Senju (Thousand-armed) Kannon

MEDITATION SYMBOLS IN EASTERN & WESTERN MYSTICISM

MYSTERIES OF THE MANDALA

BY
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PREFACE

A mandala is a road map charting the way for sincere pilgrims seeking the Pure Land of inner peace. It is not a sacred picture in the ordinary sense of the word, nor is it a vision scene associated with mysticism. It has been rejected by art connoisseurs as a kind of diagram with little aesthetic interest. A genuine meditation symbol could only be devised by a highly disciplined master of the doctrine who has completed the journey himself. In addition to the mandala designs which have descended from the past there are significant works of art that indicate a considerable knowledge of the esoteric tradition. These may assist the student and bestow degrees of understanding which are identified with the grades of the meditation discipline.

In order to understand mandala disciplines it is necessary to understand the difference between intelligence and intellectualism. Intelligence is an innate integrity abiding in the soul, and intellectualism is an education of the mind by external study and training. Most of the mandala diagrams were designed to release internal integrity, whereas the systems of schooling now extant attempt to convert the mind to the acceptance of prevailing doctrines and opinions.

The purpose of the present book is to emphasize the cultivation of those integrities without which no nation or individual can survive the pressures of a dominant economic materialism. The only solution to modern dilemmas is what Mohandas Gandhi called "the victory of soul power over brute force."

The human soul is that fragment of eternal life which abides in every living creature. In the lower kingdoms it may be instinct, but in human beings it is called intuition. The old teachings affirm that resident within each form of life is the power to achieve the full measure of its potential.

In the present volume there is a summary of the search for tranquility with the firm realization that there can be no happiness without dedication to eternal principles. In addition to the text there is a significant group of illustrations which can assist the reader to enrich his daily living. Once the discipline is accepted and practiced every natural object can become a meditation symbol to inspire contemplation and the further unfoldment of the inner life. As long as humanity chooses to abide in the realm of fantasy there can be no peace on earth. Through the development of meditative disciplines, the sincere person can escape from the shadow of materiality and find the fulfillment of his hopes and aspirations in the light of the ancient way of the sages.

Emblematic, allegorical frontispiece engraving. The central portrait of Jacob Cats is surrounded by mythological figures and symbols. Directly above the portrait is a triad consisting of Mercury with Apollo at the viewer's right, as leader of the Muses, and Athena at the left, as the patroness of learning and secret arts. Below are the nine Muses with identifying implements and attributes. At the center below is the heraldic arms of Jacob Cats, and at top and bottom of the central frame are the masks of comedy and tragedy. At the upper left corner is Pegasus, the winged horse of the Muses and the protector of the ancient wisdom. From *Alle de Wercken* by Jacob Cats, Amsterdam, 1655.

Chapter I

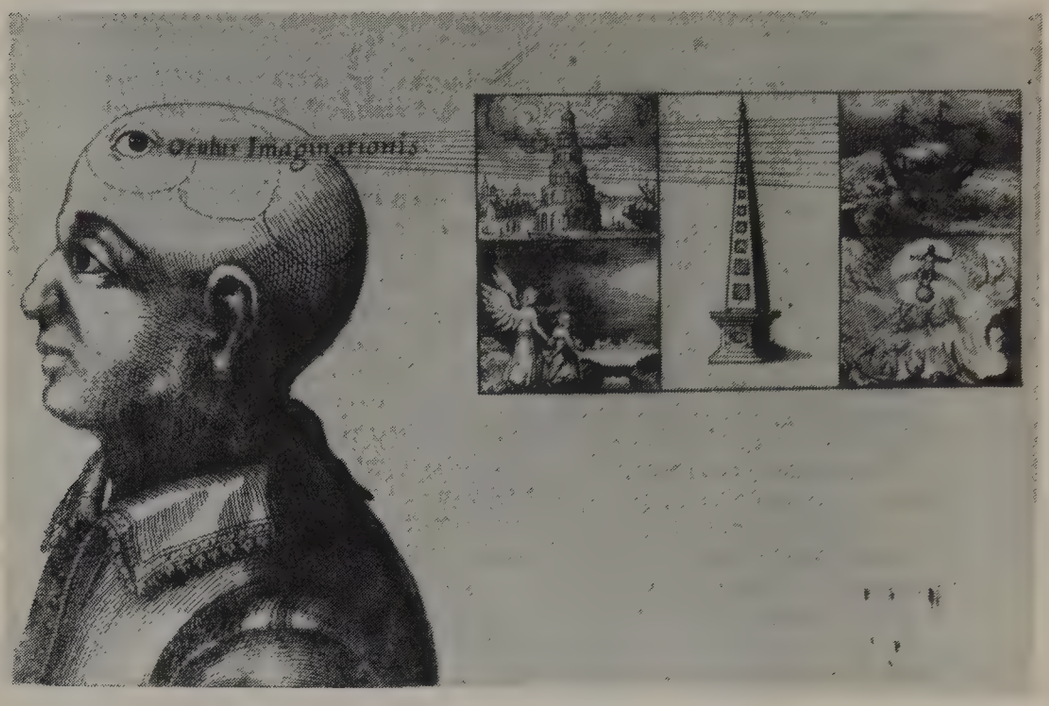
MEDITATION SYMBOLS

Meditational disciplines involving the use of symbols and emblems have been practiced for thousands of years. Every religion has advocated contemplative exercises to strengthen the spiritual resources of dedicated believers. Most of the older religious groups supervised metaphysical practices and required periods of purification, probation, and discipleship as proofs of integrity and sincerity.

Philosophical systems often included esoteric exercises to liberate the mind from bondage to excessive intellectualism. In Greece the Pythagorean School taught contemplation, introspection, and retrospection; and the Neoplatonists perpetuated this type of instruction. In China Confucius required of his followers rectification of character and detachment from unregenerate attitudes and appetites. All of the East Indian schools followed strict systems of self-imposed asceticism, and similar austerities were cardinal tenets of Early Christianity. The Essenian sect of Syria and the Lebanon could be considered as an order of strict observance.

From the earliest developments of language forms ancient scholars found it extremely difficult to transmit abstract moral and ethical truths by means of written characters. Words were sufficient to name objects about which there was common agreement, but they were less satisfactory when describing qualities about which there was uncertainty or difference of opinion. In pictographic and hieroglyphic writing physical objects reproduced in miniature form become symbols of themselves, but it was virtually impossible to draw a picture of the "forgiveness of sin" or the "golden rule." It was the pressure of man's moral reflections that impelled the refinement of written languages. The ancients believed that the alphabet was a gift of Deity, and it was from the contemplation of letter and word forms that a divine science of numerology, cabalism, and mantrams arose in both the East and West.

It is impossible to date, even approximately, the origin of the concept that words and pictures could have multiple meanings. The Egyptians had



The eye of the imagination from an engraving in Robert Fludd's *Tomus Secundus de Supernaturali, Naturali, Praeternaturali et Contranaturali Microcosmi Historia,* Oppenheim, 1619. The author deals with the effect of the imagination upon common appearances and their interpretations by the mental faculties.

a sacerdotal language for the transmission of sacred knowledge, and in Europe Latin was the language of the learned well into the eighteenth century. It is certain that numbers, letters, musical tones, and the spectromatic colors have been considered as emblems since the remote past. From the beginning these devices have been deeply involved in the systems of religion and moral philosophy. In the course of time, symbolism divided naturally into pictorial emblems and a special type of writing called the "fable." A symbol may express a concept, but an emblem proper expresses a precept. Thus, the emblem is directional, teaching a lesson or inspiring a mode of conduct. A symbol may describe abstract attributes or qualities as symbols of the Godhead or devices associated with saints and beatified persons. In modern usage it can represent an association, guild, trade, or craft, or be registered as a trademark.

An emblem is not necessarily associated with any product, nor does it identify a compound by a process of abbreviation. Thus, a coat of arms in heraldry is a device setting forth the honors of a family by combining appropriate symbols. In proper usage emblems and symbols are frequently confused, for each may partake of elements of the other. The only proper rule for differentiation is the purpose for which the design was intended.

Numerous pictorial or descriptive devices have descended from old times and form traditional equations in the human social pattern. There are myths which are accounts of divine or superhuman beings—their characters, conducts, and associations. Nearly always, mythology assumes emblematic significance. Legends are usually associated with places or are means of describing or explaining unusual or peculiar operations of nature. Folklore, as the word implies, includes hero legends and other lore directly concerned with one's race, nation, or community. The fairy tale deals with sprites, elementals, and other fantastic creatures and often involves moral instruction. The fable proper is restricted to the humanizing of animals or other subhuman forms of life for the purpose of caricaturing or exaggerating the peculiarities of human nature. Fables, such as those of Aesop and La Fontaine, frequently serve as emblems in story form, because their primary purpose is to emphasize a moral truth.

Among old nations emblems and symbols served two important purposes. They were the simplest means of communicating the mysteries of religion and a convenient vehicle for picturing and extending the social graces. Among the Greeks and Romans symbols of hospitality ornamented the fronts of houses, especially doorways, gates, and facades. They also adorned the interiors of public rooms, inviting guests to banquets, to the pleasures of the garden, and to the refreshment of the public baths. Our classical ancestors wished to be considered as overflowing with gentility, courtesy, and hospitality. They went so far as to paint a reproduction of their dinner tables outside the house, so that guests might enjoy appropriate expectations. In more somber mood, however, they seated a figure of death at the head of the banqueting table.

In the House of the Mysteries (Villa dei Misteri) at Pompeii elaborate religious murals representing sections of Dionysiac initiation rituals covered the walls. These depictions of Sacred Mysteries helped to condition the minds of both candidates and officiating priests toward the sublimity of the mystical tradition. Similar ornamentations, either painted or sculptured, adorned Eastern shrines and temples, combining decoration and visual instruction. Among such nations as have large illiterate groups the pictorial form became a vital element of education.

In Christendom, as late as the seventeenth century, morality plays contributed largely to the dissemination of Biblical history and doctrine. Through the Dark Ages in Europe even persons of wealth and distinction could neither read nor write. To teach the populace the elements of their faith, plays, pageants, and rituals were given by the clergy on the broad porches of the churches and cathedrals. The large open square in front of the religious building was intended to permit an assemblage of spectators to watch the

sacred theatrical productions. Fragments of Old Testament history, scenes from the life of Christ, and episodes from the lives of saints and martyrs were favorite subjects. It was soon recognized that the parables were especially suitable to be presented as morality plays. Such stories as the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan became typical of the entire program of Christian ethics. If the local faith seemed to be lacking in appropriate fervor, a vivid depiction of the state of lost souls usually corrected the condition.

Among the types of mandalas associated with Esoteric Buddhism it has been noted that in some instances living persons portrayed the various sacred images and acted out the mystical truths set forth in the scriptures. Even today, sanctified persons are identified principally in religious art by the symbols with which they are associated. Representations of saints may be so faulty in design and uncertain in likeness that it would be impossible to distinguish them unless they were accompanied by identifying devices. In the cases of saints, the identifying symbols are most often associated with the incidents or implements of their martyrdom. The vast pageantry of Oriental divinities, saints, and demigods must also be identified by certain invariable symbols known as attributes.

Early man brought every abstract and intangible factor of which he became aware down to the homely level of his own untutored reflections. When he represented his deities, they bore a startling resemblance to himself. He honored the divine nature by conferring upon it the regal and haughty majesty of a worldly monarch. Greek and Roman art of the classical period was extremely literal. The Egyptians, however, were more dramatic, because of their ingenious combining of human and animal forms. By this device they escaped dismal realism and prevented their gods from resembling their politicians. The simplest expedient which came to the mind of ancient man was to bestow a feeling of superiority by increasing size. Large figures gained impressiveness by mass alone, and the colossal image became symbolical of vastness of domain, superiority in wisdom or virtue, and greatness of temporal power.

Although we have defined our distinction between an emblem and a symbol, it is proper to examine various opinions on this subject. Our English word *emblem* comes to us from the Greek through the Latin. It means literally *to put in* or *to put on* and *to inlay.* The use of the word in reference to mosaics or decorations set into pavements or walls is currently obsolete. The dictionary now defines an emblem as a picture accompanied with a motto, a set of verses, or the like, intended as a moral lesson or meditation. There is also a second definition by which an emblem is recognized as the visible sign of an idea, or as a figure or object symbolizing or suggesting another figure or object. In this definition a symbol is regarded as more arbitrary or conventional than an emblem.

An early writer, Claude Mignault, writing on emblem books, recognized in 1574 that, "All emblems are symbols, tokens, or signs, but all symbols are not emblems: the two possess affinity indeed, but not identity." In his introductory dissertation to the London 1864 facsimile reprint of Geffrey Whitney's *Choice of Emblems,* first published in Leyden, 1586, Henry Green supplies the following: "Naturally and easily the term emblem became applicable to any painting, drawing, or print that was representative of an action, of a quality of mind, or of any peculiarity or attribute of character. Emblems in fact were, and are, a species of hieroglyphics, in which figures or pictures, besides denoting the natural object to which they bear resemblances, were employed to express properties of the mind, virtues and abstract ideas, and all the operations of the soul."

Emblems and symbolical devices are mentioned in the Bible, the scriptural writings of most non-Christian nations, and in the great epic poems and classical literature of antiquity. Homer and other Greek poets refer especially to the shields of the heroes adorned and ornamented with figures and devices. Many examples appear on Etruscan pottery and in the picture writings of the Mayan and Aztec empires in Central America. Such decorations established the precedent for medieval heraldry, and the coats of arms of illustrious families were painted on their shields. Devices on early coinage should also be mentioned. These often included hieroglyphical representations or symbols of divine or human sovereignty together with the peculiar emblems of cities and states. Old signet rings, seals, and cylinder seals were also ornamented with significant designs.

Francis Bacon in his *De Augmentis Scientiorum* writes: "Of the former sort are Hieroglyphics and Gestures. For as to Hieroglyphics (things of ancient use, and embraced chiefly by the AEgyptians, one of the most ancient nations), they are but as continued impresses and emblems. And as for Gestures, they are as transitory Hieroglyphics, and are to Hieroglyphics as words spoken are to words written, in that they abide not; but they have evermore, as well as the other, an affinity with the things signified . . ."

Thus, Bacon seems to suggest that the five senses open the way to five distinct schools of meditation symbols. Sight makes possible the full experience of the works of visible creation, to the contemplation of which the inward life is enriched. Hearing opens the way to the intricate mysteries of sound, including all natural sounds, human speech, and the wonderful world of music, which is an exact science and was so appreciated by the Pythagoreans. The sense of smell has wonders of its own from perfumes to incense as used in sacred rituals. The chemistry in the alchemy of odors was explored by most ancient nations and added considerably to the compounding of medicines and unguents. The Chinese did very well with the

Ripa was a distinguished iconographer, and many artists of the period made use of his remarkable illustrations. His figure to symbolize eternity is feminine, because she gives birth to time and all its progeny, and her body is spangled with stars. From *Nova Iconologia* by Caesare Ripa, Padua, 1618.

sense of taste and gave the tongue also the power of recognizing and enjoying flavors and textures of foods. All of this contributed also to gradual development in the science of nutrition. The fifth sensory perception is feeling, reaching out to examine quality by the handling of objects and the search for companionship through physical contact of one kind or another. The handshake is one simple evidence of an almost limitless exploration and has become largely a release for the blind from their isolation. If each of these senses is the complete unfoldment of a universal principle infinitely diffused, they are entitled to recognition as symbolical of the universal processes continually manifesting throughout creation.

It is now appropriate to introduce a most curious work. The *Horapollinis Niloi Hieroglyphica* first appeared in printed form in the Aldine edition of 1505. There were at least eight editions in the sixteenth century, and it later occurs in the *OEdipus AEgyptiacus* of Athanasius Kircher, Amsterdam, 1676. The most available edition in English is that published in London in 1840 by Alexander Turner Cory under the title *The Hieroglyphics of Horapollo Nilous.* It should be pointed out, however, that in Cory's version the figures representing the hieroglyphics have been completely revised to agree with the findings of modern Egyptologists. The designs ceased to be emblems in the pictorial sense and are reduced to sober elements of the Egyptian written language.

The scribe Horapollon flourished in the reign of Theodosius I (408-455 A.D.) and was a native of the nome of Panopolis, a great center of literary activity at that time. He appears to have traveled considerably and followed the profession of grammarian, teaching in both Alexandria and Constantinople. He gained some distinction as a dramatist and wrote commentaries on the Greek poets. Some have suggested that Horapollon was a priest of the surviving Egyptian religious Mysteries. Motivated by a desire to perpetuate the fast-fading knowledge of the hieroglyphics inscribed on the monuments and in the manuscripts of his people, he prepared what may be termed a key to these symbolic figures.

There has been considerable difference of opinion as to the validity of the contributions of Horapollon, but Sir E.A. Wallis Budge points out that he probably had access to a number of ancient Egyptian papyri. The original works of this scribe seem to have been extensive, but only two books or sections of his thesis on *Hieroglyphics* are extant. Horapollon apparently lived too late to restore the ancient learning of his nation, and many of his interpretations of the glyphs and figures are fantastic. On the other hand, Budge, an outstanding modern authority, states: "The first book contains evidence that the writer has a good knowledge of the meanings and uses of Egyptian hieroglyphs, and that he was familiar with inscriptions of the Ptolemaic and Graeco-Roman periods." (See: *The Rosetta Stone,* London, 1929, p. 181.)

Horapollon is mentioned or quoted by nearly all students of Egyptology. He was responsible for the recognition of the emblematic elements in the symbolism of Egyptian mythology, sculpture, and writing. In fact, his work implies that the initiated priests of Egypt used symbolism in a more philosophic sense than most ancient nations. The very concept of symbolism as a kind of language of universal truths is closely associated with *The Hieroglyphics* of Horapollon.

The first of his figures is reproduced from the Paris edition of 1551, which

The Hieroglyphics of Horapollon from the Paris 1551 edition. The uroboros is pictured with its tail covered by the rest of its body, and, because creation arises from eternity, it encircles images of the creator gods.

is in the PRS Library. Horapollon explains that to denote eternity Egyptians depict the sun and moon because their elements are eternal. They also represent eternity by a serpent, or basilisk, with its tail covered with the rest of its body. They placed golden figures of this creature around their gods. The basilisk is a mythological dragon-serpent, itself immortal, whereas all other snakes are mortal. Here, then, is an early instance of a device later associated with alchemy, Hermetic art, and the esoteric tradition. The serpent devouring its own tail is now commonly used to represent either timelessness or some vast cycle which to mortal contemplation appears endless.

In the book of Lambsprinck, *On the Stone of the Philosophers,* included in the *Hermetic Museum,* the basilisk is used as a symbol of precipitated or sublimated mercury. An almost identical treatment of this subject is found associated with the Rosicrucians. It also stands for the solution to the mystery

The second emblem in *The Hieroglyphics* of Horapollon from the 1551 edition shows the serpent devouring its own tail, for creation survives upon itself. The scales suggest the stars, and the periodic renovations of the universe are symbolized by the circumstances that the serpent casts off its old skin and comes forth renewed.

of eternal life. (See: *Lumin de Lumine* by Thomas Vaughan, *The Holy Guide* by John Heydon, and *Atalanta Fugiens* by Michael Maier.)

Horapollon supplies many quaint and curious examples of Egyptian symbolism. He says, for example, "To signify a man that has not traveled out of his own country, they delineate the onocephalus (creature with an ass's head) because he is neither acquainted with history, nor conversant with foreign affairs." It can easily be understood that such definitions and explanations, while comforting to the moralist, have not always brought complete satisfaction to the more prosaic Egyptologist. It is safe to say, however, that the mental meanderings of Horapollon influenced most early interpreters of hieroglyphical inscriptions. His book was treasured by them as a precious monument of antiquity and attained wide popularity.

Engraving of the basilisk from *De Lapide Philosophico* of Lambsprinck in the *Musaeum Hermeticum,* Frankfurt, 1678. The emblem is accompanied by the statement that it is a great miracle that in the venomous dragon there should be the universal medicine.

We have devoted considerable space to Horapollon's book because it reveals the very substance of the concept of philosophical symbolism. Strange emblems and curious devices are to be found wherever the esoteric traditions flourished among the ancients. Many of the ruins of the past are valuable principally as symbols of vanished cultures and remote learning. Materialistic scholars and scientists are interested only in recording the forms and proportions of early landmarks. It does not occur to them that locked within these forms are moral truths captured geometrically in stone and marble and artistically in ornaments, embellishments, and other designs. The spiritual, philosophical, and scientific secrets of the past are preserved, but concealed, in the symbolic forms of mythology, drama, poetry, and fables.

Unaware that these remains have other than obvious meanings, modern scholars have deprived themselves of the consolation which comes from an understanding of causes, divine and universal.

Joannes Macarius in his book *Abraxas,* published in Antwerp in 1657, illustrates a number of engraved gems relating to the Gnostic cult and the worship of the Alexandrian deity, Serapis. The accompanying plate from this work shows six gems carved in intaglio, including fragments of ritual and portrait heads of Serapis.

From *Abraxas, seu Apistopistus; quae est Antiquaria de Gemmis Basilidianis Disquisitio,* Antwerp, 1657, by Joannes Macarius (Jean l'Heureux) is derived the accompanying plate of sacred emblems and symbols associated with the Mystery cults of the Greek and Egyptian schools.

Ancient scholars stated that the priests of the old temples had a secret language called sacerdotal, which they concealed from the profane, revealing it only to those who had celebrated the rites of the blessed gods. It is reported that the priests, using the same signs and symbols employed by the profane in the transaction of their mundane affairs, were able to transmit an entirely different and more profound kind of information. These keys to this sacred mode of transmission are now believed to be hopelessly lost. Therefore, we can appreciate the influence exercised by a work like the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollon. The very obscurity of the text and the absence of adequate historical data have inclined some critics to assume that at least part of the book may have been added as late as the fourteenth or fifteenth century. Examination shows that most of the early emblem books follow closely the format of the *Hieroglyphica.* Some went so far as to include the word *hieroglyphic* in their titles, and the illustrations exhibit numerous similarities. Symbols became the elements of a moral and ethical language, and, while the moralism itself was largely dominated by the prevailing theological concepts, a new means for the communication of secret knowledge was made available to European intellectuals. The curious device of the emblem became the silent and swift messenger capable of eluding the vigilance of censorship.

Mystical speculations about God, the world, and man's place in the universe occupied the minds of many medieval scholars and theologians. In the Dark Ages, when those seeking wisdom were denied any comprehensive intellectual program, truth seekers wandered about in a sphere of uncertainties, stumbling over scholastic jots and tittles. Life itself was the grand symbol of divine displeasure. All men suffered, if not for their own sins, then for "original sin." The effort to explain life without violating theological restrictions and social mores ended in a wide use of emblems. Frequently, interpretation imposed a small meaning upon a large concept; but the symbol was a happy solution to this difficult situation. It could please all and offend none, whereas words led to endless controversy.

Books with emblematic illustrations are met with in many literary productions, but emblemata as a special class had a peculiar vogue during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For practical purposes, it may be said that the language of European emblemism began with Andrea Alciati (1492-1550), an Italian jurist. In 1522 he published his book of emblems illustrated with symbolic figures accompanied by moral sayings in Latin verse. The work was immediately successful and was soon translated into French, Italian, and Spanish. It appeared with several editings, and the figures differ in number and arrangement. From the time of Alciati to the magnificent productions of Jacob Cats (1577-1660) emblem books appeared at regular intervals. In the collected works of Jacob Cats, published in Amsterdam in

1655, the engraved title page, which is illustrated as the frontispiece to this chapter, is devoted to Greek and Roman deities and the Muses. This practice, which was quite general, does not seem to have offended orthodox religionists. After "Vader Catz," as he was lovingly called by the Dutch, there were few important additions to the literature of emblems.

An English edition of the *Moral Emblems* of Jacob Cats, translated by Richard Pigot, was published in London in 1862. There appears a new frontispiece, engraved by John Leighton, F.S.A., which is described as follows: "Portrait of Jacob Cats—Under allegorical figure of Universal Justice, supported on one side by Solomon, Confucius, and Aesop; under the other by Age instructing Infancy and Adolescence, in the presence of Labour and Travel; in the background Peace and Plenty are contrasted with the violent acts of man against the will of Supreme Power. In the centre foreground is a vase of flowers surrounded by choke-weeds—type of elevated nature a constant prey to the coarser elements. On the base are sculptured bas-reliefs, 'Suum cuique'—Let each apply to himself that which fits him; 'Bonus cum bonis'—The just with the true."

The first, and probably the most successful, of the English emblem writers was Francis Quarles. In his preface to the *Emblems Divine and Moral,* London, 1777, the editor says that the work "is not only calculated to convey the most important lessons of instruction into youthful minds, but to convey them in the most pleasant and entertaining manner; by *hieroglyphics,* or figurative signs and symbols of divine, sacred, and supernatural things: by which mode of communicating knowledge, the fancy is charmed, the invention is exercised, the mind informed, and the heart improved." Actually, the text is well-calculated to invoke noble sentiments in the young. The headings are Scriptural, and the texts accompanying the pictures have a somewhat doleful quality. For example, "Remember, I beseech thee, that thou has made me as the clay, and wilt thou bring me into dust again?"

Recent interest in symbolism has resulted in a heavy demand for emblem books. A number of the rare and difficult to obtain are now available in facsimile. In some respects, at least, they are suitable for meditative exercises. Many of the strange devices which illustrate these works have attracted the attention of psychologists and psychiatrists. It has been noted that numerous dreams or metaphysical experiences parallel closely the quaint illustrations found in the old emblem books.

Many designs resembling mandalas have appeared in Western contemporary religious art. This has resulted in the creation of numerous symbolic compositions, but most of them cannot be considered as authentic mandalas. Even if they indicate the degree of integration of the artist, they have no general meaning for other persons.

In the Orient all genuine mandalas have descended from the remote past with virtually no changes or modifications of the designs. They are cosmic patterns on the level of universal truth and, by extension, reveal the internal composition of man's complex nature.

The real purpose of the mandala is to inspire the transmutation of sight into insight. Once the idea of a completely integrated existence is experienced both the heart and mind are strengthened, and even common incidents take on deeper and more important meanings. There is a natural desire to believe that life is purposeful, and the mandala supports the natural faith with which we are all born but which tends to fail under the stress of physical insecurities.

Precise thinkers have long regarded mathematics as the most exact of the sciences. Mandalas are based upon mathematical formulas and equations. Their very exactitude bestows a kind of certainty which strongly supports acceptance. The Platonic axiom "God geometrizes" helps to restore confidence in universal laws and their operations.

Materialism cannot provide internal security for those burdened with temporal uncertainties. In spite of the contributions of the sciences, there is no available remedy for common anxieties. The Oriental philosopher-mystic might remind the Western man of learning of a line in Sir Edwin Arnold's beautiful poem *The Light of Asia,* which sets forth the teachings of Buddha, "that veil upon veil we lift to find, veil upon veil behind."

For the most part, mystics are gentle people seeking to overcome the faults and failings of their own temperaments by devotional exercises and attitudes. Instead of the intensive search for reality which dominates intellectuals, the lovers of God rejoice in the quiet adoration of an infinite parental being. This brings another issue into focus, and that is the motive which inspired and sustains mystics in their quiet acceptance of the divine will. Esoteric exercises must be free of all worldly objectives. The true mystic asks nothing and gives all. Any worldly objective frustrates the attainment of illumination. It does not follow that life becomes a tyranny of virtue, rather it ends forever the tyranny of worldliness.

Certain advanced teachers have evolved appropriate techniques to reveal their degrees of internal insight. The nearer they come to the experience of enlightenment, the more clearly they can express universal truths through various acquired skills. Many have attained extraordinary competence in the creative arts. A highly disciplined Zen man can look at a picture, examine a ceramic piece, or read a poem, and state with certainty that the creator of these works has reached a fourth, fifth, or sixth level of meditation. There are many beautiful ways to present religious themes which will inspire the

viewer and refine discrimination. In a sense, some of these productions can be considered as approaching mandalas. It is for the viewer to decide from within himself the level of consciousness which inspired the work.

Gradually, the meditational discipline becomes the leader of conduct. The periods devoted to esoteric exercises are not lengthened, because the realization of the divine plan gradually becomes continuous. This does not mean that the mystic is under the constant pressure of dedication, and he is actually more free than ever before. The mandalas have revealed a qualitative universe, and discipline has resulted in the enlightened person becoming a citizen of these invisible realms which are the only realities. There is a new dimension of seeing and a kind of hearing through the eyes. Flowers tell us something, although they cannot actually speak. What they really tell us is that all the beauty which we have seen in the mortal world is a revelation of the divine sublimity. Everything becomes more valuable, and even our mistakes are more gentle and rewarding, because we know they have helped us to grow.

The Trinity in a single figure holding compass and scale, as illustrated in an Italian manuscript of the sixteenth century. From Adolphe Napoleon Didron's *Iconographie chrétienne*, Paris, 1843.

Chapter II

MEDITATION, THE EXPERIENCE OF REALITY

Most of the world's religious leaders have learned from experience that orthodox conformities do not satisfy the internal needs of devout persons. The result has been the rise of mystical sects, which are either endorsed or tolerated by the popular faiths. India has produced a number of mystically oriented groups. The Islamic world has recognized the Dervishes and the Sufis. Judaism inspired the Mishna and the cabala. Buddhism is largely a school of meditation, while the increasing popularity of Zen and Taoism bespeaks a worldwide search for serenity of spirit.

The meditation schools have always been beset with difficulties, the most common of which is concerned with the actual process of meditation. If the mind separates itself from the illusions and delusions of the mortal realm, what is to prevent it from simply going to sleep and carrying the rest of the personality with it? In some cases it has been recommended that the intellect should center itself upon the adoration of Deity, brotherly love, and the recognition of human dependencies upon a Divine Power. Visualization can be centered on a sacred icon or a significant religious symbol.

Contemplation upon the visible manifestation of an invisible principle inclines naturally to the search for archetypal designs and figures which inspire such research and reflection. This process, as it unfolds, leads to the recognition of the symbolical forms in nature and results in the creation of emblems and cryptograms suitable to the communication of abstract truths. There is no dogma in this form of communication. Each viewer interprets the symbol on the level of his own insight and, if the figure is properly designed, it strengthens the inner convictions of the devout mystic.

Western meditation symbols are largely devotional. They inspire the purification of the affections, the strengthening of charitable instincts, and the refinement of human relationships. Prominent among the Western mystics were the Catholic saints, Francis of Assisi and Teresa of Avila. Among the German mystics were Meister Eckhart, Hildegard of Bingen, Jacob Boehme, Johannes Tauler, and Jacob Lorber. Others equally worthy of note include Emanuel Swedenborg, Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, William Blake, and Andrew Jackson Davis.

Japanese painting on silk representing three religions which have contributed to the spiritual and cultural growth of the Empire. The central figure represents Buddha, who is looking toward a Chinese scholar, who represents Confucianism. The seated lady at the left is Murasaki-Shikibu, the outstanding literary light of the Heian Period. She is used in this painting to symbolize Shintoism, the indigenous faith of Japan. From the PRS Collection.

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) was the daughter of a noble family. She was well-educated, according to the customs of her time, and passed most of her life in Benedictine convents. In due time she became an Abbess, and, with several other nuns, entered a newly constructed convent near Bingen, where she remained until she died in her eighty-second year. From childhood, Hildegard was subject to visions, mystical trances, and holy reveries. She read extensively from the works of both Christian and pagan authors and gained a fair knowledge of the sciences, according to the doctrines of the period. Three proofs that she performed miraculous cures and possessed extraordinary mystical insight were declared to be inconclusive. The real reason for her rejection probably was her independent spirit and her addiction to unorthodox beliefs. Even today biographers pass rather lightly over her metaphysical experiences and speculations.

While Hildegard has been referred to as "The Sibyl of the Rhine," she was more distinguished as a visionary than a prophet. She must be numbered among those who believed in the immediate availability of God's redeeming power. She was concerned basically with the anatomy and physiology of creation. There is no evidence that Hildegard practiced any metaphysical disciplines. Her visions were natural to her, and she never closed the door

between the visible and invisible worlds. Her mystical experiences were strongly visual and impelled her to create an elaborate symbolism for the instruction of those capable of understanding her beliefs. Hildegard suffered from lengthy periods of illness, and some writers are of the opinion that she was a congenital neurotic. She lived mostly within herself and spent much of her time suffering over the delinquencies of humankind. Like many mystics, she could never understand why mortals chose to be miserable in a universe under the rulership of a benevolent Divinity.

To assist in the transmission of her teachings, Hildegard resorted to mystical diagrams and drawings of which Charles Singer in his book *From Magic to Science* (London, 1928) writes, "Nevertheless, though the visions exhibit great originality and creative power, the reader will often be reminded of William Blake—all or nearly all present certain characters in common." He adds that Hildegard herself interpreted her visions in various ways. A remarkable manuscript of Hildegard's *Scivias,* written about 1180, is preserved at Wiesbaden.

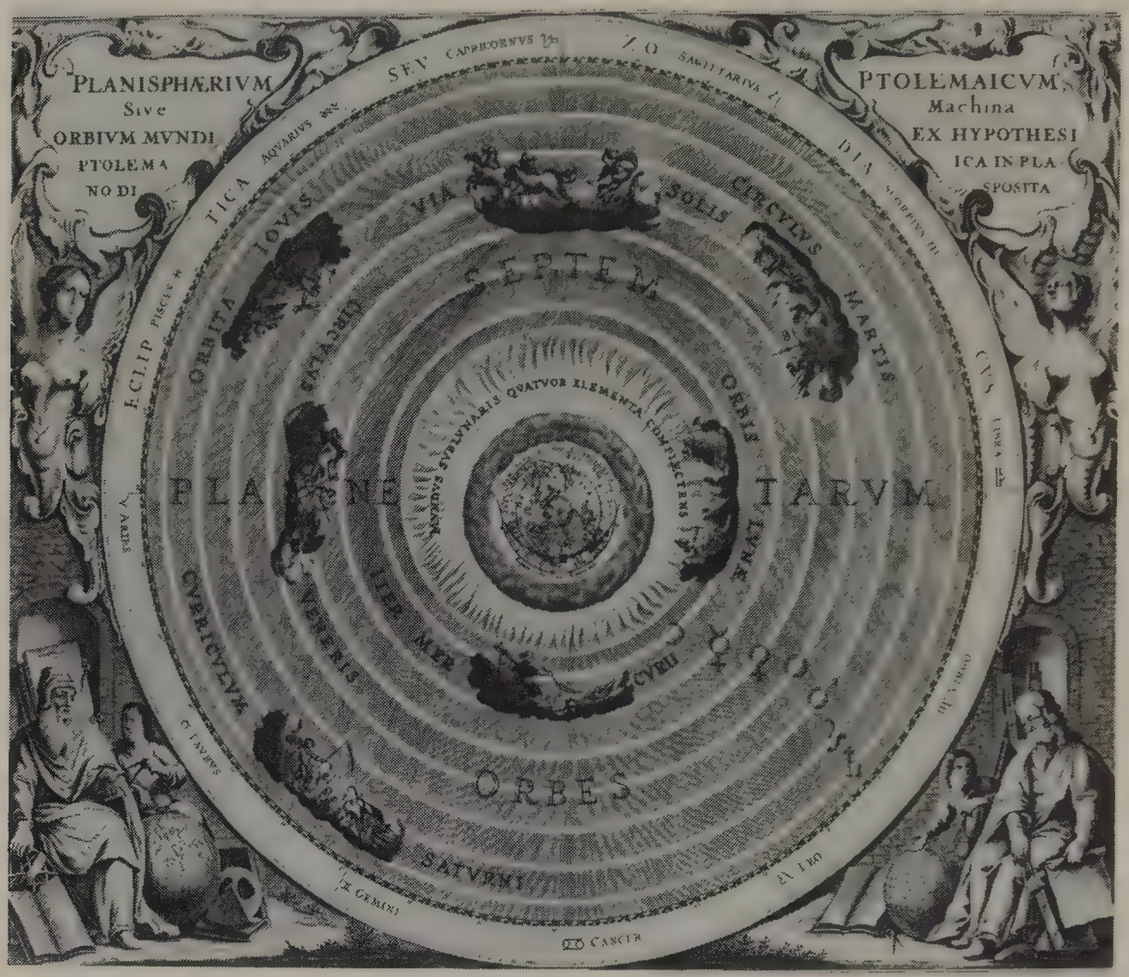
Hildegard and Blake were able to transgress successfully the conservative artistic canons of their time. It was not possible to depend upon pictorialism to escape from the boundaries of the generally acceptable. Jacob Boehme created a new dimension of language to achieve the same end, and Johann Georg Gichtel later invented suitable symbols and emblems. It might seem that Hildegard's philosophy was derived for the most part from ancient sources. Some commentators have believed that she was strongly influenced by the Gnosis, others that Neoplatonism formed her philosophical foundation; and it has even been hinted that she was familiar with the writings of Plato. It might be nearer to the truth to realize that many inspired writers have been faced with the same predicament. In effect, how can that which transcends in every way the familiar experience of living be communicated to intellects or emotions unaware of spiritual realities? Emblems and allegories can stimulate reflections, but understanding is measured by internal insight. In a way, at least, this explains why we try to communicate that truth must come to each person from within himself.

The entry of the soul into the body of the unborn child is one of the most unusual of Hildegard's metaphysical paintings. The soul is depicted as a square filled with eyes and luminous spheres. It is attached to the infant by a kind of spiritual umbilical cord. Ten attendants are grouped about, bringing gifts to the unborn infant and the expectant mother. A reproduction of this figure with considerable descriptive matter appears in Singer's book. The scene may well represent the quickening, the time when the superphysical entity enters into the body which it will inhabit for the duration of its mortal existence.

The entry of the human soul into the body of an unborn child from a painting by Hildegard of Bingen reproduced in *From Magic to Science* by Charles Singer, London, 1928.

Another mandala type of design is derived from the Ptolemaic system of astronomy and shows that Hildegard was familiar with the astrological plans of the solar system and its four elements. Streams of force are descending from the celestial regions, passing through the spheres of fire, air, and water and supporting the creatures of the human, animal, and plant kingdoms. Some of these influences are benign, but certain negative forces cause sickness and misery in the physical regions. This figure is from a manuscript of Hildegard's revelations executed about the year 1200 and now at Lucca. It is reproduced in color in Singer's book already mentioned.

The indebtedness of Hildegard of Bingen to the Ptolemaic system of astronomy is clearly illustrated in this diagram. From a manuscript reproduced in color in *From Magic to Science* by Charles Singer, London, 1928.



The Solar System according to the Egyptian astronomer, Claudius Ptolemy (fl. second century A.D.). The geocentric system was generally accepted until the time of Nicholas Copernicus. The deities in their chariots circle the earth with its zones of the elements. From *Harmonia Macrocosmica* by Andreas Cellarius, Amsterdam, 1708.

Hildegard amended some of her revelations as her spiritual experiences deepened and broadened. The implication was that she continued to penetrate ever more deeply the true meanings of the symbols which she had previously recorded. Her illumination progressed and unfolded as the result of her years of mystical devotion. Like Jacob Boehme, she made use of scientific and philosophical speculations, thus providing a basic structure which she adapted to the reveries arising within herself.

Lao Tsu, one of the most obscure of the Chinese sages, was a mystic, self-educated, and completely dedicated to the way of quietude. He taught the existence of an infinite being that abides forever, moving all things but remaining itself unmoved. Lao Tsu did not know the name of this ultimate reality, but he called it "Tao." In more recent times Taoism developed an

elaborate folklore. The principal mandala of this group is the yin-yang symbol surrounded by eight basic trigrams. The metaphysics of Taoism has descended to the West as the I-ching or Classic of Changes.

The Zen sect derived its inspiration principally from the contemplation of nature. Most of its meditation pictures are quiet landscapes bordered by rugged mountains, where sages and scholars built their thatched cottages near waterfalls or flowing streams. The artist-monk Sesshu was an outstanding master among the Zen painters. The accompanying painting by Sesshu typifies his effort to portray the tranquility of the mystical lifeway. A true sage, standing quietly in the foreground, is breathing in universal peace and contentment. To him, all existence is a meditation symbol.

The transcendental philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson taught that man is allied to the animal world through his body; but, as a rational being, he is ennobled by his love for truth, intuitions of the understanding, sympathies and affections of the heart, and high religious aspirations. Emerson created no mandalas, but his *Essays* can properly be regarded as exalted examples of meditation and spiritual appreciation. Meditation reveals to the mystic what Emerson describes as "the Overself." It is of vital importance to realize that there is something behind the personality which can lead the way to enlightened understanding.

The grand scheme of existence that Dr. Masaharu Anesaki terms "cosmotheism" is an infinite extension of life, law, and purpose, manifesting through will, wisdom, and love. Many religions have dramatized this concept, making it pictorial or arranging physical symbols into patterns which reveal superphysical content. Such devices help to support the realization that all human beings are citizens of a communal system. This being so, there can be no injustice except that which results from man's ignorance of the Divine Plan, which is perpetuated by failure to discipline the sensory perceptions.

Discipline is an internal watchfulness by which each person places his conduct under the censorship of an enlightened conviction. It is not an aggressive or combative procedure but is based upon the principle that the universe is right that this eternal truth can most easily be demonstrated when mortal beings cease to be wrong. It is perfectly proper to accumulate worldly knowledge, but it is also necessary to allow the love-wisdom in the soul to manifest according to its own nature. The human being becomes spiritual when he ceases to be materialistic. That which remains, when illusions have been overcome, is reality. This is why indoctrination is not generally successful. To share prejudices with each other is to discover that most persons prefer their own mistakes to those recommended by their associates.

Detail from Sesshu's Long Landscape Scroll, dated 1486, Mori Collection, Yamaguchi Province, Japan.

The journey inward causes no social embarrassment, no affiliation with some organization, nor any eccentric behavior by which a person becomes conspicuous. The road to the higher self has always been open, and it can never be closed. Each on his own level of maturity can find it, for, as Honen, the canonized Buddhist monk, pointed out in the teaching of the Pure Land Sect, enlightenment is not reserved for the learned or the wealthy or the privileged. According to the Divine Plan, each living being must find the road for himself and walk it, as have all others who have gone before. Most difficulties are due to a sophistication which leads to complexity and the loss of direct cognition. Mencius, the great Chinese sage, taught the secret of the child-mind. The person who is without prejudice or grievance and is free from opinion can experience truth.

Those who come into this world bring with them endowments and aptitudes. It is customary to assume that dispositional peculiarities or attitudes are due to heredity or early environment. The esotericist, however, is likely to assume that temperaments reveal the interaction of karmic processes. Those who have attained a considerable degree of inner insight from previous embodiments may have a natural inclination toward purposeful living. Their ambitions and appetites may not be so difficult to manage, and they will find their pleasures in nonharmful activities. If no foundation for mysticism is brought forward from the past, there will be fewer internal inducements to cultivate self-discipline; but the need will be correspondingly greater.

Mandalas, vision pictures, and other inspiring works of art often have a greater effect on the inner life than philosophical instruction. The purpose of the mandala may be especially associated with what is called reminiscence. There may be a dim recognition or partial remembrance that long ago and far away the soul dedicated itself to the holy life. Thus, meditation provides a link with convictions which flow on, from life to life, responding to the stimuli of idealism.

Meditation, therefore, makes previous merit immediately available in the present incarnation. It may well occur while walking quietly in a park that the mystic will have the type of experience attributed to Boehme. He said that the flowers suddenly shone with light and seemed to speak to him. Everywhere the air was filled with beauty and peace. While such an experience may last only a moment, it is indelibly recorded in the consciousness of the devout human being.

Years later there may be another experience which supports the first and is more readily acceptable because of that which went before. When a mystic reads a beautiful poem, he may react more deeply to the sentiments which are expressed than the average person. In the presence of a newborn babe

Mencius (372-289 B.C.) was the outstanding Confucian scholar during the era of the warring states. His principal literary production, *The Doctrine of the Mean,* emphasized the importance of the merit system. Mencius perpetuated the concept of the "Superior Man" but believed that it was the moral duty of every person to contribute to the advancement of human society. From a Chinese illustration reproduced in Abbé Favier's *Péking.*

the idealist is no longer able to consider it merely another child born into the world. Both birth and death are aspects of the cosmic mystery—wonders that the mind cannot solve but the heart can accept. Kindnesses are more deeply appreciated by the mystically inclined, whereby it is easier for them to forgive injustices great or small. Vision expands until it includes a new revelation of man's place in the stream of eternal life. There is less inclination to waste time, because there are so many interesting things to do and wonderful truths to think about. Calmness becomes more comfortable, which may be a shock to most Western people who regard agitation as indispensable to happiness. Calmness does not interfere with judgment but actually strengthens it. There can be no justice if our personal feelings become too deeply disturbed.

The Egyptians established the precedent of depicting justice blindfolded to indicate that it must not be deceived by appearances. The self-disciplined person is more leisurely in his attitudes and can quietly contemplate the actual meaning of human existence. In any activity in which human beings are involved internal quietude is an asset. The quiet person can listen, which is one of the basic secrets of learning. The person who is free from prejudices cannot be moved by propaganda and, most of all, cannot be disillusioned by prevailing corruptions. Disillusionment, as a word, expresses a double negative. Actually, to be disillusioned means to no longer have faith in that which is not true.

Having visualized a concept of life as that set forth in a Shingon mandala, an Amidist vision scene, or in the proportions of a great cathedral, we must try to preserve the sense of spiritual exaltation which accompanies the contemplation of sacredness. To meditate only a few minutes a day or even longer, while spending the rest of the time nursing grievances, will be of no avail. We are also assured that words without works are dead. Every effort must be made to revive the spark of sublimity, which has blazed up for a second and then grown dim again. This can be accomplished through the practice of reminiscence, a continual revitalization of constructive convictions. The dedicated person involved in the common activities of the day must, whenever possible, see evidence of the Divine Plan in action. He must try to learn something which strengthens love and faith and accept shortcomings of those around him as temporary weaknesses of character. In the course of time, the mystic can transcend negative attitudes by greater charity and the resolution to correct defects.

The intensive self-discipline associated with the esoteric philosophies of Asia is not suited to the spiritual needs of the average Westerner. It is advantageous to all concerned, therefore, to accept the obvious fact that ages of traditional beliefs must be taken into consideration. Occidental peoples

are inclined to accept the Heart Doctrine as revealed in Mahayana Buddhism and Christian mysticism. To the Buddhist, Kannon is the personification of compassion, and, obviously, compassion is also a Christian virtue. The "charitas" of St. Paul is now translated as "love." Compassion, however, implies something else. It is more than solicitude; it is acceptance with quiet understanding of the inevitable imperfections present in all human beings. Compassion is a giving of oneself to the service of all who need understanding, protection, sympathy, and generosity. Compassion involves the bodhisattva vow that no truth seeker can accept happiness for himself alone but will continue to serve the troubled in mind, heart, or body until all attain liberation from ignorance and fear.

For the Christian mystic Christ is the Transcendent Being, and the physical body of the individual or the world is the holy sepulcher. Meditation must lead to the personal experience of the Christ mystery within the self. This redeeming power descends into the limbo of the mental and emotional underworld to release souls in bondage to the sorrows of mortality. Through a gentle kind of meditation, it becomes possible to release the indwelling Christ spirit from its mortal prison to redeem thoughts and emotions and make them luminous with spiritual grace. It then becomes natural to worship through works rather than words. The individual finds that his own inner life is the house of the Holy Spirit. It does not follow that he suddenly becomes impractical, for the mind can be just as alert and conscientious as before. Shinran, the Japanese Buddhist priest, reminded his followers that to attain spirituality they were not required to give up their professions, leave their trades or crafts, renounce their families, or give away their possessions.

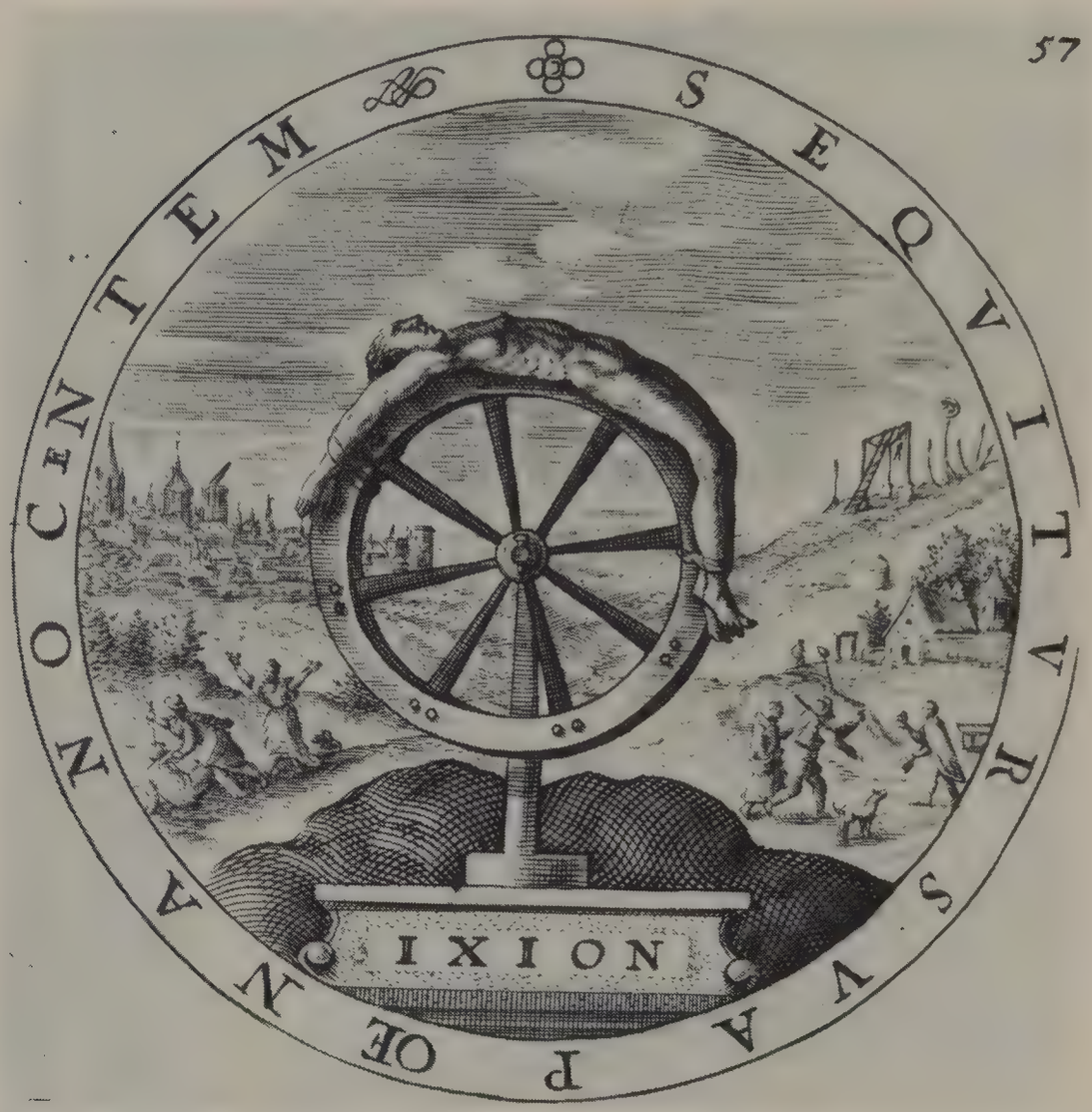
The purpose of religious devotion is to ennoble conduct, discipline the tendency toward selfishness, overcome self-pride, which is always a serious impediment, and use wisely those material possessions over which we have temporary management. As the mind becomes oriented to a higher code of convictions, the dedicated person realizes that, although there are many creeds and dogmas, there is only one religion, which, named or unnamed, impels human beings to venerate the good and live in peace together.

The visualizing tendency of the mind cannot be ignored. Mental beliefs can become so intense that they break through into the objective life as visions, dreams, and trances. Many people have pseudo-psychic experiences, but if they arise in the mind of an undisciplined person they are usually evidence of wishful thinking. There is no way to clear the mind and the emotions from the sorrows of self-deceit, except by the cultivation of constructive attitudes, especially avoiding the nursing of secret selfish ambitions. Genuine mystical procedures are comparatively simple. Honen built

St. Bonaventure sees a vision of the Holy Spirit in the form of a radiant dove hovering over the head of St. Thomas Aquinas. Engraving by E. van Paenderen. From *Vita d. Thomae Aquinatis,* Brussels, 1778.

his entire system upon a simple religious formula which he called the Nembutsu. This was a verbal meditation which translates into English, "Adoration to the Amida Buddha." The mantram is to be repeated frequently and is a continuous verbalization of veneration for the radiant principle of eternal love. The words spoken with the lips are also heard by the ears and are carried back to the mind as restatements of personal dedication.

While this procedure may not be entirely suitable to Westerners, there



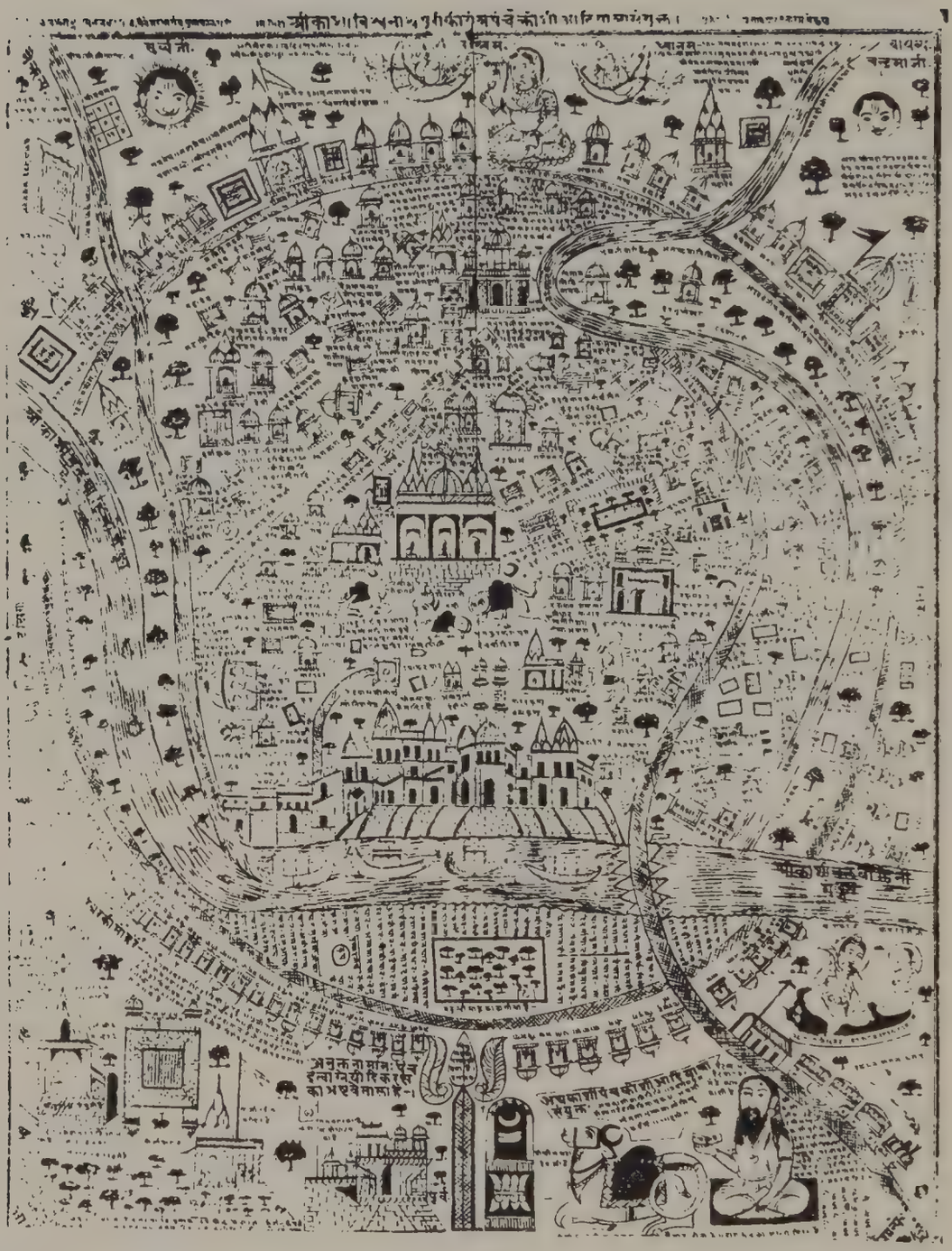
Ixion, when guilty of murder, was forgiven but then committed another misdeed and was sentenced by Zeus to be bound on a fiery wheel. It is believed that the story began as an agricultural myth showing man's complete dependence upon the sun and its motion through the seasons. From *Nucleus Emblematum* by Gabriel Rollenhagen, Arnheim, 1611, reprinted in Wither's *Emblemes,* London, 1634.

is no good reason why everyone should not substitute a simple statement of gratitude for every complaint which they are inclined to utter. Some may feel that a formula like the Nembutsu is actually auto-hypnotic and merely imposes a religious attitude which is without actual justification. If this is true, then all the destructive, discouraging, and malicious remarks repeated daily and assumed to be appropriate to various situations are also auto-suggestions leading to a condition of perpetual misery. The idealist prefers to believe that integrity is the reality, and, without much effort, he finds strong evidence to support his natural optimism.

Meditation exercises may lead to metaphysical experiences of one kind or another. If this occurs, it may be necessary to seek help to interpret the variety of symbolism that arises in the mental atmosphere. Some psychologists can deal constructively with the neurotic pressures which are usually involved. The only practical way to determine the validity of visions or messages associated with clairaudience is to analyze the motives which have led to the desire for spiritual advancement. If the person has freed the mind and emotions from all self-centered motivations and is without the desire for liberation from the burdens of daily experience, then sudden extensions of consciousness may be valid and contribute to further growth.

Meditation symbols set forth in the present writing are indicative of the worldwide search for personal participation in the consciousness of God. Followers of all beliefs will find it useful and inspiring to explore these symbols in the terms of their individual understanding. Each emblem is part of a cosmic language. As the potentials of the soul unfold, they will cast their own light upon the old diagrams and curious designs. In every land and throughout the long record of history dedication to principles has been accepted as the way to rescue humanity from the tragedies resulting from the gratification of undisciplined appetites and ambitions.

The first step on the path that leads to those higher realms which are man's natural home is the conquest of impulses which bind mortals to the wheel of Ixion. No one can claim to be truly religious simply because he loves God. He must reach that degree of understanding that God's love in *him* has brought peace to his own soul and he has forgiven all others for their shortcomings, as he hopes to be forgiven.



The sacred city of Benares as a world symbol. These crude maps were given to pilgrims who visited the most holy place of Hindu pilgrimage. This example was obtained c. 1920. From the PRS Collection.

