

# PARABOLA

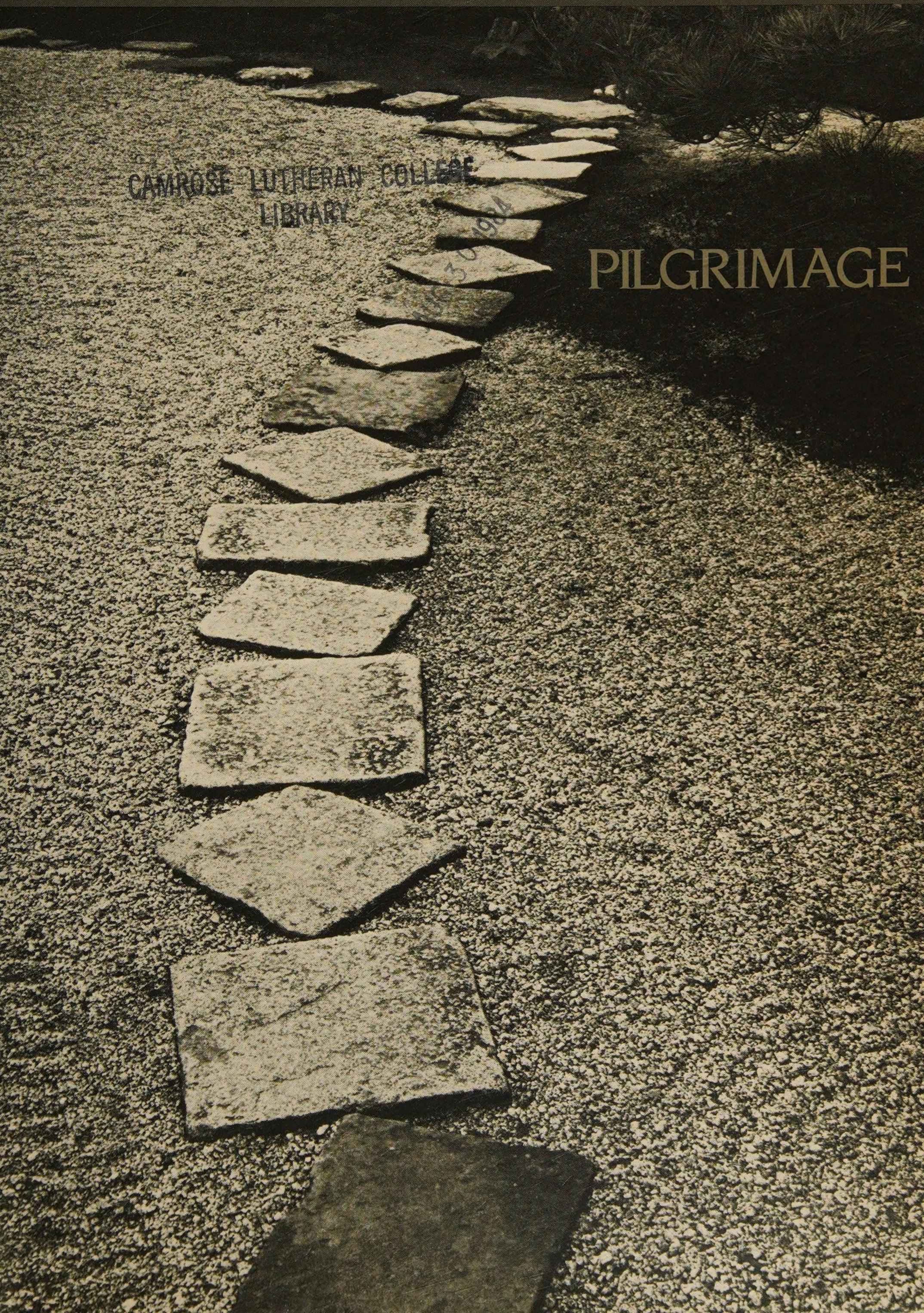
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PILGRIMAGE





# PARABOLA

MYTH AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING

## PILGRIMAGE

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## FOCUS

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The traditions are Ways; and as PARABOLA is the magazine of tradition and its mythic language, the traveling of the Ways is what PARABOLA is all about. Under one form or another, we are always talking about the way from here to there: the dangerous passage, the ladder of the heroic ascent, the process of human completion—the transforming journey, for which still another name is pilgrimage.

Whatever aspect of the perennial question we apply ourselves to, we find new things to think about, and among the many new things we discovered in preparing this issue, we began to see the differences in journeys, inner and outer. Certainly not all of them are pilgrimages. We encountered new light on that in the course of our recent program in New York, called “The Sacred Journey,” listening to the address by Professor Richard Niebuhr of Harvard, which we are happy to share with all our readers as the first article in this issue. “Pilgrims,” said Professor Niebuhr, “are persons in motion, passing through territories not their own, seeking something we might call completion, or perhaps the word clarity will do as well; a goal to which only the spirit’s compass points the way.”

Some journeys have no such compass and become, as Professor Niebuhr went on to point out, simply sight-seeing tours. Others that we know of seem to be flights, and we go not from here to there but to some accidental pseudo-refuge, where conditions may be better, or perhaps the same or worse than ever. But even with the courage and the longing for inner change



of the true pilgrim, the way can be lost if there is no guide; it can disappear completely, or it may turn out to be impassible, or lead in the wrong direction.

The guides have many shapes and forms. The Russian Pilgrim had his Philokalia, Dante his Virgil. In *Journey to the East*, besides the porter Leo there is the impetus of the quest itself. Herman Hesse wrote: "I realized that I had joined a pilgrimage to the East, seemingly a definite and single pilgrimage—but in reality, in its broadest sense, this expedition to the East was not only mine and now; this procession of believers and disciples had always and incessantly been moving towards the East, towards the Home of Light. Throughout the centuries it had been on the way, towards light and wonder, and each member, each group, indeed our whole host and its great pilgrimage, was only a wave in the eternal stream of human beings, of the eternal strivings of the human spirit towards the East, towards Home." But even so joyfully accompanied, "H.H." loses both his way and its unrecognized leader; dazzled by the glory of the adventure, he cannot see himself, and he has a long inner pilgrimage to make through loss and suffering before he learns to find the way again and to recognize the guide.

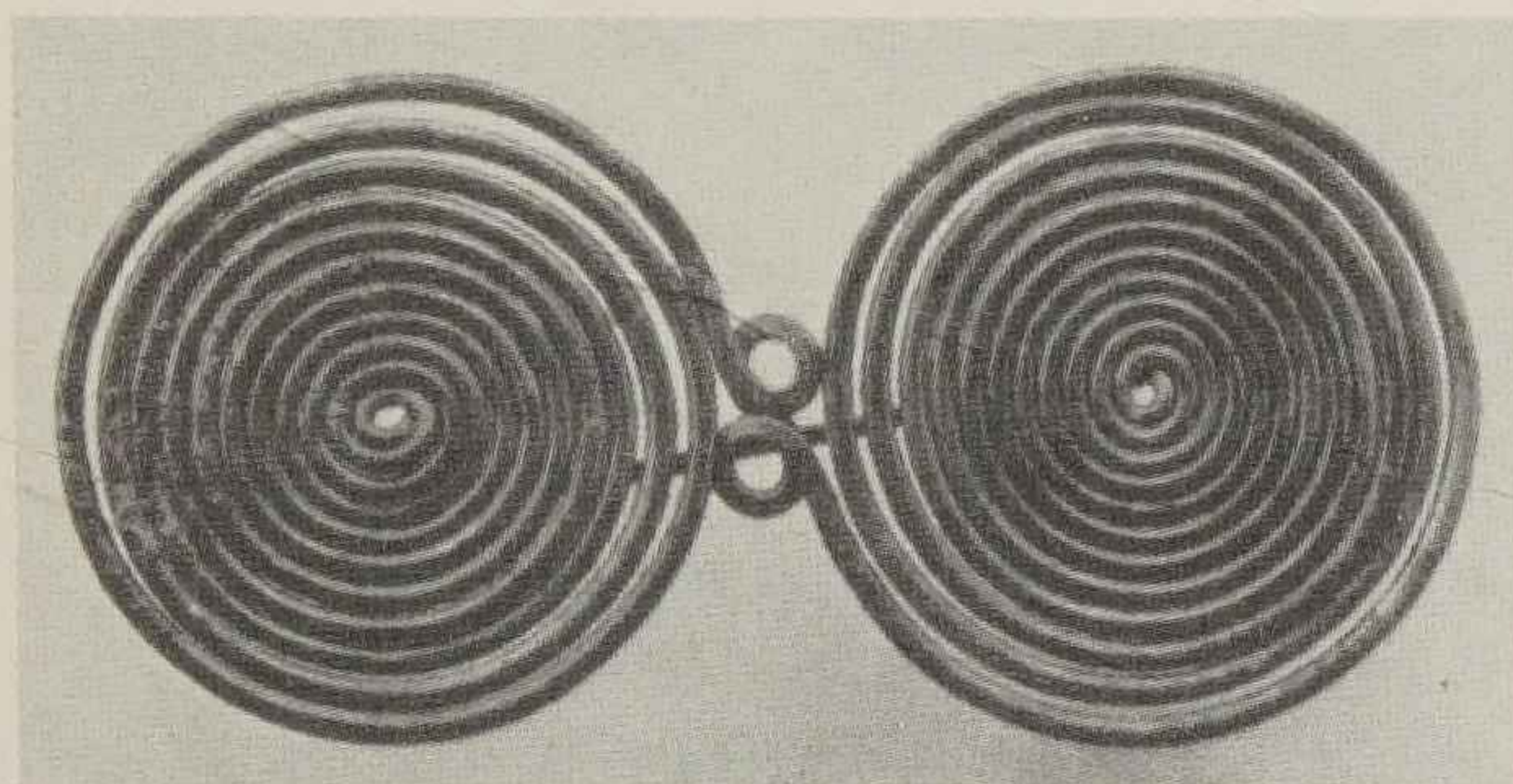
For we cannot, it seems, find the way alone. Whether guidance comes from the servant Leo, ancient custom, or an image of the Holy Grail itself, we must know for sure that "the spirit's compass" points in the same direction. The teaching of the Ways is in the terms of myth, which does

not necessarily end with being happy ever after. What is needed for the journey towards completion, besides a Way and a guide, courage and desire, seems to be both luck and good judgment, and a good deal of both. For only by unusual good fortune are the conditions found, and the best conditions fail if they are not seen and understood; and nothing about the Way is guaranteed. The facts that it exists and there are guides, that the traveler is free to choose and can be sure that prayer is answered, make it all the more dangerously necessary that he see very clearly indeed how to choose and what to ask for.

This is not to say that the pilgrim's choice to be "a person in motion" is unwise. The stay-at-home doesn't appear to be taking so great a risk only because his fate moves toward him on accustomed paths, more slowly if more certainly; but, it has been said, is the most dangerous place in the world, for more people die there than anywhere else. Perhaps rather than choosing, the pilgrim is chosen by his own way of being. For him what is important, finally, is to be in motion. Guide and goal, vital as they are to the journey, are secondary to the journey itself which is the most important thing of all. He who feels this can say with don Juan: "For me there is only the traveling on paths that have heart; there I travel, looking, looking, breathlessly."

—D.M. Dooling

## A Readers' Forum



*We encourage readers to use this space to share their thoughts and questions, either in response to a particular article or in order to raise matters of general interest. We are looking for letters which will help to open new ideas, and we will offer a free back issue for every contribution we publish.*

I enjoyed your summer edition of *PARABOLA* (Vol. IX, No. 2) which dealt with the subject of theft. Your treatment of it was most illuminating, but when I think of theft and its relation to mythology I always think of it as that tricksterish way that some heroes use to acquire that "treasure hard to attain." I think of Prometheus, who with the help of Athene stole fire from Zeus and gave it to humankind. It is interesting to note that in origin-of-fire myths from all around the world, theft from a "higher authority" is one of the most predominant means of acquiring the first fires (see J.G. Frazer's *Myths of the Origin of Fire*). From an interpretive perspective I like to think of this fire as symbolic of a higher consciousness. It is

warming, transformative, dynamic, enlightening, and dangerous. In Tonga, Maui Kijikiji is said to have stolen fire from the underworld against the wishes of his father, Maui Atalonga, and in doing so brought fire to us all. The Bergdamara of Southwest Africa say that it was a man who originally stole fire from the lion. The Sia Indians of New Mexico say that it was Coyote who stole fire from the great spider Sussistinnako. And the Haida Indians of Vancouver tell a marvelous story of how Raven, desiring to bring fire to the world, went to the house of the great chief, changed himself into a tiny spruce leaf on the water, slipped into the chief's daughter's drinking gourd, was swallowed by the maiden when she took a drink, was consequently reborn as a human child from her womb, found himself in their lodge in front of their fire, grabbed a firebrand, changed back into his raven form, flew out the smoke hole, and gave fire to the people wherever he went.

We also find thievery in the tale of Cupid and Psyche, when Psyche must collect the golden wool from the very violent golden sheep, collect a jar of water from a dark-colored stream guarded by dragons, and collect a box of beauty from the underworld. And didn't young Jack have a field day when he climbed up his beanstalk and

stole from the giant a bag of gold, a hen that lays golden eggs, and a golden harp?

Stealing, in mythology, is like killing and eating in that the qualities of the victim are incorporated by the victor. The dragonslayer is said to be the master of the land for having killed the previous "master" (the dragon). He who eats the heart or head of a worthy opponent is said to have acquired the victim's strength, courage, cunning, etc. And humanity becomes godlike by stealing fire from the gods. Fire, gold, and other "treasures hard to attain" may be viewed as symbolic of a higher consciousness, and the thievery as a means to this "end."

But what is this thievery? As I see it, thievery, in the mythological sense that I am addressing, is a spirited breaking of the rules, committed in order to unite the hero with his or her treasure hard to attain. It implies the overthrowing of external authority, dogma, and conventional morality in favor of one's own inner authority, truth, and morality. When we steal something that is truly ours (such as our own joy, our own shadow, our own projections, our own soul, our own godhood), we may be subject to the disapproval of others, but once we have been united with our treasure hard to attain the approval of others is of little consequence.

Allow me now to offer one last example of this theft-of-the-treasure-hard-to-attain motif. In Chinese and Japanese art one frequently finds depicted a great dragon chasing after a flaming orb. This orb is said to represent the sun, moon, or a pearl and is a symbol of wholeness, the union of the opposites, or that which quickens consciousness. As the story goes, this flaming orb is said to have originally resided in the mouth of the dragon until it was wrestled

free (stolen) by mortals. Ever since then it has been in the possession of mortals and continually pursued by the dragon. This theme of the dragon pursuing the flaming orb has become such an extremely popular theme that in addition to its depiction in sculpture, tapestry, and painting it has also found its way on to countless Chinese teapots and dishes. Check it out the next time you go to a Chinese restaurant.

Daniel Benveniste  
San Francisco, California

After reading "Participators of Sacred Things" by Roger Lipsey in the Winter issue (Vol. IX, No. 1) of PARABOLA, I wanted to write. I am a painter who has chosen to stay in the backwaters of Georgia, but here I find an extraordinary (non-linear) coalescence of a visionary culture with a Western European one. Black folk artists are working in a neolithic aesthetic but with Judaeo-Christian content. . . .

In time, which is more like a Moebius strip than a yardstick, the longing of artists all over this world in this century has been to reconcile the physical and the metaphysical without regard to parochial content. So the artist is a fugitive.

Thank you for claiming that we still matter.

Judy McWillie  
Athens, Georgia



*Photographs by the author*

# Pilgrims and Pioneers

RICHARD R. NIEBUHR

Well before making his Asian pilgrimage, Thomas Merton wrote that we ought to learn to accept appearances; they have “an ineffable value.”

They can be transparent media in which we apprehend the presence of God in the world . . . . The mask that each man wears may well be a disguise not only for that man’s inner self but for God, wandering as a pilgrim and exile in His own creation.<sup>1</sup>

What Merton says of appearances is striking and important. What he says about God wandering in us as a pilgrim and exile is more striking still. For six or seven years I have been reading the literatures of pilgrimage, and this has had its effects on me. Before that I thought a good deal about pioneers, those who go first into some region, and spent time looking for their tracks on the written page and in the

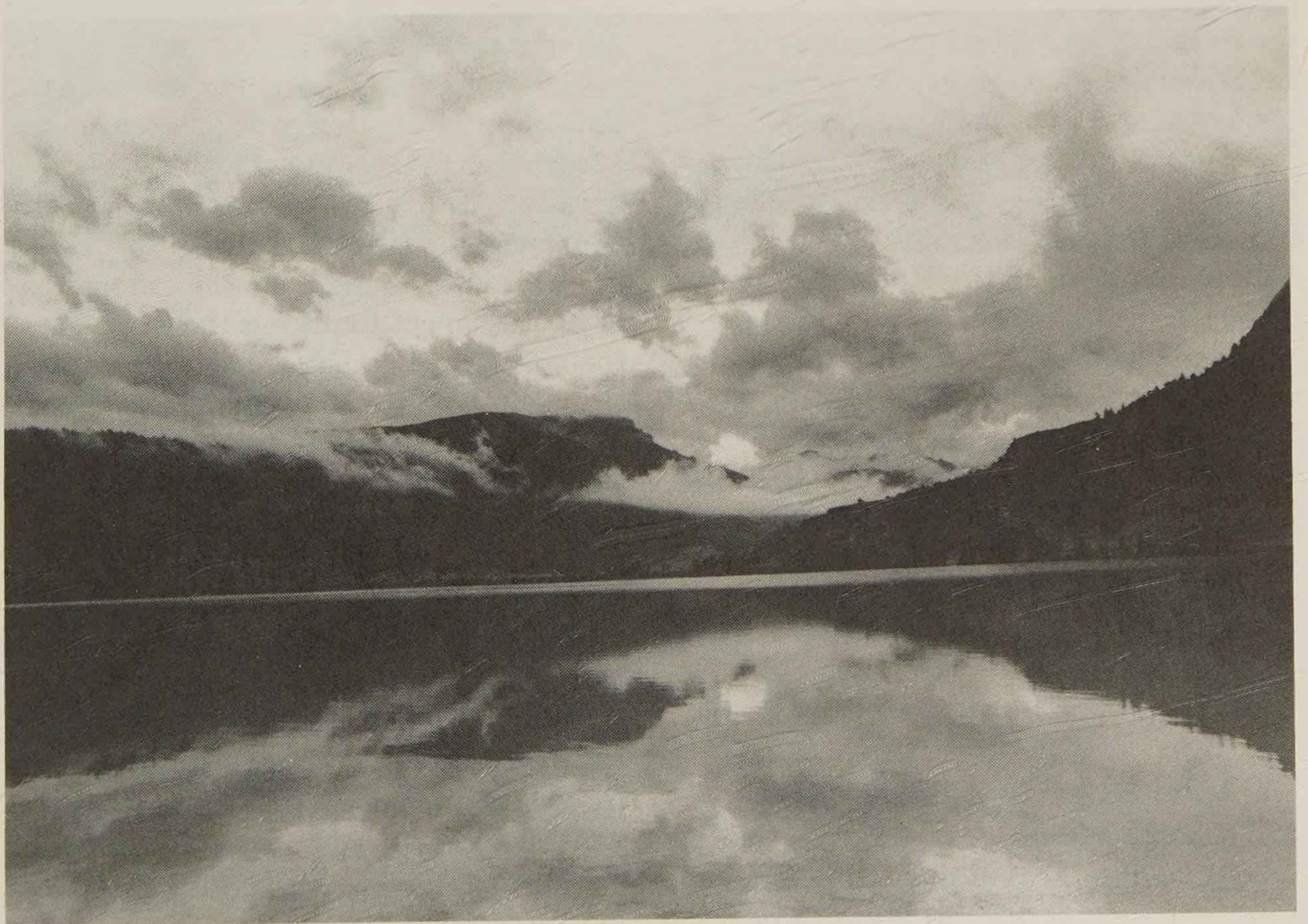
earth. Now these two kinds of journeyers have become in my mind mirrors of each other, and what follows are fragments from my personal reflections on such wanderers and their wanderings. For the most part, however, I shall refer to these persons simply as pilgrims.

World-known pilgrim roads arrive at many centers: Canterbury, Santiago de Compostella, Rome, Jerusalem, the plain of Arafat, Mexico City, Mount Koya, and the island of Shikoku. Other pilgrim roads lead to places not marked on our maps, and carry pilgrims who have left no record. Some pilgrimages are solitary, and some are communal and ritual; some happen only once, and others take place repeatedly, according to the cycle of the sun and the stars.

There are many principles we can use to classify pilgrimages. Nonetheless, pilgrims themselves are always particular and hence too various to be collected into a brief universal definition. But we have to begin somewhere, so let us start between the particular and the universal with a general characterization:

Pilgrims are persons in motion—passing through territories not their own—seeking something we might call completion, or perhaps the word clarity will do as well, a goal to which only the spirit's compass points the way.

All of us become pilgrims at one time or another, even though we may not give ourselves the name. Words and their meanings are animated by currents of energy, which none of us firmly controls. Some words seem to float weightless above and foreign to our thoughts, like a distant frigate bird riding the high air. Then, in an unforeseen moment, one descends upon us, though we can only surmise why or whence it has come and whither it is heading. The word pilgrim makes us its own in this way. We do not earn it. One day it drifts into the fields of our imagination while we are listening to a story, taking pleasure in a poem, reading the history of some Magellan or Marco Polo, and without asking our permission it works its magical powers on us, summoning us to be on our way. The occasion might even be



our reading of the daily newspaper. (The *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis often titles his pieces “At Home Abroad” or “Abroad at Home.”) The afterimage lingers and appeals to a yearning that lives deep in our dreaming; it prompts us to waterproof our boots, to hunt for the tent put away last summer, to slip a map into our pocket. Given the right circumstances, kinesthetic impulses awaken us at unpredictable times to the fact that “each day is a journey and the journey itself [is] home.” In an enduring moment of such awareness, Japan’s seventeenth-century poet-pilgrim, Matsuo Bashō, likened himself to “a travel-worn satchel,” a creased leathery bag of bones so thinned by heat, wind, and rain that it tumbles along the roads as helplessly as the clouds scud across the sky.<sup>2</sup>

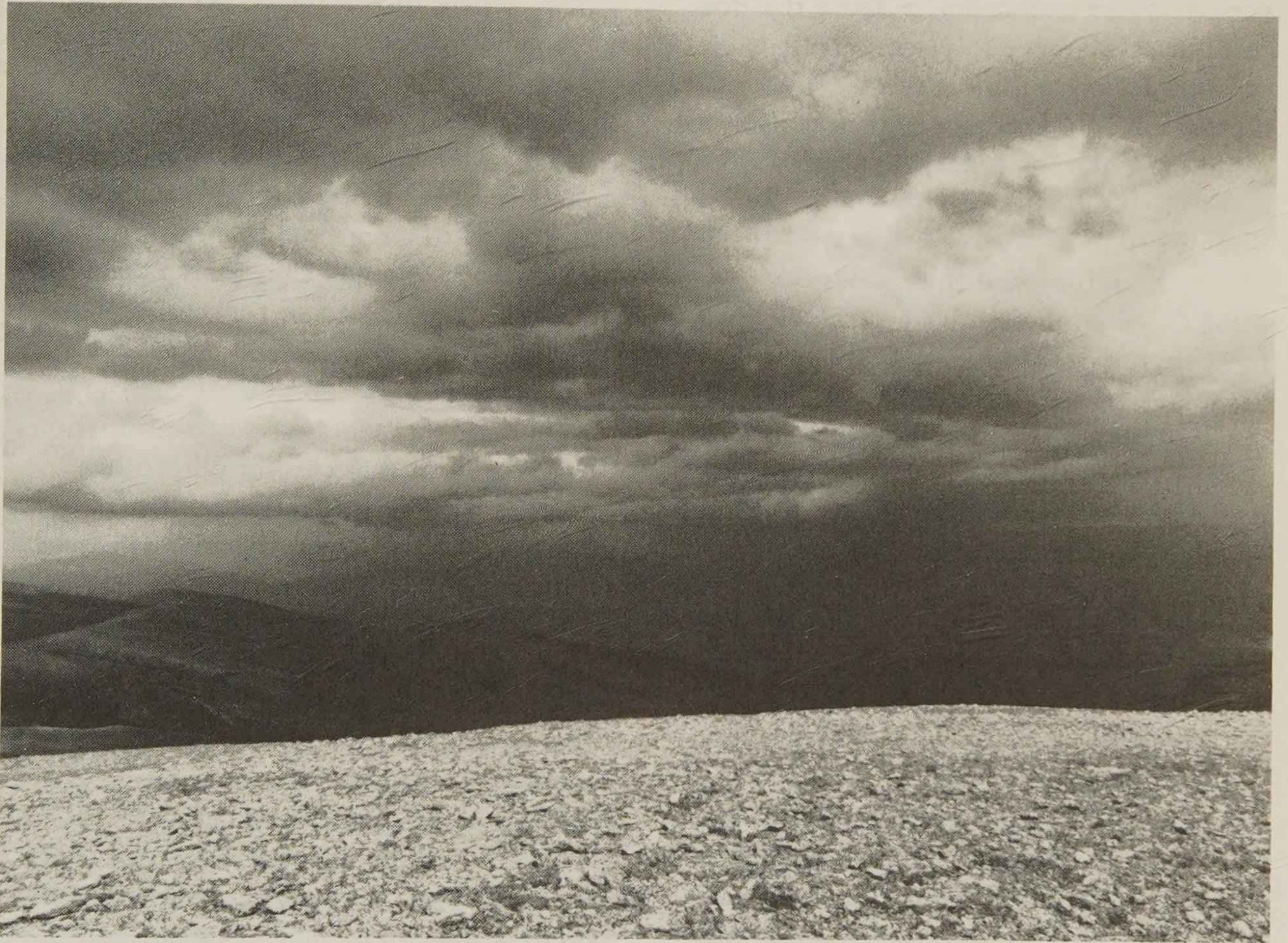
Doubtlessly, each of us holds in memory some especially beloved pilgrim or pilgrim band. Perhaps it is Abraham and Sarah encamped for a time by the oaks on the plain of Mamre in their life-journey to inherit God’s promise; perhaps it is Ruth speaking to Naomi, “Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge.” Or it is William Bradford standing in 1620 on the November beach of Cape Cod and gazing upon the somber wilderness of the mainland, or some other ancestor refugee who established here the family to which we belong. Perhaps it is Lewis and Clark following Sacajawea over the Bitter Root Mountains, or one of their successors who crossed the plains and mountains of the west in a prairie schooner to reach an El Dorado on the Pacific coast. Or it may be some figures from our literature, such as Jim and Huckleberry Finn floating down the Mississippi to freedom. All of us are the descendents of one pilgrim-pioneer band or another, and we are the offspring of their stories.

Our bodies are vehicles of passage, and to make pilgrimage is to exercise our inborn motility. It is in this natural propensity to motion that our future as pil-

grims is formed. But to discern this fact properly, we have first to attend to another fundamental trait of our being, a pervasive yet determinate feeling that is a ground tenor accompanying all the music of our activities. I will call this ground tenor *attachment to place*. We are able to recognize it in others because it is present in ourselves, always waiting to be called forth again. This we do in watching children and recalling that we too as children in the neighborhood of our homes delighted in the rain and turned our faces upward in the summer shower until the water ran down our necks. We relished the late March wind and spread our arms before it until they were chilled; we squinted our eyes into the sun until all colors began to fade. Our skin and other organs of sense register the impressions the elements of place make upon us; we interpret such signs and ciphers as messages of welcome, of belonging and well-being: invitations to abide. These sense impressions and many others—the smell of the house and of the grass and trees surrounding it, the coolness of the bare floor, the rise of the stairs—combine into a strong web of attachment to the place where we live and draw us in, making that place our home. Such impressions never wholly vanish but remain as themes and poetry of our later years: “I remember, I remember, / The house where I was born . . . . I remember, I remember, / The fir trees dark and high.”<sup>3</sup>

This interpreting upon the ground tenor of attachment to place is the work of the same neural-psychical exchange system that couples us to the psychical cosmos and its earth, water, fire, and air. Philosophers, ancient and modern, have written at length of the relation of mind to things, of mind to what is initially outside mind, and given many accounts of the hidden action by which we transform physical sensations into mental ideas. But now it must suffice simply to name this the action of our material imagination. Our imaginal affinity for matter incorporates us into the world’s weather and mass, and—by the law of reciprocal motion—incites us to absorb them in turn into our own being.

We are next to nothing if not kin to our globe and its atmosphere; but as we grow older we learn that we must employ our senses deliberately to keep this kinship alive. Yet, once we submit to this schooling, we seem not to be able to rest until we have invested ourselves in each of the world's elements: voyaged on its waters, climbed its mountains, breathed its high wind-streams, trekked over its hot sands.



Hence we pass from the mild valley floor, drained by a creek, upwards to the wet fern and pine, to the dry twisted juniper, to the boulders and shale of the mountain top where the eagles sail to survey what lies beyond, and then descend again to push farther on. Our full citizenship in the physical cosmos is incomplete until we have made ourselves part of each of these latitudes.

Our material imagination then attaches us to particular places as homes, while at the same time it sends us from zone to zone in order that we discover the various

substances of which we are compounded. Two counterimpulses work in us: the impulse to abide and the impulse to venture out. The first arises in our natural affinity to place; the second takes the form of half-voluntary quest. The same power that weaves our attachment to place induces in us a spiritual need for changes of climate, an irresistible conviction that we acquire ourselves not in abiding only, but in moving from region to region. So within our very desire of well-being, a desire that fosters our attachment to place, our first disposition to pilgrimage appears. This disposition to pilgrimage expresses itself in something like the following way.

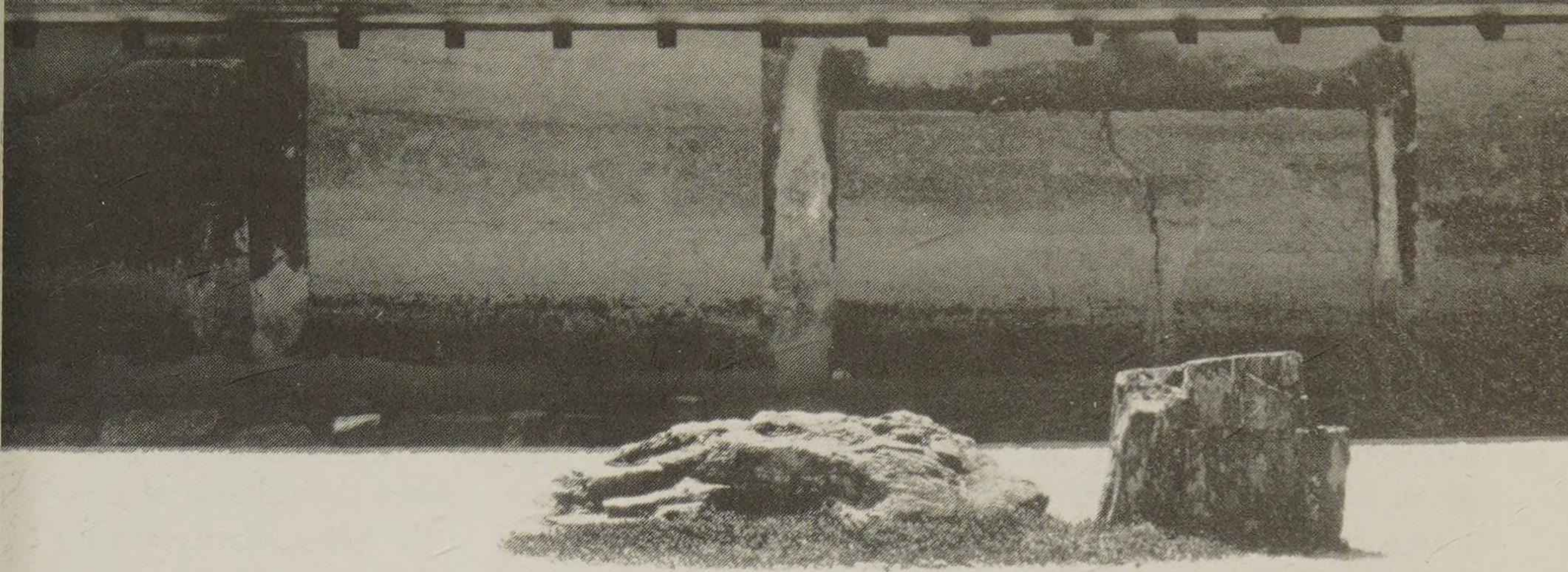
“Each mortal thing does one thing.”<sup>4</sup> We mortals make passages—on foot, on horseback, in a boat or raft. Though we are born into families, we all must become what Melville’s Ishmael calls *isolatoes*, islanders, and hence creatures perpetually searching for passages that promise approach to another shore—a shore that will complete us. We are ever passing over channels and inlets, from New Bedford to Nantucket, from Manhattan to Brooklyn, from San Francisco to the Marin County peninsula, from Dover to Calais. Passages take us not only over bodies of water but through many kinds of openings: notches in the mountain range, cavern mouths to the underground, river gorges in the wilderness, broadways through the city, doorways into theaters and libraries. These physical passings through apertures can print themselves deeply into us, not in our physical senses alone but in our spiritual sense as well, so that what we apprehend outwardly becomes part of the lasting geography of our souls. The pilgrim in us begins to awaken.

Once such awakening begins, pilgrims grow ever more watchful, watchful not only for apertures but for moments of change offering entry into a larger world than the world of routine. In the day-to-day run of our lives we are half-mindless of what is happening to us and in us. But then there arrives an undeniable alteration.

We walk through the gates of the Acropolis, the sacred height to which art and science still look, and the light we thought we knew, now reflecting from the marble blocks and columns, is unmistakably changed. Henceforth we belong to that light; we shall never again be mindless of the inexhaustible possibilities of light. Or we step into the dim hall of a Japanese Buddhist temple, pass by its great bronze bell, and find ourselves in a bright walled garden where fifteen rocks, standing in five groups, seemingly grow from the white pebble bed. They rivet our attention. At the same time these stones send our minds outward to islands surrounded by ocean, to mountain peaks rising above the clouds, and inward to a new sense of ourselves as belonging to the enduring tides and hills of the earth. The garden of rocks becomes a “cipher for the world” and an icon of ourselves as well.

In such moments we catch intimations of the depth of our kinship with other beings, both animate and inanimate. Fresh perceptions of details in the landscape and of atmosphere become symbols—ideas with a sensible content that anticipate more—more radical changes still to come. “A Symbol,” writes one of our philosophers, “is a law, a regularity of the indefinite future . . . . But a law is necessarily ‘embodied in’ ” something individual.<sup>5</sup> Pilgrims see symbols everywhere. Each particular thing beckons the pilgrim as a potential icon and cipher of what is to come. On a journey to Israel, Saul Bellow describes the air and light in Jerusalem as “thought-nourishing,” as symbols of the universe and of the future. “We step into the street,” he writes,

and my friend . . . takes a deep breath and advises me to do the same. The air, the air itself, is thought-nourishing in Jerusalem, the Sages themselves said so. I am prepared to believe it. I know that it must have special properties. The delicacy of the light also affects me. I look downward toward the Dead Sea, over broken rocks and small houses . . . . The color of these is that of the ground itself, and on this strange deadness the melting air presses with an almost



human weight. Something intelligible, something metaphysical is communicated by these colors. The universe interprets itself before your eyes in the openness of the rock-jumbled valley ending in dead water. Elsewhere you die and disintegrate. Here you die and mingle . . . This atmosphere makes the American commonplace “out of this world” true enough to give your soul a start.<sup>6</sup>

Bellow's vision of the air as pressing and melting over the valley and sea and of the soft play of the muted colors in the light is a vision pilgrims will understand. Such a being seized by the elements is a product of pilgrim watchfulness, watchfulness of the universe interpreting itself, as Bellow says; and in interpreting itself in his vision the universe also interprets him—and with him ourselves to the degree we permit—prophesying that we do not disintegrate but mingle. Elsewhere he notices that the Judean Desert appears not so much a landscape as it does “some huge being” and that he not only sees but *hears* Mount Zion. Bellow is a witness to the fact that as pilgrims we mold the air, earth, and water of definite places into symbols of the indefinite future, into emblems of completion of our own incomplete lives. This molding and shaping is the work of the pilgrim imagination—aided by chance or grace.

No hard and fast line divides sightseers or tourists from pilgrims. But we can distinguish between those who travel mere-

ly wishing to find something new to see, to hear, to touch, without so much as a glimmering that they themselves may be altered, and those who pass over thresholds aware of their need to be changed. Pilgrims relish the same sensations as do sightseers. Touching, in particular, is an often repeated pilgrim action: the kissing of holy stones, pavement, and soil; tracing the contours of carved reliefs with the fingers; gathering dust from an imprint in the rock left by the feet of the Buddha Gautama. The eye also is an organ of touch: the sightseer's eye is apt to master or to recoil, the pilgrim's to caress with reverence. The difference between the two kinds of visual touch (or other mode of perception) is in the degree of preparedness. The mere traveler is unprepared or unable to reconcile the old with the new, the familiar with the strange, accustomed gracefulness with splendor that is almost grotesque; while the pilgrim has a symbol with which to envision a more complex harmony. The response of the sightseer is shock giving way to indifference or repulsion; that of the pilgrim is surprise giving way to refreshment. In his book, *Anglo-American Landscapes*, Christopher Mulvey describes sightseers' recoil in the responses of certain nineteenth-century English travelers who, coming to the banks of the Mississippi River, the “Father of Waters” to native Americans, and gazing on the muddy stream, pronounce it a “vile sewer.” The epithet echoes the insensibility of other visitors on other continents, such as those who arriv-

ing at the sacred Ganges found it “insufferably foul” and “loathsome.”<sup>7</sup>

Matsuo Bashō, the modern pilgrim-poet of Japan to whom I referred near the outset, advises us that unless we see or hear phenomena or things from within the things themselves, we shall never succeed in recording them in our hearts.<sup>8</sup> In his *Asian Journal* Thomas Merton shows us, in strong contrast to these travelers just mentioned, what it is to record in the heart. In his account of his visit to Polonnaruwa in Sri Lanka, where the great stone Buddhas stand and recline, Merton tells us that his companion hung back at this place, not wishing to come into the vicinity of pagan idols. Then he continues:

I am able to approach the Buddhas barefoot and undisturbed, my feet in wet grass, wet sand. Then the silence of the extraordinary faces. The great smiles. Huge and yet subtle. Filled with every possibility, questioning nothing, knowing everything, rejecting nothing, the peace not of emotional resignation but . . . of sunyata.

The doctrinaire mind, Merton observes, the mind habitually requiring definitions and dogmas, is apt to find such peace and silence frightening. But, Merton continues:

I was knocked over with a rush of relief and thankfulness at the *obvious* clarity of the figures, the clarity and fluidity of shape and line . . . . Looking at these figures I was suddenly, almost forcibly, jerked clean out of the habitual, half-tied vision of things, and an inner clearness, clarity, as if exploding from the rocks themselves, became evident and obvious . . . . The rock, all matter, all life, is charged with dharmakaya [dharma-body].

Reflecting on this episode, he concludes, “Surely, with Mahabalipuram and Polonnaruwa my Asian pilgrimage has become clear and purified itself. I mean, I know and have seen what I was obscurely looking for.”<sup>9</sup>

Here Merton’s voice is resonant with the voices of other pilgrims over the centuries and in every quarter of the globe. The

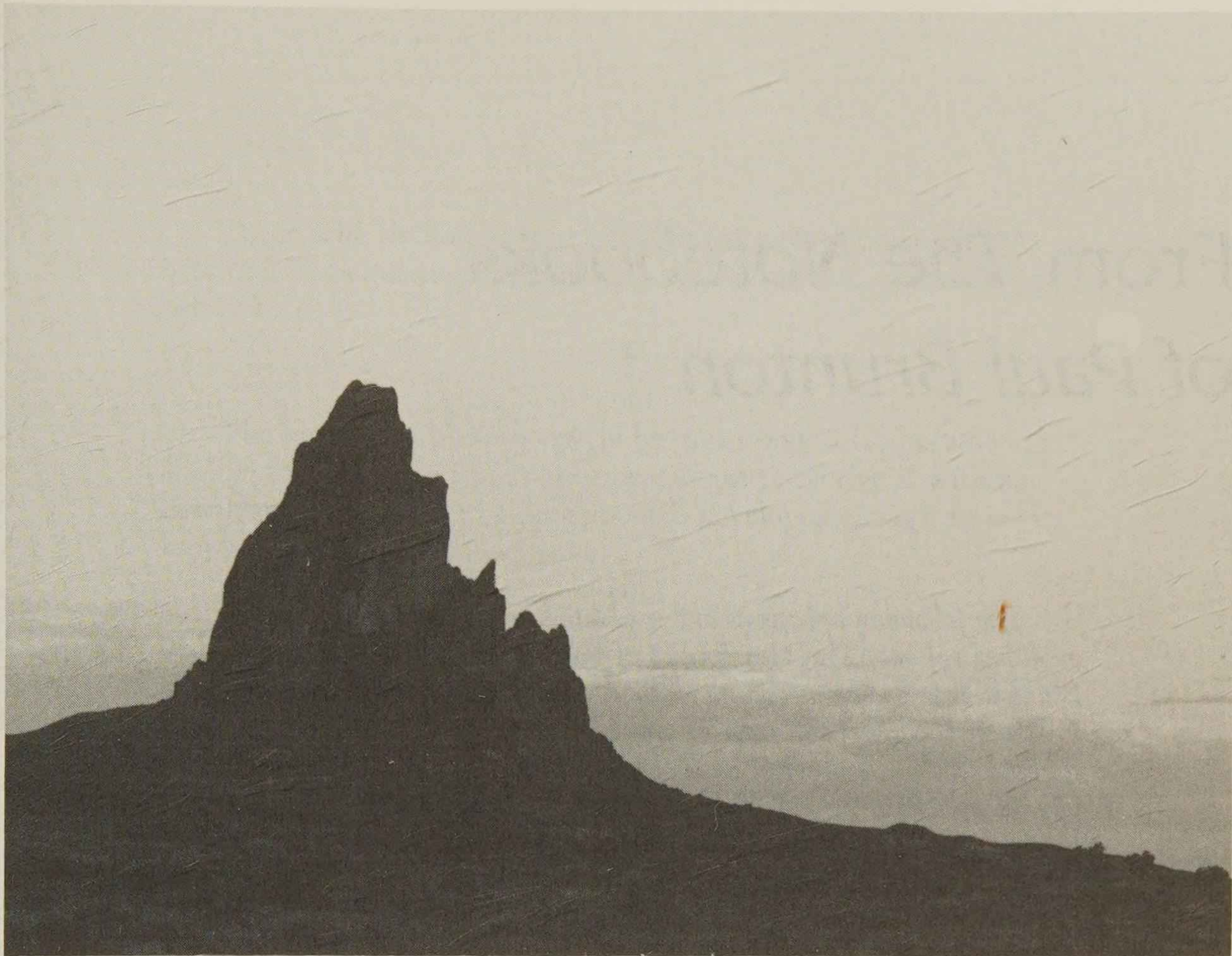
phrase “jerked clean out of the habitual, half-tied vision of things” could well serve as summary comment upon general pilgrimage experience. Moreover, his repetition of the words clear and clarity to characterize the effect of the carved Buddha faces suggests to us, once again, the goal of many pilgrimages. The clarity of which Merton speaks is more than clarity of the eye; it is clarity of the heart, clarity arising from a radical expansion of self and from a new compassion that brings with it a sense of belonging to all matter, to all life, to all being. The tall stone Buddha figures have become his companions ushering him into a commonwealth without bounds.

Pilgrimage reinterprets the word “experience” for us, a word that has grown pale and weak in our usage, and restores to it its strong meaning. In its weak form, experience means simply the continuum of moments scarcely distinct from one another—the run of day-to-day life. In its strong form, it means something else. It means the passage into ourselves of places and beings previously unfamiliar and an accompanying enlargement of ourselves. With these increments to our being, we are made new, made more thoroughly kin to the earth, its elements, and its peoples. Pilgrimage experience is radical experience—exposure to trial and peril, the making of perilous passages from a world grown comfortable and too confining into a world whose vastness we had only dimly surmised. Pilgrimage experience deports us from home; it exports us abroad into a hitherto unimaginable reality.

Poets and pilgrims are similar. They both are makers, assisting in bringing new worlds to birth. Pilgrims are poets who create by undertaking journeys. Both are pioneers. Of themselves they may say what Coleridge’s *Ancient Mariner* declared:

We were the first that ever burst  
Into that silent sea.

In this silence all appearances wear a different aspect. Everything is alien; every-



thing is new and love of all being becomes possible once more. Spirit no longer hovers above the creation but is sunk deep in matter and being itself. "Make the universe your companion," Bashō counsels, "always bearing in mind the true [that is, Buddha] nature of all creation—mountains and rivers, trees and grasses, and human kind."<sup>10</sup> Listening to this counsel, we recall Merton's meditation that in us God wanders as a pilgrim too.

#### NOTES

1. Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1972).
2. Matsuo Bashō, "The Records of a Travel-Worn Satchel" in *The Narrow Road To The Deep North And Other Travel Sketches*, trans. Nobuyuki Yuasa (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966).
3. From "I Remember," by Thomas Hood (1799–1845).
4. From "As Kingfishers Catch Fire," by Gerard Manley Hopkins.
5. Charles Sanders Peirce. *The Philosophy of Peirce: Selected Writings*, ed. Justus Buchler (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1950).
6. Saul Bellow, "Reflections (The Middle East—I)," *New Yorker*, July 12, 1976. See also Part II in the issue of July 19, 1976.
7. See Diana Eck, *Banaras: City of Light* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1982).
8. Makoto Ueda, *Zeami, Bashō, Yeats and Pound: A Study in Japanese and English Poetics* (The Hague: Mouton & Company, 1965).
9. Burton, Hart and Laughlin, eds., *The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton* (New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1975).
10. Sanki Ichikawa et al., *Haikai and Haiku* (Tokyo: The Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai, 1948).

*This essay was first presented as a talk by Professor Niebuhr as part of PARABOLA's public program, "The Sacred Journey: Pilgrimage and the Path of Thomas Merton," held in New York City on May 16.*

# From *The Notebooks* of Paul Brunton

*The following aphorisms and meditations are drawn from the just-published volume, The Notebooks of Paul Brunton: Perspectives. Mr. Brunton, best known as the author of A Search in Secret India and The Quest of the Overself, traveled widely in the Orient, studied with many spiritual teachers, and wrote books on meditation, yoga, and Eastern philosophy. In the 1950s he withdrew from public life and intensified his own spiritual search, keeping daily the notebooks excerpted below.*

There is a great tendency on the part of students of mysticism, practitioners of Yogi, and seekers after spiritual truth to regard their Quest as something quite apart from life itself, just as the stamp collector and the amateur gardener regard their special hobby as something which can be added to their routine of living. This is a fundamental error. The Quest is neither a serious hobby nor a pleasant diversion from the dullness of prosaic everyday living. It is actually living itself. Those who do not understand this fall as a result into eccentricities, self-centerednesses, superiority complexes, sectarianism, futile proselytizing of the unready or antagonistic, and attempting to impose upon others what is not suited to them.

Those who separate the Quest from their day-to-day existence shut out the most important field of their further growth. They tend to become dreamers and lose their grip on practicalities. Yet, when any of these faults is mentioned to a seeker, he rarely realizes that it applies to him personally but usually believes that it applies only to other seekers. This is because he regards himself as being more advanced than he really is.



Those who decline to search for ultimate truth because they believe it to be unattainable, because they despair of ever finding it, betray it.



The higher truth can properly be given only to those who are eligible for it, whose minds are ripe enough to receive it without bewilderment, and whose judgement is developed enough to see its worth.



There must be a certain ethical maturity before a man will even be willing to listen to such a teaching, and there must be a certain intellectual maturity before he will be able to learn it. There must be the will to analyze, the capacity to take an impartial attitude, the strength to renounce the vulgar view of things, and the desire to travel the road of truth inexorably to its last and logical conclusion. The fount of seeking must not be consciously or unconsciously muddied by selfish motive. It is not suggested that these preliminary qualifications must be present in their perfection and fullness—such will be the final result and not the first attempts on the quest—but that they should be present to a sufficient degree to make a marked disciplinary contribution to one's inner life.



Some have the illusion that the Path is heavily trodden. It is not. "Many are called but few are chosen." The traveller must learn to walk resignedly in partial loneliness. The struggle for certain truth and the quest of the divine soul are carried on by every man and must be carried on in an austere isolation when he reaches the philosophic level. No crowd progress and no mass salvation are possible here.



No seeker should be so foolish as to reject the proffered hand of a worthy master. Indeed, such is his weakness and ignorance that he needs all the help he can get from all the strong and wise men of his own times and, through their writings, of past times. But the basis of his relation to such a master should not therefore be one of complete servitude and intellectual paralysis, nor one of totalitarian prohibition from studying with other masters or in other schools. He should keep his freedom to grow and his independence to choose if he is to keep his self-respect.



There is no contradiction between advising aspirants at one time to seek a master and follow the path of discipleship, and advising them to seek within and follow the path of self-reliance at another time. The two counsels can be easily reconciled. For if the aspirant accepts the first one, the master will gradually lead him to become increasingly self-reliant. If he accepts the second one, his higher self will lead him to a master.



It is a grave misconception to regard the mystical progress as passing mostly through ecstasies and raptures. On the contrary, it passes just as much through broken hearts and bruised emotions, through painful sacrifices and melancholy renunciations.



That same light which reveals his spiritual importance reveals also his personal insignificance.



When the sublime light of the Ideal shines down upon him and he has the courage to look at his own image by it, he will doubtless make some humiliating discoveries about himself. He will find that he is worse than he believed and not so wise as he thought himself to be. But such discoveries are all to the good. For only then can he know what he is called upon to do and set to work following their pointers in self-improvement.



The practice of yoga as a psychological discipline and the study of philosophy as a mental re-education are two essentials in the equipment of the man who would explore the highest. None may be left out without leaving the seeker like a one-legged man trying to ascend a difficult mountain. The ultimate goal cannot be found by the yogi because he is concerned only with himself and not the entire universe. It cannot be found by the philosopher because he is concerned only with the *theoretical* knowledge of the meaning of all existence. It can be found by him alone who has mastered both yoga and philosophy, and who is then willing to take the next step and sacrifice his ego on the altar of ultimate attainment. For the final stage of this climb demands that the insight gained by philosophic knowledge into the ego's true nature be applied to the entire life of thought, feeling, and conduct—not by some sudden dramatic gesture but by *working* incessantly during every moment of every day. Such a perpetual vigil is really a form of continuous concentration, that is, of yoga, and it is impossible for those who have not successfully trained their minds in the yogic discipline. These are the rea-

sons why we must view yoga and philosophy as the two legs needed to support a man who would then enter into the ever-renewed practice to attain realization. This is the final climb to the summit.



The *need* of a spiritual guide is nearly as great as ever today and remains but little changed, but the character of the *relation* between the disciple and the guide has to change. The old following in blind faith must give place to a new following in intelligent faith.



It is next to impossible to ascertain the Truth without the guidance of a Teacher. This is the ancient tradition of the East and it will have to become the modern tradition of the West. There is no escape. The explanation of this statement lies in the subtle nature of the Truth. Thus, in the West, men of such acute intelligence and such high character as Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, and Thoreau came close to the verge of Truth. They could not fully enter because they lacked a Guide. Even in India, the greatest mind that land of Thinkers ever produced, the illustrious Shankara, publicly acknowledged the debt he owed to his own Teacher, Govindapada.



If an opportunity seems to occur to become the disciple of a master, be sure first to test whether he is fit to hold such a position. Do not test his supposed possession of occult powers or healing gifts; check rather whether he is master over himself before he plays the role over the lives of others. Is he free from the lust of sex, the greed of money, the itch for fame, the passion of wrath, and the desire for power? If not, he may be remarkable, unusual, clever, fluent, psychic, friendly, or anything else, but be sure that he is not competent to guide disciples to the kingdom of heaven.



We need religion, yes assuredly, but we need it freed from superstition.



It seems as if grace visits us at moments of its own choosing. That is the truth, but not the only truth. For study, practice of exercises, training, self-discipline, prayer, aspiration, and meditation also form a total effort which must attract grace as its reward eventually.

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# The Hajj

GAI EATON

*And proclaim to mankind the Pilgrimage. They will come to thee on foot and on every swift mount, coming from each distant point that they may experience great benefit. (Quran XXII:27-28)*

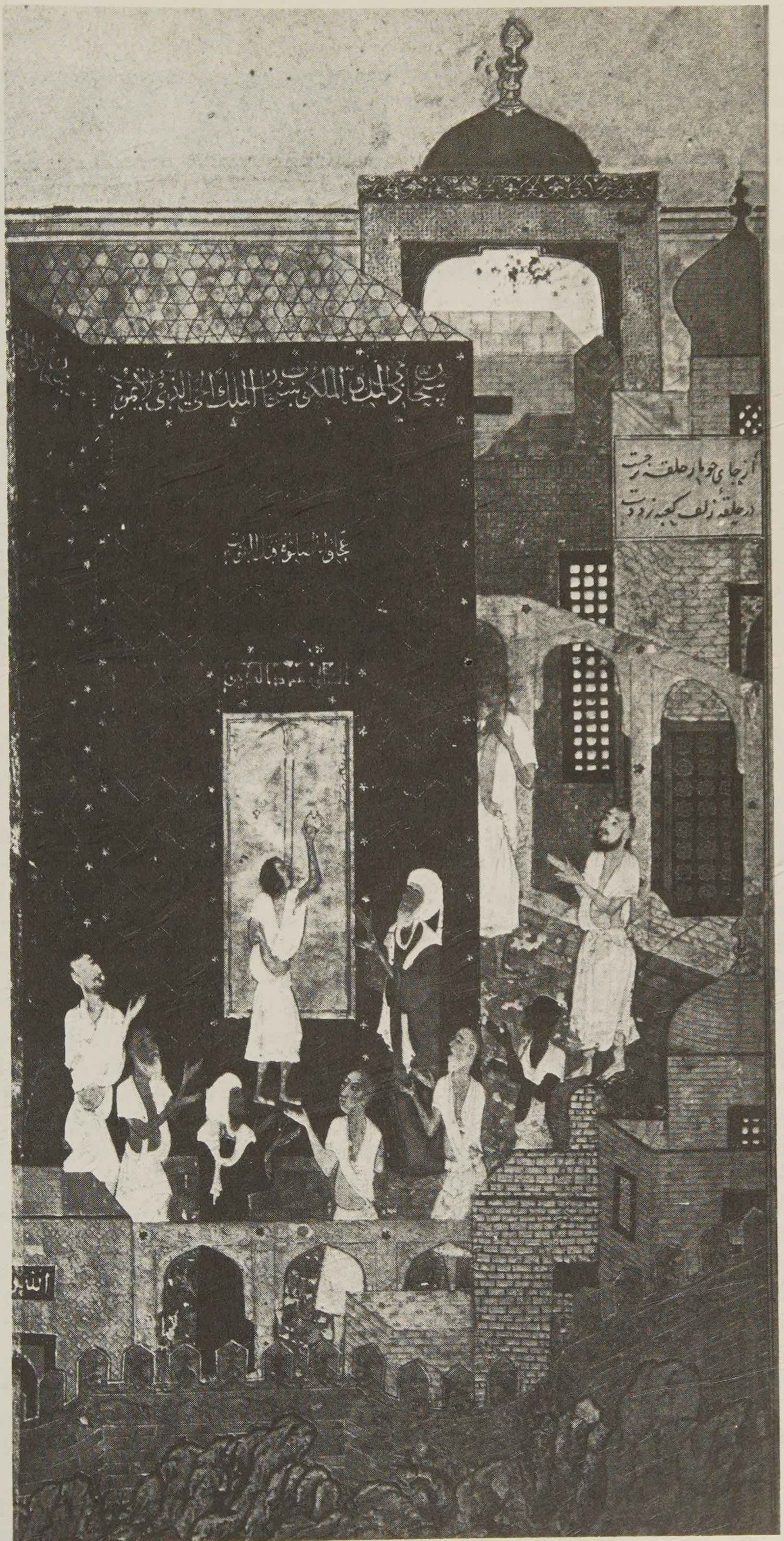
It is said that the religion of Islam is supported by five Pillars. The first is the declaration of faith in the One God and in the messengerhood of Muhammad, the second is ritual prayer five times each day, the third is payment of the poor-due or charity-tax, the fourth is fasting from earliest light till sunset during the month of Ramadan, and the fifth is the Pilgrimage, to be undertaken by every Muslim who is physically and financially able to undertake the journey. Each of these Pillars has its simple and obvious religious function, and each has its symbolic or esoteric significance.

