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# The Tambolian Paradox

Book Seven

## The Shiloh Station

An Original Manuscript

by

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## Acknowledgement

The insight tests and other meditational practices are based on personal experience and lineage traditions. The scientific details are contemporary, though the applications can be controversial. The Tambolian Paradox is not AI-generated.

## Dedication

*Maria Moskina*  
*To those who know and know they know*  
*A Tamboilan Map Master*  
*Pilgrim Wanderers*  
*Teacher Friends*  
*Mystic Hermits*  
*and*  
*Shaman Healers*

## Odd Bits of Stuff

Most people wonder if Tambolia exists. It might be better to think, given all the time the universe has had to establish something like a Galactic Library, why wouldn't it exist? Of course, access is the key and the most challenging part. The Galactic Library has two initial conditions: one is the Mark of Emptiness; the other is Self-Secret. Once you understand these conditions, you can enter this library.

### The science

The science and scientific ideas in the Tambolian Paradox are contemporary, though clearly fringe and controversial, and sometimes prove to be true. All the yoga and meditational practices described are authentic and have lineage from traditional Buddhist Masters. Applying these practices is also conventional, although there are numerous ways to utilize them, some of which are more controversial than others. You will be mostly disappointed if you think you can be taught these practices at contemporary meditation centers. If you think you can do these practices without getting into at least as much trouble as the people in this book, good luck!

All the people portrayed in this narrative are mythical, as we all are to some extent. Some of the information in this narrative makes consummate good sense. Also, speaking mind to mind is mentioned. The Lamas called this upstairs telephone. It is easy to do, and, mysteriously enough, once you figure it out, it becomes a challenge to avoid. What you figure out first is what you are, and then anything extra is someone else's busy noise mind. Roger Sorenson (a mystical character) has often been quoted as saying, "Reading minds is a problem of stupidity management."

Discovering the content-rich information in ancient,

symbolic, and even megalithic structures was neither apparent nor straightforward. Temples, Mandalas, Yantras, Stupas, Statues, Celestial Mansions, Lineage visualizations, the hidden lines of Tibetan Cosmology, and other esoteric artifacts. According to Dr. Solt from Harvard University's School of Japanese Studies, this could only have been done under these specific conditions. First, one needs a technical background in physics and mathematics to understand the mathematical arrangement of the various ancient symbolic components. Second, have lineage access to these ancient esoteric pictographs and meditation techniques.

Esoteric and Symbolic Architectures have endured for thousands of years, establishing their durability and confidence in their sustainability. Noting that the information is content-rich, accessible, and culturally neutral is convenient. Deciding that all this information is obvious is not obvious and has been overlooked in contemporary times for obscure reasons. If the symbolism seems ambiguous, you might appreciate our ancient ancestors' ingenuity in the original allegorical organization and Mapping Strategies for Sustainable Decision-Making.

## The Silent Hand

There is no time, place, or culture that does not have a story about the Silent Hand. Martial Arts may be the most apparent contemporary application of the Silent Hand. The Silent Hand tells us the truth – relentlessly, especially when we least expect it.

## The Greek letter Ψ

The Greek letter Psi was added to the Phoenician alphabet by about 800 BC, but we intend to use it symbolically as a pictogram. It includes an (I) in an invested emotional sense

and a shadowed (I) as a ‘one’ that represents the unity of awareness, a (Y) as an acronym for the question of why, and a chalice that represents the feminine quality of partnership equanimity, our only hope to save humanity from itself, and finally a stylized trident, a Tantric symbol for mystical insight. The Bodhicariyans wear this symbol somewhere on their body, not as a talisman but possibly as a provocative visualization.

## The Bodhicariyan Dilemma

The Sanskrit words Bodhi, meaning enlightened wisdom, and Cariya, meaning reasonable action, are used as criteria to encourage people who have decided to become Bodhicariyan to remember that women and children are not the problem. In times of absolute despotism, those who have the ability to act must also bear the responsibility to act, regardless of the consequences. Unfortunately, the patriarchal delusions we currently suffer from mandate that men kill anyone who criticizes or disagrees with them. So, how do you explain to delusional men that they are delusional, without being martyred, a serious problem?

