

Giving to the Earth; the Earth Gives Back

We arrived in Belize in a steamy August afternoon to 'open vortexes'. My friend, Susan, had received information during meditation that there were energy centers or vortexes that needed to be opened for balancing the earth. Assisting her, we drove to the eco-lodge where we were staying, deep in the rainforest, near the Guatemalan Border.

The lodge welcomed us with lighted kerosene lanterns under the thatched main room built of hard rainforest timber.

"Hi guys. You said you're vegetarian, right?" The owner greeted us.

Affirming that, he offered to first show us to our cabanas.

"As you can see, there's no electricity here, so we rely on kerosene for lanterns and flashlights for walking. Oh, and keep to the paths, especially in the dark. The jungle comes alive at night, and we've recently seen a few feu-de-lances around." He said. Quite casually, I thought.

"Feu-de-lances?" Gary asked. "You mean the dreaded two-step-drop snake? One bite, you take two steps and boom! You're dead! That snake?"

"Yes, that's right," again, the owner said this very casually.

My knees started to shake. I had to sit down on the bed, under the mosquito netting.

"So we'll see you guys in about fifteen minutes for dinner, all right?" The owner said, lighting the kerosene lantern. It seemed to throw more shadows than it relieved them.

"Okay," we chorused, looking at each other. We unpacked a few things, but didn't really know where to put them as there was little furniture. Seeing a few hooks on the wall, I hung up some things, and then thought better of it after spying a four inch wolf spider on the wall. Harmless, but I didn't exactly want to find it up my sleeve either. I hastily repacked and shut my suitcase.

During a delicious dinner, we talked about snakes and our vortex trip the next day.

"I was told to bring a snake-bite kit," Susan said, a little nervously for her. In fact, I suddenly realized she was not eating much.

"I'm going to carve a snake stick tonight," Gary announced. "I've been dreaming about feu-de-lances for two weeks, and now that we know they're here....." his voice trailed off and we glanced around the lodge.

"I was told snake would be an observer, not a participant," I shared, not really sure what that meant.

"You know, I'm okay with it, if this is the last thing I do in this life," Gary suddenly announced.

Susan's eyes watered, but she nodded in agreement.

Then we took out the forestry map and our pendulums.

Poring over the maps, we confirmed the two sites, apparently fairly close together and accessible by old logging roads.

That accomplished, Gary carved his forked snake stick designed to pin an average size snake behind the head, to control it until it could be handled and removed.

"I hope that's big enough," I mumbled to no one in particular.

We went to bed early. In the jungle, night is dark, but not quiet. Needless to say, we didn't sleep well.

Rising before dawn,, we tried to choke down our breakfast.

Stashing our lunch in the car, we added bottles of water, several liters of petrol, and the snake stick. Susan brought her medicine kit. I brought my camera; Gary his machete, and we all brought our ceremonial items: stones, feathers, altar cloth, etc.

Just as it was beginning to get light, off we went to a smooth highway leading to a ranger station.

Stopping there, we checked in and showed them on the map where we were headed.

"How are the roads there?" we asked.

"Fine. Fine. Just cleared them, " was the reply.

"If we don't check back with you by sunset, you'll at least know where we are," Susan said.

By the look in the ranger's eyes, he didn't really care, but he nodded politely.

And away we went on a single lane logging path.

"Oh no! Look up ahead!" Slowly Gary pulled the car to a halt. Across the road was a huge tree, effectively blocking any passage.

"So much for clearing the road!" Gary said bitterly. "What do we do now? It's too far for us to just leave the vehicle and walk. Probably not safe anyway." He added gloomily.

I got out of the car saying, "Well, let's check it out."

Walking to the tree, I decided to see what I could do. I began pulling on one of the bigger branches, and to my surprise, the tree began to move! It was half rotted and very light. Two of us were able to move it easily to the side of the road.

Feeling victorious, we piled back in the car. Only to encounter another downed tree five hundred yards down the road. Joking, we moved this tree, and another and another. About twenty eight trees in all before we felt we were close to the vortexes.

