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Dialogue and Identity

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Golden Temple

Early ɛjnaménu/late Feb-early March, 19/637

Thornton looked down into the hole the geologists had dug. It was two meters deep. Dark topsoil was followed by gray clay, then a third of the way down, by a dark black layer a meter thick; below that was clay again. He pulled his coat around him tightly, not to keep out the winter chill but to keep it away from the dirty walls, and descended the ladder they had placed in the hole. He brought a trowel with him and used it to dig into the black layer. He lifted the compressed peat to his nose and sniffed; it smelled slightly of rot. He carefully climbed back up the ladder, full trowel in hand.

"What do you see?" asked Yimu Miller anxiously.

"I see a kind of soft coal," replied Thornton. He turned to Wɛranyunu Rostuagras. "So, what did you say the ash content is?"

"In this hole, about fifty percent. It looks dark and black, but if you look closely, you can see bits of sand in it, and sometimes very fine layers of clay."

Thornton brought the chunk close to his face and looked closely, then nodded. "I see it. When we started excavating the soft coal here, 18 or so years ago, the ash content was only ten percent."

"It's hard to get something with a fifty percent ash content to burn at all," said Wɛranyunu.

"That's true." Thornton turned to Yimu. "You heard the man."

Yimu looked around them. They were standing on flat ground three hundred meters east of the Mɛlwika's reservoir on the Arjakwés River. The first two hundred fifty meters beyond the reservoir had been strip mined of soft coal for the city's blue water gas plant. A meter of dirt, then up to two meters of coal had been removed; great piles of dirt dotted the landscape, often covered by unsightly weeds and bushes. One hundred meters of coal, thinning and of increasingly poor quality, remained. "So; how much longer?" Yimu asked.

"It's hard to be sure, but I'd say in a year or two, the cost of this mining operation will begin to increase," replied Wɛranyunu. "The layer of coal is getting thinner and thinner and the layer of overburden on top is getting thicker and thicker, so you have to dig deeper to get to the coal. At the same time, the caloric value of the coal will be less and less, so you'll need more and more of it. Right now, Mɛlwika consumes fifty thousand tonnes of coal per year, half for the gas plant and half for the steel works. In eighteen years, you've gone through half a million tonnes of the stuff."

"We sure have," said Yimu, shaking his head. "What about the deposit west of town, towards Nénaslua? And the deposit along the northern side of the Péskakwés River?"

"They were small and are exhausted," said Thornton.

"The coal here costs half a dhanay per tonne. But wood . . ." he shook his head.

"Ten dhanay per tonne," said Thornton. "That adds a quarter million dhanay per year to the cost of the steel mill and the car plant."

"And at least twenty-five dhanay to the manufacture of every car," said Yimu, shaking his head.

“The Kaitɛrɛ have pretty good coal,” noted Wɛranyunu. “They’re already supplying Mɛlwika with most of its nickel-iron, so they could start to sell coal pretty easily.”

“They could fill a twenty-tonne truck five days a week and drive it here,” said Thornton. “That’d cost . . . maybe fifteen or twenty dhanay.”

“Most of that’s the salary for the driver, though,” noted Wɛranyunu. “A bigger truck would cut the cost.”

“Wood is a better value in many ways,” noted Thornton. “This coal can’t be reduced to coke because of the high ash content, but wood can be. You had to switch to melting nickel-iron with blue water gas five years ago. Wouldn’t coke give you a better product?”

“It would,” agreed Yimu. “But at ten dhanay per tonne, it’s really expensive.”

“But we can probably get the price down,” replied Thornton. “We can also improve the efficiency of the operation. You use 1.5 tonnes of coal to make a tonne of steel, partly because you have to convert the coal to gas. In Ora, where they have to use wood, they use about 1,200 kilograms. I bet we could get it down closer to a tonne of wood for a tonne of steel.”

“There’s been talk for a long time about mechanizing the timber industry, too,” said Yimu. “What ever happened to the idea of power saws?”

“Remember when your father convinced the engineers from Ora to try to build a steam powered saw? That must have been 15 or 16 years ago. They built a prototype, but it was big, clumsy, and expensive, so it was never put into production.”

“I remember. We could do much better, now!” said Yimu.

Thornton nodded. “I agree.”

“We should try again.”

Shall I write a memo to the Engineering School, add your name, and send it to you for approval?”

“Yes, please. If the memo has the name of the Lord of Mɛlwika and the Director of Miller Motors, people will pay attention!”

Lord Patékwu stepped onto the ground of Sumilara with some hesitation. Randu, who stood by the door of the taxi waiting to take the Bahá'í and Tutanɛ delegations to the Golden Temple outside Anartu, saw his concern. “Lord, welcome to Sumilara!” he exclaimed.

Patékwu looked up and smiled. “Thank you, Randu. I . . . am not sure what I expected here. A totally different world? But other than being a bit warmer than Sértroba, and greener, it really isn’t that different.”

“Most of the island looks about the same as the land around Pértatranisér. We have good, steady rain here, and no frost. You have nothing to fear, either. The Sumi people are very friendly.”

“And I suppose they have never seen Tutanɛ anyway,” added Kowɛranu, the Kwolonɛ widu, who was dressed quite traditionally, as were ɛjnodatu and Ekweisɛjnu, the priests from Gordha.

“We might even frighten them!” added ɛjnodatu, with a laugh.

Randu beckoned them and they walked over to the taxi, which was a pickup truck with a large covered flatbed and seats lining both sides. The three Tutanɛ entered, along with Randu, Aréjé, Lord Jonu, and Jordanu, who had come along at the last minute partly to guarantee that the party had a Sumi translator. Randu spoke to the driver briefly and they took off.

The ride from Sipadananda to the Golden Temple was 48 kilometers and took about 48 minutes. The narrow, two-lane road was fairly busy with trucks, steam cars, buses, bicycles, and an occasional animal-drawn wagon. At Kahingiru they turned south on Route 34 to Galulia, a booming town with a cluster of modern factories, to which workers from all over the island commuted daily. There, they turned west onto Route 35 to Anarbala, where they slowed to view the old royal complex that was the home of Countess Ninti, the widow on Prince Mɛméjékwu. From Anarbala they headed south on Route 36 past Bilara, the heavily Bahá'í village that served as the center of the Faith on the island. The Bahá'í temple for Sumilara was under construction along the side of Route 36, half way to Anartu, and they went right by it. As they approached Anartu from the north, one kilometer from the old city's walls, they reached the site of the Golden Temple. Much of the space between the temple and the city had been filling in with new houses and businesses over the last few years.

Tanaravi, Dumuninurta, and Shiimti were there to greet them in the parking lot, and as soon as everyone had exchanged greetings, Wɛrétrakɛstɛr, Lukulubu, Sarébɛjnu, and Widulubu arrived in their own taxi, which had come from Amuruéqluma on the island's western shore rather than Sipadananga on its eastern side. Another round of awkward greetings followed; the priests of Esto clearly had not wanted to come to the

island, and had done so only because the queen expected it. It made the Sumis feel even more proud of their role as hosts.

"You are here at a perfect time, for the temple's interior is mostly completed," explained Dumuninurta. "We will consecrate the temple at our spring Fertility Festival, and once that happens, much of it will be closed to outsiders forever."

"Why is this huge temple outside Anartu's walls on this hill?" Jordan asked in Sumi, repeating his question in Eryan.

"This has been a sacred place since ancient times," replied Dumuninurta. "A thousand years ago it had a great temple complex; you will see some of the ancient walls inside. It is said that Kié herself appeared here to Ninzi, the founder of Anartu, and told him to build a temple to her right here, outside the city walls. The temple here was destroyed when Sumikɛstɛr conquered the island three centuries ago, in return for sparing Anartu itself. Now we have rebuilt it."

He gestured for them to follow him and the party headed up a long ceremonial stairway to a large gateway encased by massive blocks of gray volcanic rock. It was quite a climb, but once through the gateway they were inside a huge courtyard surrounding a round, golden-domed building, whose roof turned upward along its outer edge like Chinese and Japanese architecture, thanks to the influence of a Chinese Buddhist, many centuries earlier. To the left of its entrance was a large platform raised five meters above the courtyard and surmounted by a large altar where animals could be sacrificed; a perpetual flame burned from it and a thick cloud of black smoke curled up into the sky. To the right of the entrance was a pool of water with a fountain. "Sacrifice itself is a great purifier of the soul," noted Dumuninurta. "But so is water, so all worshippers perform

ablutions by the pool before sacrificing or praying." He pointed to the cypress trees planted along the courtyard walls. "The cypress is sacred to Kié and is a symbol of female beauty. The rose bushes between the trees are sacred to her as well."

He stepped forward and beckoned the others to follow. They walked toward the circular, golden-domed central edifice. Two guards stood at an enormously wide entrance that was flanked by huge stone pillars wrapped by decorative carpets. When they reached the entrance, the guards slowly opened the doors. On the other side was a golden screen. "This is the central edifice dedicated to Kié," explained Dumuninurta. "The gilded statue of Kié is ten meters tall. The tapestries covering the walls depict her miraculous birth from a lotus and several major events in her life. The mosaic floor tells the story of the creation of her mother, Anu, and the painted scenes on the ceiling depict her father's life, Enlilu. The entire cycle of stories—the Epic of Kié—is depicted here. Even the pillar carpets add details.

"Only priests are able to enter this chamber, but the doors will be wide open and others will be able to stand here, on the threshold, adore her through the screen, and pray to her. Once this courtyard is consecrated, it will be open to Sumis only. Sumi believers, that is," and Dumuninurta looked at Randu.

"How will you know who is a believer?" asked Randu. "And how do you know Bahá'ís are not?"

Dumuninurta ignored Randu's comment. "Each of us have brought a prayer, I understand. This is the place we will chant them." He turned to Shiimti, who nodded, bowed his head, and chanted a hymn to Kié.

They went around the semicircle, standing uncomfortably in front of the elegant but unfinished sanctum, and one by one chanted the prayers they had brought. It was not clear whether they were praying together or listening to each other pray; it was a strange experience. Tanaravi's prayer, when repeated in Eryan, mentioned no gods at all; he was a philosopher, after all. It took quite a while, and Jonu began to deal with serious pain, standing that long. Randu chanted a Bahá'í prayer in Sumi; Aréjé in Eryan; Lord Patékwu in Tutanɛ dialect; Jordanu in English.

When they finished, Dumuninurta pointed to a door on the other side of the courtyard. "That leads to the priest complex, and our lunch will be there." He set off toward it and the others followed.

"How many priests, honored?" asked Jordan.

"Thirty-two, plus their families."

Jordan nodded. "A substantial number. And what do they do?"

"Some maintain the complex; some perform the rituals; some teach; and some maintain the library."

"There's a library?"

"Indeed, we are moving the old royal library in Anarbala here, to be near the Great Library of Naralon."

That intrigued Jordan; he had heard of the Anarbala library, but knew nothing about it. Just then they entered a grand doorway that led into a long hallway. Skylights admitted the sun gloriously, illuminating the brilliant colors of frescos that covered the walls of the wide ceremonial corridor. They walked about thirty meters and turned right

into a dining hall that was beautifully decorated for their visit, with huge platters of steaming rice and fish awaiting them.

They sat and young priests brought them food and drink; Sumi wine for those who drank alcohol, passion fruit juice for those who didn't. Patékwu looked around and said to ɛjnodatu and Ekweisɛjnu, "isn't this a beautiful place?"

Jonu heard and nodded as well, a jealous look on his face. Patékwu looked jealous, too. Both of their villages were getting Bahá'í temples, but much less elaborate. "Yes, how much did this cost?" said Jonu, thinking aloud.

"Many millions," replied Dumuninurta, looking at Jordanu, whose eyebrows went up. The province's annual gross domestic product was about 33 million dhanay.

"The newspapers said that some of the money actually came from a secret fund to pay for a rebellion," exclaimed Randu.

"That article was not accurate," exclaimed Tanaravi. "But it is true that some money was saved to protect the distinctiveness of Sumilara, and it was decided that we should spend it on a grand temple that represented all of us."

"It took some years to come to a conclusion on what project to fund," added Randu. "The local temples were very generous in their support."

"That is true," agreed Dumuninurta. "The local temples traditionally served as local safety storage and thus had large amounts of money on hand, some donated and some of uncertain ownership. We didn't have to borrow anything from the banks."

"I am very impressed," continued Patékwu. "The precincts around the sacred spring are similar in size and are in complete ruins. Perhaps it is time the tribes agreed to restore and rebuild it."

“Perhaps we should,” agreed ɛjnodatu. “But at the moment, the Mɛghɛndrɛ have plans to restore the Kwétrua. We want to move the traffic away from the square, tear down some old buildings, enlarge the space around it, and reconsecrate the entire area to ɛjno.”

That made the eyebrows of the priests of Widumaj to go up. Kowɛranu noticed and smiled. “I have long thought Mɛdhpéla needs to build a proper temple to ɛndro. Now, I think it is time. The army, after all, has secretly worshiped Him for five hundred years. He has guided and protected the Kwolonɛ well.”

Even Wɛrétrakɛstɛr shifted uncomfortably in his chair at that comment. The Sumis, however, looked very pleased. “Perhaps this is a good time to discuss a common project,” said Aréjé. “We would like to propose a single book of hymns and prayers. They could be printed in their original form, with translation into Eryan and Sumi, so everyone could read them.”

The Sumis and priests of Widumaj looked startled. “Well, that would be mixing the sacred with . . .” Shiimti decided not to say what the sacred would be mixed with.

“Yes, that could be quite inappropriate,” agreed Widulubu, sounding alarmed.

“Perhaps separate books, then,” suggested Jordanu. “The génadɛma could publish them. Each group would prepare their collection.”

“Yes, I can provide a selection,” said Wɛrétrakɛstɛr, before the priests could object.

“We could put together collections of hymns to ɛjno and ɛndro,” pledged Kowɛranu.

“Then I suppose we could participate as well, if the translation into Eryan was done well,” agreed Dumuninurta. “We would like the Eryan to understand our worship of our gods. There are many similarities. Even the appearance of your gods is similar to ours.”

That was a sore point; thanks to archaeology, it was now recognized that the appearance of Wɛrano, Mitro, and Saré was based on Sumi statues of Anu, Enlilu, and Kié. There was more uncomfortable shifting in chairs.

“Excellent, then we have a project we can report to Her Majesty,” said Aréjé, relieved they’d have something.

“It is important,” agreed Dumuninurta. “Speaking of the Kwétrua and the Sacred Springs; I have seen references to them in the Anarbala records we moved to the library here. Sumi armies burned Gorda and destroyed the buildings of the sacred spring about twelve hundred years ago.”

That startled the Tutanɛ, but Jordan leaned forward. “Really? What records are these?”

“The court papers of Lilalara. When that city collapsed and then was destroyed by the Eryan, the Lugal—I think I’d translate the title as ‘king’ rather than ‘lord’ because he was undisputed master of the eastern shore—the lugal retreated to Sumilara and took his library and part of his archive with him, especially military and treaty correspondence. It was all recorded on leaf paper, so it is very fragile and brown, and the ink has faded terribly. But you can still make out some of the texts.”

“Really?” said Jordan. “Because there are ways to photograph the leaf paper with our tablets that will bring out the faded ink and make the pages easier to read.”

“Perhaps you can get permission,” said Dumuninurta. “The texts are hard to read, though. The Sumi is an old dialect. There are also texts in what I suppose is Eryan. I couldn’t read them at all; the alphabet was different.”

“But Marku Bɛjdɛdrai and his archaeological team probably can read them,” continued Jordan. “The ancient Eryan city of Mɛdha, at the top of the Glugluba in the Long Valley, had thousands of inscriptions. We photographed or hand copied many of them. Many of them are no longer visible because the ruins have collapsed, now that they are exposed to the wind and rain. But we have the records and we have two or three people who can read them.”

“Then they definitely should ask Princess Ninti. She is the heiress of the library.”

“Thank you, I’ll tell them,” said Jordan.

The pickup had a terrible difficulty getting through the late-winter snowfall to the Mémɛnɛgonɛ village. Ekwanu, the tribal chief, had to be carried out to the truck because of the extreme pain he was experiencing. His eldest nephew, ɛndrokordu, squeezed in next to him and held onto his uncle as the pickup sped toward Gordha and its small hospital.

The bumpy ride seemed to take forever. Finally, they pulled up to the hospital’s main entrance and the two men carried the now semi-conscious chief inside. The doctor in charge that night was Kɛrbloré.

The sight of Kɛrbloré seemed to rouse Ekwanu. “A woman? I need a doctor, not a nurse!”

“I am a doctor. Dr. Aku had to go to Sértroba to give a class tonight.”

“I *cannot* have a woman treat me.”

“What is the problem?”

“He is in severe plain,” replied ɛndrokordu. “Right side.”

“Down here?” Kɛrbloré pointed; she didn’t dare touch him.

“It is very bad,” Ekwanu gasped. “It has been getting worse and worse for over a day, but since sunset it has become extreme.”

“Then I need to examine you.”

“I said I want a doctor!”

“I am the only doctor in Gordha at the moment. Dr. Aku can’t get back here for two hours. There is probably a male doctor on duty in Mɛlwika, but it’ll take him two hours to get here.”

“I’ll wait.”

“I think you have appendicitis. Your appendix may have burst, and that can kill you if it is not treated. I would not wait.”

“How do you treat it?” asked ɛndrokordu.

“Surgery to remove the appendix and clean up the infection.”

“You’re going to cut me open!” Ekwanu shook his head.

“Cough. Does it hurt?”

“I won’t do that because it does indeed hurt!”

“We have a traditional healer in town. Shall I call him to pray for you?”

Ekwanu was startled by that offer. ɛndrokordu shook his head. “Our village healer has been praying all day, and our nurse was praying with him.”

“What did she think was wrong?”

“Just as you said.” He didn’t repeat the unknown word, “appendicitis.”

Ekwanu stiffened from a spasm of pain and his face muscles tightened, but he uttered no sound. He wasn’t going to cry out in front of a woman. “Lord, we have things that can reduce the pain while you wait. Would you like that?”

He looked at her, then nodded. Kɛrbloré pointed to a room where ɛndrokordu could take his uncle, with a hospital bed, and while the two of them headed for the room, she went to get a needle full of morphine. It was one medicine that Mɛlwika had started to produce. She returned and gave Ekwanu the shot.

At first it didn’t seem to help, but within five minutes he reported some less pain, and in 20 minutes it was much better. But, much to ɛndrokordu’s horror, his uncle went to sleep. “What is this, is it a poison that kills?” he demanded.

“No, this is a common side effect. Morphine often induces drowsiness and your uncle has been through terrible pain. ɛndrokordu, we *have* to operate. I can do a little more examination of him, but that would just verify the diagnosis.”

“Examine him.”

“Alright.” She pulled the Lord’s shirt up and pressed on the right side of abdomen, which felt swollen. Even in his sleep, the Lord twitched. “Bring me the ultrasound,” she asked the nurse.

The nurse hurried away and in one minute brought a smart phone with a device attached to it. She turned it on and pressed it against Ekwanu’s skin. “Look,” she said to ɛndrokordu. “You can’t see it very well, but you see this here? That’s his appendix, and it

is way too large. That means it is infected and it swelled up. And I think it has burst. At this point, the infection has spread around his abdomen and that is very, very dangerous. Untreated, he will die."

ɛndrokordu took a deep breath. He did not like the scenario.

"How old are you?"

"Twenty-four. I am my uncle's heir. He has no sons."

"Then you can make decisions about his medical treatment when he is unconscious."

"Is that why you gave him the drug?"

"No, it is the only strong pain killer we have. He was suffering and needed relief."

ɛndrokordu stared at Kɛrbloré, then nodded. "Should we wait for Dr. Aku?"

"We will call him back immediately, but I am the surgeon here in Gordha, not him. We both can do surgery, but usually I do it. And I have removed a dozen appendixes in the last eight years since I became a surgeon."

"Very well, operate on my uncle."

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Museums and Temples

Late ɛjnaménu/late March, 19/637

Thornton had to hurry to get to the museum; he was going to be a bit late. The appointment at the Miller School of Engineering had taken a long time, but he was pleased they had agreed to put power saws on the schedule as a priority, and while they were at it, they planned to look at machinery for forestry and forestry products in general. Thornton was irritated that the subject had not come up five years earlier, when they were developing forestry companies, but at that time the focus had been on the legal structure, the administration, conservation, and reforestation.

As soon as he stepped inside the Museum, he saw a young man—barely older than Jordan—in the entry hall admiring some ancient tapestries on the wall. "Lord Mitrusunu, welcome to Mɛlwika Museum. I apologize I am late; an unexpected delay, I assure you."

"Oh, that's fine, Lord Dhoru. Thank you for agreeing to show me around."

"Delighted; I hope they didn't ask you to pay!"

"I paid anyway because I love this idea, of putting examples of culture and customs in one place. What a marvelous way to learn."

"I am still saddened by your father's untimely heart attack, last summer. But I have heard good things about your efforts to assist the people of Morituora."

"Thank you, you are very kind. I was blessed by an excellent education here at the génadɛma and it opened my mind to modern techniques of administration. And as you

know, I hired my good friend, Rudhékwu, from your father's tomi. He has proved to be an excellent town manager."

"And is it true you are thinking about establishing a Town Council?"

"Yes, it is, using the election of our representatives to the Provincial Assembly. Morituora's population now stands at 5,000, double what it was when the New Knowledge arrived. We are a substantial place; as big as Néfa once was. I plan to ask the Réjé to declare us a royal city."

"Excellent. So, how can I be of assistance to you?"

"I want to go up to the second floor, if that is alright with you, and ask you questions."

"Fine." Thornton led Mitrusunu up the stairs. The Museum was not very large; three rooms on each floor, 10 by 15 meters, 15 by 15 meters, and 10 by 15 meters respectively. The ground floor had Eryan objects; the central chamber had very large traditional tapestries and sculptures, the right hand chamber had traditional painting, and the left hand chamber had armor and all sorts of weapons, which the boys always loved to see. The central chamber upstairs had Sumi artifacts, the left chamber Tutanɛ objects, and the right chamber had painting and other art from the "modern" period that had started with the arrival of the Menneas.

Mitrusunu headed straight to the central chamber. He stopped to admire the huge statue of Enlilu on the right side of the room, and the statue of Anu next to him, which had come from Lilalara. A beautiful mosaic occupied much of the center of the floor. Rusted swords and other weapons lay in glass cases along one wall; another had several wall paintings taken from the Pɛnkwayukwa villa. The wall opposite the entrance and the

statue of Enlilu had several large carved stone friezes depicting Sumi gods. “I have become fascinated by this chamber,” explained Mitrusunu. “You were wise not to put it on the ground floor; I am sure many are upset. But the Sumis ruled this world, once.”

“They did indeed. It appears three groups of people arrived here; Eastern Eryan at Gordha, Western Eryan at the Long Valley, and Sumis on Sumilara. The Sumis got the best climate, so they multiplied, spread out, and colonized the entire seashore as far inland as Mɛlwika. But the Eastern Eryan had horses and the Western Eryan had a sophisticated civilization and a big army. Once the Long Valley began to flood and the climate collapsed, the Sumis were driven back to their island, where they were safe until the sea around it dried up.” Thornton pointed. “Enlilu, here, was the patron god of the temple on top of the ɛjnopéla hill. That’s where we got him. The mosaic and the swords and other artifacts came from Pɛnkwayukwa, the Sumi estate owned by a man named Felanoma, out on Round Hill. There’s also a small museum there, built on the foundation of the servant’s quarters.”

“I know, I’ve been there. I like how you’ve removed the debris so you can walk around and actually get a feel for the house’s layout.”

“It has taken us ten years, but it’s in pretty good shape now. The friezes on the opposite wall are from the palaces of Lilalara and Morituora, respectively.”

“I remember staring at the Morituora frieze for hours, when I was a student here. It is a really beautiful piece, and well preserved. The other pieces that are still on the mountain are not as good. I actually wanted to talk to you about this frieze. I know you had permission from my father to take it here, so I am not asking for it to be returned. But I would like to commission an exact copy. I’d also like the advice of your archaeology

department because I'd like to plan a thorough excavation and partial restoration of the entire mountain site. It's quite large; eight hectares at least, with a fort or palace and a temple on top. People are walking up there and looting the site; they've been doing that for centuries. But if we enclose it, establish a museum building, and create a proper attraction, it could be quite a popular tourist destination, as well as giving everyone a sense of the history of the area."

"You are correct, it would be quite a nice attraction, but we're talking about a lot of money, probably spent over more than a decade."

"I agree. I want to approach the Queen and the Consultative Assembly for a permanent budget in the vicinity of 50,000 dhanay per year. In a decade, we could do a lot with that."

Thornton was surprised. "I wonder whether you can get that much, but perhaps it's possible. Why have you decided to start the project now?"

"Several reasons. First, I have now been Lord for six months and I think I need to start innovating for my town. I have become comfortable in the office; I have good staff. Second, it is part of a larger plan to diversify Morituora's economic base. Right now, a quarter of our workers are farmers; when your family arrived it would have been ninety percent. Now half our workers commute to Mɛlwika or Mɛddoakwés to work in factories. The remaining quarter work in our own factories, run stores, or work for me. I'd like to bring more jobs to Morituora. We have a small industrial park; I'd like to get more businesses established in it. I've already talked to the Miller and Mennea tomis about the matter and I think the Miller tomi will locate a new parts factory there. But I want more than just manufacturing jobs. The archaeological site will diversify our economic base

and bring people to town who will spend money in stores and restaurants, but it will also be a source of pride and identity for Morituora. That's the main reason I want to develop it."

"I see. That's a good reason, too; a place needs to have a sense of identity."

"Exactly. I assume you heard the announcement yesterday that the priests of the Mɛddoakwés temple complex want to spend 2.5 million dhanay over the next few years to expand, refurbish, and beautify the temple? That's their attempt to build up the Capital City and its ranking."

"Indeed, and it is interesting that two priests of Widumaj went to Sumilara last month and got a tour of the new temple outside Anartu, a temple that reportedly cost 2 million to build."

"They are trying to outdo the Sumis! Perhaps I am as well, but in a different way. Morituora can't build a multi-million dhanay temple. But we can clean up the most extensive Sumi ruins in the upper valley, which lie right up hill from Morituora."

"You can, and our archaeology department will be delighted to be involved, assuming their support comes with monetary reimbursement. At the moment, our two faculty and eight students are very busy working on the Lujékwonɛ house site and Lilalara. They can't support another dig; they don't have the manpower. But if we are able to hire another archaeologist or two and recruit more students, we can do it. Presumably a long-term commitment to the ruins at Morituora would require a full-time archaeologist and a team of trained workers."

"Yes, I agree. If you can get me a budget, I'll be sure to include it. I want the archaeologist working in Morituora, though he could teach courses at either génadɛma as well."

"That's fine. I can send you an estimated budget."

"Thank you. I'm excited to see this project move forward!"

Ekwanu still had not recovered all his strength. When the pickup truck parked in front of his house, he got out of the passenger side very slowly and carefully. His abdomen still hurt a bit from the incision and the subsequent infection that had nearly killed him, if it weren't for the careful medicine of Dr. Kerbloré, Dr. Aku, and even Drs. Stauréstu and Lua, both of whom visited to advise.

ɛndrokordu had sat next to his uncle through the entire bumpy trip—especially the last half dozen kilometers, because the dirt track to the Mémɛnɛgonɛ village had little gravel, and badly needed further work—and said little, because Ekwanu wasn't in the mood to speak. The chief looked down most of the time, rather than out at the snowy forest. When he walked the dozen meters to his door, he was looking down at the snow, with Ekwanu steadying him.

His wife Kordé greeted him nervously at the door. Her anxiety was notable and puzzled him; ɛndrokordu had seemed uneasy as well. He walked slowly into the large central meeting room of his house and suddenly realized *it was bright, not dark.*

"What is this?" he asked, startled.

"It's electricity, uncle."

“How dare you do this in my absence!”

“It’s time to enter the modern world, uncle. I was in charge of the village in your absence and immediately decided that my part of the house needed electricity, so when I was in Gordha I arranged for an electrician to come out and add the wires. The power line to the village wasn’t working, but it was quick and easy to get it fixed. I spent my money on it. Then when I was meeting with the elders in here—they were all very worried about you—they asked about the lights in my quarters, I showed them and they said ‘well, get it for the great hall, too, it’ll make everything easier for us.’”

“So we did, and our bedroom, and the kitchen area,” continued Kordé. “And don’t complain. You just had electric lights and a flush toilet for fifteen days in the Gordha Hospital! When I visited you, I was very pleased with them.”

“The new bathroom will be installed next month, with running water,” added ɛndrokordu. “It can be my money or yours. It doesn’t matter.”

Ekwanu stared at his wife and nephew, so angry he was speechless. “The ancestors. The ancestors! We are the Mémɛnɛgonɛ, the greatest tribe there is! We don’t need all this new knowledge! We will become worldly people who sit on their asses and do nothing!”

“Uncle, we sit on our asses right now all winter because we *can’t* do anything. We once were *mɛnɛg,* many; once we were *mémɛnɛg,* very numerous. We were the largest Tutanɛ tribe! But now there are barely a thousand of us, the Mégɛndrɛs and Kwolonɛ and Kaitɛrɛ and Kwétékwonɛ are all much more numerous, and we are stuck in a little village in a mountain forest with some steel tools, a small lead mine, and a single pickup truck. If you want the Mémɛnɛgonɛ to be great again, they need to join the modern world. We

need to send our kids to high school in Gordha, we need a decent school here, we need a better road, we need to install a few telephones—the army went to the trouble of installing a line to the village five years ago!—and we need a development plan."

Ekwanu was turning red. "Over my dead body."

"No, uncle," replied ɛndrokordu. "The elders met here, in your absence, just two days ago, enjoying the electric lights. They agreed I should call the development office that the Menneas run and ask them to come and give us advice. We haven't called them yet; the elders thought they should meet with you first."

"They understand your love for the tribe and the village," added Kordé. "They feel terrible that they have to disagree with you."

"It was unanimous, however," said ɛndrokordu.

"Unanimous? Were they bewitched?"

"No, uncle."

Ekwanu looked at his nephew and wife, speechless. He leaned against the wall, then shook his head. "Am I still chief?"

"If you lead us forward, you are."

"Forward, huh?" He shook his head. "No, not that kind of forward. I can't."

"Then you should tell that to the elders."

"So, you will take over from me? My nephew, disobeying me?"

"No, uncle, I told them I wouldn't. But I think they will write the Réjé and ask someone else be recognized as Lord over the Mémɛnɛgonɛ."

"You would refuse." Ekwanu looked at his nephew, amazed and impressed at the same time. "I need to think about this."

The month of Ɛjnaménu ended with a big celebration of New Years—Bahá'í and Eryan—and the beginning of spring. The weather obliged with a small heat wave, tempting a few farmers to plant early crops in the hopes that there would be no frosts and they would get a very strong price. The génadɛma's first spring term began as well, with a new crop of teachers coming to improve their education. Generally, however, the big wave of new students hit in the summer and fall, after high school graduation.

The second Primdiu of Bolérɛnménu, Thornton, Chris, and Amos climbed into a steam car shortly before dawn to drive to Gordha, for that day the Méghɛndrɛ were dedicating the first segment of "the Grand Canal" as they sometimes called it, which would carry water from the Gordha Reservoir westward through their territory. The Menneas had been invited to the inaugural ceremony.

"I do wonder what this canal will do to the Majakwés marshes," said Chris, as they drove eastward on the Royal Road.

"I worry, too," said Thornton, glancing to the right as he drove. "This area is still in very good shape because it's outside Méghɛndrɛ territory. The Dwobɛrgonɛ aren't numerous enough to damage it too much."

"But won't this area become a township?" asked Amos.

"Just from the southern bank of the floodplain. The floodplain remains Dwobɛrgonɛ territory. But you'll know immediately when we reach Méghɛndrɛ territory because the marshes have been cleared of most of their trees and brush and in many

places the marsh areas have been channeled and drained. That damage is the fault of Gordha Dam, actually. It used to be that a flood rushed down every spring, drowning large areas of the plain and irrigating it. Even before the sea was restored, the floods happened, but they were fairly small. Then the sea began to return and for two years there were huge floods that did a lot of damage. Then the dam was completed and the flood was completely tamed; the river flowed very uniformly and constantly. Of course, this far west there was more rainfall, so the floodplain was green anyway. But about the time we enter Méghɛndrɛ territory, you will notice that the land grows more arid. So the Méghɛndrɛ began to drain the marshes and dig irrigation ditches. The floodplain really looks quite different once we enter their territory."

"How wide is the floodplain? Two kilometers?" asked Chris.

Thornton nodded. "About that, and thirty kilometers long, so the Méghɛndrɛs only had about sixty square kilometers of prime farm and pasture land! Of course, they had over two thousand square kilometers of sub-prime land, so they had pretty big herds of cattle. The dam controlled flooding and made the floodplain even more valuable, because irrigation ditches weren't washed out and the land was never submerged. Over the winter they excavated a concrete-lined ditch five kilometers southward. It discharges its waters into Auslua, the East Wash, which flows back to the Majakwés at the city, but from it they can now irrigate ten square kilometers more land."

"And how much will the Grand Canal irrigate?" asked Amos.

Thornton smiled. "Up to 450 square kilometers! It'll follow the Majakwés westward, gradually getting farther from the river. The plan is to dig smaller ditches downslope toward the river every 500 meters or so and pour the water over the land,

which is shortgrass prairie and arid brushland, thereby providing the water for tall grass, wheat, or other crops instead. They plan to take up to a third of the flow of the Majakwés, or fifteen cubic meters per second of water, which is enough to put a third of a meter of water on 1,500 square kilometers every year; plenty to irrigate the whole area."

"A massive modification of the environment," said Chris. "And it'll displace thousands of deer, antelope, zebra, elephants, and other wild game."

"It will if they raise cattle on all 1,500 square kilometers, but I doubt they can; that's 150,000 cattle. Right now, they're slaughtering 20,000 per year to meet the demand for beef, and I can't see it growing that much. Some of that water would be destined for irrigation, maybe as far west as Swadnoma. They would like to increase the game supply as well, and if they can take some of the exploitation pressure off the floodplain, some of it can be converted back into permanent marsh. Right now the Majakwés hippo population is severely endangered."

"And I suppose all that irrigation will increase natural springs and even rainfall," said Amos.

"Probably," said Thornton. "The lower Arjakwés valley now has a lot more natural watercourses because of leakage from the irrigation ditches. The waterfowl population has probably increased because there are more marshlands. It's hard to say what it'll do to the rainfall. The prevailing winds there blow both east and west at different times, but the tendency is southward, toward the equator, so it probably means more water in the Ornakwés, which would be a good thing."

"It sounds like, overall, the ecological impact will be positive," said Amos.

Chris shrugged. "Humans are able to screw up just about anything."

They drove on in silence and soon entered the territory of the "Great Men." The floodplain did indeed cease to be brushy and marshy, replaced by squares of wheat and corn or pastureland for cattle. They soon reached Gordha and followed main street to the old central plaza, which was all torn up. "They removed buildings!" said Amos, surprised.

"When Jordan was on Sumilara last month, the Gordhan priests said they planned to enlarge the space around the Kwétrua," said Chris, pointing to the kaaba-like cubical stone structure that was the heart of the old, pre-Widumaj customs.

"Well, they did!"

"And I think we turn here," added Thornton, turning the car to the right and onto Route 78, "South Road," which crossed the widest part of Gordha. It had been newly concreted and in a hundred meters began to descend off the high area the city had been built on to the arid brushlands outside. Dug into the gradually declining slope was the foundation of a big new building. "That's the new tribal headquarters," said Chris. "The Lord will live there, the court will be there, and all the offices. It'll be quite impressive."

"And bigger than anything the Kwolonɛ have," noted Thornton.

"Competition," agreed Chris.

The concrete surface was replaced by gravel and the road surface obviously was heavily traveled; the gravel had been compressed into ruts. Soon a large irrigation ditch paralleled the roadway; it had been dug high into the slope above the town. They had to slow because the roadway had pedestrians, horse riders, and bicyclists on it. Up ahead they could see a crowd gathering at the site of the dedication. They pulled into a

temporary parking lot filled with other vehicles. “Every pickup truck in Tutanɛland must be here,” said Thornton.

“Some of these have Arjakwés license plates, though,” noted Chris.

They got out, adjusted their toga-like robes, and walked to the gathering. They were almost late; the meeting was starting sooner than they realized. They were escorted to their seats in the large VIP section under a canopy to keep off the sun and were seated next to Count Staurɛkɛstɛr, Chief of the Kwolonɛ. He looked distinctly uncomfortable. He leaned over to Chris and said quietly, “They’re only dedicating a few kilometers today, and I have no idea whether the ditch will ever get to Kwolonɛ territory, or whether it is even large enough to carry water that far.”

Chris nodded sympathetically, but Thornton leaned over. “This canal may be big enough to irrigate all the way to Kwolona, but it’s not the best way for you to get water anyway. You can pump up plenty of ground water in your western lands. This canal can’t reach your eastern lands, but you could always irrigate using the Swadakwés.”

“Lord Dhoru, both the Swadakwés and the Ornakwés are much smaller rivers. And you think they’re going to dig a ditch big enough to get water to our lands? The Méghɛndrɛ are always showing off.”

Just then, the chanters went up to the stage to open the gathering with devotional hymns. Notably, chants to ɛndro were included, as well as hymns to Widumaj and even one Bahá'í prayer; Gordha had a small but distinguished Bahá'í community. Then Walékwɛs, the chief and Lord of the Méghɛndrɛ and now a Count, rose and walked to the front.

“Fellow Méghɛndrɛ, brother Tutanɛ, and honored guests,” he began. “We welcome you to this joyful celebration as our tribe inaugurates the first segment of the Grand Canal. The beginning is fairly small—just five kilometers of ditch—but it is very significant because the waters will pour into the dry bed of the Auslua, East Wash—the Ausakwés, East Creek, after today—a creek that flows into the Majakwés almost three kilometers west of town, thereby irrigating a very long stretch of land. Next year we will add eight kilometers more to reach the Ausakwés higher up its channel, then the year after that we will add ten kilometers, which will extend the canal very close to the southern end of our territory and the headwaters of the Akriakwés, which returns to the Majakwés near the western edge of our land. Further extensions westward will await our growing need for grassland and farmland.

“With this canal, we as a people have asserted a control over mother nature on a major portion of our territory. It will bring us great wealth as our cattle herds and farmer’s fields spread. It will also beautify our land with grass and trees and allow wild game to flourish in ways it never has before in the land of the Méghɛndrɛ. We will build small dams on the Ausakwés and Akriakwés and their tributary creeks to store water for side ditches, creating marshes for birds and watering holes for deer and elephants. We have always regarded ourselves as the stewards of our land, preservers of the sacred, and this canal is yet another way we will respect, heal, and strengthen our earth mother.

“Now I wish to introduce General Roktɛkɛstɛr, who has been sent as the representative of Her Majesty.”

Walékwɛs stepped down to applause and the general walked to the platform. “The queen is very pleased that this canal is being inaugurated,” he began. “Gordha, one of the

ancestral homes of our people, is located in a very dry place but nevertheless is blessed with ample water. For thousands of years, the Majakwés has been the source of life here. Now that source will be distributed more widely than ever. I am told that the plants and the wet ground, evaporating their water into the air, will probably even increase the rainfall here, so areas beyond the irrigation canals will benefit as well. It may be that every liter of water removed from the river will eventually return to it.

"This canal also represents the foresight, planning skills, and capabilities of the Méghɛndrɛ, one of this world's great peoples. The génadɛma here proposed the idea; the Count oversaw the planning; the tribe called on outside expertise where necessary, but has done the bulk of the work themselves. Their taxes, the taxes paid to the crown which Her Majesty agreed to contribute to the project, bank loans, and their labor have completed this segment. In future years the Méghɛndrɛ will use the water to make the desert bloom, and they will prosper. In turn, all of us will benefit."

Roktɛkɛstɛr stepped down and Walékwɛs rose one more time. "There is one other person present today that we must thank for bringing us the new knowledge that made all this possible. Count Kristobéru Mennea, will you please rise and accept our appreciation."

Startled, Chris rose, and the entire audience broke out in thunderous applause, far louder than anything he could have expected. He bowed to everyone, waved, then sat.

"And now, let us start the water flowing!" said Walékwɛs. He stepped forward with his son and heir apparent, Albékwu, and ɛjnodatu, chief priest at the Kwétrua. They gathered around a big wheel and began to turn it. Water poured from the ditch into the concrete canal leading to the Ausakwés and the crowd began to applaud. Every turn of

the wheel brought a stronger flow until the water made a distinctive roar. In a minute, a loud roar filled the air as a substantial torrent raced down the canal and toward the dry bed of the Ausakwés.

Everyone continued to applaud for some time, then the chanters came forward and closed the program with more sacred words. The caterers came forth to uncover tables heaped with little sandwiches; Chris was amused to see that the women were wearing tee shirts that said “Gordha Catering”—the word catering was just the English word, written in the Eryan script—with “Gordha Gabruli” written underneath. They all rose to get some goodies while a singer and pan pipist came to the stage to sing a love song.

“It’s hard to believe that they can use a third of the river’s flow, but the total amount of water in the river won’t diminish much,” Roktɛkɛstɛr said to Thornton skeptically.

“Well, we don’t know how much water will return to the Arjakwés through evaporation and rainfall; maybe half,” replied Thornton. “But the rest has to go somewhere, and the winds here blow both east and west periodically, but there’s a trend toward the equator, and that will carry the rainfall to the Ornakwés and Swadakwés watersheds. Together, they have barely a tenth as much water as the Majakwés, so this could increase their size.”

“Do you think it’s possible, eventually, for us to build dams in many places, create a lot of ponds and lakes, and increase the rainfall so much that there will be no deserts left?” asked the General.

Thornton nodded. “It might be possible. The sea will drop somewhat, but it’s 150 meters deep on average, so it doesn’t have to drop more than a meter or two to supply enough water for a large number of artificial ponds and lakes.”

“How is your town, my friend?” asked Chris.

Roktɛkɛstɛr nodded. “Thank you, all is well. It looks like we’ll have a good harvest this year, and once the new factory is open we’ll have more jobs, too.”

Just then, Ornkordu, chief of the Ghéslonɛ tribe on the other side of the Spine, approached Roktɛkɛstɛr. Chris was surprised to see the chief, who rarely traveled so far from home. The general turned to him, so Chris and Thornton turned away. ɛndrokordu, who had been hovering nearby, approached the Menneas. “Lords, I don’t know whether you remember me; I am ɛndrokordu, nephew and heir of Lord Ekwanu of the Mémɛnɛghonɛ tribe.”

“Yes, I remember you,” replied Chris. “How is your lord?”

“He is well. Perhaps you heard of his hospitalization last month; he came to Gordha Hospital because of a burst appendix. He wanted to come today, but did not feel well enough and asked me to represent the tribe instead.”

“Esto must have preserved him! That is a very dangerous medical condition.”

“Indeed, Count Mennea, he nearly died, but the new medicine is powerful and Esto smiled on us. More importantly, though, the event has pushed our Lord to change his opinion of the new knowledge; after almost 19 years, it isn’t even that new any more! Our tribe wants assistance, lords. We are isolated and poor. Some of our young men have moved to Gordha, Kostakéma, or Mɛlwika, and they have returned for their brides, or

they have married women from outside the tribe and have no plans to return. So our population is dropping."

"Yes, and you have timber, minerals, and furs," replied Thornton.

"And we do not even have a decent road! Sometimes our men walk to the Royal Road and take the bus to Gordha to sell their furs. We recently crashed our pickup truck and we haven't replaced it, so we have to rely on the Késtonɛ to send their truck, so we can get our lead ore to Mɛlwika. The army installed telephone and electric lines, over my uncle's objections, to the village store. If it hadn't been for the phone, we would have had no way to get a pickup and he would have died."

"So he has come around?" asked Chris, a bit surprised.

