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CREATIVE MEDITATION

and

Multi-Dimensional Consciousness

by

Lama Anagarika Govinda
(Anangavajra Khamsum Wangchuk)



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THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF CREATIVE IMAGINATION

CHANGE YOUR AWARENESS, and you live in a different world, experience a different reality! The ability to change one's awareness appears only at a certain stage of reflective and creative consciousness which does not yet exist in animals and is only partially developed in man. I say "partially," because

not all men have developed and made use of their creative faculties. Those who have done so are remembered as the great inspirers of humanity; through the power of their creative imagination they have given new values to life; they have changed the human outlook and world from that of a savage to that of a being capable of becoming conscious of his universal heritage.

Of all the distinctions between man and animal, the characteristic gift which makes us human is the power to work with symbolic images: the gift of imagination. The power that man has over nature and himself lies in his command of imaginary experience. Almost everything we do that is worth doing is done first in the mind's eye. The richness of human life is that we have many lives. We live the events that do not happen (and some that cannot) as vividly as those that do. If thereby we die a thousand deaths, that is the price we pay for living a thousand lives. To imagine is the characteristic act, not of the poet's mind, or the painter's, or the scientist's, but the mind of man. Imagination is a specifically human gift.¹

This power of creative imagination is not merely content with observing the world as it is, accepting a given reality, but is capable of creating a new reality by transforming the inner as well as the outer world. This is the very heart of the Tantric teaching and experience, which adds a new dimension to the practice of meditation and spiritual discipline.

The follower of the Small Vehicle (Hinayāna) tries to see the world as it is—i.e. as a given reality—and turns away from it. The follower of Zen sees the world as a paradox and tries to discover the given reality behind it in his inner world, his "original face" by turning away from or denying the conceptualizing activity of the intellect. The practitioner of Tantric meditation (*sādhana*) agrees with the Zenist in the overcoming of conceptual thought. However, knowing that there can be no waking consciousness without content, and that to stop thought activity is as impossible as to stop a river, the Tantric *Sādhaka* replaces abstract (or merely "mental") concepts and the operations of a two-dimensional logic by creative and multidimensional symbols of living experience. Thus the inner and the outer worlds are transformed and united in the realization that the basic qualities of human individuality

binding us to our worldly existence (*samsāra*) are at the same time the means of liberation and of enlightenment.

In short, a spiritual discipline or meditational practice which shuns the power of imagination deprives itself of the most effective and vital means of transforming human nature as it is into what it could be, if its dormant potentialities were fully awakened. But unless these potentialities are vividly represented and pictured in the human mind, there is no incentive to transform them into actualities.

However, we have to point out that there is a vast difference between creative imagination and mere aimless daydreaming, indulging in meaningless fantasies, in which the mind is drifting on the surface of our half-awake consciousness. Creative imagination builds with the "bricks of reality," as does the artist with the materials of the physical world and the potentialities of his psyche. This is done in an inwardly directed and meaningful way which crystallizes in a new and unique expression of reality—either in the form of a work of art or in that of a transformed consciousness—a transformed individual who has awakened to a new aspect of reality. The ultimate materials at our disposal are the elements of our present personality. They are the raw material which we have to convert into a supreme work of art: the completely realized human being, the symbol of which lives within us as the archetype of the Eternal Man, the exalted figure of the Enlightened One.

The very fact—and we emphasize this again—that the Buddha (or any of the great Enlightened Ones of humanity), who possessed the same basic qualities, (*skandhas*) of individual existence as any other human being, was able to transform them into factors of enlightenment, proves that the very qualities which to the unenlightened are the source of illusion and deception in the endless treadmill of births and death—of *samsāra*—contain at the same time the elements of reality and the means of liberation and enlightenment.

If we can see *nirvāna* and *samsāra* as the two sides of the same reality, we should likewise be able to see the same polarity in the *skandhas* which in themselves are neither good nor bad, true nor false, real nor illusory, liberating nor binding, wholesome nor unwholesome, nirvanic nor samsaric. All depends what we make of them, how we use them. To those who have been awakened to their basic or essential potentialities, the *skandhas* are no more tendencies of self-imitation and egocen-

tric attachment; on the contrary, they are the very factors that make the realization of freedom and enlightenment possible. That is why the Buddha regarded human birth as the best of all forms of existence.

References and Notes

¹ Jacob Bronowski (condensed from a speech to the American Academy of Arts and Letters).

PART II

THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF
VAJRAYANA MEDITATION

1

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE CONSTITUENTS OF THE HUMAN PERSONALITY

ACCORDING TO THE ANCIENT Buddhist tradition the human personality has been described as a combination of five groups or *skandhas* of interrelated functions, enumerated in the order of their increasing subtlety, and defined as:

1. *Rūpa-skandha*: a) the group of corporeality or, more correctly, the group of the sensuous, which comprises the past elements of consciousness that have formed the body and are represented by the body; b) the present elements, as the sensation or idea of matter; and c) the future or potential sensuous elements (*dharmāḥ*) in all their forms of appearance.¹ This definition includes sense-organs, sense-objects, their mutual relationship and psychological consequences.

2. *Vedanā-skandha*: the group of feelings, which comprises all reactions derived from inner causes, i.e. feelings of pleasure and pain (bodily), joy and sorrow (mental), indifference and equanimity.

3. *Samjñā-skandha*: the group of perceptions of discriminating awareness and representation, which comprises the reflective or discursive (*savicāra*) as well as the intuitive (*avicāra*) faculty of discrimination.

4. *Samskāra-skandha*: the group of mental formations, the formative forces or tendencies of the will, representing the active principle of consciousness, the character of the individual, namely the karmic consequences caused by conscious volition.

5. *Vijñāna-skandha*: the group of consciousness, which comprises, combines, and coordinates all previous functions or represents the potentiality of consciousness in its pure, unqualified form.

In the personality of a Buddha each of the *skandhas* is transformed into an aspect of the enlightened consciousness. Thus the principle of form or corporeality is no more con-

fined to the physical body, but comprises the totality of the universe from which it sprang and which is reflected in the structure, the organs, and the functions of a completely human body, and especially in the mirror-like quality of a completely skilled consciousness. Herein the enlightened mind realizes the "Wisdom of the Great Mirror" (*mahādarśa-jñāna*), in which the forms of all things are potentially present and are recognized according to their nature as exponents of the Great Void.

The principle of feeling, instead of being ego-related and concerned only with the individual's own well-being or purely personal attractions and aversions, is widened into an all-encompassing feeling of solidarity with all sentient beings in the recognition of that greater unity of life, from which grows the *Wisdom of Equality* (*samata-jñāna*). On account of this, love is freed from possessiveness and compassion from condescension. It is the wisdom that opens us to the Greater Life.

