

Chapter 4
"The Shan Chi"



CHRISTOPHER ALAN
HARDEN

The Story of the Hair Walkers

What follows is a recount of the story that Tashi told to Tom Dull, when he visited Shangri La. It provides insight as to what it means to be a Shan Chi... a "Hair Walker".

The Scrolls of Outo

"It was a cold Fall morning in 1227 A.D., the Sun was just starting to shine, and fresh misty dew was on the ground, when Outo, a senior monk in the local Nyignma school of Buddhism came rushing from the forest, wild eyed, sweaty, and crazy with rash and fever. Self-inflicted scratches and torn clothing from constant running, made Outo quite the site, as he clamored breathlessly up to the first hut in view.

To the door came Hua, mother to a couple of young men, who were studying the ancient ways of Nyignma, themselves. She knew him as a friend. "I am not dead... I will prove it..." was all she could make out in his ramblings. In his fit of insanity, the old monk killed the mother, using his field stones and a knife – it was brutal. The only thing the poor mother could do before death was to club him in the knee, breaking it. He crawled his way towards the village, and was come upon by two men working in the field. Though he struck out at them, the men took pity, for they new him. He was their teacher, who had gone out into the woods days before, on a ritual of self enlightenment. Nursing him back to health, they gave him water, and he revealed he had somehow met Genghis Kahn. "The killer of thousands has passed..." he explained. "I somehow tapped into his Karma, felt his rage at death, his strength, his merciless hatred..." Genghis Khan had passed away a few days earlier in battle, though the boys would not learn this for several weeks. "Crazy I was, wandering lost... I don't know how long it's been." "We see you have been worn to the bone, master, but what of your knee?" said one of the boys.

After a pause of self searching, then the man began to scowl and cry, his face screwed up with the memory of the past hours. He had forgotten, but the visions came back, the horror of his madness, the agony of the murder he had just entertained. "Go to the woman up the hill! Go now!!!" he cried. The boys recognized the hill he was pointing to and ran. They arrived to see their mother lying there, transitioned to the next stage in the endless cycle. They knelt and wept. She was already cold by now and starting to stiffen.

The boys went back down the hill, not sure what they would do when they came back upon the old man. There was smoke. They ran once again. The ailing man, sitting cross-legged, was no more than bones, burning meat, and flames. The air was thick and sweet with singed skin and cotton. A few feet away were bloody scribblings on the back of a parchment manuscript. On it was an apology for his worst act of existence. To repay the debt to this woman, the monk had committed suicide.

The young men also noticed some parchment, quills, and other meager supplies. He had taken notes about his trip into the forest in that manuscript. "This could not come at a worse time", Kuan told his brother. "The school is already in danger of being closed due to lack of interest; locals are no longer following the way of the Buddha as it is". "I know," said Gang, as he slowly leafed through the dirty, rain-soaked parchment. "With Master Outo fallen murderous and suicidal, from his own enlightenment exercise in the forest, even more will lose faith. Things are getting so dark lately, now more than ever we need a way – a way to show people the power of following the path, a way to show them that good Karma can overcome the darkness." Standing

up and looking back towards the village, knowing the dirt road was about ten miles back, Kuan sighed, "but we have no answers – we are only students." "Agreed – we need guidance." "Let us speak to the elders; they may know a way," said Kuan; he began to walk. "No, they will tell us not to ponder such questions," Gang stayed squatted. "They will say that Outo was practicing non-traditional techniques and that people must follow the same meager path we always have. But we need to do more – to reach past our limits. Tradition is no longer working".

"What are you thinking?" asked Kuan. Gang reached into the old teacher's bags and pulled out more of Master Outo's scribblings. He was studying them a bit more closely now. "Master Outo has figured something out here... a way to... 'tap into Karma itself'." "That's absurd, you cannot tap into Karma; we strive to reach Nirvana for many life cycles; one cannot do it without becoming a Shaman first. Karma is your own, not to be shared with others." Kuan rebutted. "... apparently Master Outo would disagree...", smiled Gang, his eyes brightened with a fresh idea of what this meant. "We should try his techniques; if Master Outo could tap into the dark Karma of Genghis himself, we should be able to tap into good karmas – perhaps those of our fathers", Gang proposed. "That's impossible... and apparently dangerous. Even if we could do such a thing, how could we be sure we would not also tap into evil?" queried Kuan. "If Master Outo were not able to control it, how could we?" he worried. "Let me study these pages, maybe I can tell", said Gang. "OK, but we must tell the seniors about Master Outo", reasoned Kuan. "That's fine, but do not tell them about the papers; let me learn from them first – let us try", pleaded Gang. After a moment of speculation, Kuan could not see how this would hurt so he agreed. The boys went down the hills back to the hanging monasteries in the ravine and delivered the horrible news. They then returned home to tend to their mother's ceremony.

As they had expected, word traveled fast down the mountain side, as more than just friends and family learned of the devastating tale of the crazed monk. Fellow students began leaving the monasteries, and some people moved away from the school. This began to have a small ripple effect as the rest of the country heard of the tragedy. Several weeks had passed now, and Gang had actually taken on the challenge quite seriously. He had learned how to use Outo's techniques and had convinced Kuan to learn too. They began small, tapping into the Karma of simple, targeted items, whereas Outo had been tapping into larger less focused streams of Karma. They worked with trees, bushes, worms, small animals, and what they found was that they could see random pieces of past lives, good deeds and bad; they could tell at what point in the suffering/extinguish cycle one was in. It was a difficult ritual and would usually exhaust them. Their search for knowledge was not going as well however. They had hoped that they could learn more clearly of the past lives of entities and even contact them in their current form. Perhaps if they became good enough, they could speak with the Karma of the dead and reach leaders who could guide them and their school better than the current monks. Perhaps they could learn how to give this good Karma to those struggling to follow the path, strengthen them, and thus help them reach Nirvana sooner.

Though their visions weren't strong enough to do this, there was an interesting side effect that came from this. They could move things, like floating a stick, or causing fish to come to the water's edge and make catching them easier. They seemed to have more energy, almost a sense of power, during a session. They could shape things, small things, into existence, like rocks, tools, and such, with enough concentration. The items would eventually dissipate, but the potential of what this could mean was intriguing enough to keep trying. At least to Gang. "This doesn't seem to be leading us to way to help people reach enlightenment. Maybe we should talk to the elders now – show them what we have done," pushed Kuan. Sensing Kuan would not wait much longer, "Ok, let us go to them in the formal meeting next week and present our findings. Maybe they can tell us how to harness this to help others," Gang offered. He knew that their recent success wouldn't be enough to rally the Monks to change their minds, but Kuan's eventual agreement would give Gang the extra time he needed.

The Ritual

That night, Gang knew his window of opportunity to use this new found skill for the greater good was shrinking. He had not revealed everything in Oto's writings to Kuan. There was another page, a darker page that required a sacrifice of a small animal; Oto had written that pushing the animal's essence into the next cycle would release enough energy to allow Gang to reach something greater – the Karma of humans. Kuan would have never gone for it; Gang knew that...

[Learn more about the growing conflict between two brothers, a struggle of love, hatred, and the destructive temptations of ultimate power by visiting www.the-Fro.com and purchasing "The Fro: Origin".]

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