"Somewhat. He has no choice, because the rest of us have decided to join the modern world!"

"I see." Chris considered. "The situation is getting more and more complicated all the time. It used to be, a pickup truck and some basic literacy was enough to help a tribe. But now they can't sell timber at a good price because the big timber operations are efficient and the price has gone down. It is the same with vegetables and wheat; the prices are lower because of the scale of operations."

"We'd need to come out and see what your resources are," added Thornton. "You are high enough to get good rainfall, so you have good timber. You'd need to organize a company and learn some of the newer systems for harvesting and maintaining forests. But that can be done."

"We would welcome that effort, Lord Dhoru!"

“The other possibility is work in Gordha,” said Chris. The Royal Road is in very good shape. If you can clean up your road to it, a bus could visit your village every morning to take people to work and children to school in Gordha. That would solve two problems at once.”

“We are about an hour from Gordha,” agreed ɛndrokordu. “Will the army improve the road?”

“If you ask,” said Chris.

“When can you come for a visit, lords? It will do all of us a lot of good.”

“We’ll have to look at our plans, Honored, but probably some time in the next few weeks.”

“That would be very welcome, Count! And please bring some Bahá'ís along, who can explain your approach to development. Both the Krésonɛ and Késtonɛ have done very well; it is very impressive to see. Perhaps they can advise us.”

“We will be glad to bring Bahá'ís along, such as Lord Patékwu.”

“Yes, he would be very, very welcome.”

ɛndrokordu thanked them profusely several more times, then took his leave. Chris smiled at Thornton, but rather than saying anything, he turned to Roktɛkɛstɛr’s conversation several meters away. Lord Ornkordu was finishing up his conversation with the general as well and looked very happy. Roktɛkɛstɛr was nodding. Then they shook hands and the general headed to the table of food.

Ornkordu looked delighted. Then he saw that Chris was looking at him, so he walked over. Chris and Thornton approached him and they shook hands. “It’s very good

to see you here at this important occasion, Lord Ornkordu," said Chris. "You don't get over the mountains very often."

"Correct, I do not, but when I saw how important this gathering would be and some of the people who would be here—especially General Roktɛkɛstɛr, who is a fair minded man—I felt I had to come. You see, the Réjé agreed the garrison should leave our village last summer, but they didn't actually leave until the snow had begun to fly, and even then, they left a small garrison there to protect the fort, because they didn't want us to use it."

"But they didn't destroy it?"

"They did not. They took everything out of it they could; many truck loads of beautiful furniture descended the escarpment to Réjéivika in the Long Valley, and I have heard it was put in the Royal Palace there that is never used. They had not decided what to do with the fort. But I just implored General Roktɛkɛstɛr to turn the keys over to us, so we could use it; we are a poor people and it is a beautiful structure. And he agreed he would arrange it."

"But what will you do with it?"

Ornkordu smiled. "We need a school and a clinic and it will be better than the small buildings we have built. Beyond that, I do not know. Have you have any suggestions?"

Chris looked at Thornton. "We'd have to go take a look. How big is it? What shape is it in?"

“It is pretty big because it had room for up to 250 soldiers and a dozen officers, plus room for exiles. But we haven’t been inside since they closed it up. I don’t know whether they destroyed it or not. They did not burn it, I can say that.”

“Then it may be in pretty good shape,” said Chris. “And that is pretty large; probably bigger than the old fort at Mɛddwoglubas.”

“It’s easily 100 meters long and 60 meters wide.”

“Big,” said Thornton, nodding. He looked at his father. “Perhaps we should visit the Ghéslonɛ at the same time as the Mémɛnɛghonɛ!”

“Yes perhaps.”

“What do the Mémɛnɛghonɛ want?” asked Ornkordu, curious.

“To join the modern world,” replied Chris. “They are isolated and poor.”

“I think the Géndonɛ may feel that way, also,” said Ornkordu. “They have watched our villages slowly grow more prosperous through the sale of pork, iron ore, furs, and cheese. They have started to bring furs and cheese to us to send out with our exports, but their cheese is not good enough in quality.”

“They need education,” said Chris.

“They are jealous of our progress and I think they may want help now. If you can come to Moruagras, I’ll invite Lord ɛjnokordu to visit.”

“Then we will definitely come,” promised Chris, thinking about the very last isolated tribe on Éra.

435. Into the Mountains

Mid Bolérɛnménu/10-15 April, 20/638

The more Chris thought about a trip to the Tutanɛ tribes, the more he realized that it was important. A follow-up stop in Gordha was needed, as was a visit to Kostakhéma. So on the 20th of Bolérɛnménu—corresponding roughly to April 10th of the new year 638, or the twentieth year the Menneas has been on Éra—Chris and Jordan set out in a new high-clearance steam car for the Spine Mountains and their eastern and western shoulders.

The stop in Gordha consumed the afternoon as they met with the tribal tomi board to discuss grants the tribe should pursue in order to maximize their use of the irrigation water they now had. After staying in spare rooms at the hospital that night—which doubled as the town's only hotel—they set out bright and early for the Mémɛnɛghonɛ.

"I've never even heard that their village has a name," said Jordan, as he turned the car off Route 1 an hour later and onto the old, beaten track that ran 8 kilometers to their settlement.

"Nor I; I suppose it is Mémɛnɛnghonatroba, which may make it the longest place name on Éra!"

Jordan laughed at that and slowed to drive around a big pair of ruts. "The army's gravel was too little, too long ago."

"At least they have a phone and power line, and I gather the phone works."

Jordan nodded and drove slowly; it took 20 minutes to reach the village. It consisted of about a hundred houses placed along a pretty creek and dotted about a large

clearing in the forest with impressive mountains to the east and west. Cows gazed on the grass; fallow fields awaited the planting of rye, carrots, cabbages, and peas; a scraggly apple orchard rose up the western slope. The lack of leaves and blossoms on the apples indicated that planting was still at least a month away.

Jordan parked in front of the largest house in the village, which was also the final destination of the telephone and power lines. He noted a smashed pickup truck parked against the side of the building. They got out as the front door opened and ɛndrokordu extended his arms in greeting. “Thank you for coming, we’re so glad you made it! The road is always very bad in the spring.”

“We drove around the worst ruts when we could,” replied Chris. He walked over and shook ɛndrokordu’s hands. “It’s so good to see you again. This is my grandson, Jordanu.”

“Very pleased to meet you, Gordanu.” The men shook hands; Jordan remembered that the archaic accent of the Méméneghonɛ did not have a “j” sound and the usual Eryan “g” sound was a guttural “gh.”

“Pleased to meet you as well, ɛndrokordu. I run our development consulting office. Grandfather asked me to come along because I can help arrange royal grants and loans for development.”

“That is very welcome assistance for us. Come inside, out of the chill.” He held the door for them to enter the house.

They removed their shoes in an atrium then entered straight into the house’s main room, a large space ten meters square with beautiful log walls and a huge stone fireplace

filled with a blazing fire. Four electric lights competed with the fire for illumination. “Allow me to introduce you to everyone. My uncle and our Lord, Ekwanu.” The lord nodded to Chris and he nodded back, for they had met at least once. “Our storekeeper, Sulanu. Our school teacher, Rudhkordu. Uncle Roktanu, and Uncle Mémorɛndru. These are Lord Kristobheru and Lord Gordanu.”

The two arrivals went around the circle, shaking hands with everyone. The two “uncles” were simply very old men, and therefore highly respected. Not mentioned was Kordé, Ekwanu’s wife, who sat next to him in a place of respect.

“We understand you do not drink beer, so my wife has tea for you,” said ɛndrokordu, and as he spoke she came forward with two large steaming mugs. “Please sit on these bear skins and make yourselves comfortable. My Lord wishes to address you.”

“I do,” said Ekwanu. “Lords, as you know, I have been steadfastly against *development* for many years. The Mémɛnɛghonɛ are a proud and self-sufficient people. We have a very beautiful valley, which we very much love. Our houses are warm in the winter and we rarely want for food. But the outside world will not leave us alone, and it has tempted many of our young people. In the last five years, ten of our young men have left—six with their brides—to live far away. We have nine teenagers who take the bus every day to Gordha high school. They are accompanied by fifteen men, who have jobs there. A wagon takes them to Route 1 and picks them up at night. We fear that some of them will choose to live elsewhere as well. People say we are poor. I disagree; we are rich in beauty and in love. But some want more than beauty and love. They like the clothes, the fancy shoes, the iceboxes and gas stoves, and the excitement of a big place. So I have no choice but to accept that we need some development.”

The others nodded. “And it saved your life,” added ɛndrokordu. Ekwanu scowled at that, but Kordé nodded vigorously.

“My Lord, self sufficiency is a very important thing,” replied Jordan. “And we do not disagree with it. You have the resources to develop yourselves because you are part of the Kingdom. Every year, your people pay taxes to Her Majesty. I would guess that if you have 100 households in the village, you pay 10,000 dhanay to her, and as Lord you have another 5,000 to spend on the village and your household. It does not violate self sufficiency to get back from the crown some of the taxes they extract from you. The crown is willing to give back to each place about a quarter to a third of what they pay, but in places that pay a very small amount, they are willing to return a larger fraction. I suspect you can get up to 5,000 dhanay every year for the next few years in development grants. They might even be willing to go higher.”

“You are an expert in this, I understand,” said ɛndrokordu. “So if we may ask, how much do you get for arranging the grants?”

“That’s a good question. Our development agency helps to write the grant, makes sure the plan is well developed and the amount requested is neither too large nor too small, makes sure the grant request has a reasonable schedule for completion, and if the grant is approved we return to inspect the final result to make sure the money was spent correctly. For this work, the palace pays us a five percent commission—fifty dhanay for a thousand dhanary grant—to do the work. It doesn’t cost you anything.”

“They do this because in the past, grants were for too little money and the project was never finished, or the money was diverted to improve the Lord’s house,” said Chris.

“This arrangement has worked out very well for everyone. Jordan knows what most villages and provinces want, and I am on most of the Tomi Boards, so I know their plans. As a result, if you propose, for example, that you want a pasta factory, we can tell you that two are already being built and five are already operating and there is no need for more pasta factories.”

“We don’t want a pasta factory,” replied Ekwanu, but he quickly added, “But I understand what you mean.”

“Several years ago, a development plan was formulated, wasn’t it?” asked Jordan.

“Yes,” said Sulanu. “We got the pickup truck. It made it much easier for us to get our lead ore to Mɛlwika and we could drive students and workers—and even shoppers—to Gordha. But then it crashed.”

“I saw it parked against the building,” said Chris. “It’d be cheaper to repair it than to buy a new one. Does it work at all?”

“The engine was damaged,” said Sulanu. “We used a horse to tow it here.”

“Mɛlwika has a repair man who will go out and fix damaged vehicles,” said Jordan. “Before we leave, I can take pictures of the damage that we can show him. Maybe he can come here to fix the truck.”

“How much?” asked ɛndrokordu.

Jordan frowned. “A hundred or two or three. It depends on the damage. Someone should start a repair business in Gordha, I think.”

“What do you recommend, Lords?” asked Ekwanu.

“We should look at the development plan,” replied Jordan. “You have a lead mine. With a 20-tonne cargo truck from Ora and with the help of the army explosives team, you

probably can mine lead ore much faster and sell more of it. Éra doesn't have much lead; yours is one of two mines. I suspect if more lead were available at a cheaper price, there would be demand for it. How many men mine the lead now?"

"Just three or four," replied Ekwanu.

"You also have cinnabar, according to the Geological Survey," said Chris. "It is a source of mercury and we have none. I'm sure it can be sold as well."

"The first priority should be to fix up the road and fix the truck," said Sulanu. "Then we can move people and goods much more easily. If the road is fixed, a truck could haul twice as much, too."

"The army can get to that this summer if you apply for it. It'll cost them about a thousand dhanay to gravel your road well and it won't cost you anything."

"How much to blow up lead ore?" asked Ekwanu.

"The team charges fifty dhanay each time. You'll need it once every month or two. It's expensive, but it doubles the work a miner can do."

"I see you have cows, so you have milk and can make cheese," noted Chris. "You also have apples. Those are things you can sell, if you have a pickup truck."

"And wild meat," added Jordan. "You'll need an icehouse so that you can preserve the fresh meat until you can haul it to market. I'd suggest you haul it to Mɛlwika, not Gordha, because it's bigger and has more demand for wild meat."

"Can we smelt the ore into lead or mercury, and sell them directly?" asked Ekwanu.

"Yes, eventually," replied Chris. "The problem is that a smelting operation is expensive and requires training to run it safely. Both lead and mercury are highly

poisonous substances. Very dangerous. If the ore is only a quarter lead, three quarters of the rock you haul to Mɛlwika has to be thrown away, which is expensive. You can probably smelt the ore here and sell the result for less *and* make more money for the tribe."

"Who do we talk to, to set up a smelter?" asked ɛndrokordu.

Chris frowned and looked at Jordan. "My son in law, Amos, will have to come here," said Chris.

"I'll contact Amos," said Jordanu. "This is an excellent development project. It can be planned in phases, one per year, and each can be kept close to 5,000 dhanay. With that much, you should be able to build a basic smelter."

"You can get the coal from the Kaitɛrɛ," added Chris. "And maybe some of the young men who have acquired an education and have left can be convinced to come back, because smelters require someone with education to run them."

"Can you get us some Bahá'í youth this summer?" asked ɛndrokordu.

That surprised Jordan; the tribe had always refused them. Ekwanu did not seem to like the idea, but did not object. "Yes, I think so," replied Jordan.

"You also have excellent timber and can sell some of it," noted Chris. "I think a sawmill would be possible."

"What about biogas?" asked ɛndrokordu.

Chris shook his head. "You don't have enough cows. You might be able to make blue water gas from wood and coal, though. The standard plant makes about a quarter as much gas as you need for winter heating and costs 10,000 dhanay, including a small

sawmill to cut up the wood to standard sizes. You'd need four of them and pipes to distribute them, so the total cost would be 50,000. That's a lot for this place, right now. But it might be a good investment, combined with a smelter, because the gas could be used to smelt lead and mercury in the warm season."

"We can look into that as part of the smelter proposal," said Jordan. "Once you have a reliable pickup truck, you should buy coal from the Kaitɛrɛ, which will be cheaper than firewood."

"You need water and sewers, too," said Chris.

"Not so much," replied Rudhkordu, the school teacher. "The creek is clean and people know to boil its water before they drink it. Right now, people use outhouses and they don't wash clothes and other things in the creek."

"But it would be very convenient, eventually," noted Kordé.

"It sounds like we have a reasonable plan, then," said Ekwanu. "Let us eat together."

"After lunch, show us your lead mine," said Jordan.

"Please come to the store for supper," said Sulanu.

"And after that, come to the school to talk about Bahu," added Rudhkordu.

Chris and Jordan had a long lunch with the Lord and elders, a long walk around the village, its fields and the mine, a large dinner with many villagers at the store, and then questions about the Bahá'í Faith until midnight. Ekwanu put them up very comfortably in his great room that night and insisted that they eat breakfast before they left for Kostakhéma.

“This was quite amazing,” said Chris. “Ekwanu is still unhappy about development, but has realized the tribe has no choice.”

“Including Bahá'í ideas,” said Jordan. “Everyone knows something. The questions they asked reflected it.”

“They did. You did a great job with the question why we accept Widumaj. The Tutanɛ are really upset about it! But pointing out that Widumaj condemned only bad aspects of the traditional religion and the followers have extended that to refer to all the hymns and customs . . . that works well.”

“It seems to be true.” Jordan stopped the car at the end of the gravel road and waited for a truck to pass before turning left onto Route 1.

“Be careful,” said Chris. “He was driving on our side of the road!”

“I hope they pave the other side of Route 1 this year, because one lane on curvy mountain roads . . .” Jordan shook his head.

They headed uphill carefully, but on the straight stretches they could go quite fast. They reached Kostakhéma in about an hour, but it was two time zones to the east, so it was 11 a.m. there. The ground was still covered with snow and the lake next to town still had ice on it. The place had seen better days; when the garrison had had 250 soldiers, the town had had 750 people, but the garrison was down to 100 and the town, 500. But between abandoned buildings were others with glass windows, two wooden buildings were brand new and modern-looking, and Main Street possessed two fire hydrants.

They parked in front of what could best be called the Town Hall. It was one of the modern buildings, with wooden pillars in front supporting an overhang that shielded the sidewalk from snow. It had quarters for the headman, Mitrubbéru, and his family on the

second story. The first floor had a meeting room able to hold 200 people and various village offices. The air temperature inside spoke of gas heat.

Chris and Jordan were welcomed upstairs to a very attractive meeting room adjacent to Mitrubbéru's office. Two others awaited them: a very elegant woman in her fifties, dressed like the queen, with perfectly arranged hair and a lot of jewelry, but excessive makeup; and a small, dark-skinned young man in a Colonel's uniform. Mitrubbéru greeted them at the top of the stairs, welcoming them effusively, then brought them into the meeting room. "I have taken the liberty to invite others to this very important meeting," he said.

"Very happy to meet you both. Colonel Suénu, or if you prefer the Eryan, Multdɛku. I'm commander of the garrison."

"Very pleased to meet you," said Chris.

"Honored," added Jordan in Sumi, and Suénu smiled and said, in Sumi, "Thanks."

"I'm so pleased to meet both of you, also," said the woman. "I am the owner of Kostakhéma's largest business by far; Mɛdhkordé."

"Ah!" said Chris, extending one hand to her and trying to disguise his surprise, because she operated the town brothel. She smiled, having caught a glimpse of his surprise. Jordan smiled respectfully to her.

"Let us sit together." Mitrubbéru pointed to an elegant table and chairs—made in Mɛlwika, Chris thought—and they sat. "Lord Chris, we are very grateful that you offered to stop by and explain the development of refrigeration and its impact on our ice business. So, this invention can make cold, right?"

“Correct. It runs on electricity. It compresses a gas to a high pressure, and if you have ever used an air pump you know they get hot. So it takes the hot compressed gas and lets it cool off while it is still compressed, then it lets the cooled gas expand. That makes it cold. Then it uses the cold gas to cool air. Right now, the units to do this are extremely large and cost two thousand dhanay each. They are also difficult to maintain. So they are practical only to cool off the big shopping centers that have cool air in the summer in Pértatranisér, Mɛlita, Mɛddoakwés, and Mɛlwika; also to cool the palaces, and the three hospitals that have air conditioning.”

“That’s half our sales of ice. So, they can’t replace ice boxes?”

Chris shook his head. “No, not at the moment. The big units could also be used to manufacture ice, which they could then sell. But we have asked the places installing these huge units not to do that because it would totally destroy the ice sales for Kostakhéma, Snékhpela, and Khɛrmdhuna. That said, on Gɛdhéma, these refrigeration units got smaller and smaller and cheaper and cheaper over time until a house could buy one for their kitchen and throw away their ice box. In fact, they got so small that people could buy one to put in their windows to cool their house; even cars had them. But we do not anticipate being able to make replacements for ice boxes for at least ten years.”

“So, we have an ice market for ten more years,” said Mitrubbéru, nodding.

“How many jobs, right now?” asked Jordan.

“We send two trucks a day to Mɛlwika, two to Mɛlita or Swadakwes, three to Mɛddoakwés, and one each to ɛjnopéla, ɛndraidha, Gordha, and Arjdhura, and two trucks per week to Sulléndha; call it eleven trucks a day, each with twenty tonnes of ice. They employ 17 men because the round trip takes up to ten hours and they work 3 or 4 days a

week. Those eleven trucks require 24 ice miners. Kostakhéma has only 200 men altogether, so that's a fifth of our workers."

"It sounds like the demand will be cut in half; by when, this summer?" asked Suénu.

"It'll be gradual," replied Jordan. "Mɛlita's shopping center already has a working unit and next month the palace gets one. By the end of the summer, there will be units at the Pértatranisér and Mɛlwika shopping centers and the Isurdhuna palace. So this summer you'll lose three truckloads per day of sales. But next summer it will be two more, I think."

"Can our operation be made more efficient, so we can complete?" asked Mitrubbéru.

"Some," said Chris. "Once Route 1 is paved in both directions, it may be safe for your trucks to haul a trailer of ice as well; forty tonnes at once, rather than twenty. That will cut the trucking cost in half. You might want to approach the army about ways their road building equipment could be used to move and load the ice onto the trailers. I think you could cut the cost of ice in half. But that's still too much. Right now it costs 5,000 dhanay to cool a large building for the hot half of the year, but the refrigeration unit costs only 2,000 to purchase and maybe 1,000 per year to maintain and run. If you cut the price of ice in half, it's still 2,500 dhanay a year to cool the building. If we can mechanize the mining process and move even more ice on each truck—say, sixty tonnes at once—maybe you can get the price of ice cooling down to 1,500 dhanay per year. At that price you might still lose some large facilities to these new refrigeration systems, but so

many more people and businesses could afford ice boxes that I suspect demand for ice would go up."

"Even so, it sounds like our workforce will be cut in half," said Mitrubbéru. "What, Lord, can we do instead, way up here on the crest of the mountains?"

"Tourism," replied Chris. "This is a really beautiful place. City people want to get away; more and more are traveling. You have a hot spring and the hunting is excellent. You need a nice place for families to stay and things for them to do."

"We have that," said Mɛdhkordé. "That other new building in town is more restaurant and hotel. It is true that I employ twenty young women to serve male clients—that is not a secret and we do a good job—but I also employ five in my restaurant. It is clean, follows Mɛlwika's health code, and serves excellent food."

Mitrubbéru turned to her. "That is true, Mɛdhkordé, but the customers in your restaurant are mostly men, and they are often there before they go upstairs. Families certainly won't stay in your hotel and I bet most wouldn't want to eat there, either."

She opened her mouth to object, but stopped because everyone knew that was true. Suénu shrugged. "It is simple; open a second hotel over by the hot spring for families and open a restaurant there as well. Maybe the Domo-Mennéi will invest in it."

"I probably can't do that; my money is tight right now," replied Chris, quickly. "But there may be others willing to invest, such as Awsé Miller, who runs the Palace Hotels. They might be concerned about their reputation, so the operation would have to be separate from your existing food and lodging."

"We can do that," said Mɛdhkordé. "The hot spring is reputed to have healing power."

“You also need to develop the town’s ability to provide guides and gear to hunting parties,” said Jordan. “If you had three or four guides, each with access to half a dozen horses, tents, and other equipment, with advertising in the newspapers and other means of publicity, men would come here to hunt for several days or a week.”

“And no doubt many would appreciate your existing facility, too, Mɛdhkordé,” added Suénu. “The garrison already has horses and equipment of that sort, which could be rented.”

“I have heard, Lords, that on Gɛdhéma there are many isolated places that have attracted many single men and even single women to them by offering entertainments that mainstream society considers improper,” said Mɛdhkordé. “Do you know whether that is true?”

Jordan’s blank expression indicated he had no idea how to answer the question. Chris was startled and thought a monment. “I believe that is true,” he finally said. “I’m afraid neither I, nor Mennea Development Consulting, is in the position to provide assistance for such a proposal.”

“The palace won’t give money for it, either,” added Mitrubbéru, quickly. “And the village budget can’t help directly, either. But you have a profitable business right now.”

“And several large loans to pay off,” Mɛdhkordé added. “But I think the way to go is to open a legitimate business as well, as has been suggested, to attract families here. Legitimate businesses are always better than businesses operating in the shadows.”

“Well you aren’t operating in the shadows,” replied Mitrubbéru.

“But I’m tempted to say you are operating under the covers,” added Suénu, with a smile. “I doubt we can attract families here, anyway. Half the people on this world are still terrified of the Tutanɛ.”

“We are quite frightening,” agreed Mitrubbéru.

“The garrison has 100 soldiers, right?” asked Jordan. “But the fort was built for 250. How are you using the rest?”

“We have spread out some,” replied Suénu. “A few soldiers have wives and children. We have a small day care facility and believe it or not, we have a gabruli! The wives were bored, so they knit and sew together and two run a laundry.”

“If you are suggesting that the hotel be opened in the fort, that is a very good idea,” said Mitrubbéru. “There’s an entire unused building, Colonel, right by the entrance. It could be set up on a profit sharing basis; no rent or money up front. The town could probably loan Mɛdhkordé some money to set up a few rooms there.”

“Interesting.” Suénu considered. “It would definitely have to be separate from the existing business; if there were prostitutes operating in the fort, the army would have my head.”

“Families would definitely feel safe,” said Chris.

“Not just families,” replied Jordan. “Honeymooning couples. A lot of couples now go away for a few days or a week after they get married. They would enjoy the scenery and might want to walk through town, do some shopping, and see the warm spring. But they don’t need much entertainment.”

“That’s brilliant!” said Mitrobbéru. “Yes, that’d be the way to start.”

“I could open a small hotel in the fort, if the Colonel is willing,” agreed Mɛdhkordé. “I’d start with five rooms and expand to eight or ten if there was demand. I have some spare furniture already. My cooks could prepare special dishes in the restaurant and send them over; it’s a ten minute walk. The front desk could send the order over by telephone.”

“You might even be able to employ some of the wives,” said Suénu. “I think they’d enjoy that. The gabruli could help.”

“Yes, that’s a good idea,” said Mɛdhkordé. “I know some of them. The guests might want a hot breakfast, for example.”

“We can help with the marketing,” said Chris. “No one will object to that; we’re talking about a legitimate hotel backed by an army garrison and a gabruli. Awsé Miller might want to invest, too, and if she does then the Palace Hotel chain could help with marketing as well.”

“You mentioned shops,” said Mitrubbéru. “We really don’t have much, right now.”

“You’ll need to develop some if you want to attract tourists,” said Chris. “Maybe some of the men who are no longer mining ice can open shops. Give me some time and I can write down some ideas.”

“Thank you.”

“You would want to create a festival, too,” said Jordan. “A time people want to be here.”

“Ah, of course.”

Suéru looked around. “It sounds like this sleepy, isolated place might have some life, after all!”

That evening, the garrison gave Chris and Jordan a tour of the building that was a potential hotel; an old stone building that badly needed upgrading, such as windows with glass in them, power, water, and modern bathrooms. But they put them up very comfortably that night.

“Mɛdhkordé’s cooks really know how to make a great supper, I will say that,” said Jordan, as they drove across Kostakhéma on their way to Moruagras. It was the first time they felt they could talk privately.

“Yes, and her legitimate business will be run well; it’s clear from her shadow business that she knows what she is doing,” said Chris. He sighed. “A very long time ago—not long after your grandmother and I got married—we went to the United States to visit great grandmother’s family. Some of them lived near a city named New Orleans and we went there for a weekend, just the two of us, to get away, and to see the place. It was the most amazingly ‘free’ place! There were crowd of drunks roaming the streets half the night and bars everywhere, filled with partiers. There were fancy restautants—the food was absolutely amazing—and very impressive art stores and other stores selling expensive items, but there were also stores selling all sorts of things connected with sex. I was young and naïve at the time and was absolutely shocked. So was your grandmother! When we got back to Mary’s family and told her about the place, she said ‘I wonder whether there will be a New Orleans in the new world order?’ We said ‘of course not!’ She shook her head and said ‘I wonder.’” Now I wonder, too.”

“Really?” said Jordan, shocked.

“Perhaps there will be a day when men and women can restrain their sexual impulses predictably and reliably, and perhaps the day will come when women will no longer be desperate for money and become sex workers. But meanwhile, we don’t live in that world. Perhaps there should be a place where people can blow off some steam. We can’t invest in such an industry, but I am not surprised that it will exist and grow.”

“Kostakhéma as a center of the sex industry?”

“Kostakhéma as a resort.” Chris used the English word. “Mɛdhkordé is right; resort towns tend to attract extreme behavior. I wonder how she knew?”

Jordan chucked at that. “She’s a good businesswoman, indeed.”

He pulled out his cell phone, which he hadn’t looked at since midnight, corresponding to 5 p.m. in Mɛlwika. There was a message from Thornton. He read it and smiled. “Thornton took my letter and the photos of the damaged Mémɛnɛghonɛ pickup to the Geological Survey, printed them out—he made the pictures as big as possible—and took them to Wɛranokaru’s Garage. He says the radiator is damaged, the left front axle needs replacement, and the sheet metal front side panel needs to be replaced. He estimates two days work of two men and a cost of about 110 dhanay. But he’s too scared to send a crew to their village! Thornton said he could go along in three weeks.”

“Great, that’ll help. But Ekwanu should pay.”

“We can add it to the grant application for the smelter, if they can’t,” said Jordan.

“Good idea.” Chris slowed the steam car as it reached the eastern edge of Kostakhéma. The ribbon of concrete that started at Isurdhuna and ran around the northern shore of the sea past Mɛddoakwés, Mɛlwika, and Gordha, three quarters of the way

around the world, was ending. The car bounced down off the pavement onto the gravel and Chris sped up. It was sixty kilometers and 3 time zones downhill to the Ghéslonɛ. In the next hour they passed only one vehicle.

They hadn't visited Moruagras for several years. The plateau of fallow fields and pastures was surrounded by an ancient wall of huge stones on four sides and cliffs on three; archaeologists spot-excavating had found the remnants of buildings all over the one by three kilometer enclosure. At the southern end was the Ghéslonɛ village; at the northern end was a rocky pinnacle and a new, but abandoned, army fort.

"Thank you so much for coming," exclaimed Lord Ornkordu, coming out of his house to greet them as they stepped out of the car. "We understand you have been traveling three days already, making a stop every day."

"Indeed we have," replied Chris. He extended both hands to Ornkordu. "It is good to see you again."

"Thank you, and thank you, Jordanu, for coming. Your assistance with two development grants has been invaluable." He shook hands with Jordan as well. I think you both have met Géndukordu, our development officer, who is also the principal of our school and our High School teacher, and Ornanu, my son and heir."

"Yes, I remember them. It's good to see you both."

"Gendukordu and I have exchanged many letters and have had many phone calls," added Jordan, shaking hands with both of them.

"I suggest we drive over to the old fort first," said Ornkordu. "We'd like to review the tribe's development plan, but it may rain this afternoon, so let's do our outside work now."

“All five of can fit in the car,” offered Chris. “That way we can talk while we drive.”

“Very good,” agreed Ornkordu. He headed for the front passenger side; Jordan headed for the seat behind him, where he was next to Gendukordu. Chris started up the engine, which still had a full head of steam, and they were off.

“How is the tribe, Lord?” asked Chris.

“I’d say we’re doing reasonably well, considering.” He pointed to the road. “The army is paving Route 1 this summer; one lane from Kostakhéma to the fort, and two lanes down the escarpment to the floor of the Long Valley. But they are *not* paving this stretch of road from Route 1 to our village! I asked Commander Stɛrékwu last fall and he said we had to apply for a development grant. A development grant! I thought the army always did the work.”

“He is incorrect, or he was misleading you,” replied Jordan. “It’s a different procedure, an ‘army road construction request.’ We have the forms.”

“Good, maybe you can help get that taken care of. We really need the paved road. Our truck can only haul ten tonnes of nickel-iron to Mɛlwika at a time because of the gravel road to Kostakhéma. Once it’s paved, we can haul twenty tonnes. We can also start to export some of our timber; we have fantastic timber, but the cost of hauling it anywhere is prohibitive. Even with the two-lane road to the valley floor, we’ll be very limited in the size of the timber we can haul down there. They’re building houses all the time and getting their timber from the mountains on the other side!”

“We really need larger trucks, able to haul more; it’ll save a lot of money,” said Chris. “Mɛlwika gets what? Two truckloads of nickel-iron a day?”

“Ten per week; that keeps three drivers and three miners busy. Of course, now that the garrison has left, the army explosives team has to come from ɛndraidha and sometimes they get delayed and we can’t fill trucks on schedule. That’s another problem.”

“A development grant helped purchase the second truck,” noted Jordan. “So we can lodge a complaint to the Development Office if you want, on the grounds that it is causing some of the grant’s benefits to be lost.”

“Well, maybe. We’ve had a lot of problems with the army. We have one telephone line; just *one*. Since it served the garrison as well, the line went there first, and the switchboard was in the fort. But when they packed up to leave, *they disconnected the switchboard!* Fortunately we noticed right away. I rode over and complained and they reconnected the switchboard until the telephone company could move it to our store.”

“Is the line busy a lot?” asked Jordan.

“You’d be surprised. We have eight students here taking radio génadɛma courses and they have to call in to ask questions and do oral exams with the professor. The store makes a lot of calls, people receive a lot of messages via the phone . . . it’s pretty busy.”

“One thing we need is another 20-tonne truck,” said Géndukordu. “We have a lot of pork and agricultural products to haul to Mɛlwika or Isurdhuna and we can’t do it fast enough. Most of our people are exporting pork or agricultural products; Néfa uses our barley to make beer. Once we have a paved road down to the floor of the valley, we’ll be able to sell things to the east as well as to the west.”

“We can write that up,” said Jordan.

Chris pointed to a building nearby and about 400 meters from the fort. “What’s that?”

“That was the whorehouse,” replied Ornkordu, dismissively. “When the army moved the troops out, they closed it, thanks to Esto.”

“It’s abandoned?”

“Yes; a pretty nice building, but it’s stripped of all furniture of course.”

“Let’s look.” Chris slowed the car and turned onto a driveway that ran to the house. They parked outside it. “It’s quite large,” observed Chris. “It must have twenty rooms.”

“Small rooms. She had room for twenty-five whores, I heard. They also had a dining room downstairs.”

“This would make a nice small hotel, perhaps,” said Chris. “Do you have a key?”

“No, but I think someone has broken in.”

They walked around the two-story stone building. Sure enough, the lock on the back door was broken, so they opened it and walked into the kitchen, which was built around a huge stone fireplace. The dining area was large and elegant, with wood paneling. The rooms could accommodate a large bed, but otherwise were fairly small.

“I bet this place could be purchased for a few thousand and refurbished into a nice hotel,” said Chris. You’d need to add running water, inside bathrooms, and maybe some gas tanks.”

They stepped back outside and walked back to the car. Jordan noticed the foundations of walls nearby. “What was this?” he asked.

“It’s old; probably a big building of a lord or something,” said Ornkordu. “The pinnacle had a fort on it before the army arrived. They tore it down and used the stones to build their new fort. The whores used the stones of this old house to build their place.”

“I see,” said Jordan, making a mental note to tell Marku and Skandu about it.

They got back into the car and drove to the fort. The front gate was immensely large and heavy, but Ornkordu inserted an enormous key and turned it with two hands, and the gate unlocked. They entered.

“It’s just like the fort at Kostakhéma,” said Chris. “An outer wall about 100 meters square; a forecourt with a dormitory for fifty soldiers, with arms storage in the basement and in the corner towers; and a circular keep climbing the pinnacle with hundreds of rooms.”

“That’s right,” said Ornkordu.

“Except this is newer and in better shape than the place at Kostakhéma,” noted Jordan.

They entered the dormitory building, exactly like the one at Kostakhéma that was being converted into a hotel. The rooms were basic, with wood paneling over stone walls; the second story rooms had windows that closed with tight-fitting wooden shutters. But each room had a socket for a bare lightbulb in the ceiling and a wall plug, and there were bathrooms at both ends of each floor, though the toilets and sinks had been removed. “I bet they took the plumbing down to Réjéivika and stored it somewhere,” said Chris. “It could be purchased and brought back.”

“But what would we do with 250 rooms?” asked Ornkordu, scowling.

“Good question,” said Chris, looking at Jordan.

“What are the attractions around here?” asked Jordan.

“Beautiful woods and a village,” said Ornkordu dismissively.

“Well, we do have hot springs down at the bottom of the escarpment,” noted Géndukordu. “Once the road is paved, a truck or car could take people down there in less than half an hour.”

“The view is spectacular, and I bet it’s spectacular down there as well,” said Chris.

“And you have the entire Long Valley,” said Jordan. “Réjéivika is how far away? An hour?”

“Probably less once they finish paving the road,” said Géndukordu.

“It’s a shame not to use this facility,” said Chris. “But it’s so big, I don’t know what you could do with it.”

“What about summer génadɛma classes?” asked Jordan. “It’s not hard to get here; it’s three or four hours from Mɛlwika and two or three from Ora. Once the paving is finished, it’ll be convenient from both shores.”

“That’s true. I wonder whether something for high school students could be tried here, like a summer camp.”

“Parents wouldn’t send their children to a Tutanɛ place!” replied Ornkordu, shaking his head.

“Not necessarily; that can change,” replied Chris.

“If there is anyone who could use this space, Lord, it is you,” said Ornkordu.

Chris said nothing in response; he was busy thinking. They entered the main building and worked their way up through the empty halls, floor upon floor, until they

reached the top of the tower 30 meters above Moruagras. The view all the way across the Long Valley and along it was spectacular. “There is nothing like this in the entire kingdom,” said Chris. “There are no hotels that have 250 rooms. There are no palaces this large either. If somehow the money could be found to punch windows through the walls and add glass panes, plant trees and flowers, and update the plumbing, this would be a fantastic convention facility.”

“How much would that cost, though?” asked Géndukordu.

Chris shook his head. “Thirty thousand? Fifty? Or more. It’d have to be accomplished in stages.”

“When the police and firemen meet, how many attend?” asked Géndukordu.

“Up to 200, and they have to be put up in people’s houses, in the classrooms of schools, etc. Mɛddwoglubas has an old fort that can hold about as many people as this place. It’s the only place,” replied Jordan.

They started down the stairs and soon were back outside the fort. Lord Ornkordu locked the gates with the help of all four of the others—it was very difficult—and they climbed back into the car. On their way back to the village, they caught up to a man on horseback. “It’s Lord ɛjnokordu, stop!” exclaimed Ornkordu. “He was supposed to come, but he’s late.”

“It’s a long ride from Géndonatroba,” said Chris, slowing the car.

They rolled down the car’s windows and waved to ɛjnokordu, who stopped. They exchanged greetings for several minutes, then he got in the car and Ornanu climbed onto the Lord’s horse to ride it to the village. “I’m sorry I wasn’t able to get here quicker, but I

was delayed on my departure," he said. "I hope, Lord Kristobhéru, that you can come visit Géndonatroba. We have been isolated many years and we are poor. We had the Bahá'í youth visit us once; Jordanu was with them!—but we did not appreciate what they could offer us. Now we are ready for assistance."

"Of what sort, Honored Lord?"

"We need help with *development.* We have a lousy road—the army barely leveled it and added a thin coat of gravel to the ruts—we have a single electric and telephone line, we have a small schoolhouse where Andamékwu teaches all the children, and we have a small store. We have no trucks or cars. A bus visits us twice a week on its way here, and a mobile clinic visits once a month."

"Your land is rich and has much potential," noted Jordan. "The Geological Survey found nickel-iron, copper, and silver in minable quantities, plus you have vast amounts of timber and agricultural products."

"We feared mining, frankly, because we did not want to rip huge holes in Érmatɛr, the Earth Mother," the lord replied. "But now we realize these holes can't be avoided, and we can help the Earth Mother heal them. The crown also gave us a township down on the floor of the Long Valley, but we have no road to reach it, so we use it very little. Without a heavy truck and a better road, we can't move anything big out of our land."

"That is true," said Jordan. "But your tribe pays taxes to the crown every year, and they have pledged to return some of it in the form of development money. That is the way to get your mines and other sources of wealth; use palace grants of the very tax money you paid to them."

"And you can help with that, I understand?"

Jordan nodded. “That is what I do, and the palace pays me and my team if we do a good job of planning the grant and following up afterward.”

“Good, we need that.” ɛjnokordu paused. “Perhaps what we need the most, though, is an understanding of what *development* really means. What is its true purpose? That’s what worries us.”

“We can tell you what it means to us, Lord,” said Chris.

The rest of the afternoon, Chris and Jordan huddled with Ornkordu, Ornanu, and Géndukordu while they examined the Ghéslonɛ development plan—the tribe had a pretty good one—and considered ways they might be able to use the fort and Mɛdhkordé’s building. There was no easy way to use it; the tribe didn’t have hotel management skills, the location was difficult, and it was overwhelmingly large. But if they converted a small part of the facility into a hotel, including the house, they might be able to make an inexpensive start and see what could develop over time with hunting parties, honeymooners, and venturesome tourists. One way to start occurred to Ornkordu: invite Rébu and his Ghéslonɛ wife to visit for the summer and offer génadɛma courses. Chris pledged a few Mɛlwika students to assist, and perhaps a few who could come and take courses.

While they discussed the tribe’s options, Lord ɛjnokordu sat on the floor nearby and examined a huge map of Géndona that Chris and Jordan had brought as a gift. The Lord was largely illiterate, but once Jordan spent half an hour explaining north, south,

east, and west and the purpose of the brown contour lines, the Lord was able to read the map, and spent the afternoon apparently marveling at it.

After a relaxing and informal evening, they actually managed to get to bed early. The next morning, Chris, Jordan, and ɛjnokordu set out for Géndonatroba, leaving the Lord's horse behind. They'd drive him back later so he could pick it up.

The first part of the drive was fast; they headed west on Route 1 toward Kostakhéma. But soon they came to the turnoff to Géndonatroba and the well-driven road was replaced by a narrow trace through the woods with two thin tracks of gravel for the wheels. The road twisted and turned to avoid boulders and large trees, headed upstream or downstream of creeks until there was a safe fording spot—there were no bridges—and rode around hills on its steady, southerly march. Chris worried what would happen if he encountered a vehicle coming the other way on the one-lane road, but he needn't have that fear; there was no other vehicle.

Finally, after almost an hour and a half, they closed in on their destination, which was only 30 kilometers from Moruagras. They climbed a long, gradual slope and suddenly reached the crest of a circular ridge; below was a dhuba or crater some four kilometers across, with a river breaching the northwestern rim, dropping onto the floor, lazing across it, and exiting through a gluba on the eastern side. The flat floor was a patchwork of fallow fields and pasture; Géndonatroba was a cluster of 300 wooden houses near the middle. The graveled track switchbacked down the steep inner rim and then rolled across a bridge spanning the creek to enter the center of the houses.

“Most of the tribe lives here,” said ɛjnokordu. “Of our 400 families, 300 are here; the other hundred live in Jérpola, another thirty kilometers to the south. The road there has no gravel, and the power and telephone lines do not reach them. They have to come here to attend the monthly clinic because it can’t get to them.”

“They may be the most isolated people in the world, then,” said Chris.

They passed a nickel-iron boulder the size of a small house; clearly, the crater had been carved by an impactor made of the stuff. Since it had struck a fairly steep slope from the east, it had blasted a very high western rim, perhaps 300 meters from bottom to top. The eastern rim, in contrast, was less than 100 meters high.

The road reached the flat floor and Chris sped up. The crater clearly had filled in with a lot of sediment over time, making the floor very fertile farmland. The houses and barns in the center lay along several crescent-shaped dirt roads that paralleled the curved course on the river. ɛjnokordu pointed the way for Chris to go and had him park in front of a large house at the center of the village.

“Come into my house; the elders will come along quite quickly,” he said, pleased that he could host Chris and Jordan. “While we are poor by the measures of outsiders, our houses are large and comfortable, we have plenty to eat, and none of us want for clothing, food, or shelter. We have no beggers here. While the world considers us ‘barbarian’ tutanɛ, they have nothing to fear from us. We are a happy people.”

“I can see that, Lord,” replied Chris. “The Géndonɛ have many reasons to be proud of their land and life and customs.”

“Your village is indeed spacious,” said Jordan, impressed by how large the houses were.

They got out—they didn’t bother to lock the car—and entered ɛjnokordu’s house. His wife came out to welcome all of them enthusiastically and offered rye bread and delicious venison stew. The family also offered beer; the Géndonɛ didn’t have wine, coffee, or tea. In return, Chris pulled out some tea and offered it, with a half kilo, as a gift to them, and soon they all were enjoying hot cups of tea.

As they ate, ɛjnokordu pointed out the various animal heads and skins on the floor, but the story he told about each one was collective; it was not just about his own hunting prowess, but the success of the group. His concern for his people was palpable.