The principle of perception is no more concerned with intellectual or conceptual discriminations or mere sense-perceptions, but is converted into the spontaneity of inner vision and spiritual discernment in the practice of meditation and thus into the *Distinguishing Wisdom* (*pratyavekṣana-jñāna*). Here differentiation is seen against a background of unity and in relationship to all concrete situations of life and individuality. If the Wisdom of Equality stressed the essential unity of life, the Distinguishing Wisdom teaches us to respect the differences and the uniqueness of every individual and every situation in which we find ourselves. *

It is on the basis of these three preceding Wisdoms that the principle of volition turns into the Wisdom That Accomplishes All Work, (*kṛtyānuṣṭhāna-jñāna*) because it results in action without a doer, that is action which is not ego-related or ego conditioned, and is therefore "karma-free." It is action that springs from a force that has its origin in a consciousness whose roots are deeper than those of our individualized intentions: spontaneous action that expresses the totality of our being.

It is this kind of action at which Lao-tse hints when he says:

Acting without design, occupying oneself without making a business of it, finding the great in what is

small and the many in the few, repaying injury with kindness, effecting difficult things while they are easy, and managing great things in their beginnings: this is the method of Tao.

This totality of our being becomes conscious of itself in the universality of an enlightened consciousness, in which the limited and merely coordinating faculty of the average human mind (through which we are aware of past and present objects, of time and future possibilities, and of ourselves as individuals in a stream of events and changing conditions) is transformed into the awareness of a higher dimension of reality, the law (*dharma*) that governs all phenomena of life throughout the universe: the "*Wisdom of the Dharma-Realm*" (*dharma-dhātu-jñāna*).

Thus, each of the *skandhas*, which to the average person may be a source of error and of enslaving attachment, is changed into an instrument of liberation. If we overlook this important fact, we miss the most essential message of a Buddha's actual existence in this our world: for he demonstrated by his very life that a human being is able to attain the exalted state of Buddhahood. His achievement gave rise to a powerful and far-reaching symbol and inspired some of the greatest civilizations of human history; it has endured over a span of two and a half millenniums without losing its universal appeal and importance for our time. In fact, the contemplation and realization of this profoundly archetypal symbol of the complete and enlightened man, in whom the universe is mirrored and re-created in an experienceable form, is in itself the way and the key that unlocks all problems and mysteries of our human existence: "The aim is the way!"

It is here where the Tantras and all the masters of meditation, from the early Yogacārin to the followers of Ch'an and Zen, have left the path of verbalization and intellectualization in order to reexperience the totality of man and his essential oneness with the universe in which he lives. This oneness is not sameness or unqualified identity, but an organic relationship, in which differentiation and uniqueness of function are as important as that ultimate or basic unity.

Individuality and universality are not mutually exclusive values, but two sides of the same reality, compensating, fulfilling, and complementing each other, and becoming one in

the experience of enlightenment. This experience does not dissolve the mind into an amorphous All, but rather brings the realization that the individual itself contains the totality focalized in its very core. Thus, the world that hitherto was experienced as an external reality merges or is integrated into the enlightened mind in the moment in which the universality of consciousness is realized. This is the ultimate moment of the liberation from the impediments and fetters of ignorance and illusion.

We are still captured by crude similes of quantitative magnitudes in place of qualitative values, when we compare the ultimate experience of liberation with "the drop that slips into the shining sea." It would be more appropriate—though paradoxical from the viewpoint of three-dimensional logic—to say that the "sea slips into the shining drop."² The drop is qualitatively not different from the sea. All the oceans that cover the earth, as seen from the distance of the sun, are not more than a drop in the immensity of space; and a drop, as seen from the standpoint of a microorganism contained in it, is as vast as an ocean.

References and Notes

¹The division in past, present and future is mentioned in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharma-kosa-sāstra*, I, 14 b. Cf. "the Five Skandhas and the Doctrine of Consciousness" in my *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism* (Rider, London).

²In the "*Divine Symphony*" by Inayat Khan, we find an interesting parallel to this thought. He says: "When I open my eyes to the outer world, I feel myself as a drop in the sea; but when I close my eyes and look within, I see the whole universe as a bubble raised in the ocean of my heart." (With grateful acknowledgement to Peter Vicsnik, who drew my attention to this beautiful and significant utterance.)

2

THE FOUR SYMPHONIC MOVEMENTS OF MEDITATION

THE DEMONSTRATION of the universality of man and of his capacity to attain self-realization in the supreme experience of enlightenment—without the intervention of gods, priests, dogmas, and sacrificial rituals—on the direct way of media-

tion: this is what the Buddha gave to the world and which has become the very core of Buddhism, irrespective of differences created by sects, philosophical schools, or scholastic traditions, or by racial or linguistic influences.

Meditation, however, concerns not only the mind, but the whole human being, including his bodily functions and activities. Therefore the first step toward meditation consists in taking stock of the situation in which we find ourselves. Meditation means many things: it means turning inward; it means quiet observation, reflection, and awareness of ourselves; it means to be conscious of consciousness, to become a detached observer of the stream of changing thoughts, feelings, drives and visions, until we recognize their nature and their origin. These latter are the main features of the Satipañhāna practice of Theravada Buddhism.

But these are only the first steps of meditation. In the more advanced stages we change from the role of a more or less intellectual observer to that of an experimenter of a deeper reality, namely, to that of the timeless and universal source of all the phenomena we observed in the contemplation of our stream of consciousness and even in the simplest bodily functions, as for instance in the process of breathing. Breathing itself can be a subject of meditation because it reveals the very nature of life in its alternate inward and outward movement, its continuous process of receiving and releasing, of taking and of giving back, of the deep relationship between the inner and the outer world, the individual and the universe.

However, between and beyond the two alternative movements—so to say at the turning-point between them—there is a moment of stillness in which the inner and the outer world coincide and become one; there is nothing that can be called either "inside" or "outside." This moment, in which time stands still—because it is empty of all designations of time, space, and movement but is nevertheless a moment of infinite potentialities—represents the state of pure "being" or "isness," which we can only express by the word *śūnyatā*, as indicating the primordial ground from which everything originates. It is the timeless moment before creation or, seen from the standpoint of the individual, the moment of pure receptivity which precedes all creative activity.

It is the first movement in the great symphonic mandala or magic circle, in which our inner world appears as sound and light, color and form, thought and vision, rhythm and harmonious coordination, visible symbol and meditative experience. This first *movement*—which expression may be taken in the musical as well as in the spiritual and *emotional* sense—corresponds to the first profound meditative attitude or experience, namely "The Wisdom of the Great Mirror."

In the light of this mirror-like wisdom things are freed from their "thingness," their isolation, without being deprived of their form; they are divested of their materiality (like the reflections in a mirror, which cannot be said to be either inside or outside of the mirror) without being dissolved. The creative principle of the mind, which is at the bottom of all form and materiality, is recognized as the active side of the Universal Consciousness (*ālaya vijñāna*), on the surface of which forms arise and pass away like the waves on the surface of the ocean; the latter, when stilled, reflects the pure emptiness of space and the pure light of heaven (the two aspects of *śūnyatā*).

