

# The Sorrows of Human Beings

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(A novel)

## Preface

- Do not start reading if you have no time.

- Why?!

- I am writing about a remote gorge called Gudamakari. I wanted to write about Gudamakarians long ago, but I could not manage to do it before. Although I am only twenty-five and I started writing only three years ago, but it seems to me the three centuries are gone instead of the tree years and I suffer that I could write nothing appropriate about the Gudamakari gorge up to now.

I thought before that Gudamakari gorge was a huge book and there were numerous stories in it... No, No! Something is really wrong with me. Now I do not see the people the way I used to do it three years ago. Now I think that every human is a story in itself and I look for a title for each of them. So, if you meet me anywhere and start speaking to me, the same moment I will imagine that you are a story and I will start seek a title for you. I do not know why, but first only the Gudamakarians seemed to me to be the stories, now, it does not make any difference who he or she is, where one comes from, I imagine everyone as a story. If only Gudamakari gorge was a book full of weird stories for me before, now I think that the earth is an immense book illuminated by the Sun and the Moon, where a lot of stories are walking around. Oh! what a wonderful book it is! The stories are erecting the monuments for good stories themselves, the book is opened and written by the invisible creator and, I wish I really knew what's wrong with me – now I imagine that the earth is a page of the huge book titled as *the universe*. I wish I knew where the blessed author is, who is the creator of such enormous book, where is either its beginning, or its ending. Or maybe it includes none of them... The earth is its one page and Gudamakari gorge could be the subtitle of many other stories.



Goderzi Chokheli

- Me?
- Who else am I?
- I may also be a story.

Then what do I have to do with the stories existing around me?

- Do you know what I want?
- What?
- I told it to you already - writing a novel on Gudamakari, let's really do it.

You can possibly not imagine, how much it suffers me: I can not help writing, but I don't know what to write, how to write... I know that I should write all the way it is, not to skip over anything, but it is difficult to start with. I believe it was also difficult for the creator to start while creating the book on the universe. I wish I could also start exactly like this and never finish... I want to speak about everything the way I see and the way I feel. Doesn't matter the sequence, it depends on the story, that has such a strange temper, that it never asks anything to me.

- I am bothering you, yes?

What can I do, I could not find the beginning, I do not know where to start from, how to bring so many stories together. Now I see the three drunk stories singing while walking along the street. They are hugging one another and staggering. Let me start with another thing as I know we can not get rid of them, they are from the village where there are only the mad stories. I wrote about their village not long ago and since then I can not find peace... Look, they turned to my house, I know it for sure they are craving for quarrelling with me. Generally, I am used to quarrelling with them. All my stories are quarrelling with me.

-What for?

-Why are you killing us in the end? I kill them as I love them. But they do not believe me and hate the death.

-Nobody loves death.

-I do love. I love it when I end the stories with death, death makes the lives of the stories as pretty, as the sun and the moon do it to the darkness.

- Are not you sorry for the death of the stories then?

- I do, but I have such a rule. I never write of anything I do not love, and whatever I love I imagine it in the moment of death and then I am sorry that I let it die, and this sorrow makes me think of the life. And Gudamakarians are coming and quarrelling with me.

-What?

-We are still alive and why did you kill us?

I tell them it is not true...

-What is not true?

- All, what human sees and feels are illusions and death is necessary to end this perceptions. But why am I cheating, there is no pretence, everything is true and life is amazing, and I kill Gudamakrians prematurely. Sure, they will get angry with me, what is if one nice day all of them commit suicide... The other day one of my story was carried out by other stories. It was hot, the graveyard is up on the mountain, they were carrying her up there. I do not know why, but everybody was looking at me. I killed the woman prematurely before and she started quarrelling with me then – Why did you do it? – And now she really died and others were looking at me as if it was my fault. I was looking at the dead and somehow I thought:

-What's the difference between the time of death, early or late. What is changed after I killed her.

- Maybe there **is** difference, and something **is** really changed.

But I did not want to start like this. It is all the three drunk men's fault. They came to me, fall out and then left. They were staggering pitifully, and were quarrelling with me on the way– why do you write about us? We will not die... but it is not so interesting, let's start with something different.

## **The Beginning**

The sun decided to roll down, and it provoked in me a strange desire for writing. It was not dark in the room, but I decided to light a candle before starting writing.

I made the fire and warmed wax on it. I was carefully peeling its sides with the knife and was kneading it on the palm of my hand in order to make it softer. Then I recalled that I needed a cotton thread. I looked for it and as I could not find anything, I did it with the wool one. I entered the writing table and started lighting the candle... It was blown out every time I tried to light it up. The wool thread did not want to be lit. Then I started looking for a cotton tread, but I could not find it. Somebody called me from outside. I went out, a Gudamakarian story has arrived from Tbilisi and came to see me. We sat down. I started seeking his title immediately. He was not going to leave, and at least, it seems I was not listening to him, and I have not even noticed how he left. I went on

looking for the cotton. I found a quite thick pile of papers wrapped by waxed cotton thread in one chest. I did not even pay attention to the papers, I put the cotton inside the wax, lit it up, placed it at the table and started praying:

- God Almighty, the biggest writer of the universe, blessed be your name, wherever you are and however you are. I know it is difficult to begin with, I can not imagine it otherwise. Nothing is coming without difficulties. Oh, How majestic you might have started. But you used so much mercy for everything in your book, it is difficult for a human to find out where the beginning is. As if it is here, but at the same time - there, it is also in me and even in the three drunk stories, coming down with staggering. It is in dog, cow, water. In the air and in the earth. You write so gracefully, about so many things, and so easily... I want to write so easy, swap from one story into another without noticing it. You manage to maintain order in every kind of mess. Look, the candle that I fixed on wool thread did not light up, as it is written otherwise in your book– the candle do not light up on wool thread and a man with the heart of a dog can not live like a human...

Meanwhile the candle burnt down and I went to the chest for another cotton thread. I took one more and I got interested in the papers.

I read several pages and I got enormously happy when I finally found out that it was an amazing story on campaign organized by Chokhelis in Gudamakari gorge. My grandma was personally taking part in this wonderful campaign. As she was famous for keeping the secrets, she got the papers to keep them. My mother could not take part in it, she was ill that winter and my sister and me were not there. There was no school in the village, so we had been sent to another place. That's why I feel sorry every time my friends retell me about the campaign...

And now my fate brought me exactly where I should have started from. As the papers are mixed I will try to order them a bit and present it to you.

The papers are covered by the thick book cover with large letters on it:

## **The Campaign in Gudamakari**

The participants of this famous campaign are listed on the first page:

1. Lad Gogi – Supreme Commander – in Chief
2. Bibgai – Arch-priest
3. Sebai – Bell ringer
4. Samkharauli – Historian, Geographer (Chronicler)
5. Qimbari – Philosopher
6. Chagi – Writer

7. Zinai – Doctor
8. Gamichardai – Sadness collector
9. Salome – Secrets Keeper (responsible to hide the papers in case of need)
10. Shete – Betrothed
11. Elenai – Housewife
12. Tatai – Secret Service Man
13. Tashkentai – Secret Service Man
14. Garaxtinai - Secret Service Man
15. Sophiai – Shouter
16. Katushai – Shouter
17. MarTai – Shouter (They must bring panic and mess in enemy's army )
18. Qetuai – Simple warrior
19. Ninuai – Simple warrior
20. Siduai – Simple warrior
21. Tasai – Simple warrior
22. Kitoraant woman – Secret military unit
23. SarvanianT woman – Secret military unit
24. SijanaT woman – Secret military unit
25. Kaltamze – Maritime unit (as there is no sea in Gudamakari, they are responsible for the connection with River Aragvi. They have to walk along the river until the end of the campaign.)
26. Tebruai
27. Dariko
28. Tamarai
29. Lelai
30. Galilei – (They should stay in Chokhi and look after the village, feed animals and birds, nurse the ill and old people.)

This is the approximately full list of those famous and brave warriors, mostly compiled from women, as in winter men go to the mountains in sheep farms, youth – in the city and only the women and kids are left in Gudamakari.

## **From the author**

Before presenting the other papers, I would like to introduce some warriors from the list.

## 1. Lad Gogi (Supreme Commander – in Chief)

It is winter. Guramakari gorge is plastered by snow. It is warm.

The Village Chokha is spread on the east side of the mountain. The smoke is coming up sluggishly from several houses. The sun rose slowly and spread the rays around the village. It is still silent. There is even no sound of barking dogs. Later, the old people, left in the village, started coming out of their houses gradually. They drove the flock out, quenched their thirst at a spring and afterwards, left them in the sun. The cows basked their cold backs with great pleasure.

Lad Gogi went out from the house, stretched a leather of a bear on the threshing floor and exposed himself in the sun. The villagers started gathering around lad Gogi slowly. Every newcomer was giving a cough and silently taking a sit.

It's silent around.

Lad Gogi is also sitting silently and thinking of further lies.

It is almost every day like this, the old people come... I think some can not be called old, they are middle-aged, but most of them just grow old and that's why I call them all 'old'. They look sad, first because of the separation from their sons and grandchildren and on the other hand - they are bored by the long winter nights and silence. Only lad Gogi is left to keep the village amused.

Lad Gogi has been in two wars and he is very proud of it. He wears two medals inseparably and when they are exposed to the sun they shine so brightly, that while looking at them the village folk involuntarily believes his lies. Maybe he retells the truth, but he says such things, that every time I listen to him, I get assured, that they look more like cock and bull stories than the truth.

- Eh, humans' work isn't appreciated sometimes... - started Gogi with grievous tone.

People started listening to him and got quiet.

- Your breast is flourished with medals, what else do you want, - exclaimed Bibga.

- Eh! That's nothing. Had my work really been appreciated, I shouldn't have been sitting here, with you now.

- Where should you have been sitting then?

-There!

-Where, there?

- Hm! I've been a submarine captain for twelve years. I've never been out of water during those twelve years. One day I was under this water, another day under another one. Eeh! What nice cities and countries are under the water, had you known it you wouldn't have been sitting here now, you would just jump inside water right today, but for what? For nothing, you don't know their language and they yours... You wouldn't find a place there, it's better for you to stay here.

-Even if we spoke that language, where'd we find the sea.

- You can jump in the lake upstairs, on Nariana mountain. This lake owns the bottom that has direct connection to the sea.

-Really? - doubted Bibga.

- I've swum several times there, but it's not allowed to put the head out, I was swimming secretly. Sometimes I've been listening to the shepherds' conversation, but I wasn't putting my head out of water. There is also a city under this lake.

-Do they also speak the different language?

-Yes, don't jump inside, anyway, you can't understand their language, and you mayn't come out from there any more.



- How does their language sound, how do they speak?

- Aiserio miserio miser, - said lad Gogi.

- What does it mean?

- One isn't appreciated the way one should've been, - and it's true. Should I sit here now?!

But what for? I only put my head out of water and I was slandered in treason.

- Why?

- I shouldn't have done it.

- What did you tell them.

- Here is your ship and do with it whatever you want.

- Then?

- They imprisoned me for two years. I started working on jet plane when they set me free.

It was so fast, you would not even see it.

- Weren't you allowed to put your head out as well?

- No! How could one stand it... I was hovering over our village and I was not allowed to look over it. I was going, bombing the country and while flying back over our village I was thinking to myself for a second, let's have a look, maybe they have Khatoba, (*name of a feast of mountainous part of Georgia*) but my first mistake was putting head out of water.

- If I were you, I would've looked from the plane, - exclaimed Tatia
  - That's why I sit now here with you as I did it, - groaned lad Gogi and got silent.
- Others were also sitting quiet.

Then the avalanche, rolling down from Ozano mountain, broke this silence. Gudamakari gorge was long echoing the avalanche and then everything lapsed into silence again.

Now everybody was staring at Galilei, who was building snowmen on the roofing of his house. Galilei has also been in war and he plays warriors since he is back. He has trained the hen so, that they never leave him. The hens of all the village are surrounding him now. He is not even listening to others, he is building up the snowmen to himself. He has a pot of bread mixed in vodka close over there, prepared for the hens. The hens are cackling. Galilei is giving them some bread, first they swell their crops and then, quite drunk start quarrelling with one another. Galilei is a commander. He leads the war the way he wants, sometimes he helps the red hens and sometimes the white ones. He has always a sword in his hand, sways it in the air and shouts:

- Tatias hen, attack the enemy from the left and as fast as you can! Treason! Treason, treason!!! Yess!

Shouts Galilei and the hens beat one another mercilessly. The war goes on until they're not asleep on the battlefield.

- Who're the winners Galilei? - calls lad Gogi to Galilei holding the sword in his hand.
- The variegated ones! - answers Galilei pointing with his sword at the motley rooster walking on the roofing. The Rooster walks slowly with triumphal steps.
- Who're they? - asks Gogi looking at the snowmen.
- This is Napoleon, - shows Galilei, - that's Alexander Macedonian, that's - Hitler, this one - Akileus, this - Shah Abas, and this's Temur Lang... They're all against me, but they'll never win.

Galilei marched around the snowmen. Then he stood aside and shouted: - I'll cut off your heads! - he swayed his sword in the air and attacked them. First he cut off the heads and then mixed them all together. He had a little rest and then started shouting at sleepy hens:

- Reveille! Stand up! Stand up, you! - and kicked several of them. The hen got sober all of a sudden and tried to stand up.
- Stand at attention! - shouted Galilei and spread over one handful of corn. The hen ate all up immediately and stared at Galilei.
- Now we're going to the neighbour village to fight, we must annihilate them all. Watch out not to loose! - added Galilei in the end and led the hens. They also followed him.

The women went after Galilei shouting at him.

- Where are you taking the hens, hey, you fool!

- Leave me alone! - called Galilei and looked at the hens as if saying follow me.
- Don't fool our hens, you light-headed!
- I'll cut off your heads! -called Galilei and went to the direction of women with the sword.

Lad Gogi caught Galilei, took the sword away and tied him at the pillar.

- I'll cut your heads! - Galilei was shouting.

The women sat around lad Gogi and he got ready for another lie.

It grew warmer gradually and the avalanche rolled down with rumble again on the other side of the mountain.

It fell silent again. Only Galilei, tied at the pillar, was breaking the silence:

- I'll cut off your heads! - He was threatening the women. The hens were cracking around him, as if saying something to their commander on their own language.

- Where're you all! - called somebody from Galilei's threshing floor.

- Help me! - called Galilei, as he heard the voice.

- Gamikhardai, - said lad Gogi.

- Here, I'm here! - Galilei was shouting.

Gamichardai came closer and stared from the far:

- What troubles you neighbours, what worries you, - he was opening a bag and took out a thick notebook while speaking.

- I'm the first, I'm the first! - called Galilei. Gamikhardai approached him, opened the notebook and wrote down:

Sorrow # 1871

Chokheli Galilei

- What are you worried about?

- I'm worried that I'm imprisoned and I've no sword in my hand.

- Nothing else?

- Untie me now.

- That's not my business, - said Gamikhardai.

- Untie me or I'll cut off your head!

- It's not my business...

- Then what's your business?

- I gather sorrows, sorrows of the people, who're in grief, who're worried, - said

Gamikhardai and left Galilei.

- Oh! You!.. - told Galilei to himself.
- So neighbours do you have new sorrows? - he approached the women and wrote down the sorrow number:

Sorrow Number 167...

