My Own Private Weiji

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In a previous article I spoke about the Chinese word for crisis: weiji. It is comprised of two characters, one means "danger" the other, "opportunity". John F. Kennedy frequently invoked this in many of his speeches. I imagine during the Cuban Missile Danger Opportunity situation it was a constant refrain.

The US is in severe crisis mode and our fearless leader, Mr. Obama, with his new, daring, some would even say radical, budget proposal, is actively espousing this concept. We are past the point of danger and he is grabbing the opportunity to ahem, right the economic wrongs of two decades, and bring his beleaguered country to her feet again. Well good for him. The fact of the matter is, I, personally, have reached a crisis point and somehow have stopped paying attention to what is happening in the US. I know I cannot do that for long, and will also eventually lose interest in myself and my problems especially in light of everything that has happened, here, in this country, and elsewhere (Madagascar for instance) these past few weeks.

A national crisis is merely a reflection of collective, and individual spiritual bereavement and, of course, poor choices. I just read this line back and cringed. I am not trying to be deepwell obviously, but I really believe that collective human energy determines the course of our own existences and, ultimately, sets the tone for a generation. In short, we bring it all on ourselves, and now, us Americans are trying to reverse the damage by voting in what we know is the exact opposite of George W. Bush. Though, we must remember, Obama is still a politician.



9/11 was the catalyst for a series of events that have now destroyed more than one country. Actually, no, I take that back, how the American people and her leaders chose to respond to 9/11 was the catalyst. And of course many a Noam Chomsky or Robert Fisk would argue that the writing was on the wall from the moment the US decided to carpet bomb Vietnam or sanctioned the annexing of a small island called Diego Garcia, illegally uprooting all its citizens, thus condemning them to a life of poverty all so they could build a missile base within striking distance of the Middle East. Remember that name, folks, Diego Garcia, because that will most certainly, karmically, rise up and bite us you know where. All of us. Because we let things happen, don't we? I know I do.

The first week I arrived in Dhaka, I was awakened from a jet lag induced stupor by the inhuman screaming of what sounded like a young girl. It was early evening, my head was spinning. I got out of bed and went to the window and peered through the grime covered iron bars. The screaming was coming from the only house on the street: a terra cotta tiled affair that looked like it could be nice inside. The young girl in question was outside, in the back, where the residents also kept a goat that bleated incessantly but was now silenced.

There is a tea stall against the back wall of the house and two or three men lounged around drinking tea calmly amidst the screaming. A servant girl or two peered down but then went back inside. I was shocked by what I perceived to be their collective inhumanity.

I had only been in Dhaka three days so I was still solidly in John Wayne modea malady many Americans suffer fromwhereby we think we can come into another society and well, "fix" it. Yes, I am shuddering too. So, naturally, I was outraged and begged my father to go down with me and do something about it. By the