Hui-Neng, the Sixth Patriarch of the Ch'an School once said: "When I speak about the void, do not fall into the idea that I mean vacuity. . . . The illimitable void of the universe is capable of holding myriads of things of various shapes and forms, such as the sun and the moon and the stars, as well as worlds. . . heavenly planes and hells, great oceans and all the mountains. . . . Space takes in all these, and so does the voidness of our nature. We say that the Essence of Mind is great, because it embraces all things, since all things are within our nature."

If *śūnyatā* hints at the nonsubstantiality of the world and the interrelationship of all beings and things, then there can be no better word to describe its meaning than *transparency*. This word avoids the pitfalls of a pure negation and replaces the concepts of substance, resistance, impenetrability, limitation, and materiality with something that can be experienced and is closely related to the concepts of space and light.

The transparency of the mind-created body, the *vajra-kāya* or "Diamond Body," visualized in tantric meditation, symbolizes *śūnyatā* in visible form, thus bearing out the above

mentioned interpretation. Here "form" is no longer in opposition to space, but form and space penetrate each other in a luminous and dynamic play of light and color.

The conception of *jiji-mu-ge* (Japanese: lit. "each thing no hindrance") has its origin in this interaction of form and emptiness, or form and space, which are experienced in the realization of the ultimate transparency of the world: the world as a phenomenon of consciousness. Without consciousness there is neither form nor its concomitant notion of emptiness. Consciousness determines the world in which we live or the particular aspect under which the universe appears to us. In itself it is neither this nor that; it is *sūnyatā*.

Thus the Mirror-like Wisdom reflects with the impartiality of a mirror the nature of all things and of ourselves, while remaining unaffected and untouched by the images it reflects. It is the attitude of the impartial observer, the pure, spontaneous awareness, which in Zen Buddhism is called *satori* or *kensho*: "looking into one's own nature."

By recognizing our own nature as *śūnyatā*, we realize that it is not different from the essential nature of all living beings. This is the "Equalizing Wisdom" or "The Wisdom of Equality," in which we turn from the cool and detached attitude of an observer to the warm human feeling of all-embracing love and compassion for all that lives. In the *Dhammapada* (Pāli) this essential equality, with others, was made the keystone of Buddhist ethics, when it was said that "having made oneself equal to others" or "recognizing oneself in others," one should abstain from hurting others. This shows that compassion in Buddhism is not based on moral or mental superiority with its inevitable attitude of condescension, but on a feeling of oneness, such as a mother feels with her child.

If, however, this feeling remains confined to the emotional plane, it may lead to a merely sentimental and one-sided attitude, in which the individual is deprived of a sense of responsibility. He may then become incapable of action and discrimination in a world that is not merely a featureless unity but an organic whole in which differentiation is as much an expression of reality as oneness, and form is as important as emptiness; both depend on each other and condition each other like light and shade.

down of Rigveda as "transparency" of space.

Thus we come to the "third movement" of meditative experience in which we are concerned neither with concrete beings nor with material things. Here both differentiation and unity, form and emptiness, the purity of light and the infinite modulations of color are revealed in their infinite interrelatedness without losing their distinctive qualities and individuality of expression. This is the "Distinguishing Wisdom" in which our mundane mind, our discriminating, judging intellect, turns into the intuitive consciousness of inner vision, in which "the special and general characteristics of all things become clearly visible without hindrances" (*asaṅga*; i.e., spontaneously) and in which the unfolding of various spiritual faculties takes place.

Through this wisdom the functions of the group of discriminating processes—which we sum up under the general term of perception (*samjñā-skandha*)—are turned inward and become transformed and intensified into creative inner vision (*dhyaṇa*). Such a vision transcends mere sense-awareness and may in this sense be called "transcendental." It is a vision in which the individual characteristics of all phenomena and their general and universal relations become apparent. This wisdom is represented by the transcendental Dhyāni-Buddha Amitābha, the Buddha of Infinite Light, who is shown in the gesture of meditation (*dhyaṇa-mudrā*).

The "fourth movement" of meditative experience belongs to the realm of action and willpower and represents the "All-Accomplishing Wisdom," the "Wisdom That Accomplishes All Works." Here volition and its formative tendencies (*samskāra skandha*) are transformed into the selfless, "karma-free" action of a life dedicated to the realization of enlightenment, motivated by compassion and based on the understanding of both the individual and the universal aspect of life and phenomena, as experienced in the previous three movements. In the *Vijñaptimātra-Siddhi-Shāstra* it has been said that "this kind of consciousness manifests itself for the benefit of all living beings . . . in the three kinds of transformed actions . . . namely, those of body, speech, and mind," according to the vow. "The vow is that of the Bodhisattva, whose "body" is the universe (*dharmakāya*), whose "speech" is the *mantric* word, the word of truth and power, and whose "mind" is the universal consciousness.

THE MEANING OF GESTURES

3

EACH OF THE FOUR MOVEMENTS of meditative experience is represented by a gesture (*mudrā*) of one of the respective four Dhyanī-Buddhas, who symbolize these states of meditative experience and are grouped around the figure of the central Dhyanī-Buddha, in whom the four movements are integrated. These five Buddhas thus form a mandala, a sacred circle, in which each of them occupies a particular place, according to the successive movement and spiritual attitude expressed by the position of their hands.

The movement or the position of our hands is highly significant for our mental or emotional attitude. The Sanskrit word *mudrā*, therefore, signifies much more than a casual gesture of the hands; it denotes a spontaneous expression of our deeper consciousness, even though we may not be aware of it normally. It is the "seal" or the visible imprint of our mind that characterizes the flow and the direction of our consciousness.

The main *mudrās* seen in Buddha images are not only based on an accepted conventional code—which would be valid only within a certain tradition and within the frame of a particular cultural or racial environment—but are of a nature that can be universally understood and accepted. They are based on knowledge and experience of general human psychology.

The palms of the hands have always been regarded as important centers of psychic energy, secondary only to the main centers, located in the brain, the throat, the heart, the navel, and the reproductive organs, in which this energy is generally accumulated and transformed in accordance with the different levels of conscious, subconscious, and unconscious activities. All can be raised to the plane of spiritual awareness in the process of awakening and integrating the activities of these *cakras* through meditation and specialized yoga techniques.

If the main centers of the body, which are connected through the nerve channel of the spinal column—the axis of

our psychosomatic organism—are harmonized and integrated, the secondary centers, like those of the palms of the hands, are capable of radiating the focalized energy, or of projecting and transmitting conscious forces into the immediate surroundings especially into any objects or living beings with which they come in touch.

The experience of this power of transmission is the basis of all ritual gestures of blessing. It finds its strongest expression in the laying on of hands, a practice known through millenniums and often demonstrated by its observable results, namely, the power of healing mental as well as physical afflictions. That this power can be generated only by persons who have attained a high degree of spiritual or psychic integration goes without saying. Only a person who has himself become "whole" can make others whole. This is the reason why the power of healing or the capacity of conferring blessings is generally ascribed only to saints and enlightened beings.