Chokheli lad Gogi

- What's your sorrow?
- The same.
- The same one?
- Yes, the same one.
- Let's write it down anyway...
- I'm worried, that I put my head out of water.
- Nothing else?
- That you looked down from the plane? - asked Tatia.
- Yes, this also.
- I wouldn't have worried about it, - said Tatia
- Nothing else? - asked Gamikhardai.
- Nothing, - said lad Gogi. Ah yes: aiserio, miserio, miser.
- What? What's that?
- The sorrow.
- Whose sorrow?
- The sorrow of the people living under water.
- What kind of sorrow is it?
- That one is often not appreciated the way one should have been.
- This is also a sorrow of the people living above water.
- Yes, this is also our sorrow.
- Thanks, you just came up to a very interesting sorrow, - said Gamikhardai and marked the number of another sorrow.

Sorrow # 167...

Bibgai

- What are you worried about?
- You know it.
- I know what worried you, but it's also possible that you have another sorrow today.
- I'll anyway build a house, but it requires...

Bibgai got silent for a while and then he started the same old story, retold who knows already so many times:

- My neighbours, you know, I never cheat, I made a design long ago, you all and Gamikhardai also know it well. You'd only give me the village square and help me in construction. It won't be only for myself.

- How many rooms will it have? - asked Seba.

- I have determined - five hundred.

- Five hundred? What do we need so many rooms for, or where should we get the construction materials from?

- We'll find the materials, we should destroy all the houses, build one big house and everybody will live there happily. Anyway, we always want to be together. Everything is inside. Only dining room will have twenty rooms.

- What do we need so many rooms for? - asked Tatia.

- What for? When eating, it is better to eat well...

- Anyway, so many rooms...

- We take off our shoes in the first room, in another – coats, in the third we will take off our hats and hang it up, in the third you will take off the belt...

- Should women also take off? - asked Salome.

- No, women here and there.

- How's that here and there?

- If you want, you can take off, if not, then you don't have to.

- What will be in the fifth room?

- The fifth will be the room for the spoons, you will take one spoon and enter the sixth room, there are the plates, so you will go along... every room is clean, tidy, in tenth room there will be a pot full of Borsh, you will pour it and go into the eleventh.

- What else is in the eleventh?

- Eleventh is the room for cherries, but..

- Why but, it's good.

- It is good but we can delete it.

- Why?
- Where can we get cherries in winter?
- We can keep there something else instead.
- Yes, it's also possible but this case still worries me.
- Does it worry you a lot? - asked Gamikhardai and got ready to write down.
- A lot, - said Bibga.
- Nothing else worries you?
- I am worried because of the fifteenth room as well.
- What's in that room?
- Strawberry and in winter...
- Which room worries you as well?
- Others are OK, in the sixteenth there is Khinkali, (Georgian national food) in the seventeenth – greens, in the eighteenth – apple, in the nineteenth there are tables, you will take your seat, put your food, satiate yourself, go to the twentieth and there are the beds, you can lie down and sleep.

Bibgai looked at the neighbours after finishing the description of the dining room and asked:

- So, what do you think of it?
- It's nice, but...
- But?
- Is it necessary to destroy the old houses to build this one?
- Yes, yes, first, there's no use of the old ones any more, second, why should we live separately, isn't it better to live together, which of any old house have such dining room? And third, we need the construction materials.

- Aren't you also worried about the construction materials? - asked Gamikhardai
- Not at the moment.
- How should we roof the house? - asked Gogi.
- With tin plates, so that its glitter cut and blind the eyes of our enemies – said Bibga and looked at the neighbours.

- Let me go or I'll hole your tin roof with stones! - called Galilei, who kept listening to the dining-room story quietly.

- Anyone making harm to the house will have no right for entry to the dining room, - said Bibga.

- I'll cut your heads off! - I'll only go into the cherry room! - Galilei was crying.
- You'd better keep quiet.

- Will your house have the room for the hens? - asked Galilei quietly.
- It'll have the room for the hens and for donkeys as well.
- You know what I'll do with you?
- What?
- When you finish eating in nineteenth room, you will sleep in the twentieth, yes?...
- Yes, we will.
- Will you sleep deeply...
- Yes, we will sleep deeply.
- Then I'll get in and cut off your heads! - said Galilei and laughed from pleasure.

Sorrow #1674

Sebai

- What are you worried about?
- Nothing at all!

Sorrow #1675

Samkharauli

- What are you worried about?
- I'm worried because of such isolation of Gudamakari gorge.
- What do you mean with isolation.
- That historically and geographically it's a forgotten and inaccessible place. Everybody knows the people from Khevsureti, Pshavi, Tusheti, Mtiuleti, Mokhevians as well and when you say I am from Gudamakhari, everybody will burst into laughter.
- Why?
- How should I know what Gudamakari is. Hardly anyone knows that: in the world, in Georgia, there's a gorge on which flows the river *Black Aragvi* and the gorge, where Gudamakarians live, is called Gudamakari; that Gudamakarians are the oldest warriors; that from the three hundred Aragvelis, who died on Krtsanisi field, mostly were Gudamakarians; that their commander was Ninia Aftsciauri from Antocki that they swore to the community icon in Pirimzis Khati and they took the battle flags from there. None knows that there were churches for monks over Chokha on the top of the mountain and this mountain is called monks' mountain; that Pirimze

icon was brought from Akhaltsikhe after one of the wars... Gudamakariiii... At last, it is time the world recognizes, that there exists a gorge called Gudamakari...

– Eh! It seems like you have lots of sorrows, ja! - interrupted Gamikhardai who could hardly write down few words as Samkharauli was confiding his sorrows too fast.

Samkharauli got silent.



Sorrow #167.6

Qimbari

- What are you worried about?
- I don't know where the beginning is.
- Beginning of what?
- Of all what we see and do not see.
- Eeh! You've invented a sorrow.
- What, don't you like it?
- Yes sure, it's interesting, but why should we care for where the beginning is...
- Do you know where the end is?
- The death is the end.
- False, it's not correct.
- Why.
- Death is the beginning as well, but not the main one, the head of the beginnings is another thing.
- God?
- Yes, maybe, but where is He?
- Is it your sorrow?
- Yes, I know, that the beginning and the end are together, that the end is followed by the beginning, but how, where?

- Nothing else worries you?
- What else should worry me...
- That Galilei is tied at the pillar, doesn't it worry you?
- No.
- Why?
- I don't care, he deserved and he was tied, why didn't you untie him?
- It's not my business as well.
- Let me go or I'll send you all to hell in the twentieth room! - called Galilei, but nobody listened to him, only the hens started cracking.

Sorrow #1677

Chagi

- What are you worried about?

Chagi is a young boy. He was sitting silently before and was listening to the elder people. He came back from the city about ten days ago and he's already used to those sad and almost monotonous days. Gamikhardai, the gatherer of sorrows, was avoiding speaking to him before, but now he wrote down the sorrow number and asked him once more:

- What're you worried about?
- Me? nothing...
- Nothing at all?!
- No.
- Then why are you so sad?
- I don't know, I miss the city.
- Are you in love?
- No, no...
- They why are you so worried?
- I have to write my diploma work.
- What are you going to write it about?
- I must write a work on Gudamakari, but I have no idea what.
- So, it worries you.
- Yes, it worries me...
- Aren't you really in love?

- No, but even though I am, I don't find love to be a sorrow.
- Sure, love is the biggest sorrow.
- Are you in love?
- I was.
- Then?
- The robbers caught her on the way and assaulted her. First she told nothing to me, one day she was sitting silently and looking at me. I asked what was wrong with her. She told nothing to me. Then she approached me, kissed me on my knees. I tried to hug her, but she slipped from my hands and ran away. She left me and that was all.. She gave herself to the heavy waves of Aragvi. Since then I am gathering the sorrows. I must gather all the sorrows of the world and go to the God.
- What was her name? - Asked Chagi.
- Nino.
- Which village was she from?
- From Didebati. She was buried a bit far from the graveyard.
- Why?
- As a self-murderer. Why did she do it?! – Everybody was angry with her, none knew the reason. Then the robbers blurted out themselves... Gamikhardai's eyes started watering and he turned back not to show the tears out. He approached Salome and wrote down the sorrow number.

#### Sorrow #1677

#### Salome

- What are you worried about?
- I don't want others to hear.
- What?
- That we build a common house.
- Then what if they hear.
- They'll interrupt us.
- What else worries you?
- It looks like it'll snow heavily.
- Then, what do you want?
- It'll bring huge avalanches
- Nothing else worries you?

- My daughter in law is ill and I know nothing about the kids.
- What else?
- Nothing at the moment...

### Sorrow #1677

Gamikhardai has just finished writing down the sorrow number, when Garakhtiant woman jumped up on the roofing, Tashkenta was following her.

- What happened? - Lad Gogi stood up.
- None cares Chokhelis any more.
- What does it mean? What are you speaking about?
- Here, Tashkentai will certify that I'm right, -said Garakhtina and looked at Tashkenta.
- I will certify and more then certify, - said Tashkenta.
- Kid, come here! - called Garakhtina to her wretched son – Shete, who was pitifully standing in the corner of the roofing.
- Do you see this kid?
- Yes we do, - said Seba.
- We see, - confirmed lad Gogi.
- Does everybody see him! - called Garakhtina loudly.
- I'll cut your heads off! - called Galilei.
- Shut up! - attacked led Gogi.
- I'll send you all to the hell in the twentieth room! - threatened Galilei.
- Do you see? - Garakhtina was shouting.
- We see! - answered the people.
- Do you also see the church of St. George?
- Yes, we beg it for mercy!
- It was a long ago settled rule in Gudamakari, that none from Chokha, no matter lame or blind, should have been refused to marry anyone they wanted.
- Yes! It's true! - the arch-priest stood up.
- Then?
- What then?
- Then.. It's not like this any more.
- Why?

– Do you see my child. Come here my kid, - Garakhtina pulled pitifully shrunk Shete and asked him:

– Do you want to have a wife?

– I want, - said Shete.

– Do you hear, he wants...

– Then?

– Then, they refused.

– Who refused?

– Didebat Mtsaria.

– Why?

– He told: - 'I can't do it, it's not old times, pluck out your ears, you ignorants'.

– Did he say ignorants? Did he really say that?

– Yes, and won't give her to you. It was a rule but it's not any more.

– My child, do you really want her badly? - asked the Arch-priest to Shete.

– Yes, I want.

– Come and pray in the church, - he led Shete to the icon and others followed them with excitement and anger.

– Let me go, damn you all! - Galilei was roaring, but nobody was listening to him. Everybody knelt down in front of the icon.

Gamikhardai went to Garakhtina to write down the sorrow.

– What're you worried about?

– Get rid of me, Gamikharda!

– Tell me what are you worried about.

– I'm about to faint and he...

– You speak up at least, - now he turned to Tashkenta.

– I am worried, that since today Chokhelis lost their priority through the Gudamakari gorge. We were refused by the inhabitant of Dideba today, tomorrow we'll be refused by Gamsivlians, the day after tomorrow by Chobolaurias.

– Tashkentai is right! - People called here and there.

– We must take the community icon out and go through the villages, that nobody dares refusing us any more, - said Lad Gogi.

Seems like people found the idea appealing, they shouted up to the Archpreist: (They were standing down the elevated place, as they were not allowed to go up there):

– Bring out the community icon, Bibga!

– We can't do it, - Bibga called down.

Then lad Gogi, Sebai, and Samkharauli went up and spoke to the arch-priest, it's high time to intimidate Gudamakarians with the community icon, to restore our rights over the other villages.

### The Community Icon

Gudamakari Gorge was first settled by the people with surname Chockheli and they called their village Chokha. There was no Christianity at that time and Gudamakarians were worshippers of the idols. Later, when they got Christianity, they trusted the moon deity – Saint George.

Step by step there appeared the new villages in Gudamakari. The runaways from the deadly enemies, from Khevsureti, were finding a shelter in this inaccessible gorge and were settling there. They have built their churches there.

Saint George has been divided into three hundred sixty-three parts and the tongue fell to Chokha's lot. That's why Gudamakarians avoided setting Chokheli's tongues wagging since olden times.

Chokha inhabitants forged the St. George's icon and conducted it through the newly settled villages. They used to enter the village, first ring the bells, then exact their most implicit submission and obedience to people from Chokha. The main sense of this obedience was that other tribes would accept their priority and if anyone from Chokha, no matter blind or lame would ask a hand of the woman from those villages, one shouldn't be refused.

They have been keeping this rule since that day and today, during those centuries, it was first abolished and it alarmed Chokha inhabitants, women could not even hide indignation, they were standing for taking out of the community icon.

The icon had also another destination. In case of war, whenever it was conducted through the Gudamakari gorge, everyone had to follow it. The last were the three hundred Aragvians going to the Krtsanisi field.

– Get it out, we'll also swear on it: either we restore our rights or none will come back! - The women were calling to arch-priest, who really took it out and rang the bells.

That evening Chokhians held a meeting in lad Gogi's living room. Most of them were women and they were so loud, that nothing could be heard.

They decided to start a campaign in Gudamakari right the next day. They made a list of the warriors and arranged it all according to the rule.

The meeting attendees unanimously chose lad Gogi as a commander in chief and trusted him the setting up of the army.

–We should organize everything now, not to be interrupted later, - said lad Gogi and

explained the women what he meant:

– No famous campaign was conducted blind, without an order, - he said, - every great commander, while conquering other countries, was taking writers, philosophers, historians, and geographers with him. It was, first of all, stressing out their cultural level and we're of course not entirely birdbrained. These people are necessary, first of all, to show the enemy what an educated people they have to deal with, and then, it is also useful for us. Our philosophers will write down a lot from the invaded people, who will swear on the icon. Who knows, how useful can it be for our sons and our grandchildren. If it's not useful, at least, it will harm none, right? By the way, we will confuse the enemy more by writing down the things and subordinate them easier. First of all, we should choose historian-geographer, it is necessary. Historians are as necessary for the campaign as the commanders. I guess, we should choose Samkharauli as a historian – geographer – chronicler. Stand up Samkharauli.

Samkharauli stood up.

- Do you all agree?
- Yes, we do, - called the people here and there.
- I think, we should choose Chagi as a war writer, - said the gatherer of the sorrows.

Chagi refused first and he did not want to take part in this campaign at all. He tried to convince the women that their decision was wrong, that Didebat Mtsaria was right.

- What do you mean right?!
- The girl belongs to father and he can marry her to whom he wants, why do you try to enslave and subordinate others?
- What does it mean, why should he refuse us? Chokhelis have never been refused.
- I want to have a wife and why are they refusing me? - exclaimed shrunk Shete from the corner.
- Untie me people, I'm cold, - cried Galilei and Chagi went out. In several minutes he came back with Galilei following him and shouting:
  - I will send you all to hell in the twentieth room, I will cut off your heads!
  - Wait Galilei, - we spoke of it already, - Chagi calmed him down.
  - Won't you be army writer? - asked the commander to Chagi.
  - Yes, you should anyway write a work on Gudamakari – said sorrows gatherer.
  - I'll be, - agreed Chagi.
  - You are in charge of writing down everything during the war.
  - I'll write down the philosophical stories and make inquiries, - said Kimbiri.
  - Agreed.

