

## the very end of january 2010

A few days from yet another day commemorating my birth. We think numbers are important, congratulating people for surviving another year. In China, what we call Chinese New Year (this year 14 february) is everybody's birthday. What a nice idea: we all get a year older on the same day. I've had so many birthdays and can remember so few that I am not sure how to deal with that day. My 'birth day' is a day like any other; never quite knew what I should be congratulated for. Perhaps I am supposed to think back, take stock of what I did or didn't do, accomplish?

By now I can look way back into what is history for most people. When I hear what others know of world war two, for instance, I am always surprised how little most people really understand what that was about, how it was to be alive then, what did people think or feel then.

Life, living, has speeded up immensely in the last 80 years. Then, life was lived leisurely by almost everyone. There was no daily 'news'. No airplanes, long distance travel was by boat, a matter of weeks to get to another continent. We did not know much about a country a few hundred miles away. Now we are overwhelmed by information; so much information that nobody can deal with it. So we choose what we want to see, hear, even feel. Our world changes by the hour. I wake up to a new day and some major event took place in my nation, or halfway around the earth. Wars are being fought and fought over. Very little of it makes sense any more. I still have most of my marbles — a strange American expression — but still cannot understand why we have a hundred thousand troops in Iraq and soon another hundred thousand troops in Afghanistan, and who knows how many troops and mercenaries all over the world, but we cannot think of health care as a right. I cannot understand that the country I adopted half a century ago, and that is, of course, my home, can spend unimaginable amounts of (our) money to prevent banks from getting into trouble, but cannot take care of its own citizens, or its infrastructure. What gives me nightmares is that I cannot deal with that we are not permitted to know that the planet, and we, humans— all Life perhaps — is in serious trouble and that we must do something about it NOW.

What I am learning from my particular choices of information is that the manmade world we live in is being run by corporations. That may sound extreme, we imagine that countries are run by their governments. But the last few weeks I've come to see that the huge international corporations are behind almost every governing body that we think works for us. I've looked at the web sites of a few of these monstrous corporations<sup>1</sup>, and their web sites are much the same. They are modest-looking, and so green and sugary that I cannot imagine anyone believing one word of what they say about themselves. They all say they are interested in, or doing, sustainable energy, they say they are helping the world, but the evidence that they do just the opposite is overwhelming. All corporations spend huge fortunes on what we in America call 'lobbying'. I'm not sure where that word originated, but it means influencing, bribing, politicians to do whatever makes it easier for corporations to make money. Lobbyists get paid big salaries and/or bonuses for befriending, bribing, forcing, politicians at all levels to do what the corporations want. And what the corporations want almost always means getting at the 'resources' of the planet — oil, gas, gold, whatever — by destroying the landscape, forcibly removing the people who live in and of that landscape, destroying biodiversity, and in the process spewing more and more CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere.

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<sup>1</sup>Corporations are usually 'groups' of companies, combining a number of related efforts to manufacture products, but then also own the rights and machines to extract the resources to make the product(s), and own the distribution of the product, advertising, etc.

Surely by now everyone knows that to be the cause of climate change. To make a short sentence of that: short term gain for speeding up planet-wide death.

When I think of that the awful thought comes into my head that perhaps the only groups that are not touched by big money are what we call terrorists, insurgents, of many colors. The more modern arms we throw at them, the stronger they get. We invent drones, that inevitably kill innocent people. They invent new ways to kill other innocent people. Shouldn't that tell us something? Force never solves anything, can't we learn that? Force always and everywhere makes counterforce. That is a law of the universe.

Ages ago we used to say, and kind of mean it, *money is the root of all evil*. It probably is. We, humankind, lived for hundreds of thousands of years without it, and we did well enough. We survived. Now, survival itself is threatened.

There is another even simpler sentence I can write to describe humankind in 2010: **More is unsustainable**. More money, more airplanes, more wars, more manufactured food, more confusion, more information, more people, more more more. There is not and never has been 'more' in a planetary ecology. If I get more someone else gets less. As simple as that. We, humans, used to know that. Before, if we did not know that consciously perhaps, nature saw to it that we got it.

All life forms, animals, plants, bacteria, make lots of offspring so that a few will survive to continue the species. The longer it takes to raise newborn seedlings, kittens, babies, the fewer 'extras' are needed for the species to survive. For a stable human population, for instance, the average couple should have two children; let's say 2.1 children, knowing that not all children will survive to reproduce. But one species taking over the entire planet, which is what we are doing now, creates havoc to the planetary ecology.

Nature, the planet, is talking back at us. But Big Money is not listening and is consistently and richly preventing us from knowing what is going on. This is currently the biggest 'I don't understand'. Surely the smart people who run the corporations (and so, run the world) must know what scientists are telling us loud and clear. The corporations spend money to make more money in the short run, but they must know that in a decade or two the whole system will collapse, the planet may change so much so quickly that humans cannot adjust. What worth is money?

Maybe corporations think 'geo-engineering' will control the changes already happening. Science will find ways to cool the earth. If a little control does not work, more control — if a big war does not defeat, a bigger war will? And in the meantime more profit, more money? More power? To do what? The Greeks had a story: Croesus who got all the gold in the world and only then discovered that he could not eat gold.