One by one, various elders and advisers arrived: Adamékwu, “untamable horse” taught all the children at the one room school house and was a Bahá'í, the village’s only solid believer; Albkrisu, a middle aged man with shockingly white hair, hence his name; and Wérspéku, an old man who was often addresses as “uncle.” Once they had arrived and the food and tea was finished, ɛjnokordu looked around at the others, then turned to Chris.

“I was very interested in the discussion yesterday afternoon,” he began. “Ornkordu constantly talked about dhanay; how many they had, how many something cost, how many they could get as a grant to do something, how many they might earn from a particular industry or additional machine. And as I listened to him, I grasped the basic approach he was discussing. First, Géndonatroba needs a real road, two lanes so vehicles can pass each other, and a lot of gravel so that one can move along it quickly.

This is essential for us to use big freight trucks, or even pickup trucks. If the clinic and a pickup truck have to use the road at the same time, right now, one of them has to back up a long way for them to find a spot where they can pass. With such a road, we could get a pickup and it could take people to Kostakhéma or Moruagras every day for school or to buy things, and that would indeed be very beneficial, in terms of dhanay. Our older kids could go to their high school. If they start summer génadɛma courses, our people could attend.

"With a heavy freight truck—a 5,000 dhanay royal development grant that Jordanu can help arrange—we can dig nickel-iron and sell it to Mɛlwika. It will be easy to get that started because there are places where nickel-iron boulders litter the ground, so we need no special equipment to obtain it. Eventually we'll need the army's explosives team to come, but that may be many months. Lord, how would we arrange that contract, and how much would we get?"

"We can put you in touch with Mɛlwika Steel's purchasing people," said Chris. "Their arrangement with the Ghéslonɛ, I believe, is 2 dhanay per tonne or 20 dhanay for a 10-tonne load. That pays the digger 5 dhanay per day to fill the trailer, the driver 5 dhanay per day to drive the load the Mɛlwika and return, and 10 dhanay to cover other expenses, including the truck."

"They'll probably agree to 1 load per day at first," added Jordan. "They want as many sources of nickel-iron as possible."

"Alright," said ɛjnokordu. "That's a lot of money for us, though I suppose that's not great pay for the city people. But the transportation cost is a lot. That gets us two

jobs, pays off the truck in less than 2 years. When do you think we can get the army to fix the road?"

"We should ask them to do it this summer; otherwise you'll have to wait another year, because the winter is a bad time to haul nickel-iron over icy roads half way around the world," said Jordan. "I can work on that as soon as I get home."

"Good. So that's one thing. Once we have that truck, we'll be able to look into mining the silver and copper. Can someone come teach us how to smelt them?"

"We can send someone to teach you how to build smelters," said Chris. "You can get started very simply, which won't earn a lot of money, but the operations can grow over time."

"It sounds like we might have 10 or 20 jobs, or even 30, in a few years, between mining and trucking," said Ɛjnokordu. "Could a sawmill and timber bring us a similar number?"

Chris nodded. "I think so. If Géndonatroba has, say, 50 of these new jobs in four years, some of those salaries will be used to purchase things here, and that will generate maybe 20 more jobs here. Right now the demand for high quality lumber is quite high because there are a lot of houses being built. There is also a very high demand for firewood; Mɛlwika, believe it or not, needs truckloads and truckloads of it for steel making and production of blue water gas. The problem is that they can pay only about one dhanay per tonne, and right now that's just the cost of moving it to Mɛlwika."

"But right now, our wages are pretty low; we can afford to work for three dhanay per day. We can hire kids to pick it up, too, and a sawmill always generates waste wood.

What about this ‘tourism’ idea? Could we obtain hunters who need guides to go hunting? We have a lot of game.”

“Yes, you probably could get enough to keep one or two men busy, and you can export pork and ham, just like the Ghésolonɛ and Wuronɛ. If someone here opens an ice house so you can store the meat and haul 10 tonnes of it at a time to Mɛlwika, you’d save a lot of transportation costs. Pork and ham sell wholesale for 10 cents a kilo, so a 100-kilo carcass is worth 10 dhanay. A farmer raising and selling 50 pigs per year can supplement his income very nicely; raise 100 and he is earning good money. The Ghéslonɛ are selling 500 tonnes of meat per year.”

“And there is plenty of demand for pork,” added Jordan. “The price should stay the same for a few years.”

“Adamékwu, we will need more people who know accounting. Can you write some of the Géndonɛ who have left and ask them to return to do accounting here?”

“Yes, Lord. I think there are two who could do it.”

“We’ll need them. So, that may employ 50 more of us, and that may get some of our young men and their wives to return. We have lost 15 men in the last five years, Lord Kristobhéru, and that greatly saddens us.”

“Some of them are truck drivers, too,” added Adamékwu. “We should be able to get them to come back, as we need truck drivers.”

“Good. That’s a good development plan for now.” ɛjnokordu turned straight at Chris and looked him in the eye. “But that does not answer the question ‘why should we develop?’ The answer I heard from Lord Ornkordu was very clear.” ɛjnokordu rubbed his

fingers together. “Dhanay. He says it often and rubs his fingers together every time. I understand this reason; indeed, it is why 15 of our young men have left. But this is not an adequate answer, Lord, and I think you would agree with me. So I ask you again: what is the purpose of development?”

“You are very wise, Lord, and you ask the very question many people never even think about, because all they want are the dhanay,” replied Chris. “There are many different answers to the question that people can offer, once they get beyond the issue of money. Our answer comes from Bahá'u'lláh; you should know that.”

“I thought it would. It would have to, because this is a question that involves God.” He used the word “déo” rather than “Esto,” which the followers of Widumaj would use. “What does your great prophet say?”

Chris looked at Jordan, who had answered the question many times through the development consulting business. “Bahá'u'lláh talks about two purposes to life,” Jordan began. “One is to know and worship God and the other is to carry forward an ever advancing civilization.

“The first means that in our own life, there is change and progress toward God. We are not born virtuous or unvirtuous; we can work on our imperfections and become more virtuous. We can pray more, be kinder to people, be more honest, be fairer or more just, be more compassionate, be more patient. And as we do that, we know and worship God better, because the qualities we are perfecting in ourselves are also divine attributes.

“The second means that society also can progress toward God. It can be more just, more compassionate, more honest, more virtuous. It can learn to listen to everyone and not just ignore Tutanɛ, or Sumis, or women, because they are members of those groups.

For society to advance—even for people to advance—there needs to be prosperity. We can't become more virtuous if we are starving; we worry about our children all the time, we yearn to feed them the way others can feed their children, and if we are consumed by hunger we can't think about being more honest or compassionate. So for society to advance, people must have a decent income. There will always be some wealth and poverty, but people who are poor need to be able to move out of that state, and society must make that possible. This is why the palace now uses taxes to pay for doctors and hospitals, because everyone gets sick and everyone could face ruin because of their illness, but it is a terrible burden on the poor.

"Bahá'u'lláh says that the purpose of money is to have the means to support our families and serve others. For the Géndonɛ, they must contribute to the ever advancing civilization of their tribe, but beyond that they must make a contribution to the advancement of all the Tutanɛ, all the Eryan, and ultimately to all the peoples on this world. That is our purpose, according to Bahá'u'lláh."

"And the money is a part of that," added Chris. "We all need nickel-iron, copper, silver, wood, and meat; these are things the Géndonɛ can contribute to the entire world, and in return they get a just compensation for them. But the Géndonɛ need also to think about what they can give to *civilization* on this world. Perhaps it is music or dance or new scientific knowledge. But if it is art, what virtues does it help people learn? How can the Géndonɛ help all of us become better people? This is the huge challenge all peoples on this world face."

"And Lord, we have been mistreated and taken advantage of," exclaimed Albkrisu. "One reason we are isolated and poor is because we did not want the world to

come to us. Once this road was built, the palace wanted their taxes, and never gave us anything in return."

"Now they will," said Jordan.

"More important, honored, the Géndonɛ can help teach us how to respond justly to injustices such as this," replied Chris. "Last year, the palace made an arrangement to purchase land from the Dwobɛrgonɛ and the Médhɛlonɛ at an unfair price. Lord Patékwu spoke to the Queen about this injustice at the level of principle; he did not get angry, accuse her of theft, or insult her judgment. And the result was a change; both tribes were given hunting access to part of the land and they were given fairer compensation. That conversation also produced the decision to give every tribe representation in the Consultative Assembly, whether they had enough people or not. Love and kindness will not always bring about justice, but sometimes it does, and as it is used more and more, it will become more effective."

Lord ɛjnokordu pondered that idea and there was a long silence in the room. "I see what you are saying," he said. "Development is more than money and jobs; ultimately it is about love and justice. And that is a much more difficult change to bring about, compared to sawmills, silver mines, and exported ham products."

"Exactly right, Lord," said Chris. "Most people want us to separate physical development from spiritual development because they don't want us to talk about Bahá'u'lláh. But ultimately they can't be separated."

ɛjnokordu nodded. "I agree."

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Expansion

Mid Dhébɛlménu/lateApr-early May, 20/638

Chris walked into the Tomi building with a mix of relief—to be home and back to work—and guilt that he had gone away for so long. He walked past his office straight to the conference room in the building's southwest corner and looked across the street. He was pleased to see that the new brick building across Icehouse Street had glass in its windows.

Luktréstu walked into the room as well. "Welcome back, Lord!"

"Thanks, Luktréstu." Chris turned to his assistant, who had run things in his absence, and offered both hands. They shook. "It's good to see you. So, our expansion is enclosed!"

"Yes, they installed the last windows two days ago. I did a walk-through last night; the electrical system is just about finished. They'll be ready to paint next week and we can start to expand into the new space in about a month."

"Fantastic; we badly need the space. Thornton told me that the City Council approved the skybridge." He pointed to a door on the third floor blocked by wood.

"Yes, but there wasn't yet the support for the Sumi language bill, so that was postponed. Once we can empty this floor and move your office, we'll build the bridge."

"You did a good job of keeping everything going, Luktréstu."

"Thank you, Lord. It is a quiet time, Thornton helped, and of course we talked for an hour a day. That was essential. How was the trip?"

“I’m glad I took off a week and went, even if it was potentially disruptive for the Tomi. It’s helpful to remember the situation of the Tutanɛ.”

“Isolated and poor?”

“Yes and no. That’s part of the story. The Ghéslonɛ have had an army base near them for a decade, so they understand the outside world and want development. They have a pretty good development plan—a real plan—and now they’re trying to figure out how to use an empty army base that now belongs to them. So they’re moving forward. The Mémɛnɛghonɛ can commute to Gordha and some do, in spite of a bad road and a broken pickup, so they know what they have been missing and now the chief has come around and agreed to join the rest of the world. And the Géndonɛ chief may not be able to read, but he’s very smart and very concerned about his people. He listened to our entire afternoon of conversation with the Ghéslonɛ, and when we arrived in Géndonatroba he laid out a development plan for them, then got to the real question: the purpose of development.”

“Really?”

“Yes, and Jordan was brilliant; he laid out the Bahá'í approach very persuasively. We spent the rest of the day talking about Bahá'u'lláh’s revelation.”

“Any declarations?”

“No, and we didn’t push the matter. There’s plenty of time; the entire tribe needs to think about it. There will be a youth group there, this summer.”

“How much did you spend?”

"Nothing yet, but I suspect I'll be investing in all three tribes because the palace is more likely to give grants when there's private investment as well. It won't be a huge amount because they can't grow that fast."

"Well, there will be plenty to spend. Planting has gone well everywhere, the weather has been excellent, the granges have been coordinating the crops so prices shouldn't decline too much, demand for manufactured goods has been really good, there hasn't been any terrorism, and the palace has started to give out a lot of grants. So it looks like the best year, economically, ever."

"Jordan was very busy on our trip talking to Tiamaté, Rostamu, and Aisugu about the development project proposals they were working on; there were a lot of them. It's going to be quite a year."

Jordan was late for the Central Spiritual Assembly meeting. He drove north from Snékhpéla as fast as he dared, skirted the edge of Tripola, and headed north on Route 2 to Mɛddwoglubas, where he went around the center of the town and headed up the still-unmarked road to the fort and temple site. He parked in front of the Assembly's administrative building and hurried inside.

Seven members of the assembly were already in the council chamber with his grandmother, Liz Mennea. As he entered, he bowed slightly. "I apologize for being late."

"That's alright," said Stauréstu, who was chair. "How was Snékhpéla?" As a native of the world's southernmost village, he was always interested in developments there.

“Everyone’s fine. The plan to build a factory to manufacture school supplies such as globes and models of molecules, and simple medical equipment was very well received. They’ll lose at least half their ice mining contracts when refrigeration units go into operation later this year, and there’s a very serious need for all sorts of items in the schools and hospitals. They have a lot of men and women who are skilled with their hands and they have to be indoors all winter, so they’re an ideal location.”

“Good, that will do the village a lot of good. I gather you had quite a trip to the Tutanɛ?”

Jordan nodded. “Yes, it was long, but well worth-while. In the week since, though, I have had a lot of catching up to do.”

“I can imagine; everyone seems to have development plans,” said Stauréstu. “The plans for the youth service corps are quite exciting, too. We were about to start reviewing the plans for the Shrine, but we do have one bit of news.”

Modolubu raised a piece of paper. “A letter from Jonu, formally resigning from the Assembly because of his declining health.”

“That’s too bad,” said Jordan, who simultaneously had great respect for the former bishop and concerns about his grasp of Bahá'í matters. “He had a heart attack, right?”

“A mild one,” said Aréjé. “But we have no ability to operate and the medicine has not been helping him. He says in his note that he thinks a ‘young man or woman with more energy and vigor should assume his place.’”

“It’s very kind of him, really,” said Brébéstu.”It’s the end of an era, in a way.”

“Let’s say a prayer for him,” suggested Liz. Everyone nodded and bowed their heads. She offered a healing prayer for Jonu Obisbu, followed by one in Sumi by Randu.

Silence lingered for several seconds when the prayers were finished. “Our next item of business is the Shrine,” said Stauréstu. “Brébéstu, will you summarize for Liz?”

“Sure,” he replied to his brother. “As you know, the Assembly asked me to research a plan for a central shrine for the hair of Bahá'u'lláh, with a budget of about 200,000 dhanay. A task force of myself, Stauréstu, Aréjé, and Chris, met a few times and we approached Mitréstu Méndig, who is certainly the best architect in the world, taught by Mary herself, designer of Mɛddoakwés’s New Square, as well as several palaces and temples. He looked at pictures of various Bahá'í shrines on Gɛdhéma and proposed this design.” Brébéstu opened a sheet of paper that showed a simple blueprint and an exterior elevation. “A circular building of the finest Bɛllɛdha limestone with eight entrances—we could do nine if you prefer, but we didn’t think it was necessary or preferable to duplicate temple architecture too closely—thirty meters in diameter, with a pillared portico reminiscent of the Tomb of Widumaj in Isurdhuna ten meters wide running around the outside. He suggested that to make the building ‘native’ rather than a mere copy of elements of gɛdhéma buildings. The roof would be flat except the inner ten meters, which would be elevated three meters and would be surrounded by clerestory windows to admit copious sunlight. The center of the shrine would contain a pillared monument based on the design of the monument for the Greatest Holy Leaf in Haifa, and somewhere inside the monument would be a gold box containing the precious hair. The floor within 4 meters of the monument would be surrounded by a raised threshold where people can place their foreheads, if they wish; the floor between the threshold and the monument

would be off limits and would be covered by rugs and adorned with candelabras and other objects of art. It would also contain four very small gardens of exquisite beauty, reminiscent of the small garden inside the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahji. Pilgrims could approach, circumambulate on the portico, remove their shoes outside any of the eight doors, enter and sit on the floor to pray, then prostrate on the threshold and step out. Surrounding the portico would be a garden fifty meters in diameter."

"And this would be set in the space defined by the temple, the Bahá'í Center, and the Institute for Bahá'í Studies?" asked Liz.

"Yes, and any other buildings we would add would also define a sacred space around the shrine," said Modolubu.

"It sounds beautiful," said Liz. "I like the idea of using both Eryan and gɛdhéma architectural elements, and echoing designs from the Bahá'í World Center. I suppose the biggest issue is security."

"Yes, what do you think of that issue?" asked Modolubu. "We have prayed extensively about that."

"We can protect the relics from thieves; I am confident about that. The fort and the Bahá'í properties here have good security. I'd be more worried about an angry anti-Bahá'í mob or an anti-Bahá'í army. But at the moment, that seems very unlikely."

"That's what we think too," said Stauréstu. "The Faith is very well respected and the anti-Bahá'í forces have thoroughly discredited themselves. But there is one way to protect the relics from thieves and an anti-Bahá'í army. Mary possessed twenty-one strands of the Blessed Beauty's hair. If we put six strands in the monument and placed the

remaining fifteen in three other containers, located in secret locations elsewhere, the most that could be lost are the six strands in the monument."

Liz nodded, 'That's an excellent suggestion. That would solve the problem. Are you planning to announce the construction of the Shrine at the Convention?"

"Yes, we think so," replied Modolubu. "The terrorism last year was the tipping point. The Faith is now widely known and largely respected. It is ready for a sacred structure."

Liz nodded. "I agree, this is now the world of 'two great prophets.' Will construction of the Shrine delay the three new houses of worship?"

"Probably," said Brébéstu. "Construction on the Khɛrmdhuna Temple starts next month and will take two years. The Bilara temple design is finalized but we can't afford to start on it until at least next year. Sértroba's design is fairly simple and can be completed pretty quickly."

"But that needs to be reconsidered, I think," said Patékwu. "The new Sumi temple complex is truly amazing. Our buildings need to be larger and more impressive."

"But remember they had tax money and lots of 'resistance money,'" noted Randu. "We don't have that."

"But we do need impressive structures," emphasized Patékwu. "That will attract people."

"Speaking of people, what are the statistics?" asked Liz.

"We think we elected 172 Spiritual Assemblies last week," replied Modolubu. "We still haven't heard from everyone, but some of the Assemblies we haven't heard

from had planned to form. We now have 41,000 Bahá'ís; we gained about 2,000 since last fall."

"The real question is how many will be active and capable," said Stauréstu. "But Mitrubbéru's radio shows have really helped a lot."

"I think we can count on four or five thousand people to contribute to local funds or organize devotionals now," said Mitrubbéru. "And a lot of the new believers were consolidated first via the radio, then declared. The Faith has so many more capacities now than just a few years ago."

"That's for sure!" agreed Liz. "I look forward to the Convention this weekend. It should be quite celebratory."

Jordan had four more days at home in Mɛlita before having to return to Mɛddwoglubas for Convention. After a long day handling development requests by telephone, they called the answering service and asked them to take messages so they'd have a few hours of peace and quiet.

"Are you sure you're not too tired to drive?" asked Tiamaté.

"I should be fine," replied Jordan, packing the last folded clothes into his leather suitcase. "There should be plenty of twilight for the next hour or so, and by then I'll be passing Brébatroba and the sky will be getting brighter. By the time I get to Tripola, it won't even be sunset. I'll be at Mɛddwoglubas in four hours, it won't even be midnight here, and it'll still be daylight there! I'll be in plenty of time for the opening session."

"I wish someone was going with you. I'm sorry I can't."

“I know, I’m sorry you can’t either.” He put his hand on her bulging stomach. “But you’re too close.”

“I know.”

Two and a half weeks! I’ll be back in three days, and after that I’m not going anywhere until the baby’s born.”

“I can’t wait. We’ll hold down the fort here.”

“I’ll try to call every morning about noon here, while I’m eating breakfast there, so we can catch up.” He grabbed a pile of completed forms and dropped them into his suitcase. “I’ll bring a pile of applications and I’m sure I’ll be able to get a dozen or two of them started.”

“The Bahá'ís always have good ideas.”

Jordan nodded, put his toothbrush, toothpaste, and scissors for trimming his beard—for all gentlemen maintained a very short beard—and pulled the laces closing the suitcase tight. He rose and headed out the bedroom door for the car parked outside.

Halfway down the hallway, the house’s private phone rang. Albkordu, the house’s butler, answered the phone. “Lord Jordanu, it’s Marku Bɛjdɛdrai.”

“Oh? Okay, I’ll take it.” Marku was Mɛlwika’s archaeologist. Jordan walked over to the phone and took it from Albkordu. “Greetings, Honored Marku.”

“Thank you, Lord Jordanu, greetings to you as well. I hope you and the family are well?”

“Yes indeed, we are all very well; and you?”

“Fine, Lord. I have a question for you; a general question, otherwise I would have called the Development line. Lord Mitrusunu of Morituora has hired Wɛrétragéndu as the head archaeologist of the ruins above Morituora; it just went through.”

“Good choice. I think everyone recommended him.”

“Exactly, and he is hiring at least one more; probably Migyusu. But now he has no money to build a museum, so he has decided to apply for a development grant to build the museum.”

“Really.” Jordan thought a moment. “Why not? It’s a public institution, a tourist attraction, it will generate economic activity . . . I think he could do that. We could handle the application if he wants.”

“Good! Because I’m thinking that we should apply for a similar grant for Lilalara. We badly need a museum there. If we had a nice building, we could fill it with artifacts very quickly and easily and attract tourists. It might cover its expenses by offering guided tours of the ruins.”

“That’s a great idea! I don’t know why we didn’t think of that before. Of course, the way to do it would be to apply through Nuarjora. It’s on their land and it would employ them, so the village government needs to either make the application or to endorse it.”

“Of course, of course. I’m going down there next week. I’m trying to watch four archeological sites at once and it’s crazy. But I think Wɛrétragéndu and Migyusu will be able to help. He had another question, one that struck me as absolutely crazy, but I’ll ask: could Morituora get a summer youth group to help with the excavation?”

“Hum. That’s an interesting question, too, and I’d say that might be possible. We’re trying to assemble teams that have specific service capacities to their villages and we have no restrictions on what they can do, other than obvious moral ones.”

“That’s what I thought. I had heard this summer you plan to send out youth groups in waves over a month or more and they will be tailored to local needs. That’s a need.”

“I suppose it is. Of course, at night they’ll be conducting classes and singing.”

“The Lord knows that; there was a group in Morituora last summer. If they can get a group, do you think I can get one for Lilalara? I can get there every day to supervise their work. Some of it will be field archaeology, too; we’ll walk the lower valley and map every archeological site we can find. The lower valley and the prairie south of it is absolutely filled with the remnants of houses and hamlets.”

“I’ve seen a lot of sites down there, too, but plowing has disturbed most of them. Yes, send me a letter or an email stating what you need, and I’ll add it to the requests. I really like this idea, Marku, because it’s not just a service to the local village; it’s also a Génadɛma-related skill. We could probably arrange for them to get some credit.”

“Oh, sure, I can give them some lectures as well and grade final papers! Definitely, we can do that!”

“Perfect, then I’ll see what we can do, Marku.”

The old fort on the hill above Mɛddwoglubas was filled to capacity for the National Convention. When everyone headed outside for lunch on Suksdiu—the second day of the three-day convention—Jordan found himself walking out with Budhéstu and Blorakwé,

both of whom were delegates from Isurdhuna. “I’m sorry we haven’t had a chance to talk,” Jordan said. “I’ve heard good things about your work.”

“Well, let’s have lunch!” said Budhéstu. “Thank you, I am a great admirer of your development work.”

“If we hurry, we’ll get in the line ahead of a lot of people,” noted Blorakwé. The two men nodded and hurried with her to the line forming under a tent outside the fort, where sandwiches and peanuts were available on paper plates, which were an innovation. They each grabbed plates, sandwiches, and a scoop of peanuts and headed for a grassy spot to sit.

Budhéstu looked at the grassy expanse that ran uphill from the fort. The Bahá'í temple was on the right, the Bahá'í administrative offices were uphill from it, and the Institute for Bahá'í Studies was to its left. “Hard to believe that in a few years, this field will have a shrine in the middle.”

“Yes, it’s very exciting,” agreed Jordan. “And with any luck, there will be an outpouring of funds sufficient to complete it and three temples.”

“That worries me, but judging from the excitement here, it is possible,” said Budhéstu.

“I was surprised that the Assembly didn’t say anything about turning to the Shrine in our obligatory prayers,” said Blorakwé.

“People know they are supposed to face the earthly remains of the Manifestation of God, but the Assembly isn’t in the position to say one should do that,” replied Jordan. “But we do plan to re-orient the chairs in the House of Worship in Mɛlwika so that they

face the Shrine. That's a decision we feel we can make. I suppose eventually we'll make a recommendation, but we were expecting someone would ask the question yesterday!"

"I'll bring it up this afternoon, then!" said Blorakwé.

"Good, please do. How are your parents?"

Blorakwé smiled. "They're well. You may see my uncle Majéstu more than I do, since he lives in Mɛlita; for that matter, my dad is there right now building another factory. Now that Golbéstu is in school, mom's able to devote her time to the Gabruli Council."

"She does a great job, too."

"How's Tiamaté holding up?" asked Budhéstu.

"Two weeks to go, if the baby's on time, and she's looking forward to the end of pregnancy. This will be the last one, we think."

"Think, yes." Budhéstu looked at Blorakwé. "We'll probably cave into parental pressure and have a baby in the next year or so."

"My Master's should be done at the end of this year," said Blorakwé. "And His Ph.D. dissertation will be over shortly thereafter."

"Assuming we get the money to open the psychiatric unit of Isurdhuna Hospital," added Budhéstu. "The plans to open senior citizens' housing has encountered one barrier: senior citizens want to stay with their kids rather than moving to the holy valley! So I said 'let's convert some of the apartments into temporary housing for the psychiatric unit' and the Lord said 'no, that has to wait until this project is finished.' So we are waiting, basically."

"Any idea what the need is?" asked Jordan.

“We estimate there are at least 500 people with serious mental illness in the kingdom. Of course, we can’t take care of all of them right away, but if we can open a hospital to handle 20 people, with the aim of stabilizing them so they can return home, that would be a start at least.”

“And the aliens have promised to include some psychiatric drugs in the next shipment, so we will see whether we can help some people with them,” added Blorakwé. “If we have to, we’ll move back to Mɛlwika, where there’s a large patient population and some immediate need anyway.”

“That’d be a shame. Isurdhuna is the logical place for such a facility because of its reputation for healing people.”

“Exactly. But its reputation as a place to go to seek enlightenment hasn’t attracted many older people! Just the ones with no family to take care of them.”

“Which may be just as well,” said Blorakwé. “Because children should take care of their parents in old age anyway.”

“If they can, yes,” agreed Jordan. “But we are now getting more and more people who are *very* old and they may need more help than a family can easily provide.”

“Can we join you?” asked Tomasu, who was approaching with Primanu.

“Sure, the more the merrier!” said Jordan.

“How goes the pipe laying business?” asked Budhéstu.

“I am amazed how many people still want gas,” said Tomasu. “I have a team laying pipes and installing biogas digesters. But increasingly, the biogas is being installed in big installations by dairies or granges that raise a lot of animals, and the gas is being scrubbed and added to pipelines. Even the Kwétékwonɛ are installing enough to convert

their cattle manure to gas, compressing the extra, and hauling it to Brébatroba, where it goes into the eastern shore pipeline."

"There's now talk of building pipelines from Bɛllɛdha east and west to the villages there," said Jordan. "I suppose eventually there will be a line all the way to Néfa and Nuarjora and we'll have a line going all the way around the top of the sea, but my dad has vowed he won't build it!"

"One of us will do it, then!" said Tomasu.

"And I have five teams building water and sewer systems in four provinces at once," added Primanu. "It keeps me pretty busy."

"But water bore illnesses are on the decline," said Migélu Khɛrmdhunai, a Bahá'í physician who was just approaching with his Sumi wife, Damkiané. "We were in Mɛlwika over ɛjnoménu and got a report from the palace. They're very pleased with the results so far."

"I wish they had told us!" said Primanu. "That actually would help us, because a lot of villages say 'our water is fine.'"

"I can get you the report," said Migélu. "It wasn't secret."

"How are things in Khɛrmdhuna?" asked Jordan.

"Pretty good. Remember the plastic greenhouses the youth installed, six or seven years ago? Well they're all gone now! And there's a good reason. Khɛrmdhuna is on a good concrete east-west road now and has a good gravel road southward to Klɛnvika, It has factory jobs, good demand for its animal products, and farmland in Mɛlita. So we can import vegetables easily and cheaply, so no one wants to raise them any more! There's neither demand nor profit."

“Interesting. So, the loss of the project reflects progress.”

“Exactly. We’re doing fine, and of course we can’t wait to get started on the House of Worship next month. I am not sure the idea of building it like our heavy stone churches, but nine-sided and with lots of windows, was such a good idea. A lot of people are saying the temple design is old-fashioned and they want something new.”

“How is reconciliation going with the remaining Kristanɛs?” asked Jordan.

Migélu nodded. “Bit by bit. I’m meeting with Father Luku about once a month because he was so mad with Bishop Jonu, he wouldn’t meet with him any more. His congregation is now shrinking pretty fast and there are no longer enough contributions to repair the church or provide him a decent living. But I think he can switch to being a part time priest and serve as a middle school teacher.”

“So, do you think he’ll become a Bahá'í?” asked Blorakwé.

Migélu shrugged. “I’ll never say never. I think he’s too committed to his attacks and his statements that Bahá'u'lláh is the Antichrist, and his attacks on Widumaj. It would require a great overcoming of ego to accept Bahá'u'lláh.”

“Then we should pray for him,” said Blorakwé.

“How long before everyone becomes a Bahá'í?” asked Primanu.

“There’s a lot of beauty and truth in the teaching of Jesu, Widmaj, and the traditional Tutanɛ and Sumi religions,” replied Jordan. “I think we need to appreciate them while they are around.”

“Well said,” agreed Budéstu, and Migélu nodded vigorously as well.

“Let’s go into the Temple to say some prayers for the progress of the Kingdom before we go back to the convention,” suggested Blorakwé and they all nodded, because

they had finished their sandwiches. They went into the temple, which was pretty crowded with people saying prayers silently. Then they returned to the old fort for the afternoon session.

"Our first item of business is the tellers' report," said Stauréstu, after devotions concluded. He beckoned the tellers up on stage.

"We prayed and voted in unity," began the head teller. "Of the 171 delegates, 165 voted in person and 6 by mail. There were 2 invalid ballots and 169 valid ones, for a total of 1,521 votes. Of those, 6 were for people ineligible because of age, because they were dead, or they weren't Bahá'ís, so we had a total of 1515 valid votes. Elected were the following: Modolubu Papɛrkwéri, Dr. Stauréstu Aywɛrgui, Brébéstu Doma-Slirbrébu, Mitrubbéru Kanéstoi, Aréjé Aywɛrgui, Jordanu Doma-Menneai, Randu Maradar, Lord Patékwu Doma-Krésoni, and Migélu Khɛrmdhunai."

The audience erupted in applause and rose to its feet. The members of the Central Spiritual Assembly rose and walked to the front. Migélu stood, looking shocked, and wobbled his way forward. "A good choice," Liz said to Chris.

"He's smart, organized, and what; 28 or 29?"

"Twenty-nine, I think. A member of the original youth team. We need more like them on the Assembly."

"The new generation," agreed Chris.

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Surprise Developments

Early Blorménu/late May, 20/638

Thornton was impressed by the construction he saw on top of Mɛdhpéla's rock. Part of Lord Staurɛkɛstɛr's large house had been torn down; it was old and not suitable as the tribe's administrative headquarters. But the pillars he saw rising clearly showed that it was being replaced by a temple.

He wished he could go up and get a closer look, but he had an appointment with the Lord, his son Staurɛgéndu, and Brébiku, who was head of the schools. So he locked the steam car and headed into the Kwolonɛ's new tribal headquarters, located next to the Géndha in a space where several old houses had been removed.

The three were waiting for him in the meeting room next to Staurɛkɛstɛr's new office. "Isn't this a beautiful building?" said the Lord, as they shook hands. "We just moved in last month."

"Yes, very nice and modern," replied Thornton. "I'd say it's nicer than Mɛlwika City Hall! Our building was built a few years ago and is too small."

"We should have room here for some time," replied Staurɛkɛstɛr. "And did you see the beginnings of our new temple to ɛjno?"

"I did. You have moved quickly, Lord."

"We have, of course. We have the money we receive every year for the sale of our western lands and even with Jordan's development plan, we can't spend it all! And when Kowéranu saw the new Sumi temple, he insisted we plan a large and opulent structure.

We will soon have twenty-five Sumi stone carvers working here, and they are teaching our people how to do some of the work!"

"That's important; most people just hire the Sumis."

"We want to know their skills, too, and I suspect they thought 'these Tutanɛ will never learn from us anyway!'"

"How's the Géndha and the veterinarian school?"

"Going pretty well," replied Brébiku. "We have set a goal to recruit twenty students from the High School every year, plus offer evening classes to one hundred individuals per year. We have twenty students graduating in another month who will come to the géndha this fall; we actually had three more who wanted to, but we turned them down. So far, our evening courses are doing very well, too."

"And you have six or eight coming to Mɛlwika every term, too. Wékhéstonu is teaching zoology full time here and at Mɛlwika, so the exchange of faculty now goes both ways."

"How goes your Bahá'í community here?" asked Staurɛgéndu.

"As you know, last month they elected a Spiritual Assembly, and it has some very good people on it, so I think it will provide good leadership. The Bahá'ís appear to be doing well."

"That is good," said Staurɛkɛstɛr. "Do you know how many of the Kwolonɛ Bahá'í youth are planning to participate in your summer youth program?"

"I called Modolubu last night and asked him, because I thought you'd ask. He said, so far thirteen youth have indicated interest to the local Spiritual Assembly, so they'd be going elsewhere."

“That’s not too many,” said Staurɛkɛstɛr, sounding relieved. “We’d like to have as many as possible stay here or even be assigned to return here from your training session.”

“We’d like to make our summer youth program as purely tribal as possible,” added Brébiku. “We mean no offense to you, nor are we rejecting Bahá'í involvement. Rather, we want to take your idea—your program—and create a Kwolonɛ version of it. We want our own summer youth program, run by our own people as much as possible, geared to the tribe’s plans and future.”

“I understand,” said Thornton, thinking. “I think that is a noble plan and will do much to move the Kwolonɛ toward the future they choose. No other tribe is mobilizing their youth at an age when they are idealistic and enthusiastic, and directing all that energy to the advancement of the tribe.”

“Precisely,” said Staurɛgéndu. “One reason we can do it, also, is the steady stream of payments we get from the crown for the lands they expropriated from our western territory. We are still looking at ways to revise our entire high school curriculum so that service to the tribe is woven into the subjects they study. We have made much progress in the last two years, with the result that more youth actually want to go to high school.”

“So, let me ask you this. Wouldn’t a summer youth program be even more effective if some of the teachers teaching the youth Kwolonɛ values were Eryan and Sumi?”

“Yes indeed,” agreed Staurɛkɛstɛr. “And that is one reason we want the older Bahá'í youth from the génadɛmas. We are even debating whether we should approach the army and ask for some of their bright young officers to participate. Some are Kwolonɛ, after all; there’s a long history of Tutanɛ boys joining the army.”

“I’ve even sent a letter to Mitrui Génadɛma in Ora, asking them whether we can hire one or two bright seniors or graduate students for the summer,” said Brébiku. “You, see, we have learned from the Bahá'ís about the idea of diversity!”

“What we’d like you to provide is about twenty Bahá'í youth, older ones able to teach a range of subjects.” Staurɛgéndu picked up a piece of paper. “Here’s a list of topics we’d like to have covered.”

Thornton took it and scanned it. It had almost forty subjects with a note on top they were in priority order, and after each subject it said from “four weeks” to “one week.”

“This is very impressive,” he said, a bit surprised. The previous summers the Bahá'ís had planned the entire program.

“Thank you,” replied Brébiku. “About half our high school teachers will be involved. The subjects with stars in front of them should also be taught at the géndha, and we will pay the teachers. The ones with two stars will be offered only at the géndha. We want many adults—young or not—to feel free to come to the géndha this summer to learn. We will be offering literacy and numeracy courses as well.”

“And accounting, basic science, geometry, surveying, ecology, history . . . this is an amazing list.”

“Sunéru told us a very interesting story,” said Staurɛkɛstɛr. “That about sixteen years ago your family came in contact with Mɛddwoglubas, and Lord Estodhéru mobilized the entire town to repair the fort and come for a month of classes. Look what resulted! Lɛwéspa is a small but wealthy province. It developed power looms and clocks.

We are much larger than Mɛddwoglubas and our people are more scattered, because we raise cattle rather than farm. But we can gradually do the same sort of thing."

"This is quite amazing and very impressive," said Thornton. "So, how many people are you planning for?"

"Five hundred in the summer youth program and a thousand in the summer géndha," replied Brébiku. "We will be using all the high school classrooms for fourteen hours a day!"

"Our high school teachers will be teaching classes as well as taking them, and we have others in Mɛdhpéla who will offer classes. Even Kowéranu plans to offer classes," added Staurɛgéndu. "Of course, many people will just take one four-week or six-week evening course. And that's fine. The idea is to get as many people involved as possible."

"Can we count on the Bahá'ís to provide us some of the needs on the list?" asked Staurɛgéndu.

Thornton nodded. "These are the sorts of skills we've been able to provide before, so I don't anticipate any problems."

"And we hope you'll come as well, Lord," said Staurɛkɛstɛr.

"I was planning to come for four weeks," replied Thornton. "And you have inspired me with great interest in your plans, so I will schedule myself to be here."

"Excellent.Thank you for coming down here on a Primdiu. Would you like to see the temple site?"

"I would, but I have to watch my time because Jordan and Tiamaté are coming to our house for lunch with their new baby."

"Baby? Is it a boy?" Then Staurɛkɛstɛr quickly added, "Or a girl?"

"Her name is Lubaté, and she is indeed dearly loved." Lubaté meant "loved one."

"How beautiful."

"And I suppose they don't want more than two," added Staurɛgéndu.

"I think that's the plan." Thornton shrugged. "But even with the pills . . ."

"Even with the pills," agreed Staurɛgéndu.

By the time Thornton got home, dinner had just been placed on the table. Amos, May, and Marié had just arrived; their older daughter, Skandé, 18, was living in Mɛlwika because she had just started génadɛma. The highlight of the Primdiu midday dinner, however, was Jordan, Tiamaté, two year old Andru, and two week old Lubaté.

"She's so little and cute!" said Thornton, as soon as he came into the house and spied the baby in Tiamaté's arms.

"She's so precious," said Tiamaté, who was obviously smitten by her daughter.

"Of course. Beautiful black hair and brown eyes, like mother and father, and a dimple nose," said Thornton. He reached out and took the baby, who was content to be passed to someone else.

"Good, you hold her while I eat a bit," said Tiamaté with a smile.

"We're passing her around," said Liz, with a smile.

"Is she sleeping?" asked Thornton.

Jordan shrugged. "She's still sleeping most of the day, but she's up three times at night. She's going back to sleep pretty well, though."

"How recovered are you feeling?" asked Thornton.

Tiamaté shrugged. “Bit by bit. Nursing has been a struggle, but I think we’re getting there.”

“That’s good.” Thornton glanced at his three—Jalalu, age 17, Kalé, age 15, and Jonkrisu, age 12—and thought back quickly to their babyhoods.

“How are the Kwolonɛ?” asked Chris, as he put turkey on Thornton’s plate.

“They’re doing very well. They want about 20 Bahá'í youth and they have a very specific list of skills they need; advanced skills, too. They are planning a youth service summer for 500 of their youth and a summer of evening classes for a thousand adults. They plan to use every classroom in the high school *and* the géndha.”

“Wow, that’s ambitious,” said Liz.

“Lord Staurɛkɛstɛr specifically cited the first summer school at Mɛddwoglubas’s old fort as their inspiration. They want to move forward fast. And by the way, their new administrative building is finished, and it is really beautiful; it’s laid out with corridors and offices, very modern in design. And before I left the Lord insisted on giving me a tour of the temple site, up on the rock; that’s why I’m late. It’s actually a very large ceremonial space, for recitation of their old hymns around a sacred fire located in the center of the space. It’ll have pillars, a high ceiling, an open central area for the smoke to escape, and the walls will be covered with paintings referring back to events in the hymns. No statues, but a lot of paintings. The Kwolonɛ are designing the paintings and a team of Sumi painters will come to execute them!”

“Really! Expensive!” said Chris.

“They have Sumi stone carvers building the walls of the best Bɛllɛdha limestone. It’ll cost them 200,000 dhanay, Staurɛgéndu said.”

“A lot!” said Jordan. “But they’ll get that in 3% taxes from the new townships in a few years, especially at the current rate they’re growing.”

“Yes, they’re both almost filled,” added Rostamu.

“That’s the same price as our new temple to commerce,” quipped Chris.

“What do you mean?” asked Behruz.

“The new tomi building; it costs 200,000.”

“How will we pay for that?” asked Thornton.

Chris shrugged. “We borrowed the money; the tomi has excellent credit. And the space rental will pay for it pretty quickly.”

“You’re closing some offices in Mɛddoakwés and Mɛlita,” added Jordan.

“Yes, we’re centralizing eastern shore operations here; it’ll be more efficient, and now we have the space.”

Thornton turned to Amos. “How are things in Pértatranisér?”

Amos nodded. “Pretty good. The contract to manufacture the underwater power cable to Sumilara is big; it’ll cost 150,000 dhanay. We’re making the copper cable and waterproofing it with local gutta-percha. It looks like there will be another cable in three years to connect Sumilara to the eastern shore, too, so the two shores will have yet another power connection.”

“Two more factories just opened, too,” added May. “One makes all kinds of presses; for wine, cider, olive oil, etc. It also makes various tools. The other one is making factory equipment.”

“Mɛlwika can’t make everything,” added Amos. “I’ll be here for the next two months to help expand the product development institute. It’ll be doubling its size in the

next few years, and it'll be manufacturing a lot of high-precision, low-volume items that can't be contracted out to other places."

"That's essential; factory buildings get finished and there are no machines to put in them for as much as three months!" said Chris.

"Things are growing really fast, right now," said Amos. "It can't continue."

"Are you going to be able to visit the Mémɛnɛgonɛ and the Géndonɛ?" asked Jordan.

"I probably can when I drive back to Pértatranisér. I'll drive east instead of west. But I want to recruit the Dwobɛrgonɛ to go help the Mémɛnɛgonɛ with the smelters, so all I'll do is make the introductions and take a look at the result. The Dwobɛrgonɛ can help their cousins just fine."

"That's a good plan," agreed Chris. "By the way, the harvest seems to be almost perfect this year. Because there hasn't been guano for a few years, yield per acre has dropped a bit, and some farmland is left fallow or is put into crop rotation. That has decreased the harvest just enough so that supply and demand are close to the same. With more kids, more meat consumption, more alcohol to fuel vehicles, and more cotton production to make more clothing, the diversity of crops is just about right, too. It doesn't happen very often! Tax revenues are up more than ten percent, I'd say."

"We're getting twenty percent more development grant proposals, I'd say," said Jordan. "Everyone is sensing the growth and wondering what they can do next."

"Do we have any sense what fraction of the GDP comes from manufacturing, versus agriculture?" asked Skandé.

Amos was surprised by his daughter's question. He looked at her, then to Chris, who would be the only person who could answer that.

"I'd say manufacturing is two thirds the economy now," replied Chris, after a moment considering the question. "That'd be good to know. Services—primarily education, health, government administration, and banking—has to be more than ten percent of the economy, too. Manufacturing is probably close to half of the jobs now. Twenty years ago, agriculture was eighty-five to ninety percent of the economy. Agriculture is still a driver, though, because its importance in people's minds is oversized."

"Interesting," said Skandé.

"I can see why you're getting As in all the courses involving math," Amos said to his daughter.

Skandé nodded. "I love math and statistics! I'd really like to work for the Royal Statistics Department this summer, but I'm sure they'd just say 'no, you're a girl,' and that'd be it."

"I think you're right," said Chris. "I could talk to Bidhu, but I'm not sure the staff will treat you right. I think you need to wait until you're a few years older, when you'll be able to handle men better."