Chapter III

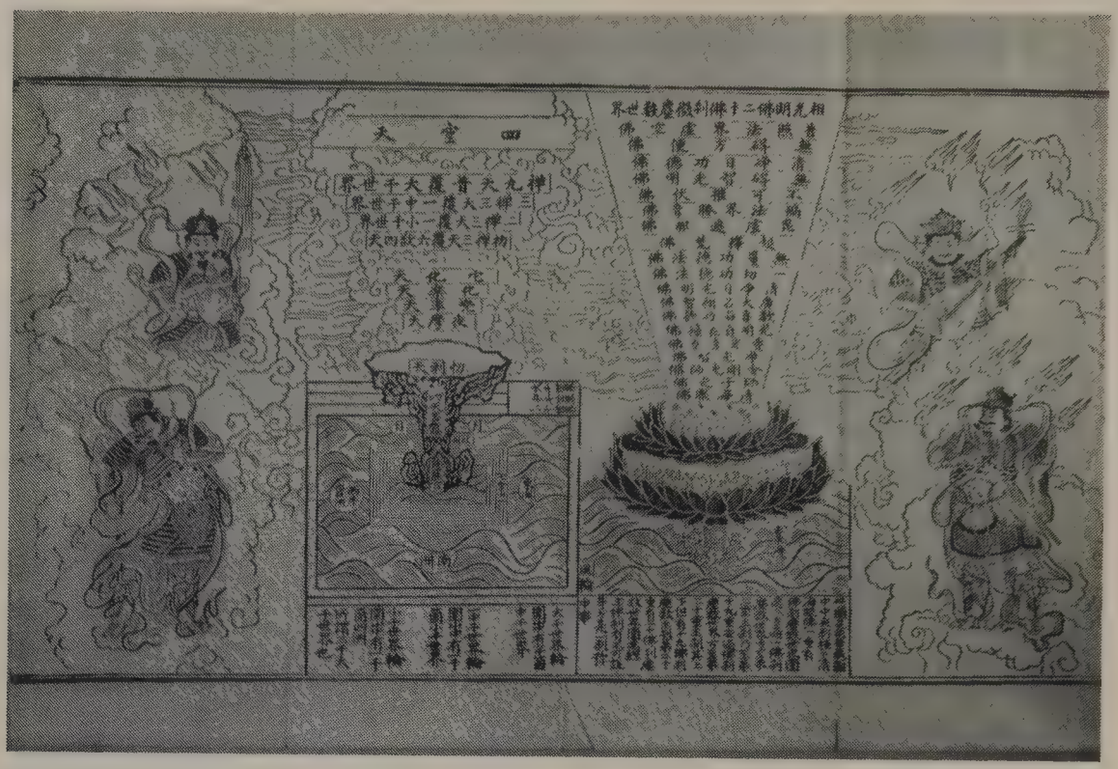
THE MANDALA AS A SYMBOL OF THE UNIVERSE

A mandala (Japanese—mandara) is a graphic representation of universal existence through a complicated structure of symbols arranged according to the teachings of Hinduism and Buddhism. By extension, it includes similar productions found in other religious systems which have attempted to delineate mathematically or artistically the pattern of cosmic principles within which the physical world exists and unfolds. In his *Hand-Book of Chinese Buddhism, Being a Sanskrit-Chinese Dictionary* (Tokyo, 1904) Ernest J. Eitel defines "mandala" as: 1) the circle of continents around the Meru; 2) magic circles used in sorcery; 3) circular plate (with five elevations representing the Meru and the four continents) placed on every altar. It is obvious that this definition is principally concerned with the use of cosmic diagrams in Hinduism; but, as these were later incorporated into the teachings of Northern Buddhism, they apply to both religions.

The accompanying illustration from a sixteenth century Chinese edition of the *Lotus Sutra* depicts the world mountain, Meru (Sumeru), rising from a platform of four levels, which, in turn, is surrounded by water. The mountain itself is table-shaped and supports a design setting forth the invisible levels of the celestial region. Another part of the diagram shows the metaphysical anatomy of creation supported by a double lotus flower rising above the surface of the watery element. Four Lokapalas, or guardians, defend the diagram and also protect the concept which it portrays.

The mandala as a magic circle is associated with the primitive rites of many ancient culture groups. The world diagram or parts thereof can be used in talismanic magic as a charm or protection against evil. The magic circle found in old European *grimoires* has many meanings, not the least of which is the magnetic field of the human body which serves as a protection against evil forces—physical or metaphysical. Medieval sorcery arose in Europe as the result of contact with the Near East and was quickly incorporated into cabalism, astrology, alchemy, and necromancy.

Marg, A Magazine of the Arts, Volume 16, No. 4, Bombay, September, 1963 reproduces an altar ornament representing Meru and its four continents from the collection of the Dalai Lama. It is a mandala with four circular



The World Mountain. A woodblock illustration from a sixteenth century Chinese edition of the *Lotus Sutra*.

tiers said to represent chakras and crowned by a Wheel of the Law. It is inscribed with a mantra consisting of a vow to strive for the liberation of the universe. Most of the architectural designs for Buddhist memorial monuments have been inspired by the Mount Meru concept, which appears in the form of a tower, pagoda, or mound.

Students of Oriental religious symbolism recognize at least twelve types of mandalas, and within each of these groups there are several varieties. (See: *A Dictionary—English and Sanskrit* by Sir Monier Monier-Williams and *A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary* by Arthur Anthony MacDonell.)

1. **A Symbol of Totality.** This implies wholeness or the circumference of the eternal Deity which presides over existence and is diffused throughout all of creation. There is also the implication of archetypal unity, which follows the Pythagorean concept that division occurs within unity, but unity itself is undivided. The circle is also an appropriate symbol of the solar system within the band of the Zodiac, and astronomical or geographical charts or globes are still widely used for educational purposes. With the development of the planesphere and the more recent planetarium, the sphere is still the most practical device within which to assemble the elements of the sidereal

or mundane regions. The circular zodiac of Dendera, now in the Louvre, is one of the earliest Egyptian representations of a circular cosmos.

2. **A Symbol of Protection.** This concept may have arisen from the idea of consecrated ground. When buldings, or the land on which they stand, are set aside for sacred purposes, they are placed under the protection of God by special rituals. If for any reason they are returned to secular usage, they are also deconsecrated to prevent desecration. In demonology and witchcraft conjurers drew circles about themselves with consecrated rods and placed within the circles protective spells or curious symbols believed to be the monograms of celestial or infernal spirits. The *Clavicula Salomonis Regis,* popularly attributed to Solomon, the wisest of all kings, contains pentacles or magical seals of angels, archangels, demons, and archdemons.

3. **A Symbol of the Sun, Moon, or the Polished Surface of a Mirror.** One of the earliest hieroglyphics to represent the sun was a dot in the center of a circle—still used in astronomy. This was believed to be the shield of the sun god, Apollo, with a boss or elevated knob in the center. The moon was represented as a silver disc, and in tantric philosophy there was the shakti, the feminine reflex of the sun. In Japanese Shintoism the mirror of Amaterasu, O-mi-kami, signified nature as the reflection of the causal archetype—the created world as the embodiment or reflection of the creative power. Obviously, the earth itself was considered a microcosm or miniature of the total cosmic scheme. Within the earth's surface was a stratified underworld, which the Egyptians believed resembled the cross section of an onion. From the surface of the earth upward were thirty-three invisible realms, the true abodes of the administrators or regents of the solar deity.

4. **A Symbol of the Radiant Field of Energy Surrounding All Living Bodies.** The religions of the East and West represent spiritual exaltation by a halo, nimbus, or mandorla. The halo is a circle of light surrounding the head; the nimbus usually encloses the entire body; and a mandorla is a more elaborate form in which two or more halos are combined. In Esoteric Buddhism these auras are of various colors and differ considerably in shape. Many of them seem to be derived from a single lotus leaf and resemble the vesica piscis, an aureole of oval shape, often associated in Christian symbolism with the Virgin Mary. Esoteric Buddhism recognizes hundreds of different types of halos, including concentric circles, overlapping circles, and

A magic circle containing protective spells for the control of creatures of the invisible worlds. From a manuscript copy of the *Clavicula Salomonis Regis.*

radiating lines of light. The meanings of Eastern and Western halos are essentially the same, but in Oriental religions they are used with greater philosophical significance. The Greek Orthodox Church often places symbolic devices within halos, and these become attributes to assist in the identification of sacred personages. In Esoteric Buddhism the mandala, with all its deities, reveals the mystic truth that all life is sustained by the aura or radiant energy of the Dhyana Buddha Mahavairocana.

5. **A Group of Persons Arranged in a Symbolic Pattern.** Like the sacred dramas of the Greeks, which set forth the more significant elements of their theology in the theatres of Dionysus, the mandala symbols were brought to life by priests and other attendants of the temples. They portrayed, usually with the help of elaborate masks and costumes, the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and lesser divinities acting out the operations of natural law. These performances, some of which continue to the present time, are reminiscent of the miracle plays presented on the porches of cathedrals in medieval Europe. In ancient times ritualistic dramas, dances, and pageantries were performed on natural hills or artificial mounds. It is now believed that many of the pyramidal structures that have descended to us from antiquity were platforms or altars for the celebration of sacred rites. Later, tables took the place of the stages or platforms, and the *dramatis personae* were replaced by images or symbols. Where mandalas are used, they may be wall decorations or, in the temples of the Japanese esoteric sects, the designs may be painted on the surfaces of low tables. Many of the early temples, such as the Buddhist fanes of the Nara Period, have altars of earth faced with stone, very similar to the ancient mounds.

6. **A Representation of a Secret Society.** This can be a subtle reference to the Sangha or the confraternity established by Buddha himself to constitute the congregation of dedicated disciples. Thus, this type of mandala can be defined as an assembly of persons bound together by vows and obligations and of celestial beings also so dedicated. The circumference of the mandala is a spiritual wall protecting the faithful from evil influences and the pressures of the profane world. It can also signify the distinction between Esoteric Buddhism and the non-esoteric sects.

7. **A Symbol of a Political Division.** This can represent a state, province or country, a limited geographical area or a cultural sphere in which certain customs, arts, or beliefs are perpetuated. In a larger sense, it covers racial demarcations and the major religions of mankind considered as parts of one essential doctrine. Some Eastern rulers actually attempted to install public officials in harmony with the structure of the solar system and divided their citizens into twelve classes suggested by the keywords of the zodiacal signs. The emphasis is upon the realization that all divisions in nature or human society are unities within greater unities and sustain smaller unities within themselves.

8. **A Pictorial Representation of a Sacred Book.** Most of the Hindu

and Buddhist scriptural writings include illustrations to amplify and embellish the texts. Buddhist sutras may have elaborate woodcuts at the beginning of the volumes or sets of volumes. Such pictures are likely to feature a kind of panorama with Buddha in the center and circles of disciples and bodhisattvas extending outward to the edges of the illustration. Many of the books of Esoteric Buddhism contain specific instructions for the creation of mandalas, and these are usually a pictorial summary of the text. Thus, meditation upon such a mandala is equivalent to the actual reading of the complete scripture. A good example of this was the magnificent woven tapestry representing the Western Paradise of the Amida Buddha, which was originally preserved in the Taimadera Temple in Japan. This summarizes the mystical vision expounded in the *Amida Sutra.* In the esoteric iconographic scrolls of the Japanese Shingon School a number of mandalas are pictured and their purpose carefully noted. Large paintings of these symbolic designs are exhibited in the temples during certain rites and rituals.

9. **A Representation of the Human Body.** Here the Buddhist mandala approaches the elaborate diagrams of tantric yoga. Many years ago, in a museum in Central India, I saw an elaborate drawing in the form of a long scroll painting of the human body. In this picture each nerve end terminated in a miniature figure of a deity. Each organ was the throne of a god, and every function was related to a spiritual energy emanating from the sanctuary of the heart. Three generations of artist-mystics had prepared this drawing, and it is a comprehensive representation of esoteric anatomy and physiology. This amazing composition unfolded from First Cause through the generation of man and the emanations of the lower kingdom of nature without any break in its formulas. The concept might be stimulating even to a modern scientist. Like Egyptian Hermetists, the arhats of Northern Buddhism recognized the principle of analogy. The universe was a vast person, and the human being was a tiny universe. This analogy is also found in cabalistic writings.

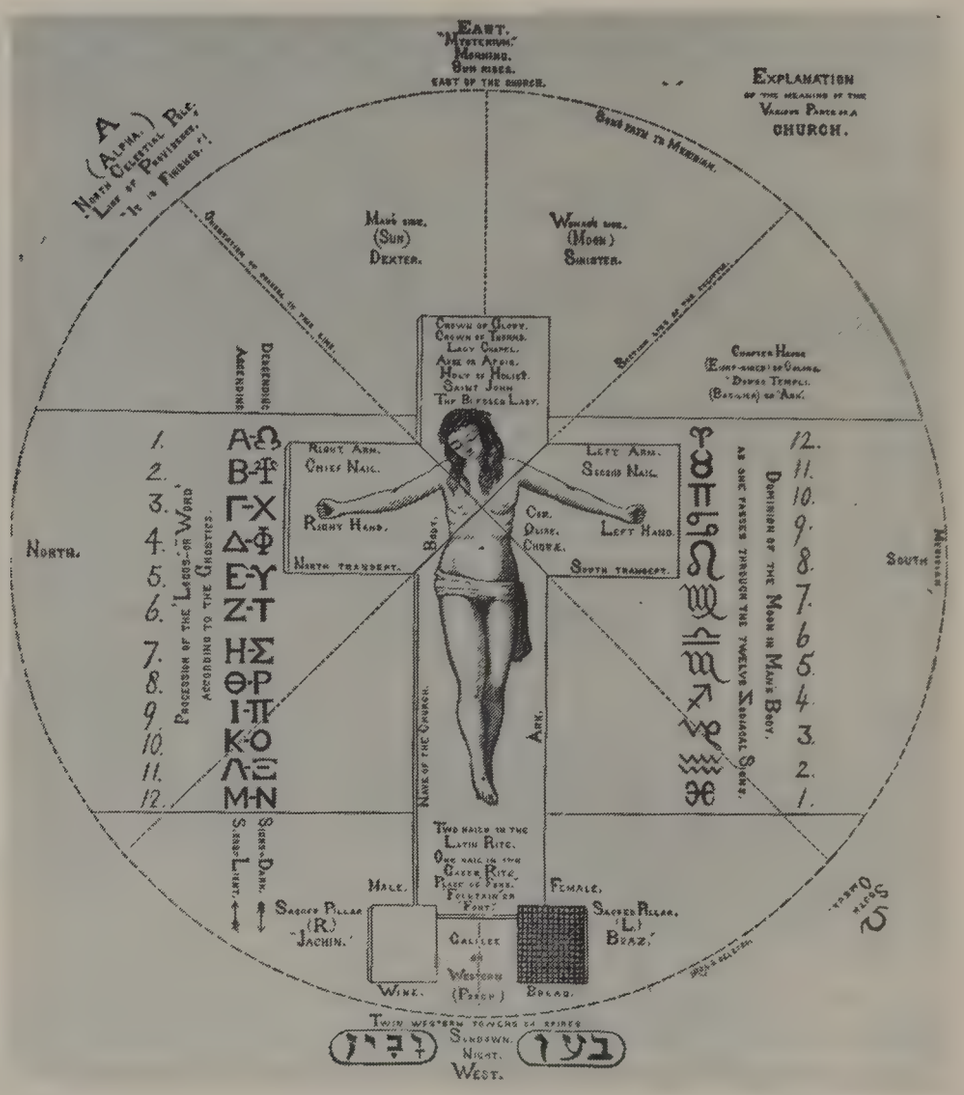
   The human body as a symbolic structure has inspired several types of mandalas. One of these is the language of hand postures called *mudras.* By various arrangements of the fingers the most intricate operations of tantra can be indicated and released into conscious manifestation. There are also the *asanas* or the postures of the body involved in the disciplines of meditation. By such posturing the disciple creates a subtle rapport with the divinities normally represented in their appropriate asanas. Mantras are also mandalas as sound and rhythm. Many East Indian religions have cultivated chanting and the

intoning of sacred writings. Religions of the West celebrate the Mass with appropriate chanting and genuflecting. Numerous elements of symbolism derived from the human body are traceable in religious observances.

10. **Architectural Monuments.** Throughout the world the prevailing concepts of the universe have influenced religious architecture. As most of the older nations considered the invisible universe to be merely a counterpart of their own civilizations, the demigods were a celestial aristocracy ruled over by an invisible but all-powerful monarch. The world was his palace, and all mortals were required to obey his laws. The great shrines and temples of the Far East are masterpieces of symbolical construction. This is most apparent when the ground plans are studied, and it becomes obvious that the builders were simply interpreting cosmic diagrams in wood and stone. The Shwe Dagon pagoda in Rangoon, Burma rises like the heavenly mountain from the clustering of small shrines gathered about its base. The ground plan of the Jewish Tabernacle in the Wilderness and the later Temple of Solomon the King reveal clearly the symbolism of the cosmic mandala. Hargrave Jennings, who devoted many years to the study of European mysticism, including in his book *Live Lights or Dead Lights: (Altar or Table?)* the cruciform ground plan of an English church with the figure of Christ added to clarify the symbolism. It is reproduced here.

    Jennings explains that the figure of the Latin cross reveals the great sacrificial idea. The man fixed on the cross, the "Atoning One," is its governing impress. He came in his human life from the East, so his head is laid in the East. He descends in the sacrament to the invocation of man. The Body of the Lord is supposed to be extended upon the cross, which is the shape of the cathedral. The central spire is placed over the heart to signify the ascension. The Body of the Lord upon the cross may be mystically said to be the Grand Sentinel standing over nature.

11. **Attributes and Adornments.** It has never been denied that the habiliments of the clergy are highly symbolical. In the Old Testament the High Priest of Israel appeared upon the porch of the temple in garments of glory fringed with golden bells and wearing upon his head a bonnet inscribed "Glory unto the Lord." His robes represented an aura of sanctity, presumably the radiation of his own consciousness. In Egypt the hierophant of the Mysteries stood before the multitude in robes of blue and gold carrying in his hand the crux ansata or cross of life, also called the key to the Mysteries.



An explanation of the symbolical meaning of the Christian Church from *Live Lights or Dead Lights: (Altar or Table?)* by Hargrave Jennings, London, 1873.

Until the fourth or fifth century A.D., the Christian clergy had no distinguishing vestments. Even in the celebration of the Eucharist they wore their ordinary garments. Gradually, the clergy adapted elements of apparel based upon Greek and Roman clothing. The Eastern Church borrowed part of its regalia from the Egyptian priests of the Ptolemaic Period. Male and female clothing were combined in church vestments, and this practice was also followed in a number of non-Christian sects. It was only after the secular power of the clergy resulted in the creation of a clerical aristocracy that the princes of the Church assumed splendid raiment and became peers of the realm. Color symbolism played an important part. Parish priests dressed in modest black, bishops and archbishops wore purple, cardinals

The High Priest of Israel wearing the garments of glory. The white undergarment of linen symbolized the earth, and the blue overrobe the sky. The ephod represented the four elements. The sardonyxes worn upon the shoulders stood for the sun and moon, and the twelve jewels of the breastplate signified the tribes of Israel and the zodiacal constellations. From an anonymous nineteenth century engraving.

favored red, and the pope or supreme pontiff was always dressed in white. Nearly all religions that favor special raiment for their clergies perpetuate ancient styles of dress.

In Buddhism the deities are variously arrayed according to their dignities, and each is accompanied by special attributes, a term used to cover objects which they hold in their hands, symbols on their robes, and their vahans—objects or creatures on which they stand or are seated.

The term mandala is often applied to the painting or statue of a single deity. This means that the image is being interpreted on the level of a cosmic diagram personalizing a process or manifestation of universal law. For example, Buddhas are usually pictured without adornments of any kind and are identified by such attributes as the long ear lobes, a jewel in the forehead, a mound on the crown of the head, and tightly curled hair. Bodhisattvas are pictured in the princely robes of ancient India to remind the devotee that Gautama Buddha was an Indian prince before he attained illumination. He then renounced all worldliness and never again wore symbols of temporal rank.

Arhats remind us that Buddha himself was a truth seeker. They are usually shown in saffron-colored robes, bareheaded, and carrying a mendicant staff, book, or a rosary. The Indic divinities, which were absorbed into Buddhism, also wear the rich adornments of the princely class; but the emphasis is upon temporal splendor, and they can easily be distinguished from the bodhisattvas. Buddhist priests wear elaborate brocaded or embroidered robes and carry a flywhisk. In deference, however, to their faith, the robe must be made of small pieces sewn together, often crudely, to indicate mending, and, by extension, self-chosen poverty. In the Tibetan system the ferocious deities wore an assortment of appropriate emblems, and the priests of the Red Hat Sect often wore ornaments fashioned from human bones. Each item of apparel or decoration ties into the grand symbolism of the esoteric rites.

12. **The Rose Windows of Christian Churches.** Several writers have noted the similarity of appearance between the Buddhist mandala and the rose windows of such churches as Notre Dame in Paris and the magnificent cathedral at Chartres, which certainly suggest the mandala form. Actually, the similarity is more apparent than real; but the light, passing through the elaborate stained glass designs with their religious symbols, seems to shine down from heaven into the souls of the worshippers. Thus is the light of God transmitted through

The north transept of Westminster Abbey from T. G. Bonney's *Cathedrals, Abbeys, and Churches of England and Wales,* London, 1891. The rose windows of the north and south transepts correspond to the wounds in the hands of Christ, whose blood was shed for the salvation of mortals.

the bodies of His saints. The beautiful windows suggest a burst of spiritual glory and also the chakra or many-spoked wheel of the cosmic law. Usually such windows have been inspired by simple piety, and their integrity depends upon the insight of the artist. With the true mandala the design is prescribed and unalterable, and its meaning is the same for all who understand the symbolism. The rose window suggests the rose itself, a favorite symbol in Christian mysticism. It also reminds us that throughout nature the Divine Power

geometrizes, revealing His creations as eternally unfolding manifestations of His own unchanging nature.

With Hindu and Tibetan mandalas the circular form is dominant. It suggests a specialization within a larger generality or totality as space beyond which nothing is conceivable. When the circle is within a square which seems to "square the circle," it combines the world of causes and the regions of effects. In Esoteric Buddhism spiritual and material concerns are not divided or contrasted with each other; they are conditions of one thing, and there can be no competition between them. In the Lamaist temple of Peking mandalas are fashioned by the same method that the Navajo Indians of the American Southwest use to create their sand paintings.

In Japan the overall mandala (mandara) design is likely to be square or rectangular. Circles may be introduced in various parts of the pattern to represent spheres of influence. The complete mandara is an enclosure subdivided internally into a number of smaller enclosures. These symbolical designs are not limited to the esoteric sects, but among the followers of Pure Land Buddhism the paintings have a strong devotional quality and are not usually presumed to have magical significance. The Western Paradise of Amida Buddha is a favorite theme with the Pure Land school, and vision paintings of Buddha descending from the higher world attended by radiant bodhisattvas are most inspiring. There are also a number of figures and diagrams combining Shinto and Buddhist elements. If these are considered as genuine mandalas, the meaning of the term must be enlarged to include scenic pictures with waterfalls, forests, and mountain peaks. Actually, all these are fragments of earthly beauty; and the earth itself is a proper mandala. The Eastern artist is always concerned with essential meaning and is inclined to depreciate any work of art which does not instruct or ennoble.

The great Shingon sanctuaries at Koyasan and Kyoto have elaborate altars on which precious treasures of the temples are arranged as mandara. I was fortunate enough to visit Toji on one of the rare occasions in which the sanctuary was opened for ventilation. It is quite understandable that in the presence of this incredible array of sacred icons the worshipper, or even the casual viewer, would be profoundly impressed.

There are four general classifications of the methods used to represent esoteric truths through mandala designs.

1. In the most elaborate form all the attributes of consciousness or mind are personalized as deities according to a strictly controlled pantheon of figures. In such examples a Dhyani, or metaphysical Buddha, is usually placed in the most prominent part of the design and is surrounded by hierarchies of reflexes and attributes. Such paintings are

splendid works of piety and insight, and older examples are very rare. They usually seem brilliantly colored, unless mellowed by age. The earliest specimens were painted in gold or silver upon purple or dark blue brocaded silk.

2. In the second method the figures on the mandalas are represented by attributes. Each of the personifications, which Westerners are inclined to think of as deities, has a particular symbol associated with it. In the case of images the attributes may be carried in the hands or appear prominently in the headdress. The special attribute of Amida, for example, is the ambrosial vase. The symbol most associated with Kannon is a miniature figure of Amida placed in the diadem. Monju carries a sword and Miroku a mortuary tower. A mandala can be composed of these attributes so arranged that the informed person recognizes them as identical in meaning with the actual images. Some regard this as a more refined type of symbolism, and it is found in old Shingon paintings.

3. A mandala can also be formed by substituting characters from the Gupta Sanskrit alphabet for the deities according to a well-established system. This was an early practice and may have been brought from China by Kobo Daishi. We reproduce in Chapter Seven two mandara in which letters have been substituted for deities. They were done in the Muromachi Period (sixteenth century), and both of them are woodblock prints colored by hand. In such cases the letters are called the "seeds of the Buddhas." They are also called *bija,* by which a sound is substituted for a form. Each image has a kind of keynote. When this is recognized, the elaborate group of letters becomes a perfect harmonic picture of the esoteric concept involved. This is considered the most advanced of all symbolism. No physical image is used to identify any of the metaphysical beings. This removes completely the stigma of idolatry and permits those viewing the mandala to call upon their own inner resources when contemplating the design.

4. Where actions of various kinds are substituted for static symbols, we have what are called karma mandalas. These, in turn, represent man experiencing the mysteries of cause and effect through his daily associations in the mortal world. Every sequence of events which we set into motion is a revelation of universal processes. Thus, the individual must experience the inevitable reactions of every action which he vitalizes. Good deeds bring a good harvest, while evil ultimately nullifies itself. Carelessness ends in pain, and wastefulness results in want. Constructive thoughts protect us, and destructive thoughts disturb our inner lives. Thus, the marketplace can be a kind of mandala reminding us

of our opportunities and responsibilities. The good life is a revelation of law and order and contributes to the ultimate attainment of enlightenment. Here, also, we create patterns of merits and demerits like the actors in a sacred drama.

Although most of the mandalas present the various divinities in static or cult postures, the karma mandala shows them performing symbolic actions or accompanied by attributes suggesting animation. Thus, the universe is presented as an intricate interplay of processes, all of which originate in the Cosmic Buddha, who causes transitory existence to emerge from his meditation.

There are many other forms of Buddhist paintings and sculpturings that have mandala properties, and some of these will be considered later in this work. There are also, especially in Western religious art, figures and symbols which suggest meditation diagrams but are not actually intended for that purpose.

In Japan mandara are nearly always found in temple collections and are seldom displayed in private homes. If a family has such pictures, they are kept in a go-down (storage place) with other treasures of the house and are brought out only if some visiting religious dignitary requires them for ritualistic purposes. Of course, most rare mandara are in temple museums and art galleries.

Many of the mandalas offered for sale today are hand-colored woodblock prints mounted in scroll form or with brocaded silk borders, as in Tibet and Nepal. Some of the prints are of exceptionally large size and may be five or six feet square. The designs are so elaborate that the creation of such pictures by freehand would be a most arduous undertaking. Also, there would be greater possibility of error, such as the omission of a significant attribute or decorative detail. Examples produced by stencils are also known, and in recent years the more important types of diagrams have been reproduced by lithography. Many of these copies are magnificent and meet all the needs of scholars.

When tantra was brought from India to China and later to Japan, its symbolism was completely revised and its mandalas redesigned and reinterpreted. All elements that might be objectionable to a highly sensitive and refined people were removed from the symbolism. New and more subtle devices were evolved to depict the deeper meanings without the literalism prevalent in Indian and Tibetan tantra. This may have been due to the system of Imperial patronage under which most Buddhist sects of Japan were established. Kobo Daishi, for example, was strongly supported by the Emperor; and, when he returned from China, he presented religious pictures, objects, and

manuscripts to the Imperial Court at Kyoto for examination. The same practice had earlier been followed in China, and neither the Chinese nor the Japanese favored the tantric artistry and ritualistic practices that prevailed in Tibet and Northern India. A sect dependent largely upon Imperial approval for support and even survival could not offend the decorum of the Japanese aristocracy, which believed itself to be the protector of public morals.

In many ways this policy has been advantageous, for both Chinese and Japanese religious art have a sublimity and purity that is inspiring to persons of many beliefs. The esoteric schools elevated the older symbolism to an exalted place in the sacred art of mankind.

Gautama Buddha as a mendicant in meditation. Chinese scroll painting of the Ming Dynasty in the PRS Collection. An unusual representation of the great teacher without attributes, except for a case of sacred books. He is in a contemplative posture, and his robe is beautifully ornamented.

Chapter IV

THE MANDALA AS AN INTERNAL MYSTERY

After the death of Buddha, as set forth in the Mahaparinirvana Sutra, the responsibility for the continuation of the doctrine rested with the *Sangha* or Brotherhood. It soon became obvious that the teachings would have to be adapted to the needs and capacities of the Indian people. To meet the challenge of survival a series of great councils were convened for the purpose of clarifying the conflicting traditions that began to disturb the unity of the Brotherhood. During this period, the Sangha was under the leadership of a succession of patriarchs, the first of whom was Mahakasyapa, the elder surviving disciple of Buddha.

About 250 B.C. the great Emperor Asoka, usually referred to as the Constantine of Buddhism, became protector of the doctrine and was responsible for its dissemination through most of Central and Western Asia. He was so enthusiastic in his devotion to the teachings that he is said to have presented his entire kingdom to the order and then bought it back with money out of the Royal Treasury.

The most important of the great Buddhist councils was the one assembled under the patronage of Kanishka, King of Palhava and Delhi. He flourished about the end of the first century A.D., but the exact date is uncertain. Learning that Buddhism had divided into four schools, which were, in turn, further divided into eighteen subdivisions, the king felt the immediate need for clarification and unification of the essential rules and disciplines. He ordered a congress to be held at the royal mansion of Kusana in Kashmir. It is reported that two hundred and fifty bodhisattvas attended this convocation, and five hundred arhats and five thousand Mahayanist monks were also present.

It was on this occasion that the Northern and Southern Schools became more or less separate entities. A similar occurrence took place in Christianity at the time of the division of the Eastern and Western Churches. Actually, however, Kanishka's council only formalized a trend that had developed almost immediately after Buddha's death. At that time, the *Mahasanghika,* or Great Congregation, had been inspired by circumstances arising in an earlier Buddhist council held at Vaisali in 380 B.C. It had already become

evident that if the doctrine was to survive it must unfold its religious content. Buddhism has never been a static system. It has always met the challenge of social change and adapted its beliefs to the capacities of its followers. At the time of Kanishka, the seeds of the three vehicles began to unfold their potentialities. These vehicles were represented by carriages or carts; one drawn by a bullock, another by a deer, and the third by a ram. The accompanying native diagram shows the three vehicles.

The three vehicles from an old woodcut of the sixteenth century. From *Eastern Art, An Annual,* Volume III, Philadelphia, 1931.

Even before the time of Asoka, Indian Buddhism was feeling the pressure of orthodox Hinduism with its mystical disciplines and spiritual overtones. According to the list of patriarchs which L. Austine Waddell derived from Tibetan sources, the eleventh leader of the Buddhist community was Asvaghosa, who was a contemporary of Kanishka and is remembered for his book *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana.* This is a highly metaphysical tract, which has been translated into many languages and has been available in English through several editions. It is believed that Asvaghosa was the teacher of Nagarjuna, the most famous of all the early Mahayana arhats. While it is unlikely that Nagarjuna attended the council

of Kanishka, he became the thirteenth patriarch about the middle of the second century A.D. He was so talented that he contributed in many ways to the advancement of the Northern School, and most of its sects regard him as their founder.

With the rise of Northern Buddhism the trend toward the deification of Gautama Buddha gained momentum. About the same time, a group of metaphysical Buddhas, conjured into being by meditation, were first recognized. Gradually, also, the traditional Buddha image came into existence, probably derived from Helios, the Greek sun god.

The next important date is approximately A.D. 500. By this time Buddhism was fulfilling a prophecy attributed to its founder, who declared that one thousand years after his death the great era of interpretations would begin. Northern Buddhism absorbed into itself many practices and theories associated with yoga pantheism. As the Sangha had always practiced forms of meditation, the Yogacarya system was not only readily available but seemed to meet most of the requirements of Buddhistic idealism.

As yoga included tantric elements within its own structure, these gained a dominant place in Esoteric Buddhist speculation by the end of the sixth century. Those who followed this path were said to be traveling the road to liberation in the *Tantrayana,* or tantra vehicle. By way of yogic practice, mantras were introduced, resulting in Mantrayana, or the vehicle of spells, charms, and magical symbols. About the tenth century still another system developed in North India, which accepted the *vajra* or thunderbolt as its principal symbol. This was the magic wand of Asia, and those belonging to the Vajrayana system established their strongholds in Tibet and Nepal.

It might seem that these improvisations upon the ethical theme promulgated by the historical Buddha would have resulted in a hopeless confusion. Actually, this was not the case, except possibly in the minds of casual observers. Division took place within Buddhism, but it was never actually divided. All the schools were interpretations of one primary system of self-culture. An analogy with modern science may help to clarify the point. Within the body of science many systems of special research have arisen, such as biology, physics, anthropology, geology, and chemistry. All of these follow the same basic rules and hold principles in common. Another parallel can be drawn from the distribution of the sciences throughout humanity. The biologists of China still hold fraternal communion with the biologists of America, Germany, and Russia. Politically, they may be divided, but science remains a common denominator. In the case of Buddhism the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, and the Three Precious Jewels continued to guide the destiny of the Buddhist community.

Reconciliation is not only possible but also inevitable, because all Buddhists recognize concepts, beliefs, and hypotheses as aspects of mental phenomena. The world with all its intricate speculations is merely an extension of mortal mind. Physical phenomena have a kind of reality which is available to all observers. No one has questioned that trees exist or that the waters of the ocean are subject to their tides. It would be foolish to reject the procession of the seasons or the seven ages of man's mortal existence. Problems only arise when we try to understand the meaning of phenomena. We all come to the conclusion that there is more to human consciousness than a faculty of acceptance. It is well and good to call a tree a tree, but observation leads to reflection, and reflection may lead to further confusion.

Captured within a world of static facts, man is impelled to fashion a dynamic existence. He forever questions, and it is out of this spirit of inquiry that the arts and sciences were born. Mahayana Buddhism gradually, but relentlessly, sought to explore the internal life of the human being. An effort to build a reasonable existence upon the testimonies of the senses appeared futile. Phenomena can be recorded by the sensory perceptions; but the latter are like computers and, for this reason, were referred to collectively by Buddhists as the "machinery of the six senses." These are the five senses with which we are all familiar and the sixth sense as the mental co-ordinator.

At this point, I would like to explain my own personal concept of the Mahayana system as it exists today. No one is responsible for the following remarks except myself.

Those seeking a better understanding of universal processes have two choices. They can explore outwardly through a universe that seems to extend beyond the boundaries of human comprehension. Some work has been done in this direction by Western thinkers, but findings are still tentative. It is also conceivable that the human being can explore the internal mystery of himself. He can turn his attention to the wonders of his own inner structure Here, also, there has been some progress but, as yet, no integrated program of research.

The subject was but slightly considered in the West until the rise of modern psychology, and even now there are many conflicting schools of opinion. Is man a person in a body or a body sustained by various types of nutrition originating in space or derived from the earth and its products? It appears that Mahayana Buddhism considers the mind as a being and that this being occupies a body appropriate to its nature, which we may call a mental body. The mind per se has its own organs and functions. It is dependent upon a highly specialized nutrition and is subject to aging processes and a variety of ailments now considered as mental or emotional diseases.

A mass of diagrams exists, including mandala pictures, which reveal the anatomy and physiology of the mind. Because this inner structure is invisible, it has either been taken for granted or has been assumed that it is impossible to investigate the structure of the mind with the physical faculties at our disposal. According to the Hermetic axiom, all manifestations of universal processes can be classified analogically. The physical body is a manifestation of archetypal patterns in the physical world, and the mental body is like a highly organized structure in the mental world. There is a similar integration of emotional factors, resulting in what might be called an emotional body. Mystics have been inclined to consider these superphysical bodies as auras or zones of light and have assumed that activities occur within these fields.

Researchers have also been blocked because the mind, as used today, thinks in terms of forms, and these forms are thought to be either physical or imaginary. It is assumed, therefore, that the mind must be explored in the same way as the physical body is examined—with the aid of scientific equipment. It is said that shortly before his death Thomas Edison was attempting to invent a telephone mechanism through which he could talk to the dead. This is a typical Western approach.

Those non-theologically minded have grave misgivings concerning the existence of heaven and hell. Is it true that these are superstitions conjured up by religionists, or do they actually exist as parts of the archetypal imaginings of the human mind? Is heaven merely a name for the superconscious, earth for the conscious, and hell for the unconscious spheres within man's composite constitution? Are the fabled lands of giants and demons part of folklore or are they vestiges of an inner life breaking through into objectivity by the industry of such writers as Hans Christian Andersen and the Brothers Grimm?

If man could internalize and experience the world within, what would he actually find? Perhaps dreams provide a clue. The dreamer may find himself in a world of sleep as vast and complicated as the realm of waking. People have dreamed of being shipwrecked on rock-strewn shores, trapped in burning buildings, and lost in deserts or jungles. In the realm of sleep there are mountains and valleys, cities and villages, and vast populations. Some of those dwelling there strongly resemble our own departed kin.

We can pass through some harrowing experiences in this dark realm, and time is almost nonexistent. We can compress a lifetime into a few minutes and often awaken deeply disturbed by the phantoms that have obsessed our sleep. There may also be archetypal dreams that seem to have special messages for us, and prodromic dreams—warnings of perils that lie ahead or of sickness. The dead come back in dreams, and we relive scenes of childhood

The world mountain, Meru, rises from the great ocean of space. Cliffs surround the earth, beyond which are the invisible realms and the orbits of the planets. From a Japanese edition, dated 1678, of a Buddhist ritual volume for the feeding of ghosts. This text was printed in a Buddhist monastery at Uji, Japan. The work includes mudras and mantras.

and half-forgotten incidents that have faded from our conscious memories. There must be something there that is not merely fog and mist. It is a very challenging field of research, but we generally approach it with a sense of defeatism or, at least, a suspicion of futility.

Dr. Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, who helps to bridge the philosophical interval which separates Eastern and Western mysticism, makes frequent reference to the German visionary Meister Eckhart (1260-1327?). It has been said of Eckhart that he was a Marxian mystic. Eckhart was essentially a Zen man and found little difficulty in pointing out that even theologians have no awareness of God while they are asleep. Students of Zen would understand and appreciate this method of rescuing the mind from all intellectual complications. Meditation cannot fulfill its essential purpose while the intellect is perturbed by incompatible thoughts and emotions. Under many names mystics have sought that peace which surpasseth understanding. The efforts to reconcile the errors which burden all cultural systems require constant self-discipline. The truly wise realize that the Gordian knot of worldly learning cannot be untangled and must be cut by a single stroke of the dedicated will.

Some of those seeking enlightenment have felt that the contemplation of the world's spiritual heritage is a waste of time. Why should the modern

individual concentrate his attention upon the philosophies and religions of antiquity, ponder the writings of philosophers long dead, or devote attention to the historical aspects of theology? The answer is simple—we must all build upon foundations and benefit so far as possible from the common experiences of humankind. Unless we develop an interest for the dreams, hopes, and visions of mankind, there is no adequate motivation either to advance ourselves or improve the society to which we belong. In connection with the present book it is obvious that the mandalas and meditation symbols are intended to inspire reflection by means of symbolical devices. In order to release the mystical content of an emblem, one must have some knowledge of the doctrine and policies which inspired the artist who created the design. Oriental meditation figures are reminders of beliefs which have been held by Asiatic peoples for thousands of years. To the Western truth seeker who has no familiarity with Oriental religious artistry the emblems have little practical meaning. They are accepted for their artistic appeal, and there may be some degree of respect for their geometrical integrity.

A person cannot afford to assume that these meditation emblems are magic circles which will relieve all the mental and emotional burdens of life by a casual inspection. A lifetime may be required to fathom the depths of symbolic art. One practical result may be the impulse to discover the esoteric doctrines which inspired the mandala. By degrees, the study of comparative religions enlarges man's concept of the world in which he lives, the laws that govern existence, and the eternal powers which preside over the pageantries of progress and transformation. Very few individuals can grow if they remain locked in concepts which have already proven to be inadequate. In the last analysis, all of the advanced religions of mankind are monotheistic. Devout believers, regardless of race, nationality, or religious allegiances, are seeking for that peace of soul which can only come to those who strive to outgrow the restrictions of ignorance.

The religious imagery of Esoteric Buddhism is of increasing interest to Western thinkers. It must be realized, however, that these artistic conceptions are really "mood" pictures. They personify laws, principles, and powers forever operating in both the spiritual and material realms.

As a spectrum of many colors is inherent in the white light of the sun, so the ethical and moral attributes of the Divine Plan flow forever from the spiritual sun and the Eternal Illuminator, Dainichi Nyorai. He is the ever-burning flame, bestower of life and light, and guardian of the law. If all the lamps of the world were extinguished and darkness seemed to reign supreme, anywhere and at any time the flame is born again by the striking of a single match. In the accompanying plate Dainichi Nyorai (Mahavairocana) is attended by two bosatsu (bodhisattvas). Miroku (Maitreya) is at the

Dainichi attended by Kannon and Miroku. The inscription reads, "These images were placed in the Chōdu temple on Hiyé-San by the piety of Emperor Saga 1082 years before Meiji 25—i.e. A.D. 811." From *Messiah, the Ancestral Hope of the Ages* by Lady Elizabeth Anna Gordon, Tokyo, 1909.

viewer's right and Kannon (Avalokitesvara) at the left. In terms of symbolism Dainichi can be considered as personifying absolute love from whose being has emerged Miroku, infinite kindness, the ultimate savior of all that lives, and Kannon, the compassionate one, signifying infinite mercy. While some may object to the symbolism, it is difficult to deny that truth manifesting through its most natural attributes bears witness to the omnipresence of a benevolent deity. These symbols of Dainichi (the Lord), Miroku (goodness), and Kannon (mercy) perfectly illustrate the closing verse of the twenty-third psalm, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." In Japan and China the Bosatsu Kannon is frequently represented as "the all merciful mother of creatures great and small." Even in the animal kingdom, the wonderful solicitude of the mother for its young clearly reveals the presence of the Kannon factor. As Portia says in *The Merchant of Venice,* "The quality of mercy is not strain'd, it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath."

In the present illustration the Bosatsu Miroku is seated at the lower right. Strangely enough, Miroku's distinguishing symbol is a mortuary monument composed of the five elements. There is a tradition that when Miroku descends to physical embodiment he will first venerate the tomb of the Manushi Buddha, Kashypa, who at a remote time had been the master and instructor of the Buddha, Gautama.

Miroku represents kindness, which is a more public virtue applying to the relationships of individuals, communities, and nations. Therefore, he is a "Prince of Peace." As kindness unfolds from the depths of the human soul, each person thinks not only of his own good but of the well-being of others. He performs kindly and thoughtful labors and tries in every way possible not to cause pain or mental suffering to those with whom he is associated. It is not difficult to recognize in Miroku the "desired of all nations." In those wonderful days to come there will be no greed or jealousy or the corruption of laws. Religions shall unite in peace. Some say that the Miroku Butsu will come in glory, but the mystics believe that his true advent will be within the heart of man himself.

If the thoughtful individual approached religious symbolism by drawing from the inner resources of himself the noblest of his inner musings, he would realize that the mandalas are true pictures of a universe of qualities. All creatures which exist within the aura of Dainichi Nyorai are alive. Thoughts and emotions are also alive. The moods and impulses which impel action are themselves living things. The mystic in his meditation has a deeper experience of the great plan of existence than those reading textbooks on science or theology. In the mortal world there is competition—in

the world of the soul there is co-operation. And in the radiant nature of Dainichi Nyorai all things are forever one—unity is reality, diversity is an illusion, and upon this mental self-deceit we have built a world of pain. By correcting our own perspective we restore the grandeur of the Infinite Plan.

First of all, the importance of the mind must be evaluated. It is generally felt that the exploration of outer space is going to result in at least a few useful by-products. What then can be learned by attempting to discover the true source of our own thinking? The human being will never think well until he understands what he thinks *with* and its place in the complete structure of himself. Gautama Buddha was profoundly suspicious of the mind, convinced that it was often an organ of self-deception. Few can deny that much thinking is uncertain, if not actually unreasonable. Also, there is very little agreement between minds, which might cause one to doubt that mental energy is diffused equally throughout humanity.

Man inhabits a comparatively small planet and, like a shipwrecked mariner, has little hope of rescue. He must live with his own kind locked in an environment from which there seems to be no escape. Nature, however, does not deal in futilities, and there must be a way out of this labyrinth. Ariadne's thread can guide the truth seeker back to the realm of light, the source of himself.

Mystics have also given some attention to thought forms, and the creative consciousness of artists seems to indicate that original ideas can function through bodies created outwardly by the skillful use of form, number, color, and sound. Consider the Mahayana bija or seeds, those basic ideas—germ concepts which arise in the mind as plants grow in the physical earth. Seed ideas must immediately be embodied in some kind of form; otherwise, neither their qualities nor their appearances can be experienced.

Each thought is appropriately embodied in a structure which can unfold, grow, mature, and bear fruit. Ideas are not only born, but they have their prenatal epochs and post-mortal existences. Is there any reason to doubt that the ideas themselves radiate the energies from which their forms are built and that they come into birth through the use of inherited materials and propagate in their own region? If an idea is destructive, its form must be asymmetrical. Mind substance is far more subtle than physical matter and builds forms according to the mathematical properties inherent in the idea itself. The process is as inevitable as the structure of a snowflake or a fern-like tracery on a frosted window pane.

When an idea takes form, it may, therefore, be radiant or fearful in appearance. Many kinds of magic or mystery can arise out of imagination, which is the image-producing factor in the mind. Some believe that this is

the true explanation of tantra, which is a conjuring-up of internal forms. In the Tibetan system the ferocious deities are psychic projections in ourselves fashioned from past karma and have descended as an inheritance from a previous life.

There are systems of modern psychotherapy which strongly advocate the extroversion of inhibitions. If an impulse to violence arises in our psychic integration, we should extrovert such pressures regardless of personal or social consequences. This is precisely what the tantric sorcerer brings about with his spells, rattles, and magic formulas. The tantric graveyards, as they are called, are where personal antagonisms and animosities, like decaying corpses, continue to pollute the mental and emotional atmosphere within ourselves. It is difficult, however, to extrovert a destructive attitude without creating more bad karma, so the remedy may be no better than the disease.

It is almost necessary to resort to symbolism to make the tantric concepts comprehensible to the average person. The thought-monsters do not actually resemble the ferocious deities of Tantrayana. They do not have extra arms or heads, nor do they make horrible grimaces; but Tibetan artists make use of such contrivances to express the menacing qualities inherent in destructive ideas and feelings. The mental world of man, like his physical world, is a limited region very largely dependent upon his own wise and honorable administration. Those who cheerfully abuse their physical resources actually endanger the health of collective humanity. To permit mental pollution to corrupt the fabric of the thinking equipment is a sin against truth and a crime against nature.

How does one proceed to make a picture of his own inner life, especially if he is interested in diagnosing the condition of his psychic content? He would no longer be content to draw a pretty sunrise, hoping that it would occur sometime in the future. It would be far more interesting to represent the mental realm as one might chart the physical solar system with its parts and members clearly indicated and its functions graphically pictured. If correctly pictured, such a diagram would resemble a mandala. These depictions of the cosmotheistic system of Buddhism were never intended to compete with the findings of Galileo or Copernicus. They are dramatic projections of things unseen, and the deities and tutelaries shown thereon are intended to reveal dramatically and systematically the exact processes involved in mentation. They reveal a world of thought ruled over by a demigod called the thinker and enthroned in the midst of his minions, which are extensions of himself and represent the processes by which ideas move into manifestation.

We have not given much attention to the emotional life of the human being. Diagrammatically it is far better organized than the mental structure, because it is older and, for vast periods of time, was completely in control

of physical evolutionary processes. In the emotional realm man comes face to face with the power which he has named desire. Very few have ever attempted to make a picture of desire, but they have classified emotional traits which they consider desirable or undesirable. For the most part, desires, like thoughts, are seriously undermined by ambitions and appetites.

The emotional world is also a broad panorama of mountains and valleys with a number of deep and dangerous-looking crevasses. Here feelings put on various masks, some pleasing and others frightening, but all more or less deceptive. Some of man's worst emotions come in pleasant forms, but their consequences are tragic. All desires are not bad any more than all thoughts are evil, but they are ephemeral and must be sustained with many compromises of character and principle. Desiring stimulates mentation, and the two working together form a dangerous partnership. Desire has gratification as its primary end—it reaches out to grasp that which it wants. At the same time, it is fickle, for, having fulfilled a desire, it is cast aside in favor of some other gratification.

The emotional realm is primarily a world of arts and the mental world the realm of sciences. Science and philosophy are closely associated, and arts have long mingled their courses with religion. There is no evil in expressing constructive emotion, but to be possessed by emotional pressure is to contribute to a life of self-delusion. The intricate involvement of emotional excess and karma is pictorially represented by the hells of Buddhism and, for that matter, the infernal regions of all religions. They are not places but states of the inner self. Plato was evidently aware of this fact, for he pointed out that men do not go to hell when they die out of this world but when they are born into it. This is the inferno populated by ghosts trying to satisfy insatiable appetites of one kind or another. In each embodiment we grow a little wiser and live a little better, and there are very few who do not accumulate some merit (good karma) during an embodiment. The emotional realm, therefore, has its pleasant vistas and rewards for those who deserve them.

For some time it has been assumed by psychologists that man's mental and emotional natures are two aspects of one structure. This is not necessarily true. It seems more in harmony with nature's constant insistence upon equilibrium that we should consider the mental and emotional worlds as two conditions of life somewhat interrelated but basically independent. They contribute two distinct patterns to man's physical life, the emotions being associated with the heart and the arterial/venous systems and the mind with the brain with its twofold nervous system. Is it possible that the emotions constitute together the *shakti* or psychic counterpart of the mental entity? If so, it is understandable that all seed thoughts have their feminine aspects

and propagate themselves through a superphysical type of generation. This again would preserve the natural order of generation. Mental thought forms would thus give rise to feminine emotion forms, and together they would release their energy in a normal way. If they are divided, there is a kind of sterility in which neither the thoughts nor the emotions make their contributions to the common good.

A number of advanced Buddhist texts attempt to classify the complete pattern of mental phenomena with its reactive emotional responses. When Kobo Daishi brought the two mandara to Japan, he seemed to have possessed the key to the hierarchy in the world of mind and its reactive complement in the realm of emotion. He sublimated all obvious tantric imagery and in doing so was perhaps the greatest master of the art.

The Japanese Buddhist is taught that figures with savage expressions are defenders of the doctrine, protecting the truth from the conspiracies of evildoers. Knowledge tempts man to exploit his world. Skills can be used for destructive purposes, and there is no discovery that man has made that he has not been able to pervert to some degree. When good is misused, it becomes a demon. A beautiful principle corrupted by selfishness can end in sorrow for all concerned. In the emotional realm the intensity of love can be corrupted into the intensity of hatred; but, in a strange way, hatred defends love, for it brings about a variety of sorry consequences which will never cease until the integrity of emotion is restored. The monstrous forms, therefore, are ever reminders of the consequences of perversity.

In Shingon symbolism the shakti are not known but seem to be implied in the interchange of the two mandara. Also, the union is symbolized by the hand posture of Dainichi Nyorai. This posture is called union and signifies that in the ultimate all differences are reconciled. All conditions transcend their own conditioning, and all symbols unite in the nature of the Great Illuminator.

The point which will come as the greatest surprise to the Western thinker is that in Eastern mysticism the self is merely a mental focus seated like a spider in the midst of a web of its own weaving. The mind and the emotions are part of the illusion; and the self, which is usually accepted as the master of human destiny, can never lead anyone to the security he seeks. Something of this frustration is becoming evident in modern society. An increasing number of thoughtful persons are becoming disenchanted with the policies and conclusions which originate in the mental focus. All faculties and members are part of the equipment of something superior to themselves. When a person says "My body," or "My mind," or "Myself," he is referring to possessions and not to a possessor.

Danjuro Ichikawa in the role of the Buddhist divinity Fudo, from the Kabuki play of the same name, forming the sequel to the more popular play *Narukami.* From the Kabuki Juhachi-ban.

Up to this point, modern Buddhism has made no serious break with the original concepts of its founders. In many of the Tibetan paintings the various regions of illusion contain images of the Merciful Buddha or one of the Dhyana bodhisattvas. These represent the seed germs of liberation. They personify the qualities and characteristics which evolve in the compartments of the wheel of transmigratory existence.

Fudo-myoo is considered to be an aspect of Dainichi Nyorai, the Supreme Buddha. Although of ferocious visage and carrying the sword and the noose cord and his body surrounded by flames, Fudo is a benevolent representation of universal law. Buddhism has no malevolent deity. Punishment is not a spiritual reality. Karma is never represented as an adversary but, as Mephisto says in *Faust,* ". . . part of that power that still works for good while ever scheming ill." When the human being for any reason or under any circumstance performs an action contrary to virtue, a reaction results. This is not actually a punishment but a lesson, a revelation of the infinite plan in which all things exist and grow and ultimately attain to perfect enlightenment.

When an unkind word leads to a dispute, the power of universal truth chides the offender. He gradually learns that he cannot under any conditions escape from the consequences of his own conduct. In family life the disobedient child is appropriately punished in order that its character can be rectified. It does not mean that parents are actually angry and wish to hurt a son or daughter but, rather, that unless mistakes are corrected the future life is impaired.

In human society there are rules which constantly remind the wrongdoer that he is endangering his well-being to gratify the mind, the emotions, or the body. The purpose of evolution is to unfold the internal potential with which every person is endowed, and suffering is the inevitable result of wrong action. If the personal will is permitted to defy the blessed doctrine which is for the perfection of all that lives, it is love and not hate that leads Dainichi to appear as a revengeful power. The devout Buddhist, understanding the doctrine, recognizes Fudo as a teacher worthy of veneration and respect.

In the Amidist sects the Dhyani Buddha, Amida, transcends the confused structure of the mental world and builds in the subtle substances of regenerated thought and emotion the splendid palace of the Western Paradise. Sukhavati's blessed realm is the transmuted subconsciousness of man himself. Here he will dwell in the light and draw to himself no further negative karma. It is by his own merits or good karma that he creates the wondrous atmosphere of Amida's heaven.

If thought and emotion subside into their own source—if the inner life is no longer conditioned by any phenomena accumulated by the machinery of the six senses—the result is a kind of void. When the picture has been erased, only the paper remains; and, in this case, it is the blank paper that all the world is seeking. It is called blank because man has no way of estimating its qualities. It is called unreal because it is beyond personal realization.

This silence is not a vacuum or deprivation but eternal life. It is the cause of all that lives, and to it all living things must return—not to extinction but to completeness. This reality which transcends all definition is Dainichi Nyorai, the source of all, symbolically seated in eternal meditation. This experience of identity with eternal life is possible only when the individual is capable of outgrowing the world around him and transcending the world within him. He is in the midst of infinity, in an ocean of eternal light, and the only darkness that exists is in himself. To recognize this is to be an arhat;

to experience this and share the experience, so far as is possible, with all living things, is to be a bodhisattva; to become one with it forever is to be a Buddha.

The Ten Regions Mandara, the Nichiren Sect Kokori-no-kagami. From the PRS Collection.

Chapter V

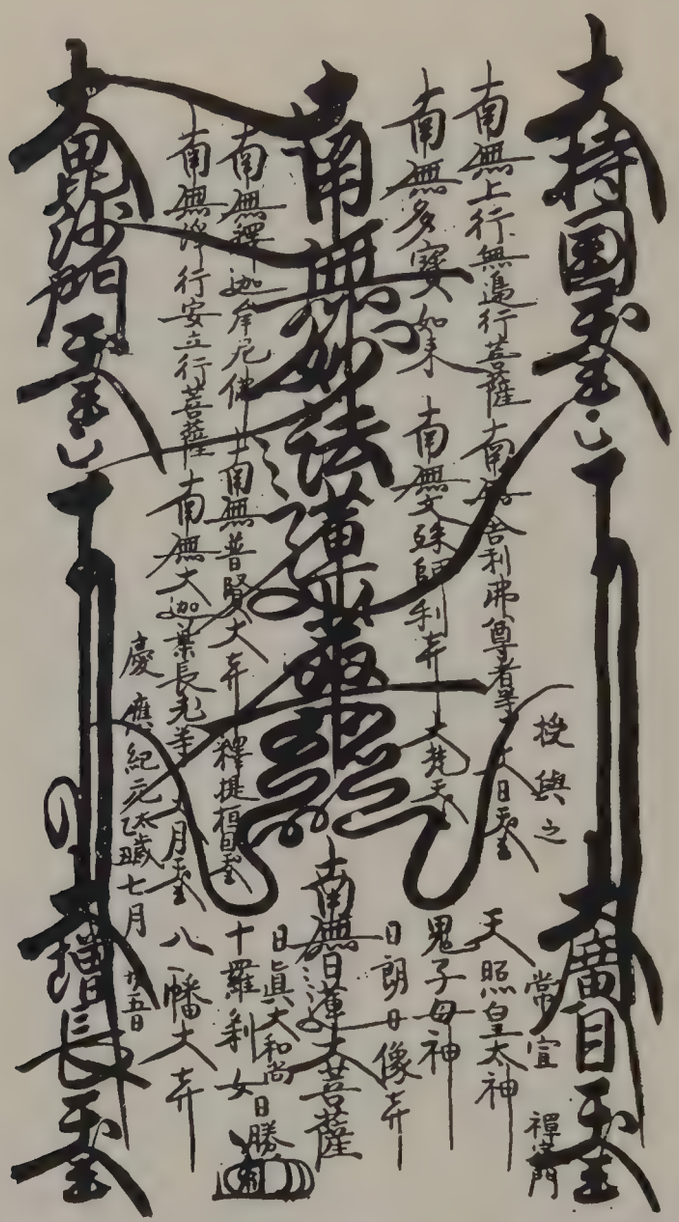
THE LOTUS SUTRA AND ITS MANDALAS

The most important of the religious writings of Northern Buddhism is the *Saddharma-pundarika-sutra* (Japanese: Hokkekeyo) or *The Lotus of the True Law.* It is available to Western students as Vol. XXI of *The Sacred Books of the East,* translated by H. Kern and edited by F. Max Müller. Generally referred to in the Orient as the *Lotus Sutra,* it has been described as the most precious jewel among all Buddhist sacred writings. The origin of the work is obscure, and the popular belief that it is based upon the last discourse of Gautama Buddha is questioned.

It is known that a Chinese translation of the *Lotus Sutra* was made between A.D. 265 and 316. Other translations followed in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, and these were frequently republished. It is, therefore, probable that the *Lotus Sutra* was actually written or compiled in India between 200 B.C. and the beginning of the Christian era.

While devoted entirely to the concepts of metaphysical Buddhism, the *Sutra* derives considerable inspiration from older sources. Borrowings from Hindu mysticism, especially the *Bhagavad-Gita,* have been noted by scholars. For this *Sutra* the world is indebted to those sages who undertook the difficult task of laying the groundwork for Buddhism as a universal religious philosophy. Professor Kern points out that a study of the *Lotus Sutra,* while it does not refute the prevailing belief that Buddhism was non-theistic, reduces the issue to inconsequential proportions. All the practical requisites of a Buddhist religious system are provided by the *Lotus Sutra.* At the same time, one receives the strong impression that the basic teachings of Buddha himself have not been violated but, rather, expanded and enriched in meaning.

The *Lotus Sutra* has influenced all the Buddhist sects of Japan and has been especially venerated by the followers of the Tendai and Nichiren schools. The principal mandara devised by the Nichiren sect glorifies the *Lotus Sutra.* This design composed of written characters is called the Daimoku. The sacred words "Namu Myo-ho-ren-ge-kyo" (Hail to the Sutra of the Good Law) are placed vertically in the center and dominate the design. At the four corners are written the names of the guardian kings who preside over the four directions of space. On either side of the central inscription are the names of



The Daimoku Formula, the principal mandara of the Nichiren Sect of Buddhism, as originally designed by the great priest Nichiren himself.

the two Buddhas described in the apocalyptical vision of the *Lotus Sutra.* These are the extinct Buddha, Prabhutaratna, and the Lord Gautama himself. The design also includes the monograms of Fudo Myo-o and Aizen Myo-o. The Daimoku is the *Lotus Sutra,* the ten regions of the world, and the *sila* or body of moral precepts.

The Kokori-no-kagami or mirror of the heart is the Japanese wheel of life with its ten conditions or psychological divisions. This symbol is much used by the Nichiren sect, and a typical example of the diagram is repro-

duced here. In the center is the Japanese character which has been described as signifying the Ego, the center of self-consciousness. As this is only a mental focus, it is the source of the illusionary phenomena and the establishment of stability in the inner life.

