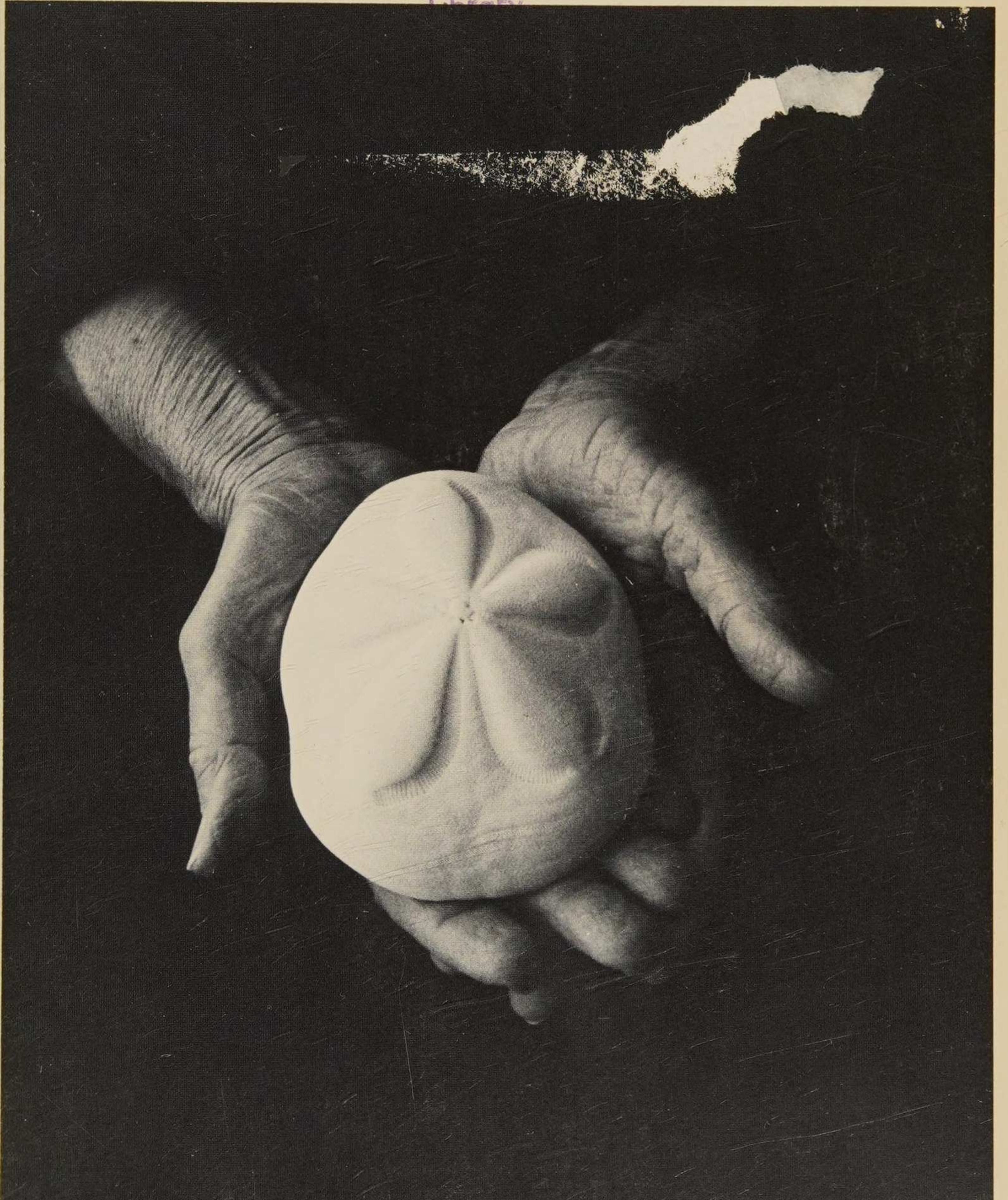


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MYTH AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING

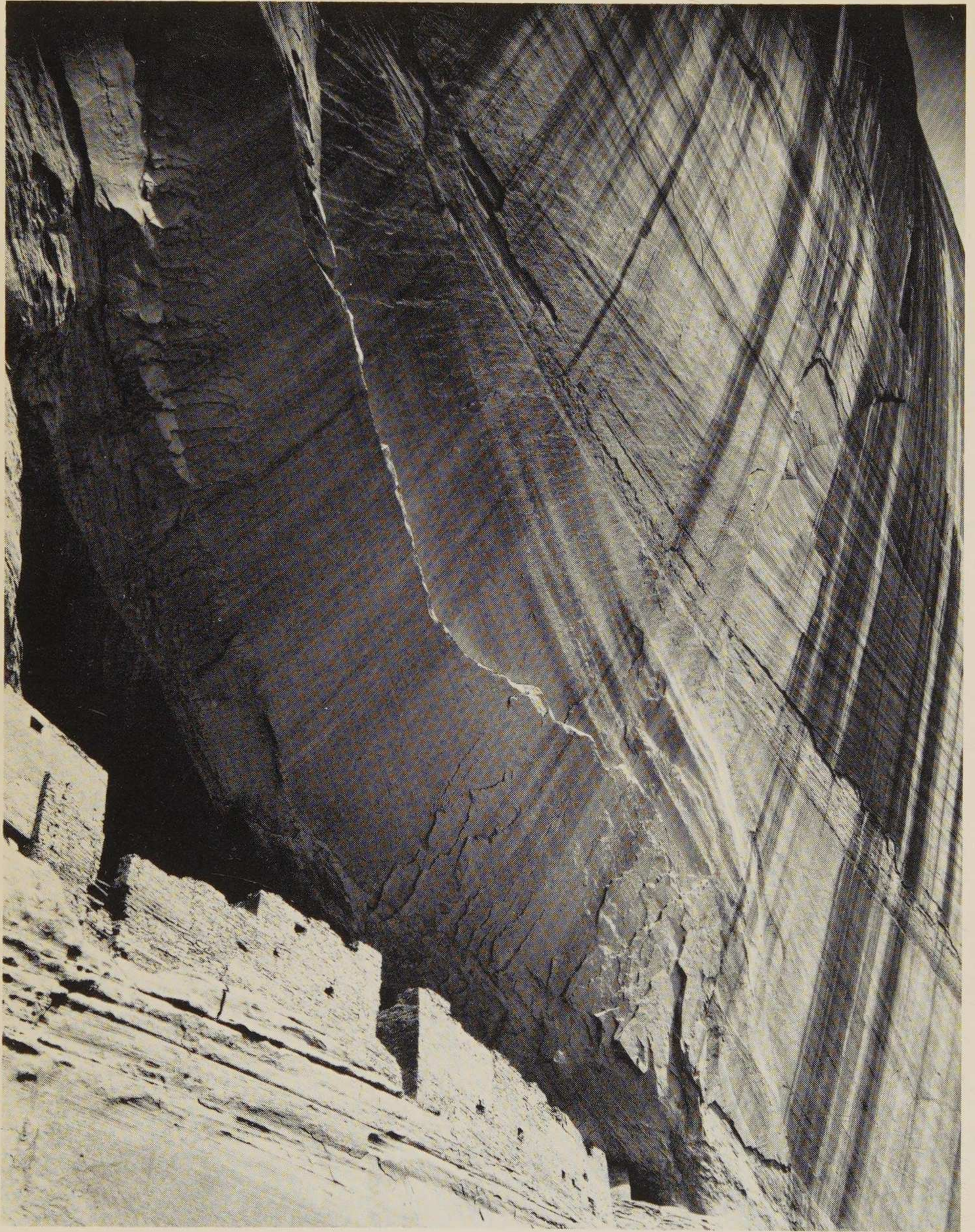
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Inside Cover: Anasazi Cliff Dwellings, Canyon de Chelly National Monument, Apache County, Arizona. Photograph ©1980 by Mark Orlove.

FOCUS

Hey-a-a-hey! Hey-a-a-hey! Hey-a-a-hey!
Hey-a-a-hey! Grandfather, Great Spirit,
once more behold me on earth and lean to
hear my feeble voice. You lived first, and
you are older than all need, older than all
prayer. All things belong to you—the two-
leggeds, the four-leggeds, the wings of the
air and all green things that live. You have
set the powers of the four quarters to cross
each other. The good road and the road of
difficulties you have made to cross; and
where they cross, the place is holy. Day in
and day out, forever, you are the life of
things.

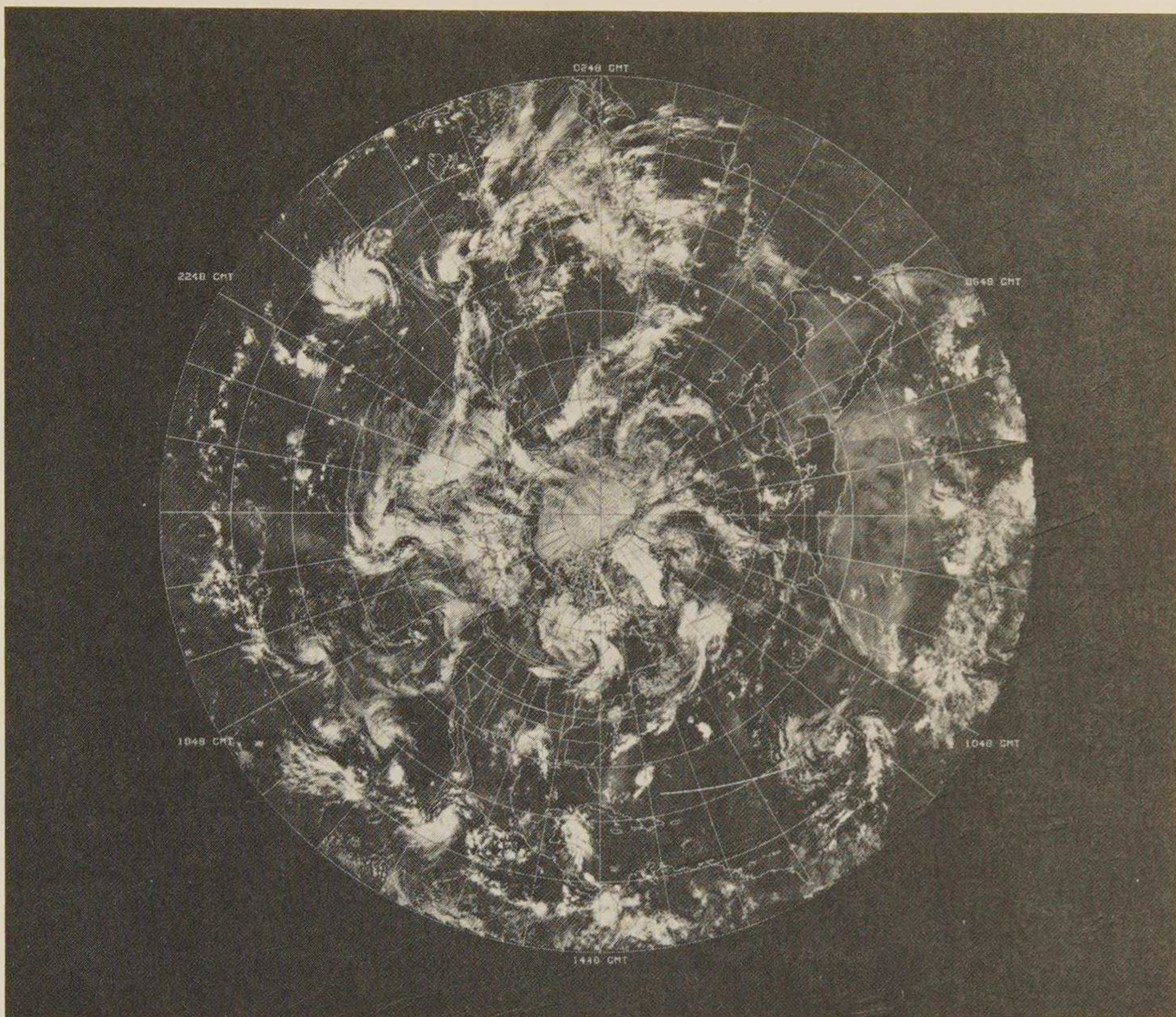
Therefore I am sending a voice, Great Spirit, my Grandfather, forgetting nothing you have made, the stars of the universe and the grasses of the earth.

You have said to me, when I was still young and could hope, that in difficulty I should send a voice four times, once for each quarter of the earth, and you would hear me.

Today I send a voice for a people in despair.

You have given me a sacred pipe, and through this I should make my offering. You see it now.

From the west, you have given me the cup of living water and the sacred bow, the power to make live and to destroy. You have given me a sacred wind and the herb from where the white giant lives—the cleansing power and the healing. The day-break star and the pipe, you have given from the east; and from the south, the na-



tion's sacred hoop and the tree that was to bloom. To the center of the world you have taken me and showed the goodness and the beauty and the strangeness of the greening earth, the only mother—and there the spirit shapes of things, as they should be, you have shown to me and I have seen. At the center of this sacred hoop you have said that I should make the tree to bloom.

With tears running, O Great Spirit, Great Spirit, my Grandfather—with running tears I must say now that the tree has never bloomed. A pitiful old man, you see me here, and I have fallen away and have done nothing. Here at the center of the world, where you took me when I was young and taught me; here, old, I stand, and the tree is withered, Grandfather, my Grandfather!

Again, and maybe the last time on this earth, I recall the great vision you sent me. It may be that some little root of the sacred tree still lives. Nourish it then, that it may leaf and bloom and fill with singing birds. Hear me, not for myself, but for my people; I am old. Hear me that they may once more go back into the sacred hoop and find the good red road, the shielding tree!

—Black Elk*

*From *Black Elk Speaks* by John G. Neihardt, deluxe edition, University of Nebraska Press; 1979, Pocket Books/Simon & Schuster, 1972. Reprinted by permission of the John G. Neihardt Trust, Columbia, Missouri.

FULL CIRCLE/A Readers' Forum

PARABOLA is interested in an exchange of ideas and points of view through the active participation of its readers. We welcome your letters and comments on the issues raised in our pages. Please address all correspondence to:

The Editor, PARABOLA, 150 Fifth Avenue,
New York, N. Y. 10011

My recent discovery of PARABOLA through a Jerusalemite friend was one of those pleasant and useful coincidences which lightens from time to time the somewhat dense air of destiny in this land. Your issue devoted to "The Trickster" (Vol. IV, No. 1) is very fine indeed. Congratulations.

I would like to take this opportunity to present to the editors and readers of PARABOLA a question which has puzzled me for years, in the hope that someone out there may be able to provide the answer. It concerns an old English "riddle-song" which I learned from my mother as a child, and which recently surfaced in my memory, quite intact but more baffling than ever. I cannot help feeling that this song embodies a sort of mnemonic esoteric credo—a collection of fundamental symbols or "types," whose mythic significance was once well known. A few of the song's symbols remain familiar, but the majority give that pleasant but disconcerting feeling of having once been known but now forgotten.

I would greatly appreciate if anyone could identify for me the mythic and/or legendary references in this song.

The song itself is sung to a light and cheerful tune. It is, I believe, entitled "Green Grow the Rushes," and the words are as follows, with each verse including the preceding verse, as is customary with number-songs of this type:

I'll sing you One-o.
Green grow the rushes-o,
What is your One-o?
One is one and all alone
And evermore shall be so.

I'll sing you Two-o.
Green grow the rushes-o,
What is your Two-o?
Two, two for the lily-white boys
Clothed all in green-o,
One is one and all alone
And evermore shall be so.

Three, three for the Rivals...
Four for the Gospel Makers...
Five for the Symbols at your Door...
Six for the Six Proud Walkers...
Seven for the Seven Stars in the Sky...
Eight for the April Rainers...
Nine for the Nine Bright Shiners...
Ten for the Ten Commandments...
Eleven for the Eleven Who Went
Up to Heaven...
Twelve for the Twelve Apostles...

—Raphael Carse
Galilee, Israel

PARABOLA invites its readers to offer their interpretations to add to our own in the next issue.

In reading and re-reading the highly interesting review of John Anthony West's book on Schwaller de Lubicz in the recent PARABOLA (Vol. IV, No. 2) I found myself stumbling in puzzlement over the sentence: "Number mysticism is mysticism and not mathematics." Further, reading your example of the eye diagram just left me more confused, possibly because the word "mysticism" is so vague (to us all) and the notion of an analogy seems to beg certain slippery metaphysical questions.

If I understand the viewpoint of the Traditionalists at all from my reading of René Guénon's *Reign of Quantity*, he and his followers assume that all science was sacred in the distant era when the "Primordial



Tradition" flourished. In other words there was no dualistic cleavage between sacred and profane science or art, between the spiritual and the material; and each order reflects those above and below it by virtue of an analogical relationship.

Since I have not yet read West's book, I cannot judge whether his criticisms of the "abstractions" of modern science are just or not. Certainly, as Seyyed Hossein Nasr's critique *Man and Nature*, points out, western science is degenerate from a metaphysical standpoint, because it lacks the foundations of a spiritual cosmography. Simone Weil believed western science has reached such precision on the material level because it chose to ignore the hierarchical dimension.

It may be true that the extraordinary achievements of modern mathematics and its abstractions allow enormous precision, but such gains are purely operational and in the end only pragmatic (pragmatism was another of Guénon's bugbears); without the awareness of the analogical dimension they exist only in a void, cut off from any coherent sense of the cosmos.

I wonder whether in your insistence on "precision" as a criterion of the advance of modern mathematics you don't fall a prey to the very inversion that believes the "use" of a thing to be superior to its meaning. To value precision for its own sake or for its productivity in the realm of creating further formulae is a parody of sacred science, Guénon would say. Maybe I have misunderstood your example as a very amateur philosopher and inept mathematician, but I find your review to be from the standpoint of the "modern" as Guénon calls it, which surprises me in a journal of PARABOLA's

perspective; but perhaps your review compensates a rather ignorant snobbery about science on West's part—Guénon's own superiority gets very wearing too, I find!

—Roger J. Woolger
Plainfield, VT

Dr. Lipsey and Ms. Weld reply:

Dr. Woolger's warm and interesting letter is a pleasure to think about.

By the phrase "number mysticism is mysticism and not mathematics," we mean to distinguish between the investigation of a formal system of relationships and the spiritual inquiry that can animate such an investigation.

Mathematics is the study of relationships, structures; of conditions and their necessary conclusions. Contemplation of the ideas of mathematics shows that these "abstractions" generated by the mind alone seem to conform to and reveal natural law both to the physicist seeking application in the real world, and to anyone trying to understand the structure of his own inner world. To such a person the precise definitions of mathematics make it available as a means for formulating something about the spirit.

It seems to us unnecessary to pass from a deep appreciation of the coherent spiritual cosmos of tradition to a condemnation of modern science and mathematical research. In affirming this, we are merely practicing empiricism, in the first instance: many fields of investigation are yielding facts that force the mind out of a purely mechanistic model of reality, and science itself has produced spokesmen—Lewis Thomas, Fritjof Capra, others—who appreciate this and teach it. Myth has convinced us that every quest includes a stage in which nothing coheres. And general respect for the principle e pluribus unum tells us that there need never be a time when this process of finding the unity must halt; in our own time, we expect truthful and beautiful theories to gather in periodically the diverse findings of empirical research and to provide, as

(Continued on page 122)

TIME STANDS STILL

by Keith Critchlow



photographs by Rod Bull

Εν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος

Our unquenchable thirst for knowledge of our origins lies in the intuition that we feel the clue to our destiny lies hidden in our origins. A birthday celebration expresses this as much as Darwin's elaborate "Origin of the Species" theory. The great creation myths* of humanity epitomize our need to transmit our roots and give original meaning to existence. The value of creation myths lies in their effectiveness, not in their logicality. Myth is an inspired way of transmitting and maintaining those essential values and truths which each society deems vital. Only through myth can the expressive, poetic, intellectual, and inspirational levels of the mind be united in the symbolic. Our fascination for the dignity and mystery of the megaliths stems from the recognition of our own mute "creation myths" in stone. Their very presence seems to pose the perennial question, "what does it *really* mean to be human?"

Those of us who are part and product of Western technological culture—significantly the minority of the current human family—despite our inordinate greed for energy and materialism, find ourselves in an exceptional phase of the life of humanity.

*We uphold the traditional sense of the term myth, which is a relating *in time* matters which are essentially timeless; matters which are central and psychological and spiritually accurate, yet not by their nature expressible in literal ($a = a$) terms, as they deal with the essential meaning of being human. Needless to say Darwin's theory of the Origin of the Species is a myth in the *modern* sense of a partial and plausible thesis *in time* only.

We are unwittingly taking part in the anomaly of attempting to conduct society without the metaphysical or spiritual dimension. It is that very dimension which addresses itself to origins and destiny and humanity's overall relationships with our universe or the "whole." Because of the distractions of technological "magic" and its obvious material advantages, we have failed to achieve a wholeness in industrial or postindustrialized society. The paradoxes of increased material wealth and energy greed, natural resource destruction and the increase of mental illness all point to the fact that never before in human history has a culture been attempted without a spiritual dimension; in fact one could go further and suggest that a society is not correctly definable as "human" without such a dimension.

The sad modern prejudice against "religion" is due to the lack of differentiation between an individual's "experience of religion" and "religious experience." Tradition is *certainty* orientated whereas modern "replacement" theories support the doctrine of uncertainty, thereby giving uncertainty itself an absolute value; which is a simple contradiction of meaning. There can be no such thing as *uncertainty* (as it is the "lack of") if *certainty* doesn't exist first. We are not, in modern times, usually made aware of the significance of the choice between believing in *certainty* or *uncertainty*. For instance, Heisenberg doesn't ask us to be uncertain that there is a phenomenon which we call an electron; he tells us only that we can be sure that *its exact whereabouts* is *uncertain* at any given moment. His "uncertainty principle" is naively cited by some as if it were a *philosophical* truth. In fact it only points to the impossibility of an empirical absolute—which accords with the metaphysical tradition.

The consensus traditions of mankind all

indicate metaphysical dimensions, which we could call our spiritual heritage and without which life on earth is meaningless.

In *Science and Civilization of Islam*, S.H. Nasr speaks eloquently of the traditional meaning of knowledge from the Islamic perspective (gnosis), which was to be considered either as “worldly” (empirical), concerned with the realm of becoming and change (uncertainty) or as “heavenly,” permanent, archetypal, and immutable (certainty). The former was the basis of *scientia* and the separate sciences, and the latter of *sapientia*, an essential level of knowledge of being. Nasr describes *sapientia* as “A knowledge that illumines the whole of the being of the knower.” One can see how confusion has penetrated so-called “modern philosophy” in that it allows equal status to relative opinions in the search for certainty. This competitive marshland of relative opinions has resulted in truth itself being questioned as a value. Leaving a residue of relative falsehood?

The sun and the moon are the two primary pacemakers of all biological existence, whilst at the same time they are the prime symbols of permanence and cyclicity. Therefore it is not surprising to find these two immediately attendant as foci of orientation both physically and metaphysically in the establishment of the human sanctuary—the temple. There is no reason whatsoever to consider the stone circles of Britain other than temples in the true meaning of the term.

Similarly the word origin is grounded in the early word *orire*, to rise as the sun, hence the link with east, or orient, and orientation: the direction of the new-born light. Lucid (clear, accurate), luminous, and lunar come from the same source.

Professor Thom’s findings have implicitly indicated the employment of Pythagorean triangles by megalithic temple-building man quite a millennium before Pythagoras lived. There is a remarkable parallel between these findings and the re-

cent decipherment of certain Babylonian clay tablets which, coincidentally, are of about the same date as the stone circles. There is a particular tablet in the Plimpton Library of Columbia University, New York, which until recently was lumped together with many others under the loose title “Commercial Tablets.” Yet this tablet, when analyzed by a mathematical authority, revealed quite startling and totally unexpected results. These results have a direct relation to Professor Thom’s findings, as the tablet contained sets of pairs of Pythagorean triplets: this means two of the sets of three side lengths of Pythagorean triangles. A Pythagorean triangle is a three-sided figure with one angle a right angle of 90° and with side lengths which are whole numbers; the third number can be ascertained if the other two are given. The startling facts of these number sets is that they would seem to indicate a quite different approach to and understanding of the nature of number and geometry from our own. We, for instance, would immediately resort to algebra, trigonometry, or our pocket calculator to manipulate numbers like 12,709 and 18,541 to find the Pythagorean triplet of 13,500, as their squares, which are necessary to know, run into millions,* yet there can be little doubt that algebra was unknown in pre-Christian times.

From the power over “number-theory” that the fifteen Pythagorean triplets implies the Mesopotamians possessed, certain questions must arise. As they are handling a general rule which is well known to them, we cannot deny them the ability to express the generalization that $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$ yet they never do so. There must be a good reason for this.

Two obvious reasons come to mind: (a) that the mathematicians did not wish others to know of the generalizations, or (b) that there was *no need* to express them in abstract form. The latter solution would imply that, for the people of that era, actual numbers conveyed some sort of immediate perception of the general relationships existing between these numbers.

* $12,709^2 = 161,518,681$ and $18,541^2 = 343,768,681$, with $13,500^2 = 182,250,000$. So that $343,768,681 - 161,518,681 = 182,250,000$; as $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$ or $c^2 - a^2 = b^2$.



Whatever we choose to believe, their ability to handle Pythagorean triplets cannot be doubted, as the evidence is concrete; the implications are, however, that such ability indicates a familiarity with:

The number theory (principle) of Pythagorean triplets
The geometry of right triangles
The arithmetic of squares and roots of large squares
The elements of trigonometry, and
The number theory of sexagesimal expansion

—and all this without algebra.*

Measure and Number are the two keystones of logical or quantitative reasoning. Number, we can say, was the main concern

of these Mesopotamians, whilst measure was that of the Egyptian civilization; our current knowledge of the Megalithic Briton is that he was concerned with both. Of the Egyptians and Babylonians Professor John Kreitner has said, “for the foremost achievements of their time, we have no record of method; we only know that they knew it, and that they lacked the *formal* tools of mathematics. Hence their very achievements imply a greater depth of intuition than the modern mind is capable of, and hence willing to concede.”

It is because intuition represents just this antithesis to analysis that it is so suspect to our own times. We believe that it is just this

*There is however a geometric solution to these triplets, according to Robert Lawlor, intended to be published in relation to musical scale theory.

remarkable balance between the intuitive and the logical that is to be found in the British megalithic artifacts and monuments that have come down through time to us today.

We need to take a new look at the techniques used by primordial societies—as distinct from sophisticated ones—called by the too general term Shamanism. Perhaps study will show them to be techniques that enable not only the intuitive mind to be brought into play, but into greater depths of consciousness than, to use Professor Kreitner's phrase: "the modern mind is capable of, hence willing to concede." Maybe we should say "willing easily to concede," as there is increasing evidence of an interest by modern Western psychologists in the realms of traditional psychology as represented by the Hindu Yogic tradition, the Buddhist meditative tradition, the Islamic Sufi tradition as well as the Christian contemplative tradition, and the archaic techniques of "gnosis," or knowledge of the self, upon which traditional societies base their view of the world.

Starting from the unity of existence considered as the prime characteristic of a traditional society, the indications are that the distinction *between* a temple and an observatory is unnecessary when considering the stone circles. Since it is not in doubt that the builders were what is ordinarily meant by a traditional society, it is more fruitful to attempt to put the conceptual evidence together with the evidence from stone circles themselves and to see what results emerge.

But at this point it is necessary to pay tribute to the heroic feats of surveying of Professor Alexander Thom, who made it possible to relate my own work as a geometer and architectural proportionalist directly to the arrangements of the megalithic structures.

It is not so surprising that the members of the archaeological community were so reluctant to listen to, let alone accept, the findings of Professor Alexander Thom with

regard to the *geometric* structure underlying the stone circles of Britain. Even though he presented these findings in the most scientifically accurate way, this only served to make the effect one of "delayed action," as the community was not able to test all the mathematics and professional surveying immediately. On top of this there were inbuilt prejudices against the possibility of a pre-literate and therefore presumed prenumererate society being capable of such mathematical activity. Another curious prejudice seemed to rest on the grounds that astronomical alignments meant "observatory" and therefore not "temple," and implied loss of the religious motivation in the megalithic society. Such either/or logic is significantly a "modern" division and therefore not likely to arise in the mind of the builders.

On the other hand, the long-held view was that these "rude" stone structures were clumsy erections of primitive "wild" peoples and therefore not worthy of further consideration, apart from the energy they expended on humping them about. The exception was Stonehenge, which was constantly "excused" on the grounds that the Romans or the Myceneans or the people of some other Mediterranean civilization were responsible. This attitude served to block our perception of the beauty and subtlety of these arrangements and of the stones in themselves.

The intellectual challenge that these megalithic monuments present to us is very much bound up with our own sense of what we take to be self-explanatory. The tendency is to make the stones fit neatly into either an "irrational" religious or "cultic" category, or a wholly rational "observatory" category. The fact that there are such obvious contradictions to either of these extremes, if one or other is taken as providing the "correct" answer, should warn us to be wary of our modern mental habits.

Direct experience of the stone circles arouses an immediate sense of drama, power, and concrete reality: we recognize a tremendous driving force. Because there are none of the normal associations of ego-aggrandizement the idea of the sacred inevitably arises. On the other hand the precise studies and hypotheses of Alexander Thom

and others demonstrate what we can only call a "scientific" motivation. For our modern Western categorizing mentalities this tends to force a choice between the "irrational" and "rational" interpretations, when in fact there is every good reason to accept both. It is by reviewing the meaning and nature of *temple* that we believe a solution emerges.

Archaic man, from all reliable evidence, placed himself in a metaphysical context: the Gods* were more *real* than the actual daily events—be they food-gathering or building. Without recourse to the study of comparative religion our view of megalithic man can only be less than fully human.

Mircea Eliade, after forty years of published findings in the field of comparative religion, concluded that his task would have been incomplete had he not discovered the function of symbolism from all his research. He concludes that symbols for the traditional and archaic societies, because they "reveal" underlying realities and conditions of the world which are not normally evident to immediate experience, are *always religious* since they point to the *real* (as in contradistinction to the actual or relative), and to a *world-pattern*. This he qualifies by saying that at the archaic levels of culture the *real*—the powerful, the living, the significant—is equivalent to the *sacred*. This also means that as a symbol it has *several simultaneous meanings* and therefore through *paradox* the symbol has the capability of expressing *patterns of ultimate reality* that can be expressed in no other way. Because of this, the value of religious symbolism as a universal phenomenon is that it *always points toward a reality concerning human existence*; in other words, the person who *understands* or is the proper recipient of a symbol is thereby "*opened*" to a *comprehension of the universal*. Thereby *one emerges from one's personal situation* at such a moment.

The symbol, then, whether a temple, a

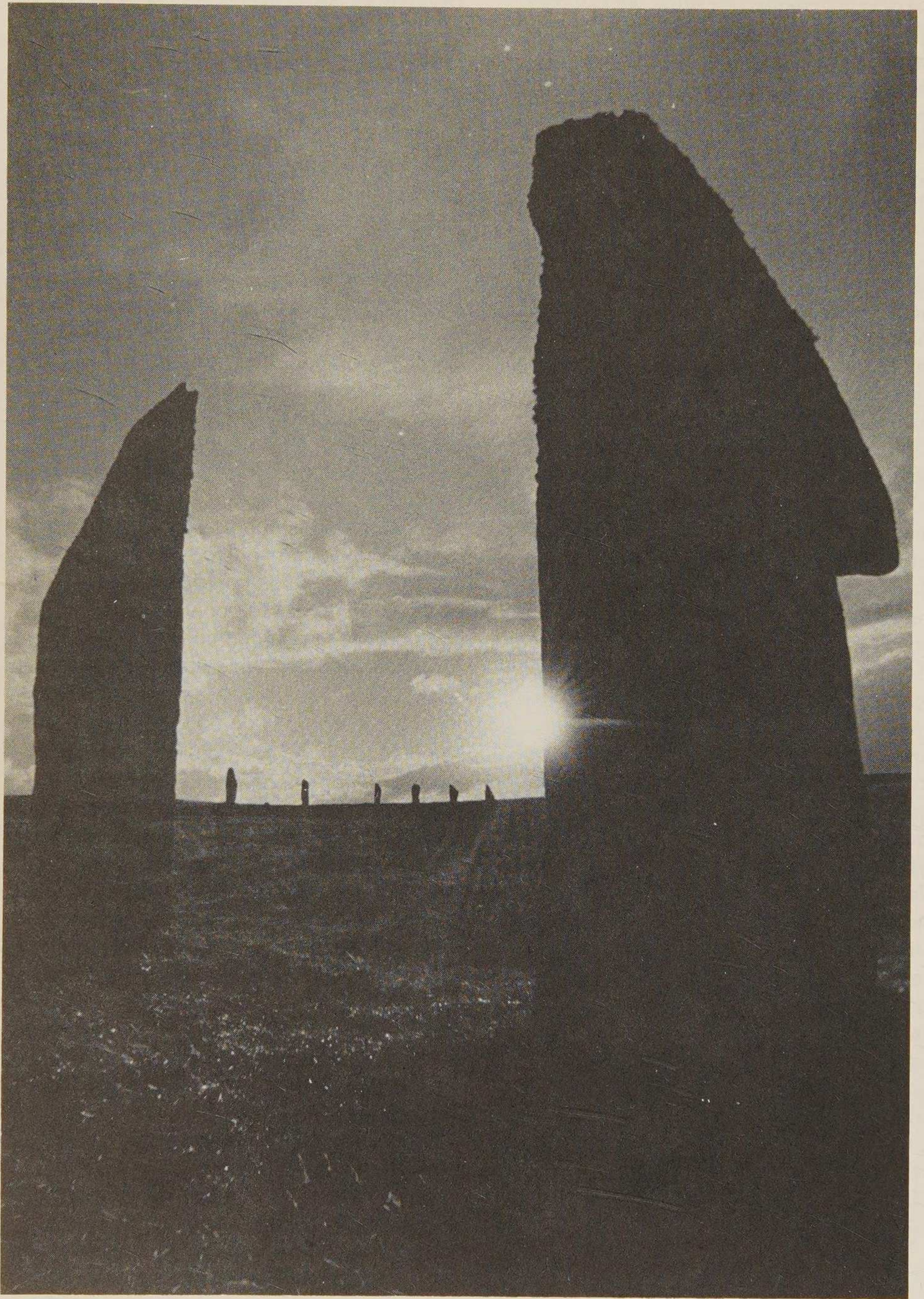
* As principles of the created order.

ritual or a natural event, is capable of revealing a *perspective of integration* in which apparently diverse realities can be fitted together.

Eliade cites an archetypal instance of direct relevance to our study—the Moon—which he concludes reveals a connatural unity as a symbol between lunar rhythms (the physical facts), temporal becoming, the "Waters," the growth of plants, women, death and resurrection, the human destiny, the weaver's craft, and so on. In sum, the Moon as a total symbol reveals a correspondence between all the levels of cosmic reality as expressed in human consciousness and experience. He adds, as if in warning to our perpetual searching for immediate empirical causes for all symbolism, that to understand the "lunar destiny" of human existence requires quite another order of cognition than an act of critical reason.

It is totally unwarranted to deny megalithic communities their human-ness by attempting to approach their works without taking into account these findings and all the studies so far made in the field of human societies of a primary, traditional, and archaic nature. To them the ultimate reality was of a symbolic and religious nature. As Eliade points out, the religious symbol reveals a pattern of existence which brings a *meaning to human existence*, translating any human existence into cosmological terms; in other words it reveals the unity of human and cosmic structure. At moments of such revelatory experience, differences between the individual and the rest of the cosmos become illusory—thus giving rise to the doctrine of illusion. It is not that the sensorial world is nonexistent, but that ultimately separation between the different levels of actuality and reality are illusory from the viewpoint of "revealed" Unity.

The explanation of the world, our modern obsession, by a series of reductions has, Eliade believes, one aim in view: to rid the world of any extramundane values. This systematic banalization of the world, as he calls it, is pursued with one purpose: that of conquering and mastering it. Despite the massive damage such an attitude can cause, its aim is obviously an impossibility, yet Eliade is at pains to point out this conquest of the world is not the purpose of all human



societies (at least not until half a century ago), but an idiosyncrasy of modern Western man. Traditional societies, he finds, pursue the aim of understanding the mystery of the World in order to live as the World “lives,” that is to say, by perpetual renewal. It is the meaning of human and therefore cosmic existence that matters, and this meaning is of a spiritual order.

“If there is mystification,” he continues, “it is not among the primitives...but among modern materialists who believe that the cosmic rhythms can ultimately be reduced to the periodicity of the crops.” Nourishment reduced to a merely physiological or economic activity is a banalization and an abstraction—notwithstanding that through forced starvation people can be reduced to tragic subhuman behavior. For traditional man, food represents his active participation *in* and part of his total behavior *toward* the Cosmos—an act of reciprocal renewal. It is in this sense of responsibility toward the renewal of the World that Eliade believes lie the origins of all forms of politics, both “classical” and “millennarist.” We need nourishment, shelter, kinship, occupation, purpose, respect, and accomplishment as much today as ever. In the same way we desire peace, friendship, and affection more than conflict, disruption, and discord. We also need to know something of our origin and destiny, and it is in this final area that we have most to learn from the ancient traditions.

Technological wizardry, the current pervading preoccupation, may not be the only criterion of a civilization. To be wise may be more valuable than to be clever. To have less knowledge, but in more depth, may be wiser than accumulating vast amounts of data in breadth which no individual can synthesize.

Possibly the ancients ran the economy of the British Isles so well, leaving themselves time to build permanent guides in the form of their temples, for this reason: they placed so much emphasis on wisdom and the

ultimate relationships between mankind and the Cosmos that they found little value in technological distractions which made water flow upwards and fire burn downwards.

The abstract concepts of calculation, the calendar, time, and space all relate to the immediate present, but the great sagas and creation myths of mankind embody the recurring theme that the gift of “knowledge” comes from the Gods. So we may expect that not only the “ground rules” of the stone circles originate with the “Gods,” but that the main purpose of the temple circle was to maintain contact with the transcendental. That is, truths of a universal nature that transcend the individual ego or sectional interest.

In their own mute way these proto-temples point heavenward, symbolically directing mankind’s attention to a metaphysical source of existence. The energy of the sun, the unceasing rhythm of the planets, repeat without words Plato’s plea to look to “the revolutions of intelligence in the heavens and use their untroubled courses, to guide the troubled revolutions in our own understanding.” Not least these “timeless” stones should cause us to question the real nature of permanence and the real nature of what it means to be human.◇

Adapted from *Time Stands Still* by Keith Critchlow, photographs by Rod Bull; published by Gordon Fraser Gallery, Ltd., Fitzroy Road, London NW1 8TP, England, ©1979.

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Tokahe

Tokahe is adapted from material in the James R. Walker Collection at the State Historical Society of Colorado, and reworked by researchers at the Oglala Sioux Culture Center, under the direction of Vivian One Feather. The material used is part of the traditional myths and folktales of the Lakota people, collected under the name Ehanni Ohunkakan and presented as a curriculum resource unit of the Red Cloud Indian School at Pine Ridge, South Dakota.

After the sons of Tate had established the four directions and the four winds, there was much rejoicing, and the lodge of Tate was filled with happiness. There were still no people on the earth in those days except for the sorcerer Wazi and his wife Wakanka and Anog Ite, the double-faced woman. The four sons of Tate, the Tatuyetopa, and the fifth son, little Yum, whose capriciousness delighted everyone, were as spirits, doing the will of Mahpiyato. There were other spirits in the world as well, and one of them was the trickster, Iktomi.