However, this does not minimize the importance of these secondary centers of psychic energy, even for the less developed individuals. In the gesture of prayer, in which the hands are raised and lie flat against each other so that the palms are almost touching, while the fingers are stretched upward, resting against each other, the energies emanating from the palm-centers are intensified and reabsorbed into the circuit of individual forces in the direction of the highest supraindividual center, in which the universal consciousness has its potential seat! Prayer is the first step toward its awakening.

Prayer is an act of opening ourselves to these universal forces within or beyond ourselves. It has its root in the heart-center, where our deepest emotions—such as love, faith, compassion—are born. Therefore the hands are raised to the level of this center and point upward, as if to support or express the upward trend of our aspirations, in which the individuals submit to the universality of the spirit. This does not mean that the individual submits to something outside of himself, but rather to something that is already present within his innermost being, though only dormant and not yet realized.

However, as there are and have always been Enlightened Ones who have realized this universality, we may express our veneration of them by raising the joined hands to the fore-

head or above the crown of the head in salutation and in recognition of their supreme attainment, which we hope to realize within ourselves by arousing and activating these higher centers toward a similar awakening. This form of salutation is a common feature in the ritual worship practiced all over the East, often combined with prostrations, in which the forehead touches the ground. This is at the same time an exercise in humility—which Westerners often find difficult to perform. It hurts their pride, their vanity, their ego or their false sense of dignity. In reality the touching of the ground with the highest center of consciousness is an act of humility. It is also a symbol of the fact that the highest consciousness must descend into the depth of material existence, that the "lowest" and the "highest" are interchangeable (being one in essence, but different in appearance or function), and that the very "earth" is the basis, the womb, and the breeding-ground for the unfolding and the realization of the spirit.

The first gesture of the Buddha under the Tree of Enlightenment was the touching of the earth (*bhūmisparsa-mudrā*), calling the earth to witness. The earth here stands for the totality of his past, which is as old as the world, in which he has practiced innumerable acts of renunciation which entitle him to his present position and enable him to gain enlightenment. The earth is also the symbol for the totality of all that has become, that has taken concrete, tangible form as the materialized past, not only of one, but of all beings living in this world, who have to take this world in its present aspect as the firm basis and starting point for their further development or their final liberation.

Without facing this past and recognizing it as the world in which we live, we cannot become free from its bondage, which becomes stronger the more we try to reject it. We become free, not through rejection or aversion, but through knowledge, through understanding and accepting things as they are, in their true nature. This is the first aspect of meditation, represented by the *Dhyāni-Buddha Akṣobhya*: the pure awareness of things as they are and the awareness of being conscious of them and of ourselves.

It is here that the ocean of consciousness becomes conscious of itself, by reflecting all things as in a mirror: without attachment and without aversion, without discriminating or

MUDRĀ Gestures	LEVELS	SKANDHA Constituents	TRANSFORMED Into:	REPRESENTED By:	
<i>Bhūmisparsa-mudrā</i> Earth-touching (right palm inward)	basic level	<i>Rūpa</i> Form & Corporeality	Wisdom of the Great Mirror	<i>Akṣobhya</i> , the Unshakable Touching the Earth	Intro- spective
					<i>Dāna-mudrā</i> Giving (right palm outward)
<i>Dhyāna-mudrā</i> Meditation (both palms upward)	middle level	<i>Samjñā</i> Perception	Wisdom of Distinguishing Inner Vision	<i>Amitābha</i> Infinite Light Meditating	Intro- spective
					<i>Abhaya-mudrā</i> Fearlessness (right palm outward)
<i>Dharma-mudrā</i> Universal Law (left palm inward; right palm outward)	upper level	<i>Samskāra</i> Volition	The All-Accom- plishing "Karma"-free Action	<i>Amyatāsiddhi</i> The All Accom- plisher, Blessing	Communi- cating
					<i>Vijñāna</i> Coordinating Consciousness



judging, merely taking in the totality of all that is within and without ourselves, the totality of our past and our present as it offers itself to our spiritual eye. This is the Wisdom of the Great Mirror.

The stilling of the mind, therefore, is the first step of meditation, and this stilling is possible only if we recognize the firm ground of our present position and the world in which we live. We have created this world through our own past, in so far as the latter determines that which our senses are capable of perceiving and experiencing. Thus the touching of the earth is the recognition of our past in the mirror of our present consciousness, and the firmer we take our stand on this "earth," the more perfectly can we reflect the light of "heaven," the universality of the mind.

The palm of the hand that is touching the earth is turned inward and therefore relates to our inner center. The outward turned palm establishes communication with others. It indicates both an opening of ourselves toward others and an outflowing of psychic forces. A gesture of blessing, for instance, would be inconceivable, if the back of the hand were turned toward the object or the person to be blessed. In the laying on of hands the palm rests on the head of the person receiving the blessing, because it is from the palms that psychic force is supposed to emanate.

The turning of the palm outward in the reversal of the earth-touching gesture constitutes, therefore, a complete reversal of the conscious attitude, namely the change from the cool, detached and uninvolved "objective" observer to the warm and profoundly caring attitude of one who not only recognizes and realizes the unity of all life, but feels involved in all its forms, sharing other beings' joys and sorrows, and thus giving himself in love and compassion to all beings.

This was the attitude of the Buddha after his enlightenment when, instead of enjoying the bliss of emancipation for himself alone and entering into the final state of *parinirvāna*, he returned into the world, taking all its suffering upon himself again, in order to share his great vision and his liberating knowledge with his fellow-beings. Thus he gave to the world not only his teaching, but himself, his complete life. This is symbolized in the gesture of giving (*dāna-mudrā*) which expresses the Wisdom of Equality, or the essential oneness of all life, embodied in the form of the Dhyañi-Buddha Ramasam-

bhava, whose right hand is stretched across his knee with the palm turned *outward* and his fingertips barely touching the earth.

The most general attitude of meditation, in which all levels of the mind are engaged, is represented by the Dhyañi-Buddha Amitābha, the Buddha of Infinite Light, who embodies the Wisdom of Distinguishing Inner Vision. Both his hands with palms turned upward, rest upon the soles of his upturned feet, the active right hand upon the passive left hand. The upward turned palms, so characteristic of this gesture of meditation (*dhyāna-mudrā*), signify a receptivity toward the eternal qualities and forces of the universe. The palms are like open bows, ready to receive the gifts of heaven. In this gesture the body is in perfect symmetry, completely centered, balanced, and relaxed.

Only out of this centered and relaxed attitude can spontaneous and selfless action be born. This is represented by the Dhyañi-Buddha Amoghāsiddhi, who embodies the Wisdom That Accomplishes All Works. His right hand, with the palm turned *outward* and the fingers stretched upward, is raised to the height of his shoulders in the gesture of fearlessness (*abhaya-mudrā*), reassurance, and blessing. Amoghāsiddhi is the embodiment of that highest freedom in which an Enlightened One moves through his actions without creating new karmic bonds through his actions, because they are motivated by selfless love and compassion.