The highest section of the wheel signifies the state of perfect enlightenment. On one side is Kannon, on the other side a dedicated arhat in meditation. There is a department set aside for angels and celestial musicians and a place of rest for those who live as honorable human beings. In the realm of Asura are those dressed as warriors, who seek wealth and fame and rejoice in warfare. The lowest region shows the miserable condition associated with a bad conscience. Also noticeable is the pitiful abode of ghosts and those who are victims of their lower appetites suggested by animals and birds. Through meditation upon this design, integrity is strengthened and the worshipper is rescued from the tyranny of his own mind.

The principal altar of the Nichiren sect is called the Sambo or the Holy Three. The two Buddhas, Gautama and Prabhutaratna, are seated on lotus thrones. Between them is a tablet with a pagoda-like roof on which is inscribed the Daimoku.

The Sambo or Holy Three. The Two Buddhas, Gautama and Prabhutaratna, are seated on lotus pedestals, and the Daimoku is inscribed on the tablet between them. Formerly in the PRS Collection.

The *Sutra,* as now preserved, consists of twenty-eight sections; although it is usually presented in twenty-seven chapters in the Chinese version, due to the combining of the eleventh and twelfth chapters. An interesting peculiarity of the *Sutra* is that in all but four of the sections both prose and verse forms of the same text are included. The poetic versions, generally called *gathas,* may have originally been issued separately or perhaps one form was developed from the other. This means that there is considerable repetition, and the text generally follows the extravagant style of Indian religious writing.

Like many apocalyptical writings, the *Lotus Sutra,* as Professor Kern has perceived, is strongly theatrical in the presentation of its pageantry. The curtain rises to reveal the Buddhist universe reminiscent of the elaborate ritualism of the Greek Mystery dramas. In the *Lotus Sutra* Gautama Buddha (Shakyamuni) is presented as an ideal—a personification of cosmic truth. This explains several inconsistencies that have worried skeptical scholars. It would be contrary to the basic concepts of Buddhism for the historical Buddha to declare himself infallible or eternal. The scriptural writings of many people, however, do at various times introduce utterances attributed directly to Deity; and, whenever these declarations appear, they are invested with the ultimate authority. Under such conditions, these words of God are regarded as a proper means of conveying the omniscience of Deity. It has been argued that, because of its magnificent pageantry, the *Lotus Sutra* awakens strong emotional responses. The Buddha of this *Sutra,* however, is passionless, revealing no evidence of human emotions. As the personification of the immutability of Universal Law, this detachment is perfectly consistent with Buddhist teachings; but what the non-Buddhist does not realize is that to the devotees of the *Lotus Sutra* Law itself is the perfect expression not only of truth but of divine love.

The *Lotus Sutra* begins with the simple statement, "Thus I have heard." The great discourse took place in India at Vulture's Peak, located in Rajagriha. The scene is so magnificent that it transcends imagination, and it takes the first ten chapters to describe this pageantry to the reader. Gautama Buddha is seated upon the throne of teaching. Suddenly, a ray of light streams from the white curl on his forehead and illumines all the innumerable cosmic systems which make up the Buddha Worlds. After Buddha declares his intent by permitting the luminous rays to shine from his forehead, all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas from the myriads of Buddha Worlds assemble at Vulture's Peak. They fly with the speed of light, each with hosts of followers, until myriads upon myriads seem to fill all the parts of the universe. Each of the Buddhas is seated on a lion throne and shaded by a tree of jewels.

The Buddhas of the Ten Regions of Space have assembled to hear the perfect revelation of the Eternal Law. The great bodhisattvas in their splen-

Title page from a Ming printing of the *Lotus Sutra.* The Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten regions of space assemble at the Vulture Peak to hear the Perfect Revelation of the Eternal Law.

did garments wait breathlessly for the words of the Perfectly Awakened One. The arhats have gathered from all the countries, continents, and abodes where they dwell, each bringing with him a retinue of saints. The monks and nuns of the monastic orders, including the wife of Buddha and the aunt who raised him after his mother's death, are present. In addition to these are creatures of the invisible worlds, which have no likeness in the mortal sphere. The gods of India are in attendance, with the great rajas who guard the four corners of the world. There are multitudes of the pious, extending to the very limits of space. The universe itself is breathless with expectation.

In describing this scene Professor Kern notes that he was reminded of the lines of the poet Wordsworth:

> 'Bright apparition suddenly put forth
> The Rainbow, smiling on the faded storm;
> The mild assemblage of the starry heavens;
> And the great Sun, earth's universal Lord.'

All the principal bodhisattvas are included in this mighty spectacle. In their proper places Manjusri (Monju), Maitreya (Miroku), Avalokitesvara (Kannon), Mahasthamaprapta (Daiseishi), and Bhaisajyaraja (Yakushi) wait silently for the wonderful moment. Manjusri tells Maitreya that Gautama is about to preach the Great Discourse, the final revelation of all revelations; and the name of this discourse is "The Lotus of the True Law."

The Hokke Mandara. This is a pictorial representation of the *Lotus Sutra*. Eight bodhisattvas are seated on the petals of the central lotus. Reading clockwise from the top they are Monju, Yaku-o, Myo-on, Daishojin, Mujin-i, Kannon, Fugen, and Miroku. From an original drawing in a manuscript set of the scrolls of Sonoyosho.

In the midst of this celestial assembly the earth seems to open, and there rises up from the ground a *stupa* (pagoda or relic tower) of stupendous size, decorated with garlands, and fashioned from precious stones. The stupa is suspended in the midst of the sky, and from the innermost part of this sanctuary a voice as mighty as the rumble of thunder exclaims: "Excellent! Excel-

lent! World-Honored Shakyamuni." The assembly is filled with great wonder and delight, for the voice is that of Prabhutaratna, a famous Buddha of long ago. Before terminating his own existence he had made a vow that he would appear when the *Lotus Sutra* was preached.

In the presence of the assembled throng Gautama Buddha rises from his throne and ascends into the sky. Coming to the door of the stupa, he unfastens the lock, and, as the inside of the tower becomes visible, the "Extinct Buddha" is seen seated in meditation. Prabhutaratna invites Gautama to enter the stupa and share his throne. The scene is so splendid that the Buddhas appear like meteors in a star-strewn sky. At this point, Gautama, by his perfect insight and absolute power of consciousness, draws the entire assembly up into the sky with him and then delivers his discourse.

The presence of the "Extinct Buddha" seems to suggest that the wisdom of past ages supports and sponsors the revelation. All that still exists and all that has ceased in the mystery of time gone by is invoked to bear witness to the eternality of the Law. Vast periods of time are dissolved in the vision, as are all dimensions of space. The cosmos is suspended for one dramatic instant, which may properly be termed "the eternal now."

Primitive Buddhism, being essentially an ethical philosophy, gave scant attention to cosmological theories. Hinduism provided the philosophical concept of the universe as it was understood in those days. Hindu astronomers were well-versed in mathematics and able to calculate cycles of planetary motions and related phenomena. From the old scriptural writings a great deal of extraordinary lore bearing upon the creation, continuance, and final disintegration of the world was available to the scientific-minded.

The universe was believed to be so immense that it transcended all human imagination. Time, which was related to the space dimensions, was calculated in thousands of millions of years; within both quantitative and qualitative dimensions incredible distances were envisioned. The entire cosmic system was divinely fashioned, and its unfoldment was according to immutable laws. The religious believer was not limited by any arbitrary concept of creation. He did not regard himself as unique or as the only intelligent creature in space. Even the most distant stars were alive.

Old diagrams of the solar system and the various divisions of the earth with its elements and regions would not rejoice the mentality of the modern astronomer. These ancient universe maps were largely the products of institutional processes striving to understand basic principles, rather than to grasp the outward forms of things. These concepts led to the development of mandalas.

There is no doubt that the religions of early India were strongly influ-

enced by prevailing sidereal theories. Some believe the Hindu astronomy was largely based upon the anatomy and physiology of the human body. A casual reading of the opening sections of the *Vishnu Purana* supports such conclusions. To the Oriental the cosmos was a vast being; and worlds were generated within a matrix, even as the unborn babe develops within the maternal womb. The Hindus believed that by analogies between human and universal generation they could explain the origin of both man and the cosmos.

Buddhism, inheriting the old wisdom of India, was not called upon to devise a new system of cosmology. It simply reinterpreted the Hindu concept of cosmogenesis, harmonizing it with the ethical doctrines promulgated by Gautama Buddha. With the rise of the Mahayana system, the arhats of Buddhism borrowed generously from the earlier descriptions of the cosmos found in their own national literatures. In the *Lotus Sutra* Buddhist metaphysics was caused to expand until it virtually filled the Hindu universe, but the Buddhas and bodhisattvas took precedence over the deities of the older pantheon. According to the Mahayana philosophy, the Hindu universe was a part of a material creation and its deities suffered to some degree from delusions of grandeur. It was necessary that they be converted to Buddhism; and, this having been accomplished, the old gods became the defenders and interpreters of Buddhist wisdom. Therefore, the world of the *Vedas* was a realm which both existed and did not exist. For those who believed, including Brahma himself, the gods were divine autocrats ruling over the Vedic wonderland. It remained for Buddhism to convince the older deities that they governed a transitory realm which had been fashioned by their own minds.

Early Buddhists divided existence into two parts: reality and illusion, which they symbolized by a sphere divided into an upper and a lower hemisphere. The lower part was the world of illusion, the abode of suffering. The upper part was nirvana, the realm of the complete suspension of all mental-emotional activity. There were many conditions of illusion but only one reality. For practical purposes, there was only temporal existence below and eternal existence above; and the mind could choose from only these two possible states. By accepting the reality of phenomenal existence, the mind remained immersed in materialism and subject to its innumerable infirmities. The alternative was to reject the world of transitory suffering and strive through inner discipline to attain the nirvanic reality.

In the *Lotus Sutra* Buddha is caused to unfold the deepest mysteries of the heart doctrine. He does this most skillfully with the aid of parables and persuasive discourse. In this *Sutra* Buddha is presented as a concrete manifestation of the Infinite Mind. He embraces within his own nature all the mental phenomena of existence and transcends them. There is a strange

Detail from the front illustration of Volume One of the *Lotus Sutra*, probably seventeenth century. At upper left is the vision of the stupa accompanied by metaphysical beings, including Kuan Yin and Vaisramana, the guardian of sacred relics.

undercurrent that seems to imply that this magnificent spectacle is curiously, even divinely, unsubstantial. It is the production of a cosmic dreaming, but it is a dreaming as near to truth as dreams can ever come. It is the ultimate expansion of the power to think, to know, or to reason. The spectacle is suspended in the midst of "no mind," for beyond it there is only that which transcends and defies even the highest conceivable aspects of the human consciousness.

Buddha as the personification of the Eternal Mind is an eternal being. The author of the *Lotus Sutra* causes him to declare that he has existed for countless eternities and that he will continue for the duration of infinity. His original enlightenment was not under the bo tree at Buddh Gaya but occurred in a remote time beyond the power of man to calculate. His illumination during his historical existence in India can be symbolized by his sacred footprint, for it was only one of innumerable occasions in which he took on the semblance of mortality and walked the earth as a man.

Here the *Sutra* draws heavily upon the concepts of ancient Hindu astron-

omy. Everywhere in the cosmos are worlds as numerous as the grains of sand along the banks of the Ganges. Man cannot calculate them, discover their beginnings, nor envison their ends.

The Buddhas are more numerous than the glittering stars of the Milky Way. Yet, on the momentous occasion of the revelation of the *Lotus Sutra,* these Buddhas appeared in their mystical bodies, flying through the air on clouds and arriving from the ten directions; while over the great scene celestial musicians filled the universe with their cosmic harmonies, and angels dropped petals of heavenly flowers upon the assembly.

The *Lotus Sutra* projects the moral philosophy of Buddha into all the dimensions and regions of space. Creation itself is an inconceivable ethical mechanism, splendid with the beauties of wisdom. Throughout space the Buddhas and bodhisattvas fulfill the eternal mystery of redemption. It is no longer assumed that they will retire into Parinirvana and vanish utterly from the world of suffering. The great teachers, although ever appearing to be born, are never born in the cycle of mortality. Although they may appear to suffer, they only voluntarily assume suffering as part of the labor of salvation; and, though in the end they seem to vanish into the mystery of the void, in reality they never cease to exist.

One of the best known sections of the *Lotus Sutra* is Chapter XXIV in the translation by H. Kern. It is called *The All-Sided One, Containing the Description of the Transformations of Avalokitesvara.* Such editions occur in Chinese printings as early as the Tang Dynasty. This section is frequently published separately, and it is known to Japanese Buddhists as "The Kannon-Kyo." In this section of the *Lotus Sutra* the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Akshayamati arises and, assuming a prayerful attitude, inquires of the Lord Buddha concerning the reason why the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Avalokitesvara (Kannon) is called the *All-Beholding,* the *Everywhere-Present,* and the *Eternally-Compassionate.* Buddha then delivers a brief discourse in which he explains the efficacy of prayers addressed to the Arya (Lord) Avalokitesvara. Regardless of the dangers that may arise, sorrows that may burden the soul, or punishments that are too heavy to bear, Kannon will relieve the misfortune and protect with perfect solicitude all who call upon this Bodhisattva in love, faith, and humility. This statement is followed by thirty-three stanzas describing the intercessions of Kannon.

When the Buddha is asked how the Bosatsu Kannon preaches the eternal law in the mortal world, the Perfectly Enlightened One explains as follows: "The Lord Avalokitesvara takes on many appearances. To some beings he may take on the form of an arhat or one of the Hindu gods. He is all things to all men, and to those who have received instruction he comes in a familiar form. It may be assumed that he supports sincerity wherever it exists and

performs the labors of compassion, regardless of the sect or creed of petitioners. After countless ages of dedication, Kannon is able to accomplish an infinite number of transformations so that he can teach every living creature according to its own nature."

The accompanying woodblock print depicts the intercessions of this Bodhisattva as they are set forth in the *Kannon Sutra.* In the lower part of the design are small scenes showing the emergencies and disasters that afflict human beings. In each case the distressed person calls upon the "Everywhere Present One" for protection. To perform meritorious actions, or to venerate the name with perfect faith, is to be rescued from the misfortunes of mortality. It is obvious that the fulfillment of the requirements set forth in this *Sutra* exacts the practice of meditation. Those who have the strength of inner conviction have attained a victory over the tragedies of worldliness. The scenes in the print set forth preservation from death by fire, by drowning, or by a fall from a great height. There are versions of this scene in which a man, cast off a cliff by a wicked person, falls into the open hand of Kannon and is preserved. Those who accept the love of this Bodhisattva cannot be the victims of common evils, because they experience in their hearts and minds the infinite grace of Deity.

A new dimension is added to the teaching of the older Buddhist schools. The Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and arhats are fulfilling vows they made before the beginning of mortal history. The vows always include labors of salvation, for the Great Ones can never rest until the tiniest molecule floating in a sunbeam has attained the true enlightenment.

If we assume that this apparently extravagant pageantry refers to the infinite manifestation of unfolding universal consciousness, it is comprehensible at least in theory. If each of the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and arhats personifies an aspect of Infinite Mind, the *Sutra* becomes more meaningful.

The Japanese Five World Diagram is supported by a type of demon called an oni. Although attendants upon the judges of the underworld, the oni are really rather whimsical creatures. There are two types: the red oni and the green oni. Both have been converted to Buddhism and have been rendered comparatively harmless. They play many pranks which may cause annoyance; but they do not resemble the Western type of demon, which is a relentless and remorseless adversary of both man and the heavenly host.

Buddhist philosophy does not admit the existence of a principle of evil or of any power or being seeking to frustrate man's search for truth. The only hindrance is the weakness of human nature, which man must overcome by self-discipline.

Woodblock print from a Ming edition of the *Lotus Sutra* picturing an intercession of the Bodhisattva Kuan Yin. A pious man cast off a cliff is saved as a result of his prayers to the Bodhisattva, whose hand materializes to break his fall.

The Five World Diagram. From a hand-colored Japanese woodblock print in the PRS Collection.

In the accompanying diagram a white disc is shown above the head of the red goblin. Above the disc are four characters, which translate, "perfect purity and nirvana." Below the disc, between the horns of the oni, are the words "great demon of impermanence." The long inscription to the right of the goblin's head reads: "If you wish to be liberated, you should practice the teachings of Buddha. Life and death are enemies which must be defeated as an elephant crushes grass beneath its feet." The corresponding inscription on the left also gives excellent advice: "In this sphere of doctrine, always practice good and do not be irresponsible. Diminish the ocean of desire and eliminate the bondage due to suffering."

Around the lower part of the wheel are a number of small figures engaged in various pursuits. These correspond to twelve nidanas set forth on the border of the Tibetan version. Beginning at the bottom of the wheel, between the feet of the oni, a single menacing figure is seen. It is called "Ignorance." Proceeding clockwise, the small drawings are labeled Action; Conduct Arising from Ignorance; Consciousness of Delusion; Beginning of Existence (man in boat); The Six Senses; Communication in Relation to the World; Receiving; Perceiving; Love; and Attachment. Beginning again at the bottom and reading counterclockwise, we find symbols and inscriptions as follows: Worry; Sorrow; Suffering; Anxiety; Death; Sickness; Old Age; Birth; and Worldly Possessions. It is obvious that the number of nidanas has been increased by the addition of supplementary designs elaborating upon the mystery of suffering.

The central wheel shows five spokes which converge upon the figure of Buddha. Beneath him are three creatures: a bird, a serpent, and a boar—indicating greed, appetite, and ignorance. These are the three causes by which the wheel is kept in motion. It should be noted that in this particular example Buddha is placed above the three animals, for by the practice of right discipline the animal propensities become the basis of liberation. The outer ends of the five spokes touch and pass through the gilded rim of the wheel, and at each of the five angles there are two small diagrams, one marked "life" and the other marked "death."

The five regions of the world are closely associated with the illusions of the five senses. The lower section is the abode of the most terrible punishment and is presided over by the Regent of the Underworld, who is seated behind an elaborate table. Here red and green demons carry out the sentences imposed by Emma-O. To the left is the realm of hungry ghosts, who are unable to escape from the longing of unfulfilled appetites and sensations. Above this, in turn, is the sphere of human beings, showing people from various walks of life, including a great nobleman, a mother and child, coolies carrying baskets, a shepherd, a scholar, and a sage in meditation.

Continuing beyond the meridian, we reach the kingdom of the devas, a radiant and beautiful region populated with angels and containing wondrous palaces and clouds of rainbow hue. The fifth and last region is that of the animal kingdom, containing examples of birds, fish, reptiles, and mammals of many kinds.

According to the concept of the Bhava Chakra, those passing out of physical life are drawn by their karma to one of the five conditions. Only the Buddha is completely free from the sequence of cause and effect. He remains tranquil in the midst of the spheres of impermanence.

The real message of the *Lotus Sutra* is not conveyed by the words of the speaker, for it is obvious that its deeper meaning cannot be verbalized. The real message was the impact of the total scene, which takes on the dimensions of the ultimate mandala. This no doubt explains why various Buddhist leaders in both China and Japan evolved their interpretations by their own meditational and intuitive faculties. The words of Buddha merely state the essential structure of the concept. The rest must be experienced. The whole scene suggests a cosmic version of Buddha's own enlightenment under the bo tree. There is an incredible burst of light, as though a psychic atom had been split. The cosmos is revealed, like the unfolding lotus, forever evolving, forever maturing, and forever fruitful. Lives are bound together in an infinite pattern of mutual benevolence. The cosmos is revealed as the eternal teacher of all that lives.

The vision scene as unfolded in the *Lotus Sutra* sets forth the physical world as revealed to the perfectly enlightened seer or sage. Physical forms disappear, boundaries of time and space fade away, and all that is seen is the radiance of causation on its various levels of manifestation. Every flower in the field becomes a radiant light. Even the physical earth is vibrant with an eternal energy. Instead of a star-lit heaven, there is a star-lit earth. As in a lantern, every existing creature in all kingdoms is a form enclosing a light. The power that administers the clouded world seen by the limited sensory perceptions suddenly reveals the mystery of itself. Many unseen and unknown types of beings shepherd the several kingdoms of physical nature. No living thing is without protector and enlightener. A hierarchy lies behind every veil, and in the *Lotus Sutra* the psychic mechanism is revealed in its fullest splendor. It is true indeed that even the fall of a sparrow is noted, and the little soul finds its eternal refuge in the heart of a loving and protecting friend and teacher. We see only shadows, and space seems empty except for a few sidereal bodies. Actually, we are in the midst of a life which surrounds and penetrates every physical unit of eternal energy.

As the psychological aspects of the *Lotus Sutra* are examined sympathetically, it becomes evident that it is one of the most extraordinary revelations of Will-Consciousness-Mind to be found in the religious literature of the world. It is appropriate that all students of comparative religion should study the cosmotheism of the Lotus Gospel, which is accepted as the ultimate authority by certain schools of Northern Buddhism.

A mandala depicting the grand scheme of the Chinese Buddhist system. A modern print derived from early religious paintings.

Chapter VI

MANDALAS IN CHINESE BUDDHISM

Although Mahayana Buddhism originated in Northern India, its development into an elaborate religio-philosophical system occurred in China. Buddhist priests and missionaries established themselves among the Chinese people during the first century A.D. To advance the cause of their religion these Indian teachers first mastered the Chinese language and then began the translation of the Sanskrit Buddhist writings, a program which continued for several centuries. China already enjoyed the civilizing influence of two indigenous systems, Taoism and Confucianism. The Buddhists had no desire to undermine the prestige of the native beliefs and devoted their attention principally to the cultivation of their own meditation disciplines and constructive community projects. As a result, they won the confidence of both the government and the people, gradually enlarging their spheres of influence.

It was in China, therefore, that Northern Buddhism came into direct contact with three great religions: Taoism, Confucianism, and Christianity. Monasteries were established by the Buddhists in scenic mountain territories, where the Taoists had already built their retreats. Proximity resulted in interchange of convictions and concepts, and this, in turn, modified the Buddhist arhat tradition and gradually brought about a reorganization of Taoism along Buddhist lines.

The plate of the Vinegar Tasters by Utanosuke illustrates differences between the three schools as described by Okakura Kakuzo: "It represents the members of the Three Schools discussing the contents of a large vase of vinegar—the emblem of human life. The Confucian with prosaic fortitude pronounces it sour, the Buddhist bewails its bitterness, while the Taoist philosopher extolls its sweetness."

Confucianism remained comparatively aloof, constituting the code of the intelligentsia. It restrained, at least to a degree, the metaphysical speculations of the Buddhists and periodically opposed the growing temporal power of the Buddhist monastic orders. Average believers, following the example of their Buddhist teachers, simply broadened their horizons and nourished their internal needs from all available beliefs, assuming that if one religion was good, three would be better. In the course of time images of Confucius

The Vinegar Tasters by Utanosuke, an artist of the Kano School, who flourished in the sixteenth century. From *Japan Described and Illustrated by the Japanese,* edited by Captain F. Brinkley, Boston, Massachusetts, 1898.

appeared at least occasionally in the galleries of Buddhist saints along with that sanctified Venetian traveler, Ser Marco Polo.

Three popular branches of Buddhism unfolded and matured in China: the esoteric schools, the Pure Land sects, and the Zen meditational system. Later, all three reached Japan, where they have continued to this day as a powerful living force in Japanese life. The esoteric schools developed an elaborate system of rituals and ceremonies and an extensive pantheon of metaphysical Buddhas and bodhisattvas. The Pure Land sects were largely devotional, venerating the Dhyani Buddha, Amitabha (Chinese: O-mi-t'o Fu; Japanese: Amida). These sects, which affirm that salvation can be attained by faith alone, gained a large following in China and are probably the most powerful of Buddhist denominations at the present time. The Zen system especially honors the Indian monk Bodhidharma, who reached China in the fifth century, establishing himself in the Shao Lin Monastery, where he sat in meditation for nine years and kept awake by drinking vast quantities of tea. This meditation school gained prominence in Japan during the Kamakura Period (A.D. 1186-1393) and still has a large following. The system has aroused the interest of many Western psychologists.

We are indebted to the Chinese for a mandala depicting the grand scheme of their Buddhist systems. The picture occurs in many forms: some handpainted, others woodblock prints, colored or uncolored, and extremely modern lithographs. The one reproduced at the beginning of this chapter belongs to the last classification and is somewhat more ornate and comprehensive than the earlier types. As the picture is suitable for meditation and is an epitome of the Buddhistic world theory, it should correctly be considered a mandala.

The upper section of the picture suggests the heavenly regions with the sacred mountains, where the immortals dwell together in eternal felicity. Genii and spirits populate this atmospheric expanse; and a small tableau at the upper left presents Mahamaya, the mother of Buddha, with attendants, including arhats floating on clouds. Below this group is a figure in armor called Wei-t'o, who has been called the Archangel Michael of Buddhism. He is truly a defender of the faith, leader of the heavenly guard, and frequently appears at the end of Buddhist sutras as guardian of the sacred writings. Heavenly temples with their pagodas, Chinese versions of the Phoenix bird, godlings presiding over the elements, and mountain shrines complete the panorama.

The picture is dominated by representations of the three Buddhas forming a triad of spiritual powers. In the center the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni (Gautama), sits in quiet contemplation. There are disciples in the background, the most prominent being Kashyapa and Ananda. Ananda was a

The Maitreya Buddha from a miniature painting on a leaf of the Ficus religiosa, the sacred fig tree.

cousin of Gautama and had the distinction of being born on the day that Buddha attained enlightenment.

The central figure is accompanied by the two primary reflex images of itself. On the viewer's left is Bhaishajyaguru (Japanese: Yakushi), the Healing Buddha who brings the sovereign remedy for ignorance, the world disease. On the other side is Amitabha, the Buddha of boundless light, holding a miniature pagoda in his lap. Each of the figures wears monastic vestments but has some ornamentation. All three have the tightly curled hair, the ushnisha on the crown of the head, and the long ears of wisdom. On the breast is a swastika, which the Chinese consider the symbol of the heart at rest. The figures are seated in the adamantine posture on many petaled lotus blossoms and are attended by circles of disciples and bearers of ceremonial lanterns.

The next register is dominated by a seated figure of the Bodhisattva Kwan Yin (Japanese: Kannon). This figure, personifying the infinite compassion of the Buddhist concept of life, is attended by two small children in attitudes of veneration. Kwan Yin appears in typical feminine form, which is believed to have originated in China, and is attended by two figures. On the viewer's right stands Ti-ts'ang, a portly person with an abbot's coronet and his hands joined in prayer. Ti-ts'ang reached Japan as the Bodhisattva Jizo, guardian of children and of souls in the underworld. In the Chinese system this concept is expanded to include the whole physical existence of human beings.

Jizo took the bodhisattva obligation to wander the labyrinthian corridors of the sub-mundane realm until he had rescued all beings and brought them into the presence of Buddha. Jizo had two principal disciples, the elder being Min, shown on the viewer's left as a venerable man in flowing robes holding a flaming pearl. Min was a minister of state whose son had become a monk. This son, named Tao-ming, is the other disciple and is given preference in Buddhist philosophy, because he was the one who converted his own father. The son is not clearly indicated in the print but may be included among the arhats scattered throughout the picture.

In the same register at far right and left are the Bodhisattvas Manjusri, riding on a lion, and Samantabhadra seated on an elephant. In Japanese Buddhist art these two figures, as Monju and Fugen, attend Gautama Buddha. Monju personifies the wisdom of the doctrine and Fugen the spiritual strength of the Dharma. In Japanese art, however, both these figures are presented with gentle, almost feminine, appearances. The lion and the elephant upon which these bodhisattvas ride are both associated with the life of the historical Buddha, Gautama.

The lower section of this mandala is especially complicated. It is

The Western Paradise of Amitabha from a large eighteenth century woodblock print in a temple library in the Mongolian city of Jehol.

dominated by the rotund and gilded figure of Maitreya (Japanese: Miroku), whose smiling countenance represents the blessedness of the golden age to come. The lotus blossom upon which he is seated floats on the surface of a lake in which are also placed the longevity symbols of both China and Japan, the crane and the tortoise. Between these is the Ship of Salvation, the blessed doctrine of Buddha, which carries souls across the troubled waters of existence, bringing them in the end to Amida's Western Paradise. In the foreground and at the sides, grouped along the banks of the pond, are the great Mahayana arhats who also came into prominence in the Chinese monasteries. They are engaged in various occupations and carry appropriate symbols. Four Lokapalas, or Guardian Kings, with stern expressions stand as protectors of the assemblage.

We also have in our collection a large and important woodblock print of the Western Paradise of Amitabha. According to the information which accompanied the diagram, the original block was in the temple library of the Mongolian city of Jehol, which is located about one hundred and twenty-five miles northeast of Peking. The date of the original woodblock is unknown, but it was probably cut in the eighteenth century. As this mandala belongs to the Pure Land sect, Amitabha (O-mi-t'o Fu) is featured accompanied by his two reflex forms, Kannon (Kwan Yin) and Daiseishi (Sanskrit: Mahasthamaprapta, Chinese: Tai-shih-chih). The Buddha of Boundless Light is enthroned in the Western Paradise surrounded by attendant bodhisattvas and the souls of the redeemed. As in the Chinese mandala, the lower section features a pond bordered by railings. In the pond grow gigantic lotus flowers in which redeemed souls are born into Amida's paradise.

The entire picture signifies the heart of Amitabha, within which all the mysteries of redemption are accomplished. The heart becomes the redeemer of the mind, causing love to be supreme, accomplishing all of its wonders by virtue of its own nature alone.

According to Abbé Favier in his book *Peking,* Nestorian Christian missionaries reached China from Persia about A.D. 635. One proof of their ministry is the Nestorian monument, which was erected in A.D. 781 at Sian in Shensi Province. This great tablet includes a summary of the life of Christ and an account of the introduction of Christianity into China. A further description of this stone from *World Healers* by Lady Elizabeth Anna Gordon, now out of print, can be found in a monograph "E. A. Gordon," published by the Philosophical Research Society. An imperial university was established at Sian, and the Nestorian missionaries were granted the right to build churches and convert the people. The emperor and his court were instructed in Christian doctrine, declaring it to be harmless to the State and useful in the lives of the people.

Most students of Mahayana Buddhism assume that Christian elements were introduced at a comparatively early date and were responsible, at least in part, for the rapid unfoldment of the devotional aspects of Buddhism. Lady Gordon was convinced that Japanese Buddhist scholars visiting China in the ninth and tenth centuries were influenced by Nestorian concepts and brought back to Japan symbols and beliefs of Christian origin. These may occur in the mandalas but are thinly veiled. For example, Amida exists in two forms: Amitabha and Amitayus, which mean boundless light and boundless life respectively. We can compare this with the first chapter of the Gospel According to John, where Christ is revealed as the Word of God made flesh, and according to the fourth verse, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." It is also probable that a further stream of influence reached China from the Near East along the old caravan routes, and it is known that Buddhist pilgrims set up missions as far west as the North African city of Alexandria.

Each of the Buddhist sects gives special veneration to the historical Buddha or one of the metaphysical Buddhas. The Zen, or meditation school, is especially mindful of the historical Indian prince, Gautama; and there are special ceremonies in his honor on his birthday (April 8th), his attainment of enlightenment (December 8th), and his nirvana (February 15th). It was Gautama himself who first revealed the mysteries of Zen to his disciple, Mahakashyapa (See: *Manual of Zen Buddhism* by D. T. Suzuki, Kyoto, 1935).

Gautama Buddha is presented in several different aspects. When attended by his two disciples, the emphasis is upon his historical life and ministry. However, when he is accompanied by the two Bodhisattvas, Monju riding a lion and Fugen seated on an elephant, he is presented in a mystical or metaphysical form. When arhats or disciples are also present, the metaphysical and physical aspects are blended. Incidentally, the triad composed of Amida, Gautama, and Miroku represents the three dimensions of time, with Amida as the Buddha of the past, Gautama as the Buddha of the present, and Miroku as the Buddha of the future. A great deal of symbolism is involved in the religious art which has developed within the structure of the several sects.

The accompanying painting is in the Chinese style and inspired by the Chinese tradition, but the picture was made in Japan. The grouping of all these figures presents the traditional form of what is called the Sakya Mandala. It is also a pictorialization of the revelation of the meditation discipline and the powers that protect it. As a diagram, it is appropriate to the Zen sect but is also acceptable to the so-called esoteric schools.

The Sakya Mandala (Mandara) from a Japanese painting on silk, probably eighteenth century. From the PRS Collection.

Gautama is presented as seated on a lotus throne with his hands in the mudra of instruction. Above his head is a canopy suggesting a lotus leaf surmounted by a radiant pearl. He is attended by Monju, the Bodhisattva personifying prajna or wisdom, riding on a lion. Fugen, seated on an elephant, in this case signifies the eternal, immeasurable love of Buddha. The eternal figures are surrounded by the sixteen benevolent devas, divine beings who protect the sacred text of the *Mahaprajna Paramita Sutra.* They are represented in elaborate costume, usually including some type of armor and weapons.

In addition to these defenders of the faith, other personalities are included in the scene. At the extreme left foreground is a very mysterious looking figure wearing a necklace of skulls, with a face on his abdomen, and elephants' heads as ornaments on his leggings. This is Jinsha Daio. Above and somewhat to the right is a shaven-headed monk called Jotai Bosatsu (Sadaprarudita). These figures are closely associated with the *Mahaprajna Paramita Sutra.* Hsuan-Tsang translated this work into the Chinese, and he also translated the commentaries thereon by Nagarjuna. While on his celebrated journey across the endless deserts of Central Asia, Hsuan-Tsang was confronted by the god of the desert, Jinsha Daio, who had already destroyed six pilgrims attempting to reach India and wore their skulls as ornaments. When Hsuan-Tsang recited the wonderful *Mahaprajna Paramita Sutra,* the spirit of the wilderness was so entranced that he was immediately converted to the true doctrine and declared himself to be a protector of the Paramitas.

At the lower right is an intended portrait of the great Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Hsuan-Tsang represented with a traveling rack strapped to his back. His long pilgrimage required sixteen years, and during this period he visited practically all of the important centers of Buddhist culture between his native China and the rugged regions of Afghanistan. He also lived to return to his own country and translated seventy-four Buddhist scriptures, many of these containing the descriptions and philosophical instructions which were later transformed into mandalas. Most of the later editions of the sutras printed from his translations include one or more woodcut illustrations of a highly symbolical nature.

In China representations of single Buddhist deities or small groups of them are viewed as mandalas. Any representation in which a Buddha or bodhisattva is portrayed is a revelation of the Law. It is assumed that contemplation of such pictures results in the internal visualization of a quality of consciousness. Buddhism combined with Taoism has given us the discipline of the Transcendent Being. The average person looking at the world around him is confused by illusionary circumstances or has his cupidity stimu-

lated by spectacles of wealth and luxury. These taken into the mental and emotional structure tend to corrupt the nature. When these false values have become parts of character, they emerge again as desires and appetites. The person believing these illusionary pressures to be an expression of his true self may dedicate his life to the gratification of his sensory perceptions.

By viewing a synthesis of the Five Meditation Buddhas or a syncretic picture of the Buddhist hierarchy, the worshipper is ennobled in his thoughts and feelings and begins to create within himself an imagery of lofty ideals and aspirations. He acknowledges that the only honorable desire is to transcend all desire and devote his life to the restoration of the Buddha consciousness within himself. Here is also a vestige of the Christian symbolism of the resurrection of Christ, which, according to St. Paul, is a mystery of the internal life.

The Bodhisattva Kwan Yin is especially appealing to the devout, and the many forms of this deity, each with a special meaning, abound in Chinese and Japanese imagery. Kwan Yin is the only bodhisattva accepted in the Southern School. Kwan Yin introduces the mystery of intercession to the devout Buddhist. Some missionaries have insisted that the bodhisattva tradition in general is related directly to the Christian teaching of the vicarious atonement.

To sit quietly in the presence of the gracious figure of this Bodhisattva is in itself a mystical experience. The serene face with dreamy, half-closed eyes, the robes flowing in pleasant patterns like the outpourings of cosmic light, the strange humility united with inner strength, which most Western people do not understand, work small miracles in the heart of the believer. Kwan Yin, in a remote age before the memory of men, took the obligation to labor unceasingly for the improvement and redemption of humankind. Yet, within the structure of Buddhist philosophy Kwan Yin cannot overcome the orderly processes of universal law.

Though referred to as a deity, this Bodhisattva can only inspire the weary and the sorrowful to transcend the illusion of worldliness within themselves. Kwan Yin is more like a physician than a deity. A dedicated doctor knows in his own heart that he cannot save the sick from their own mistakes. He cannot decree health for anyone or forgive even the smallest child for the mistakes that have brought it suffering, but the physician still serves the sick because of a deep sympathy and because he believes in the nobility of his profession. If he is truly sincere, he can help; but he cannot save. This is exactly the place of Kwan Yin, whose very radiant personification suggests the inner transformation necessary for redemption. Enthroned in the heart of the worshipper, this Bodhisattva leads the way to the father's house, for Avalokitesvara is the beloved son of the Dhyani Buddha, Amitabha.

Seated figure of the Bodhisattva Kannon. The original of this type was painted in China in the Tang Dynasty. The most important Japanese example is attributed to Godoshi and preserved in Daitokuji Temple. This Japanese painting at the PRS was formerly in the Henry Steigner Collection.

Mandala designs include both cosmic diagrams and mood pictures. The psychic field of the human being is symbolized by the altar table, or place where the mandala forms are represented as pictures, groups of actual ritual instruments, or arrangements of spell-letters. In Chinese the ideographs for meditation are "tso-kung-fu" or "yung-kung." Both of these mean "work." (See: *Truth and Tradition in Chinese Buddhism* by Karl Ludvig Reichelt, Shanghai, 1934). The implication is that the most arduous of all human endeavors is the attainment of internal quietude.

Here the disciplines of East and West are in complete agreement, for in alchemy the labor of transmutation by which base metals were transformed into gold was called "the great work." This transmutation is advanced in Chinese alchemy through a process of visualization by which the mental and emotional contents of the individual are sublimated and, in this sense, transmuted into the spiritual gold of Amitabha's radiance. As the mind is nourished through learning, so the psychic inner self is unfolded through the mysteries of "the Heart Doctrine." Through this teaching the evil seeds and the good seeds are made perfect by the Buddha seeds.

In the old Buddhist systems cosmogony was purely symbolical and the cosmic diagrams were never intended to be astronomically accurate. The concepts were derived from Hindu speculations and were gradually brought into harmony with Buddhist metaphysics. We have the same situation in the West, where for hundreds of years the geocentric system of astronomy was accepted without question. Pythagoras certainly knew, as we learn from surviving fragments of Pythagorcan writings, that the earth revolves around the flaming altar of the sun; but, like his Eastern contemporaries, he was concerned with mandala forms relating to the inner construction of man and the invisible dimensions behind the visible structures of the world.

One interesting feature about East Indian cosmogony was its precision, as L. Austine Waddell points out. According to the Hindus, Mount Meru, the Oriental Olympus, was exactly 84,000 miles high. Space was infinite, and each universe came into existence like a seed planted in dark earth. Every creation was supported by crossed thunderbolts as imperishable as diamonds. The Katsmata, or double thunderbolt of Esoteric Buddhism, represents the mystery of cosmic energy, for all things are sustained by energy, not by physical footings. The earth was regarded much in the same way in India as in Egypt, and the Egyptians symbolized it by the cross section of an onion.

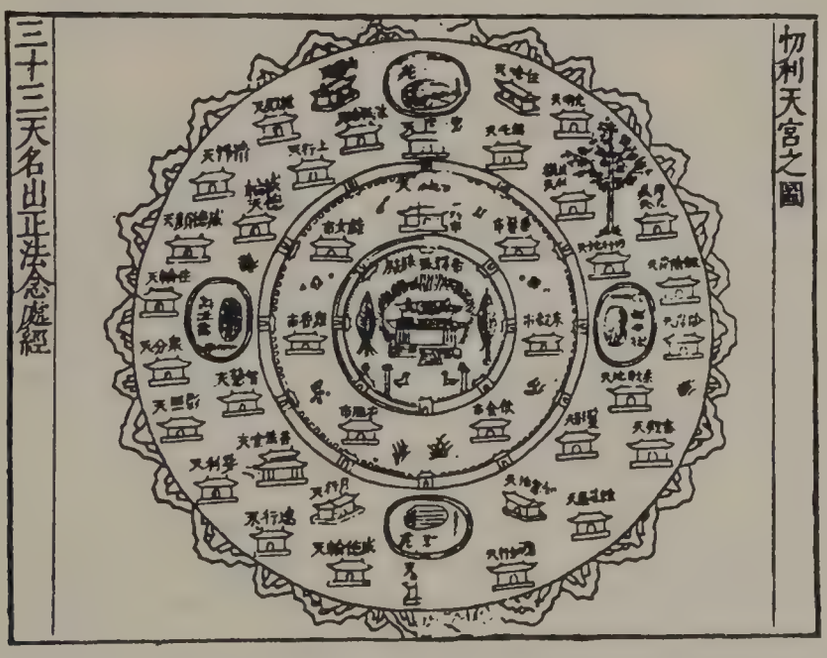
The accompanying Chinese version of the cosmic diagram will summarize the grand scheme. There are four great continents, only one of which is physical. These continents are separated from the central mountain by seven oceans and seven concentric rings of mountains. The entire cosmic

Vertical scroll painting of the universe according to ancient Chinese cosmogony. From the PRS Collection.

design is surrounded by a double wall of iron. In the midst of the planetary structure is Mount Meru, which rises to an incredible height and is shaped like a table with one central pedestal. On the sides of Mount Meru are the abodes of the Great Devas and lesser godlings, who occasionally rebel against the higher deities above. According to the Tibetan systems, the great wishing tree, which has been likened to our Christmas tree, grows midway up the side of Mount Meru. On the top of Meru, which is like an altar table, is represented a mandala of three concentric circles of which the second and third each have eight gates, much like the Matrix Mandara. This is the Holy City, the archetype of all temples and palaces on earth. It is also assumed that the abode of mortal kings influenced the design of the heavenly realm, as it did in Western religion. Above Meru and represented by groupings of clouds are the thirty-three heavens, of which the highest is the abode of the first and primordial Buddha.

The plate of the summit of Mount Meru is based upon a woodblock print in *History of Buddhism* by Jin Ch'au. Comparison with the previous illustration shows clearly that a mandala is intended. The divine realms are archetypes of their corresponding spheres in the material world. Buddhism borrowed the design but interpreted it symbolically, rather than literally.

The European cabalists and followers of esoteric alchemy taught that the universe, which they called the macrocosm, was a vast being and that



The summit of Mount Meru showing the grades of the thirty-three gods from *Abstract of Four Lectures on Buddhist Literature in China* by Samuel Beal, London, 1882.

man was a microcosm or miniature of the macrocosm. Robert Fludd, the Rosicrucian apologist, included in his writings a diagram bearing upon this concept. He notes that the underworld of Greek mythology is based upon the circuitous structure of the human intestines. The same type of symbolism occurs in the philosophies of Asia. The great world mountain symbolizes the diaphragm, which supports the Palace of the Gods, the heart. Above this rises the higher world of the brain with its convolutions, which are twelve in number, as were the principal Brahmanic deities and the Olympian gods. In East Indian mysticism the brain is the source of the Ganges River (the spinal chord), and within the brain are the caves where the great yogins sit in eternal meditation. Above the brain rises the sarasvara or thousand-petaled lotus, the symbol of the Eternal Self.

The great Lamaist cathedral in Peking was for many years the principal center of Tantric Buddhism outside of Tibet. It was presided over by a reincarnate abbot and enjoyed a considerable revival of prestige and prosperity while the Panchen Lama was living in the area in the late 1920's. With his death, however, the Yung-Ho-Kung fell upon evil times and survived by opening its precincts to visitors as a museum of liturgical arts. I visited this temple about the time that Professor Ferdinand Diederich Lessing was preparing his handbook of the sanctuary in 1924. Later, I met Professor Lessing while he was teaching at the University of California at Berkeley. He describes the technique for designing the Rajomandala, the term given to pictures made in powders of various colors on a flat, square altar table. He notes that in some cases the basic outlines are painted permanently on the altar tables or transfers are made from stencils, as in the case of the thankas or painted banners of Tibet.

It is assumed that each grain of color used in the construction of the mandalas symbolizes a Buddha. The design begins with a hollow square (the tabletop). The corners of the square are connected by two diagonal lines which cross at the center, resulting in, what is called in the West, a St. Andrew's Cross. Where the lines bisect each other, the central deity is enthroned and takes the place symbolically assigned to Mount Meru. From his throne the divinity presides over the unfoldment of the mandala picture, blessing and protecting the artists who create it. (For further details see: *Yung-Ho-Kung* by Ferdinand Diederich Lessing, Stockholm, 1942.)

The Lamaist cathedral, to which Professor Lessing gave so much time and study, is itself built on the basis of a mandala. Its principal altars are three in number, each set in a courtyard such as those in old Chinese palaces. The imagery in this sacred precinct represents the universal government, and the rooms and galleries display a fantastic array of ritualistic paraphernalia. Each room with its court is also a mandala, and within the various

apartments there are smaller groups of symbols arranged according to the most ancient and approved traditions.

Regardless of how the visitor reacts to the incredible imagery, he is likely to be impressed by the meaningfulness of everything he sees. Nothing is placed without due consideration. Things are not shown to artistic advantage but to symbolize aspects of universal processes. The Yung-Ho-Kung is one huge architectural picture, an iconographic museum second only to the Potala at Lhasa. The fate of both collections is uncertain, but it is sincerely hoped that the present regime, though not interested in the religious implication of Lamaism, may protect these historical and archaeological treasure houses.

The Horokaku Mandara from the Sonoyosho scrolls. This is the principal meditation symbol of the Horokaku-kyo (the great hall treasury). A towering building ornamented by seven precious pearls shelters the figure of Gautama Buddha, who is seated in the center with his hands in the mudra of discourse. He is attended by the Bodhisattvas Kongoju and Hokongo. In the foreground is a lotus pond with a hundred-spoked wheel guarded by four kings of the corners of the world with attendants. From the PRS Collection.

Chapter VII

MANDARA OF THE TWO WORLDS

The principal mandalas (mandara) of Japanese Esoteric Buddhism are the *Kon-go-Kai Mandara* (the diamond world of indestructible forces) and the *Tai-zo-Kai Mandara* (the matrix or world-womb), which represents the universe in the process of continuing dynamic unfoldment. Thus, the two great diagrams present to the contemplating mind of the mystic the invisible region of causes and the visible realm of effects. The origin of these cosmic diagrams is obscure; but they are believed to have originated in Southern India, and the matrix design may be the oldest.

According to popular tradition, these pictures formed a part of the sacred treasure preserved in the Iron Tower guarded by *nagas* (serpent deities). The great Tantric Buddhist Arhat, Nagarjuna, opened the tower and was permitted to take therefrom two sacred writings, the *Kongocho-kyo* and the *Dainichi-kyo.* The Diamond Mandara was derived from the first of these books and the Matrix Mandara from the second. It is not clearly stated that Nagarjuna actually found pictorial representations of the two cosmic diagrams. He may have secured only the two sutras, which contained the instructions for their preparation. Actual paintings existed, however, by the seventh century A.D., and some authorities believe that the designs were made at the time the scriptures they represent were compiled.

The two very elaborate Shingon mandara, which are frequently reproduced in sections, are each considered as a complete picture. Reproductions of these have been made in miniature and are kept in small cases or portable shrines. Even in Tibet the tendency to isolate especially important symbolic units from the rest of the picture, concentrating them as a pious action, is widespread. Usually, such fragments can be identified by comparing them with the larger and more complete designs.

The imagery of the two great mandara inspired the production of a series of ten scrolls in which the Shingon iconography is set forth in an encyclopedic manner. This collection is known as *The Scrolls of Sonoyosho,* and examples will be found in the libraries of most Shingon temples. Those now regarded as the "originals" are in black and white line drawings and date from the early years of the Kamakura Period or possibly a little earlier. In the course

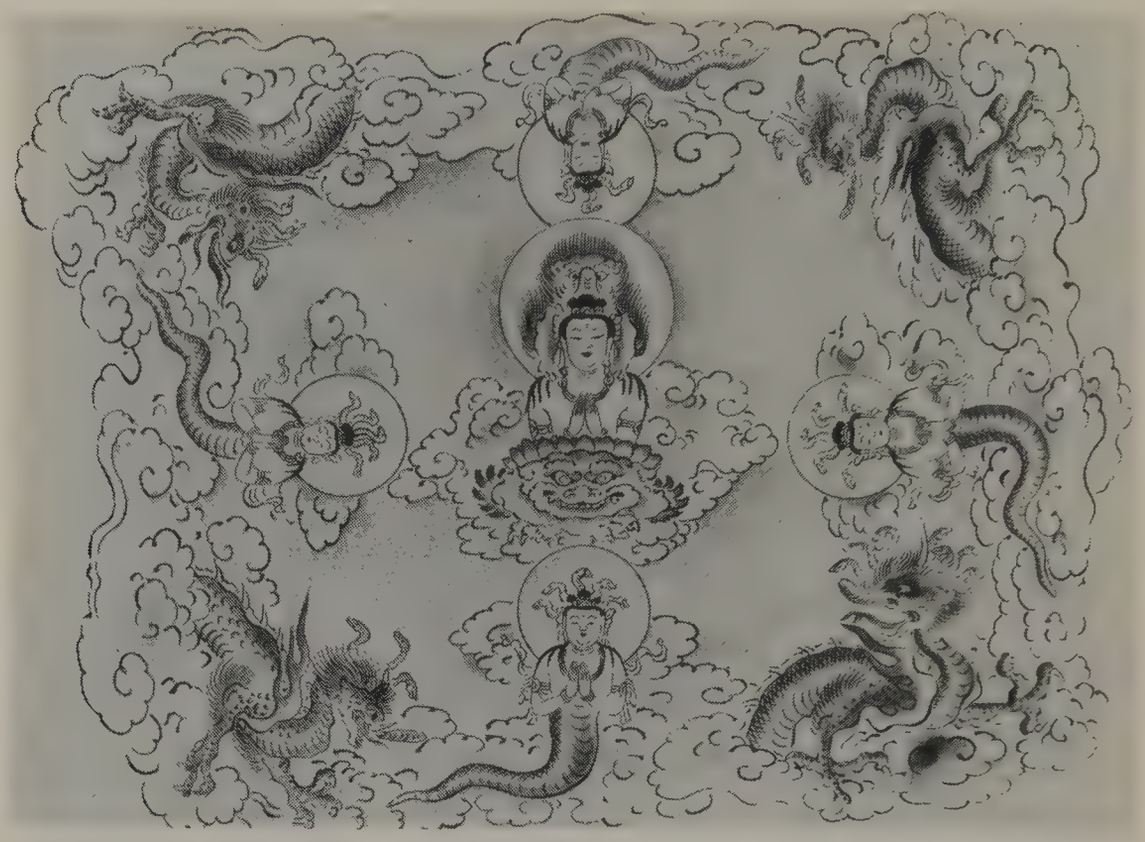
Detail from the central section of the Matrix Mandara. In the center the Dhyani Buddha, Mahavairocana, is seated in a red lotus flower attended by four Dhyani Buddhas, each with a Dhyani bodhisattva. From the PRS Collection.

of time the original designs were elaborated and the various religious figures were presented in full color, some expertly drawn. The preparation of these sets of scrolls had votive significance, and they were regarded as pious undertakings bestowing merit upon the artists and scribes who produced them. There are many varieties of these scrolls, some consisting only of the pictures and others with descriptive commentary and appropriate groups of spell-letters. Sometimes small additional symbols are also added.

Some years ago, the Toji Temple in Kyoto, in order to advance the major purposes of the Shingon Sect, offered duplicates from its vast collection to a few favored antique dealers. Some criticism resulted, although it has been generally admitted that the sale was justified. We are fortunate in having a complete set of these iconographic scrolls and several separate scrolls, probably from the Toji collection. The complete set in our library is undated but can be considered as work of the late Edo Period. Each scroll is twenty feet or more in length and includes nine to twelve hand-painted miniatures.

Shingon mandara from the scrolls of Sonoyosho. Buddha is seated in the midst of the planets, constellations, and other astrological elements. The diagram consists of three concentric squares, of which the second contains the zodiac presented in the Chinese-Hindu form. The twenty-eight day symbols signify the lunar month. This design is often referred to as the "The Mandara of the North Star." From the PRS Collection.

In addition to a complete set of these manuscripts, we have two of these scrolls of somewhat earlier date. These are known to have been in the Toji collection and each contains the following note: "Each scroll was composed by the monk Ingen of the Ninnaji Monastery (Kyoto), of the Nansho'in Temple within that monastery. Composed on the first day of the sixth month of 1310 (Enkei 3), this scroll was illustrated (written down?) by the monk Ekaku in the third month of 1656 (Meiryaku 2)." According to the inscription, Ingen was thirty-three years of age (by Asian reckoning) when he composed this text.



The Naga Mandara from the scrolls of Sonoyosho. This is described in the *Dainichi-kyo,* and the five Buddhas are transformed to become nagas or serpentine mermaids swimming in the eternal ocean. There is also a dragon king in each of the four corners. The dragons of the deep worship the central figure of Buddha, who has assumed the mystical attributes of the water deities. From the PRS Collection.

Most of the Sonoyosho scrolls dating back to the fourteenth or early fifteenth century which have appeared on the market have been broken up, and the separate pictures, sometimes with related text, have been mounted in the form of kakemono or vertical hanging pictures. Two mandara from the Ingen scroll are reproduced here. The first is the Naga Mandara used for invoking rain and as a means for overcoming the terrors of the sea. The second is the Amagoi Mandara used in the magical rain-asking ritual by the great Shingon master, Kobo Daishi. In his interesting book *Japanese Rainmaking,* London, 1963, Geoffrey Bownas describes a rain-making ritual in a small Japanese village some twenty miles south of Nara. He notes that, in addition to the ceremony which he attended, similar rites had been practiced in 1948 and 1955. The Shingon monks of Mt. Koya participated in the ceremony, which ended in a downpour of rain.

We also have a Shingon mandara scroll dating from the Muromachi Period (late sixteenth century), which is crudely drawn and lettered but has con-

The Amagoi Mandara from the scrolls of Sonoyosho. The Amagoi Mandara is also designed from the directions found in the great sacred book, the *Dainichi-kyo.* The Buddha, Gautama, in one of his aspects is seated on a lotus floating in water. There is a pagoda behind him, and he is attended by the Bodhisattvas Kannon and Daiseishi. A priest and water elementals called nagas are worshipping the central figure, and there are ritual altars in the foreground. From the PRS Collection.

siderable naïve charm. The material pictured forth in the Sonoyosho scrolls has also appeared in printed book form in the collection called *Bukkyo-Chin-Seki-Kanko-Kai.* Many editions of these woodblock prints have been issued in recent centuries and have inspired elaborate series of icons in large format. To meditate upon such pictures is equivalent to reading the complete text.

The founders of Esoteric Buddhism in Japan, Dengyo Daishi, who established the Tendai School, and Kobo Daishi, who originated the Shingon School, both received instructions in China in the opening years of the ninth century A.D. They were formally initiated into the Mantrayana system and became apostolic delegates with authority to bring the teachings from the continent to the Japanese islands. Dengyo Daishi first taught the mysteries of the Matrix Mandara; whereas Kobo Daishi centered his attention on the Diamond Mandara, into the secrets of which he later initiated Dengyo Daishi.

Fourteenth century carved wood relief portrait of Kobo Daishi now preserved in the Jingo-ji Temple. The Esoteric Buddhist leader carries in his right hand the ritual *sanko* and in his left the Shingon rosary, which are his identifying attributes.

When the two mandara are brought together and considered as one unit, they are referred to as the Mandara of the Two Worlds.

When Kobo Daishi presented to the Japanese emperor an inventory of Buddhist sacred writings and ritual paraphernalia, the list included five mandara. They are not actually described, but it is assumed that from them have descended the numerous designs which are now found in Japanese Buddhist temple collections. The original paintings have not survived, but there are early examples dating from the closing years of the ninth century. Those now exhibited for ritual purposes in the Toji Temple in Kyoto date from the seventeenth century but are splendid examples of esoteric artistry. Almost immediately iconographic scrolls were made in which the deities pictured in the mandara were classified and described. Most of these date from the early years of the Kamakura Period (1186-1393 A.D.).

Both the Diamond and Matrix Mandara exist in two forms. In one the vast hierarchy is represented by groupings of figures portraying the deities, and in the other Sanskrit letters are substituted for the images.

A discussion of the esoteric meaning of the letters or syllables of the Sanskrit alphabet will be found in *The Garland of Letters (Varnamālā)* by Sir John Woodroffe (Arthur Avalon), Madras, 1963. In Sanskrit letters and their related sounds are used in magic and to summon divine beings. These letters are therefore called *bija,* or *viga,* which translates into Japanese as *shuji.* Like seeds, these letters are believed to contain the germs of deities, elements, and conjurations. As used in Shingon Buddhism, the shuji letters form a kind of magical alphabet resembling Sanskrit, but, in some cases, so ornate as to be virtually unrecognizable. The examples shown here will serve, however, to indicate the principle involved.

The forms must be memorized in relation to the objects which they represent. Each of the deities of Esoteric Buddhism, including many of the gods derived from Hinduism, can be represented solely by a shuji symbol. The letters have their sound equivalents; but, according to Dr. Masaharu Anesaki in his book *Buddhist Art in Its Relation to Buddhist Ideals,* Boston, 1915, it is not known whether or not the sounds convey any mystical meaning of their own.

At Mount Koya most of the mortuary monuments consist of five sections forming together the appearance of a slender pagoda. Each of these segments is marked with a shuji letter corresponding with the elements of earth, water, fire, air, and ether. In those great mandara which can be seen in the Toji Temple in Kyoto and several of the sanctuaries at Koyasan the entire pantheon is presented for meditation in the form of the shuji letters. There are also figures of deities in meditation with their luminous shuji letters in

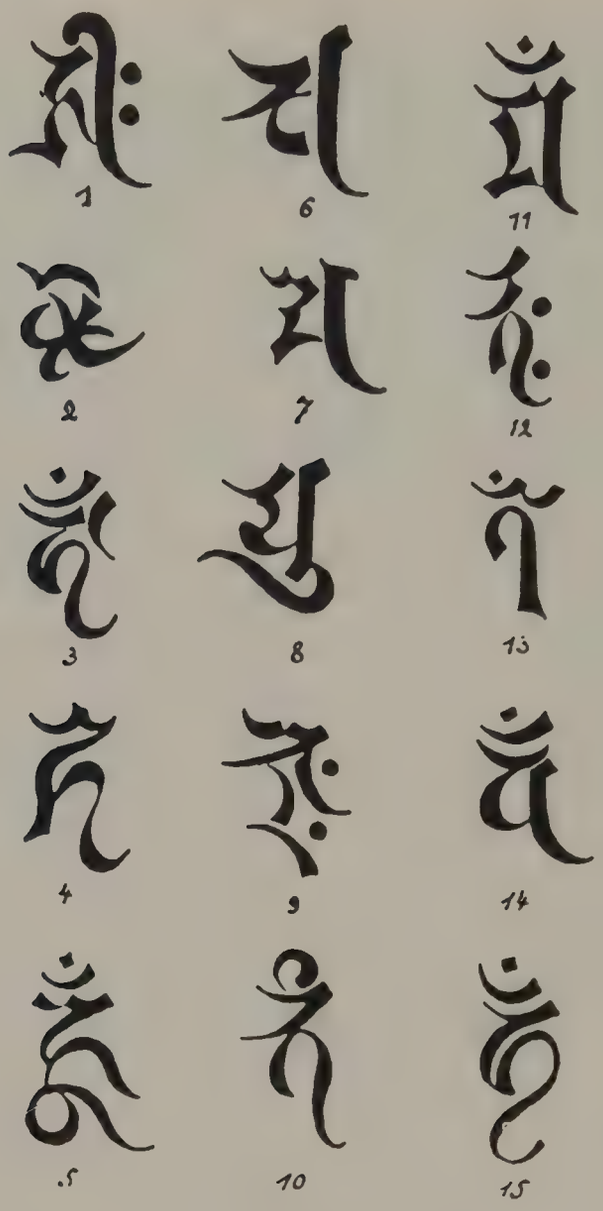


Fig. 63. — Caractères " bon-ji ".
1. A-mi-da. — 2. Bi-sha-mon-ten. — 3. Fu-dô Myô Ô. — 4 Ji-zô. — 5. Kon-gô Ya-sha Myô Ô. — 6. Kwan-on. — 7. Ma-ri-shi-ten. — 8. Mi-roku. — 9. Mon-jû. — 10. Yaku-shi. — 11. Mon-jû. — 12. Sha-ka. — 13. Shô-gun Ji-zô. — 14. Daï Nichi. — 15. Ba-tô Kwan-on.