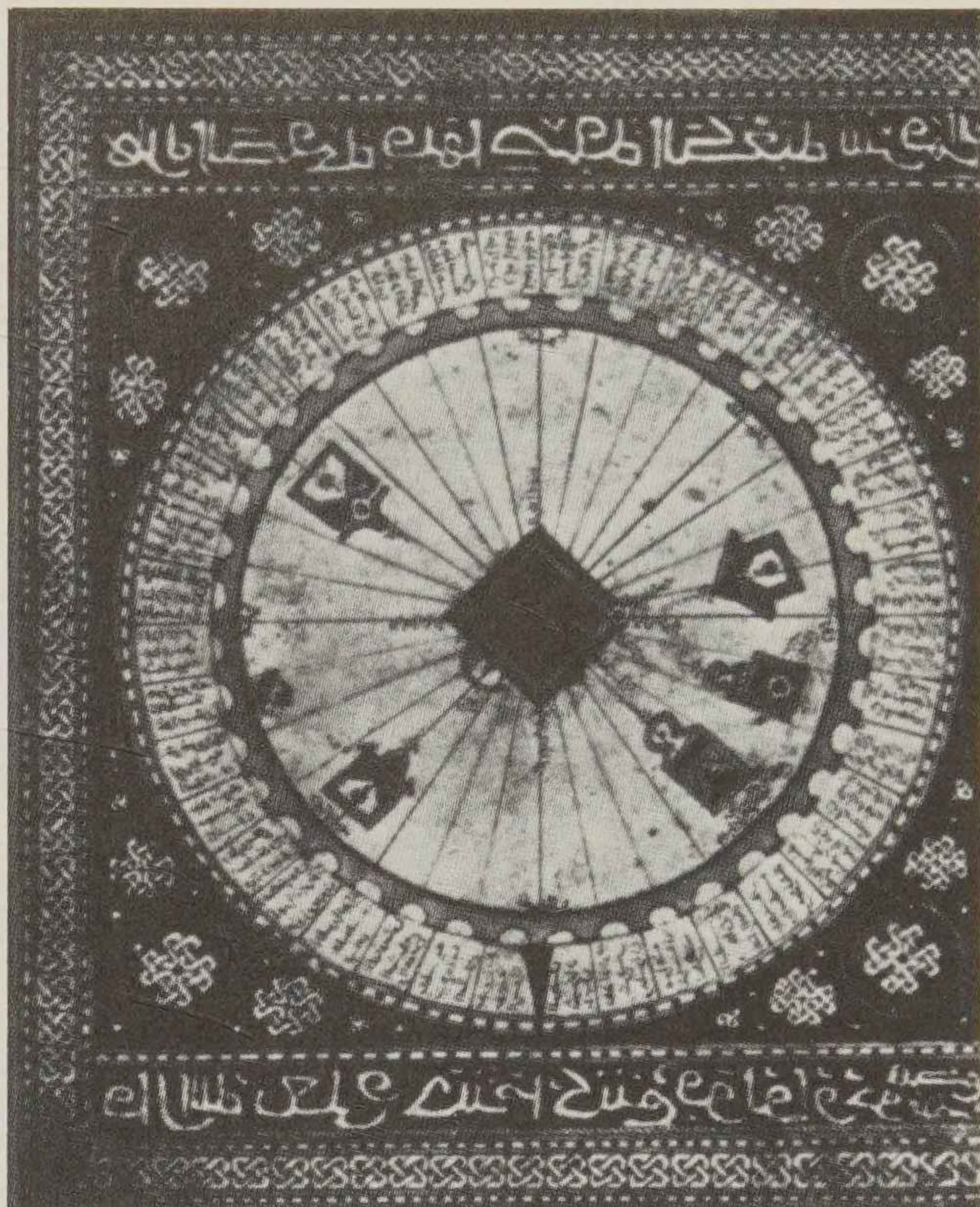
For the ordinary Muslim, it is sufficient to know that he or she acquires great merit in the sight of God by performing the Pilgrimage, and that its performance washes away all past sins. The pilgrim returns home unstained as he was at the mo-

ment of birth and able to face the final Judgment—at which every atom of good or ill is exposed and assessed—without fear. The rites are extremely complex and must be carried out meticulously, but the pilgrim is led through them by a qualified pilgrim-guide and does not need to be aware of their deeper significance. This is not an intellectual exercise but a concrete experience in which body, mind, and heart participate. There is, however, one particular aspect of the rites of which even the simplest pilgrim can hardly fail to be aware. This is the aspect of continuity or of “primordially.”

Islam stands or falls, not as one religion amongst others, but as the final religion, the synthesis of the great cycle of revelations or “messages” which began at the time of man’s creation and ended with the death of Muhammad. For the Muslim, Abraham was a Prophet of God; so was Moses, so was Jesus, and so were countless others whose names are unknown to us. Each played his part in fulfilling the divine promise that mankind would never be left without guidance through the twisting pathways of life in this world. Muhammad differed from the others only by virtue of the finality of the “message” he brought, and this was neither more nor less than the summing-up of all that had come before; in other words, the Muslim sees Islam not as a new religion, a light suddenly projected into the darkness, but as a “reminder” of the primordial faith, the perennial wisdom. It is for this reason that the other religions must, in one way or another, be reflected within Islam. All are beads in a necklace, and the connecting thread remains unbroken. It is in the rites of the Pilgrimage that this continuity is most apparent.

The Quran tells us that the first Ka’bah was built by Abraham and his son Ishmael but, according to legend, this was only a reconstruction, and the first Ka’bah was built by the first Man, Adam. It is said that after his fall from Paradise, Adam journeyed across the earth to the barren valley of Mecca and was commanded to build, in that very place and directly beneath the Throne of God, a temple around which he





must then circle just as the angels circle around the Throne. The heavenly Center had already cast its reflection there in the form of a building roofed with one great ruby and supported by columns of emerald, and it was Adam's task to encompass this vision with an earthly "House" made, so we are told, from stones taken from Mount Sinai, the Mount of Olives, Mount Lebanon, and a fourth mountain called el-Judi upon which, long afterwards, Noah's Ark would come to rest. Even in this legend we can recognise without difficulty the element of "synthesis" so essential to Islam, as we can the element of "imitation" (that is to say the imitation of heavenly models or exemplars) which plays such an important part in the rituals of so-called "primitive" peoples.

But, for Muslims, the Ka'bah is above all Abraham's "House." The Patriarch who stands, as it were, at the source of Judaism and Christianity as he does at the source of Islam, came to the Meccan valley long after Adam's temple had been engulfed by the sands, bringing with him his maidservant Hagar and their little son, Ishmael, and here he abandoned mother and

child to the divine Mercy. Distraught and thirsty, Hagar left their son in a sheltered place and followed a track which led between two hillocks, Safā and Marwah. From Safā she saw no sign of water or habitation, and from Marwah she saw none. Seven times she ran between the hillocks (as do the pilgrims today), and then she heard the sound of a voice and hastened back to Ishmael. Beside him stood an angel who now struck the earth with his wing so that sweet water gushed from the ground. This was the spring called Zem-Zem, from which the pilgrims drink today and every day. Here she reared Ishmael, ancestor of the Arab race.

The boy had grown to manhood by the time Abraham returned, and together they set about rebuilding the sacred House, the Ka'bah, repeating Adam's task as all men must, in one way or another, being of Adam's flesh and blood. Ishmael brought the stones on his back while his father set them one upon another without mortar: "And when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House they said,— Our Lord, accept this [service] from us, for truly Thou art the All-Hearing, the All-

Knowing” (Quran II:127). And when he left the Hejaz, never to return, Abraham blessed the Meccan valley and prayed: “Our Lord, I have settled a part of my progeny in a barren valley close to Thy sacred House. . . . Our Lord, raise up in their midst a Messenger from amongst them who shall recite to them Thy revelations and teach them the Scripture and Wisdom, and purify them” (Quran XIV:37, II:129).

Modern man tends to be insensitive to the richness of such stories, poking at them obtrusively with a scholar’s finger rather than exposing himself to the meaning contained in seemingly simple images. Certain implications are, however, obvious: the “centrality” of the Ka’bah, directly beneath the Throne of God—that is to say, on the axis which connects this earth with all that is above and beyond it; the “primordially” of the “sacred House,” both Adamic and Abrahamic, and finally, its “connectedness,” as though invisible threads attached it to the whole history of humanity. But the first aspect of the Pilgrimage which we must consider relates particularly to the concept of primordially. This is *ihram*, the state of consecration.

Upon arrival, or, if he has come by sea, before actually landing, the pilgrim has a bath, casts aside the clothing which identifies him in this world, and dons the *ihram* garments, two pieces of unsewn cloth (usually white towelling), one knotted around his waist and the other covering his left shoulder but leaving the right shoulder bare. No one, from now on, can tell whether he is a king or a servant. His status is forgotten, as is his place of origin; even the period of history in which he happens to live has been transcended (no doubt Abraham’s generation was clothed much as he is) and, insofar as his former identity has disappeared, he has died to the world he knew. The state of consecration also includes certain “bans.” The pilgrim must have no sexual contacts once he has as-

sumed this state, he must not wear jewelry or use perfume, he is not permitted to shave or to cut his hair, and, once within the sacred territory, he is forbidden to kill any living creature (unless it threatens human life) or to uproot any plant. It is not only the territory as such that is sacred; everything within its boundaries partakes of the same other-worldly quality, and it is significant that women—so often veiled in the Arab world—are forbidden to veil themselves while on pilgrimage. It might be said that there is, in the face of a beautiful woman, a foretaste of paradise, something that must be concealed from the vulgar gaze but exposed when the conditions of common life are suspended.

All preparations having been completed, the pilgrim sets out for the Ka’bah in Mecca, crying *Labayka Allahhumma* (“Here am I, O God, at Thy service!”) again and again. He is, in a sense, coming home. Throughout his life, assuming that he is pious, he will have prayed five times each day facing in the direction of the Ka’bah and, very possibly, visualising it in his mind’s eye. On his journey he has, so to speak, followed the straight line which always connected his prayer-mat with this building. He is now approaching journey’s end, having traveled in body the course previously spanned by mind and heart. The unitarian nature of Islam requires that the whole man should participate in the rites which lead to God for, if the body is left out of any spiritual act, then that act is incomplete; there is no integration, no unity. But the concept of homecoming relates essentially to the esoteric perspective. From this point of view, the human creature is an exile in this world (it is for this reason that our lives here are never entirely free from conflict and disharmony), at home only in close proximity to God. This proximity is, at the very least, prefigured in a place that is primordially sacred, “out of this world.” In such a place as this, proximity is realized as concrete experience.

At the same time—and still from the esoteric point of view—the physical journey is neither more nor less than an out-

ward enactment of an interior journey, the journey from the periphery of our being to the center, the Heart which, for Islam, is the point at which the vertical and the horizontal meet, the point at which the Divine intersects with the human. In our everyday experience we are not ourselves; we are exiles from the center in which the two dimensions meet, and we have a passionate desire—expressed, only too often, in irrelevant frenzies—to find ourselves. One way of doing so is to follow, outwardly and in the body, the trajectory which the troubled and dispersed soul must follow if it is to return to its own hidden center, its true selfhood, the Heart.

For the outward to mold the inward, it is not necessary that the individual should be fully aware of what is happening or express his experience in concepts. The pilgrim enters through one of the doorways into the vast amphitheater which has the Ka'bah at its center, and he or she is overwhelmed. This small building has a quality of majesty which even Western sophisticates, despite their need to analyze experience, have difficulty in defining. It is *there*. It *is*. Some may think of the Buddhist term translated as "is-ness"; others will be content with their own astonishment. The Ka'bah is, in fact, a cubic structure some fifteen meters high and twelve by thirteen meters square. It is "clothed" in a canopy freshly woven each year in Egypt, which is embroidered at the hem with verses from the Quran and, elsewhere, with the constantly reiterated Name of God, *Allah*, the golden calligraphy standing out against its dark background like light emerging from darkness. It must be added that the building has been reconstructed many times over the centuries, and yet the pilgrim has the sense of an eternal presence, a massive four-square solidity which neither earthquake nor tempest could ever shake.

The first rite of the Pilgrimage, which will be repeated on two further occasions in the course of five days, is the

*tawaf*, the circumambulation. The pilgrim circles the Ka'bah, which may now be seen as the perfect image of the "motionless Mover," seven times and, in doing so, he is carried along in a human flood which is reminiscent of the symbolism of the Wheel of Existence turning upon its axis. Life as such may be defined as movement, and movement is of three kinds: towards the goal (centripetal) which represents its finality, or away from the goal (centrifugal) in dispersion and disintegration, or, finally, circular as though attached to the goal by an invisible thread, neither absorbed into it nor losing touch with it. We have, therefore, in the circumambulation, an image of human life when that life is held in balance by the magnetic force of the Principle which resides in the center. It is a short step from this to comparing the circumambulation to the circling of the planets in the "seven heavens," planets which—according to the esoterists—symbolize modalities of the human state in the domain of subtle manifestation, and this is the more apt because the pilgrims' movement is "polar" (that is to say, anti-clockwise). The symbolism of the number seven as such is universal; one need only think of the Biblical text, "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. . . ." It represents repose in the divine Center, peace and perfection.

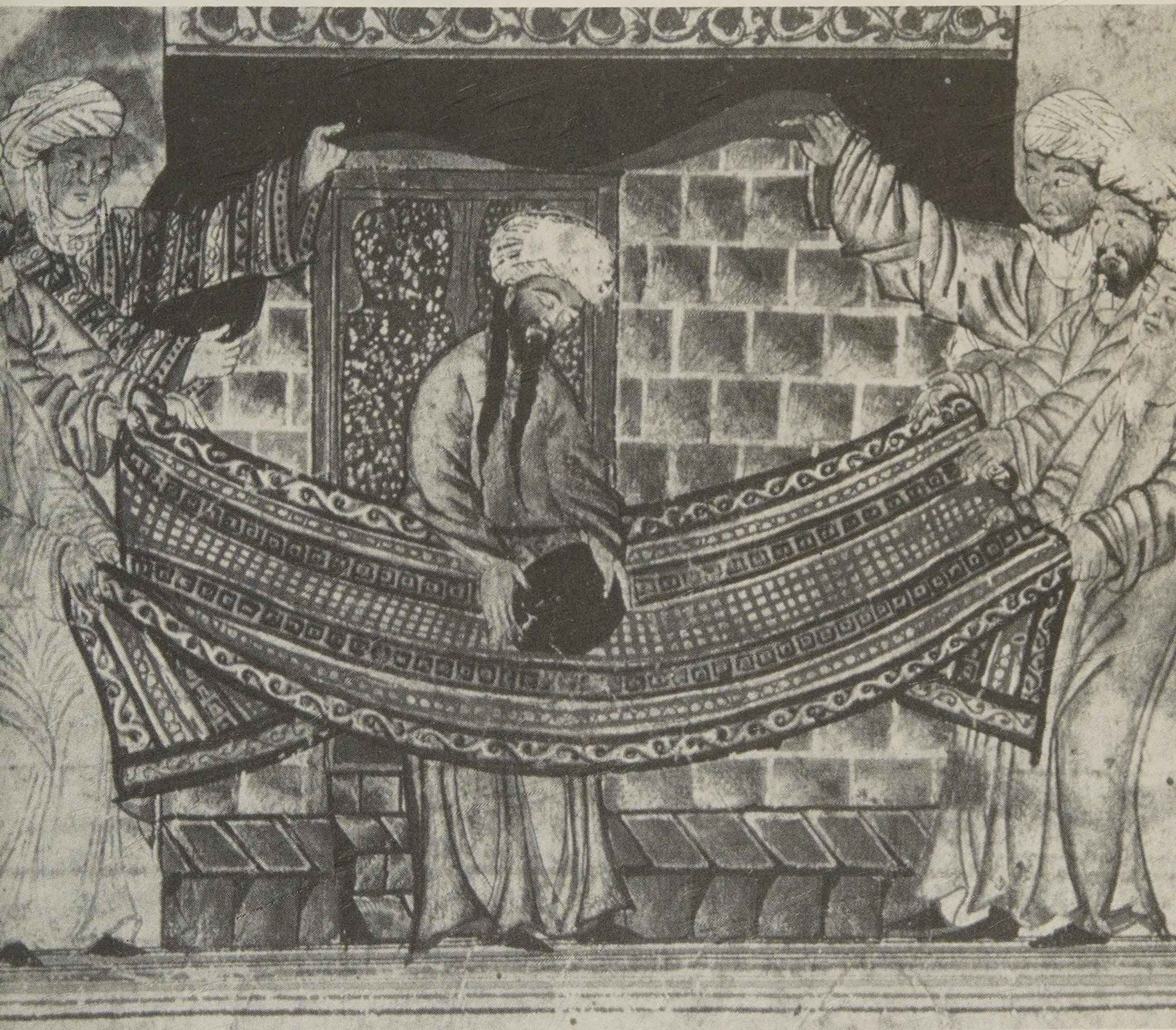
On each circuit the pilgrim will, if he can, kiss the Black Stone which is embedded in one corner of the Ka'bah. If the press of people is too great for him to reach it, then he greets it with a raised right hand each time he passes the corner. For the strict exoterist, the only significance of this rite is that he places his lips where those of the Prophet once rested, but many legends surround the stone—which is oval-shaped, about eighteen centimeters in diameter, and set in a mesh of silver wire. According to some, Adam found it in the celestial temple which was the model for the original Ka'bah, but then it was pure white, unstained by human sin. According to others, it was brought from heaven by the Archangel Gabriel, and the scientists say that it is a meteorite, which is merely

another way of ascribing to it a celestial origin. For the mystics, it represents "the Right Hand of God," and this lends a special significance to the act of kissing (the Sufi always greets his sheikh, his Spiritual Guide, by kissing his right hand).

Although it is only at the time of the Great Pilgrimage that a vast mass of men and women circle the Ka'bah, there is no time of the year, day or night, when the courtyard is still and the movement ceases,

cesses, and prayer is in essence outside time or, at the very least, an encounter with the timeless.

But life goes on. The pilgrim, having completed his *tawaf*, proceeds to the second rite of the Pilgrimage, the *Sa'y*. This is the walking (and, at one point, running) between the hillocks of Safā and Marwah, the same outcrops of rock between which Hagar hastened in search of water for her son. They stand now at the two ends of a cov-



except during the performance of the ritual prayer. This breaks the flow just as—within the individual soul—the flow of thoughts which circle the Heart is halted during the prayer. The circumambulation takes place in time, as do our thought pro-

ered gallery close to the Ka'bah, and the pilgrim covers the course between them seven times in imitation of Hagar's search. That, at least, is the exoteric explanation of this rite, but the esoterists have explored its significance in much greater depth in the



light of certain ancient legends. There is, for example, the story of two young lovers in pre-Islamic times who are said to have profaned the Ka'bah and who were, in consequence, turned to stone, the one at Safā and the other at Marwah. The man's name relates to an Arabic root which has the sense of "regret" and "sadness," while the girl's name suggests "favor and fulfillment," and this is related to the idea that the pilgrim starts his course in a state of sadness on account of his sins and ends it by finding fulfillment and release. There is also a legend to the effect that Adam and Eve, long parted from each other after their fall from Paradise, were reunited here, but not before they had been compelled to stand for a long period, Adam at Safā and Eve at Marwah, forbidden to come together until released by the Archangel Gabriel.

Whatever we make of these stories, the implication is that these hillocks represent the two poles of existence, active and passive, male and female, or, in the Far Eastern tradition, *yang* and *yin*. As he hastens between them, the pilgrim unites the two poles within himself. Duality, which is the source of all movement and all phe-

nomena, must constantly return—or be returned—to Unity, its origin and its end.

Up to this point, we have treated the Ka'bah as the goal of the Pilgrimage, and this is so in the case of the "Lesser Pilgrimage," called the *'Umra* or "Visit" (which may be performed at any time of the year). Yet the Prophet Muhammad said, *al-hajj 'Arafa*, meaning "the Pilgrimage is [to] Arafat," and it is towards Mount Arafat—an up-jutting of stone in the desert beyond Mecca—that the river of pilgrims flows after the rite of the *Sa'y* has been completed. The pilgrim tents cover the valley and plain around the "mount," and it is here that the Pilgrimage reaches its climax. To understand why this should be so we must necessarily turn to the esoteric teachings.

Anyone familiar with the writings of René Guénon (which may be described as a *Summa* of traditional symbolism) may at once surmise that we are concerned here with the two journeys, the one "horizontal" and the other "vertical," described in traditional metaphysics as also in the mythologies of many different peoples. The

first spiritual journey is to the center of the human individuality, the second is towards all that lies beyond this individuality and, ultimately, to Reality as such. The spirit can mount upwards only from one “place”—one “springboard”—and that place is the center which is on the vertical axis joining all possible states of being; or, to put the matter another way, man cannot seek to realize the higher states of being, let alone to be united with his eternal Source, until he has achieved unity and wholeness within himself. Until every aspect of his human nature has been harmonized in relation to the center, the Heart, he is too divided within himself to be capable of undertaking the “second journey.”

A number of traditions make a distinction between “Perfect Man” and “Universal Man.” The former is one who has reached the conclusion of the first journey, whereas the latter has completed the second, transcending himself and achieving universality. In terms of this doctrine, it may be said that the Ka’bah has two faces. On the one hand it is the center of pilgrimage for those whose religion is called “Islam” and is of significance only to this particular religion; on the other, its connection with Abraham (according to the Quran) and even with Adam (according to legend) makes it a universal center—or simply The Center. The Andalusian mystic, Ibn Arabi, pointed out that the Ka’bah is orientated towards Arafat through the location of the Black Stone in the angle which points that way and, from this point of view, the Ka’bah is like a door opening onto the universal. But the name of the religion itself has this same duality. First we have “Islam” and its followers, the “Muslims”; secondly there is *al-islam*, meaning “submission” or “surrender” (to God), and every creature in this world is *muslim*, that is to say subject to God. Animals “submit” by following their instincts, even a stone “submits” when it falls in accordance with the law of gravity. The only difference is that those who describe themselves as “Muslims” submit willingly and consciously and try to cooperate with divinely willed Destiny which, in any case, none can escape.

For the ordinary pilgrim, who is unlikely to be concerned with metaphysics, the *Wuqūf*—that is to say, the “standing” at Arafat—is a prefiguration of the Last Judgment. The vast multitude of which he is one small component now stands before God in this barren desert landscape, just as all men will stand before Him at the end of time, every action they ever did exposed under an all-encompassing radiance.

No more can be said of this since Arafat represents what would be described in certain other traditions as the Void, and the verbal equivalent of this total emptiness is silence. But two other Pilgrimage rites require some brief mention. The first is the animal sacrifice which follows the “standing.” On the exoteric level, this takes place in imitation of Abraham’s sacrifice of the ram in place of his dearly loved son and is a reminder of the divine mercy which made this substitution possible. On a deeper level, it represents a symbolic sacrifice of the body, and, concerning the animals that are sacrificed, the Quran tells us: “It is not the flesh that reaches God nor is it their blood. It is your piety that reaches Him” (Quran XXII, 37).

The second of these rites is the stoning of the pillars at Mina, pillars which represent Satan or the forces of evil which operate both within and outside ourselves. This, too, is in imitation of Abraham’s action when Satan tempted him to disobey his Lord. Each time Satan approached, so we are told, the Patriarch drove him off by casting pebbles at him. Each pilgrim therefore gathers either forty-nine (seven times seven) or seventy small stones and throws these at the pillars with as much force as he can muster. In doing so he purifies himself. With each throw he destroys—or hopes to destroy—some of the shadows, the temptations and evil impulses within his own soul.

Such are the principal rites of the *Hajj*, the Great Pilgrimage, which each year brings together Muslims of every race “from each distant point” (as the Quran has it) in performance of the fifth Pillar of their religion and in the hope of forgiveness and mercy from God. ■

# Guruji

PADMA PERERA

**S**hort legs, long hair, face made up of bones and feelings, so that you never remember what he looks like, only how he is made and how he feels. How, too, he wants you to feel.

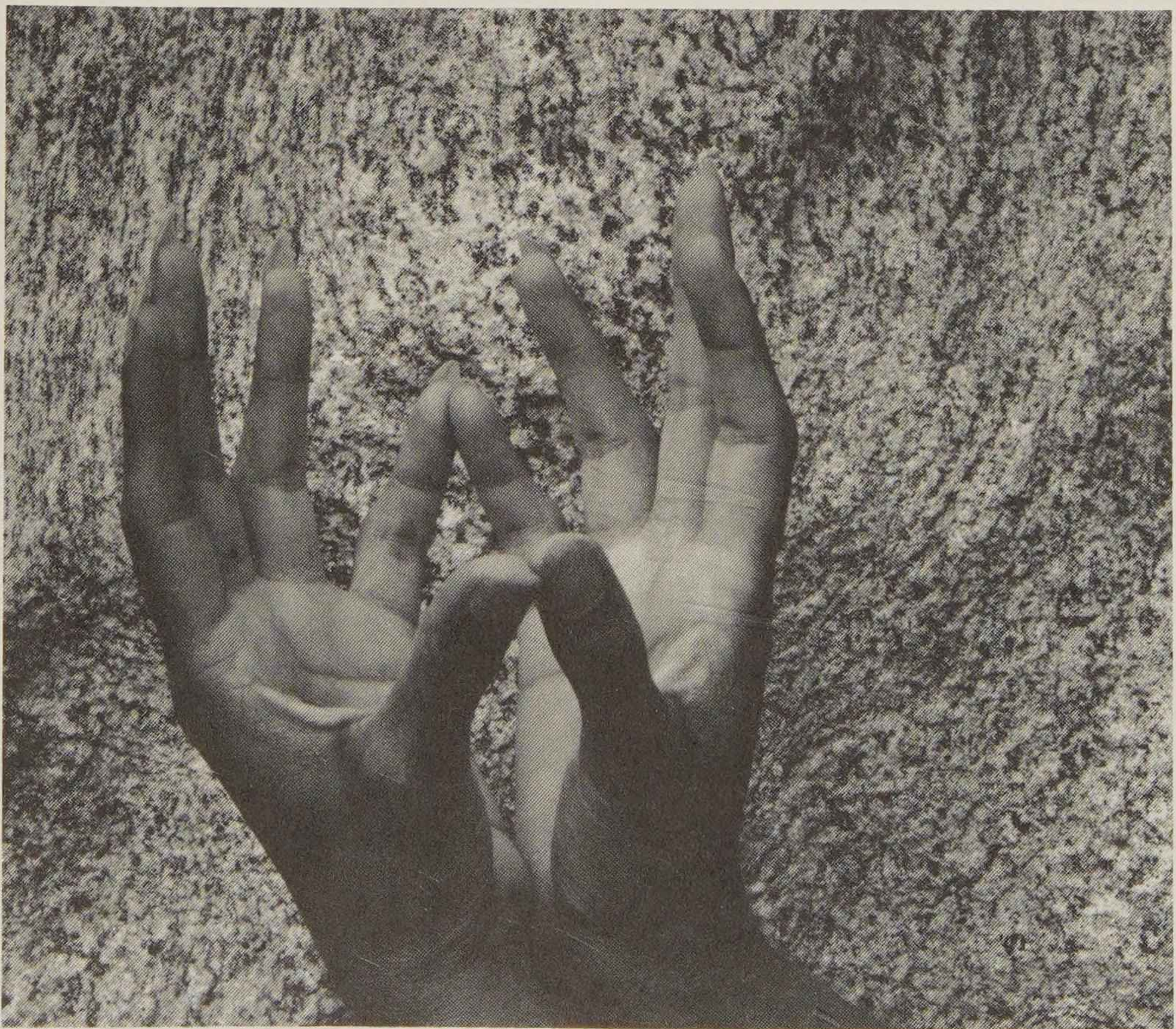
You are four-and-a-half years old when you first meet him. There at the dancing school where you have begged to go, despite your terror of strangers, because you have just witnessed your first performance of classical Manipuri dancing, and know now that this is the one thing you have to do.

Guruji teaches only an occasional group class at the school. For the privilege of including his name on their staff, the school board has provided him with a cot-

tage at the back of the grounds. Here he trains his individual pupils. And from here he emerges to pick those envied “singles” out of the babies’ class. . . . Unobtrusively he strolls down to the classroom; unobtrusively he sits in a corner and watches; unobtrusively he makes his choice. If his actions are noted he will fly into one of his much-touted rages. Afterwards you are to realize this legendary temper has been fabricated by the school to protect him from importunate parents. “That is his way,” they say, as if of an eternal verity.

His way, as far as you’re concerned, is as indefinable as a leaf, the sun, the tune of a song. At four and a half, you don’t even know you have been picked. “*Ao*,” the man with the shoulder-long hair says. Come.

Astoundingly, you’re not shy of him. Down you go to the cottage at the bottom of the compound, with a creeper flowering low over the front door; into a bare sunlit room containing a stringed tanpura, two drums of the tabla, and a single stick of incense burning at a shrine in the corner.



*The blooming of a lotus*

He re-ties your ankle bells more firmly and guides your feet into the first syllabic formula: *dhingte-yengta-khitta-dhenta, dhingte-yengta-khitta-dhenta*. . . .

When you have learned both the steps and the matching mudras of the hands faultlessly enough so that combining them is no more difficult than walking, he kneels down, face level with yours.

“Now go home and come back to me when you are five years old.” You look at him, uncertain. “That is a long time?”

“Maybe.”

“I can’t dance until then?”

He looks back at you in silence for a moment and then points to the starry white flowers over the door. “See that plant? It grows from the soil, *hai na?*” (Isn’t that so?) “So, dancing grows from everything you do every day of your life. How you eat,” he shows you. “How you bend down and pick up something from the floor. How you join palms to greet someone and say ‘*Namaste*.’ How you move, walk, sit—” matching action to word. “You see? I am dancing. Remember that, practice your *dhingte-yenta*, and come back to me when you are five years old.”

Five years old.

You arrive, bearing a shiny bell-metal platter arranged with marigolds, a heap of rice grains, token silver coins, betel leaves, half a coconut and a twisted yellow bit of turmeric root. Proffer it to him, and bend down to touch his feet as a worshipful student should. He blesses you gently enough, but when you straighten up, his tone is sharper than you will ever hear it. “Never do that to me again until you have learned everything you have to learn from me, and it is time for you to leave—understand?”

The early years. Graduating slowly past the first simple syllables to more complicated measures of rhythm: *Kokilpriya, Panchamswari, Brahmatal, Vishnutal*. . . . The evenings when you badger him to spice the lessons with some drama and danger. “Please, Guruji, show me the demon dance.”

“No, *chal*—go— it will frighten you.”

“Please, Guruji, just once. I won’t be scared. I promise I won’t be scared.”

His one fault, everyone says, is his tenderness toward children (which of course every child knows and exploits): it breaks into the sternness and stringency required of a teacher. “*Achcha*,” he gives in, and turns into a demon.



*Living things: like antelopes, like bees*

Horrible mask-face hovering over outspread talons, eyebrows flared terrifyingly over bloodthirsty eyes, mouth a snarl of fangs, it dances. . . crouch— leap— thud, crouch— leap— thud . . . nearer and nearer.

By the time you fall, panting and dusty, over the fence at the other end of the compound, the demon has disappeared. When you retrace your steps, Guruji is waiting at the window, saying resignedly: “What did I tell you?”

Seven years old. No more games. Nine years old. The stage. Which, after the initial nervousness, excitement, blinding lights, and anticlimax of Guruji picking holes in your performance afterwards, makes no difference at all. There’s still milk to be gagged over at breakfast next morning, the same arithmetic to be wrestled with at school.

At twelve, a rebellion. “Guruji, it’s not fair! The men can jump and leap about as much as they like. Why do *we* have to

keep gliding around so gentle and passive all the time? Why should their dances have so much more life?"

"LIFE?" You've never seen him so outraged. He launches off in a spate of his incomprehensible mother-tongue before he can recollect himself enough to revert to Hindi and point to that same damn creeper over the door. "See that? Don't just look at it. Fill your eyes, fill your eyes! You think that has no life? Foolish girl! When you can dance the way it moves, you will have achieved something. Not until then. *Sancharini pallavini lata. . . .*" Obediently you repeat the Sanskrit quote after him but grumble in your head that you've just about had enough of being a "swaying blossoming vine."

Shrewdly he shoots a glance at you. "Manipuri dancing must be kept absolutely pure, you hear? No jerks. No wriggles. Not even the needless flutter of a single eyelash. Go home now. I don't want you here unless you can be attentive with your whole self."

Blackmail. Pure blackmail. Semblances of docility are no use, he'll see right through them. You whip off your ankle-bells and storm home. "I'll never go there again. Never!"

When you creep back two weeks later, it is to find the lapse—both of time and manners—magnificently ignored. He never refers to the episode again; neither do you. Stalemate. On the one hand, you can't *not* dance. On the other hand, the further you progress, the subtler and more active the passivity demanded of you.

But now he speaks more about dancing than he has in all the previous years put together. A little here, a little there, explaining a gesture, a legend, a memory of the green hills of his land, he teaches you:

In Manipur, dancing is charged with faith, the devotional fervor of *bhakti*. To a Manipuri, one's whole life is a dance offering. Thus, following given dictates, the Tandava style of men's dancing is swift and vigorous, the feminine Lasya an apotheosis of grace: fluid movements merging into one another with no clearly defined begin-

ning or end, continuous as the rhythm of birth and death. No extraneous glance or gesture should be allowed to mar the sanctity of this offering. The ignorant call it an expressionless dance. Never! The true dancer has reached a stage where the earthly audience has ceased to matter, and she is conscious only of the deity in the temple, of—another shrewd look—the gift of life itself. . . .

After all this, by the time you're into your teens, Guruji decides that you're perhaps disciplined enough to be allowed occasionally to choreograph your own dances in the classical mode. If your movements in the Dance of Creation are more vehement than seemly, he temporarily looks the other way. "I have to let you do this now. It's the only way you'll dance right some day. But no public performances until I say so."

If, then, you try to check your upstart originality against his standards, there's only the shrug by the window again. "That is how you do it. That is not the way it has always been done. Don't expect me to approve until you can put old and new together, and let them go, and dance as you should."

"How can I do that?"

"How? You dare to ask me HOW?"

You are silent, but it isn't a quelled-enough silence.

Grudgingly he adds: "Some things cannot be taught. They can only be learned."



*What we don't know*



Wonder

Still later, he remarks in passing, “You know the difference between statement and art? *Rasa*. Simple word: juice. Complicated word: essence. *Rasa*, the essence and fulfillment of art. A whole world. In dancing—” he quotes again—“*eye follows hand, hand follows mind, mind follows emotions, emotions follow rasa*. Unless you achieve that mingling, you are nowhere. Enough talk now. Get back to work.”

On your fifteenth birthday, in your last months at high school, Guruji starts you reading the medieval poets—Vidyapathi, Chandidas, Jnandas, Vishnudas. . . . “Theirs is the spirit of *bhakti*, child, and our dancing its body.”

Squirm or rebel as you might, against the strength and pliancy of a poetry that can encompass a universe in a couplet, your own personal quirks become somehow irrelevant. Dancing changes, probably grows in you without your knowing it.

The morning after the school finals end, a hot blue April day with mangoes in the market and gul-mohur trees in masses of bloom so red that they seem to breathe (in, out. . . in, out. . .), Guruji sends for you.

“You did well in the exams? You must be tired. Rest now. Rest. Eat and sleep properly these first two weeks of the holidays. Then we will start again.” He lowers his voice. “I will give you the five *parengs*.”



Moving toward . . .

The five *parengs*. Rarest and most revered of the dances; said to have been handed down by Krishna himself, so that a single misstep is tantamount to blasphemy.

Outside, a loose strand of the malati creeper, grown lower and more obdurate than ever, scrapes its starry white flowers against the door in the wind.

“It’s true,” Guruji says, smiling. “Shut your mouth, you don’t have to say anything. Go home now. Rest. Prepare yourself.”

How can you guess what you are preparing yourself for? Two years of straining yourself against limits you hadn’t even known existed. An unimaginable stretching of yourself, within and without. Evenings when you weep at your sheer human inadequacy, pulverized with shame at betraying the discipline of this bare room; and Guruji says matter-of-factly: “How can you live an art until you have wept over it? When you come back from the other side of tears, you will dance as you should.”

Afterwards you can never recapture the actuality, only sense in the abstract that final fusion: between how Guruji wants you to dance, and how you dance, and how (he tells you later, for you do not know) the audience “sees” you dance: completing with their eyes what you begin with your hands, so that, together, you re-create an art in the inheriting of it. ■

# A New Dwelling

## AN INTERVIEW WITH TARA TULKU, RINPOCHE

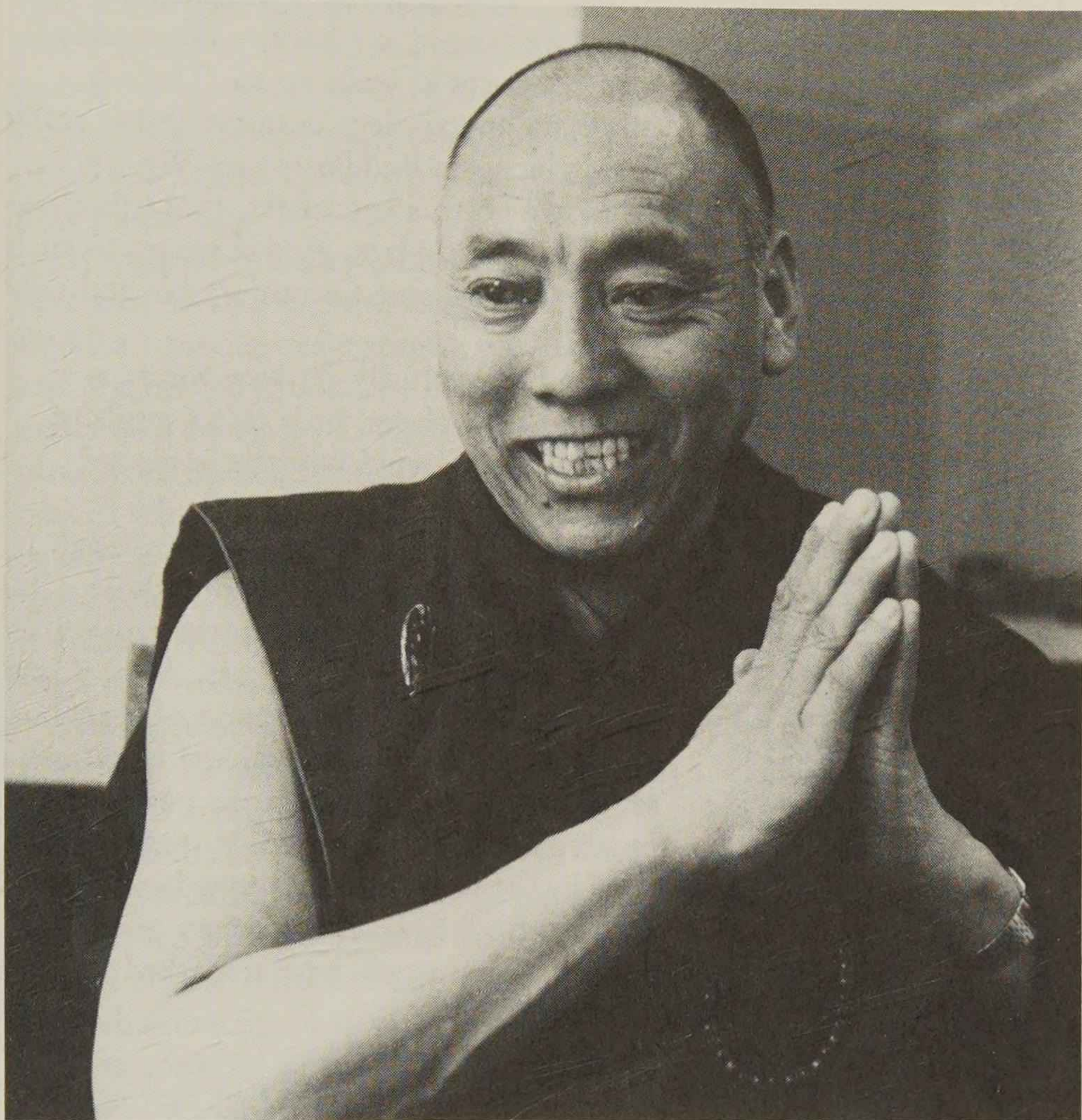
*By the standards of his own rigorous tradition, the Venerable Tara Tulku, Rinpoche, is a remarkable individual. Born in Kham, eastern Tibet, in 1927, Rinpoche was recognized at a very early age as the reincarnation of the previous abbot of neighboring Sendru Monastery. Beginning his monastic training at Sendru at the age of three, Rinpoche in 1940 entered Drepung Monastery, the largest in Tibet, with ten thousand monks. There he was recognized as master of all five fields of Buddhist scholarship at the age of twenty-nine—inordinately young for such an achievement. He proceeded for advanced training to Gyuoto Tantric Monastery, where he remained until the Chinese invasion—making him one of the last monks to receive a complete Tibetan Buddhist training on his native soil.*

*The great catastrophe of 1959 decimated Gyuoto Tantric Monastery; of five hundred monks in residence, only seventy escaped. After great hardships, the monastery was relocated in India, where Tara Tulku guided it through the arduous process of reconstruction. Following nine years as abbot—three times the customary tenure—Rinpoche became abbot emeritus. But his work continues unabated. Recently, His Holiness the Dalai Lama appointed him to teach the Dharma to Westerners each year at the Tibetan monastery at Bodhgaya, and for the past year he has been teaching in America both as the Henry R. Luce Professor of Comparative Religious Ethics at Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts, and as scholar-in-residence at the American Institute for Buddhist Studies in Amherst.*

*We spoke to Tara Tulku at the home of Robert A.F. Thurman, professor of religion at Amherst College, president of the American Institute of Buddhist Studies, and the man who was instrumental in bringing Tara Tulku to the United States. Professor Thurman not only translated for us with vigor and wit, but helped illuminate difficult aspects of Tibetan teaching during the course of our long conversation. His translating skills came into play as soon as Rinpoche joined us, smiling brightly, arms spread wide in greeting, dressed in a monastic garb of maroon robes, yellow silk shirt, and red sweater bearing a portrait-pin of H.H. the Dalai Lama.*

*After lunch, we gathered in Tara Tulku's sunny upstairs living quarters where he sat on Western pillows. As he responded to our questions with warmth and intensity, we were aware of his openness and freedom and of our own instinctive respect toward him. His fluid attention, sense of humor, great intellectual depth—and as it seemed to us—profundity of being, gave his responses, and his silences, a rare seriousness and weight.*

—Lorraine Kisly and Philip Zaleski



Photographs by Lorraine Kisly

**PARABOLA Rinpoche**, perhaps we could start out by asking what connotations pilgrimage has for you.

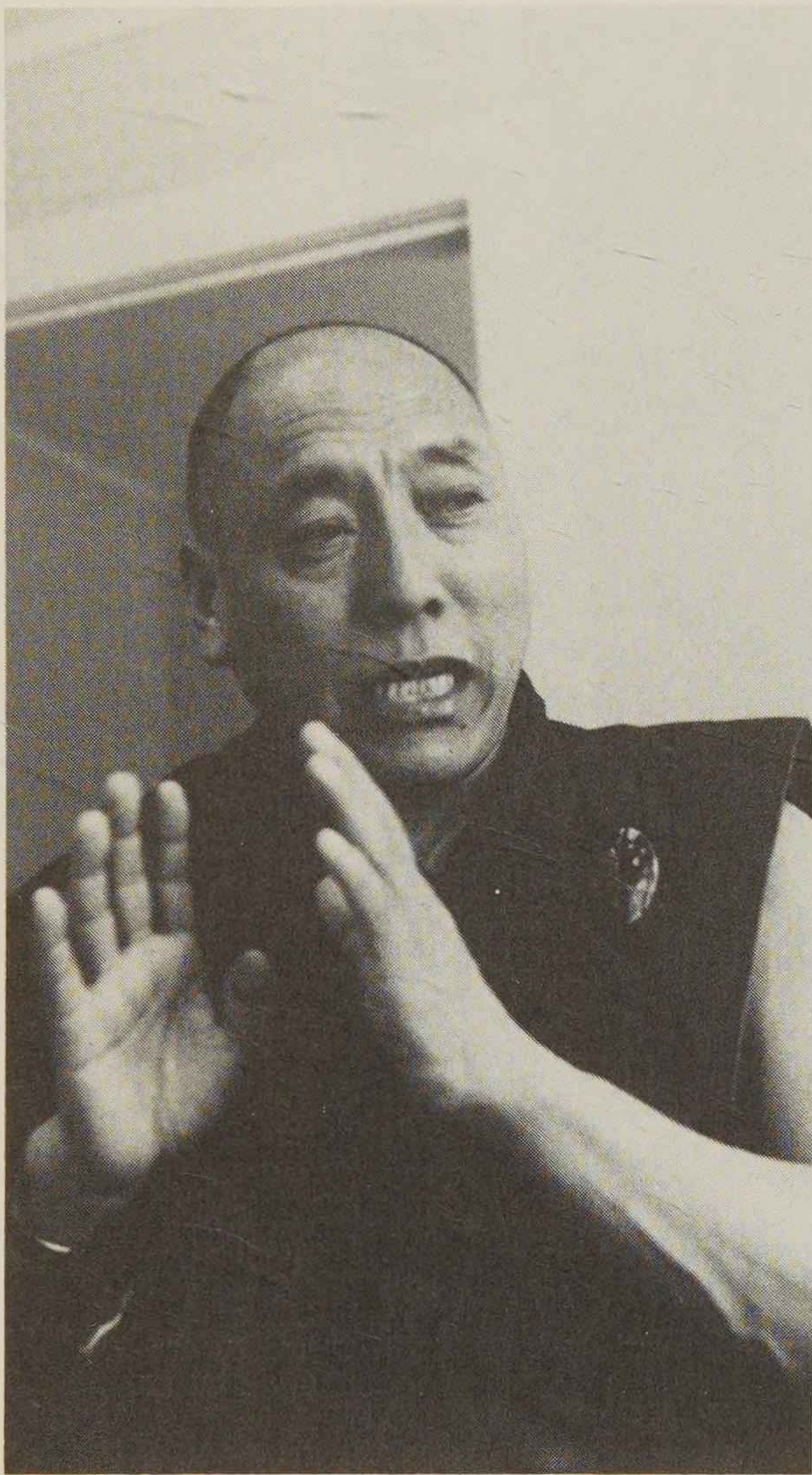
**Tara Tulku** We believe that there are two reasons to go on pilgrimage. One is temporary, the other is ultimate. Generally, we feel that pilgrimage is very important and powerful. If we were to go on pilgrimage in the way it is recommended in the Buddha Dharma, it would be truly excellent for us. For example, the places where we live, our dwellings, are not quite right or suitable. Why is that? Because no matter how we deal with them, they become a source of suffering for us. Similarly, our ordinary body is definitely not proper as it is. Therefore, it is necessary that we contemplate the development and acquisition of a new dwelling, a new body. You can say that the Buddha Dharma, its various techniques and arts, consists of means for developing and attaining a new body, a new dwelling. There are both ordinary and

extraordinary methods for creating these; the process of going on pilgrimage should be understood as part of these methods.

**P.** Is Rinpoche referring to the development of a subtle body in this lifetime?

**T.T.** (*Smiles.*) We will come around to the subject of subtle bodies and such, but we haven't quite gotten there yet. Let's consider the case of Sakyamuni Buddha, to commemorate whom one goes on the pilgrimage to Bodhgaya. On the ordinary level of reality, Sakyamuni, in the series of events relating to his eating the first bit of rice, taking his bath, going to the Bodhi tree and so forth, realized a new body. He suddenly became golden, and his ascetic body filled out. He had a completely different body—it suddenly appeared on the ordinary level.

The place itself, under the Bodhi tree at Bodhgaya, was transformed as well. It became a place of diamond, a *vajra* place, a



place of extreme sacredness. Why is it sacred? Because Buddha's transformative experience of unexcelled perfect enlightenment blessed it in a special way. Some people even believe that if you reach and stand on that place and take the Bodhisattva vow or make prayers to achieve Buddhahood for the benefit of all beings, then just because of the power of that place, you will never be reborn in the lower states. And if you meditate there, recite prayers, and study, the place has a special power for the mind to come to realization. It is a place of light and bliss. This is because this is the place where Śakyamuni achieved the special Buddha body, a body which has only bliss and happiness, and never suffers. He also used this place as a basis for perceiving all places as indivisible from the highest heaven of the four realms. Because this place was the basis from which he re-envisioned all reality as the highest heaven, it is extremely sacred.

That's how Buddhists explain this. But when we hear it, we have to ask ourselves whether it could really be so. There is, however, an excellent example that it really is so which the Buddhists use. We say, when we go to a battlefield, that it is a horrible, awful place. And if we go to such a place, we become uncomfortable and sad.

**P.** Are there actually physical forces at work in such places, or is this a result of memories connected with these places?

**T.T.** Both. Bodhgaya has a great special power infused in it by a person whose achievement was timeless, in the sense that the future was present. It lasts. Also, if one goes there with a strong vision of that moment, as if it were not separated from one, as if it were not past, then the power is much greater. But even when someone not thinking of its importance wanders through Bodhgaya, it has a very great power. Many people have remarked upon this.

**P.** Just as there are places that can be beneficial and places that can be detrimental, it can be said that there are paths that lead towards a true goal, and paths that lead towards falsehood. How can one discern whether one is on a right path—particularly if one lives outside of a traditional society?

**T.T.** The impact on the mind is how one judges the validity of the path. Here, again, the issue of relativity is crucial. When a path brings us into relativities, into causes and conditions that influence the mind in a positive way, we can say that the path is positive or good. But how have you asked this question?

**P.** We are thinking of pilgrimage as not just a physical voyage, but as the journey from ignorance to enlightenment.

**T.T.** Yes, you are jumping ahead of me again. (*Smiles.*) I am talking first about the ordinary level of pilgrimage. For example, we have Bodhgaya, a place to which anyone can go, but an especially sacred place.

And if one has faith in the Buddha, and practices and meditates and proceeds on the path from ignorance to enlightenment, the place gets a greater and greater power for one. Now, this is what we mean by ordinary pilgrimage.

As for extraordinary pilgrimage, we believe that there is a place, made by the Buddha's merits, realizations, and vows and prayers for all sentient beings, which exists on a subtle level. He has created this place from his achievement of the timelessness in which past, present, and future are equally accessible. In this place, he receives those beings who go there. But this place is practically impossible for us to encounter from our ordinary level.

The Buddha has left there an inconceivable body, an extraordinary one which has not passed away as the ordinary one has. These are the two major foci of pilgrimage on the extraordinary level. Why is that? Because the Buddha has said that if one reaches ethical, meditational, and intellectual achievements of a certain kind, then one can come to have such a dwelling, such a body and mind. One becomes a Buddha oneself. If one practices according to those teachings, one can transform one's world, one's body, and one's mind. That is the true inner pilgrimage—the attainment of enlightenment; to change the body and the world as well as the mind.

**P.** What is the connection or meeting point between ordinary and extraordinary pilgrimage?

**T.T.** You can see ordinary pilgrimage as a kind of preparation, as the creation of a paradigm in the mind, and as an accumulation of merit for the person who will then go on the extraordinary pilgrimage when he becomes capable of it. The nearer one gets to the field of those activities of the Buddha, the historical and transhistorical realities of those activities, the more one generates faith, admiration, and estimation of his achievements, and the more one prizes one's achievement of these stages oneself. The more one likes something, the more likely it is that in the future one will acquire it.

One thing that isn't well enough known is that the Buddha himself, in his own discourses, gave the recommendation to undertake ordinary pilgrimage. It's not something that others added after his death. In the Parinirvana Sutra, when the Buddha is about to die, he says to Ananda that Buddhas always die in this way, and that after they die, the relics are put in a stupa, much bigger than for a king. Afterwards, there are four places where pilgrims should go: where a Buddha is born, where a Buddha attains enlightenment, where a Buddha first turns the Wheel of Dharma, and where a Buddha attains Parinirvana. Thus you recapitulate the whole life cycle of the Buddha by going around these four places. The Buddha seems to have been the first person to create such a pattern—that is, pilgrimage that is not just a journey to a local, ancestral, or tribal shrine.