One day, Iktomi made a pact with Anog Ite. He told her he would no longer play pranks on her if she would agree to help him. Then he made a similar pact with the wolves. Since that day, Iktomi has kept to his bargain. The wolves, following Iktomi's instructions, drove game toward the tepee of Anog Ite, who killed and skinned them. Then she made many beautiful robes for men and women, and prepared a pack containing clothes and food. Iktomi gave the pack to a wolf and went to the cave that is the entrance to the world under the world, where the Ikce, who are the ancestors of the Lakota people, lived before there were people in the upper world. Iktomi told the wolf to go through the cave, speaking to no one, until he saw the first strong young man. To him alone was the wolf to speak, and then give him the pack of clothes and food, telling him that there were plenty of such things in the world he came from.

The wolf did as Iktomi had bidden. He went through the cave and saw the camp of the Ikce. On the way, he



met a strong young man, who asked the wolf who it was, whence it came, and what it wanted. The wolf replied, "I am a benefactor of the Ikce, and have come from the upper world to give your people what they most desire." Then he gave the pack to the young man and asked his name. "I am Tokahe," replied the young man. "You will become a leader among your people," said the wolf. "Take the pack and give the things in it to your people. Tell them that there is an abundance of food and beautiful clothing in the world above, but if they ask you how you came by these things, you must not tell them."

Tokahe took the pack and gave the meat to his people. He and his wife wore the clothes, and all the people envied them. He told them that there were plenty of such things in the world above, but he said nothing of the wolf who had given him the pack. Then, an old man suggested that three young men go with Tokahe to the upper world, to see if these things were true; and when the moon was round, they followed his advice. The wolf met them and took them to his world, where they saw much game, for Iktomi had taken care to tell the wolves to drive the game about in great numbers. The wolf led the young men to the tepee of Anog Ite, who, covering her ugly face, showed only her beautiful one. Iktomi appeared too, disguising himself as a handsome young man, and told the four that he and Anog Ite were very old, but kept a youthful appearance because they ate meat.

When Tokahe and the three young men had eaten of the feast of soup and meat that Anog Ite had prepared for them, Iktomi gave them presents of meat, robes, and soft skins, and went with them back to the cave. The wolf guided them through to their own world, and when it returned, Iktomi told it to remain at the entrance and guide others who wished to come to the upper world. Then, when they had passed through, the wolf was to lead them far from food and water, and leave them.





Tokahe and his friends showed their people all the presents that Iktomi had given them, and told them that they had been to the world above and had seen plenty of game. They also told them that they had seen people who ate meat and remained beautiful and handsome, even though they were very old. Many wished to follow Tokahe into the upper world, but an old chief warned them that those who passed through the cave would never again find the entrance and must remain in the upper world forever. He told them that winds blew on that world, and that they would be cold and hungry, and that despite the plentiful game, they would have to hunt for food and work hard to prepare tepees and clothing.

After much argument, six brave men and their families chose to go with Tokahe. When they had passed through the cave, the wolf met them and guided them. They traveled by night, and the wolf led them into the wilderness. The children cried for food, but there was no game to be found. It was cold, as the chief had warned, and the winds blew mercilessly. Iktomi came and laughed at their misery, and when Anog Ite appeared, as if to comfort them, she showed them her ugly face, and they fled from her in terror.

When morning came, the people who had come with Tokahe were hungry and lost, and Tokahe was ashamed. Then Wazi and Wakanka appeared, and led them to the pine forests. Wazi showed the men how to hunt game and dry the meat to last through the winter, so that they would survive the cold blasts of Tate's son, Yata. Wakanka showed the women how to make clothing and tepees, and put into their hands all the skills they would need to survive. Thus Tokahe and his friends came into the world as the first people, and their children are the Lakota.

In the upper world, once they had learned all that

Wazi and Wakanka had taught them, the Lakota multiplied and tried to make their lives as comfortable as possible. But always Iktomi and Anog Ite were there to annoy them, because they delighted in trickery. The two went into league with the demon Gnaski to make as much trouble in the world as possible, and Gnaski planned fresh torments every day, seeking advice and help from his mother, Unk.

One day, Unk created the Mini Watutkala, tiny creatures too small to be seen, that could hide in the water so that people would drink them and fall ill. That is how pain and fever came into the world, and the Medicine Men could find no remedy for this affliction. Then Tokahe sought help from Wakinyan, and in a vision learned how to make Sweat Lodges—dome-shaped, so that when stones were heated inside them and water was poured on, the steam that arose would strengthen the spirit to aid in maintaining the health of the body and drive from it the Mini Watutkala. Since that day, the Lakota have used the Sweat Lodge whenever they need to strengthen their inner spirits.

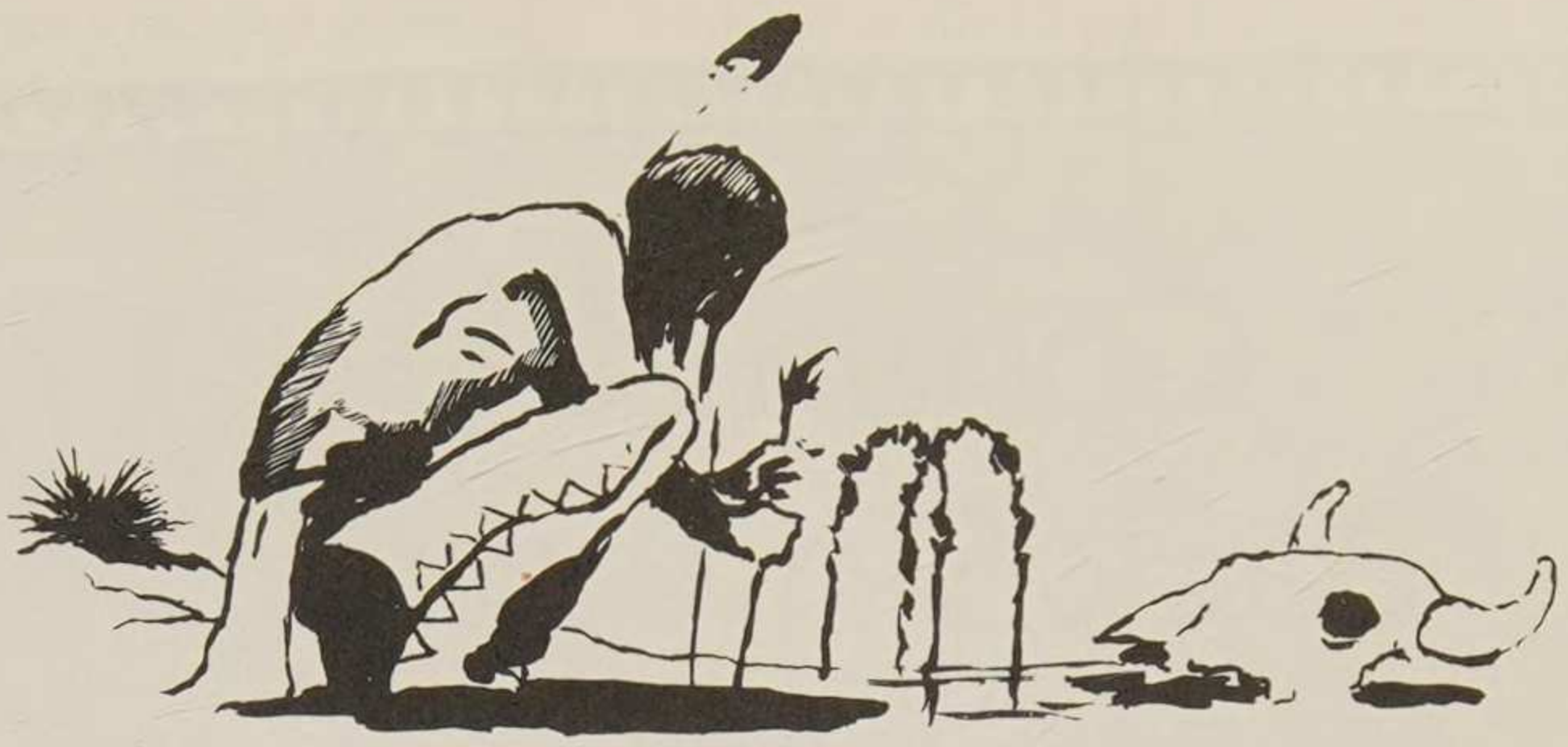
Tokahe also brought to his people the custom of the Vision Quest. This is how it happened.

One day, a young man mocked a Holy Man, and was defiant when Tokahe admonished him. Tokahe held his hand over the young man and said that from that time on, he would be like the dogs. The young man laughed in scorn, but when he tried to get up, he could not, and had to walk around on his hands and knees. When he tried to talk, his tongue could not form words, and he had to lap water from a bowl when he was thirsty. The people became afraid of this man-dog, and after a while he had no more friends. One day, he came to Tokahe, whining and howling, and crawling to his feet in shame. Tokahe painted a red stripe across the forehead of the young man

and said, "From now on, you will be my adopted son, and your name will be Sunk. You will be like all my sons to me."

Then Tokahe took Sunk, and another young man called Pahin, and taught them all the traditions of the Lakota. When the two of them had learned all the sacred mysteries and traditions, Tokahe told them to go separately to some secret place and remain without food or drink. "All the time you are there, you must pray to the gods for a vision," he said, "and if you are granted a vision, you must return and tell it to me."

When Sunk and Pahin returned from their fast, Tokahe placed his hand on Sunk's head and asked him what he had seen. Sunk said that a voice had spoken to him. "What did it say?" asked Tokahe. "It said, 'The point of an arrowhead, the hoof of a deer, the quill of a hawk, the root of an herb,'" replied Sunk. "Bring these things here," said Tokahe, and Sunk gathered the four things and placed them on a soft deerskin before Tokahe. Then Tokahe built an altar and put the deerskin and the four sacred objects on the altar. He told Sunk and Pahin to lay their hands on the skin; then he put his hands on their heads and prayed to Mahpiyato, the great spirit. Afterwards, he asked Sunk and Pahin to wound themselves so that the blood would flow, and he smeared the blood on each of the sacred objects. "Now you are Holy Men," said Tokahe. "From now on, these things will be as charms, which will have the power of the Great Spirit in them and will enable you to work wondrous deeds. You must never call upon these powers for trivial matters, but only for serious things, for the Will of the Great Spirit works through them." Then he wrapped the four charms up in the deerskin and tied it with mysterious knots. He taught Sunk and Pahin sacred songs and dances, and brought them before the people, and a great feast was held in their honor.



Thus, Tokahe brought the Vision Quest to his people, and for several generations, parents brought their sons to him to seek visions, and their daughters to be taught the powers of womanhood. Upon the heads of all who came and learned from him, Tokahe painted a red stripe at the parting of the hair, and since that time, this has been kept as a sign of fidelity to the ways of the Lakota.

For many generations, Tokahe remained among his people and taught them their customs and rites, and during all this time he never suffered any disease or bodily harm. But one day when he had grown very old and weak, he told Sunk and Pahin to bring two poles and place them side by side. Then, during the night, a spider wove a huge web from pole to pole, and when morning came, the people were amazed because the web was so strong. Then Tokahe lifted up his voice:

“The time has come for me to leave you,” he said. “From far away I have come, and there I must return in obedience to the will of Mahpiyato.” Then he sat on the great spider web and instructed Sunk and Pahin to carry him where he directed. The two men lifted the poles and were astonished to find that their burden was as light as a feather. They carried Tokahe to a secret place and the people bowed their heads and wept and sang songs for the dead. Sunk and Pahin left Tokahe alone, but for one moon stayed nearby to protect him from harm. When they went to find him, he had disappeared, and was seen no more by the eyes of men.

—Retold by Paul Jordan-Smith

Illustrations by Asa Battles

Coming Back Slow

by Agnes Vanderburg



Agnes Vanderburg is a venerated member of a distinguished family of Flathead Indian tribal leaders. The old ways of doing, which are also ways of being, are part and parcel of what she is: a simple, no-nonsense, working model of a just exchange between the human being and the powers that rule his universe. Mrs. Vanderburg passes on her knowledge of these ways of being-doing to the children (the ones who will listen) at St. Ignatius and other schools, and in summer at her camp on the reservation, not far from Arlee, Montana, to anyone of any age who wishes to come and learn. PARABOLA asked her to tell us what she thinks about old people and old ways, and why they are important.

Well, when I grew up, things were different. In my time there was a lot of berries, a lot of game, fish, everything. But now everything is gone—the roots, the berries.

That is what I see: they don't grow no more. The reason why is because when they are ripe, nobody prays when they grab the berries to put 'em in their mouth; they just go in there and eat off the bushes. It's the same with the roots. The oldtimers believed they had to pray for everything before they tasted it. But now, they don't believe in anything anymore. I tell my kids: I'm getting there, this February fourteenth I'll be seventy-nine; so I know a little bit about what's behind me. So I tell them: do what I was taught; then when I've gone, you'll know whatever I knew. But now you believe in the other way, you don't believe in our Indian ways.

I always tell my kids I am ready any time. I did everything with my two hands. I'm ready. I should be laying down taking rest. When you get too old, you don't use your hands no more. One of your kids has to take care of you. Some old people can't walk, they are hard of hearing or blind. But you have to take care of your elders after

they get that old. You can't just put them in an old people's home and forget about them. You're supposed to pay them for what they did for you from the time you were born. That's the way we do; we take care of our elders, we don't put them in an old people's home, even if they can't walk or talk.

In the old days, when the people were moving from place to place, they took the old people with them. Lots of different places they're buried. If they were on their travels when they died, they buried them right there.

Now, I'm trying to teach people what I know about the old ways of doing things. I teach some at St. Ignatius, beading and quill work, like that. I see kids aren't interested in school. That's the reason why what they're doing is mostly in their heads. You see on TV what's going on. That's the way a lot of them learn how to do these bad things; they even show on TV how to steal a car, how to break into a house. They show you how to open the locks, how to open windows, how to destroy cars. That's what I don't like. That's where they learn all these bad things. They don't care to learn the good way from their teacher.

Then I have a camp, where I teach; I stay over there three months in the summer. I'll have it again next summer. I had five hundred and fifty-two kids—people—up there this year. (Anybody younger than me, I call 'em kids.)

Some stay a few hours, some ask if they could come again in a week or maybe tomorrow, so they can learn what I'm teaching. The longest they stay is two weeks. It's three years now I've done this. I go about four miles down the highway and turn left; I got all my signs on the road where everybody can see how to get to my camp.

When I came back I missed my camp. Everything seemed noisy. Over there it's still. That good water—there's kind of a spring that comes out of the ground.

One of the things I'm teaching them is how to make Indian saddles, because that's gone too; you don't see no Indian saddles anymore. You make your frame out of wood and cover it with wet rawhide, and sew it where it needs to be sewed. Then when it gets dry it kind of grabs the wood.

Yes, that's the thing: kids don't care to go to school. I had five; I made 'em all go all the way through, high school, college; then the three boys went in the service.

Even the language is gone. Just to be funny, I start talking Indian to these kids and they look at me and say, "I don't know what you're saying." They're starting in now teaching it again in the school here. But they call and ask me what this word means. I say: You're supposed to be teachers! You got to pay me five dollars for every word. They owe me a lot of money now! [laughs]

Sometimes I show 'em how to make the sign language—you see, Indians, they can't keep their hands still; when they talk, their hands are going. That's part of the talking. People can understand the movements. [She demonstrates] "You are talking: I hear you: what?" You see, you can pretty nearly understand just by the movements.

When I was growing up, everyone was talking Indian. So when I went to school at the Agency, it was okay to talk Indian there. But first thing I knew we had to go to St. Ignatius and there was nothing but English. Then when we'd get together and start talking Indian, we'd sure get scolded for that; they didn't want us to talk Indian. We got scared to talk. That's why a lot of Indians stopped talking their own language.

I've visited different tribes and it's the same; they just wanted to talk their own language. But all the tribes are different. The Nez Perce, for instance; you can't understand them. And the Kootenai—they talk fast. Even between here and St. Ignatius there's different words. So when the oldtimers get together we talk with sign language. We say: What kind of Indian are you? This is the way; we go like that [she shows a movement of right hand raised, then touching the back of the left hand.]

Then there's what my grandparents

said: When all Indians start talking one language, then you better watch it: the world's going to end. And I believe it, because they are all talking English now. But the old language is coming back slow—so they might stop it, if they try.

But some of the kids don't want to learn the Indian ways. That's what gets me mad. At the Dixon School, they brought an elk and a deer to make jerky—that's what we call dried meat—so they laid it on a big table. The teacher say: Agnes, you show the girls how to slice it. One girl was just barely touching the knife and the meat. I went over to her, and I really grabbed her hand and made her hold the knife tight. I took her other hand and put it right on that meat. I says: Here, that's the way you do it; and I started cutting it, holding on to her hands. I made her touch that meat and grab that knife the way she should. Then I left. But the others started cutting when I showed them, and in no time I saw a bunch of meat on the rack.

Some, I just call them bullheaded. If they don't want to do it they don't do it, and I tell them: Well, you get away from here, then! If you want to be bullheaded I'll be bullheaded too; go on! I want to teach everybody the old ways, and that's what I was doing.

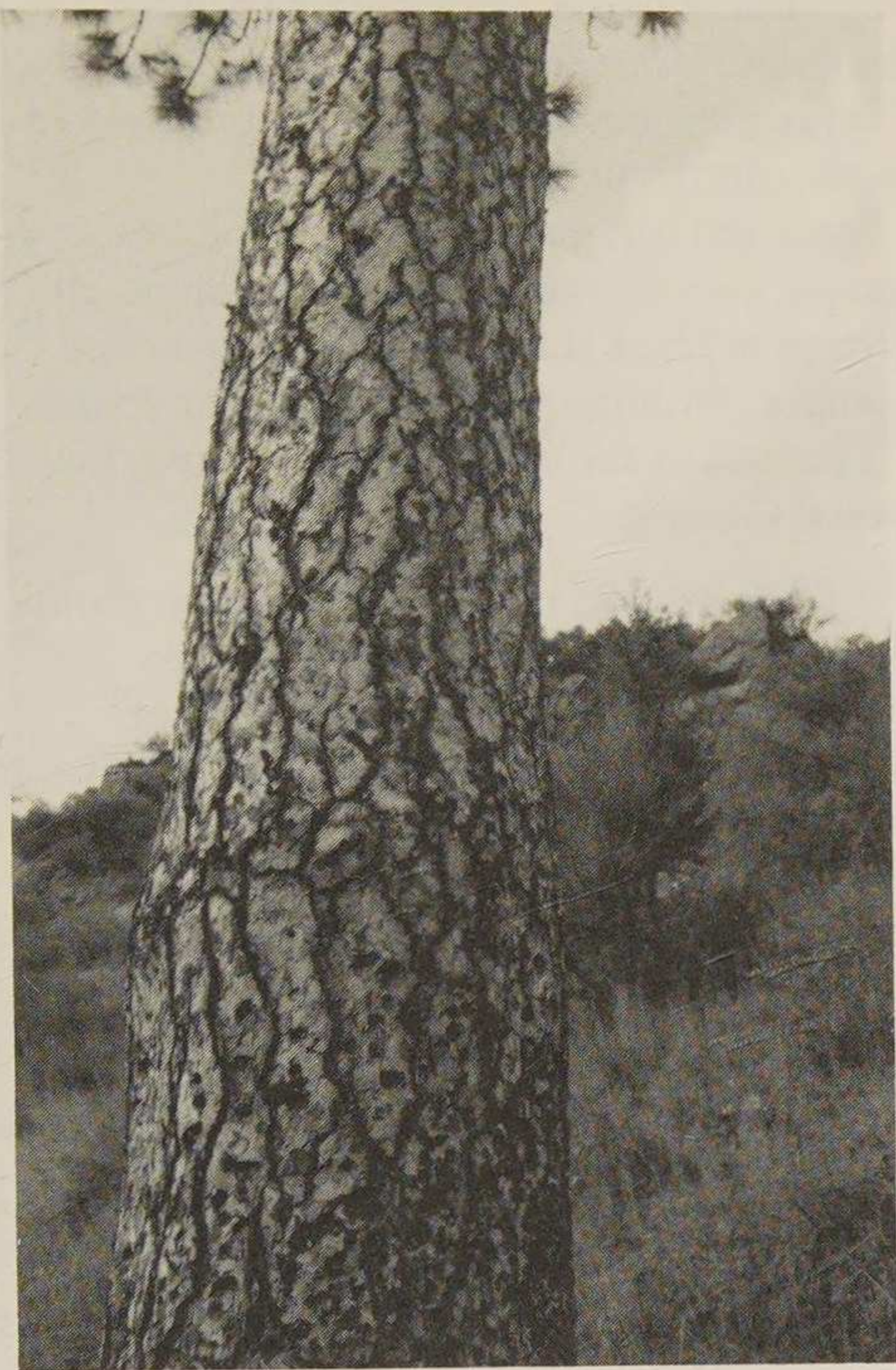
But nobody has any more berries stored for the winter, no roots, nothing; there are no berries any more. It's been about three years there are no huckleberries. What I always tell them: Do what we're supposed to do, it will come back. The water's going really dry, the lakes went way down. It's because they don't believe in anything anymore. The way the old people was, they never had no doctors, and now everybody's going to doctors. They knew what the roots and plants were for. Now there's all sorts of sicknesses, heart attacks, cancer, all that stuff; we've got the medicine for 'em, if they'd just leave these drugs and pills and

shots; that's no good for your body. I start showing them all our medicine. When you get them from the ground, or off the tree, you can't just go over there and dig 'em out; when you find them, you got to take something you really like, and talk to this plant and tell him what you're going to do with it, and then bury what you are offering in the ground. Then you dig the root or whatever you need, and then that helps.

There's a place the other side of Hamilton where we've got a medicine tree. This tribe used to believe in that tree. Every fall and every spring they'd go over there. They went over there to give that tree a present. Whatever they wish for they tell that tree. You know the story? Well, they say that once a great big mountain sheep was chasing Coyote, and Coyote, he was running for his life, and he came to this tree and got behind it. The sheep charged right into the tree and rammed one of his horns in the tree and got stuck there. So Coyote said: Now this tree will be the medicine tree, and whoever comes to pray to this tree, he got to give it a payment and he can ask for anything he wants.

Just about a month ago I took some people over there. I told them: Don't just come here and laugh; you got to pay this tree. Whatever you want to be, anything you want, you tell him, but you got to pay this tree. This tree had a lot of these coins that people had stuck into it, old money, and later people came and cut into the tree so there was a bunch of holes. You could tell where there used to be a dollar, a fifty-cent piece, or a quarter—it was just like a woodpecker had been chipping on that bark. One man, oh, he was mad; he says: Why didn't I know when I was young? I said: 'Cause you didn't care! What your old grandmother knew, you didn't care to know.

Last year and this year I took some people there. But our tree is dying from the top. They're saying it's on account of everybody taking things out of the tree. There's just a bunch of holes in the trunk, where people have taken the money out, because it's old money, old coins.



So there's another thing that's in our belief, that medicine tree.

There was one woman that when she got old enough to comb her hair, her mother says: Take care of the hair that comes off in your comb, keep it and this spring we'll take it back to the medicine tree, because I want you to have black hair no matter how old you are. So in the spring they go over there; she puts the hair in that tree, or else in the ground, and tells the tree: I want to have black hair no matter how old I am. So that's the way she was, her hair stayed black till she died.

It comes true if you make up your mind what you're going to tell that tree; but if you just go over there for a joke, nothing is going to help.

In my Grandma's time they went over there with their horses, and there was a hole in the tree where the mountain sheep put his horn in, and they put all their beads in that hole, or whatever they wanted to put in; but after all the oldtimers went, that hole closed over.

We still got the medicine tree, but there are no medicine men anymore. In their time, they didn't have doctors; it was the spirit that came to them that cured all different sicknesses. There was one old man that cured even for babies. That's all they depended on, was the medicine men. But now if they tried to have medicine men, they would just try to go on what they heard about the way it was. But there aren't any, anymore. The old grandmothers used to say it's because we're living in a box—that means, in a house; and in those days, they were staying in tepees, so their spirit could come to them. But not the way we live now. That's why we are not strong like the old ancestors.

My Grandma died when she was a hundred and fourteen. My mother died when she was eighty-four. My grandfather—I didn't really know how old he was.

And I was with my husband fifty-three years when he died. Now kids get married and in two weeks they part. I say, you have got to face one person. But they can't.

I try to tell 'em what we left behind. Just teach 'em that. That's what I've been trying to do for three years now: tell 'em what's right and what's wrong—that's easy done. Sometimes you get angry and holler at 'em, but you have to tell 'em what's right and what's wrong. Some take your word and some don't; it's okay. Tell 'em what you know of the old ways. A lot of 'em don't care, but some of them do. Why I'm doing this is because it used to be on my chest all the time. I like to tell everybody what I know and now that weight on my chest is gone. Then I feel good. So it is the way to do it. What little you know, tell 'em. You feel good afterward; you get everything right for yourself. And some of them will listen. ◇

Living Ancestors

*written and illustrated by
Frederick Franck*

“Come home with me, I have to show you something,” Professor Nishimura had said with a peculiar smile. And there we were, sitting on the tatami, sipping tea. Mrs. Nishimura was holding up her still-wet copy of an Utrillo and I had to praise its competence endlessly, but obviously that was not what I was here for. At long last my host got up, took a leather cassette out of a wall cabinet, opened it carefully, and, sitting down again, showed me the gleaming enameled trinket on a ribbon.

“The Imperial Order of Merit,” he announced with his most formal smile, his eyes darting from the medal to me and back. I admired the decoration with elaborate deference, congratulated him perhaps a shade too profusely, to veil a slight embarrassment. How could this learned man, emeritus professor of a prestigious university, visiting professor at American and European universities, still active as the director of a respected postgraduate institution, be so elated with this knickknack?

“When did you receive it, Nishimura Sensei?”

“Immediately after my seventieth birthday! You see,” he added emphatically, “it is never, never given before one’s seventieth, often much later!”

He got up again to fetch the photograph: two rows of old men on a lawn, all frozen in black suits, stiffly smiling at the camera, Nishimura, front row, near center. “This was at the ceremony. In Tokyo. Imperial Gardens.”

Theologians, mathematicians, surgeons do not become “Living National Treasures,” so they are given The Order of Merit to honor them after a lifelong striving for prominence in their field, examples for those who one day may be seventy. To become a Living National Treasure, however, one has to be craftsman or artist: potter, painter, dyer, actor. One has to be an “intangible cultural asset.” For a government concentrated on assets that are all too tangible, to honor that which—while being intangible and cultural—is nevertheless appraised as a national asset, isn’t that rather wonderful?

Shigeyama Sensaku, the Kyogen actor, is such a Treasure. The first time I saw him on stage in a splendid performance of Kyogen—the farcical interludes between solemn Nō plays—a bald little man of remarkable, quite acrobatic, agility, I took him to be in his early sixties. He was then seventy-three. It so happens that I visited Japan every year since, on various pretexts for seeing more of the Nō and the Kyogen to which I am addicted. Every time I managed to see (and for me that means: to draw) Shigeyama-san on stage with his cast, consisting of his son Sengoro, one or two younger sons and grandsons and even a great-grandson. The Shigeyama family tradition as Kyogen actors goes back for centuries. When Sensaku-san was seventy-nine, three years ago, he became what he had actually been all the time: a Living National Treasure. When, last June, I saw him in a particularly lively Kyogen in which he had to fall flat on his face, he proved that at eighty-two a Living National Treasure can fall flat on his face with enviable dignity.

His range of expression is limitless. No baby can produce a more lovely, more in-



nocent smile, express more malignant arrogance and shed bitterer tears, all in the span of thirty seconds, than Sensaku-san—except perhaps his eldest son Sengoro who moreover holds a world record: no one on earth, purebred bullfrogs excepted, can make his eyes pop out like Sengoro. At sixty, although magnificent, he will no doubt continue to refine his craft until the time that he in his turn will be certified as a Treasure.

For these Shigeyamas are not just superb comedians, they are the great masters of a craft who must transmit that craft to the next generation after having added their own substance to centuries of tradition. They are an object lesson on the meaning of that much abused word “creativity.”

Sensaku Shigeyama has a hobby: once I happened to sit next to him, on his day off, absorbed in watching a Nō play at the Kongo Nogaku; another time I saw him at a Mibo-Kyogen performance, a folk version of Nō by amateurs at a local temple. During intermissions, now and then one of the actors would come to bow low before the tiny little old man in his neat double-breasted suit, who sat there following the goings-on on stage in relaxed concentration—kindly, serenely, without a trace of self-importance.

The institution of Living National Treasures was started in the fifties—when Japan’s machine culture was preparing to overtake ours—barely a hundred years after the West had forced the opening up of its insular, agricultural society. The title Living National Treasure implies more than mere homage paid to excellence in the traditional crafts. It is just one expression of devotion to these still-living ancestors lifted from the anonymity of social security registers, to these citizens whose seniority far transcends the merely chronological. It is at the same time a wholesome antidote against the excessive glorification of youth and a reverential attitude towards age as a stage in the human life-process that has its immense value, a stage that can be life’s culmination and consummation.

R.H. Blyth says somewhere that mere oldness is “dryness and decline of life and energy,” but that “agedness” may well



mean "all of youth with none of its stupidity, insensitiveness, egotism, and cruelty." Agedness then, is oldness without cynicism, obstinacy, and pride of power.

This must be the "intangible asset" the Japanese defer to in these still-living ancestors, and find worthy of emulation, if not worship.

I had the good fortune to watch another Treasure firsthand: Eishiro Abe, one of the few men who have kept the craft of hand-made paper (*washi*) alive, a craft dating back to first-century China and perfected in Japan since the eighth century. I visited Mr. Abe with mutual friends—followers of the Oomoto (Shinto) sect—from Matsue, where Lafcadio Hearn's house, now a museum, is still a Japanese place of pilgrimage. The Abe establishment has dominated the nearby little mountain village of Yakumo in the district of Izumo for hundreds of years. Its center is the vast and beautifully beamed Japanese farm building, which houses Mr. Abe's living quarters, his offices, and a museum on paper-making. The latter also contains rare pieces of folk art and contemporary works by artists like Bernard Leach, the English potter (the most revered Westerner in Japan along with Lafcadio Hearn), the great ceramist Shoji Hamada, and various other contemporary artists who use Abe's Izumo paper. (Rembrandt, by the way, appreciated *washi* for etching and drawing more than three centuries ago.)

Mr. Abe, a man of aristocratic bearing in his late seventies, aided by a son, a grandson, and his working staff, still runs this ancient, yet by no means anachronistic industry, in which mulberry-bark pulp, after lengthy preparations and dying with vegetable dye, is beaten into an emulsion, enriched with starches, applied to bamboo screens, and dried in the sun. In this way the sixty varieties of paper are made which Abe has always in stock, as well as many more varieties designed for special purposes.

Shortly after my visit, Eishiro Abe left for America with a traveling exhibition of his most elegant creations.

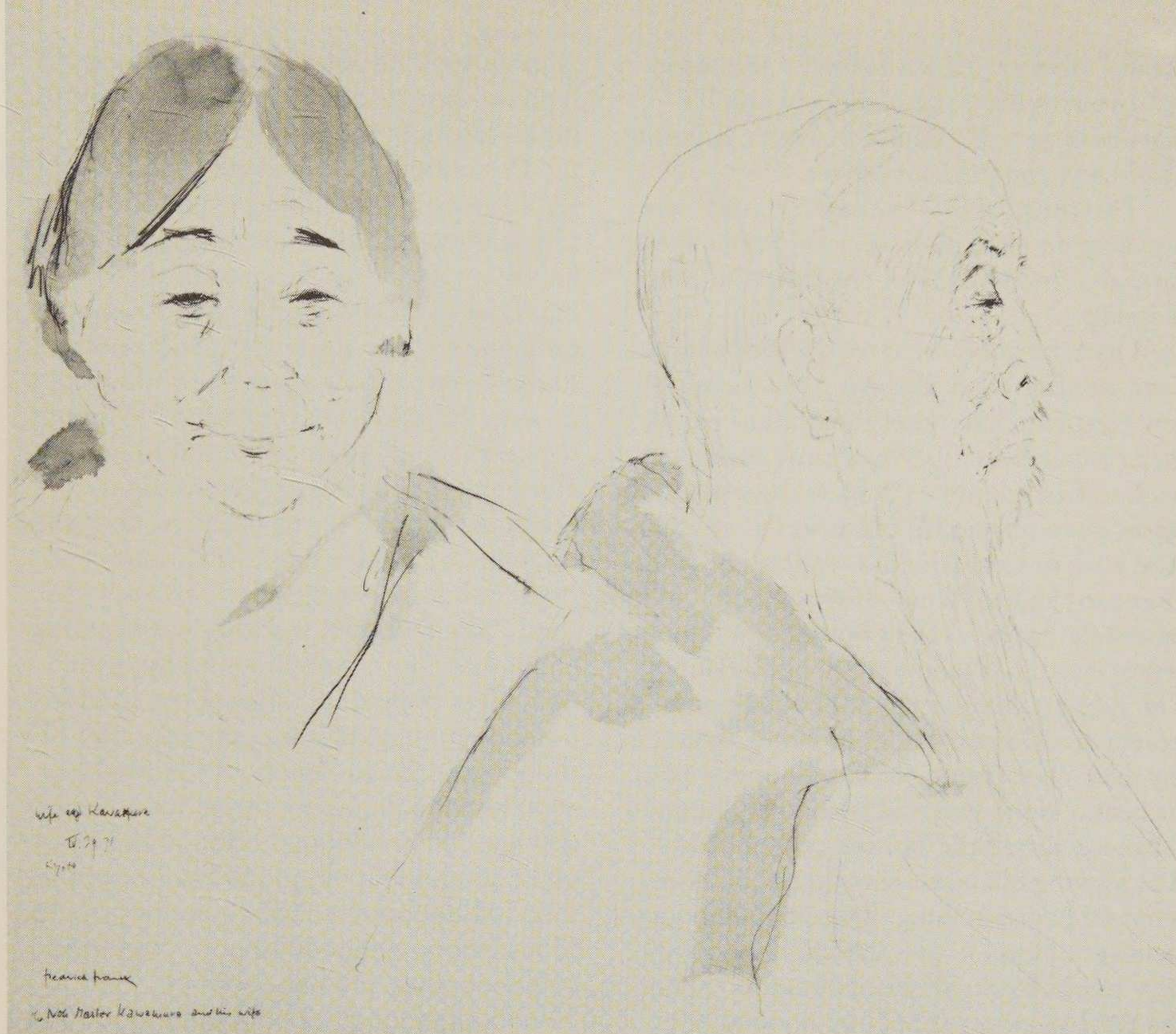
In a beautifully illustrated book *The Living Treasures of Japan* published by Kodansha International, Barbara Adachi reports on her interviews with fourteen of these remarkable craftsmen and women. Almost each one of them has something memorable to say on what it means to grow old, and to do so in unbroken striving for perfection in the craft one committed oneself to long ago as a *deshi*, an apprentice. The bamboo craftsman Shono, for instance, made it very clear to Ms. Adachi that a craft cannot be mastered in six, or even in sixty, easy lessons: "My *deshi* start working with bamboo only after they have learned to clean up. This gives them time to put themselves in order too! They must learn to take care of the garden, the workshop, the house; they must learn to decide on their own to pull this weed and to let that blade of grass grow. In this way they develop discrimination and confidence. Only someone capable of making judgements can ever hope to obtain the highest level in his work."

It makes one think of what Tintoretto's or Rubens' apprentices had to go through before being let loose to indulge in "creative expression," and also of something a great Zen master in Kyoto once told me:

I get many young Americans here who want to study Zen. They have read a lot about enlightenment.... When I take them on I say: "All that is very nice, so let's first start with washing your rice bowls, making your bed properly, and cleaning your fingernails."

The master craftsman is referred to as *Oya kata*, father-person, and all these father-persons seem to agree: little can be achieved unless a craft is seen as a pilgrimage, a Way, a lifelong self-imposed discipline or yoga, that requires total commitment—and character. The stencil cutter Nambu puts it this way: "I must concentrate intensely, completely, physically and mentally, I must not let down for a moment. This is my whole life..."

"It is refinement and character that distinguishes the true potter from a man who merely makes pots," says Fujiwara, Living Treasure of the famous Bizen kilns. His



world-famous fellow Treasure, Shoji Hamada, would concur, for both men confess that between a third to one half of the work that comes out of their kilns is not up to their standards, that they destroy much, that only some ten percent is worthy of being shown. Hamada's yearly production runs to about five thousand pots. Not more than five hundred ever go to exhibitions. They also agree that it is not enough to imitate the traditional, but that tradition remains the foundation upon which the craftsman, without merely copying, must build his oeuvre.

The eighty-five-year-old hemp weaver and dyer, Ayano Chiba, an almost dwarf-like little woman ("I have shrunk a lot!"),

who perpetuates the two-thousand-year-old craft of hemp spinning and dying, grows her own hemp, cleans it, boils it, spins the fibers, prepares the home-grown indigo dye and, with her daughter, weaves a limited number of bolts of kimono cloth "that will last three hundred years." (And, "mind you, my dye is absolutely fast, no rubbing off ever; just as in the old days!") She has hardly ever left her village, she is too busy, "likes her work too much..."

Shoji Hamada, the potter, does know his world. When young he befriended Bernard Leach, who was then working in Japan and was later to become almost personally responsible for the renaissance of pottery in the West. Hamada worked with Leach in his Cornwall studio, then returned to Japan in 1924 and settled in the pottery village of Mashiko. Together Leach and Hamada symbolize the modern movement in ceramics and set the example for contemporary

craftsmen who have to cope with today's specific problems. They share their love for ancient folk craft and in this they were joined by Soetsu Yanagi, the great collector and prophet of the value of folk art, on whose sheer enthusiasm and perseverance the Tokyo Museum of Folk Arts (*Mingeikan*) was founded in 1936. The three formed a team which in 1952 toured America, with Hamada demonstrating at the wheel, Leach lecturing on tradition, and Yanagi reading papers on folk craft. It was a visit to our shores of Three Wise Men, from which very much could have been learned by our commercialized art establishment with its intellectualized critical attitudes, for they glorified what is "wholesome and natural" in art, rejecting the "attractions of the pathological."

Yanagi (1889-1961) especially, never tires in his praise for the anonymous, often illiterate potters of the Korean Yi dynasty (sixteenth century) so much greater than the self-conscious artist-craftsmen of our time with all their acquired knowledge and technical skills.

"What produced the Korean bowls was not the path of *jiriki*, 'self-power', (salvation through the efforts of ego), but that of *tariki*, 'other-power', (the abandonment of all reliance on self, the reliance on 'grace'), or perhaps even the point at which the dualism between *jiriki* and *tariki* is overcome."

