovlevich invited the next patient to the stage, not even looking at him. But when he saw that it was a very old lady who smiled to him generously with all her toothless mouth, Vitaliy Yakovlevich evidently recalled the non-forgettable kiss attempt of his previous patient whom he cured from sufferings and categorically waved with his hands. The woman-presenter immediately blocked up her way to the stage and shouted to the crowd pushing the old lady from the back that the sensitive will choose his next patient on his own in order to demonstrate his abilities. People in the crowd began to growl. And in order not to fail in front of the audience Vitaliy Yakovlevich fastly declared to the microphone that his help is needed first of all those whose aura is in the very bad condition.

He looked with his eagle-eye at the crowd staying near the stairs and pointed out with the finger choosing his next patient. It happened to be a young pretty girl, 18 years old, who stayed almost in the back of the crowd. When she struggled forward through the crowd to the stage, Vitaliy Yakovlevich even assumed a dignified air and a friendly smile appeared on his face. Having thrown out his chest and breathed out the air he came closer to the girl and hugged her in a familiar way, putting his hand on her naked shoulder. And began to put her questions not concerning her disease,

asked her about her name and her school. When the general questions were finished Vitaliy Yakovlevich finally asked what was wrong with her. It turned out that the girl suffered from insomnia. In reply Vitaliy Yakovlevich at once joked turning to the audience that it happens so when young girls don't have a possibility to get acquainted with a respectable experienced man who would easily vivify her lonely dull evenings. The audience as if adjusted to the mood of Vitaliy Yakovlevich and laughed so as if he had told a very funny joke.

The sensitive made a few compliments to the girl about her pretty appearance and let himself remark that due to his wisdom, experience and great force the girl may not worry anymore about her insomnia. He looked with his 'experienced' eye and informed about the 'terrible state' of her aura and that the girl was put off and bedevilled. He said he saw some strange energies in the regions of her breast. Then he ordered that she close her eyes and fully entrust to his powerful might. Meanwhile he explained to the audience that he would demonstrate now one more method of his work.

First the sensitive started to make passes over her head almost the same way he made over that man. But then his hands slid stroking the body of the girl: on the head, on the face, hands, breast, belly, legs. Meanwhile sliding with his hand on the body he all the time shook it up as if he tried to get rid of something invisible and sticky.

Having finished with the girl Vitaliy Yakovlevich declared that he tried to help her to get rid a little bit of the negative energy. But in order to eliminate fully this awful evil

eye he would need to work with her aura for long and effectively. He told the girl to come to him after the performance in order to make an arrangement about next healing hours and to tell her in details what should be done. Having accompanied the young patient to the stairs the sensitive went again to wash his hands in pure water already changed by the woman-assistant. Now Vitaliy Yakovlevich washed his hands with obvious pleasure.

One should note that during this scene with the girl the spectators behaved quite noisy, especially on the back seats. Out company laughed loud over something funny told by Ariman. Nikolai Andreevich turned half-side to Sensei and discussed with him something. Since I didn't have the chance to listen to the replies of Sensei nor what Ariman was telling because of the guys' laugh, I had to contemplate with boredom what was happening on the stage.

When Vitaliy Yakovlevich had finished his procedure of hands washing and began to look for a next patient, a woman of about 40 years old started to desperately thread her way to the stage through the crowd. There was a big tumour on her shoulder which strongly disfigured her. It was scaring to observe this neoplasm even from the last rows. Therefore no wonder that people who stood in the line stepped aside and let her go forward. Vitaliy Yakovlevich had nothing left to do but to invite this unfortunate woman to the stage.

Reaching the sensitive she couldn't calm down for long sobbing from tears. Finally she introduced herself as Ekaterina Dmitrievna and began to tell about her problem. She told that she visited a lot of doctors but nobody could help

her. She was proposed to undergo an expensive operation but nobody could guarantee her a successful result of it. Vitaliy Yakovlevich gave her the last hope. It was her only chance to get rid of the terrible disease since she didn't have enough money for the operation. And as she was a mother, she didn't have right to leave this world. Since she had two children whom she brought up alone, without anybody's help. But on the other side she can't suffer of this pain, of constant fears for the future of her children. Thus she set all her hopes only on miraculous healing and 'divine abilities' of Vitaliy Yakovlevich.

The story of this woman aroused some sympathy and compassion of the quieted down audience. Even Ariman stopped with his jokes and started to listen seriously and attentively to the story of this woman. The sensitive only nodded with his head and in the end of such a touching speech of the patient declared that he would do all his best to help her. Then he ordered that Ekaterina Dmitrievna closed her eyes and said that he would now perform an operation on her astral body and remove this tumour. When the woman closed her eyes, Vitaliy Yakovlevich began to make the pass not right away. He explained to the audience that he needed to get concentrated and mobilize his cosmic powers on generation of the huge energy from his hands. In general he delivered as usual very long pompous speeches about his cosmic almighty and omnipotence in healing of any diseases. And then in the solemn silence he closed his eyes for a few seconds. The audience held its breath.

Meanwhile we heard a very light click. I looked to the direction of the outgoing sound. Our guys enchanted by the ongoing events even bent forward on their seats. Unlike the guys Ariman sat silently on the bench. His hands were crossed on his chest. He looked concentrated on the stage, and his lips whispered something soundless. I looked anxiously to the stage. For some reason I didn't doubt that something extraordinary would happen now.

Vitaliy Yakovlevich swung and slowly closed his eyes. Judging by the way he started to approach the woman, it seemed that he really fell into a trance. Meanwhile I felt that my 'lotus flower' in the solar plexus began to work somehow strangely. Usually it 'widened' spreading its pleasant warmth all over the body. But this time it somehow narrowed, shrank as if wrapping itself up from something terrible by its petals. I felt intuitively that something happened on the stage, some terrifying, invisible change. Something disquieting, imperceptible increased with each second. The whole hall froze up. Everybody was as if benumbed, watching the movements of the sensitive.

Vitaliy Yakovlevich slowly came to the woman and powerfully stretched out his hands over her, but somehow strangely hooking his fingers. These actions made me feel scared. He started to pass his hands over the woman's shoulder. Each movement of his hands caused the whole wave of obscure panic fear in my mind. In addition to my undescrivable fear I noticed that my body unwillingly began to swing a little after the movements of his hands. Having looked around fearfully, being afraid of arousing a derision I

found out that it was not only me who turned into such a weak-willed pendulum, but the whole audience too, slightly swinging from one side to another. It seemed that even the air over the people became thicker, heavier and more viscous like a sticky jelly.

When the sensitive began to make some odd new for his usual movements ‘magic passes’ my state of panic fear became stronger even more. As it seemed to me, the air around the woman’s shoulder began to tighten quickly. And at some instant unexpectedly the hand of the sensitive like a snake swiftly went into the shoulder, right into the tumour. I even flinched and shrank back out of fear. Vermilion blood splashed from the woman’s shoulder. We heard the acute click reminding a current discharge. And already at the next moment the sensitive’s fingers started slowly to go into her skin, more and more deepening into the flesh. Having seized the tumour he drew it to himself. The woman’s skin stretched as if a thin membrane, and in the ideal silence we heard the squelching sounds of the torn flesh. The blood ran stronger and began to stream down to the light blouse, spreading as an intensive red spot. The sensitive drew stronger and began to slowly pull out the whole piece of alive bloody flesh from the woman’s shoulder. The tumour didn’t hasten to tear away its tight tentacles from the human flesh which were like blood thirsty dark leeches stuck to the body of the poor woman. But the hand of the sensitive was merciless. The flesh stretched out like a rubber began to tear with typical sounds, quickly coming apart from the shoulder. And in a few instants the dangerous neoplasm fully left its lair leaving after it a bloody

mess on the shoulder. The audience uttered a common scream of fear and surprise.

Holding in hands this piece of flesh bleeding and leaving drops of blood on the floor, the sensitive showed it again to the frozen audience. A few people who stood near the stage lost consciousness, fainting away with loud sound. The people who were not far from it, first stepped aside with fear but then bustled around them. Without paying attention to this incident, the sensitive came to the wash-basin with water and put the tumour into it. Then he washed his bloody hands in the same water and began to dry them with the white towel, leaving red traces. The audience was still shocked by this scene and followed with strained attention all his movements. Drying his hands the sensitive came with half-sleeping walk to the woman and began to thoroughly dry her shoulder. The audience was just puzzled and I was dumbfounded after he removed his hand from the shoulder since instead of the bloody mess there was a quite normal healthy skin! There was left no trace of the previous tumour. The audience simply gasped with surprise and in a few instants burst into wild applause.

The patient who didn't almost move during the whole healing performance suddenly came to herself. First she looked scared at her blouse with bloody stains, then on the shoulder and obviously didn't believe her eyes. Since there was no wound nor scar on the skin. It seemed that she really didn't feel anything during the performance as when she touched once a painful spot she got fully confused. Meanwhile Vitaliy Yakovlevich also came to himself. He has

seen the towel with bloody stains in his hands and thrown it away with fear as if it were a crime instrument and jumped as crazy to the side. Then he stared in silent amazement at his hands with still fresh blood on them. And only after that he looked at the woman standing in front of him. Undoubtedly what he has seen shook him strongly. Without believing his eyes he cautiously approached to the woman and touched her smooth skin where there was an ugly tumour not long ago. The woman has already realized what had just happened, uttered a wild scream of joy and rushed Vitaliy Yakovlevich, and hugged him with such a force that he got scared and began to suffocate and tried to get rid of her strangled 'chains'. She set him free, ran to the edge of the stage and began to cry, jump, shout of joy showing her healthy shoulder to the shocked audience.

A big turmoil began. The audience just exploded. Many people applauded, many shouted 'bravo', some people cried of joy, some shouted 'this is a new messiah'. People from the line rushed to the stage, pushing rudely aside the woman-assistant who was struck dumb by what she had seen. Some of them bowed lubberly before the sensitive, some crawled on all fours and tried lamenting at least to touch his clothes. Vitaliy Yakovlevich who didn't quite come to himself on seeing the crowd rushing to him and shouting in various ways, cowardly covered his face with his hands as if protecting himself against blows. But when he understood that people threw themselves at his feet, praising him with tears, he smiled silly and began to bow slightly to the shouting audience. He obviously tried to gain himself fully and to

realize what had happened here. But he was confused only for a very short time. After he understood that the audience declared him a ‘supermessiah’, he threw out his chest and bowed with much more enthusiasm, jauntily giving his hand to people who knelt before him. They kissed his clothes, hands, some of them crossed themselves and bowed shouting that it was the very Jesus in front of them. Judging by the self-satisfied grin of Vitaliy Yakovlevich this new image given to him by the crowd pleased him a lot.

To our surprise that man with a golden chain who wanted to kick Vitaliy Yakovlevich before the performance also crawled on his four to the stage. Contrary to his promises he, with crazy eyes, pushed aside people crowded around the sensitive and began to throw himself at his feet and kiss his shoes. Ariman drew attention of our guys to this man and said loud trying to speak louder than the shouting crowd, “Look! Do you see what the power of subconscious can do! That’s the result of the word uttered in the right time. The man turns from the opponent to the fan!”

Our guys nodded with admiration. Meanwhile I heard the voice of Sensei who addressed Ariman through the noise of the crowd.

“Ariman! I can’t see it anymore. It’s too much... We will go out with Nikolai Andreevich and wait for you on the street.”

“We leave as well,” Ariman waved with his hand towards exultant people and non-stop bowings of Vitaliy Yakovlevich. “There is nothing to look at here anymore.”

We went out of the summer cinema. After all we had seen and heard both me and our guys were shocked. The head was just spinning. I don't know about others but for some reason I felt somehow very unpleasant inside, some discomfort in my body.

“Have you seen how the man is able to manage his subconscious!” Ariman nodded merrily towards the summer cinema from which the noise of exultant crowd wafted to us.

“We thought first that he lied,” Ruslan said confused.

“Right,” Andrew backed him. “We thought he is a charlatan. But he really has a power.”

“How did he manage to do it that there was no wound left on the shoulder?” Stas uttered shrugging his shoulders. “It just a mystery!”

“That's true,” Eugene agreed with his friend. “I didn't understand anything. “One second and there is no tumour as if it had never existed, even the skin became smooth. It's incredible!”

“But you have seen it with your own eyes!” Ariman was surprised by him.

“I have seen it but somehow... eh...” Eugene tried to find proper words in order to describe his inner feelings but wasn't able to do it. “In short, I can't believe it and that's all!”

“That's a paradox of human!” Ariman said laughing. “He can't believe even what he sees. He believes only in what he imagines on his own. And his imagination has its roots in foundations of society where he was brought up. That is if the crowd surrounding him constantly believes that the operation may be performed only with the help of surgical scalpel, this

individual will not perceive in his mind as the truth, even if he sees it by himself. You might have thought that this woman was a puppet, and the tumour wasn't real, but a plaster cast filled out with red paint.

Eugene looked blank in amazement.

“How did you... I have just thought about it!”

Ariman laughed even more and uttered, “Your thoughts are quite predictable because you think like others. Even those who kiss now the feet of the sensitive and believe in his healing power will consider in a while that they were cunningly fooled by playing all this performance. The only one who won't doubt that it had really taken place will be that very woman who had a tumour and those who knew her before that case of healing. But for all others this performance will stay in memory not more than a bluff. It's just now the applauding people have such a euphoria as the belief was evoked in them at least a little bit, but tomorrow their logic will prevail and they will think as all.

“So, it's my way of thinking to blame?” asked Eugene.

“Of course,” confirmed Ariman. “If you wanted to change your standard way of thinking and to become a different person, much more things would open before you. Since a free man differs from the crowd by having his own opinion and he can see much wider and deeper into the root of any problem. If during the performance you had really looked into the root, you would have seen that Vitaliy Yakovlevich removed the tumour in actual fact, he practically operated the woman without a scalpel. But the thing he has done is only a very insignificant part of that what can be done by the human,

including you. This operation may be really performed in the distance, even if you don't see the man but work only with his image on the photo.

“Belief plus a wish is a huge power. With its help you may work wonders including healing this way. It can do everything you wish, if you want, you may heal a man, if not you may kill him. Everything is in your hands, or if to be more specific, in your true inner wish. This power is just an instrument, all the rest is the matter of your fantasy. And forget about the morality. It doesn't exist at most. Just in some periods of your growing up you were obtruded to accept certain stereotypes, that very stereotypes which are elaborated by the elite for controlling the crowd. But the elite itself doesn't follow these rules therefore it's free of any rules, otherwise it would not reach such heights. And it differs from you only by the freedom of its thinking. So become free, and possibilities and riches will open before you.”

