



VIRUNGA MASSIF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT PLAN

DR Congo, Rwanda and Uganda

5.2 METAPHYSICAL ANALYSIS

SIX SENSES APPROACH

The majority of all site analysis and planning techniques that are being practiced today are unfortunately objective, and so, somewhat one-dimensional. Considering the strong spiritual energies in the Virunga Massif Region, we employed the “six senses “ approach to analysing the spirit of the region. In order to become ‘one’ with this region we spent time at various locations in the three countries to experience the site via each one of our six senses – sound, sight, taste, smell, touch and most importantly feel. The main objective was to enter the experience the essence of the various sites. We sat on rocks, slept on the forest floors, tasted different fruits and berries, touched the various textures of the forest etc. we spent at least five minutes focusing on each one of the senses and then jotted down in our notebooks what we were sensing and feeling. Below is a metaphysical analysis of the Virunga Massif Region.



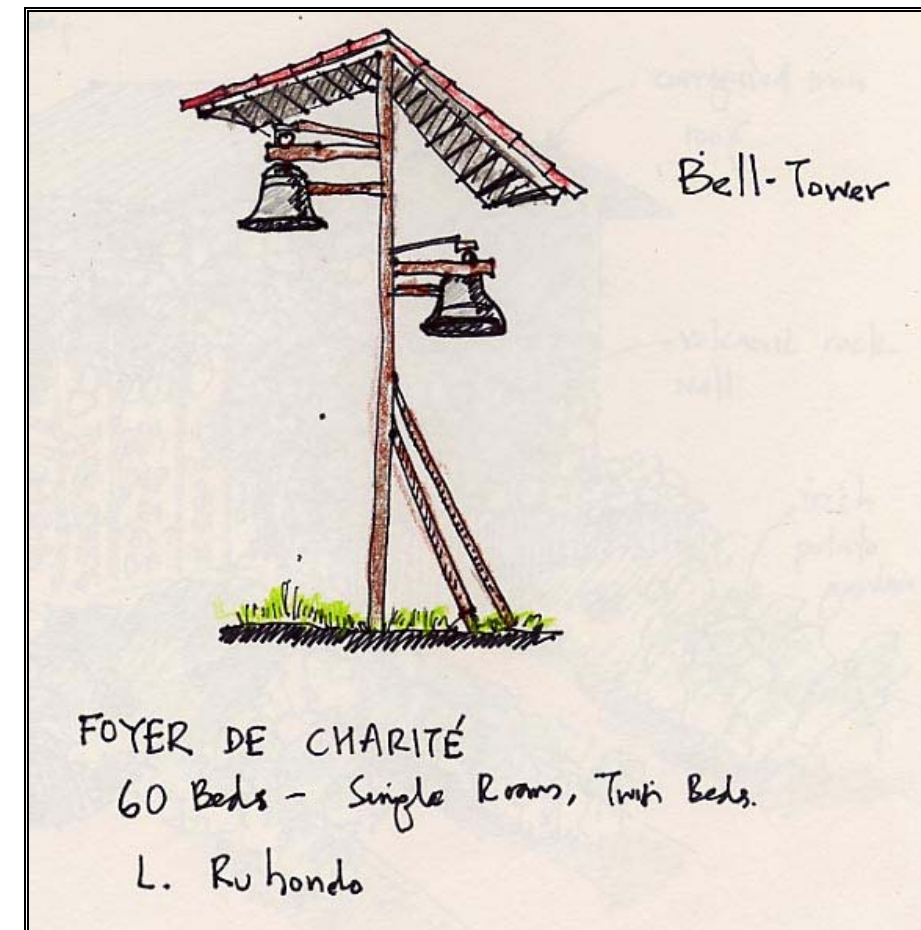
Sitting on the crater rim of Mt. Gahinga, Uganda