The passive left hand of all the four above-mentioned Dhyañi-Buddhas is always shown as resting in the lap with its palm turned upward in an open, receptive attitude, because our essential, though unconscious, relationship to the universe (or its corresponding forces within us) is common to all stages of meditation. Besides the direction of the palms we have to consider the three planes or levels of these gestures. The first two *mudrās* are on the basic level and point toward the earth. The *Dhyāna-mudrā* is on the middle level, which represents "man," in whom "heaven" and "earth" are united. The fourth gesture is on the universal level, where wisdom turns into spiritual action.

On this level we also find the fifth gesture, which belongs to the central Buddha of the mandala: Vairocana, the Radiating One, who represents the sum total of the Four Wisdoms, namely the Universal Law. His gesture is the "Setting in Mo-

tion the Wheel of the Law" (*dharmacakra-mudrā*). In this gesture both hands are active on the level of the heart center, the left hand turned inward, the right turned outward. Thus the inner and the outer worlds are united in the ultimate realization, as well as in the primordial state of universality.

References and Notes

¹ In contrast to this natural gesture of praying, which has been depicted in numberless ancient paintings and sculptures of various religions, is another gesture, in which the fingers are interlocked in such a way that it appears as if the praying person were shackled or straining in a feeling of helplessness and despair, or struggling to obtain something by sheer force of will. It is significant that this gesture—which apparently was unknown or not favored in early and medieval Christianity and even during the Renaissance, as we can see from numerous well-known paintings—has now, as it seems, been generally adopted in Western countries. Does it not reflect the tense, if not cramped, attitude of the Western individual?

4

ORIENTATION, COLOR, AND TIME-SEQUENCE IN THE MANDALA

FROM THE FOREGOING it becomes clear that the position of the Dhyanī-Buddhas in the mandala is not only concerned with a spatial arrangement and their mutual relations, but also indicates a sequence in time, a development or unfolding of spiritual qualities in the process of meditation, which comprises the totality of the human consciousness and all its faculties, as indicated in the five *skandhas*.

The mandala is like a map of the inner world, which we want to explore and realize in the great venture of meditation. But just as a map conveys nothing to one who is not familiar with its conventional symbols or the geographical names and designations, in the same way a mandala can have no meaning for people who have no idea of the underlying tradition and symbology. Just as we have to know the language and the alphabet before we can read a book, we have to know the

language of symbols and colors before we can read and appreciate the message of a mandala! But people nowadays talk about mandalas, collect and produce mandalas and look upon them as merely aesthetic compositions or decorations, or as magic devices to induce meditative trance states. They fail to realize that mandalas have a precise meaning and that every detail in them is significant and does not depend on arbitrary moods or whims of an artist, but is the outcome of centuries of meditative experience and a conventional language of symbols as precise as the sign-language of mathematical formulas, where not only each sign, but also its position within the formula determines its value.

Even an ordinary geographical map presupposes that we know, for instance, that blue stands for oceans and lakes, blue lines for rivers, black or red lines for roads and railways, green for low-lying plains, different shades of brown for mountains of different altitudes, etc. But even these indications would be of little use to the observer if the map were not oriented according to the four quarters of the compass. Unless we know that the top of the map is north and the bottom south, so that the east is to the right and the west to the left, the map would not help us to find our direction.

The same holds true for the mandala. But if people take it for granted that the mandala is oriented like a geographical map, they miss the meaning and confuse the time-sequence of its details. North, south, east, and west in a mandala are not indications of three-dimensional space, but of movement within the inner space of meditative-experience. And this movement, like the course of the sun, begins in the east. Consequently, the entrance into the mandala is from its eastern quarter, where the sun rises, in other words, from where the meditative experience starts. Since the mandala was originally drawn or composed on the ground in front of the mediator, the entrance is the point nearest to him and, therefore, designated as east, and as the movement from there proceeds clockwise, following the course of the sun, the left side of the mandala is designated as south, the right side as north and the farthest point opposite to the mediator as west. If such a mandala is reproduced in a *thangka* and hung on a wall like a map, what is up would be the west (and not the north) and what is down the east (and not the south). This has been misunderstood and misrepresented so often (by reproducing man-

dalas the wrong way round), that it is necessary to point this out as clearly as possible.

The prototype of all mandalas is the great *Śūpa* in Sanchi, a massive tumulus, in which some of the relics of the historical Buddha Sākyaṃuni, were enshrined. The *Śūpa* is surrounded by a monumental stone railing with gates (*toranā*) opening toward the four quarters of the universe. The emphasis on Buddhism, which welcomes all seekers of truth with the Buddha's words, "Come and see," has been preserved in the mandalas of the Vajrayāna, where the ground-plan of a square temple with four open gates surrounds the inner circle.

Between the stone railing and the base of the *Śūpa* was a path for ritual circumambulation (*pradakṣiṇā-pāthā*) in the direction of the sun's course. The orientation of the gates also corresponds to the sun's course: sunrise, zenith, sunset, nadir. As the sun illuminates the physical world, so does the Enlightened One illuminate the spiritual world. The eastern gateway represents the Buddha's birth, the southern his enlightenment, the western the proclamation of his doctrine, and the northern his final liberation (*parinirvāna*).

Circumambulating the *Śūpa*-sanctuary thus meant to re-experience the Buddha's path of liberation; and this is exactly what the tantric mandala means. But instead of following the chronological order of events in the life of the historical Buddha, the infinitely more complex and developed mandala of the Vajrayāna follows the psychological structure of the human mind and the elements of the human personality, as contained in the Buddha's original teaching and definition of the *śaṅdhas*.

Thus, the Wisdom of the Great Mirror, as embodied in Akṣobhya, occupies the eastern quarter of the mandala; Ratnasambhava, the embodiment of the Wisdom of Equality, occupies the southern quarter; Amitābha, the embodiment of the Distinguishing Wisdom of Inner Vision occupies the west; Amoghasiddhi, the embodiment of the All-Accomplishing Wisdom, the north; and Vairocana, the sum total of all these Wisdoms, occupies the center.

To each of these quarters and their presiding Dhyaṇi-Buddhas is assigned a particular color: to the east the dark-blue of the sky before sunrise, to the south the yellow of the sun at noon, to the west the red of the setting sun, and to the

north the mysterious blue-green of the moon-lit night. The center, the integration of all colors, is white.

In this way the colors of the Dhyaṇi-Buddhas and their respective quarters of the mandala express a particular mood and spiritual attitude which—combined with their gestures—give each of them an outspoken character and an easily visualized image. The very colors in which these images appear free them from any conception of materiality and raises them to the level of an intense psychic reality—a reality that is as actual as the mind that experiences them.

However, the capacity of experiencing them depends on the creative faculties of our intuitive consciousness and the depth of our feeling. Both can be developed by the practice of guided visualization and mantric evocation, as taught in the *sādhana*s (practices) and liturgies of tantric meditation. These again are based on a deep understanding of our depth-consciousness and a general knowledge of human psychology. This was regarded as more important than occupation with metaphysical problems and speculations, as we can see from the early Abhidharma literature, out of which the later tantric *sādhana*s with their meticulous psychological details and mandalas grew.