The same day the list of the warriors was compiled and the commander gave each or them their role. The army was distributed according to the needs and the rules of the war. They have appointed the pedestrian unit, shouters, secret service men, secret unit, maritime unit, that included the three women, as there is no sea in Gudamakari, to the respect of the rules of war the maritime unit was charged with a mission of walking along Aragvi until the end of the war. Several women and Galilei were assigned to stay in the village.

- What? You don't take me in the army? - said offended Galilei.
- You'll have to stay here, there's also a lot to do here.
- Which of you is better warrior then me, could not your blind eyes see how I cut off the heads of so many famous people? - Jalaedin, Macedonian, Akileus, Hitler, couldn't you see?
- We did.
- Then why're you avoiding me?
- You know that enemy may attack our village and if we're not here, who will repulse them?
- You've me here! I stay here, - called Galilei.
- One more thing, - said the commander and looked over the army.
- What then?
- Don't we need a doctor?
- We do.
- So we should take Zina somehow.

The same evening Galilei was sent to Kitokhi to bring the doctor. Galilei cheated the doctor that lad Gogi was ill and was dying. There they introduced her their plan. First she refused to take part, but then she was menaced: if you don't, then we will have to kill you.

- Yes, we will cut off your head, yea! - added Galilei and gained Zina's consent.

The same day it was decided, that the secret service unit should cause the avalanches over the entrance of Gudamakari gorge not to let anyone **in** until the end of the war.

- I can't walk, you should give me a horse sledge, - said Zina.
- She can not really walk, -agreed Tatia.
- OK, you'll sit in the same sledge with the food, - allowed the commander.

That night none could sleep. The campaign plan was drawn and was decided to attack the village Dideba, from where they should have brought a woman, as the least one.

- Yes, it's better, first others should swear and then we can directly celebrate the wedding, Garakhtina liked the commander's plan.

They gathered food, armed themselves the way they could. The best guns were given to the secret service men. They sew the white clothes to remain unnoticed in snow.

They slept for two hours, only by the daybreak and in the morning they started ringing the bells.

The army woke up and gathered themselves over the icon, in a small meadow. Everybody was ready for fight.

– Stand in line according to heights! - ordered the commander and the woman lined themselves up one after another. Some of them were with guns and some - with swords.

Sebai rang the bells. The arch-priest brought the community icon out and called from the hill:

- May the traitor be damned by this icon!
- Amen! - buzzed the women.
- Swear that you will restore the old rules!
- We swear!
- May icon bless you!
- Amen!

Then the commander gave order to move forward and the army moved.

Again from the author

I knew it all from others and maybe a lot more is missing here. I will try to introduce the manuscripts titled as *The Campaign in Gudamakari* without undoing the sequence of the famous events. The papers consist of five notebooks.

1. *The notebook of historian-geographer*, the cover of which is marked with bold letters - *The Chronickler*.
2. *Philosopher's notebook*, with the bald letters on it: *Gudamakarian's philosophy*.
3. *Writer's notebook*, on which it is written *The sorrows of the human beings*. I liked this headline and borrowed the name of the novel from it.
4. *The notebook of the gatherer of sorrows*, it is written *The sorrows of Gudamakari* on it.
5. *The notebook of the secret service unit*. There is written *Secret assignments* on it.

These five notebooks tell everything about the campaign and I think it is not necessary to bring everything here. I will try to select the most interesting stories.

I have nearly forgotten; together with these notebooks there are the letters sent by the warriors to the village and some wise notes written down by the commander on the way.

The promise was broken!

(From the chronicler's notebook)

The promise was broken!

The news spread over Gudamakari like a wind and Chokha inhabitants had to take out the community icon. The whole gorge has to be invaded and everyone has to swear one more time, that they will comply with the requests again.

The army is head by the experienced member of Chokha, the participant of the numerous wars, the man who has been under water for twelve years – the famous commander in chief – lad Gogi.

On the first of February of this year the army of Chokhelis moved to the east. Arch-priest leads the forces with the community icon, he is followed by the commander in chief, then the ringer of the bells and then we are coming back: historian – philosophers and warriors.

### The battle plan

(From the secret service notebook)

The chiefs, looking at the map of Gudamakari gorge, decided to conquer the following villages:

1. Chobolauri ,
2. Lida,
3. Khoza,
4. Tcutskunauri,
5. Fakhviji,
6. Sachalis Chala,
7. Qichokhi,
8. Lutchubi,
9. Dikhcho,
10. Kotoroani,
11. Nislaurni,
12. Lagaziani,
13. Torelaani,
14. Bakhani,
15. Tsinamkhari,
16. Maqarta,
17. Kitokhi.

The village Dideba comes after Kitochi. The chiefs decided not to go into this village after

Kitochi. We will keep it for the last shot. When all the villages swear on icon, they will have no escape. We will silently pass by this village and then conquer the other villages according to the following sequence:

18. Gamsi,
19. Cchalivelni,
20. Atnokhi,
21. Boseli,
22. Dumatckho,
23. Saqore,
24. Qaqeeni,
25. Busarchili,
26. Salago.

Then we will attack the village Dideba by means of our main forces.

The secret service is sent to block up the entrance with avalanches today. The maritime unit is sent to Aragvi.

### Chobalauri

(From the chronicler's notebook)

The village Chobalauri is in about two kilometres from Chokha. It is surrounded by the rocky ravines. It is difficult to enter the village because of snow, and it is dangerous to cover the narrow path with the sledges, but the commander's order remains unshakable. - The first attack should be like a hit and run and we all should do our best. The first victory should excite the warriors and should lead us to future victories: - these are the commander's words.

The army moves forward. Silence and snow surround them. The village appeared in front. The commander held the warriors and as secret service wasn't back from the beginning of the gorge jet, he sent Elenai and Salome to Chobolaurta. The women came back in fifteen minutes.

– What happened? - asked the commander.

– The women are sitting on the roofing and knitting the socks, - they said.

Our campaign is also well-planned as the men are in sheep farms in winter. Although our army consists of women as well, but our women areee!..

The commander gave the sign of attack and the shouters ran into the village with the terrible scream. The ringer clashed the bells. The gunmen thundered the guns. The village is surrounded. Terrible squeal. I think enemy surrenders us, there is our flag on the highest roofing. This is how attack should look like!

## The first victory

(From the chronicler's notebook again)

The first attack ended up with the first victory. The army has captured the village. Our flag flatters on the highest roofing.

Commander and arch-priest are sitting on a couch. Our warriors forced the enemy to their knees, they swear on the icon one after another, that they will recognize the priority of Chokhians, especially in woman issues. What can be compared to this minute. The process of swearing is finished and now it is philosophers' and the writers' turn. The enemy should be confused by philosophy, so that they never dare to resist easily. First writer, then the philosopher are writing down the stories and the soldiers are writing the letters to be sent home. The enemy is astonished...

## The Questions

(From the philosopher's notebook)

– Name.

– Tsiklauri Solomoni.

– How old are you?

– I am in my eightieth.

– What do you think life is or where does it come from?

– Imaginary, life comes from God, that's the way I know it. The writer writes humans' adventure after the birth. It is written on the forehead.

– What is written?

– Fate. Everyone's fate is written on the forehead. There was a pregnant woman and she gave birth to a boy. That day the tree writers came to the boy. The woman listens to them while writing his fate... one told: may this baby live until he can climb up the tree, then he falls down and dies. Another told – no: may water takes him away. The third one – may he is alive until this ember is burnt all out. There was a fire burning in the fireplace and he meant that one. Boy's mother took the ember put it out and saved.

– Then?

– The boy grew up, got married. His mother told him the story of the ember.

– Then?

– One moonlit night he was coming back home from the sheep farm. He bumped into his wife lying down with their neighbour in the field. He killed them both there, then went home and burnt

the ember. The same evening he was killed by her brothers.

– What would you do if you have such ember, would you ever burn it?

– Sometimes I get so angry on myself, I would have also burnt it.

– What is death?

– It is also from the God. God destined a human to have two sons and one girl. The devil told to the God: who will even mention you if they never die and if they always remain alive. Then, as I know, God invented the death.

– Where does human go after the death?

– A human shifts as I know.

– What sense does the humans' long life have?

– We love to live, nothing else.

– If God tells you live as long as you wish, how long would you live?

– Ninety.

– If God says: no, I give you two hundred?

– I couldn't, I wouldn't stand it.

– Why?

– Because of old age. I'd get very weak.

– Do you think the earth will exist forever?

– Of course, I think so. Then what else would eat it?

– Maybe a war?

– Isn't it a war that you conquer us, then what else is it?

– I mean a huge war.

– War will be on the surface of the earth, not under. That's why it's called the earth, it will absorb either war, or blood.

– If it darts away unexpectedly? Where will it go?

– Evaporate, otherwise where can it go, I don't know any more. Water will take it, where?!

– You say evaporate?

– Yes, evaporate.

– Can the stones and trees hear or not?

– Yes, they understand their own language, but me, what can I say to them. They also speak their language. As for the rock, I do not know.

– What do you think where is God?

– Who will show it to me.

- What is dream?
- Always wanders and roams around, sometimes here and sometimes there.
- Do you think people live on the stars or not?
- People are not only upstairs, but also downstairs, we are in the middle, that's why we girdle our waists.
- Then, those who live upstairs girdle the head?
- Sure, on head.
- And those who live downstairs?
- They might have the legs bound, and I do not know how they walk.
- Why do people tie the feet of a dead?
- I do not know, then they untie them later. They do not also put a hat on, they put it on the right. One has forgotten to untie the legs and mother dreams him every evening – her son goes to her and asks: mummy, I have my legs bound. The woman dug him out and saw that his legs were really bound.
- They don't also put a hat on?
- No! not.
- You love life, yes.
- I love life most of all. The older I get the more I fell in love with it.

#### Slight digression

(From the secret service notebook)

Before presenting the story from the writer's notebook written down in Chobolauri, I would like to bring a small notice from *the Secret Service Notebook*:

'The secret service unit came back peacefully. They have closed the gorge with avalanches. We can act now.'

And one more letter: as soon as the attack was successfully finished, the warriors have sent the letters to Chokha. The secret unit: Kotoraant woman, Shirvashiant woman and Tasia were in charge of post officers.

#### We will win

(From the letters)

Hello dear brothers and sisters!

We greet you all together. Our warriors also send greetings. We inform you, that everything

has started very good. We had the first attack today. Chobolauri is conquered. We hold philosophic and scientific researches. They will comply fully with our requests ever after.

We will definitely win!

The pedestrians 6.II-68 y.

A glorious word

(From the historicist's notebook)

Seba rang the bells whenever the Philosophical – scientific inquiry was over, and the arch-priest addressed the Chobolaurians:

'We are the people of one gorge, one sky covers us and one Aragvi flows through our villages. We should be friends since today. If anyone bothers you from other villages you should tell it to us and we will help you. Do we have anything to divide between us? Nothing. We should hide nothing. We, Chokhians, have decided to build a house with five hundred rooms. We need the construction materials for it. You can help us. There'll be perfect construction materials from those walnut trees. As for woman issues, the women we don't want, you can give to anyone you wish. You gave an oath today and the one who breaks it, will be cursed by the icon!

– Amen! - called Chokhelis

– Amen! - Called Chobolauris.

Then the commander arranged the army and we went on the way to the neighbour village called - Lida.

The priest

(A story from the writer's notebook)

Christianity and idolatry are still mixed in Gudamakari. People still bake wolves of bread, fix brick teeth on it and bring it to the cattle-shed. Tie wolf's mouth and pray like this:

'May the wolf's mouth, who wishes to eat my cow, be tied like this'.

Then they untie the mouth and break its teeth.

'May your teeth be broken like this'.

'May your knees be broken like this!' - They break off its knees, cut it all into pieces and feed the cattle.

Christianity was entering there in a very unusual way. They did not want to accept the new belief. They started believing in it gradually.

Several Gudamakarians were called by Katholokos in Mtsketa and they were rebuked because

of burying dead without a priest.

– We've no priest – they justified themselves.

Then they were given a priest and were strongly warned not to bury anyone without the priest any more.

The murder of fourteen Kists in Atkhoni, Akai Tamniauri was dying. They brought the priest. Akai died.

They could hardly dig out the frozen earth of Autumn. One was left to guard the grave, not to let evil souls inside and others brought him with panting. The priest prayed before lifting him down and as soon as they received his confirmation they put the coffin carefully into the earth. Then they suddenly seized the priest and buried him in. He was shouting, trying to come up. But some frozen pieces of earth fell on his head so hard that he senseless lay over the coffin. They were filling the grave diligently and were mumbling:

– You are earth and turn into earth!

– You are earth and turn into earth!

They had another sorrow by the end of the week. The murder of five Kists, Gagila died in Damatsko. The Gudamakarians went to Mtsketa and informed the Katholikos:

– A man died and we can't bury him without a priest...

– We've given one to you one didn't we? - Katholikos amazed.

– We buried that priest with another dead. Haven't you warned us not to bury a man without a priest? This time there is another dead.

I have no idea what Katholokos told them, but Christianity still gained foothold in Gudamakari. I guess, he could say nothing but: unintentional sin is not a sin.

## Lida

(From the Historicist's notebook)

Lida is in one kilometer from Chobolauri. This village is also surrounded by the cliffs on both sides. It is easier to walk there and we move forward as fast as possible. The previous victory showed us that quickness is the half way to the victory. The secret service has just arrived and they brought the news that the village is almost totally empty, only childless wife and husband is left there... Woman is ill and bedridden. The commander is still careful: maybe the enemy is making an ambush anywhere, in any house, it is necessary to lay the siege.

We surrounded the village and started searching around. The village was really empty, they had all moved to city for winter. We attacked wife and husband and they surrendered us very soon.

Our flag is flying over the village Lida. The arch-priest made wife and husband swear on icon and according to the commander's order the doctor is giving some medicine to the ill woman. Seba rings the bells and lets Gudamakari know that Lida will also fulfil Chokhelis' wishes, mostly in women issues. The philosophical inquiries commenced on.

### The Soul and the death

(From the philosopher's notebook)

- Name,
- Batila Lidiauri.
- How old are you?
- Eighty.
- Do you have children?
- No I am childless.
- Where does the soul go to after the death?
- The soul? Soul never dies. It leaves the body and disappears like a dream. It stays as a dream.

The blessed ones will be always in clear and the evils, of course, will get some space.

- What do you think where will you go?
- Me.?. The childless people lie on stomach in another world, but please don't write it down.
- Why shouldn't I?
- Anyone childless will read it and fell into sorrow.
- What will you say about the death. Do the stones and the trees have a sense of death?
- When God invented the death first decided to try it on stone. The stones suffered from this sense so much, they could not forget the friend's death and they used to break into pieces. God thought they are weak for this sense, took it away from the stones and gave it to the trees, they suffered a lot as well, the trees started breaking its branches, they could not also forget. The God took it away from the trees and gave it to water. Water could not also stand it and started draining. Then God gave this sense to the human beings. The human cried, cried... Then they buried the dead and came out of mourning. So, a human carries this sense since that day.