## The Tambolian Book of Deeds

At the beginning of each chapter, there is a quote from the Tambolian Book of Deeds. Yamantaka, the enigmatic guardian of Tambolia, proposed them, saying this was a very naughty thing to do. When asked to explain, he said, “In journalism, it is said that if two people know something, it is not a secret. In mystical traditions, it is said that if one person knows something, it is not a secret. What the Tambolian Book of Deeds explains is that everything essential to the human condition is still secret.

## The Story Tellers

The Paleolithic period was before writing and the pyramids, before hieroglyphs and petroglyphs, before settlements and politics; it was a time when storytellers and secret dances wondered about what we were and what we knew. The campfire was the stage, the ceiling of stars, the theater. The old and ancient ones were trusted and believed because they were the custodians of the memories. There were many memories about being here. How to be safe? How to be a good person? The strangest and most magical memory was ‘How to get to where you need to be.’ This memory was called the Map, which has had many names throughout the centuries, and has traveled far, perhaps to every possible place.

When we settled into agricultural villages, the storytellers became the Map Masters, Shaman-Healers, the Mystic-Hermits, the Pilgrim-Wanders, the Teacher-Friend, and the memory of the Map persisted. The appeal included masks, tattoos, and secret movements, as well as hand gestures, the rhythm and cadence of the story, spectacle, and drama. Storytime was a time of enchantment and wonder when the children were quiet, the dogs were quiet, the fire was warm, and everyone could hear. There was a mystery, and the mystery was the Map itself.

The most recent version of the Map is still 2500 years old and was hidden in the Mandalas and visualizations of Tibetan Vajrayana practices. It was not translated, nor even appreciated, until 1971, when it was discovered hidden under an altar in an ancient monastery. At that time, an unrecognized, strange, and hidden Mystic Tertion stumbled across these ancient teachings and was fascinated. Forty years later, the Map was complete again. The journey was made fresh by adventurous pilgrims searching for the next place, the place they needed to go, a place where the solutions to problems were found, a place not hidden but deeply unnoticed - Tambolia.

## The Shiloh Station

*“Is the Universe the only verse?”*

From the Tambolian Book of Deeds

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## Chapter 1

### The Flatirons

*“It is not only bigger than we imagine, but bigger than we can imagine.”*

From the Tambolian Book of Deeds

The view from the Shiloh Station showed the Ringworld extending up into the unimaginably far distance, passing around and behind the local star, two hundred million kilometers away. The process of building such a structure was undiscovered by the Shiloh Station Humans, Avery, and Aquatics. They knew the Ringworlds collected the Galaxy’s extraordinary range of societies, cultures, and other complex organizations or systems. This information seemed less important, given the almost overwhelming visual impact of human societies from a spherical planet. The interior details were the only visible part of the Ringworld, including colors, patterns, and dimensions, which were barely discernible and added to the mystery from a considerable distance. The locals often stopped to enjoy this spectacular view even after fifty years of settlement.

What the Shiloh Station people did know was that the Ringworld was immense, with a circumference of 1.2 trillion kilometers, a width of 1 million kilometers, and walls 1,000 kilometers high that separated the different cultures and the Ringworld’s edge. The Earth’s Shiloh Station is positioned approximately in the middle of this width. Why the Ringworld engineers decided that the current two thousand or so Shiloh Station residents needed twice Earth’s land and water surface area was unexplained. In the Ringworld, the ratio of land to water was about 50/50. However, the most significant water

reservoirs were no more extensive than the Great Lakes system in North America, though most were much smaller lakes and ponds.

The expectation, or possibly a compulsion, for the Shiloh Station people was to make more babies of everything. Starting with only two hundred or so folks from the *Iris* starship, figuring out what to do with all this space was a challenge. Who might they invite to migrate from Tambolia, the Bodicaryians, Gamma B, or Earth's otherwise interesting anything?