Since the guys were keeping silence, Volodya remarked with a smile, “In our country it's not an advantage to become rich. The very moment you get on in the world, you will be killed.”

Ariman grinned.

“Well, it's better to live a short life but to be rich than a long one but to be a slave. In fact, if a man is smart, he will be favoured and needed by all. And if he isn't a man with brains why should he get into business? It's a game for real men, not for dweebs. As a rule, such riders without head in business are like ghosts, they don't do anything themselves and disturb the others. That's why they are taken away. As they say, the life

chooses the strongest! Its reality requires a huge will-power from a man, and freedom costs a great deal of money. What can you do, this is how this world functions. As Erich Fromm used to say, ‘A human is the only being who needs to solve a problem of his existence’.”

Meanwhile we stopped at the crossroads and started to decide together which way it was better to take in order to get from rest houses to the spit. Having taken the decision we again moved forward. Some time we were walking all together, exchanging only some insignificant phrases, evidently being strongly impressed by the seen performance. And only when we had left the territory of the rest houses, we again unnoticeably parted, stretching along the deserted road of the spit. The gloaming thickened, and the road began less and less visible. The main part of the guys was walking with Ariman ahead. Me and Tatyana, Kostya and Andrew were walking behind them. The darker it was around the quicker we neared the bigger part of our group. And this time the rear of our company was brought up by Sensei with Nikolai Andreevich. Their figures were slightly visible somewhere behind. It seemed that the darkness didn't get on their nerves unlike our company. And the topic of their discussion was probably serious since they were talking in very low tones, obviously avoiding unwanted ears. But at the same time Ariman was good to be heard. His voice was authoritatively sounding in the silence of surrounding nature. The guys continued to question him about the subconscious and how to use it at least the way Vitaliy Yakovlevich did, in order to achieve success in the life.

“Vitaliy Yakovlevich simply used the power of his subconscious, even without noticing it,” explained Ariman. “That’s the secret of his phenomenon. And spectators in the hall became the object of his impact, with its help Vitaliy Yakovlevich evoke their belief. Naturally this combination led to the positive result of his performances which was inevitable.”

“Does it mean that he was doing it on the instinctive level?” Ruslan made his little discovery.

“Of course. Since time immemorial people felt instinctively the power of subconscious and that it can be used somehow for healing diseases and more. Those who guessed how to do it were ascribed that they possess a secret ability to heal people, to release from the evil eye, to influence on destiny. In fact the methods of influencing people are primitive. The more odd and mysterious things will see the suggestible person, the stronger will he be influenced by the suggestion. Since mysterious actions stimulate always very strongly fantasy, therefore they make the human subconscious susceptible to the suggestible ideas. By the way, this main principle was a ground for appearance of different religious rites, rituals as well as myths about talismans, amulets, mascots.”

“Does it mean that people were always able to use their subconscious, even ancient people, and not just some shamans?” Kostya decided to specify his guess.

“Why were they able to do it?” Ariman was surprised. “Namely the ancient people used it actively. And the story with shamans happened much later.”

“I didn’t get it,” uttered Eugene and asked with doubts in his voice. “But how were the ancient people able to use the subconscious? They were moving in herds.”

Ariman laughed so infectiously that our guys unwillingly followed him.

“You see how you think! What does it mean in fact? It means that your knowledge about that times is not just limited, it is practically absent. Right now you said aloud the stereotype which was imposed on you since childhood, it’s a certain stamp which was determined by the elite for its multibillion army of creeping servants.”

“But why is it a stamp?” objected Kostya who has been just laughing uncomprehendingly together with all. “How is about statements of scientists, their archeological findings?”

“I’m afraid to disappoint you greatly, Konstantin, but the majority of really valuable findings which would help the scientists to study the past of humankind get dusty either by ignorance in archeological archives, or knowingly in inaccessible safes of the mighty of this world. And in mass media they announce only those facts which are favorable for the elite.”

“But why do they need such difficulties?” Eugene asked even more puzzled.

“Knowledge means power. And power means authority,” Ariman uttered mysteriously as if telling us the most secret information of all times and peoples. “I can reveal you one big secret. The modern humankind arose from the remains of the previous highly developed civilization which achieved such a success in development of their supernatural abilities that they

became to them natural. Moreover those people used more than 50% of brain whereas the modern Homo sapiens uses less than 10%.”

“Here you are!” uttered amazed Andrew.

But Ruslan immediately interrupted his delight indignantly jabbering in one go, “If our forefathers were so smart why are we so stupid? Since in principle we should have at least one of their ‘decayed’ genes.”

Ariman smiled.

“You are not stupid, and there are enough genes in you. Each man possesses these abilities, and he can develop them in him if he wishes. But the key to all of that lies in your mind. And it’s blocked by slavish directives imposed on you by the elite. Though actually it’s just a veil, a smoke screen. Everything is in your hands.”

“But who is this elite?” Victor asked irritated. “Are they rulers of big countries or the army of politicians? Where did it come from to decide what we can do or not? Tomorrow there will be in some country a revolution and the people will throw away in one blow all their elitism. It happened already so in 1917!”

Ariman grinned indulgently.

“As I see, your knowledge and statements are too far from the real state of affairs in this world. But it’s not your fault since you were brought up with these convictions and you were given as much knowledge as necessary for you to be able to do your work properly. You were suggested that you are free though in fact you are fully dependant on the system where you were put into. And it is again necessary for the

slave to do his work without foolish ideas in his head. Don't be offended by my words. Since I tell you all of this for you to understand what is a genuine freedom and that it's real to achieve it and if you break in yourself your system of thinking artificially formed in you you will achieve unbelievable heights. You can even become one of this elite and control the world in the way you consider the most fair. I repeat again, everything is in your hands!

“As for the elite itself, you are wrong to think that it can be blown off with a revolution,” condescendingly grinned Ariman, “Often the elite itself orders this very revolution, the wave of which merely wipes off puppets out of favor with the elite in order to put new ones in their place. Perhaps, I'll tell you a history of this world elite so that you'll have a better understanding of the matter.

“Their ancestors per se were individuals who tried to save knowledge of the previous civilization, including the knowledge of so-called supernatural capabilities. However they have been passing this knowledge only hereditary; in extremis they found themselves successors. That is in practice they've retained and improved this knowledge from one generation to another, keeping it in secret from people. When humankind significantly increased in terms of population and there appeared foundations of social and economic formation, chieftain leaders showed up. However, behind the visible power of those actually there were ‘knowledge keepers’ or, as they liked to call themselves, the ‘minions of gods and spirits’. Not only did they consult the chieftains, but in fact they were skillfully manipulating them, making them carry

out their commands. This group of special people had various names: shamans, sorcerers, wizards, priests, and so on. Their real name, however, is Archons.

“Archons?” asked Kostya.

“Yes. Translated from Greek it means ‘chiefs’, ‘rulers’. But if you go deeper into history, the true sense of this word shall be revealed as it means ‘the rulers of the world’. So, practically the Archons separated themselves into a distinctive caste of intermediaries between people and higher powers, later named gods. A chieftain of a tribe was a public person, had responsibility for his tribe, and was under power of an Archon. The Archon, actually governing the tribe through the chieftain, always remained in the shade. This secrecy gave him more opportunities for real manipulations over people. While chieftain leaders were chosen by people of the tribe, the Archon passed his ‘magical art’ of real power only to his successor. In other words, a distinctive caste was being formed, in the hands of which a real power was concentrated. The more this caste consolidated its power, the more toil – for its benefit – it gave to other members of the society. Noteworthily, it is this group that usurped principal knowledge later on, thus subordinating other people to their needs. This is exactly the first elite of this civilization.”

“Were there many of them at that time?” inquired Kostya.

“No. Their quantity is fixed. At that time and presently there are twelve people plus one Chief Archon, who is at the head of them.”

“Why exactly twelve?”

“Because this civilization originates from twelve human families. The Archons of the present are direct successors of the first twelve Archons. Now then, alongside the growth of human population Archons continued to grow in art of people control and manipulation. As they say, few people – few chiefs. Many people – many chiefs. They created a so-called artificial elite, placing their marionettes all over the world, who ruled over entire nations. Moreover, it is they who elaborated and implemented one of the most curious form of mind manipulation and governance over people – religion. The Archons based this artificially created form of public conscience transformation on the two strongest human stimuli: belief and fear. They added some drops of the true knowledge, putting them into an appropriate shape for a greater servility of the crowd and perpetuated this serfdom through monopolizing of the spiritual culture...”

“How come?” Stas didn’t get it confused by what he had heard.

“For example, take the Bible well-known to you and honored by half of the planet as the sacred book. Who composed the Old Testament? The priests, that is, the servants of the Archons. And who composed the New Testament? Marionettes of the Archons. What can be said more about that?”

“It turns out that these Archons are at the head of the world religions?”

“De facto in power, yes. But to be more precise, their minions were and will be at the head of all of the world religions. At the head of all big politics and businesses there

are their marionettes. Even all those people who swayed the destinies of the world, as for instance Alexander of Macedon, Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Napoleon, Stalin, Hitler, and others, were merely pieces on their chessboard where they performed their usual intricate games.”

“Wait, wait,” implored lost Stas. “What do you mean by ‘minions’?! How about Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed? These people brought freedom to people. They can’t be minions of those priests...”

Ariman did not even let him finish, interrupting his speech in an imperious arrogant tone: “And where is their freedom?!” And making a meaningful pause, he demanded again in a commanding voice: “Where?! Yes, there were those who tried to teach something, to give people the knowledge. What’s more the very Grail, the utmost power, was in people’s hands! And what of it? Where did it all come to? Another victory of the Archons and creation of new religions on the basis of the lost Teachings! And why? Because people are too lazy to transform themselves. Because people are already used to gregarious habits, they are used to servile way of thinking. They wait all the time to be governed. The Archons did such a great job that people are already enjoying to be morons. They enjoy being dumb and wait to be spoon-fed with explanations from their manipulators. It is more convenient for them to live in a flock than to be free men. They doom themselves to a lifetime slavery, so let them remain slaves if that is what they want. It is their choice after all. Everyone decides for one’s own self.”

After such a shocking speech by Ariman nobody dared to break the silence. And I even felt somehow uneasy inside, an unpleasant feeling of predetermination arose, some inner self-dissatisfaction, a state of depression and despair. Ariman sustained a pause and continued with a softer tone, “So, guys, this world is doomed to eternal slavery. But you have a chance to become free people! For doing this you just need to become a rich and financially independent person. Then you will have access to everything, including the genuine spiritual knowledge opening in you a limitless source of force and power.”

Eugene cleared his voice as if after a long silence and uttered hesitatingly, “It sounds like nonsense. How can I be free when I become rich if I will be still ruled by these, how are they called... Archons?”

“You are wrong, young man,” uttered Ariman in a tender voice. “This dependence will not eternal for you. During the process of growth of your capital you will be of course dependent on first of all the state where you work and live. Later on when your business will grow a new dependence on laws of other countries will appear, where your business will be present. But when you earn enough money to become independent on business then you will become really free. If you prefer politics instead of business, sorry but you will be dependent all your life. Since the more power you will have over people, the stronger will you depend on the Archons. But in exchange for that you receive glory, big money, comfortable life. So everybody chooses himself.”

Eugene hemmed and said, “Well, I have understood that I didn’t get anything. But from what I understood it comes out that freedom is a very relative notion. Everybody determines it for himself individually. For the most part all of us were slaves and we will remain slaves.”

Ariman grinned.

“Everything is up to you.”

“Sure,” Stas muttered to himself, “It is the same old story.”

“Is it possible for us to get to this caste of Archons?” Ruslan suddenly put his question.

The senior guys wanted to answer him with a joke but Ariman replied quite seriously ahead of them, “Of course, it is real though very hard. If you achieve not only the financial freedom but the significant spiritual growth you won’t be left without attention. Since this caste is from time to time renewed with new members. The old ones pass away, the new ones take their places. It’s a natural process.”

“How is it possible to find them?” Ruslan again put his naïve question.

Ariman grinned.

“If you achieve what I told you, they will find you themselves and believe me they will not leave your personality without attention.”

“Who can need us?” grinned Eugene. “This Olympus is not for us.”

“Oh, that is your main hinder” stated Ariman with a pleasure in his voice. “This is exactly the point we started our discussion. Everybody dreams to become rich, but doesn't

want to do anything for that. Giving up the victory without even starting the fight, you wittingly doom yourself to defeat. You haven't just seen in your life the real examples when people from the very low level reached the highest top. But I have seen and not one time. Those people began from the most simple but most important on their way, they believed in themselves thus forcing their subconscious to work in the right direction. Today you admired Vitaliy Yakovlevich and his mastery. However, his abilities are primitive. But you have already hurried on to label them as unattainable. But I tell you, change your way of thinking, don't abase your personality, make it free of any restrictions. Believe in yourself! And your dreams will turn into reality!

“Since mostly a human has only one universal and healing power, call it as you wish, universal knowledge, nature, God, creative Reason, but in fact, it's all is a power of subconscious. Those who direct thought to the right way, receive a result they wish. It concerns all people on Earth, regardless the colour of their skin, origin etc. This principle works the same way both with atheists and believers. Since the main thing is the belief itself in the human. Do you understand it? Not something you believe in but with how strong you believe. Since all your life is based on the strength of your belief. And all events and circumstances in life are just a result of your belief. That's why Jesus all the time repeated over and over again to the crowd to have belief. Do you remember what is said in the Gospel of Mark, 11:23 'For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and

shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.' 'Subconscious harbours forces which advance the world.' It was said by William James, the father of American psychology. Ancient innermost wisdom says, 'It's the same inside and outside, up and down'. This truth was interpreted in different ways by all: Zoroaster, Lao Tse, Buddha, Moses, Jesus. It's written in the Bible that every man will be rewarded according to his faith. And faith is nothing else than a thought or a certain state which is taken by the consciousness as the truth and transmitted to the subconscious to execute.

Ariman held a pause and said, "Thus though Vitaliy Yakovlevich managed to use the power of his subconscious, first, he used only a minor percent of it, second, he acted blindly, by intuition."

