



THE ESSENCE OF
JUNG'S PSYCHOLOGY
AND TIBETAN BUDDHISM

Western and Eastern Paths to the Heart

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body, speech, and mind. Their purpose is to activate and conjure up powerful but dormant forces from the deep levels of the unconscious; it is a confrontation with our innermost nature to awaken us.

The three basic and prevalent methods are: recitation of mantras (sacred words) involving the speech; performance of ritual gestures (mudras) involving the body; meditation (especially visualization of and identification with deities) involving the mind.

I shall return to these methods in a subsequent chapter and discuss them and their meaning in more detail, as well as the symbolism and function of mandalas. At this point it may suffice to state that:

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 one of us, although it is enveloped in an insidious web of the psyche's weaving.⁴⁴

2 Carl Gustav Jung

Two and a half millennia after Buddha and about a century ago, on the other side of the globe from India, Carl Gustav Jung was born. He was born and lived his entire life in Switzerland, in that lovely, peaceful country in the heart of Europe and the Western world, the country that has known no wars for many, many years. His parents and ancestors on both sides were traditional people, deeply rooted in the Swiss soil and customs, which endure and tolerate no change. He loved his country, but from an early age he felt that its beauty belonged to a space and a time that far transcended the narrow boundaries of that tiny nation and its immovable society. His very first memories—first intimation of something larger than himself—were memories of wonder as he stood in awesome contemplation of the blue waters of Lake Constance, and the white, snow-covered peaks of the majestic Alps. Already then he had a sense that this was the center of the universe—not the universe of his parents and the few million Swiss, but of a very private universe within himself that he saw mirrored in the quiet waters of the lake, and extending to the peaks of the Alps, and beyond into infinity.

He grew up as a shy, sensitive boy, often at odds with his parents' beliefs and his teachers' demands. He felt both very special and at times inadequate in school in comparison to his classmates. He was easily hurt and was prone to outbursts of rage when injustice was done to him—when, for example, his teacher accused him of cheating. But it was in such moments that he sought and found refuge in his personality Number Two, as he

used to call it. This personality was his true authentic self, reaching deep into the roots of mankind itself, perhaps even before mankind was.

Somewhere deep in the background I always knew that I was two persons. One was the son of my parents, who went to school and was less intelligent, attentive, hard-working, decent, and clean than many other boys. The other was grown up—old, in fact—skeptical, mistrustful, remote from the world of men, but close to nature, the earth, the sun, the moon, the weather, all living creatures, and above all close to the night, to dreams, and to whatever “God” worked directly in him.⁴⁵

This “other” was a fragile, frail personality that often eluded him, and so he had to push forward with his so-called personality Number One, a sham, a game, one that gradually more and more satisfied all around him, but not his own self. So he continued his path, going from one success to another; whatever he worked at he accomplished with flying colors. But the turmoil inside never left him and was a constant prodder that led him astray from where everyone around him expected him to go: while his personality Number One was brilliant, his personality Number Two was aching with pain, the pain of unfulfilled wholeness. He searched for that wholeness all his life.

He heard of a professor in Vienna. He went to see the professor and paid his respect to him, as he mistook the professor for a genius who was not understood by others. They became close friends and associates. Jung's personality Number Two, however, rebelled at the very instance of their first encounter. But he refused to heed his personality Number Two, which was still weak and submerged at that time. The professor in Vienna became famous, and as his fame grew their friendship dwindled. Only later Jung understood: it was not their friendship that dwindled, it was his personality Number Two that became an indi-

vidual in his own right. The professor from Vienna and Jung parted. This was the greatest shock in his life. It threw him into darkness such as he had never known before. But out of it his entire work emerged.

He had left behind not only his friend from Vienna, to whom he nevertheless always remained grateful, but also his personality Number One. From then on Jung devoted himself fully to his personality Number Two. Many people from all the corners of the world came to see him and inspire him, as he inspired them. Alone in his stone tower he was in deep and intimate contact with everything and everyone that was at that time, that preceded him, and would follow him. On a stormy day in late spring, at the age of eighty-five, his long and rich life came to an end. His personality Number One finally left him for good. But his personality Number Two goes on living, for there was no time when it was not and there can be no time it will cease to be.