"But how will I ever get any experience, grandpa?"

"With me. I need assistance."

Her eyes grew big. "Really? I'd love that, grandpa!"

“Well, let’s talk later, then. You’re really busy this semester, but the summer’s coming, and you’ve taken some useful courses, including accounting. I think you can be of considerable assistance to me.”

“That would be great!”

“I’m glad one of our granddaughters is interested in business,” said Liz. “ But I hope you still want to come to the theater with me next weekend.”

“Oh yes.”

“I can’t wait to see the play, too,” exclaimed Kalé, who was entranced by the arts.

“Well, we’re all going,” said Liz. She turned to May. “It’s too bad you have to go back to Pértatranisér.”

“I know, but Marié has to be back in school later this week, and I’ll be attending the town council meetings in place of Lord Amosu.” She said that with some excitement.

“It’ll be good for them,” added Amos.

“Is everyone just about done eating?” said Chris. He looked at Thornton, who nodded and hurried to finish the turkey and rice on his plate. Lébé had taken Lubaté so he’d have both hands free to eat.

“I’m done,” Thornton said. “Aren’t we having coffee and tea?”

“Afterward. I want to show some of you my new meeting room in the new building. Liz, Amos, Behruz, Thornton, Jordan.”

“Me too?” asked Skandé.

Chris shook his head. “No, you and Rostamu can see another time.” Chris rose, so the others did as well, rather surprised by the development.

He led them across the courtyard, open and sunny, and down the ramp to the house's basement. Many of the grandkids had rooms down there; Jordan and Tiamaté stayed there as well if they spent the night in Mɛlwika. Thornton opened the door for everyone and they passed through the tunnel to the old Tomi building across the street, which had been a génadɛma classroom building, their first engineering building, and had housed the widows' work area and a restaurant in earlier eras. They entered an old office space; the basement area also had the family's five-car garage opening onto Icehouse Street. They walked up the stairs—slowly because it was hard on Chris's knees—to the third and top floor, where his office used to be. The space was now mostly empty.

"Quite a change, isn't it?" he said. "This will be a new area for the expanded accounting department." He led them diagonally across the floor to the southeast corner and across the new pedestrian walkway over Icehouse Road to the new building, "This just opened yesterday afternoon."

"To the world's first five story building," said Thornton.

"Unless you include the Palace Hotel in Anartu, but they count the basement as the first floor. This building has a basement, too, and an elevator, but there's no operator available now, so we'll have to walk up to the fifth floor." Chris pointed to the stairs next to the elevator at the exit from the skyway, so Thornton opened the door and they went up. "This is a very nicely built building," said Chris slowly, as he climbed the stairs. "Moléstu did a great job. It's the first modern steel frame building. The brick walls don't carry the weight of the building. The floors are all poured concrete, and the ceilings are all 'drop ceilings' with wires and pipes above them. In the fall we'll be installing a sprinkler system, because the fire department isn't sure it can shoot water this high."

“How will you fill it all?” asked Amos.

“The first floor will be leased to a clothing store. The second floor will be leased out as office space. When the tomi needs more room, we won’t renew the leases.”

They reached the top floor and Chris, who was in the lead, opened the door. The building, which was 24 meters wide and 32 long, had been built on the site of nine houses, which Chris had gradually purchased over the years. The top floor had a series of large offices along the southern and western sides; there was a conference room along the northern side. Thornton was struck by the windows, which were made of single large panes of glass; most buildings had windows made of many smaller panes. The center of the floor was open and had dozens of desks for assistants and scores of cabinets.

Chris led them into his new office in the southwest corner. It faced Temple Street with all its busy commerce; the génadɛma was prominently visible out the southern windows. To the west, Route 1 to Mɛddoakwés ran to the horizon, and green fields were prominent.

“You have a great view,” said Liz.

“I love it. Let’s sit down.” He pointed to a large table and they all sat around it. “So, the Ménnéa Tomi is centralizing its operations here. The offices in Mɛddoakwés, ɛjnopéla, and Mɛlita are all shrinking down to local accounting services. All auditing and human services—medical bills, pensions, vacation time, profit sharing checks, dividends, etc.—will be handled here. In the next phase, we’ll shrink the offices on the western shore and put the human services and such here as well. Even with a lot of telephone calls, it’ll be cheaper. We’ll have to run the office here from 7 a.m to 9 p.m.; 14 hours.”

“How many employees?” asked Jordan.

"About the same number we have now; 250. But we'll have 200 of them here, and we think we'll get about twenty percent more done because of specialization. With all the provincial tomis and businesses we serve, we are handling a cash flow of twenty-five million dhanay per year; over 10% of the GDP. But our total expenses will be about half a million, or 2% of the cash flow. No one else can do what we do at that price."

"But how long can you keep this going, dad?" asked Thornton.

"That's why I've invited all of you here." Chris paused. "What I want to do is strengthen and broaden the Tomi Board of Trustees, promote some of my staff, and start regular head-of-staff meetings. I want to make Luktréstu Vice President for Operations and Chief Operations Officer. He knows the entire operation and has already taken the lead role in many projects. Lubanu will become Vice President of Accounting Services, which means he'll have charge over the branch offices, which will be reduced to local accounting work, payroll, invoice payment, etc. Wɛranogénu will become Vice President for Auditing Services; he's really developed incredible skills in the last few years. I will be President of the Tomi, Vice President for Development, and Chairman of the Board." He looked at Jordan. "And I'd like Jordan to become Executive Vice President of Ménnéa Tomi."

Jordan was startled. "But I already have a business."

"I know, and you have grown it incredibly well and made it into an important service to the entire kingdom. But the Mennea Tomi is going to need you in the next few years. I'm 74 years old! I can't keep this up much longer. If I have a heart attack tomorrow, who's going to keep things running?"

"Not Thornton?"

"No, not me," said Thornton. "As much as I'd like to, this really is not my thing."

"It isn't," agreed Chris. "You are a very talented scientist and a very capable member of the City Council and Director of the Geological Survey."

Jordan looked around. He knew Amos and his father Behruz couldn't do it; both relied on the Tomi to handle their accounting already. He was the only one.

Jordan nodded. "Alright; can you give me six months or a year? We have to figure out what to do with Development Consulting."

"Of course. For now, I need you once or twice a month to attend the head of staff meetings. But I really hope you can do this, Jordan. A lot rides on it."

"I know, grandpa, and I understand."

It wasn't until Jordan and Tiamaté headed home in their steam car that he could tell her of the conversation.

"I was wondering why you were so quiet, the rest of the afternoon," she said, pondering. "And you said yes? Without consulting me?"

"Well, really, what choice do I have? Thornton can't do it and doesn't want to anyway. He's not a businessman. My dad *definitely* can't; he would hate it. And Amos is very thoroughly embedded in Pértatranisér, with his own plantation and his very important engineering work."

"But . . . what about the house? Your lordship over Mɛlita? The Development Consultancy?"

"The house belongs to the family. I could always come back for City Council meetings, or appoint someone else to go instead. And I don't know about the

Development Consultancy. It's pretty important, too. Maybe we can move it to Mɛlwika, hire more people, and you can run it."

"Me?!"

"Why not? Or Rostamu can help, or maybe your brother. Or maybe Tomasu would like a new challenge."

"He's doing biogas."

"He could sell that to Primanu. I don't know what the answer is, my dear."

"Where would we live? We're in the basement in the Mɛlwika house!"

"Maybe we can swap with Amos and May, since they're not there much. I don't know, dear. But we have six months or a year to figure these things out."

438.

New History

Early Kaiménu/late June, 20/638

When Rudhu Gukwolɛr completed his presentation about treating cattle diseases, the Kwolonɛ audience applauded appreciatively. Thornton, sitting in the back, was very pleased. The Kwolonɛ generally looked down on the Médhɛlonɛ as stupid swamp dwellers, but Rudhu had been conveying his learning about animal medicine for the last year at the Kwolonɛ Géndha, had been taking courses on human anatomy at Mɛlwika, and had been treating animals in Mɛdhpéla three mornings a week. He had even started to assume a Kwolonɛ accent. The old cattle herders had started to respect him.

A small crowd clustered around Rudhu afterward to tell stories about sick animals or ask questions. Thornton hovered, wanting to congratulate the world's first veterinarian, worrying about the lecture he was about to miss across the street at the high school but not wanting to leave.

Finally, Thornton had his chance, so he approached and offered both hands. "Congratulations, Rudhu, that was a fantastic summary of the developments of the last year. I am so excited by what you have been able to achieve!"

"Thank you, Lord. I am too, but I am exhausted, taking four courses and teaching four courses, plus running an animal clinic here and in South Ménwika. But I have rented out all my farmland. Maybe someday I'll return to farming, but right now caring for animals is all I do."

"And quite well. How many veterinary students are there now?"

"Seven; four Kwolonɛ, one Kwétékwonɛ, one Méghɛndɛrɛ, and one Mɛlwikan. Next fall, we'll have six more in a series of special nursing courses in Mɛlwika during the first term, then we'll have classes here. We'll also be opening two more clinics, in Gordha and Gréjpola."

"How are you going to run five clinics?"

"I can't. But by then we'll have at least 2 or 3 students able to do a lot of basic things, and they can call me if they have unusual cases. There are still a lot of conditions I can't diagnose either. We have a lot to learn!"

"That's true, but progress is being made."

"Definitely. We figure this world needs about 300 veterinarians, because it has a lot of animals. We need to train ten per year for thirty years to get to that number, and by

then some will be retiring. A program of that size will need maybe 10 professors of veterinary medicine, all specializing in different things, and we wouldn't be using courses at the medical school any more, either! But we have a plan. What we don't have is the long term funding."

"You have to convince the palace, and I'm sure you will. You'll need a building that also serves as an animal hospital. You're aiming for a dwoyɛri?"

"Yes. I had enough génadɛma courses already so that I now have a dwoyɛri, and the other students are now half way there. But we need to increase the expectations gradually. I understand on Gɛdhéma you need a kwétɛryɛri before you even start veterinary school! I doubt we'll get there very quickly. Maybe every 3 years we can add a year to the education we expect."

"That sounds like a wise pace, and it'll allow you and the other professors to stay ahead of the others! Well, congratulations again, Rudhu. This is a very important development and you are making a crucial contribution."

"Thank you."

Thornton shook hands with Rudhu and headed out of the Kwolonɛ Géndha. He had to hurry across Route 2 to the high school; he was now late for Marku's talk to the Kwolonɛ youth about their tribe's prehistory. It was just about sunset and the city's marketplace was very busy; not everyone was participating in the summer educational program, but Mɛdhpéla was a long settlement and had 8,000 of the tribe's 10,000 people. He detoured around the crowds and waited for a moment when he could dash across the street, then hurried into the high school.

The auditorium was packed. Marku had a huge sheet of newsprint pinned to the curtains of the stage listing his major points. He was finishing up his explanation of the "Gordha Period" when the Eastern Shore Eryan had started settlement there about 4,000 years ago—a guess, he admitted—then spread out, with Mɛdhpéla likely an early colony. The 500 young adults and a few accompanying family members were obviously unhappy at the thought that the Mɛghɛndɛrɛ had a claim to seniority among the Tutanɛ but seemed intrigued when he said archaeological work was necessary to determine the age of Mɛdhpéla and asked people to let him know if they had seen anything that seemed very old.

His detour through Sumi history seemed to irritate them. Clay tablets in Anartu went back to a similar time—about 2,000 BC—and they could read the few that still existed. They spoke of mainland cities gradually being established, Lilalara and Ora being prominent among them, and clashes with local tribes. After 2,000 years, all the major Sumi city-states had been established and clashes among them, and between individual city-states and the Eryan of both shores, grew more intense, because all the available land had been settled. Various competing empires followed, but Sumilara tended to dominate because it was an island, so its navy could both defend it from attack and deploy armies in various directions. It carefully maintained control over Lilalara and Ora (Idka, as the Sumis called it), the largest mainland cities, and therefore over both shores. Volcanic eruptions would weaken it and it would lose control temporarily; earthquakes would shake down Lilalara or Idka, or floods devastate Idka, and Sumilara would gain the upper hand again. Bɛllɛdha, with its copper, and Morituora, with its water and associated iron deposits, were important garrison points. The latter was heavily

fortified against Eryan incursions, with forts stretching from east of Mɛlwika southward to the volcanic ridge in South Ménwika.

Then Marku turned to the ruins along the Swadakwés, some of which his team had excavated over the last year, which showed that the Eastern Shore Eryan were a sophisticated group as well. He described the school of Rudhdiu and the debates its philosophers were known to have had in Anartu with philosophers there. He noted that on a hike from there fifty kilometers to Austroba and back he had counted over 150 ruined structures or groups of structures, some very large, bespeaking of a densely populated, irrigated valley. It was abandoned today except at Austroba at the far eastern end largely because of fear of the structures.

Then a huge landslide blocked the Glugluba and the Long Valley began to flood. Previous landslides had blocked it for perhaps six months or a year before the rising waters washed out the debris, which always caused severe damage to Idka, but did not disrupt the western shore Eryan in their huge, fertile valley. But this landslide was different and within ten years, perhaps 100,000 people were displaced; they mostly went east into Kɛrda, invaded Néfa, then conquered the Sumi cities along the western shore of the sea, all of which were struggling with dry harbors. For three hundred years the sea gradually dropped as the water depth in the Long Valley rose, constantly disrupting the marine traffic of the Sumis. But once the sea had dropped to a critical point, the Great Drought began and everyone was affected, causing the movement of peoples and chaos. From the Swadakwés valley, the ancestors of the Kwolonɛ and Kwétékwonɛ expanded in search of land, adding to the pressure from Gordha, and the Sumi settlements in the Arjakwés fell one by one. The great irrigation works in the Dhudhuba dried up and the

Sumis starved by the hundreds of thousands. Lilalara was taken and burned; some of its population fled back to Sumilara, which offered some dry seabottom for settlement. The Arjakwés was settled by a mix of Sumis and people from the Gordha and Swadakwés areas. It became a kingdom in its own right and began to fight with the Western Shore Eryan.

Marku skipped over much of the last six hundred years, since the coming of Widumaj; he didn't have much archaeology to add to it and the Kwolonɛ really didn't want to hear about it, since he had nothing to say about them. When he finished there was vigorous applause from the older adults. A lot of the younger ones applauded strongly, but really had no way to understand the implications of Marku's lecture.

Thornton headed up front to congratulate his friend and again found himself part of a group around the speaker. Two men were telling Marku about ancient structures they were aware of in the grasslands east of Mɛdhpéla and he was listening with interest. "So is there no way for you to determine the role of the Kwolonɛ in the taking of Lilalara and the settlement of the Arjakwés Valley?" exclaimed Lord Staurɛkɛstɛr, interrupting the men after they had described what they had seen.

"It is difficult, Lord, with limited written sources in Sumi," replied Marku. "There is a string of forts guarding the valley from the east and they appear to be directed against attacks from the Gordhonɛs or Gordha people. I won't say 'by the Mɛghɛndrɛs' because the Sumi written sources say 'the Gordhans' when they are mentioned at all. I don't think there was a tribe named the 'Mɛghɛndrɛs' a thousand years ago. There appears to be the remnant of a fort near the Dhudhuba and at Ornakwés and they may be defensive positions against the 'Horse People.' You may remember I already mentioned references

to the ‘White Horse’ people, the ‘Black Horse’ people, the ‘Central Spring People,’ and the “Eastern People.” I think they are components of the people who attacked the Arjakwés when the Great Drought was threatening the lives of everyone here on the Eastern Shore.”

“The people in the lower Arjakwés Valley also have a different accent than the people around Mɛddoakwés,” noted Thornton.

Marku nodded. “That is true, but it could have several causes; it could be that the accent in Mɛddoakwés changed because it was the capital; it could be that the lower valley accent was different because there were more Sumis; or it could be different because it was settled by a different tribe. An analysis of the accents may answer that question.”

“They do pronounce some words similarly to us,” noted Staurɛkɛstɛr. “I remember you mentioned those groups. And do you think they—us—had a great civilization, just like the Mɛghɛndrɛs?”

“The population of the Swadakwés Valley and Mɛdhpéla Creek was probably very similar to that of Gordha and the Majakwés valley. We need to do a lot more archaeology to know for sure.”

“Then we should do it,” said Staurɛkɛstɛr. “Can our géndha do it?”

“Indeed, and you now have one very capable archaeology student, Gɛlékwu, and the consultative assembly has approved a budget for an archaeology program here. It is time to take the funding and establish the position. Gɛlékwu barely has a dwoyɛri. But that’s enough to get the program started.”

“Good.”

“And I’ll come down,” added Marku. “Now that we have an archaeologist at Morituora and two support staff—one at Lilalara full time—I have a lot more support that I had last year. I can come here one month a year to conduct a field archaeology course and help Gɛlékwu acquire more experience.”

“Good. I want this, Honored Marku. I was very pleased to see that the students were listening carefully.”

“It’s their story,” agreed Marku. “The summer youth program appears to be going very well.”

“It does, and we’ve just started,” said Staurɛstɛr. “They are getting all sorts of classes, they are doing service, they will be traveling to the Mɛlwika war memorial and the Mɛlita zoo, they’ll all go to the Sacred Spring and the Kwétrua in Gordha, they’ll go hunting . . . we are spending a lot on the program, but it will be very useful. Don’t you agree, Lord?”

Thornton nodded. “Indeed, Lord, I do. The Bahá'í students are adjusting to the culture and coming to enjoy the program as well.”

“Excellent. Thank you to both of you, then.” Staurɛkɛstɛr bowed slightly, then backed away.

Thornton turned to Marku. “Extremely impressive.”

“Thank you, though I have no idea whether we’ll ever find enough written sources in Anartu to answer the questions we have about the Kwolonɛ. Skandu has a team reading through the materials that were donated to the Golden Temple from Anarbala, and they do have some new items. But before the Great Drought there is very little, unless we find more clay tablets. The Sumis switched to writing on leaves about

100 years before the Great Drought, and the leaves from that period crumble to dust when you touch them. We will have to develop very special techniques to read them."

"I understand they are trying to photograph everything."

"Yes, they photograph a leaf, try to remove it without destroying it, photograph the next one, etc. It's slow and expensive, but it works. Say, I wanted to telephone you, but since you're here I'll tell you: the youth archaeology team you got me has surveyed the area just northeast of Lilalara near Route 1. That area has undergone intensive use and there are ruins that have been damaged. But very close to Nuarjora there's a shell mound and they did some digging there a few days ago—I thought it'd be an easy, quick experiment—and we found some things we never would have expected to find."

"What?"

Marku paused. "Stone tools."

"Stone? No one here uses them."

"Well, we can't say that any more."

"Really." Thornton frowned.

"I thought you and Jordan would like to come see."

"Yes, I think we would!"

It was a week before Thornton and Jordan were free. May was in Mɛlwika at the time and wanted to come as well. So Thornton and she drove to Mɛlita to get Jordan early one morning, then the three of them drove to Lilalara to meet Marku, who led them to the excavation.

The site was a kilometer inland from Nuarjora, the Fish Eryan or Moranɛ village built on a limestone bluff above the sea. The bluff marked the northern edge of the Arjakwés Valley and ran inland or eastward, gradually changing from a cliff to a hillslope. Marku directed Thornton down a rough dirt track that ran down the slope to an alcove with a flat floor and an arc of hillside facing the Arjakwés Valley, but slightly above the valley floor. A very small creek trickled down the hillslope, across the alcove, and across the floodplain to the river itself. Six génadɛma students were painstakingly excavating a low mound near where the trickle left the alcove for the plain two meters below.

"Believe it or not, this mound—twenty meters long, about four wide, and up to two meters high in spots—is a pile of shells mixed with fish bones and some animal bones, cooked and chopped," said Marku. "I figure it has about 100 cubic meters of trash in it. If the average person adds a quarter of a cubic meter to the pile per year, this represents 400 person years of kitchen waste. Since the pile runs right along the edge of the slope that drops down to the floodplain, I suspect it was even bigger in the past."

"So, a lot of people or a long time, or a bit of both," said Thornton. He looked at the gully the trickle of water made as it cut across the alcove. "What's the underlying material? Coral sand?"

"Yes, basically. I'd say the sea was higher in the past when this spot was occupied and this alcove was a big sand deposit washed off the cliffs."

Thornton nodded and looked around. "I think so. We're about two or three meters above current sea level. Sea level goes up and down, but Lilalara is built on a spot where

sea level was 1 to 2 meters higher than at present and it was founded about 2,000 years ago. So this place is older; maybe about twice as old."

"That sounds like a good guess." Marku pointed to a tent. "Come see the artifacts."

They followed him into a large army tent which was filled with crude tables made of sawhorses and plywood sheets. On each were neatly marked and numbered artifacts. They stood and stared.

"Let me give you a tour. We have lots of long, thin flint blades. There is some flint in the cliffs around here, so it may be local. Some are double sided spear blades for hunting and fishing; others are one sided and serve as knives. There are also scrapers and arrowheads. Note the obsidian; I don't know of any sources closer than the eastern polar basin. Whereas the flint has been very carefully chipped from cores, the obsidian is carefully polished and razor sharp.

"Over here we have bone tools; antler horns carved into knives and bone fish hooks. We've found a lot of them. And look at this lovely little thing!" He pointed. "It's a bone flute!

"Then this table has sample animal remains. We've found lots of fish and shellfish—that's the majority—but there are also deer, antelope, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, and even some elephant. They would have been brave hunters!

"So, what's missing? That's an important question."

"Plant foods," said May. "But would any plant remains have survived?"

"No, they didn't, so we don't know about their plant foods. But there's something else missing that suggests these people didn't have agriculture."

They thought about it. “No domesticated animals,” said Jordan.

“Correct; these are hunters and fishermen. What else is missing?”

“Pottery?” said May.

Marku smiled and nodded. “Exactly. They had no pottery or domesticated animals. The Eryan and Sumis arrived here with both, and with the ability to make bronze. The polished bone and sophisticated flint tools are late Paleolithic or Mesolithic, as near as I can tell from encyclopedia materials and archaeological articles we have in Eryan. We have, here, a third people on this world, one that predated the two on Éra now.”

“Really?” said Thornton, surprised. “And when was this site occupied?”

“I can’t date it, but I think you did when you said sea level was 2 to 3 meters higher, 4,000 or more years ago. The Eryan and Sumi arrived here about then. I think they encountered these earlier peoples, traded with them, and displaced them. And yesterday one other tantalizing bit of information emerged.”

Marku smiled in anticipation. “I invited Lord Mitrusaju of Arjdhura—formerly lord of Akanakvéi—to come over and see, because their village was just four kilometers from here before the sea was restored. He said this alcove-shaped bench with the mound had a name: Anara.”

“Anara?” said May. She looked at Thornton and Jordan. “That’s a funny name.”

“That’s what I thought,” agreed Marku. “Then I remembered that Anartu was built on the west bank of a river—the Anar River—and on the east bank there’s an old shell mound. Skandu has been curious about it but hasn’t excavated at all; a farmer brought him obsidian tools from it. He told me about them and we didn’t think anything

about it at the time because metal is scarce on Sumilara, but obsidian is available in a few places, so people still make obsidian tools occasionally. I called him last night and asked him about the obsidian tools and he described them to me over the phone. They are like these flint and obsidian tools here."

"So, is 'Anar' a Sumi word?"

Marku shook his head. "That's the thing. 'Anar' is not a Sumi word. It's also not an Eryan word. Neither language has any word root that has those consonants. For that matter, if you think about it, Lilalara isn't from either language. Neither is Idka, Namelo, or any of the other Sumi city names found along the eastern and western shores. The names of cities and villages on Sumilara are all in Sumi, except Anartu that is. And all city names on the eastern and western shores today are Eryan, because they came in and displaced the original inhabitants, so they renamed everything."

"Fascinating," said May. "So you think we have preserved bits of the language these people spoke?"

"I think we have the preserved bits of a third language, yes," replied Marku.

"When was the Mesolithic again?" asked Jordan, frowning.

"It depends," replied Marku. "The rise of agriculture, pottery, and domesticated animals about 10,000 years ago marks the end of the Mesolithic and the beginning of the Neolithic in the Middle East on Gɛdhéma. It lasted longer elsewhere; until those inventions arrived, basically."

"So, when the Eryan and Sumi were put here, these people were replaced."

"Yes, either through peaceful assimilation, military extinction, or some of both." He pointed to the tent. "Either we move all these items to the museum building at Lilalara

or we build something here. I'd prefer we have a building here. When we have excavated the shell mound sufficiently we need to excavate the ground around it, in order to find the remnants of the settlement. The Gɛdhéma archaeologists can recognize post holes. If we can do the same, we may figure out what sorts of structures they built. We might encounter burials as well."

"It's important." Thornton looked at Jordan and May. "I suspect we can convince dad to spare 5,000 or 10,000 so something can be built here."

"I agree," said May, and Jordan nodded vigorously.

"Thank you, that will really help. When should we release the news?"

"Once you are sure," said May. "Maybe wait a month so the conclusions sink in. The papers will be fascinating."

"If Skandu can excavate the shell mound near Anartu, that would be even better," said Jordan. "This has the potential to unite Eryan and Sumi. It gives us a common ancestor."

"Or enemy," agreed Marku. "Skandu will be here next week. I'll talk to him then about a parallel excavation near Anartu."

Written 9/24/17, 12/8/24

439.

Inaugurations

Late Kaiménu/mid July, 20/638

Soru parked the rented steam car near the general store and opened his door to step out. Kanawé got out of the passenger side and opened the back door on her side of the car. “Blorané! Isuru! Get up. We’ve arrived!” The kids had slept most of the way from Pértatraisér.

“This is Tɛrskua?” asked Isuru, nine, who hadn’t been to the village for three years and didn’t remember it.

“Yes, this is where I’m from. You remember my uncles Moléstu and Majéstu? Moléstu still lives here with Mɛlitané and their son Golbéstu. He’s your cousin.”

“Oh yes, I remember Golbéstu!”

“I wonder whether we could have driven down?” said Soru. “The problem is I don’t want to park on the road down there; if a truck needs to pass, there might not be enough room.”

“We can walk,” said Kanawé. She looked at Rudhstélu’s store, which had doubled in size in the last year and sported a corrugated metal roof. Next to it was Estowékhu’s manufactory for making office and school desks, filing cabinets, and other items of metal; it was larger as well. The village’s water tower had been replaced by a much larger tower and the number of telephone and electric lines that came off the main line running down Route 1 was surprisingly large. The big parking area in front of the store and manufactory was nicely graveled; it had been rutted dirt.

Soru locked the car and they walked westward past houses to the spot where the village's main street dove suddenly downhill, then turned abruptly and ran across down the hillside east to west, then made a hairpin turn and ran west to east to the bottom of the twenty-meter slope. Each leg of the road was 120 meters long and had houses on both sides; it ran along the base of the slope as well in both directions and had buildings there as well. A typical house was two stories, the first level for farm storage and for animals, the second story for the human inhabitants, but in the last twenty years most of the lower levels had been converted to housing as well. A grange building dominated the east end of the village at the lowermost level with a large hall for five tractors, 2 grain threshers, five trailers, and miscellaneous plows and harrows; if they were moved out of the main space, large meetings or parties could be held there.

The western end of the lower road had the most development. There was a bakery that baked much of the bread the village consumed. Just five years earlier, most of the bread was made by the housewives, so it was a huge development for the thousand inhabitants of Tɛrskua. Next to it was the eight-classroom school, just four years old and handling grades 1 through 8, though there was only one classroom for the 7th and 8th graders because there weren't many kids of that age; Tɛrskua's baby boom had begun about twelve years earlier and had reached to 6th grade. West of the school was the headquarters to Dénujɛnésɛ Construction, Moléstu's company, which had a large garage for six pickups and two heavy trucks, a large storage area for construction materials, and a large office with two telephones.

Across the street from the construction facility was Tɛrskua's new gabruli, and that was their destination that day. As they walked down the main road, Kanawé shook

her head, wide-eyed. “New stucco . . . a pretty pastel paint job . . . another new paint job . . . just about all the houses have glass windows, too . . . it’s as if I’m in a different village!”

“It *is* a different village. When you left there was no grange, no school, no store, no furniture manufactory, no bakery, no construction company, no gabruli, no pickups, no tractors . . .”

“Just dirt floors, a lot of chickens, and not much food.”

“‘Dry well’ doesn’t have dry wells any more,” said Soru, referring to the village’s name *Tɛrskua.*

“A lot of this is the Menneas. The grange, the construction company, the gabruli . . . that’s most of our employment here.”

“That’s true everywhere, but they have had a really big impact here.”

“And I think they’re going to be here for the dedication,” said Kanawé.

They reached the bottom of the slope and walked the last 150 meters to the gabruli. It was a very large one-story building with three rooms for child care of 2 to 5 year olds with a grassy play area behind the building; four large rooms for work and socializing; and a bath area with a dozen private shower stalls. In front of the building was a large crowd that overflowed across the gravel road and into the parking lot of the construction company. Most of the village was present.

“We are so honored to have so many visitors today,” Lord Mitruluku was saying, as they reached the edge of the crowd. He stood on the steps of the building, flanked by the two cut ends of a ribbon that formerly stretched across the door. “Count Kristobéru of the New Cities, who sparked the creation of the granges in our area and who got

Moléstu's construction business going is a guest of honor, as is his wife, Lady Lizé, who has helped to organize the gabrulis around the world, of which this is one of strongest. We have Moléstu himself to thank for building this gabruli building, with the assistance of our grange, a very active grange under the young leadership of Stɛrstélu, and with the financial assistance of Estowékhu and his furniture business and Sarédatu and his dairy. Also present today is Honored Wɛranéstu, head of the ɛjnopéla Grange, who is a native of Tɛrskua; welcome home!

"How many villages have so many businesses?" Mitruluku paused to let the crowd consider the question. "I'll tell you: None. Frakdomas has a new textile mill that turns out bed sheets and curtains. Naskérpɛda has a pasta factory. Tritɛjna has a regional office of Estanu construction. They each have one. We have three, a construction headquarters, a furniture factory, and a dairy! In the last twenty years, Tɛrskua has become twice as wealthy as it was. Children are no longer hungry, they eat fairly well and they go to school so they can learn to read. Only half of us are farmers, but the farmers farm three times as much land. An impoverished and isolated place shrank in population as young people moved away, but then the factories opened, some came back, and the rest were replaced by a whole new generation of children. As a result, Tɛrskua has a slightly larger population than it had 20 years ago. There is no question that its future is secure!

"This gabruli will help the womenfolk of the village immensely, and we can be very proud of that. They can wash clothes here using warm and hot water and sinks; much more convenient than cold water, outside. They can cook together; the women here prepare and sell all sorts of jams and preserves, and they are one of the largest producers

of flower essences in the world. This new building will allow them to produce even more. There is a large bathhouse for washing children, as well as themselves, and the men can now wash across the street at Dénujɛnésɛ Construction, so everyone in Tɛrskua can now be cleaner than ever. The little ones are safe at the daycare facility attached to the gabruli and the school is practically across the street, so it is easy to reach and care for sick children. The three village representatives, having talked to the villagers, approached me last week and asked whether I would devote some extra tax money to a clinic, located down here by the school and gabruli, and I have agreed to partially fund a clinic, with matching funds from the palace. The goal is to install at least a nurse here in Tɛrskua."

The Lord paused, expecting strong applause, and was pleased when he received it. As an absentee lord, he was not known either for his deep interest in the village, or his care for its people. "Having a nurse living here in the village, able to take care of sick children any time, able to maintain accurate medical records for everyone, and able to do simple dentistry, will be a great boon to Tɛrskua. The grange and the businesses will cover their people, and the palace, as you know, now assists, so I am sure a nurse will make a fine living here. I hope we can arrange this before the end of the year, and I hope Moléstu can help build a simple clinic so the nurse will have a place from which to work.

"But I think I have spoken long enough. The children have a musical performance for us, then they will lead us into the building."

Lord Mitruluku stepped down from the steps and everyone turned to the school across the road as the 16 seventh and eighth graders issued forth. In front were three children playing panpipes, followed by three with small drums; the rest were singing a Hymn of Widumaj to the orchestral accompaniment. Two teachers marched on each side

to maintain the pace and make sure everyone stayed in solemn procession. It was quite a sight and the crowd was delighted. The crowd parted to let them through and the kids walked up onto the entrance steps, where they finished the hymn. Everyone applauded vigorously when they finished, then the kids entered the gabruli, followed by the entire village.

Soru, Kanawé, and the kids walked around the right side of the crowd because they could see Moléstu, Mɛlitané, Lord Mitruluku, and the Menneas standing there watching. “I find it hard to believe he has come around,” Kanawé said quietly to Soru as they moved forward. “Mitruluku never gave a damn for us, and when the sea returned and the rains improved, he tried to claim the entire northern half of the township for himself.”

“I remember, but also remember the courts threw out most of his claim, the villagers got to buy the land at the going grange rates, and now three quarters of the farming is done on the uplands. He learned. I bet he’s getting three times as much tax revenue now as he got twenty years ago.”

“Four times! This was a poor place. We raised goats up on the uplands and irrigated small fields of wheat down by the river, but we had to dip the water out of wells dug in the riverbed. I bet the average family income here is 1500 per year now! He can afford to pay for a clinic.”

Kanawé lowered her voice because they were now approaching Mitruluku and the others. Moléstu saw his sister, smiled, and opened his arms. Kanawé hurried over and embraced her brother. “You made it!”

“We were a little late. What a beautiful building! Tɛrskua is so lucky.”

“I think it will be a great contribution to the village,” agreed Moléstu.

Soru embraced Mɛlitané, then the children. Soru turned to Lord Mitruluku first. “That was a marvelous speech, Lord, and a generous one.”

“Thank you, Soru,” he replied. “It’s the least I could do, really.”

Soru turned to Chris and Liz. “It’s so good to see both of you again.”

“We’re always delighted to see you, Soru,” said Liz, shaking his hands.

“Our lives have been entwined in mysterious ways, eh?” added Chris with a twinkle in his eye, for he was referring to the time Soru was leading a band of thieves on an attack against Chris’s rover, which Chris turned back by shooting Soru’s horse with his revolver. Soru smiled as they shook hands.

“Many mysterious ways,” he agreed. “So, a glorious day for Tɛrskua; what’s next?”

“The clinic will go there,” replied Mitruluku, pointing to the western end of the school building. “We’ll add two more classrooms to the school, one will be the clinic, and if we need it for students we’ll build another clinic. After that, well, we’ll see what I can talk Lord Chris into.”

“Demand for canned goods, especially soup and tomatoes, has gone up sharply in the last year,” said Chris. “A cannery employing ten to fifteen could turn out maybe 200,000 cans. It’d cost maybe 50,000 in investment.”

“I can shell that out,” said Mitruluku quickly. Chris nodded, thinking Mitruluku would borrow a lot of it.

“Good, I’ll get back to you, then,” replied Chris. “It’d be part of the Mennea Tomi and the local grange can invest in it as well. My investment will be a third, I suppose.”

“Alright,” replied Mitruluku quickly, not wanting to lose the chance.

“I’m sure the grange will be interested,” said Moléstu. He pointed to a spot next to his construction operation. “We can put it there.”

“Pretty soon, commuter buses will have to start to bring workers to Tɛrskua!” quipped Mɛlitané.

“Maybe they should,” replied Chris. “Because Tɛrskua has a gas line, a switchboard, reliable electricity, a paved road, and workers used to working at factories. So you have some things other villages don’t have, or have less of.”

Mɛlitané looked at the line to get into the new gabruli building; it had shrunk. “Let me take you inside,” she said.

The others nodded and followed her. With a lord and a count, the existing line parted for them, so they all went straight in, including Soru, Kanawé, and the kids. “This is our main room,” noted Mɛlitané as they entered a 15 by 10 meter space with a tile floor, white walls, and big windows facing the road. “We’ll have four very long tables in here and lots of chairs. We can use the space for common sewing projects, for agricultural tasks like hulling peas—the grange has no room for them now—and the kitchen will always have food, so this will serve as a village restaurant as well.”

“For men, too?” asked Soru.

“Of course! We’ll feed the grange guys, and families can come here to eat if they want,” said Mɛlitané. “It’ll be a real restaurant.” She pointed to the door on the left. “That leads to the sewing room, which is half as big as this room. It has eight sewing machines, tables to spread out cloth, and places to sit and knit or make lace. On the other side of it is the day care facility. Behind the sewing area and partly behind this room is the fragrances

room; we have four large stills and room to install four more when we can afford them. It also has access to the ice room because we need to be able to store flower petals in a cool place, to preserve their aromas." She pointed to a door and they could see two of the stills through the open entranceway.

"Then directly behind this space, through that door in the middle of the back wall, is the kitchen. In addition to the restaurant, it'll cook lunch for the kids at the school every day; they'll come here to eat it. There's also plenty of room for making jams and for drying fruit."

She pointed to a door in the right side of the back wall. "That door leads to the beauty area; there's room for two women to cut hair, do nails, etc. We'll even cut the hair of men, but now a man wants to open a barber shop in his house right down the road, so I don't think that'll happen. To the right of the beauty area are two offices where we run everything.

"Then to the immediate right of the door we come in is the laundry area, and beyond it is the bathhouse."

"This is amazing," said Kanawé, and Soru nodded, a bit awestruck by the place. "How many women is it designed for?"

"Tɛrskua has 200 households and about 250 adult women," replied Mɛlitané. "We can easily have forty or fifty in here working at any particular time, excluding the bathhouse and laundry. If this common room is full, it can hold 150. So we're set up to accommodate just about everyone."

"How much did it cost?" asked Kanawé, quietly.

“A lot,” replied Mɛlitané. It was a 30,000 dhanay structure, but she didn’t say that. “Some was donated by the Lord and other donors, some was raised by the gabruli, some was donated by the grange, some was borrowed based on the contract to feed the school . . . we pieced together the funding.”

“There is nothing like it anywhere,” added Liz. “Mɛlwika’s gabruli has a big space in the market and has several businesses owned by women, but it doesn’t do the range of things this gabruli does. It’s immensely impressive.”

“It should be very helpful for the women of the village, because it gives us a place to gather and to work together to earn money for our families,” said Mɛlitané. “It has things many houses don’t have: electric light, gas stoves, running hot and cold water, and common equipment we can share, like sewing machines. Of course, we also have to make sure we can repair the roof, pay the bills, pay taxes, and pay people fairly for their work, and that’s the complicated part. But we have a half time accountant to take care of that!”

Liz pointed to the laundry room. “I see the laundry room is still empty.”

“Yes. We have room for twelve sinks and we’ll have them installed in a few weeks. Everyone in the village will have access to hot and cold water here, which will make clothes washing much easier. Then people can carry them home to hang them up to dry.”

“Did you look into the new Kérékwɛs washing machines?”

“Yes.” Mɛlitané sounded disappointed. “They wanted to charge us 150 dhanay for each machine! We couldn’t afford more than one or two at that rate.”

“One fifty?” said Chris, frowning. “That doesn’t sound right.”

“They said demand has been really weak.”

“Well, at 150 dhanay each, it would be! No one can afford a price like that.”

“How much would it cost to make each one?” Liz asked Chris.

“Well, we’re talking about some powerful electric motors, a rotating drum, and some switches. . . I suppose 40 or 50, maybe even 35 dhanay.”

“That’s all?” said Mɛlitané. “It sounds like an attempt at robbery, then!”

“I think so,” replied Chris. “It was sexism.”

“I wonder how many they’ve sold,” said Liz. “I suppose they sell most of them through Home Improvement.”

“We could ask,” replied Chris. “But they’ve never tried to make something so big before and it’s aimed at the home market, I suspect. There are probably less than 100 households who will spend that kind of money.”

“It’d be cheaper to use a laundry service,” said Liz. She looked at Chris. “I wonder whether the central gabruli council could put in a bulk order? Every gabruli could use at least one.”

“If it really washes clothes without human assistance, it would be an immense help,” said Mɛlitané. “Imagine, women could come here, and rather than washing their clothes by hand, they could engage in a job that will earn their family money while the machine washes the family clothes for them!”

“That would be something!” said Kanawé, with a laugh.

Well there are something like 80,000 households in the kingdom, and they all need to wash clothes,” said Liz. “Assuming 15 users each week, the kingdom needs

something like 5,000 machines! The Kérékwɛs Company can make plenty of money and charge a reasonable price."

"The gabrulis may be the best way to get the machines out to the women washing clothes, too," said Chris.

"I agree!" said Liz. "I think we need to go have a talk with Lord Mitruiluku Kérékwɛs."

"Really?" replied Mɛlitané, frightened at the thought.

"Yes," said Liz emphatically. "But we'll need to do some research first."

May and Amos hadn't been to Moruagras for a very long time. They were used to driving west to go from Mɛlwika to Pértatranisér, but this time they had driven east—the long way around—and were only 5 time zones from their new home on the western shore. But it would be a dramatic drive when they made the last bit: down 1,600 meters from Moruagras to the floor of the Long Valley, across the narrow valley in a few minutes to the opposite escarpment, then up 1,600 meters again and across the Snowy Plateau and Snowy Mountains, then finally a 2,200 meter gradual downslope to sea level and the city of Ora. If they preferred to stick to Route 1, there would be a 1,600 meter rise to enter the West Snowy Plateau, a 1,800 meter drop to the Kɛrda Valley, a 1,500 meter rise to the East Snowies, and then a long, gradual 1,900 meter decline to Néfa. She was not looking forward to the winding, narrow ups and downs.

But Moruagras struck her as charming. The roads and lanes had the usual heaps of animal dung on them, of course, and no one was planting grass or flowers around their houses, but the elaborately carved wooden eaves, the decorative wooden pillars around

the doors, and the carved window frames—with real glass panes inside them—gave the architecture a unity and beauty. These were people who didn't think of themselves as poor, in many ways.

Amos parked in front of Lord Ornkordu's house and they both went in—May insisted she come along, as she often did. The Lord knew they were coming and was surprised by Lord Amosu's wife's presence, but adjusted quickly. "I am very pleased to welcome both of you to our village," he said, offering both hands to Amos and one to May. "Your reputation as a great engineer has preceded you, Lord. We hope you can spare some time to give us advice."

"It would be an honor. As you know, we are here briefly—two days—so that our Dwobɛrgonɛ colleagues can catch up with us. They're still busy helping the Mémɛnɛghonɛ set up smelters to extract copper, lead, and mercury. They are experts at copper smelting and provide Mɛlwika with most of the copper it uses. Lead smelting is very similar, but very dangerous, because the lead gets into the air and even small amounts are very poisonous. We spent a week setting up a lead smelter as far from the village as possible, to avoid contaminating its air. Mercury smelting is even more dangerous to health, so we will have to return to the Mémɛnɛghonɛ later to work on that system."

"What brings you here, exactly, rather than going straight to Géndonatroba?"

"I would like to meet with the women, especially if you have a gabruli here," replied May. "I am interested in stories such as the ones Lébé may have already acquired, but I am also interested in language. The Géndonɛ and Ghéslonɛ have a unique form of

speech and I think it needs to be studied much more thoroughly, for it will tell us about our history on Éra."

"Then you'll want to speak to Rébu. He just arrived last week with his wife and children and with Skandu, the half-Sumi historian and archaeologist. Rébu and Snékhɛsé plan to stay two months and he will be offering courses in our summer génadɛma."

"You have a summer génadɛma?" said May, surprised.

"You didn't hear? We do indeed. When Lord Kristobhéru was here two months ago, he looked at the old house of Mɛdhkordé and her prostitutes and at the old army fort. He suggested we purchase the house and renovate it for fancy visitors and renovate the fort for large gatherings like conferences and génadɛmas. Of course, the cost was completely out of reach; he was suggesting 50,000. But we got the house anyway as a start, and it cost us only 2,000. Then, looking at the fort further, it occurred to us that Lord Krisobhéru's price estimate was probably correct for Mɛlwika, but if we did the work ourselves, it was way too high. We can make furniture, weave mats, buy light bulbs, and reconnect the plumbing the army had disconnected. We now have thirty functioning dormitory rooms in the fort. The bathroom facilities are rather primitive, still. There is a bathroom at the end of every hall and we have gotten the cold water re-established, but the army took the sinks and toilets. But we bought faucets and installed them and have placed buckets in the bathrooms; we've even built rather primitive toilets that work pretty well! Rébu and Skandu brought thirty Sumi students here and they are holding classes for them and for our people in both languages, and paying us a very small fee that covers their meals and laundry. But we have our 'hotel' started, at least!"