"It's not a bad minor percent!" said Andrew shocked. "What will happen if to use it fully?"

"You can't even imagine that!" uttered Ariman satisfied. "However, let it be so, I will share with you some examples from the life of those who managed by my advice to consciously use the powers of his subconscious and to radically change his life.

Ariman thought for a while and then he uttered, "Alright, I will tell you about a priest whom I know. When I got acquainted with him, it was a sick, tormented by the life man. He had his own parish, but almost nobody visited it. People are easy to understand. Who would like to come to a chipped church which building long needs major repairs to a priest who is often ill and sometimes even can't serve the mass to

the end because of his weakness? But at the same time the priest himself was a quite interesting person. There was something special in him,” Ariman drawled a bit the last word as if recalling, “There was some invisible attractive feature. When we got into heart-to-heart conversation with him, he began to tell that everything is bad with him: people don’t visit his parish, there was no offertory, walls of the church get gradually destroyed, there was no money to repair them. His health got completely poor. He had done everything to restore it. But nothing helped him: nor doctors, nor holy water, nor prayers. In general, he had a breakdown. Everything was bad with him. He couldn’t see any outcome nor was he able to endure it anymore.

“Certainly, how could someone help him if in fact the problem wasn’t with his body which he tried to cure but with his spirit! How could the holy water help him if he didn’t believe in its healing powers! Since the healing by the holy water happens not because of the water but solely due to the belief of the man himself, that is due to the reaction of subconscious. It’s the healing power of subconscious that cures the body and nothing else. And water is just a nice argument for a man to convince his subconscious and started to believe in his healing, no more than that. How could his prayers help him if mostly they were abstract and directed into nowhere? The priest has been spending all his life in fears and delusions. Even the Bible was for him a ground for a deep sorrow. Where could the harmony appear in his soul from? Since psyche and physiology should supplement and balance each other, but not cause discord!

“So I felt pity about him. And I decided to explain him that all his problems are connected not with external but internal factors. I taught him to pray in the right way. To pray clearly and in details, using the inexhaustible power of his subconscious, disclosing in him amazing extraordinary abilities for healing. That is, I told him in details that before the prayer he should first tune himself to it and prepare. For doing it he should mentally address his body and reach the relaxation of his body and quieting his psyche. It’s the same like you get into the state of meditation. And when he reaches this half-sleeping state, he should repeat the prayer I gave him, ‘Gracious and perfect God manifests in my body. My subconscious is getting filled with His huge power. He created me in His own image. He gave me power over my body and spirit. He created this world for me. Everything in this world belongs to me. I am a Master of my life. Wealth, health, success fill out my life. My subconscious recreates me again according to the image created by God.’

I told him that this prayer is to be performed twelve times per day saying it twelve times. And I have not just told him this prayer but explained the mechanism how it works. When this prayer is persistently repeated exactly this number of times per day, our brain which represent an organ of conscious analytical mind takes this formula of prayer for the rule and order. And as soon as his mind accepted it, this order of thought is transmitted to the solar plexus which is called sometimes as a “brain of subconscious”.

“Right, Sensei told us about the solar plexus,” uttered Andrew excitedly. “Is it really a brain of subconscious?”

“Surely. I am surprised that Sensei didn’t explain it to you. Namely the solar plexus is the brain of the subconscious. Moreover, right there your thoughts and images are activized and materialized into events of your life... But let’s come back to our priest. After my explanations he resolutely and persistently got down to prayer performance. And literally in a few days he felt a considerable relief. In one month it was confirmed by the medical examintation, his health improved considerably, and later it was fully restored. Moreover, after he continued to perform persistently this prayer, he convinced himself following my advice that he is an excellent speaker. And what do you think? The power of transforming his subconscious did make him wait for long. His financial state sharply went uphill. The parish revived and soon became so often visited by people who just were enchanted by sermons of this priest that its walls could not afford place for all those who were interested in it. They started to give big donations which allowed to wholly restore the buildings of the parish. People began to invite this priest to different cities and countries. He quickly became popular and famous. And up to date he visited almost half of the world with his lectures, he was in many capitals, got acquainted with outstanding people. He wrote books about the phenomenon of subconscious and taught many people to use this method I gave him. That is the power of subconscious! As it is said in the Gospel of Mathew, 21:22, “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.” Since it is said, everybody will deserve what he believes in. Do you see what the power of subconscious do

with people! If this priest hadn't learnt to use it, he would die without being needed by anyone."

"His destiny would be gloomy," remarked Stas.

"Right. But he managed to restore himself and to become a true human," again emphasized Ariman. "He had done a lot of useful things for other people, visited a lot of countries with his lectures and taught many people. You can see what it means when the man began to cognize himself."

"Well, if Eugene begins to cognize himself, he would need to live in a cave then," jokingly uttered Stas.

"Why?" Eugene didn't understand him.

"What do mean 'why'?" cunningly smiled the guy. "You will see your essence and you will be driven back to your home. Can you imagine what a Neanderthal man is hidden in the depth of your subconscious!"

"Come on. Whatever good or bad it may be, but it's mine! At least I will be driven to the cave because my Neanderthal man is though a simple but a smart guy. And your ape-man will force you all your life to crawl on the trees and guzzle bananas!"

"Ape-man?" grinned Stas and addressing to Ariman he added, "Don't pay attention, normally he is a clever guy. But there are some clinical peculiarities inherent to his mind..."

The guys laughed and when the jokes were over they came back to the topic of their discussion.

"It turns out that our belief determines the direction of work of our subconscious," Victor made a conclusion. "And if our belief would be abstract, our subconscious will bear us illusions and myths?"

“Of course,” nodded Ariman.

“But still, the priest didn’t begin to live from zero,” said Volodya in a low voice. “He had some good or bad but parish. That is mostly that man needed just good health and capacity to work in order to put in order his life.”

“Alright,” uttered Ariman. “I can share with you also another life example from my practice of educating people when a man being nobody and nothing listened to my advices, began his life from zero and with the power of his subconscious reached a huge fortune and high position in the society.”

The guys stared at Ariman with interest. He began to tell his story without haste.

“Once I was walking in the park and my attention was drawn by a bum. He looked like fifty years old. Dirty, muddy, in torn clothes. He hardly dragged his thin body gathering bottles. When I started to talk to him, I was surprised to hear that he was just forty one years old. Though the story of his life was quite banal, family, friends, work, alcoholism and its consequence, street and despair, nevertheless I decided to help him. I got him sincerely talking and he told me that all his life he was afraid of something. First it was a fear to lose his job, to stay without money, then the fear how to earn money for his family, he was afraid to get into a conflict with his boss, he was afraid to get fired, to be thrown away to the street. In order to get rid of this fear he began to drink. He drank once, felt relief, relaxation, his fears left him for some time. He drank for second, third time, felt as a ‘hero’ in this life. In this way he got used to alcohol. But the fact that temporarily he

forgot about his problems didn't mean at all that they weren't stockpiled. Finally he understood that he became dependent on alcohol and the problems just increased. One conflict begot another and everything rolled as a snowball. As a result, what he was fearing most of all in his life, finally happened. He became jobless, homeless, thrown away in the full sense to the street.

“Pay your attention, this is a classical example showing the phenomenon of subconscious. The thought dominating in a man, when it is supported by emotions, gains power. Namely this power is an order for subconscious. And subconscious, as is known, doesn't understand jokes. It strenuously and effectively executes what the man believes in and convince himself. That's why I draw all the time your attention to the fact that it's necessary not only perform the prayer given by me in the state of meditation but to rejoice yourself that you have already received what you wanted. This emotion gives power, an order to the subconscious and it executes it. But most of people do everything on the contrary, strengthening in them year by year the domination of the strongest emotion, the fear, thus making their life unbearable. The previous life of this man is the typical example of mistakes done by many people. His fears that he grew in himself, mentally confirmed and supported with his emotions came into life.”

“Does it mean that he gave orders to his subconscious that he will stay without job and money on the street and it happened so?” specified Andrew for himself.

“Yes,” relied Ariman. “Besides the subconscious found the most effective way how to realize this order quickly. Getting used to drink alcohol, the man became quite quickly a drunkard, lost his job, all relatives rejected him and as a result when he was 39 years old he found himself on the street homeless and without means of living. Two years he was lounging about parks and ins and outs living on scanty donations. If I hadn’t met him that time, he would have been long dead and wouldn’t have known that the true reason of sad events in his life was lied in him, or to be more precise, in his thoughts.

“After he entrusted me, I decided to help him and began to tell about the true reasons which brought him to this state and how to get out of this situation. I told him which force led him to this extreme poverty and taught him to control and to manage it, to direct into the right way. I taught him simple truth and he really believed in it. On the other hand,” grinned Ariman, “What could he do if it were his only chance. And he used it. Nine years flew by. And as a result up to date this man is the head of the big corporation. He is one of my best assistants. He managed to rise on his own from the lowest state, from the very dirt. And you can’t imagine how it is pleasant for me to observe when during meetings famous politicians and even presidents stand in line in order to shake his hand considering it for them a big honour,” Ariman grinned and uttered pensively, “If they knew that only nine years ago ordinary passers-by shrank from not only shaking his hand but even throwing him coins...”

“Of course,” Ruslan drawled with envy in his voice, “You helped him, taught him, gave him money.”

“You are wrong, young man,” answered Ariman. “I didn’t give him any money. After our conversation in the park I met him next time only in six years when he has already been a head of the corporation. And he asked himself to join my team. Of course, I took him to me. I was pleased to see that listened to my words.”

“Here you are!” uttered Eugene wonder-struck. “He turned in six years from the bum into the head of the corporation?!”

“There is nothing amazing in it. The possibilities of our conscious are limitless,” uttered Ariman. “Everything depends on you, how much you believe in it and which force you put into achieving your wish.”

“How is that possible... without money?” Victor shrugged his shoulders puzzled.

“I gave him much more than all money in the world! I revealed him the secret of subconscious. I gave his valuable knowledge how it works. He understood and learnt what I told him and began to fulfil it all. And money automatically came to him. What is money by itself? It’s just the energy which should be attracted. Money can’t be hated or despised. Money should be loved. You should respect your capital as yourself.”

“What did you tell him if it’s not a secret?” asked Volodya.

“For you it’s not a secret,” replied Ariman. “I told him how he should convince his subconscious in the right way, how to prove it that what you want to achieve is your strongest

intention in the life and is your main order to which execution needs the subconscious should draw its strongest reserves.”

“Is it all?” Ruslan got surprised.

“And what should be done in the first turn for the subconscious to get to work?” Kostya interrupted Ruslan.

“First of all you should change the habits of your thinking, since they are the primary source of your delusions, groundless fears, erroneous belief which consequence is your life. So first as I have already told you, you have to delete from your memory such convictions as ‘I can’t’, ‘everything is hopeless’, ‘I won’t manage to do it’, ‘I don’t know what to do’, ‘I feel worse and worse each day’. And so on. That is delete from your memory all destructive and negative thought which hinder you from achieving the set goal. I explain you once again why you should do it. Out subconscious is arranged so that if there are two thoughts, a good one and a bad one, which you believe in, the subconscious will realize a bad thought, that is your doubts, your fears. That’s why I repeat you once again that fear is a very strong emotion, that is this thought and order will be more steady. If unconsciously you put into it more force and your belief, then these convictions will dominate in your mind. Therefore what a person fears of in his life, finally he gets it. If you are afraid of diseases, old age, poverty, it doesn’t matter what, any your fear is just an order for your subconscious. Therefore you should first of all get rid of your fears.”

“How?” asked Ruslan.

“Just don’t believe in them, stop fearing. Convince yourself that you don’t care about your fears at all, that you

have a goal and nobody and nothing will be able to prevent you from its achieving.”

“It’s easy to say ‘convince yourself’,” hemmed Ruslan. “I say to myself again and again, convince myself, but I’m not too successful with it.”

“So you have to keep silent and do nothing,” Eugene advised him with a smile.

Stas couldn’t miss this chance to mock at Eugene, too.

“It’s easy for you to say so. Even dust can’t appear in your full vacuum. But in my head there are many thoughts, like bees in the hive.”

Hardly Eugene wanted to say him something back, Ariman began to speak again, “You know what the main point with it? Most of people think that they are helpless before any obstacles in their life, starting from fears in their mind and finishing external circumstances, whether it’s decrease of their salary or discharge. They are terribly afraid of it and naturally they get it sooner or later. Because their subconscious executes their order. That is they give instead of the order to be rich and happy they give in fact every day orders to be poor and to destroy their career. But even if people decide to change themselves, many of them do a mistake that they are not consistent and consequent in their decisions. They improve themselves one or two days until their enthusiasm is over. Then they see that they can’t manage it and say ‘It’s all rubbish!’. Then they begin to cherish their lazyness, to feel sorry for themselves and envy the others. Whereas they should better improve themselves every day and force their way to their goal as a tank. And for doing it they have just to

change their opinion about themselves and to believe in their forces.”

“I would believe in myself with pleasure,” took up Ruslan. “But all the time there is someone near you who is much better than you and more successful.”

“Well, take for example, sport. Each kind of sport has its own champions. And sportsmen know That if they want to show high results, they need to achieve it not being envious towards the champion but to work on themselves by the sweat of their brows every day. But unlike in sport it’s life where the quality of your training determines whether you will be a free man or you will stay all your life long in the herd of slaves. If you want to become rich nevery envy anybody at all. Since it dooms you to poverty, bears thoughts and therefore a direct order to the subconscious that you are a loser, a victim of injustice and slave of oppression in comparison with that man. Believe me, you will be like that if you don’t learn to transform your envy into orders to be happy that you possess it all already.”

“How can it be ‘already’ if in reality I don’t possess it at al?” Victor asked confused.

“That’s the secret, the key to belief and realization of the power of your subconscious. Since if you have the same house as your neighbor, would you envy him? No. Because you possess it already! After you imagine that something what you wish has really happened you materialize this way your wish through your subconscious, that is you give it a firm straight-out order for realization of this wish. But if you tell yourself that you ‘would like to have it’ that means in the

language of your subconscious that you ‘dream of it’. Therefore your subconscious will please you only with dreams about it.