“My life has been in a sense the quintessence of what I have written,”⁴⁶ says C. G. Jung in the introduction to his autobiography. So his entire life, his myth, should be viewed as an indivisible whole that proceeded as a gradual and continuous unfoldment out of its own unique seed. No event, no aspect of his outer or inner life, is unimportant or irrelevant to his work.

My life is what I have done, my scientific work; the one is inseparable from the other. The work is the expression of my inner development; for commitment to the contents of the unconscious forms the man and produces his transformations. My works can be regarded as stations along my life's way.⁴⁷

There was a particularly pregnant time in Jung's life, a time when new ideas were germinating that were to occupy him for the rest of his life. This was the period following his break with Freud, when for a while he lost his bearings. It was a time of confusion, turmoil, isolation, loneliness—of inner chaos. Jung

was assailed with confusing dreams, images, visions, a surge of unconscious material that at times made him doubt his own sanity. And indeed, in a sense it was not unlike a psychotic break. But it was also a crucial intersection, a most creative station along his life's way. These were the years of Jung's confrontation with his unconscious.

Here the vision of the young Siddhartha Gautama comes back to our mind. The well-protected innocent prince suddenly shocked by the sights of the tragic side of life—sickness, old age, and death—his determination to find answers to the riddle of life, first unsuccessfully from learned men, and finally from within himself, in deep meditation under the bodhi tree. Similarly, Jung could not find answers to his questions either from Freud or anyone else, from any books and theories, and so like Siddhartha, he left behind all of them to look for answers within his own psyche. In his autobiography Jung tells us he had to undergo the original experience himself. One day he sat at his desk, let himself drop, and plunged into the depths of his psyche, submitting to the spontaneous impulses of his unconscious.⁴⁸ This was the very beginning of an experiment that lasted for several years and produced a wealth of material, later to become part of Jung's most important works, his most creative contributions. Throughout that time he not only observed carefully but wrote down, and embellished with drawings, his dreams, fantasies, and visions, and they all became part of his famous Red Book. But being trained as a scientist, he felt the obligation to understand the meaning of all that material. "I had to draw concrete conclusions from the insight the unconscious had given me—and that task was to become a life's work."⁴⁹ He had to show that his very personal, subjective experiences were potential experiences of all humankind, for they were an inherent part of the nature of the psyche.⁵⁰ It was, though, a revolutionary way in scientific methodology, "a new way of seeing things."⁵¹ Above all Jung had to prove that his own experiences were real, which others could have too: that the unconscious was a demonstrable psychic real-

ity, but which had its own style and spoke its own language, namely the universal language of images and symbols. Furthermore Jung became aware that the insights gained from the unconscious must be translated into an ethical obligation.

Not to do so is to fall prey to the power principle, and this produces dangerous effects which are destructive not only to others but even to the knower. The images of the unconscious place a great responsibility upon a man. Failure to understand them, or a *shirking of ethical responsibility, deprives him of his wholeness and imposes a painful fragmentariness on his life.*⁵²

This thought is reminiscent of Buddhist ethics, as enunciated in the eightfold path, particularly in right action and right meditation. Personal suffering cannot be eliminated, and individual wholeness achieved, when ethical conduct is not observed. Jung understood, as Buddha pointed out long ago, that mere ego-centered pursuits in disregard of others lead to confusion. Thus knowledge acquired through contact with the unconscious—through "right meditation"—in order to have any significance, must become an integral part of one's life; it must be translated into "right action."

After about six years of a fierce struggle with the darkness of his unconscious, Jung began to have the first inklings of light. The dawn appeared when he started sketching mandalas—one new mandala every day. A *mandala*, the Sanskrit word for circle, is the circular pattern form found in all elements of nature, and in the arts and dances of all people, throughout history. It is also an image residing in the depths of the human psyche that spontaneously emerges and assumes many different forms. It usually takes shape in times of disorganization and inner chaos, and it is nature's way of restoring balance and order. Jung discovered, through his own experience, that each single mandala he drew was an expression of his inner state of being at that particular

time. As his psychic state changed so did the mandala he would spontaneously sketch. He came to the conclusion that the mandala represented "Formation, Transformation, Eternal Mind's eternal recreation."⁵³ At the same time he realized that the efforts he pursued consciously, prompted so to speak by his personality Number One, were undermined by a stronger force that compelled him to take a different path. In other words, he could not choose a goal, rather it chose him.