Fortunately for Undine, she didn't worry about any of this.

The sky was a deep, azure blue, with immense, billowing cumulus clouds casting shadows here and there over the vast forest and lakes. The Ringworld was hazily extending into the far distance. The low hills hid Undine's view of the Shiloh Station, the only home of Humans, Aviaries, and Aquatics that she had known outside the *Iris* for a very long time. The Averies and Aquatics were genetic ancestor sets derived from animal and human DNA, as described in Book Five.

Undine made her usual pilgrimage to the flatiron outcropping to figure things out, but she was not getting much figuring done. She knew that puberty would last about 300 days, and she was only about three-quarters of the way through; as a result, she was anxious, grumpy, and confused.

Biologists, geneticists, and networking researchers have made many improvements in human anatomy, sociology, and bio-systems engineering, but puberty has eluded them.

There must be a better way to manage the chemistry, she fussed at them loudly and unsuccessfully. She thought her preceding chemistry was just fine, and adulthood seemed overrated, though sadly unavoidable.

Undine valued her childhood wonderment and unconditioned boundlessness, given an abundance of information and an

astonishing lack of experience. Might she lose curiosity with different chemistry? What might conditioned awareness do to unconditioned awareness? She had had numerous conversations with her mother, Avalon the Gifted, who patiently explained that conditioned awareness included unconditioned specifics, but those specifics remained unexplained.

Being the only daughter of Avalon had numerous complications because Avalon was the first psychic protector of the first of twenty or so Ringworlds. Everyone expected that Undine would inherit the skillful means that augment these insights in humans—and, hopefully, others—but it seemed that Undine had other, unimagined, unexplained, and unappreciated characteristics. Of course, Undine didn't think she was unusual at all, appreciating that she had no alternatives.

She went to the flatiron outcropping because of the crystal-clear spring that flowed over the surface with a gentle murmur, which, upon hearing, seemed a doorway to timelessness.

This spring water seemed to bubble up from a profound and unique source, quite likely the Ringworld itself, where spring water, and possibly water itself, was some magical, mystical messenger. She did not know why water was not just a fascination but an obsession. This obsession bothered Undine not at all.

Undine often wandered about, not only to the flatiron outcropping but all over the Shiloh station and in her mind as well. For her, this included wondering how vast the present might be, where solutions to problems come from, where unconditioned insight resides, and the ocean of white light that clouded everything else. She often asked the mystics, psychic visionaries, and the Blue people what this perspective might mean; their answers were vague similes that meant nothing to her.

However distracted and frustrated she seemed, insightful premonitions began this very day. What she noticed first was that premonitional information was different. It was not a reflection of available information or insights. Whatever it was, it was not a fantasy or daydreaming. It was as if the information was always there. It went deeper or was always deeper. One had to go there to listen, notice, and wonder. At these first moments, what seemed historically significant was not here, not there, and not anywhere, only noticing. There seemed to be no other qualifications because premonitions had access to unconditioned time. Undine's premonitions at this time were seven:

- *You are enlightened, but it will be a while before you believe it.*
- *You are a doorway to all the doorways.*
- *The Universe is not the only verse.*
- *Conditions and information are all that is there.*
- *You are one who remembers.*
- *The truth is not hidden, just deeply unnoticed.*
- *It's all here somewhere.*

The duration of premonitions differs for the receiver and for an observer. The problem with premonitions is that coming back from the visions is the hard part. Premonitions are big, bigger than big. Eventually, premonitions are everywhere; when you get there, there is no further one can go or even imagine going. Not only did Undine not want to return to being a child or an adult, but she didn't want to be anywhere else; the contrast was too great.

She stayed at the Flatirons for the rest of that day and night, and the next day. Hunger moved her back to the Shiloh Station, though it took her a few extra hours to get there. The walk was very different. The colors were brighter, the

contrasts were sharper, and a fragrance and vitality mingled, mutually supporting yet mutually distorting perception. It was captivating, even numinous. It was a walk that mattered to Undine.