Amos and May looked at each other, surprised. “That’s very impressive,” said Amos.

“I’ll be happy to make sure this entire effort meets our génadɛma standards and everyone gets proper credit,” added May, who was the chair of the All-Génadɛma’s Accreditation Committee.

“I’m sure that would be welcomed, because Rébu and Skandu said they wanted to do that. We can accommodate you in the guest house; I think you will be very comfortable there. It’s a very attractive building, well built, and we were able to fix it up quite well. Lord Amosu, if you plan to be here for two days, perhaps we can talk further. You may be able to help us with several problems. In short, because of the steep roads—either eastward, down into the valley, or westward to Kostakhéma and the top of the Spine—our trucks are very limited in the amount of cargo they can haul. Ora trucks are designed to pull 20 tonnes on flat roads such as you have around the Sea, but they can barely pull 10 tonnes on our roads. As a result, it costs twice as much to haul out our lumber, wood, or ore. But if we did more work on the raw materials here, that would not be a problem. For example, if we could smelt the nickel-iron into nickel steel bars here, they would be worth more. Copper ore from here is rarely more than 5% copper, so copper ingots would be a much better export.”

“Yes, you are right, and I think you could do it. You have plenty of wood here to make charcoal, and charcoal is the main ingredient in a smelter. You also have strong winds here at the edge of the escarpment, which will dissipate the air pollution effectively. There are also electrical ways of purifying ore that we have not used on Éra

yet, but if the hydroelectric potential of your streams is harnessed, you would have the electricity to use those techniques as well."

"Really? How do we learn about them?"

"I'm the one. I'll have to research them, and you will need a LOT of electricity, so it will have to wait for more power to be produced in this area. It will be several years."

"I am impressed by your forests, Lord," said May. "The slopes of the Smoky Mountains near Pértatranisér and Ora have similar forests, but with different species. Here you have enormous fir trees."

"We do, but again, we can't cut them and haul them out because they weigh more than ten tonnes."

"Oh, of course. I wonder whether the army could at least build a better road to the floor of the Long Valley. If it was long and straight, without a lot of turns, you could haul the logs down there, at least."

"We are Réjéivika's main source of wood already and we haul it down ten tonnes at a time. They have not yet had a need for very long, heavy logs, though. They have a sawmill down there and again, I wish we had the sawmill and sold them finished lumber, rather than cut logs. They also haul in a lot of finished wood from the Western Shore." Lord Ornkordu considered a moment. "There is another route to consider, though. We have a very good, flat road from here northward along the top of the escarpment to Lujroktisértroba. It is our other village and is small; 150 people. The road is just a dirt track, though it does have log bridges over a few creeks. The people there have a school but no electricity or telephones; they are mostly hunters and trappers and have a pickup truck that can get here. They also have opened up their trails enough so that the pickup

can get up the Lujroktisér, which is a pretty good sized river that flows into the Long Valley by their village. They also have a track that goes all the way to the top of the Long Valley. From there, one can follow a hunting trail to the Northern Basin; it comes out by the glacier the army has to blow up every spring so that it doesn't produce big floods. Theoretically, it should be possible to build a fairly good road along that trail."

"I've hunted along it," added Ornanu, the Lord's son. "It has no steep descents and almost no uphill stretches."

"So, a good road could be built along that route and trucks could haul out more cargo?" said Amos.

"I think so," said Lord Ornkordu. "The Geological Survey should know, they have aerial photographs!"

"They do," agreed Amos. "Very interesting. We'll have to explore that possibility."

"That would be of great help to both of our tribes here," said Ornkordu. "So let us give you a meal, at least, and then we can take you to the guest house, where I think you'll be very comfortable."

Two hours later as the sun was approaching the western horizon—even though it was only early afternoon in Mɛlwika—Lord Ornkordu led Amos and May to the guest house near the fort. He drove a pickup; Amos and May followed in their steam car. As they parked the car, they saw Skandu and a team of a dozen Sumi and Ghéslonɛ students doing an archaeological dig in the ruins near the house. Skandu was surprised to see them and waved; Amos and May waved back, then entered the guest house with the Lord and

with their luggage. Rébu, Snékhɛsé, and their three kids were sitting in the house's big comfortable living room and were startled to see the arrivals.

"May!"

"Rébu!" They were both surprised to see the other. May walked to the Sumi radical and he toward her; they shook both hands in greeting.

"What are you doing here?"

"Amos and I are here for two days, then on to the Géndonɛ. Amos is helping them with smelters and I'm studying language."

"Ah, of course. As you can see, we're here for the summer, teaching just about everything; Snékhɛsé has a class in an hour while I'm watching the kids, then tomorrow I teach the evening class. The Ghéslonɛ are very eager pupils."

"Many of the tribes are. We'll have plenty of time to talk, then. Let me get our luggage settled in, and I'll be back."

"Good."

May hurried back to the stairs by the front door where Amos and Ornkordu were waiting, and the three of them went upstairs. The second floor had a dozen bedrooms, all painted rather brightly, but the tribe had furnished them adequately and the three bathrooms on the floor were complete. May and Amos chose a room and pledged to pay the tribe 2 dhanay per day for room and board, even though Ornkordu said he wanted to accommodate them for free.

"Go back down to talk to Rébu," said Amos. "I can get us settled into the room."

"Okay, thanks. Come down when you're ready and join us."

"I will, I want to hear his interesting stories, too!"

May smiled at that and headed for the stairs. When she got to the house's big living room, she found Rébu there by himself. Snékhɛsé and the kids had retreated to the large dining room nearby where they were setting the table.

"So, how long are you here for?"

"We're here all summer. Snékhɛsé has been wanting to come back; she dislikes Sumilara intensely and just can't seem to get the language. Besides, the people I know there are aristocratic and they treat her like a barbarian, in spite of everything I say." He shrugged. "So far we haven't been able to arrange to move to Arjdhura, either. I think the army wants to keep me in Anartu, where they can watch me. Anyway, last month Lord Ornkordu wrote to us—Snékhɛsé is the daughter of his wife's sister—and invited us to come for the summer and teach classes. It was an impressive letter; typed and well written. He must have asked the school teachers to fix it. When I got the letter, I showed it to Marku, who is essentially a partner with me; we do a lot of historical work together, and the army trusts him to keep an eye on me. He said, 'I bet I can take my archaeology class and you can teach them, too.' So he arranged it, which was even better for Ornkordu because it filled the rooms in the fort!"

"I thought Skandu was excavating a shell mound near Anartu."

"He did for two weeks and found the same material remains that Marku found near the mouth of the Arjakwés: bone fishhooks and flint and obsidian spearheads, arrowheads, and knives. Sumilara doesn't have flint and there's no obsidian near the mouth of the Arjakwés, so there must have been trade across the water. That's a significant new conclusion."

"That is interesting."

“And it proves one old story: human beings have been conquering each other on this world longer than we thought. It turns out there was an earlier group here. I wonder whether we wiped them out or whether we stole some of their women and married them.”

That’s an old story, too, and I bet their genetics continue in both the Sumis and the Eryan.”

Rébu smiled and nodded. “Yes, I think you are right.”

Amos came down the stairs at that moment and walked over to join them. But as soon as he shook hands with Rébu, the cook rang a little bell. It was time for supper. “Let’s see; is this a second lunch?”asked May.

“I guess so,” replied Amos. He turned to Rébu. “We were with the Méménɛghonɛ this morning, helping them set up copper and lead smelters.”

“East of Gordha? Is there a tribe the Mennea family hasn’t helped?”

“Yes; the Géndonɛ. We’re going there next,” replied Amos, with a smile.

Rébu laughed and led them to the table, which had bread, venison, and a soup of cabbages, carrots, and potatoes. They passed bowls to Rébu, who ladled out the soup while Snékhɛsé passed around the bread and Amos began to slice up the venison. The three kids were well behaved and patient; Rébu asked about their two, who were both in Mɛlwika for the summer.

Just then Skandu came in, having dismissed his archaeological assistants for the day. He greeted May and Amos and shook hands with both, then sat to a bowl of soup.

“What have you been finding?” asked May.

“The excavation? We’ve been working on it for a week now. This house was built on the site of a large structure; probably a palace. The pinnacle on which the fort is

built—Moruastéa—was fortified then as well; the current fort was built on ancient foundations. Moruagras itself, as you know, is surrounded by stone walls, even along the cliff sides; twelve kilometers of walls, with the highest and strongest walls here at the isthmus. We've been walking the eight square kilometers of Moruagras also. The fields are full of crumbling roofing tiles and the stone walls around the fields are full of dressed stones from old houses."

"So, this was a city?" asked May, surprised.

"It wasn't completely filled with houses, wall to wall. I think about a quarter of the area was housing and the rest was devoted to intensive agriculture. But two square kilometers of houses is still tens of thousands of people."

"But how were they eating up here? And why here?" asked Amos.

"I have some speculations," replied Skandu. "The Long Valley is 160 kilometers long, north to south, and averages 9 kilometers wide; that's almost 1,500 square kilometers, 2,000 when you include flat spots along the valley sides. Kɛrda is only a quarter as large and had 25,000 people before the arrival of modern technology, so the Long Valley must have had something like 100,000 people. Mɛdha, the capital city, must have had 30 or 40 thousand; it was quite big and was located in the equatorial zone where three crops per year were possible. Then there was a huge landslide and the Glugluba was blocked by a pile of debris so huge, no civilization could have ever removed it. The water began to back up right away."

"How long before the entire floor of the valley was flooded?" asked May.

"I'm sure someone can figure that out, but consider that the floor gradually rises toward the northern and southern ends, where it is about 200 meters higher than at the

Glugluba's exit point from the valley. I suspect it took a century or so to flood that far, but that really doesn't matter. Mɛdha and the rice paddies around it flooded within a year or two, displacing maybe a third of the population, and where could they go? The northern and southern ends were colder, had a lower carrying capacity, and probably were already at that capacity. The Sumi records seem to suggest that Kɛrda was a vassal state, but it was probably at carrying capacity as well. Some people could move to the eastern and western highland edges, at least temporarily. There's a similar fort to this one on the eastern side where Route 55 reaches the edge of the escarpment. But I doubt 30,000 people could survive here. My guess is that this was a stronghold *against* refugees as much as *for* refugees. Perhaps the king of Mɛdha moved here and let some people settle here, especially his army and their wives and children. Meanwhile, down on the valley floor, civilization descended into chaos."

"And the majority of the people died," said Amos.

Skandu nodded. "I think so, perhaps over a decade. It would have been a terrible tragedy; one of the worst this world has ever seen."

"And let us remember the aliens had the capacity to prevent it," said May. "They bear some responsibility. They created the Glugluba in the first place and made it so deep and narrow that it was prone to landslides."

"That's true," agreed Amos. "And when the entire sea got trapped in the Long Valley and the Great Drought followed, hundreds of thousands more died; maybe even a million people."

"But there's nothing we can do about that now," said Skandu. "Let's consider the consequences. Let us say that an army of ten thousand young men, with their wives and

eventually their children, retreated to this place, and a similar army retreated to the fort on the opposite side of the valley. Neither place can support several tens of thousands of people for very long; the climate is too cold. So where would they go?"

"Kɛrda and the western shore," said May. "The Sumi cities there were attacked and taken."

"That's right, the historical records are clear about that; but what about a king and an army here at Moruagras? They can't get to the western shore because the flooded Long Valley is in the way."

May and Amos looked at each other, considering the mountains and forests that lay to the west. "The only places they could go are the valley of the Kaitɛrɛ and Gordha beyond," said May.

Skandu nodded. "That'd be my guess. The Sumi records do speak of Gordha being burned and I had assumed the Sumis had burned it, but now I'm not so sure."

"And modern Eryan is a patois of Eastern and Western Indo-European, which came together about the time of the landslide and the Great Drought a few centuries later," said May. "They could understand each other, but there were big differences in grammar that had to be eliminated through simplification. I had always thought the patois occurred as a result of mixing in the northern and southern shores, where the two conquering armies met and mixed."

"That may have happened as well," said Skandu. "But that doesn't explain the dialects of the Tutanɛ, which would not have been affected by mixing of populations on the north and south shores. The Ghéslonɛ and Géndonɛ speak the most differently; they are very difficult to understand. But even the Wuronɛ, Kwolonɛ, and Késtonɛ use a

grammar and vocabulary that reflect Eastern Eryan influences. I think that's because all the Tutanɛ tribes on the other side of the Spine Mountains are a mix, because of refugees from the flooding of the valley."

"That makes a lot of sense," said May. "The Mémɛnɛghonɛ are an exception; their's is a very Western Indo-European dialect. That does suggest they are a remnant of the Gordha population, as they claim."

"They claim to be the people who originally ruled Gordha," said Rébu. "And their name means 'the many ones'; ironic because they are the smallest tribe."

"And the 'Ghéslonɛ' are the 'thousands,'" added May. "Which they aren't any longer, either."

"But their names may reflect their ancient realities," said Skandu. "The question is how much archaeology and ancient records can verify these hypotheses."

"Well, I'm working on the dialects this summer, and I'll let you know how much the dialects reflect this hypothesis," promised May.

440.

Labor Saving Devices

Mid Dhonménu/early August, 20/638

Mɛlitané grew more and more nervous as they drove into Gramakwés. It had become a fairly large place of 3,500 people and a dozen factories employing half the male population; the industrial district was on the south side and approaching from the northeast they missed it, but could see and smell the smoke. The town had a decent main street, though half the shopping its people did weekly involved a bus ride to Mɛlita a dozen kilometers away.

Lord Mitrulubu's mansion had just acquired a new addition and was bigger and more luxurious than ever. "The Kérékwɛs brothers may be the real rich people on Éra," said Liz. "They've been able to steer much of Véspa's surplus population to their three townships and they now have 8,000 people living in them. The farmland is rich and gets three crops per year, but most of the men work in factories and are paid well."

"They are stingy with their money, too."

"They aren't as bad as they used to be. Gramakwés looks reasonably neat and clean and has decent schools. They've learned those things are important to attract people, as are decent salaries and all the usual tomi benefits. The one thing they don't do is profit sharing."

Liz parked the car and the two women stepped out. "Are you sure you want me to do the talking?" said Mɛlitané.

“Yes. You know the facts and can be quite professional and persuasive; I’m confident in you.”

“We really need to arrange this washing machine contract. When I think of the number of hours women spend on washing clothes, and the amount of time those machines can free up, it amazes me. It can revolutionize lives.”

“It sure can. The best way to free women from drudgery is to give them various machines, just like the men. Let’s go.” Liz pointed toward the door; Mɛlitané led the way. They walked to the mansion’s grand entrance and knocked. A butler greeted them, rather stiffly, and led them to the lord’s sitting room. He joined them a few minutes later.

“Lady Liz, it is so nice to see you,” said Lord Mitrulubu, sweeping into the room and offering her his hand. “How is the Lord? How is your family?”

“Thank you, Lord, we are all well, and I hope your family is well, also.”

“Indeed; my two sons are now busy running factories and they each have their own wings of this house for their families.”

“Excellent. Please allow me to introduce Mɛlitané Dénujɛnésɛ, the President of the Gabruli Confederation. She is my boss today, as it were.”

“Oh, I see,” he said, startled.

Mɛlitané immediately extended both of her hands to Mitrulubu, as a man would. “I am pleased to meet you, Lord. I represent 45 gabrulis around the world, located in every major city and town. You may also know my husband, Moléstu Dénujɛnésɛ.”

“Yes, indeed, I know Moléstu. A very capable and honest builder; he has built a few factories for me. I am . . . pleased to meet you.” He hesitated and then shook both hands with her.

“Thank you, Lord,” she replied. “Yes, Moléstu is a good man. May we sit, Lord?”

“Ah . . . certainly!” Mitrulubu had forgotten to offer them chairs or refreshment; he was a bit flummoxed, trying to deal with women.

“Thank you. As you will recall from our letter to you, we believe gabrulis are the perfect place to locate laundries full of your new washing machines, if the price is right. The women of each city or village are already connected to the local gabruli and visit it regularly for various services or opportunities to earn a bit of money. It will be very easy to introduce them to washing machines.”

“I would welcome that. This house has one and the servants report that it saves them considerable time. Sales have been very poor, unfortunately, but if the gabrulis have them, perhaps more houses will want to purchase them as well.”

“There are two problems that we see,” continued Mɛlitané. “We have used the machine in Mɛlwika that was purchased to wash the uniforms of the city workers. The first is the rinse cycle; clothes often need to be rinsed two or three times to get the soap out. We spoke to Behruz Shirazi about the problem and he said the repeated rinses were necessary because of the nature of the soap used, and a different formula would allow a single rinse to work. So he proposes to develop a special laundry soap for use in the machines. But that will only be economic if there are enough machines out there, and that is impossible with the current price of 150 dhanay each.”

“Unfortunately, at the current level of demand, that is the price.”

“We would like to propose to raise demand, so you can cut the price significantly. An expert who examined the Mɛlwika machine concluded that the parts could be

manufactured and assembled for as little as 30 dhanay if an assembly line could be operated."

"Thirty?" Mitrulubu scowled. "No, I don't think that's possible."

"We were not proposing to purchase machines for 30 dhanay each, but it does illustrate the potential the washing machine has. We'd like to purchase 200 of them from you for 50 dhanay each."

"Fifty?" He thought for a moment, then shook his head. "No, that's too low."

"The price can't go too high, Lord. It may seem easy to you for a woman to pay one dontay for a load, but if she has to do two loads a week, that's 120 dontay per year. Poorer women can't afford that. They need a lower price than that. The total price needs to pay for the machine, the special soap, maintenance, hot water, and someone to operate the machines, since they don't completely run themselves. Furthermore, we think that if we purchase 200 machines and more people see them in action, your other sales of washing machines will pick up. Every city and major town will want one to wash uniforms. The army will want them. The major palaces will want them. So what we give you is worth something, too."

"It is indeed." Mitrulubu considered. "Seventy five. You have to understand that the assembly line for making them has been shut down because demand was so low. We manufactured 100 and we still have half of them available. We have to start up the assembly line again and re-train the workers, and that costs money."

"I'm sure it costs a few hundred, but divided among 200 machines, that doesn't add much to the cost. We anticipate we'll purchase more next year, too."

"How many?"

“If they are as good as you say, most women will want to use them. Our gabrulis serve five eighths of the population; that’s fifty thousand households out of eighty thousand. Let’s say half those households will use machine machines regularly; that’s twenty-five thousand households. If the average machine can be used by 25 households every week, that means there’s demand for a thousand washing machines. If, at that number, they are cheap enough, I suspect villages will want them as well, and poor women will use them sometimes as well. What is your guess for total demand for clothes washing machines? Two thousand? Three thousand?”

“About that, but the price is hard to reach, and the soap problem has been a limitation. I’d be very interested to hear from Behruz about a special soap.”

“The problem is that it will be expensive, also, unless it is manufactured in large quantities. So we need each other, Lord.”

“I see. I’ll come down to seventy, then.”

Mɛlitanɛ shook her head. “That will be too expensive for the average gabruli member.”

Mitrulubu shook his head, exasperated.

“We could do sixty dhanay per machine, and buy 250 instead. How’s that?”

“And if you have fifty in stock, we can give you a check for 3,000 dhanay right now and purchase all of them,” added Liz.

“How sure are you that the check will be good?”

“Oh, it’ll be good. My husband and I guarantee all checks written by the Gabruli Confederation.”

“Oh, I see,” said Mitrulubu. “I can do sixty, but only if the assembly line is making more than 250 machines per year.”

“And if we buy 250, you don’t think anyone else will buy washing machines?” asked Mɛlitané.

“Are you a widu?” Mitrulubu clearly was irritated.

“You don’t need to be, do you?” said Mɛlitané, with a smile.

“I don’t know; I’m a businessman.” Mitrulubu used the English word, which was modern; “merchant” would have sounded grubby and beneath his station as a lord.

There was a moment of silence when Mɛlitané considered her response. Then Liz said, “I think we could buy 300 at 60 dhanay each, and if you have 50 in stock, we can pay for them right now. That’s 3,000 dhanay right away.”

Mitrulubu turned to her. “I think that arrangement is acceptable. I certainly want to be supportive of the gabrulis.”

“Good,” said Mɛlitané. “I think we have a mutually beneficial arrangement, then.”

Mitrulubu extended two hands to her and they shook. He shook hands with Liz as well. The lord offered them tea while he called to verify the number of units in stock—53—and determine that the assembly line could be reopened in three months to make the rest by midwinter. They shook again on the details, then Liz and Mɛlitané headed back to their car.

“That ended pretty well,” said Mɛlitané. “It helps to know the actual manufacturing cost!”

“Yes, though I suppose Chris’s accountants shouldn’t have divulged that to us! I had my doubts we’d talk him down below 75 dhanay.”

"Me, too. But now we have 300 instead of 200! How will we ever sell them! The gabrulis didn't want that many!"

"They will. They have to, because these machines can save the average housewife half a day of work per week. You are right that in Tɛrskua, a dontay per load is too much. But it isn't too much in Mɛlwika, where the families earn twice as much. The city has 4,000 households; at 20 families per machine, the city would need 200 washing machines all by itself. Pértatranisér probably could use 50. I think if we make this a big push, we can sell or lease them."

"Are you going to do it? Because I'm not sure my office can."

Liz nodded. "I'll see what I can do."

Thornton looked at Wɛranisaju closely to make sure his nervousness about visiting the Mémɛnɛghonɛ wasn't obvious. A third son of an Old House from the very comfortable village of Pɛrkas was a brilliant engineer, but a complete city slicker and afraid of anything Tutanɛ. "Don't worry, this will go fine," he assured the young man.

"I'm sorry, I suppose I shouldn't worry so much," he replied.

Lord Ekwanu, Mémorɛndru, and Roktanu, who were elders, and Rudhkordu, the village teacher, approached. Ekwanu's bear claw necklace startled Wɛranisaju and the men's leather clothing made him nervous, but he swallowed. He was a professional.

"Shall I explain this device?" he asked.

Ekwanu nodded. "Lord Dhoru did, but explain it again."

"Glad to." He cleared his throat. "You may have heard that Mɛlwika is running out of coal for its production of gas and steel, so we want to switch to wood, which is

more expensive, but burns cleaner anyway, because all the coal deposits have a lot of dirt in them. About four months ago the Miller Engineering Institute was asked to develop machines that would make timber cutting much cheaper and easier. A long time ago, there was an attempt to create a steam powered saw. It worked, but it was extremely heavy and clumsy. In fact, it was unusable in practice. But we decided this time to use pneumatic power because we had just developed a jack hammer, which uses air pressure to smash up concrete and rock. A pneumatic powered chain saw works pretty well."

"I see," said Ekwanu, then he shook his head. "Demonstrate."

"What tree can I cut down?"

"Cut down a tree?" Ekwanu looked at the others; this was just outside the village and there were trees around, but they were all on the land someone used. They conferred. Finally, Roktanu said, "One of those trees over there." He pointed to a grove of trees about 50 meters away.

"Alright. I have to drive over, though." Wɛranisaju got in the pickup truck, which had a full head of steam, and put it in gear; it began to roll over to the grove of trees and the men jogged alongside. He got out and looked at the trees along the edge of the grove, which could be felled into a pasture. He pointed. "This one?" It was about 40 centimeters in diameter and 20 meters tall; neither too big nor too small.

"Alright," said Roktanu. Apparently it was on his land, or the land of a relative.

Wɛranisaju opened the pickup's tailgate and pulled out two large boards and two jacks. He set up the boards in front of the rear tires and proceeded to jack up the rear axle until the wheels were off the ground. He brought out an air compressor, which was attached to a large air tank in the back of the truck via a hose, and put it on the ground

next to the right rear wheel. He pulled off the right rear wheel—he had already loosened the lug nuts—and attached the air compressor to the axle. Then he went back to the driver's seat and put the pickup truck into first gear. The rear axle began to turn and power the air compressor.

Wɛranisaju picked up the chain saw, which had a blade about half a meter long—it wasn't too large—and carried it over to the tree, watching the air hose to make sure it was straight. He put on gloves, then engaged the engine.

The chain saw began a whirring blur; the men were startled by its speed and noise. Wɛranisaju pushed it against the tree diagonally, cutting a deep notch in it. He cut two more until he had about half the tree cut away facing the pasture. Then he turned to the far side and began to cut it diagonally as well.

The tree cracked, tilted, and crashed down.

Ekwanu looked at the puny engineer, surprised. "Wow."

"So, the pickup truck engine compresses air, the hose delivers the compressed air to the saw, and the air spins the chain?" asked the school teacher.

"Exactly. This is a prototype; it's the only one we have made. We could make smaller ones, or bigger ones for really big trees. The hose is a very tough, strong mesh of metal outside a rubberized canvas, which is airtight. The hose could burst; we have to test the system and see how long it will last. The blade has to be handled carefully because you could get it stuck inside the tree, and the chain conceivably could snap if it is used too roughly. But we think we have the air pressure set right so neither of those things will happen, and we have this metal guard here to protect the worker from those accidents."

“I hope so!” said Ekwanu. He turned to Thornton. “So, you want us to use this thing?”

“That is up to you, Lord. This is the first one made; the prototype. It needs to be used and refined. Then a contract will be made to someone to manufacture them, and a few hundred will be made. The various timber companies will all buy them, a lumberman will be able to cut down three times as many trees, and wood will become cheaper for everyone to purchase. It also means the trees that are cut must be replaced, but the timber companies understand that and are already planting new trees. If you are the first place to cut trees more cheaply, you can get contracts for wood and keep them, in spite of the extra cost of shipping the trees up over Gordhamonta.”

“I see what you are saying.” Ekwanu pondered a moment and looked at the others.

“Can we try that thing?” asked Roktanu.

“Of course. I can show you how it works,” replied Wɛranisaju. “It takes some practice, but it isn’t too difficult.” He beckoned Roktanu over. The man was strong in spite of his seventy years and took up the chain saw immediately, hefting it and swinging it around. Wɛranisaju pointed out the safety and the trigger that controlled the amount of air that went to the blade. Roktanu nodded, brought the saw down to the fallen tree, and activated the saw. He had watched Wɛranisaju’s technique and copied it. In two minutes he had cut all the way through the trunk.

Roktanu smiled. “You have to push!” But then he added, “It’s rather like cutting butter with a knife, compared to an axe or two-man saw.”

“Let me try!” exclaimed Ekwanu.

“Certainly,” said Wɛranisaju, who was beginning to relax around the Tutanɛ. He handed the chainsaw to the Lord and repeated his instructions.

Ekwanu cut through the trunk as well and marveled at the clean cut and the pile of sawdust. It was Mémorɛndru’s turn next, then Rudhkordu’s, and Thornton couldn’t help but think that men everywhere loved pickup trucks, chainsaws, and other powerful tools.

A crowd was gathering; the chain saw’s loud noise was distinctive and the entire village had gradually walked over. “What do you think?” Ekwanu said to the others who had accompanied him. “This is like having a portable sawmill!”

“It is amazing,” agreed Mémorɛndru.

“The new knowledge at its best!” added Rudhkordu.

“It is,” agreed Ekwanu. He turned back to Thornton and Wɛranisaju. “Yes, we will be happy to test this chainsaw. How long can you stay?”

Thornton turned to a startled engineer. “You could stay a week, couldn’t you, Wɛranisaju?”

“Ah . . . I suppose. I have a lot to do at the Institute, though, and my wife is expecting me back right away!”

“You can call her using my phone,” replied Thornton. “We can transfer the air tank and pump to the tribe’s pickup.”

“You can’t leave this pickup here, so he can drive back to Mɛlwika?” asked Ekwanu.

“Ah . . . yes, we could do that,” replied Thornton. “I can take the bus back to Mɛlwika.”

“We can give you a ride to Mɛlwika tomorrow when we drive a load of copper and lead ingots there,” said Rudhkordu.

“Alright,” said Thornton. “And Wɛranisaju, they have a phone in the store. You have a phone at home, right? Call your wife every day. I can give you a toll free number to use.”

“Thank you, that would be very helpful,” replied Wɛranisaju, sounding a little relieved.

441.

A Day in Kɛrda

Late Dhonménu/mid August, 20/638

The 450 workers in the Isurdhuna Industrial Park rose to their feet as Her Majesty Queen Estoibidhé entered the tent, followed by her entourage. They applauded as she walked down the main aisle to the front and climbed onto the stage. There, the entourage sat, followed by the audience.

Kɛkanu, who was accompanying the queen, walked to the microphone and chanted a hymn of Widumaj. The audience fell silent, knowing the power of his voice, which had been demonstrated yet again in the recently completed annual chanting of the entire hymn cycle at Widumaj's tomb. When he finished they gave him a standing ovation.

Duke Yusbéru of Kɛrda stepped forward. "Every year we welcome Her Majesty to our sacred valley for the Hymn cycle, but this year is special. The tomb of her beloved mother is finished and will be dedicated tomorrow, and we have had a year of peace and good order. This industrial park, which she just toured, represents the future of Kɛrda, and it is a future of prosperity and service to everyone on Éra. We have much to be proud of, and we can thank Her Majesty for her wise leadership and generous support as the province advances. Let us welcome our queen."

The employees of the industrial park jumped to their feet and applauded as the Queen rose and walked to the podium. She carried a small stack of cards that had her notes. "Thank you," she began. "We have just completed yet another hymn cycle; the

priests think it was the 595th, so we are approaching the 600th anniversary of the complete annual recitation of the entire revelation of Widumaj. The pilgrimage this year again was the largest we have ever had, involving 62,000 visitors to the valley. All this indicates that the spiritual life of our world is well and strong. This bodes well for our future."

She paused for applause, and the audience rewarded her patience. "While Isurdhuna helps to insure the spiritual vitality of our society, our society has an obligation to help insure the material prosperity of Isurdhuna. The great smoke stack, which rises 1,127 meters up the side of the escarpment, is now complete and carries the pollution up away from the valley's air. As a result it is easier to breathe here than it has been in twenty years, when coal was first used in the valley. The gas plant's pipes now carry clean and safe gas to both the northern and southern ends of the valley.

"This industrial park is an even more important development for Kɛrda's future. I am very impressed by the huge, state of the art grain elevators, the enormous bakery that bakes half this valley's bread, the cannery and fruit drying facility, and the new dairy. I understand that in the next year, a new facility will open every other month, including a service building with a daycare, a bank, and a restaurant. A slaughterhouse for the valley's cattle, with a tannery and a leatherworking facility, will be an important addition. Duke Yusbéru has led your villages through a series of discussions over the last year about the valley's future. Extensive industrialization, most people have agreed, is not compatible with the valley's sacred character, so intensive development of its agriculture is the plan. Kɛrda has enough farmland to give all its people a good living and provide the pilgrims with the items they wish to take home with them, so that is the plan. Kɛrda

will be greener, more verdant, and more agricultural than it has ever been. Its beauty will dazzle those who descend the escarpment, whether from the north, south, east, or west.

"The other development that bodes well for Kɛrda's future is its care for the elderly and ill. The sacred valley has long been the destination for older people who wish to sing the hymns in their later years, but it was never possible for more than a few dozen to come here. Now we can accommodate hundreds of the elderly, and perhaps some day it will be thousands. It will be the privilege of the crown and the priesthood to care for them in their last days as they devote themselves to the hymns.

"So we have a valley dedicated to serving the people of Esto through agriculture and care, and by providing them clean air. What more could we wish for? What could please Widumaj more? And in addition to the service you are providing, you now live in peace. There has been no violence for over a year now. Let us pray Kɛrda is past the troubles and can now march forward toward a happy future, blessed with peace, harmony, justice, and prosperity. Thank you."

The queen paused and the audience rose in standing ovation once again. She nodded to them in thanks and Kɛkanu stepped forward to chant another hymn. Then the royal party processed out of the hall and the audience rose to follow them.

Her Majesty stepped into the royal limousine—made by stretching a steam car body and installing a heavier engine—followed by Duke Yusbéru, Duke Kandékwɛs, and Count Kristobéru. The rest of the party piled into two rented taxis. "Drive us past the Bahá'í Center on the way to the hospital," she asked the driver.

"The fastest way to the hospital, Your Majesty, is to take the bypass round the east side of town. It's a beautiful, wide, smooth road."

“Yes, I’ve been on it, but I want to see the reconstructed Bahá'í Center, and that won’t add much time to the trip.”

“As you wish,” replied the driver.

Yusbéru looked at Chris. “As you may have heard, someone did throw a stone through one of the windows last week.”

“Yes, I heard,” replied the Queen. “And I was saddened by it. The violence here has not completely subsided, I’m afraid.”

“But that has been the only incident,” Yusbéru added.

“The Bahá'ís feel safe to use it,” added Chris. “The dedication ceremony last month was quite large and was attended by a lot of local people. Liz and I didn’t go, but we heard all about it.”

“It was quite well done. I attended,” said Yusbéru. “It was uplifting and unifying.”

“Excellent,” said the Queen. “My good duke, I am impressed by the industrial park; it really is coming along quite well. And I have heard several people sing the praises of the provincial development plan. It is not a standard plan emphasizing heavy industry. It is practical and relates to the valley’s strengths.”

“Thank you, Your Majesty. The Provincial Tomi held public meetings here at Isurdhuna, but also in three other villages in the northern and southern parts of the valley. It was the first time we ever did something like that. They went very well and generated a lot of ideas. Most people want Kɛrda to preserve a more traditional look, but they also want prosperity. I think this plan accomplishes both goals.”

“It is a wise plan,” agreed Chris.

The driver turned left off the eastern bypass and drove into a narrow street enclosed by tightly packed buildings. He drove down several alleys, then turned right onto a narrow street. He slowed as they all looked out the windows at the stately brick building with many tall, wide windows.

"Very impressive," said the Queen. "A building filled with light."

"It is a variant of the design of the Mɛlwika Bahá'í Center, which was designed by Mary, my mother in law," said Chris. "Over half the wall area is windows. But unfortunately that means the windows are easy to break."

"I hope no more are broken," said Estoibidhé.

The limousine continued north up the long, thin city, which was built on a long, rolling ridge surrounded by what had once been marshes but now was rich farm and park land. They stopped at the Isurdhuna Hospital at the northern end of town, just past the palace. Next to the hospital was a very attractive one-story brick building, built in a U with a pretty garden in the middle.

"How is the senior housing going?" asked the Queen.

"Well; 45 of the 50 units are filled now. Many of the old people are local—from Isurdhuna—but we have begun to attract a few from the eastern and western shores. We need to build fifty more units."

"How much?"

"One hundred twenty-five thousand. The units are small, but they are comfortable and they are safe; they have wide hallways, wide doorways, and lots of hand rails. The province has thirty thousand in the budget."

"And we will provide the rest, of course."

“In another year we plan to build another form of facility, a ‘nursing home’ for people who can not live alone and need constant care, either because of age or debilitation, but have no family to provide it. We’ll start with 30 rooms but leave room to expand it. It’ll cost sixty thousand dhanay, and we’ll get back to you about the plans once they are final.”

“Excellent. I am glad to see we are providing for the infirm. Now, let us go see what Budhéstu has to show us.” She stepped out of the car—the driver had been holding the door for her—and headed for the hospital’s main door.

Budhéstu and his wife, Blorakwé, were waiting in the lobby with Soru, whose wife was Blorakwés’ aunt. “Greetings, Your Majesty,” said Budhéstu, falling to one knee in respect.

“Thank you, Dr. Budhéstu,” she replied. “We are delighted that you have begun to offer a service to assist those whose minds are diseased. They have long been treated as infectious or possessed, rather than simply ill; do I understand the idea right?”

“Yes, Your Majesty, mental illnesses are just illnesses. They are very difficult to cure, but we have been learning the techniques to work with such patients, and the *alienɛs* have begun to provide us with some crucial medicines that help the patients control their minds better.”

“Really? There are medicines?”

“Some. For example, there are some people whose imaginations run wild; they believe crazy things, can’t tell a fantasy or imagination from a memory or reality, etc. But a drug may be able to help their brains function normally and separate out reality from

non-reality. Other people lack self control, but there is a drug that can help strengthen self control. Others are inclined to violence but there are drugs that calm them down."

"I see. So these are brain problems?"

"Essentially, Your Majesty. There are other people who need to talk out their problems, and there is a way to help them through talking. Sometimes children can't talk about their problems, but if you give them paper and ask them to draw a picture, you may see what is bothering them that way. Yet others can be helped through prayer and special ceremonies, though one cannot determine whether the belief in the prayer cured them, or the prayer itself. All these techniques need to be tried at one time or another."

"Amazing. How old are you? There is so much wisdom resting on young shoulders!"

"I am just 27 years old, Your Majesty, and my wisdom is still growing. But I try. My wife Blorakwé has also completed a Bachelors and is pursuing a medical degree. I just got my medical doctorate last month."

"He's the world's first psychiatrist," added Soru, proudly. "On Gɛdhéma there are places that have one psychiatrist or psychologist for every two thousand people, so we need about 200 more."

"Really?" said the Queen. "And what would they do?"

"Help people with their problems," replied Budhéstu. "But perhaps I should show you our psychiatric wing in the hospital."

"Yes, please do."

He pointed the way forward and the party followed him and the queen. "Blorakwé and I are the physicians, plus we have one more person in training and two nurses

assisting us. Currently, we have fifteen patients. Ten are from Kɛrda province. We haven't gotten many from elsewhere yet, but every week the hospitals hear more about our program and gradually they are sending us mentally ill patients."

"And how many have you cured?"

Budhéstu sighed. "We've had seven patients who basically had mental breakdowns and we were able to help them overcome their difficulties and return home. Another six or eight are doing reasonably well with the experimental medications and they may be able to go home in a few months. But six or eight patients may be incurable and will require permanent institutionalization here in the hospital. Eventually we will need a facility for such patients, similar to the housing for older people. They will require constant care; otherwise they will injure themselves or others, be miserable, and die."

"How big will that facility have to be?"

"I don't know; possibly room for one hundred patients."

The Queen nodded. "Who can I meet?"

"I have a few ready to meet you."

They crossed into the new wing of the hospital and went up a spiral ramp to the third floor. They passed through two pairs of heavy doors and entered a corridor stretching before them with about twenty doors on each side. At the far end they could hear someone crying or talking in a random fashion. Budhéstu took them past the pair of offices on each side of the hall and turned left into the third door. The large room had a long table able to seat thirty people and several couches, and on the couches sat four patients busily patting two very friendly dogs.

“They love the dogs,” Budhéstu quickly explained. “It’s good for everyone. Allow me to introduce everyone. Your Majesty, this Mitré.”

“Greetings, Mitré.”

“Greetings, Queen. So, you’re queen, too?”

That startled Estoibidhé. “I am.”

“So am I!”

“Then I am very happy to meet you!” said Estoibidhé, recovering her composure.

“And this is Sulokwé.”

“Greetings, Sulokwé.”

Sulokwé looked up, nodded, and went back to patting the dog,

“This is Varanu.”

“Greetings, Varanu.”

“Greetings, Your Majesty,” said the man, nodding and smiling to her. Then he rose and bowed. He sat and nudged Sulokwé. “That’s what you’re supposed to do when you meet the Queen.” Sulokwé nodded.

“And this is Vithéstu.”

“Greetings, Vithéstu.

The young man looked up at her. He was twitching. “Th . . .th . . . thank you, your . . . you . . . your Maj . . . Majesty.”

“You are welcome, Vithéstu. Varanu, how is this place?”

“Oh, I love it, Your Majesty. I am no longer hungry and lonely and people here don’t tease me.”

“I’m the Queen,” injected Mitré.

Estoibidhé nodded. “I am so happy that we are able to help all of you. Do you have good food, here?”

“It’s okay!” exclaimed Vithéstu.

“Yes, it’s good,” corrected Varanu.

“They get the standard food the hospital cafeteria prepares. We eat it, too,” said Budhéstu.

“I see.” The Queen reached down and patted the black dog in front of Sulokwé. It caused Sulokwé to look up at the Queen, then look back down and continue to pat the dog.

“Thank you, all of you,” said Her Majesty. She turned toward the door, so Budhéstu led her out. They turned into his office, the second door on the right.

“The rest of the hall is rooms for between one and three patients, or meeting rooms,” Budhéstu explained. The last six rooms have security for potentially violent patients. We’ve had a few of them.”

“What do you do?”

“We can give them a pill to calm them or even put them asleep; if they won’t take the pill, we can give them a shot. We have ways to restrain patients, too. The hospital has two very big security guards, mostly to help us, and sometimes we have to call them.”

“Have you been injured?”

Budhéstu nodded. “This job can be dangerous.”

“How much money do you need?”

Budhéstu considered. “What we need is money for scholarships. We need to train psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychiatric nurses. We can give them classes in the

subject. They'd get their other courses in the various génadɛmas, but they'd need to come here for two or three months at a time and that means a place to stay and money for living costs."

"How many?"

"We'd like to start training ten per year, and eventually expand that to twenty."

The Queen nodded."That's 3,000 or 4,000 dhanay per year? We can do that."

"I suspect it's more, Your Majesty," said Chris. "But I want to pledge, too. I'll donate a thousand."

"I agree, it is important. Thank you, Lord Kristobéru." She turned back to Budhéstu. "Thank you so much for the tour, Honored. I have learned something about my kingdom today that I never knew, and I am enriched by the knowledge. Your service to these people will bring you many rewards from Esto."

"I pray they are worthy, Your Majesty."

She turned to Soru. "It's very good to see you again also, Honored. I didn't realize you were involved in this effort."

"Only tangentially, Your Majesty. Budhéstu and Blorakwé are family; she is my wife's niece and they met at my school in Mɛddoakwes. On my various travels around the kingdom, I remind people of this new facility and what it tries to do."

"He has sent us some of our patients," added Budhéstu.

"And how are your schools?"

Soru smiled; he had hoped she'd ask. "They are doing very well. We now serve nearly 300 students who are blind, deaf, or who have learning difficulties. The schools in Mɛddoakwés and Pértatranisér can house only thirty each; they are small. But both have

many day students. I now have five ‘bus classrooms’; each pair of seats face each other and have a table between them, so the students can use the table while they’re on the bus. In addition to the driver, the bus has a teacher and while the students are riding to school they can learn. Every day a bus goes from the South Shore, the North Shore, and Kɛrda to Pertatranisér; the other buses go from Mɛlwika or from ɛndraidha and Mɛlita to Mɛddoakwés. Some of the rides are pretty long, so the students usually sleep in one direction or the other. In addition, there are now special needs classrooms in twelve high schools, where children with less serious learning disabilities can go to school. Those teachers are paid by the local schools. So we are developing quite a network.”

“That is very impressive,” said the Queen. “I understand that 80% of all first grade aged children will start school this fall! The estimate is that 25% of 18 year olds will complete 12th grade next spring, also. The progress is very impressive.”

“It is nearly miraculous,” agreed Chris. “The literacy rate for 18 year olds is very high, too; 75% or 80%. That means they can acquire skills, work more productively, and earn a higher salary.”

“Extreme poverty is down to 5% of the population,” added the Queen. “We have made some remarkable progress.”

By the end of the afternoon, Chris was finally free of the round of visits with the Queen, including a meeting with the provincial tomi board. He headed to the village of Frachvala, where Liz had been busy with the gabruli all day.