Letters of the Gupta Indian alphabet used to identify the deities of the Esoteric Buddhist pantheon of Japan. This illustration is from *''Ko-ji Hô-ten''* by V.-F. Weber, Paris, 1922.

the heart. The grand mantra seed of Dainichi Nyorai represents total existence in its absolute form. It is, therefore, the primordial germ resting in the darkness of the "Buddha fields." A mandara preserved in the collection of the Asakusa Kannon Temple in Tokyo shows Dainichi in the center and eight attendant Buddhas and bodhisattvas on the petals of a surrounding lotus. The entire design is represented by the seed-letters, but the worshipper intuitively transforms the symbols into the likenesses of the transcendent beings and the prayers appropriate to each. As far as we know, there is no comprehensive list of the seed-letters available in English; but the *Butsu-Zo Zu-Kan,* a Japanese book which lists and pictures the imagery of Esoteric Buddhism, includes the shuji letter with the picture of each of the divinities. This is still another instance of Japanese Buddhism borrowing from earlier Indian and Chinese sources.

According to my understanding, the meditation Buddha, Dainichi, is the seed of existence. He is the universe *in abscondita,* a sovereign unity infinitely diversified but never divided. He infuses all time and space, causing every atom to be seminal with his own vital essence. Thus, we can use the Pythagorean concept of the monad, for the number one can stand for the all, the first, or for each of the separate manifestations existing within the Primordial Principle.

Another example may give some insight into the two mandara. Using the symbolism of an oak tree, the Matrix Mandara is the acorn and the Diamond Mandara is the complete tree which has grown from the acorn. Each acorn contains the tree in potential and also the immutable laws by which it will unfold from within itself until it attains its full estate. It will then bear many acorns, each one of which can unfold into a cosmic totality. Under such a symbolism the idea of the seeds as the germs of infinite wisdom is strangely, but wonderfully, appropriate.

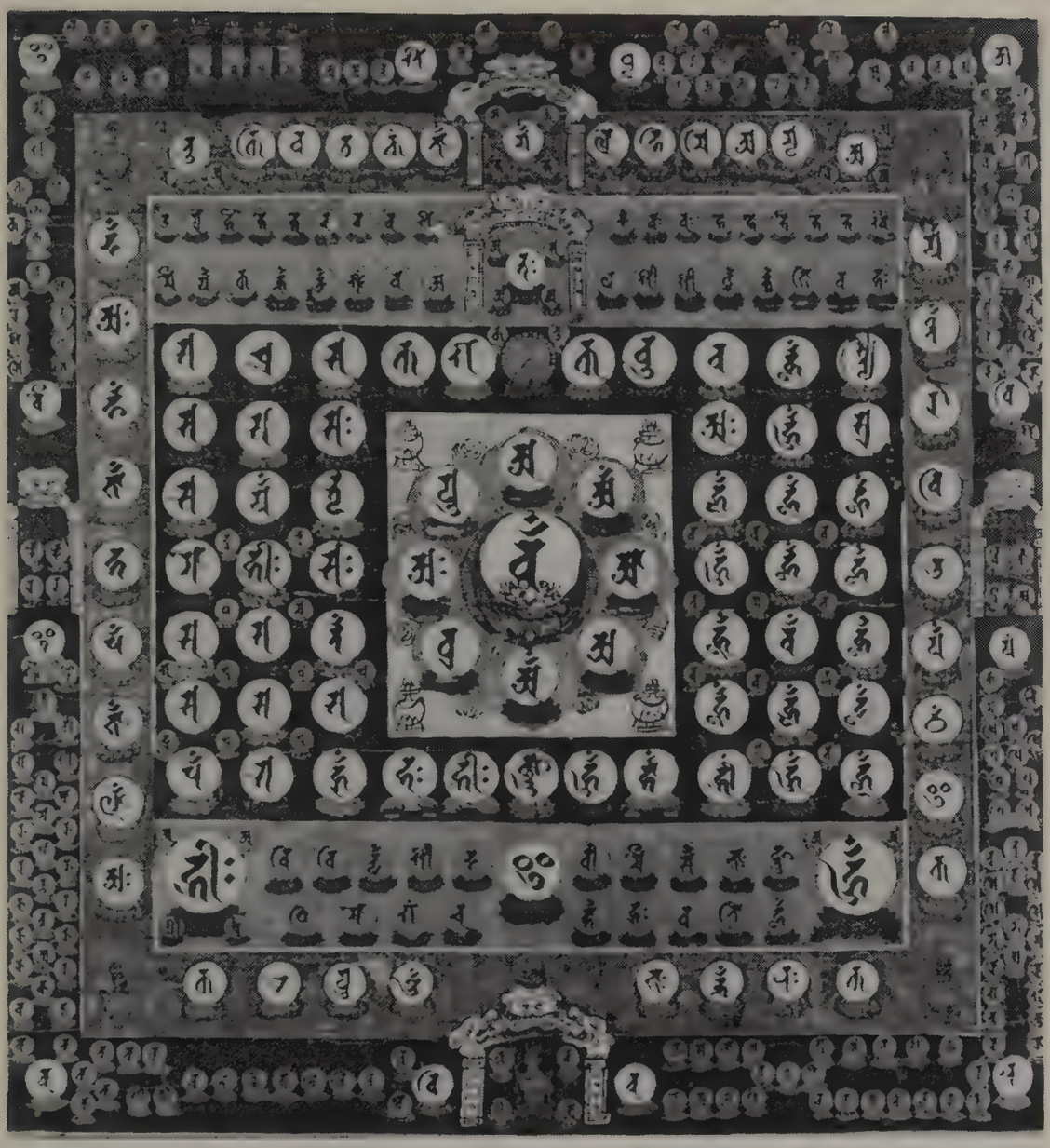
It also seems that this concept reached Europe and is found among the alchemical speculations of the esoteric chemists. One of the principles of transmutation is that the alchemist did not create gold, because its seed was already present in every element and substance. His labor consisted of nourishing this seed, causing it to grow in his hermetically sealed vessels. As alchemy was essentially a spiritual science concerned with the regeneration of man himself, it would follow that the seed of man's enlightenment concealed in his own heart could be made to grow and bear its "twelve manner of fruit."

The arrangement of the Matrix Mandara suggests the splendid court of an Oriental potentate. It was probably derived from the concept of the Chakravartin or world-king. Also, on the crest of Mount Meru stood the palace of the gods and the realms of the immortals. The same world-mountain is

The Matrix Mandara. From a painting in the PRS Collection.

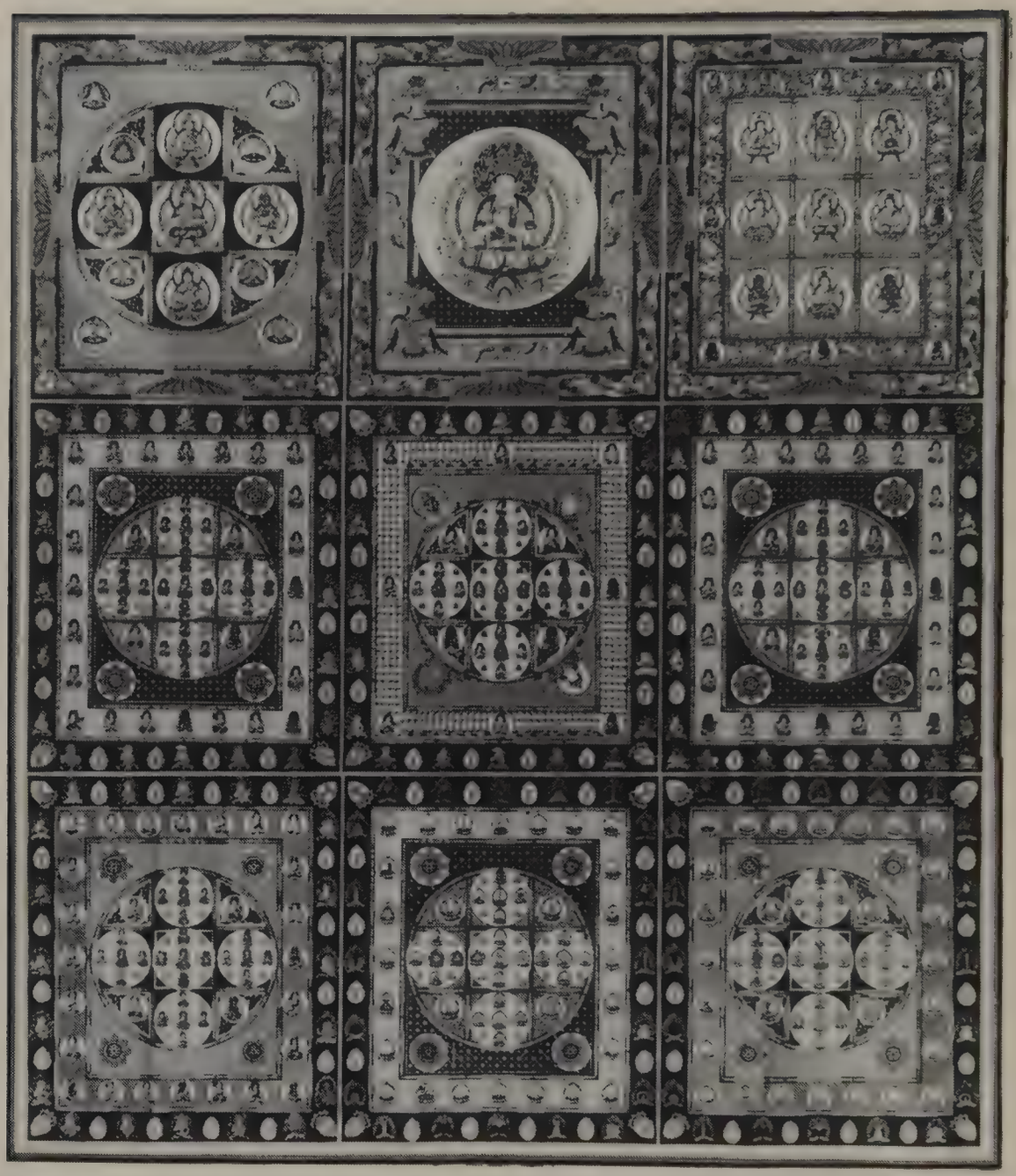
familiar to us in Nordic mythology, where the palace of Asgard rises from the highest peak of the world-mountain. In the Book of Revelation the "city foursquare" strongly suggests a mandara. It is this city adorned as a bride that will be lifted up into eternal union with the Messianic Lamb. This city with its gates and walls and courts provided inspiration for Andreae's Utopian community, as described in *Christianopolis* and, also, in a diagram of the Holy City which appears in one of the writings of Jacob Boehme.

In the center of the great throne room of the Matrix Mandara with its four gates Dainichi Nyorai, the Dhyani Buddha, Mahavairocana, is seated in the heart of a red lotus flower attended by four Dhyani Buddhas, each with a Dhyani bodhisattva, which has emanated from its parent Buddha. Although Dainichi appears as an absolute monarch, he actually rules over



The Matrix Mandara with bon-ji (shuji) letters from a woodblock print of the Momoyama Period in the PRS Collection.

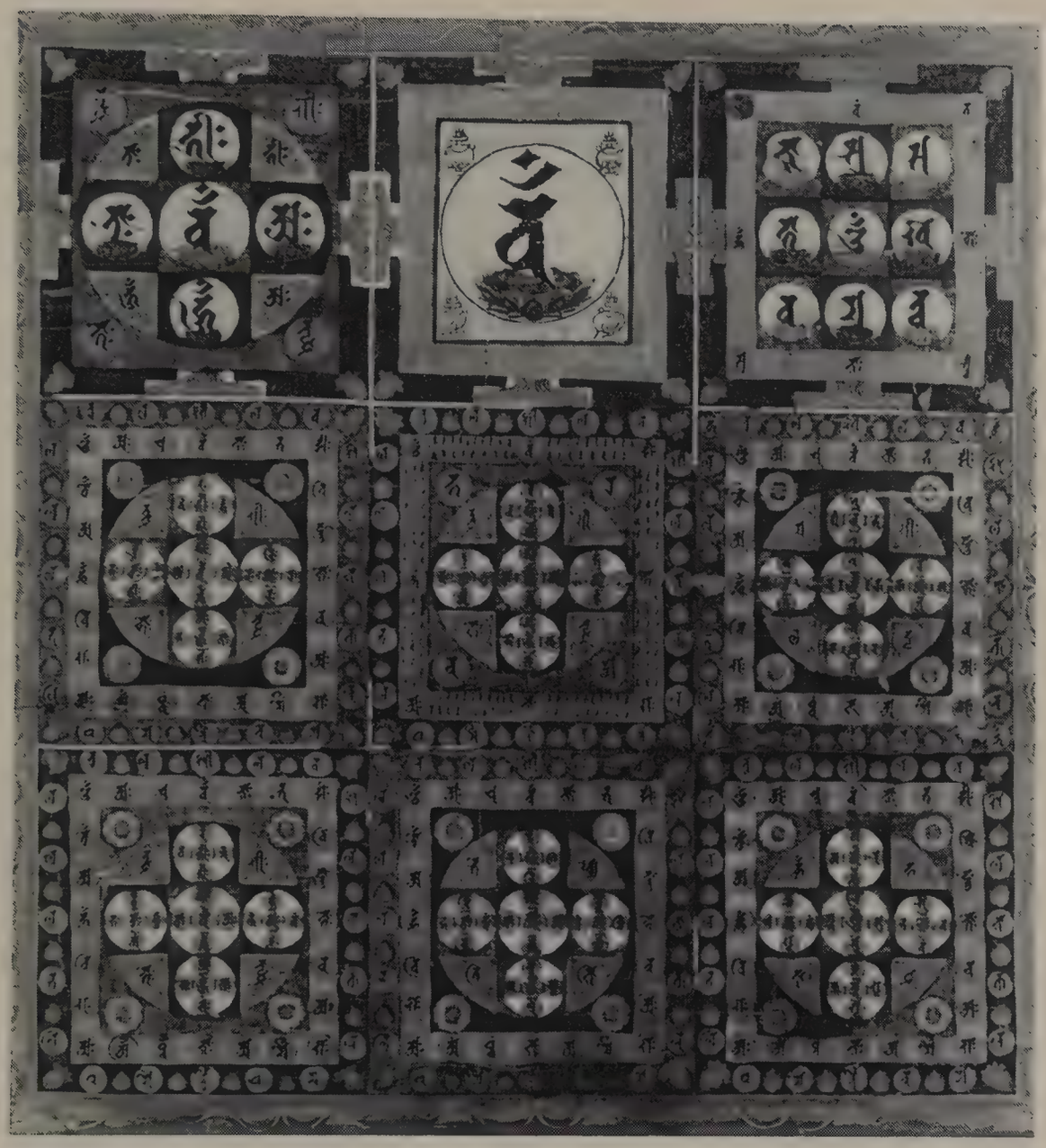
only the extensions of his own consciousness—for there is nothing else in all of existence. His symbolic entourage consists of twelve assemblages of deities arranged in courts or compartments. Each group carries a symbolic object by which its activities can be recognized and the requirements of its worship properly indicated. Dr. Anesaki mentions that those who carry thunderbolts signify firm resolution and indefatigable action. Those who carry lotus flowers should be approached with purity of heart and deep compassion; and those who carry the precious pearl bestow riches and benefaction, and the worship of them involves generosity. There are, in all, four



Dainichi Nyorai, the Dhyani Buddha, Mahavairocana, as he is presented in the Diamond Mandara. He is seated on a white lotus, and his hands are in the mudra of the union of the numinal and phenomenal worlds. His head is surrounded by a nimbus of rainbow colors, and the five Dhyani Buddhas are enthroned in his headdress. From a painting in the PRS Collection.

hundred and fourteen images in the design of the Matrix Mandara; and they all derive their power from Dainichi Nyorai, who is serenely meditating in the crimson heart of the world.

The composition of the Diamond Mandara is entirely different, but the



The Diamond Mandara with bon-ji (shuji) letters from a woodblock print of the Momoyama Period in the PRS Collection.

two designs are compatible and complementary. The diagram of the Diamond Circle consists of nine squares or rectangles of the same size corresponding to the center of a lotus and its eight petals. Each of the enclosures is bordered with decorations and appropriate symbols. The central square, which is the source of the activity revealed through the diagram, encloses five circles in the midst of which is Dainichi as the Great Illuminator. Although it is not obvious at first glance, this compartment contains one thousand and sixty-one figures; but these are mostly shown as tiny Buddhas over-

lapping each other and forming a border around the central enclosure. They signify the one thousand Buddhas who have attained perfection in the present cycle of the world's evolution.

The eight remaining divisions are often reproduced separately, each one being a complete mandara in itself. The seated figure in the upper central division is Dainichi with the hand posture of the union of the two worlds. Enthroned among the productions that have issued from his own nature, the Great Illuminator is now presented as completely revealed and, therefore, an appropriate symbol of cosmic illuminations. This signifies that man does not attain enlightenment through merit alone, but his earnest endeavors and rigorous self-discipline cause Dainichi to emerge in glory from the seed in the aspiring heart of his believer.

In the Shingon meditation hall the Matrix Mandara is hung on the east wall and the Diamond Mandara on the west wall, the two pictures facing each other. Between them is the square, low altar table and a seat for the presiding priest. Rituals are performed daily in the meditation hall, and visitors to Mount Koya are invited to attend these rites, which are extremely inspiring.

It is difficult to find any reference to the initiation rituals by which a novice is received into the assembly of the redeemed. Lady Elizabeth Anna Gordon, who visited Mount Koya in the early years of the twentieth century and received instruction from Shingon priests, describes in some detail a baptismal rite of this sect. As the neophyte approaches the sanctuary, he is blindfolded and steps over the image of a small white elephant, as Indian princes did when they were enthroned. While blindfolded, the novice throws a flower at the mandara and receives a "new name," according to the figure which the flower touches; all of the figures, of course, being manifestations of Dainichi. A thunderbolt is then placed in his hand, and he is instructed in the meaning of the secret name.

After this, the bandage over his eyes is removed; and he stands in a magnificent room supported by thirty-six cryptomeria trees decorated with white lotus flowers. Here the mandara are shown, the sunrise design placed to the east and the sunset painting placed at the west. The actual baptism, by which the candidate symbolically becomes a Buddha, takes place behind the Matrix Mandara. After consecration and purification, the presiding dignitary crowns the candidate with a coronet and places a mirror in his hand. By this ceremony the initiate renounces the bondage of the flesh and puts on a new body of light. It is assumed that this initiation, which is divided into two grades, is the same that Kobo Daishi himself received in China. The lower grade unfolds the mysteries of the Matrix Mandara, and the higher grade bestows the radiance of the Diamond Mandara.

The deities arranged in both of the mandara form hierarchies which decrease in power as they approach the borders of the design. In the Matrix Mandara this is especially obvious. The outside border contains a variety of figures derived from Hinduism and other beliefs which the tantric system gradually absorbed. With a splendid sense of diplomacy, the Buddhist missionaries never attempted to discredit or destroy the religion of other people. They found it expedient to convert strange gods along with their worshippers. The migration of Buddhism from India across Mongolia and Tibet established its strongest outpost in China and added considerable variety to the Mahayana pantheon. The converted godlings were left to administer the internal affairs of their people but acknowledged the sovereignty of Dainichi and his vice-regents. In the end the converted deities became "defenders of the faith," and, having attained enlightenment, realized that they were only semi-divine beings in a vast system ruled over by the Great Illuminator.

Many students of Esoteric Buddhism have assumed that the most important mandalas were made in Tibet or in areas influenced by Tibetan culture. Actually, there is evidence that China was converted much earlier than Tibet and that many of the mandala designs may have reached the high Himalayan country along caravan routes from China. The first important Mahayana evangelists may have been educated at Nalanda in India, called the University of the Sorcerers. Certainly, Padma Sambhava, the great missionary to Tibet, came from Nalanda, bearing with him the scriptures and ritual implements of the tantric school. The only areas in which the Indian schools of tantra flourished outside of India for any extended period of time were Tibet and Mongolia.

Western people have very little understanding of the Eastern way of approaching mandala symbolism. An Oriental student of Esoteric Buddhism may take regular lessons for a period of from ten to twenty years from a priest who is recognized as an outstanding authority. Under guidance the subject expands to a total concept of existence in time and space and embraces all recognized arts and sciences. Gradually, the student becomes familiar with the complete iconography of Mahayana Buddhism and comes to realize that every image is a revelation of cosmic law moving into activity. At the same time, the disciple must develop his inner spiritual resources so that he does not memorize the elements involved, as the Westerner might do, but unfolds his inner life through a series of conscious experiences in which the parts of the Infinite Plan seem to actually come to life within himself.

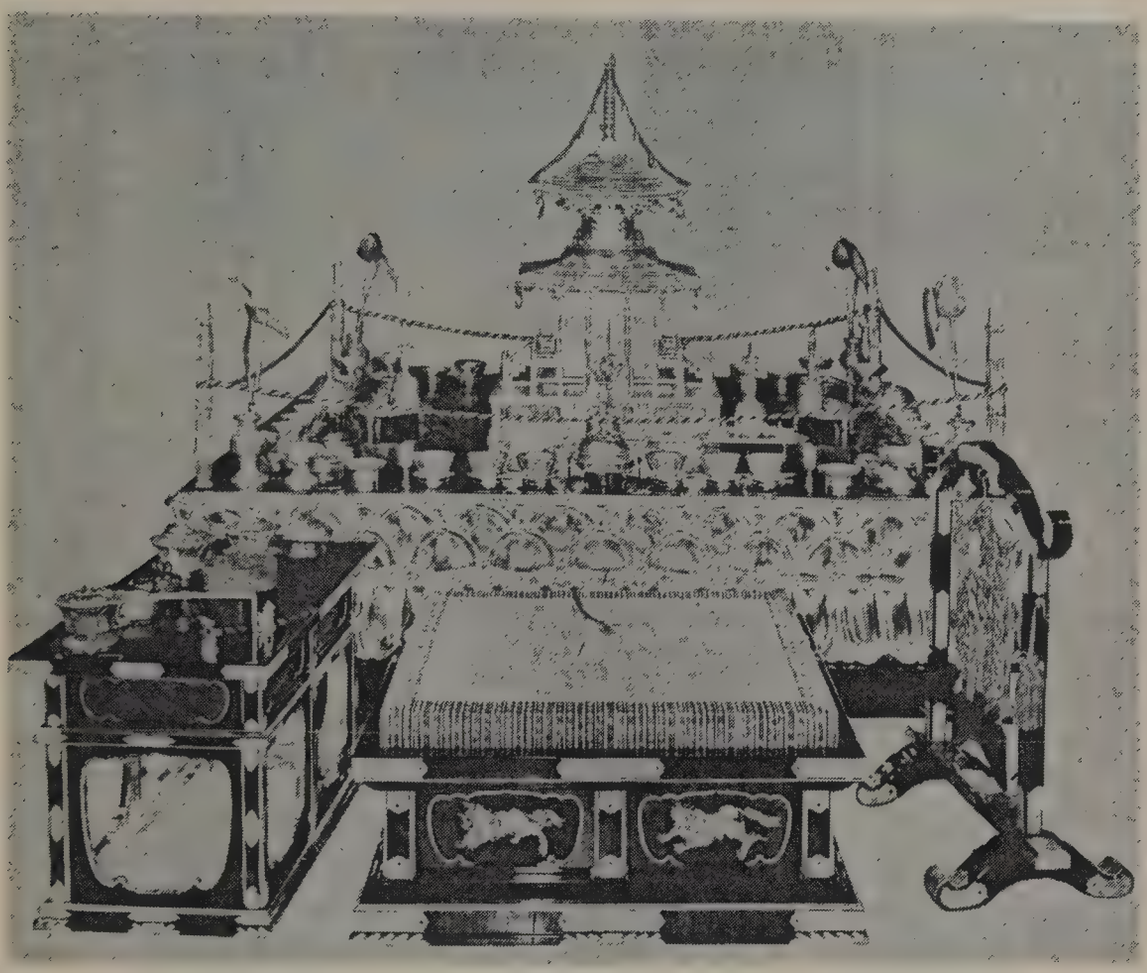
Japan is now one of the few areas in which Esoteric Buddhism can be studied in its original setting and free from political discrimination. The government has become the custodian of the more important sanctuaries,

and their religious treasures are supervised by the nation. There is a similar problem in the field of Oriental fine arts. Treasures from mainland Asia were brought to Japan, where they were most jealously guarded in such depositories as the famous Shosoin Museum belonging to the Todaiji Temple at Nara. In spite of wars, rebellions, and natural disasters, most of the significant works of art brought from China or copied from Chinese originals are available to scholars. This material is virtually unavailable in mainland China, where the study of its deeper meaning has been discouraged until recently; and, for sometime, Buddhist scholars were severely reprimanded or persecuted for their beliefs. At the present time, therefore, Japan is the best source of research material for those attempting to explore the mysteries of Eastern metaphysics.

Some of the Shingon scrolls show complete miniature mandara and also indicate the arrangements of ritualistic objects on altar tables for various rites and ceremonies. The accompanying illustration shows a complete Shingon altar. The arrangement is strictly according to the canon. A certain magical overtone is created, and the altar is bound to the cosmic archetype by what Paracelsus called "sympathetic magic." Belief in such vibratory accord is to be found in the mystical rites of nearly all ancient peoples. It is assumed that to create a certain pattern according to the ancient law is to release within the nature of the worshipper the universal power symbolized by that pattern. This suggests cabalistic magic and the doctrine of magical affinities between the macrocosm and the microcosm. According to the Hermetic law of analogy, "that which is above is like unto that which is below." European students of ceremonial magic believed that they could draw energies from space by talismans and amulets. There are many stories of Shingon adepts who served Japan in times of national emergencies with their occult powers.

According to the instruction left by Kobo Daishi, the flat altar of a Shingon meditation hall was not properly consecrated unless a mandara painting was placed on its surface. In some cases, as I noticed at Toji, an outline of the mandara was actually traced on the flat surface of the square table. There is an example in the Tokyo National Museum of such an altar table on which miniature figures have been arranged according to the prescribed formula. The magical virtue of an altar corresponding exactly with the structure of the universe was sufficient in itself to bind the imagery to the Great Illuminator.

In the Kondo at Toji there is a large rectangular altar surfaced with stone on which life-sized figures are arranged in three groupings. In the middle is the Meditation Buddha, Dainichi Nyorai, in the center of a hollow square made up of four other Buddhas, as in the Matrix Mandara. At the viewer's left, as he faces the altar, is a figure of the grim-visaged Fudo with four



A Shingon ritualistic altar. This is a three dimensional mandara laid out on the surface of a flat table. Small cups and dishes border the design, which is enclosed by cords. In each of the corners is a vase supporting a lotus bud, and each bud is of a different color. The mandara designs are changed according to the requirements of certain ceremonies. From an illustration in the PRS Collection.

attendant myo-os, who afflict the disobedient to hasten their own redemption. The Bible says, "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth," and Fudo is the chastener. At the extreme right of the altar is another group of images representing Amida and his attendants. The three groups are protected by four guardian kings, who stand at the corners of the altar; at the extreme left is Taishaku-ten (Indra) as a vassal king, and at the far right Bonten (Brahma), seated on a goose, is also shown as a tributary deity.

From the basic mandara, which flank the Shingon altar, a number of secondary pictures have been evolved. Some of these are merely details selected from the main designs, whereas several seem to be traceable to other sources. In most cases, however, the treatment is the same. The design derives its name and significance from the divinity occupying the central place. From

this radiate reflex beings, and these, in turn, may become the centers of still lesser diagrams. Always the emanations obey the Grand Plan governing the production of these sacred pictures.

There is a class of mandara about which very little is written, and these seem to have originated in folk artistry. Some are highly decorative; but there are no traditional explanations available for them, and they do not appear in the older books. There are also minor differences between the Shingon and Tendai paintings, and the large Monju Mandara reproduced here is said to have been of Tendai origin but showing some Shingon influence. There are also magic circles or squares which serve as *dharani* or charms. Many of these are similar to the various details of the Mandara of the Two Worlds, but some personal improvisations are noticeable. In medieval Japan Shingon was a defender of the state, and in all national emergencies the priests were called upon to preserve the nation. They were also expected to contribute to the well-being of the Imperial Family and members of the higher aristocracy. Kobo Daishi himself was a universal genius who has been compared with Leonardo da Vinci. He frequently came to the assistance of farmers whose crops were threatened by floods or droughts, designed bridges and roads, and propitiated unwelcome spirits which threatened to injure citizens of various communities. Several of the emperors devoted much of their time to the study of the Shingon doctrine; but gradually less complicated sects gained Imperial favor, and Shingon became a realm of sacred scholarship. It is still called upon when normal processes fail to attain the desired result.

There is some evidence that mandara may have entered Japan as early as the sixth century A.D. Many of the old temples were constructed to conform with the pattern of the Buddhist universe. Even the Amidist and Nichiren sects have recognized that buildings erected according to the rules governing the various classes of sacred architecture are consecrated by their design alone. They radiate an atmosphere which can be experienced by the worshipper and contributes to the primary objective of all Buddhist discipline.

Each of the mandara has a number of small symbols associated with it and which have a bearing upon the mood of the occasion. These may include four small figures, which Professor Anesaki calls, "the play, the garland, the song, and the dance . . ." To these may be added an incense burner, lotus flowers of four colors, a lamp, and perfume. These have to do with the relationship between the worshipper and the altar and are particularly associated with the realms of art. We are told that the play is grace of manner, artistic posturing, and the discipline which gradually causes the person to be conscious of bodily symmetry and the art of gesture. By the garland the works of man are brought together like chains of flowers to form harmonious compositions. The song is beauty of speech, self-expression on

The Monju Mandara, formerly in the Yamanaka Collection. Monju (Manjusri), the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, is depicted enthroned in the region of Universal Mind. The scene is framed by what is called the Holy Enclosure. This Tendai painting was made in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. It should be compared with the ground plans of religious monuments described elsewhere in this book. From the PRS Collection.

a poetic level, and freedom from all harsh and unpleasant utterances. The dance corresponds closely with the dance of life described by Havelock Ellis in his book of that name. The other adornments of the altar suggest worship in which the inner life of the person is offered upon the altar of his eternal hope. Thus, even the smallest detail has very special meaning; and Shingon becomes a mood which seeks beauty and joy in every manifestation of the universe and, by this very seeking, honors the Great Illuminator.

This may explain why the mandara do not conform with modern Western concepts of the universal structure. The mandara are formulas, not pictures of physical structures. Yet, in each of these formulas there are concealed truths which help to explain physical phenomena. When Rama IV, the famous King of Siam, first contacted Western astronomy, he was profoundly intrigued and, finally, deeply impressed. Before he came to the throne he was the head of Siamese Buddhism but found no difficulty in introducing Newton, Copernicus, and Galileo to his brother monks. From that time on, astronomy was taught according to the Western system; but the psychological overtones were explained in terms of Buddhism. The prime minister of Siam wrote an interesting book asking Western scientists for simple and direct answers to a number of spiritual and philosophical questions. It is not recorded that he was ever supplied with the information that he sought.

When Kobo Daishi evolved his Ryobu Shinto, he assigned Buddhist equivalents for the principal Shinto kami, the indigenous spirits and deities of ancient Japan. He affirmed that the same principles revealed through Esoteric Buddhism were also expressed in the Shinto rites and ceremonies. This resulted in a small group of Shinto mandara. These are rather less formal and more pictorial than the Shingon types. The famous Kasuga Mandara, for example, features a deer standing on clouds and carrying the sacred mirror on its back. Although the design is not especially exciting, Lady Gordon was deeply intrigued because of the Christian use of a deer as a symbol of the Messiah. She believed the Nara picture to have originated about A.D. 700.

A white stag in Christian symbolism is especially associated with Saint Eustace the Martyr. He was a captain of the guards of Trajan and a great lover of hunting. One day, while in the forest, he pursued a white stag which fled and ascended a high rock. As Eustace looked, he saw between the horns of the stag a radiant cross and on it the image of Jesus crucified. Eustace was converted to Christianity by this mystical experience and died for the faith on September 20, 118 A.D. The accompanying bookplate by T. Erat Harrison was one of several designed for members of the Corbet family. The heading in the design includes ravens, squirrels, and a turreted elephant associated with this family. The figure of Christ in glory, crucified between the horns of the stag, has essentially the same symbolic meaning as the mirror of the sun on the back of the Kasuga deer.

Other Shinto mandara include views of shrines with Buddhist divinities seated in circles in the sky or alloted to appropriate places in the shrine precincts. By this thinking also, Amaterasu as the kami of the sun came to be considered as an aspect of Dainichi. Here, again, Buddhism attempted to disseminate its essential principles by adapting them to local religious beliefs.

An ofuda, a temple souvenir, picturing the deer of the Kasuga (Shinto) Shrine in Nara, Japan. This symbol is of special interest to Buddhists because Gautama gave his first sermon in the Deer Park at Sarnath. From the PRS Collection.

Bookplate by T. Erat Harrison designed for a member of the Corbet family. Note the crucifix between the antlers of the deer.

The details of the more complicated mandara have little meaning for Western scholars. Those intrested should consult *Les deux grands mandalas et la doctrine de l'ésotérisme shingon* by Ryujan Tajima, Paris, 1959, or a more recent work entitled *The Esoteric Iconography of Japanese Mandalas* by Lokesh Chandra, published by International Academy of Indian Culture, New Delhi, 1971. With the exception of the principal figures, the images, though identified by name, are beyond the experience of the Western reader. It is better to cling to the grand scheme and purpose of the diagrams than to become involved in their complexities. By the same token, these meditation pictures do not stimulate the inner consciousness of the Western viewer. If he depends upon them as magical devices, he is also defeated, for in the deeper meaning of tantric symbolism the mind must conjure the deities from their pictured likenesses by an act of enlightened will.

The practical benefit of the mandara is its invitation to view both the universe and man himself as visible symbols of invisible principles. We should never accept appearances as solutional to our spiritual needs. Every aspect of living must be both experienced and interpreted. Thus, each culture develops mandara of its own, which we should evaluate to determine whether these pictures have arisen from enlightenment or have been projected upon society by prevailing ignorance. Systems of governments and industrial institutions are mandara. The vast structure of education, as we know it today, is only a confused complex of often dissonant factors. When considered as a mandara, it must be understood as a program for human effort and brought into harmony with the innate wisdom ruling not only animate beings but inanimate structures.

A remarkable example of the vision scene from the Heian Period (794-1185 A.D.) is treasured by the Daien-in Temple at Mt. Koya. It shows Amida attended by twenty-five bosatsu playing various musical instruments and singing the sacred songs of Paradise. From a facsimile in the PRS Collection.

Chapter VIII

MANDARA OF THE PURE LAND SECT

The sect of the Pure Land is one of the earliest of the Mahayana Buddhist schools. According to Karl Reichelt, it reached China with the first Buddhist missionaries; and in the fourth century A.D. the Chinese patriarch, Hui-yuan, established a monastery dedicated to the veneration of Dhyani Buddha Amitabha and his Western Paradise. Because there were beautiful ponds filled with white lotus blossoms at the entrance to this sanctuary, the sect was first called the White Lotus religion.

Traditionally, the great East Indian Arhats Asvaghosa and Nagarjuna are listed among the founding fathers of this devotional branch of Buddhistic philosophy, which first appeared about the beginning of the Christian era. There is considerable probability that the Pure Land sect came under the influence of Nestorian Christianity, which had taken refuge in Asia and had carried eastward the "glad tidings of redemption."

Lady Elizabeth Anna Gordon, who studied Esoteric Buddhism in Japan under two professors of the Shingon College in Kyoto, published a book *"World-Healers," or the Lotus Gospel and its Bodhisattvas Compared with Early Christianity,* Tokyo, Shanghai, and London, 1912. Her book provides a vast amount of carefully documented material bearing upon Christian influence on the Mahayana school of Buddhism. In his introduction to this work Archibald Henry Sayce, who was Professor of Assyriology at Oxford and a member of the Old Testament Revision Company, states simply that Lady Gordon's work "is one of the most interesting books that has yet been written upon Comparative Religion, and is full of new and striking parallels and facts. You seem to me to have proved what an intimate relation there is between Buddhism and Early Christianity."

Elements of the Mahayana Buddhist doctrine are believed to have reached Japan in the sixth century, when the King of the Korean state of Kudara sent a Buddhist triad to the Emperor of Japan. The original icon is now preserved in the Zenkoji Temple at Nagano. The accompanying copper engraving shows the Amida triad receiving the veneration of pious worshippers. Ofuda or religious souvenirs issued by this temple are still decorated with an Amida triad with the central figure attended by the Bodhisattvas

The Amida Triad preserved in the Zenkoji Temple at Nagano. This Triad is among the earliest Buddhist icons to reach Japan. Through the piety of Zenko, a layman, the image was miraculously preserved. From the PRS Collection.

Kannon and Daiseishi. Amidism was taught in the Tendai sanctuary on Mount Hiei, but it was not integrated into a separate sect until three powerful leaders arose; Genshin (942-1017), Shonin Honen (1133-1212), and Shonin Shinran (1173-1262). These men became the influential and dedicated exponents of the doctrine which has survived to this day as the most popular of the Japanese sects.

In Japan the Pure Land school is known as the Jodoshu or the Jodoshinshu, and veneration centers upon the metaphysical Buddha Amida (Sanskrit: Amitabha). There is no essential break in the descent of primitive Buddhism, for many sub-systems arose within the structure of the faith without damaging its unity. Although interpretations became numerous and many were accumulated in the pilgrimage of Buddhism across Asia, they all obey Guatama Buddha's original injunction to teach the Law according to the understanding of the converts. This is another statement of St. Paul's advice that milk should be given to children and meat to men.

Pure Land Buddhism is often referred to as "The Heart Doctrine." It teaches that salvation is possible through complete trust in the love of Amida. The tired and world-weary can reach out and grasp the hand of "Another," the radiant image of the Lord of Enlightened Love. The spread of the philosophical and monastic orders in Buddhism had little effect on the average householder burdened with the problems of personal survival in the mortal world.

Although patronized by great princes and subsidized by the aristocracy, the temples were strange but wonderful places where the elect could devote their lives and energies to universal mysteries. In early days, when social pressures were less intense, truth seekers could retire to quietude far from the temptations of the marketplace. In "the later days" all was changed. The Buddhist commandments were difficult to obey, and the minds of believers were distracted by the conflicts of society. The only hope was a gentle and simple faith, which bestowed courage to face the dilemmas of the day with patience and serenity.

It should not be assumed that Amidism was an easy path to follow, for beneath its placid surface was a powerful structure of morality and ethics. We use the term "faith" with very little insight as to its true meaning. It does not imply that the devout Amidist should cast his burdens upon the radiant being enthroned in his Western Paradise. Amida's Sacred City is in the human heart. He is the life and the light within ourselves, and to venerate him means to conform with that universal principle of integrity in which we live and move and have our being. We must experience the mystical truth that "the Other," who is forever with us, is that part of our own causal na-

The Amida Triad. The Buddha is accompanied by Kannon holding a lotus blossom and Daiseishi with his hands in the mudra of prayer. Amida is blessing a devotee. From an old Japanese woodblock print in the PRS Collection.

ture which we do not know. The Amida image arises in our own minds as a radiant symbol of the spiritual potential locked within humanity.

The Pure Land sect, therefore, does not require its followers to achieve a heroic renunciation of character weaknesses and deficiencies of judgment. It advances sincere devotion as a panacea for the anxieties that perturb the subconscious mind as a result of negative or destructive reactions to the burdens of mortal existence. By visualizing the Western Paradise of Amida and experiencing a pure and happy state by childlike trust in Amida's vow to save all creatures, the true believer passes from this troubled realm to an appropriate reward beyond the grave.

The principal texts of the Pure Land sect are the larger and smaller Sukhavati-vyuha (Japanese: Amida-kyo Sutra). Both of these have been translated into English and are available in Volume 49 of the *Sacred Books of the East,* edited by Professor F. Max Müller. These sacred writings are attributed directly to Guatama Buddha. The larger discourse was delivered at Rajagriha and the smaller while Buddha was dwelling at Sravasti.

Substantially, the discourses were concerned with the spiritual unfoldment of a Buddhist mendicant named Dharmakara, who lived millions of years ago. By faithfully practicing the blessed Dharma he became a bodhisattva and finally attained Buddhahood. His original vow as a monk was that when he attained the perfect enlightenment he would fashion a world of beauty, where all who loved and served truth could abide together in felicity. Gautama Buddha then explained that Dharmakara now reigned in Sukhavati as the Buddha Amitabha or Amida.

The sutras just mentioned describe the Pure Land with all the extravagancies of Oriental imagination. It is a beautiful world shaded with trees covered with gems and hung with garlands of bells. Its foundations are precious stones, and the shores of the Blessed Land gleam with gold, silver, crystals, diamonds, and pearls. The air is filled with heavenly music, and angels scatter flowers upon the holy assemblage. (For a more detailed description consult my publication, *The Western Paradise of Amitabha.)* Guiseppe Tucci in his book *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala* makes the following observation: "Lapis-lazuli as well as a diamond is a symbol of the other plane. Indeed, the ground of the Paradise of Amitabha or Amitayus, the God of Light and Infinite Life, is of lapis-lazuli, being level and smooth, precisely because it is outside the earth and its limitations. For it is the realization of a spiritual condition in which there is no longer any movement or whirlwind of passion but only the clear and motionless brilliance of consciousness reconquered."

Western readers who may regard the Pure Land as a figment of Eastern

imagination should consult the twenty-first chapter of The Revelation of John, which contains the vision of the Holy City of Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, shining like a precious stone and having twelve gates. Each of the gates was a pearl. The city was foursquare, "according to the measure of a man," and the city had no need for sun and moon, "for the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof." In this sacred region was the tree of life bearing twelve manner of fruit, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. The more carefully the descriptions of Amida's Paradise and the Holy City of John's vision are compared, the greater the probability appears that they are both archetypal symbols of the inner life of the purified mystic who has cleansed his consciousness of mortal defilements.

The Pure Land Sect does not have the elaborate pictorial symbolism associated with the Esoteric Schools. Statues of Amida, either standing or seated, are found in the sanctuaries of the sect. This Buddha is often represented alone, but he may also be accompanied by Kannon and Daiseishi. Occassionally, as in the Phoenix Hall at Uji, Amida is attended by a heavenly retinue of angelic beings. The principal mantram of the Amidists is the Nembutsu and consists of an inscription written in a vertical column of Chinese characters comprising seven syllables, "Namu Amida Butsu." The inscription rises from an open lotus blossom (see illustration). In painting, also, Amida may be presented alone or with his two attendant bodhisattvas. In vision scenes he is accompanied by a host of heavenly beings.

Although Amidist paintings do not fulfill all of the requirements associated with mandalas, they are certainly meditation pictures and assist believers to visualize the central concept of Amidism. Elaborate graphic representations of the Western Paradise, presided over by the radiant figure of the Lord of Enlightened Love, have been produced not only in Japan and China but in such remote places as the Tun-Huang cave temples in Chinese Turkestan. Japanese paintings of this subject are derived largely from a tapestry woven from lotus fibers enshrined for centuries in the Taimadera Temple near Oji. This extraordinary picture, nearly fifteen feet square and containing hundreds of figures, is said to have been created by Chujo-hime, a Buddhist nun (753-781). She died in her twenty-eighth year, and a miracle play is still performed annually in her honor. It is now believed that the original tapestry has not survived and that the mandara exhibited today is a hand-painted replacement.

The Taima Mandara illustrates the account of the Western Paradise given in the larger and smaller versions of the Amida Sutra, and it is reproduced herewith in a woodblock print of the complete design. The panoramic view of the Pure Land is divided horizontally into three registers, each consisting

Detail of a Japanese cardboard shrine such as are carried by devotees. The central column is the Nembutsu. The inscription, which translated reads, "Adoration to the Amida Buddha," is supported by an open lotus blossom. From the PRS Collection.

of three smaller horizontal divisions. The nine hypothetical compartments ascend from a base starting point, "the doubting city of the Pure Land." Through the contemplation of the symbolism involved in each concept, the worshipper becomes aware that all certainty must begin with uncertainty. This thought is also clearly expressed in the original teachings of Buddha. Perfect faith comes at the end, not at the beginning; but it begins with "a hunger after righteousness." The believer must affirm his intention to himself, which he does by the quiet repetition of the Nembutsu ("Adoration to the Amida Buddha"). According to Amida's original vow, any person who recites the Nembutsu only ten times during his earthly life will come in the end

Woodblock print of the Taima Mandara, probably eighteenth century. This picture has been mounted as a vertical scroll suitable for study and meditation. In the upper register ten Buddhas with their retinues are flying in from the dimensions of space. The spans of the bridge directly below are suspended by streamers, signifying the internal realization of the believer. Shrines and temples rise on every hand, and the Amida triad, with retinue, is enthroned on the shore of the mysterious ocean, which separates the realms of immortality from the mundane world. From the PRS Collection.

to the Pure Land. The commitment of the heart and mind to the quest for ultimate union with the infinite heart of Amida assures salvation. Many lives may pass before the lotus in the heart opens to reveal the golden city of Sukhavati standing majestically on "the other shore," but, once the commitment is made, the seed of dedication can never die.

In the world of the Taima Mandara there are two classes of human beings, and these divide and subdivide to correspond with the nine regions. There are those who have not accepted Amida's promise, which does not actually mean that they are not included. Amida Nyorai has taken the oath that he will lead all sentient beings to the Pure Land. The second group consists of those who have already bound themselves by obligations taken in former lives or in the present embodiment. Some have been on the path for many ages, and others are child-souls beginning their journey. This concept may explain basic differences in human behavior for which there appears to be no rational explanation.

There are always in the world some dedicated persons, great sages, saints, mystics, and humanitarians, who have lived and died for the common good. Less noticeable, but equally important, are men and women in every walk of life who live by codes of unselfishness and generosity. Every family, it would seem, has a burden-bearer who must renounce personal objectives in the service of relatives and friends. There are also persons of various degrees of honesty. Some bring credit to their professions and trades and would rather remain impoverished than succeed by compromising integrity. Wherever conscience inspires victory over ambition or avarice, the Amidist might say that another seed of liberation has fallen into the lotus pond before Amida's throne.

The twelve orders of arhats, carefully ennumerated in primitive Buddhism, are actually symbols of the ethical levels of human attainment. All sentient beings are on one of these levels, and each is gradually ascending through the thirteen regions (twelve and infinity) represented by the spires of Chinese pagodas. In the Amidist system nine regions are recognized, and these are the nine rungs of Amida's ladder symbolized as the nine circular bands around the mast of Japanese pagodas. This mast has the blazing pearl as its finial. Lady Gordon believes that the blazing pearl is a symbol of Amida's heart.

The "doubting city of the Pure Land," when contrasted with Amida's Paradise, reminds us of St. Augustine's description of the City of Babylon and the City of God. The sanctified Bishop of Hippo considered the City of Babylon as the symbol of self-will and God's City as the symbol of the Divine Will. The road that connects these two is the spiritual pilgrimage

leading from profane to sacred commitments. The intent is the same in both the Western and Eastern teachings. It is the journey to the innermost, the effort to attain universal citizenship while still in the mortal world—"the doubting city."

On the surface of the lotus pond in the Taima Mandara is the Ship of Salvation. In old illustrations Amida is the captain of the vessel and is assisted by Kannon and Daiseishi. The ship may be likened to this world, moving through an atmospheric ocean carrying living creatures from an unknown beginning to an inconceivable end. By his vow Amida has gained the power and the right to bring this vessel across the sea of uncertainty and to safe harbor on Sukhavati's golden shore. The Greeks divided the realms of the living from those of the dead by the River Styx, and this has been preserved in Christianity as the symbolic Jordan, the one more river that we all must cross.

It may be difficult to understand that faith must be cultivated by degrees; but all growth is "by degrees only," according to an old ritual. We are inclined to feel that faith is a simple acceptance which we can acquire by committing ourselves to a doctrine. Experience, however, must lead to a contrary conclusion. A person may have a little faith and large doubts. His inner resolution may serve him in some cases but fail him on other occasions. His faith may be modified by education and personal experiences which have undermined his dedication. Spiritual weakness is common to all religionists and is most evident when individuals claiming spiritual insight do not practice what they preach. The interval between noble attitudes and ignoble conduct divides the nominal believer from the inner consolation which he seeks. While Amidism emphasizes that the repetition of the Nembutsu assures salvation, it does not specify where and when. Only when earnest prayerfulness inspires the correction of personality defects can the goal we seek be reached.

The second type of Amidist Mandara is the vision picture. This theme is perhaps the most beautiful to be found anywhere in the sacred art of the world. Its purpose is to bestow upon the living a glimpse of Amida's eternal love. Amida's appearance takes many forms. At the head of this section we reproduce a hand-painted copy of a national treasure preserved in the Daienin Temple at Koyasan. Amida is shown attended by twenty-five bosatsu floating down into the mortal realm on clouds to welcome the soul of a believer into the Pure Land. In the foreground (viewer's right) is Kannon holding the lotus throne which will transport the soul to Paradise. Daiseishi (viewer's left), with his hands held together in the attitude of prayer, personifies perfect courage and unquestioning faith. In this scene there is no hint of pain, fear, or doubt. The heavenly assembly is a sacred company, but solemnity has been transmuted into a deep, all-pervading joy.

The Ship of Salvation. This illustration is derived from a woodblock picture which appears in *"World Healers," or the Lotus Gospel and Its Bodhisattvas Compared with Early Christianity* by Lady Elizabeth Anna Gordon, London, 1912.

Another type of this picture depicts the head and shoulders of Amida rising above the mountain peaks of earth. In this depicture he may also be attended by Kannon and Daiseishi, who are less prominently placed. This type of vision scene is called Yamagoshi-no-Amida or "Amida crossing the mountain." One of the best examples of this presentation of the vision scene is among the treasures of the Konkai-Kumyoji Temple. When it first reached Japan, the concept of the vision picture was gentle and leisurely and urgency was not evident in any part of the design. During the Kamakura Period, the conditions of the country were violently disturbed by internecine

Amida crossing the mountains. From a woodcut illustration from *Sho-shu Butsuzo zu'i,* illustrations of the Buddha images of the various traditions. From the PRS Collection.

strife and natural disasters. As tragedy increased, sufferers reached out pleadingly for help, and prayers to Amida seemed the only hope.

The Raigo-zu (vision picture), symbolizing the immediate availability of Amida's love, became increasingly dramatic. The Buddha and his attendants swept down from the sky as though pressed forward by the winds of space. One is reminded of the words in the last chapter of the Book of Revelation, verse twenty: "He who testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly." Paintings of the vision scene were frequently brought to the bedside of those desperately ill or dying. Cords attached to the hands of Amida in the painting were then held by those in the last moments of life. It was a special

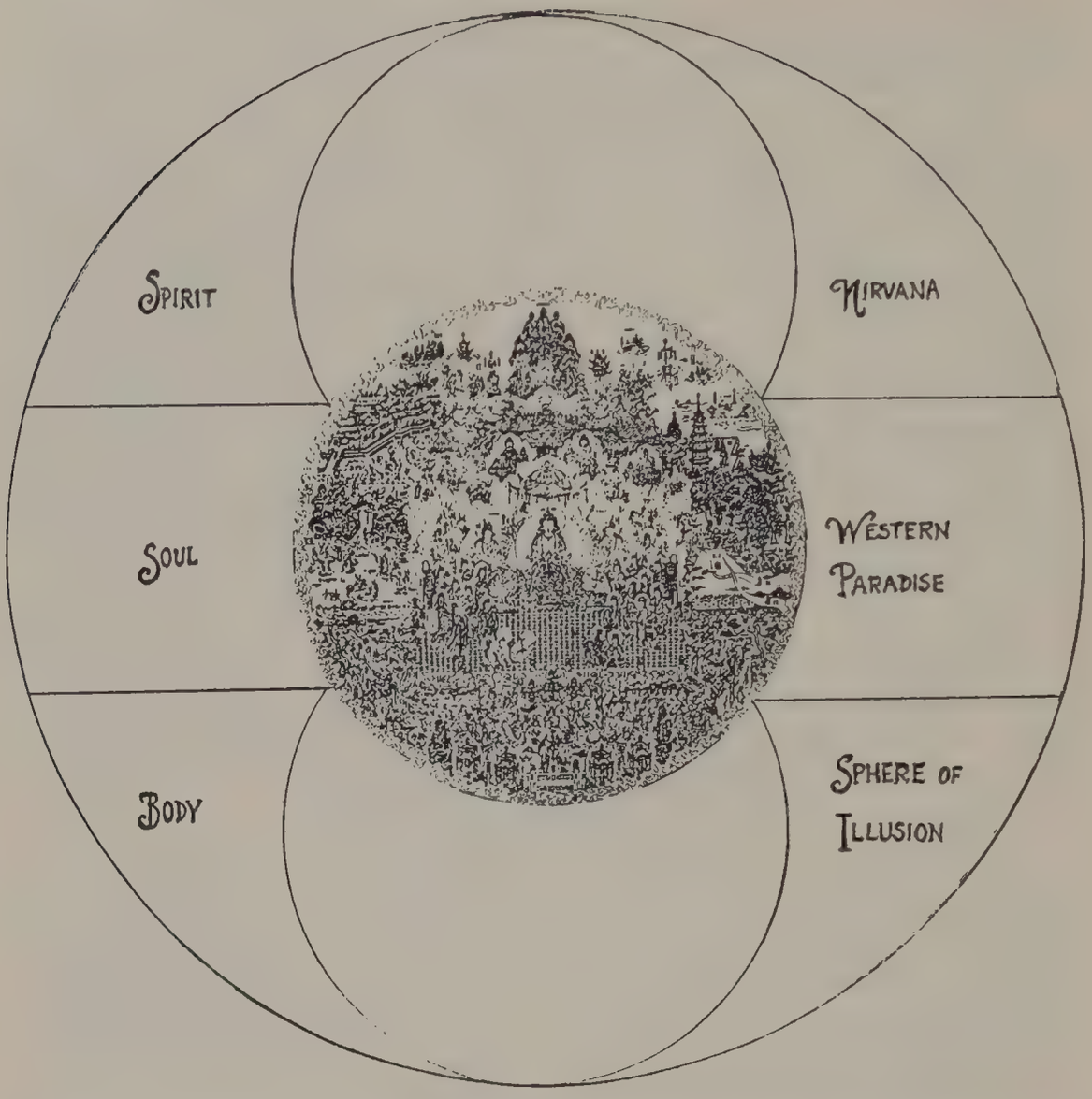
blessing for these beautiful representations of spiritual conviction to be seen at the moment of transition.

In Tibet there is an elaborate ritual involved in the transition from physical life to the regions beyond the grave. The rites attendant upon this release from the phenomenal realm are called the Bardo, and in the tantric sects these are very elaborate with symbolical formulas that should be of great interest to Western psychologists. For the study of the Bardo the reader is referred to *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* by W. Y. Evans-Wentz. For the moment, certain practical aspects of the Bardo, which transcend sectarian consideraton, are worthy of attention. It is common knowledge in the West that both men and women pass through complicated mental and emotional changes between the sixtieth and sixty-fifth years of life. Consciously or unconsciously they begin the process of extricating themselves from the pressures of worldly careers. Many begin to think in terms of retirement and the fulfillment of such personal desires as have been frustrated by social responsibilities. At this time, also, acquisitiveness normally loses much of its fascination, and the individual begins to dispose of possessions that are no longer convenient. Ambitions lessen markedly, and the competitive stress of worldly projects slows down, ending in a general acceptance of the inevitable. These character changes are part of nature's way of preparing earthbound mortals for the changes that lie ahead.

While the individual is releasing his physical burdens, he is likely to find that various submerged neuroses come to the surface of consciousness and disturb the quietude he is seeking to cultivate. Long established habit patterns close in, and temperamental peculiarities are no longer restrained by the responsibilities of employment and family. As a result, some older persons become increasingly involved in their own shortcomings, remaining troubled and irritated to the end of their days.

The more disposition deteriorates, the more difficult it becomes to depart from this life with appropriate dignity. Some schools of Eastern religion teach that attitudes held at the time of physical decease affect the after-death state and establish patterns carried into future embodiments. If a man wishes to die in peace, he must live in peace; and the good karma he accumulates will result in a peaceful re-embodiment when the time comes. Something of this belief is found in some Western religions in which the Sacrament of Extreme Unction is considered indispensible to peace beyond the grave. Faith is a transmuting force which can change the whole chemistry of the personality. This is not only true in religious matters but has proved most beneficial in preserving or restoring physical health.

The accompanying diagram may be useful in this outline of Amidism. Similar designs abound in other mystical writings, including the teachings



Amida's Pure Land. This can be interpreted as the soul, personal and universal, uniting spirit and body through the immediate experience of Amida's love. Diagram incorporating Jehol woodblock designed by the author.

of the Druids and the mystical figures of Jacob Boehme. Three overlapping circles arranged vertically represent the interrelationships between the three conditions of existence. The upper circle is inscribed with the word "nirvana" and symbolizes Ultimate Reality, the final end of the Buddhist quest. The lower circle is the realm of illusion or the Doubting City. These circles meet at the center of a third circle in which we have placed a Tibetan mandala of Amida's (Amitabha's) Western Paradise. It will be noted that the upper and lower circles actually join in Amida's heart. From this we are to understand that the Western Paradise is not Nirvana or the final state of perfection. It is not heaven, where redeemed souls dwell forever in the kingdom

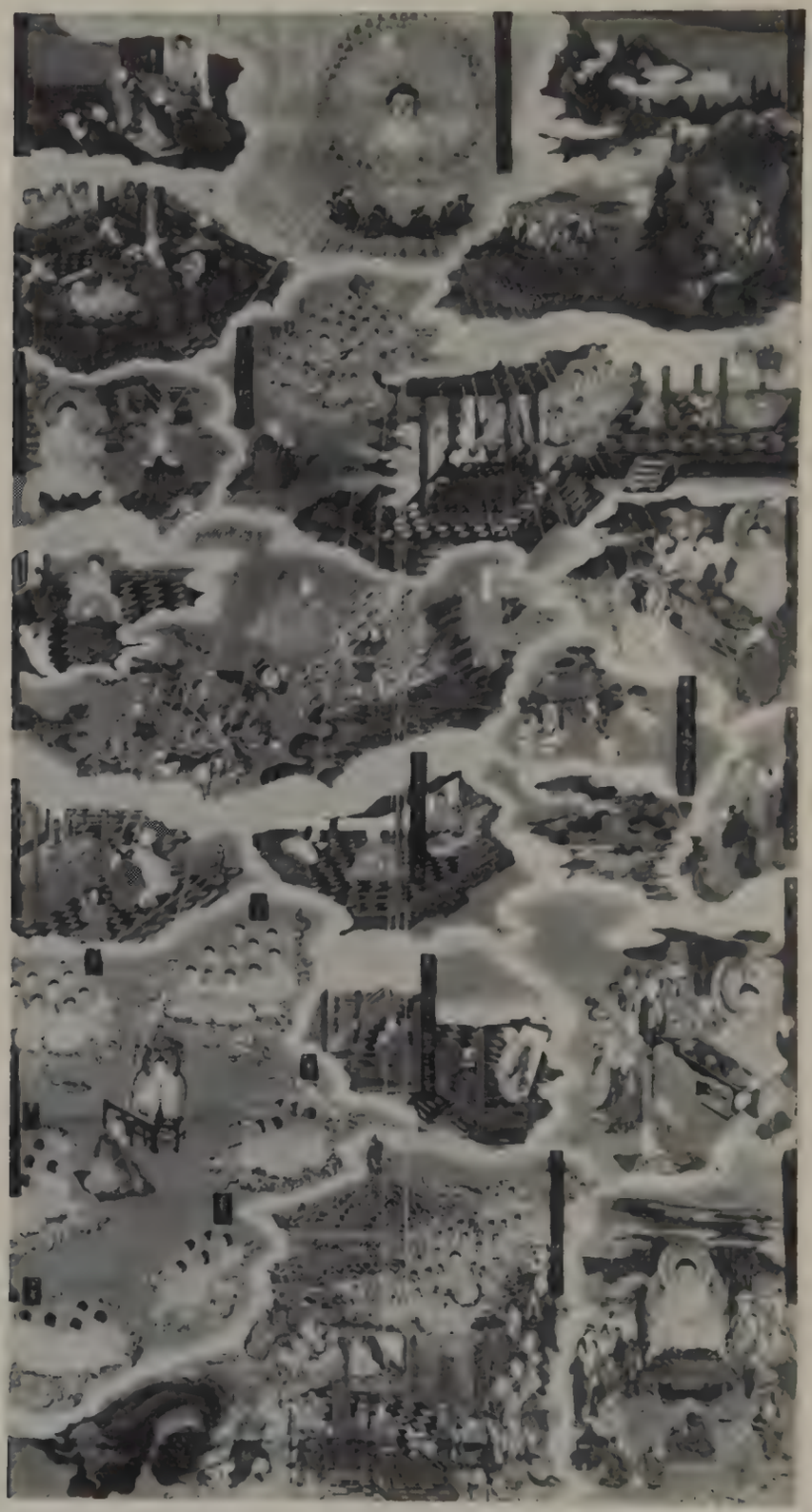
of God. Neither is the illusionary sphere dominated by sin and death, which Milton calls "the last great enemies."