### A tiny secret

(From the secret service notebook)

The secret service unit, while being in Lida, brought the news of the maritime unit. Shijaant woman (*common addressing of someone coming from Shijashvili family*) and Kaltamze inform us that Aragvi is frozen on several place and it is necessary to break the ice, not to let anyone keep the connection with the villages on the other side of the river. The measures are taken.

#### Sorrow #1680

(From the notebook of the sorrows gatherer)

– Name.

– Batila Lidiauri.

– What are you worried about?

– That I die without a child.

– Nothing else?

– What else do you need, there is nothing more painful then to be alive and see nobody to proceed your existence. What is our guilt to blessed God that we got no child in this world and we must lie down on stomach in another one.

– Yes, it's definitely a big sorrow. I'll ask God the question of childless people if not the first, but as a second one for sure.

#### Salome Lidiauri

(A story from the writer's notebook)

There is a ruined house above the village Lida. Ten years ago Salome's parents engaged her on Gamsiveli Batira.

The straw-coloured hair was reaching Salome's ankles. Man could not differ her from the cornfield whenever she was walking through it; rippled the field and the maiden as well.

Salome and Batira loved each other in a strange way. They were not seeing each other for months, they were afraid of the proximity.

That spring Batira's elder brother was building a roofing for Salome's parents. Batira's brother is called Sagira. He is still alive. He is a quiet man, reserved. He will hardly say a word in a whole day.

Batira was not engaged on Salome then, woman and man were meeting each other over the

spring under the moonlight. Salome was going there, filling the pitcher, only once taking a glance at Batira and coming back home.

One night Sagira met the woman coming back home and seized her in arm.

- I know where you have been, - told Sagira.
- Then what do you want!
- I want that... I love you.
- I've no feeling to you...
- You'll have, whenever you are mine, you'll love me.
- It'll never happen.
- It will. Otherwise I'll let none of you happy.

Salome could not sleep that night at all. She met Batira the second night as well, but she told him nothing about Sagira.

Sagira finished working and went home.

One Autumn day Batira sent the match – makers and the parents engaged Salome on Bagtira. Salome was more than a happy.

Irritated Sagira told to Batira:

- Do not marry Salome.
- Why?
- She was coming to me and was sleeping with me when I was working in their house.

Since that day Batira went neither to the spring to see Salome, nor spoke about marriage with her parents.

Salome did not know what to do. Then her friend asked Batira the reason for it. Batira, of course answered that he would not marry his brother's bitch.

Salome first went up to the icon to swear that she was innocent. Then the parents always watched her, not to let her do anything to herself.

The members of the village from another side of the river saw that Salome went down the river, took off her shawl, fixed it on her eyes and went to the bridge. The viewers were so scared that they could not even manage to help her. Batira has also seen it. First he did not move.

Eyes-tied Salome went along the bridge, then came back. Then turned to go forward again and suddenly her friends appeared with squeal. Without reaching the middle of the bridge she flew down into the river. People run along Aragvi and none dares to help her. Its waves were like giants.

Only Batira did it.

You know Aragvi is black. They say, it was floating Batira's Salome through the waves and her hair was rippling over the river like a ripe cornfield in the wind...

There is a ruined house above the village Lida.

### Khoza

(From the chronicler's notebook)

Although not so many people lived in Lida, the Arch-priest still respected the attendees and gave a farewell utterance:

- We, contemporary Chokhelis, keep and will go on keeping the traditions left by our forefathers. We have always been friends. You have never refused us to marry your daughters in Chokha. We used to help one another and we should go on supporting one another with the construction materials and with everything. For example, this walnut trees are fine material for construction, and of course we won't refuse such assistance, especially when we build such an enormous house. The model is ready and only the materials are left to be procured.

You swore on icon today and pledged obedience. May the breaker of the oath be cursed by the icon!

– Amen! - called Chokhelis.

– Amen! - said Batila.

– You also, madame, - they insisted from the ill woman.

– Amen! - groaned she.

Seba rang the bells. We took the flags away from the roofing and set off to Khoza. It is the same distance up to Khoza, like from Chobolauri to Lida.

There is wood behind the village and meadow in front.

The commander sent the reconnaissance and they brought the news, that one old woman is fighting to the bitter end and she is about to die in Khoza.

– What does *about to* mean! - the commander got angry, - attack, as fast as possible, not that she ruins our plans.

We did not lay the siege around the village, in about five minutes our flag was above the highest roofing in Khoza.

– Who is dying? - shouted the commander.

– Here she is, - they pointed.

– So, doctor, nothing should happen with her until we are here, otherwise... Gogi warned Zina.

– Kneel! - ordered arch-priest and the warriors prepared the guns. They knelt and swore the obedience. The dying woman was the first, it was more urgent. The doctor regained her consciousness and they started her psychological inquiry.

## The body and soul

(From the philosopher's notebook)

– Name.

– Tamar Khozeli.

– How long do you want to live?

– As long as I would. One should live until one can carry oneself. Man shouldn't bother others with own life.

– Will dead people come back or not?

– Sure not. It is made-up, it's also invented that souls are like dreams. All is a falsehood. A man dies and turns into the earth. Soul stops existence.

– Does soul go into the earth as well?

– No, the soul leaves a human and goes up in the air, like the air comes out of the puffed out wineskin.

– Can't it exist in the air?

– How? It'll go up and turn into air.

– Do you think God exists?

– I ain't know. I can tell neither this, nor that.

– What incites the human beings to suicide?

– When man can't stand any more, when something bothers them from inside, the doggy life plays its role as well, some are also seduced by devil. Then the soul stays devil, his soul turns into devil.

– Where are the devils?

– In the caves. I've seen them, they light the fire at night. Now people are like devils.

– Do you wish for anything?

– No.

– Why?

– Let me breath out...

She breathed out and died.

## The seventh Generation

(A story from the writer's notebook)

The woman who died recently was the last member of Aspaniani (*the surname*). I've no idea why Georgians have the curse die out after the seventh generation, but it was always like this. The surname was very seldom cursed and it always sounded like this: - *May your name dies out after the seventh generation*. The seven is not just occasionally brought number here.

The forefather of this woman, before the seventh generation, was an adopted brother of Kviria Kharkhelauri, a well known man in Gudamakari with having lots of enemies. Kviria trusted nobody, only Aspaniani Butulai. He trusted only Butula to shave his beard by a sword. Kviria was never leaving the weapon.

Once his enemies bribed Butula and when he was shaving his face, he cut off his head by sword. The half shaved Kvirias head was rolling down the earth and was calling out.

– May your name ends up with woman at seventh generation and thus dies out.

The word told by the arch-priest

(From the chronicler's notebook)

– We're very sorry to see you in such misfortune. We feel deep sorrow, especially now, when you swore the obedience. Dead-out – your surname will be mentioned like this. And we'll proceed our surnames and we have to keep close to each other and support one another. Whenever you are in trouble tell it to us. Make a walnut coffin for her. Walnut trees are very good as a construction material. May the breaker of the oath be cursed by the community icon.

– Amen! - shouted Chokhelis.

– Amen! - said the inhabitants of Khoza.

– Dip the flags! - ordered the arch-priest and the ringer rang the bells.

The commander gave a sign, we left the village voiceless. Thus we cast a respect on them. They should know that we are the tribes with high cultural characteristics and consciousness.

A little secret

(From the notebook of secret unit)

Today the secret service men brought the news. The maritime unit has seen a puddled river somewhere. The pool is full of salmons. Today the order is sent to close the puddle by snow and provide the warriors by those salmons time to time.

## Tsutskunauris

We passed by the gorge and the commander held the army. It is midday already. The things are going well. Elena laid the table. We set the fire and roasted the salmon brought by the secret service. It is one kilometre up to the village Tsuskunauri. We even see the tops of their hay stacks. The smoke is coming up from the chimneys here and there. The reconnaissance unit was send out.

They came back and announced that the village is full of women. The commander thanked them and ordered the writer to write the order on rewarding the secret service.

We cleaned the table and moved forward for fight. We approached the village quickly and laid the siege very fast. First shouters rushed in with terrible squeal, then pedestrians, the gun holders shot the guns. Philosopher- historian - writers also followed the commander. We walked through the whole village but there was nobody over there.

The commander called up to the secret service men:

- You told that the village is full of women?
- We swear the community icon!
- Then where're they now, if there were here?!
- They really were...
- Has anybody seen you?
- I don't think so.
- A bad job. Delete the order on their reward! - the commander ordered the writer.
- Yes Sir! - told the writer and tore the order.
- Seems like their secret service works very good, - the commander shook his head.
- Should we hand the flag? - Gogi was asked.
- No. Not yet, not to survive disgrace. We do not know yet what they are doing with us.

Strengthen the siege.

- It's better for you show out, otherwise we'll burn your village for hiding from us! - the shouters called out everywhere.
- We count up to five, - called the commander and took the hay by the stick, made fire, stood over the hay stack and started counting:
- One... two... three... four...
- What are you doing, do not perish us!

Called a woman and came out of the hay stack. About twenty women followed her from there.

- Do you see?! That's the strategy! - the commander amazed and looked into the hay stack.
- Hands up! - called the gun holders and cocked the guns.

The women put the hands up.

– Kneel!

They knelt.

– Swear on icon that since today you will neither hide, nor refuse marrying your daughters in Chokha! - ordered the arch-priest and made them swear on the icon.

A flag was waving on the highest roofing.

The philosophical inquiries commenced on.

A fate writer

(From the philosopher's notebook)

– Name.

– Tsutskunauri Eliso Mikha's daughter.

– How old are you?

– I am in my sixtieth.

– What is life for you?

– Man, I know nothing, live me alone!

– Why do we exist?

– God has written why and how. God gave us life and god will take it away as well.

– What's the sense of such giving and taking?

– God is in everyone.

– The best day in your life.

– I can't, I can't recall.

– Have you ever got so scared, that still you remember it today?

– I was coming from Busarchali at night and something followed me with mauling. Dzalua was also with me, something was mauling like a cat. I'll never forget it in my life.

– What was it?

– A devil.

– Why didn't it show up to you?

– I don't know, maybe it would, but Dzalua warned me not to look back, it was not funny.

– Has anybody seen it?

– You can see it if you look back.

– Are you afraid of death?

– Why should I be afraid?!

– Why not?

- As death is our duty, and one should meet one's duties.
- When you meet the duty where will you go?
- In black world, where else should I go, I'll fill my own grave.

A father in law's justice  
( A story from the writer's notebook)

Martai Tsutskunauri was married in Kitokhi. She got married in Summer and in Autumn her husband went to the farm. Only handicapped, woman, old men and children are left in the village.

It is winter. Snowing. The father-in-law is looking at snow through the window. It was his ninetieth snowy year. Their cow bore the first calf one week ago.

- Before the kids were killed, - said the old man.
- Be quiet, not that kids hear it, - warned the daughter in law, hinting at the neighbour's kids.

They were looking at the old man attentively.

- Then what, we don't kill kids any more.
- Who was killing, granny?
- Their owners.
- Why were they killing?
- The first kid should have been sacrificed to the icon.
- Now?
- Now, not any more, only the first calves instead of the kids.
- When should we kill? - asked the daughter in law.
- Whenever it reaches twelve days, we are not allowed to do it before.
- It's tomorrow.
- Go to Ninia and ask him to help you with cutting off its head, the snow is too high, I can't go up to there.

Marta went to Ninia. He promised: - take a calf to the icon and I'll also come there. The icon is over the village on the top of the mountain.

The next day broke. It's snowing. Everything is white. Marta can hardly carry the calf upstairs. Her feet are slipping sometimes and then both fell down. Seems the calf could not walk any more, it knelt with front legs and licked a woman's foot. She put it on her back and brought it up to the

mountain.

There is a small house for praying on the top.

Marta put the calf down and thrilled from the thought: 'Good that I bring only a calf here and not a child'.

It is snowing again.

Snowing

The calf shrank pitifully.

Time passed, Ninia did not show up.

Seems that calf got hungry. Started mooing.

She knew that the calf brought to the icon should not be taken back and she was waiting.

It was getting dark.

A wolf howled from another mountain. First one, then another. A woman knew that she should not take a calf back and Ninia was not also there.

It got darker. Hauling grew more frequent.

Woman lit a candle up, prayed, singed calf's forehead and fixed the candles at the church wall.

She had no knife. She chose a sharp rock, cleaned it.

Laid the calf down and cut off the calf's throat.

The calf started mooing.

The blood was warmly streaming down the white snow.

She left the head there, put the rest on her back and ran down.

The hauling of the wolves were following her and drilling her back.

– Where have you been so long? - asked the father in low with doubt.

– He did not come...

– Who cut of the head then?

– Me.

– You light a candle as well?

– Yes.

– How did you cut off the head?

– By the rock.

– Go!

– Where?

– I don't want to see you in my house any more.

The wolves started hauling louder.

– It is a rule that a calf shouldn't be brought back from there...

- Killing the children was also a rule. Go, first bring the head of the calf, not to offend the icon by the cut-off head, then go home.
- I go directly home.
- First bring the head!
- There are the wolves.
- Do not worry wolves wont harm you.
- I am afraid.
- I assure you.

Marta went to the icon. It was quite dark. She could hardly find it. The wolves were not hauling any more. The candles were all burnt out. She started looking for the head with her hands. Only several bones were left. She froze to the spot. Seems like her blood stopped flowing and she turned into ice. Then something heavy and warm fell on her back and somehow a picture of ding calf played in front of her eyes. Then she could only feel that some kind of creatures started *contending* for her body against one another...

Marta was from Tsutskunauri... and the bodies normally *contend* for existence.

#### The arch-priest's word

(From the chronicler's notebook)

The sun was about to sink. We moved forward to the direction of Kotoraanti. Each warrior stands fast up to now. Good news are coming from the maritime unit as well. We aren't afraid of anything from the air, our commander has fought in the air and he knew everything by heart about it. There are two verses up to Kotoraanti. We are in a hurry, but what is happening. The arch-priest asked the commander to hold the army.

- What happened?
- I forgot my word, - he said, - turn the army back!
- We are late, we should take Kotoraanti before the dusk.
- It isn't allowed to, I cut my work into short and come back soon, - persisted the arch-priest.

Gogi sent the reconnaissance unit to Kotoraanti and rotated the army.

The women still hid away from them.

- Should I drive them out? - asked the commander to arch-priest.
- No, don't bother yourself, they can also hear over there.
- Do you hear us? - called in Gogi to the women.

– Yes, We do! - they shouted from inside.

– So, be quiet!

The arch-priest started:

– 'Women! Tsutskunaurians! Don't think that we have invaded the village. We want only friendship with you. We must unify. What could be better than unified whole Gudamakari together. We've a model already. You'd cut all your nut trees immediately, having known what kind of kitchen we'll have. We need the construction materials. That house will also be yours, not only ours. Aren't we friends? So you must obey us. You must give us women and walnut. Otherwise we can't show the resistance to the enemies. Will you obey?

– We will! We will! - the women shouted out.

– Don't determine anything without us.

– No! no!

– So friends, see you soon! May the breaker of the word be cursed by the icon.

– Amen! - shouted the army.

– Amen! - called the women from the heart of the hay stack.

We moved to Kotoraanti again. The secret service met us on the way and told the commander that there are five women and one old man in Kotoraanti.

– Do they've hidden army anywhere?

– No, we examined everything.

– Write down the order on their reward, - lad Gogi turned to the writer.