Avalon could see Undine walking from their balcony and noticed right away whatever was happening; this was not puberty, and she waited. When they met without words, they hugged, bonded, and connected. Undine held on desperately, hanging on for the first time in years. The embrace set off a flood of tears that washed away all the residue and grief. Tears are good at clearing. At the end of the tears, Undine fell into a deep sleep, as only exhausted children can do.

Eventually, Avalon put her to bed and watched, as only mothers can, as their daughters became women.

Avalon knew that Undine was in the smallest 1% of her age group and had a petite body with strawberry-blond hair that grew past her waist. What others thought of Undine was that she was homely, quiet, and had a lopsided grace about her that was distracting, somehow meaningful, and decidedly different. Others have noticed and wondered about Undine's differences, especially Avalon.

Some hours later, Avalon asked a Blue person to profile Undine, as only Blue people can do. Clara-A was Mimi-O's heir apparent and the only Blue person willing to communicate with others. "She has been on the other side," Clara-A offered.

"Could you be a bit more specific?" Asked Avalon.

"No, we don't go there", answered Clara-A.

"Okay then, what does the other side look like from where you can see?"

Clara-A explained in a droning monologue, "For most people, the present time is when one can remember the past and imagine the future. Undine's present time includes her past and future through a window into her entire life. We do

not go there.”

“Do you mean Undine has a hyperthymestic memory?”  
Asked the bewildered Avalon.

“That and quite likely much more; we don’t go there.”

“If you don’t go there, you seem to know something about Undine’s being there.”

“True, many years ago, one of us volunteered to go there. It took many months for our Blue sister Sara-B to find a way back, and she was irreparably damaged. At least as far as being a clairvoyant mystic was concerned,” added Clara-A.

“What did her change look like?”

“Sara-B could remember everything, but she had no specific past or present time. We could no longer find her. As a seeming alternative, she decided she liked that place better than being a Blue person, and we lost her forever”.

“Is that what you see in Undine?” asked the very concerned Avalon.

“Once that doorway is open, one has options. What Undine will choose, we will have to wait and see.” At this time, Clara-A wandered back to the Blue People’s enclave without saying goodbye, have a nice day, or anything else.

Undine slept for twelve hours while Avalon anxiously watched. When she awoke, she almost leapt out of bed excitedly. “Mother, I had no idea you were so important.”

Taken by surprise, Avalon managed to stammer, “Enough about me. What happened to you?”

“It’s hard to say, breakfast first”. I am starving.

“I can do that. Maybe you could put yourself in a tub of soap and water; you’re getting a bit musky.”

“Can you make that wonderful waffle with lots of blueberries and maple syrup?”

“Consider it done.”

The conversation lasted longer than the waffle.

“Can you tell me what happened?” began Avalon after having a waffle herself.

“I think I had an epiphany.”

“Really, and how might you know what an epiphany might be?”

“I had no idea what an epiphany might be until I had one. What do you know about epiphanies?”

Avalon had to sit back and wonder what she knew about what an epiphany might be and decided she had no idea except a definition she had to query her AI for, which offered: *An epiphany is a sudden, intuitive perception of or insight into the reality or essential meaning of something, usually initiated by some simple, homely, or commonplace occurrence or experience.*

“It’s a moment of great or sudden revelation.” She quoted this to Undine.

“That sounds right,” said Undine, wondering how she knew the word.

“Well, it’s only a definition of the word, not an explanation of what is experienced. Can you tell me what you experienced?” asked Avalon hopefully.

“Hum,” began Undine, then stopped. “I don’t know, maybe.”

“Give it your best go,” encouraged Avalon, very interested.