**P.** Does this establish a physical relationship to the Buddha?

**T.T.** Exactly right.

**P.** Has pilgrimage, then, played a large role in the life of Tibetans?

**T.T.** Oh, yes. It has entered the ears of Tibetans that it is a great and sacred thing to go on pilgrimage. Some know what they are doing, and the context in which they do it, and the attitude which they should bring to it. Others go without knowing. At Bodhgaya, they take bits of earth and put them into amulets or charm boxes to take with them. This is a Tibetan custom.

**P.** Does the arduousness of the pilgrimage add to the merit?

**T.T.** Yes. The more suffering that is undergone—provided that suffering is borne in the positive sense—the more merit accrues. Of course, if you get mad and irritated with your hardships, that will decrease the merit. (*Laughs.*)

**P.** Has pilgrimage played an important role in your own life, Rinpoche?

**T.T.** Yes, it has had a great impact on my life, particularly in terms of my experiences at Bodhgaya. They have been very powerful—praying, meditating, performing ceremonies. The tremendously peaceful atmosphere at Bodhgaya has had a great effect on me. It facilitates achieving my own sense of peacefulness.

**P.** It's a common practice among educated Westerners to go around the world, visiting pilgrimage sites in traditions that are not their own. What do you think of, for instance, a Christian going to a Buddhist site?

**T.T.** It doesn't matter what religion people hold, if they are going with an open mind, if they are seeking truth. In this case, it is extremely meritorious to go to the holy sites of any religion.

**P.** But isn't it necessary to have a thorough training in the tradition of a site in order to fully receive the influences connected to it?

**T.T.** Yes, there is a question of degree of merit, but there is always some real merit. There's a famous story about a monk who was not going to be admitted to an order by some of the order's great venerable elders because he was a nasty person with a bad record. The monk complained bitterly about this, saying, "You bunch of incompetent venerables, I want to be a monk! So what if I've been mean." He scolded them, in his typically abusive way, about how they shouldn't stand in his way, and how at least they should ask the Buddha before making a final decision. So the elders went and asked the Buddha, "Does this fellow have any redeeming characteristics, so that he might benefit himself and others by becoming a monk in our order?" The Buddha looked at the monk for a long time and then said, "Yes, indeed, he does have a redeeming feature." When the elders asked, "What is it?" the Buddha told this story: Many previous lifetimes ago, he said,

this monk had been an ant. As an ant, he had been present when some pilgrims had held a picnic in Bodhgaya, near the stupa of the former Buddha. The ant had been sneaking around, trying to steal crumbs from the food of the pilgrims. Suddenly, one of the picnickers got up and started to circumambulate the stupa—with the ant stuck on his foot, hanging on for dear life! (*Laughs.*) He held on for several revolutions around the stupa. And by the virtue of that, the Buddha concluded, he was now deserving of becoming a monk in the order.

**P.** Could Rinpoche indicate to us what qualities a person needs to set out on the inner or extraordinary pilgrimage?

**T.T.** A person must have faith in the goal—faith that there is a transformed place; that there is the possibility of an evolutionary transformation of the self, of body and mind; faith that beings have done so; and that they left accurate records of how to do so. Next, effort is required. The more faith one has, and the more ambition one has in consequence of that faith, the more one's effort will increase. And in order to generate that faith more powerfully, one must have the memory, the mindfulness, of the excellence of the goal. The more one can remember what a Buddha is, the more one's aspiration for that becomes, and the more one's effort increases. The more one realizes how beneficial that achievement is, what great advantages there are in achieving such a stage, the more intensely one will wish to practice the methods leading to such a stage. Similarly, if one is aware of a really delicious meal in a particular restaurant or country, one's effort will be more intense to get to that place to have that feast.

**P.** But we don't know this end state—the end of the pilgrimage—as clearly as we know the taste of food. It's something unknown by definition.

**T.T.** How is it that we get to know it? By depending upon the greatest of the Buddha's accomplishments—his speech. A re-

markable aspect of the Buddha is that he taught and described extensively the nature of all the various stages and paths. It is by relying on these descriptions that we can come to understand it.

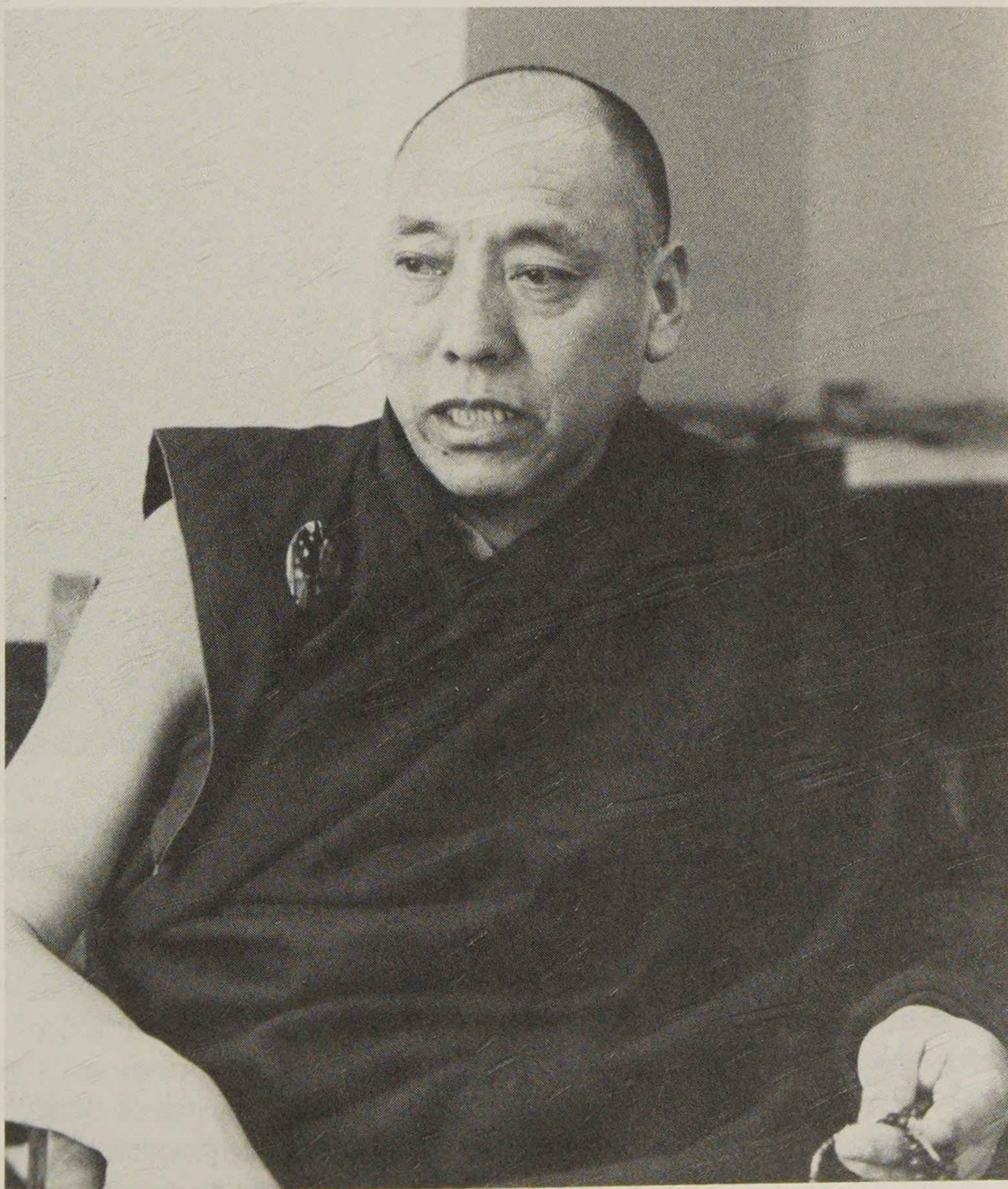
Two aspects of the Buddha's teaching are particularly important in this context. One is that he always spoke reasonably, providing clear reasons of why it is one must come to this or that understanding. You might call it his scientific side. And the other is his artistic side. He also spoke poetically and vividly. In his discourses, there are very vivid descriptions—evocations, you might say—of various kinds of states, of beings, heavenly realms, and so forth. So by the imagination and by critical wisdom, he has methods for both sides of the person to develop simultaneously. The initial key, of course, is to be aware that ordinary reality is the reality of suffering.

And second, that suffering has a root which can be eradicated. Once that has been realized, the prospect of a state without suffering becomes tangible.

**P.** But what is it that distinguishes someone who comes to this understanding from someone who does not? What is the nature of that critical moment that leads one to place one's foot upon the path?

**T.T.** As we define it, the first step in the path is the taking of refuge. Then comes the mind of renunciation and detachment, the spirit of love and compassion. Third is the wisdom of selflessness. These are the three things that are necessary.

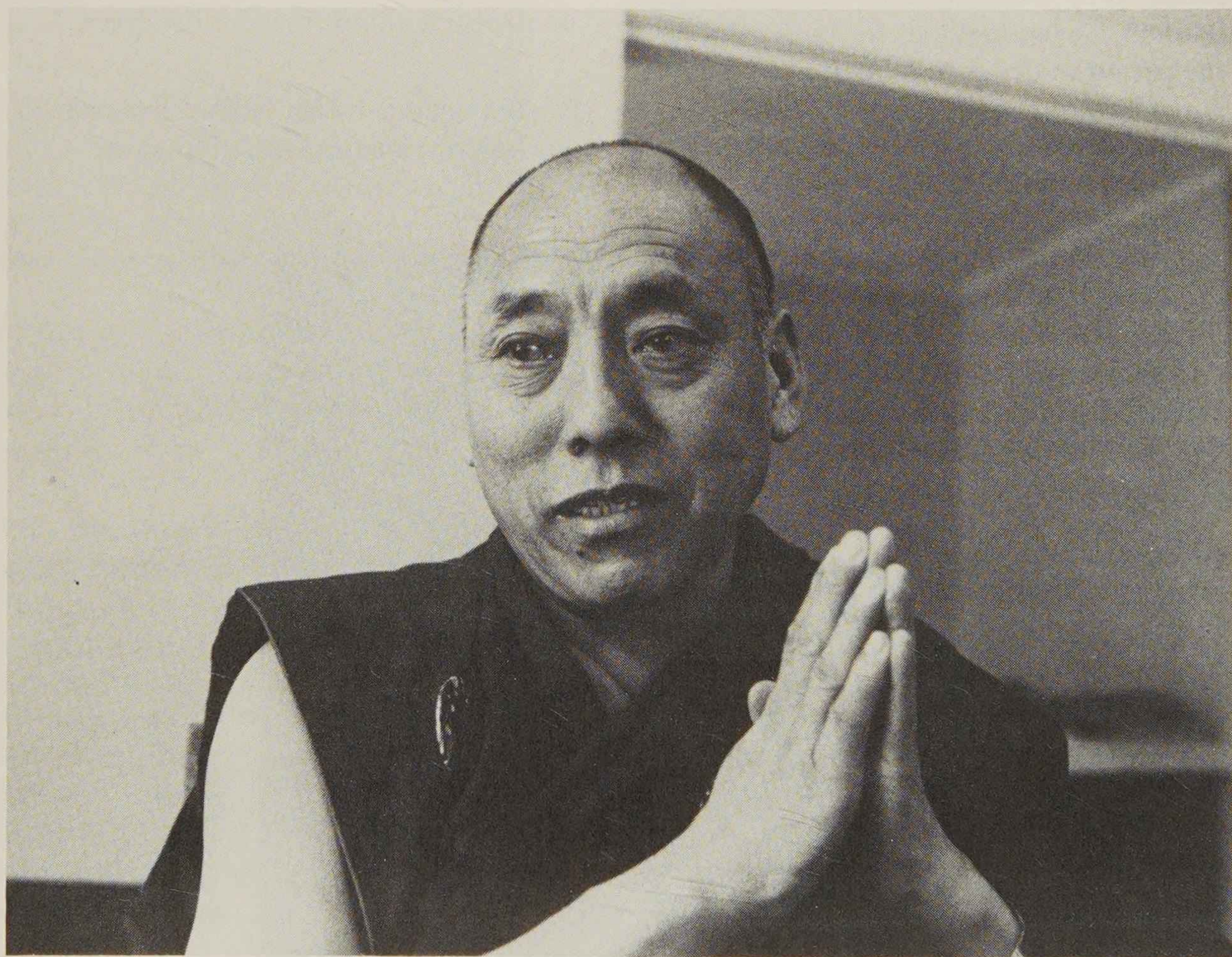
**P.** And what is it that leads one person to seek refuge and another to ignore it?



**T.T.** This has to do with whether the two major causes of the taking of refuge are present in the person. These causes are said to be terror and faith. By faith, we mean faith in the three jewels of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha—that there is a community, a teaching, and an enlightened being. By terror, we mean terror of cosmic suffering, especially, at the beginning, terror of the lower states of existence—of hell, of the *preta* realm, of animal suffering, terror of future lives in an uncontrolled way. A person who has those two causes—cosmic terror of an unsaved destiny, and faith that there are compassionate beings who have

**T.T.** We mustn't be angry with the obstacles. When obstacles arise, the key thing is to practice tolerance, one of the most transcendent virtues taught in Buddhism. One must cultivate one's patience and tolerance. Of course, there are levels wherein, in addition to not being angry with obstacles, as far as that has to do with one's subjective attitude, there are ways of going around them. There are even methods, in the tantras for example, of removing obstacles.

**P.** Is there a way of transforming an obstacle, or must it always be removed or gone around?



the ability to give one the method of saving oneself from that terror—will automatically take refuge. That is the beginning of the path.

**P.** Once one is on the path, we are told that one will meet many obstacles. What is a fruitful attitude to take towards those obstacles—particularly if they seem to be other people?

**T.T.** Śāntideva's book, *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (*A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Compassion*), is full of this sort of approach, about how your enemy is your greatest teacher—ways of turning this whole thing around. There is a very elaborate discussion in Śāntideva about tolerance as a great virtue. From tolerance arises beauty. All of Buddha's beauty arises from his practice of tolerance. The more patient you become, the

more you are able to bear suffering, the more beautiful you will become. To be tolerant, however, I need an enemy. I need someone to bother me, so I can practice my tolerance. Thus the enemy becomes a guru. Śāntideva is full of techniques of this kind, in a very sophisticated, intricate, beautiful form.

**P.** So the greatest obstacle on the path is having no obstacles at all.

**T.T.** Śāntideva will go to such extremes as making statements like that. But on the other hand, when tolerance is perfected and one has Buddhahood, even if there are no obstacles in oneself, other beings have quite enough obstacles to go around, to provide an outlet for your tolerance. For example, the Dalai Lama is always saying that the Communists have been very kind to him, a tremendous help. But, on the other hand, he says that the Communists' destruction of his people is bad. When a soldier has beaten up an old man, or killed a monk or a child, this is bad. If you know the practice of tolerance, then an enemy can help you. But otherwise, you are simply harmed by your enemy, and experience even more harm from your own anger and bitterness at the enemy, so it's doubly bad. Nobody benefits from that. So without being angry at anyone, certainly you should try very forcefully to stop bad persons from doing bad things.

**P.** Is meditation in any way like a pilgrimage?

**T.T.** There are many ways of meditating. If one is just concentrating on a single object, then it is hard to see it as a pilgrimage. Within, however, the discursive or thematic or analytic types of meditation, some can be said to be like a pilgrimage. Again, within that, there are ordinary and extraordinary levels.

**P.** Even in very simple relaxation meditation, however, one encounters obstacles. One is going to a slightly freer place than the usual subjective state. It's a kind of

inward journey, even on a very simple level.

**T.T.** Yes. We talk about these things in the form of remedies. For example, if one's mind is full of anxiety, then one contemplates the counting of breath. If one is excessively attached to something, the contemplation of unloveliness is considered to be a remedy. If one has anger, then tolerance is meditated on. Each mental imbalance has its particular corrective remedy.

**P.** To what extent is one's pilgrimage individual and solitary, and to what extent does it involve companions? If it is a group effort, what should one's attitude be towards one's companions on the pilgrimage?

**T.T.** There are various levels of pilgrimage, relating to the motivation involved. In an objective way, of course, there is always an individual and a collective component relating to any action. But the action changes and has a different degree of merit and power depending on the orientation of the person. For example, if a person is what is called an "inferior" person—that is, a spiritual, but "inferior" spiritual person—he is going on the pilgrimage to get merit for himself, to prevent his future sufferings and to achieve heavenly and other kinds of reincarnations in his future lives. This is somewhat narrow, but it has a certain type of merit. The middle person is going on a pilgrimage to get merit not only for the betterment of his life, but to achieve liberation and enlightenment for himself. This has a wider power. Finally, bodhisattvas go on the pilgrimage for themselves, but simultaneously wish all beings to go with them. In a sense, they visualize that they are taking all beings with them on that pilgrimage. They are including all beings as receiving the fruit of what they do. That becomes a vast root of virtue. These are the famous three types of person—inferior, mediocre, and superior—on the basis of how they are motivated in any virtuous action that they might do. If one goes on the pilgrimage just to benefit oneself in this life, it is not considered a religious action,

but just an ordinary action, and yet one can receive some benefit from it.

**P.** Like the ant on the shoe!

**T.T.** Yes.

**P.** What aspects of Buddhism are most misunderstood by Westerners?

**T.T.** There's a long list. The worst is the misunderstanding of emptiness as if it were nothingness, leading to meditation on nothingness: non-thought. Relating to this, the notion that there's no ethics in Buddhism. And then, the wish and insistence on immediate practice of tantra.

**P.** Is it difficult for Tibetans to understand Buddhism?

**T.T.** Yes, it's very hard for anyone. It entails a whole process of education.

**P.** I know I have no understanding of emptiness.

**T.T.** You must make effort in the method of coming to understand it. Emptiness is the essence of the Dharma.

**P.** Does this have something to do with it: We have a consciousness which persists; thoughts come and go, but consciousness persists. Now, there's one consciousness which is involved in, identified with, and reacting to an external reality. Is the same consciousness, when it is freed from that identification, part of what is meant by emptiness?

**T.T.** (*Expression of anguish.*) To think about emptiness, one has to examine how, in your mind, when you let it settle a little bit, there arises this sense of "I." You have to observe that "I" and come to understand it. That's in the direction of emptiness—not just some peacefulness. The critical insight about what that "I" is. This mind of "I," "I," "I" is always, continually arising. There is a relative "I"—the conventional self really is there.

But we don't understand it as a relative and conventional "I," because we have a strange way of exaggerating it, and perceiving it to be an independent thing, not part of the relativity which is emptiness. To begin to diminish that exaggeration is the purpose of contemplating emptiness. The important thing is to avoid thinking of emptiness as nothingness, which comes from thinking of it as a kind of empty space of peaceful meditation. The real meaning of emptiness is relativity, relationality, interdependency.

**P.** So seeing this "I" come up again and again is very important.

**Robert A.F. Thurman:** Oh yes, and learning how to separate the falsely exaggerated absolute "I" from the relative "I," and getting to learn how one is exaggerating, and how the feeling arises of some sort of independence, which seems to be there but can't possibly be there. The main thing to understand is the Buddha's view, that of relativity. So, in response to an earlier question, sense-consciousness is just as much emptiness as an inner peaceful state. Subject and object—all relationships are empty. There's no place that is emptier than any other.

**P.** Does the ego have a purpose?

**T.T.** Its purpose is to organize your activity—for example, to take the pictures you are taking, to walk, to eat, to think, to achieve Buddhahood. To help other beings. Buddha has to have an "I," an ego. You need the relative ego, you need to make it stronger, but to make it less absolute. This lets it grow more.

**P.** The relative ego must assume its proper place.

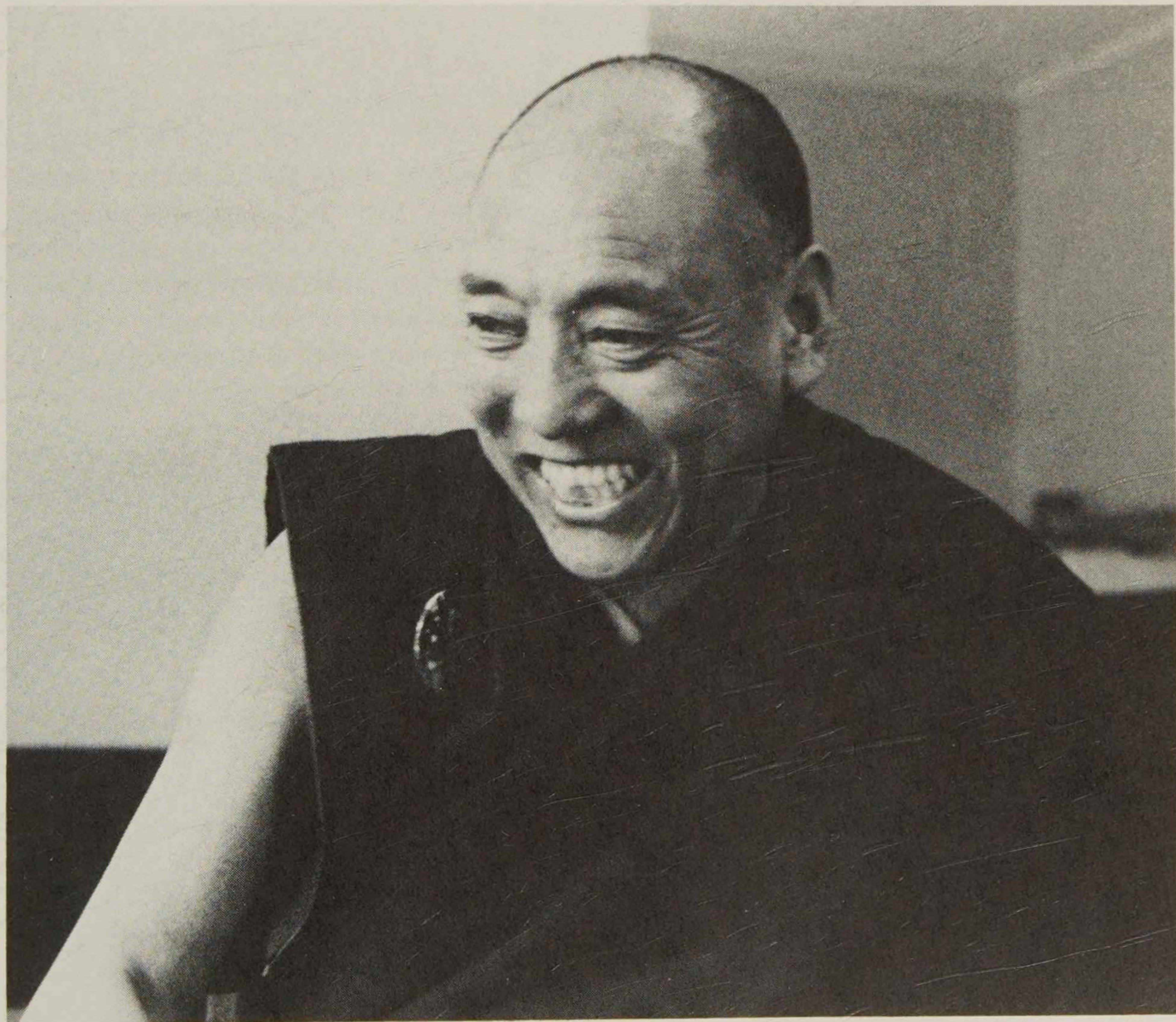
**T.T.** It's very interesting. You never lose the ego, although temporarily, because the relative ego and the hypothetical absolute ego are so inextricably intermixed, when you begin with critical wisdom to look into the absolute ego, you see through it, you see that it is just a presumption. And

it seems to take the relative one with it as it disappears. You feel as if you've lost your ego. But that's an illusion. If you have a nihilistic outlook, you identify that loss of the relative "I" as a big achievement, and so you become a nihilist by experience as well—and then you are very difficult to deal with.

**P.** Is there any way in which the dissemination of the Dharma to the West can be seen as a kind of pilgrimage?

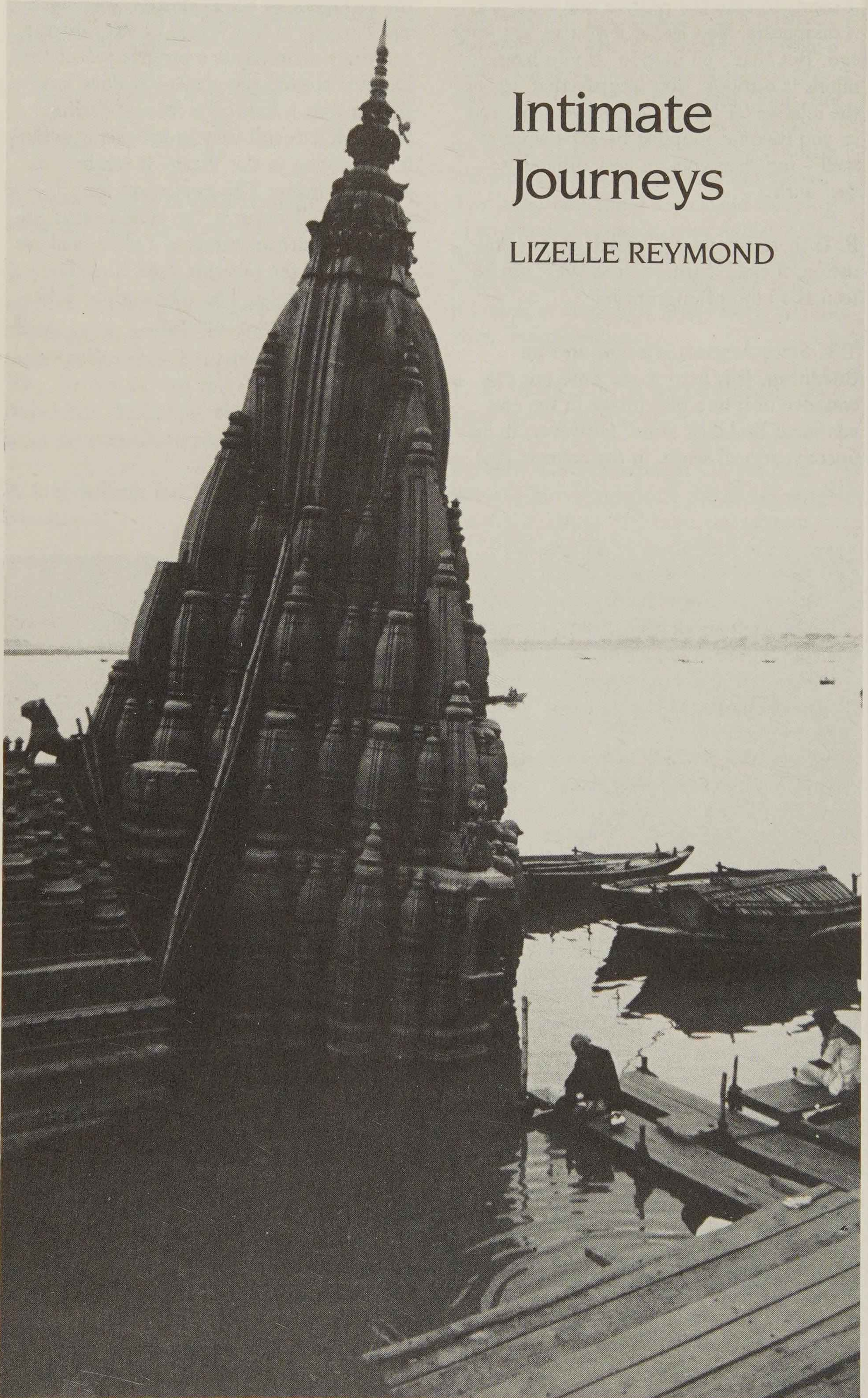
**T.T.** Since America is a new area for Buddhism, it is hard to see how one can conceive of it as a pilgrimage in the conventional Buddhist sense. However, in an unconventional sense, in the context that

the metaphor of the Buddha's teaching is the Turning of the Wheel of the Dharma, and there definitely is a progression of the Dharma around the planet—it does seem that in Asia it has had a time of decline, although it is still very much there, while it is growing in the West—it can be seen as a pilgrimage. The expression for pilgrimage in Tibetan is "to turn around the place," to circumambulate a place, and we can see that the Dharma itself is circling around the globe. The whole globe is becoming a Wheel of Dharma. ■



# Intimate Journeys

LIZELLE REYMOND



Photographs by Edward Rice

I quote from the experience of a *baul* who humbly made this pilgrimage when he was already an old man. "It was a hard climb," he said. "I was almost dead with fatigue before reaching the summit; and I told my companions, 'If I don't get there, leave me wherever I fall on Shiva's ground.' But finally I got to the top and entered the temple. It was exactly like being swallowed up by a huge whale, along with everything around me. Four or five others of our group entered at the same time and began to weep. I asked, 'Why are you crying?' They couldn't answer. They had experienced something. As for me, I saw 'That' with my eyes wide open; now I know it. Such was my pilgrimage toward the Mountain. I came back down again, but I am a different man."

### *Toward the Mountain*

To start out on a pilgrimage is to throw down a challenge to everyday life. Nothing matters now but this adventure. Travelers jostle each other to board the train where they crowd together for a journey that may last several days; after that there is a stony road to climb on foot—a rough, wild path in a landscape where everything is new. The naked glitter of the mountain stirs the imagination. The adventure of self-conquest has begun.

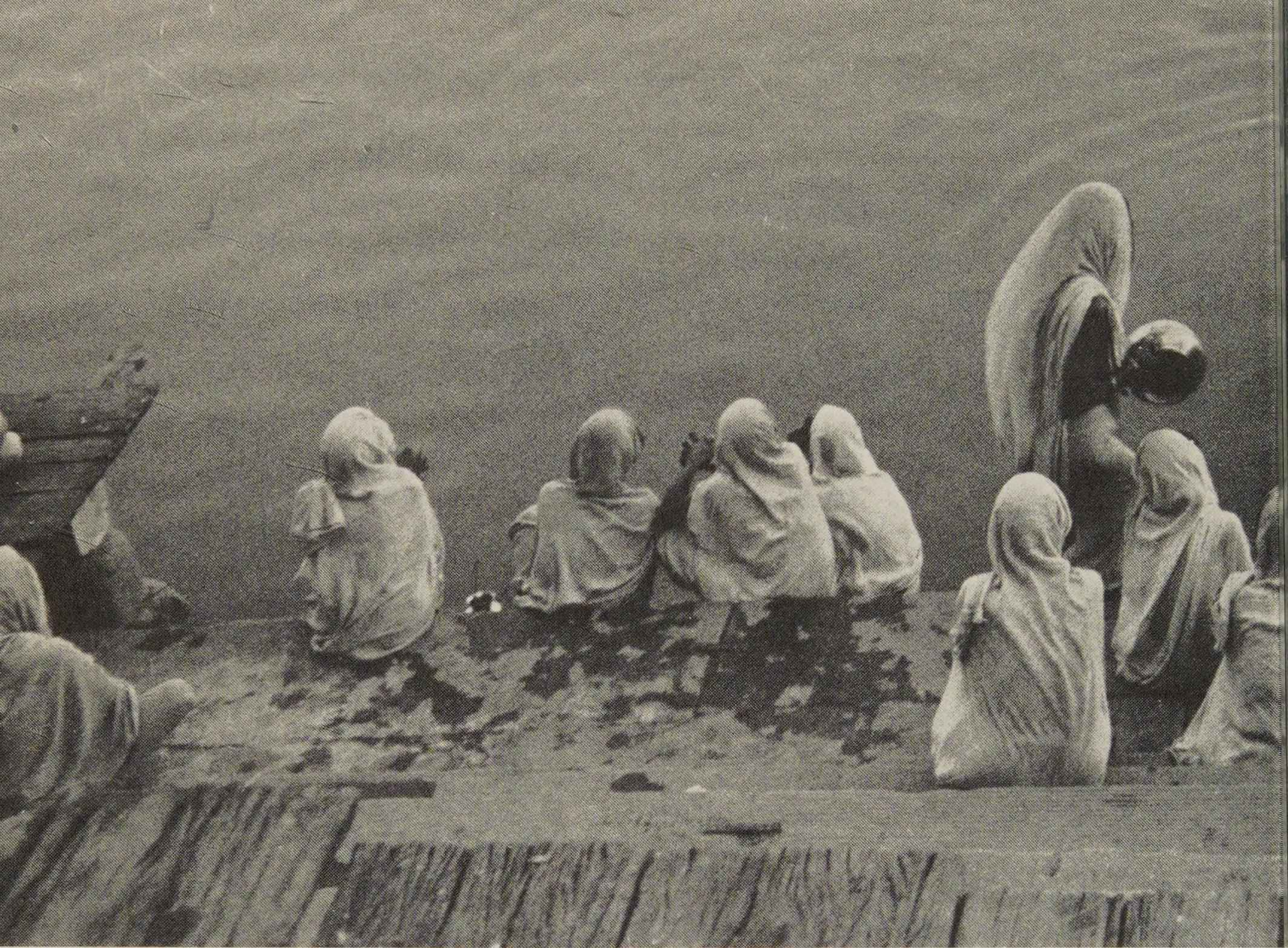
There are many young men, women in the prime of life, widows in their saris, invalids on crutches. A whole way of life is in question: how to cope with ups and downs, struggle with constant dangers. From time to time a song breaks out, a kind of litany that supports the upward march.

At last Badri Narayan, the land of Shiva, is reached. The crowd presses up to the entrance of the temple and little by little is swallowed up by it. Inside, there is nothing to be seen except a few faint lights in the center, where the god in his flawless posture offers a meeting with the Infinite. In front of huge lingams crowned with flowers the faithful prostrate themselves, while priests pour melted butter on the stone. Guttural chants rise, fill the space, and abruptly are stilled. One feels a wave of something strong, powerful. The collective adoration surges into ecstasy. . . .

I knew this *baul* well; he was my guide. I stayed in his hermitage, where his influence helped me to begin the search for myself. This journey is not undertaken easily; it also is an uphill climb, across all the planes of being. There is a long preparatory stage in which one learns to live very simply with a continuous attention. And one day my turn came to feel myself swallowed up with my eyes wide open. Strangely enough, I also wept without knowing why. Something in me was torn apart.

I was disoriented; a harsh note sounded in my ears—the commitment to live in a voluntary humility, to evaluate what seemed to be an inner freedom, and which is nothing else than the possibility of discovering the discipline necessary in order to learn to know oneself.

"Go to the root of everything that happens," said the guide, "but judge nothing like a woman who knows many things, but like a child who knows nothing." That means simply to turn to the primitive in ourselves, to the essence of our life which is born with us. We cannot either ignore or refuse it. On the spiritual path, we obey our essence because we recognize its flexibility and its capacity to absorb the divine light as nourishment. "In the quiet of your being, feel the gushing of the fountain: 'Thou art That.'"



new stage of inner observation from which to approach the meeting with the Infinite.

### *Kanya Kumari*

To start toward the Mountain with one of the great pilgrimages signifies that one has mentally accepted the idea of renouncing all attachments, large or small, that will arise in the future, by a voluntary act of stripping away. All the circumstances of life mark the path of the future, whatever impermanence they offer, whether wonderful or painful. They lead us to a discipline that is almost invisible, but so deep that the ego rebels. "It is a new life," said the guide, "a state of consciousness in which India appears as a vast laboratory where the power of manifestation is carried to a very high degree in spiritual experience."

The pilgrim returns from his journey turned upside down and at the same time strengthened by the vista of a disciplined life which is implied in the search for oneself, the attempt to live as an adult. It is a

There is a pilgrimage toward the Infinite, beyond the horizon which represents Totality. It is made by going to the farthest point of India, to Cape Comorin, where two oceans meet. There Kanya Kumari waits in her marble temple.

She has been waiting forever. She knows that he will come, followed by triumphal music, to find her. She has no doubt; and yet, he does not come!

In sacred history, she is the forgotten bride in her veil and wedding dress.

Kanya Kumari is the daughter of a king, or a great lord, or perhaps simply the daughter of a fisherman—it is no longer known. Time has brought conflicting reports. But it cannot be forgotten that the long-awaited bridegroom is Shiva himself, the greatest of all yogins and princes, who went away to war to settle a grave quarrel. On his way he met an astrologer who told



him, "Invincible Lord, hasten neither to the right nor the left, but straight ahead; and if an eagle screams, at his third cry go directly back without turning. If you do otherwise, you and your army will be lost."

The prince saluted the astrologer respectfully and hastened on, sure of himself. But the bird cried three times and the prince turned his horse, drawing all his followers after him.

Kanya Kumari knew nothing of this; she heard nothing. She had been adorned for her wedding in brocade and pearls. She held herself very straight beneath her crown so as to seem tall (which she was not), her eyes fixed on the point where the two oceans meet. She waited so long that she remained frozen in her attitude of hope, her hands joined. . . . The golden jewel shone on her forehead in the last rays of the sun; the moon in its turn shone upon it.

And it is the same today. People go to Cape Comorin to ask Kanya Kumari the secret of her constancy, which in the game

of life makes love always painful in the midst of its joy.

### *The Mouths of the Ganges*

There is one special pilgrimage which is made when the believer reaches an advanced age. Its reward is a spiritual state—the action of grace—which will allow a happy old age. It takes place in January at the Mouths of the Ganges, below Calcutta; it is the coldest time of the year. Everything that has been attained in the mountains during the pilgrimages to the high valleys, everything that has been the support of the middle years, will be symbolically thrown into the ocean, to let the pilgrim go free from himself, his ego washed away in the sea.

It is hard to imagine the scene: four hundred thousand pilgrims huddled together on the docks of the town; the solid mass of tents and huts with their stone hearths and copper pots; old trucks, motor coaches, carts, sightseeing buses, horses, and oxen; no children, no young people, only the mis-

ery of the old pilgrims waiting for the boat to take them to the Delta. That lasts several days, during which a sort of *mela* or country fair springs up with stalls of fruit and vegetables.

I knew the guide was going to propose that I make this pilgrimage with him—"toward Ganga Sagar, to find the Absolute"—not with our physical bodies, but in a vision coming from deep meditation. We were in Calcutta, in an empty room with the shades lowered against the sun, a cotton cloth on the floor to sit on, a metal suitcase for a table. He said, "You and I are pilgrims with them, we live their life; we are going with them toward the ocean where the Ganges will lose itself. We go forward with the same hunger they have, with the same hope of reaching what is beyond the known.

There is always a goal which awaits us beyond anything we can see. The sun burns our heads, the sand burns our feet, the wind burns eyes, nose, mouth, but we go on. We make the same conscious offering as do these pilgrims; we induce our thoughts, our feelings, our bodies, all that we are, to be nothing but the force that leads us toward emptiness. There is not a trace of emotion in the movement of life toward death, only the posture of that moment of encounter when death makes life overflow in us."

The exhausting march to the bathing place lasts four or five days. It is an effort that shatters the body's limits of resistance. The only shelters at night are improvised huts, and most of the pilgrims sleep under the stars. With the plunge into the water where the Ganges enters the ocean, the ego is dissolved; it is a pure act of renunciation which frees the energies and gives the vision of a widening horizon. The Ocean of Emptiness cleans away the past, while another Ocean is revealed which cannot be spoken of. It dances, disappears, returns, flows in the deep calm of the Absolute.

The chorus of pilgrims invokes the sage Kapila,\* who in the darkness of the ancient past brought wisdom to the earth, as the Ganges was called from heaven to the shore of the ocean to dissolve the past.

\*Kapila: the holy man who wrote down the sacred scriptures.

"Victory to Kapila," the pilgrims chant softly; "Victory to our Mother the Ganges."

### *New Birth*

In the North, in Assam, a Divine Mother who is widely respected and worshiped lives in a temple folded in on itself. The narrow facade is framed by two low towers. Inside the door, a circular staircase descends underground like a huge, deep well. The altar is down below the ground. The Divine Mother is related with the earth, with what is most primitive in man.

We are in the Temple of Kamakhya on the top of Nilachal Hill on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, here as wide as a lake. It is the meeting place of all the tantric pilgrims from all parts of India. They are dressed in red cloth and carry garlands of red hibiscus. It is an orgy of redness of all possible shades.

Temple priests guard the entrances. Our small group, faces hidden by crowns of flowers, places itself in the midst of the crowd of pilgrims to enter the temple, where we are given lighted candles to descend the stairs. The interior of the temple is black. One feels the push of the throng and the force of its emotion on entering into the earth's bowels at the very bottom of the well. There the altar stands.

The flower crowns are thrown down, others received. There are ablutions, instinctive gestures of simultaneous adoration and supplication; a moment that is almost anguish, panic; a violence of longing that brings cries from the pilgrims. The Divine Mother is given what she awaits; we receive the blessings of which we have need. The priests give the blessings with open hands; they hold back people descending the stairs, and once they have passed the altar, push them toward the ascending staircase. The obedient crowd uncurls slowly. In the push, people are weeping, heads bowed into their flower crowns. They are driven on to free the staircase for others. The force of emotion is difficult to contain, although it expresses itself with

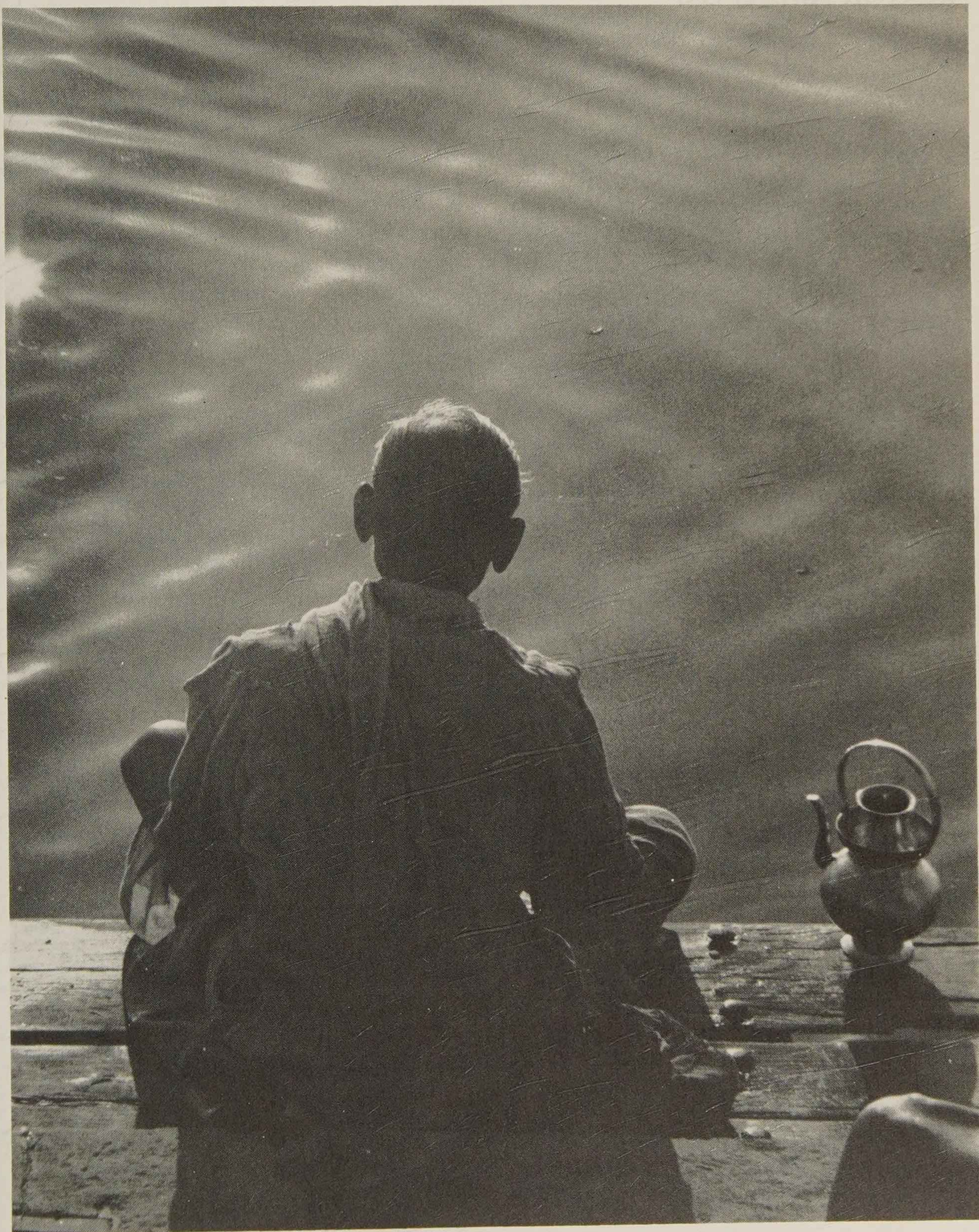
dignity. The crowd passes a corridor where white goats are tied up, undoubtedly for sacrificial offerings.

Returning back down the hill, it is hard to understand what has happened, the pressure of the crowd of pilgrims is so primitive and, at the same time, so full of humility. One can carry away only what has been shared of rites, centuries old, expressed in the actual giving of oneself, red

flowers, and the symbolic ablution of blood.

No one speaks. The descent of the hill is difficult; the worn-away steps demand an awareness of oneself that reaches an ever deeper quiet.

It is the pilgrimage which marks a second birth with the measure of intensity of a new life. ■



# The Road to the Center

ARTHUR AMIOTTE



In the mythic beginning of the Lakota world, its sacred and temporal dimensions were one, and the Lakota still recognizes himself as a microcosmic reflection of the macrocosm. If he can live in concert with the holy rhythm of that which causes all life to move, he is then assisting in the ongoing process of creation. To maintain his participation in this process, he needs annually to make the journey to the Center of the World, which is the place of his beginning and the origin of all things. There he can renew his relation with the sacred rhythm in the ceremony known as the Sun Dance.

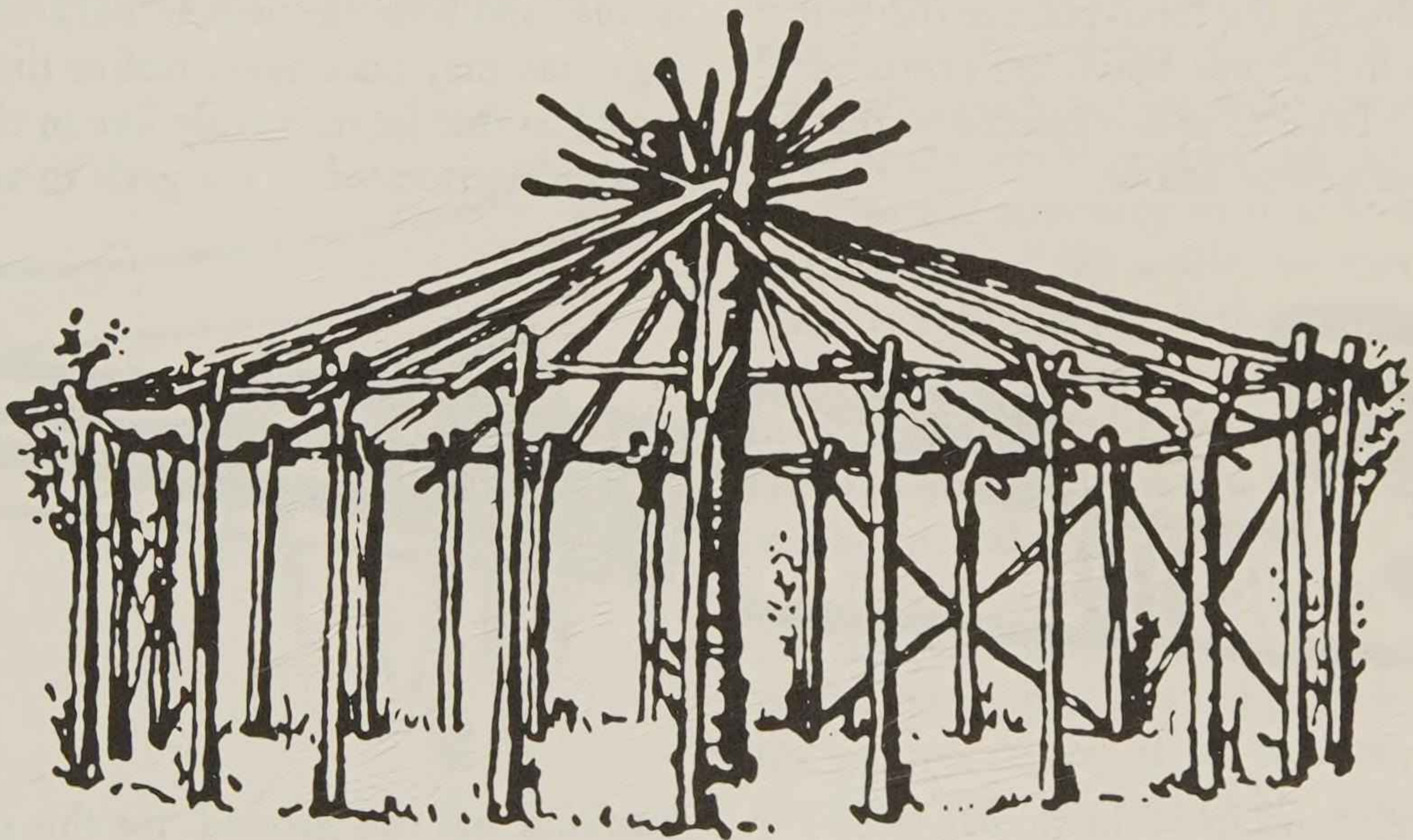
Especially at this time, since many of the Lakota are scattered, people must sometimes travel great distances to return to their homeland to take part in the event. But before it can take place, another journey has to be made, though not by all. The sacred Center changes annually—the place of the holy Tree through which the worlds of above and below are joined—and it must first be found by traditionally initiated shamans and priests. These are people who have sought through many disciplines to empty themselves of the profane and accumulate the sacred energy of the gods, in order to become intercessors for their fellow-beings. They have, as it is said, “the right to paint their hands red,” and are instruments through which the power of the sacred world will be funneled into this, the temporal one.

On the appointed day, near the time of the summer solstice, four such priests, having passed through the purification rites of the sweat-lodge, set out to find the holy place. Due consideration must be given to the physical setting: it must accommodate a circular camp of hundreds of people; fuel and water must be available, also an abundance of male sage, the purifying herb, and cottonwood trees must grow nearby. An expansive plain of level ground with a relatively unobstructed horizon is considered best. In modern times, pains must be taken to avoid sites where man-made structures are glaringly visible.

The priests carry with them a pointed cottonwood stake about three feet long, a

four times, the fourth time being at the exact place where the tree will eventually be placed. The four priests then sit down and face the west for a short period of silence.

They then proceed to talk and chat in a lighthearted way about such things as would be discussed by people who have not seen each other for a long time, inquiring how their family members are, and jokingly teasing each other about old and new lovers, invented sexual exploits, and all kinds of ribaldry and gluttony. This seems to be a reversal of what they have actually been doing in preparation for the event. It also appears to be an enactment of chaos and the profanity of an unbridled gross life



portion of precious red cloth (antique Hudson's Bay trade cloth), sacred powdered paints, a pipe and tobacco, sweetgrass and sage for incense, a great length of cord, formerly of bison rawhide, now of deerhide, and eight tipi stakes of chokecherry wood, representing the fruitfulness of the earth.

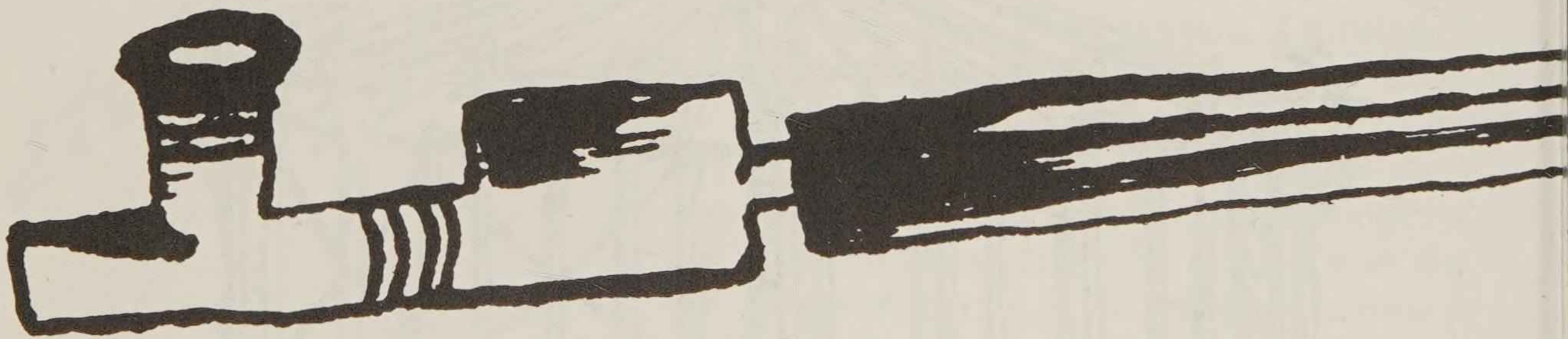
When an appropriate place has been selected after considering four potential ones, the four priests walk toward what will be the central sacred place, singing warrior scouting songs or songs of the old warrior societies, particularly those that are designed to encourage bravery. They stop

as compared to the sacred life in which there is divine order, restraint, and harmony. This may refer, among other things, to the undifferentiated chaos which existed before the gods brought about the world as we know it and interjected into it the sacredness and harmony that we strive to attain.

When this phase is finished, the actual ritual of making the place begins. The pipe is ritually filled to the singing of the pipe-filling song:

Friend do it this way  
 Friend do it this  
 Friend do it this way and all that you ask for  
 will be given you  
 From this center where you stand  
 with this sacred pipe  
 make an offering  
 send a voice from within  
 to your grandfather  
 and all that you ask for will be given you  
 Friend do it this way  
 and all that you ask for will be given you.

As it is filled, each pinch of tobacco is first held over smoking and burning sage and then a smoking braid of sweetgrass, thus sanctifying it. Burning sage expels any evil influence, burning sweetgrass infuses with positive power. Each pinch is offered to each of the directions, beginning with the west, imploring the force present there to be present in the pipe bowl, the center of the world. Tobacco is also offered to that which is above and below.



The relationship of the human body and spirit to the gods or their manifestations is seen in the comparison of the body to the sacred pipe: both consist of the same material substances, and both have a central axis, with an upper and a lower part. The pipe is also identified with the Sun Dance tree—the axis of the universe. The top of the Tree is at once itself, the sun, and the masculine principle; its middle, the crotch to which will be tied the offering bundle containing the tools of human culture, and the ropes of sacrifice from which will flow the renewing creative energy of the god-tree-sun; its base, embedded in the earth, the female principle and foundation. During the ritual centering of the Tree, in southern Sioux tradition, a pipe is actually

embedded inside the excavation—an idea similar to that of the sacrificial body of man through interment becoming one with all that is.