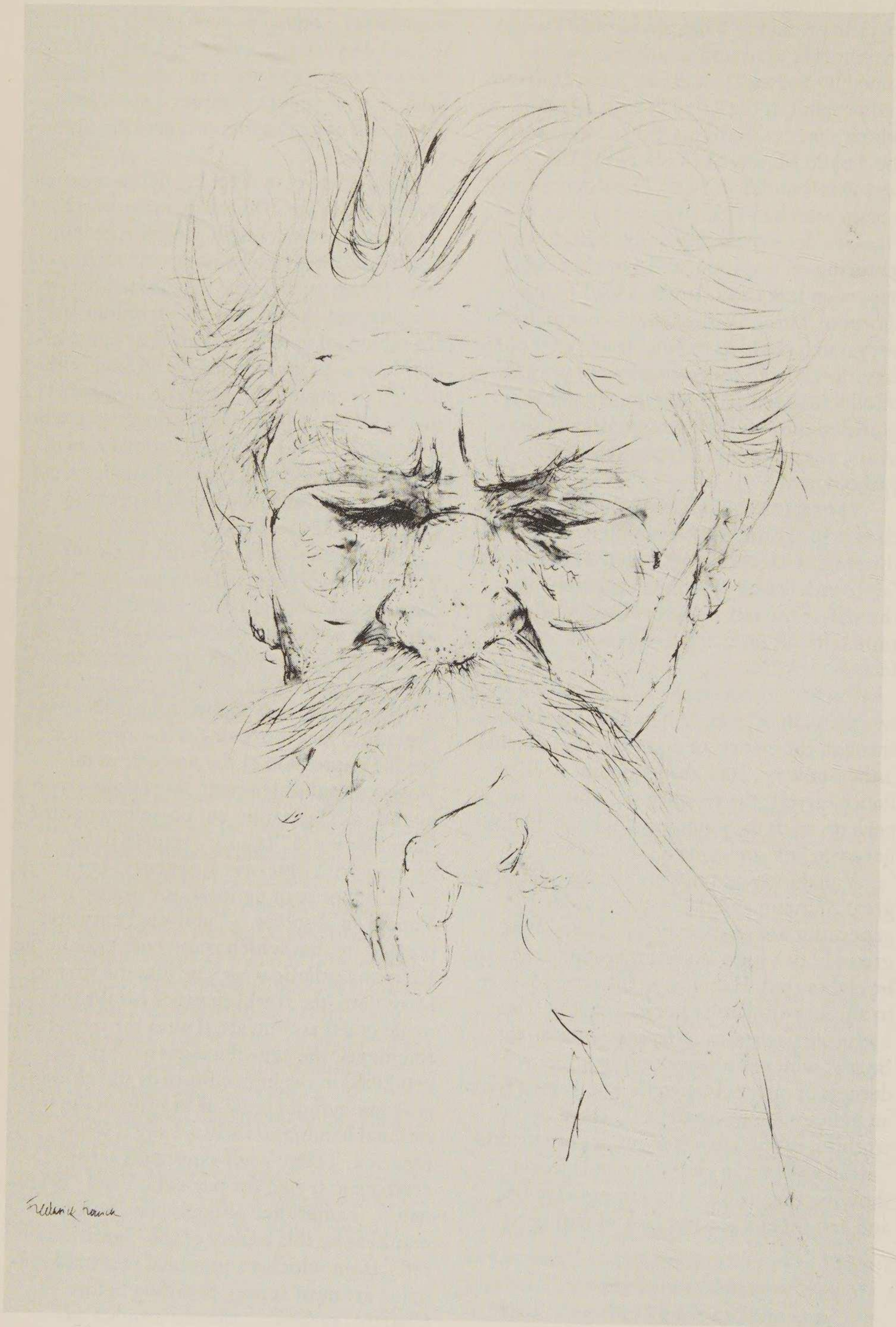
Yanagi was not merely the founder of a great museum and the inspired guide to generations of craftsmen, he also laid the groundwork for a Buddhist aesthetic still to be elaborated. Hamada, in his introduction to another Kodansha book, Yanagi's *The Unknown Craftsman, A Japanese Insight Into Beauty*, which is a voice crying in the wilderness of our technotronic era, begins with an indictment-in-a-nutshell, as sad as it is truthful, of the self-assertive art of our time "often abstract in character and clearly showing the pressures of present-day life and art: I feel a general lack of maturity,

both in motivation and technique. The first impression...one of power, of force, but followed by a sensation of violence and at the same time of emptiness...shells without fish... The abstract examples were mannered, did not spring from a genuine internal life."

When Suetsu Yanagi lay dying at seventy-two he wrote: "Recently many works of art have appeared which profess freedom. Real freedom is free from the ism of freedom. When we become imprisoned by the clinging ego, we at once lose freedom and are subjected to un-freedom. The ego constantly sets about judging everything with the self as center of judgement. Lying on this sickbed I see that rather than those who have talent or genius, quite ordinary men who are most deeply, most spiritually alive, have miraculously succeeded in creating things of great beauty."

Writing about his beloved Yi potters, Yanagi says: "They had no high-flown theories, had no thought of seeing their works displayed in exhibitions or sold for inflated prices, nor did they look upon their products as works of art."

For Yanagi, art and what he calls "beauty," far from being self-expression are the expression of the no-Self; in the same way enlightenment, one might say, is not self-actualization but no-self-actualization. The word "beauty" returns in his writing with obsessive frequency, but never as the opposite of ugliness, for beauty is for Yanagi an absolute, a "non-dual entirety," created by that which transcends ego. In the Eastern aesthetic which he was the first to formulate, the truthfulness of rural handmade crafts is contrasted with the over-refinements, the ego-obsession of "art" as produced in the high culture of the cities. It is an anonymous sense of beauty, in the traditional handicrafts always allied with function. Today's self-conscious artist-craftsman, trying for perfection and "originality" rather than authenticity, fails in manifesting this beauty of the "human itself" from which a communal, transindividual art must spring. Standing before Chartres cathedral, the old prophet exclaimed: "This is what you have lost! You need a new Gospel!"



Frederick H. Frank

Yanagi's lifework, says Bernard Leach, was "to establish art in relationship to the Tree of Life, to God, to Suchness to use Buddhist language." In contrast to the arrogance of what he called "our art of signatures," he praises the quality of *shibui*: that modest, restrained inward beauty which is born "when the work is done by heart and hand, in praise of life itself, in moments in which the artist transcends the empirical self and Other Power takes over." As such Yanagi could claim Rembrandt as being "one of our artists." In his chapter on the Way of Tea he says of the ancient tea masters: "They saw, before all else they saw, they were able to see." They did not just "look" with the eye of convention, but had the kind of vision that discerns *shibui*, the hidden beauty of ordinary things.

It is as if Yanagi were not only writing about artists and craftsmen but, in distilling an Image of the Human out of the raw material of art and craft, he had reached that particular wisdom that knows the limits of knowing.

"I am not *that* quick," Hamada said when someone marveled at seeing him decorate his pots at lightning speed. "Every stroke of my brush took me sixty years and a second." What has he *done* in his sixty years as a craftsman?

"...dig down deep beneath his own feet to find springwater. This is better than finding a section of the river of tradition already become unclear and weak. True tradition never comes from water flowing above ground. It comes from underneath, from a man's own experience... Critics today judge with their brain. Too much brain, not enough heart! For Yanagi beauty was not measured with an intellectual yardstick, it was without any ranking... One must study beauty with one's own eyes... There is too much dependence on knowledge and knowledge is not good enough... we must know from the neck down, from the heart. The head is not so necessary for this kind of knowing."

Hamada does not sign any of his pots, he never did, even when he couldn't afford to emulate the ancient anonymous craftsmen

and refuse to cater to "collectors of signatures."

If I were to draw conclusions: these Living Treasures, these worthy ancestors still among us, do not uphold merely oriental attitudes towards art and craft or even life. They transcend the national in upholding something universally valid: they confirm the blessing of reaching that agedness, free from cynicism, that is youthful without youth's ego-bondage, and the wisdom that is life aware of its livingness. They affirm the sacredness of life and of the human.

I have seen this youthful agedness radiate from Albert Schweitzer, when at eighty-six he became once more the pioneer: this time as the first prominent protester against atom bomb testing; from John XXIII, when at eighty he stopped the Easter Liturgy to expunge, after two millennia, its accusation of the "perfidious Jews," and from Suzuki's finest essay, "The Unattainable Self," written after his ninetytieth birthday. These were famous men, but I have seen this great agedness radiate equally from many unknown ones around me. I think of the luminously courteous tenderness between an octagenarian uncle and aunt of mine in Holland, and as touchingly beautiful, that between Mathieu and Marie, the illiterate ancient African couple on their narrow bunk in Schweitzer's hospital, and in the ninety-two-year-old great lady we visit as often as we can in her olive grove near Grasse, who writes us regularly her enlightened observations, arrived at by reading the newspapers through her magnifying glass, about the barbarity of this Kali Yuga, this apocalyptic time. ◇

For further reading: Susan Adachi, The Living Treasures of Japan; Bernard Leach, Hamada, Potter; Susan Peterson, Shoji Hamada: A Potter's Way and Work; Soetsu Yanagi, The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight Into Beauty, all published by Kodansha International Ltd., Tokyo, New York & San Francisco, 1972-1978.

EPICYCLE

Ah!

From Chuang tse

Nanpo said to Lady Yu: "You are old and yet you have the complexion of a child. How is this?"

"I have abolished past and present. For me, death does not take away life, nor does giving birth add to it; I accept all and welcome all; I see everything in the process of completion and everything being destroyed. This is to be secure amid insecurity. This is Tao."

"From where did you learn Tao?" asked Nanpo.

"I learned it from the Son of Ink, and the Son of Ink learned it from the Grandson of Learning, the Grandson of Learning from Understanding, and Understanding from Insight; Insight learned it from Practice, Practice from Folk Song and Folk Song from Silence and Silence from the Void."

"And from whom did the Void learn it?" Nanpo asked.

"Ah!" said Lady Yu.

—Retold by P.L. Travers



Pilgrimage

An old Persian story

One day an elderly Ant was seen to be scurrying to and fro in her house.

“What are you doing?” enquired the neighbors.

“Packing my things,” the Ant replied.

“But why? For what? Where are you going? How will your household manage without you?”

“Well,” said the Ant. “I have long ago paid my debt to Nature. My children are all out in the world. I have done my duty to the ant-heap. Now I must think of my service to God.”

“And what is that?” the neighbors asked.

The Ant told them.

“Impossible!” they all cried. “You will have to cross mountains and seas and deserts.”

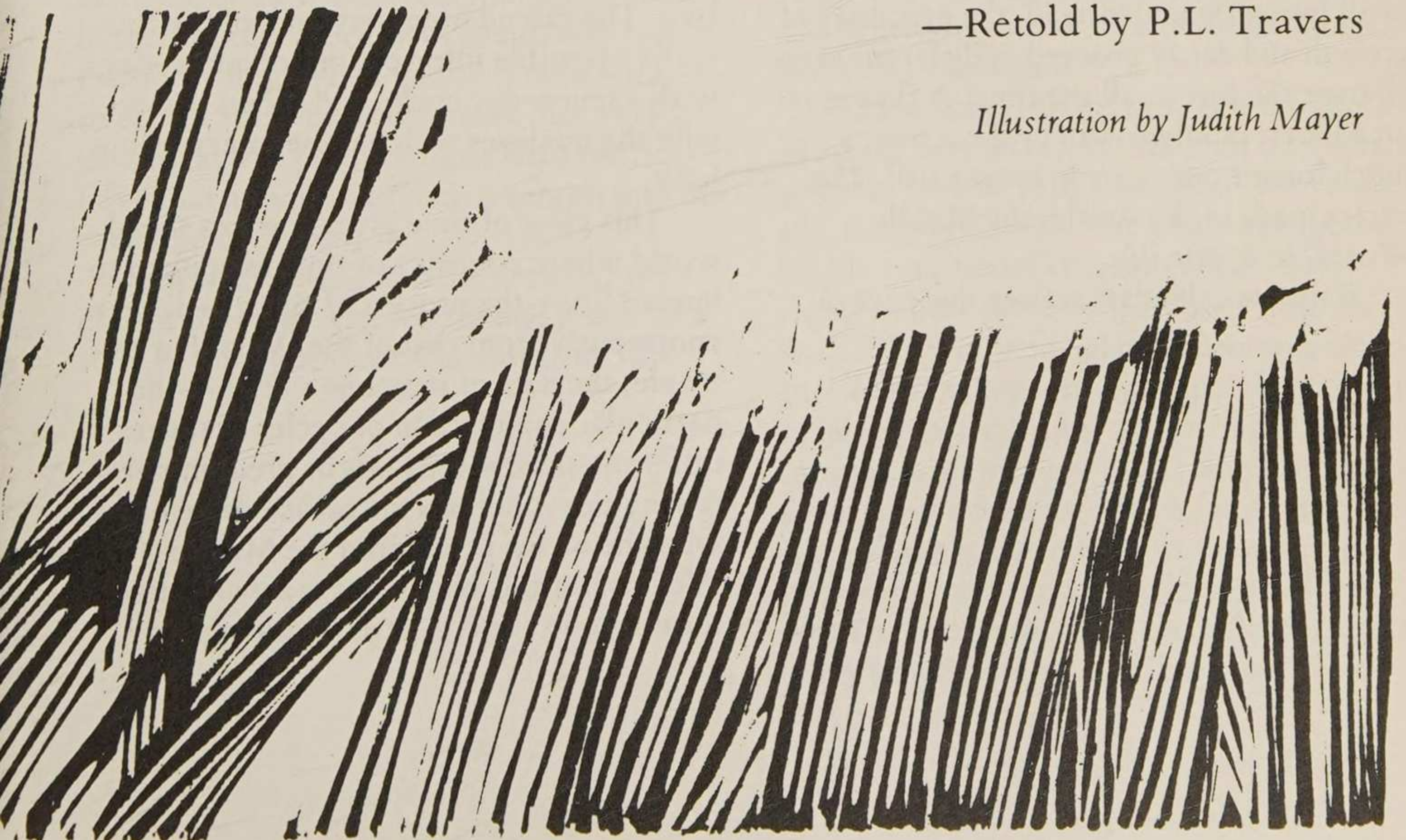
“Indeed, I am well aware of that.”

“But you are old. You will die on the journey, with no kith or kin to bury you.”

“Probably,” the Ant replied, as she lifted her bundle on to her back. “Nevertheless, I can take the first step on the road that leads to Mecca.”

—Retold by P.L. Travers

Illustration by Judith Mayer



Circles of Time

by J. Stephen Lansing

It has been suggested that the linear theory of time is related to the experience of time in the Northern (and Southern) hemispheres, where it is marked by seasonal changes: life begins in the spring, matures in the summer, and dies in the fall, to begin a new cycle the following spring. Bali, however, lies in the region of tropical rain forests near the Equator where there are no seasons to synchronize the growth schedules of all living things. Instead, the processes of growth and decay proceed at different rates all over the forest, all the time. A flower is on a short, rapid growth cycle; a tree, a much longer one; a rock, longer still. The cycles mesh in this world, the Middle World, to create life.

Balinese calendars reflect this experi-

ence of time. According to the Balinese theory, each living being moves on its own time scheme, and events occur when these touch, when things or creatures interact with one another. This is somewhat like our concept of Friday the thirteenth: when Friday of the week cycle intersects the thirteenth day of the month cycle, the day has a particular quality—dangerous or unlucky—determined by the conjunction of the two. The calendar depicts each of the thirty-five possible intersections of a five-day with a seven-day cycle, and shows pictorially the qualities which these intersections have.

This view of time gives rise to a social world where concepts of time as applied to human life—the process of aging—differs enormously from that of the West. For example, the date of someone's birth—the particular conjunction of cycles of several different-sized weeks—is of great importance since it defines the *qualities* time had when he or she re-entered the Middle World. But this birth-date is *not* used to determine one's age. Age as such—age in



High priest and priestess

years—is irrelevant to this concept of time, and Balinese usually do not know how “old” they are in years—although this could be calculated.

Death is seen not as an ending, but a movement out of the Middle World into some space in the baroque Balinese Heaven, from which one will emerge eventually into the Middle World to play another role. The doctrine of karma decrees that one’s station in the Middle World will eventually rise or fall according to one’s actions in former lives, but the wheels of karma turn very slowly, and in practice most Balinese believe that almost everyone is reborn into his own line of descent.

The very young and the very old are closest to the unseen worlds and hence to a state of purity and detachment from this

world. As a child grows up, he becomes attached to the Middle World in order to become an effective actor in it, but in later life he should begin to withdraw so as to prepare for his transition to a higher level of existence. High priests are usually elderly couples, who often undergo their own funerals before beginning a new career as priests, striving for a detachment from human life so complete that they are utterly unaffected by events such as the death of their own children.

These beliefs about time and the process of aging have an effect on life in Bali which goes far beyond religious belief. For example, scattered around the island are special, highly traditional villages called “Bali Aga,” where these beliefs about time underlie the whole social and economic structure of the village. In Bali Aga villages, it is believed that villagers are always reborn into the same village, unless they commit some great crime for which they are exiled. The village is therefore in a sense eternal: just as the land and the buildings and temples are always there, so the villagers, after a short spell in heaven as “ancestors,” re-

turn to their place to be reborn. People are in this sense precisely like rice or other crops, they say: after harvesting, they are replanted.

The village is self-governed by a strict gerontocracy. Upon marriage, a young couple sits at the seaward end of a long ceremonial seating platform. They are given a plot of farmland and a house by the collectivity. After about ten years, as other young couples join the village after them and take their seats behind them, the land is redistributed. As one gets older, one's land gets better and one's seat moves up the hierarchy. Each seat or group of seats has a particular title and functions attached to it, from "butchers" at the lower end to "village heads" at the upper. The formal heads of the village are the two oldest married couples. All major decisions are made by the entire community of married villagers, led by the elders.

In such a system, one's age in absolute terms is almost a meaningless concept, since each person has lived through the entire cycle of statuses from "newborn" to "elder village head" to "ancestor spirit" and back to "child" many times. On the other hand, one's *relative* age (relative to the other villagers) determines one's entire social position. The names used in these villages reflect this attitude: at birth children are given a birth-order title (e.g. "firstborn") and a personal name, which can be changed like a nickname. On having a first child, a parent is renamed teknonymously, e.g. "Father of X" or "Mother of X." Grandparenthood brings a new title, "Grandparent of Y." Greater age also brings public titles, so that a village elder ought to be addressed as the equivalent of "sir" and his or her per-

sonal name is forgotten. What Clifford Geertz has called "genealogical amnesia" occurs after a person's death: it is considered disrespectful to remember the personal names of ancestors, so that as one becomes older one's identity simply merges into the generalized one of "ancestor," later to become "child" or "first-born" once again.

In these villages, social order is in effect created by the order Time is presumed to follow: that of slow and predictable changes. Since Claude Lévi-Strauss, many anthropologists have discovered instances where societies find a pattern in the order of Nature: the totemic clans of Australian and Native American cultures, for example. The Bali Aga, however, find such a pattern in time itself. For each citizen of the Bali Aga village, the passage of time will bring him inexorably through all the stations of village office, and provide him with all that the village has to give. The structure of Time is the model, and basis, for social order.

Today the Bali Aga are only a small minority of Balinese villages, but many vestiges of the Bali Aga preoccupation with time-cycles as this sort of basis persist in more modern villages.

A vivid example of this preoccupation is provided by the archaeologist W.F. Stutterheim, who in 1925 began the first systematic exploration of archaeological sites on Bali. In a book about the results of this survey, Stutterheim describes an incident that occurred while he was investigating a tenth-century shrine:

Not far from (Tampak Siring), which has acquired a certain fame among tourists owing to the so-called "kings' tombs" situated there, lies the already mentioned very holy watering place Tirta Mpul. Exploring the vicinity, I found a short distance away, in a village named Manukaya, a much weather-worn inscription on a stone. None of the Balinese could decipher the old engraved letters, nor were the contents of the inscription known to anyone. The stone stood there, as every villager of Manukaya knew it from childhood, wrapped in a white cloth and provided with the regular offerings. I was told, however, that on the fourth month of every year, at full moon, this stone (which is also said to have fallen from the sky) is carried to the holy waters of Tirta Mpul and bathed



A prince conducting a dance rehearsal

therein—much to the detriment of the stone, by the way, which is a big slab of soft grey tuff covered as usual with a thin layer of cement. Deciphering the inscription, I found that it was none other than the charter of Tirta Mpul's foundation, made in the fourth month, at full-moon day, in the year 962 A.D. Thus the people have kept alive the connection between stone and watering place for almost one thousand years, and have always celebrated its anniversary ceremony on the correct day; but of the true meaning of this connection every recollection was lost. I need hardly add that the communication of my findings was received in the place with little interest.

The experience of aging is universal, but the meaning of that experience is linked

to concepts of time, self, and, in the Balinese case, Nature itself. I have only been able to hint at some of the ways Balinese theories of time are applied to their understanding of self. But it would seem somehow unfair to end without addressing the question, how does it feel to grow old in Bali? Do their theories of time really affect how old people feel?

In August of 1979 I took an anthropologist-friend to a Balinese temple festival—the first time for her, perhaps the hundredth for me. There are on the order of twenty thousand temples on Bali, all of which have festivals on particular cycles of their own, like the stone of Tirta Mpul in Stutterheim's story. On these occasions the gods descend to be worshipped and entertained. Among the many sorts of performances held are dances—some performed by a few skilled dancers, others involving the whole congregation. Watching the lines of women dancing classical *rejang* (an offering dance) in age files, led by the oldest who danced so close to the altars of the gods they could touch them, my friend exclaimed, "They move as if no one ever told them they were old."◇

The Old People Give You Life

by Megan Biesele

...Now the elephant girl had already warned her grandmother that something might happen to her. She had said, "... Watch well: a little wind will come to you. The little wind will come to you with something in it. It will bring you some droplets of blood. The blood will come to lodge inside your groin. Take that bit of blood and put it into a container. Don't let on what you're doing—just take it and put it into something. Something like a little dish or a little bottle." ...It happened just as the girl had said. A little wind came back to her grandmother. The bit of blood came to lodge in her groin. The grandmother saw it and said, "Didn't the child tell me something like this would happen?" She didn't speak aloud, she just said this in her heart. She took the drops of blood and put them in a bottle... Then she sat and thought, and asked herself, "Should I go to see what has happened to my granddaughter? No, it has already happened just as she said it would, so he must have killed her already and there's no help for it." She turned it over and over in her mind... Meanwhile the bit of blood was growing. It grew and grew until it was too big for the bottle. Then the grandmother took it out and put it in a skin bag. It grew again and burst the bag, so the grandmother put it into something bigger. Then it grew some more and broke that. Only the grandmother knew about it. No

one else knew that she had the elephant girl and was restoring her to life. She kept it a secret. She had the bit of blood and it grew and she fixed it, and it grew some more and she fixed it. When it had grown completely it was a woman again! She looked just like she had before.

One morning when the camp awoke, the women decided to go gathering berries. They got up and went off picking berries. The elephant girl's little daughter went with them, saying, "Today I'll accompany my aunts and eat berries." The old grandmother said, "Go ahead, go with them." So



the elephant girl's mother and all the other women went gathering. The old woman stayed home alone. She spent the day quietly. In the afternoon she took a skin and spread it in the shade, spread it in the late afternoon shadows. Then she took out the elephant girl and sat her upon the skin. She ground ochre and spread it upon the young woman's face. She replaced her old rags with soft, new skin clothing and hung her all over with ornaments. Then the old woman tied copper rings in her granddaughter's hair the way people used to tie them long ago. She fixed her up so that she was the beautiful elephant girl again.

Later the women came back from gathering. Towards sunset they returned. The old woman was telling funny stories and the elephant girl was laughing. As they came near the village, her little daughter said to the others, "Who's that laughing just like my mother in the village?"

Her aunt said, "How can you be so crazy? My older sister died a long time ago. Don't go saying you hear her laughing someplace."

Another woman said, "My aunt is certainly dead: this child is crazy."

So they came closer, listening. The elephant girl laughed again. This time they said, "Can it be? Whose laughter is this? When we left there was nobody but the old woman in the camp; we had all gone gathering. What young girl can that be whose laughter sounds just like our sister's?"

When they came into the camp they saw the elephant girl sitting there with her grandmother. Her daughter cried, "Mother, mother, mother!" and ran to her, flopped down, and began to nurse. The others cried out and said, "Yo! Who has accomplished this?"

The young woman answered softly, "Granny, of course. Granny lifted me up. Granny spoke the word and I sat up and was alive. If it had been up to you others alone, I wouldn't be here. Long ago Granny took me and sheltered me in a skin pouch and now I

am alive again. That's how it was. The old people give you life."

This Kung Bushman folktale gives a dramatic indication of the importance of old people in the lives of these hunting-gathering people. Though the Kung do not keep count of their own ages in an absolute sense, they show great concern with relative age in their relationships. Reflected in respectful terms of address, seniority in any relationship between two people is accorded small but real prerogatives. The older one becomes, the greater the number of relationships in which one is the elder, and the more respect one is accorded. An "old" stage of life is distinguished linguistically by the suffix "na" which is applied to those who are no longer bearing or begetting children, but who may still be active and vigorous. A special description for the extremely old means "nearly dead." This word may indeed be used for old people near death, but it may also be used in a joking, self-deprecating way by middle-aged people to describe themselves when they are tired or feeling bad. In this article, the "old" people discussed belong to that group called "na," perhaps forty-five or older, and thus includes as well those referred to as "nearly dead."

Many old people among the Kung are vigorous and independent. Good physical condition and playfulness are commonly seen, and the elderly participate with young children and adolescents in games Western societies might consider strenuous. Old people of both sexes engage in joking and teasing with young people while the middle-aged are busy with tasks. When old people are hurt or sick, however, they often require special care and consideration from the younger members of their group. Kinship determines who will look after such disabled older people, because it can be a genuine burden to care for a non-productive member of society: but whatever consideration the old receive in their time of infirmity, they have paid for by a lifetime of gifts and services to others. They have invested in their futures by investing in other individuals.

The degenerative diseases of civilization



are absent among the Bushmen, but vision problems, respiratory diseases such as tuberculosis, chronic bronchitis, and emphysema, and some mild osteoarthritis, do afflict the elderly. Illnesses and accidents are treated with trance medicine rather than with herbs or other medicinal substances. Relatives and non-relatives alike provide psychological support through the frequently-held trance dances. In principle, everyone supports the efforts of old and sick people to recover from temporary illness, but old people who have close relatives are given more solicitous care in crises and a better diet when they can no longer provide for themselves.

These hunter-gatherers live in camps of individuals bound together by close kinship ties. Each camp has a "core" composed of older men and women who are one another's cousins, brothers, and sisters, and who through long tenure at a particular waterhole are seen as its owners. The oldest man or woman, the "big owner," represents the

core group as host to visitors who want to use the water. Similarly, the old maintain steward-like control over specific food resources in the subsistence region around the waterhole. The old people know from years of experience how best to maintain community life; they are also repositories of genealogical information and interpreters of the kinship system. The large part they play in resource management is a main component of their economic importance. Water sources can and do run dry, and it is vital that some one person know *all* the demands on the water source likely to occur in a given period, so that available water can be fairly apportioned to all who have rights in it. The Kung do not like to be caught unawares, without time to plan for emergencies. The older people do not, however, act without regard for the opinions of the younger men and women. The vigorous hunters and gatherers participate with the old in the process of arriving at group consensus, the Kung way of making decisions.

The smallest social unit is the nuclear family household, consisting of those who build a common hut to mark their place in the group, and eat and sleep together at the same fire. Groups of such households make

up the camp. The largest households are composed of adults in their thirties and forties and their dependent children. As the children reach puberty and set up their own households with marriage partners or temporarily with friends, the parents' household size is reduced until only the couple remains. Most older people live with their spouses, or, if the spouse has died, maintain a household alone. This house will be located close to other kin, however, who have obligations to care for the elderly person. Although the continuation of marriage into old age may have an important psychological effect in providing old people with a sense of security, more important is the presence of children and other close kin, as an aged spouse may not be able to provide food on a regular basis. Living together in a camp, three and even four generations (as illustrated in the story of the Elephant Girl) participate in the mutual business of survival. Old people benefit from the energies of the young and provide, in return, knowledge of resources gained over a lifetime, as well as other services, both social and spiritual.

Gathering for women and hunting for men may persist as regular activities throughout the lifespan, though they usually taper off in the older years. Because gathering demands none of the dramatic spurts of energy that hunting does, more old women gather regularly late into their lives than old men hunt—except for such mild forms as snaring birds. There is no restriction on men of any age gathering plant foods, and some older men may gradually substitute it for strenuous hunting; but past age sixty, old people contribute relatively little to the subsistence of the group as a whole.

As the work load is lightened, however, other activities begin to absorb the energies of the old, and they account for the respect they continue to receive. Never do they really become "useless" (though some old people may talk of themselves this way),

because as they age they are increasingly seen as the repositories of knowledge and lore. Storytelling, for instance, is a special activity largely reserved to the old. Most men and women over forty-five are reasonably good if not highly proficient storytellers. They have heard these stories—which may be ridiculous, bawdy, and amazing by turns—in all their myriad variations so often and for so long that they know them as if by second nature, and they delight in telling them again to make a new generation laugh.

Old people form important parts of some of the groups of differing ages with which children spend their time—for instance, while their mothers are off gathering. The companionable time grandparents spend with the young contributes to children's warm and relaxed feelings toward them. Young children easily and confidently demand food from their grandparents; they seem to regard them as a secure resource that they unquestionably possess. Also much important learning of skills, traditions, and social attitudes takes place as the children—who begin subsistence work rather late in life, between fourteen and sixteen—spend time with the old people.

Food avoidances that apply to younger people in the various stages of reproductive life are often relaxed after the childbearing years. Young adults, for instance, must not eat steenbok meat, but older people may. There is also a prohibition concerning ostrich eggs; these must not be eaten from the age of puberty until one is old enough to have had five children. Believed to make reproductively active people crazy, the eggs are relished by children and by older people who are felt to be past the danger of having their minds affected by the rich food. The following anecdote demonstrates the gentle but muscular good humor that can be seen often in elderly Bushmen as they make light of the predicament of growing old. An old woman, joking with her husband one day, said that he was too old to be chasing young women. With a straight face he responded by commenting to a third party that one should not take seriously anything his wife might say, because she was only "an old woman who eats os-



trich eggs.” The implication, of course, was not only that she was past her reproductive usefulness but that the eggs had addled her judgment.

Freedom from constraints applying to the middle years is one link between the very young and the very old in Kung society. Another is forged through the custom of namesakes. Children are never named for their parents, but rather, for their grandparents or others in the first or second generation above the parents. It is felt that if one person is named for another, their identities mingle in important ways. Kinship terms used between old and young to indicate this relationship (“my big-name” and “my little-name”) contain much implicit affection and a sense of special connectedness between the two people.

There is another link between the two generations: passing the reproductive age appears to be an achievement that prepares both older men and older women to take an active part in the transitional rituals involv-

ing children. The grandparent for whom a child is named gives him a handsome gift at the rite of the child’s first haircut. Old men serve as the initiators of the boys in the *tsho-ma*, a month-long male initiation ritual held in a bush camp far from other people, where young men endure cold, hunger, thirst, and prolonged dancing. During this month, the old men impart to the young ones secrets about the animals.

Old women beat axes together for sound and bare their buttocks as they dance for a girl’s first menstruation. It is an old woman, generally her grandmother, who is with the girl in her seclusion hut and who teaches her the things she must learn at that time. Old people may handle ritual substances and the powerful ritual fires burned at the hunting and initiation rites to accompany the entry of boys and girls into adult life.

The tapering off of their work load enables the old to begin to spend more time in spiritual exploration. They have more time for the spiritual discipline of healing—though people in their thirties and forties can also be very active in this way. This is so important to group life that younger people are grateful to those elders who begin to concentrate their energies so as to

draw upon supernatural resources for curing. Furthermore, released from certain prohibitions that constrain younger people, the old can control and handle ritual substances and powers thought to be dangerous earlier in life. In the exercise of this ritual power, the old serve as initiators of younger people into the successive stages of life. The verb used for what the old do to the young in several such initiation rites is "to create." The old are seen as symbolically responsible for the "creation" of new adults out of what were once children.

In his paper "Education for Transcendence,"* Richard Katz describes the careers of trance healers as they work through the years to gain control of this powerful psychic resource in order to use it for curing others. In the Dobe area of Botswana today, just under half the adult Bushmen and perhaps a third of the women become "owners of *num*" (psychic power) during their lives.

Some old curers, of course, say that the psychic power they had in their mature lives has weakened or been taken from them by God in their infirm old age. They lament that they have become too thin, or feeble, or blind, to go on curing. But there are others whose involvement with *num* seems to increase greatly in intensity with their advancing age. One old woman described by Katz had become so powerful and so completely taken up with the opportunity of healing and of altering her consciousness that she was in and out of trance continually. People came and sang and danced with her every day to accompany her trances, and she was known and respected far and wide for her power to heal.

Another old person, a man this time, was also a dance specialist in his old age. But it was as an artist of fun and a specially zany, gifted clown that he excelled, rather than as a curer, though he did curing as

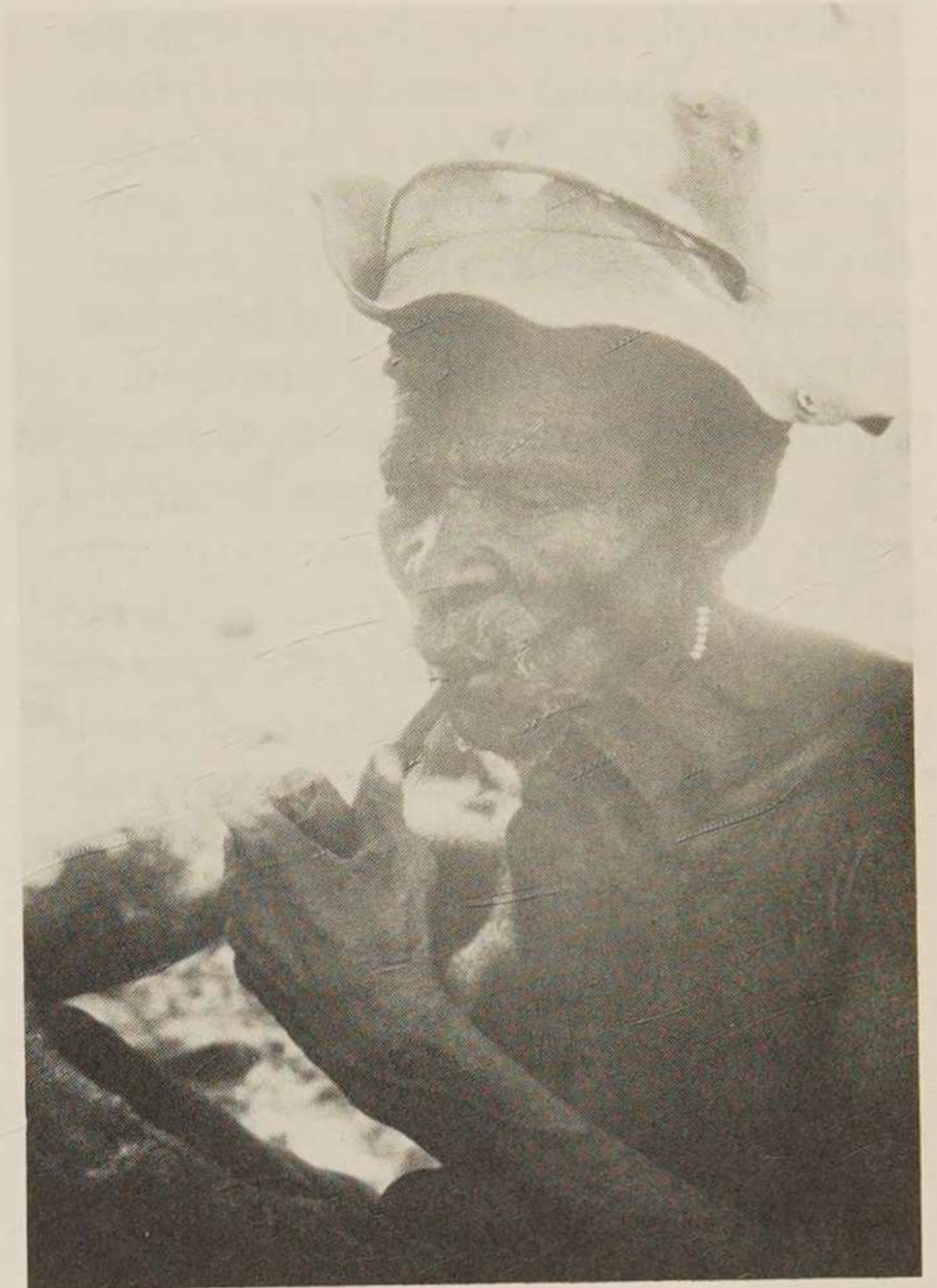
well. People came from all over to make a dance so that they could watch him hunch his shoulders and warble like a besotted bird on a branch, all the while shooting his legs forward at unexpected but somehow perfectly hilarious angles and shaking his dance rattles in joyful mock ferocity. He lived for dancing and for entertaining people as a clown in daily life, did practically no subsistence work, and was provided for as a matter of course by his amused relatives.

The interest of women in making music by singing and clapping, and of men in dancing, appears to be sustained into old age. Dancing is a serious pursuit of mature people and may become increasingly important in very advanced age.

There is a great tolerance for individuals' differing relationships to the *num* of the trance dance; as with many of the everyday differences among individuals, these propensities are considered God-given. Like leisure, this tolerance is another manifestation of a kind of "surplus" these people possess. The way subsistence is organized provides a degree of "fat" in their economic system, one of whose uses is to support playfulness, individualism, and "non-economic" behavior among the old. The outspokenness and sense of self of many of the old people is a delight to the young. Of course, it is readily admitted that with old age sometimes comes not inspired madness but real foolishness and lack of sense. But they mention this frankly and kindly, just as they speak of other kinds of slightly remarkable behavior. The ostrich-egg joke is but an example of the ways the Kung recognize second childhood matter-of-factly but gently.

Koka na and Toma gwe have been married over fifty years. They are now in their seventies and are the nucleus of their community at Dobe, Botswana. Their three married sons and married daughter built their huts in a cluster around the old people's huts, and this group of families, with occasional visitors, constitutes the camp. From time to time this extended family moves camp to another site within the Dobe area. Koka na is feeble and rarely gathers anymore, but she is recognized as

*In *Kalahari Hunter-Gatherers*, edited by Richard B. Lee and Irven Devore (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1976).



having rights, through her age and long residence in the Dobe area, over certain gathering locations. Permission to gather in them is asked of her. Her continued good appetite is satisfied, now that she rarely goes gathering herself, by a more or less steady stream of mongongo nuts, marula nuts and fruits, morethlwa berries, and many other plant foods gathered in the various sites by her daughter, her son's wives, and their offspring. Koka na sits by her fire with her fire paddle for roasting nuts, a stone for cracking them, and a pot or two. Her small wooden mortar and pestle are there also, and with them she pounds for herself and her husband any food that is brought to them. (Their teeth are worn down and the mortar has become their constant companion.) The old woman and her husband snack on and off all day as food-stuffs come in, constantly muttering that their offspring never bring them anything. (These mutterings are good-natured, surprise no one, and create no special resent-

ment. People of all ages voice such moment-to-moment pique in what seems to outsiders high relish for hyperbole and invective.)

Toma gwe, a man of fewer words than his wife, sits on his side of the fire and smokes, when he has a supply of tobacco. Sometimes he will peg out and scrape the skin of an antelope one of the younger men has killed and given to him. At other times he will disappear from the family circle abruptly, to reappear a few hours later with a guinea fowl or korhaan he has snared. When he snares a bird, his eyes sparkle, and he seems glad that he can still do it. In his youth he so loved plums that he was named for them, Toma gwe, Toma Sour Plum. Now people often call him "The Old Sour Plum." He says to his sons often that he is old and cannot help himself, and that he should therefore be given all the things he needs. He and his wife are well provided for. Children are sent from their parents' fires a few steps away with dishes of nuts, a double handful of small fruits, several big tubers, or a joint of fresh or strips of dried meat for the old couple. Once or twice a day a child will be asked by its parents, or

by the grandparents themselves, to bring the old people a bucket of water from the waterhole. Though some children refuse, and are not pressed, most of the time the water arrives with fairly little fuss, with leafy branches stuck in it to keep it from splashing out of the bucket and being lost.

During the morning and afternoon, Koka na and Toma gwe nap intermittently, in the shade of their small grass hut or of a nearby tree if it is hot or in the sun next to the fire if it is cold. Koka na often gets out her little skin bag containing the beads she is working on and strings glass trade beads she has received as presents from her trading partners, on twisted threads made from the long back muscles of a kudu or gemsbok. If she runs out of sinew, she will send a child to its mother for some more. She sits and sews, and fusses that no one ever gives her any beads. People fuss back conversationally, barely needing to raise their voices to be heard from where they sit at their own fires.