Every year they visited Frachvala--“Broken Wheel” because the village was at the former end of the Royal Road—and they were pleased to see some new development. In

the last twenty years Frachvala's school had raised the village's literacy rate for adults to over fifty percent, and nearly all the children went to grades one through eight. About a third of the older kids took the bus every day to Isurdhuna High School. Thanks to more efficient crop rotation, better use of irrigation water and imported fertilizer, the introduction of corn and tomatoes, and greater emphasis on cash crops like fruits, the farmers' output had nearly tripled and their incomes had gone up fifty percent, to about a thousand dhanay per household. This was sixty percent of the income of families in Isurdhuna and forty percent of the income of families in Mɛlwika, but expenses were somewhat lower, so everyone had several changes of machine-made clothes, beds or futons with sheets, gas for cooking, a collection of wooden or wicker furniture, and most had electric lights. The six hundred people in one hundred twenty-three households even had six telephones, seven tractors, and a dozen pickups among them. A dozen men commuted daily by bus to Isurdhuna for work, a trend that was accelerating as more factory and sales jobs were created in the city.

Liz was at the gabruli when Chris arrived. "Come see," she said to him. She led him into the sewing room, where the women of the village shared use of a dozen sewing machines. She pointed to a corner. "They've agreed to install a washing machine here. On the other side of this wall is the bath house, where there's already hot and cold water, so it'll be easy to extend the pipes through the wall."

"Excellent, and a drainage pipe as well."

"Exactly. I'm still not sure how we'll manage repairs; the things seem to break a lot. But there's a man here who fixes the tractors and pickups and everyone says he has a gift."

“I think he’ll manage,” said Chalané, the head of the gabruli. “If not, don’t underestimate the ability of some of the women here to fix things!”

Chris smiled. “That’s the spirit. There are several other villages in the valley here with bath houses, right? Maybe all of them will want a washing machine.”

“We’ll see,” said Liz. “Two women from Justha were here and they were interested in seeing the machine work. I think once one is installed and people see what it can do, they’ll want to use it.”

“Give the other villages a few months,” agreed Chalané.

“Excellent. My dear, we need to get back to the hotel to call Thornton and Jordan. They’re calling in half an hour.”

“Oh, that’s right. I’m done here, just give me a few minutes to pick up my things.” Liz walked back into the other room to pick up her purse and a satchel with papers she carried with her. They said goodbye to the women in the gabruli—only a few were left because it was time to cook supper—and walked to the car.

The hotel in Justha was just ten minutes away. They drove down the gravel road excessively dignified with the name “Route 46” southward along the base of the escarpment until they came to the road leading to it. Since they had invested in the hotel years ago, which was located next to a very pleasant hot spring, they could stay in it for free. They went upstairs and entered their room just as Chris’s cell phone rang.

“Hey, Thornton!" said Chris, pushing a button so it was set on speaker phone. “Good morning to you!”

“Good evening to you,” Thornton replied. Mɛlwika was exactly twelve hours ahead of Kɛrda. “Jordan’s here with me; we’re in your office in the tomi building. We’ve

got lots of little things. We got a report from city hall yesterday about tax revenues, which are still running twelve percent over last year."

"The economy is absolutely red hot," agreed Chris. "More people than ever came on pilgrimage; that's not a rumor, that's a statistic. Her Majesty is in a very generous mood and has been giving away grants every day for one thing or another. In Bɛllɛdha, she forgave all the loans to the provincial tomi. In Néfa she said that the workers should elect two representatives to the Rudhisér Tomi board next year and asked the Board to double the profit sharing to the workers, which the Board agreed to do."

"I was wondering whether the Miller Tomi planned to increase the profit share of its employees," said Jordan.

"The Board meets next month and I think they should. Profits are record high, so this is the time to reallocate the pie slices. Any news from the granges?"

"No," said Thornton. "I asked Chandu yesterday. But Wɛranisaju is back from the Mémɛnɛghonɛ after ten days there, experimenting with the new pneumatic chain saw. It works pretty well, but he came up with a number of improvements. They'll take a month or so to complete the modifications, then the device will go into production in Mɛlwika. The Mémɛnɛghonɛ will get the first three, and everyone will have to go to them for training!"

"Oh, that's good," said Chris. "That'll encourage them."

"They're doing better," said Thornton. "The increase in mining is bringing them more work and money, they're getting pretty good at producing lead and mercury safely—Amos stopped there two days ago to check—and now they have the possibility

of exporting timber. The lord's nephew is coming here in two months to negotiate a contract with the gas company for wood."

"That's excellent."

"We can't forget their neighbors, the Késtonɛ, though," said Liz. "We need to get back there in the next few months and help them brainstorm about their continued advancement. Say, Thornton, anything new from the Mɛlwika Gabruli?"

"Yes. Génésɛ dropped off a report last night. She has gone to all five of the bathhouses here in town. Three of them are interested in purchasing washing machines. They think they'll complement their existing business pretty well."

"Good, and the gabruli will set up a laundry as well. That should occupy a dozen or more machines!"

"How many more do you have to sell or lease?" asked Jordan.

"We paid for fifty on the spot and promised to purchase 250 more. But it'll take a year or more to distribute them all. People have to see them working, then try them, then someone has to find a place where the machine can access hot and cold water."

"And the soap has to be available, and someone needs to be available to fix them," added Chris. "It's a short term gamble and a long-term sure thing."

"Yes, well put," said Liz.

442.

Véspa

Very end of Dhonménu /late August, 20/638

Rostamu looked over the waters of the Achmani River and the big field in front of them. “It should be here, shouldn’t it?”

Aisugu opened the folder filled with paperwork for the Mitranimɛla ball bearing factory and looked at the map again. He brought it over so Rostamu could look as well. “Yes, this is the place.”

“How could it be? There are orders here for machinery for making ball bearings, construction invoices . . . 60,000 dhanay of expenditures altogether.”

“I smell a rat. Mitranu has a bad reputation, according to my father.”

“I’m glad you decided to come with me,” replied Rostamu, looking at his 21 year old brother in law’s sergeant's uniform and sword. Rostamu was barely 19 and had a thin, scraggly beard, which looked even worse because it was close cropped, as was the fashion of Eryan men. He was not very impressive looking. “We had better not assume the worst, though. Let’s go ask the lord.”

“I agree. I’m glad I came with you.”

The two men climbed back into their pickup truck and headed into Mitranimɛla, a town of some three and a half thousand. It had some trappings of prosperity: a water tower, hydrants, several very pretty public water fountains with a statue of the god Mitro in the middle, and biogas. But the muddy central square had just five small businesses

and the only paved street was Route 55, which bisected the town. The public school struck Rostamu as rather small.

They had to ask directions to the lord's house. When they first came to it, they were impressed; but then they saw an ever bigger, newer, more impressive house behind. "I'm afraid I know where the money went," said Aisugu.

"Let's not jump to conclusions," replied Rostamu.

They parked their "Mennea Development Consultants" pickup truck in front and knocked on the door's big knocker. The butler answered and was rather cold to them when they explained they were Rostamu Domo-Menneai and Aisugu son of General Aisɛndru from Mennea Development Consulting, here to make an audit of the ball bearing factory. He didn't even admit them into the house. Ten minutes later, he returned. "The Lord is not available and said that you should leave his town immediately or he will call the police and ask them to arrest you."

"But we are here because the agreement the lord signed to receive the royal development grants specified that Mennea Development Consulting would audit the expenditures," explained Rostamu.

"Regardless, you have heard the lord's message. You are trespassing in his town. Shall we call the police?"

"No, that won't be necessary," replied Rostamu, barely disguising his anger. The two young men turned and walked back to their pickup.

"Now what?" asked Aisugu, once they were inside.

"I don't know. We'll drive back to Ora." Rostamu sent steam to the cylinders, turned the truck around, and headed back to the main street. Once there, he rolled down

his window and hailed a man walking by. “Sir, can you tell us where the ball bearing factory is?”

“The what?”

“The ball bearing factory. Mitranimɛla is supposed to have a ball bearing factory under construction.”

The man frowned. “I think I heard some talk about building something on the big field on the east side of town.”

“Thank you.” Rostamu rolled up the window and started to drive. He pulled out his cell phone and pointed to the folder full of papers. “Take my phone and call the company that issued the invoices for the machines.”

“I’ll call them all,” agreed Aisugu.

Amos looked at the maps covering the wall of the Royal Geological Survey’s map room and said to Thornton, “I envy you working here. I love all these maps!”

“It’s a real privilege to make them,” agreed Thornton. He looked around the room at the dozen men and two women working at desks, light tables, and stereoscopic mapping tables. “These people are real artists, as well as scientists. The work they do is beautiful as well as precise.”

“Truly. This is one of the greatest successes of Mɛlwika Génadɛma. Both the army and the queen have agreed to let us do this work for the entire kingdom.”

“We get a lot of requests from them, too, especially for strategic areas. So, you were wondering about the northern end of Ghéslona?”

"And just north of the Long Valley. The last month in Ghéslona and Géndona has highlighted a basic problem they have: anything they import or export has to go up and down almost 3,000 meters of mountain roads. It's extremely expensive. The Long Valley has it almost as bad; they require about 2,000 vertical meters of travel."

"It may be there's an easier route via the North Polar Basin, except maybe in the winter. I don't know; I haven't looked at that area closely. We have aerial photos and some rough contour lines for the areas, though." Thornton walked to a map on the wall that showed the numbers of every quadrangle map. Then he walked to a cabinet, opened a drawer, and pulled out a big map of part of the north polar basin.

He and Amos spread it out and leaned close. "Not too many contour lines."

"But one every 40 meters is enough to get a sense of heights." Thornton pointed at the craggy end of the Spine. "This is a dramatic, glaciated area; you should see the aerial photos. This is where the glacier that periodically blocks the Yɛjisrumakwés originates. The Spine is as high here as it is at the equator because the impact that formed the Northern Polar Basin threw a lot of the ejecta this way. But the mountain slopes downward quite a bit to the east. In fact, the plateau and hill country of the Ghéslonɛ is highest near the equator and drops down quite a bit to the north."

"It looks like the saddle between the North Polar Basin and the Long Valley is at 1,500 meters. I'm surprised. Long Lake reached just about 1,500 meters before the aliens blasted tunnels around the dam and began to drain it."

"Did it spill into the Northern Basin?"

"I don't think so. We'd have to check. But this does answer the question I have long had: how did the Long Valley drain to the sea before the aliens blasted the

Glugluba? This place is ten million or more years old, but the glubas are only a few tens of thousands of years old. Before that, Éra was dotted with lakes. The North Polar Basin was an arm of the sea, the Kaitɛrɛ valley was underwater, Kɛrda was a lake . . . but as Éra's water slowly escaped into space and sea level dropped, they cut the glubas to keep the sea supplied."

"Interesting. Sounds like a mystery to explore. But could a road be put through?"

"We'd have to walk it with a civil engineer to be sure. But this looks promising." Thornton put his finger on the map and traced a line northward along a wide area clear of contour lines—fairly flat—then along a creek that flowed from northern Ghéslonɛ country down into a valley that started near the northern top of the Long Valley but ran northward into the North Polar Basin, where it joined the Yɛjisrumakwés.

"Yes, that appears to be a creek that followed the old Long Lake drainage, if it really drained northward."

"Exactly. We'd have to check it out. With horses, starting at Khɛrmdhuna, it might take a week."

"Can you contact the army and ask them?"

Thornton shook his head. "They're scattered about, and a lot of the decision makers are in Ora now because the Queen's there for the next two weeks."

"Oh, that's right. I have to be in Ora next week for the Véspa development conference and before it starts, I'll see Gɛlnébɛlu. If you can get me a close up map and some aerial photos, I'll ask him."

"Excellent."

A week later, Amos was wandering through the big royal palace in Ora in search of the meeting room. The army had an engineering office in the palace, from which they ran all road and dam building efforts on the western shore. As he approached room 112—all rooms in the palace were conveniently numbered—he saw General Gɛlnébɛlu, who was in charge of the Engineering Corps, approaching.

"Hail, Lord General! How are you and the family?"

"Well, Lord Amos; my son is now in the génadɛma here studying engineering. How are you?"

"We are all well, thank you."

"And the waterproof cable production?"

Amos nodded. "The improved cable looks excellent. I checked yesterday when I was at home. We'll have the electrical and telephone cables for the Arjdhura crossing ready in another month."

"Good, we are anxious to connect Sumilara. Not only will it give them the power to develop, but it will anchor them into the kingdom more firmly than ever."

"Indeed, and tie the two shores more closely together as well. Say, I want to talk to you about a new road building project. I have a new contour map just produced by the survey and aerial photos. It turns out there's an excellent route for a road into the Long Valley from the North Polar Basin. Route 92 can be extended straight north and east to Route 21 by Khɛrmdhuna. The vertical rise is 1,600 meters and the drop into the valley is 1,000; about two thirds as much as Route 55 from Ora. Furthermore, Route 96 can be extended northward from Moruagras and can connect to 92 at a spot where it begins to drop towards the Polar Basin, which will facilitate shipping to the two tribes there."

“Really? Yes, we’d like to know about that. But I can’t talk now, or later today; maybe in a few days. The Queen herself is coming, and she should be here any minute.”

“Really? Yes, this must wait.”

Amos followed the general into the meeting room, where two assistants were setting out reports around a big map of the Snowy Range and the Glugluba. Amos glanced at the map and the report, but the Queen entered a minute later with Kandékwɛs, Lord Mitruidatu—the Lord of Ora and third son of the previous lord—and their various assistants. “So, General, what do you have for me?” she said.

“Thank you, Your Majesty, and thank you for coming. I think we have a plan that will allow us to build a major hydroelectric dam across the Glugluba at a reasonable cost.”

“So I understood, from your summary yesterday. Tell me how it works.”

“Certainly.” Gɛlnébɛlu pointed to the map. “Note the path of the South Rudhisér River. It joins the northern and western branches near Isurdhuna, but trace it southward to its headwaters.” He followed its course upstream with its finger. “Basically, it starts at the top of the northern rim of the Glugluba. Then look southward and you will see that a creek—the Isasruma, Arrow Creek—flows into the Glugluba at the very same spot. It appears that when the aliens melted the Glugluba, it cut across the Southern Branch of the Rudhisér and left the Isasruma as an orphan. There is a valley on both sides of the Glugluba filled with rock and sand 20 meters deep. Quite a lot of material that could be used to build a hydroelectric dam.”

“Really? How would you get it into the Glugluba; push it?”

“Basically, Your Majesty. The Glugluba is quite wide at its top; about 500 meters. We would extend a series of strong, anchored cables from side to side and build a small suspension bridge. It could be used to transport equipment from one side to the other, but its main purpose would be to suspend chutes from both sides, down which the debris would be dropped, and to suspend electrical cables to get the electricity out. It might even be possible to use it as the top of a crane to lower materials into the Glugluba.”

“Really?” The queen was impressed by the idea.

“How will you keep the current from washing the debris away as it falls?” asked Kandékwɛs.

“We’d transport concrete and steel pipes and other materials down the Glugluba using special vehicles that can float but also have very large wheels. The water in the Glugluba is usually less than a meter deep, so the vehicles would ride on their wheels most of the time. We’d divert the river into a pipe or we’d excavate a tunnel. There is a tunnel the aliens excavated there and we may be able to use it. Then we’d build a diversion dam to dry up the riverbed and allow the debris to rain down. Periodically, we’d bulldoze and compress it and add clay, which we’d have to transport down the gluba as well.”

“How tall?” asked Amos.

“We can certainly do 200 meters, maybe 250.”

Amos was startled by that. “That’s a huge dam.”

“How much power can it make?” asked the Queen.

Amos answered that question. “The Delongisér can make roughly 1,000 kilowatts for every meter it drops, so a 200 meter dam can make almost 200,000 kilowatts. I’d say 180,000 would be more accurate.”

“And our entire electrical system now puts out about 160,000,” added Gɛlnébɛlu.

“How much power do we need?” she asked.

Everyone turned to Amos. “We have enough right now,” he replied. “But our economy is growing and we will need more. Our population is 425,000. On Gɛdhéma, advanced societies of that size would need about 425,000 kilowatts. But it’ll be a long time before we get that developed.”

“How long?”

Amos considered. “Twenty or thirty years? Maybe even longer.”

“So we will need this project.”

“Or another one that is similar in size. There are three large rivers that fall into the Long Valley from the west. The biggest one is by Moruagras. We can take one of them, put it in a pipe that runs part way down the cliffs, and generate power where it comes out of the pipe. When we need more power, we can install a second pipe that goes farther down the side of the valley.”

“How expensive would that be?”

Amos looked at the engineers, who were extremely unhappy he had mentioned an alternative. “I don’t think anyone knows,” said Gɛlnébɛlu quickly.

“It can be estimated,” replied Amos. “Potentially, the power output is immense; bigger than the Glugluba’s potential.”

“How much would this dam across the Glugluba cost?” the Queen asked.

Gɛlnébɛlu hesitated. “Perhaps five million dhanay.”

“Do you know?” asked the Queen, persisting.

“We can estimate it. That’s our best estimate. It is a very large number, I know, Your Majesty, but the project can be completed over five years, so the cost each year is about one million. This is a very exciting project for the army and will be a glorious accomplishment for you. People will praise you for its boldness.”

“I see.” She looked at the General and wondered who wanted the credit for boldness and bigness. No one had ever authorized a single project that large before, except for some of the kingdom’s major highways. “Can the project be done in phases? Can you build a 50-meter dam first, for example, and raise it?”

“That would be very difficult to do, because the structure is at the bottom of a 2,000 meter deep canyon and because the construction material has to be brought from upstream before a reservoir is created.”

“So, in phases it would be even more expensive?”

“Exactly, Your Majesty.”

“I see.” She thought for a moment. “There are two conditions under which a project of this sort can be pursued. First, there has to be as accurate an estimate of the costs as possible. Second, there needs to be an accurate and complete study of alternative projects that can satisfy the kingdom’s needs for electricity. Lord Amos, how soon will the electric company need new sources?”

“I’d say, perhaps 2 or 3 years, Your Majesty. This year, for example, the economy appears set to grow twelve percent, which is just about as fast as it has ever grown in the past. The need for electricity will grow about fifteen percent. We are satisfying that

greater need by connecting together the existing dams more efficiently. We have always been able to send electricity from place to place, but only a relatively small amount of the output, so each hydroelectric dam mostly served local needs. With the undersea power cable across Sumilara, we will have a much greater ability to route power from one shore to the other, especially power produced by the existing dam on the Glugluba near Ora to the eastern shore, where the existing dams have reached capacity. That means that the lines around the northern and southern shores can supply more power to Tripola and Bɛllɛdha, where demand is growing fast."

"That explains the huge amount of money the Development Ministry has been giving the electric company," said the Queen.

"It also explains the blackouts at eclipse time," added Kandékwɛs.

"Indeed, the electric company has had a lot of trouble keeping the lights on for the eastern and northern shores, lately," agreed Amos. "The Mɛlwika, Gordha, and Dhudhuba dams have to operate at full power most of the day to supply the eastern shore. Ora's power can't get much beyond Néfa in the north and Tripola in the south because the power lines can't carry more. The new power lines will distribute Ora's extra power farther."

"It sounds like we need more lines around the northern and southern shores, so we aren't dependent on the line across Sumilara. Thank you, Lord Amos. General Gɛlnébɛlu, can you give us a detailed report about this project and other options in six to twelve months?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

“Include some information about the impact of the choices on the environment, also. Thank you, gentlemen, for your fascinating presentation.” Her Majesty turned and headed out of the meeting room. As they went down the hallway, she turned to Kandékwɛs and Mitruidatu. “This would be an incredible project to complete; no question about that. But we must be cautious about doing big projects just because they are big. I sensed that was a motivation.”

“But Ora does need a project like this,” replied Mitruidatu.

“Does it? Your 100-meter dam cost over a million dhanay and supplies almost two thirds of the kingdom’s power. Your city uses only a third of the dam’s electricity. The kingdom needs the new dam, not Ora.”

“I see your point, Your Majesty,” Mitruidatu said quickly.

That put her in a bad mood. Kandékwɛs noticed and put his hand on his wife’s shoulder. “Be gentle with the next one.”

“I know, but I’m not inclined,” she replied.

The Queen and her consort headed back to their private quarters and she summoned Lord Mitranu of Mitranimɛla, who was awaiting his call. He was nervous when he entered her meeting room.

“Welcome, Lord,” she said, when he entered. She did not rise for him; he dropped to one knee.

“Thank you, Your Majesty,” he replied.

“You may rise and sit next to us.” She pointed to a chair on the other side of Kandékwɛs and picked up a folder. “So, Lord, I have here the application to build a ball bearing factory. It specifies the construction of a brick building on a concrete foundation

and the purchase of equipment from manufacturers in Ora and Mɛlwika. Altogether, the project is to cost 80,000 dhanay, employ 15 people, and produce ball bearings worth 100,000 dhanay per year. What can you tell me about the plans?"

"They have been badly delayed, Your Majesty, but I plan to proceed with them immediately and complete the factory within a year."

"I see. So." She picked up another folder. "I have here the receipts for bricks, concrete, steel reinforcing rods, and tiles to build the factory building, but I am told there is no building."

"I'd have to ask the foreman of the construction about that."

"Is there any work on the factory building?"

"I believe the hole is there and the foundation is being poured."

"Oh? When did they start?"

"A few weeks ago, Your Majesty."

"Really. But these are receipts for materials delivered several months ago."

"I . . . don't know, Your Majesty."

"Do you think the foreman might have cheated you?"

"It's possible."

"Then there are these receipts. They are for the ballbearing factory equipment. Were they paid for and delivered?"

"I think so."

"Then where were they stored, if there's no building to put them in?"

"I'll have to ask, Your Majesty."

“Please do.” She reached into the folder and pulled out a letter. “This is a copy of a letter from the Mɛlwika factory that manufactured some of the equipment saying you ordered the equipment, then canceled the order, but kept the forms. And this is a similar letter from the Ora factory that made some other items for the factory. They both say you canceled the order.” She handed the copies to Mitranu and looked at him closely as he guiltily looked at the letters. “I understand, Lord, that you have built a large, beautiful new house in Mitranimɛla.”

“I . . . have, Your Majesty. It was necessary to convince my wife to leave our house here in Ora and move back to our town.”

“I see. Lord, did you spend the 60,000 dhanay that has already been advanced to you—to your personal account—on your house instead of on the factory?” She looked straight at him, her gaze intimidatingly powerful.

“Your Majesty . . . I have borrowed the money for the factory to build the house, but I still intend to build the factory.”

“And where will you get the 60,000 dhanay?”

“I have money in the bank, and the town pays me about 100,000 dhanay in taxes every year.”

“But surely most of that goes to the schools, the police, and the sick and poor.”

“A . . . lot of it does, yes, but the factory will increase my taxes by 10,000 per year, too.”

“I see. Just think, if you had built the factory, you’d have 10,000 per year right away, and you could have borrowed 60,000 from the bank to build your house, and you could have easily paid it off.”

“Please, Your Majesty . . . I apologize for this reallocation of the development grant and I assure you I will get the factory built right away.”

“The factory will indeed be built right away, but not by you. I want you to give a check to the Royal Exchequer for 60,000 dhanay by the end of this month.”

“Sixty thousand? Your Majesty, I don’t have 60,000 dhanay laying around! I can’t get it that quickly!”

“I think you can if you contact your friends and borrow some from them. You know all the other lords in Véspa, I am sure. You are all friends, right? Most of you were part of a group that was very close to Lord Mitru, before he passed. Ask them.”

“That would be humiliating, Your Majesty!”

“Would you prefer that I consider other measures, then, Lord? They will not be as generous, I assure you. I will not tolerate theft of royal taxes. We live in a new world; a world of courts, prosecutors, and prisons. A world where some towns and villages have toothless lords, or no lords at all.”

His eyes grew large at the threat. “Your Majesty, I am . . . a Lord.”

“You are, at the moment. Consider the fate of Lord Spondu, then his son Spondanu, or the temporary fates of Lords Déolu and Albanu, or the shake up my mother brought about here in Véspa when Mitru died. Lords serve at the pleasure of the monarch. Remember that.” She pointed to the door. “You may now go.”

“Th . . thank you, Your Majesty.” Mitranu rose hastily, trying not to look angry, and left the room.

She turned to Kandékwɛs. “What do you think?”

Kandékwɛs considered. “He’s a scoundrel.”

She nodded. “He is. He has a week to return the money. If he does, I may strip him of his rank anyway. Certainly, I’ll appoint someone to run the town. If he fails, he’ll lose his rank and I’ll have him prosecuted for theft.”

Kandékwɛs nodded. “It’s time for that.”

443.

Development Conference

Early Abɛlménu/early September, 20/638

The hundred men and women attending the Véspa Development Conference applauded briskly as Jordan stepped down from the podium. “Thank you, Lord Jordanu,” said Aryu, the Duke of Véspa, who was chairing the conference. “Your summary of recent efforts at development by granges, small businesses, and small government efforts all around the kingdom greatly complemented Lord Kris’s review of the work of the tomis this morning. You are a worthy grandson to him! We are grateful for your presentation. Now, we have a series of workshops. Agricultural development will be the focus in room 215. In 216 you will find a discussion of industrial development priorities. Commercial and tourist efforts will be the focus in 217. Finally, in 218 there will be consultation about town planning. We will reconvene together at 4 to hear reports from the four rooms. Thank you, everyone.”

Everyone rose to head for their sessions or escape the meeting altogether. Several came up to Jordan. Lord Jendu of Kadakvas was the first. “Thank you for your advice about a hemp weaving facility,” he said. “I was able to talk to some people this morning before I drove back up here and we definitely want to move forward, but I will need to invest only 5,000 dhanay this year, I’m afraid. I think we can do 10,000 next year, though.”

“I see. Thank you for letting me know. I’ll make a note about that when we follow up next week. Why the decrease? Tax revenues have been really strong this year. In fact, you’re the third person today who told me they need to cut back a bit.”

“Well, we’re trying to help a friend in trouble.”

“I see. I’m grateful to know that.” He turned to the second man.

“Lord Jordanu, I just want to express my thanks. I am Sujvétu and my father is Lord of Triakvas. After you led the youth team through southern Véspa, my father was extremely impressed and decided I had to get a proper ‘modern’ education, so I went to the génadɛmas in Tripola, Mɛddwoglubas, Ora, and Néfa—and moved around a lot!—but eventually I got a kwétɛryɛri in accounting and business, and now I am development officer for our village. We’re dedicating a larger fraction of local taxes to development than ever before, getting royal grants, and we’re moving forward well.”

“Thank you, I’m so glad to hear about it! That was quite early and we really didn’t know what we were doing! We did a lot of singing and shared some advice, and built an occasional water tower.”

“Exactly; we got a water tower that year, too. But among the youth in that team were the men who went on to install biogas and village water and sewer systems! What an important group it was. I just wanted to say thank you.”

“Thank you, and thank you for all your efforts on behalf of your people.” Jordan extended his hands and they shook.

The young man moved to the side and Jordan inwardly braced himself for his next visitor: Mɛdhkordé, the head of all the prostitutes in Kostakhéma. He had no idea why she had showed up at the Véspa Development Conference.

“Don’t worry, I’m not going to ask you for anything,” she said, extending her hand to Jordan. He shook her hand and realized she was speaking with a Véspa accent, something he had never heard before. “I want to thank you as well. You may recall, back in the spring, your grandfather and you visited Moruagras, and you talked to Lord Ornkordu about my old house and restaurant near the old fort. When the soldiers left I had abandoned it and thought it would be a complete loss. But a few weeks later Lord Ornkordu visited and asked to purchase it from me for 2,000 dhanay, which was a very fair price. He said your grandfather and you had talked to him about turning it into a hotel. I accepted the offer and sank some of the money into my new hotel in Kostakhéma, which proved a good investment indeed. So I am grateful for your grandfather and you for your suggestion to the Lord.”

“Oh, that is kind of you. Thank you, Mɛdhkordé. I was surprised to see you here at this conference!”

“Well, I’m from here originally and I love my home city. And I’m always looking for new business opportunities. Of all the cities, Ora is the least conservative. The temple here is weak and the lords have always been pragmatic men. I think there are business opportunities here for hotels and restaurants, and perhaps a Men’s Club, shall we say. And as I said, I don’t need to ask you for anything. There are potential business partners here, because this is a practical place.”

“I see. Interesting. Well, what shall I say; good luck?”

She smiled. “I’ll accept that! And all my best wishes to your efforts to serve people, Jordanu. I am one of many people who are very impressed. But be wise and

careful to protect yourself, because I have seen the less moral, more violent side of this world, and I assure you it is strong."

"Thank you, that is good advice."

She offered her hand again and Jordan shook it, then she stepped away.

The room had mostly emptied out, but Chris was in the back talking to Wɛpokɛstɛr. So he walked over to them. "What did Mɛdhkordé want?" asked Chris.

"She wanted to thank us for encouraging Lord Ornkordu to buy her whorehouse in Moruagras! She invested the money in her operation in Kostakhéma and may start a hotel and restaurant here."

"Really?" said Wɛpokɛstɛr, shaking his head. "But I suppose if there's any place that can accommodate it, it is here, the most corrupt of our cities."

"Your presentation was incredible," said Chris. "I see some maturation of expectations at this conference. People are no longer asking what grand project they can bring to their village; they're asking what are its resources and needs, and how can we match them."

"I think that's true, too," agreed Wɛpokɛstɛr. "The provincial assembly last week seemed generally more mature as well."

"I've had three lords approach me this morning and back out or scale down their development commitments, though. I was very surprised. One said they were helping as friend."

Wɛpokɛstɛr smiled at that. "Interesting, but I suppose I shouldn't be surprised. I will tell this to you in confidence: Her Majesty, Jordan, is immensely grateful for your detailed report that Lord Mitranu of Mitranimɛla has misappropriated development funds.

She requested some additional information from various sources—like the Royal Bank—and called the lord in four days ago. She gave him until tomorrow to return the 60,000 dhanay. I'm here to speak to you further about the matter, actually, and since we appear to have privacy, we can discuss it right here. How have the other development grants to Mitranimɛla worked out?"

"There have been several others; I checked right before I wrote the report for Her Majesty. The first development grant was for the biogas system and I audited it personally; I even met with the Lord and his son. It was executed carefully and properly. I also audited the water and sewer system at the same time, and they were well done. But it had been a struggle; Lord Mitranu's son, also named Mitranu, was in charge of the water and sewer system and constantly tried to modify the contract. He and I had some difficult exchanges over the telephone. That was over three years ago. Then the grange asked for two development grants, because the lord did not help them with the building or the tractors. We oversaw those two grants and audited the results. They did a pretty good job. The grange building was designed to be too small for the town, and they soon asked for another grant to expand it, which we oversaw as well."

"It sounds like a pattern of neglect."

Jordan nodded. "When Rostamu returned from the audit—it was my brother who went!—I asked him about Mitranimɛla. Route 55 was gravel when I drove through, but now it's paved, but it's the only pavement in the entire town. Even the town square is dirt. It has five small businesses for 3,500 people; some encouragement of local business development is in order. Right now, people do a lot of their shopping in Ora. As crop prices continue to fall, men are commuting to Ora for work, or they're moving away. The

town needs some manufacturing. The lord's son said they wanted a regional high school. I doubt they can get that, but it is the largest place in northern Véspa, so they could get some regional services. He also said his father was almost desperate to get waterpower on the Achmani, but no one would invest in it."

"That may change," said Wɛpokɛstɛr. "We'll need more power soon."

"The Achmani is probably twice the size of the Arjakwés at Mɛlwika, so it should have some potential. It's actually the biggest river in Véspa other than the Dɛlongisér, of course."

"Thank you, that's useful. One more question: if Her Majesty were to appoint a town manager, whom should she consider?"

"I don't know. But the grange seems to be fairly well run; the grants were executed well."

"Do you know any members of the local Spiritual Assembly?"

"There's Dr. Datoféstu. He completed his medical degree a year ago and settled there. He's chair of the Assembly."

"He's a marvelous man, and I think he must be loved by many people in Mitranimɛla," added Chris.

Wɛpokɛstɛr scribbled down the name. "Is there a gabruli?"

Chris shook his head. "I don't think so."

"Thank you. We know we can count on the two of you for reliable information. Her Majesty will be very grateful, I'm sure."

Thornton was surprised to receive a request to do a one-day survey of the geology of Mitranimɛla the next day. The palace specified a study in particular of the hydroelectric potential of the gluba. So he studied maps closely with his team, then he and two geologists jumped into a pickup about noon for the five-hour drive, arriving there just before the eclipse. As soon as the sun reappeared, about 10 a.m. local time, they hiked fifteen kilometers up the Achmani River's northern side, ate lunch/supper, crossed the river on a hunter's footbridge, and headed back to town on the south side. They stopped at various prominent rock outcrops and mineral deposits reported in field notes from prior years and assessed various potential sites for dams and diversion canals.

As they drove through town on their way to Ora, Thornton saw an Ora taxi in front of Dr. Datoféstu's office. Having heard a bit about the situation from his father—whom he had called right after the palace had called him—he slowed down and waved to the doctor, whom he knew slightly. Datoféstu waved back. The taxi was right behind them, all the way to the palace.

The men then sat in an office, drank a lot of coffee, and drafted a ten page report by midnight Ora time. When Thornton delivered the report to Her Majesty's office, Datoféstu and four others were just leaving. Even though the sun was rising in Mɛlwika by then, the three geologists obtained bedrooms in the palace to sleep before driving home. The next morning, as they were about to leave, the queen summoned them to ask questions about the report and obtain a map of the township. As they left to drive home, a delegation of eight local lords was waiting to meet with her. She admitted them a few minutes later.

“Your Majesty, we have come to plead for your cousin and our cousin,” said Duke Aryu. “His action was unconscionable and a clear violation of your trust. You have every right to admonish and fine him. But for the sake of the honor of all of us, we beg you not to strip him of his rank or prosecute him for a crime. Our honor has taken a terrible beating, again and again, over the last two decades. Our people question our judgment and complain about our rank and its attendant rights. Your actions can strengthen our position, rather than weakening it, and we beg you to consider them carefully.”

“What would you have me do, Honored Duke?”

“Allow him to pay back the 60,000 over a year or two and monitor any development grants more rigorously in the future. You can be sure he will be much more diligent in the future. All of us will.”

“I see.” She looked at the eight lords, most of whom had title over new villages and towns carved out of the hills after the sea had returned. They had all received their villages in return for loyalty to Mitru, not for their desire to help farmers fleeing the rising sea. “My lords, once upon a time, everyone on this world scraped and struggled for a living. Men exploited their wives and children to work their farms, and enjoyed a bit of comfort in consequence. Lords exploited the farmers and artisans in order to live in a bit more comfort and to maintain order in their villages. The monarch exploited everyone and had an army to keep the peace, preserve order, and guarantee the flow of taxes, and lived in even more comfort. And we all died young, because that’s the way it was. That was life.

“Now we can live longer and we all can have more comfort. A more wealthy farmer or factory worker might own more clothes than some of the poorer lords used to

have. But this greater wealth comes with other requirements. One is education: Farmers and artisans cannot earn more without being able to acquire more skills, and that usually means they have to be able to read. The other requirement is the rule of law: We can no longer just exploit people to get ahead and tell ourselves that is just the way it is. When people are more educated, they have a keener sense of justice and resent exploitation. They want to know and understand. They want a say.

"So what you say is your right and privilege, for many intelligent people, is simply exploitation. And when a lord feels he can just claim back some tax money paid by his people to the crown because, after all, it came from his people, it is now theft from the people as well as from the crown. The crown can forgive cousins because they are cousins. The crown can settle a moral indiscretion involving a cousin quietly and privately. But it is now a theft from the people as well, so the crown cannot just look away or demand repayment. The crown has a responsibility to the people as well as to the lords. There must be a severe penalty for this theft, lords, or the reputations of all of you will suffer, as will mine. Widumaj calls on us to be servants to the people, and servants we must be."

"Your Majesty, we have made our plea. What you ask is a huge change, very quickly. This change must occur gradually."

"Twenty years isn't gradual enough? What was the fate of three of Lord Mitru's sons? Of the lords of Néfa, Tripola, and Bɛllɛdha? Of the young men of the Old Houses who tried to assassinate my mother and brother? Of the priests in Isurdhuna who tried to assassinate the two new high priests there? How many lessons do you need? How

gradually must this change come? No, I am sorry. Lord Mitranu has failed to repay the 60,000 that he unlawfully took for himself."

"He was able to turn over 43,000 to the Exchequer last night," said Aryu. "I am sure in a few days we can raise the rest."

"You had better. I will now expect it. But it will not change my judgment, lords." She looked at them one by one. "Thank you so much for coming to see me."

"Thank you, Your Majesty," replied Duke Aryu. He and the others bowed and left her meeting chamber.

"I'm shocked that they come begging for him to be forgiven, and they manage to raise only 43,000 to help him," said Kandékwɛs.

The queen nodded and turned to Wɛpokɛstɛr, who had been diligently taking notes the entire time. "Summon Lord Mitranu, so we can inform him of his fate. Then we'll call the new Mitranimɛla Town Council and tell them to set our visit for 3 p.m."

Mitranimɛla was a fairly large place—a town, not a village—but the news of the queen's visit spread like wildfire, as did rumors of the reason. The fact that the news was released by the Director of the Grange and not the lord himself, who wasn't even in town, spoke volumes. When the queen's entourage rolled into the town square, the dirt plaza was filled shoulder to shoulder, with crowds spreading up the four main streets and blocking Route 55.

Right behind Her Majesty's limousine was a pickup truck equipped with loudspeakers, with a speaking platform on the flatbed. The town police—all four of them, with the aid of several volunteers—had cleared a spot in front of the town's store where

the vehicles could park. Waiting to greet her were the five members of the council she had appointed. All the details had been handled via the Queen's cell phone during the drive.

When she stepped up the stairs in the back of the pickup and onto the speakers platform, the crowd began to applaud vigorously. She smiled and nodded to them and waited for them to stop.

"Thank you for your warm welcome," she began. "I have never been to Mitranimɛla before and am immediately impressed by its beautiful location in a big bowl in the mountains, with verdant fields and fertile rice paddies, tall vigorous forests all around, and a powerful river. The people I have met from here have all impressed me as loving parents, dedicated servants to the crown and the people, and well-wishers of their fellow residents.

"I have come because, for some time, the palace has been giving development grants to this town. As a result, you have a water tower, a series of beautiful public fountains to give you safe drinking water, gas for cooking in most houses, and a large, prosperous grange. I want to see Mitranimɛla continue to grow and flourish. The ball bearing factory that has long been planned will be built in the next six months. In addition, the Royal Geological Survey informs me that a 5,000 kilowatt hydroelectric plant can be built on the Achmani where the river enters this bowl. I have authorized the Exchequer to release the funds necessary to build that plant next year. I have also directed the Army to pave this public square and all of the town's main streets and alleys in the next 18 months."

She paused as the crowd applauded vigorously. She waited patiently and nodded several times to people in the crowd. “I will return here next Abɛlménu to see whether the work is progressing. I am sure it will be.

“To coordinate this work I have appointed a Town Council consisting of Bithu Ervárjɛri, Jérdu Jérdusunu, Marju Toktɛr, Dr. Datoféstu Néfai, and Florané Varánuduktár. You know all five of them. The first three were your highest vote getters for the Provincial Assembly; Bithu, whom the others have elected as acting Mayor of Mitranimɛla, is the head of the grange. Dr. Datoféstu is your new physician in town and has a reputation as someone who cares for everyone in town. And Florané; what can I say? How many grandmothers do you know who went back to school and got herself a degree to teach children in your school? Can you think of someone with a bigger heart? I am also very impressed by her wisdom.

“I have authorized the Town Council to collect all the taxes due in this town. They will pay to the province and the crown what is due to them. The remainder is 100,000 dhanay. I have told the Town Council that Lord Mitranu and his family is to receive 5,000 of that each year for the next ten years, which will supplement their income from their estate and businesses they own in Ora. The members of the Town Council are to receive 1,000 dhanay per year for their part time service; the Mayor is to receive 5,000. The rest goes to the town budget, which previously was about 50,000 dhanay per year.”

A powerful wave of applause spontaneously broke out and the Queen had to wait patiently for it to subside.She smiled and waited patiently. “Thank you. This morning I met with a group of lords in Ora and I told them that the tax money belongs to the crown and to the people. This is based on the hymns of Widumaj; He put the house of

Mégékwɛs in charge of this world and told us to serve the people and each other. When something belongs to the people, the role of the crown is to be sure the money is managed and expended in service to the people. This is what I told the lords, and I repeat it here before you now. You work hard for a living and you pay 1/3 of those earnings to the crown, the province, and the town. If I see that the money is misappropriated, I will act to protect you, because that is my responsibility. But it is the responsibility of the town council to spend the money wisely. And in less than two years, when this kingdom holds another election, it will be the responsibility of all of you to choose a wise and capable town council. I can turn over authority to collect and disburse taxes to the elected agents of the people only when those agents are able to do the job well. Prove to me that this town can run itself and it will be rewarded with many more development grants and you will prosper."

More applause followed. She motioned to the members of the Town Council to step up onto the platform with her and the applause grew louder. "You're popular," she said to them. "Good. Mayor Bithu, you should speak."

"Very well," he replied. He was a local farmer, 35 years old, who had taught himself reading, writing, and accounting. He had a warm smile, a friendly personality, and could always answer something clearly, followed by a joke. He stepped to the platform and the crowd applauded.

"Thank you, my fellow citizens," he replied. "'My fellow citizens'; does that make me sound like someone who has to give a speech? Well, I do have to, because Her Majesty requested it! But of course I am happy to oblige her. My fellow members of the Town Council and I were called to Ora yesterday and informed that Her Majesty wanted

to give us authority over Mitranimɛla. We were overwhelmed, shocked, humbled, and frightened. We knew it was a huge responsibility. In the 24 hours since, we have discovered how enormous the responsibility is, and we are even more overwhelmed, shocked, humbled, and frightened. But we will need your help, and we know you will give it to us. How do we all move Mitranimɛla forward? What do we do first, do second? What is the most important goal to set? Above all, how do we do this well, as an example to the other towns and villages across the western shore, because they and their lords will be watching. We must succeed for the sake of our town and our children, as well as the sake of everyone else in the kingdom. Please pray for us. In the coming days the Town Council will announce a series of planning meetings so we can discuss the direction Mitranimɛla will move in. We will discover that direction together. Thank you."

444.

Hydroelectric Pipeline

Mid/late Abɛlménu/mid September, 20/638

Amos barely reached Amurueqluma on time. As his pickup truck came up over a rise on Route 31, he could see the neat new Sumi town laid out before him, and a large ship approaching the northern end of its harbor. He was lucky that it was late.

He drove down the hill and along main street. Amurueqluma was just 12 years old, founded after the eruption of Evudingiru to give the refugees a place to settle and provide an opportunity for Sumilara to create a brand new, "modern" city. That corner of the island had been devastated by an eruption of the other volcano, Agpa, several centuries earlier, and the land had now recovered. The town now had 4,500 people, the fourth largest on the island.

The main street was wide, paved, and lined with attractive stone buildings. A flower planting campaign was on and was beautifying the place. The central market was thriving and possessed a substantial hotel. On the edge of town was the Sumilara Fire and Police Academy, which trained the island's first responders, and génadɛma classes were held there as well. The main harbor boasted three long wharves and many full warehouses, for Amurueqluma was the island's second most active port, after Anartu itself.

The ship, however, was not heading for one of the main wharves, but a temporary floating dock at the far northern end of the harbor. Amos drove up just as the ship was slowly backing up to the dock, blowing its steam whistle triumphantly to the thrilled

applause of a crowd of dignitaries gathered on the shore. The seamen threw heavy ropes to a dock crew and they secured the ship. Then a group of electrical workers came forward with a long, heavy pole with a hook on the end. The stern of the ship—which had docked facing the land, so that its bow was pointed seaward—contained a huge spool of cable, the end of which extended off the stern and into the water. The men hooked the cable and began to pull strenuously while the crew on board engaged an electrical motor to unspool the cable slowly. The electrical workers pulled the extending cable through the last few meters of sea and up the beach along a deep ditch dug to receive the wires. They kept pulling until the cable reached an electrical transformer about ten meters inland.