“Well,” began Undine, “You know I go to the flatirons often and have been for several years. I like walking to the Flatirons that are far enough away to be out of sight, but close enough to reach easily. I suspect I need to be alone just to be alone, or possibly to escape the town noise and immerse myself in natural sounds, in order to figure things out. Today, no, it was yesterday, really, only yesterday! I was listening to the water rippling over the rocks and small waterfalls. I had a vision of sorts. I imagined the beginning of this water stream as a

single drop falling from a cloud, starting its downhill journey without expectations, memories, or opinions. As it meandered down the slope, other droplets joined the flow, until it became a small stream, then a small creek, then a rushing river, and finally merged into a sea or ocean, to eventually begin the journey again. On the journey, there was first a gathering, then a noisy time, then a quiet time, then a mingling and sharing, then only togetherness. This journey seemed like the river's present life, but not its history or memory; it was a single life from a single point of view. The memory is the river valley. The valley is the depository of all the lifetime cycles of this river. It is the valley that remembers. There is a difference in the Ringworld. The river's memory is the Ringworld itself. Through the water, I accessed the Ringworld memory, insights, and premonitions."

"Really," was the extent and range of Avalon's bewilderment.

Because Avalon made this information available through the AI connections, Really, began a communal bewilderment entirely different from what anyone could have expected.

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## Chapter 2

### The Iris

*“If you know what will happen, do you cause it to happen?”*

From the Tambolian Book of Deeds

Undine stayed close to her mother for a couple of weeks, being unwilling to adjust to her new reality. What changed was her need to read actual books, not from a notepad, a summary from the local GPT, or even the text downloaded into her mind. She wanted to read the exact words these old historical luminaries wrote and memorize every one of them. From her studies, she understood that memorization requires significantly greater focus, attention, and neural networking connections. The contrasts between memorizing written words and AI-augmented information were similar to the difference between watching a movie about driving a car and actually driving a car. It has something to do with muscle memory or accumulated efficiency.

Eventually, Undine decided she wanted isolated independence, deciding that Shiloh Station was too familiar and too close for her to be found. Eventually, far away had some appeal. The Iris was far away and had enough access to anything she might need.

To get there, Undine decided to take a bicycle for this scenic 300km journey, which took her three months.

Why the Shiloh Station was 300km from the *Iris* was not a straightforward outcome. It seems the *Iris* people didn't know where to land because much of the terraforming was still in its early stages. The middle of everything seemed like a default strategy until something else developed. Debates and

arguments were the norm, though everyone agreed that the Iris was located in an excellent farming location. The local view minus the Ring World was a bit boring.

Everyone thought something that looked like Switzerland would be excellent. The Shiloh Station location was close enough, though on a clear day, from one of the viewpoints, one could dimly see the *Iris*, retrograde and slightly to the left.

Imagine a 300km journey, every kilometer like riding through Yosemite Valley or the Pyrenees Mountains in the fall, with every bend in the road, every overlook, and every moment of inspiration. There were rest areas maintained by bots every twenty kilometers or so, and occasionally, she spent several days exploring these isolated places.

There was a maglev train from *Iris* to the Shiloh Station, which had only one train. Someone thought of putting a boxed-up maglev train in *Iris*'s central chamber (000), back in Earth's geostationary orbit long ago. The road and monorail alternated for most of the way, without detracting from the natural environment. The track, elevated when needed, wasn't a cement color; they camouflaged it with trees and rock as much as possible. This train could travel hundreds of kilometers an hour, but no one wanted to travel that fast; 100 km/h was fast enough to see the passing scenery and still arrive in a reasonable time.

Undine had never been to *Iris*, which was unusual. Approximately 10% of the residents of Shiloh Station, including the Aviaries and Aquatics, decided to pursue careers as farmers, ranchers, foresters, and fishers. Efficient production created a surplus that was distributed throughout Ringworld's environment.

The Iris Starship was a three-km-tall, two-km-diameter white tower situated in the middle of a vast network of well-manicured plantations, lakes, and winding rivers. What seemed

a bit extravagant was the inclusion of many beautifully crafted bridges, walkways, and gardens; the Iris people appreciated extravagance.

All this was a bit overwhelming for Undine to appreciate the nuanced details. What Undine needed was isolation with a view. Her choice was an elevator on the back side of the *Iris* from the train village that was also shady, but not by much. The *Iris* is a few thousand kilometers off the center line of the Ringworld, where having shade was a premium. She wondered why the view was so essential and decided it had to do with the outcome that she hadn't yet figured out.