“Thus ‘would like to’ and ‘already have it’ are two different orders for the subconscious. For example, one thing is when you would like to have a car which you liked. If you just wish it, you give an order to your subconscious to draw this wish in your dreams. Another thing is when you order to your subconscious ‘I have this car’ and imagine in the reality that you sit in this nice car, you see its compartment, you know that it’s yours. Be sure the subconscious will find the ways to realize your order. Certain circumstances will happen in your life and as a result this car will become yours.”

“But if for example me and Stas would like to have one and the same car, what will be then?” asked Eugene.

“Don’t worry, then each of you will drive this car. The subconscious has a huge power. If necessary, it can divide the world into two or even three parts. And each of you in this divided reality will drive this car.”

“So in order to become rich it’s necessary just to suggest to yourself, to repeat that ‘I’m rich’, isn’t it?” asked Kostya with a distrustful grin.

“Noway. If you repeat as a parrot ‘I’m rich’, ‘I’m rich’ but don’t believe in this statement taking into account the idea that in fact your poor reality is your only reality, you may repeat it to yourself many years but nothing will come of it. As I have already told you, the subconscious doesn’t understand your moods and inner contradictions. Your

thought means for it an order which it has to fulfil. Your thought should be full of power and power full of belief that it all will come true.”

“Well, but could you please explain it to me how can I believe that I even don’t know how can I become rich?” asked Victor.

“Many people think this erroneous way. How to become rich is a question of minor importance. It’s a task of your subconscious. It will find this solution by its own. Your task is to give a clear order to it and to be sure for one hundred percent that your order will be fulfilled in a most quick and optimal for you way. The subconscious is though a soldier it’s much smarter than its general, I mean the consciousness. And be sure it will use all means in order to execute the order. If you will try all the time to correct the set task with your consciousness and each time to give a new order how it should do it, you will complicate its task and it will never fulfil it.”

“Nevertheless I don’t understand how it can realize it at all?” uttered Victor thoughtfully.

“It can do it in different ways. It will do all in order to create necessary circumstances. For example, you may suddenly win a huge amount of money by lottery, by playing cards, you may find a suitcase with money, or inherit it. Or a grandiose idea will arise in your head which you will sell very profitably.”

“But who will buy my idea?” Victor grinned. “Money is the most important thing in business.”

“Noway,” drawled Ariman and already addressing all the guys he uttered, “The most important things in business are new ideas and information. Money is a result of working of ideas and information. By the way, this man I told you about started his rapid rise from an idea. First every day during a few months he has been doing persistently a prayer-meditation I had given to him. And the prayer was like that: ‘I’m a free man. I’m rich, strong, powerful. My will bend people and circumstances. My ideas are perfect. They are realized in the life and with each day they bring me a huge income. My Divine Father, I’m grateful to You for my success, hapiness, my wealth and material fortune.’” And what do you think? In a few months he has got the first results. And then the events were rushing so quick that he became rich as if by magic. The main thing, guys is not to disturb your subconscious with your wrong ‘directives. And be sure that finally the subconscious will bring you to the right place and will get into touch with necessary people, so it will do all in order to realize your order in details. Since in fact any event in your life is not accidental. This event is born and ripens in you and the subconscious just looks for reasons and a pretext for its realization.”

Ariman kept silent and then uttered again, “So, guys, willy-nilly, our belief determines everything. People receive knowledge but almost don’t use it because they don’t want, because they are lazy. And they just don’t believe in it. Though every man has a chance, plenty of opportunities which lie literally underneath. Everybody sees himself in his dreams as a rich man, how he satisfies all his wishes and

needs without problems. These are not dreams, guys. This is how your subconscious works. It shows you whom you can become in reality. But people don't understand it. They slug in their dreams and then again give orders to their subconscious that they will never get it."

"And how quickly may the subconscious realize it and make me rich if I repeat again and again confirmatory formulas?" Ruslan couldn't calm down himself.

"It all depends on your belief. Those who really sincerely and firmly believe in it, putting into this affirmation all his power, I mean belief, will get it quicker. It's different for everybody. It's foolish to wait when you will become rich already in a week. During a week you will not put into order even your thoughts..."

While Ariman was talking, the surrounding nature was taken up more and more by the darkness of the coming night. Therefore our attention wasn't distracted by anything but fully concentrated on the words of Ariman and consideration of what he had said.

"The power of subconscious is really allmighty," we heard Ariman's voice from the darkness. "It's namely the keeper of your brilliant ideas and inventions. Why do you think Goethe cognized the great truth which remained a secret for most of his contemporaries? Because Goethe managed to open the power of his subconscious. Or why did Mozart charm the whole world with his music? Only due to his innovative independent thinking which awoke his hidden forces of subconscious and made his brain work in this direction. The same can be said about hundreds of the most

talented people of the world: famous scientists, sculptors, painters, actors, diplomats, bankers, world known leaders of their time. For example, Stalin turned from a thief to a Generalissimo, he began to rule millions of people. Your Khrushchev was a mechanic and miner and became a Secretary General of the great powers. Bonapart became from an ordinary unknown soldier a great Napoleon whose name is known to the whole world. And Hitler? He was nobody, beggar who couldn't earn money and he turned into whom! Of course, he is a negative figure for the world, he was a fascist but it doesn't matter. He used a power of his subconscious as an instrument for achieving his wishes. And he became a fuhrer! All those people managed to get glory, respect and their great position only because they believed in themselves and used the power of their subconscious which generated brilliant ideas for them... So, guys, if you go to bed with belief that you will fully transform your life to better and will wake up with this thought, sooner or later it will happen. Remember that your true value is your subconscious which according to your order generates any idea or creates any event for you. It's your subconscious that is your true treasury! It is said even in the Gospel of Mathew. Do you remember these words about your true treasure where 'moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.' So use it! Use the power of your conscious which is given to your by Heaven!"

Judging by reaction of our guys to the words of Ariman they were quite inspired. After these words even my mood changed and I had a clear wish to work seriously with my

subconscious and to learn to manage its force in order to transform my life to the better. Though I was confused by these examples. And beside that I didn't understand what else 'better' I wanted. It seemed that everything in my life was going good, even very good.

“But in order to use so the power of your subconscious as the great people you should at least know in which sphere you have big talant and interest,” Kostya expressed his thought. “And correspondingly you should develop it. That is, as far as I understood, you may become rich in any profession.”

“Surely,” confirmed Ariman. “Moreover, I will tell you more. Take for example medicine. I know a lot of doctors who are actually not smarter than their colleagues. But they believe in themselves and respect themselves. That's why they don't work like their colleagues eleven months a year and earn nothing. They managed to arrange their life so and to convince their clients in their advantages over other specialists so they work now only five months a year and receive more than a million dollar a year. And all of that is due to their exceptionally high self-estimation. So, guys, any profession whatever good specialist your are in requires self-confidence in order to advance more than you will be let to do it by people who are more self-confident.”

“But how is it possible to know what suits you better?” Kostya asked again. “How is it possible not to make a mistake? What is the best way to realize your abilities in order to achieve the set goal, for example, a fortune?”

“I will reply you with an example. I had once an interesting case. Once I met a young guy. He was from the ordinary provincial family, as they say without money, opportunities and connections. But he had a big desire to become famous and rich, though as you understand he had no real prospects in life. Moreover he even didn't know like you what is his vocation and where to go in order to realize his dream in his life. I revealed him a secret of subconscious and told him that he should always repeat such a formula, ‘Genius of my subconscious makes me perfect. It determines my true vocation in life and makes me happy, successful and wealthy man.’ The most important in this process is to fully trust to your subconscious. Don't worry, it will lead you in life as it should be. Don't interfere and don't resist those events which are created by your subconscious otherwise you will lose years of your life and will achieve nothing. So actually you don't need to do anything, it will be arranged by itself, the most important is just to believe in it.

“I told the same to that guy. And what do you think? He started to perform this prayer persistently and with full responsibility. And his subconscious found the shortest and the most effective way to wealth. The guy became quite quickly a famous actor, though he has never thought that it was his vocation. Now he is one of the richest people in the world, he is world known, got not a single ‘Oscar’ for his play and what is most interesting, his material wealth continue to grow and increase. So if you set a concrete goal in your life, don't disturb your subconscious with your logic to realize it.”

“Well,” Tatyana uttered sadly, “It is much easier for a man to realize himself in life than for a woman.”

“Your are wrong,” endearingly replied Ariman. “All people regardless their sex, race, nationality, location have a chance to develop the mighty power of their subconscious. Specially for you I will tell another example. Once travelling by car, I visited a service center in order to clean the car and to change engine oil. When my car was serviced, I was sitting in the rest room and watched TV. A girl from maintenance staff brought me a cup of coffee. I paid attention that her gaze was lifeless, unnatural as if she didn’t live but was spending last hours of her life. I began to talk to her and began to ask about her problems. The story of her life also seemed to be banal and typical for many people. She was from an ordinary family and lived for miserable salary. The lack of money didn’t let her continue her education. She has found with difficulties even this badly paid job. Though she had big ambitions and many wishes. But she saw the real way out from her poverty and a chance for realization of her wishes only in one thing, to get married successfully and to bear a lot of children for her husband in order to stabilize her material state. However after I had told her about the secret of subconscious her life changed radically. She has not only sincerely believed in my words but she changed her thinking and directed all her forces for achieving the final result. And what do you think? Today she is a successful politician. And her influence will grow with each day, she will achieve big success. And that is possible because she knows the secret of subconscious and actively uses its force! In the nearest future

the whole world will speak about her and she will become one of the most authoritative politicians... So everything is in your hands, or to be more precise in heads.”

“Is it possible to use the subconscious to develop extraordinary abilities?” this time asked Andrew.

“Guys, your subconscious is your extraordinary abilities which simply speaking you don’t use. I’m surprised that Sensei didn’t tell you about it.”

“Not at all,” said Volodya in a bass voice defending Sensei, “He told us and demonstrated a lot of things.”

Ariman grinned.

“Surely, he told you a lot but not all. If he told you about the golden key to your subconscious which awakens extraordinary abilities in a human I suppose you would not go so far to have a look at this sensitive. People would come to you in crowds from all countries of the world.”

“And what is that key to the subconscious?” asked Victor with curiosity.

“Oh, it’s really a golden formula. It opens such a power of subconscious with which help it’s possible not only to develop your extraordinary abilities but to influence people, events, circumstances. It gives huge power. With the help of this power which it opens it’s possible to heal the fatal illness, to kill just with one thought, to create a free fearless person or a slave till death, it’s possible to generate and implement great ideas, or to destroy the whole megapolises...”

“The whole megapolises?” asked amazed Ruslan. “In which way? By atomic explosion?”

“Why so complicated?” grinned Ariman. “It’s possible to do much easier and more effectively. The human thought is able to have an influence on natural processes. The keeper of this formula may cause an earthquake just with one thought, or tsunami, or tornado or other natural disasters. Maybe it sounds for you too fantastic but it’s quite real...”

As soon as Ariman pronounced these words suddenly I recalled yesterday’s events when just one drop of sea caused under the mental impact of Sensei a huge storm and then it again unexpectedly calmed down the running high sea. After I recalled the huge black wave I looked byside wth fear at the sea as if being afraid that it would appear again on the moonlight horizon. There was no wave of course but the fear didn’t disappear, even on the contrary with each word of Ariman it grew and increased.

It seemed that not only me recalled about the yesterday’s events but my friends too.

“Well, it’s clear that it’s possible to influence mentally on some small place and to cause a local storm,” Anrew began to argue and added like an expert, “I assume nobody of us already doubt it. But to destroy the whole megapolises?! There live so many people. Their psyche will resist somehow the disaster. Maybe unconsciously but still it will.”

“Exactly, it will resist unconsciously,” Ariman emphasized it sarcastically. “This dissociation will not have a noticeable result since during the disaster every man tries, like any other animal to save himself. But those who consciously use the formula are able to use much bigger forces than the

whole crowd which is trying to escape the disaster. Therefore the golden formula is golden.”

“And what is the mechanism of this formula?” inquired Volodya.

“There is a transformation of thought due to a certain sound through the ezoosmos into reality,” seriously replied Ariman.

“Due to a certain sound?” Stas asked again.

“Right, due to a sound of certain words,” specified Ariman.

“Do you want to say that just with a sound of certain words it’s possible to destroy the whole megapolis?” Ruslan hemmed distrustfully.

“Young man,” Ariman said with a note of arrogance in his voice. “Though the thought strengthened by the sound of words the Universe originated, including you. I mean that big bang which according to the statements of astronomers gave a start to everything. And for destruction of some megapolis it’s not needed to use even the golden formula. It’s necessary just one of simple formulas of the great Archons. For example this one: «IED SUEM SULAM».”

Ariman pronounced these words in such a strong loud voice that I had not only goose bumps on the skin but I felt as if some heavy wave of unclear alarm and discomfort rolled through me which just intensified my inner fear.”

“Is that all?” uttered Ruslan with surprise and immediately hurried on to repeat this formula aloud after Ariman.

But the guy managed just to babble something unclearly, so Ariman laughed kindly together with our guys.

“Even if you learn to pronounce it clearly, it will not bring you anything. Because you should put in the power of thought to the sound and not only.”

“What do you mean?” Ruslan didn’t get it.

“For this formula to start to work you need to concentrate your thoughts and to visualize concretely the ongoing process directly inside of you that is to create a situation on the level of microcosmos. For example you wish to generate a tornado in the ocean and to make it fall on the certain megapolis. For doing that you need to see that geographical place where your tornado is going on to appear. Let’s take for example the Atlantic ocean. With the inner sight you should clearly imagine how in this location a light wind appears, how it becomes more intensive, twists spirally. How this vortical flow grows more and more, how it extends. How this tornado begins to move towards let’s say the Gulf of Mexico gaining more and more power on its way and increasing its speed. And how this might approaches the coast and falls on the certain megapolis, for instance, New Orlean. By the way you should thoroughly see with your inner sight which exactly destruction it will cause. For example, it will destroy a dam, certain works, it will flood the city, turn upside down cars, smash billboards, cause fire etc. Thus you have to visualize the real geography of this city and real destruction which will be caused by your tornado.”

“Here you are!” exclaimed puzzled Ruslan. “One should know so much! I don’t know well even the geography of my

own town, not mentioning some Orlean which is located nobody knows where.”

