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AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ARCHETYPAL SYMBOLISM

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THE ARCHIVE FOR RESEARCH IN ARCHETYPAL SYMBOLISM

EDITED BY
BEVERLY MOON

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CONTENTS

Introduction by Joseph L. Henderson vii
Preface by Charles H. Taylor xi
Editor's Note by Beverly Moon xv

COSMOS AND CREATION 1
Colossal Wheel from the Sun Temple 2 • *Helios, the Zodiac, and the Four Seasons* 6 • *The Cosmic Egg* 10
The Jain Universe in the Form of the Cosmic Person 14 • *Brahmā Offering Lotuses* 18
Eleven-Headed Female Figure 22 • *Four Dwarfs Support the Sky* 26
The Entrance to Paradise 30 • *Gods and Demons Churning the Ocean* 34

CENTER OF THE WORLD 37
Fuji Pilgrimage Maṇḍala 38 • *Khaṇḍarīya Mahādeva Temple* 42 • *The Ur Ziggurat* 46
The Dome of the Rock 50 • *The Great Stupa at Sāñcī* 54 • *The Ascension of Christ* 58
The Dance of the Xocotlhuetzi 62 • *Christian Labyrinth* 66 • *Siuhu's House* 70

SACRED ANIMALS 73
Frog 74 • *Zeus Meilichios* 78 • *The God Thoth as an Ibis with the Goddess Maat* 82
Hathor as a Nurturing Feral Cow 86 • *Lion Capital at Sarnath* 90 • *Bear Screen* 94
Anubis on His Pylon-Shaped Shrine 98 • *Bees Clasping a Honeycomb* 102

MONSTERS 105
Lion-Man 106 • *Ganeṣa, Lord of Hosts* 110 • *Mushhush, the Serpent-Dragon* 114 • *Twisted Face* 118
Medusa and Pegasus 122 • *The Binding of Fenrir* 126 • *Thor Catches the World Serpent* 130
Apocalyptic Vision: Ecclesia and the Dragon 134 • *Sisiutl, the Two-Headed Serpent* 138

GODDESSES 141
Goddess Presented with Offerings 142 • *Aphrodite Riding a Goose* 146 • *Tārā* 150 • *The Goddess Nimba* 154
The Goddess Freyja 158 • *The Goddess Cāmuṇḍā* 162 • *Coatlicue* 166

GODS 169
Kṛṣṇa Lifting Mount Govardhana 170 • *Oath-Taking Figure* 174 • *Odin, the One-Eyed God* 178
The Norse God Freyr 182 • *One of the Twin Gods of War (Ahayuta)* 186 • *Rāma and Sītā in the Forest* 190
The Moon as an Above Person 194 • *Hachiman in the Guise of a Buddhist Monk* 198

SACRED MARRIAGE 201
Father Sky, Mother Earth, and Rainbow 202 • *The Investiture of King Zimri-Lim of Mari* 206
The Binding of Isaac 210 • *Leda and the Swan* 214 • *The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa* 218
The Annunciation 222 • *Loving Couple* 226

The Divine Child 229

The Divine Child Dancing on a Lotus 230 • The Birth of Mithra from a Rock 234
The Birth of Athena 238 • The Nativity of Christ 242 • Skaoaga and Her Bear Child 246
First Bath and First Steps of Śākyamuni 250 • Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi as a Boy) 254
The Buddha-to-Be as a Truthful Youth 258 • Snake Goddess and Child 262

Sacred Kingship 265

Ptah Embracing Sesostris I 266 • Māndhāta, the Cakravartin 270
Thutmose III Suckled by the Sycamore Goddess 274 • Beaded Crown 278 • Torah Crown 282
The Coronation of the Virgin 286 • The Throne of Wisdom (Sedes Sapientiae) 290

Saviors 293

Christ the Savior in the Tree of Life 294 • Preaching Hall and Tīrthaṃkara 298
Colossal Buddha 302 • Standing Buddha Maitreya 306 • Maitreya and Attendants 310
Avalokiteśvara as Psychopomp 314

Heroes and Heroines 317

Saint George and the Dragon 318 • Bahrām the Gor Killing the Dragon 322 • Judith and Holofernes 326
Ānanda 330 • Mahākāśyapa 334 • The Good Shepherd 338 • Susanna and the Elders 342
Amenhotep Son of Hapu 346

Duality and Reconciliation 349

A Pair of Intertwined Serpents 350 • Eṣu Shrine Figures 354
Ardhanārīśvara, the Lord Whose Half Is Woman 358 • Androgynous Water Spirit (Nommo) 362
Irises and Zigzag Bridge 366 • The Royal Portal 370 • Twin Figure with a Beaded Jacket 374
Ankh Mirror Case of Tutankhamen 378

Revelation 381

The Coming of Elijah 382 • The Ancient in Years 386 • The Descent of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost) 390
Divination Tray 394 • Divination Vessel with an Attached Figure 398 • Land Otter Man 402
Shaman's Mask 406 • Queen Triśalā Dreaming 410

Death 413

The Crucifixion 414 • The Creation of Adam and the Fall 418 • The Temptation of Eve 422
Anubis and the Weighing of the Heart 426 • The Weighing of Souls 430
The Last Judgment 434 • Śiva and His Family 438 • Wailing Female Mourner 442

Transformation 445

Apollo and Daphne 446 • Aphrodite Emerging from the Waters 450 • The Baptism of Christ 454
The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ 458 • The Crossing of the Red Sea 462 • Mithraeum 466
The Goddess Chinnamastā 470 • Menorah Flanked by Olive Trees 474 • Minoan Libation Table 478

Index 483

Credits 509

INTRODUCTION

The Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism (ARAS) is dedicated to the collection, description, and dissemination of archetypal images. Photographs of works of art, ritual images, and artifacts drawn from sacred traditions all over the world and contemporary art are presented as individual records, which include written accounts of the context and meaning of each image.

Each record not only provides the identity and location of the image but also describes the myths and rituals of the tradition from which it derives. In addition, a discussion of the symbolic patterns, or archetypes, found in the image and known from other cultures is included in a section entitled "Archetypal Commentary." Here also are found interpretive statements by analytical psychologists that connect the archetypal symbolism to the inner experience of contemporary men and women.

ARAS has an interesting history, which I should like to summarize briefly before describing its specific content and function in more detail. A number of original illustrations of ancient symbolic artifacts were collected by Olga Froebe-Kapteyn at her estate on Lake Maggiore in southern Switzerland, where each year in late August, beginning in 1933, she conducted meetings of the Eranos Society. In his foreword to *Spirit and Nature,* volume 1 (1954) of the series Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks, Joseph Campbell notes that each meeting was assigned a theme, which served as the topic for papers presented by scientists, theologians, philosophers, psychologists, and religious historians. "Continuity was due, on the one hand, to the guidance of Frau Froebe, whose sense of the meaning and object of Eranos never wavered [even during the years of World War II when the operation was greatly curtailed—JLH], and on the other, to the continuous presence and genial spirit of Dr. C. G. Jung, whose concept of the fundamental psychological laws of human life and thought supplied a criterion for both the recognition and the fostering of the perennial in a period of transition" (p. xii).

Among the scholars who participated in the Eranos conferences were Heinrich Zimmer (Indian religious art), Károly Kerényi (Greek mythology), Mircea Eliade (history of religions), C. G. Jung and Erich Neumann (analytical psychology), Gilles Quispel (gnostic studies), Gershom Scholem (Jewish mysticism), Henry Corbin (Islamic religion), Adolf Portmann (biology), Herbert Read (art history), Max Knoll (physics), and Joseph Campbell (comparative mythology).

Olga Froebe-Kapteyn had a lively interest in finding and collecting images to illustrate the topic of each year's meeting, which included such titles as "Yoga and Meditation East and West," "The Gestalt and Cult of the Great Mother," "The Hermetic Principle in Mythology, Gnosis, and Alchemy," "The Mysteries," "Spirit and Nature," "Man and Time," and many others. She explained this interest in images in her preface to the volume *Spirit and*

Nature (1954): "Those who feel the truth of the old Chinese conception that all that happens in the visible world is the expression of ideas or images in the invisible might do well to consider Eranos from that point of view" (p. xv). She might have said of the collection of pictorial artifacts what she says of the lectures themselves: "Their value is *evocative.* In many cases, they carry us to the bounds of scholarly investigation and discovery, and point beyond. They touch upon unusual themes, facts, and analogies and in so doing evoke the great archetypal images" (p. xvi).

One of the creative uses to which Froebe-Kapteyn's collection was put is Erich Neumann's book *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype* (Princeton, 1955), where pictures of ancient goddesses provide the material for Neumann's psychological interpretation of the archetype of the feminine as it evolved from the time of ancient Sumeria and Egypt on through the religions of Greece and Rome and into the Christian era. In addition, Neumann presents archetypal images drawn from tribal societies that lack any historical connection to the vast civilizations of East and West. In this way, he demonstrates the universal influence of the archetype, which expresses itself in countless spontaneously generated forms. These eternal images are analogous to the dream images of people all over the world. Hence the term *archetype,* which denotes an inborn psychic disposition to repeat old patterns of image or behavior in new ways. (*Archetype* derives from a Greek compound: the word *archē* ("first principle") refers to the underlying pattern of a symbol, whereas *tupos* ("impression") denotes a specific concrete form, or configuration, through which the *archē* is rendered tangible. In other words, the *archē* points to the creative source, which cannot be represented, while *tupos* refers to any one of its many cultural manifestations.)

In 1946 Olga Froebe-Kapteyn gave her collection of pictorial artifacts to the Warburg Institute in London. Photographic duplicates of the archive were given to the C. G. Jung Institute in Zurich and to the Bollingen Foundation in New York, which was, at that time, supporting numerous scholars in quest of the meaning of symbolism and publishing the works of Jung. Jessie E. Fraser, the librarian of the Analytical Psychology Club of New York (with financial assistance from Jane Abbot Pratt, a member of this early Jungian group), began to edit and develop the archive, extending the range of its subject matter far beyond its original limits. The pictures and their accompanying study sheets that are presented in this volume reflect many years of dedication and patient work on Fraser's part in collecting, sorting, and classifying this material.

Eventually the collection in New York, now called the Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism, was acquired by the C. G. Jung Foundation of New York. Copies of the collection were housed also at the C. G. Jung Institute in San Francisco and at the C. G. Jung Institute of Los Angeles. These three Jungian institutions continue to be the founding members of National ARAS, not because a symbolic point of view is limited to Jungians, but because Jung was the particular proponent of a broadly archetypal point of view that insists upon transpersonal and symbolic connections transcending cultural and theological boundaries. This perspective lies at the heart of the archive.

The archive includes images drawn from the entire range of historical artifacts pertaining to the religious elements basic to each cultural period. Of these, the earliest period is the Paleolithic, with its images of animals, human figures, and abstract designs, which played a magico-religious role in the relationship between the hunter and the hunted. The next period is the Neolithic, with its wide expansion of vegetation symbolism. Here we discover

gods and goddesses associated with the agricultural cycle and its seasonal progressions, manifesting the eternal archetype of death and rebirth. The religious art of ancient India, Asia Minor, and Egypt together with Mycenaean art constitute a large section of the archive. The motifs expressed in the art of these early civilizations are found reemerging in modified form in the world religions for which they have provided the foundations: Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism.

In contrast to those images that suggest a historical process according to which symbols constantly die and are reborn in a new form, the archive also includes images drawn from small tribal societies, which provide a horizontal dimension made up of many archaic traditions that are still vital today. One of these is the Paleolithic culture of the Malekula Islands in Melanesia, which has been fully described by John Layard, an anthropologist who later—as a Jungian analyst—put his findings into an archetypal frame of reference.

The study sheets that accompany each image present a detailed description of the image together with a cultural history that serves to clarify the meaning of the symbolism at a time when it was collectively valued. These sections are followed by an archetypal commentary, which brings the image into focus for its modern psychological meaning. Although the psychological interpretation relies heavily on Jung's theory of archetypes, the universal nature of the symbolism on a cultural and religious level is fully honored in this section. The study sheets end with a bibliography for related reading and a glossary of technical terms, making it a useful tool for the researcher as well as for anyone who wishes to enlarge his or her understanding of the image and its historical origins.

As indicated already, the main function of the archive is to enable people of all kinds, and not solely specialists, to discover the living quality of ancient myths, rituals, and symbolic artifacts, and in so doing to deepen their awareness of the archetypes of the collective unconscious that underlie all cultural forms. The viewer may follow numerous paths of inquiry and indeed is encouraged to enter this activity spontaneously rather than from any prescribed direction of study.

When one consults ARAS to find a particular image, one is rewarded not only by the information provided in the study sheets but also—and perhaps far more—by the interest they may arouse in looking up related symbols that one might not have thought relevant. Thus, one may end up with a group of records (images together with their study sheets) that amplify significantly the original image. In this way, a single image may lead far beyond its original focus of interest. This is made possible by the archetypal commentary, which focuses on the universal patterns to which the specific image belongs, in respect to both cross-cultural and psychological contexts. In some cases, this may lead to syncretistic developments of a far-reaching character.

An example of this may be shown in the selection, let us say, of the labyrinth as an image to explore in the ARAS collection. One early form of the labyrinth is a spiral; or it may appear as a double spiral to suggest both the way in and the way out of an enclosed area. It is a simple design found at entrances and exits to caves, graves, temples, and other sacred enclosures. An abstract design, it reminds us that an initiatory experience of an inward nature must also find its way outward again, with all the confusion, anxiety, and peril to conscious orientation that this involves.

The early labyrinths of Paleolithic cultures often express an ambivalent attitude in respect to a great-mother figure. The initiate on Malekula, an island in the New Hebrides

Archipelago, must know how to draw one half of a labyrinth design in such a way that it corresponds to a second half that is drawn by Le-hev-hev, a female ghost. If he fails in this, she will devour him. Similarly, the Cretan labyrinth was inhabited by the Minotaur, a monster that was half man and half bull, the offspring of the Minoan mother goddess Pasiphaë and a sacred bull. Nevertheless, there is always a sense that the positive creative aspect of the maternal principle lies inherent in the central symbol, as a circle of containment to which the initiate must submit as if losing himself and then transcend by reemerging renewed.

Later in history, we find this symbol set in stone on the floor near the west portal of Chartres Cathedral in France and in other cathedrals, such as Ely Cathedral in England. The symbolism of meaningful initiatory entrances and exits exist here also, but in medieval Christianity the emphasis is on the wholly benevolent and loving quality of the Virgin Mary. The design at Chartres embodies also a cross, and at the center of the labyrinth is a design suggesting the mystic rose, so that the sacred space embodies the way of Christ (the cross) and the compassion of Mary (the rose). At the same time, the labyrinth suggests that the inward path to the center exists as a parallel to the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the spiritual center of this and other biblical traditions.

Chartres was, above all, sacred to the Virgin Mary. In exploring this image, the viewer finds in the record bibliographical references to numerous works to be read for further amplification of the symbolism. Other references lead the viewer back to the earlier forms of the symbol. In this way, it becomes clear that the labyrinth expresses a fundamental experience of death and renewal through the healing power of the archetypal feminine.

Clearly, one of the major functions of ARAS is to provide an encyclopedic collection of symbolism that honors both the universal pattern and the specific meaning associated with a given image, something seldom found in other collections. There is, however, no supposition among those working in this field that they have found the one and only way of interpreting archetypal symbolism. The symbol is forever recreating itself anew in the imaginations of those who experience it.

Psychotherapists and dream interpreters may find relevant symbolism here to further their understanding of the fantasies and the dreams of their patients. These spontaneous expressions of the individual combine personal and archetypal elements, which the records in the archive may help to disentangle and clarify. This method may provide amplification for many psychological problems confronting both therapist and patient at nodal points in the analytical process of self-discovery.

Images that may prove especially apt for this use of ARAS are those of animals or plants with archetypal significance. The animal and plant symbols that appear in tribal cultures are often reflected in the dreams of modern people. The bear, the serpent, the lion, the bull, the dog, the horse, the boar, the tortoise, and many other animals are given their place of study and interpretation here as prime symbols. Plant symbolism also abounds in modern dreams and reflects the trees, flowers, vines, and grasses of mythological patterns. The world tree, the lotus, the rose, and the vast archetypal expanses of nature in art and religious iconography take on new significance through the perspective provided by the ARAS collection.

Joseph L. Henderson

PREFACE

As Joseph L. Henderson's introduction to this volume makes clear, the Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism has evolved over several decades. It now comprises about thirteen thousand images catalogued and filed at locations in New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Collected over many years, the photographs vary in quality, and the commentaries are diverse in structure and content. The images can be consulted at the C. G. Jung Center in New York or at the C. G. Jung Institutes of Los Angeles and San Francisco, but they are not accessible away from these three sites.

Many of those who have found the collection an evocative aid for the illumination of symbols drawn from the great mythological and religious traditions as well as of related symbols that appear in art and in dreams, have wished for an archive that could be studied in hand or at a nearby library. In pursuit of that goal, Mr. Bingham's Trust for Charity, of New York, generously supported a three-year project to develop the archive in a form that could be broadly disseminated. As a result, the National Archive was established as an independent charitable trust with a majority of its board members appointed by the C. G. Jung Foundation of New York, the C. G. Jung Institute of Los Angeles, and the C. G. Jung Institute of San Francisco. The development of the separately incorporated archive owes much to the initial leadership of its board, including especially its first president, Donald Kalsched of New York; its first vice-president, Thornton Ladd of Los Angeles; and its first treasurer, John Levy of San Francisco. Two years ago the C. G. Jung Institute of Chicago also joined in support of the project and is represented on the board.

Since 1983, historians of art and analytical psychologists have developed a standard format for presenting the cultural context of each image together with a thoughtful commentary on its archetypal significance, and created a computer program to link textual and, potentially, visual information in an electronically reproducible and searchable database. All new records are now being written, stored, and cross-indexed in the computerized format. In time, it is expected that the newly computerized files will be made available to libraries and interested individuals here and abroad.

As this work progressed, however, it became evident that preparing records of publishable quality required more extended efforts than originally had been foreseen. At the same time, even small numbers of completed records accompanied by excellent color photographs had a cumulative impact greater than expected, for even modest numbers of images revealed striking relationships among themselves. In order to demonstrate the value of a modest collection of images and, simultaneously, the wisdom of going forward with the commitment necessary to prepare a larger number, early publication of selected records became a top priority. That is the origin of the present volume.

At this point in the archive's development, we were fortunate to engage Beverly Moon as editor for this collection. As editorial chairman of the larger project that will continue to go

forward in the years ahead, I wish to single her out for her unprecedented contribution to this tangible realization of our intention. Not only has she been an extremely skillful editor, crafting together the previous efforts of many other researchers and writers, she has also written major portions of the text. Her particular training in the history of religions is conjoined with a deep knowledge of analytical psychology, which together have equipped her uniquely for the completion of this task. Moreover, she has made the effort a labor of devotion, and working together with Annmari Ronnberg and myself, she has enabled us to complete the task we set ourselves on schedule and in good spirits.

The volume gathers images around several themes that appear again and again in the mythologies of all traditions as well as in the inner lives of individuals: cosmos and creation; center of the world; sacred animals; monsters; goddesses; gods; sacred marriage; the divine child; sacred kingship; saviors; heroes and heroines; duality and reconciliation; revelation; death; and transformation. Although specific images often touch more than one significant motif, primary themes present themselves almost autonomously. As a whole, the collection follows the cyclical model of the solar calendar, beginning with new life and finding in death a movement toward transformation and rebirth.

Each image is rendered by a full-page color photograph and is accompanied by written commentaries, references for related reading, and, where helpful, a glossary. In addition, a detailed index makes this volume the foundation of a uniquely illustrated encyclopedia of archetypal symbols. With its assistance, one can make connections across cultures, religions, and mythologies in a powerful way. The perception of linkages among diverse sacred traditions that the thematic organization of the book provides is deepened further by the recurrence of related symbols in different thematic contexts. Tracing particular symbols from one image to another throughout the volume spins narrative threads of many colors, and these gradually weave themselves into a tapestry of great richness. Living with the volume as an educational resource, the whole becomes more than the sum of its parts.

The extent to which the meaningful images of various cultural traditions throughout human history relate symbolically to one another affirms the profound similarities rather than the hostile differences among human beings across the worlds of space and time. Perhaps this volume can promote an experience of the sacred depths shared by all. Much as modern science reveals that, despite our apparent differences of physiognomy and color, the human species has been biologically one for thousands of years, so, too, these images point vividly to the sacred, symbolic, and psychological concerns we have had in common since prehistoric times.

The work represented here is the first book-length publication by the Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism, whose roots reach back to Ascona in the 1930s. It incarnates creative efforts that have been supported with both energy and resources for more than forty years, and by many individuals. Joseph L. Henderson and Beverly Moon have both tried to indicate the main lines of scholarly and psychological indebtedness, and I shall try to indicate those whose tangible support has been most important to the development of this volume. Because memory is flawed over time, it is almost certain I will overlook some of those who have made significant contributions, and if so, I extend my sincere regrets and hope they will nevertheless take satisfaction in this manifestation of the value of their aid.

In the past, ARAS has received substantial assistance not only from Olga Froebe-Kapteyn and the Bollingen Foundation, but also, through the C. G. Jung Foundation of New York, from gifts by Jane Pratt and Paul Mellon. The C. G. Jung Foundation has also provided for more than a decade the space in New York that has been essential for the project and has, additionally, helped sponsor curatorial oversight of the large number of images filed on its premises.

For many years, the late Jessie E. Fraser not only gave her own creative labor to the development of the archive, but also supported it tangibly, most especially in a generous bequest. The present project not only was initiated with the venturesome grant from Mr. Bingham's Trust for Charity mentioned above, but also, after the publication project was defined, received from that same Trust an additional grant of endowment, conditioned upon our best efforts to raise additional capital to undergird a portion of the long-term budget.

In recent years, the operating budget of the archive has been critically dependent upon gifts from members of its board of trustees and others especially interested in the development of a publishable format. In particular, Robin Jaqua and John Jaqua, Thornton Ladd, the Ralph B. Lloyd Foundation, Lulu May Lloyd Von Hagen, Bettina Bancroft, Joseph Henderson, Catherine Conover, Culver Nichols, Lucia Woods Lindley and Daniel Lindley, Robin van Loben Sels and Donald Kalsched, Beverley Zabriskie and Philip Zabriskie, Ann Paras, the Ann and Erlo Van Waveren Foundation, Nancy Anderson and Richard Rockefeller, Doris West Goodrich and Chauncey Goodrich, Elizabeth Segal, Claude Drey, Gilda Frantz, Joyce Easton Ashley, and Mrs. Roger Milliken have been generous in their support. The C. G. Jung Institute of Chicago, the C. G. Jung Institute of New York, and the New York Association for Analytical Psychology made grants that have been a great encouragement. In addition, faithful members of the Friends of ARAS in New York, too numerous to mention, have together made critically useful gifts for each of the past several years.

Finally, I want to offer personal thanks to Annmari Ronnberg, who, as curator of the archive in New York and as administrator of National ARAS, has provided the long-term continuity and personal knowledge of the files essential to our success in completing this project. She has been a pleasure to work with and a guiding presence in enabling the archive to inspire visitors.

CHARLES H. TAYLOR

Editor's note

These images drawn from sacred traditions from all over the world derive from a collection of images that were gathered together initially by a group of art historians and analytical psychologists under the direction of Marilyn Hirsh. Working together, the two groups compiled a collection of five hundred records—images together with their commentaries—in different stages of development. Using the one hundred records that had received the most attention in terms of commentary, we began to sort them according to mythical themes, and from the images themselves emerged the thematic structure of this volume. Traditional motifs (such as the creation of the cosmos, the center of the world, and death and transformation) together with mythological protagonists (such as gods and goddesses, monsters, and heroic figures) were easily distinguishable. In this way was born the idea of organizing the themes themselves to tell the story of how life arises, takes on meaning, and undergoes never-ending change.

In the commentaries, the historical dimension of the symbolism has been emphasized, since each image derives from a specific historical situation and can best be understood only within its cultural context. The Chinese dragon, for example, is connected with the ruler, whereas in the West the dragon often appears in battle with the hero. This kind of historical information is presented in the sections entitled "Cultural Context." These brief essays are intended as general introductions for the layperson, who it is hoped will turn then to the bibliography for suggestions of works providing further, more in-depth study.

The Archetypal Commentary is the section of the record in which we have examined the relationship between the symbolism in each particular image and patterns of related symbols found in other cultures. These commentaries are not meant to be definitive. We hope that the discovery of cultural patterns found in more than one tradition will serve to illuminate the individual forms. Sacred kingship, initiatory rites, myths about culture heroes, and ritual sacrifice are but a few of the numerous themes discussed here.

It is also in the Archetypal Commentary that the symbol may receive a psychological interpretation, for the symbols found in the great mythological and religious traditions of the world continue to appear also in the dreams of individual men and women. However, connecting historical images with inner images is a tricky and delicate procedure at best. At all times our goal has been to allow the outer, or historical, meaning to reflect back on and illuminate the more obscure personal symbolism. This is what Carl Jung called "amplification." When one of Jung's patients reported the appearance in a dream of an unusual (especially a numinous, that is, awe-inspiring) symbol, Jung would first ask for personal associations. Next, he would turn to the writings of the historians of religions to find the meaning of the image within a specific cultural context. Historical amplification of subjec-

tive material served to deepen the patient's understanding of the inner experience. Very often such amplification facilitated the healing of some subjective wound, because seeing one's own dilemma in terms of a universal drama can connect the person to the roots of his or her humanity and to the inner resources that have the power to resolve conflict while engendering new attitudes and new life.

Many people have been involved in the preparation of this volume. Individual scholars responsible for researching the cultural commentaries of specific images are listed on the credits page. I am grateful to those art historians who participated in the earlier stages of this project for their willingness to allow their work to be assimilated into the final product, and I am pleased to have been able to include the work of numerous historians of religions. The completed records were then reviewed by Joseph L. Henderson, who contributed his insights to the discussion of intrapsychic symbolism.

In consultation with Paul Bernabeo and Thornton Ladd, Annmari Ronnberg has created a unique index, which is designed to lead the reader to separate discussions of related symbolism. Before being sent to Shambhala for publication the entire manuscript was patiently copyedited by Marcia H. Golub, and throughout the editorial process I was aided by the cheerful and efficient work of assistants Michael Scott Cooper, Jennifer Jung, Helena Bongartz, Jeanette Leardi, Jennifer R. Ash, and Joseph M. Dunlap. To Michael A. F. Malcolm fell the arduous task of tracking down the photographs themselves and obtaining permission to reproduce them here. Finally, the search for poetry to introduce the themes of the book was furthered by the efforts of Gayle Homer and Patricia Finley.

Throughout the year during which I worked steadily on this book, I relied heavily on the excellent collection of books on religion and psychology in the Kristine Mann Library, founded and operated by the Analytical Psychology Club of New York. Librarian Doris B. Albrecht and her staff were always friendly and ready to help me search for books and articles dealing with the myths and symbols found in these images. During this time I also found encouragement in the enthusiasm of Shambhala's publisher, Samuel Bercholz, and his assistant, Jonathan Green. Their joint capacity to grasp our vision during the early stages of this project allowed us to share our excitement as the volume took shape.

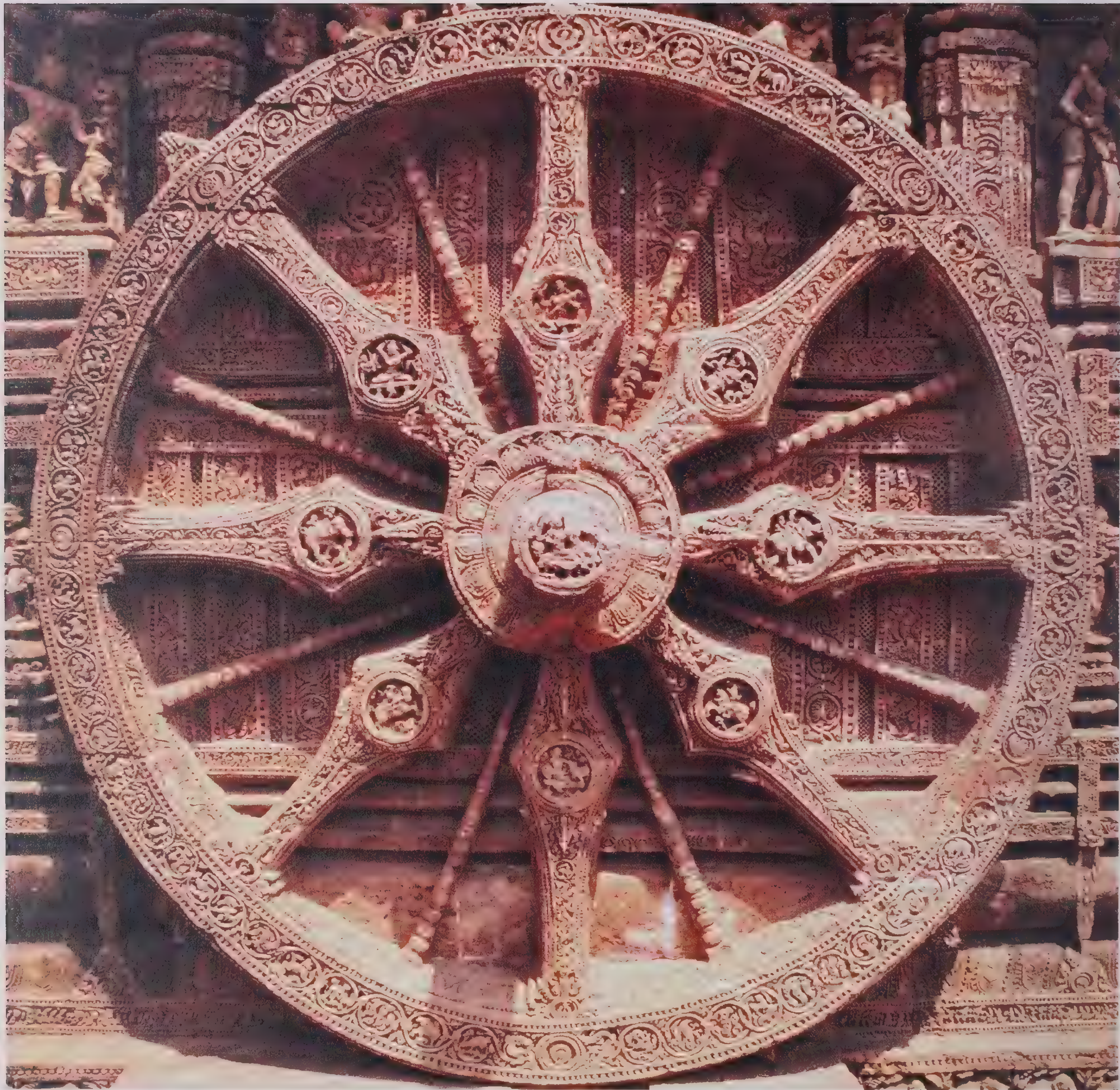
Finally, I would like to thank the two people without whom this volume simply would not exist. It was Jessie E. Fraser who dedicated herself to the creation of what is now the Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism. Any further development of the archive rests on the foundation that she lovingly established. More recently, the future of ARAS has been the concern of Charles H. Taylor, who, recognizing the deep and lasting value of this collection, has committed much of his own talents and energy to bringing these images and their symbolic significance before the general public.

BEVERLY MOON

Cosmos and Creation

Life appears in the world,
Life springs up in Havaiki.
The Source-of-night sleeps below
in the void of the world,
in the taking form of the world,
in the growth of the world,
the life of the world,
the leafing of the world,
the unfolding of the world,
the darkening of the world,
the branching of the world,
the bending down of the world.

—*Polynesian Chant*



COLOSSAL WHEEL FROM THE SUN TEMPLE

Artist unknown Sculpture: sandstone Diameter: 10 ft. (3 m) Between 1238 and 1264 CE

Site/Location: Surya Temple, Konarak, Orissa, India

Colossal wheel from the sun temple

India: Orissa

The wheel is a symbol of the sun god. In this image, it is part of a temple that was designed to take the shape of his chariot.

This photograph presents a large, richly carved stone wheel with eight spokes radiating from a hub whose central axial medallion is couched in a carved open lotus. Small roundels enclosing the figures of divinities ornament the spokes at regular intervals. The rim of the wheel is decorated with a continuous circular vine pattern. The wheel as a whole stands before a stone surface ornamented also with plant patterns, architectural motifs, and figures.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This is one of the stone wheels of the Sun Temple at Konarak. Konarak, or "place of the sun," lies on the eastern coast of India. The temple, dedicated to the Vedic sun god, Sūrya, was never completed. This wheel is one of twenty-four wheels, each nearly ten feet in diameter, that were attached along the two sides of the temple. Taken in its entirety, the temple resembled a huge chariot drawn by seven colossal horses. The chariot is the well-known vehicle of Sūrya, carrying him across the heavens day after day.

About the beginning of the second millennium BCE, peoples speaking related languages spread across western Asia and Europe by means of horse-drawn chariots. These were the Indo-Europeans, who settled in lands as distant as what are now called Scandinavia, Greece, Iran, and India. Their high god was a sky god—Týr, Dyaus-Pitṛ, Zeus, or Jupiter. In many cases, this high god ceased to be worshiped on a daily basis, and attention went instead to one of his offspring, sometimes the sun god. This latter process, known as solarization, resulted in the myths and cult surrounding deities such as the Vedic god Sūrya.

The most treasured animal of the Indo-Europeans was the horse, and it was probably these peoples that invented the chariot. Certainly, it was by means of the horse-drawn chariot that they conquered the indigenous civilizations throughout the Western world. Very often the chariot was deemed to be the special vehicle of the sun, and the horse, his sacred animal, was often sacrificed to him. In the myths, Sūrya, in addition to being drawn in a chariot by horses, sometimes assumes the form of a horse.

The Vedas are Sanskrit hymns, the earliest written texts that we have from ancient India. Here the priests of the Indo-Europeans who arrived in India and conquered the original inhabitants of the subcontinent preserved the ritual songs of their sacrificial religion. Some echoes of their mythology are preserved there as well. So it is that these texts mention the sun god, Sūrya, who was represented by such symbols as the twelve-petaled lotus, the golden sun disk, and the wheel. Earliest anthropomorphic images of the god are the stone reliefs of Sūrya in a one-wheeled chariot at the Buddhist sites of Bodhgayā and Bhaja (first century BCE). These relatively late images reflect the continued popularity of the Vedic god within the developing Buddhist tradition of southern India.

In the North, however, the worship of the Vedic sun god merged with the solar cults of other peoples, such as the Iranians and the Greeks, and this syncretism resulted in the rise of Saura Hinduism, a form of Hindu religion in which the sun god plays the central role. The temple at Konarak in Orissa belongs to this tradition. By association, the temple—because it houses the divinity—can be assimilated to his chariot. The wheel symbolizes the deity because it reveals both his form as the sun (spherical) and his vehicle, the chariot, which is based on the wheel and its capacity for mobility.

In India, the wheel is a powerful and multivalent symbol beyond its place in the worship of the sun god. It can be a symbol of time, which in the Indian view is cyclical rather than linear. Time is regarded as consisting of age upon age, and each age contains both a time of creation and a time of destruction. In addition, life itself has a cyclical nature. Hindus perceive one lifetime as a homologue to a cosmic age. The soul is born over and over again, each time into a new body with a new identity.

The wheel also serves a ritual purpose. In Sanskrit the term *cakra* refers to the wheel, the discus, and the circle. The *cakra* is used as a symbol for the deity in both collective worship and individual meditation. Furthermore, a place set apart for religious use may also be referred to as a *cakra.* The *maṇḍala,* which is often thought of as the combined symbolism of the circle and the square, and the *cakra* may be used interchangably in some rituals.

In esoteric Indian traditions that involve meditation practices centering on a symbolic or imaginary body, the *cakra* is also important. For example, in certain forms of yoga, the spine is envisioned as a sacred *axis mundi,* and ascent up the spine (by consciousness or some sacred inner energy) represents the ascent of the soul and the attainment of spiritual liberation. Along the spine are centers, or *cakra*s, where the physical and the spiritual systems meet and influence each other.

The religious imagination of the Hindus has found in the wheel a symbol that participates in all levels of reality. Not only does the wheel point to the sun god and his power to animate life on the planet, it also points to the infinitely vast cycles of creation as well as the infinitely subtle centers of human personality.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The sun wheel is an exceedingly ancient symbol rooted in the worship of the sun, which goes back to prehistoric times. It may be traced to the image of the sun disk crossed by the four cardinal points. Sometimes the wheel is subdivided further, resulting in eight spokes, as in the wheel of Sūrya.

Among the Assyrians, the solar wheel was a symbol of life, and the god within the wheel was the god of both war and fertility. The spirit of the sun god, Ashur, was believed to animate the wheel that brought about the changing seasons. In Babylonian art, the sun god Shamash is depicted sitting on a throne with the sun wheel in front of him. The wheel has spokes that are shaped like stars. In the Hebrew scriptures, the vision set down in *Ezekiel* 1 may have been influenced by the Assyrian symbolism. Ezekiel describes the wheels in his vision: "Each had four faces. . . . Their faces were like this: all four had the face of a man and the face of a lion on the right, on the left the face of an ox and the face of an eagle."

In addition to being the symbol of the sun in India, the wheel was also connected with Viṣṇu as his discus, the fiery wheel that revolves and returns to the thrower. *Karman,* the

cosmic law of cause and effect, is often referred to as the wheel of fate that revolves relentlessly and unceasingly. In Buddhism, the wheel is associated with the nature of reality as a whole and with the Buddha, the king whose wheel rolls over the whole world. In the traditions of India, the connection between the lotus and the wheel is prevalent. The eight spokes of the wheel reflect the eight petals of the lotus flower.

In medieval processions, wheels were carried about on chariots or in boats, both of whose prototypes can be found in prehistoric times. The taboo prohibiting the use of a spinning wheel on certain evenings of the year (especially close to the time of the winter solstice) and other comparable phenomena can still be found in peasant communities of eastern Europe. Further, Mircea Eliade suggests that the wheeled chariot itself has its origin in the worship of solar bodies. Designed to imitate the movement of the sun across the sky, the chariot only later found practical application in everyday life.

The appearance of the wheel in the dreams and fantasies of modern man reflects the complex nature of this symbol. Not only does it refer to the vision that the sun's rays make possible (and consciousness, or inner vision, as well), but it also symbolizes the repetitive flow of psychic processes modeled on the experience of the solar year. In alchemy, for example, the rotating solar wheel represents *circulatio,* or the constant alternation between ascent and descent that keeps the process of transformation going.

Further, the four spokes of the wheel may be seen as the four functions of the ego in its relation to both inner and outer events (and with the doubling of each function—introverted and extroverted directedness—these become eight spokes). The necessity of developing all functions of the ego is apparent then by way of analogy, for the wheel loses its roundness, and its capacity for rotation, if one of the spokes is missing.

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GLOSSARY

MAṆḌALA (Skt., "circle") In Hinduism and Buddhism, a circular diagram. It can serve as a ground plan, as a symbolic view of a centered universe, or as an aid to meditation.

Helios, the Zodiac, and the Four Seasons

Artist: Marianos and his son Hanina   Mosaic (pavement)   11.6 × 12.3 ft. (3.55 × 3.75 m)

518–527 CE   Site/Location: Beth Alpha Synagogue, Jerusalem

Helios, the Zodiac, and the Four Seasons

Israel: Antiquity

This central mosaic from the floor of a synagogue represents the temporal cosmos. Helios and his quadriga are at the center of the universe; the wheel of the zodiac revolves around him; and the four seasons, personified as women, fill the four corners of the square.

The overall effect of this mosaic design is that of a wheel within a square. At each of the four corners of the square is depicted the upper half of a female figure accompanied by the symbols of the season that she represents. At the upper right is winter; spring appears at the upper left; at the bottom are summer and fall, on the left and right respectively. Between the twelve spokes of the wheel are depicted the twelve signs of the zodiac, beginning at the top with Cancer, the crab. In the center is Helios on his quadriga surrounded by moon and stars.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The Second Commandment prohibits the use of "graven images." This prohibition was seen, at certain times and places in Jewish tradition, as outlawing all representational art. Archaeologists have disclosed, however, that ancient Judaism employed representational art and often borrowed symbols from the surrounding culture. One of the most popular of these was the zodiac. For Judaism, operating on a lunar calendar, the attraction of the zodiac was obvious: it personifies the flow of the year, and one need only recast the names, as here, into Hebrew to provide an apt symbol.

This zodiac circle is "squared" by the four seasons at each corner, although they do not stand in correct relation to the zodiac symbols. The placement of the Greco-Roman sun god, Helios, in the center is startling for the modern observer acquainted with a resolutely monotheistic Judaism. We may surmise that its presence serves one of three functions: (1) it may be purely decorative—that is, as a symbol with aesthetic and no theological significance; (2) it may be representative of the divine order, with all of the figures in the image subordinated ultimately to Yahveh (God); or (3) it may simply indicate that Roman religion had indeed influenced certain Jewish communities and that Helios was openly venerated.

At times in the history of Judaism, astrology in general and the zodiac in particular have been vigorously objected to, as representative of "pagan" magic and the graven images alluded to above. As a result, the zodiac persisted only sporadically and without the deep influence on Jewish consciousness of indigenous symbols. We may speculate that the correspondence between the twelve signs of the zodiac and the twelve tribes of Israel proved too alluring a junction to be ignored. Indeed, the twelve tribes, which were named on the breastplate of the high priest, were in later generations thought to represent the zodiac. Moreover, for a people with an acute consciousness of agriculture and the rhythm of the seasons (the Jewish calendar, Jewish holidays, and even Jewish prayer are to this day built around the agricultural rhythms of the land of Israel), the zodiac was a palpable sign of the ebb and flow of the year.

There is discussion in the Talmud (codified at about the same time that this image was constructed) as to whether the Jewish people were subject to planetary influences or whether they might, unique among peoples, be immune to the cosmic determinism. This floor mosaic testifies certainly to the belief that the Jews also came under the power of the stars.

Some scholars have seen political statements in these images: the crab of Cancer, it is argued, represents Israel and so is placed at the top of the wheel. Others have drawn a connection between the zodiac and the holiday Sukkot, interpreted the image as a mystical or messianic symbol, or linked it to contemporary liturgical poetry. Perhaps the safest and surest assertion is that this mosaic reminded the worshiper of the heavens in all their array, of the influence of the celestial bodies on the earth and the varying seasons, and so, too, of the Author of all.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The components of this mosaic are common symbols in the culture of Hellenism: the sun god Helios; the Horae, or the four seasons; and the zodiac. In the Greek view, the heavenly bodies were indeed gods, but they tended to be less involved in the concerns of mankind than other, local deities. Rhodes was the exception, however, and had a vigorous cult of Helios. He appears to have been the chief god of Rhodes, and according to local legend the island was his special property. The inhabitants even claimed Helios as the father of their ancestors. Helios was mentioned only rarely in Greek mythology, but it was generally acknowledged that he traveled regularly in his chariot from east to west across the sky. The question as to how he got back again during the night was evidently discussed very early on, and the solution evolved that he floated around the earth by the stream of Ocean in a huge cup.

Helios became more important, generally speaking, during the time of the Roman empire, when he was identified with other, non-Greek, solar deities. Thus, together with Sol, he was worshiped in the imperial cult of the Sun, which culminated in making him the principal god of the empire from Aurelian (r. 270–275 CE) on.

In Greek mythology, the Horae were commonly regarded as goddesses who arrived with the changes of seasons and made flowers and plants grow. Their names and number varied from region to region. During the later, Hellenistic period, they were identified with the four seasons, and in art they were carefully distinguished from one another by attributive plants and animals, as in this mosaic. The regularity of the seasons was a favorite argument of Greek philosophers for the existence of a divine order.

The zodiac derives from Hellenistic astrology, the combination of Chaldean and Egyptian astral religion with Greek astronomy and methods of computation. The Greek term from which the English *zodiac* derives means "[a circle] of animals," or perhaps "[a little picture] of animals." Essentially, the zodiac provides a symbolic map of the sun's journey through the skies—from the point of view of those living on the earth. Traditionally, it has provided a mirror in which mankind saw its place in relation to the cosmos as a whole.

When we use the word *cosmos,* we usually use it interchangably with *universe* or *world.* The modern view of the cosmos has been determined largely by constructs taken from astronomy—our solar system, or galaxy, or an infinite number of galaxies. We think of the cosmos as something spatial. However, our ancestors, who lived and found meaning in a

world that they described in myth, were more likely to think of the cosmos as something temporal. For one thing, the word itself means "order," and the order that is experienced by natural man is that of time: the day, the seasons, the generations. Hence, most creation myths relate how the beginning of time was likewise the beginning of creation. To be outside time is to be in chaos or eternity, depending on one's point of view, but outside the cosmos in any event.

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GLOSSARY

TALMUD Composed of the Mishnah (an apodictic law code edited by Rabbi Judah the Prince [Yehudah ha-Nasi'] circa 200 CE) and *gemara'* (elaboration and discussion that takes the Mishnah as its starting point, redacted in the sixth century CE), the Talmud is the determinative document of normative Judaism. It is a sprawling, amorphous compendium of law, legend, scriptural commentary, sage advice, family counsel, cosmology, theological observation, and medical and social comment. The Talmud has formed the focus of Jewish intellectual and spiritual creativity ever since its formulation.

THE COSMIC EGG

Artist unknown   Manuscript illumination: gouache on paper with gold leaf
Height: 12.5 in. (31.5 cm); width: 8.4 in. (21 cm)   Circa 1730 CE
Site: Basohli, Punjab Hills, India   Location: Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras

The cosmic egg

India: Rajput

According to the worshipers of Viṣṇu, the cosmic egg (also known as the golden womb) emerges from the world ocean at the beginning of the ever-recurring cycle of creation as a result of the friction produced by wind and water. Viṣṇu then enters the cosmic egg and, after a period of quiescence, the creator god Brahmā is born from his navel. With this, the creation of the manifest universe begins.

The large, central golden egg emerges out of the friction produced by water and wind, depicted here by swirling white lines against a greenish-gray ground.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The image reproduced here is from a manuscript of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa,* which belongs to the Hindu tradition revolving around the worship of Viṣṇu, and which attained its final form, more or less, by the tenth century. Here earlier myths of the cosmic egg are assimilated to the theology of Viṣṇu.

> All the elements combined with divine energy to produce a shining egg, which lay on the waters of the cosmic ocean for a thousand years. Then Viṣṇu entered it and rested on the serpent Śeṣa. He sank into a mysterious slumber, and in his sleep he imagined the creation of the animate and the inanimate. From his navel grew the mystic lotus with petals of pure gold, stainless, radiant as a thousand suns. Together with this lotus he put forth the creator god of the universe, Brahmā, seated in the center of the golden lotus, which expands and is radiant with the glowing energy of creation. From its pericarp then issue the hosts of the created world. (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 20)

In the illustration the golden egg resembles both fire and light. In its primordial purity, it arises from the interaction of the three strands, or *guṇas*, envisioned here as centripetal attraction, centrifugal force, and their equilibrium. The field of wavy lines portrays this cosmic activity.

The story of how the world emerged from the cosmic egg is a myth of such power that it has been adopted by many of the great Indian religious traditions. Already in the *Ṛgveda,* a body of Sanskrit hymns, sacrificial formulas, and incantations collected in the first millennium BCE, there is the myth of Prajāpati, Lord of Creatures, who fertilizes the waters of creation, which change into a golden egg. Inside sits the golden figure of Brahmā, floating in the primeval waters for a thousand years, his golden light shining through seven shells. Land, sea, mountains, planets, gods, and mankind—all exist inside the egg with him. One of the creation myths described in the Upaniṣads (c. 600–300 BCE) relates how the cosmos emerged from an egg breaking in two.

In Hindu thought, the creation of the cosmos is part of a continuous, never-ending cycle composed of creation, expansion, contraction, destruction, quiescence, and new creation. Many creation myths exist side by side. Each contributes a unique perspective based on

intuitive understanding or logical exposition, and each new view further differentiates a vision of the process of coming into being. Therefore, the different myths are recognized as truths that are neither exclusive nor mutually contradictory.

Furthermore, Hindu tradition often equates cosmic activity with the psychic life of the individual person. The *yogin,* or ascetic holy man, observes how the stages of human consciousness arise in his own body and recognizes this process as one that is parallel to the emergence of the universe from the cosmic egg.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

In this image, two cosmogonic structures are combined—chaos and the cosmic egg. The waters of the cosmic ocean in the Indian myth for which this image serves as an illustration are symbolic of chaos as the undifferentiated source that lies behind creation. Ontologically speaking, chaos is a condition prior to cosmos, for it is out of the elements that are dissolved in the waters that the new order is put together.

The creative interaction of wind and the primordial waters is described also in *Genesis.* The Hebrew creation myth recounts that just before the creator spoke—in the first moments of creation—a mighty wind swept over the surface of the waters. The wind is often a symbol of the divine spirit, which activates life in all its forms.

In many of the myths that refer to water, or chaos, as the primordial reality, we find the motif of an egg. Sometimes the waters produce the egg, as in the Indian myths found in the *Laws of Manu* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.* In the Polynesian myths, Tangaroa, the supreme being, exists within the egg, and in one African myth, the supreme being, Amma, produces the egg. In the Japanese myth, chaos itself is likened to an egg, and the Orphic version states that the god Time (Kronos) created the silver egg of the cosmos.

One can immediately see the relationship of the egg to the general symbolism associated with fertility and new life. The egg is the potential source of all living beings. It is the incubator and therefore a homologue of the womb. Like the cave, the shell, dark places, and the earth, it represents the feminine principle as that which protects and nourishes budding creation. However, something more complex is at work here.

> In the cosmic-egg symbolism the beginning of things is spoken of as a totality which includes the opposite modes of sexuality in relation. This is a *coincidentia oppositorum,* a form of symbolism which is different from that of the primordial World Parents. Sexuality is not represented here by World Parents but by the precise creative power of each sex, who, though related, are capable of independence and separate determination. In other words, the actual *power of creativity* is already present in the beginning. . . . In the cosmic egg the concrete forms of two sexual principles are united. This unity is a symbol of perfection. (Long, 116f.)

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BRAHMĀ In Hindu mythology, the creator god. His animal form is the gander. He is also depicted as the four-headed ascetic, full of yogic wisdom. The mythology of Brahmā seems to have developed during the period of the Brāhmaṇas (c. 1000–700 BCE) as a product of orthodox Aryan thinking. Later, Brahmā became subordinated to both Viṣṇu and Śiva. No modern cult exists around this god.

GUṆAS (Skt., "qualities") In Hinduism, a metaphysical term derived from the Upaniṣads. The *guṇa*s are the three properties (strands) that combine in various proportions to determine all of phenomenal existence: purity or goodness (*sattva*), energy or passion (*rajas*), and inertia (*tamas*).

PRAJĀPATI (Skt., "lord of creatures") According to one Hindu creation story, the primordial being whose body served as the material source of the cosmos. One story relates how he sacrificed himself in the exhausting fervor of ascetic and erotic heat, and brought about by stages the creation.

ŚEṢA In Indian traditions, king of the serpent race, or Nāgas, and of the infernal regions of Pātāla. A serpent with a thousand heads, he serves as the couch and canopy of the sleeping god Viṣṇu during the intervals of creation. At the end of each cosmic era, Śeṣa spews forth a venomous fire that destroys creation.

VIṢṆU A principal Hindu god. As one of the trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, he is the preserver, but to his devotees he is the supreme god of the universe.

THE JAIN UNIVERSE IN THE FORM OF THE COSMIC PERSON

Artist unknown   Gouache on cloth, polychrome   Height: 149.6 in. (380 cm); width: 110.2 in. (280 cm)

Circa 1800 CE   Site: Rajasthan, India   Location: Collection of Ajit Mookerjee, New Delhi

The Jain Universe in the Form of the Cosmic Person

India: Western India

The cosmic person represents the universe as a whole. According to this view, the structure of the human body reflects the order of the cosmos.

A human figure is presented largely in geometric form. He wears a crown, and two blossoms emerge on their stems from behind the crown. Seated human figures appear on the forehead and face as well as within the central panel of the upper torso. The waist region is a *maṇḍala,* a square containing a circle. The circle is divided horizontally by numerous regions. Two human figures stand at the lower corners of the square. The central panel, which extends from the throat to the hem of the skirt, continues and includes images of the dead. The arms are held in symmetrically flexed positions at the sides of the body, and the sleeves flow out beyond the hands. On each sleeve is the figure of an animal.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This is a devotional picture painted on cloth, depicting the cosmos in anthropomorphic form. It is a *yantra,* or tool for meditation, and derives from the Jain tradition of India.

The Jain movement is essentially ascetic. The founder, Vardhamāna, was born the son of a clan chieftain and took up asceticism at the age of thirty. Increasingly, his habits grew more and more austere. After twelve years of training, he attained *mokṣa* and was called from that time Mahāvīra, "great hero." He taught that he was only one in a series of liberated teachers, or Jinas ("conquerors").

The followers of Mahāvīra departed from the traditional paths of Hinduism—sacrifice and ritual—and developed an original view of rebirth, *karman,* and release. According to their teachings, there is within each person a living entity, or *jīva* ("life"). *Jīva*s are present not only in animals and plants but also in objects such as rocks and stones. Each of the infinite number of *jīva*s shares the same basic nature: bright, blissful, and intelligent. *Jīva*s do, however, differ in their circumstances because the *karman* that adheres to each differs.

For the Jains, *karman* is a kind of subtle matter. Produced by both thoughts and deeds, it collects on the *jīva* and obscures its basic nature. In this ascetic tradition, knowledge alone is not capable of leading to liberation. It is necessary to understand the nature of the *jīva* and the bondage of *karman,* but beyond that, release can come only by living in such a way that *karman* is gradually destroyed. Jainism is therefore a religious ethos: salvation depends on adhering to the correct way of life. And the way taught by the Jains is one of extreme asceticism.

The cosmic person in this image reveals the whole of the universe, delineating the different modes of being that exist and the place of each in relation to the others. Essentially, the cosmos is divided into four parts: a higher world of the gods; a middle world of mankind, animals, and plants; and a lower world of demons. Above these three realms lies yet another region in which the liberated souls dwell. This formal icon of the universe helps put in

perspective the various regions of the cosmos. Emphasis is placed on the waist, where the earth is located and where one must be born as a human being before liberation to the top (head region) is possible. These two regions contrast to the heavens of the gods (upper torso) and the hells of the tormented (between the feet and the waist).

The cosmic person is found in the religious symbolism of India ever since the time of the Vedas. Already in the *Ṛgveda,* the oldest extant text of the Vedic tradition, there is reference to Puruṣa, primordial man. The first part of the "Hymn to the Person" (*Ṛgveda* 10.90) establishes the basic identity of Puruṣa and the universe; the second part of the hymn establishes the correlation between Puruṣa and the sacrifice. On the one hand, the different components of the cosmos come into being through the self-sacrifice of the primordial man, and on the other, the primordial man is reconstituted in and through the construction of the sacrificial altar. The sacrifice itself reverts the energy that has come into the cosmos to its origin in the primordial man.

Throughout the intellectual history of India, the concept of the primordial man, or cosmic person, has been continually reinterpreted. Beginning in the Vedas as a cosmogonic principle, it eventually became identified as ultimate consciousness (a reality that precedes the cosmos ontologically). In the Jain image, the cosmic person serves as a map illustrating the cosmos and, what is most important, as a metaphor for discerning the path from a "lower" to a "higher" level of reality.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

> According to many creation myths of different nations, the whole universe arose originally from the parts of a huge human figure. In the Germanic Edda it was the giant Ymir: "From Ymir's flesh the earth was formed, from his bones the mountains . . ." etc. In China it is the dwarf *and* giant P'an Ku, who became the cosmos. P'an means egg shell and "to make firm," and Ku means underdeveloped, unenlightened or embryonic. When P'an Ku cried the Yellow River and Yang-Tse-Kiang came into being, when he breathed the wind sprang up, when he spoke thunder arose, when he looked around lightning flashed. When he died the four holy mountains of China (with the Sung-mountain as fifth in the middle) came from his body. His eyes became the sun and the moon—much later he reincarnated through a virgin, "the holy mother of the first cause," and became a cultural hero. . . . In the old Iranian religion the corresponding figure is Gayômart. The word comes from *gayô,* eternal life, and *maretan,* mortal existence. Gayômart was the semen of the good God Ohrmazd, and the first priest-king. When he was killed by the evil God Ahriman, the eight metals flew out of his corpse; and from the gold, his soul, sprang a rhubarb plant, from which came the first couple, who generated mankind. (von Franz, 20f.)

The history of Indian religious thought includes an interesting development that involves the image of the cosmic person. During the Brahmanic period (ending c. 800 BCE), ritual acts (especially the sacrifice) were gradually replaced by ritual knowledge: the concept of ritualism was extended to include mental as well as physical performance, based on the conviction that ritual sounds and actions could be internalized (converted into thought) without a loss of effectiveness. For those who were properly trained and initiated, private mental performance of the ritual was as effective as external public performance. This view gave a new status to the individual person. The performer was elevated to the level of the sacrifice. He *was* the sacrifice, and, by extension, he could also be identified with Puruṣa, the

cosmic man. This led to further reflection on the nature of man's essential self, or *ātman*, and served as the basis of mystical traditions in which the universal self and the inner, spiritual self are seen as potentially one. In the mystical union with the universal self, the individual experiences liberation from the conditioned realm of phenomena.

C. G. Jung has given much attention to the symbolism of the cosmic person, or primordial man, who appears often in both myths and dreams as a symbol of the Self. Discussing a patient's painting in which the "true personality" is depicted, Jung recalls that for the alchemist the creation of personality was analogous to the creation of the cosmos:

> Man was seen as a microcosm, a complete equivalent of the world in miniature. In [the patient's] picture, we see what it is in man that corresponds to the cosmos, and what kind of evolutionary process is compared with the creation of the world and the heavenly bodies: it is the *birth of the self,* the latter appearing as a microcosm. It is not the empirical man that forms the "correspondentia" to the world, as the medievalists thought, but rather the indescribable totality of the psychic or spiritual man, who cannot be described because he is compounded of consciousness as well as of the indeterminable extent of the unconscious. The term microcosm proves the existence of a common intuition . . . that the "total" man is as big as the world, like an Anthropos. (Jung, par. 550)

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GLOSSARY

MOKṢA (Skt., "release, liberation") Release from the tedious and painful cycle of transmigration of souls. This religious notion appears already in the Upaniṣads, as well as in early Buddhism.

YANTRA In India, a formal mechanical device such as a geometric or symbolic diagram. It serves as a focus for meditation and can be a map or chart referring to inner or outer realities.

Brahmā offering lotuses

Artist unknown Relief: stone Height of figure: approximately 3.5 ft. (107 cm) 1060–1070 CE

Site/Location: Nanpaya Temple, Pagan, Burma

Brahmā offering lotuses

Burma: eleventh century

This is one of four pillars at Nanpaya Temple showing Brahmā, the ancient Hindu creator god, as an attendant and devotee of the Buddha.

Within the temple are four stout square pillars of stone. These support the main roof and are grouped around a pedestal, now empty, that was occupied once probably by a standing image of the Buddha. The four sides of each pillar are richly carved in relief. On the two sides of each pillar that face inward toward the center pedestal are depictions of Brahmā offering lotuses. As is usual in Southeast Asian art, each of these eight images of Brahmā shows him having three faces (the fourth is assumed to be facing away from the viewer). On each pillar, Brahmā appears seated on an open lotus and holding lotuses in both hands. In each of the carvings, one of his knees is raised, with an elbow resting on it and his head gently leaning in that direction. Although the eight carvings of Brahmā are far from identical, the flattened knee and leg is always pointed toward the central shrine, whereas the raised knee points away from it. Further, Brahmā's head is always shown with a high tower of braided hair, topped by a double lotus finial. An elongated halo encircles his head, and he sits in an arched frame, surrounded by more floral decorations. Above the arch, a row of demon masks, called *kīrttimukha,* spout foliage and jewels. The remaining two sides of each pillar that face away from the center are carved with flamboyant floral designs, the foliage presented as if dangling in elongated triangles. Originally the surrounding walls were painted with scenes drawn from the life of the Buddha and other historical scenes. The main images and the columns are illuminated from above, as if bathed in celestial light.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The Nanpaya Temple is considered by many to have been built as a private place of worship for the Mon king Manuha. Others suggest that Manuha's son built it in his father's memory. Captured by the Burmese king Anawrahta, Manuha was detained as a royal prisoner in Pagan. Legend has it that the Brahmā images are likenesses of the Mon king.

In Buddhist Southeast Asia, the Indian gods Brahmā and Indra are not worshiped in their own right but are depicted as attendants of the Buddha. According to tradition, they appear already at the birth of the Buddha, and later, when he cuts off his hair as a sign that he is assuming the path of the ascetic, they present him with the robes of a monk and a bowl for collecting alms. They also accompany him on his descent from Tavatimsha Heaven, where he goes to preach to his mother. Commonly, in Burmese representations, Brahmā stands to the left of the Buddha, holding the royal umbrella over the Buddha's head. Solitary images of Brahmā are rare indeed. Fewer than a dozen other Brahmā images have been found in Burma, and most are badly damaged or in fragmentary condition. All solitary images of Brahmā are very early and have been found in either Pyu or Mon sites.

Before Brahmā was assimilated to the Buddhist tradition, he had a history in Hinduism. At the time of the Buddha's career in India, the two most popular deities were Brahmā and

Indra. Indra was the protector of life, whereas Brahmā was the creator of all forms of existence. Brahmā inherited his role from the god Prajāpati. Unlike Brahmā, however, Prajāpati had been envisioned as the supreme deity. His methods of creating the world were numerous: through the ritual sacrifice of his own seed; through a sexual union with his own feminine nature; and also by practicing the austerities of asceticism and meditation, which in turn generate the heat, or energy, that is the basis of physical matter. Using these divers means, Prajāpati brought forth the fire, the wind, the sun, and the moon. These creations were then followed by that of the gods and the demons, and finally, earth and all its creatures. As it is described in the epics and Purāṇas, Brahmā, too, could create by such methods. However, he is more likely to use a mental method: Brahmā thinks of something and it comes into being.

The belief that a god, such as Brahmā or Indra, might be somehow inferior to a man, such as the Buddha, is not peculiar to Buddhism but rests on a tradition that arises in the speculative writings of the Indian Upaniṣads. Prior to the Upaniṣads, the sacred texts of the Indians (i.e., the Vedas) described a polytheistic religion in which sacrifice was the central fact. The world was created through divine sacrifice and must be sustained by ongoing sacrifice, by means of which the divine powers were constantly renewed. The worldview was almost scientific in the modern sense, acknowledging that anything that exists cannot cease to exist but undergoes transformation only. Later, the Upaniṣads would build on this view and suggest that all phenomenological existence consists of transitory appearances behind which lies a single, universal self. The individual person can eventually realize the identity of his inner self with that universal self and so transcend the changing play of appearances. Out of this view developed the soteriological belief in *mokṣa,* or liberation from rebirth. In other words, the creation—and with it all the gods and demons that have their place in the scheme of creation—is seen as a secondary phenomenon, one that is pervaded necessarily by pain and death but that can be transcended through mystical experience.

Once the gods are recognized as subsidiary powers, confined to the cosmos and its limited reality, they lose their omnipotence for many. In addition to devotion to a god, a second path to salvation lies revealed: the path of the mystic. And so in Buddhism, which derives much of its way of thinking from Hinduism, the gods retain their role as powers of the cosmos. Hence, they are caught up like all creatures in the suffering of cosmic existence. Therefore, when the Buddha discovers the way out of this suffering, he offers salvation (interpreted slightly differently from traditional Hinduism) to the gods as well as to mankind. In this way, it is perfectly right and understandable that a great god, even the creator himself, would feel reverence toward the Buddha.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The creator god offers the sacred lotus blossoms to the Buddha, because he recognizes that there is a dimension of reality that is even more valuable than divinity. In Indian philosophy, this reality is the universal self. In Buddhism, the ultimate reality is not identified with any one phenomenon, not even with the self. Instead, enlightenment is the experience of a consciousness that is completely free from self-interest. In defining enlightenment, the Buddha did not intend to repudiate Indian philosophical tradition but rather to complete it.

Mircea Eliade points out that the Buddha rejected the conclusions of Upaniṣadic

speculation, especially the idea of a universal self, because this dogma might easily satisfy the intellect and prevent the person from seeking the experience of enlightenment:

> More careful examination shows that the Buddha rejected all contemporary philosophies and asceticisms because he regarded them as *idola mentis* interposing a sort of screen between man and absolute reality, the one true Unconditioned. That he had no intention of denying a final, unconditioned reality, beyond the eternal flux of cosmic and psychomental phenomena, but that he was careful to speak but little on the subject, is proved by a number of canonical texts. [*Nirvāṇa*] is the absolute in the highest sense, . . . that is, what is neither born nor composed, what is irreducible, transcendent, beyond all human experience. (Eliade, 164)

In Buddhism, any theory about life and salvation is potentially an obstacle to the personal, subjective experience of reality as it truly is. Any form of dogma is recognized as dangerous, because it can so easily be used not as a vehicle on the path but as a defense set up to protect the subject from ultimate reality.

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GLOSSARY

INDRA In the Vedas, the earliest Hindu writings, Indra is the storm god, protector of the cosmos and all its inhabitants.

KĪRTTIMUKHA (Skt., "face of glory") A demon mask originally associated with the Hindu god Śiva. In Southeast Asian temples, it is omnipresent as an auspicious and protective symbol, placed usually over doorways or at the top of the backslab on reliefs.

MON A people living in the south of Burma and in central Thailand prior to the advent of the Burmese and Thai kingdoms. The Mon are related to the Khmer. Their indianized states were Buddhist, both Theravāda and Mahāyāna. The culture of the Mon exerted widespread influence in Southeast Asia, and their script became the basis of the Burmese, Lao, Shan, and northern Thai systems of writing.

ŚIVA A principal Hindu god. Within the divine trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, he is the destroyer, but to his devotees he is creator, preserver, and destroyer. Although Śiva does not appear in the early Vedic writings, his cult seems to have preserved aspects of the ancient Aryan tradition: Śiva is the Lord of Creatures as well as the great ascetic. His universal symbol is the *liṅga,* his animal companion is Nandi the bull, and a bull serves as the vehicle on which he rides.

VIṢṆU A principal Hindu god. As one of the trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, he is the preserver, but to his devotees he is the supreme god of the universe.

Eleven-headed female figure

Artist unknown Sculpture: wood Height: 14¾ in. (37.5 cm) Date unknown Site: Mali

Location: Paul and Ruth Tishman Collection, Epcot Center, Orlando, Florida

Eleven-headed female figure

Mali: Dogon or Sanga

This female figure expresses in her form both the mythical and historical origins of the Dogon people of the Bandiagara escarpment in Mali. Her "head" is composed of elements that refer to Dogon creation myth, and the eleven spirits that are arranged in a circle are depicted in such a way as to recall the Tellem, a historical group who "owned" the land that the Dogons conquered and inhabited.

From the neck down, the figure is that of a woman with small breasts; a slim torso; large, heavy hands brought together in a gesture of calm; short legs; and feet merged as a unitary support. Her head is composed of three elements. A disk supporting eleven serpentine figures rests on her shoulders. The serpentine figures form a circle, their heads facing outward. They, in turn, support a cup on their collective heads.

Cultural context

This female figure, part of the rich artistic tradition of the Dogon people, represents a veritable "archive," uniting in its form crucial elements of both Dogon cosmogony and history. Iconographically, the cup, eleven figures, and disk that together form the "head" of the figure function together as an *imago mundi;* the cup and disk, representing sky and earth respectively, are connected by the eleven figures, the Nommo, hermaphroditic spirits whose embodiment of life-giving and regenerative powers places them at the heart of the Dogon creation myth and all human existence.

According to Ogotemmêli, a blind Dogon sage, the creation of the world occurred through a subtle interchange of creation, defilement, and regeneration. Amma, the supreme being, created the earth from a ball of clay that he flung into the starry firmament. The earth came to rest in the form of a supine female body facing up toward the heavens. Being lonely, Amma had intercourse with the earth, transgressing thereby the natural order of the universe. The result of this act was the birth of the fox Yurugu (Ogo), a trickster who introduced disorder and defilement into the universe (by coupling with his mother, the earth). To rectify his botched creation, Amma caused the Nommo to be born to purify the earth and to counteract the impact of Yurugu. Henceforth, he withdrew from active involvement with the world, leaving these lesser spirits to work his will. In contrast to Yurugu, the Nommo were androgynous twins, complementary, serpentine, supple, and fluid. They healed the world by clothing it (in fronds of vegetation), bathing it with moisture (fertilizing it), and providing it with the divine word (speech among the Dogon is associated with water, a gift and property of God, and is believed to have fructifying properties; beneficent words, consisting of "breath vapor" and linked to the life-generating powers of the Nommo, are thought to enter into the genitals of any woman who hears them and to increase her fertility). Eventually the Nommo descended to earth in an ark and became the founders of the eight Dogon lineages. As such, they are the primordial ancestors of mankind.

The head of the figure pictured here encapsulates the creation myth by representing the Nommo as the vital mediators between Amma and mankind, the earth and the sky. While

calling to mind the descent of the Nommo in the ark and their identification with rain, the sculpture affirms that the Nommo—as transmitters of water, speech, fertility, and weaving from Amma to mankind—are central factors in the evolution of human culture. Yet the sculpture moves beyond this affirmation. The faces of the Nommo are in the style of the Tellem (possibly a branch of the Kurumba, now resident in Burkina Faso), the ancient people who inhabited the Bandiagara cliffs prior to the Dogon. Sometime between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries, the Tellem were driven out or migrated elsewhere because of pressures from the Dogon. But as the original inhabitants of the land, they were seen as possessing considerable power over its productive capacities. In recognition of this power, the Tellem were integrated into the very essence of the new Dogon culture and society. The sculpture unites both myth and history by identifying the Tellem with the Nommo—the historical predecessors and spiritual "owners" of the land with the primordial ancestors and life-giving mediators—while honoring them explicitly as the source of human and earthly fertility.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

In many creation myths (stories that relate how the world came into being), the world is created by a supreme being or high god, after which other divinities appear (such as the Nommo of the Dogon mythology) who act as culture heroes, that is, reveal the rites and beliefs that underlie social existence.

Jerome H. Long (1987) points out that culture heroes provide the models, or sacred paradigms (archetypes), for all of the economic and social customs of a people. The San, or Bushmen, of Africa relate how the culture hero Kaang created all of the wild game and gave each animal its color, name, and characteristics. Then the same culture hero taught the San the ways of hunting: how to make and use the bow, poisonous arrows, traps, and snares. The culture hero of the Trobriand Islanders is Tudava, who introduced the Trobrianders to the cultivation of yams and taros in addition to the arts of hunting and fishing. The Shilluk, pastoral nomads of East Africa, recount the acts of their first king and culture hero, Nyikang. The sacred acts of this great ancestor include the freeing of the waters and the provision of grazing lands for the cattle of his people.

In other ways, the culture heroes set the stage for human survival. They destroy monsters that threaten the community, they reveal the appropriate (sacred) sites for living and worshiping, they mediate between animals and human beings, and they often introduce both fire and language to humankind.

Sometimes culture heroes take on the form of human beings, often as twins. The Iroquois of North America acknowledge twin culture heroes, brothers with different fathers. One is the son of the sun and represents the powers of goodness; his brother is the son of the waters and is associated with evil. Many culture heroes are theriomorphic, that is, they may assume the form of an animal. In South America, the culture hero may appear as a jaguar; in Oceania, a snake. Furthermore, the culture hero may exhibit a close relationship to either the trickster figure or the ancestors. All three categories of mythical creatures tend to be related. They may appear in similar kinds of myths, especially those dealing with the beginnings of human history, and they sometimes overlap. For example, Praying Mantis is both a culture hero and a mischievous trickster in the myths of the San; and, like the Nommo, the so-called *dema* deities of the Indonesian island of Ceram appear to be both the

ancestors of humankind and culture heroes. Active in the establishment of village life, they determine the rules that govern both religious and social orders.

Mircea Eliade has identified two forms of primordiality as expressed in creation myths. The first mode is the primordiality defined by the creator, who brings the cosmos into existence. This form of creativity is inaccessible to ordinary human beings, and such deities usually appear remote and generally indifferent to the human condition. The second form of primordiality expressed in many creation myths often takes place after a rupture between the creator gods and other gods who enter upon adventures and exploits that define the archetypal modes for human existence. These culture heroes and ancestors of mankind establish the forms of life by means of which everyday social life participates in the sacred.

In psychological language, the culture heroes represent the unconscious factors that determine our humanness. Like all living things and especially animals, human beings share in a legacy of fundamental instinctive behaviors. Where human behavior differentiates itself from that of other animals and becomes social or cultural behavior, however, there we find the level of the unconscious revealed in myths about the culture heroes. Furthermore, it is significant that the head of the figure pictured here embodies the meaning of the creation myth. The head stands for consciousness, and we learn from Marie-Louise von Franz's 1972 study of creation myths that the creation of the world is at bottom a metaphor for the birth of consciousness. In the Dogon myth, the creation takes place in stages, which suggests the possibility of different levels of human consciousness.

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Four dwarfs support the sky
Artist unknown Relief: stone Length: c. 6.5 ft. (2 m) 800–1050 CE
Site: Cemetery of Saint Peter's Church, Heysham, Lancashire, England
Location: Saint Peter's (now kept inside the church), Heysham

FOUR DWARFS SUPPORT THE SKY

Scandinavia: Viking Age

The Norse gods created the cosmos out of the dismembered body of Ymir, the anthropomorphic primordial being. They made the land and the sea from Ymir's flesh and blood. Then, as this relief indicates, they made the dome of the sky out of Ymir's skull and stationed four dwarfs at the four corners of the world to hold it up.

The rectangular tombstone on which this image is carved is about three times as long as it is tall. Stretching almost the length of the stone, just above the center, is a horizontal line. Designs and figures are carved both above and below this line. Below are four anthropomorphic figures, two at each end of the line, with their arms upraised as if they are holding up the upper half of the stone. A number of animals are depicted between the two sets of humanlike figures.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Sources of Norse mythology contain vivid accounts about the creation of the universe and its ultimate destruction. The body of the primordial being Ymir emerged from drops of water that condensed when the frigid mists of Niflheimr (the cold northern region later associated with the murky realm of the dead) encountered sparks from Múspell (the southern region of blazing hot fire).

From Ymir's hermaphroditic body emerged the ancestors of the evil race of frost giants and, on the maternal side, the first of the Norse gods—Odin, Vili, and Vé. These three divine brothers slew Ymir and fashioned from his corpse the worlds of the gods, the giants, and mankind. Four dwarfs, named after the four cardinal points, were assigned to support the sky, which they fashioned out of Ymir's skull. The dwarfs themselves had originated from the maggots that infested the rotting body of Ymir; despite their base origins, however, they were given form and intelligence by the gods. It was the task of the four primordial dwarfs to support the heavens for as long as the universe was fated to exist. Yet with the coming of Ragnarǫk the mountains would fall and the dwarfs would be heard crying out from their homes among the hills and rocks while the sky itself split open and all living creatures met their doom.

The Norse accounts of the creation and destruction of the universe are considered to have archaic connections with ancient Iranian and Indian mythologies. Despite their Indo-European origins, however, the Scandinavian tales retain a distinctively dramatic coloring that reflects a sense of fatalism particular to the austerities of life in northern Europe during the age of the Vikings.

The dwarfs played a prominent role in folklore as well as in mythology. It was believed that they inhabited hills and rocks, and that if they could be enticed into the sunlight, they would be turned to stone. The gods endowed them with secret knowledge and magical abilities. As a result, the dwarfs became the smiths and artisans, creators of supernatural treasures. It was the dwarfs who slew Kvasir, the wisest of the gods, and mixed his blood

with honey to form the mead of poetry. It was they who fashioned hair out of gold for the goddess Freyja after Loki had shorn her of her natural locks. The same two dwarfs crafted Freyr's magic ship and Odin's spear. Two additional smiths created Freyr's golden boar, Odin's ring, and Thor's hammer. According to a story in the late thirteenth-century *Flateyarbók,* Freyja slept with four dwarfs in order to obtain her famous necklace.

The mythical account of the forging of the magic chain with which the gods bound the diabolical wolf Fenrir offers a poetic rendition of the supernatural craft of the dwarfs. While appearing to be nothing more than a harmless piece of string, this unbreakable instrument of bondage was created from magical powers: the noise of a cat, the beard of a woman, the roots of a mountain, the sinews of a bear, the breath of a fish, and the spittle of a bird. Not only did the dwarfs create treasures, they are depicted also—as in the legends of Sigurd and the Volsungs—as the guardians of massive hordes of wealth. Although there is no evidence that the dwarfs themselves were ever venerated, it is obvious from the literary sources that, despite their hostile acts toward both gods and men, their arcane knowledge and skills inspired both admiration and respect.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The dwarfs, who dwell underground in caves and among stones, are mythical representations of the chthonic forces associated with the earth. They are epiphanies of the transforming presence that exists in the dark, geological levels of existence, and they are manifest in the sacred art of metallurgy.

In a number of his writings, Mircea Eliade explored the mythologies and rituals associated with metallurgy. Originally, iron was obtained from meteorites; since these were regarded as fallen stars, iron shared in the symbolism of celestial fire and the immortality of the heavens. Only after the discovery of furnaces, and especially after the perfection of the technique by which metal was brought to the white-hot point and "hardened," did terrestial iron assume a predominant position.

With every stage of technological culture relevant mythologies develop. With the Neolithic revolution came a completely new complex of myths and symbols associated with the cultivation of plants and animals. Likewise, we find the origin of many myths in the discovery of metallurgy. The central metaphor is this: metals "grow" in the womb of the earth. Ore that is extracted from caves and mines is some sort of "embryo" and must be "ripened." The skill of the metallurgist is likened to the wisdom of Mother Earth, that is, to the feminine powers of gestation. It is sacred knowledge; it is knowledge that transforms.

Alchemy—as a "science" and also as a "spiritual discipline"—takes its place within the same mythological framework as metallurgy. The alchemist takes up and perfects the work of Nature, while at the same time working to "make" himself.

> The tendency of Nature is to perfection. But, since gold is the bearer of a highly spiritual symbolism ("Gold is immortality," say the Indian texts repeatedly), it is obvious that a new idea is coming into being: the idea of the part assumed by the alchemist as the brotherly savior of Nature. He assists Nature to fulfill her final goal, to attain her "idea," which is the perfection of its progeny—be it mineral, animal or human—to its supreme ripening, which is absolute immortality and liberty (gold being the symbol of sovereignty and autonomy). (Eliade, 52)

If the dwarfs are most often depicted in myth as artisans and smiths, in folklore they appear to be a more diverse and perhaps more humble group. Fairy tales, for example, are filled with

dwarfs with names such as To Have a Quick Wit, Quarreling before One Reflects, Quick Stealing, and so forth. These and other dwarf names suggest something spontaneous and creative in a minor way. In her study of fairy tales, Marie-Louise von Franz suggests that on an intrapsychic level, dwarfs may represent the invasion into consciousness of sudden, unconscious impulses. The impulse lives in the dark and has a potentially creative impact. However, the biggest danger is that the "dwarf" will be undervalued because it is small ("dwarfed").

> The dwarfs are everything that has to do with a good idea, even on a minor scale. If you visit a farmhouse in the country you will see a lot of tiny, very good tricks: how the man gets his electricity to the stables, how he prevents the water from seeping into another place, etc. Farmers, and most simple people, do not get specialists to help with the difficulties which nature always produces, but they invent their own little devices which work quite well. . . . That is more or less the dwarf. The person who has such hunches will have a more comfortable life and usually can save himself a lot of work and trouble—which is why one usually does invent things! Many stories tell us that the dwarfs do the work for us. Someone who is in good relationship with dwarfs, or *Heinzelmännchen,* or fairies, has only to put out a bowl of milk at the door every evening, or something like that, and the dwarfs will do the work for them. . . . The great difficulty with dwarfs, namely those good ideas and impulses of the unconscious, is that they are small and therefore easily overlooked. If you watch yourself, especially if you are a rationalist, you will see that very often you have a good idea but then think it is nonsense and go on with your rational planning; only afterwards do you discover that that would have been a good idea, but unfortunately you set it aside or overlooked it. You repressed it and did not lovingly pick it up, and so you are annoyed, remembering that you thought of it and then didn't do it. The dwarf gave you the good idea, but because he was small and didn't press his point, you didn't pick it up. That annoys dwarfs tremendously. (von Franz, 180)

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GLOSSARY TERMS

FENRIR Also known as the Fenriswolf; in Scandinavian mythology, the supernatural wolf who is said to be one of Loki's offspring. Fenrir gapes so hugely with his mouth that it stretches from heaven to earth. To protect the worlds of gods and men, he is bound by the god Týr, but at Ragnarǫk, the final battle between the gods and their enemies, he will break loose again.

RAGNARǪK (Old Norse; "destruction of the powers") In Scandinavian mythology, term used to describe the end of the world created by the gods. At Ragnarǫk, the monsters vanquish the gods and both Midgard and Ásgard (the home of the gods and the dwelling place of mankind) are destroyed.

SIGURD A Germanic hero, Sigurd the Volsung was also known as Fafnisbani, that is, "slayer of Fafnir" (the dragon).

THE ENTRANCE TO PARADISE

Artist unknown   Textile: wool pile   78.3 × 58.3 in. (199 × 148 cm)   Eighteenth century CE

Site: Turkey   Location: The Sir Isaac and Lady Edith Wolfson Museum, Hechal Shlomo, Jerusalem

The entrance to paradise

Turkey

Rugs such as this one are hung before the ark or draped over the desk on which the Torah is read. The overall design represents the Garden of Eden, and the arched gateway in the center suggests the gates of paradise.

This rectangular rug consists of three borders and a central, rectangular image. At the top are two serpents facing each other. Below them and at the top of the central motif is a Hebrew inscription. Two columns support an arch, and between them is a tree-shaped design from which hang numerous lamps, like fruits. Below this design is a patch of flowers. Floral designs decorate the surrounding borders also.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

During certain Jewish prayer services, the scroll of the Torah is taken from the ark in a reenactment of God's presentation of the Law on Mount Sinai. Modeled after the veil of the Tabernacle (*Exodus* 26:31–34), the curtain hangs before the ark and contributes to the drama of the symbolic event: the curtain is swept aside, and there is the Torah ready to be accepted anew by the community. Once again the children of Israel will demonstrate their love for God and his word by reading from the scrolls.

The Torah is often called "the tree of life," and observance of its precepts is reckoned a foretaste of paradise. The exterior beauty of the curtain is symbolic of the treasures hidden within. Moreover, the inscription above the archway and below the two serpents—"This is the gate of the Lord; the victors shall make their entry through it" (*Psalm* 118:20)—has a dual significance: the victors (or the righteous) enter the world of the Torah, and love of the Torah—manifest in studying it and practicing its precepts—makes one a victor.

Images of paradise in Judaism are influenced by the descriptions of the Garden of Eden, as recorded in *Genesis* 2. The two serpents and the top of the curtain and the flowers refer back to that garden. In addition, the tree-shaped design in the center may well represent the tree of life found in the center of the garden. The fruits that hang from the tree resemble lamps. This may indicate Islamic influence. (Islamic prayer rugs often include a niche and a lamp.) However, the lamps symbolize also the eternal flame burning before the veil of the Tabernacle (*Leviticus* 24:2–4). The two columns that make up the sides of the gates of paradise in this image probably represent the two columns of the Temple in Jerusalem. Just as paradise represents God's eternal home, the Temple was his dwelling place on earth. Hence, the entry to either the Temple or paradise is a threshold that unites the sacred and profane realities.

Paradise in Judaism has been an indeterminate concept. While the belief in a life after death has been a constant article of faith (called simply "the world to come" in rabbinic literature), speculation about the form of the afterlife has been minimal, especially in comparison with the speculation found in other cultures. There is no explicit mention of an afterlife in the Bible (although the resurrection of the dead is mentioned in *Daniel* 12). Both the belief in the resurrection and the idea of the immortality of the soul have captured the

imaginations of Jewish thinkers at various times, often in creative combination. Thus, Jewish interpretations of paradise include both restorative and utopian motifs: according to the former, the deceased will be resurrected bodily in a restored Eden; and according to the second view, unprecedented conditions will obtain in the world when the denouement of history arrives at last.

Certain threads do persist in eschatological imaginings: the longing for peace is satisfied at last in paradise. Neither natural nor human strife will exist: the lion will lie down with the lamb. Knowledge of God's will is to fill all things, and there will be universal delight, not the delight of sensual pleasure but rather a spiritual bliss that comes from intimacy with God.

Thus the belief in a garden paradise, which began as a quite literal notion, was gradually "spiritualized." Although its literalness was not entirely negated, the metaphor grew more abstract and sophisticated over generations.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

As recounted by Harry B. Partin in his essay on the theme of paradise in world religions, the English word *paradise* derives from the Old Persian *pairidaeza,* which means "walled enclosure, pleasure park, garden." This term entered Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek while still retaining its original meanings. It is found three times in the Hebrew scriptures and in later rabbinic literature as well. In the Septuagint, any Hebrew reference to a garden was usually rendered by the Greek *paradeisos.*

The earliest known account of a paradisial garden appears on a cuneiform tablet from ancient Sumer. Here we learn of the mythical place called Dilmun, a pure, clean, bright place where sickness, violence, and old age do not exist. At first this paradise lacks only one thing: water. Eventually this is provided by the Sumerian water god, Enki. At once, Dilmun is transformed into a garden of fruit trees, edible plants, and flowers. Dilmun, however, is a paradise for the gods alone and not for human beings, although one learns that Ziusudra (the Sumerian counterpart of Noah) was exceptionally admitted to the divine garden.

Paradises are found in both historically oriented and cosmically oriented traditions. In the former, paradise may appear both at the beginning and again at the end of a time period that is conceived linearly. In cosmically oriented traditions, paradise is lost again and again but recurs just as regularly as one stage in an ever-turning wheel of time.

One example of the latter pattern is found in the Hindu doctrine of the world ages, or *yugas*. Briefly, each world cycle is subdivided further into four world ages. The first of these is the perfect age, or *kṛtayuga.* It is also known as *satyayuga* ("real *yuga*"). During this age the actions of mankind correspond wholly to the cosmic law. It is a golden age, filled with justice, prosperity, and human fulfillment. When the *kṛtayuga* inevitably ends, it is followed by three ages of increasing decline. However, it will reappear again after the decline has reached its ultimate culmination.

In Buddhism, the Hindu view of time is retained. However, the next perfect age is interpreted as the time of the birth of the next Buddha, Maitreya. This age will be marked by the absence of crime and evil deeds. People will delight in doing good, and they will live strong, healthful, joyous lives. Most important, all sentient beings will be receptive to the teaching of Maitreya.

The theme of paradise appears in numerous other traditions, as for example in the Greek myths of the Golden Age and in the idea of the ideal state in Plato's *Republic.* It is at work in

Augustine's description of the city of God, and it is present also in Thomas More's *Utopia*. Clearly, an archetypal motif lies at the source of all these images of an ideal place and the nostalgia for a conflict-free existence that they express.

Regardless of the cultural context, the age of paradise is characterized by the absence of death and disease, the presence of joy, and often the proximity of the gods or their equivalent. Many psychologists have suggested that this image represents a psychological state of infancy, prior to the differentiation of the individual ego from the matrix of the unconscious. "This represents the state of the ego that is yet unborn, not yet separated from the womb of the unconscious and hence still partaking of the divine fullness and totality" (Edinger, 8).

The longing for paradise to come does not, however, simply translate as a wish to regress to a state of unconsciousness. There is a difference. What is sought in most, if not all, religious traditions is an experience of the primordial reality but with the added perspective of consciousness. This is symbolized in our image by the presence of a tree of lamps. Differentiation on a psychological level is often represented by the capacity for sight, which depends on the presence of an external light. The lamps in paradise signify the possibility of a conscious experience of the primordial unity of which the ego continues to be a part.

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GLOSSARY

EDEN In the second creation account set forth in *Genesis,* Eden is a name given to the land where God plants a garden and creates the first human beings, Adam and Eve. The text mentions four rivers that flow out of Eden, thus indicating that this garden exists symbolically at the center of the cosmos.

TORAH (Heb.: "teaching, law") The written Law, or the five books of Moses, also known as the Pentateuch. Believed to have been handed down to Moses on Mount Sinai, the Torah embodies the revelation central to Jewish life and religion.

GODS AND DEMONS CHURNING THE MILK OCEAN

Artist unknown   Miniature painting: gouache on paper, polychrome   Approximately 7 × 10 in. (18 × 25 cm)
Eighteenth or nineteenth century CE   Site: Kangra, Punjab Hills, India
Location: Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Gods and demons churning the milk ocean

India: Rajput

The gods and the demons work together, churning the milk ocean in order to obtain the elixir of immortality.

Two groups of figures are assembled on opposite sides of a central axis, or *axis mundi,* consisting of a mountain resting on the back of a tortoise and bearing the figure of the god Viṣṇu. The *axis mundi* operates as a churning stick surrounded by sea, and wrapped around it, a serpent's long body serves as a cord that reaches to two opposing shores. On the left shore are the gods, all of whom wear crowns, while the demons are amassed on the right. People and animals appear to be coming out of the water, some of them aided by figures on either shore.

Cultural context

The Hindu story of the churning of the milk ocean is found in the *Mahābhārata,* one of India's two great epics, dating somewhere between the fourth century BCE and the fourth century CE. In painting, depictions of this myth were especially popular from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries.

The mythical account relates how in the beginning the gods decided to obtain ambrosia for themselves so that they would be both omnipotent and immortal. This they were to accomplish by churning the salt ocean. By uprooting the king of mountains, Mandara, and attaching the mountain upside down to the back of the king of tortoises, the gods constructed a churning stick. For the cord, they used the king of serpents, Vāsuki. Then with the help of the demons, they began to churn the ocean.

The immediate consequences of the churning were a cataclysm of fire and explosions of all kinds. The vegetation living on the mountain was crushed and burned; saps from the trees and juices from the herbs flowed into the water of the ocean. Commingled with these juices, the salt water transmuted into milk, and out of the milk emerged various elixirs: ritual butter, wine, and poison. When the poison threatened to envelop the universe, paralyzing the cosmos with its fumes, the god Śiva took the form of a sacred chant and held the poison in his throat. From that moment, he has been known as the Blue-Throated One.

But this was just the beginning. Other phenomena began to rise up out of the ocean depths: the sun and the moon, the white horse of the sun, the great elephant Airāvata, etc. Finally, after the surfacing of the magic tree and the magic cow that grant the fruits of all desires, the physician god Dhanvantari rose up, bearing a white pot in which the ambrosia was contained. At this point a battle between the gods and the demons took place to determine who should possess the elixir of immortality. In the end, the gods won out, keeping the divine drink to themselves. Thus their sovereignty was established, and the creation of the cosmos was allowed to continue.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

This is a creation myth, a variation of the theme of creation out of the chaos of the waters. The waters are saturated first with the living juices of a different order, the vegetation deriving its life from the cosmic mountain. In this way, by doubling the vitality of the waters, the potency of the cosmic order is enhanced.

The central metaphor in the myth refers to the process of churning milk to obtain butter. In churning milk, steady, strong circular motions serve to separate out the lighter particles of fat (which rise to the surface) from the rest of the liquid. The myth expresses the creative process in terms of hard work and method, creation as a gradual differentiation of chaos.

The creative process itself can occur on numerous levels: cosmic, social, personal, and intrapsychic. According to the myth, the process is accompanied by violence of two kinds: initially, the effort to bring forth the elixir involves the violent movement of changing from one state to another; but afterward, there is the battle between the gods and the demons, each representing the use to be made of the creation. In this case, will the sacred power be channeled into the ongoing maintenance of cosmos, or the integrity of personality, or will it become fragmented and dispersed among those forces that are opposed to these goals?

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GLOSSARY

AXIS MUNDI (Lat., "world axis") The world pillar, or cosmic axis, described in the cosmologies of divers cultures. It provides a center to the cosmos by connecting all three realms: that of the underworld, that of human beings, and that of the gods. It may take on any one of a number of forms: for example, that of a gigantic tree, a mountain, a bridge, or a ladder.

Center of the World

Its root is above, its branches below—
This eternal fig-tree!
That [root] indeed is the Pure. That is Brahma.
That indeed is called the Immortal.
On it all the worlds do rest,
And no one soever goes beyond it.

—Kaṭha Upaniṣad 6.1

Fuji pilgrimage maṇḍala
Artist unknown Hanging scroll: ink, colors, and gold on silk Length: 71.1 in. (180.6 cm); width: 46.5 in. (118.2 cm)
Sixteenth century CE Site: Japan Location: Shizuoka Prefecture, Sengen Shrine, Japan

Fuji pilgrimage maṇḍala

Japan: Muromachi Period

Mount Fuji, an active volcano, has been the focus of many mythological and religious conceptions since ancient times. It has been variously regarded as a cosmic center, a sacred mountain, the residence of a divinity, and a national landmark celebrated in poetry and painting. Because of its importance in both Shintō and Buddhist beliefs and practices, it has also become a major pilgrimage center.

This painting presents a panoramic view of Mount Fuji and its surroundings from an aerial perspective. The scene is everywhere dotted with the tiny figures of pilgrims. In the foreground is Miho no Matsubara, the famous pine-covered spit of land, and the temple Sengenji. Immediately above is Sengen Shrine, where devotees are performing ablutions in a pond. Just above and to the right of the pond is a waterfall under which pilgrims are purifying themselves. The zigzag arrangement of the structures visible through the dense bands of clouds leads the eye gradually upwards from the plains and foothills to the steep slopes of Mount Fuji itself. There, an antlike column of pilgrims bearing torches wends its way upward. The crown of the mountain is shown here as three distinct peaks, each bearing an emblem. To the left and right, near the slopes of Fuji, are the moon and the sun.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This Fuji pilgrimage *maṇḍala* offers a faithful depiction of the arduous ascetic practices performed in the fourteenth century by lay monks and ordinary pilgrims preparing to ascend Mount Fuji. The climb and its attendant rituals were symbolic of progress toward enlightenment. Pilgrimage *maṇḍala*s celebrating famous places, usually Shintō shrines and other sites where deities were thought to reside, served both to stimulate interest in pilgrimages and to commemorate them. In contrast to the cosmic *maṇḍala*s of Buddhist traditions elsewhere, Japanese shrine *maṇḍala*s were not used for meditation, nor were they employed as a substitute for actual pilgrimage. Commissioned by religious brotherhoods associated with a principal shrine or temple along the pilgrimage circuit, the *maṇḍala*s were often shown to prospective pilgrims to help them prepare physically and spiritually for the journey.

An acquaintance with Shintō, the collective spiritual and cultural attitudes of the indigenous Japanese people, is essential for an understanding of this scroll. Shintō recognizes many mountain divinities—the *yama no kami.* In one sense, they dwell upon the mountain, but perhaps it is more accurate to say that they are not actually distinct from the mountain itself. For the Japanese, any separation of nature from spirit is considered to be artificial. The present image depicts thus a pilgrimage to the lofty heights of the divine mountain itself.

This pilgrimage *maṇḍala* reflects also a process of syncretism whereby Buddhist beliefs and practices in Japan were much influenced by Shintō. Indeed, the present image belongs to the Buddhist as well as to the Shintō tradition of Japan. By the thirteenth century, many Shintō gods had come to be identified as the local *avatāra*s, or incarnations, of Buddhist deities, and paintings showing the paired deities became increasingly popular. The Buddhist term *maṇḍala,* referring to a cosmic diagram, was adopted and modified by the Japanese. In

Japan, the term *maṇḍala* came to designate, in addition to diagrammatic arrangements of deities—both Buddhist and Shintō—paintings of Buddhist paradises and, by extension, maplike paintings of Shintō holy sites (such as Mount Fuji) where an individual might hope to attain enlightenment.

The three seated figures seen in this image on the three peaks of the mountain are the Buddhist equivalents of the Shintō deities who were traditionally believed to dwell there. The presence of the moon and sun to the left and right of the mountain indicates that the mountain is an *axis mundi,* or cosmic center, much like Mount Meru (or Sumeru), the mountain that serves in Buddhist mythology as the throne of Buddha around which sun, moon, and planets revolve.

This work, with its bird's-eye view overlooking broad blue bands of mist, is an exceptionally fine example of the native Japanese approach to landscape. However, the sense of spatial depth evoked by the work suggests the influence of Chinese landscape painting.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Throughout history and in diverse cultures all over the world, the mountain has served as a sacred place—as a place where the gods and mankind are brought together. This is because the top of the mountain rests high in the heavens, where the sky gods dwell. Often it is believed quite literally that the top of a mountain is the home of the gods, and so the pilgrimage to the summit becomes an ascent to divinity. Sinai, where Moses spoke with God and where he received the Ten Commandments, is such a mountain. Also in Jewish history there is the example of Zion in Jerusalem, where the temple of God is to be built precisely because that is his dwelling place.

Not all mountains are believed to be connected with divinity. In some places and times, a mountain may be associated with a period of chaos and appear as an eruption of demonic earth force. Mount Fuji, however, belongs primarily to the category of cosmic mountain, sacred because it serves as a center on the cosmological level. This is clear from the image shown here, in which all the elements are brought together: the waters; the earth rising to meet the sky; and the "fire" of the sun and the moon.

At the same time, the *maṇḍala* presents the human being, in this very special context of cosmos in focus, as pilgrim. The pilgrim in this picture is moving upward through a series of ritual states. Ascent always carries with it the symbolism of transcendence, the central attribute of the heavens. But this transcendence is achieved without leaving the earth and so represents a *conjunctio* of the transcendent and the immanent.

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GLOSSARY

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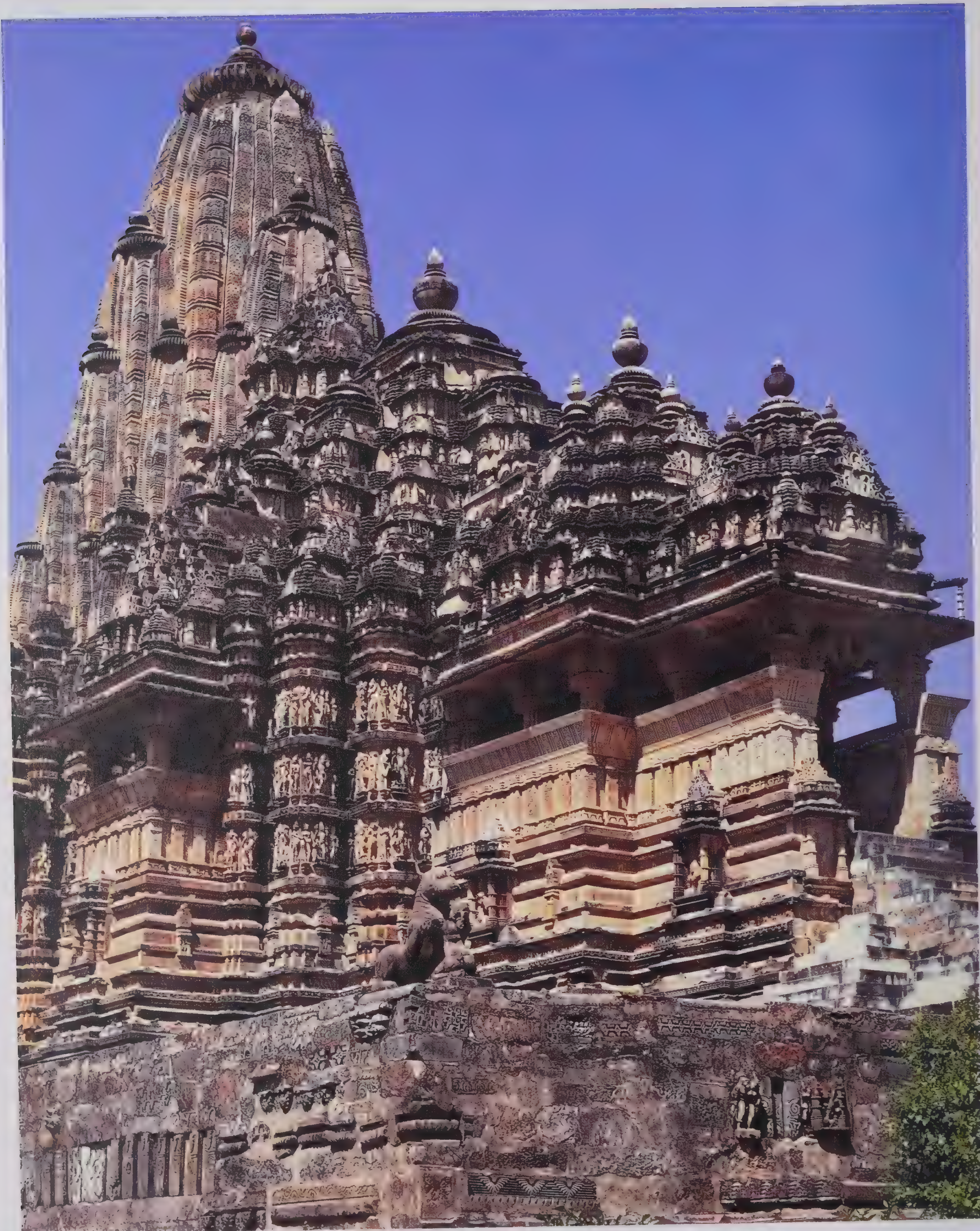
underworld, that of human beings, and that of the gods. It may take on any one of a number of forms, for example, that of a gigantic tree, a mountain, a bridge, a ladder.

ENLIGHTENMENT (Buddhist) The goal of every Buddhist is to attain enlightenment, that is, to break through the limitations of ordinary consciousness in order to experience reality directly and completely. Siddhārtha Gautama was called the Buddha, the "enlightened" or "awakened" one. The term *Buddha* derives from Sanskrit *bodhi,* or ("awakening").

MAṆḌALA (Skt., "circle") In Hinduism and Buddhism, a circular diagram. It can serve as a ground plan, as a symbolic view of a centered universe, or as an aid to meditation.

SHINTŌ (Jpn., "way of the gods") A term used to describe the native religious beliefs of Japan, which emphasize the close affinities between man, nature and natural phenomena, and the divine.



KHAṆḌARĪYA MAHĀDEVA TEMPLE
Artist unknown   Religious architecture: sandstone
Height: including plinth, 116 ft. (45.7 m); length: 109 ft. (42.9 m); width: 60 ft. (23.6 m)
Early eleventh century CE   Site/Location: Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh, India

Khaṇḍarīya Mahādeva Temple

India: Chandella

The Khaṇḍarīya Mahādeva Temple rises like a many-peaked mountain from the lofty plinth (pedestal) that demarcates the sacred precinct. The temple is an image of the universe with all its names and forms, a display of the manifold expressions of Śakti (the feminine, creative energy of God). The inner sanctum is a dark square cell situated directly below the highest of the towers. There Lord Śiva in his image form rests; he is the liṅga *at the heart of creation.*

The plan of this towering structure is complex yet regular. The entrance consists of a small, eastward-facing, four-pillared porch (foreground right) attached to a larger, eight-pillared porch. This in turn leads to the temple proper with its two adjoining interior rooms. The first of these rooms, a four-pillared hall, leads to the central shrine. Both interior rooms have laterally projecting porches that create the effect of a double-transept plan. Everywhere the walls are thick and elaborately worked. The stepped-back elevation scheme of the temple calls for a series of graduated towers rising above the entrance porches and interior hall toward a much higher rear tower. This in turn is placed over the central shrine, the "womb chamber" (*garbha gṛha*). The entire temple sits on a broad terrace upon a high base. A steep flight of steps leads from the ground to the terrace, and another flight connects the terrace with the porch entrance.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This Hindu temple is dedicated to the god Śiva. The extreme verticality of the structure clearly conveys its symbolic affinity with Meru, the cosmic mountain. The series of smaller towers together with a rear tower, which is over thirty meters high, create the effect of a range of mountains and suggest a difficult journey to the highest peak. The doorway and porches are dark cavelike openings in the sides of the "mountain." The symbolic meaning of the temple is connected with the feminine principle, Śakti. It is she that lies behind the manifold forms that unfold in the universe. As dwelling place of the god, the temple is an image of the universe as a whole, in which the god is immanent.

From the entrance the devotee is led through the suite of antechambers into the womb chamber where the *liṅga* resides, directly beneath the highest spire. An invisible shaft is believed to rise from the pillarlike form of Śiva-as-*liṅga* upward, emerging in manifest form as the main tower of the temple. Awareness of this invisible shaft enables the devotee to find his or her orientation in respect to the center of the universe, or *axis mundi,* and ultimately to concentrate on the spiritual aim of achieving union with the divine and, through this union, ultimate release (*mokṣa*).

As a type, the Hindu temple evolved over many centuries. Historically, the central shrine, or womb chamber, is descended from the Vedic fire altar, while the exterior architectural elements are still to be seen in their simplest form in village shrines fashioned from bound twigs. With some variation, the essential elements of the temple are repeated

everywhere on the Indian subcontinent. The basic geometry underlying the altar/sanctuary is that of a *maṇḍala,* a circular diagram that is realized here as a closed polygon.

Ritual governs the approach to the deity. This calls for circumambulation of the temple, first on the ground below the sacred precinct and then on the terrace of the temple plinth, where shrines to gods of the Śaivite pantheon are placed. The worshiper then mounts the final flight of stairs, passes through the entrance porches, and enters the cavelike interior of the temple. In the shrine room a third circumambulation is performed before nearing the *liṅga.* There, in the womb chamber, if one has truly encompassed the deity by means of ritual circumambulation, becoming one with the deity, he or she will experience *mokṣa* as a spiritual flight up along the *axis mundi* into a state of perfect freedom.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The temple in this image resembles a mountain, and it shares in the cosmogonic symbolism of the mountain. In numerous creation myths, the creation takes place in an undifferentiated mass of water. These tales recount often how a mountain-island provided the place for the gods to stand, or the emergence of the mountain is the first step in the creation of the earthly order of things. The mountain, because of its height, serves also as a link between earth and heaven. It is at such centers, where commerce between levels of reality is possible, that creation always takes place.

Furthermore, the reverse process, liberation from the creation or transcendence, must take place at the same point, that is, where the human and the divine meet. So, too, the temple provides the ritual space for moving up, along the *axis mundi,* out of the mundane into the spiritual cosmos.

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GLOSSARY

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GARBHA GṚHA (Skt., "womb chamber") The inner shrine of a Hindu temple, usually a dark, square room.

LIṄGA (Skt., "phallus") In Hinduism, the erect phallus is a symbol of the god Śiva. It is sometimes conceived as a pillar of energy. As a sculpted form representing a focus of worship, it is often set in a *yoni* pedestal, the two signifying unity within duality.

MAṆḌALA (Skt., "circle") In Hinduism and Buddhism, a circular diagram. It can serve as a ground plan, as a symbolic view of a centered universe, or as an aid to meditation.

MOUNT MERU (SUMERU) In Hindu cosmology, this mythical mountain exists as the center of the cosmos. Rooted in the netherworld, the four lotus-petal continents and seven ring-shaped seas and ring-shaped continents surround it. Wider at the top than at the bottom, it rises into heaven and serves as the home of the gods.

MOKṢA (Skt., "release, liberation") Release from the tedious and painful cycle of transmigration of souls. This religious notion appears already in the Upaniṣads, as well as in early Buddhism.

ŚAKTI (Skt., "energy") In Hinduism, the feminine creative force, often personified as the female consort of a male deity.

THE UR ZIGGURAT

Artist unknown Religious architecture: brick, baked and unbaked

Height: approximately 70 ft. (21 m); dimensions of base: approximately 200 × 150 ft. (61 × 46 m)

III Dynasty of Ur, reign of Ur-Nammu (2111–2094 BCE) Site: Ur, Iraq

The Ur Ziggurat

Near East: Mesopotamia, Neo-Sumerian Period

The ziggurat (here seen in an artist's reconstruction) was a temple tower inhabited by the moon god, Nanna. Its stepped form is a concrete expression of its function as a kind of ladder or stairway reuniting Heaven and Earth, which were separated at the beginning of time.

In its original form, this terraced tower consisted of three levels and was surmounted by a shrine. Its corners were oriented to the cardinal directions; the sides of each level sloped gently backward and were articulated by deep niches. A central staircase, perpendicular to the facade, ascended from ground level to the summit. Two additional staircases were built laterally, against the facade, and led from the ground to the top of the first level, where they intersected beneath a covered gateway with the central staircase.

Cultural Context

Cities were built in ancient Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers, as early as 5000 BCE. Each city was protected by a god or goddess, and the priesthood of the deity ruled the city on his or her behalf. However, by the time writing had become common, the cities of this area had developed both cultural and commercial connections. The rise of a common mythology reflected this interdependence, incorporating stories that depicted the relationships among deities from different places. Thus, Nanna of Ur (later called Sin by the Akkadians) was related by marriage to a goddess of the marshes, Ningal, whose mother was called Lady of the Reeds. They had two offspring: Utu, the sun god, and Inanna, the goddess of love and war, who was associated with both the morning and the evening stars.