I had to let myself be carried along by the current, without a notion of where it would lead me. When I began drawing the mandalas, however, I saw that everything, all the paths I had been following, all the steps I had taken, were leading back to a single point—namely, to the mid-point. It became increasingly plain to me that the mandala is the center. It is the exponent of all paths. It is the path to the center, to individuation.⁵⁴

Thus the forceful and persistent question in his mind was answered—the question as to what this process is all about and what its destination is. The goal was the Self, the alpha and omega of psychic development, for the Self is the *proto-image* out of which the person emerges, and the culmination of his growth.

And then Jung had a dream that was symbolic of his situation at the time (darkness and isolation, but also an emerging vision of light and flowering of new life), and through its elaborate imagery unmistakably pointed to the center, the Self, as the goal.

Through this dream I understood that the Self is the principle and archetype of orientation and meaning. Therein lies its healing function. For me, this insight signified an approach to the center and therefore to the goal. Out of this emerged a first inkling of my personal myth.⁵⁵

This was an event of tremendous importance, a turning point in Jung's life and his work. It was the climax of his confrontation with the unconscious, his six years of solitary battle with the dark depths of his psyche. Jung describes these years as

the most important in my life—in them everything essential was decided. It all began then; the later details are only supplements and clarifications of the material that burst forth from the unconscious, and at first swamped me. It was the *prima materia* for a lifetime's work.⁵⁶

It was during those years that he made the discovery of the collective unconscious and developed the concepts of the archetypes and the Self. But much work still lay ahead of him: all the fantasies and material that had flooded him from the unconscious and the insights he gained needed to be built on a solid foundation of scientific theory. That work gradually unfolded as Jung encountered alchemy.

In alchemy he discovered that, unlike in Christianity, the feminine principle is as important as the masculine. The symbols in alchemy, "those old acquaintances" of Jung, fascinated him.⁵⁷ But he began really to understand it after reading a Chinese alchemical text, *The Secret of the Golden Flower*.⁵⁸ This was also probably the beginning of his interest in Oriental philosophies and spiritual traditions. To Jung "the secret of the alchemy was in...the transformation of personality through the blending and fusion of the noble with the base components...of the conscious with the unconscious."⁵⁹ In alchemy he found a correspondence to his psychology, which gave his work a confirmation of its validity. It was not, however, the end product of Jung's creative journey, for he did not stop with psychology: he went beyond it.

COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS

Jung's greatest contribution to psychology was his theory of the

collective unconscious. He argued that this concept was not a speculative idea or a philosophical postulate, but that there was an empirical proof for it.⁶⁰ He defines the collective unconscious as the part of the psyche that owes its existence exclusively to heredity, and not to personal experiences that had been conscious at one time and then disappeared from consciousness. The latter is the layer of the psyche that he calls the personal unconscious and that contains all the material that the individual has merely forgotten or repressed, either deliberately or unintentionally.⁶¹ Thus Jung makes the distinction between the personal unconscious, the subjective psyche, and the objective psyche that he calls the impersonal, transpersonal, or collective unconscious. He discovered the collective unconscious through his own dreams and visions, as well as those of his patients, including fantasies of schizophrenics. He observed that all this material often contained mythological motifs and religious symbols. Jung then came to the following conclusion:

In addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche (even if we tack on the personal unconscious as an appendix), there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents.⁶²

ARCHETYPES

According to Jung, archetypes—the contents of the collective unconscious—are analogous to instincts. Both are fundamental dynamic forces in the human personality that pursue their inherent goals, in the psychic or physiological organisms respectively.

Jung also refers to archetypes as primordial images, “the most ancient and the most universal thought-form of humanity. They are as much feelings as thoughts.”⁶³ But it should be stressed that archetypes are not inherited ideas; they are merely propensities in the human psyche that can express themselves in specific forms and meaning when activated.