Koka na reaches into her bag for one of a few copper ornaments her husband has given her, takes it out, and ties it into her hair. Copper hair rings are worn only by women beyond "a certain age," and are signs of that age and of status. They are evidence of being cared for by a husband who still has active trading relationships with people in contact with the sources of copper, far away from the Dobe area. Koka na enjoys her hair rings and feels she ought to have more, to tie all over her head.

As the sun begins to tilt toward the horizon, the sons of the old couple visit with their father at their fire, discussing plans and gossiping about local events. Koka na gets up and goes into the bush. She is gone for perhaps half an hour. When the sun has just slipped down she appears, walking slowly, a tiny, bent figure under an enormous load of firewood. Arrived at the fire, she dumps the wood unceremoniously. She complains "Oh, my back!" as she lowers herself to the ground and begins to build up the fire for the night.

If people are lively, there will be an evening's visiting by the fire, perhaps with people coming to talk from the other Dobe camps nearby. A welcome gift of fresh

meat may unexpectedly arrive in the dark. Koka na or her husband will take it from the giver wordlessly and cook and consume it, sharing it with anyone sitting at their fire. There may be stories told, or news of a hunt, or there may be a marriage to discuss. In the middle of the talk, Koka na may decide she is ready to bed down for the night. She curls up under blankets next to the fire, her head covered too, and is soon asleep, while Toma gwe goes on talking right next to her. The conversation may be uproarious or very low and quiet, depending on who is there and what the subject. Gradually, the old man's sons and the other visitors go back to their own fires. Toma gwe sits smoking and watches the moon rise from behind an enormous white termite mound. Some nights he may play his musical hunting bow for hours: he possesses the powerful *num* and can talk in this way to those who are gone. Some nights he will feel old and beat, and just go to sleep like the others.

Acknowledgment

Besides Richard Katz, whose work is noted in the text, the author wishes to acknowledge several other scholars whose writings were utilized in the preparation of this article. They include Nancy Howell (demography, health, and household composition of the !Kung as they pertain to the aged), Richard Lee (core groups and resource management), and Lorna Marshall (kinship relations and food avoidances). For further reading see: Nancy Howell's "The Population of the Dobe Area !Kung" in *Kalahari Hunter-Gatherers* edited by Richard B. Lee and Irven Devore (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1976), Richard Lee, *The !Kung San: Men, Women, and Work in a Foraging Society* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1979), and Lorna Marshall, *The !Kung Nyae Nyae* (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1976).

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Legacy



The stories that are told can be repeated... to make them last. If we keep them to ourselves, in about fifteen or twenty more years we will not have them. It will all be gone. There will not be any songs or prayers because the legends go along with all this. One cannot exist without the other.

—Tom Ration, Navajo¹



My maternal grandfather and my father used to speak their prayers on top of the Navajo Mountain many years ago. It was at a level spot, where the home of Monster Slayer was. That is where they sat, Monster Slayer and Born-for-Water; they sat there, it is said. That is the place where they placed precious stone offerings, these old men. They used to carry these offerings there, calling on the name of Naatsis'áán (Head of Earth), it is said. They also made an offering at the place where the Spring is. That is what the old men were saying and doing. But nowadays the White people do all kinds of things up there. The old men's ceremonies made life good for the men and women of long ago.

—Long Salt, Navajo²



And it is said, that below Rainbow Bridge one cannot live for the purpose of aging. Because of the prayers, the place is made strong. And this place where the Spring is had a name, and today it still has a name. And it was designed by the gods, for as long as it is there, for the purpose that the People will be blessed with an abundance of children. So it was decreed. It cannot be revoked. That is the way it is. And then from the Rainbow Bridge area human prayers and offerings are talked about on the four sacred mountains. And the way it is with the mountains—the prayers proceed from the feet of the mountains on up. That is the way the elders, who do these sacred things, do in the Mountainway chants and in other sacred ceremonies. They obtain their power from each of the four mountains.

—Buck Navajo, Navajo³



... men can better their existence and soften the harshness of fate. Now I no longer feel alone, and my old age is a restful time. But when I chance to think of my childhood and recall all the memories from those days, then youth seems a time when all meat was juicy and tender, and no game too swift for a hunter. When I was young, every day was as a beginning of some new thing, and every evening ended with the glow of the next day's dawn. Now, I have only the old stories and songs that I sang myself in the days when I delighted to challenge my comrades to a song-contest in the feasting house.

—Ivaluarjuk, Iglulik Eskimo⁴



When I was young, my grandfather and I, almost every evening we would sit on the west side of the summer house and watch the sun set or we would sit on the east side and watch the colors cover the mountains. My grandmother would join us. Then they would tell me about the mountain, about evening sounds, my grandfather would sing a particular song and tell me "remember it." I would try. Sometimes I would ask my grandmother to help me remember. She would only tell me that that was between my grandfather and me. She would not interfere and it was the same with what my grandmother was teaching—my grandfather did not interfere. And these things they were advising me, their thoughts were the same.

—Soge Track, Taos⁵



The sweat bath had prepared me for my vision-seeking. Even now, an hour later, my skin still tingled. But it seemed to have made my brains empty. Maybe that was good, plenty of room for new insights.

Darkness had fallen upon the hill. I knew that hanhepi-wi had risen, the night sun, which is what we call the moon. Huddled in my narrow cave, I did not see it. Blackness was wrapped around me like a velvet cloth. It seemed to cut me off from the outside world, even from my own body. It made me listen to the voices within me. I thought of my forefathers who had crouched on this hill before me, because the medicine men in my family had chosen this spot for a place of meditation and vision-seeking ever since the day they had crossed the Missouri to hunt for buffalo in the White River country some two hundred years ago. I thought that I could

sense their presence right through the earth I was leaning against. I could feel them entering my body, feel them stirring in my mind and heart.

We Sioux haven't got your generation gap. We believe in bringing the young along to take our place because this is nature's way. It's maybe this, our willingness to share power with the young, which makes our old people loved and respected, which makes talk easy between the generations.

—Lame Deer, Minneconjou⁶



Gently traced,

*this hand of bark-dry grooves
lies on fels naphtha sheets
not a sacred relic
but a legacy of strength.*

its last will and testament reads:

*that when she delivered him
into the gentle hands of the shaman
she asked for his moccasins
so he couldn't leave without her.*

*they laughed together
but he left and walked
the cold journey alone,
and she bore the weight
of the family tree.*

*now as i sit in haunched acceptance
i feel my share of the future
descend from those hands so,*

gently traced.

—Lois Bissell Jircitano⁷



I climb the black rock mountain
stepping from day to day
silently.

I smell the wind for my ancestors
pale blue leaves
crushed wild mountain smell.

Returning
up the gray stone cliff
where I descended
a thousand years ago.

Returning to faded black stone
where mountainlion laid down with deer.

It is better to stay up here
watching wind's reflection
in tall yellow flowers.

The old ones who remember me are gone
the old songs are all forgotten
and the story of my birth.
How I danced in snow-frost moonlight
distant stars to the end of the Earth,
How I swam away
in freezing mountain water
narrow mossy canyon tumbling down
out of the mountain
out of deep canyon stone
down
the memory
spilling out
into the world.

—Leslie Silko, *Laguna*⁸

Notes

1. Quoted by Peggy V. Beck and A.L. Walters, *The Sacred* (Tsaile, Arizona, Navajo Nation: Navajo Community College, 1977).
2. Quoted by Karl W. Luckert, *Navajo Mountain and Rainbow Bridge Religion* (Flagstaff, Arizona: Museum of Northern Arizona, 1977).
3. Quoted, *ibid.*
4. Beck and Walters, *op. cit.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. © 1972 by John Fire/Lame Deer and Richard Erdoes. Printed by permission of Simon & Schuster.
7. Permission to republish authorized by "Akwesasne Notes" [a newspaper], Summer 1975
8. Leslie Silko, *Laguna Woman* (Greenfield Center, N.Y.: The Greenfield Review Press, 1974). Copyright © 1974 by Leslie Silko, by permission of Leslie Silko.

The Transmission of Blessings

An Interview With Deshung Rinpoche

It was our good fortune to be present when the following dialogue between the Venerable Deshung Rinpoche and translator J. Douglas Rhotan took place at the Jetsun Sakya Center in New York. Helen Mendoza and Susan Mesinai helped to express questions and transcribed the replies, leaving us free to listen and receive impressions, which were many and strong. Deshung Rinpoche, after greeting us from where he sat under a scarlet canopy in his white-walled room, offered us tea and cakes and occasionally a penetrating glance or a kindly smile. Otherwise he gave his full attention, with the utmost tranquillity, to one of two things. When a question was put to him, he gave a very long and thoughtful reply, which was apparently memorized by the extraordinarily well-trained Mr. Rhotan. While his answer was being translated, he returned to his prayer beads with a constant quiet movement of lips and fingers. There seemed to be no discrepancy between the two occupations, nor between the alternating laughter and seriousness with which he spoke. The strongest of all the impressions we received was that of witnessing the possibility of a movement between outer and inner as natural and as little contradictory as breathing.

Born in Tibet in 1906, the Venerable Deshung Rinpoche entered a monastery at the age of six. He was recognized as the third reincarnation of the line of Deshung Tulkus, and studied under many teachers from all the Tibetan traditions; he became the chief disciple of the noted lama Sakyapa Ngawang Legpa, whom he succeeded as Abbot of the Sakya Tharlam Monastery. He came to New York in 1977 and founded the Jetsun Sakya Center for Buddhist Studies and Meditation, where he now teaches Western students.



I recall that in your meeting at the Jetsun Sakya with Grandfather David of the Hopi, you spoke to him with great respect for having attained so many

years, and expressed the hope that you too might be so blessed. Would you kindly tell us, why in Tibetan Buddhism is it considered so important to achieve a long life? Why are there so many practices and prayers to promote a long life? And especially—given the conditions of life as suffering, why is this attainment desirable?

One must distinguish between longevity in a purely samsaric context or in a dharmic and religious context. The beings who inhabit samsara in the unfortunate states such as the hell realms, certain god realms, the animal realm, and even in the human realm may be forced to exist for long periods of time in intense suffering. In the case of some sutras, they are said to last for an aeon. Such incredible periods of time spent in intense suffering are of no benefit, even to the beings themselves, since their existence is severely limited by all kinds of unfavorable conditions.

But in the dharmic context, even the brief lifespan of a human being—say, fifty to one hundred years—is spent in worthwhile efforts that promote increased understanding, so that even that short period of time is the cause of some good, and is considered by the Buddhist to be of great value. If a person spends a day, month, year, or years in sincere, diligent effort that leads to present well-being for himself and others, and eventually for the highest good of all, then that human life, those moments of time, are worthwhile. They become the basis of immeasurable good in the world. Every effort of the Buddhist, whether a follower of the arhat or bodhisattva ideal, who—mindful of impermanence—applies himself towards the accumulation of wisdom, becomes a source of good in this world.

It is in this light that long life is valued. The more moments a practitioner of dharma is able to spend in this world, with prospects of enlightenment, the more it follows this will bring much good to the world.

Thus, long life for the religious person is of much value, in contrast to humans who merely accumulate unwholesome habits and perpetuate unwholesome actions in this life, causing great harm to themselves and others. For such beings, long life has little value.

We know that the transmission of the teachings traditionally must go from the more experienced to the less, and frequently that goes from the elder to the younger. In the lineage structure for the transmission of teachings, what is it that age and experience have passed from ancient to younger, how does it flow, and how is it returned?

In the world, a parent transmits knowledge to a child through verbal instruction, by way of example and the like. A foreman trains and instructs his workers. Apart from a sense of convention about what has to be done, there is room for innovation in this kind of education. This is usually the case in worldly life: that while there is a continuity of education, instruction does not *depend* on continuity.

The Buddhist or Tantric tradition is quite different. In the Tantric context, the transmission is all important. It is absolutely essential. Therefore, all the exoteric teachings found in the sutras have their origin in Sakyamuni Buddha himself, transmitted through an unbroken historic lineage to the present, and the esoteric Tantric teachings have their origin in Vajradhara, the Tantric counterpart of Sakyamuni.

The process of transmission is one of interdependence, and has two main requisites. First, the Master must be truly endowed with spiritual qualities which are transmittable. Then the disciple must have an attitude of receptivity—of respect and trust, and of harmony so that he or she remains in agreement with the aims of the teacher. If both requisites are present, a transmission of blessings must take place. There are two kinds of transmission, the *Oral Transmission* and the *Direct*. Through the *Oral Transmission*, a teacher verbally reveals through words

and concepts what the student needs to know, as well as accomplishing his own spiritual aims. Through *Direct Transmission*, such a teacher can transmit something of his spiritual qualities. This is called the *Transmission of Blessings*.

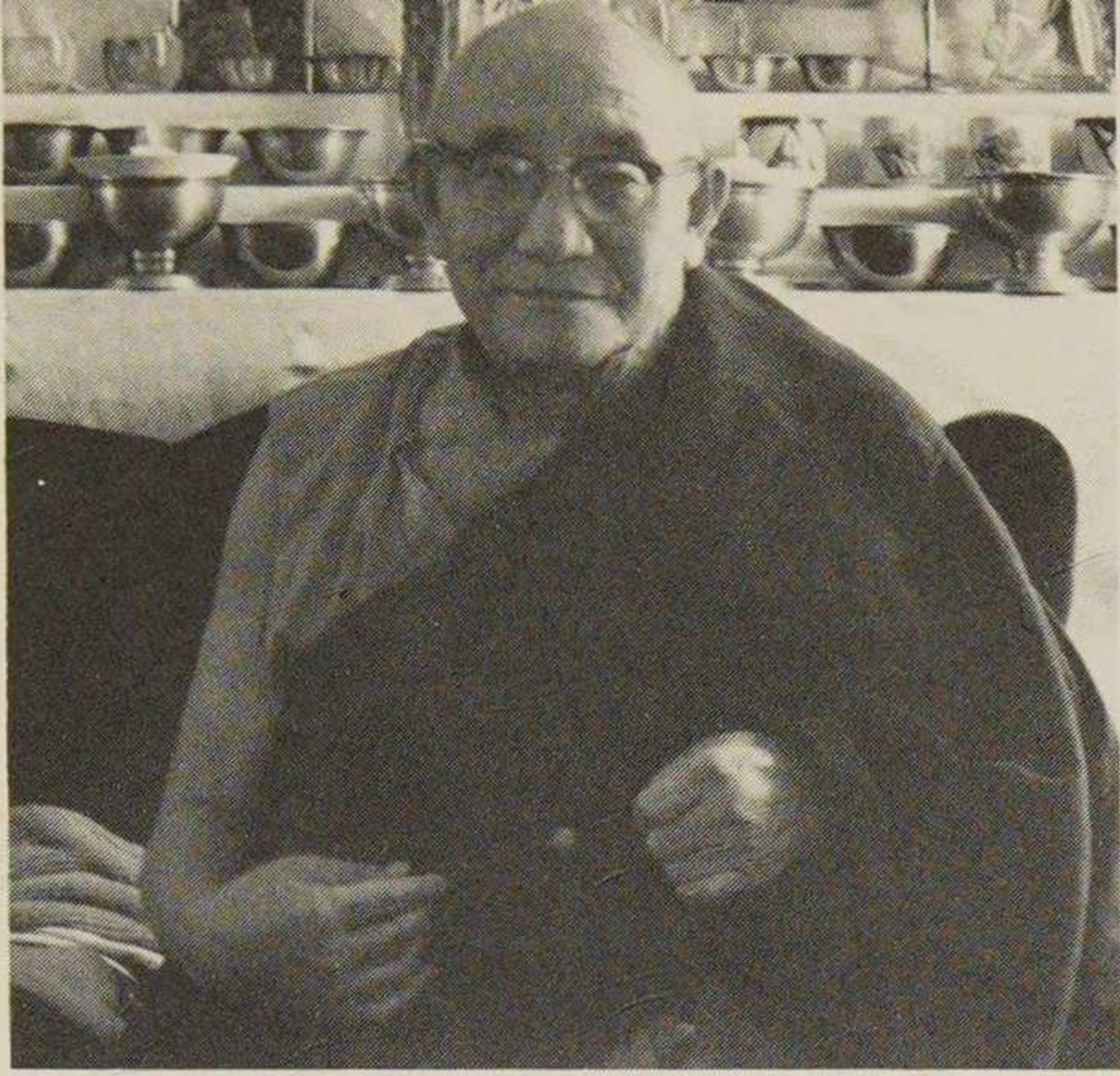
There are three kinds of blessings—of wisdom, compassion, and of spiritual power. An endowed teacher may transmit something of his own attainment to the students, thereby enabling himself to gain extra advantages in the achievement of his own spiritual goals. These blessings are not tangible, and yet transmission takes place. One wonders how such transmission takes place. It is much like the transmission of a flame from one candle to another. The second begins to burn, but the first is not extinguished. The two are now identical, yet still separate and coexistent. Interdependent Origination is the mechanism through which Tantric transmissions are possible. It is like using a fire-crystal or magnifying glass to light a fire. If the sun is shining and one holds the glass at the right angle over the tinder, then it will work. But if any one of the three—glass, sun, wood—is obscured or absent, there can be no fire. The same is true of the transmission of blessings. Without the requisite qualities in teacher and disciple, no transmission can take place; but if the Master is truly endowed with transmittable spiritual qualities and the student is receptive and harmonious, the transmission is assured.

What are the characteristics of the relationship between a Buddhist master and his student?

In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, faith is considered to be the first prerequisite in embarking on the spiritual path. In the Tibetan terminology, however, the word “faith” rather signifies “confidence,” that is, confident reliance of one person upon another person within the context of spiritual practice. As the *Dashadharmasūtra* states:

Just as no sprout springs forth from a seed which fire has scorched, so the phenomena of holiness do not arise within a mind which lacks faith.

Although faith is only one of a number of essential factors which enable one to progress on the spiritual path and attain its result, it is



of great importance, especially in the early stages.

According to the Mahayanist Buddhist tradition, it would be extremely difficult, almost impossible, for a person to attain enlightenment on his own without recourse to the guidance of an experienced teacher. It is taught, "Without the Master, even the name of the Buddha would not be possible. All the Enlightened Ones of the past have become Buddhas through reliance upon a teacher." Sakyamuni Buddha and the Buddhas of the past have all been indebted to teachers in former lifetimes, whose guidance brought them eventually to the attainment of enlightenment. One can understand from this that the relationship between teacher and student is one of much importance in the Buddhist tradition.

The relationship between the two is initiated when one person seeks out another and requests his guidance in living the spiritual life. Recognizing his own role as a student, the disciple is encouraged to think of his teacher from then on as being none other than the Buddha Himself, no matter how human he might appear. This, of course, reminds us of the notion that Buddhahood is obtainable only through the guidance of the Master.

Veneration is shown to the Master in a number of ways: by respectful salutation, by seating oneself lower than the Master, and, in general, by observing a commitment to follow his precepts. The Teacher, in turn, commits himself to the relationship by assuming responsibility for the spiritual growth of his student. He thinks, "This is

my student," and undertakes to nurture him with material assistance, needed instructions, and blessings.

Between the two, there must be an agreement upon the value of the relationship, of confidence in the process of the spiritual training, and, finally, of their joint commitment to uphold their spiritual tradition. A tradition consists of this very rapport—these meetings and agreement of two minds; it is simply a succession of such relationships between teacher and student.

The student, in turn, must also have three virtues or essential basic qualities. The first is *faith* in the teacher—a trusting reliance, a willingness to trust, a confidence. The second is *zeal* to learn, zeal in the acquisition of knowledge. Thirdly, he must be *intelligent* by nature.

If the life of the spirit is endless, is there never an end to learning?

The process of the spiritual life is, as you say, endless in the sense that from the time that one first consciously decides to strive for a spiritual goal right up to the attainment of that goal, there is no ceasing of effort. Even beyond that, in the Buddhist view, the spiritual activities of an Enlightened One become infinite.

After a Bodhisattva has attained the "Path of No More Learning," a fifth stage on the Bodhisattva Path whereon he does not have to study or train himself anymore, he achieves total enlightenment, yet he continues to act spontaneously on behalf of those countless beings who remain unenlightened. He is able to do this through his realization of the Void of Selflessness and by the strength of his former resolves and prayers on behalf of all beings. His actions flow out effortlessly and spontaneously, so long as beings remain in the bondage of worldly existence.

There is another way of regarding this idea of reliance upon external supports. The concept of reliance upon an external source of strength for guidance or refuge is called the *ordinary* approach. In the Tantric, or *extraordinary* method, one is taught that one's only *guru* is the ultimate nature of one's own mind. ◇

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Gatherer of Glorious Virtues

by Lobsang Lhalungpa



The Tibetan tradition believes that great minds, through the light and spiritual power of their teachings, can deeply move other human beings and guide them towards inner peace and longer life. The ancient tradition tells of the emergence of such great minds in various times and places, helping humanity to overcome its inner suffering and to strengthen its commitment to true spiritual development.

One such extraordinary mind in modern times was Jetsun Rinpoche of Shukseb (the Juniper Forest Hill) who lived to well over a hundred years, from 1840 to 1951. Her enchanting mountain retreat was situated in Uri, the central mountain range some thirty miles southwest of Lhasa. This great woman was my chief teacher. I was fortunate enough to have many, but whatever my spiritual awakening and eclectic understanding, I owe to her. Her popular name, Jetsun Rinpoche, means "The Supremely Venerated Precious One" and indicates the esteem in which she was held by the people of Tibet.

She was born at a sacred Buddhist place known as Tsopema (The Lotus Lake) in the western Himalayan region of India during one of her parents' extended pilgrimages. Her father was Thonglek Tashi ("He Whose Appearance Brings Good Luck"), the son of a southern Tibetan family. Her mother, Penpa Dolma ("The Saturnine Liberator") was a woman from Lo (Mustang) on the Tibetan-Nepalese border and of Tibetan stock.

Her parents had no special skill or trade. They moved from place to place, visiting

the Buddhist shrines in India, Nepal, Ladakh, and Tibet, accepting odd jobs or begging as they went along. When their only child was born during one of these journeys they named her Sonam Palzom ("Gatherer of Glorious Virtues"). The little girl grew up to be not only pretty but unusually intelligent and sensitive. The unsettled lifestyle of her parents prevented her from having a formal education. Instead, her character was formed by the hard life of her parents, their poverty, frequent hunger, and illness, which caused her to mature early. She had a lovely voice, and while still a child she started singing religious songs in front of crowds for money, to help her family to survive.

The dawning of a first spiritual experience in the little girl took place in a frightening situation. One day her father returned drunk to the tent where they lived and demanded a separation from his wife, saying: "We must separate by dividing our only possession, our daughter, into two halves, and each of us will have one half!" The child was so terrified by this that she ran out of the tent and hid under a bush. There she experienced a state of ecstasy which lasted for several days. When her parents finally found her, they were amazed at her radiant looks.

People began to recognize the girl as a religious devotee and increasingly supported the family. She was able to learn how to read and write from an accomplished Tibetan Yogin. While still in her teens she traveled widely in Tibet and studied under many Lamas.

As the little girl turned into a beautiful young woman there was no lack of suitors who wanted to marry her. But her only desire was to continue her religious studies and spiritual development. With her parents' encouragement she continued along this path for the next twenty years.

Jetsun Rinpoche had an unshakable faith in her Lamas, never allowing it to waver under any circumstances. Once, for instance, on returning to the residence of a learned Lama to bring him some of the food people had offered her, the Lama looked at her angrily and said: "You pretend to be a religious person, but in reality you are nothing but a hypocrite! You deceive people by claiming to be a living incarnation. I don't want to see you any more. Leave my place at once!" Jetsun Rinpoche was shocked and shaken by this sudden hostility, knowing that the accusation was completely unfounded; but her faith in the Lama was such that she sincerely apologized, begging him to let her continue her studies. The Lama flatly refused and she then had to go away for some time, brokenhearted.

At another time her devotion to a Lama led her to become his wife for a short time—the only time she was ever to be married.

She came to consider the use of religion for purely selfish reasons as nothing more than the pursuit of material ambition; for her, religion was the noblest means of realizing the ultimate truth and fulfilling the spiritual need of humanity. She worked towards the simultaneous development of transcending wisdom and great compassion which is the quintessence of the Buddha's life and message. In the course of her personal transformation she discovered that immediate self-awakening was the simplest of processes, although ordinary people, due to their inner difficulties and prejudices, find it so hard to achieve.

Around the middle of her life, well versed in Buddhist philosophy and techniques of esoteric meditation, Jetsun Rinpoche spent years in the sacred cave called Zangri Khama (The Copper Cave) in southern Tibet, where people began to tell stories of her amazing yogic feats, regarded as signs of great mental power over physical forces. During many moments of inner ecstasy and illumination, she would utter extemporaneous passages and poems in Tibetan which have now come to us in writing.

Later she lived in another sacred cave on Gangri Thoekar (The White-Headed

Mountain) at Shuksep, there to continue devoting herself to solitary meditation.

Once she was satisfied with her spiritual attainment, she started receiving people for Buddhist teachings and blessings. Soon a nunnery was established under her guidance. Every ordinary pilgrim or visitor coming to her hermitage was treated like a member of the community and given an equal share of living space, offerings from the local people, and teachings of the Dharma near her nunnery. Before long people from all parts of Tibet began to visit her. Many women joined her nunnery, including two of my cousins; great Lamas paid their respects to her and sought her guidance. She herself was a member of the Red Hat sect of the Nyingmapa order, but she held the other religious orders in equally high esteem, and encouraged students to understand the teachings of different schools. She was one of the few remarkable eclectic teachers who revered and imparted the teachings of all the Buddhist schools. Thus a community of devotees from different orders of Buddhism gathered around her to live and carry out their practices together.

Her teachings were simple, clear, and inspiring, for they originated from her experiences in life and her own enlightenment. The Lamas recognized her as the reincarnation of the great woman-teacher Machik Labdron (1031-1129), the founder of a new meditative movement known as "Cutting the Hidden Root of Self-Delusion."

To Jetsun Rinpoche, spirituality and humanity were identical; one without the other would be nothing but materialism. The enlightened state she had achieved was founded upon and indivisible from her unlimited concern and compassion for all sentient beings and humanity in particular. Short of stature, with a serene face and kind, sensitive eyes, the aura of holiness that surrounded her inspired awe but exuded a warmth of compassion. No visitor left her presence without seeming to have experienced a new and ecstatic state of awakening.

In spite of years of undernourishment and asceticism, she was able to remain alert



and active till the end of her long life. She spent the last forty years in a seated position for meditation, teaching, and even sleeping; although she never really slept, but went into another meditational state. During the last decade of her life she became crippled, but this did not at all affect her private practices and public teachings. She received visitors and pupils up to the very end, and guided the lives of innumerable men and women with penetrating insight into their individual problems and possibilities. She died in 1951, a few years before the Chinese invasion of Tibet.

Jetsun Rinpoche, my venerated teacher, was an outstanding example—as are His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and His Holiness the Sixteenth Karmapa—of living Bodhisattvas in this century. From all three of them I draw continuous inspiration in my humble devotion to the noble tradition of Buddhism. ◇

Elders and Guides

A Conversation With Joseph Campbell

The following is a conversation between Joseph Campbell and Michael McKnight, the director of a Mythology Program at the Living and Learning Center at the University of Vermont. PARABOLA found it particularly interesting, not only because of our admiration for both Zimmer and his distinguished pupil, nor because Joseph Campbell has been one of our most valued supporters since the inception of the magazine, but because the exchange seemed the perfect reflection of an important aspect of "The Old Ones": age as teacher.

Dr. Campbell himself is seventy-five, as he tells everyone, and indeed has to tell us or we would never know it. His vigor, wit, and youthful appearance are such that the usual reaction to this statement is, "You must be kidding!" But chronology apart, Joseph Campbell's enormous work and international reputation in the field of mythology (which might well have remained a remote, mysterious Never-Never land in our century without his explorations) warrant the respectful and affectionate title of "The Grand Old Man of Myth." His reminiscences of his own teacher, Zimmer, a guide and an elder to the young Campbell, warmly suggest the chain of transmission and some new ways of looking at the older generation.

My conversation with Joseph Campbell took place in New York in May of 1979. It focuses on the life and work of Heinrich

Zimmer and on Zimmer's role as one of Joseph Campbell's chief teachers. On the same day that this interview took place, I recorded a similar conversation with Heinrich Zimmer's widow, Christiane Zimmer, who resides only a few blocks away from Professor Campbell's apartment. The interview with Mrs. Zimmer was a perfect prelude for the interview which is transcribed here. Both Mrs. Zimmer and Joseph Campbell spoke of the great scholar with love, humor, and gratitude. Their lucid memories enabled me to develop a vivid impression of the dynamic Professor Zimmer. His sudden death in 1943 came at the brink of what promised to be his most productive period. In a very real sense, his mission was carried forth successfully by Joseph Campbell.

If Professor Campbell had not undertaken the arduous task of editing and translating Zimmer's lectures and notes it is improbable that Zimmer's work would be known outside a small circle of scholars. It was in the twelve years that Joseph Campbell labored over this material that he really learned from Zimmer. He recalled Zimmer's inspiring way of lecturing at Columbia University, and this recollection helped him in rendering difficult passages in the notes. Out of this extraordinary transmission of tradition came the four monumental works in the Bollingen series: *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization* (1946), *The King and the Corpse* (1948), *Philosophies of India* (1951), and *The Art of Indian Asia* (1955).

Zimmer sought a "middle path" between the extremes of uncritical appropriation of Eastern spirituality as a "cure-all" for the West and the opposite pole which might be described as an overly critical philological approach that saps the material



of all its spiritual significance. He called this “middle path” a “process of mutual transmutation and assimilation.” For him, the task of transmuted Eastern wisdom was not simply a scholarly pursuit. He strongly believed that the West is in need of the mythological nourishment of Indian traditions. He showed the way that this transfusion could take place in the most beneficial manner. In this regard, Zimmer stands as one of the truly formidable teachers of the present century. In his editions of the Zimmer works and his own books, Joseph Campbell has admirably carried on Zimmer’s work of interpreting myths and symbols.

MICHAEL McKNIGHT *In the course of talking with Zimmer’s widow, Christiane, she mentioned that when Zimmer came to this country the first thing that he bought was a pair of blue jeans and a flannel shirt because he thought this was the greatest—not “hippy” clothes exactly—but something like that.*

JOSEPH CAMPBELL Oh yes, he moved right over. He changed his name to Henry R. Zimmer—Americanized his name. In fact his book on medicine, which was made up of scrap notes and wasn’t very well put together, was published by Johns Hopkins under “Henry R. Zimmer.”

M.M. *Before coming here, I know he established a long-standing relationship with Carl Jung...*

J.C. Yes, you know Jung edited his work on Sri Ramana Maharshi, *Der Weg zum Selbst*. I think they met at the first Eranos meeting in 1933. Zimmer’s *Kunstform und Yoga*,* the book you’re working on now, caught Jung’s fancy and introduced the whole mystery of the mandala to Jung. At least, I’m pretty sure that was where Jung got it.

* This work is presently being edited and translated by J. Michael McKnight, Gerald Chapple, and James Lawson for Princeton University Press. Publication is slated for early 1984.

For the first Eranos meeting, Zimmer was invited. Some people who had been there told me they were like a pair of bodhisattvas—laughing and enjoying each other. Zimmer was there for three or four of those sessions. Then he came over here, and that ended that. It was one of those *Wahlverwandtschaften* things, where the two people who meet are just made to enjoy each other.

M.M. *It seems as if there was some kind of exchange, some kind of transmission of wisdom going on there. When you and Zimmer came together—and I realize it was kind of a chance meeting—this seemed to happen again. Certainly without your meeting, his name wouldn’t be as familiar as it is. Who else would have taken on the “translation” of his work?*

J.C. Nobody I can think of.

M.M. *Do you feel then that you were completing his vocation as an interpreter of Eastern thought to the West?*

J.C. I felt more that I was starting my own vocation!

Zimmer was the first person I ever heard speak about myths who spoke about them the way I was thinking about them. That is to say, not as curiosities for a curiosity cabinet, but as guides. He was the first I ever heard speak that way! I had already discovered Coomaraswamy’s writings. In fact, I had known Coomaraswamy’s work for some four or five years before I met Zimmer. When I did meet him I had already started *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, and was working on *The Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake*, so I was way into that world. Hearing Zimmer’s lectures and the way in which these myths came out, not as curiosities over there somewhere, but as *models* for understanding your own life—this is what I had felt myths to be all this time. Of course, Jung had it, but not the way Zimmer did. Zimmer was much more in myth than Jung was. Jung tends to put forms on the myths with those archetypes; the Jungians kind of cookie-molded the thing. None of that with Zimmer. I never knew anyone who had such a gift for interpreting a symbolic

image. You'd sit down at the table with him and bring up something—he'd talk about the symbolism of onion soup. I heard him do it! I don't remember what it was, but he went off on onion soup...oh God! This was a genius!

M.M. One question that I have is how he came to be such an interpreter of myth and symbol. I read his own biographical sketch, and it seemed that he didn't ever feel the answer was to be found in the European tradition.

J.C. No, he didn't. I'll tell you what he told me. His father was one of the great Celtic scholars of all time...

M.M. Yes, he calls him "a titan."

J.C. And Zimmer was brought up in a world of major scholarship—I mean that late nineteenth-century German scholarship that has not been equalled. It's basic to the whole thing—I don't care what subject you're interested in—those are the men who *did* it! They were the first professional scholars in the world. The Germans looked the field over, asked: what's to be done? and went in and did it. This is what hit me when I was a student in France. I went over there to study medieval French, Old French of Provençal. Basic works? in German! So, the first thing I thought was: I can't speak or read German, so what the hell am I doing here in France when the things I *have* to know how to read are in German! The next year I went to Germany, and then the world broke wide open for me.

Now Zimmer, with his father's impulse, was working in that area, in Indo-European philology; then he had a year of military duty. The day he was to be dismissed, the trumpet blows for the First World War. So, he was five years in the military life. Comes out: Iron Cross with Palms. Christiane may have told you what it was he did in the war, but I think he was in the Intelligence, and since he knew Sanskrit, he related to the In-



dian captives. He was working with some of them, the prisoners of war, and two thoughts came into his head: first, just the opposite world view to that which has brought Europe into this war is to be found in India. So he thought of the Indian philosophy as a complement to what we had here. Second, he determined that he would not translate anything that he didn't think he understood. You know those translations of oriental texts where the translator says of the passage on which he is working: But this is absurd! Well, Zimmer decided to know what the thing was saying before he produced a translation. Then, just at that time when he was mustered out of the army, Sir John Woodruff's *Tantric Texts* were being published. These were the first well-edited publications of the tantric texts, and Zimmer told me: "I drank those in as a baby drinks in milk." You know that kind of reading experience yourself, where you hit it, and you're building your own insides by pulling this stuff into you—that's the way he worked. And also, he had an inherent talent for amplifying the imagery through his own experience.

I learned this from him, that one should not be afraid of one's own interpretation of a symbol. It will come to you as a message, and will open out. The key to this is in that little preface that I built out of some scraps of his writing, "The Dilettante Among Symbols" at the opening of *The King and the Corpse*. That's Zimmer! When an image had

opened to him that way (and mind you, he knew one hell of a lot about symbols), he'd know just where to turn to validate his own interpretation in the experience of it. He would check it. But his interpretation of symbols always came out of him personally, reinforced by a host of clues from the East.

M.M. *And with a sense of delight... his understanding of "dilettante"...*

J.C. Yes, that *delecto*... he had delight! I'll not forget some of those lectures! He was just bubbling over! And he could play it—this way or that way or throw it around. It wasn't just bumm, bumm, bumm, down the line.

M.M. *Christiane was originally his student—and she mentioned that he had an extraordinary teaching style, that even with Sanskrit grammar, he was very enthusiastic and almost inspired.*

J.C. He made you feel that you understood Sanskrit. You know how Sanskrit is: the roots and all that kind of thing. But anyone studying Sanskrit with Zimmer would have learned it in a couple of months. At least how to read the epic Sanskrit which is relatively easy. The Kavya poetry—that would be something else again. But the Mahabharata, the Ramayana—you'd be reading them in a couple of months. He was wonderful.

But that wasn't what I sat in on. I was already well along in my own teaching career when he came over. I was helping Swami Nikhilananda with *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, and I knew people in the Jung Foundation. They all knew of Zimmer's arrival here. I had never heard of Zimmer. I met him first at one of the evenings that Swami Nikhilananda liked to put on where he'd invite people and prepare a curry dinner for them. (He was a really good cook.) Then I learned almost immediately that Zimmer was about to deliver some lectures at Columbia. It was not Columbia

who had invited him to give the lectures. It was the *Jungfrauen*, the ladies of the Jung Foundation who had discovered a room on the campus where he could lecture. It was at the top of Low Library—a little museum up there. I heard that he was going to be lecturing, and having met him at Nikhilananda's, I was eager to hear him. He was a lovely presence. There was such a stream of marvelous wisdom pouring from him!

There were three people inscribed for his lectures, plus Marguerite Bloch, the lady who was the director of the museum: namely me, a woman from the Jung Foundation, and a Polish sculptress who emanated a perfume that almost set everybody crazy. Well, Zimmer lectured as though he were lecturing to an auditorium! He was not a good lecturer in English yet; he couldn't do it right off the top of his head. So he had written out his lectures. I have them all in my files, the ones I turned into those books, on little pieces of paper—about six by four inches, something like that. And he would type out the lines—not in a running prose, but in stroke phrases. And he would underline in red the syllable to be accented in each word. I mean, he *worked* on those things, and the lectures were great. And every now and then when he'd come to the point of telling a story, he'd put the thing down and tell you the myth—always with a wonderful sense of the humor that is the life of myth.

Well, those were stunning lectures (he only lectured about things he believed in), and those are the ones I made into the great big two-volume work, *The Art of Indian Asia*. That was the first semester.

The second semester, he had to move into another room, because there were about fifty people this time. I mean, news gets around! (My father had a saying: you can't hide a good restaurant, and Columbia couldn't hide Zimmer.) In the fall, he started a series of lectures—then in one week, he died. He gave a lecture one Friday night; he was breathing somewhat heavily; he went home. Christiane phoned me the next morning and said he was very sick and she was afraid. I was amazed. And we were

burying him the next week...it was like that.

M.M. *It was pneumonia, wasn't it?*

J.C. Yes, it was pneumonia that had not been properly diagnosed; he'd been walking around with it for a couple of weeks. He was a big strong man; he just thought he had a cold or something like that, and, zing, it took him away.

Well, that was a stunner! But then Christiane asked me if I'd edit this material—his American lectures—and I thought: a couple of years.

It was twelve years I worked on those notes.

His first series of lectures was the set that I turned into *The Art of Indian Asia*, which was the last book on which I worked. His second series was a full semester of philosophy; then came the series that I published under the title *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*. That was the first that I brought out. Then I did *The King and the Corpse*, which is based on written material that he had published plus the first chapter of his unfinished translation into German of the *Kalikapurana*. But the fourth semester of his teaching was the one that broke off with his death. It was again a semester on philosophy. So when I started on the philosophy volume I had only a semester and quarter of his lectures, and that was not the whole story. I found a lot more material in his notes. I phoned Jack Barrett at Bollingen, and said: Look, if you'll give me another two or three years on this book, we can have a killer here. And it is. *The Philosophies of India* is a corker!

There were some very interesting things that happened to me in the course of doing those books. Zimmer used to give his manuscripts to his friends and students just to have them read them over and help him straighten out his prose. So when I would come to certain chapters, they wouldn't be

there. There would be a gap. Some little lady would have kept them somewhere in her memory chest. But he had a very striking and forceful presence in his presentation: in my memory I could hear him. I would get to the point where pages were missing and a break came; I'd jump the break and pick up again where the thing resumed and do a few paragraphs of that. Then I'd see what the gap was between the two and what had to be covered. I had talked with Zimmer a lot about these things and I would bridge the gap with four or five questions; I'd ask a question and listen, and he would dictate. The style was his style, more or less. Then when I got into doing the big book on *The Art of Indian Asia*, I could no longer hear him dictating—that was eleven or twelve years later—and I was finished. There was no way to go on.