4. Factor: Every shape and form that arises in the soul, every link which in a mysterious way, joins us to the Universal Life and unites us, maybe without our being aware of it, to Man's most ancient experience, the voices which reach us from the depth of the abyss, all are welcomed with almost affectionate solicitude. Buddhism does not desire that such life of the soul should be scattered. It is of no importance if these images, visions, fears and hopes are not entirely suited to our own vision. They are a legacy which Man carries with him from his birth. They have a positive, real existence like the things we see and feel. They are an irrepressible element of our persons. If, with the rule of reason, we should desire to thrust them back down into the depth of our souls, they would burst forth, all the same, sudden and destructive. It is better, then, to assume possession of them at the first and then by degrees to transfigure them, just as one passes from the outer enclosure of the mandala, successively, through the others until one reaches the central point, the primordial equipoise regained after the experience of life.¹

Even the negative aspects of our *skandhas*, our passions, aversions, attachments and delusions have to be truly recognized and painfully experienced before they can become stepping stones for our progress on the way to liberation, before they can become transformed into the light of higher wisdom.

The aim of all the Tantras is to teach the ways whereby we may set free the divine light which is mysteriously present and shining in each of us, although it is enveloped in an insidious web of psyche's weaving.²

In this aim all Buddhist systems of meditation are united, though their ways may differ. But as long as they recognize the Four Wisdoms as the basis of all meditative practices, they shall never lose that spiritual balance on which the final success of them all depends. That this was recognized not only in the Mahayāna literature and in Indian and Tibetan Tantras, but equally in Chinese Chan and Japanese Zen, becomes evident in Rinzai's (Lin-chi was his Chinese name) "Fourfold Contemplation."³

Explaining his meditational method Rinzai made the following statement:

At the first instance I destroy the Man and not the object:

At the second instance I destroy the object but not the Man.

At the third instance I destroy both: the man and the object.

At the fourth instance I destroy none of them: neither the Man nor the object.

This statement, which on the surface sounds like a paradoxical Zen *koan*, is in reality a sober assessment of the subject-object relationship in the experience of the Four Wisdoms:

In the Wisdom of the Great Mirror the pure *objective* awareness prevails, while the notion of the subject (Man) is absent.

In the Wisdom of the Essential Equality of all beings, the *subject* (Man) becomes the only conscious reality, without an object.

In the Wisdom of Distinguishing Vision both subject and object lose their independent reality and are seen in their mutually dependent relationship on the universal stage, and

in their eternal interplay of emptiness and form, in which materiality, thingness, and the illusion of separate entities gives way to the transparency of creative vision. It was this experience, according to the Buddha's own words, that characterized his enlightenment.

In the All-Accomplishing Wisdom of selfless action, subject and object are restored to their functional status of polarity on the plane of the three-dimensional world of existential—i.e. relative—reality. Thus, "neither the Man nor the object" is destroyed, and we have returned into our familiar world, where "mountains are again mountains and waters are again waters" (to use the well-known Zen phrase), but where we see them with new eyes, no more veiled by the illusion of egoity and separateness and freed from craving and possessiveness as well as from enmity and aversion. *Samsāra* has turned into *Nirvāna*; the mundane world has turned into a gigantic mandala, in which every form has become an expression of total reality and every living being a unique manifestation of a greater life and a universal consciousness.

Thus, the meditative experience of the Four Wisdoms has revealed itself as a tremendous symphony of four movements, in which the pendulum of experience results in the transformation of *all* faculties of man, until he has become complete.

This completeness cannot be achieved through negations—for which reason the Buddha rejected asceticism—nor through one-sided affirmation of the one or the other of our basic faculties. Feeling has to be balanced by knowledge, intuition by clear thought, contemplation by action. Those who believe that by mere passive sitting they can attain enlightenment, are as far from the mark as those who believe that they can achieve liberation by mere learnedness or pious recitation of sacred texts. This was pointed out by the ancient Ch'an Master Tai-hui when he wrote to his disciple Chen-ju Tao-jen:

There are two forms of error now prevailing among followers of Zen, laymen as well as monks. The one thinks that there are wonderful things hidden in words and phrases. The second goes to the other extreme, forgetting that words are the pointing finger, showing one where to locate the moon. Blindly following the instructions given in the *sūtras*, where words are said to hinder the right understanding of the truth of Zen and Buddhism, they reject all verbal

teachings and simply sit with eyes closed, letting down the eyebrows as if they were completely dead. Only when these two erroneous views are done away with, is there a chance for real advancement of Zen.⁴

This sound advice is as true nowadays as it was then; it applies not only to Zen, but to all methods of meditation.

References and Notes

¹ Giuseppe Tucci, *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala*, (Rider & Co., London), p. 83.

² *Ibid.*

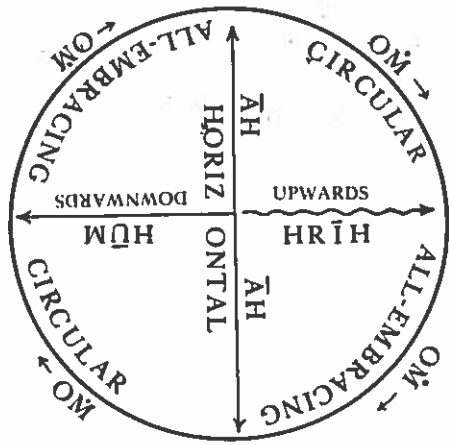
³ *Kaito-shu*, part 11, folio 27b-28a, quoted by Ohasama-Faust in *Zen, der lebendige Buddhismus in Japan*, Perthes A.G., Gotha, 1925.

⁴ Dwight Goddard, ed., *A Buddhist Bible*, New York: Dutton.

MULTIDIMENSIONALITY OF SEED-SYLLABLES (BĪJĀ)

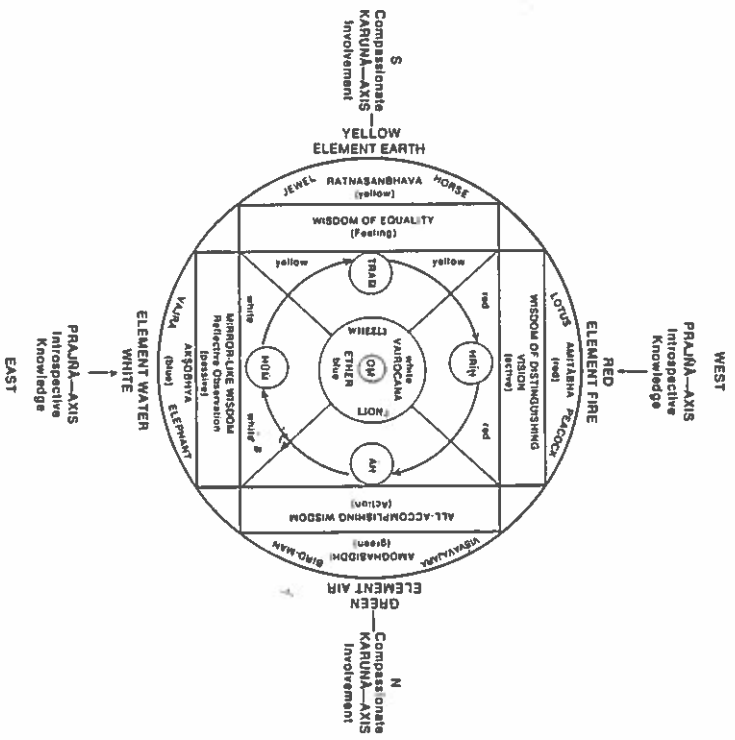
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It is significant that the main mantric seed-syllables (*biḥa*) of the Vajrayāna, and in particular those used in the basic structure of the mandala of the Dhyaṇi-Buddhas, are based on simple vowel sounds, like o, ā, ū, ī, corresponding to four movements; the circular (all-inclusive), the horizontal, the downward, and the upward movement.