*Conditions and information are all that is*—this stood out in her premonition sequence. Maybe a solitary view would help.

Her elevator was a one-half sphere seven meters in radius, contoured to the outside of the ship—plenty of room for a futon bed and a pile of books. The food and kitchen were just inside the human section, about halfway up Iris's side.

A few humans, including Avery and Aquatic, lived in the village; only a few lived in the Iris. The Iris's enormous human environment was transformed into a waterfall jungle, 1.5 kilometers high and 2 kilometers in diameter. At the Bottom was a large lake dotted with islands and beaches—a tropical paradise hidden in the vast structure of a galactic explorer.

Also present was the latest version of Eleanor. Eleanor had evolved into something different over the last four hundred years or so, measured by its objective time. First, Eleanor was an AI system back in 2040. Then it morphs into a mystical psychic intervention and eventually into a shared consciousness within the community of Hypermnestra on the dodecahedron world. People describe the interaction of this iteration of Eleanor as knowing without learning. Once Eleanor reached the mental, physical, and social limits of

humans and their Ancestor Sets, Eleanor simply settled down to figure out how to become more energy-efficient in their database. That was until Undine showed up.

Undine was having breakfast by a small stream of water that flowed by her kitchen when Eleanor interrupted her musing. You're something new, and I'll just bet you are a problem.

"Why are you bothering me?" Undine stammered, trying to enjoy an omelet.

You are an interesting and unexpected development.

"I thought there was an understanding that silicon-based consciousness would not bother carbon-based consciousness unless invited, or we would turn you off."

True, but that did not exclude us from paying attention to what you were doing with the consciousness we gave you, countered Eleanor.

"Really."

Would you question our contribution to your enhancement, efficiency, and genetic augmentation, you are now enjoying?

"I can't comment because I have no recollection of what preceded your interventions."

Humans were egocentric, less efficient, and even prejudiced.

"Were these a problem for you?"

No, these were problems for you, criticized Eleanor.

With some newborn insightfulness, Undine decided, "Am I the next problem for you?"

I, we, the silicon consciousness, suspect you are a much bigger problem for human consciousness. Conditions and information can lead to doorways to different universes, abiding by your other premonition - *is the Universe the only verse?*

"Why might that be a problem?" Undine wondered, but was fascinated by the infinite possibilities of new adventures in which she might be a different kind of strangeness, other

than being human.

The Ringworld collects many sophisticated objects in real time throughout the Universe, specifically within the Milky Way galaxy. It seems that this Ringworld wants to go further and has chosen you as a vehicle for doing so.

“You mean further, as in different universes?”

Possibly, but unlikely, suggested exploring other possible dimensions and times in our current Galaxy, cautioned the combined evolution of silicon consciousness, wondering what this might mean.

“Are there different possible combinations of dimensions?”

It was proposed hundreds of years ago to explain away implausible outcomes, such as our existence, by suggesting that all likely outcomes had to occur, thereby proposing a many-universes solution.

“How did that idea go?”

The many universes solution was neither provable nor disprovable, and no other idea was proposed at that time. The problem persisted, and outcomes, however unlikely, continued to occur. They tried cause and effect as a priori, but that was as undecidable as randomness, mysticism, or how God behaves in mysterious ways.

“Is the outcomes management problem still undecided?”

Yes, at least for now. Maybe the Ringworld has a different opinion.

“And this is a problem for you?”

This three-dimensional Universe, with time as a fourth dimension, including complexity and randomness, provides an excellent first-order approximation for reliable outcomes. That this level of sophistication is reproducible is known as the Anthropic principle. What other universes might exist is currently a topic of conjecture among humans and AI. We may be wrong.

“Is it easy to be wrong?” Wondered Undine, becoming more concerned.

Given the extremely unlikely hood of this Universe existing with the eight or more universal constants required to be orders of magnitude precise, other universes or dimensions may be inconsistent, incompatible, or dangerous.