When the pipe is filled, it and its offerings are once again offered to each of the directions. Following this, the formal prayer is made by one of the priests. The prayer is not only a request to the Lakota cosmos to become present here in this place, but also a recital of why this is being done. The part of the Lakota mythology dealing with the beginning of the world and how it was created is retold, and how the four directions came to be; how mankind dwelt in the mythological underworld and how man and the bison, bear, and other animals were once one and the same. The story of the coming of the sacred pipe is told, and how through it and its teachings man may once again realize the other world so that he may truly live in this one. It is then requested of the gods to sanctify

mankind and this ground, for this place will be made a sacred place where man will join himself with them and they may dwell together again for a little while. Together, gods and mankind will create the true world as it is, so that man may enter the sacred reality of the presence of the gods.

Upon completion of the narrative, a knife is purified over the smoke of the sage and sweetgrass. Beginning at the west side of the place before which the men are now seated in a circle, an incision is made and a small portion of sod is lifted and placed to the west. The song of making the sacred place is sung:

Four times to the earth I sent a voice (prayer)  
 A place I will prepare  
 Oh. . . people (tribe) behold!

This same song will be sung during the making of the sacred altar of the Sun Dance proper, which is called the *Unma Wiconi*, the other world.

At each of the directions, sod is lifted up after feigning three times and completing the act on the fourth. Finally two pieces are lifted from the center. The cutter of the sod has previously painted his hands red and purified them over the smoke of the sage and sweetgrass. All the while the cutting is being done, one of the priests has been standing on the eastern side of the group, holding the pipe and praying audibly, as each sod is lifted, to each of the directions, imploring them to be present now in this place. Finally the remaining



sod is lifted and placed to the west, forming a small mound. Now a circle is revealed, about sixteen to eighteen inches in diameter, a little larger than the base of the tree which will be placed there. A circle of soft mellowed earth, which is further softened and cleared of any remaining roots and plant particles, will become the center of the world.

The cleared circle is smoothed and brushed with an eagle feather drawn from

the back of the head of one of the priests. The priests then stop for a short rest period. They smoke not the ceremonial pipe but common small everyday smoking pipes or modern cigarettes.

The initial lifted sods placed at each of the directions would form a square if connected by lines; however, they are not. Instead, the sod is removed to form a circular mellowed earth shape. The mellowed earth altar of the Sun Dance proper, however, is in the shape of a square or rectangle with a circle divided into four quarters by a cross. Actually a linear groove is made moving from the center and around the outside edge, into the center and back again to the edge at each of the directions, continuing around to the west and returning to the center. The maker thinks about and re-enacts in his mind that part of the mythology that traces the journey of the four sons of Tate, the wind, as they went about the edge of the world establishing the four directions and returning to their father's tipi at the center of the world; for their father, Tate, is a companion to the one above and one who can commune with the one above, having lived there originally but having come to the world that the world might be made more complete.

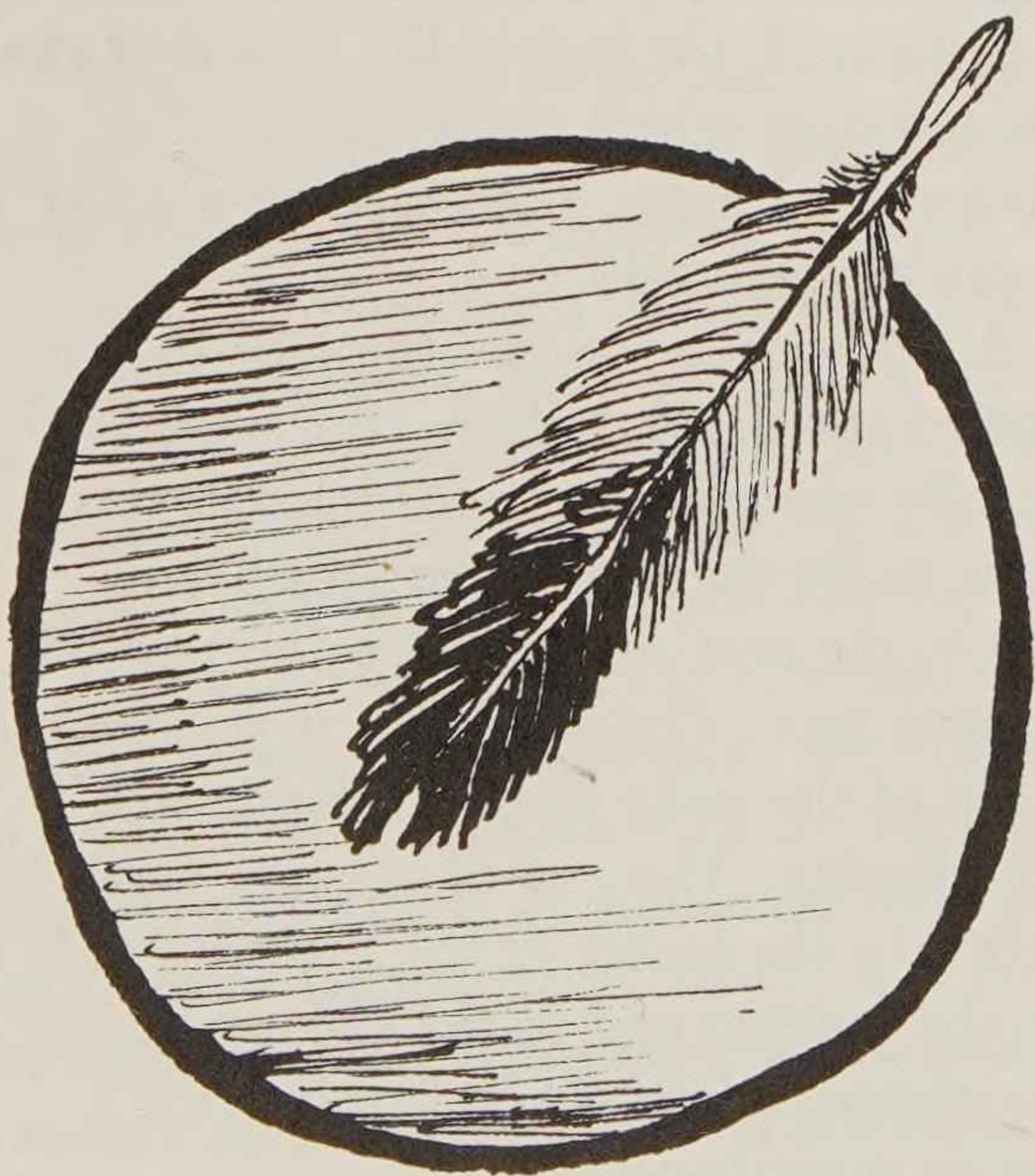
Tobacco is next placed in the grooves, thereby placing all living things on the earth. Finally precious red paint is placed in the grooves on top of the tobacco, imbuing the earth with the hue of life, blood of the gods and man which speaks of sacrifice, tradition, and order, the red way; a good red day in the world.

A priest then touches the pipe to the prepared stake and declares that these two are really one and the same and that this time is really the same time which will occur in the near future when the tree will be placed here. The long cord is attached to the top of the stake along with the red cloth offering. The end of the pipe bowl is touched to the center of the mandala and then the pointed end of the stake is placed at its center and driven in firmly with a stone or stone hammer.

One of the priests then unrolls the cord as he walks to the west, stopping four

times as he approaches a distance determined by his judgment of how large he thinks the diameter of the actual future lodge should be—in modern times, from eighty to one hundred feet. He re-enacts in his mind how the great Inyan, the original rock of the universe, the Tunkasila, opened himself to release his blood which flowed and spread around him in a great disc to form Maka, the earth.

Lodgemaker also reflects on the mythical journey of the sons of Tate. As he approaches what will become the western edge and one of the entrances of the sacred lodge, he stops and drives two tent stakes into the ground, thereby creating the two sides of what will be one of four doorways to the sacred area. He makes a preliminary hole before driving in the stake on each side, into which he puts a pinch of tobacco first. He creates spaces—doorways—rather than walls, signifying that space, that which is invisible, is really something—much like the “somethingness” of the sacred reality which is most often invisible. Lodgemaker then proceeds clockwise around the perimeter of what will be the lodge, using the cord as a means to establish the other three directions equidistant from the center.

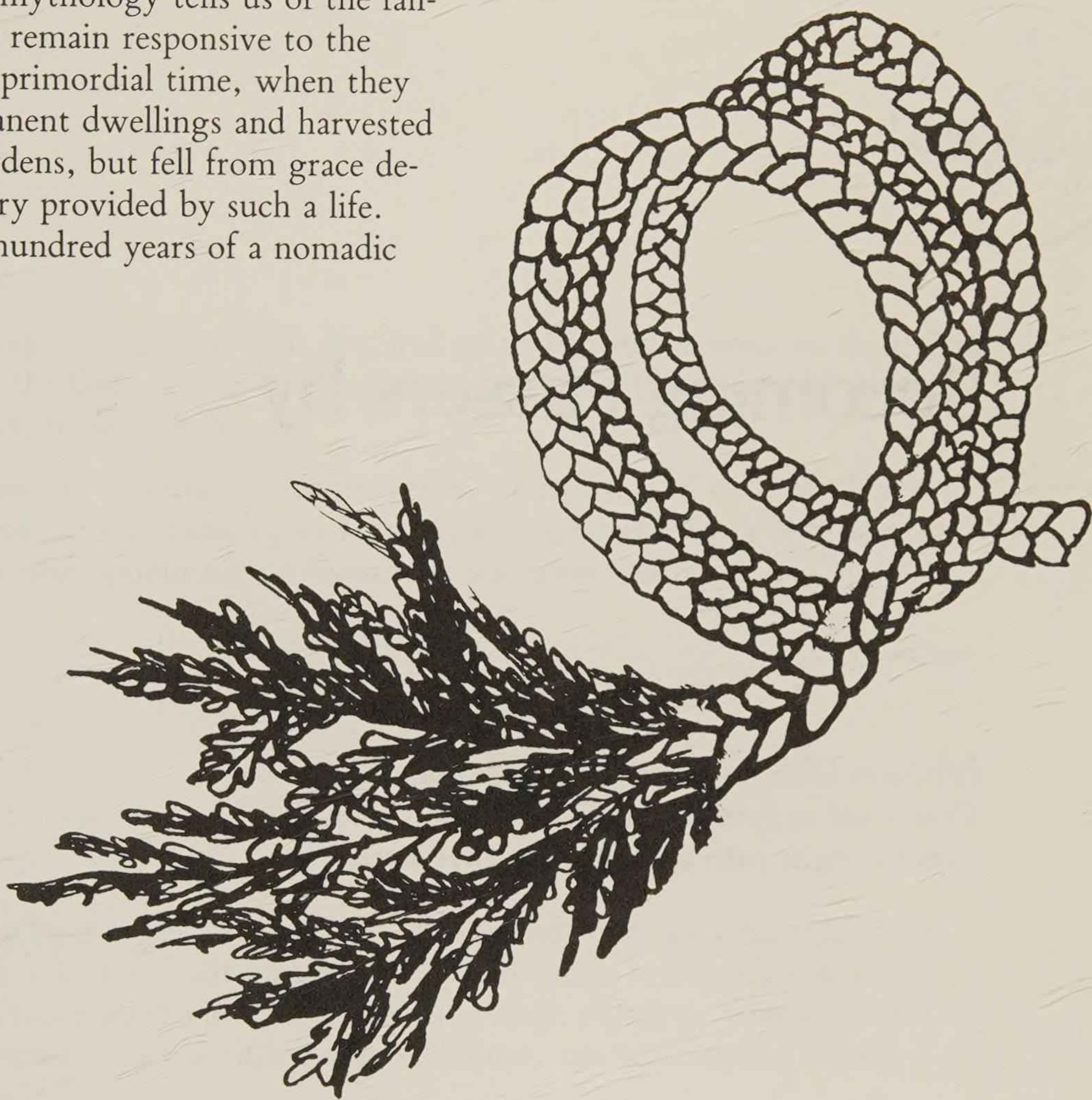


To be in concert with the world as it will be at or near the time of the summer solstice, the directions are not established as true according to the compass but rather in line with where the sun will rise and how the world really is at a specific time. Thus, as the sun rises on that day, it will travel a sacred road into the east entrance of the dwelling fashioned for it. Directly opposite this entrance and on the rear or west side of the sacred lodge is the fire without end, the power of the sun itself, where the stones for the purification lodge will be heated. The distance of the fire from the west entrance of the sacred lodge is approximately the same as the diameter of the lodge. An actual break in the wall of the sacred lodge will be provided on the west side so that the sunrise, the tree, the mellowed earth altar, and the fire will all be directly aligned, each a manifestation of the Wakan, all linked in their common energy.

This preliminary ritual having been completed, the four priests gather their materials including the long cord, but leave the center and other stakes, and walk backward toward the east entrance, stopping four times and going out through the invisible gate. Before they leave, however, they sit at the east entrance and smoke the ceremonial pipe, offering prayers for good weather and that the newly consecrated place will remain unblemished by negative influences and free from those who might abuse it. Finally before leaving, a smoking piece of sweetgrass is walked around the outside perimeter of the sacred circle, incensing it and giving it an invisible sacred protection.

Upon their arrival at their homes, the four men enter the purification lodge and cleanse themselves of the residue from having been to the sacred world, a re-created sanctuary. They are then ready to return to the mundane tasks of the profane world, and to continue preparations for the days to come when, at the designated time, the people will arrive in great numbers to celebrate having arrived at their sacred center, still located in their ancestral land.

Lakota mythology tells us of the failure of men to remain responsive to the gods in some primordial time, when they lived in permanent dwellings and harvested fruit from gardens, but fell from grace despite the luxury provided by such a life. After several hundred years of a nomadic



hunting life, and a hundred years of sedentary coexistence with foreigners, the Lakota sacred traditions have remained uninstitutionalized as “organized religion.” Today, they formally and consciously reject permanent sacred architecture as suitable or as having any lasting significance. The transparency of the world of matter and the transmutability, birth-lifetime-death, of all things including the earth itself, precludes the thought that material permanence has very much to do with sacred space. Rather, by not being in a structure, one is in the sacred temple—*templus*—which is the world itself, with the actual dirt of the earth as the floor and the vast blue dome of the actual sky as the ceiling. Any material representation could potentially be a profanation of that which already

exists in a sacred manner and is readily available around one. Thus, once a year at the height of the life cycle of the earth and sun, the temple is replete. The re-creation of the world at this time appears visible in the temporary Sun Dance lodge, which can never be used again, and serves only as a *temporary device* to assist men to realize that there is a sacred world whose center is everywhere, including inside himself; and that our whole life is the journey towards it. ■

*This essay is from a work in progress documenting the entire process of the Sun Dance.*



## Becoming Passers-by

Midway life's journey I was made aware  
That I had strayed into a dark forest,  
And the right path appeared not anywhere.<sup>1</sup>

—Dante

Our Master, the Lord of the Close Vicinity,  
thinks and does what He wishes; He determines, He amuses  
himself.

As He wishes, so will it be.

In the palm of His hand He has us; at His will He shifts us  
around.

We shift around, like marbles we roll; He rolls us around  
endlessly.

We are but toys to Him; He laughs at us.

Rise, array yourself, stand on your feet,  
partake of the pleasure of the beautiful place,  
the home of your mother, your father, the Sun.

Good fortune, pleasure and happiness are there.

Go forth, follow your mother, your father, the Sun.<sup>2</sup>

—Florentine Codex

Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the Gate at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.

I seek an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; and it is laid up in Heaven, and fast there, to be bestowed at the time appointed, on them that diligently seek it.<sup>3</sup>

—*Christian*

For he is called a “wayfarer” who minds that the present life is to him a *way* and not a native land; who thinks it beneath him to fix his heart on the love of this passing stage of being, who longs not to continue in a transitory scene of things, but to reach the eternal world.<sup>4</sup>

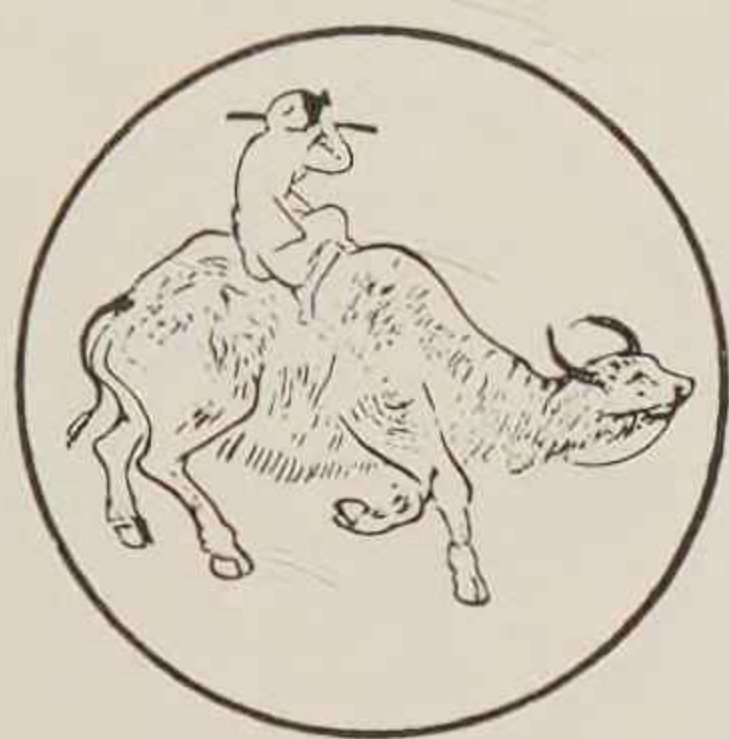
—*St. Gregory*

The road to the sacred leads through the secular.<sup>5</sup>

—*Abraham Heschel*

Jesus said: Become passers-by.

—*The Gospel According to Thomas, Log. 42*



O lovers, O lovers, it is time to abandon the world;  
The drum of departure reaches my spiritual ear from heaven.  
Behold, the driver has risen and made ready the file of camels,  
And begged us to acquit him of blame: why, O travelers, are  
you asleep?  
These sounds before and behind are the din of departure and of  
the camel-bells;  
With each moment a soul and a spirit is setting off into the  
Void.  
From these stars like inverted candles, from these blue awnings  
of the sky  
There has come forth a wondrous people, that the mysteries may  
be revealed.  
A heavy slumber fell upon thee from the circling spheres:  
Alas for this life so light, beware of this slumber so heavy!  
O soul, seek the Beloved, o friend, seek the Friend,  
O watchman, be wakeful: it behoves not a watchman to sleep.  
On every side is clamor and tumult, in every street are torches  
and candles,  
For tonight the teeming world gives birth to the world ever-  
lasting.  
Thou wert dust and art a spirit, thou wert ignorant and art  
wise.<sup>6</sup>

—*Jalāl'Ud-Din Rūmi*

I was the Sin that from Myself rebell'd:  
I the remorse that tow'rd Myself compell'd . . . .  
Pilgrim, Pilgrimage and Road  
Was but Myself toward Myself: and Your  
Arrival but Myself at my own door.<sup>7</sup>

—*Faridu'd-Din 'Attār,*

## ITHACA

When you start on your journey to Ithaca,  
then pray that the road is long,  
full of adventure, full of knowledge.  
Do not fear the Lestrygonians  
and the Cyclopes and the angry Poseidon.  
You will never meet such as these on your path,  
if your thoughts remain lofty, if a fine  
emotion touches your body and your spirit.  
You will never meet the Lestrygonians,  
the Cyclopes and the fierce Poseidon,  
if you do not carry them within your soul,  
if your soul does not raise them up before you.

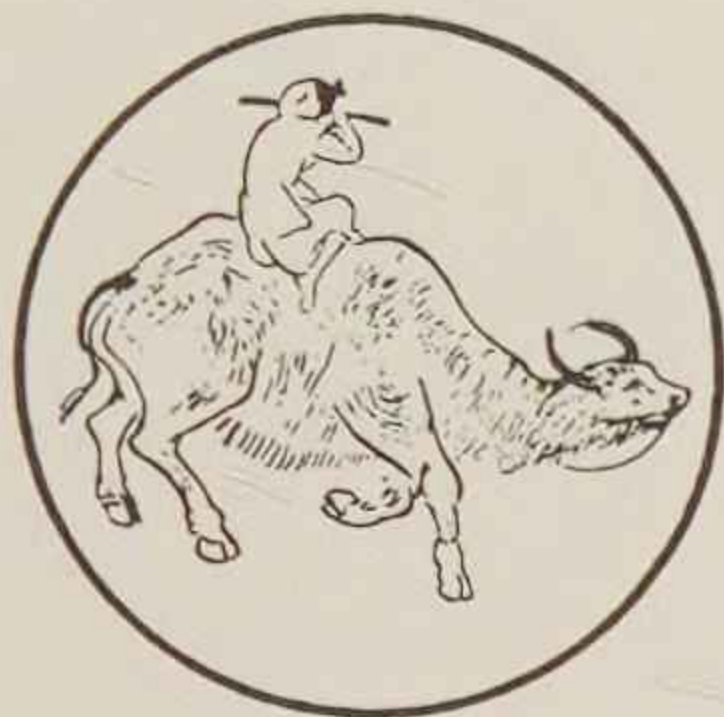
Then pray that the road is long.  
That the summer mornings are many,  
that you will enter ports seen for the first time  
with such pleasure, with such joy!  
Stop at Phoenician markets,  
and purchase fine merchandise,  
mother-of-pearl and corals, amber and ebony,  
and pleasurable perfumes of all kinds,  
buy as many pleasurable perfumes as you can;  
visit hosts of Egyptian cities,  
to learn and learn from those who have knowledge.

Always keep Ithaca fixed in your mind.  
To arrive there is your ultimate goal.  
But do not hurry the voyage at all.  
It is better to let it last for long years;  
and even to anchor at the isle when you are old,  
rich with all that you have gained on the way,  
not expecting that Ithaca will offer you riches.

Ithaca has given you the beautiful voyage.  
Without her you would never have taken the road.  
But she has nothing more to give you.

And if you find her poor, Ithaca has not defrauded you.  
With the great wisdom you have gained, with so much experience,  
you must surely have understood by then what Ithacas mean.<sup>8</sup>

—Constantine Cavafy



Wherever I go, I go to Jerusalem.<sup>9</sup>

—*Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav*

“Pilgrimage,” said Imlac, “like many other acts of piety, may be reasonable or superstitious, according to the principles upon which it is performed. Long journeys in search of truth are not commanded, Truth, such as is necessary to the regulation of life, is always found where it is honestly sought.”<sup>10</sup>

—*Samuel Johnson*

Thus we may go so far as to assert . . . that however a religion may be self-sufficient if it be followed to the very end to which it is directed, there can hardly be supposed a way so plain that it could not here and there be better illuminated by other lights than that of the pilgrim’s private lantern, the light of any lantern being only a refraction of the Light of lights. A diversity of routes is not merely appropriate to a diversity of travelers, who are neither all alike, nor start from one and the same point, but may be of incalculable aid to any traveler who can rightly read the map; for where all roads converge, there can be none of them that does not help to clarify the true position of the center of the maze, “short of which we are still in a duality. . . .”

In the matter of direction toward the Kingdom of Heaven “within you,” the modern world is far more lacking in the will to seek, than likely to be led astray by false direction.<sup>11</sup>

—*Ananda Coomaraswamy*

There are four places which the follower should visit with feelings of respect and awe . . . the place at which the follower can say, 'Here the Tathāgata was born' . . . 'Here the Tathāgata attained supreme *bodhi*' . . . 'Here the Tathāgata set foot making the spot into a kingdom of *dhamma*' . . . 'Here the Tathāgata passed away into the traceless passing away' . . . and there will come to that spot followers, brethren and sisters of the order, or devout men and women, . . . and they who shall die while they, with trustful heart, are journeying on such pilgrimage shall be reborn, when the body shall dissolve, in the happy realms of heaven.<sup>12</sup>

—*The Buddha*

The double movement of apogee and perigee of the stars resembles the double journey of the pilgrims who approach and recede from Mecca in their going and returning. Each pilgrim carries with him his business, money, masterpieces, gifts, and rings before encountering on the sacred ground pilgrims coming from all the nations and belonging to all sects and all doctrines. The pilgrims make intimate contact among themselves and exchange during their stay merchandise and ideas. Once the rite of pilgrimage is accomplished, each returns to his country provided with the pardon and the satisfaction of Allah.

Likewise, oh Brother, is the propagation by effusion of the forces of the superior beings from the outermost sphere to the center of the earth. Their union and provisional stay in matter of particular bodies gives rise to exchange among individuals belonging to the realm of generation and corruption—that is, minerals, plants and animals. Their enthusiastic return, once the end of their journey is reached, toward their point of departure resembles term by term the



stages of human pilgrimage to Mecca. The particular souls who regain—in passing beyond the outermost sphere—their original source, return happily to the world of Eternity.

Man should thus meditate on his original home and awaken from his ignorant sleep, and desire fervently to return to his celestial abode announcing finally *Labbaika Labbaika*, at Thy orders, to the call of God, “But oh! thou soul at peace! Return unto thy Lord content in His good pleasure!”<sup>13</sup>

—*The Ikwān al-Safā'*

*The Lord said:* I have known many past births, and so have you, Arjuna. I remember them all, while you do not, enemy-burner. Although indeed I am unborn and imperishable, although I am the lord of the creatures, I do resort to nature, which is mine, and take on birth by my own wizardry. For whenever the Law languishes, Bhārata, and lawlessness flourishes, I create myself. I take on existence from eon to eon for the rescue of the good and the destruction of the evil, in order to reestablish the Law. He who knows thus the divinity, as in fact it is, of my birth and work, no more returns to rebirth when he dies—he returns to me, Arjuna. There have been many who, rid of passions, fears, and angers, and made pure by the austerities of insight, have immersed themselves in me, resorted to me, and become of one being with me. I share in them in the manner in which they turn to me; for in all their various ways men do follow my trail, Pārtha.<sup>14</sup>

—*The Bhagavad-Gītā*

When you go abroad, don't turn around at the frontier.

—*Pythagoras*

Hierusalem, my happy home,  
 When shall I come to thee?  
 When shall my sorrows have an end,  
 Thy joys when shall I see?

—Old English Song

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# The Way Back

P.L. TRAVERS

Let me remind you of the ancient story, taken from the Upanishads, of Indra and his palace; how, heady with triumph after his defeat of the enemies of Heaven, he engaged the divine architect Vishnakarma to build him a mansion of such ever-increasing size and splendor that Vishnakarma despaired of finishing it, and appealed for help to the gods. Immediately thereafter, you remember, a radiant boy—Vishnu disguised—appears before the triumphant king, praising this marvel of

architecture and assuring him that no other Indra has ever accomplished such a feat. Surprised, but indulgent—how could there have been another Indra?—the king smilingly asks to be told how many Indras the boy has known. “They are numberless,” the child replies, “as the universes that rise and fall.” And he waves his hand at the column of ants that at this moment, in martial array, is marching towards the throne. “Can you, O king, make count of these? Yet each of them,” the boy declares,



“was once himself an Indra. Each one, by virtue of pious deeds, ascended to the world of the gods and now, after many incarnations, has become again an ant.” Startled, the king confronts the army till at last the truth dawns upon him and we are left with a repentant Indra, rehabilitated, wise, and humble. One could wish that all men, both high and low, could have such lordly preceptors.

But, rejoicing as one does with the king, as indeed we do with all that ends well, can we forget those others, the ants? For me they are the heart of the story. I need to be told what happens to them. In my mind’s eye, I see the parading horde and ask myself—Is there one among them who in his secret lonely heart has the wit to enquire “Who am I?” Him at the outer edge of the line, a sturdy sergeant-at-arms, maybe, bulbous-eyed, tiger-waisted, a pillar of the ant-heap? I imagine him, having heard the words of the ancient boy, breaking abruptly away from the column and, egged on by his own enigma, making hurriedly for the portal and the nearest blade of grass.

There I would find him, crouched and somber, pondering within himself his whence and why and whither. And as one pilgrim to another, I would make bold to speak to him, lightening my heart to the stranger as one cannot do to one’s nearest.

“Ant,” I would say, “my plight is yours, my questions, too. But where shall we find the answers? From the moment of birth we are, all of us, on a voyage of exploration, not, as we fondly think, to new pastures—though these we’ll doubtless come upon—but to what, a voice within tells us, is, in fact, our homeland. We think of it as the way forward but in truth, Ant, it is the way back. We return to whence we have come. And if there be answers, they will outstrip us. We will find them arrived before us.”

Would something of Indra stir within him as we sat in the shade of the blade of grass, I beguiling him with a story or two to illustrate my theme; perhaps reciting the *Hymn of the Pearl*, watching the round eyes

growing rounder as he heard the tale unfold?

“There was once,” I would say, “a Prince of the East whose parents sent him forth on a quest. They provisioned him aptly for the journey but took from him the robe of glory that was fashioned exactly to his shape—as all our robes are at the beginning—telling him that when he had gone down into Egypt and captured the One Pearl from the Sea Serpent he would not only have his robe again but would be, with his brother, heir to their kingdom. So he set out and when at last he came to Egypt he settled, hidden, close to the Serpent, watching for it to fall asleep so that he might take the Pearl.

“But, alas, it was he himself who slept, in the sense that he became one with the Egyptians. He decked himself in their garments, drank deep of their curious potions and ate the food of bondage. He forgot that he was a Prince of the East, made his oblations to the Egyptian king, and thought no more of the quest.

“At length his parents, made aware of his plight, sent him a royal message:

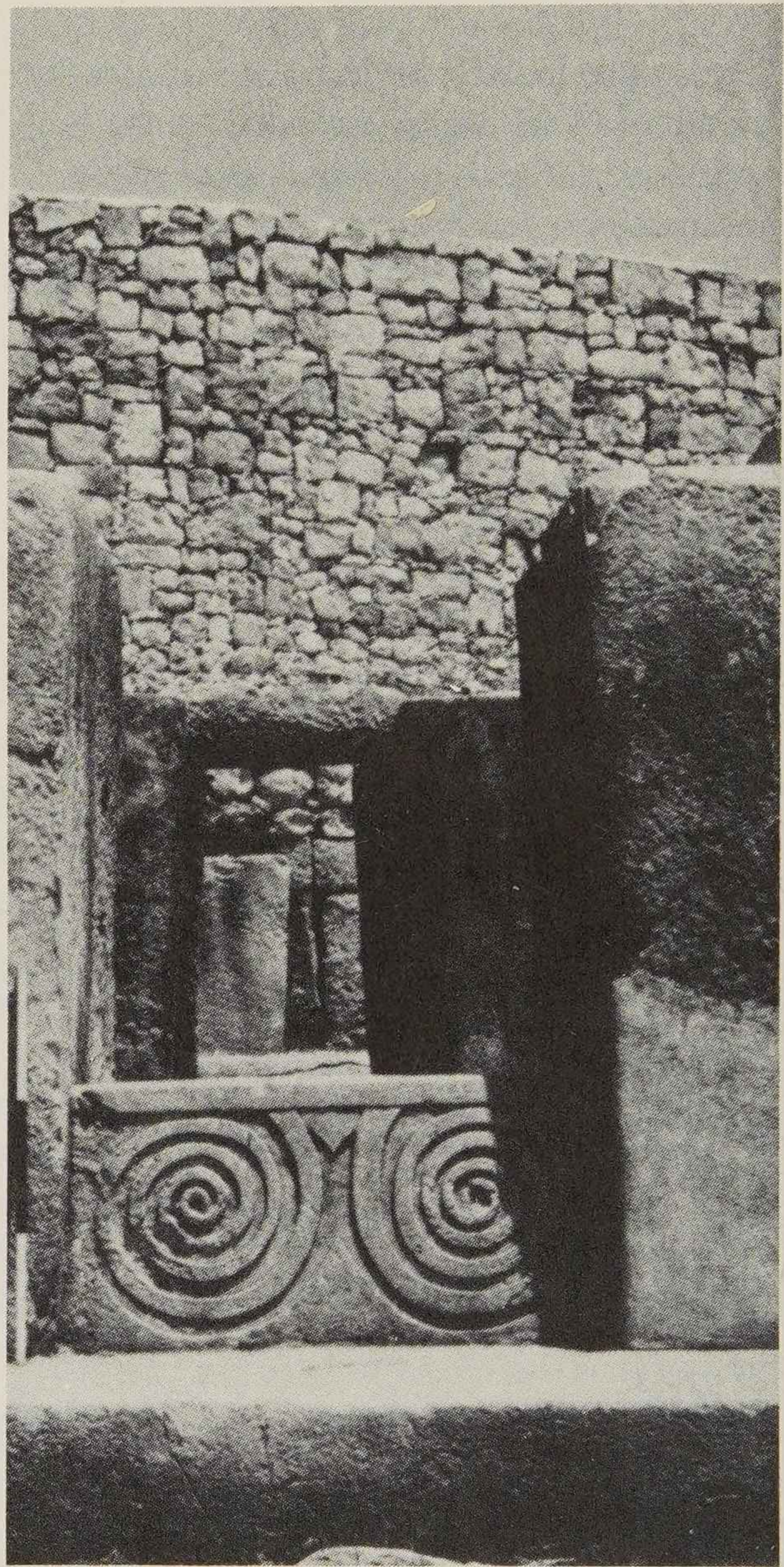
Awake! Remember you are the son of a king who now comports himself as a slave. Remember the Pearl for whose sake you went down into Egypt. Remember your robe of glory that you may put it on again, and your name be read in the book of heroes, and you with your brother be heir to the kingdom.

“Then this letter, royally sealed, rose up and took the form of an eagle, and flew till it alighted by the side of the Prince and became, miraculously, speech. And the sound of the words awoke the youth. His freeborn soul leapt within him, and he longed to be with his kind. Now, at last, he remembered the Pearl and slowly began to enchant the Serpent, making a charm of the names of his parents. And the Serpent, rocked and lullabied by the spell, for the first time slumbered and slept. At once the Prince seized the Pearl, tossed aside his foreign garments and, guided by the voice of the letter, made his way towards the East.

His robe of glory came to meet him, brought by a faithful messenger, and he ran to bedeck himself with it as though it were his lost true self. And so, carrying the treasure, he came to the gates of his father's castle and was given a hero's welcome.

"Ant," I said, as the naked lidless eyes glistened, "I have told the story shortly but the journey would have been long, I think." How long, I wondered, would *his* journey be, what ardors, what austerities would it take for a man, much less an ant, to become again an Indra? The fearful thought turned upon myself, blackening my blood. But I continued my telling.

"The tales are many, Ant," I said, knowing well that I was invoking them as much for my own sake as for his. "There is one that reveals itself in pictures, as the eagle, remember, became the letter, of an Oxherd who has lost his Ox. And yet we learn, paradoxically, that the Ox has never been astray. It is the Herd himself who is in confusion, beguiled by dreams of gain and loss, right and wrong and all things that oppose each other. He must gather what he has of wisdom and set out in search of his beast. And, sure enough, in the picture called *Seeing the Traces*, he finds in the dust a hoof-print. This happens, we are told, because what he thinks of as the objective world is merely a reflection of his Self. He is still confused, unable to distinguish between truth and falsehood, but his senses, now more harmoniously related, bring him to the point of *Seeing the Ox*—which, when all is said and done, has really nowhere to hide. But *Catching the Ox* is a different matter, for the creature has returned to the wild and is restive and unruly. So, *Herding the Ox* is no easy task. The Herd must keep tight hold of the nose-ring while letting go that in himself which is wild and will not be tethered. At length, after a long struggle, harmony is established and the Herd rides home on the back of the Ox, joyfully playing his flute. *The Ox Forgotten, Leaving the Man Alone* shows the two now at peace with each



other, the Man sitting on his verandah, the Ox grazing meekly by. And the eighth picture, *The Ox and the Man Both Gone Out of Sight*, is nothing but a large circle. 'All confusion,' we are told, 'is set aside and serenity prevails. Emptiness is fullness.'

"But are we to suppose, Ant, that that is the end of the story? No, I do not think so. In all tales that tell of a quest—you must have heard many in the ant-heap—something has to be brought home. This is the meaning of 'Happy Ever After,' where all things that have been separate are made into a whole and the fullness overflows to the general world. So, after *Returning to the Source*, which is shown simply as three flowering branches, the Herd appears to us again rich with all his emptiness and *Entering the City with Bliss-Bestowing Hands*, in fact, bringing himself. 'Carrying a gourd,' says the legend, 'he goes into the market; leaning on a staff, he comes home. He is found in company with wine-bibbers and butchers, and he and they are all converted into Buddhas.' Was there ever such a Happy Ever After?

"But, Ant, there is still another story. Do I dream that your great eyes glisten as a child's do when a tale is proposed? Well, this is how it goes.

"A certain rich man had two sons, and the younger said to him, 'Give me my portion that I may go adventuring in the world.' So the father divided his living and gave him his share, and he set out into a far country. There he wasted his substance in riotous living. And when a famine fell on the land, he was destitute and compelled to join himself to one of the citizens, who set him to feed the swine. So, since no man befriended him, he was hungry and would fain eat the husks that the swine devoured. Then it was that he came to himself. 'Even the hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare while I famish and waste away. I will arise,' he said, 'and go to my father.' And that is what he did. He arose and took the long way back. But when he was a great way off, his father spied him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said 'Father, I

have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' But the father ordered that the best robe be brought and a ring put upon his finger and shoes upon his feet. Also that the fatted calf should be killed and all should eat and drink and be merry.

"But the elder brother, hearing the sound of music and dancing and learning what movement was afoot, was angered and would not join the feast.

" 'These many years I have served thee,' he said, 'and not transgressed thy commandments. Yet to me thou never gavest a kid that I might make merry with my friends. But he who has devoured thy living with harlots, for him thou hast killed the fatted calf!'

" 'Son,' said the father, 'thou art ever with me and all that I have is thine, but this is my son that was dead and is alive again and was lost and is found.'

"That is how the story goes and nobody cares for that elder son. Even children cry out against him. But to me, Ant, he is the heart of the matter. As I see the parable, he is the part of the younger son who has never left the father, the part that calls him to come to himself, to arise and journey home and be joint heir (again!) to the kingdom.

"And you, Ant, have you arisen? Is there something still of Indra in you that makes you move so purposefully from one blade of grass to the next, not trying to make a hurried escape but rather as one setting out. Shall we travel together, you and I, pilgrims both, valiant against all disaster?

"Who knows—yet something knows—if the stories I tell you are true? Men need such lively oracles in order to sustain their existence. Lay them to your heart, if you will. Even so, we take the road empty-handed, remember, without even a map to guide us; not dreaming that we carry treasure, nor hoping that someone will run to meet us. Cast off hope, if you have it, Ant. The burden of hope is too heavy. The way itself knows where it is going. The way itself will lift us forward. The way itself is all." ■

# Living in the Distance

THOMAS BUCKLEY

*All interpretation is to conquer a remoteness, a distance between the past cultural epoch to which the text belongs and the interpreter himself. . . It is thus the growth of his own understanding of himself that the interpreter pursues through the understanding of the other.*

—Paul Ricoeur



*You, Western Zhou dynasty, 11th–10th century B.C. (rubbing detail)*

Consciousness, they say, begins with distance, with a baby's new sense of separateness from the world, and pain in our remoteness from the objects of desire. Beyond the close boundaries of our own small bodies the universe spins away, and we start trying to understand it; to go home again. In fact, we have just created that home by our very distance from it, without which it—the center—would not exist. "The home that is nowhere, that is the true home," said a Chinese adept.

We desire to understand, yet every understanding, once fixed, creates new distance, and the other escapes us like a greased pig. So, Walter Benjamin, a philosopher, speaks of "friendliness" and says that "friendliness is not the abolishing of distance but the bringing of distance to life." Trying to grasp things too firmly crushes out the rich life that springs up in the distance between ourselves and our others; it is unfriendly. In friendliness to ourselves and to our others there is nothing for it but to live in the distance between self and other, here and there; not one, not two.

I think, now, that this may be why Gary Snyder, the poet, said he did not comprehend the ancient and awful bronze ritual vessels of China: "I don't *comprehend* them." It was at a late dinner in a Chinese restaurant. I hadn't thought about the vessels for a long time, but the conversation came around to them and, I thought, "Oh, I understand those things pretty well." Oh? Snyder just smiled, his eyes clear, and I began to think about Chinese bronzes once again.

As a child I'd lived in a house filled with the old family things of proper people who rose in New York and Connecticut in the nineteenth century. Particularly, I think now of two wooden Florentine angels, gilded and painted, that hung on a wall, flying down powerfully, their hands raised to announce news of some consequence. I wondered what it was.

My grandmother had traveled to China in the nineteen twenties and her house had many Chinese things in it: embroidered silk and a wedding crown of kingfisher feathers and gold, a smoky smell of tea and old wood. Her stories were of places that I found myself longing for, and I often took such longings outside, into the woods, where I stared at small insects, trying to see the world as they did. It wasn't surprising, all in all, that when I was old enough I started out to study the history of art, and soon gravitated toward the art of China.

Eventually, in the early sixties, I met Max Loehr, an art historian erudite in Asian art and languages, and joined him in the Fogg Museum at Harvard and at the end of the Neolithic in the Yellow River Valley, trying to understand the ancient Chinese ritual vessels found there, and what they were about.

Professor Loehr had an open curiosity, a happy puzzlement concerning certain aspects of these vessels, but he also had confidence in his understanding of other aspects. The bronzes, for him, were "about" art. He particularly admired their decoration, the fantastic beasts that covered their surfaces and the patterns of laced spirals, the "matrix from which the zoomorphs sprang." That was enough. He renounced "attempts to explain these elusive images in terms of cosmology or religious lore," for it sufficed him to understand them as "design merely, interesting solely on formal grounds, as 'pure art.'" His understanding became my question.

The bronzes themselves, solid, florescent with intricate designs of great variety, power and aloofness, somehow not old at all, strange things from an entirely other world, arrested me and would not let me pass. I was innocent, then, of the tens of thousands of years of human creativity that stretched out behind even these things, began my own time with the time of the earliest bronzes—thirty-five hundred years ago—and bounded my space with these vessels that hung at its limits, defying their own vast gravity.

I put my trust in them too lightly, it turned out. The bronzes rewarded my attention only with vertigo, leading me on and back again, though never to quite the same place. Paul Klee said that the outward spiral leads to life, the inward to death—but can we tell which it is? Spirals read both ways. There is no finality in understanding Chinese bronzes, and can be none.

I realize now, long after those early and short years of study with Professor Loehr, that I was not so odd in taking the bronzes as personally as I did. (Again, though, I was not circumspect about it, in the beginning.) Many people, indeed whole peoples, collapse time in somewhat this way, through myth and religion and art, making the deep past a personal present. The Chinese seem to me to excel at this and to rely on it for security, for a sense of location. Seeking the history of the bronzes we enter through fact and end in fancy, or vice versa, forward and backward, and either way end up with unanswered questions.

The old Chinese sources say that the first bronzes were cast in the time of the Xia kingdom (2200–1818 B.C.?). More recent accounts are unsure of Xia, calling it a “mythical dynasty,” for the Xia left nothing in writing. These accounts begin history and bronze casting alike with the Shang dynasty (ca. 1523–1027 B.C.). The Shang didn’t write books, but they left oracular inscriptions incised in the burnt scapulae of animals early on, at the old capital city of Anyang. We want, after all, history to be about ourselves, a tale of nation-states and literate, metal-using peoples.

Factual or not, Xia is useful. It serves well in locating the crossing of that brink that both separates the supposed no-time of the “tribal” and “neolithic” from “historic” time in China, and that connects the two in a single flow. While human action was flowing over that brink, someone began casting bronze ritual vessels, marking the time, sending down a record of it to us (bronze lasts well, buried in the earth).

The early bronzes look both ways. They retain the immediate ritual efficacy that served to connect human beings and their worlds for aeons, and voice it through a technology and specialization that signaled a new world order. Today we know a great deal more about how the bronzes were made and about their diverse, refined styles than we do about what they meant—and that is only natural. The Shang moved slowly off that brink, into history. The Zhou, who conquered the Shang in 1027 B.C. and held what is now central eastern China until 221 B.C., never looked back, although they continued casting bronzes. Today, we are farther from Xia than Xia was from its own mythic past, though the distance from here to Zhou is not so great. The Zhou were writers of books.

Still, if we want or need to come closer to the bronzes themselves we must go back further than Zhou, or Shang, or even Xia; back to the beginning earth on which all of these transient states flourished, in their times, and which saved their ritual vessels for us. And too, I think, we must attend to this brief life we have now.

About 8000 B.C., long before the earliest bronzes, clay vessels had begun to appear in East Asia. There were soon ones with three straight legs, from which in time came the bronzes called *ding*; with three curving, pointed legs, from which *jia* were to come; with three breasts for legs, with three vulva-split legs, double-chambered ones like scrotums, round full-bellied ones from Yang-shao, from which came the shape *hu*. These last had clay loops for handles on either side and some were painted in black and red and white in four great swirls. Others were painted with hooks and zigzags and with designs taken from the backs of cicadas. Also, there were three-legged wine cups, *jue*, of strange configuration. All of these have been found in tombs.



Ding, Shang dynasty, 12th–11th century B.C.

These earthen pots were made and offered for thousands of years. In the beginning their makers must have been dancing, masked; hunting peoples finally gone to farming. The differences between people were established, high and low, and the fine pots were buried with the wealthy and powerful. Perhaps even then they were used in sacrificing to that more powerful than powerful people, and to the spirits of the ancestors that it had taken.

Maybe in Xia, and certainly in Shang times, many of the pot shapes were cast in bronze. Owning such bronze vessels seems to have been the prerogative of kings and nobles, whose priests used them to cook and serve sacrificial meals, to heat and serve wine at memorial feasts. A great bronze axe head depicting a grinning mask has also been found, next to the bones of forty decapitated men in the tomb of a chieftain. Wine cups are more common, now, and three-legged food vessels, *ding*, seem once to have been accorded the greatest veneration.

In 2205 B.C., they say, the emperor Yü of Xia quelled a great flood by throwing monumental cauldrons, *ding*, into the waters of the Yellow River. A huge tortoise had come from the depths bearing on its back a scroll from which Yü, a report reads, “deciphered the basis of his moral teaching and the secrets of the unseen.” Yü’s story echoes that of Fu Hsi, the First Emperor, a hunter who ruled from 2953 to 2838 B.C. or two million years ago, depending on whom you believe. A dragon-horse appeared to Fu Hsi, rising out of the Yellow River and bearing on its back a map from which the eight cosmographic trigrams as well as writing are said to have come. Like Fu Hsi’s map, Yü’s *ding* made a place to begin, one where history could take place, a firmness in the waters like the tortoise makes. A later ruler tried to raise one of these *ding*, to use its power to his own ends. Although his men got a rope on it they could not bring it up.

Yu had cast nine bronze *ding*, each of vast dimensions, of tribute metal sent from

the Nine Provinces. Each of these vessels had the map of a province engraved on its surface, the *Shu Jing*, the “Book of History,” states, although some say they were decorated with representations of spirits and demons. There are many ways to tell a story, and many kinds of maps. In any case, all of this was long before Shang times which, again, began around 1500 B.C. and lasted until around 1030 B.C., when the Shang of the Yellow River Valley were overthrown—on moral grounds—by the Zhou of the Wei River Valley.

In the *Yi Jing*, the “Book of Changes,” the sages of Zhou wrote of using bronze *ding* to cook sacrifices offered to Heaven. Through such sacrifices, “superior men” both made sense of their experience and met the present squarely. Thus, the sages wrote that the *ding* itself can remind one to “consolidate his fate by making his position correct” and that it also signifies “taking up the new.” In discussing the *ding*, the Classic ends with this advice: discussing the *ding*, “through gentleness, the eye and ear become clear and sharp.”

When the Zhou invaded the Yellow River Valley they captured the Shang imperial *ding*, said to have been the same nine *ding* of Xia, already a thousand years old, first taken by the Shang when they too wished to make a change, to consolidate their fate and stand correctly placed.

The Shang were fond of wine and were taken to task for this later; it was the moral flaw that justified the Zhou conquest and their new, more austere order. Shang artisans had cast many three-legged wine goblets, *jue*, as bronzes based on pottery prototypes. These and the large wine vessels, *jia*, that they accompany in Shang tombs all have a strange feature. Two protuberances rise out of the rims of each, like umbrellas or small trees or mushrooms. Some say they were to grab with tongs, to handle the vessels hot from the fire. Others say that they are *Amanita muscaria*, *soma*, magic mushrooms, shaman food.

The Shang spun much else out of the matrix of spiral markings that had first adorned clay pots, including many sorts of beings: tortoise, snake, tiger, fish, ram, water buffalo, deer, hare, elephant, dragon, silkworm, bear, hawk, owl, ram-owl, crested bird, and still others. Among them is an unknown creature that many have seen as a monster and, writes an art historian, “sometimes a man seated before a monster who is either protecting him or is on the point of devouring him.” Occasionally, this creature holds another in its mouth, whether from hunger or tenderness one cannot tell.

Actually, and although this being is found on almost all of the Shang vessels, such manifestations are rare. Far more commonly, the beast’s mask, first carved into clay molds so that it stood out in relief on the cast vessels, is but a small though central part of the design. This mask is split, splayed out symmetrically, two profiles—or are they two beasts?—meeting head-on to make a single face. It has very large eyes, a center ridge forming a nose with flaring nostrils, fangs (or a beak), usually large curving horns above and, below, no lower jaw. Although it appears on almost all Shang bronzes and many later ones, its meaning is obscure.

It is in part because of this motif’s combined ubiquity and obscurity that the bronzes defy ready understanding. Modern studies attempt to explain away the duality of the mask, for example, as the somehow inevitable result of using segmented molds in casting the vessels. Scholars have suggested that the molding technique demanded that the cast motifs be symmetrical, in order to join well along the mold segments’ seams. But recourse to such arguments is finally unconvincing in the face of the bronze casters’ own, vastly greater imaginative freedom and the nonpareil finesse of their craft. Most studies of these vessels, although they start out well, end in bafflement, consigning the beast, and hence the bronzes, to “pure art” or to that mystery in which most of earliest China resides.



Ding, Eastern Zhou dynasty, 7th-early 6th century B.C. (rubbing detail)

Today, the creature on the Shang dynasty bronzes is called the *taotie* (*t'ao t'ieh*), a name compounded, I'm told, of radicals meaning "to howl" and "to nourish," "to eat" and "to violate." It is a name that first appears in what seems a different context. A writer of the Eastern Zhou (770–221 B.C.) mentions by the name of Taotie a "greedy man who was sent along with three other unsavory characters to guard the four quarters of heaven against evil." The people of Han, the Middle Kingdom (206 B.C.–220 A.D.) seem to have viewed the beast on the Shang vessels that they collected as a symbol of possessiveness and of the other, avaricious peoples outside, beyond the Great Wall; the barbarians. It was not until the eleventh century, however, that the two were linked by Song (Sung) scholars who called the Shang creature "taotie," "The Beast of Greed," "The Glutton," seeing it as an admonition against gluttony: eat too much and your lower jaw will fall off.

It seems strange to me that the Shang priests and artists would have enshrined greed on the ritual implements through which men took up the new and saw clearly, centered themselves and met eternity. And how, for that matter, might simple greed protect the world from evil? What is the other side of greed, meeting it head-on and revealing its place in things?

Two thousand years had already passed before the beast was called "taotie." Buddhism had come, with its hungry ghosts and world guardians. The Middle Kingdom represented a civilization already ancient and deeply invested in its own civility. Yet, despite the fear of savagery among the Song, could not something vital and wise have flowed into their time from its own, deep past? I don't think that the name "taotie" (however apocryphally applied to the Shang motif and despite whatever prejudices were in it) is entirely irrelevant to the motif itself. I think that the being first depicted by the Shang bronze casters may have had a life of its own, free of the vagaries of changing ide-

ologies and having something to do with the name it was ultimately given. At least, this name gives us another place to begin.

By the time the Shang beast was called “taotie,” actually long before that time, the mask itself had become simply exotic decoration, a tamed convention—often with a bulbous nose pierced by a ring or holding a ring in its mouth, one on each side of the vessel. In the time of the Western Han (206 B.C.–9 A.D.), when the fash-

Why bother with any of this now, so far from us, so strange? Back then, with Professor Loehr at the Fogg, I did not really know and, in fact, soon was bored by the bronzes and took two steps further away from them: first, out of the Shang and into later, Buddhist China; second, out of college. I’d looked to art history for understanding and found only more remoteness. So I left such things as explaining Chinese bronzes to others, as not for me, bent on the forests and cities of the west, to be an artist, to live at last.



Li, Shang dynasty, 13th century B.C. (rubbing detail)

ions of dilettantes changed rapidly, the old bronze form *hu* was being copied in elegant pottery vessels, painted, with taotie applied on their sides in thin clay, the rings now incised as perfect circles in shallow, careful lines on the surfaces of the pots. In Song times all traces of the masks are gone from the vessels, now vases, replaced by flowers in jade tangles penetrated by delicate ring handles, as though that were all along the purpose of flowers and of beasts, to hold handles. The taotie itself had come to rest on a screen wall before courts of law, warning judges against greed, functioning as an emblem of justice.

Now, at least, I’d say that we bother with things like these ancient vessels as a way of coming to know ourselves. Paul Ricoeur says that these kinds of efforts reveal a “profound intention, that of overcoming distance,” of matching ourselves to that “which has become foreign, thereby incorporating its meaning into the present understanding a man is able to have of himself.” And I’d add that birth and death alike are foreign to us, that we live in the distance between them, and that we are arrested by things like the Chinese bronzes because we sense that they offer a bridge, though one as elusive as a rainbow.

I'm ahead of my story, however. Back then, after I left college, I soon found my hands too full to think of things like ancient ritual vessels from China, even had I wanted to. I met Max Loehr once more, in San Francisco. He introduced me to his colleagues—men whose books I'd read and admired—as a “former protégé. Gentlemen,” he said, “Mr. Buckley has escaped to the real world.” He said this with such solemnity that I took him seriously, although the others looked amused and perplexed. Years went on, and though the bronzes still appeared in dreams and in peripheral vision, I dismissed them. The real world to which I had escaped was rife with death, and I found little justice in it.