“What do you want?” laughed Ariman. “You claim to possessing serious knowledge. In order to have it you need at least elementary skills and knowledge. Without it nothing will come of it. Everything needs a thorough preparation... Of course, you may do another thing. If you are not good with geography and location of the concrete megapolis, you may begin from more simple thing. That is you may cause not the tornado but an earthquake on certain place. And not only cause it but program it for a certain date and year.”

“How is that?” Ruslan was puzzled.

“It’s very simple. You take mentally for example the date of July 12, 1993. You choose a geographical place, let’s say, Japan, Western coast of Hokkaido. And the force of the earthquake itself that measures let’s say 7-8 on the Richter scale. You visualize inside this event and pronounce the same Archon’s formula.”

And Ariman again repeated the formula with force in his voice. After he pronounced it, I felt completely bad inside. First there was some wild tension of all organs, then some disgusting relaxing wave as if I was shaken energetically from inside. It caused some terrible panic and animal fear as if this earthquake already happens and not somewhere in Japan but here and now, on this very coast. This unclear state lasted not for long, maybe a few seconds. But it seemed to me that they lengthened out into eternity. The following conversation of the guys with Ariman a little bit distracted me from such unpleasant experienced feelings.

“That’s all. You see now, everything is very simple,” Ariman uttered with a calm voice.

“I didn’t get, on whose scale should we determine force of the earthquake?” asked puzzled Ruslan.

Ariman kept silent for a while, sighed heavily and after that he explained mockingly, “The scale of Richter. It’s a seismic scale based on the estimation of energy of seismic waves which appear during earthquakes, with highest possible magnitude of 9. And Richter is an American seismologist,” and he added with a snicker, “It’s the man who proposed to introduce this scale in 1935.”

“Ah,” drawled Ruslan.

“Although,” Ariman continued in the same tone. “If you don’t know what is the true value of these indicators, you may just imagine the force of the earthquake itself and the following extent of destruction.”

“Now it’s clear,” significantly said the guy and justified his words, “Americans always invent something that you can’t enunciate it afterwards.”

Victor obviously didn’t want Ariman to draw attention to empty chattering of Ruslan and asked him, “So what, if you create all those events inside, will they happen?”

“Surely,” convincingly uttered Ariman. “Since you not only visualize inside, you launch under the impact of your thought a certain program. That means that you visualize a real situation in inner microcosmos and then with the help of a certain sound you transfer it through ezoosmos into external macrocosmos. It’s important to keep emotional neutrality during all this process, that means total lack of any emotions.

You should not feel neither sorry, nor anger towards the object of your impact, in this case it's the population of this city. That is you should be neutral towards these events. Otherwise you will not succeed. Because emotions may effect also other forces and the result will be different from the one you wanted. In order to obtain an experience in it, remember that you need certain time, your wish and constant training.”

“It looks like a true climate weapon,” remarked Volodya in a bass voice. “It's terrible to think that it can be used by anyone who wishes it.”

“This is a serious weapon,” Victor agreed with him.

“The most terrible and serious weapon is the human himself,” Ariman replied them with a smile. “However fortunately he doesn't even suspect about it.”

Our company was walking some distance keeping silence. Stas broke the silence.

“I assume if the simple sound formula is able to have such an effect, what are the possibilities of the golden one?”

“Oh,” Ariman drawled with a pleasure. “Its possibilities are enormous. For a human who possesses the formula of this sound there exist almost nothing impossible. Let's take for example St. Agapit...”

“Agapit?” out guys got excited. “Sensei has just told us yesterday about him.”

“Really? Did he tell you that Agapit also used the golden formula?” asked Ariman.

“Did Agapit know this formula?!” our guys got surprised.

“Of course, he did! The Holy Spirit was in his body. By the way, I don’t know whether Sensei has told you about it or not but Agapit used this formula not only during his life but also in the epistle after his biological death. With the help of this formula he has written the after-death forgiveness on the parchment. And the force put into the parchment due to the golden formula has an effect till now healing everybody who is near it within a radius of its field. So imagine now which opportunities were opened by this formula to a human who possessed it.”

“Well, Sensei told us that Agapit was a Bodhisattve of Shambala and did a lot of good things for people,” uttered Victor.

“He did a lot of good things for people?!” Ariman repeated with disappointment and said toughly as if a public prosecutor to the criminals. “He has given to people much more than they deserve! He brought again the very Grail into the human world, this highest power, power over power...”

He wanted to tell something else but the seniour guys not paying attention at his harsch intonation asked him almost all together, “The Grail?!”

Ariman was like awaken after this collective question and asked with his normal voice, “Didn’t Sensei tell you about that too?”

“No,” the guys answered in the same manner.

Ariman grinned and replied evasively, “It means, guys, it’s not the right time to tell you about it.”

Since Ariman mysteriously stopped as they say at the most interesting place, the guys started to throw him with different questions.

“Who or what is the Grail?” tried to elicit Ruslan.

“Does the Grail have a power over power?” asked amazed Volodya.

“The Grail was brought by Agapit himself? Where from? From Shambala? Right?” persistently was asking Victor. “How does it look like in reality?”

“What is the golden formula? Are these some words?” asked Stas.

“Can you give it to us?” Eugene immediately joined him.

“It’s important for us,” his friend hastily added obviously feeling some doubts in Ariman.

“Guys, I can give you of course the golden formula and to tell about the Grail,” declared Ariman reluctantly. “But you’d better learn first use the elementary power of subconscious. Feel that you are a master in your body and in your life, not a slave depending on the will of other people and circumstances. Learn to manage your subconscious, require from it that it would execute precisely all your wishes and orders. When you master that I will share with you with pleasure the highest secrets... Otherwise even the golden formula will not bring anything. For an ordinary man it’s just a combination of sounds, nothing more. It’s the same as to give a car to a pithecanthropus and he would look at it as at a big shining cobble. One the person who can drive a car is able to value its capacity and advantages.”

The guys quieted down. And suddenly Stas asked, “I wonder whether Sai Baba also uses this golden formula?”

“Certainly,” Ariman uttered so as if it went without saying. “And not only him, but many of those who achieved significant results in spiritual growth. So, guys, make your subconscious work for you and you will be surprised how your life will change. Just throw away all foolish dreams and move purposefully to your goal.”

Meanwhile far off in the sea flashed out the whole ‘constellation’ of bright multicoloured lights. Their outline looked like a ghost ancient ship under sail roaming about the world all the time. Almost all paid attention to this unusual phenomenon trying to guess what could it be. The guys presupposed very different even mysterious reasons. But Ariman quickly disillusioned us. It turned out that it was a simple illumination on his yacht stylized specially to such an unusual antiquity. After Ariman made us get rid of the imaginary mysticism, he began to tell how difficult it was for him to find a specialist who would create such a vivid image for the yacht. And really in the darkness of the velvet night it shone not just like a ship from the distant past but if to defocus a gaze its contour merged into one big gilding star showing us a way to the camp. Ariman suggested to turn aside from the usual way and to walk along the seaside and we did it. From here the yacht seemed to be even more beautiful. Ariman remarked on that, “Look at the yacht. From this distant it looks like a big, unreachable star shining brightly somewhere there on the horizon. But is it that unreachable? Every step makes you implacably closer to it. If you have no

doubts, sooner or later you will reach the goal and will realize that this goal is quite real and material. The same thing is in business. Business is your steps. Richness is that yacht which you will surely reach. You just need to make efforts and fearless move on. Don't set aside it for tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, since it will be the same as to stand still. Do it here and now. The sooner you will start moving the quicker you will reach your cherished goal. Everything is simple.”

“It's really simple,” I thought. “I have just to start, and then it will go on automatically. I can't just stop on the half-way. Otherwise it will be neither backwards nor forwards. We left the rest houses far behind but still have to walk a long way to the yacht.” The yacht really was seen from here alluringly and nicely. But the way on the sticking sand got much harder than on the earth road of the spit.

“Remember, guys,” Ariman was telling instructively, “Only force is valued in this world because the world is arranged by its principle. Even if you want to be kind, you need force and not only physical but a spiritual one too. Don't even dream that the world will change radically in the nearest time and will become a planet of universal happiness. Look around you and at life. There are not even slight hints for such assumptions. Don't go far away, look at your families, where you live, at the families of your friends. Since even in the family everybody tries to manipulate the others, to emphasize his own value, to satisfy his own egoism. Look at the colleagues who surround you at your working place and at college. It's just a total division into clans of gossips, constant quarrels who is guilty and who is smarter and stronger. And if

to take in bigger scale, for example, of a state? People are able to do anything in order to get power and to reach their goal. Why do you think they need this power? To satisfy the needs of people?! Of course, not! They do it only for themselves, for satisfaction of their megalomania and growth of their capital. They clearly understand that they are just puppets of the mighty of this world, that's why they use the moment and take everything from the power what they can. Many ordinary people exalt them as an ideal of philanthropy. But in fact they are the same people like other, noway better at all. The difference between them and you lies only in the fact that they are more cunning, smarter and more confident in themselves. There is no sense to wait charity from them. They can give it only when it's profitable for themselves. And they throw it to people like a bone to a hungry dog so that its mouth waters on seeing his 'generous master.' But at most who needs you with your naïve dreams? Nobody. Until you become yourselves strong, nobody would help you. Therefore you have only one way out, to learn how to skillfully manipulate people. Otherwise other people will manipulate you.”

“How can I manipulate people if I can't do it?” asked Andrew with surprise.

“It only seems to you that you can't. Recall at least various tricks you invent and use in order to get something for you. You let to appear your great trickster only on the small everyday level, among your friends and relatives. But people who achieved big success in their life allowed their inner Affix to show off to a great extent in the external world. That's all the difference. You need to learn to play your

games in life. And not only to play but to win them. Actually you don't even suspect what a great Affix lives inside each of you."

"Affix?" Victor asked to repeat. "What does it mean?"

"Affix comes from the Latin word 'affixus', which means 'attached.' It's a part of us. It's our own inner 'I' which is able to change our essence, to transform it forming its new quality. Today this word is used in the different meaning but it's not that important. So, guys, every has a chance to reach a peak in any sphere, both in politics or in business."

It came again to a long pause in the conversation as if Ariman gave us a chance to comprehend what we had heard.

"What is the easiest way to start my own business?" suddenly asked Victor.

Ariman said with a slight sneer in his voice, "The easiest way if you don't have any idea, means and you are lazy to work on your subconscious is the following. Get a job in a commission business which is dealing with trade. A position doesn't matter, you may work there as a caretaker or a loader. But use every minute at work rationally for you. Go deeply into the core of processes which take place there. Ask, show interest, listen, observe how this company works, who are its supplier, who are buyers of its products. After you grasp the schemes of work, simply open your own company. If you don't have money, borrow it from someone or take a loan in a bank, or make an arrangement with a company which would be a wholesale buyer of your products. And then do the following. You take the goods from the suppliers of the

company you worked at before but at a little bit higher price. Where is the trick? For example, the company bought from them the goods for one dollar and sold for 1,5 dollar and earned 50 cents on that. You buy from their suppliers at higher price, for 1,2 dollar and sell to their buyers at lower price, for example, for 1,4 dollar. You earn only 30 cents on each good, but this way you awake interest in the companies supplying and buying goods to cooperate with you. Since it will be profitable for them to work with you. This way you just cut off the business of your former employers and become the owner of the business.”

“How can it be? It’s not fair,” said Volodya in a bass voice. “People gave you a job, and you just betray them?”

“What are talking about, Volodya? It’s business, not the army. For business this process is natural because here is like in jungles: the strongest and the smartest survive,” said Ariman. “As they say, nothing personal, only business.”

“Right, one should be a skillful master of a play in order to arrange things so,” remarked Victor with a grin.

“You should be so good in communication with people to carry it through!” uttered Eugene not paying attention to Victor’s words.

“Certainly. You should become a master in the art of communication. You have to know how to talk to different individuals, to know the approach to them. You have to be outwardly sociable and friendly. You have to play sincerety, that is to seem open and direct in communication with people but noway to show them and open fully your plans. You have only to describe colourfully that part of a game which you

assign to them. You have to present it so as if it were the final result of your plans and intentions. Moreover you should be unpredictable for your partners. Otherwise if you are predictable for them in your decisions, you provoke them to cheat you. It means if your steps are easy to calculate in advance they can play their party beneficially for them at your expense.

“But when you are unpredictable, you have a possibility to lead your game. Even when you hold business negotiations this quality is a good stimulus for making concessions to your favour. Since the other party will not be sure till the last moment which decision you will take, it means if the contract is profitable for it, it will be inclined to making for you considerable concessions. And besides by your image of an unpredictable business ‘shark’ you will kill the desire of cunning businessmen to arrange their hazardous speculative transactions at your expense.”

“For doing it one should be a quite self-confident person,” thoughtfully responded Victor.

“Surely. Without it you will not become a true businessman. Show self-confidence in all your actions. I drew your attention to it already many times. Defend your point of view, be a man of principle. And don’t let even a slight thought that you are wrong in something. Since if you say something to a man in the conversation but you have doubts inside, he feels your doubts subconsciously and correspondingly it arise distrust in him towards you. You have simply to persistently and stubbornly insist on your position. You have to force a man to believe in your rightfulness. If he

proves that it's a white colour, make him see a grey in it. Convince him. And if you meet a worthy opponent who knows this psychological method of pressure and will insist on his point of you the same way like you, just laugh in reply together with him and say, "You just want it this way."

"Well," Ruslan hemmed. "It's not difficult to be a man of principle. But how can we influence directly a person?"

"Everything is simple. If you want to influence a person, you have to know his weaknesses. If you want to control a man, you have to play on satisfaction of his psychological needs. At least you have to touch his two main cords, the megalomania in the form of praising his Ego and the mania of personal significance in the form of his constant boasting. All people have them strained, some are stronger, the others less.

"And if you become a good musician, you may master other strings of this instrument called a 'human' such as material interest, creative freedom, security, significance of support of surrounding people, love, curiosity, success, self-respect and many others. The main thing is not just to touch these strings and to get on the man's nerves but to play such a charming melody which would cause his delight and he would start to fulfil your orders with great joy. Then you will really get the highest possible result from him in the work. And the more effective your employers will work, the more you will earn. You should remember about it all the time!"

"How is it possible to find out which qualities dominate in a human?" asked Victor.