– Yes Sir! - the writer said.

– We moved forward very fast. We should have captured Kotoraanti before the sunset and subordinate them totally. In subordination I mean philosophical inquiries as well. If we manage what we plan, then I can insist that our commander is extremely gifted. The world knows no other commander capturing five countries in a day. It's true we conquered the villages, but if we compare the amount of our army to theirs and the amounts of the commanders, we must consider that we conquered a country as well. And how, bloodless and everybody promises slavery subordination to us. Bringing out the community icon and the inquiries appeared to be a clever idea! We scare them by the icon and confuse - by the inquiries.

Five countries in one day... But the fifth we have not captured yet and, here, were are. Warriors lay the siege, shouters rushed into the village to bring in the mess. The flag holder runs up to the highest roofing. Quickly! quickly, the sun is rolling down and then we can't see the glimpse of our flags in the sunshine. The victory after the sunset has no worth.

The gun keepers shot the guns. The pedestrians ran into the village. Everything is arranged. The

defeated are brought out of the houses and they kneel in front of the community icon. They promise the obedience in turn.

The sun will soon go down.

The world really remembers no other commander like him. It's time, already. They start the philosophical inquiries.

### Love and life

(From the philosopher's notebook)

- Name.
- Vasil Kotorashvili.
- How old are you?
- I am in my seventy sixth.
- What is stronger love or life?
- Life. First life is beautiful and then love to the alive human.
- What is life?
- Life is, that we open our eyes and see the sun, moon.
- Are you afraid of getting old?
- I ain't afraid, but my knees do. I feel like I was born only yesterday.
- Are you afraid of death?
- No, I amn't.
- Why?
- I don't know. Maybe God gave me such heart that I ain't afraid. The hope, that one will not die, still exists, even though one knows, that death is inevitable.
- Which of these are you afraid the most.
- I'm afraid of nothing. I don't know when I die, so why should I be afraid of.
- Which of them do you like more: earth or air?
- Without air a man can't live, only the earth would not help. When there is no earth then air would not also help a human.
- That's right, then we would all die. Do you think the earth will exist forever?
- Where else will it go, will remain and remain forever...
- What if a big war takes place?
- It'll remain anyway. When the sea fell out, they said, it touched the sky three times, but the earth still exists today.

- Is the God in a human or outside?
- How should I know, there must be something else, otherwise who created the universe. This sun, moon and here, these people. But maybe we are the gods?
- What? How could you say the thing like this?!
- Where does soul go after leaving the body?
- Nowhere, the dead one is lost.
- Then living in this world has no sense? Why did God arranged it like this?
- We pray, that's why.
- Only because of this?
- Then for what else?
- What is God getting from it?
- Nothing. God must help us, it doesn't need our help.
- What do we need the help for, if we don't exist after life.
- Don't we need to feel good while we're alive?
- What do we care this welfare for, if we do not exist later.
- I ain't know, we can't live forever, yes?
- Then what's the difference between being here for a year or for a hundred.
- You found a common between a hundred and one...
- If you live a hundred year and then die out, what sense does it have?
- I wish soul really exists. No! No! I think there should be something up there. Dreams exist. I am here and there... isn't it soul then what else is it?!
- Should evil exist or not?
- Then how would we appreciate the kindness?
- What's the best thing in humans' life.
- When you're young and you're in love with somebody. Then, when you live with her happily up to the end of your life, that's the best.
- Would you kill yourself in case of a big trouble.
- No! I'd never kill myself. For sure?!

A fisher

(From the secret service notebook)

We decided to overnight in Kotoraanti. Nobody knows anything about it yet. We have sent out the reconnaissance to the maritime unit to let them know our location. They brought a tied man. The

maritime unit caught him on the side of Aragvi.

Our commander took us aside and warned us before starting the interrogation: If the man puts anything in his mouth while inquiry, hit him, not that he swallows it. He may be a spy, they have small ampoules, they swallow it and then we're lost, they die and we'll get no information.

The commander went into the food store house and ordered:

- Bring him in!
- The secret service men brought him in.
- Untie his hands! - Who are you! What are you? Where are you from?
- I'm from Pasanauri, but I am Melikishvili, I am a fisher.
- Where could you get into the gorge from?
- From the entrance...
- Wasn't it closed by the avalanches? Wasn't it difficult for you?
- Not so.
- Secret service unit! A bad job. Is it your closed entrance? Writer! Delete the order on their reward!
- Yes Sir! - said the writer.
- Then how can you persuade us that you're a fisher? Do you have documents?
- I do.
- Show them to us.
- The fisher opened a bosom pocket and put something like ampoule in mouth.
- Hit him! -shouted the commander, but before finishing this order the slave was on the ground, with broken head.
- Take the ampoule out of the mouth!

The secret service men rushed at him and hardly took a tiny pin from his teeth. The commander paled. When the slave came to his consciousness he asked:

- Why did you put the pin into the mouth?
- Where should I've taken it then?
- What does *where* mean? What did you need it for, I say!
- To tie the pocket, not to loose the documents.
- Something must be hiding behind it, - said the commander.

The secret service men took the documents away from him.

- There is nothing to hide, I am a fisher, that's all.
- Who is fishing in winter!
- I always fish in winter, I've puddled Aragvi upstairs and when it freezes there's always fish

over there.

– Aha, you know this secret as well. Now it's for sure that you're a maritime spy. Arrest him.

The secret service men tied him tightly.

– Put him in! - ordered lad Gogi and the spy was placed into the big basket specially brought for this case and he was thoroughly covered.

#### A man turned into icon

(A story from the writer's notebook)

Mamuka hated working. He used to lie under the pear tree and just wishing for some wind.

Wife bothered him by cursing and later she ran away from him. Mamuka did not suffer a lot and gave the kids to wife as well.

There is a church built on the top of the mountain, over Kotorranti. Mamuka has never been there and today he longed for going up to the mountain and looking down from over there. He liked this place a lot.

What if I turn into icon? - he thought to himself and the idea appealed him a lot. He went down, took off the clothes, covered himself with white bedsheets and went upstairs with shouting:

– I'm coming, be blessed! I'm coming! - he was crying on the way. He had a lit candle in his hand and people were following him with fright. When he went up on the top, Mamuka sat down close to the praying house and ordered.

– Everybody kneel! I'm your icon and I order you to kneel! People knelt down.

– Now stand up!

People stood up, they were crossing themselves at the same time.

– Go down and bring up all the beautiful stones on the sides of Arafvi. Faster!

The scared people went down. They chose beautiful stones and took up to the mountain.

– Are they beautiful? Don't I deserve more?! - he got angry and rolled the stones down.

– Now go down and bring the proper stones otherwise I'll annihilate you all.

People went down again.

Mamuka was sitting on the top of the mountain and was amusing himself by rolling the stones down for a month. He would roll down the stone he did not like as if the icon was not accepting it.

It was Autumn. It was too hot. All the woods of Gudamakari went yellow. It was not raining and Mamuka did not have a lack of food and drink.

He accepted no stone from Kotoranti Tsitsa. He brought up twelve stones, and all were rolled down. For the thirteenth one he brought a crystal and hoped that he would accept at least this one.

– Not good, - said Mamuka and rolled it on the side. He sat down and looked how it was

rolling down. People were coming up in line, with the stones on their backs.

Tsitsa could not help jumping at Mamuka and pushing him down the mountain. While rolling down human curves himself like a ball. Mamuka was rolling down exactly like this. The people thought it was a stone again. They were used to it so they did not even pay attention and went along...

### Sorrow

(From the notebook of the sorrows gatherer)

– Surname?

– Kotorashvili.

– Name?

– Nino.

– What are you worried about?

– Many things.

– Namely?

– We burnt a child the day before yesterday.

– Whose?

– Our neighbour's, her name was Marine.

– Can't you relate it to me in details?

– Sure.

– Do you see here the burnt walls?

– I do.

– It's owner - Gigua was taken to prison that days.

– What for?

– May the village chairman be damned, he liked Gigua's wife.

– Did woman also like him?

– Maybe she did.

– They had a small kid. Whenever the child was asleep, the chairman was visiting her. One day the chairman went drunk to them and the kid was also there.

– Then?

– He started violently taking off her clothes, 'faster'- he was saying.

The woman, ashamed of her kid, resisted him, what kind of kid, she was already a girl. When she saw her mother in such situation she took a poke. Little girl could not hit him of course. The chairman got angry because of it and threw her out. He closed the door, the woman was trying to go

out to her child. The evil man did his job and left.

– Then?

The woman took the kid to the wood of Sakorni and took two ropes with her, one for herself and one for the child. She tied first one and then another. Then she sat down, hugged her and cried bitterly. Child got scared and ran away from her. She told: first she was following me but then let me go. Child went back home again.

I don't know who saw the smoke from their house in the morning, I think Katusha, she shouted and when nobody answered she rushed in. She entered and what does she see, the house is burning. The child was making a fire and I have no idea how, it spread over the house.

– Then?

– We ran fast, took the child out. Some was taking the flock out. The swollen animals from fire were cracking like the guns.

– And the Child?

– The clothes of the child were covered with fire. That damn woman had a bucket full of kerosene over there, we thought it was water and... we burnt the child.

– Mother?

– We could only look after her the next day... you will ask again what worries me, what else should trouble a humans' heart...

There Gamikhardai has written:

When I go to the God, I'll relate this sorrow if not as the second, the third one defiantly.

#### A letter to Galilei - from the Commander

(From the letters)

'Hallo Galilei!

First of all I send greetings to you with the handshake. We fought in five villages and now we are in Kotorranti. Our campaign plan is justified. We do all our best here and there you know your job. Don't leave the village. Look after the elder people and hens. We'll call you in case of need. Do not leave the village. Let us know, if enemy invades the village.

The commander in chief of the village Chokha

Leg Gogi'

Galilei's answer

(From the Chronicler's notebook)

'Do not worry!

I have cut the head of Achilles, Jalaeddin, Hitler, and how can others surpass me...

If enemy invades us, I won't trouble you, I'll cut off their heads alone.

You only try not to bring Shete without Ketino.

Galilei'

A night in the store house

(From the chronicler's notebook)

The night fell. It was really a glorious day in the history of Gudamakari. Our commander showed his genius today as well. It's the high time to let the world know, that there exists a gorge called Gudamakari on the surface of the earth. Whoever wishes to get to know Gudamakari, can pay a visit of course, but before I'll say, that we mostly rear sheep and cows, grow potatoes. Walnut is a very well-grown plant here. Although it's night, our arch-priest decided to look around the village and he looks very pleased to see the great number of walnut trees. After coming back he introduces his house plan to the people living in Kotoraanti. Walnut wood is the best construction material - he says.

The high mountains surround Gudamakari, own sky covers it and own sun and moon shines there. The stars we have as many as you would like. Here flows the most black river in the world. We have many other things, but listing them all will take us far away and lead astray from the story of the campaign. So:

The warriors sat at the laid table, of course we're highly cultural people and we invited the conquered villagers as well. The prisoner was served in his place. The guards are around the village.

The commander called up Shete and asked:

- What's the name of your fiancée?
- Ketino - he could hardly blurt it out.
- You don't mind to marry, yes?
- No, I want to have a wife.
- Your wish is the most important here, if our campaign goes on like this, I'll bring Ketino to you in three days.

Shete got happy.

Then we discussed lots of things with Kotoraans and as the army was tired and as we had to go on the way tomorrow early in the morning, we all, instead of guards, went to bed.

Nisliauris (*People living in the village Nisliauri*)

(Again from the chronicler's notebook)

The day broke, the bell-ringer rang the bells. Elena laid the table and we had a snack. The commander organized the army. Arch-priest bade a farewell word to Kotorants. We untied the flag and went to the direction of the village Nisliauri. It is in two kilometres. The secret service went forward. They came back very soon and brought the strange news:

– Nisliauris are all dressed in black, - most of them are women, - come along the mountain and bring something very carefully, as if a coffin, but there is no dead inside. What kind of man should get inside, the coffin is the size of a matchbox.

– You say carefully? - the commander cast doubt in it.

– Yes, it looks like they bring a dead.

– Everything is clear. If I'm not mistaken they bring a bomb and they're afraid of its explosion: and they're dressed in black to tie our eyes, it's a manoeuvre, but they can't mislead us. Lay the siege immediately and whenever we've them they won't explode the bomb, good job, they'd put that bomb on our way. Write down the order on their rewarding, - he addressed the writer and then we moved forward as fast as possible. Nisliauris could not even recognise how they were besieged.

– Hold on! - ordered the commander.

– They stopped.

– Put your bomb down carefully!

– What kind of bomb, which bomb?!

– Then what's in that box?

– A dead.

– Don't laugh yourselves, what kind of dead can be placed inside!

– A mouse...

– What?!

– A mouse died in our village.

– Then?

– And we bring it.

– Are you crazy?!

– Why? We have such a rule. We bury everything that dies. We're all children of God.

– What kind of rule? - the arch-priest got angry, - Who gave you the right to invent the new

rules without our permission. Swear on the community icon immediately, that the name *Chokheli* will always be on the first place for you and if we come here to ask a woman or nut trees you won't not refuse us.

– We weren't refusing you also before...

– Sure but you must anyway swear. As for the mice, where have you seen the Mouse funeral...

– We have such a rule, we also bury snakes, dogs, birds and flies. Look that mountain is for it, they took off a head of the coffin, there was a ruffled and tail stretched creature.

The arch-priest demanded to swear on the icon, then whispered to the commander:

– It's better to let them go, they can either bury or leave out their own dead. Let's follow them.

Lad Gogi let them go and we followed them. They buried a mouse in the grave dug out for it before. When the funeral was over, we took the people to Nisliauri, hanged a flag on the highest roofing and started philosophical inquiries.

#### Nisliauri Zitandari

(From the philosopher's notebook)

– How old are you?

– I am in my ninety fifth.

– What is death?

– What is death? - Ha, ha, ha, when man dies, that's death.

– Where do we go after the death?

– God covers you, where that mouse went, where else? We go to the earth.

– What's in the earth?

– Eh, How should I know what's there, snakes, worms, frogs, what else.

– What does soul look like?

– Souls shows up to human differently. It goes sometimes there, sometimes here. The way it shows us in dreams.

– In dreams?

– Yes, the way we see the dreams, it also goes here and there, goes...

– Will it always exist?

– It may also have its end, then it will go and be lost forever, everything end up some day.

– Will it transfer into nothing?

– Yes, into nothing. And then that nothing will turn into something and so.

– Don't you think we repeat the life?

- What do you mean with repeating?!
- For example, whenever we do something, we feel, as if we have done it before?
- Sure, when we were burring a mouse, I thought, where else have I seen exactly the same, I have also seen your army, but I do not know when.
- Do you think there is a heaven?
- Don't we call it heaven, where souls gather and they are together, how should I know, I don't know how to explain. The bones are lost in the earth, soul flies to the next world. Humans' soul is not lost, no.
- But you've mentioned before that everything ends up some day and will disappear.
- Yea, that's true, heaven will also have its end. A human dies two times?
- What?
- Dies two times.
- How does it happen?
- First, the body dies, then the soul and a human being is lost forever.
- Does the earth have a soul or not?
- Sure, the earth has a soul!
- Like a human?
- The way the human beings bear the soul.
- Will the earth die?
- No, what can kill it? Souls exists and will exist forever.
- If war breaks out? Not the one like this, when we, Chockelis behave culturally, I mean the huge war... Won't it be the death.
- Yes, if the earth burns out, then it dies.