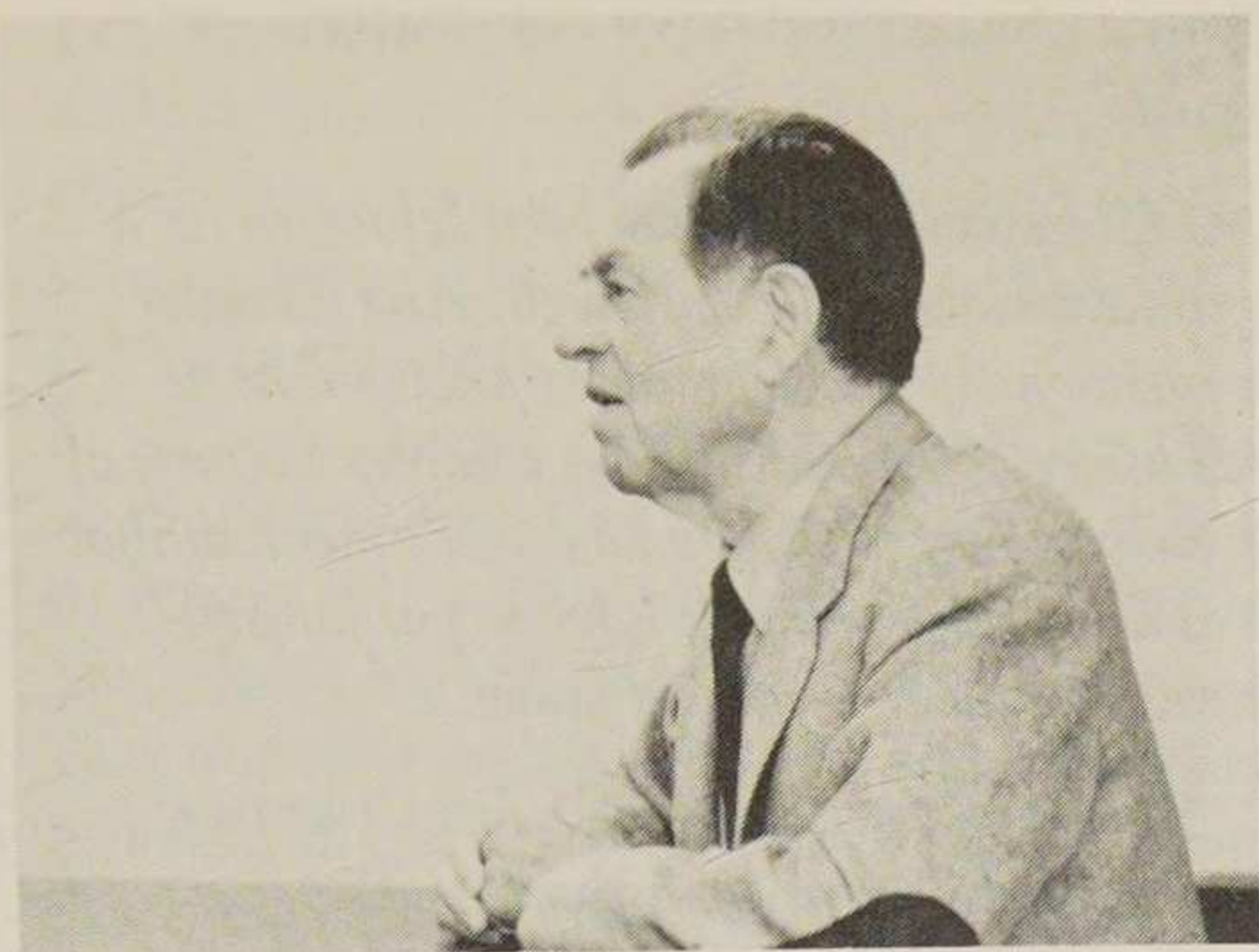
M.M. *Would you have a visual impression of him?*

J.C. No, I'd just sit down and listen. There'd be a vague sense of his weight, and I'd take dictation.

M.M. *Do you feel then in a sense that he was actually speaking through you somehow?*

J.C. No, those were just bridges, you know; I don't have any sense of that kind of spooky thing. It was my recollection of his manner, of what he had been saying, that is what I'd hear him say—maybe I had a couple of notes of my own from the lecture. My technique in handling Zimmer's material was to keep his page at my left hand and write with my right (I don't use a typewriter when I write). I was using his phrases as far as possible with a correction of some of the verbal choices, and I would try to get that baroque rhythm that he had. I would mark off with a red line down the page whatever I had used, and sometimes I'd jump from the top to the bottom of the page and come back to the middle and so forth. It was all built out of his words and put together with a more naturally English tone and type of prose. I don't know where Zimmer ends and I begin. It was a great inspiration to me—working on that wave of his vitality.

Often when I talked with him, he had Wagner going on the record player full



blast. Wagner full blast and Zimmer full blast and I'd stand there and I'd know: The whole answer to the universe is coming at me right now and I wonder if I'm understanding it or getting any particle of it! Some of those moments were really fantastic.

M.M. But you did get it; that's the marvelous thing.

J.C. Well, yes, I got it, but as I said, I worked twelve years on it.

M.M. But it was like a labor of love...

J.C. It was a labor of delight! Every bit of it. It was hellish hard work, but a real, real delight.

Sometimes I wished he'd written the damn paragraph in German—the English was *just off*. That's the hardest kind of thing to get back on the track with—where it isn't *quite* correct. Also, with his enormous philological knowledge he could make up words! He would put in a word that he thought ought to be an English one, and there wouldn't be anything in English quite like it.

I wouldn't have been able to do the books at all if I hadn't known that Zimmer would have liked the way I was doing it. He was extremely amusing with relation to what we call academic formalities.

There was one chapter—the whole thing on *Satyagraha*—you know, the Gandhi piece which I wrote from my notes of his lecture and what I remembered. Somebody had run off with that lecture. When I was in Calcutta, they gave me the newspaper one day, and I opened the thing, and here in a framed box on the front page was some Indian declaring that the Westerner, the white man, just can't understand Gandhi, and that Gandhi's message is as follows. I went on reading, and my God, I was recognizing my own prose! It was this chapter! They were pulling it right out of the book! That was very amusing, and pleasing in a way. [laughter]

When Zimmer came here the Bollingen Foundation had just gotten started. Mima Mellon, who was the foundress and inspiration of the whole thing, had been trying to get advice from several others of the European scholars who were coming over here at that time. And when Zimmer came, obviously he was the one. He was really the initiating scholar of the Bollingen series. They asked him what Number One should be. (We had just gotten into the War.) He said that if we were doing this in Germany, he'd try to begin with something *of the land*, thus giving respect to the land, letting the spirit of the land support us. So he selected a Navajo myth and series of pollen paintings that Maude Oakes had brought back from New Mexico, and suggested that that would be a good thing to start with. Its name was: "Where the Two Came to Their Father." But it had to be edited, because Maude knew how to collect material—she did it beautifully—but didn't really know how to build a book. They asked Zimmer who should edit it. And as I had already given him a couple of books of American Indian myths, he said Joe Campbell. And that's how I got started.

I had a double advantage—not only Zimmer there as a model in those years, but I was teaching young women who weren't the least bit interested in academic details. They wanted to know what a myth might mean to *them*. With this double inspiration, Zimmer and my students, I was held to the *life* of my subject, and this is the thing that

built whatever it is I have had as a career, which I think has been a pretty good one.

M.M. Understanding myths and symbols tends to bring one to a perspective; at least it's hopeful. Even in bad situations, you can see the thread.

J.C. Absolutely! The bad situation is one of the disintegrating moments in myth out of which integration comes. And what is it that's collapsing? And why? Because something was missing. It's collapsing because it was off balance. Well, let that go and find the opposite. That's what Zimmer did with the War. He went to India.

M.M. But he didn't physically go.

J.C. He never saw India!

M.M. He says in the biographical sketch that he reached a point where he realized he couldn't get any more out of texts. He had studied them all. And he realized that the real teacher was experience—it was life itself. That recognition seems to have elevated him from an ordinary teacher to an extraordinary teacher.

J.C. If you live with the myths in your mind, you will find yourself always in mythological situations. They cover everything that can happen to you. And that enables you to interpret the myth in relation to life, as well as life in relation to myth.

M.M. There's one enigma—or at least one point I'm not too clear on—regarding his relations with his father. Did he ever speak to you about that? I heard for the first time that his father committed suicide when Zimmer was only about twenty years of age.

J.C. Heinrich was twenty years old and his father committed suicide? I didn't know that...that would have been just about the time the War was coming too? Oh my!

M.M. It would have been 1910...

J.C. Four years before the War. I didn't know that! And I can't imagine why H.

Zimmer, Sr. would have committed suicide.

M.M. Christiane said he had been depressed for a long time and not physically well. And Zimmer also mentions in his biographical sketch that he saved himself from an Oedipus complex because of this early demise, although he doesn't mention that it was a suicide. He didn't have to put himself somehow in rivalry with his father.

J.C. Yes, it's interesting—I didn't know that. He didn't mention that at all...

We visited them in New Rochelle though...which brings up a couple of odd things. My years as a little boy, the years between nine and fifteen, were lived in New Rochelle. Those are wonderful years in a boy's life—they were in mine anyhow. We had a house on Pintard Avenue and Woodland Avenue was the side street. Zimmer lived on Woodland!

M.M. Does your family still live there?

J.C. No, no. We had a dramatic finale: the house caught fire, my grandmother was killed, my father was almost killed, and that was the end of our relationship to New Rochelle, in 1919. But it was fantastic to have this man, who now was beginning to mean so much to me in the development of my own thoughts on what kind of a spiritual life could go along with an academic life, living there in the same town which to me stood for a delightful period of my life.

That was when I found the Indians. I was living right next to the New Rochelle Public Library. When I was eleven years old, they opened the stacks to me because I had read every book about American Indians in the children's library. The beginning of my real scholarly life had been up there. And then, here was the culmination and fruition of it with Zimmer there.

Then Zimmer died and Christiane moved into New York—into exactly the same apartment building that I had lived in with my family when I was doing graduate work at Columbia!

M.M. By coincidence?

J.C. Completely by coincidence.

M.M. Yes, but what is "coincidence"?

J.C. Yes, where are you! Talk about Jung and the idea of synchronicity...I began to think that there was a spook behind the whole thing! That's very interesting, isn't it? Very strange...

There was an amusing dream that I had at that time, and I've forgotten now whether it was just before he died or just after he died that I had this dream. It was right at that hot time when the stuff was really just pouring into me from his lectures. During the Depression period, there were five years between 1929 when I returned from my years in Europe and 1934 when I got my first teaching job—five years of just rolling around. I lived for a part of that time up in Woodstock, in a tiny cabin, more like a chicken-coop, that cost me \$20 a year. I used to go out and run to keep in shape and also walk in the woods—I always liked walking in the woods, even when I was a little boy. And what I liked best to do was break into the woods anywhere—no paths—just anywhere. Then you'd come to a little footpath and follow that. And the footpath would lead to a bigger path and the bigger path would lead to a logging road or something like that.

The dream was that I had gotten on to one of those logging roads, and the road was running through the forest, and there was a turn ahead. And just about to go around the turn—still within my view—was Zimmer. As he was about to disappear, he turned back and he beckoned to me, "Come!"

M.M. *And he was smiling?*

J.C. Yes, he was smiling: "C'mon!"

M.M. *This is something that came out in the discussion I had with Christiane—he loved to walk in the woods.*

J.C. I didn't know that about Zimmer!

M.M. *Yes, she said even when he was working and*



typing, if she came in and said, "Heinz, would you want to go for a walk in the woods?" he would just drop everything and go out for a walk in the woods.

J.C. Well, you see, myths come out of the same basis as the trees of the woods do. They come out of the *Vijnanamayakosha*, the wisdom body of the universe that's in us. So it's very appropriate.

It's hard for me to think now that he was in his fifties when he died, and a man now in his fifties could be my son.

Still, he's in my mind as the older, the guide. I've studied with a lot of special people. I've had very, very wonderful luck in the people who became my (what they now call) gurus—even from the time I was a little boy. It was never really a "guru"—nobody ever took charge of me the way a guru does—but there were people who were my inspirations. And Zimmer was the last one.

M.M. *There hasn't been one since?*

J.C. No, not of that type.

M.M. *How many were there before?*

J.C. Oh, there was a long line. From the time I was a little boy, the people in school with whom I was working, then in college, graduate school, and then in my off-campus life as well, I've always had inspired connections with the really wonderful, wonderful teachers—some of them not "teachers," just men that I admired and talked to. But Zimmer topped it off. ◇

The Old Man of the Sea

He was called the Old Man of the Sea, and his long white beard mingled with the froth of the waves as he sported with his flock of seals in the waters around the island of Pharos. Many sought him, for he knew the future as well as the past, but few found him and fewer still could make him speak; for though he had the gift of prophecy, only a hero or a god could force him to break his silence.

So it happened that after the fall of Troy, storm-tossed Menelaus, for eight years driven by contrary winds from the shores of his homeland, came at last with the few ships that were left to him to the island of Pharos. He and three of his men killed seals and skinned them, and hiding themselves beneath the skins, they lay on the rocky shore until hundreds of seals came out of the sea to join them there, and the Old Man of the Sea among them; and they all stretched out on the rocks and at last slept. Then Menelaus and his companions cast off their sealskins and crept to where the Old Man of the Sea lay snoring and seized him in their hands.

The Old Man woke with a roar, and suddenly it was a lion that they grasped, with hot breath and bared teeth; and Menelaus' men were frightened and loosed their hold, but Menelaus held firm. And the lion changed into a writhing serpent, but Menelaus still held firm. Then the serpent became a panther, sleek as the seals but far more dangerous; but it could not escape the grip of Menelaus. The panther turned into a boar with slashing tusks, but Menelaus did not let go; and all at once, the boar was gone and through his hands a stream of water seemed to

play, and his fingers almost opened, but again he clenched them to hold the stream tight; and the smooth water became the rough bark of a great tree with rustling leaves, and still Menelaus held on. And now it was the Old Man of the Sea he held, vanquished and forced to speak the truth.

“Go back to Egypt, king,” the Old Man said, “and build a ceremonial tomb dedicated to the gods, for Agamemnon your brother is dead, slain by his wife Clytemnestra and her lover. And there you will see what you must do next.”

And so it was, for when Menelaus returned to Egypt and the order was obeyed, for the first time in eight years a favoring wind sprang up, and Menelaus was able to launch his battered ships and sail home to Greece.

—Retold from classical sources by D.M. Dooling

Illustration by Eileen Rosenfeld



Old Oaks and Ancient Sages

by Jonathan Chaves

It is difficult for us—living in a society which idealizes young athletes, then considers them to be washed up at the age of thirty or forty, and which turns sixteen-year-old rock musicians into millionaires while their grandparents languish in depressing “nursing homes”—to comprehend the profound veneration which is accorded old age among the Chinese.

This veneration for the aged was not limited to the family. Old men in many walks of life were regarded as guiding spirits, sources of inspiration. It was not necessary for an old man to be a religious practitioner of some kind to be held in great respect. Chang Yü and Yang Chi give us wonderfully observed vignettes of old fishermen, whom they clearly admire for their closeness to nature, and their rich life-experience. It is no surprise that so many of the gods worshiped in Chinese folk religion are depicted as kindly old men, sometimes, as in the case of local earth gods, accompanied by their aged wives (*T'u-kung T'u-mu*).

After death, the old man can become not only a source of moral guidance for his descendents, but a wellspring of inspiration for ages to come. Yang Shih-ch'i goes deep into the mountains on a personal pilgrimage

to the site of the Pavilion of the Drunken Old Man, Ou-yang Hsiu (1007-72) of the Sung dynasty, whose writings “touched on the movement of the universe.” The ruins of the pavilion may have disappeared long since—after all, some three hundred years have passed—but Yang finds in the daily labors of the local peasants an affirmation of cyclical continuity, and perhaps herein lies his experience of communion across the centuries with the spirit of Ou-yang Hsiu.

And because the Chinese vision of nature included a strongly humanistic component, the old oak tree of Chang Yü's *Song* seems itself to be something of an ancient sage. It is humming with life, and the old villager who remembers having climbed it as a youth can almost be seen as the tree's spokesman.

The six poets represented here wrote during the Ming dynasty of China (1368-1644): Hsü Pen (d. 1379/80); Chang Yü (1333-85); Yang Chi (c. 1334-c. 1383); Yang Shih-ch'i (1365-1444); T'ang Yin (1470-1523); Wen Cheng-ming (1470-1559). Ming poetry remains virtually unknown in the West, and even scholars of Chinese literature have paid it little heed. But as the poems (translated here for the first time) demonstrate, these were writers of great power and sensitivity, whose work deserves to be better known. All of them were also painters, and two of them—T'ang Yin and Wen Cheng-ming—are counted among China's greatest masters.



WEN CHENG-MING

The Evening Of My Birthday

On this day of my birth, I see no visitors:
the family is busy with the celebration!
As evening draws on—
green wine, yellow oranges!—
I'm congratulated for being seventy-three.
Candles wish me joy with their flames,
my relatives—branches of the same tree—
crowd around,
with golden chrysanthemums.
The little grandchildren
imitate their elder brothers
who kneel before me and
present me with poems.

—YANG SHIH-CH'I

A Poem Inscribed on a Painting

Pines and cedars, a hundred feet of
green, clinging to the earth.
The hermit's robe is ragged,
his hair, spotted with grey.
The desolate mountain is silent—
no human voices here!
Among the wolves and tigers,
he reads the *Tao te ching*.

—T'ANG YIN

*Staying Overnight
at T'ien-ning Ch'an Temple*

I rush to the office when I'm in the city,
but when my duties are over,
I take walks in the hills.
This evening I visit a Ch'en dynasty temple,
its corridors and halls filled
with ancient treasures.
In crumbling niches, gold Buddhas shine;
marvelous paintings cover
the high walls.
A broken stele can no longer be read:
cracked, and covered with moss.
The old monk, well acquainted with
the Dharma,
sits in meditation, cultivating tranquillity.
He shows me a palm-leaf manuscript
and we pass the evening
in profound conversation.
Wind-bells sound above the clouds
and dew drips into the pond
and the spring.
Our words seem to be in perfect accord:
from this day on, I will leave
the world behind.

—CHANG YÜ

A Painting

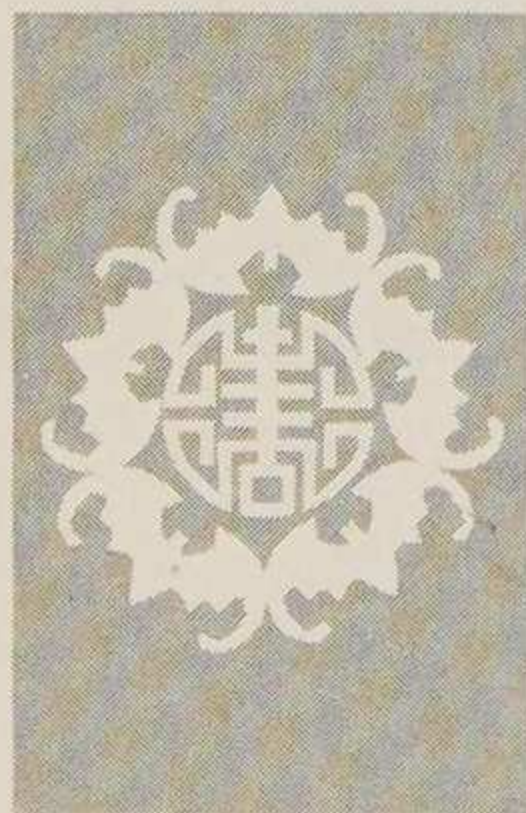
His pole and paddle have been
with him a long time.
He feels close to the water-birds.
This old man of the river,
with his bamboo cape,
he has seen them all: the travelers
who come and go.

—CHANG YÜ

A Poem on Passing By Hsin-k'ai Lake at Kao-yu in Light Rain

The remnants of a rainbow fall
to the western bank at dawn,
gulls and egrets fly in confusion
through the rain.
All day long, the little boat travels
inside a painting:
lotus leaves and lotus blossoms,
an unbroken fragrance.
In the bow of the boat is an old man
with a beard a foot long,
piling up water chestnuts, and selling fish.
His son can work the rudder, his
daughter sweeps the scull:
what use for them to be brilliant
and read lots of books?

—YANG CHI



Recording a Dream

I fell asleep in the daytime,
and dreamed of my hometown:
with a bamboo cane, I was
visiting my western neighbor.
The old man greeted me with great respect
and invited me to view
the magnolias with him.
We had a cup of wine, sang a song,
and before we knew it,
the red sun was setting...
Then I awoke, with a feeling
of emptiness:
here I was, still floating
at the ends of the earth.

—YANG SHIH-CH'I

To A Hermit In The Mountains

You've lived there long, away from
the trappings of office,
your mind at peace, cut off
from the world.
In jars: herbs, handed down
by your teacher.
In bags: elixir, refined
by your own hand.
You whistle out loud beyond
the thousand peaks,
walk quietly along a hundred streams.
You resent even the intrusions of
woodcutters and shepherds,
so now you want to move
still deeper into the clouds.

—HSÜ PEN

*Hermit Feng's
Residence On The Lake*

Your house is near the southern
tip of the lake;
the green mountains end at your gate.
The fields are low, often covered
by floods;
your neighbors are few, not enough
to form a village.
You've lived here a long time—
now you know how to farm;
enjoying tranquillity, you've come
to understand the meaning of
Taoist sayings.
Men like you, who've escaped our
troubled times:
how many of you are left?

—HSÜ PEN

A Eulogy on My Own Portrait

The old boy's seventy-three
this year,
and keeps on dreaming of
returning to the south!
If the Emperor would let me
take off my official cap
I'd get myself a fishing pole
and fish at Stone Pond.

—YANG SHIH-CH'I

*Inscribed On a Painting Of Bamboo
Presented to Lecturer Ch'en
Upon His Departure
To Resume His Duties At Nanking*

Even ordinarily, parting is difficult,
and now I must part from
a lifelong friend!
The trees are shedding leaves, the
weather is cold, the year
draws to a close,
and one white-haired man says goodbye
to another white-haired man.

—YANG SHIH-CH'I



SHEN CHOU

*The Year I-mao (1555),
New Year's Eve*

Laughing, before the lamps, we pour
each other New Year's drinks:
In the mirror, fleeting time has
passed another cycle.
Human life is limited from the start—
a hundred years:
thousands of things have happened
in mine, I regret none of them.
Remaining hardships? No need to send
them off in a "carriage of fire;"
Ailments? Blown away by every
firecracker!
Yesterday has gone, and
tomorrow is with us:
the spring winds turn the calendar
back to the first page.

—WEN CHENG-MING



Living in Master Fang's Garden

You remove a jade pendant—
to exchange for a lute,
and sell a few books to buy wine.
Nights in the pavilion, among the
bamboo, listening to the snow;
time spent looking at flowers at the
plum blossom hut!
Your daughter has been married
to a local farmer,
your son has become a gardener.
The old man next door is
impossibly vulgar:
but how can you refuse when he asks
you over for a drink?

—YANG CHI

*Searching For the Ruins of the
Pavilion of the Drunken Old Man*

A deserted mountain, streams and
stones, but no one living here.
The pavilion of those years has long
since turned to dust.
The writings of this famous man touched
on the movement of the universe:
men of the district who visit here now
must feel ashamed.
Cold forests, vague beyond the
wild mists;
a frost-covered path, twisting and
turning along the ancient stream...
The scene may have changed, but customs
remain the same:
I see the peasants of Ch'u-chou, coming
and going with their water-jars.

—YANG SHIH-CH'I

Song of the Old Oak

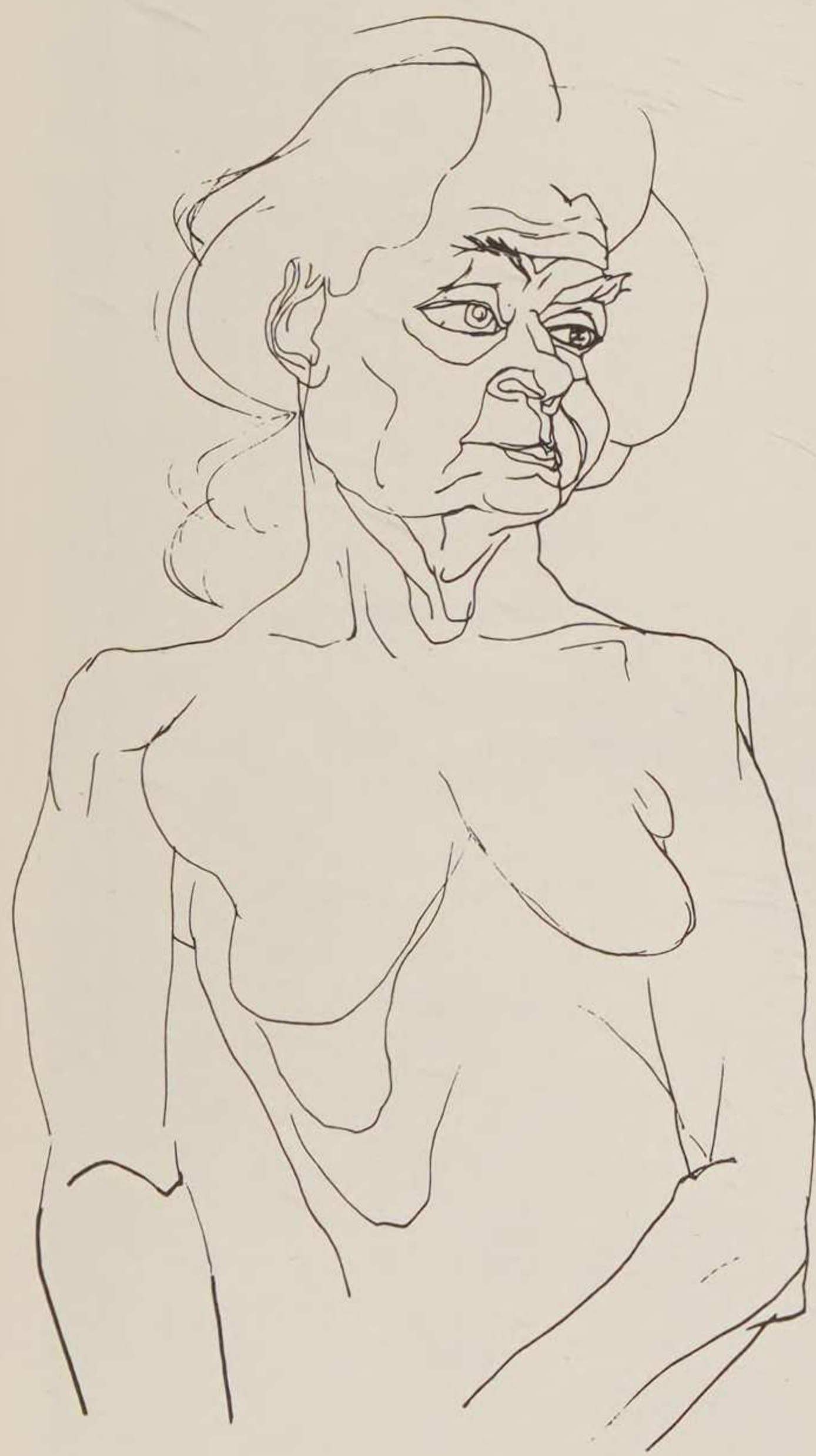
No one knows how old this tree is,
standing before the mountain;
in profusion, its mass of dark colors
reaches to the sky.
The frosty branches and twisted roots
are like battling dragons and tigers;
in the huge, drooping canopy sing
crickets and cicadas.
Its green leaves, weaving
patterns, are full of life,
and the holes in the trunk
swarm with colonies of ants.
The upper branches darkly slant
across the clouds;
the roots below dig deep
into the thick earth.
Beside the tree is an ancient shrine
to the local god:
people pour libations of wine,
moistening the roots of the tree.
“We only wish that the spirit of this
place be provided always with
offerings,
so the tree and the people who live
nearby will live for many years.”
An old man of the village, who
has raised sons and grandsons,
says, “This tree has been here
for ages;
I remember as a child I’d climb
this tree,
and when I look at the roots and
branches, they still are just
the same!”
It has lived through times of chaos,
and seen times of peace;
how many woodcutters have chopped
away at it, and yet it never died!
The mountain monks, loving this spot,
cut thatch for a retreat,
but the thick greenery of the tree
still stands firm, here
beside the eaves.
Wait until I come in the sixth month,
bringing a cot with me:
I’ll lie down, and listen to
the south winds in this tree
like the roar of ocean waves.

—CHANG YÜ



T'ANG YIN

Re-remembered Lives



Many years ago when my mother was first studying drawing she drew old people over and over; and when I look at these pictures I understand why I got into the work in which I have found myself. My mother found in them the folds, wrinkles, bags, pouches, and angles that were characteristic of aging physiology and physiognomy. She rendered them with a love of line that made the subjects attractive and interesting; ultimately they aroused affection and understanding.

I begin to comprehend more and more how essential it is that we be given authentic, arresting images of the elderly, how our society contrives to withhold this, giving us nothing, degradation or sentimentality. We are not taught to see the elderly. They become invisible to us and ultimately to themselves. Without positive (in the sense of strong and accurate) images, our future (seen in their bodies and faces) holds despair and losses.

What Sir Thomas Browne said in 1685 is still true: The threat of oblivion is “the heaviest stone that melancholy can throw at a man.” When people are very old, separated from progeny, bearers of traditions that will pass away with them, and not sure that anyone—neither God nor their fellows—will remember their names or pass on the knowledge that they have existed, then they face a death that surpasses a normal separation from life; then they face the possibility of oblivion. Since 1971 I have been working among such people, elderly Jews

by *Barbara G. Myerhoff*

*illustrations by
Florence Siegel*

of eastern European origin, living on their own, often in severe economic and physical straits, and coming together often at a community Center. To meet their circumstances, over several decades they improvised a syncretic culture made up of their common childhood past, combined with their values and experiences of adulthood, and ultimately old age. Whenever they could and by whatever means they found, they brought themselves to light and portrayed or claimed the meaning of their lives and experiences.

Old people are said to be naturally drawn to review their lives, and Jews are reputed to be addicted to talk of this nature, "talking as if their lives depended upon it, but no 'as if,'" as folklorist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett put it. These old Jews were virtuoso talkers, exegetes, arguers, and dialecticians, and many reasons for this may be suggested. The historical facts of their history since the Dispersion from the Holy Land exacerbated their passion for self-scrutiny, for so much time spent among hostile outsiders in so many differing countries requires explanation. The Holocaust further intensified their awareness of their distinctiveness and urgently called out for explanation. The Center elders had not experienced the Holocaust firsthand; they left the Old World when so many of their peers, family, and companions remained behind to be destroyed. They did not experience the most important event of their generation, perhaps the century; yet they did, for just as those who are victims of atrocity petition the gods to know why they are af-





flicted, those who escape by accident demand to know why they too have not been taken. "Why me?" becomes "Why not me?" and the ones who survive seem universally to think there is no intrinsic justice to be detected in their escape, usually believing that it was always the best who perished, the least deserving who did not. Much has been written on the subject of "survivor's guilt." Robert Jay Lifton, speaking about survivors of Hiroshima as well as Jews who survived Hitler, suggests that those who remain after mass destruction of their fellows become "seekers after justice," devoting themselves to careful examination of their own lives and of history, trying to find evidence of something aside from chaos to account for their sufferings. An explanation is sought, some indication is required of a moral and sane accountable universe. Disaster once named and conceptualized becomes bearable, when, as Bertrand Russell put it, one can at the very least manage to believe in "the relatively modest assertion that God is not mad." Such scrutiny is extraordinarily painful; but as one of

them put it, "Why do we torture ourselves with memory? The one who studies history loses an eye. The one who does not loses two eyes."

Surviving and survivor's guilt, then, can serve as transformative agents, taking the base materials of ordinary existence and disaster and working the alchemical miracle upon them until they result in consciousness. The consequence is a development of the capacity to lead an examined life. Through this consciousness, the elders were able to focus their remaining moments, enliven and enrich every detail of daily life, in the light of what had been extinguished and lost. "If we lose ourselves now, if we give up our traditions, if we become like everyone else, then we finish ourselves off. We do Hitler's work for him," said one of the women. They owed living fully to those who were gone. And too they often felt a bittersweet triumph at having persisted despite so many and such exaggerated attempts to do away with them. Outliving historical enemies (Hitler was the last in a series, after all) was a personal accomplishment in which they took pride.

Memory is a continuum ranging from vague, dim shadows to the brightest, most vivid totality. It may offer opportunity not merely to recall the past but to relive it, in all its original freshness, unaltered by intervening changes and reflections. Such magical Proustian moments are pinpoints of the greatest intensity, when a sense of the past never being truly lost is experienced. The diffuseness of life is then transcended, the sense of duration overcome, and all of one's self and one's memories are felt to be universally valid. Simultaneity replaces sequence and a sense of oneness with one's past is achieved. Often such moments involve childhood memories, and then one experiences the self as it was originally, and knows beyond doubt that one is the same person as that child who still dwells within a time-altered body. Integration through

memory with earlier states of being surely provides the sense of continuity and completeness that may be counted as an essential developmental task of old age.

Freud has suggested that the completion of the mourning process requires that those left behind develop a new reality which no longer includes what has been lost. But it must also be said that full recovery from mourning may restore what has been lost, maintaining it through incorporation into the present. Full recollection and retention may be as vital to recovery and well-being as the forfeiture of memories.

Victor Turner has used the term "Re-membering," bracketing it by the hyphen to distinguish it from ordinary recollection. Re-membering, he offers, is the reaggregation of one's members, the figures who properly belong to one's life story, one's own prior selves, the significant others without which the story cannot be completed. Re-membering, then, is a purposive, significant unification, different from the passive, continuous, fragmentary flickerings of images and feelings that accompany other activities in the normal flow of consciousness. The focused unification provided by Re-membering is requisite to sense and order. Through it, a life is given shape that extends back in the past and forward into the future, a simplified, edited tale where completeness may be sacrificed for moral and aesthetic purposes. Then history approaches art, myth, and ritual. Perhaps this is why Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory, is the mother of the Muses. Without Re-membering we lose our history and ourselves.

The Center elders in their extraordinary struggles to retain their histories and transmit them, tame the future with the same weapons they used to overcome their past—irony, dignity, independence, courage, practicality, and imagination. Such traits make them worthy of the name Ancestors, even in their own time.

One of them put his thoughts like this:

So, I'll tell you how I survive, but you won't like it. Every time I say anything about it, people shudder. But you couldn't get away from it, the thing I am talking about. The word is

"pain." Pain is the avenue to getting a soul, getting *quality* from yourself. This is how you get a life that's really on the essence.

You got to go about pain the right way. You couldn't escape, so you go into it. Then it melts. You get from this the whole thing, the idea of life itself and the result is you're able to take pain in and ignore it because you're so full of living. When you learn to do this—and believe me, it took me a very long time—you get a clarification, I would say.

Now if you would like to hear a little more, I could give you an example. When I start to talk about pain it leaves me. That's why I don't like to talk so much. All that I got to say is painful, and when I tell somebody about it, then I feel better. But that's no good. It comes back to you when you're not looking, *whoosh*, it jumps out from behind the stove and grabs you. So when the pain comes, I am patient. I shut up, active silence; I bear it, wait, even overnight, but I mean I *bear* it, I don't take a tranquilizer, a sleeping pill, some schnapps, or watch television. I stand before it, I call the pain out. After you go through this you discover you got choices. You become whole. This is the task of our life. I want to live this kind of life, so I can be alive every minute. I want to know when I'm awake, I'm altogether awake. When I'm asleep, I'm asleep.

It's not masochistic. It's not stoical. In fact, if you want to know, it's Jewish. One of our prophets said, "In quiet confidence, shall lie your strength." In this way you can make of suffering something positive, because it's part of human life.

In old age, we got a chance to find out what a human being is, how we could be worthy of being human. You could find in yourself courage, and know you are vital. Then you're living on a different plane. To do this you got to use your brain, but that's not enough. The brain is combined with the soul. Do you know what I'm talking about? I don't think you could get to this understanding too young, but when you get to it, then you couldn't go before your time, because you are ready.* ◇

*Quoted from *Number Our Days* by Barbara G. Myerhoff, (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1978).

F O U R P O E M S

*by Robert Bly
and Rolf Jacobsen*

illustration by Scott Rawlins

W O R D S
R I S I N G

To Richard Eberhart

I open my notebook, write some words with a green pen, something enters my chest, and the stars begin to revolve and pick up alligator claws from under the ocean, whatever we have lived, in the sunlit shelves of the Dordogne, what we sang among the skeletons of Papua, the many times we died wounded under the tent of an animal's sniffing, and the grassy nights we ran in the moonlight for hours, returns, there is a "welling up of watery syllables," the anger barking in the cave, the luminous head of wheat, growls from under fur, none of it is lost. The old earth fragrance remains in the word "and," "the" with its lonely suffering.

We are bees then; language is the honey. The honey lies now in caves beneath us, and the energies of words carry what we do not. When a man or woman feeds a few words with private grief, the shames we knew before we could invent the wheel, words grow, an instant later we slip out into the farmyards where rabbits lie stretched out on the ground for buyers, then the stored energies come to our ears as music, we see the million hands with dusty palms turned up inside a verb. There are eternal vows held inside the word "Jericho."

Blessings then on the man who labors in his tiny room on his poem on lambs, and on the woman who separates the black seeds of loneliness from the brown seeds of solitude, as the afternoon light slants in, blessing on the dictionary maker, huddled among his bearded words, and the setter of songs, who sleeps at night inside his violin case.

—ROBERT BLY



THE OLD The girls whose feet moved so fast, where did they go?
WOMEN Those with knees like small kisses and sleeping hair?

In the far reaches of time when they've become silent,
old women with narrow hands climb up stairs slowly

with huge keys in their bags and they look around
and chat with small children at cemetery gates.

In that big and bewildering country where winters are so long
and no one understands their expressions any more.

Bow clearly to them and greet them with respect
because they still carry everything with them,
like a fragrance,

a secret bite-mark on the cheek, a nerve in
the palm of the hand somewhere betraying who they are.

—ROLF JACOBSEN

*Translated from the Norwegian
by Robert Bly*

DRIVING
MY PARENTS
HOME AT
CHRISTMAS

As I drive my parents home through the snow,
their frailty hesitates on the edge of a mountainside.
I call over the cliff,
only snow answers.
They talk quietly
of hauling water, of eating an orange,
of a grandchild's photograph left behind last night.
When they open the door of their house, they disappear.
And the oak when it falls in the forest who hears it
through miles and miles of silence?
They sit so close to each other... as if pressed together
by the snow.

—ROBERT BLY

OLD AGE

I put a lot of stock in the old.
They sit looking at us and don't see us,
and have plenty with their own,
like fishermen along big rivers,
motionless as a stone
in the summer night.

I put a lot of stock in fishermen along rivers
and old people and those who appear after a long illness.
They have something in their eyes
that you don't see much anymore
the old, like convalescents
whose feet are still not very sturdy under them
and pale foreheads as if after a fever.

The old
who so gradually become themselves once more
and so gradually break up
like smoke, no one notices it, they are gone
into sleep
and light.