There are as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life. Endless repetition has engraved these experiences into our psychic constitution, not in the form of images filled with content, but at first only as *forms without content*, representing merely the possibility of a certain type of perception and action. When a situation occurs which corresponds to a given archetype, that archetype becomes activated and a compulsiveness appears, which, like an instinctual drive, gains its way against all reason and Will....⁶⁴

In developing the concept of archetypes and their dynamism, Jung quotes a remarkable example: the genesis of the idea of conservation of energy, credited to Robert Mayer in the nineteenth century. The latter was not a physicist who might be naturally preoccupied with such a concept, but a physician, and the idea came to him in a most extraordinary way, during a voyage in the tropics. Here is what Mayer wrote about his experience and discovery:

I'm far from having hatched out the theory at my writing desk. [He then reports certain physiological observations he had made...as ship's doctor.] Now, if one wants to be clear on matters of physiology, some knowledge of physical processes is essential, unless one prefers to work at things from the metaphysical side, which I find infinitely disgusting. I therefore held fast to physics and stuck to the subject with such fondness that, although many may

laugh at me for this, I paid but little attention to that remote quarter of the globe in which we were, preferring to remain on board where I could work without intermission, and where I passed many an hour as though *inspired*, the like of which I cannot remember either before or since. Some flashes of thought that passed through me while in the roads of Surabaya were at once assiduously followed up, and in their turn led to fresh subjects. Those lines have passed, but the quiet examination of that which then came to the surface in me has taught me that it is a truth, which cannot only be subjectively felt, but objectively proved. It remains to be seen whether this can be accomplished by a man so little versed in physics as I am.⁶⁵

The question that Jung asked himself is: where did this new idea come from and impose itself upon consciousness, and what is the force behind it that overwhelmed the personality? And the answer can be found only in applying his theory of archetypes, that is, that “the idea of energy and its conservation must be a primordial image that was dormant in the collective unconscious.”⁶⁶ Jung then proceeds to demonstrate that such a primordial image indeed existed since most primitive times, expressed in many different forms, as for example the idea of demonism, magic power, the soul’s immortality, and many others. The notion of energy, its preservation or rather transmutation, is the central concept in all tantras.

THE SELF

As already stated, there are countless archetypes, but the one that encompasses all others, the quintessential archetype, is the Self. It is the organizing, guiding, and uniting principle that gives the personality direction and meaning in life. It is the beginning, the source of the personality and its ultimate goal, the culmination of

one’s growth, that is, self-realization. The Self is the *homo totus*, the timeless man, that not only expresses his unique individuality and wholeness but is the symbol of man’s divinity when he touches the cosmos, his microcosm reflecting the macrocosm.

Intellectually the Self is no more than a psychological concept, a construct that serves to express an unknowable essence which we cannot grasp as such, since by definition it transcends our powers of comprehension. It might equally well be called the “God within us.” The beginnings of our whole psychic life seem to be inextricably rooted in this point, and all our highest and ultimate purposes seem to be striving towards it.⁶⁷

Jung also refers to the Self as being both unitemporal and unique, and universal and eternal, the one expressing man’s essence, and the other being a God-image, an archetypal symbol.⁶⁸

INDIVIDUATION

Between the stages of the self as a source in the beginning and the Self as a goal, in its ultimate destination, there is an ongoing continuity of development, which Jung has called the process of individuation. It is the process of integration of the personality. This archetypal, universal psychic process is autonomous and unconscious, and it has run its course since immemorial time. It reflects psyche’s striving to harmonize its conscious and unconscious contents, and it is the natural and spontaneous urge for self-realization and wholeness, the quest for meaning. Collectively it has been expressed in the multitudes of myths and symbols in which mankind has given outward form to its inner experiences. On an individual level, although the process always goes on since the psyche never rests, it may remain purely unconscious or it may become a conscious task. Whether it will lead in one direction or the other depends on the intervention of consciousness.

The difference between the two roads is tremendous, and their outcome far reaching. In one instance when consciousness is not involved, "the end remains as dark as the beginning." In the other instance "the personality is permeated with light," and consciousness is further extended and enhanced.⁶⁹

Through alchemy and its symbolism Jung became aware that the transformation of personality takes place in the interaction between the ego and the unconscious, out of which a new unified being emerges. It is a new being, yet not entirely new, for it was always there, but dormant and hidden in the chaos of the unconscious. The process requires an open communication between the conscious mind and its unconscious counterpart, a sensitivity to the signals of the unconscious, which speaks in the language of symbols. It is the constant dialogue between the outer and the inner, the mundane life and its symbolic dimensions—dreams, fantasies, visions.