The patron god of the city of Ur was Nanna, the moon god of the Sumerians. The ziggurat of Ur was dedicated to Nanna, and it served as his dwelling place on earth. The top of the tower housed a shrine, which provided a place of retreat for the god, where, too, he could give dream oracles or participate in a divine marriage rite with his consort, Ningal. Below, at the base of the tower, was a large temple. Here was the actual dwelling place of the god; here his image was fed and clothed daily. Nanna ruled from this temple complex for approximately three thousand years. The temple complex at Ur was destroyed numerous times over the centuries, but each time, it was rebuilt in order to provide a home for the god.

The Sumerian ziggurat was actually meant to represent a primordial mountain that existed before creation. Indeed, the terraces of the ziggurat were even planted with trees. In the creation stories of the ancient Sumerians, there is, first of all things, a great primeval sea. Out of the sea arises the cosmic mountain, which is, in fact, the manifest form of Heaven (An) and Earth (Ki) before they are separated. From their union is begotten the air god, Enlil, father of Nanna. It is Enlil who separates his parents and who, together with his mother, Ki, sets the stage for the organization of the cosmos, the creation of humanity, and the establishment of civilization.

The first true ziggurats were built during the period of the Third Ur Dynasty. They were

probably not the expression of any new religious concept but rather the final stage in a long architectural development. Traditionally, Mesopotamian temples were raised on a platform, and new sanctuaries were built directly over the hallowed ruins of old ones, leading to higher and higher constructions. By the late third millennium BCE, this casual process of growth was taken as a model for monumental towers. These were planned and executed from the ground up as a single whole, but often still incorporated—as at Ur—the remains of previous sanctuaries. Ziggurats continued to be built in Mesopotamia during the second and first millennia BCE. They were also known in the northwest (for example, at Mari, on the middle Euphrates) and in the east (in Elam). Later ziggurats were much larger and had as many as seven stages, but the symbolism of the structure appears to have remained the same.

A Sumerian song consisting of a dialogue between Nanna and Ningal records the Moon's attempt to entice his consort to join him on top of his ziggurat at Ur. Nanna sends a love message to Ningal, describing the delicious food that he has for her and expressing clearly his wish that she join him. She replies that he must be content to wait until he "has filled the rivers with the early flood, has made grain grow in the field, old and new reeds in the canebrake, stags in the forest, plants in the desert, honey and wine in the orchards, cress in the garden, and long life in the palace." Only then, continues Ningal,

> In your house on high, in your beloved house,
> I will come to live,
> O Nanna, up above in your cedar perfumed mountain,
> I will come to live,
> . . . .
> O lord Nanna, in your citadel
> I will come to live,
> Where cows have multiplied, calves have multiplied,
> I will come to live,
> O Nanna, in your mansion of Ur
> I will come to live,
> O lord! In its bed I for my part
> will lie down too!
>
> (Jacobsen, 126)

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The word *ziggurat* derives from a Sumerian term meaning "pinnacle." The symbolism of this temple tower has its roots in the symbolism of mountains, whose pinnacles have served for thousands of years as dwelling places of the divine. For example, in ancient Israel, Mount Zion, the sturdy, rocky mount of Jerusalem, was believed to be God's home. Here God was said to live in the midst of his people. Throughout Canaan, the high places belonged to the powerful local gods, and Mount Zaphon was the abode of the great Baal Hadad. Some of the earliest mountaintop sanctuaries existed in the Minoan civilization on Crete (2100–1900 BCE). Evidence of cave and mountaintop shrines have been found at Mount Juktas, Mount Dikte, and Mount Ida. Of course, the Greek gods—especially Zeus—were at home on Olympus. Similar traditions are found in China and India, and in other cultures widely separated by both time and space.

The ziggurat is a variation on this same theme, that of the man-made cosmic mountain

as dwelling place of the god. We find a similar phenomenon in the temple pyramids of Mesoamerica. These were not tombs like the pyramids of Egypt but rather, like the ziggurat, served as temples.

The symbolism of the cosmic mountain, shared here by the ziggurat, has numerous aspects: it can be the navel of the world from which creation emanated and so represent the life principle at its most fundamental level; it can be sacred because it touches the sky and so represent transcendence; or it can be a place of special revelation and vision. Here, however, because of the mythological context of the ziggurat, there is a special nuance to the symbolism: the sacred mountain in Sumerian tradition was originally the manifest form of Heaven and Earth, that is, the primordial father and mother before they were separated. Hence, the reconstruction of the mountain provides an ongoing connection with this primordial, undifferentiated state of being. The mountain does more than connect the earth with the skies, in this view; it is a return to the time when they existed as one. It is an epiphany of the unity prior to creation; or, on the intrapsychic level, it is a symbol of the wholeness that exists before the birth of ego consciousness.

In this particular ziggurat, the Moon lived and was cared for. It is rare that the moon is conceptualized in the form of a male god, yet this one ruled for thousands of years. He was called Father Nanna and brought forth both the sun and the goddess who secured desire as well as aggression for his people. In this symbol system, the hidden, healing power of the moon reveals a creative power that is broader and deeper than the more directed forms of instinct:

> It is not under the burning rays of the sun but in the cool reflected light of the moon, when the darkness of unconsciousness is at the full, that the creative process fulfills itself; the night, not the day, is the time of procreation. It wants darkness and quiet, secrecy, muteness, and hiddenness. Therefore, the moon is lord of life and growth in opposition to the lethal, devouring sun. The moist night time is the time of sleep, but also of healing and recovery. For this reason, the moon-god, Sin, is a physician. . . . To the nocturnal realm of the healing moon belong the regenerating power of sleep which heals the body and its wounds, the darkness where the recovery takes place and also those events in the soul which in obscurity, by processes only the heart can know, allow men to "outgrow" their insolvable crises. (Neumann, 50f.)

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GLOSSARY

COSMIC MOUNTAIN The belief that a mountain is sacred is common to many cultures. In the mythology of a specific people, the sacred mountain may be the dwelling place of the gods, or it may be the navel of the earth out of which creation itself issued.

UR City of ancient Sumer whose patron deity was the moon god, Nanna. Ur experienced several periods of prominence (c. 2500–550 BCE) under the Sumerians, Akkadians, Elamites, and Babylonians. It is famous for its rich material culture, and especially for the great ziggurat.

THE DOME OF THE ROCK
Artist unknown Religious architecture: stone, faced with marble and ceramic tiles
Height: 115.5 ft. (35.2 m); width: 179.5 ft. (54.7 m)
Completed in 691–692 CE (with later additions and restorations)
Site/Location: Haram al-Sharif, Jerusalem

The Dome of the Rock

Israel: Umayyad Period

According to the traditions of Islam, the Dome of the Rock in the holy city of Jerusalem marks the site whence Muḥammad ascended into Heaven, where he experienced many wondrous visions.

The monument—the earliest surviving example of Islamic architecture—is octagonal in form with a central, domed area. There are four entrance portals, oriented toward the cardinal points. The exterior is sheathed in marble up to the window line, while above are sixteenth-century ceramic tiles that replace the original glass mosaics, which may have once covered the now gilded dome as well. The plan is based upon the forty-five degree turning of one square upon another, producing the eight sides. The interior space is defined by two concentric octagonal ambulatories surrounding a central area that is covered by the dome and beneath which lies the Rock.

Cultural Context

After Mecca and Medina, the city of Jerusalem, as the site of the Dome of the Rock, is the third holiest city in Islam. As in Mecca, the place of the Ka'bah (lit., "cube"), Jerusalem's holiness is connected with a sacred rock. This rock lies at the center of the shrine, in line with the golden dome.

The sacred rock of Mecca is the Black Stone, embedded in the eastern corner of the Ka'bah, the principal Islamic shrine. The Black Stone was sacred to the pre-Islamic Arabs long before the birth of Muḥammad (c. 570 CE). During the Prophet's lifetime, the Ka'bah was the principal religious shrine of central Arabia. Located at the center of a sacred territory, it had the characteristics of a Semitic sanctuary. Muḥammad captured the shrine, removed all evidence of earlier deities, and dedicated it to the one God of his monotheistic faith. Since that time, the Ka'bah has been the central object of Islamic pilgrimage.

The prophet Muḥammad experienced his revelation, recorded in the Qur'ān, as coming from the biblical God of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. Ever since the time of David, the city of Jerusalem had been holy to the Israelites and, later, to both Jews and Christians. It was there that God commanded Solomon to build his Temple, that is, God's sacred dwelling place on earth. There in the Holy of Holies (a curtained inner chamber) were kept the Ark of the Covenant containing the Tablets of the Law and other tokens of the deliverance from Egypt and the sojourn in the wilderness of Sinai. There Solomon reinstituted all of the cultic acts commanded to Moses on Sinai, the daily sacrifices, the feasts of the New Moon and the New Year, the Day of Atonement, and the three great pilgrimage festivals of Passover, Weeks, and Tabernacles. A body of Aaronite priests and ministering Levites served in the Temple.

By claiming Jerusalem as one of its holiest places, Islam was able to articulate its inner connection to ancient Israelite religion. Christians had earlier done the same thing. The first Christian emperor, Constantine, established sacred places of pilgrimage in Jerusalem and throughout Palestine as geographical symbols of the life and ministry of Christ. In 638 CE, the

Muslims from the south arrived and took over the city, building there almost at once a mosque on the deserted Temple mount and, within a century, erecting in the middle of that same platform the Dome of the Rock. Eventually, the rock at the center of this holy place in Jerusalem was incorporated into Islamic tradition as the rock from which Muḥammad ascended into Heaven.

The belief that Muhammad ascended to Heaven during the course of his life and beheld secrets of the otherworld unknown to all other persons is shared by all factions of Islam. The ascension of Muḥammad is, however, a belief with a long and complicated history. One early version—the night journey—derives from a Qur'anic surah, according to which God's servant was carried one night from the Holy Mosque to the Distant Mosque. Some Muslims identified the Distant Mosque with Jerusalem (the Holy Mosque was another name for the Ka'bah, of course). A second tradition is that of the Mi'rāj (lit., "ladder"). Based also on Qur'anic terminology, a legend grew up, according to which the Prophet ascended directly into Heaven. The two ascensions were eventually harmonized, with the result that instead of the earlier belief in the nocturnal journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, Jerusalem became the site of the ascension. Over the centuries, tales of the ascent of the Prophet provided the mythical framework and terminology for the development of Islamic mysticism.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

When the Scandinavians were converted to Christianity (c. 1000 CE), they proceeded to establish Christian churches on the sacred sites of their ancestors. Something similar happened in ancient Greece when the Indo-Europeans invaded and conquered the indigenous peoples: the sacred shrines continued as centers of the new cult, inhabited for the most part by the gods of the invaders. It appears that the sacredness associated with a geographical place does not depend exclusively on any one specific religious interpretation but lingers on to be reinterpreted with every new generation. The history of Jerusalem would certainly support this view. The city and its holy mountain came to be a symbol of God's dwelling place, a reflection of the heavenly Jerusalem, for Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike.

For the Israelites, the city was sacred because of the mountain and the Temple. Moses had spoken to God on a mountain and received the Law from God on a mountain. It was there at the summit of the world, close to God's heaven, that communication between Israel and her God was most open and creative. The Temple was, like the Ark, a dwelling place on earth for the sky god of the Israelites. This transition reflects the nomadic roots of this tradition and the gradual change of the culture into one based on agriculture and a connection to the land.

To these ancient traditions, the Arabs contributed the symbolism of the rock. Although already present in Israelite religion, the rock as an epiphany of the divine was central to the religion of the Arab peoples who later became the peoples of Islam. The Black Stone of Mecca was a meteorite, whose sacredness was due primarily to its heavenly origin. Like the black stone of Pessinus (an epiphany of Cybele, the Great Mother of the Phrygians), which was later transported to Rome during the last of the Punic wars, it was also an image of a goddess. The meteorite is supposed to have become an image of the Great Goddess because it was thought to have been pursued through the heavens by a thunder god. At the same time, in falling through the atmosphere the meteorite made a hole in the sky, and it was through this hole that communication between earth and heaven could be effected.

Clement of Alexandria wrote that the Arabs adored stones. Following in the footsteps of Isaiah and his polemic against the so-called idols, the early Christian theologian saw in this adoration of stones a form of idolatry. However, as Mircea Eliade has pointed out,

> recent research . . . shows that the pre-Islamic Arabs venerated certain stones called by the Greeks and Romans *baytili,* a word taken from the Semitic and meaning "house of God." And such sacred stones were not venerated in the Semitic world only, but by all the peoples of North Africa even before their contacts with the Carthaginians. But bethels were never adored simply as *stones;* they were adored inasmuch as they manifested a divine presence. They represented God's *house;* they were his sign, his emblem, and the repository of his power, or the unchanging witness of a religious act performed in his name. (Eliade, 228)

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GLOSSARY

QUR'ĀN (Arab., "reading") The sacred book of Islam revealed by God to the prophet Muḥammad in separate revelations over the major portion of his life at Mecca and Medina. In the canonical version, established in 651–652 CE, the revelations are divided into 114 surahs, or chapters, arranged from shortest to longest.

THE GREAT STUPA AT SĀÑCĪ

Artist unknown Religious architecture: sandstone Height, including harmika: approximately 70 ft. (21 m)
Diameter of sacred precinct, gate to gate: approximately 162 ft. (49 m)
Circa first century BCE to first century CE Site/Location: Sāñcī, Madhya Pradesh, India

The Great Stupa at Sāñcī

India: Andhra

The stupa, or hemispheric funerary mound of early Indian origin, was first taken over by Buddhism to enshrine relics of the Buddha and his followers. Later it became a symbol of death and the attainment of nirvāṇa, *or release from the cycles of rebirth, the goal of every Buddhist. At the Great Stupa at Sāñcī, a railing sets off the sacred precinct with its circumambulatory path and four gates. This arrangement produces a ground plan approximately in the form of a swastika, that is, an auspicious sun wheel. At the summit of the hemisphere is a square shrine with a railing surrounding a shaft with a three-tiered umbrella. The shaft represents the world axis, which passes through the "dome of heaven" (which encloses the "cosmic mountain"). Another name for the stupa is* aṇḍa, *or "egg," since the funerary mound symbolizes a rebirth that transcends the cosmos.*

The stupa itself is a solid hemispherical structure faced with stone and surrounded by a carved stone railing. Partway up the dome is a similar but smaller railing, accessible by stairways, and at the apex a square railing made of the same elements encloses a small square shrine (the harmika). Emerging from the shrine is a post on which are mounted three stone disks of graduated diameters, with the smallest at the top. In the main circular railing on the ground are four baffle-gated entries that mark the cardinal directions. Before each of these entries is an elaborately carved, freestanding gateway consisting of three crossbeams stretched between posts on either side.

Cultural Context

According to legend, the appropriation of the stupa form to serve as a Buddhist monument was ordained by the Buddha himself shortly before his death. To show how a stupa should be built, he took his robe and folded it (the platform), placed his alms bowl upside down thereon (the hemispheric dome), and then put his staff on top (the central pillar).

A stupa may serve several related religious functions. In the first place, it commemorates the Buddha (or one of his followers), enshrines his relics, and serves as the symbol of his physical death and final release (*parinirvāṇa*). Further, the dense arrays of symbolic and narrative carvings on the surrounding bases, railings, or gates of the stupa are intended to teach lay Buddhists about the Buddha and his past lives as well as to convey his teachings. Beyond this, stupas are complex symbolic structures that are meant to be experienced by devotees through the ritual encounter known as circumambulation, a clockwise circling of the stupa performed in order to encompass it spiritually.

The stupa functions as a reliquary by means of a small chamber, buried at its core within the solid mass. Called a *garbha,* or "womb," it usually holds a small casket in which relics ("seeds") have been deposited. Conceptually at least, these relics are located at the center of the world, for the domelike structure of the stupa represents the dome of heaven that surrounds the cosmic mountain, and the vertical post that emerges from the top of the stupa represents the *axis mundi* that marks the center of the world. The shape of the stupa is the

basis for another of its names. As *aṇḍa* ("egg"), the stupa alludes to the mystery of generation. This association suggests further that the stupa, though a reliquary, is a fertile, birth-giving center; that is, the relics at its core are really the "seeds" that offer spiritual rebirth.

The horizontal plan serves as a *maṇḍala,* which is experienced as such by devotees who enter its gates and perform the rite of circumambulation. Overall, the scheme can be viewed in terms of solar symbolism as a sun-wheel, with the four angled entryways serving as the arms of a swastika and introducing a clockwise directionality (about a fixed center) to the otherwise circular plan. This solar symbolism is compatible with the dome shape of the stupa and is echoed by the many images of the open lotus—the flower of the sun and, ultimately, of enlightenment—seen on the gates to the stupa.

The gates are an important part of the architectural complex and its symbolism. They symbolize the threshold between the everyday world outside and the spiritual realm of the stupa. Upon reaching them, pilgrims pause to study the carved images that narrate stories of the previous incarnations of the Buddha and of the great events in his life, and they take pleasure in viewing a profusion of other auspicious symbols such as tree goddesses, elephants, lions, and earth gods. One of the best opportunities for viewing the carvings comes as one circumambulates the stupa along the second-tier railing that is reached by stairs on the southern side. The circumambulation here is performed not only literally but also symbolically at a higher level.

Sāñcī served as an important place of Buddhist worship from about 300 BCE until after the Gupta period (700 CE). The Great Stupa, as it is popularly known, is the largest structure at Sāñcī. The present edifice with its stone casing and railings dates from the first century CE, but its core is believed to date from the time of Aśoka (r. 268–232 BCE). Although there is no inscription stating whose relics are contained within the monument, it is highly probable that so major a monument at so early a date would have held some relics of Śākyamuni himself, which were redistributed by Aśoka after their original distribution into eight portions.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

At his death, Śākyamuni Buddha transcended the cosmos and the cycles of rebirth to enter fully into *nirvāṇa.* Earliest Buddhism stressed the need for the individual struggle to attain enlightenment, but later on, the belief in compassion allowed followers of the Buddha to call upon him or the *bodhisattva*s (Buddhas of the future) for aid. The stupa came to serve as a link to the transcendent Buddha—not a temple for his dwelling place (since he was now beyond the cosmos), but a memorial based on relics of his life on earth. Thus, the stupa, which is in fact a reliquary (since the Buddha's body was cremated and the remains became relics), is a tomb that functions as a shrine. In this way, it resembles the tombs of heroes in the hero worship of late Antiquity. The hero was also one who had entered the transcendent realm and whose burial place served as a point of communication with him.

The form of the stupa appropriately combines those of the tomb and the shrine. The hemisphere has its model in the early Indian tumulus, an artificial mound that was erected over a grave. The harmika, or shrine at the top of the stupa, has its model in the village sanctuary. As Anagarika Govinda explains, by bringing these two symbolic structures together, the unity of life and death is expressed.

The mysteries of life and death were always the greatest agents of religious ritual and speculation. Through the experience of death, man becomes conscious of life. Thus, the cult of the dead stimulated primitive man to build the first great monuments (tumuli), while the other side of religious activity, which was concerned with the living and the mundane aspects of life, found expression in the simpler forms of tree and fire worship. . . . While the tumuli and the cult of the dead had their place outside the village, the sanctuary of the life-giving and life-preserving forces (personified in the sun-god) had its place in the center of the village. It consisted of a simple altar (a sanctified form of the domestic hearth, the fire of which was always regarded sacred as a symbol of family life) or a small shrine (an idealized form of the village hut) which stood in the shadow of the sacred tree (Tree of Life) and was surrounded by a fence as a demarcation of the sacred place. The Buddhist stupa combined the elements of the village sanctuary with the monumental dome of the ancient tumulus (*cetiya*), thus uniting the two oldest traditions of humanity, as expressed in the lunar and solar cult, fusing them into one universal symbol which recognized formally for the first time that life and death are only the two sides of the same reality, complementing and conditioning each other. To think of them as separate is illusion. . . . Once it has been understood that there is no life without transformation and that the power of transformation is life, then the great synthesis takes place and the foundation of a world-religion is established. (Govinda, 76f.)

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GLOSSARY

Axis mundi (Lat., "world axis") The world pillar, or cosmic axis, described in the cosmologies of divers cultures. It provides a center to the cosmos by connecting all three realms: that of the underworld, that of human beings, and that of the gods. It may take on any one of a number of forms, for example, that of a gigantic tree, a mountain, a bridge, a ladder.

Maṇḍala (Skt., "circle") In Hinduism and Buddhism, a circular diagram. It can serve as a ground plan, as a symbolic view of a centered universe, or as an aid to meditation.

Parinirvāṇa (Skt., "complete *nirvāṇa*") The physical death of a Buddha or other enlightened being. The event marks the liberation from the cycle of rebirths.

Śākyamuni (Skt., "sage of the Śākya clan") Title for Siddhārtha Gautama, the historical Buddha, who lived in India from 563 to 483 BCE. Born a prince, he renounced both family and social position, attained enlightenment, and preached the Way (Dharma) to a community of monks and lay followers.

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

Artist unknown   Manuscript illumination: tempera on parchment   Height: 13 in. (33 cm)   1125–1150 CE
Site: Court scriptorium, Constantinople, Turkey   Location: ms. grec 1208, folio 3 verso, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

The Ascension of Christ

Turkey: Byzantine (Comnenian)

This image suggests that the church is not simply a building but rather the temenos, *or sacred place, within which the drama of death and rebirth takes place. Here the Christian church provides the theater in which the community of saints experiences the Ascension and anticipates the gift of the Holy Spirit that is to follow.*

The church depicted in this manuscript illumination is seen partially from the outside and partially from within. The towers and spires of the roof are depicted as if seen from the outside, whereas the two scenes that involve figures are shown as if the walls of the church had been removed. In this way, inside and outside are revealed simultaneously. Below are the twelve apostles and Mary, the mother of Jesus, flanked by the prophet Isaiah (left) and King David, wearing a crown (right). David and Isaiah bear scrolls, indicating their prophetic writings. Two angels stand behind the apostles and point heavenward. Above them Christ in a mandorla is lifted upward by four angels. Above this scene is another, smaller one, presenting the twelve apostles seated in a semicircle.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This Byzantine miniature, which originally appeared in *Sermons in Honor of Mary* by Jacob Monarchus, depicts two closely connected scenes from the *Acts of the Apostles:* the ascension of Christ into heaven (1:9–11) and the anticipation of the Holy Spirit's descent at Pentecost (2:1–4):

> When he had said this, as they watched, he was lifted up, and a cloud removed him from their sight. As he was going, and as they were gazing intently into the sky, all at once there stood beside them two men in white who said, "Men of Galilee, why stand there looking up into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken away from you up to heaven, will come in the same way as you have seen him go." (*Acts* 1:9–11)
>
> While the day of Pentecost was running its course they were all together in one place, when suddenly there came from the sky a noise like that of a strong driving wind, which filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues like flames of fire, dispersed among them and resting on each one. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them power of utterance. (*Acts* 2:1–4)

Christ is seen seated on a throne, within a mandorla signifying his glorified state, as he is lifted up toward the heavens by four angels. This particular way of representing the Ascension derives from late antique representations of apotheoses and is distinctively Byzantine, the enthroned Christ recalling the imperial court. Below, the twelve apostles and Mary, the mother of Jesus, witness the event, with their eyes turned heavenward. Behind them are seen the two men mentioned in *Acts,* portrayed here as two angels, who predict Christ's second coming. To the right and left of this group stand King David, wearing a crown, and Isaiah the prophet, both of whom were believed to have predicted Jesus' coming.

Above this scene, represented together in the dome of the church, the twelve apostles are seated "all together in one place" (*Acts* 2 : 1) awaiting the descent of the Holy Spirit, which was to follow soon after Jesus' ascension.

The Ascension is closely connected with Christ's resurrection. Indeed, the two events are represented as separate only by the author of *Luke/Acts.* In earlier accounts, both events were described as taking place on the same day. Be that as it may, the Ascension as a separate event became an established part of Christian tradition and is mentioned explicitly in the early Christian creeds. According to this view, Christ remained with his disciples some forty days after his resurrection, prior to his final departure to rejoin his Father in heaven.

The Pentecost is believed to have taken place shortly after the Ascension. While gathered together as a community, the disciples of Christ experienced the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of wind and fire, and they began to speak spontaneously in foreign languages. The prior ascension of Christ was understood to be the necessary precondition for this outpouring of the Spirit. It was only after the bodily presence of Christ among his disciples came to an end that his spiritual presence through the Holy Spirit could become central for the community of his followers. The close association of the two in this miniature has thus a doctrinal warrant.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

In all of its various forms, the church or temple is a sacred dwelling place for the god or goddess of a given tradition. In Christianity, the symbol of the church as the house of the Lord is combined with the Hebrew symbolism of the "chosen people." Indeed, *ecclesia* ("church") derives from the Greek word meaning "chosen" or "called." In this way, the Christian church refers to the community of saints as the so-called body of Christ. It is through the Ascension and Pentecost that this living temple of God is born. The community of saints consists of those who experience the resurrection and ascension of Christ, that is, his victory over death (and in the mythology of traditional Christianity, God's victory over the Devil). The community of saints becomes the body of Christ during Pentecost, when the divine Spirit enters each one and they come to participate, one and all, in the incarnation of Christ. It is this symbolism of the church that the image suggests: the mediating reality between heaven and earth that comes into being with the appearance of the Holy Spirit and will cease to exist at the time of the Second Coming, when the Devil will be vanquished and paradise restored.

The Ascension is central to this vision of the church, and it is modeled on the Hellenistic religious form called apotheosis, or deification. Although ascent of a religious leader to heaven is found in the Hebrew scriptures, it is an ascent that bypasses death. In apotheosis, on the other hand, the mortal person must first shed his or her body before becoming divine. This is because apotheosis has its roots in two distinct belief systems: that of the hero, who is divinized because of his or her godlike qualities, and that of the Roman cult of the dead, that is, the worship of ancestors.

The worship of heroes developed at a time when the cults of the local deities were suffering erosion due to the cosmopolitan nature of the empire created by Alexander. Simultaneous with the loss of traditional beliefs emerged the need for a savior and peace-maker who could speak to this new and heterogeneous culture. The hero was recognized by his or her superhuman achievements, and these ranged from acts of strength to feats of

magic. Thus, philosophers, wise men, and miracle workers could be regarded as god-men, worthy of immortality.

Robert Turcan (1987) recounts how in ancient Roman religions, the dead (as the *manes*) were collectively and indiscriminately deified. They were offered gifts of food and drink in order to pacify them, that is, to keep them from interfering with the living. During the Hellenistic period, this cult merged with that of heroes so that the individual dead were often honored as divine. It became the practice to build a sarcophagus in the shape of an altar, a place where gifts might be brought and offered to the deceased. By the first century BCE, the altar-shaped tomb was quite common.

The ultimate form of this development was the imperial apotheosis. From the death of Augustus, the funerary services of the emperor came to express in elaborate ritual his apotheosis. This included cremation of the body on an immense pyre established for this purpose in the Field of Mars. When the pyre was fully aflame, an eagle was set in flight to bear the soul of the deceased Caesar to heavenly Olympus. (This posthumous flight is depicted on coins and cameos, as well as on the vault of the Arch of Titus in Rome.) Later, it is the winged spirit of eternity, Aion, that carries the soul heavenward. In this view, we recognize the ever-present Hellenistic evaluation of the human body as the mortal prison of an immortal soul. Even though the Hellenistic kings and the Caesars were adored while still alive, no true apotheosis was possible except after their death, for, as one Hermetic writing puts it, "the soul cannot be divinized as long as it remains in a human body" (*Corpus Hermeticum* 10.6).

Together the Ascension and Pentecost represent a shift in respect to the experience of the spirit, which is encountered first in the external figure of Christ and later in his church. C. G. Jung has emphasized the collective nature of the church, but it is important not to forget that each member of that church had, in theory, immediate access to the same divine spirit. An internalization of the projected value took place even if on a collective level. For Jung, the spirit represents the numinous power of an archetype and its ability to compel and inspire human personality. The force of an archetype must always be mediated by a suitable container, lest it overwhelm the ego.

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GLOSSARY

APOTHEOSIS (from the Greek *apothēosis,* "deification") The conferring (through official, ritual, or iconographic means) of the status of an immortal deity upon a mortal person. The term derives from the Hellenistic period and the Roman cult of emperors.

THE DANCE OF THE XOCOTLHUETZI

Artist unknown Manuscript illumination 15.3 × 15.3 in. (39 × 39 cm) Early sixteenth century CE

Site: Tenochtitlán (Mexico City) Location: Bibliothèque de l'Assemblée Nationale, Paris

The dance of the Xocotlhuetzi

Central Mexico: Aztec Culture

In the Dance of the Xocotlhuetzi, young men prepare to scale the sacred tree, which bears the epiphany of a god. The first to reach the top will scatter the parts of the image over the heads of those below, and he will reign as a victor sanctioned by the elders.

The Xocotl, or ceremonial tree, is represented here. At the top of the pole is the image of a god molded in dough made from seeds of the amaranth tree. The image is clothed in white paper garments. Surrounding the tree are thirteen male figures. One of them beats a drum, while another observes the dance from the temple steps. The remaining youths circumambulate the tree with their hands joined. All but one have their bodies blackened for the occasion.

Cultural context

The Aztec calendar consists of two parts: a ritual calendar and a solar calendar. The ritual calendar is based on a cycle of 260 days, which approximates the time of human gestation. After 260 days, the cycle begins again. The solar calendar is based on the time it takes the earth to revolve around the sun, that is, slightly more than 365 days per cycle. Every fifty-two years both cycles begin on the same day, and so a third cycle, a combination of the first two, commences. Only once in every fifty-two years does the exact same combination (in respect to both the solar and the ritual calendars) arise. Thus, the anniversary of one's birth comes around only once in a lifetime.

The tenth month of the solar year is the Xocotlhuetzi, or Fall of the Fruits. It is the time characterized by heat and the ripening of fruits. The god presiding over this month is the fire god Xiuhtecuhtli, also known as Ixcozauhqui ("yellow face"). Among the Aztec, he was recognized as an ancient and venerated deity. In his honor, a fire sacrifice was held. During this ceremony, prisoners of war were burned almost to the point of death and then lifted from the great fire by means of hooks. Thereupon, their hearts were removed from their bodies and offered to the god. The Aztecs believed that the creation of mankind depended on a divine sacrifice. Therefore, it was necessary to reverse the process in order to revitalize the powers supporting the cosmos.

The other chief ceremony of Xocotlhuetzi involved the Xocotl, or ceremonial tree. During the preceding month, the people went into the forest and cut down a large tree, approximately fifteen meters high and so wide that a man could not reach around it. They carried the tree on other logs to the city, dancing and singing to it as if it were a god. Drawing near the city, they were met by women of nobility, who received them with jugs of chocolate and garlands of flowers.

Later a hole was dug in the temple courtyard, and the Xocotl (as the tree was called) was established upright in the hole. On the upper part of the trunk, two logs were tied together to form a cross. Then, above the cross was placed an image of the god made out of amaranth

dough. The god's image was clothed and decorated in white paper garments as well as strips of paper of varying lengths that fluttered in the wind like flags. Heavy ropes reaching almost to the ground were hung from the tree. These ropes were called the "cords of penance" and symbolized the lives of penance and hardship led by the priests who served the god and who, as part of this service, frequently performed auto-sacrifice.

The tree and its image stood throughout the month, but as soon as all the other ceremonies of Xocotlhuetzi were completed, the people gathered at the plaza around the tree. The leaders of the young men covered their bodies with soot, in emulation of the god Tezcatlipoca ("smoking mirror"). At a signal, the young men rushed forward and began to climb the ropes hanging from the tree. The shrewd ones waited until the ropes were swarming with men and then, climbing up over the shoulders of the others, they made their way to the top of the tree. The first youth to reach the summit seized the bread image, together with the shield, darts, dart hurler, and several large pieces of bread made from the same dough as the god. The image and the bread loaves he tore into pieces and scattered over the heads of the people gathered in the plaza below. Everyone sought to catch and eat a piece, regardless how small, since in this way they shared in the substance of the deity.

Next the victor descended carrying the arms that he had taken from the god, as if from an enemy, and he was taken to the top of the temple by the elders of the community, who presented him with gifts of jewels and other regalia. They placed on his shoulders a tawny-colored cloak, bordered in rabbit fur and feathers, a garment reserved for those men who had accomplished this feat. Then, amidst a warlike clamor made by conch-shell trumpets and accompanied by the entire community, the young victor was ushered to his home, where he deposited the god's shield, now his own.

Since most of the religious manuscripts of the Aztec were destroyed by the Spaniards, it is impossible to know whether this illustration of the Xocotlhuetzi Dance is typical. There were, however, other festivals that took place around the sacred tree: the feast of Micailhiutontli (Little Feast of the Dead), the feast of Huey Miccailhuitli (Great Feast of the Dead), and the Huey Tozoztli (Great Vigil). The volador ceremony, celebrated in contemporary Mexico, displays similar ritual and symbolic components.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The tree is extremely important as a symbol in myths and rituals all over the world. Often the universe itself is portrayed as multilayered, and the layers are kept distinct and in place by a world tree running through the exact center of the cosmos. In other traditions, the tree is connected with the goddess of life and represents the power of sustenance, bringing food into the world and supporting both gods and mankind. Another, related theme is that of the tree of knowledge, which often stands close to the tree of life and represents the ontological counterpart to being, that is, consciousness. Together, existence and awareness are the twin supports of a meaningful life, the matrix in which human beings thrive.

Sometimes a tree may be viewed as having a soul or a spirit or as being a deity in its own right. The Australian Aborigines believe that their own spirits are embodied in the rocks and trees among which they live; when they leave one geographical site for another, they are actually leaving parts of their selves behind. In ancient Greece, different trees were sacred to specific deities, several species of oak, for example, to Zeus.

On the level of ritual, the tree may serve as a vehicle for communication with the gods. Reaching up into the sky and down into the ground, it provides a concrete link between the three worlds: the transcendent heavens, the earthly domain of men and women, and the underworld. A sacred tree may pass on communications from a deity by speaking directly to someone, or indirectly, by means of its whispering leaves, whose sounds must then be interpreted by a priest.

The tree in this ritual dance is the bearer of a god, and the god is divided and scattered in order to feed the group, at the end of the ritual period. Meanwhile, during the month in which the tree and its god stand watch, human beings are being sacrificed to the god of fire. A cycle of life and death is being acted out in ritual form. This Aztec intuition—that life derives from divine sacrifice—is an insight also found in other cultures, among the Vedic peoples, for example, whose sacrifices were meant to return vital energy to the divine source so that life could continue.

The tree that offers divine food is the center of a ritual dance. The young men circle the tree. Circumambulation is a common way of expressing the sacredness of a particular place or thing. By walking around what is set apart, the separation between the holy (inside the circle) and the profane (outside the circle) realms is established and experienced. Yet, at the same time, the person remains in a unique position, at the boundary between the two realms, and in connection with both.

The young men's ritual dance and climb to the top of the tree is one variation of a universal scenario known as "the trial of strength," combined with a veiled reference to "the ordeal." Both are found in initiation ceremonies the world over and reflect an underlying archetypal pattern of transformation by means of which the child is turned into an adult.

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GLOSSARY

TEZCATLIPOCA (Aztec, "smoking mirror") One of the four Aztec creator gods, who arranged the universe and set the cosmic ages in motion. A god displaying diverse and protean personal aspects, he is perhaps best described as "the enemy on both sides."

Christian labyrinth

Artist unknown   Mosaic: inlaid with blue and white paving stones   Diameter: circa 41 ft. (c. 12.5 m)
1220–1230 CE   Site/Location: floor of nave, crossing, Cathedral of Notre Dame, Chartres

Christian labyrinth

France: Gothic

The labyrinth at Chartres is positioned so that one cannot directly approach the main altar, situated in the eastern end of the church, without first becoming entangled in its turnings. Over the path of the labyrinth (the equivalent of eleven concentric circles) is superimposed a cross. This symbolism provides the Christian sojourner with the opportunity to transform his or her own path through the world of sin into a path toward heaven, or Jerusalem.

The large, well-preserved labyrinth is centrally located on the main axis leading to the high altar. It is an inlaid mosaic of large white paving stones on a circular dark-blue ground, every part of which is traversed by the path. Seen from above, the overall pattern is of a cross within a circle. The path, some 294 meters in length, enters and leaves each of the quadrants of the surface area several times but leads inevitably to the center, marked by a six-sided floriform pattern.

cultural context

The so-called Chartres type of labyrinth is found in manuscripts, church reliefs and mosaics, and English raised gardens. Normally circular in form (occasionally octagonal), it is subdivided into quadrants by the pattern of its pathway. A unicursal maze, the Chartres type offers no alternative pathways; hence it is not possible to lose one's way. Similarly, Christians who persevere in the face of uncertainty and possible disappointment will not lose their way, for they are guided by God.

Within a medieval Christian context, the Chartres labyrinth possesses an especially rich symbolism. To begin with, its eleven concentric circular paths (the Cretan labyrinth had seven) reflect a well-developed number symbolism. The number 11 stands for sin, for it oversteps boundaries (10 marks a boundary within the decimal system). Moreover, it is an imperfect number, being one more than the Ten Commandments and one less than the twelve apostles. The eleven circles of the labyrinth may have been taken to represent the *orbus peccatus,* or "world of sin."

In a French manuscript (Paris ms. lat. 13013) one finds the world of sin illustrated as a labyrinth of the very same type, with a horned being—perhaps the Minotaur or Satan—enthroned at the center (Kern, 152, pl. 177). However, the quadrant pattern of this labyrinth type introduces a countersymbol by implying the presence of a cross. The cross-over-circle may also be interpreted as the cruciform halo, which is reserved for the Trinity in Christian iconography (Kern, 209–212). Placed over the "world of sin," the cross performs a redemptive function: this is shown by the way the path of the Chartres labyrinth turns back on itself every time it nears an arm of the cross, as though it were being repulsed by that emblem of salvation. With the superimposition of the cross, the meaning of the entire pattern is transformed: no longer is the Devil or the Minotaur at its center, but heaven or Jerusalem. Thus, a French name for the ecclesiastical pavement labyrinth was *chemin de Jerusalem,* or simply *ciel* (in reference to the center). Such names would seem to support an unverified

tradition, no older than the seventeenth century, that a journey through the labyrinth on one's knees served as penance in place of the actual journey to Jerusalem. Strangely, however, there are no references in medieval ecclesiastical literature to any practical use or liturgical function of such labyrinths. In recent centuries they have come to be regarded by some clerics as pagan symbols to be hidden from the attention of the laity.

There is no direct evidence as to what specific emblem would have originally been seen at the center of the Chartres labyrinth (the copper plate that once covered the circular central stone is lost, while the fastening pins are still embedded in the stone). It is conceivable, however, that here, as in the case of a similar labyrinth at Amiens, a memorial to the architect of the cathedral once occupied the spot (Kern, 225–226). Just as Daedalus (a master craftsman and the namesake for those labyrinths that were sometimes referred to as *daedale*) gained fame for having constructed the Cretan labyrinth that held the Minotaur, so would the architects of the great cathedrals deserve to be remembered as master builders in the service of God.

Many medieval illuminations and some pavement labyrinths in Italian churches show Theseus battling the Minotaur. Perhaps this image was reinterpreted by Christians as the divine or heroic in man overcoming his animal nature.

One peculiar feature of the Chartres labyrinth is the cogwheel outline along its circumference. Perhaps there is a connection here with another unique feature of this labyrinth, namely, the flower pattern at its center. It is unlikely to be mere coincidence, moreover, that the overall dimensions of the labyrinth correspond closely to those of the great rose window in the west wall above the main entrance. The repeated use of flower imagery symbolizes the presence of Mary and points to the fact that the great cathedral is dedicated to the Virgin.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The labyrinth is an ancient symbol, found even in the cave paintings of prehistoric peoples. It signifies a movement from what is outside and visible to what is inside and invisible, and, of course, the possibility of return. This journey may be regarded as a return to the womb, a descent into the underworld, or a journey to the center of the world. The journey is often connected to rites of initiation, that is, symbolic ordeals that bring about the spiritual transformation of the initiate.

The psychological function of the labyrinth, and its inclusion in the initiatory rites, transcends both the prehistoric and the Christian interpretations. Joseph L. Henderson observes that "the experience of the labyrinth, whether as a pictorial design, a dance, a garden path, or a system of corridors in a temple, always has the same psychological effect. It temporarily disturbs rational conscious orientation to the point that . . . the initiate is 'confused' and symbolically 'loses his way.' Yet in this descent to chaos the inner mind is opened to the awareness of a new cosmic dimension of a transcendent nature" (Henderson and Oakes, 46).

The labyrinth in the cathedral at Chartres is combined with the cross, the Christian symbol associated with the death and resurrection of Christ. However, at the center of the labyrinth is the flower, the symbol of the Virgin Mary. Here the center is occupied by the feminine principle; the journey of transformation involves a discovery of that reality.

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GLOSSARY

HEAVEN A symbol of divine transcendence; often the dwelling place of the highest god.

JERUSALEM In Biblical religions, Jerusalem is the city built around the Temple, which God (Yahveh) compelled King Solomon to erect in order to provide a permanent home for the Ark, that is, to provide a permanent dwelling place for God on earth. Moreover, the Temple was to be built on Mount Zion, a site especially sacred to God.

THESEUS Legendary Athenian hero. Among his exploits was the slaying of the Minotaur, the monstrous bull-man who inhabited the Cretan labyrinth.

TRINITY, THE Many Christians believe that God reveals himself as three persons: the Father (the creator), the Son (the savior), and the Holy Spirit (the counselor).

TWELVE APOSTLES In Christian tradition, the group of disciples closest to Jesus, although other disciples are mentioned in the New Testament. The twelve disciples were sometimes believed to symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel.

Siuhu's house

Artist unknown   Basketry: willow and devil's claw fibers   Diameter: 9.75 in. (24.5 cm)   1880–1900 CE
Site: Arizona   Location: no. 23/761, Museum of the American Indian / Heye Foundation, New York

Siuhu's house

North American Indian: Pima

This design represents the mountain home of Siuhu, a legendary Pima deity who is also known as Elder Brother. He surrounds himself with the maze in order to prevent enemies from finding their way into his place of dwelling.

The object is a flat circular plaque or tray, woven of willow (*Salix* sp.) and black devil's claw (*Martynia vulgaris*) fibers. A linear maze design in black circles around the surface leads from the rim into the solid black center, known as Siuhu Ki ("Siuhu's house"). A small anthropomorphic figure in black representing Siuhu is at the top "entry." The coil weave extends from front to back, allowing the design to be seen from both sides of the tray.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The Pima and neighboring Papago people, living in the southern Arizona and northern Mexico area known as Papaguería, weave a great variety of baskets from local fibers, primarily the desert yucca, bear grass, and cattail, and decorate them with black devil's claw. Most of these are containers for gathering and storing various foods. With the advent of white settlers, these forms changed somewhat; tin, copper, and iron buckets and kettles slowly replaced the more fragile baskets, and the latter became for the most part decorative objects intended to provide cash income. Not only did sizes change, but also the forms. One novel introduction was the flat circular mat or tray, which grew out of the shallow bowl basket and had never been used indigenously. Made in various sizes, it is primarily intended as a wall decoration or place mat. The motifs range from figurative to geometric forms.

The Pima and the Papago are distantly related, live side by side, and have absorbed much of each other's culture, although the latter inhabit a more remote region and have had less contact with whites. The basketry work of the two groups was very similar in early days, making it difficult to determine the origin of a particular piece. Over the years, the Papago have developed a more distinctive, looser weave, and it is now easier to identify their work. Today, they are the most prolific basket makers among the Native American peoples. The Elder Brother legend and design is common to both tribes.

According to Pima and Papago creation myths, Siuhu (or I'itoi, among the Papago) was a powerful ancestral figure, commonly called Elder Brother, who lived in the mountains adjacent to the Indian country. He watched over the people, often came to visit them, brought rain, good crops, and tobacco, and in general served as a tribal protector and disciplinarian. Since his benevolence was frequently abused (he was killed several times but always came back to life) and because he was often besieged by suppliants for his aid as well as by traditional enemies intent upon destroying him, Siuhu built a great labyrinth so that no one could follow him into his home. He would emerge from time to time to pursue his duties, but he always retired into the solitude of his mountain retreat for privacy. This design reflects the story and belief in Elder Brother, his mystery, distance, and power, and his willingness to reemerge in order to help his people.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

In his studies of alchemical writings, C. G. Jung came across a text written by the Chinese alchemist Wei Po-yang (second century CE). Wei Po-yang is concerned with the appropriate method to be employed in the alchemical opus. First, he describes the true or complete man, who is both the beginning and the end of the work. "He is and he is not. He resembles a vast pool of water, suddenly sinking and suddenly floating." The alchemist goes on to describe a region composed of intercommunicating labyrinths and surrounded on all sides by walls. Inside this region exists the divine spirit, and whoever retains it will prosper, whereas whoever loses it will perish. He advises the correct procedure for dealing with this labyrinthine region and its treasure: "Cessation of thought is desirable and worries are preposterous."

The labyrinth in this text is a concrete symbol for a mode of consciousness. Another way to refer to this mode is to speak of "feeling one's way." It is not the rational, goal-directed mode associated with "seeing." That is the method of the one who loses the spirit:

> He will direct himself in all things by the course of the sun and the stars, in other words will lead a rationally ordered life in accordance with the rules of Chinese conduct. But this is not pleasing to the *tao* of the feminine principle (*yin*), or, as we should say, the ordering principles of consciousness are not in harmony with the unconscious. . . . If the adept at this point orders his life according to rules traditionally regarded as rational he brings himself into danger. . . . This danger, as the Chinese Master rightly observes, occurs when the traditional, moral, and rational principles of conduct are put into force at a moment when something other than social life is in question, namely, the integration of the unconscious and the process of individuation. (Jung, par. 433)

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Sacred animals

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

How can those terrified vague fingers push
The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
And how can body, laid in that white rush,
But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
And Agamemnon dead.
Being so caught up,
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

—W. B. Yeats

FROG

Artist unknown Sculpture: faience Height: 2.1 in. (5.3 cm) Reign of Amenhotep III (1417–1379 BCE)
Site: Egypt Location: no. 58.28.8, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York

Frog

Egypt: New Kingdom, Eighteenth Dynasty

The frog was sacred to Heqet, the Egyptian water goddess. Associated with the life that emerges in the muddy waters prior to creation, the frog came to represent the fecundity of life as well as the possibility of resurrection.

Sitting on a base vaguely suggestive of a lily pad, this simple but charming frog is naturalistically rendered in blue faience, a primitive glazeware. It sits on its haunches, as if stalking an unseen fly, with its front feet spaced widely apart. Its skin is smooth and looks almost wet, and its protruding eyes are rendered by two circles of brown faience.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Since this exquisite piece was acquired on the market and does not have an archaeological context, its original purpose is unknown. Made out of glass, which was rare and costly during the eighteenth dynasty, it probably was the possession of a wealthy or noble person. Since it was the custom to exchange such figures as New Year's gifts, it is tempting to consider this as one such gift. It might have conveyed wishes for good luck and good fortune. Or, since the frog as a hieroglyph could mean "repeating life," it might have been intended for funerary use. Similar frogs have been found in burials as part of the magical funerary goods designed to ensure the rebirth of the deceased. Indeed, small frog mummies are occasionally found in Theban burials, where the intent appears to be to aid in this process. Their presence there expresses the common association in the Egyptian mind of frogs and toads with the powers of creation.

Before its dramatic rise in population, Egypt was more than a land of desert and fields. It was also a land of swamps and thickets. Indeed, every year the inundation of the Nile turned farmland into swamp. In these areas of mud and water, frogs numbered in the uncountable millions. This sense of almost infinite plurality was recognized by the Egyptian, and the hieroglyph of the tadpole served to represent the number 100,000.

Furthermore, in Egyptian mythology, the swamp—a land of mud and water rich with flora and fauna—symbolized precosmic reality. The Hermopolitan cosmogony recounts how the world was created by an ogdoad of primordial gods, who then continued to rule over their creation for a period that is now called the Golden Age. After they had reigned for some time and the work of creation was completed, the Eight died and went to the underworld to live. Still their power continued after their deaths, because it was they who caused the Nile to flow and the sun to rise every day. The four male deities of the Ogdoad were depicted in Egyptian art with the heads of frogs, whereas the four female deities had serpent's heads. This points to their origins in the watery waste that existed before the creation.

Another deity associated with the frog is Heqet, the water goddess. At Hermopolis she was linked with the four frog deities who lived in the watery waste before creation. Heqet was usually thought of as the wife of Khnum, and she became a goddess who presided over

the births of those creatures that Khnum fashioned on his potter's wheel. In addition to presiding over births, Heqet was helpful in resurrecting Osiris from the dead.

Depictions of frogs appear prominently in Egyptian temples that are dedicated to birth. Such temples often celebrated the birth of a god. At Edfu, for example, in the temple of the child Horus, the motif of a frog sitting on a lotus is repeated many times on the architraves. A similar motif, of a frog sitting on a blossom, was a common element in pharaonic New Year's symbolism. The seemingly spontaneous generation of the frog or toad out of the waters suggests a divine power in nature that cannot be repressed, not by the old year, not even by death.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Frogs and toads are rarely distinguished in traditional accounts. As Manabu Waida (1987) points out, both are lunar animals *par excellence.* Like the moon, the frog (or toad) changes its shape, growing large and round and then shrinking. It comes and goes, disappearing beneath the water or hiding under ground during the winter to reappear in the spring. Many myths relate how the moon and the frog share a common destiny. In Chinese mythology, a three-legged toad is said to live in the moon, which it periodically swallows, causing each time an eclipse. Another story tells how the mythical chieftain Hou I obtained the elixir of immortality from Hsi Wang Mu. His wife Ch'ang-o stole the elixir and fled with it to the moon, where she was turned by the gods into a toad. As a lunar symbol, the frog or toad conveys the immortality associated with the capacity for ongoing change and transmutation.

The frog is naturally associated with the waters. Moreover, because it lives both in the water and on land, it shares in the symbolism of the go-between, a creature that can cross boundaries and connect one cosmic realm with another. In creation myths, the frog may play a role in bringing forth the earth out of the waters. One Huron myth recounts that numerous animals descended into the depths of the primeval sea, searching for the earth that was essential for creation. Finally, it was the toad who rose to the surface carrying the precious soil in his mouth. This small bit of earth was then placed on the back of a tortoise, and the miraculous evolution of the earth began.

In her study of the prehistoric religions of Europe, Marija Gimbutas (1982) demonstrates the ancient connection that was made between the goddess of birth and the frog or toad. Often the goddess was depicted in the shape of a toad, or an otherwise naturalistic frog was given the face and genitalia of a goddess. The mysterious power over life processes, which the toad is thought to possess, continues to find expression long after the dissolution of Old Europe. Terra-cotta, bronze, amber, and ivory toads are found in Etruscan, Greek, and Roman sanctuaries and graves. To this day, toads of wax, iron, silver, and wood are offered to the Virgin Mary in churches in Bavaria, Austria, Hungary, Moravia, and Yugoslavia, where the culture of prehistoric Europe is still alive beneath the overlay of the later Indo-Europeans, including Christianity.

Lunar symbolism includes both the full and the dark moon. The dark moon, or the moment that precedes regeneration, is often connected with death, and with evil. In some cultures it is this aspect of lunar symbolism that is emphasized by the symbol of the frog or toad. For example, among certain Indo-Europeans, frogs and toads were associated with the goddess of death and thought to cause madness. It was sometimes believed that a toad could take away the milk of a nursing mother or suck the blood of a sleeping human being. Iranian

myths refer to the frog as the embodiment of the evil spirit. In African tales, the frog may appear as the messenger of death. The Ekoi of Nigeria tell that at the time of the creation, both the duck and the frog were sent by God to visit mankind. The duck carried with it the gift of immortality, whereas the frog brought the curse of death. It was the frog that arrived on earth first, and so human beings were doomed to die.

In a comment on the life of Nietzsche, C. G. Jung points to the meaning of the frog in modern dreams. In his words, it represents the "animal urge to life." Apparently, Nietzsche often dreamed of a frog, or toad, that he felt he must swallow but could not.

> When we scrutinize his life . . . we are bound to admit that Nietzsche lived beyond instinct, in the lofty heights of heroic sublimity—heights that he could maintain only with the help of the most meticulous diet, a carefully selected climate, and many aids to sleep—until the tension shattered his brain. He talked of yea-saying and lived the nay. His loathing for man, for the human animal that lived by instinct was too great. Despite everything, he could not swallow the toad he so often dreamed of and which he feared had to be swallowed. The roaring of the Zarathustrian lion drove back into the cave of the unconscious all the "higher" men who were clamoring to live. Hence his life does not convince us of his teaching. For the "higher" man wants to be able to sleep without chloral, to live in Naumburg and Basel despite "fogs and shadows." He desires wife and offspring, standing and esteem among the herd, innumerable commonplace realities, and not least those of the Philistine. Nietzsche failed to live this instinct, this urge to life. (Jung, par. 37)

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GLOSSARY

KHNUM Egyptian god who created life on a potter's wheel. Khnum was depicted as a ram-headed man wearing a royal kilt; usually his horns are straight rather than curved. His cult was old and widespread, but its center remained in the cataract area around Elephantine. He was thought to control the Nile's annual inundation. In the New Kingdom and later, he was worshiped there in a triad with Sakis as his consort and Anukis as his daughter.

Zeus meilichios

Artist unknown Relief: marble Circa 400–375 BCE Site: harbor-area sanctuary at Piraeus, Greece
Location: no. 723, Antikenabteilung, Staatliche Museen, East Berlin (destroyed during World War II)

Zeus Meilichios

Greek: Late Classical

This votive relief showing two men and a woman before a large serpent was probably dedicated to Zeus Meilichios, a popular Attic deity who appeared in serpentine form. It was important after shedding blood to appease this deity, who was also connected with agriculture.

The relief shows an enormous, obviously divine, serpent, and standing before it in an attitude of reverence, two men and a woman.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Similar reliefs with inscriptions referring to "Zeus Meilichios" lead us to assume that this relief is dedicated to the same god. The name *Meilichios* means "he who is easily placated." The same divinity was also referred to as Zeus Maimaktes, that is, "he who thirsts for blood." The two titles of this deity inevitably remind us of how the Erinyes, or Furies, are sometimes called the Eumenides, or "gentle ones." Meilichios was an ancient chthonic Attic deity whom Zeus absorbed as he absorbed so many local gods and daimons. Yet this Zeus Meilichios remained very different from Zeus, the Indo-European sky god, in function, attributes, and appearance, as well as in the manner in which he was worshiped.

Long before Zeus was introduced to Attica, Meilichios had been worshiped in the form of a snake in the region surrounding Athens. He was associated with both death and fertility. His worship, conducted outdoors instead of inside a temple and at night rather than during the day, consisted primarily in rites of placation and purgation. What is remarkable is that during the classical period the most important festival associated with Zeus in Athens was the Diasia, a spring festival in honor of Zeus Meilichios, and that the rites resembled those associated with the ancient chthonic deity. The sacrifice was a holocaust—a burnt offering, the whole of which was consumed by fire—of pigs (the animals sacred also to Demeter, the goddess associated with agricultural fertility). Ordinarily, Zeus was offered tidbits from the sacrificed animal, and the worshipers themselves partook of what was offered. Holocausts were intended to placate angry gods. They were appropriate here because, like the Erinyes, Zeus Meilichios was seen as an avenger of the shedding of kindred blood. In Attica, this referred primarily to domestic violence. In Argos, one sacrificed to Zeus Meilichios also for purification after participation in a bloody war. There are indications that in the archaic period worshipers may have wrapped themselves in the fleece from the freshly killed sacrificial victims before they fell asleep—in the hope that the magical fleece might bring them a prophetic dream.

This deity, a subterranean counterpart to the Indo-European sky god, yet so different from the more familiar Zeus, was sometimes referred to as "the other Zeus." *Zeus Meilichios* may have simply been another name for Hades (who as Pluto was associated not only with death but with fertility, wealth, and prosperity); but nevertheless, it was with this designation that he was invoked by the farmer concerned with the fertility of his crops and by all who sought to effect purgation for having caused death and to establish reconciliation with the dead.

In her study of the religion of Old Europe, Marija Gimbutas shows the prevalence of the snake motif in the art of early Western culture: "The snake and its abstracted derivative, the spiral, are the dominant motifs of the art of Old Europe, and their imaginative use in spiraliform design throughout the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods remained unsurpassed by any subsequent decorative style until the Minoan civilization, the sole inheritor of Old European lavishness" (93). The snake god Meilichios belongs to this ancient, pre–Indo-European culture.

In Old Europe, the snake represented the power in the earth that supports life and the transformation of life on its surface. The snake was recognized as the actual force behind the creation: "The mysterious dynamism of the snake, its extraordinary vitality and periodic rejuvenation, must have provoked a powerful emotional response in the Neolithic agriculturists, and the snake was consequently mythologized, attributed with a power that can move the entire cosmos. Compositions on the shoulders of cult vases reveal pairs of snakes with opposed heads, 'making the world roll' with the energy of their spiraling bodies" (Gimbutas, 94). Everywhere the snake or the spiral appears in the presence of new life: vases flaunt a gigantic snake winding over the whole universe, or over the sun, moon, and stars; elsewhere the snake appears below a growing plant or coils above the belly of a pregnant woman. The ritual phallus and also ithyphallic vases and lids are marked by snake coils. The snake was a symbol of energy—spontaneous, creative energy—and of immortality.

Three aspects of the snake support its symbolic meaning: it lives in the earth, in holes and under rocks; it is swift and sometimes poisonous; and it sheds its skin in order to increase in size. The snake's relation to the earth makes it a chthonic or underworld being in the mythologies of ancient peoples. At times the snake will be a symbol of the dead, who have been buried in the earth. In some cultures, the household snake is fed and protected as embodying the soul of an ancestor, which in turn protects the lives of the family, bringing them health and prosperity—the gifts of the underworld. The speed and poison of the snake make it a dangerous rival, and often the snake represents the power of death. As such, it may be a protecting spirit—that is, if the power is directed against one's enemies—or a true opponent. Finally, the snake is often a symbol of rejuvenating powers because of its capacity to shed its old skin and emerge renewed in the process. In this capacity, the snake is found in cults of healing and as a symbol of immortality.

In his study of snake dreams, Carl L. Iandelli suggests that the snake appears at a time of transition and symbolizes the power supporting transformation. This may occur both in regressive and in progressive developments of the individual, since every transformation necessarily involves both. Like the snake, the ego outgrows its "skin" and must shed old attitudes before moving on in its new, larger mode:

> The particular circumstances . . . in which the serpent symbol emerged for our patients show that its appearance always expresses not only a specific conflict between the ego and the unconscious but particularly a specific transitional phase, more or less initial, from one evolutionary stage in the ego's development to the next. On these grounds we are able to predict that the emergence of the serpent as a symbol of transition (danger, alarm, flight, struggle, failure, success, transformation) may be potentially present in all transition stages, with the purpose of supporting the essential libidinal process of regressive dissolution and progressive integration; its value (whether mainly regressive, simultaneously regressive and progressive, or mainly

progressive) must always be defined by the stage of maturity in the individual ego. In this respect, the more mature the ego, the more complete its involvement in disintegration-integration will be. (112)

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GLOSSARY

ERINYES Also known as the Furies; spirits of punishment, avenging wrongs done to kindred, especially murder within the family or clan. Associated with Gaia (Earth), they are often identified with the kindlier spirits who send fertility, the Eumenides.

THE GOD THOTH AS AN IBIS WITH THE GODDESS MAAT
Artist unknown Sculpture: bronze, gilded wood (body of ibis), black glass (inlays for eyes of ibis); cedar base
Height: including base, 7.7 in. (19.5 cm) Circa 300–200 BCE
Site: Tuna el-Gebel, Egypt Location: no. 1957,83, Kestner Museum, Hannover, West Germany

The god Thoth as an ibis with the goddess Maat

Egypt: Ptolemaic Era

The moon god Thoth and his wife, Maat, together serve the sun god by providing the natural order that pervades and supports the creation. Thoth appears here as an ibis, and Maat as a diminutive woman wearing the feather of an ostrich.

Resting on a base, the god Thoth is depicted in his epiphany as an ibis. His legs and feet, neck, bill, and the tips of his tail feathers are in bronze. No doubt they were originally polished and shining. His eyes are made of glass. The remainder of his body is in gilded wood. Before him sits the goddess Maat in her characteristic crouching position. Her knees are drawn up under her chin, with her feet tucked under her buttocks and her hands resting on her knees. On her head is her primary attribute, the feather of an ostrich.

Cultural context

The primary animal form of the god Thoth is the ibis, although he also appears sometimes as a baboon. The ancient Egyptians imagined that in the beginning the universe was nothing more than a vast ocean. This ocean lacked a surface; it completely filled the universe and was often referred to as the cosmic egg. Variations of this creation myth were told at Hermopolis, a city of Middle Egypt. According to one tale, the world was said to have originated in a cosmic egg that had been laid by the celestial goose, which had first broken the silence of the world and was called the Great Cackler. This egg, laid upon a primeval hill, contained the bird of light, Re, who then created the cosmos as we know it. A second version was similar to the first, except that in this tale the egg was laid by an ibis—that is, by Thoth. The cult of Thoth at Hermopolis was rather late, and it has been suggested that this variation of the myth was an attempt by the Hermopolitan priests to graft the Thoth legend on to older traditions.

Perhaps Thoth assumes the form of the ibis because, like him, the bird is connected with the moon. The ibis has a bill that resembles the crescent moon, and its gait suggests the movement of the moon to some classical authors. Plutarch has written that the alternating black and white feathers of the male ibis are reminiscent of the dark and light phases of the moon. In addition to being a lunar animal, the ibis was well known in antiquity, because it would refuse to drink unhealthy or poisoned water, killed poisonous reptiles, and set mankind an example of cleanliness. Like the god Thoth, the ibis was hostile to dangerous forces and a model for purity and good sense; for Thoth, in addition to being the moon god, was the god of wisdom, who maintained the cosmic order that pervades the created world.

It is in his role as god of wisdom that Thoth demonstrates his connection to Maat, the embodiment of cosmic order. Together, as a divine couple, they serve the sun god, Re. Thoth is the scribe of the gods and, as such, the secretary of Re. One hymn to Re runs: "Daily Thoth writes Maat for thee." Every day Thoth must determine the course of Re; it is his wisdom and creative power that ensures the regular movement of the sun through the sky.

Moreover, it is Thoth who crushes the hostile forces that oppose Re during his voyage. As a result, Thoth is often depicted standing in the prow of the sun-boat.

Maat reveals the other side of the situation, for she embodies the order that Thoth protects. She is called the food of Re: "Thy nourishment consists of Maat, thy beverage is Maat, thy bread is Maat, thy beer is Maat." The law that governs the regularity of the heavens is understood to be the nourishing matrix of both the sun's power and the goodness of life that depends thereon; for Maat is not only the goddess of law but also of justice. Her symbol is the feather of the ostrich. This is a bird that inhabits desert and savanna, although it must never wander too far away from rivers and lakes, since it drinks more than a gallon of water a day. The ostrich cannot fly, but it is a fast runner and a strong fighter. Often Thoth and Maat are depicted together, usually riding in the sun-boat. The law that governs the day and the night, the revolving seasons, and the cycle of years is Maat. It is she who supports the sun god, with Thoth's protection.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Birds are usually epiphanies of a god or goddess, although sometimes they may represent messengers from heaven. A number of themes are associated with birds, and it is helpful to focus on these themes by paying attention to the particular habitat of a bird. For example, the ibis is a water bird, while the ostrich is undoubtedly and primarily connected with land. In addition, almost all birds are regarded as air animals because of their capacity for flight.

Water birds are found very often in tales of creation, as Manabu Waida (1987) points out. One category of creation myth is the cosmogonic dive. In such myths, creation begins with a great primeval sea and no land in sight. One animal succeeds in diving to the depths and resurfacing with a small amount of soil from the bottom of the sea. This soil will then serve as the basis for the earth. Sometimes the so-called earth diver is a frog, but often it is a water bird. The latter motif is common among the peoples of Russia and North America.

Another form of creation myth that combines the symbolism of the waters and the bird is found in traditional Finnish and Estonian tales, where God assumes the form of a bird and lays an egg on the surface of the primeval sea. This egg then grows into the world. A similar tale appears in both Indonesia and Polynesia mythologies. An Orphic myth is slightly different: originally, Night exists as a great black-winged bird hovering over a vast darkness. Although she has no mate, she produces an egg out of which hatches gold-winged Eros. The two halves of the shell become Heaven and Earth.

The idea of a water bird, sometimes anthropomorphized, as the creator of the cosmic egg is found already in Neolithic figurine art. Very often these are vessels that have the shape of a bird. The most unusual aspect of these representations is that the jar is shaped not simply in the form of a bird but in that of a bird carrying a large egg within its body. Similar artifacts are found in Cycladic, Minoan, and Helladic art.

The bird that lives on the land is, of course, not as common as the bird in flight or the water bird. However, there are aspects of bird symbolism that do not depend on the context of either the heavens or the waters. Perhaps the most well-known motif of this kind is the bird goddess of Old Europe and her descendent, in the ancient Near East and in the cultures of the Mediterranean, the sacred dove. For example, in Greece the dove is an epiphany of divinity, but divinity in its amorous aspect. It is the animal that is most sacred to Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty and love.

The most familiar symbolism associated with birds, however, is based on the animal's capacity for flight, that is, the bird that is at home in the heavens. Because of its ability to fly high up over the earth, the bird suggests the possibility of a new perspective, one that is broad and wide and "objective." It is this capacity that makes the bird a symbol of wisdom, the understanding that comes from vision.

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GLOSSARY

RE The most important and widespread name for the Egyptian sun god, who is combined syncretistically with numerous other deities. Re is usually depicted in human form and is worshiped primarily as the creator and sustainer of the world. He travels in a bark through the heavens by day and through the underworld by night. From an early date, his chief cult center was located in Heliopolis (Gk., "sun city").

HATHOR AS A NURTURING FERAL COW
Artist unknown   Sculpture: sandstone, plastered and painted   Measurement unavailable
Reign of Amenhotep II (r. 1447–1420 BCE)   Site: Hathor chapel, temple of Thutmose III
Deir al-Bahri, West Bank, Thebes, Egypt   Location: no. 11549, Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Hathor as a nurturing feral cow

Egypt: New Kingdom, Eighteenth Dynasty

Emerging from papyrus reeds, Hathor as a cow suckles the young king while beneath her chin and in front of her breast another royal figure stands, receiving her protection.

The three figures in this group were carved from a single block of stone. Although this is a freestanding sculpture, the rough stone between the cow's legs and beneath her belly has not been removed. As a result, from each side the effect is of a high-relief carving. At her udder, a nude, crouching figure is being suckled. He is adorned by a uraeus, or protective cobra, an emblem of royalty. Between her horns the cow goddess wears a sun disk surmounted by double plumes. The hide of the cow goddess has a distinctive patterning of blue trefoils and quatrefoils. Under her chin stands the small figure of the king. He wears a nemes headcloth, another emblem of royalty, and stands with his left leg advanced, that is, in the "striding" position. His hands are extended in an attitude of adoration, with his palms down and resting on his stiff white kilt. His face (not shown) either was never finished or else was mutilated. Behind the king and around the neck of the cow a thicket of papyrus is suggested.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This exceptionally fine sculpture represents the goddess Hathor in her form as a feral, or wild, cow. As occurs only rarely, it was found intact in its original decorated surroundings, in a sanctuary dedicated to Hathor in the Theban necropolis.

Hathor is an ancient Egyptian mother goddess. She is portrayed in three ways: as a woman bearing headgear (either a sun disk accompanied by the uraeus, or a cap in the shape of a vulture); as a wild cow of the marshlands; or as a woman with the ears of a cow. Sacred to Hathor are the menat necklace, which is a jewel and a musical instrument in one, and the sistrum. As a cow, Hathor belongs to the sky goddesses of ancient Egypt. However, she is also associated since earliest times with the tree as well as being goddess of the dead.

As with all Egyptian deities, the cult and rituals connected with the worship of Hathor varied according to period and locale. The cliff where this shrine is located was sacred to Hathor at least from the time of the Middle Kingdom (c. 2134–1550 BCE). The chapel was built during the reign of Thutmose III (1504–1450 BCE) within the northwest corner of the old (but probably still revered) mortuary temple of Mentuhotep, founder of the Middle Kingdom and the ruler who established Thebes's prominence. (The present sculpture of the goddess dates to the reign of Amenhotep II, the son and successor to Thutmose III.) A similar chapel, built nearby and probably somewhat earlier by Hatshepsut, the stepmother of Thutmose III, contains inscriptions that clarify the purpose of this one. In Hatshepsut's chapel the goddess Hathor says, "I have wandered through the northern marshland, where I stopped at Khebti, protecting my Horus [child]." At another point in the text, the goddess explains, "I fill thy majesty with life and happiness, as I have done in the west of Khebti. I have suckled the majesties with my breasts. I am thy mother who formed thy limbs and created thy beauties." At Byblos (modern Jubayl) in Lebanon, where there was a local cult of

Hathor, a comparable image of the goddess nursing the king appears on a Middle Kingdom pectoral (dated to circa 1800 BCE).

Hathor is originally the mother of Horus the Great God, Lord of Heaven. Yet, she was also the mother of his incarnation as Horus the King. For example, Pepi I puts "Son of Hathor of Dendera" instead of the usual "Son of Re" in his titulary. The image of the goddess as a cow suckling a newborn king simply reveals this intimate relationship by means of which the Egyptian king was known to be divine.

The chapel in which the statue was found was dedicated to the god Amun as well as to Hathor in her aspect as Goddess of the West (that is, goddess of the dead), in connection with the necropolis that spread through the hills and valleys on the west bank of the Nile at Thebes. The side walls of the chapel contain scenes of the pharaoh and queen making offerings to a Hathor cow who emerges from a pavilion to greet them, and of the pharaoh alone in prayer. In the center of the chapel stood this life-size statue of Hathor as a cow (the first such statue ever found *in situ*). The architectural form of the chapel, which is only slightly larger than the cult image it held, was tailored to accommodate it. Such shrines are known as cave chapels. In this kind of construction, a natural or artificial hollow has been used to create the suggestion that the goddess, in bovine form, is literally emerging from the mountain. This motif emphasized the protection that Hathor offered the deceased, who were sealed in their "eternal homes"—that is, in tombs dug deep in the sides of hills.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

In numerous cultures, cattle are a sign of wealth. In addition, the milk of the cow is nearly everywhere a symbol of the gifts of nature and the nurturing mother. It is interesting, however, that this cow is a wild cow, at home among the papyrus reeds of the marshlands. She is not a member of the domesticated community. Yet as an herbivore, she is not particularly aggressive. Hence the wild cow can represent a serene nature that is still wild, that is, not submissive. As such she is the nurturing support of the king, both in this life and in the life to come. She does not grant him sovereignty or help him defend his boundaries. She is the food and warmth that flow through his veins.

Erich Neumann refers to the relationship between Hathor and the king in his discussion of the positive elementary character of the "Great Mother." "The king, the Great Individual, the god among men and the intermediary between above and below—he too remains the child of the great Mother Goddess, the mother of all the gods, who bore him and rebore him and through whom alone he is king. The horns of Hathor, the nurturing cow of heaven, tower over her head, which is adorned by the maternal symbols of the snake and vulture. She is the throne, sitting upon which he possesses the land of Egypt and with it the earth and its center of fertility" (Neumann, 130).

On the subjective level of the individual person, the image of the cow nurturing the king must point to an archetypal foundation for the Self. Nature itself sponsors and cares for the ruling principle, with the result that the process of individuation does not occur in opposition to the instinctive matrix of personality.

> Thus the Feminine, the giver of nourishment, becomes everywhere a revered principle of nature, on which man is dependent in pleasure and pain. It is from this eternal experience of man, who is as helpless in his dependence on nature as the infant in his dependence on his

mother, that the mother-child figure is inspired forever anew. This mother-child figure, then, does not betoken a regression to infantilism, in which an "adult" becomes a child, or is moved with nostalgia by the mother's love for her child; rather, man in his genuine identification with the child experiences the Great Mother as a symbol of the life on which he himself, the "grown-up," depends. (Ibid., 131)

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GLOSSARY

AMUN (Egyp., "the hidden one") One of the eight primordial gods of Hermopolis. In the Middle Kingdom (2050–1756 BCE), he was assimilated to numerous other deities including Re, chief god of the earlier Egyptian pantheon. As Amun-Re he was represented as a ram-headed sun god.

HORUS An ancient Egyptian god of the sky and of kingship, who absorbed a whole set of gods with hawk and falcon forms. His close links with the sun god and later with Isis and Osiris give rise to many new associations in which his martial and youthful aspects predominate.

URAEUS Originally a symbol of the predynastic snake goddess Wadjet of Buto, a city in Lower Egypt. Combined with the vulture of the Upper Egyptian goddess Nekhbet, it formed an emblem of the pharaoh's power. The uraeus (pl., uraei) is frequently seen on headdresses and crowns.

LION CAPITAL AT SARNATH

Artist unknown   Sculpture: polished sandstone   Height of capital, including base: 7 ft. (2.13 m)   Third century BCE
Site: Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh, India   Location: Archaeological Museum, Sarnath

Lion capital at Sarnath

India: Mauryan

Originally the four lions (each standing above a small wheel) of the Sarnath capital supported a fifth wheel, which represented the teaching of the Buddha, that is, the Wheel of the Law.

Four addorsed Persian-style lions, originally carrying a carved stone wheel, stand atop a drum-shaped plinth on which are reliefs of four wheels and four animals (bull, horse, lion, and elephant). The base is an inverted lotiform bell.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This lion capital is the best known of the Pillar Edicts of Aśoka, the emperor of India from about 270 to 230 BCE. Aśoka is important to the history of Buddhism because after his conversion he was largely responsible for its development and expansion. In this way, his impact on the East resembles Constantine's impact on the West after his conversion to Christianity. In both instances, power and faith are united in the early foundation of a world religion.

In his biography of Aśoka, A. L. Basham (1987) relates that the emperor was the grandson of the founder of the Maurya dynasty. According to Theravāda tradition, Aśoka succeeded to his father's throne only after a period of fratricidal strife during which ninety-nine of his brothers were killed. All of the traditions agree that when Aśoka became emperor, he was an oppressive tyrant. During his reign, which lasted nearly forty years, Aśoka's power grew until he governed an empire larger than that of any previous ruler in India. His empire included most of the subcontinent together with what is now eastern Afghanistan.

The main sources of our knowledge about Aśoka are the inscriptions on rocks and pillars by means of which he made his reforming legislation known to his subjects and exhorted them to follow the Dharma, or teachings of the Buddha. The most important of these include fourteen Rock Edicts and seven Pillar Edicts. Some shorter and less informative inscriptions of Aśoka have been named the Minor Rock and Pillar Edicts.

More than one story relates how the bloody tyrant was transformed into a great Buddhist monarch. His own version is recorded on the Thirteenth Rock Edict. Around 258, a revolt occurred in Kalinga (modern Orissa). The king waged a campaign to put down the rebellion. This involved the slaughter of 100,000 people, while even greater numbers were led into slavery. In addition, many more died from the disease and exposure that accompany warfare. The emperor records how seeing this great suffering caused him to feel remorse for what he had brought about. Experiencing a change of heart, he vowed to abandon aggressive war forever. A second account relates that Aśoka was converted to Buddhism by a child monk. A third version states that Aśoka witnessed a Buddhist monk who exhibited calm and courage while being tortured, and this impressed the emperor so much that he immediately became a devout Buddhist.

The inscriptions of Aśoka, found on pillars like this one as well as on rocks, were part of the peaceful expansion of what he saw to be a spiritual empire. He sent ambassadors to the

five great Hellenistic rulers in the Greek empire in his desire to reach out to all the world. In addition, he initiated many reforms, such as the promotion of vegetarianism, the provision of free medical services to his subjects, and the establishment of resting places on major trade routes. In addition, Aśoka—though a devout Buddhist who set up a number of stupas and sent Buddhist missionaries into all parts of the Indian subcontinent and beyond—proved to be a tolerant and ecumenical ruler who set a precedent for future Indian kings. He gave qualified support to all the religious groups in his kingdom, and he even donated man-made caves in the Barabar Hills (near modern Gaya) to the Ājīvikas, opponents of the Buddhists.

The pillar depicted here combines the symbolism of the royal lion, the sun wheel, and the lotus—all solar symbols in ancient Indian and Buddhist tradition—with that of the *axis mundi.* The pillar both represents and furthers in fact the mission that Aśoka took up in his desire to convert others to the teaching of the Buddha. The lion represents the Buddha, for the clan into which Śākyamuni was born held the lion as its sacred emblem. Furthermore, the revelation of the Buddha was often referred to as "the lion's roar." The lion's roar is directed into all four corners of the earth from the sacred center of the world that the pillar, and especially its wheel, represents.

The Wheel of the Law is the center of the world in that it is the starting place for the path to enlightenment. Śākyamuni Buddha's first sermon was given in the Deer Park at Sarnath to the five mendicants who had shared his austerities. Here he first revealed the Law (Dharma), that is, the nature of reality, the inevitability of suffering, and the path to enlightenment. The wheel, an earlier symbol of the sun and sometimes the cosmos as a whole, assumes the role of representing the Buddha's vision of ultimate reality. It is on this vision that his teaching of the way out of the cycle of births and deaths depends.

The four animals that decorate the pillar—the lion, the bull, the horse, and the elephant—are all sacred animals symbolizing power. The lotus, commonly found in Indian and Buddhist sacred art, suggests the unity of life that begins in the dark, wet mud of the earth and reaches up out of the waters toward the sun. In the simple life of the lotus, all the elements are encountered in its quest for the sun's light.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

"According to *Physiologus* (the traditional lore of animal psychology), the lion's cubs are still-born. They must be awakened into life by a roar. That is why the lion has such a roar: to awaken the young lions" (Hillman, 41). The Buddha is "the awakened one." It is no wonder that his teaching is the lion's roar that awakens the sleeping cubs, that is, the rest of mankind and other sentient beings. To be awake is to see things as they really are: the interdependency of all things and the truth that whatever is subject to arising is also subject to cessation. To be awake is to have compassion for all things and to cultivate the path to *nirvāṇa.*

The symbolism of the lion is vast and rich. As the power that protects, he is the companion of the goddess of love and war in the ancient Near East, and he often appears close to her throne. The lion is also a solar symbol because of his golden mane, which resembles the rays of the sun. In astrology, the constellation of Leo was assigned the sun as its ruler, and the zodiacal sign of Leo appears during the hottest time of the year (July and August). In the early Christianity of Egypt, the image of the lion in the desert stands for the

solitary path of the hermit. C. G. Jung suggests that the lion as it appears in alchemical treatises symbolizes the fire of emotion, source of the light that may illuminate new insight, or conscious perception.

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GLOSSARY

AXIS MUNDI (Lat., "world axis") The world pillar, or cosmic axis, described in the cosmologies of divers cultures. It provides a center to the cosmos by connecting all three realms: that of the underworld, that of human beings, and that of the gods. It may take on any one of a number of forms, for example, that of a gigantic tree, a mountain, a bridge, a ladder.

DHARMA (Skt., "law," "practice," or "duty") In Hinduism, the moral order of the cosmos as a whole, hence the reality that dictates the way things ought to be. In Buddhism, *Dharma* refers to the Buddha's saving insight into the nature of ultimate reality, and in this way to his teachings about that reality.

ENLIGHTENMENT (BUDDHIST) The goal of every Buddhist is to attain enlightenment, that is, to break through the limitations of ordinary consciousness in order to experience reality directly and completely. Siddhārtha Gautama was called the Buddha, the "enlightened" or "awakened" one. The term *Buddha* derives from the Sanskrit *bodhi* ("awakening").

ŚĀKYAMUNI (Skt., "sage of the Śākya clan") Title for Siddhārtha Gautama, the historical Buddha, who lived in India from 563 to 483 BCE. Born a prince, he renounced both family and social position, attained enlightenment, and preached the Way (Dharma) to a community of monks and lay followers.

Bear screen

Artist of the Stikine division of Tlingit Wood with traces of hair, red and black pigment
Approximately 15 × 8 ft. (4.57 × 2.74 m) Circa 1840 Site: "Big House," Wrangell, Alaska
Location: QT 1-41, Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado

Bear screen

Northwest Coast: Tlingit

This screen of a female brown bear represents the bear crest belonging to a line of Tlingit chiefs who have the hereditary title of Shakes. According to myth, one of the ancestors of this lineage married a she-bear, who bore him offspring. This man was killed by the bear-wife's cubs at her command when he failed to return from visiting his human family. Ever since, the sons of the dead man's sister and their heirs claim the right to display this particular crest.

This screen is perhaps the most important crest of the Shakes clan. The figure of a squatting bear with a doorway through her vagina is frontally presented, with arms crooked at the elbow so that her hands face palms forward just below her cheeks. The elbows nearly touch her bent knees. The ears (with pendants of hair on the outer edges), head, arms, hands, and legs are all red and without outlines, as are the organs of the body, which are depicted in X-ray style. The features of the face, the outline of the body, and the feet are all in black. Small, squatting figures of bears occupy each of the ears as filler designs. The face is carved slightly in bas-relief, the technique being highlighted by the black eyebrows, black-outlined eyes, black nose, and widespread mouth with black lips. The teeth, though carved, are unpainted. Small anthropomorphic faces fill in the pupils and nostrils. More conventionalized black faces with features in natural wood occupy negative space in the palms, elbows, and knees. Similar conventionalized faces are seen at the top, each side, and in the middle of the trunk of the bear-wife's body. These serve as a frame for her internal organs.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The bear—black bear, brown bear, or grizzly bear—is a recurrent image in Tlingit art. Furthermore, several Tlingit matrilineages as well as certain clans of the Wolf moiety claim rights to a bear crest. Such rights are legitimated by means of stories of ancestral dealings with supernatural bears.

According to the Tlingit myth associated with this bear crest, one of the ancestors of the clan was captured by a grizzly bear while he was out hunting. The grizzly then threw the hunter into his den. The she-bear, however, instead of killing him, concealed him, and when her mate returned, she denied that the human had ever been cast into the cave. The male grizzly departed and never returned, and the hunter married the she-bear, who bore him children. He lived with them and hunted for them, until one day, he felt a longing to return to his village and his human family. The bear-wife let him go unwillingly, beseeching him not to have anything to do with his human wife. The hunter returned home, where his human wife reproached him for having abandoned her for so long, for having left her alone with the care of their children. So the hunter went out to hunt for them. He brought them seals and other food and fish. The bear-wife learned of his doings and grew very jealous. She directed her cubs to fall on him and kill him as soon as he entered the forest again to hunt, and so they did.

Stories of the bear-wife, or Bear Woman, are common among North American Indians. In a Fort Fraser Carrier Indian tale, a young man out hunting meets a young woman who turns out to be a black bear. He kills a grizzly who is an enemy of her people, and so comes to live happily with her until he returns with her to his village. There she acts spitefully, refusing to aid the others in drying fish and gathering berries. When famine threatens, however, she discloses a miraculous underground store of dried salmon and dried berries and saves her new family. The following summer, the young hunter meets a former sweetheart and flirts with her. The bear-wife weeps all night, and in the morning, she and her cub change into bears and depart. The young man sorrowfully follows their tracks but never catches sight of them again.

These two tales illustrate some of the more general themes that appear in the myths of this kind: the helpfulness of the bear-wife; the offspring that unite the human and the bear; and the jealousy of the offended bear-wife. In the Tlingit tale, however, there is no boon offered to the bear (as in the killing of the grizzly in the second tale) to offset her jealousy.

Cultures in which animals serve as totems have rituals that define and sustain this special relationship. Bear ceremonies are found throughout the hunting peoples of northern Eurasia and North America. In these regions, the harsh conditions of life make the killing of animals a necessity, and hunting rites consequently are an essential part of religious practice. Furthermore, the bear is always treated with special fear, even reverence. For example, when a dead grizzly is brought into a Tlingit camp, its head is carried indoors and decorated with eagle feathers and red paint. One talks to it as if it were a human being, not because it might come to life again, but because its friends might take revenge on the hunter.

Shakes is the name given to the hereditary chief of the principal family of the Wolf moiety at Wrangell. When the United States Forestry Service in the late 1930s sponsored the rebuilding of the ancestral home of the Shakes chieftains and their totem poles on Shaiks Island, Wrangell, a replica of the present screen was made for the rebuilt house. Unfortunately, it was placed incorrectly (on the outside of the house so as to surround the main doorway). Moreover, the ravens on either side have nothing to do with the piece (the raven sections appear to be broken sections of wooden boxes).

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Among hunting animals, the bear is closely connected with the shamanic rites of healing. Although this crest does not have a direct connection to shamanism, the historical connection is evident in the use of the X-ray style, which has its roots in Paleolithic times. The X-ray style is doubtless an expression of the shamanistic view that animals can be restored to life from certain vitally important parts of the body. The mere portrayal of these body parts serves to bring about the resuscitation or increase of the animals. Thus, pictures of animals are not decorative but bring into the artist's possession the vital substance of the animal, which can then be influenced through ritual. Among Native Americans, the bear is considered to be, along with the buffalo, one of the strongest of the land animals. Medicine derived from contact with a bear (whether actual or symbolic) is perhaps the most powerful available.

The bear in the image reproduced here is a female bear, and her femininity lends further symbolism to this theme of the bear's power. The female bear raises her offspring alone, and

she is considered by primal peoples generally to be the ideal mother. Hence she has come to represent the kind of maternity that is both independent and fiercely protective of the young. The Greek goddess Artemis was known as a bear. Artemis was the virgin goddess, in the sense that she did not live in the role of a consort; at the same time, she is especially important as the goddess who is friendly to young animals and children.

The striking symbolism of the bear's vagina serving as a doorway points to the bear's role as an animal of initiation. The door symbolizes the process of moving from one state to another. Such passage is connected here with the symbolism of birth, and the bear is the mediatrix that guides the human being to new life. The bear has long fascinated mankind, partly because of its habit of hibernation, which may have served as a model of death and rebirth in human societies.

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GLOSSARY

CLAN CREST Most commonly found among the Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest, crests are visual designs limited in use to members of a given clan, representing ancestral (totemic) figures. They demonstrate wealth or political or social prestige, and they identify the individual in relationship to other members of the same group. Usually made of wood or ivory, they may be incorporated into costumes, personal property, or dwellings.

TLINGIT A large and important Athapascan tribe inhabiting coastal Alaska, famed for their wood sculpture, especially the tall totem poles erected in front of their wooden dwellings. Their skillful dealings with Russian and American traders earned them great wealth and brought them to the forefront of tribes of the Northwest coastal region.

X-RAY STYLE An artistic convention in which the inner skeleton and organs of an animal or human figure are visible, as if by means of an X ray.

ANUBIS ON HIS PYLON-SHAPED SHRINE

Artist unknown   Sculpture: wood, gessoed, gilded, and covered with bitumen or black resin; eyes inlaid with calcite and obsidian   Height of figure: 23.5 in. (59.7 cm); height of shrine: 21.3 in. (54.1 cm)
Reign of Tutankhamen (c. 1361–1352 BCE)
Site: entrance to the treasury, KV 62, tomb of Tutankhamen, West Bank necropolis, Thebes, Egypt
Location: Tutankhamen cat. no. 261, Egyptian Museum, Cairo

ANUBIS ON HIS PYLON-SHAPED SHRINE

Egypt: New Kingdom, Eighteenth Dynasty

The Lord of the Necropolis, a recumbent but alert canine god (Anubis), guards the entrance to a room in Tutankhamen's tomb, called the treasury. In addition to serving as a watchman in cemeteries and tombs, Anubis was said to preside over the embalming of the dead and to conduct the Weighing of the Heart, a ceremony in which the deceased was judged in the presence of Osiris, the king of the dead.

The forepaws of the watchful canine god rest on the shrine, while his tail, which is very long, hangs over its back. The eyes are of inlaid calcite and obsidian (gold "cosmetic lines" outline and extend the eyebrows and outer canthi). The shrine upon which Anubis sits is flat-topped, with traditional sloping, or battered, sides that suggest the shape of a temple pylon. Religious texts are displayed in bands along the perimeter of each of the four sides of the shrine. Its main panels are covered with two registers of *djed* pillars in pairs (signifying stability) alternating with *tyet* signs (signifying protection). These symbols are carved in low relief, gessoed, and heavily gilded. The shrine rests on a sled that is fitted onto carrying poles.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

During the New Kingdom and in later periods, a figure of the recumbent deity often appeared atop the so-called mystery chests that contained the embalmed viscera of the deceased. In this way, Anubis served in his role as "he who is over the mystery," protecting the life organs that he had resuscitated through the embalming process.

Anubis was depicted either as a black jackal or dog or as a jackal-headed man. In earliest times, the jackal was for the Egyptians simply the destroyer of corpses. An inhabitant of the desert, Anubis became associated with the western desert, the site of the portals to the underworld. These two associations together determined the evolution of this figure: always he remains involved in the transformation of corpses (embalming instead of consuming) and acts as a signpost, even as psychopomp, on the journey through the underworld to the realm of the gods.

It appears that, at first, Anubis was the god of death for the pharaoh alone. It is thought that in ancient times the pharaoh may have been ritually put to death at the end of a reign of twenty-eight years. At the appointed time, Anubis (or a priest wearing a jackal-headed mask) appeared before the pharaoh bearing a viper. When this practice was ended, Anubis continued as the announcer of death, depicted as a warrior bearing daggers and a coiled viper or cobra.

In myth, Anubis became identified with Osiris, king of the dead. One version relates how Nephthys, the wife of Osiris' brother, desired a child by Osiris. Some say she disguised herself as Isis, his wife; others suggest that she drugged him. Either way, she conceived Anubis, but fearing punishment at the hands of her husband, Seth, she exposed the infant as soon as he was born. Soon thereafter, Seth murdered Osiris, and Nephthys joined Isis in the search for the body of the dead god. Further, she told Isis about Anubis. Isis was led by a pack

of dogs to discover the whereabouts of the infant, and she adopted him. Anubis grew up to become the guard of Isis, and eventually it was he, alone or together with Isis and Nephthys, who embalmed the dead Osiris.

In practice, the funerary rites for Osiris were available also for those who worshiped him. In this cult of the afterlife, it was Anubis who supervised the correct embalmment of bodies and their reconstitution; received the mummy into the tomb, performing the Opening of the Mouth ceremony; and conducted the soul to the Field of Celestial Offerings, laying his hand over the mummy to protect it. Most important of all, Anubis directed the Weighing of the Heart in the presence of Osiris: the heart of the deceased was placed in one tray of a scale, and a feather was placed in the other. If the dead person's heart—that is, the inner self—proved to be heavier (more earthbound) than the feather of the goddess Maat, who embodied the principles of cosmic order and truth, he or she could not join the gods in eternal life.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

As Manfred Lurker notes, the dog is an ambivalent symbol. It is experienced by human beings both as the domestic animal who is friend and companion and as the wild dog or wolf. As companion of herders and hunters, the dog became a symbol of vigilance and fidelity. As predator and scavenger in the wild, it became a symbol of greed and impurity. In Islam, for example, this ambivalence is fully expressed in the different roles assumed by dogs. On the one hand, the black dog is connected with the devil; on the other hand, the dog of the Seven Sleepers is believed to be holy because of its constant contact with the saints.

The relationship between the dog and death, in both ritual and myth, is found all over the world. Already in the age of the megaliths, ancient Europeans were burying dogs along with their dead. Among the ancient Aztec and Mayan peoples, it was believed that a dog could guide the dead across the river that separates this world from the next. For this reason, dogs were sacrificed during the funerary rites and buried with the deceased. In addition to its role as guide, the dog may serve as guardian of the land of the dead. The ancient Greeks tell of Kerberos, who guarded Hades; the Indians, of the dogs of Yama (god of the dead).

In addition to Anubis, numerous other demons and deities take the form of members of the dog family. In Hinduism, Śiva is called "lord of the dogs." One of his wives, the demon-slayer Durgā, has the name "wolf-faced one." Among the Khanty and Mansi of Siberia, the spirit of death has the form of a dog, and on the Kamchatka Peninsula it is believed that one is most likely to attain paradise if one has been devoured by dogs. Wolves and corpse-eating dogs may represent death, but the animal that licks wounds may also be an image of healing. Thus, Gula, the Babylonian goddess of healing, assumes the form of a dog, and it is Anubis who, by embalming the corpse, "heals" it for eternal life.

The ambivalence of the symbolism of the dog—its twofold nature as wild predator and domestic watchman—is expressed on an inner level as well. It seems to represent an aspect of human instinct that exists at the boundary between the wild and the tame, or the unconscious and consciousness:

> The dog is a threshold animal. In its phantom form it haunted boundaries, cross-roads and bridges; in myth, it guarded bridges and gateways into the Underworld. Sometimes the archetypal dog is a barrier, sometimes a link; as a doorkeeper it is a controller of exits and

entrances. The boundary kept by the dog-archetype is that between life and death, outer and inner, day and night; between the conscious and unconscious mind. Its image appears not only at the brink of death, but in transitional stages and at turning points in life: the points at which arrows change their direction; where despair changes into hope, poisoning into healing, and death into new life. From this position the dog-archetype controls the balance of life, for it stands at the centre, weighing sin against truth, evening up until there is equilibrium.

(Dale-Green, 191)

C. G. Jung defines the psyche as a combination of conscious and unconscious factors. However, the unity of the psyche is experienced in everyday life as being continually disturbed, if not totally interrupted. There are many threshold figures that guard the way to and from the unconscious. The dog is especially apt since it combines conscious loyalty to a master, representing the ostensible sum of ego-consciousness, with the wildness of its jackal nature, representing the obscurity or at least unpredictability of the unconscious.

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GLOSSARY

DJED Egyptian hieroglyph that conveys the notion of stability and duration. Originally an independent emblem, it came to be associated most often with Osiris, but is frequently connected to other gods as well.

OSIRIS The Egyptian god who suffered a violent death; he is depicted in human form without indication of limbs. His attributes of crook and flail allude to ancient links with kingship and pastoralism. Other features connect Osiris with the cycle of seasons and vegetation. However, he became primarily a ruler of the dead. The best-known of his cult centers was at Abydos.

PYLON (from the Greek *pulōn,* "gateway") A truncated pyramid, or sometimes two of them together, serving as a gateway to an Egyptian temple.

TYET Symbol of the Egyptian goddess Isis, derived most probably from the shape of a sandal strap. It was sometimes called "the knot of Isis."

Phillips Memorial
Library
Providence College

Bees clasping a honeycomb

Artist unknown Jewelry: gold Height: 1.8 in. (4.6 cm) Circa 1700–1550 BCE

Site: Cemetery (Middle Minoan), Mallia, Crete Location: no. 559, Iráklion Museum, Crete

Bees clasping a honeycomb

Greek: Crete, Palace Period II

This heraldic display may reflect a myth or rite from the cult of Zeus on Crete. The infant Zeus, whose first home was Crete, is said to have been nourished on honey from birth, and the round honeycomb may represent the matrix that nourishes new life.

This pendant is a beautifully worked piece of gold jewelry showing two bees protectively clasping a honeycomb.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

We know very little about the myths or rites of the ancient Minoans, but there is evidence of a bee goddess, who was understood as a goddess of periodic regeneration. Bees also play an important role in the ancient traditions that associate Zeus with Crete. According to some mythological sources, the goddess Rhea saved the infant Zeus from being swallowed by his father, Kronos (who had already devoured his older offspring), and then she secretly sent him off to Crete into the care of his grandmother, Gaia. Another tradition asserts that Zeus was born in a Cretan cave. Both traditions picture the divine child hidden in a mountain cave and cared for by goats or young maidens, in particular by the two daughters of the Cretan king, Amaltheia and Melissa. Amaltheia fed him goat's milk; her sister, whose name means "bee," fed him honey. All of the accounts record the belief in honey as a sacred food, and since Zeus was rescued from death at birth, this food may be seen as having regenerative powers.

In Greek mythology, the mature gods are represented as subsisting on nectar (a drink made from the same plant juices from which bees make honey) and ambrosia (a sweetly smelling and tasting food), and in their veins flows not blood but ichor, a pale yellow, ethereal fluid. *Melissa,* the Greek word for "bee," can be a proper name as described above, but it can also be the title for a priestess. The princess of that name who nursed Zeus is said to have been the high priestess of the great goddess Rhea. Priestesses of Artemis and Demeter were also referred to as bees, and it is said that Apollo learned the art of prophecy from three old women, three Melissae.

Apollo's son Aristaios (who was raised by Gaia or by the centaur Cheiron and taught by the Muses), a healer and prophet, was reputedly the first to learn the art of beekeeping. For this gift he came to be worshiped as a god. One day Aristaios caught sight of a beautiful nymph and began to pursue her. Attempting to flee, she stepped on a snake and died almost at once of its poisonous bite. The nymph was Eurydice, the wife of the god Orpheus, which Aristaios discovered only later when he sought to discover why his bees were falling sick and dying. Learning that her death was the cause, he purified himself by sacrificing cattle to Orpheus. Returning home nine days later, he found his bees swarming in the carcasses. Much later, in grief over the death of his son Actaion, Aristaios left Greece for Crete—so that this story, too, brings us back to Crete. There the child Dionysos, like his father, Zeus,

before him, was secretly brought to a cave in Crete for a safe upbringing (in this case, to protect him from Hera). Dionysos was nursed by Aristaios's daughter Makris, who nourished the divine infant on honey.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

"Honey has served mankind as food since the Old Stone Age. A dark-red rock painting in the cave of Araña near Bicorp in Spain shows the precursors of the 'honey thieves' climbing tall trees in order to rob the bees. The different methods of obtaining honey: directly from flowers, from wild bees, and by the domestication of bees, would provide a special system of dating, varying with the region and people. The common—archetypal and biologically grounded—factor is that in addition to nourishment (it seems unlikely that men have ever lived on honey alone) *zoë* ["life"] seeks sweetness and finds an intensification in it. A further intensification was provided by the making of an intoxicating drink from honey; though it is more correct to speak of euphoria than of intoxication, for it is hard to say where drunkenness sets in and can be recognized as a special state, distinct from euphoria. The bees were the first source of what men later obtained from the vine" (Kerényi, 35).

The bee is often a symbol of the soul that, with the death of the body, flies to heaven. In another capacity, the hive itself can be a symbol of the living psyche—a complex whole, which seems to have one will and seeks at all times to maintain a balance that supports new life.

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MONSTERS

[Middle English and Old French monstre, *from the Latin* monstrum: *any occurrence out of the ordinary course of nature supposed to indicate the will of the gods; a marvel, a monster.]*

Nine at the beginning means:
Hidden dragon. Do not act.

Nine in the second place means:
Dragon appearing in the field.
It furthers one to see the great man.

Nine in the third place means:
All day long the superior man is creatively active.
At nightfall his mind is still beset with cares.
Danger. No blame.

Nine in the fourth place means:
Wavering flight over the depths.
No blame.

Nine in the fifth place means:
Flying dragon in the heavens.
It furthers one to see the great man.

Nine at the top means:
Arrogant dragon will have cause to repent.

When all the lines are nines, it means:
There appears a flight of dragons without heads.
Good fortune.

—I ching

LION-MAN

Artist unknown   Staff: ivory, with iron inlays   Height: 7.75 in. (19.7 cm)
Nineteenth or twentieth century CE   Site: Zaire
Location: Paul and Ruth Tishman Collection, Epcot Center, Orlando, Florida

Lion-man

Zaire: Yombe

The canes of the Yombe chiefs are important insignia of their office and attest to their prestige and authority. The lion-headed man carved at the top of this staff symbolizes a protective power that is intensified by the aggressiveness of its gaping mouth and protruding tongue. It may also serve to inspire reverential fear of its owner.

The figure of a man with the head of a lion rests in a kneeling position, his hands gathered together in his lap. His only ornament is a necklace of round shells on his shoulders, covering much of his neck. His head is that of a lion, without a mane. The mouth is open, teeth revealed and tongue quite visible, as if the lion were roaring.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Two levels of chief are distinguished in Yombe society: the chief of the lineage (the elder of the lineage) and the elected and sacred chief of the groups of lineages. These chiefs, known as the "fathers," do not wield power or authority in the way that we understand these terms. Although the chief acquires his office as a result of his role in the lineage structure, it is the position he occupies in the religious order that defines the nature of his power. The chief symbolically affirms and embodies the existence of the lineage group (or groups of lineages) sanctioned by Nzambi, the high god. Vital forces are bestowed on the community through the chief, and his significance is derived from his structural place in this continuum of power.

Nzambi is the creator of all things, the one who makes the universe visible and witnesses all human activities. He knows how to punish humans who offend him (often by sending tornadoes or tempests). While all important beneficent forces are believed to originate in Nzambi, he is particularly linked to success in the hunt. As in many other African traditions, Nzambi works his will primarily through lesser spirits; the *kinda* and the *simbi* are refractions of his power.

The *kinda* (also called *Nzambi a tsi,* "Nzambi on the ground") are earth spirits that assure order, security, and all manner of prosperity. Humans are much more dependent on the *kinda* than on Nzambi, because they are more directly involved with the life of the community. They are central to the installation of chiefs, the consecration of adult males, and circumcision rituals.

The *kinda* are complemented by water spirits known as *simbi.* The *simbi* are both male and female and have proper names. The waters where they live are consecrated waters, inbued with healing powers. When they are angry, they poison or dirty the water. Like the *kinda,* the *simbi* are associated with the chiefs. It is said that they impose rules on them, but there are also stories of friendships and ritual exchanges of gifts and powers between the *simbi* and the chiefs. While signs of the *simbi* can be perceived as they roam through the forests (in the wind rustling through the leaves, for example), it is only the chiefs who can actually see them.

There is, however, a more crucial link between the lesser spirits and the chiefs. Above all else, they endow him with *wene,* the spiritual power (ultimately deriving from Nzambi) that

supports human existence. Because he is imbued with *wene* by the lesser spirits, the chief "manages" the soil and controls the religious values associated with the land and its productivity. Without the chief and his *wene,* the groups that he links to divinity simply could not possess, cultivate, or live on any piece of land.

As spiritual representative and conservator of the group, the chief alone is given the right to display a variety of royal regalia indicating his special status. Both canes and staffs are typical emblems of office, and among the Yombe they are decorated often with figures in postures of respect or reverence (showing the attitude one should assume before a chief). Further, to come into contact with and to channel *wene* is not a matter to be undertaken lightly. The awe-inspiring feline character of the cane head shown here reflects this fact by emphasizing the fearsome nature of the chief's power and the fierce responsibility he faces in wielding it.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The staff has a twofold symbolism: it is both a means of support and a weapon for defense. For example, the ancient Egyptians held a festival after the autumn solstice that they called the Nativity of the Sun Stick. They supposed that as the days grew shorter and the light of the sun weaker, the sun would need a stick for support. In the riddle of the Sphinx, which Oedipus correctly guessed, the creature that walks on three legs in the evening is an aged human being supported by a staff. This same Oedipus killed his father, Laius, whom he did not know, with one blow of his staff. The staff of the shepherd, with which he protects and guides the sheep, becomes a symbol of protection and authority, for both the chieftain and the king. In the Hebrew Psalms, the singer praises the divine shepherd upon whom he relies: "Even though I walk through a valley dark as death I fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy staff and thy crook are my comfort" (*Psalm* 23:4). The symbol of the staff or cane can be used in a negative sense as well, as the ineffective or broken stick. Thus, in *Isaiah* 36:6, Egypt is referred to as a power that the Israelites must not rely upon: "Egypt is a splintered cane that will run into a man's hand and pierce it if he leans on it."

As the emblem of the chief, the staff represents not only the protection and support that he offers his people but also his role as the intermediary *par excellence* between the divine and the natural realms. In this sense, the staff symbolizes his role as a living version of the *axis mundi.* The figure of a lion-man on the top of a chief's staff emphasizes the raw force that strengthens royalty. The lion is often associated with kingship as the divine power of aggression required to protect the people and their land from its enemies. The lion's roar awakens friend and foe alike, filling them with awareness of this fierce beast and its presence.

The image of a creature that is half man and half lion is found also in the myths of ancient India. The Purāṇas relate tales of the fourth *avatāra,* or incarnation, of Viṣṇu, Narasiṃha, the man-lion. Viṣṇu assumed this form to deliver the world from the tyranny of a demon who, through diligent practice of austerities, had become invincible. The demon, called Hiraṇyakaśipu ("golden garment"), had through the power of yoga become sole sovereign of the cosmos, overthrowing even the gods. Further, he had a son by the name Prahlāda ("joyful excitement"), a devotee of the god Viṣṇu. The father was filled with arrogance and believed that he had banished all threat of divine intervention in his life. One day, when his son declared that Viṣṇu was everywhere, the father challenged him to explain why, if that were the case, the god was not visible in a pillar of the palace. He then struck the pillar with

his fist. The column split open, and out sprang Narasiṃha. A short but terrible struggle ensued, which ended with the god tearing the demon apart and devouring his entrails.

Another lion-headed human being is known to us in the form of a statuette from ancient Susa (c. 3000 BCE). Probably an androgynous spirit with a lion's head, the so-called lion-demon stands holding its hands in the very same position as this lion-man of Africa. Little is known of the cultural significance of the small (3.5-in.) figure.

These half-lion, half-human figures express a dual nature that can be conveyed only by mingling animal and human characteristics. It is not simply the animality of the image that is significant but rather the contrast and simultaneous synthesis of opposing metaphorical principles. Oppositions such as those between the wild and the domestic, nature and culture, the unconscious and consciousness are thus brought together to create new categories. The god or king who is represented as a lion-man expresses the harnessing of the lion's independence and fierceness to protect the ordered world of gods and mankind. On the intrapsychic level, the appearance of such a man-beast might refer to a union that brings instinctual power into service of the ordered world of the Self.

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GAṆEŚA, LORD OF HOSTS

Artist unknown Relief: schist Height: 22½ in. (57 cm); width: 11�7⁄16 in. (29 cm); depth: 5⅞ in. (15 cm)
Eleventh century CE Site: Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India Location: Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar

Gaṇeśa, lord of hosts

India: Orissa

Gaṇeśa, Lord of Hosts, is the son of Śiva and Pārvatī and the wise leader of all minor Hindu deities. His role is to create and to remove obstacles. He is connected with undertakings, ritual or otherwise, and their resulting success or failure.

A corpulent human figure with the head of an elephant stands in the graceful "triply flexed" pose on a lotus pedestal. His head is crowned with the matted, piled-up coiffure of an ascetic, while serpents and strings of pearls serve him as ornaments. The bells on his feet indicate that he is a dancer. An elaborately carved, flame-edged halo encircles his head. Gaṇeśa holds objects in each of his four hands: a broken tusk, a rosary, a bowl of sweets, and an elephant goad. Small figures representing musicians and minor deities surround him, and his vehicle, the rat, gazes up at him.

Cultural context

In addition to being the Lord of Hosts, Gaṇeśa has many names and identities. He is also Vināyaka ("leader"), Ekadanta ("one-tusked"), Lambodara ("potbellied"), Vighnarāja ("lord of obstacles"), and Siddhadāta ("giver of success"). The son of Śiva and Pārvatī (or of Pārvatī alone), he is the leader of Śiva's group of attendants, the minor deities or *gaṇa-devata*s. Gaṇeśa's special role in the Hindu pantheon is to create and remove obstacles. His image is found at the entrance of every house, every sanctuary. Further, he is propitiated at the beginning of every undertaking in order to ensure its success, whether it be a journey, the building of a house, the writing of a book, or even the composing of a letter. Moreover, Gaṇeśa is a god of wisdom and prudence. A good scribe and learned in the scriptures, it was he who transcribed the *Mahābhārata,* using his broken tusk as a pen.

Gaṇeśa is represented as a short fat man with four hands and the head of an elephant, having only one tusk. The second tusk was broken off in battle. Numerous accounts are given to explain why it is that Gaṇeśa has an elephant's head. According to one tale, Pārvatī desired a son to love, but Śiva thought it foolish, since he did not need any progeny to prolong his life through oblations. Making fun of her, he produced a child out of a piece of her dress. Then Pārvatī brought it to life as a real child. After she had embraced him for a moment, she gave the beautiful little boy to her husband in order to share her happiness. The father noted a flaw in his birth caused by the position of Saturn, the planet of suicides. At the same time the boy's head, which was pointing north, fell from its neck. Pārvatī was overcome with grief, and Śiva, feeling pity for her, sought to join the head again to the body of the boy. Just then, however, a voice came out of the sky and warned Śiva that the head had been harmed by the god's gaze. He was told to have another head, one facing in the same direction, substituted. Śiva sent forth his faithful bull, Nandi, to fetch the first available head facing north, and this turned out to be that of Airāvata, Indra's elephant. A battle with Indra followed, but in the end, Śiva and Nandi won, and Gaṇeśa received his elephant's head.