From the diagram it is possible to recognize the Pure Land as the symbol of the human soul suspended between spirit and body, and reconciling both is the immediate experience of Amida's love. Heaven, earth, and hell are conditions arising in man and must be experienced as levels of awareness associated with degrees of conduct. The *Purgatorio* of Dante is the soul in psychic pain, and the *Paradiso* is the regenerated soul brought back into harmony with the Divine Plan. Both realms are essentially unreal, but the former is the unreality of suffering and the latter the unreality of happiness. Both are byproducts of thoughts and emotions establishing habit patterns in the psychic body of the individual. The final goal of Buddhism, which is liberation from the wheel of transmigratory existence, may be still a remote goal; but, in the meantime, patterns of punishment and reward have temporary validity. The two paths, one of wisdom and the other of faith, both lead to liberation from the delusions of ignorance. It is quite conceivable that absolute faith and absolute wisdom may be identical. Certainly, one justifies and sustains the other.

Another type of meditation picture is derived from the Pure Land sutras. It is based upon the request of the mother of King Agatasatru for enlightenment, so that she could come to the Holy Land of the West and help other people to die into Paradise. Buddha appeared to this queen, Vaidehi, who was confined in a remote palace as a political exile. The story of her tribulations provides the springboard for the Amitayur-dhyana-sutra or the scripture of the meditation on Amitayus.

Vaidehi was most devout and prayed that she might receive instruction in the mysteries of the Pure Land, saying, "Oh World-Honored One, mayst thou preach to me in detail of all the places where there is no sorrow or trouble and where I ought to go to be born anew." Buddha then explains to her the sixteen kwans or meditations, of which thirteen are fixed virtues, and the other three have no actual boundaries. Through these meditations, the devout person comes to an inner comprehension of the wonders of the Western Paradise. In the Taima Mandara small pictures of the sixteen kwans are found in squares vertically arranged along the two sides of the painting. The three undefined virtues are referred to in the bottom panel of the picture.

There is a special painting called The Sixteen Kwan Mandara, an example of which is shown here. The meditations include visualization of the blessed region, with all its beauties, and a detailed consideration of each of the symbols included in the pattern of the Taima Mandara. The meditations are as follows:



The Sixteen Kwan Mandara representing the mystical intercessions of the Amida Buddha. This is a beautiful woodblock print, probably of the Edo Period. Each of the cloud encircled sections symbolizes a degree of inner awareness of Amida's infinite love for all creatures. From the PRS Collection.

1. The Perception of the Sun, which is to be experienced at the time of its setting over the western horizon.
2. The mind must be held firmly upon the waters of the heavenly region; also, the ground, which is of lapis lazuli, with the appearance of the temple, its towers and galleries, and the feeling within oneself of the eight gentle breezes, which are visible as light.
3. When the Pure Land is visible with the eyes open or shut and a state of supernatural calmness is attained, all sorrows are banished from the heart and mind.
4. The inward attention should then be fixed upon the jewel-trees, with all their flowers and leaves, and a region so glorious that it resembles the realms of Brahma. When all these splendors are firmly fixed by internal visualization, the true structure of the world will become known.
5. Mindfulness should now bring into focus the countless lakes in which grow innumerable lotus flowers shining like jewels. Here, also, are birds, fashioned by the thoughts of immortals, who sing forever the praises of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.
6. In the Buddha country there are also jeweled pagodas and galleries beyond the number of five hundred million. Here are devas playing musical instruments and also wonderful chimes which sound without being struck. These heavenly treasures are to be clearly perceived as beyond mortal estimation.
7. Buddha then discoursed upon the deliverance from trouble, and, as he spoke, the Buddha Amitayus appeared in the sky, attended by two bodhisattvas. Queen Vaidehi, strengthened by Buddha's consciousness, was able to see this miracle in a setting of indescribable beauty and glory.
8. In the Western Paradise there are beautiful flowers, which were created by the prayers of Dharmakara before he became the Buddha Amitayus. By meditation upon the details of these prayer-flowers one is redeemed from the shortcomings of many births and deaths. The radiant figure of the Blessed Lord of the Pure Land should be inwardly perceived with his attendants. Under every tree are three lotus flowers, on each of which is the image of a Buddha or a bodhisattva. It should now occur that, whether meditating or concerned with secular matters, the memory of the excellent law should be continuous, constantly pacifying the soul.
9. Next, the appearance of the Buddha Amitayus should be clearly

visualized. His vastness is immeasurable, while his eyes are like the waters of great oceans; and from his body issue brilliant rays more luminous than hundreds of millions of cosmic systems. He bears upon himself all the signs of perfection. After the contemplation of the body of Amitayus, his mind must also be experienced as absolute compassion. Gradually, also, the Buddhas of the ten directions of space will be apperceived.

10. In meditation the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (Kannon) should next be contemplated. The sutra then describes the attributes to assist the visualization of this Bodhisattva.

11. Having perfect insight on the nature of Avalokitesvara, one should then meditate on the Bodhisattva Manasthamaprapta (Daiseishi), who symbolizes the inexhaustible courage which comes to those who have perfect insight.

12. In this meditation the devotee should visualize himself as actually born in the Western Paradise and seated in the Buddha posture on a giant lotus flower. By this, there is the experience of translation into this other region without the mystery of death.

13. This meditation seems to imply an actual identification with the splendor of Amitayus, who is also seated on the open lotus throne in the midst of a crystal lake.

    At this point, the three regions of the Western Paradise with their subdivisions come into focus. The three classes are: those who possess a compassionate mind and do no injury to any being; those who study and recite the sutras of the Mahayana doctrine; and those who practice the sixfold remembrances. All who perform any of these meritorious deeds for one to seven days will in due time be born in the Pure Land. When this happens, the Buddha Amitayus, with a retinue of blessed beings and innumerable gods, will appear to welcome him; and he will be born from the heart of a lotus. Such are the ones who have attained the highest section of the highest grade.

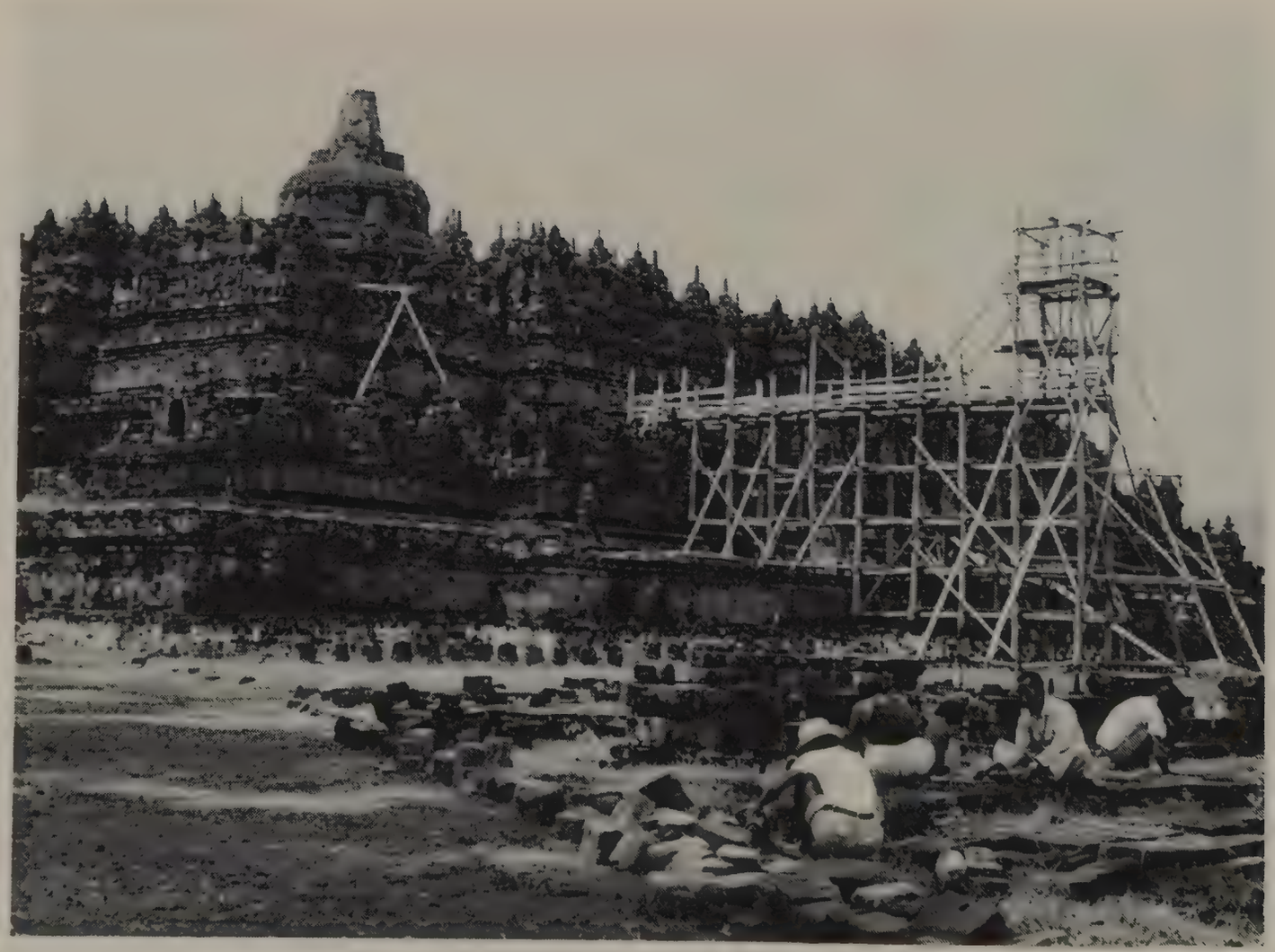
    Those belonging in the middle and lower sections of the highest grade are welcomed in the same way but must pass through further purifications before they can attain perfect felicity.

14. Meditation upon the three classes of the highest grade prepares the devotee to join those who have attained supreme happiness.

15. In this meditation visualization centers upon the three sections of the middle grade, which include those who have sincerely practiced the code of Buddhist virtues for the laity, have followed a personal code

of compassion, and refrained from the cultivation of illusional or delusional attitudes. The contemplation of the mysteries of the middle grade assist the true believer to plan a nobler life.

16. The three degrees of the lower grade are concerned principally with the physical responsibilities of life. The believer should seek a constructive profession, practice charity, respect parents and elders, be loyal to rulers and leaders, and be faithful to all obligations. By contemplating the entry of just beings of the lower grade into the Western Paradise the devotee becomes aware of the causes of bondage and liberation and the reward that comes to those who place their faith in the compassion of the Buddha Amitayus.



Restoration work in progress on the Borobudur Temple, Indonesia, 1969. An international campaign for the protection of Borobudur was officially launched with the signing of a formal agreement between the Indonesian government and UNESCO on January 9, 1973. UNESCO/Mireille Vautier.

Chapter IX

ARCHITECTURE AS ARCHETYPAL SYMBOLISM

According to Hippolyto Joseph da Costa in his fragment on the *Dionysian Artificers,* societies of architects and builders bound together by secret ties preserved the arcana of symbolical architecture which had descended to them from remote times. These organizations existed in Rome until the eighth century A.D., after which time there was a general deterioration of arts, sciences, and philosophies, culminating in what is referred to as the Dark Ages. The Romans, ambitious for the splendor of their city and mindful of the importance of public works, found it expedient to encourage the science of architecture and bestow honors and rewards upon those especially gifted in such labors. During the reign of Augustus, the Roman Collegia, or association of the architects entrusted with the building of palaces, temples, monuments, tombs and aqueducts, was under the leadership of Marcus Vitruvius Pollio. He was the most celebrated construction engineer of his time and was often referred to as the father of the modern science of architectonics.

The Greek concept of esoteric philosophy considered architecture itself a vast structure of composition unfolded mathematically and diagrammatically according to laws of dynamic symmetry. The basic theme in each case was repeated and amplified, and then variations upon the theme were introduced in much the same way as in a musical composition. The governing pattern of a building was determined by the purpose for which the structure was erected. Thus, the temples of gods, goddesses, heroes, and nymphs were symbolic representations in stone and marble of the powers, provinces, and attributes of these divinities. Any departure from the most rigid adherence to the sacred rules and laws of the Dionysian fraternity was a violation of both religious and secular codes, which were strictly enforced by the State.

The Roman Collegia also derived inspiration from the motions of the heavenly bodies. Many of the great public buildings of Rome were developed from mathematical expansion of constellation symbols and star clusters. Sometimes in designing the sanctuary of a certain god, or a public edifice dedicated to a particular purpose, the constellation appropriate to the deity propitiated was selected as the archetype for the structural concept. Thus,

the finished building became the embodiment of an idea and, as such, was incorporated into the consciousness through the visual faculty.

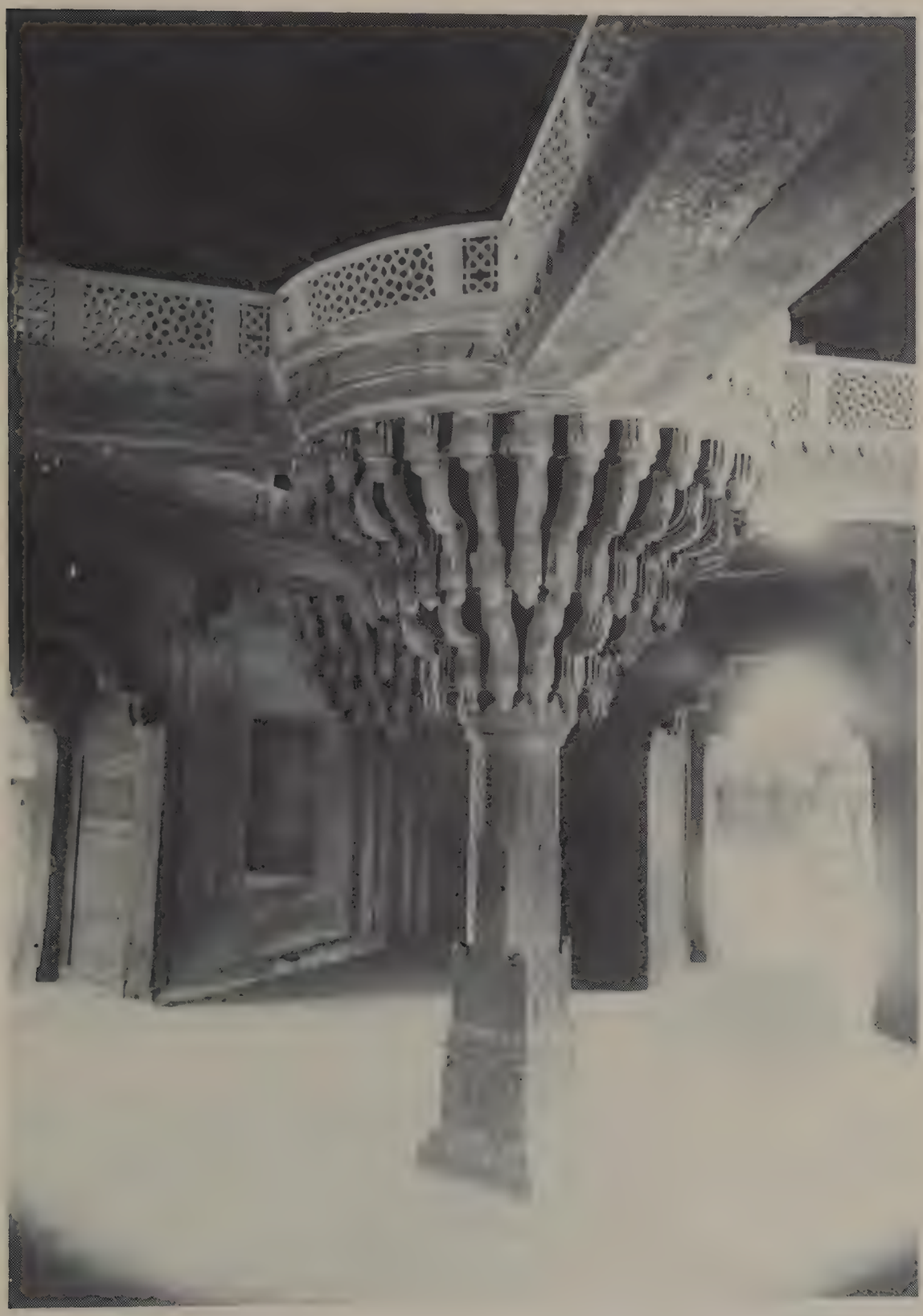
In his *Dionysian Artificers* da Costa writes, "It appears, that, at a very early period, some contemplative men were desirous of deducing from the observations of nature, moral rules for the conduct of mankind. Astronomy was the science selected for this purpose; architecture was afterwards called in aid of this system and its followers formed a society or a sect . . ."

Although the secret associations of antiquity, including the Roman Collegia, were officially dissolved in the fifth century A.D. by Imperial edict, these schools were privately perpetuated long after they were abolished publicly. The Reverend George Oliver, an outstanding Masonic scholar, links the Dionysian Artificers with the trading association of architects, which appeared through the Dark Ages under the special authority of the See of Rome.

The building guilds of Europe placed certain marks upon the structures on which they labored. Each master had a distinguishing symbolic device which he cut into the surface of every stone which he trued and finished. These marks are found in many parts of the world. A. Gorham states in his treatise, *Indian Mason's Marks of the Moghul Dynasty,* London, n.d., ". . . I am convinced that behind the symbolism of Mason's marks in India lies a vast field of research into the Mythology which illustrates the Cosmology and Speculative Philosophy of the Hindus." Mr. Gorham found over forty different Mason's marks on the stones, especially paving blocks, in the palace of the Emperor Akbar at Fatehpur Sikri, Uttar Pradesh, India. When giving audience from his lofty throne, Akbar, the Great Mogul, was seated on the top of an elaborately carved column, and petitioners gathered below. The general shape of the column is reminiscent of Mount Meru as the symbol of temporal sovereignty.

The Christian clergy, like the earlier Roman aristocracy, developed a keen desire for splendid structures such as monasteries and magnificent cathedrals. Unfortunately, skilled craftsmen and architects were difficult to locate; and, to encourage the profession of architecture, the bishops of Rome conferred large and broad privileges upon the building guilds. The members were allowed to govern their association by laws, customs, and ceremonies peculiar to themselves. Members of these guilds, including Italians, Greeks, French, Germans, Dutch, and Belgians, journeyed from one country to another; and many generations of artisans labored upon a single project.

Geometry is also akin to geography. The builders of the great ceremonial structures of the past left enduring proof that they were acquainted with the true proportions of the earth, its shape and size, and also that in some remote



The column throne of Akbar, the Great Mogul, in the palace at Fatehpur Sikri. From a photograph in the PRS Collection.

time there was philosophical intercourse between areas later to be considered isolated. It was impossible to unfold what Proclus called "the divine arithmetic" without discovering the key of universal design. The temple was the miniature world, a place of worship designed to educate the mind, give expression to the most reverent emotions, and reveal symbolically the underlying esoteric tradition.

Even the distribution of vast complexes of buildings upon the surface of the earth was not accidental. As Frank C. Higgins points out in his *Ancient Freemasonry* (New York, 1923), remarkable and mysterious edifices are distributed about the surface of the earth according to a well-defined plan. Each stands at the junction of geometrical lines and patterns, which, in turn, coincide with magnetic zones or vital energy centers of the planet. Modern archaeologists can find no reasonable explanation for many of these apparently remote and unsuitable sites, and scholars are still trying to understand what inspired the builders to choose such places.

The seven wonders of the ancient world are sometimes referred to as pentacles (sigils or seals), but more correctly they are mandalas. Though widely scattered, they are associated with the seven planets recognized by the ancients. Only one of these extraordinary structures has survived. It is the Great Pyramid of Khufu at Gizeh in Egypt. By present measurements, the Great Pyramid covers an area of thirteen acres and rises to a height of four hundred and eighty-two feet. There is a tradition that it was raised to honor the deity Mercury or Hermes, the universal symbol of wisdom.

The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus was situated on the Gulf of Kos in Southwest Asia Minor. When King Mausolus of Caria died in 353 B.C., his Queen Artemisia decided to build for her beloved husband the most beautiful tomb ever known to man. It is believed that the mausoleum remained in good condition to the twelfth century A.D. Somewhat later, the Knights of St. John decided to build their castle at Halicarnassus, and they tore down the upper part to secure building materials. It is listed as the pentacle of Venus.

According to Pausanias, the Temple of Artemis or Diana at Ephesus "surpasses every structure raised by human hands." When completed, the building was over three hundred feet by one hundred and fifty feet and within it were accumulated the treasures of a hundred nations. Known as the pentacle of the moon, parts of it survived until the third century A.D., when it was plundered by the Goths.

In Babylon, near the Euphrates River, was the beautifully terraced Garden of Semiramis, the pentacle of Mars, and often called "The Hanging Garden of Babylon." By legend, at least, it was attributed to a semi-mythical Assyrian

Queen believed to have been the foundress of both Nineveh and Babylon. The word *hanging* used to describe the garden meant that wonderful flowers and vines overflowed the walls. On top was a huge reservoir; and many gardeners were assigned to maintain the rare plants and shrubs, which had been gathered from all parts of the world. It was destroyed with the fall of Babylonia.

The colossal statue of the Olympian Zeus (pentacle of Jupiter) was designed by Phidias. The temple to contain it was built about 450 B.C. in the Peloponnesus. The body of the image was gold and ivory, and the god was represented seated upon a throne with a wreath about his head and holding in his right hand a statue of victory. The sandals and garments were also of gold, and the robes were ornamented with figures and animals and flowers. The size is not known, but it is popularly believed that it was between thirty and thirty-five feet high without the pedestal. There is no record of the Olympian Zeus after the fifth century A.D., and it may have been destroyed by the barbarians who overran the area.

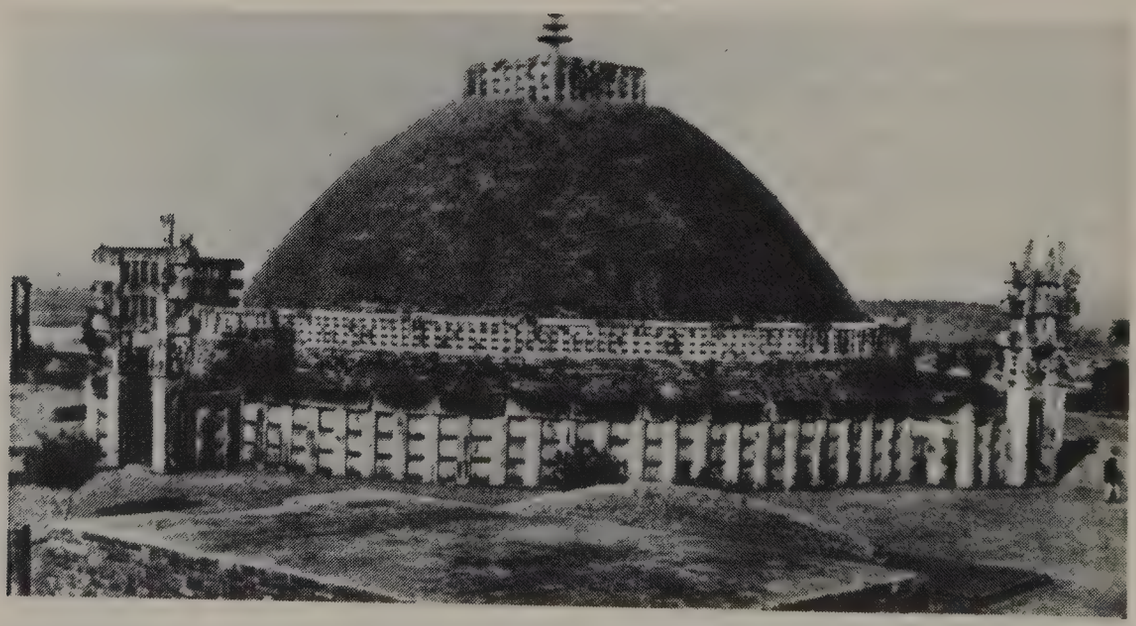
The Pharos, the great lighthouse of Alexandria, stood at the entrance of the city and was built during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.). It was approximately six hundred feet high. On the top was a huge brazier, the flame of which was visible for a considerable distance. It was partly destroyed by Moslems searching for treasure believed to have been buried beneath. The lower part stood as late as the fourteenth century, when it was destroyed by an earthquake. The Pharos was believed to be under the rulership of the planet Saturn.

The Colossus of Rhodes was created by Chares the Lindian. It was about a hundred and ten feet high and was fashioned of huge plates of bronze. The work was begun in 292 B.C. and required twelve years to complete. The popular account that the figure straddled the entrance to the harbor of Rhodes is probably incorrect. The Colossus stood for only fifty-six years and was destroyed by an earthquake. Efforts to restore the great image failed, and, ultimately, the metal was sold to a merchant. Early coinage of Rhodes depicts the head of the Colossus surrounded by solar rays. The image honored Apollo and was the pentacle of the sun.

Architectural designs vary in different localities. We may wonder why the Chinese built differently from the Greeks, or the Egyptians from the Hindus. The architects were fashioning their own faiths in stone or marble and building that which they believed to be true. Always, however, they were expressing their convictions lawfully. Older national designs and patterns were mostly religiously inspired. We can identify the products of Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islamism. In addition, there are the old Egyptian, Babylonian, Chinese, and Japanese styles and, also, the works

of artificers laboring in the Western Hemisphere, especially in Central and South America. The Greek styles found favor in Europe, and even in the United States public buildings show Grecian influence. The productions of many of these cultural platforms can be interpreted by reference to the faiths, creeds, and doctrines of their designers.

James Fergusson, in his *Tree and Serpent Worship,* London, 1873, describes several important Buddhist monuments. He devotes special consideration to the great stupa at Sanchi in Bhopal State, Central India and the famous stupa of Amaravati in the Guntur district of the Madras Presidency. A stupa, sometimes called tope or dagoba, is generally believed to be an elaboration of the early Hindu burial mound. It consists of a dome of solid masonry, except for a small relic chamber in the center near to the ground level. This chamber is inaccessible after the structure is completed. Around the central dome are platforms reached by stairways, so that rituals of circumambulation can be performed. On the top of the dome is a small pavilion from which rises a tall mast or pole supporting symbolic umbrèllas. In the earliest type the dome was hemispherical; but in later architecture the proportions were modified and, in some cases, the central mound became a tall pointed spire. There is much to indicate that the stupa or mound form was expanded into the pyramid. This, in turn, became more and more ornamental and structurally complicated, inspiring other memorial constructions.



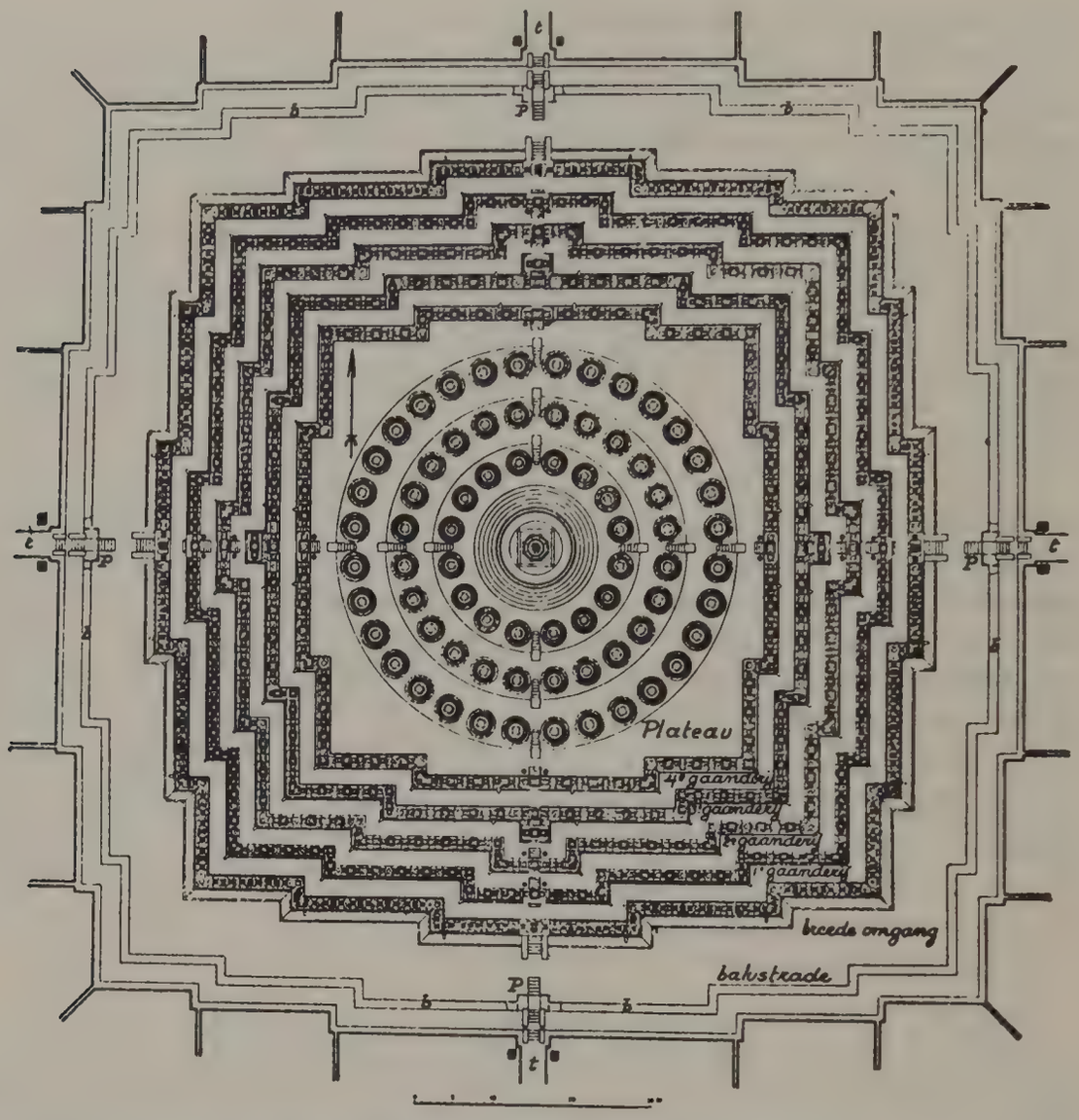
The great stupa at Sanchi. This imposing structure is a solid dome of stone about one hundred and three feet in diameter and forty-two feet in height. From *The Handbook of India,* London, n.d.

On the Kedu Plain in Central Java, about twenty-five miles from Yogyakarta (Jogjakarta), guarded by volcanoes, stands Borobudur, one of the most impressive religious structures of all time. This pyramidal monument is approximately five hundred feet square at the base and rises to a height of about a hundred and fifty feet. Until recently, it was assumed that the edifice rose in seven terraces; but it is now believed that the design has nine levels, six square and three circular. Borobudur is a mandala in stone created about eleven hundred years ago as a symbol of the Mahayana system of Esoteric Buddhism. The various terraces are ornamented with fourteen hundred and sixty carvings in high relief and four hundred and thirty-two statues of Buddha.

The three circular upper terraces are decorated with seventy-two bell-shaped stone towers of open latticework. Each of these contains an approximately life-size carving of a seated Buddha, all facing in toward the large central reliquary. It is assumed that the apex tower symbolizes the cosmic Buddha, Mahavairocana, as infinite life diffused throughout space. If this assumption is correct, the three circular terraces with their seventy-two bell-shaped towers stand for the auric body or magnetic field through which infinite life flows into manifestation. According to this interpretation, the large central stupa is the Dharmakaya or the Law Body of Mahavairocana; the three circular terraces are the Sambhodakaya, corresponding to the soul radiance of Christian mysticism; the square terraces would then symbolize the Nirmanakaya or physical, manifested universe. Thus, the composite structure could well symbolize the spirit, soul, and body of creation.

Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy has noted that the meaning of the number of stone bells on the circular terraces is a matter of conjecture. This monument was built before the cosmic implications of the structure had been clearly defined. The number seventy-two, however, occurs in Judaism and Christianity and may also have astronomical significance. This number can also be interpreted as symbolizing a large or countless host, thus bearing witness to the infinite diversity of the power of Mahavairocana throughout the cosmic diffusion. At the beginning of this chapter is a photograph showing a phase of the program of restoration under the direction of UNESCO. Borobudur is accepted as one of the most important cultural treasures which have survived from the past.

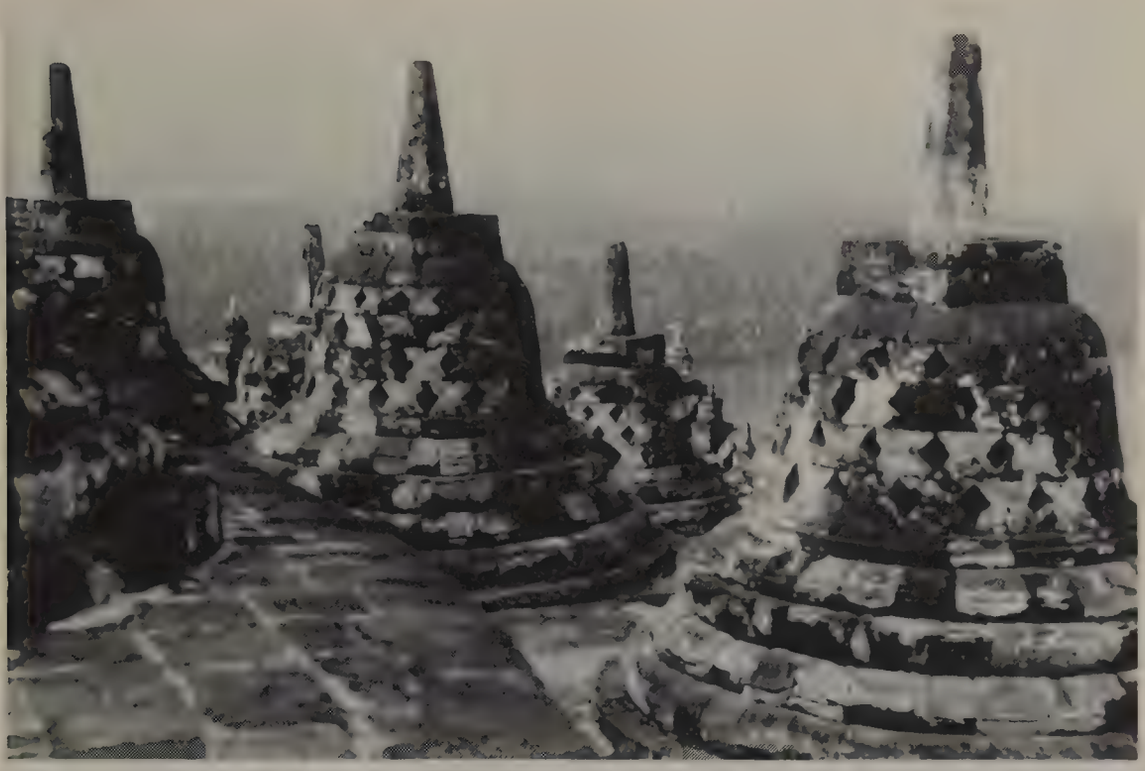
The seventy-two latticed, bell-shaped stupas on the three circular platforms of Borobudur can be explained only in terms of Esoteric Buddhism. Recent writers are inclined to assume that the monument is a symbol of the universe. The architectural concept combines theology with Hindu concepts of the world mountain and a secular calendar. The mysterious bell-shaped stupas are arranged in three concentric circles; the upper has sixteen stupas,



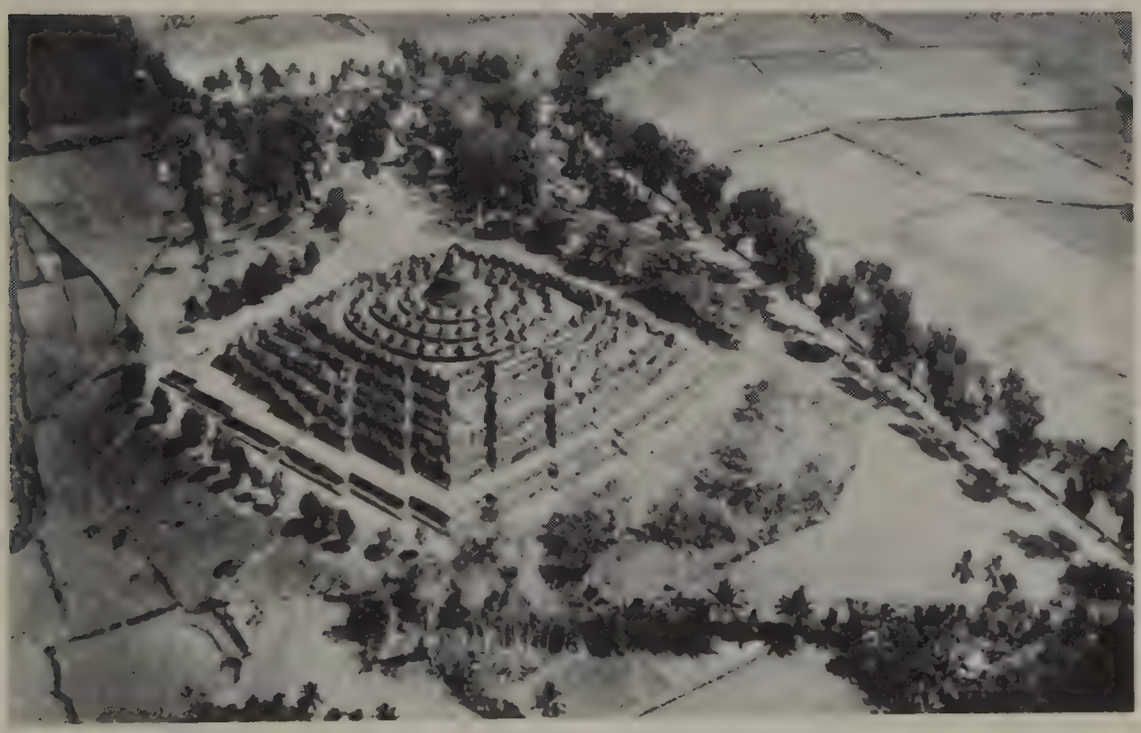
Ground plan of the pyramidal monument of Borobudur in Central Java. From *Pictorial History of Civilization in Java* by Dr. W. F. Stutterheim, Weltevreden, 1926, figure 26.

the middle twenty-four, and the lower thirty-two. They descend in multiples of eight. If we assume that the central tower represents the Mahavairocana Buddha, he would be a solar symbol presiding over the zodiac. Charles François Dupuis in his *The Origin of All Religious Worship,* New Orleans, 1872 shows that the twelve tribes of Israel were assigned to the signs of the zodiac. The modern state of Israel has issued several sets of postage stamps which feature the twelve zodiacal signs.

Ancient peoples in the development of their cosmogonies divided each of the zodiacal signs into three decans of ten degrees each, and each decan was divided into two dodecans. If each of the twelve signs is divided into



The bell-shaped stupas on the three circular platforms of Borobudur. This photograph taken by Manly P. Hall in 1924 shows the restoration work of Theodor Van Erp.



The Borobudur monument photographed from the air. This photograph was taken about 1930 and shows the stupa after the restoration of Theodor Van Erp in 1911. From *Pictorial History of Civilization in Java* by Dr. W. F. Stutterheim, Weltevreden, 1926, figure 25.

six parts, the sum of these divisions is seventy-two—one of the most important of all symbolical numbers. Arthur Dyott Thomson, M.A. of Balliol College, Oxford and barrister of the Inner Temple, in his book *On Mankind: Their Origin and Destiny,* London, 1872 writes, "Jesus had also seventy-two disciples. Seventy-two men came from Medina to Mohammed, and he retained with him twelve as his apostles. The College of Cardinals consists of seventy-two persons. Ptolemy took seventy-two men to translate the Pentateuch. The Persians had a title, Soliman, equivalent to the Greek Αἴολος, and implying universal *Cosmocrator,* whom they thought possessed universal dominion over the whole earth. Thamurath aspired to this rank; but the divine Argeng, in whose gallery were the statues of the seventy-two Solimans, contended with him for the supremacy. This Argeng was the head of the league of Ἄργειοι, and the number seventy-two is that of the kings subject to the king of kings."

In support of the special significance of the number seventy-two Thomson quotes Brian Walton, Bishop of Chester and the editor of the *Great Polyglot Bible* published in London, 1655-1657. This Biblicist wrote, "The Hebrews are accustomed to use round numbers, and neglect the two or three units which exceed them in certain cases. They say, for example, the Seventy Interpreters, and the Council of Seventy, although the number in each case was seventy-two . . ." Thomson supports Walton as follows: "The story is, that the translation called the Septuagint was made by seventy-two men, six out of each tribe, though it is called the Seventy; that to these men seventy-two questions were put, and that they finished their work in seventy-two days. The Rabbis maintained that the angels who ascended and descended Jacob's ladder were seventy-two in number. Lightfoot states the dress of Aaron to have had upon it seventy-two pomegranates. The division of the nations named in Gen. x., which was in seventy-two, is alluded to most clearly in Deut. xxxii, 8, where the Most High is said in the LXX to have divided the nations according to the number of the angels of God, and not, as in our text, according to the number of the children of Israel. This division of the earth is a microcosm of the division of the heavens. The stars are commonly called angels; and Pliny says there are seventy-two constellations, or groups of stars, called by the names of animals or other things . . ." The same author also points out that the Mohammedans believe that the world is divided into seventy-two nations, that there were seventy-two languages, and seventy-two sects in the Moslem religion.

Thomas Fergusson, a member of the North China branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, in his book *Chinese Researches,* 1880, notes that "the use of a period of seventy-two was anciently known to the Chinese." He supports his statement by William Frederick Mayers' reference on page 3590 in his *The Chinese Reader's Manual:* "The year is divided into seventy-two

periods of five days each, an arrangement traced to the period of the Chow dynasty." Incidently, the Chou (Chow) dynasty extended from 1122 to 249 B.C.

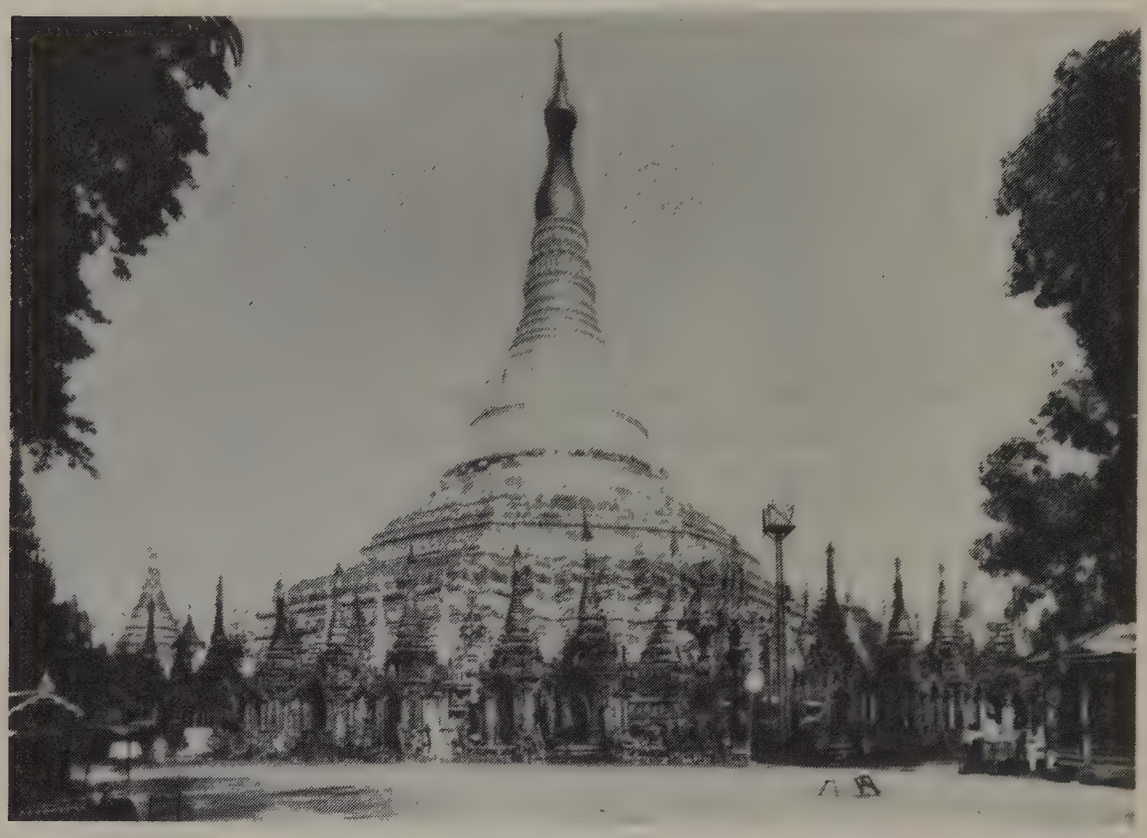
In *Bible Myths and their Parallels in Other Religions,* New York, 1910 T. W. Doane writes of the Chinese sage Confucius, "His disciples, who were to expound his precepts were seventy-two in number, *twelve* of whom were his ordinary companions, the depositories of his thoughts, and the witnesses of all his actions. To them he minutely explained his doctrines and charged them with their propagation after his death."

The cabala sets forth the seventy-two names of God, and Athanasius Kircher in his *OEdipus AEgyptiacus* includes an extraordinary engraving with the seventy-two divine names inscribed upon the petals of a symbolic sunflower. Also in this diagram are included diagrammatic tree-like devices, one bearing the symbols of the planets and the other the signs of the zodiac.

Psalm 90:10 reads, "The days of our years are three score and ten." As previously noted, seventy-two years are probably implied, and the present life expectancy in the United States is now between seventy-two and seventy-three years.

Of ancient Buddhist monuments which are still vital centers of worship, pilgrimage, and festivals, the most remarkable is certainly the Shwe Dagon Pagoda in Rangoon, Burma. The translation of the name into English is "The Golden Dragon," and nothing similar to it can be found elsewhere in the religious world. It is located to the north of Rangoon itself and occupies the upper levels of a small hill that rises some two hundred feet above the surrounding countryside. The hill has been trimmed and straightened and surfaced with rock and brick to form an appropriate platform, which is approximately nine hundred feet long and seven hundred feet wide with flights of steps ascending on the four sides. It is reported that the original pagoda was about twenty-seven feet high, but it was overbuilt on a number of occasions.

The present height and condition of the great monument dates from 1776, and the central spire now rises three hundred and twenty feet above the platform. The symbolism of the monument has been carefully noted and interpreted by the Buddhist community. There is a base about two feet in height. From this rise three terraces, the lower with a circumference of three hundred and forty-four feet, eight inches and a height of seventy feet, four inches. This section, which is described as bell-shaped, is said to symbolize the inverted begging bowl of the Buddha. Rising from this is a series of folds believed to represent the shape of a turban twisted around the spire. The turban is surmounted by a lotus decoration, and above this is a swelling lotus bud.



The Shwe Dagon Pagoda, often called "The Golden Dragon," in Rangoon, Burma from *Views Depicting the Principal Features of Interest in Rangoon . . .* , Rangoon, n.d. Beneath this magnificent spire are sacred relics of four Buddhas. Clustered about the base are numerous sacred structures, which give the impression of a range of foothills encircling a single lofty peak in their midst.

The periphery of the central pagoda at the base is thirteen hundred and sixty-five feet. The symbolical umbrella, which crowns the central tower, was put in place in 1871. It is composed of iron rings, gold-plated and hung with gold and silver bells, whose tinklings can be heard from the platform below. The upper point of the canopy is called "the gemmed crown." It glistens with diamonds, emeralds and rubies, for many wealthy Burmese Buddhists hung their personal jewelry on this crown before it was raised to the top of the pagoda. Like most other structures of this type, the Shwe Dagon Pagoda is venerated as a reliquary; and it was created to enshrine eight hairs from the head of Gautama Buddha. While there are certain differences, there is a distinct similarity between the symbolism of Borobudur and that of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda. In an undated publication issued by the Directorate on Information, Rangoon, Burma under the title *The Golden Glory: Shwedagon Pagoda* seventy-two small shrines are represented encircling the pagoda. These are flanked by many images and devas described as recording angels.

A view on the platform of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda or "The Golden Dragon." Here stand memorials to the dead, schools for the education of Buddhist monks, and hospitals to take care of those stricken with such maladies as tuberculosis and dysentery. The phongyees (monks) with their horsehair tail scepters and shaven heads wander among the golden altars, and devout believers gather to pray for their venerated dead. Photograph by Manly P. Hall.

Upon the platform of "The Golden Dragon" is gathered in lavish disorder the architecture of forty nations. There are strange slanted roofs from Thailand, fluted points from Indochina, curious towers from Cambodia, bell-like dagobas from Tibet, ornate gables from China and Korea, strange carved towers from India and Ceylon, and mendotes from Java. Here, again, the world mountain is intended; but in the Burmese system it is spindle-shaped and rises from the mortal sphere, where persons of every race, religion, or belief pay homage to Gautama Buddha, the Light of Asia.

In Egyptian mythology the hieroglyphic of a hemisphere surmounted by a pole with a symbolical banner attached to it signified the north polar abode of the gods. It was, therefore, the world mountain, on the summit of which were placed royal or divine insignias—in the case of Buddhism, the ceremonial umbrellas. The structures of the seven-stepped pyramid of Saq-qara in Egypt and the semi-mythological tower of Babel with its seven plat-

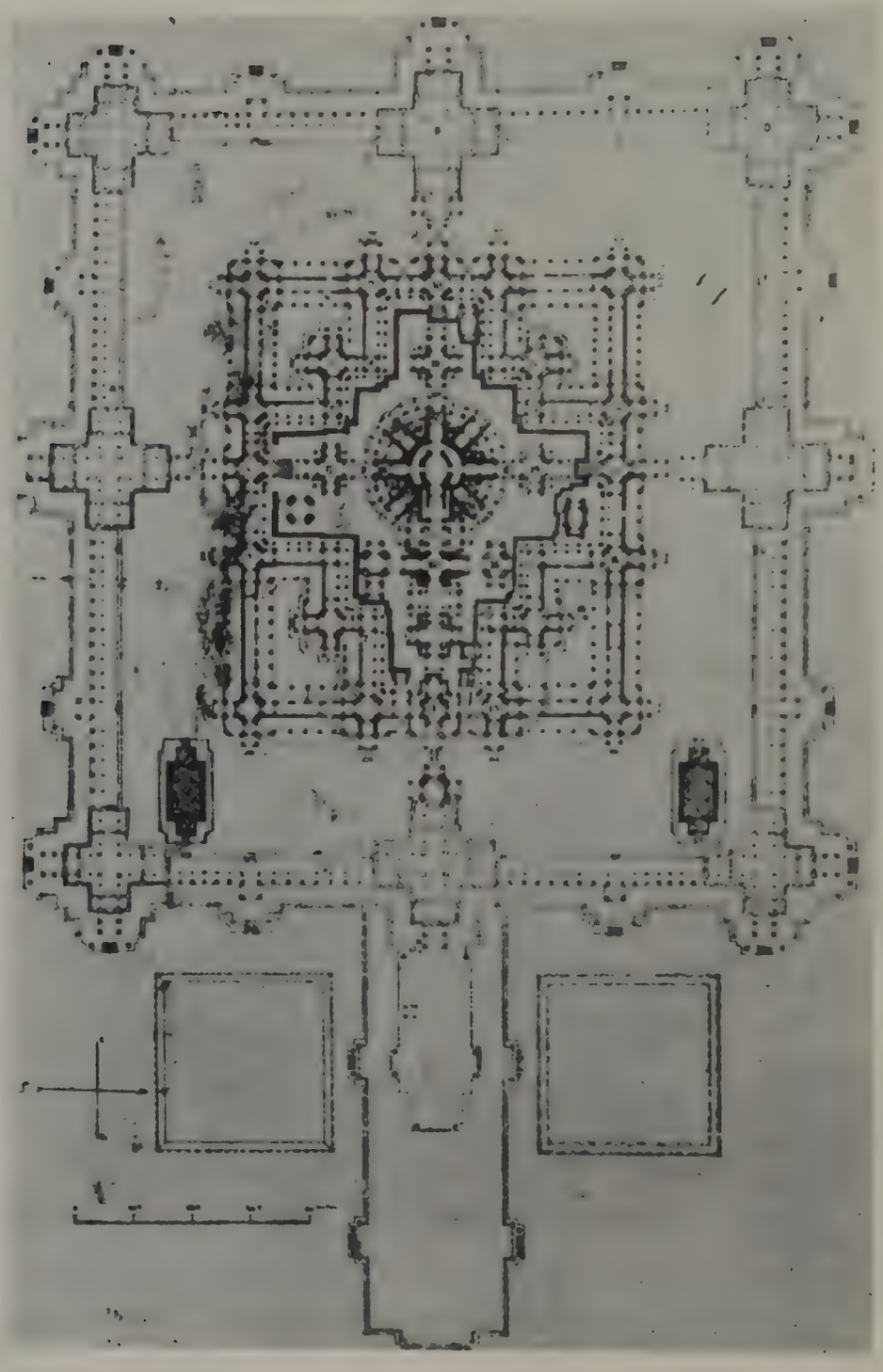
forms were epitomes of the solar system, the seven platforms being assigned to the ascending order of planets. The Khmer of Cambodia developed the theme further, and the complex of temples at Angkor Vat and Angkor Thom symbolize a combination of Hindu and Buddhist cosmogony. It has already been demonstrated by experts that the pyramid of Kulkulkan in Chichen Itza on the peninsula of Yucatan is a vast calendar, its parts and proportions coinciding with the astronomical knowledge of the later Mayas.

In Tibetan religion the stupa retains its original Buddhist significance. Small models of these structures in gilded wood or metal are used as reliquaries and also as altar ornaments. In Japan small wooden stupas, dating back to the eighth century, were used as containers for dharanis or charms. Among Eastern peoples there was slight tendency for originality or innovation in religious symbolism, and old designs were seldom neglected or forgotten. Stupas occur in association with many of the divinities of the Tibetan pantheon. The Maitreya Buddha is conventionally depicted with a miniature stupa in the front of his coronet, the place assigned as the throne of his teacher or his celestial patron. The use of the reliquary in this case is highly significant, standing for Gautama Buddha who ordained him to his ministry.

It might be well to note that coronets used in both the East and West were often surmounted by battlements or other architectural symbols. Diana of Ephesus wore the mural crown and the headdresses of several ancient nations, including Thailand, were stupa-shaped. L. Austine Waddell in his book *The Buddhism of Tibet,* London, 1895 devotes considerable attention to mortuary stupas. He explains that these consist of several parts, or sections, which are fitted together to form an ascending mass surmounted by sacred emblems. The Lamaist and Japanese stupas include symbols of the five elements into which a body is resolved at death. Of this, Waddell writes, "The lowest section, a solid rectangular block, typifies the solidity of the *earth;* above it *water* is represented by a globe; *fire* by a triangular tongue; *air* by a crescent—the inverted vault of the sky; and *ether* by an acuminated circle, tapering into space."

We already mentioned the ruined sanctuaries of Cambodia. The Bayon of Angkor Thom has been described as the hub of the Khmer universe. The structure is ornamented with fifty towers and one hundred and seventy-two huge human faces; but, for the moment, the ground plan attracts our attention. The Bayon ascends in three successive levels, each with galleries. The principal entrance is at the east, and there is a gradual ascent to the central tower, which has as its base an eight-spoked wheel—the familiar Buddhist Wheel of the Law. The builders, therefore, were trying to tell us that the Khmer State was a miniature of the universe, and they succeeded admirably. Here indeed is cosmogony in stone, and every detail of adornment is part

In Esoteric Buddhism the sotoba or grave monument is in the form of a stupa. It is composed of five segments on each of which appears a sacred spell letter representing the mantram of Vairocana. Each spell letter (shuji) has a symbolic sound and stands for one of the five Buddhas. Photographed by Manly P. Hall in the necropolis at Mt. Koya, Japan.



The plan of the Bayon at Angkor Thom. In this treatment the several levels are represented according to their dominant architectural motifs. The radiation of the design from the central eight-spoked wheel is immediately obvious. From *Bulletin de la Commission Archeologique de l'Indo-Chine,* 1913.