"It's very simple. For doing that you have just to learn to listen to a person, what he is talking about, which issues he

emphasizes, which problems he tries to solve and which psychological needs he tries to satisfy at this moment. If you know that you may easily become a band-master of the symphony of his life, redirecting the satisfaction of his psychological needs at your business... In general, all people are the same,” Ariman continued to explain. “And at a great extent if you want to make an individual or the masses to do anything you need to use either the policy of threats or bribery, or both of them step by step. Because the psychology of a man is so that he can be forced to work or to refuse from a work only when he wants to receive a pleasure from it or to avoid emotional or physical pain, or to be more precise, not a pain but a fear before it. So if you don’t succeed in using the method of bribery, use easily the method of threat. You don’t have another choice. Otherwise you will work hard all your life under the threats of others or receiving bribery from them.”

“What do you mean under threats? To beat or what?” asked puzzled Ruslan.

“Using a physical force is the extreme measure. And in fact it’s not effective in comparison with psychological pain, fear and pressure,” emphasized Ariman and continued, “If the team is working for you, you should use for it a principle ‘divide and rule’ so that everybody was afraid of you and respected you. You should know about everything what happens inside the team, their thoughts, desires, intentions and manipulate them for your benefit. You should know all rumours, scandals, relations between the employees. That is you have to hold the hand on the pulse of the team. If you

received information that someone spreads rumours about you and speaks negatively about you, fire him without hesitations. The well paid place will be never empty. You will always find people who want to work on his place. But you will teach the others a good lesson. You should create such an atmosphere so that everybody would like to be your friend and a foe to each other. Then you will be surely aware of all matters. Since everybody will in fact peach on others trying to show that he is a man you need, who cares about the prestige of your company. Otherwise if your employees close the ranks you will get the usual result: they will steal each day from your company and idle at the working place, parasitize on your shoulders. And the most important is that you will not know anything about that and you will just get surprised that your company goes worse and worse after all the investments.”

“Noway,” Volodya growled out. “If the team is solidary and good, on the contrary nothing will happen.”

“You just estimate it from the point of view of a military man,” Ariman replied to him. “Business is a completely different sphere of human relations where the main goal is determined not by moral principles but the amount of money earned. I will show you a simple example. Let’s assume that you opened a kiosk on the market. You hired two or three sellers for salary. If you don’t show yourself as a tough manager, they will close their ranks, agree behind your back and line their pockets at your expense. One will sell goods and replace two others who will buy other goods and will sell it secretly in your kiosk. And all three of them will tell you tales that your goods are sold bad for some reason. As a result they

will get profit at your expense and laugh behind your back and you will run at a total loss, paying for rent, taxes and their salary from your pocket. But if you create such an atmosphere in your team that each of them will see a competitor in others and hurry on to tell you about their mistakes then you will be aware of everything. And it will boost your income.”

“But we were taught from our scouting childhood to the friendly team,” remarked Eugene not without sarcasm.

“Of course,” Ariman grinned in reply. “You were sculptures into the proletariat for state enterprises but not for private owners. In state enterprises the proletariat unites and together cheats the state,” laughed Ariman and addressed already directly to Eugene. “Look around. Everybody steals everything! For example, a worker stole a bolt, it doesn’t matter. Nobody will notice it in the state enterprise. And now imagine that it’s your enterprise, let’s say a car repair workshop. You invested a lot of money into it so that it would work. And your worker whom you pay regularly salary stole a bolt in your car repair workshop. It seems just a bolt but it also costs money. Let’s say 5-10 cents. But it’s money from your pocket! And if a few people take bolts. It’s already a dollar. Your dollar! Having stolen this bolt, the worker has actually slipped his hand in your pocket, took out a purse and money from it. Your money!”

“What a chump!” Eugene was indignant ragely about the situation described by Ariman.

“Right, because it’s yours,” Ariman grinned again. “And you shouldn’t let something like that at your enterprise otherwise you will be a bankrupt. So for a private capital this

situation with unanimous theft will not be possible. The private owner, that is you, has to calculate his steps, to keep record of each coin. Otherwise there will be always someone in the team who will calculate quickly these coins, of course, not to your benefit. So working with people you need a tough supervision and corresponding competitive atmosphere. And it doesn't matter whether there are three employees who work for you or five thousand. Either you will be the owner of your enterprise or you will be a puppet and all your life people will disregard you... There are certain unwritten rules in business. If you don't follow them, you will be eaten by stronger players. Remember, guys, you can't trust or believe anybody in business..."

"Even if your brother is a partner?" Victor got surprised.

"Even if your own brother is your partner," confirmed Ariman. "Look after him in the first turn, the same way as after the latest thief in your enterprise. Only then you will be able to prevent unpleasant events in your business. There is no true friendship in business. Whatever fairy tales whoever would tell you about it

Remember that everything is measured there with money. And your best friend is the first candidate to traitors. Because he knows everything about you. He will express his delight about you to your face and behind he will machinate because he envies you that you are more successful than you. A friend in business is the worst foe since he knows about all mistakes of your company and knows its weak points.

Therefor you shouldn't have in business any close friends and nobody should know about you and your business. Remember, guys, the less anybody will know about you, the better you will sleep.”

“It is so serious all in business?” Andrew got surprised.

“Alas, unfortunately money rules minds of people in this reality. If you become successful businessmen you will fully feel what is a human envy. Everybody will envy you, starting from your relatives to complete strangers. And everybody will think that you owe something to him. They will swear about their love and respect before your eyes, and behind they will hate you that you are smarter and more free than they.”

“But why?” Kostya was at a loss after he evidently imagines himself in the role of a big businessman.

“Because by your position you emphasize in the first turn that they are losers. But don't be afraid of it. I would recommend to look at it from another side: it's better to be envied than to envy somebody. I understand that it's not pleasant for your to hear this but, guys, it's a reality of life and you can't avoid it. Business is the same like sports where the first prize will be won by a champion, the one who became a leader. Surely he will be envied. But by whom? By weak people and losers who were lazy to work on themselves in order to achieve the same results. Since business is a kind of sparring where everybody can rely only on his forces and abilities. Your task is to win this sparring at any price only then you will become really rich. All means are good for that. If you doubt the method of action, someone will use your loss and will simply knock you down. And you will lose.

Therefore there shouldn't be any doubts. Business is a serious game. It's like a fight without rules where there are almost no forbidden tricks." Ariman grinned. "Your capabilities are limited only by frames of law of the country where you run your business. And if you delivered a strong blow and your partner fell down, are you guilty of that? No. He fell down, it means he was weak, he missed the blow, he wasn't ready to a fight. Therefore you won, got a prize for the best sparring. And the prize in business means money."

"You have said that there are almost no forbidden tricks in business," remarked Stas. "How about all these discussions on TV about honest businessmen?"

"That is the point that these are just discussions. But as a rule those are talking like that who are completely different in business. When you face the reality, you will understand that in fact the word 'honesty' both in business and politics is used just for manipulations with people."

"But we were taught that it's good to be honest," Tatyana said timidly.

"Of course, it's good," backed Ariman. "But to be honest regarding yourself, your life principles, though not in relations with surrounding people who mostly just use your naivety and honesty in their selfish ends.

"In general think over who and how did teach you the notion of honesty? You were suggested an idea that if you want to earn fairly you have to be a worker in the plant or a caretaker, go and sweep somebody's cigarette stubs and wait until a 'kind' boss will give you your mere pittance. You shouldn't envy those who risked with their conscience and

became richer than you, since they are scoundrels and you are an honest man! Let your family stay half-hungry living from hand to mouth while the dishonest rich neighbor is fed up with caviar, why, you are honest! Let the dishonest person recovers his health in the best clinics of the world and you will be cured by a drunk local therapist, but you are honest. Well, then don't envy, you have chosen yourself the life of an honest slave!

“‘Honest’ people used to believe that a dog likes to pick bones given to it by its master. But why? Because nobody gives it meat. People gobble it up themselves hiding their greediness behind the honest distribution. The same occurs in the society: the dishonest master gets meat, the honest slave get bones. However everybody dreams of living well and of eating meat not bones. In dreams every man sees himself throwing money around. But as I have already said the common stereotype hinders of fulfilling these dreams. And now think over well, why were you imposed such a stereotype that to be poor but honest is good but to be rich that is dishonest is bad? The answer is very simple. It's just one of the suggestions invented by the elite for servility of the crowd,” and in a while he added, “So, who is honest in fact? The one who is free of suggestions and lives according to the Holy Writ which states that everything is created for you on earth, man, so take it and use these earthly blessings! Or that slave who lives in poverty and permanent fears for his future and meanwhile envies rich and free people? So who of them is the genuine Human?”

We were walking shocked by this revelation effected in our minds by Ariman. The usual world turned out to be completely different as if it opened before our eyes a reverse unknown side of its 'moon' always hidden in the shadow. How come that before we didn't notice, maybe we just didn't pay attention to such trifles in life which actually turned out to be not trifles but suggestion. For some time we were walking in silence staggered by Ariman's revelation. Victor broke silence and asked with surprise, "It means then if 'honesty' is just a suggestion, all means are good in business for achieving a goal, even the real 'trickery'?"

"Try to look deeper into this event," Ariman suggested him. "Who is deceived? Those who are credulous and greedy. Credulity just manifest a total result of personal secret wishes, for example to become rich quickly and easily at somebody's expense, or as you say 'for free'. Those are cheated who are dazzled by greed. Plus their feeling of personal significance are supported by words of the trickster. And as a result, a man overestimate his intellectual abilities. There is no smoke without fire. If your sparring partner in business proved to be a simpleton who is guilty if not he himself with his greed? Starting a sparring a man should realistically evaluate his possibilities and not fly in clouds of egoistic illusive ambitions. If your partner put all in the kitty and lost, it's his own fault. Now his money, his company and his business you're your deserved prize. You proved to be stronger and smarter and more nimble, you got your reward!"

"Well, but how is about morality and fair play?" Volodya asked thoughtfully.

“Morality and fair play are quite relative and conventional things. Nobody would give you a simple answer what it means since everybody will interpret them from his point of view, experience and self-assertion in this world. Let’s take military men for example. I assume you know better than the others what is morality and fair play during the battle, especially if it’s a mortal combat. How can we speak about morality and fair play towards the enemy who is going to kill you? You didn’t force him to come to this life ring, he volunteered himself. But if he volunteered, he should get his fairing. It’s the same in business. There is no public war there but there is a competition. Many real wars, however, happened because of competition among serious people,” Ariman noted. “And other causes of war that were later explained to vast masses, that is to the servile crowd, are only tales for the herd, in order to rouse the spirit of nationalism in it, amuse megalomania of their herdsman as well as distract the herd’s attention from the vital problems. No more.”

“How can people be a herd?” objected Volodya. “They are humans.”

“Humans they are, of course. But they are foolish. They are slaves, who were governed by clever people. And they will be governed, whatsoever fine word this governance is called. For a person in the crowd has no more individuality, but he is only a part of the crowd. He is not capable of thinking on his own in the crowd, to evaluate soberly situation and ‘facts’, generously strewn by the orator. It is because a man in the crowd sees thousands of the like, and this union, this huge power, inspires him. It is a huge power indeed, but it

is not of that man or any other taken separately out of that mass of bodies. It is the power of the orator! It is he who transforms it and channels it properly.

“And with this power he imprints in consciousness of everyone those tenets that are carefully camouflaged with tumid words. In other words the orator simply uses suggestion mechanisms. And nothing else. Therefore, a herd is a herd, all around, which with bleating takes its lead from a skilful shepherd. Although, nowadays controlling a herd is referred to in finer words, the meaning does not change because of that. I understand full well, guys, that there is little pleasant in these words, but it is true. And the truth always has bitter taste. I simply open your eyes to the world as it is.

“This is life, guys, where at the end of the day nobody needs anybody and nobody does anything without a particular reason. For one thing, take a look at how political elections are run. Take any country. They promise whole mountains of gold to people. And after elections? Riding on rams and donkeys the politician reaches his own paradise and then shuts its gates right after himself. People remain in poverty just as they have lived in poverty. Do you know, whom the newly elected politician is concerned about in the first place? At first, about himself, his incomings. Then about his family. And finally, about his own retinue, so that they would kiss hands of their master and lest they should forget his ‘benefactions’. Nobody cares about people and nobody will. Because in the grand scheme of things nobody cares about the commonage. If it is still able to keep on feet and work, then it’s alright. Where can it go? It would grumble and bridle a

bit, and then survive somehow. You see, it is nothing but a workstock, which lives in a stable, feeds on rejects, and works from morning till night. It exists for the reason of bringing profits to the elite and breed, granting its masters inflow of fresh work force in the form of new slaves. I understand that it is unpleasant to hear this. But look around. This is reality. You will recall my words again, because it is the truth of life!

“Do you think something has changed since the time of slave-owning?! Nothing of the kind. Only methods of influence on the slaves have changed, but by no means people themselves. The system of controlling the slaves has changed, but slavery has never been abolished! Look at the present-day world, at the ruling elite exploiting the masses and using them for personal gain. It simply obtrudes its beneficial concepts on peoples. It models likes and behavior of the masses, intentionally controls and standardizes a man.”

“How can it control me?” objected Eugene, “If I decide myself what I should do. I’m a free man!”

“You are a free man?” Ariman asked with irony. “Well. In two days the British Queen gives a reception in Buckingham palace in honour of eminent guests. Let’s meet each other there and continue our conversation.”

“The British Queen? In England?” Eugene was sincerely surprised. “But how can I get there?”

“But you are a free man,” grinned Ariman and added with a jeer, “Tell me please, Mr. free man, do you at least money to get to that England? Note that I don’t even speak about getting to that reception in the palace.”

Eugene was evidently confused with an answer and fell silent. Stas hurried on to help him.

“But the genuine freedom is not measured by geographical travelling of a human. I understand it so that the genuine freedom is inside of the man. It means his thoughts, perception, finally his choice. How can the elite obtrude something on me if I’m all by myself? I myself decide how to live,” Stat was surprised.

Ariman chuckled: “You suppose so, young man, because you did not perform a serious analysis of your life, of how you live, and what forces you to make various decisions in life. In truth you don’t even realize that your life, your liking, perception, and your choice is being skillfully manipulated. It is because the elite needs slaves, not free people! You see, in your perception, in order for you to be manipulated, there’s got to be some overseer with a whip that would stand over you. This is narrow-mindedness. In modern world with all of its leading-edge technologies, everything is much more simple and efficient. The elite artfully created that very overseer out of your own mind, which tells you how to live, whom and what give preference to in your life. And it created it with the help of an ancient method of influencing a human – what is called advertising nowadays.”