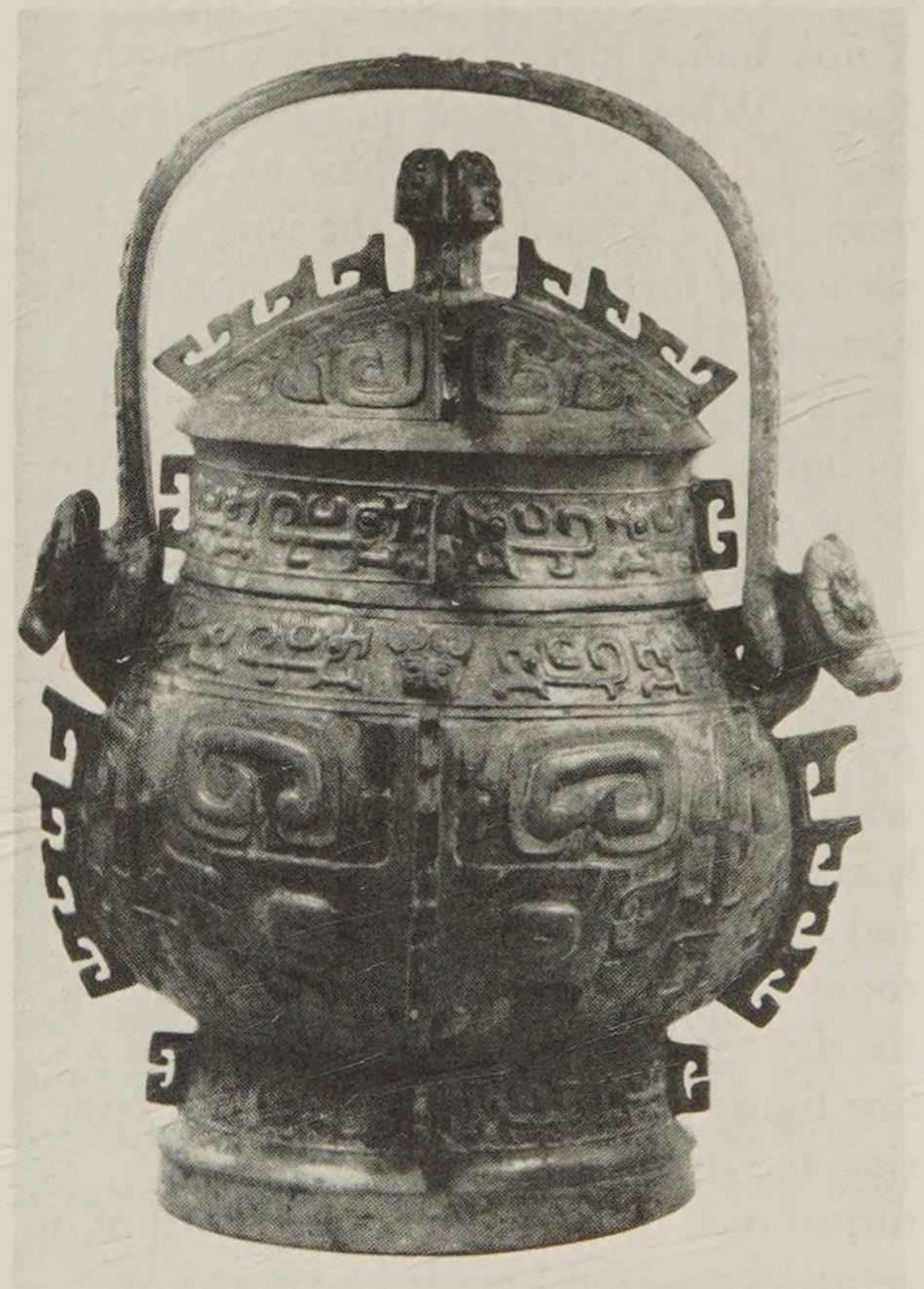
Acquaintances and friends, kin and lovers died during that time in numbers that still stagger me. I suffered great confusion and anger, disguised for a while as a manic clarity. Unable to grieve for so many at once, the individual deaths were unreal to me, lost in the shattering glass and sharp knives, blooming cancers and broken hearts and cold ropes. Never directly feeling the loss of anyone in particular, the reality of each life lost was lost on me, as though none of these people had ever been, as though they had only died, each sudden death marking not so much the end of a unique life as adding an increment of shallow drama to my own. In this drama, only death seemed real—although now I'm not sure that this was truly so.

Many births came during the same time, but I could not find release in them from the isolation and rage of living in a world made only to be destroyed. Still, delivering my own child I felt something loosen, a terrible willing for that slick and grey-blue being to draw breath and live; a pure, animal demand. Yet when it was over, my son healthy and sleeping, sorrow overtook me. I'd seen no more than a child born to death in a world turned upside down, and wept bitterly in drunken confusion.

I went the outlaw way—no other made sense in such a world. I was meat hunting, poaching deer to feed several families, cash being short. One night with my

hands inside the slit belly of a yearling buck I'd shot I saw the universe filled with the dark blood smell and warmth, a luminous, particulate ocean in the sea of night, a new milky way embracing the world in awful tenderness. Life, I suppose, is terrible only so long as you cling to belief in a kind God, and in fact I experienced an order of joy and sharp attunement to something very close to the bone; something like justice, but having no name I knew.

Whatever it was, it was not enough. My understanding of it did not last, and I set out again. Particularly, I thought, the native peoples of California, Indians, could teach me what neither art nor death could. Now I see that, in the beginning at least, I looked to these others and saw only the distant and inverted reflection of my own pain—in, for example, the Luiseño Indian story of the beginning of this world:



You, *Western Zhou dynasty*,  
11th–10th century B.C.

Earth lay in darkness with her feet to the north. Sky sat on her right. They gradually became conscious.

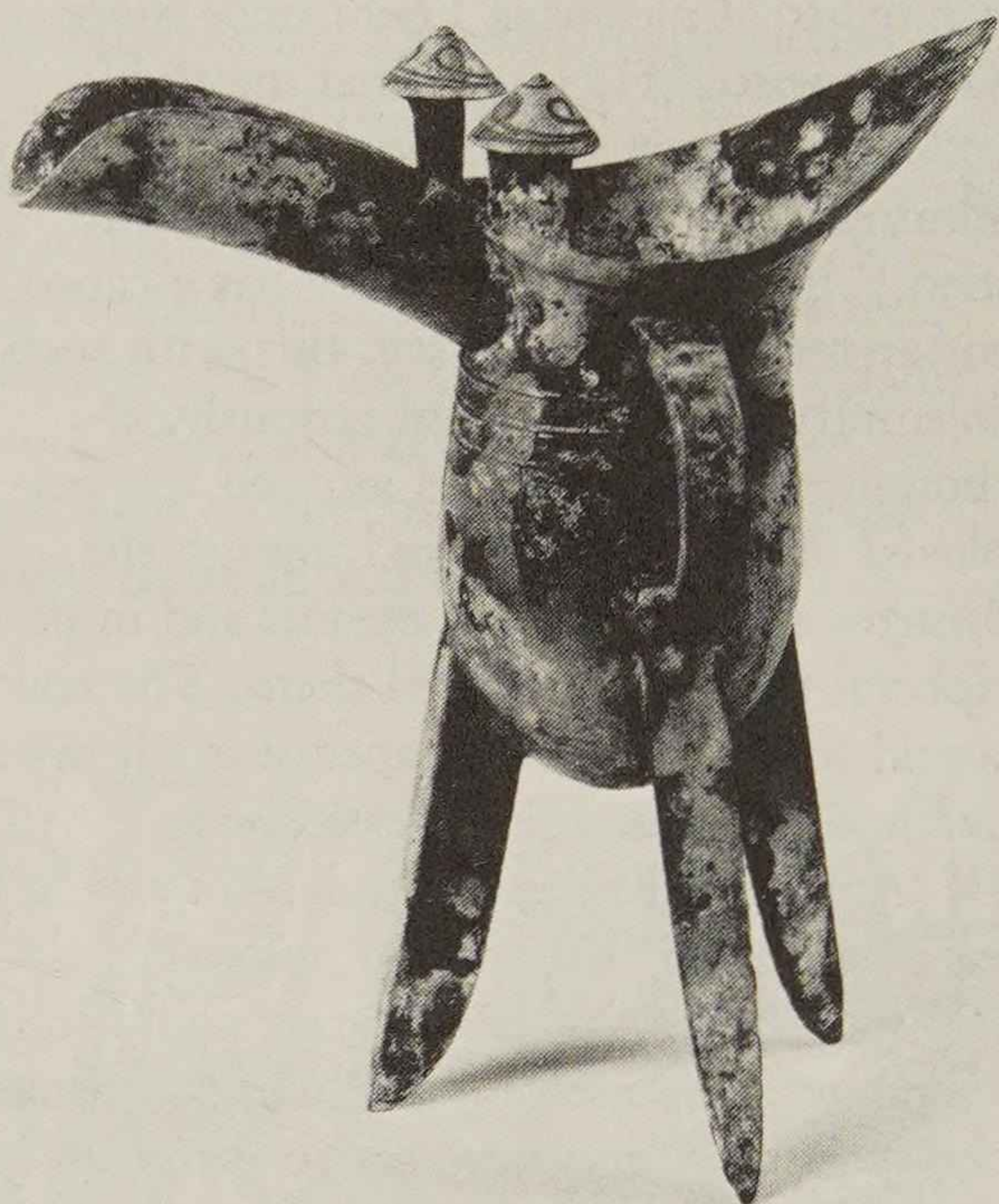
Sky said, "I am vacant." Earth replied, "I am non-existent," then, "I stretch, I extend."

Sky said, "I shake, I rumble, I am high, I arch over"; and he ended the argument: "I devour, I drink up, I cut off, I sever."

Sky took earth and began the creation.

It was about then, around 1970, that I met my uncle. He was already an old man, moving slowly on crutches, beaten down and rounded off like a great stone near a river. When he was a young boy he'd been adopted as nephew and trained by a famous Yurok Indian high man on the Klamath River. When you asked him a hard question he'd think deeply to hear his teacher's voice and, I learned later, the voices and silences of forty thousand years of men like himself. The day I first met him he asked me what I wanted. I told him I wanted to go home. He smiled and allowed that maybe he could find some use for me.

In time he taught me how to tie a trucker's hitch and a one-handed bowline, how to make Turkish sesame candy and to poke-pole a rock cod out of a seastack; what to do about an off-center lathe. I learned the names of many plants from him and I might have learned some about ball-room dancing too, but it was a bit late in the day for that, though he'd once cut a fine figure on the dance floor, in the prize ring and in the logging woods. As it turned out, he could use a son—both of his being away—and I needed a father just then. We took to each other and settled, after a while, on being uncle and nephew, and he a grandfather to my own son, who'd lost both of his. My uncle taught me slowly. I paid him with deer meat and firewood and company, and by paying attention as best I could.



Jue, Shang dynasty, 12th–11th century B.C.

I often wondered at my uncle's equanimity. I thought he'd seen all he loved and respected ground down utterly. The others that had borne the old way that was his constant heart were gone. Even the great trees thousands of years old had left his homeland, carried off on loud trucks which returned to the north coast bearing only shoddy, overpriced goods—the greedy exchange of a truly avaricious people. Yet my uncle moved calmly and deliberately, attending with great care to the smallest details of the world. "Light," he said, "is the normal course of events."

I say he taught me slowly, but in fact I was a slow learner. I could not see this world of light and still don't manage it much of the time, although then the darkness was more convincing. Despite whatever understanding I grasped for, my pain in death and distance grew more entrenched and blinding. I fought remoteness from a world I could not comprehend with a lashing rage, and with a lot of alcohol—which alone seemed to illumine things, to put the scattered pieces together, however momen-

tarily. Finally, my uncle took me to a place deep in the coastal mountains. "I just want you to see how beautiful it is," he said.

We stayed eleven days.

It was a place I'd often heard of, one where (I thought) "power" was sought. Of course, swaggering with desperation, I couldn't hear my uncle's advice. I tried this and that and got further and further from what was appropriate to that place. In exasperation, my uncle stopped talking to me, stopped acknowledging my existence at all. This hurt considerably, and I could neither eat nor sleep for three days. Finally, I ran.

There was only one way to go from the narrow valley where we were camped, and I ran straight up toward the ridges above. Nagging voices rose and fell with my harsh breathing; I swore at them. Shadows dogged my steps, raising the hackles on my neck; I spun and drove them off with an obscene gesture. I ran, and when I could have run no more I reached a small lake high in a glacial cirque. I stripped and dove in and started swimming across, thinking, now: suck me down forever or by God let me go.

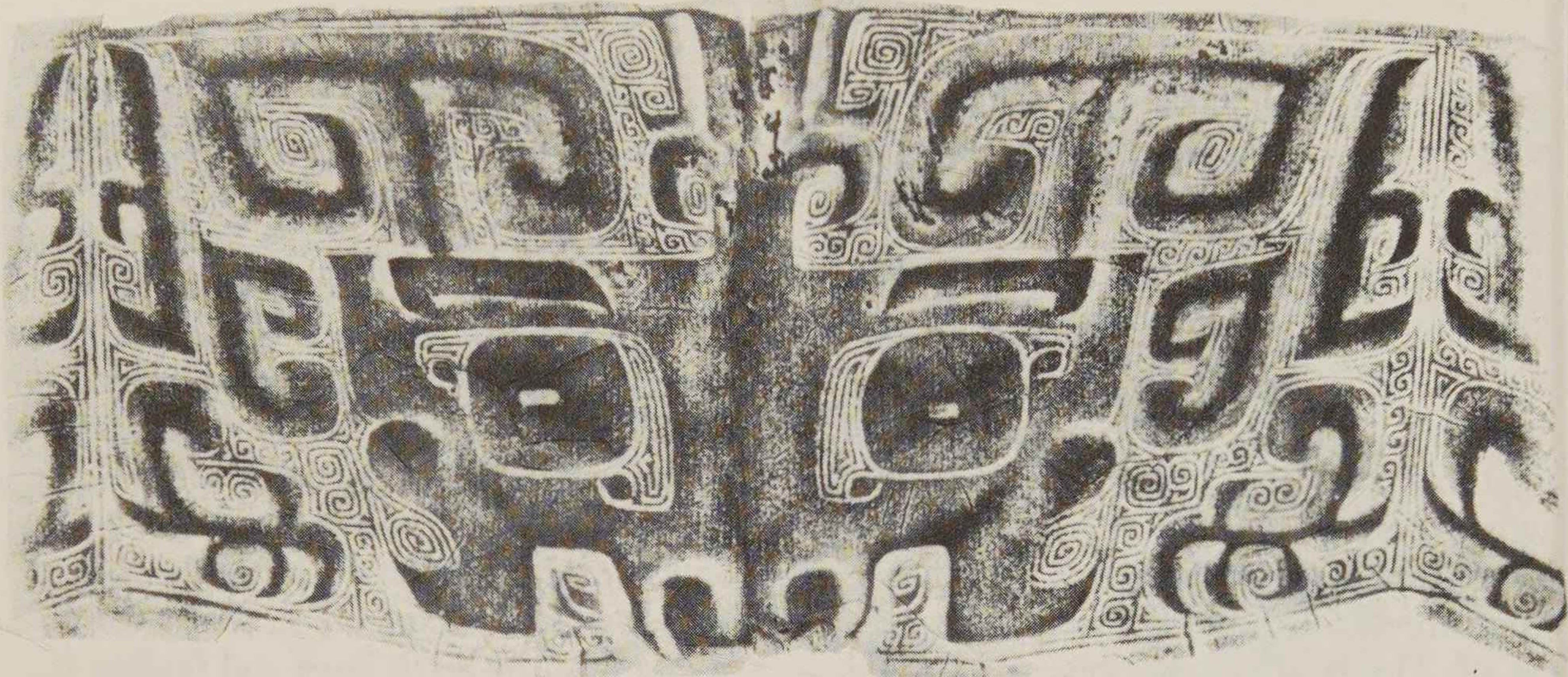
Nothing at all happened. The water was very cold. I swam back and forth across the deep, black well at the center of the pond and finally hauled myself out of the water and onto a rock in the sun. There were salamanders floating tail-down along the edges of the water. A couple of flies buzzed in lazy, persistent circles near my head, and a bird that I could not identify sang somewhere. A light breeze stirred the two trees near the rock, and the sky was very blue, with high cirrus clouds. I felt sleepy, and had no thought and little feeling. Dried, empty, I rose and dressed and walked off, heading back down the trail I'd run up.

But as I walked I saw that it was not the same trail at all. Each outcropping of pinkish basaltic schist, each Brewer's spruce, western hemlock, yellow pine, each blade of grass, thimbleberry, blackberry, red huckleberry, each snow plant, bracken fern, angelica leaf and vine maple, small

dragonfly, nuthatch and bandtailed pigeon, fallen white cedar and dried shelf fungus, wrinkle and crack on the fungus, ripple in the stream and pebble in the trail, each was purely itself, just light, distinct from all else and also completely at home in a single, multiform place of dazzling complexity and beauty. Oddly, the more distinctly etched and beautiful the earth became the more transparent it was, as though it were only the lid on the cauldron of the world. And that lid shifted aside so that I was seeing into the kettle itself and finding it probably bottomless, bubbling with layers and layers of beings and things unimagined and, even then, seeing it clearly, still unimaginable (even as fantastic creatures), probably never to be fully grasped, although I knew there were those who had gone far in this.

The sun was bright through the trees, the air filling me with its clarity, dissolving me into light, the light and the air breathed becoming a single field of being in which I flowed, anonymously, joining the ranks of myriads of beings that are the uniquely manifested forms of that field, coming and going on mysterious yet perfectly ordered and perfectly compassionate rounds, coming and going in beauty. And as, when I'd seen each thing on the surface of the world as utterly distinct, perfectly formed and autonomous, then that surface had knit into a single, whole, and unblemished fabric, so now, finding myself nameless and of no particular strength or merit in an eternal succession of things and beings seen and unseen, benign, innocuous, and highly dangerous, I became more and more distinct to myself, each breath and footfall, the weight of my body and light of my eye as real as the song that rode then in the stirring of the air.

At the bottom of the trail, where it met the jeep track into the valley, my uncle sat in his pickup truck, smiling, the passenger door open—as, I realized when I saw him, I knew he would be. "Wa'll," he said, "where you been? Time to eat, isn't it?" We drove back to camp together, chuckling and humming.



Li Ding, *Western Zhou dynasty, 11th century B.C. (rubbing detail)*

*God is a man-eater.*

*For this reason men are sacrificed to him.*

—*The Gospel of Philip*

To the south along the California coast, far south of the Klamath, south of the Luiseño, the Tipai say that a great double-headed serpent with horns once contained everything. It flew up into the sky from the sea where it lived. Someone shot it with an arrow and it plummeted, bursting open, scattering all things about it in its death; the ten thousand things, this one world.

Understanding the taotie only as a glutton, a singular beast, smacks of empire and of decoration, of “design, merely.” I don’t think that the Tipai story teller would have accepted this, had he seen the Chinese bronzes, and I don’t think that my uncle would have either. But I can’t ask him now and cannot speak for him.

A while ago by the winter sea, back on the east coast again, twelve years after that time in the mountains with my uncle, I walked with Lam Yau Ming, a sojourner from Hong Kong. He called taotie the “Eater of Eaters.” I believe he intended something different from a glutton, and that he was correct.

The old Chinese historians say that this beast actually existed in the time of the

emperor Yao, who ruled wisely for seventy years and abdicated to Shun in 2287 B.C., just before the time of the Xia kingdom. It was Emperor Shun that banished the taotie from the realm as, long before Yao, the Yellow Emperor had organized an army of beasts and driven out Yen Ti, the barbarian, clearing the land for the coming dynasties. Nothing is simple, here, or moves in straight lines—but perhaps there is another place to begin:

*Ch’i*, life-force or breath, say the sages, appears as clouds, especially around mountains. Clouds come from two sources: the minerals and ores in mountains and the breath of the *lung* dragon (which also issues as fire and as water, as lightning and as rain). The *lung* dragon is mighty, but the oldest dragon is the *k’uei*, which is said to restrain greed. Dragons appear in profusion on the old bronze ritual vessels, together with taotie—which they greatly resemble. The vessels, of course, were cast from ores mined in mountains.

From the beginning of the Shang dynasty at least, taotie masks and dragons were formed on the bronze vessels from the “thunder pattern,” *leiwen*, first painted on clay pots and related to the earliest ideographs for “cloud” and for “thunder”; hooking, spiralled lines of energy, signs for *ch’i*, “the matrix from which the zoomorphs sprang.”

There were other lines translated from pots to bronzes, ones signifying cicada, an

emblem of death, and others moving out in scrolls of ch'i energy from the bronze beast masks. Taotie stayed put, solid and glaring, while the thunder lines wandered across the vessels' surfaces, forming dense arabesques, gathering here and there as rams, tigers, crested birds, and *k'uei*. The eyes of the masks multiplied, dotting the vessels with polished, clear knobs in the interstices of the woven world.

For these bronzes are worlds. The mask lines of breath and beasts' eyes exfol-

mapped this world as an indiscriminate and unbounded creator's doing. No wonder that emperors sought to control such vessels, that kingdoms rose and fell upon the possession of them! For their sources are older than the corpses of men conscripted for distant frontier wars, of mothers and tired farmers piled in burnt, blood-soaked fields—one side of the double beast. And they are older than the other that meets head-on, disgorging birds, swallows released to feed the *lung* dragons whose food



Guang, Shang dynasty, 12th century B.C.

iated until the vessels themselves were maps of the real world and all that is in it: shaman's charts, true territory, this world made of the clay womb earth by sky ch'i flashing in conjunction; the map of Fu Hsi and of the Xia provinces, of that place in which we come to make our positions correct, seeing it clearly.

Shang is three thousand years past now, but the spirit of the bronzes is older even than the dusty riders and cities of Shang or Xia whose ruler's bronze vessels

they are, tumblers and jugglers and magicians fooling everybody back at the capital, wine cups like lilies, babies like dew, alert cranes and peaceful rhinoceri, people raising pigs and harvesting millet.

The bronzes are icons of this place the powerful makes. They were vessels for cooking sacrifices, for grabbing Being by the horns, taking control of time, assuring departed ancestors' places for eternity. Fire was set below them and food cooked. They say that Fu Hsi invented hunting and cook-

ing alike. However so, we are the ones that cook the beasts we kill, as time cooks us before we go back to the earth, just clay.

From this point of view, the creature on the Shang bronzes might well be called "taotie," the Beast of Greed, the devourer, or *t'an*, "avarice." But this is a limited understanding, unless we also take such avarice to be the impulse *toward* form, toward infinite manifestation, toward creation, beauty, life in all forms fed, it is true, by the apparent death of those forms.

Somewhere between defeated and vengeful sadism and dissociated, mystical acceptance of death lies sacrifice, the opposite of meanness, a creative act. Why else would people give all that they can afford—a chicken or forty men and a hundred horses—if not to *make*? To give life lest it simply be taken, to create an eternity of life, stop time itself through that giving, lest in time's taking of life they be destroyed?

This complete world bursts into being, life and death revolving; such is the avarice of the Eater of Eaters, disinterested. The early bronze casters imaged this world, mapped it for ritual use in mortuary sacrifice, in order to give the world to the world; perfect freedom.

Fu Hsi also invented music, and the Shang also cast bronze bells marked with the taotie mask, giving the lie to the simple immorality of gluttony. The bells were struck with a wooden mallet and rang out a sweetness of sound calling the mind to sharp attention, weaving space without by their droning. There were drums, incense burners like bronze mountains, and axes. All of these things, it is my sense, showed the world itself and also ensured connection with it: by the sweet cloud-breath rising through bronze mountains, by the vapor of cooking food and heating wine, by blood flowing and by the focused attention these all summoned.

There were also square bronze mirrors with taotie masks and thunder spirals and mountains on their backs. Such mirrors had magical properties and, say the old texts, could make the hidden visible, reveal the future and protect their owners for a while—as could the "monster."

It was not until later, in Zhou times, that the mirrors became perfectly round, without disconcerting angles. The masks had gone then and in their places were mandalas, formal and abstract maps of the world. Yet at least one such mirror, much later, retained the old and demanding power: they say that it could show the viewer his own insides. And even then, in Han times, beyond the Great Wall, among the barbarians of the north and west at large in the encircling sweep of Asia, shamans still crafted odd, angular mirrors of slate or even wood, still connecting with that vastness in spirit.

And beyond Asia, around the Pacific rim, there were a myriad of peoples who seem, today and intuitively, to have had much in common, despite the distances between them. Two thousand years ago, shamans hunkered in the fog of the northwest coast of North America, gazing into slate mirrors. George MacDonald, an historian of Northwest Coast art, thinks that these mirrors followed Siberian patterns. He thinks that they provided the shape for the more famous "coppers," ritual shields of native copper shaped something like key holes, but with squared corners. These were valuable things that shone like abalone, like the sun. MacDonald says that the coppers are actually maps of the world, seen as a dwelling. They bear split, double images of the ancestral beast.

Great Kwakiutl men threw such valuables into the sea, broke them into pieces, threw them into the fire; pulled down the mirror and looked directly, sharp of eye and ear. For, they said, we are all thrown into the "mouth of heaven": you had better take what control you can, join in the endless giving of the world to the world that gives; sacrifice. In the winter they wore the masks of spirit beasts and danced cannibal dances, respecting themselves as cannibals, as equal to a world that eats itself, daily.

**F**ire burns even metal, finally, and metal in its transformations makes earth.



Ding, *Shang dynasty, 15th–14th century B.C.*

Clouds emanate from metal ores still in the earth or back there again. In China the Bronze Age ended in a flurry of written words originating in the map of Fu Hsi, and in a return to clay versions of bronze vessels first derived from clay pots.

In Zhou times, the bronzes lost their ritual solemnity, as one authority puts it. Abstract decoration for its own sake took the place of the masks and of the swirling spiral lines that emanated from them. The

vessels became a means of secular ostentation and vehicles for fullblown praises of familial glory and filial virtue. (The same, more or less, was to happen much later to the Kwakiutl coppers.) Of course, this was neither an ending nor a beginning but just a moving, a continuing of the creation, of the coming and going of worlds.

In China, the thunder pattern traveled on through time, lighting here and there. In the Chu era of late Zhou it moved

across the black and red lacquerware of the south as *yün ch'i*, "cloud scrolls" that could be clouds or water or a road. Newly freed, the lines came back as silver and gold inlays in new banquet bronzes and on silk banners embroidered with mythical beasts—Heavenly Deer, Pheonix, various dragons, a raven in the sun and half-men, half-beasts of a remnant tradition that itself moved off elsewhere, maybe east.

In the Warring States period (475–221 B.C.), and even more after the Han unified the Middle Kingdom again, people and horses and houses and trees began to stand on as well as among these lines of breath. Cloud scrolls became mountains and rivers, flights of birds, new worlds away from the bronze ones, narrative landscapes incised in stone slabs and painted on silk, dragons diving through clouds, "Chinese art." The first practical maps appeared then too, used in flood control, in planning military campaigns and decorating the floors of tombs where ranks of lacquer vessels stood as offerings, more expensive than bronze in an age of iron. "*Ch'i yün sheng tun*," wrote Hsieh Ho, an artist-adept of the era: "ch'i revolves, vitality emerges"; "engorges!" said Gary Snyder at that Chinese dinner, laughing.

After I'd begun writing these reflections, going back to museum collections, to check, I discovered something new. I was at Harvard once more, in the Fogg Museum, looking at taotie on Shang vessels. As I moved to those of Western Zhou, I realized that what I wished to take as taotie here were not, but were two crested birds, quite separate. Each had one eye and occupied the register that, on the Shang vessels, customarily bore taotie. The substitution was a quiet one, as when a word or short phrase in a familiar ritual recitation is changed and we at first accept it whole and only a few beats later realize that the entire axis of the formula's reality

has been shifted a few degrees. The double creature, neither one nor two, had been sundered unambiguously by the Zhou artists and the resulting two were no longer an Eater of Eaters, but decorative birds. One side of the doubled taotie had been chosen, and then reiterated, the beast itself banished once more.

Actually, the taotie was now just on the outskirts, transformed. On these Zhou vessels, three food containers, *gui*, directly above the center ridge that was once the taotie's nose line, but in a separate register, there is a single small animal face in high relief. It is usually called a "feline face," although its cat's ears might as easily be read as curving horns. Like the birds, it is both decorative and domesticated, appealing. Mapping the world, I say, led inevitably to a judgment upon it, and its fragmentation, its escape.

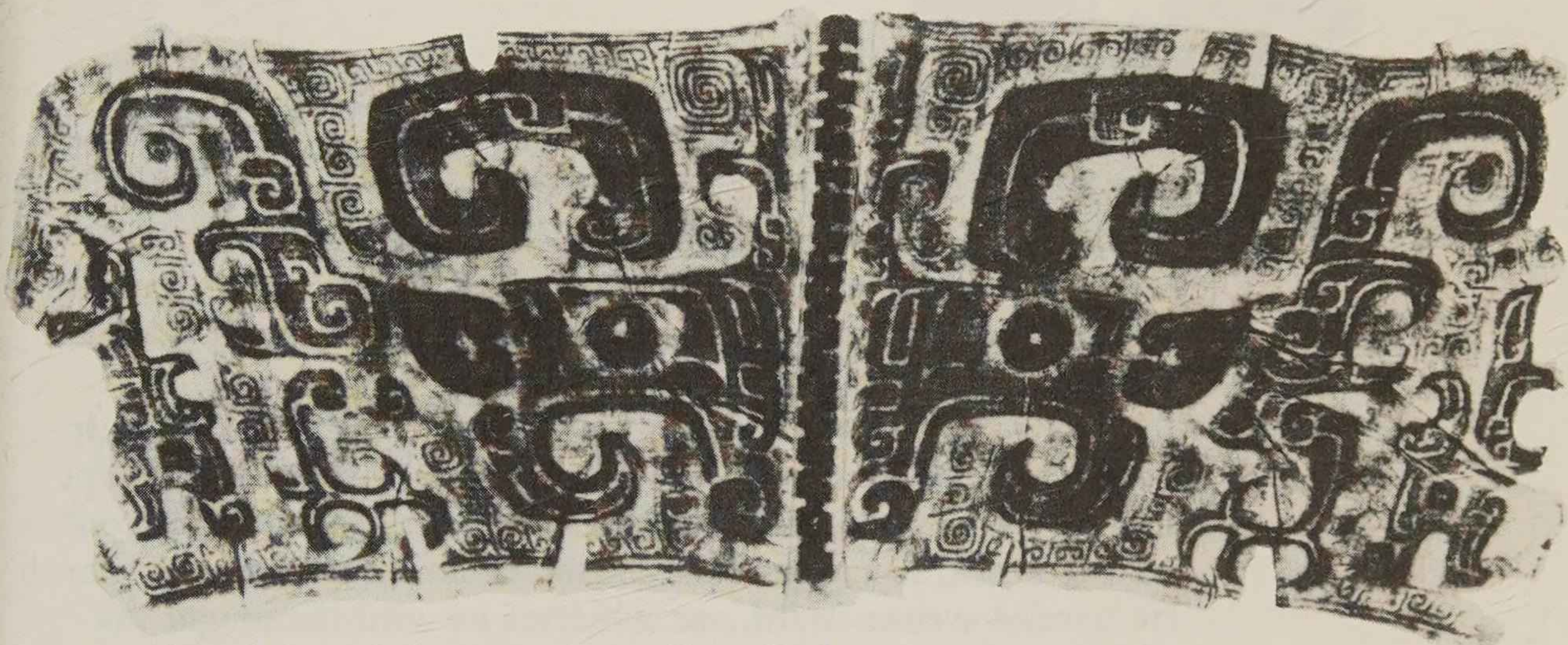
These food vessels carried birds, while Western Zhou wine jars continued to bear taotie for a while (and realistic mushroom handles on their lids—now emblems of "immortality"). In the end, though, in Eastern Zhou times, both were overwhelmed by abstract decoration. Most beings are gone entirely now, the vessels' polished surfaces relieved only by tiny interlaced spirals, unravelled and linear, made by pressing stamps repeatedly into the wet clay of the molds—a technique that made mass production possible. All of this is meaningful and perhaps could lead us to see in new light that, while the excesses of Shang may have been drink and live sacrifice, those of Zhou were probably wealth, moralism, and loneliness.

But, more than enough. Like coming to understand, like distance, this essay could go on forever. (Komokums, the Modoc Indian Creator, patted some clay between his hands and made the world. "Well!" he said, "I didn't know it would do that!") It's a big wonder that Eater of Eaters lets loose here and I'm not sure that

I've gotten anywhere with it at all, thinking about it ever since that dinner in the Chinese restaurant. We talked about art and ate until we were full. At the end it was late and the others were tired, preoccupied as though attending to internal injuries. Only Snyder, the poet, still had a carafe of wine before him. "Have some more," he said; "in China a meal like this would last for six hours!" Soon, though, it was time to go on.

Eastern winter's weight from my chest.  
On the downhill trail I began to fly.

I loped easily with arms spread, swinging back and forth across the fall-line, singing. The slope bottomed out on a flat at the top of a sea cliff and I came to rest, arms still out, still singing. Five turkey vultures wheeled above, and they began to take turns diving down. One at a time the great birds came directly at me until they were just above and in front of my face.



Guang, Shang dynasty, 12th century B.C. (rubbing detail)

You and I will too. But first, let me tell you a little more about my uncle and me, about his death and about living in the distance. My swim in the lake did not close this distance. Such things never do, my uncle said, they only get you started, "give you a license to begin studying all over again. But it's different." Still, I can't help but wonder sometimes, if I'd dived down into that lake, into its black well, would I have found the bottom of it? I've heard some men have. Maybe some day I will too—I go back to that country from time to time.

In the spring a few years back I was near there, joining some others to complete my uncle's funeral rites. On an afternoon I was walking the ridges above the Pacific. The light was gentle, curving through a luminous sky, and the wind over the new meadow grasses sweet enough to lift an

There, each snapped its wings against the air so emphatically that I heard it crack, then climbed again in a few powerful strokes. The force and beauty of it all wrenched my guts, but I could not give up this game and as long as I continued, so did they. ■

## I. The Shrine/Turkish

Nasr Eddin's father was the keeper of a shrine. The shrine was known far and wide as the burial place of a great teacher, and pilgrims of all kinds and degrees flocked to it.

Nasr Eddin would naturally have inherited his father's position as keeper of the shrine, but soon after he reached fifteen, he decided to travel in search of knowledge.

"I will not try to stop you, my son," said his father. So Nasr Eddin saddled a donkey and set off on his travels. He visited Egypt and Babylon, traveled through the Arabian desert, and on to Iconium, Bokhara, Samarkand, and the mountains of the Hindu Kush. He traveled ever eastward, and wherever he went, he sought the company of dervishes.

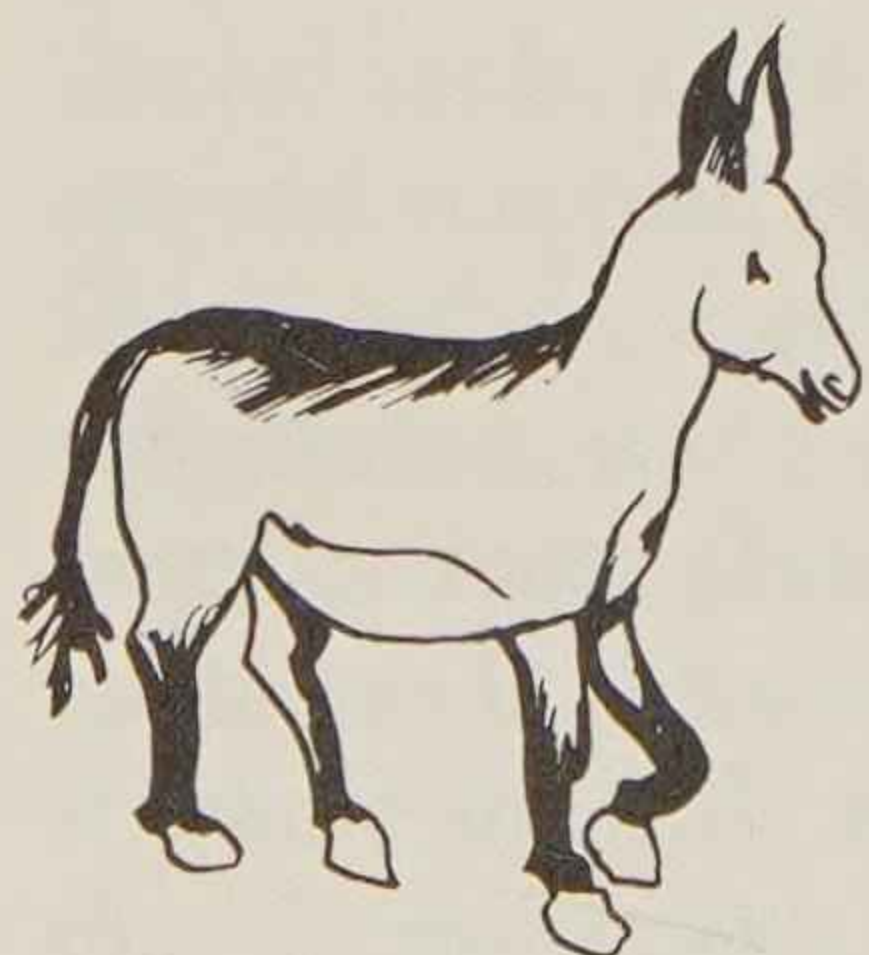
He was struggling across the mountain ranges in Kashmir when his donkey, worn out from walking, gasping in the thin air, lay down and died.

Nasr Eddin grieved for his friend and companion, who had traveled with him for so many years. Heartbroken, he buried the donkey and raised a simple mound over the grave. There he remained in silent meditation, the mountains towering above him and the rivers rushing below.

Before very long travelers along this mountain road noticed the lonely figure who wept as he gazed across the valley of Kashmir. "This must be the grave of a holy man," they said to one another, "a very holy man indeed. Look how his disciple is mourning."

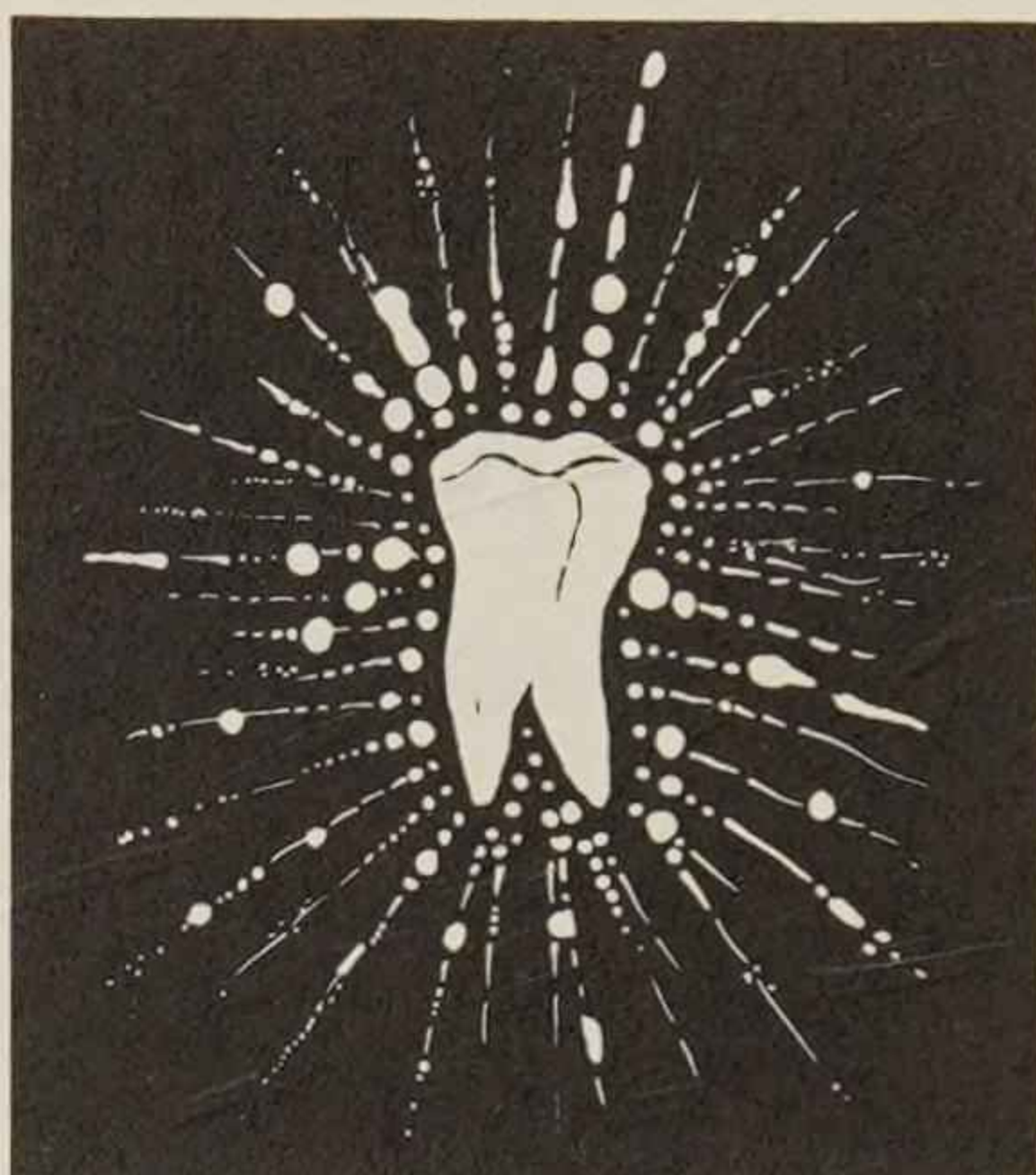
One day a rich man passed and had a dome and a shrine built on the spot. Other pilgrims built terraces on the mountainside and devoted the crops they planted to the upkeep of the shrine. Travelers carried the story of the Silent Mourning Dervish to many lands, and one day it reached the ears of Nasr Eddin's father. At once, he set off on a pilgrimage to the shrine. Arriving, he saw his son, and asked him how the shrine had come to be.

Nasr Eddin told him the story. The old dervish raised his hands in astonishment. "My son," he exclaimed, "the shrine I have kept for all these years was begun in just the same way, when my own donkey died more than thirty years ago."



—Retold by Anne Twitty

## II. The Shrine/Tibetan



Once a boy from Khams went up to Lhasa to see the great statue of the Buddha there. His mother couldn't go, but she asked her son to please bring back a blessing from this great Buddha.

The boy worked his way to Lhasa as a helper with a yak caravan. The caravan passed through many holy places, and the boy was entranced with the sights he saw, and even more entranced with the Buddha of the Lhasa shrine.

He was so entranced that he forgot that his mother had asked him to bring her a blessing. When he was almost home, on his way from the village up to his house, he suddenly realized what he had forgotten. He looked around for something—anything—that he could take to his mother. There by the side of the road he saw the bones of a dead dog. Quickly, he picked up one of the dog's teeth, wrapped it in a bit of silk, and brought it to his mother, saying, "This is a relic from the Buddha."

His mother received the tooth with reverence. She put it in her shrine and every day she said her prayers before it. One day, lights began to shine from the tooth. The people of the village heard of this, and they began to come to that house to see the wondrous tooth. In its presence, miracles took place.

After some years of this, the boy could no longer bear to hear his mother talking of the wonder-working tooth. He told her what had happened on his way home from Lhasa. "That tooth came from a dead dog lying by the side of the road," he said.

"Oh no," she said, "you must be mistaken. The tooth is a great relic."

The boy turned around and walked out the door. There was the Buddha. And the Buddha said, "That tooth is truly one of mine."

—Retold by Anne Twitty

## Journey's End/From *Journey* to the West



**T**ripitaka, his three companions, and the Horse of the Will arrive at last at Thunderclap Monastery, where they come face to face with Buddha Tathagata. Tripitaka requests the three baskets of scriptures to take back to China, and the Bodhisattva Kuan-Yin reads the registry of deeds accomplished by the pilgrims: in the journey of one hundred and eight thousand miles, they have endured eighty ordeals. This leaves one lacking, which they must suffer while returning to the emperor, in order to make up the requisite sacred number of nine times nine. Finally, all ordeals endured safely, Tripitaka, Monkey, Sandy, Pigsy, and the Horse arrive at the court of T'ai-tsung, and present him with the scriptures: five thousand and forty-eight scrolls.

T'ai-tsung was delighted and gave the order to prepare a banquet in honor of Tripitaka. Then he noticed the monk's three extraordinary disciples and asked, "Are your noble disciples foreigners?"

Tripitaka prostrated himself and replied, "My eldest disciple is called Monkey, and his religious name is 'Awake-to-Vacuity.' He is also called Pilgrim Monkey. He comes from the Water Curtain Cave of the Flower-Fruit Mountain. My second disciple is called Pigsy, and his religious name is 'Awake-to-Power.' Sometimes we call him Eight-Commandments Hog. He comes from the Cloudy Paths Cave of Fu-ling Mountain, and was a fiend at the Old Kao Village in Tibet when he was converted to the teaching. My third disciple is Sandy; his religious name is 'Awake-to-Purity.' We also call him Sand Monk. When I found him, he was a fiend at the Flowing-Sand River. But all three have helped greatly on our journey.

"My horse is not the same as the one my Lord gave me when I started out. That horse was devoured at the Eagle Grief Stream in the Serpent Coil Mountain by this horse, who was originally a prince of the Dragon King of the Western Ocean. Having set fire to his father's palace, he would have been executed if the Bodhisattva had not intervened. She commanded him to become the steed for our journey, and he also has served us well, by carrying me over the most treacherous passages."

When T'ai-tsung heard all this, he asked, "Just how long was your journey to the Western Region?" To this, Tripitaka replied, "I did not make a careful record, but the Bodhisattva said that it was one hundred and eight thousand miles. By my reckoning, we have experienced fourteen seasons of heat and cold, encountering mountains and ridges, vast forests, and wide, swiftly flowing streams. We went through many kingdoms as well, and in each of them the ruler's seal and signature was affixed to our travel papers." Then he presented the papers to the emperor, who marveled greatly over the many adventures of the T'ang monk.

After the banquet was over, T'ai-tsung asked if Tripitaka would consent to recite the scriptures for the court. A proper site was chosen where a lofty platform was erected and appropriately decorated. Tripitaka mounted the platform and had just taken several scrolls to read when he caught a familiar whiff of fragrant wind. Then the Eight Vajra Guardians, who had been sent by Buddha Tathagata to bring the pilgrims back to the Western Region, appeared in mid-air, crying, "Readers, drop your scripture scrolls and follow us to the West!" Before the astonished eyes of the emperor and his court, Monkey and his two companions, together with the white horse,



immediately rose into the air. Joined by Tripitaka, they all left soaring through the air, and came once again to Spirit Mountain, where they were bidden to approach the throne of Buddha to receive their appointments.

“Sage Monk,” Tathagata began, “you were once in a previous incarnation my disciple Golden Cicada. Because you did not listen to my exposition of the law, and showed no respect for my teaching, you were banished to find another incarnation. Happily for all, you submitted and remained faithful, enduring many hardships to fulfill your duty. For such merit, I now promote and appoint you Buddha of Sandalwood Merit.

“Awake-to-Vacuity, your disturbances at the Celestial Palace forced me to imprison you beneath the Mountain of Five Phases. You were fortunately brought to the true teaching, however, and I am particularly pleased by your scourging of evil and exaltation of good. For your fidelity from beginning to end, I hereby promote and appoint you Buddha Victorious in Strife.

“Awake-to-Power, you got drunk during the Festival of Immortal Peaches, and insulted the divine maiden. For this you were banished to an incarnation as a hog in the Region Below. Fortunately, you still loved the human form, and eventually returned to the teaching. You protected the sage monk on his journey; however, greed and lust were not entirely extinguished in you. All the same, for the merit of carrying the luggage, I hereby promote and appoint you Janitor of the Altars.”

“Wait a minute!” shouted Pigsy. “You made them Buddhas, why not me?”

“Because you are still lazy and talkative,” said Tathagata, “and moreover you have an enormous appetite. But think: all over the world, whenever there are Buddhist services, you will be asked to clear the altars. That’s not such a bad appointment, is it?”

“Awake-to-Purity, because you broke a crystal chalice during the Festival of Immortal Peaches, you were banished to the Region Below. There you sinned by taking the form of a demon and devouring humans. However, you gained great merit by leading the sage monk’s horse over the mountains, and I hereby promote and appoint you Golden-Bodied Arhat.”

Tathagata then spoke to the horse, and promoted him to become one of the dragons of the Eight Classes of Supernatural Beings.

Tripitaka, his three disciples, and the horse all bowed low before the Buddha. And Monkey, raising his hand to his head, discovered that the fillet with which Tripitaka had formerly been forced to control him, had vanished.

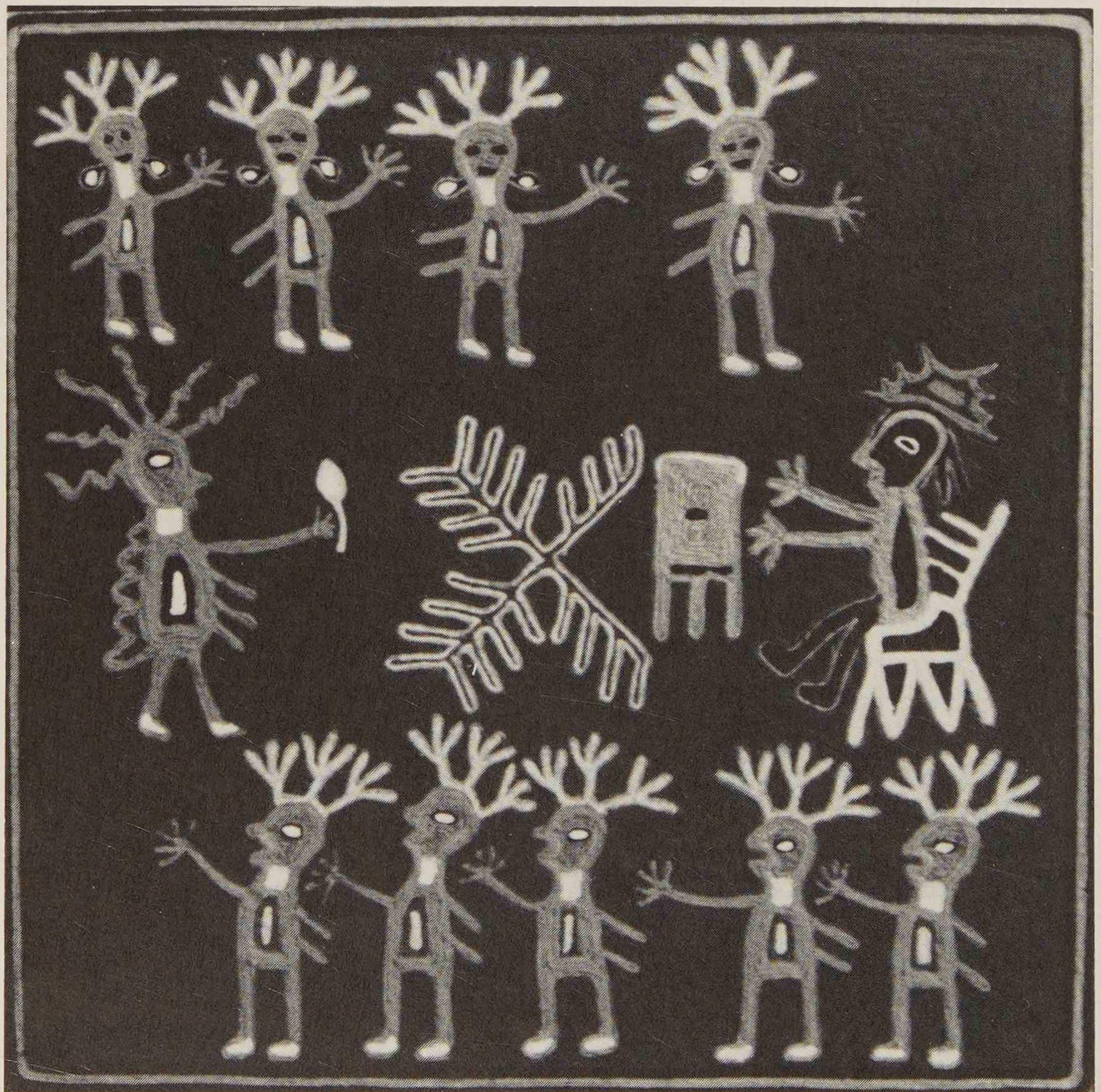


So it was that Sandalwood Buddha, Buddha Victorious in Strife, Janitor of the Altars, Golden-Bodied Arhat, and even the Heavenly dragon horse assumed their rightful place, and live to this day on Advaya’s heights.

—Retold by Paul Jordan-Smith

# Flying the Children to Wirikuta/Huichol

“Look,” he tells them, “it is this way. We will fly over this little mountain. We will travel to Wirikuta, where the sacred water is, where the peyote is, where Our Father comes up.”



And from there they fly, like bees, straight, they go on the wind as one says, this way. As though they were a flock of doves, very beautiful, like the singing turtle doves. They fly evenly. You can see that they become as little tiny bees, very pretty. They continue from hill to hill. They fly from place to place as the mara'akame\* tells them. The mara'akame goes with Kauyumari, Kauyumari who tells him everything. He protects them all. A little girl is missing a wing because the father or the mother has committed many sins. If they are missing a wing, the mara'akame puts it back on. Then she flies with the rest of them.