After Śiva restored the child Gaṇeśa with the head of the elephant, he brought him

before the gods, who marveled at the youth's radiance and offered him gifts: Brahmā gave him a rosary of beads, Indra (repenting of his selfishness) gave him an elephant goad, and the goddess Earth gave him a rat (or bandicoot) for his vehicle. Another myth relates how the god won his two wives, Siddhi and Ṛddhi. He and his brother Skanda were rivals, and they agreed to decide the winner by means of a race once around the world. Skanda set off and after long and difficult travels returned home to find that Gaṇeśa was married already to the two girls, having, as he put it, made the tour of the entire world in the course of his deep studies of the scriptures—so gifted in learning and logic was he, that his tour was completed long before his less astute brother returned.

The historical origins of this deity are obscure, but already by the first century of the common era his image appeared on coins, and sculptures of the elephant-headed god are numerous by the fifth century. Although Gaṇeśa is recognized throughout India, he is worshiped most particularly within the context of Śaivism. Moreover, ever since the seventeenth century he has been the object of special devotion among the Gāṇapatyas, who regard Gaṇeśa as the manifest form of ultimate reality (*brahman*) that is accessible to the senses, the mind, and (through devotional practices) the heart. Thus, he may serve both as the patron deity of a family or clan and as a personal lord. In the first case, devotion tends to be more formal and takes place during specific festivals, while the second form of devotion is more likely to be informal, intimate, and intense.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Many of the animals that play a significant role in the symbolism of human culture are experienced both as wild animals and as their domesticated cousins. The cat, for example, is both the great lion of the wilderness and the useful tabby that keeps down the mouse population in the barn. The dog symbol may refer to the killer wolf or the loyal companion of the hunter. So, too, the elephant is experienced both as the giant of the African plains and as the domesticated helpmate of Indian travelers and workers.

The symbolism of Gaṇeśa, the elephant-headed god, points more particularly to the latter group of elephants. Gaṇeśa displays both the helpfulness and the wisdom of the domesticated elephant. In addition, there is behind the figure of Gaṇeśa that of Airāvata, the great elephant who carried the god Indra. As Indra's mount, Airāvata participated in the protection of the cosmos. The elephant connotes royal power as well. At certain times in the history of India, elephants were associated with kings and chieftains. They were employed in war and for the sake of royal ceremony. In myths about the universal monarch, it is declared that he shall ride a white elephant as he traverses the world in watchfulness.

It is then no wonder that Gaṇeśa is a god of obstacles. In pre-industrial societies, the brute strength of the elephant would be required for much actual removing of physical obstacles and for carrying trees in order to build walls and gates.

In addition to the strength of the elephant, its strongly social nature has been noted by many scholars. The elephant lives in a herd and obeys the social customs of its group. Living as long as sixty or seventy years, it is capable of complex social behavior. Female elephants assist one another at the birth of their calves, protecting the newborn elephant until it is able to fend for itself. Further, if an elephant falls into a trap, its companions will work together in order to free it.

The god who is half man and half animal combines characteristics of both natures.

Gaṇeśa seems to represent a spiritual force that is directed outward into the world of human activity. In contrast to the snake, who seems to represent an energy or force that compels change within, the domain of Gaṇeśa is both extroverted and more social—he pushes into consciousness solutions of practical problems that enrich the human community.

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GLOSSARY

BRAHMĀ In Hindu mythology, the creator god. His animal form is the gander. He is also depicted as the four-headed ascetic, full of yogic wisdom. The mythology of Brahmā seems to have developed during the period of the Brāhmaṇas (c. 1000–700 BCE), as a product of orthodox Aryan thinking. Later, Brahmā became subordinated to both Viṣṇu and Śiva. No modern cult exists around this god.

GAṆA-DEVATAS (Skt., "troops of deities") Hindu deities who generally appear, or are spoken of, in classes. There are nine classes of such deities, and they are attendant upon Śiva, under the command of Gaṇeśa. They dwell on Gaṇa-Parvata (i.e., Mount Kailāsa).

INDRA In the Vedas, the earliest Hindu writings, Indra is the storm god, protector of the cosmos and all its inhabitants.

MAHĀBHĀRATA One of the two great epics of India, compiled from oral tradition between 400 BCE and 400 CE. The plot of the epic centers on a war between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas, but within this narrative framework are included tales of all kinds. The *Bhagavadgītā,* one of the most sacred Hindu texts, is found in the epic.

MUSHHUSH, THE SERPENT-DRAGON
Artist unknown Molded relief: enameled bricks, polychrome Height: 39⅛ in. (1.0 m)
Reign of Nebuchadrezzar II (605–562 BCE) Site: Ishtar Gate, Babylon
Location: Vorderasiatisches Museum, East Berlin

MUSHHUSH, THE SERPENT-DRAGON

Near East: Mesopotamia, Neo-Babylonian Period

The composite nature of the Mushhush expresses the great range of its powers: as a scale-covered dragon with the head of a horned serpent, the forelegs of a lion, the hind legs of a bird, and a serpentine tail ending in a scorpion stinger, it could represent several underworld deities. However, it came to be associated with Marduk, the patron deity of ancient Babylon.

This fierce guardian figure has the head of a serpent with horns above the eyes, a large curl behind, and two smaller curls at the top of the neck. Its head, neck, body, and tail are covered with scales. Its forelegs are those of a lion, its hind legs are those of a bird, and its tail ends in the stinger of a scorpion.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This image is one of many identical representations of the Mushhush that stood in horizontal registers on the Ishtar Gate of ancient Babylon. Its task was to guard the entrance to the city of Marduk. Furthermore, the road that passed through the gate was called Aiburshabu, or "the enemy shall never pass."

The ferocity of the Mushhush is evident in the fact that it brings together in its person the strengths of four dangerous animals that were well known to the inhabitants of ancient Mesopotamia: the head of the horned viper, the stinger of the scorpion, the forelegs of the lion, and the talons of a bird of prey. The Mushhush would have been recognized by all who passed it as an epiphany of Marduk, placed on the gate to frighten away any evil or aggressive force that might seek to enter the city.

Marduk (known also as Bel, "lord") was originally an obscure Sumerian deity. During the Amorite period (1826–1526 BCE), he became extremely important when his city rose to political prominence. Gradually, he assimilated the aspects of the Sumerian Enlil, the god of storms, who served also as the model for the king. The nature of Marduk is best spelled out in the famous Babylonian creation myth, the *Enuma elish*.

According to this myth, the primordial beings Apsu and Tiamat were free to create anything and everything simply at whim, without any sense of order, continuity, or meaning. Among their offspring were the creator gods, who wanted to establish an orderly cosmos. To do this, they organized themselves and founded a divine court. Such purposeful activity was resented by Apsu and Tiamat, who did not wish to be accountable to anyone, and so they spawned a brood of monsters to destroy the court of the gods. Chief among these was Kingu, who was invested with the Tablets of Destiny, the divine blueprint that authorizes the direction taken by creation.

First Ea, the god of wisdom, overcame Apsu by means of magic spells and cunning. Then his son Marduk engaged Tiamat in single combat, armed with bow, mace, lightning, net, and winds. He rode into battle in a chariot drawn by a team of four creatures: Killer, Relentless, Trampler, and Swift. Tiamat was destroyed, and out of her body Marduk fashioned the universe. Then he took the Tablets of Destiny and fixed them on his own breast, so that

control of the world would be under the proper authority of the heavenly court. As chief executor of the royal power of the creator gods, Marduk carried out their plans and established the cosmos:

> The Lord trod on the legs of Tiamat,
> With his unsparing mace he crushed her skull.
> With the arteries of her blood he had severed,
> He split her like a shell-fish into two parts;
> Half of her he set up and ceiled it as sky,
> Pulled down the bar and posted guards.
> He bade them to allow not her waters to escape.
> He quartered the heavens and surveyed the regions.
> . . . .
> He constructed stations for the great gods
> Fixing their astral likenesses as constellations.
> He determined the year by designating the zones.
> . . . .
> The Moon he caused to shine, the night to him entrusting,
> He appointed him a creature of the night to signify the days.
> (quoted in Gray, 32)

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Dragons are mythological creatures with serpentine features. Often they are endowed with features or parts that belong to various animals (a body like a lizard's or a crocodile's, a feline or reptilian head, a bat's wings, an eagle's or a lion's paws and claws, and a mouth endowed with many tongues and pointed fangs). Fierce, devouring monsters, dragons may spit fire and travel through the air. They can be at home in the sky, in the sea, or underground.

More important than the shape of the dragon, however, is its meaning and function in mythical thought. Dragons symbolize elements, forces, or principles that are present, or active, in the cosmic (or precosmic) world. In the West, the negative value of the dragon is at the forefront: with roots in the mythologies of the ancient Near East as well as of Indo-European cultures, Western dragon-lore depicts the dragon as the enemy of the cosmic order that is necessary for the maintenance of life both on the biological and social levels. In the East (notably China, Japan, and Indonesia), dragons are believed to be powerful and helpful beings. However, in spite of this general tendency, the dual nature of the dragon is everywhere evident: sometimes in the West the power of the dragon is "positive" in healing or in martial contexts; at the same time, dragon slayers are also known from Eastern mythologies.

The dragon slayer is a hero who fulfills his destiny by means of either force or magic. Typically, the dragon that must be slain is guilty of being an obstacle to life, or of hoarding some treasure that is essential to life. Both Indra and Thor, two Indo-European dragon slayers, were protectors of the cosmos with the special task of slaying a monstrous force, in the case of Indra one that withheld the waters from creation, in the case of Thor one that threatened to destroy all living creatures with its poisonous fumes.

A certain logic inherent in mythical thought proclaims that the dragon slayer is somehow related to the dragon. It is almost as though the power of the dragon passes over into

the dragon slayer, or, on the other hand, as though only a being with dragonlike nature could take on another dragon. Therefore, it is not surprising that Marduk, the victor in the struggle with the monstrous Tiamat—mother of monsters—should exhibit a dragon form.

M. Esther Harding sees in the Babylonian creation myth an analogue to the birth of consciousness both in human history as a whole and in the history of the individual person. In her view, Tiamat represents the primordial and chaotic creativity of the unconscious and Marduk, the force that organizes the Self into a specific, potentially conscious and purposeful unity:

> This mythologem corresponds to the development of consciousness in the human being. In the earliest stages of the dawn of consciousness, the infant is under the absolute autocratic power of the primal forces, represented by the parents, and at this stage he is still unconscious of what he is doing and why, for the ego-complex has not yet emerged into consciousness, his reaction is purely instinctive. It is only a good deal later, when he becomes conscious of himself as "I," that he begins to take up the hero struggle. (Harding, 61)

What the Mushhush reveals, or reminds us of, is the fact that this heroic force itself has unconscious roots, that on some level the dragon itself desires and sponsors the birth of consciousness.

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GLOSSARY

EA Akkadian god of wisdom and conqueror of the watery abyss, the Apsu. He was the power in water that made the soil produce. It was he that fathered the king of gods, Marduk.

ENLIL Sumerian storm god, son of Anu. Enlil was both the wind that brought the rain and filled the sails of seafaring vessels, and the king of the gods. Whereas Anu was the divine sovereign and ultimate authority, it was his son Enlil who carried out his orders and served as a prototype for the human king.

ISHTAR Akkadian goddess who absorbed most of the attributes of Inanna, an earlier Sumerian goddess. She often appeared as a lion or riding on a lion. Worshiped as the goddess of aggression and love, it was she who gave the human king his powers to rule.

TWISTED FACE

Artist unknown   Carving: basswood, with horsehair; carbon pigment
Height: 12 in. (30.4 cm)   Circa 1850–1900 CE   Site: Onondaga, New York
Location: no. 21/6509, Museum of the American Indian/Heye Foundation, New York

TWISTED FACE

North American Indian: Onondaga

Carved wooden masks representing various spirits in the Iroquois cosmology are used by the False Face Society during healing rituals. One of the most important of these beings is Twisted Face (Haduigona), also known as the Humpbacked One. The deformity was the result of an injury suffered in a legendary encounter with a mountain.

An elongated oval basswood mask, carved in the form of a human face with pronounced eyebrows, sunken eyes, rounded cheeks, and a long chin ending in a rounded projection. The narrow, sharply defined nose ends in a curve to the mask's left; the large mouth, with closed protruding lips, curves upward from the left to the right. Small, wooden, peg teeth have been inserted into the mouth line. Horsehair has been attached to the top, serving as long, draped hair. The rear has been hollowed out to permit attachment to the face of the performer. Holes on the rim, made by a hot wire, are intended for tie cords. The smoothened surface has been coated with a black (carbon?) pigment; the rear is unpainted.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Among the numerous myths told by the Iroquois to explain the ancient past is this tale about Twisted Face and the origin of the False Face Society:

> When the creator had finished his task, he traveled widely to inspect his handiwork and to exile all evil spirits. Traveling west on the rim of the world, he came across a huge giant, who was the chief of all the Faces. The creator asked the giant where he came from. The stranger replied that he came from far beyond the Rocky Mountains and that he had been living on the earth ever since he, the giant, had created it. They then argued over who was the real creator and agreed to have a contest to settle the argument. The winner would be acknowledged with the title of World Creator.
>
> Each was to summon a distant mountain by magic. So they sat down with their backs to the west. The great giant shook his turtle rattle, frightening all the animals, and called to the mountain. It moved only a slight distance. Then the creator called out, and the mountain came directly up to him. This enraged the giant, who turned about quickly to look at the mountain behind him, and the huge rocky mass struck him in the face. The impact broke his nose, and pain twisted his mouth.
>
> Although the creator had won, he realized that the giant had great powers, even if the mountain had responded more completely to his own orenda. So he assigned his opponent the task of driving all disease from the earth and of helping the people who were traveling and hunting. The giant, in turn, agreed that if humans made portraits of him (masks), called him Grandfather, and offered tobacco offerings, they too could gain the power to cure disease. The creator gave the giant a place to live in the rocky hills to the west, near the rim of the world, and the giant agreed to respond whenever the people called on him for help. (Fenton, 1941, 418f.)

Although there are several religious societies among the Iroquois people, the False Face Society is by far the best known in this culture, largely due to the visually impressive masks

and accompanying ceremonies in which they are used. There are several orders of membership within the society, in which participation is specifically prescribed; however, any Indian may join, male or female, although only men wear masks. Each order specializes in the cure of a specific ailment. Although the tradition of the False Face Society may have been kept secret in ancient times, today it is relatively public, with patients treated regularly according to clearly established formulas. The performers are well known and appear regularly in public. Some are even famous for their dramatic skills and perform specific roles repeatedly.

The performances of the society are held semiannually as a purification rite, or they may be held privately at any time to treat a personal illness. By far the best-known performance occurs during the Midwinter Festival, which—as is common among most Native American peoples—is a combined harvest feast, thanksgiving ceremony, and New Year's festival of "world renewal." The mask designs originate in dreams and are portraits in wood of mythological or ancestral beings. According to Iroquois legend, they represent forest creatures who were first encountered by hunters. These spirits requested food (that is, tobacco and cornmeal mush) and promised not to harm the humans. The masks are usually (although not exclusively) carved from basswood; those carved from the growing tree are known as "live masks," and they are believed to have greater potency than those carved from a section of wood that has been separated from the trunk.

Any skilled artist with sufficient knowledge may carve a mask. The common features are a rounded forehead, tear-shaped eyes (often with a piece of tin attached for reflection in the fire), and a mouth of varying form (opened or closed) in an overall superhuman form. Horsehair is usually attached to the top to serve as hair. It may be black, gray, or white, although black is most common; earlier, corn silk or bison hair was used. There is no specific body costume; old clothes are usually worn. The performer carries a hickory staff and a rattle made from the body of a snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*). The mask is intended to be worn and is shaped accordingly, but miniatures are also made that are sometimes attached to the larger masks, worn on the body, or kept in the home.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Fascinating in the story of Twisted Face is the transformation, or perhaps conversion, of a giant into a divine healer and culture hero. In this myth, the creator recognizes the potential value of the giant's power (his *orenda,* or "magic," for something quite different from brute strength is required to cause a mountain to move). Instead of opposing the owner of this force, the creator in the Iroquois view offers him a special job in support of the creative enterprise: as divine healer (as well as guardian of travelers and hunters). Then the giant suggests that he can share his healing powers with those human beings who cultivate an intimate relationship with him by way of sacrifice, prayer (calling on him as Grandfather), and the ritual use of masks. In this way, Twisted Face acts as a culture hero, the founder of the False Face Society. Like other culture heroes, he contributes to the everyday culture and survival of the people.

The incorporation of the giant and his power into the plans of a creator god is noteworthy, because giants often represent forces that are opposed to the cosmic order. For example, in Scandinavian mythology the giant is both the predecessor and the enemy of the gods. According to this worldview, the cosmos was forged out of the body of a giant (Ymir)

who had been slain by the younger gods. Later, an ongoing hostility exists between gods and giants. A certain amount of paradox in their relations is indicated, however, by the fact that the gods were originally the offspring of the giantess Bestla, and frequently marriages between gods and giantesses take place. Furthermore, the gods obtain from the giants numerous important possessions such as the knowledge of hidden things and the wall around their fortress in Ásgard. In the end, however, the world perishes in a fire kindled by yet another giant, Surtr.

The giant represents a cosmic force that is closely related to the divine and yet retains certain precosmic tendencies. Giants resemble dragons in this respect, and either may seek to restore the chaos prior to creation. Unlike dragons, however, giants are humanoid in form and nature. Giants are supernatural beings with strong generative and magical powers, which under the right circumstances can be harnessed for the benefit of human beings.

In dreams, the giant may represent shadow qualities such as selfishness, aggression, and destructive impulses. At the same time, the shadow may also harbor energy and talent that the ego needs: the power to act and create, and a connection with primitive levels of instinct. The relationship between the ego and the shadow is always changing, and it is the ego that must take responsibility for this relationship, by not allowing the shadow to take charge (a return to a chaotic or unconscious condition), while—like the creator in the Iroquois myth—harnessing the power that is carried by the shadow in the service of life and consciousness.

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GLOSSARY

ORENDA Iroquois term for a supernatural power exercised by spirit-forces called Otkon and Oyaron, and present in those human beings, animals, and objects that display great size, strength, or ability.

Medusa and pegasus

Artist unknown   Relief: terra-cotta, polychromed   Height: 22 in. (56 cm)   Circa 620 BCE
Site: Temple of Athena, Syracuse, Sicily, Italy   Location: Museo Archeologico Regionale, Syracuse, Sicily

Medusa and Pegasus

Greek: Archaic

At the sight of this Gorgon men turned to stone, but as soon as she was beheaded, Medusa's body brought forth the winged horse Pegasus, who loved to roam the heavens when he was not serving as a mount of heroes.

This archaic terra-cotta relief shows Medusa in typical Gorgonian form with round, goggling eyes, lolling tongue, jutting teeth, feathered wings, and serpentine hair. She is clutching a small winged horse under her right forearm.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Reliefs of this kind were apotropaic signs, deriving probably from masks worn in ancient death-averting rituals.

The Gorgons (Sthenno, Euryale, and Medusa) were three monstrous sisters who lived on the other side of Oceanos, where the realm of night begins. Medusa was mortal, her two sisters immortal. Late traditions imagine Medusa as originally a beautiful maiden who was transformed by Athena into an ugly hag in punishment for having lain with Poseidon in a temple dedicated to the goddess. In the archaic view, however, she had always, like her sisters, been a monstrous female, a glimpse of whom turned man or beast to stone. The most familiar tale involves her death at the hands of Perseus. When the king of Perseus's adopted land demanded that each of his subjects contribute a horse to his bride gift, the young man rashly promised to bring him instead the head of the Gorgon Medusa (who was depicted in some ancient narratives as a mare whom Poseidon had entered, as he entered Demeter, in the form of a stallion).

Perseus's success was made possible by the assistance of Athena, who was still angry at Medusa's violation of her temple. It was she who arranged that he be supplied with Hades' cap of invisibility together with Hermes' winged sandals and adamant sword. She herself (in some traditions at least) held his brightly polished shield so that he might direct his weapon by looking at Medusa's mirrored image instead of directly at her death-bringing face. As he beheaded the monster, a giant gold-sworded warrior, Chrusaor, sprang forth from her body, as did the beautiful winged horse, Pegasus. The drops of blood that fell from the wound were gathered into two vials: the blood from the left had the power to kill, that from the right, the power to heal and even to revive the dead.

Of Pegasus there is another adventure to recount. One story tells that Perseus fled Medusa's winged sisters on Pegasus's back. But usually the wondrous steed roamed the sky and land freely, unwilling to let anyone come near it. The young hero Bellerophon longed to capture the supernatural horse and went to Athena's temple to pray for her help. She came to him in a dream and promised to supply him with a golden bridle with magical properties. When he awoke, there it was in his hand. Once he found the horse, it calmly allowed him to slip the bridle over its head and to mount. Aloft on Pegasus, Bellerophon could easily kill the fire-breathing Chimera (a strange composite creature that has come to

represent all phantasmal incongruities, all unrealizable dreams) and to defeat a series of frightening antagonists. When Bellerophon sought to have Pegasus carry him to Olympus, however, Zeus caused him to fall back to earth while Pegasus continued his flight. As for Medusa, Perseus gave her severed head to Athena, who wears it on her aegis as emblem of her own warrior attributes.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Medusa's name means "queen," and she may once have been a moon goddess. Her sisters—whose names mean "strength" and "wide leaping"—are probably two other aspects of the same divinity. The tripartite goddess represented in this way the threefold appearance of the moon: its waxing, its fullness, and its waning. Likewise, each appearance of the moon expressed one of the goddess's powers: dominion over growth, death, and rebirth. Medusa, as the mortal sister (the only one that could die), suggests the darkest aspect of the lunar cycle. Indeed, in the myth that begins with Poseidon and ends with Perseus, Medusa clearly represents the darkest, most destructive aspect of the feminine archetype. She is a witch who destroys by paralyzing, or turning to stone, anyone who catches sight of her.

According to the most predominant view in Western thought, the goddess (or feminine principle) provides the inert substance that comes to life as soon as it receives a form from the god (or masculine principle). For example, the Greeks believed that the father planted a small human being in the womb of the mother where it absorbed "feminine matter" and grew in size until it was big enough to survive on its own. The entire tradition of gnostic mythology, for another example, understood matter as the deficient product of feminine nature, which without the presence of the masculine spirit remained inert and lifeless.

In alchemy, the process by means of which psyche is concretized and assumes material form is called *coagulatio*. It is the process, ultimately, of incarnation. Edward F. Edinger suggests that the myth of Medusa represents a negative relationship to the feminine reality that lies behind the process of incarnation.

> To look at her turns one into stone. The man's ego is the one more vulnerable to this effect. For example I once heard of the case of a young scientist who was enthusiastically involved in some important research. One day his mother came to visit him in his laboratory. She looked around and uttered some depreciatory remark concerning the value of what he was doing. That did it! It was enough to destroy the man's relation to his work for several days. His libido had been "benumbed and congealed." He was relieved only when anger at the situation broke through to consciousness, i.e., when the solar component of the Philosopher's Stone resolved the one-sided effect of the lunar component. The congealing, benumbing effect of the lunar quality is an extreme form of the capacity of the feminine principle to promote *coagulatio*. Images and urges of a spiritual nature which would prefer to soar unfettered by the earth are obliged by the feminine Eros principle to become related to personal, concrete reality. If the ego is too far removed from such reality it will experience the encounter with the feminine as a paralyzing crash to earth. (Edinger, 277f.)

The winged horse that emerges from the body of the beheaded Medusa represents the union of spirit and instinct, which is possible only when the negative force of the feminine is transformed.

Many tales and traditions report that human beings cannot see the gods face to face

without going mad, burning up, or—as in the case of Medusa—being turned to stone. Most often the god or goddess appears to mortals in a form that mediates the divine power without overwhelming the creature. The destructive power of Medusa is obviated when a mediating form is provided so that one perceives her reality indirectly. The mirror shield of Perseus serves this purpose and represents the psychic faculty for symbolization.

> Here the mirror shield acts as the mediating element between ego and archetype; it both protects from and establishes connection with the witch, for it must not be forgotten that it works both ways: whatever an observer can see in a mirror can also see him in it. It is thus the place where each side can become conscious of the other. As a Self symbol it must contain every aspect of the whole. It is natural it should be [Athena], the archetype of developing consciousness, who gives the shield, for anyone who has to approach that type of witch needs sufficient consciousness not to be sucked down by her. (Dykes, 124)

The head and the blood of Medusa continue to be powerful even after her death. There is a poison in her veins that can kill or heal, and her head can just as easily protect as destroy. Whether she means life or death depends on one's particular relation to the goddess.

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GLOSSARY

ATHENA The patron goddess of Athens in Attica and Athens in Boeotia, also worshiped extensively throughout Greece proper and in the colonies and islands. A pre–Indo-European bird goddess, Athena is associated with war, the protection of heroes, and the patronage of the arts.

CHIMERA A monster described in Greek mythology, lion in the front, serpent in the back, and she-goat in the middle. The Chimera was a fire-breathing divinity that was slain by the hero Bellerophon.

HADES A Greek deity. One of the sons of Kronos, Hades had dominion over the lower world, the land of the dead. The only myth about Hades concerns his wedding with Persephone.

HERMES In Greek mythology, the messenger of the gods and psychopomp. Hermes was one of the most ancient of the Greek gods. His name is connected with the daimon who haunts or occupies a heap of stones, or perhaps a stone, set up by the roadside for supernatural purposes.

OCEANOS Oceanos was both a Greek deity and the river that encircled the entire world. Depicted in Greek mythology as a benign old god, Oceanos is a great cosmic power—the water—and source of all life.

POSEIDON Greek god of earthquakes and of water, secondarily of the sea. He is frequently depicted as a bearded deity, carrying a trident and sometimes a fish or dolphin.

The binding of fenrir

Artist unknown   Relief: bronze, cast   Height: 1.8 in. (4.6 cm); width: 1.77 in. (4.5 cm)   Seventh century CE
Site: Torslunda parish, Björnhovda, Öland, Sweden   Location: Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm

The binding of fenrir

Scandinavia: Vendel Period

This die, used perhaps in the manufacture of helmet plaques, depicts the giant wolf Fenrir, or Fenriswolf—Loki's most terrible offspring—together with Týr, the ancient sky god of the North and the only deity who was capable of feeding and handling this ferocious beast. When the wolf grew larger and so powerful that he could no longer be held by ordinary chains, Týr bound him with magic fetters.

This bronze relief depicts a god in the process of binding a monster with a rope. The god is shirtless and wears trousers and shoes. He is beardless but has a mustache. In his right hand he carries an ax, and in his left he holds a rope. The rope is twisted around the neck of a monster. This monster has clawed feet and extends its tongue from between beak-shaped jaws. He is sitting on his haunches, and even so is as tall as the god before him.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Týr's willingness to face the ferocious Fenriswolf is an appropriate symbol of bravery for the adornment of warrior helmets. Warriors carved the runic letter standing for Týr's name on their weapons and were exhorted to call upon him at least three times before battle.

Týr's cult most likely reaches far back into the archaic Bronze Age world from which survive numerous rock carvings depicting a sky god brandishing an ax. This sky god is considered to have been the primary deity of a sun-worshiping, warrior-oriented culture. Týr is also known as the "one-handed god," and there may be some connection between his cult and the ubiquitous motif of the single hand in Bronze Age rock carvings. Isolated images of a hand may have stood for the god's pledge of protection. Týr's function as a god of battle in the later ages is known from Tacitus, who identified him with the Roman god of war, Mars.

By the time of the late Viking age, Týr's role in the pantheon of Norse gods had faded considerably. His function as a sky god and patron of judicial gatherings had been usurped by Thor, now the principal champion of order in the world. Further, Týr's position as a god of battle had come to be almost completely overshadowed by Odin. Still, Snorri Sturluson's account of Týr's sacrifice of his hand to Fenrir (chapter 34 of the *Gylfaginning*) is evidence that Týr continued to play a role as patron god of brave warriors.

Prophecies had warned the gods that the offspring of Loki were exceedingly dangerous to the world that they governed. Therefore, Hel had been cast into Niflheimr and the world serpent had been exiled to the rim of the cosmic ocean. But the young Fenriswolf was still in the care of the Æsir. As he grew, only Týr was brave enough to feed him, and eventually the gods decided to bind him with powerful fetters. Two types of bonds were tried, but both broke under the strength of the wolf. Finally, the gods sent one of their messengers to the dwarfs to ask them to manufacture an unbreakable fetter. Using their magical powers, the dwarfs fashioned a long rope that was as light and soft as silk yet able to withstand any test of strength. The gods then took Fenrir to a remote island on a lake and there challenged him to

break the new fetter. The monster was proud of his earlier show of strength and resented the fact that they wanted to test him with an apparently insignificant ribbon. When the gods persisted, he became suspicious and refused to be bound unless one of the gods would place a hand in his mouth as a pledge of good faith. Only Týr was willing to sacrifice his hand, knowing full well that the bond would hold and infuriate the wolf. In this way, the wolf was tied to a gigantic rock and gagged with a sword, where he is to remain until Ragnarǫk and the battle between the gods and their enemies.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The binding of the Fenriswolf is but one episode in a vast mythology that encompasses the destruction as well as the creation of the world. It represents a temporary standoff between the creative and the destructive forces that enables life to continue. But in the end, the fetters of the wolf do break, and he joins the other monsters and giants in overthrowing the gods and destroying their world.

The story of Ragnarǫk, the end of the world as described in Norse prophecy, belongs to a category of myth called eschatological. This term is of Greek origin and means "talk about the end." Eschatology represents the counterblance to cosmogony, or the body of beliefs about the creation of the world. They are usually linked, especially when the end of the world is followed by a new creation. Such a cosmic rebirth is also suggested by ancient Scandinavian sources. The gods do not survive the battle, nor do the heavens and the earth. However, a new earth will rise out of the sea and be ruled over by a new generation of gods. The promise is explicit; only the details are missing.

The motif of eschatology is connected in the history of religions to another theme, that of the new year. Many traditional cultures see in the revolution of seasons a manifestation of the cyclical nature of time. Every year is born with the sun, grows old and dies with the winter, and is reborn at the new year. The new year involves a return to the realm of precosmic chaos and a re-creation of the cosmos as a whole. The numerous New Year festivals must be understood within this framework. "Every New Year ritual reenacts the original creation when the world emerged still fresh and whole out of chaos. Further, the very first moment of creation is precious, because the dissipating influences of time have not yet had any effect. . . . Belief in the redemptive power inherent in the moment of creation is expressed in visions of the end of the world. Only in the visions of the end, the symbol of the New Year has been conceptually disconnected from the cyclical framework of the solar year and projected out onto some moment in the unknown future. This eschaton, or last day, will see the old system eliminated once and for all, and the new creation will be such that it will never again lose its vitality and require renewal" (Moon, 7).

The activities of Fenrir and other wolves at Ragnarǫk suggest something of his symbolism. Wolves devour the sun and the moon, and it is the Fenriswolf himself who destroys Odin, the chief god. Odin is very much associated with the powers of the mind and with consciousness. He is the god of ecstasy and inspiration, of esoteric knowledge. So it seems that the wolves represent the power of darkness that devours the light, both the inner and the outer light. Of course, these are not ordinary wolves, for no ordinary wolf is going to be able to consume the moon, much less the sun. They are monsters—that is, supernatural beings like the dragon or the world snake. As such, their destructive power is connected

with the symbolism of the chaos that precedes creation and opposes it, overcoming the cosmic order periodically so that a new creation, with its accompanying renewal of life and consciousness, can take place.

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GLOSSARY

LOKI In Scandinavian mythology, an inhabitant of Ásgard (the home of the gods) who frequently makes trouble. Loki was bound under the earth for his role in the slaying of Baldr. He will break loose to join the monsters in the final battle with the gods at Ragnarǫk.

ODIN (Old Norse, Óðinn) In Scandinavian mythology, the leader of the Æsir (one of two groups of deities). Odin is a god associated with wisdom and battle.

RAGNARǪK (Old Norse, "destruction of the powers") In Scandinavian mythology, term used to describe the end of the world created by the gods. At Ragnarǫk, the monsters vanquish the gods and both Ásgard and Midgard (the home of the gods and the dwelling place of mankind) are destroyed.

THOR (Old Norse, Þórr) In ancient Scandinavia, the god of thunder, who was venerated especially in Norway and Sweden. Thor carried a hammer with which he protected the worlds of gods and mankind. Thor opposes the world snake at Ragnarǫk, and the two destroy each other.

THOR CATCHES THE WORLD SERPENT

Artist unknown   Carving: stone, incised   Height: 77.2 in. (196 cm)   Tenth or eleventh century CE

Site/Location: parish churchyard in Altuna, Uppland, Sweden

Thor catches the world serpent

Scandinavia: Viking Age

This picture-stone depicts the fishing incident in which Thor battles his greatest opponent, the world serpent, who lies coiled around the earth. Here the god catches the serpent by using an ox head for bait and hauls the creature out of the water so forcefully that his feet go through the bottom of the boat.

This side panel of a memorial stone at Altuna, Sweden, bears a runic inscription stating that it was erected in memory of a father and a brother burned by enemies in their hall. Depicted is the god Thor in his boat, holding his hammer aloft and pulling on the line that is connected to the world serpent. Thor's left foot is seen poking through the bottom of the boat.

Cultural context

Thor's most terrible adversary is Midgardssnake (Old Norse, Miðgarðsormr), the world serpent. At least three myths recount their battles: the wrestling match in which the serpent is magically disguised as a cat; Ragnarǫk, when Thor and the serpent destroy each other; and the tale of Thor's fishing trip, when he catches the serpent with the head of an ox, as illustrated on this carved stone. The last myth is known to us from four poems, all of which were written earlier than 1000 CE, that is, before the conversion of Scandinavia to Christianity and contemporaneous with this picture-stone. The fishing tale is described also in *Hymiskvida,* one of the later poems of the *Poetic Edda.* Each version of the tale differs slightly, and none of the poems makes it clear whether or not the battle between the monster and the god was a conclusive one. Nor is the outcome discernible from the memorial stone at Altuna.

The Eddic poem links the fishing trip to the visit of Thor and Týr to the hall of the giant Hymir. When Thor devours two of Hymir's three oxen, the giant complains. Thor then offers to go fishing with him so that the giant and his wife will have something to eat. There is no indication in this account that the serpent survived the battle with the giant. A later account of the fishing adventure is included in the *Prose Edda* of Snorri Sturluson (1179–1241), Iceland's greatest historian. Apparently Snorri knew two traditions: one in which Thor kills the world serpent while out fishing, and a second version, according to which he fails and must fight the monster again at the end of this world, that is, Ragnarǫk. Snorri sticks to the latter interpretation, which then fits well with his account of the final battle.

> According to Snorri, Thor set out to visit the giant Hymir, disguised as a youth. Hymir was a sea-giant, and Thor offered to go fishing with him. The giant did not know that his visitor was a god, and he sent him off to fetch bait. Thor went to the giant's special herd of oxen, cut off the head of the largest beast, and took it back to the sea. Once Thor took the oars, Hymir's boat moved so fast that he became alarmed lest they should come to the territory of the World Serpent, and indeed when Thor flung out the oxhead on his line, it was the serpent that took the bait. Thor exerted his divine strength and hauled the monster out of the water, until as he grew in might he pushed his feet through the bottom of the boat and stood upon the sea bottom. The

terrible head of the serpent emerged from the waves to meet the fierce gaze of the god, but just as Thor raised his hammer to strike, the giant in terror cut the line, and so the serpent fell back into the deep. As the boat sank, Thor struck at Hymir in his wrath and then waded back to land.

(Davidson, 1969, 58)

The *Lay of Thor* recounts that Midgardssnake is one of the monsters begotten by Loki, the divine mischief-maker, or trickster. There Loki is called, among other things, Father of the Girdle of the Ocean. Another tale describes how Odin threw the serpent into the waters that encircle the earth (Midgard), and how the serpent came to wrap itself around this world, biting its tail, deep in the ocean. During the final battle of Ragnarǫk, Midgardssnake will rise up in a rage. Not only will this cause the waters to flood the earth and to drown its living inhabitants, but the serpent will also poison the air with its fumes. At this time, when all the gods struggle against the monsters, Thor and Midgardssnake shall meet again. Thor will succeed in slaying the serpent, and then he too will fall, vanquished by its poisonous fumes.

Whenever Thor battles with the serpent, the giants grow frightened, and it is sometimes difficult to determine whether they are more afraid of the god or the sea serpent. Thor, the most popular of the Scandinavian gods during the period just prior to the conversion of Scandinavia, was the beloved protector of the cosmic order and of life itself. Killing giants was his daily duty, even if he did sometimes go about with them, but on a cosmic scale he was opposed only by Midgardssnake.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The world serpent of Scandinavian mythology belongs to a category of mythological beings that are known as dragons. Indeed, the etymology of the word *dragon* points to serpents, for the Greek term *drakon* ("serpent") refers both to real snakes and to mythical snakes or snakelike creatures. Furthermore, this dragon is connected with beginnings and endings—it is a cosmogonic and eschatological figure. In many myths, the world order is born only after a struggle with and defeat of the cosmogonic dragon. Similarly, it is the resurgence of this force that signals a return to the precosmic state.

Especially among Semitic and Indo-European peoples, the dragon or cosmic serpent is seen as a symbol of the chaos that must be overcome in order for life to be maintained in a meaningful way. In Hebrew texts (e.g., *Isaiah* 27 : 1 and *Job* 7 : 12) as well as in the apocalyptic literature of Christianity (e.g., *Revelation* 12–13, 20), the primeval dragon is said to have been defeated but not totally eliminated, and it will return during the last days to wreak havoc before finally being destroyed. Further, like the Hindu deity Indra, Thor is clearly an archetypal symbol of the force that keeps chaos at bay.

In the case of Midgardssnake, however, two serpentine symbols are combined. Not only is it the dragon of chaos, but during the peaceful period between the beginning and the end of the world, this snake assumes the character of the uroborus, encircling the world with its tail in its mouth. This association points to another complex of meaning: since the uroborus is not evident in any of the sources existing prior to the conversion, it may have been incorporated in Scandinavian mythology under the influence of Christianity.

Erich Neumann has referred to the idea of the uroborus as the primordial Self that exists prior to the differentiation and development of the ego. Elsewhere, Edward F. Edinger has suggested that the symbol of the uroborus points as well to an ongoing reality behind the

individuating ego. "This image is an active and sustaining one through all phases of psychic development. The psychic fact to which [it] points is the antidote to all the frustrations that dependence on outer objects and persons engenders. To be aware of individuality is to realize that one has all that one needs. It also means that one needs all that one has, namely, that every psychic content and happening is meaningful" (Edinger, 167f.).

The two visions of Midgardssnake—as cosmogonic dragon and as uroborus—suggest an ambivalence in respect to that primordial reality out of which we emerge. On the one hand, it is always threatening to overwhelm us, to reinstate the original stasis. On the other hand, it exists as the "other" that can—precisely because it exists, so to speak, as an undifferentiated whole at our borders—complement and sustain our limited consciousness.

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GLOSSARY

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ODIN (Old Norse, *Óðinn*) In Scandinavian mythology, the leader of the Æsir (one of two groups of deities); a god associated with wisdom and battle.

TÝR One of the ancient Germanic deities; possibly an early war god.

APOCALYPTIC VISION: ECCLESIA AND THE DRAGON

Artist: The monk Emeterius and the nun (?) Ende   Manuscript illumination: tempera on parchment
Height of each folio: 15¾ in. (40 cm)   975 CE   Site: Monastery of San Salvador de Tabara, Leon, Spain
Location: folios 171 verso and 172 recto, ms. 7, Gerona Cathedral Treasury, Gerona, Spain

Apocalyptic vision: ecclesia and the dragon

Spain

The vision of John, as described in his Revelation, *includes a dramatic sequence introduced by the appearance of a celestial woman about to give birth to a son destined to rule the nations. She is confronted by a dragon that seeks to devour the infant, but with the help of an angelic host the young savior is whisked away into the presence of God the Father. This is but one act in the theater of salvation history, where suffering and death are explained as elements of a great drama in which God is the ultimate victor.*

At the upper left is a woman, her feet resting on a crescent moon, her head crowned by a nimbus and surrounded by stars that look like flowers. Her abdomen is concealed by a *maṇḍala* (comprising circles and a star) that represents the sun. In front of her is a seven-headed dragon: one head is upside down, three of its heads face the woman, and three face a group of angels dressed in tunics and armed for battle. In the upper right corner sits God the Father (with a halo) on a simple chair as throne. In front of him stand an angel and a young boy (also crowned with a halo). On the lower left, the woman, now with wings, is confronted by the seventh head of the dragon. From its mouth spews forth a river of water. On the lower right, an angel casts a naked woman into a pit and into the company of other naked human beings and a dark demon, who is being bound in place by a second angel.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This depiction of the struggle between the seven-headed dragon and the "woman robed with the sun," narrated in the twelfth chapter of the John's *Revelation,* is taken from one of the many surviving cycles of manuscript illuminations illustrating the influential commentary on this work written by Beatus of Liébana (c. 750–798). The apocalyptic visions of early Christians, which situated the struggles of the early church within the context of a cosmic battle between God and the Devil, has continued to shape the imaginations of Christians down through the centuries.

> Next appeared a great portent in heaven, a woman robed with the sun, beneath her feet the moon, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant, and in the anguish of her labor she cried out to be delivered. Then a second portent appeared in heaven: a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns; on his heads were seven diadems, and with his tail he swept down a third of the stars in the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that when her child was born he might devour it. She gave birth to a male child, who is destined to rule all nations with an iron rod. But her child was snatched up to God and his throne; and the woman herself fled into the wilds, where she had a place prepared for her by God, there to be sustained for twelve hundred and sixty days. Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels waged war upon the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought, but they had not the strength to win, and no foothold was left them in heaven. So the great dragon was thrown down, that serpent of old that led the whole world

> astray, whose name is Satan, or the Devil—thrown down to the earth, and his angels with him. . . . When the dragon found that he had been thrown down to the earth, he went in pursuit of the woman who had given birth to the male child. But the woman was given two great eagle's wings, to fly to the place in the wilds where for three years and a half she was to be sustained, out of reach of the serpent. From his mouth the serpent spewed a flood of water after the woman to sweep her away with its spate. But the earth came to her rescue and opened its mouth and swallowed the river which the dragon spewed from his mouth. . . . Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven with the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hands. He seized the dragon, that serpent of old, the Devil or Satan, and chained him up for a thousand years; he threw him into the abyss, shutting and sealing it over him, so that he might seduce the nations no more till the thousand years were over. After that he must be let loose for a short while. (*Revelation* 12:1–9, 13–16; 20:1–3)

In the scene depicted here, the church is hypostasized as a pregnant woman about to give birth. She is called Ecclesia, which is the Greek word for "church," or "those who are called." Ecclesia is threatened by a seven-headed dragon. Miraculously, the child is delivered safely into the presence of God—a reference to the birth and eventual ascension of the Messiah. Meanwhile, the archangel Michael appears together with his angelic host to vanquish the dragon and to cast it out from heaven, while the woman receives the wings of an eagle so that she may flee to the wilderness for safety. There they meet once more: the dragon now tries to drown the woman with a flood that issues from its mouth, but again she is miraculously saved when the earth opens up and swallows the river of water. This imagery refers to the persecution of the Christian community and its preservation through the divine aid symbolized by the woman's wings and the earth's intervention. The twin appearances of the woman and the dragon suggests also the original confrontation between Eve and the serpent in Eden and the promise made to the serpent, that one day Eve's brood would strike at the serpent's head (*Genesis* 3:15). Finally, in the lower right corner, we see angels binding the vanquished Devil together with his worshipers, the damned.

This story of persecution and divine intervention, found in the last book of the New Testament, derives from a time when the Christian church was, in fact, undergoing persecution at the hands of the Roman emperors. In later centuries, when Christianity became the official religion of a new, "holy" Roman empire, the story was given a more metaphorical interpretation. It came to represent the struggle between God and the Devil, or more generally, the conflict between good and evil. This was the interpretation associated with the Donatist Tyconius (c. 330–390), and it seems to be in this Tyconian tradition that Beatus of Liébana stood. Thus, this vivid representation of the struggles of the "last days" signifies the present triumphs of the human church over its mortal enemies as much as it does the divine victory at the end of time.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The vision of John, as recorded in his *Revelation,* is fascinating and complex. Like a myth or a dream, the visionary material offered here cannot be pinned down as a simple allegory, although numerous allegorical interpretations have been offered and accepted by Christians through the ages. For example, the celestial woman has been seen variously as Ecclesia (a view that was popular at the time of this manuscript illumination), as Israel or the Virgin Mary, or even as the New Jerusalem. As Queen of Heaven, however, she symbolizes an

archetypal reality that was vital in the Hellenistic period when John had his vision and that appears throughout the history of religions and in personal dreams and fantasies. Some elements of the myth of the pregnant woman and the dragon are found in the Roman imperial cult of John's time. "A coin of Pergamum . . . shows the goddess Roma with the emperor. Roma, the Queen of Heaven, was worshiped as the mother of the gods in the cities of Asia Minor and her oldest temple stood in Smyrna, whereas her imperial child was celebrated as the 'world's saviour' and the sun-god Apollo" (Schüssler Fiorenza, 124).

As the divine principle that brings to birth a new and saving reality, the Queen of Heaven is naturally threatened by all those forces that resist change or transformation (depending on the context). John, however, inserts this motif into a worldview that derives from the Jewish understanding of history, according to which God is actively involved in the fate of his chosen people, and the Fall will be reversed ultimately with the restoration of paradise. In the Christian version, the Fall results in the dominion of Satan on earth, with death and suffering as the signs of his power. The Resurrection is the beginning of the end of the Devil's rule, because it demonstrates God's power to destroy death. After the Resurrection, Christians expected the immediate return of Christ and the restoration of paradise. When this did not happen, they saw in this delay a second phase of history: the era of the church, or Ecclesia. During this period, the Devil is stirred up and fights the community of saints, because he knows that his end is in sight and that they belong to his victor. In John's version, a third phase follows, a thousand years during which the Devil is imprisoned and the earthly church prospers. This is then to be followed by a final conflict, at which time the Devil is vanquished once and for all, and the general resurrection of the dead takes place in a new world, recreated without sin and death.

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Sisiutl, the two-headed serpent

Artist: Arthur Shaughnessy   Textile: muslin sheet, with black pigment   Width: 10 ft. (3.05 m)

Circa 1925–1950 CE   *Site: Kingcome Inlet, British Columbia, Canada*

Location: no. A4363, Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver

Sisiutl, the Two-Headed Serpent

North American Indian: Kwakiutl

Sisiutl (Sisiul) is a two-headed monster that can turn a person into stone. However, he is also the friend of the courageous, lending the brave warrior invulnerability in battle.

This *mawihl,* or dance curtain, is decorated with a black-and-white representation of Sisiutl. The mythical creature has a round body, two horned heads, four legs, and fins on the sides of its torso. The figure in the center is its human aspect.

Cultural Context

Invariably appearing in the form of a serpent with an elongated head at each end and with a human face forming the central body, Sisiutl is regarded as a fearsome sea monster who is an important participant in the war ceremonies of the Kwakiutl. He has a large mouth, teeth, a long, sharp tongue, large flared nostrils, and two curled horns on his head. Sisiutl is believed to be able to bring harm to anyone; his baleful gaze can cause a victim's joints to turn backward, and the person dies, turned to stone. Sisiutl is the assistant of Winalagilis, the Kwakiutl war god, and any warrior who bathes in his blood will become invulnerable, for the scales, spines, and blood of Sisiutl give tremendous power.

The image of Sisiutl is often painted over the entry doors of houses in tribute to his role as a protector of the Above Ones. If properly assuaged in ritual, Sisiutl will come to the warrior when summoned. The body of the monster can turn into something that resembles a self-propelled canoe, and in this vessel the warrior can be easily transported. Yet there are many dangers connected with any contact with the sea monster: if one stumbles onto the trail of Sisiutl and rubs one's hands or feet in the slime, the limbs will turn to stone; or, if the serpent's clotted blood is rubbed onto one's skin, the skin will likewise turn to stone. However, it is thought possible to kill Sisiutl by biting one's tongue, covering a war staff with the blood, and striking the monster.

Archetypal Commentary

Sisiutl is a special kind of monster, one who befriends those who have courage. This is the key to his role as an initiatory spirit. By his very presence, he triggers off the crisis that allows for the person to realize his or her own heroic nature. The courage of one who stands firm in the face of an evil spirit alters the spirit, in turn, by allowing it to become conscious, and hence supportive rather than destructive in its effect.

In many traditions, the acquisition of sacred knowledge or skill requires the guiding presence of a teacher, one who has undergone the transformation already. This is necessary because the fear that accompanies true change can be so great as to cause death or insanity in the initiate. However, the reassuring presence of one who has trodden the path before can make all the difference. The fear inspired by Sisiutl resembles the fear that accompanies any initiation, because depending on the person's response to the monster, he or she will lose or gain all.

In his book on initiation, Joseph L. Henderson suggests that today there is a special problem derived from the absence of initiation in modern society. Many psychological problems arise from the fact that the individual has never been forced to undergo an ordeal that marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. The failure of the young man or woman to move on into maturity can itself injure the psyche. Moreover, in what he calls "the spirit of evil," C. G. Jung sees the power that can either hold us back or force us on into life:

> The spirit of evil is fear, negation, the adversary who opposes life in its struggle for eternal duration and thwarts every great deed, who infuses into the body the poison of weakness and age through the treacherous bite of the serpent; he is the spirit of regression, who threatens us with bondage to the mother and with dissolution and extinction in the unconscious. For the hero, fear is a challenge and a task, because only boldness can deliver from fear. And if the risk is not taken, the meaning of life is somehow violated, and the whole future is condemned to hopeless staleness, to a drab grey lit only by will-o'-the-wisps. (Jung, par. 551)

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GLOSSARY

Above Ones An almost universal mythologem among Native Americans in North America, referring to any number of spirit beings who watch over humanity. An Above Person may be either malevolent or benevolent, but it is always a powerful being that must be carefully acknowledged and propitiated.

Goddesses

Sleep on the stones of Delphi—
dare the ledges of Pallas
but keep me foremost,
keep me before you, after you, with you,
never forget when you start
for the Delphic precipice,
never forget when you seek Pallas
and meet in thought
yourself drawn out of yourself
like the holy serpent,
never forget
in thought or mysterious trance,
I am the greatest and the least.

—H.D.

Goddess presented with offerings
Artist unknown Jewelry: gold, cast Width: 2.2 in. (5.6 cm) Circa 1500–1400 BCE
Site: Tiryns, Greece Location: no. 6208, National Archaeological Museum, Athens

Goddess presented with offerings

Greek: Mycenaean

A goddess of the underworld receives homage and libations from leonine attendants.

A gold signet ring shows a seated female figure holding a chalice, with a falcon behind her. She is approached by four upright lionlike daimons, separated from one another by stalks of grain. Each daimon carries a libation vessel with the left hand and raises the right hand in homage. Above the scene are representations of the sun, the moon, and grain.

Cultural context

The scene clearly suggests the seated figure of an archaic goddess of the Minoan-Mycenaean world—Potnia Theron, lady of the animals and of the underworld. The falcon that sits behind her is a typical Cretan emblem of divine power, which appears often in such representations on the goddess's head. Potnia Theron is closely associated with the Minoan snake goddess, although, interestingly, the snake goddess herself never appears in frescoes or on rings, only in statuette form.

As is usual with this goddess, she is not shown as the mother of a child. She is the goddess of the grain, of animal life, and of the dead—a precursor of "the two goddesses," Demeter and Persephone. The scene suggests a ritual in which a priestess would have taken the place of the goddess and priests or worshipers dressed in animal skins might have masqueraded as her attendants. Here the goddess is attended by lion-headed genii in bee skins bearing her offerings. Libation vessels came in many shapes besides the one depicted here, including vessels in the form of a bull's head, of a pregnant woman with an opening for pouring from the pudendum, or of a female with holes at her nipples. The celestial symbols suggest that the festival may involve not only the earthly cycles of animal and vegetable life but also the regeneration of the cosmos as a whole. The four libation vessels probably each contained a different libation—perhaps milk, wine, honey, and blood—all of which would later be combined in the larger chalice. Although most Minoan sacrifices were bloodless, blood was traditionally offered to underworld deities.

A more usual representation of the lady of the animals shows her standing in the center of a circle made up of symmetrically arranged beasts. Often she grasps them, one in each hand, by their necks or legs to demonstrate her power over them. In this aspect, the goddess's affinity to Artemis and to Aphrodite becomes apparent. Although the animals associated with the goddess may be any truly wild beast (wolf, deer, or bear, for instance), among the Minoans and later among the Greeks the lion seems to have been a favored symbol of this dimension of life. Artemis is often shown, not only with a lion on each side but nursing an abandoned lion cub. In the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite,* panthers, wolves, bears, and lions follow Aphrodite up the slopes of Mount Ida and then slip away in pairs to copulate in the woods.

The idea of a special type of deity or spirit that reigns over the animal kingdom is common among many Old and New World peoples. In some cultures, this figure is a male god, or lord of the animals. Elsewhere, especially in ancient Greece and Crete, the deity is female, and she is called Potnia Theron ("lady of the animals"). The lady of the animals usually appears in the wilderness and is accompanied by wild, rather than domesticated, animals. She may have originated in the religious life of hunting and gathering peoples. A distinctive characteristic of the lady of the animals is the fact that, despite her role as protector of wild game, she will make certain concessions when considering the needs of the hunter. Among the Greek deities, Artemis is most obviously a lady of the animals. A goddess of the wilderness, she is often surrounded by wild life. Indeed, one of her main epiphanies is in the form of a bear. Her counterpart in Roman religion is Diana; among the Gauls she is Artio (from the Celtic word for "bear").

The discovery of the domestication of plants and animals led to the Neolithic revolution, which gave rise to settlements on a grand scale and the birth of cities. The goddess in the present image is clearly connected with wheat or cereal and so is not exclusively a goddess of the wilderness. Jane Ellen Harrison has discussed the connection between the lady of the animals and the corn mother in her study of ancient Greek religion. In her view, both are secondary forms of an earth goddess. Originally, Earth was regarded as mother not only of mankind but of all creatures. Furthermore, she is mother of the dead as well as of the living, as in the words of Aeschylus: "Yea, summon Earth, who brings all things to life and rears and takes again into her womb" (*Choephoroi* 127). Indeed, during the Nekusia, or festival of the dead, it was to Earth that the Greeks offered up their sacrifices.

Perhaps the goddess in this image represents the earth goddess in her underworld aspect, an early prefiguration of Kore, or Persephone. Seated on a throne, she looks like the queen of the underworld, mother of both plants and animals. The libations that are offered to her reflect a ritual that is known to have existed throughout the history of the ancient Mediterranean cultures as well as elsewhere. Libations were common as early as 2000 BCE in the Minoan-Mycenaean period. Gems often depict sacrificial scenes with libation pitchers and altars laden with bread and fruit. Sometimes the images from this period depict the sacrifice of a bull, blood flowing from his throat into a vessel on the floor.

Libations served many purposes. Sometimes they were offered as a legal binding in a contract between two parties. Libations for the dead may have been offered so that the souls of the dead might receive nourishment. Water libations were understood mostly in terms of purification, although they were also performed at tombs in funerary rites. Many religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, have rejected libations altogether. In Judaism, since the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, sacrificial ritual in general has been abandoned.

The libation in this image seems to be an offering of sanctified beverages to the underworld goddess. There is probably a sense that she will be able to utilize this gift, just as the earth itself "drinks" the rain from heaven. Water and other liquids often represent emotion, which must keep flowing in order to stay spontaneous and vital. Frozen water may signify the inhibition of emotion, just as tears may express the renewal that comes with emotional connectedness. The libation ritual suggests that the flow of emotion must go both ways. Emotions rise to the surface of the unconscious and make themselves felt by the

conscious ego; they are not products of the ego. If the individual cultivates a feeling connection to the unconscious—in music, dance, the arts, and through play—a renewal is experienced on both levels.

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GLOSSARY

APHRODITE ("sexual love, pleasure") Goddess of love, beauty, and fertility. Her origins lie outside the Indo-European culture, and she has many aspects that connect her both with the Mesopotamian goddesses of love and war and the bird goddess of Old Europe. In Greek myth, she is the wife of Hephaistos, the beloved of Ares, and the mother of Eros. She is often depicted accompanied by birds or rising from the sea.

ARTEMIS A goddess worshiped universally in historical Greece, but in all likelihood pre-Hellenic. Her proper sphere is the earth, specifically the wilderness. A virgin goddess, she is the friend and helper of women and children, loves the hunt, and is associated with wild beasts, especially the bear.

DEMETER The Greek goddess of grain. A powerful and important mother goddess in the religion of ancient Greece, Demeter was connected with several festivals. Her mysteries at Eleusis, which were pre–Indo-European, continued to thrive in the cosmopolitan world of Hellenism. In her youthful aspect she is known as Kore or Persephone.

PERSEPHONE Daughter of the Greek goddess of grain, Demeter; she is also known as Kore ("virgin"). Persephone is carried off by Hades to be his wife in the underworld. Demeter grieves, and the earth ceases to produce life. Zeus interferes and has Persephone returned to her mother. However, because she has tasted food in the underworld, she must spend some part of every year underground.

APHRODITE RIDING A GOOSE
Attributed to the Pistoxenos Painter Ceramic: Attic white ground, with polychrome
Height: 4.5 in. (11.4 cm); diameter: 9.5 in. (24 cm) 470–460 BCE *Site: Tomb at Camirus, Rhodes, Greece*
Location: no. D2, *British Museum, London*

Aphrodite riding a goose

Greek: Early Classical

Aphrodite is shown riding through the sky on the back of a goose, one of the creatures sacred to her. In her right hand she holds a flowered tendril, representing a divine plant. This image of Aphrodite (who was daughter of the sky and born from the sea) presents Aphrodite Ourania, a cosmic power at home in the heavens, on earth, and in the sea.

This early classical painting is on the inside of an Athenian cup. The outside of the cup is black. Aphrodite rides aloft on a large goose. The flowering tendril in her right hand comes from no earthly plant. The group is set free in an empty whiteness that stands for the heavens. One feels the figures ethereally afloat. The goddess wears a purple-red cloak over a patterned dress. The hem of the dress is likewise purple-red, with a white meander pattern. Around her neck is a necklace, and she wears sandals on her feet. Beside the goddess is her name, written in the genitive: "[image] of Aphrodite."

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Aphrodite is best known from Greek mythology as the goddess of love; however, her preliterary history—revealed especially by way of visual artifacts—shows her to be a pre–Indo-European goddess with connections both to the goddess of love and war in the ancient Near East and the water-bird goddess of Old Europe. In this painting, it is the latter connection that is presented: the goddess flies through the heavens as Aphrodite Ourania ("celestial Aphrodite"), borne up by her sacred goose.

Ever since Hesiod (*Theogony* 11. 188–206), the Greeks held her name to be derived from the Greek word for froth or foam (*aphros*). According to the poem, Aphrodite was born from the foam generated by the genitals of Ouranos ("sky") that his son Kronos had cut off and thrown into the sea. Aphrodite was considered therefore to be a goddess born of the sea and the sky. Ever since the classical Greek period, however, she has been identified most often as the goddess of love and sexuality. Although the Greeks assigned Hephaistos to her as husband, Aphrodite continued to act as a virgin goddess, that is, independent in her affections. Further, she is known to have committed and encouraged all forms of sexual relationship, not just marriage, which was in any case the domain of Hera, wife to Zeus.

Aphrodite riding on a goose does not have any clear connection to a known ancient myth. There may, however, be a literary analogue to this picture in a poem by Sappho (sixth century BCE). The Greek poet describes Aphrodite riding on a car drawn by birds (frag. 1): "And birds, beautiful and fast, led you over the dark earth, whirling quick wings from the heaven's ether through the middle sky." The poet used the Greek word *strouthoi,* referring either to sparrows or, more ambiguously, simply to birds in general. Athenaios, a Greek writer of the late second and early third centuries CE, took the word literally and thought that Sappho had really meant sparrows. Athenaios considered sparrows appropriate birds to draw Aphrodite's chariot because, in his opinion, they were particularly lustful. He cited a lost work of Terpsicles, an obscure author, who wrote that people who eat sparrows are

inclined to sexual activity. Aristotle, as Athenaios noted, believed that sparrows laid as many as eight eggs at one time.

However, these "strouthoi," described by ancient commentators on Homer's *Iliad* as sacred to Aphrodite, were taken for swans rather than sparrows. In the fifth century BCE, when this painting of Aphrodite was painted, the swan may have been a sexual symbol. The Greeks considered the swan sacred to Apollo, but the Romans associated the bird with Venus, the Roman goddess they identified with Aphrodite. Horace wrote an ode to Venus, whom he described as being "borne by gleaming swans" (*Carminum* 4.1.10). Like eagles, geese and swans fly high and may have been associated with Olympus, the realm of the gods. In the *Fourth Pythian,* Pindar wrote that Aphrodite "sent down from Olympus the bright wryneck, . . . the passionate bird." Born of the sea, the goddess would naturally be associated with all manner of water birds.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

It is common to find that an animal or bird may itself be an epiphany, the form by means of which a divine being makes itself perceptible to human beings. On the other hand, the animal may appear as the special companion to the anthropomorphic epiphany of the deity. Such companions are often mounts, that is, they support or carry or transport the god or goddess. For example, the chariot of the Scandinavian goddess Freyja was drawn by cats, and the Indian god Indra rode through the heavens on an elephant. It is important to remember that both the anthropomorphic and the animal forms point to the same reality, or different aspects of one divine being. Therefore, the goose in this image tells us something about the archetype that underlies the goddess herself.

We know that Aphrodite is a goddess whose Mediterranean roots reach far back to an age before the invasions of the Indo-European peoples. Many ancient texts identify her as related to certain Mesopotamian goddesses. The sacred goose of Aphrodite, however, connects her to the goddesses of Old Europe, especially to the goddess that was manifest as a water bird. The bird goddess of Old Europe appeared sometimes in conjunction with the snake goddess, and sometimes alone. Her presence is felt everywhere—on earth, in the skies, and beyond the clouds, where the primordial waters lie. Her abode is beyond the heavenly waters, which were symbolized by the meandrous labyrinths. She rules over the life-giving power of water, and her image is consequently associated with water containers such as the Athenian cup pictured here. She assumes the shape of a crane, a goose, a duck, or a diving bird.

In Old Europe, the meander—in this image, the geometric pattern on the hem of Aphrodite's dress—was a symbol of the cosmic waters. The meander was incised on figurines, masks, cult vessels, and altars in all cultural groups of Old Europe. It was not a symbol invented by the early agriculturists but was rather inherited by them from earlier hunting and gathering cultures. Symmetric and rhythmic meanders are encountered on Magdalenian bone and ivory objects. These objects appear to portray water birds with long necks.

> For the northern hunters the water bird was the major food supply, and the well-being of the people depended to a great extent on its regular return from the south in the spring. The divinity symbolized by the water bird must have been a giver of nourishment. Portrayals of

water birds in stone and bone are known from Upper Palaeolithic sites in Europe and Siberia. It is the notion of hybridization of bird and woman which led to the creation of a rigidly schematized type found in Mezin and Peterfels. The geometric signs were necessary to invigorate the effectiveness of these amulets. Chevrons emphasize the avian character, and the meander, the mythical waters or the energy of waters and their mistress, the snake.

(Gimbutas, 134f.)

The arrival in the West of the Indo-Europeans and their patriarchal culture resulted in the displacement of important local goddesses and gods and, most conspicuously, the universal water divinity who appeared as a snake or a bird. The ancient practice of sculpting "Lady Bird" figurines ceased in Old Europe. The situation was different in the Mediterranean, where her cult continued to thrive, especially in Minoan Crete and in all areas of the Aegean where the Minoan influence was strong, including the Greek mainland. In this cultural milieu, Aphrodite survived as a manifestation of the ancient goddess. She was portrayed not only flying through the air standing or sitting on a goose but also accompanied by three geese, as in the Greek terra-cotta artifacts of the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. She may well have reappeared after the christianization of Europe in the rhymes taught to children as Mother Goose.

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GLOSSARY

HEPHAISTOS Greek god of fire, especially the fire of the smith. Originally he may have been a god of the volcano. He is the divine craftsman of the gods, and in line with the customs of that culture he is lame (that is, unfit for war or farming). His wife is Charis or, more usually, Aphrodite, which bespeaks little more than allegory, that is, craftsmanship allied with grace or beauty.

HERA An ancient, pre-Hellenic goddess. Her Greek name seems to be the title "lady." Her native name is not known. In the myths of the Greeks, she is said to be the wife of Zeus and a deity of marriage and of the life, especially the sexual life, of women.

OURANOS (Gk., "sky") In Greek cosmogony, Ouranos, or Heaven, together with Gaia, or Earth, brought forth numerous offspring. Ouranos, however, hated them and hid each one away in its mother's body. This caused Gaia great pain, and so she made a sickle and called upon her children to castrate their father. Kronos alone had the courage to accomplish the act.

ZEUS The only Greek god whose Indo-European origin is certain. His name derives from the Indo-European root that refers to the bright sky of the day, and originally he was a storm god. For the Greeks, he was the king of the Olympian deities.

TĀRĀ

Artist unknown Sculpture: black schist Height: 30.5 in. (77.5 cm) Tenth century CE
Site: Bihar, India Location: private collection, Los Angeles, California

Tārā

India: Pala

Tārā, supreme goddess of Mahāyāna Buddhism, is shown here seated in the pose of royal ease upon a throne supported by lions. In her left hand, she holds the lotus; with her right hand, she displays the boon-granting gesture.

A richly garbed goddess sits on a lion-ornamented throne in this gray stone sculpture. Her left leg is bent, the foot resting in her lap. Her right leg hangs down, the foot resting on a lotus-shaped stool, which, in turn, is supported by attendants. The goddess holds a lotus flower in her left hand, while her right hand displays the gesture of boon granting. The inscribed halo, surrounded by a row of pearls and edged in flames, is crowned with the *kīrttimukha* (demon mask). Celestial figures play music on either side.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Tārā, whose name is related to the Sanskrit word for *star,* evolved as the supreme feminine divinity in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Tradition holds that she was born as a tear of the compassionate *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara, savior of mankind, who leads all sentient beings to enlightenment. Tārā then became his consort, or feminine counterpart—his *śakti*—offering grace and wisdom to her devotees.

This image of Tārā is a photograph of a statue created originally to serve as an impetus to devotion. It was placed in a Buddhist shrine in Bihar, northeast India. Tārā was particularly popular in Bihar and Bengal from 800 to 1200 CE. It was in Bengal that notions about *Śakti* (or the feminine principle as cosmic energy) seem to have evolved. This emerging concept colored both Hinduism and Buddhism during the Pala-Sena period, and such figures as this one of Tārā are artistic reflections of a philosophical and religious development. Buddhism disappeared from Bihar and Bengal by the end of the twelfth century, but the worship of Tārā continued and developed further in Nepal and Tibet, where she still plays a highly significant role.

Some scholars suggest that the worship of Tārā was brought to the north around 1000 CE, that is, contemporaneous with this image of the goddess. By the time Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism had become well established in Tibet, Tārā was already one of the most important female deities. Known as the Great Savioress, she is believed to be the ancestress of the Tibetan people as a whole. This is related in a myth according to which Tārā mated with Avalokiteśvara in the semblance of a rock demoness with a monkey. Their offspring were monkeys who gradually became human, the first Tibetans.

The early images of Tārā represent her in a seated position possessing two hands and two arms, as here. As time passes, her iconic representations become more complex. Not only is there an increase in the number of limbs and heads, but the number of her attendants increases as well. This artistic development reflects a corresponding development in her theology. Beginning as a placid and compassionate figure, she later assumes the fierce aspect of a war goddess, Mahāmāyāvijayāvāhinī. As their protector, Tārā defends mankind from the

"eight great terrors," or perils of elephants, lions, fire, serpents, robbers, fetters, sea monsters, and vampires.

As goddess of mercy, Tārā is especially responsive to the tears of compassion in her followers. Leslie S. Kawamura relates the popular tale of how a certain Candragomin, feeling pity for a beggar woman who had no money and so could not arrange a marriage for her daughter, prayed before the image of Tārā. As tears fell from his eyes, the image came alive. The real goddess took off her jewels and handed them to Candragomin for the beggar woman.

The image of Tārā shown here reveals her benevolent nature. The nimbus signifies her divinity. The lotus, so common in the religious art of India, is especially the sign of Avalokiteśvara, her masculine counterpart. The *mudrā* of boon granting signifies her willingness to serve all who call upon her for help. The throne is a symbol of her authority, and it is a lion throne, for in India, Tārā shares the lion attribute with the goddesses Devī and Durgā, the demon killers. Like them, Tārā protects the weak from harm.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The development of Mahāyāna out of earlier forms of Buddhism is certainly complex and hard to decipher. But the shift itself is clear in one respect, in the reinterpretation of the role of the *bodhisattva.* In pre-Mahāyāna Buddhism, the term referred primarily to the Buddha, from the time that he adopted the vow to attain enlightenment to the point at which he attained Buddhahood. In the teaching of the Hīnāyāna school, however, the *bodhisattva* became a figure with intrinsic value: to be a *bodhisattva* meant to adopt the vow of seeking enlightenment for the sake of all living beings. Finding a model in the tales of the former lives of the Buddha, when he was still a *bodhisattva,* they sought to underscore the universal rather than the personal goal of liberation from suffering.

Mahāyāna Buddhism took over this view and developed it into a pantheon of *bodhisattva*s, dedicated to the salvation of all sentient beings through the ages. A corresponding shift took place in the ritual life of Buddhism as well, from individual meditation to the practice of devotion. It is within this context that figures such as Avalokiteśvara and Tārā evolved. In this way, the myths and rituals associated with gods and goddesses found a comfortable home in Buddhism, which is a primarily atheistic religion. Here, however, all beings—animal or divine—share in the suffering of the cosmic predicament, and the possibility of enlightenment.

Tārā, the feminine counterpart of the *bodhisattva* of compassion, derives her characteristics primarily from Buddhist tradition and secondarily from the more ancient worship of goddesses. Perhaps most startling in this image is her depiction seated on the lion throne. The same motif is a common one in the ancient art of the Near East. Inanna, the Sumerian goddess of love and war, rests her foot on the back of a lion as she offers the king the symbols of his rule. Her successors in Mesopotamia and Anatolia appear likewise with the lion or on a lion throne. The motif surfaces again in the Christian art of the Middle Ages, where sometimes the Virgin Mary is depicted seated upon a throne with lions at her side.

The lion goddess represents one aspect of the feminine that is often overlooked in modern times. The lion represents the fierce aggression of the female; it is perhaps the other side of her more gentle but mysterious feline nature, symbolized in the domestic cat. The cat

is helpful and gentle and responds to affection; the wild lion reveals the feline qualities prior to domestication—power, grace, and the skill of the hunter. Together they reveal a wholeness to the feminine, as both wild and tame. Tārā is primarily a goddess of compassion, but her feeling for the suffering of others would be useless if she lacked the power to oppose the perils of existence. It is here in her power to protect that her lion nature is revealed.

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GLOSSARY

AVALOKITEŚVARA The *bodhisattva* of limitless compassion, the most popular figure in pan-Asian Mahāyāna Buddhism. Worshiped and evoked in both male and female forms, Avalokiteśvara is considered a potent savior in times of need, one who watches over all beings and hears their cries of distress. He is often depicted as a lotus bearer. Known as Kuan-yin in China and Kannon in Japan.

KĪRTTIMUKHA (Skt., "face of glory") A demon mask originally associated with the Hindu god Śiva. In Southeast Asian temples, it is omnipresent as an auspicious and protective symbol, placed usually over doorways or at the top of the backslab on reliefs.

ŚAKTI "(Skt., "energy") In Hinduism, the feminine creative force, often personified as the female consort of a male deity.

THE GODDESS NIMBA

Artist unknown   Mask: wood   Height: 29.9 in. (76 cm)   Date unknown

Site: Guinea   Location: Carlo Monzino Collection, Lugano, Switzerland

The Goddess Nimba

Guinea: Baga

The goddess of generation and new life, Nimba, appears among the Baga of West Africa in the form of a dancing mask. A member of the Simo, a secret society of Baga men, carries the mask on his shoulders, the rest of his body hidden beneath a dress of raffia leaves. Nimba appears thus, dancing, on sacred occasions, especially at times of seeding and harvesting rice.

This wooden yoke mask has four "legs" that fit over the shoulders of the wearer. Above the legs are the shoulders, breasts, neck, and head of a highly stylized female figure. The breasts are rounded and curve to the vertical, with triangular decorations on the chest. The neck is elongated, and the head resembles that of a bird—the nose is prominent and hooked, the mouth absent, the coiffure a combination of geometric patterns and a long strip of hair running from forehead to the base of the skull.

Cultural Context

Secret societies form an integral part of the religious systems of many West African peoples, particularly those who belong to the so-called Poro cultural complex in Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. This is especially true of the Baga, who live in the coastal region of Guinea. In general, secret societies have a multiplicity of social and religious functions. Guardians of the traditions handed down from ancestor to ancestor and keepers of the sacred order, their members educate the young about the nature of divinity and the world, preparing them for marriage and adulthood. Frequently this education includes seclusion in a bush school presided over by elders of the society and a rigorous series of initiatory trials. Following the lines of classic rites of passage, the initiates progress through stages of death, liminality, and rebirth into the social order. Someone who has not undergone this process cannot be said to be fully human, that is, connected with the traditions of the past and the divine order. The role of the secret societies goes beyond initiation, however, and extends to the entire community. Because they are the possessors of religious knowledge, they serve to maintain the moral order on earth and to protect the harmony and productivity of the land and community.

The most important of the Baga secret societies, of which this Nimba mask forms a part, is known as Simo. Simo dominates the religious life of the Baga, playing a central role in the three most crucial events in a man's life: birth, circumcision, and death. As the Baga say, "Time and Simo are one." There are a wide range of masks within Simo, each representing a different spirit. Through dance rituals these spirits are called forth and their powers wielded for the benefit of the human community.

The Nimba mask plays a crucial role in agricultural rites, especially those of first fruits. The mask invokes Nimba, the goddess of generation, whose prodigious powers bring about the increase of crops, livestock, and humans. Her blessings are essential to the continuance of human life. Besides being the source of fecundity in females and the earth, Nimba is thought to provide special protection to pregnant women. Traditionally, her primary

manifestations are more public and communal, however. At times of seeding and harvesting rice, the primary staple of the Baga, Nimba materializes out of the bush in the form of a mask and leads the village in a celebration of her pivotal role in the creation of new life. As Nimba dances, the women of the village shower her with rice in a gesture of gratitude.

In contrast to the small mask shown here, most Nimba masks are monumental sculptures. Regardless of its size, however, this piece has many of the stylistic elements typically found in Nimba masks: the long neck, cantilevered head, pronounced nose, and decorative patterns. With the bigger masks used in the dance ritual, the dancer fits his upper body into the yoke below the neck and looks out through holes in the breasts. He holds onto the legs of the figure to balance the large and heavy burden. Further, his entire body is covered by a cloak of raffia fronds attached to the mask. This concealment of the human agency involved in the movement of the Nimba mask emphasizes its divine nature.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The most common definition for *mask* is something worn over the head or face of the bearer. However, as Henry Pernet notes in his study of masks in the history of religions, masks may be defined more broadly to include both bodily marks and costumes that conceal part or all of the body. If, however, one sticks to the more narrow definition of the term, it is interesting to note that even in regions that are traditionally considered to be the privileged domains of masks, there exist important zones in which they are not known. They are by no means universal in Africa, the Americas, or in Oceania, for example. Nor is any explanation for the presence or absence of masks currently accepted.

While it is a mystery why masks are used in one culture and not in another, comparable society, there is also something subtle and elusive about the function that masks have where they are in use. "Throughout the principal regions in which ritual masks are found—Africa, Melanesia, and the Americas—the majority of the figures depicted in masks are primordial beings, mythical ancestors, culture heroes, and gods. The past misconception that most masks represent 'spirits of the dead' was due to a large extent to the confusion between 'the dead' and 'the ancestors' and to lack of precision in the definition of 'spirit'" (Pernet, 263).

It appears that the mask does not represent the dead who return to move among the living; instead, the mask belongs to the mythical arts of storytelling and drama. That is to say, through the mask, mythical time and its events as well as mythical personages are brought into direct contact with the present. Thus the mask evokes the archetypal reality that serves as a paradigm for social existence.

For example, the mask may call to mind the primordial state prior to creation or the events that led to the first act of creation. The mask of the toucan among the Dan belongs to the latter kind, depicting in visual form the cosmogonic drama. When the Mai masks of the middle Sepik of New Guinea appear in public, they are accompanied by the recital of totemic names and sacred narratives. One mask represents a female spirit. Her partner in the creation of the present world is a masculine spirit who assumes the form of a crocodile. They appear together and draw the audience into the mythical time of beginnings.

The relationship between the mask and its wearer has provoked considerable speculation in the writings of anthropologists and ethnologists. One view is that wearing a mask is a parallel situation to being possessed, that is, that the person is transformed into the being

that he represents (in traditional, nonliterate societies most masks are worn by men only). According to another view, wearing a mask falls under the head of service rather than possession. Although the wearing of a mask may bring honor and prestige, it also burdens the wearer with various duties. These may include payment of a tax in cowries to purchase the right to wear a particular mask or several months of preparation during which the mask wearer learns the dance steps, intensively rehearses combined movements, and memorizes complicated texts, sometimes in a secret language.

The relationship between the mask and its wearer is a motif that evokes a certain degree of fascination. Japanese popular culture includes the story of a woman thief who, during her crimes, concealed her face behind a rigid mask. At one point, she forgets to remove the mask with the result that it grows attached to the flesh of her face. The same metaphor is found in C. G. Jung's theory of the persona, which is an aspect of the personality that serves ideally to present the person to the world or, when it fails to function correctly, becomes an obstacle existing between the Self and the outer reality.

> The term *persona,* taken from the Latin, refers to the ancient actor's mask which was worn in the solemn ritual plays. Jung uses the term to characterize the expressions of the archetypal drive toward an adaptation to external reality and collectivity. Our personas represent the roles we play on the worldly stage; they are the masks we carry throughout this game of living in external reality. The persona, as representational image of the adaptation archetype, appears in dreams in the image of clothes, uniforms, and masks. . . . We must learn to adapt to cultural and collective demands in accordance with our role in society—our occupation or profession and social position—and still be ourselves. We need to develop both an adequate persona mask and an ego. If this differentiation fails, a pseudoego is formed; the personality pattern is based on stereotyped imitation or on a merely dutiful performance of one's collectively assigned part in life. The pseudoego is a stereotyped precipitate of collective standards; one 'is' the professor or judge or society matron rather than an individual who gives the role its proper due at the necessary times. Such a pseudoego is not only rigid but also extremely fragile and brittle; the necessary supportive psychic energy from the unconscious is not forthcoming but rather is in opposition to consciousness, since such an ego is completely split off from the intentions of the Self. (Whitmont, 156f.)

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THE GODDESS FREYJA

Artist unknown   Jewelry: silver   Height: 1.5 in. (3.8 cm)   800–1050 CE

Site: Aska Parish, Hagebyhöga, Östergötland, Sweden   Location: no. 16429, Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm

The goddess Freyja

Scandinavia: Viking Age

This pendant probably represents Freyja ("lady"), the goddess of love, war, and shamanism, who, like this figure, is often adorned by a necklace. In exchange for four nights of love, four dwarfs forged for Freyja the fabulous Brísingamen necklace.

This small pendant combines the figure of the goddess and the symbolic circle in one design. The goddess appears to be wearing a cap, or her hair may be braided. Her hands are clasped in her lap, her arms around her pregnant belly. Above the belly is her necklace, below is her skirt or cloak. Her eyes are mere indentations, her nose a simple bulge. From her shoulders issues a great circle, which connects then again with her dress or feet at the bottom.

Cultural context

Freyja, the "most excellent of the goddesses" and "bride of the Vanir," was the sister of Freyr. In the myths of ancient Scandinavia, Freyja is depicted as a goddess eager for jewels and for all forms of wealth. Desiring a necklace, she willingly slept four nights with four different dwarfs so that they would forge the Brísingamen. Freyja herself is said to have wept tears of gold, and she was associated with all forms of material prosperity. As befits a goddess whose origins lay in archaic fertility cults, Freyja was generous even with her love. She felt desire indiscriminately for all of the gods, while at the same time the giants lusted after her. One of the giants, Hrungnir, went so far as to threaten Ásgard, the stronghold of the gods, if he could not possess her. On another occasion, the giant Thrymr refused to return Thor's hammer unless Freyja became his bride. Both myths reveal that the Æsir were spared the loss of their goddess of love only through the heroic intervention of their chief defender, Thor.

Freyja was essentially a Vanir deity who came to be associated in myth and cult with the Æsir gods, especially with Odin. It was Freyja who taught Odin the art of *seiðr,* a form of ecstatic divination. Priestesses of *seiðr* often wore cat skins, and Freyja herself is described as journeying in a wagon drawn by cats. Like Odin, Freyja was also capable of shape shifting. She could turn herself into a falcon and fly through the realms of the gods and the giants. Furthermore, both Odin and Freyja were connected with war, each receiving half of the dead slain in battle.

Freyja was also identified with the pig. In times of war, she appeared together with her boar—that is, with Hildisvíni ("swine of battle"). Moreover, she was provided with an appropriate dwelling place in Folkvangr ("battlefield"). Warrior helmets crowned with the carved image of a boar indicated that the wearer was dedicated to the goddess.

The sow or boar as Freyja's attribute was connected not only to the cults of warriors but also to her role as a goddess of generation and bountiful life. Boar helmets and masks were worn at cult centers, such as the great temple at Uppsala, by priest-kings who served as "husbands of Freyja" in Vanir rituals. The intimate relation between sexuality and death in

the cult of Freyja is reflected, moreover, in the numerous ship graves and burials of highborn men and women. In Iceland, two such graves were linked with men who were called "priests of Freyja." In the famous Norwegian Oseberg ship burial of two women, possibly a queen and her servant, Vanir worship is also evident. This burial site includes elaborately carved wagons similar to those that carried the image of the goddess or her priestess through the countryside to ensure the prosperity of the land.

During the Viking age, the worship of the Vanir gods was repressed. What evidence remains is scattered and often distorted. Yet it is obvious from Bronze Age finds and from early place names that the myths and rites surrounding the Vanir deities were quite ancient and had been for a long period of time the most prominent element in Scandinavian religious life.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Modern studies of Freyja are often confusing, because although she is acknowledged as having been the most important goddess of the North at the time of the conversion to Christianity (c. 1000 CE), she is still very often denounced as a "whore" or "witch." These two terms refer to her roles as goddess of love and goddess of divination, or shamanism. However, she is seen only as the negative manifestation of the feminine in these roles. Some of this misunderstanding rests on the slanders of the trickster Loki. Loki was capable of maligning other deities, too, but nowhere else is his nonsense taken so seriously as his treatment of this goddess. Perhaps one can understand Freyja, or the kind of goddess that she represents and the fears that she evokes, by focusing on her role as a medium, one who connects the opposites (male and female as well as spirit and human opposites). This female medium as a type has been discussed already by numerous analytical psychologists.

For example, Ann Belford Ulanov, in her valuable study *The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and Christian Theology,* explores a feminine typology based on one set forth earlier by Toni Wolff in her essay "A Few Thoughts on the Individuation Process in Women." According to this typology, the feminine may manifest itself in four major modes, each one having a special relation to one of the four components of personality: persona, ego, personal unconscious, and collective unconscious. Furthermore, each type tends to connect to the masculine in a specific way—as mother, as daughter, as comrade, or as mediatrix. The fourth of these, having a special connection to the collective unconscious and relating to men as a mediatrix, is the medial woman. Freyja was a goddess of shamans, and the tradition of female seers that she inspired probably is best understood in terms of the medial woman.

The medial woman's task is to act as a medium who separates and connects the reality of the nonpersonal, objective psyche to the consciousness of others, indeed, to the consciousness of the society as a whole. In this way, she serves as a prophet or healer, a cultural innovator. She is very much influenced by the archetype of the wise old woman, and she can succeed only if she has a strong sense of her own self, so that she does not confuse what belongs to the ego with what belongs to the environment, what is personal with what is impersonal, or the values and limits of consciousness with those of the unconscious. Without the capacity for separation, her talent for mediation cannot be realized.

> The negative aspect of the Wise Woman archetype is expressed in the swamping effect of objective psychic contents on an individual ego that is weak or even entirely lacking. Then,

instead of being a Medium, a woman's personal identity becomes simply a means of articulation for the objective psyche and can turn into an agent of confusion or destruction. This is symbolized by the witch, or by fortune tellers, who assume the power of the unconscious as their own and "become the playthings of potentially destructive psychic influences and thereby sources of psychic infection and decadence" (Edward C. Whitmont, *The Symbolic Quest* [New York, 1969]: 180). Most frequently what an environment will not or cannot permit to come into consciousness is the negative aspect of an idea or situation, and thus the Medium, if her ego is weak and unable to differentiate, activates and develops what is negative. (Ulanov, 208f.)

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GLOSSARY

FREYR The son of Njord and brother of Freyja, Freyr was a god of plenty associated especially with vegetation and animal life. Both the horse and the boar were sacred in his cult.

ODIN (Old Norse, Óðinn) In Scandinavian mythology, the leader of the Æsir (one of two groups of deities). Odin is a god associated with wisdom and battle.

THOR (Old Norse, Þórr) In ancient Scandinavia, the god of thunder, who was venerated especially in Norway and Sweden. Thor carried a hammer, with which he protected the worlds of gods and mankind.

THE GODDESS CAMUṆḌĀ

Artist unknown   Sculpture: sandstone   Height: 34.5 in. (87 cm)   Tenth century CE

Site: Hinglajgaṛh, Madhya Pradesh, India   Location: Central Museum, Indore, India

THE GODDESS CAMUṆḌĀ

India: Central Medieval

The insatiable Camuṇḍā is the most terrible aspect of Devī, the Hindu great goddess. Born from the forehead of Ambikā (another name for Devī), the goddess Kālī was endowed with such strength that she was able to destroy an army of demons, decapitating their chiefs, Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa. Henceforth, she was also known as Camuṇḍā. Dry and blackened, Camuṇḍā is an eater of corpses. Yet she remains emaciated, because her hunger can never be satisfied. In constant agony, she fills the world with her terrible cries.

A damaged stone sculpture, this piece shows a horrifying hag with gaping mouth, bulging eyes, and matted hair crown. Her "jewelry" consists primarily of serpents writhing about her neck, hips, and waist. Camuṇḍā appears bearing a halo and a crown and wearing the panther skirt of an ascetic. Her bony body is adorned with a skull garland and serpents, and a scorpion crawls on her sunken belly. Originally this figure would have had four arms and in each hand a weapon or some other symbol of her power (chopper, noose, skull, or spear). She would either have been dancing in a cremation ground or standing triumphantly upon the corpse of at least one of her victims.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This devotional image of Camuṇḍā, Hindu goddess of death and destruction, once stood in a goddess temple or in a shrine of a temple dedicated to her consort, Śiva. Because she is also a manifestation of Pārvatī, the wife of Śiva, Camuṇḍā wears the panther skin of the ascetic and matted locks. A horrific form of the great goddess (Devī), she evolved probably within the Śakti cult of post–Gupta dynasty Bihar and Bengal.

The iconographic elements seen in this figure are distributed throughout Indian art. They are especially elaborate in Nepal and Tibet, where an amalgamation of Hindu and Buddhist notions of the goddess has occurred within Tantrism. Multiple manifestations of one divinity are commonplace in Hinduism. The fierce goddess is said to have appeared first as Durgā when all the male gods combined their energies to bring her into being, in order to overcome the demon horde. Subsequently, she created out of herself still other forms. In her manifestation as Kalī, the dark goddess, she created the even more terrifying Camuṇḍā. Both Durgā and Kalī are more popular than Camuṇḍā and are depicted more frequently in art. However, in her manifestation as a hag Kalī is in most respects identical with Camuṇḍā.

In Hinduism, the deity is both the source of life and the dealer of death. Thus devotion to Camuṇḍā (or Kalī) is necessary in order to acknowledge the full reality of the goddess. In Tantrism, the devotee may worship this aspect of the goddess in the cremation ground, among corpses who serve as a reminder of the inevitable dissolution of the flesh and the destruction of the self that inhabits the impermanent human body. In this setting, the defiling corpse handlers, jackals, and crows that scatter the bones of the dead are perceived as doing the work of Camuṇḍā. Yet Camuṇḍā is not only a goddess who harms. Hindus believe in an ongoing cycle of rebirth: just as life ends inevitably in death, so, too, death is the

release that promises a new existence. For this reason, a demon about to be destroyed by Camuṇḍā will often smile or clasp its hands in a worshipful gesture to express its ecstasy at being freed by the goddess from its demon birth.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The history of Camuṇḍā in connection with Durgā and Kalī suggests a process by means of which the Indian goddess (Devī) is thought to manifest herself in more and more specialized and differentiated forms. Her capacity for death and destruction is most completely symbolized thus in Camuṇḍā. Originally, she is born as a name of Kalī, in celebration of the death of two mighty demons. Therefore, she is primarily a force that opposes the demonic by superseding it in her capacity to terrify and destroy. She reveals herself thus as a protector of the cosmos, for demons nearly always represent forces that lead to the disintegration of the matrix that supports life. Paradoxically, as goddess of death, Camuṇḍā is ultimately a servant of life, and this is the basis of the devotion offered her.

Kalī (Camuṇḍā's most immediate predecessor) resembles the Greek goddess Athena in that both goddesses were born out of the forehead of their parent deity. In Athena's case, it was the forehead of Zeus. Both goddesses are fierce warriors. However, they serve as warriors coming out of differing realms: Athena is a solar deity associated with reason and other masculine values, whereas Kalī derives her warrior spirit from the feminine ground of being, which links her to the underworld. Camuṇḍā's garments—snakes, scorpions, and skulls—symbolize this earth-connected spirit.

Erich Neumann has suggested that Kalī/Camuṇḍā represents the darkness inherent in the maternal powers: "The mysteries of death as mysteries of the Terrible Mother are based on her devouring-ensnaring function, in which she draws the life of the individual back into herself. Here the womb becomes a maw and the conceptual symbols of diminution, hacking to pieces, and annihilation, or rot and decay, have here their place, which is associated with graves, cemeteries, and negative death magic" (Neumann, 71f.). Yet Camuṇḍā serves also to inspire new life in her devotees: in numerous ascetic traditions, meditation on the face of death and destruction as symbolized by this and similar figures can result in the recognition of the limits of the ego, which is tied to the individual, mortal body, and this can lead to a new orientation, that is, to a spiritual rebirth.

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GLOSSARY

DEVĪ (Skt., "goddess") At some point in Hindu literary tradition, an important theological tendency became apparent and dominates many texts that are partial to goddesses. This is the belief that the numerous goddesses are but myriad manifestations of a single feminine deity. Often she is simply called Devī, but other names include Mahādevī ("great goddess") and Śakti ("power, energy").

DURGĀ One of numerous fierce Hindu goddesses associated with battle. Durgā is born of the combined energies of the male deities, who create her in order to combat a demon who has been given the boon that he can be defeated only by a female. Durgā has many arms, each of which wields a weapon special to one of the powerful male deities. She rides a lion, and she is overwhelmingly beautiful and powerful. Her primary role is to protect the cosmic order by appearing periodically to battle demons who oppress the world.

KĀLĪ (Skt., "the black one" or "time") One of many fierce Hindu goddesses that appear in the medieval period and are associated with battle. Black, naked, and adorned with parts of the human body, Kālī dwells in cremation grounds and is often pictured seated on a corpse. She is particularly popular in Bengal, and wherever she is worshiped she receives blood offerings.

PĀRVATĪ Associated with the mountains, especially with the Himalayas, Pārvatī is the primary consort of the god Śiva. Luring the great ascetic Śiva into marriage, she draws the accumulation of spiritual and sexual energy of the god with him into the world. The symbol of this accomplishment is the image central to most Śiva temples: the conjoined *liṅga* and *yoni.*

ŚAKTI (Skt., "energy") In Hinduism, the feminine creative force, often personified as the female consort of a male deity.

ŚIVA A principal Hindu god. Within the divine trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, he is the destroyer, but to his devotees he is creator, preserver, and destroyer. Although Śiva does not appear in the early Vedic writings, his cult seems to have preserved aspects of the ancient Aryan tradition: Śiva is the Lord of Creatures as well as the great ascetic. His universal symbol is the *liṅga,* his animal companion is Nandi the bull, and a bull serves as the vehicle on which he rides.

TANTRISM A form of religious practice. In both Hinduism and Buddhism, *Tantrism* refers to non-Vedic beliefs and practices emphasizing the existence in man of divine powers that can be activated and experienced by means of specific ritual procedures.

COATLICUE

Artist unknown Sculpture: andesite Height: 8 ft. 6 in. (2.59 m) Late fifteenth century CE

Site: Main plaza, Tenochtitlán, Mexico City Location: Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City

Coatlicue

Central Mexico: Aztec Culture

Coatlicue ("serpent skirt") was one of an array of earth goddesses in Aztec mythology. Her image here emphasizes her identity as a cosmic process rather than her personification as a female deity, that is, as the force that offers life but is maintained by death in a struggle of the opposites that is inevitable, even necessary.

This stone figure consists of a female form draped with a blouse of severed human hands and hearts, a skirt of intertwined serpents with skull belt buckles in the front and in the back, ferocious rattlesnakes for hands, and a head composed of two giant rattlesnake heads facing one another. Her feet are giant jaguar claws. From beneath her skirt of serpents flows a serpent of blood.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Coatlicue was one of the five moon goddesses worshiped by the Aztecs. Or, according to another view, she was a single earth goddess with five aspects: the four directions and their center. She embodies the cosmic force that solidifies all that is potential into concrete form, not as matter only but as the dynamic matter of living things. Through her the transcendent becomes tangible.

For a time, Coatlicue's existence remained unknown. She languished, lonely and barren, in a cloud. When the Sun discovered her, however, and then took her as his bride, all of her powers to create quickened. From this time forward, it was her power that lay behind the seed and its flowering, the animals and their coupling. If this description seems too kind to fit the terrifying vision of the goddess revealed in her statue, it is because Coatlicue, as goddess of life, is actually a vast cosmic process. What appears as cruelty is actually far away from either cruelty or compassion. It is the objective nature of living beings: eat or be eaten.

Justino Fernandez, in his study of the goddess, has described the symbolism of the statue shown here: The skirt of entwined serpents, hanging from two creator gods that form her belt, represents mankind. The skulls that serve as ornaments represent the rhythm of life growing or merging into death. Behind hang thirteen leather thongs that are encrusted with snails. These represent the thirteen heavens that rise up over their foundation in the city at the center of the earth, Tenochtitlán. The goddess is clad about the thorax with a garment of human skin, a reminder that she is connected to Xipe Totec, the flayed god of spring. Hands and hearts are strung together to form her necklace, a reminder of the ritual of human sacrifice, which was necessary in order to maintain the gods and to uphold the cosmic order.

At the highest point of the statue is Omeyocan ("place of duality"), the thirteenth heaven and the dwelling place of the primordial, androgynous deity Ometeotl, who gave birth to the first, creator gods. Omeyocan is represented by two rattlesnake heads in place of the goddess's head. In this manifestation of her numinous reality, the goddess reveals herself not as woman but as cosmic mountain: as the force that underlies the dynamic of life and death, she holds the cosmos together and provides the primary material for the drama that

includes both the gods and mankind. Bloodthirsty and warlike to mortal eyes, she is in reality the principle that provides both stability and endurance to the cosmos.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

This image of Coatlicue is a good example of what Erich Neumann called the Terrible Mother. When ego-consciousness is experienced as masculine, and as developing out of a maternal matrix called the unconscious, the symbolism of the struggle between the hero and the Great Mother arises: "In other words, the dialectical relation of consciousness to the unconscious takes the symbolic, mythological form of a struggle between the Maternal-Feminine and the male child, and here the growing strength of the male corresponds to the increasing power of consciousness in human development" (Neumann, 148).

Insofar as the liberation of consciousness is painful and difficult (which it always is), the unconscious is perceived symbolically as the so-called Terrible Mother.

> Just as world, life, nature, and soul have been experienced as a generative and nourishing, protecting and warming Femininity, so their opposites are also perceived in the image of the Feminine; death and destruction, danger and distress, hunger and nakedness, appear as helplessness in the presence of the dark and Terrible Mother. . . . This Terrible Mother is the hungry earth, which devours its own children and fattens on their corpses; it is the tiger and the vulture, the vulture and the coffin, the flesh-eating sarcophagus voraciously licking up the blood seed of men and beasts and, once fecundated and sated, casting it out again in new birth, hurling it to death, and over and over again to death. (*Ibid.,* 149f.)

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Gods

O Lord our sovereign,
how glorious is thy name in all the earth!
Thy majesty is praised high as the
heavens.
Out of the mouths of babes, of
infants at the breast,
thou hast rebuked the mighty,
silencing enmity and vengeance to
teach thy foes a lesson.
When I look up at thy heavens, the
work of thy fingers,
the moon and the stars set in their
place by thee,
what is man that thou shouldst
remember him,
mortal man that thou shouldst
care for him?
Yet thou hast made him little less
than a god,
crowning him with glory and honour.
Thou makest him master over all
thy creatures;
thou hast put everything under his feet:
all sheep and oxen, all the wild beasts,
the birds in the air and the fish
in the sea,
and all that moves along the
paths of ocean.
O Lord our sovereign,
how glorious is thy name in all the earth!

—Psalm 8

KṚṢṆA LIFTING MOUNT GOVARDHANA
Artist: Shahadin   Miniature painting: gouache on paper, polychrome
8 3/8 × 11 3/4 in. (21.3 × 29.8 cm)   Circa 1690 CE   *Site: Bikaner, Rajasthan, India*
Location: no. 1960-7-16-016, British Museum, London

Kṛṣṇa lifting Mount Govardhana

India: Rajput

The youthful god Kṛṣṇa, most beloved avatāra *of Viṣṇu the preserver, demonstrates power equal to that of Indra, the lord of thunder. Indra (upper right), riding through the clouds astride his white elephant Airāvata, sends down a great storm, but Kṛṣṇa raises Mount Govardhana aloft and holds it as a protective umbrella over the cows of Gokula and their keepers.*

The painting is divided into three quasi-registers. Kṛṣṇa is in the center of the middle register, dressed in princely garb and surrounded by his friends and adoptive kinsmen (adoring women, in particular) and some of their cattle. In the upper register the great mountain Govardhana is shown as a large hill with buildings, and to the right Indra is depicted riding his elephant. Fearsome black storm clouds fill the sky. Kṛṣṇa holds the mountain effortlessly with one finger, sheltering his companions from Indra's storm (rivulets fall from Mount Govardhana in front of them). The lower register (the foreground) is taken up with pastoral imagery (cows birthing, suckling, and being milked).

Cultural context

This depiction of one of the many heroic deeds of the young Kṛṣṇa is an illustration of a myth found in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa,* a great literary work that contains the life of Kṛṣṇa. According to this myth, Indra was angry because Kṛṣṇa had disrupted the sacrifices owed to him by advising the inhabitants of Gokula to turn their veneration toward the symbolic center of the nourishing realm in which they lived, that is, to the mountain Govardhana itself.

In the Vedic system, sacrifice is the central exchange of energy on which the entire universe and all its elements depend. For Indra to lose sacrifices would mean that he would cease to exist as a vital, spiritual force in the universe. So to put a stop to this, he determined to kill off the cattle of those who have turned aside from him. To this end, he summoned the heavens to assist him. At his command, a horrendous storm darkened the sky and flooded the earth, killing cattle right and left. But Kṛṣṇa proved himself as strong as Indra by uprooting the mountain and using it to shield his beloved cowherders and their cattle. For seven nights the storm continued, until Indra gave up and dispersed the clouds from the sky.

By saving Gokula from a cataclysm sent by the angry storm god, Kṛṣṇa here expresses both his might as a protector equal to Indra and his compassionate nature. More generally, God's love for humans (and animal life) is demonstrated in Kṛṣṇa's action, while the love of humans and animals for God is evident in the adoring attitude of the figures surrounding Kṛṣṇa. (Love of this kind is called *bhakti.*)

The miniature displays the superhuman strength of Kṛṣṇa and emphasizes his divinity. Yet throughout the myths that have grown up around the figure of this god, the playful or romantic, human side of Kṛṣṇa is just as prominent as his divinity and awesome strength. This ambivalence in his nature leads his companions to feel sometimes that Kṛṣṇa is one of them, while at other times the revelation of his divine power sets him apart. But intimacy and loving devotion (*bhakti*) remain especially characteristic of Kṛṣṇa worship.

The earliest artistic renderings of this myth are sculptural and come from Mathura, Kṛṣṇa's supposed birthplace, in north central India. They may be dated to the third or fourth century CE. While the worship of Kṛṣṇa was popular over the whole of India, it was especially important in Rajasthan, in northwest India, where loving devotion to the god was stressed. The painter is known, which is relatively unusual for Rajput paintings. Shahadin was obviously a highly talented artist, and presumably well patronized. His name suggests an Islamic origin (he may have been well versed in Hindu iconography without having practiced the faith). The commissioner of this painting was probably of princely rank, for its quality is very high. Both his prestige as a devout Vaiṣṇavite and his reputation as a connoisseur would have been enhanced by an association with this fine work.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

During the Vedic period (the time of the literary flowering of the Aryan conquerors in India), Indra was one of the most important deities. In a tripartite division of the world and society and the gods, Indra represented the power to defend the cosmic order. The other two roles were those governing creation (understood in terms of sacrifice and associated in society with the priestly caste) and fertility (associated in society with the farmer). Defenders of the social order, warriors and kings, patterned their roles after Indra, the god who had killed the dragon and freed the waters, the god who saved cattle and mankind from harm.

Whenever there is in the history of religions an intrusion of new values or attitudes that leads to a transformation of the existing belief system, it is essential that the preexisting balance of power be maintained. In other words, if Indra is no longer acknowledged, who will defend the cosmos? The myth of Mount Govardhana reveals the safe transition from one worldview to another: Kṛṣṇa has the vital force to succeed the old god. Like Indra, Kṛṣṇa has the strength to protect mankind and their cattle. He has the power to lift the cosmic mountain. Indeed, he is equal in power to Indra. The transition will not result in a crisis.

The new value that came into being with the worship associated with Kṛṣṇa included, among other things, the more intimate relationship of *bhakti*. The Vedic religion was polytheistic; *bhakti* is theistic, that is, the divine is experienced as a personal being capable of the emotions of love and affection. In the discipline of *bhakti,* relatedness provides the container for the transformation of raw emotion into a quality of feeling that has saving value. Liberation from the endless cycles of death and rebirth is achieved in this system through specific forms of relationship with the divine (conceived of as either male or female): the dependency of a child on its parent; the maternal solicitude of a parent for its child; the easy familiarity of the friend; the devoted service of the servant for his master; or the passionate attachment of lovers. Each of these forms can provide a container for the spiritualization of the emotions and can lead to eventual union with the divine.

From a psychological point of view, the transition from the worship of Indra to that of Kṛṣṇa symbolizes an archetypal pattern that is universally found to mark the change that takes place in a society or an individual when the power of the primal Self gives way to the needs of the developing ego-function. The early development of the ego-function is frequently represented as a hero figure during the transition from an image of absolute power to a humanistic and compassionate image of human relatedness. In the process a warlike antagonism could arise between these two modalities if there were not some transforming

symbol to unify them peaceably. Hence, Mount Govardhana is transformed from an image of absolute dominance into a specific, useful object with which to protect the liberated ego from the danger of being either destroyed or inflated by identity with the Self. The humorous, playful, creative power of the Divine Child as archetype is well represented in this tale of Kṛṣṇa with its sense of renewal.

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GLOSSARY

AVATĀRA (Skt., "descent") In Hinduism, a god's embodiment on earth in the form of a creature. Incarnation.

BHAKTI (Skt., "devotion") In Hinduism, one of a number of religious paths that lead to union with the Absolute and liberation from the cycle of birth and death. *Bhakti* stresses the personal, affectionate relationship between the human and the divine.

GOPĪ (Skt., "milkmaid") The milkmaids of Braj are so much in love with Kṛṣṇa that they will do anything for him, and he for them. In the so-called amorous dance, or *rāsa līlā,* Kṛṣṇa dances with all the *gopīs* of Braj at once, multiplying himself so that each woman feels he is dancing with her alone.

INDRA In the Vedas, the earliest Hindu writings, Indra is the storm god, protector of the cosmos and all its inhabitants.

KṚṢṆA (Skt., "the dark one") Most often regarded as one of the *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa is probably the most beloved god in modern Hinduism. Often he inspires the intense form of devotion known in Hinduism as *bhakti.*

VIṢṆU A principal Hindu god. As one of the trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, he is the preserver, but to his devotees he is the supreme god of the universe.

Oath-taking figure

Artist unknown   Sculpture: wood   Height: 14.6 in. (37 cm)   Date unknown

Site: Zaire (southwestern or adjacent areas)   Location: private collection

Oath-taking figure

Zaire: Bakongo

When a nail is hammered into the torso of this figure, its avenging powers—symbolized by the energy-releasing gesture of its upraised right hand brandishing a weapon—are activated. If the oath is then broken, the figure will look into the spirit world to discover whom to punish.

This exquisitely carved sculpture was used ritually probably less than a dozen times. The large feet ground the figure, which stands erect in a pose signifying purposeful movement, with the right hand raised and the left hand on the hip. This is a standard gesture, reminiscent of baton twirling or sword thrusting, and serves as an emblem of energy release. The legs are positioned apart and are slightly bent, and the prominently modeled kneecaps suggest action. Though the gender of this figure is not indicated, its force is masculine. A daggerlike weapon is in the raised right hand. The heads of such figures can be fully one-fourth their total height. This relative largeness of the head emphasizes it as the seat of the soul. The lips are parted, with no tongue visible. The eyebrows are in pronounced relief, and the eyes large and fully open. The cavities once held inlays, probably glass or some other reflecting substance. The hat is of a pillbox type. The figure is polished and has acquired a high patina. Central to an understanding of this image are the nails—less than a half dozen in number—that have been driven into the torso, as well as the nail holes near these nails: they identify the work as a nail charm (*n'kondi*).

Cultural context

The Bakongo people living to the north and south of the Zaire River in southwestern Zaire created this *n'kondi,* or nail charm. Bakongo nail charms have protective powers, since they have the capacity to inflict harm on an enemy. In addition, they are used in the making of oaths.

The word *n'kondi,* derived from the verb *konda* in the Kikongo language, means "hunter." The *n'kondi* hunts out people and things that endanger institutional prosperity or the well-being of a community. The actions of liars, thieves, and adulterers can be detected and forestalled by the spirits that inhabit these figures. Further, covenants or vows of loyalty can be made by having the image "kiss" a knife, or by touching the lips of the image with iron. An iron or wooden peg is then hammered into the image to activate it. If the oath is broken, the spirit of the image seeks revenge on the unfaithful partner. The spirit can hunt out or even kill the offender. Oaths sworn before a *n'kondi* have been used in judicial proceedings. Military agreements, mutual-aid pacts, penal regulations, clan conflicts, family testimony, litigation concerning unpaid loans, domestic unrest, and killings—each requires the seal of a *n'kondi.* The serious and threatening appearance of the icon, therefore, matches the purposes of its users.

The nail charm depicted here has four nails driven into the front of the torso, each of which represents an oath. The three holes without nails commemorate matters that were resolved in such a way that the nails and oaths became obsolete. The open mouth may

symbolize the power of speech, which is required to proclaim oaths and to testify, or to relay messages in this world and in the spirit world. In order to strengthen the effectiveness of the icon, the hairs of persons involved in an oath making are wrapped around the nail before it is hammered into the wood. The reflecting surfaces of glass or other substances that would have been inserted in the eye sockets signify the spiritual vision that allows the spirit of the figure to see into the spirit world. The positions of the arms and hands convey a variety of important messages. Such hand gestures are used to hail the law, and authorities are saluted with the raised right hand. The left hand at the hip expresses the requirement that the oath taker moderate his or her emotions and yield to protocol. Moreover, all these gestures in combination are believed to counteract the evil works of sorcery. The same gestures function as a hunter's charm and are found on Bakongo weaponry. As a symbol of transition from this world to the next, they may also be interpreted as the hailing of heaven and the horizon.

For the Bakongo people, the creator of this type of image is a *nganga,* the traditional diviner and the artist who makes prescriptions, sculptures, and charms for clients. The first *n'kondi* was called Funza. It was created by Nzambi, the supreme god of Bakongo cosmology. Funza was a messenger who appeared in the company of numerous lesser *n'kondi* figures, which he then distributed throughout the kingdom. Each of these was assigned authority in a particular domain.