### The two hunters

(A story from the writer's notebook)

Midnight was just passing by, when the two hunters left the village Nisliaurti and speechless set off upstairs, where wild goats were kept.

Both were young. Both were walking silently. They walked without a word until the daybreak. They sat down only over the unattainable places, took off the bags from their backs, one took out boiled butter from it and another boiled meat. They had a snack, cold water sprang out of the ground. They drank it. One had a full hand of water.

- Too much water makes man tired, - said one.

Another kept silent. They both picked up their sacks and went along the side of the rock.

One was called Gagi, another – Jarji.

They were both in love with one woman, her name was Iamze.

Jarji was thinking of Iamze, Gagi also.

Iamze was in love with Jarji. Gagi knew it.

Jarji knew that, the very moment Gagi was thinking of Iamze. Gagi also knew, what Jarji was thinking about. Jarji was sorry for Gagi in the very depth of his heart but...

One stopped on the top of the rock, another followed up the rock from downstairs and drove the flock to another direction. Gagi shot and killed the mother of a wild goat. It did not run away. It stayed by mother and started licking her eyes.

They flayed the wild goat and went to the cave to overnight there.

That night the wind blew terribly and brought lots of clouds in Gudamakari gorge. It grew dark. The cave was illuminated by the fire light. The baby of the wild goat had appeared over the entrance and ran away. The heart and liver was pleasantly burning on ember and the smell of burning meat was mixing into the fresh air. The hunters were still silent.

A lavender thorny flower was blooming over the cave entrance. The wind was swinging it around.

– Do you see how far it can grow? - said Jarji.

– What? - asked Jarji.

– The thorny flower.

Gagi put a bullet in the gun and smiled. Later he told to Jarji:

– If I kill you now, nobody will find it out, yes?

– What will nobody find out? - smiled Jarji.

– That I killed you, - Gagi smiled again.

– You see this thorny flower, yes?

– I do.

– I'd make this thorny flower tell, that you killed me.

– Gagi smiled and took a bullet out of the gun.

Jarji laid the wood on the fire and strung the meet on the stick. He turned back to Gagi. All of a sudden a gun thundered and Jarji fell down right into the fire.

Gagi put the body first on his back. Then closed his eyes and put his hands on his breast.

The wind was blowing and was swinging the lavender thorny flower all night.

It did not also clear up by the daybreak. White never-melting mountains could be vividly seen.

Gagi put the body on his back and took upstairs. He carried it on his back till midday. When

he reached the never-melting mountains, he hid it in a big ice cleft and covered the body with rocks and then ice.

He wondered through unattainable places for five days. He was overnighing in cave. Then he came home and brought a killed wild goat with him.

– Where is Jarji, - they asked.

– Has not he come yet?! - he wondered.

– No, - they said.

– Jarji came back tree days ago. He took a killed wild goat. I was misled by the flock of wild goats, -he said, threw down the wild goat and went back to look for Jarji. Jarji's brothers went also after him. They walked several times over the places where Jarji was hidden.

They found him nowhere.

Fifteen years passed. In Autumn, on the verge of Winter, a man and a woman were thrashing a straw in Nisliauri.

The man is Gagi and the woman is his wife – Iamze. Gagi is already old enough.

Then wife and husband spread the felt-cloaks in straw and lay down to sleep. Over the verge of the field a lavender thorny flower was blooming and the wind was moving it slightly.

A man smiled.

– Why are you smiling, - asked the wife.

– Nothing, - said Gagi.

Wife did not stop asking, tell me, why did you smile. Gagi was not telling it. Wife did not stop it also in the evening. Gagi thought, she is already my wife, fifteen years are gone since than, what is if I tell it to her.

– Do you see this thorny flower?

– I do, - said a woman.

– I smiled because of it. Jarji told me, If you kill me, I'll make this thorny flower tell, that you killed me. That's why I smiled. How can a thorny flower say anything at all.

The next morning wife was not next to him. Gagi heard a noise from upper threshing floor. He looked up. He saw Jarji's brother.

The same moment a gun thundered and before closing his eyes forever, over the beginning of the field he saw the thorny flower.

The wind was blowing and was waving the thorny flower.

## An incredible attack

(From the historicist's notebook)

After the philosophical enquiries in Nisliauri the arch-priest addressed Nisliauris with friendly speech, the commander arranged the army and we conducted an incredible campaign that day.

The history mayn't remember a case that a commander conquers ten countries in a day, and so cleverly as we did it. Other campaigns are followed by starvation, blood, death, destruction, humiliation of nations... and we, on the contrary, were act bloodless, silently, and philosophically. The arch-priest was addressing everyone with friendly farewell, sometimes hinting on nut trees.

We have conquered ten villages before the February sun rolled down and they all swore on icon, we wrote down numerous sorrows they had, made philosophical enquiries and etc. Our rights were fortified in each village.

We approached Maqarta by the sunset and, although the sun could not glitter our flag over Maqarta, we still rose it. Maqarta surrendered us before the dusk and that night we spent there in great philosophical enquiries.

We moved to Kitokhi at dawn. The commander held us over the entrance of Kitokhi and addressed us:

- We have accomplished an incredible attack, each of you is worthy to be praised. I'll show you underwater cities some day, but before we still have to do a lot. If we conquer Kitokhi Gudamakari is ours. Kitokhi is the intelligent village in comparison with others and more civilized people live there, they have school. I know it from my experience that if we treated unintelligent villages courteously, we must do it otherwise with educated ones, we should be wild to subdue them. Cultural people are afraid of wildness. You have the right to utter wildness and we start our attack!

The shouters ran with shouting. The guns started thundering.

We laid the siege, burnt the hay stacks here and there and exactly in one hour our arch-priest was making the knelt villagers swear on icon.

Then we made philosophical enquiries, to cover our wildness.

The arch-priest decided to have a look at school.

– Shouldn't we know what are the children taught at schools? - said he and asked the commander to come with him.

– Should we take army with us? - asked led Gogi.

– No, not inside the school, let them walk outside that children see them and feel your might, - said the arch-priest.

The arch-priest went into the classroom and asked a teacher:

– Do you instil into children the obedience to Chokhelis?

- Yes, - said the teacher.
- May we measure your and your student's philosophic level?
- Yes you may.
- The enquiry commenced on.
- We saw through the window Gogi's army moving up and down.

The schoolboy Koba  
(From the philosopher's notebook)

- How old are you?
- Eleven.
- What do you like most of all?
- Everything...
- If you were given a chance for transmuting into anything you want for one day, what would you wish to be?
- A cuckoo bird.
- Why exactly the cuckoo?
- Cuckoo is a nice bird, it cheers us coming of Spring and embellishes a day by singing.
- Wouldn't you wish to be a fish?
- No
- Why?
- If I am on the earth that time I would die.
- Would not you be a flower?
- No
- Why?
- Somebody would pick me and I would die.
- A horse?
- No, others would sit on me and make me run endless.
- Would you be Aragvi?
- No. Something would fell in and I would kill... let's finish questioning.
- Ok, let's end it up.

- What would the teacher tell us?
- About what?
- What is life?
- Life is when you achieve your goals.
- That's right, - the arch-priest liked it.
- We need exactly life like this.

### A long attack

(From the historicist's notebook)

I must admit that we impressed the inhabitants of Kitokhi and they swore us eternal obedience. They liked our community icon so much that they were praying on it all the time.

We launched a long attack after Kitokhi. We passed Dideba, it is a military manoeuvre, that is the last village to enter with triumph and then celebrate the wedding party.

The secret service unit does its best. Good news are coming from the maritime unit. The prisoner surrendered to his fate. He has not jet, but he'll surely confess some day; we are so smart it's also possible that, he takes our side. It's better for him to coordinate with us, if he's in his right brains. We conquered Lageni, Saqore, and took the way to Burichala.

Our flag was flapping on the highest roofing of Burichala before the sunset. The procession of swearing and philosophical communication commenced on.

### The adopted brother of Gigia Bubunauri

(From the writer's notebook)

It is snowing. The milk-coloured quietness lies over the Burichala slopes. Only snowflakes rustle silently, silently, silently, like heaven's prayer. Then, the eagle screamed: once, twice, three times. The eagle calms down and again quietness dominates through Burichala slopes.

It is snowing.

Eleven years old Gigia Bubunauri goes up the mountain slope with his father's gun on his back.

Upstairs, on the mountain, there is a praying house *place of mother*. Gigia goes to another direction. Suddenly he stops. Looks around. Goes on walking again. Again stops and decides to turn

back. His heart draws him to *place of mother* somehow. He anyway chooses another direction.

Suddenly his leg slipped and fell down. He shook out the rustling snow quietly while standing up. He turned and went up to the *place of mother*.

Gagi saw an eagle on the top of the mountain and hasted forward. He wanted to see the eagle closer. He bent and crawled upstairs.

The eagle's scream broke the quietness of snow. Then it floundered on the mountain so mightily that made a whirlwind around. It screamed again and calmed down.

Gagi could not dare approaching the eagle first, he was looking at it from far. He was always getting a kind of strange satisfaction from looking at eagles. He has never seen it from so close.

The eagle made a whirlwind of snow once more. Then it rose up in the air and the boy saw that something was bound on its leg.

He threw his gun away and went closer.

The eagle screamed and moved to the direction of the boy fiercely.

Gigia was standing and looking:

The coming snow has half filled the foot-prints made yesterday. There was a chain for trap bound over the prayer house. The eagle was trapped by the claws of the right leg. Gigia was looking at human tracks. Then he was looking at the eagle for a while. There were silver money inside the prayer house. There were bells on the faded antlers of a deer. It was snowing and the voice of snow was joining the quiet ringing of those bells. The smoked walls of the prayer house were making the surrounding more silent and secret. All together was playing a symphony of heaven's prayer: church, snow, faded deer horns and the ring of the bells mingled with snow rustle were breaking the harmony of nature. There was a metal trap on this chain and the trapped eagle in it and after it the strange foot-prints from old snow, that was getting filled by the new one.

Gigia went closer to the eagle. It shouted out and approached a boy. Then stopped all of a sudden, rested his wings and stared at Gigia. Gigia set its leg free. The eagle was bleeding. One clang was connected only by the skin.

Gigia Bubunauri brought the eagle home.

It is snowing again...

Smoked towers stand like exclamation marks in snow. The smoke, puffed out from some of the houses, joins the quietness of snow with slow shiver and fermenting mumble.

The tower of Bubunauri family: fire, burning in the fireplace; smoked roof and the oak trees, looking black into the invading whiteness; The wall is embellished by the armaments: a shield, a sword, an arm shield, chain dress, a helmet, the daggers, a gun and smoked bow, old witness of the life of Bubunauri family, full of enemies.

There are several dry and smoked cut off right hands in the roof. (*It was a wide spread rule of*

*the mountainous region of Georgia to cut off the right hand of the killed enemy and hang it in the roof of own tower.)* Upper, in the right corner, where the fire light could not be reached, were the huge horns of a wild goat.

It is snowing.

A dim light was penetrating from outside.

Twelve years old Gigia Bubunauri and eagle were sitting on the skin of a wild goat, spread in front of the burning fire.

The eagle was looking at the tower walls quietly.

Gigia stood up, took a silver dagger off the wall, a silver bowl from the chest and brought Vodka with the silver jug. Then poured vodka in the silver bowl and cut off the side of the silver jug by the sword. He put the cut pieces in the bowl full of vodka, mixed and put it in front.

The eagle was looking at Gigia quietly, who rose his head slowly, like an old men, looked at the eagle and said:

–I am Gigia Bubunauri, Badzia's son, the last inheritor of Bubunauri family. I have a mother and a sister married in another village, she has three kids: Nino, Shorena and Gagi. They are all kids, Gagi can not even walk.

I have an enemy. As I already mentioned, I am the only one left to proceed the name of Bubunauri. Most of my ancestors were killed by the enemies. My father was also killed by Khevsurians living behind the mountain. It was winter. They could not carry the whole body in high snow and he was brought in pieces by the sacks, I was only five then. Tavgauris are my enemies. I always avoid going up to that mountain. Don't think I'm afraid of them. I can kill them all even now, but I'm ashamed of my ancestors. I don't want to cease their name without a sense. I must marry first, get a child, only then I'll revenge and if they kill me, it is ok, at least I'll leave someone to proceed my name. To tell the truth I don't want to kill a man. - *Hei kid!* -The voices of ancestors are familiar to me, but first I should get a child and then...

Gagia got silent for a while and said in lower voice: - I am engaged with Mzia Tamniauri in cradle.... She lives there on the other side of the village. She is only eight years old. She has a sun-coloured hair. I saw her on Khatoba (*village holiday*) several times from far. My father was alive when I was engaged.

And yes, I always avoid going up to that mountain, I don't want to look that side. Don't think I hate being on the height, on the contrary, I admire it. I love Mzia as well. I guess you take love in different way, you are always high in the sky and your dreams could be higher. Love to me is dreaming of eternal life. That's why I don't want to die, first I must proceed my name. God gave us the gift of love to proceed the names. The love of a woman is the beginning of the huge love, called an eternal life. I must prolong that love first. You may understand it otherwise. We may dream less

on the earth than in the sky. You don't know, how much I want to fly in the sky sometimes! You are so lucky, you can be both on the earth and in the sky.

You are brave in different way.

I would like to be on your place, but I cannot, God condemned me to be on the earth... I told it all to you, as I want you to know my story. You are brave and you must understand me, you must adopt me as a brother, if I can not fly in the sky, at least I can say, that you are my brother.

Gigia got silent. Then he looked into the eagle's eyes. It was listening to him quietly.

Gigia Bubunauri cut his right hand slightly by the sword, then took eagle's bloody leg and mixed its blood with his one, took the bowl of vodka mixed with silver and told to the eagle:

Your mother is my mother!

Your sister is my sister!

Your brother is my brother!

Your happiness is my happiness!

Your sorrow is my sorrow!

The one who abuses you - abuses me as well!

The one who kills you - kills me as well!

Your life is my life!

This swear is eternal!

Our brotherhood – forever!

Amen!

He ended his speech, drank vodka and gave one gulp to the eagle. He washed its wound with the rest, wrapped wound up, took it out and let it fly.

It was snowing.

The eagle was flying above the towers of Bubunauri for a long time.

It was snowing.

Then the darkness crawled around slowly.

The eagle shouted loudly several times and flew away.

...

Gigia Bubunauri has just turned thirteen that Summer.

The Summer, embellished with violets, was appealing Gigia and the boys of his age up to the high mountains.

Only Gigia was wearing the gun. The boys were moving along the slope. They had a rest when they reached the top.

The sun was rolling up from the mountains of Sakornie.

Boys were lying down on their backs and looking up in the sky. The eagle screamed

somewhere. Then the ravens started croaking.

The eagle made a circle above the boys and slowly moved down. Gigia's friend seized a gun suddenly. Gigia came to his mind and clung the gun instinctively. The boy aimed it.

– It is an eagle man!

