

## Chapter 1

# Coming to terms with chaos

**I**t was 10 pm. Peter Trot was sitting in his second floor home in a posh locality in Delhi. Two months ago he was asked by his boss in London if he was open to working in an emerging economy country in Asia. Peter jumped on the idea. He knew Asia was again the place to be for those who wanted to grow rich and rise quickly in the ranks. As in 18th and 19th century, 21st also offered huge opportunities for European and US companies to make a killing in Asia that was witnessing unprecedented economic growth. Peter had always been looked upon as some sort of a genius. He was born in Chicago to a single British mother who had just moved to the US in search of a better life. Peter was an A Grader throughout during his school days. He completed his masters from Harvard and PhD in economics from London School of Economics. As London was becoming the playground of the rich and famous thanks to the liberal policies initiated by the then London mayor, Peter decided to take up a job here in a renowned FMCG Company with an aim to strike it rich one day.

He believed in the axiom, "momentum means money". Going to Asia where once his forefathers sought their fortunes was at once a romantic notion as well as one which made terrific business sense. He landed in India as CEO of a FMCG company. Peter thought that now his career would gallop to new heights. But within less than 60 days of arrival he was feeling jaded and defeated - A feeling which was alien to him. Slowly and deliberately he sipped single malt whisky that was a gift from his wife. She was yet to join him and he was already contemplating whether to put in his papers. Nothing that he studied in Harvard or at LSE prepared him for what he encountered in India. As CEO in charge of Asia, a brief visit to Jakarta blew up his notions of making any headway in this chaotic continent. "The place is far tougher than I initially thought," Peter mumbled, "And I haven't even landed in China...hmm...God save me from breakdown."

It was 2 am. Peter Trot was deep in meditation. He learnt this oriental art from his friend Shinzo Tanaka, whom he met at Harvard. Tanaka's father a martial arts expert had taught him judo when he was in Japan for a year. Tanaka senior had taken a shine for him as he was a gifted athlete. Peter was a great student, Tanaka a great teacher. At the time of his departure Tanaka had accompanied him and his son Shinzo to Narita airport in Tokyo. When the time came for Peter to say goodbye, his voice was choked with emotions. He did not want to leave Tanaka senior. He was the father Peter never had. Wise, self assured, calm with a ready smile, Tanaka senior sensed Peter's anguish.

He put his arms on his shoulders and said in a soft tone, "Son you will be back in Asia, don't worry about that for neither you are finished with the continent nor the continent is done with you.

Whenever you need me I am just a phone call away or thanks to Shinzo I am net savvy too." And then he burst into his trade mark affectionate smile.

Peter remembered the moment. It was 8 years ago. "Today I need the old man and his advice. What should I do?" He thought. "It must be 11 pm in Japan. Will the old man be awake?" With a lot of trepidation Peter finally decided to write a mail.

**Master,**

Your prophecy has come true. I have landed in Asia. In less than two months I think I had had enough of the exotic place. Only thing that is helping me is meditation that you taught me. I can't wait to return to England. I think I am done with Asia.

Regards

**Peter**

In a couple of minutes, Peter's gtalk window popped up. It was Shinzo on the other hand. But Peter knew it was Tanaka senior. No matter how much Tanaka insisted that he was at ease with internet, his son knew better. The old man was just about conversant with the technology but won't accept it. He kept asking Shinzo about small little things and once the obedient son would fix it he would say, "I was just testing you". Shinzo knew better and asked his father to use his email id. Now both had access to the same password and Shinzo could help him from any part of the world. This helped Shinzo guide the old man whenever he was stuck, which was almost every day.

"My child Peter, I still maintain you are not finished with Asia yet," was the first line with a smiley.

"Master, I am glad you are online," Peter replied.

"Why are you so down and out Peter? You are Peter the Great."

"Yes master, but nothing that I ever learned while doing business in Europe and US has prepared me for the experience I am having here. I don't know how to deal with it. Everything seems convoluted, twisted. People give bizarre logic as all the business rules are turned upside down. Don't know what to do," Peter ranted.

"Hmm it seems much education has been wasted on you otherwise you wouldn't have been cut off from Asian reality to this extent,"

Came the reply again with a smiley and abbreviation LOL. Peter couldn't help but smile. Then he told Tanaka that he intends to leave India.

"You want to run away?" Tanaka asked a pointed question.

"Isn't it a virtue a la Sun Tzu," Peter asked. The duo was back to the old days when they indulged in such philosophical discussions.

"Yes it is but if you run away you will forever be ignorant about the ground," Tanaka said.

"That's true..." Peter admitted.

"How do you commute in the city?" Tanaka asked.

Peter was taken aback by the mundane question. But he knew Tanaka was angling at something.

"By a chauffeur-driven BMW master, why?" he asked  
"Start commuting by Tuk Tuk or an auto rickshaw as they call it in Delhi," Tanaka wrote back. The text looked more like an order.

"Why master?" Peter was confused.

The answer was a smiley and four words, "in time you'll know" and the green light of gtalk turned grey signalling the master had logged out.

Peter kept thinking about master's curious suggestion. It seemed bizarre but he decided to give it a shot.