There is historical evidence of the considerable age of the nail-charm tradition. For example, the pillbox hat worn by the figure seen here is like those worn by Bakongo dignitaries of the fifteenth century. In 1505, the Portuguese wrote about the flourishing city of Mbanza Congo, where such a figure was reported as in use. In 1670, a Dutch explorer related the story about a similar image with nails that was believed by the coastal Bakongo people to have caused the destruction of a ship from Portugal.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Most oaths intend to establish relationships of trust between two parties. When one person vows to tell the truth, he or she is creating a bond of trustworthiness as a link to another person. Covenants between two parties are, likewise, based on (mutual) oaths.

Oaths gain their power by coming under the power of the divine reality. Therefore, the rituals that accompany the making of an oath will reveal the nature of that reality as it is perceived by both parties. For this reason, the oath resembles any sanctified phenomenon. The oath (embodied in a formulaic saying or ritual action) belongs to the gods. If the oath is broken—if perjury is committed or if a contractual agreement is broken—the gods are free to take possession of the guilty party in its place.

Two examples of this belief, drawn from the history of the Greeks and Romans, are described by W. Brede Kristensen (1960). Criminals who were struck by the lightning of Jupiter or Zeus, and who subsequently died, were worshiped as sacred beings. The lightning was interpreted as the god's means of transferring the mortal into the immortal realm. The death of the Vestal Virgin Tarpeia was explained in a similar fashion. She was buried alive, and this was interpreted by her peers not as a punishment but as an act of consecration. She was returned thereby to the god of the underworld, whose consort the Romans believed her to be. Having broken her vows, she herself became the holy possession of the god.

Very often the most sacred oaths are sworn by the gods of the realm of the dead, because such deities are held to possess powers of life. "Among the Silesian Poles in the seventeenth century there was the rule that someone who wished to swear an oath had to strip naked and kneel in a knee-deep pit (dug out of the ground); then he had to hold a piece of grass sod on his head (i.e., be buried) and thus take the prescribed oath. It cannot be put more clearly. In the grave, meaning in the realm of the dead, the oath becomes a sacred oath, because there one is taken up into the order of absolute life. In Greece an oath of the same type is described by Euripides in the *Hiketides*. Adrastus has to swear that the Argives will never enter Attica with hostile intentions; the oath is written in the hollow of the Delphic tripod and the blood of three sacrificed sheep is poured over it. The hollow of the tripod represents the underworld; it is there that the oath is sworn" (Kristensen, 430).

Oaths are just as often sworn by the gods of the sky, who regulate the order of the cosmos. For example, oaths were extremely important in the culture of the ancient Scandinavians. At the time when they were being converted to Christianity (c. 1000 CE), oaths were often taken in connection with a sacred ring that was known as the ring of Thor (a storm god of the sky). It may be noted also that the Thing, or popular assembly, of Iceland opened on Thor's Day.

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ODIN, THE ONE-EYED GOD

Artist unknown   Carving: wood, with paint   Measurement unavailable   Early thirteenth century CE

Site/Location: top of column hidden above the ceiling of a stave church in Valdres, Hegge, Norway

ODIN, THE ONE-EYED GOD

Scandinavia: After the Vikings

This disfigured face, thought to depict the god Odin, indicates the ordeals he undertook to gain access to secret forms of knowledge. One tale relates how Odin gave one of his eyes to the giant Mímir in order to drink from the water of wisdom in the well at the base of the world tree, Yggdrasill. According to another myth, Odin hanged himself from the world tree for nine days and nine nights in order to bring up the runes from the land of the dead.

The left eye of the carving is open; the right is closed or missing. The mouth is slightly askew on the face, and the tongue outstretched. Linear markings cross the left cheek and stretch from mouth to chin.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This artistic representation of Odin as both one-eyed and hanged was placed, ironically perhaps, almost out of sight in the upper reaches of a Norwegian stave church. Nevertheless, it offers a powerful reminder of how this ancient deity gained access to powerful sources of sacred knowledge. The Germanic name of which *Odin* is a variation means "master of inspiration." The knowledge that interests Odin is knowledge that is gained through divination, oracles, possession, and prophecy. It consists of hidden wisdom, the destiny of persons and the world, and what have been called magico-religious powers.

In ancient Scandinavian mythology, it was not uncommon for a god to sacrifice one part of his physiognomy in order to gain some particular gift, be it knowledge or strength of one kind or another. Odin's gift of his eye to Mímir so that he could drink from the well of wisdom parallels Týr's forfeiture of his hand to gain increased strength and Heimdallr's loss of his ear to acquire the keenest hearing. Like the well of Mímir, the runes were also hidden under one of the roots of Yggdrasill, and Odin's sacrifice of "himself to himself," by ritually hanging on the mighty world tree, ensured his possession of this sacred language.

Among the ancient Scandinavians, esoteric knowledge was often thought to derive from the realm of the dead. As Lord of the Gallows, Odin could extend the range of his knowledge by sitting under the bodies of hanged men, forcing them to reveal the future or other hidden events. In addition, Odin often made use of the runes to conjure up and converse with the spirits of the dead. In this way, he once elicited from a sibyl the *Vǫluspá,* the great Eddic poem that reveals both the origins and the ultimate destruction of the Nordic universe.

Odin also had his scouts among the living. Every morning, this mighty god dispatched his two ravens, Huginn and Muninn ("thought" and "memory") to fly out across the world. Each evening they returned to his home, Valhǫll, and reported the day's events so that Odin could determine the fate of mankind accordingly.

Odin's relation with the realm of the dead was not limited to necromantic activities for acquiring supernatural knowledge. As leader of the *einherjar,* an army of dead warrior souls, Odin was also a psychopomp. In Valhǫll, Odin held court for his army, the members of which fought and died during the day and were aroused in the evening by the valkyries to feast on mead and pork. Odin trained these supernatural warriors to fight on the side of the

gods at Ragnarǫk, the great cosmic battle between the gods and the monsters at the end of this age.

Odin's special form of esoteric wisdom connected him also with the ecstatic skill of poetry. This accounts for his veneration as the patron god of poets. According to the mythical accounts, Odin stole the sacred mead, which was the source of all poetry, from the giants. The mead had been made from the blood of the god Kvasir, who himself had been formed from the combined spittle of the Æsir and Vanir gods. Kvasir was considered so wise that no question existed that he could not answer. The dwarfs killed him and mixed his blood with honey to form the mead of poetry. However, these same dwarfs ran into trouble with the giant Suttungr, when they killed both his parents. Seeking vengeance, Suttungr placed them on a rock in the middle of the sea and left them to drown. To save their lives, they were forced to hand the mead to him. Odin changed himself first into a serpent to steal the mead and then into an eagle to fly home with it to Ásgardr, the dwelling place of the Æsir gods. He then spewed the precious liquid into three urns placed at the entrance of the gods' fortress. In his haste, however, Odin let fall a portion of the mead outside the walls. This portion fell into the world of mankind and was named the "fool-poet's portion," because any mortal could drink from it and receive inspiration.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The rather mysterious figure of Odin seems less self-contradictory or complex when we observe that central to his varied occupations is the phenomenon of ecstasy. Ecstasy is a heightened form of consciousness in which the individual stands outside his or her usual mode of perception and gains access to supernatural influences. Three kinds of ecstasy seem to be particularly connected with Odin: the inspiration of the poet; the frenzy of the warrior; and the prophetic insight of the necromancer.

The mead of the ancient Germans and Scandinavians is just one of many sacred beverages known from the history of religions. Mead was also sacred in ancient Crete, and was associated quite early with Dionysus. Later, wine took the place of mead in connection with this Greek god, and wine has continued to be known as a sacred drink throughout the history of the West. Other sacred beverages include the *soma* of the ancient Indians and the *haoma* of the ancient Iranians. Such beverages are sometimes thought to derive from the blood of a god or other supernatural being. According to the Scandinavian sources, mead was brewed from a mixture of honey and the blood of the giant Kvasir. The ancient Greeks believed that mead was the blood of the gods; in Christianity, the ritually blessed wine of the Eucharist is the blood of Christ. It is no wonder that the sacred, intoxicating beverage is often associated with the inspiration of the poet: in most traditions, poetry is believed to be the language of the gods, mediated to humankind by way of an inspired poet. One way of ensuring this transfer is by way of the sacred beverage: that is, the ecstatic state is inherent in the blood and gives rise to inspired (divine) speech.

Although "frenzy" is not often recognized as a special category of consciousness, it appears in descriptions of a number of religious states and activities. The individual is carried out beyond him- or herself in a state of agitation that brings with it gifted insight or physical strength. Another word for the frenzy associated with combat is *furor.* It has been reported both in legends and in historical accounts that in the heat of battle certain warriors enter into a delirious fury, attacking anyone in their reach. For example, legend has it that Muḥammad's son-in-law Sīdinā 'Alī, the ideal warrior, once became so caught up in the frenzy of

killing that he began to kill his own people after finishing off the enemy. His frenzy had to be cooled down before he could stop. In an analogous Celtic tale, Cú Chulainn, the hero of the Ulster legend, while still a boy vanquished the three sons of Nechta, the enemy of his people, and returned to his home still in a frenzy. He was seized and thrown into a vat of cold water to cool him down. The frenzy of the warriors associated with Odin thus expresses the power of ecstasy in battle.

Ecstasy is also connected with necromancy, the art of magically conjuring up the souls of the dead for the purposes of divination. The fact that Odin sought and gained knowledge by communicating with the dead tells us something about the ancient Germanic view of death. Necromancy presupposes a belief in some form of afterlife and the continued interest of the dead in the affairs of the living. The ancient Greeks believed that the dead had great powers of prophecy. The dead were often consulted by performing sacrifices or by pouring libations at their tombs. The visit of Odysseus to Hades in order to consult Tiresias, as described in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey,* is a parallel to Odin's dealings with the dead.

There does seem to be some kind of similarity between this view of the dead and certain theological notions about eternity, as well as psychological views of the unconscious. Each of these three realms exists in a different relation to time than that experienced by the conscious ego. The timelessness of these states implies the coexistence of past, present, and future and the possibility of knowing what has been and what is to come. In addition, this atemporal simultaneity gives rise to a form of insight, or intuition, that perceives hidden connections between events.

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GLOSSARY

HEIMDALLR Germanic god who stood guard night and day over the fortress of the gods.

MÍMIR A wise being associated in Germanic mythology with the World Tree and the Spring of Urdr. Mímir was put to death by the Vanir, after which Odin kept his head and consulted it in times of perplexity.

TÝR One of the ancient Germanic deities. Possibly an early war god.

VALHǪLL (Old Norse, "hall of the slain") The dwelling place of the Germanic god Odin, where he welcomes half of the warriors slain in battle (the other half go to Freyja). There they spend their time fighting and feasting, preparing for the cosmic battle between the gods and their enemies.

VALKYRIES (Old Norse, "choosers of the slain") Female spirits under the leadership of the goddess Freyja. They help decide the course of battle, and subsequently lead half of the slain warriors to Freyja's residence, the other half to Valhǫll, Odin's home.

THE NORSE GOD FREYR

Artist unknown   Sculpture: bronze   Height: 2.8 in. (7 cm)   Eleventh century CE

Site: Lunda, Södermanland, Sweden   Location: Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm

The Norse God Freyr

Scandinavia: Late Viking Age

This figure probably represents Freyr, who, together with Njord and Freyja, was one of the most important of the Vanir (one of the two races of gods in Norse mythology). He is a god of peace and harvest; among the animals sacred to him are the boar, the horse, and the ox.

This small bronze sculpture portrays an ithyphallic figure, naked except for his pointed cap. He sits in a cross-legged position. His right arm is broken off at the elbow, but the right hand remains, resting on a knee. With the left hand he appears to be stroking a long, pointed beard.

Cultural Context

This ithyphallic sculpture of Freyr reflects the deity's function as a god of procreation. The Eddic poem that relates Freyr's courtship of the giantess Gerdr is thought to mimic some aspects of his cult. In the poem, Freyr sees the beautiful Gerdr while he is sitting in Odin's high seat, and he falls passionately in love with her. He equips his messenger Skírnir with his own horse and sword, and sends him through the realm of the giants to fetch the shining giantess. Skírnir is greeted by Gerdr, who offers him mead. He tells her of Freyr and offers her presents if she will accept the god's love: the apples of eternal youth, the magic arm-ring, and Freyr's invincible sword. She, however, is not interested. Finally, Skírnir begins to threaten her. He warns that if she fails to accept Freyr's love, she will waste away, ugly and desolate and plagued by lust, for having incurred the wrath of the gods. Worse still, she will be delivered over to a three-headed fiend from hell. Frightened, the giant maiden gives in and promises to meet Freyr, but she insists that the god wait nine nights for her. The poem ends with Freyr lamenting that this is far too long for him to endure his passion.

Despite its comic quality, the poem is thought to reflect the pattern of an archaic rite of *hieros gamos* ("sacred marriage"). This theory is strengthened by evidence from both folklore and mythology. In the Norse tradition, giantesses, in various guises, were often chosen to be the brides of gods and heroes, while the union of divine pairs, such as Freyr and his sister Freyja or Njord and Nerthus, were central to the beliefs and cultic life of the settled people of the northern Germanic world. Sacred marriage was thought to ensure the renewal of the life-giving powers of the earth.

Freyr's cult is thought to have had its origins in the archaic Vanir aspect of Scandinavian religion. Two of his attributes, the sword and the boar, can be found paired in Bronze Age rock carvings. It has been argued that the ithyphallic figure bearing the sword in these enigmatic carvings could have represented Freyr as an ancient sky god. Freyr's boar, Gullinbyrsti ("gold bristle"), was so swift he could outrun the fastest of horses, and he was so bright that he could light up the dark realm of the underworld. It is tempting to link Freyr with the Bronze Age cult of sun worship, in which the sun and its god would rise in a chariot over the sky by day and through the darkened underworld by night. This drama of the daily and seasonal renewal of the sun was connected with the ritual procession of sacred carts

carrying images or priestly representatives of Freyr or, in some cases, his sister-consort, Freyja.

The regenerative power of the processional ritual is evident also in the symbolic role of ships. Freyr is described as possessing a special ship, Skídbladnir. This magical ship was so large that it could convey all of the gods, but it could also be folded up and carried in a pouch when not in use. In the context of the development of Vanir religion, ship symbolism came to be connected with religious images of death and fertility. Depictions of warriors being carried to the underworld aboard ships are common motifs on memorial stones, while the number of mammoth stone-ship burials, often miles from any body of water, testify to the powerful belief in the ship as a symbol of regeneration after death.

Freyr's role as a god of fertility and prosperity is reflected also in his association with the practice of horse sacrifice. This ancient form of religious ritual reached large-scale proportions during the migration period and survived even into the early years of christianization. During the late Viking age, the Norwegian king Hakon the Good, who had been raised in England by a Christian king, refused at first to eat horse stew, one aspect of the ritual associated with horse sacrifice. Participation of the kings in this Vanir ritual of fertility and prosperity, dedicated especially to Freyr, was considered crucial, and Hakon was eventually forced to acquiesce to at least a symbolic partaking of the ritual meal.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Freyr resembles a number of male gods from all over the world. These deities are associated with the land, with agriculture, and with domesticated animals, such as the horse, the bull, the goat, and the boar. Central to the symbolism of Freyr and of other similar gods is the erect phallus, as depicted in this small sculpture. Two important studies of the phallus as a religious symbol appeared in 1987: a survey by George Elder of phallic gods and the values associated with them, and a psychological study by Eugene Monick of the phallus from the point of view of archetypal psychology.

In a survey of Paleolithic and Neolithic deities, Elder presents brief histories of several ithyphallic deities: the Egyptian Min, the Japanese Dōsojin, the Australian Djanggawul, the Indian Śiva, and the Greek Hermes. Each of these gods is the epiphany of a mysterious divine reality that is manifest as well in the phallus. Of these, perhaps the theology of Śiva has been the most thoroughly articulated in the writings of religious philosophers. The *liṅga* (Skt., "phallus") is Śiva; both symbolize the masculine principle of the cosmos, that is, the arising of ego-consciousness. Together with the feminine principle of energy and actualization, manifest in the *yoni,* the dynamic whole of the divine is revealed.

In addition, Elder draws attention to the stories about the castration of major deities, Śiva among them. His castration is connected with adultery, or the unsanctioned expression of phallic power. This is followed by a period when the phallus is in the underworld and a new phallus must be fashioned above for the god. Elder suggests that this drama represents a shift from one stage of consciousness to another: "the image of the castrated [*liṅga*] is obviously also the divine erection of Lord [Śiva]; it is at once creator and destroyer. Should the men in the rather 'phallic' pine forest worship this image as they are told, with baths, flowers, and the creative sounds of *mantras,* they will be worshiping [*ātman*]. What is more important, they will be 'seeing' the two opposite phases of [*ātman*] simultaneously: to 'see'

[*ātman*] is to become free from attachment to either birth or death—and that is the goal of the Hindu religion" (Elder, 267).

Monick writes in a similar way of the shift that allows the individual to recognize the fact that the phallus manifests an autonomous power. The castrated phallus is the separate phallus, independent of human will.

> The importance of autonomy in religion is the experienced fact that the transpersonal dimension of the psyche breaks into the ego at the most inconvenient and surprising of times. Just as we think that things are going well and life is basically under our control, something happens to remind us that this is not true at all. If one were a leaf, floating on the breeze, the breeze would have more to do with where one lands than the intention of the leaf, its color, its structure and its priority of birth on the branch of the tree. Autonomy with regard to phallos is grounded in the experienced reality of men that they cannot, however much they might wish otherwise, make phallos obey the ego. Phallos has a mind of its own. Phallos and the transpersonal have autonomy in common. (Monick, 22)

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GLOSSARY

FREYJA The sister of Freyr and daughter of Njord. Freyja is probably the most powerful goddess of the ancient Scandinavians. She is the goddess of love, of war, and of ecstasy. Her animal companions are the pig and the cat.

ODIN (Old Norse, Óðinn) In Scandinavian mythology, the leader of the Æsir (one of two groups of deities). Odin is a god associated with wisdom and battle.

YONI (Skt., "womb, vagina; source, origin; home; family, race") The *yoni*—the word derives from a verbal root that means "to join"—is that which unites or brings together. In Hinduism, the *yoni* represents the feminine genitalia and symbolizes the feminine principle in general. As represented in sculpture form, it often serves as a pedestal for the *liṅga.*

ONE OF THE TWIN GODS OF WAR (AHAYUTA)

*Artist unknown Carving: pine wood (*pinus ponderosa*), with olivella shells, feathers, and earth pigments*
Height: 30 in. (76.2 cm) Circa 1875–1900 CE Site: New Mexico Location: Museum für Völkerkunde, West Berlin

One of the twin gods of war (Ahayuta)

North American Indian: Zuni

Created by Sun Father to protect the first Zuni from their enemies and help them make their home in the Middle Place, the twin gods of war are central figures in Zuni mythology and religion. Their umbilical cord symbolizes the axis mundi, *the center or navel of the world, and their lightning powers of destruction continue to serve the Zuni and all peoples. Each year they are accorded special honor at the winter solstice ceremonies, at the end of which their effigies are carried to a shrine at the top of Thunder Mountain. As the effigies deteriorate, their powers slowly ebb.*

The figure is one of a pair representing the Ahayuta, the War Twins. The bullet-shaped figure is made up of a slender, limbless, reddish-brown body and a sharply carved, abstractly rendered face. The long nose seems to be an extension of a white cap or helmet. Two sets of five fingers are incised directly upon the body. A separate ribbed and serrated carved cylinder has been inserted laterally into the center of the figure. The face is painted bilaterally in blue and green; feathers have been attached to the nose and neck. Around the neck is a string of olivella shells. The helmetlike top is surmounted by a carved wooden lightning-arrow. The bottom of the figure is flat and its back is smooth-carved, with only minor detailing.

Cultural context

These figures are among the most highly revered and powerful elements in Zuni religion. They possess enormous powers, and they can be deadly and devastating or beneficent and kindly. Because they are held in great awe, they are never impersonated as are, for example, the intermediary spirits called *kachina*s. Images of the war gods are created anew each year, for use in two major ceremonies: the initiation of new members into the society of priests, an event that is held every four years and that celebrates both the martial and religious aspects of Zuni life; and the annual winter-solstice rituals. Since it is believed that these awesome powers affect not only the Zuni but everyone who comes into contact with them, the Zuni are uneasy when they see the Ahayuta on display in museums or collectors' homes.

The origin of the War Twins is bound up with the origins of the Zuni, who regard the pair as part of the creation story, and several accounts of their birth and adventures are retold during the solstice rites: With the beginning of the world, the Zuni people moved from place to place, seeking a home. When they finally came to the area that would become their permanent dwelling place, they had to face many hostile forces. To aid and protect them, Sun Father created the War Twins and endowed them with special destructive powers. Through their help, the Zuni overcame their enemies and made a home, called Hepatina ("the middle place"). There they live today, protected still by the war gods, whose great powers aid all peoples everywhere.

Winter solstice observances, various forms of which are celebrated in every Pueblo tribe, mark the yearly cycle. It is a time for world renewal, the restructuring of life forces, dedication to religious belief, and reaffirmation of faith. Newly built homes are blessed by

the Shalako, and masked *kachinas* appear in the villages to hear the prayers of the people, entertain them with dancing, and then carry their messages and requests back to the Above Ones. As much a joyous as a solemn time, the solstice also calls for feasting and open-house hospitality. During the solstice ceremonies, elaborately carved and painted altars are constructed and set up in the men's lodges to serve as the focus for the rituals. Images of the War Twins are placed on the altar, where they may observe the ceremonies, and are fed ritually with sacred corn. At the close of the rites they are carried off to the shrine dedicated to them on the top of neighboring Towayaalane, or Thunder Mountain. There they are allowed to deteriorate.

The elegant and unusual form of this class of sculpture has made Ahayuta pieces one of the favorite subjects of enthusiasts of tribal art. The figure shown here clearly had an impact on Paul Klee, whose *Mask of Fear* (1932) seems to have been painted after he visited the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin. Klee's figure even has the feather in the nostril.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The Ahayuta figures represent a merging of two important symbol systems: that of twins and that of the war god.

The very earliest artifacts, deriving from Paleolithic cultures, reveal already the symbolism of doubleness, which lies behind the meaning of twins as well as other kinds of doubles. Prehistoric artists used images of doubles to indicate potency or abundance. In the art of prehistoric Europe, this is evident in the frequent use of double images of caterpillars, crescents, eggs, seeds, spirals, snakes, phalli, and even goddesses. The same effect is achieved also by doubling the lines on a figurine. Neolithic images of the goddesses are marked often with two dashes over the hips, between the breasts, or on the pubic triangle. Double-headed gods and goddesses as well as twins may well express in a similar fashion the intensification of power or bounty.

In the symbolism of the War Twins, we have a doubling of the vitality available for protection of the cosmic order. Unlike the creator god and the so-called fertility deities, the war god is not preoccupied with the origins of life or with the matrix that nourishes life, that is, the cosmos. Instead, the warrior god has access to special powers of aggression that enable him to keep giants, demons, and evil spirits at bay. The realm of this protective deity is very often the atmosphere (as opposed to the sky or the earth), where he will govern the lightning, the thunder, and even the rain. The Ahayuta also have a special connection with the earth, expressed by their protruding navels and their shrine on top of Thunder Mountain. Both mountain and navel are symbols of a center to the cosmos; in modern psychological language, one might say that the protective forces that guard the integrity of the ego are supported by the center of the personality, that is, the Self.

Of special interest is the connection between the Zuni war gods and the winter solstice. Here, as in numerous other cultures, the winter solstice—the moment when the sun is reborn, that is, when days begin to grow longer—is celebrated as a new year. It is a dangerous time: the old year has grown feeble, depleted of energy. In order for the new creation to take place and for the new order to be filled with energy, a return to the precosmic state of chaos is required. It is in the undifferentiated realm of potentiality that new life emerges as a possibility. The Zuni myth suggests that the protective forces must likewise be renewed at this time.

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GLOSSARY

ABOVE ONES An almost universal mythologem among Native Americans in North America, referring to any number of spirit beings who watch over humanity. An Above Person may be either malevolent or benevolent, but it is always a powerful being that must be carefully acknowledged and propitiated.

KACHINA One of a host of Pueblo supernatural beings, identified with people who have died and live in the *kachina* world. Impersonated by men wearing identifying masks, they are bringers of rain and messengers of the Above Ones, as well as sacred beings who bring much of the joy and beauty of life.

SHALAKO In Zuni tradition, four or six sacred beings who appear at the time of the House Blessing in December to purify all new homes. Impersonated by huge costumed figures (concealed dancers carrying long poles), they perform, sit with the people to listen to their prayers, and leave their blessings for a good life.

SUN FATHER (Zuni, *Yatokya*) In Zuni tradition, the giver of life and warmth. He is not "God" per se but is paramount among sacred beings. He bestows long life, and babies are displayed to him at birth to ensure longevity. He is also a hunting deity.

ZUNI One of the major groups among the Pueblo Indians. Their home in McKinley County, New Mexico, was invaded in 1540 by Francisco Coronado, who was searching for the Seven Cities of Cibola. Their speech is apparently unrelated to other Pueblo languages.

RĀMA AND SĪTĀ IN THE FOREST

Painted in the style of Sahibdin   Manuscript illumination: gouache on paper, polychrome
Height: 7 in. (17 cm); width: 13.25 in. (35 cm)   1650 CE   Site: Mewar, Rajasthan, India
Location: fol. 71 recto, add. 15 296, British Museum, London

Rāma and Sītā in the Forest

India: Rajput

As the paragon of the dutiful son, Rāma submits to the banishment decreed by his father, King Daśaratha. Accompanying him are Sītā, his devoted wife, and Lakṣmana, his faithful brother. Here they are shown twice, first preparing and then eating a meal in the jungle wilderness: they are making the best of their banishment from courtly life.

The setting is a lush jungle, with flowering plants and fruit-bearing trees, bordered by steep cliffs; the horizon seems dark and remote. A stream runs across the immediate foreground. In the first scene of this continuous narrative, Rāma (dark-skinned) tends a small sacred fire while his brother Lakṣmana (light-skinned) prepares skewers of food. In the next scene, the two men are seated on a mat while Sītā, who kneels before them, offers them food. Finally, Sītā is shown taking her own meal within the thatched hut. According to custom, she would have eaten by herself after serving the brothers.

Cultural Context

Rāma, the hero of the *Ramāyaṇa,* an epic of ancient India, is a popular figure throughout the history of Indian religion and art. He appears in Buddhist and Jain traditions as well as in traditional Hinduism; sometimes he is presented as a secular hero, and at other times he is the seventh *avatāra* of the god Viṣṇu. Most often he is accompanied by his brother, Lakṣmana, and his wife, Sītā. The two brothers look very much alike, except that Rāma's skin is blue whereas his brother's is the color of gold. Sītā is the model of chastity and the ideal wife. Their exile to the jungle is a tale that is found in different versions throughout the traditions of India.

In the *Ramāyaṇa,* the story of exile begins with Rāma's father, King Daśaratha, who decides to abdicate his sovereignty and consecrate Rāma as prince regent in his stead. The announcement of Rāma's succession to the throne is met with rejoicing throughout the kingdom, and preparations for the ceremony are begun. On the evening prior to the coronation, however, Kaikeyī, one of the king's junior wives (whose jealousy has been aroused by a maidservant), lays claim to a boon that the king had once promised her. She demands that the succession pass to her son Bhārata for fourteen years, during which time Rāma is to be banished from the kingdom. The brokenhearted king must do as Kaikeyī says to fulfill his former vow. Rāma willingly accepts his father's order to live for fourteen years in the jungle. He gives away all his personal wealth and assumes the role of a forest dweller as he and his wife Sītā, together with his loyal brother Lakṣmana, begin their new life in exile. King Daśaratha, his hopes shattered, is consumed by grief and dies within the week.

In this famous Indian tale, the traditional figure of the warrior prince is expanded to incorporate the lifestyle of the ascetic. In Hinduism, many life stages are recognized: the child; the student; the householder; the forest dweller; and the renouncer. The forest dweller, or *vānaprastha,* in effect retires from living in an active household in order to dwell as a hermit in the forest. His wife may accompany him and assist in the performance of rituals,

but from this point on both are enjoined to celibacy. The forest dweller takes with him the ritual fires of his household and for a time continues to perform sacrifices in the forest. Eventually, however, he gives up external rites and concentrates on internal sacrifices to the sacred fires within. He lives on plant foods from the forest or on a meager diet obtained by begging; animal food is to be avoided. The forest dweller practices the restraint of the senses and performs austerities, seeking to achieve purity and self-control.

Each of these disciplines is believed to prepare the forest dweller for the final stage of life, during which *mokṣa* (or release from the cycles of rebirth) is attained. Mokṣa takes place, traditionally, during the stage of the *saṃnyāsin* ("the renouncer"), which is entered by means of a formal ritual in which the initiate renounces all worldly ties, including all relationships with wife and family: "No one belongs to me, and I belong to no one." This is done with the performance of one last fire sacrifice, after which the *saṃnyāsin* gives up his sacrificial vessels and his sacred fires, depositing the fires mentally within himself. Henceforth he is no longer bound to home or household ritual. He affirms the vows of noninjury to any creature, truthfulness, unconcern for property or wealth, and total continence, declaring formally his renunciation of the world and entry into a state of *saṃnyāsa,* or abandonment of worldly life.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The hero is a person who accomplishes during his or her lifetime the fulfillment of an impossible feat, something requiring supernatural powers. In the mythologies of polytheistic societies, the hero will often be attributed with divine parentage on one side. Sometimes he or she will have received a special gift from the gods at birth. During the Hellenistic period, a cult of heroes came into being. It was believed that a hero, although born a mortal, did not actually die. Unlike ordinary people, the hero was ultimately divinized and ascended into heaven to dwell with the gods.

F. R. S. Raglan has drawn up a list of traits and exploits that are often associated with the hero, regardless of the setting into which he or she is born. Among these are the experience of being abandoned or exposed at birth, the survival of ordeals, the vanquishing of a monster or dragon, and ascent to a special heaven at death. All these elements are found in the story of Rāma, except that his banishment, instead of occurring at birth or soon thereafter, takes place during his youth and assumes the appearance of an ordeal.

Exile in a forest is a common theme in fairy tales. Snow White seeks refuge in the forest when her life is threatened by the queen. The epic of Parsifal includes this motif as well: the young Parsifal is brought up in the forest by his distraught mother, who believes that civilization is the cause of all her suffering. Exile in the forest, whether self-imposed or caused by outside forces, appears in these various settings to be a transitory stage in a larger process, one that leads ultimately to fulfillment of one kind or another. For the hero, the fulfillment lies ahead in a restoration to civilization; Snow White, Parsifal, and Rāma eventually become rulers and regain their rightful place in the world. For the ascetic, on the other hand, the goal is spiritual freedom.

The intermediate stage represented by exile appears to have the qualities of a retreat or, psychologically speaking, an experience of introversion and an encounter with the unconscious matrix in which the hero is strengthened and realigned with the forces of nature. In his discussion of "The Spirit in the Bottle," one of the Grimm fairy tales, C. G. Jung describes the forest as a symbol of the unconscious. "As at the beginning of many dreams

something is said about the scene of the dream action, so the fairytale mentions the forest as the place of the magic happening. The forest, dark and impenetrable to the eye, like deep water and the sea, is the container of the unknown and the mysterious. It is an appropriate synonym for the unconscious. . . . Trees, like fishes in the water, represent the living contents of the unconscious" (Jung, 194).

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GLOSSARY

AVATĀRA (Skt., "descent") In Hinduism, a god's embodiment on earth in the form of a creature. Incarnation.

MOKṢA (Skt., "release, liberation") Release from the tedious and painful cycle of transmigration of souls. This religious notion appears already in the Upaniṣads, as well as in early Buddhism.

VIṢṆU A principal Hindu god. As one of the trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, he is the preserver, but to his devotees he is the supreme god of the universe.

THE MOON AS AN ABOVE PERSON
Artist unknown   Painting: on bison hide, with animal and bird body parts, polychrome mineral painting
Diameter: 22 in. (55.6 cm)   Circa 1830 CE   Site: Montana
Location: no. 11/7680, Museum of the American Indian/Heye Foundation, New York

The Moon as an Above Person

North American Indian: Crow

The medicine shield of Chief Arapoosh of the Crow Indians offered physical and spiritual protection through the powers of the Moon, who is portrayed as he appeared to the chief during a vision quest.

The shield consists of a flat disk covered with tanned buckskin and fastened in the back with lashing to keep the front taut and secure. Heavy thongs were interlaced in the back so that the warrior could hold the shield firmly. A large central anthropomorphic design is painted in black. Vermilion pigment is applied in lines that surround the figure and has also been rubbed on the accessory objects. A deer tail and eagle feathers wrapped in red trade-cloth are fastened at one side of the shield. The head and neck of a crane are tied to the opposite side, together with crow or raven feathers, a length of otter fur, and a cluster of hawk feathers. A narrow length of red trade-cloth is tied to the crane's lower bill. There are no markings on the reverse side of the shield.

Cultural Context

Shields had two primary functions among the Crow Indians: to protect the owner in battle against the enemy and to serve as a spiritual protector by embodying the sacred powers of the spirit-guardian of the warrior. Normally, such shields were veiled by a second cover to show proper respect, to protect the powerful "medicine" from wasteful exposure (lest it lose its potency), and to hide the designs from uninitiated eyes.

The shields were made from the thick hump section of the bison hide and could turn any arrow, even the Civil War musket balls of the white troops. It was not until the introduction of the carbine that they lost that effectiveness. But by far the greater power was inherent in the symbolism of the designs, which often stemmed from forms that appeared during a vision quest. Arapoosh said that on a vision quest in his youth he had been visited by the figure in black, who was the spirit of the Moon. He was told to regard the visitor as his spirit-guardian—a supernatural protector who would watch over him, help him whenever called upon, and guide his life.

The vision quest was a major goal in life for all Plains Indian men, to such an extent that those who never achieved a vision felt they were failures; this attitude was shared to a certain extent by the community. Therefore success and the creation of indicia to demonstrate success, as well as one's belief in the powers that came with the vision, were very important. Anything that happened during the quest became critical. It might indicate the whole future way of life for the person. Perhaps it signaled the appearance of beneficial or harmful spirits to be attended to. Or it might even provide an actual view of the future to the supplicant. Symbols representing these benefits or dangers held an overriding role and were always respected, though they were never worshiped per se.

On the shield pictured here the Moon is personified as an Above Person (one of the Above Ones) overseeing the activities of all creatures on earth, and most particularly

Arapoosh, to whom he had appeared in the vision. This appearance established a close relationship between them that would endure for the balance of the man's life. It also created a responsibility toward the spirit being that was not to be taken lightly. All Native American traditions speak of a strong spiritual bond between Sky Beings and mankind, which in many tribes surpasses even the kinship felt for those creatures that reside on the earth and in the underworld.

The medicine shield of Arapoosh is among the very finest of its kind to survive. The history of this shield has fortunately been preserved. Although Lewis and Clark met Chief Arapoosh—who was known to them by his English name, Rotten Belly (or Sour Belly)—during their expedition of 1804–1806, the shield was first described in detail by Jim Beckwourth, a legendary mountain man who saw it around 1830. He recounted the belief of the Crow in the medicinal powers of the designs. According to Beckwourth, the shield was brought out in times of trouble or just before a war party was to depart for battle. Arapoosh, the major tribal war chief, would ceremoniously roll the shield (as in bowling) down the row of lodges. When it fell over, if the designs were skyward, success was assured; but if it came to a stop facedown, the war party would be abandoned. While most people painted their own shields, often a holy man would be requested to make medicine objects, to increase their power. However, since Arapoosh was also a medicine man, it may well be that he painted this shield himself.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

In any social group, certain symbols come to serve as focal points of cultural orientation. The *axis mundi,* or cosmic center, can be a geographical site, such as a sacred mountain. It can also be an artifact, such as a pole that is carried from place to place but represents at all times the center of the world. Essential is the experience of being connected to the archetypal realm, the numinous source of being and value. Among nomadic tribes in North America, the vision has served a comparable function. Direct inner experience of the gods has been cultivated and has come to serve as an orienting and sanctifying force for the individual Native American and his community. The interpretation of visions and the techniques for integrating the vision into the life of the person and the group are highly developed among these peoples.

The vision quest can take place at any time, but it is usually first undertaken by a young Native American male as a rite of puberty. Often the boy will be separated from the group, left in a womblike hole in the ground, and surrounded by sacred things (a rattle, a blanket). Without food and sleep, he awaits the appearance of spirits. If he has a vision, it will serve to define his identity and role in the tribe from then on.

Further, the vision quest is a model for any inner journey:

> The individual undertakes his inner quest, without any show of heroic strength and achieves it, not as a triumph, but as a submission to powers higher than himself. He accomplishes nothing by guile, which would be merely another form of heroic trial of strength. He is essentially a suppliant, not a man of power. He can count only upon his own intrinsic human worth and is of necessity his own teacher. He may be allowed to see the object of the heroic quest but not to possess it, or he may possess it briefly before losing it again, or he may derive spiritual insight from it as a talisman which comes and goes. (Henderson, 141)

The moon is usually personified in myths as a female deity, but it is also known in some cultures as a male figure. Lunar symbolism brings together powers associated with the cyclical patterns in nature: the tide, the fertility cycle of a woman, the shedding of the snake's skin. All these repetitive modes of change, of death and rebirth, are interrelated in lunar symbolism. The moon represents a force that expresses itself indirectly and through endurance rather than through direct aggression and oppression. It is the power of water to wear away the stone, the survival of the snake that disappears into the earth as it flees the hungry eagle, and the power of healing that comes through a connection with deep, vegetative forces in the psyche.

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GLOSSARY

ABOVE ONES An almost universal mythologem among Native Americans in North America, referring to any number of spirit beings who watch over humanity. An Above Person may be either malevolent or benevolent, but it is always a powerful being that must be carefully acknowledged and propitiated.

CROW One of the major Siouan-speaking tribes on the Northern Plains, occupying a large part of western Montana. Famous among Native American peoples for their dignified bearing, beauty, and fine clothing.

HACHIMAN IN THE GUISE OF A BUDDHIST MONK
Artist: Kaikei (active 1185–1223)   Sculpture: wood, polychrome   Height: 35.4 in. (89.8 cm)   1201 CE
Site: Japan   Location: Hachiman Shrine, Tōdaiji, Nara, Japan

Hachiman in the guise of a Buddhist monk

Japan: Kamakura Period

This statue represents Hachiman, the Shintō god of war and archery and tutelary deity of Tōdaiji, in the guise of a Buddhist monk. Hachiman's Buddhist garb symbolizes his acceptance of Buddhist teachings.

This roughly life-size, realistic statue portrays Hachiman with the shaven head and multicolored patchwork robe of a Buddhist monk. In his hands he holds a staff and a rosary (now missing), both standard attributes of the Buddhist monk. Also from Buddhist iconographical tradition are the elongated ears, halo, and large lotus pedestal.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Shintō is the name for traditional Japanese spiritual and cultural attitudes. This statue serves as a dwelling place for the Shintō god Hachiman within the Hachiman Shrine at the compound of Tōdaiji in Nara. In accordance with traditional practice, it is not displayed to devotees but rests in a hidden place behind curtains within the shrine's innermost sanctuary.

Hachiman's presence in Tōdaiji in the form of a Buddhist monk has been interpreted in many ways. According to one tradition, this Shintō deity of obscure origins was recognized in 749 CE as the tutelary deity of Tōdaiji (the most influential and powerful temple in eighth-century Japan) after an oracle proclaimed the god's desire to reside in the capital of Nara in order to protect the nation as a whole. A second tradition claims that he was invited to Tōdaiji as an expression of gratitude for his help in completing the monumental statue of Birushana Butsu (Vairocana Buddha), also housed in Tōdaiji. As protector of Tōdaiji, Hachiman came to represent harmonious relations between Shintō and Buddhist religions.

The image of an individual with shaven head and patchwork robe is one of the fundamental expressions of a Buddhist worldview. Śākyamuni had himself chosen the life of a mendicant in his search for enlightenment, and the figure of the monk, or the ascetic, came to serve as a model for those who wished to follow his example. Thus, the monk was an ideal form for a Shintō deity who had adopted Buddhist ways. Hachiman is only one of a number of indigenous Japanese deities to assume this form.

The image of Hachiman underwent many changes in later times as his cult spread from Tōdaiji to other temples and shrines throughout Japan. Initially, he was venerated as a guardian of Japan as a whole. Eventually, however, he became associated more specifically with the nobility as the guardian of imperial legitimacy. At one point, Hachiman and two female attendants were identified as incarnations of a semilegendary Emperor Ōjin together with his mother, Empress Jingō, and his consort, Nakatsu-hine. This prompted members of the imperial family to worship him. Finally, his best-known role, that of god of war, resulted from his adoption by the Minamoto warrior clan. As god of war and guardian of emperors, Hachiman assumed characteristics of a courtier but never ceased to appear also as a Buddhist monk.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

This statue depicts the monk as an image of the divine man, that is, one who brings together in his person both divine and human natures. The figure represents only one kind of divine man. Well-known examples from the history of religions are the sacred king, the messiah or savior, and the magician. The monk, or ascetic, serves to bring together the two worlds, that of the gods and that of men, by way of an inner discipline: through prayer, meditation, detachment from the phenomenal world, and attention to the transcendent reality.

The lotus is a sacred plant that represents the organic nature of transformation. With its roots buried beneath the water in the mud, the flower of the plant rises above the water to face the sun. It symbolizes thus a solar consciousness that depends on nourishment in the dark, wet, undifferentiated matrix of primordial nature.

The staff is a symbol of authority. It is one form of the *axis mundi,* or world axis, which connects all levels of reality and gives order to the cosmos by providing it with a center. Authority that rests on this center acquires legitimacy and authenticity.

The rosary (now missing) is a symbol usually associated with the goddess of love, representing her feminine beauty and generative powers. Prayers repeated with the rosary take on a cosmogonic power, returning energy to what supports and regenerates cosmic life.

The halo manifests a state of blessedness. It reveals the presence of an inner light, believed often to be a reflection of the divine light. The ability to reflect the divine may be achieved in a number of ways, by means of any spiritual path.

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Sacred marriage

The moment I heard my first love story
I started looking for you, not knowing
how blind that was.

Lovers don't finally meet somewhere.
They're in each other all along.

—Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī

FATHER SKY, MOTHER EARTH, AND RAINBOW
Artist unknown   Painting: mineral pigments on powdered sand   Measurement unavailable
Circa 1940 CE   Site: Kayenta (Apache County), Arizona
Location: Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian (A2-59/500 P4-#4A), Santa Fe, New Mexico

Father sky, mother earth, and rainbow

North American Indian: Navajo

Surrounded by Rainbow on three sides, Father Sky and Mother Earth are depicted in a sand painting that was created for a Navajo Shootingway chant. They are united by the yellow Pollen Path signifying peace, happiness, and prosperity.

This square rectangular sand surface is decorated with two large figures surrounded by blue, red, and white rectangular lines ending in groups of feathers in black, red, and white. Both figures are diamond shaped with rectangular heads, angular arms and legs, and large, curved horns. On top of each head is a motif representing sacred feathers. The faces represent painted leather masks, the decorated horns of which are tipped with feathers. Coral strands encircle their necks. Each figure carries a rattle upright in each hand. The black figure is Father Sky: stars, moon, sun and the constellations decorate his body. Above his head is a medicine pouch that contains his magic paraphernalia. The blue figure is Mother Earth, upon whose body are sacred plants—corn, tobacco, beans, and squash—all growing out of the central Place of Emergence. Over her head flies a bat, her protective guardian. The two figures are connected at the top by a strip of yellow and by Rainbow, whose body ends in two feather clusters; small tufts of feathers are attached to each corner.

cultural context

The Navajo people live primarily on the Navajo Nation (a reservation approximately the size of New England) in northern Arizona and New Mexico. They are relative latecomers to the American Southwest, having arrived there between 1000 and 1525 CE. In their contact with the Spanish and Puebloan peoples, they acquired horses, goats, sheep, and agriculture. The Pueblo and the Navajo have much in common: their myths, their use of masked figures in ritual, and their practice of making sand paintings are similar and suggest much cultural exchange.

The creation myths of the Navajo relate how they emerged from a series of underworlds onto the Earth Surface. According to one version, First Man, First Woman, and other Holy People created the present world during an all-night ceremony at the Place of Emergence. Using a medicine bundle that they had brought with them from the underworlds, they set in place the "inner forms" of natural phenomena: the earth, the sky, the sacred mountains, plants, and animals. Into this world Changing Woman was born. Impregnated by the sun, she gave birth to twin sons, who killed various monsters that had threatened the Holy People. With the medicine bundle, which she received from First Man, Changing Woman created maize. Then she also created the Earth-Surface People, or Navajo, by rubbing cells off her skin.

In some versions of the myth, Changing Woman is the offspring of Father Sky and Mother Earth. Here they are depicted in a sand painting from a Shootingway chant. Mother Earth and Father Sky stand side by side, joined at the top by a thin line of yellow pollen from head to head. Pollen as the "essence" of the sacred maize is a symbol of peace, happiness, and

prosperity among the Navajo. Father Sky and Mother Earth are depicted thus in order to bring them, their role in creation, and their powers into the midst of the chant. In this way, events that took place in mythical time become contemporaneous with ritual time. The creative powers of the beginning are made once more accessible, available to heal injury and restore harmony here and now.

Anthropologists have identified as many as twenty-four Navajo chants, or ceremonies, although by the 1980s many were no longer performed. Among the well-known chants are Blessingway, which is directed at eliminating disharmony (*hocho'*) and achieving a state of blessing (*hozho'*). The Kinaaldá, or girl's puberty rite, is another chant, which celebrates the transformation of Changing Woman from a girl into a woman. Enemyway, an ancient war ceremony, is designed to protect the Navajos from both human and spiritual enemies. The Shootingway chant is directed against infection from lightning, snakes, and arrows. It is also used to counteract colds, fevers, rheumatism, paralysis, and abdominal pain.

Each chant is a complex pattern of ritual actions centering loosely around an associated myth of origins, which describes how a hero or heroine made a journey to the land of the gods in order to acquire special knowledge and healing power. The myth of the Shootingway chant involves the adventures of a quaternity—Holy Man and Holy Woman, together with Holy Boy and Holy Girl. The performance of a chant consists of component rites strung together in a specified order over a number of days. For example, these may include a bath, a sand-painting ritual, a sweat and emetic ceremony, and an all-night sing on the last night.

The sand painting plays a major role in the ceremony, because it is through the sand painting that the Holy People are invited into the presence of those gathered for the chant. The priest, or *hatali,*' draws colorful designs with multicolor mineral sands on the smoothened sand surface of the ground or within the medicine hogan. The healing occurs by means of an identification of the priest and the patient with the images in the painting. This is furthered, for example, by having the patient sit on the painting and by pressing the sand from the figures depicted there onto parts of his or her body. Identification with the Holy People (who are immune to the negative power of *hocho'*) strengthens the power of *hozho'* within the patient and the priest. The negative power of disharmony and disorder enters simultaneously into the painting. The sand painting is then destroyed, and with it the negative power that it now contains.

> The earth has been laid down; the earth has been laid down;
> The earth has been laid down; it has been made.
>
> The earth spirit has been laid down,
> Its top is clothed with all the growing things,
> It has been laid down;
> The sacred words have been laid down;
> The earth has been laid down; it has been made.
>
> The sky has been set up; the sky has been set up;
> The sky has been set up; it has been made.
>
> The black sky has been set up.
> Its top is clothed with all the heavenly bodies,

It has been set up;
The sacred words have been set up;
The sky has been set up; it has been made.

(quoted in Sandner, 119)

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Father Sky and Mother Earth are common mythological figures. They represent broadly the two great symbol systems of the heavens and the earth, transcendence and life.

Certainly ever since the great Neolithic revolution (that is, the discovery of the domestication of plants and animals), the earth as a symbol has been homologized with the female body. The feminine principle is believed to be at work in both, nurturing new life in the dark and bringing it forth in the light. Indeed, many myths reveal how human beings themselves were born from the earth. In the myths of ancient Lithuania, for example, babies are said to come from the springs, lakes, and hills associated with the earth mother Žemýna, for she alone is responsible for the creation of new beings. According to Hesiod, Earth (Gaia) even created the starry heavens (Ouranos). Although sometimes the counterpart of Mother Earth is Sun Father (as among the Zuni of New Mexico), more often it is the heavens themselves that are hypostasized as her lover, as in the Navajo creation myth.

Although the Egyptian goddess Nut is a goddess of the sky and although numerous goddesses are called Queen of Heaven, more often the sky is anthropomorphized as a male deity. For nomadic peoples, such as the ancient Semites and Indo-Europeans, the sacrality of the sky is central in their religious system. In spite of their constant movement from place to place, their connection with the heavens remained constant. Their most important deities were male gods of the sky: creators, storm gods, and gods of war. Furthermore, the symbolism of the sky has always lent a degree of detachment to these gods. Indeed, often the sky is worshiped as something that seems rather more an abstraction than what is generally recognized as a god: the Chinese T'ien, the Iroquois *orenda,* and the Altaic Tengri, for example.

The natural world is a unified system depending on the light, rain, and air of the heavens in conjunction with the soil of the earth for the world of vegetation and animal life as we know it. This unity is symbolized in the marriage of Heaven and Earth. The rainbow often represents this union, providing a bridge between the two realms.

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THE INVESTITURE OF KING ZIMRI-LIM OF MARI

Artist unknown   Wall painting: mud brick, painted and incised   Height: 69 in. (1.75 m); length: 98.5 in. (2.5 m)
Reign of Zimri-Lim (c. 1779–1761 BCE)   Site: court 106, palace of Zimri-Lim, Mari, Syria
Location: Musée National du Louvre, Paris

The Investiture of King Zimri-Lim of Mari

Near East: Syria, Old Syrian Period

This wall painting is a record of the investiture of a sacred king receiving his power from a goddess. The fertility and peace of the land rests on this relationship between the ruling power and the gods.

In the center of the larger panel is a double register showing the investiture of Zimri-Lim. In the upper register, the central figure is the goddess Ishtar. From each of her shoulders emerges a mace between two axes. Ishtar stands with her right foot on a recumbent lion; in her left hand (this arm hangs at her side) she grasps a sickle sword, while with her right hand she extends a rod and ring toward the outstretched left hand of Zimri-Lim. He wears a tall oval cap with broad-band rim, a robe with a double fringe, and a long necklace with a counterweight that falls from his neck to his knee. Raising his right hand, he makes a gesture of reverence to the goddess. Zimri-Lim and Ishtar are flanked by interceding goddesses with hands raised before their chests. On the far right is an unidentified male divinity. All the figures except the king are wearing horned crowns seen in profile. In the lower register, two goddesses wearing horned crowns hold vessels from which plants sprout and streams full of fishes flow.

Cultural Context

Mari, the city over which Zimri-Lim ruled, was an important way station along the Euphrates for both boat and caravan traffic. It became the major entrepôt on trade routes running between Syria and Babylonia and was thus the principal connecting point between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. The revenues from the traffic that passed through Mari made its rulers rich. The greatest monument to their wealth is the palace, which comprised more than 260 courts and chambers and covered an area of about 2½ acres. This palace, famed far and wide during its heyday, housed the largest archive that has yet been discovered for the Old Babylonian period. These finds shed invaluable light on the history and people of the time. In particular, they reveal the intimate ties that joined Mari and the cities of Mesopotamia, allowing us to understand why it is that artifacts found in this Syrian capital are dependent for their symbolic vocabulary on Mesopotamia rather than on any indigenous Syrian heritage.

In the Sumerian and Semitic cultures of Mesopotamia, the king was held to be godlike rather than divine as in ancient Egypt. However, his relationship to the gods was central in establishing his rule, his duties, and his powers. The king's first duty was a priestly one: he was caretaker of the gods. In this role, he was responsible for providing dwelling places—shrines and temples—for the gods. He officiated at the rituals celebrated in their honor. Furthermore, he had to see to it that the gods received offerings of food for their nourishment. In spite of this priestly function, the king was dependent in many ways on the diviners, for divination served as a primary means of revelation in these cultures. Hence, the king had to consult constantly with the specialists in this area in order to ascertain the will of the gods.

In some cases, the king was believed to be the son of a god or a goddess. More frequently, however, he was "chosen" by the gods. The belief in divine election is expressed in the words of Assurnasirpal II in his hymn to Ishtar.

> But thou, O Ishtar, fearsome mistress of the gods,
> Thou didst single me out with the glance of thine eyes;
> Thou didst desire to see me rule.
> Thou didst take me from among the mountains.
> Thou didst call me to be a shepherd of men.
> Thou didst grant me the scepter of justice.
>
> (Frankfort, 239)

This very often occurred while he was still in the womb of his mother, so that he was raised as one destined to rule. The most consistent relationship that existed in these cultures between the king and the gods was that of marriage: the king was often presented as the spouse of a goddess. In most cases, the king assumed the ritual identity of Dumuzi or Tammuz in order to enact his marriage with the goddess Inanna or Ishtar. The sacred marriage was ritually performed between the king and a priestess (representing the goddess) during important festivals. It may be that the sacred marriage was the channel whereby the power of the goddess flowed through the king into the land over which he ruled.

Investiture rites are less well attested to in Mesopotamia than elsewhere; however, a text does exist describing the coronation of a Sumerian king during the Uruk period (late fourth millennium). According to this text, the king-to-be approached the throne dais of the goddess Inanna-Ishtar. There he received from her the "bright scepter" and the "golden crown." He probably also received from her a new, royal name.

The goddess depicted in this image is a warrior goddess. Her animal epiphany is clearly the lion, on which her right foot rests. She is an extremely important goddess of the ancient Near East, who is known to be the goddess of the star Venus. In ancient Sumer, she was known as Inanna; the Semitic cultures that conquered Sumer and settled in Mesopotamia called her Ishtar. She was known in Canaan as Astarte; in Greece, as Aphrodite. She is the goddess of love as well as war. As Aphrodite, she seems to have lost her martial aspect, although this may survive in her relationship with Ares, the god of war. She is an obvious match for a king, who is responsible for the protection and prosperity of his realm.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

This image depicts a flow of power from the goddess through the king to the land. The result is symbolized in the freedom of the overflowing waters. The absence of water implies a wasteland in which nothing grows. On the psychological level, the flow of water represents the flow of emotion by means of which the unconscious supports and nourishes the life of the ego. In this particular constellation of images, the health of the individual person is dependent on a marriage relationship between the king and the goddess.

The king seems to represent some aspect of the human personality that mediates between the archetypal realm and the personal unconscious. In the figure of the king, the values and energies that support the ego are brought together and integrated as a meaningful and authoritative unity. Further, as expressed in this imagery, the mode of connection represented by the king is based in eros. It is not by virtue of his genetic essence that he rules,

nor out of subservience to the gods: the sacred marriage is an affective, biological metaphor for the commingling of two separate realities, in this case the transpersonal and the personal.

The goddess who is paired thus with the king, and who serves in this way to represent the whole of the archetypal reality, is a goddess of war and of love. In her person, she combines both the desire and the aggression without which life cannot move forward. Her epiphany as the lion symbolizes both aspects. Lions are now extinct in Mesopotamia, but once they flourished there. Like all cats, the lion is known to "see in the dark," hunting by night rather than by day. It is not a loner but travels in groups, and it is felt to be connected especially with royalty for various reasons: sometimes it represents the sun and so assumes the centrality of a solar principle; sometimes it is the impact of the lion's roar or the fierceness of the lion in combat that inspires the belief in the lion as "king of the jungle."

The king receives two royal insignia from the goddess: the rod and the ring. The rod is a symbol of the *axis mundi.* It connects the three realms or dimensions of life: the world of the gods (archetypes); the world of mankind (consciousness); and the underworld or land of the dead (the unconscious as a whole). The ring may represent the powers of fertility, the unending cycle of life and death that is governed by the feminine principle. It may also signify union with the goddess.

It is interesting that the sacred marriage was expressed in the earliest agricultural civilizations in the West as a union between the mortal male and the divine female, whereas during the Middle Ages the sacred marriage was most commonly depicted as a union between the feminine (human) soul and the divine male, Christ. The earlier version of the sacred marriage took place at the center of society and was reenacted publicly in ritual, whereas the bridal mysticism of medieval Christianity was an inner, subjective phenomenon.

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THE BINDING OF ISAAC

Artist unknown   Manuscript illumination: ink and gouache on parchment

Length: 21 in. (53.5 cm); width: 13.5 in. (34.5 cm)   1751 CE   Site: Livorno (Leghorn), Italy

Location: no. U8440, Jewish Museum, New York

The binding of Isaac

Italy: Renaissance-Rococo

On this written marriage contract, or ketubbah *(lit., "writ"; pl.,* ketubbot*)—for thousands of years part of the Jewish wedding ceremony—two putti display the supreme image of Jewish faith and obedience: Abraham has bound his only son, Isaac, and is preparing to sacrifice him, when the angel of the Lord stays his hand.*

This parchment bears two sections, a betrothal agreement and a marriage contract written for Eliahu, son of Solomon Judah Hayyim Teglio al-Fierino, and Duna Rachel, daughter of Isaac Yeshurun. It is dated Livorno, sixth of Adar, 5511 (i.e., 1751 CE). The text, attested to by witnesses whose signatures appear below, affirms the identity of the groom and bride and lists the financial considerations of their marriage. It ends with the groom's promise to provide for the well-being of his bride. The columns of text are framed by a baroque arch upon which are seated two putti holding a cartouche; within it is a depiction of the binding of Isaac. A coat of arms surmounts the cartouche.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The transfer of the *ketubbah* from the groom to the bride is the central event of the Jewish wedding. It signifies that the bride has passed from the jurisdiction of her father into that of her husband. The custom has a known history of at least twenty-five hundred years; some scholars believe it to be even older. The depiction of the binding of Isaac on this *ketubbah* would surely have reminded those present of Abraham's willingness to heed God's command to sacrifice his son, and of God's subsequent promise to "greatly multiply [Abraham's] descendants until they are as numerous as the stars in the sky" (*Genesis* 22:17). The architectural frame of the present contract, which recalls the Torah ark in the Livorno synagogue, emphasizes the relationship of marriage to the primary communal institution of the Jewish people.

The decoration of Italian *ketubbot* ranges from folklike ornamentation to the fine execution of the present example. Some have only simple border designs, while others employ elaborate frames incorporating mythological figures, classicizing personifications, and biblical scenes, all related to the names of the bride and groom or their wishes for the future. This parchment is relatively restrained in its choice of motifs. Its overall format—including architectural frame, figures, and floral ornament—derives ultimately from traditional manuscript illumination and the conventions of decorative frontispieces of printed books. But there are more specific sources for the motifs presented here. The architectural frame, with its colored marble planes set at oblique angles and its rococo cartouches and pediment, resembles the architectural decoration of the Livorno synagogue. This building had been enlarged on several occasions to accommodate a growing and prosperous congregation (the dukes of Tuscany had in the sixteenth century invited Sephardim to settle in Livorno in order to develop the city as a commercial center). Then in 1740, Isidoro Baratta, a sculptor from Cararra who also worked in local churches, was commissioned to carve its marble ark

and reader's desk. It is this Torah ark that served as the immediate inspiration for the frame of the present *ketubbah,* which thus recalls the most sacred feature of the synagogue, that is, the structure that housed the Torah scrolls (the Scrolls of Law). More generally, the artist emphasizes a relationship to the Livorno synagogue, the pride of the community, and alludes to the commonly held Jewish belief that each bride and groom who marry are establishing "a small sanctuary" (*mikdash me'at*).

No matter how liberal the attitude of local rabbis at various times may have been, three-dimensional sculpture of the human figure was never permitted within the synagogue proper. This was based on the prohibition expressed in the Second Commandment: "You shall not make a carved image for yourself nor the likeness of anything in the heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth" (*Deuteronomy* 5:8). Yet figural elements deriving from sculpture do play a considerable role in this image. The treatment of the putti is borrowed from Christian architectural decoration executed in Livorno by Baratta for the Chiesa di San Gernando. There, similar figures support cartouches with biblical scenes. They are remnants of the late Hellenistic and early Christian erotes, or cupids, descendants of the god Eros. Clearly, their presence is connected with the hope for fruitfulness in the marriage. The scene framed by the putti, the binding of Isaac, is the quintessential Jewish paradigm of man's faith in God. According to the Hebrew scriptures, Abraham was one hundred years of age when his heir, Isaac, was born. Nevertheless, Abraham did not hesitate to obey when God commanded him to offer his son in a ritual sacrifice of the firstborn. The scene on the *ketubbah* represents the climactic moment, as the angel intervenes to stay Abraham's hand. It is perhaps relevant that in this biblical passage God makes a kind of contract with the Jews, promising to reward them for Abraham's obedience.

Until recently, the Ashkenazim, Yiddish-speaking Jews from central and eastern Europe, used unadorned contracts bearing only the text and witnesses' signatures. Jews in Spain and in areas settled by the Sephardim after their expulsion in 1492 from the Iberian peninsula were, on the other hand, accustomed to decorating their *ketubbot.* In Italy, where the size and ornateness of the document came to reflect family status, communities felt obliged to enact sumptuary laws to regulate its appearance and thus prevent displays of bad taste. Heraldic devices such as the coat of arms crowning the present example were often appropriated by wealthy Italian Jewish families, again as status symbols. Since Jewish coats of arms were not officially bestowed, however, their form was susceptible to change over time, even those kept within a single family.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The imagery on this marriage contract draws on both Hebrew and Greek symbolism and integrates seemingly discordant themes of sacrifice and love. The story of Abraham is complex and harbors several levels of meaning. It may have been considered especially appropriate here because of the bride's father's name being Isaac. One abiding aspect of Judaism, however, that connects the story of Abraham and the institution of marriage is a strong conviction of the centrality of covenant between two parties. According to Hebrew tradition, the first covenant was between God and Abraham: Abraham promised that he and his sons would be circumcised, and God promised their family everlasting prosperity and

dominion over Canaan (*Genesis* 17:1–14). This covenant is constantly being reinterpreted and reaffirmed throughout Jewish history.

God's covenant with Abraham established once and for all time the relation of a man with a Father God, and Judaism has always been a father/son religion that rejected the overt worship of goddesses. Indeed, in this image the emphasis is on obedience rather than love. However, it is important to remember that both the feminine and sexual love are valued in Judaism. Sabbath is personified as a goddess called the Sabbath Bride in the Jewish mystical tradition. She is welcomed in with song and candle lighting on Friday night, and her parting is mourned when she leaves on Saturday evening. Indeed, it is considered a blessing for husband and wife to have intercourse on the Sabbath as a way of participating in the love God feels for his people. (The congregation of Israel is viewed in feminine terms as God's bride.) Further, Wisdom is personified as a feminine aspect of God, as is Mercy.

The putti representing Eros in this *ketubbah* have no symbolic function but are merely decoration appropriate for the period. However, their presence gently draws in a veiled reference to the goddess as represented by Eros's mother, Aphrodite, as if to balance in some slight way the emphasis on obedience and sacrifice.

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GLOSSARY

ASHKENAZIM European Jews who settled in central and eastern Europe during the Middle Ages. They shared a common language, Yiddish, which is a dialect of German written in Hebrew characters and containing terms from other eastern European languages such as Russian and Polish.

SEPHARDIM European Jews who lived in Spain and Portugal from the time of the Roman empire until they were expelled by the Christians in 1492. They resettled throughout the lands bordering on the Mediterranean, especially in North Africa and the Middle East.

TORAH (Heb., "teaching, law") The written Law, or the five books of Moses, also known as the Pentateuch. Believed to have been handed down to Moses on Mount Sinai, the Torah embodies the revelation central to Jewish life and religion.

LEDA AND THE SWAN
Artist unknown   Relief: marble   Measurement unavailable   Circa 350–300 BCE
Site: Greece   Location: National Archaeological Museum, Athens

Leda and the Swan

Greek: Late Classical

Zeus, filled with desire for Leda, assumed the form of a swan and in this form pursued and made love to her. Their offspring included the beautiful Helen and the Dioscuri, all of whom eventually gained immortality.

The marble relief shows an enormous swan in sexual union with Leda, a beautiful human female. The swan's left wing tenderly caresses her back, his beak strokes her neck, and his claws gently hold her body close to his own.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The relief depicts one of Zeus's many conquests of beautiful mortal females. Leda was the wife of King Tyndareus; the mythological accounts relate that some of her children were fathered by Zeus, some by her human husband. Helen was said to have been hatched from an egg after Zeus came to make love to Leda in swan form. (According to other accounts, the goddess Nemesis, not Leda, produced the egg after both she and Zeus had transformed themselves into birds and united. Later, Nemesis reportedly gave the egg to Leda for hatching.) Of all the daughters fathered by Zeus with mortal mothers, Helen alone was granted immortality.

In all, Leda is commonly assigned four children: her daughters, Helen and Clytemnestra, and twin sons, the Dioscuri. In contrast to Helen, Clytemnestra was fathered by the mortal Tyndareus, and she was fully human. Of the twins, one (usually Pollux) was Zeus's son and thus immortal, while the other (usually Castor) was the mortal son of the mortal father. Most accounts agree that both sons were allowed to share the one immortal life between them, living together half the time below the earth and half the time on Olympus.

Zeus's appearance to Leda in swan form recalls his coming to Hera as a cuckoo and to Ganymedes as an eagle. The swan, however, is a bird more often associated with Aphrodite; it may be that Zeus's coming to Leda in this particular guise explains why Helen comes to be so deeply identified with Aphrodite (in a way that causes her own downfall and the death of so many Greek and Trojan heroes). The association with Aphrodite might also signify that Zeus approaches Leda with real love, which might help account for the deep devotion the Dioscuri bear toward each other.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The symbolism of the swan is most commonly associated with the ancient goddesses who were associated with the waters, with new life, and with prosperity. Like the goose and the duck, the swan is a water fowl and symbolizes, as such, the powers of generation latent in the waters. At the same time, it is a creature of the sky and represents the objectivity and vision of the heights. In the ancient hunting and gathering cultures of the North, these water birds were sacred both because they offered sustenance and because their annual flight north appeared to usher in the spring.

The swan was sacred to Aphrodite, who shared in the sacrality of other goddesses of the waters and its life-giving power, and may have been sacred to a divine Leda as well. Robert Graves suggests that *Leda* may be a derivative of *lada,* which is the Lycian (that is, Cretan) word for "woman." Further, she may be related to the Titan Leto, who bore Apollo and Artemis, fathered by Zeus. We do not know definitely that a water bird was sacred to Leda at any time, but it was sacred to Nemesis, who is sometimes substituted for Leda (or perhaps vice versa). When Zeus pursued Nemesis, she first turned into a fish and then into a goose. It was then that Zeus assumed the form of a swan. It may be that the swan form of Zeus says more about the nature of the goddess than about the god, for this god is a shape shifter who can take on any form. Choosing to be a swan may simply imply that he assimilates himself to the nature of the goddess or, in the case of Leda, that of the mythical woman.

The wedding between bird and woman is a common theme in the history of culture. Sometimes the male consort is a bird, at other times it is a winged young man. The Western tradition of Psyche and Eros is historically connected with the sacrament of the Bridal Chamber in gnosticism and with bridal mysticism in early and medieval Christianity. Related symbolically is the role of the Holy Spirit, also in Christianity, which appears throughout in the form of a dove. The dove represents the Holy Spirit through whom Mary conceives the Christ Child. In addition, the Holy Spirit is that force that enters into the inner life of the individual Christian and engenders there the life of the spirit.

Thus the wedding of bird and woman takes us to an inner union that brings about a new way of being, one we associate with "spirit." In his study of alchemy, Edward F. Edinger has seen in the alchemist's techniques symbols that bring into focus a complete cycle of psychic processes. Among these is the *sublimatio,* the transformation of a solid into a gas. The *sublimatio,* representing the process of gaining objectivity, detachment, breadth of vision, and freedom, is symbolized by the bird that flies high in the sky. The opposite procedure is *coagulatio,* that is, taking whatever is in a gaslike state and transforming it into solid matter. A back-and-forth movement between these two processes, the fluctuation between spiritualization and incarnation, is set into motion. Both processes are evident in the myths, as they are fundamental in human experience. Without spiritualization (or *sublimatio*), we become narrow-minded and unable to imagine new life or act creatively. Without incarnation, however, we fly far above the earth, envisioning possibilities but incapable of realizing them.

"Just as ascending birds represent *sublimatio* and translation from the temporal to the eternal, so descending birds represent contents from the archetypal world that are incarnating by breaking into the personal ego realm. . . . Upward movement eternalizes; downward movement personalizes. When these two movements are combined, we get another alchemical process, namely, *circulatio.* A paragraph from the *Emerald Tablet of Hermes* refers to *circulatio:* 'It ascends from the earth to the heavens, and descends again to the earth, and receives the power of the above and below. Thus you will have the glory of the whole world. Therefore all darkness will flee from you.'" (Edinger, 142)

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GLOSSARY

CLYTEMNESTRA The daughter of Tyndareus and sister to Helen and the Dioscuri, Clytemnestra became the wife of Agamemnon. Her legend was a favorite among post-Homeric authors. Of central interest was her infidelity to and murder of her husband.

DIOSCURI, THE Castor and Pollux, the twin sons of Leda and brothers of Helen. They had a cult in Lacedaemon, where their symbol consisted of the *dokana,* two upright pieces of wood connected by two cross-beams.

GANYMEDES A beautiful youth who was adopted by the gods as their cup bearer.

HELEN The daughter of Zeus and Leda (or Nemesis). Associated with birds and trees, the Helen of Greek mythology probably reflects an earlier, pre-Hellenic, goddess. According to Homer, she was the human wife of Menelaus and was carried off to Troy by Paris because he saw in her the most beautiful woman in the world (who had been promised to him by Aphrodite).

HERA An ancient, pre-Hellenic goddess. Her Greek name seems to be the title "lady." The earlier form of her name is not known. In the myths of the Greeks, she is said to be the wife of Zeus and a deity of marriage and of the life, especially the sexual life, of women.

NEMESIS Perhaps the most puzzling of Greek goddesses, owing to the wide divergence between her mythology and her position in cult and the moral order. Her cult center was at Rhamnus in Attica, where she appears to have been a goddess of the type of Artemis, that is, mistress of wild animals and young children. In the myths, Nemesis was pursued relentlessly by Zeus, whereas in the literary tradition she is presented as the personification of retribution or righteous indignation.

TYNDAREUS In Greek mythology, the husband of Leda and the father, real or putative, of Helen, Clytemnestra, and the Dioscuri. Tyndareus was king of Lacedaemon.

THE ECSTASY OF SAINT TERESA

Artist: Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini Sculpture: marble Life-size group 1645–1652 CE
Site: Rome Location: Cornaro Chapel, Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome

The ecstasy of saint teresa

Renaissance: Italy

Saint Teresa's love of God and her desire for spiritual union with him found expression in a vision in which an angel pierced her heart with a golden spear and sent her into a trance. The erotic intensity of her vision is vividly suggested in this image by Teresa's swooning expression and languid pose, and by the deep folds of drapery, which convey her agitation.

Teresa is clothed from head to foot in a loose hooded garment. Her feet are bare, the left one prominently displayed. Her eyes are shut, her mouth opened, as she swoons in ecstasy. Standing before her is the figure of a winged youth. His garment hangs on one shoulder, exposing his arms and part of his upper torso. In his right hand he holds an arrow that is pointed at the heart of Teresa.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Teresa of Ávila (1515–1582) was a Spanish mystic who lived during the Counter-Reformation, a period of religious turmoil in Europe. Teresa founded several houses for discalced (or "barefoot") Carmelite friars and nuns, who sought to live according to the original rule of the order. This was a more primitive and ascetic form of monastic life than was practiced in Spain at that time. In addition, Teresa was author of numerous books, including her *Life,* a personal autobiography, the *Way of Perfection,* a handbook for her nuns, and *Interior Mansions,* in which she describes the many different steps taken on the path to mystical union with God.

Teresa described the soul's intense desire for God in the language of erotic passion. In this, she belongs to a long tradition of mystical experience that is known as bridal mysticism:

> It pleased our Lord that I should see the following vision a number of times. I saw an angel near me, on the left side, in bodily form. This I am not wont to see, save very rarely. . . . In this vision it pleased the Lord that I should see it thus. He was not tall, but short, marvellously beautiful, with a face which shone as though he were one of the highest of the angels, who seem to be all of fire: they must be those whom we call Seraphim. . . . I saw in his hands a long golden spear, and at the point of the iron there seemed to be a little fire. This I thought that he thrust several times into my heart, and that it penetrated to my entrails. When he drew out the spear he seemed to be drawing them with it, leaving me all on fire with a wondrous love for God. The pain was so great that it caused me to utter several moans; and yet so exceeding sweet is this greatest of pains that it is impossible to desire to be rid of it, or for the soul to be content with less than God. (Peers, 197)

The symbolism of bridal mysticism is found already in early gnostic forms of Christianity, where the central sacrament is called the Bridal Chamber. There the feminine soul of the gnostic unites with the masculine spirit and is in this way spiritualized, that is, liberated from the limitations of mundane existence. Related symbolism is found as well in the writings of the early Christian mystic Origen and the Neoplatonic mystic Plotinus. These three forms of mysticism are related and serve as the foundation for the history of mysticism in Christianity.

Probably, the early forms of bridal mysticism were influenced by the myth of Eros and Psyche, which was quite popular during late Hellenism. Indeed, we find a gnostic interpretation of this myth in the anonymous homily entitled *Exegesis on the Soul,* which describes the sacrament of the Bridal Chamber. During the Renaissance, Greek themes and images were rediscovered in Italy and elsewhere in Europe. Certainly, the form of Teresa's vision, and the symbolism illustrated here by Bernini, lies very close to the tale of the god of love and his human beloved. Psyche's name means "soul," and she begins her career as a mortal. It is because Eros loves her and wants her for his bride that Zeus is willing to elevate her to the status of an immortal. For Teresa, the moment in which she experiences the spiritual wound is but one moment in a complex drama culminating in the spiritual marriage, when such wounds will no longer be felt but are supplanted by a complete union of God and the soul on an inner level.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The word *psyche* in contemporary analytical psychology has taken on at least two meanings. On the one hand, it refers to the faculty of the human being that is capable of experiencing the imaginary world as well as the physical world. On the other hand, *psyche* may refer to the entire realm of experience, both conscious and unconscious. In the first case, the psyche is identified with the soul in the traditional sense; in the second, the psyche is the world of the soul.

The two traditions that are joined in this image of Saint Teresa are that of Greek mythology—the story of Psyche and Eros—and Renaissance Christian mysticism, in which the soul is awakened to spiritual passion. There is, however, one important variation: In the Greek tale (recounted by Apuleius) it is not Eros who wounds Psyche with one of his arrows (in fact, he wounds himself when he first beholds her); rather, Psyche accidentally wounds herself when, disobeying him, she takes up a light to see what he looks like. In Teresa's vision, she as "soul" is completely passive and receives the wound at the hands of an Eros figure. Nevertheless, central to both scenes is the symbol of wounding, the origin of love in pain inflicted from without.

Although it may seem insignificant at first, the suffering caused by the arrow's wound is of the greatest value. It is the pain that initiates the ensuing action, the eventual marriage of Eros and Psyche in heaven and the spiritual marriage of the Bridegroom and the Bride in Teresa's innermost heart. Teresa describes this pain as being filled with fire, being inflamed. What is needed is something to quench the fire, to heal the wound. For Psyche, what follows is a painful period of alienation between her and Eros, until ultimately they are reunited and she gives birth to their daughter, Joy.

The marriage between the human soul and the divine lover represents a creative union of the human self with its transpersonal counterpart. The soul symbolizes the subjective capacity to feel and experience reality—the capacity for consciousness. By uniting with the god of love, the soul gains a permanent connection with the abiding source of all life and love. In the infant, there is not yet the separation that gives rise to a subjective self. In the symbolism of the sacred marriage, a return to the original wholeness is achieved without a regression to the infantile unconsciousness.

Erich Neumann suggests that Psyche cannot truly love Eros in the dark. As Psyche, she requires vision. Her desire to see results in suffering, but also in real love:

> Psyche's act leads, then, to all the pain of individuation, in which a personality experiences itself in relation to a partner as something other, that is, as not only connected with the partner. Psyche wounds herself and wounds Eros [with the hot oil of the lamp, not the arrow—ED.], and through their related wounds their original, unconscious bond is dissolved. But it is this two-fold wounding that first gives rise to love, whose striving it is to reunite what has been separated; it is this wounding that creates the possibility of an encounter, which is prerequisite for love between two individuals. (Neumann, 85f.)

The Bernini sculpture celebrates the moment of woman's ecstatic union with her animus, or masculine component, and does not therefore go on to complete the image of a divine marriage. That could only come later, in a more symbolic, less personal, expression of that inner experience. Saint Teresa developed her relation to the creative animus by becoming a highly articulate and active influence in her order and in the church. The erotic nature of her mystical experience was initiatory and, as it were, impregnated her with her future career.

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GLOSSARY

ORIGEN Early Christian mystic and theologian (c. 185–254? CE) of Alexandria. A great teacher and author, Origen left behind important schools of followers, although the venturesome nature of his metaphysical speculations aroused much controversy.

PLOTINUS Neoplatonic philosopher and mystic (c. 205–270 CE) who lived most of his adult life first in Alexandria and then in Rome.

SERAPH (pl., Seraphim) In Hebrew tradition, a member of the highest of nine orders of angels, represented in the scriptures as a celestial being bearing three pairs of wings.

THE ANNUNCIATION

Artist unknown Manuscript illumination: tempera and gold leaf on parchment

Height: 11.5 in. (29.2 cm); width: 8.5 in. (21.6 cm) Circa 971–984 CE Site: Winchester, England

Location: folio 5 verso, add. 49598, British Museum, London

The annunciation

England: Anglo-Saxon

The angel Gabriel appears to the Virgin Mary to reveal to her God's will that she conceive his only child, Jesus, the Christ.

Gabriel, dressed in blue and white robes, is surrounded by swirling pink clouds. He wears a diadem and carries a staff in his left hand. With his elongated right hand he blesses Mary. She is dressed in purple and brown robes, and holds an open book in her right hand and a spindle in her left. The baldachin (aediculum) under which she is seated has acanthus capitals that support arches; the roof is domed. In front and to her right is a lectern made of a twisted column surmounting a lion's mask. The temple curtain is wrapped about a column of the baldachin. In the background is a cityscape. The image is elaborately framed by a trellis pattern decorated on each side with acanthus leaves and flowers.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This narrative miniature emphasizes the sanctity and dignity of the Virgin Mary as a temple maiden. Her femininity is expressed here in cultural achievement, as opposed to the natural virtues of the maternal. A literate woman was probably just as rare in tenth-century England as in first-century Palestine. But this Mary reads. Possibly she is reading the prophetic words of *Isaiah* 7 : 14, "A young woman is with child, and she will bear a son, and will call him Immanuel." She is depicted with a spindle as well. This scene is probably based on traditional stories about the birth and life of the Virgin Mary, the earliest and most important being *The Protoevangelium of James* from the second century.

> And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before her and said: "Do not fear, Mary, for you have found grace before the Lord of all things and shall conceive of his Word." When she heard this she doubted in herself and said: "Shall I conceive of the Lord, the living God, and bear as every woman bears?" And the angel of the Lord said: "Not so, Mary, for a power of the Lord shall overshadow you. Wherefore also that holy thing that is born of you shall be called the Son of the Highest. And you shall call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." And Mary said: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord before him: be it to me according to your word." (*The Protoevangelium of James* 2 : 2 – 11)

According to this infancy gospel (which was not included in the New Testament, although it was known by Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and other patristic writers), Mary's parents—Joachim and Anna—were childless and, like Abraham, begged God to grant them a child. When an angel appears to Anna, saying that the Lord has heard her prayer, that she will conceive and bear a child, Anna makes a vow: she will bring the child to God's temple as an offering. When the child, Mary, is three years old, her parents do just that, and she lives a cloistered life in the temple until her thirteenth year. At that time, a future husband (Joseph) is found for her by sacred lot.

The tradition continues: while Mary was still a young girl, the priests resolved to have a veil made for the temple. Only virgins were considered pure enough to weave the cloth for

this veil, and so Mary, among others, was brought to the temple. Again, lots were cast to see which girl would weave which color, and to Mary fell the lot of the purple and the scarlet. She took them and worked them in her home.

The architectural setting suggests the medieval belief among Roman Catholics that Mary was a model for the church. By receiving Christ into her womb, she became like a temple housing the Lord. The clouds surrounding Gabriel suggest the visionary nature of his appearance to Mary. His diadem and staff attest to his status as an archangel, one of the four (or sometimes seven) highest-ranking angels, whose duties include communicating messages from God to mortals.

An Annunciation in which Mary is seated while Gabriel strides toward her is known as a "seated Annunciation." The oldest type, it appeared in both Europe and Byzantium. The earliest known example, from the catacomb of Priscilla in Rome, dates from the fourth century. From early Christian times until the eleventh century, the baldachin and a spindle were often included in this image, but afterward a book came gradually to replace the spindle. The other major medieval iconographic tradition, in which both Mary and the angel are depicted in standing positions, was particularly popular in architectural sculpture created for Romanesque and Gothic churches. During the Renaissance, even more variants of the scene were developed.

The illumination shown here is taken from a benedictional, that is, a liturgical book containing blessings to be pronounced by a priest during Mass or on other occasions. This collection of blessings was commissioned by Saint Æthelwold, bishop of Winchester Cathedral, for use by the bishops of Winchester in the local rite. The Annunciation precedes the blessing for the first Sunday of Advent (the four-week period prior to Christmas). Such a luxurious manuscript as this one suggests that its patron had considerable resources. Bishop Æthelwold was a reformer of religious houses who was later canonized for his efforts. Religious reform has often stimulated the production of high-quality—even luxurious—devotional objects, and indeed, during the years Æthelwold ruled as bishop, Winchester became one of the most important scriptoria in Anglo-Saxon England.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The Annunciation is, of course, an important theological component in Christian tradition. However, the concept of impregnation of a mortal woman by a god belongs also more generally to the belief system of the Hellenistic world, with its Greek and Near Eastern antecedents. In the ancient Near East, the king was often believed to belong to the family of gods, especially by way of his connection to a goddess, as either her son or her lover (or both). In Greek mythology, there are numerous instances wherein a god (usually Zeus) will impregnate a mortal woman and bring forth a hero, that is, someone with superhuman capacities who may eventually be immortalized. By late Hellenistic times (the first three centuries of the common era), it was usual for any religious leader (known as a god-man, a prophet, or a magician) to claim—or be assigned—divine parentage. In all these instances, the meaning has to do with the influx of divine power into the human realm to bring about healing, order, and superhuman achievements.

On another level, that of subjective experience, the Annunciation can reveal the nature of any religious transformation: the receptivity of the Virgin Mary to God's presence has served throughout Christian history as a model for the tradition called bridal mysticism. The

soul of the devotee seeking union with Christ is likened to Mary in her acceptance of God's love. The offspring of the mystical marriage is not a physical child but rather the rebirth of the mystic, the spiritualization or sanctification of his or her whole being.

Ann Ulanov refers to the Annunciation as a model also for the spiritual growth of everyday life:

> The Annunciation of the Holy Spirit to Mary pierces her flesh, implanting it with seeds of new life. [It] is paradigmatic of all annunciations to the heart ego, such as the saving reality of love, of a new insight, or of any sense of a new relationship to come. The Spirit fecundates a woman's whole being, and she experiences herself both as subject and object in the mysterious process. The religious penetration is like a sexual penetration, seeding the flesh, changing its shape both psychologically (as with Mary, from Virgin to Mother) and physically. The ego does not create a new attitude of reality but rather receives it, waiting for the impulse of spirit to be carried toward it by the unconscious. (Ulanov, 184)

The symbolism of the book and the spindle points to both the assimilation of the spirit and the creative response. The act of reading, of receiving the word, carries the metaphor of the Annunciation to another level—from the biological to the cultural. The book is sacred when it contains the wisdom of the past: the revealed mysteries and the archetypal experiences of a people. The Virgin spinning wool can be understood as a necessary preparation for weaving, which is a common symbol for the interfacing of planes of reality. The warp and the woof together represent the horizontal plane of the physical world intersected by the vertical plane of spirit.

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LOVING COUPLE

Artist unknown   Relief: reddish sandstone   Height: 29⅛ in. (74 cm)   Eleventh century CE

Site: Madhya Pradesh (probably Khajuraho style), India

Location: The Cleveland Museum of Art (Leonard C. Hanna, Jr. Fund, 82.64), Cleveland, Ohio

Loving couple

India: Chandella

A god and a goddess embrace in a moment of physical union that expresses the ultimate unity of the Absolute. The sacred marriage serves also as a symbol of the soul's longing for union with the divine.

A god is gently disrobing his sinuously posed and responsive partner. The kiss of the entwined lovers expresses a restrained passion. The sensuous character of the scene is further emphasized by the jewelry of the young goddess, following the voluptuous lines of her body (which is in the "triply flexed" pose) and by the graceful folds of either partner's clinging garments.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This "loving couple" existed once as one of a number of sculptures placed on the exterior walls of a Hindu temple. It belonged within a continuum of erotic images—from figures of ladies applying cosmetics to couples engaged in sexual intercourse—that adorned the outer surfaces of the temple to serve as objects of contemplation for the devotees before they entered the interior shrine. The power of such figures to attract the worshiper through sheer beauty and provocativeness made them valuable as one element in a complex symbolism of spiritual experience. This carving would have been seen in the context of the entire Hindu temple, which reiterated in its plan, elevation, and overall iconography the religious aim of achieving final release, or *mokṣa*.

In Hinduism, there are many ways to represent the differentiation of the Absolute into antagonistic yet complementary pairs of opposites. Among the oldest and most usual, however, is that based on the duality of the sexes: Dyaus ("heaven") and Pṛthivī ("earth") in the Vedas, as well as Śiva and Śakti or Viṣṇu and Laksmī in later Hinduism. Originally, the loving-couple motif must have had a close tie with the liturgical life of the agricultural year and with the rites connected with the cultivation of domesticated animals and plants. Gradually, however, a number of related beliefs emerged: that the heaven that awaits heroes and pious sages is full of celestial maidens whose love is their reward; that the male deity resident in the icon of a temple, itself a reflection of heaven on earth, should be attended by a corps of female dancers, or hierodules; and so on.

Eventually, the motif developed as one of the primary symbol systems in Tantrism, especially where Tantrism was influenced by the worship of the goddess. Tantrism is an elusive term to define, and one that has been given a wide range of meanings. Sometimes it refers to any non-Vedic practice. At other times, it is limited to a specific group of teachings that emphasize the cosmic male-female polarity, or to those practices that use this polarity in ritual in order to bring about a spiritual release from rebirth.

The sacred marriage is a symbol that pervades the religious sensibility of Indian traditions. In the primal couple engendering the spheres that make up being, the Indian beholds

the divine essence personified in its creative aspect, that is, "polarized for fruitful self-reflection," as Heinrich Zimmer puts it:

> In stone and in bronze, again and again, this classic theme of the God and Goddess reappears, variously inflected, in the monuments of Hindu art. The God and Goddess are the first self-revelation of the Absolute, the male being the personification of the passive aspect which we know as Eternity, the female of the activating energy, . . . the dynamism of Time. Though apparently opposites, they are in essence one. The mystery of their identity is stated here in symbol. The God is he . . . who dwells in the "root-figure" of the lingam, the Goddess is the yoni, mother-womb of the ever-cycling eons, of all the universes endlessly extending in space, of every atom in the living cell. . . . She has her living counterpart in every woman, as the god in every man. (Zimmer, 139f.)

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

In the experience of sexuality, the complementarity of inner and outer worlds is apparent. For it is through the encounter with love—the awakening of eros and the joys and frustrations that follow—that the inner process of integration is constellated and energized. Behind the love of a man and a woman lies in the unconscious the image of a transcendent union, waiting to be wakened into life. "The *coniunctio* is, of course, a completely nonpersonal process, as separate from the ego of the individual in whom it takes place as is the flash of lightning from the electric pole which may appear to give it rise. . . . In the *coniunctio,* love and truth are reconciled. The woman adores the spirit embodied for her in the man, and he in turn comes to realize that spirit must incarnate as love. So the human union is paralleled and completed by the mystic marriage of the opposite principles within the psyche" (Bertine, 148).

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The divine child

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy, But he beholds the light,
and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

—William Wordsworth

THE DIVINE CHILD DANCING ON A LOTUS
Artist unknown Sunk relief: sandstone, with traces of original polychrome Measurement unavailable
237–57 BCE Site: Idfu, Egypt Location: National Museum, Warsaw

The divine child dancing on a lotus

Egypt: Ptolemaic Era, Twenty-second Dynasty

A newborn god dances on top of a lotus blossom, while two female deities accompany him with the music of a sistrum and cymbals. This relief decorates the column of a mamessi *("birthing house"), a temple dedicated to the divine child.*

In the center is a young god wearing a tight-fitting skull cap and broad collar. The folds under his left pectoral and at his stomach suggest that he is nude, although there is no indication of genitalia. His right arm and hand are lifted up above his head, and the left arm is held behind his back. He stands on his right leg with the left tucked behind his right knee. He stands on a lotus blossom. The flower is supported by a thick stem, and two outer sepals enclose three pointed petals. To the right and left are two closed buds. Flanking this figure are two female deities holding musical instruments. On the child's left, a goddess clad in a tight dress and wearing a lappet wig offers the young god a menat collar and a sistrum, or ceremonial rattle. On his right, another goddess beats a tambourine.

Cultural context

This sunken relief on a column drum, or segment of a column, is part of the architectural decoration of a *mamessi* ("birthing house"), a special type of temple dedicated to the birth of the divine child. At Idfu, the main temple is dedicated to Horus of Idfu, and the *mamessi* to the child Horus. As a divine child, he quite naturally figures prominently in the iconography of the *mamessi.*

Already during the Old Kingdom, the lotus plays a significant role in cosmogonic mythology. In one myth, the primordial waters are described as a limitless dark sea. From the surface of the sea an immense lotus bud emerges. It is luminous even as it rises, and as the bud opens it offers up the light of the world and the sweet perfume of the morning air. Because the opening and closing of the lotus blossom follows the rising and setting of the sun, the lotus is often a solar symbol: "I am the pure lotus that rises in the glorious light to be the peculiar delight of Re," one Coffin Text records (Clark, 239). Elsewhere, it is the newborn sun itself—identified as the child Horus—that emerges from the opened blossom. Corresponding to this notion, Horus was depicted during the Hellenistic period as a sun child on a lotus blossom.

The temple complex in which this image is found was built under the Ptolemies, that is, during a time when Greek influence was spreading throughout the Mediterranean world. It is the best preserved of all ancient Egyptian temples and exalts the extensive aspects of Horus of Idfu, a martial falcon god who was also the divine child of Isis and Osiris.

As the divine child, Horus was sometimes depicted riding on the back of a crocodile—that amphibious inhabitant of the delta swamps—or crowned by a sun disk. During the reign of the Ptolemies, he was assimilated to Greek mythology as Harpocrates, in which form he often appeared as a child in the arms of his mother, Isis. But he was also identified with the early morning sun, that is, incarnated in the first two hours of the day. Further, the

menat collar, sistrum, and tambourine, held in this image by unidentified goddesses, were all used by deities who promoted birth, motherhood, and fertility in general. These were also important aspects of the symbolism surrounding Harpocrates. The joy of birth is assimilated here to the joy experienced at the return of the early morning sun, and this joy is expressed vividly in the child's dance.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The child is a universal symbol of the unknowable but latent possibilities of the future together with the concrete, specific inheritance of the past. A reminder of both, the child most importantly symbolizes the present moment—the wonder, receptivity, and freshness of consciousness that is open to the here and now.

Since the child cannot survive on its own, it also represents the experience of utter dependency. The divine child is often depicted in a close connection with the powers of nature, especially the waters. In legend, then, one finds children brought by fishers such as the stork or by water dwellers such as the frog. In this image, the divine child is born out of the lotus, which is a plant that resembles symbolically the crocodile, yet another bearer of the divine child. The crocodile can live both in and out of the water; equally of a twofold nature, the lotus grows in the water but blossoms forth in the air. Both are symbols of a mode of being that connects the natural realms of the waters and the heavens. The waters represent chaos, the state in which all things are dissolved together as one; the heavens represent the world of differentiation, where things can be seen by the naked eye as discrete and separate. It is the realm that is governed by the light of the sun, whereas the deeper one goes into the waters, the darker it becomes.

This child that is born out of the lotus is also a newborn sun, revealing the necessary relationship between the conscious ego and the dark, potent realm of the unconscious from which it emerges. This moment in which the light first appears represents simultaneously the dawn of creation and the moment when a human being awakens from the sleep of the unconscious: "The archetype of the child has to do with the wonder of all beginnings and the wonder of all beginning again. We are led by it to imagine being in the world as on the first day of creation, seeing the world for the first time. The child embodies and encourages spontaneity and joy, imagination and celebration" (Downing, 226).

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GLOSSARY

ISIS (Egyp., "throne") Egyptian goddess, the sister and wife of Osiris and mother of Horus, whom she protects from many dangers by means of her supernatural powers. Usually depicted as a woman with

the sign for "throne" on her head, she also appears in countless other forms so that she becomes the "multiform one" *par excellence.*

OSIRIS The Egyptian god who suffered a violent death; he is depicted in human form without indication of limbs. His attributes of crook and flail allude to ancient links with kingship and pastoralism. Other features connect Osiris with the cycle of seasons and vegetation. However, he became primarily a ruler of the dead. The best-known of his cult centers was at Abydos.

THE BIRTH OF MITHRA FROM A ROCK
Artist unknown   Relief: marble   Height: 11.5 in. (29 cm); width: 11.5 in. (29 cm)
Probably fourth century CE   Site: Esquiline Hill, Rome
Location: no. 2327, Palazzo dei Conservatori, Museo Capitolino, Rome

The birth of Mithra from a rock

Roman: Late Imperial

Mithra, the supreme deity of an important Hellenistic mystery religion, was born from a rock. Here he emerges with a short dagger in one hand and a torch in the other. These allude to his roles as bull slayer and begetter of light.

A young boy, not an infant, emerges naked from a rock. His legs—from the knees down to the feet—have not yet become wholly visible. In his right hand he holds a dagger, and in his left, a lit torch. His hair is shoulder length, and on his head he wears a pointed cloth cap.

Cultural context

Originally, Mithra was one of the major deities of ancient Iran. However, in the Hellenistic world (c. 330 BCE to c. 400 CE) founded by Alexander the Great, numerous deities assumed "international" status. For instance, the worship of Isis, which was originally Egyptian, became the center of a worldwide religion in which both the goddess and her cult acquired non-Egyptian attributes. Similar was the fate of Mithra, who became especially popular with the Roman soldiers and whose cult, together with the army, spread throughout the empire.

This later, more universal Mithra was worshiped as the god who brought light into the world, a deity associated also with immortality. His followers went through a series of initiations by means of which they gradually transcended the cosmos and its limitations, which include death. A common belief of this period was that beyond the seven spheres of the visible planets and the sun and the moon was a realm at the level of the fixed stars—the *ogdoad* or *pleroma* or *aeternitas*—in which the soul could exist free and immortal. In Mithraism, the god served as both guide and savior for those who sought to attain immortality in this life.

Mithra was the god born out of a rock, but this was a celestial rock, one that gave forth both fire and light. In the Hellenistic period, numerous traditions recognized the meteorite (or "fallen star") as a sacred rock, usually the epiphany of a god or goddess. Birth from such a rock symbolizes the incarnation of this divinity in human form, that is, it is as if one of the immortal stars came to life in order to provide a bridge between the earth and eternity.

In his account of the myth of Mithra's birth, Franz Cumont stresses the analogy between the earthly appearance of the god and the celestial manifestation of light:

> The light bursting from the heavens, which were conceived as a solid vault, became, in the mythology of the Magi, Mithra born from the rock. The tradition ran that the "Generative Rock," of which a standing image was worshiped in the temples, had given birth to Mithra on the banks of a river, under the shade of a sacred tree, and that shepherds alone, ensconced in a neighboring mountain, had witnessed the miracle of his entrance into the world. They had seen him issue forth from the rocky mass, his head adorned with a Phrygian cap, armed with a knife, and carrying a torch that had illuminated the somber depths below. (Cumont, 131f.)

In Rome, the birth of Mithra was celebrated together with the winter solstice on 25 December. He is "the begetter of light" (*genitor luminis*), who emerged from the rock that

gives birth (*petra genetrix*). In some representations of this event, flames shoot out of the surface of the cosmic birth rock. The Phrygian cap worn by the god harks back to his Eastern origins as an Iranian solar deity. Sometimes the cap is represented as studded with stars and, like the roofs of the Mithraea (or cave sanctuaries in Mithraism), symbolizes the celestial vault. The knife held by Mithra is his weapon in the slaying of the bull, a central motif in his mythology.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

> The hardness, ruggedness, and permanence of matter was in itself a hierophany in the religious consciousness of the primitive. And nothing was more direct and autonomous in the completeness of its strength, nothing more noble or more awe-inspiring, than a majestic rock, or a boldly-standing block of granite. Above all, stone *is.* It always remains itself, and exists of itself; and, more important still, it *strikes.* Before he even takes it up to strike, man finds in it an obstacle—if not to his body, at least to his gaze—and ascertains its hardness, its roughness, its power. Rock shows him something that transcends the precariousness of his humanity: an absolute mode of being. Its strength, its motionlessness, its size and its strange outlines are none of them human; they indicate the presence of something that fascinates, terrifies, attracts and threatens, all at once. In its grandeur, its hardness, its shape and color, man is faced with a reality and a force that belong to some world other than the profane world of which he is himself a part. (Eliade, 216)

With these words, Mircea Eliade conveys some of the feeling the archaic man has expressed in his religious attitude toward rocks and stone. Because of its apparent permanence, the stone is a symbol of endurance; indeed, the experience of the stone suggests the concept of eternity. Furthermore, it is a symbol of power. Early weapons and tools were made of stone, increasing the might and effectiveness of early men and women in coping with their environments, whether in hunting, cooking, or building. Finally, stones were used in funerary rites to protect the dead and to provide the soul with an enduring abode.

The celestial stone—begetting fire and light—is a variation on the general symbolism of the stone. In the belief systems of the ancient Near East, the fallen star may lose its celestial appearance, but it does not lose its inherent nature: the power to generate fire. One of the best-known celestial stones, or meteorites, is the Ka'bah of Mecca, which according to tradition was brought to earth by the angel Gabriel, the same angel that revealed the holy book to Muḥammad. Before the birth of Islam, this meteorite had been sacred to the Arabian goddess al-'Uzzā ("the mighty one"). Another famous meteorite is the black stone of Pessinus, an epiphany of the Phrygian great mother, Cybele, which was taken to Rome during the last of the Punic wars to protect the Romans from Hannibal.

The meteorite is sacred because it is a stone and because of its celestial origins. Sometimes it is worshiped as the house of a god, sometimes as the abode of a goddess. In other words, the stone is one of the forms wherein the divine may reside. Both motifs refer to the ancient belief that the stars—like the sun and the moon and the visible planets—are the dwelling places of divine beings or heroes. In India, for example, the polestar is called the "pivot of the planets" and is represented by the god Dhruva, who was so immovable in his meditation that he became the polestar shining about Mount Meru, the center of the world. In the ancient Near East, the planet Venus was called the "morning star" and was identified with various goddesses, among them Inanna, Ishtar, Astarte, and Aphrodite.

The birth of Mithra from a rock is a myth of incarnation, like that of the *anodos,* or rising up of the virgin goddess out of the earth, in Greek myth. In the latter, the emergence of the goddess reveals the eternal cycle of the seasons and the annual return of vegetation. In the birth of Mithra, however, we witness the emergence of the solar hero. Mithra is an expression of the masculine will to overcome inertia and repetition. Thus he became a model for the warrior societies of the late Roman empire in its time of colonial expansion.

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GLOSSARY

ISIS (Egyp., "throne") Egyptian goddess, the sister and wife of Osiris and mother of Horus, whom she protects from many dangers by means of her supernatural powers. Usually depicted as a woman with the sign for "throne" on her head, she also appears in countless other forms so that she becomes the "multiform one" *par excellence.*

THE BIRTH OF ATHENA
Unknown painter; potter's signature "Phrunos"   Ceramic: Attic black figure
Height of vessel: 7.9 in. (20.1 cm); diameter: 11.1 in. (28.1 cm)
Circa 560–550 BCE   Site: Athens   Location: no. B424, British Museum, London

The birth of Athena

Greek: Archaic

Hephaistos, the divine smith, has cloven the head of Zeus with the latter's ax, whereupon Athena emerges, armed and fully grown. This extraordinary birth symbolizes Athena's distinction as a goddess of war and wisdom, her exalted position as Zeus's favorite child, and the triumph of Zeus over the previous generation of gods.

Zeus leans forward on his throne, brandishing a thunderbolt in his right hand. His left hand is raised in a gesture of presentation for his daughter Athena, who has just burst forth from his forehead. Athena is armed with a spear and a shield that is decorated with the head of a bull. Hephaistos has successfully assisted in the birth by splitting open Zeus's head with an ax. Having completed the task, he strides away, turning his head back and raising his right arm either to acknowledge a job well done or to offer an exclamation of surprise.

Cultural context

There are many stories recounting the birth of Athena. For example, some Hellenes report that she had a father named Pallas, a winged, goatish giant, who later attempted to outrage her and whose name she added to her own after stripping him of his skin to make the aegis, and of his wings to place on her own shoulders. Others report that her father was Poseidon, but that Athena disowned him and begged Zeus to adopt her, which he was happy to do. But according to the priests of Athena, she was born from the forehead of Zeus, as depicted in this image.

The Oceanid Metis was the wisest of gods and humans alike, and it was she who helped Zeus liberate the siblings whom his father, Kronos, had swallowed. Zeus then took Metis for his wife, and she conceived a child. An oracle of Mother Earth (Gaia) prophesied that the child would be a girl, but that should Metis conceive again, she would bear a son who was fated to depose Zeus, just as Zeus had deposed Kronos and as Kronos had deposed his father, Ouranos. Therefore, having coaxed Metis to his couch with words of honey, Zeus suddenly opened up his mouth and swallowed her whole. That was the end of Metis, although Zeus often claimed that she continued to counsel him from inside his belly. In due course, Metis's daughter was ready to be born, and so Zeus called upon Hephaistos to relieve him of his labor pains (a splitting headache). Hephaistos wielded his ax, and out of Zeus's head sprang Athena, in full armor and with a war song on her lips. This child, full of courage and self-confidence, became Zeus's favorite, the only one allowed to carry his aegis and thunderbolt.

The ancient roots of this goddess go back to a time before the arrival of the Indo-Europeans and their pantheon of gods headed by Zeus. The pre-Hellenic Athena was the protectress of a Mycenaean citadel on top of the Acropolis and of the royal household that lived there. As protectress of Athens, she was responsible for preventing the attack of enemies and patron also of urban life: the education of children, the training of spinners and weavers, and the development of the arts. (In addition to Athens, several other ancient acropolises were sacred to Athena, including Argos, Sparta, Troy, Smyrna, Epidaurus, and Pheneus—all pre-Hellenic sites.)

There is evidence that the early Athena was, like many other Paleolithic and Neolithic goddesses, manifest as either a bird (night owl or diver) or a snake. This suggests her connection with the realm of the pre–Indo-European mother goddesses, of creation and regeneration. On the other hand, the Greek goddess, that is, Zeus's daughter, was dedicated almost entirely to the values that make civilization and the development of the individual possible: courage, wisdom, and friendship.

The Greek myth of Athena's birth from Zeus thus reflects a transformation that took place in the religious orientation of ancient Greece. The conquest by the Indo-European charioteers led to a union of two cultures—one nomadic and patriarchal from the steppes of Central Asia, the other based on the practice of agriculture and goddess worship. The feminine wisdom of Metis was assimilated by the thunder god Zeus, and Athena represents the new value that emerged.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

This image of a god giving birth to a goddess belongs to a category of myths that account for a transition from one religious system to another. Similar is the story of Kṛṣṇa, who in deposing Indra displays the very powers that are attributed to the powerful protector god. Here Zeus demonstrates the life-giving power of a goddess, while revealing simultaneously his role in Greek mythology as "father of the gods." The central transition in effect here derives from the union of a nomadic, patriarchal religion with an indigenous form of goddess worship.

Nomadic peoples move about from place to place and are less inclined, the greater the distances they cover, to experience the gods in connection with specific geographical landmarks. Instead, they develop myths and beliefs centering around sky gods, who can move with them. This is the historical origin of the Israelite deity Yahveh, who could appear as fire or a cloud, and it is the origin of numerous Indo-European deities. These cultures also tend to be strongly patriarchal, since their way of life is based on the mobility that is guided by men and not on agriculture, which is often associated with feminine symbols.

Many scholars have emphasized the importance of recognizing the nature of the goddess worship that predated the Indo-Europeans in such places as Greece, India, and Eastern Europe. However, there is also much to learn about the new values and opportunities that the Indo-Europeans brought to these indigenous peoples, and the image seen here hints at the birth of Western culture as we know it. The image of a god giving birth to a goddess who emerges from his forehead may symbolize a new potential for human experience: both the masculine and the feminine are undergoing transformation in this miraculous birth. Perhaps it represents a new form of creativity that is available to both men and women—one that takes place in the head, that is, within the imagination. Zeus's child is courageous and wise, teacher to both the artist and the hero. Or perhaps Athena is, as Christine Downing calls her, a "maker of soul," and her birth from the head of Zeus represents the awakening of symbolic consciousness in a particular form, that is, a man's awareness of his own feminine component (the anima, in the terminology of C. G. Jung). Zeus, as masculine agent, had to integrate that primordial aspect of the mother capable of producing his anima image. Indeed, as guardian and protector of the national domain, Athena embodies the soul image of patriarchal Greece as a whole. In her official, outward form, she is a warrior goddess, but her inner influence is gentle and restraining of undue masculine aggression. For example, at the end of

the *Odyssey,* when Odysseus is throwing the suitors of Penelope out of his home and exults in a murderous impulse to pursue them "like an eagle in free air," Athena appears and says, "Move not Zeus to wrath," restraining him. Odysseus obeys, "inwardly glad."

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GLOSSARY

HEPHAISTOS Greek god of fire, especially the fire of the smith. Originally, he may have been a god of the volcano. He is the divine craftsman of the gods, and in line with the customs of that culture, he is lame (that is, unfit for war or farming). His wife is Charis or more usually Aphrodite, which bespeaks little more than allegory, that is, craftsmanship allied with grace or beauty.

KRONOS (Gk., "time") In Greek cosmogony, the youngest son of Heaven and Earth and leader of his brethren, the Titans. Advised by his mother, Kronos castrated his father, who therefore no longer approached Earth. In this way, a space was created between the primordial parents that allowed the Titans to exist. Knowing that he was to be overcome by one of his children, Kronos swallowed all but Zeus, who was rescued by his mother, Rhea.

OURANOS (Gk., "sky") In Greek cosmogony, Ouranos, or Heaven, together with Gaia, or Earth, brought forth numerous offspring. Ouranos, however, hated them and hid each one away in its mother's body. This caused Gaia great pain, and so she made a sickle and called upon her children to castrate their father. Kronos alone had the courage to accomplish the task.

POSEIDON Greek god of earthquakes and of water, secondarily of the sea. He is frequently depicted as a bearded deity, carrying a trident and sometimes a fish or dolphin.

THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST
Artist unknown   Mosaic   Measurement unavailable   Circa 1150 CE
Site/Location: chapel, Capella Palatina, Palermo, Italy

The nativity of christ

Italy: Byzantine

The newly born infant Jesus sleeps surrounded by animals in the manger of a cave. In spite of this lowly beginning, his birth is proclaimed as the arrival of a great king and redeemer by the presence of a new star in the heavens and by the appearance on earth of angels from above.

At the center of the scene is a cave entrance, within which Mary sits holding the newborn Jesus. An ox and an ass look on. The flowerlike star above them sends forth a single ray that descends to the manger. Above and to the left, three angels guide the three wise men of the East to the cave. Two of the Magi are visible also to the right of the manger. There they offer gifts to the newborn child. A solitary angel stands by, pointing the way to the nativity scene. At the upper right corner, another, larger, angel gestures to the shepherds (not visible here). Below the manger, two midwives prepare a bath for the infant. Below Mary and to her right, her husband Joseph sits, chin in hand, contemplating the scene.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The story about the birth of Christ is not recounted in all four gospels. Mark, for example, begins his book with the baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan and the commencement of his ministry. The most beautiful canonical account is offered by the literary Luke, and extra-canonical stories abound. Throughout the centuries, the nativity story and its visual representations were most often linked to the Christian holy day of Christmas in celebration of the nativity.