– Do not shoot! - Gigia only could only pronounce, when the gun was shot unexpectedly and Gigia jumped up high, then fell down in the grass illuminated by the sun.

The boys stood silent, the one who shot turned back and ran down to the village.

Men put the summer leaves on the stretcher and placed Gigia Bubunauri so lightly, as the snow from that winter used to spread around the smoked rocks of the *place of mother*'.

Gigia's mother was not at home. Gigia's niece, little Gagi started walking that day and she went to see him.

They put Gigia in front of the fire, exactly where he adopted an eagle as a brother. Several men ran to bring a doctor, but it was too late, even Gagi's mother could not see how the last inheritor of Bubunauri name, one of the oldest and full of enemies, ended his life in front of the fireplace. That day the voices in Bubunauris' blood calmed down forever: Do not disgrace us Kid! The tower, the smoked roof, the shield, the sword, the arm-shield, the chain dress, the helmet, the bow, the hanging rights of the men in the roof are left now alone. There are also left the mountains, the praying house, Gigia's village, the graveyard up above the village, filled with stony grave, several men in black knelt over the grave and one more, the adopted brother of Gigia Bubunauri, that sat down on Gigia's grave after the third day of his funeral and has never flown away.

First the village dogs wanted to attack the eagle, but they fell into such a bed day, that ran to the village with the tail between the legs.

The eagle was sitting and flying nowhere. One day that boy, who shot a gun came there with a stick, in order to revenge, as it was only the eagle's fault. He entered and started hitting it with stick. First the eagle was sitting immobile, then clung the child and pinched his both eyes.

Someone from the village shot the eagle.

First it was lying on the earth, then stood up again, men started kicking it with legs. It could still get up, hold the wings on the ground, then flashed his eyes to the people, opened mouth, panted and spilt the blood taken from the heart to the people.

Then it clung the earth from Gigia's grave and died on it.

The men went speechless back to the village. Eight or nine year old girl was coming from downstairs, so silent, as if afraid of the objects around her...

And at least from the author:

–Eh, the earth! I guess, your heart would be broken, having known how painful it is for me to see a Georgian woman, dressed in black, lying on your back.

### The sorrow #1682

– Name and surname.

– Martia Bubunauri.

– What are you worried about?

– I'm worried of the loneliness. A human is often among the people but still feels lonely. Sometimes a man feels stranger even to him/herself and looks for the ways to escape from the self. Why does it happen? I do not know. Where are we coming from and where will we go? I do not know it either.

### The Soul

(From the philosopher's notebook)

– Name.

– Martia Bubunauri.

– What does soul look like?

– Soul is like a sickle, it could easily get rusted by your past. Soul should be sharpened sometimes, the way sickle is sharpened by the file. Otherwise flash is like a rust, it spreads all around and blunts the soul. It seems to be an unwritten law, that when one gets elder, one is inclined to move to the earth, the earth is calling us and then our soul becomes so sweet and dear.

### The first sad news

(From the historicist's notebook)

The arch-priest felt sad to see, that there were no walnut trees in Busarchala. However, he uttered a friendly farewell to them.

Now we move to Salago. Bad voices are spread about that village and we should be careful. The most of them are mad and we may not even enter that village.

The commander anyway laid the siege in Salago. They paid no attention to us.

- We should treat mad culturally, - said the commander and entered the village.

In the middle of the village the mad tied a man on the tree and punch him with knives. The

man is all blue, but he is still not ding. Someone asks the mad to leave him alone. They do not obey.

– Fire! - ordered the commander.

The guns thundered and others froze at a spot.

– Why are you torturing this man? - said the commander.

– He doesn't say anything.

– What should he say?

– Whatever he has seen in another world.

### A strange story

(A little story from the writer's notebook)

One year ago Bagila Aldiauri woke up and his soul left his body like a shadow. The soul brought the body out, looked around. The people were about to get up and go to work.

– Hei, come here! - called the shadow to others.

They gathered over Balaga's house and when they saw body and soul separately they started trembling.

– Do you see my body? I take it inside the house; I place it there and then go to another world. Don't touch it until I come, don't bury it, otherwise you've to blame yourselves then.

The shadow put the body under the armpit and placed it at home above the door. He went out and left...

That day twelve men got mad in Salago. The soul came back in one year, again like a shadow, entered the house, brought out own body, all wormy, shook it out and crawled inside. Suddenly the body rose from dead. That day more then half grew mad. They tied Bagila on the tree and torture him, - tell us what did you see there, or why don't you die. He says nothing, he has one little snake in body. It leaks the wounds on his body. It doesn't kill Bagila, it licks and licks him. This snake was given to him in another world and was told: take it, put it into the body and it will cure you if anything happens to you. If you get bored of being a man, cut off the tail of the snake, it will loose its might, you will die and come to us.

The mad people beat him, pinch with daggers, Bagila still does not cut off the tail, he does not want to go there.

The mad people can't catch the snake. Only Bagila can do it.

They torture him and he says nothing.

They remain like this.

## Avoidance

(From the historicist's notebook)

We could not understand the mad. They have no philosophy for us, no nut trees. We preferred to leave them.

We moved to Atkhoni and soon hanged our flag on the highest roofing through the sun rays. They surrendered us without any resistance. There are all women, only one man. We started questioning that man first.

## The right hand

(A story from the writer's notebook)

Genja Bosleli took Goriai to the wedding party as the best friend. The woman was from Kvirilaanti. Genja worked as a shepherd in the village Kisti and he went there in one month after the marriage. The woman was left alone.

There is a way through the wood from Bosli to Atkhoni. It is autumn. Genjai's wife has gathered wood and makes it ready for carrying it home.

Goria went by, took her inside the wood.

One man passed by and saw the wood ready to for carrying. That man didn't pay attention and passed by. Genjai's wife walked the same way with the wood on her back in a short time.

Five years later Genja brought wife with him. He was also seldom coming home there.

– Stay at home, I was always bothered there and should I be also here...

– What? - asked Genja, - who was bothering you.

– Nobody, but.

– Come with me up the mountain and bring a child with you, - said Genja.

They both followed him. When they were on the top, he fall the wife down and put the dagger on her.

– Won't you tell me whose child he is?

Wife could not hide it any more and told everything.

– I knew he was not mine, as he didn't look like me, said Genja and..

The woman put child's head in lap and with bitter cry come down.

Genja went to Atkhoni and asked for Goriai.

– He's up in the sheep farm. - said Goria's wife.

– How are you doing? - asked Genja.

– We're fine, thanks to God, come in, you forgot us at all.

– I go up, see Goria and we come together, - said Genja and went up.

– Goria was sitting over birch trees. They greeted each other with great pleasure. Genja had a little axe in his hand.

– What are you doing with the axe? - asked Goria.

– We move here this winter and I want to cut the grass for the sweep, - said Genja,

They spoke a lot.

– So, now I must go now, - said Genja and stretched his right hand. The axe was in his left.

After shaking the hands he didn't let his right away, put it on the birch tree over there and cut it off.

– Keep well, - threw it to Genja, then took off his trousers and left.

In the evening Goria appeared in the village, without trousers, holding a right hand in his left one, he could manage somehow to wrap the cut hand into the garment.

He still keeps it. He takes it out sometimes from his chest.

#### The sorrow #1683

– Aptsiauri Goria

– What are you worried about?

– Woman don't like me as I have only one hand.

#### Goria

(From the philosopher's notebook)

– What do you like?

– Hehe, woman, you should not even ask it to me!

– Do you love life?

– Me?

– Yes.

– Sure I do, if God lets me live. God gives life to everyone but it keeps good people closer.

– What is life?

– Life is God, and God owns them both. Every separate God is life and death in itself, and each belongs to God.

– What holds the earth?

- By Ame.
- What kind of Ame?
- Love.
- Would you fly to the moon?
- I would, with a nice woman .
- What kind of women do you need you are so old, take there your wife.
- She eats my heart out here, what do I need her there for?
- Have you ever seen a nice dream?
- I have, but for nothing. Sometimes I see the women hugging me, then I wake up and where are they...
- Where does the dream come from?
- I don't know, although the bones are in the earth, the soul still exists. I think soul and dream are from the same land.
- Will you go to that land?
- Everybody will.
- If you were sent here back after a long time, would you like to come?
- Why not.
- When you know nobody here.
- It's not too difficult to get someone know, I would meet a woman in one-two hours and ...
- Wait a bit, I ask you the philosophical question and you are again with the women.
- Man, where do you find more philosophy then in women!
- What else would you wish instead of women?
- I have seen how violets were blooming on the bones of a human, stuck out from the earth. The owner of these bones would not even dream of such thing in his/her whole life, but I would.

### Triumphal campaign

(From the historicist's notebook)

It is midday. The arch-priest has finished inspection of the walnut trees in Atkhoni and gave a long speech.

The commander first organized the army.

A huge celebration is waiting us today. Gudamakari gorge is wholly in our hands with their walnut trees and women. Only one village is left – Didebani. This is the village that first refused us,

that's why we saved it for the last shot, it is the manoeuvre, the very clever manoeuvre. Now, when all the villages swore on the community icon and oath obedience, this village has nothing left to do but join us. I guess they thought we would enter their village first. They are mistaken very bitterly and waiting might have broken them morally.

Our army moved to Dideba. The secret service unit decided to go, but the commander changed his mind.

– Secret service officers, there's no necessity to send you there, go to our village and announce that we will enter Dideba with triumph today and we will bring Ketino to Chokha this evening. Tell them to get ready for the wedding. I feel that they will meet us on the way and bring the woman themselves. One should go to the maritime unit, to bring fish for the wedding, tell them, the salmon are preferable. Ah! Yes, bring our prisoner with you and feed him well. What can we do, he is our enemy, but we are the winners, are not we?

– Shete, good job man, we bring Ketino to you tonight.

– Soo, to the right! - he addressed the army.

– Fast walk! - he ordered and we moved with ringing of the bells and with singing. We have our own campaign song, written by our writer. It sounds like this:

All, whatever exists is ours

Here and there

iiiiiiiiiiii

– iii – must be longer in the end.

The midday sun is shining in the clear sky. We do not stop singing. The ringer of the bell rings the bells. We are only four kilometres away from our aim.

– Eh, how wonderful minute it is! Here we see Dideba already.

– Let's sing louder. Enter the village in line! - ordered the commander.

The army growled. Shete is full with joy.

– I'll have a wife in the evening! - he says.

The bells are ringing. We move forward.

– Here we see them. The fore-feeling of our commander appeared to be the truth. People move from the village, seems they are getting ready to meet us, they carry something carefully, I guess it could be a gift.

– Sing louder! - ordered the commander again.

We move forward to the people.

They stopped.

– What happened? Are they crying? With voice?

– It is cry of happiness, they are happy that they can oath obedience to such famous people.

Maybe they even regret, - explained the arch-priest.

– A song! - says led Gogi.

Our song covers their voice.

Oh, what a glorious minute it is, one is crying and another is singing and the cry will be totally covered by song soon.

Only the three steps and...

– What happened?

– Stop! - ordered the commander.

– A coffin? That's why they are crying.

### Ketino

(A real story from the writer's notebook)

Ketino and Mikho were learning together up to the sixth form at school. Then Mikho went on learning in Pasaauri. There was not more than six forms in Knitokhi, where they had learned. Ketino had to stop education.

Their villages are next to each other. Mikho is from Kitokhi, Ketino is from Dideba.

They were together since childhood and they could not live without each other. Mikho was coming in Gudamakari to see Ketino in every three days.

– Then?

– Then as they say: out of sight out of mind. Mikho got colder, he was visiting Ketino more seldom. He passed exams at the university and has not seen Ketino for one year. Ketino was in love with Mikho more than ever and one fine day she went to see Mikho in the city.

– Did she know the address?

– No, she just went, she told she might see him in the street. She really saw him. It confused

Mikho, he felt he still loved her, however he treated her cold.

– Let's go to the cinema, - said Ketino.

They stood in line. Mikho searched the money silently and it appeared that he had only the money for two tickets. Good that I did not fall into the shame -he thought to himself. Ketino felt it and pretended she mentioned nothing.

– Mikho are you buying a ticket? - the girls called from behind, - won't you get three for us?

Mikho stumbled over.

Ketino put five Manetis in Mikho's hand without showing it to others.

The film finished, Mikho said nothing. He has not opened a mouth while accompanying

Ketino to the bus. Then he exploded and cried out:

– Why are you following me? Why did you come?

Ketino paled.

Then the bus brought her to Gudamakari.

Ten days later she has received a letter. She recognized it was from Mikho, she opened it with trembling hands and saw only five Manetis.

Late at night, when the parents went to bed, she hanged a rope on the roof...

The village did not let dig Ketino's grave close to others, as she killed herself.

Our triumphal campaign stopped by her grave.

Galilei came exactly when we were burying her and shouted from far:

– Where are you so long, the wedding table is ready! - When he came closer and saw our faces he asked:

– Where is Ketino?

– She's there, they're covering her with earth, - showed Shete.

– Wha're you doin', damn you all, whom're you putting in the earth! - roared Galilei and attacked us, he was throwing us everything whatever he could see.

Then several men carried him away by force.

– I'll cut off your heads! - he was shouting from the road.

Ketino's grave looked like a black dot in Gudamakari all covered with snow.

We turned speechless and went to Chokhi silently.

We set the prisoner free the same evening. The commander sent the reconnaissance unit to release the maritime unit.

Summer came soon afterwards. The shepherds, left during the winter, brought the sheep flocks back and Gudamakari gorge get noisy again. The people, settled in the city, came back for Summer.

From the author

My grandmother, who saved these papers died two years ago. Most of the 'Gudamakari warriors' are alive today, as for Gamikhara, he walks over the mountains every day with his sack on the back. He has the sorrows of Gudamakari in his sack and he overnights one day on one top of the mountain and another day on another one. He says: gods love elevated places and I may see it some day on any top of the mountain.

The shepherds felt sorry for him. They clothed one shepherd all in white, made wool beard, as

if he was God and asked him to sit for Gamikharda on the mountain top .

Gamikharda saw a man in white from far and approached 'the God' on his knees.

- God almighty! - he told after coming closer.
- Why're you here? - asked 'the God'.
- I've this sack full of Gudamakarians sorrows and please dispel it! - Gamikharda took off his sack.
- Oh! - breathed the shepherd out, - it's too much, opt one out of there, the one you want the most of all and I dispel it, don't ask me more.

Then Gamikhatda chose this one:

#### The sorrow #1

- Name.
- Gorge Beqauri.
- What're you worried about?
- They say the war starts soon. Military forces are being gathered. They're going to burn the earth. Pull down the moon.

The shepherd read this sorrow, he put his hand on Gamikharda's shoulder and said:

- I will definitely dispel this sorrow. He brought the rest of the sorrows back and since then he walks free. He thought if God dispels one sorrow, other sorrows can be left with us.

There is one story in the writer's notebook named after 'The Sorrows of Human Beings', it might have been written later and it has nothing to do with the campaign. I bring it here as I liked it.

#### A feast with the death

(A story from the writer's notebook)

On the east of Chokha, in Gudamakari, there is a mountain called Elia by the villagers.

The people believe that the mountain top is God's proprietorship and there is built its own alcove. On the middle of the mountain the rod divides it into two parts: God's place is above the rod and the devils – underneath, it goes down deep into the gorge.