The upward and downward movements of HRĪḤ and HŪM also correspond to the movements of the respective elements with which they are associated in the mandala: fire moves upward, water downward. Earth and air, associated with the *biḥas* TRĀM and ĀH stretch out horizontally.
Just as water and fire are opposites in movement, so Akṣobhya and Amitābha stand opposite each other in the mandala. But their polarity, i.e., their compensatory nature, is indicated by the fact that they belong to the same axis in the diagram

upon which the mandala is constructed. Their common factor is that both represent introspective attitudes; their difference consists in the fact that Akṣobhya's attitude is mainly a reflective and receptive awareness, while Amitābha's attitude is that of discerning or distinguishing vision, i.e. active and creative.
Their corresponding mudrās show the same tendency. Akṣobhya's reflective attitude is expressed by the inward turned palm of his right hand, Amitābha's distinguishing vision by the upward turned palm of his right hand. Thus the (vertical) east-west axis of the mandala may be called the axis of intro-



BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE MANDALA OF THE FIVE DHYĀNI-BUDDHAS: THEIR BĪJA-MANTRAS, WISDOMS, ELEMENTS, COLORS AND SYMBOLS

spective knowledge (*prajñā*). In contrast to this the (horizontal) north-south axis may be called the outwardly directed axis of compassionate involvement.

Just as earth and air are opposites in density and movability, so Ratnasambhava and Amoghasiddhi are the polar opposites in the horizontal axis of the mandala: Ratnasambhava represents feeling and emotion, while Amoghasiddhi represents volition and action. Both are extravertive or communicative, i.e. directed toward other beings, either in the feeling of love and compassion or in the selfless action motivated by these feelings. This outward-directedness and communication is expressed in the mudrās of both Ratnasambhava and Amoghasiddhi, whose right-hand palms are turned outward.

From all this it becomes evident that the mandala reveals a double polarity: first, that of *prajñā* and *karuṇā*—the axis of introspective knowledge and the axis of compassionate involvement—and second, the inner polarity of each single axis, such as reflective awareness and creative vision of the east-west axis, or feeling and action (or emotion and volition) of the south-north axis.

But a mandala is not merely a static structure of the mind; it represents the inner space in which we move. And our movement here again reveals a third kind of polarity insofar as we are alternating between inward and outward directed states or mental attitudes. In the clockwise movement beginning from the eastern starting point, the meditator proceeds from the inward directed attitude of introspection (*Aksobhya*) to the outward directed attitude of communication (*Ratnasambhava*). In the third movement he turns again inward in the attitude of meditative absorption (*Amiṭābha*), and in the fourth movement again outward in action (*Amoghasiddhi*).

This is indicated by the respective alternating mudrās, as mentioned before. However, the change in attitude does not mean a break in the continuity of the *sādhana* or a negation of the previous experience. On the contrary, each experience forms the basis for the subsequent step and is thus integrated in the new attitude and experience.

Without the Wisdom of the Great Mirror, which reveals to us our true nature and our position in the world, we could not conceive the essential oneness of life and our solidarity with other sentient beings. And likewise, the Wisdom of Distinguishing Vision is possible only on the basis of the essential

unity of life, which enables us to see the interrelatedness of forms and individual beings. The underlying unity makes it possible to appreciate the value and the beauty of differentiation and the significance of individuality. Without it unity would be meaningless and mutual understanding impossible. And again, it is on this basis of recognizing and understanding both individuality and the essential oneness of life, that unselfish and spontaneous action can succeed in bringing happiness and liberation into the world.

The *bijas* proceed in a similar way. The *OM* is contained in the *HŪM*, as it precedes every mantra, as for instance that of *Aksobhya*: "OM *Aksobhya HŪM*." And likewise, if we now proceed from *Aksobhya* to *Ratnasambhava*, the experience of *HŪM* (and *OM*) is included in the *TRAM*, while both the experience of the *HŪM* and of the *TRAM* are included in the *HRIM*, and correspondingly all these *bijas* are present in the experience of *AḤ*.

When now we return to the *HŪM* of *Aksobhya*, we experience his Mirror-like Wisdom on a much higher level, a level that comes much nearer to that of the center. And, in fact, if we arrive on the highest level of *Aksobhya's* Wisdom, it no longer reflects merely the individual situation of the *sādhaka*, but the universality of *Vairocana's Dharmadhātu Wisdom*, which is now reflected in the Great Mirror.

When this is the case, *Aksobhya* under the name *Vairasattva-Aksobhya* (the Diamond Being) becomes identical with the center of the mandala. It is for this reason that *Aksobhya* and *Vairocana* become interchangeable.¹⁸ This relationship is clearly expressed by the colors associated with them. The body-color of *Aksobhya* is blue, the radiation of the Mirror-like Wisdom emanating from his heart is white (like the reflection and the color of the element water). The body-color of *Vairocana* is white, and the radiation of the *Dharmadhātu Wisdom*, emanating from his heart (i.e. from his essential being) is blue, (like the color of the element ether).

According to the emphasis upon the one or the other aspect of these *Dhyāni-Buddhas*, the triangular field on the eastern side of the mandala is either white or blue, in which case the circular space around *Vairocana* takes the opposite color, i.e. blue when *Aksobhya's* field is white (as in the case of our diagram of the basic mandala), and white when *Aksobhya's* field is blue.

A deeper explanation can be found in the statement of the Viññānavādins that *mano-vijñāna*, the empirical consciousness (from which we start at the beginning of our meditation) and the universal consciousness are overlapping in what has been defined as *manas*, whose object is not the sense-world, but that ever-flowing stream of becoming (*santāna*) which is limited neither by birth and death nor by individual forms of appearance, but contains the sum total of all our past, enshrined in the depth of our innermost being. It is the manifestation of the basic universal consciousness or *ālaya-vijñāna*.

While the *mano-vijñāna* sorts out and judges the results of the five kinds of sense perceptions, the *ālaya-vijñāna* has been compared to the ocean, on the surface of which waves and currents are formed when disturbed by outer influences, but which reflects the clear light of heaven when undisturbed by emotions, desires or aversions, thus becoming the Great Mirror of Aksobhya's Wisdom.