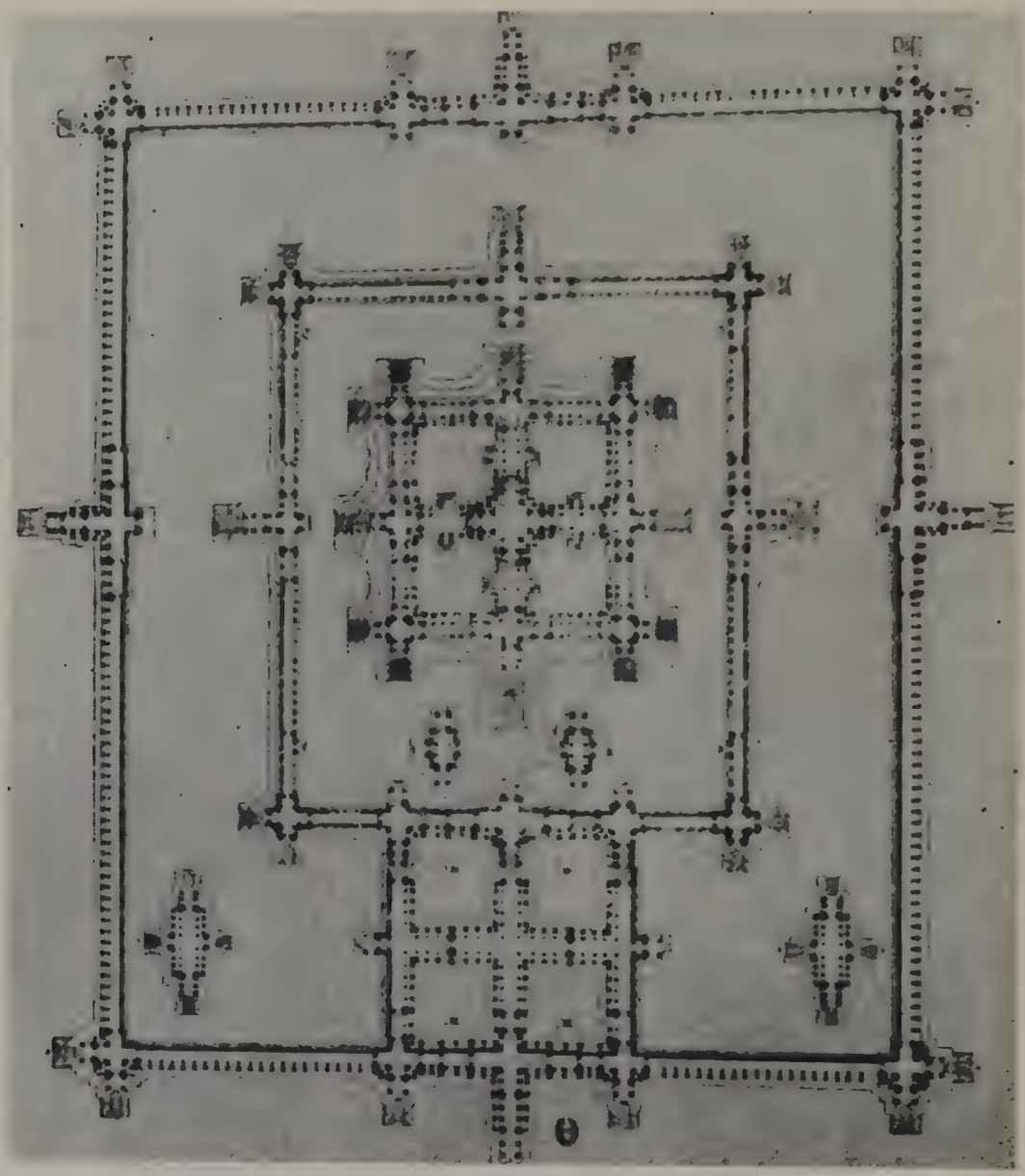
of the master plan. We reproduce herewith the ground plan of the Bayon; and this should be imposed, at least mentally, upon the mandala diagrams of Eastern nations if the architectural archetype is to be discovered. Notice also that the approach and the principal side gates of the Bayon form almost a true Christian cross with the central tower like a halo or nimbus around the head of an invisible being, who might be lying with arms spread upon the cruciform design.

Somewhat less pretentious but, nonetheless, fascinating is the plan of Angkor Vat. Here, also, there are three major divisions represented by concentric rectangles. The cross motif dominates and is made more obvious by the fact that the side gates are not centered. For comparison with this figure, refer to the Japanese Monju Mandara reproduced on page 117.

All temples built by enlightened races are divided into three sections to signify the three qualities of the universe, referred to in the West as the physical, the mystical, and the spiritual. This concept is preserved for Christianity in the doctrine of the three worlds, heaven, earth, and hell. The triple tiara of the Roman Pontiff and the triple dome of the Temple of Heaven in Peking are identical in meaning. In Central America most of the ancient buildings stand upon pyramidal plinths or bases, and these frequently are so terraced as to place the principal structure above the three worlds, like the palace of the gods on Mount Meru.

Architectural canons recognize a table of essentials. A building must fulfill its fundamental requirement. The principal essentials are fitness, endurance, and appearance. By fitness is meant that the structure is suitable for the purposes intended and that it is supplied by adequate lighting, ventilation, and drainage. Its arrangement must be convenient, and it must have such equipment as facilitates the activities for which it was constructed. Under the heading of endurance are the materials and the proper knowledge of the use of the rules and laws of architecture. These added together insure permanence and a minimum of maintenance. Under appearance comes the pleasantness of the design, involving balance, symmetry, proportion, form, and mass. There must also be consideration for the culture and tastes of the community and sometimes emphasis upon historical association.

These essentials are reminiscent of the three columns of the cabala. According to the doctrine of the Jewish mystics, the universal plan was supported by three pillars: wisdom, strength, and beauty. By analogy, wisdom implies fitness, strength means endurance, and beauty suggests appearance. This is the universal canon and must be fulfilled in all the architectural works of men if they wish their projects to prosper.



The plan of the central building at Angkor Vat. As a mandala, this building becomes a symbolism in stone of the essential concepts of the Buddhist faith and also a kind of trestle board revealing the disciplines and practices required of those seeking enlightenment. From *Atlas du voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine* edited by François Garnier, published by Hachette.

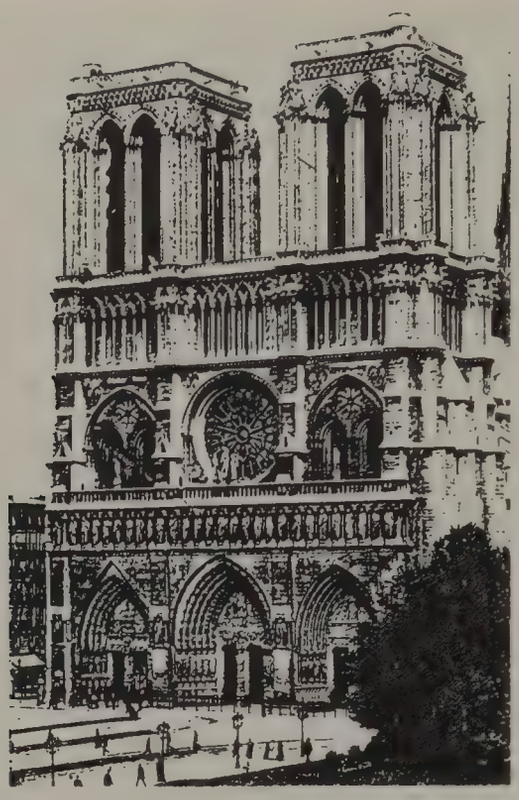
Christian buildings intended for religious purposes are usually cruciform with the altar at the upper end of the cross, showing the indebtedness of architecture to anatomy. The human body was the living temple, and the congregation was a composite person. Usually the pulpit was off-center to suggest the true location of the human heart in the body. The altar itself was often a marble block with the proportions of a double cube. The arrangements of the adornments, candles, and vessels on the altar ascended

through the sphere of the five elements and was apexed by the cross, the symbol of spiritual victory over matter. The high altar corresponds to the human head; and its furnishings relate to the internal structure of the brain together with the organs of spiritual apperception located therein.

Since the Egyptians used geometrical symbolism as an essential part of their sacerdotal learning, we may be entitled to assume such symbols occur in the *Pentateuch.* As an example of the complexity of mathematical symbolism, we can mention the first great building described in the Bible, the Tower of Babel. The Jesuit Father Athanasius Kircher in his *Turris Babel,* Amsterdam, 1679 explains that the Tower was to have been in height fifty-two semi-diameters of the earth, by which it would reach the orbit of the moon, which was the lowest of the seven heavenly bodies. The Tower was, therefore, a representation of the pyramid of knowledge that Francis Bacon called the "Pyramid of Pan." By ascending the levels of the sciences mortal man was resolved to conquer the mysteries of space. The audacity of the project resulted in the confusion of tongues and, finally, the loss of the one sacred language of all mankind.

The elevations of great cathedrals reveal numerous symbolical details. Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris and the magnificent structures at Rheims and Cologne are typical. Even the gargoyles suggest some of the grotesque ornamentations on Tibetan mandalas. In Westminster Abbey a pyramid has been introduced between the spires; and the campanile of St. Mark's in Venice is surmounted by a pyramidal finial, which causes the entire structure to be a perfect obelisk. If we assume for a moment that the frontal elevation of Notre Dame can be considered as a human face, much of interest is immediately apparent. The central rose window then corresponds with the place of the third eye of Eastern esoteric doctrines. On each side in the location of the normal eyes is an arched orbit. Below is the principal entrance corresponding to the mouth, and this is flanked by two other entrances to signify the nostrils. The entire front presents the elevation of an altar; and originally the principal arches of the entrance were ornamented with magical and alchemical symbols which set forth hieroglyphically the formula of the Philosopher's Stone. The hieroglyphical doors and most of the symbols were destroyed during the French Revolution, but old engravings of them can occasionally be found. They are mentioned in the collection of Dr. Sigismond Bacstrom's alchemical writings.

During the Gothic Period, it was customary to arrange and ornament the massive columns which supported the naves so that they gave the impression of great trees, the branches of which united to sustain the roof. These huge pillars were equivalents in stone of the Cedars of Lebanon, a title given to the priesthood of the Syrian Mysteries. These priests were the living pillars



The front elevation of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. From a photographic view taken in the early twentieth century.

of the "Everlasting House." The symbolism further reminds us that religious sects like the Druids assembled in forests and raised their altars among groves of living trees. The whole idea restates the original concept that the earth itself was the physical temple above which, in the sky, was the eternal sanctuary.

Most North American Indians were not given to permanent architectural projects. Like the wandering tribes of Israel, they were content to frame their shrines with portable or impermanent material. Yet, even among them, especially the Pueblo Indians, the same symbols occur that are scattered throughout the ruins in Europe and Asia. The labyrinth design is a good example. The Iroquois longhouse and the Hopi and Navajo kivas were always involved in concepts of the universe.

Research suggests that the underlying scheme of the American Indian cosmogony and theology was similar to that of the early Babylonians. Hasteen Klah, the Navajo sage, told me personally that Babylonian symbols were understandable to the Navajo medicine priests. The world was a pyramidal mound ascending in steps or levels. Human beings lived in the middle zone. Above was the abode of the manitous or deities and below the ghostly realm of the dead, which was also the origin of humanity.

The Indians did not believe in heaven or hell as moral spheres of punishment or reward. Some believed in reincarnation and also considered the stars as the campfires of the dead in the celestial region. Amerindian priests, like those of ancient Egypt, were thought to travel into the invisible world to guide the souls of the dead. Various animals, especially birds and reptiles, were messengers to the beings in the superior or inferior spheres. Many tribes recognized seven or eight important deities, but there seems to have been little knowledge of astronomy north of the Rio Grande.

Some Amerindians substituted mazes of stone for temples, and those passing through tribal initiation simply walked along narrow paths bordered by rocks. The journey was always circuitous and was normally accompanied by fertility rites. These mazes are reminiscent of the labyrinths near or beneath great sanctuaries of classical civilizations. Indians of the Pacific Northwest built more permanent tribal structures, and there is evidence of the migration of architectural forms from Asia. There is no doubt that the facial designs, masks, headdresses, kilts, and ornaments worn in Navajo, Hopi, and Zuni ritual dances are intended to suggest the existence of superphysical beings and the dimly remembered remnants of a once widely disseminated theology.

The sand painting itself tells a story, and the designs are usually in a sequence or series. There are several important series and also separate paintings for particular purposes. Although pictorial, they are also magical. Any representations of the gods or their activities capture and hold energy or power and thus become, in a sense, alive or ensouled. The same is true of masks and the objects used in the ceremonial rituals of the people. The medicine priests use sand paintings as an essential part of their rites of healing. The sick person is placed on a sand painting as part of the treatment of his ailment. Very little is known about American Indian magic, since the missionaries have done everything possible to prevent the continuation of the Indian ceremonies. As a result, these are now held in remote parts of the reservation, and only trusted non-Indians are encouraged to attend. As these ceremonies also take place in the most inclement season of the year, visitors are uncommon.

Hasteen Klah, the celebrated Navajo medicine priest, was one of the last of the great sand painters; and with his death perished much of the history and philosophy of his nation. The young men did not have the quiet reverence and the simple faith which were the foundations of his character. He did not trust them and, therefore, would not tell them his secrets.

From Hasteen Klah it was possible to gather something of the psychology of sand painting, as this related to the Indian life-way. The pictures were mnemonic, a kind of writing in symbols and pictures which revived thoughts and memories. When the same sand painting is made by different artists

remote from each other, the results are always identical. There is no master picture from which the others are taken. Each priest creates from memory, and to him the sand is like clouds. When the work of the painting is finished, it is scattered by a few strokes of the hand. In the old days it was against the tribal law to preserve these pictures or to make them in any permanent form. In recent years this rule has been relaxed for two reasons: first, the younger Indians consider the old symbols only as interesting and beautiful designs and are not restrained by the ancient religious rules; second, the priests themselves, fearing that their records will be hopelessly lost, have been induced to make some provision for posterity. By the same incentive, they have also allowed their medicine chants and their historical and religious songs to be recorded. Elaborate collections of such recordings are now available to the public.

The first of the great gods of the Navajos was Hashjeshjin. Klah was emphatic that this is the greatest of all the gods. He lives under the earth in burning pitch, and it is because of him that Navajos have fire. He controls all the lights in the heavens, and with him under the earth are countless little suns and moons and stars. He is represented as being very dark and with white rings around his eyes and mouth. The second and third divinities are simply called the First Man and the First Woman. Although they are male and female, they possess no physical generative powers. The fourth deity is the Salt Woman. She lives under the earth, and all the salt, the water, and the lava rocks belong to her. She is invisible, but in response to prayer and ceremony she makes salt soft and abundant. Her mother was the ocean and her father the mountains. The fifth god is Ttsayhashkeh, who is associated with the coyote. According to Hasteen Klah, this god has control of the rains. His mother was the white light that comes before dawn when the coyote starts to howl. The sixth god is Begochiddy. Much research could be spent on Begochiddy. He is represented with reddish-blond hair, light eyes, and fair skin. In him were vested the creating powers of the old gods, and he fashioned everything; and every time he brought a new work he "kind of smiled." Hasteen Klah went so far as to say that this god would make something, look at it, laugh a little, and say: "It is good." Begochiddy did not die. He went up to heaven and still looks down upon his creatures and protects them. The daylight was his mother, and the rays of the sun were his male parent. When Begochiddy fashioned the first human man and woman, he made them out of crystal-like stones. Then he took his own hair to make their hair, and from all parts of his body he derived the materials for their bodies. He made six pairs of men and women—they were all Navajos.

When Hasteen Klah was asked if there were any secret meanings to these stories, he nodded approval, but, when further questioned, would answer: "That will come by and by." Although the medicine priest was not entirely

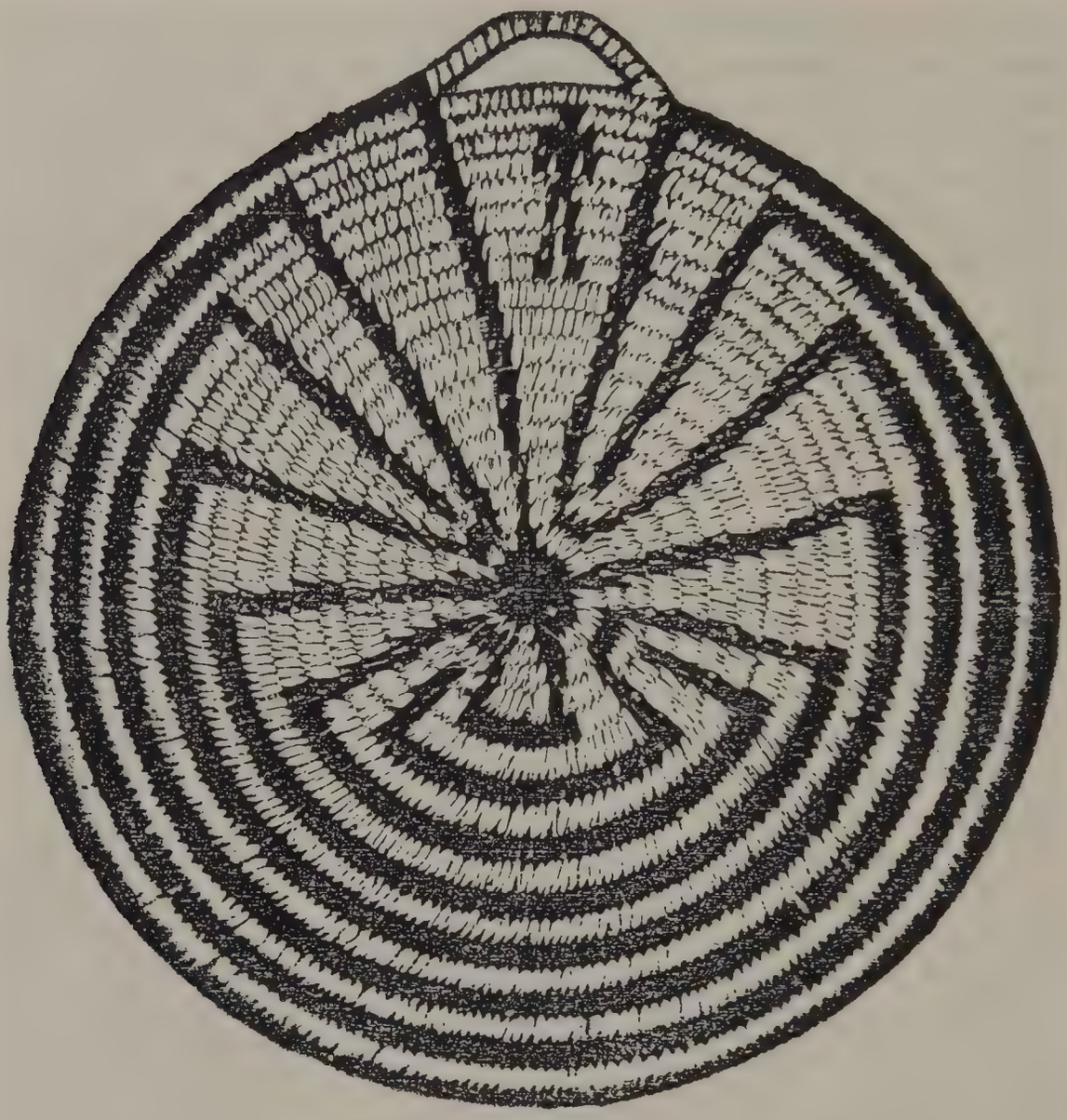
clear as to the seventh god, he mentioned one more deity in considerable detail. This being was the god-that-had-something-wrapped-around-him. He lives with the rainbow; and, because he is represented as surrounding the sand painting in the form of an arch, he is probably the hunchback god who brings seeds to mankind. In the beginning both the gods and their creation dwelt under the earth and came to the surface to escape a deluge which flooded the underworld. They used a magical stalk of maize as a ladder; and, when they reached the surface of the earth, the mountains and the heavenly lights came up with them. The details of these events and the various gods involved in them form the themes of Navajo paintings. Elsewhere in these pages we discuss the subject of sand painting in connection with the Rajomandala as executed early in the twentieth century in the Lamaist cathedral at Peking and the fashioning of the Peace Mandala in Peking in 1932.

Among the Southwest American Indians, the man in the maze design is most closely associated with the Papago people. It is found on their baskets, as a decoration in village churches, and is sometimes painted above doors. This symbol reveals the complicated and often uncertain way a man must walk to find happiness, which is said to exist in the center of the maze. Although at times he seems to be walking in the wrong direction, if he will persevere, he will in the end attain peace with himself, his neighbors, and his God.

John Amos Comenius (1592-1670), the Moravian educator, wrote a curious little book entitled *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart.* The work was first published in 1631 and belongs to the cycle of reformation that was spreading throughout Europe. *The Labyrinth* introduces a pilgrim journeying through the world in search of knowledge and understanding. The purpose of the symbolism is to prove that all temporal knowledge is uncertain, and those who follow it are beset with hardships and disappointments ending in sorrow and tragedy. The section dealing with the Paradise of the Heart is highly mystical and, though religious, is not involved in any theological controversialism.

The labyrinth motif is found in the artistic and archeological remains of most ancient nations. The ancient Cretans used the symbolism of the labyrinth to represent the maze of material life. The Egyptian priests of the Mystery temple of Crocodilopolis, near Lake Moeris, practiced their secret rites in the labyrinth temple consisting of twelve courtyards representing the mansions of the zodiac. It is described by both Herodotus and Strabo.

Possibly the most impressive mandala form that has descended to Western man is the Great Pyramid of Khufu at Gizeh. It is the perfect example of the power of understatement. Many books have been written dealing with its measurements, and it is a model of the solar system. It may have been



An example of the maze design in basket weaving by Arizona Indians.

a symbolical tomb, like the mound and stupa; but it was also the world mountain with the capstone missing. Its age has been a subject of lingering controversy, but recent testing has given it a far greater antiquity than has been popularly believed.

The Greeks taught that public buildings and private dwellings profoundly influenced human conduct. The soul receiving into itself the impression of shapes is offended by deformity and strengthened and inspired by noble proportions. It is reported that legislators of Athens exiled several architects because the buildings which they designed were considered detrimental to the morals of the community.

Buildings are thoughts and emotions in stone, concrete, steel, and other materials. All structures have their karmic consequences, for which the architects should properly be held responsible. The Egyptians taught that diseases could be healed if sufferers would sit quietly and gaze intently at models of the symmetrical geometric solids, the different shapes being remedial for the various ailments. We may not realize that the skyline of a city is a mandala which can press in upon us, stimulating responses, pleasant or unpleasant. The great city is usually unhealthful because of the confusion of its architectural forms. There are also other factors, such as neglect, congestion, and the psychic tempo of the metropolis. The Japanese believe that every house should have a garden, even if it is only a few inches square—for a tiny growing thing can be the perfect symbol of immortality.

All genuine mandalas are intended to picture forth some aspect of universal harmony. The inward experience of the infinite scheme usually results in a refinement of the various expressions of human activity. Among Eastern nations the natural physical environment is the great mandala and the family is a miniature of an infinite pattern. Life, to be harmonious in this world, must be established in obedience with the eternal environment. Every living thing is symbolical of the Divine Plan on one of the several planes of existence.

The Chinese have a tendency to favor paintings of flowers, gardens, and scenes emphasizing the three perspectives. There must be a near object, something placed in a middle distance, and lastly a remoteness represented by mountains, forests, oceans, and cloud formations. The Japanese have always placed more emphasis on flower arrangements in the home. The study of Eastern art must convince us beyond doubt of a valid mystical comprehension of the mystery of the infinite in all finite creations. In this sense the Japanese create a mandala symbolism to bring the domestic pattern into harmony with universal truth and beauty.

Progress, according to prevailing modern standards, must be essentially soulless. A building should exist only for utility, art for ingenuity, music for emotional excitation, laws for the advancement of material economic expansion, and recreational activities strictly for sensory enjoyment. As a result of constant association with mediocrity, human conduct is no longer influenced by overtones of beauty and integrity. This has contributed to the disintegration of modern society. Laws always contribute to harmony; but the breaking of laws must end in discord, which in turn deteriorates the integrities of individuals. Discord detracts from the dignity of personal living and obscures the essential symbolism which makes possible the appreciation of true value.

When the human being no longer pauses to read what Paracelsus called "the living book of nature," he loses contact with those basic values which alone can reveal to him his own origin and destiny. For this reason the clouded mind cannot originate mandalas that are genuine, nor in such a condition can there be derived a true vision of the purpose of an individual. A printed text or verbal instruction is contrary to the principle of internal release. A suggestion or two may appear or direction be indicated, but those seeking genuine mystical enlightenment must release a power of soul awareness in themselves and allow their own intuition to indicate the direction they must travel in their earthly pilgrimage.

Mosaic in the cupola of the Baptistry of the Cathedral of Florence. Photograph courtesy of Società Scala, Firenze.

Chapter X

THE MEANING OF MANDALA DIAGRAMS FOR WESTERN MAN

The accompanying reconstruction of the City of the Golden Gates, the metropolis of Ancient Atlantis with its surrounding walls and the mountain rising in its center, closely resembles the Meru mandala. According to legends which descended to Plato from Solon, the Greek legislator, Atlantis was destroyed because it departed from the laws of the gods and by arrogance and perversion of power brought upon itself the wrath of heaven. It vanished in a single night into the sea of oblivion. We may read into this that Atlantis is a perpetual symbol of what happens to an individual, a continent, or a world, when it attempts to advance self-interest above the common good.

The mind has trapped us into a completely physical concept of life. When we think of exploration, we think only of extending our knowledge further into material distances. When we invent, it is for the purpose of advancing our scientific or industrial programs. Religion is tolerated but is passed over with discreet silence by higher intellectualists. The arts languish for lack of creative vision, and now we are confronted with the physical consequences of centuries of exploitation involving our natural resources. Yet, with all this, we cling desperately to a subconscious fixation that things must go on as they are, or that there is no remedy and that we must suffer to the bitter end.

We will continue to put new patches on old policies and try to fit the future into the garments of the past. The more desperate we become, the more completely we are dedicated to immediate pleasure and profit, even though the end is misery and loss. Gradually, our obviously imperfect world has moved into ourselves. It has become the source of our decisions, attitudes, and conclusions. We assume that there is no other path than the one we are now following and find consolation that in our misery we are part of an illustrious company. How are we going to break through this strange false mandala of our own creation that vibrates within our own mental structure; and must we always assume that our thoughts, highly conditioned by an inadequate pattern of beliefs, can never be changed or improved?

It seems to me that in this area the Oriental doctrine of the mandala is

"The London Budget" for November 17, 1912 contains an article by Dr. Paul Schliemann, the grandson of Heinrich Schliemann, who discovered and excavated the site of Troy and other ancient cities. The article is accompanied by a restoration of the Atlantic island, and the great City of the Golden Gates is represented by a mandala-like design. The picture was reissued in the December, 1926 issue of a French journal, "Metanoia."

of the most immediate and practical utility. All physical change arises from the transformation of mental and emotional attitudes. When man thinks the same, he will remain the same; and because his thinking has created his civilization that will also remain unchanged.

The Buddhists declared that the first step was to convert the gods of Meru. Those with the best minds and the largest spheres of opportunity can achieve the most if they become enlightened by inner experience. The two great mandalas relate to the spheres of idealism and materialism. We must gradually come to recognize that idealism is reality and that materialism is a delusion that exists only in the human mind. It does not follow that idealism transcends the mind, but it becomes, like the Western Paradise of Amitabha, a wonderful dream that Claude Bragdon called "the beautiful necessity." Our greatest possibility of personal and collective security is to believe in that which is best. We have already demonstrated beyond doubt that selfishness is not best, and to cling tenaciously to that which has already failed is not loyalty but benightedness.

Mahayana Buddhism created a series of diagrammatic forms with which

to clothe the geometric processes of cosmic idealism. It did not regard these forms as imaginary, because they provided the valid reason for phenomenal existence. The Mahayana Buddhists would never accept the concept that life was meaningless and that all things ended in universal oblivion. They considered such views as a kind of disillusionment resulting from the desperate effort to live well in a structure of false beliefs. Through the mandalas, forms were given to abstractions; and these graphic representations were accepted as meditation diagrams. Taken into the psychic life by the devout believer, they began to neutralize the attitudes of futility which had been built up by discouragement and fear. We need here in the West a great archetypal symbol in which all of the abilities of Western man are directed toward the solution of the mystery of himself.

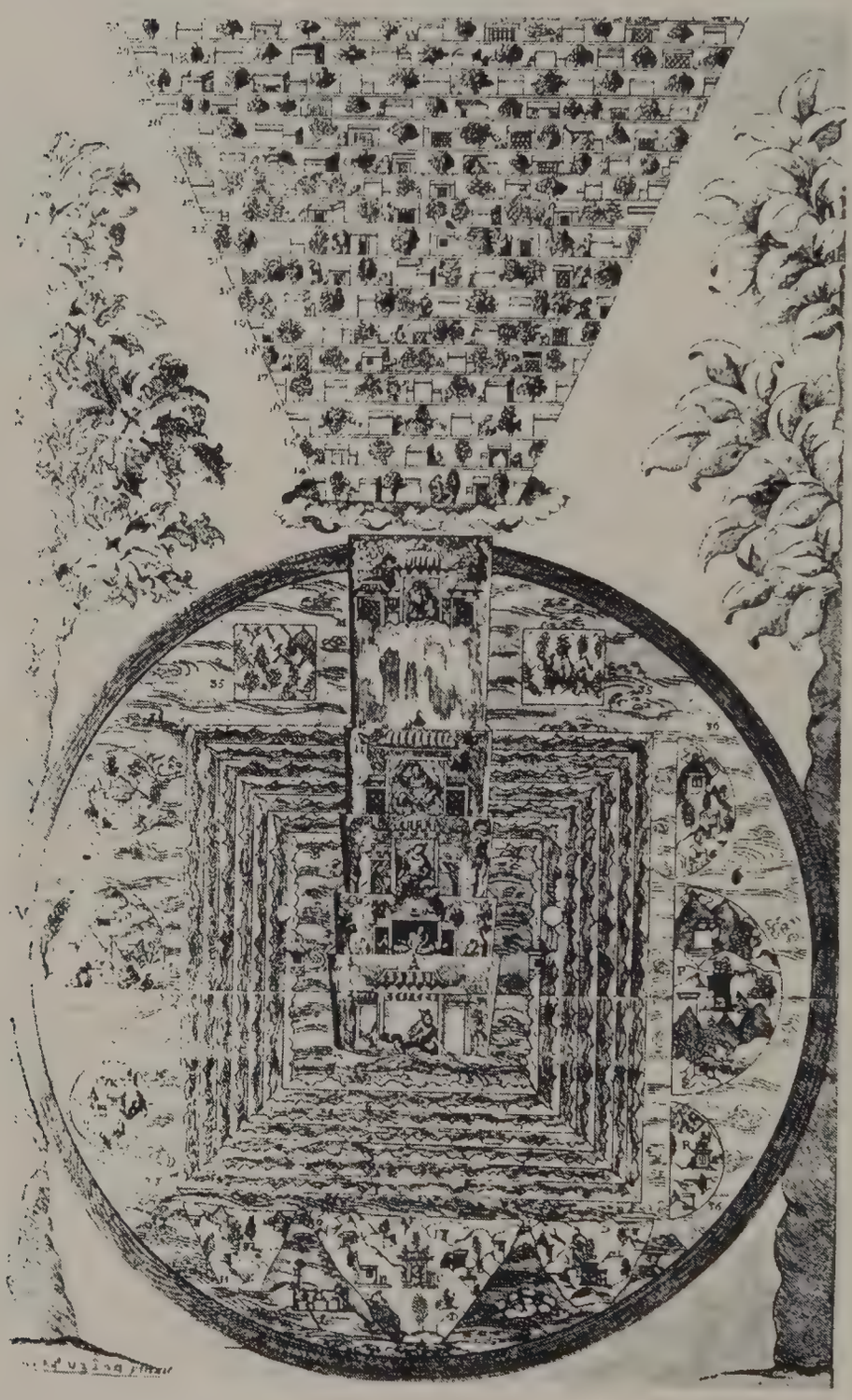
A great house cannot be built without an architectural drawing properly engineered and providing the necessary information to the artisans who will actually construct the building. We cannot bring a world together without a plan, and all plans which have depended upon materialistic ways of life for their fulfillment have failed. Up to recently we were not so aware of this failure, but now the evidence is undeniable.

Eastern meditation is not entirely different from Western prayerfulness. The Bible says, "Be still and know that I am God;" and Christ told his disciples that, when the time came for them to pray, each should go into his closet and pray to God in secret and the God he worshipped in secret would reward him openly. Zen would say that the closet is the human heart.

Meditation can be a very simple process based upon the Pauline triad of virtues: faith, hope, and love. Essentially, it is the relinquishing of attitudes that damage our own lives and bring tragedy to others. It is a searching after righteousness and a visualization of the eternal power at the source of life and the infinite manifestations which radiate therefrom. If we could really believe that we live in a larger universe, the greater part of which is invisible but more real than any of its visible manifestations, we might be more inclined to fit ourselves for universal citizenship.

To support this position, Buddhism has emphasized the doctrines of reincarnation and karma. It has extended human life beyond the narrow boundaries of a single embodiment. It has also set up a merit system, which has always appealed to honest persons. It has never been in conflict with science but has made the world eternally alive and has placed the laws of the eternal above the edicts of man.

A curious series of illustrations to Dante's great work *La Divina Commedia* was published in Rome in 1855. One of the plates is a diagrammatic cross section of the inferno. As the entire poem is allegorical, it cannot be



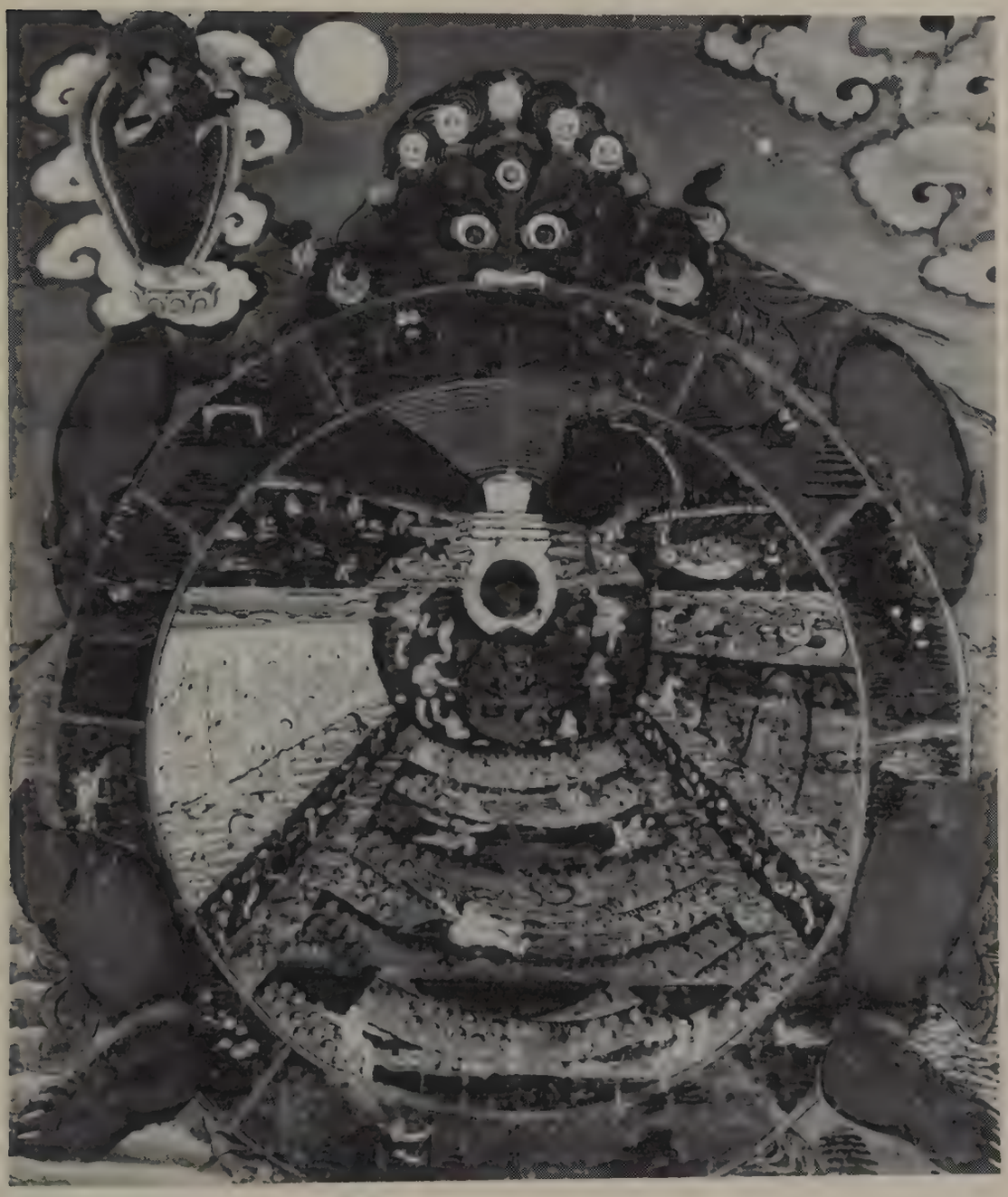
The Buddhist Universe from *A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures* by Reverend Samuel Beal, D.C.L., London, 1871.

accepted literally. In connection with this symbolic figure we reproduce an extremely rare Tibetan thang-ka. The circle of transmigratory existence is held by a demon-like figure symbolizing the delusion of mortal minds. Within this circle are the regions of the dead in which, one after another, the lower aspects of consciousness are destroyed. The wheel of life is surrounded by a band depicting the nidanas or the sequential aspects of physical existence. Within this circle of allegorical representations are the various forms of karmic retribution. Paths lead to the lower levels, and in the center is the judge of the quick and the dead. Above is a pagoda symbolizing the secret presence of the all-forgiving Buddha, and at the upper left is Jizo, the Buddhist divinity who is the compassionate guardian over the dark regions of fear and doubt. Jizo is the ever-present principle of redemption.

Some will say that this is a splendid theory, but what proof is there that things are not as they seem to be? Actually, things *are* what they *seem* to be, and that is why they must be changed to become finally what they *should* be. Observation and experimentation have always been considered valid instruments of science, and they are closely identified with the inductive system promulgated by Francis Bacon Lord Verulam. Observations do not support our present attitudes toward living. Even young people realize that our knowledge is much better than our conduct in most fields of activity. We are observing too much evidence that we have lost contact with our own destiny. If such mistakes could be proved to be successful, the Buddhist position would be weakened; but mistakes actually breed only further mistakes, and selfishness hastens the unhappy day of reckoning. Experimentation also proves that self-discipline contributes to better health, conserves natural resources, and makes us happier and more efficient. The person who cannot discipline himself is always in trouble, and, when reasonable codes of conduct are broken or ignored, culture degenerates. On this basis, the Eastern mind affirms that there are principles that must be understood, natural laws which must be obeyed, and a destiny for all living creatures that must be fulfilled.

Idealism sets up a new relationship between the individual and his environment, and, in so doing, constructs a cosmic mandala to take the place of the small diagram of prevailing national and international points of view. There seems no good reason why we must gaze longingly at the stars as Alexander the Great did when seeking new worlds to conquer. Why not allow the sublimity of the infinite program to move in upon our personal consciousness? We must ensoul learning, or it will destroy us. We must realize that knowledge which contributes nothing to the improvement of humanity becomes a burden upon the human mind. We cannot know everything, nor can we think all thoughts; but we can choose to dedicate our resources to

The Bhava Chakra, the symbol of transmigration, from a Tibetan woodblock print. From the PRS Collection.



Tibetan thang-ka showing a rare depiction of descent within the spheres of punishment in the realms of mortal delusion, instead of the usual circular cycles. From the PRS Collection.

the perfection of a system which will bring us world peace and the brotherhood of all that lives. Our mistakes are actually shortening our physical lives and burdening our years with stress and sorrow. We still go on, unable to understand why Lamaist priests personify such mistakes as grotesque and fearful monsters.

Western man's heritage of religion can serve him in good stead. He has a wonderful legacy of art, music, and splendid structures dedicated to the sovereignty of spirit over the pressures of physical concerns. No nation has ever become great without preserving its spiritual-cultural heritage, which provides the first breakthrough in our search for that which lies beyond personal ambition. The East took advantage of its splendid artistic tradition and revealed through painting and sculpture archetypes of the ideal world. Many who have rested quietly in an Oriental garden, which is itself a mandala, have found that beauty wisely and skillfully directed to the fulfillment of the needs of man's soul brings peace and contentment and freedom from the tyranny of despotic opinions.

When we can illumine the recesses of our own subconsciousness, we discover what Paracelsus called the sympathy of similarity. If we find beauty in ourselves, we will experience it in the immediate world around us. If we convince our own natures that creation is just and redemption is certain, we will immediately be aware of these truths in all our dealings and associations. We see what we want to see. If we want to see misery, we find it everywhere and solemnly affirm that it is real. If, conversely, we experience inner happiness, we also see it reflected in the faces of our children. In a generation of disillusionment we solemnly affirm that the worst is factual. If our mood changes, we can prove just as easily that the best is actually the truth.

Plato decided long ago that the arts and sciences play a very important role in the redemption of man's point of view. Learning helps us to build foundations under faith, for if we are at all open-minded we cannot overlook the magnificent integration existing everywhere in space. By teaching ourselves to observe thoughtfully and to express our convictions through trained artistic skills, we mature our inner lives. In the end we come to know that we can accept with perfect confidence the purposes of the Infinite Will. No doubts are necessary, no compromises can be tolerated; and in the end with full faith and love we mingle our own purposes with eternity. Realizing that the mind of man is so imprisoned in material concepts, the East has fashioned its mandalas in order that man can see, at least symbolically, that which he devoutly wants to believe. Like mathematical formulas, they justify and reveal the plan of the Infinite Geometrician. Humanity is very close to the time when it must break through into a larger concept of life.

The Triumph of the Lamb. In a circle the Lamb of God is shown with a cross-shaped crosier. Above the Lamb is the figure of God the Father, and the central design includes the four evangelists and their symbols. The stars in the outer circle indicate that the scene is taking place above the firmament. The design is supported by four archangels. This illustration is derived from a twelfth century manuscript commentary on the Apocalypse in the library of M. Ambroise Firmin-Didot. From Paul Lacroix's *Vie militaire et religieuse au moyen age et à l'époque de la renaissance,* Paris, 1873.

Many of the great cathedral churches of Italy include among their ornamentations mandala-like designs. The most important of these are found on the interiors of domed ceilings. The elaborate designs set forth pictorially the heavenly regions according to the concepts of early Christian theology. The mosaic in the cupola of the Baptistry of the Cathedral of Florence is reproduced at the head of this chapter. The highest section surrounds the central lantern, and the lower three sections depict the Last Judgment with Christ enthroned above the world. Surrounding the hierarchy are four zones in descending order depicting stories from Genesis, incidents from the life of Joseph, accounts from the life of Christ and the Virgin, and events from the life of John the Baptist. Those entering the Baptistry gaze upward to behold the mysteries of the heavenly realms and the composition is, in many respects, a mandala or meditation symbol. These extraordinary representations of the divine universe have a powerful effect on devout persons. It seems as though heaven appears in all its glory suspended above the physical structure of the church.

The Cathedral Church of San Marco in Venice also has several domes with symbolical decorations. The principal domes of the cathedral are located at the four extremities of the cruciform design and in the center where the lines of the transepts intersect the nave. The dome first visible when entering the church depicts the Descent of the Paraclete or the Pentecostal dove of the Holy Spirit bestowing divine grace upon the circle of disciples. Below this dramatic theme is a band of figures representing various races and nations of the world to indicate the universality and defusion of the power of the Comforter. The entire work is done in mosaic, and the disciples are placed on a golden field.

Pentecost, which derives from a Greek word meaning fiftieth day, is a major Christian festival occurring on the fiftieth day after Easter. It is not known when the festival was first held; but it was mentioned as early as the third century A.D. by Origen, who was the leader of the Christian community in Alexandria. The composition is inspired by the second chapter of The Acts of the Apostles. The Holy Spirit is represented as a dove resting upon an altar in the center of the design. A line radiates to each of the disciples and terminates in a flame.

In the Pentecostal mystery the Holy Spirit or Paraclete is the Comforter and will remain in this world until the second coming of Christ. In The Acts of the Apostles 2: 3,4 the Holy Spirit bestowed upon the disciples power to speak in other tongues, so that the message could be given to the peoples of all races and nations in their own language. As a meditation picture, it becomes a promise that each believer will receive the light in a form which he can comprehend. The Comforter was also associated with the

Mandala-type design of the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis from one of the mosaic-decorated domes in the Basilica Church of San Marco in Venice from *Il Tesoro di San Marco in Venezia,* illustrated by Antonio Pasini, Venice, 1885.

redeeming power of faith, which is the ever-present help in time of trouble. In the Early Church Easter and Pentecost were especially favored for the Sacrament of Baptism. Gradually, Pentecost, or Whitsunday, was given preference. As a meditation symbol, therefore, this mosaic comforted the spirit seeking eternal union with the love of God.

Persons who are mystically inclined usually invest the natural world with spiritual overtones. Both Occidental and Oriental peoples often view the visible universe as a resplendent symbol of the nature and power of Deity. Mandalas become diagrammatic picturizations of those invisible realms beyond the ken of human sensory perceptions. What cannot be perceived must be cognized by a disciplined intuition. The early astronomers accepted with

The Pentecostal mosaic from one of the domes in the Basilica Church of San Marco in Venice from *Il Tesoro di San Marco in Venezia,* illustrated by Antonio Pasini, Venice, 1885.

certain reservations the Ptolemaic system of astronomy and transformed mathematical formulas into logical realities. This procedure is notable in nearly every part of the world. The pyramids and temples of Mexico and Yucatan are also calendars. The ziggurats of Chaldea and Babylon, the mounds of India, the sanctuaries of Greece, Rome, and Egypt, and the mandalas of Esoteric Buddhism reveal the labors of the human mind as these were dedicated to the solution of the Universal Mystery.

Western meditation symbols are often cosmological, and an outstanding example of this trend is also to be seen in the Cathedral of San Marco. As

the Oriental mandalas are pictorializations of sacred writings, so the mosaic of the creation of the world, reproduced at the beginning of this chapter, sets forth in dramatic imagery the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis. The design consists of three concentric circles. The inner circle shows the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the deep, the bringing forth of the heavenly regions and the waters which are beneath the firmament. The second circle covers the account of the creation of the sun and moon, the various orders of living creatures, and finally the fashioning of Adam from the dust of earth. The outer ring depicts the material world shown by the story of Adam and Eve and their final expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

In the Eastern system the three divisions of the St. Mark mosaic correspond to the three-fold manifestation of the Infinite Illuminator, Mahavairocana. These divisions are the Dharmakaya, the perfect state of illumination attained by a Buddha; the Sambodakaya, the condition of the bodhisattvas; and the Nirmanakaya, the psychic integration of the arhats. Quite appropriately, the three realms of Christian theology, which are the abodes of the creators, the sages, and the assembly of consecrated worshippers, are differentiated.

Christian religious art has had a tendency to perpetuate a literalism which may have descended from the sacred imagery of the Greeks and Latins. Often, the themes are exalted but the treatment is almost photographic. It was customary to make use of models, and mystical overtones were achieved by depicting incidents described in the Scriptures. The sacred artists of Buddhism worked from an entirely different concept. While using many devices to dramatize and spiritualize the human form, they seldom used models but created "mood" pictures, emphasizing serenity, peace, compassion, and detachment from bondage to mortality. While it was inevitable that in various countries at different times stylization was modified, there was no aggressive conflict between good and evil. The believer conquered all by conquering self.

Protestant Christianity neglected sacred art, probably because such artistry was associated with Catholicism. Most Christian sects, however, have produced painters and engravers who sought to transcend prevailing tendencies toward literalism. No study of Western mystical symbolism would be complete without a mention of the leading exponents of metaphysical symbolic imagery. The extraordinary productions of William Blake (1757-1827) include his 1825 *Illustrations of the Book of Job* and his outstanding work included in the 1805 edition of Young's *Night Thoughts.*

Blake is said to have been considerably influenced by the work of Michelangelo and was an excellent draftsman. He devoted most of his skill, however, to expressing an internal mysticism which broke through all conventions. It is only in recent years that his works have been fully recog-

"Ezekiel's Vision" by William Blake (1757-1827). Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The Death of the Good Old Man. From Robert Blair's *The Grave,* illustrated by William Blake, London, 1808.

nized. William Blake's illustrations for *The Grave,* a poem by Robert Blair, London, 1808, include the concept of death coming to a good old man. The picture, quiet and sincere, reveals faith and hope and the consolation that attends a virtuous life. The upper section of the design depicts the soul being carried to its heavenly reward by two angelic figures. There is much in this composition that suggests the vision paintings of Mahayana Buddhism in which two attendant bodhisattvas bear the soul to Amida's Western Paradise. There is deep faith in the faces of the mourners, which contributes to the dignity of the scene.

George Frederic Watts (1817-1904) was another highly controversial figure. He has been criticized because of his insistence that art must have meaning, which is the only valid excuse for its existence. His skill has never been questioned, and his portraits are widely admired. He twice refused a baronetcy but was awarded the Order of Merit in 1902. His mystical pictures have much of the depth and impact of the Buddhist art of Japan, China, and Korea. His home is now a gallery in which many of his paintings are exhibited. I was deeply impressed by the inspirational quality of his symbolic pictures. One of the most powerful of Watts' mystical paintings is "The Dweller in the Innermost." The original of this painting was in the Tate Gallery in London and was reproduced in *Bibby's Annual* for 1918. The caption says that this

picture is not a gallery work but a fascinating and awful reminder calling upon all who gaze upon it to judge themselves. (From an article "Spiritual Training in Daily Life" by Clara M. Codd, *Bibby's Annual,* Liverpool, 1918, p. 61.)

Most of the artists who illustrated emblem books and gained distinction in England or on the Continent were essentially moralists. There was one exception, however, whose labors were unique. The Dutch artist Romeyn de Hooghe (1645-1735) has been described as a cartoonist, largely because of his satirical approach to political subjects. His *Hieroglyphica* of *Merkbeelden Der Oude Volkeren* contains sixty-three full page copper plates dealing with almost every aspect of classical mythology and Christian symbolism. For some reason, not entirely clear but probably due to the controversial nature of his pictures, the book was not published until twenty-five years after the artist's death.

It has been said of de Hooghe that rather early in his career fantasy turned his attention to esoteric matters. Obviously, he must have given considerable energy and time to the study of ancient authors and the ritualism of the secret societies of antiquity. In addition to the dramatizing of pre-Christian beliefs, he gave considerable thought to Catholicism and presented the clergy and their rituals in allegorical pictures which were certain to arouse the antagonism of the Church. It seems appropriate to introduce two of de Hooghe's designs.

Although the source of his symbolism is uncertain, it is believed that he may have been inspired by the researches of the Jesuit Father Athanasius Kircher. Each of his designs can be considered a rebus or several such enigmas grouped together.

In one of the plates the central figure is the Virgin of the World standing in the zodiac with the planetary symbols on her body. She is Sophia or Isis with the moon beneath her feet. On the viewer's right is a design from Brahmanic cosmogony showing creation taking place on the back of the turtle of universal motion. At the left is a figure divided vertically to signify the equinoxes. In the sky above is the chariot of the sun surrounded by astronomical symbols.

The second example of de Hooghe's work illustrated here is a design signifying the generation of the universe. In the upper central section the planets and their deities circle about the sun. At the lower left, wearing a turreted crown, is seated Cybele, the great nature goddess, the deification of the earth and the nourishing mother of man. At the right is a Janus figure within the zodiac, its body covered with sacred emblems. It is depicted with an old face to represent the past and a young upturned face to signify the future.

The Virgin of the World, a symbolic plate by Romeyn de Hooghe from his *Hieroglyphica* of *Merkbeelden Der Oude Volkeren,* Amsterdam, 1744.

The Generation of the Universe, a symbolic plate by Romeyn de Hooghe from his *Hieroglyphica* of *Merkbeelden Der Oude Volkeren,* Amsterdam, 1744.

The figure is placed in a turning wheel to indicate the mystery of time. It is impossible to study these engravings without becoming aware of their deeper implications, and this is the proper purpose of all symbolism.

The veil between materialism and idealism is growing thinner every day. Many progressive thinkers are already exploring the mysteries of the meditational life. They realize that ceaseless activity without purpose or vision is futile. It is also obvious that our unrealistic adjustment with nature around us is threatening our ecology. This is merely a symbol that our mistaken use of our own internal faculties is endangering our mental and emotional integrity.

There is also a strong upsurge of public opinion demanding reforms in education, government, industry, and economics. Religion is increasing in influence every day, but self-discipline has not yet been adequately emphasized. The beginning of religion is to keep the rules of an orderly universe. To do this, we must experience the rules within ourselves and finally prepare instruments for their release into the departments of our social mandala. The one great lesson that Asia can teach us is to explore the instruments which have been given us for our own perfection. By penetrating beyond the ego and outgrowing self-interest, we can enter into a larger world, more beautiful than anything we have ever known. This new world is a perfectly organized structure with its own rules and its own patterns, all leading to graciousness and peace. We can best symbolize this concept by a mandala in which laws are combined to form an exquisite pattern which is truly the shape of things to come.

THE COSMIC ROSE

"Thus, in the semblance of a snow-white rose,
There was displayed to me the saintly throng . . ."

From Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy, Paradiso,* Canto 31, illustration by Gustave Doré (1833-1883).

Chapter XI

MANDALAS IN WESTERN MYSTICISM

According to Greek mythology, Hermes was the son of Zeus and Maia, one of the daughters of Atlas. He was originally a fertility deity but gradually became associated with learning and eloquence, and in Homer's *Odyssey* he was the messenger of the Olympian divinities and accompanied the dead into the sphere of the afterlife. He was known to the Romans as Mercury, a protector of travelers and a bestower of secret treasures. During the Ptolemaic Period in Egypt, he was identified with Thoth, the scribe of the Osirian Rites. Hermes seems to have been known under the name of Cadmus and had characteristics in common with Nebo, the Chaldean god of the writing tablet.

Hermetic philosophy seems to have arisen in Alexandria shortly after the beginning of the Christian era. A group of writings appeared attributed to an ancient sage named Thoth Hermes Trismegistus or the Thrice Greatest Hermes. The most important of the books ascribed to this Hermes is the *Divine Pymander* or *The Shepherd of Men.* The work gained great influence, but it is not recorded that a formal sect arose to propitiate this immortal-mortal. In passing, however, it may be noted that Hermes was occasionally referred to as the "good shepherd," and there are representations of him carrying a sheep on his shoulders.

Although Hermes Trismegistus became the patron saint of chemistry with its alchemical associations, it is not known whether he was the first to bestow these sciences upon humanity. References to the transmutation of base metals occur in early writings from many parts of the world, including China and India. The mystical cults in Alexandria, however, appear to have added a new dimension to chemical speculations. They transformed alchemy into alchemysticism, greatly expanding and enriching its theological overtones. The word "Khem" was an ancient name for Egypt, and the prefix "al" or "el" signifies a divinity, as in the Arabic "Allah" and the Hebrew "Elohim." We are to understand, therefore, that alchemy was the sacred science of the Egyptians.

In the esoteric system of spiritual chemistry there were several grades

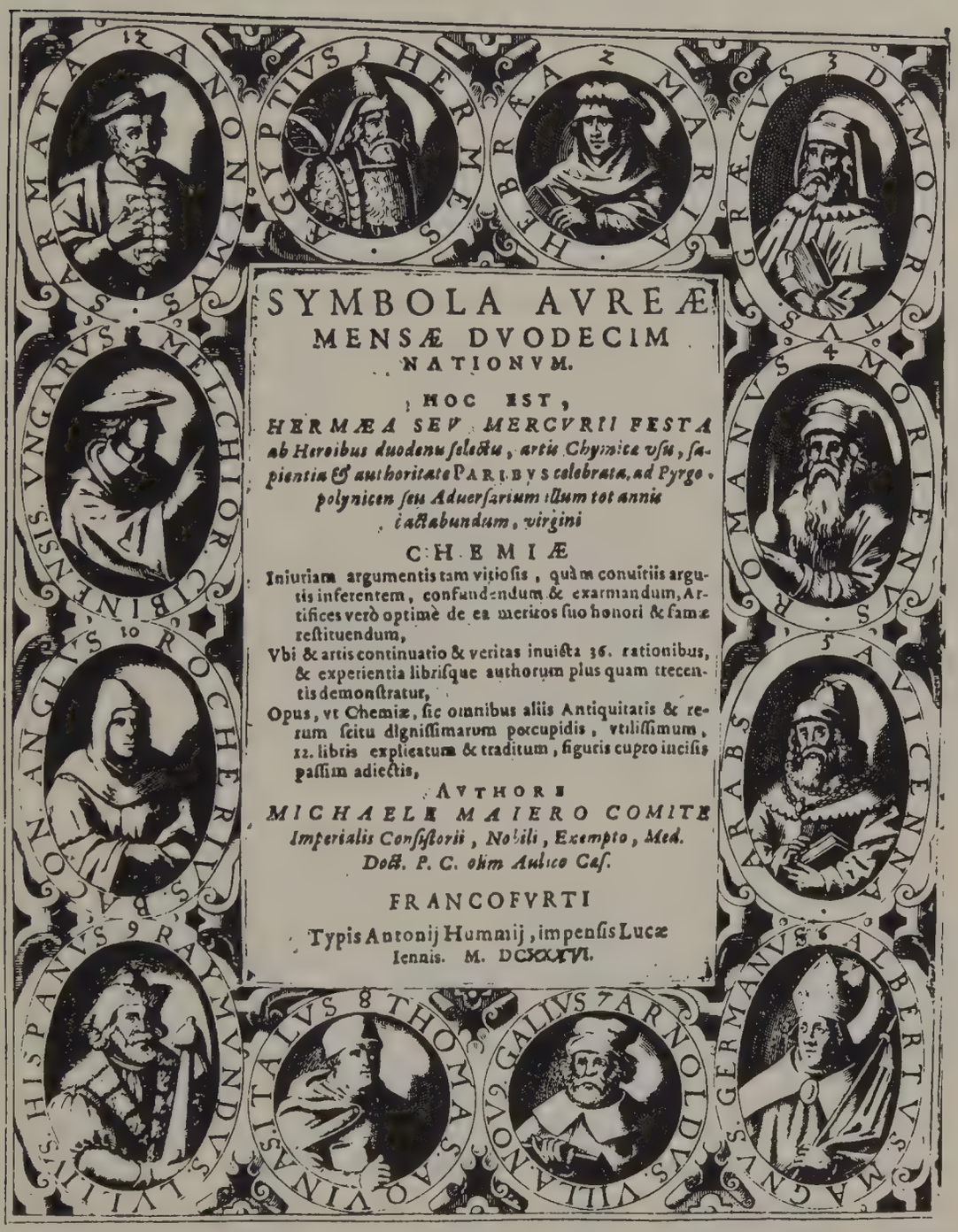
of membership. This arrangement followed closely the pattern of the ancient philosophical associations. In the Hermetic system those who had attained to the highest degree were called adepts. This word implies one of exceptional skill or proficiency in the theory and practice of some advanced art or science. The use of the term in the alchemical and Hermetic traditions is restricted to those subtle master-chemists who were the custodians of the high secrets of the *lapis philosophorum,* the philosophers' stone. By extension, the term is now used to distinguish the most advanced initiates of the Western esoteric tradition. Hermes Trismegistus, Elias Artista, Raymond Lully, George Ripley, and Nicholas Flamel are listed among the adepts. An adept must have actually performed transmutation of the metals and compounded the sovereign medicine which bestows immortality.

The second grade is that of the illuminated ones. They know the true mystery of divine chemistry. They have beheld the wonders of the great light, and they have been lifted up into communion with the divine powers; but they have not actually performed the great work of transformation. Saint John the Apostle is referred to as one sublimely illuminated, and the entire alchemical mystery is said to have been revealed in his *Apocalypse.* Among the illuminates were Jacob Boehme and Heinrich Khunrath. The concept of the illuminate seems to cover those who had experienced within themselves the transmutation of their own natures and, as a result, became aware of the supreme truth.

The term "initiate" is applied to those who have not performed the final labors of alchemy but are aware of the correct procedure. They have not seen the light, but they know it exists; and they can assist lesser disciples to understand the correct procedures of spiritual chemistry. A work entitled *Occult Bibliography* states that there are more initiates than real illuminates, and adepts are very scarce. Among the best known of the initiates are Apuleius, Virgil, Roger Bacon, Robert Fludd, and John Dee.

The alchemical tradition assumes that every physical art or science is a body of knowledge which exists only because it is ensouled by invisible powers and processes. Physical chemistry, as it is practiced in the modern world, is concerned principally with pharmaceutical or industrial research projects. It is confined within the boundaries of an all-pervading materialism, which binds labor to the advancement of physical objectives. According to the alchemical classification, Paraceleus von Hohenheim was an adept-spagyrist. This means that he was an alchemist-physician searching for remedies for those common ailments that burdened the world of his time.

The Alexandrian mystics believed that the material aspects of progess were among its least important potentials. Mathematics was not primarily intended to be used for bookkeeping, nor is its final flowering to be com-



The title page of *Symbola Aureae* by Michael Maier, Frankfurt, 1636. The border is composed of portraits of celebrated exponents of the Hermetic arts. Prominent among them are Hermes, Democritus, Avicenna, Albertus Magnus, Raymond Lully, and Michael Sendivogius.

puterization. Unless astronomy discovers astro-theology, it can never explore the higher dimensions of the cosmos. Francis Bacon said that, when physics is properly understood, there will be no need for metaphysics; but the higher realms have not yet been properly explored by the scientific community. Biology is the least part of an esoteric biophysics. Century after century we grope along rejoicing over insignificant achievements and ignoring those realities upon which we depend for our very existence.