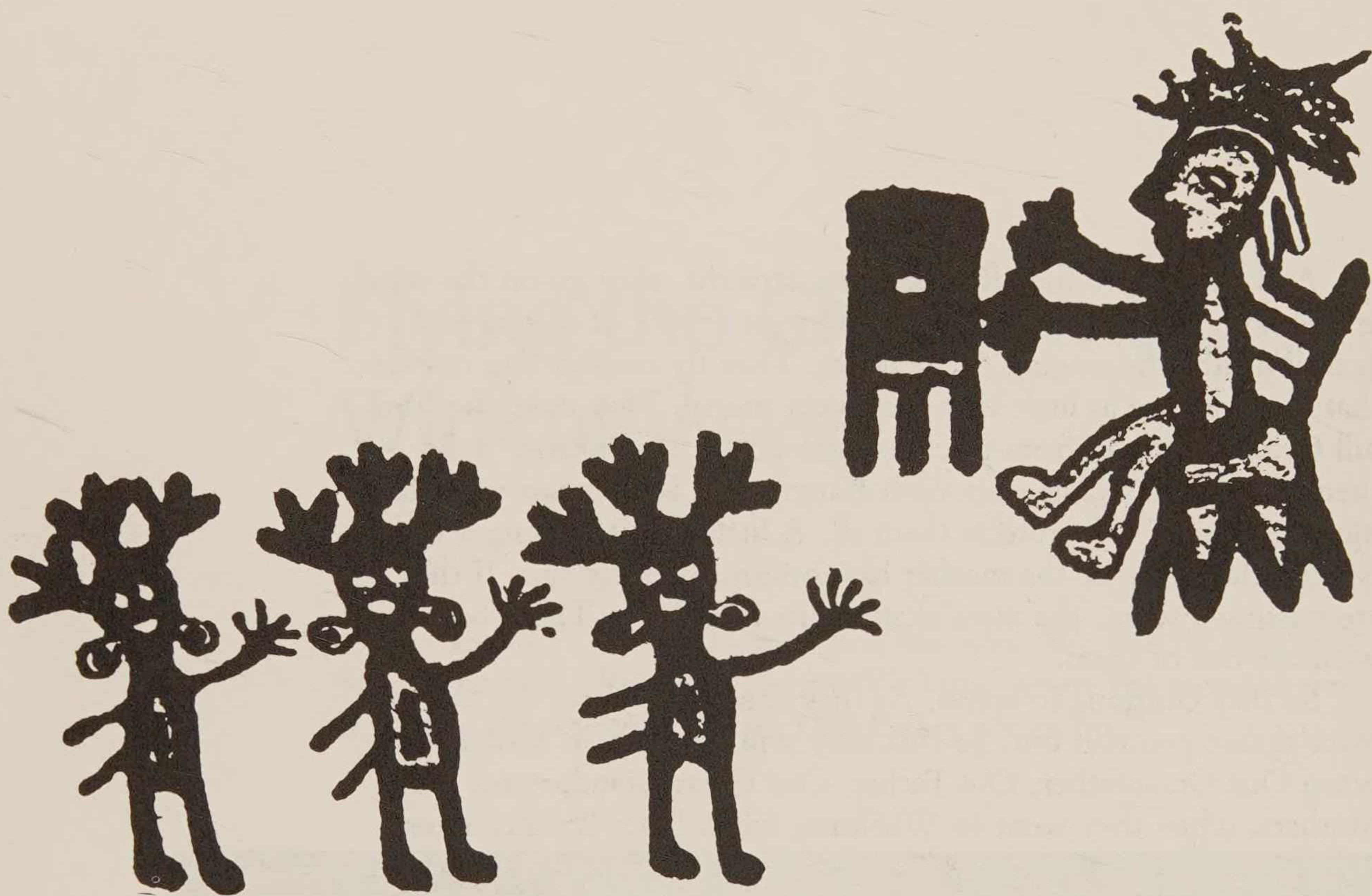
So they continue to travel. As they come to a place, the mara'akame points it out. So that they will know of it, how it was when Our Grandfather, Our Father, Our Great Grandparent, Our Mothers, when they went to Wirikuta, when Elder Brother Deer Tail, Maxa Kwaxi-Kauyumari, crossed over there and the children of the first Huichols went there, so that they became cured.

That is what the drum says on our rancho. When it is beaten. There the children fly. The mara'akame leads them on the wind. They land on one of the rocks. It is as though they were clinging to the rock, very dangerous. The mara'akame tells them, "Look, children, you are not familiar with these paths. There are many dangers, there are many animals that eat children, that threaten people. You must not separate, you must stay close together, all of you." And the children are very glad, very happy.

They fly on to Tokuari, to Where the Arrows Are. They fly past there. *Xiuwa, xiuwa, xiuwa*, so goes the sound of their flying. Their wings. They arrive at Tskata, the Volcanic Place, where in Ancient Times, the First Mara'akame, Our Grandfather, blessed the sacred water in the caves, so that everyone could go there, our relatives, the Huichols, everyone. The mara'akame takes a gourd bowl and with it sprinkles the sacred water over them. He tells them, "I bless you in the Four Winds, to the right and to the other side, to the north, to the south, and up above." So he says to them. He prays, "Let us feed them. There where Our Grandfather is, there on the south, there on the north. You, Our Aunt, Our Mother who are there. You, Kumúkite, gather yourselves together. You, Our Grandparents, who are kept in our houses as rock crystals, gather yourselves together. Your votive bowls are in their places, there they are."

He offers them on his right, he offers them on his left, he offers them to his east, he offers them above. Also he offers them to his

\*shaman



west, where Our Mother Haramara dwells, where Our Mother Hamuxamaka dwells. So at last he says, "We will fly on." They land at Wakanarixipa. This is a terrible mountainous country. Here the mara'akame explains to them, "That is the way we must travel, the symbols we must follow. For when someone dies, there is always someone who comes after." Then he flies on. The children fly on, to Where the Star Lives. Then they fly to a place they call Hukuta (La Ocota, Pine Grove, the Place of Kindling Wood). Now they say, "Mara'akame, tell us, how will we cross that river there?" "Well," he says, "I know how." And he takes them safely.

"At last," he prays, "Our Mothers, Our Fathers, all you who are in Wirikuta, those who are eaten as peyote, we are on our way to Wirikuta." He says to the children, "Act and feel like eagles. You will go there on your wings." They give instructions to one another, they learn. One tells the other, "Light your candle," and he answers, "Yes, very well." The mara'akame takes tinder, he takes flint, he takes steel for striking fire. They do this five times and they light the candles and worship there and go on their way. They travel and come to a place they call Las Cruces, where the cross is. They exclaim, "Oh, look, we really have come far, yes we have come far. And how will we be able to go on?" And they say, "Well, it is because we are going to Wirikuta, where the peyote grows, where our ancestors traveled. We have to get rid of our sins, everything." . . .

Where it is called Wirikuta, where Our Mother Peyote dwells, there they arrive. When he has beaten the drum, when he stands by the sacred pools, when he has spoken to the Mothers and the

Fathers, to Our Father, to Our Grandfather, to Our Great Grandparent, when he has laid his offerings down, when their votive bowls are in their place, when their arrows are in their place, when their wristbands are in their place, when their sandals are in their place, then it will be good, then we will have life.

The children are happy, all, they are contented. Because now they are blessed. The offerings are made, the deer tail plumes are in their place, the arrows are to the south, to the north, to the east, up above. He holds them out. The horns of the deer are in their place, no matter what kind. The mara'akame says, "Oh, Our Father, Our Grandfather, Our Mothers, you all who dwell here, we have arrived to visit you, to come and see you here. We have arrived well." And when they arrive, they kneel and Our Father, Our Grandfather, Our Elder Brother, embrace them.

"What did you come for, my children?" they ask. "You have come so far, why did you travel so far?"



They answer, "We came to visit you so that we will know all, so that we will have life."

"All right," they say, "it is well," and they bless them. And there they remain but ten minutes, a very few minutes, to speak with Our Father, Our Grandfather, with all of them there. And then the Mother gives them the blessing and they leave.

Adapted with permission from Barbara Myerhoff, *Peyote Hunt: The Sacred Journey of the Huichol Indians* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1974).

# The Last Pilgrimage/

## From the Mahābhārata

After all their trials—the banishment, the thirteen years of forest exile, and finally the terrible battle of Kurukshetra and the defeat of their enemies—the five Pāndava brothers, with Yudhishtira as their king, and their queen Draupadī, reigned over all the land of India. Many years passed, and at last came the time to make an end of earthly power and undertake the last long pilgrimage to Indra's Heaven.

So they set forth on foot, accompanied by their dog, for the great mountains: Yudhishtira the king and Draupadī, the powerful Bhīma, Arjuna the warrior, and the twins Nakula and Sahādev. They came at last to the heights of the Himalayas, and the way was very hard. They were old now, and weary with their long life of wandering and fighting. Draupadī the queen was the first to sink to the ground, exhausted and dying, and one by one the others followed her in death: great Bhīma and brave Arjuna, Nakula and Sahādev; and only Yudhishtira, weeping but never looking back, pressed on, followed by his dog.

Staggering and sorrowful, blind with weariness, the king climbed higher and higher until suddenly, with a crack of thunder and a blaze of light, a chariot appeared before him, and in it the towering form of Indra, King of Heaven. He smiled upon Yudhishtira and bade him enter the chariot.

“I am come to bring you with me to Heaven,” Indra said to him, “for you alone among mortals are found worthy to enter there, still in your mortal form.”

“Nay, Lord,” answered Yudhishtira, “I am one with my brothers and with our queen, Draupadī, and they have fallen and died. Without them to accompany me, I may not enter into Heaven.”

“They have gone before you,” Indra told him, “and you will see them when you arrive. Enter now the chariot. But you must leave your dog behind, for a dog cannot enter Heaven.”



“Nay, Lord,” answered Yudhishtira, “I cannot abandon the dog who has followed me all this way. Without him I cannot enter Heaven.”

“Should Heaven be defiled by the presence of a dog?” cried Indra. “He has served you here in this world and here you must leave him. There is no sin in this.”

“Nay, Lord,” answered Yudhishtira, “it is the greatest sin for any of us to cast off one who has loved us faithfully. I cannot abandon the dog for my own happiness.”

“Yet you have left everything else behind, even your wife and your brothers,” said Indra.

“What could I do?” said Yudhishtira. “They did not live to accompany me; but the dog lives, and I cannot leave him.”

Then with another great flash of light and the sound of many voices singing, the dog disappeared and in his place stood the shining god Dharma. And he and Indra praised Yudhishtira for his faithfulness, and took him into the chariot, and a radiant chorus of immortals welcomed him into Heaven.

And now to his astonishment, Yudhishtira beheld enthroned in glory the heroes who were his enemies, whom he had fought and slain; but his comrades were not in that place, and he exclaimed in dismay and demanded to see his friends. A guide was given to him and he was taken to another place which was dark and terrible, and voices cried out to him in anguish; and Yudhishtira recognized them as the voices of his kinsmen and his comrades.

Then he turned in great anger to his guide and cried: “Go back! go back to the high gods and tell them that I shall remain here in Hell with my people. If evil men dwell in Heaven, and the good here in Hell, this is where I shall abide and look no more on the faces of the gods.” Then the messenger bowed and disappeared, and Yudhishtira remained alone in that dark place.

But the darkness lasted only a moment. Light dawned brighter and brighter and a sweet wind began to blow and the sound of mourning became songs, and Yudhishtira sprang up with the gods around him, smiling upon him.

“Now are your journeys ended and your trials over,” they said to him. “You have passed all the tests of kingship: you have seen Hell as well as Heaven, as all kings must, and now only glory and happiness remain. Put on your immortal body, O Yudhishtira, and ascend your throne among your brothers and among the gods.”

—Retold by D.M. Dooling



## GALLERIES

Years ago in a local museum—and perhaps still today—there was a room-sized model of the solar system that rotated larger and smaller spheres around a central “sun,” the innermost planets chasing one another with zest, the outer planets hardly moving. The mechanical exactitude of the model, its neat spheres and almost audible whirr, were immensely reassuring: one could watch at length, fascinated by a celestial clockwork that was ever-changing and yet ever the same.

The universe of Paul Reynard’s new paintings (recently shown at The Brewster Gallery in New York City) blends the reassuring regularity of that older vision of the cosmos with the awesome energies of the new cosmology revealed by recent advances in astronomy. The concentric pattern of the traditional universe, pieced together by the ancients from observation and corrected but not wholly transformed in the Coper-

nican era, coexists in Reynard’s paintings with the shimmering nebulae and unending tumult that astronomers now report.

But these works are not only an artist’s vision of a macrocosmic order immersed in and even threatened by the primal energies from which it emerges. They also suggest the patterns and upheavals of inner space—of the microcosm, to use the time-honored term. In this perspective, the imagery suggests a challenging vision of human wholeness, as neither a centralized order that turns upon itself within limits nor a limitless surge of unmanaged energy, but both together.

## FILM

Although books documenting the spiritual practices and way of life of the Tibetan people have proliferated in recent years, film treatments remain scarce. The situation has now changed dramatically with the appearance of the four-hour **Tibet: A**

**Buddhist Trilogy**, currently showing in selected cities around North America. Written and directed by Graham Coleman, the trilogy consists of *A Prophecy*, a study of the Dalai Lama and his political and social responsibilities; *The Fields of the Senses*, which depicts one day in the life of refugee monks and farmers in Ladakh, and *Radiating the Field of Truth*, an extraordinary portrayal of the tantric ritual, "A Beautiful Ornament." Many of the special rituals and day-to-day routines seen in these films have never before been shown to the public; they are presented with a minimum of commentary, allowing the quality of life in Tibetan society to speak for itself.

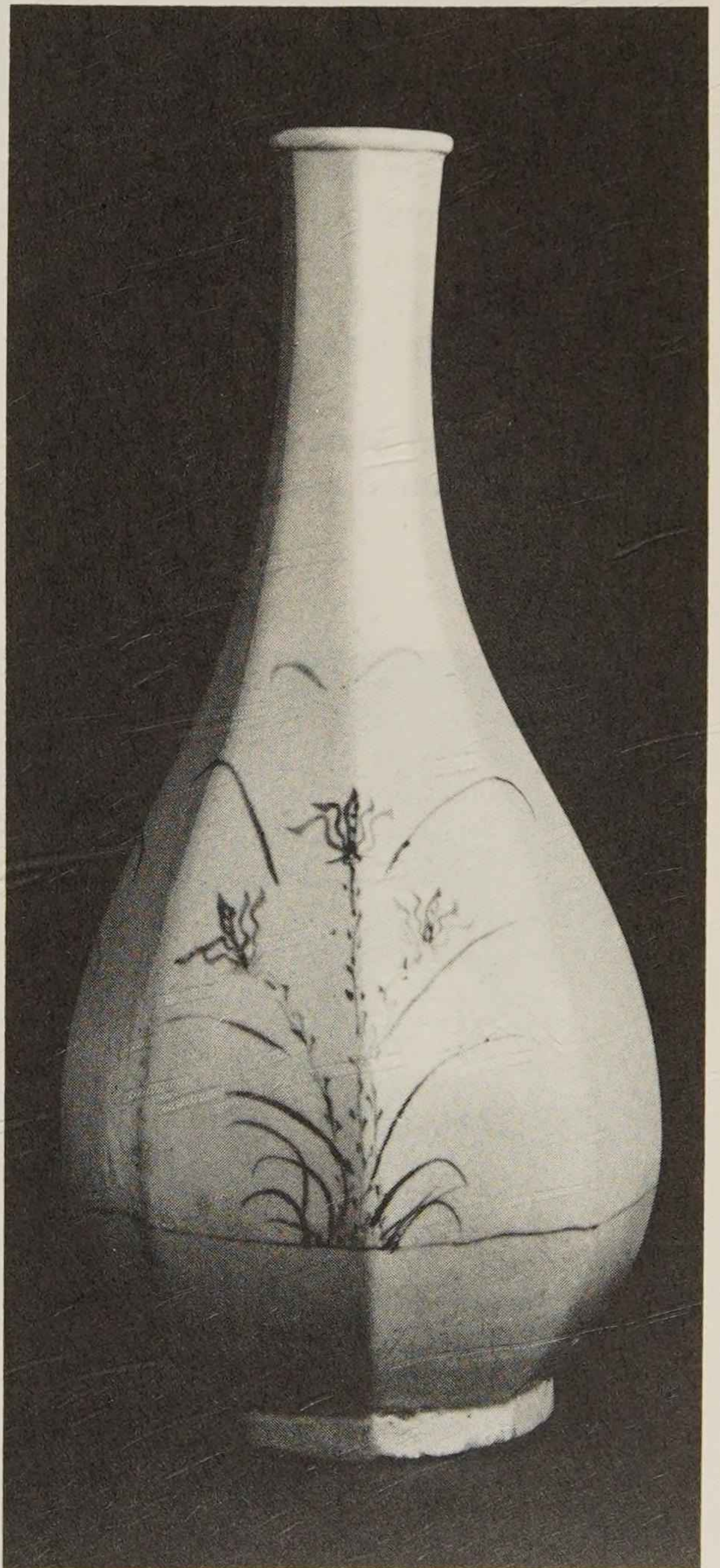
## MUSEUMS

For the next few months, visitors to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City will have the opportunity to explore three impressive new collections of traditional art. The just-opened, permanent **Galleries of Ancient Near Eastern Art** offer a spectacular array of pre-Islamic works from Mesopotamia and ancient Iran, as well as selected objects from Anatolia, Syria, and Arabia. Most of the items to be seen have been locked away for sixteen years, and many have never before been shown in public. Glazed lion panels from the Ishtar Gate, Iranian pottery, Sasanian gold craft, and alabaster sculptures from southern Arabia are among the thousands of treasures on display.

Two temporary exhibits at the Met reveal the more recent art of indigenous cultures. In **African Ivories**, sixty figures, masks, ornaments, containers, and musical instruments disclose the iconographic and stylistic complexity of ivory carvings over the past four hundred years in sub-Saharan Africa. **Te Maori: Maori Art from New Zealand Collections** offers over two hundred sculptures and carvings in wood, stone, bone, ivory, and shell, dating from 800–1900 A.D. The exhibit includes musical instruments, monumental ceremonial sculptures, canoe prows, and weapons. African Ivories runs from now through December

30; Te Maori from September 11 to January 6, 1985. For further information, telephone 212-879-5500.

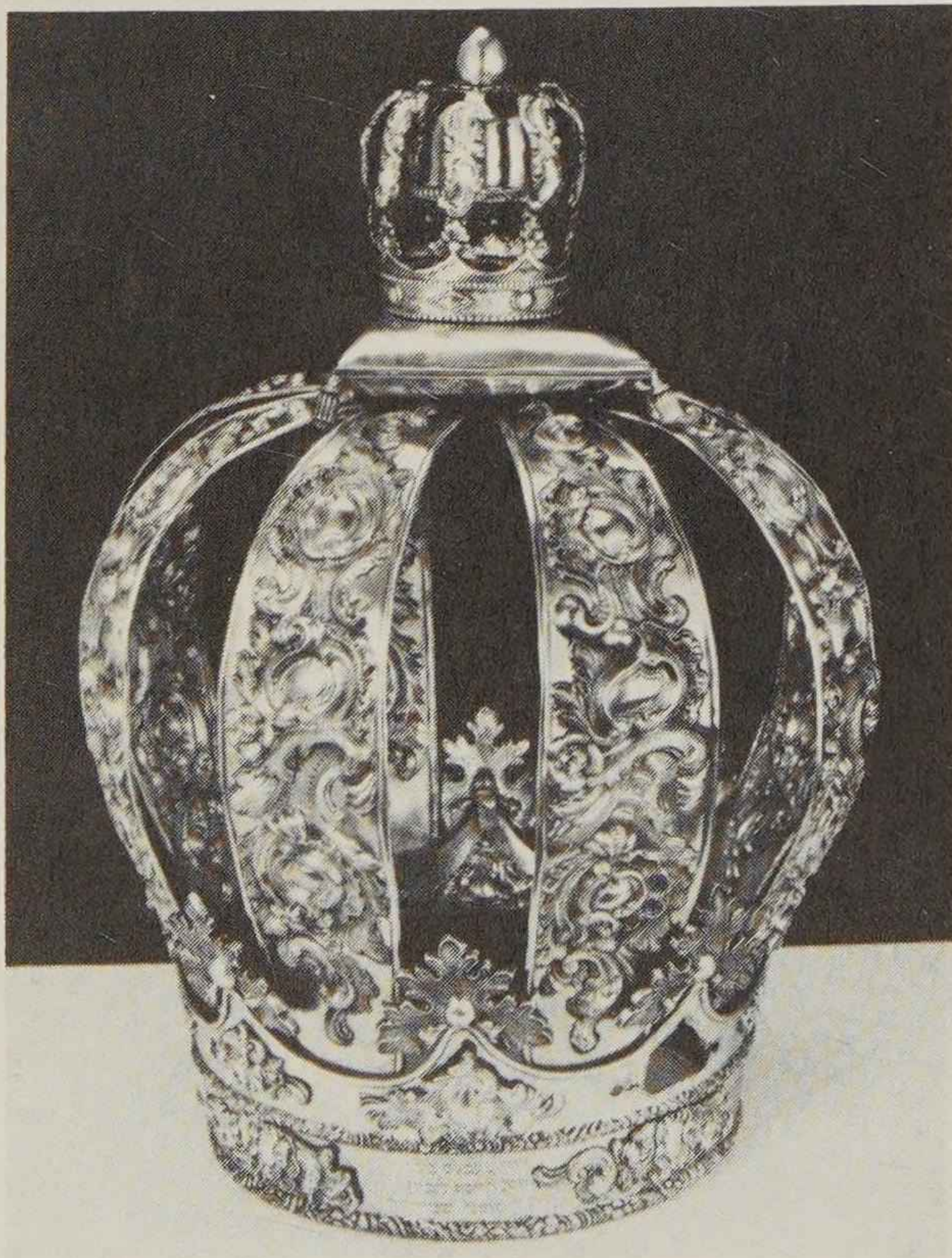
**Art of the Yi Dynasty**, an exhibit of Korean masterworks from 1392 to 1910, can now be seen at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Among the fifty objects on display are landscape paintings, portraits, and scrolls bearing exquisite Korean calligraphy. A major portion of the exhibit is devoted to Yi Dynasty ceramics, including jars, bowls, and flasks exemplifying *punch'ong*—a bluish-green glazed stoneware common throughout Korea—and



vases, ewers, and bottles of delicate white porcelain, reserved for ceremonial functions. Landscape paintings, portraits, and wooden utensils complete the exhibit, which will be on view for two years. For further information, telephone 213-857-6111.

For more than two thousand years, the Orient and the Occident have exchanged goods, arts, and ideas by land and sea. **Silk Roads, China Ships**, currently on view at the Cincinnati Art Museum, documents these two millennia of commerce along the fabled silk roads stretching from Rome to Peking and, later, via the great ships of the European seafaring powers. On display are such diverse items as Chinese tomb figures from the first and second centuries A.D., Chinese and European porcelains, and materials unearthed by the Royal Ontario Museum at a second century A.D. site along the silk road in Iran. The exhibition runs through August 19; for more information, telephone 513-721-5204.

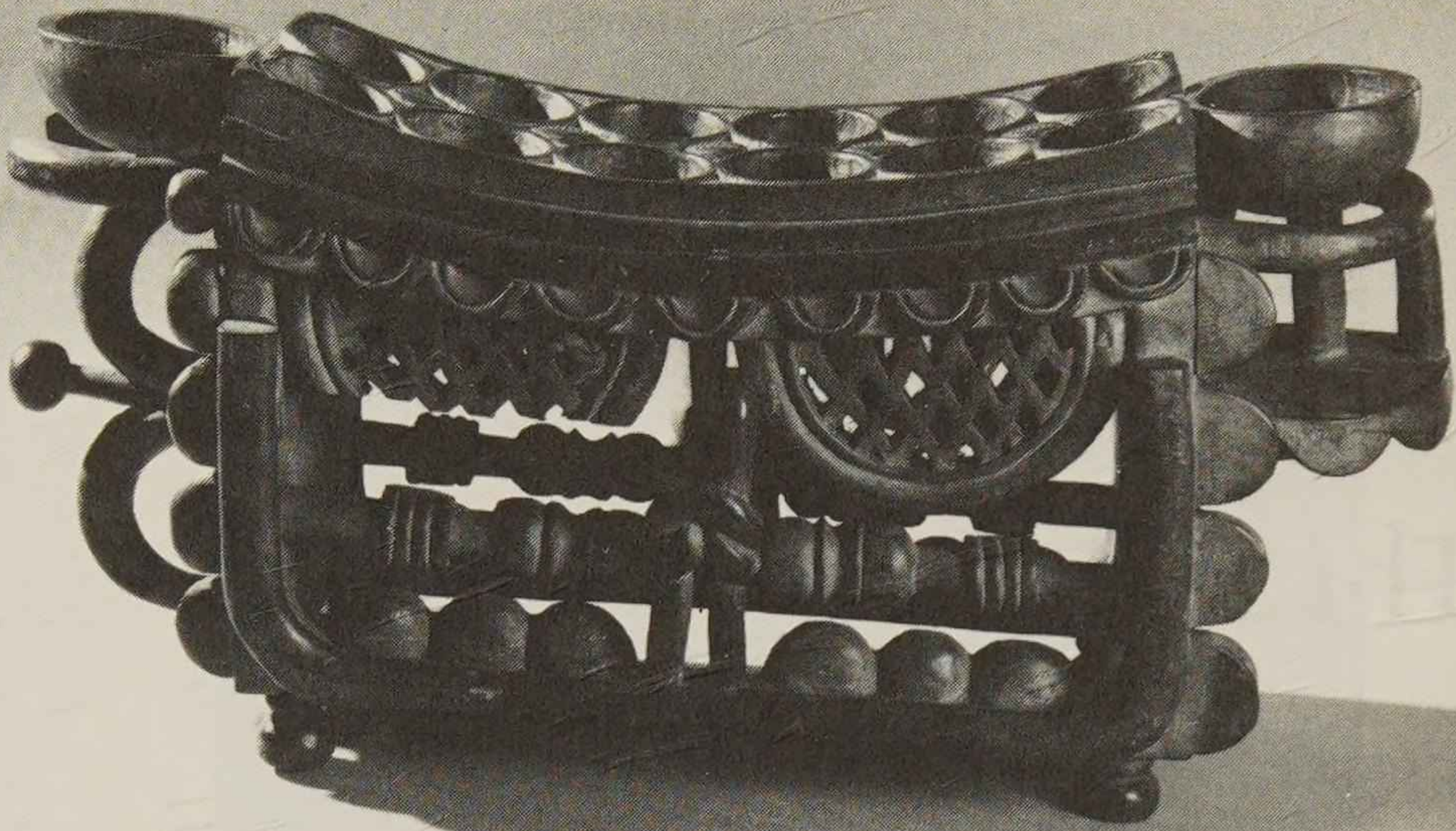
The Fogg Art Museum of Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is



currently hosting two outstanding exhibitions of Asian art. **Sung and Its Reflections** presents a rich array of paintings and ceramics from the Sung Dynasty (960-1279 A.D.), the golden age of elegance in Chinese art. Handscrolls, hanging scrolls, album leaves, black-glazed and white ware are among the items on display through September 5. **Viewing Architecture: Paintings and Photographs of Indian Architecture** depicts the glorious palaces and tombs of classical India, including the Taj Mahal, the Jama Masjid, Akbar's Tomb, and the Palace of Lachnow. The exhibit is evenly divided between classical Indian paintings from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, which employ a remarkable non-Western system of perspective to capture elusive architectural detail, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century photographs. Through September 9. For more information, telephone 617-495-2387.

A glorious array of Jewish ceremonial and folk art has been brought to the United States in **The Precious Legacy: Judaic Treasures from the Czechoslovak State Collections**. Coordinated by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service in cooperation with the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the show will tour the country through 1985. Many of the items on display were seized from the Jewish quarter of Prague by the Nazis during World War II to become part of a projected "museum to an extinct race." Instead, these objects celebrate a still vital legacy of worship, art, and scholarship, preserved through secular and religious silverworks, paintings, glassware, textiles, books, and illuminated manuscripts. Special artifacts on display include the oldest extant Jewish textiles and the oldest known Hebrew mathematical treatise. A 288-page catalogue of the exhibit is available for \$17.50.

Tour itinerary: Through Aug. 26, the Jewish Museum, New York City; Sept. 22-Nov. 18, San Diego Museum of Art; Dec. 15-Feb. 10, 1985, New Orleans Museum of Art; Mar. 12-May 5, Detroit In-



stitute of the Arts; June 3–Jul. 29,  
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford.

The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African Art has mounted an unusual exhibit tracing the history and cultural significance of *mankala*, Africa's traditional board game. Played by children and adults alike, the game has been used for centuries for both recreational and ritual purposes. Twenty-seven sculptured gameboards and eleven related objects are included in the display, which features a special gallery equipped with boards and instructions, allowing visitors to try their hand at the game. **African Mankala** runs through October 7.

Also on exhibit at the Museum from August 21 to September 16 is a show exploring **Pattern and Form in African Art**. The displays range from a section on "Body Patterns," depicting body scarification and body painting, to "Decorated Form," showing how African artists shaped household objects. A third section examines the use of ritual utensils in African life. For more information on either exhibit, telephone the Museum at 202-357-2700.

## Red-Thread Zen

FREDERICK FRANCK

### **Zen's Core: Ikkyu's Freedom**

By Jon Carter Covell with Abbot Sobin Yamada. Seoul, Korea, and Elizabeth, New Jersey: Hollym International Corporation, 1981. Pp. 341.

### **Zen-Man Ikkyu**

By James H. Sanford. Chico, California: Scholars Press/Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions, 1983. Pp. xv + 321. \$18.00. Paper \$13.50.

*Reviewed by Frederick Franck*

If you break open the cherry tree  
where are the flowers?  
Ah! in spring  
see how they bloom.

—Ikkyu

It is strange that until these two books were published, only R.H. Blyth\* had

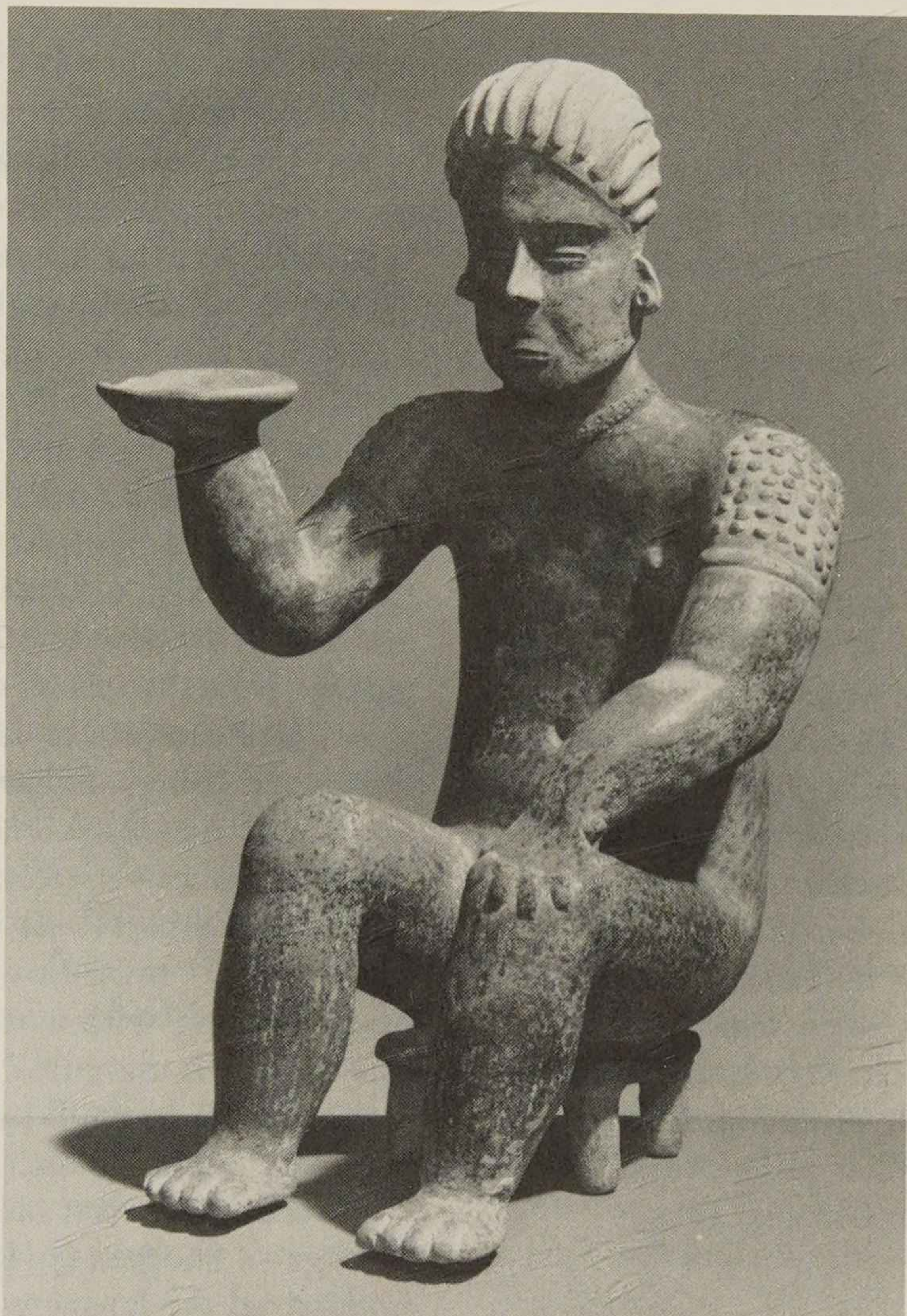
\**Zen and Zen Classics: Selections from R.H. Blyth*, ed. by Frederick Franck (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

drawn the Western reader's attention to this fifteenth-century phenomenon: a poet, Zen master, iconoclast, and religious reformer who, although an emperor's son, spent most of his long life as a wandering mendicant monk, became the greatest calligrapher of his time, and is remembered as a legendary lover who had his most passionate affair in his late seventies. At eighty, Ikkyu accepted the challenge of rebuilding Kyoto's great Daitoku-ji temple, after its utter destruction in the cruel Onin wars (1467-77). He lived to complete it before his death at eighty-eight. When he received the title of Chief Abbot, he wrote:

for fifty years I was a man  
in a straw raincoat  
I feel grief and shame  
now in this purple robe.

Ikkyu was as full of contradictions as the time in which he lived: a period of

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## PARABOLA

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political upheaval not unlike ours, with riots and civil wars, plague epidemics and famines: but at the same time with a radical renewal in the arts, a cultural renaissance rivaling the Italian Renaissance. His influence on this renewal—on the Tea Ceremony, for instance, which he transformed from an occasion of sociability into one of the Zen “Ways” or spiritual disciplines, and on the Noh drama (two Noh plays, still in the repertoire, are ascribed to Ikkyu)—cannot be overestimated. Through his disciple Shuko, via Joo, he became the spiritual ancestor of Sen Rikyu, who gave the Tea Ceremony its definitive form and whose fifteenth-generation descendent Sen Soshitsu now heads the Urasenke Tea Ceremony empire which claims millions of students all over the globe. Ikkyu wrote thousands of poems in classical Chinese. One of the great Japanese classics on death, “Skeletons,” is in the vernacular, as are his *doka*, profound little poems moralistic and ironical, which in their pithy profundity and skepticism rival Chuang Tzu.

I won't die, I won't go anywhere  
I'll be right here,  
just don't ask me anything:  
I shan't answer!

Or:

As to the skin  
what a difference  
between a man and a woman.  
But as to the bones  
both are simply human beings.

Still, Ikkyu's greatest contribution to Japanese culture was as the father of *wabi*, that crucial ingredient of Japanese esthetic sensibility. There is no adequate equivalent in English of *wabi*: the beauty of simplicity, of the lack of “things,” the absence of

materialistic ostentation. It is closely related to *sabi*, *shibui*, *furyu*, those other principles of the Japanese esthetic which has influenced our art and architecture as powerfully as it has left our life style untouched. While *wabi* is ideally expressed in the nakedness of the Noh stage, the stark simplicity of the tea hut, the severity of the gravel gardens of Ryoan-ji and Daisen-in, *sabi* expresses the added charm of agedness, of things matured by time and use, the quality that makes an old, cracked tea bowl preferable to a new one. As such, it is perhaps related to *mono no aware*, the pathos, the awareness of the transitoriness of things and beings. *Shibui*, too, is intimately associated with Ikkyu the poet, the painter, the calligrapher—it refers to unobtrusive, understated artistry—as is *furyu*, which literally means “mind-flow,” but becomes here a flowing with nature, with life, a this-sided, “horizontal” transcendence.

This free spirit, Ikkyu, became a folk-hero during his lifetime, was forgotten for a few centuries, then revived in the mid-Tokugawa Shogunate (1600-1867), which imprisoned the Japanese people in a totalitarian cage. At this time, numberless apocryphal anecdotes were interpolated in Ikkyu's biography. The third and most remarkable wave of Ikkyu's popularity came after World War II, when “Ikkyu-san” became a prime-time cartoon show on Japanese television. It may well be, as Dr. Sanford suggests, that Ikkyu became the ideal exemplar of the nonconformist, fully individuated personality needed for modern Japan's declaration of independence from centuries of all-too-rigid, all-too-tyrannical conformism.

In the five hundred years since Ikkyu's death, fact and fancy about his life have become somewhat confused. Nevertheless, we have the sketchy *Ikkyu Chronicle* written by his favorite disciple, Bokusai, a gifted painter whose informal portrait of the

master, reproduced here, is considered one of the finest works of art of premodern Japan. Dr. Sanford's book includes a translation of Bokusai's biography, but Dr. Covell and Abbot Sobin Yamada (the latter is Ikkyu's direct spiritual descendant) flesh out the *Chronicle's* skeletal story with the translation of many of the Chinese poems from the *Crazy Cloud Collection (Kyouunsha)*, for which Ikkyu adopted the pseudonym "Crazy Cloud." "Crazy" does not refer to insanity but to eccentricity or unconventionality. In these poems, incapable of the slightest hypocrisy, he shows himself in his all-too-human frailties, his passionate anger at, and denunciation of, all religious abuses and corruption. These accusations must have shocked the official Zen establishment of his day no less than the description of his love life, as he expressed it in the tender but explicit love poems of his seventh decade.

Ikkyu Sōjun was born on New Year's Day, 1394, to a lady-in-waiting of the imperial court, who had been dismissed from the palace before giving birth to the son of the 100th emperor of Japan, Go Komatsu, who was then seventeen years old. Ikkyu's mother was probably exiled summarily for reasons of state, connected with the rivalry between the Northern and Southern imperial lines in their relation to the Ashikaga Shoguns, who were the de facto rulers of Japan. Little Ikkyu was soon enrolled as a pupil of the Ankoku-ji temple, probably to hide and protect him from assassination as a possible future pretender to the throne. At thirteen, already an ordained priest, he transferred to Kennin-ji, another of the official Rinzaï Zen temples, where, however, training in meditation was considered far less important than a thorough grounding in Chinese culture. He revealed himself early as a Chinese poet of promise, but gradually he became aware of the inauthenticity of the extroverted, intellectualized Zen es-



tablishment, and left Kennin-ji to join a Zen master, Keno, who had fled the mundane, political Zen of the capital to live in an obscure country temple. Keno had few disciples because he refused to give his students the *inka* (certificate of enlightenment) which was indispensable for a career in the Zen hierarchy. When Keno died a few years later, young Ikkyu's bereavement was such that he attempted suicide, to be rescued only in the nick of time. Eventually he tried to join another master of no-compromise Zen, Kaso, in Katada, on Lake Biwa. Kaso, who only accepted Ikkyu as a student after severe and humiliating tests, was a disciplinarian of extraordinary severity. Life at his zendo was extremely spartan, food so far below the subsistence level that young Ikkyu had to peddle incense in order to survive. The acrimonious character of Kaso's "drill-sergeant," Yoso, almost twenty years Ikkyu's senior, did little to make these hardships more bearable. After years of constant struggle, Ikkyu, while meditating in a little boat on Lake Biwa, heard the cawing of a crow echo across the water:

. . . the instant that crow laughed  
a hearer rose up from the ordinary dust.  
In this morning's sunshine  
an illuminated face sings.

Kaso tried to pooh-pooh Ikkyu's enlightenment experience: "You are not a master yet, just a hearer!" but Ikkyu shot back, "I am quite happy to be only a hearer, I'd hate to be a Zen master!" Kaso then admitted: "You *are* a master after all," and proceeded to write an *inka*. Ikkyu threw it on the ground and stamped on it. He was then twenty-nine. His enemy, Yoso, was to receive his *inka* some three years later at forty-six, but, being a reliable organization man, he then rose quickly to become the Chief Abbot of Daitoku-ji. Ikkyu, however, wandered for the next forty years on his straw sandals all over Japan, playing his *sakuhachi*, writing his poetry, teaching the fiercely nondualistic, almost Taoist Ch'an of the ninth-century master Rinzai (*LinChi I-hsuan*), which only later in its Japanese form became what we know as Zen.

Ikkyu really lived, as Dr. Covell puts it, "the ninth and tenth stages of the oxherding pictures." Following Rinzai, he saw "the spiritual life manifesting itself through the six senses." Often, he felt himself to be the successor if not the reincarnation of Rinzai or Kido (in Chinese, Hsu-t'ang, 1184-1269), in whom he found his own intuition of "Red-Thread-Zen" confirmed. In contrast to puritan, asexual "official Zen" which ignored and almost denied the existence of women and hence the importance of love between the sexes in human life, "Red-Thread-Zen" recognizes the "red thread" as an integral aspect of Suchness. There would never have been a single Zen sage but for the "Red Thread," the umbilical cord that connects us with the feminine! Ikkyu became the sole challenger in word and deed of puritan Zen's clinging to celibacy. He declared calmly

that his intimate relations with women deepened his enlightenment immensely. These relations remained for years rather anonymous—his black priestly kimono became a familiar sight in the teahouses and taverns of the Gion red light district of Kyoto and the seaport of Sakai—until, in his mid-seventies, he found the great love of his life in a blind ballad singer, forty years his junior. Dr. Covell refers to her as Lady Shin and says she survived Ikkyu by thirty years. Dr. Sanford calls her Lady Mori and lets her die during her lover's lifetime. I prefer to believe Dr. Covell, who is a woman, and who quotes, apart from Ikkyu's official death poem, his real final stanza "on departing from this world," written just before his death in 1482.

I do regret to cease pillowing my head  
in her lap  
I vow eternity to her. . .

If I may add my own epitaph for  
Ikkyu:

The figure of the Real Man  
standing there  
one glimpse of him  
and we are in love.

—Ikkyu

*Frederick Franck, artist and author, is a Consulting Editor to PARABOLA.*

## BOOK REVIEWS

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### **The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt**

Edited by Raymond J. DeMallie. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984. Pp. xxx + 481. \$19.95.

*Reviewed by Father Peter J. Powell*

The call to holiness often comes early. So it was that Black Elk was yet a boy when he beheld the great vision in which he himself was the "Sixth Grandfather," the spiritual representative of the earth and of mankind. In traditionalist Lakota theology the Six Grandfathers symbolize Wakan Tanka, the Great Mysteriousness, the Powers of the six directions of the universe: West, North, East, South, Above, and Below. Manifested as grandfathers, these spirits are venerated as being loving and compassionate, full of years and wisdom, as are revered human grandfathers. They symbolize the sacred Six Directions. However, for the Lakotas symbols are more than empty signs. They express identity: so that the symbol and the symbolized are one and the same. Thus, the Six Grandfathers *were* and *are* the Six Directions. Black Elk himself became the Sixth Grandfather, the spirit of the "below" direction, the earth, the home of mankind, the source of human life. By becoming the Sixth Grandfather through his vision experience, Black Elk assumed the identity of the spirit of all mankind. And the vision blessed him with power to become a great holy man, one in whom the roles of teacher, healer, and wise man were wondrously commingled.

Sanctity exists to be shared, and Black Elk's greatest sharing was with John G. Neihardt. When Neihardt first arrived, unexpected and unannounced, the Oglala holy man was already aware that he was coming. After they had shared the sacred smoking, it was Black Elk who spoke first, saying to Flying Elk, the interpreter, in Lakota, "As I sit here, I can feel in this man beside me a strong desire to know the things of the Other World. He has been sent to learn what I know, and I will teach him." So great was Black Elk's spiritual power that he already realized the essential truth concerning this Wasicu poet: he was certain that not only could Neihardt understand his teachings, but also that he could communicate the message of Black Elk's great vision to the world at large. For more than fifty winters, the Oglala holy man had borne the tremendous spiritual responsibility of making the meaning of his sacred vision a part of people's lives. He had only partially succeeded in doing so. Now, with the coming of Neihardt, he knew that it was time to entrust the work to this man who "had been sent" to him.

It was close to sunset when that first visit ended. "There is so much to teach you," Black Elk told Neihardt. "What I know was given to me for men and it is true and it is beautiful . . . . You were sent to save it, and you must come back so that I can teach you." Neihardt promised to return in the spring, which he did. And so, within this sacred context, the interviews for *Black Elk Speaks* were born.

The spiritual impact of that book, and of the later Neihardt volume, *When the*

*Tree Flowered*, have blessed and transformed the lives of countless people from many tribes and cultures. They have also immortalized Black Elk, not only as a great holy man, but also as one of the greatest spiritual teachers of all time. However, in the presence of holiness there are always doubters. Thus, some readers and researchers have questioned the authenticity of the two volumes as truly presenting Black Elk's words and teachings. They have also questioned the importance of Neihardt's role as their author. *The Sixth Grandfather* answers these doubters and clarifies Neihardt's own role. For here are the original interviews with Black Elk and the other venerable Lakotas whose oral accounts form the heart of *Black Elk Speaks* and *When the Tree Flowered*. Here, for the first time, newly transcribed and annotated, is the whole corpus of shorthand notes of the Black Elk-Neihardt interviews, making available a wealth of material all but unknown before.

And there is even more. Many who have read and re-read *When the Tree Flowered* and *Black Elk Speaks* desire to understand more deeply the spiritual relationship between Black Elk and Neihardt, and also the true role that the white poet played as the Oglala holy man's amanuensis. Many have wished to know more about Black Elk's life after the terrible massacre at Wounded Knee. Some know that in later years Black Elk was a respected Roman Catholic catechist, trained by the Jesuits, one who instructed not only his own Lakota people, but also those of other tribes as well. How did the Oglala holy man, the beholder of the great vision, reconcile traditionalist Lakota theology to the theology of the Roman Catholic church? they wonder.

The answers to these questions and others are found in *The Sixth Grandfather*. In his introduction, Raymond DeMallie paints a brilliant word portrait of Black Elk, enabling the reader to gain a profound understanding of the holy man's long life

and deep wisdom, and of his relationship to Neihardt. The volume contains the entire body of Black Elk's teachings as given to Neihardt, and as recorded by Neihardt's daughters Enid and Hilda, who acted as their father's secretaries throughout these interviews in 1931 and 1944. (In addition, Hilda Neihardt Petri contributes her own sensitive, beautifully written foreword.)

The text of the 1931 interviews, centering upon the holy man's life, from which *Black Elk Speaks* was written, are reproduced in their entirety. The text of the 1944 interviews with Black Elk and other venerable Lakotas alive then, are likewise printed in full. Centering upon Lakota history and culture, these are the notes from which *When the Tree Flowered* was written. Thus the reader is given the exact words of Black Elk as interpreted in English. Raymond DeMallie makes it clear that these are not verbatim records, but that they are the combined efforts of the interpreters and Neihardt to express in English the meaning of the holy man's Lakota words. Now readers can compare for themselves Neihardt's treatment, in the two volumes above, with the full recordings in the original interview notes, the "primary documents" of Black Elk's teaching. All these are carefully edited by Dr. DeMallie, who adds footnotes to clarify obscure points; to identify persons, places, and events; to provide comparisons between the interviews and the published books; and to give bibliographical leads for further studies of related topics. Readers will also wish to consult the important teachings concerning Lakota theology and the Lakota sacred ceremonies that Black Elk gave, toward the end of his life, to Joseph Epes Brown. These appear in *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux*.

Raymond DeMallie deserves our profoundest gratitude. His superb editing of J. R. Walker's studies, *Lakota Belief and*

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*Ritual and Lakota Society*, have firmly established him as a distinguished scholar. In *The Sixth Grandfather*, Dr. DeMallie reveals himself to be a uniquely sensitive interpreter of Lakota theology, philosophy, and history—which are all one in traditionalist Lakota thought. His editing is a masterpiece of scholarly skill and spiritual insight, insight that penetrates the inner beings of both Black Elk and John G. Neihardt, two men of vastly different cultures who became one as seekers of the Sacred. *The Sixth Grandfather* is, as it were, the completion of the holy task begun in *Black Elk Speaks* and *When the Tree Flowered*, and fulfilled in the Sacred Circle of Life, the symbol, and thus the reality, of Wakan Tanka's Own Being and eternity.

Father Peter J. Powell is author of *People of the Sacred Mountain and Sweet Medicine*. He is currently a Fellow of the Museum of the American Indian, New York; Spiritual Director of St. Augustine's Indian Center, Chicago; and Research Associate of the Newberry Library, Chicago.

**The Road Less Traveled: A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values and Spiritual Growth**

By M. Scott Peck, M.D. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978. Pp. 316. \$15.95. Paper \$8.95.

**The People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil**

By M. Scott Peck, M.D. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983. Pp. 269. \$15.95.

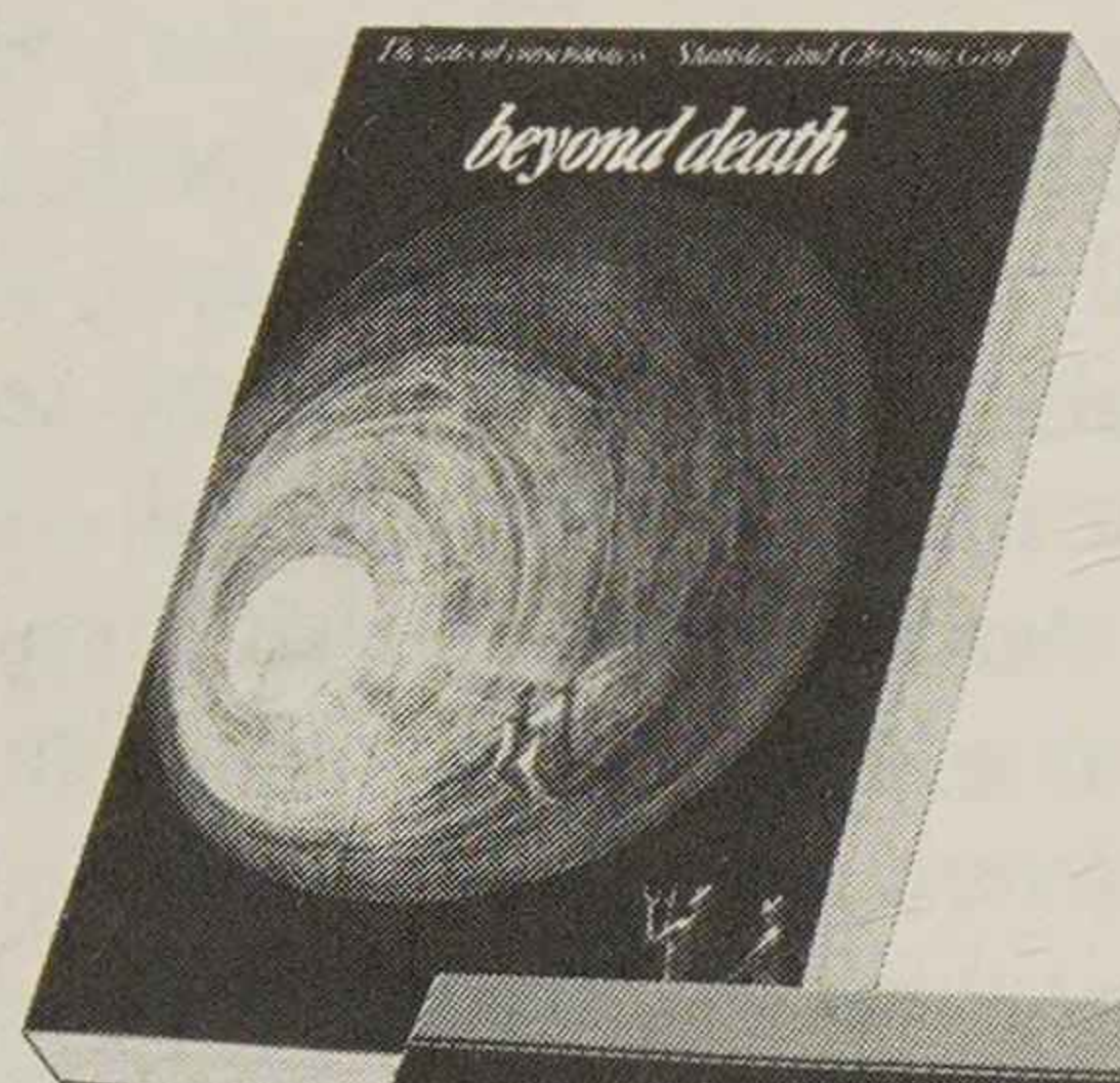
*Reviewed by John Loudon*

M. Scott Peck is emerging as the leading psychology-and-religion writer of the eighties. His first book, *The Road Less Traveled*, became an underground bestseller and is now a perennial of the paperback list; his recent *The People of the Lie* was a bestseller shortly after publication. Although *Road* makes a very persuasive case for psychotherapy, and *Lie* a courageous attempt to have evil recognized as a legitimate psychiatric category (indeed, the ultimate character disorder), what matter most are his vision of life and insights into the art of living. He comes across as tough-minded, clear-sighted, unsentimental, truly caring; he gives a view of living that is engaged, active, vigorous—the opposite of the timid escapism often associated with therapy.