“Why do you call advertising an ancient method? It’s appeared on TV just recently,” asked Ruslan bewildered.

“So it seems to you. In fact this phenomenon exists as long as reasonable humans do,” explained Ariman with a smile. “The modern word ‘advertising’ originates from the ancient Latin *reclamare*, which means ‘to proclaim’, ‘to

demand', 'to call out'. Earlier it was extensively employed in writing and especially verbally for promulgating of the desired information through special-purpose people – market touts, criers, broadcasters, and so on. This is the most ancient method of influencing a human. And it is based on the unshakable psychological peculiarity of a man to believe exactly in what he would want to believe in, taking the wish for the reality. Clever advertising only wakes a 'dormant' need in a man. It contaminates him and forces him to imitate.”

“A 'dormant need'?” repeated Yura. “What does it mean?”

Ariman explained instantly: “For example, you feel lack of self-confidence, underrate your self-judgment, but at the same time you are trying to suppress these feelings. But they do not disappear, you know. They just 'drowse' in your sub-consciousness, waiting for a positive resolution of this personal emotional problem or of a set of psychological problems. This is where advertisement appears before you. It convinces you that the advertised, whatever, would give you what you dreamed of. By the by, it is all viewed in an optimistic light, which, of course, would pick you up, for on a sub-conscious level there will occur a stimulating effect of your 'dormant' unrealized need. As a result, like a Pavlov's dog at the first bell-ring, you would spatter, willing to get the camouflaged 'marrowbone' palmed to you.

“Advertisement utilizes a vast range of special technologies of emotional impact on a prospect. It appeals to your natural desires. For example, desire to be in good health, to have success, wealth, happiness, to look beautiful; to your

vanity, self-importance, delusions of grandeur; to your ambition of enhancing your social status, and so forth. In other words, people as a flock are going on a leash of artificially generated desires, without even knowing that this is the very whip the elite skillfully handles.

“Wake up and look around! In fact everything you believe to be unshakable is in truth invented by people just like you. They are simply more self-assured and pushier. Who writes laws by which the society lives? People do. Who calls the tune of fashion? People. Who defines the ideals? Again those, who can artfully protrude their opinions to the masses. Clever people produce idols, cult-figures, and heroes for the whole nations. And it has been this way since the primitive society till the present day and in everything at that: from preferences in food and commodities to art. Take pictures of Picasso, for example. I’ll draw better with my foot alone! And his works are presented to the masses in eulogistic odes as drawings of the master of acutely expressive creations in neoclassical style, the founder of cubism, whose pictures have a, say, huge social importance. Or take ‘Black Square’ by Malevich. The guy was not in the mood, so he daubed the canvas with black paint. And people marvel at this smeared canvas, seeking deep philosophy in it. And they will find it, and they will believe in what is proclaimed to them! For it is passed through the mechanisms of psychological manipulation of the masses.

“Or take John Rockefeller Senior. This man became a legend. His name is known all over the world. By the way, even during his lifetime his image was turned into some good-

natured old fellow, who spent millions on charity and gave away hotels to children. However, creation of his ideal image was just a skilful wordplay, modeling ‘public opinion’ for the naive audience. John was such a pinch-gut, of something else. What kind of charity can one talk about? Keep in mind, guys, one simple truth: serious businessmen never throw money on charity for nothing. They will spend money on a project only in such a case when it is advantageous for them, if in this campaign they will see good advertisement to their business, their image, their status in the society. Or if they view another neat trick for laundering of dirty money. But for no special reason no one will stir a finger. Now then, John Rockefeller made a very wise move. Lest he should spend large capital on promotion of his image thought ‘costly’ (for him) charity, he did much better. In 1903 Rockefeller hired a young reporter Ivy Lee and made him a personal ‘advisor’ of the family, having generously paid for his services. And this little reporter simply turned public opinion upside down, creating in his publications out of John Scrooge a positive image of the greatest fairy godfather of time, caring about people. That’s why don’t believe everything you see and hear. This world is a mere mummery!

“So, guys, think well whom you want to be, a bleating sheep in the general herd or a herdsman of this herd. I’m sorry for expressing so but it’s a fact! Though as for me it’s better to be a herdsman of this herd. Since only then you will feel and understand what is Freedom in its genuine meaning and what is life in a paradise. You strive to spiritual development, right? If you can’t arrange paradise conditions for your

existence, how can you hope to get to paradise there if you doom yourself here to a miserable existence, diseases and fear? Like attracts like! Since if you want to create something you have to be yourself a creator! And for doing that you need to control your subconscious, possess knowledge and power. So change yourselves, become free people! If this world is divided into clever and fool people long before you, join the ranks of clever people otherwise you will be turned into fools.”

“Well,” Victor drawled thoughtfully, “All the same this life is a hard thing.”

“It’s hard to live only first seventy years then you get used to it,” said Ariman with a grin.

The guys burst out laughing.

“If to speak seriously, the only difficulty is to be able to cut off the suggested stereotypes, to kill a slave in you. The rest is very simple,” continued Ariman. “You have to make a new, a free man out of yourself! You see, how much you know already: how to work with your subconscious, how to start your own business...”

“How can I achieve much success in business?” suddenly asked Ruslan. “To make so that people would buy only from me?”

“It’s simple. Why do you need to invent a wheel if there is a ready bicycle?”

“Aha,” echoed Eugene and said with a snicker, “The main thing is that there would be less spokes than wheels.”

“Use ads,” Ariman went on with his speech addressing to Ruslan. “It will form you so many mass consumers of your

goods and services as you wish. Remember as a multiplication table five golden tasks of your ads: 1) to inform 2) to inspire 3) to convince 4) to suggest 5) to remind. The more unusual will be your ads, the more hidden strings of the general public will it touch, the richer and more successful you will become.” And already turning to the guys Ariman said, “I will reveal to you one big secret: to tell the truth, people don’t know themselves what they want. Remember what Saltykov-Schedrin wrote “Something is wanted — either a constitution or a piece of sturgeon under horseradish sauce.” And this state is typical for everybody. So use this vagueness. Help people to find out their ‘genuine need’ in your goods. Remember, you may sell with profit even the shit if you advertise it well. And people will buy it with great pleasure even fight with each other for its rests. As Bernard Shaw used to say, ‘If you keep telling people that horse’s back is the beauty ideal, they will soon believe it. People are just people. If they want to be deceived, so let it be so.’”

Ariman walked a while keeping silence and then he added with a grin, “I recalled a funny case from my life, it matches well our topic. Many years ago I was on the business trip in Germany. I passed through a little town and went to lunch in a local restaurant. This restaurant was located in the centre of the town, it was quite cozy, nicely decorated, with good cuisine. However I was surprised that there were almost no visitors during the lunch time. I wanted to know from the owner of this restaurant about the reason. And he began to complain to me that however hard had he tried, he wasn’t able to attract people to him. There were almost no regular clients.

And with each day his business get worse and worse. So I advised him in jest to tie a donkey near the restaurant. Can you imagine, he took all of this seriously. He sent his assistant to the nearest village and he brought a donkey which was tied near the entrance. Just picture to yourselves what the donkey felt. Not long ago it was quietly and peacefully grazing on the lawn, but now he was brought to some noisy place with a lot of cars all the time driving by and people passing by. Out of fear the donkey began to shout at the top of its voice and that attracted attention of people. Immediately a crowd of gapers gathered around it and it gathered even more people. They began to throng around the restaurant. After many of them gazed at the donkey they started to come into the restaurant. When I returned from my business trip in a few days and visited the same restaurant, there were no free places there. But the owner noticed me and invited to have a lunch in his room. He told me that my advice helped him. Thus we became friends with him. Since that time his business boomed quickly. Now he became a known and respected man who runs already the whole chain of restaurants in big cities. One might say it became possible due to my advice.”

“And those asses who brought him his income,” added Eugene.

The guys burst into laughing and Ariman declared with satisfied air, “You see, you already start to go into the root of business. Actually there is nothing really difficult in it. Just be all the time head and shoulders above others, notice and use for your benefit what the others look right through. Remember, guys, I repeat you again, if you manage to open

your talent and abilities of your Affix, you will be able to influence on subconscious of other people and make them do what is beneficial for you. But everything starts from your work on yourselves, on your subconscious. All the rest is just technical tricks. Namely your subconscious will supply you with ideas and all the necessary things for realization of your project. The main thing is to get the right input, the right thinking and what is most important, your sincere belief that you will achieve it! Kipling has a nice poem in this regard, I would like to draw your attention to it. Listen to it attentively.”

Ariman’s voice changed and became somehow pure, nice and inspired. Words taking our breath came from his lips:

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too:

If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same:.
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken

Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build'em up with worn-out tools;
If you can make one heap of all your winnings

And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings,
And never breathe a word about your loss:

If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much:

If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!

When Ariman stopped talking, a solemn silence hung in mid-air. We were walking simply charmed by this magnificent poem. Victor was first to break the prolonged silent pause.

“What a strong poem, I have never heard something like that.”

“Oh, you might hear many thing during your life, young man. The main thing is to learn to listen and not just to hear,” remarked Ariman.

We were so strongly impressed by this poem that even didn't notice when arrived at our final destination. This way we came close to the fire keeping deep silence. The most surprising was that not only those two sailors were sitting near the fire on the coast who guarded the beggar 'property' of our shabby camp but also Sensei and Nikolai Andreevich who lagged behind us still on the ground way. Judging by the fact that they were finishing to drink their tea they should have been waiting for us quite long. Evidently though the ground road seemed to be a roundabout one, they arrived to the camp much more quickly than we walking along straight way.

“What a paradox!” laughed Eugene having seen Sensei at the fire. “We thought that you lagged far behind us!”

“The turkey-cock also thought,” Nikolai Andreevich smiled friendly, “but in soup has got.”

“Well, as they say, live and learn,” uttered Stas jesting.

“It seemed to us that if we turn away from the road we will shorten the distance!” It was Victor's turn to get surprised. “But we had to walk much longer and harder. If we had known...”

Eugene scratched his head and uttered putting on a mask of a clever guy: “If I had this knowledge before, but it dawns on me afterwards.”

His clownery made everybody laugh again. When the laugh was over Sensei uttered, “Once Solomon said, ‘I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness... but I came to realize that the same fate overtakes them both.’”

Sensei exchanged looks with Ariman and they both smiled sadly on something.

The guys seemed not to grasp sense of the phrase said by Sensei and tried to continue the interrupted conversation about business with Ariman. But he had obviously other plans. And he switched easily the guy’s attention to the splendour of this yacht. In the night it seemed really to be even more beautiful than in the day light. The whole yacht shone with marvellous illumination of its lights. There were so many of them that their irradiation created a peculiar intensive aura around the yacht. A pleasant melody wafted from the yacht on our ears.

“Do you organize a night disco party there?” asked Eugene with a smile.

“Something like that,” grinned Ariman.

“Your crew is so lucky,” said Eugene with envy. “They travel with such a man, on such a yacht and around the world! Wow! Like the wind! I guess, the yacht is so nice inside as outside?”

“Oh, inside it’s much nicer,” uttered Ariman. “By the way, I would have a suggestion. If you are not too tired, I would propose you to visit my yacht, if you don’t mind, of course,” and he added with an intrigue in his voice, “Besides

there is not only good music there but also ice-scream and fruits.”

“Of course, we go!” almost unanimously cried out the guys with joy.

Ariman smiled friendly and said to his assistant, “Veliar, arrange it.”

Veliar bowed politely and guided the guys to the boat. First I went together with all, too. But having looked at the water and swinging boat, I felt badly again. The body began to show again strange signals of unclear inner discomfort. I lost at once the desire to go there with everybody. Though frankly speaking I wanted very much to look at the yacht, especially because all our guys, Tatyana and even Nikolai Andreevich went there. However my body seemed to have gone through not an easy day. I hardly arrived to the camp. And after I had come to my native tent, my body got relaxed, and as they say, I let off my will-power giving it the deserved rest. My body immediately was seized by weakness and desire to have a rest. That’s why when our guys began to take sits in the boat for going to the yacht, I understood in my mind that I lose a chance to look at something I would probably never see again in my life. But this discomfort of my body fully convinced me that it was the right decision to get to my tent as soon as possible so that nothing unexpected would happened with me. I refused with difficulty from such a tempting proposal to visit Ariman’s yacht and moved on towards my tent. Meanwhile a strange state embraced me with a wave: on one hand I felt annoyed about this fit of weakness of my body at the most inappropriate moment, but on the other hand I felt

joy and calmness that I would manage finally to have a rest from all of that. Anyway after I got to my bed, I didn't start to go deep into the reasons of such a state. I just decided to have a nap a little bit, since as the ancients used to say, sleep is the best medicine.

I don't know how much time passed but I opened my eyes out of some strange feeling that something had happened. Tatyana wasn't yet in the tent. I examined myself. I felt strangely. I didn't understand whether it was a dream or it really happened to me. If I slept why my thoughts were so absolutely clear and unusually pure, why I felt such an odd inspiration, burst of energy as if I were born anew? I pinched myself to dispel all the doubts. Surprisingly enough but I rather guessed that I hurt myself than felt the pain. Having got up from the bed and without examining my feelings to the end, I went out of the tent. My body felt an unusual ease. And it was moving too smoothly. If I wanted for example to raise a hand, it went up not at once but in a few instants. It was all quite unusual and interesting for me.

The air thickened strangely. But most of all I was stricken by the silence which reigned around. I heard neither music, nor merry talks of the guys, nor even the usual rustle of sea waves on the coast. It was suspiciously quiet all around as if everything and everybody died out in this world. It begot a strange mixture of feelings in me: everything around was dead but I understood that it was alive but it didn't live. It was alive and dead at one time.

I raised my head and looked to the huge sky. It was spangled with bright stars as if someone scattered tiny shining

diamonds on the velvet canvas. This beauty and calm harmony of the universe inspired me even more. I turned my gaze towards the sea. In this black yawning abyss Ariman's yacht was shining as if a lonely lifeless star. I was myself surprised about this comparison. But only then I understood that it was really lifeless. There was nobody there, neither the guys, nor the sailors. Not even music, nor the talks were heard. As if there was never any of that joyful careless life on that yacht. Not only this mysterious silence was unusual but the perception of the time. Or rather the full absence of it. As if this notion has never existed at all. As if it was lost somewhere in the inmost recesses of eternity without leaving even a hint of its presence in the past.