The birth of Christ was not celebrated during the early days of the Christian community. In fact, there is no certain knowledge of the origin of the Christmas feast. We do know, however, that by the middle of the fourth century it was observed at Rome. Some scholars argue that the date assigned to the birth of Christ, 25 December, originated in competition with the Roman Feast of the Invincible Sun; others argue that the date was calculated on the basis of the idea that the conception of Christ coincided with his death, which supposedly occurred on 25 March.

According to the legends that grew up around the gospel accounts of the birth of Christ, Jesus's birth was surrounded by miraculous events. These began already with the appearance of the angel Gabriel to Mary. The angel revealed to Mary that she would conceive a child by the Holy Spirit, and that this child should be called the Son of God. Mary was betrothed to the carpenter Joseph of Nazareth, who also experienced a revelation: an angel appeared to him in a dream and told him that Mary's child had been fathered by the Holy Spirit, and that he would save his people from their sins.

As the time drew near for Mary's baby to be born, the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus, decided to take a census to see how many people were living in his empire so that he could collect taxes from them. The emperor then ordered everyone to return to their hometowns for this purpose. Mary traveled with her husband Joseph to his hometown Bethlehem for the census. When they arrived there, the village was filled with travelers and

there was no room for them anywhere. Finally they found shelter in a stable, where Jesus was born.

Nearby, in the hills, shepherds watched over their sheep. After an angel appeared to them with news of the birth of a savior, the shepherds drew near to the manger to get a look at the holy infant. At the same time, three Magi (diviners who lived in the East) arrived by the light of a star that had mysteriously appeared in the heavens. They brought with them gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Stories about the washing of the infant are noncanonical but correspond to several references in the Gospels to the customs surrounding the birth and development of any Hebrew child at that time: circumcision, presentation at the Temple in Jerusalem, and the sacrifice of a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons, required for every firstborn son.

The Palermo mosaic corresponds to the traditional nativity found in the liturgy of the Eastern Orthodox Church, which had separated fully from the Roman Catholic Church only about a century earlier. Its elements are derived from the biblical readings and commentaries used during Christmas services. In Byzantine art, the nativity is commonly placed in a mountain cave. This setting may reflect the actual topography of Bethlehem. Even today in the modern city of Bethlehem there are cellars and stables hewn out of the living rock, some of which serve as shelter.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The central motif of this mosaic is the birth of the divine child. For Christians, Jesus is an example of the divine child because he has a divine father and because he is destined to become the Messiah. Both Matthew and Luke regarded the virginal conception as historical. The two evangelists refer to the conception of Jesus from different standpoints—Matthew from that of Joseph, Luke from that of Mary—but both agree that the conception came about through the power of the Holy Spirit and without human intercourse. The divinity of Jesus is an integral part of his mission: as Messiah he is to establish God's kingdom. This is begun in his lifetime and will be accomplished at his second coming. His birth ushers in a new age.

In this image, the divine child is born in a cave. The cave is also the place where Jesus the man becomes resurrected as the Christ. His dead body is sealed up in a cave; after three days the cave is reopened, but the body is gone. An angel reports that Jesus has "been raised from the dead" and has left the tomb on his own.

Throughout the history of mankind, according to Doris Heyden (1987), the cave has been a symbol of creation, the place of emergence of celestial bodies, of ethnic groups, and of individuals. On the one hand, it is the womb of the earth, bringing forth new life. In addition, it is the entrance to the underworld, the land of the dead. Every cave is sacred. Sometimes a cave will be at the center of the world, a place where the divine manifests itself. For example, the Pyramid of the Sun (built c. 100 BCE, destroyed c. 750 CE) at Teotihuacán, Mexico, was built over a primitive shrine, which itself was built over a subterranean cave. The cave had the shape of a four-petaled flower, possibly suggestive of the four directions. The Sun Pyramid was constructed so that the cave lies directly beneath its center. In myths of emergence, such as those of the Hopi or the Zuni, the ancestors of mankind are conceived in the earth and climb up out onto the earth. Cave burials are known from very ancient times as

well. Setting the nativity of Jesus in a cave contributes to the emphasis on his divinity, almost as if he had two mothers, the Virgin and Earth.

The communion of human and divine elements in the Christ as spelled out in traditional christology reflects the implicit roots of the "redeemer" or "savior" in divine kingship; this is explicitly evident from the name *Christ,* Greek for "Messiah" (Heb., *Mashiaḥ*), which is a royal title. The king has a special relationship to the divine world: either he is a divine human being or he has a goddess as a consort. In his person the two worlds are mingled for the sake of the land, the kingdom. The savior, on the other hand, is like an international king—that is, the salvation that he brings is not limited to one geographical place or to one cultural group. What is saved is the individual, and what he or she is saved from is death itself. We see in the myth of the savior one step taken in the process of individualization and, simultaneously, universalization. The savior's kingdom is not identified with one place and so is "invisible"—that is, a spiritual (or psychological) reality.

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GLOSSARY

ANGEL (Gk., *aggelos,* "messenger") A term found in Hellenistic writings, including the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures) and the New Testament. Angels are a class of spirits midway between gods and human beings. Most often represented as anthropomorphic beings, they frequently bear wings by means of which they are able to travel between heavens and the earth.

MAGI (Gk., "wise men"; sg., *magos*) The Greek term *magos* derives from the religious language of the Hellenistic world, where divination of all kinds was popular. The Magi were wise by virtue of the arts of divination, in which they excelled. For the typical Greek of that time, the Magi of the East, that is, the Chaldeans, were especially gifted.

Skaoaga and her bear child

Artist: Tsagay   Sculpture: argillite   Length: 5.5 in. (14 cm)   1883 CE

Site: Queen Charlotte Island, British Columbia, Canada

Location: no. 73117, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Skaoaga and her bear child

North American Indian: Haida

This sculpture recalls the story of a woman who gave birth to a bear child. Here, the struggling mother, Skaoaga, holds her head back in agony, while the baby tears furiously at her breast.

This three-dimensional carving in the round shows a nude woman, lying on her back, with her arms and hands extended slightly along her body; her legs are drawn up in support. A small child is crouched upon her body, with its head against one breast and its hands holding firmly onto the breast. The woman's head is turned back in agony with the pain of the child's furious suckling. The surface of the stone is burnished and has been blackened for aesthetic effect. The woman wears a large oval labret in her lower lip, indicative of her high social status.

Cultural context

This is one of the most famous works of Northwest Coast art, certainly of those created in argillite. It was collected at Skidegate by John R. Swanton in 1883 and was probably made shortly before that time. It depicts the legendary Skaoaga, the Bear Mother, and her child. Apparently, this was originally a Tsimshian story that has become known by way of the visual representations in argillite created by several Haida carvers. The story of Bear Mother is one of the most familiar legends in the Northwest Coast area, and there are many different versions. The following is based on the account published by Marius Barbeau in 1953:

Skaoaga, princess of the wolf phratry of the Haida people, was the daughter of Chief Negwa'on, whose village was located on the Nass River. As was customary, she led a sheltered life and could not venture out among common people except on special occasions. One day, bored by seclusion, she asked several of her companions to join her on an expedition into the mountains to pick salmon berries, which were ripening just then. As they wandered from one bush to the next, Skaoaga broke the strap of her gathering basket and had to stop to repair it. This happened again, and yet a third time. Eventually she became separated from her friends. In her preoccupation, she stepped into a patch of bear excrement on the trail. Angered, she loudly berated the bear people for their careless ways, continuing her tirade as she hastened after the other girls. But again her strap broke. This time, two handsome young men came up and offered to help her. Beguiled by their appearance, she wandered off with them, not noticing that she was traveling farther into the mountains.

Eventually Skaoaga was led into the bear village, for one of the young men turned out to be the son of the bear chief. The father had become furious at her for insulting his people, and he had sent the young men out to kidnap her. He was resolved to make her a slave in retaliation. The next day Mouse Woman appeared and asked Skaoaga for some wool and copper, telling her that in return for the gift, she would protect her. She advised her that whenever she had to relieve herself, she should bury the excrement in a hole and cover it with copper. Skaoaga wisely followed the instructions of Mouse Woman. Meanwhile, the

bear people, who had been watching her to prevent her escape, on seeing the copper, were impressed and reported it to the chief. "Ah," he said, "now I understand why she was so contemptuous of our excrement. Hers is tremendously valuable." Relenting slowly, he came to accept her as his daughter-in-law, and the two young people lived together in the village.

In time, Skaoaga gave birth to two sons, part human and part bear. They often tore furiously at her breasts as they suckled, betraying thus their animal origins. Her husband foresaw that in time her own people would find her, and he predicted that her brother would eventually kill him. Then he told her that if she honored him in death, their children would grow up to become greater hunters. And so it came to pass. One day her brother together with her favorite dog located the village, and the brother killed her young husband with his spear. After the body was respectfully carried away and received the proper ritual attention, the bear garment was burned. Instantly, the two young boys became completely human, and eventually they proved to be the most famous hunters of the Nass people.

The Haida have a long tradition of narrative sculpture in wood, stone, and metal; they are perhaps best known for their cedar and spruce wood totem poles. They also create a large variety of smaller works of equal beauty, including rattles, masks, and ceremonial and utilitarian objects that demonstrate a remarkable aesthetic skill. A unique art is the use of argillite, a form of slate found only in the Queen Charlotte Islands and a resource that the Haida control completely. The gray stone is mined, broken into blocks or slabs, and carved, and when polished and given a black surfacing (carbon soot was used earlier; today black shoe wax is commonly employed) produces a remarkable medium for sculpture.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Many scholars suggest that the bear was already worshiped as a divine being by Neanderthal man in the interglacial period ending not later than 75,000 BCE. This hypothesis is based on the discovery of what appears to have been altars for the ritual sacrifice of the bear in caves inhabited by these ancestors of *Homo sapiens.* More certain is the notion that bears have played a significant part in the religious life of the hunting peoples of northern Eurasia and North America. Throughout the Arctic Circle one finds richly developed ceremonies that focus on the bear, and there is a certain continuity to bear ceremonies from widely separate societies.

The myth associated with Bear Woman, who is depicted in this sculpture, belongs to this religious tradition in which the bear plays a central role. However, the two themes that are most clearly expressed here involve the marriage between a mortal and a bear, resulting in the birth of a culture hero (or twins, as in this case), and the theme of the mortal woman nourishing a bear cub. Both themes are common in the mythology associated with the divine bear.

In his essay on the religious meaning of the bear, Carl-Martin Edsman points out that marriage between a woman and a bear was common in the myths associated with the bear sacrifice. "The bear subsequently allows himself to be killed by his wife's brother on the condition that his instructions on the ritual will be carefully observed in all future bear hunts" (Edsman, 87). In the story of Skaoaga, the brother does indeed kill her bear husband, who expresses the concern that he be treated appropriately after death (that is, in a ritually correct manner). In addition, he promises her that their twin sons will then prove to be great hunters.

At this point, the related mythologem of the bear son, a kind of hero figure, is introduced. The hero is very often the offspring of a mortal woman and a divine god, who may or may not appear in the form of an animal. One Chinese tale relates how the bear son appeared to be human except for the fact that his ears were bear's ears. Tales of this kind are found in German and Croatian legend as well as in Asian and North American lore. Two famous bear sons are Beowulf and Odysseus. The exploits of Beowulf, whose name means "bee-wolf," a descriptive title for the bear, include a descent into the underworld and a battle with a dragon, which run parallel to the basic pattern of the bear son stories. It is also possible that the Greek hero Odysseus may have roots in an ancient bear cult. The *Odyssey* refers to the family of Odysseus as the house of Arceisios, which name is a variant of the Greek adjective for "bearish" or "ursine." A very ancient Greek myth relates that Arceisios (the grandfather of Odysseus) was the child of a union between a man and a she-bear. In the tales of Odysseus, we find again the descent into the underworld and a battle with a monster (the giant Polyphemus in his cave).

The second theme, that of a mortal woman suckling a bear cub, appears in some reports about the bear sacrifice among the Ainu. "When a very young black bearcub is caught in the mountains, it is brought in triumph to the village, where it is suckled by one of the women, plays about in the lodge with her children, and is treated with great affection. As soon as it becomes big enough to hurt and scratch when it hugs, however, it is put into a strong wooden cage and kept there for about two years, fed on fish and millet porridge, until one fine September day, when the time is judged to have come to release it from its body and speed it happily back to its mountain home" (Campbell, 335f.). The conviction that governs this adoption and nurturing of the bear cub rests on the belief that the bear is a god who takes on this form, that is, that of an animal, because the gods really enjoy life on earth. By treating the bear cub with love, the Ainu seek to develop a more intimate relationship with the gods. The sacrifice of the bear is called "to send away," and is a farewell party for the return of the god to his home. The last words to the bear express the meaning of the ritual: "O Little Cub, we give you these prayer-sticks, dumplings, and dried fish; take them to your parents. Go straight to your parents without hanging about on your way, or some devils will snatch away the souvenirs. And when you arrive, say to your parents, 'I have been nourished for a long time by an Ainu father and mother and have been kept from all trouble and harm. Since I am not grown up, I have returned. And I have brought these prayer-sticks, cakes, and dried fish. Please rejoice!' If you say this to them, Little Cub, they will be very happy" (Campbell, 337).

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First bath and first steps of Śākyamuni
Artist unknown   Painting: ink, colors, and gold on silk
Area shown, approximately 13.4 × 7.5 in. (34 × 19 cm)   Circa eighth or ninth century CE
Site: Tun-huang cave temple, Kan-su Province, China   Location: British Museum, London

First bath and first steps of Śākyamuni

China: T'ang Period

The newborn infant Buddha is bathed in a golden bowl with water released from a thundercloud by nine dragons. Next he takes seven steps and proclaims his identity to the world. Wherever his foot touches the earth, a lotus springs up.

At the top of this silk banner, five women surround the infant, who is being bathed in an elaborate golden bowl. The water falls in two streams from a thundercloud inhabited by nine Chinese-style dragons (only their heads are visible). Below, in another scene, the child is taking his first seven steps, and his feet are surrounded by white lotus blossoms. The infant raises one arm heavenward while stretching the other one down toward the earth. Five women and one man witness this sacred moment. The cartouches on either side of the scroll are empty of inscription.

Cultural context

Together with his birth, the first bath and the first seven steps of the Buddha make up a birth cycle that is frequently celebrated in art. This cycle emphasizes the miraculous aspect of the Buddha's entry into the world. Conceived while his mother dreamed of a white elephant entering her womb, he was brought forth from her side as she clutched a tree. The infant was then bathed by heavenly dragons, who drew together supernatural waters in a dark cloud. He was able to walk and to talk immediately, and his first acts were highly symbolic: "As soon as he is born, the *bodhisattva* [future Buddha] places his feet flat on the ground and, turning toward the North, takes seven strides, sheltering under a white parasol. He looks at the regions all around and says with his voice like that of a bull: 'I am at the top of the world, I am the best in the world; this is my last birth; for me, there will never again be another existence'" (*Majjhima Nikāya* 3).

This is the language of ascension. In ancient India, the number seven was associated with the seven so-called planets, that is, the five visible planets and the sun and the moon. At the same time, in Buddhist cosmology the North Pole is the summit of the cosmos, beyond which lies the supernal land of the Buddha. Thus, the child crosses the boundaries of the universe—ascends beyond the planetary spheres and moves to the highest point in the world—as a sign that he has transcended all that is. In so doing, he abolishes space. He becomes the "highest."

A Buddhist speculation, the myth of ascension is based on ancient Indian traditions, the goal of which was to transcend the life-and-death process inherent in the cosmic mode of being and attain immortality ("heaven"). The language of ascension is found already in reference to the ritual sacrifice: "The sacrifice, in its entirety, that is the ship that sails to heaven" (*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 4.2.5.10). The celebrant mounted the steps to the altar and, arriving at the top, declared—arms outstretched—that he had attained heaven and become immortal. Later, in the practice of Yoga, the symbolism of the seven steps, or stages, is incorporated into the internal symbolism of the subtle body. The goal, however, remains the same: moving beyond the creation into the freedom of absolute consciousness.

Furthermore, in Indian cosmogonies the creation starts at the summit. It is a gradual process beginning at the North Pole. Hence, the Pole is also the oldest place in the cosmos. When the Buddha attains this place, he becomes contemporary with the very beginning of the world. In this way, he reaches a place prior to time; time is abolished. He becomes the "oldest."

Having abolished both time and space, the Buddha reveals a reality that transcends the cycle of life and death, the existence that is accompanied inevitably by the experience of suffering. Suffering, it is important to remember, does not refer only to the presence of pain but also to the inevitable loss of every pleasure, that is, to the transient flow of phenomenal existence.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The various components of this image are all symbols with numerous meanings, depending on the context. This is especially true of such universal and potent symbols as the child, the dragon, the bath, and the lotus. But given the fact that this is a Chinese scroll coming out of the Buddhist tradition, a certain specificity of the imagery is discernible. For instance, the dragon—perhaps the most popular symbol of ancient and modern China—is here closely connected in function with the *nāga*s of ancient India. It is a translation of the Indian motif into Chinese, so to speak. The *nāga*s have a pre-Aryan origin as fertility gods in the Indian subcontinent. Because of their association with agriculture, they were assimilated into Buddhism as low-level deities. Here they represent the powers of nature that provide the water for the bath of the infant Buddha.

In ancient China, infants were bathed in wooden tubs for the most part. Here the tub is made out of gold, a sign that this is no ordinary child. The golden tub suggests an epiphany, or the appearance of a divine being. Furthermore, in Chinese tradition the number nine often stood for the ninefold universe; hence, the nine dragons represent all the natural forces of the cosmos. The bath of the infant seems to represent the belief that the epiphany of the divine is supported and nurtured by the forces of cosmos, that is, by nature as a whole.

In the lower scene, the meaning of the epiphany is made clear. This child represents the greatest possible value: the power that breaks through the endless cycles of suffering to another dimension, or form of existence. Although sponsored by natural forces, this child signifies a goal that transcends nature. The lotus contributes also to the language of transcendence: rooted in the mud, the flower of the lotus breaks through the surface of waters to bask in the light of the sun, just as the Buddha transcends the limitations of contingent being through enlightenment.

The child is a universal symbol with many connotations. Here the invincibility of the divine child is at the forefront: the infant Buddha reveals his full stature as a divine being who will inaugurate a new age, one in which suffering will be overcome. C. G. Jung discusses this aspect of the child archetype:

> The "child" is born out of the womb of the unconscious, begotten out of the depths of human nature, or rather out of Living Nature herself. It is a personification of vital forces quite outside the limited range of our conscious mind; of ways and possibilities of which our one-sided conscious mind knows nothing; a wholeness which embraces the very depths of Nature. It represents the strongest, the most ineluctable urge in every being, namely the urge to realize itself. . . . The urge and compulsion to self-realization is a law of nature and thus of invincible power, even though its effect, at the start, is insignificant and improbable. (Jung, para. 289)

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GLOSSARY

BODHISATTVA A future Buddha. One whose being or essence (*sattva*) is "awakened" (*bodhi*), having perceived reality directly and completely already in this life. In Mahāyāna, the *bodhisattva* represents the Buddhist ideal of compassion. Having attained enlightenment, the *bodhisattva* renounces *nirvāṇa* in order to help bring humanity and all other sentient beings to this state.

ŚĀKYAMUNI (Skt., "sage of the Śākya clan") Title for Siddhārtha Gautama, the historical Buddha, who lived in India from 563 to 483 BCE. Born a prince, he renounced both family and social position, attained enlightenment, and preached the Way (Dharma) to a community of monks and lay followers.

KŪKAI (KŌBŌ DAISHI AS A BOY)
Artist unknown   Hanging scroll: ink and gold on silk
Height (entire scroll): 34 in. (86.7 cm); width: 19 in. (48.9 cm)   Fourteenth century CE
Site: Japan   Location: Art Institute of Chicago

Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi as a Boy)

Japan: Muromachi Period

Kūkai (known posthumously as Kōbō Daishi), founder of the Shingon school of Buddhism, is depicted in a devotional posture and seated upon a lotus floating in a luminous circle. This image symbolizes the beginning of spiritual awareness in the divine boy. It is said that as a child of five, he had visionary dreams during which he often conversed with the Buddhas of many eras.

In this work the young Kūkai is shown in three-quarter view, kneeling on a large lotus with his hands joined in prayer. He is dressed in court garb comprising a lavender split skirt and a pink robe with a gaily colored pattern of orange blossoms. His hair, parted in the middle and falling over his shoulders in the manner of a court page, his full cheeks, and small pouting lips give him a somewhat effeminate appearance. A womblike halo encloses his figure, effectively excluding all reference to the world beyond and imparting to the image a timeless, supernatural quality.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Kūkai (774–835) was an influential cultural figure in ninth-century Japan and, in the eyes of his followers, an immortal god. Joseph M. Kitagawa has outlined his history as follows: born into a declining aristocratic family on the island of Shikoku, young Kūkai was tutored in Chinese. At the age of eighteen he enrolled in the national college to study the Confucian canon. Following a conversion to Buddhism, however, he terminated his career as a member of the literati. Living in a mountain retreat, he undertook a discipline of austerities in order to acquire spiritual power. By chance he came upon a text of Esoteric Buddhism. Wanting to learn more, Kūkai accompanied a Japanese envoy to China. There he managed to become initiated into the teachings of Esoteric Buddhism and ultimately was named the eighth patriarch of the tradition. Returning to Japan in 806, Kūkai brought with him a valuable collection of Indian and Chinese scriptures, commentaries, and ritual objects. Eventually he was recognized by the emperor and spent the rest of his life synthesizing and promoting his interpretation of Buddhism. "As might be expected, Kūkai's death did not diminish his aura; rather, it deified him in the minds of his followers, who believe that he is still alive on Mount Koya in an eternal trance of concentration, a savior to suffering humanity" (Kitagawa, 396).

Members of Esoteric Buddhism distinguish themselves from their counterparts in exoteric forms of Buddhism by proclaiming the existence of two distinct traditions: on the one hand, the exoteric teachings of Śākyamuni Buddha (exoteric); on the other, the esoteric teachings that are revealed by the cosmic Buddha, Mahāvairocana (Jpn., Dainichi). This distinction goes back to the Tantric Buddhism that in China was called *Chen-yen,* a term rendered by Kūkai as *Shingon.* Both terms are translations of the Sanskrit term *mantra,* which refers to an incantational syllable that embodies the truth of ultimate reality (similar teachings are found already in ancient Vedic writings).

Shingon Buddhism features a unique cosmology and ontology that Kūkai developed to express his vision of enlightenment. Central to his teaching is the belief that the cosmic Buddha, Mahāvairocana, exists inherently in all beings and, therefore, that enlightenment need not require ages of rebirth but rather may be experienced here and now. This insight led him to the additional teaching that the experience of enlightenment is simultaneously the revelation of one's Buddha nature.

With his posthumous recognition as Kōbō Daishi and his subsequent deification came the development of traditions about Kūkai's inclinations as a child destined to be a savior. To these belong the beautiful image shown here. According to one version, at the age of five or six Kūkai dreamed of himself seated on an eight-petaled lotus conversing with the Buddhas. Paintings such as this one came into existence through the isolation of one event from longer scrolls on which his life story was narrated in word and image. In transition from the earlier, narrative treatment, descriptive detail was eliminated in favor of iconic clarity. The isolation of this episode belonging to Kūkai's childhood follows a well-established hagiographical pattern in Japan that dramatizes the birth, coming of age, and death of a holy man as prefigurements of his greatness. Paintings of Kūkai, symbolizing the beginning of spiritual awareness, have precedents in statues depicting the Śākyamuni Buddha just after birth and the infant prince Shōtoku Taishi (573–621), a Buddhist saint and culture hero.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

C. G. Jung has written a great deal about the archetypal image of the child. In "On Psychic Energy," he uses the child motif as his example in explaining the nature of archetypal images per se. Like all symbols, that of the child is multivalent, and we err if we reduce the image to a single verbal formula. However, two of Jung's insights seem especially pertinent to this painting of Kūkai.

"Childhood is important not only because various warpings of instinct have their origin there, but because this is the time when, terrifying or encouraging, those far-seeing dreams and images appear before the soul of the child, shaping his whole destiny, as well as those retrospective intuitions which reach back far beyond the range of childhood experience into the life of our ancestors. Thus in the child-psyche the natural condition is already opposed by a 'spiritual' one" ("On Psychic Energy," par. 98). This statement echoes the meaning expressed in the story of Kūkai, who envisioned already as a young child the presence of the Buddhas in his life and his intimate relationship with them. The story calls to mind the legend of the child Jesus discoursing with the elders in the Temple of Jerusalem. In either case, the future sage is present already in the child as destiny. In Jung's language, the vision of the child often reveals the goal of individuation—that is, the end result of the task of becoming who one really is. The vision may reveal the goal itself or the conditions of the ordeal in which self-realization takes place. In his autobiography, Jung gives much thoughtful attention to his own dreams and visions of childhood.

Interesting, too, is the contrast between the natural condition and the spiritual condition of the child. Very often the child is a symbol of the natural person, and of the instinctual spontaneity or play that fills the life of the healthy child. However, Jung points to the spiritual awareness that belongs to the child as well. Reality reveals itself to the child very often by way of fantasy. The painting of Kūkai emphasizes the "spiritual" rather than the

"natural" child. Seated on a lotus pedestal (a sign that he is divine), Kūkai kneels in an attitude of serene prayer. In appearance he is both innocent and androgynous. As an archetypal symbol, this child seems to express some aspect of the Self, that is, the unconscious center of personality. The image conveys both the wholeness of the child (contained in a circle of light and seemingly undifferentiated in respect to gender) and the freshness of new life to come. "The 'child' paves the way for a future change of personality. In the individuation process, it anticipates the figure that comes from the synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements in the personality. It is therefore a symbol which unites the opposites; a mediator, bringer of healing, that is, one who makes whole. Because it has this meaning, the child motif is capable of . . . numerous transformations . . . : it can be expressed by roundness, the circle or sphere, or else by the quaternity as another form of wholeness. I have called this wholeness that transcends consciousness the 'self'" ("The Psychology of the Child Archetype," par. 278).

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GLOSSARY

MAHĀVAIROCANA (Skt., "the great illuminator") the Great Sun Buddha, transcendent and cosmocratic apotheosis of the historical Buddha, Śākyamuni. Later designation of Vairocana. In contrast to the intuitive realization of an ultimate perspective (Vairocana), Mahāvairocana is realized concretely in the ritual practice of Esoteric Buddhism.

MANTRA (Skt., "vehicle of thought") A sacred sound that embodies divine power. The theory and practice of *mantras* goes back to the Hindu Vedas. The use of *mantras* was elaborated and intensified in Hindu and Buddhist forms of Tantrism.

ŚĀKYAMUNI (Skt., "sage of the Śakya clan") Title for Siddhārtha Gautama, the historical Buddha, who lived in India from 563 to 483 BCE. Born a prince, he renounced both family and social position, attained enlightenment, and preached the Way (Dharma) to a community of monks and lay followers.

SHŌTOKU TAISHI Son of Emperor Yomei and regent of Japan, Shōtoku Taishi lived from 573 to 621 CE. Shōtoku transformed the culture of Japan with religious and political innovations, many imported from China. Early chronicles of government and the first Japanese history book are attributed to him. After his death, he was venerated as a Buddhist saint.

THE BUDDHA-TO-BE AS A TRUTHFUL YOUTH

Artist unknown Relief: unglazed terra-cotta tile 15 × 15 in. (38 × 38 cm); 3.25 in. thick (8 cm)
1060–1070 CE Site/Location: plaque no. 261, West Petleik Temple, Pagan, Burma

The Buddha-to-Be as a Truthful Youth

Burma: eleventh century

Only the Buddha-to-Be, the youngest of three youths who have come to the lotus pond for flowers, receives a lotus flower from the disfigured, noseless caretaker. His two companions have tried to gain the caretaker's goodwill through insincere flattery, by assuring the man that his nose will grow once more. The future Buddha, however, remains truthful in his speech and thus exhibits one of the so-called perfections realized by a bodhisattva *on the path to enlightenment.*

Three youths (the rightmost figure is damaged, with only its legs intact) approach from the right, asking for flowers from a man standing in the lotus pond (on the left). The pond rises like a curtain behind the man (suggested by waves, flowers, and fish). The man holds a lotus in either hand and is in the act of handing them to the truthful boy. The man's missing nose is a crucial element in the story that this scene illustrates. The story itself is identified at the top by its number and title in old Mon script.

Cultural Context

A doctrine that became one of the cornerstones of Mahāyāna Buddhism is that of the perfections. According to this teaching, the *bodhisattva* realizes in his life each of the six perfections: goodness, patience, generosity, strength, focus, and wisdom. All of these virtues are frequently commended throughout Buddhist literature, but they become perfections only when they are developed to the utmost extreme. The extracanonical stories called Jātaka tales recount in parable form how Gautama (the historical Buddha) accomplished each of the perfections during a former life, when he was still a Buddha-to-Be.

The name of the Jātaka illustrated on this tile is *Paduma.* It is a parable illustrating the perfection of goodness, specifically, honesty—one of the virtues comprising the Eightfold Path (Cowell, 223f.):

> Once upon a time, there lived a man who had lost his nose, and it was his job to watch over a pond of lotus flowers. One day it happened that a holiday was proclaimed in that town, and the three sons of a rich man sought to bedeck themselves with garlands of flowers and to spend the day in merrymaking. "We'll soften up the old lacknose fellow, and then we'll beg some flowers off of him." So they went to the pond at flower-picking time, and waited. When the caretaker arrived, the oldest addressed him in this way:
>
> Cut, and cut, and cut again,
> Hair and whiskers grow amain:
> And your nose will grow like these.
> Give me just one lotus, please!
>
> But the caretaker of the lotus pond grew angry and refused to give him any flowers. So the second son tried his luck:

In the autumn seeds are sown
Which ere long are fully grown:
May your nose sprout up like these.
Give me just one lotus, please!

Once more, the man grew angry and refused to budge. Finally, the youngest son spoke up:

Babbling fools! to think that they
Can get a lotus in this way.
Say they 'yes,' or say they 'no,'
Noses cut no more will grow.
See, I ask you honestly:
Give a lotus, sir, to me!

Hearing the lad speak in this way, the caretaker of the lotus pond praised him for his truthfulness and offered him an armful of flowers.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

This Indian story resembles many of the fairy tales known in the West. It relates how the treasure is attained by the young "fool" who speaks the truth, rather than by his older, more sophisticated brothers. The treasure is represented in this tale by the lotus flower. In Indian tradition, the lotus is a central symbol conveying values such as consciousness, beauty, life, and even divinity. In Buddhism, the lotus is often a symbol of the purity associated with enlightenment—that is, the unique quality of a consciousness that transcends its roots in cosmic existence. The lotus grows in the mud but shows nothing of its origins. Nor are its petals and leaves affected by the water on which it rests; the water beads off and falls away. In a well-known passage from the Pali texts *Saṃyutta nikāya* (vol. 3, p. 140) and *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (vol. 2, pp. 38f.), the Buddha is likened to a lotus: "Likewise, monks, the blue lotus, the pink lotus, or the white lotus, born in the water and grown in the water, rises beyond the water and remains unsoiled by the water. Thus, monks, the Tathāgata [another name for the Buddha], born in the world, grown up in the world, after having conquered the world, remains unsoiled by the world."

In the context of this symbolism, the treasure sought by the young boys is nothing less than enlightenment itself. The man without a nose acts as a guardian of the treasure. Often the treasure is protected by a dragon that must be slain, or perhaps it is buried underground and must be found. Here, however, the obstacle to the treasure cannot be overcome by either brawn or brain. Instead, the quality that is required is simple honesty.

Honesty has two faces, however. There is the honesty of the hypocrite and the honesty of the simpleton. For the hypocrite, telling the truth is one of the ways that the person builds up an impregnable persona. This persona then serves the needs of the ego. It acts as a mask that separates the hypocrite from others, those who are "inferior" in virtue. However, the posture of honesty that is practiced for egotistical gain—for prestige, approval, self-satisfaction—cuts one off from ultimate reality as well. This "virtue" then becomes its opposite, another link in the chain that binds the person to the world of illusion and suffering. In contrast, the honesty of the simpleton reveals an inner disposition, consisting of a humble openness to reality. Here, the ego acts as a mediator, reflecting reality in its mirror

of consciousness. Honesty of this kind allows for the unknown to break through and make itself felt. The unknown might be something from the unconscious, or empathy with another person, or even a new capacity for experience.

If this tale were regarded as a psychological parable revealing a dynamic of personality structure, the truthful youth would represent the honesty that comes from acceptance of the inferior function, which appears as a young "fool" in contrast to the sophistication of the superior and auxiliary functions (as described by C. G. Jung). The latter functions, however, can be easily corrupted if they are not grounded in the unity of the psyche. Although appearing at first unadapted (that is, "foolish"), the truthful youth becomes the bearer of the new image of the Self.

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GLOSSARY

BODHISATTVA A future Buddha. One whose being or essence (*sattva*) is "awakened" (*bodhi*), having perceived reality directly and completely already in this life. In Mahāyāna, the *bodhisattva* represents the Buddhist ideal of compassion. Having attained enlightenment, the *bodhisattva* renounces *nirvāṇa* in order to help bring humanity and all other sentient beings to this state.

EIGHTFOLD PATH In Buddhism, the path leading to cessation of suffering and comprising eight virtues: right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. The Buddha called this the Middle Way, distinguishing it from the extremes of asceticism and sensual indulgence.

ENLIGHTENMENT (BUDDHIST) The goal of every Buddhist is to attain enlightenment, that is, to break through the limitations of ordinary consciousness in order to experience reality directly and completely. Siddhārtha Gautama was called the Buddha, the "enlightened" or "awakened" one. The term *Buddha* derives from the Sanskrit *bodhi* ("awakening").

MAHĀYĀNA (Skt., "great vehicle") A major division of Buddhist thought, Mahāyāna encompasses a wide variety of sects and practices. It is characterized by a belief in the *bodhisattvas* and their compassionate assistance as a means to enlightenment.

SNAKE GODDESS AND CHILD

Artist unknown   Sculpture: terra-cotta, with bitumen   Height: 5.5 in (14 cm)

Ubaid 4 Period (first half of the fourth millennium BCE)   Site: pit F (PFG/AA bis, U.15506), Ur, Iraq

Location: no. 8564, Iraq Museum, Baghdad

Snake goddess and child

Near East: Mesopotamia, Prehistoric Period

Figures of nude, nursing females with reptilian (often serpentine) faces, their lower legs ceremonially broken off to prevent their escape, are commonly found in the graves of both sexes from the Ubaid period. They seem to represent a chthonic goddess linked with the life-giving, life-sustaining essence of the earth as well as with the dark, mysterious underworld, land of the dead and source of all life.

This figure represents a slender female in standing position. Her head is reptilian. She has long, slanting slit eyes, a pointed snout with a nostril on either side, and a small, horizontally slit mouth. She wears a conical bitumen headdress. Her shoulders are very broad (pellets have been applied to them, front and back), while her hips and waist are narrow. The pubic area is represented by a large incised triangle. Her legs have been broken off below the knees. She suckles an infant, holding it in the crook of her left arm. The infant also has reptilian features.

Cultural context

Female figurines of this type were kept in houses and placed in graves as images of a chthonic mother goddess who gave and sustained life on earth and who might be expected to play a role beneficial to the deceased in the underworld. In the symbolic vocabulary of ancient Mesopotamia, the reptile—most often a snake—was the most common chthonic image: statuettes of the type shown here combine the naked female form of the Great Mother, who brings forth and nurtures all life, with the form of the serpent, a symbol of rebirth. Here the maternal aspect of the figure is underscored by the presence of the nursing infant. This female's tall, conical headdress is probably an emblem of her divinity, whereas the pellets on her shoulders resemble both scales and ritual tattoo markings that would be in keeping with her serpentine and otherworldly nature.

The presence of figurines of this type in both the houses and the graves of the Ubaid period attests to a belief in some form of existence after death, and, what is more, an existence during which the deceased would continue to rely on the powers that sustain life on earth. The fact that a number of such figurines were discovered at Ur suggests that they represent a goddess whose characteristics were well defined, even during this early period.

Both the serpentine and maternal aspects of this figure reflect widespread beliefs in the ancient Near East. The serpent as a chthonic image was especially common in Mesopotamia and Iran. During early periods, chthonic deities tended to assume serpentine and quasi-serpentine forms, while later representations are more commonly (but by no means exclusively) fully anthropomorphic, with serpents or serpentine monsters as adjuncts or divine emblems. As maternal symbols, statuettes such as this one have close links with early Neolithic fertility figurines but display a more attenuated female form.

Archetypal commentary

Numerous aspects of the image suggest the experience of rebirth and the nurturing of new life. The most obvious meaning carried by the image is the nurturing of new life, for this

snake goddess cradles an infant in her left arm and suckles it. It is commonly known that the ideal place to hold an infant human being is on the left side next to the heart. The rhythm of the heartbeat calms the child by simulating the womb-experience, during which it lived in close proximity to the heart. The milk of the mother is a symbol of the ideal food; if the mother is divine, her food, too, is divine and will bring about the immortality of the child.

The serpentine features of this goddess suggest a lunar symbolism. Like the moon, the snake is believed to embody the power of an immortality based on metamorphosis: it appears and disappears; it has as many coils as the moon has days (a legend preserved in Greek tradition); and it sloughs its skin (that is to say, it is periodically reborn, just as the moon is). As an epiphany of the moon, the snake can also bestow fecundity. In many cultures, it is believed that snakes produce children. For example, among the Togos in Africa a myth tells that a giant snake dwells in a pool near the town of Klewe and, receiving children from the hands of the supreme god Namu, brings them into the town before their birth.

Many goddesses have snake forms, especially goddesses associated with the underworld in any capacity who share as much in the sacred nature of the moon as in that of the earth. Because these goddesses are also funeral goddesses (the dead disappear into the ground or into the moon to be reborn and reappear under new forms), the snake becomes very specially the animal of death and burial, embodying the souls of the dead, the ancestors of the tribe, etc.

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GLOSSARY

EPIPHANY An appearance, or manifestation, of a deity or any other sacred reality. In Christianity, it is the name of a festival (sometimes called Twelfth Night) commemorating the revelation of Jesus as the Christ to the gentiles in the persons of the Magi at Bethlehem.

SACRED KINGSHIP

Those who in ancient times invented writing drew three lines and connected them through the middle, calling the character "king" (王). The three lines are Heaven, earth, and man, and that which passes through the middle joins the principles of all three. Occupying the center of Heaven, earth, and man, passing through and joining all three—if he is not a king, who can do this?

Thus the king is but the executor of Heaven. He regulates its seasons and brings them to completion. He patterns his actions on its commands and causes the people to follow them. When he would begin some enterprise, he observes its numerical laws. He follows its ways in creating his laws, observes its will, and brings all to rest in humanity. The highest humanity rests with Heaven, for Heaven is humaneness itself. It shelters and sustains all creatures. It transforms them and brings them to birth.

—Tung Chung-shu

PTAH EMBRACING SESOSTRIS I

Artist unknown Relief: stone, original once enhanced by color Height of pillar: 11 ft. (3.3 m)
Section of pillar shown: 20.5 × 25.2 in. (52 × 64 cm) Reign of Sesostris I (1971–1928 BCE)
Site: foundation of third pylon, Karnak, Thebes, Egypt Location: Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Ptah embracing Sesostris I

Egypt: Middle Kingdom, Twelfth Dynasty

The essential kinship between the king, who embodies the principles of divine order on earth, and the god who is creator of that order is expressed in their mutual embrace. This scene served to set the stage for the Sed festival, a five-day ceremony by means of which the powers of the king were revitalized.

In the present image, part of a larger composition, Sesostris I and the god Ptah are depicted in a ritual embrace. The king is identified by a cartouche above his head. He wears a striped nemes-headdress with a uraeus, a broad-collar, and an elaborately pleated kilt with a pendant front panel. He stands with his right arm reaching up to the god, his hand touching the back of Ptah's head. Ptah, in his shrine, embraces the king. The god stands on a stepped base symbolic of a measured unit of ground and shaped like the hieroglyph signifying divine order (not visible here). He is presented in his characteristic mummy wrappings, and with his distinctive straight false-beard and skullcap. The inscription above reads, in part, "I have given all life, stability, prosperity, all health, all joy, to the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Kheperkare, given life, stability, prosperity like Re [forever]!" At the base of the pier, two horizontal registers of hieroglyphs refer to the Sed festival of the king.

Cultural context

Ptah was originally the creator god of Memphis, as recounted in the *Memphite Theology.* There it was argued that all things that exist found their origins in the conceptions of Ptah's mind ("heart") and were then objectified by being pronounced by his "tongue." The founding of Memphis and the erection there of a temple dedicated to Ptah were accomplishments of the first ruler of a united Egypt, Memes, and the worship of Ptah continued to be closely connected with the ritual life of the pharoah, especially in the Sed festival.

Although Ptah later became identified also as god of the dead, his earlier role as creator continued to be the strongest aspect of his divinity. As the high god of Memphis, he was declared the master of destiny. It is he who imparts to the phenomenal world the character of an established order, valid for all time. In Abydos, in the temple of Seti I, he is called "he who has created *maat*"—that is, divine order. Herein lies his special identity with the king, who, in the Egyptian view, embodied that divine order. Just as the creator god rules as king in a cosmic sense, his son, the pharoah, is established on earth to rule mankind. Their kinship serves to connect the two realms and to sanctify the land of Egypt over which the pharoah rules.

In principle, the ritual life of Egypt was in the hands of the pharoah, although he delegated his functions to the priests of the different temples. The purpose of these rituals was to reenact the primordial creation (New Year festival) and the establishment of the kingdom (the enthronement). The coronation ceremony was reenacted on the occasion of the Sed festival, which was usually performed thirty years after the enthronement (although some rulers celebrated it repeatedly and at shorter intervals), and it was intended to renew the foundations of kingship.

The festival lasted five days. Often a new temple was founded for the occasion. A central court was adapted to serve as "Court of the Great Ones," that is, to provide a place for the gods who would come from other shrines to participate in the solemnities. The god in whose temple the festival was to take place was the deity on whom the pharoah felt most dependent. Usually it was Amun or Ptah. Much of the festival consisted of ritual visits and gift giving, the pharoah visiting the shrines of the gods, and the gods (their statues) participating in numerous processions. One important ceremony was the "dedication of the field," wherein the pharoah by means of a ritual dance took possession of a field that represented all of Egypt.

The *Memphite Theology* also recounts a version of the myth of Osiris and Horus, two aspects of the king. Osiris is described as the dead king, who lies buried in the earth around Memphis. As the chthonic god, he becomes the source of life for his son, Horus. The intimate connection between the underworld king and his earthly son is expressed in their mutual embrace: "Thus Osiris became earth in the Royal Castle on the north side of this land, which he had reached. His son Horus appeared as king of Upper Egypt and as king of Lower Egypt in the arms of his father Osiris in the presence of the gods that were before him and that were behind him" (cited in Frankfort, 32).

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Ancient kingship was most often a sacred institution whereby the values and the authority of the divine world were made present in the human world as its ruling principle. The king was not always divine. In Sumer, he received the divine powers of aggression and fertility by way of a sacred marriage with Inanna, the goddess of love and war. Sometimes, however, the king is the offspring of a god or goddess, or divine animal. This image presents the relationship between the king and the divine world as one of love and kinship. The god embraces the king as a father embraces his son. The embrace expresses their identity and the god's support of the king. This interpretation is supported by the contemporaneous view of Osiris and Horus, which seems to be the model for this image.

Analytical psychologists C. G. Jung, Erich Neumann, and others have written about the impact of the mother on the child, and perhaps less about the role of the father. Today, the role of the father is being reexamined and reevaluated by many. However, it is important to remember that the father in the family is not identical with the father archetype, which has deeper origins: "the child possesses an inherited system that anticipates the existence of parents and their influence upon him. In other words, behind the father stands the archetype of the father, and in this pre-existent archetype lies the secret of the father's power, just as the power which forces the bird to migrate is not produced by the bird itself but derives from its ancestors" (Jung, par. 739). The relationship between the god Ptah and the king, like that between Osiris and Horus, reveals to us one dimension of the father-son archetype, which can help us understand more fully the feelings and needs that fathers and sons feel in the family.

Central to the father-son relationship is the creation and realization of order—the structures and values that support life, giving each thing its place in an overall schema. Eleanor Bertine has discussed this aspect of the archetype in her book on human relationships:

> This is [the father's] role of lawgiver, authority, the spirit, as it controls impulse and emotion. The manner in which the father carries his function of authority is of the utmost importance for

> the future development of the child. Many people have been seriously warped morally by a father whose rule was based entirely on his own personal wishes and convenience. . . . The result was that all authority became, for them, a thing to be scouted, evaded, or combatted as circumstances might permit, with every ounce of their strength. This is a disastrous blockage of the normal path of development, in which the law of life and of the ways things are is gradually discovered to be back of the authority of the father, whose intermediation ceases to be necessary when the child is old and mature enough to deal directly with the inner law. (Bertine, 28)

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GLOSSARY

AMUN (Egyp., "the hidden one") One of the eight primordial gods of Hermopolis. In the Middle Kingdom (2050–1756 BCE), he was assimilated to numerous other deities including Re, chief god of the earlier Egyptian pantheon. As Amun-Re he was represented as a ram-headed sun god.

HORUS An ancient Egyptian god of the sky and of kingship, who absorbed a whole set of gods with hawk and falcon forms. His close links with the sun god and later with Isis and Osiris give rise to many new associations in which his martial and youthful aspects predominate.

OSIRIS The Egyptian god who suffered a violent death; he is depicted in human form without indication of limbs. His attributes of crook and flail allude to ancient links with kingship and pastoralism. Other features connect Osiris with the cycle of seasons and vegetation. However, he became primarily a ruler of the dead. The most well known of his cult centers was at Abydos.

PYLON (from the Greek *pulōn,* "gateway") A truncated pyramid, or sometimes two of them together, serving as a gateway to an Egyptian temple.

URAEUS Originally a symbol of the predynastic snake goddess Wadjet of Buto, a city in Lower Egypt. Combined with the vulture of the Upper Egyptian goddess Nekhbet, it formed an emblem of the pharoah's power. The uraeus (pl., uraei) is frequently seen on headdresses and crowns.

MĀNDHĀTA, THE CAKRAVARTIN

Artist unknown Relief: greenish-white limestone Height: 4 ft. 3 in. (129.5 cm) Second century BCE
Site: Jaggayyapeta, Andhra Pradesh, India Location: Government Museum, Madras

MĀNDHĀTA, THE CAKRAVARTIN

India: Early Andhra

Māndhāta, the cakravartin *(universal monarch), surrounded by the seven jewels of his meritorious rule, points toward heaven with his right hand and clenches his left—a gesture that calls down a shower of little squares that may represent rain, jewels, or coins, that is, prosperity for his kingdom.*

The large central figure of Māndhāta dominates the relief. His otherwise bare torso is decorated profusely with heavy jewelry, as are his arms and wrists. A diaphanous loincloth is secured at the waist, below which is tied a free-swinging scarf. He wears an elastic headdress, an umbrella opened over him. Māndhāta is surrounded by symbolic beings and objects: these include (beginning above and continuing clockwise) a wheel on a column, a drumlike object on a pedestal, two male figures on individual footrests, an elephant with raised trunk standing on a footrest, an elaborately decked horse on a similar footrest, and, finally, a richly attired female figure on a cushioned footrest. At the uppermost edge of the relief, the sky is rendered as a scalloped canopy with four rows of small, square coins falling from it.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Māndhāta was a legendary king, who, through the powers of his accumulated merit, acquired the seven jewels that are the attributes of a *cakravartin.* Indeed, his treasury and granary were never empty, and he soon accumulated enough merit to gain half of Indra's throne. He even overcame enemies that Indra had failed to master. And so he began to lust after the position of the god. Ultimately, through his lust and his greed, Māndhāta came to lose his powers. Realizing the foolishness of his desires, he repented.

Literally, the word *cakravartin* means "the turner of the wheel (*cakra*)." In classical Hindu texts, the term signifies an ideal king, one "whose chariot wheels turn freely" or "whose travels are unobstructed." He is to rule over the universe with justice and benevolence. "According to South Asian sovereign myths (many of which suggest a solar origin), the *cakravartin*—here, a paradigmatic figure—while deep in meditation sees a peaceful and pleasantly glowing wheel (*cakra*) turning slowly in the sky above him. Knowing this wheel to be a call to unify all peoples, the king leads his armies out in all directions to the farthest horizons, all the way to the universal ring of mountains (*cakravāla*) that lie beyond the oceans and that mark the final edge of the concentric world. Guided by the celestial wheel, and borne upon the atmosphere by flying white elephants and horses, he ends all strife and suffering as he brings all people everywhere under his virtuous rule. Thus, *cakravālacakravartī cakram vartayati:* the universal monarch turns the wheel of righteousness throughout the whole world" (Mahony, 6).

Such an all-encompassing view of the universal monarch informs the present relief, in which the larger-than-life figure of Māndhāta is surrounded by the "seven jewels." These are the celestial wheel; a wish-fulfilling jewel (the drumlike object); his son; his minister; the

elephant; the horse; and, lastly, the queen, who has an essential role in the performance of the sacrifices that are the obligation of the *cakravartin.* By clenching his left hand and touching it with his right, he can produce a shower of jewels and other wealth. It is this latter feat that is shown here. The shower of wealth is indicated by the rows of small, square coins that are descending in orderly fashion from above.

In Hindu belief, the reign of a *cakravartin* augured peace, prosperity, and general well-being. The meritorious power of such a monarch also ensured harmonious coexistence of all creatures in the kingdom. To this day, people in India hold up the example of the mythical Rāma (the hero of the epic *Rāmāyaṇa* and an incarnation of the god Viṣṇu) as the ideal monarch, whose kingdom prospered because of his powers of justice and goodness. In the Vedic period and in later Hindu thought, the *cakravartin* might model himself after Indra, the "king of the gods." Like Indra, he was capable of freeing the life-giving rains so that his kingdom would prosper. He might also produce untold wealth, merely by gesturing.

The idea of the universal monarch was adopted in both Jain and Buddhist traditions. Both Vardhamāna Mahāvira (the most recent of the twenty-four Jain prophets) and Siddhārtha Gautama (the Buddha) were born into powerful families and displayed the characteristics suitable for a *cakravartin.* And each tradition maintains that its founder chose not to enjoy political power and its privileges but sought instead to attain spiritual understanding for the benefit of all. Buddhist legend relates that when Siddhārtha was born, astrologists predicted that he would become either a universal ruler or a universal savior. His father, wishing to prevent the latter event, cloistered his son away from all the suffering in the world and surrounded him with beauty, luxury, and pleasure. Yet, as a young man, the future Buddha left his home and was struck deeply by what he saw: disease, old age, and death. And so he began his search for enlightenment, that is, the cessation of all suffering.

This low-relief sculpture belongs to an extensive series of narrative and symbolic scenes used in the decoration of a stupa. Such descriptions served to educate unlettered members of the community. The present illustration of the universal monarch Māndhāta would have been used as a supplement to the Jātaka tales (stores of the previous lives of the Buddha) and narratives of the Buddha's life that comprise a large proportion of stupa illustration. In any event, the subject of Māndhāta would have reminded the viewer of what Siddhārtha might have become had he not abandoned his father's palace.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Since the appearance of Indo-Europeans in India (giving rise eventually to the Vedic period), India has known a tripartite division of its social and religious structures: the realm of the priests; that of the warriors; and the largest, the domain of farmers and artisans. Whereas the priests were preoccupied with the cosmic alignment of the community through the practice of sacrifice and the memorization of sacred ritual, it was from among the warriors that the kings were chosen. We see in the development of an ideal king who assumes responsibility for universal peace an enlargement of the role of the monarch. Resembling the divine kings of the ancient Near East, the *cakravartin* becomes the central mediator between the human and the divine. The priestly function becomes assimilated in his person. However, a reaction sets in immediately, as illustrated in the myths that surround the figures of Mahāvira and the Buddha. Both refuse to rule as king and choose instead the path of world savior, one more in

line with the priestly role (although both cases represent a radical reinterpretation of that function).

The seven jewels of Māndhāta are traditional Hindu symbols of power: the horse was for the Aryan invaders of ancient India the very source of their capacity to conquer; the elephant is believed to be a rain cloud that has metamorphized on earth as an animal, representing the boon of rain and fertile lands; the wheel is a symbol of the cyclical nature of time and the universe; and the jewel is a talisman, or object charged with magical power to enhance the good fortune of its owner. The three individuals that accompany the king provide him with wisdom (the minister), groundedness in the present (through the femininity of his wife), and extension into the future (through his son). Here we have what in analytical psychology is called a quaternity, or symbol of wholeness. In addition, the number seven (as in the seven jewels of the *cakravartin*) may refer to the cosmos over which he rules, for seven is often thought to symbolize the heavenly spheres, ruled over by the so-called planets—that is, the five visible planets plus the sun and the moon.

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GLOSSARY

INDRA In the Vedas, the earliest Hindu writings, Indra is the storm god, protector of the cosmos and all its inhabitants.

JAINISM Ascetic tradition founded by Vardhamāna, who assumed the title of Great Hero (Mahāvira) when he achieved liberation from rebirth through the practice of severe austerities. He and his successors—the Jinas, or conquerors—developed their own unique doctrine of rebirth, *karman,* and release.

JĀTAKA (Skt., "birth story") Story of one of the 550 previous lives of the Buddha. Similar to a parable, a Jātaka tale will serve to illustrate in an entertaining way an example of ethical behavior.

STUPA (Skt., "reliquary mound") A solid reliquary, varying in size from a miniature to a monumental architectural form. In Buddhist Southeast Asia, the stupa is usually a mound or dome-shaped structure containing relics of an enlightened being, great teacher, or other honored individual.

VIṢṆU A principal Hindu god. As one of the trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, he is the preserver, but to his devotees he is the supreme god of the universe.

THUTMOSE III SUCKLED BY THE SYCAMORE GODDESS

Artist unknown   Wall painting: pigment on plaster

Measurement unavailable   Reign of Thutmose III (1504–1450 BCE)

Site/Location: burial-chamber pillar, KV 34, tomb of Thutmose III, West Bank necropolis, Thebes, Egypt

Thutmose III suckled by the sycamore goddess

Egypt: New Kingdom, Eighteenth Dynasty

In Egyptian art, a goddess often assumed the form of a tree. In this image, the goddess is Isis, and she appears as a sycamore tree suckling the dead king Thutmose III.

On the left is the deceased king, Thutmose III. The figure is identified by a cartouche. The king, drawn here as a stick figure, wears a short kilt and a bag-wig on which is seen the uraeus, or protective serpent. Next to him is the following inscription: "Menkheperre [another name for Thutmose III] is suckled by his mother Isis." The tree is rendered as rough leaves daubed on sticklike limbs. A human arm and breast emerge from within the tree.

Cultural context

This is a vignette from the tomb decoration of Thutmose III. The decorations in royal tombs of this period, depicting scenes from the *Book of Going Forth by Day,* were intended to instruct the dead on their journey in the afterlife. This particular image suggests that the life-giving power of the goddess is not limited to those who dwell on earth but extends also to the dead.

The tree plays a significant role in the mythology of ancient Egypt. The ancient Egyptians conceived the sky as a giant tree overarching the earth. The stars were like fruits or leaves hanging from the tree, and the gods perched on its limbs. This tree separated the sky from the ocean, the upper from the lower worlds. Osiris, lord of the dead, was identified with it. The fruit of the celestial tree had the power to keep both the gods and the souls of the dead in a state of eternal youth and wisdom. In numerous Egyptian images, it is depicted with arms that bear gifts or pour out the water of life from an urn. Sometimes the arms are replaced with the person of an actual goddess, sitting in the celestial tree and dispensing food to the dead.

A related theme is that of the Egyptian tree goddess. For example, not far from the Great Pyramid at Gizeh, the mother goddess Hathor was worshiped at a shrine in the form of an enormous sycamore tree. In fact, all over Africa sap-filled trees represented divine motherhood. They were venerated by women, as well as sought out by the spirits of the dead who want to return to life. In this image, the goddess appears as partly human but mostly tree. However, the central focus lies on the act of suckling. The feeding of the dead has been transformed from a rather impersonal act to one of human intimacy.

The king who is being suckled is one of the greatest kings of ancient Egypt, Thutmose III. This pharaoh reigned altogether fifty-four years, although during the first twenty-two years his stepmother, Hatshepsut, dominated as regent. Nevertheless, when he did assume the throne in 1504 BCE, he proved to be a wise leader, bringing Egypt to the zenith of its power. Under Thutmose III, Egypt's rule extended beyond the Euphrates to the east and to the land of the Hittites in the north. In addition, he supported the building and renovation of numerous sacred sites throughout the land. His mother, a minor wife of Thutmose II,

carried the name of Isis. This may or may not have been a factor in the representation of the king's kinship with the goddess Isis.

Isis got her name from the Greek translation of the Coptic *Esi.* The Egyptian hieroglyph for this goddess was simply the throne. In a sense, it is the throne that makes the king; the king receives his authority by taking his place on the throne. In this way, Isis is seen to be the mother of the king, and she appears as such throughout the iconography of Egypt. For example, in Abydos there is a relief in the temple that depicts King Seti I seated on the lap of Isis, who in turns sits on the typical Egyptian throne. On the mythological level, the same meaning is expressed in the care that Isis shows for her son Horus, the divine prince. What Isis is willing to do for her son, she is likewise willing to do for the king, who bears the Horus name.

While all royal tombs of this dynasty have decorations based on various funerary texts, the decoration of these walls is conceived as an enormous papyrus roll illustrating what we know as the *Book of Going Forth by Day.* Accordingly, the stick figures are drawn like those in papyrus illustrations.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The connection between the goddess and the cosmic tree is a common pattern in the history of religions. In the pre-Aryan civilization of the Indus valley, this association was represented by a nude goddess standing next to a sacred tree or in the image of a plant emerging from the goddess's genital organs. In ancient Mesopotamian myth, Gilgamesh, the hero, comes upon a miraculous tree in a garden, and standing next to it is the goddess Siduri (literally, "the maiden"). She is described as *sabitu,* that is, "the woman with wine." A coin from Myra (Lycia) depicts the theophany of a goddess in the midst of a sacred tree. The examples are endless.

Mircea Eliade suggests that these symbols express a religious intuition uniting the nurturing element of the goddess and the orienting power of the cosmic tree. "They mean that here is a 'center of the world', that here is the source of life, youth and immortality. The trees signify the universe in endless regeneration; but at the heart of the universe, there is always a tree—the tree of eternal life or of knowledge. The Great Goddess personifies the inexhaustible source of creation, the ultimate basis of all reality. She is simply the expression, in myth, of this primeval intuition that sacredness, life and immortality are situated in a 'center'" (Eliade, 286).

The ancient Egyptians place this nurturing tree goddess in the realm of the afterlife, where it feeds the dead king. The Egyptians' view of the afterlife was complex; there are multiple ways in which they conceived of the hereafter, called in Egyptian *Duat,* the zone of twilight, or heaven by night. But central to all of them is a belief in the afterlife as a place of ongoing activity and possibility.

The dead king is perhaps even more powerful than the living king, because in his dead state his divine nature is more complete, for "the king of Egypt was believed to be the god Horus. . . . [The Egyptians from the very beginning of the First Dynasty] believed that the creator of the cosmos had chosen Egypt as his own, that he had brought the divine ordering power (Maat) directly into Egyptian society by manifesting himself as the god Horus in the person of the Pharaoh, and that the presence of a god-king on the throne generation after

generation guaranteed that Egypt would exist securely without falling prey to the world's evils" (Loewe, 69).

The living king as the embodiment of the principle of cosmic order is supported by the dead king, and the dead king is nourished by the tree of life, conceived as a feminine and maternal force. This is to say that the masculine symbol of order is not at odds with the feminine symbol of life. On the contrary, the masculine is nourished by a feminine ground. This intuition takes the form here of a mother-child symbolism, whereas in Hinduism it is expressed by way of sexual symbols, the union of the *liṅga* and the *yoni* revealing how the masculine principle finds its ground and support in the feminine.

On the intrapsychic level, this image reveals the depths of the unconscious as a place in which the opposites are necessarily united. The dead king may well be a symbol of the unconscious Self, which shares with the conscious ego its capacity for differentiation and order. The tree-mother in the realm of the dead suggests that level of the unconscious that is purely and simply creative, similar to the plant that takes the energy of the sun and transforms it into food for itself and for all living beings. This is not an image of sacrifice—one reality being destroyed so that another may live—but of fulfillment. Just as the mother needs the child to take her milk, so too the nurturing power of nature finds fulfillment in the life of the individual that it supports.

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GLOSSARY

HATHOR ("house of Horus") Probably the most versatile Egyptian goddess. She has marked characteristics of a mother goddess, but as the "eye of Re" she brings ruin to all enemies and, in addition, is worshiped as a goddess of the dead, especially in Thebes. She is usually depicted as a woman with cow's horns and sun disk or as a cow, but also as a lioness, snake, tree nymph, and other creatures.

HORUS An ancient Egyptian god of the sky and of kingship, who absorbed a whole set of gods with hawk and falcon forms. His close links with the sun god and later with Isis and Osiris give rise to many new associations in which his martial and youthful aspects predominate.

SETI I Egyptian pharaoh (r. 1318–1304 BCE). Son of Ramses I and father of Ramses II; coregent with his father (c. 1320–1318). Often considered to be the greatest king of the Nineteenth Dynasty.

URAEUS Originally a symbol of the predynastic snake goddess Wadjet of Buto, a city in Lower Egypt. Combined with the vulture of the Upper Egyptian goddess Nekhbet, it formed an emblem of the pharaoh's power. The uraeus (pl., uraei) is frequently seen on headdresses and crowns.

Beaded crown

Artist unknown   Crown: cloth, beads   Height: 25 in. (63.5 cm)   Twentieth century CE
Site: Ogoga-Ekiti, Nigeria   Location: Paul and Ruth Tishman Collection, Epcot Center, Orlando, Florida

Beaded crown

Nigeria: Yoruba

The beaded crown, or adenla, *is worn only by a Yoruba king, who must be a descendent of the original king and creator of the earth, Oduduwa.*

This colorful beaded crown supports a large chicken resting on two four-legged creatures at its peak. A duck rests on the side of the crown stem. Several embroidered flaps hang from the rim of the crown itself, and three human figures stand at the juncture of cap and hanging flap. Geometric designs circle the cap in layers.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Twelve to fifteen million Yoruba people, who live in southwestern Nigeria, the Republic of Benin, and Togo, have inherited one of the oldest cultural traditions to be found in West Africa. The Yoruba have lived in their present habitat since at least the fifth century BCE, and the urbanization of their culture reaches back to before the ninth century CE, at which time the capital city, Ile-Ife, was already thriving. Sacred kingship was established in Yoruba culture by that time as well.

Yoruba kings validate their right to rule by claiming lineal descent through the creator god, Oduduwa (also known as Odua), and his sixteen sons. It is the prerogative of the king to display his royal position by wearing a beaded crown resplendent with signs of sacred power. Such crowns, suggestive of the origin of mankind and the genesis of kingly authority, richly express the divine connection. The crown traditionally included flaps designed to hide the monarch's face from popular view; it was believed that commoners could not look upon the king directly without coming to harm, because his spiritual ties (particularly with Oduduwa) and range of mystical powers are too strong for simple humans to withstand.

The crown seen here is topped by a large representation of a chicken, which figures prominently in the Yoruba creation myth. According to a version related in Ife, the spirits (or *orișa*) originally lived in the sky; below was only primeval sea. The supreme being, Ọlọrun, gave to his oldest son, Ọbatala (also known as Orișa-nla), a chain, a clump of earth, and a five-toed chicken, and told him to climb down and create the earth. This was a great honor. As he was leaving heaven, however, Ọbatala encountered a group of deities having a party, and he paused to join them. Having consumed too much palm wine, he forgot his mission and promptly fell into a drunken sleep. Meanwhile his brother, Oduduwa, who had overheard Ọlọrun's instructions to Ọbatala, came upon the sleeping god and decided to take matters into his own hands. Stealing the creation materials, he went to the edge of heaven, lowered the chain, and climbed down. Reaching the end, Oduduwa placed the earth on the water and then put the chicken on the earth. The fowl began at once to scratch at the earth, spreading it in all directions over the seas. After testing the firmness of the land, Oduduwa stepped down and claimed the earth as his creation.

When Ọbatala awoke and saw what had happened, he was extremely angry at his brother's usurpation of his rights. He, too, descended to earth, asserting that it was his

possession by right of both seniority and Ọlọrun's direct command. The two brothers began to fight, and all the deities started to take sides and join in the quarrel. When Ọlọrun became aware of the struggle that threatened his realm with disorder, he summoned Ọbatala and Oduduwa in order to mediate the dispute and end the fighting. To placate Ọbatala, Ọlọrun granted him the ability to fashion human bodies and consequently made him the creator of mankind. To Oduduwa, the creator of earth, he gave the right to "own" the world and rule over it. Consequently, Oduduwa became the first king of Ife. Through his sons, who dispersed to found the various Yoruba kingdoms, he is the source of all royal authority.

The myth in all its variants functions as a vital part of local politics. In fact, it is common for the Yoruba to debate whether or not one or another of the kings who bear the traditional beaded crowns are really the direct descendents of Oduduwa and his sons.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

A crown is an object that is placed on the head and so is a symbol of preeminence. The top of the head suggests a meeting of two realities in analogy with the top of the mountain, the sacred point where heaven and earth come together. Indeed, the top of the head is itself called the crown, and we use the same word for the top of a hill.

The custom of placing an object on a person's head as a visible sign of a particular success—of having attained a summit in achievement, so to speak—is very old. The ancient Greeks bestowed wreaths of wild olive on the brows of victorious athletes at the Olympic games, and the Romans presented wreaths to generals celebrating formal triumphs as well as to soldiers for bravery and to artists for excellence.

In some traditions, divinities and kings wear crowns to show their preeminent authority. The ritual initiation of a king is called a coronation, or literally a crowning. Mesopotamian deities and kings are depicted wearing high conical headdresses rising between pairs of horns. The royal headdress of Egypt was a curiously shaped high cap, and the Persian kings wore high caps studded with jewels.

The beaded crown of the Yoruba is unusual because of the symbolism of the figures that decorate it, especially the comparatively large chicken at the very peak. Because of the important role of the chicken in the Yoruba creation myth—as one of the three "tools" of the creator—it is not surprising to see it linked thus to royalty, but it is an uncommon association.

Chickens atop pillars—resembling the one in this image—appear in quite separate traditions, beginning already with a Paleolithic bone carved in the (now partly reconstructed) image of a black cock standing at the end of a perforated staff and found in Le Mas d'Azil, southern France. A fifth-century BCE Greek terra-cotta sculpture depicts two women bearing gifts and separated by a cock perched on a lamp stand. An amphora from the same period depicts Athena in a dress decorated with flowers and myrtle and carrying a raised spear; on either side she is flanked by tall, slender columns with a cock perched on top of each. A very similar cock atop a column appears seven hundred years later in Christian iconography to represent Peter (who during the night denied Jesus three times before the crow of the cock). The Wends of eastern Germany had a custom of setting up an oak pole in the middle of the village on the second of July, around which they danced. The tree was called a cross-tree because it bore a crossbeam; however, more important was the presence

of a cock at the very top. Similarly, a Swedish custom celebrates midsummer by setting up a pole surmounted by a red cock.

The cock is associated with the sun (whose appearance in the morning sky it announces) and also with diligence, alertness, vigilance, and warning. It may be a guardian, alerting the farmer to a change in the weather, or awakening the dead. At the same time, the cock is associated with masculine sexuality. In this context, it is one of the three animals associated by the Buddhists with worldly existence, that is, the snake (envy), the pig (unconsciousness), and the cock (lust).

In the Yoruba myth, the chicken is valued because of its specific connection with the earth (which, through its scratching, it causes to spread across the seas). This animal is not wild, nor is it powerful. It is a domesticated beast whose scratchings in the earth ordinarily have little use except to provide it with food. However, in the mythical image of a chicken spreading the earth and providing thereby the solid ground for a world filled with people, plants, and other animals, we have the revelation of a cosmic force of fundamental value. This chicken represents an instinct, or archetype, that unites solar and chthonic principles. It represents the small, random efforts of the ego to survive and, in surviving, to provide a carrier for consciousness.

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TORAH CROWN

Artist unknown Metalwork: silver, semiprecious stones, glass

Height: 19¼ in. (49 cm); diameter: 8⅝ in. (22 cm) 1765 and 1773 CE

Site: Lemberg (Lvov), Poland Location: No. F2585, The Jewish Museum, New York

Torah crown

Poland: Rococo

The Torah crown expresses the value of God's revealed Law for his people. This Law is a divine gift that serves and guides the people; thus it resembles in both its function and its value a living king.

A close examination of the structure and inscriptions of this Torah crown reveal that it was made in two phases. The lower band was finished in 1765. The decoration of this portion of the crown consists largely of architectural and ornamental elements: arches and pilasters, fruits, rococo scroll and shell forms, and animals. In 1773, the upper portion comprising rampant griffins, the upper circlet, and the domed section was added. The griffins rest on rococo scroll consoles, which obscure to some extent the floral motifs of the lower band. The griffins support a circlet bearing a complete cycle of zodiac signs, each labeled in Hebrew. An eagle at the top poses on a large sphere and bears a smaller sphere in his beak.

Cultural context

The Torah (the five books of Moses), the central document of the Jewish faith, is considered to be the revealed word of God, and as such the ritual object itself is holy. The scroll may not be defaced in any way. Although its adornment is a ritual imperative, one may not adorn the parchment itself or the traditional lettering. All decoration must be external to the actual words. Therefore, it is customary to "dress up" a scroll with woven linens, jeweled breastplates, and, as pictured here, Torah crowns. These last rest on the two wooden handles that are the top of the spools around which the parchment is rolled. The composition of crowns varies considerably, since the depiction of representational images, such as those that decorate this crown, were prohibited at various times and in particular communities. The prohibition was based on interpretations of the Second Commandment, the interdiction of graven images.

In Jewish literature the Torah is often personified, and the dressing of the Torah belongs to this tradition. Common also are legends in which the Torah speaks, pleads on behalf of the people, and stands up as a member of the congregation. These beliefs express the conviction that the Torah is a living and vital presence in the religious community.

In the picture, several apposite decorations can be seen. On top is an eagle, a bird that figures powerfully in Hebrew scripture. For example, in *Exodus* 19:4, God promises to bring the children of Israel home "on eagles' wings." The eagle is reminiscent of God's promise and also of the gift of the Torah itself, which embodies and explicates the covenant between Israel and her God. The griffin, a fabulous beast with the head, wing, and talons of an eagle and the hindquarters of a lion, is known from old as a guardian of treasures.

The zodiac appears in the middle of the crown. Astrological symbols in general, and the zodiac in particular, have been periodically represented in Jewish art. They may be connected with the twelve tribes inscribed on the breastplate of the high priest, which symbolism was often thought to have had astrological reference. The signs of the zodiac appear in two types of medieval manuscripts: in festival prayer books and in service books for

Passover. In the prayer books, the zodiac cycle illustrates prayers for dew and conveys the meaning of an orderly passage of time through the year, during which God ensures the fertility of the soil. Several later printed books with zodiac cycles also include commentaries that interpret the zodiac as a symbol of good luck for the new year.

A crown is often studded with jewels. The Torah itself is frequently compared to a crown, and its lessons to precious stones. Additionally, we find that crowns may be marked by appropriate quotations, wishes for the well-being of certain members of the congregation, and quotes from the Bible and from rabbinic literature: for example, "There are three crowns—that of learning, priesthood, and royalty. But the crown of a good name excels them all" (*Pirque avot* 4.17).

Further, God is often styled as king in both biblical and rabbinic literature, and the Torah is referred to as his royal decree. The Torah embodies all the principles and particulars necessary for a harmonious personal and civic life. However, the Torah is more than a book of rules and regulations. Interpreted on mystical and prophetic levels, it is a source of legend as well as of law, and constitutes part of the threefold canon: the Torah, the Prophets (historical books and books of poetic prophecy), and the Writings (a miscellany of poetry, ethical maxims, short stories, and such), which taken together compose the Jewish Bible. The normative attitude toward the Torah may be summarized in the rabbinic advice "Turn it [i.e., the sacred text] over and over, for everything is in it." Indeed, the dominant preoccupation of Jewish learning has been to explore the Torah and its commentaries from endless angles in an attempt to extract all the wisdom and guidance it can offer.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The crown resembles the wreath and the nimbus in that all three are symbolic headgear conveying the special status of the bearer. Whereas the wreath is more often associated with the hero and the nimbus with the saint, the crown is the emblem of royalty. Actual kingship takes on many forms, from sacred kingship (known from numerous traditional cultures throughout history) to symbolic kingship (where political power rests in the hands of others). As a symbol, however, the king is a human being who by nature provides a living mediator between the land and the gods. He may be the offspring of a deity, or he may receive his power through marriage with a goddess or by way of divine adoption. Whatever the genealogy of the king, his function remains the same: his will becomes a channel for the divine will. Through him flow the justice and vitality of the sacred order into the land over which he rules.

The crown represents this connection to the divine. It suggests a heavenly as opposed to an earthly source of authority, for the crown emphasizes the head of the bearer, increasing the stature of the king. He becomes one who is closer to heaven, one who stands out in a crowd. In Chinese, the character for "heaven" consists of the radical meaning "person" crossed by two lines. The first line, across the middle of the radical, conveys "expanse"; the second line, across the top of the radical, emphasizes the top of the head. The top of the head is often analogized with the heavens, and both convey the transcendence of the divine.

Further, the crown is a circular object, and as such it carries with it the symbolism of the perfection of what has no end, no beginning. It is not only worn by kings and queens but may be placed upon some sacred object as well: a scroll of scripture, a statue of a god, or an icon. The crown may even be an object of ritual veneration, because it represents the enduring

reality of kingship—apart from the actual embodiment of this reality in a particular king. Indeed, it is known from myths and from history that an old king may be killed and replaced when he weakens and no longer fulfills the role of kingship, that is, no longer serves the crown.

On the intrapsychic level, the crown represents the role of the Self, the unconscious center of personality, which serves as a ruling principle in the birth and development of conscious personality. The Self provides a link between the personal and the transpersonal levels of the psyche. Images of the Self vary and include the *maṇḍala,* the savior, and the diamond. However, the crown as a symbol of the Self conveys its integrating and governing role. The crown is made of gold to express the limitless value of this function.

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GLOSSARY

TORAH (Heb., "teaching, law") The written Law, or the five books of Moses; also known as the Pentateuch. Believed to have been handed down to Moses on Mount Sinai, the Torah embodies the revelation central to Jewish life and religion.

THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN
Artist: Fra Angelico (c. 1400–1455 CE)   Wall painting: pigment on plaster
Height: 74.4 in. (189 cm); width: 62.6 in. (159 cm)   1440–1441 CE
Site Location: Cell 9, upper floor, San Marco, Florence

The coronation of the virgin

Italy: Renaissance

Receiving the crown of glory from the hands of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary becomes a model for the Christian church and for the individual Christian as well. The crown symbolizes her participation in the kingdom of God, that is, her contribution to the incarnation of divinity on earth.

At the upper right of the painting, Christ is seated on a white cloud, or bench, wearing robes of white and bearing a red and gold cruciform nimbus (the so-called tri-radiant nimbus). In his hands he holds a golden, cone-shaped crown. To his left, the Virgin Mary, seated likewise, leans slightly forward, tilting her head beneath the crown. Her hands are crossed in front of her heart. Below are six saints. Each one bears a nimbus, and each is portrayed as a distinct individual. All of the the saints hold their hands so that the palms face forward, fingers upward, in a gesture of adoration.

Cultural context

Eastern Orthodox regard for Mary has continued throughout the centuries of the Christian era. In the West, however, focus on the Virgin as an object of special devotion goes back only to the twelfth century. This development has been underscored by modern events. In the apostolic constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* (1950) and in an encyclical letter, *Ad Caeli Reginam* (1954), Pius XII defined the assumption of Mary into heaven—"body and soul"—as a dogma of the Roman Catholic church, giving doctrinal substance to an idea that had occurred frequently throughout the history of Christian teaching. The same pope instituted a feast to be observed annually in honor of Mary's "regalis dignitas" as Queen of Heaven and Earth. Mary's queenship is justified and legitimatized solely by her association with her son Jesus Christ, the encyclical states: in other words, Christ alone, both God and man, is king in the full, proper, and absolute sense of the term. Yet Mary also, in a restricted way and only by analogy, shares in the royal dignity because she is the mother of Christ and because she assists him in the work of redemption.

The fifteenth-century mural shown here depicts a group of Christians venerating Mary as she is crowned in heaven by her son with the crown of glory. The saints of the church hold up their hands in a gesture of adoration. Each figure is distinct; as a group they represent the individuals who make up the church and who will one day join Christ and his mother in the heavenly kingdom. At that time, each Christian will also receive a crown of glory as a sign of sanctification and participation in the kingdom.

In *The Pearl,* a fourteenth-century poem, the author converses with the soul of his child, who died at the age of two and now enjoys the glories of heaven. The child explains how even she, despite her infancy, is the bride of Christ and queen of heaven, so wonderful and infinite is the love of God. The child's father doubts this, asking whether it is not true that Mary alone is queen of heaven. In defense of the child's report, Mary, who is called Queen of Courtesy, replies:

Sir, many who seek here, here are paid
But no usurpers may know this place.
That Empress doth all Heaven embrace
And Earth and Hell in her empery.
No heritage will she ever efface,
For she is Queen of Courtesy.
The Court of the Kingdom of God alive
Holds to this law of its very being:
Each one that may therein arrive
Of all the realm is queen or king.
No one shall ever another deprive,
But each one joys in the other's having.
(ll. 439–450; Ford, 39)

Mary, who has been called Mater Ecclesiae ("mother of the church"), serves as a model for the Christian community as a whole as well as for the individual Christian. By obeying God's will and giving her body as the place for his incarnation, she represents the human capacity to facilitate God's presence on earth. By nourishing Christ in her body, Mary became a temple, or dwelling place for God; so, too, the Christian, by believing in Christ and by giving him a place in the center of his or her life, becomes a temple for the Holy Spirit. The crown of glory is an outward symbol of the goal of the Christian's life. Through serving as a temple for the incarnation of God on earth, the person becomes sanctified and whole.

Not all Christians agree with the dogmatic rulings of the Roman Catholic church. Some Roman Catholic theologians sought a declaration at the Second Vatican Council that would declare Mary to be coredemptrix with Christ. The council, however, refused to make such a statement. Orthodox Christians, on the other hand, have reacted against the dogmatic assertion of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary (1854), insisting that everyone, Mary included, is afflicted with sin in the sense of human infirmity. Protestants, for the most part, have moved away from recognizing in Mary a model for the church and its individual members.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The queen of heaven is an ancient motif found in both Eastern and Western traditions. Matsu, the Chinese Queen of Heaven and Holy Mother, is the goddess of the sea to whom sailors offer prayers and sacrifices for good weather and protection from harm. She is also called Mother of the Measure and is often identified with the Buddhist goddess Marīcī, who is sometimes represented as having eight weapon-bearing arms. Matsu dwells among the stars that form the dipper in the constellation of the Great Bear.

In the West, "queen of heaven" is a title for numerous astral deities. Ancient Semites gave the title to the morning star as goddess of war and to the evening star as goddess of love. The Egyptians referred to Isis as Queen of Heaven, and this title was shared as well by the Greek goddess Hera, the Phoenician goddess Astarte, and the Roman goddess Juno. In the twelfth book of *Revelation,* a woman appears in the heavens. She is robed with the sun, her feet rest on the moon, and her head is adorned with a crown of twelve stars. This unknown figure has been said to represent Israel, and the stars, the twelve tribes. She has also been connected with the Virgin Mary, her assumption into heaven, and her coronation.

The motif of bodily assumption follows in the path of a well-developed tradition of ascension in Hellenistic cultures generally. Usually it is the soul alone that is capable of transcending the planetary spheres. The bodily assumption of Mary, however, recapitulates the resurrection of Christ, which for most Christians was a physical raising up of the body made whole—that is, a sanctified body. Furthermore, the assumption of Mary and her coronation parallels the descent of Christ. Whereas in the son the divine becomes human, in the mother the human is raised up and made divine.

C. G. Jung was very much interested in teachings about the assumption and coronation of Mary. He saw three important themes in this popular tradition, which eventually became official dogma in the Roman Catholic church: the transformation of the Trinity into a Quaternity; the union of masculine and feminine principles within the godhead; and the redemption of matter, which had been experienced as cut off from the divine spirit in the gnostic Christianity of the West (which though "heretical" nevertheless seems to have ruled the day in much of Christian spirituality).

> Symbols are tendencies whose goal is as yet unknown. We may assume that the same fundamental rules obtain in the history of the human mind as in the psychology of the individual. In psychotherapy it often happens that, long before they reach consciousness, certain unconscious tendencies betray their presence by symbols, occurring mostly in dreams but also in waking fantasies and symbolic actions. Often we have the impression that the unconscious is trying to enter consciousness by means of all sorts of allusions and analogies, or that it is making more or less playful attempts to attract attention to itself. One can observe these phenomena very easily in a dream-series. . . . Ideas develop from seeds, and we do not know what ideas will develop from what seeds in the course of history. The assumption of the Virgin, for instance, is vouched for neither in Scripture nor in the tradition of the first five centuries of the Christian Church. For a long time it was officially denied even, but, with the connivance of the whole medieval and modern Church, it gradually developed as a "pious opinion" and gained so much power and influence that it finally succeeded in thrusting aside the necessity for scriptural proof and for a tradition going back to primitive times, and in attaining definition in spite of the fact that the content of the dogma is not even definable. The papal declaration made a reality of what had long been condoned. This irrevocable step beyond the confines of historical Christianity is the strongest proof of the autonomy of archetypal images. (Jung, par. 668)

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THE THRONE OF WISDOM (SEDES SAPIENTIAE)
Artist: Master of the Registrum Gregorii (?)   Relief: ivory   Height: 8⅝ in. (22 cm)   Circa 1000 CE
Site: Trier (?), West Germany   Location: no. 0.1517, Landesmuseum, Mainz, West Germany

The throne of wisdom (Sedes Sapientiae)

Germany: Ottonian

Seated in the lap of his mother, the Virgin Mary, the infant Jesus personifies the wisdom of God as it is preserved in his church.

Seated on a throne in front of a curtained arch, the Virgin Mary holds her child in her lap with her left hand while raising her right hand in salutation. The infant Christ, bearing a cruciform halo, presses his right hand to his chest and rests his left hand on his mother's wrist. Both arch and throne are decorated with architectural motifs.

Cultural context

In the early centuries of Christian tradition, Mary, the mother of Jesus, was barely mentioned, but during the Middle Ages she became an important figure in Christian theology. The components that have gone into the Christian understanding of Mary are both numerous and diverse, including symbolism and mythology from both Christian and non-Christian sources. In the image depicted here, only a few of these aspects are present: Mary as mother; the royalty of Mary and Jesus; and, because the composition has been termed the Throne of Wisdom, or *Sedes Sapientiae,* the place of wisdom in Christian tradition. In a Christmas homily, the Venerable Bede, an eighth-century English monk, says that Christ is "the Wisdom of the Lord who assumed flesh in which He could be seen." Guibert de Nogent, a French writer of the eleventh century, compares Christ to Solomon, who "built a throne when he prepared a seat for Himself in the Virgin." The relief shown here may be the earliest example of the *Sedes Sapientiae* known. The Gregory Master, or master artist of the Registrum Gregorii, is often credited with carving this ivory.

A chronological survey of the representation of mother and child, that is, Mary and the infant Jesus, throughout Christian history would show that the Middle Ages saw a growing "humanization" of this theme. The earlier the art, the more formally "divine" the figures. By the late Middle Ages, we find a human warmth and affection in the interaction between mother and child. Not so here. This suggests an early date for the composition and the corresponding emphasis on the distance that exists between the human and the divine. Such formality blends easily with the royal overtones of the scene. Kingship is one of the oldest and most enduring roles of the Christ. The Greek title *Christos* is, after all, simply a translation of the Hebrew *Mashiaḥ,* or "Messiah," and the Messiah is the future king in the lineage of King David, who will restore the kingdom of Israel and the Temple. In one more recent Christian tradition, not only Jesus but also Mary is enthroned. Her coronation takes place after her bodily assumption into heaven.

Wisdom (Gk., *sophia*) is hypostasized in both Jewish and Christian literature as a feminine figure. Usually she plays an important role in the creation of the world, whether or not the creation is believed to be a good work or, as in the case of the gnostics, is held to embody a mistake. In the Middle Ages, Sophia becomes identified with Mary. In the

symbolism of the Throne of Wisdom, Mary herself becomes the throne of Christ, who through her acquires the role of wisdom.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The place of wisdom in Christian tradition has never been a simple and straightforward one. During the Hellenistic period, wisdom personified as Sophia was often a controversial figure. She was too often identified with the philosophers or with esoteric groups that claimed special and non-universal forms of revelation. Indeed, early Christians struggled to define themselves in relation to both the ritual heritage of Judaism and the philosphical heritage of Greek culture. Ultimately, they rejected the Jewish Torah as a binding ritual guide and also rejected gnosis, or nonsacramental forms of salvation, although both Jewish and Greek influences continued to define the new religion.

This image may be called a Throne of Wisdom, suggesting a medieval assimilation of Hellenistic values. However, its visual impact is much closer to that of images of the ancient Near East depicting the child god or king seated on the lap of his mother, a goddess of the sky and of kingship.

The assimilation of this ancient symbolism into medieval Christian art suggests its enduring value in spite of the transition from one cultural context to another. It appears during the tenth century and signals a development that will take place in the two centuries that follow: the rise of Mariology, or worship of the Virgin Mary.

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SAVIORS

He is the way.
Follow Him through the Land of Unlikeness;
You will see rare beasts, and have unique adventures.

He is the Truth.
Seek Him in the Kingdom of Anxiety;
You will come to a great city that has expected your return for years.

He is the Life.
Love Him in the World of Flesh;
And at your marriage all its occasions shall dance for joy.

—W. H. Auden

CHRIST THE SAVIOR IN THE TREE OF LIFE

Artist unknown Manuscript illumination: tempera on parchment Height: 12 in. (30.5 cm)

Circa 1000 CE Site: Monastery of Reichenau (?), West Germany

Location: folio 20 verso, clm. 4454, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich

Christ the savior in the tree of life

Germany: Ottonian

Christ is presented as the living fruit of the tree of life. He is shown to be the source of the revelation found in the New Testament as well as the embodiment of the unity that exists between spirit and nature, or God and his creation.

Jesus stands, garbed in a white gown and a red cloak, with bared feet in the midst of a fruit-bearing tree. With his left hand he lays hold of a tree branch, while his right hand supports a brown sphere. His head is framed by a cross and nimbus, and he and the tree are contained within a mandorla that unites at four points with four encircled figures. Below, supporting the tree, is a naked female standing in water. On the left of Jesus is the upper torso of a blue man with a crescent moon resting on his shoulders. On the right is the upper torso of a white man dressed in red and white with red rays issuing from his head, suggesting the rays of the sun. At the top of the mandorla is the pale image of an old man's countenance. In the four corners of the illumination are four winged figures: an angel, an eagle, an ox, and a lion. Each bears a nimbus and is supported by a green female figure, naked and rising up out of the waters.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This image of Christ in majesty is remarkable for what one might call its deeply incarnational character. Originally an illumination for a collection of the four gospels, the central image of Christ unifies the symbolic representations of the four evangelists: Matthew is represented by the angel, Mark by the lion, Luke by the ox, and John by the eagle.

Christ is not only presented here as the unitary source of revelation; he is also depicted as the unifying power of the universe. This is stated quite dramatically by placing the figure of Christ in the midst of the tree of life—by itself an important symbol of the cosmic whole—and by placing him within a mandorla that connects with four circles enclosing four divine figures. On his right is the Sun, and on his left the Moon. Below, and shown in support of the tree in which he stands, is Mother Earth, while above Christ is the face of God the Father.

Finally, Christ is shown to be the lord of creation, bearing the cosmic orb in his right hand, signifying universal dominion. Further, just as Christ is supported by Earth, so too each of the evangelists is supported by a form of nature, in this case the four rivers of paradise: Pishon, Gihon, Tigris, and Euphrates. Here they are rendered personified in the form of sirens, Platonic symbols of cosmic harmony.

Christians have traditionally affirmed the unity of the divine and the human in the person of Christ, and this conviction has led them now and again to find a profound harmony existing between the divine and the natural orders. This eleventh-century illumination is an eloquent expression of the medieval desire to see nature as a revelation of the divine, but this desire is not unique to the Middle Ages. As early as the second century, the church father Irenaeus recognized in the fourfold structure of various elements of creation—such as the cardinal points and their corresponding winds—a providential fore-

shadowing of the four gospels. The four rivers of paradise (*Genesis* 2:10–14) that flowed from a single source were taken as a natural symbol of the four gospels that flowed from the one revelation in Christ.

Placing the figures of Christ and the evangelists together with cosmic symbols in this way expresses a belief in the harmonious relationship between nature and grace, or between creation and redemption. Christ in majesty is understood not as triumphing over nature but as bringing nature to its highest realization and fulfillment.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The individual components of this fascinating image could be amplified and followed along diverse symbolic avenues. It is, however, the combination of symbols that ultimately must direct the viewer, and here the emphasis of the whole is on the interrelatedness of natural, or cosmic, forces and the central figures in Christianity, God the Father and Christ. This interrelatedness in the composition suggests at least three interpretations: the reconciliation of Christian and non-Christian values; the divine man as supported and acknowledged by both mankind and the gods; and the unity of spirit and nature.

From the Christian point of view, what is emphasized in this image is the Incarnation, that is, the embodiment of divine reality within the world. Christ is at the center, but he does not stand alone. He rests in the branches of the tree of life, which in turn is supported by Earth. This image supports the view that Christ was sent to complete the creation, to render the creation not less valuable but more so. Of the many moods that find their home in Christianity, this image lies closer to the Hermetic sense of *unus mundus,* or the unity of the world, than to the gnostic conviction that the divine must be liberated from the limitations of the cosmos.

Seen out of context, the image presents a divine man who is connected to other divine figures (Sun, Moon, Earth, Wise Old Man) and receives homage from several winged figures. The emphasis, from this perspective, is on the central figure as a sort of primordial man, or anthropos. He is presented as the fruit of the tree, or the natural fulfillment of the cosmic process.

Implicit in this image is the rejection of what is so often found in Western religious thought, the opposition of nature and spirit. There are many ways to look at the relationship between these two notions, and it is, of course, important to be able to differentiate them. However, many have followed Plato in the insistence that nature is what changes and is, therefore, inferior, whereas spirit belongs to whatever is unchanging, such as (in the ancient view) the motionless stars and (more generally) the constructs of the mind.

The opposition between spirit and nature lies behind the modern supposition that instinct and culture exist at odds (as in Sigmund Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*). C. G. Jung, on the other hand, belongs to the tradition that begins in archaic cultures and is perceived at work in both Hermeticism and cosmic Christianity. In his view, the relationship between spirit and nature is rather more complex:

> The ancient world contained a large slice of nature and a number of questionable things which Christianity was bound to overlook if the security of a spiritual standpoint was not to be hopelessly compromised. No penal code and no moral code, not even the sublimest casuistry, will ever be able to codify and pronounce just judgment upon the confusions, the conflicts of

duty, and the invisible tragedies of the natural man in collision with the exigencies of culture. "Spirit" is one aspect, "Nature" another. "You may pitch Nature out with a fork, yet she'll always come back again," says the poet. Nature *must not* win the game, but she *cannot* lose. And whenever the conscious mind clings to hard and fast concepts and gets caught in its own rules and regulations—as is unavoidable and of the essence of civilized consciousness—nature pops up with her inescapable demands. Nature is not matter only, she is also spirit. Were that not so, the only source of spirit would be human reason. (Jung, par. 229)

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GLOSSARY

GOSPEL ("the good news") This term is used by the Christian church in two senses, to refer to the saving teachings of Jesus and also to any written account of his life. Besides the four canonical gospels, there exist numerous other accounts that were not recognized as orthodox by the compilers of the New Testament.

MESSIAH, THE (from the Hebrew term *ha-Mashiaḥ,* "the anointed one") In Jewish tradition, the king was specially anointed as a chosen one of the God of Israel. Ever since the deaths of David and Solomon and the disintegration of the kingdom, Jews have come to hope for the appearance on earth of a new king, one who will be sent by God to restore the kingdom. Christians believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah; the Greek word for "Messiah" is *Christos,* the title given to Jesus by his followers and the founders of his church.

Preaching hall and tīrthaṃkara

Artist unknown   Manuscript illumination: gouache on paper, polychrome

Height: c. 3.5 in. (8.9 cm); width: c. 2.5 in. (6.4 cm)   1411 CE   Site: Gujarat, India

Location: collection of Sarabhai Nawab, Ahmadabad, India

Preaching hall and Tīrthaṃkara

India: Western India

In the samavasaraṇa, *a preaching hall built by the gods in the form of a* maṇḍala, *a Jain savior preaches the message of salvation to all beings (whether animal, human, or divine) desirous of final release (mokṣa).*

A Jain savior, or *tīrthaṃkara,* occupies the center of this diagrammatic representation of the preaching hall. He is seated in the lotus position, his hands folded in the *mudrā* of meditation. Two worshipers attend him. His princely garb is a reminder of the earthly status he held before he renounced the material world. The preaching hall is actually a stepped pyramid, with each of its three levels being reached by sheltered gateways and flights of stairs that are oriented to the four cardinal directions. At the very top of the painting are the lower branches of a flowering tree. The dark, cruciform shapes at each corner represent pools for ritual bathing, and two creatures are shown next to each of these.

Cultural context

Each of the twenty-four Jain saviors is believed to have once preached his saving message from one such preaching hall, or cosmic temple, said to have been constructed by the gods. Because of its mythical nature and gigantic size (about eight miles in diameter), a *samavasaraṇa* cannot be found within the time-space continuum. But it is often depicted in miniature, as here in an illustration from one of the Kalpasūtra manuscripts, texts sacred to the Śvetāmbara Jains.

Presented in this manner, the *samavasaraṇa* becomes a *yantra,* or diagram used in meditation. It serves as a constant reminder to the devout Jain of how one is to attain *mokṣa,* or release from the cycles of rebirth. The devotee is able to "see" himself in a preaching hall and so to "hear" the message preached there by the savior (who is now a "fully released" being, dwelling at the top of the universe). Elaborately descriptive Jain texts provide a full account of the preaching hall with its ramparts of gold, silver, and gems. The savior sits at the summit of the stepped, roofless pyramid, which is either round or square in plan and which has flights of ascending stairs and covered gateways facing in all four directions. The savior is, in effect, at the cynosure of a three-dimensional *maṇḍala.* The worshiper approaches the *tīrthaṃkara* by transversing each level of the hall in an exercise of the imagination.

The ritual purification that prepares the individual to receive the message of deliverance is suggested in the image by four cruciform stairwells placed in the four corners. The sanctity of the space is suggested further by the creatures depicted in each of the margins. Normally hostile, they act here as guardians; it is the savior's message of salvation that has rendered them well-disposed. The tree (often omitted from similar compositions) suggests the vitality of the savior's message. Other, nonvisual elements associated with the mythologem of the *samavasarana* must be imagined. For example, the Jain texts describe a sound emanating from the savior, a divine language that all present understand automatically. Moreover, the atmosphere of the preaching hall is said to be pervaded by music, while incense and flowers

are scattered over all by hovering gods. These elements, too, none of which are hinted at in this abridged visual representation, are part of the rich symbolism available to the Jain for the practice of meditation.

Spiritual merit is acquired by the person who commissions a visual representation of the Jain preaching hall. Today, three-dimensional models of the *samavasaraṇa,* made of metal or stone, are placed prominently in temples (which themselves may be interpreted as *samavasaraṇa*s). The savior is said to multiply himself miraculously so as to be able to face out in all of the four directions, and three-dimensional realizations of the *samavasaraṇa* sometimes present him as four figures combined in one statue.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Literally speaking, the term *maṇḍala* refers to a circle and derives from Indian iconography. *Maṇḍala*s, however, belong to a more general tradition of complex geometric designs in Indian religion. The earliest known of these (whether based on the circle or the square) are the Vedic altars, which were constructed in geometric designs with cosmological correspondences. The best-known design is the falcon-shaped altar of the Agnicayana ritual. In this design, specific areas are marked off as places for the gods to sit during the ritual sacrifice. The *maṇḍala* in the Jain painting represents a mythical temple (with a savior figure at its center). It provides a sacred place that can be approached by the individual in the privacy of the daily, domestic worship. It is here that the term *yantra* has come into use, to refer to the small, geometric design that serves the individual rather than the group as an aid to meditation and worship.

Two aspects of this *yantra* have become articulated in the literature of analytical psychology: the symbolism of the *maṇḍala* and the use of the imagination in dealing with spiritual (or psychic) realities. C. G. Jung has found the spontaneous appearance of *maṇḍala*s (especially in the sense of a geometric design composed of both a circle and a square) in the dreams of modern men and women to have a special significance.

> There are innumerable variants of the motif shown here, but they are all based on the squaring of a circle. Their basic motif is the premonition of a center of personality, a kind of central point within the psyche, to which everything is related, by which everything is arranged, and which is itself a source of energy. The energy of the central point is manifested in the almost irresistible compulsion and urge to *become what one is,* just as every organism is driven to assume the form that is characteristic of its nature, no matter what the circumstances. This center is not felt or thought of as the ego but, if one may so express it, as the *self.* Although the center is represented by an innermost point, it is surrounded by a periphery containing everything that belongs to the self—the paired opposites that make up the total personality. This totality comprises consciousness first of all, then the personal unconscious, and finally an indefinitely large segment of the collective unconscious whose archetypes are common to all mankind. . . . The self, though on the one hand simple, is on the other hand an extremely composite thing, a "conglomerate soul," to use the Indian expression. (Jung, 357)

The *maṇḍala* used as a *yantra* to support a ritual of worship taking place on the level of the imagination has a modern counterpart in the practice of active imagination. However, the *yantra* provides a highly structured container for the encounter with images drawn from the tradition out of which it comes, whereas the practice of active imagination depends on

the analytical context to provide a structure both for the experience and for its interpretation. Active imagination is a process in which the unconscious throws up images that are experienced by the ego as something separate to which the ego can then relate, and with which the ego can have a dialogue. The basic assumption behind the process is the faith that "all things come from God," that is, that everything in the experience of the ego (whether inner or outer) is meaningful and nothing fortuitous. Through active imagination the psychological meaning of inner images reveals itself, but in the beginning, one must accept this as a possibility in order to proceed at all.

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GLOSSARY

DIGAMBARA (Skt., "clothed with space") One of Śiva's titles, and more generally, the name for a naked mendicant. In Jainism, one of the two principal schools, distinguished from the Śvetāmbara school by its more rigorous asceticism.

LAKṢMĪ In India, the auspicious goddess of good fortune and prosperity, also called Śrī or Padma ("lotus"). Within Hinduism, she is the principal consort of Viṣṇu.

MOKṢA (Skt., "release, liberation") Release from the tedious and painful cycle of transmigration of souls. This religious notion appears already in the Upaniṣads, as well as in early Buddhism.

MUDRĀ (Skt., "stamp, mark, seal") In Hinduism and Buddhism, symbolic hand gestures that serve as ritual guarantees for the efficacy of a ritual act.

ŚVETĀMBARA (Skt., "white-clad") One of the two principal churches of Jainism, the less rigorous of the two in their ascetic practices; the Śvetāmbaras are to be found today in Punjab, Rajasthan, and Gujarat.

COLOSSAL BUDDHA

Artist unknown   Sculpture: brick(?) covered with stucco, lacquered and gilded

Height of figure: 60 ft. (18 m); width of figure from knee to knee: 47 ft. (14.3 m)   1059–1060 CE

Site/location: Manuha Temple, Pagan, Burma, damaged in 1975 by an earthquake

Colossal buddha

Burma: eleventh century

The Buddha achieved enlightenment only after a confrontation with the cosmic powers of evil. He was supported by his own acquired merit and loving-kindness as witnessed by Mother Earth herself.

The seated figure—so enormous and so narrowly confined within its temple that devotees must circle the exterior of the building to perform the ritual of circumambulation—holds his right hand in the earth-touching *mudrā,* a gesture symbolic of his victory over Māra, the personification of evil. His left hand is in his lap. What lighting there is comes from arched windows on either side of the Buddha's head.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Gigantic Buddha images are still erected occasionally in Burma and neighboring Thailand. They are particularly characteristic of the early Mon peoples, who set up many of them in what is now Lower Burma and Thailand. Normally, these images were built to sit out in the open, dominating the countryside. Sometimes later generations, moved by piety, would erect a temple around the image. In the present instance, however, the temple was built at the same time as the statue.

Furthermore, its decorative earmarks, derived from early Mon architecture, lend support to a traditional story, according to which the temple was built by the royal prisoner Manuha. It may be that the "confinement" of this statue of the Buddha within a darkened interior is actually an allusion to the experience of its builder, Manuha, the Mon king who suffered imprisonment at the hands of the Burmese. The Mon king and his entire court, along with Mon artists and craftsmen, are said to have been captured by the Burmese and removed forcibly to Pagan, where the prisoners seem to have exerted a significant and long-lasting influence upon Burmese culture (evident especially in its art and architecture). Manuha was allowed to build two temples of his own in Pagan. Leading characteristics of Mon temples are dim interiors, windows of perforated stone, and a cavelike atmosphere conducive to meditation.

This figure within its enclosure presents a unique image because of its gigantic scale and its confinement within a relatively small space. In the words of one observer, "the temple is the allegorical representation of the physical discomfort and mental distress the captive king of Thaton was in. The builder's grievance is graphically demonstrated by the uncomfortably seated and sleeping Buddha" (Lu Pe Win, 51).

The *mudrā* articulated by this image of Buddha refers back to the story of the temptation of Śākyamuni. According to legend, Gautama dreamed five dreams, all indicating that he was about to become a Buddha. Thereupon, he went and sat beneath the Bodhi Tree with his face to the east, and he resolved not to arise until he had attained enlightenment. The Evil One, Māra, became alarmed at the prospect that Gautama might actually achieve enlightenment, and so he called together a host of terrible demons for an attack. Gautama, however,

was protected by his accumulation of merit and because he was filled with friendly love. Failing to shake him, the army of devils fled in defeat. So then Māra invoked his own merit, and converting it to magic, he sought to overthrow the *bodhisattva* (or Buddha-to-Be). At this point, Gautama—having no other witness on his side—simply touched the earth with his right hand and called upon Mother Earth to testify to his merit. The earth quaked in response, and Māra, having failed to intimidate the *bodhisattva,* turned to another form of temptation. He called upon his three daughters, Discontent, Delight, and Desire, and sent them to seduce the future Buddha. Gautama remained impervious to lust just as he had been undaunted by fear. As the sun began to set, Māra and his company of demons gave up and withdrew, leaving Gautama under the Bodhi Tree.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The earth-touching *mudrā* of Śākyamuni refers to the temptation prior to enlightenment, whereas the golden surface of this statue represents the attainment of the final goal of release, which enlightenment makes possible. The Buddha is frequently portrayed in gold. As a symbol, the golden Buddha is an image of the fully realized person, the goal of all spiritual paths.

The metal gold is one of the oldest and most universal of religious symbols. "As a physical substance, gold is quite literally incorruptible: it is highly resistant to chemical reactions and is immune to the corrosion that affects baser metals. It is also intrinsically luminous, seeming to shine with a light of its own. Thus no speculative leap was required to make gold the universally acknowledged symbol of life and the spirit and of perfection and immortality. There is a certain obviousness to the symbolic value of gold that explains its universal appeal throughout history and in virtually every corner of the world" (Carpenter, 67).

The ancient Egyptians envisioned the afterlife as beginning with a series of stages during which the deceased underwent a gradual transformation. The goal of this process was the acquisition of an immortal body—made of gold—and participation in the blissful existence of the gods. The art of alchemy has its roots in ancient Egyptian ideas about immortality (in fact, the term *alchemy* derives from the Coptic word for "Egypt"). In the Hellenistic world, in the post-Renaissance world, in India and China, the belief that "gold is immortality" led alchemists to attempt to transmute base metals into gold, believing that they could thereby achieve perfection and immortality for themselves. In each tradition, this goal was sought with the aid of traditional techniques of spiritual development: for example, in Hellenism, alchemy combined with Hermetism and in India with yoga. The goal was at once concrete and spiritual. For example, in Indian alchemy the end was a perfect body of the *siddha.* This body shines like gold. It is as hard and impenetrable as a diamond, and it is possessed of supernatural powers.

The golden Buddha is thus an image of the full realization of spiritual freedom, which is also the goal of every Buddhist. That this achievement requires a confrontation with the forces of evil suggests that there can be no real freedom of spirit until all the opposites are recognized and integrated into one complete whole. The temptation of the Evil One appears also in the story of Jesus. In both cases, the outer evil mirrors the darker side of the personality, so that the confrontation of opposites can take place and lead to a new level of integration:

The contents that rise up and confront a limited consciousness are far from harmless, as is shown by the classic example of the temptation of Christ, or the equally significant Mara episode in the Buddha legend. As a rule, they signify the specific danger to which the person concerned is liable to succumb. What the inner voice whispers to us is generally something negative, if not actually evil. This must be so, first of all because we are usually not as unconscious of our virtues as of our vices, and then because we suffer less from the good than from the bad in us. The inner voice . . . makes us conscious of the evil from which the community is suffering, whether it be the nation or the whole human race. But it presents this evil in an individual form, so that one might at first suppose it to be only an individual characteristic. The inner voice brings the evil before us in a very tempting and convincing way in order to make us succumb. If we do not partially succumb, nothing of this apparent evil enters into us, and no regeneration or healing can take place. (I say "apparent" though this may sound too optimistic.) If we succumb completely, then the contents expressed by the inner voice act as so many devils, and a catastrophe ensues. But if we succumb only in part, and if by self-assertion the ego can save itself from being completely swallowed, then it can assimilate the voice, and we realize that the evil was, after all, only a semblance of evil, but in reality a bringer of healing and illumination. In fact, the inner voice is a "Lucifer" ["light-bearer"] in the strictest and most unequivocal sense of the word, and it faces people with ultimate moral decisions without which they can never achieve full consciousness and become personalities. (Jung, par. 319)

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GLOSSARY

MĀRA (Skt., "death-causer") A god identified in Buddhist legend and cosmology as ruler of the realm of sense-desire and chief antagonist of the Buddha and his followers. Māra rides an elephant; his chief attribute is the snare of worldly thoughts and pleasures that binds his captives to repeated death, rebirth, and suffering.

MON A people living in the south of Burma and in central Thailand prior to the advent of the Burmese and Thai kingdoms. The Mon are related to the Khmer. Their indianized states were Buddhist, both Theravāda and Mahāyāna. The culture of the Mon exerted widespread influences in Southeast Asia, and their script became the basis of the Burmese, Lao, Shan, and northern Thai systems of writing.

MUDRĀ (Skt., "stamp, mark, seal") In Hinduism and Buddhism, symbolic hand gestures that serve as ritual guarantees for the efficacy of a ritual act.

ŚĀKYAMUNI (Skt., "sage of the Śākya clan") Title for Siddhārtha Gautama, the historical Buddha, who lived in India from 563 to 483 BCE. Born a prince, he renounced both family and social position, attained enlightenment, and preached the Way (Dharma) to a community of monks and lay followers.

STANDING BUDDHA MAITREYA

Artist unknown Sculpture: bronze, gilded Height (including pedestal): 24 in. (61 cm) 536 CE

Site: Ho-pei Province, China Location: University of Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia

Standing Buddha Maitreya

China: Eastern Wei Period

Maitreya, the Buddha of the future, is manifest in his power and glory. Even though age upon age of darkness, ignorance, and violence may oppress humankind here on earth and the capacity for enlightenment may seem to disappear, Buddhism offers a hope for future salvation as represented by his image. A time will come when the light will return to this world and men and women will be wise enough to accept it. All sentient beings will then attain enlightenment.

Maitreya assumes here a hieratic, frontal pose while standing on a lotus. He is making the gesture of protection (*abhayamudrā*) with his right hand. His left hand is in the pose of generosity (or *varadamudrā*). His habit is that of a monk, which in China acquired the appearance of a specifically Chinese imperial gown. The robe hangs from the shoulders, is caught on the Buddha's left arm, and continues to fall in cascades, forming pleated skirt edges. On the nimbus surrounding his head are lotus tendrils edged by a pearl-bead border. Flames fill the pointed aureole. An inscription identifies the figure. This is followed by a prayer for peace.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This is one image of Maitreya, the Buddha of the future, who will appear in the next age and lead all sentient beings into enlightenment. The belief in more than one Buddha goes back to the earliest period of Buddhism and rests, ultimately, on Indian views of cosmology.