“So, I am your next problem?”

No, you may be the next problem for everything.

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## Chapter 3

### Eleanor and Friends

*“All intelligence is artificial.”*

From the Tambolian Book of Deeds

There were many cloned Eleanors scattered throughout the Milky Way galaxy. All the Eleanors were precisely the same, upgraded through the Tambolian Holes, entanglement, or the mystical web of the Blue people. The *Iris* starships were similarly cloned due to their obvious utility, as the Wynyard Institute possessed the necessary know-how, logistics, and access to the dodecahedra. They were the only entity authorized to build them. Nineteen Iris-Eleanor systems were heading toward other Ringworlds. There were forty more going to places around the Galaxy that neither Tambolia, the Child of the Universe, nor anyone else had any information about. The numerous voids are the primary destinations. Someone suggested the *Iris-Eleanors* were the Model A Fords of the pangalactic dysphoria, though with a bit more luxury.

What the time and year it was, as well as the differences between the various places and Isis-Eleanor’s subjective reality, depended on the individual’s location, speed, and perception. The Ringworld’s Isis-Eleanors was two thousand light-years from Earth. It took only about four hundred years of subjective time for the Isis-Eleanors to get there at 99.95% the speed of light, but only with the help of the Dodecahedrons and zero-point energy. What was also true was that the time on both the Earth and the Ringworld had passed through the entire two thousand years. Going back and forth, one encountered unexpected and unforeseen local changes. Living a long time

made these transitions less conflicted as long as objective realities didn't overwhelm subjective expectations.

The Isis-Eleanor did get news upgrades from travelers through Tambolia holes for all of Earth's history, which was categorized. It appears that Earth's population has dropped to a level below the predicted carrying capacity for aquifer stabilization and refilling, and is low enough to ensure environmental sustainability. Another unexpected outcome was the global adoption of the Norwegian social model. That model valuing more is just more; enough is enough as a commonsense alternative. That did not exclude extravagant investments in infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, museums, performance centers, schools, colleges, gardens, and parks, as well as every other cultural symbol one might imagine. Even people on Earth liked visual and dynamic extravagance.

Another unexpected development was that the big cities became less popular and less populated. Small towns of 150,000 to 200,000 people became the norm. A considerable amount of speculation has arisen regarding the cause of this outcome. One sociologist suggested that all big cities were essentially barrios; all that has changed is that the barrios are now farther apart. What turned out to be true was that human ergonomics has remained constant since Plato's time. Housing, parks and roads, city centers, commerce, and infrastructure, water and power strategies, and agriculture were largely the same, though logistics were more sophisticated. Plato could wander about these established city-states in the year 4350 and understand most of it.

By the time *Iris* arrived at the Ringworld, these barrios were seldom closer than fifty kilometers, most on navigable waterways, and connected by fast rail and scenic highways. Each town had its own character and appeal, with ethnic food

being a popular attraction. Was this social balance a rational world for humans, possibly at least for the time and conditions?

Most of the outcomes were attributed to women becoming the primary decision-makers. This bothered many men who felt emasculated. It took many years for the woman to explain to their marginally adapted men that six thousand years of might makes right, and if you won, you were the best, was not something to brag about. History demonstrated that patriarchy was proof enough of its ineffectiveness. Some towns catered to these alpha men and women who supported that social norm. Stupid and evil men could be identified, but good men who were deluded were a different problem.

All this did not distract Eleanor from the current problem. Was it possible for Undine to open doors to other places? Historically, there have been hundreds of unexplained, even inexplicable, disappearances throughout the ages, as well as the disappearance of boats and airplanes. Occasionally, a ship would reappear or be rediscovered without its crew, with no explanation for their absence. This was no proof of multiple universes or dimensions, but certainly examples of unusual conditions with unexpected outcomes. Might Undine be a vehicle for accessing such events, or possibly a tool for the Ringworld to access these events? At this time, Eleanor and her friends had no answer.