The arduous task of conscious confrontation with the unconscious has the effect of expanding consciousness, of diminishing the sovereign powers of the unconscious and bringing about the renewal and transformation of personality. This change, which is the central object of alchemy and of Jung's psychotherapy, comes about through the principle that Jung called the transcendent function.⁷⁰

Indeed it is more than an arduous and often painful task, as Jung experienced himself. It is a battle between two opposing forces, each contending for its own rights, the battle between reason and rationality versus chaos and irrationality. At the same time it has to be a collaboration between the conscious and unconscious attitudes of the psyche: consciousness must heed its unconscious counterpart, must listen to the inner voices, so that the latter can cooperate with consciousness instead of disturbing it.

The confrontation of the two positions generates a tension charged with energy and creates a living, third thing—not a logical stillbirth...but a movement out of

the suspension between opposites, a living birth that leads to a new level of being....⁷¹

Since the process aims at the total transformation of personality, nothing that belongs to it, no aspect of it, must be excluded.⁷² And the consummation of this union of opposites, in order to create new life—not a logical stillbirth—must be attended not only by Logos, the rational principle, but by Eros too, the principle of relatedness.⁷³

So, individuation leads from oneness, emptiness, the undifferentiated state of unconsciousness, *participation mystique*,⁷⁴ to ever-increasing differentiation, the supremacy of the ego, to oneness, emptiness again, which has become fullness—to the Self, the mandala. The end has rejoined its beginning, and the ultimate goal its original source.

ALCHEMY

The evolution of personality, or, as Jung called it, the individuation process, has been expressed in different terms by the symbolism of alchemy. Even though the alchemists set themselves the task of revealing the secrets of matter and chemical transformation, their labor primarily reflected a parallel psychic process, which met with a strong resonance in Jung's mind and had an enormous impact on his work.

To Jung the chemical experiments of the alchemists, the whole alchemical *opus*, was of a psychic nature rather than a search for the secret of gold-making. The alchemists themselves proclaimed that "*Aurum nostrum non est aurum vulgi*."⁷⁵ While working in his laboratory the alchemist had certain psychic experiences that he attributed to the properties of the matter; Jung believed that in fact he was experiencing his own unconscious. "In seeking to explore it [the matter] he projected the unconscious into the darkness of matter in order to illuminate it."⁷⁶

It has been generally understood that the purpose of alchemy

was to produce a miraculous substance, gold, panacea, elixir of life. But in actuality, above and beyond that, the very essence of all alchemical work was a spiritual exercise whose goal was none other than spiritual transformation, liberation of God from the darkness of matter.⁷⁷ The bewildering profusion of complicated and often grotesque alchemical symbolism describes pictorially the process of change from psychic sleep to awakening, and the stages along that journey. Jung found in this symbolism an illustration of what he had called the process of individuation: one's gradual unfoldment from an unconscious to a conscious state, and the healing process underlying it.⁷⁸

In medieval European alchemy, which he discovered by way of Chinese alchemy, Jung found the spiritual roots of a Western tradition that addressed itself to the same issues that preoccupied him all his life. Thus alchemy provided him with a historical foundation as well as validation for his own findings.

As in Jung's psychology, opposites and their union play a major role in alchemical procedure. The union is the motivating force and the goal of the process. But at the beginning of the process the opposites form a dualism, conceived in numerous terms such as: upper and lower, cold and warm, spirit (soul) and body, heaven and earth, bright and dark, active and passive, precious and cheap, good and evil, open and hidden, inner and outer, East and West, god and goddess, masculine and feminine.⁷⁹

The primal opposites are consciousness and unconsciousness, whose symbols are Sol and Luna—sun and moon—the one representing the diurnal and the other the nocturnal side of consciousness, the male and female principles. The corresponding alchemical substances are sulfur and salt. Sulfur, because of its association with the sun, is the masculine principle expressing consciousness. In alchemical texts it is referred to as “the male and universal seed,” the “spirit of generative power,” the “source of illumination and all knowledge.” It has a double nature: in its initial crude form it is burning and corrosive and has an offensive odor, but when transmuted, “cleansed of all impurities, it is the

matter of our stone.”⁸⁰ Salt, because of its association with the moon, is the feminine principle and expresses various aspects of the unconscious. Like its counterpart sulfur, salt contains a double nature: in its unrefined form, coming from the sea, it is bitter and harsh, like tears and sorrow, yet at the same time it is the mother of wisdom when transmuted. As the principle of Eros, it connects everything. Salt is also associated with earth, and as such represents the Great Mother and the archetype of the feminine deity.