According to ancient Indian mythology, each cosmic age begins with a creation, a time of purity and power. This is followed by a gradual degradation of quality in all that exists. Thus, a so-called golden age is followed by numerous epochs, each one marked by more corrupt government, greater disease, and earlier deaths than its predecessor, until a final, dark age spells the end of the cosmic cycle altogether. Each cosmic age, however, is followed by another, which also begins in golden purity. The belief in more than one Buddha reflects this mythologically based hope that even though the present age and its inhabitants are limited, and less likely to experience enlightenment, another chance will arise for all during the next cosmic age. At that time, the successor to Śākyamuni (the Buddha of this cosmic age) will appear in order to complete his work.

Sometimes the image of Maitreya emphasizes his role as a *bodhisattva,* that is, picturing him as a mortal, waiting in Tuṣita heaven for his rebirth in the next age. This sculpture, on the other hand, reveals Maitreya in his final glory as a realized Buddha. Instead of emphasizing his humanity or his compassion (as suggested by his name, which means "loving-kindness"), the present figure calls to mind the power and the light that will accompany him in the future age as a gift to all those who long for enlightenment.

Maitreya was recognized already in the earliest Buddhist schools, although his name is not commonly found in many texts. During the early aniconic period, emphasis lay on salvation through personal striving, and images of the Buddha were avoided in the religious life of the early monks. They preferred symbols that referred to the transcendent nature of enlightenment: the lotus, the wheel, and the footprints of Śākyamuni, for example. Later, the possibility of attaining enlightenment with the help of the *bodhisattva*s led to the practice

of devotion, especially within Mahāyāna Buddhism, and devotion centered often on images of those who were being petitioned for help. It is within the context of devotion that we find the image of Maitreya gaining importance.

In northwest India during the first centuries of the common era, figures of Maitreya appear depicting him as the successor to Śākyamuni (sharing in the characteristics of the Buddha of this age) or as a Buddha of great power. When early Buddhism found its way along the silk route and into northern China, the images of Śākyamuni and Maitreya from northern India predominated from about 400 to 700. Indeed, one of the most important founders of Chinese Buddhism, Tao-an (312–385), was personally devoted to the veneration of Maitreya. He and his disciples took a vow to be reborn in Tuṣita heaven in order to be guided by Maitreya prior to his arrival in the next age.

In the late seventh century, however, the popularity of Śākyamuni and Maitreya decreased, and Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara (known as Kuan-yin in China) took their places in the hearts of the Chinese. Later centuries saw the reappearance of Maitreya in China in three separate contexts. During those periods of Chinese history when Buddhism and Buddhists were being persecuted, the orthodox could interpret this darkness as a sign of the last days of a dying age, and they could pray to Maitreya for a future salvation. Occasionally, a more active group would form in which religious vision and political passion united. These rebel groups would seek to overthrow their rulers and usher in themselves the new age of Maitreya.

Finally, the Maitreya figure merged somehow with the image of a popular Chinese folk hero, the fat and jolly monk called Pu-tai (c. 900), who was thought to have been an incarnation of the Buddha. He became known as Mi-lo, the so-called laughing Buddha. Pu-tai/Mi-lo, the mendicant nonconformist, may well reflect certain age-old Chinese values that can be seen also in Taoism and in Ch'an Buddhism: spontaneity, the capacity to see through everyday illusions, and the joy of spiritual freedom.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The prevailing symbolism in this image points to the light that Buddha brings into the world and the fire that supports that light. The light is enlightenment, being awake, that is, direct knowledge of unconditioned reality and the freedom that goes with that knowledge. The fire that fills the pointed mandorla emphasizes the dependence of saving knowledge on processes that are inherent in the simplest forms of nature.

In the history of religions, the fire altar and the hearth have often served as centers of ritual activity for numerous reasons. Not only does fire give off light and warmth, it transforms the solid substance of nature and turns it into smoke that moves heavenward. Because of this characteristic of fire, it has often been believed that earthly things (animals or human beings, for instance) could be transferred to the heavenly realm through fire sacrifice. For example, in ancient India, cremation was thought to be the holy work of the fire god Agni conferring immortality on the cremated. The immolation of widows was meant to enable them to join their husbands in eternal life. We find this symbolic belief emerging in Buddhism in voluntary deaths through self-immolation, which are called "abandoning the body." According to Carl-Martin Edsman, death by fire was occasionally regarded also as promoting a rebirth on a higher level—as a *bodhisattva,* for example, or in the paradise of Amitābha Buddha, also known as the Pure Land.

Stories about Maitreya emphasize the conviction that his arrival will spell universal salvation. All share the capacity for enlightenment, or Buddha nature. This universal hope contrasts with certain forms of religious or ideological fanaticism based on feelings of elitism, where the light of knowledge or consciousness is thought to belong solely to the few. The dependence of the light upon the fire, of the fire upon the fuel, and of the entire process upon the secret wisdom of nature reminds us of the ultimate dependence of all spiritual attainment on the lowly nature that we all share.

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GLOSSARY

AMITĀBHA (Skt., "endless light") One of the most important of the Buddhas who became the focus of a distinctive tradition, Amitābha rules over the Western Paradise and offers universal accessibility to this Pure Land (called Sukhāvatī), granting rebirth to those who practice the Buddha's determination to be reborn in it and even to those who merely recite his name or think of him with faith on their deathbeds.

BODHISATTVA A future Buddha, one whose being or essence (*sattva*) is "awakened" (*bodhi*), having perceived reality directly and completely already in this life. In Mahāyāna, the *bodhisattva* represents the Buddhist ideal of compassion. Having attained enlightenment, the *bodhisattva* renounces *nirvāṇa* in order to help bring humanity and all other sentient beings to this state.

MAHĀYĀNA (Skt., "great vehicle") A major division of Buddhist thought, Mahāyāna encompasses a wide variety of sects and practices. It is characterized by a belief in the *bodhisattva*s and their compassionate assistance as a means to enlightenment.

MAITREYA AND ATTENDANTS
Artist unknown   *Sculpture: off-white marble, traces of polychrome*
Height: 23¼ in. (58.7 cm); width: 13¼ in. (33.7 cm)   551 CE
Site: Ting-chou, Ho-pei Province, China   *Location: Asian Art Museum, San Francisco*

Maitreya and attendants

China: Northern Ch'i Period

Seated in a reflective posture beneath two blossoming trees in Tuṣita Heaven, Maitreya patiently awaits his incarnation as the Buddha of the coming era. He will be reborn as a savior destined to lead all sentient beings to enlightenment.

Maitreya sits with the left leg pendent and the right leg lying horizontally across his knee; the right hand is raised to his chin and the left rests in his lap. He is dressed as a *bodhisattva,* a costume based on that of an Indian prince. Flanking him are a pair of trees encircled by dragons. A nimbus is centered above Maitreya's head in the branches; flying attendants hover to either side. On the right and left of the trees are *bodhisattva* figures with smaller figures seated on lotuses above them. On the base is an incense burner with lions and guardians on either side.

Cultural context

Maitreya, the Buddha of the future, will come in the next era to save mankind. He is the direct successor to Śākyamuni, the Buddha of our present era. Until the time is ripe for him to descend to earth, Maitreya waits in Tuṣita Heaven, which is probably the setting of the present image. Śākyamuni Buddha had also awaited his final birth in Tuṣita Heaven. Figures in this pose, called the "pensive prince" posture, are conceived to be in deep reflection over their coming final birth. In their last incarnation, they will at last attain enlightenment and bring the Dharma to humanity. As such, the pose of the present figure implies equally Maitreya and Śākyamuni as each waits in Tuṣita Heaven, but in this image the dragon-flower trees, referred to in Buddhist texts as the tree under which Maitreya will achieve enlightenment, identify the main figure as Maitreya.

Images of *bodhisattvas* or princely figures in this posture appeared first in India during the Kushan period (second to fourth centuries CE), in the northwest region known as Gandhara. They are shown either alone or listening to discourses in paradise. They are not necessarily depicted as seated under trees, and it is not clear whom they are meant to represent. One such figure holds a lotus, which may mean that he is Avalokiteśvara. The images were also popular in China during the Northern Wei through Sui periods (late fourth to early seventh centuries). It was in China during this period that Maitreya attained his greatest popularity as a savior. Perhaps his cult served to orient many during a time of social chaos and political upheavals. Maitreya not only presided over a paradise into which believers might be reborn, but he was to come to earth personally to bring all suffering beings to enlightenment. The time for this coming was usually thought to be in the distant future, though some devotees may have believed it to be imminent. At the very least, knowledge that he was coming seemed to offer them great support and hope. The popularity of Maitreya and of the image of the "pensive prince" spread to Japan by way of Korea in the seventh century (famous images may be found in the Duksoo Palace Museum, Seoul, and in Chuguji, Japan).

An inscription on a related image depicting a figure in the same posture, although without the trees, indicates its ritual context: "A Buddha disciple of pure faith, Tsou Kuang/shou, on behalf of his deceased parents has reverently had one 'jade pensive image' made; with the prayer that his deceased parents may be reborn on high in Paradise; that his household and dependents may always remain prosperous and successful; that the seven past generations and those sentient beings under the same government may be equally blest; such is his prayer. The donor of the image is Tsou Seng/ching, magistrate of Ch'ien/p'ing X" (*Akiyama and Matsubara, 240*).

Texts about the age in which Maitreya will be reborn describe a life that in some ways imitates that of Śākyamuni. He will choose two parents (although they will be priests, not princes), a counselor, and a wife. He will have all the distinguishing marks of a Buddha, and after attaining enlightenment under a tree (a dragon-flower rather than a fig tree), he will spend his time in teaching. On the other hand, Maitreya's efforts to show all sentient beings the way to enlightenment will be much more successful than Śākyamuni's, since he will arrive on earth at a time of greater readiness.

Although it is not known what species the so-called dragon-flower tree is, most likely it carries the auspicious connotations of the dragon, a pair of which are, in any case, entwined in the trees of the present image. These are probably *pa-hsia,* which are carved at the bottom of stone monuments since they are believed capable of supporting heavy weights. In China, the dragon (of which there are numerous kinds) is a symbol of both nature and the emperor. Lions are not indigenous to China and probably entered Chinese art by way of Buddhism, where they had the symbolic role of guardianship: defenders of the law and the temple.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Buddhism is a religion fully bent on salvation, in the sense of freedom from suffering. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, this goal becomes a possibility for all sentient beings through the aid of certain supernatural agents: the *bodhisattvas*. Resembling redeemers of other religions, such as the gnostic savior, the Christ, and the Messiah, *bodhisattvas* are intermediary or connecting figures, reconciling the extremes of the mundane and the divine realms. Maitreya exemplifies this role in an eschatological way, that is, his appearance will usher in the end of history—a time when all living beings will finally realize the goal of their evolution, the attainment of enlightenment.

On the intrapsychic level, the savior or redeemer represents some aspect of the psyche that is outside the conscious ego but is capable of bringing it into a mutual relationship with the unconscious. Experience in depth psychology shows that there is a tendency for the unconscious and consciousness to oppose themselves to one another. In fact, for the ego to exist at all, it must differentiate itself from unconscious contents and maintain its boundaries lest it be dissolved, so to speak, in the unifying matrix of the unconscious. The boundaries of ego-consciousness reflect its momentary mode of adaption to the world; hence, all incompatible material is repressed. On the other hand, psychic balance is maintained between both poles of the psyche, in that the unconscious will compensate for extreme attitudes in the conscious. Thus, polarization of psychic contents is inevitable—in order to support the separateness of the ego and its survival in a unique, historical setting—and as the result of the psyche's internal mechanism of maintaining balance.

The definiteness and directedness of the conscious mind has rendered humanity a great

service. However, it is always achieved through a very real sacrifice: the more differentiated the ego-consciousness, the firmer the boundaries between consciousness and the unconscious and, hence, the greater the danger of alienation. In tribal and traditional cultures, the unity of the psyche is supported by a relatively unified mythic worldview. However, in a cosmopolitan culture, alienation may well set in as one is confronted with numerous contradicting containers for the psyche. At such times, we often find the emergence of redeemer figures. These redeemers have qualities that are easily transferred from one cultural context into another.

There are similarities between the role of a redeemer and that of the transcendent function as described by C. G. Jung: "The transcendent function lies between the conscious and the unconscious standpoint and is a living phenomenon, a way of life, which partly conforms with the unconscious as well as the conscious and partly does not" (Jung, 23). The redeemer may be a vital symbol for this function, for the work of the redeemer always lies ultimately in the future. Belief in the future coming of a redeemer instills patience in the believer and supports a time of waiting and bearing the conflicts of unredeemed life. This corresponds to the metaphor of the transcendent function as something that is constellated when the tension of opposites is fully experienced. Giving both sides their due without capitulating to either—waiting in the fullest sense of the word—gives rise to a third, the unknown possibility that leads beyond conflict into new life.

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GLOSSARY

AVALOKITEŚVARA The *bodhisattva* of limitless compassion; the most popular figure in pan-Asian Mahāyāna Buddhism. Worshiped and evoked in both male and female forms, Avalokiteśvara is considered a potent savior in times of need, one who watches over all beings and hears their cries of distress. He is often depicted as a lotus bearer. He is known as Kuan-yin in China and Kannon in Japan.

BODHISATTVA A future Buddha. One whose being or essence (*sattva*) is "awakened" (*bodhi*), having perceived reality directly and completely already in this life. In Mahāyāna, the *bodhisattva* represents the Buddhist ideal of compassion. Having attained enlightenment, the *bodhisattva* renounces *nirvāṇa* in order to help bring humanity and all other sentient beings to this state.

DHARMA (Skt., "law," "practice," or "duty") In Hinduism, the moral order of the cosmos as a whole, hence the reality that dictates the way things ought to be. In Buddhism, *Dharma* refers to the Buddha's saving insight into the nature of ultimate reality, and in this way to his teachings about that reality.

ENLIGHTENMENT (BUDDHIST) The goal of every Buddhist is to attain enlightenment, that is, to break through the limitations of ordinary consciousness in order to experience reality directly and completely. Siddhārtha Gautama was called the Buddha, the "enlightened" or "awakened" one. The term *Buddha* derives from the Sanskrit *bodhi* ("awakening").

AVALOKITEŚVARA AS PSYCHOPOMP

Artist unknown   Painting: ink, pigments, and gold on silk

Length: 31.5 in. (80 cm); width: 21 in. (53.3 cm)   Circa tenth century CE

Site: Tun-huang cave-temple, Kan-su Province, China   Location: British Museum, London

Avalokiteśvara as psychopomp

China: T'ang Period

The bodhisattva *of limitless compassion, Avalokiteśvara descends in order to guide the soul of a believer who has just died to the Western Paradise. The lotus in Avalokiteśvara's left hand is his special attribute, and the blossoms falling gently around him signify his blessings on the deceased woman.*

Avalokiteśvara has just swept down on a purple cloud from the palaces of the Western Paradise, shown in miniature in the upper left corner. As indicated by the inscription *yin lu sa* ("the *bodhisattva* who leads the way"), Avalokiteśvara is a psychopomp, or one who guides the souls of the dead. The woman to whom he is appearing is depicted on a far more diminutive scale at the lower right. Avalokiteśvara stands on a lotus, and in his right hand he holds a censer by its handle while his usual attribute, a lotus, is seen in his left. He is dressed in the typical jeweled, pseudo-Indian costume of a prince, with scarves draped around his shoulder and falling in double loops across his front. His almost feminine mien is offset by a moustache. The devotee wears the robes and coiffure of the T'ang court. Lotus blossoms falling (to the right and left of Avalokiteśvara) mark the bestowal of divine blessing.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This painting of Avalokiteśvara was probably suspended beside the deathbed of a devotee. Avalokiteśvara (Chin., Kuan-yin) is the *bodhisattva* whose nature embodies absolute compassion and mercy. The text that is dedicated to this *bodhisattva* (incorporated as the twenty-third chapter in the *Lotus Sutra*) is the most widely read text of Mahāyāna Buddhism. In it Avalokiteśvara is portrayed as "the Lord who heeds the cries of the world." He is the most popular of all the many *bodhisattva*s, a class of enlightened beings who postpone their own salvation and attainment of *nirvāṇa* in order to allay the sufferings of other sentient beings. Avalokiteśvara serves as an ally for the less fortunate beings, bringing them to the freedom of enlightenment. Moreover, as one who succors those in distress, he may assume as many as thirty-three forms and perform numerous different duties.

Avalokiteśvara is also conceived as an emanation of Amitābha Buddha, serving as the latter's emissary by rescuing the souls of the departed and conveying them to Sukhāvatī, Amitābha's dwelling place (Western Paradise). This paradise is not to be confused with *nirvāṇa;* it is a happy locale where beings, born as children seated on lotuses, may listen all day to discourses on the Buddha's teachings. Sojourners in the Western Paradise hasten their entry to *nirvāṇa,* reducing the number of times they will have to be reborn (but since beings may achieve final enlightenment only as humans, they, too, will have to be born into the world again). The tradition of representing Avalokiteśvara as a psychopomp is associated directly with the popularity of Amitābha Buddha, which extended from the late Six Dynasties Period (ended 581 CE) through the end of the T'ang and into the Sung (960–1278 CE). Yet Avalokiteśvara's popularity continued, even though his original identity was being lost (especially by the end of the Sung), when he was mythified by the Ch'an (Zen) sect as the

bodhisattva Kuan-yin, who made his residence on Potalaka Mountain. In later times he was assimilated in popular Chinese religion as a goddess with the power to grant children—both male and female—in response to the pleas of barren women.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

In Buddhism, wisdom and compassion are like two sides of the same coin, and they are the great attributes of an enlightened being. In the experience of enlightenment, all attachments to the world fall away so that the person feels reality with a freedom that is not limited by subjectivity. Wisdom refers to the moment when the nature of ultimate reality breaks in upon the Buddhist, freeing him or her from the cycles of rebirth; compassion is a natural outflow of this moment. No longer identifying with one's own subjective particularity, the enlightened being becomes at one with all beings. Their joy is his joy; their pain, his pain.

In analytical psychology a similar phenomenon exists in the idea of the assimilation of projections. In the projection, something that exists within the individual psyche but is disconnected from the ego is recognized when reflected in the outer world. The feeling of need, or dependency, that arises from this projection dissolves if and when the inner reality comes into permanent relationship with the ego. Life experience and analysis both contribute to the inner development that dissolves projections. And with each reassimilated projection, the person is freed to experience others with less self-interest. This freedom is something like the compassion of Buddhism: it is not a giving of the self but a revision of identity in which other beings gain more and more in intrinsic value.

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HEROES AND HEROINES

In the pasture of this world, I endlessly push aside the tall grasses in search of the bull.
Following unnamed rivers, lost upon the interpenetrating paths of distant mountains,
My strength failing and my vitality exhausted, I cannot find the bull.
I only hear the locusts chirring through the forest at night.

Along the riverbank under the trees, I discover footprints!
Even under the fragrant grass I see his prints.
Deep in remote mountains they are found.
These traces no more can be hidden than one's nose, looking heavenward.

. . . .

I seize him with a terrific struggle.
His great will and power are inexhaustible.
He charges to the high plateau far above the cloud-mists,
Or in an impenetrable ravine he stands.

. . . .

Astride the bull, I reach home.
I am serene. The bull too can rest.
The dawn has come. In blissful repose,
Within my thatched dwelling I have abandoned the whip and rope.

Whip, rope, person, and bull—all merge in No-Thing.
This heaven is so vast no message can stain it.
How may a snowflake exist in a raging fire?
Here are the footprints of the patriarchs.

. . . .

Barefooted and naked of breast, I mingle with the people of the world,
My clothes are ragged and dust-laden, and I am ever blissful.
I use no magic to extend my life;
Now, before me, the dead trees become alive.

—*Kakuan*

SAINT GEORGE AND THE DRAGON

Artist unknown Panel painting: tempera on wood Height: 22.8 in. (58.7 cm); width: 16.6 in. (42.2 cm)
Fourteenth or fifteenth century CE *Site: Novgorod, Russia Location: no. 2123, National Russian Museum, Leningrad*

Saint George and the Dragon

Russia: Novgorod School

*The Christian knight Saint George—patron of soldiers, protector of livestock, and embodiment of the forces of good—slays the dragon while the Hand of God (*manus Dei*) makes a gesture of blessing above.*

At the center, Saint George is depicted wearing a tunic and a cape, his head framed by a halo. His left hand holds the reins of the white horse on which he rides; his right hand holds a lance with which he slays a small dragon that appears to be flying slightly off the ground. The front hoofs of the horse are about to trample the dragon, who has a long serpentine tail and two winged legs. The scene takes place before the rocky cave opening of the dragon's lair. In the upper right-hand corner, a hand emerges from the edges of a robe and signals the gesture of blessing.

Cultural Context

The legend of Saint George and the dragon has been popular with Christian tradition for centuries, and the fact that there exists no historical basis for the legend has not diminished the attraction of this powerful symbol of the victory of good over evil.

Traditionally, Saint George is connected with George of Cappadocia, who was martyred in 303 CE during the persecutions of the Roman emperor Diocletian. The earliest stories associated with George tell of his miraculous bravery and endurance during his torture and eventual execution. The scene depicted above, however, belongs to a separate episode that preceded these trials and for which George is most frequently remembered. According to legend, the saint once happened upon a town that was being terrorized by a dragon. Having gradually offered the beast all of the town's sheep in an attempt to assuage its hunger, the people were reduced to offering their own children, chosen by lot. Eventually, the lot fell to the king's daughter, who had been sent out to meet her fate just prior to George's arrival. George rode out to confront the demon, transfixed it with his lance, and saved the life of the princess.

This episode seems to have been added on to the more usual descriptions of a saint's martyrdom, although it is unclear exactly when this occurred. It may have served the early Syrian Christians as a symbol of the conversion of Cappadocia, the traditional place of George's birth. The story appears in its classic form in the *Golden Legend* of the thirteenth-century Italian prelate and writer Jacobus de Voragine. Its roots lie much deeper, however. In fact, the whole story of George and the dragon seems to belong to a diffuse tradition found throughout the ancient world. It may be derived from the earlier Greek tale of Perseus, who killed the sea monster that threatened Andromeda. The Greek story of Perseus may, in turn, derive from the Egyptian story of the god Horus, who was sometimes represented on a horse, piercing a crocodile with his lance. In the Christian context, the dragon became a symbol of the enemies of the church, especially during the persecutions, as well as a symbol of paganism in general.

The story of Saint George became a favorite among the Christian crusaders of the Middle Ages, and the saint eventually became not only the patron of the chivalrous Order of the Garter, instituted by Edward III of England in 1344, but the patron saint of England as a whole. He is also the patron saint of various European cities, and his cult is very popular among the peasants of the Balkans and Russia.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

H. S. Haddad has suggested that there is a common origin to three saints of the Near East: the Christian Saint George, Khidr of the Muslims, and the biblical Elijah. Sacred stories and shrines of the Levant are often dedicated to more than one of these and sometimes to all three. The people of this area recognized that the three saints are related, and they share much of the same symbolism. Haddad's hypothesis to explain this phenomenon is that the cultic life surrounding the three religious heroes rests on an older Canaanite tradition, the religion of Baal. It is very likely that connections can be made in this geographical area between the ancient god Baal and these more recent religious figures. However, it is also true that the underlying pattern, or archetype, reaches beyond historical influences, for the dragon slayer is a figure that appears all over the world, especially in the mythologies of those gods who protect the cosmos or some form of cosmic order: Marduk, Thor, and Indra, to name a few. Furthermore, in popular lore, the slaying of the dragon is one aspect of the hero, a human being who displays godlike qualities.

In ancient times, the heroic person was thought to be the offspring of a deity. Herakles sprang from the union of Zeus and the maiden Alcmene; the mother of the Babylonian hero Gilgamesh was a goddess called Ninsuna; Romulus and Remus issued from the rape by Mars of Rhea Silvia. Sometimes the hero was "adopted" by a goddess, who watched over him and offered him gifts of power and insight. Well known is Athena's protection of Odysseus during his lengthy journey to Troy and home again.

Sometimes heroes appear to be gods of an earlier culture who have been "demoted" or secularized to the human level. Elsewhere, the hero may be a historical person who has been "promoted" to the level of the gods because of birth or personal achievement. Often heroes and heroines are looked to as models for everyday behavior. The saints of Christian tradition seem to share in this typology to some degree, and often they are actually local deities, assimilated into Christian mythology as saints.

Perhaps the most common feat of the hero is the slaying of the dragon, and Saint George is a typical representative of this category. The dragon is not always considered evil; indeed, in the East it is perhaps the most common symbol for the power that underlies all reality. However, it is also often identified with chaos, a reality that is opposed to the order that supports meaningful existence. As an extension of this idea, the dragon is sometimes regarded in analytical psychology as a symbol of those unconscious impulses that may undermine or overwhelm the integrity of the conscious ego.

M. Esther Harding discusses the myths surrounding Saint George from this point of view. The princess who is threatened by the dragon is the anima, or the feminine values of a given man or society. The threat of the dragon who is about to devour the maiden is the danger of losing a conscious relation to certain values associated with the feminine. Often the anima represents the realm of feeling per se. In such cases, the realm of feeling may be neglected by the individual, whose dealings with others are dominated by moods, impulses,

and greed. In terms of the myth, the maiden (or anima) has been given over to the dragon. "When the anima is lost in this way, the man may find himself incapable of any articulate response and may simply fall into a mood of black despair whenever he is confronted with a question that demands a feeling reaction. If he gives way to these moods or allows them to become still more autonomous, producing actual illness—headaches, indigestion, or the like—it means that he is following the renegade tendency in himself, hoping, albeit unconsciously, to return to that blissful state of infancy in which a beneficent fate, an all-loving mother, arranged matters for his comfort and well-being without his having to move a finger to help himself. . . . Under such conditions the situation can be saved only if the man is able to undertake a heroic quest and redeem his lost soul, the anima. It was in such a desperate situation that St. George set forth to conquer the dragon that held Egypt in thrall and to rescue the princess from her dire fate" (Harding, 273).

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GLOSSARY

ANDROMEDA In Greek mythology, the daughter of Cepheus, king of the Ethiopians, and his wife Cassiepeia, or Cassiope. Cassiepeia boasted that her beauty was greater than that of the Nereids, who complained to the god Poseidon. Poseidon flooded the realm and sent a sea monster to ravage it. Consulting the local oracle, the king learned that only the sacrifice of his daughter would appease the dragon, and accordingly Andromeda was fastened to a rock beside the sea. She was rescued by the hero Perseus, who killed the dragon and won her hand in marriage.

HORUS An ancient Egyptian god of the sky and of kingship, who absorbed a whole set of gods with hawk and falcon forms. His close links with the sun god and later with Isis and Osiris give rise to many new associations in which his martial and youthful aspects predominate.

PERSEUS In Greek mythology, a hero who is known for having removed the head of the Gorgon Medusa and for having rescued the princess Andromeda from the sea serpent.

BAHRĀM THE GOR KILLING THE DRAGON

Artist unknown   Manuscript illumination: ink, colors, and gold on paper

Length: 4⅞ in. (12.5 cm); width: 6 11/16 in. (17.5 cm)   1370–1371 CE   Site: Shiraz, Iran

Location: Topkapu Sarayi Library, Istanbul

Bahrām the Gor Killing the Dragon

Iran: Mongol

The exploits of Bahrām V, also known as Gor ("wild ass")—the pre-Islamic Iranian ruler, hero, and dragon slayer—are cataloged in the Iranian national epic, the Shāh-nāmah. *Here Bahrām is shown slaying a dragon from the land known as Turan, ancient Iran's greatest rival state. According to the text, the monster was a lionlike creature with female breasts and hair down to the ground, but this artist has depicted instead a more typical, and perhaps more familiar, Oriental sort of dragon.*

A horseman is about to shoot an arrow at a dragon twice his size. The horseman is clothed like a hunter and sits astride a black horse. In the background, three gentle slopes suggest a range of mountains in this highly abstract composition. Beyond the mountains is the blue sky. Filling much of the foreground is the serpentine body of the dragon. This dragon has four legs, a long black mane, and a green beard. Tufts of grass and small bushes placed here and there suggest vegetation.

Cultural Context

The *Shāh-nāmah,* the national epic of Iran, was written by Firdawsī of Tus in the eleventh century CE. Firdawsī drew on an earlier redaction of the traditional epic of Iran and on numerous other sources as well as oral tradition for his material. The *Shāh-nāmah,* as a whole, is a collection of episodes that provide a more or less continuous story of the Iranian empire from the creation of the world out of nothing to the downfall of the Sassanian rulers of Iran in the Arab conquest during the seventh century CE. The episode of Bahrām V killing the dragon is only a minor incident in the vast epic, but it provided a natural subject for an illustrator.

The epic, a long chain of episodes arranged chronologically, was considered by its contemporaries to be a historical account. Poetic formulas provide some unity to the text, as does the ancient Iranian metaphysical concept of a cosmic dualism between the absolutes of good and evil and the final victory of good. This dualism finds one expression in the description of the ancient struggle between Iran and Turan, reflecting probably the age-old antagonism between settled farmers and nomadic herders as well as the wars between Iran and Turkey waged since the year 628 CE.

The episode of the dragon occurs in the course of a hunting trip undertaken by Bahrām the Gor: "On the third day, when the sun lit up his throne and the world became white, mountain and sea taking on the hue of ivory, the valorous king of kings set out once more to hunt. He espied a dragon having the appearance of a male lion, on its head a mane as long as the creature's own height and on its chest two breasts like a woman's. He affixed to his bow a cord and a poplar-wood arrow which he let fly at once at the dragon's chest. Another arrow he shot through the creature's head while the blood and venom came spurting from its chest" (Levy, 309).

Bahrām the Gor is not the only dragon slayer in this Persian epic. A seventeenth-century edition of the poem that is now in the Cochran Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of

Art in New York depicts a similar scene in which the hero Goshtasp is slaying a dragon. Other dragon slayers in this tale are Rustam, who like Herakles had to perform seven labors, including the slaying of a great dragon capable of becoming invisible at will, and Esfandiyar (the son of King Goshtasp), who likewise performed seven labors, the second of which was to fight an enormous venomous dragon.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

In putting together his "history," Firdawsī used myths about the gods as well as legendary and historical material. Many a god is transformed into a hero or king in this way: that is, what was once mythical becomes "history" as the stories about the gods are attributed to human beings. The chief dragon slayer in Iranian tradition is originally a divinity.

The Iranian god Tištrya resembles his cousins Indra and Thor, the dragon slayers of Indian and Scandinavian mythology. All three have their roots in a common Indo-European ancestry. Tištrya is the god of the atmosphere, a storm god. He protects the vitality of the living cosmos. In order to do this, he must vanquish the demon of drought, Apaosha. Sometimes Tištrya is simply presented as the primeval producer of rain, seas, and lakes. Elsewhere, the emphasis is on his role in the annual cycle of nature as the giver of offspring, the one who defeats sorcerers, the lord of all the stars, and the protector of Aryan lands.

Tištrya serves as a divine model for numerous heroes in Iranian lore, and there seem to be no dearth of dragons to be fought. In Indo-European religions, the dragon usually symbolizes chaos, or the forces that oppose order, be it on a cosmic or psychic level. Ultimately, the dragon cannot be destroyed, or rather must be destroyed over and over again. This is because on the deepest level the chaos that the dragon represents is the matrix out of which life issues. To destroy this chaos would be to destroy the possibility of renewal and rebirth once the old forms of creation grow weak and decay.

The dragons that the individual must fight are those that represent aspects of the personal and collective unconscious that are hostile toward human culture and personality. Usually these unconscious dragons appear in projection outward onto the environment in the form of enemies. The task is to recognize the inner nature of the dragons and to assume a conscious attitude toward them, that is, to take up a moral role of being responsible for one's own feelings and fantasies.

> Not infrequently, when an individual is in danger of falling prey to unconscious psychic elements, the delicate balance between sanity and insanity depends on whether he can gain and hold on to insight into his condition. His physician has the difficult task of deciding whether or not to press him to recognize that his strange ideas and feelings are of subjective origin. If the patient can grasp this, he turns his face towards sanity. But these contents of the unconscious are so remote from his own conception of himself that he usually experiences them as though they were objective, coming into his consciousness from outside—that is, as though they originated in the machinations of other persons or in an uncanny world of spirits. For this reason there is always a grave risk that if the physician calls these projected and unassimilable elements by their rightful names he may cause a panic, and the attempt to reinforce the patient's conscious standpoint and sanity may precipitate the final plunge into the maelstrom of the unconscious that it was designed to prevent. If, however, the manoeuvre is successful, and the patient comes to recognize his strange ideas as phantasy or illusion, as projections that distort his understanding of the world about him, he will not become insane, even though the illusion, the

projected material, remains to be dealt with. He will recognize that it is a nonpersonal power of the unconscious that is assailing him—a dragon to be fought on the subjective plane and not an objective reality to be combated by overt action. (Harding, 274f.)

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GLOSSARY

FIRDAWSĪ Persian poet (c. 935–1026 CE). Firdawsī spent approximately thirty-five years composing his great epic, *Shāh-nāmah* ("Book of Kings"), which was first published in 1010. An account of Iranian kings both mythical and historical down to the Arab conquest of 652 CE, the work is one of the world's great epics.

Judith and Holofernes

Artist: Caravaggio Painting: oil on canvas Height: 57⅛ in. (145 cm); width: 78¾ in. (195 cm)
1598–1599 CE Site: Rome Location: Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, Rome

Judith and Holofernes

Italy: Renaissance

The story of Judith is one of the great short stories of ancient Hebrew literature. The beheading of the drunken warrior by the pious young widow was written to exhort a strict adherence to the Torah in order to gain God's faithful protection.

On the left is a bearded man lying in bed. His naked torso reveals his muscular strength. Behind him hangs the rich, burgundy cloth of the bed's canopy. He is being beheaded by a pretty young woman, who holds his hair in her left hand and a sword in her right. Beside the young woman, holding a bag of brown cloth, is an old woman. Her head is covered by a scarf; her expression is one of anger.

Cultural Context

The book of Judith, one of the apocryphal books of the Bible, was written in Hebrew around 150 BCE in Palestine. It describes the Assyrian king Nebuchadrezzar's attempt, through his general Holofernes, to punish the Jews. According to the story, they had refused to help him in his war against Arphaxad, the king of the Medes.

After Nebuchadrezzar had defeated Arphaxad in a great battle, he returned to Nineveh and secretly planned to take revenge on all the nations between Mesopotamia and Ethiopia that had refused to ally themselves with him. Accordingly, he sent his chief general, Holofernes, with a huge army to destroy them all. Holofernes' mission was especially abhorrent to the Jews because he intended to destroy the gods of all other nations so that Nebuchadrezzar alone might be worshiped.

After ravaging Mesopotamia, the Assyrian general pitched his camp near Judea and waited a month in order to regather his forces. Meanwhile, fearing that they might lose the Temple once again to invaders (the tale takes place after the destruction of the Temple and the return of the Jews from exile in Babylon), the Jews began to fortify the hill country of Judea, where, covering themselves with sackcloth and ashes, they began to pray to God for deliverance.

Holofernes kept his army in the camp, but his troops did seize the outlying wells and fountains, hoping by means of thirst and famine to defeat the Jews without a battle. They were about to succeed, for the Jewish authorities, giving in to the despair of the people, decided to surrender within five days if no help came from God. Judith, a wealthy, godly widow, refused to lose faith in her God, and she admonished the others for giving in. Then she traded her sackcloth for a fine dress and entered the enemy camp on a mission of guile.

Judith told the Assyrians that she wanted to advise their general so that he would be able to capture Judea without losing the lives of any of his men. She claimed to have come as a prophetess who had lost faith in her people because, in their despair, they were about to abandon the rules of their religion. For example, they were about to eat foods that are forbidden in the Torah. She made it clear to Holofernes that Judea could be defeated only if

and when the Jews sinned against their God, and she offered to pray that their sins might be uncovered.

Judith remained three days in the enemy camp. During this time, she made a point of traveling early in the morning with her maidservant to one of the fountains for ritual purification and prayer. On the fourth day, Holofernes invited her to dine with him in the company of his servants, and she did. Captivated by her beauty, the warrior drank more wine than he was used to and fell into a drunken sleep. His servants left Judith alone with their unconscious master, and she cut off his head with two blows of his sword. When her usual time for prayer arrived, she and her maidservant placed the head in a sack and returned to their city.

> When they had all gone and not a soul was left, Judith stood beside [Holofernes'] bed and prayed silently: "O Lord, God of all power, look favourably now on what I am about to do to bring glory to Jerusalem, for now is the time to help thy heritage and to give success to my plan for crushing the enemies who have risen up against us." She went to the bed-rail beside [Holofernes'] head and took down his sword, and stepping close to the bed she grasped his hair. "Now give me strength, O Lord, God of Israel," she said; then she struck at his neck twice with all her might, and cut off his head; . . . a moment later she went out and gave [Holofernes'] head to the maid, who put it in her food-bag. The two of them went out together, as they had usually done for prayer. Through the camp they went, and round that valley, and up the hill to Bethulia till they reached the gates. (*Judith* 12:16–13:10)

Upon returning to her home city of Bethulia, Judith displayed the head of the enemy general and related how she had deceived him and come away with his head before he had had the chance to touch her sexually. Judith told the townspeople to hang the head from the highest place on the city walls. The Jews then went out to give battle to the Assyrian army, which, demoralized, fled in panic and was slaughtered.

Caravaggio's painting depicts Judith striking the second blow to the head of Holofernes. Her maid waits beside her with an open sack to receive the severed head. The story of Judith was a popular theme for artists throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Her cunning and deceit provided a biblical model for treachery in warfare. Judith was usually portrayed either holding the severed head (as in the painting by Matteo di Giovanni) or striking the fatal blow.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Judith (whose name means "Jewess") is a wonderful heroine, perhaps even a personification of Israel itself. The story of Judith has not been considered canonical by all Jewish and Christian groups, not because of any unorthodoxy (quite the contrary, for Judith defends the Law and the traditions of her people), but because of its obviously literary rather than historical nature. The main theme of the story is the power of piety, or faith in God's Law and, ultimately, God's empowering of those who keep faith with him. Judith is pious. As a widow, she lives a life of fasting and renunciation even though she has inherited her husband's wealth. She never remarries, and just before dying she distributes her wealth to others. Above all, Judith never loses faith in God; in her view, it is God who slays Holofernes through her.

Viewed in the context of world religions, Judith resembles most of all the warrior goddesses of India and the ancient Near East. For example, the Indian goddess Durgā was born of the combined energies of the Indian male deities. They create her to combat a demon who has received the boon that he cannot be defeated by any male being. Durgā has many arms, and in each one she wields the weapon sacred to one of the gods. She rides a lion, and she is also very beautiful. Less attractive is Kālī, the demon killer who emerged from the forehead of Devī. In ancient Mesopotamia, a number of goddesses, among them Inanna and Ishtar, were similarly associated with the lion and with the power of aggression that this animal symbolizes. Even Aphrodite belonged originally to this group of goddesses, although by the time that she became popular in Greece, her warlike aspect was split off and associated with her lover Ares.

Judith may have had some connection with ancient Canaanite goddesses, that is, her story may be a retelling of an ancient myth. It has been reinterpreted, however, and serves the theology of early Hellenistic Judaism quite well. All the same, the power and the beauty of the ancient warrior goddesses are clearly present in the figure of this mortal heroine.

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GLOSSARY

BABYLONIAN EXILE, THE The forced exile of Jews by Nebuchadrezzar II, who conquered Jerusalem twice and both times deported its leaders to Babylon (in 597 and in 587 BCE).

TEMPLE, THE Also known as the Temple of Solomon or the Temple of Jerusalem, it was built around 968 BCE, during the reign of King Solomon. The design for the Temple was revealed by way of divine revelation, and in this way the God of Israel instructed his king how to provide him with a dwelling place and a site for his sacrifices.

TORAH (Heb., "teaching, law") The written Law, or the five books of Moses; also known as the Pentateuch. Believed to have been handed down to Moses on Mount Sinai, the Torah embodies the revelation central to Jewish life and religion.

Ānanda

Artist unknown   Sculpture: clay, with polychrome   Larger than life-size   Circa eighth century CE
Site/Location: Tun-huang cave-temple number 45, Kan-su Province, China

Ānanda

China: T'ang Period

One of Śākyamuni's ten (canonized) disciples and his most beloved, Ānanda epitomizes the intelligence and youthful wisdom of one who follows the Dharma as preached by the Buddha.

Ānanda has the shaven head of the Buddhist monk. His elongated earlobes indicate that formerly he was a prince or an aristocrat (once his ears had been weighed down by earrings). In traditional Buddhist lore the long earlobes, one of the signs of a Buddha, strengthen his ability to hear the cries of those in need. The floral-bordered shirt under his simple monk's robe is a Chinese addition. Ānanda has a plump, youthful face, downcast eyes, and a gentle smile; his hands are simply folded. The present image belongs to a group of nine figures centered on the Buddha and filling a niche in a cave-temple. Here Ānanda is turning slightly to the right (toward the central figure of Śākyamuni).

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Ānanda, a younger cousin of Śākyamuni, the historical Buddha, was one of his most beloved attendants from the monastic community (he is frequently mentioned in Hīnāyāna literature as the Buddha's favorite). Often, as in this grouping, Ānanda is paired with Mahākāśyapa and the two are arranged on either side of an image of the Buddha. After Mahākāśyapa, who is regarded as the patriarch of the saṃgha, or monastic community, Ānanda is considered the highest ranking of Śākyamuni's ten disciples. Thus, together, one elderly and the other young, they represent the earliest community of Buddhists. The image of Ānanda remained unchanged during the centuries when Buddhism was popular in China (from the sixth through the tenth centuries). He was also important elsewhere in the Buddhist world, and a particularly famous, oversize rendering of Ānanda, dating from the twelfth century, is preserved among the rock carvings at Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka.

Ānanda is said to have attended Śākyamuni for the twenty years before the latter's death (during the first twenty years of his ministry, the Buddha had not been personally attended). Ānanda was completely devoted to Śākyamuni, who trusted him fully. It is said that Ānanda looked after his master's room, robes, and alms bowl. When it became apparent that the Buddha's earthly existence was nearing its end, Ānanda wept and grieved. Śākyamuni consoled him with these words:

> Do not grieve, Ānanda, do not despair. Remember my words
> that from all that delights us, from all that we love, we must one day be separated.
> How can that which is born, how can that which is created, endure forever?
> How can that which is born be other than inconstant and perishable?
> Long have you honored me, Ānanda; you have been a devoted friend.
> Yours was a happy friendship, and you were faithful to it in thought, in word and in deed.
> You have done great good, Ānanda;
> continue in the right path, and you will be forgiven your former misdeeds.
>
> (Saddhatissa, 285)

The Buddha's words to Ānanda expressed central teachings of the new faith, namely, the doctrine of impermanence and the importance of adhering to the Dharma, or law. Later that night the master said, "Perhaps, Ānanda, you will think, 'We no longer have a Master.' But you must not think that. The law remains, the law that I taught you; let it be your guide, Ānanda, when I shall no longer be with you" (*ibid.*).

Gifted with an unfailing memory, Ānanda was commonly regarded as the most learned of Śākyamuni's disciples. In keeping with the Indian belief that all beings have passed through innumerable births and past lives (i.e., the doctrine of *karman*), the Buddhists saw no inconsistency in Ānanda's possessing both youth and great wisdom. Indeed, some beings were thought to be born into a state close to enlightenment, as Śākyamuni himself had been: a youthful person might be very wise, therefore, as a result of prior lives. Many of the most famous questions and dialogues that make up the legacy of the Buddha's teaching originated in conversation between himself and Ānanda. Using his master's own methods of argument, Ānanda succeeded in swaying the Buddha's mind toward a favorable answer on the question of whether women are capable of achieving enlightenment; and it was he who persuaded his master to create an order of nuns (Buddha so trusted Ānanda that he allowed him to enter the female quarters of the palace to instruct women in the Buddhist law).

In the larger ensembles of Buddhist figures that fill niches in Chinese cave temples, Ānanda and Mahākāśyapa represent monastic, or Hīnāyāna, Buddhism. Usually these two monks are placed so as to flank two *bodhisattva* figures who occupy the favored places immediately to the right and left of the central Buddha image. The alternate situation, with the monks next to the Buddha, is also common, but then they are usually smaller and farther back than the *bodhisattva*s on either side. Both hierarchical arrangements of the "Buddhist family" reflect the lower status accorded by the Chinese to the older Hīnāyāna school as opposed to Mahāyāna Buddhism. The Hīnāyāna values, which stress seeking enlightenment by means of personal effort, had come into conflict with the now popular devotionalism of the Mahāyāna school, in which *bodhisattva*s—that is, those who postpone their own attainment of *nirvāṇa* and, acting from compassion, seek to aid other sentient beings toward that goal—were worshiped as sacred models and guides.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Seen cross-culturally, Ānanda—the faithful disciple—represents a value that is found always close at hand for the hero. Especially in fairy tales, there will be animals or friends or servants that support the protagonist throughout his or her ordeals. In the economy of the individual personality, these may be what Marie-Louise von Franz has called positive shadows. A positive shadow is some unknown part of the psyche that supports the ego. It is a kind of double for the hero—closer perhaps to the hero's animal nature, often extremely loyal and affectionate.

The values associated with this fairy-tale figure, the hero's confederate, are embodied in a slightly different form in the good disciple. Here the relationship has shifted on its axis: in the fairy tale, the protagonist has a task. Something must happen, and the helper assists. But in the relationship between the master and the disciple, the goal is the attainment of equality between them. The disciple is "one in training," who will someday take the place of the master. In this context, Ānanda, faithful servant and humble disciple, embodies other values: especially his receptivity, which connects him so well to both tradition and the feminine.

Ānanda serves to link the Buddha and his followers in ages to come because Ānanda has assimilated so perfectly the teachings, indeed the spirit, of his teacher. In addition, it is he who recognizes the place of the feminine in this new experiment of Buddhism, persuading the Buddha to admit women to the *saṃgha.*

In the language of analytical psychology, Ānanda seems to represent some of the positive aspects of the Puer Aeternus, or eternal youth. His sensitivity and readiness to learn, his loyalty, his youthfulness in appearance, as preserved in tradition, point to this. Therefore, it is understandable that he would be linked to the Senex, or elder, Mahākāśyapa, a patriarch who serves by way of authority and by governing the growing community. Together they represent the two sides of the masculine principle in service of the Self.

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GLOSSARY

DHARMA (Skt., "law," "practice," "duty") In Hinduism, the moral order of the cosmos as a whole, hence the reality that dictates the way things ought to be. In Buddhism, the term *Dharma* refers to the Buddha's saving insight into the nature of ultimate reality, and in this way to his teachings about that reality.

ENLIGHTENMENT (Buddhist) The goal of every Buddhist is to attain enlightenment, that is, to break through the limitations of ordinary consciousness in order to experience reality directly and completely. Siddhārtha Gautama was called the Buddha, the "enlightened" or "awakened" one. The term *Buddha* derives from Sanskrit *bodhi,* or "awakening."

HĪNĀYĀNA (Skt., "little vehicle") One of the major divisions of Buddhist thought; also known as Theravāda ("way of the elders"). *Hīnāyāna* is a term coined by Mahāyāna Buddhists to distinguish this early school from their own. Hīnāyāna is actually an earlier form of Buddhism stressing the need to achieve enlightenment by one's own efforts.

MAHĀYĀNA (Skt., "great vehicle") A major division of Buddhist thought, Mahāyāna encompasses a wide variety of sects and practices. It is characterized by a belief in the *bodhisattvas* and their compassionate assistance as a means to enlightenment.

NIRVĀṆA (Skt., "blow out, extinguish") The spiritual goal of numerous Indian religions. In Hinduism, it is a reunion with the universal consciousness; in Buddhism, a reality beyond the distinctions even of self and consciousness; in Jainism, the soul's total liberation from the world of matter and the laws that govern it.

MAHĀKĀŚYAPA

Artist unknown   Sculpture: clay, with polychrome   Larger than life-size   Circa eighth century CE
Site/Location: Tun-huang cave-temple number 45, Kan-su Province, China

Mahākāśyapa

China: T'ang Period

Mahākāśyapa, a monk of venerable age and ascetic discipline—converted from traditional Hindu beliefs by Śākyamuni (the historical Buddha) himself—was one of the Buddha's most treasured disciples. As a representative of early monastic (Hīnāyāna) Buddhism, he is often paired in Chinese art with the beloved younger disciple Ānanda.

Mahākāśyapa ("Great Kāśyapa") is depicted as a man somewhat wizened by old age. His advanced years are suggested also by the stubble of his beard and his knitted brows. His bald pate, high cheekbones, and exposed ribs accentuate the characterization. Mahākāśyapa's austerity, seen in his emaciated frame, is offset somewhat by his subtle smile and downcast eyes, which cause him to seem absorbed in meditation.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Like Ānanda, Mahākāśyapa is a protagonist of the monastic aspect of Buddhism. One of Śākyamuni Buddha's ten original disciples, he himself represents old age (just as Ānanda symbolizes youth). Mahākāśyapa epitomizes the ancient Indian tradition of ascetic discipline as a means to spiritual achievement, and he is mentioned often as having been foremost in the practice of austerities. According to tradition, Mahākāśyapa presided over the so-called first council, or council of Rājagṛha, held shortly after the Buddha's death. For this reason, he is called the first patriarch of Buddhism. The image of Mahākāśyapa seen here is an especially eloquent portrayal of the wise elder whom the Chinese delighted in depicting as a figure of noble old age. There are similar pieces from the Northern Wei and T'ang periods preserved at Tun-huang and Lung-men cave-temple sites. Mahākāśyapa was popular in China as long as Mahāyāna Buddhism flourished there (from the sixth through the tenth centuries). From about the seventh century onward, portraits of monks became widespread in China and Japan; for these paintings, Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda served as prototypes.

In Chinese groupings of three, five, or more Buddhist figures, Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda are often paired, arranged on either side of a central image of the Buddha. (The detail shown here is from a group of nine figures.) Within the larger groupings, these two monks represent Hīnāyāna (monastic) Buddhism. Their presence together with figures of the *bodhisattva*s signifies a reconciliation, within a hierarchically constituted Buddhist "family," of the rival Hīnāyāna and Mahāyāna sects, just as between themselves Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda complemented each other in actuality, the older monk urging strict adherence to monastic discipline and the younger one pleading for a gentler, more accepting approach. Whereas in some earlier representations Mahākāśyapa is depicted as a weak old man, here he is the vigorous philosopher, still healthy and confident. This image may express the assimilation of certain Confucian values associated with respect for old age and the experience of the elderly.

In stories from the Vinaya Piṭaka (rules of monastic discipline), Mahākāśyapa (Pali, Kassapa) is always shown as wishing for stricter and more austere rules. Even the Buddha urges him to be more lenient.

> One evening, in the Bamboo Grove, the Master looked at Kassapa's frayed robe and said: "You are old now, Kassapa, and those frayed worn robes cannot be comfortable for your aging body. Why do you not take some of the robes that householders would gladly give you? And would you not stay near me and sometimes accept meals which householders offer, instead of subsisting on such scraps as you obtain when you take your bowl for alms?" Kassapa replied: "I have been a forest-dweller all my life and I have commended solitude to others. I have always said that it was weakness to partake of meals in houses rather than accept the scraps put into one's bowl. And as for clothes, a Brother is not concerned with what is put on his perishable body. I have always worn rags and three garments only, and my added years give no reason for changing now." Kassapa outlived the Master and called the first Council which gathered together his words. And the reason there were so many rules gathered together along with the sermons and the talks of the Master was because Kassapa liked rules and was strict himself in keeping them. (Saddhatissa, 122f.)

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

William James, in his *Varieties of Religious Experience,* suggests that among other things the mystical experience is purely spontaneous. It breaks in upon the person on its own impulse and in its own time. Probably most mystical experiences take place, therefore, at complete random. However, in numerous religious traditions that center around direct experience of the ultimate reality (or God, or *ātman,* or even so-called emptiness) attempts are made to induce mystical experience. Techniques are devised; disciplines are instituted; tradition is founded. And there is much evidence that these attempts have value, that whether or not they succeed in inducing the experience of the ultimate, they certainly offer a human framework for interpreting such happenings when they do occur. Where such frameworks are missing (as in our modern culture for the most part), the individual mystic may fear that he is she is insane.

In Buddhism, there is a teaching about the nonattachment to teachings, or nonattachment to dogma. The Buddhists, in a metaphorical reference to using the structure of a teaching in order to cross over to *nirvāṇa,* speak of crossing over the river in a raft. Once one has attained the goal, the raft is expendable and should not be carried about as an extra burden. In this teaching, the relative value of technique and discipline in spiritual life is maintained. Indeed, the Buddha himself had practiced all of the disciplines and austerities of traditional Hinduism, but discovered that they did not lead to enlightenment by themselves. Hence, his way is the Middle Way, in which rules and techniques have a place but are not at the center.

Mahākāśyapa represents this ability in human nature to concretize and guide experience. Without his presence, much that the Buddha taught might have been lost. But in the stories he is always set off, or balanced, by Ānanda—young, warm, spontaneous, and in his own right a carrier of tradition (he memorized all of the Buddha's sermons). In the language of analytical psychology, whereas Ānanda represents the Puer Aeternas, or eternal youth, in Mahākāśyapa we have a noble example of the Senex, or Wise Old Man.

James Hillman writes extensively about this archetype of the Senex and Puer and concludes that "the senex is there at the beginning as an archetypal root of ego-formation. It makes consolidation of the ego possible, giving its rule as an identity within fixed borders, its tendency to omnivorous rapacious aggrandizement . . . through the principle of association with consciousness, and its perpetuation through habit, memory, repetition, and time. These qualities—identity of border, association with consciousness, continuity—we use to describe the ego, and these qualities are all given by . . . the senex" (Hillman, 322f.). Hillman also reminds us of the unity of Senex and Puer: if the Puer inspires the blossoming of things, it is the Senex that presides over the harvest. But life is an ongoing interplay of the two, each giving birth to its opposite.

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GLOSSARY

BODHISATTVA A future Buddha; one whose being or essence (*sattva*) is "awakened" (*bodhi*), having already perceived reality directly and completely in this life. In Mahāyāna, the *bodhisattva* represents the Buddhist ideal of compassion. Having attained enlightenment, the *bodhisattva* renounces *nirvāṇa* in order to help bring humanity and all other sentient beings to this state.

HĪNĀYĀNA (Skt., "little vehicle") One of the major divisions of Buddhist thought. Also known as Theravāda ("way of the elders"). *Hīnāyāna* is a term coined by Mahāyāna Buddhists to distinguish this early school from their own. Hīnāyāna is actually an earlier form of Buddhism stressing the need to achieve enlightenment by one's own efforts.

MAHĀYĀNA (Skt., "great vehicle") A major division of Buddhist thought, Mahāyāna encompasses a wide variety of sects and practices. It is characterized by a belief in the *bodhisattvas* and their compassionate assistance as a means to enlightenment.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Artist unknown Relief: marble Height: 28.3 in. (72 cm); Length: 87.8 in. (223 cm) 375–400 CE

Site: Rome (from the Catacomb of Praetextatus) Location: Museo Pio Cristiano, Rome

The good shepherd

Roman: Late Imperial

The good shepherd, the grapevine, and the young erotes *are all symbols connected with the protection and renewal of life. Here they are presented together on the sarcophagus of a Roman Christian as a sign of the resurrection to come.*

In the center of this marble relief stands a shepherd on a raised platform decorated with two winged beasts. He carries his staff in his right hand and with his left secures the lamb that is balanced on his shoulders. He is surrounded by grapevines and a troop of *erotes,* who are harvesting the grapes, preparing wine, and tending sheep.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This elaborately carved fourth-century sarcophagus, an expensive purchase at the time, indicates how far Christianity had spread into the upper classes of the Roman empire after the conversion of Emperor Constantine I. With the influx of the Roman elite into the Christian church came not only wealth and political power but also Hellenistic symbols and values.

The harvesters depicted on the sarcophagus strongly resemble the *erotes* that were frequently carved into Greek and Roman sarcophagi. The god Eros, a young god of erotic love, was the son of Aphrodite. At first he was usually portrayed as a winged youth decked out in martial costume, but gradually he was depicted in ever younger form, until by the late Hellenistic period he was represented by one or more naked winged infants. The presence of *erotes* in a funerary context points to the life-giving powers that lie behind the symbolism of this god and, further back in time, that of his mother, Aphrodite.

Unlike the pagan *erotes* on earlier sarcophagi, who are often depicted holding upended torches (symbolizing night and sleep), these young harvesters gather grapes and make wine in the broad daylight. Such christianized *erotes* are forerunners of the angels in medieval iconography. The shepherd holding his staff, a sheep draped over his shoulders, represents Jesus. Panpipes, often played by ancient shepherds, also hang from the vine. Jesus is described in the New Testament as the good shepherd who was willing to give his life for his sheep:

> I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hireling, when he sees the wolf coming, abandons the sheep and runs away, because he is no shepherd and the sheep are not his. Then the wolf harries the flock and scatters the sheep. The man runs away because he is a hireling and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep and my sheep know me—as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . The Father loves me because I lay down my life, to receive it back again. No one has robbed me of it; I am laying it down of my own free will. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to receive it back again; this charge I have received from my Father. (*John* 10:11–18)

Not only does this passage indicate that Jesus is the Messiah, who cares for and protects the people of God; it also refers to his death and resurrection, the experience of which lies at the center of Christian faith. The savior who protects his followers even from death is the central symbol that is so fittingly placed on this sarcophagus.

Another symbol for Jesus is the vine: "I am the vine, and you the branches. He who dwells in me, as I dwell in him, bears much fruit; for apart from me you can do nothing. He who does not dwell in me is thrown away like a withered branch. The withered branches are heaped together, thrown on the fire, and burnt" (*John* 15:5f.). It is easy to see how this metaphor found a place in funerary symbolism, for the threat of being cut off and cast into the fire is the same threat that is found in the imagery of damnation. Clinging to the good shepherd, as a branch clings to the vine, the Christian hopes to be resurrected to eternal life on the day of judgment.

The Christian symbolism of the good shepherd has roots in the Hellenistic tradition of naming the good king "the good shepherd." Here the emphasis was on the king who distinguished himself from the tyrant. For example, in his fourth discourse on kingship, which he probably delivered to the emperor Trajan in 103, Dio Cocceianus pictures the good king as a shepherd of his people: "Homer . . . commending some king . . . calls him a 'shepherd of peoples.' For the shepherd's business is simply to oversee, guard, and protect flocks, not, by heavens, to slaughter, butcher, and skin them. It is true that at times a shepherd, like a butcher, buys and drives off many sheep; but there is a world of difference between the functions of butcher and shepherd, practically the same as between monarchy and tyranny" (*Fourth Discourse on Kingship,* 43 ff.).

The imperial notion of a good shepherd implied prudent management. According to the imperial biographer Suetonius, the emperor Tiberius reminded his Roman governors who wanted to superimpose burdensome taxes on their provinces that it was the part of a good shepherd to shear his flock, not to skin them. Christian symbolism takes the image of the shepherd further: Christ gives up his life for the flock (the church); he becomes the sacrificial lamb.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The images of sheep and grapevine belong to ancient levels of symbolism that go back to the Neolithic revolution, that is, to the domestication of plants and animals by human societies. The sheep brought both food and clothing to its domesticators. Considering its defenselessness and relatively high fecundity (and hence availability and expendability), it is easy to see how the idea of the sheep as a sacrificial animal came into being and became widespread in Judaism, ancient Greece, ancient China, and elsewhere. From the vine came food and the ritual beverage, wine. Wine, like all other intoxicating beverages, has been associated with the blood of the gods. To drink wine, mead, or ale is to become temporarily divine, infused with the supernatural vitality of the drink.

Together, the sheep and the grapevine provide the basis for ongoing life, including ritual sacrifice and celebration. The caretakers in the scene depicted here draw in additional symbolism. The *erotes* belong both to the ancient symbolism of Eros, the god of love, and to the eternal archetype of the divine child. Indeed, they seem to resemble the sheep as symbols of innocence, gentleness, inoffensiveness, and collectivity. The shepherd seems to be con-

nected with two symbol systems as well. He is the hero, the mortal who must fight lions and wolves in order to protect that which is dependent and defenseless; he reminds us of the knight who slays the dragon to rescue the maiden in distress. And he is also, like the king, a leader.

In Christianity, the flock of sheep has become one metaphor for the church as a whole. The sheep represent the actual dependency that exists in the creature's relation to the creator. The acknowledgment of this dependency is an essential component in the religious attitude. There is, however, a dark side to the symbol of the sheep. The sheep will follow their leader so mindlessly that they will even follow the ram if he falls off a cliff. Marie-Louise von Franz underscores this aspect of a collective attitude that is sheeplike:

> As you know, Christ is the Shepherd and we are the sheep. This is a paramount relevant image in our religious tradition and one which has created something very destructive, namely, that because Christ is the shepherd and we the sheep, we have been taught by the Church that we should not think or have our own opinions, but just believe. If we cannot believe in the resurrection of the body—such a mystery that nobody can understand it—then one must just believe it. Our whole religious tradition has worked in that direction, with the result that if now another system comes, say Communism or Nazism, we are so taught that we should shut our eyes and not think ourselves, that we are trained to just believe the Führer or Khrushchev. We are really trained to be sheep. (von Franz, lecture 2, p. 14)

Finally, the image of Christ as the divine shepherd connects the Christian era with its predecessor, Hellenism and the religion of Orpheus. In that tradition, the god is life-supporting and comforting rather than sacrificial: even though the shepherd is willing to sacrifice himself for his sheep, he does not have to do so unless they are attacked. This down-to-earth quality provides a counterbalance to Christ's excessively spiritual perfection.

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GLOSSARY

CONSTANTINE I Also known as Constantine the Great; emperor of the Roman empire from 306 CE until his death in 337. A convert to Christianity, he issued with Licinius the Edict of Milan (313), extending rights and toleration to Christians. It was Constantine I who called the great Council of Nicaea (325) at which the Nicene Creed was adopted.

DIO COCCEIANUS Later called Dio Chrysostomos; Greek rhetorician who lived in Rome (c. 40–112 CE). Banished (82–96) by Diocletian, during which time he adopted the philosophy of the Cynics.

EROTES In religious art, winged infant boys that represent Eros or his followers. (The term is derived from the plural of the Greek name of the god.) Also known as cupids.

SUSANNA AND THE ELDERS

Artist: Artemisia Gentileschi   Painting: oil on canvas   Height: 67 in. (170 cm); width: 47⅝ in. (121 cm)   1610 CE
Site: Italy   Location: Collection of Dr. Karl Graf von Schönborn, Schloss Weissenstein, Pommersfelden, West Germany

Susanna and the Elders

Italy: Renaissance

Two lascivious old men, spying on Susanna at her bath, threaten that unless she consents to their demands they will accuse her of adultery. Susanna refuses, however, preferring death by stoning. Brought to trial, she is saved by divine intervention and so becomes a symbol of the salvation that awaits those who put their full trust in God.

A woman, naked except for a white towel that partially covers her left thigh, is seated on a stone bench with a high back. Leaning over the bench from behind are the upper bodies of two men. They appear to be fully dressed, their cloaks covering all but their hands and faces. The men have their heads together as if plotting. One of them seems to be whispering to the woman, with his left hand to his mouth. The woman turns her head away from the men, her countenance expressing some pain. Her arms are lifted in a gesture of self-protection. The dark mood of the encounter is emphasized by the storm clouds that hover just above the two men.

Cultural Context

The story of Susanna and the two elders appears in the apocryphal book of *Susanna* (second or first century BCE). Whether this text was written first in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek is debated. In both the Septuagint and the Vulgate, slightly differing versions of the tale are included as the thirteenth chapter of *Daniel.* A short text of only 64 verses, it relates the story of a false accusation of adultery brought against Susanna by two elders.

The tale is set in the Babylon of the exile. Two elders, judges of the Jewish community, fall madly in love with Susanna when they see her walking in her husband's garden. One hot day, the two elders hide themselves and spy on her as she washes in the garden. As soon as her slave girls leave, they proposition her.

"Look!" they say, "the garden doors are shut, and no one can see us. We are burning with desire for you, so consent and yield to us. If you refuse, we shall give evidence against you that there was a young man with you and that was why you sent your maids away." Susanna replies that it is better for her to suffer the consequences of their slander than to sin in the sight of God.

The next day, the two elders falsely accuse Susanna of adultery before an assembly of the people, which then condemns her to death. Susanna cries out to God, who intervenes at once by sending to her aid a devout young man by the name of Daniel (sometimes identified with the prophet). Daniel faces the assembly and denounces the two elders for lying. Questioning them separately, he asks each one under which tree he saw Susanna together with her lover. One answers that it was a clove tree; the other, a yew. When Daniel exposes the two men and their lies, they are executed by the assembly.

This painting captures the moment when the two elders proposition Susanna. Though highly stylized, the portrayal is anatomically realistic in Renaissance fashion. The lust of the elders is evident, as is Susanna's rejection of their advances.

The motif used here was popular already in the early Christian period. For example, Susanna is depicted as a lamb flanked by two wolves in a fresco dating from about 350 CE in the cemetery of Praetextatus in Rome. The story of Susanna was illustrated in catacomb fresco paintings and on Roman and Gallic sarcophagi from the second to the fourth centuries. It appears also in the frescoes of Baldassare Croce (early seventeenth century) in the church of Santa Susanna in Rome. In the ancient Christian church, Susanna's justification was taken as a symbol for the soul's deliverance from the persecutions of Satan and as a symbol for the Christian martyrs who suffered persecution under Roman emperors. The story retained this allegorical meaning throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The trial of Susanna as recorded in this story reveals the participation of God in the affairs of humankind. Accused, Susanna appeals to God, and justice prevails only by virtue of God's intervention, that is, by his raising up of the spirit of Daniel, who then uncovers the truth of the situation. The tale is not really an exceptional one, since it is a common practice in many times and places for human beings to appeal to the gods, or to God, for guidance in matters of law. Seeking divine assistance in determining the guilt or innocence of an accused person is a long-standing tradition in Western culture and elsewhere. It is from this tradition that we have the term *ordeal,* referring to a divinatory practice that serves a judiciary function. The word has been brought into the English language from the medieval term *ordalium,* the latinized form of the German *Urteil* ("judgment"). Dario Sabbatucci explains the two kinds of judiciary ordeals. The first type involves techniques of divination to determine guilt or innocence. For example, among the Shoshoni, a medicine man would take two hairs from the head of the accused and place them in his own tent. If, after one day, they disappeared, it was regarded as proof of the person's innocence; if, however, they remained in place, this was considered proof of guilt. The second form of ordeal involves the accused more immediately. Ordeals of the second type place the accused in mortal risk. If he or she escapes death, this is proof of innocence; if not, the death is considered just punishment. Common ordeals of this kind are the trial by poison, the trial by water, and the trial by fire.

The oldest body of laws that includes judiciary ordeals is the Code of Hammurabi from Babylonia (1792–1750 BCE). It prescribes the so-called ordeal of the river. If a woman was accused of either witchcraft or adultery, she was thrown into a river. If she drowned, she was believed to have been guilty, and if she survived, she was absolved. It is noteworthy that according to the evidence available from comparative studies of judiciary ordeals these two crimes outnumber all others. The story of Susanna must be understood against this ancient tradition of ordeal, and the way in which she is vindicated must be seen as an interpretation that would carry with it an important theological message.

Ever since the Code of Hammurabi, the "burden of proof" had been imposed solely on the accused and not, as we would expect, on the accuser. Apparently, Susanna's ordeal is death by stoning. However, with the appearance of Daniel, the process is reversed and the accusers are brought to trial. Perhaps this innovation of cross-examining the prosecutors required divine support and the cross-examiner was necessarily recognized as inspired by God. We can only speculate, since the story itself existed originally quite independent of any specific literary context. It is clear, however, that what is being expressed here is the reinterpretation and reformulation of an ancient Near Eastern legal tradition.

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GLOSSARY

BABYLONIAN EXILE, THE The forced exile of Jews by Nebuchadrezzar II, who conquered Jerusalem twice and both times deported its leaders to Babylon (in 597 and 587 BCE).

DANIEL Hero of the biblical book that bears his name, Daniel was a Jew who lived in Babylon at the time of the Babylonian exile. He achieved notoriety in the royal court for his dream interpretations and cryptography and for his salvation from death in a lion's pit.

SEPTUAGINT (from the Latin, "seventy") The name given to a Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures translated during the Hellenistic period by "seventy" Hebrew scholars. The Septuagint was later adopted by Greek-speaking Christians.

VULGATE A Latin edition of the Bible prepared by Jerome in the fourth century and serving as the authorized version for the Roman Catholic Church.

AMENHOTEP SON OF HAPU

Artist unknown Sculpture: black granite Height: 51.4 in. (130.5 cm); width: 31.1 in. (79 cm)
Depth: 28.5 in. (72.5 cm) Reign of Amenhotep III (1403–1365 BCE), probably latter part Site: north side of the entrance to the tenth pylon, Karnak, Thebes, Egypt Location: JE 44862, Luxor Museum, Egypt

Amenhotep son of hapu

Egypt: New Kingdom, Eighteenth Dynasty

The learned Amenhotep is shown in the characteristic cross-legged posture of the scribe, with a papyrus on his lap and a palette over his shoulder. Venerated as an intercessor for the pious, he was eventually deified. The great reverence accorded a man of learning by the ancient Egyptians is suggested by this sculpture, which is less an individual portrait than a conventional rendering of the scribe as a type, that is, as a specialist whose duties might range from administration to design and engineering.

Amenhotep's kilt forms a flat surface for writing. His head is inclined toward his text. He wears an elaborate wig associated with the upper classes. His right hand once held a stylus (missing). His left hand steadies the papyrus roll. Near his left hand is a clam shell that holds his pigment. His advanced age is suggested by the three folds of skin around his torso and by his sagging breasts. A palette, a sign of the office of scribe, is draped casually over his left shoulder. His other shoulder is inscribed with the cartouche of Nebma'atre, throne-name of his patron, the reigning pharaoh, Amenhotep III. The platform on which he sits is inscribed with his name (Amenhotep Son of Hapu), titles, and biographical data.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This votive sculpture representing Amenhotep Son of Hapu, was placed in a strategic position at Karnak. Although the sculpture depicts a historical person and was made during his lifetime, it is not a portrait in the modern sense, but tends toward the conventional iconography of the scribe. The pharaoh's scribe was in some ways equivalent to a present-day minister, or secretary, of cultural and economic affairs. Especially as Egypt depended upon an accurate recording of the levels of the annual Nile flood—both for economic planning and for setting social policy—those who kept records held an important place in society.

Amenhotep was born circa 1450 BCE in the Delta city of Athribis. He was the son of Hapu, a nobleman, and Lady Itu. At fifty he was asked to resign from his position as chief priest of the local god Horus Khentikheti in order to come to Thebes to work for the court. An architect, he designed the temple of Amun at Soleb in Numbia, built for Amenhotep III's first jubilee, and he no doubt also designed others for the second and third jubilees of that king as well. His primary title was First Scribe; in addition he served as steward for the princess Sit-Amun, one of the king's favorite daughters. In organizing the king's jubilee celebrations, Amenhotep assumed a role performed usually by the king's son. He died in the thirty-fourth year of the reign of Amenhotep III, having served thirty years at court.

The deification of Amenhotep occurred in stages over a period of more than a thousand years. It should be remembered that deification of persons, royal or otherwise, was fundamentally contrary to Egyptian custom and practice (unlike the Greek or Roman attitude in this respect). During the Old Kingdom (c. 2665–2135 BCE), the architect Imhotep had received honors and was eventually deified. Besides Imhotep, only Amenhotep achieved

a nationwide cult and posthumous deification. During the Ramesside period, that is, 1305–1080 BCE, various deceased kings and queens enjoyed popular cults among villages of the workmen who built and decorated their tombs in the necropolis of Thebes, but their cults were essentially local and short-lived.

Although numerous monuments were dedicated to the honor of Amenhotep during his life, actual deification was achieved only during the Ptolemaic era (323–30 BCE). Ptolemy VI built a temple at Deir al-Madinah for him, and in a document of that era he is referred to as the "great god." Under Ptolemy VIII, a temple dedicated to both Imhotep and Amenhotep was built in the ruins of the temple of Hatshepsut in Deir al-Bahri. In it Amenhotep is depicted with his mother, now considered divine as well, and the god Amun is designated as his father.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

In this image Amenhotep is depicted in his original, primary role as scribe. Perhaps this ancient scribe signals the beginning of the value ascribed in Western culture to the written word. The written word was believed to be inspired, that is, revealed to the scribe by a god. As a result, both the writings attributed to Homer and the Hebrew scriptures came to be known in the ancient Mediterranean world as sacred books. The New Testament and the Qur'ān claimed the same kind of sacred authority, that is, inspired by God.

Eventually even the term *Logos* (Greek for "word") came to be hypostasized, that is, personified, as a divine savior both in Greek philosophy and in Christian theology, where Logos becomes another name for the Christ. Perhaps the experience of Helen Keller, who was both blind and deaf, renders the divine mystery of the word more accessible. For she would often say that only when she had first understood a word—in her case, the word *water*—as a symbol uniting a diversity of experiences into one category did she come to "see" the world as a human being. In other words, the experience of language is so intimately connected with the capacity for human consciousness that it is felt to be truly divine.

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Duality and Reconciliation

"One who has a man's wings
And a woman's also
Is in himself a womb of the world"
And, being a womb of the world,
Continuously, endlessly,
Gives birth;
One who, preferring light,
Prefers darkness also
Is in himself an image of the world
And, being an image of the world,
Is continuously, endlessly
The dwelling of creation;
One who is highest of men
And humblest also
Is in himself a valley of the world,
And, being a valley of the world,
Continously, endlessly
Conducts the one source
From which vessels may be usefully filled.

—Lao-tzu

A PAIR OF INTERTWINED SERPENTS

Artist unknown   Miniature painting: gouache on paper, polychrome   6 × 4 in. (15 × 10 cm)
Eighteenth Century CE   Site: Basohli, Punjab, India   Location: Collection of Ajit Mookerjee, New Delhi

A PAIR OF INTERTWINED SERPENTS

India: Rajput

The two serpents intertwine as a symbol of the relationship between two opposites: the sun and the moon, on the cosmic level, and within the sacred physiology of the subtle body, the solar nāḍī *and lunar* nāḍī, *as they are described in the texts of Tantric Hinduism. The opposites manifest themselves in the cosmos and within the individual psyche; they reflect the complementary aspects of the divinity out of which all things flow.*

This painting on paper depicts two long, thin, black and light gray serpents against a bright red ground. The creatures cross over each other twice in sinuous but regular curves. Their bodies form a nearly perfect circle in the center of the painting. A second circle is made as their heads nearly meet at the top of the picture, the whites of their small but intense eyes standing out prominently as they stare at each other. The brilliant red background gives a fiery glow to the entire work.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This manuscript painting is a *yantra,* or sacred diagram, and it is intended as a symbolic object of personal meditation. The symbolism of the two snakes presented here probably derives from the Tantric traditions of India. Tantrism designates a symbolic view that has its roots in non-Vedic Indian religion. The term *tantra* is Sanskrit for "warp" or "loom" and refers more specifically to the texts of Tantrism, not to the content.

The central view that pervades this vast, diverse body of texts and rites is an interpretation of the nature of ultimate reality. In this view, the Ultimate is one and transcends all duality. At the same time, it comprises two aspects, the masculine and the feminine. The conjunction of these two aspects is the first and necessary step within God toward the unfolding of creation, and it is the feminine principle that activates the process. This is Śakti, the first cause of all that takes place. Activated by her impulse for manifestation, the cosmos comes into being; the energy of Śakti pervades the universe, and it is through her that the universe is returned to its origins in the divinity.

The process of creation is seen in terms of emanation. What exists potentially in the godhead is transformed from the subtle to the gross, through a series of stages. The goal of the adept is a return to the transcendent unity of the Ultimate. This is done by aligning oneself with the elements of the cosmos, embodying the creation myth in one's own body, and reversing the process. Various schools interpret both the details of creation and the process of reintegration differently, but the broad strokes that delineate the Tantric way of life are discernible in spite of these variations.

The path of liberation for the Tantric adept involves the secret initiation by one who is already a master. Yogic meditation is a primary means to cosmicizing the body, setting the stage for the process of liberation. *Yantra*s are used together with *mantra*s (sacred sounds), *maṇḍala*s, and *mudrā*s. These symbols represent spiritual realities that are realized—consciously embodied—during the practice of meditation. The two serpents in this image

represent the sun and the moon spiraling around the world axis. At the same time, they represent components of the subtle body, "the two nerve currents flowing on the left and right sides of the spinal cord through the two *nadis,* or nerves, named Ida and Pingala. The former, being cool, is said to resemble the pale lustre of the moon; the latter, being hot, is likened to the radiance of the sun" (Krishna, 105).

Through the power of meditation, *kuṇḍalinī* (the name given to the cosmic energy, or *śakti,* as it is present both in the cosmos and in human beings), which lies like a serpent coiled asleep at the base of the spine, is awakened. She rises up through the central channel (called *suṣumnā*) and passes through several centers of the subtle body (*cakras*), in the process awakening different levels of consciousness. At the summit, she joins in union with her masculine counterpart, the supreme god who abides in the topmost center (identified with the top of the skull). The adept experiences the ecstasy of that union and participates simultaneously in the transcendence of the Ultimate, achieving in this way liberation in this life.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The two snakes in this image represent complementary forms of divine energy. The same forms are represented by the sun and the moon, the male and the female, heat and cold. Central in this symbolism is the notion of energy. In the Hindu worldview, the term for this energy is *praṇa,* which means "breathing forth." It may refer to the Ultimate as the transcendent source of all life, to life in general, to the life force of a specific being, to respiration, to air, and to the life organs. It is the creative force that underlies and pervades all being. In this sense, *praṇa* is related to the Greek *pneuma* ("spirit") and the Melanesian *mana* ("power"). All of these terms refer to an invisible force that moves and empowers cosmic life.

That this energy should be represented in two of its aspects by two snakes is not surprising, since the primary divinity involved in this ritual process is also depicted as a snake, that is, Kuṇḍalinī. Western religions tend to symbolize spirit as a bird, especially a dove or an eagle. In this way, they stress the freedom and transcendence of the spirit. However, the snake is also a common symbol for spirit, because it is believed to possess the powers of healing and immortality. Shedding its skin, the snake appears to undergo rebirth. Further, it is believed to have a special connection with the life-giving powers of the earth in which it dwells.

In his study of Kuṇḍalinī, C. G. Jung emphasizes the value that traditional spiritual disciplines offer the individual during the process of psychological development. The traditions provide both a symbolic context and the techniques necessary for integrating activated unconscious material (dreams, visions, physical symptoms, etc.). In his commentary on Gopi Krishna's personal experience of the awakening of Kuṇḍalinī within his own body, James Hillman restates the importance of an ideational context for psychological experience.

> To our loss in the West, we are so lacking in an adequate context that we do indeed go to pieces at the eruption of the unconscious, thereby justifying the psychiatric view. Fortunately, Jung's analytical psychology gives in its account of the process of individuation a context within which these events can be meaningfully comprehended. Fortunately, too, Jung studied as a psychologist this branch of yoga. He called the Kuṇḍalinī an example of the instinct of individuation.

> Therefore, comparisons between its manifestations and other examples of the individuation process (e.g. alchemy) provide a psychologically objective knowledge without which there would be no way of taking hold (comprehending, *begreifen*) what is going on. Very often, therefore, it is of utmost value during a period of critical psychological pressure in which the unconscious boils over, to provide the sufferer with psychological knowledge. (Krishna, 95)

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GLOSSARY

MAṆḌALA (Skt., "circle") In Hinduism and Buddhism, a circular diagram. It can serve as a ground plan, as a symbolic view of a centered universe, or as an aid to meditation.

MANTRA (Skt., "vehicle of thought") A sacred sound that embodies divine power. The theory and practice of *mantra*s goes back to the Hindu Vedas. The use of *mantra*s is elaborated and intensified in Hindu and Buddhist forms of Tantrism.

MUDRĀ (Skt., "stamp, mark, seal") In Hinduism and Buddhism, *mudrā*s are symbolic hand gestures that serve as ritual guarantees for the efficacy of a ritual act.

ŚAKTI (Skt., "energy") In Hinduism, the feminine creative force, often personified as the female consort of a male deity.

Eṣu shrine figures

Artist unknown Sculpture: wood, shells, gourds, metal Height: 25 in. (63.5 cm) Probably nineteenth or twentieth century CE Site: Oyo region, Nigeria Location: Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Robert C. Magoon

Eṣu shrine figures

Nigeria: Yoruba

This pair of male and female figures gathers into a single image all of the iconographic symbolism associated with Eṣu, who is the messenger of the gods, the conveyer of sacrifices, the guardian of sacred rites, and the trickster of the Yoruba pantheon.

The figures of a man and a woman covered with necklaces of cowrie shells, black pod shells, gourds, and divers items from everyday life: miniature hoe handles, a leather club with a brass ring, a fly whisk, a metal bow and arrow, a split piece of wood, calabash fragments, combs, ladles, a short length of chain, and brass bells. On the right, the head of a male, on the left that of a female. Both bear the same hairstyle, consisting of a series of three tiny medicinal gourds. The figures are linked by a leather thong, by which they could be hung above a shrine dedicated to the god Eṣu or worn around the necks of devotees when they dance in the annual festival.

Cultural context

Eṣu, also called Ẹlẹgba or Elegbara ("owner of the power"), is one of the most important of the *oriṣa* (gods) in the Yoruba pantheon. In contrast to the high god, Ọlọrun, worship of the *oriṣa* is direct, local, and intimate. Several hundred *oriṣa* are believed to exist, and each has a priest, cult, and corpus of ritual practice associated with it. Devotees are chosen by being "mounted" in spirit possession, or by manifesting signs that an Ifa divination priest (*babalawo*) or initiate recognizes as the claims of a particular deity. While one *oriṣa* usually has predominant influence over an individual worshiper's life, often a number of deities will play a role at one time or another, and the devotee must be attentive to their multiple claims. Crucial here is the ability to perceive, recognize, and respond to the imprint of divinity in this world. Worship of the *oriṣa* does not entail neglect of Ọlọrun; devotions directed to them are also sent to the high god.

The youngest and cleverest of the deities, Eṣu, like many other African tricksters, combines within himself a multiplicity of roles, underlining his mastery of sacred transformation. He is the god of potentiality; as the Yoruba proverb says, "Eṣu turns feces into treasure." His sign is above all that of the crossroads, the crucial point where the sacred and the profane, truth and falsehood, intersect. As a trickster, Eṣu delights in practical jokes, the essence of invention and confusion. In the words of Robert D. Pelton, such tricksters "strike up absurd conversations between laundresses and goddesses, sex and death, flatulence and spiritual power, breaking the univocal by the anomalous and so opening human life—bodily, daily, defined—to its sacramental immensity" (Pelton, 1987, 46).

The divine messenger and possessor of *ase,* the creative force that makes all things possible, Eṣu is linked to divination and sacrifice. Without him, there could be no communication between the human and divine realms. He delivers sacrifices prescribed by the *babalawo* to Ọlọrun and to other deities. Similarly, if any of the *oriṣa* wish to perform a service for those on earth, the deity must first go to Eṣu, who "opens the road" for them. Eṣu is also the divine enforcer, punishing those who fail to perform the ritual obligations recommended by the *babalawo* and rewarding those who do so. Beside serving Ọlọrun and the other deities

by causing trouble to humans who offend or ignore them, he delights also in creating havoc among the *orișa* themselves. Regardless of what *orișa* has claimed them, all Yoruba believers pray frequently to Eșu so that he will leave them alone. In recognition of his role in facilitating contact with the divine, a part of every sacrifice offered to Ọlọrun and the other *orișa* is set aside for Eșu.

In the image depicted here, the Eșu figures are draped in cowries (a sign of trade and wealth) as an emblem of honor. The sculptor has aptly summarized Eșu's character in his rendering of the face. The features are comically enlarged, yet the protuberant eyes and bulging lips, while absurd, bespeak his prodigious powers of perception and communication. Eșu's penetrating gaze reflects his ability to express a larger truth by injecting cosmic laughter and ritual disorder into the most deeply profound aspects of Yoruba religion.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Eșu shrine sculptures of this type always consist of paired female and male figures. Although many tricksters are androgynous and capable of changing back and forth between male and female forms, this couple may represent devotees of the god rather than two of his "forms." Eșu, the Yoruba trickster, does play a role in the relationship between the sexes, for he is above all the archetypal "go-between" in this tradition: it is he who mediates between the divine and human realms, and it is he who mediates the sexual relationship between a man and a wife. In both cases, we see the impact of his power to "open the road."

> His power is revealed in his ability to carry the sacrifices of men to the gods, and it is expressed in the sexual imagery associated with him. . . . Sexual vitality, while making male and female acutely aware of their radical difference, is the mediating power that overcomes the opposition. It is a gracious, life-creating power when honored. It is mischievous, even destructive, when it is dishonored:
>
> Eshu, you are the giver of gifts.
> Eshu laughs as the impotent man sweats,
> while trying to make love to his wife.
>
> (Fagg, 58)

Whatever the trickster can influence, he can affect for better or worse, and he is often found drawing attention to the ridiculous. Just as often, the trickster will himself play the fool. His goal is to disclose the lighter side of life. He will provoke laughter and joy as he reveals the comedy that is also an integral part of sacred reality. Or he may simply try to restore balance by poking fun at the hypocrite, mocking the gods, and ridiculing sacred institutions and mores that have become rigid and meaningless.

A trickster is a mythological creature who excels in deception and cunning. In addition, the trickster is often known for biological drives and bodily parts that exceed the commonplace. This comic and paradoxical figure may be a shape shifter, appearing sometimes as a man or a woman, other times as an animal, typically an animal noted for its agility and shrewdness: the crafty spider, the sly fox, the elusive rabbit, or the wily coyote. Most tricksters share with Eșu the role of go-between. They are often encountered at the boundaries between different orders of reality, opposing forces, extremes. They confuse these boundaries and seem to create chaos, although often it is through the actions of the trickster that the need for order and the value of boundaries are once more recognized.

The crossroads, as the symbol of Eșu, represents his typical mode of operation at the

place where opposites meet. George Elder (1987) reminds us that other deities are likewise found at the crossroads: the Greek god Hermes and the folk deity Dōsojin of Japan are both associated with roads, boundaries, and especially the crossroads. Like Eṣu, each is commonly represented by a phallic image. Found at the place where two roads meet, Dōsojin may appear in the form of a standing stone phallus or pair of phalli, or as a male and female couple standing hand in hand. In ancient Greece the quadrangular stone pillars of Hermes were topped by the god's head and fronted by his erect penis. These herms were located at the juncture of roads, supposedly to offer guidance and protection to travelers. However, they might just as easily bring the traveler into some kind of disaster. As stated in the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes,* "Even though he helps a few people, he cheats an endless number."

> Crossroads in religion belong to the general phenomenon of sacred places and are a specific instance of the sacrality of roads. Wherever two or more roads intersect—forming a T or a fork or, most significantly, a junction of two roads at right angles to form a cross—there religious people often felt that the divine has intersected with the mundane. The nature of this divine presence may be positive but is very often negative. Most often, however, the divinity associated with a crossroads is paradoxically both good and evil: it seems that the meeting of different roads attracts and then expresses very well the meeting of opposites within the god. (Elder, 166)

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ARDHANĀRĪŚVARA, THE LORD WHOSE HALF IS WOMAN
Artist unknown   Relief: sandstone   Measurement unavailable   Ninth century CE   Site: Rajasthan, India
Location: Collection of the Maharaja of Jaipur, Rajasthan

Ardhanārīśvara, the Lord whose Half is Woman

India: Northern Medieval

By means of this manifestation as one androgynous being, Śiva and his consort Pārvatī reveal the unity underlying the apparent duality of the sexes. The pose of the figure, the strands of jewelry, garlands, and vegetation, and the attitudes of the human and animal attendants—all are of a serpentine fluidity that suggests the movement of prāṇa *(breath or cosmic energy). This energy, though it assumes an unlimited number of forms, is always of the same essential nature.*

This most sensuous four-armed figure stands in the triple-flexed pose between two engaged columns. The prominent left breast indicates that the figure is feminine on the left side. On the other, masculine side, Śiva holds a rosary, a lotus, and a trident around which a serpent coils; he wears the ascetic's panther skin and has matted hair. On the feminine side, Pārvatī is elegantly coiffed and bejeweled and holds a mirror that reflects the radiant light of the divine presence (i.e., of her consort). Gazing up adoringly at the divine unity Śiva-Pārvatī is the bull Nandi, Śiva's companion.

Cultural Context

This is a devotional image of the god Śiva in his androgynous form, in which he is combined with his *śakti,* or female nature, personified as his wife Pārvatī. The image is called Ardhanārīśvara, "the lord whose half is woman." By an almost seamless blending of opposites, a distinct symbol is created of divine unity in place of the presumed duality of masculine and feminine. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* describes this remarkable manifestation of the sexually biune divinity as Parabrahman, the transcendental reality out of which the universe emerges and into which it is then reabsorbed.

Here Śiva is represented as an ascetic. Thus his union with Pārvatī, who is richly adorned, also refers to the harmony between two ways of life: that of the ascetic and that of the householder. Many stories relate the fusing of Śiva and his *śakti.* According to one account, Śiva lived as a beggar, and one day he smoked so much hashish that he could not move. Pārvatī went on his begging rounds for him, bringing him the food that she collected in this way. This pleased Śiva so much that he embraced her violently and their bodies merged. In another story, Pārvatī became jealous of Śiva's infatuation with another woman and left him. Śiva sought her out and appealed to her with these words: "You are the oblation and I am the fire; I am the sun and you are the moon. Therefore you should not cause a separation between us, as if we were distinct people" (*Skanda Purāṇa* 1.3.2.18–21).

The most ancient and most popular way of representing the union between the god and his *śakti* is by way of the *liṅga* encircled by the *yoni.* Ardhanārīśvara, then, is a later epiphany of this same unity. The androgynous Śiva is mentioned as early as the fifth century CE by the poet Kālidāsa, although the tradition is probably older. Stone sculpture from the Gupta period onward as well as metal sculpture of medieval southern India include fine interpreta-

tions of this subject matter. It is also represented in paintings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The present image, with its architectural frame, has been removed from its original location within a Śaivite temple. There it would not have been the main icon, but rather a subsidiary image that stood either in an exterior niche or along an interior wall. It would have been one of an array of figures in the temple that together exhibited some of the many manifestations of Śiva, a great and complex deity. The central icon in Śaivite temples, however, is always a *liṅga* placed in the *garbha gṛha,* or "womb chamber." The *liṅga* as the primary epiphany of Śiva is both generative principle and *axis mundi,* which supports the cosmos both as life and meaningful order.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The word *androgyne* derives from the combination of the Greek words for "man" and "woman." Therefore, the androgyne is literally a man-woman, a creature that is half male and half female. Although not a universal symbol, the androgyne is found in numerous cultures, among the Indo-Europeans, in ancient Mesopotamia, and among the indigenous peoples of Africa, Australia, and North America. The symbolism of androgynes is quite diverse. Generally speaking, however, there are two kinds of androgynes: those that create through splitting and those that become creative through their fusion.

The first group of androgynes consists of primordial beings that are androgynous and that through splitting into male and female enable life to begin or to become more highly individualized. For example, in ancient Sumeria heaven and earth are united in the beginning in the form of a mountain. Their first offspring, air, separates them so that the creation can take place. In the Upaniṣads, Prajāpati, the Lord of Creatures, is described as an androgyne. He is as large as a woman and a man in a close embrace. Joyless and lonely, he causes himself to fall into two pieces, which become husband and wife. He copulates with her and produces human beings. Feeling incestual guilt, the wife hides herself under various forms—as a cow, as a mare, as an ant, and so on. But with each metamorphosis, her husband changes, too. In this way, the world is populated with creatures of all kinds. Further, among the Dogon of Africa it is believed that every child has both a female soul and a male soul. At puberty, the child undergoes ritual circumcision or clitoridectomy in order to establish a single soul and to render the person truly human. In their mythology, gods may be androgynous, but adult humans may not.

Whereas the theme of the first group of androgynes is the movement toward differentiation, the theme of the second group is the union of complementary opposites, or the *coniunctio oppositorum.* These androgynes originate in the fusion of male and female beings, and in their union they gain in creative possibility. For example, in the gnostic homily *Exegesis on the Soul,* the soul in its fallen state is feminine. Her counterpart is the spirit-giving male, who continues to live in heaven. Their sacred marriage results in the birth of the androgyne, who now has the power to transcend the cosmos. The soul is spiritualized, that is, she acquires the freedom to move at will and is no longer bound to the laws of the earth. Similar is the mythical context of Ardhanārīśvara, the androgynous Śiva-Pārvatī, for what is gained in their fusion is a completeness that allows for transcendence. In the Indian mind, desire results from a sense of deficiency, from seeking the self outside oneself. The androgynous

Śiva represents the inner union that eliminates desire and attachment to cosmic experience. It allows for the liberation of the soul from the cycles of rebirth.

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GLOSSARY

AXIS MUNDI (Lat., "world axis") The world pillar or cosmic axis, described in the cosmologies of divers cultures. It provides a center to the cosmos by connecting all three realms: that of the underworld, that of human beings, and that of the gods. It may take on any one of a number of forms, for example, a gigantic tree, a mountain, a bridge, a ladder.

LIṄGA (Skt., "phallus") In Hinduism, the erect phallus is a symbol of the god Śiva. It is sometimes conceived as a pillar of energy. As a sculptured form representing a focus of worship, it is often set into a *yoni* pedestal, the two signifying unity within duality.

ŚAKTI (Skt., "energy") In Hinduism, the feminine creative force, often personified as the female consort of a male deity.

YONI (Skt., "womb, vagina; source, origin; home; family, race") The *yoni*—the word derives from a verbal root that means "to join"—is that which unites or brings together. In Hinduism, the *yoni* represents the feminine genitalia and symbolizes the feminine principle in general. As represented in sculpture form, it often serves as a pedestal for the *liṅga.*

Androgynous water spirit (Nommo)

Artist unknown   Sculpture: wood   Height: 52 in. (132 cm)   Before 1935 CE   *Site: Yaya village, Mali*

Location: Musée de l'Homme, Paris

Androgynous water spirit (Nommo)

Mali: Dogon

This figure represents one of the Nommo, androgynous and serpentlike divinities who serve as culture heroes and ancestors to the Dogon of West Africa.

The wooden androgyne is seen from the side. It has a long and undulating body and arms beneath small, high breasts. The legs have been merged into one serpentine tail, and the head is small above a long cylindrical neck.

Cultural context

The Nommo, masters of water, fertility, speech, and weaving, are the essential fabric out of which Dogon theology is woven. The progeny of Amma (the supreme being), the Nommo serve as counterparts to the trickster Yurugu (Ogo), who introduced chaos into the universe. The result of an act of failed creation, Yurugu was born in violation of the original principles of the Dogon world: twinness and androgyny. From birth, he was solitary and incomplete, a being perpetually in revolt. Trying to achieve wholeness, he had intercourse with his mother, the earth, and succeeded in appropriating the powers of fertility and speech that Amma had bestowed upon her (a theft that accounts for Yurugu's control of divination techniques). This incestuous coupling, depriving her of these sacred qualities, defiled the earth, leaving her dry and barren, naked and speechless. Rather than begin anew, Amma brought forth the Nommo to offset the destruction wrought by Yurugu and to regenerate the world.

The original Nommo, the primordial couple, were born as twins in accordance with the divine order. They had both male and female characteristics as a sign of their completeness, though one of them had a slight predominance of male qualities and the other, female qualities. The Nommo were flexible and fluid, human from the waist up and serpentine from the waist down (hence their traditional depiction as one-legged creatures). Their bodies were green and sleek all over, gleaming like the surface of water, and covered with fine, green hair, a sign of vegetation and generation.

Above all, the Nommo personify the divine properties of Amma. They *are* God's word; they are water, emblems of fertility. Through a complex series of events, they entered into the womb of the earth mother, giving her the divine Word and rendering her fertile again. (Human speech, associated with the Nommo, has a similar effect; traveling on the "breath vapor" issuing from the speaker, "good" words are thought to enter the genitals of any woman who listens and to increase her fertility.) Yet the effects of Yurugu's transgression could not be completely effaced. Amma's creation, originally perfect, would henceforth be touched by sterility, drought, and death. Thus Dogon religion is characterized by an unfolding process of ruin and restoration (presided over by Yurugu and the Nommo) and the interplay between generation and decay.

The Nommo primordial couple gave birth to eight Nommo, who descended to earth in an ark and became the ancestors of the Dogon. To complete this tie between the Nommo and mankind, a human descendent of the eighth Nommo, called Lébé, was sacrificed and

then resurrected by Amma in the form of a snake, much like the Nommo. Lébé's bones remained in the earth and worked to increase its fertility as a potent sign of the covenant between man and God. The purpose of this sacrifice was to impart the divine force of the Nommo to human beings by merging the flesh with the Word. This act of divinization is repeated by Lébé and the chief Dogon priest, the *hogon.* Each night, Lébé goes to visit the *hogon* under cover of darkness to provide him with enough spiritual sustenance to survive for another day. Lébé licks the *hogon,* imparting the Word to him and covering him in sacred moisture that gives him (and through him, the community) strength and fertility. Without it he would die, the lands wither and decay, and the community cease to exist.

Like many lesser spirits in other African religious systems, the Nommo are the primary bridge between the supreme being and humanity. More than the agency through which Amma transmits his gifts to humanity, without the Nommo the Dogon would have no means of coming into contact with divinity. The incarnation of vital force, divine speech, and fertilizing moisture, they ennable both prayer and sacrifice, the most significant rituals linking human beings and Amma.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

In the myths of the Dogon, there are three qualities that reflect the completeness and sacred power of the divine; these are embodied in the twin, the androgyne, and the amphibian. The Nommo participates ontologically in all three modes of being: it is an androgynous twin, of half-human, half-snake composition. The Nommo is complete, fertile, and beneficent to life, whereas its opposite, the spirit Yurugu, is single, imperfect, and unhappy.

The symbolism of the twin may go back to the sacred potency associated with doubleness in prehistoric cultures. The relationship between twins within a given mythical context is affected largely by the evaluation of the opposites. Broadly speaking, two schemas are possible. In some cultures, the opposites are experienced as ontologically opposed, that is, primary principles of good and evil. Zoroastrianism is the most obvious example of this form of dualism, although dualism appears elsewhere in varying degrees of intensity. For example, gnostic myths express a secondary dualism: the primordial reality is a unity, but creation results in the emergence of a material world that is deficient, possibly evil, and opposed in kind to the spiritual world.

In dualistic systems, twins may embody opposing principles as in Zoroastrianism, or as in Manichaeism they may represent the two sides of the self—the earthly soul and its celestial (i.e., spiritual) alter ego. The saving message for the gnostic is that through uniting with its spiritual twin the soul can be saved, lifted up out of the "tomb" of the earth. (This metaphor is paralleled in gnostic systems by that of the syzygy, where the feminine soul is saved through her union with a spiritual husband.)

In nondualistic worldviews, twins are more likely to symbolize a wholeness and the potency of complementarity. The twins are not necessarily portrayed as rivals. Differences between them are determined by their respective destinies. Among the Caribbean population of the Kaliña, Tanusi—a twin and the creator of all good things—lives in the "land without evening." His counterpart and twin brother, Yolokantamulu, is connected with obscurity and the pains of humanity and lives in the "land without morning." Together they represent the coincidence of opposites, a dynamic interplay without which nothing could exist.

While each of the Nommo is a twin and participates in the stability and power associated with doubleness, it is also androgynous, although differentiated enough so as to be able to form a marriage with his or her twin. The androgyny of the Nommo is a primordial form of androgyny, that is, it is not the result of fusion but ontologically present from the start. The androgyny of these spirits expresses their role as healers and promoters of animal and vegetable life. It expands the symbolism of their twinship. So, too, does their theriomorphic form: being half snake and half human, the Nommo retain the capacity to move between the animal and the human realms as well as between land and water. Their connection with the creative powers of the earth and the waters is retained, and so they can serve as mediators *par excellence* and carry on the creative work of Amma, who has meanwhile withdrawn from his creation.

It is interesting to note that the Dogon, while recognizing in androgyny and twinship the revelation of a divine wholeness, themselves emulate the differentiated, limited form of the trickster Yurugu. The Dogon believe that every child is born androgynous, like the Nommo, but must at puberty have the contrasexual element surgically removed from their bodies. Hence, they practice both circumcision and clitoridectomy. The Dogon fear that if left in their natural, androgynous state, they would fail to develop the inclination for procreation.

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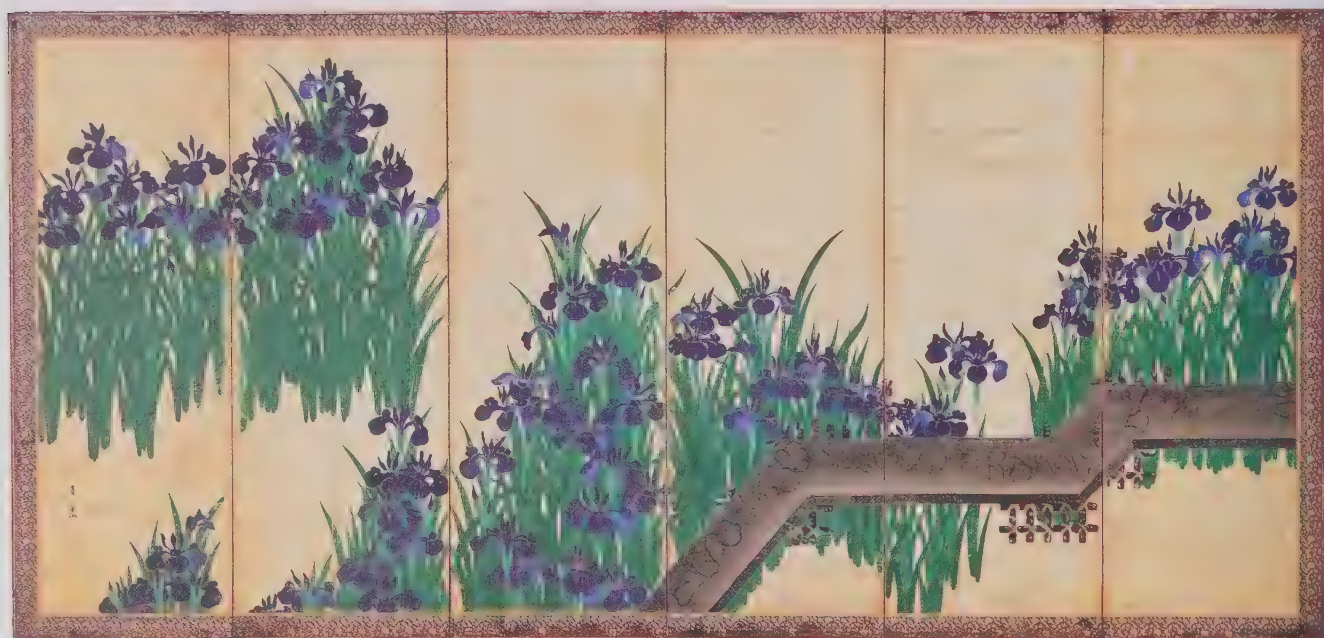

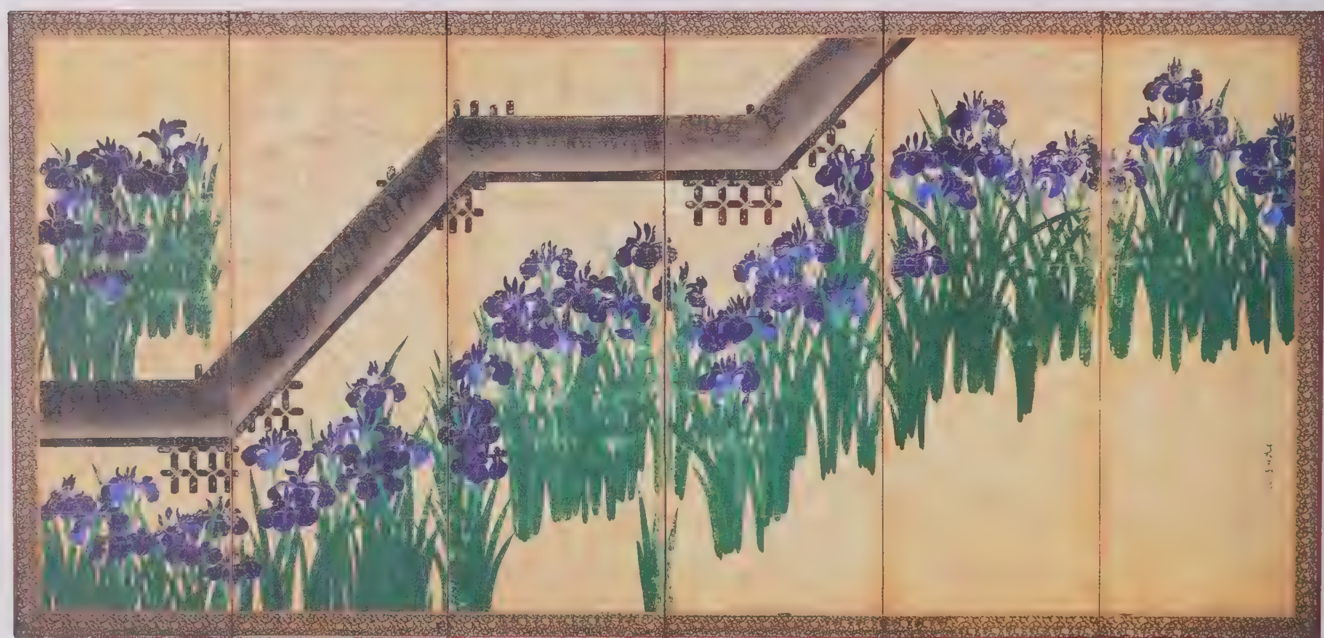

IRISES AND ZIGZAG BRIDGE

Artist: Ogata Kōrin (1653–1716)   Painting on screens: ink and pigments on gold-foil ground
Height: 70½ in. (174 cm); width of each panel (not including borders): 65⅛ in. (165.1 cm)
Early eighteenth century CE   Site: Japan   Location: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Irises and Zigzag Bridge

Japan: Edo

This pair of screens showing irises and a zigzag bridge was inspired by an episode in the Tales of Ise, *a tenth-century classic of courtly literature. This Japanese text popularized the image of a bridge amid irises, which together call to mind the month of May and nostalgia for home and absent loved ones.*

The composition combines irises with an angular bridge that sweeps diagonally across both screens. While each cluster of flowers is represented with compelling clarity and freshness, in the overall arrangement naturalism is subordinated to pictorial design. The network of diagonal and horizontal planks of the bridge serves as the composition's scaffolding. The dense stands of irises on either side echo its zigzag movement. Midway across the left screen, the bridge disappears into the foreground so that its floral orchestration is interrupted at the lower edge of the picture. The overall visual rhythm of the imagery is resumed, however, by a horizontal band of flowers at the upper left, which brings the composition to a measured close.

Cultural Context

In Japanese culture, the iris has its place in both myth and ritual. Ever since the Heian period (794–1185), the flower has been associated with the month of May. Traditionally, this is the month of the Iris Festival, which has courtly origins. During the festival, irises are displayed publicly, both as decorations of the home and in the coiffures of men and women. The iris is believed to ward off evil spirits and illness. Also in May is the Boy's Doll-Day Festival (5 May), at which time young men drink a tea made from iris bulbs and bathe in water in which irises have been floating, in order to ensure their good health and virility. The leaf of the iris symbolizes a sword for the Japanese, with the result that the flower as a whole combines both masculine and feminine (the blossom) elements. As suggested above, it is thought to be especially effective in protecting the health and the vitality of men and women.

In his painting of irises around an eight-plank bridge, the artist wishes to call to mind a poem of lost love from the *Tales of Ise.* This is a collection of poems and short prose tales relating the romantic entanglements of an unnamed hero, usually identified with the book's purported author, Ariwara no Narihira (825–880). The iris motif derives from the famous Yatsuhasi ("eight bridges") episode in chapter nine. The hero, after a failed love affair, decides that it is useless for him to remain in the capital, and so he sets off on a journey to the east in order to begin life anew. He takes a number of friends along with him for company. At some time during May, the friends reach a place called Yatsuhashi. There a small river branches into eight streams, each with its own bridge. Pausing by these streams for lunch, they admire the irises blooming luxuriantly in the marshes all around them. Together they compose a poem and lend expression to their feelings of nostalgia for home and for the loved

ones they have left behind. The resulting poem tells about a distant lover. Each line begins with a syllable from the Japanese word for iris—*kakitsubata:*

> I have a beloved wife,
> Familiar as the skirt
> Of a well-worn robe,
> And so this distant journeying
> Fills my heart with grief.
> (McCullough, 74)

The friends are so moved by their feelings, so the story goes, that they fall to weeping, until finally their rice begins to swell with the moisture of their tears.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The journey to the otherworld—whether it be conceived as the land of the dead, the realm of the gods, or the unconscious—is a metaphor found in mythologies from all over the world. Usually the spiritual journey is fraught with perils and encounters with strange beings. One such peril is a bridge leading across a chasm, a rapacious stream, or the void.