Sleeping on a Bamboo forest floor, Rwanda

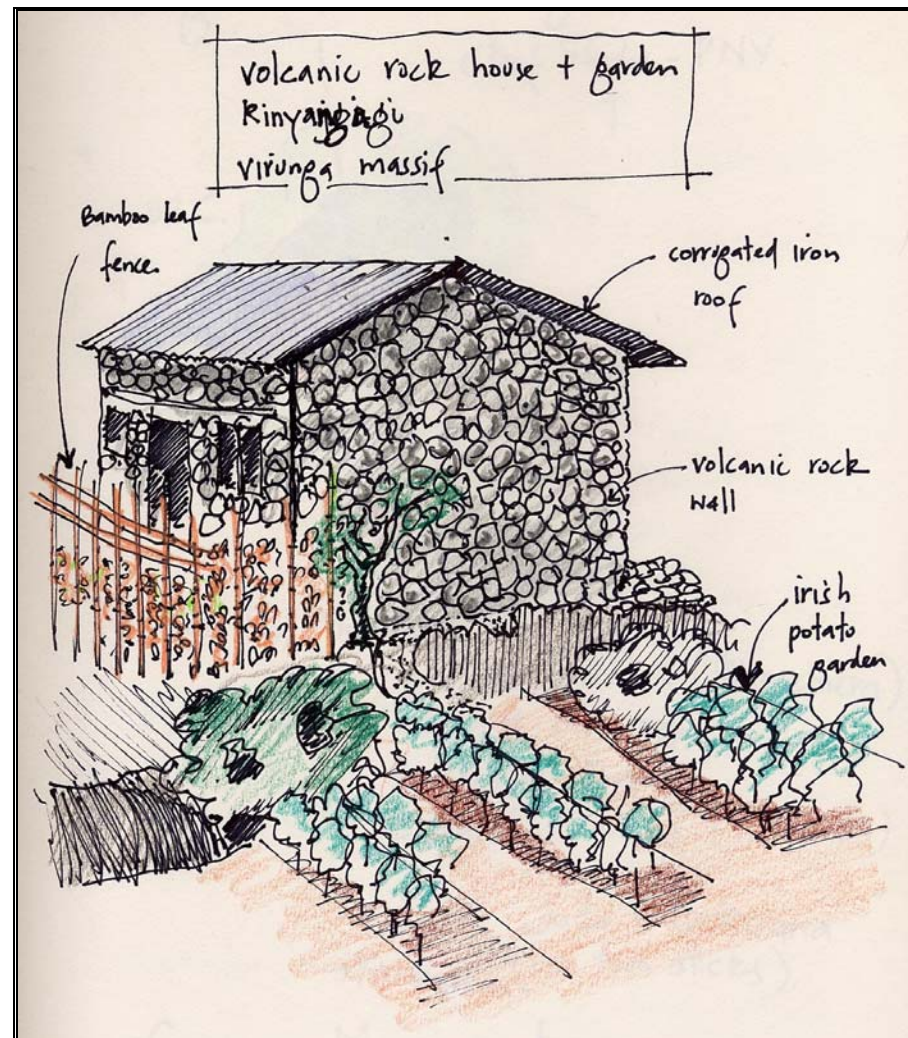
Sound

- *The ‘hmrrr’ of the gorillas*
- *The farting of the female gorilla*
- *The radio at the campsite – local news and music*
 - *The crackling sounds of the fire*
 - *The chirping of the birds in the lower forests*
 - *The mooing of the cows at the edge of the forest*
 - *Local people talking in their farms*
- *The rustling of the leaves in the evening southern wind*
 - *The breaking of bamboo stumps by the gorillas*
 - *The waterfalls of the streams*
 - *The melodies of the lobelia flute*
 - *The distinctive sound of lava under the shoes.*
 - *The bell ‘clongs’ of Foyer de Charite.*