We live in a world, halfway between nature as it was and the world controlled by a very few corporations. We have lost most of our connection to the ground—the holiest word in most indigenous languages—and we are equally ignorant of the reality of the artificial world we are forced to live in. We are wallowing in an illusionary make-believe world of television, Disney-land. The food we eat has only very fragile ties to nature and we ignore that six enormous world-wide corporations feed us, and see to it that we don't eat what grows in our own gardens. Manufactured food, wrapped in plastic. Grown, designed, genetically altered, harvested, processed, transported by a few corporations. One day of baby food made with GM soy contains the estrogen of five birth control pills. What we buy in plastic wrap contains much too much salt, fat and sugar, and the

plastic contains a lethal chemical. But we are not told that. Not at all hard to find out, however: the internet really does have real information. But modern man is so conditioned to get information from advertising (which is propaganda), packaging, soothing words, that we look no further. I think it very likely that I am of the last generation that will live longer than 70 years because my generation remembers how to live simply, to eat when we are hungry not when we are bored. I've been hungry in my life, in my early twenties. Lost 40, perhaps 50 pounds because there simply was no food. None of my offspring has known more than a day of being hungry, but a chocolate bar was always close at hand. But I forget that modern medicine's main function has become to prolong a life time, In America only the rich will get old.

There is talk of alternative fuels, so that we will have the energy we need to continue our life style. Big Money has destroyed large parts of the world's rain forests to grow plants that are to provide the alternative fuel to use in cosmetics, in food, in all kinds of other artificial products, and yes, drive ever more cars and other machines tomorrow. True, burning oil and coal contributes to the excess CO<sub>2</sub> that poisons the atmosphere. But destroying rain forests probably poisons as much or more by removing a major landscape that absorbed CO<sub>2</sub>. A million hectares of oil palm does not absorb as much CO<sub>2</sub> as the rain forest it displaced. Alternative fuels without a radical change in how we live will give a tomorrow choked in more cars, more factories, more waste — and less water, less live soil, less nature, all of which means less Life.

To me it all sounds simple. We, humans, cannot continue to think MORE.

What there is is all there is.

I am encouraged by what I also find on the internet, that (mostly) young people—very young, the age of my grandchildren—are protesting, demonstrating, in huge masses. Opposing further destruction of the wild, protesting the destruction caused by the might of the World Trade Organization that forces nations to accept corporations that poison water, the air, the land. Always accompanied by the violent displacement of tribes that led sustainable lives.

American media are owned by these big corporations and report only what the corporations want us to know, so we don't see much of this worldwide movement that comes from the bottom. We see only the more and more forceful suppression of any kind of popular revulsion by police, armed, and trained to 'control the masses'. That makes us feel secure, my friends tell me. We are afraid of mobs. Yes, mobs are dangerous, but people are us. The aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti is a good picture of human behavior without 'control'. Americans sent troops to control the riots we expected. But there were no riots. People immediately and almost instinctively organized themselves in small groups wherever they found themselves. Strangers clinging together in an open park, a square. When food and water finally reached them they organized themselves in neat lines. But when uniformed, armed, troops came to organize what they saw as a mob—people whose language they did not speak (everybody in the world speaks English after all, don't they?) — *then* the people got mad. I saw a movie of a helicopter landing, and as soon as people approached, taking off again, hovering a few feet above the reach of people, throwing out bags of food. People were furious. "What do they think we are? Dogs, that you throw food to from a distance?"

We, perhaps particularly Americans, must change our thinking about who we are. Humans are not and never have been bad, dangerous, criminal. We don't do well with control from above. We don't like to be told what we can do, what is allowed, what is moral, legal. Presuming that citizens,

left to themselves, will kill each other, rampage, steal, is simply not true. There are still millions of people all over the world, even in America, far from the law, police, control, but they live in peace and harmony. In fact, people do best when left to work out living together by themselves. **How else could we have survived the first few hundred thousand years of our being on this planet?**

Saw a very short movie recently. Arianna Huffington talking about what kept her awake at night. "It's the warnings," she said. The example she gave was about a town on the slope of an active volcano. For weeks, perhaps months, there had been warnings. More smoke from the volcano, rumblings, rocks suddenly rolling down steep slopes. And yet when the volcano erupted people were caught unprepared.

That is what keeps me awake too: the warnings. The planet is giving ample warnings, but we don't see, don't hear — and what is infinitely worse, there is a group of extremely rich and therefore powerful people who expend enormous efforts to prevent us from knowing the warnings.

That is a crime against humanity, against all LIFE.

A few sources:

- <http://www.thegreatwarming.com/pdf/ClimateChangeFactSheet.pdf>
- <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=3833110324043445440#>
- [http://fora.tv/2009/07/22/Food\\_Security\\_and\\_Climate\\_Change#fullprogram](http://fora.tv/2009/07/22/Food_Security_and_Climate_Change#fullprogram)
- <http://www.truthout.org/the-battle-titans-jpmorgan-vs-goldman-sachs-or-why-market-was-down-7-days-a-row56526>
- <http://www.linktv.org/latinpulse/20091027/ecuador-the-tribes-vs-chevron-texaco?hm>
- <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=7300>
- <http://www.truthout.org/haiti-untold-nonviolence-and-humanization-grassroots56527>

And of course there are a million more.