—ROLF JACOBSEN

*Translated from the Norwegian
by Robert Bly*



WHERE WE ARE

BY GARY SNYDER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK ORLOVE

I came here by a path, a line, of people that somehow worked their way from the Atlantic seaboard westward over a hundred and fifty years. One grandfather ended up in the Territory of Washington, and homesteaded in Kitsap County. My mother's side was railroad people down in Texas, and before that they'd worked the silver mines in Leadville, Colorado. My grandfather, being a homesteader, and my father a native of the state of Washington, put our family relatively early in the Northwest. Yet we weren't early enough. An elderly Salish Indian gentleman came by our farm once every few months in a model T truck, selling smoked salmon. "Who is he?" "He's an Indian" my parents said—

Looking at all the different trees and plants that made up my second-growth Douglas fir forest plus cow-pasture childhood universe, I realized that my parents were short on a certain kind of knowledge. They could say "That's a Doug Fir, that's a cedar, that's bracken fern..." But I perceived a subtlety and complexity in those woods that went far beyond a few names.

As a child I spoke with the old Salishan man a few times over the years he made these stops—then, suddenly, he never came

back. I sensed what he represented, what he knew, and what it meant to me: he knew better than anyone else I had ever met, *where I was*. I had no notion of a white American or European heritage providing an identity; I defined myself by relation to the place. Soon I also understood that "English language" is an identity—and later, via the hearsay of books, received the full cultural and historical view—but never forgot, or left, that first ground: the "where" of our "who are we?"

There are many people on the planet, now, who are not "inhabitants." Far from their home villages; removed from ancestral territories; moved into town from the farm; went to pan gold in California—work on the Pipeline—work for Bechtel in Iran. Actual inhabitants—peasants, paisanos, paysan, peoples of the land, have been sniffed at, laughed at, and overtaxed for centuries by the urban-based ruling elites. The intellectuals haven't the least notion of what kind of sophisticated, attentive, creative intelligence it takes to "grow food." Virtually all the plants in the gardens and the trees in the orchards, the sheep, cows, and goats in the pastures were domesticated in the Neolithic; before "civilization." The

differing regions of the world have long had—each—their own precise subsistence pattern developed over millennia by people who had settled in there and learned what particular kinds of plants the ground would “say” at that spot.

Humankind also clearly wanders. Four million years ago those smaller proto-humans were moving in and out of the edges of forest and grassland in Africa; fairly warm; open enough to run in. At some point moving on, catching fire, sewing clothes, swinging around the Arctic, setting out on amazing sea voyages. A skull found in Santa Barbara has been dated at 50,000 years. So it may be that during the middle and late Pleistocene, large fauna hunting era, a fairly nomadic grassland-and-tundra hunting life was established, with lots of mobility across northern Eurasia in particular. With the decline of the ice age—and here’s where we are, most of the big game hunters went out of business. There was possibly a population drop in Eurasia and the Americas, as the old techniques no longer worked.

Countless local ecosystem habitation styles emerged. People developed specific ways to *be* in each of those niches: plant knowledge, boats, dogs, traps, nets, fishing—the smaller animals, and smaller tools. From steep jungle slopes of southwest China to coral atolls to barren arctic deserts—a *spirit of what it was to be there* evolved, that spoke of a direct sense of relation to the “land”—which really means, the totality of the local bio-region system, from cirrus clouds to leaf-mold.

So, inhabitory peoples sometimes say “this piece of land is sacred”—or “all the land is sacred.” This is an attitude that draws on awareness of the mystery of life and death; of taking life to live; of giving life back—not only to your own children, but to the life of the whole land.

Abbé Breuil, the French prehistorian who worked extensively in the caves of southern France, has pointed out that the animal murals in those 20,000-year-old caves describe fertility as well as hunting—the birth of little bison and cow calves. They show a tender and accurate observa-

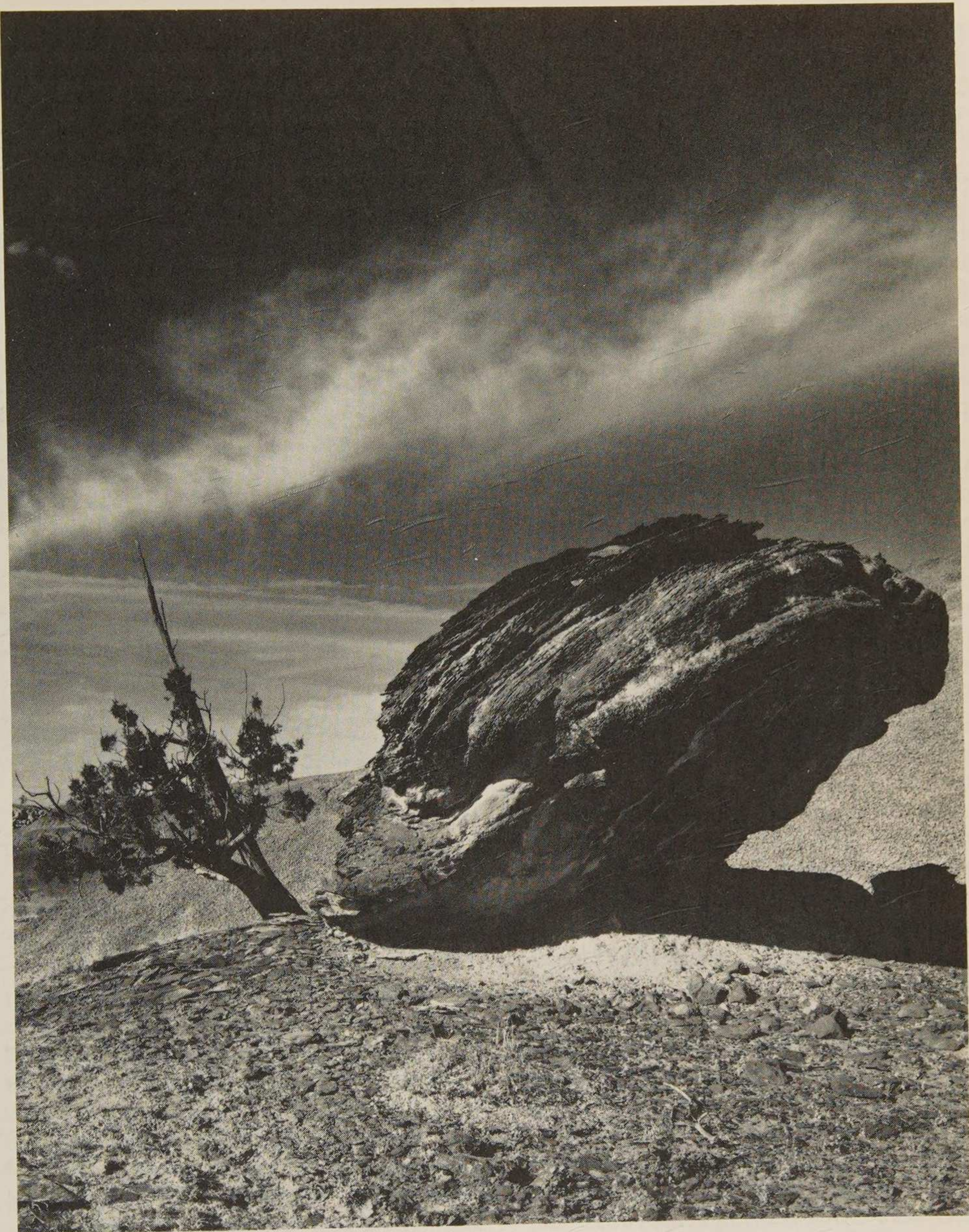
tion of the qualities and personalities of different creatures; implying a sense of the mutuality of life and death in the food chain; and what I take to be a sense of a sacramental quality in that relationship.

Inhabitation does not mean “not traveling.” The term does not of itself define the size of a territory. The size is determined by the bio-region type. The bison hunters of the great plains are as surely in a “territory” as the Indians of northern California, though the latter may have seldom ventured farther than thirty miles from where they were born. Whether a vast grassland, or a brushy mountain, the Peoples knew their geography. Any member of a hunting society could project from his visualization any spot in the surrounding landscape, and tell you what was there; how to get there.

“That’s where you’d get some cattails.” The bushmen of the Kalahari desert could locate a buried ostrich egg full of emergency water in the midst of a sandy waste—walk right up and dig it out. “I put this here three years ago, just in case.”

Ray Dasmann has useful terms to make these distinctions: “ecosystem-based cultures” and “biosphere cultures.” By that Ray means societies whose life and economies are centered in terms of natural regions and watersheds, as against those who discovered—seven or eight thousand years ago in a few corners of the globe—that it was “profitable” to spill over into another drainage, another watershed, another peoples’ territory, and steal away its resources, natural or human. Thus the Roman Empire would strip whole provinces for the benefit of the capital, and villa-owning Roman aristocrats would have huge slave-operated farms in the south using giant wheeled plows. Southern Italy never recovered. We know the term “imperialism”—Dasmann’s “biosphere cultures” adds to that, helps us realize that biological exploitation is a critical part of it too—the species made extinct. The clear-cut forests.

All that wealth and power pouring into a few centers had bizarre results. Philosophies and religions based on fascination with society, hierarchy, manipulation, and the “absolute.” A great edifice called “the



state” and the symbols of central power—in China what they used to call “the true dragon”; in the West, as Mumford says, symbolized perhaps by that bronze age fort called the Pentagon. No wonder Lévi-Strauss says that civilization has been in a long decline since the Neolithic.

So here in the twentieth century we

find occidentals and orientals studying each other’s Wisdom, and a few people on both sides studying what came before both—before they forked off. A book like *Black Elk Speaks*, which would probably have had zero readership in 1900, is perceived now as speaking of certain things that nothing in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and almost

nothing in the Hindu-Buddhist tradition, deals with. All the great civilized world religions remain primarily human centered. That next step is excluded, or forgotten—“well, what do you say to Magpie? What do you say to Rattlesnake when you meet him?” What do we learn from Wren, and Hummingbird, and Pine Pollen, and how. Learn what? Specifics: how to spend a life facing the current; or what it is to perpetually die young; or how to be huge and calm and eat *anything* (Bear). But also, that we are many selves looking at each other, through the same eye.

The reason many of us want to make this step is simple, and is explained in terms of the 40,000 year looping back that we seem to be involved in. Sometime in the last ten years the best brains of the Occident discovered to their amazement that we live in an Environment. This discovery has been forced on us by the realization that we are approaching the limits of something. Stewart Brand said that the photograph of the earth (taken from outer space by a satellite) that shows the whole blue orb with spirals and whorls of cloud, was a great landmark for human consciousness. We see that it has a shape, and it has limits. We are back again, now, in the position of our Mesolithic forebears—working off the coasts of southern Britain, or the shores of Lake Chad, or the swamps of southeast China, learning how to live by the sun and the green at that spot. We once more know that we live in a system that is enclosed in a certain way; that has its own kinds of limits, and that we are interdependent with it.

The ethics or morality of this is far more subtle than merely being nice to squirrels. The biological-ecological sciences have been laying out (implicitly) a spiritual dimension. We must find our way to seeing the mineral cycles, the water cycles, air cycles, nutrient cycles, as sacramental—and we must incorporate that insight into our own personal spiritual quest and integrate it with all the wisdom teachings we have received from the nearer past. The expression of it is simple: gratitude to it all, taking responsibility for your own acts; keeping contact with the sources of the energy that

flow into your own life (i.e., dirt, water, flesh).

Another question is raised: Is not the purpose of all this living and studying the achievement of self-knowledge, self-realization? How does knowledge of place help us know the Self? The answer, simply put, is that we are all composite beings, not only physically but intellectually, whose sole individual identifying feature is a particular form or structure changing constantly in time. There is no “self” to be found in that, and yet oddly enough, there is. Part of you is out there waiting to come into you and another part of you is behind you, and the “just this” of the ever-present moment holds all the transitory little selves in its mirror. The Avatamsaka (“Flower Wreath”) jeweled-net-interpenetration-ecological-systems-emptiness-consciousness tells us, no self-realization without the Whole Self, and the whole self is the whole thing.

Thus, knowing who and where are intimately linked. There are no limits to the possibilities of the study of *who* and *where*, if you want to go “beyond limits”—and so, even in a world of biological limits, there is plenty of open mind-space to go out into.

In Wendell Berry’s essay “the unsettling of America” he points out that the way the economic system works now, you’re penalized if you try to stay in one spot and do anything well. It’s not just that the integrity of Native American land is threatened, or National Forests and Parks; it’s *all* land that’s under the gun, and any person or group of people who tries to stay there and do some one thing well, long enough, to be able to say, “I really love and know this place,” stands to be penalized. The economics of it works so that anyone who jumps at the chance for quick profit is rewarded—doing proper agriculture means *not* to jump at the most profitable chance—proper forest management or game management means doing things with the far future in mind—and the future is unable to pay us for it right now. Doing things right means living as though your grandchildren would also be alive, in this land, carrying on



the work we're doing right now, with deepening delight.

I saw old farmers in Kentucky last spring who belong in another century. They are inhabitants; they see the world they know crumbling and evaporating before them in the face of a different logic that declares, "everything you know, and do, and the way you do it, means nothing to us." How much more the pain, and loss of elegant cultural skills, on the part of non-white fourth-world primitive remnant cultures—who may know the special properties of a certain plant, or how to communicate with Dolphins, skills the industrial world might never regain. Not that special, intriguing knowledges are the real point: it's the sense of the magic system; the capacity to hear the song of Gaia *at that spot*, that's lost.

"Mankind has a rendezvous with destiny in Outer Space." Some say. We are al-

ready traveling in space. This is the galaxy, right here. The wisdom and skill of those who studied the universe first hand, by direct knowledge and experience, for millennia, both inside and outside themselves, is what we might call the Old Ways. Those who envision a possible future planet on which we continue that study, and where we live by the Green and the Sun, have no choice but to bring whatever science, imagination, strength, and political finesse they have to the support of the inhabitory people—natives and peasants of the world. Entering such paths, we begin to learn a little of the Old Ways, which are outside of history, and forever new. ◇

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Tom Brown's School Days

by Paul Jordan-Smith

The Tracker: The Story of Tom Brown, Jr. as told to William Jon Watkins.

By Tom Brown, Jr. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1978. Pp. 190. \$9.95.

America Revised: History Schoolbooks in the Twentieth Century

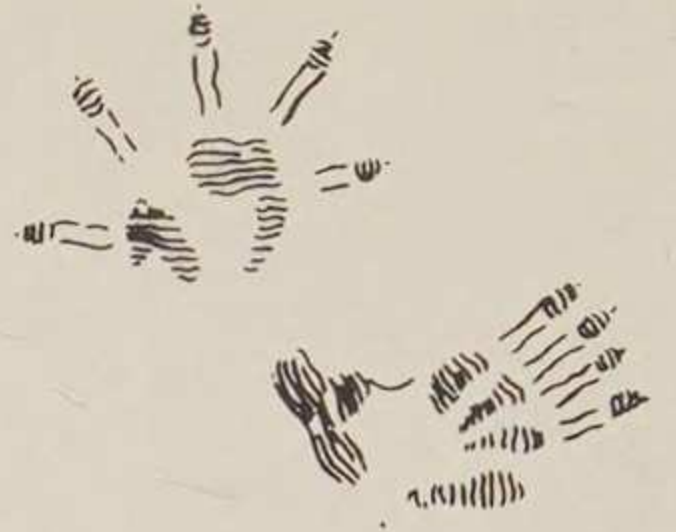
By Frances FitzGerald. Boston: Little, Brown, 1979. Pp. 240. \$9.95.

In the "Focus" of PARABOLA's last issue, D.M. Dooling wrote: "Whatever education is or is not, it must be the transmission of a living energy, and human beings must exchange it." Education, she continues, implies "a development from the inside, an opening of the inner eye... a development of inner strength." This is true of traditional education, but what are we to say about our system of public education in which facts constitute the purpose as well as the material of learning, and in which an understanding of the facts is dependent upon interpretations which change every few years, often reversing themselves, so that the villains and disasters of one generation of history textbooks, for example, appear as the saviors and triumphs of the next?

What Frances FitzGerald shows us in her even-tempered yet scathing assessment of history textbook publication in the United States is that a great deal of the material in the textbooks is not what historians would regard as history at all, that children are actually being taught attitudes,

opinions, values and morals, the tribal customs and beliefs of American society, and that the American educational establishment predicates its philosophy upon the belief that this is the proper material for public schools. On the surface, textbook history bears some resemblance to the sacred history of more traditional cultures, in which myth and legend play as strong, or stronger, a role than "factual" chronology. Sacred history, however, tends to be consistent from one generation to another, being part of a tradition passed down to a new generation by the leaders of the tribe. Its authority derives from continuity and tribal integrity, and it supports the individual because it is culturally true: the literal truth of sacred history is less important than the milieu it regenerates.

Textbook history, as described by Ms. FitzGerald, is neither consistent nor authoritative. It fails to support the individual because it is culturally unstable, and the cultural integration it achieves is negligible, if not nonexistent. How could it be otherwise? Textbooks are written not by historians (despite the notable names that grace some title pages), but by publishers, whose principal aim is to make money. The elders of the tribe have been replaced, it seems, by bunches of market analysts trying desperately to keep abreast of continually changing patterns of interest of thousands of textbook committees across the nation. "Relevancy," not tradition, is the chief criterion for admitting new material into a textbook (or rewriting old material), by which is meant accommodation to "the burning questions of the day" reflected by news media—ecology, civil rights, the energy



crisis (and doubtless, in the next generation of textbooks, the Iranian situation). The stew of fact and opinion that results from such communal cookery is then carefully strained so that not the least suspicion of spice remains.

America Revised does not present a happy picture of American education. It was written, as was Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, to apprise us of grim realities and, like *Silent Spring*, it does not propose simplistic solutions that assuage one generation only to alarm the next. The writing is impeccably clear, witty, and concise, and the scholarship unimpeachable. It needs to be read by every parent—but it leaves unanswered the most important question it raises: what is the alternative?

One should not be so naive as to suppose that the method of education described in *The Tracker* could be what is called a "viable" alternative, the theories and romantic notions of Rousseau notwithstanding, at least on a public scale. It may seem selfish to reduce the question to the private level by asking "What alternative can I offer my children?", but perhaps general solutions can only proceed from private successes. It is the individual, personal "solution" which makes *The Tracker* a book worth reading, not only by parents, but by their children as well (for age 12 or thereabouts; parents should read first and judge for themselves). Certain of the methods employed by Stalking Wolf, the quintessential Grandfather in *The Tracker*, give a clue to what education could engender in the life of the disciple: yearning and thirst for a deeper understanding of the fact of one's existence in the world, and the discovery, when the apprenticeship is over, that the true teacher lives within oneself.

The Tracker is the story of the wilderness education of Tom Brown, Jr., who lives in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey, and who is a professional tracker (and finder), mostly of people who get themselves lost, some-

times of escaped convicts, or wandering children, sometimes of animals, such as the wild dogs who guard the Barrens but sometimes get out of hand. It is the story of how, as a boy of seven, he met another boy like himself, fascinated by fossils and animals and Nature in general, and how for the next nine years, he and his friend Rick were trained to stalk and track by Rick's Apache grandfather, Stalking Wolf. The book is written "as told to William Jon Watkins," who spent months walking with Brown through the woods, recording the story of his life. What makes the book so engaging is its blend of observations, ideas, the principles of tracking, with a number of rattling good stories about life in the woods.

What Stalking Wolf taught was how to survive in the wilderness on one's own resources—resources that include not only basic woodcraft, such as how to build cabins, or make a fire, but also such abilities as how to observe patiently and carefully the most minute changes in a track, while maintaining an awareness of everything else going on. This calls for the simultaneous application of two kinds of attention. "Where our schools were forcing us to pay total attention," Brown says, "Stalking Wolf was teaching us intermittent attention, a constant refocusing between minute detail and the whole area around it, between the track and the whole pattern of the woods."

But *what* the boys learned is perhaps less germane than *how* they were taught. "He gave us information that would lead us on to the next step a bit at a time, and he always waited until we had incorporated what we had learned before he nudged us toward something else," says Brown. "Stalking Wolf led us out of childhood into a unique kind of manhood. We came to our skills as he had come to his, through a series of ideas and understandings that could only be gotten out of experience. He taught us to make use of everything, to live with the least disruption of the earth, to revere what we took from the woods, to master our fear, to hone our special skills sharper and sharper, to expand our senses and awareness, to live in the space of the moment and to understand eternity."

The apprenticeship lasted until Rick and his grandfather left, when Brown was six-



teen. A new phase began, as Brown passed from apprentice to journeyman, which led ultimately to the most perplexing question of all: "I had begun to wonder if I hadn't just mistaken a fascinating hobby for a lifetime purpose. As some people I knew were fond of pointing out, I not only wasn't rich and famous, I hadn't even achieved the commonplace...I began to wonder what my purpose in being alive was, and where I fit in the scheme of things." That this question appeared at all seems to me to be one of Stalking Wolf's greatest gifts to Brown, for it led to that most mysterious of all tracks, the one that leads at last to the beginning of understanding one's own self.

Not every child can have an Apache

grandfather, even an adopted one, but perhaps our children could have what Stalking Wolf gave the tracker: an awakening of a permanent interest in one's inner life, even at the expense of outer comforts. This may take considerable courage of our convictions—and perhaps first we must find out what those convictions are. We may be able to find help for this: the ghosts of the tribal elders still live within ourselves, if only we would listen to their voices.

Paul Jordan-Smith is a freelance writer and Editor of the Epicycle section of PARABOLA.

Ancestors

by Winifred Lambrecht

The Ancestors: Native Artisans of the Americas

Produced by the Museum of the American Indian, U.S. Custom House, New York City, August 1-October 31, 1979.

Reviewed by Winifred Lambrecht

We probably all remember our childhood visits to museums, educational wanderings through halls, and past display windows... part of the adult vision of completing one's world-view. These visits were not all unpleasant—I was indeed fascinated by dioramas, perhaps because they provide us with an attempt at a total environment. But the

exhibition of objects whose creators remained unknown, whose very anonymity was emphasized by generalizing labels, held little interest. "The Ancestors: Native Artisans of the Americas" brought to mind these early impressions about anthropological museums, and others as well. The show, organized by the Museum of the American Indian Heye Foundation of New York, was housed in the U.S. Custom Building, a turn-of-the-century monument to enterprising capitalism, now a New York City landmark with no permanent occupants. Most of the five hundred or so objects were displayed in three adjacent sections; two darkened side wings reached by a tunnel-like entrance. Here objects were spotlighted in an otherwise dark place, and recorded Native American music coaxed us into other worlds. Yet these encased pieces alone resurrected little of their original setting. Our eyes could ap-

preciate the decorative qualities, but the barriers to the living, underlying traditions remained; labels, including the measurements of the displayed objects, did not satisfy our yearning for meaning. That is not to say that all experiential dimensions from another reality escaped the viewers, but these were as fragmented as the translated text would be from a multi-dimensional performance: voice and music, movement, costume, audience participation would reach us only as the one-dimensional experience of a linear text.

The two side exhibit spaces were separated by a center hall dominated by a Sioux tepee.

The exhibit was organized in an unusual and appealing manner departing from the more traditional ethnographic museum format: no chronological or geographical framework; instead, it was designed around seven crafts of the Americas, covering two millennia. Each craft was represented by a group of people who excelled in its production: the potters of the late prehistoric southeastern United States; the Coclé goldsmiths of ancient Panama; the Araucanian weavers of Chile; the Haida carvers of the Pacific Northwest; the Karaja featherworkers of the Amazon basin; the Sioux painters of the Great Plains; and the Pomo basketmakers of northern California.

It was an aesthetic achievement; yet, the setting of that Plains Indians' dwelling in the Custom House's marble hall evoked the feelings that came to dominate my reaction to the exhibit: The sixteen poles supporting the decorated tepee almost met the vaulted ceiling of the hall, a ceiling covered with frescoes depicting New York harbor; in the juxtaposition of these iconographies lay the irony and the ambivalence of the exhibit. Reginald Marsh painted the gates on that ceiling to a new world of hope and material wealth; the inner visions of the Sioux painter remained anonymous and un-



reachable; was it a dream of the re-enactment of an exploit? The hall contained the history of the encounter of these two worlds: the glorification of a civilization which signaled the attempted annihilation of another.

Apart from the anonymity of most ethnographic art, a further question arises as to the appropriateness of exhibiting ritual objects. Should we be allowed to view objects which might still be taboo in their own setting? Should a spiritual vision be exhibited as a "painting"? The very role of the museum is itself in question. The function of an ethnographic museum is the preservation, care, study, and exhibition of objects from other cultures; it serves as a repository of objects to satisfy the curiosity of viewers in other places, to release new images in other times. It is the material, or three-dimensional, equivalent of ethnographic literature. And just as anthropologists have re-evaluated their discipline to make it more responsible and more useful to the powerless, museums should move towards an active participation in new forms of inquiry and dissemination of information.

One cannot deny that social upheavals and ideological shifts have led to the destruction of art or craft pieces, the sole examples of which survive in museums. But many of these objects were never meant to survive the specific occasion for which they were created, and were housed in sacred spaces to be brought out only when spiritual forces were called upon to maintain the order of the world. The oral tradition preserved knowledge of the objects so they could be re-created when appropriate. That tradition was silenced or interrupted, and Native Americans, the descendants of the

“ancestors,” are voicing their struggle to regain the thread of that tradition.

It was therefore disconcerting to me that the museum should celebrate the opening of the new exhibit with a display of the Thunderbird Dancers but did not mention the political struggles of the Native Americans in the Amazon, in the Southwest, in the Dakotas, to mention just a few. (I had myself just come back from a visit to Akwasasne—also known as the St. Regis reservation—where Mohawks were fighting to maintain a world order that had been threatened from the outside.) The display of colorful costumes of the dancers reminded me of the handful of Native Americans brought back to Europe by early travelers to be paraded in courts and in the streets, while their lands were being plundered and their creative achievements pillaged and destroyed.

Perhaps the most outstanding achievement of the show, and one not publicized enough, was the film festival “Craft Within a Cultural Context,” and the speakers series. The media program included a series of about 125 film and video titles including ethnographic media, archival footage, and Hollywood portrayals. It remedied the absence of economic and political documentation in the rest of the exhibit. Together with the speakers series, it gave us an overview of the questions which face Native Americans today. Speakers included concerned film and video producers, anthropologists, crafts people, museum personnel, and educators, descendants of the “Ancestors” as well as descendants of those who sailed into New York harbor only a few generations ago.

Winifred Lambrecht, an anthropologist involved in alternative media, is teaching at the New York Center for the Visual Arts. She is a Contributing Editor to PARABOLA.



Kirittik's Circle

by Roger Lipsey

A Night of Serious Drinking

By René Daumal, translated from the French by David Coward and E.A. Lovatt. Boulder: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1979. Pp. 121. \$8.95.

Reviewed by Roger Lipsey

This book has finally been published, after years of an unusual Anglo-American *samizdat* existence that saw various translations on both sides of the Atlantic, none quite ready for publication, circulating among admirers of Daumal who are hard to satisfy. In fact, the translation is brilliant, with only rare lapses into plain error or unneeded complexity, and the title as given in English is a victory of the translator's art, since *La Grande Beuverie*, Daumal's title, has until now suggested one clumsy or archaic English wording after another, and added to the discouragement. Now the book has made its passage from Daumal's French, which ranges in expression from the classically pure, compact, and lucid to Gaulish word-play that defies translation. There are other works of his that we should see in English, particularly the essays with a selection of poems, and the *samizdat* is already there.

Daumal is greater than Borges; not as a stylist, each has worked brilliantly in small forms; not as an explorer of hidden realms and the minutiae of the occult, each in his way has married erudition with a sense of the mystery of life; but morally and spiritually. In the end, Borges gives no impulse to live. His brilliant workmanship, however much it fastens bits of our life together into marvelous designs and reveals the incessant inner life of man, leads to cold resignation. We can praise this as true, and must praise it as fine art, but Daumal's work is truer

and no less fine when he assumes full command of his gifts, as he does in many parts of *A Night of Serious Drinking*, in a good number of essays and poems, and throughout his masterpiece, *Mount Analogue* (translated by Roger Shattuck, Penguin, 1974). What does modern literature become when the keenest and least naive of minds, appropriately steeped in every "ism" (Surrealism, etc.) of the day, nurtured on the blessedly clear rhetoric of French tradition, and increasingly cognizant of the ancient values of the Vedas and Upanishads, turns to fundamental themes? This was Daumal, and to this inventory of the man must be added the results of his long years of study as a pupil of Gurdjieff's teaching (this aspect of Daumal has been discussed in the introduction to the Penguin edition of *Mount Analogue*). I would say, in answer to the question, that literature begins again to fulfill its whole function; bringing an acute perception of the human condition, together with precise hope that we can be more than we are (whatever we are), all of this while entertaining, since the challenge before writers is to be serious and knowingly hopeful but also fascinating. Daumal gradually met this challenge, passing from the Pataphysical uproar of his youth, through the lucid denial of things that had failed him (which this book represents), to the moral



and spiritual grandeur of his final parable, *Mount Analogue*. That all this was accomplished in thirty-six short years, partly dogged by the bad health that eventually stopped him in 1944, is miraculous and makes doubts about human nature seem unrealistic. Borges, and maybe the rest of us, have somehow accepted to stay in a certain circle of the Inferno—one for well-spoken pessimists—but Daumal is nowhere to be seen there.

A Night of Serious Drinking is a guidebook to the culture of its time, the 1930s, drawn up by an expert on the subject not long after his departure from it. It is certainly a *roman à clé*, but most of the references are now irrelevant while, in accord with “*Plus ça change, plus c’est le même*,” the essence of the book remains timely. Things haven’t altered beyond recognition. The book is about people Daumal knew: Kirittiks, Pwatts, and Nibblists, Fidgeters, Fabricators, and Clarificators, don’t forget Sophers and Scienters, and Abyssologists, and at the top of this food-chain the Primes, among whom figure the Primepope, the Prime-scienter, Primepwatt. A Dante in an alcoholic dream, during which he gradually sobers until the sobriety is overwhelming, the protagonist-author is taken on tour through a hell of false culture.

“In my view,” the Primepope declared slowly, “my law is simple; you know what it is and I stand by it; to act without knowledge and to know without acting.”

It is not easy to find a single passage that can stand for the book, but perhaps it is this one: it is fine narrative, it is funny, and it is on target.

Daumal doesn’t exclude himself from the upside-down world that he reports. When we first meet him he is a sodden participant in a night of serious drinking, perpetually thirsty like his pals and drinking toward oblivion. His dream takes him up into the world of Escapees, who no longer thirst because they believe they have found an answer to their thirst. Here are the Pwatts, the aesthtishams, and the others, and here Daumal even meets a certain Mr. Aham Egomet (Aham, “I” or ego in Sanskrit) who resembles him closely. There is

enough plot in the book to prompt a reviewer to describe it no further, since that can spoil it for new readers, but nothing is spoiled by mentioning that toward the end the author-protagonist burns everything he owns right down to his clothing, through a parish church,” the literature devoted to it is slight: indeed, except for Michael

flushing on the horizon, a beam of gold, a tiny burning dome slowly rising into a blinding scream.

Although very much a pupil of the Gurdjieff teaching and of ancient Hindu texts, Daumal is not so unsubtle as to offer a reading list or an address by way of solution to the problem that he poses. This book is his rejection of much in modern culture—“*Non non mon nom est non*,” as he said somewhere in his poetry of this period—but as for the Way, he says here something about waking up, something about the need for a sincere assessment of what one has been doing up till now, and a great deal about the need to think well. This theme of thinking runs through the book, never as the solution of anything at all, but as the start, and by thinking it is clear that he means what Gurdjieff means in *Beelzebub’s Tales to his Grandson* (a *samizdat* book in the 1930s and 1940s, as it happens). There Gurdjieff speaks of thinking as a splendid act, involving the whole person, and rare in our time. The result of Daumal’s thinking, in this sense, went into his final book, *Mount Analogue*.

The two books, *A Night of Serious Drinking* and *Mount Analogue*, are two panels of a diptych. They fit together more than one might at first have thought, since the somewhat restless style and pace of the first differ from the classic steadiness of the second. On the left, a modern hell that we can effortlessly recognize as home ground; on the right, the island empire of *Mount Analogue*, already partially scaled by a daring band of seekers under Father Sogol’s guidance. At least this once, in art, heaven is more interesting than hell.

Roger Lipsey is a Contributing Editor to PARABOLA.

Book Reviews

Prehistoric Avebury

By Aubrey Burl. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979. Pp. viii + 275. \$19.95.

Reviewed by Christopher Bamford

This book represents a well-intentioned, materialistic attempt to synthesize a history, description, and explanation of the complex of prehistoric remains surrounding Avebury in Wiltshire in the south of England.

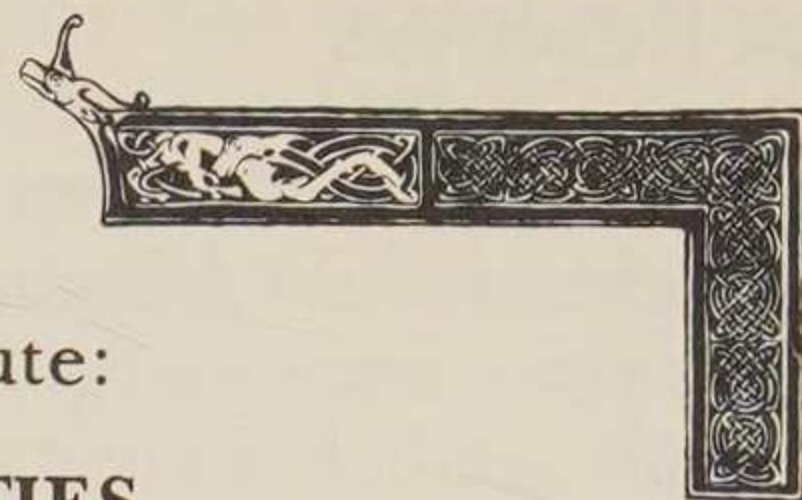
Professor Burl, the author of a previous book on Stone Circles and a Lecturer in Prehistory, conceived his work in the awareness that, although Avebury “does as much excel Stonehenge as a Cathedral does a parish church,” the literature devoted to it is slight: indeed, except for Michael Dames’ *The Avebury Cycle* and a handbook put out by the Curator of the local museum, there seems to exist no standard account of this largest of megalithic monuments. And this was the positive need that Professor Burl proposed to answer; negatively, however, he was motivated by the desire to correct the various “soft” primitivisms—“reshaping our forebears into the image of the noble savage, Einstein in a sheepskin”—of all those who, from Professor Alexander Thom to unnamed “mystics,” “geometers,” “ley-liners,” and “UFOlogists,” have worked to raise the past into the present on different premises than his own.

Rightly believing that “any single-minded preoccupation with astronomy or measuring rods or extra-sensory perception must limit an investigation of the past” and that “prehistory should encompass all of man’s activities,” Professor Burl set out to write a book about “people” and “beliefs,” as these emerged from the contexts of geography, archaeology, and anthropology. With this plan in mind, and by these means, he unfolds the layers of Avebury chapter by chapter. A noble strategy, but one fatally—perhaps even tragically—flawed in execu-

tion: for not only does Professor Burl exhibit just as narrow (if not narrower) a mentality as those whom he wishes to criticize, but this narrowness seems unconscious and perhaps even more pernicious than other reductionisms.

To be more precise, Professor Burl espouses what he calls “hard” primitivism, that is “the comparison of prehistoric people with today’s primitive communities”—which assumes, of course, that there is such a thing as an objectively “primitive” consciousness, apart from whatever premises of primitivism an observer might have. In Professor Burl’s case these premises are quite clear, and he repeatedly returns to them: “There never was a Golden Age at Avebury.... To the contrary, life was demanding, insecure, sometimes dangerous.” Writing of “the fearful and imaginative minds of the people” (sometimes called “natives”), “whose lives were hard and who had a fierce desire to survive in their harsh gaunt world”; and invoking “the barbaric nature of these early societies” (in the words of the dust jacket, presenting “a vivid and moving picture of a people whose lives were brief, savage, and fearful”) Professor Burl goes so far as to quote, with approval, the following: “It is no surprise that the men of those times, unlettered, unable to know anything of the world beyond their senses... were so filled with fatalism and superstition.” This Darwinian vision—haunted, as may be imagined, by the specter of colonialism—of the struggle for survival in a hostile, alien world is based, finally, on the “hard” evidence of the skeletal remains. From these, Professor Burl infers an arthritic, suffering, diseased population, prone to interpersonal conflict and aggression; and concludes that they must have found life so hard and fearful that they

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spent twenty generations constructing a gigantic ritual center for their protection and survival.

A ritual center certainly existed at Avebury, but there are other hypotheses than the Darwinian to account for its purpose and function. What one might call the metaphysical hypothesis is at least equally plausible; namely, that God becomes Man so that Man might become God, or less controversially that Brahma becomes Maya so that Maya might become Brahma, or again that Spirit becomes "matter" so that "matter" might become Spirit. Of course this hypothesis is fundamentally opposed to the other, but it can account equally well for the evidence and with greater conviction. In the one, phenomena are taken as evi-

dences of higher level events or processes—"the world of profound, wise, chaste archetypes"; in the other, phenomena are proposed as the explanation of phenomena. In the one, the Temple, the ritual center, is an instrument of knowledge, of divine embodiment for the cosmic guidance of humanity; in the other it is an act of self-protection, out of all proportion with the "facts" and so, ultimately, "megalomaniac."

All this is only to register regret at "the state of the art" as Professor Burl exemplifies it; it is not to say his book does not provide useful information and material for thought. It does provide clear, factual grist for the student of ancient culture and insights of many different kinds for those who are seeking them. For the reader, then, prepared to read between the lines, the book has much to offer; the reader who is not, however, will be disappointed.

Christopher Bamford is a Director of the Lindisfarne Press.

Tormented Master: A Life of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav

By Arthur Green. University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1979. Pp. 395. \$27.50.

Beggars and Prayers: Adin Steinsaltz Retells the Tales of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav

Edited by Jonathan Omer-Man, commentary by Adin Steinsaltz, translated by Yehuda Hanegbi, Herzlia Dobkin, Deborah French, and Freema Gottlieb. New York: Basic Books, 1979. Pp. 174. \$8.95.

Reviewed by Lawrence Kushner

Hasidism is the most recent flowering of the Jewish mystical impulse. Beginning as a pietist, ecstatic folk revival in the middle of eighteenth-century Eastern Europe, it generated such spiritual creativity and intuition that it continues to nourish American Judaism's modest spiritual renewal. And yet despite the many beautiful anthologies of legends and thoughtful studies, this gentle country mysticism remains largely a mystery to the non-Hebrew reading public. This is in large part because—as most students would agree—Hasidism's hallmark as a Jewish movement is its emphasis upon the centrality of the person of the rabbi (holy man, miracle worker, righteous one, saint or most commonly "rebe"), and there are no sustained critical biographies of any of the "masters" available in English.

Each one of the rebes in turn created his own dynasty or school—many of which continue to flourish to this day—perpetuating his own unique religious insight. Of them all, one Nahman (1772-1810) of the Ukrainian town of Bratslav, grandson of the progenitor of Hasidism itself, the *Baal Shem Tov*, was unquestionably one of the most fascinating and important. In him are drawn together, often to both inspiring and grotesque extremes, many of the motifs primary to Hasidism—and even more impor-

tant, primary to the theology, politics, and psyche of any serious religious leader.

Arthur Green's *Tormented Master* is a meticulous, provocative, and loving presentation of Nahman of Bratslav's life and thought. The "Bratzlavev rebe" emerges as a real person: conflicted, guilt-ridden, and devout—in a word "tormented." There are "cycles of guilt recrimination and ecstatic release, moments of elation...[and] severe depression..." His personality is strung between sexuality and piety, his own humanity and messianic fantasy, adolescence and maturity and popularity and integrity. Here is a man of towering spiritual genius whose insight seems to rise from his own personal "struggle to believe in himself": a master who knew enough to take seriously "man's inability to experience God"; a man who set out to self-consciously create a new sacred history. And for some—even today—a man who succeeded.