This unusual feeling of a frozen instant prolonged in eternity I felt even tingles on the skin. Everything was so artificial, unusual as if I found myself in a completely other sphere of reality: it was so close and so faraway, it was so familiar, native and so strange, intriguing by its novelty, timelessness and absolute silence. I was simply charmed by this kind of habitual but completely unusual strange world. Suddenly I heard a voice.

“A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains for ever. The sun rises and the sun goes down, and hurries to the place where it rises... All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they continue to flow... What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun... The people of long ago are not remembered, nor will there be any

remembrance of people yet to come by those who come after them...”

First it seemed to me that this voice flows somewhere from above as if from the stars. I raised my head but haven't seen anything except of the light. Then it seemed that it comes from beneath. But underneath there was only sticky sand. After that I felt that the voice surrounds me from all sides and began to look around. But wherever I gazed, the darkness reigned everywhere. And only the last words pointed to the source of the sound. Only now I noticed the burning out fire on the coast with Sensei and Ariman sitting near it. Having seen them I cheered up. However as soon as I made a step towards them, suddenly the world as if cracked. I heard some unnatural acute sound resembling either a crackle of the torn cloth or a discharge of electric current.

At once some unclear sounds began to stream out, sometimes clear, sometimes muted. They waved so as if the wind blew the draught through a pane splitted in the window in windy weather. The world was as if divided in two. Making efforts I made a attempt to get concentrated and to understand these sounds, to break this unreal reality swinging between the worlds. To my surprise I managed to do it. By concentrating my attention I heard first scraps of phrases and later a strage conversation itself.

“I'm so tired, Rigden, you even can't imagine how much,” I heard an unusually clear voice, to all appearances it belonged to Ariman. “It's all the same day after day. No creativity among this dullness.”

“It means, Abraxas, that you’ve done your job well,” replied Sensei with his melodious voice.

“I don’t need already to do anything for long time,” Ariman’s voice turned from a heartfelt to a sad-and-blameful. “There are so many ‘enthusiasts’ now that the professionals have nothing here to do. It’s even boring to look at it. So do you still hope that it’s possible to get a result in this project?”

“Nevertheless maybe something will come out of it. Since the plan of our Father is inscrutable and Providence of His will is inexhaustible.”

“I’m not sure, Rignen... Still the part of the whole is the part because it repeats the features of the whole in its individuality. In such conditions and with prevalence of the matter it’s unlikely that the part will be able to become an integral unity, especially on the final stage of this project.”

“Even with this current state the part has still a chance to become the whole,” uttered Sensei.

“Right, especially with its neglect to coming events it will be equal to the ration one to a billion,” mockingly said Ariman.

“Let it be so, but it’s still a real chance for it,” thoughtfully replied his interlocutor.

It came to a short silence. Holding my breath I stood still on my place fearing to move and to lose the concentration of attention due to which I clearly heard this conversation as if through the appeared acoustic slot in the space.

“I console myself only with a thought that all this global lowering is coming to its end,” uttered Ariman. “So it seems to me that we just waste our time in vain for all these real

chances. They take too much efforts and means and bring insignificant result.”

“Maybe you are right, but...”

“Of course I’m right!” Ariman declared firmly. “I have studied thoroughly this structure. You visit it seldom but I can’t leave it even for an instant. Just recall the previous project!”

“Right, there was a lot of work for everybody that time.”

“That’s why it gave a result. And here? It’s just a total standard... So we will hardly squeeze out from it,” and in a while he added sadly, “I’m so fed up with it, if you only knew. I’m tired of all of these endless experiments. Why did we have to launch all of that? It was so good before.”

“Whose idea was it?! Who forced you to do it, Abraxas? You volunteered yourself!”

“Well, Rigden, if I knew that the initiative is so punished with fulfillment,” he uttered with a sorrowful smile.

“It’s a natural process when creating,” his interlocutor smiled sadly.

At this moment the world was as if exploded in its sounds as if someone switched on volume at full power. The sound wave simply broke fully that unusual dual world into thousand small pieces. And all accumulated sounds of the usual world at the same time burst through into this space like a turbulent current through a huge broken aquarium. I was gripped by terrible animal fear. This incredible crash made me squat, close my eyes tight and close my ears with hands. My

body shuddered with horror. I was shaking with tremor. The fear grew up as if a snow avalanche. But through this rattling cacophony of sounds, I heard with surprise echo of rapt shouts of our guys. It slightly diminished my fear before the ongoing events.

It took me much efforts to calm down a bit and to force myself to open eyes. When it happened finally, sounds of the world again came back to their old habitual way. First I heard the splash of waves on the coast. Then I saw Ariman's yacht and our guys standing on its deck. They applauded and rapturously cried 'hurrah' looking at small multicoloured lights of a salute fading in the sky.

They fired a new salvo, and a nice glaringly shining star hung in the sky over the sea. It was so magnificent that involunterily I admired it forgetting at once about all my fears. It illuminated the big space with bright unique light and died out giving way to a new pattern of the next salute. A new salvo painted the sky with an unusually nice ball woven from a plenty of shining lights. Enchanted by the salute, for some time I was watching at its fine patterns in the form of fantastical flowers, circles, fountains. This non-stop firing was accompanied with rapturous shouts of the guys, their whisting and applauses. The salute so brightly illuminated the sky over the sea that the coast was lighted up as if at the daylight.

I looked around and felt terrible cold. My body was still shivering. No wonder because I found out myself standing barefoot on the cold sand. And besides the cool wind blew from the sea bringing moist air to the coast. It was strange that I felt it only now. The sports wear on me seemed

not to keep warm. Shivering from this cold I hurried up to come to the fire where Sensei with Ariman were sitting. Unusual ease in my body disappeared. The world became again rugged, cold and uncomfortable though it was that very habitual world known to me from the childhood. I don't know why but I understood that I would perceive its difference from that one I felt recently only in the first minutes but then I will forget everything again and it will resume its normal course. That's why approaching the fire I tried to recall in my memory anew and to enjoy those fabulous feelings which I managed to perceive. Meanwhile I heard again continuation of the conversation between Sensei and Ariman. However this time their voices were quite natural and usual. And the sound of their words faded in as it should be continuously on my way to the fire being lost in the roar of salvo of the new salute.

“... So you, Sensei, hope that you will get something worth of them?” grinning asked Ariman with his usual voice obviously contemplating this non-stop feast on his yacht.

“Everybody has a chance,” replied Sensei. “So, Ariman, it's not you neither me will make a decision for them. It's their choice.”

“Well... a choice,” he uttered thoughtfully.

“What do you want. It's a democracy,” Sensei said jokingly.

As if coming to himself Ariman uttered with humour, “Hem, as always this demos kratos!”

They laughed loud. Meanwhile I came close to the fire trying to get warmed at least a little bit. It seemed that nobody expected my appearance.

“Oh,” Ariman uttered with surprise, “I thought that everybody in on the yacht.”

With these words he shifted archly his gaze at Sensei who smiled satisfied and replied with a triumph, “It means that not everybody,” and already addressing to me he uttered, “Take a seat. Are you frozen?”

At this moment a new salute rattled and it became so bright on the coast as if at daylight. Sensei looked at me with such a kind warm gaze that I felt immediately calm, pleasant and nice. And what was most interesting, I lost the feeling of cold.

“Not at all,” I replied with a smile and added boastfully, “I train myself to endure it.”

Sensei turned his gaze to my bare foot and said as a careful parent, “Self-training is of course as a good thing. But you should train your body gradually. I guess, it’s enough for it for today. Better go and put on your shoes.”

I looked at my bare foot standing on the cold sand. A perspective to get sick in the nearest future didn’t please me as well. That’s why I hurried on to follow Sensei’s advice.

When I have been walking to take my sport shoed, the salute was over and they began to take the exultant company of our guys to the coast. Hue-and-cry of various impressions started to fill quickly the space of this part of the land being once very still. I joined the guys who cast on me the whole avalanche of their emotions. Having circled Ariman and

Sensei they began to share their impressions interrupting each other.

“Sensei, it’s a pity you didn’t come with us. It’s so beautiful there!” Eugene was telling with excitement gesticulating with his hands. “There are such sculptures, paintings, any museum will just get envious.”

“Aha!” Victor supported him. “And the furniture there is so stylish, not like in royal palaces.

“And it all is mahogany,” Ruslan added boastfully as if it were his property.

“And it is decorated with real gold!” Tatyana emphasized with particular inspiration.

“And most strikingly is that well-done matching of old-fashioned decoration with the newest equipment,” Volodya said in a low voice enchanted by the yacht.

Ariman looked satisfied at the guys who interrupted each other and were telling with eyes sparking with delight about the rich decoration of the yacht. But having seen the puzzled air of Nikolai Andreevich who looked somehow sad in comparison with wild cries of the guys he asked him, “And how about you, did you like it?”

“Yes. It’s a very nice yacht. But I didn’t quite understand.” Nikolai Andreevich glanced at Sensei with inquiry. “It’s much bigger inside than outside.”

“Oh, I’m proud of it,” Ariman hurried on to reply and emphasized with pleasure. “It’s a good planning. A lot of specialists worked on it. They managed to implement the illusion of expanded space.”

“Amazing,” Nikolai Andreevich uttered it so as if tried to compare something incomparable in mind.

The guys didn't wait for following comments of Nikolai Andreevich on this issue. It seemed they didn't even pay to it attention. They again rushed forward with impetuous impressions which more touched food, decoration, joy and salute. This unrestrained flow of emotions might have continued till the morning but Ariman interrupted it in the same unexpected manner as he suggested to visit his yacht.

“I'm glad that you liked it and you had a nice rest. Let this day be a good stimulus for your happy future. I'm sure, guys, that you can easily reach all this luxury yourselves.”

“We'll do our best!” Ruslan said with passion for all.

“I hope so,” smiling uttered Ariman exchanging strange looks with Sensei as if they both knew something more than it was said aloud. “But unfortunately I have to go. As they say, the sea is calling.”

“What, is that all?” asked Kostya upset.

“I wish we could talk to you more,” Victor expressed his thought. “Since we don't meet such people every day.”

Ariman smiled satisfied, threw a quick glance towards Sensei and replied to Victor.

“Don't worry. We will have soon a lot of time for talks.”

“Really?!” the guys exclaimed with joy and livened up even more.

“Will we see you soon?”

“Sooner than you think,” Ariman replied with a smile and began to say goodbye.

It should be noticed that the guys did it in a very warm way this time not like in the morning. Everybody shook his hand for long, saying the whole current of grateful words, some guys asked last questions, some of them couldn't even express their delight and emotionally shook his wrist. Only Sensei did it the same simple way as he had met him by briefly shaking his hand. 'Ladies' got from Ariman his customary gallant kiss of the hand, this time reacting naturally on this courteous gesture. And after the overall 'familiarity' all of us went to see Ariman to his boat. The sailors lit nice torches and fixed them along its sides. They put away the motor and dragged out again the sculls. As soon as Ariman stood in the boat, we heard a charming melody of the 'Moon sonata' by Beethoven from the yacht. This music was wonderful. It sounded so harmoniously and calmly as if it were produced by the nature itself.

When the board sailed away, the guys didn't even notice that they entered the water waving to Ariman, wishing happy sailing and all the best. We stood so enchanted by this moving touching moment of farewell. The boat illuminated with the torches slowly moved away from the shore, with sculls splashing on the water in time with sad music capturing with its melody. It all almost made us to shed a tear.

Soon when the crew went on board, Ariman waved us for the last time. The motors started up. The yacht turned around and shining with its marvellous illumination began to move away on the moon path to the open sea accompanied with a charming music of the great composer. As soon as it disappeared the guys began to go out from the water with

sadness. Though the music wasn't heard for long, I could hear non-stop this wonderful melody like a long-playing record. The guys were obviously upset by the departure with Ariman who managed due to the refinement of his mind, luxury, delicacy and at the same time with his martial mastery, business acumen, striking openness just during one day not only to win the sympathy but to conquer the young hearts.

Having seen Sensei standing behind the company the guys rushed to him with questions.

"Sensei! When will he come to visit us?" almost insisted Ruslan.

"If he said soon, it means soon," Sensei replied calmly.

"He is a great man!" Volodya uttered with delight.

"In all spheres," Eugene added with admiration agreeing with him.

"That's true," confirmed Victor. "Have you seen how he... All the truth! That's the freedom of the thought, that's the power of intellect!"

"How much money does he have?" Andrew asked Sensei with greed. "Is he rich?"

"At least I don't know anybody who would have so much money. All the biggest corporation of the world are under his control."

"Wow!" The guys exclaimed with admiration.

"It's no wonder, with such a bright head," remarked Stas.

"Does he belong to this elite of elite?!" Eugene uttered half-question half-exclamation as if he were stricken by this thought right now. "He is the Archon!"

“Of course,” Sensei replied somehow without enthusiasm. “He is the Supreme Archon.”

“Ariman heads the elite?!” Almost together asked the amazed guys.

“Yes,” Sensei replied as if it were needless to say and in a while he added, “His real name is Abraxas.”

“Abra... who?” Eugene uttered puzzled.

“Abraxas,” Sensei repeated.

But the guys seemed not to know this name. However I felt cold inside. I have heard this name not for the first time during this strange evening. It turns out that the conversation near the fire which I considered just to be my hallucination took place in fact? On this thought I even grew cold.

“Hem, why didn’t we hear about him anywhere till now?” Victor got surprised.

“You have heard. And not one time. He is just known more under his pseudonyms.”

“Surely, if you possess such a business, you will need to hide,” Volodya remarked with sympathy.

“That’s true,” Sensei said grinning.

“Wait, but under which pseudonym could we hear about him?” lost in guesses Victor uttered in perplexity. Obviously he turned over in his mind all rich people in the world he knew.

Holding breach everybody stared at Sensei.

“Under which?” he asked again thoughtfully.

Sensei took his a cigarette from the pocket and lit it slowly. Then he looked towards the sea on the shining silver

moon path. And puffing a light cloud of a milk-white smoke to the night darkness he uttered wearily, "Satan."

The books by Anastasia Novykh:

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