The crowd applauded again.

Meanwhile, General Gɛlnébɛlu had stepped off the ship and onto the dock. He approached the crowd of dignitaries and stepped up to a speaker's platform. Near him were Amos, Duke Lamuno, Governor Dingirammaru, and Ninazu of the House of Engurra.

"I bring you electricity from the western shore," said Gɛlnébɛlu in Eryan, pausing for translation, then vigorous applause. "We left Luktrudɛma, 43 kilometers west of here, this morning shortly after dawn. The forty-one tonnes of cable strained the ship, but we maintained a good pace eastward, pausing only to remove empty spools and splice in new ones. The cable got hung up in rotten trees a few times, but that won't be a problem once they rot away; the cable will sink to the bottom. We completed the crossing in ten hours, and here we are."

Duke Lamuno stepped forward and shook the General's right hand, for Sumis did not normally shake both hands. "Thank you General," he replied in Sumi, pausing for

translation after every sentence. “Sumilara rejoices today at this great gift. We are experiencing an energy crisis; we have tapped all our hydroelectric resources and have had to burn wood to make electricity, at considerable cost. Every year, more people acquire electric lights, radios, and fans. Every year, more factories are planned and the plans run up against a major problem: where will they get the power they need? Every day at noon, the eclipse begins and the electrical grid collapses under the strain. Now, in a matter of days, that problem will be solved. We are immensely grateful for this important step in Sumilara’s development.”

The Duke stepped down to applause and Dingirammaru approached the podium. The son of Dumuzi, head of one of the largest trading families in the world, he had also been the founder of Amurueqluma and lord of that new place. While he was still the lord, he had turned day to day operations over to the town council and a town manager he appointed. “Thank you, General Gɛlnébɛlu, for the gift of mainland electricity. I am told this line is designed to transport up to 50,000 kilowatts. Bravo! Our island has a maximum production of 6,000 currently and many businesses are forced to run their main shift at night because that’s when the power is available. Here in Amurueqluma, the new bicycle factory is running on half a shift because it lacks the power for full capacity. In Anartu, the fish processing factory has to work at night. The hospital schedules surgery for 6 a.m. when power is reliable. The Palace Hotel warns its guests that the elevator may not be available at any odd time. In Galulia, woodworking and metalworking factories are never sure when they will be able to operate. Now all of these problems will be relegated to the past. Sumilara is proud to be part of the kingdom and eager to take up a

leadership role. This undersea cable will make many new contributions tot our collective future possible. Thank you."

It was Amos's turn next. He walked to the podium and waited for the last applause to die down. "First, I want to thank General Gɛlnébɛlu and his crew for their fast and efficient completion of the cable. We have leased the oceanographic ship for two weeks, and now we can return it ahead of schedule. In a few months we will install a 25-kilometer undersea electrical cable from Sipadananga to Nuarjora. We will also install new telephone cables on both coasts. When we are finished, the island will be able to receive 50,000 kilowatts of power from either shore and will have 200 telephone lines that connect in each direction, which is more than the connections from either the eastern or western shore to the northern shore. I have just completed a two-day inspection of the new electric line that runs from here to Kalegaduru, Anartu, Galulia, and Sipadananga, spanning the width of the island. The line appears to be ready, so once this cable is spliced in and tested, which will take about 24 hours, Sumilara will have tens of thousands of kilowatts at its disposal. The old brownouts and blackouts will indeed be a thing of the past.

"We have many people to thank for this achievement. Duke Lamuno and Governor Dingirammaru arranged for the provincial subsidies that made the work possible and arranged for translators to help the crews currently working on the line, because the Sumi electricians required new training to handle a high-voltage line. They unfailingly supported the project. Her Majesty's royal army and its engineering corps has been absolutely essential through the entire two-year project. Among other things, the palace had to give permission for a new electrical distribution coordinating center in

Anartu, which will balance the voltage and route power on the island as needed. Sumilara also will soon have a new central telephone switching center. Everyone in this world has contributed something through their taxes toward this quarter million dhanay project. The electric company is proud to complete this breakthrough power line today. We look forward to see what the people of Sumilara are able to do with it."

Amos stepped down to applause as well and Duke Lamuno returned to the podium. "I wish our crew could just plug the line in and we'd see a light bulb start to glow! But it doesn't work that way. So I want to thank everyone for coming today and invite guests to a special reception under the tent over there." He pointed to a big white tent. "Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for coming today."

There was a final scattering of applause, then the several dozen dignitaries present began to walk over to the tent. Both Gɛlnébɛlu and Amos had to linger as people came up to them to thank them or ask them questions. Finally, they found themselves walking to the tent together.

"So, the line from here to Sipadananga is ready?" asked the General.

"Yes, once the electricians get the cable connected and tested, the island will have access to almost ten times as much power as they currently have."

"A huge change," he said ambiguously. "I know you favor this."

"I do, because this integrates Sumilara more tightly than ever into the kingdom, and everyone will benefit."

"I suppose, and I suppose they can never arise to conquer us again."

“No, the Eryan outnumber everyone else. The goal now is to create a world where everyone contributes to the common wealth and development, to building a world civilization.”

“Including your friends the Ghéslonɛ. We never had a chance to talk about a northern route to them or to the Long Valley. Certainly, I’d favor another way into the valley, and one that is easier. But now that you have brought up the idea of making hydroelectricity from the Ghéslonɛ rivers . . . Amos, you undermined our case with the Queen. I was counting on you to strengthen it! I’m really angry with you!”

“My lord general, I didn't mean to interfere, but Her Majesty asked me a question and I answered it truthfully. A huge dam on an extremely inaccessible canyon is very expensive; there’s no way around it. It’s too bad the aliens never offered to install hydroelectric generators on the huge natural dam! We would have vast amounts of power, far more than we could use, and could have drained the valley more gradually. But the landslide dam has been washed away and destroyed; it’s gone. Building a small dam, compared to it—but huge for us—will not be easy.”

“But how will we ever do it, if we have to tap the rivers that fall into the Long Valley first!”

“The army will do it in the future when the kingdom is ten times richer than it is now.”

“Hah! That won’t happen in my lifetime! Look, Amos, I intend to oppose any hydroelectric project that taps the rivers falling into the Long Valley. That was a bad move on your part. We want to build the Central Glugluba Dam; it is now an army priority. And we will do it.” He added the last sentence with startling fierceness.

"Well, lord General, I repeat, I am sorry my comments upset your plans. But I think we both should think about what is best for the entire kingdom."

"I see," said Gɛlnébɛlu, shaking his head.

It was a week before Amos could get to Mɛlwika to discuss Gɛlnébɛlu's comments with Chris and the others. He was needed there quite badly to help with the huge expansion of the engineering institute, but he managed to find some time to meet with the various managers of the World Electric Company—of which he was President, but not Chief Executive Officer, because he simply didn't have the time—and investigate the electrical situation more thoroughly.

When Amos arrived in the Mɛlwika house, Chris wasn't back from a big meeting. "Sorry I'm late," Chris said when he finally got home, just before the eclipse. "The board of Miller Industries has been meeting all day today. I'm glad to say that with the big spike in profits this year, we're able to raise the quarterly dividend to the workers and increase their percentage of the profits to 25%. The investors get increased dividends as well, but not a windfall, like they would have gotten otherwise."

"They won't be upset?" asked Amos.

"No, the Board had agreed on this plan a long time ago: if there was a windfall in profits, it will go to increase profit sharing. Now we have more flexibility because if there's a downturn, the workers will automatically get paid less and we won't have to lay them off, or not so many of them at least." Chris sat at the dining room table and took a sip of the coffee the cook had immediately brought him. "So, what do you have?"

"I told you about Gɛlnébɛlu's implied threat that he wouldn't help us with small hydroelectric projects because he doesn't want them to undermine his plans for a huge hydroelectric dam across the Glugluba. But I have found several problems with his proposal.

"First of all, he said a dam 200 meters high would cost five million dhanay. But the 100-meter dam just upstream from Ora cost 1.5 million, and it was built at a spot where they could build a road 2 kilometers long and elevated 2 meters about the glugluba's floor to the dam site in order to haul in construction materials by truck. This dam is twice as high and twice as wide, so it will have four times as much material, and the material will be much harder to haul in, so I can't imagine the cost will be less than 6 or 8 million. This is a huge project, requiring some very clever engineering and the accomplishment of some tasks we have never tried before. Its location is thirty kilometers down the canyon, so building an elevated roadbed all that way would be horrendously expensive. Floating the clay to the dam site in barges will require transferring it at a dock to a truck to carry it to the growing dam. Dropping it 1,600 meters from the top of the canyon will be quite tricky as well; the material will smash itself to shreds on the way down and damage anything it lands on. I have my doubts that enough dirt and rock could be scraped off the highlands to build the dam; it would create a huge area of bare rock. It would almost be cheaper to tunnel parallel to the Glugluba, use a small dam to shunt the river into the tunnel, and put hydroelectric turbines at the far end of the tunnel. That effort would have the advantage that you could make the tunnel longer when you needed more power, too. It would even preserve the natural beauty of the Glugluba. But it would be even more expensive; tens of millions of dhanay."

"And doing the work in phases doesn't help?" asked Chris.

"Not really; in fact working around an existing reservoir and functioning power plant is complicated and even more expensive."

"That makes sense," said Chris. "How much would a hydroelectric plant by Moruagras cost?"

"Much less. The Kostisér is smaller than the Dɛlongisér—40 cubic meters per second instead of 100—but it drops 1,800 meters from Moruagras to the floor of the valley. Potentially, it can make 742,000 kilowatts. There are three other rivers flowing into the valley and they're smaller, but together they can make 900,000 more. Furthermore, they flow through steep, narrow, short, inaccessible canyons, so no one can see whether they are beautiful or not; diverting the river from the canyon won't mar a place of beauty. From Moruagras to the bottom of the valley is a bit over 3 kilometers, so the length of heavy metal pipe that is needed is not excessive. It may be easier to tunnel than to anchor heavy steel water pipes to the cliffs; that's the difficult engineering question that still needs to be resolved. If one initiated a tunnel or pipe that brings the water down 200 meters, it'd make 80,000 kilowatts. Once there's demand for more power, one would add a second 200-meter section. So one could invest gradually and increase production as needed."

"How much?" asked Thornton, who was also at the table.

"I asked various engineers. The pipe is extremely expensive because it has to be high quality and thick. The easiest thing to do would be to place it along Route 1 where it switchbacks down the escarpment to the valley floor, so that the pipe could be delivered easily. In many cases it might actually go under the road. If each section of pipe is 2.5

meters in diameter and about 800 meters long to attain a vertical drop of 200 meters, it'll cost about 50,000 dhanay to manufacture and install. Two hydroelectric turbines and generators—each rated to produce up to 40,000 kilowatts, so that they could turn out peak power of 80,000 kilowatts if necessary—will cost 80,000 each. So you install the pipe and and one turbine for 130,000, then when you need more power you add another turbine, then you add another section, and by the time you've reached the bottom of the escarpment you have 720,000 kilowatts of capacity, or almost a million kilowatts peak output, for a total cost of 1.6 or 1.7 million dhanay. Much cheaper than the dam, and easier to implement in stages as the power is needed."

"You'd need a storage reservoir on top and maybe on the bottom as well," noted Chris.

"Yes, to store water at times of low demand for times of high power demand. That'd add a few hundred thousand."

"How visible would it be?" asked Chris.

Amos looked to Thornton, who thought. "If you plant trees around the pipe, it'd be invisible," Thornton replied. "Exactly when would we need to start work on something like that?"

"That depends on economic growth," replied Amos, and he looked at Chris. "Right now we have four significant hydropower plants: Gordha with an average capacity of 27,500 kilowatts, Dhudhuba with 17,000, Rudhisér with 10,000, and Ora with 90,000. Mɛlwika can make 4,000 at the most and is completely dependent on Gordha and Dhudhuba. Arjakwés and Swadnoma provinces were reaching the point where they were using all the power produced from Mɛlwika, Gordha, and Dhudhuba. Meanwhile, Gordha

and Mɛdhpéla are seeing rapidly growing power demand, so the eastern shore would have been in trouble in another year. The power cable via Sumilara has arrived just at the right time. By this time next year, the western shore's 100,000 kilowatts will be 90% accounted for."

"Maybe sooner," replied Chris. "Economic growth this year has been at least 12 percent, even when inflation is taken into account. Almost all that increase comes from manufacturing, so electric demand this year alone has probably jumped twenty percent."

"It's up twenty-two percent," replied Amos. "I checked. Electric sales this year will hit 9 million dhanay. That's why the company is investing a million dhanay into new transmission lines."

"So why are we worrying about the Army Engineering Corps or palace grants?" asked Chris. If demand is growing 25,000 kilowatts per year, that means you need to install a section of pipe every two or three years to produce 80,000 additional kilowatts, at a cost of around 200,000 dhanay."

"If growth continues at this pace, Gɛlnébɛlu can't get his huge dam done soon enough," said Thornton.

"And there's another thing to consider," said Chris. "I don't like the idea of putting all the power output in Véspa province. If you put a lot of it in Ghéslona, with a transmission line westward over the Spine to Gordha and Mɛlwika, and another one northward to the Polar Basin, the power can get out two ways. Ghéslona needs development and they're friends of Mɛlwika."

"So, that makes the northern route even more important," said Thornton.

“It does. There’s also an existing line eastward to Réjéivika and Kɛrda that can be upgraded. I think we should ask Gɛlnébɛlu one more time, but if he’s adamant we should go over his head to Pɛrku or even to the Réjé if necessary. How much would a basic road from the Polar Basin cost, anyway?”

“If we built an emergency road using the standards of our farm lanes, which would be adequate on a short term, it’d cost 500 dhanay per kilometer,” said Thornton. “There’s already a basic gravel road 25 kilometers from Moruagras northward to Lujroktisértroba. From there to Route 21 in the Polar Basin is maybe 75 kilometers.”

“But some of that is mountainous and will require blasting,” said Amos. “I suspect even a basic road will cost 75,000 dhanay, and if the army builds a proper 6-meter concrete road it’d cost half a million. That’s what the Ghéslonɛ need in order to export items cheaply. The taxes on them and the Géndonɛ would pay for the road in two years, and the road would open the Long Valley up as well! The army has to build that road.”

“I agree, and the fall legislative session is coming up, so we can try to get that added to the budget,” said Chris. “We can be sure the representatives from the Long Valley will support it. Thornton, do you have time to scout the route? We need a very specific proposal.”

“There’s not much time, but I’m not teaching this term, so I could go in a week or two.”

“And I can get a formal proposal put together officially on behalf of the World Electric Company,” said Amos. “We’ll also have to talk to Lord Ornkordu about this

because it's their land and they deserve some benefits, such as jobs, free power, and maybe a small annual royalty or leasing fee."

"Okay, let's do all those things," said Chris. "Once we have them, I'll talk to Pɛrku, ideally with Gɛlnébɛlu present."

Thornton began to plan the trip right away, which would start at Moruagras and head north, with a diversion into the Long Valley, and would also involve a quick survey of the routes for a hydroelectric pipeline. It couldn't wait; summer was ending and fall was beginning, especially in the North Polar Basin and the mountains fringing it. But he couldn't avoid one major responsibility: the monthly meeting of the Mɛlwika City Council. And it was taking up some very controversial legislation.

"Why must we make all street signs and other public information bilingual?" asked Lasu dismissively, as soon as discussion began. "It's a ridiculous waste of government money, and for what? A few tourists. If they're here, they should learn Eryan anyway!"

"It's more than that," Dumuzi shot back. "First of all, potentially we're talking about a thousand Sumi tourists a year spending an average of 50 dhanay each, so that's 50,000 dhanay! Our stores are the biggest draw, and Sumiwika, and the museum. Right now we're getting maybe 200 tourists from Sumilara per year, but we can do better. The signs are symbolically important. Furthermore, if we do that, Amurueqluma will post all its signs in Eryan and Sumi, making Eryan tourists feel welcome there. Mɛddoakwés and Anartu will follow. So will Mɛlita, with its zoo, and maybe Pértatranisér. So our move will trigger others to do the same."

"The new signs will cost 25,000 dhanay," added Mayor Kérdu. "And if there's any year to do this, it is this year, because we have the largest tax surplus in history. Not only are we getting more factories and jobs, but three quarters of the new factories elsewhere order their equipment from us. This year alone, Mɛlwika has seen the construction of 600 new houses and the arrival of 1,000 new adults. Wages have gone up ten percent, too, because of the shortage of trained workers. Even with all the increased costs associated with inspection of new construction and licensing new businesses, we still have a 150,000 dhanay surplus."

"There's even money to advertise Mɛlwika on Sumilara," said Thornton. "My father is very keen about the future of tourism, and for good reason. It's growing fast, and we are a major destination."

"How well can we really estimate the increase?" asked Génésé.

"Not well," injected Lasu.

"I disagree," replied Dumuzi. "If we advertise as a friendly town, Sumis will come."

"How will my police handle people who don't speak Eryan?" asked Bɛlekwu, shaking his head.

"Hire some Sumi policemen," replied Dumuzi. "It's badly needed already. What's our population now?"

"About 28,000," replied Kérdu.

"So, we need 28 police, and I think we have only 26."

"That's really not a problem," replied Lasu. "One per thousand is a very rough number. We're close enough."

“How do you know?” replied Bɛlékwu, irritated. “Mɛddoakwés has one for every 800 and Ora has one per 700 and they need more. So do we.”

“We have private security guards taking up some of the need,” replied Lasu.

“We’re off topic,” said Kérdu.

“Look, if we have a surplus, let’s lower our tax rate next year,” said Lasu. “Of course, you might say we need the extra hundred thousand to build another school building; we always seem to need another one. But if that’s the case, we *still* wouldn’t install the Sumi signs, because the school would take precedence.”

“Lasu, we already have school expansion in the budget,” said Kérdu. “The school has even opened. We’ll need another school next year, but it’s budgeted. Mɛlwika has almost 9,000 school-age kids because we have a lot of cousins who have moved in with uncles and aunts to go to a good public school.”

“Then we can use the surplus to pay off loans and bonds.”

“Yes, we can do that. We can also welcome Sumi visitors warmly to our town.”

“I move that we call the vote,” said Mitru, getting irritated but trying not to show it.

“I second,” added Ornéstu.

“All in favor of Resolution 638-62 to spend 25,000 dhanay on new street signs and other city signs in public spaces to make them bilingual in Eryan and Sumi. Please signify by raising a hand.”

Eight hands went up.

“Opposed?”

Lasu raised his hand.

“The ayes have it and 637-62 passes. Thank you.”

“Honored Mayor, may I ask how well the new Sumi language policy is working in the schools?” asked Lasu. “Because I have heard it is controversial.”

“Controversial to whom?” asked Ornéstu. “We now teach Sumi literature in Sumi starting in 9th grade as an optional literature course. Students need 4 years of literature and at least three years need to be in Eryan because we are preparing young people to get professional jobs and they need a mastery of language to succeed. We have some Sumi literature in Eryan translation included in the Eryan literature courses, and we plan to include a few Eryan works in Sumi translation next year when our two Sumi literature courses increase to three. There have been a few complaints, but overall Mɛlwika is reasonably tolerant, I’d say.”

“The Sumiwika here is the largest one on the mainland,” added Dumuzi. “There are almost 2,000 Sumis in Mɛlwika. This is the place for them to come to get a good education in both languages, which is crucial for success in business, accounting, and related careers if you are working on the island and on the mainland. No one on Sumilara can get four years of Eryan literature in high school, and very little, still, in génadɛma. Mɛlwika is the only place in the kingdom where one can get a good education in both languages. As a result, Mɛlwika is poised to become the major center for business between the island and the mainland.”

“And that makes us money,” added Thornton looking at Lasu.

“I get it, I get it,” replied Lasu, irritated.

The grand plaza of Réjéiwika—"Queensville"—was worthy of the town's name, although the population of the Long Valley's capital was still inadequate and disappointing. Thornton had been through the town several times since he first saw the hole in the ground that the plaza started as, nine years earlier. The plaza was 150 meters square, but none of the buildings fronting on it were worthy of the size. The market stretched along the entire south side, but only because it was one stall deep. The palace on the north side only occupied a third of that side; the rest was filled with houses, some large and a few rather modest. The eastern side of the plaza was dominated by a grand temple to Wɛrano, with tasteful parks on both sides of it to fill out that side. The western side was defined by the North Branch of the Dɛlongisér and a line of tomɛ trees, known for their wide-spreading shade, which gave the plaza a cool area in the equatorial summer.

Thornton parked the Geological Survey's high-clearance pickup truck in front of the palace. A moment later the second pickup came along and parked next to him. He pointed to the marketplace and while the geologists headed there for a meal and supplies, Thornton took a big map, a bundle of aerial photos, and headed inside.

Governor Mɛndhrubéru had been chief accountant for Mennea Tomi and was an old friend of the family. "It's so good to see you, Dhoru," he said as Thornton entered his office. "I wish I got out of this valley more often! I get to the eastern shore once a year! I don't even visit Ora and Néfa very often."

"You have a reputation for being totally devoted to the valley."

Mɛndhrubéru smiled. “I suppose I am. I just wish we could get more people to move here! For some reason, people think this is the end of the world, but we’re closer to Véspa and Rudhisér than the towns of the western shore, and we have a good road.”

“Prince Mɛméjékwu spared no expense to get this place started, but he couldn’t do much about immigration. The new villages in Véspa and Rudhisér absorb their surpluses and the many new towns on the eastern shore absorb everyone else’s surplus. Kɛrda is the only place with an excess population that comes this way.”

Mɛndhrubéru shrugged. “So, what do you have for me? A northern entrance?”

“I think so.” Thornton pointed to a table and unrolled a map there. “In the last month we’ve used aerial photos to refine the map. As you can see, the northern terminus of the valley is the lowest spot in its rim; 1368 meters above the lowest spot in the floor. The lake had risen to within 50 meters of that point. North of that low point there’s a canyon, and it’s much larger than the little creek in it today. At one point it was the spillway for Long Lake.”

“You mean, there was no Glugluba?”

Thornton nodded. “I think so. We’ll be sure once we explore it. The canyon is wide enough for a roadbed, though it may be that it should be placed above the canyon. We’ll have to look and see. From here to Route 21 at Khɛrmdhuna is 85 kilometers.”

“Really? That’s not too far.”

“And the up and down is much less than any other route into the valley, plus it’s a short and fast route to the Eastern Shore; 260 kilometers, less than four hours drive to Mɛddoakwés.”

“Yes, we need that. Why hasn’t anyone thought of this before?”

“I think people have, but this part of the map was pretty blank, so no one was sure what it was like. It’s only been a few years since the northern entrance to Kɛrda was created.”

“Your letter mentioned a road along the western rim to Moruagras.”

“Yes, the Géndonɛ and Ghéslonɛ badly need a better road as well. They have nickel-iron, copper, some silver and lead, and their forests are some of the best. Réjéivika is not a big enough market for them, either.”

“We can’t use their ores. We use their timber already; they’re amazing wood carvers.”

“They are. And they have the world’s greatest hydroelectric potential, too.”

“I saw your reference to that, too. What do you think of the proposal for a gigantic dam in the middle of the Glugluba?”

“The time will come, but it’s premature to spend 4 million dhanay, or more likely 6 or 7 million, on it. We can utilize the hydro of the western streams in reasonably priced phases and get a lot more power for a lot less money.”

“Gɛlnébɛlu loves big projects. Well, everyone does, don’t they? What do you want from me?”

“Do you want to send someone along on the expedition? We’re going up to Moruagras later this afternoon, then we’re heading north to Lujroktisertroba where we’ll rent horses.”

“I can send two or three men. But how will you survey the route into the valley?”

“Once we get to the saddle, we’ll split into two teams. One will descend southward into the valley and the other will head north to the Polar Basin.”

“I see. I suggest you send someone with my men and some horses and head north from Réjéiwika. They can meet you at the saddle.”

Thornton looked at Mɛndhrubéru and realized he had better agree. “Sure, we can do that. My number two could lead an expedition northward from here.”

“I think that’s a better arrangement. My city engineer plans our roads and he could figure out where to put the route. He’d be a great addition to the trip.”

Thornton nodded. “That would be great. He’d be an invaluable addition.”

“Could that be them?” Dwosunu asked Thornton. He pointed to three men with two pack horses walking toward their camp, about a kilometer away.

Thornton looked closely, then nodded. “Probably. It’s about time!”

“Eight days. I can’t imagine it would have taken them eight days to hike here from Réjéiwika.”

“And why are they exploring the western escarpment? The best place for a road is the eastern side, so it catches the afternoon sunlight to maximize the melting of any snow.”

“I know.” Dwosunu shrugged. He went into the tent to call out the other two men in their party, another geologist and the Ghéslonɛs’ science teacher. In ten minutes they could see that the man in the lead was Rudhisuru, the geologist they had left in Réjéiwika, with the city’s science teacher and civil engineer.

“You finally made it!” exclaimed Thornton. “What happened; did you get started late?”

"No, we got here four days ago!" replied Rudhisuru. He turned and pointed to a big flat spot above the cliff east of them. "We camped up there; we figured you'd check out the spot and see our campsite. There was no good route along the eastern side of the valley. There are cliffs and huge boulders all over the place. The eastern escarpment has had several major landslides that wiped out any natural routes. But we could see, as we hiked up the eastern side, that the western escarpment looked better, so we went back down and tried that side. It's much better."

"There's a pretty good route for a road along the western side," confirmed the engineer, who had the all too common name of Mitru. "We blazed it, too, so it should be pretty easy for the road builders to find, even if I'm not with them."

"Good," said Thornton. "Sounds like Route 92 has a future through this area. We got here after three days. It was really easy to hike through the woods from Lujruktisértroba. We stayed several kilometers back from the cliffs, partly to avoid any little canyons and deep gullies and partly because the hunters wanted a route that would maximize the area they can reach easily. There's also a pretty easy route from the plateau down to this point, so Route 96 can be extended down to here and join Route 92. On our fourth day, about noon, we left here—we didn't know when you'd arrive—and continued north to the Polar Basin, which took two full days. There's a pretty easy route down to the basin; a big slope with just a few small cliffs. We blazed it, too, and marked it on a map. Then we turned around and came back here, which took a day and half. We got here last night."

"So, we have the entire route marked?" asked Rudhisuru.

"Yes, and it shouldn't be too challenging."

“We just need to get the army to schedule it,” said Mitru. “But once I report back to Mɛndhrubéru, with maps, we can be sure he’ll get Pɛrku on the phone the next day!”

“They can clear and gravel a basic road in a few months,” said Thornton. “Concreting it will take longer; maybe a year.”

“We also found a pretty good copper deposit on the western side, and it has some silver as well,” said Rudhisuru. “We have samples. We spent a few hours exploring it and have a pretty good idea of its size. It’s large enough to be economic and is right on the proposed route.”

“Well, we moved the route when we found it!” said Mitru, with a laugh.

“Even better!” said Thornton. “This will open a big area to hunting and should greatly improve access to the valley and the western plateau.”

“The only area that will still be safe for the animals is the southern mountains,” said Rudhisuru. “I wonder how long it’ll be before we build a road there.”

“I suppose it’s inevitable,” agreed Thornton.

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Chief Executive Officer

Mid Brɛnménu/early October, 20/638

Jordan drove the steam car into the garage under the old Tomi building. He closed the alcohol and air intakes to the steam engine's firebox; one had to be very careful, parking in closed spaces, not to fill them with carbon monoxide. He and Tiamaté climbed out. He helped 2 ½ year old Andru out of his car seat while Tiamaté picked up six month old Lubaté. "I'll grab both suitcases," said Jordan. He opened the steam car's trunk, picked them both up, and staggered behind Tiamaté toward the Mennea house.

"Be careful!" she said, worried he'd hurt himself and relieved she just had to carry the baby.

They crossed through the tunnel under Foundry Street and entered the basement of the house, which had been dug two years earlier. It had a large "family room" in the middle that the kids sometimes used to get away from their elders, and was otherwise surrounded by doors that led to storage rooms and guest bedrooms. They headed up the steep spiral ramp to the ground floor.

As they emerged, Liz saw them and rose from the dining room table. "You made it! Excellent!"

"It's good to be back . . . er, home," said Jordan. He put down the suitcases and kissed his grandmother.

“I’m so glad all of you are able to move back,” said Liz, looking at Tiamaté as well and hoping she felt better about it. “Chris isn’t getting any younger, Jor. We need you here.”

“I know, grandma, and we’re glad to be moving here. This is going to work out fine. With Mennea Development Consulting moving here as well, I only need to spend one day a month in Mɛlita. I’ll probably try to get back more often than that. But I don’t need to.”

“This is better for Rostamu as well,” added Tiamaté. “Because he can continue his work with the consulting company while he’s going to génadɛma.”

“Yes, and maybe Jalalu can do both as well,” agreed Liz. “Well, I don’t want to hold you up! Come back out once you’re settled and have some tea.”

“We will. Where’s grandpa?”

“At his office in the new Tomi Building. He’ll be here for lunch.”

Jordan nodded and picked up the two suitcases. He, Tiamaté, and Andru walked across the courtyard and entered their new apartment.

Over the summer, the house had undergone its third renovation; not bad, for twenty years. Originally, the house was divided roughly into thirds; the eastern third, middle third, and western third, each 12 meters long and 10 meters wide. The eastern third had been a dining area and a bedroom for great grandmother Mary; the latter had become an office for Chris and part had become an enlarged kitchen, which occupied a small southern part of the middle third. The western third of the house had been an apartment. Other apartments filled the second stories of the eastern and western thirds and a three meter wide stretch along the southern edge of the middle third. The rest of the

middle third had been a courtyard, with no second story over it, only a gigantic open space to the sky that they covered with alien parachute material in the winter to keep out the cold. One change that had just occurred over the summer was the installation of a permanent steel-ribbed glass dome over the courtyard, a first on Éra and horrendously expensive, but it made the courtyard pleasant year round.

Two years ago when there had been an attempt to break into the house and kill its inhabitants, they had made drastic changes. The main door was moved to the flower court on the western side, where large, attractive planters made it impossible for vehicles to approach. That necessitated removal of the apartment there; the kitchen and dining area was moved there and a grand entrance installed. Where the old door had been in the middle section of the southern wall, a ramp descended to the basement level. The ground floor of the eastern section was converted into a new, modern apartment for Jordan and family. Overhead, the apartment of his parents--Lua and Behrouz--was renovated, as was the apartment of Thornton and his family, over the grand entrance and new dining room on the western side. Amos, May, and their family, who visited only occasionally, had very comfortable rooms in the new basement.

Jordan opened the door to their new apartment, which was 10 meters by 12 and quite spacious. They entered a long, thin living room which gave the family a private common space. On the right were three doors, to a bedroom, a bathroom, and another bedroom; both kids would have their own rooms once they were old enough. Straight ahead was a door to a small room that could serve as a storage area, a spare bedroom, or an office. A single door on the left led to the master bedroom, which in turn had a master

bath and two small offices, which gave Jordan and Tiamaté plenty of room to work at home.

Jordan put the suitcases down on the big bed and opened them. Tiamaté put Lubaté down in her crib and they began to unpack clothes. “Well, it has everything we need,” she said. “But I’m going to miss the old house, with its beautiful windows and sunlight.”

“I know. This place was built like a fortress, and for a good reason. Maybe when the kids are older and the stairs to the second floor aren’t so worrisome, we can switch with my parents. They have two high windows and some skylights.”

“That would be nice. The furniture here is really nice, though. Grandpa was very generous.”

“He wants us to be comfortable.”

“And we will be.”

“Are you sure, honey?”

Tiamaté nodded. “We were already spending half our week here anyway, and we went to school here. Yes, this will be good. And maybe, moving to a huge Bahá'í community like Mɛlwika, we won’t get elected to anything.”

“I wouldn’t bet on that!”

She chuckled. She finished hanging up her clothes just as Jordan finished his; the bedroom had some large, beautiful wooden armoires, as even modernized Eryan houses often didn’t have closets. They walked across the living room—which was a long, thin space that would probably prove useless—to Andru’s room and hung up his clothes, too. Then they headed back to the dining area with the kids.

Chris had returned from the office. “How’s the place? Is it good?” he asked, especially eyeing Tiamaté.

“It’s really beautiful, grandpa,” she replied, giving him a kiss.

“It’ll work out really well,” added Jordan. “Of course, I have to be in Mɛlita a day or two a month; as Lord, I need to know what’s happening. It’s very strange being an absentee lord, after complaining about them for years!”

“But there’s one difference; Mɛlita has a good mayor and a strong city council,” said Chris. “Our role is to provide the long view and to arbitrate disputes fairly. Those are elements that make democracy strong and effective. But to do that, we have to be credible and respected. That’s the only way for this system of lords to retain some legitimacy.”

“If it can,” said Jordan.

Chris smiled. “Yes, if it can. The Lord of Mitranimɛla really screwed that up and the Queen stripped him of his rights. But from what I hear, the new mayor and council are not doing so well, either, because they lack experience in decision making and executing their decisions.” He sighed. “Perhaps we can offer them some seminars. I’ve written them and offered my assistance.”

“That’s good.”

Just then, Stɛrésé and Korudé came out of the kitchen with platters of food, so Jordan helped Andru sit in his high chair while Tiamaté sat holding the baby. With Andru between the two of them, they’d be able to help him eat.

“So, we have a meeting about 2 p.m. with the heads of staff,” said Chris to Jordan. “They know I am announcing that as of today, you are Chief Executive Officer of Mennea Tomi.”

Jordan took a deep breath. “Yes, I figured you warned them ahead of time. I’ve been thinking about what I will say.”

“Good. I’ll still be in every day, of course, but I am hoping I’ll be able to do more to assist the palace. I think I am now old enough that people will respect me, in spite of my strong accent!”

“They’ve been respecting you for years!” replied Tiamaté.

“I suppose,” said Chris. “I’ll also have more time to do things like advocate for the Ghéslonɛ and help Mitranimɛla, if people will let me, anyway.”

“I hope they will,” replied Jordan. “All the work you do to keep up with all the different tomis, advise them about developments, network them on common projects, refer new machines or ideas to them . . . it’s invaluable. I think you’re responsible for at least half a percent of the annual increase in GDP, and every year!”

Chris smiled. “Perhaps true.” He turned to Tiamaté. “How are your dad, mom, and brother?”

“Oh, they’re well. Aisugu’s here at the génadɛma through spring to get some courses in science, agriculture, and development he can’t get in Sumilara or at ɛndraidha Génadɛma. Dad’s actually very happy because the army needs someone with his development consulting experience. Once he finishes his kwétɛryɛri, he’ll be going back to Sumilara to help plan army development projects.”

“Excellent. The army has really turned around on Sumilara, and your father has been central to the change.”

Jordan asked Chris about the *Mɛlwika Motorɛs*, the local semi-professional soccer team, and that became the subject of discussion for the rest of lunch. Once they were

finished, Chris looked at the clock. “There’s time to look at the offices of Mennea Development Consulting, if you want.”

“Yes!” said Tiamaté, eagerly. “We need to get it set up in six days.”

“I understand the office furniture and telephones have arrived,” said Jordan. “The trucks with the filing cabinets and records will be here tomorrow. We’ve got everything packed up.”

“Good. Let’s go.” Chris rose, so Jordan helped Andru out of his high chair, then Tiamaté handed Lubaté to him. If they were going into public she wanted the man to carry the baby.

It was a short walk. They descended the ramp and took the tunnel to the old Tomi Building, crossed the basement level and emerged onto the sidewalk of Icehouse Street, crossed the street into the gleaming new Tomi Building, and took the new-fangled elevator to the second floor. Half the floor was occupied by two doctors’ offices and Mitréstu Méndhig’s architectural firm. Jordan pulled out a key and unlocked the door to the other half.

They had a space 12 meters wide and 28 long, with a bank of windows along the southern wall. The west wall had two offices 5 by 3 meters and a 5 by 6 meter conference room. The rest of the space was open and had room for at least 12 desks.

“Plenty of space for our six employees, plus expansion,” said Tiamaté. “And with Jordan upstairs, it’ll be easy for him to come and go.”

“That’s the idea,” said Jordan. “I’ll use the conference room as my office when I’m down here, and will spend an hour or two every day here.” He looked at Tiamaté.

“And as the executive with seniority, you get the corner office. Rostamu will have to settle for the other one.”

“Good, I agree!” she said, nodding.

“He’s coming along pretty well,” said Chris. “I’m glad he’s settling into development consulting and is focusing on agriculture and farmers. We need rural development expertise.”

“Dad’s disappointed, though; he was counting on Rostam to help run the gas company or to become a chemist.”

“Well, we have a whole crop of younger ones coming along who might be interested,” said Chris. “I think we should get upstairs.”

“Alright.” Jordan turned to Tiamaté. “Have a good afternoon. I’ll be back by supper.”

“Okay.” They kissed and they all headed out of the future Development Consulting offices, which Jordan locked tightly. Chris and Jordan let Tiamaté take the kids in the elevator to the ground floor and waited for the attendant to bring it back. “She’s really special,” said Chris. “You found a great wife.”

“Thanks, I think so! She could run the entire Development Consulting office herself, but she doesn’t have the confidence yet.”

“Give her time.”

They got in the elevator and headed for the fifth floor. When they got off, everyone nodded to Chris and Jordan. He had already been spending three days a week in Mɛlwika and had an office next to Chris’s, which was already filled with paperwork. But

today was different; he was arriving permanently and had new responsibilities. They all nodded to him with extra deference.

They had a few minutes before the meeting began. Chris went into the conference room, Jordan into his office. Chris still had the corner office on the southwestern side of the building; Jordan had the first office on the south side, facing Mɛlwika Génadɛma and the Bahá'í temple, while Luktréstu, Vice President for Operations, had the first office on the west side. Almost as soon as Jordan sat down, Luktréstu came to his door. He looked nervous and spoke tentatively.

"So . . . I suppose I am bringing to you all the reports I used to take to Lord Kristobéru on Dwodius?"

"Come in and sit down." Jordan came out from behind his desk and sat with the man who was number two in the firm, was five years older than he, and had been involved many years longer than he, who no doubt resented the fact that he was not a member of the Mennea family like Jordan. "As I understand it, I am now in charge. Lord Kristobéru will advise all of us, of course, and we can seek his opinion about difficult matters, but he is in partial retirement. I suppose you could say he is Vice President for Development and External Relations."

"But we have a Vice President for Company Development."

"We do. Perhaps he's Ambassador for Development, then! Because he seems to want to travel, talk to people, advise them, and of course encourage them to retain this tomi for their management and financial services."

“Ambassador.” Luktréstu thought about that word, a very rare one in Eryan because only the Sumis had had an ambassador of sorts in Mɛddoakwés, and he had always been a partial prisoner.

“Envoy, then.” The Tutanɛ had envoys. “Or perhaps ‘representative.’ Someone with prestige and respect—like Countess Ninti on Sumilara—who is listened to by many people.”

“I see what you mean.” Of course, he had really understood all along. “He will be excellent at that, but certainly we will miss him.”

“Indeed we will,” agreed Jordan, wondering what Luktréstu had meant, but he decided not to push the matter. “Let’s go to the meeting.”

Luktréstu nodded and followed Jordan out of the office and across the floor to the conference room on the north side. Most of the company’s executives had arrived, and within a minute the rest had as well, including Lubanu, the Vice President for Accounting Services; Wɛranogénu, the Vice President of Auditing Services; Roktésu, the Comptroller and Chief Financial Officer; and Estomolu, the Vice President of Western Shore Operations, who ran all the branch offices from Bɛllɛdha to Tripola from Pértatranisér. The original plan to downsize them all and run everything from Mɛlwika had proved premature; customers had revolted.

“We should begin,” said Chris, looking at the others. “Wɛranogénu, please chant for us.”

Wɛranogénu nodded; he was often asked to chant a hymn of Widumaj. They all closed their eyes and listened to his beautiful voice.

"Thank you," said Chris. "Everyone has received the reports and usually we just acknowledge them quickly. I never did get a chance to report about my trip around the sea with Her Majesty, though I did give everyone partial reports when I came back for our monthly meetings. Overall, the tomis are doing better. They're more experienced, more professional, more efficient. This is good news and bad for us; good because the economy keeps getting larger and stronger; bad because more tomis don't need us. The average tomi grew over twenty percent in the last year; some, like the Jérdomais Tomi, grew twenty-five percent. I'm told Miller Tomi grew twelve percent and the machinery manufacturing division is way behind because they can't keep up with the demand. Mɛlwika has grown by at least a thousand people and wages here are going up remarkably. Next year should be slower, for two reasons: this year's growth was so fast because last year's chaos made growth slow then; and because the inflation and shortages this year should slow next year. But I'm rambling.

"The main item of business, all of you know: today we mark a major change in the management of this tomi. Today Jordanu Doma-Menneai becomes the chief executive officer of Mennea Tomi and I move into an advisory role. I am hoping, in fact, to become an advisor for a wider range of operations, from the palace to tomis to cities and villages, if they will have me. But at my age, while I may have the wisdom to run a company, I no longer have the vigor. I owe it to this company to put it in the hands of someone younger, who will also have a new perspective and will be able to take it in new directions. I think Jordanu is perfect for the job. He has already created a unique company, Mennea Development Consulting, and grew it very rapidly into a very important and valuable service to the palace and by extension to the entire kingdom. Having it housed under the

same roof as this tomi—which already handles its accounting!—strengthens both operations. His judgment is excellent and he will lead us from strength to strength. I am delighted and grateful that he has accepted my request, has moved here, and reoriented his entire life to serve this company. So I now pass the floor to our new Chief Executive Officer, Jordanu Domo-Menneai."

"Thank you, lord," said Jordan, addressing his grandfather as formally as possible while also avoiding all reference to family. "I am very grateful to all of you for your kindness to me, your assistance to me as I learn the operation, and your support over the last few months as I have made the transition from Mɛlita to Mɛlwika. I have learned much and I am sure I still have much to learn, so I thank you for your patience and wise advice. I particularly thank the man all of us have learned so much from, who started this company nearly twenty years ago in order to help small businesses in Mɛlwika to get started, in the absence of banks, of accounting expertise, even of literacy in most cases. We all remember that time. Because of him and the staff he assembled, Mɛlwika acquired the resources and organization to become the engine of growth for this entire kingdom. He then wisely made sure those capacities were planted in all the other cities in the kingdom, then in many villages as well. None of us would be where we are today without him. I plan to lean heavily on the accumulated wisdom and experience he has, as I keep Mennea Tomi moving forward.

"There is nothing like this company anywhere in the kingdom. In a way, that is bad; some competition might actually be good for us. But we have already learned to compete against ourselves, to examine our operation for new efficiencies, to brainstorm about improving our services, to test new services. We have to continue these efforts to

remain creative and innovative, not just for our own sake, but to move the kingdom forward. The kingdom is developing, both materially and spiritually. We have been an important part of the material engine for growth. But how can we be a part of the spiritual engine for growth as well, to help people educate themselves, develop their capacities, their skills and judgment, their ability to love and serve others? This, afterall, is the ultimate purpose of life, not to make money, develop better cars, generate more electricity, eat better food, etc. We must help make life better. This is not our direct and principal purpose, and I am not saying that it should be. Instead, what I am saying is that we must keep it in mind in everything we do. We must avoid projects and policies that make life worse and must consider how our actions can make life better, even if it costs a little bit more money. We also need to protect the environment and be good stewards of the natural resources we use. We can be exemplary in these matters and continue to make a good profit while we serve the kingdom. That is my vision for the company."

Jordan looked around the room. Some were pensive; some puzzled; some worried; Chris was surprised. Jordan could see he had work to do.