Every year a lamb is killed over the alcove, the attendees throw the beheaded lamb from upstairs. People try to catch the lamb above the rod, on God's side. If they manage it, they boil meet and share the pieces to everyone.

If the lamb goes down the border, it is the devil's piece, they leave it and go home wistfully.

The day broke. The first rays of the sun shone through the gorge. The fog, prolonged on the

banks of Aragvi, is cut into two pieces. One crawled up the slope of Elia, and another laid over the village, covered Aragvi and gradually disappeared.

The sun illuminated Gudamakari gorge.

People started gathering over the sacred place of St. George. Bibga, gaunt and jaw wrecked arch-priest went up there. Then Omarrant Sandura, ShuglianT Zora. Gamikhardai, Shete, Basa, Mtsaria, Chichka, Jgunta, Tata followed them and then came other Chokhelis. They were coming up the mountain, gathering and then taking their place. Women were waiting beyond the icon, by the rod, they were praying there and joining other women. According to community rules, women are forbidden to approach the mountain of icon, only man are allowed to go there and only that day, without this holiday they also avoid abusing the sacred place.

The monk went up as well, prayed, knelt tree times and joint the people.

– Icon's bless to you! - said the monk.

– Bless you too! - answered the people.

Jguna handed a bowl full of beer to the monk. He took it, blessed them and drank.

– Monk, you know, you should bring a lamb this year, it's your turn, - said Bibga.

– I know, - said the Monk, - I've sent a child to bring it.

– Don't be late, - said Bibga and stood up. Everybody stared at him. He was such a good looking old man, that one could not help looking at him. He was tall, thin, only the jaws were a bit twisted and this was more stressing out his severe look.

A small boy appeared above the village. He had a white lamb on his shoulders. He came and stood next to the Monk. The lamb licked the boy's hair, then looked at the people and bleated.

– So, let's gather the candles. Without a delay! - the arch-priest addressed the attendees.

They gathered three candles from everyone:

– God bless the Monk!

– God bless Jguna!

– God bless Martia!

– God bless Qora! - they were gathering the candles with the following words.

– Let's go! - said Bibga, put the flag decorated with the tiny bells on the shoulder and led the people up to the Elia mountain. Only women stayed there. They were standing and looking at the people moving up on the slope of the mountain, who were led by the twelve year old child, with the lamb on his back. Then the arch-priest was following, with ringing the bells, then the people who would confirm the death of the lamb and then others.

The arch-priest ordered the boy to go faster and to bring the lamb up on the top of the mountain. He went faster. The arch-priest lined up the people above the rod and led up the

mountain.

The boy was waiting for the arch-priest over the alcove, he was holding the lamb with front legs and was petting it. The lamb was white as snow, with blue eyes, it was licking boy's cheeks and bleating, as if speaking to him.

The arch-priest approached. There were a lot of lamb heads on the top of the mountain, over the alcove. Time has already powdered some of them, some has retained it's shape. It was a rule to leave a head and, as the mountain was so high, the animals were also avoiding going up to there, only ravens were flying up sometimes, eating the carrion and leaving the bones. During the years there were so many heads left there, that if God would have made them alive and if they would have bleat to the god, I think, the sky would be torn from the grief. Today one more head would join the hole-ridden skulls.

The arch-priest went up the mountain, knelt and kissed the earth three times. Then stood up, lit up the gathered candles and prayed for a long time. He was asking Elia to keep Chokhelis well, to avoid hail and storm from them, landslides, floods...

The boy was standing, holding the lamb with one hand and slightly bent down was listening to him.

Bibga finished praying, fixed the candles on smoked stone of the alcove and pulled the dagger out. The boy laid the lamb down, hold its legs with both hands and when the arch-priest bent its head to cut it off, he looked aside. He could see only the top of another mountain and could feel how the arch-priest was cutting its head off with all his body. Then beheaded lamb started shivering and boy let him off.

The arch-priest hanged a head on the alcove, then took beheaded lamb, threw it to the people and shouted loudly:

– Long live to Elia and Zaqaria!

– Long live! - answered the people from downstairs and rushed up to hold the lamb, they were afraid of missing it down the rod, otherwise they could not eat it. They caught it soon and waited for the arch-priest.

– Let's go, -said Bibga to the boy, who was staring at the head of the lamb hanging on alcove.

The head was blinking the eyes.

– Let's go, what're you waiting for! - repeated Bibga.

– It's not ding, - said a boy.

– It'll die, what else will it do! - Bibga placed a flag on his shoulder and went down. Boy followed him, then held for a while and listened.

– Did you hear? - asked a boy.

– What?

– A lamb bleated.

– That seems to you, - said the arch-priest, but exactly the same time lamb bleated again. They turned and looked at the cut head.

The head was bleeding. It was staring at the boy and the arch-priest with the same astonishment, time to time was blinking and was shaking its tongue from thirst. The candles were cracking on the wall from the blood dropping on it. The bones, spread over there, were soiled by blood. The head of the lamb was still staring the boy and the arch-priest.

– Why isn't it ding? - asked the boy.

– It's like this sometimes, it comes later, until the death calls in, - answered the arch-priest.

– What if it won't come?

– It isn't possible...

– Why?

– It is a rule, the rule of death and life, - explained the arch-priest, then crossed himself and turned. Boy looked once more at the head, that was shaking its thirsty tongue and then followed the arch-priest. His eyes were full of fears.

They were stricken by grief, when they saw that the beheaded body was still moving after coming down.

– It is not ding, - said the monk.

Arch-priest told nothing, he led the people up to the mountain of icon.

People were waiting for the death of the lamb, but it was still shivering, until it had the last drop of blood in veins, then it calmed down and was only beating very slightly.

– It died, - said the priest and flayed it.

–The people gathered around the table and started drinking, the monk put the pot full of meat on the fire. Jguna brought beer down to the women. They played accordion and the music, like pleasant goosebumps, spread through the mountain. People got happy. Started dancing.

The music stopped all of a sudden, the girl playing accordion, first saw a handsome man approaching them. Everyone looked that side, it was so silent as if they all got dumb.

A young man was approaching the mountain. He was dressed in garment, that had a colour of a spring butterfly, blond curls were covering his shoulders, he entered, knelt down, kissed the earth three times, stood up, went to the people and said:

– May icon bless you all!

– Bless you too, - some blurted here and there enchanted by the beauty of that man.

– Will you accept me? - asked he and when he smiled his face was illuminated with such

kindness, that brought everyone to smile

- Sure, why not, a guest is from God, - they called bravely and invited them to the chairmen.
- Here, here!

They have brought him and asked to sit next to the arch-priest. Jguna gave him a bowl of wine. The guest took the bowl and blessed them:

- Long live to you Chokhelis, may God give you health, love and kindness.
- You too, - they called. He drank the bowl with great satisfaction and smiled again.
- Have some bread before we bring some meat, - the arch-priest gave him Khada (*Georgian Pastry*).
- Thank you very much, - the stranger answered courteously again. His politeness confused them all.

Then the monk brought boiled meat and put it on the table. Steam rose from the pot of meat.

- Drink it, our guest! - Jguna handed him a horn of vodka... he took it blessed then and gave it back again.
- Help yourself!
- I am not used to it, I can not drink.
- What, ain't you a man, how can't you drink one horn, a toast to our acquaintance.

The guest drank it and it was clear from his face how difficult it was for him to drink it up.

- Have some meat, - said the monk.
- No, I do not eat meat, - he refused and took Khada again.

Everyone was amazed by this announcement. They were eating the lamb so tastily that they could not imagine, why he was refusing such satisfaction.

The feast was on its peak. They were drinking from horns, beer and vodka was doing its job. They were making the guest to drink as well, but he was avoiding it.

The women liked the guest so much that they have totally forgotten the rod. They went up to see his beauty closer. The arch-priest mentioned it and stood up, he rang the bells and let them know to go down. They went down with silent whisper and started dancing.

Men were quite drunk already. They were singing. Now they forced the guest to drink more vodka, but he did not drink, only blessed them and gave it back to Jguna.

- I don't like your behaviour, - said Jguna and made himself ready for fight.
- Jguna! -called the monk.
- What do you want?
- You are mistaken Jguna! . Said the monk and stood in the middle of the guest and Jguna.
- I told it and I repeat whenever you take a horn you should drink it, - said Jguna.

Women were dancing downstairs.

- Come downstairs! Come here! They were calling to young people.
- Do not be offended, Jguna is always like this, - told the monk to the guest.
- No, why should I be offended, - said the guest.

Soon came the time, when Chokhelis should have tested one another's strength. They put a barrel, full of beer, in front of the icon and gathered around it. Some of them held the barrel.

- What are they going to do? - asked the guest.
- They are testing their strength, the stronger will take it on his side.
- Can I also try it?

– Sure, go, - said the priest and led him to the barrel. This fact made the hearts of curious Chokhelis beat faster, they surrounded the young competition participants, who were trying to pull the barrel to their side. They did not have to wait long, the guest pulled the barrel so strong that he brought the young participants with it.

Women started whispering. Jguna got ready for fight again, but he was calmed down and the bowls were brought. According to the rule the toast to the winner was drunk from the beer of the barrel.

First, the arch-priest took the bowl and before starting blessing he told modestly:

- Don't be angry with for asking your name, but it is a rule, that in your toast man should say your name:
- Death, - answered the guest.
- What?!
- My name is death

People hushed up all of a sudden. The arch-priest almost lost his bowl.

- Are you really?!
- Yes, really, - said the death and smiled again. People smiled as well.
- He's cheating, - laughed somebody
- No, I am not cheating, I am death.
- Then what do you want here?!
- What do you mean with these words, I would not have come If I had nothing to do here.
- Hey brother, tell us who you are, don't make fools from us?!
- I am death, I missed life as a human, that's why I came, I can be with humans once in millions of years and this day is exactly today.
- Fui devil, fui devil! - the people started brunting.
- Wait, listen to me, are not you interested? - said Death. People got silent.

– I can live as a human only today, before the sun sets, then I will turn into the death again. Do you know why am I here? I miss you very much sometimes.

– We know it! - said Jguna.

– Jguna, I will not play your game, no matter how much you try it, I have only one day to live like a human and I have no wish to fight with you.

– Stop cheating! - Jguna got angry.

– I am not.

– I'm sure you aren't death, you are kind of a greenhorn.

– Why don't you believe me? But it is all the same for me, if you do not want you have right not to believe me, it will make me happier. Today is the day when no creature will die in the world.

– Then this lamb? - said Jguna and turned the eaten bone in front of death's eyes.

– It has not died.

– How, we ate it? Could not you see it? You told, you do not eat meat?

– Yes I told it...

– Then?!

– Then... the lamb is not dead.

– This man is fooling us!

– It could not die as God turned me into a human today and it will be like this before the sunset, you can only kill me, but nothing and nobody. This lamb is alive and look the head is coming with its bones...

People looked that side. The head was rolling downstairs, it stopped over the borderline and stared at the people, shivered the dry tongue and bleated. It turned and brought all bones with it. It took also its skin.

People started trembling from fear, nobody could dare saying anything.

– Don't be afraid people. I am here to have fun with you, and you.. come here, take your sits, let's drink my toast, - people agreed and they handed the bowls out.

– Long live to Death! - said the arch-priest.

– Long live to Death! Long live to alive heath!

Death grew happier, he was drinking one horn after another and was singing. People got used to him again. Monk liked him so much that he was not leaving him, then adopted him as a brother: They peeled silver in the bowl full of vodka and drank it.

– The one who offends you, offends me, - said the monk to death and looked at Jguna.

The women were still dancing. Death stood up and went down to dance. The women were fighting for dancing with him.

A woman, all dressed in black, came from Dideba. She leant on her stick, looked into death's eyes and asked him:

– Why did you kill my Ketino?

– Mother I have only one day to be a human and please don't mar my pleasure?!

– Then why did you mar my life?!

– Could I help killing her?!

– Could not you? You could at least let her live up to the old age.

– Up to the old age?

– Yes, up to the old age.

– It was impossible

– Why?

– I don't know, I am a human like you today and I think it was not possible, I can not explain it to you today.

– Then when can you do it?

– Later...

– Were not you pity for her?

– You know, you are so nice, that I am pity for each of you for death, it's so good to be a human, but when I have to do my duty, then... but if I tell you that I love doing my job it may have no sense for you.

– Then where do you take us?

– I can not tell it to you, mother.

– Do you have a mother?

– No.

– Are you an orphan?

– I am.

– Why do you kill us?

– As I am kind to you.

– What kind of kindness it is my son?

– You can not be a human all the time?

– Why not...

– You will not get tired of it?

– You can do with us all what you want, when we get old.

– Then life would have no sense if you all get old.

– It is evil, my son.

– But a rule.

– What did you want from Jesus?

– I did it from my kindness as well, otherwise you would not have seen him the way you do it now. You think it is the huge evil. You know mother, I do not kill you, I just kill myself in you, I am also suffering by soul delivery. I just finish whatever should happen and every time it happens whatever should have happened... and the necessity doesn't really exclude the fortuity.. Let's forget the death until I am alive. You know, If you want I can share one secret with you: you can kill today only me, if you kill me, you will never die, but don't do it, life gets harder without me, you will have neither love, not happiness... time is leaking, let's dance, play the music!

The girls played the accordion and then started dancing, even the earth was dancing with them.

Several men were whispering secretly on the mountain of the icon.

The death was dancing. He was looking at the sun time to time and was getting sad, as it was going to set soon. Monk was not leaving Death, the adopted brother, alone. Kids were surrounding him with joy. Death was laughing cordially and his face was full of kindness.

Then everyone was dancing, little and big. The guest affected everybody so much, that they were also looking at the sun with regret.

Only several men were whispering secretly. Jguna was among them. Then they started dancing as well and approached Death. Suddenly Jguna took a dagger out and thrashed it in Death while dancing. He fell down.

The music stopped at once and people stopped dancing. Monk knelt in front of Death full of tears and carefully took the dagger out from his heart.

Jguna ran up the mountain of the icon, to the mount of Elia.

The monk was silently looking at ding Death, who was smiling so kindly at them, that it involuntarily brought smile on everybody's face. Then he held monk's hand and stopped shivering.

Huge regret confined them all. The kids were crying, monk was crying as well. That woman dressed all in black cried with voice:

What did you want from us, my son,  
We can not live with the one like you,  
I bless your youth,  
How will you go in the earth,  
Your hopes will turn into black.  
The snakes will take your eyes.  
Never think of coming here,

No, my son, do not get angry with us,  
Go, and have a peace with my children...

People got so sad, they could not bear looking at him. They dug the earth quickly and instead of coffin they put him into the meadow flowers. Then they covered him with meadow flowers as well and nobody was daring covering him with earth for a long time...

The sun went down the mountains slightly and Gudamakari gorge was covered by darkness. The next day, I was the witness how the sun rose again. But not from the place where it usually rises, from yesterday's grave, it rose and sat on its midday sit in the sky.

From the author again.

I saw a piece of paper in Philosopher's notebook, with only two questions and two answers on it. There was marked no author or the place of writing. I could not bring it anywhere in the middle so I saved it for the end:

- What is life?
- Life is a sorrow, the sweet sorrow of being a human.
- And death?
- Death is also a sorrow, the sorrow of not being a human.