Most alchemical symbols and emblems are derived from laboratory equipment and objects familiar to chemists. Perhaps the most common device is a chemical retort or bottle within which the various experiments take place. Let us assume for a moment that the bottle represents the planet Earth, a modest member of the solar system. Around the physical body of the planet are layers of atmosphere, now in an advanced state of contamination. How many chemists have realized what is actually going on in this little retort which is our earthly abode? All the creatures who live, move, and have their being on this planet are strangely and wonderfully interrelated. The alchemist's symbol of a serpent eating its own tail portrays a creature which survives by living off itself. If this serpent is placed within a bottle, it becomes a most stimulating symbol of the facts of life on this earth. Everything lives on everything else. There can be no replenishment by the benevolence of Providence. If we would have grain, we must plant the seed every year. The water in the planet's atmosphere, or lakes, rivers, and oceans, neither increases nor decreases, but, as Lao-Tzu pointed out, it is in the process of perpetual cyclic mutation.

The alchemist might remark that the continuous resurrection of life from death and the inevitable decline of living things into the state of death is in every sense of the word miraculous. If we could understand the processes that make possible the fertility of the planet and learn to use properly its visible and invisible resources, we would have the correct answers to the enigma of our own survival. No one can deny alchemy when he lives in an environment in which incredible transformations are continuous.

According to the teachings of the Thrice Greatest Hermes, man himself is a small bottle, strangely isolated even from his planetary environment. He has little or no basic understanding of the body which he inhabits. He takes its functions for granted and seldom pays any attention to the rules governing his life, unless his daily pursuits are impaired. He may gain some insight from a study of physiology but is not inclined to philosophize upon his findings. That the individual can live in close association with a physical body for seventy or eighty years without exploring at least some of its lesser mysteries is difficult to understand. The alchemist made one interesting discovery—the proper equipment and the casual reading of approved texts

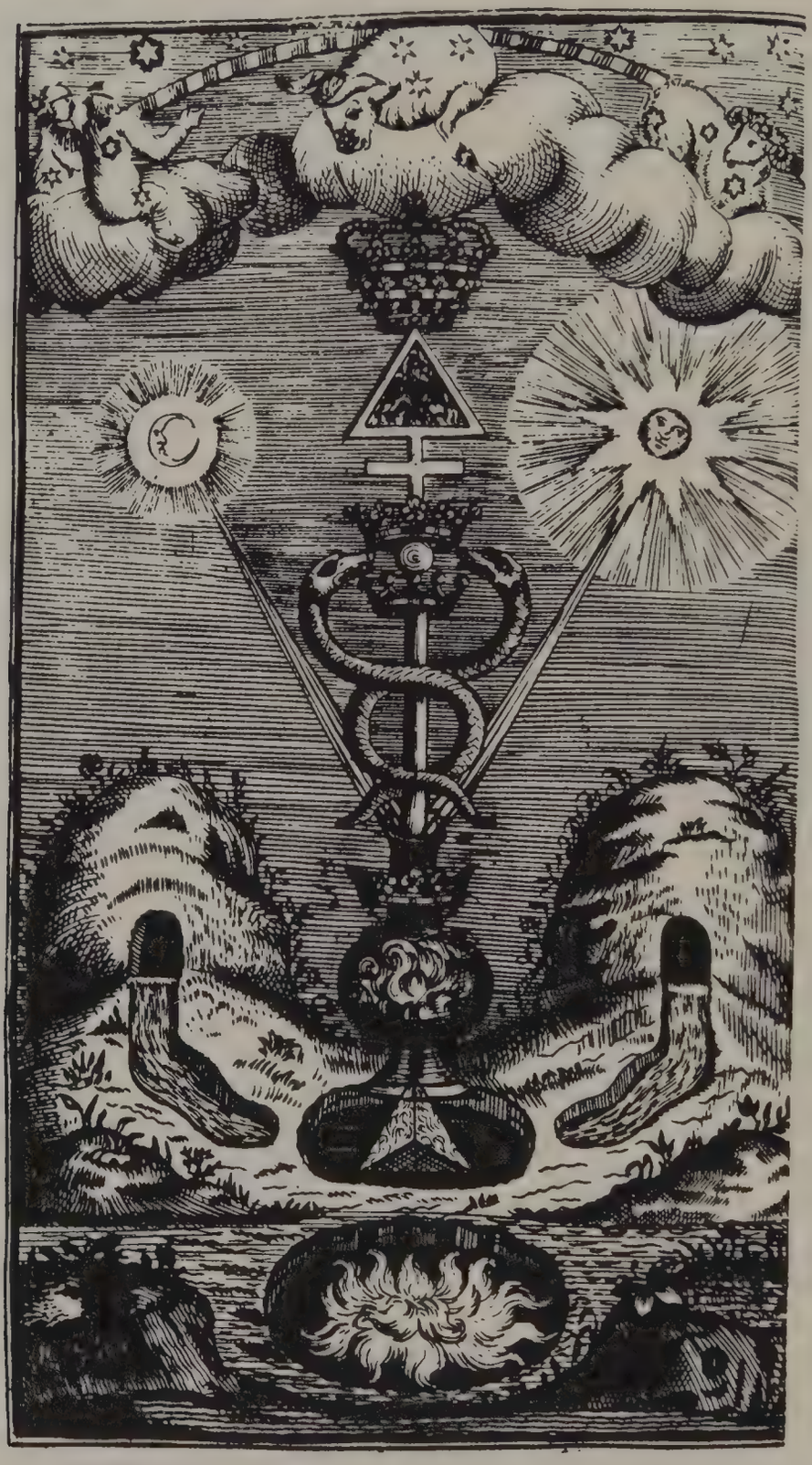
did not assure the success of the experiment. Man must develop within his own nature certain mystical insights. In other words, he must bring into activity latent areas in his own consciousness. To approach alchemy with the scientifically approved skepticism of today is to face inevitable defeat. Francis Bacon explained that, when you are tempted to accomplish something that has never been accomplished before, you must make use of means which have never before been tried. The wall between materialism and idealism must be removed before the greater works of God and Nature can be known.

Alchemical mandalas may be enclosed in bottles or encircled to signify their separation from traditional procedures. A group of these designs appears in *Elementa Chemiae* by Johannis Barchusen, Leiden, 1718 and are derived from *Sapientia Veterum* by an unknown author. The first of these sets forth the mystery of the Prima Materia and the second the perfection of the final labor.

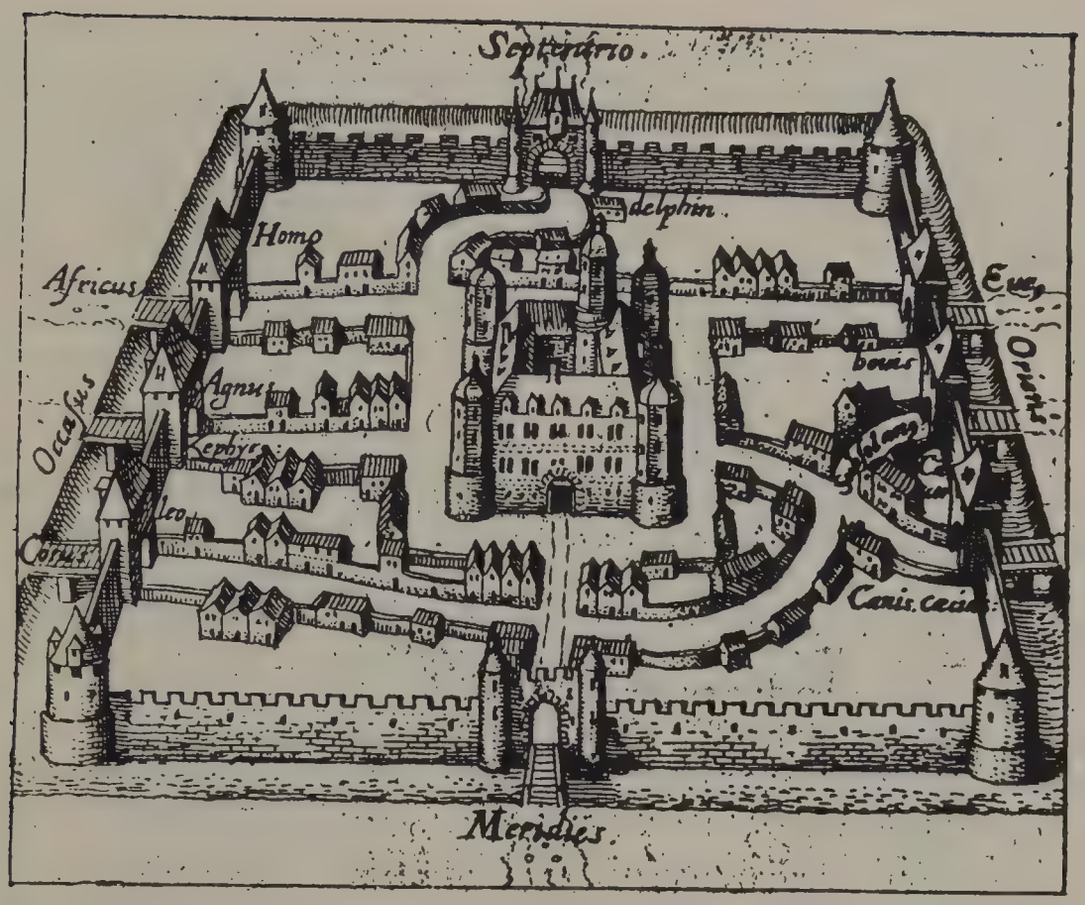
The Christian mandala, placing Christ or his symbol the cross in the heart of the spiritual mystery, reveals that the Christ consciousness is moving through all nature and forms of existence, establishing in each the pledge of its own redemption. This remains, however, merely an intellectual concept, unless a science of regeneration actually exists. All over the world, under various names, it has been taught that an exact science of salvation does exist which can be adapted to the needs of Western man. Alchemy or spiritual chemistry flourished for centuries in Europe, was unfolded by Christian mystics, philosophers, and theologians, and sought objectives comprehensible to those living in a strongly materialistic environment.

As an example of a possible association between the alchemists and Asiatic esoterics, consider the engraving which appears in *The Hermetical Triumph,* or *The Victorious Philosophical Stone,* published anonymously, first in German and then in English, in London by Thomas Harris. The picture is a perfect representation of the system of chakras found in the teachings of yoga and tantra. The Shushumna Nadi ascends from the subterranean flame below up to a crown representing the thousand-petaled lotus; the ida and pingala, in the form of two serpents ascending, constituting the positive and negative aspects of the spinal fire. A diagram of this kind can certainly be considered as a mandala.

In his *Viatorium* Michael Maier includes an engraving presumed to be the City of Thebes. Any resemblance, however, to this celebrated Boeotian metropolis must be considered accidental. We do have, however, the familiar form of architectural mandalas found in India, China, and Japan. We have the walled city with its inner palace, the corners of which are ornamented with towers, and in the courtyard of the palace rises a taller pagoda-like



Engraved title page of *The Hermetical Triumph*, London, n.d.



The City of Thebes from the 1618 edition of Michael Maier's *Viatorium.* In the later edition dated 1651 there are numerous changes in the engraving, which obscure parts of the original design. The engravings in the first edition were by Théodore de Bry, but in the later printing Joannis Berthelin is credited with the illustrations.

structure. Maier was definitely not interested in recording the appearance of the ancient community, for the entire study is devoted to the harmony of the plants and metals for the sake of those desiring to cross the deep and treacherous ocean of chemistry.

Early in the seventeenth century the alchemists seemed to have mingled their streams of symbolism with the elusive fraternity of the Rosie Cross. The objectives of the two were compatible, but the Rosicrucians emphasized social and political reforms. Another interesting link between East and West is the mysterious world mountain, which appears in both alchemical and Rosicrucian symbolism. In his work *Lumen de Lumine* Eugenius Philalethes includes an engraving which he calls "the invisible magical mountain." Of this he writes: "There is a mountain situated in the midst of the earth, or center of the world, which is both small and great. It is soft, also above measure hard and stony. It is far off, and near at hand, but by the providence of God, invisible."

This description is reminiscent of Meru, the axis mountain of the world, and shares with pyramids, dagobas, and domes in symbolizing the axis of consciousness. The illustration in *Lumen de Lumine* also has in the foreground the uroboros or dragon biting its own tail. This symbolism is supposed to have originated in Egypt but has also been known in many other areas. The dragon or serpent with its tail in its mouth has already been mentioned. The uroboros devouring its own tail, the pelican feeding its young with its own blood, and the bird of Hermes, which survives by devouring its own feathers, tell the same story. There is only one life which nourishes the creatures it has fashioned with its own vitality.

We should also mention that the alchemists formed a fraternity with the poets of the time and made use of the same printers and engravers. Those who dealt with heroic verse also had their magical mountain represented graphically as Parnassus with its three peaks. It was here that the muses held court, serving as attendants upon Apollo, sometimes shown playing exquisite melodies upon the viola da gamba. Here also, Pegasus, the winged horse of poesy, stamped upon the earth with his hoof, causing to flow forth the secret spring of Helicon. Considerable literature arose relating to La Pléiade, the constellation of seven poets, of which Ronsard was a member, and most of these had inherited some of the esoteric responsibilities of the troubadours. The poets, in turn, bestowed their attention upon a number of emblem books containing curious engravings, presumably suitable for pious contemplation. Usually the poems had slight bearing upon the pictures and showed considerable contrivance.

Seventeenth century symbols may be considered cryptographic pictures to be interpreted according to the insight of the viewer. Such designs are not mandalas in the Eastern meaning of the word, but perhaps they should be considered as Western equivalents suitable to inspire reflection upon sacred mysteries. Broadly speaking, European emblemata are moral or ethical, but they are more than merely illustrated parables. They imply a science of human regeneration and are fragments of several different philosophical beliefs. Both the writings and the engravings which illustrate them assume a science of salvation supposed to have existed for countless ages and to have originated in the heart and mind of God.

The majority of the seventeenth century European symbols and diagrams are directly associated with mystical chemistry and the transmutation of the gross elements of substances and policies. Therefore, the term *transformation* is used interchangeably with *regeneration* when referring to the reformation of human conduct.

The Rosicrucians were among the most elusive of all the mystic fraternities of Europe. Their traditional symbol was a rose, similar to the device

The invisible magical mountain from the London, 1651 edition of *Lumen de Lumine* by Eugenius Philalethes (Thomas Vaughan).

which occurs frequently on the title pages of tracts written by Martin Luther. When used in Rosicrucian literature, the rose is either placed in the heart of a cross, or four roses are placed between the arms of a cross, as in the coat of arms of Johann Valentin Andreae, the German theologian who is closely associated with the Rosicrucian controversy. Although the early manifestos of the Society are unillustrated, later apologists occasionally used pictures of conventionalized roses to embellish their texts. Robert Fludd uses an elaborate engraving of a rose at the beginning of his tract, *Summum Bonum,* Frankfort, 1629, which is a defense of the claims of the Rosicrucian fraternity.

To find an Eastern type of mandala in a Western book is difficult, but fortunately one was included in the *Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer,* which was published anonymously in two parts issued separately; the first in 1785 and the second in 1788. The volume, which appears in large folio, was derived from many earlier sources and included thirty-eight plates which are hand-colored in most copies. On page ten is a design entitled "Harmonious Conception of the Light of Nature, From Which You Can Deduce the Restoration and Renovation of All Things Emblematic." In this design the center is a double rose, in the midst of which stands a figure of Christ; and behind Him is a radiating St. Andrew's cross. What is perhaps most unusual is that the rose has eight petals—the same as the lotus in the Matrix Mandala of Esoteric Buddhism. Eight petaled flowers are unusual in Western symbolism, and between each petal of the outer circle a double leaf is shown. In the Oriental correspondence the head of a thunderbolt takes the place of the leaf. In the Western example the extended arms of the cross reach the boundaries of a square, so that the complete picture is a squared circle. Each of the large triangles formed by the arms of the cross is colored to represent one of the four elements (earth, water, fire, and air), and the circle itself is surrounded by flames. The quadrature of a square field corresponds exactly with Tibetan compositions, which are also colored to signify the four elements and the directions of space.

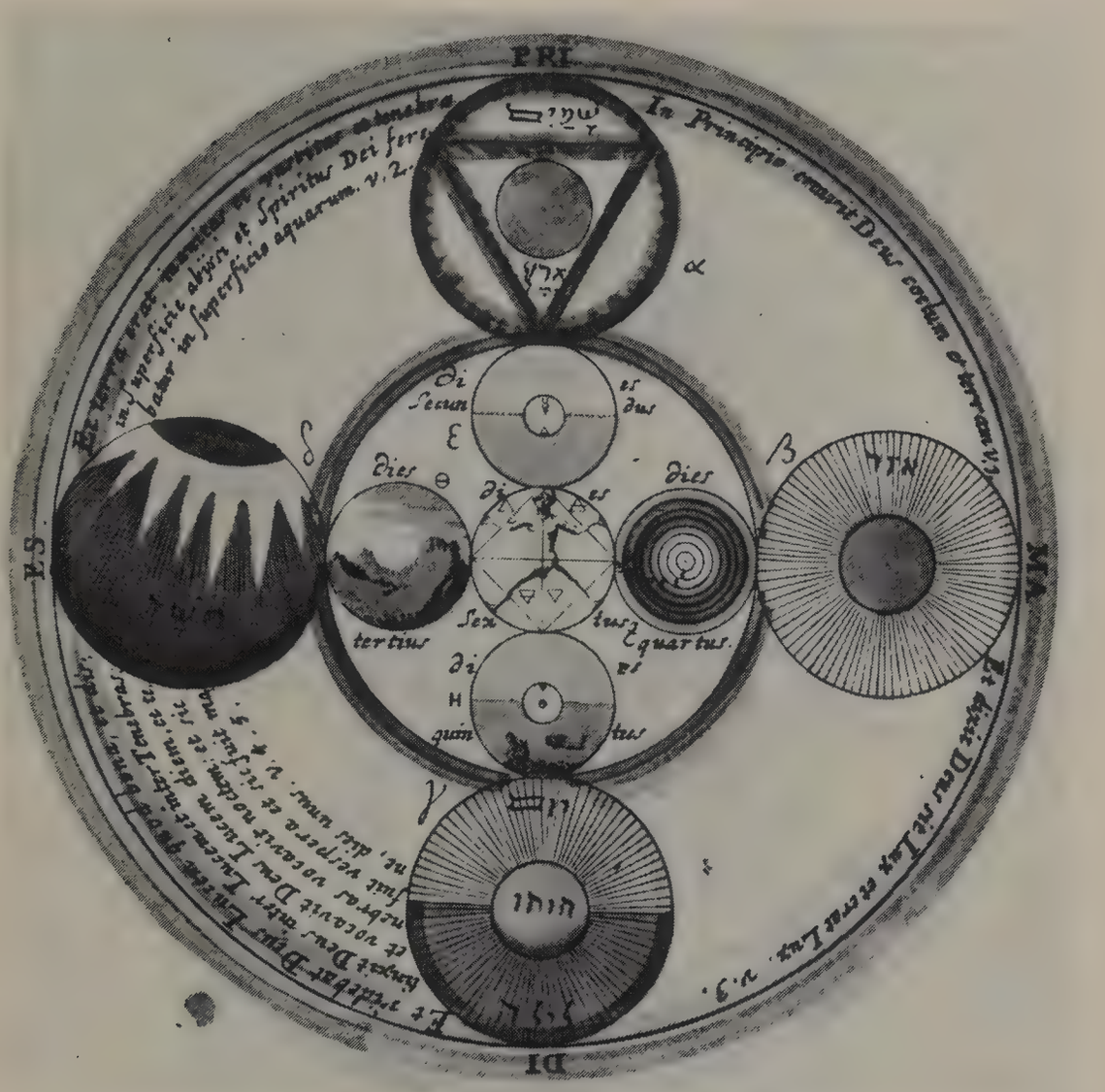
In connection with the alchemical approach to esoteric art, the *Mutus Liber,* which first appeared in 1677, was reprinted by Jean Jacques Manget in his *Bibliotheca Chemico-Curiosa* in 1702. The author of the *Mutus Liber* conceals his name under the pseudonym of *Altus.* The book, as its name implies, is without text and consists of fifteen engraved plates depicting an alchemist and his wife engaged in such chemical pursuits as sublimation, distillation, and the sealing of flasks and retorts. The third plate in this collection has a distinctly mandala-like appearance. A sphere made up of three concentric globes floats in space with clouds below and Jupiter seated upon an eagle at the top. The design is flanked by the sun and moon, and figures enclosed in the circle include Greek deities, animals and birds. The

"The Harmonious Conception of the Light of Nature." From page 10 of *Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer,* Altona, 1785-88.

resemblance to a Tibetan mandala is again remarkable. In the Oriental examples the central design is bordered by clouds, the sun and moon are shown in the sky, and one or more deities are placed at the top or bottom of the picture, which internally reveals the construction of the three worlds.

Georg von Welling authored a remarkable alchemical work entitled *Opus Mago-Cabalisticum et Theologicum.* The first volume appeared in folio in 1719 with several plates. Goethe took a lively interest in this publication, which dealt with numerous obscure matters; but to the average reader it was considered unintelligible. The design from this book illustrated here approaches a mandala in appearance.

Plate III of the *Mutus Liber.* From Jean Jacques Manget's *Bibliotheca Chemico-Curiosa,* Geneva, 1702. Although the greater part of the book is devoted to alchemical processes, it is obvious that in this case an esoteric design suitable for meditation serves as a key to the mysteries of spiritual alchemy.



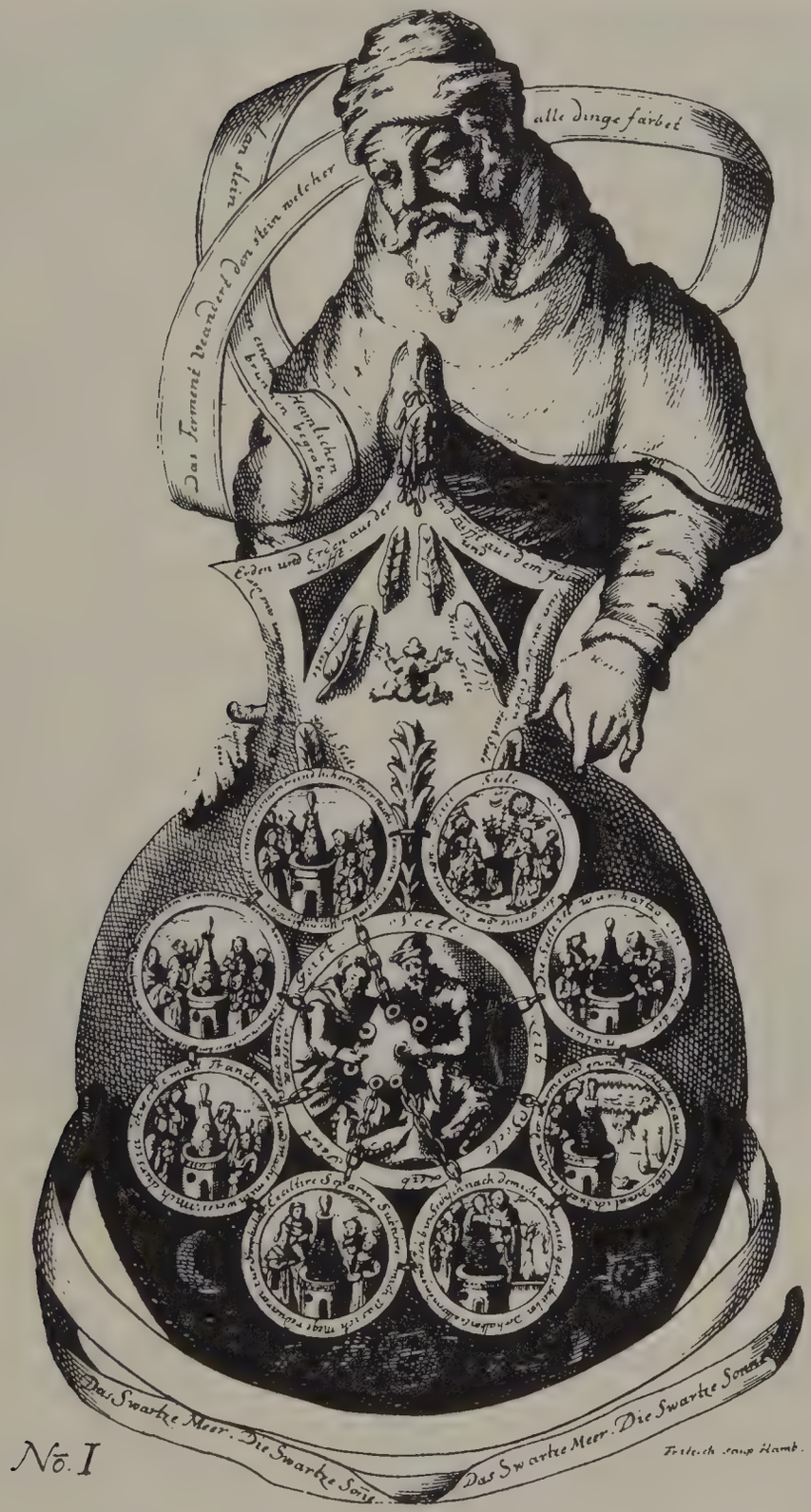
The days of creation according to *Opus Mago-Cabalisticum et Theologicum* by Georg von Welling (Gregorius Anglus Sallwigt), Frankfurt, 1719.

According to the lettering on this diagram, the large enclosing circle represents the first day of creation. In this zone are Biblical quotations. That at the lower left says, "And God saw the light and it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness; and God called the light Day and the darkness Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." At upper left are the words, "And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the water." At the upper right it says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and at lower right is the last Biblical quotation, "And God said let there be light; and there was light."

The next concentric circle contains five smaller circles and is inscribed "the second day." The third day is a small circle at the left containing the symbols of dry land. On the right is the fourth day with the orbits of the planets. Below is the fifth day showing the birth of living creatures, and in the center is the sixth day with the creation of man accompanied by small symbols of the four elements. It is most significant that a work on chemistry should include this type of symbolism.

Sir George Ripley, Canon Regular of Bridlington, is generally recognized as an early adept of the alchemistical arts. The date of his birth is apparently unknown, but he was working in the second half of the fifteenth century and died c. 1490. Elias Ashmole, in his *Theatrum Chemicum,* London, 1652, provides some information on Ripley's career. He tells us that Sir George studied philosophical chemistry in Italy, that he traveled extensively, and resided for some time on the Island of Rhodes with the Knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. In his older years he returned to England, became a Carmelite, and lived as a hermit at St. Botolph's in Lincolnshire. Many of Ripley's writings were circulated in manuscript before they were available in printed form and several of them were published in Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum.*

The most famous of Ripley's productions was the *Rotulum Hieroglyphicum Cantarvas Philosophorum.* This is generally referred to as "Ripley's scrowle." It was originally compiled for the benefit of advanced disciples seeking special instruction in the Hermetic arts. We have in our library a fine example of the Ripley scroll approximately twenty feet in length and eighteen inches in width. It is hand-painted in full color on paper which has been mounted on canvas and was probably executed in England in the late seventeenth century. Early copies are known to exist on vellum, usually in black line drawings with touches of color. Through the co-operation of the British Museum, we secured photostatic copies of the Ripley scroll from that institution's collection. All these examples have distinct differences, but a certain conformity is present. One copy has no commentary text. Two early examples have a text in English. A printed example of the scroll is found in *Universal und Particularia* by David Beuthers, Hamburg, 1718. He presents the scroll in five engraved sections, indicating the proper sequence of the symbols and the major symbolic designs which they set forth. In this case it is intended for contemplation as a key to esoteric chemistry. It serves exactly the same purpose as the sacred scrolls of Sonoyosho, which provide a comprehensive outline of Esoteric Buddhism. Here the seven seals of Revelation appear as the alchemical formula for the transmutation of human imperfection. It is interesting that an eighth seal is included but is not attached by a chain to the central circle. The symbolism of the marriage of the sun and



The first section of Ripley's scroll as published in *Universal und Particularia* by David Beuthers, Hamburg, 1718.

the moon is of an inner enlightenment depending entirely upon the mystical experience of the Divine Presence.

Another eccentric personality in European mysticism was Heinrich Khunrath, previously mentioned as an illuminate, whose principal work, *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae . . . ,* is said to have appeared in a number of editions, but the only one known was issued in 1609. Khunrath graduated in medicine at Basel in 1588 and belonged to the Paracelsian school of thought. He was not highly regarded by his contemporaries but has gained considerable distinction in more recent times. The book mentioned above includes ten engraved symbolic plates, of which one may be considered a Christian mandala because it combines elements of the cabala, Biblical quotations, and Christian emblems. In the midst of a radiant circle surrounded by flame Christ appears crucified in space. This traces back to the earlier mystical concept that the cross symbolizes the material world, within which the Christ power is imprisoned in the Holy Sepulcher of matter. At the resurrection (regeneration), Christ comes forth in glory to establish His kingdom in the realms of the eternal soul. This whole design corresponds with the Sambhodgakaya of Northern Buddhism, in which the eternal is revealed in glory through the mystery of universal compassion.

Dr. Ebenezer Sibly was evidently familiar with the teachings of Heinrich Khunrath, for he took the unusual liberty of transforming a plate in the *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae . . . ,* described above, into a symbolical representation of the fall of Lucifer. The engraving reminds us how the rebellion of the fallen angel opened the gates of the wrath and brought self-will into conflict with Divine Will. Sibly in *A Key to Physic and the Occult Sciences* explains the engraving as "A plate of the interior heaven, with the different orders of the Spirits and Essences of the Divine Mind, distinguished by their proper names and characters . . . it will also appear from this plate, in what manner the rays or beams of Divine Providence pass from the center or seat of the Godhead, to all the different orders of angels and spirits, to the *Anima Mundi,* and from thence to all the celestial bodies, planets, and stars; to our earth, and to the remotest parts of infinite space."

It seems almost incredible that the alchemical period in the history of chemistry should have received so little attention from historians of the sciences. Fortunately, however, writers in recent years have become more thoughtful. We can mention *Alchemy and the Alchemists* by General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, *An Inquiry into the Hermetic Mystery* by Mary A. Atwood, and *Psychology and Alchemy* by C. G. Jung.

It has become increasingly evident that the alchemical adepts of the six-

Christ crucified in space from the *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae* . . . by Heinrich Khunrath, Hanover, 1609.

teenth and seventeenth centuries were deeply involved in the political policies of their times. The simple fact that they were dedicated to the establishment of an ideal social commonwealth would fully justify the concealing of their major objectives in an extravagant artistry and curiously stated aphorisms. Many of the illustrations in the writings of such Hermetic mystics as Robert Fludd and Michael Maier are certainly ethical mandalas. Some of the symbols used in Western esotericism are the very same as those favored by Oriental teachers. For example, the dragon, the serpent, the phoenix, and geometrical designs have the same meanings throughout the world, past and present. It was intimated that, when dedicated disciples gained possession

of such secret keys as those of Basil Valentine, it would be possible to compound a universal medicine for the healing of the miseries of mankind. Base materials could be transmuted into gold for the enrichment of the wise, and through manufacture synthetic gems could be made equalizing or surpassing those taken from the earth. It is understandable why such notions captivated the public mind and led to the proliferation of alchemical literature. If and when transmutation becomes commonly known, one of the great prophecies of the sibyls will be fulfilled, for in that day "Gold and silver will lose their guile." Wealth will become meaningless and poverty will vanish forever.

The alchemistical writers have concealed under their curious symbolism the key to a total science of reformation and regeneration. The strange and wonderful symbols and diagrams found in the writings of these mystical chemists constitute an alphabet used to spell out the total science of transmutation. In nature life, though forever the same, is continuously changing its appearances. For these early savants the human body became an appropriate subject for contemplation as a mandala. The cabalists, following the hermetic axiom, stated a fact that had been long ignored. The above which is the universe and the below which is the human being differ in magnitude but not in principle.

The body can be conceived of as a mandala, and in several different ways great ingenuity was employed by creation in the fashioning of the male and female organisms. After centuries of weary dissections and testings, the exhausted researchers turned from the little miracle for which they could find no solution to the contemplation of the universe with no better results. We live all our days on the surface of a mystery. Wherever the unknowable disturbs our minds, we are in the presence of a mandala. The fact remains that, in spite of the courage with which we challenge the unknown, the undevout anatomist suffers from the same madness which troubles an undevout astronomer. The search for the answer to the questions that have been asked from the dawn of time is a quiet, relaxed, and soulful contemplation of existence. It is not possible to lock ourselves in mortal combat with the unknown. We cannot demand the keys of life which we have not earned the right to possess.

Georg von Welling, the great alchemist (from whose book we reproduce a diagram on page 201) was engaged one day in argument with a skeptic who had a tendency to be an atheist. This unbeliever poured some oil upon the surface of a pail of water. He then took his finger and agitated the oil with a circular motion, explaining "You can see how a solar system comes into existence. It is obvious that no God is necessary. You can see that creation is a simple physical fact." Von Welling smiled and remarked, "You are

Systems of the interior, or Empyrean Heaven, from Ebenezer Sibly's *A Key to Physic and the Occult Sciences,* London, 1794.

quite right; but, tell me, who stirs the oil?" Even a story like that has a depth that can only be appreciated by a thoughtful person. The mind cannot answer the eternal question, but it is useful when it reveals the necessity for that which is beyond itself.

Jacob Boehme, the Teutonic Theosopher. From a seventeenth century engraving by J. B. Brühl of Leipzig.

Chapter XII

THE MYSTICAL SYMBOLS OF JACOB BOEHME

The origin of meditation symbols has always been difficult to trace. Many originated in antiquity, and others were associated more recently with esoteric traditions which were veiled in elaborate legendry. European mystics, such as St. Francis of Assisi and Abbess Hildegard of Bingen, are venerated throughout the world for their piety and spiritual insight. Hildegard left a number of mysterious pictures in which she attempted to set forth the wonders she experienced in meditation and reverie, and these have been studied at considerable length by Lynn Thorndike in his work *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* and in *From Magic to Science* by Charles Singer.

The greatest of the Protestant Christian mystics was Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) (also spelled Böhme and Behmen), who was born at Altseidenberg, near Goerlitz, in Saxony. He came of peasant stock, and very little biographical information is available concerning him. As a boy, he went to an ordinary school, where he learned to read and write and was then apprenticed to a shoemaker. There is no indication that he ever had more than a rudimentary education suitable to the needs of his time and the village in which he lived. He was a member of the Lutheran communion; and the church which he attended regularly was presided over by an ignorant and bigoted pastor named Gregory Richter, who considered it his moral duty to prevent Boehme from spreading his heretical notions among the good folks of Altseidenberg. With a meekness that was part of his nature, Boehme sat quietly in his pew while Pastor Richter railed against him in Low German.

One day, while Jacob was still a lad serving his apprenticeship, a stranger entered his master's shop and bought a pair of boots. Who this person was is not known, but before he left he addressed the boy as follows: "Jacob, thou art yet but little, but the time will come when thou shalt be great and become another man, and the world shall marvel at thee." It is believed that this stranger may have been a member of one of the alchemystical orders that were flourishing in Europe at that time.

Boehme passed through three metaphysical experiences or illuminations. The first lasted for seven days and prepared the groundwork for his future labors. When he was nineteen years old, Jacob married the daughter of a

local tradesman; and four sons blessed the union. He was in all respects a sincere and kindly family man, conscientious in his dealing, and without vanity or self-pride.

In his twenty-fifth year Boehme received a further enlightenment, which is described by W.P. Swainson in the following words: "One day, while walking in the fields, he fell into a deep and inward ecstacy, so that he could look into the inmost principles and deepest foundations of things, gazing as it were, into their very hearts. The mystery of creation was opened to him suddenly, and he learned the ground of all things. He writes: 'In one quarter of an hour I saw and knew more than if I had been many years together at a university, at which I did exceedingly admire, and I knew not how it happened to me; and thereupon I turned my heart to praise God for it. For I saw and knew the Being of all beings, the Byss and Abyss, also the birth or eternal generation of the Holy Trinity; the descent and original of this world, and of all creatures, through the divine wisdom. I knew and saw in myself all the three worlds, namely the divine, angelical, and paradisiacal world; and then the dark world, being the original of nature to fire; and then, thirdly, the external and visible world, being a procreation, or external birth; or as a substance expressed or spoken forth from both the internal and spiritual world; and I saw and knew the whole being in the evil and in the good, and the mutual original and existence of each of them.' " (See: W.P. Swainson, *Jacob Boehme, The Teutonic Philosopher,* London, 1921.)

Ten years later Boehme passed through another internal experience in which all the previous revelations were brought together into a complete system of religious knowledge. Fearing that what he had learned would be lost in case of his death, he began writing in 1612 and in the remaining twelve years of his life produced about thirty books. The first he called *The Aurora,* which he permitted a few of his closest friends to read and copy in manuscript for their own use. One of these copies fell into the hands of Parson Richter, who declared it to be the work of the devil and never ceased his bitter attacks until his own death. Incidently, Boehme outlived him by only a year.

It is useless to expand on the difficulties through which Boehme passed. They certainly saddened his life, but he accepted them as God's way of tempering the human spirit. As we are concerned principally with the quality of Boehme's illumination, we must turn to his own writings for basic insight. Here we come upon the first obstacle. His vocabulary was extremely limited, and the well-intentioned assistance of his better educated admirers often added to the confusion. They introduced him to terms found in alchemical, cabalistic, and astrological books; and these he made use of, but not always according to their original meaning.

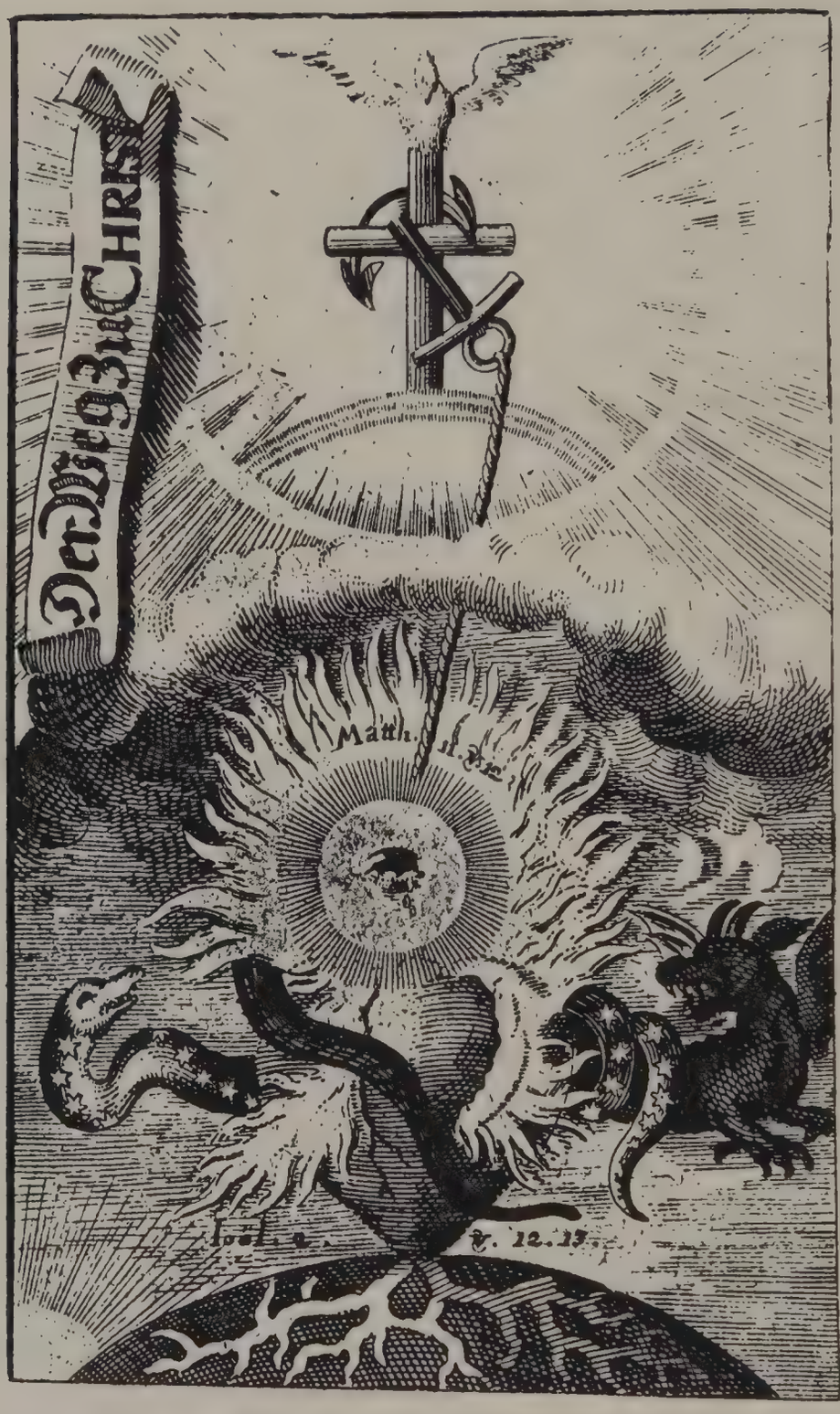
German philosophy has always been distinguished by its redundancy, and

Boehme's ideas are sometimes drowned in a sea of words. Dr. Alexander Whyte (1837-1921), whose admiration for Boehme was unbounded, states the situation clearly without any intention of disparaging Boehme's revelation: "The *Aurora* was written in a language, if writing in a language it can be called, that had never been seen written or heard spoken before, or has since on the face of the earth." (See *Jacob Behmen, An Appreciation)* Whyte recommends, therefore, that as one learns a foreign language before visiting a strange country, the student of Boehme's writing must master Behmenite grammar and Behmenite vocabulary. Some have done so and have agreed that the reward more than compensated for the labor.

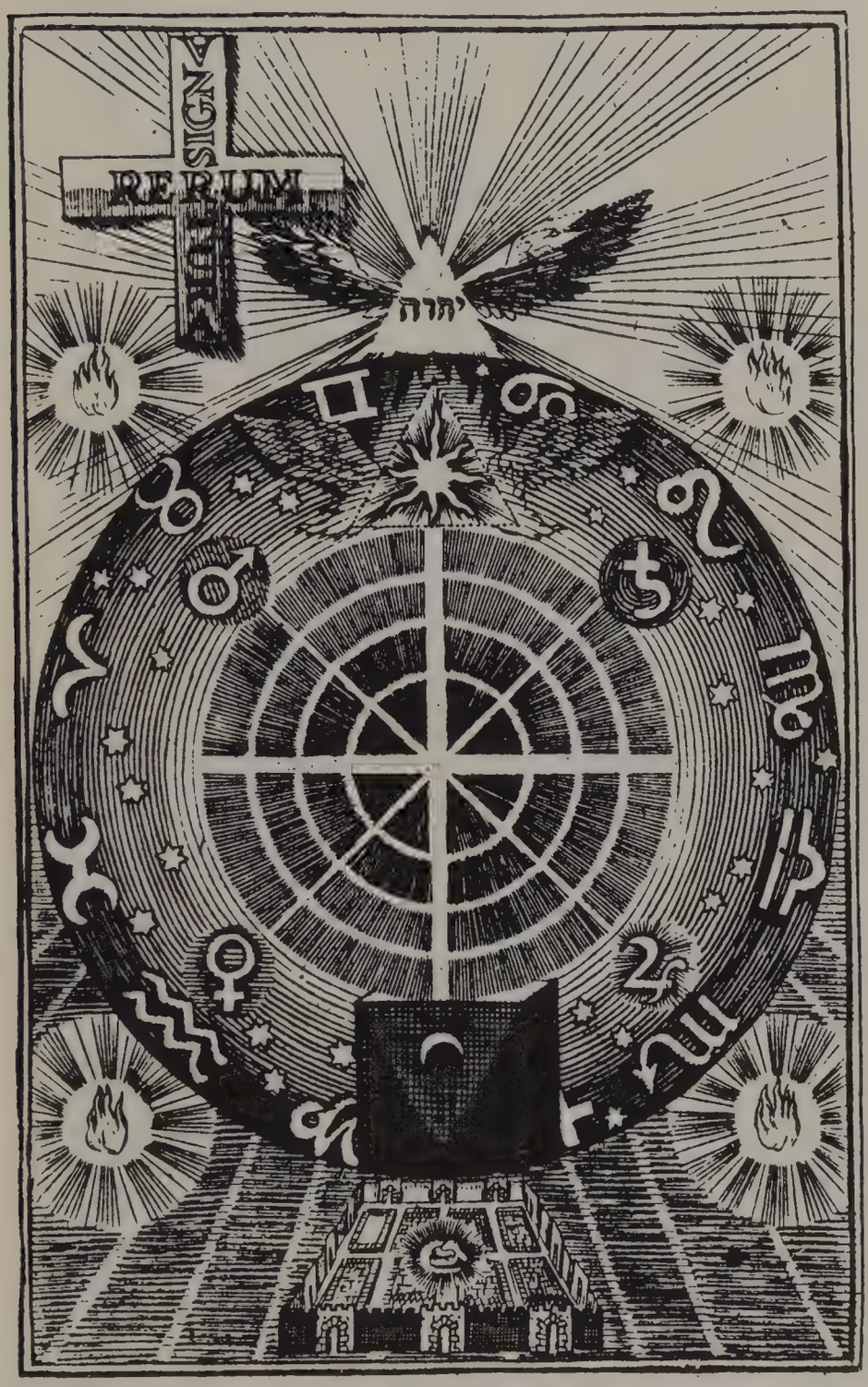
In 1623 Abraham von Frankenberg published several of Boehme's shorter works under the title *The Way to Christ.* This was the only book by this German mystic to be issued during his lifetime. When Parson Richter found out about this, his profanity from the pulpit was so loud that it reached the ear of the Prince Elector of Saxony, who lived a considerable distance away.

Among those strongly influenced by Boehme was Johann Georg Gichtel, who designed engraved plates to accompany Boehme's writings. These pictures were not used until a number of years after the shoemaker's death, but many of them are mandala-like and include elements sometimes found in Buddhist religious art. They definitely fulfill the requirements specific to many mandala pictures. They summarize the text of the writing and contribute to the understanding of the reader by the pious subjects which they represent. We reproduce here three of Gichtel's title pages, all of which have esoteric implications.

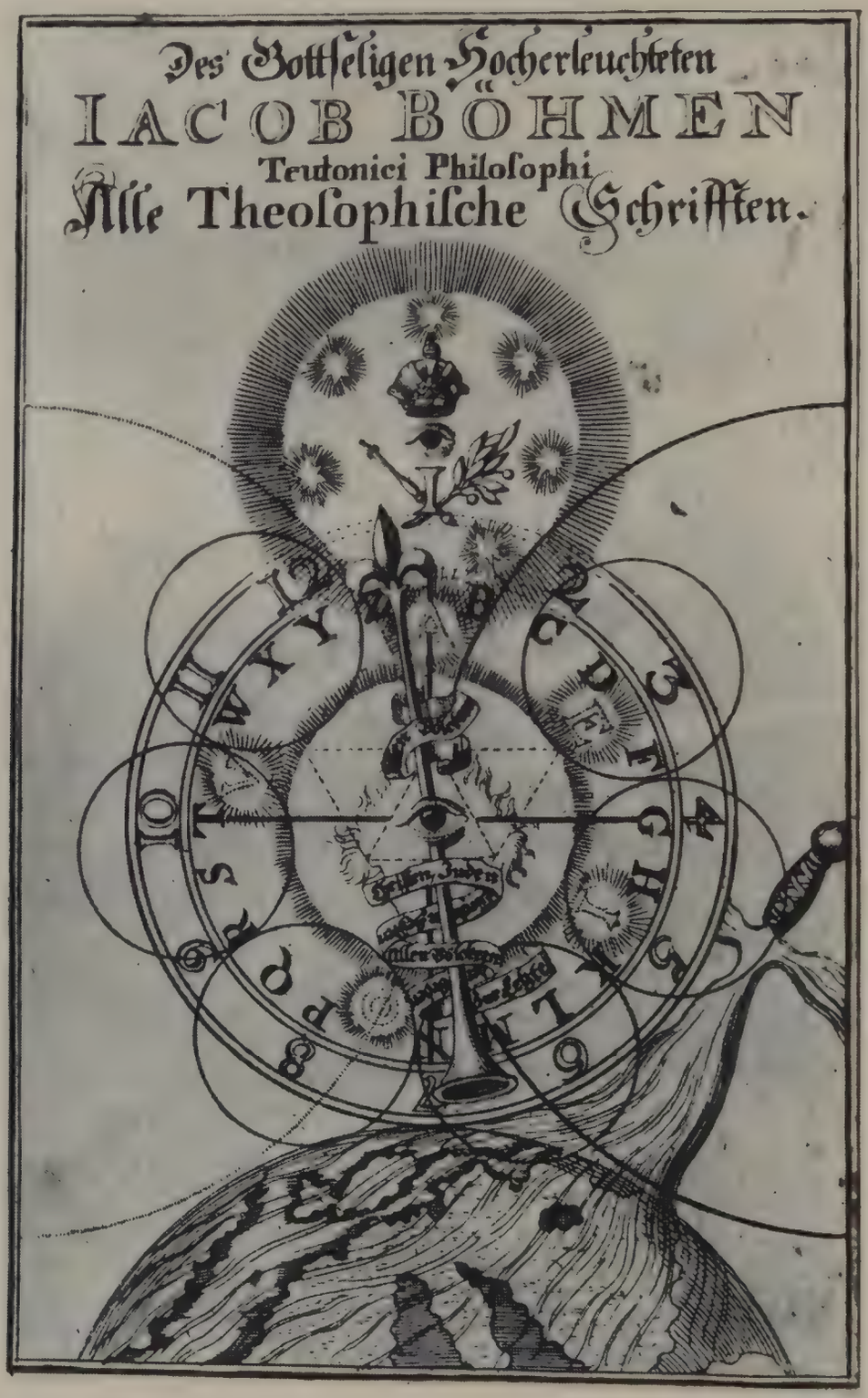
The frontispiece of the *Theosophia Revelata* was designed by Johann Georg Gichtel as a pictorial key to Boehme's mysticism. The picture is a kind of spiritual compass, the finger of which always points toward God. The alphabet encircling the all-seeing eye indicates the revealed language of nature, by which the names of all things can be formed. It should be noted that the vowels are separated from the consonants, while each vowel is surrounded by a radiant energy; and together they constitute the Divine fiat. The twelve numbers stand for the signs of the zodiac; and the numeral "one" is crowned because it stands for unity, which is the number of God. The seven small circles surrounding and interpenetrating the region of both the divine and human soul reveal the nature of the planets and the constitution of the human soul. This realm is projected from one of the seven stars or spirits surrounding the throne of God. It will be noted that one of the stars has fallen into generation. The needle of the compass is in the form of a scepter, and the lower end is the seventh trumpet of The Book of Revelation. Outside the main circle is a flaming sword, which stands for the cherubim guarding the Gate of Paradise.



In this Amsterdam, 1732 symbolical engraving from *Der Weg zu Christo,* designed by Gichtel, the soul is represented in great pain. The heart (or emotions) is assailed by material passions and desires but is still bound by a spiritual umbilicus to the upper worlds of light. Despite its infirmities, the soul is anchored in the cross, which, in turn, is under the wings of the Holy Spirit.



The title figure of a 1730 edition of Boehme's *Signatura Rerum.* This plate symbolizes the heavenly seal which the Father-Mother God impressed upon the substances of creation. The sun is shown in a radiant triangle in the upper part of the sphere, and the moon is shown as a dark cube. Above the circle, at the top, is a winged triangle containing the name of God in Hebrew characters.



Frontispiece of a 1730 edition of the *Theosophia Revelata*. Here the mandala concept is obvious. In the central part of the design is the eye of God within a triangle of fire, which, in turn, is contained in a triangle of water. This is also the inner eye of man through which he sees Deity and through which Divinity reveals the secrets of the Heavenly Will through all times and peoples.

Symbolical engraving to interpret the one hundred and seventy-seven theosophical questions by Jacob Boehme in a 1730 edition of the *Quaestiones Theosophicae.* The upper part of the design originally contained three hierarchies of celestial beings, Michael (M), Uriel (V), and Lucifer (A). The "A" falls and comes to stand for Adam. The fiery tongues, rising from the sphere of mortality, represent the miracle of the Pentecost; and in the lower region the sheep shall be divided from the goats.

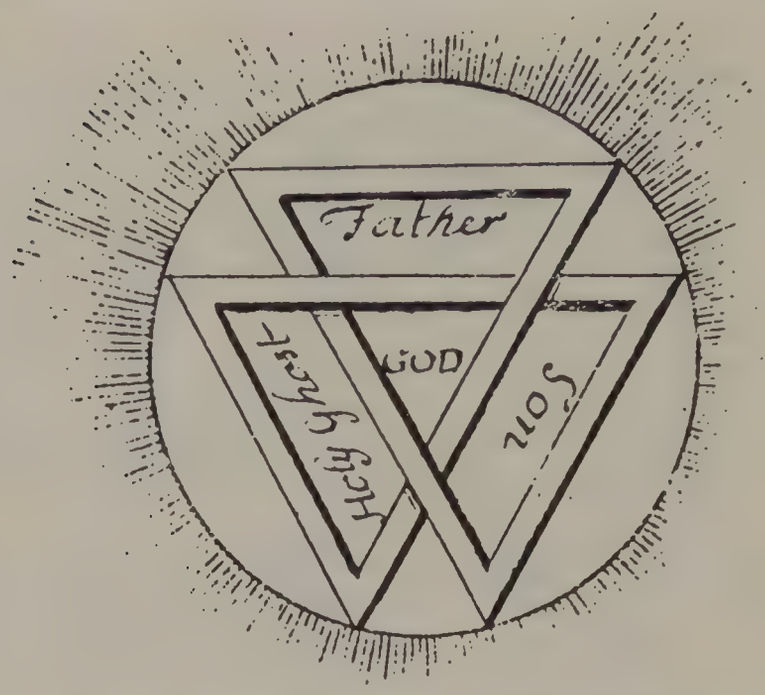
Between 1764 and 1781 the Reverend William Law, an English mystic with a profound admiration for Boehme's writings, published an English translation in four volumes under the title *The Works of Jacob Behmen.* This edition includes a number of symbolic plates, the most important one of which is shown here. Among the engraved diagrams are three manikins with movable parts which, when lifted up, reveal a spiral line moving inward through nature and man, finally reaching the name of God in the heart of creation. The origin of these engravings has been attributed to Peter Paul Rubens, who is known to have been interested in Boehme's philosophy. The French illuminist Louis Claude de Saint-Martin (1743-1803) was introduced to the writings of Jacob Boehme about 1788 and later came under the influence of another famous mystic, Baron Emanuel Swedenborg.

We reproduce here diagrams and symbols from a scrapbook, formerly in the library of Alexander Whyte and with his personal card as a bookplate. Some of these hand-drawn symbols are derived from the figures in the William Law volumes. Other symbols are gathered from numerous early sources, while a few of the designs may be unpublished. Thus, we have available in our Library three sources of meditation symbols based upon the writings of Jacob Boehme: Gichtel, Law, and Whyte. The PRS Library includes early editions of Boehme with a few stray diagrams, which are less complete than the examples illustrated here. One of the Whyte drawings has the title *A Mathematical Demonstration of One in Three and Three in One, Unity in Trinity and Trinity in Unity.* The marked resemblance in this diagram to a Hindu tantric mandala is apparent. While it is not certain that it was intended for meditation purposes, there is no doubt that the three triangles could be brought together by an exercise of the mind, by which they would apparently merge as in the tantric procedure.

As in the cases of Oriental meditation pictures, Boehme's mandalas, if we may call them such, are based upon his written descriptions. His words are sufficiently graphic to inspire an engraver to compose illustrations with considerable dramatic impact. Through both his symbolism and the artistry which it inspired, the German shoemaker strongly influenced the religion and philosophy of the modern world. Among those who drank at his well can be included such names as Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Bergson, and Heidegger. One writer has noted that even Sir Isaac Newton is reported to have hitched his plow to Boehme's heifer without giving due credit. Schopenhauer is especially interesting because he clearly stated that he was inspired by Boehme's writings, and, at the time, he acknowledged the influence of Buddhism on his personal convictions.

Boehme was a devout student of the Bible, and his most extensive work, *Mysterium Magnum,* which in printed form extends over five hundred pages

Two diagrams from the manuscript scrapbook of Boehme material of Alexander Whyte in the possession of the PRS. Both of these figures show Boehme's indebtedness to astrological speculation. The compound design signified the seven days of creation. The lower figure is also astrological. The planets are again numbered, but the four is placed in the center to symbolize the manifesting of the light and dark halves of the created world. This justifies the wording "beginning and end" and "end and beginning."



Unity in Trinity and Trinity in Unity from a drawing in Alexander Whyte's collection of Boehme's symbols.

in duodecimo, is perhaps his greatest accomplishment, being a mystical commentary upon the Book of Genesis. When Schopenhauer read this, he said, "I cannot withhold either admiration or emotion."

The two capital letters of the words "Mysterium Magnum," as they appear at the upper right of the design reproduced here, are the keys to the symbolism. The dark "M" suspended from the trumpet stands for Moses, who is represented below. The light "M" signifies the Messiah, who carries it on His banner. Between the two is a child with a key to the mystery in his belt. This child is the personification of Boehme's book *Mysterium Magnum* and reaches toward the figures of both Moses and the Messiah. Boehme also explains other great mysteries, including the polarities of fire and light, law and mercy, and image and reality. Although these appear to be different, they are all born of unity and are apparently divided because the world is constantly in a state of fear and unrest, unable to find contentment and peace anywhere in its own nature.

Most mystics have sought seclusion from the profane world and have had a tendency to lament over the delinquencies of society. Boehme was fully aware of the shortcomings of his fellow men but remained in the world even during the most creative periods of his spiritual exaltation. It is said that he actually experienced the mystery of the Divine World while working at his cobbler's bench. He cultivated no environmental peace, declaring that

The engraved title page of an Amsterdam, 1682 edition of the *Mysterium Magnum* of Jacob Boehme. He describes it as "an elucidation of the being of all beings, the nature of all natures, so that the lover of Truth may be guided to deeper insight and study."

the silence of God was available everywhere, at all times, and under any condition.

As we approach the substance of Boehme's mysticism, we realize that it was founded upon the immovable foundation of Christ's message and ministry. He believed that Christ meant what He said—that He would provide the keys to His Kingdom to those who kept His commandments. There was to be no evasion, no compromise for those who sought to perfect the divine mystery in themselves. Boehme seems to have been profoundly influenced by the *Sermon on the Mount,* and certainly the *Beatitudes* guided his life from the very beginning: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth . . . Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God . . ."