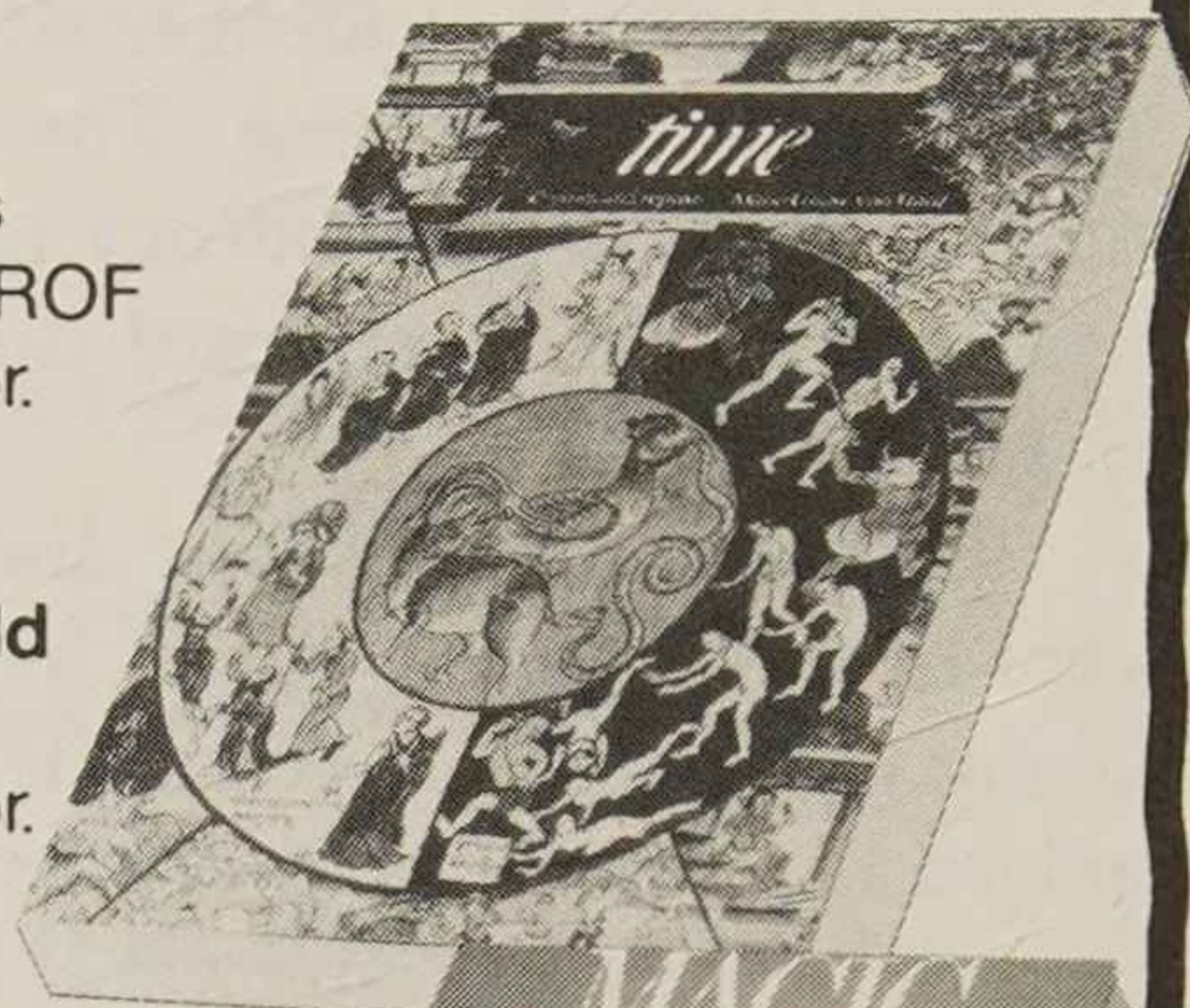
Peck's writing matches his bold, nonsense view of things. "Life is difficult," he tells us right at the start of *Road*. Realizing this truth is as tough but freeing as grasping the first of Buddha's Noble Truths, "life is suffering." We expect that life should be easy, that growth should come naturally; but it is precisely by fighting life's battles, by facing and solving the problems that life poses, that we come alive and expand ourselves. It is not by avoiding pain, by finding the easy way out, but by bearing the legitimate suffering entailed in

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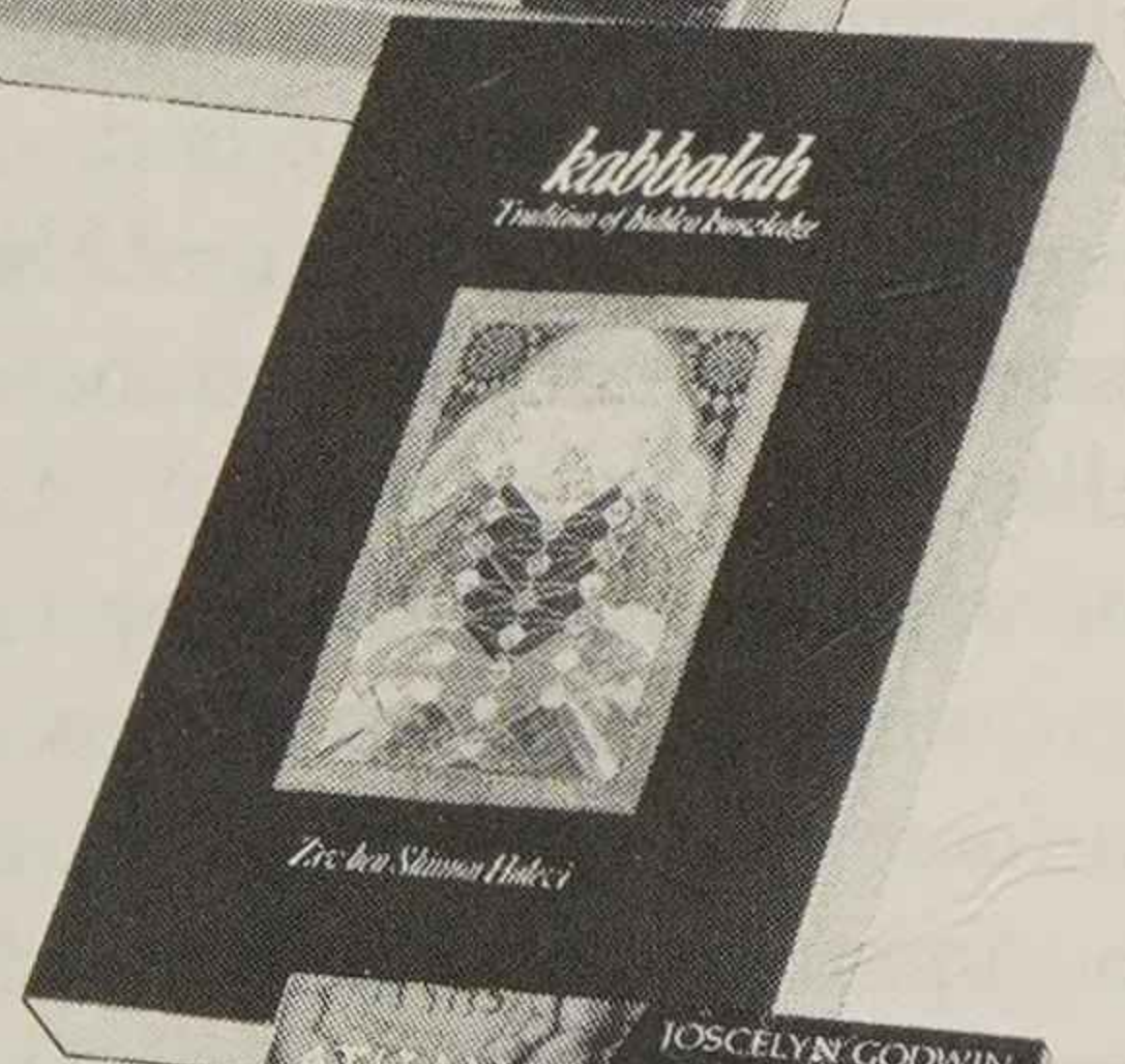
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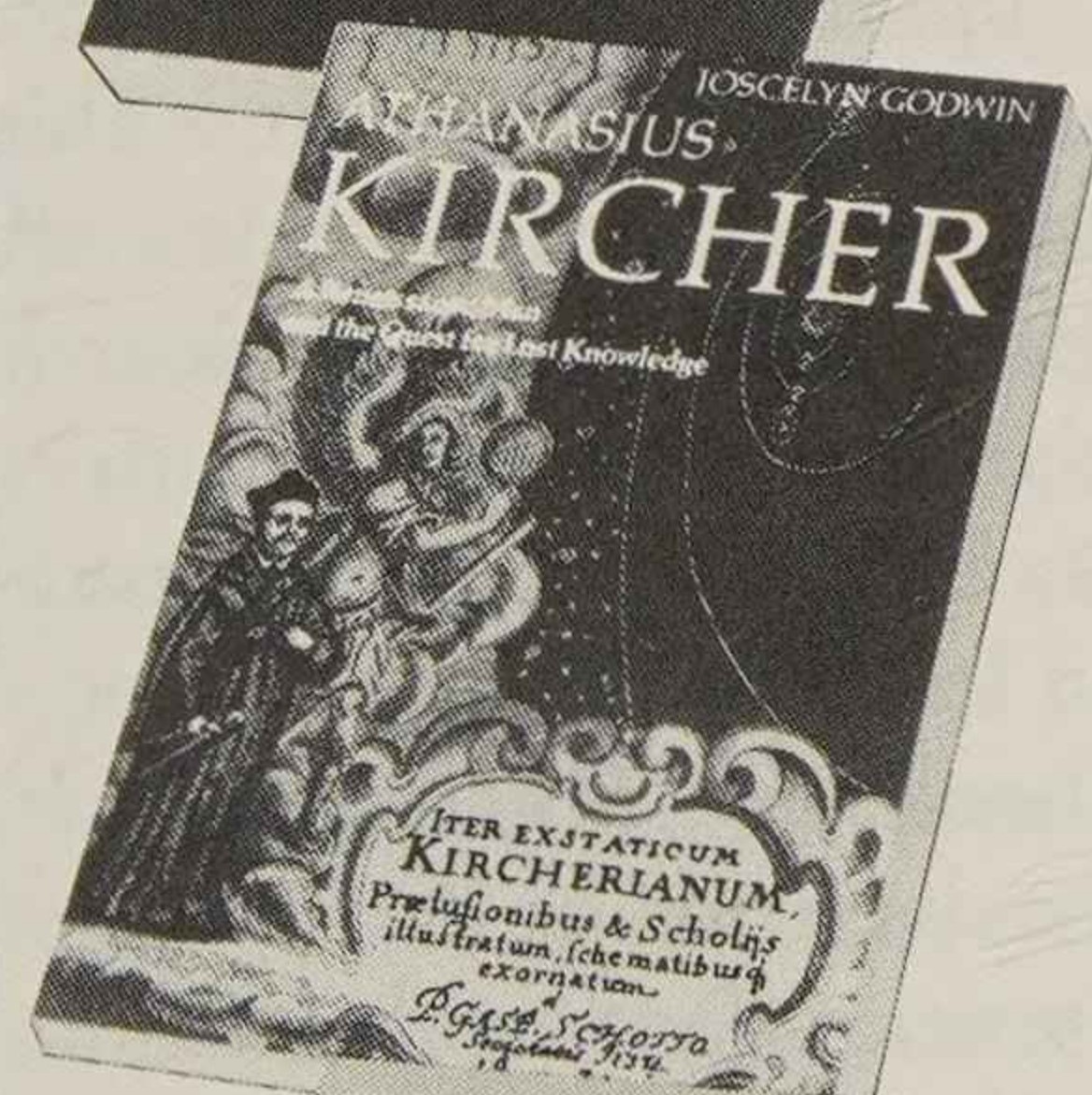


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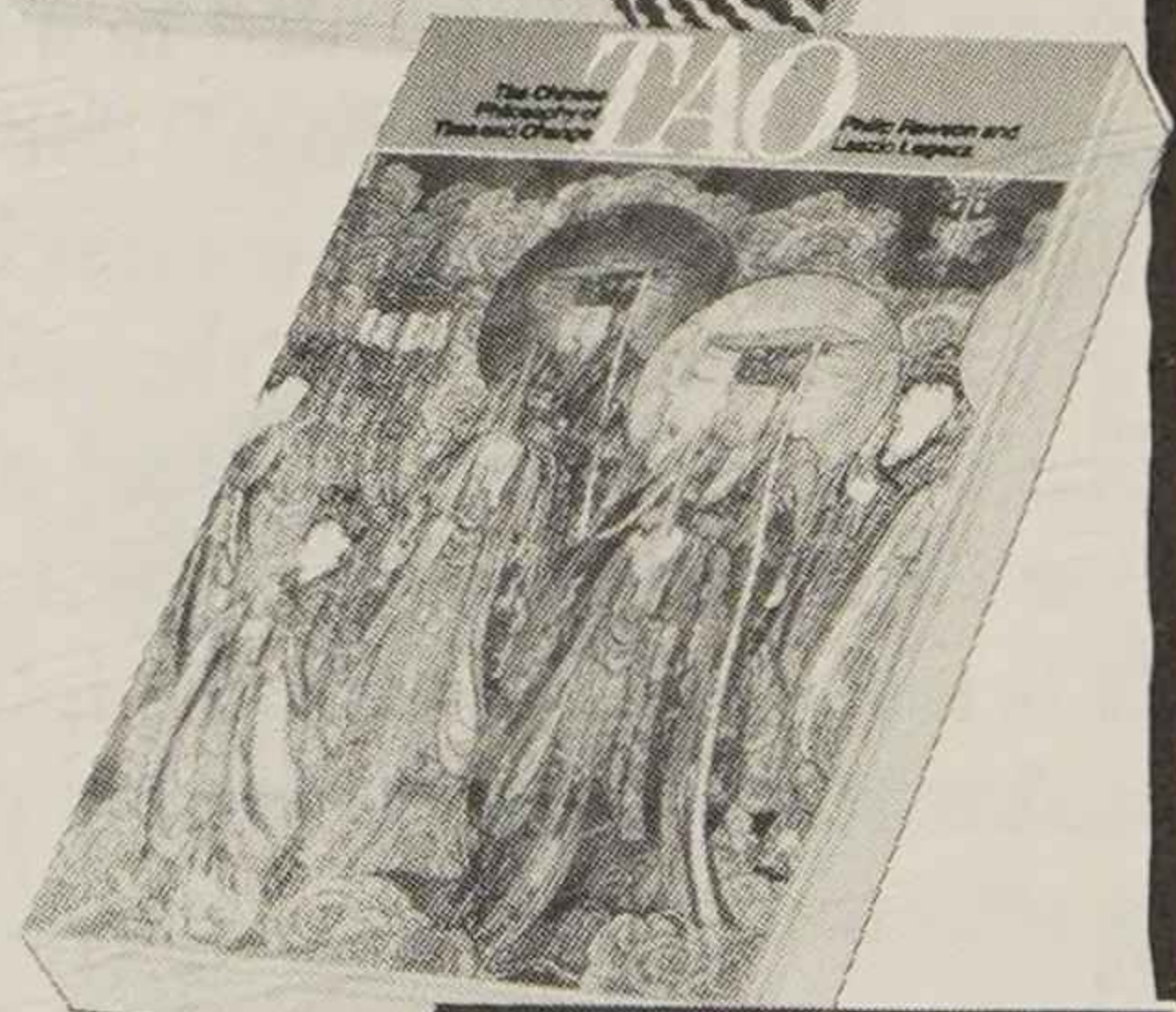


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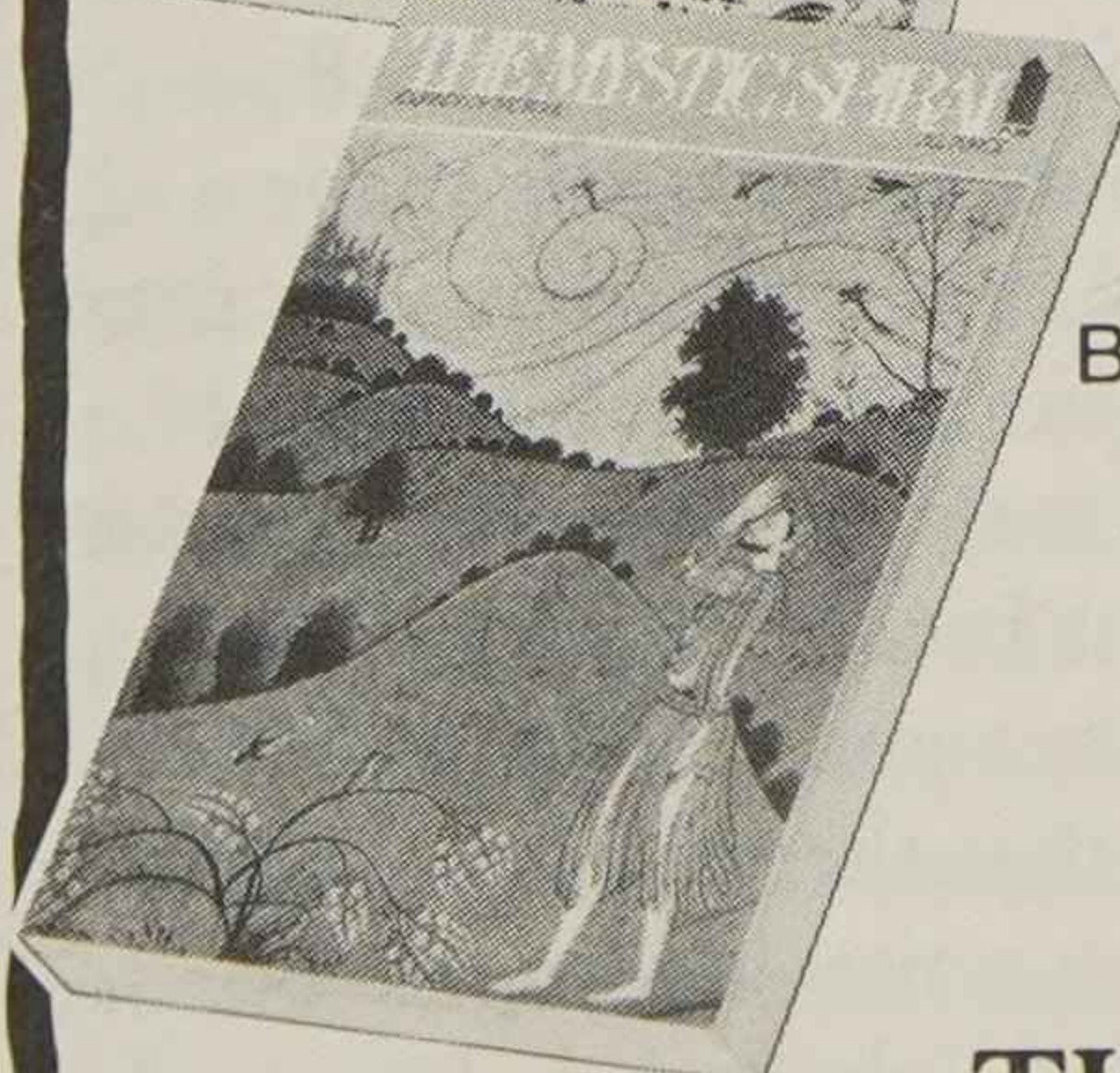
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confronting life's challenges that our humanity comes into being. The source of mental illness is the tendency to avoid problems and the emotional pain involved in solving them.

He identifies four basic disciplines as vital to this engaged way of living: 1) delaying gratification—facing the pain involved in a challenge right away so as to gain richer rewards afterward; 2) taking responsibility—acknowledging the problems that are legitimately ours to solve; 3) dedication to the truth—a commitment to seeing reality as it is, no matter how much we have to suffer the pain of revising our views; 4) balancing—the lifelong flexibility to give up what needs to be surpassed, to die the deaths that lead to fuller life. The will to use these disciplines is the essence of love—of self and others. Such self-discipline, responsibility, self-examination, dynamic detachment are best learned in a childhood of disciplined love. But since many if not most of us are the spiritually frail children of frail parents, these disciplines have to be learned in a long, arduous process of “reparenting,” for which Peck argues psychotherapy is especially apt.

For Peck, love is “the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth.” It is love that fuels the discipline that makes spiritual development possible. Love is effortful, a form of work, an act of courage; it extends the self's limits, involves choice, commitment, confrontation, the channeling of emotions. It has essentially little to do with dependency, attraction, romance. The opposite of love is laziness, passivity.

Of course, Peck well knows that the vision he's championing is based on his own world view, his understanding of what life is all about, his religion. It won't make sense or appeal to people with a

wholly alternate viewpoint. Those, for instance, convinced that life is chaotic and meaningless will want to grab whatever pleasure is available, whereas those who see the world as nurturing and orderly will willingly make sacrifices in faith that virtue is rewarded. Hence Peck insists on the importance of discovering our religion, the faith we live by, which is often more implicit than explicit even for the conventionally religious. For our religion to be realistic, to conform to the truth of the cosmos and our role in it, it must be constantly revised and expanded with experience. The path of spiritual knowledge lies in questioning everything, in making our world view fully our own, and it often leads out of childhood superstition and magical thinking into agnosticism and then toward an increasingly accurate awareness of ultimate reality.

Peck eloquently concludes *Road* by testifying to his growing experience of grace in the world: a force that operates routinely in most people to protect and foster their mental, and even physical, health. It is this force—God's grace—that defies the law of entropy, the streak of laziness (“original sin”) that is the ultimate impediment to spiritual growth, by energizing our capacity for disciplined love.

In his new book, *The People of the Lie*, Peck explores the dark side of life. He reveals that since writing *Road* and after years of “vague identification with Buddhist and Islamic mysticism” he made a commitment to Christianity, now the most important thing in his life. His book not only contends that evil human beings exist and that evil must become a category of psychiatric diagnosis and study; ultimately it seeks to show that the traditional Christian view of life as a titanic struggle between the forces of light and darkness, of life and death, God and the devil, waged

on the battleground of the individual human soul, most aptly expresses the dynamics of evil in the world.

His analysis unfolds through detailed case histories—a pact with the devil; parents encouraging their son's suicide; a wholly narcissistic patient intent on seducing Peck; a symbiotically self-destructive couple. In these and other cases he dramatically depicts the essential features of human evil. Evil is what opposes the life force, what seeks to kill vitality; it is the use of power to destroy others for the sake of protecting one's sick self. The descent into evil follows a slippery course of cowardly choices, seeking the easy way out—compromises with self-discipline, responsibility, truth. The tortuous paths of deception and self-deception can create a personal labyrinth from which there is finally no escape. Such "people of the lie," who function reasonably well in ordinary life and vigilantly maintain an image of respectability and even goodness, become human black holes, vortexes of nihilism, negating the grace of life through their scapegoating, intolerance, deviousness. The evil trap themselves in their own living hell of self-devaluation and pridefully choose to stay in it rather than admit sinfulness and imperfection.

In fact, Peck maintains, this gradual process of selling out can result in possession by the devil and require exorcism ("psychotherapy by massive assault"). Through participation in exorcisms he has "met" Satan and knows that "it" is real, and he sketches a frightful portrait of the Father of Lies as embodied in patients very much along traditional Christian lines.

Evil exists in groups as well, and Peck uses his long experience as a military psychiatrist to provide a convincing analysis of group evil as manifested in the massacre of innocent civilians at MyLai, the virtually

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inevitable result of bad choices at all levels.

*The People of the Lie* is a powerful, cautionary book. But I have to wonder whether its rather primitive theology is really necessary or fully true. At this point Peck seems a master psychologist but a fledgling theologian. In the long run, I think that it is *The Road Less Traveled*, because of its real helpfulness and relative universality, that will endure as a minor classic. It is certainly the book to start with.

*John Loudon is Editorial Manager of Harper & Row San Francisco and a Consulting Editor to PARABOLA.*

### **Buddha: A Pictorial History of His Life and Legacy**

By Jeannine Auboyer. Photographs by Jean-Louis Nou. Foreword by Huston Smith. Epilogue by Heinrich Dumoulin. Text translated from the French by Nelly Marans, epilogue translated by John Cumming. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1983. Pp. 271. \$75.00.

*Reviewed by Carol Zaleski*

According to popular legend, the Buddha once overcame the skeptics in his audience by floating over their heads and reproducing himself a thousandfold, until the sky filled with teaching Buddhas radiating wisdom in all directions. What the Buddha achieved by magical skill-in-means, the authors of *Buddha: A Pictorial History of His Life and Legacy* have attempted through modern techniques of book production. Fittingly, the cover of this glossy coffee-table book displays a head of the Buddha, taken from a sixth-century mural which depicts this miracle of self-replication. We are not told whether this warm, earth-colored portrait represents the original, or only one of the Buddha's magical surrogates. But perhaps that is beside the point; the visual legacy of Buddhism—over two millennia of painted, sculpted, and now photographed images—may be one way in which the dharma reaches beyond the circle of his immediate disciples, allowing those who could not see him in the flesh to catch a glimpse of the Buddha's original face.

The aim of *Buddha* is to integrate verbal with visual dharma. Jean-Louis Nou has supplied 129 splendid color photographs of sacred art, architecture, and geography, for which the text by Jeannine Auboyer, former chief curator of the Guimet Museum, offers a guided tour. Auboyer emphasizes

# The Parable of the Tribes

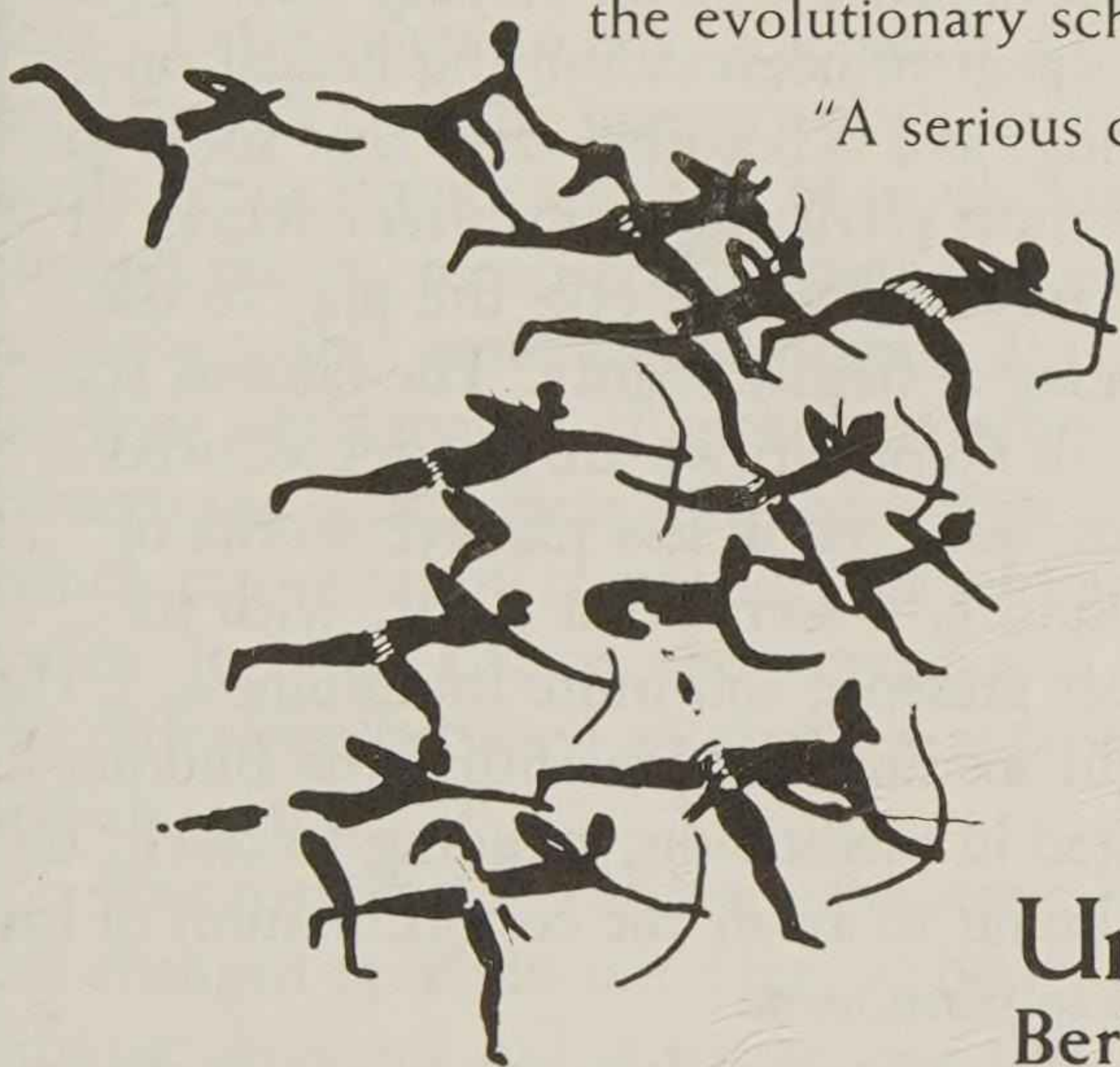
## The Problem of Power in Social Evolution

by Andrew Bard Schmookler

"A formidable synthesis. It confronts us with the grim paradox of violence and power in human nature and in history, and yet even in this nuclear age, it leaves a glimmer of hope. It should be read not only for expanding our breadth of knowledge but also for deepening our understanding of where we as human beings now are in the evolutionary scheme of things."—Jonas Salk

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the stories and teachings which are common to all Buddhist paths, rather than the divergent aspects of the evolution of Buddhism. Her text begins with a survey of the historical setting in which early Buddhism arose, and ends with an account of its expansion throughout Asia, but the core is an illustrated retelling of the "great events" of the Buddha's life in legend: his previous incarnations, auspicious birth in the Śākya clan, pampered existence as a prince, encounters with suffering, escape from the palace, years of fasting and austerities, enlightenment under the pipal tree, life as a teacher, and death as a fully realized and "extinguished" being. With the help of the pictures, Auboyer succeeds in conveying a feeling for the Indian land-

scapes and the cosmic and mythic setting in which Buddhist tradition places these events. Familiar features of the Buddha's legend come to life, thanks to notes on lesser-known details of climate, topography, culture, and daily life. We learn, for instance, that the "wheel" of samsara is no abstract metaphor; it refers to the Oriental noria, with its swinging buckets that fill up with water from a stream, rise to the top, and then empty again on the way down. Unlike carriage wheels, whose turning leads toward a destination, this great water wheel of death and rebirth revolves perpetually, recycling the stuff of life, without moving forward.

But for all the aid which the text provides to those who wish to appreciate the

pictures, it is also a source of distraction. The prose is flat-footed, and the historical commentary, although it does not falsify, seems to narrow its focus at inappropriate moments. For instance, Auboyer reduces Buddhist meditation to the technique of concentrating on a single point, leaving out the disciplines of mindfulness which some consider to be Buddhism's most original contribution to Eastern spirituality. Peculiar remarks, dropped in passing, undercut the fascination of the narrative: the Buddha "was spared the state of femininity" in his previous lives; the study of Maitreya, the future Buddha, "has already received too much attention"; the Buddha's long marriage is "historically impossible to prove and humanly hard to believe." Yet some of the glitches in the text appear to be the fault of the translation. The flow of discourse is disrupted by sudden tense changes ("And while Shuddhodana hastens the preparations for the consecration of his son, the latter was thinking more and more about going into a retreat to meditate"), odd word choices, and grammatical hiccups—caused, perhaps, by poorly digested bits of French syntax. These deficiencies come as a surprise after Huston Smith's luminous foreword, urging the reader to "see through" the book's images and ideas to the sacred reality they represent.

The visual syntax of the book, on the other hand, is flawless. Jean-Louis Nou's photographs brilliantly capture the image of the Buddha from the early days when he is portrayed only by his footprints, or by the empty space he occupied, to the paintings, bas-relief sculptures, and statues in which the Buddha appears in fully human and superhuman glory. It would have been helpful, though, to learn more from the

text about the artistic traditions and iconographic rules which gave rise to such different forms as the aniconic relief-sculptures at the *stūpas* of Amaravati and Sanchi, the vaguely Westernized Graeco-Buddhist statues of Gandhara, and the haloed images of the Gupta period. In the Ajanta cave murals, which are well represented here, we get glimpses of the life of pleasure which the Buddha renounced: harem scenes, royal processions, a woman playing with a duck, a serpent-princess delighting herself on a swing; and it becomes clear that some of the most spiritually translucent works of art are those which give full play to the canons of fleshly beauty. The famous statues of Polonnaruwa are not reproduced here, but even in less massive works of sculpture, it seems that stone, with its sheer presence and mute mindfulness, is the right medium for presenting the Buddha seated in meditation, standing to teach, or reclining to await the consummation of his life in *parinirvana*.

The pictures alone are worth the price of the book; and those who can forgive the idiosyncrasies of the text will find that it provides a useful, if not captivating, introduction to the spoken and visualized legacy of the Buddha.

*Carol Zaleski is a Lecturer in the Study of Religion at Harvard University.*

## The Secret of Shakespeare

By Martin Lings. New York: Inner Traditions International, 1984. Pp. 144. Paper \$8.95

Reviewed by Paul Jordan-Smith

The "secret" alluded to by the title of this study is emphatically not the supposed authorship of the plays. Although our general ignorance about Shakespeare may be connected in some way, the "deeper mystery" Lings refers to has to do with the total impact that the maturer plays have on us. It is not simply a matter of psychology, though fidelity to observable human traits unquestionably enriches the impact. It is likewise not a matter of consistent adherence to the world-view of bygone times, which can certainly charm us, but seldom touch. In Lings's view, the secret lies in the difference between an exoteric approach and an esoteric.

The meaning of the term "esoteric" has changed much in our time, at best signifying obscurity and at worse, like the word "myth," indicating falsehood. The fact that modern man often finds his ear more attuned to the words of Shakespeare's villains than those of his heroes shows how deeply sunk in humanism we have become. What Lings attempts here, among other things, is a reconstitution of the word "esoteric," in its original sense of "innermost." As he expresses it, esoteric works "look beyond salvation to sanctification." More than his forebears, modern (that is, humanistic) man is primarily concerned with salvation in one form or another, be it religious, psychological, or materialistic. His concerns are "exoteric," lying outermost, on the surface of the world.

Lings takes ten plays, beginning with *Henry IV*, and proceeding through all the plays of what is usually called "Shakespeare's maturity," not excepting that bitter comedy, *Measure for Measure*. What he



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tries to show is how the inner dynamic of the play itself, what might be called its esoteric structure, recapitulates the process of "sanctification," leading the audience/reader through the various stages of the way: the discovery by the principal character of his immanent flaw; the descent into Hell; the sacrifices of Purgatory; the great liberation; the hierogamy of spirit and soul; and an indication of what cannot be revealed, the Beatific Vision. Sometimes only part of the process is shown, leaving one with a longing for what can follow only through our own efforts; sometimes, as with the *Tempest*, we are taken to the threshold of Paradise.

There is no question that to a certain degree Lings succeeds in his undertaking.

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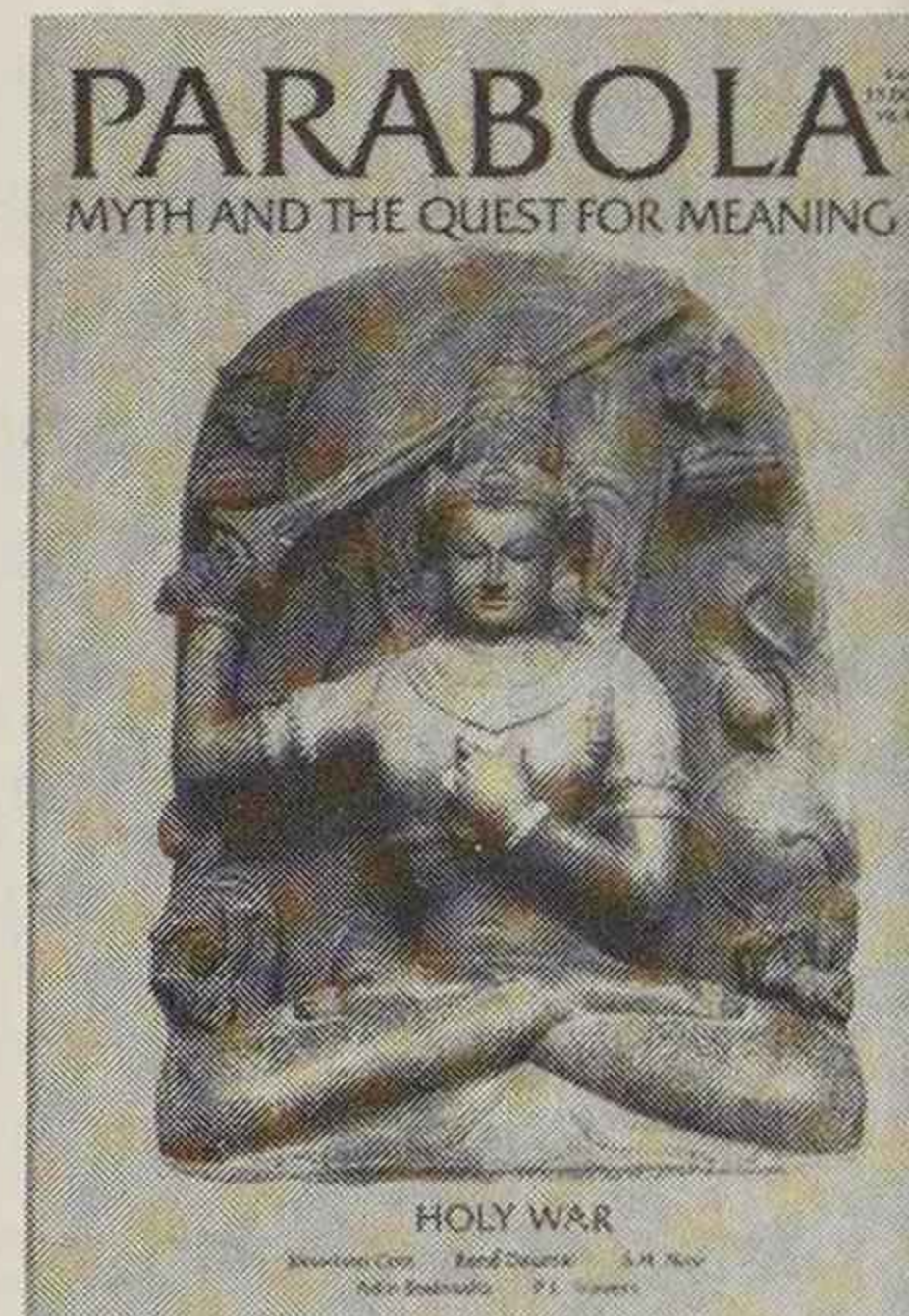
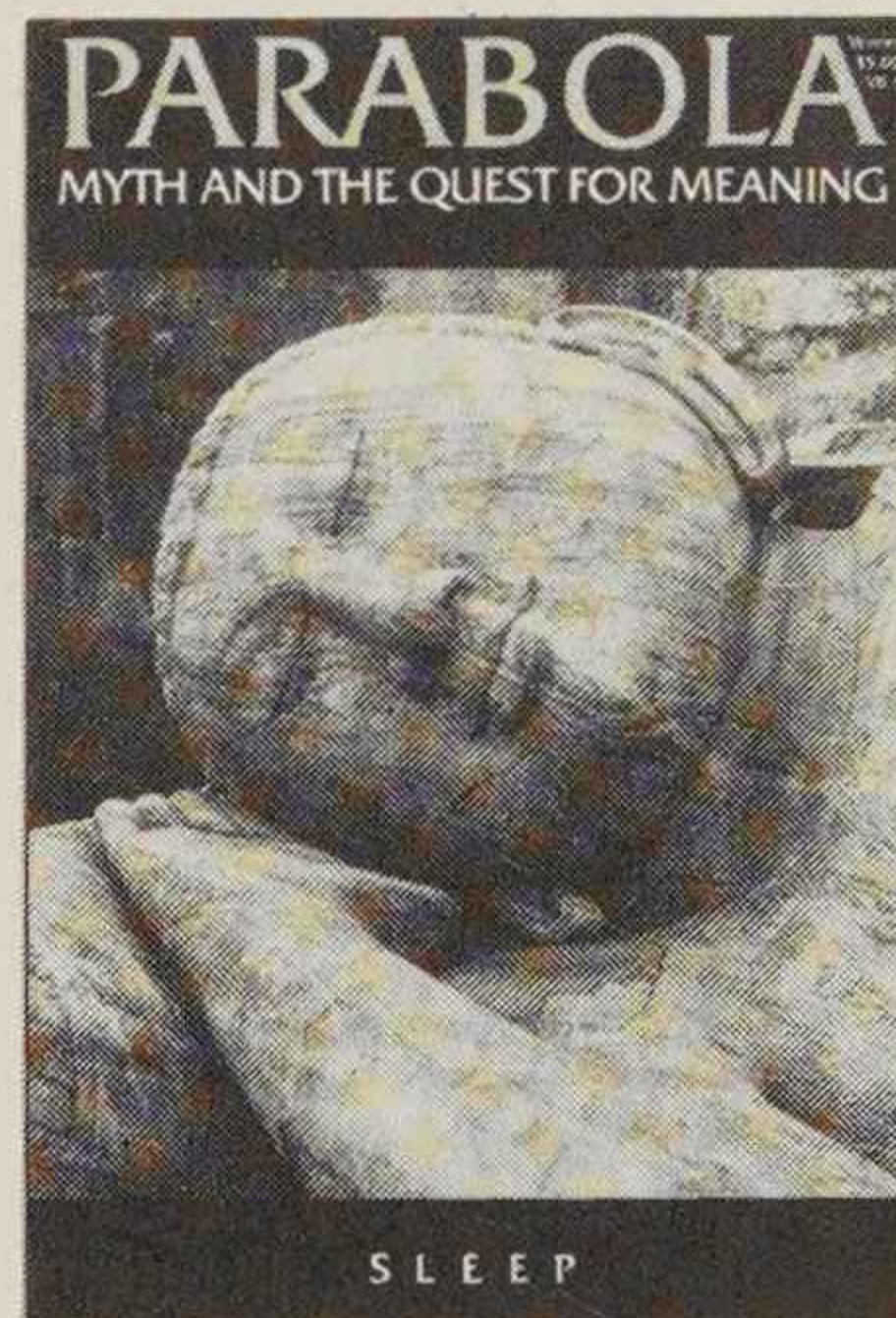
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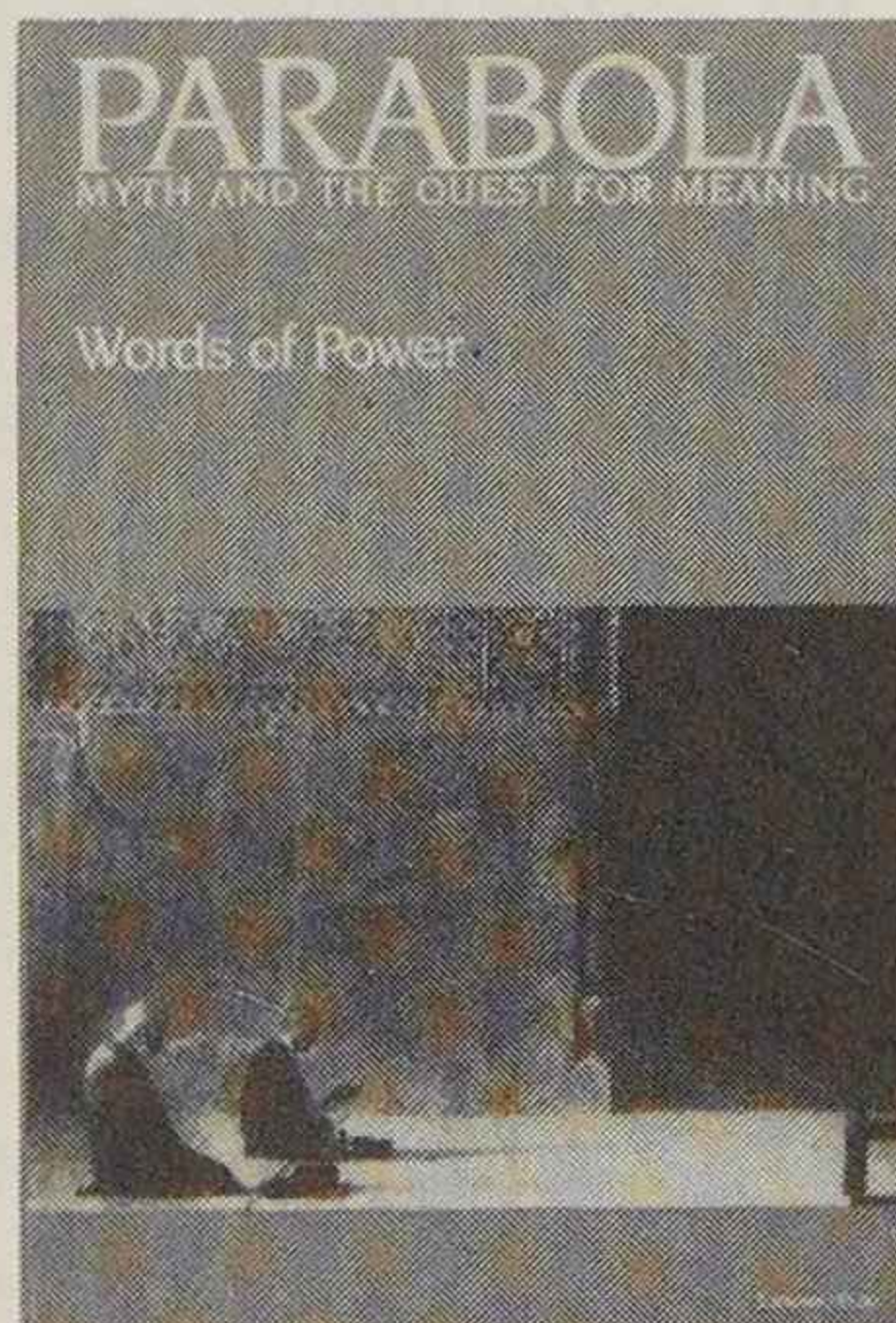
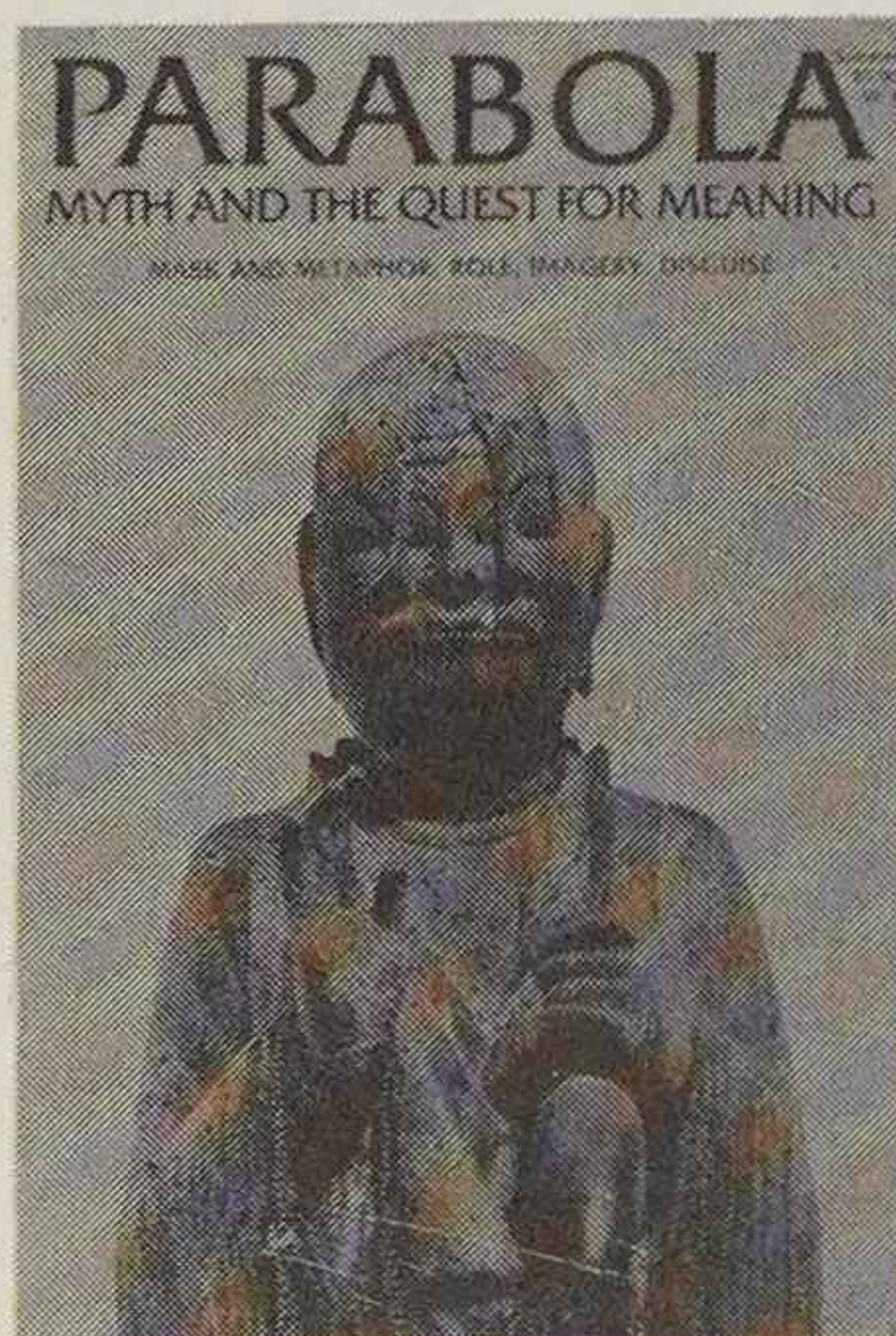
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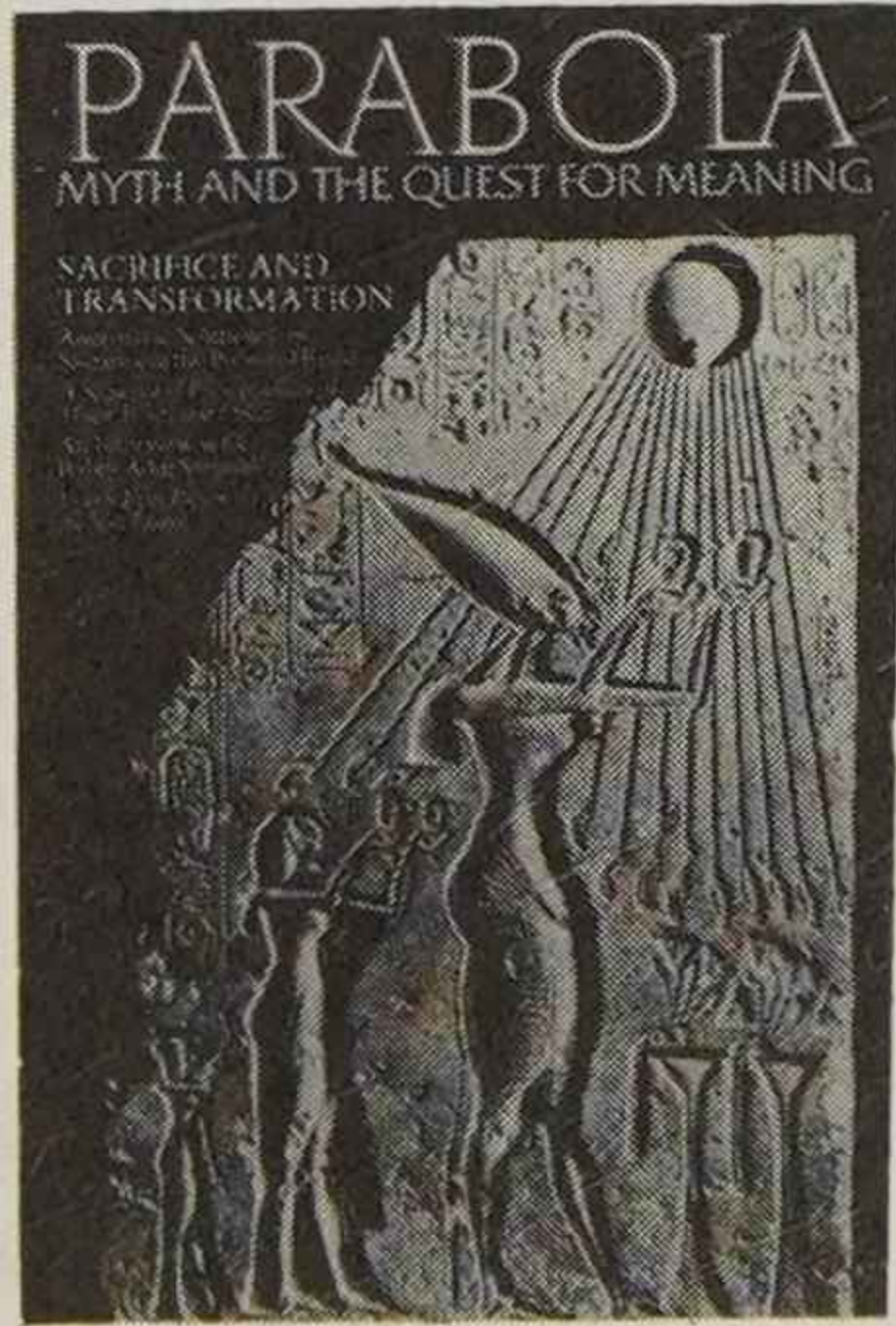
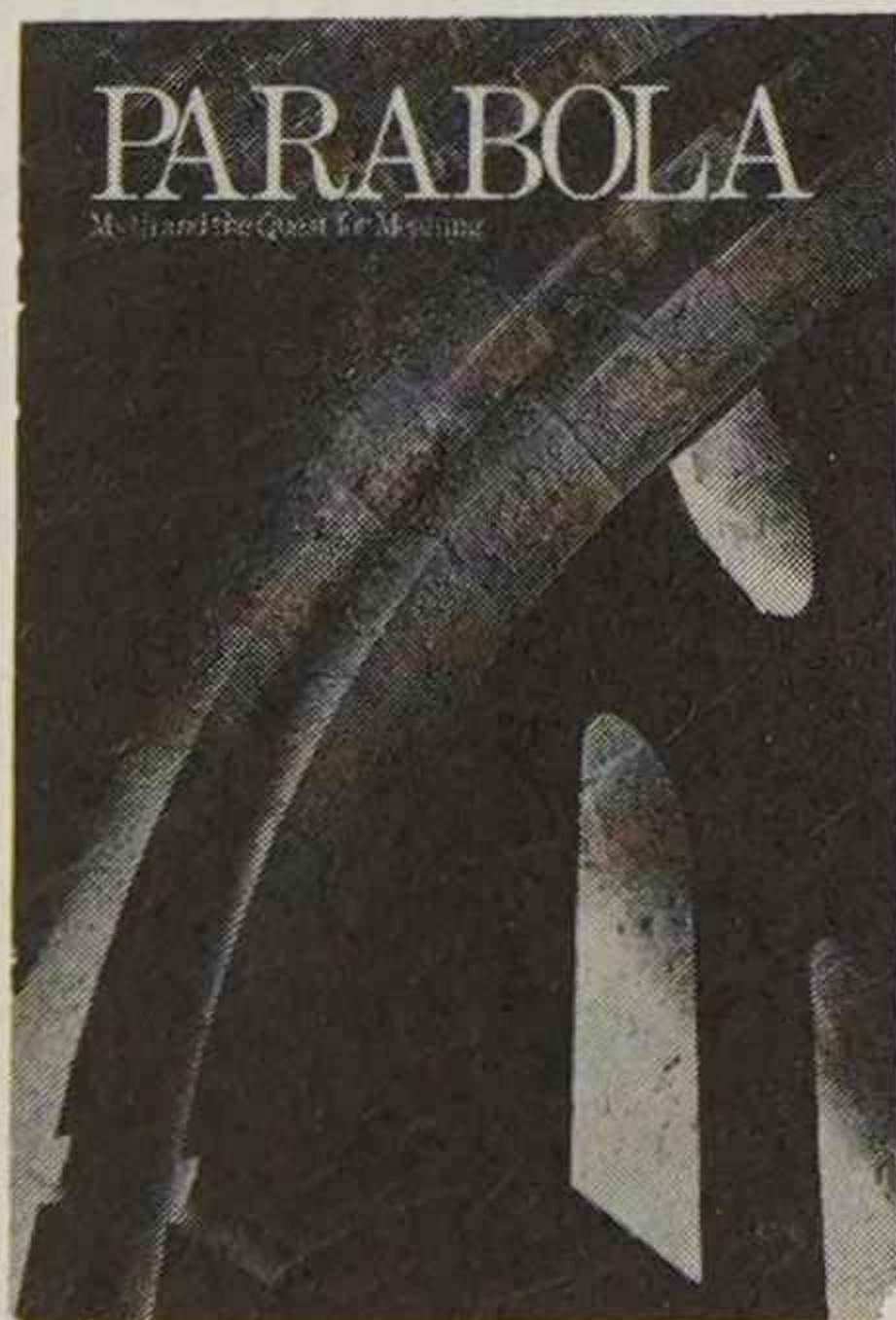
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After reading the book, I had the occasion to see the film of Olivier's *Othello*. I have never watched the play with greater interest and understanding. Nevertheless, I must confess to a certain disappointment with the book as a whole. It seems to promise much more than it delivers, as far as a coherent understanding is concerned of what one needs to follow the path delineated. When, in the final chapter, Lings tells us that the secret of Shakespeare's art was that he was "on the right side of the great tapestry of life," i.e., that Shakespeare himself had penetrated the veil of the mysteries, it is not convincing. Was Shakespeare, then, a saint? One can hardly believe it, yet that seems to be what is implied. Or is it perhaps simply a matter of his being permanently enlightened, of speaking to us from a position of true objectivity? Again, it seems doubtful, however enriching of our inner lives the later plays may be.