Mediating between the universal consciousness and the individual intellect is the spiritual consciousness (*manas*), which takes part in both sides. It represents the stabilizing element of the human mind, the central point of balance, upholding the coherence of its contents by being the stable point of reference. But for the same reason it can also be the cause for the conception of a permanent ego in the unenlightened individual, who mistakes this relative point of reference for the real and permanent center of his own personality. Or, as the Lankāvāra Sūtra expresses it: "Intuitive mind (*manas*) is one with Universal Mind (*ālaya-vijñāna*) by reason of its participation in Transcendental Intelligence (*ārya jñāna*) and is one with the mind-system (the five senses and the intellect) by its comprehension of differentiated knowledge."

Thus it depends whether this intuitive mind is directed toward the world of differentiated sense impressions or toward the universal [depth-] consciousness. In the first case it reflects our momentary position in the present world; this is the situation with which we begin our meditation. In the latter case it reflects our true universal nature and our identity with the *Dharmadhātu*, at which we arrive after we have moved through the mandala many times in ever narrower circles which finally merge into the center.

Since thus Aksobhya is the reflection of Vairocana on the plane of human consciousness, the mantra HŪM represents the humanized experience of the *Dharmakāya*: the realization

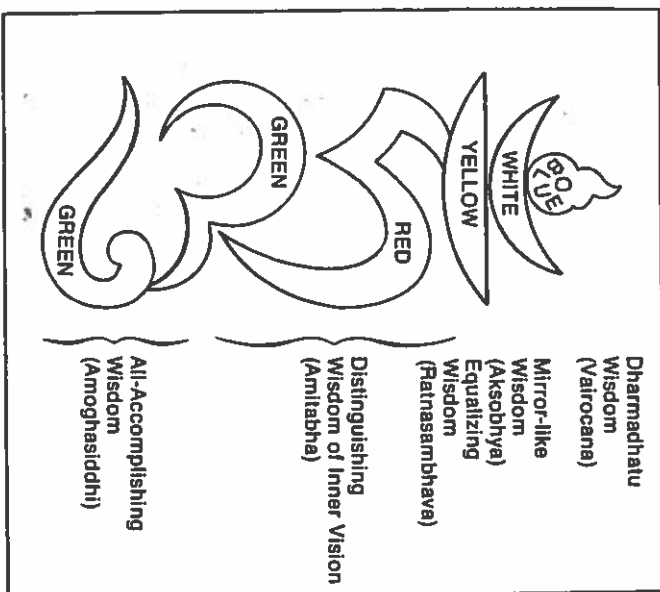
of the *Dharmakāya* in the human body, which thus becomes *Nirmānakāya*. Herein lies the special importance of HŪM, because it brings down the supramental upon the human plane, which is the aim of Buddhahood. OM is, so to say, the raw material, the universe in its pure suchness and objectivity, or the *conditio sine qua non* of all that is or appears in form. But the HŪM contains the *experience* of this suchness plus that of all its modifications. It comprises both unity and diversity.

OM may be compared to the purity of the child, in whom all possibilities of development are present in a latent form, while HŪM is the return to the purity and simplicity of the child after a life of human experience and with the knowledge and compassion that grow out of deep suffering and exalted joy. It is the attitude of an Enlightened One who has "gone the Way," who has arrived at the "other shore" (*param*). Thus the HŪM in its highest potential contains the OM and all the other mantras of the Dhyāni-Buddhas.

In those schools of the Vajrayāna which follow the mystic or inner path of Vajrasatva (the Adamantine Being)—the active reflex or emanation of Aksobhya—in whom the rays of the combined Wisdoms are integrated, Vajrasatva-Aksobhya becomes the exponent of all transformed *skandhas*, integrated into the "purified aggregate of consciousness," while Vairocana becomes the exponent of the "purified aggregate of bodily form," i.e. the principle of spatial extension, or of space as the precondition of all bodily existence. In this case the HŪM assumes a higher dimension than the one that stood at the beginning of the meditative path. It is the integration of all the experiences and spiritual attitudes and Wisdoms encountered in the process of the four movements around the center of the mandala. This may be summarized in the following formula:¹

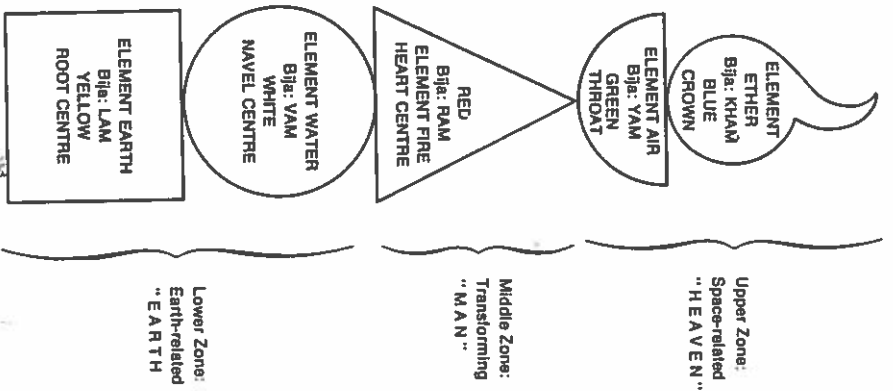
$$\begin{array}{l} \text{OM} \\ \text{HŪM} \\ \text{TRAM} \end{array} \left. \vphantom{\begin{array}{l} \text{OM} \\ \text{HŪM} \\ \text{TRAM} \end{array}} \right\} \text{OM-HŪM} \\ \text{HRĪH} \left. \vphantom{\text{HRĪH}} \right\} \text{OM-HŪM-TRAM} \\ \text{ĀH} \left. \vphantom{\text{ĀH}} \right\} \text{OM-HŪM-TRAM-HRĪH-ĀH} = \text{HŪM}^5$$

The same idea is expressed in a more graphic form, in which the seed-syllable HŪM is visualized in the colors of the five Wisdoms and their respective Dhyāni-Buddhas.



References and Notes

¹ This formula shows, as the name *seed-syllable (bija)* indicates, that it is not a static but a growing thing, which extends into ever higher dimensions through its steadily accumulating experiential content and spiritual as well as intellectual relations.



It may be noted that the elementary *bijas* are not identical with those of the Dhyani-Buddhas or those of the Three Mysteries. When the latter are consciously projected into the respective *cakras*, the nature of the *cakras* is being modified and their forces are transformed into qualities of higher awareness and potentiality.

The geometrical symbols (square, circle, triangle, semi-circle, and acuminated circle) are transformed into three-dimensional forms in the construction of *stūpas* or *chortens*, religious monuments representing simultaneously the *cakras* of the human body and the elements of the universe. The above-mentioned symbols accordingly change into cubic, spheric, conic, or pyramidal forms, the semi-circle into a cup-shape and the acuminated circle into a "flaming drop" (*bindu*) or a small ball from which a flame issues. (More about this in my *Psycho-Cosmic Symbolism of the Buddhist Stūpa*, Dharmapublishing House, Berkeley, California, 1971)