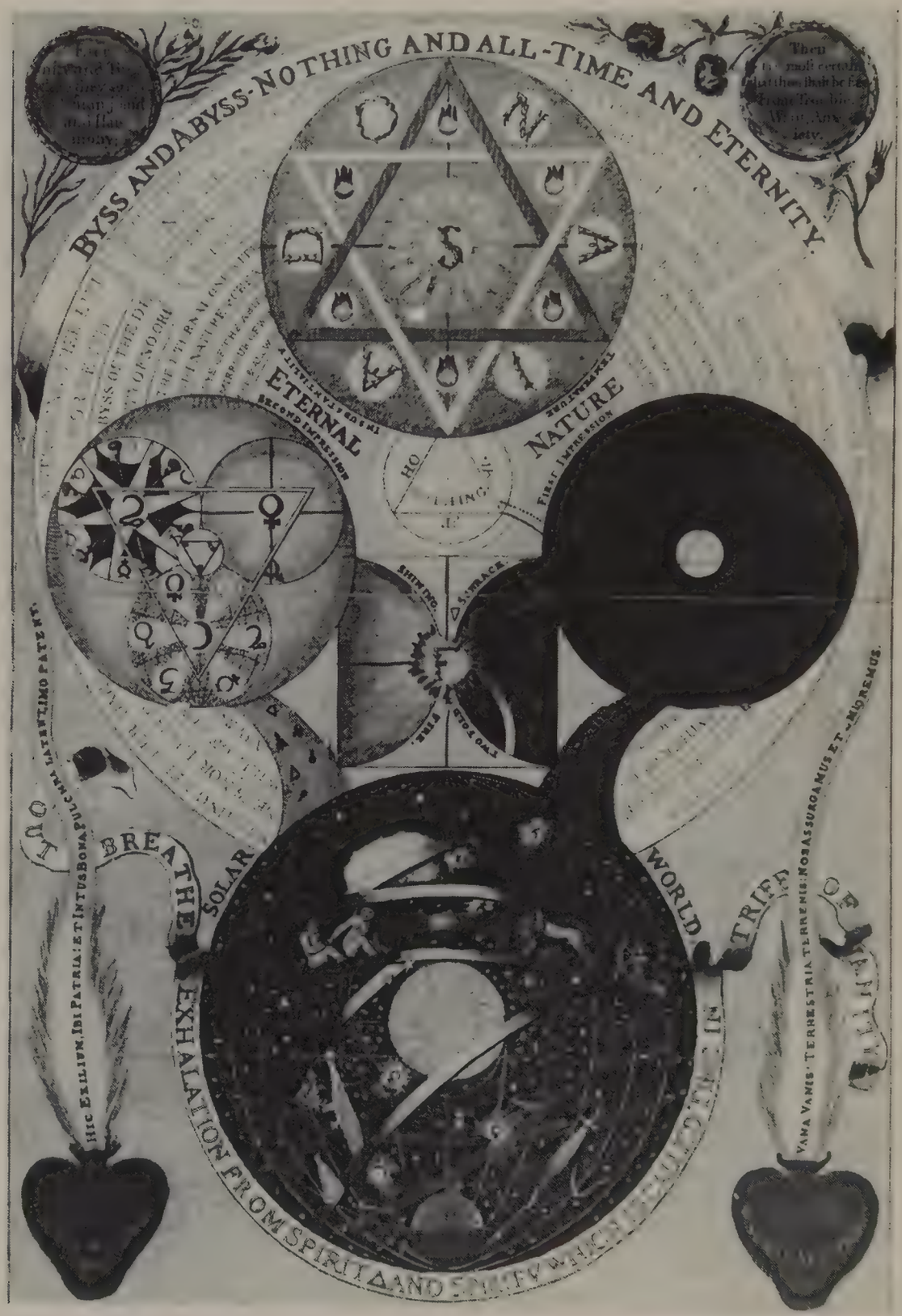
Christ holding the keys of the Kingdom. An engraving by William Blake from his illustrations of Blair's poem, *The Grave,* 1808.

These admonitions seem to find their fullest expression in humility. Boehme was a humble man, and the closer he came to the revelations which filled him with awe and wonder, the more humble he became. He was one of God's meek—a child playing in the garden of heaven, free of all sophistication, without pride, and with no rebellion in his heart. Of the Christianity of Boehme, Swainson says: "A merely historical faith, Boehme reiterates again and again, will never save any man. Wrapping ourselves round externally with the robe of Christ's righteousness is worse than useless, if inwardly we remain wild beasts."

For our present purpose, we must select from Boehme's writings a few simple principles which will help us to understand the Divine Plan as it unfolded within him, becoming the basis of his meditation symbols. Whereas many psychics and visionaries have dealt with the particulars of the invisible region and the state of souls in the "psychic summerland," Boehme devoted little attention to such matters but sought those eternal foundations upon which all existence depends and which must forever serve to guide the ways of creatures, including man.

According to Boehme's philosophy, in the beginning was Byss and Abyss. These are "Nothing and All; Time and Eternity." Abyss was never created and will never end. Its depths are deeper than even the eye of God can fathom; but it is not empty, for within it is the potential of all that exists, has ever existed, or ever will exist. Abyss reminds us of the Zen concept of the Void, which played so important a part in the thinking of the great Mahayana Adept, Nagarjuna. Even in the Abyss, Boehme finds an archetype of meekness. That in which there is no deficiency does not need to assert itself. The Absolute is neither a tyrant nor an autocrat but an infinite peace extending everywhere and always. From the Abyss have emerged cosmic systems, universes, constellations, planets, and elements with all their creatures and dependencies. There was never a time the Abyss was not fruitful and its infinite resources can never be exhausted. All things come from it, exist in it, and return to it; and neither its weight nor its substance can be increased or diminished. This was God to Boehme, but few Western thinkers have experienced within themselves this magnificent conviction of the Divine Nature.

Because nothing can exist except that which is contained potentially in the Abyss, it must be the source of all conditions, good or evil; and in this conclusion Boehme takes a controversial position. He is confronted with the need to explain how Divinity can cause an adversary to emerge from its own unity. His answer has the simplicity of the shoemaker, but it has confounded many scholars who have attempted to interpret his philosophy. In the depth of the Abyss the Divine Will rests in an uncreated condition.



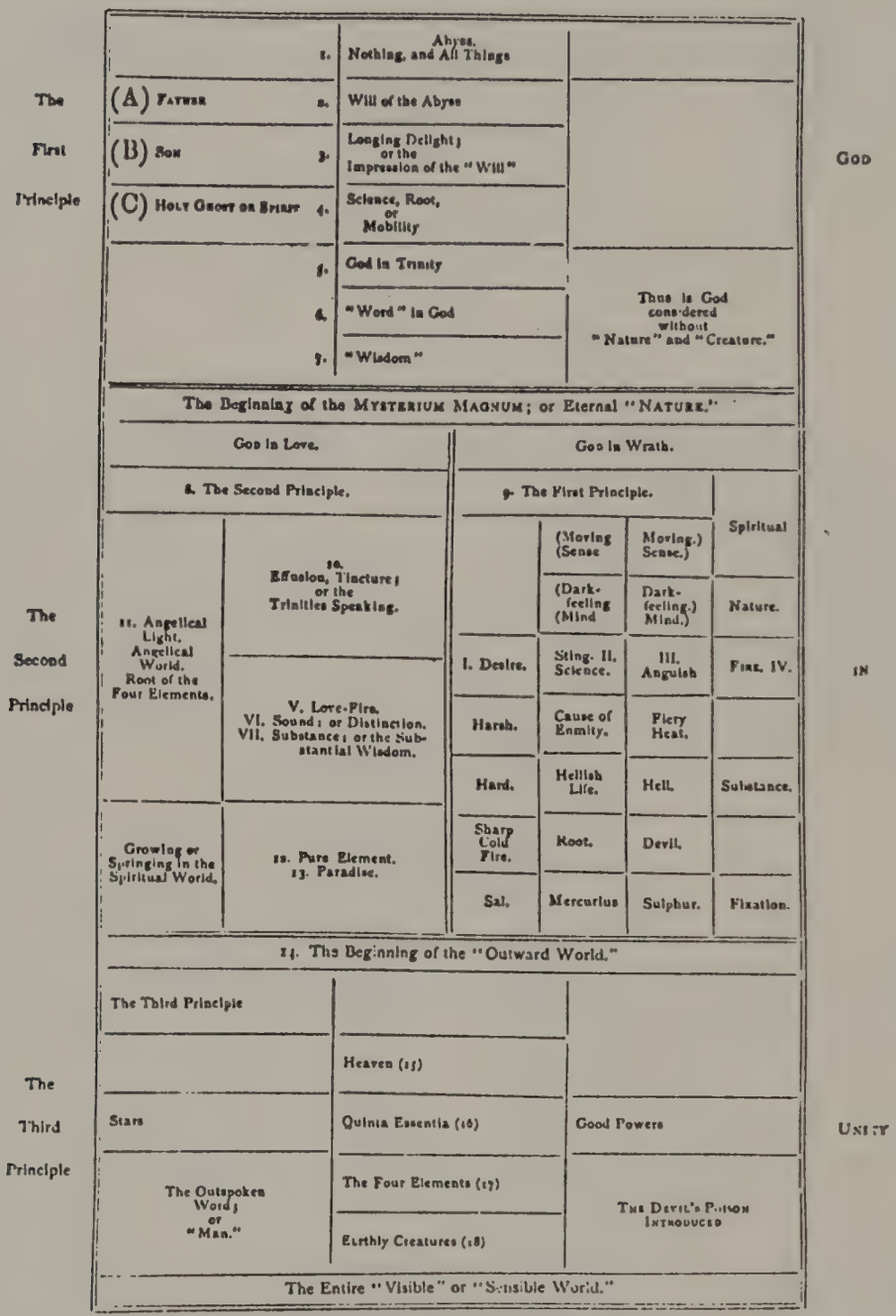
Byss and Abyss—Nothing and All—Time and Eternity. This magnificent design appears in the William Law edition of *The Mystical Writings of Jacob Boehme*, London, 1764, and sets forth in mandala form the deepest teachings of this illuminated German shoemaker.

Boehme calls this Will the "Byss." It seems likely that Schopenhauer would be interested in Boehme's concept of the Will, since it played so large a part in his own philosophy. In the process of bringing forth those qualities which lie in perfect equilibrium, therefore unmanifested, the Byss, or Will, must arise in the Abyss. From this Will, and by the means of this Will, a magic mirror is fashioned, in which the Eternal beholds its own face. This mirror is *creation,* which occurs within the Abyss, the dark spiritual earth from which grow the beings who are to become fruitful. We, therefore, find that on some of Boehme's diagrams the terms Byss and Abyss are united to signify the ultimate conceivable state.

In the Abyss, also, there is a natural darkness which is locked in God. It is inevitable that, when the Will of God is manifested forth, eternity must give birth to time, which, in turn, is the womb of conditions. In the Abyss the dark shadows of things are neither visible nor comprehensible, because they are overwhelmed by the eternal effulgency. Creation is still locked in the substance of the Infinite; but, in the process of manifesting forth the secret treasures of the Abyss, the Divine Will is moved to become productive and creates forms or beings by which the Abyss can experience the wonders locked within it. To Boehme, creation was the first and most perfect expression of God's love. All things in heaven and in nature are created by love alone. Nothing is fashioned for punishment, nor to wander about helplessly in a world of infirmities. The Will of the Abyss makes all things perfect, full of wonder and congruent with enduring peace.

As a parent must allow its children to grow up and assume their proper places in society, so the creatures fashioned by the Will of God must come in their own way to maturity; and this cannot be accomplished unless each becomes a free agent and has a will of its own. All of these wills exist in the Divine Will in which they share and from which they derive their energy and power. There can be no personal integrity unless each person has the power of determinism. He must choose right, finding it in his own way, enriching his own character, and by these acts glorifying the God who fashioned him. To free creation, therefore, there must be experience of the states of ignorance and knowledge, of desire and control, and of action and peace; but, even at this stage, there was no sin or death in the world. The Gates of Wrath were closed, and the Door of Bitterness had not been unlocked.

We dimly see here a subtle parallel to the Eastern doctrine of karma, which Boehme also implied in his word "turba," as a symbol of confusion. Unless a negative or destructive cause is set in motion, suffering cannot follow. Yet, the law of karma is in the Abyss and will come forth only when it becomes inevitable that consequences be set in motion by conduct.



The Theosophical System of Jacob Boehme from *Live Lights or Dead Lights (Altar or Table?)* by Hargrave Jennings, London, 1873. This chart is based upon a design which appears in the William Law edition of Boehme's writings.

In Boehme's philosophy Lucifer was the hierarch who was to preside over the pattern of creation to which we belong. He was supposed to abide in the Divine Will but received as his allotment the power of self-will. It was then that he revolted against the meekness of the Abyss. Being unable to realize the wrath that was locked therein, no evil existed; and therefore Lucifer resolved to take over the Divine Plan. His resolution was called pride, and by this pride the angels fell. The mere act of transgressing the Divine Purpose caused the Gates of the Wrath to be opened; and suddenly the silence, in which only the love of God made beautiful the deep, faded away and in its place there came forth the absolute power of the Almighty. Lucifer brought the Divine Law into manifestation by trying to break it, only to discover that meekness was the indestructible truth.

From this point on, Boehme's mystical theology deals with the conflict everywhere present between Divine Will and the self-will. It is quite conceivable that, by the full revelation of its panoply of power, the Divine Will could have crushed all things; but this is not possible when Will is an expression of Infinite Love, and both Will and Love are synonyms for justice. Boehme liked to think of himself as the Prodigal Son, realizing in his heart and soul that every living thing must ultimately fight its Armageddon in which Divine Will conquers self-will. The same concept is found in Persian dualism, where Ormuzd and Ahriman struggle for the control of the human soul. Finally, Ahriman is vanquished and kneels at the feet of Ormuzd, who immediately forgives him, restoring what Boehme calls the "temperature" of the Infinite.

In 1621 Boehme finished a remarkable work, the *Signatura Rerum,* in which he teaches that all things exist in two worlds, one of which is outward and visible and the other inward and invisible. The invisible has, therefore, stamped itself like a seal upon the surface of manifested creation. Because this is true, the behavior and appearance of created things is a key to their true invisible natures. The world around us is the symbol or signature of that realm which can only be seen through inner vision. In this, Boehme seems to have anticipated the art of physiognomy as later developed by Lavater.

The two worlds to which Boehme refers are also clearly revealed in the two great mandara of Shingon Esoteric Buddhism. There is an archetypal sphere which impresses its likeness (which Boehme calls its signature) upon all its productions. This led an alchemist to declare that God has given man three ways to know the workings of the Universal Law. One is Holy Writ, the second is the natural world in which we live, and the third is the internal structure of man himself. Boehme combines nature with human nature, affirming that these two states or conditions, visible and invisible, unite in

the human heart. The visible state is under the tyranny of self-will, which bears within it the distorted image of the Divine Will. The invisible realm is the abode of the Divine Will in its own beauty and benevolence. The struggle of these two Wills must finally be solved in the human heart.

The ultimate reconciliation, by which human will is brought back into harmony with the Divine Will, is made possible through the Christ Mystery, which likewise abides in the human heart. It is Christ who makes possible the regeneration of mankind through the establishment of a covenant between earth and heaven. The actual transmutation of the corrupted will and its purification from all self-interest is the final labor in Boehme's system of alchemy.

According to Boehme, the only way that this transformation can be accomplished is through the immediate practice of Christ's life in ourselves. We must surrender our hearts and minds to the Infinite Will, for only in this way can we close the Gates of Wrath in ourselves and in human society. We know the Divine Nature and discover its love for creation by perfecting our own love for one another, for in each of us is the Eternal waiting to receive our true affection. To Boehme, the mystery of creation is continuous. The Divine Power speaks every instant throughout eternity, saying, "Let there be light." It is also speaking forever in our hearts, telling us that the meek shall inherit the earth.

Meditation, then, is entering into the Divine Meekness, which is the silence which comes before sound and into which all sound fades away. In Esoteric Buddhism the Will is the *vajra* or thunderbolt, and the meekness is the *ghanta* or bell, these two being the special attributes of the *Vajrasattva,* the Diamond Soul of the world. Meditation is also the perfect symbol of the renunciation of human self-will, as exemplified by the words of Christ when he said, "Not my will but Thine be done." To surrender will is to renounce worldly ambitions and desires, for these are the two forces which conspire to corrupt existence. Buddha likewise warned against self-will, selfishness, and self-centeredness, declaring them to be the great hindrances to the proper fulfillment of man's destiny.

Boehme explains that when Lucifer set up his kingdom in the Abyss, Christ called him "the Prince of this world [who] cometh and hath nothing in me." Lucifer could not build his region in the meekness of God, which he had betrayed. He could exist only in a realm of transitory conditions, because he had been fashioned by a creative act. Therefore, none of his works could be eternal. He presided over a realm of dreams and delusions—a false world of small achievements circumscribed by death and in which vast projects fade away in the infinitudes of time. Lucifer became power without

The translation into English by John Sparrow of Jacob Boehme's *Aurora—That is, the Day-Spring . . . or Morning-Redness,* originally published in London in 1656, adopts a frontispiece from a seventeenth century German edition reproduced here from a photogravure in the English 1914 reprint of the work. It presents in picture form symbolism from the Book of Revelation beginning with Chapter IV, and the composition is an outstanding example of a Western mandala which corresponds in its construction to those of Esoteric Buddhism.

virtue, skill without integrity, and achievement without lawful purpose. When we choose to live in Christ, we close again the Gates of Wrath in ourselves. Then the God of Wrath vanishes, and only the God of Love remains. There is nothing to fear, no doubt and no misgiving, as we build an inner life in the certainty of our salvation.

The various diagrams in this section deal with the unfoldment of Boehme's concepts from the triune nature of the Eternal through the three principles and the seven states of being. In the large diagram from the William Law edition it is apparent that the symbolism is cosmological. The universe unfolds from its root downwards through the various levels of the eternal mind until it terminates in the solar system enclosed within the band of the zodiac.

Boehme's theology reveals clearly the problem that has burdened all the religions of mankind. Self-will has become supreme. To do what we will seems to be the real purpose for existence. All things are achieved by gratification, and frustrated desire is a disaster. We never pause to realize the falseness of our position and the basic error in judgment which has disfigured so many pages of our history. By prayerfulness we make a simple statement of dependence upon a power greater than our own self-centered purpose. We transfer our allegiance from the Dark Centrum of the Wrath to the Light Centrum of God's Love. There is only one reality. To the degree we experience this by a mystical illumination within ourselves, we become one with the Eternal Plan. In one way or another all meditation is an effort to release ourselves from the tyranny of the Dark Centrum of self-imposed willfulness. The goal is peace, but how can it be obtained unless we transform the centrum of selfishness?

William Law in his work *The Spirit of Prayer* tells us something about the gentle wisdom he had learned from Boehme. "Moses and the Prophets, Christ and his apostles . . . came to kindle a fire on earth, and that fire was the love which burns in heaven. Ask what God is? His name is love; he is the good, the perfection, the peace, the joy, the glory and blessing of every life. Ask what Christ is? . . . He is the breathing forth of the heart, life and spirit of God into all the dead race of Adam. He is the seeker, the finder, the restorer of all that was lost and dead to the life of God . . . Lastly, love is the Christ of God; it comes down from Heaven; it regenerates the soul from above; it blots out all transgressions; it takes from death its sting; from the devil its power and from the serpent his poison. It heals all the infirmities of an earthly birth; it gives eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf and makes the dumb to speak; it cleanses the lepers and casts out devils and puts man in Paradise before he dies."

Throughout Boehme's mystical revelations the reader comes to under-

The Tree of the Soul in an enlarged version from the Alexander Whyte scrapbook. In the teachings of Boehme both the human soul and the world soul are represented by trees, which, rising from the material universe, ascend through four spheres of life, attaining to flower and fruit in the light of majesty.

stand the spiritual disciplines which unfolded along with his philosophical convictions. He believed that humility alone made possible the conscious experience of Divinity. He did not believe in the practice of austerities, or that the body should be punished for the misdeeds of the mind or emotions. Boehme did not practice fasting or penance, and he was opposed to monastic orders or sects, the members of which displayed eccentric conduct or rebelled against the common code of the time. Boehme considered it a serious mistake to impoverish oneself for the glory of God. Genuine truth seekers did not give up their employment, desert their families, or neglect their community responsibilities. All affectations were evidence of false pride and obvious self-centeredness. Although a poor man himself, he did not consider it a spiritual virtue for the wealthy to distribute their goods among the underprivileged. Those of humble spirit should be faithful stewards, wisely administering their worldly goods according to the Divine Will. He also held that rulers should not abdicate their powers but remain in office, contributing in every way possible to the genuine enlightenment of their people.

To Boehme, God was an all-benevolent parent; and the creatures which He fashions and ensouls are His children. There is no division within the nature of Deity. It is the eternal unity, deficient in nothing, all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-loving. In the Divine Nature the law is "unite and survive." In the terrestrial sphere the fallen angel has established his kingdom, and the rule is "divide and destroy." The adversary is the spirit of contention, corrupting all creatures with the false belief that they are separate from each other and must compete for supremacy.

Unity is the Law of the Spirit; but it abides in a body, the parts of which are in conflict with each other. The world is the "great theater of bodies," and all terrestrial institutions are competitive. Nations stand against nations and races against races. The arts and sciences are especially mindful of their own purposes, and theologies persecute each other for the greater glory of their heavenly parent. Individuals afflict each other for gain or domination. In one way or another, the segments of human society struggle to preserve the right to afflict each other. The material world, therefore, is Babylon, the realm of ulterior motives and a confusion of tongues.

Boehme describes the two trees which grow up in the mystic garden of living. One is the tree of life, which is nourished by unselfish love, and the other is the tree of worldly knowledge nourished by self-interest and false beliefs. According to Boehme, these trees are supported, so far as humanity is concerned, by the thoughts, emotions, and actions of individuals. In personal living these trees also exist and grow through daily conduct. He warned that every unkind word favored the cause of the antichrist. It fed the tree of delusion, so that it grew and flourished. It is a sin against the Divine

Unity to return evil for evil or downgrade the aspirations of other persons. Humility requires that we should forgive our enemies, love one another, and keep the peace.

It is also a mistake for arrogant individuals to attempt to take over the management of the world or the universe. It was for this sin that the angels fell. That which was destroyed by pride must be restored by humility. Boehme did not believe that a separate spark of God existed in each creature. The Divine Unity is the one source of all good, and the truly devout person who experiences the mystery of God within himself becomes one with all that exists in space. To make certain that all creatures will ultimately return to the nature of the Father, He bestowed His love as His only begotten Son or Messiah to reopen the Gates of Mercy. Without love true illumination is impossible.

In order to thwart the saving power of love, the fallen angel attempted to bind it to material existence as desire or passion. Most theologies interpret human affections on the level of corporeality and confuse frustration with regeneration. In the thinking of Boehme the transmutation of material love is the very essence of religion. The mystic restores the "child heart." There is an innocence achieved by those who become playfellows of God. Through simple love and faith, they lose all sophistication, and, of these little ones in God, Jesus says: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." By this thinking, love *for* God is the love *of* God revealing itself in the world. There is no answer to sin and death but in the realization that the patient practice of quiet virtues ends in the personal experience of infinite good and life everlasting.

The frontispiece of *Anatomiae Amphitheatrum* by Robert Fludd, Frankfurt, 1623. Fludd uses this emblem to set forth the alchemical processes which take place in the human body during the digestion and assimilation of food. He arrives at the natural conclusion that all the mysteries of alchemical transmutation constitute a universal miracle taken for granted by the average human being. He made important contributions to the science of nutrition in the early years of the seventeenth century.

Chapter XIII

MANDALAS IN WORLD GOVERNMENT

It has already been noted that one of the definitions of a mandala is a mirror, which also plays a part in Western mysticism as revealed through the teachings of Jacob Boehme. Those looking into mirrors see the reflections of themselves, and this is about the only way in which we can gain a perspective of our own objective existence. In remote times the mirror was associated with water. Narcissus in Greek mythology gazed into a pool and, seeing the reflection of his own appearance, became enamored of the image; and, casting himself into the pool, he drowned in an effort to embrace his own shadow. This legend has great psychological importance.

It is difficult for Western man to believe that in the hinterland of Asia, among the semi-barbaric tribes inhabiting the vast regions of the Himavat, beliefs of worldwide significance could have originated. The issue is further complicated by the bizarre and involved religious art of these people. In spite of this, a number of highly qualified scholars have turned to the Orient for inspiration and spiritual guidance. Among them we might mention Lieutenant Colonel Sir Francis Younghusband, who led a punitive expedition into Tibet in 1903. He told me that his little expeditionary force had conquered Tibet but that Tibetan philosophy had conquered him. Dr. L. Austine Waddell, who was the medical officer with the Younghusband expedition, wrote one of the most comprehensive works on Lamaism, which was published under the title *The Buddhism of Tibet,* London, 1895. W. Y. Evans-Wentz, D.Litt., D.Sc. devoted the greater part of his life to studying and interpreting Tibetan philosophy, and his work, *On the Great Liberation,* etc. includes a psychological commentary by Carl Gustav Jung. Sir John Woodroffe (Arthur Avalon), an initiate of tantric doctrines, is honored by Orientalists throughout the world.

Special mention should also be made of Dwight Goddard, a dedicated convert to Buddhism, whose principal text, *The Buddhist Bible,* has been well-received and widely distributed. Dr. Goddard cooperated with the Young Buddhist Association of Japan in preparing a handbook, *The Teaching of Buddha.* In many Japanese hotels this little volume is found side by side with the Gideon Bible.

One of the most unusual ceremonies of the Tibetan lamas is the ritual of presenting the universe as an offering to the sovereign power by which it was fashioned. L. Austine Waddell describes the World Mandala as a miniature representation of the universe offered in effigy to the Divine Power. On this subject Waddell makes the following observation: "During this ceremony it is specially insisted on that the performer mentally conceive that he is actually bestowing all this wealth of continents, gods, etc., etc., upon his Lamaist deities, who themselves are quite outside the system of the universe." (Waddell's *The Buddhism of Tibet,* p. 398.)

The general form of the World Mandala appears in Waddell's book accompanied by the following description. In the center, serving as an axis for the design with its thirty-eight components is Mount Meru. In the accompanying diagram the regions are identified by numbers as follows:

1. Meru
2-5. The four great continents
6-13. The satellite continents
14-17. The four worldly treasures
18-24. The seven precious things
25. Goddesses
26-33. The Matri Goddesses
34-35. The sun and moon
36-38. The jewelled umbrella, the flag of victory, and certain powerful deities.

In *The Peking Chronicle* for October 30, 1932 there is an article by Basil Crump describing the great Peace Mandala fashioned during the important Lamaist ceremonies held at the Tai-ho-tien. During one of the ceremonies, Dr. J. F. Rock, an expert photographer, took a picture of what he described as the finest example of a Tibetan mandala he had ever seen. The elaborate design was made by applying colored powders through tapered tubes, and the work was done without any previous sketching or recourse to other pictures. On the occasion described in the press the rituals were especially concerned with the dissemination of universal peace by His Serene Holiness, Panchen Rimpoche. A magical system of Yoga, known in Sanskrit as the Kalachakra, was used by the Panchen Lama presiding over this ritual.

The boundless circle of time, represented by the mandala, symbolized Adi-Buddha as primeval wisdom. Aryasangha in his secret treatises describes this mystery, which is said to have arisen in the esoteric doctrine of the sacred sons of wisdom who dwelt in the mysterious city of Shambhala. This point is substantiated by Emil Schlagintweit in his book *Buddhism in Tibet,* Leipzig, 1903. Ekai Kawaguchi, a Japanese Buddhist monk, in his book *Three*

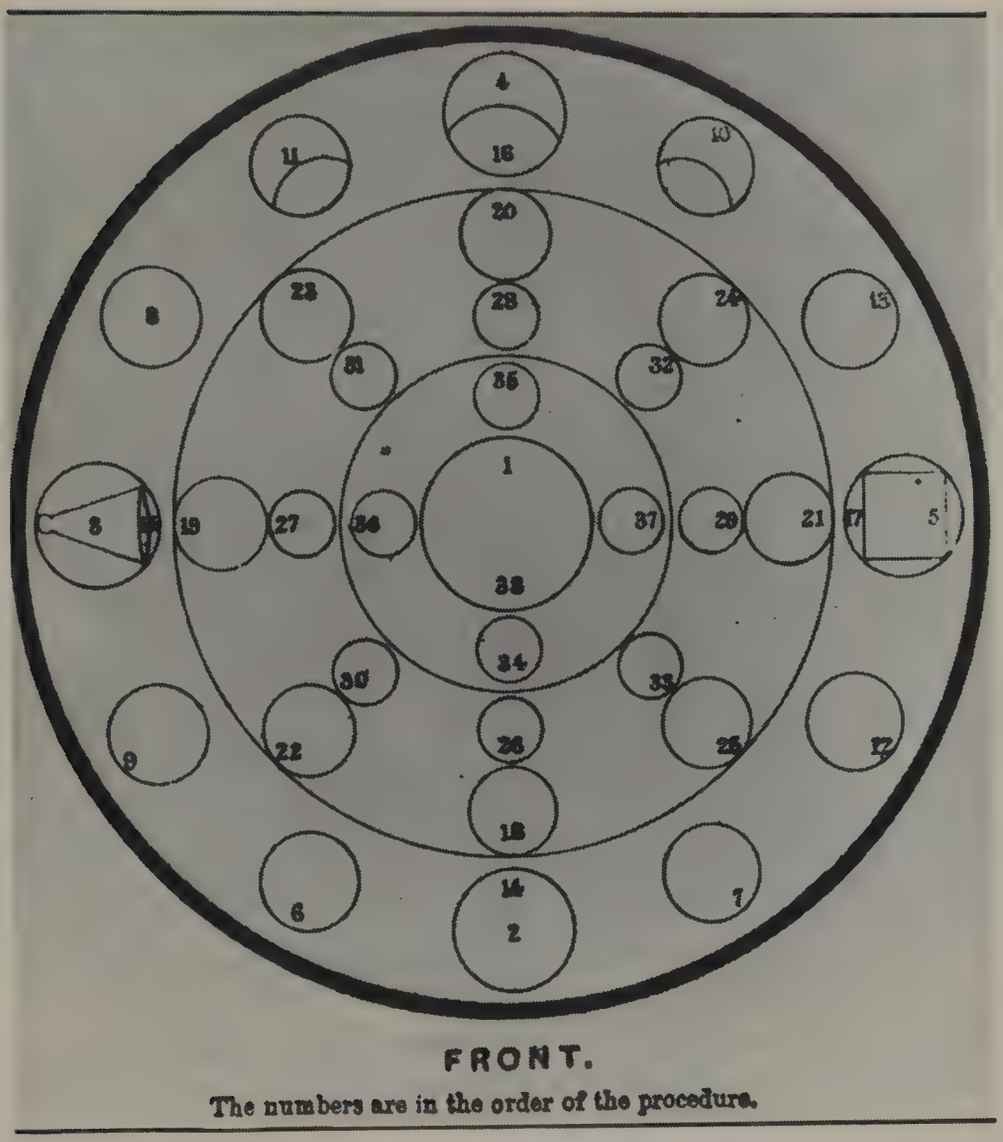
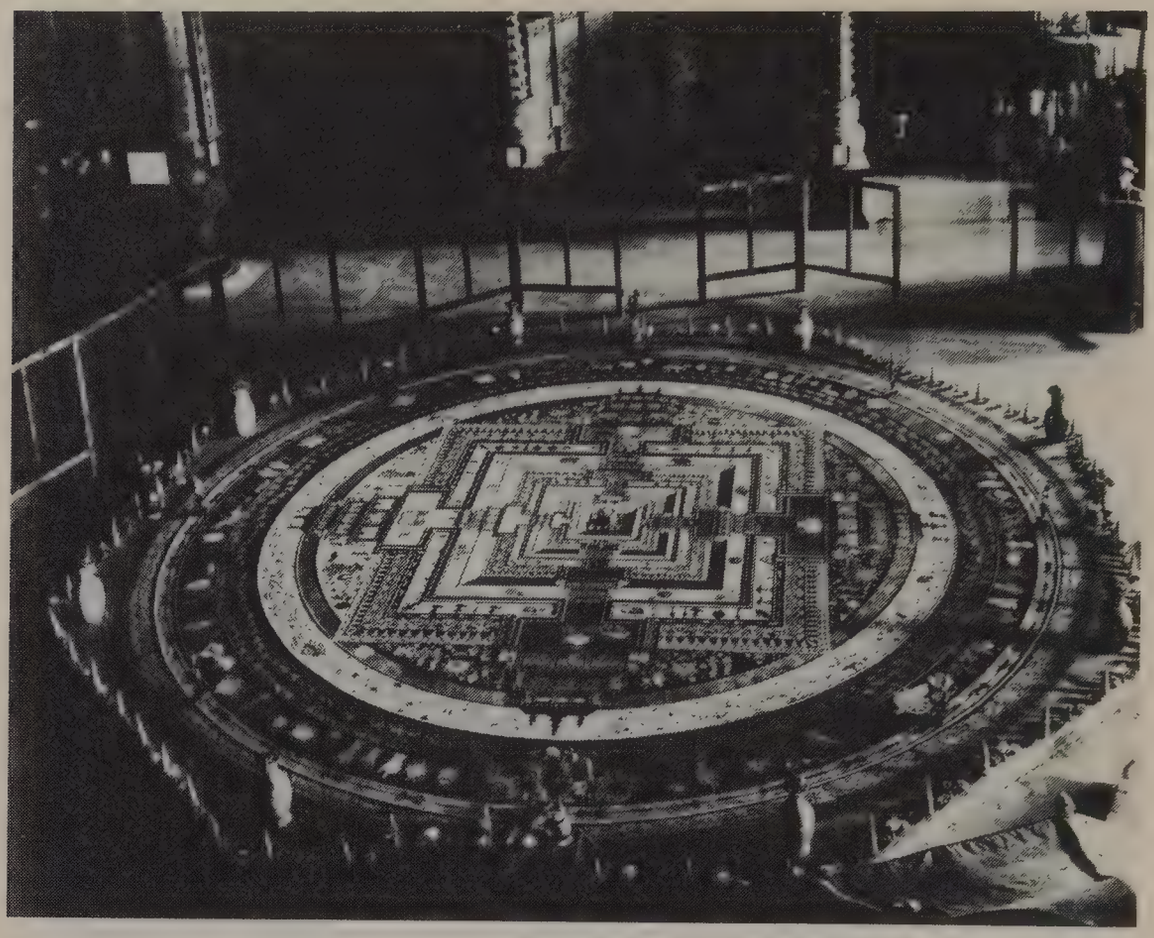


Diagram setting forth the construction of the Mandala of the Offering of the Universe from L. Austine Waddell's *The Buddhism of Tibet,* London, 1895.

Years in Tibet, London, 1909 sets forth considerable lore regarding Shambhala, which some Tibetans believe to be located in a remote part of Kashmir. There is also a legend that the great Zen monk, Bodhidharma, received his instruction from the masters of Shambhala.

In the World Peace Mandala four gates lead into the sacred city, and by these are to be understood the four yogas or disciplines by which the truth seeker approaches the inner life. In each gateway there is a cart drawn by seven animals. These are the vehicles which arose within the disciplines of Esoteric Buddhism. The magic circle is protected by a wall of thunderbolts and other symbols, which have to be correctly interpreted if the heart



The Kalachakra or Wheel of Time Mandala used in tantric ritual on October 21, 1932 in Peking by His Serene Holiness, Panchen Rinpoche, known to the West as the Tashi Lama. From a photograph in the PRS Collection.

of the mystery is to be penetrated. There is a curious mixture of metaphysical and physical elements in the great design. The four continents recognized in the Lamaist concept of the world can be identified as Europe, Africa, America, and Asia. Some have tried to associate Shambhala with the magnetic pole of the earth, which no longer coincides with the physical pole but is supposed to be located in the area of Gobi.

The idea of presenting the created universe to the Eternal Power, which brought it into being, can be stimulating to Western thinkers. We are told that when we build a church we dedicate it to the Deity or a member of the Heavenly Host. In taking holy orders the devout believer dedicates all of himself, body, soul, and spirit, to the service of God. When the human being was placed in the garden of the world, he was supposed to be a good and faithful servant, whose natural labor was to protect the beautiful realm that had been entrusted to him. Symbolically, at least, he should preserve his environment, learn to dwell in peace with his neighbors, guard and guide the lower forms of creatures, and become a priest in the "Everlasting House."

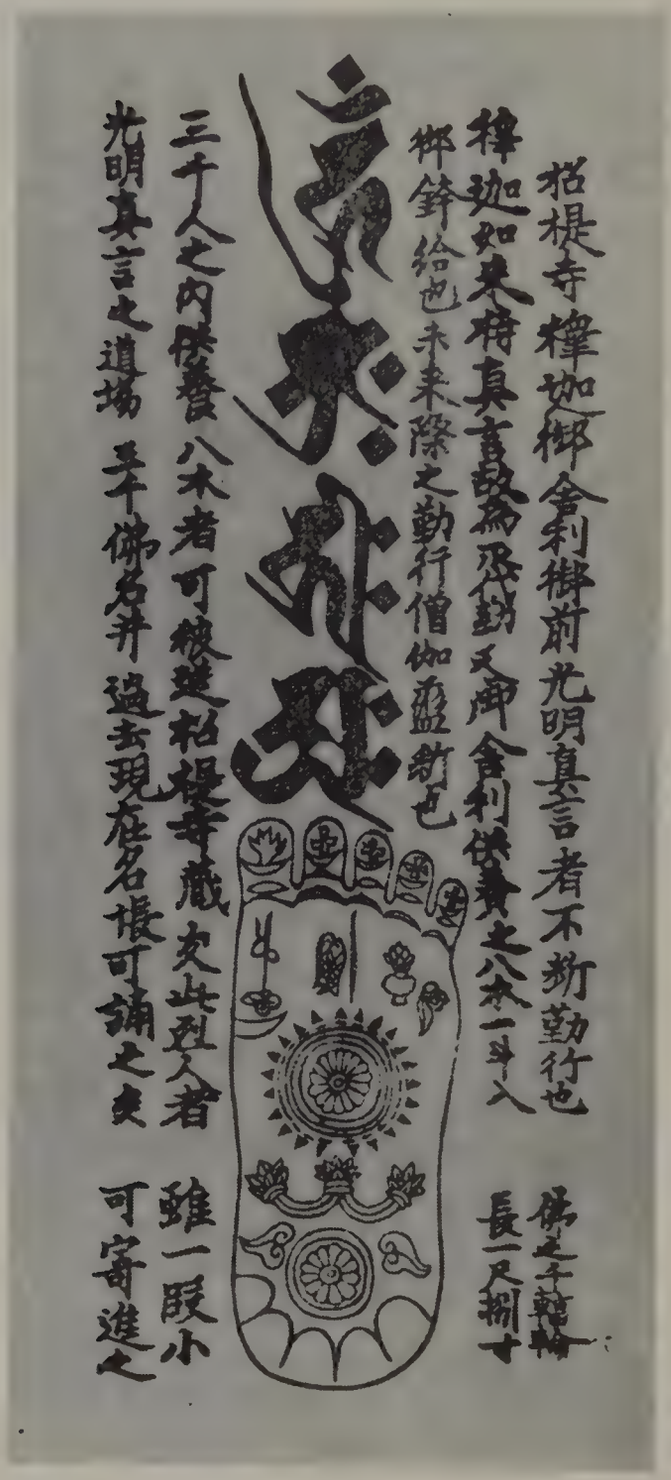
That the people of remote Tibet should recognize this responsibility and create mandalas to portray it is truly inspiring. During the ritual of the Peace Mandala, the Panchen Lama is changed into the god Kalichakra by a Tibetan form of transubstantiation. He becomes, or takes upon himself, the burden of the wheel of time, thus returning time to infinity and bestowing all things to that absolute power from which they came.

In Lamaist metaphysics those officiating in the higher rituals seem to become supernatural beings, but the entire ritual is an aspect of mental phenomena. It is the mind itself that becomes the master of magic by mystical transformation of its normal processes. If the devotee is without blemish and, therefore, holds no mental or emotional attitudes that will distort the mystical experience, he will be able to release from within himself the seed of the Buddha or bodhisattva he is venerating. The qualities which he experiences must exist first within himself, and, since all mysteries of consciousness exist within the seed of Mahavairocana, in the heart of man. When the ritual is completed, the two spheres of spiritual experience divide again, the worshipper reassumes his normal level of cognition, and the bodhisattva image retires to the realm of mental abstraction.

Because of this procedure, every implement held by a deity, every adornment, and the various multiplications of arms and faces become symbolically significant. They are all experiences of consciousness and sometimes indicate that several manifestations are combined in one composite image, which, therefore, unfolds aspects of the various mandala designs. The total experience of the Matrix Mandala is identification with the natural world; and, when the beholder can identify himself with the Diamond Mandala, he becomes one in actuality with the total Buddhist commune.

We have already mentioned the Buddhist idea of the cosmic community. Twenty-five centuries ago Buddha taught that there was but one life in all of space and that all manifestations of existence are rooted in this life and sustained by its eternal vitality. In very early representations of Buddha receiving homage the Master himself was not represented by a person. His symbols were the empty teaching throne, a wheel of light, or his footprint. The worshippers, however, were presented in their natural forms. They included not only human beings bearing flowers and plants arranged in garlands but, also, members of the animal kingdom. All things, from the most minute particle to the greatest galaxy, were bound together by their dependence upon the immeasurable sea of life, that which was never created and can never end. It appears logical that if creation exists because it shares in one inexhaustible energy, then the brotherhood of all that lives is an obvious fact.

The footprint of Buddha from a thirteenth century ofuda is preserved in the Toshodai-ji Temple in Nara. It was prepared to solicit contributions



The footprint of Buddha from a thirteenth century woodblock in the Toshodai-ji Temple, Nara. (See: *A Collection of Old Japanese Buddhist Woodblock Prints* recorded by Timikichiro Tokuriki, Kyoto, 1960.) Representations of Buddha's footprints are found in most Eastern nations. They indicate that the doctrine has passed through the region carried by faithful monks and teachers.

for a religious service. Symbolic footprints mark the journey of Buddhism throughout Asia. Footprints of Buddha are considered meditation symbols and are found wherever Buddhism has established itself. Prominent among the symbols represented on footprints are fig leaves, swastikas on the toes, two joined fishes, a conch shell, the sacred vase, and the elephant goad. Below these is a large *rimbo,* the wheel of the sun. On the base of the foot is a triple lotus, called the tri-ratna, supported by a trident, which is in the form of the Greek letter *omega.*

Western science can hardly refute the Buddhist belief in a universal energy where creation subsists, but, at this point, mysticism and materialism come to a parting of the ways. Can life per se produce out of itself that which does not exist eternally within itself? Can space be mindless and, yet, generate minds? Can it be impersonal, yet produce and sustain an infinite diversity of beings having personality and individuality? As we explore the potentials within man himself, are we to assume that he has fashioned them solely by his own ingenuity without being aware of what he has accomplished and how he has attained to his present condition? The sophisticated like to assume that man owes everything to his own mind. But what is mind? Where did it come from, and what are its ultimate objectives?

Buddhism originated in a land of jungles, forests, mountains, and rivers. In those days India was a beautiful country, and its people developed their arts from the quiet contemplation of their environment. To them, nature was vast and man comparatively insignificant. They developed a friendly relationship with the earth and the sky and all that lay between. Filled with wonderment, they fashioned philosophies to explain the miracle of life as revealed to them by their own sensory perceptions.

Buddhism, building upon the older mysticism of India, conceived that all diversity revealed the infinite potential referred to by the esoteric sects as Mahavairocana. Instead of believing that form is the reality and is vitalized by some abstract energy, most Eastern philosophies posit life as the reality revealing itself through secondary manifestations, which we call life forms. Everything that exists apart from unconditioned life is a body of some kind through which that one life manifests. All bodies are not physical, but they are alive because they are ensouled. There is no such thing as an inanimate object. If a man builds a temple, it does not remain a dead thing of stone or wood. It is a body, and through consecration this body is ensouled. The art of medicine is not actually a material structure of discoveries, remedies and techniques; it is the life of Mahavairocana embodied in the Healing Buddha, Yakushi Nyorai. A great musical composition is overshadowed and ensouled by the gracious goddess of music, Sarasvati (Japanese: Benzaiten).

Ragini Devi from an original watercolor by Promode Chatterjee. The deity, Shiva, is playing the harmony of the universe on an instrument made of the emblem of transciency. His son, Ganesha, accompanies him with the drum rhythm, which signifies the pulse beat. By this invocation the goddess of music, Ragini Devi, is called into manifestation. From the PRS Collection.

The public school is not merely an institution; it is one of the bodies assumed by the Teaching Buddha, Gautama. All manmade structures—religious, political, industrial, educational, and social—are vehicles for the manifestation of the Meditation Buddhas. A corporation cannot be built without energy. Every organization and its members live because life is universal. A production or distribution policy cannot be designed without calling upon the basic resources of life and consciousness. In the West we all takes oaths of office upon the Bible. We pray for the well-being of our nation and its government. We take obligations of integrity in courts of law, and, for thousands of years, physicians have sworn allegiance to the code of Aesculapius "and all the gods."

The next points are moot questions. Does eternal life itself obey laws identical with its own substance? Are we dealing with a principle that has principles? Is our vital resource something that we can use or abuse as we please? Do all things that live and grow exist for our convenience, so that we have a perfect right to cut down our forests, exhaust our mineral resources, pollute our streams, atmosphere and oceans, and destroy each other? By the same token, may we look forward to oblivion after death, so that neither here nor hereafter are we accountable for our deeds—except to each other?

The mandala attempts to represent a totally living world. It is not a planet maintaining creatures but a being in its own right, manifesting its own life through its fertility. Such manifestations are orderly, proper, and consistent; and from the smallest to the largest are fashioned upon a single archetype—the world diagram. By further extension of this same thinking, we must recognize the existence of two levels of government, one of which exists forever in space and the other which struggles desperately for survival in our planet and, in all probability, in many other parts of space.

The four gates, which are conspicuous on most mandalas, may be likened to the four streams that poured out from Eden. These can represent the four major religions of mankind: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judeo-Christianity, and Moslemism. As spiritual convictions flow outward from the center, so these become paths for those making the journey homeward. There can be no essential differences in the substance of the cosmic religion. It arises in unity, moving forth into differentiation suitable to the needs of the various races and nations, creating specializations that do not imply conflict. It is the mind that has divided them, and it is the heart that must bring them back again to unity. The essential teachings of all religions are the same. By interpretation they have been made to appear to be different. All are dedicated to the reality of archetypal truth. Each assumes itself to be the instrument of the Divine Will by which that Will shall be made manifest. Orthodoxies have crept in, but they suffer from the same infirmities as afflict all competitive institutions.

In the Butsuden of the Todai-ji Temple at Nara is the largest single bronze casting in the world. It is the figure of the Buddha Roshana (Sanskrit: Locana). The significance of this figure is somewhat obscure; but at the time of its dedication the emperor and his entire court were present, and at his death all of the emperor's treasures were presented to the image. The Buddha Roshana probably personifies the Sangha, or total community of Buddhism in the world. It implies that all believers are parts and members of the one truth, which can be properly represented only as a gigantic figure. Under such conditions, Roshana Buddha of Nara is also a mandala, for it represents the determination of the Imperial Family to dedicate their domain to the Eternal Law. This is not the only instance of the political influence of Buddhism in East Asia. This influence did not arise from an effort to dominate the secular government but, rather, to ensoul it and rededicate it to the Buddhist teaching.

The image of the Roshana Buddha in the Butsuden of the Todai-ji Temple at Nara. Photographed by Manly P. Hall.

The earliest exponent of this concept in Japan was Shotoku Taishi (573-621 A.D.), Regent for his aunt, the Empress Regnant. This enlightened prince formulated the first great code for the administration of the Japanese empire. It was founded firmly in Buddhist ethics, and the great temple of Horyuji, which he caused to be built, was laid out in mandala form. Horyuji was a sanctuary dedicated to most aspects of Buddhist imagery, and, from the Kondo, the great Gautama triad bestowed its blessings upon the Japanese Empire.

In most religions it is assumed that Heaven will descend and judge the quick and the dead. In Buddhism man judges himself and, having discovered the way of righteousness, raises his own estate through meditative disciplines by which he purifies his own consciousness. The mandala can be firmly imprinted upon the basic substances of mind, so that it becomes the proper diagram of self-redemption. It is believed that this inward concept of universal integrity will overcome the false pressures of the intellect and release its blessings within the person and through him into his environment.

Western mystics have referred to the over-government as the kingdom of heaven, and this might well be another name for Shambhala. In both cases man has instinctively realized that, unless there is a plan larger than his own, his existence is fruitless. Back in the mythological ages the world was always thought to be in the keeping of divinities of various orders and different degrees of insight. It has generally been assumed that men have created heaven in the image of their own desires and that the kingdom of heaven is merely a symbolical glorification of the empires of the Medes and Persians.

We can agree with Boehme, therefore, that the world is divided into two hemispheres, of which the higher is the realm of principles and the lower the abode of embodied creatures. It was also assumed that the upper region was the natural ruler of the material sphere and that human institutions must ultimately be reconciled with the laws and purposes of the celestial archetype. This seems to be intimated in the words of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come, They will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The Early Church believed that Christ would come in glory as the world king and that it was the moral duty of true believers to transform the earth into a sanctuary, the stones and timbers of which were actually the congregation of the redeemed.

Referring to the Shingon belief in the commune of cosmic life, Dr. Anesaki writes in *Buddhist Art in Its Relation to Buddhist Ideals,* Boston, 1915, p. 33: "The world is composed of the various groups of spiritual forces expressing themselves in the form and behavior of material phenomena, each of which, according to Shingon teaching, may be regarded as a deity, with his or her special attributes, functions, and intentions. The number of these

This engraving is described as symbolizing all the species of bodies which exist in the world created by God by the free motion of His will and most beautifully adorned, and most wisely governed, and powerfully preserved. From *An Entire Body of Philosophy* by Anthony Le Grand, being a translation with some additions of the writings of René Descartes, London, 1694.

deities, like the particles of the universe, can never be exhausted; nevertheless they do not constitute a mere aggregate, but are grouped in a definite system of classes and finally united in the cosmic person or spirit of the Great Illuminator.

The arts have a unique place in the wonderful realm of Mahavairocana's divine purpose. He is embodied in them, for he *is* music, drama, the dance, and the world's inspired literature. The mind, concerned primarily with self-gratification, can corrupt and pervert the various branches of learning; but Mahavairocana has a sterner side to his divinity, which is not always welcome to those who have violated his edicts.

When virtue fails among men, the Great Illuminator suddenly is revealed as Fudo Myo-o, a deity of ferocious appearance, carrying in one hand a flaming sword and in the other a lariat. Boehme suggests a similar transformation in his description of the rebellion of Lucifer. When this great angel turned against the God of mercy, blessings, and peace, the Creator was suddenly transformed into the Lord of Wrath. Fudo Myo-o, according to Buddhist iconography, is the faithful servant of truth; and, in this capacity, he is the Defender of the Faith. When man sets in motion the wheel of karma, he must abide by the consequences until by merit he achieves his own redemption. Fudo, like the angel with the flaming sword guarding the gates of Eden, will not permit anyone to enter the Blessed Land who has not redeemed his own mind. The material world is the realm of karma, and the time has come when thoughtful persons should be able to recognize some valid relationship between their own conduct and the dilemmas of society.

Considering the human body to be a mandala, a belief shared by both Western and Eastern mystics, may provide some pertinent analogies. At the present time, the body is managed or mismanaged by two conflicting types of rulership. It is subjected to the autocracy of the mind and inevitable operations of natural law. The tragedies resulting from this duality of management are becoming more numerous every day. In the first place, the mind does not actually understand the body, for it has no direct experience of the physical requirements for normal bodily functions. To the mental entity, the body is a proletariat governed principally for the benefit of the mental aristocrat. Politically, this has always led to social upheaval, in which the overtaxed and underprivileged have revolted against their avaricious overlords. When the body rebels against the mind, we call it sickness and we try to meet this emergency through medication administered with little realization of the actual facts.

The body, on the other hand, is one of the world's most perfect structures. Practically every rule and principle included in the seven orders of

Fudo Myo-o with attendants from a Japanese Buddhist scroll painting. The deity is represented seated on a throne made of rocks, bearing in one hand the sword of quick detachment and in the other a lariat or lasso, the symbol of bondage. From the PRS Collection.

architecture recognized by the ancients are present in the human structure. For centuries the alchemists searched after the secret of transmutation, but it is accomplished every day in the digestive system of man. Nor should we stop here, for the wonders never cease. The smallest insect is a marvel and miracle in one. Everywhere nature accomplishes what appears to be the impossible. The mind cannot begin to fathom that which appears to proceed from the so-called mindless processes of existence. The human mind attempts to capitalize on nature's productiveness but with no intention of keeping faith with natural law.

I have seen old Oriental charts of the human body in which each nerve terminated in the image of a deity. How can a power less than divine maintain the rhythm of the heart, or guard the circulation of the blood, or accomplish the wonder of human sight? It is because a life with a consciousness greater than our own inhabits every cell and enables man to survive his own misdeeds for threescore and ten. If man's body is the living temple of a living god, it is too often in a neglected and ruinous condition with a constant need for reconstruction.

Two centers of authority have come to be regarded in relation to man's government of himself. One is the mind, the seat of egocentricity; and the other is the heart, the center of life. If the heart fails, the labors of the mind come to nothing. It has been assumed by most esotericists that the heart is the seat of Divine Law, which expresses itself through the physical body as natural law. However, it does not follow that the spirit, or universal principle, is actually captured within the auricular and ventricular chambers of the secret house. Rather, like Shambhala, the true heart resides in the auric field of energy within which the body lives and moves and has its being.

It is conceivable that a complete system of human government could be based on the functions of the human body conceived as a mandala. It is probable that we would have to relinquish the two party system, because no part of man's economy is based upon political competition. When all work together for common survival, realizing that the failure of one part must finally end in disaster for all, we might be able to establish a philosophical commonwealth. Such indeed is the Buddhist commune, which teaches that avarice and conflict are madness. This does not mean that man will be able to destroy the cosmic harmony. He can only deprive himself of participation in the concord of the eternal, and even this deprivation is temporary.

A mandala of world peace sets forth the imagery of redemption as the return to obedience. One writer has said that obedience is an admission of limitation. It implies that man can never take over the management of space. He may explore it, but this is as far as his "conquest" will carry him. It may be pathetic to visualize human nature languishing for lack of free will, but there is hope that the outlook is not as gloomy as first appears. By restraining his instinct to dominate a small world of rock, water, fire, and air, man can expand his inner life far beyond the scope of his imagination. His inner wealth is not wrenched from others by violence but arises from experiences of consciousness beyond his present beliefs.

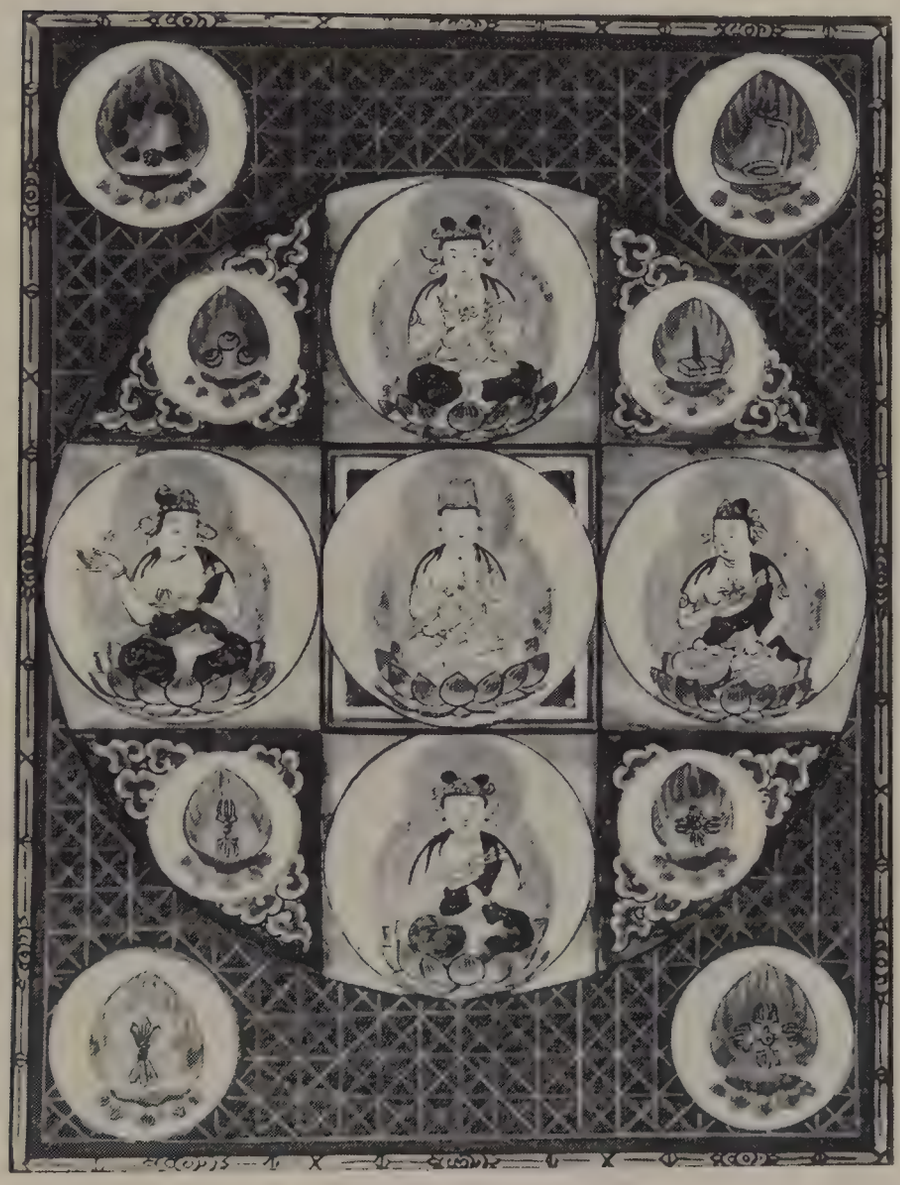
The first step is the reorganization of physical society through the realization of the universal purpose. To accomplish such a change, a working diagram is needed. We have too long labored without a practical plan. The

mandala reminds us that life is sacred, that its use is a religious responsibility, and that the perversion of any universal resource is a sin against the Holy Spirit. In the center of the universal mandala sits the Infinite Buddha as eternal life, light, wisdom, and love. This same being in quiet repose dwells in the innermost of a blade of grass, a little bird, or a newborn child. Every drop of blood bears witness to an eternal pact between life and its outpourings. It is because it is everywhere that it can truly mark a sparrow's fall, for even this common bird is an aggregate composed of Mahavairocana and countless conditioned manifestations of himself.

Unless the Eternal builds the house, those who would build it labor in vain. In this case, a house can be a structure of belief, an organized system of knowledge, or a combustion engine. In the old days doctors tending the sick were not ashamed to kneel in prayer at the bedside of their patients. They realized that man's life was in the keeping of Eternal Life and that the physician was only a priest in that temple which we call a hospital. When the physician forgets this, the spirit of health fails in himself, and the art of healing is profaned.

Mahavairocana can be imagined as seated in the midst of four extensions of himself, and these can be called religion, philosophy, science, and the arts. They are not separate things, for they are all united in him as children and with each other as brethren. Each of these creative expressions can be considered a Buddha; and to each of these Buddhas is assigned a bodhisattva, which, in its turn, can become two as reflexes of the central power. The Buddhas are the principles, and the bodhisattvas are the dedication of these principles to the good of living things.

Religion is far more than theology, for its labors lead to a common solicitude in which we serve God by helping one another. Philosophy can never be fulfilled by involved patterns of abstract thinking in conflict with each other and abiding in the rarified atmosphere of intellectual speculation. Philosophy has as its purpose the application of reason to the solution of problems which have arisen from ignorance. Science is not research for research's sake or for the enlargement of profits and the exploitation of peoples who have learned to depend upon science. The real end of this great program of specialized knowledge is human well-being.



Detail from the Caturmudra Mandara. Mahavairocana is represented seated and manifesting through four reflexes of himself.

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MEDITATION SYMBOLS IN EASTERN & WESTERN MYSTICISM

Mysteries of the Mandala

"The discipline of meditation involves the expansion of awareness. There are many questions about life that cannot be easily answered, but they can be experienced by the mystic in moments of quiet contemplation. Ultimate truths are available to those who become aware of the meditative disciplines. Reality is present in everything, but is obscured by the doubts and confusions that afflict the human mind. The finite is merely a shadow of the infinite. The heart and mind can come to perfect peace by the contemplation of the wonders of the natural world. The creating power is unfolded to our inner vision through creation itself. (Manly P. Hall)

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