In ancient Iran, the first three days after death were filled with ceremonies dedicated to helping the deceased in his or her journey to Heaven. This journey included the crossing of the Chinvat Bridge ("the separator"), a bridge that began at the top of a sacred mountain and ended in Paradise. The same motif is found in traditions as diverse as Judaism and ancient Scandinavian mythology. The classic Christian image of a bridge is contained in the *Dialogues* of Gregory I (c. 540–604). Gregory's story is probably modeled on the Myth of Er in Plato's *Republic.* In Gregory's version, a soldier relates the existence of a bridge that leads to the green meadows and shining mansions of heaven, where dwell men and women dressed in white. Under the bridge, however, flows a dark river from which rises a terrible stench. The just shall easily cross over the bridge in safety, whereas the wicked are sure to fall into the river below.

The bridge is a symbol found also in the language of initiation, linked with the "strait gate" or "paradoxical passage." Here, as in the funerary myths, the bridge represents the difficulty of passing from one state of being to another, the trauma and danger of change.

Thus Mircea Eliade, in his discussion of the religious symbolism of the bridge (Eliade, 483), delineates a mythological complex consisting of four principal components: "(a) *in illo tempore,* in the paradisal time of humanity, a bridge connected earth with heaven and people passed from one to the other without encountering any obstacles, because there was not yet *death;* (b) once the *easy* communications between earth and heaven were broken off, people could not cross the bridge except 'in spirit,' that is, either as dead or in ecstasy; (c) this crossing is difficult; in other words, it is sown with obstacles and not all souls succeed in traversing it; demons and monsters seeking to devour the soul must be faced or the bridge becomes as narrow as a razoredge when the wicked try to cross it, and so on; only the 'good,' and especially the *initiates,* cross the bridge easily (these latter in some measure know the road, for they have undergone ritual death and resurrection); (d) certain privileged persons nevertheless succeed in passing over it during their lifetime, be it in ecstasy, like the shamans, or 'by force,' like certain heroes, or, finally, 'paradoxically,' through 'wisdom' or initiation."

In light of the mythological connotations associated with bridges, it is interesting that in the West the iris is a flower whose name means "rainbow," and the rainbow is one such mythical bridge. Indeed, like Hermes, the goddess Iris was a messenger figure in Greek mythology. The rainbow was the bridge or road let down from Heaven to carry her to Earth.

The bridge connects, and the iris protects. The combined imagery of bridge and iris suggests the life-giving power that derives when a link between the opposites is maintained. C. G. Jung stressed the goal of depth analysis, to establish and cultivate a bridge between inner and outer worlds (or ego and the unconscious): "From a consideration of the claims of the inner and the outer worlds, or rather, from the conflict between them, the possible and the necessary follows. Unfortunately our Western mind, lacking all culture in this respect, has never yet devised a concept, nor even a name, for the *union of opposites through the middle path,* that most fundamental item of inward experience" (Jung, par. 327).

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GLOSSARY

OGATA KŌRIN Originally, Ogata Ichinojo (1653–1716); Japanese painter, one of the two great masters of the Sotatsu-Kōrin school of decorative arts. He is known for his screen paintings, lacquerwork, textile designs, and the pictorial decorations he supplied for the ceramics of his brother Ogata Kenzan (1663–1743).

THE ROYAL PORTAL

Artist unknown   Relief: limestone   Width: 43.5 ft. (13.25 m)   Circa 1145–1155 CE

Site/Location: west facade, Cathedral of Notre Dame, Chartres

The Royal Portal

France: Gothic

Through these portals the faithful enter the presence of the Virgin Mary in her cathedral. Figures from both the Old and New Testaments are depicted here, as the drama of salvation history is presented visually to the pilgrim who comes to the shrine of Mary in search of God's healing grace.

The Royal Portal is the main entrance to the Cathedral of Chartres. It comprises three doorways with their architectural frames. Each portal, slightly splayed, consists of a tympanum surrounded by rows of archivolts above, with flanking lateral columns and their capitals below. The columns and capitals form a continuous frieze where the rather larger central portal abuts the side portals, unifying them visually. In the tympanum of the Ascension portal (viewer's left), Christ's ascent into heaven is depicted in the uppermost register, angels and clouds appear in the middle register, and the apostles in the lowest. The archivolts depict signs of the zodiac and the Labors of the Months. Scenes from the infancy of Christ appear on the capitals below. The tympanum of the central portal shows Christ in glory surrounded by the animal symbols of the four evangelists; in the arcade beneath are the apostles and the Israelite prophets Enoch and Elijah. Above, in the archivolts, are the twenty-four elders of John's apocalypse and angels. The capital frieze depicts scenes from Christ's infancy and his Passion. The right-hand tympanum depicts, in ascending order: the birth of Jesus, his presentation in the Temple, and the enthroned Virgin and Child. The seven liberal arts and ancient philosophers appear in the archivolts, while scenes from the Passion appear on the capitals above the statue columns.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The twelfth century saw in France and in other parts of medieval Europe the flowering of a Christian piety that exalted Mary, the mother of Christ. The cathedral at Chartres was perhaps the holiest site for those who shared in the devotion to Mary. The cathedral served as the shrine for a relic—a piece of the tunic that Mary was said to have worn when she gave birth to Jesus—and as a center for pilgrimage. The life of Chartres as a community centered in and around the church. Fairs took place on its sacred precincts during the festivals of the Virgin, and both the economy and social life of the people of Chartres grew out of its religious orientation.

During the night of 10 June 1194, a great fire took place that destroyed much of the town and most of the cathedral. Within fifty years, the cathedral was rebuilt in its present glory by the ten thousand inhabitants of this small French town. This achievement was motivated both by devotion to Mary and by the will to survive, for the shrine was the life of the town, both symbolically and in practice. The presence of Mary, experienced as Queen of Heaven, is felt already in the images on the Royal Portal. The overall mood is one of grace and glory; fear, pain, and judgment do not exist. The pilgrim enters into a place of healing and peace, gifts of the holy mother of Christ.

The triple portal, which resembles a Roman triumphal arch or city gate, may also be understood as the entrance to the heavenly Jerusalem, a traditional concept in Christian architecture. Just as traditional is the desire, apparent here, to demonstrate the Christian belief that Israelite prophecy finds fulfillment in the New Testament: statue columns on which are sculpted Old Testament kings and queens holding scrolls (which once may have been painted with their prophecies) serve literally as "pillars of the church." The long, rigid forms and serene expressions of these figures effectively associate them with the architecture, while, on the other hand, the high relief of the carving makes them appear to float in front of the column, lending them an otherworldly quality.

The right portal has as its central theme the incarnation of Christ, who embodies both earthly and heavenly wisdom. The figure of Christ appears in the center of all three registers, as an infant (lowermost), being presented in the Temple (middle), and in the lap of his mother. Christ's sacrifice, reenacted daily in the Mass, is brought to mind by the scenes from the Passion on the capitals below. Literally embracing this representation of theological or divine wisdom are the archivolts depicting the seven liberal arts and the classical philosophers associated with each. Through the presence of these latter figures, the portal acquires the character of a manifesto for the intellectual life of the University of Chartres. (This institution, one of the greatest centers of learning during the Middle Ages, was sponsored by the Cathedral of Chartres.)

The Ascension portal at the left also links earthly and heavenly activities, but here the emphasis is on the passage of time as seen in the annual cycle of the zodiac in heaven and in man's corresponding physical labors on earth. This imagery on the archivolts surrounds the tympanum scene of Christ's own transition from earth to heaven. The three registers of the tympanum are divided into the earthly zone, from which his disciples watch their teacher rise; an intermediate zone populated by angels and capped with clouds; and a celestial region above, where he appears between two angels. As a reminder of his manifestation in human form, the capital frieze of the right portal depicts scenes from Christ's infancy.

In the tympanum of the middle portal, Christ appears as savior at the end of time. In this celestial vision, he is surrounded (on the archivolts) by angels and the twenty-four elders of *Revelation.* Beneath, in the arcade register, are the twelve apostles together with Elijah and Enoch. The apostles were told that they would assist Jesus during the Last Judgment, and the two prophets are said to have been taken up bodily into heaven. In Christian tradition, both groups are expected to return to earth to convert mankind before the end of time. The capital frieze below depicts scenes from Christ's infancy and Passion.

Chartres is the first cathedral in which Mary appears on the facade of the church. Her presence reflects the conscious return of the feminine principle into the ruling values of Western culture. Indeed, this is the era not only of Mariology but also of chivalry and the birth of romantic love. It is a time when the feminine is experienced as an ideal worthy of homage and service. Here, in the doors of this cathedral, a harmonious unity is expressed that balances the many streams of Christian tradition (Greek, Hebrew, and European culture) as well as the worship of the Virgin and the religion of the Trinity.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

A church or cathedral belongs to a category of man-made structures that serve to set apart a particular space from the space around it—in other words, that mark off a sacred space. A

sacred space is one that is filled in some way with the numinous reality of the divine. It is there that special rites take place and the community reexperiences its connection with the gods. Many a sacred space is revealed simply by a special event, as when lightning strikes a tree or a prophet has a vision at a particular site. Other places are sacred because of natural symbolism: a sacred mountain that seems to lead one right up into the heavens, a sacred spring that offers new life in its waters. Still other sites are sacred because they possess a sacred object. A cathedral such as Chartres may combine all of these aspects: it may well have been built on an ancient site that was holy before the arrival of the Christians due to some sacred historical event; it was constructed so as to recall the uplifting power of a sacred mountain; and it housed the relic of the Virgin Mary's tunic.

A sacred space may serve as a place of communication between the human realm and that of the divine. It may be a locus for divine power that can transform human life. Pilgrims travel to Chartres to come into the power-filled presence of the Virgin Mary, often to be healed, either physically or spiritually. Further, a sacred space may serve as an icon that represents the cosmos as a whole and orients human beings within that cosmos. Finally, a sacred space may serve as a metaphor for inner experience: it is within this context that the doors of Chartres are especially symbolic. A door is a threshold between "inner" and "outer." The door can be closed or open, setting up a boundary or temporarily removing it. By moving through the door of the temple or church, the worshiper enters a different world. The door thus embodies the power to differentiate the sacred from the profane, the power to establish the structures that allow for differentiation. On the intrapsychic level, doors represent the capacity for recognizing inner and outer, or unconscious and conscious realities. In addition, doors that open and shut symbolize the possibility of exchange and mutual influence between these two realms. Although doors may sometimes be locked, any room without a door becomes itself a prison.

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GLOSSARY

SEDES SAPIENTIAE (Lat., "Throne of Wisdom") The image of the Virgin Mary enthroned and holding the infant Christ on her lap, symbolizing the Christian Church as preserver of God's Word.

TWIN FIGURE WITH A BEADED JACKET

Artist unknown Sculpture: wood, beads Height: 15.5 in. (39.4 cm) Nineteenth or twentieth century CE

Site: Nigeria Location: Paul and Ruth Tishman Collection, Epcot Center, Orlando, Florida

Twin figure with a beaded jacket

Nigeria: Yoruba

Among the Yoruba, twins—whether living or dead—have the power to bring good fortune to those who honor them and harm to those who neglect them. Numerous customs have developed in consequence of this belief. For example, if one twin dies, his spirit is placated by the creation of and care for a surrogate figure such as the one shown.

The center of this statue is occupied by the head and shoulders of a figure representing the deceased twin. The facial features are only vaguely suggested, whereas the hair is elaborately depicted. The central figure wears a necklace and a relatively large beaded jacket. Reference to twinship is indicated by two identical beaded figures seated on saddles over the shoulders of the central figure as well as by the two identical birds that face each other in the design on the jacket.

Cultural context

Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, who have elaborated one of the most complex cosmologies and spectacular visual traditions in Africa, the birth of twins is linked to the Yoruba concept of destiny. The Yoruba believe that before birth (or more properly, rebirth) a child's ancestral soul kneels before Ọlọrun, the supreme being, and pronounces his choice as to what destiny he would like to have in his new life. If the choice is reasonable, Ọlọrun will grant it, along with a new body and vital force. This destiny involves a fixed day on which the soul must return to Ọlọrun and the details of the individual's personality, occupation, and luck. Hence, among the Yoruba, multiple births are seen as the fulfillment of a divinely assigned individual destiny. The ultimate responsibility lies with Ọlọrun, and the twins are welcomed as a gift from him. Yet precisely because their existence is tied to the will of the supreme being, twins are regarded as special, to be feared and venerated. Furthermore, excessive fertility is seen as an intervention of divinity and requires specific rituals for dealing with the corresponding excess of sacred power.

In contrast to the cults dedicated to the hundreds of minor spirits, or *oriṣa,* in the Yoruba pantheon, the *ibeji* (twin spirit) is a domestic concern of the immediate family group. When twins are born, the placenta is buried in a pot as usual, and the Ifa divination priest (*babalawo*) is consulted as to the kinds of sacrifices and other rituals that are required. If one twin dies, a statue (*ere ibeji*) is made to represent the dead child. If the second twin also dies, a second sculpture is created. When the memorial figure is finished and brought home by the mother, the family and friends gather for dancing and feasting. The image is anointed with a mixture of camwood and palm oil and adorned with beads, cowries, and other decorative elements as a means of honoring the dead child. The *ere ibeji* is always the same sex as the dead twin, and is named for it. Indeed, it is treated exactly as if it were a real child. Everything that is done for the surviving twin (who is told simply that his sibling has "gone away") is done for the *ere ibeji*: it is washed, clothed, offered nourishment, carried on the back of the mother, and put to bed with its twin, so as to propitiate the soul of the dead twin. When the surviving twin grows up, he assumes the responsibility for attending to the statue.

Ibeji figures are carved as a visible sign of the intimate connection between the human and divine worlds, and they express the belief that life and death are best understood as related states within a continuity of existence mediated over by divinity. The *ibeji* figures do not represent divinities; the sacrifices offered to them are gifts intended to appease human souls. Through the proper performance of ritual and the carrying of the image, the mother is thought to be protected, for a neglected *ibeji* is believed to inflict sterility and misfortune on its mother. Furthermore, the figures themselves offer comfort to a bereaved mother and family.

The *ibeji* is conceptually linked to the *abiku* ("one born to die"). When several siblings in succession die at birth or in infancy, it may be the result of a single ancestral soul that is reborn repeatedly only to return to Ọlọrun. Such a soul is granted this destiny by Ọlọrun because it prefers existence in heaven (or traveling between heaven and earth) to life on earth. Much like the *ibeji,* the *abiku* must be placated through ritual before it will cease to trouble the mother and agree to stay on earth until it reaches adulthood.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Twins appear in numerous mythologies but do not always appear in the same role or as expressive of the same meaning. Often they are divine twins—either creators or heroes—who may or may not represent complementary values. The nature of the divine twins and the form of their interaction may reveal the hidden structure of reality; the philosophical problems signified by such terms as dualism, polarity, and dichotomy may be connected to the mythical appearance of twins. Important examples of divine twins can be found in the myths of the Iroquois of North America, the Dogon of Africa, and the ancient religion of Zoroastrianism, which survives today in the Near East and in India.

The *ibeji* figure of the Yoruba of Nigeria, on the other hand, represents the soul of a deceased twin—that is, a human rather than divine twin. This fact tells us at once that we are dealing with another level of meaning, less cosmological and more psychological (in the religious sense). Whereas divine twins often reveal two aspects of a unity (good and evil, structure and chaos, male and female, etc.), human twinship appears to refer to the experience of a spiritual identity that transcends the limits of mortality.

Often the idea of human twinship is linked to a belief in the human soul. For the Yoruba, the soul is capable of continual rebirth, and the souls of twins appear to be specially linked so that they must share the same destiny, even after one of them has ceased to exist on earth. This notion—that the mortal person shares an identity and a destiny with a heavenly or disembodied soul—is found also in numerous gnostic teachings and in the related religion of Mani.

In the *Hymn of the Pearl,* a gnostic myth preserved in the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas,* a prince is sent into Egypt to recover the lost pearl. However, he falls under the spell of Egyptian magic and forgets who he is, where he has come from, and his destiny. Meanwhile his twin, or double, continues to exist in his home. This double is his true self, his transcendental identity, who sends forth messengers to awaken his memory and recall him to himself. As the prince returns to his heavenly home, his double comes forth to meet him.

In gnostic lore, the spiritual counterpart is sometimes experienced as an angel. Another version is the doctrine of the spiritual union, or syzygy, consisting of the feminine soul and her masculine counterpart, the spirit. (Twinship may also be shared by brother and sister;

indeed, ancient Iranians believed that every man had a celestial image in the form of a beautiful maiden, with whom he was united on the third day after his death.) In Manichaeism, the spiritual double is, again, the twin. Mani, the Persian religious leader who lived during the third century CE, claimed to have a "twin self" in the heavens, who came down and united with him, bringing revelations from the deity. Central to all of these Hellenistic traditions is the inner experience of a dual identity, that is, the intuition that the conscious ego shares its identity and destiny with a transcendent Self.

The transcendent Self, or unconscious center of personality, is revealed through numerous symbols: some are personal and others more abstract. Each symbol conveys a different aspect of the Self. The twin as a symbol of the Self reveals the feeling of shared identity and destiny that bind the Self and the ego.

> When a summit of life is reached, when the bud unfolds and from the lesser the greater emerges, then, as Nietzsche says, "One becomes Two," and the greater figure, which one always was but which remained invisible, appears to the lesser personality with the force of a revelation. He who is truly and hopelessly little will always drag the revelation of the greater down to the level of his littleness, and will never understand that the day of judgment for his littleness has dawned. But the man who is inwardly great will know that the long expected friend of his soul, the immortal one, has now really come, "to lead captivity captive"; that is, to seize hold of him by whom this immortal had always been confined and held prisoner, and to make his life flow into that greater life—a moment of deadliest peril. (Jung, par. 217)

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Ankh mirror case of Tutankhamen

Artist unknown Gold foil over wooden core, inlaid with carnelian and colored glass; interior lined with silver foil Height: 10.6 in. (27.2 cm) Reign of Tutankhamen (c. 1347–1337 BCE) Site: KV 62, tomb of Tutankhamen, West Bank necropolis, Thebes, Egypt Location: no. 62348, Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Ankh mirror case of Tutankhamen

Egypt: New Kingdom, Eighteenth Dynasty

In ancient Egypt, the hieroglyph designating "life" was the ankh. The same sign was used to refer to a mirror. The ankh-shaped mirror case shown here was placed in a tomb to ensure the afterlife for the deceased.

The names and titles of the king have been worked in shallow relief in the gold foil on the handle and in a band surrounding the inlaid center panel of the upper part of the mirror. On this panel, a scarab (*kheper*) with outspread wings and mounted on a *neb* ("all") basket supports a slightly flattened solar disk (*re*). Thus, the elements of the king's personal and throne name, Neb-kheperu-re, are spelled out in the decorative scheme. This motif is flanked by two protective serpents emblematic of royalty. All of this appears above an open lotus blossom, a plant symbolic of Upper Egypt. The lotus can be taken with the papyrus blossom, symbolic of Lower Egypt, on the back of the case (not pictured) to represent the age-old Egyptian concept of the unification of the Two Lands. Two glass knobs were used to fasten the case.

Cultural context

The ancient Egyptian symbol of the ankh designates the divine power that supports both life on earth and life after death. It is found in relief on temple walls, tombs, and inscriptions, often in the hands of a god or goddess. Sometimes the god will hold the ankh under the nose of the pharaoh, as if allowing him to breathe in the vital force that it represents. Inscriptions accompanying such depictions may include the divinity's words "I give you all of life." Funerary objects in the form of an ankh are found already in tombs of the Early Dynastic Period (c.3000–2635 BCE).

Prominent in the cult of the goddess Hathor, mirrors, like ankhs, were among the objects most frequently placed in tombs. During the Middle and New Kingdoms, they figured also among the magical equipment of the dead (both men and women). It was generally believed that the mirror's surface resembled the image of the solar disk. The mirror was further associated with the sun because of the fact that its highly polished surface reflected the rays of the sun.

Mirrors were often placed in tombs in pairs. In the tomb of Tutankhamen two were found, the ankh-shaped one pictured here and another in the shape of the sign for "endlessness," the emblem of the god Huh. The interiors of the two mirror cases were lined with silver and gold foil respectively. The actual mirrors, no doubt of solid metal, had been stolen from their cases, presumably by the earliest robbers of the tomb. (The cases were found carelessly tossed in a nearby casket.)

This mirror case brings together in one object the symbol systems of both the ankh and the mirror. In addition, it is covered with images that augment the primary intent, which is to ensure life after death for the deceased, conceived as a rebirth similar to the return of the sun every morning. In Egyptian iconography, for example, the lotus appears as a symbol of

the life force. According to one tradition from Hermopolis, the highest god appeared, self-begotten, emerging from a lotus. Further, an inscription from the temple at Idfu equates the First Primeval One, who "caused the Earth to be when he came into existence," with the Great Lotus. Sometimes the soul is seen to emerge from the interior of the flower, at other times it is a young child or the morning sun.

The scarab beetle is also associated with the birth of the sun. Perhaps this is because it is known to have the unique skill of creating and pushing along balls of dung. (Each dung ball serves as a "womb" for a scarab beetle larva.) The scarab's work is recognized as an allegory for the power that pushes the sun up into the sky every morning. Moreover, the Egyptian word for scarab is a homonym for their word meaning "to come to be" or "to happen." The same word became the name for the early-morning sun deity. In contrast, the god Re is the powerful sun at noonday, and Atum is the old and depleted sun of the evening.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

In the vocabulary of analytical psychology, the ankh belongs to a cluster of related symbols that express the reality of the Self, an organizing principle (or center) of the entire personality, both in its conscious and unconscious dimensions. Related symbols include the *maṇḍala,* the tree, and the ship's mast. The Self includes all parts of the personality, even those that are not acceptable to the conscious ego. Therefore, it contains the psychic structures and energy that enable the ego to grow beyond itself, incorporating—or realizing—more and more of the Self.

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Revelation

Eternal Light, You only dwell within
Yourself, and only You know You: Self-knowing,
Self-known, You love and smile upon Yourself!
That circle—which, begotten so, appeared
in You as light reflected—when my eyes
had watched it with attention for some time,
within itself and colored like itself,
to me seemed painted with our effigy,
so that my sight was set on it completely.
As the geometer intently seeks
to square the circle, but he cannot reach,
through thought on thought, the principle he needs,
so I searched that strange sight: I wished to see
the way in which our human effigy
suited the circle and found place in it—
and my own wings were far too weak for that.
But then my mind was struck by light that flashed
and, with this light, received what it had asked.

—Dante

THE COMING OF ELIJAH

Artist: Joel ben Simeon (Feibush Ashkenazi of Bonn) Manuscript illumination: ink, gouache, and gold paint on vellum Length: 9⅛ in (23 cm); width: 5⅞ in. (15 cm) 1478 CE Site: Central Europe Location: folio 19 verso, "Washington Haggadah," Hebraic Section, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

The coming of Elijah

Italy: Middle Ages

On Passover eve, at the moment when the door is opened for him and the text "Pour out Thy wrath" is recited, the ancient Hebrew prophet Elijah appears. He comes to initiate in the Messianic age and the redemption of Israel.

This miniature, which lacks a frame, depicts Elijah seated on a donkey, riding toward the open door of a house. The prophet is bearded and dressed in biblical garb. He carries a whip. The master of the house stands at the entrance with a cup of wine in his hand and welcomes him. In this somewhat humorous illustration, an entire family is seated on the donkey behind the prophet: the father and his son ride the rump, the mother and daughter sit on the donkey's tail, and a small (only partially visible) figure, probably the youngest child, clutches at the tail from behind. Each of these figures (unlike Elijah) is dressed in contemporary (fifteenth-century) costume. The house at the left, with its turrets and gabled roof, is a type found throughout Germany and Northern Italy during this period.

Cultural context

During the ninth century BCE a sharp conflict arose in the northern kingdom of Israel between the followers of Yahveh and the worshipers of Baal, a god of Canaan and Phoenicia. Elijah (Heb., *Eliyyahu*), whose name means "Yahveh is God," was the leader of those who fought on the side of Yahveh. The conflict resulted eventually in political revolution.

As John Van Seters notes, the literary sources of our knowledge concerning Elijah are confusing since they consist of different traditions mixed together. The biblical text that has been most important in establishing Elijah as a major personality in Israelite history is *1 Kings* 17–19. Here Elijah is shown to be a hermit, a solitary figure fed by ravens in a remote region. He is also a wonder-worker who can control the weather, feed the family of a starving widow, and raise the widow's son from the dead. Furthermore, Elijah is caught up in a battle between Yahveh, the god of Israel, and Baal, the god of the Phoenicians. In a contest that takes place on Mount Carmel, 450 prophets of Baal are unable to produce fire from heaven for their altar, while Elijah, the only prophet of Yahveh present, produces fire for his altar and thus wins the people over to worshiping his god.

Another tradition (found in *2 Kings* 2) relates the ascension of Elijah. The prophet is walking with his disciple Elisha beside the river Jordan when suddenly they are parted from each other by a fiery chariot driven by horses of fire. Elijah is caught up in a whirlwind and raised aloft to heaven, vanishing from Elisha's sight. This story suggests that, like Moses and Enoch, Elijah never died but went straight to heaven. On the basis of this belief, Elijah acquired a special role in Jewish tradition: as is already expressed in *Malachi* 3:23–24 (Eng. version 4:5–6), Elijah will return to Israel to bring the Israelites to repentance before the day of judgment: "Look, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. He will reconcile fathers to sons and sons to fathers, lest I come and put the land under a ban to destroy it."

Throughout the history of Judaism, stories about Elijah have remained popular on all levels of tradition: in apocalyptic literature, in nonlegal rabbinic thought, in the symbolism of the mystics, and in folklore. Elijah the prophet gradually assumes the role of mediator between heaven and earth, between the present and the age to come. He appears in dreams and visions as a counselor or wise old man, and for the scholars of Qabbalah he was the acknowledged guide to the heavenly realm.

Further, over the centuries a number of customs have grown up around the prophet. Amulets that carry his name are considered to bring good luck, and at the ceremony of the male infant's circumcision an empty chair is established for him to occupy. His presence is of special worth on this occasion since he is said to be a protector of the young. In a similar way, he has a place at the table of the Passover Seder and a cup of wine is reserved for him there. The Ashkenazim have the additional tradition of opening the front door during the Seder in order to welcome in Elijah and the Messiah. The participants in this ceremony may then recite the text, "Pour out Thy wrath upon the nations that know Thee not," which appears in Hebrew above this scene.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Elijah is a prophet and, as such, represents a mode of religious specialization that is distinct from priests, kings, and saviors. In the scriptures, he is referred to as "a man of God." The neighboring Hittites (Indo-European peoples who lived in Anatolia, modern Turkey) called each of their prophets "man of the gods." The Arabs likewise called a diviner "he of Allah," while for the Greeks he or she was "seized by a god" or was "one with a god inside." The Israelite expression does not refer to the devotion or piety of the prophet but rather to his capacity for communicating directly with a supernatural being. Indeed, he is not called "man of Yahveh," because the generic term refers to spirit possession more generally. The prophet is a person with the capacity to hear or see or feel the messages of a divine being. He or she acts as a medium. In the biblical tradition, it is perhaps most common for a prophet to hear the words of God or to have a dream in which God speaks. However, in other traditions, the revelation may be a vision or some other, comparable experience.

The ascent of Elijah belongs to another form of religious experience altogether. It recalls the motif of ascension, by means of which the hero attains immortality: Herakles, for example, ascended into heaven in a cloud from his funeral pyre, and Roman emperors were believed to ride with the sun god after death. Furthermore, the symbolism of the fiery chariot may have its roots in Mithraic imagery: the god Mithra was said to have been borne aloft in the chariot of the sun after his earthly mission had been fulfilled.

It was Elijah who first appeared to C. G. Jung during a period of intense introversion and visionary experience:

> In order to seize hold of the fantasies, I frequently imagined a steep descent. . . . First came the image of a crater, and I had the feeling that I was in the land of the dead. The atmosphere was that of the other world. Near the steep slope of a rock I caught sight of two figures, an old man with a white beard and a beautiful young girl. I summoned up my courage and approached them as though they were real people, and listened attentively to what they told me. The old man explained that he was Elijah, and that gave me a shock, but the girl staggered me even more, for she called herself Salome! . . . Elijah assured me that he and Salome had belonged together from all eternity, which completely astounded me. (Jung, 181)

Elijah seems to be carrying out a role that he has had for ages, appearing when least suspected and offering guidance. Jung recognizes that the Elijah and Salome are archetypal figures, but he does not allow himself to dismiss them through some simple, reductionistic interpretation. Instead, he accepts them as real personalities, acknowledging their reality in his life. "Elijah is the figure of the wise old prophet and represents the factor of intelligence and knowledge; Salome, the erotic element. One might say that the two figures are personifications of Logos and Eros, but such a definition would be excessively intellectual. It is more meaningful to let the figures be what they were for me at the time—namely, events and experiences" (*ibid.,* 182).

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GLOSSARY

ASHKENAZIM European Jews who settled in central and eastern Europe during the Middle Ages. They shared a common language, Yiddish, which is a dialect of German written in Hebrew characters and containing terms from other eastern European languages such as Russian and Polish.

BAAL (Heb., "Lord, master") Or, more fully, Baal Hadad; a Canaanite god associated with weather and the fruitfulness of vegetation. By itself, *baal* may be a title for any male god, but if it is used without qualification, it refers to Baal Hadad. The sacred animal of Baal (as of many other weather gods) is the bull, and he wields the lightning bolt.

MESSIAH, THE (from the Hebrew term *ha-Mashiaḥ,* "the anointed one") In Jewish tradition, the king was specially anointed as a chosen one of the God of Israel. Ever since the deaths of David and Solomon, and the disintegration of the kingdom, Jews have come to hope for the appearance on earth of a new king, one who will be sent by God to restore the kingdom. Christians believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah; the Greek word for "Messiah" is *Christos,* the title given to Jesus by his followers and the founders of his church.

PASSOVER A Jewish festival celebrating the Exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt where they were held in slavery. The name of the festival refers to the deliverance of the Israelites, who sacrificed a lamb to Yahveh and then marked the doors of their homes with its blood. Yahveh killed the firstborn of the Egyptians but "passed over" the homes marked by the blood of the paschal lamb.

THE ANCIENT IN YEARS

Artist: Prior Pedro   Illuminated manuscript, 280 folios with 90 miniatures

14.87 × 9.75 in. (38 × 25 cm)   1109 CE   Site: Monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos (north of Burgos), Spain

Location: folio 240, add. 11695, British Museum, London

The Ancient in Years

Spain: The Middle Ages

Daniel's vision of the Ancient in Years and the four beasts was interpreted by the angel as a prophecy: four nations will rise up to govern the holy ones of the Most High. The last nation shall be the greatest and the most destructive. However, each one will be overthrown in time, and the saints shall receive sovereignty in the end.

The Ancient in Years sits within a mandorla, making a gesture of blessing with his right hand, holding a book in his left. Two spoked disks form the wheels of the throne; a fiery stream flows downward. Two rows of nimbed angels with raised wings frame the upper sides of the mandorla. Four beasts on the banks of the fiery river look toward the Ancient in Years: a winged lion at the upper left; a sharp-toothed bear at the lower right; a four-headed, winged leopard at the upper right; and a fourth beast at the lower left bearing numerous horns, the center horn surmounted by a man's head.

Cultural Context

In the Hebrew tradition, Daniel (or Daniyye'l) was the hero of the biblical book bearing his name. As such he is presented as an Israelite living in exile in Babylonia who achieved notoriety in the royal court of the Babylonians because of his ability to interpret dreams and visions. Daniel was also known as the martyr who was saved from death in a lions' pit. It is likely, however, that the name *Daniel* was a pseudonym assumed by the redactor in order to lend authority to the book. (This was a common practice during the Hellenistic period, as witnessed by the numerous apocryphal writings ascribed to apostles in early Christian writings.) It is most probably an allusion to a wise and righteous man known from Ugaritic legend and earlier biblical tradition (*Ezekiel* 14:14, 14:20, 28:3). The *Book of Daniel* is of mixed authorship; it is composed partly in Hebrew (a section of legends and dream interpretations) and partly in Aramaic (a section dealing with apocalyptic visions and interpretations of older prophecies). The various parts of the book date from the early half of the Hellenistic period, that is, between 330 and 100 BCE. The book as a whole has been unified through the efforts of the editor.

The visions of Daniel, including the vision illustrated on this manuscript, belong to the second section of the *Book of Daniel.* Here, instead of interpreting dreams and vision, Daniel is himself the visionary. Moreover, his visions are interpreted to him by an angel. The vision.of the Ancient of Years (7:2–14) is the first of this group: In it, four huge beasts rise up out of the sea. The first resembles a lion but has eagle's wings. Its wings are removed, and it is forced to stand on two feet like a man. It is then given the mind of a man. The second beast is a bear, which is commanded to gorge itself with flesh. The third beast resembles a leopard with four wings on its back and four heads. It is invested with sovereign power. Finally, the fourth beast appears. It is the most terrible and the most fierce, devouring and trampling down everything in sight. The fourth beast has ten horns at first. Then three center horns are

uprooted as a single horn with eyes and a mouth springs up. At this point in the vision, thrones are set in place and the one who is ancient in years takes his place on a throne.

> . . . his robe was white as snow and the hair of his head like cleanest wool.
> Flames of fire were his throne and its wheels blazing fire;
> a flowing river of fire streamed out before him.
> Thousands upon thousands served him
> and myriads upon myriads attended his presence.
> The court sat, and the books were opened.
>
> (*Daniel* 7:9–10)

The fourth beast is killed and cast into the flames, but the first three are allowed to live. Then, riding on the clouds of heaven, one who resembles a son of man approaches the Ancient in Years and receives from the latter sovereignty, glory, and kingly power. The son of man is destined to rule over all people and all nations eternally.

The angel's interpretation of the dream follows: The beasts are four kingdoms that shall rule the earth. However, the holy ones of the Most High (in this text, an epithet for the God of Israel) shall ultimately receive kingly power, never to lose it again. Furthermore, the fourth beast has ten horns, each horn representing one king. The union of three of these horns and the resulting central horn with mouth and eyes represents an empire that grows out of elements of the earliest kingdoms. The emperor differs from his predecessors in power and in opposition to the holy ones of God. Under his reign the saints shall suffer more than ever, and yet they shall be delivered from this tyrant in the end.

The present image illustrates only the first half of the vision, before the obliteration of the fourth beast and the arrival of the son of man. This eschatological vision probably refers to the dynasties under which Israel suffered, up to and including the years under the Roman emperors. It also offers hope of a final resolution, in which God's people will be delivered into eternal peace.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Although the vision of Daniel is from the Hebrew scriptures, the image presented here is a Christian one, and as such it offers us a Christian interpretation of the initial vision. For this reason, the Ancient in Years sits enthroned on high and resembles images of Christ in heaven, surrounded by his angels. Further, the composition of the image suggests the Christian belief that the kingdom of God will ultimately replace the kingdoms on earth. The central figure appears to be carried aloft on a chariot, and the wings of the attending angels seem to be moving the chariot along. The overall effect is the sense that the human being with his book moves freely above the animals, who cannot impede his movement. This suggests the freedom and invulnerability of transcendence, the elevation of the spiritual and intellectual modes of being above the animal, or instinctual. For each of the book religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), the sacredness of scripture as a guiding revelation from God is a fundamental value. Here the central figure holds a single book, perhaps also in an allusion to *Revelation* 5:1: "Then I saw in the right hand of the One who sat on the throne a scroll, with writing inside and out, and it was sealed up with seven seals." In Christian metaphysics, the written word is not simply a record of what has been; more often it can be the plan for what will take place. In this sense, John says that in the beginning was the

Word—that is, the word is a symbol of the plan existing in God's mind, which will be revealed through time.

Not included in this representation but central to the text of Daniel's vision is the arrival of the son of man, who is made king by the figure on the throne. There is an echo of God's will as expressed in *Genesis* 1 : 26 : "Let us make man in our image and likeness to rule the fish in the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all wild animals on earth, and all reptiles that crawl upon the earth." Order and peace are restored to the creation when the human being is established as ruler over the beasts.

Members of traditional societies tend to believe that they are "human beings" and that those who fail to share their language and customs must be "barbarians" (as the ancient Greeks called non-Greeks), "savages," or perhaps "wild beasts." Hence, to insist that the human being rule the beast rather than vice versa usually refers to the conviction that it is culture (the symbolic world that expresses human nature) that makes a person human. Initiation rites of the young turn new members of a group into "human beings" by conveying to them through ritual and the revelation of sacred history the symbolic heritage of the group as a whole.

In his *Republic,* Plato uses a similar metaphor in his analysis of the soul: the human being ruling over the beasts. Interpreting this image, Plato suggests that the human being represents the intellect, or mind, and that the beasts represent animal courage and the appetites. In this way, the Western dichotomy of mind and nature finds an early expression.

These mythic images underlie an exploitative attitude towards instinctual life, both within the psyche and, externally, as manifest in the natural life of the environment. Thus the elevation of reason and other values associated with the masculine spirit can and does have ambivalent consequences. "Western man has no need of more superiority over nature, whether outside or inside. He has both in almost devilish perfection. What he lacks is conscious recognition of his inferiority to the nature around and within him. He must learn that he may not do exactly as he wills. If he does not learn this, his own nature will destroy him" (Jung, par. 870). Nevertheless, at the heart of these images lies the recognition that the Self, as the organizing center of personality, stands in a special relation to the instinctual components or complexes.

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THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (PENTECOST)
Artist: The Westphalian Master Painting: triptych (detail)
Height: 23.1 in. (58.5 cm); length: 22.4 in. (57 cm)
Circa 1380 CE Site: Westphalia, West Germany Location: Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne

The descent of the holy spirit
(Pentecost)

German: Gothic

In an image of the Pentecost that recalls the Last Supper, a dove representing the Holy Spirit descends upon Mary and the apostles as they gather around a round table. Their lips are connected by radial lines (rays) to a white sphere in the center that resembles the Eucharistic wafer. Thus, the apostles' reception of the Holy Spirit is interpreted as a model for the Eucharist, or communion with God.

Twelve men and one woman sit around a round table. They rest on a round bench that resembles a circular mound of grass. Each figure is draped in a loose cloak, and the head of each is framed by a nimbus. Their hands are folded together in prayer. In the center, between the woman and one of the men, a dove descends head first. In the middle of the round table a white sphere is encircled by a red line, and rays of red extend from the circumference of the circle to the closed mouths of the thirteen. The woman alone has her head covered by her cloak.

Cultural context

This image of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples of Jesus together with his mother, Mary, is far from being a photographic representation of the biblical event described in *Acts.* Instead, this is a theological statement about the giving of the Holy Spirit that combines elements from John's account as well as from Luke's account in *Acts.*

The best-known version of Pentecost is the dramatized historical event Luke describes in *Acts* 2:1–4: "While the day of Pentecost was running its course they were all together in one place, when suddenly there came from the sky a noise like that of a strong driving wind, which filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues like flames of fire, dispersed among them and resting on each one. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them power of utterance." Luke is describing a formative event in the life of the early church. It is the fulfillment of the promise made by the resurrected Christ that after his ascent into heaven, he would send the Holy Spirit to his followers in his place. The descent of the Holy Spirit as tongues of fire resulted in the evangelical phenomenon known as "speaking in tongues" (glossolalia). Indeed, in the Hebrew scriptures, God often revealed himself through fire, as when he spoke from the burning bush. The disciples found themselves speaking in languages that they did not know and voicing as one the gospel of Christ. In this respect, the presence of the Holy Spirit facilitated the mission of the church—spreading the good news of Christ and his resurrection to all peoples.

Luke has linked the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Pentecost, the ancient Israelite Feast of Weeks (Shavu'ot). This harvest festival became in time a commemoration of God's gift of the Law to guide and counsel Israel down through the ages. Moses had ascended Mount Sinai, where he received the Law directly from God. Christians saw in Pentecost a comparable

event, Christ's ascent to the Father, resulting in the gift of the Holy Spirit as a new law (an inner force) that would guide and care for the new Israel. There are no tongues of fire in this picture, however, and the group of believers sit silently, mouths closed. The emphasis is on the unity of those who through their faith become the mouthpieces of the Holy Spirit. The disciples and Mary appear to be feeding at the table on a radiant light. The Holy Spirit is depicted as the descending dove that appeared also to those who witnessed Jesus' baptism at the river Jordan. This portrayal suggests the Johannine perspective that the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the coming of the Spirit take place all on Easter Day: "Late that Sunday evening, when the disciples were together behind locked doors, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them. 'Peace be with you!' he said, and then showed them his hands and his side. So when the disciples saw the Lord, they were filled with joy. Jesus repeated, 'Peace be with you!' and said, 'As the Father sent me, so I send you.' Then he breathed on them, saying, 'Receive the Holy Spirit! If you forgive any man's sins, they stand forgiven; if you pronounce them unforgiven, unforgiven they remain'" (*John* 20:19–23). John is not interested so much in the chronology of events as in communicating a theology of the essential unity of resurrection and ascension. Despite their differences, Luke and John agree that it is the Holy Spirit who animates the life and mission of the church.

Thus, the presence of the dove in this image reflects what A. M. Ramsey calls an attempt to explain the "contradiction" between the story of the gift of the Spirit on Easter Day as John records it and the story of Pentecost in Luke's account: "But here the possibility that there was a twofold gift need not be excluded. The Holy Spirit overshadowed the manhood of Jesus both at His conception and at His baptism. Subsequently the Holy Spirit endows the people of Christ both in baptism and in laying-on-of-hands. Similarly a twofold action may have occurred in the original redemptive events on Easter Day, a bestowal of the breath of the new life; at Pentecost, an outpouring for the execution of those tasks which the new life involved" (Ramsey, 88).

The image reproduced here summarizes in simplicity the salvation history of the individual Christian. The gift of new life received during baptism through the agency of the Holy Spirit unites the person to Christ's church, and as a member of the body of Christ, he or she is spiritually nourished in the Eucharist. The individual Christian is empowered and inspired thus by the Holy Spirit to witness for Christ and to continue his work of drawing others to the God of the Resurrection. Finally, Mary's presence symbolizes the receptivity that enables one to become a bearer of the Spirit and to share in the incarnation of Christ's church in the everyday world.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The divine is experienced on many levels. Sometimes it is felt to appear outwardly, as a natural event (lightning) or dwelling in a tree or a statue. Or the divine may be experienced on the inner level, in dreams, visions, and voices that carry a numinous quality. Pentecost illustrates a shift from finding the divine outside to seeking it within. The Hebrew Law, or Torah, was God's saving gift to Israel: by consulting the Law, God's will was known and ever present to his people. The Christian belief in the Holy Spirit as a substitute for the divine Law is probably based on the Hebrew tradition of prophecy, for the prophets heard God's voice directly, and they were able to supplement and interpret the unchanging Law.

The new Israel, then, was to consist of a multitude of prophets, having received through

baptism the divine Spirit as it was manifest in Christ. Problems arose with this emphasis on the inner life as the place of God's revelation. What if two Christians disagreed? Which of the two was motivated by the Holy Spirit? Which by another (and what) spirit? Thus was born the Christian belief in the false prophet as the agency of the Antichrist, or Devil.

Inspiration, or an inner encounter with the spirit, may engender conflict between the individual who is inspired and the collective in which he or she lives. When the divine spirit is encountered external to the person, objectively, it provides a common reference point for all (as in a sacred book or a holy icon). When it makes itself felt inwardly, diversity of experience and subjectivity of interpretation are inevitable. Yet for many the intimacy and immediacy of the inner religious experience holds compelling value.

Psychologically speaking, the process involved here is the introversion of a projection. First the Law, then Christ, and then the church served as outer containers of the divine. In contrast, the belief in the Holy Spirit emphasizes the inner reality of the divine. In Jung's view, this attitude fosters individuation, the full realization of the individual in connection with a transpersonal reality:

> Origen said of the Three Persons, that the Father is the greatest and the Holy Spirit the least. This is true inasmuch as the Father by descending from the cosmic immensity became the least by incarnating himself within the narrow bounds of the human soul. . . . The "littleness" of the Holy Spirit stems from the fact that God's pneuma dissolves into the form of little flames, remaining nonetheless intact and whole. His dwelling in a certain number of human individuals and their transformation into [sons of God] signifies a very important step forward beyond "Christocentrism." . . . On the level of the Son there is no answer to the question of good and evil; there is only an incurable separation of the opposites. . . . It seems to me to be the Holy Spirit's task and charge to reconcile and reunite the opposites in the human individual through a special development of the human soul. (Jung, pars. 1552f.)

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GLOSSARY

GOSPEL ("the good news") This term is used by the Christian church in two senses. It refers both to the saving teachings of Jesus and to any written account of his life. Besides the four canonical gospels, numerous other accounts exist that were not recognized as orthodox by the compilers of the New Testament.

Divination tray

Artist unknown   Relief (divination tray): wood   Height: 20 in. (51 cm)
Date unknown   Site: Efon-Alaye, Ekiti, Nigeria   Location: private collection

Divination tray

Nigeria: Yoruba

The Yoruba divining board is consulted by a priest in times of trouble or to determine dates for sacrifices and feasts.

The round wooden tray features a broad rim decorated with numerous figures and images. At the top, at the bottom, and on the right are depicted the face of the god Eṣu. On the left, Eṣu is depicted in full figure holding a kneeling woman. The top two side panels portray an equestrian figure, flute players, drummers, soldiers with guns, and a captive—all images associated with sacred kingship. On the lower half of the tray are domestic scenes: a man holds a woman by her arms from behind, another holds an animal on a leash, and two couples engage in sexual intercourse.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Ifa (Ọrunmila), the Yoruba god of divination and friend of the trickster god Eṣu, is the mediator through whom the Yoruba gain divine revelation. Characterized often as a scribe or scholar—because it is he who taught his priest, the *babalawo* ("father of the secret"), to "write" the figures of Ifa on divination trays—he is the one who transmits and interprets the wishes of the high god, Ọlọrun, to mankind. All Yoruba believers turn to him in times of distress, and through the wisdom of Ifa as revealed to the *babalawo* learn what sacrifices must be offered to Eṣu, who delivers them to Ọlọrun. Together, the trinity of Ọlọrun, Eṣu, and Ifa grant each individual the possibility of understanding and fulfilling the destiny granted to his or her ancestral guardian soul before birth. Ifa permeates Yoruba religious life because he speaks for the gods (the *oriṣa*) and contains within himself the collective wisdom of the ancestors.

According to a legend related by 'Wande Abimbọla, Ifa once reigned on earth, maintain ing harmony through the dispensation of his critical knowledge. The earth was thrown into chaos, however, when he withdrew into the heavens rather than suffer the insults of an arrogant and disrespectful son. The land was plagued with drought and sterility, and under the influence of this withering decay, both humans and animals were driven to suicide. To restore order, the sons of Ifa climbed to heaven and begged Ifa to return. Softened by their pleas but unwilling to go back, Ifa gave each son sixteen palm nuts, the concentrated essence of his knowledge, to take back to earth and to gain access thereby to his wisdom. Through the medium of the palm nuts, which form the crux of Ifa divination, the natural order of life on earth was rescued from chaos.

The practice of Ifa divination is complex. The *babalawo,* recipient of the original techniques bestowed on the sixteen sons by Ifa, must progress through an extremely rigorous program of training before being able to practice his art. In response to a seeker's question or problem, the *babalawo* covers the smooth surface of the divining tray with a fine layer of divination powder. He then attempts to seize all sixteen palm nuts in his right hand in one swoop. Depending on the number of nuts left outside his grasp, he then marks either one or

two parallel lines in the dust on the tray. Four marks of either one or two lines constitutes one half of a figure, and each half has sixteen possible forms. To complete the figure, the process must be repeated. Insofar as the sixteen forms of the first half combine with those of the second, there are a total of 256 complete figures in the system, and each figure has at least four verses associated with it.

Once the correct figure has been divined, the *babalawo* recites one of the verses, which he selects as appropriate to the issue at hand. The extent of the diviner's mental prowess is indicated by the fact that he must have memorized more than a thousand verses and continues to accumulate this precious lore throughout the course of his life. The verses express the collective wisdom and experience of the *orișa* and often include an exemplary myth drawn from their history, cautions as to what happens to those who ignore Ifa's advice, and an application of these lessons to the seeker's problem. The seeker is left to interpret the detailed implications of this verse revelation to his own life, but the *babalawo* is an individual with profound insight into the life of the community, someone capable of great psychological acuity, so that he is rarely off the mark.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

There are many forms of divination by means of which mortals gain access to sacred knowledge. Evan M. Zuesse (1987) defines divination as "the art or practice of discovering the personal, human significance of future or, more commonly, present or past events" (Zuesse, 375). Zuesse has developed a typology of divining techniques, which includes three main types: (1) intuitive divination, in which the diviner spontaneously "sees" or "knows" reality or the future; (2) possession divination, in which spiritual beings are said to communicate through intermediary agents; and (3) wisdom divination, in which the diviner decodes impersonal patterns of reality. Like the Chinese *I ching* and astrology, the Yoruba divining tray belongs to the last category.

Here we have an oracular art, by means of which symbols are understood to be messages from the gods. Such symbols require the interpretive expertise of a trained specialist, and they are frequently based on phenomena of an unpredictable or apparently trivial nature. In the Hellenistic culture of the Greek and Roman empires, for example, the more common oracular forms were the casting of lots (sortilege), the flight and behavior of birds (ornithomancy), the behavior of sacrificial animals and the condition of their vital organs (e.g., hepatoscopy or extaspicy), various omens or sounds (cledonomancy), and dreams (oneiromancy).

The worldview that underlies all forms of divination, especially the oracle, is expressed in the term *synchronicity,* which refers to meaningful relationships among simultaneous events. In his introduction to Richard Wilhelm's translation of the *I ching* (Book of Changes), C. G. Jung contrasts the Western notion of causality with the ancient Chinese view of acausal connection, which underlay their system of divination—one that is strikingly similar in form to that of the Yoruba:

> The ancient Chinese mind contemplates the cosmos in a way comparable to that of the modern physicist, who cannot deny that his model of the world is a decidedly psychophysical structure. The microphysical event includes the observer just as much as the reality underlying the *I Ching* comprises subjective, i.e., psychic, conditions in the totality of the momentary situation. Just as causality describes the sequence of events, so synchronicity to the Chinese mind deals with the

> coincidence of events. The causal point of view tells us a dramatic story about how *D* came into existence: it took its origin from *C*, which existed before *D*, and *C* in its turn had a father, *B*, etc. The synchronistic view, on the other hand, tries to produce an equally meaningful picture of coincidence. How does it happen that A', B', C', D', etc., appear all in the same moment and in the same place? It happens in the first place because the physical events A' and B' are of the same quality as the psychic events C' and D', and further because all are the exponents of one and the same momentary situation. The situation is assumed to represent a legible or understandable picture. (Jung in Wilhelm, iv–v)

Of course, the Chinese sage or Yoruba *babalawo* doesn't explain his art in this way. In the traditional view, spiritual agencies "cause" the apparently random fall of yarrow stalks, coins, or palm nuts. Further, these same powers determined future events as well and so they can be trusted as sources of guidance.

The Yoruba myth recounts how the god Ifa guided his people when he was on earth, and how in his absence the oracle mediated his communications from afar. The underlying problem—solved here by divination—is the universal one of how to live in accordance with God's will. If the god is present (in the person of the sacred king or savior, for instance), one can simply listen and obey his dictates. But if he is distant for one reason or another, his people are left in a chaos that cannot support meaningful life. Apart from divination, the most common "solution" to this problem is the revealed law or book, as in the biblical traditions. Jews, Christians, and Muslims can always scrutinize the pages of sacred scripture in order to discover how to live and to discern the meaning behind events.

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Divination vessel with an attached figure

Artist unknown Vessel: wood, vegetable fibers, skin Height: 9.8 in (25 cm) Before 1933 CE

Site: Ivory Coast Location: Musée de l'Homme, Paris

Divination vessel with an attached figure

Ivory Coast: Baule

The mouse oracle of the Baule people is based on the conviction that the mouse has an intimate relationship with the earth and the ancestors and can, therefore, serve as a messenger conveying important information to the living.

On the right, a vessel resting on a circular base. Attached to the vessel and leaning against it with feet resting on an extension of the base is a human figure. His hair is neatly arranged on top of his head, and he wears a beard. Earrings hanging from his ears are the only visible ornament on his body. The posture of the figure and his expression convey deep concentration.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The mouse oracle is one of three divination systems practiced by the Baule of the Ivory Coast, and it dates back to their very inception as a distinct people. The Baule relate that their kingdom was founded by an Ashanti queen, Aura Poku, who left her homeland in Ghana with a large retinue as a result of a succession dispute. In the midst of this journey, at the crossing of a certain river, the swells were so threatening that the entire group was unable to cross. Passage across the river (and hence the existence of the Baule) was made possible only by consulting a mouse oracle, who correctly divined the nature of the problem and prescribed the proper sacrifices to appease the angry water spirits.

The mouse oracle typically consists of a wooden vessel with a fretwork base and cover. The interior of the vessel is split into two compartments by a piece of wood with a hole that connects the upper and lower halves. A field mouse is placed inside (because it is not domesticated, it prefers to remain hidden in the lower half). Oracle bones are laid out in a parallel pattern on a small metal plate in the top half, and rice is scattered over them as a lure for the mouse. The cover is then replaced. As the creature scurries about in the top compartment gathering the rice, the bones are disarranged into distinctive patterns that the diviner subsequently "reads" as a sacred revelation and applies to the problem at hand. The mouse is never seen by the questioner, and the entire process is understood as occurring through the intervention of divinity. As one Baule informant explained to Vincent Guerry, "When you adore a statue, you see the carved wood, but you do not see the spirit within; equally, you see the heavens, but nobody has ever been him who is inside."

The Baule believe that the divinatory power of mice is grounded in their nature; because mice live within and close to the earth, they have access to a continuum of divine power called *asye*. *Asye* is both the name of the vital forces contained within the earth and the appellation of the earth deity who controls and embodies these forces. The deity Asye is always invoked together with Nyame (Nyamia), the god of heaven. They are so closely related that they are said to be like "a bell and its clapper." The organization of the divination vessel into upper and lower compartments (representing sky and earth respectively) may reflect the relationship between Nyame and Asye. Significantly, the mice are also thought to

be in contact with the ancestors. The seniority of the ancestors places them closer to God (they have preceded us into his realm), hence they have greater contact with his knowledge and are a conduit to him. The mouse oracle makes use of the powers of the ancestors and draws upon their collective wisdom.

Asye is a powerful deity that is always invoked before sacrifices, before drinking palm wine, before breaking the earth to farm, and before settling in a new village. In order to ensure the productivity of the land and the harmony of the community, Asye's prohibitions must be obeyed. One of the most profound violations of the earth is the spilling of blood as a result of anger and violence. (In a variety of African cultures, the spilling of blood is associated with menstruation, a sign of infertility and death, and is thought to be "hot"; the heat of blood spilled through anger is said to seep into the earth and dry it up, leaving it barren.) Any act of violence (such as murder) is interpreted as an offense against Asye and must be followed by stringent ritual measures designed to placate the earth.

The divination vessel shown here is unusual insofar as it is accompanied by a figure, perhaps a representation of the diviner, or thoughtful seer. The intense concentration, serene and balanced posture, and respectful attitude of the figure may reflect the qualities that the Baule assign to their masters of divination. The beard of the figure, denoting age and the knowledge that comes from experience, may also work as a symbolic assertion of their connection with the ancestors.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The seer, or diviner, is an important member of any community. Two kinds of diviners are commonly found in Africa: the medium, who resembles the shamans of the Northern Hemisphere in that he or she enters a trance during which the soul or spirit leaves the body in order to communicate with other souls or spirits; and the interpreter, who is able to decipher the language of the world all around.

An assumption about the nature of reality underlies the work of the interpreter-diviner:

> In the eyes of the African, who valorizes it to the utmost degree, in fact . . . almost as much as he does himself, the cosmos does not constitute a fixed, cold, and mute world. On the contrary, it is a world charged with meanings and laden with messages, a world which "speaks." Thus man finds in his surroundings a partner with which he can enter into communication, with which he must in fact maintain an almost constant dialogue if he wants to be informed about himself. This is because the macrocosm contains in itself all the potentialities of the microcosm which is man. In this sense the world possesses an absolute value. Consequently, to know oneself it is necessary for one to know the messages which the universe continuously sends. It is through these messages that one can interpret one's own destiny. (Zahan, 81)

To this end the interpreter-diviner employs divinatory equipment, objects that mediate the exchange between the diviner and the spirits, gods, or ancestors. These objects are chosen according to the place that they occupy in the mythology of the people to whom the diviner belongs. In the case of the divining vessel, three symbols are explicitly present: the union of heaven and earth (the upper and lower chambers) making up the cosmos as a whole; the mouse as go-between or archetypal messenger; and the bones of the oracle.

The vessel represents the wholeness of being, the macrocosm and the microcosm; all are symbols of the unity of human experience. Heaven and earth are often hypostasized as divine

father and divine mother, and their union commonly represents the creative powers of the cosmos in general. As such they can also symbolize the relationship between what lies above the surface and can be seen (ego-consciousness) and what lies below the surface, supporting life above (the unconscious). The Baule state that the mouse is useful as a mediator because it lives both above and below the earth. It is small, active, and successful in its efforts to survive. It represents an irrepressible and autonomous factor within the human psyche that facilitates communication between the opposites.

Finally, it is significant that the bones of the oracle are moved by the actions of the mouse and provide a pattern, or message, to be interpreted. Because they resist decay longer than any other parts of the body, the bones of animals and humans are regarded in many parts of the world as the real seat of life. Bones share in the symbolism of immortality that is commonly associated with stones. In addition, the bones taken together provide the structural framework of an animal; hence, the identity of any animal can be deciphered by its bones. Bones thus convey both permanence and order, which is always necessary for the human discernment of meaning. In a way, bones represent the enduring structural components of the psyche, the archetypes themselves. The pattern presented to the seer reveals the archetypal situation that governs at any given moment.

An analytical psychologist might use similar language to describe the relationship between the unconscious and the ego, that is, dreams, fantasies, and visions are messages from a "partner" within. For the African seer, the objective psyche—the archetypal matrix that determines our humanness—is experienced projected into the world perceived by way of the senses; for the psychologist, it is experienced projected onto the subjective plane, or "the unconscious." The value of "reading" the messages, whether they come at us by way of outer or inner signs, is recognized by both "seers." Man is not alone, they agree, and he can better fulfill his destiny if he cultivates an ongoing dialogue with his invisible partner.

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LAND OTTER MAN

Artist unknown Carving: cedar wood, with haliotis shell (eye inlays), opercula (teeth), abalone (pupils, earrings), tufts of human hair (set into the crown of the head); light blue copper-sulfate and red pigments
Height: 21 in. (53 cm); width: 14 in. (36 cm) 1825–1875 CE Site: Chilkoot, Alaska
Location: no. 1/6713, Museum of the American Indian/Heye Foundation, New York

LAND OTTER MAN

North American Indian: Tlingit

This canoe prow carved in the form of Land Otter Man was chosen to memorialize the end of a thirty-year interclan war. It was chosen because a leader in the war had accomplished feats that resembled those of the Land Otter and because the inmates of Land Otter house were his paternal grandparents.

Land Otter Man is portrayed on a canoe prow as a kneeling human male (the absence of a lip plug implies a male). He leans forward, supporting himself by means of the extended left arm (which was made separately and then joined to the rest of the figure). The left hand is bent slightly and clenched into a fist. The right arm is raised with the index finger pointing forward. The head is turned to the left. Human hair, inserted into the crown of the head, falls to the shoulders. The eyebrows are painted black and offer a striking contrast to the white, lenticular eyes with their rounded, blue pupils. The wide mouth shows bared opercula teeth; abalone pendants hang from the ears. The face is painted a blue-green ground that appears to have been washed intentionally, since heavier lines of opaque blue-green paint stream down the neck. The entire body is red, and red rectangles representing another set of ears are painted above each eyebrow. A red, oblong line encircles the mouth and also covers the wings of the nose; enclosed within this marking are the lips, heavily outlined in red as well.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Land Otter reveals his presence through odd behavior. A person who is possessed by Land Otter may run along a beach on all fours with bared teeth, eat smelly substances, and attack other human beings. To restore a land otter man to his senses, live coals are thrown on him, and after he faints, slits are made with a knife on the palms of his hands and the soles of his feet, into which urine is rubbed. Among the Tlingit, belief in spirit possession is deeply rooted. This is evident in that it is easy for a practical joker to frighten others by imitating the sounds and gestures associated with Land Otter, as if possessed.

Land Otter is particularly feared in connection with a drowning. It is generally believed among the Tlingit that the spirit of the drowned is caught (like a fish?) by Land Otter and dragged into his hole. Then Land Otter transforms the person into a *goosh-ta-kah,* that is, a hobgoblin or ghost of the woods. Hence, drowning is considered the worst calamity that can befall one, especially if the body is not recovered.

Because land otter men are said to inhabit the forests, it is not uncommon for women especially to be afraid of entering the woods alone. Returning to the village after having been alone in the woods, one young girl appeared half-crazed. Attacking her friends and family, she struck and bit anyone who got close to her, tearing at her own clothing and running around in a rage of affect. She even tried to throw a stone at the shaman as he danced before her accompanied by his drum and rattle. Then her tribesmen made a medicine of the roots of a poisonous weed (unidentified), which they had scraped under water into a fine meal. Four

cuts were made on the head of the girl, and these were brushed with the medicine. Immediately she became calmer, and gradually she recalled that she had encountered land otter men in the woods. She then fell into a deep sleep from which she awoke after several hours completely recovered.

Not only associated with bizarre behavior, however, Land Otter may serve as an ally to a shaman. Sometimes a shaman will encounter Land Otter in a dream or vision, and a special relationship between them will ensue, in which case the shaman will portray the supernatural being on his mask. In addition, Land Otter may belong to a family as a special patron of the clan. Representations of Land Otter Man are transferred matrilineally and/or are clan crests. It is likely that the present piece is a crest figure, probably belonging to a matrilineage of the Raven moiety at Chilkoot. As such, the crest figure would have been displayed on a canoe used by guests going to a potlatch or perhaps to a peace conference.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The North American otter is widely distributed, and the fur is considered to be especially valuable. The otter lives in a holt, or hole burrowed out of the bank of a lake or water course. The entrance to the holt lies below the surface of the water, whereas the chamber within lies above. The only openings from above ground are imperceptible air holes.

The otter swims with a serpentine movement of body and tail, limbs pressed to its sides. Clumsy on land, it is an excellent diver and can stay under water for a long time, hunting fish, eels, and crustaceans among the rocks and plants. An otter, regardless of age, can be tamed, and it will fish for its master. The cry of the otter is a half-scream, half-grunt that it utters only rarely.

Symbolically, the otter is classified among images associated with water. Although technically the otter lives on land, it depends on other water animals for food, and so it cannot wander far away from streams, rivers, and lakes. Legends about Land Otter focus on two apparently unrelated aspects of his symbolism: on the one hand, he can be helpful in finding and catching fish for those who are connected to him in a positive way; on the other hand, he may take possession of a human being, who will then exhibit bizarre behavior. Perhaps it is because the otter appears to live under the water that he becomes a symbol of a human condition that might be called psychic drowning, that is, the psychosis that results when the defense system of the ego dissolves and the person is overwhelmed by the collective unconscious.

However, as friend and helper of the shaman, Land Otter plays quite a different role. He does not take possession of the shaman. Instead, he shares with the shaman his particular knowledge of how to "live underwater." The shaman depends on the aid of such animal spirits as he moves back and forth between the human world and the invisible world of the spirits.

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GLOSSARY

POTLATCH Any of a disparate variety of complex ceremonies among the Indians of the Pacific Northwest Coast, associated with the transfer of property, prestige, and obligations, and characterized by reenactment of sacred histories and ritual feasting.

SHAMAN A religious specialist found especially among Siberian peoples and Native Americans. The shaman has the ability to move between the human and the supernatural realms. He or she is thus able to heal illness, retrieve lost objects and persons, and look into the future.

TLINGIT A large and important Athapascan tribe inhabiting coastal Alaska, famed for their wood sculpture, especially the tall totem poles erected in front of their wooden dwellings. Their skillful dealings with Russian and American traders earned them great wealth and brought them to the forefront of tribes of the Northwest coastal region.

Shaman's mask

Artist unknown

Carving: wood with inlays of copper; blue Russian trade buttons (eyes); and red, greenish-blue, and black pigments

Height: 13 in. (33 cm)   Circa 1825–1875 CE   Site: Village of Gaudekan, Chichagof Island, Alaska

Location: no. 9/7989, Museum of the American Indian/Heye Foundation, New York

Shaman's mask

Northwest Coast: Tlingit

This anthropomorphic mask depicting the female spirit-patron of a Tlingit shaman was worn presumably on the forehead whenever the spirit was to be invoked. Each spirit was thought to have a mask of its own. The spirit of this mask is unknown, but other, subsidiary spirits (Land Otter, Frog, land spirits) have been identified. These spirits are the most powerful helpers of Tlingit shamans.

At the top of the mask are a double row of squatting human figures who represent the so-called land spirits. On either side, above each ear, a figure of Land Otter bridges the two rows, facing downward. The careful modeling of the face and the slightly bulging eyes are characteristic of the carving style of the Tlingits. The eyebrows and alae of the face are made of copper, while the unperforated, lenticular eyes have trade-button pupils. The low-set ears project outward. The wide open, perforated mouth is ornamented with a labret, or lip plug, in the lower lip (denoting a woman). Inside the mouth a figure of Frog is posed in such a way that all four of his legs are fully visible. Figures of Land Otter descend the cheeks in the direction of the mouth. The face is blue-green with a red stripe from the bridge of the nose down and across the left cheek. Red is also used for the ears, lips, land otters, land spirits, and Frog. Ear pendants are missing.

Cultural context

Although often confused with diviners, healers, priests, etc., the shaman is a specific type of religious specialist. Among the indigenous peoples of North America, the shaman is best defined as one who has acquired extraordinary access to spiritual power. In all cases the power can be practically demonstrated: for example, in healing, weather control, game divination, finding lost objects, predicting the outcome of war or other future events. Sometimes the shaman may be accused of using his or her powers for harmful purposes, as in revenge. Acquisition of spiritual powers depends on realizing a special relationship with the spirit powers that exist all around. These appear in dreams and visions, very often in animal forms. Such a relationship begins as the result of a personal quest (similar to the vision quest for a personal guardian spirit) or is inherited. This often involves the revelation of a power object and the learning of sacred songs, formulas, and chants.

The shaman's mask will bring him or her into intimate connection with the spirits represented by the mask. In this way, wearing a mask is a ritual realization of shape shifting, a mythological phenomenon. In numerous mythologies, certain deities are able to change their shapes in order to achieve whatever they desire: for instance, in Scandinavian myths, a god or goddess may turn into a bird in order to fly to a distant realm, perhaps to the land of the frost giants. This analogy points further to the fact that one of the chief abilities of the shaman is the ability to travel from one spiritual level to another—hence the capacity to "see" into the future, into distant places, into the demonic realm, and so forth.

The Tlingit shaman has a separate mask for each spirit that serves as his (or, much less frequently, her) patron. The greater the number of spirits that befriend a shaman, the greater

will be the extent of his powers. Therefore, in addition to depicting a principal spirit on each mask, usually one or more secondary spirits are represented as well. Each spirit will—by its presence on the mask—support the shaman in the area of its speciality. In addition, the location of the spirit's image on the mask will indicate what faculty of the shaman is to be influenced.

The main spirit represented by this mask has not been identified. However, the subsidiary spirits include the most powerful helpers known to the Tlingit. Ordinarily, Land Otter drives people mad, but when he favors a shaman he will share with him the secrets of his knowledge. Land spirits appear to a shaman in the form of land animals. However, they are believed to be the souls of Tlingit ancestors, who go to live in the far north. The frog is a lunar animal *par excellence.* Among the North American peoples there is a belief that the primeval moon was a frog that contained within its body all of the waters, by means of which it eventually flooded the earth. The frog resembles the moon also in that its body swells up and shrinks, and it will submerge itself in the water; in addition, it will disappear under the earth during the winter only to return the following spring. The frog-tongue seems to suggest that the shaman can communicate with frogs. In fairy tales, the languages of animals are often learned by eating a magic tongue or by undertaking some similar step. The ability to communicate with an animal opens up to the shaman an entire universe of knowledge, and the powers that go with it. In this case, he becomes versed in lunar wisdom, the power of transformation and healing.

The aspiring Tlingit shaman will receive power either through a personal quest (by fasting alone in the woods or near by a shaman's grave) or as an inheritance. The spirits choose whom they will to bless, and the person who desires to become a shaman will not necessarily succeed by his or her own will. Indeed, another, unwilling person may have the shamanic calling imposed upon him by pestering spirits. Tlingit shamanism, if acquired directly by the blessing of spirits, may offer to some a limited opportunity for social advancement, since shamans tend to be high-ranking among the Tlingit (of higher status than the shamans among the Haida and other nearby peoples). Most shamans, however, inherit their spirits and paraphernalia. In matrilinear Tlingit society, the "spirits descend" from mother's brother to sister's son, as do secular crests and titles. Since the moiety system prevails here as elsewhere, the spirits that come to the Raven shamans are distinct from those that come to Wolf shamans. It is possible, however, that a paternal fondness of a man for his own biological son—who cannot inherit from his father by legitimate means—may have sometimes led to the illegal transfer of shamanic spirits and equipment.

A nearly identical male-spirit mask—it has a mustache but no lip plug—was paired with the present female-spirit mask. They were probably carved by the same artist and together formed part of a shaman's kit.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

Not every shaman is connected with the lunar forces represented here by this frog-tongued spirit. More often, perhaps, the shaman is connected with birds—animals of flight, solar creatures. But all shamans are able to move out from the human realm into the spirit world. The identity of the spirit guide indicates only the manner in which this will take place, that is, according to what laws. Here the focus is on the feminine and on lunar symbolism. In addition, it is the ability to speak the language of animals that is underscored in this image.

Along with the belief that human beings are the only animals with language, modern civilizations share the philosophical insight that language is what frees human beings from being dominated by instinct. The symbolic universe of language, and with it, the matrix of human impulse, can be "seen" and manipulated. To ascribe language to animals, then, is to suggest that similar symbolic universes may exist. To enter such a universe is to gain access to another dimension of existence. On the intrapsychic level, this movement represents the ability to move into the unconscious psyche without destruction, without disintegration. Ordinarily, the boundaries of the ego enable consciousness to survive as something separate, unified. When ego-consciousness is overwhelmed by the unconscious, as in a psychotic episode, the orientation of the person is lost. But the shaman is the person who can move into the unconscious and return with all boundaries intact.

In some cultures, a future shaman is an individual who during childhood suffers some form of psychic collapse and who heals himself or herself. In this way, the person is identified as one who can relate to the unconscious in a special way. He or she will be trained by an older shaman to strengthen this innate talent.

> It is hard for us to imagine what such a shamanism can represent for an archaic society. In the first place, it is the assurance that human beings are not alone in a foreign world, surrounded by demons and the "forces of evil." In addition to the gods and supernatural beings to whom prayers and sacrifices are addressed, there are "specialists in the sacred," men able to "see" the spirits, to go up into the sky and meet the gods, to descend to the underworld and fight the demons, sickness, and death. The shaman's essential role in the defense of the psychic integrity of the community depends above all on this: men are sure that *one of them* is able to help them in the critical circumstances produced by the inhabitants of the invisible world. (Eliade, 509)

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GLOSSARY

TLINGIT A large and important Athapascan tribe inhabiting coastal Alaska, famed for their wood sculpture, especially the tall totem poles erected in front of their wooden dwellings. Their skillful dealings with Russian and American traders earned them great wealth and brought them to the forefront of tribes of the Northwest coastal region.

VISION QUEST One of the endurance tests of young Plains Indian men, involving a solitary retreat usually for four days, during which the individual hopes for some visionary experience by which he can be assured of good fortune, gain a powerful guardian against misfortune, and receive beneficent guidance in his future life.

Queen Triśalā dreaming

Artist unknown   Manuscript illumination: gouache on paper, polychrome and gold
Length: 3¾ in. (9.2 cm); width: 2¾ in. (7 cm)   Sixteenth century CE
Site: Gujarat, India   Location: private collection, New York

Queen Triśalā dreaming

India: Rajput

Queen Triśalā dreams the fourteen auspicious dreams, in which she sees, among other things, an elephant, a full vase, and the Milk Ocean. These dreams foretell the birth of her son, the Jain prophet Mahāvīra.

Reclining on a bed, Triśalā observes with open eyes the dream images displayed above her. In order of appearance (beginning upper left) these images are: (1) a white elephant; (2) a white bull; (3) a lion; (4) the goddess Lakṣmī; (5) a garland; (6) the full moon; (7) the rising sun; (8) a banner; (9) a vase; (10) a lotus lake; (11) the Milk Ocean; (12) a celestial palace; (13) a pile of gems; and (14) a smokeless fire. The dark-blue background indicates that it is night.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Among the numerous philosophers and religious teachers who preached in eastern India during the sixth century BCE was the Jina ("conqueror"), founder and systematizer of Jainism. His parents called him Vardhamāna ("prospering"), for soon after he was conceived, the saying goes, things began to flourish and prosper for them. The gods called him Mahāvīra ("great hero") because, it is claimed, he stood fast in the midst of dangers and fears. He is regarded as the twenty-fourth prophet of Jainism. His symbol is the lion and, like other prophets, he often appears flanked by two guardian deities.

The two schools of Jainism do not always agree regarding the details of Mahāvīra's life. According to the Śvetāmbaras (in a version rejected by the Digambaras), Mahāvīra's embryo was transplanted, following Indra's orders, from the womb of a brahman mother, Devānandā, into that of a woman of the warrior caste, Triśalā. This episode is reminiscent of a legend according to which Kṛṣṇa was likewise transplanted from one womb into another. Both the Śvetāmbaras and the Digambaras agree, however, that Mahāvīra's conception was foretold to his mother in a series of fourteen (or sixteen) auspicious dreams. These dreams are frequently described in the literature and represented in manuscript illustrations and in temple art.

This painting is one of the illustrations of the *Kalpa Sūtra,* the most sacred scripture of the Śvetāmbaras, which recounts the life of Mahāvīra. The present image displays the usual iconographic treatment of his conception, which is one of the five events in Mahāvīra's life central to the ritual life of his followers: conception, birth, renunciation, enlightenment, and passing into *nirvāṇa.*

Each dream symbolizes a highly sacred value that will manifest itself in the child carried by Queen Triśalā. Most of them are significant in Hinduism and Buddhism as well as in Jainism. There is, for example, the commonly understood royal connotation of the elephant and the lion, or the association of good luck and prosperity with the goddess Lakṣmī and the lotus. The bull connotes both physical and spiritual strength, and a flower garland is necessary for any display of honor in India. The presence of the rising sun and the full moon contributes a cosmic dimension to the value of the event, as well as suggesting that the child

will dispel the darkness of ignorance from the world. The banner stands for the victory of the Jina over the material world. The full vase is an Indian symbol of the fullness of life and of immortality. Often flanked by a pair of eyes in Jain iconography, the vase can refer also to the clairvoyance that the prophet will achieve. The Milk Ocean is the primordial sea that has been saturated with the life of the cosmic mountain, and which the gods and the demons churn so as to bring forth numerous sacred beings, including the divine elixir *soma,* which bestows supreme wisdom and immortality, the two goals of every Jain. The celestial palace alludes to Mahāvīra's career as a spiritual leader (rather than as an earthly king). The pile of gems foretells the attainment of the "three jewels hard to attain": right knowledge, right intuition, and right conduct. Finally, the smokeless fire is a symbol for the fiery heat of asceticism, by means of which he will burn the bonds that link him to the cycle of rebirth.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The dream, like the vision, is a special state of consciousness, by means of which the spirit world (the sacred, or the inner world, or the unconscious) reveals itself. That is to say, in a dream or a vision the individual's consciousness becomes receptive to symbolic communication from a dimension of reality that often goes unnoticed. In most cultures, dreams are respected as tools of divination, prophecy, and healing. Visions are interpreted according to cultural guidelines in order to inform and guide entire groups.

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Death

In our rhythm of earthly life we tire of light.
We are glad when the day ends, when the
play ends; and ecstasy is too much pain.
We are children quickly tired: children who are
up in the night and fall asleep as the rocket
is fired; and the day is long for work or play.
We tire of distraction or concentration, we sleep
and are glad to sleep,
Controlled by the rhythm of blood and the day
and the night and the seasons.
And we must extinguish the candle, put out the
light and relight it;
Forever must quench, forever relight the flame.
Therefore we thank Thee for our little light, that
is dappled with shadow.
We thank Thee who hast moved us to building,
to finding, to forming at the ends of our
fingers and beams of our eyes.
And when we have built an altar to the Invisible
Light, we may set thereon the little lights
for which our bodily vision is made.
And we thank Thee that darkness reminds us of light.
O Light Invisible, we give Thee thanks for Thy
great glory!

—T. S. Eliot

THE CRUCIFIXION
Artist unknown Mosaic Measurement unavailable Circa 1020–1025 CE
Site/Location: Narthex (north lunette), Katholikon of Hosios Loukas, Phocis, Greece

The crucifixion

Greece: Middle Byzantine

Here the redemptive aspect of the crucifixion of Christ is emphasized by the presence of Adam's skull at the foot of the cross on Mount Golgotha. Flanking Christ are the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist, intercessors for human salvation.

This mosaic of the crucifixion depicts Jesus hanging on a wooden cross, part of which is obscured by a golden nimbus around his head, which nearly merges with the surrounding gold background. His hands and feet are pierced by nails, and blood drips from his wounds. Above, and on the left, is the sun opposite the moon, on the right. Below, on the left, stands the Virgin Mary together with John the Baptist, on the right. The cross is situated on a small mound, in the center of which rests the skull of Adam.

Cultural context

In this mosaic of the crucifixion the redemptive work of Christ is iconographically stated. In Christian iconography, particularly that of the East, factual and objective detail are rarely the focus; rather, objectivity is sacrificed for the purpose of revealing the statement of a theological truth valued by the tradition. In this icon, each person and each element pictured is a symbolic part of a theological statement that might read: "Jesus, the son of God, who was foretold by the prophets and lastly by John the Baptist, was born of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit to redeem humankind from the bonds of death brought about by Adam's sin."

Christ's cross is placed on a small elevation in which the skull of Adam is pictured. All four evangelists relate that Jesus was crucified on Mount Golgotha, literally "the place of the skull." The site of the crucifixion may have been so named because the hill itself was shaped like a skull. Later legends, however, identified the spot as the burial place of Adam's skull. According to a Jewish tradition that received wide acceptance in the Christian West, Adam was buried in Hebron. This supposition gradually gave way to another, first found in Origen and then widely accepted in the East, that Adam was buried on Calvary. The latter view supports the belief that the blood of the second Adam, Christ, was poured out over the head of the first.

This belief expresses a teaching identified with Irenaeus of the second century. The core of Irenaeus's Christology, indeed, of his entire theology, rests on his theory of recapitulation, seminally found already in the writings of Paul, but developed further by him. Recapitulation, for Irenaeus, is a taking up in Christ of everything since creation and restoring, that is, rehabilitating, all things according to the original plan of God, which had been interrupted by the sin of Adam. Thus, through Christ's birth from a human mother and his ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection, not only Adam but the entire Adamic issue—the human race—is saved from eternal damnation and death. Humanity is re-created with the capacity and purpose of attaining a state of grace, that is, to grow in the image and likeness of God, which in and of itself means to experience life eternal.

Depicted in this crucifixion icon are the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist. They represent the human response to and cooperation with God's action to save fallen humanity. Irenaeus extends his analogy of the first and second Adams to Eve. The first Eve sinned by heeding the words of the serpent. She became, with Adam, the instrument of human destruction, whereas the second Eve, Mary, by heeding God's word, became the one through whom salvation was born. As formulated by Irenaeus, "The knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary."

John the Baptist is another example of one who was able to hear and see God's revelation in Jesus. Like Mary, John surrendered his will to God and so became an instrument of God's work by "preparing the way of the Lord." In addition, this process proved to be his own purification and transformation. As such, he was, after Mary, the first one to recognize Jesus in his earthly ministry as the Messiah. For both, questioning and doubt at each stage of development were prerequisites for understanding and relying on God's guidance. Hence, they are pictured with Christ at the foot of the Cross, indicating that the salvation of individual Christians must follow the pattern of the cross. This assumes the necessity of questioning, doubting, of despair and groaning, but always with an openness to God, accepting his initiative and the grace that was given in the mission of Christ and accomplished on the cross. The Virgin Mary and John the Baptist are esteemed and regarded as the first two among the saints. They are intercessors with God for those believers who strive to follow their example in attaining salvation through Jesus Christ.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The crucifixion is one of the central images of Christian tradition, yet not until the sixth century was it represented in religious art. Early Christian art referred to the event by placing the lamb beside the cross, or by the cross alone. Eventually the representation of Christ hanging on the cross became common. This has been done in two ways: sometimes he is presented as the victorious Christ, preshadowing the Resurrection; elsewhere, as in this image, it is the suffering of Christ that is the main message.

The crucifixion has been interpreted over and over again throughout Christian history. It is the sacrifice in which God gives up his son for the world. It is the revelation of Christ's dual nature—human and divine. It is the paradigm for the life of suffering, in which the opposites are accepted and endured so that eventually new life and new meaning can emerge.

In a private letter, C. G. Jung expressed the meaning that the crucifixion held for him:

> The problem of Crucifixion is the beginning of Individuation. This is the secret meaning of Christian symbolism, a path of blood and suffering—like any other step forward on the road of evolution of human consciousness. Can Man stand a further increase in consciousness? Is it really worthwhile that Man should progress morally and intellectually? Is that gain worth the candle? That's the question. I do not want to force my views on everybody else. But I confess that I submitted to the divine power of this apparently insurmountable problem and I consciously and intentionally made my life miserable, because I wanted God to be alive and free from the suffering that Man has put on him by loving his own reason more than God's secret intentions. There is a mystical fool in me that proved to be stronger than all science. I think that God in turn has bestowed life upon me and has saved me from petrification. Thus I suffered and

> was miserable, but it seems that life was never wanting and even in the blackest night, and just there, by the grace of God I could see a great light. Somewhere there seems to be great kindness in the abysmal darkness of the Deity. Try to apply seriously what I have told you, not that you might escape suffering—nobody can escape it—but that you may avoid the worst—blind suffering. (Kirsch, 11)

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GLOSSARY

PAUL OF TARSUS (originally called Saul and later known in Christian tradition as Saint Paul) Author of many writings in the New Testament. Paul was a leader in the missionary activity of early Christians as well as an important voice in the formulation of Christian belief.

THE CREATION OF ADAM AND THE FALL
Artist: The Master of Maderuelo (or possibly the Master of Santa Maria de Tahull)
Wall painting: plaster, polychrome   Measurement unavailable   Late twelfth century CE
Site: Chapel of La Vera Cruz, Maderuelo (Sergovia), Spain   Location: Museo del Prado, Madrid

The creation of Adam and the Fall

Spain: The Middle Ages

In the biblical tradition, the origins of suffering and death are explained by the myth of Adam and Eve. Disobedience and shame are essential components in the fall from paradise.

Left: As though he were taking the pulse of newly created life, God (depicted anthropomorphically, dressed in robes and with a halo) draws Adam up by the wrist in front of what may be the tree of life. Right: Later, tempted by the serpent, Adam and Eve taste the fruit of the tree of knowledge and consequently cover their nakedness. Adam even clutches at his throat as if he senses already the consequences of the Fall. The two biblical scenes are separated by a palm tree.

Cultural context

In this wall painting from a Christian chapel in medieval (i.e., Islamic) Spain, two scenes drawn from one story are united: the creation of mankind and the subsequent fall of Adam and Eve. These two motifs cannot be separated; they belong to one and the same myth. Creation myths often serve as a framework for understanding how things came to be the way they are. The story of Adam and Eve is a mythical response to the question "Where did suffering and death come from?"

Genesis actually contains two creation myths. The second of these (*Genesis* 2:5–3:24) begins with the creation of Adam in a wasteland: "When the Lord God made earth and heaven, there was neither shrub nor plant growing wild upon the earth, because the Lord God had sent no rain on the earth." The first creature that God creates is Adam. Adam was originally androgynous, having both male and female components. God then creates Eden, a garden filled with plants and trees and fed by the waters of four rivers. In the middle of the garden are two sacred trees, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Up to this point, Adam (or "mankind") is the only living creature. Then God tells Adam that he may eat the fruit of every tree in the garden except for that of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If he eats the fruit of this tree, on that day he will die. Thus the stage is set: mankind in the person of Adam lives in a paradise that has been created around him for his needs. The exception is the tree of knowledge. Why was it created? What kind of knowledge does it offer, and for whom?

Now God has compassion for this being that he has created, and lest he be lonely God creates animals as companions. Still the man is lonely. "And so the Lord God put the man into a trance, and while he slept, he took one of his ribs and closed the flesh over the place." Out of this rib, God makes a woman. Adam rejoices to have a partner made of his own flesh and blood. Eve is thus the feminine side of Adam, realized as a separate human being.

Enter the serpent—the wisest of the wild animals that God has created. In the image shown here, the serpent is gigantic, almost as long as Adam is tall, and he seems to have a special connection with the tree upon which he hangs. It is the serpent who tells Eve that God fears that they will eat from the tree of knowledge, their eyes will be opened, and they

will see as the gods see. Indeed, as soon as Adam and Eve eat the fruit, "the eyes of both of them were opened." The result? They discover that they are naked. The rest of the story, how God discovers their disobedience and exiles them from the garden, belongs to the myth but is not depicted in this image, which emphasizes two moments: the creation of Adam and the first moment of consciousness (the discovery of nakedness).

Throughout the history of Western culture the story of the Fall has been told and retold. People refer to it when they want to explain suffering and the origin of death. Interpretations vary from time to time and from place to place. However, the myth does hang on two central points. First, suffering is the result of a human predisposition, that is, it derives from a human rather than a divine flaw. (In some creation myths, suffering is caused by a divine being, or the Fall takes place within the divine sphere before the creation.) Second, suffering is somehow connected with consciousness—the knowledge of the difference between good and evil. Yet the fall from paradise, the source of all human suffering, also brings Adam and Eve closer in nature to the gods—even though they are banished from the place where God walks. Further, to become like the gods, according to our tale, involves the experience of shame.

Shame is profoundly meaningful in this context, because it marks the moment of separation from the state of instinctual innocence. At this moment, the human separates from the animal: one does not cease to be an animal and to have the instincts of an animal, but one "sees" from a new place, at one remove. One experiences the inner impulses and the life of the body almost as an outsider. This is the birth of suffering, even of death. An animal does not know that it will die, because it is unconscious.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

When one lives in a myth—as we of the West live in this one—it is hard to see beyond its boundaries. The myth is like a gigantic box containing a miniature cosmos. One cannot imagine another box, another cosmos. Yet as soon as we encounter creation myths of other cultures, we become freer in respect to our own. It then becomes apparent that certain elements taken for granted are unique. For example, this creator god (ignoring for the moment the first creation myth in *Genesis*) is a craftsman—he creates Adam by molding mud. There are many ways that gods create: by means of sexual intercourse, masturbation, through self-sacrifice, even by weeping. Furthermore, this creator is masculine, although there are references in the text to other gods that may be male or female. His purpose for creating is not clear; nor is it apparent why he wishes Adam to remain unconscious. In addition, why is the serpent wiser than Adam? Many such questions arise—and numerous answers have been offered. From the history of hermeneutics (the interpretation of sacred stories) we learn that a myth, any myth, seems to beg for interpretation. The symbol itself gives rise to thought, as Paul Ricoeur has said. By this, he means that both theology and metaphysics are born in thoughtful reflection on sacred stories.

Edward F. Edinger has reinterpreted the myth of Adam and Eve from the point of view of depth psychology. He suggests that the myth recounts the emergence of personal consciousness from the point of view of the individual ego. The establishment of ego-consciousness is felt to be a standing over and against the original unconscious Self. The ego feels separate, isolated, perhaps alienated. This process is at work in the infant as it becomes a person in its own right, and a parallel process supports each newly acquired expansion of

consciousness. Consciousness emerges as a counterpole to the instinctual and unconscious mode of being. Hence, duality, dissociation, and repression are inevitable in the dialectic that leads to individuation. It is only at a later stage that what has been repressed or left behind can be recovered and assimilated into the conscious personality.

The mythological motifs associated with the Fall continue to live in the unconscious of modern men and women, and to appear in symbolic expressions of the unconscious:

> They are very common at times when new conscious insights are being born. The theme of encountering or being bitten by a snake is common in dreams. The latter generally has the same meaning that the succumbing to the temptation of the serpent in the Garden of Eden had for Adam and Eve; namely, that an old state of affairs is being lost and a new conscious insight is being born. This is often experienced as something alien and dangerous; hence it is never a pleasant dream. But at the same time such a bite usually initiates a whole new attitude and orientation. It is generally a transition dream of considerable importance. (Edinger, 21)

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THE TEMPTATION OF EVE

Artist: Gislebertus Relief: limestone Height: 28.3 in. (72 cm); width: 52 in. (132 cm) Circa 1125–1135 CE

Site: fragment of lintel from destroyed north portal, Cathedral of Saint Lazare, Autun, Burgundy, France

Location: Musée Rolin, Autun

The temptation of eve

France: Romanesque

In this Christian visualization of Eve's temptation, we see the claw of the Devil pushing the forbidden fruit closer to Eve.

Desire, shame, regret, and a sense of transgression seem to be combined in the attitude of Eve, who crawls nude along the ground while reaching back with one hand to pluck fruit from a serpentine branch. The branch, belonging to the tree of knowledge, the fruit of which God expressly forbade to humanity, is pushed forward by Satan's claw (extreme right). Eve's right hand is cupped against her cheek, either to call Adam or else to express a dawning feeling of guilt.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The story of Adam and Eve and the Fall is a biblical one, and so has come to be shared by all three religions of the book: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This image is from a Christian setting, a French cathedral built in the late Middle Ages.

According to the so-called Yahvistic account of creation in *Genesis* 2:5–3:24, God created the garden of Eden and placed in its center two trees, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He then created Adam and Eve, forbidding them only one thing, that is, that they should not eat from the tree of knowledge lest they die. It is a snake who interrupts this static but peaceful scene. He convinces Eve that far from killing her, the forbidden fruit will actually give her divine knowledge. And so she eats the fruit and shares her plunder with Adam.

> The serpent was more crafty than any wild creature that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Is it true that God has forbidden you to eat from any tree in the garden?" The woman answered the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, except for the tree in the middle of the garden; God has forbidden us either to eat or to touch the fruit of that; if we do, we shall die." The serpent said, "Of course you will not die. God knows that as soon as you eat it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods knowing both good and evil." When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good to eat, and that it was pleasing to the eye and tempting to contemplate, she took some and ate it. She also gave her husband some and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they discovered that they were naked.
>
> (*Genesis* 3:1–7)

When God discovers the act of disobedience, he punishes the humans as well as the snake: Adam and Eve are henceforth subject to pain, work, and death; as for the snake, henceforth he is condemned to crawl about on his stomach, legless. God then takes counsel with himself and decides that, like the gods, Adam and Even now possess the knowledge of good and evil; fearing that they will eat also from the tree of life and "live forever," he casts them out of Eden to live as they can, wherever they can.

The story of Adam and Eve has been the subject of constant interpretation ever since it was written down thousands of years ago. In Christianity, the drama has come to be known as the Fall. Christians have seen in the Fall the origins of all suffering and death, and they proclaim that the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ is an historical event that reverses the entire process. In this view, Christ is the second Adam, who does away with both suffering and death.

What distinguishes the Autun Eve from other treatments of the theme is her horizontal pose. Depictions of the Fall usually show Adam and Eve standing upright on either side of a tree, taking the fruit. The Syriac *Cave of Treasures* (fourth–sixth century CE), an apocryphal version of the story, consists of a lengthy lamentation by Adam and Eve after the Fall. This text may have served as the model for numerous representations depicting Eve in a prostrate posture after having eaten the forbidden fruit. Her loss of an upright stance symbolizes her fall into an earthbound condition. It may also echo the punishment of the serpent.

Originally, the lintel fragment shown here would have formed part of the upper member of a door, above which would have been placed additional sculptural decoration. The missing portion of the lintel would have shown Adam in a horizontal pose. The lintel was located on the doorway of the north transept of the cathedral. In 1766 it was removed on order of the cathedral chapter; only fragments have survived. The sculptor who carved this image left his signature on the west portal of the church: *Gislebertus hoc fecit* ("Gislebertus made this"). Fragments of other sculptures attributable to him have been located at La Madeleine, Vezelay, and at the destroyed monastery of Cluny, where he was probably trained. Gislebertus was recognized as one of the greatest sculptors of the twelfth century.

According to descriptions from the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, the tympanum above the lintel represented the raising of Lazarus. The combination of the theme of the miraculous resurrection by Jesus of an ordinary person like Lazarus with the motif of the Fall was most likely inspired by medieval writings that interpreted this miracle as a concrete sign of Christ's reversal of the Fall, and so, too, victory over death. And since the north portal combining the themes of Lazarus and the Fall faced the church burial ground, it would seem that these reliefs served to remind the faithful that even though punishment for mortal sin is death, salvation is still possible through Christ, his church, and its sacraments.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The story of Adam and Eve is probably the most widely interpreted story in Western culture. Perhaps the account in *Genesis* is itself a Hebrew retelling of ancient Near Eastern themes: the association of the great goddess with the tree of life and/or the wisdom of the snake. The biblical account, however, interprets both woman and snake in a negative light. Through them Adam is tempted to disobey God, and so the Fall comes about. Suffering and death are given an absolute beginning in human history. Man is deemed responsible for both. He has gained freedom but lost both a closeness to God and eternal life. Yet all three religions based on the Bible claim that the original paradise will someday be restored. They disagree only as to how and when this will take place.

Certain Christian theologians, beginning with Origen, have interpreted the Fall as a necessary evil. They suggest that God prefers a humanity that knowingly loves and obeys him rather than one that offers blind obedience. They describe the restored paradise to come

as superior in value to the garden of Eden. Gnostic Christians, especially the so-called Ophites, have interpreted the Fall in yet another way: they regard the creator as an inferior, short-sighted, childish demiurge. The snake, on the other hand, is for them the messenger of a spiritual reality to which Adam and Eve truly belong. His task is to awaken them to their spiritual nature.

Edward Edinger interprets the Fall as a myth that reveals the experience of the birth of consciousness as a crime that alienates mankind from God and from an original preconscious wholeness. "Eating the forbidden fruit marks the transition from the eternal state of unconscious oneness with the Self . . . to a real, conscious life in space and time. In short, the myth symbolizes the birth of the ego" (Edinger, 18). The sense of guilt or shame that accompanies the Fall expresses, in his view, the feeling of estrangement between the conscious individual and his animal nature: "Consciousness as a spiritual principle has created a counterpole to natural, instinctive animal function" (*ibid.*, 19).

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GLOSSARY

EDEN In the second creation account set forth in *Genesis, Eden* is the name given to the land where God plants a garden and creates the first human beings, Adam and Eve. The text mentions four rivers that flow out of Eden, thus indicating that this garden exists symbolically at the center of the cosmos.

SATAN (from the Hebrew root *saṭan,* "to oppose") One of the names given in Christian tradition to the principle of evil. He is associated with the serpent in the garden of Eden as well as the fallen angel Lucifer. He is also called the Devil.

ANUBIS AND THE WEIGHING OF THE HEART

Artist unknown   Painting: papyrus, with ink and pigment   Length of scroll: 18 ft., 1 in. (5.51 m)
Circa 1310 BCE   Site: Thebes, Egypt   Location: scene 125d, papyrus no. 9901, British Museum, London

Anubis and the Weighing of the Heart

Egypt: New Kingdom, Nineteenth Dynasty

Two successive moments in the funerary rite called the Weighing of the Heart convey the Egyptian sense of justice. The god Anubis, with the head of a jackal and the body of a man, leads the deceased Hunifer to the scales of the gods. There the heart of the dead man is weighed against the feather of truth (symbol of the goddess Maat, whose head surmounts the central pole). Anubis officiates while Ammit, the demon devourer of the dead, awaits the outcome. Ibis-headed Thoth, the divine scribe, records the verdict.

On the left, Anubis is depicted in his characteristic hybrid form, with the head of a jackal and the body of a man. In typical Egyptian fashion, the juncture between head and body is skillfully masked by means of a thick wig. Striding forward, with his left foot fully advanced, Anubis leads the deceased Hunifer toward the balance in the center. In his left hand, the god holds an ankh, or symbol of life. He wears a striated kilt, from which is suspended an animal tail, and a vestlike garment supported by shoulder straps. Hunifer wears a long white robe, fringed apron, and broad-collar; he has a short beard. In the center portion of the scene, the heart of the dead man is weighed against the feather of truth (*maat*). The head of the goddess Maat, surmounted by an identifying feather, rests on the central fulcrum. The same feather emblem appears on the right dish, balancing the heart of the deceased, which is visible in the left dish. Below the arms of the balance is Anubis, squatting on a shrine with a cavetto cornice. With his left hand he calibrates the deeds of the deceased, while with his right, he calms the wailing demon Ammit, the devourer of the dead. This demon, a composite creature, possesses the head of a crocodile, the forelegs and mane of a lion, and the hindquarters of a hippopotamus. To the right of Ammit is the god Thoth, characteristically depicted as an ibis-headed man. He wears a kilt, a sash across his torso, a broad-collar, and arm bands. In his left hand he holds a scribe's palette, and with his right he records the results of the weighing. The beginning of another scene, showing Hunifer with Horus, is visible at the extreme right.

Cultural Context

The ancient Egyptians depicted the god Anubis as a black jackal crouching on his belly or as a man with the head of a jackal. Anubis is the oldest of the funerary deities in Egypt. Originally, he was known as a destroyer of corpses. (Like the vulture and the hyena, the jackal is a scavenger who clears the countryside of corpses.) Later, he became the embalmer of both the gods and mankind. By the time of the New Kingdom, Anubis assumed the role portrayed in this image, that of "magistrate of the court." Tending the moral as well as the physical condition of the deceased, he played a prominent part in the judgment hall of the hereafter. It was he who examined the heart of the dead on the scales of the gods. Still later, during the Hellenistic period, Anubis became a psychopomp in the mysteries of Isis and so continued his role as the one who tends to the dead.

The transformation of Anubis from corpse eater to psychopomp accompanies the gradual evolution of the Egyptian funerary rites. These, in turn, reflect changing attitudes

toward death. As noted by Helmer Ringgren (1987), the ancient Egyptians were always fascinated with the concept of life after death. In the Pyramid Texts, the oldest funerary texts extant, there is no reference to a judgment of the dead. However, several of the inscriptions in tombs of the Old Kingdom period warn that trespassers will be "judged by the Great God at the place of judgment." In addition, autobiographical writings from this early period express the desire that the author's name "may be good before the Great God." This seems to be evidence for belief in some kind of judgment in the hereafter. By the time of the Middle Kingdom, there is mention of a judge who judges sinners after death. According to the *Instruction for Merikare,* anyone who lives without considering this judgment is foolish, while those who do not sin shall become like the gods.

In the Coffin Texts, magic spells are introduced to help the deceased secure various privileges in the afterlife. This development is carried further in the *Book of Going Forth by Day.* Chapter 125 instructs the dead man how to successfully undergo the judgment before Osiris, who was by this time the divine judge of the netherworld. The text describes the Weighing of the Heart rite, performed by Anubis in the presence of Osiris; simultaneously, it prepares the Egyptian for this event, both by giving him foreknowledge of what to expect and by describing the protective amulets and rites that will ensure his success. Reflected here are two strands of Egyptian tradition: the moral sense that a man's life must correspond in character to the principles that govern the universe, and the conviction that this can be achieved by means of sacred rites and knowledge as well as by good deeds. The Weighing of the Heart as presented in the *Book of Going Forth by Day* presupposes certain preliminary formalities, such as offering breads, beer, the hooves of a red bull, four bowls of milk from a white cow, and four bowls of blood on an altar. The body of the deceased bears a sacred amulet of jasper and lapis lazuli, his wrist bears a bracelet of flowers. The twelve fires of the sacred altar have been lit. The paths that lead to the underworld have been copied on his coffin, and further, a figure representing the deceased has been placed in the prow of a small green porcelain solar boat, decorated with the images of guardian spirits and anointed with cedar oil.

Anubis then leads the dead man to the scales of the gods. On one pan of the balance lies his heart; on the other lies the feather of truth. If Thoth, the scribe of the gods, can record in his tablet that the two pans of the scales balance, then he will turn toward Osiris and say, "This man has been weighed in heart. The scales say that his heart is true of voice and just." Henceforth, he is called Justified. If the dead man fails the test, if his heart is heavier than the feather, he will be fed to the demon whose name means "devouress." Having survived the test, however, he is free to go wherever he wishes. Accepted now by the gods, the justified one is no longer dead. He takes his place among them, and the hidden nature of the universe is revealed to him.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The meaning of the ritual called the Weighing of the Heart is based on the symbolism of ascension. Implicit in this trial is the comparison or alignment of the human and the divine: when the human being shares in the same substantial being as the goddess Maat, he or she is free to share in the immortality and freedom of the gods in general. Explicit in the trial is the comparison of substance in terms of weight, or the susceptibility to the pull of the earth's gravity.

The feather stands for the wing of a bird, and therefore for the capacity for flight—freedom from the pull of the earth. The bird of flight has often represented movement between the world of mankind and the celestial realm of the gods. With this capacity for movement comes vision and objectivity—a form of spirit that is often associated with a bird, as, for example, the Holy Spirit in Christian tradition. A pair of wings can carry this meaning as well. In Western tradition, those mythological creatures that move between the human and the divine realm often bear wings. Angels are a good example. The word *angel* derives from the Greek word for "messenger." The angel is a messenger who travels to earth to reveal messages from the gods to mankind. A comparable symbolism is found in Greek images of the soul, or *psyche,* bearing wings, for the soul is believed to be capable of movement between heaven and earth, not to bear messages but because it actually belongs in both realms.

That the heart of man should be as light as a feather is a metaphor for divinization in this ancient Egyptian rite. The spiritual development of the individual is represented by an increasing freedom of the heart (which in Egyptian tradition symbolized the existential personality of the person—mind, memory, will, conscience, etc.). As the person grows in accord with the laws that govern ultimate reality (*maat*) his or her heart manifests this growth by becoming lighter, freed from the pull of earthly existence.

The spiritual development of the individual is at once moral and religious. Therefore, it is natural that the acquisition of sacred knowledge would play an essential role in the divinization of the individual. This is everywhere the rule: initiation always includes acquisition of new, sacred knowledge. The initiated person "knows." Sacred knowledge plays an important part in the Egyptian beliefs about the afterlife, and this tradition is fundamental in the Hellenistic mysteries, which taught the sacred knowledge that would enable the initiate to attain immortality after death. We find this principle operating also in the gnostic teachings of the period. Death is conquered by means of a sacred knowledge of the otherworld and of the words and rites that protect the soul on its journey from this world into the next.

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GLOSSARY

MAAT Egyptian goddess who embodied the principle of cosmic order and justice. This principle underlay both creation and the legitimacy of the king's rule. She is depicted as a graceful young woman with an ostrich feather in her hair, or sometimes by the feather alone.

THOTH The god of wisdom from Hermopolis in Middle Egypt. Thoth was the moon god and, as such, the companion of Re, his father, the sun god. He is identified with both the ibis and the baboon. Credited with the invention of writing—that is, with hieroglyphs, the so-called "god's words," according to ancient Egyptian texts—he is often depicted as the patron of scribes. During the Hellenistic period, Thoth was identified with the Greek Hermes.

THE WEIGHING OF SOULS
Artist: Gislebertus Relief: limestone Height: 5 ft. (1.5 m) Circa 1125–1135 CE
Site/Location: tympanum (lower right), west portal, cathedral of Saint Lazare, Autun, France

THE WEIGHING OF SOULS

France: Romanesque

The motif of the weighing of souls appeared in Christian art during the late Middle Ages. This eschatological motif came into Christianity by way of ancient Egypt and recalls the Weighing of the Heart, a postmortem rite described in Egyptian mythology during which the heart of the deceased was weighed on a balance together with the feather of truth.

Angels, demons, and little naked human beings (representing souls) are collected around a balance. On the left stands the archangel Michael, holding the left scale steady. Inside the scale sits a human being. Behind Michael stands another angel holding a scroll in its hands. On the right stands a demon, its left hand grabbing another human being by the hair; with its right hand, it attempts in vain to tip the balance in its own favor. An aide crouches in the righthand scale, while the demon pulls down on the crosspiece. Below, a three-headed hydra entwined in the demon's legs menaces tremulous, naked souls, who seek refuge among the robes of the archangel.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The representation of the weighing of souls at the Last Judgment appeared in Christian art rather late, in view of the long-standing, literary precedents for this motif. Augustine of Hippo wrote that at the time of judgment, our good and evil actions shall be as if hanging in the scales, and should evil preponderate, the guilty shall be dragged away to hell. John Chrysostom used even more explicit imagery: "In that day our actions, our words, and our thoughts will be placed in the scales, and the dip of the balance on either side will carry with it the irrevocable sentence" (Brandon, 1967, 122). The judgment of the scales did not originate, however, with these saints of the fourth and fifth centuries. The idea appears already in the Hebrew scriptures, as, for example, in *Job* 31:6: "Let God weigh me in the scales of justice, and he will know that I am innocent!"

In Christian tradition, the weighing of souls is carried out by the archangel Michael. Michael's career as a figure of eschatological importance begins already in the Hebrew scriptures. In *Daniel* 12:1–2, he appears in a vision that describes the end of the world:

> At that moment Michael shall appear,
> Michael the great captain,
> who stands guard over your fellow-countrymen;
> and there will be a time of distress
> such as has never been
> since they became a nation till that moment.
> But at that moment your people will be delivered,
> every one who is written in the book:
> many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will wake,
> some to everlasting life
> and some to the reproach of eternal abhorrence.

Michael continues to play a similar role in the New Testament and in early Christian literature. For example, in the revelation of John, Michael appears as the leader of the heavenly host that overthrows the Devil and his angels. Further, in the *Letter of Jude* there is evidence that Christians were familiar with the Jewish apocryphal legend of Michael contending with Satan for the soul of the dying Moses.

The bringing together of the two themes—the weighing of the soul and the role of Michael as a psychopomp—takes place in the *Testament of Abraham,* a Jewish-Christian text that was composed in Egypt during the second century. The patriarch Abraham is conducted on a tour through the next world by the archangel Michael, and he witnesses the weighing of the souls, first by an angel resplendent in light, and later by the archangel Dokiel, "the just weigher." In later writings, it is Michael who weighs the soul.

Both the *Testament of Abraham* and the eventual assimilation of this motif into European Christianity reflect the influence of an important Egyptian ceremony: the Weighing of the Heart. Egyptian tombs included illustrations and texts depicting the afterlife journey into paradise, that is, the trials and tribulations of this important rite of passage. Among these was the Weighing of the Heart, a ceremony in which the jackal-headed deity Anubis weighed the heart of the deceased in a balance with the feather of the goddess Maat ("truth" or "justice"). The results of this rite were recorded by the god Thoth, and if successful, the deceased was allowed to continue the journey. The wicked, however, were cast before a hungry monster whose name meant "the devourer." The entire procedure took place in a hall before the god of the dead and his court.

The Weighing of the Heart was a common subject for representation on funerary objects in the ancient world. Because of the simplicity of the idea and the ease with which it was represented graphically, it found its way into Christian art, even though it cannot be said to express orthodox views of the Christian church in respect to the resurrection and Last Judgment.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The postmortem weighing of the soul or heart as a rite of judgment appears in numerous religious traditions. The Egyptian conception of the judgment of the dead is the earliest and the most elaborately articulated. S. G. F. Brandon uses a word of Greek derivation, *psychostasia* ("weighing the soul"), to refer to this motif in a comparative context.