I will keep Lings's book on my shelves, however, and I will doubtless return to it often, since despite the feeling of a promise unfulfilled (perhaps because of it), it opens afresh some of the questions that need to be asked.

*Paul Jordan-Smith is a freelance writer and storyteller and a Contributing Editor to PARABOLA.*

### **The Sacred Mountain: Travelers and Pilgrims at Mount Kailas in Western Tibet, and the Great Universal Symbol of the Sacred Mountain**

By John Snelling. London: East West Publications. 1983. \$13.95.

*Reviewed by Edward Rice*

The *lingam* par excellence. Inscrutable, formidable, imposing, almost symmetrical in its mass. Such is Mount Kailas, sacred to Jain, Hindu, Bon-Po, and Buddhist, and beloved by the scholar. It is history and symbol, myth and fact, to be conquered (in the mind), scaled metaphorically, but ultimately remaining a mystery. John Snelling reminds us, in this entertaining account of the greatest of all sacred peaks, that the mountain plays a frequent and central role in the iconography and faith of many beliefs. Here, Kailas is Shiva's own mountain: it is Shiva as phallic king and deity.

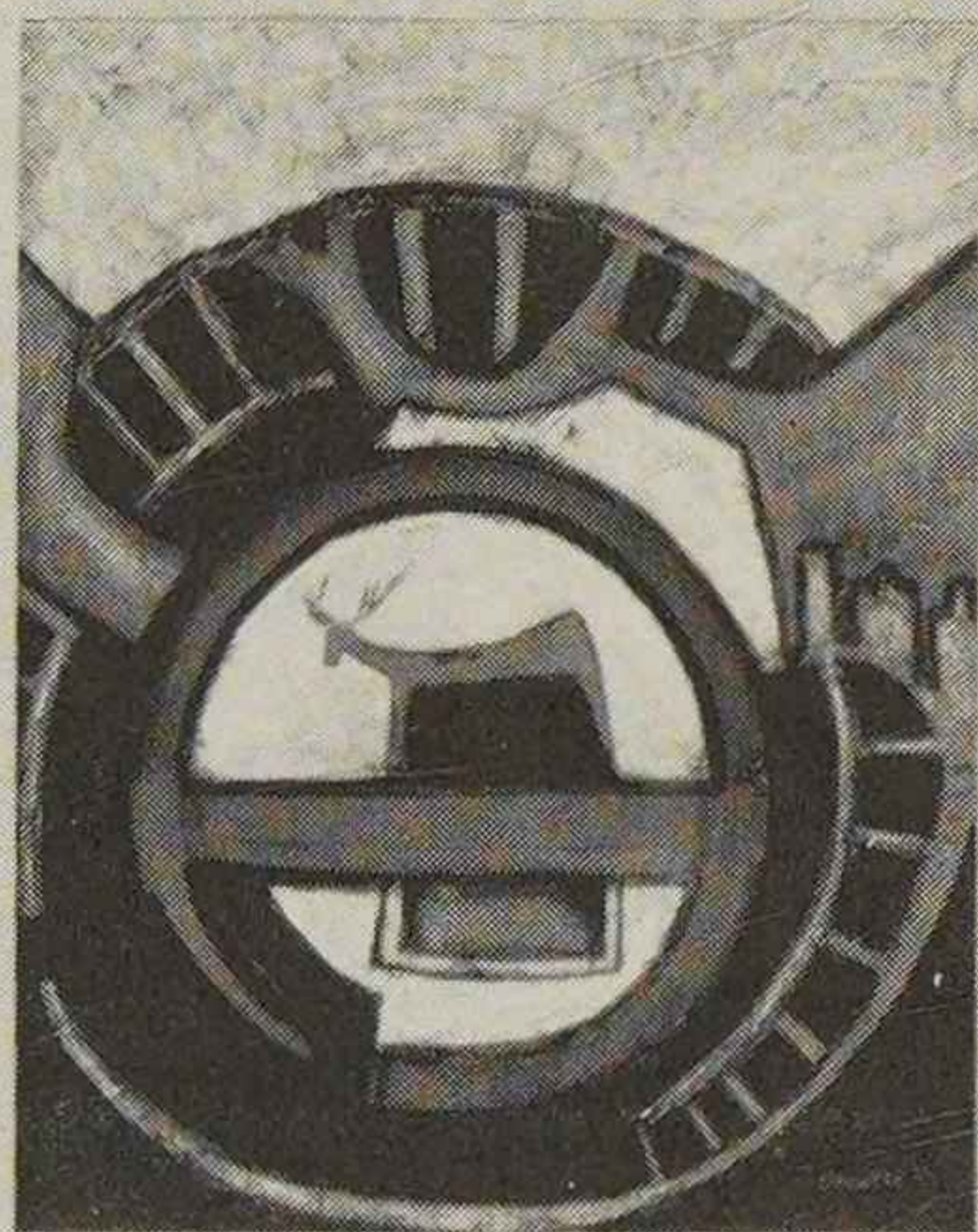
As for other mountains, says Snelling, there are Fuji, so sacred to the Japanese; Olympus for the Greeks; Sinai for Moses and the Jews of the Exodus (and Hira, Nebo, Zion, Carmel, and Moriah for later generations). Christ died on the hill of Golgotha, and Muhammad encountered Allah's messenger Gabriel in a cave on Mount Hira; the sacred Ka'ba itself is a symbolic mountain. For the Zoroastrians, there is Elburz, north of Teheran. Only the desert offers a comparable ground for a sudden flash of enlightenment, a dialogue with the Creator, or a retreat (almost always of forty days, a symbolic number everywhere); and it is a poor second.

Kailas is identified with Mount Meru, the axial center of the universe in Hindu and Buddhist cosmologies. A physical Meru does not exist, though it is real enough in the minds of believers. "The idea of a self and of a being is Mount Meru," said the legendary Sixth Patriarch,

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Hui Neng. "When you get rid of the idea of a self and of a being, Mount Meru will topple." "Or equally," adds Snelling, the General Secretary of the London Buddhist Society, "Mount Kailas will topple."

Kailas is a goal of pilgrims—Hindu, Buddhist, and Bon-Po—a rigorous journey through formidable passes at high altitudes, across Tibet's desolate, forbidding, cold and windy plains. At its base, pilgrims make the great *parikrama* or circumambulation; no one seems to try to climb the faces. The usual route is some thirty-two miles in circumference and can be completed in three days, two if one hurries. Some Tibetans, an especially hearty and muscular people, can make the *parikrama* in a single day, a feat known as *Chhokar*. Critics are

likely to call such spiritual athletes *khi-kor*, "he who runs round like a dog." Some enthusiasts perform *parikrama* by prostrating themselves at full length over and over again for the entire circuit.

There are always those—Westerners, of course—who see other people's beliefs and customs as a challenge, a source of amusement. In the nineteenth century, when parties of British travelers—most often spies—journeyed to Kailas, presumably expecting to assess whether Tibet should be added to the Queen's acquisitions, Tibet remained, thanks to climate, geography, and its barren nature, untouched, although certain men like a Mr. Robert Drummond irreverently paddled about the holy lake Manasarovar in a rubber boat. One English party had to get the Tibetan officials drunk with Jameson's whiskey before they could proceed to hunt wild yak. The Tibetans were remarkably patient, considering the affronts by Europeans to their religion, their borders, and themselves. They were likely to escort objectionable strangers to the border and shove them back into Nepal, rather than to kill them; it was their own officials who had their heads lopped off for allowing trespassers to proceed.

So many pagans could not but attract the attentions of missionaries. France sent several, including the great Abbé Huc, to whom we owe many thanks for carefully collected and sympathetic information about nineteenth-century Tibet and its customs and practices. The man one comes to hate in this account is Arnold Henry Savage Landor, bearer of a distinguished name. Landor wrote that when he felt insulted by a Tibetan, "I grabbed him by the pigtail and landed in his face a number of blows straight from the shoulder . . . . I made him lick my shoes clean with his tongue . . . . This done, he tried to scamper away, but I caught him once more by the pigtail,

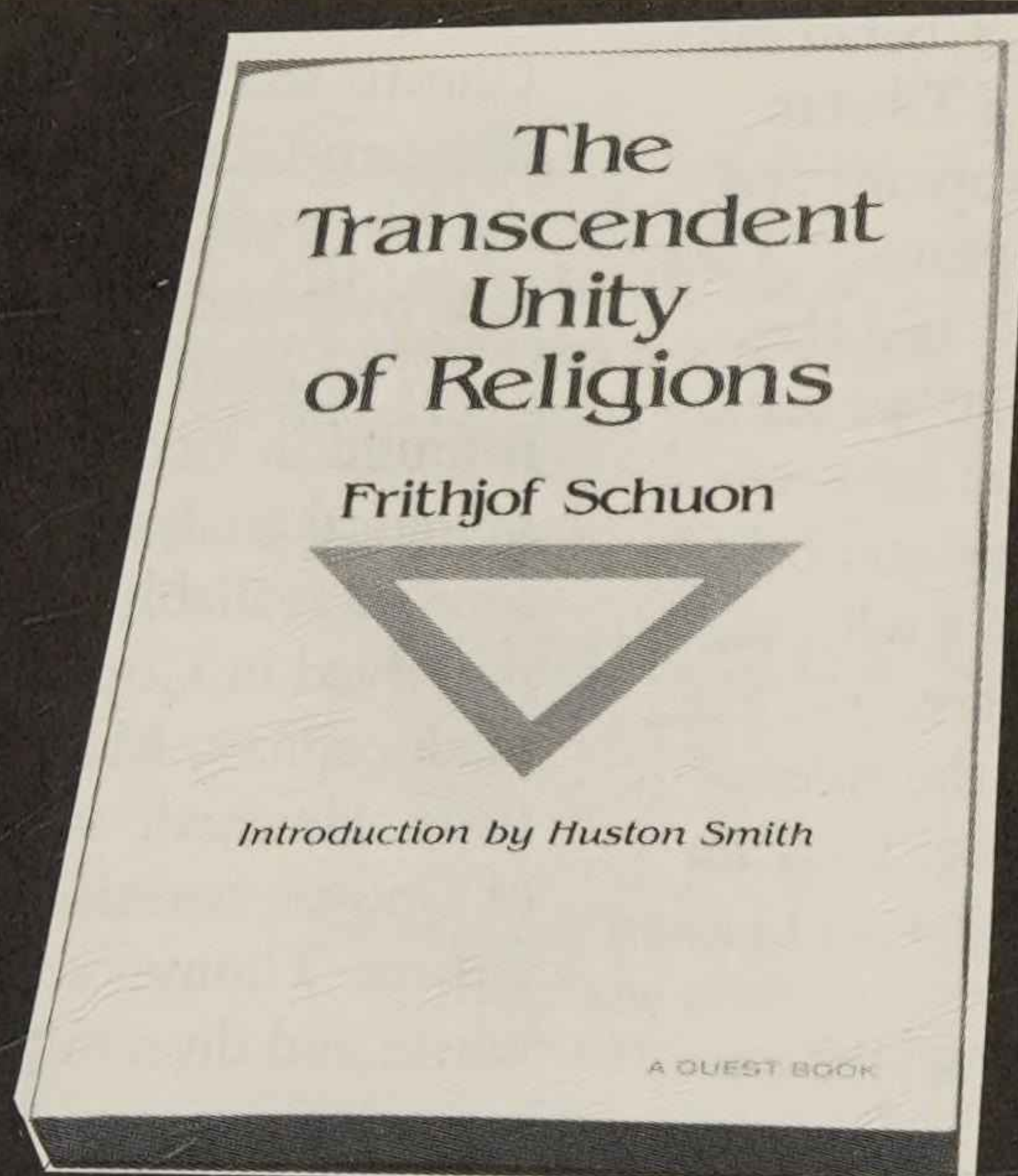
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and kicked him down the front steps . . .” Needless to say, Landor was courageous to the point of insanity in going where he was not wanted, though he was tortured and even had his head placed on the executioner’s block, from which he escaped. He returned home a hero. There were dozens of others who traveled more sensibly, among them the popular Sven Hedin and, later, Giuseppe Tucci, Heinrich Harrer, and, of course, Alexandra David-Neel.

The final word about the Tibetan attitude to intruders comes from a Tibetan official complaining about Europeans and Indians who worked for Europeans. “They all seem very unhappy to me,” said the *Garpon*. “We have our gods and we are content. If the Europeans came, however, they would drive the gods away and bring us nothing in their place. That’s why we prefer to be left alone . . . . Here, you the intruders are nothing. Even I, the ruler of this whole province, am nothing. *Only the gods rule here.*”

*Edward Rice has traveled extensively in Asia and the Middle East as a writer and photographer. He is now completing a biography of Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton based on previously overlooked material.*

### **Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism**

By Kurt Rudolph. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983. Pp. xii + 411. \$24.95.

*Reviewed by Pheme Perkins*

Scholars of ancient Gnostic sects have always appreciated the careful analyses of the distinguished East German scholar, Kurt Rudolph. While many scholars see Gnostic sects through the perspective of Western Christianity, Rudolph sketches the story of Gnosis as an independent religious movement.

The main substance of his latest book is found in two hundred pages of phenomenological analysis employing all of the sources available: original Gnostic writings preserved in Coptic such as the Nag Hammadi codices, Manichean and Mandaean texts, Hermetic writings, and descriptions of Gnostic heretics by the Christian church fathers. Though some scholars find the pluralism and diversity of Gnostic writings reason to reject such a comprehensive phenomenology, Rudolph insists that there is a fundamental pattern to Gnosis.

He points out that Gnostics did not write a “holy scripture.” Out of the fund of Greek and Oriental mythological traditions, they consciously created the symbolic and narrative materials which matched their own conceptions. Rudolph shows that this creation fits a fundamental pattern in the Gnostic perception of revelation. Revelation has two elements: the primordial burst of enlightenment into the world of darkness, which reflects the true nature of human origins in the divine world, and the on-going, hidden revelation of Gnosis in the world, the call which awakens and liberates.

The coherence of the Gnostic vision of the human person as a reflection of the



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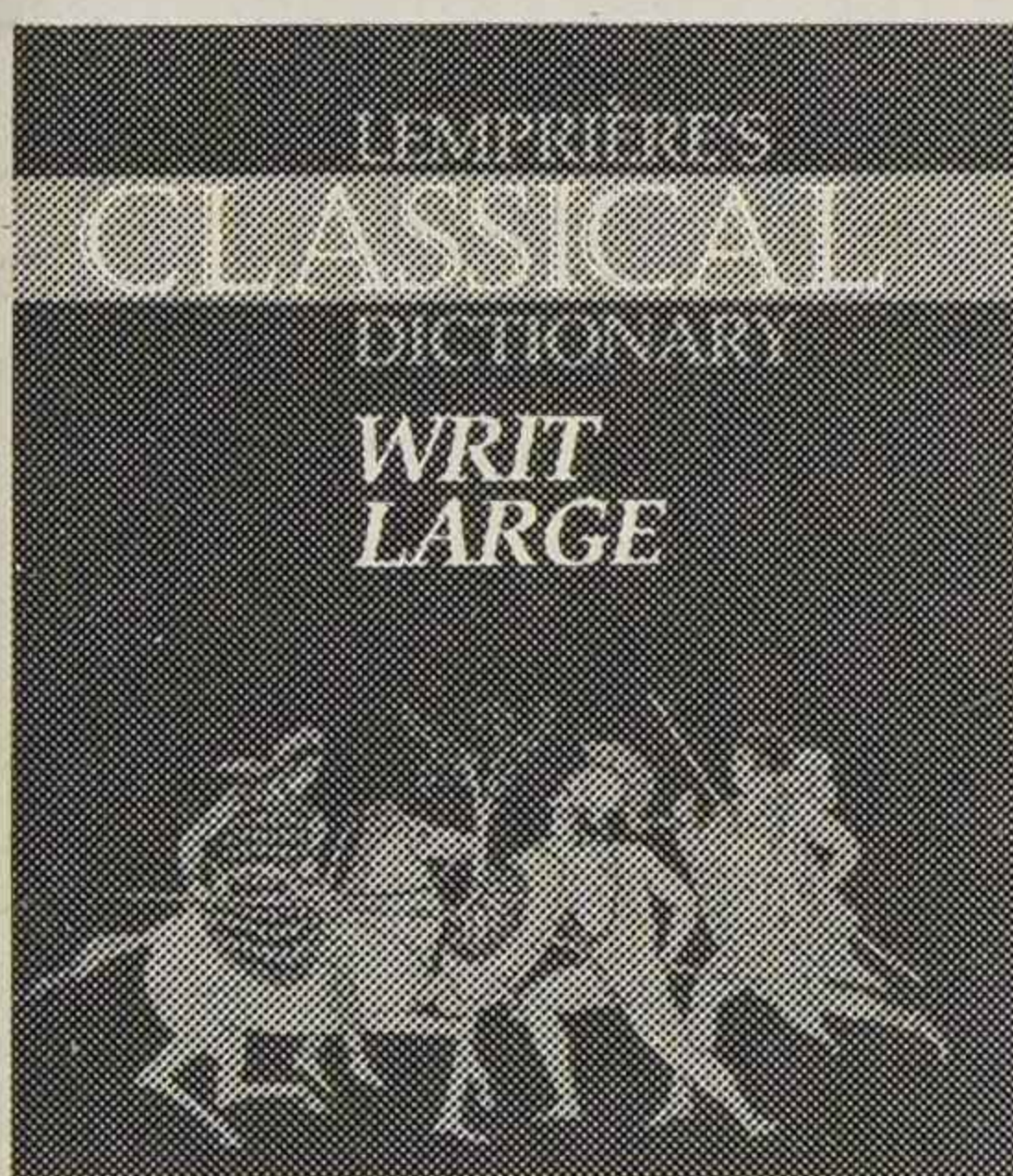
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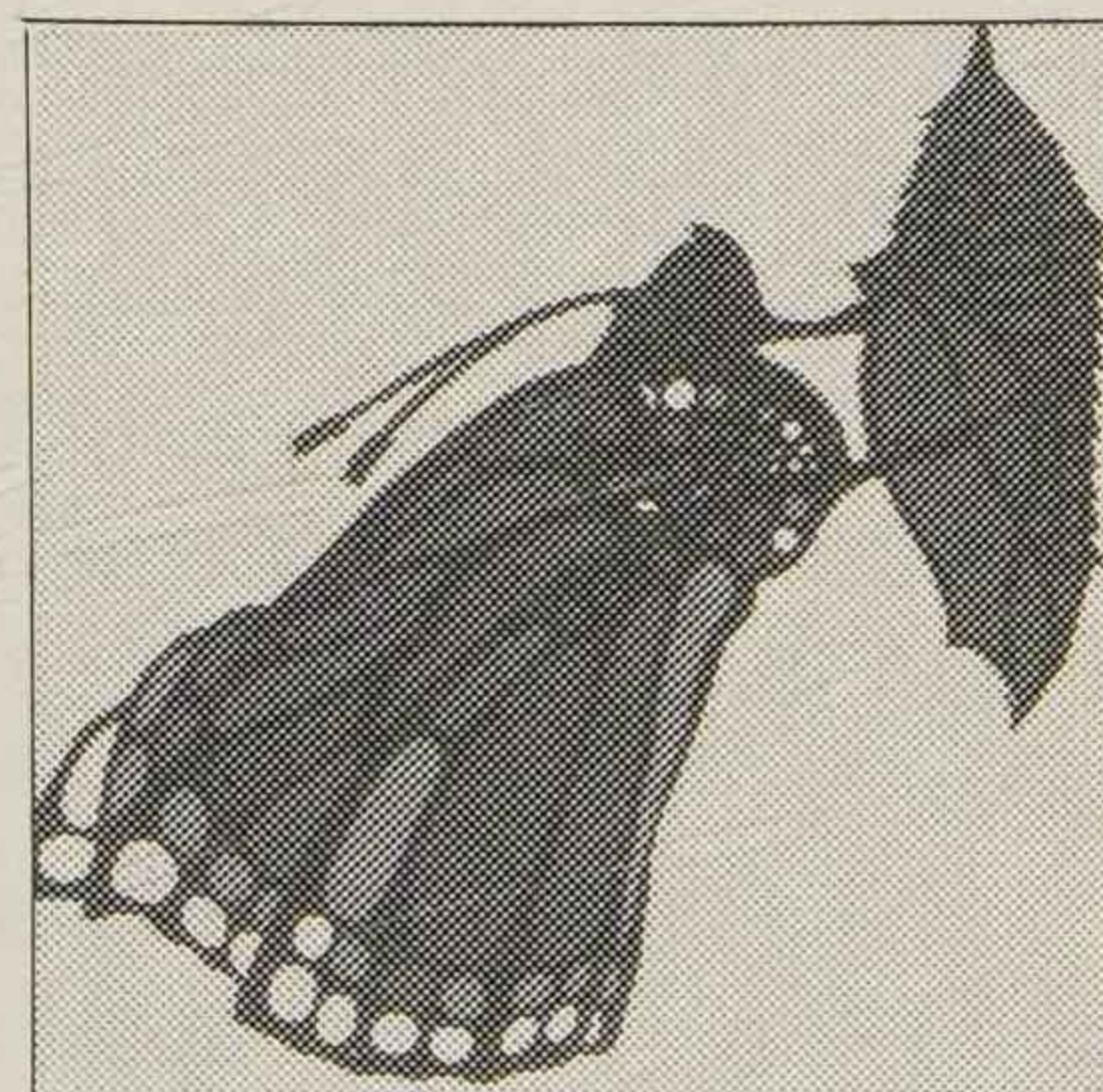
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higher divine redeemer, who must be liberated from the darkness, ignorance, and passions of this world, demonstrates a religious seriousness that goes beyond mere dabbling in the esoteric. Whatever the pluralism of its manifestation, Gnosis is an independent religious vision. It is not Christianity run amuck. As far as we can tell, this vision arose concurrently with Christianity in the first century, though the great systematizers of both traditions are found in the second century and later. The debate over the influence of Gnosis on the New Testament has often failed to show how much more open the New Testament itself is to the perceptions and symbols of Gnosis than the later formalization of Christian thought. Even in the second century, Christian images of Jesus as divine revealer and savior are nearer to those found in Gnostic writings than people often realize.

The interaction between Christianity and Gnosis had its impact on both movements. Non-Christian, Gnostic redeemer figures belong to the mythological realm. With the exception of one writing which is attributed to Zoroaster, they are not attached to historical persons. Adoption of Jesus as the revealer leads to an historiciz-

ing of the redeemer. The Gnostic distinguishes between the heavenly Christ, Immortal Man, or Seth figure, incarnated in Jesus, and Jesus as the subject of the Christian story. The essence of the human being is identified with and liberated by incorporation into the former. Though writings such as the Gospel of Truth may speak positively of Jesus' suffering in bringing the saving revelation to a lost humanity, that suffering never becomes the divine act of salvation as in Christian theologies. Inevitably, the confrontation of the two religious movements influenced the shape of Christian understanding of Jesus as divine and/or human, of salvation, and of scripture.

Rudolph pays careful attention to the cultic aspects of Gnosticism. He proposes that the evidence we have of spiritualization of the cult belongs to a later stage of the movement. Most Gnostics would find themselves members of a community of cultic practice which emphasized the "brotherly equality" of the enlightened (including women) over the divisions and hierarchy of the surrounding world. Knowing one's origins in the higher divine world also opened the way to prayer and participation in rituals that included bap-

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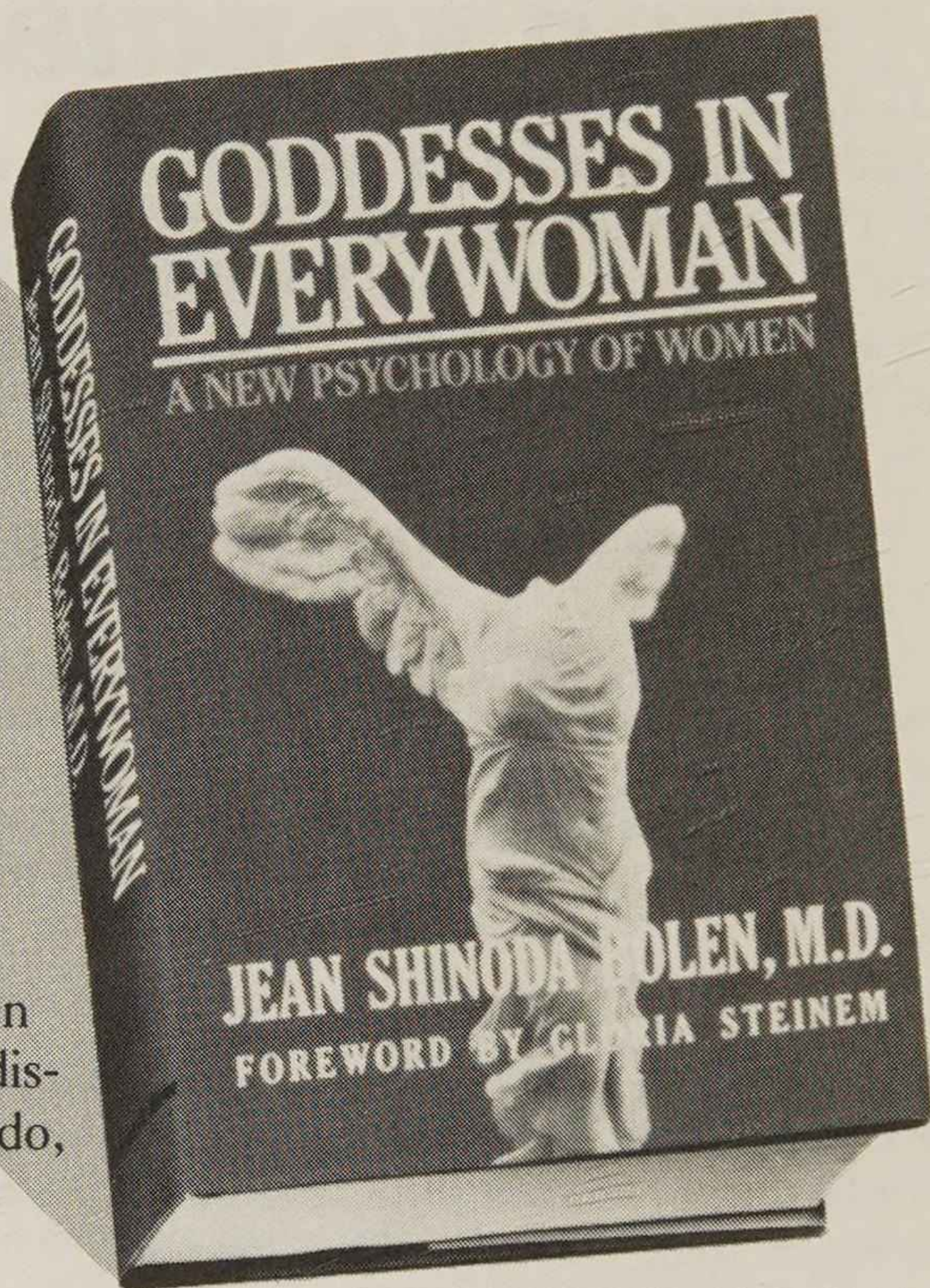
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tism, anointing, cultic meals, a rite for commending the soul of the dead to its journey through the heavenly spheres, and, in Valentinianism at least, enactment of the unity of the soul with its heavenly counterpart in the “marriage chamber.”

Rudolph argues that Gnosis was essentially a religion of the dependent classes in the cities under Greek influence. Such an environment of depoliticized intellectuals provided the setting for the Hellenistic costume worn over the oriental and Jewish body of religious symbolism found in Gnosis. The great Gnostic thinkers show a high level of intellectual attainment. As is the case with Valentinianism, Gnostic sects depended upon such teachers and leaders,

and often fragmented into different groups when a leader died. While the appeal of the traditional mythology found in Gnosis had a broader base, the elitism and anti-worldly stance of Gnostic sects made it difficult for them to gain widespread acceptance.

This is a creative, accurate study which deserves to become a standard reference. The volume is beautifully produced with plates, index, and selected bibliography. The only difficulty for the general reader may be the lack of easy-to-spot differentiation between the text and the extensive quotations from original sources. One must also turn to the documents themselves to find the context from which the different examples come. But any serious student of

religion and mythology will want to study this book.

*Pheme Perkins is Professor of New Testament at Boston College. She is the author of several books including The Gnostic Dialogue (Paulist Press, 1980) and The Resurrection: Early Christian Witness and Contemporary Reflection, to be published by Doubleday in the fall.*

### **Sky Dancer: The Secret Life and Songs of the Lady Yeshe Tsogyal**

By Keith Dowman. London, Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984. Pp. 379. Paper \$14.95.

*Reviewed by Anne C. Klein*

The Nyingma or Ancient order of Tibetan Buddhism reveres Yeshe Tsogyal as a fully enlightened Buddha intent on leading others to enlightenment. The tradition holds that this wish motivated her to take birth in Tibet and to demonstrate, as if she were accomplishing them for the first time, the practices by which enlightenment is attained. Tsogyal, who was made a queen by the eighth-century Tibetan king Tri-srong-day-tsen, is best known as an extraordinary disciple and consort to the Indian Buddhist Tantric master Padmasambhava. Her chief legacies are the preservation of Padmasambhava's *rDzogs-chen* or Great Perfection teachings and her example of successful efforts to realize those precepts.

Her apprenticeship and subsequent miraculous accomplishments—raising a Nepali

youth from the dead or displaying herself as a body of rainbow light, for example—are detailed in her biography. This text, a buried treasure or *terma*, was discovered and written down by the Tibetan yogi Daksham Nuden Dorje (sTag-sham-nusldan-rdo-rje) in the eighteenth century. It is a saga of spiritual seeking recounting the magic of a guru-disciple collaboration in the great tradition of Marpa and Milarepa. Dowman's translation of Tsogyal's biography is highly readable; his style is rich and well nuanced, its flow only slightly marred by jargon such as "synchronistic coincidence." His format is attractive; for example, his stated technique of capitalizing words such as "Awareness" and "Mind" where these have "deeper significance than their face value implies" works well. Line drawings by Eva van Dam add to the book's appeal.

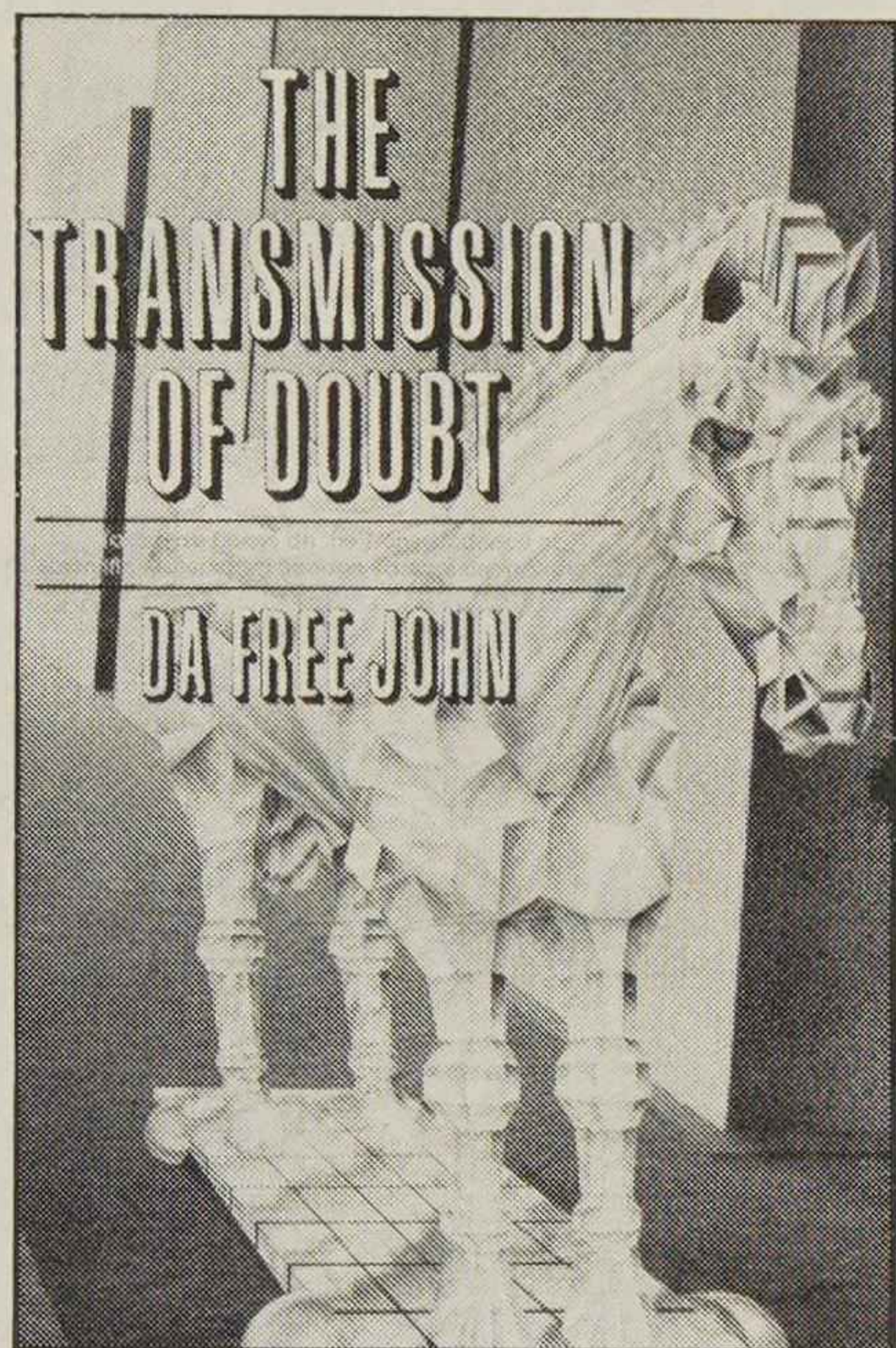
Dowman's four-chapter "commentary," which could more appropriately be called an introduction, is of uneven quality. It discusses the religious context of Tsogyal's tantric practice; the relationship of women to such practice, and to a figure like Yeshe Tsogyal; the Nyingma lineages; and relevant historical background.

The discussion of the tantric path, though idiosyncratic in language and perspective, avoids grave distortion—a significant achievement given the subtlety of tantric language. It admirably seeks to dispel lurid misassociations of tantra with sexual adventurism, and correctly emphasizes that Buddhist Mahayana theory and practice is integral to tantra. Indeed, though Dowman does not say so, tantra is a branch of the Mahayana. The author is trying to strike a delicate balance between philosophical precision and the needs of a nonspecialist audience. He is, by and large, successful, yet some notable misstatements occur. For example, he writes that "in the

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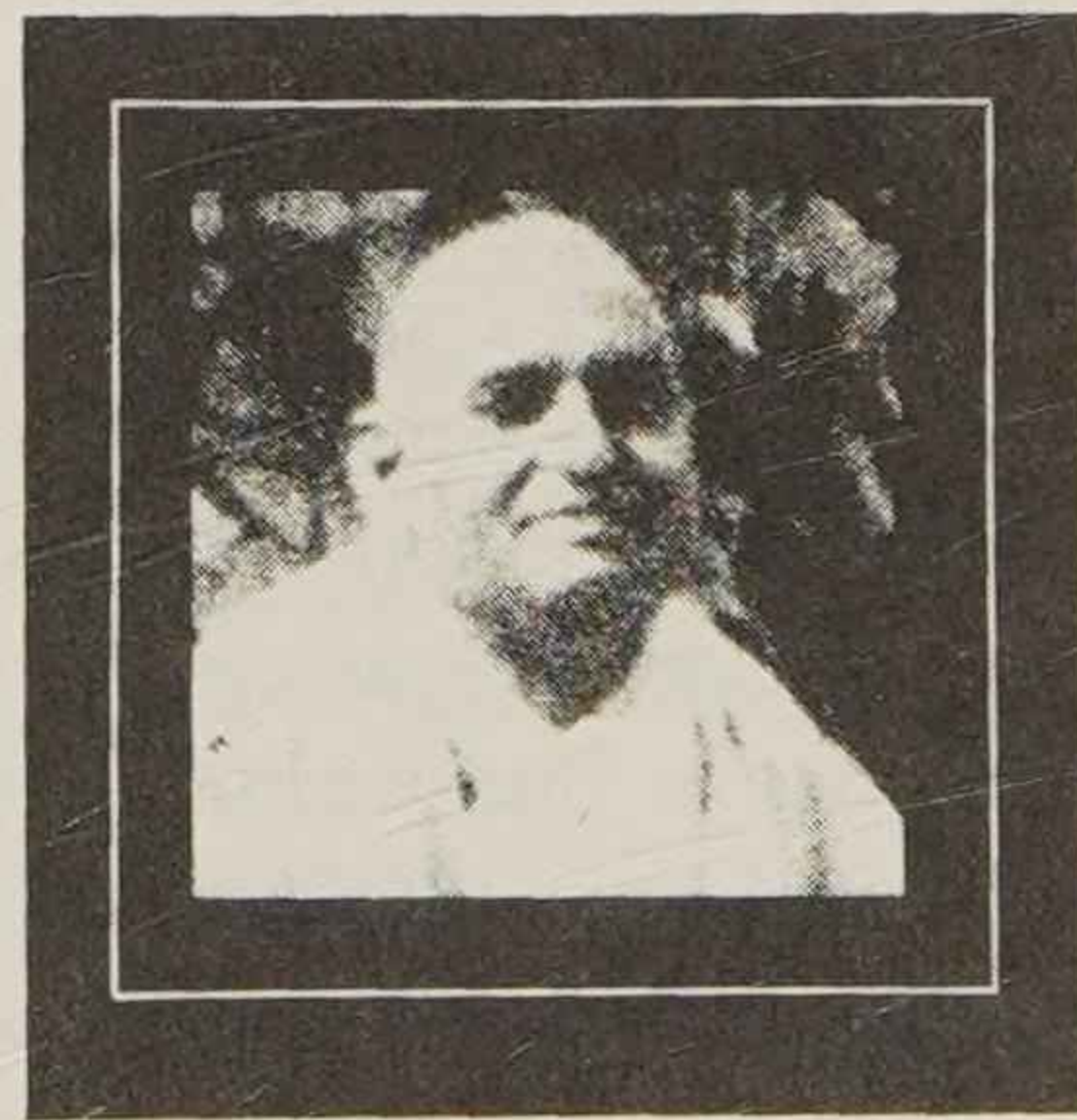
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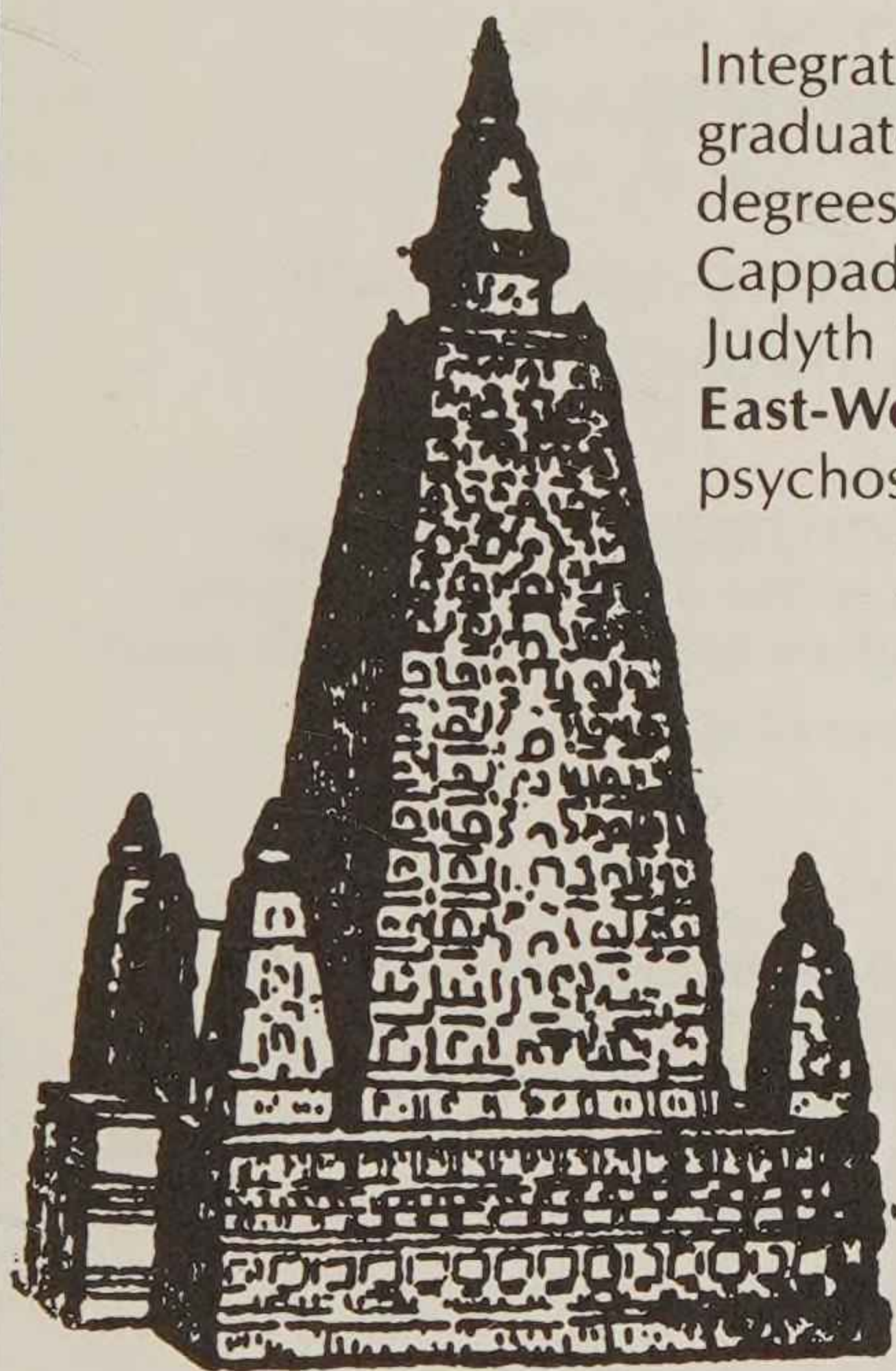


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Mahayana Buddhahood is defined as the state of recognition in oneself and in phenomena." Such "recognition" is an important landmark on the spiritual map, but Buddhahood further requires extraordinary familiarity with this perspective and the concomitant development of compassionate activities. Further, in stating that "the purpose of practice is Buddhahood, gnostic perception, and pure pleasure," Dowman omits the most essential element of Mahayana motivation—the intention to become enlightened so that, like Yeshe Tsogyal, one may work to enlighten others.

The weakest section is that entitled "Women and the Dakini." It is to Dowman's credit that he saw the need for such

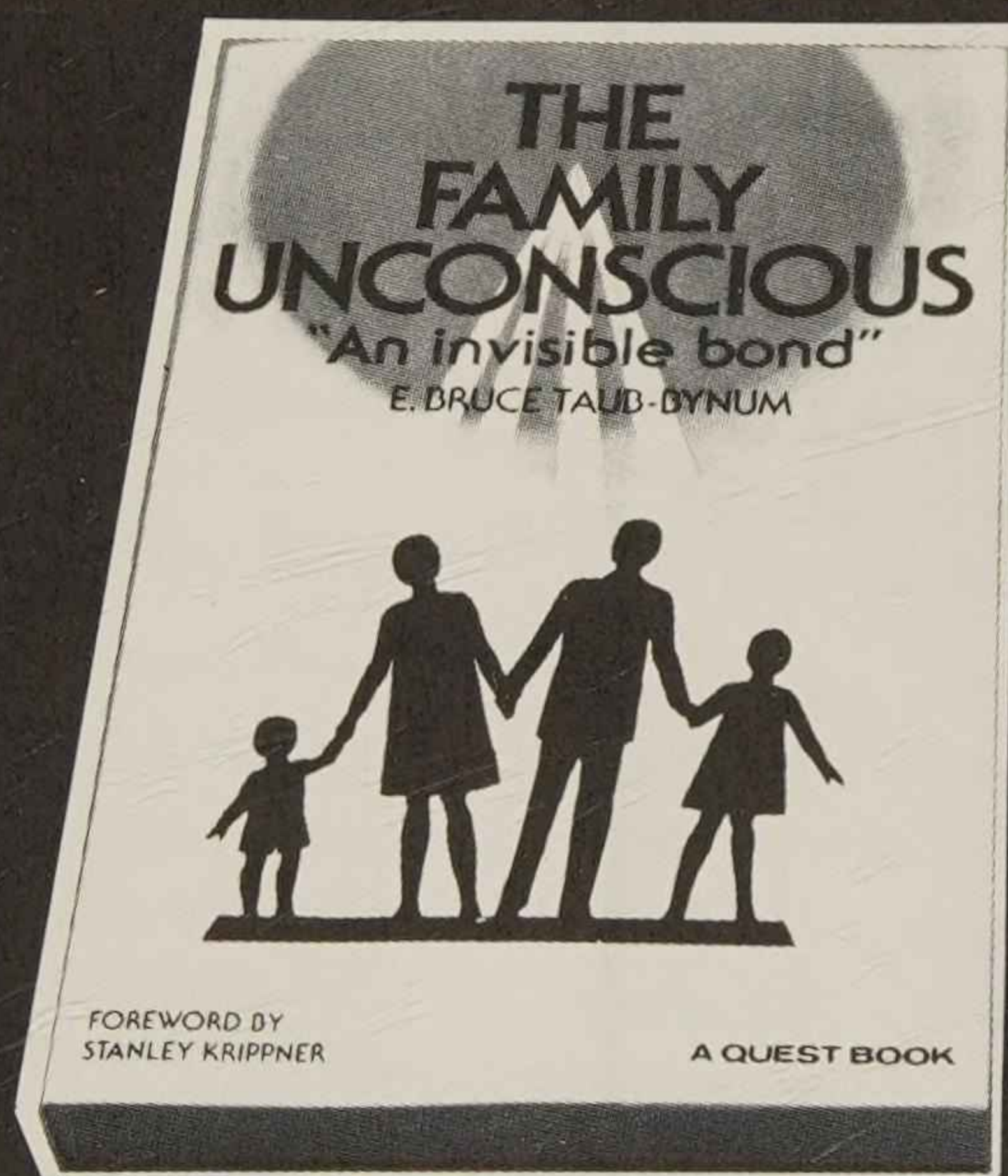
a discussion, but he evinces a simplistic perspective that sees woman essentially as receptivity and does not question, for example, whether women have anything to gain from "the concept [of] 'woman' that men usually project upon the Dakini . . . ."

A dakini is, in part, an enlightened female preceptor known as a sky-goer or sky dancer because of her wisdom which is as expansive as the sky. Her exalted position, however, must be seen in the context of the Dakini Tsogyal's role as consort compared with Padmasambhava's status as Guru. Dowman does not note this issue at all. His lack of inclusive language throughout the book raises questions about the seriousness of his concern here.

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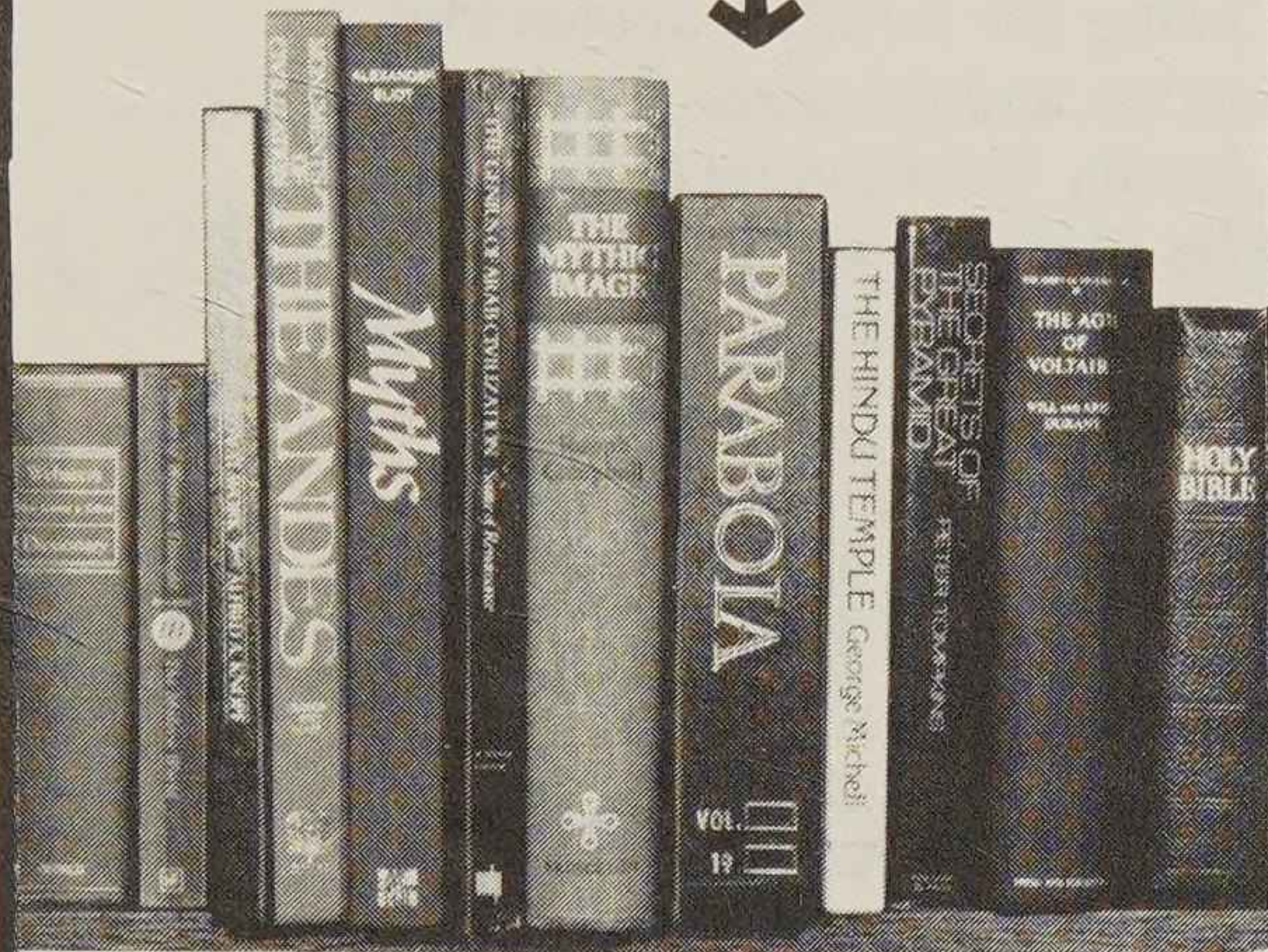
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The final sections on Nyingma lineage and history are most informative. The Tibetan index is a plus for those who know the language, but should be coordinated with an English index and glossary to accommodate the wider audience which in other ways the book successfully addresses.

In brief, the translator and commentator has taken on a mighty challenge. Tso-gyal's biography overflows with profound meanings that either cannot or may not be fully explained in print. Where many fools have rushed in before him, Dowman, if not quite an angel, has trod lightly and well.

*Anne C. Klein, a Visiting Scholar at Harvard University's Center for the Study of World Religions, is Co-editor of Tantric Practice in Nyingma and author of the forthcoming Knowledge and Liberation in Tibetan Buddhism.*

Photographs by Peter Kaufmann, Deu-Fra

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Page 99 Bokusai, Life-sketch of Ikkyū (detail).

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# PROFILES

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**Arthur Amiotte** is a well-known Lakota artist and teacher. His writings and illustrations have appeared in several previous issues of PARABOLA.

**Thomas Buckley**, a Consulting Editor to PARABOLA, has published a variety of scholarly articles in anthropology, as well as reviews, photographs, and personal essays. He teaches anthropology at the University of Massachusetts, and is currently on leave while completing books on the Yurok Indians and on the anthropology of menstruation.

**Gai Eaton**, a Muslim since 1951, is a consultant to the Islamic Cultural Center in London and a lecturer, broadcaster, and writer on Islamic topics. Previously, he served in India, Africa, and the Caribbean for the British Diplomatic Service. His books include *The Richest Vein: Eastern Traditions and Modern Thought*, *King of the Castle: Choice and Responsibility in the Modern World*, and a forthcoming work on Islam.

**Richard R. Niebuhr** is the Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard University. His professional interests range from the psychology and philosophy of William James to the moral and religious dimensions of perception and imagination. Prof. Niebuhr's most recent books include *Experiential Religion* (Harper & Row, 1972) and *Streams of Grace* (Doshisha University, 1983).

**Padma Perera** has published two collections of short stories, one in India and one in the United States (*Dr. Salaam and Other Stories of India*, Capra Press, 1979). Her writings appear in *The New Yorker* and elsewhere.

**Lizelle Reymond** lived and studied in India for several years. Her books include *My Life with a Brahmin Family*, *Shakti*, and *To Live Within*, an account of her five-year experience in a Himalayan hermitage studying under the spiritual master, Shri Anirvan.

**P.L. Travers**, a Consulting Editor to PARABOLA since the magazine began, is the author of the Mary Poppins books, as well as *Friend Monkey*, *The Fox in the Manger*, *About the Sleeping Beauty*, and *Two Pairs of Shoes*.