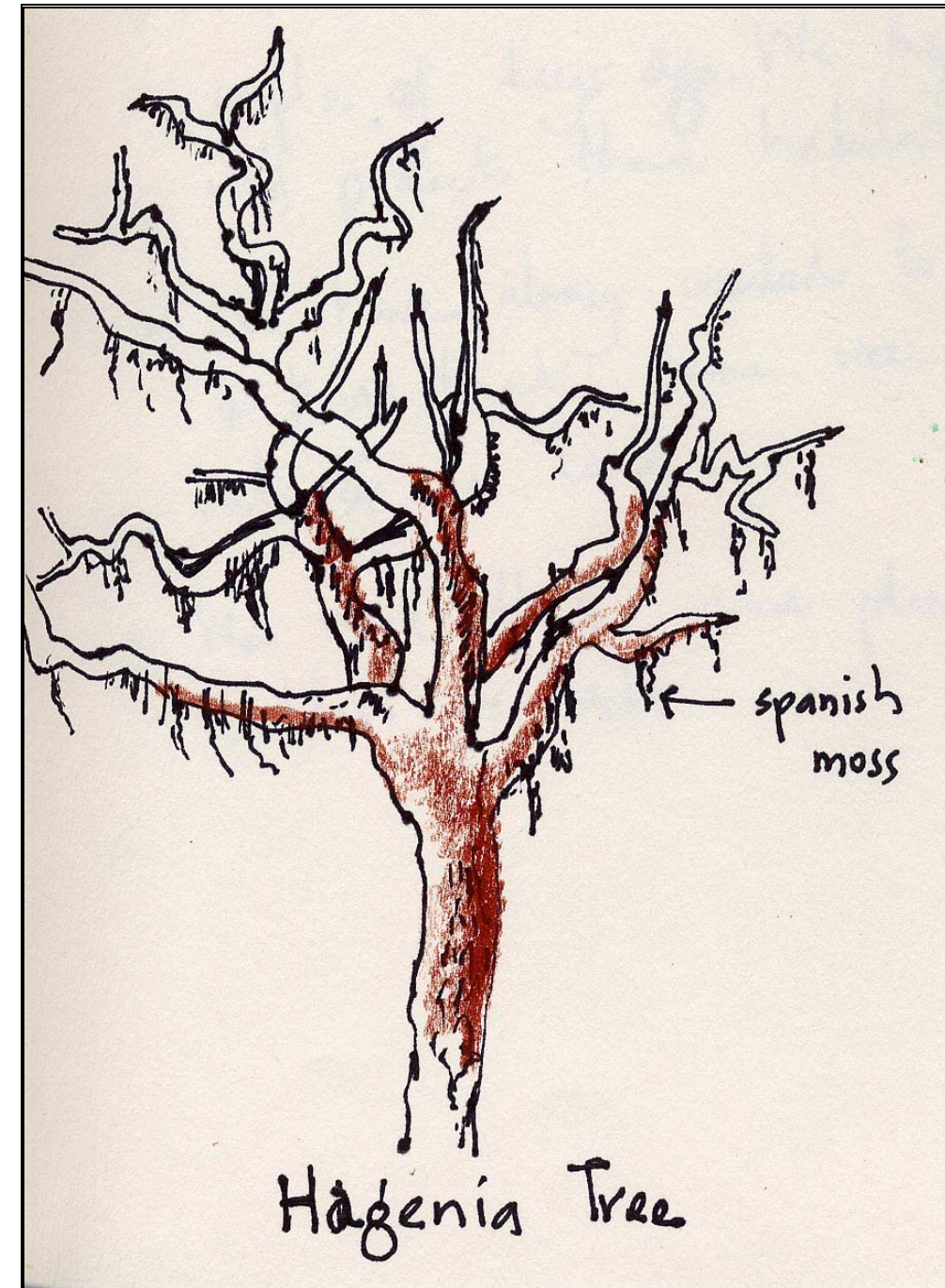
Sight

- *The sun rays through the hagenia leaves*
- *The majestic view of Karisimbi volcano from Bisoke Volcano*
- *View of Kisoro Town and Sabyinyo Volcano from Bisoke Volcano*
 - *Views over Kinigi and Ruhengeri*
 - *Porcupine and Buffalo Spoor along the trails*
 - *The dense *Arundinaria alpina* forest*
- *The brilliant colors of local clothes and garments*
 - *The rising sun over Lake Burera*
 - *The bright green of a tobelia leaf*
- *The sheer beauty of a traditional house and garden*



Touch

- *Ouch!! The stinging nettles*
- *The moist wet volcanic soil*
- *The coarse bark of the Hagenia trees*



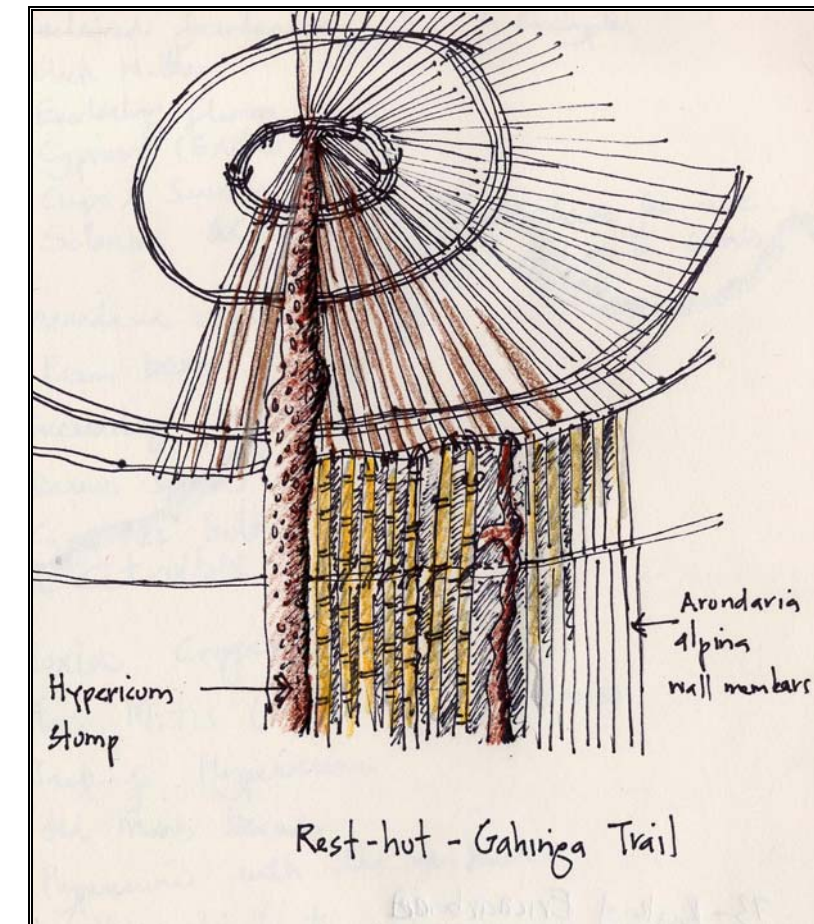
Taste

- *The sweet water from the mountain top*
 - *The tasteless soil*
- *The unforgettable taste of elephant beer*
 - *The acrid sap of the lobelia plant*