Starting with the original substance, the *prima materia* that contains the opposites, the alchemist's task is to harmonize them, to bring them into unity, which culminates in the “chymical marriage,” the consummation of his work. Jung postulates that on a psychological level the union of opposites cannot be achieved by the conscious ego alone—by reason, analysis—which separates and divides; nor even by the unconscious alone—which unites; it needs a third element, the transcendent function. In the same way, for the conjunction to take place, the alchemist needed a third factor, a medium, which was Mercurius (mercury). Thus there is sulfur, the masculine principle, salt, its feminine counterpart, and mercury, the substance that is both liquid and solid. By nature Mercurius is androgynous and partakes of both the masculine and feminine elements; in himself he unites the spiritual and physical, the highest and lowest.

Alchemy is full of paradoxes—as Jung's work is—since paradoxes are the only way remotely to express the inexpressible, the phenomena of the psyche that can be apprehended only through direct experience.⁸¹ The mysterious Mercurius is the paradox *par excellence*. The fertile imagination of the alchemists gave countless synonyms to Mercurius, and the most fantastic descriptions of his attributes. Here is one example, taken from an alchemical treatise, in which the alchemist asks nature to tell him about her son Mercurius, and she responds:

Know that I have only one such son; he is one of seven,

and the first among them; and though he is now all things, he was at first only one. In him are the four elements, yet he is not an element. He is a spirit, yet he has a body; a man, yet he performs a woman's part; a boy, yet he bears a man's weapons; a beast, yet he has the wings of a bird. He is poison, yet he cures leprosy; life, yet he kills all things; a King, yet another occupies his throne; he flees from the fire, yet fire is taken from him; he is water, yet does not wet the hands; he is earth, yet is sown; he is air and lives by water.⁸²

Jung recognized in the multiple and paradoxical aspects of Mercurius a reflection of the nature of the self, which is a *complexio oppositorum*, and must necessarily be such if it is to symbolize man's totality. To Jung, Mercurius represented not only the self but the individuation process as well, and because of the limitless number of his names, also the collective unconscious.⁸³

The first phase of the alchemical process was the black stage, *nigredo*, characterized by confusion, frustration, depression, "the dark night of the soul" of St. John of the Cross, in which nevertheless all potentialities and the seeds of future development are contained. Then as the fire of the alchemical retort, the psychic fire, purges the elements, the second white phase, *albedo*, is brought about. It is the stage of clarification and intensification of life and consciousness. The final phase is the red stage, when the drama reaches its conclusion: the chemical process of *coniunctio*, the appearance of the philosophers' stone, and at the same time the completion of psychic synthesis—the emergence of the Self.

What is the philosophers' stone, the lapis? It was said that it heals and bestows immortality. To Jung "the lapis is a fabulous entity of cosmic dimensions which surpasses human understanding." Like "man's totality, the Self, [it] is by definition beyond the bounds of knowledge."⁸⁴

However, to the alchemist Gerhard Dorn, the lapis was not

the completion of the art. The final and highest conjunction was the union of the whole human being with *unus mundus*, the one world. This is when the individual psyche touches eternity, the identity of the personal with the transpersonal. It is the numinous event, the mystery of the *unio mystica*, or in the Oriental traditions, the experiences of *tao*, *samadhi*, or *satori*.⁸⁵

Jung concluded that the phases of the alchemical procedures, the reconciliation of conflicting opposites into a unity, paralleled the stages of the individuation process.⁸⁶ In his dreams, as well as those of his patients, he could at times discern a portrayal of the mandala, symbolizing the multiplicity of the phenomenal world within an underlying unity. The mandala symbolism represents the psychological equivalent of *unus mundus*, while its parapsychological equivalent is Jung's concept of synchronicity.

