

EASTER

It is Easter today. Maybe that is why the Sunday market I go to was so empty. I thought it was because of the horrendous rain storm, everybody was wet, even the vendors under the tarps. There is nothing as pitiful as a Hawaiian, or a person who has lived here all his life, shivering, in long (wet) sleeves, hugging himself, his face gray, saying "It's so cold!" --the temperature probably was 68, or 69 (Fahrenheit)).

My embarrassment: I bought three dollars worth of bananas, papayas, and some green vegetable, and all I had with me was \$2.83. I'll pay you next week. He waved me away, Da's okay, papa.

Home, wanted to take a quick shower, but the water had not heated yet from my morning shower. Changed, dressed in layers, I am almost comfortable.

A few days ago someone wished me Happy Good Friday. I said, what it celebrates was not so good. She had never known it was the Crucifixion. Read some high exec in the Vatican, who said that the pope's last suffering is to remind us that Christ suffered.

And so, hand on the Bible, we bring democracy to the world. The kind we have, which works well for people who are high enough in the pyramid. Then, for a while more and more people really had enough to eat. The ones who were further down, well, they were just born that way, or not very smart, or it's all that free sex. But that bottom of the pyramid may not go very high, there's a lot more of us down here, than up there. Do you remember? It was a long time ago (10-12,000 years) that someone invented the whole idea of one boss, two servants, each servant two assistants, each assistant two helpers. And so on, you get the shape? Now, the idea is for each tier to get wider. Each boss now can have three servants, etc. Or four, or a thousand. Or, the way it is today, the one on top has millions of servants, who each have a hundred thousand assistants, each of those have ten thousand under them, who each have a thousand, then a hundred, ten, and one. We, at the bottom, must look out for ourselves.

A man called K.M. (in America he never existed) saw that, and he got the strange notion that it was therefore the bottom who carried all those others on top of him. Everyone on top of him ultimately relied on him. The man at the bottom should have the power! For a while the pyramid wobbled a bit, but it's healthy and growing again. The higher you go, the fewer of us, which also means the more there are here at the bottom! The bottom gets thicker, the top rising into the stratosphere. Isn't that how we see the world? It is called a hierarchical system. It created our man-made world.

We tried any number of variation of the basic theme: Genghis Khan was one tough guy, all the others obeyed (worshipped) him. Napoleon had a few officers under him, who commanded lieutenants, etc. The Czars did it in secret, but there was no secret that he stood alone at the top; Communism, despite the word, was modeled after the Czar. All kinds of dictatorships, each standing for words that could be interpreted as a noble principle.

Then came Democracies, as we now call them. It's the "in" thing, now enforced with our arms and armies. It's hard to say much about democracy, for one thing because it means different things to different people. One of the features of this system is that it believes in voices. Originally it was mostly the voice from below that the bosses said they needed to know. The louder and clearer our voice was, the more they would do

what we wanted. At least, that was the idea.

In this new century we have changed that. We inserted what we call the Media -- all the many organizations that entertain us 24/7 (for those who are not familiar with those numbers it seems every day including Sunday, 24 hours a day). Over time all these different media (oops, Media), radio, television, cable, and others, were bought up by a few big money people. So, now, the top feeds what they want us at the bottom to know to the few big Media, and what used to be entrainment has become advertising which morphed into propaganda. Now the voices from above drown out the voices from below, they have more powerful loudspeakers. And all these voices get put in a big vat, spun, and given back in 2.8 minute bytes to whoever listens any more.

When you think about it, the whole idea of a "majority" is pretty silly. Polls are entirely determined by how you phrase the question. Smart people know how to ask a question to get a majority to agree what you want them to agree to. This is what I read the other day, Vote yes or no: should we make bridges between the Hawaiian Islands. 37% Yes, 35% no, the rest were asleep when we called, or were sick, or had lost their license, or had forgotten, or could not read and write, or did not feel good. A clear mandate?

Usually the rulers rely on committees to study the problem. Reports. Environmental Impact Statements. Forums. Discussions. More polls. And if, occasionally some decision is made, we need bonds and grants and funds and money ready to be spent. Jobs for people! Much money is made by shops who sell what the projects requires. Scandals discovered. Money disappears, and is given again. Twenty years later, another evaluation of the projects, almost started. Thirty-seven years later more committees report that the latest scientific experts in the world report it is..., although on the other hand... Ten years after that nobody remembers why we wanted such an idiocy to begin with. A lot of money spent, and some money saved.

In battle fields and in emergency rooms they do 'triage'. For a long time I thought that should mean that three people decided who might live with medicine's new skills, and who would die anyway. But I've heard that is not what it means. Usually one doctor, or whoever has the most knowledge of wounds, decides who is beyond help, and among those who can possibly be helped by medical treatment, who needs it immediately, so that we can do them first, and who can wait till we have time later. We all made those decisions before we became civilized.

Old people were valuable because they had lived long, and so, knew a lot, we thought. Nowadays we think old people are a burden, and youth may have new ideas about how to save this sadly unstable world we have created. In the very olden days, when old people could no longer keep up with the tribe when it had to move camp, they were left behind. The tribe left with love in their hearts, and probably tears down their faces as they walked on, knowing and accepting that it was the old people who made the decision to stay behind. They lived in a different system. They had not discovered hierarchy yet. No bosses, no differences. Everyone was the same, and man was related to snakes and elephants, cousins to the roots they dug up for food.

Today there are many more of us, and we live in another system; our ideas about ourselves are very different. We know ourselves certainly no kin to a snake or a potato! Today only our scientists study the planet. We no longer trust our own experience, we

accept information from experts,preferably with a degree or two. But we don't believe them if they tell truths we don't want to hear.

I cheer myself up sometimes with the thought that, of course, the old system is still here. It is not even very difficult to be part of that web again. All you have to do is let go the thought that there must be a boss, rules and laws. We did fine without. I like that world where I sit somewhere in between, and equal to, plants and trees, the frogs, stray cats,the ducks who fly around before landing in the pond. There is no hierarchy, no better than. Yes, I have qualities the dogs don't have, but they smell a whole lot more than I do. Sure, I can eat a chicken (I don't because I don't like meat), but a rock could trip me and break my neck — and there are lots of rocks.

And so it is, a few days after yet another Easter.

robert wolff © 2005 -- edited 2010