Exiting the car slowly, we stopped at the vortex crossing and looked around as the sun began to come out from behind rain clouds.

We began laying out our ceremonial items. Susan was looking nervously around us. I wasn't concerned about what was out there. We'd already made our peace with whatever was to come.

As we began our ceremony of prayers and petitions to the Spirits of the Jungle, each of us had a part. Butterflies kissed each of us during the moving ceremony. The jungle felt so alive. No animals bothered us. Instead colorful birds chirped and fluttered around us, singing in happiness for our presence and intentions.

Then it was time to begin.

Gary and I set off in one direction, and Susan in the other.

Gary and I went down the ancient path, not knowing exactly where we were going, but allowing the pendulum to lead us.

When it began to swing wildly, almost out of control, we stopped.

This, then, was the spot.

We performed ceremony.

A slight breeze came through, ruffling our hair.

We prayed and chanted more.

Blue butterflies danced around us.

Then it was time to find Susan.

We met back at the meeting camp and laid down on the ground around it, looking up at the canopy overhead and the glimpse of sun and sky.

Finally packing up, we were aware of the time and needing to be to the ranger station by sundown. The rainforest is not a place to be in at night, as navigation becomes difficult.

Back in the car, the return trip was made easier due to the fact the logs were already moved. As we looked back at where we'd been, we gasped and ground to a halt.

Piling out of the car to see for sure, we noticed a huge ball of whirling white light right where we'd been working! As we watched in disbelief, it slowly turned into a rainbow, arching over the trees.

Slowly we got back in our car. But when we looked back, we next saw a double rainbow.

Stopping again, Gary and Susan climbed a rock to get a better view. I took my camera and dashed back up the road to a slightly different angle. Snapping the picture, I decided to try it again, this time with a different lens. Racing back to the car before the rainbow faded, I quickly changed lenses and took two steps.

Something made me look near my feet.

At the split second I noticed it, several things happened at once. I leaped about eight feet up the road, turning in mid-air, letting out a single shriek and executing a perfect three point landing.

The cause of this stunt was the largest snake I'd ever seen, even in pictures.

Its head was the width my hands were when touching my thumbs together and spreading the rest of my fingers outward. Easily ten inches at the widest part. And the eight feet of him I could see were not getting any narrower as it hid in a rotting log. Gray, with diamond-shapes on him, he really was beautiful.

Gary and Susan, still perched on their rock, were staring at me as if I'd just lost my marbles. Shakily, I raised a hand and pointed at the still (thankfully!) snake.

"Don't you see him?" I asked.

Susan turned white and looked about to faint. Gary grabbed his snake stick. It would have been comical if it weren't so serious to me.

"I don't think that's big enough," I said fairly calmly. "And I don't think he's coming after me, either. But what do I do?"

I had no idea what kind of snake this was. Only that he was big, and as a result of my jump, he now separated me from the car.

"I think if you cross to the other side and slowly walk to the car, you'll be okay," Gary said.

"Yes, I think so too. He's had several chances to get me and hasn't. So he must not be hungry." But before I made my way back to the car, I had to do it. I took his picture.

Slowly I tip-toed toward the car.

"Would you hurry up?" Gary hissed.

I ran the last few steps. Gary released the clutch to move the car without starting the engine. I took another picture from this angle. Then we piled back into the car and headed back to the eco-lodge.

There, over a hilarious dinner with Susan now able to eat, we recounted our adventures, high on life, high on adventure, high on spirit. The owners sat raptly, and oohed over the snake part.

"You? You were the one to encounter it? After every one else's preparation, the snake was meant for you?" The owner asked me. "You said snake would be an observer. Sounds like that's what he was doing. Do you also realize that snake represents new beginnings? New for you and new for the earth. You know, because they shed their skin and let go of the old? Plus, I'll bet you didn't know this." He paused dramatically as we all looked at him.

"Snake is the guardian of sacred places."

Phoenix Rising Star

Co-director of Your HeartWalk Center in Sedona, AZ

For more information on their services and Sedona vortexes, visit

www.sedonaheartwalk.com