We see this in one of his most celebrated stories of the prince who thought he was a rooster. He was cured by a wise man who, by taking off his own clothes and eating grain from the floor beside the King's deranged son, convinced him that he too was a rooster. So that after a while, it was not unreasonable for a "rooster" to put on a few clothes and eat at the table, "acting" like a person, while still of course remaining a rooster. This Nahman presented by Green is so engrossingly instructive not because he is so holy but because he is so human. He knows that for each of us there is occasional confusion about whether we are roosters pretending to be people or people pretending to be roosters.

It is a scholarly work (including some sixty-eight pages of footnotes) without being pedantic, and assumes no prior knowledge of Hasidism or even Judaism. It is challenging and carefully reasoned and, while Green conscientiously does not practice psychoanalysis, presents a coherent, terribly human personality. One is reminded of other similar ventures such as Gershom Scholem's Sabbatai Sevi and Erickson's Luther. It is a big book, perhaps a little too big. The publishers's choice of such a small typeface is frustrating, as is the

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price. Mention must also be made of two excursuses which comprise almost one quarter of the book and stand in their own right as significant theological and literary contributions. The first considers the intersection of left brain thinking, existentialism, and mysticism; and the other, on Nahman’s “Tales,” the relationship of literature, legend, and myth.

Beggars and Prayers is not, as far as I can tell, a “retelling” by the brilliant Israeli Talmudist, Adin Steinsaltz—as we are promised by the subtitle—but a very faithful literal translation of six of Nahman’s tales which retain their pristine, childhood quality. These “tales,” all told during the final years of Nahman’s life, remain a literary and religious enigma. Their Kafkaesque, dreamlike quality, superficially non-religious, without even any allusion to Judaism, has led some to claim they are the result of Nahman’s debilitating physical condition. It is said that Nahman himself claimed that he did not know what he would say or how the tale would progress or end (they were told serially) until he got there. They are unique in Jewish literature and strike even the thoughtful reader as probably profound but unintelligible. It is here that Steinsaltz’s little anthology is of such great importance. At the end of each tale we are given a penetrating, concise “commentary” which opens one symbol after another until we are in possession of an intricate mystical legend. Something we had intuited is now manifest.

I studied some Reb Nahman with Arthur Green one summer—at Havurat Shalom—an urban Jewish spiritual commune which he founded. I shall never forget it. He had so personally penetrated the work of this most mysterious rebe that from time to time we would forget it was Green speaking. It is only fitting that this gifted biographer of the rebe of the “dead Hasidism” so obsessed with self-transcendence should himself mingle so perfectly with the material. Something of that enchanted kind of experience awaits the reader.

Lawrence Kushner, rabbi at Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley, Sudbury, Massachusetts, is author of The Book of Letters and Honey From the Rock.

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Sombraventadora/Shadowinnower

By Agueda Pizarro. Translated from the Spanish by Barbara Stoler Miller with the poet. New York: Columbia University Press, 1979. Pp. xxiv + 103. \$10.00, paper \$4.95.

Reviewed by Robert Lima

If I were to come upon this book of poems in a bookstore, it would catch my attention, not because of its jacket design, which incidentally is not in keeping with the tone of the poems, but because of its title—the provocative words themselves.

There is an exotic quality inherent in new composite words, an element of surprise, of revelation, which prompts investigation of their meaning, of the rationale behind their creation, of their validity as neologisms.

Sombraventadora/Shadowinnower has the dual titular attraction of the original composite word and its translation. On reading the bilingual text itself, the exotic promise of the title is borne out; the internal dynamics of each neologism in Spanish and its English counterpart serve as springboards for unique semantic leaps. Among the most intriguing of these is the poem title "Serpiedra," which is an obvious composite of *ser* (being) and *piedra* (stone). But ensconced secretly between the two words is the *serpiente* disclosed in "Serpentbeingstone," an effective if less fortunate title than the original. The verbal virtuosity of the book as a whole is impressively resonant, doubly so for the reader of both of its languages.

But this collection deserves much more than linguistic kudos. The poems are not settings for verbal games or ingenious coupletings; they are communiqués of inner and outer experience imaginatively entwined towards poetic disclosure. The poet sees her invented words as "weapons against silence" and her poems as "spells against death." Further, she has structured the longer poems (none are overly long) around

"a precise location" with description "directed inward so that the exterior landscape penetrates the interior one in order to grow there, transformed." The shorter poems she sees as "meditations on a single mental vision," having been "conceived originally as envois or epigraphs" for the longer works, "but they changed into a kind of illumination, more lucid and transparent, more concise than their companions." Thus in "Stalagmitemyth," Agueda (the literary persona of the poet) and the setting (the great unfinished cathedral in Barcelona) are mutualized,

Agueda, grim, barren
guided by an enigma Gaudí made,
woman inside a cathedral watching
the mystery of myself,
the inner myth of stalactites
and stalagmites, jagged in me
like flesh of a grey raised reef,
a gothic skeleton of bones like arches
in the edifice of my skull,
its hollows like echoes of an organ
breathing in nautilus chambers.

the process culminating in person and place
being interfaced, like the parts of a composite
word,

while I feel how I change
from a cavern
into a city
into a being,
into a woman,
Agueda, pregnant with song.

In her preface Agueda Pizarro recounts the varied sources of her work—both literary and biographical. Spain, the homeland of her parents, is ever present, as are the voices of Lorca, Jorge Guillén, Salinas, Juan Ramón Jiménez, and other poets, some of whom she heard read and afterwards met in her youth. The French Surrealists infected her with their passion for the "fusion of contraries," while the English Romantics eventually led her to the "density" of Yeats. These are the recognized European echoes in her life and work. But the American experience—she was born in New York, has lived in Mexico and Colombia—is no less important. Neruda's powerful imagery resounded in her with its indigenous Latin American voice; in the prose of García Marquez, author of the epochal *One*

Hundred Years of Solitude, and in the poetry of León de Greiff, both Colombians, she found the touchstones for “the naming of things” and “daring language” respectively. There are other admitted influences, the most surprising of which is that of Sanskrit, with its traditional usage of compound words.

Sombraventadora/Shadowinnower is many distinct things—a linguistic *tour de force*, an expression of bicultural *angst*, a succinct “portrait of the artist” as cabbalist—brought together in the alchemical furnace where the interaction of inner and outer realities creates a new entity: the poetic persona. “Treepoem,” the last piece in the collection, presents the end-product of this tempering.

Figtree Agueda,
kapok Agueda
air rooted,
tree voyager,
mangrove woman,
I hold flying flowers
of dense flesh
and succulent fruit
to bite color,
skin of light.
Beasts of thick fire,
languid lions,
pale pears,
hang from my branches.
In the inner pulp
of my trunk I carry
a deep name,
round,
an armor of warm blood,
bone earth,
native soil,
knotchild,
my human tongue.

The poet emerges as mythographer, creator of a new ambiguity.

Robert Lima is Professor of Spanish and Comparative Literature at The Pennsylvania State University and author of critical studies on Lorca, Valle-Inclán and Borges. His poetry has been published widely.

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Faith and Belief

By Wilfred Cantwell Smith. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979. Pp xii + 348. \$18.50.

Belief and History

By Wilfred Cantwell Smith. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977. Pp. vi + 138. \$12.50.

Reviewed by John Loudon

A couple of issues ago, Huston Smith suggested that the seminal influences on the contemporary study of the history of religions have been Mircea Eliade and Wilfred Cantwell Smith. Eliade is doubtless known to most readers of *PARABOLA*, while Smith is likely familiar chiefly to more academic readers. And it is not difficult to figure out why. The bulk of Eliade's work has been actual comparative phenomenology of religions—detailed analyses and interrelating of myths, rituals, symbols, etc.—and much of it is not only accessible but directly appealing to nonprofessional readers; whereas most of Smith's published work has been conceptual and methodological, aimed at determining just what it is that religious studies are to study and how such studies might be most profitably and authentically conducted. Thus, there has been a tendency to regard his work as of significance mainly to professionals, and even they—at least those outside his area of expertise, Islam, on which he has written extensively and importantly—have often seen his contribution as technical and formal. Another factor is that, with their painstaking concern for nuanced precision, their seemingly fussy prose, and reams of qualifying and supplementary notes, his works have appeared baroquely academic, even somewhat forbid-

ding. But on careful reading one discovers that Smith's peculiar style of exposition serves well his aim of countering prevailing views of fundamental issues and that his elaborate argumentation and documentation contribute to making his presentation definitive and exhibit the immense erudition in religious traditions on which it is based.

Smith is still perhaps best known for his groundbreaking work *The Meaning and End of Religion* (1962). Its surface argument demonstrated conclusively that the word "religion" is a late entry into the vocabulary of religious discourse, and is indeed a distorting, reifying abstraction, as are the nouns Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, etc. Rather, one ought to speak more authentically in terms of communities and traditions of faith—the dynamic, diverse reality of actual religious living. His point was not just that we ought to change our language, but that we should change our whole way of thinking about "religion" and "religious" and begin to see the subject of historical comparative study as living—therefore, changing—traditions, and lives of personal faith lived out in the context of those traditions, with faith giving rise (and life) to traditions and traditions shaping faith.

Again in the books under review, Smith's concerns are linguistic and methodological, but even more clearly they probe the heart of religious meaning. And his conclusions are revolutionary, not just for the field of comparative religious history and for philosophy of religion and even theology, but, more importantly, for our personal understanding of what it means to be religious. Of the two books, *Faith and Belief* clearly is the major systematic sequel to *Meaning and End* and, I would venture, an even more important work; *Belief and History* originated as a series of lectures while the other book was being written and Smith calls it supplementary. Still, both books contribute to his argument, and since they overlap and are interdependent at many points, they can be considered together.

Smith's bold thesis is two-pronged: first, that the idea that being religious involves believing certain things is modern and aberrant, and second, that faith—rath-

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er than belief—is the fundamental religious category. For most of us, and explicitly for most modern philosophy and history of religion and much modern theology, what “religions” primarily consist in is systems of basic beliefs—about God, the human situation, human destiny, the way to salvation and so on. But, as Smith demonstrates, beliefs—like rituals, ethical systems, sacred art, etc.—are culturally and historically conditioned, and thus relative, expressions of something that is both prior and transcendent to them: faith. And faith is not a matter of holding certain propositions to be true that may or may not be so; in fact, insistence on equating faith with belief can be an obstacle and a deterrent to genuine faith. Rather, in the religious traditions, faith is a matter of personal orientation (to oneself, to others, to ultimate reality), of wholehearted commitment. Its intellectual component is insight into and recognition of the nature of things, immersed as we are in a mystery that surpasses all finite understanding, and its volitional dimension is a committed response to the truth that one dis-

cerns. Naturally, the elements of the traditions, including beliefs, elicit, condition, and nurture our faith, but they are not its essence.

Moreover, Smith details how the word “believe” itself has degenerated in meaning over the course of history from being the proper verbal equivalent of faith to its contemporary sense of thinking something to be so that is dubious or even wrong. Originally, “to believe” meant to hold dear, to prize, to love, to give allegiance to. And so believing in God did not mean holding a position on the question of divine existence but a pledging of oneself to God, a commitment to live one’s life in responsive recognition of the divine call and grace. Thus, rather than implying doubt and uncertainty as the word belief does today, it meant giving one’s heart to what one knows to be true and valuable. St. Augustine’s famous dictum, “*Intellige ut credas, crede ut intelligas*,” then, really means, “Understand in order that you may become committed. Become committed in order that you may understand.”

In the course of his exposition, Smith demonstrates the meaning and centrality of faith (and the marginality of belief) in major religious tradition—Buddhist, Islamic, Hindu, Judaeo-Christian. While each tradition has its own distinct accents, in none does salvation come through holding certain propositions to be true; rather, what is crucial in each is a distinctive way of “recognition plus commitment.” In the Buddhist tradition, faith consists in recog-

nizing that all beings are caught in the flux of *samsara* but that commitment to the eternal *Dharma* unlocks the prison of suffering. In Islam, faith is the positive recognition and response to the divine summons. In the Hindu tradition, faith has the dimensions of both *astikya*—saying yes to the spiritual tradition, the significance of the religious way, which in turn involves a recognition of transcendence—and *sraddha*, the capacity for giving one's heart wholly to something, discovering a path with heart. And in the Jewish and Christian traditions, faith consists essentially in committing oneself fully to God and neighbor in response to God's gracious call.

So too the opposite of faith is not disbelief but nihilism and *anomie*: the inability to recognize any meaning in one's life and in history and to commit oneself to anyone or anything as ultimately worthwhile. As Smith puts it, "faith differs from faith in seeing the point of life and of the world in differing fashion, and yet also, in the global context, faith differs from un-faith in seeing that life and the universe do, indeed, have a point—a cosmic point; and that man can be grasped by it, and transported." As such, faith is both universal throughout cultures and history and yet intensely personal and in a sense ineffable—no two persons have faith in precisely the same way, and no individual or culture can express the fullness of faith's encounter with transcendence. But it is also true that the faith of a Christian can be more like that of a Muslim, say, than that of someone in his or her own tradition, despite the differences in symbols, rituals, beliefs. The expressions of faith are products of time and place, and necessarily all faith must be concretely lived out in the nurturing contexts of specific traditions, but they must not be taken as absolute or final or the complete story, for faith and the object of faith always transcend all such finite symbol systems.

Both books are extremely rich both in

their perceptions of religious meaning and in their incisive interpretations of various traditions. The full impact and import of what Smith is saying cannot be delivered in summary, but have to be experienced in careful engagement with the works themselves; there are reasons why they are so densely packed with arguments and information. Given serious and widespread consideration, his work may well usher in a major new stage both in religious studies and in genuine ecumenism. As Smith puts it:

Over the past century much effort has gone into uncovering and studying the traditions of mankind, and this will continue. Over the coming century it will be supplemented by equally elaborate studies of faith. The history of religion has at times been mistaken for the history of its symbols; but this is superficial.... The true history of religion, not yet written, is the history of the depth or shallowness, richness or poverty, genuineness or insincerity, splendid wisdom or inane folly, with which men and women and their societies have responded to such symbols as were around them, and of their capacity to generate new symbols or to neglect old ones. Such a history of religion... will be constituted in significant part by a history of faith and of its absence, and its weaknesses, aberrations and perversions.

John Loudon is a Contributing Editor to PARABOLA.

Hopi Painting, The World of the Hopi
By Patricia Janis Broder. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1978. Pp. 319. \$25.00.

Reviewed by Patrick T. Houlihan

Hopi Painting, The World of the Hopi, by Patricia Broder, is the kind of book one would like to see written about Indian Art, in that it seeks to explain the art in terms of the culture that produced it and at the same time provides insights to the culture itself. Unfortunately, Mrs. Broder, an art historian, should not have attempted this large a work, for her presentation of both Hopi art and culture lacks any real depth of historical or cultural analysis that would significantly expand our understanding of either subject.

With the exception of a few plates, most of the paintings illustrated are works

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of art by members of Artist Hopid, an association of four Hopi artists and one Tewa artist from Hano. Formed in 1973, Artist Hopid is a kind of artists' guild, vaguely patterned after the Hopi Silvercraft Cooperative, founded by Fred Kabotie. His son, Michael Kabotie, is one of the dominant forces behind Artist Hopid, and is quoted extensively in this book, interpreting both his own art and Hopi culture in general. In a sense, Artist Hopid is an art marketing group, although its published aims and purposes are larger. That is, its members work together and often exhibit their work in group showings. (It should, however, be noted that many of the paintings presented by Broder pre-date the formation of the group.)

The history of Hopi painting, as with all of Pueblo Indian art, begins in prehistory. Its best documented forms are those of painted pottery, beginning in the Basketmaker III/Pueblo I time phases (A.D. 500-900) and Kiva wall painting from Pueblo IV (A.D. 1300-1550). The ancestors of today's Hopis occupied a large portion of north central Arizona from Kayenta south to the Jeddito Valley and east to Canyon de Chelly. By A.D. 1100, these people were consolidating into the mesa country near the Painted Desert. At the same time, they were receiving migrants from the Flagstaff area, though by the 1500s when first encountered by the Spanish, these newcomers all spoke Hopi.

In historic times, the period since Spanish contact, the Hopi have seen other migrations from the eastern Pueblos. The Tewa village of Hano, for example, resulted from such a migration. With American occupation of the Southwest, the Hopi have lost much of their isolation from Western

influences. Many of the design elements and stylistic attributes seen today in Hopi painting have originated from this rich history of change.

For the past one hundred years, the Hopi have painted for two audiences, themselves and non-Hopis. The art in the first instance is related to religious activities; in the second to commercial enterprise. Much of the subject matter in religious art is taboo for commercial art. And Hopi artists who violate these sanctions are severely reprimanded by other Hopis. The paintings by Artist Hopid, although the subject matter may be religious, are not works of religious art. They are its sanitized version for commercial sale.

Part of my dilemma with this book is that Broder does not deal adequately with this distinction. For example, color. For all of the Pueblo Indians, color is the gift of supernatural beings. It has meaning with regard to direction; sexual reference; associations with various animate and inanimate beings as well as sacred deities; and can frequently be a reference for an order of importance, such as of one group of Kachina dancers to another. The rules for the application of color in Hopi dry paintings done for Kiva rituals are strict and unchanging. These same rules do not hold on works on paper or canvas done for sale to white collectors. Missing from Mrs. Broder's treatment of Hopi art is any sense of the layered meanings of this aspect of the painting. Rather, she has translated the literal titles in the commercial paintings of religious scenes or subjects into the context of Hopi culture.

In many instances, Broder does an excellent job explaining for the layman one or another aspect of Hopi culture evidenced in a painting. Unfortunately, she also presents a great deal of misinformation. A good example of this is to be found in the text accompanying the painting on page 110 and in the discussion of that same painting on page 287. The plate is a painting by Bevins Yuya-

heova which Mrs. Broder has titled, "Dreams of Hopi." Her entire description of it on page 287 states:

Bevins Yuyaheova has painted a seated Kachina who envisions a series of infinite reflections of his ceremonial mask. Some of the dream images are vague shadows while others are clear, brightly colored masks. A giant arm holding the ceremonial rattle symbolizes the power of the Kachina.

In fact, the painting is titled, "Dreams of Ho'-e" and Ho'-e is not a Kachina, but a Clown; one that appears in the Bean Dance as a disruptive, boisterous entertainer. The multiple images that appear above the seated Ho'-e are other Ho'-e masks. The key to its identification is, of course, the mask itself. The date of this painting, 1968, is also of interest in that, I believe, it is the first painting Bevins ever sold, a sale that occurred at the Arizona State Fair of that year.

Synchronizing paintings with description of them is also often difficult. In the example above, "Dreams of Ho'-e" appeared on page 110, Broder's description on page 287, yet the Index reference to the painting does not show its location in the book. Certainly, another most vexing aspect of this book is its editorial snafus—from spelling errors (Peter Shelton not Skelton), to misnaming (Byron not Brian Hunter), to paintings on their side (page 126 and 127), to paintings without collection attribution (page 124). An errata insert is a necessity.

As the published work of Artist Hopid in this book is almost entirely religious or mythological in its subject matter, a reader seriously interested in Hopi culture would do well to balance Broder's view of it through the paintings with that of Byron Harvey's *Ritual in Pueblo Art: Hopi Life in Hopi Painting* (1970). By reference to the two works, Hopi culture in art can be seen more completely. In fairness to Broder, however, no good survey of Hopi painting exists, and her presentation of the work of Artist Hopid does expand the corpus of published Hopi art. But by the exclusion of other Hopi artists, the uninformed reader

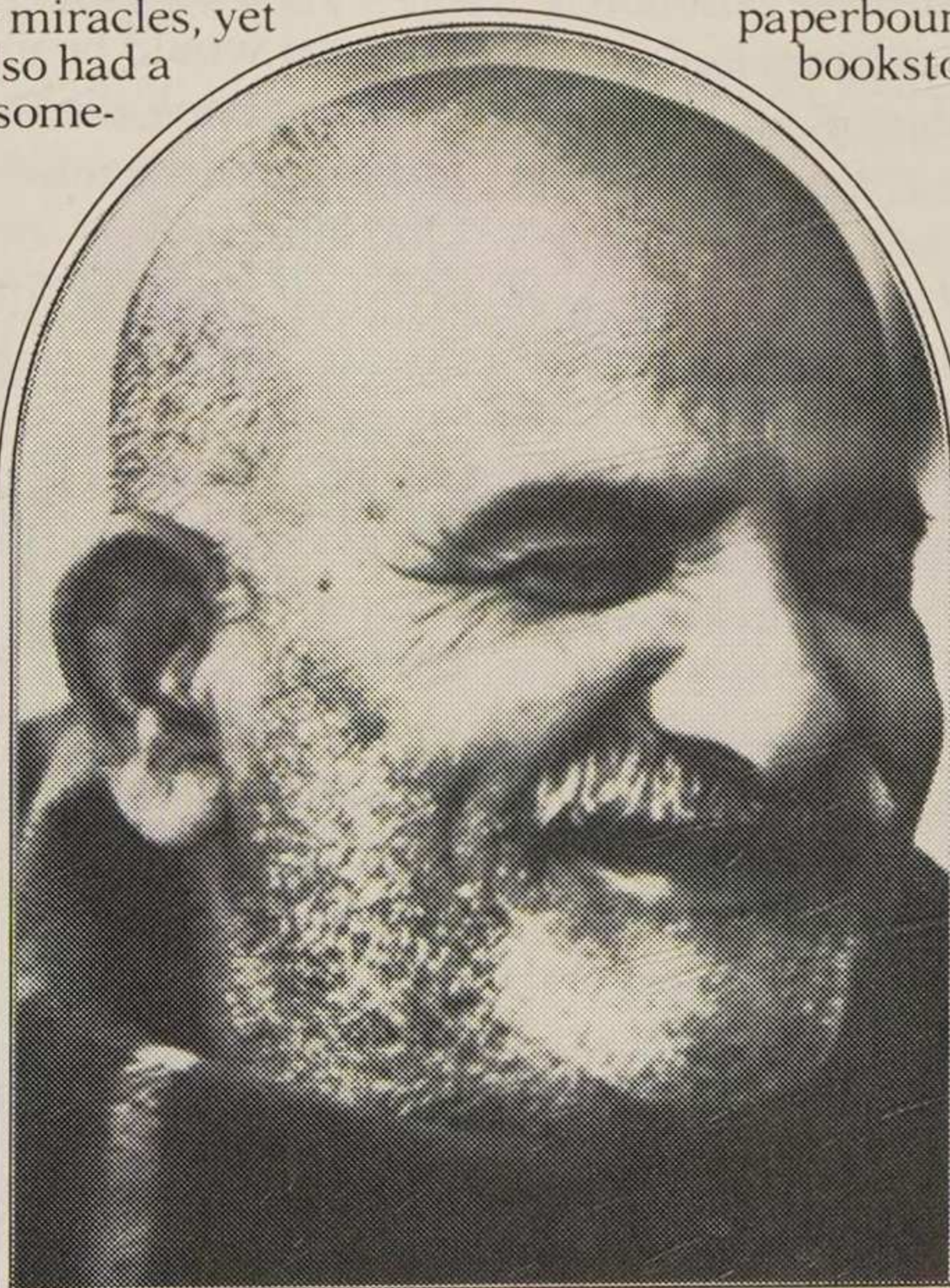
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could be easily misled as to the much larger scope of contemporary Hopi art.

In spite of these criticisms, this book is still the only published collection of the work of Artist Hopid and an Indian Art library would be incomplete without it.

Patrick T. Houlihan is the Director of The Heard Museum, Tucson, Arizona.

The Encyclopedia of Tarot

By Stuart R. Kaplan. New York: U.S. Games Systems, Inc., 1978. Pp. 387. \$18.95.

Reviewed by Lynda Sexson

Born on April Fool's Day, Stuart Kaplan has taken on the fool's burden of bringing order to the history and typology of the Tarot. Kaplan's task on the surface seems a "heroic" one in the face of the need to sift through the dross of so many predecessors. But the grace of Kaplan's study is that he has not behaved "heroically" but "foolishly"—he has recognized nonsense and delighted in it; his refutations for the sake of accuracy and responsibility have born the implicit understanding that those falsehoods and fantasies of earlier speculators legitimately belong among the historical and metaphorical constellations of the Tarot images. Kaplan's book is good enough for the library reference shelf and entertaining enough for the bedside table. In either setting it will be valued.

Kaplan is the author of one of the very best of those generally revolting introductions to the Tarot, *Tarot Classic*. Most of the books of this type attempt to decode and reveal the "true-esoteric-divinatory-meaning" of the cards. His journey through that passage, perhaps because his preliminary statements are so superior to the general run, took him far beyond the "writer for the occult market" to become the leading authority on the cards and to develop and publish his excellent volume, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*.

Kaplan manages respect for the historian, the collector and the occultist—he offers aid to each of them and manages to coax each into an uneasy acknowledgment of the others. The collector will find the illustrations a joy, accompanied by excellent, concise descriptions in a coherent arrangement. The historian will appreciate the full, annotated bibliography, the care given to naming the locations of the cards, and the capsules of the work of many theorists and researchers. It is the occultists—the persons beguiled by the veils of the occult—who will face difficulties with the *Encyclopedia*.

For instance, after a careful reading of Kaplan, it would be problematic to base one's interpretation of the World card on the "androgynous" figure projected onto some of the better known World images. One would be unlikely, with Kaplan's work at hand, to accept the pseudo-stories of arcane origins; and even though Kaplan offers a chapter on the "divinatory" and "reverse" meanings of each of the cards and a chapter on sample spreads (places where documentation would have enriched the text: who used these approaches and when), I hope it would be impossible to come away from the book without having gained more insight into the movement of metaphor. One must move—through the images—from the hocus of literalizing to the encounter with the richness of symbolic language.

The desire to foretell, to divine, nearly always rests upon the established links to a remote or original past. As Alice's White Queen said to her, "Memory works both ways"; which is why occultists, as well as historians and collectors, have been so intrigued by the origins of the Tarot. Searches have been made among the remnants of the ancient Egyptians, Indian, and Chinese systems and games, Kabbalistic thinkers, medieval heretics, Renaissance poets, wandering gypsies, and in churches and in carnival, hoping for clues about the origins of the Tarot. Curious—but fallible—resonances have been found in all of these places and more. The Tarot is a pack of cards that has inspired everything from morality lectures to metaphysical sermons to fantasies of past and future. One can only begin with

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the cards themselves, and Kaplan takes his readers on a tour from a fine assortment of cards from the fifteenth century on through to very contemporary versions of the deck. He wisely leads us, too, through where the cards are *not* found.

The second and third printings of Kaplan's work are labeled "Volume One." The *Encyclopedia* has been so well received (deservedly), that Kaplan has been encouraged to bring out his further discoveries and insights. For Volume Two, to be out in 1980, Kaplan has uncovered and photographed previously unknown fifteenth-century cards, he will provide a guide on tax-stamps and feature many more decks, he has extended the bibliography and has written a special history of the Visconti-Sforza family especially relevant for students of the Tarot.

The Tarot and other elements of our minor traditions are made more manifest in these times of de-centering; and special fools are required to explicate these frothy, unorthodox texts. In the end Kaplan's clarity is not a sacrifice to a false simplicity but a clarity that originates in an illumination and enhancement of complexity.

Lynda Sexson teaches Religious Studies at Montana State University.

The Sacred Hoop

By Bill Broder. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1979. Pp. 252. \$12.95.

Reviewed by Bill Jacobson

Broder's "cycle of earth tales" is a tough and brilliant collection of fifteen short stories and fables arranged in chronological order, starting at the creation and ending in the present, but circular in design, so that his genesis of earth opens with "In the beginning there was no beginning," and his concluding personal piece, located in the present, and the genesis of the artist, "ends with the hope that there will be no ending."

In Broder's hands history is not a linear yardstick measuring up to the present, but rather is an unending hoop bent in a circle so that we view it simultaneously from points along its circumference as well as from the center which is the present. To use another figure, we might say that on his earth the present is always experienced from the firm floor of dirt and rock, but the past and future surround us in the best mythical manner, like a galaxy of stars—actual, but at the same time richly emblematic, capable of giving us accurate bearings. The total effect is not unlike the magic attributed to the American Indian ritual hoop after which the book is named. Stepping through the hoop and then pulling its world over one's head is a rite of passage that converts the participant into a state which is both actual and sacred.

Broder's narrative mode is fiction, but each tale is followed by a bibliography and notes as in a scholarly history. While we are quick to grant every historian the license of fiction in his narrative (and since Defoe, we have come to expect every writer of fiction to use the historical convention), Broder challenges our grasp of these categories on every level through paradox and irony. The work belongs neither on the shelf of modern history nor on the shelf of fiction. It belongs on the same shelf that holds *The Old Testament*, *The Book of the Hopi*, and other anthropological collections of tribal "cycles," including those recorded by Boas and Kroeber. And because it is also the inspired work of a mere individual, it also belongs on the shelf that holds *Paradise Lost* and the *Variorum Dunciad*, two other sacred and imaginative histories which also mined pure gold from the muck of time.

Each tale is set in a concrete fictional milieu, rigorously researched, so that it is rooted in the best archaeological and historical evidence. While most of his characters are necessarily invented, several are persons who actually lived. However, even the latter are not the ones we generally meet in other exemplary histories, even those written as late as the modernist era. Lu-igisa, Chief Contractor to the State in ancient Mesopotamia, after exhausting all official and personal channels of appeal, single-



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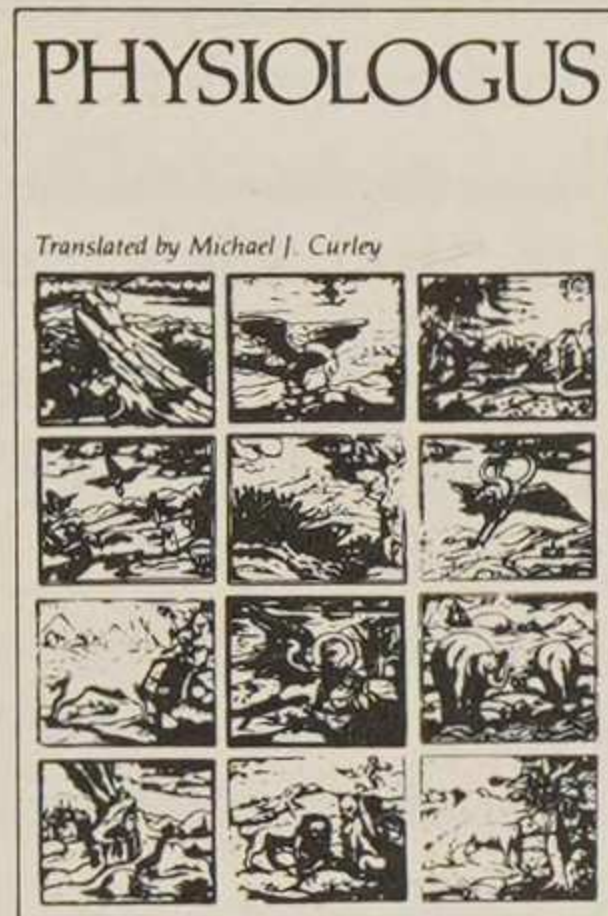
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handedly destroyed the Central Canal, an act of ecological sabotage comparable perhaps to one man safely delivering us from the nightmare of Three Mile Island. Luigi-sa perished in the process but he still made sure that his accurately kept records of public accounts would remain unharmed and could be found easily afterwards along with copies of the fruitless correspondence to the corrupt in power. Even in death he remained the perfect civil servant. Similarly, Broder's revision of Western historical settings unearths bold new perspectives. The tale of ancient Greece is set at a time when after generations of easy patriarchy there occurs a sudden regression among women to the most primitive forms of the Diony-

sian Mystery. The tale focuses upon the grim fates of a father and his two sons. The eldest and unloved son has moved "east, where he spends his days amassing coins, a perfect antidote to the madness of the demonic spirits which reside deep in his mother's womb." The youngest and loved son, traumatized and in exile, takes refuge in a Brotherhood of Pythagoras in distant Calabria, but when that all-male preserve also falls before the mob of women, he hangs himself with the strings of his sacred lyre. Meanwhile, the father, discomforted by the fact that now he has to make his own tea, finds solace in writing a letter to his favorite son that begins with, "I want to explain myself to you above all, perhaps to find some forgiveness for this failure of mine—of all fathers," and ends with, "I merely want you, son, to know that at last I am beginning to understand your yearnings to escape the 'wheel of time.' Until we grow wombs we shall remain separate from the

force which gave us birth and sustains us.”

It is particularly in the way that his characters resonate as emblems that the transcendent aspect of the sacred hoop is most profoundly established. Dag, the first man or near-man we meet in “Out of the Garden,” is really our early ancestor, not yet *homo sapiens*. One would expect that his concerns would be the most remote of all from our own. Instead, we find him bitter and loath, determined to do his duty, yet sick with anxiety as he weighs eradication of his neighbors over total extinction of the race as the lesser of two evils. In another tale, Katharine, the mother of the astronomer Johannes Kepler, is a wonderful, cranky, naughty, but clear-sighted and deeply principled old lady, nearly put to death at the stake by her other son because he finds her continued existence socially humiliating. The tale gives as deadly a blow to the Church as State as does Dostoevski’s tale within a tale of the Inquisition. But Broder’s treatment is broader. This mixture of farce and horror is also the story of every aged parent trundled out of sight into an institution.

The Sacred Hoop not only revitalizes and passes on to us a testament of usable history, it also preserves and revitalizes the best literary forms. The prose style, to begin with, is the native, plain, and unadorned. It is always in the service of its subject, never self-consciously art, and is dipped from the same pure well of King James as is the prose of Defoe, Hawthorne, Melville, Hardy, Faulkner, and Hemingway. The achievement of the individual tales is no less. The story of a plague, though modern, is nevertheless patterned after the ancient beast fable, and is traced not only with biological and historical necessity, but its dramatic structure would make Chaucer sit up with envy. Its impact is as chilling as the Old Testament account of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Broder’s vision is that gods, communi-

ties, institutions, and nature shift convulsively without warning even to the best of us. And while there are qualities which once we euphemistically called progress through growth in technology and consciousness, the wilderness is always with us. The wilderness of man, like the wilderness of the earth, is formless, terrifying, uncontrollable, and amoral, but it is also good, beautiful, eternal, and satisfying. In this tough pruning back to the roots of overgrown Western myths of humanism, which never descends to the level of rhetoric and tract, the greatest achievement is that Broder’s narrative really does succeed in bringing the reader to see Black Elk’s transcendent vision:

And I saw that the sacred hoop of my people was one of many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight, and in the center grew one mighty flowering tree to shelter all the children of one mother and one father. And I saw it was holy.

Bill Jacobson, a former professor of English, is a sculptor, psychotherapist, and author of a work-in-progress, Swift River Journal. He is currently living in New York City.

**Touch Will Tell
Walk with Your Eyes
Listen to a Shape**

Text and photographs by Marcia Brown.
New York/London: Franklin Watts, 1979.
Unpaged. \$4.95 each.

Reviewed by Richard Lewis

The noted children’s author and illustrator, Marcia Brown, has conceived of three books which are badly needed in the area of children’s literature. With text and photographs by herself, Ms. Brown has produced a series of sensory explorations which will enable children to view aspects of their own perceiving in different ways. She has brought together some of her own stimulating photographs of the natural world—and supported them with a text which makes the reader look a little deeper into the reality of nature itself. Centered on the three primary senses of seeing, touching, and hearing, these books are a way for a child,



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particularly a young child, to reflect on the extent of its senses—and to let the senses, in effect, daydream so that one might meander into a sensory world without the usual didactic boundaries imposed upon them.

On first reading I felt that the text sometimes overwhelmed the photographs; there was, it seemed, an excessive busyness in terms of the amount of text in relation to the pictures. Rereading the books later, however, I realized that these are books which cry out for a child-and-adult partnership in their reading. Ms. Brown poses lots of questions and statements, both poetical and factual, which could become wonderful initiatives for a child and adult to interact and compare experiences—or for the adult simply to use the text as a springboard to take the child that extra step further into enlarging the scope of his sensory experience.

Books such as these are particularly valuable today because so many of our children (as well as many adults) have been halted in their sensory education. Children, first and foremost, gain access to the world through their senses, and far too little attention is given in schools to building on that innate ability. “Feeling” is simply not seen by many educators as primary to the curriculum. What is also valuable about Ms.

Brown’s books is their ability to bring “nature” and the “senses” together—to make us look and feel again the many ways that a tree trunk, or a wave, or a bird can be perceived. A child’s vision can only be enhanced by these books; and with Thoreau who said: “We are as much as we see,” Ms. Brown echoes:

Take these shapes.
You can feel
 what they say.
They don’t lie.
 You can dance with them.
They are your world.
They are in you.

Richard Lewis is a teacher and the editor of many anthologies: Out of the Earth I Sing, Journeys and the soon-to-be-published The Luminous Landscape. He is director of the Touchstone Center in New York City.

The Gnostic Gospels

By Elaine H. Pagels. New York: Random House, 1979. Pp. xxxvi + 182. \$10.00.

Reviewed by John G. Gager

The history of Christianity is replete with astonishing ironies. Irony itself depends on a failure of memory. We are astounded because we fail to remember our own past—or because we choose not to see it for what it is. In part, of course, we are victimized by the self-serving accounts produced by history’s “winners.” They choose our past for us.

From time to time these comfortable constructs come under attack. Their hidden fragility is brought into focus, whether by visionary historians who reveal the struggles and ambiguities which the winners' story is designed to conceal or by the fortuitous discovery of accounts told by the losers. At such moments two reactions tend to predominate—either we retreat quickly to our traditional views and alleviate the disturbance by accounting for it within the inherited framework (“You see, these Gnostic Christians really did miss the point from the very beginning!”), or, by misconstruing the insight that orthodoxy is nothing other than a successful heresy, we convert and embrace the other side. (“You see, these Gnostic Christians really did have the truth all along!”)

With *The Gnostic Gospels*, Elaine Pagels has offered an enormously challenging account of Christian Gnosticism as it confronted, influenced, and ultimately succumbed to an emerging “orthodox” Christianity with its western center in Rome. The key term here is “emerging” orthodoxy, for her fundamental thesis is that Roman Christianity, far from representing a cohesive and well-articulated movement before the Gnostic crisis, was itself—and despite itself—profoundly affected by its abhorred opponent. More specifically, the very creeds of Western Christianity—those amalgams of “astounding views” about God and the world—are what they are and say what they say largely because of this crisis. Thus she can argue that while Gnostic Christianity disappeared as a movement, it did not disappear without a trace. In one sense, its trace is orthodox Christianity—shaped, though not created, by its interaction with and reaction against the Gnostic gospels. Or, to put the matter somewhat differently, the emphasis which the creeds themselves give to the reality of Jesus' resurrection and to the unity of God and the church can only be un-

derstood when we see that figures like Marcion and Valentinus had *already* interpreted these ideas with special emphasis.

As such, this view of the creeds as products of polemical encounters between rival parties—the creeds representing the ideology of the ultimate winners—is not particularly novel. What distinguishes Pagels' treatment is the claim that the struggle between the Gnostics and their opponents was never, as traditional interpreters have presented it, purely ideological, doctrinal, or theological. Ultimately, she argues, the orthodox response to Christian Gnostics makes sense only if we consider the political and social issues at stake. To cite but one example, the orthodox insistence on the physical nature of Jesus' death and resurrection serves to undermine the Gnostic position at several crucial points: (1) it reinforces a notion of ecclesiastical authority as based on a public tradition which originated among eyewitnesses of Jesus' death and resurrection; (2) it reinforces the ideology and practice of martyrdom as a form of *imitatio Christi*; and (3) it affirms an understanding of human experience in which “bodily experience [is] the central fact of human life.” This final point deserves particular attention because Pagels quite properly lays great stress on Christian Gnosticism as a movement of alienation and revolt—not just against mainstream Christianity but against existence in this world generally. In the final analysis, it was this “fundamental religious perspective that remained antithetical to the claims of the institutional church.” All of the particular issues, whether ideological or political, were merely manifestations of that fundamental perspective.