SYNCHRONICITY

All of Jung's discoveries were accompanied by dreams or synchronistic events that either pointed the way or gave him confirmation that he was proceeding in the right direction. At the time when he was diligently drawing mandalas, he produced a painting of a golden castle. The painting was particularly intriguing because of its Chinese quality, and he was puzzled by it. Shortly afterward he received from the sinologist Richard Wilhelm a copy of *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, an old Chinese alchemical text, which marked the beginning of his fascination with alchemy. The event of receiving the Chinese manuscript was a synchronistic one, and furthermore it was connected with a mandala painting of Jung's. This striking coincidence, this single event, contained in itself both the mandala symbolism and the principle of synchronicity, namely, the double expression of *unus mundus*—psychological and parapsychological. And indeed Jung felt the powerful effect one experiences in moments of encounter with the *unus mundus*. This event occurred at the time when the cycle of his alienation was drawing to a close. In his autobiogra-

phy Jung remembers: "That was the first event which broke my isolation. I became aware of an affinity: I could establish ties with something and someone."⁸⁷ Perhaps it is not a mere coincidence that Jung for the first time announced to the world his concept of synchronicity in a memorial address to his friend Richard Wilhelm, the man who played such a significant part at a crucial period in Jung's life.

Synchronicity is the most abstract and most elusive of Jung's concepts. Jung describes synchronicity as "a *meaningful coincidence* of two or more events, where something other than the probability of chance is involved."⁸⁸ The connections of events are not the result of the principle of cause and effect, but of something else that Jung called an acausal connecting principle. The critical factor is the meaning, the subjective experience that comes to the person: events are connected in a meaningful way, that is, events of the inner and outer world, the invisible and the tangible, the mind and the physical universe. This coming together at the right moment can happen only without the conscious intervention of the ego. Instead it is prepared in the unconsciousness of the psyche, and it is as though the psyche had its own secret design, irrespective of ego's conscious wishes. Such synchronistic events, of smaller or larger proportions, occur to most people in daily life, but as with dreams, if we do not recognize them and pay attention to them, they remain insignificant.

Jung gives examples from his practice when patients he was treating had uncanny coincidences that put them in touch with a deeper than conscious level of experience, and convinced them in a dramatic, unequivocal way of the reality and limitlessness of the unconscious. Of particular interest is the case of the young, well-educated woman, who, with her very one-sided logical mind, was stubbornly unresponsive to Jung's efforts to soften her rationalism. One day as she was telling her dream of the night before, involving a golden scarab that was given to her, a flying insect persistently knocked at the window obviously attempting to enter the room. Jung opened the window, let the insect in and

caught it. The insect turned out to be a golden-green beetle, very much resembling the scarab from the dream.

I handed the beetle to my patient with the words, "Here is your scarab." This experience punctured the desired hole in her rationalism and broke the ice of her intellectual resistance. The treatment could now be continued with satisfactory results.⁸⁹

In developing his concept of synchronicity, Jung related it to the discoveries of modern theoretical physics, from which we had learned that causality and prediction are no longer valid in the microphysical world.⁹⁰ He concluded that there is a common background between microphysics and his depth psychology.⁹¹ At the same time Jung went back to ancient Chinese philosophy and recognized a correspondence between synchronicity and the ineffable idea of tao. In fact it was the *I Ching*, the Chinese *Book of Changes*, and its method, with which Jung had personal experience, that was to him a major inspiration in developing the concept of synchronicity. The two seemingly opposite frameworks, the rational scientific and the intuitive philosophical, are by no means contradictory. In his book, *The Tao of Physics*, Fritjof Capra addresses himself to this very point and argues that there are close parallels between basic concepts of modern physics and Eastern mystical teachings. The findings of theoretical physics reveal a universe that is a harmonious, unified process, a dynamic web of interrelated elements. This is precisely the fundamental thought in Buddhist and Taoist philosophies. And to Jung, synchronistic events point to "a profound harmony between all forms of existence."⁹² When experienced as such, the synchronistic event becomes a tremendously powerful occurrence that gives the individual a sense of transcending time and space.