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Maternity Leave

Late Génménu/mid November, 20/638

"Look at these numbers," Luktréstu said to Jordan. They sat side by side—a bit uncomfortably—in the conference room where the accounting ledger could be opened between them. "Eagle Eye Security's branches in Ora and Néfa are losing money. Major contracts with Mitru Steel and Manufacturing and with the Rudhisér Tomi never materialized, though the Luktrudɛma Race Track and Pértatranisér both came through with contracts, so that branch is in the black, though barely. The Mɛlwika branch is making by far the biggest profits because all the factories and major businesses, plus the génadɛma, temple, and Bahá'í Center, have security contracts. But some are thinking of dropping their contracts because danger hasn't materialized against their property. Mɛddoakwés is almost covering its costs, but the government buildings did not want contracts and asked the army to provide them with security instead. Mɛlita and the Triwika Industrial Park have been consolidated into one district and it is barely breaking even."

Jordan nodded. "Security is expensive, and the discord of last year has passed."

"But overall, after a year, Eagle Eye is still losing money, and there's no prospect that it will cover its costs and make a profit soon."

Jordan looked at the reports. The Tripola branch had closed within a month of its opening; Bɛllɛdha and Isurdhuna had never gotten branches at all. The fifty employees cost 160,000 dhanay per year, against an income of 120,000. "That's a big loss. There

must be ways to streamline the operation. One dispatcher in Pértatranisér could coordinate Néfa and Ora as well, so those dispatcher positions could be eliminated. The Mɛlwika dispatcher could handle Mɛddoakwés as well if the telephone lines were expanded."

"I know the Lord wants to keep Eagle Eye, but frankly, I think it has to be cut back or even shut down," said Luktréstu. "I don't think we'll have disorder again like we had last year."

"Maybe not, but private security is a potentially good business and should work eventually. A lot of the businesses the Lord set up in partnership with others took more than a year to make a profit, and some of them are very profitable now."

"That's true; I was involved in many of them. So, what will you tell him?"

Jordan was irritated by the question, as if he had to report to Luktréstu. "I'll pass the financial information to him with a recommendation that we approach Sarésunu about streamlining the operation. If we can have one dispatcher in Pértatranisér for Ora and Néfa, with one or two steam cars so that substitute security guards can be moved around, we'd probably save 10,000. I suspect small-scale operations could be opened in Tripola, Mɛddwoglubas, Isudhuna, and Bɛllɛdha as well, using one 24-hour dispatching office. We can consolidate the dispatching on the eastern shore as well. People have to get over the idea that each city is an island unto itself. If they call a toll-free number, it really doesn't matter where the person they call is located."

"That's the problem we've had with shrinking the tomi's own regional operations."

"Exactly. Now, what's the progress on the report about the costs of maternity leave?"

Luktréstu hesitated. "I . . . think Sliranu needs another week. He's been pretty busy lately."

"Really? Doing what?"

"The Research Office is always researching something. I'll check this afternoon."

"Okay, thanks." Jordan picked up the Ledger Book for Eagle Eye Security, thanked Luktréstu, and carried it to his office. He sat at his desk and picked up the first of three financial reports he had received that morning. They were dense, but he knew he had to read them carefully so that he could ask detailed questions of the Comptroller on Pɛnkudiu when the monthly Heads of Staff meeting was scheduled.

He read the first one and scribbled notes on it in pencil, so he'd remember his questions later that week. Then he rose to stretch his legs. He walked down the stairs to the third floor to get some exercise, but before going back up, he walked to the Research Office. "Good morning, Sliranu. How's the maternity report going?"

Sliranu was surprised. "I gave it to Luktréstu 10 days ago. It's an extremely easy report to write! The Mennea Tomi only has 5 female employees and they're all grade 1 or 2, so they aren't paid much. If one of them took six months of maternity leave each year—highly unlikely—it'd cost us about 1,000 dhanay. Three months of maternity leave for fathers would be much more expensive because about ten percent of our employees have children every year. Twenty five employees, on average costing 750 dhanay would cost a total of about 19,000 dhanay. That's about 15% of the tomi's annual profit."

Jordan nodded. “It’s worth doing, especially, if we can close down more of the branch offices and consolidate our resources here. That’s supposed to save 15,000 per year.”

“Yes, they almost balance each other. Shall I make you another copy of the report?”

“Yes, could you?”

“Sure.” Sliranu walked to a closed office where someone was typing information into the tomi’s only tablet, and was able to borrow the tablet long enough to print the report. A minute later he handed it to Jordan.

“Thanks.” Jordan flipped through the report quickly. “You write really clearly, Sliranu.”

“Thank you. I completed a double major in accounting and literature.”

“Really? It shows. I’m amazed you can turn out reports as fast as you can. I think we need to expand Research.”

“I would welcome additional help and new questions,” said Sliranu with a smile.

“We need a strong research program. Thanks.” Jordan headed out of Sliranu’s office with the report, his anger growing by the moment. Luktréstu had lied to him. He was a Bahá'í, but no doubt the equality of men and women—implied by the idea that the tomi should start offering 6 months maternity leave to women and 3 months to male employees if their wives were not employed by the tomi as well—was strange and off-putting. Or possibly Luktréstu was exerting some power because he was resentful he hadn’t moved into the position of chief executive officer. It was hard to say.

Jordan took the stairs back up to the fifth floor so he could think the situation through. He showed the report to his administrative assistant, Sajéstu. “Can you get enough copies of this report from Sliranu to send one to everyone attending the heads of staff meeting on Pɛnkudiu? And please add it to the agenda. I’ll draft a cover memo for it this afternoon.”

Sajéstu jotted down the title, then nodded. “Okay, I’ll get that done, too.”

“Too much?”

“I can’t always keep up!”

“I know, I’ll see whether I can get you some additional help. I’m going home for lunch and will be back in an hour.”

Sajéstu nodded; Jordan headed for the stairs. He didn’t like waiting for the elevator, and besides, he needed the exercise. He was hoping Chris would be home and awake by then.

Sure enough, when he entered the house he saw his grandparents sitting at the dining table, where they were usually ensconced. “You’re back!”

“Yes; we arrived a few minutes after you went to work,” replied Chris. “Roktɛkéstu is a rather fast driver. Frightening, but pretty good. We made good time.”

“How’s Mitranimɛla?”

Chris shook his head. “Not so good. The five-member Board the Queen appointed has serious personal problems. Fithu is a pretty good mayor, I’d say. He had been secretary of the town grange, so he already knew how to run a large organization. I wouldn’t call him stellar, but he does fine. Dr. Datofésu also understands how things work. But Florané, the dear sweet widow whom everyone adores, is very persuasive, very

conservative in the ways she thinks things should be run, and since she really can't read very well or quickly, she does not have access to all the information. The other two members adore her, so what she says often goes. This makes it almost impossible for Bithu to run the town professionally. My heart goes out to him."

"Did your seminar do them any good?"

Chris considered. "Maybe a little, but I'm not sure. It was a frustrating two days."

"Were you safe?" asked Jordan.

"Yes; there was no danger. Roktɛkéstu was intimidating by virtue of his size, but he's polite and a good note taker and assistant at the same time. He was always getting something done to help me, but stayed close. People could tell he was a bodyguard as well as a personal assistant. We were careful to drive unusual routes and at unusual times, too; we arrived in town an hour early and from the direction of Pértatraisér instead of Ora, and when we left for Pértatranisér we headed south toward Ora instead. We got a pretty good tour of northern Véspa that way. It's really developing nicely, albeit slowly."

"Ora sucks up as much development as possible and leaves the villages poor," said Jordan. "But Route 55 is now paved and there's talk of installing a gas line along it. I haven't seen the delta area, but I understand it's now filling up."

"That's what I heard, too. People didn't want to move back at first; the old villages were buried under tens of meters of gravel, and not much would grow on the rocky ground. But the tail end of the flood was pretty muddy, so the delta area did get some soil, and it turns out if you remove the boulders, the ground is pretty good for rice paddies. So people are moving back in. Ora claims the entire area for itself, of course." Chris turned to Liz. "So, did you get the last washing machines leased?"

“Yes, yesterday. Who would have thought it’d be so hard to give 300 washing machines a home! But your advice to focus on just a few big cities was a wise one, Chris, because we can provide maintenance and training more easily that way. Two days ago we opened a sixth laundromat right here in Mɛlwika, and they have an average of 12 machines each. We’re beginning to get calls from gabrulis or even from businessmen asking how to get a washing machine, so we seem to have successfully stimulated interest in them.”

“Good.”

“How much did all that cost us?” asked Jordan.

Chris frowned. “The 300 machines were 18,000, but that was a loan and we got it back. We extended loans to the various people setting up laundromats as well because they needed plumbing or to refurbish a space. I think that totaled 20,000, with the tomi keeping track of the various loans. We should get it back.”

“With the Tomi providing about 1,000 dhanay in free accounting,” added Jordan. “We should keep track of that, too, even if we are happy to be providing the service.”

“Yes, definitely.”

“I was talking to Luktréstu this morning and he is very concerned because Eagle Eye Security is 40,000 dhanay in the red this year. He thinks it needs to be restructured. We could probably rely on the telephones more and use fewer dispatchers, for example, and that would save maybe 10,000.”

“Yes, that would help, if we can get a system of telephone communications to work adequately. It probably will, but Sarésunu doesn’t trust it. That’s part of the problem.”

“Maybe we can look at the problems and find some solutions, because 40,000 is a lot to lose. I have another problem to talk to you about, grandpa. When Sliranu completed the report about the costs of initiating a 6-month maternity leave last week, Luktréstu took a copy, and today he told me the report wouldn’t be ready for another week. After the next head of staff meeting.”

“Hum. That’s not good.” Chris considered. “There is no doubt he resents you. It pains me because he is an excellent executive and has vast experience. I can see where he is coming from, but he has to get over it.”

“It pains me, too.”

“What will you do?”

Jordan opened his mouth to say “I came to ask your advice what to do,” but realized Chris had asked the right question. “Ah . . . I think I should go to his office, sit down, and talk to him about it, and ask him to raise his objections to a policy with me directly, rather than undermining it.”

Chris nodded. “Yes, he is good with a frank and calm approach. No reason to highlight that he lied; it will be obvious that you know that. He can’t be undermining you; he has to state his case and accept the result. But that also means you have to be fair.”

Jordan nodded. “I know.”

Just then Tiamaté came up the ramp from the basement tunnel to join them for lunch, so they turned to other subjects. Afterward, Jordan went back to the office and headed straight to Luktréstu’s office. “Do you have a minute?”

Luktréstu looked up. “Sure.”

“Let’s talk further about the maternity and paternity leave policy. Before lunch I stopped at Sliranu’s office and got a copy of the report, which he gave you last week. I’ve told Sajéstu to get copies for everyone for our heads of staff meeting on Pɛnkudiu. But I’d like to know what your concerns are about it, which has caused you to drag your feet about it.”

Luktréstu was surprised by Jordan’s question. “Well, it’s pretty simple. I think the maternity leave policy is premature; no one does it anywhere. Besides, we haven’t got practically any female employees. But the paternity leave policy; that strikes me as a waste of time. Men will be glad to take 3 months without pay, but they won’t be taking care of their baby! They’ll let their wife do it and they’ll hang around the house and relax! That just won’t work!”

Jordan was startled by Luktréstu’s answer. “You’re probably right about that,” he conceded. “I’d take three months to help Tiamaté, but only one man in ten would do that.”

“I think that’s right, and paternity leave won’t change that. And you can’t take three months of leave, anyway.”

“No, I can’t. But women certainly would benefit from the policy.”

“No question, and so would their family. I really don’t object to that, and it won’t cost us much, unless we hire more women.”

“Which we will do,” replied Jordan. “But that will take time because there aren’t many women graduating with the accounting and marketing skills we need. Alright, how’s this: we drop the paternity leave policy, at least officially. If a man complains it isn’t fair and he really seems to want to help his wife, we could make an exception.”

“I think that’s much better. Do you want me to go down to Sliranu and ask him to shorten the report to include maternity leave only? He can probably make that change by tomorrow morning.”

Jordan nodded. “Yes, thank you, Luktrésu. Let’s do that.”

“Alright, I’ll make sure the report is ready for the heads of staff meeting on Pɛnkudiu.”

“Thank you.”

447.

South Tutanɛ Province

Mid Prusménu/early December, 20/638

The Krésonɛ Géndha was a small but attractive structure, a one-story stone building with eight offices in front and a very large room behind, capable of being divided into four classrooms using heavy carpet dividers. It was next to the elementary school—though it was much nicer, reflecting the tribe's greater prosperity—and both were downhill from the nearly finished House of Worship, the "Mother Temple" of the Tutanɛ, and the Bahá'í Center, which now looked small and old fashioned.

It was a lovely day in mid-Prusménu—early December—because Sértroba was on the equator and always warm. The wind was blowing off the mountains to the east—as it almost always did—so it was dry and sunny. The géndha's dedication ceremony began in the House of Worship, which was lovely even without the interior decoration. The entire tribe came because the Queen, Duke Kandékwɛs, Crown Prince Mégékwɛs, Lord ɛndranu, and the Mennea family were all present. The temple was packed and half the audience had to stay outside and listen through the nine open doors. There was chanting of hymns by Widumaj, traditional hymns to ɛndru and Érmatɛr, and Bahá'í prayers. Kɛkanu even came and chanted a traditional prayer to Érmatɛr, much to the appreciation of the tribe.

Then the entire gathering processed the 75 meters downhill to the front of the géndha, to the music of pan pipes and drums, Her Majesty in the lead. The crowd stood in front of a wooden platform where the VIPs sat. Lord Patékwu rose to speak.

“Welcome to Sértroba Your Majesty, Duke Kandékwɛs, Prince Mégékwɛs, Count Kristobéru, Lord ɛndranu, Lord Dhoru, Lord Amosu, Lord Jordanu, and our other distinguished guests. Today is a joyous occasion for all the Krésonɛ. It was our first use of the temple, which will be dedicated this spring once the interior decoration is complete. The Mother Temple for all the Tutanɛ and the Kresonɛ Géndha share two things in common. First, they were both built by us with our own hands out of our own rock, according to traditional methods. There was a slight exception: we had to use a concrete foundation and steel beams to support the roofs, because we were told our traditional building methods would not be adequate if the ground shook severely, and we did not want either building to fall on us. Second, both buildings had very expensive and very modern aspects to them that were definitely not traditional. In the case of the House of Worship, it is the magnificent dome of glass over the center of the worship space. We understand there is only one other glass dome in the world, which is also 12 meters across. In the case of the géndha, it is the mobile barriers of sound-proof carpeting that can divide the interior into two large rooms or four small ones. We are grateful for the advice of many experts, who helped us do most of the work on these buildings.

“The Krésonɛ have many reasons to be thankful today. We are thankful to our Queen for her strenuous efforts to understand and support us in our efforts to advance. We are thankful to Duke Kandékwɛs for encouraging us to establish trade relations with the businessmen in Mɛddoakwés. But we save our special thanks to the Mennea family. They came here often, advised us, encouraged us, loaned us money, gave us gifts at crucial times when we needed them, trusted us, believed in us, and prayed with us. They believed that we could want to be part of the Kingdom and the Kingdom could want us to

be a part of it, not just as a source of taxes, but as a contributor to civilization. They first visited us thirteen years ago. And look at what has happened in thirteen years! We have these buildings, we have much irrigated farmland, we have electricity and gas, we have a school, and today we have a géndha. We are still a small and poor tribe, in many ways, but we have one precious resource that is also unique in many ways: the Ornakwés marshes, among which we have built our hamlets and farms. Our géndha will be dedicated to studying the plants and animals of these marshes, and we hope eventually to have two professors of ecology here studying our marshes full time. Our géndha will also host faculty from Mɛlwika and Gordha, and buses will bring students from Wurontroba, Austroba, and Gordha to study here several nights a week. One unique feature of our géndha will be the courses it provides to high school students in the afternoons, giving the evening students a chance to convey their knowledge to younger ones. We hope Wurontroba and Austroba will do the same. This géndha will be an engine of civilization and development, helping all of the Krésonɛ to learn. Because the crown was able to give us the funds for the construction, we are forever in your debt, Your Majesty, and can never thank you enough for your love and support."

Patékwu nodded in thanks to Her Majesty. He turned to his seat and kneeled before her. She bade him to rise and walked to the microphone.

"I can not begin to tell all of you how impressed I am with the Krésonɛ," she began. "You live in one of the most beautiful places on Éra and enjoy what may be the most perfect weather. The green of your marshes and the abundance of game and cattle—we saw a herd of a hundred antelope on our way here—must always bring you joy and a trust in Esto's abundance. But you have not sat back and simply enjoyed the

fruits of your land. You have advanced your unity, your capacities as a people, your knowledge and wisdom, and you have cultivated the virtues Esto has endowed you with. You have learned from tradition, from Widumaj, and from Bahá'u'lláh. Today, you inaugurate an institution to help you advance systematically, wisely, and I trust spiritually as well: the Krésonɛ Géndha, the nineteenth génadɛma or géndha in the world. I cannot tell you how privileged I feel, as your Queen, to assist this effort. It is a great honor to announce that the crown will endow one of the two chairs in ecology that you wish to establish." She paused for a wave of applause. "It will be named for my late brother, Prince Mɛméjékwu, who was a great friend of the Tutanɛ and sought to be a compassionate supporter of all the tribes. In this concern he was exemplary and I wish to continue the work in his honor.

"Beyond that, you can count on me to patronize your géndha strongly. I urge the Krésonɛ to set for themselves the goal of becoming the best educated and most literate of the twelve tribes. Nothing will secure your future more. Nothing can guarantee a strong voice in the future of the kingdom more than education. The Krésonɛ can lead the way as the kingdom advances toward the future. I will pray that you will make it so."

Her Majesty sat to strong and sustained applause. Then Lord Patékwu rose to introduce Count Kristobéru. With a slight limp, Chris walked to the microphone. He paused to look at the crowd. "One of the greatest privileges of my life has been to get to know and serve you. I love the Krésonɛ. I love the Krésonɛ." His voice even cracked a bit, the second time. "As Her Majesty has said, you are blessed to live in a beautiful place, a rich and abundant place, but the greatest beauty of all are the people here. You

have been generous to me; you have given gifts to all of my family. When we were not sure where our children could be safe, we knew they could come here.

"You were confident you could advance, and with the great leadership of Lord Patékwu, you have. With irrigation, you protected your marshes from over-exploitation and gave yourselves twice as much farmland so that you could sell winter vegetables to all of Arjakwés province. And now, with your steadily growing business storing archival documents in your perfect climate for their preservation, you have acquired a business that will keep educated young people here." Chris pointed to the hillside north of the village. "We can see the archival facility from here and it steadily grows, modular unit by modular unit, as you acquire papers to store for the palace and various businesses. North of it, we come to Salidhuba and the solid waste facility, which provides yet another vital service to the kingdom. And now you are the hosts of the Mother Temple of the Tutanɛ.

"In consequence, I have great confidence in the future of the Krésonɛ. You are already contributing to this world in important ways. Above all, you are concerned to establish unity of the Tutanɛ and unity throughout the kingdom. This is the greatest gift you can give, and you are giving it every day. Tomorrow will be one of your greatest contributions to date. I look forward to many more years of collaboration with you."

Patékwu rose in a standing ovation as Chris returned to his seat, so the audience followed to honor him for all he had done to assist the tribe. As the applause died away, he beckoned the Queen and Chris to join him at the front door of the géndha, which was blocked by a bright red ribbon. Together the three of them took a giant pair of scissors and cut the ribbon.

Everyone applauded and the VIPs led the people inside. The tour was fairly simple and straightforward because the chairs and tables that each room had were moved to the side to let people pass through. The main corridor was split in two by a heavy carpeted curtain and open to the two front rooms on the right and left; the spot in the middle of the space where the four walls were supposed to meet was left open so people could easily walk from any classroom to any other classroom. Each of the four classrooms had its own door to the outside, and they were opened as well so that people could enter and exit easily.

Chris, Liz, and the rest of the family walked the length of the géndha, admiring the woodwork and the big windows that admitted light, and exited the far end, leaving Lord Patékwu with the royal party. As the latter exited the building as well, Patékwu hurried over. “Please join us for the private reception in the elementary school.”

“We will be pleased to do so,” said Chris. “What a magnificent day, Lord!”

“Yes, we are stunned and amazed by it. But I seek your advice, lord. Her Majesty will be here tomorrow for the inaugural meeting of the South Tutanɛ provincial assembly. We would be most honored if Her Majesty and the Duke would stay here overnight with us, rather than returning to Mɛddoakwés.”

“Where would they stay?”

“We can convert the rooms of the géndha into bedrooms. We can even set up the elementary school for them. Your family is staying at the Bahá'í Center, right?”

“Yes, that is our intention. Why don’t you ask Her Majesty to stay?”

“Because it would be an insult to our people if she declines.”

“I see what you mean.” Chris considered. “So . . . would you like me to ascertain her willingness?”

“Or persuade her to say yes!”

“Alright, I can try to do that.”

“Thank you, lord,” said Patékwu, with some relief.

Chris and Patekwu quickened their pace to catch up to the Queen and her party, who were being conducted to Patékwu’s house by his son. When they caught up to her, Patékwu said to his son, “why don’t you and I hurry ahead to make sure everything is ready. Lord Chris can lead the party to our manor.”

“I will be glad to do so,” said Chris, with a nod. The two Krésonɛ hurried ahead and the Queen turned to Chris. “This is a glorious day, Lord, and I think you received less credit for bringing it about than you deserved. When my mother named you ‘Count of the New Cities’ I don’t think she had Sértroba, Khɛrmdhuna, Tɛrskua, Dhudrakaita, and Dhébkua in mind . . . the list of places that have benefitted from your attention and assistance is very long.”

“Thank you, Your Majesty. Sometimes people need a little bit of encouragement and a small bit of monetary assistance, and they can do the rest on their own.”

“And sometimes they need more, and that is the role of government. I am concerned, lord, that the launching of this new province will go well. But I know all four of the lords. They seem to have no grudges against each other and appear to work well together. Is that your experience?”

“I have not seen them together, but I know the Wuronɛ are close to the Krésonɛ and Kaitɛrɛ, and they have collaborated with the Kwétékwonɛ. The Krésonɛ are close to

the Wuronɛ in particular, but have no particular relationships, good or bad, with the other two because of geographical separation."

"How do the Kaitɛrɛ and the Wuronɛ know each other?"

"They are connected by trail, and until the last few years, people went back and forth."

"Perhaps that explains the request by Magékɛru that the army extend their road southward to the end of their valley and over the mountains to Wurontroba. Lord, what are your thoughts about the northern tribes? We can make a province out of the Méghɛndrɛs, but the Mémɛnɛghonɛs, the Késtonɛs, and the Dwobɛrgonɛs are too small to add to them. Together with Kostakhéma they are rather small to make a province of their own. And they are too far from the Ghéslonɛs and Géndonɛs to make a province with those tribes."

"I agree, it is a dilemma, Your Majesty."

"We'll have to see how this province works out."

"That probably is best, I agree. Now, I have a question for you, Your Majesty. My family and I plan to stay here tonight in the Bahá'í Center. The Krésonɛ feel very honored when their guests stay the night; when the guests leave, then return the next day, they feel their hospitality was lacking. I know they want to ask you to stay the night. They will do their best to make you comfortable, either in the lord's house or in the new géndha, which has ample space."

Estobidhé's eyes grew large. She looked at Kandékwɛs, who was equally surprised. "That would be difficult," he said.

"It would." She thought. "But we want the provincial assembly to go well."

"We do," he agreed. "And this will help, if we mix with the people."

"Yes, we can't just retreat into the school." She nodded. "Should we offer to stay?"

"No, I think Pakékwu wishes to make the offer."

The Queen nodded.

Sértroba was thrilled their Queen agreed to stay the night and they threw a huge banquet, with singing. The Queen, Duke, and their party mixed with the people fairly freely and answered questions, and that thrilled the Krésonɛ even more.

People did not get up quickly the next morning, and it was fortunate the representatives of the other three tribes were not on time. The Wuronɛ—the lord, one elected representative, and one elder—arrived by pickup first. The Kwétékwonɛ—lord, 3 representatives, and 3 elders—arrived next, followed by the Kaitɛrɛ with their lord, 5 elected representatives, and 5 elders. The Krésonɛ, based on their population of 1,200, were represented by their lord, 2 elders, and 2 elected representatives, so the total gathering was 26. Ten of them were Bahá'ís; one woman was included. One of the classrooms in the new Géndha was prepared to host the first consultative assembly of the new province.

They ate bread, cheese, and venison together, washed down by tea and coffee, and talked informally until the Queen and Duke entered. They shook hands with everyone and exchanged personal greetings with each one. Then the gathering moved to a big circle of chairs, with the Queen and Duke seated as part of the circle but elevated on a low platform. The first priority, of course, was to pray, and they chanted their traditional

hymns freely, even ones to ɛndro, much to the Duke's visible discomfort. Patékwu himself chanted one of them, to demonstrate his adherence to traditional ways even as a Bahá'í.

"My heart is filled to overflowing because of this gathering," said Patékwu, once they finished their prayers. "The Krésonɛ feel incredibly honored, first to have Her Majesty here—she spent all of yesterday and last night with us—and second to have our brothers and sisters from the Kaitɛrɛ, the Kwétékwonɛ, and the Wuronɛ here for this provincial assembly. None of us know what this assembly portends for our tribes. Today we will find out. As host, I will serve as the chair of this gathering, and whoever is host of the next assembly will chair that meeting, or appoint someone to serve as chair. It is now our honor to hear from Her Majesty, Estobidhé, the Queen of the World."

"Thank you, Lord. You speak of honor to you, but I must emphasize the honor I feel, coming here, being greeted so warmly by everyone, both yesterday and this morning, and how incredibly impressed I am by the southern tribes. I have visited the Wuronɛ and Kwétékwonɛ on other occasions, and not yet the Kaitɛrɛ, who I hope will host the next assembly so I can see their lands and peoples as well. My experience has been a deep love and respect I feel for all of you. You have made great material progress, as this building itself demonstrates, but you have preserved your generosity, your desire to serve others, your warmth and hospitality, and the other values that have made you spiritually strong and worthy peoples. I am confident this gathering will aim to reinforce your material and spiritual progress.

"Why do you need to be a province at all? Why not, just four tribes? I have pondered this question and admit that this is an experiment. I think there are several

answers to the question. First, this kingdom, increasingly, is organized on three levels: the village, the province, and the totality. These three levels provide local intimacy of governance, an intermediary form, and a world-wide perspective. Some planning is best done at a regional level, because individual villages are too small to provide everything they need, but centralizing everything in one or two places is not wise, either. The success of the Kwolonɛ and the Mɛghɛndrɛs demonstrates the importance of the intermediate level. The four southern tribes, with a total population of six thousand people, are larger than the Kwolonɛ were twenty years ago, and are the same size as the Mɛghɛndrɛs are today. As a province you will receive the so-called 'duke's share' of the provincial taxes, three percent, which totals 30,000 dhanay. But you have no need for a duke and I do not currently plan to appoint one. Rather, the provincial assembly will be responsible for spending the money and determining who will oversee it. The assembly or an officer it chooses may also apply for additional development grants, so 30,000 dhanay need not be your entire budget.

"What I am hoping to see from you is unity over some direction forward for the province. Some of you were elected by your people; some of you are elders invited by your lords because you occupy traditional positions of respect and experience. You know your needs, which go far beyond 30,000 dhanay. Come together, deliberate wisely, and make a plan. This is what I request from you. Does anyone have any questions?"

That last statement startled people; no one expected the queen to ask that. Patékwu nodded quickly. "Thank you, Your Majesty, I think that is very clear."

“Excellent.” Estobidhé smiled and rose, so everyone stood as well. “My lord Kandékwɛs and I will leave you so you can deliberate freely, then, and look forward to hearing a report toward the end of the day.”

The Queen and her consort left the room. Patékwu moved over to a chair on the low platform. “So, we are free. Where would we start to spend 30,000?”

Lord Magékɛru of the Kaitɛrɛ raised his hand immediately. “A road leading out of the southern end of our valley to our cousins the Wuronɛ would be of great assistance to all of us, because it will speed our communication as a province.”

“Yes, that’s true,” agreed ɛndranu of the Wuronɛ.

“Will it?” asked Mɛnɛgékwɛs of the Kwétékwonɛ. “Right now you can drive around the mountain in an hour, can’t you?”

“I think it’s a good idea and we need to ask for such a road,” said Patékwu. “But the army will pay for it. Our 30,000 need not be used that way.”

“Yes, you are right,” agreed Magékɛru.

“All our tribes need development,” exclaimed Déodatu Ekwɛsmani, a Bahá'í and the Kwétékwonɛs’ development officer. “Thirty thousand will hire fifteen people. They can be teachers, for example.”

“But we don’t need four more teachers, and they’ll need classrooms and other things that cost money,” noted ɛndranu. “If we each could hire two more teachers, though, that would leave some money to build classrooms for them.”

“Wait a minute,” said Magékɛru. “Why should we divide the money equally? Your tribe is only one twentieth of our total population, and I bet you contributed only a twenty-fifth of the taxes!”

“Please, brother, be generous. We have only one teacher for our children. As a result, only children aged 7 through 10 go to school.”

“I understand that, brother, and I could see us giving you some additional funds, but not a quarter of them. My people did not pay taxes to educate your children.”

“I’d rather not put all the money into one project, anyway,” said Patékwu. “Let us say that one additional teacher for each tribe is a possibility. What else could we do with the money?”

“We need a doctor,” said Ɛndranu. “We are a long way from one. If the road through the southern end of the Kaitɛrɛ valley is completed and a doctor is based in Wurontroba, he could get to the Kaitɛrɛ and the Kwétékwonɛ quickly and easily. This would be a great assistance to our tribes.”

“Well, probably not to the Krésonɛ; but we’re closer to Gordha anyway,” observed Patékwu.

“We won’t have the road that fast; they’ll probably need two years to complete it,” said Déodatu. “I think this goes on the agenda for next year. What about funds to develop small businesses?”

“How do you do that; give it away to businessmen?”

“You give them a grant or a loan; usually some of both.”

Ɛndranu shook his head. “Too complicated for us. We don’t have anyone to do it.”

“Déodatu could do it,” said Mɛnɛgékwɛs. “Our tribe has tried to use him as our Development Officer, but we are so small, we don’t need him full time, so he has ended up being a part time teacher at our school. Perhaps he should serve as the Development Officer for the province. It would be a better use of his talent.”

“He has visited us and offered ideas,” said Magékɛru. “We would like that.”

“He has been to us as well,” agreed Patékwu.

“Alright,” agreed ɛndranu, somewhat reluctantly. “Can we agree on that, and least one more teacher for each village?”

“Fine,” said Magékɛru.

“And I suggest a definite salary for the teacher; 1,500 dhanay the first year, increasing to 2,000 over three years as an incentive to stay, plus 1,000 to assist in the construction of a classroom if it’s needed, and 50 dhanay for teaching materials,” exclaimed Déodatu. “That’s the sort of arrangement that is needed.”

“I agree,” said Patékwu, and the other lords nodded.

So far, none of the other “legislators” had spoken, but now Ekɛru, a Kaitɛrɛ hunter and one of the elected representatives, spoke up. “We need to clean up the sacred springs. This is something we could do together to benefit all the tribes. It is in a state of ruin, with trees and brush growing inside old buildings, knocking over walls . . . the springs are filled with branches and dead leaves, not to mention dead animals.”

“Yes, that is an excellent idea,” said Mɛnɛngékwɛs.

“But do we know whose land it is on?” asked Patékwu.

“Ours; no question,” replied Mɛnɛgékwɛs. “It is on the Kaitɛrɛ side of the Majakwés. The Mémɛnɛghonɛ claim the other side, and the Késtonɛ are considerably upstream.”

“I would love to see the springs cleaned up,” agreed Magékɛru. “Perhaps we could dedicate 10,000 to that task, and that would help greatly.”

“Part of the effort should be to hire the archaeologists to take a look,” suggested Déodatu. “They are trained to look at ruins and determine how they originally looked. There are now four professional archaeologists and four or five more in training. They would cost a few hundred dhanay only. They could photograph everything and write up a report with recommendations for us.”

“That’s a good idea; could our ‘Development Officer’ do that?” asked Patékwu.

Déodatu nodded. “Yes, I can do that, and help with the teachers and classrooms. Did we also agree to hiring a doctor? I suppose he or she would have to travel among all four towns, but that’s possible. The doctor could be in each town at least one day a week, maybe two days in the Kaitɛrɛ area, since they are the largest tribe.”

“How much would such a doctor cost?” asked Mɛnɛgékwɛs. “I remember we looked into the cost of getting a doctor just for the Kwétékwonɛ and decided it was too much.”

“They have to be paid 3,000 to 4,000; they are expensive,” said Déodatu. “They will need an office in each village, which could be a room attached to the school or in a house. I would suggest a nurse as well, though perhaps Wurontroba could share a nurse with the other tribes because they are small and do not need a full time nurse. I think a doctor, three nurses, and office space will cost 10,000.”

"So; 10,000 for teachers and classrooms, 10,000 for doctors and nurses, and 10,000 for the sacred springs," said Patékwu. "Plus I suppose 2,000 for the Development Officer; we've spent too much!"

"The salaries are for a full year, but presumably Her Majesty is offering us a budget for the rest of this year," said Mɛnɛgékwɛs. "If that is correct, there will be enough."

"Can the Development Officer also pursue development grants for the tribes?" asked Magékɛru. "Because we could use experienced help with that."

"Of course; that's the main task of a Development Officer," replied Déodatu.

"It sounds like we have a budget, then," said Patékwu. "May I suggest that we turn to ideas for next year. Let us go around the circle and all 26 of us speak up about things we think our tribes and our province need, starting next summer."

The preliminary agreement hammered out by the four lords in the presence of everyone else established a very positive environment for further discussion. They took their time and went around the circle three times. Déodatu, having seen the way the Menneas lead such discussions, pulled out a pad of paper and wrote everything down, immediately becoming the council's secretary. Everyone spoke up and the list of ideas for future consideration grew quite long.

They took a break late in the afternoon while Patékwu went to report to Her Majesty. Pleased, she immediately came to the council and requested an official report, which Déodatu, by virtue of his notes and minutes, gave.

“This is an excellent plan; a truly excellent plan,” she said, repeating herself for emphasis. “There were many traps the council could have fallen into. One was fighting over the proportion each tribe would get. Another was hiring a governor and staff, which would eat up a large portion of the total budget. Yet another was just distributing it to each tribe to spend as they see fit, which would produce no province at all. There are a number of ways the council could have wasted resources or had difficulties allotting them because of lack of trust. But you avoided them and put the Duke’s share into education, health, and a sacred place. These were very wise choices.

“I have considered establishing a policy that affects the poorer villages and provinces. It is this: that a province where the household income is less than half the kingdom’s average is eligible to get *all* of its taxes back, but in the form of development grants. That means you have to have a development officer to determine what opportunities exist and apply for the grants. The kingdom’s household income currently stands at 2,500 dhanay, but in the South Tutanɛ province it is just 1,200, so this province is eligible for development grants equal to as much as 100 percent of your taxes paid to the crown, or 200,000 dhanay. This is independent of any decisions to add roads or wires to the province, which are separate matters.

“So, it is wise that you have decided to hire Déodatu as your Development Officer! He will be able to provide the four tribes a great deal of assistance in the next year.”

Started July 8, 2017. Reread and edited, July 2, 2022.

Ideas:

Liz (72): Gabrulis, growth of the Faith, spiritualization

Chris (74): Focuses on sustainable development. Wants hydroelectric potential of Long Valley developed. Talks to John about sustainable development

May (47) is focusing on; Amos (49) is focusing on engineering; Lua (52) is busy with a rapidly expanding health system; Behruz (56) is working on the Institute; Thornton (37) is busy running Mɛlwika; Lébé (38).

The children: Rostamu Shirazi (19, summer); Skandé Keino (18, spring); Jalalu Mennea (17, spring); Kalé Mennea (15, June); Marié Keino (same); Jonkrisu (12, Aug.)

Tiamaté (25-26) Jordan (25-26) Andru (2 on 9 Dhébɛlménu). Lubaté (born in very early Blorménu): continue with development, raise a baby

Tomasu and Sulokwé is raising their baby, born in mid-late Bɛlménu 17/635

Primanu and Gramé Miller: have baby

Sugérsé: Continues to develop Institute

Chandu: Becomes a major force in grange movement

Roktɛkɛstɛr: Developing his town? Retired? Dies?

Estoiyaju: developing his town with estate lords Wértéstu and Wokwéstu, respectively, with Chris and Jordan's inputs. Wɛranu's heirs develop his town.

Wɛpokɛstɛr and Wɛrétrakɛstɛr:

Aisɛndru and Sarédaté: Settling into Anartu and working to make the army a service agency. Aisugu: Attending Mɛlwika Génadɛma, working with Jordan

Budhéstu and Blorakwé (24) start psychiatic facility; Mɛlitané and Moléstu:

Soru, Kanawé, Blorané (13-14), Isuru (9):

Rébu:

Pɛrku and Sharé: kids Mitrubu (26) and Avásé (21)

Queen Awstɛr/Estoibidhé: With computers and cellphones, she stays overnight in only 5 places and travels with a smaller entourage. Prime Minister flies in for consultations once per week.

Northern tribes consider an assembly as well

Rostamu wants to marry? Whom? A Tutanɛ?

*Ekwanu of the Mémɛnɛgonɛ has appendicitis, almost dies; Mémɛnɛgonɛ have a pro-development "coup" as a result (March)

*Morituora plans a museum and cleared archaeological site on mountain; new Lord tours Mɛlwika museum with Thornton and asks for help (March)

*Visit the Géndonɛ; they have decided to enter the modern world (April?)

Redistrict and divide clusters; appoint new Auxiliaries; visit temple sites (complete Khɛrmdhuna temple; start building Bilara temple; complete design of Sértroba temple, 2-4 yrs) (Ridvan)

*Plan to build the qiblih (May?)

*Bishop Jonu resigns from Assembly because of health; Dr. Migélu is elected (May)

*Mennea Tomi gets a new addition across Icehouse Road; Luktréstu becomes Vice President as Mennea Tomi is reorganized (May)

*Mɛdhpéla builds big temple to ɛndro (May)

*Tiamaté has a baby (mid May)

* Anara shell mound excavated in June; earlier population discovered. May, Jordan start at Lilalara to meet Marku and Skandu (June)

* First veteranarians complete uniyɛri from Kwolonɛ Géndha; learn more about the archaeology (June)

*Fast economic growth causes problems; Mɛlwika can't make machines fast enough; they distribute the work to other places (especially those losing ice mining) (June)

*Tɛrskua gabruli building opens; laundromats start (June)

*Rébu goes to Morituora (June) for summer génadɛma; Amos goes to Mémɛnɛghonɛ and Géndonɛ to help with smelters (July).

*Liz and Mɛlitané ask the Kérékwɛs family for better washing machine prices; Thornton takes experimental pneumatic chainsaw to Sullɛndha (July)

*Budhéstu plans to open a psychiatric section at Isurdhuna Hospital, asks Queen and Chris for money; washing machines in Frachvala, Mɛlwika (mid August)

*Plan for hydropower in Long Valley is pushed by Ora and is controversial; Mitranu of Mitranimɛla cheates the crown and must pay back the money; Amos asks Thornton about northern access route to Ghéslona (late August)

*Mitranu is stripped of his powers as Lord; Town council appointed; Queen visits and announces the change and various development plans (early Sept.)

*Power cable to Sumilara starts, mid Sept.; Plans for hydroelectric pipeline advance; New high school curriculum; controversial Sumi language bill finally passes City Council late Sept.)

*Jordan and family and development consulting moves to Mɛlwika; Jordan becomes CEO and embarks on an effort to add a spiritual concern to the Mennea Tomi's priorities (Oct)

*Struggles with Luktréstu over maternity and paternity leave policies; more about washing machines; developments in Mitranimɛla; security company not doing so well (Nov.)

*Launch a Krésonɛ génadɛma; Southern tribal assembly meets; Queen recognizes them as a province; they propose rebuilding the sacred spring (early Dec.)

Spring: National forest and park system; entire western shore is now using timber from land for gas, charcoal, and construction

Mɛlwika salaries are not rising 10% per year, like average, so its standing vis-à-vis the villages is being eroded. Decision to pay in profit therefore is very controversial. Tax base is not expanding as fast, either, so establishment of a Youth Center is controversial

Wind turbines and undersea power cable for Sumilara

Wɛrétrakɛster writes a piece lamenting modern life and criticizing the Bahá'í Faith indirectly. Chris and Wɛrétrakɛster meet and dialogue

Fall: Bilingual government? Sumi on street signs in Mɛlwika? High Schools start to teach Sumi, too.

Round-the-sea bicycle race planned. It includes Kɛrda, too.

Security for Bahá'í properties in Mɛddwoglubas

Jordan is very busy with the summer youth program; Rostamu has stepped in to help with development; Jordan still travels with Sajéstu

Fix up the sacred spring?

Dhébɛlménu: April 21-May 20 (month of planting)

1/21

7/27

13/May 3

19/9 Mɛlwika spring term 1 ends

25/15 Mɛlwika vacation

Blorménu: May 21-June 20 (month of flowers)

1/21 Consultative Assembly (next 4-6 weeks, ending at Grand Court); Mɛlwika spring short term 1 begins

7/27

13/June 3

19/9

25/15 Mɛlwika spring short term 1 ends

Kaiménu: June 21-July 20 (hot month)

1/21 Mɛddoakwés: Harvest; Graduation, All-Génadɛma Council and Conference; Thornton heads for Mɛdhpéla

7/27 Grand Court and Harvest Festival

13/July 3 Mɛddoakwés: second planting; Mɛlwika summer short term 1 begins

19/9

25/15

Dhonménu: July 21-August 20 (month of grain)

1/21 Queen visits Morana, Lɛpawsona (where she urges patience with the economy)

7/27 Queen visits Bɛllɛdha;

13/Aug. 3 Queen visits Jérnstisér (from Bɛllɛdha), Rudhisér (from Ora); Mɛlwika summer short term 2 begins

19/9 Queen visits Rudhisér (from Ora), visits Isurdhuna

22/12 Widumaj cycle culminates, ends at Isurdhuna

25/15 Queen visits Isurdhuna

Abɛlménu: August 21-September 20 (month of apples)

1/21 Queen visits Long Valley (from Ora), Ora

7/27 Queen visits Ora, Lɛwéspa (from Ora)

13/Sep. 3 Queen visits Tripola, Wurontroba for one day; Mɛlwika summer short term 3 begins

19/9 Queen visits ɛndraidha, Kwolona, Kwétékwona (from ɛndraidha)

25/15 Queen visits "Northern Tribes" at Gordha, then home

Brénménu: September 21-October 20 (month of browning)

1/21 Fall Consultative Assembly (if held)

7/26 Fall Consultative Assembly

13/Oct. 1 Mɛddoakwés: Second harvest; Mɛlwika vacation week

19/6 Mɛlwika Harvest Festival; Mɛlwika fall term 1 starts

25/11

31/16

Génménu: October 21-November 20 (month of hunting)

1/21

7/26

13/Nov. 1

19/6

25/11

31/16 Mɛlwika fall term 1 ends

Prusménu: November 21-December 20 (month of frosts)

1/21 Mɛlwika (short) fall term 2 starts

13/Dec. 1

19/6

25/11

31/16

Bɛlménu: December 21-January 20 (white month)

1/21 Mɛlwika short winter term 1 starts

7/26

13/Jan. 1

19/6

25/11

31/16

Plowménu: January 21-February 20 (rainy month)

1/21 Mɛlwika short winter term 2 starts

7/26

13/Feb. 1

19/6

25/11

31/16

ɛjnaménu: February 21 -March 20 (30-day month) (month of sacrifice)

1/21 Mɛlwika school vacation (all month)

7/27

13/Mar. 3

19/9

25/15 Primdiu: world and Mɛlwika election

Bolérɛnménu: Mar. 21-April 20 (month of greening)

1/21 Mɛddoakwés: planting; Mɛlwika spring term 1 starts

7/27

13/Apr. 3

19/9

25/15

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