Pagels' book will take its place along with Walter Bauer's *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Early Christianity* and Robert Grant's *Gnosticism and Early Christianity* as a fundamental contribution to an historical understanding of the forces that shaped the predominant form of Christianity for some 1500 years. Like these earlier works, hers can be read at many different levels. With remarkable skill, she has portrayed the powerful appeal of Gnosticism for the ancient world as well

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as our own. While stressing the “worldliness” of orthodox Christianity and its suitability for effective organization, she is not insensitive to the fact that orthodoxy always extracts a heavy toll of individual human creativity. At the same time, we should not imagine, as her use of terms like “orthodox” or “Gnostic” sometimes suggests, that either group was an internally homogeneous entity or that the distance between them was as great as either party would have us believe. It is not just, as Grant proposes, “an interesting question whether the teaching of the [New Testament] Gospels and Epistles is more adequately reinterpreted by the Gnostic teachers or by such second-century ‘orthodox’ teachers as the apologists and Irenaeus.” Nor is it simply that figures like Clement of Alexandria and Origen stand as close to Valentinus and several of the Nag Hammadi texts as they do to Tertullian and Hippolytus. The point is that Gnosticism continued to exercise its appeal long after the second and third centuries, even within “orthodox” circles. For as Augustine reveals in his *Confessions*, his own early career consisted of a strenuous effort, successful only in part, to free himself from the allure of traditional Gnostic preoccupations. In the final analysis, then, orthodoxy is a process not of discovering limits but of creating them. The ultimate irony is that the limits are often set in such a way—whether consciously or not—as to include much of what the despised enemy believes.

John G. Gager is Associate Professor of Religion at Princeton University.

The Secret Book of Revelation

By Gilles Quispel. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1979. Pp. 192. Illustrated. \$39.95.

The Celtic World

By Barry Cunliffe. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1979. Pp. 224. Illustrated. \$39.95.

Reviewed by David Leeming

The Book of Revelation has often been disturbing to Christians—disturbing because it is so untamed and so unearthly, so distinctly foreign to the conception of reality contained in the other books of the New Testament. For one thing, the believable flesh and blood characters are missing. What does the celibate Christ of the Gospel have to do with the married Lamb of *Revelation*? Is the woman with child of Chapter 12 supposed to be the Blessed Virgin? And who is the Wife of the Lamb in Chapter 24? What is the meaning of the much-repeated number 7? Who or what is the seven-headed beast? Who are the four horsemen? And where does *Revelation* take place?

The Church has traditionally stressed the millennial aspect of John's writings and has by so doing perhaps unwittingly fueled the fire of the political and economic millennialism which has plagued the Western world. The scholars have seen Prester John as an eschatological thinker who for his metaphors and imagery borrowed heavily from Babylon and Persia.

Gilles Quispel, a scholar of the early Church and the New Testament, takes a different approach in this volume. He begins from two basic premises: first, that Saint John the Divine was a true seer or prophet, that his writing reflected real, not literary visions, and second, that this highly esoteric work is only likely to reveal its secrets when considered in the context of John's primitive Jewish-Christian church of Jerusalem, a church founded in the tradition of a messianic mission for Israel—and specifically Jerusalem—in *this* world. According to the tradition the East would defeat Rome, and Israel would regain, under the Christ, its proper place as center of the Kingdom of God *on Earth*. So, for example,

HUMANITIES IN SOCIETY

HUMANITIES IN SOCIETY examines the ways in which the humanities have changed in our time, how they differ from society to society, and the relation between academic disciplines that interpret human activity to those professions—law, medicine, science, and the like—that shape it. The journal, published by the University of Southern California Center for the Humanities, also seeks to define to what extent humanists are responsible for enacting assumptions about society implicit in their scholarship. Essays addressing these questions will be complemented by translations of cultural studies and by reviews of works and areas of scholarship from one discipline that have practical consequences for others. Each year the Center sponsors a conference, lecture series, or research seminar that provides an occasion for the journal staff and its contributors to engage its audience. In so doing, the editors hope to provide a model for the ways in which the learned journal can identify and pursue subjects vital to the humanities in society.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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the Lady of the *Apocalypse* is the Holy Spirit, who gives birth to Messiah in his second coming as Son of Man—a concept itself rooted not in gentile thought but in Old Testament prophecies. The seven-headed beast is Nero who according to a Jewish-Christian folktale would, in a second coming of his own, become the means by which Rome would be burned once and for all. The bride of the Lamb is the New Jerusalem spoken of in the Old Testament, the city which will come down from Heaven to replace the old Jerusalem. The bride is literally the instrument by which God will dwell not in Heaven but completely “among men.” The New Jerusalem is a concept which takes its significance from the Jewish need to see salvation in terms of this rather than another world: “people do not go to heaven; heaven comes to them.”

Professor Quispel does not limit us to an historical reading of *Revelation*, however. In a section entitled “The Relevance of Apocalyptic” he outlines the various interpretations of the Church, the scholars, the mystics, and the Jungians. It is the latter among whom, with some qualifications, Quispel must finally be numbered. This becomes clear when he analyzes the “individuation process of John” seeing in the elements of *The Secret Book of Revelation* the symbols of the Self on its voyage from birth—Meister Eckhart’s “birth of God in human hearts”—to the assimilation of light and dark, heaven and hell in the establishment of the Kingdom of God on Earth.

If Professor Quispel’s conclusions seem at times to be somewhat forced in order to meet the needs of his particular point of view, his interpretation is always lively and provocative. Perhaps the most useful section of the volume is the biblical text—the entire *Book of Revelation* itself—with extensive but lucid explanatory material. The quality of this material is sufficiently high to make what would have been merely a beautifully illustrated “coffee table” production into a reputable scholarly work as well.

Another successful combination of the scholarly and the popular is Barry Cunliffe’s *The Celtic World* also published with a great deal of elegance by McGraw-Hill. Cunliffe, Professor of European Archaeology at Oxford, provides a clear and insightful tracing of the Celts from their obscure origins in central Europe in the eighth century and their bitter conflicts with Rome to their current expression in the Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany of today.

A particularly useful chapter is one on the ancient Celtic religious practices in which Cunliffe considers such aspects as the triplic or trinitarian element in the pre-Christian cults, the mysterious ritual shafts—apparently used for contact with the Underworld—still being discovered on the European landscape, and the emphasis on sacred natural precincts where men and gods could communicate.

What emerges finally from this work is a beautifully illustrated and accessible portrait of a people who must rank among the world’s most fascinating and enduring.

David Leeming is an associate professor of English at the University of Connecticut, a Contributing Editor to PARABOLA, and the author of several volumes on the subject of myth, religion, and literature.

Researches on The I Ching

By Iulian K. Shchutskii, translated by William L. MacDonald, Tsuyoshi Hasegawa with Helmut Wilhelm. Princeton: Bollingen Series LXII.2, Princeton University Press, 1979. Pp. lxvi + 255. \$12.50.

Reviewed by Kenneth L. Phillips

In recent years, interest in the ancient Chinese I Ching has grown enormously, nearly to the point of playing a central role in our cultural myth, or zeitgeist. Artists and musicians such as Jackson Pollack and John Cage have found it to be a well reaching deep into the collective realms of the human experience. The Beatles in the sixties often spoke and sang of its wisdom. Today, it is the source of calendars, posters,

LECTURES ON THE I CHING CONSTANCY AND CHANGE ✻

Richard Wilhelm
Translated and Edited by Irene Eber

As the West's foremost translator of this difficult and elusive text, Richard Wilhelm frequently wrote and lectured on the Book of Changes, supplying guidelines to its ideas and ways of thinking. Collected here are four lectures he gave between 1926 and 1929. The lectures are significant not only for what they reveal about Chinese tradition and culture, but also for their reflections of the scholarly and cultural milieu prevalent in Germany during that time.

Bollingen Series XIX: 2. \$9.75



RESEARCHES ON THE I CHING ✻

Iulian Konstantinovich Shchutskii
Translated by William L. MacDonald and
Tsuyoshi Hasegawa with Hellmut Wilhelm
Introduction by Gerald W. Swanson

One of the most important books in the world's literature, the *I Ching*, or Book of Changes, is one of the first efforts of the human mind to place itself within the universe. As a companion volume to the Richard Wilhelm/Cary F. Baynes translation of the *I Ching* (Princeton), Iulian Shchutskii's *Researches on the I Ching* makes available a

wealth of critical essays on the lore associated with this profound book. As with the most recent edition of the Wilhelm/Baynes translation, this volume benefits from the collaboration of Hellmut Wilhelm, Richard Wilhelm's son and the leading authority on the *I Ching* in this country. *Bollingen Series LXII: 2.* \$12.50

諸侯	chu-hou
康侯	k'ang-hou
后	hou
國君	kuo-chün
君	chün
主	chu
士夫	shih-fu
金夫	chin-fu

FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF THE WILHELM/BAYNES TRANSLATION OF THE I CHING

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

Princeton, New Jersey 08540

and endless courses taught by both serious scholars and self-proclaimed pundits. Despite its growing audience, little Western scholarship of any value has emerged in recent years with the I Ching as its subject. Popular interest has circled around its synchronistic, oracular properties, while no visible scholarly attention has been directed at the rich source of mythic, philosophical, and psychological wisdom at the base of this great scripture.

The divination process involving milfoil, now more often called yarrow, predated the existence of the I Ching. Shchutskii documents this statement with references to the Li-chi and very important Tso-chuan commentary as well as the much later work of the Japanese scholar, Matsui Rashu (1751-1822). He points out that the work of such accepted scholars as Henri Maspero, excellent as it may be, contains a fatal flaw: the basing of I Ching research on the Hsi-tz'u chuan, rather than the original germinal text. One of the effects of this error has been to produce scholarship reflecting an excellent understanding of technical terminology, but devoid of much needed consideration of myth and universal patterns of life.

Many other important sources are drawn upon in the first part of *Researches* though eventually all of their major theses are rejected. A notion which Western students of the I Ching will surely find interesting is Shchutskii's finding that the origin of the primary and secondary texts, "Ten Wings," is not Confucian. Although Western thinkers, including Leibniz, have often been drawn to the mathematical aspects of the I Ching, mathematics "could not have had any place in China in the period of the creation of this document." Shchutskii makes the interesting observation that formal logic did not exist in China until after the appearance of Buddhism.

Part Two of the Shchutskii volume is comprised of twelve chapters dealing with far more technical but no less important matters. Interpretation of the I Ching is the most valuable topic addressed, in which the author stresses that "the meaning is not in the images, but in *how* these images as a whole are coordinated in the system." He regards the individual symbolic content conveyed by the use of specific words as unimportant: something scholars with a psychological bent should often bear in mind. Matters of order and pattern are most important.

Much advice to the beginning student of the I Ching may be found in the earlier chapters of this section. The evolution of the text, as having been a progression from verbal images, through concepts and ethical judgments, to a systematic world view, and finally achieving an ordering of the hexagrams, is a valuable though disputed explanation. Other scholars have stated that the systematic world view evolved first, perhaps from the original myth of Fu Hsi and the magic tortoise.

In subsequent sections matters of language, dialect, sociology, philosophical and interpretive schools of thought, and chronology are all treated in a lively style. The chapter on translation problems develops a scope much wider than the title would imply, offering a most interesting analysis of the Ta Chuan, or Great Treatise.

Although it may seem reckless to proclaim *Researches* as a major publishing event, I believe that the translation and release of this doctoral thesis by a noted Russian sinologue on an ancient Chinese text, which in the end rejects the theories of its major sources, will come to be viewed as one of the major contributions to I Ching scholarship in a Western language. This study is unique in its approach, purpose, detail, and exclusive adherence to the original core texts of the I Ching.

Kenneth L. Phillips holds graduate degrees in Psychology and Physics. He is in private practice in New York, lectures widely, is on the faculty of N. Y. U., and is an officer of Citicorp, N.A.

Birds With Human Souls: A Guide to Bird Symbolism

By Beryl Rowland. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1978. Pp. 214. \$15.00.

Reviewed by M.L. del Mastro

In this twentieth-century bestiary, Professor Rowland has gathered the symbolic lore of fifty-nine birds, real and mythological, from albatross to wren. Like her medieval, Renaissance, and seventeenth-century predecessors, Professor Rowland is not particularly interested in ornithology. Real birds, when mistreated, attract her indignant sympathy, and there is a minor but persistent "SPCA" element in the work. However, Rowland's chief concern is with birds as they have appeared to the mind, imagination, and spirit of man the writer.

Poet and priest, magician and preacher, philosopher and encyclopedist—in every age and culture, all these have been drawn to the bird, and all have found in this winged and singing creature analogues for the human spirit and images of human behavior. Each has made use of the accumulated lore of the bird he has chosen for his symbol in order to fill out his own analogy and make his own point.

In this collection, Professor Rowland synthesizes these views and uses of the bird. She has drawn her material from primitive and from sophisticated cultures, from ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, from China, from Africa, from Asia and from Europe, from Scripture and from secular love poetry, from the earliest written records and (chiefly, since they tend to contain the most complete accounts of most of the birds) from medieval, Renaissance, and seventeenth-century compilations: bestiar-ies, natural histories, books of emblems, and homilies, among others.

Birds With Human Souls is more than a handy reference to literary bird symbolism through the ages, however. It is a jeweled

collection of miniature essays on individual birds seen as focal points for human emotions, habits, and attitudes. Each essay is a kind of mosaic in which individual bits of disparate, sometimes contradictory, scholarly information are brought together and shown to have a significant pattern. It is Professor Rowland's remarkable insight which makes pictures from what would otherwise be heaps of brilliantly colored broken glass.

But it is in her perception of this pattern that one of the few weaknesses of the book lies. Making uncritical use of the simpler dicta of Freud, Jung, and twentieth-century psychology, Rowland tends to pursue the sexual overtones of an image, disregarding irony and metaphor in its uses, and in some cases, ignoring the plain sense of its traditional interpretation. For example, describing the dove she remarks, "...in the Christian myth the holy dove fertilized the Virgin. The Word is made Flesh. The Immaculate Conception is through the ear as in the hymn: *Gaude, Virgo, Mater Christi/ Quae per aurem concepisti* (Rejoice, Virgin, Mother of Christ/ You who have conceived through the ear)."

One may discount Rowland's theological confusion of the Virgin Birth (Christ's birth of a virgin mother—the point of the hymn quoted) with the Immaculate Conception (the preservation of that virgin mother from the taint of Original Sin from the moment of *her own* conception in her mother's womb—not at issue in the hymn). Even so, she is guilty, here, of a sheer literal-mindedness that misses the point of the material she cites, while adding nothing to the significance of the dove-symbol.

Traditionally, the Virgin "conceived through the ear" by *listening* to the invitation of God (conveyed to her by the angel) to become His mother, and by giving her free consent to this *spoken* invitation. "The power of the Most High," the Holy Spirit (traditionally pictured as a dove), then "overshadowed" her, and she conceived. The plain sense of this traditional interpretation avoids the grotesqueness to which Rowland's leads.

Fortunately, such lapses are not too fre-

quent—though the pattern recurs often enough to leave one with the disquieting sense of a blind spot in the author not adequately compensated for. Nevertheless, the value of the book as a whole substantially outweighs its flaws.

Physically, the book is lovely. The illustrations of the birds, drawn from medieval manuscript illuminations are carefully reproduced. White space has been used effectively and the unusual format (1¼" wide × 6¼" long) pleases eye and hand.

Two small scholar's objections remain. The one-line descriptive caption for each illustration would profit greatly from the inclusion of the Manuscript reference number for its source. The Acknowledgments page of single-spaced, running citations conceals this information as effectively as a labyrinth. The same technique, used for the notes for each essay, is less troublesome, perhaps because of the smaller scope, but still annoying, as the text lacks footnote numbers to make clear what is being cited.

But finally, and this is, perhaps, its chief value, *Birds With Human Souls*, like Keats's Grecian urn, does "tease us out of thought." Each essay, sometimes each line, gives rise to clusters of new ideas, fresh associations, intriguing questions, and vivid emotional and imaginative responses. What more can be asked of a book?

M.L. del Mastro is Professor of Literature at The Polytechnic Preparatory Country Day School and translator of Juliana of Norwich's Revelations of Divine Love.

Astronomy of the Ancients

Edited by Kenneth Brecher and Michael Feirtag. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1979. Pp. ix + 206. \$12.50.

Reviewed by David Finkelstein

In the course of time the motion of our planet draws at least three circles on the

canvas of the distant stars. Daily a searchlight pointing vertically upward from any place on our equator would trace out the swiftest circle of the three, the *celestial equator*. Annually the sun in its apparent motion against the stars traces out the *ecliptic*, the second circle, tilted 24° from the first, and therefore crossing it at two points, the *equinoxes*. Each twenty millennia or so, the earth traces out the third circle, the *precession*, with its north pole, wobbling in its orbit like a spinning top and for the same mechanical reason: the forces on the earth do not act at its center of mass. The circles of the day and the year are deeply graven on all of us, but life is short and the circle of precession takes many lives of observation and tradition to become known. It appears as a slow grinding of the second wheel on the first, Hamlet's mill, in the phrase that is the title of the classic work of Santillana and von Dechend on how this revolution of the heavens was reflected in the revolutions of ancient mythology. As the point where one wheel rests upon the other moves through the houses of the zodiac, we move from one age to another.

This book continues the exploration of ancient knowledge of astronomy, and extends our sense of the depth of the well of the past. We begin close to home in space and time with the Native Americans of the plains, who built their elaborate medicine wheels of stone and their sundance lodges in special relation to the dawn rising of the brightest stars at midsummer solstice, described by John A. Eddy. Not far off John Brandt finds Plains Indian records of the nova of 9000 B.C. that created the Gum Nebula, a star that must have been as bright as the quarter moon. Some of these findings, with Derek Price's reconstruction of the Antikythera mechanism, and the astronomical towers of the Mayans, are woven together by Sharon Gibbs and by Anthony Aveni, in further articles on the ancient astronomy of the old and new world. Owen Gingerich shares his recent views on Stonehenge, building on the remarkable insights of Hawkins and Hoyle.

Two chapters take us far out of the solar system. One deals with the one star in the sky that blinks conspicuously. Every two

and a half days this star dims for about five hours by more than a magnitude. China called the star the Piled-Up Corpses, to Jews it was Lilith or the Head of Satan, to Arabia and thence to us it was The Ghoul, Al Ghol, Algol.

Jerome Lettvin, in an imaginative chapter that alone justifies the book, attributes the widespread fear of Algol to fear of the evil eye. And since the evil eye of the sea is possessed by the octopus family, he constructs from this beginning a marvelous theory of the true meaning of the myths of the Gorgon Medusa, her two sisters, and the mirror and sword of Perseus, a delicate and airy edifice on a firm base of astronomy and biology, full of poetic truth if we cannot yet be quite sure of its historical truth, using the sky as a temple of memory in the true Ciceronian way.

The other star we visit is blue-white Sirius, bearer of two enigmas. Why, Brecher asks, is Sirius, the brightest star in the sky, called red in Greek, Roman, and Babylonian sources from 2000 B.C. to 100 A.D. and white thereafter? This is either an astrophysical puzzle or a linguistic one. And why does the Dogon tribe of Mali in the west Sudan, not far from Timbuktu, speak of Sirius as companion of an invisible, superdense, supersmall star, Digitaria, orbiting every fifty years in an ellipse with the visible star at one focus, and why do they center the attention of their initiates on the invisible Digitaria? Here, as in Jonathan Swift's description of the moons of Mars, the puzzle is the precision. There are too many improbable features gotten right too early. Brecher provides one scenario that explains both Sirius enigmas naturally, but leaves astrophysics with a hard nut to crack, chew, and digest.

The final chapter returns to Hamlet's mill. Taking up from the work of Hertha von Dechend, Reiche gives a plausible reading of the myth of Atlanta in Plato's *Timaeus* as a narrative of the succession of ages resulting from the precession of the equinoxes through the zodiac. This doctrine of world ages is found in the *Enuma Elish* of second millennium Babylon and in the Norse Edda, in Persia, and in Greece. The Golden Age, according to Reiche, lasted

from 6000 to 4000 B.C. because then heaven and earth connected via the bridge of the Milky Way; in other words, because then the sun rose and fell in the Milky Way on the spring and fall equinoxes, in Gemini in the spring and Sagittarius in the fall; in brief, because Gemini and Sagittarius are the two houses bridged by our galaxy's misty path, and our equinox is in Aquarius now. He seeks explanations in the sky for most of the puzzling numerical and architectural details of Plato's legend, an admittedly risky pursuit, but a worthwhile and happy one. To a remarkable degree, ancient astronomical mythologers served to create, transmit, and apply the cosmologies of their days, much as this book does of ours.

The chapters originally appeared as separate articles in *Technology Review*. This makes for some redundancy, but it also provides a good bibliography with each chapter, and the most beautiful and important readings in archeo-astronomy are thus made more accessible to us all. Today we have a robust and evolving astronomy for the economic use and scientific study of the stars, and a fossil astrology where we echo without comprehension the mythic formulae of the past. Through archeo-astronomy we are gradually getting glimpses of the meanings these myths had in the ages before the split.

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PARABOLA

extends its warmest congratulations to

ELAINE H. PAGELS

on receiving the National Book Critics
Circle Award

for

The Gnostic Gospels

Her article, "The Gnostic Vision," appears in PARABOLA, Vol. III, No. 4 and "To the Universe Belongs the Dancer" in Vol IV, No. 2.

usual, "extrinsic and probable proof" of the existence of God, for which intrinsic and unshakable proof can be sought otherwise and elsewhere. There is a tension between traditional metaphysics and modern scientific theory, but a creative one—a diversity, not a fragmentation, if we succeed corporately in being vulnerable to both.

I have greatly appreciated your most recent publication (Vol. IV, No. 3) exploring the child especially because of the inclusion of child-vision through their words and pictures. Mr. Lewis' article and Ms. Sexson's wonderful portrayal of unfolding myth/drama especially added to reinforce an abiding intuition of mine that if the renewing power of nature as exhibited in the poetic heart of children was valued the way adults value "the news," not only would the lion and lamb snuggle but they would play and design costumes. One would draw pictures, the other would write songs.

—Stephen D. Maye
San Jose, CA

I was mostly delighted with P.L. Travers' article, "The Primary World," (Vol. IV, No. 3) but her dissatisfaction with Tolkien's understanding of the Primary, as he gives it in his essay "On Fairy Stories," disturbed me. Professor Tolkien was a Christian as opposed to a Gnostic; naturally therefore, Primary Truth would for him be incomplete without history and matter. In a partly parallel way, the Protestant communion seems incomplete to a Catholic because it doesn't involve (or at least, isn't believed by the participants to involve) the actual body

of Christ. It is not that history or matter-of-fact makes something true, but that truth is not whole if it does not reach into history, to the pavement and stones in the road, to a resolution of the apparent differences between the true and the real. This is precisely why Tolkien concludes an essay on fairy stories with a discussion of the Incarnation.

Travers counters Tolkien's historical view of the Primary World with this definition of it: "that which has never been invented but came into being, along with the blood stream, as a legacy from the Authors who...are in Eternity." Since I can't pin down her references to D.H. Lawrence and Blake, I will comment on this only by asking two questions: Isn't the blood stream, to use one of Ms. Travers' phrases, "an element of history"? If so, then why not *the truth*?

(I hope the author's intended meaning was not such as should have obviated this letter.)

—James Spreckels
Beaumont, TX

Please could you persuade that splendid lady, Pamela Travers, to elaborate on why Tolkien's Frodo is not a true hero and his story not really archetypal—because a) the ring is first found and b) given back, as it were, by accident. Why is this not one of those "seeming" mistakes, one of those necessary accidents, that the myths and fairy tales are full of?

Frodo wrestling with Gollum (his dark self) on the edge of the abyss—the ring finally eluding them both—as it *has to*—as it has always done (absolute power not being for man)—is this not an image from the primary world?

I can see that Frodo is very different from the heroes of old, who went forth, looking for heroism, as it were—but is this reluctant hero, plaintively saying "Why me?" not just our old friend Everyman: You and I, sent out to be heroic—that surely is what touches us so and makes us chalk up "Frodo lives"!... Strange thought, that Tolkien, with all his dreams of chivalry and

high breeding, has produced the quintessential democratic hero!

As to the finding of the ring—are the fairy stories not full of things magical found by people who at first do not know their use? Bilbo finding the ring seems to me no more unjust than that spoilt boy Aladdin finding the lamp.

I hope this does not sound as though I am challenging P.T.; she has after all, spent a lifetime studying these matters—I would just like her to explain more. The one gnawing doubt I have always had about Tolkien has been his terrible poetry—how one is carried along by the great story and then suddenly dropped in a puddle of verse—not at all like the simple but utterly magical little rhymes of the old tales, which seem to stay in one's mind, as though one had always known them.

Yet at the end of *The Hobbit* when Gandalf says to Bilbo “Surely you don't disbelieve the prophecies, because you had a hand in bringing them about yourself? You don't really suppose, do you, that all your adventures and escapes were managed by mere luck, just for your sole benefit?”, then I find it difficult to disbelieve in the genuine source, that Tolkien somehow managed to tap.

—Trata Maria Mahoney
London, England

P.L. Travers responds:

Only two letters? I had expected an army with banners—“Votes for Rabbits.” “Anti-Mermaidism is Racist.” “Frodo for President.”

Well, first Mr. Spreckels. He will have noted that I expressly left open—well, a crack!—the question of what Tolkien meant by Primary and Secondary Worlds while myself plumping for the former. Perhaps, having always in mind the words of one of Tolkien's cronies, C.S. Lewis, himself a committed Christian—“There is only one Creator and we merely mix the elements He gives us”—I

should more properly have said of Tolkien's “sub-created” that it was man-mixed rather than man-made. D.H. Lawrence's axiom, unintentionally omitted by PARABOLA's printer—“Remember that, as well as the truth of fact, there is also the truth of truth,” subsumes, I venture to suppose, what Mr. Spreckels is saying. And, in “The Primary World,” the implicit assumption is that, along with the Authors (Blake to Butts, 6th July, 1803) the blood stream itself together with Tolkien's great diapason from (non-invented) Fairy Tale to Eucatastrophe, are in Eternity—in which fact, time, and history are but passing presences.

Miss Mahoney will also have noted that another crack was left so that she—or others!—could squeeze through, carrying a torch for Frodo. And, by voicing what I feel to be a proper criticism of Tolkien's poetry, she, in turn, opens for me a wide gateway to what, perhaps, is the heart of the matter. Those dilly-down-dotty songs do indeed give rise to doubt. Reading them, one cannot but wonder whether the text that enshrines them can be unquestioningly accepted. And her comments on the whole epic, seen from the standpoint of Everyman, indeed make a palpable hit. But, alas, it is not true, as she asserts, that Everyman is “sent out” to be heroic. He is not, in fact, “sent” anywhere, except, perhaps, to the compost heap. He does, indeed, cry “Why me?” on every possible occasion. He also protests (see the first issue of PARABOLA) that since he never asked to be born he bears no part of blame. So, it is not he, but One-man, who is “sent out” (though Everyman has the possibility of becoming One-man); or who, more accurately, undertakes to set out; One-man also, for the dignity of all and to serve a purpose not wholly known, inquires of himself “If not I, who?”; One-man who says “I asked to be born, or, if not, I will act as if I had asked and bear the consequences”; One-man, sprung from Everyman's loins, who meetly dies for the people. This being so, Miss Mahoney's concept of Frodo as democratic hero gives rise to further questions. Can those two words do anything but cancel each other out? Is the hero not, no matter what his outer or inner walk of life, of his very nature aristos? And, was Frodo, in fact, a hero?

Of course Tolkien tapped authentic sources; that has never been in doubt. But he was a man hag-ridden by words—as distinct from Word—

and, from the moment when a child of six cried "That's not fair!" in the Riddle Game, I wondered, myself at one with the protest, whether those eldritch riders had not betrayed their trusty steed. And later, in the Preface to *The Fellowship of the Ring*, this disquiet, I thought, was corroborated. It seemed to me that Tolkien was turning himself inside out in an effort to erase or make lawful something he felt to be not according to lore—and the words would not be unsaid. Either that, or he intended it, the whole equivocal business, which would as I said in "The Primary World," make all the difference.

No, not quite all. In a Court of Lore he would still have to confront his own words as witnesses for the prosecution. There they are, in black and white, testifying not only to the terms of the original contest but to those of its ultimate outcome; to the fact that to the very last Frodo refuses to part with the ring, insists that it belongs to him and continues to make full use of its magic. They further record that Gollum, biting the air at a venture, snaps off invisible ring and finger, holds both, now manifest, aloft in triumph and topples over the edge. And, as if this were not enough, they declare—a mere four paragraphs later—that Frodo declares to his faithful Sam "But for him I could not have destroyed the ring."

Now, what would the jury make of this? A platitude? Out of evil comes good? This would indeed do well enough for a less portentous story. Or would the foreman say something like this? "We find, m'lud, that the gentleman was not quite right in his facts; that it wasn't him that destroyed the ring; he had it bit off him, as it were, by the one that fell into the fire. Furthermore, m'lud, we do not agree with the Witness for the Defence, begging her pardon, when she says that the ring has to elude both parties. Yer ludship will know, better than twelve good men and true, that, for the reinstatement of the fallen world, the ring has to be

restored; of intention, given as gift to its source. Otherwise, sir, it is merely lost and all is to do again and again till One-man, gathering his will, by choice relinquishes, throws it back. As Mr. Prometheus, we suppose, will also have to do some day."

Well, the case rests. Lord Justice Time will sum up in due course; doubtless, in the process, advising the jury of the possibility that Tolkien, when he sent Frodo off to the Grey Havens, knew or half-knew that things were a-gley; and that in the matter of herohood, Bilbo's boy was merely a candidate. It is the business of the hero to mediate, always at cost to himself, between the gods and man; to bring the treasure, whether manifest or absconditus, from above to the market-place; to Enter the City with Bliss-bestowing Hands as he does in the Tenth Ox-herding Picture. Frodo had nothing to bestow but his need, his wound, his *woebegoneness*. And he never truly returned to the Shire. It was Sam, kith to him as Kent to Lear, who came back to live at Bag End.

Even so, chalk up "Frodo lives!" It is a cry of affirmation. For, if he lives, there is always the possibility that between the stirrup and the ground he'll achieve the quest and tell the tale. Dead men have nothing to do or to tell.

My piece in *PARABOLA* (Vol. IV, No. 4), entitled "Mirrors and Masks" reviewed the work of Paul Gibbons, alias Garbanzo the clown, in the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, but I neglected to credit specifically the courage and imagination of my anthropological colleagues, Michael Ames, the Museum's director, and Marjorie Halpin, who is jointly with the Museum and the Department of Anthropology at UBC. The clown show continues at the Museum, now augmented by Koko, Garbanzo's partner in clowning and also in real life. In addition to seeing what a clown could be doing in a museum of anthropology, Marjorie Halpin has been developing a sort of treasure hunt through the museum's images called, "following the frog." She has also conducted workshops on masks and masking with Garbanzo. Perhaps we may hear from Marjorie herself one day about her adventures with the frogs of northwest coast art.

—Robin Ridington
Vancouver, B.C.

PARABOLA especially regrets the following omissions and errors in previous issues:

—In P.L. Travers' article "The Primary World" (PARABOLA Vol. IV, No. 3), the Grimms story most children didn't come to know is titled "The Devils's Sooty Brother"; Andersen's tales should have been described as "folkly"; the D.H. Lawrence axiom omitted is: "Remember that, as well as the truth of fact, there is also the truth of truth."

—The misspelling of our good friend Dr. Frederick Franck's last name in the by-line on his article, "Looking at the Children Playing, from the Sky" (PARABOLA, Vol. IV, No. 3).

—The omission of the name of Dr. Franck's companion in life and translation, Claske Franck, in the credit for Maria Dermoût's "The Good Serpent" (PARABOLA, Vol. IV, No. 4).

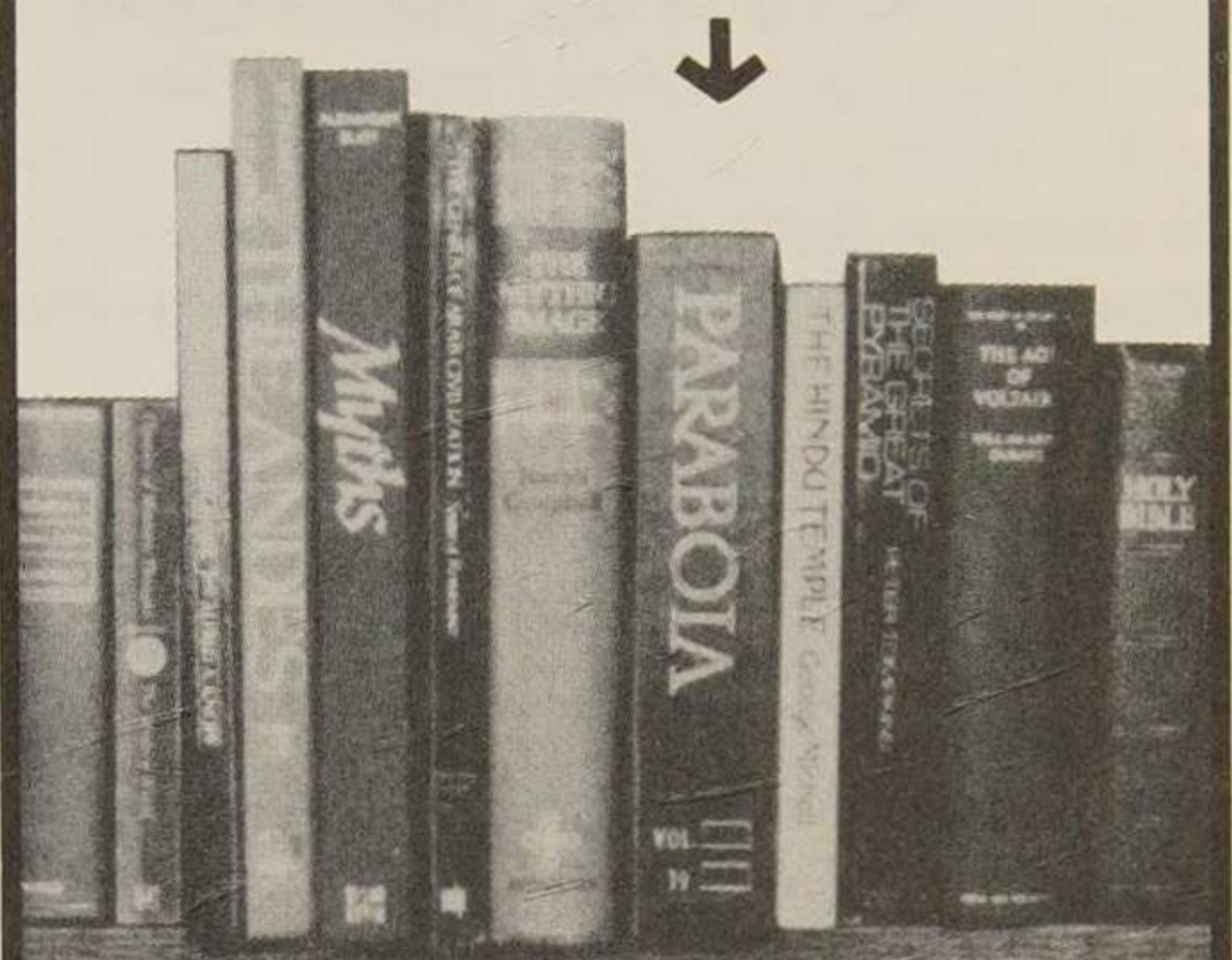
—A dropped line from Sam Gill's article, "It's Where You Put Your Eyes" (PARABOLA, Vol. IV, No. 4). The statement on page 93 should have read:

The sandpainting is but an instrument for this creative act, and perhaps it is the wisdom of the Navajo that it be destroyed in its use so that the obvious aesthetic value of the instrument does not supplant the human and cosmic concern which it serves. There is a certain sense in which the confinement of our attention to the reproductions of sandpaintings is somewhat analogous to hanging paint-covered artists' palettes on the wall to admire, not acknowledging that these pigment-covered boards are not paintings but the means to create them. There is a certain aesthetic value in artists' palettes I suppose, but surely most would think of this action as foolishly missing the point.

Our sincere apologies to our valued and understanding Consulting Editors.

—The Editors

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete /s/ Lee B. Ewing, Managing Editor. September 13, 1979.

Joy Elvey Bannerman writes poetry and prose, lectures and teaches, and conducts workshops on art and writing as craft in North Carolina.

Megan Biesele was trained in literature and anthropology at the University of Michigan and Harvard. She conducted fieldwork in northwestern Botswana and has written a number of articles and reviews on Kung folklore and culture change. She lives in Woodville, Texas.

Robert Bly was born in western Minnesota and was educated at St. Olaf College and Harvard University. In 1958 he founded a quarterly journal, called, successively, *The Fifties*, *The Sixties*, and *The Seventies*. His collections include *The Light Around the Body* (winner of the National Book Award), *Sleepers Joining Hands*, and the latest, *This Tree Will Be Here For A Thousand Years*.

Jonathan Chaves has taught Chinese language and literature, as well as Chinese art, Japanese literature, and creative writing and is now at George Washington University. He has published three books on Chinese poetry, the most recent of which, *Pilgrim of the Clouds: Poems and Essays from Ming China* (Weatherhill, 1978), was nominated for the National Book Award in translation, 1979.

Keith Critchlow teaches at the Royal College of Arts in London and is the author of *Order in Space*, *Into the Hidden Environment*, and *Islamic Patterns*. He recently completed *Reflection*, a film which investigates the symbolism of natural forms. Critchlow is a fellow of the Lindisfarne Association where he frequently lectures.

Frederick Franck, Dutch-born author and artist, holds doctorates in Fine Arts, Medicine, and Dentistry. He designed and built "Pacem in Terris," a spiritual center, next to his home in Warwick, N.Y. and is the author of a number of books: *The Zen of Seeing*, *EveryOne*, and most recently, *The Awakened Eye*. Dr. Franck is a Consulting Editor to PARABOLA.

Rolf Jacobsen, at 61, is one of Norway's leading modern poets and, according to Robert Bly, is "the greatest poet alive about old people."

J. Stephen Lansing is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Southern California. Since 1971 he has lived off and on in Bali and is now completing a book and a film on Balinese culture. He previously published *Evil in the Morning of the World*, Michigan Papers on Southeast Asia, 1974.

Lobsang Lhalungpa was born in Lhasa, Tibet and has become an important translator of Tibetan texts, *The Life of Milarepa* and the *Mahamudra* among them. He emigrated to Canada in 1971 where he taught Tibetan language and Buddhist classics at the University of British Columbia, and has been in the United States since 1975. He is a Consulting Editor to PARABOLA.

Victor Lobl, our cover photographer, is a freelance photographer, designer, and director. His photographic works include a number of in-depth essays on contemporary dancers as well as studies of major artists in their living and working environments. He is currently directing television in California.

Barbara G. Myerhoff is Chairperson and Professor of Anthropology at the University of Southern California. Her books include *Peyote Hunt* and *Life's Career: Aging and Cross-Cultural Studies in Growing Old*, and most recently *Number Our Days* (E. P. Dutton). A film with the same title won her an Academy Award for Best Short Documentary in 1977. She is a Consulting Editor to PARABOLA.

Gary Snyder's own words describe him best: "Myself, raised in the West, in the basin of Puget Sound, what some poets now call Ish Nation, set out like everyone else, to make sense, and to find somehow a way to actually 'belong to the land.'" His many books include, *Turtle Island*, *Riprap and Cold Mountain Poems*, *Earth House Hold*, and *Myths and Texts*.

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