Smell

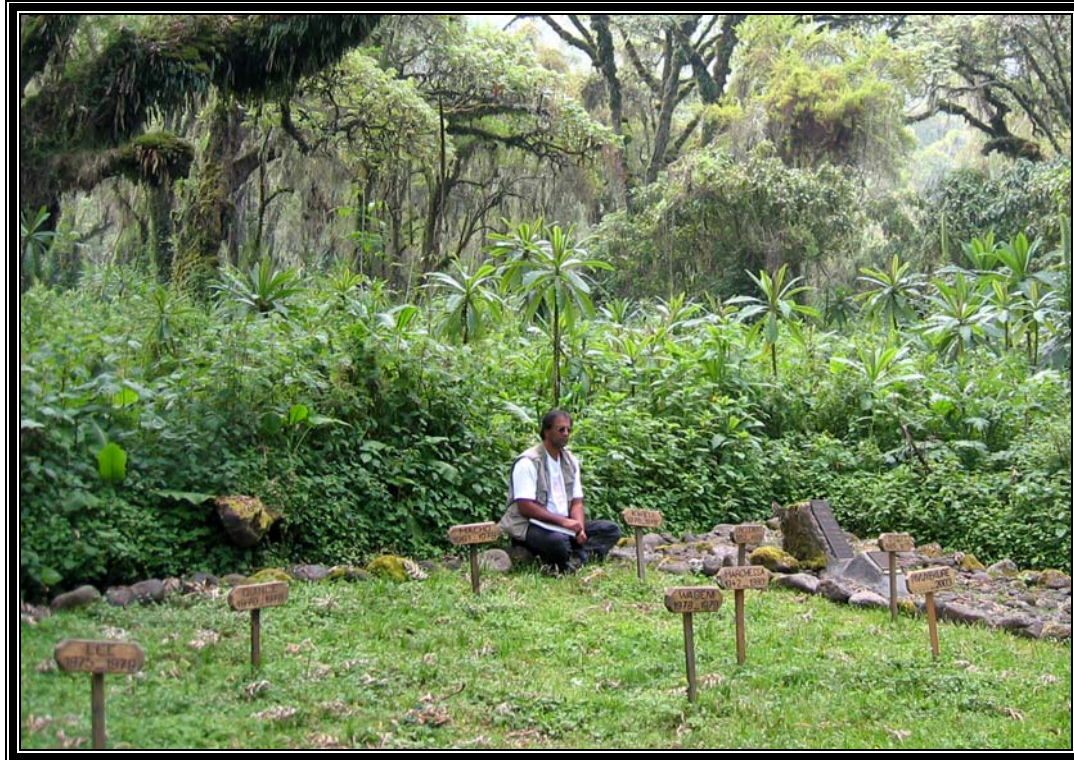
- *The fresh Oxygen in the air*
- *The bland smell of gorilla faeces*
 - *Buffalo faeces!!*
- *The smoke of a rest-hut camp fire*



Becoming the site

The most productive part of the metaphysical analysis is the final experience, when i (Hitesh Mehta) tried to *imagine* that I was the place. For this experience, I sat beside Dian Fossey's grave and under the beautiful Hagenia forest and became the gorillas that have been laid to rest next to Dian grave at the Karisoke Research Center. By becoming the Gorillas, I had an interesting view of the project.

Following is a narrative that I wrote after becoming the Gorillas for a period of thirty minutes.



Feel

IMAGINE

Imagine....just imagine....

Here we lay under the Hagenia Forest and amongst the company of the one person who loved us the most – Dian.

This forest is our eternal home. It is here that our ancestors first came into being and it is here that our children play with each other.

Under this fertile volcanic soil, our souls are connected and our bones have become part of the earth on which you are sitting on..

Some of us left this forest as part of evolution while others were killed by our closest cousins.

We don't want your sympathy; there is no time for that. What we need is your primal sensitivity and we need for your kind to take action!!

The roots whisper to us that new twins were born a couple of days ago. We hope that your plan will protect their mother, their habitat and their children's home.

We have always wanted to live in peace with humans and are aware that some of them were killed by their own kind while others were evacuated from our forest.

We hope that your plan will also take care of them and their children as well.

Imagine all those children....just imagine

You and we are connected in more ways than you can ever imagine.

Imagine us in your plans....just imagine.