In addition to the ancient Egyptian and medieval Christian appearances of this idea, the theme of psychostasia is mentioned in a Jewish work of the first century BCE, the *Similitudes of Enoch,* which states that the Lord of Spirits will place the Elect One on the throne of glory. This one will then judge the works of the saints by weighing their deeds in a balance. Further, one of the surahs in the Qur'ān refers to psychostasia, emphasizing the impartiality of this mode of evaluation: "We shall place the balances of justice on the day of resurrection, and no soul shall be wronged, even to the extent of the weight of a grain of mustard seed. We shall make the assessments. We shall know how to cast the account" (surah 21:48). In Islam, however, psychostasia is only one among several eschatological ordeals, and the same can be said of its role in both Zoroastrianism and Hinduism. In the latter tradition, it is Yama, the god of the dead, who weighs the good deeds of the dead; in Zoroastrianism, it is the just Rashnu. His spiritual scales "incline to neither side, neither for the saved nor yet for the

damned, nor yet for kings and princes. Not for a hair's breadth will he diverge, for he is no respecter of persons. He deals out impartial justice both to kings and princes and to the meanest of men" (Brandon, 1969, 109).

Psychostasia is an eschatological motif, taken from the marketplace and transposed to the law court. The symbol of the scales carries with it an objectivity and impartiality that expresses faith in divine justice. The same idea is preserved in modern symbolism by the blindfolded figure of Justice, holding the scales and a drawn sword.

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GLOSSARY

ANUBIS Egyptian god associated chiefly with protecting and transforming the dead. As such, he guarded the necropolis and supervised the process of embalming. In art, he is usually depicted as a black jackal or a man with a jackal's head.

MAAT Egyptian goddess who embodied the principle of cosmic order and justice. This principle underlay both creation and the legitimacy of the king's rule. She is depicted as a graceful young woman with an ostrich feather in her hair, or sometimes by the feather alone.

THOTH The god of wisdom from Hermopolis in Middle Egypt. Thoth was the moon god and, as such, the companion of Re, his father, the sun god. He is identified with both the ibis and the baboon. Credited with the invention of writing—that is, with hieroglyphs, the so-called "god's words" according to ancient Egyptian texts—he is often depicted as the patron of scribes. During the Hellenistic period, Thoth was identified with the Greek Hermes.

THE LAST JUDGMENT

Artist unknown Manuscript illumination: tempera on parchment Measurement unavailable
Eleventh or twelfth century CE Site: Ethiopia Location: Lady Meux Collection, British Library, London

The last judgment

Ethiopia

In his heavenly court, Christ sits in majesty, surrounded by a host of angels as he separates the just from the sinners. Present also are the defeated powers of evil, who lie at the feet of the heavenly king.

Dressed in a red gown and a golden robe, a bearded man with a nimbus dominates the center of this manuscript illumination. In his right hand, he holds a banner comprising three red flags on a cross-tipped staff. With his left hand, he makes the gesture of benediction. Above him and on both sides stand sixteen angels, dressed also in red and gold, each bearing wings and a nimbus. Below, and on his right is a group of mortals dressed in gold and huddled together. Only their heads and their gowns are represented. On the left is a group of gray figures that resemble shadows, ghosts, or naked human beings. Below, are three demons, lying beneath the feet of the central figure. They are monsters of unknown composition. Horns, claws, wings, and serpentine tail are included in their attributes.

Cultural context

The central figure in this Ethiopian miniature is Christ in majesty, seated upon his throne at the Last Judgment and exercising decisive judgment over the quick and the dead. Above, he is flanked on either side by a host of angels. Below, he is flanked by the saved (on his right) and the damned (on his left). The latter are naked and little more than shadows painted in gray, a sharp contrast to the well-ordered figures of the redeemed depicted opposite them, clothed in bright yellow or gold as is Christ himself. Christ's arms are spread wide apart, as if to emphasize the separation of the just from the unjust. The sign of benediction that he makes with his left hand is here to be understood as a sign of his authority as he pronounces judgment.

The composition of the picture as a whole is deeply indebted to Byzantine representations of Christ in majesty, which were themselves modeled on the splendor of the Byzantine court. Angels and mortals surround Christ just as the ministers and supplicants stood around the Byzantine emperor dispensing justice from his throne. Here this imperial imagery is used to convey a sense of divine power and authority, which triumphs over the evil represented by the three demonic figures lying prostrate beneath Christ's throne.

It is probable that this manuscript illustration was intended originally to illustrate *Matthew* 25:31–42, which contains the most important description of Christ as judge in the New Testament:

> When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, he will sit in state on his throne, with all the nations gathered before him. He will separate men into two groups, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right hand, "You have my Father's blessing; come, enter and possess the kingdom that has been ready for you since the world was made." . . . Then he will say to those on his left hand, "The curse is upon you; go from my sight to the eternal fire that is ready for the devil and his angels."

The three demons depicted below Christ, two bearing wings, may be intended to represent the Devil and two of his angels.

The notion of the Last Judgment is closely connected with the belief in the second coming of Christ, who in the words of the Nicene Creed "will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead." It is thus an essential part of Christian tradition. It ensures that the just will be vindicated in the end and that evil will be punished. This view provides a mythical foundation for the moral responsibility of the individual.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The Christian belief in the judgment of the dead belongs to a category of beliefs according to which human beings are held accountable for their deeds in an afterlife. At least four types can be distinguished among those religions that differentiate between the righteous and the sinner in the hereafter. Sometimes the process is automatic, built into a system of rebirth, as in the Indian doctrine of *karman*. In this view, the deeds of an individual's lifetime determine his or her status in the next life. Plato presents a similar view in his Myth of Er. The second type of judgment takes the form of an ordeal. For instance, it is believed that the deceased must pass over a narrow bridge in order to attain paradise. If he or she is righteous, success is assured; if not, a fall is inevitable. This belief is found in ancient Iranian mythology as well as among the Algonquin Indians, the Mari (Cheremis) of Russia, and the Bojnang of the island of Sulawesi. In both of these views, judgment takes place without the intervention of a god or goddess.

The third type of judgment is based on the metaphor of the scales. The person's soul or heart (representing actual deeds or essential goodness) is weighed in order to determine his or her status. In ancient Egypt, the essence of the dead person (represented by his or her heart) was set in one tray of a balance. In the second tray was set the feather of Maat ("truth"). If the two failed to balance, the heart was thrown before a devouring monster. Should the two balance out, however, the deceased was led to the land of the gods where he or she found eternal happiness.

The fourth type of judgment is based on the metaphor of the court of a king. In traditional China, the god of the dead, Yen-lo or Yen-lo Wang (derived from the Indian god Yama), is believed to be the administrator of the punishments of Hell. It is thought that he encounters the deceased immediately after death and judges with the strictest impartiality. He fixes the hour of dissolution, and once that decision is made, nothing can alter or postpone it. In Japanese Buddhism, he is called Enma-ō. The Christian version of judgment is most often depicted as belonging to the fourth type, with Christ as the king who judges in his heavenly court, although the weighing of souls (probably influenced by early Egyptian Christians) sometimes appears in the iconography of this tradition.

These mythical portrayals of events in the afterlife all serve the problem of theodicy as it exists in traditions that insist on rewarding virtue and punishing sin. Ronald M. Green states the problem in this way: "Why do the righteous suffer? Why do the wicked prosper? Why do innocent children experience illness and death?" (430). In other words, how can faith in divine justice be reconciled with the fact of earthly injustice? The problem of theodicy, or divine justice, gives rise to numerous mythical and moral solutions. Some of these solutions involve mythical interpretations of an afterlife, in which the inadequacies of earthly justice are recompensed by divine intervention. To these eschatological (or recompense) theodicies belong all the myths considered above.

Eschatological theodicies are based on a belief in life after death; however, the widespread (although not universal) rejection in modern Western cultures of belief in an afterlife has caused the problem of earthly injustice to resurface unsolved. One solution, of course, is to claim that there is no such thing as divine justice. This view is not uncommon; however, it generates a certain degree of despair. Another solution is to reinterpret the value and meaning of suffering in life. Many are drawn to the metaphysics of suffering found in Indian and Buddhist traditions. Others offer their own theological or psychological myths. The most important thing is to be able to interpret suffering, for "suffering that is not understood is hard to bear, while on the other hand it is often astounding to see how much a person can endure when he understands the why and the wherefore. A philosophical or religious view of the world enables him to do this, and such views prove to be, at the very least, psychic methods of healing if not of salvation" (Jung, par. 1578).

It is also relevant to point out that the four distinct symbolizations of the Last Judgment may each be experienced by different types of people or by the same person at different times during one lifetime as part of what Jung calls the process of individuation, since this is the greatest test of individual self-differentiation. The true judge in this case is the Self as encountered by the ego at various stages of its development.

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ŚIVA AND HIS FAMILY

Artist unknown   Miniature painting: gouache on paper, polychrome

Length: 9⅝ in. (24.4 cm); width: 6 in. (15.2 cm)   Circa 1790 CE

Site: Punjab Hills, Kangra, India   Location: Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Śiva and his family

India: Rajput

With the help of his children, Skanda and Gaṇeśa, the Hindu god Śiva strings together a garland of human heads. His wife, Pārvatī, looks on, and Nandi the bull rests in the background. In the foreground, a human skeleton, funerary fires, and jackals indicate the presence of a cremation ground.

Śiva and his family appear to be enjoying an informal outing. They are seated on a leopard skin in a cremation ground, under a shady tree. A river flows in the immediate foreground, while stretching behind them is an idyllic countryside. The god, his body whitened with ashes, sits in the half-lotus pose; he is nude save for a red loincloth, a cobra wrapped around his neck, and a bead necklace. He has a third eye on his forehead and a delicate crescent moon tangled in his hair. Together with his children, he is engaged in stringing the heads of the dead on a red cord. Sitting on Śiva's left is his wife, Pārvatī, dressed in red and yellow and holding the six-headed, six-armed baby Skanda on her lap. Skanda wears a magenta drape around his waist and holds a human head up to Śiva (other human heads are piled on the lower left corner of the leopard skin). Standing at the far left is Gaṇeśa—red, four-armed, and elephant-headed—who assists Śiva also by holding one end of the cord. Behind the tree trunk to the right is the bull Nandi. In the foreground are two cremation fires, jackals, and a human skeleton.

Cultural context

In classical Hindu mythology, Śiva is the god of death and destruction. He lives on Mount Kailāsa in the Himalayas. As Kāpālika (or Skull Bearer), Śiva appears wearing a garland of skulls, his body smeared with ashes, his hair piled up in matted locks. He wears an animal skin (elephant or tiger) and carries a trident. A cobra often serves as his necklace, a crescent moon ornaments his hair, and he has a third eye in the middle of his forehead. He is often accompanied by his beautiful wife, Pārvatī, and their two sons, the six-faced Skanda and the elephant-headed Gaṇeśa.

It appears that the Hindu god Śiva has as his antecedents primarily two earlier gods: a Vedic storm god associated with the bull and a pre-Aryan deity known as the Lord of Beasts, who is depicted on certain seals in a yogalike position. Although the myths that surround the figure of Śiva are numerous and often inconsistent, one of the central themes is his capacity for both asceticism and eroticism. In the Vedas, sacrifice is essential both for the creation of the world and for the ongoing renewal of the gods. But Śiva does not attend the sacrifices (sometimes he refuses to go, often he is excluded). Rather, he acquires power by way of austerities. Herein lies his uniqueness: he becomes powerful through asceticism, yet his power—symbolized by the *liṅga*—is the phallic force that supports the cosmos.

Numerous myths explain Śiva's connection with skulls. Most often he is accused of having chopped off one of Brahmā's five heads (his motivation is variously described by different tellers). As a result, he is charged with the major sin of the murder of a Brahman

and must undergo penance, in this case, the penance of the Great Vow of the Skull Bearer. The skull sticks to his hand, and he is destined to wander about begging for food until his penance is fulfilled. The act is eventually completed in Banares, the holy city of Śiva, at the sacred bathing place on the Ganges called Kāpālamocana, where the skull finally falls from his hand. As Skull Bearer, Śiva is emulated by ascetic followers who call themselves, likewise, the Kāpālikas. Like Śiva, they wander about with skull begging-bowls, their bodies smeared with ashes, wearing bone or skull ornaments and loincloths of animal skin, their hair in matted locks.

At the same time, Śiva is known for his marriage with Pārvatī (and for marriage with her in her earlier incarnation as Satī). Pārvatī is erotically attracted to the ascetic and finds in his snakes and skulls signs of his power and a capacity to transcend the illusion of the cosmos. In order to get his attention, she takes up the practice of austerities, for Śiva, too, is not attracted to beauty but rather to something more powerful, something that lies closer to the power of transformation. Together Pārvatī and Śiva found a family. Although the birth accounts of their two children, Gaṇeśa and Skanda, vary, there is an element of reconciliation and peace associated with the family as a whole. This seems to be the dominant theme of the present image, in which the family scene incorporates Śiva's role as Skull Bearer. Like Pārvatī, the child Skanda has no fear of Śiva's ascetic ornaments:

> He touches the garland made of skulls
> in hope that they are geese
> and shakes the crescent moon with eagerness to grasp
> a lotus filament.
> Thinking the forehead-eye a lotus flower,
> he tries to pry it open.
> May Skanda thus intent on play
> within his father's arms protect you.
>
> (*Subhāsitaratnakośa,* no. 91)

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

In Hinduism, the power that is acquired through the practice of austerities is just as often demonic as it is divine. In fact, very often it is the demons themselves who practice austerities and thereby gain formidable power. Every initiation, every ordeal, if survived, will lead to an increase in power. It is just this fact that makes initiation so dangerous—especially the initiations associated with specialized religious roles. In his dissertation on yoga, Mircea Eliade carefully documents the Indian insights into this dilemma. The powers gained through asceticism will destroy the ascetic and others if they are sought for themselves. Only if the powers are encountered as an inevitable side effect on the way to liberation, and disgarded by the ascetic in favor of a greater goal, will the *yogin* be successful.

In the modern world, the temptation to identify oneself with the powers gained through hard work (whether on a material, intellectual, or spiritual level) is ever present. The demonic path is always there. Yet all of the great religions declare that only by recognizing a sacred reality greater than the individual person can one begin to discover one's true identity and become completely human. Perhaps on an interpsychic plane, what is at stake is a differentiation experienced by the ego in respect to the Self, that is, the numinous but unconscious center of personality. The relationship between the ego and the Self is central in

determining the individual relationship to others and to nature as a whole. When the ego identifies with the Self, it becomes inflated.

> Power motivation of all kinds is symptomatic of inflation. Whenever one operates out of a power motive omnipotence is implied. But omnipotence is an attribute only of God. Intellectual rigidity which attempts to equate its own private truth or opinion with universal truth is also inflation. It is the assumption of omniscience. Lust and all operations of the pure pleasure principle are likewise inflation. Any desire that considers its own fulfillment the central value transcends the reality limits of the ego and hence is assuming attributes of the transpersonal powers. (Edinger, 15)

From this point of view, the picture of Śiva and his family reflects the importance of maintaining a good attitude in which Skanda and Gaṇeśa (representing the ego) show they are not afraid of the god's omniscience (Self) and are able to humanize it in the spirit of relatedness created by their mother, Pārvatī, an archetypal image of the feminine.

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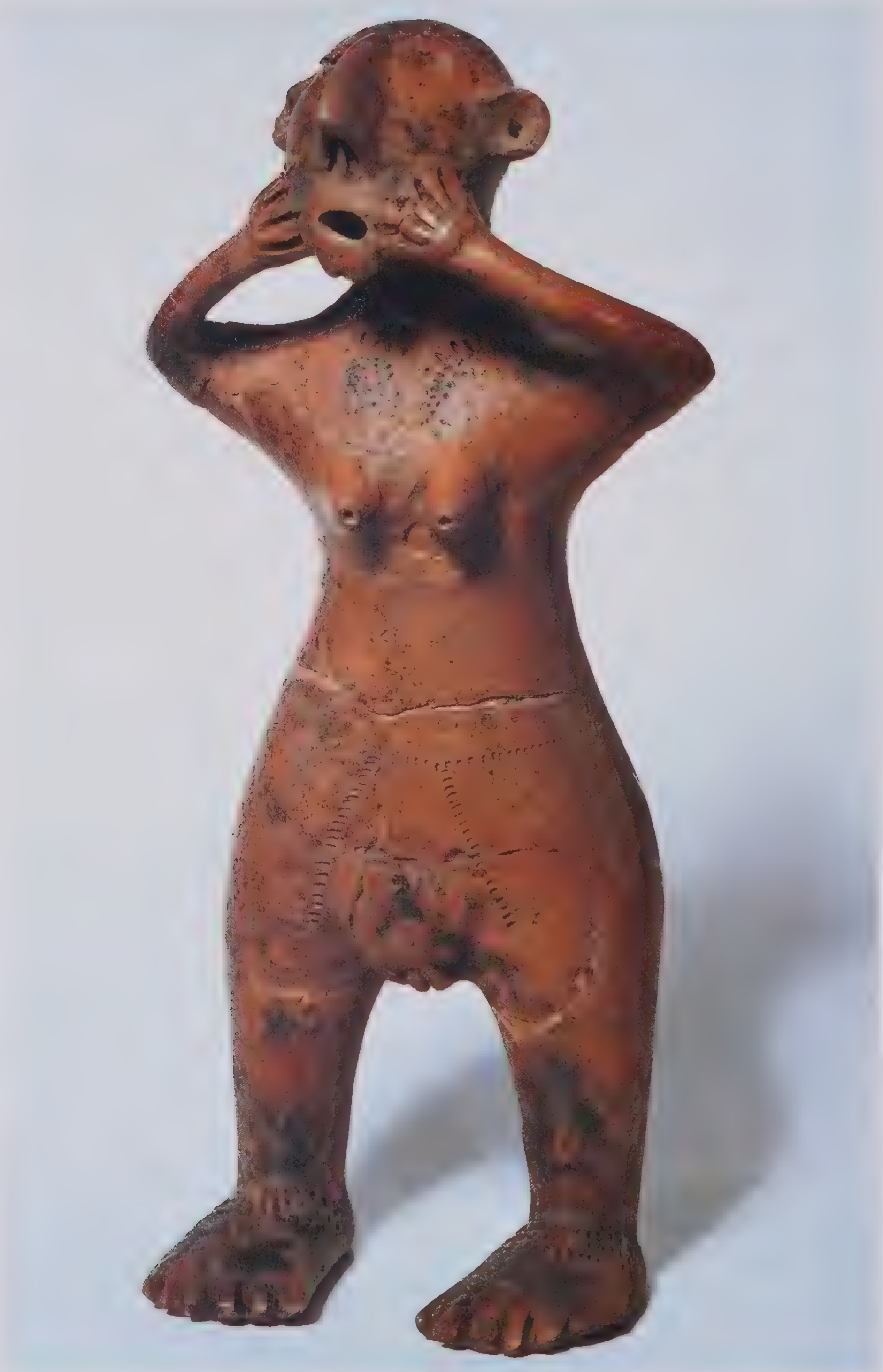
GLOSSARY

BRAHMĀ In Hindu mythology, the creator god. His animal form is the gander. He is also depicted as the four-headed ascetic, full of yogic wisdom. The mythology of Brahmā seems to have developed during the period of the Brāhmaṇas (c. 1000–700 BCE), as a product of orthodox Aryan thinking. Later, Brahmā became subordinated to both Viṣṇu and Śiva. No modern cult exists around this god.

LIṄGA (Skt., "phallus") In Hinduism, the erect phallus is a symbol of the god Śiva. It is sometimes conceived as a pillar of energy. As a sculpted form representing a focus of worship, it is often set into a *yoni* pedestal, the two signifying unity within duality.

NANDI (Skt., "the happy one") In Hinduism, the bull of Śiva. His image is always conspicuous before the temples of Śiva. He is Śiva's chief devotee and guardian of all quadrupeds.



Wailing female mourner

Artist unknown Sculpture: terra-cotta Height: 15 in. (38 cm) Thirteenth or twelfth century BCE
Site: Tomb in Marlik, Iran Location: Iran Bastan Museum (Archaeological Museum), Tehran

WAILING FEMALE MOURNER

Near East: Iran, Iron Age

A shrieking female mourner expresses the full anguish of bereavement. Her nakedness, prominent genitals, and punctate patterns (tattoos or ritual scarring?) may be intended to evoke the forces of fertility necessary for rebirth after death.

This highly abstracted mourning figure is of somewhat squat proportions. Her head and pelvic region in particular are disproportionately large. The heavy bare feet, with their well-defined, inward-turning toes, are also oversized. Only the upraised forearms are delicate. They appear almost as though withered in comparison with the rest of the figure. The woman's half-closed eyes seem deliberately minimized as an expressive feature in favor of her mouth, a starkly rendered orifice framed by her seemingly helpless hands and arms. The small pointed breasts and prominent genitals are clearly indicated; incisions and puncture marks suggest her jewelry (necklace and anklets), hair, and a garment slung low on her hips (and perhaps tattooing).

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The statuette was placed in a grave to stand in eternal lamentation over the loss of the deceased. However, just as lamentation expresses not only the agony of bereavement but also the faint hope of a reunion with the lost one, so, too, this figure—its pronounced sexuality recalling a fertility image—seems to embody some reference to life after death.

The symbolism of this image is communicated directly through the form and pose of the female mourner. The gesture of her hands held before the face and her wide-open, wailing mouth eloquently and unmistakably express the anguish of bereavement, whereas the naked female form, with its conspicuous genitals, connotes fertility and rebirth. On the other hand, the very simplified puncture patterns, though they are immediately descriptive of hair, jewelry, and clothing, lend the figure an eerie quality that prevents us from identifying with it as readily as we might otherwise.

Although both the anguish of bereaved females and the hope for some kind of afterlife are topics commonly found in Sumerian religious literature, they were almost never given visual expression in Mesopotamia or neighboring Iran. There was, however, a venerable and widespread Near Eastern tradition of female funerary figurines. These images, placed in graves, presumably reflect a belief in rebirth after death. Often they are lent an otherworldly quality by the presence of marks that suggest ritual scarifications and tattoos, or by a reptilian cast of features.

The presence of this female figure, and other similar figures, in the royal tombs of Marlik overlooking the Caspian Sea suggests that the people buried there—about whom almost nothing is known—held religious beliefs not unlike the beliefs of their better-known Mesopotamian and Iranian contemporaries. This statuette may be an expression in visual terms of a central aspect in the Mesopotamian cult of the dying and rising god, namely, the lament of the women. Bemoaning the death of the young god was one aspect of a ritual that resulted eventually in his rebirth or his return to live among the living.

"As among the gods, so among the mortals was death everywhere woman's business. A woman is said to have invented the wailing for the dead. Lamenting and wailing, spontaneously or as a ritual, has everywhere been woman's task, if not her profession" (Lederer, 127). So, too, on a transpersonal level, a goddess weeps for her son or lover: "Gone is my husband, my sweet husband," laments Inanna after she herself has condemned him to death. "Gone is my love, my sweet love. My beloved has been taken from the city. O you flies of the steppes, my beloved bridegroom has been taken from me before I could wrap him with a proper shroud. The wild bull lives no more. The shepherd, the wild bull lives no more. Dumuzi, the wild bull lives no more" (Wolkstein, 86). And many centuries later, the Virgin Mary cries out at the death of her son: "I am overwhelmed, O my son. I am overwhelmed by love. And I cannot endure that I should be in the chamber and you on the wood of the cross. I in the house and you in the tomb" (sixth-century poem, quoted in Warner, 209).

The ancient female mourner in this picture suggests not only the fullness of feminine grief but its connection with fertility. The archbishop of Syracuse reiterated the ancient connection between fertility and tears when he proclaimed: "Mary has wept! Mary has wept! . . . Weeping is fecund. . . . A woman who weeps always becomes, in the very act, a mother. And if Mary weeps beside the Cross of Jesus—I can tell you that her weeping was fertile" (Warner, 223). The sense that through grief one "becomes a mother" suggests that, on a human level, the depression following inner or outer deaths, if allowed expression by a feeling ego, may participate in a deep, archetypal pattern of renewal.

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Transformation

The old masters were wont to call this work their white swan, their albification, or making white, their sublimation, their distillation, their circulation, their purification, their separation, their sanctification, and their resurrection, because the Tincture is made white like a shining silver. It is sublimed or exalted and transfigured by reason of its many descents into Saturn, Mercurius, and Mars, and by its many ascents into Venus and Luna. This is the distillation, the Balneum Mariae: *because the Tincture is purified in the qualities of nature through the many distillations of the water, blood, and heavenly dew of the Divine Virgin Sophia, and through the manifold circulation in and out of the forms and qualities of nature, is made white and pure, like brilliantly polished silver. And all uncleanliness of the blackness, all death, hell, curse, wrath, and all poison which rise up out of the qualities of Saturn, Mercury, and Mars are separated and depart, wherefore they call it their separation, and when the Tincture attains its whiteness and brilliance in Venus and Luna they call it their sanctification, their purification and making white. They call it their resurrection, because the white rises up out of the black, and the divine virginity and purity out of the poison of Mercurius and out of the red fiery rage and wrath of Mars. . . .*

Now is the stone shaped, the elixir of life prepared, the love-child or the child of love born, the new birth completed, and the work made whole and perfect. Farewell! fall, hell, curse, death, dragon, beast, and serpent! Good night! mortality, fear, sorrow, and misery! For now redemption, salvation, and recovery of everything that was lost will again come to pass within and without, for now you have the great secret and mystery of the whole world; you have the Pearl of Love; you have the unchangeable eternal essence of Divine Joy from which all healing virtue and all multiplying power come, from which there actively proceeds the active power of the Holy Ghost.

—John Pordage

APOLLO AND DAPHNE
Artist unknown Relief: ivory Height: 4⅞ in. (12.4 cm) Fifth century CE
Site: Egypt (Coptic) Location: Museo Nazionale, Ravenna, Italy

Apollo and Daphne

Egypt: Coptic

Apollo, the Greek god of justice and harmony, fails to gain the love of the nymph Daphne, who, like his sister, Artemis, prefers the wilderness and the hunt to the love between a man and a woman. In her efforts to escape the embraces of this god, Daphne calls to her father, Peneus, for help, and he turns her into the laurel tree.

The ivory plaque is deeply carved with the nude figure of Apollo playing a lyre and looking at the nude figure of a woman standing among the branches of a tree. She grasps one branch with her left hand while her extended right seems to merge with the other branches, as though it were becoming part of the tree. This would then represent the moment of the transformation of Daphne from human form into the tree that bears her name, the laurel (Gk., *daphnē*). A diminutive Eros flies above Apollo's head carrying a baton or the remnant of a bow in his left hand. A swan (sacred to Apollo) flies between Apollo and Daphne with its head lowered.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The story of Daphne and Apollo is found in more than one form in Greek mythology. The most common version relates that Daphne was a nymph, the daughter of a river god named Peneus in Thessaly. She loved to spend her days hunting in the forest with her companions, maidens like herself. Like Artemis, she rejected all suitors for her hand. Peneus pleaded with her to take a husband and to give him grandsons, but Daphne became so sad at the prospect of marriage that her father did not insist. Still, she was beautiful, and many fell in love with her.

Among these were the god Apollo and the nobleman Leucippus. Apparently, Apollo had boasted to Eros that he was the greater archer, and Eros had retaliated by piercing his skin with one of his arrows. Just then Apollo caught sight of Daphne and fell hopelessly in love with her. Meanwhile, Leucippus, making no headway in his attempts at courtship, disguised himself as a woman and joined the troop of attendants that hunt with Daphne. Apollo, learning by means of divination of this deception, suggested that the nymphs bathe naked in the mountain stream. In this way, Leucippus's disguise was discovered, whereupon the nymphs tore him to pieces.

Apollo then pursued Daphne on foot. She fled from him in terror; when she could run no farther, she called out to her father to save her from the embraces of Apollo. Her prayer was answered, for as the god was about to clasp her in his arms, she turned into a laurel tree. Finding himself embracing a tree, Apollo declared that it would forever be his tree, that its leaves would always be green, and that he would bind them around his head in memory of his love for Daphne.

The story of Apollo and Daphne may have a historical background in the Greek conquest of Tempe, a narrow valley some five miles in length in northern Thessaly through which the Piniós (the ancient Peneus) flows. There the goddess Daphoene ("bloody one") was wor-

shiped; her cult included the use of laurel leaves (bay leaves) as stimulants to prophecy. After suppressing the religion, the Greeks established the worship of Apollo and took over the laurel, which, afterward, only his priestess, the Pythia, might chew.

The swan, the lyre, and the bow as well as the laurel are sacred to Apollo. The swan, associated with the sun, was the vehicle of Apollo as the sun god. Scarcely born, the young Apollo cries out, "Give me my lyre and my curved bow; I will declare to men the inflexible will of Zeus" (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 132). Above all, Apollo is a god of harmony: of music, law, and ritual purity. For the ancient Greeks, as for all ancient peoples, the law that governs the regularity of nature likewise governs the moral actions of mankind. Art, religion, and social custom are but different responses to the ultimate reality. Accordingly, Apollo reveals this underlying unity (that is, "the inflexible will of Zeus") through both his music and through his oracles.

The fact that this frankly pagan carving was executed during the fifth century of the common era, that is, after the christianization of the Roman empire, indicates how firm a hold Greek myths had on the ancient imagination.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The myth that is illustrated by this ivory carving belongs to the category of myths that account for changes in religious history. When the Indo-Europeans arrived in what is now called Greece, they encountered a living religion in which goddess worship predominated. Some of these goddesses were assimilated into the Greek pantheon, and their worship continued. Such a goddess might be reidentified within the new, emerging religion as the consort of a Greek god. For example, Hera became the wife of Zeus. Others, such as Daphoene, were completely supplanted by a Greek deity. A myth explaining the disappearance of a goddess, such as the story of Daphne and Apollo, serves many purposes: it renders the historical change meaningful in terms of the culture that follows the change, and it offers the possibility of drawing elements from the earlier religion into the myths and symbols associated with the new.

Daphne had always been a sacred tree, as her name attests. Like the divinities associated with other sacred plants, she can choose to appear in either form—as a goddess or as a tree. This capacity to assume more than one form is common in the history of religions and is sometimes referred to as shape shifting. However, shape shifting suggests a transformation that is not usually associated with the god, as when Zeus assumes the form of a swan in pursuit of Leda. The swan is not sacred to Zeus; it is not his "animal form," as it is for Apollo. Animal forms are common, for example, in ancient Egyptian religion and in the myths of the San, or Bushmen, of the Kalahari desert. Both the animal and the deity in human form manifest a divine reality that transcends any specific epiphany.

The swan, as the animal form of Apollo, is a bird related to both the heavens and the waters, interchangeable in many mythologies with the goose or duck in representing the creation from the waters. Sometimes the swan will dive down into the depths of the sea in order to bring up soil for the establishment of land; at other times it is the parent of the cosmic egg that is laid upon the cosmogonic waters. In Egypt, swans were known as vehicles for the journey to the otherworld, as they are in the shamanistic traditions of northern Asia. In ancient Greece, the priests of the mysteries at Eleusis were regarded as their descendants; and after their immersion in the waters of purification, they were called swans. In China and

in ancient Persia, the swan was a solar bird as in ancient Greece. In Celtic lore, sacred swans were held to embody the beneficent, healing power of the sun, and among the Sioux of the North American Plains, the sacred white swan was the form taken by the Great Spirit, who controls all that moves and to whom prayers are addressed. The swan was also connected with divine music because of its sweet song: in Egypt it was associated with the harp; in Greece, with Apollo's lyre.

In an essay on Greek gods, Arianna Stassinopoulos suggests that the story of Daphne and Apollo reveals also something about the dark side of this god who is often unsuccessful in love:

> Sibyl shrivels up into a disembodied voice, Daphne turns into a tree, Cassandra prophesies but fails to touch those who hear her. The god who embodies light and truth and beauty wreaks destruction in the world of love and the feminine. The dominance of an exclusive masculinity, detached and dispassionate, is Apollo's dark side. "The man is the source of life," the god proclaims in the *Eumenides.* Dionysos encompasses the feminine in himself; Apollo is disconnected from it. He embodies the will to power that, cut off from the feminine, from love and intuition, has brought about our shrivelled-up rationalist order, with its naive belief in the absolute manageability of life and of human beings. (Stassinopoulos and Beny, 59)

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GLOSSARY

ARTEMIS A goddess worshiped universally in historical Greece, but in all likelihood pre-Hellenic. Her proper sphere is the earth, specifically the wilderness. A virgin goddess, she is the friend and helper of women and children, loves the hunt, and is associated with wild beasts, especially the bear.

EROS God of love in Greek mythology. For Hesiod, Eros is the primal mover of creation, but by classical times he appears most often as a martial youth who stirs up infatuations with his magic bow and arrow. By late Hellenistic times, he is depicted as an infant with wings.

APHRODITE EMERGING FROM THE WATERS
Artist: unknown Relief: marble Height of preserved portion: 28.3 in. (72 cm); width: 56.3 in. (143 cm)
Circa 470–460 BCE Site: Italy (possibly of Greek origin)
Location: no. 8670, Museo Nazionale delle Terme, Rome

Aphrodite emerging from the waters

Greek: Early Classical

The scene on this relief fragment is commonly thought to represent the birth of Aphrodite, goddess of love and beauty, out of the sea. Or it may depict the ritual bath of the goddess, by means of which she annually restores her virginity.

Aphrodite, flanked by two female attendants, is shown rising up out of the waters. The goddess emerges looking upward to her right, her arms outstretched. The impression of wetness is conveyed by the thin chiton that adheres to and reveals the forms of her body. The attendants (heads missing) stand opposite each other on a pebbled incline. One is dressed in a heavy Doric peplos, the other wears a thin Ionic chiton. They bend, each with one arm supporting Aphrodite's back, while they hold a cloth across the front of her lower torso.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Aphrodite is one of the twelve Olympian deities, a goddess of love, beauty, and pleasure. A pre-Hellenic deity, she is related to the ancient Near Eastern goddesses of love and war (Inanna, Ishtar, etc.). In Greek mythology, her warlike aspect is carried by her lover Ares, just as, later, Eros takes over much of her role in connection with love. Even though Aphrodite came to be identified principally as a goddess of feminine beauty, of all the Hellenized goddesses she alone seems to have retained a hold on her ancient dominion: even Zeus succumbs to her power. Ruling the hearts of the gods as well as of men, Aphrodite several times caused Zeus to fall in love with mortal maidens.

Rising up naked out of the foam of the sea and riding on a scallop shell, Aphrodite stepped ashore for the first time on the island of Cythera. Finding this only a small island, she proceeded to the Peloponnesus and eventually took up residence at Paphos, in Cyprus. Grass and flowers sprang up from the earth beneath her feet, and at Paphos, the Seasons hastened to clothe and adorn her. Homer says that Aphrodite was the daughter of Zeus and Dione, a Titaness. Hesiod has another account: when Zeus castrated his father Kronos and tossed the testicles into the sea, a bloody foam covered the waters and out of this was born the goddess. For this reason, she was also called Aphrogeneia ("foam-born") and Anadyomene ("risen from the sea").

Some scholars interpret this relief as a depiction of Aphrodite's birth from the sea. Ancient tradition, however, includes two occasions when Aphrodite is received and decked by her women attendants—on her birth from the sea and also after her sacred bath in Paphos. The bath is described in the lay of Demodocus:

> And fast away fled she,
> Aphrodite, lover-of-laughter, to Cyprus over the sea,
> To the pleasant shores of Paphos and the incensed altar-stone,
> Where the Graces washed her body, and shed sweet balm thereon,
> Ambrosial balm that shineth on the gods that wax not old,
> And wrapped her in lovely raiment, a wonder to behold.
>
> (Homer, *Odyssey* 8.270)

The ritual bath, in which the youth and beauty (virginity) of the goddess is renewed, is found also in the myths about Hera and Athena. Further, the high priestess of the temple dedicated to Aphrodite in Paphos, the ancient seat of her worship, reenacted the ritual bath every spring. On the other hand, the motif of the goddess rising up out of the water may well be related to an even older tradition, that of the Anodos, according to which the goddess of spring (the maiden, or Kore) rises up out of the earth as if emerging from the underworld. The suggestion of wetness in this image, however, supports the interpretation that it depicts Aphrodite emerging from the waters, either the bath or the sea. Nevertheless, all three traditions—birth from the earth, birth from the sea, and rebirth in the sacred bath of the goddess—suggest the epiphany of the eternal virgin, the return of youth, beauty, and desire commingled with hope for new life.

The monument to which this relief belongs was probably used in a temple of the goddess Aphrodite. This scene is the central image of a three-sided relief carved from a single block of marble that was hollowed out at the back in a way suggestive of a seat. Long known as the Ludovisi Throne, its early interpretation as a throne for a divine image has been dismissed. Its function has since then been proposed variously as an enclosure for a sacrificial pit or as a windbreak for a rectangular altar. More recently, scholars have suggested that a similar block is part of the monument and that together they belonged to a stepped altar.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The theme of the goddess emerging from the waters as a symbol of her birth, or regeneration, may well belong to very ancient precursors of baptism. The word *baptism* comes from the Greek term that means "to plunge, to immerse, or to wash." From the time of Homer onward, it was used to refer to any rite of immersion in water.

As Michel Meslin notes, the purifying properties of water have been ritually important ever since the rise of civilization in the ancient Near East. In Babylonia, as recorded on the *Tablets of Maklu,* water was used in the rites of Enki, lord of Eridu. In Egypt, newborn children were baptized in order to purify them of any blemishes acquired in the womb. The Nile was believed to have regenerative powers, and its waters were used in ritual baptisms of the dead based on the Osiris myth. In the Greek-speaking world, ritual bathing was associated with rites of purification and also the attainment of immortality.

The ritual bath of a goddess to restore her virginity may well have been a mythological model for these baptismal rites among mortals. The feeling of freshness that comes from being immersed in water is the key to this symbolism, since all symbolic meaning depends on actual experience. This is a symbolism that is distinct from "purification" that takes as its starting point the cleanliness achieved through ablutions. Fresh from the bath, the goddess is once again young, lovely, and filled with grace. This symbolism helps us understand the origins of the belief in the virgin goddess, as well. Virginity does not refer to the absence of sexual intercourse or the innocence of the child but rather to this sense of freshness and grace and the hope that it conveys.

The waters are often believed to be a symbol of chaos, or of the unconscious, that reality where all things rest in potentiality. Another symbol for this state is the *tao* of Chinese thought. To return to this place is to receive again all that has disappeared through the entropic forces of time. This is the experience of renewal *par excellence.* The renewal of the goddess of love represents on the intrapsychic level a restoration of the capacity to receive

new life, new emotions, new ideas, new relationships. The capacity to "fall in love," that is, to experience the rebirth of Aphrodite, is a receptivity to the unconscious and its contents as well.

Emerging from the waters, Aphrodite represents a form of consciousness (for as Queen of Heaven she also embodies the light) that leads to connection rather than separation. In a hymn to Aphrodite, Christine Downing articulates the nature of the goddess, who is feared when misunderstood:

> My sense is that you are often seen as representing the pull toward dissolution because you imply a reconciliation of what are usually seen as contradictions or mutually exclusive choices. What you make possible is not logical resolution or synthesizing compromise but mediation at the level of feeling. Your bringing together what is ordinarily kept apart is not fusion; it represents an intense valuing of both poles. Yours is a loving consciousness, a connecting, not a dissolving, consciousness. It is a transformative consciousness. (Downing, 203)

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GLOSSARY

INANNA (Sumerian *Ninana,* "mistress of the date clusters") Goddess of ancient Mesopotamia, variously associated with the storehouse of dates as well as with thunderstorms, war, and love. Her early form was apparently that of a lion-headed thunderbird. Her numerous myths include the tales of her marriage with Dumuzi.

ISHTAR Akkadian goddess who absorbed most of the attributes of the earlier Sumerian goddess Inanna. She often appeared as a lion or riding on a lion. Worshiped as the goddess of aggression and love, she gave the human king his powers to rule.

KRONOS (Gk., "time") In Greek cosmogony, the youngest son of Heaven and Earth and leader of his brethren the Titans. Advised by his mother, Kronos castrated his father, who therefore no longer approached Earth. In this way, a space was created between the primordial parents that allowed for the Titans to exist. Knowing that he was to be overcome by one of his children, Kronos swallowed all but Zeus, who was rescued by his mother, Rhea.

The baptism of christ
Artist: Giotto   Painting: plaster, polychrome   72.8 × 78.7 in. (1.85 × 2 m)
1304–1306 CE   Site/Location: Scrovegni Chapel, Padua, Italy

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

Italy: Late Middle Ages

In this simple but dramatic portrayal of the baptism of Jesus, focus is on the central triangle of God the Father, John the Baptist, and Jesus. Angels and humans, to the left and to the right, represent the spiritual and social dimensions of this cosmic event in which the Christ is revealed and takes up his ministry on earth.

The Jordan River flows between two barren and rocky ledges. Standing undressed in the water, his head framed by the cross-nimbus, a very human Jesus stretches forth his hands toward John the Baptist. The latter stands on the right-hand ledge, dressed in a camel-hair tunic over which is hung a rose-colored cape. His head is framed by a nimbus, and like Jesus he wears a beard. Both men appear to be about thirty years old. John stretches out his right arm over the head of Jesus in a form of benediction. Beside John stand two human beings, an older man in full gray beard bearing a nimbus and a mature woman dressed in blue. On the ledge to the left of Jesus stand four winged angels holding his clothing for him. Each bears, likewise, a nimbus. Above and in the center (this section of the painting is damaged), as if reaching down out of the sky, is God the Father, who with his right arm outstretched points toward Jesus from above.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Giotto created this painting of the baptism of Jesus as one in a series of scenes that depict the life and ministry of Christ. Directly below this scene is that of the crucifixion, where Jesus is likewise presented in the center. Giotto portrays the beginning and the end of the ministry in starkest simplicity. In this respect his painting seems to follow in the spirit of the story of the baptism as related by the author of *Mark.* The baptism of Jesus is found in all four of the Gospels, but in *Mark* we find the story presented with the least amount of theological interpretation. It relates that John the Baptist was an ascetic who lived in the wilderness and proclaimed that baptism in the Jordan River together with repentance would lead to the forgiveness of sins. In addition, he prophesied the appearance of another who would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

The story continues by telling how Jesus appears at the Jordan and is baptized by John. As soon as he rises up out of the waters, the heavens open and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descends upon him. Then a voice from heaven announces that Jesus is his son. Jesus is next led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. There he is tempted for forty days by Satan, the evil one. During this time, the angels of God support and protect him.

The story of the baptism of Jesus presents the sacred history of two central early Christian sacraments: baptism and Pentecost, or second baptism with the Holy Spirit. In the earliest account of Christian life and ritual, that is, in the *Book of Acts,* these two sacraments are clarified. The baptism with water retains the symbolism of repentance and the forgiveness of sins, as proclaimed by John. The baptism with the Holy Spirit, or the baptism by

fire, as it is sometimes called, followed and enabled members of the Christian community to live and act supported and guided by the divine spirit within.

Giotto is known for his break with the Byzantine tradition of sublime and highly stylized figures. He seems to have used real people as models for his paintings, as in this painting, where Jesus looks very human and even somewhat vulnerable in his concrete physicality.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is described in other places in the New Testament as a baptism by fire. For example, the descent of the Holy Spirit at the first Pentecost appeared to the followers of Jesus as "tongues like flames of fire, dispersed among them and resting on each one. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit . . ." (*Acts* 2 : 3 f.)

Baptism by water and baptism by fire are two related rites of initiation. In any initiation the goal is the transformation of the individual so that he or she is able to function on another, more advanced level (socially, intellectually, or spiritually, as the case may be). The transformation effected by immersion in water differs, however, from that effected by fire. Symbolically, the ritual of burning transmutes earthly and material things into celestial, or spiritual, realities. The fire sacrifice is based on this principle, so that the victim is sent by way of burning into the heavenly realm. The waters, on the other hand, belong to another symbol system, one that we find, for example, in the pre-Indo-European goddess worship of Old Europe, where the goddess is manifest in the moon, the waters, and water animals. Here the emphasis is less on spiritualization and more on renewal within the earthly context.

The baptism of John may have its historical origins in the rites and beliefs of the Qumran community, who lived in a desolate area at the northern end of the Dead Sea. In the community's Manual of Discipline, it is stated that the initiates are to separate themselves from society and enter the wilderness for a period of time in order to dedicate themselves to God's will. The members of this community stressed that their rites of lustration, or purification by means of water, were effective only if the individual was inwardly penitent.

But baptism is not limited to the Jewish and Christian traditions; it resembles ablution rites found in numerous other religions. Statues of the great Greek goddesses (such as Hera, for example) were annually bathed in order to regenerate their immortal powers, especially their virginity (a symbol of their creative potential). Aphrodite, too, is often portrayed rising up out of the waters. In Indian tradition, the Ganges, like the Jordan, is a sacred river. Called Mother Ganges, she is both a river and a goddess. Her waters are said to be a manifestation of the feminine principle, *Śakti,* and to be capable of bestowing immortality.

In analytical psychology the waters are often believed to be a symbol of the unconscious, the dark, unknown dimension of psychic life. The ego has its origins in the unconscious just as life has its origins in the waters. Ritual contact with the unconscious can effect a renewal of ego-consciousness by bringing it into contact with aspects of the Self that have suffered repression or disassociation. Yet as the symbolism itself suggests, whereas a ritual bath renews, it is also possible to dissolve, or drown, in these same waters.

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THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST
Artist unknown Relief: ivory Height: 7⅜ in (18.7 cm) Circa 400 CE
Site: Italy (north?) Location: Bayerisches Staatsbibliothek, Munich

The resurrection and ascension of christ

Italy: Early Christian

The resurrection of Christ took place in a tomb unseen by human eyes and was revealed to his female followers by an angel when they went to anoint the body with oils. The Resurrection was then followed by a period during which Christ appeared among his disciples. Eventually, however, he left them and ascended into heaven.

Below, in front of an elaborate mausoleum, sits a man greeting three women (lower right) whose faces express fear and amazement. In the central area of the scene are four male figures in postures of lamentation or awe. Out of the top of the tomb grows a fruit-bearing tree, among whose branches pose two birds searching for food. Above, a youthful figure, whose head is encircled by a nimbus, strides upward. His right hand is grasped by another hand that reaches down out of a cloud in the upper right corner. The ascending youth carries a scroll in his left hand.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

This ivory relief presents the final events of Christ's salvific mission on earth, namely, his resurrection and his ascension into heaven. Significant are the four symbols of tomb, angel, tree, and youthful Christ, which refer to the Resurrection as it was interpreted in the four canonical gospels by those who were the first witnesses of it, and as it was understood by the very early Christian community.

The tomb is depicted here as an elaborate mausoleum in front of which sits the angel, who announces to the oil-bearing women that the Christ has been raised up. In the texts, the Resurrection is symbolized by the "empty tomb." None of the synoptic gospels provide any further description, nor does the gospel written by John do so. The actual resurrection was not witnessed by anyone. What was experienced was the appearance of a young man, dressed in shimmering white clothes and seated beside the empty tomb, to a group of women, followers of Christ who came to anoint his body, as was the custom. The specific details of the events that led up to this encounter vary from gospel to gospel. There was no felt need in the early Christian community to present one version of the Resurrection, just as there was no standard account of the Passion.

The angel addresses the women, saying, "Fear nothing; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised again; he is not here" (*Mark* 16:6). The appearance of the angel marks this message as a revelation from a heavenly source. The white robes worn by the young man identify him as an angel, for in Hebrew scripture white robes are understood to be heavenly garments. This symbolism lives on in early Christian tradition. For example, during the transfiguration, Christ's garments were transformed into dazzling, intensely white robes, and his disciples experienced his divinity fully for the first time.

The tree that grows out of the tomb is the tree of life. In the biblical creation account, there are two trees in Paradise: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, which had been

forbidden to them. As a result, they were cast out of Paradise lest they eat from the tree of life and live forever. The Christian belief is that the cross becomes the tree of life, available to all who believe in the resurrection of Christ. The cross was the instrument of Christ's death, but because his resurrection signifies victory over death, the cross is transformed into an instrument of eternal life.

The youthful Christ, who ascends to heaven, provides the central focus of the scene. He is aided by the hand of God, which extends downward out of a cloud. The divinity of Christ is indicated by the nimbus that surrounds his head. The youthfulness of the Christ figure symbolizes his relationship to God. Jesus often referred to God as "Father." Further, his death and resurrection are sometimes compared to a biblical story about a loving father and his trusting son, that is, to the account of the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. In this story, God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his only son on an altar in the desert as a first-fruits offering. Abraham loved his son, a gift from God in his old age, but he trusted in God's righteousness, and so he obeyed. The child, too, trusted his father and willingly took his place in the sacrifice. At the last minute, God rescinded his command and provided a ram as a substitute for the child. The crucified Christ is often interpreted symbolically as the sacrificial lamb as well as the first-fruits offering.

The scroll in the hand of the youthful Christ is a reference to the apocalyptic account of the Last Judgment given in *Revelation* 4:1–6:17. There the scroll is held in the hand of the one who is seated upon the heavenly throne. This royal figure is called the one who will live forever. The scroll is sealed up with seven seals, and only one creature is worthy to take the scroll and break the seals. This one is the Lamb, who approaches the royal figure and receives the scroll: "Thou are worthy to take the scroll and to break its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst purchase for God men of every tribe and language, people and nation; thou hast made of them a royal house, to serve our God as priests; and they shall reign upon earth" (5:9–10). The scroll contains the revelation of the final events to take place prior to the realization of the kingdom of God. In the hands of the youthful Christ, it marks him as the sacrificial lamb and points to his role in the last days.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

One of the fascinating—and confusing—aspects of Christian eschatology is the simultaneous belief in the resurrection of the body and the heavenly ascent. These beliefs derive from two separate traditions. The resurrection of the body is connected with a conviction that at the end of time the earth will be destroyed in a great fire and then re-created; the new earth will be a restoration of the original Paradise to be inhabited by the saved, who will be resurrected in their bodies. The ascension into heaven derives from a well-developed Hellenistic tradition, based on the belief that, whereas the sublunar world was determined by change, involving birth and subsequent death, above the moon a different cosmic law held sway: there death did not exist. In other words, ascent into this heavenly realm involved a transformation from a mortal to an immortal state.

In the writings of the church father Irenaeus, for example, we see the orthodox belief in the restoration of Paradise and the resurrection of the body. Gnostic Christians denied this belief; for them the body was a mistake, and they saw Christ as a messenger from another, purely spiritual and heavenly home, who came to show how to get there. Between these two

extreme views lies a continuum of Christian doctrine that changes from school to school and from era to era. In this ivory relief, both values are represented: the tomb and the tree represent the hope for renewal on earth, and the angel and the vision of an ascending Christ point to a heavenly goal.

In a larger sense, the two values reflect two alternate symbol systems: on the one hand, the cyclical rejuvenation of vegetation in the broader symbolism of Mother Earth and her power to renew life; and on the other, the transcendental symbolism of the sky. The tomb may be seen as the womb of the earth, and the body of the deceased is placed there so that it can receive from the earth new life; the tree rising out of the tomb symbolizes this regenerative power. This angel has no wings to identify him as a creature of heaven; however, his appearance as described in the texts reveals him as a creature of light—which ultimately derives from the heavens. The ascending Christ is a literal portrayal of the belief that one can transcend the cycles of life and death by climbing up into the sky, that is, into a deathless realm.

The dominant theme of this scene, however, is the ascent. Here the journey into heaven makes one forget the possibility of an earthly paradise. Psychologically, ascent symbolism depends on an insight into the ultimate nature of things that transforms the fear of personal death into a faith in some transpersonal reality in which one participates. In his discussion of *sublimatio,* Edward F. Edinger recounts numerous rituals of ascent that enact this inner event.

> [The ritual] was meant to bring about a revelation of the divine realm and to confer immortality on the initiate by means of an ascent to heaven. In psychological terms, it is a revelation of the archetypal psyche which releases one from a personal ego-attitude, enabling one to experience oneself as an immortal—that is, as living with archetypal realities and making a contribution to the archetypal psyche.
>
> Similar experiences of revelation occur in modern dreams and vision. For example, Dr. Liliane Frey had been thinking deeply about death and her own myth concerning death as a transformation. She writes: "Death consists of the miracle of transformation into a new form of existence. Death is for me the gate to a new birth, and the breaking-through of the transcendental realm into our empirical existence. I am convinced that we experience a complete transformation of our being in the last moments of our life. Simultaneously with the death of body and ego-personality, something new gets born which is neither matter nor spirit but both together in an indeterminable way." While developing these thoughts she had a very impressive dream in which *she was flying higher and higher in a plane especially constructed for her and she had a wonderful view of the Alps, all immersed in deep blue.* (Edinger, 128f.; his emphasis)

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THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA
Artist unknown Manuscript illumination: ink and gouache on parchment 11 × 9⅛ in. (28 × 23 cm) 1325–1350 CE
Site: Valencia, Spain Location: ms. 6, John Rylands University Library, Manchester, England

The crossing of the Red Sea

Spain: The Middle Ages

God's deliverance of the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt is an event that is sacred to the Jewish people. During the Exodus, God divided the waters of the Red Sea so that the children of Israel could cross over. As soon as they were safely on the other side, he restored the waters, which drowned Pharaoh's pursuing armies.

This miniature, which is placed within a border decorated with a chevron pattern, depicts the Israelites, many of them armed and carrying sacks and treasures, crossing the Red Sea on two horizontal bands of dry land. Three registers formed by waves of blue water surround the Israelites. These show the drowning Egyptian soldiers. The two bearded figures who face the Israelites (upper left) are probably Moses and Aaron. They are pointing upward to the miracle that is taking place, while Moses holds the staff that he used to divide the waters. The Hebrew inscriptions at the top of the page say: "And the Lord swept [the Egyptians] out into the sea" (*Exodus* 14:27) and "Meanwhile the Israelites had passed along the dry ground through the sea" (*Exodus* 14:29).

Cultural context

This is a scene from a series of illustrations found in the Rylands Haggadah, a manuscript of fourteenth-century Spanish Jewry. The Haggadah ("telling") is the traditional collection of hymns, stories, and poetry recited on the first night of Passover (outside Israel, also on the second night). The Haggadah has developed over the centuries in response to the command that parents tell their children of God's mighty deeds in delivering his people out of slavery (*Exodus* 13:8). It assumed its present form, for the most part, during the Middle Ages. The central message of the Haggadah is that God alone is responsible for the deliverance from bondage. He and no other brings the twelve tribes of Israel out of Egypt. Even his prophet Moses is mentioned by name only once in the Haggadah.

Passover is the joyous celebration of freedom celebrated every spring by the Jewish people. Participants in the Seder, the Passover meal, relive the Exodus, experiencing anew God's loving redemption. At the same time, they are not to rejoice at the misfortune of the Egyptians, and so to express symbolically their sympathy for the sufferings of their enemies they spill a single drop of wine for each of the ten plagues that God sent upon the Egyptians before Pharaoh would at last agree to release the Israelites.

Some variations exist in the way this scene is depicted. The differences reflect sundry legends that surround the story of the crossing of the Red Sea. The paths may be shown as straight or semicircular, and their number ranges from one to twelve. The legend that each tribe had its own passageway across the seabed (so that all were able to cross over at the same time) is reflected already in third-century wall paintings from Dura Europos. While Pharaoh is not shown in this example, he is sometimes included, as the sole survivor among the Egyptians. This convention accords with the legend that he was brought down to the depths

of the sea, where he repented and was saved. The traditional biblical account reads as follows:

> The Lord said to Moses, ". . . And you shall raise high your staff, stretch out your hand over the sea and cleave it in two, so that the Israelites can pass through the sea on dry ground. For my part I will make the Egyptians obstinate and they will come after you; thus will I win glory for myself at the expense of Pharaoh and his army, chariots and cavalry all together. The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I win glory for myself at the expense of their Pharaoh, his chariots and cavalry." . . . Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea away all night with a strong east wind and turned the sea-bed into dry land. The waters were torn apart, and the Israelites went through the sea on the dry ground, while the waters made a wall for them to right and to left. The Egyptians went in pursuit of them far into the sea, all Pharaoh's horse[s], his chariots, and his cavalry. . . . Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, and let the water flow back over the Egyptians, their chariots and their cavalry." So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the water returned to its accustomed place; but the Egyptians were in flight as it advanced, and the Lord swept them out into the sea. (*Exodus* 14:15–18, 21–24, 26f.)

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The ancient Israelites were a people composed of numerous Semitic tribes who settled eventually in Palestine. They saw in the story of the Exodus their historical and religious origins. These ancestors of the Jews practiced henotheism, that is, they recognized the existence of many gods but were uniquely attached—bound in covenant eventually—to one, Yahveh. The Exodus from Egypt was filled with miracles, all of which revealed two things: (1) Yahveh's love for his chosen people, and (2) the certainty that Yahveh was stronger than other gods, especially Pharaoh, who was believed to be divine.

Christians have reinterpreted the deliverance out of Egypt in and through the Easter event, which has its historical and symbolic roots in the Jewish Passover. *Exodus* 12 describes a revelation to Moses in which Yahveh commands the community of Israel to sacrifice a lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month. The blood of the sacrificed lamb is to be smeared on the two doorposts and on the lintel of every home in which the lamb is eaten. In the night, God passes through Egypt, killing the firstborn everywhere except where he sees the sign of blood. There he "passes over" the inhabitants, and they are saved. In Christian belief, Jesus is the Passover Lamb, whose sacrifice saves them from death.

Gnostics in the second and third centuries of the common era interpreted the Exodus according to their own metaphysical view of salvation. According to the gnostics, the soul's true home is a purely spiritual realm (the Pleroma) in which neither death nor sin have a place. The cosmos—the realm of life and death—is equated with the Egypt of the Hebrew scriptures, and Israel becomes a symbol for the soul. In this allegorical reading of *Exodus,* the deliverance from Egypt comes to represent the awakening of the soul to its own true nature and its return to the transcendental realm from which it comes.

On the level of intrapsychic experience, the crossing of the Red Sea has been compared to the crisis that marks the beginning of the individuation process. In this interpretation, Egypt represents the collective unconscious, and Israel, the ego moving out beyond the maternal matrix of containment to encounter its destiny as a separate individual.

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GLOSSARY

DURA EUROPOS Ancient city in Syria, a vital urban center during the Hellenistic period. Modern excavations have revealed much about life in this civilization.

MITHRAEUM

Artist unknown   Religious architecture: stone and mortar   Length: 29½ ft. (9 m); width: 19⅔ ft. (6 m)
Circa 325–350 CE   Site/Location: beneath the church of Saint Clement, Rome.

Mithraeum

Roman: Late Imperial

The cult that surrounded the worship of Mithra throughout the Roman empire was a typical Hellenistic phenomenon. Drawing on Iranian mythology, Mesopotamian astral religion, and archaic warrior societies, Mithraism provided a communal context for personal salvation.

The Mithraeum beneath Saint Clement, near the Colosseum, is constructed so as to resemble a cave. Built as a long rectangle, it has lateral brick benches. At one end of the cave is an altar. On the front of the altar is a relief depicting Mithra slaying the sacred bull. Above is a statue of the birth of Mithra from a rock, flanked by two busts—probably Cautes and Cautopates, two other epiphanies of Mithra as solar deity. (Dionysius the Areopagite speaks of the "triple Mithra.") In the background to the right was a bust of the sun god, wearing his radiate crown. It has been removed. The arched roof has numerous holes cut into it.

Cultural Context

This Mithraeum, which dates from the fourth century CE, was discovered beneath the basilica of Saint Clement in 1867. Built in the Roman house of an influential member of the cult, the Mithraeum was entered by descending a number of stairs and passing through an anteroom before actually entering the sanctuary. A flow of water blocked excavations until 1914, when a water tunnel was constructed. Water played a purificatory role in Mithraism, and a spring (natural or man-made) was usually located near the sanctuary.

Mithra, Lord of Light, a god closely associated with the sun, was worshiped in natural and artificial caves. The Mithraeum, a kind of temple, served as a meeting place for the members of the religion. It represented the cave where Mithra caught the sacred bull and killed it, an episode in the life of the god that is central to his cult. Because the cave was also a replica of the cosmos, the starry firmament was usually represented on the ceiling, especially the signs of the zodiac together with the seven "planets" (the sun, the moon, and the five visible planets) known in antiquity. This arched roof, for example, has eleven holes, some of which may have been used for letting in light and air. Seven of the holes, however, are round and may well represent the planets.

Originally the Mithraeum contained an altar, a relief of Mithra Tauroctonus ("the bull slayer"), a statue of Mithra's birth from a rock, and three busts—two of which are aspects of Mithra, the third representing Sol Invictus, the sun god. The slaying of the bull was the most celebrated action of the god and was visually present in every Mithraeum: Mithra forces the bull down with one knee and holds up its head by one horn or by its nostrils, stabbing his knife into the bull's heart. In some of the artistic representations, grain sprouts from the bull's blood and a dog and a snake lap it up. Devotees regarded the killing of the bull as a creative and generative act. They worshiped Mithra as the creator or demiurge who brought new life to the cosmos and secured the material well-being of the world. Porphyry, the fourth-century Neoplatonist philosopher, identified the bull in the Mithraic sacrifice with the moon (*De Antro Nympharum* 18) and called the souls that were subsequently created

"born of cattle." Porphyry states also that "Mithra rides the bull of Aphrodite, since the bull is creator and Mithra the master of creation."

After killing the bull, Mithra and Sol seal their friendship by a banquet in which they share the flesh of the bull. The two gods are served by persons wearing animal masks. Having finished their meal, the two gods ascend to heaven riding in Sol's chariot. This banquet constitutes the paradigm for the communal meal shared by the followers of the god, who likewise wear masks that indicate their degrees of initiation. In the myth, the life of the cosmos is renewed by the blood of the bull. In a similar fashion, the followers of Mithra believed that by eating the meat of a bull and drinking its blood they would be reborn to ascend with Mithra to the celestial home of the Sun, and immortality.

Although Mithraism has roots in Iranian mythology, as we can see by the fact that Mithra was always known as a Persian god, the religion itself resembled other mystery religions and took shape outside Iran, spreading throughout the Roman empire. The cult appealed to the Hellenistic mind because of its soteriological message and corresponding gnosis, which was based on belief in the existence of an immortal soul and its ascent through the seven planetary spheres. Ascension was symbolized by seven grades of initiation, each stage governed by a "planet": Raven (Mercury); Bride (Venus); Soldier (Mars); Lion (Jupiter); Persian (the moon); Courier of the Sun (the sun); and Father (Saturn). The ultimate goal was to transcend all levels of the cosmos and to attain the level of the fixed stars, or *aeternitas.*

Claiming to be a universal religion, Mithraism nevertheless excluded women from membership. It was, however, especially popular among soldiers and sailors. Indeed, some scholars suggest that the Mithraic emphasis on initiation and a related communal ethos were taken over from archaic warrior initiations, or *Männerbünde.* In any case, Mithraism demonstrated a great capacity for adaption and expansion while remaining a religion of initiates. Eventually, however, it was forced to give way to Christianity and the intolerance of emperors such as Constantine and Theodosius. It was attacked by early Christians (Tertullian, for one), who thought that the Mithraic "baptism" was inspired by Satan and that its communal meal was a diabolic imitation of their Eucharist.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The cave is an ancient symbol of the place of creation. Aztec myths, for example, relate that the sun and moon were first formed in a grotto before being situated in the heavens. Creation is sometimes envisioned as an emergence from the earth. For example, the Hopi tell about the three worlds that exist under the earth. There the Hopi lived together with the Ant People before they managed to find their way up to the fourth world, the one in which they now live. The Zuni have similar beliefs and call each world a "womb."

Indeed, the cave is most often understood as a cosmic womb. It is a natural symbol related to man-made containers: the vase, the cauldron, the grail, the chalice, and the alchemist's vessel. Unlike the womb of the woman, the earth's womb not only brings forth life, as revealed in creation myths, but also receives the dead back again. Evidence of this religious belief, which underlies the practice of burial, is found already in Paleolithic cultures. The insight that supports this belief points to the connection between death and life. The dead are taken back into the womb of the earth in order to be reformed there and restored to life.

The central value of the cave or earth's womb, then, is that it is a place of transmutation.

This belief is the expression of the experience of the feminine aspect of the divine as a containing and transforming reality, both in the cosmos and within the individual psyche. (In nature, the closest analogy might be the cocoon of the caterpillar, which provides the place for the transmutation of the worm into a butterfly.) In the ancient Near East, the bull was a common symbol for the masculine aspect of this divine reality. Often connected with the mother goddess, the bull represented the impetus to change—the universal urge of all living beings to exist. The sacrifice of the bull is a ritual by means of which the sacred power of its life force is returned to the transpersonal realm. This ritual is based on insight into the nature of energy: the divine source of life must receive back energy—in the form of sacrifice, worship, attention—in order to continue the process of transformation and the renewal of life.

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GLOSSARY

APHRODITE (Gk., "sexual love, pleasure") Goddess of love, beauty, and fertility. Her origins lie outside the Indo-European culture, and she has many aspects that connect her both with the Mesopotamian goddesses of love and war and the bird goddess of Old Europe. In Greek myth she is the wife of Hephaistos, the beloved of Ares, and the mother of Eros. She is often depicted accompanied by birds or rising from the sea.

SOL (Lat., "sun") The name of the Sun is given to two utterly different deities in ancient Rome. Little is known about the older god, Sol Indiges, apart from the fact that his sacrificial day was included on the religious calendar. Much later, and certainly influenced by Syrian religion, was the cult of Sol Invictus. Introduced into Rome in the third century CE, his cult was assigned an imperial role until displaced by Christianity.

THE GODDESS CHINNAMASTĀ
Artist unknown Miniature painting: gouache on paper, polychrome
Length: 8 in. (20 cm); width: 6 in. (15 cm) Circa 1800 CE
Site: Kangra, Punjab, India Location: private collection, U.S.A.

The goddess Chinnamastā

India: Rajput

Chinnamastā is a Tantric goddess of wisdom who is evoked through meditation. Here she is depicted as self-decapitated and standing on the copulating Originating Couple, manifest in this instance as Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. Transformation through self-sacrifice is symbolized by the life energy of the goddess flowing back to her own head and to her attendants, who, like Chinnamastā, are supported by the cosmic union beneath them. Underneath the Originating Couple is the lotus of creation, with an inverted triangle (symbol of the feminine) at its center.

A decapitated female, youthful and orange-skinned, holds her own crowned head and stands upon a copulating couple. On either side are blue-skinned female attendants who wear skull garlands, crescent moons, and serpents, as does their mistress. The severed head and the two attending figures catch and drink the blood that spurts in three streams from the neck of the central figure. The young couple below lie on a carpet made up of an encircled triangle, which rests, in turn, on an open lotus flower. The entire scene is placed on a green hill with a stream passing along the lower border.

Cultural context

This is a painting of Chinnamastā ("she of the cut neck"), a Tantric Mahāvidyā, that is, one of ten manifestations of Śakti, who serve the worshiper in his or her search for spiritual fulfillment. Based on an underlying geometric formula, this image was created for use in meditation as a *yantra* (sacred diagram) to aid the worshiper in concentration and inner visualization.

Central to the Tantric teachings is the concept of ultimate reality as a unity, an undifferentiated whole. It is called Śiva/Śakti, or cosmic consciousness. Śiva and Śakti are eternally conjoined, and only on the relative plane of phenomenal experience do they appear as separate entities. The individual has the capacity to become a conscious participant in this ultimate unity and cosmic awareness, and this is the goal of Tantra.

In this view, the feminine principle, or Śakti, is the kinetic energy that activates and permeates the creative process. This leads to a composite image of the feminine principle: Śakti is endowed with all aspects of life, creative to dissolutive, sensual to sublime, benign to horrific. Śakti's universal power is the prime mover and the mother-womb of the recurring cycles of the universe. She symbolizes total life affirmation and is the impulse behind all polarity, the differentiation that gives rise to the play of cosmic life. Each Mahāvidyā is a manifestation of this divine energy in its various modes of activity: (1) Kālī, the power of time; (2) Tārā, the potential of re-creation; (3) Śodasī, the embodiment of the sixteen modifications of desire; (4) Bhuvaneśvarī, substantial forces of the material world; (5) Bhairavī, who multiplies herself in an infinity of beings and forms; (6) Chinnamastā, distributing the life energy into the universe; (7) Dhūmāvatī, associated with unsatisfied desires; (8) Bagalā, destroyer of negative forces; (9) Mātangī, the power of domination; and

(10) Kamalā, the state of reconstituted unity. This *yantra* depicting Chinnamastā was probably created originally as part of a series of all ten Mahāvidyās.

The eternal process that involves generation, death, and transformation is presented in the dynamic interplay of symbols in this *yantra*. The goddess—or Devī, as she is called (Śakti in her cosmic manifestation as deity)—is displayed in both her destructive and creative aspects, death dealing as well as life giving. As Chinnamastā, she signifies the apparent dissolution of things, a return to the primary substance so that creation can begin anew. This is depicted by showing the goddess beheaded, her blood flowing out to feed ongoing life. Through self-sacrifice, she nourishes her own self and her attendants, aspects of herself.

All three upper figures find support on the reclining bodies of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, who are in the act of procreation. This god and his mortal consort serve as models in Hinduism for the soul's union with the divine; they also represent, in this *yantra*, the timeless union of the ultimate reality that underlies the apparent play of life and death. Yet their depiction as male and female points to the dynamism that leads to generation in the cosmos, a connection that is supported further by the single lotus, which symbolizes the unity of that same reality in its transcendent mode as cosmic consciousness. Thus, this powerful icon presents both life and death, united by the transforming energy of the goddess as she moves into and through the universe of manifest forms to render possible, finally, the experience of a consciousness that is both the origin and the goal of all creation.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The symbolism of the *yantra* depicted here is both extremely concrete and metaphysically abstract. It sets forth the drama of transformation within the context of cosmic creation and the underlying reality of transcendent consciousness. Yet the focus is on one moment in this great drama: that aspect of the flow of life that is connected with or hypostasized as Chinnamastā. This is the moment of dissolution, when the energy that supports one system departs so that that form of life dissolves; at the same time the departing energy gives life elsewhere. In this image, the distribution of energy is within the divine realm—the blood of the goddess feeds the goddess—and represents the process of cosmic circulation in general.

The symbolism associated with blood is ancient and vast. Blood has always been felt to have a numinous quality. It is identified with the life force. Blood is the drink of the gods, in the view of many ancient peoples. Other sacred beverages often demonstrate a symbolic connection to it. For example, in the ancient Mediterranean both mead and wine were believed to be the "blood" of the gods. Perhaps the gods might drink human blood, but their own vital fluid was of a higher level, and thus intoxicating. This imagery is present in the ritual drinks such as *haoma* among the ancient Iranians, mead among the ancient Scandinavians, and the wine of the Christian Eucharist.

Because blood was a sacred fluid, it was a crime to spill it except during sanctified rituals, or sacrifices. Traditionally, the blood sacrifice was believed to be an act whereby power was returned to its source in order to support the gods in their ongoing creation of the universe. We find this attitude in such disparate places as ancient India and ancient Mexico. The circulation of the blood within the body of the living organism becomes a model for the circulation of the life force throughout the cosmos, and the ritual sacrifice is man's contribution to this constant cycle of renewal.

In the sacrifice of the goddess to the goddess, the entire process takes place on a level that is independent of human intervention. In a way, this is a theological refinement of an earlier, more anthropocentric understanding. In Tantrism, the adept does not contribute to the divine circulation through concrete sacrifice; instead, he or she seeks to identify with the entire process, to embody it and so to experience the transcendental consciousness that underlies it. Psychologically, this image points to a capacity that lies within the individual psyche for its own regeneration, to the ability to take what is given—biologically, socially, psychically—and reprocess it. Energy that goes into one form of adaptation can then be used again for something new. In this way, the human psyche is not simply the product of outside factors, or conditions, but participates freely in its own ongoing creation.

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GLOSSARY

DEVĪ (Skt., "goddess") At some point in Hindu literary tradition, an important theological tendency became apparent and dominates many texts that are partial to goddesses. This is the belief that the numerous goddesses are but myriad manifestations of a single feminine deity. Often she is simply called Devī, but other names include Mahādevī ("great goddess") and Śhakti ("power").

KṚṢṆA (Skt., "the dark one") Probably the most beloved god in modern Hinduism, Kṛṣṇa is regarded as one of the *avatāras* of Viṣṇu. Often he inspires the intense form of devotion known in Hinduism as *bhakti.*

RĀDHĀ The favorite mistress and consort of the Indian god Kṛṣṇa while he lived among the cowherds. Considered by some to be an incarnation of Lakṣmī, she was worshiped accordingly. Some see in her the prototype of the human soul that is drawn to the ineffable god.

ŚAKTI (Skt., "energy") In Hinduism, the feminine creative force, often personified as the female consort of a male deity.

ŚIVA A principal Hindu god. Within the divine trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, he is the destroyer, but to his devotees he is creator, preserver, and destroyer. Although Śiva does not appear in the early Vedic writings, his cult seems to have preserved aspects of the ancient Aryan tradition: Śiva is the Lord of Creatures as well as the great ascetic. His universal symbol is the *liṅga,* his animal companion is Nandi the bull, and a bull serves as the vehicle on which he rides.

MENORAH FLANKED BY OLIVE TREES
Artist: Joseph ha-Zarefati Manuscript illumination: parchment, polychrome
Length: 11⅛ in. (28.2 cm); width: 8½ in. (21.7 cm) 1300 CE
Site: Cervera (and Toledo?), Spain Location: ms. 72, National Library, Lisbon, Portugal

Menorah flanked by olive trees

Spain: The Middle Ages

Zechariah's vision of the menorah *that is fed by the oil of two olive trees came at a time when the Israelites felt the possibility of God's eternal and peaceful rule from his Temple in Jerusalem.*

A golden *menorah* consisting of seven branches with three budlike elements on each branch is displayed against a nearly square, blue-green field covered with a carpetlike trellis. The interior spaces encompassed by the seven branches show a delicate arabesque pattern. Two olive trees flank the *menorah* and, with their graceful branches spreading against the parchment ground above, seem to form a protective niche. The trees spew oil into spouted bowls, which in turn channel the oil into a central bowl placed immediately above the midmost stem of the *menorah.* The seven pipes attached to this bowl serve to distribute oil to the cups positioned on top of the branches of the *menorah.*

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Zechariah was one of two prophets who are remembered from the time when many of the Israelites were allowed to leave Mesopotamia and return to Judah. It was the end of the Babylonian exile, the time of a new Exodus. Second Isaiah had expressed much of the feeling that accompanied this liberation and return home. The period of exile was considered to have been a punishment from God for the sins of the Israelites. The return indicated the completion of atonement and the birth of a new age, one in which a new covenant with God would be realized.

The return to Jerusalem took place in 538 BCE. Immediately, the high commissioner, Zerubbabel, and the high priest, Joshua, began to reconstruct the Temple. They were supported in this by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. Complications arose, however, and the Temple was not completed until 515. A time of disappointed hopes followed the return, for the Messiah did not show his face, and the kingdom of God lay still in the future, it seemed. The timetable for the *eschaton,* or final end, and the nature of the new age had to be redefined.

The visions of Zechariah illuminated this time when impatience was close to the surface. According to Zechariah, God himself had changed because of the Babylonian exile. The old Yahveh (a Hebrew name for God) had been inclined to destruction whenever the world that he created failed to live up to his expectations; the new Yahveh desired to save his people from suffering. Zechariah envisioned a future in which all of the enemies of the Israelites would be punished and sinners would be banished. The people of God would prosper. Their Messiah would appear to rule them according to God's will. In fact, the nations would recognize God's presence in Jerusalem and come there to honor him and to seek shelter. A universal redemption would be realized on earth. In the language of Second Isaiah, as soon as Yahveh's kingdom is established on earth, "the Lord shall be your everlasting light" (*Isaiah* 60:19).

The light of the *menorah* was already known during this period. A *menorah* made of pure gold had been created and placed in the Temple, and it was described in *Exodus* 37:17–24. This lamp-stand seems to have been the inspiration for Zechariah's vision:

> The angel who talked with me came back and roused me as a man is roused from sleep. He asked me what I saw, and I answered, "A lamp-stand all of gold with a bowl on it; it holds seven lamps, and there are seven pipes for the lamps on top of it, with two olive-trees standing by it, one on the right of the bowl and another on the left." I asked him, "What are these two olive-trees, the one on the right and the other on the left of the lamp-stand?" I asked also another question, "What are the two sprays of olive beside the golden pipes which discharge the golden oil from their bowls?" He said, "Do you not know what these mean?" "No, sir," I answered. "These two," he said, "are the two consecrated with oil who attend the Lord of all the earth."
>
> (*Zechariah* 4:1–3, 11–14)

The angel may be suggesting that the trees represent the high priest and the high commissioner, both of whom are serving the Lord by restoring his holy place in Jerusalem. In that case, the *menorah* may represent the Temple itself, or the ritual worship of God. Or it could be a symbol of God's saving light, as expressed by Second Isaiah.

The manuscript illumination, however, is from thirteenth-century Spain, a period when Jews and Muslims shared a culture that was rich in both philosophical and aesthetic interpretations of their related traditions. The artist must have seen in Zechariah's vision associations beyond the primary one of the Temple *menorah*. The two trees recall the two trees in Paradise, the fruit of which Adam and Eve were not allowed to eat: the tree of life and the tree of knowledge. Placing the *menorah* between these two trees, having it fed by their oil, is in a way envisioning a return to paradise, but paradise with a difference. Something new has been added—a third "tree," one that bears light as its fruit.

Certainly, the artist would have associated the candelabrum with the Jewish winter festival of Hanukkah, or "dedication." During these holy days, Jews celebrate the victory of the Maccabees over the forces of Antiochus after a three-year battle that took place during the second century BCE. It is stated in *2 Maccabees* 10:6–8 that the altar in the Temple was rededicated and the festival of eight days was introduced, since during the war the Jews had been unable to celebrate the eight-day festival of Sukkot. A later Talmudic legend relates, moreover, that the Maccabees found only one small jar of oil for the kindling of the *menorah* in the Temple. This was sealed with the seal of the high priest but contained only sufficient oil to burn for a single night. By a miracle, the oil lasted for eight nights. It was consequently ordained that lights be kindled on the eight nights of Hanukkah.

ARCHETYPAL COMMENTARY

The *menorah* combines two primordial images that normally exclude each other: a growing thing (tree or bush) and a burning thing (fire, sun, etc.). With the fusion of these two images, a symbol expressive of the spiritual as coming both from above (heaven) and below (earth) is formed. Similar to the *menorah* is the traditional Christmas tree, which combines the two same elements: the living tree holding up burning candles. Associated since medieval times with the winter solstice, the *menorah* and the Christmas tree serve as reminders of the life and the light that have disappeared from the earth during the long dark days of deepest winter. However, other variations of the symbolism are to be found, even in the religion of

the ancient Israelites. The burning bush is an epiphany of the divine that appears to Moses on Mount Horeb. God is revealed as the light that burns but does not consume. Further, the Israelites followed a pillar of fire as they wandered in the desert after leaving Egypt and before they settled in Palestine.

The everlasting quality of the light is also central to this image in the vision of Zechariah. The oil that comes from the trees is a natural product of the living organism. This oil serves as fuel for the fire, and out of the fire light emerges. The light then joins with the light of heaven in providing the trees with what they need to make oil. Thus, a symbiotic cycle is established. On a subjective level, this may represent a union between the instinctive and the spiritual dimensions of the personality. The natural life of the instincts provides the fuel without which the fire could not burn. Without the fire, there would be no consciousness. C. G. Jung refers to this process when he insists that the complexes are the fuel for the fire of emotion that gives off the light of consciousness.

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GLOSSARY

MESSIAH, THE (from the Hebrew term *ha-Mashiaḥ*, "the anointed one") In Jewish tradition, the king was specially anointed as a chosen one of the God of Israel. Ever since the deaths of David and Solomon, and the disintegration of the kingdom, Jews have come to hope for the appearance on earth of a new king, one who will be sent by God to restore the kingdom. Christians believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah; the Greek word for "Messiah" is *Christos,* the title given to Jesus by his followers and the founders of his church.

SECOND ISAIAH Hebrew prophet and unknown author of *Isaiah* 40–55. Known especially for the songs of the "servant of the Lord."

TEMPLE, THE Also known as the Temple of Solomon or the Temple of Jerusalem, it was built around 968 BCE during the reign of King Solomon. The design for the Temple was revealed by way of divine revelation, and in this way the God of Israel instructed his king how to provide for him a dwelling place and a site for his sacrifices.

Minoan libation table

Artist unknown   Sculpture: stone   Diameter: approximately 35 in. (90 cm)

Circa 1700 BCE   Site/Location: central court, palace at Mallia, Crete

Minoan libation table

Greek: Crete, Palace Period II

This Minoan libation stone served as an altar for the offering of cereals, fruits, oils, and mead in the worship of an ancient goddess.

A large kernos, or circular libation table, occupies a corner of the central court of a Minoan palace. The stone circle is marked with a large central hollow, and there are thirty-four bowl-like depressions (cupules) around the circumference. One of the cupules is slightly larger than the others, and beside it the outer rim of the stone projects slightly, resembling the spout of a lamp.

Cultural context

Our understanding of Minoan ritual and myth is based on inferences made from material artifacts and analogies to cultures whose written texts we have learned to decipher. Circular stone altars are, of course, very ancient and appear as part of archaic religion in many cultures throughout the world. Students of Minoan religion believe a kernos such as the one depicted here played an important role in the worship of the ancient Minoan goddess who was associated with grain, with animal life, and with death. There is little evidence of the worship of any male anthropomorphic deity in Crete during the early or middle Minoan periods.

Many suppositions as to how these altars were used are based on rites dedicated to Demeter, which were conducted at similar altars during a later period. The large hollow in the center probably held oil or some liquid libation that would flow into the earth and encourage the rain to fall on the fields. The smaller hollows around the circumference would hold fruits and cereals, probably a different offering in each hollow—wheat, barley, oats, various legumes, figs, and other fruits. These sacrifices would be blessed and then shared among the participants. When in use the kernos was like a wreath of fruit, symbolizing the circle of the year and ensuring fertility.

Another, very similar libation stone, also from Mallia, has been preserved. Its projecting cupule is larger, and around the central cavity are thirteen additional cupules, of which the one corresponding in position to the larger outer cupule is similarly a little bigger than the rest. These large libation stones resemble the smaller Minoan kernoi, which often consist of a central bowl surrounded by an outer circle of cups. The prototype for the kernos may be a vessel, round or oval and of dark burnished clay, that makes its appearance during Early Minoan II. Consisting of a flat-bottomed pan supported on a pedestal topped by a flat table, it demonstrates a parallelism with early dynastic Egyptian tables of offering.

Archetypal commentary

The English word *altar,* which refers to a raised structure on which sacrifices are offered to a deity, derives from the Latin *altare,* which may be related to *altus* ("high"). In a similar

fashion, the corresponding Greek term for *altar* refers to a raised platform. Actually, the specific form of an altar may vary greatly and may reflect the religious interpretation of the sacrifice at hand. For example, high altars often elevate offerings for the consumption of the sky gods, whereas a sacrificial pit may be designed to receive the offerings to the deities of the underworld. The Minoan libation table is raised slightly above the ground and may have been intended to serve an earth goddess.

There are many different kinds of sacrifices; indeed, not all require the presence of an altar. Among those that do, there are both burnt offerings and libations, animal sacrifices and bloodless offerings. The altar shown here appears to have been used for libations and for the sacrifice of fruits, grains, oils, and beverages. It resembles a table rather than a hearth (two abiding centers of communal life).

This table altar has many parallels in other cultures, such as the so-called fairies' mills of ancient Sweden, small cavities hollowed out in big stone blocks from pre-Christian times. Until recently, people continued to smear these with butter. Until the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in the first century of the common era, Hebrew tradition included both animal sacrifice and other kinds of oblations offered upon an altar: for instance, grain, wine, and incense. Ever since then the table has been looked upon as a kind of altar. It was at the altar that the covenant between Israel and God was constantly renewed, hence the modern saying "Now that there is no altar, a man's table atones for him." The centrality of a table as altar is found likewise in Christianity. The death of Christ, and the Resurrection, are celebrated in the Lord's Supper, a communal meal that may take place around a simple table. Saint Paul contrasted the Christian sacrament with the so-called pagan sacrificial meals when he stated that one cannot partake of the Lord's table and the table of demons at the same time (*1 Corinthians* 10:21f.).

Those engaged in the study of religious customs have tended in the past to look for the so-called origins of a rite in order to understand its meaning. More recent scholars try to avoid the quest of origins, as it is often called, and seek rather to comprehend the meaning of a symbol or ritual by means of the phenomenological method: that is, they try to recreate the worldview of a given time and place and within that context to offer interpretations that take into account those of the period in question. In looking at sacrifice, both methods have been used. Theories that articulate the "origins" of sacrifice are numerous and well known: sacrifice has been interpreted as a gift, as homage, as a bribe, as a totemic communal meal, as a reenactment of primordial events, as an anxiety reaction, and as a mechanism for diverting violence. Phenomenological interpretations of sacrifice vary according to specific cultures. The ancient Vedic sacrifice, for example, was understood as an essential part of a cycle of creation that depended on sacrifice. The divine sacrifice led to the creation of this world, and the ritual sacrifice returned the creative power to its source so that the cosmogony might continue.

This latter view, according to which sacrifice is understood as a ritual means to transform creative power from one realm to another, has been taken up by C. G. Jung in his discussion of the symbols of transformation.

> The essence and motive force of the sacrificial drama consist in an unconscious transformation of energy, of which the ego becomes aware in much the same way as sailors are made aware of a volcanic upheaval under the sea. Of course, when we consider the beauty and sublimity of the whole conception of sacrifice and its solemn ritual, it must be admitted that a psychological

formulation has a shockingly sobering effect. The dramatic concreteness of the sacrificial act is reduced to a barren abstraction, and the flourishing life of the figures is flattened into two-dimensionality. Scientific understanding is bound, unfortunately, to have regrettable effects—on one side; on the other side abstraction makes for a deepened understanding of the phenomena in question. Thus we come to realize that the figures in the mythical drama possess qualities that are interchangeable, because they do not have the same "existential" meaning as the concrete figures of the physical world. The latter suffer tragedy, perhaps, in the real sense, whereas the others merely enact it against the subjective backcloth of introspective consciousness. . . . The essential thing in the mythical drama is not the concreteness of the figures, nor is it important what sort of an animal is sacrificed or what sort of god it represents; what alone is important is that an act of sacrifice takes place, that a process of transformation is going on in the unconscious whose dynamism, whose contents and whose subject are themselves unknown but become visible indirectly to the conscious mind by stimulating the imaginative material at its disposal, clothing themselves in it like the dancers who clothe themselves in the skins of animals or the priests in the skins of their human victims. (Jung, par. 669)

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GLOSSARY

DEMETER The Greek goddess of grain. A powerful and important mother goddess in the religion of ancient Greece, Demeter was connected with several festivals. Her mysteries at Eleusis, which were pre–Indo-European, continued to thrive in the cosmopolitan world of Hellenism. In her youthful aspect, she is known as Kore or Persephone.

MALLIA One of three large palaces constructed on the island of Crete by the ancient Minoans around 1900 BCE.

INDEX

Numerals in italics indicate pages bearing illustrations.

Aaron crossing Red Sea, *462*, 463
Ablution. *See also* Baptism; Bath; Purification rites.
  in four ponds of Jain preaching hall, *298*, 299
  by Fuji pilgrims, *38*, 39
Above Person (Ones)
  (glossary definition) 140
  moon personified as, 195
Abraham, and binding of Isaac, *210*, 211, 212
Active imagination, and yantra, 300–301
Adam
  and Eve, at tree of knowledge, *418*, 419–20
  Christ as second Adam, 415, 416
  God creating, in garden of Eden, *418*, 419–420
  holding Adam's apple, *418*, 419
  originally created as androgyne, 419
  skull of, below crucified Christ, *414*, 415
Adoration. *See* Gesture of adoration
Adultery, false accusation of, against Susanna, 343–44
Aegis of Athena, made of skin from her father, Pallas, 239
African images
  Baga, mask of goddess Nimba, *154*, 155–56
  Bakongo, oath-taking figure, *174*, 175–76
  Baule, divination vessel with attached figure, *398*, 399–401
  Dogon, eleven-headed female figure, *22*, 23–24, 25
  Dogon, Nommo, androgynous water spirit, *362*, 363–65
  Yombe, lion-man on cane-top, *106*, 107, 108, 109
  Yoruba, beaded crown, chicken atop peak, *278*, 279, 280, 281
  Yoruba, circular divination tray, *394*, 395
  Yoruba, Eṣu shrine figures, *354*, 355, 356
  Yoruba, twin figure with beaded jacket, *374*, 375–76
Afterlife. *See* Death and rebirth; Life after death; Rebirth; Resurrection
Agriculture, mask of goddess Nimba used in rites of, *154*, 155–56
Ahayuta
  (one of twin war gods), *186*, 187, 188
Airāvata (elephant)
  created from milk ocean, *34*, 35
  Indra riding above Kṛṣṇa lifting Mount Govardhana, *170*, 171
  replaces Gaṇeśa's head, *110*, 111, 112
alchemy, compared to metallurgy in perfecting work of Nature, 28
altar
  circular, central hollow surrounded by bowllike depressions, *478*, 479, 480
  within Mithraeum (cave sanctuary), *466*, 467
Amaltheia, feeding infant Zeus goat's milk, 103
Ambika, Kālī born from head of, 163
Ambrosia. *See also* Eternal youth.
  divine food, related to honey, 103
  extracted from churning milk ocean, *34*, 35
Amenhotep Son of Hapu, as scribe, *346*, 347, 348
American Indian. *See* Native American images
Amitābha
  (glossary definition) 309
  worship of in China, 308
Amma (supreme being and creator god), 23–24, 363–64
Ammit (devourer of the dead), and Weighing of the Heart, *426*, 427
Amṛta. *See* Ambrosia
Amun, glossary definition, 89
Ānanda, monk and disciple of Buddha, *330*, 331–33
An and Ki (heaven and earth personified), and Ur ziggurat, 47
Ancestors
  ancestral soul proclaiming his destiny before birth, 375, 376
  contacted by mouse oracle, 399–401
  Goddess Tārā as ancestress of Tibetan people, *150*, 151
  as land spirits, appearing to shaman, 408
  Nommo descending to earth in ark, 23–24, 363–64
  Siuhu, creator and protector of mankind, *70*, 71
  snake embodying soul of, 80
Ancient in Years (vision of Daniel), *386*, 387–89
Aṇḍa ("egg"), stupa as, *54*, 55, 56
Androgyne
  Adam originally created as, 419
  creation through splitting and fusion, 360
  Kūkai as child, *254*, 255, 256–57
  man and woman, as two "forms" of trickster god Eṣu, *354*, 355, 356
  Nommo (serpentine twins), *22*, 23–24, *362*, 363, 364, 365
  Śiva-Pārvatī, *358*, 359–60
Andromeda, glossary definition, 321
Angels. *See also* Michael, archangel; Winged being.
  (glossary definition) 245
  at empty tomb of Christ, *458*, 459, 461
  erotes harvesting vine, surrounding Christ as good shepherd, *338*, 339, 340–41
  erotes, sign of resurrection of Christ, *338*, 339
  four, bringing Christ up to heaven, *58*, 59
  framing mandorla of Ancient in Years, *386*, 387, 388
  Gabriel and annunciation to Virgin Mary, *222*, 223, 224
  host of, casting dragon (Satan) out of heaven, *134*, 135–37
  host of, surrounding Christ at Last Judgment, *434*, 435
  Jewish putti, depicted on marriage contract, *210*, 211, 212, 213
  Matthew the Evangelist as, holding book, *294*, 295
  ministering at baptism of Christ, *454*, 455
  piercing heart of Saint Teresa with arrow, *218*, 219
  preventing sacrifice of Isaac, *210*, 211, 212
  three, pointing to nativity of Christ, *242*, 243
Anger of old servant woman accompanying Judith to Holofernes, *326*, 327
Aniconic. *See* Images.
Anima, and slaying of dragon, 320–21
Animal, human in form of. *See also* Monster, animal-human composite.
  John the Evangelist as eagle, *294*, 295
  Luke the Evangelist as winged ox, *294*, 295
  Mark the Evangelist as winged lion, *294*, 295
Animal and divinity
  Aphrodite and goose, *146*, 147, 148, 149
  Apollo and swan, *446*, 447, 448
  Freyja and cats, 148, 159
  Freyja and pig, 159
  Freyr and boar, 183, 184
  Gaṇeśa and rat, *110*, 111, 112
  Heqet and frog, *74*, 75
  Indra and elephant, 148
  Mahāvīra and lion, 411
  Mother Earth and bat, *202*, 203
  Odin and ravens, 179
  Potnia and falcon, *142*, 143
  Tārā and lion, *150*, 151, 152–53
Animal and human. *See* Bird and woman; Marriage between human and animal; Monster, animal and human composite
Animal divinity
  Anubis as jackal or dog, *98*, 99, 100
  Artemis as bear, 97
  Athena as night owl, 240
  Hathor as cow, *86*, 87, 88
  Ishtar as lion, *206*, 208
  Thoth as ibis, *82*, 83; as baboon, 83

Animal divinity (*continued*)
Zeus as swan, *214*, 215, 216
Zeus Meilichios as snake, *78*, 79, 80
Animal hide. *See* Aegis; Skin
Animals. *See also* Monster, animal composite; Monster, monstrous animal
Language of, shaman understanding, 408
Mistress of, Potnia, *142*, 143, 144
Ankh
Anubis holding in one hand, *426*, 427
Mirror case shaped as, *378*, 379
Symbolizing life, 379
Annunciation
as model for spiritual growth, 224–25
Virgin Mary holding book and spindle, *222*, 223
Anthropos. *See also* Body and cosmology
Christ as, 296
in connection with microcosm and macrocosm, 17
Anubis
(glossary definition) 433
as embalmer, 99, 100, 427
as guide of the dead, 99, 100, 427
as jackal or dog on top of shrine, *98*, 99, *426*, 427
jackal-headed, and Weighing of the Heart, *426*, 427, 428–29
Aphrodite
(glossary definition) 145
emerging from water, *450*, 451, 452–53
goddess of love, beauty, and pleasure, 451
Ourania, goddess of heavens, earth, and sea, *146*, 147, 148
riding a goose, *146*, 147, 149
Apocalypse. *See Revelation*
Apollo
dark side of, 449
god of justice and harmony, 448
playing lyre, pursuing Daphne, *446*, 447
Apostles
and Virgin Mary seated at round table at Pentecost, *390*, 391, 392
seated in semicircle at Pentecost, above scene of Ascension, *58*, 60
Apotheosis. *See* Deification
(glossary definition) 61
Apotropaism. *See* Evil, warding off
Apple. *See* Fruit, of tree of knowledge
Apsu and Tiamat, in Babylonian creation myth, 115–16, 117
Arapoosh, medicine shield of, *194*, 195–96
Archangel. *See* Gabriel, archangel; Michael, archangel
Architect, Amenhotep Son of Hapu as, 347
Ardhanārīśvara, "the lord whose half is woman," *358*, 359, 360–61
Aristaios, son of Apollo, first beekeeper, 103
Ariwara no Narihira (*Tales of Ise*), 367–68
Ark
Nommo descending in, becoming ancestors of humankind, 23–24, 363
Torah, covered by curtain depicting entrance to paradise, *30*, 31
Arms. *See also* Gesture
four-armed Gaṇeśa, *110*, 111
four-armed Śiva-Pārvatī, *358*, 359
six-armed Skanda sitting with Śiva and Pārvatī in cremation ground, *438*, 439
Arrow. *See also* Bow and arrow.
angel piercing heart of Saint Teresa with, *218*, 219, 220
Artemis
(glossary definition) 449
as bear, 97
as mistress of animals, 143
Arts, the, Athena as patron of, 239
Ascension
heavenly, in Christian belief, *458*, 459–61
language of, at birth of Buddha, 251
in Mithraism, symbolized by seven grades of initiation, 468
of Muḥammad, Dome of the Rock as site of, *50*, 51–52
symbolism of, in connection with Elijah, 383, 384
symbolism of, in connection with Weighing of the Heart, 428–29
Ascension of Christ
depicted on left portal of Chartres cathedral, *370*, 371, 372
above empty tomb, *458*, 459–61
modeled after hero worship (Greece) and deification of the dead (Rome), 60–61
above Virgin Mary and apostles, *58*, 59
Ascent of Mount Fuji, symbol of progress toward enlightenment, *38*, 39–40
Ascent and descent
ascension of Christ and descent of Holy Spirit at Pentecost, 59–60, 61
of birds, as *sublimatio* and *coagulatio*, 216
Ascetic
John the Baptist, dressed in camel-hair tunic, *454*, 455
Mahākāśyapa, *334*, 335–36
matted locks and panther skin signs of, Śiva, *358*, 359
matted locks sign of, Gaṇeśa, *110*, 111
Rāma as forest dweller, *190*, 191–92
Śiva as divine model, *438*, 439–40
Asceticism
and eroticism, in connection with Śiva and Pārvatī, 439–40
in Jainism, 15
as smokeless fire in dream of Queen Triśalā, *410*, 411, 412
Ase. *See* Energy, *ase*
Ashes, Śiva as ascetic, covered with, *438*, 439, 440
Ashkenazim, glossary definition, 213
Aśoka, emperor of India, expanding Buddhism, 91–92
Ass and ox, at nativity of Christ, *242*, 243
Assumption of Virgin Mary, *286*, 287, 288, 289
Astrology
Helios, zodiac, and four seasons, *6*, 7–9
Judaic, 7–8
Asye (earth deity), 399–400
Athena
(glossary definition) 125
assisting Perseus in decapitating Medusa, 123
birth of, from Zeus's forehead, *238*, 239, 240
patron of the arts, weaving, and education of children, 239
Ātman, in connection with mystical union with universal self, 17
Attributes. *See* God, attributes of; Goddess, attributes of
Aura. *See* Light around body
Aura Poku (queen, founder of Baule kingdom), 399
Austerities. *See* Asceticism
Autun, cathedral of, temptation of Eve, detail of cathedral, *422*, 423, 424
Avalokiteśvara
(glossary definition) 153
as guide of souls, *314*, 315
Tārā born from tear of, 151
Avatāra, glossary definition, 173
Avenger, of shedding kindred blood, Zeus Meilichios and the Furies, 79
Ax
mace between two axes, on shoulders of Ishtar, *206*, 207
Týr holding, *126*, 127
of Zeus, and Hephaistos assisting birth of Athena, *238*, 239
Axis mundi. *See also* Cosmos, center of.
(glossary definition) 36
central shaft of Great Stupa at Sāñcī as, *54*, 55
cosmic person as, *14*, 15–16
Dome of the Rock as, 51–52
lion capital at Sarnath as, *90*, 92
main tower of Khaṇḍarīya Mahadeva Temple as, *42*, 43, 44
Mount Fuji as, *38*, 39, 40
mountain as, on back of tortoise bearing Viṣṇu, *34*, 35
rod of Ishtar as, *206*, 209
spine as, two snakes spiraling around, *350*, 351–52
staff of chief as, *106*, 108
staff of Hachiman, symbol of authority, *198*, 200
Xocotl tree as, *62*, 64–65

Baal, glossary definition, 385
Babalawo. *See also* Priest
taught divination by Ifa, 395–96, 397
Baboon, Thoth as, 83
Babylonian Exile, glossary definition, 345
Bahrām the Gor, killing dragon, *322*, 323
Bait (ox head) used by Thor in catching Midgardssnake, *130*, 131–33
Balance. *See* Scales
Baldness. *See* Head, shaved
Banishment. *See* Exile
Banner
Christ holding, at Last Judgment, *434*, 435
Queen Triśalā dreaming of, *410*, 411, 412
Banquet. *See* Meal
Baptism. *See also* Ablution; Bath.
of Christ, *454*, 455–56
with water and with the Holy Spirit (fire), 456
"Barefoot" (discalced) Carmelite houses, Saint Teresa as founder of, 219
Basket
neb, supporting scarab on ankh mirror case, *378*, 379
tray, Siuhu's house as center of labyrinth, *70*, 71
Bat, as guardian of Mother Earth, *202*, 203
Bath. *See also* Ablution; Baptism.
of Aphrodite, restoring virginity, *450*, 451, 452
of divine child Buddha, *250*, 251, 252
of divine child Christ, *242*, 243, 244
of Susanna, elders spying on, *342*, 343
Battle between opposite forces. *See also* Chaos; Good and evil
demons destroyed by Kālī, 163–64

god and giant moving mountain in contest to decide who is creator, 119
God and the Devil, *134*, 135–37
gods and demons churning milk ocean, after early cooperation, *34*, 35
Thor and Midgardssnake, *130*, 131–33
Týr binding Fenriswolf, *126*, 127–28
Beans, growing out of center of Mother Earth, *202*, 203
Bear
connected with shamanic rites of healing, 96
as ideal mother, 96–97
one of four beasts in vision of Daniel, *386*, 387
screen of squatting female brown bear, *94*, 95, 96–97
worship and bear sacrifice in connection with legend of Bear Woman, *246*, 247–49
Bear Woman
marrying human, *94*, 95–96
suckling bear child, *246*, 248, 249
Beard
denoting age and knowledge of diviner, *398*, 399, 400
false, of Ptah, *266*, 267
Freyr as bearded god, *182*, 183
Beatus of Liébana, commentator of *Revelation*, 135, 136
Beauty, Aphrodite as goddess of, *450*, 451, 452
Bees
Bee skin of leonine daimons, *142*, 143
pair of, clasping honeycomb, *102*, 103
as symbol of soul, 104
Beetle. *See* Scarab.
Beheading
Chinnamastā holding her self-decapitated head, *470*, 471
of demons Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa by Kālī, 163
of Holofernes by Judith, *326*, 327–28
of Medusa by Perseus, 123, 124
Bel. *See* Marduk
Bellerophon, capturing Pegasus, 123–24
Belt
buckle made of human skull, of goddess Coatlicue, *166*, 167
snake, of Camuṇḍā, *162*, 163
snake, of Chinnamastā and attendants, *470*, 471
Benediction. *See* Gesture of blessing
Bereavement. *See* Mourner
Beth Alpha Synagogue, floor mosaic of zodiac, *6*, 7–8
Bhāgavata Purāṇa illustrations
cosmic egg, *10*, 11–12
Kṛṣṇa lifting Mount Govardhana, *170*, 171–72
Bhakti
(glossary definition) 173
devotional love of human for a god, related to Kṛṣṇa, *170*, 171, 172
Bhārata (half-brother of Rāma), reigning fourteen years, 191
Bible, New Testament illustrations. *See also* Christian images
annunciation to Virgin Mary, *222*, 223, 224
ascension of Christ and Pentecost, *58*, 59–61
baptism of Christ, *454*, 455–56
Crucifixion, *414*, 415–17
nativity of Christ, *242*, 243–44
resurrection and ascension of Christ, *458*, 459–61
Virgin Mary and Christ child enthroned, *290*, 291–92
Virgin Mary seated at round table with apostles at Pentecost, *390*, 391, 392
"woman robed with sun" and dragon, *134*, 135–37
Bible, Old Testament illustrations. *See also* Jewish images
Adam and Eve in garden of Eden, *418*, 419–21, *422*, 423, 424
Ancient in Years, in vision of Daniel, *386*, 387–89
binding of Isaac, *210*, 211, 212
crossing of Red Sea, *462*, 463–64
garden of Eden, *30*, 31
Judith and Holofernes, *326*, 327–28
Susanna and elders, *342*, 343–44
vision of Zechariah of olive trees and *menorah*, *474*, 475–76
Binding
of the Devil in hell, *134*, 135–36
of Fenriswolf with magic fetters, *126*, 127–29
of Isaac, *210*, 211, 212
Bird and woman
union of Holy Spirit and Virgin Mary, 216
union of Zeus as swan and Leda, *214*, 215, 216
Bird goddess
Athena as bird or as snake, 240
in old Europe, related to Aphrodite, *146*, 147–49
Birds. *See also specific birds*
ascending and descending, as *sublimatio* and *coagulatio*, 216
in connection with air, water, or land, 84
in connection with creation myths, 83–85
as messengers, 84
pair of, facing each other on twin figure, *374*, 375
pair of, in tree of life growing out of tomb of Christ, *458*, 459
Birth. *See also* Creation; Pregnancy
of Buddha, *250*, 251–52
of Christ, *242*, 243–45
column of birthing house depicting Horus child, *230*, 231
of consciousness, in connection with fall of man, *418*, 419–21
of consciousness, represented by Marduk killing Tiamat, 117
from dress, Gaṇeśa from Pārvatī, 111
from father, Athena from Zeus, *238*, 239, 240
frog associated with, 75–76
from head, Athena from Zeus, *238*, 239, 240
from head, Kālī from Ambikā, 163
of hero, by "woman robed with sun," *134*, 135–37
of hero, Queen Triśalā dreaming of conception of Mahāvīra, *410*, 411–12
from navel, Brahmā from Viṣṇu, *10*, 11
newborn Horus dancing on lotus, *230*, 231–32
from rock, Mithra, above altar relief depicting Mithra slaying bull, *466*, 467
from rock, Mithra emerging as naked boy, *234*, 235–36, 237
from sea, Aphrodite from severed genitals of Ouranos, 147
of sun, related to scarab, 380
from tear, Tārā from Avalokiteśvara, 151
from testicles, Aphrodite, 451
virgin, and Virgin Mary, 243–44
Birth goddess (Heqet), associated with frog, 75–76
Black. *See* Skin, black; Stone
Blessing. *See* Gesture of blessing
Blood
of crucified Christ pouring over skull of Adam, as redemption of mankind, *414*, 415
ichor flowing in veins of Greek gods, 103
mead of poetry made of, 180
of Medusa, having power to kill and to heal, 123, 125
and milk, wine, and honey, as libation to goddess, *142*, 143, 144
as sacred life force, 472
of Sisiutl, lending warrior invulnerability, 139
snake of, flowing from goddess Coatlicue, *166*, 167
spilling of, violation of Asye, earth deity, 400
of Ymir, made into sea at creation, 27
Blood sacrifice
in Mithraic religion, 467–68, 469
self-decapitated goddess Chinnamastā, *470*, 471, 472–73
Blue. *See* Skin, blue
Bodhisattvas
(glossary definition) 309
Avalokiteśvara, as guide of souls, *314*, 315
and Maitreya under dragon-flower tree, *310*, 311, 312
pantheon of, developed by Mahāyāna Buddhism, 152
Body. *See also* Body, naked; Body and cosmology; Gesture; Incarnation; Posture; Subtle body; *specific parts of the body*.
emaciated, Camuṇḍā, *162*, 163
old, Amenhotep Son of Hapu, *346*, 347
perfect, goal of *siddha* in Indian alchemy, 304
resurrection of, in Christianity, 459–60
resurrection of, in Judaism, 31–32
Body, naked
Adam and Eve covering, *418*, 419, *422*, 423
Apollo pursuing Daphne, *446*, 447
female mourner, *442*, 443
ithyphallic Freyr, *182*, 183
Leda and Zeus as swan, *214*
Skaoaga, mortal woman, suckling her bear child, *246*, 247
snake goddess suckling snake child, *262*, 263
as soul, at Last Judgment, *430*, 431
Susanna being spied on by elders, *342*, 343
Body and cosmology. *See also* Anthropos.
cosmic person, *14*, 15–17
cosmos created from body of Tiamat, 115–16
cosmos created from body of Ymir, *26*, 27
creation myth embodied in one's own body, in Tantrism, 351–52
head of female figure as earth and sky, *22*, 23–24
structure of body reflecting order of cosmos, *14*, 15–16
Bondage. *See* Slavery
Bonds. *See* Rope
Bones
of first man, as sign of covenant between man and god, 363–64
symbolizing immortality and order, 401

Book
Ancient of Years holding, symbolizing sacredness of scripture, *386,* 388–389
John the Evangelist as eagle, and Matthew the Evangelist as angel, holding, *294,* 295
Virgin Mary holding, *222,* 223, 224, 225
Bow and arrow, of Bahrām the Gor killing dragon, *322,* 323
Boy's Doll-Day Festival, and use of iris, 367
Brahmā
(glossary definition) 113
in Buddhism, *18,* 19
offering lotuses to Buddha, *18,* 19
resting on lotus growing from Viṣṇu's navel at creation, 11
Bread image, of god, dismembered and eaten, 64
Breast. *See also* Suckling
of androgyne Śiva-Pārvatī, *358,* 359
Breath
as energy, in Tantrism, 352
as serpentine energy, suggested in triply-flexed posture of Pārvatī, *358,* 359
Bridal mysticism. *See also* Marriage
in Christian history, 219–20
and ecstasy of Saint Teresa, 220
and receptivity of Virgin Mary to God's presence, 224–25
Bridge. *See also* Rainbow
crossing of, to otherworld, 368–69
zigzag, and irises, *366,* 367
Brisingamen (necklace of Freyja), *158,* 159
Brothers
Castor and Pollux, sons of Leda, 215
conflict between, Gaṇeśa and Skanda, 112
conflict between, Ọbatala and Oduduwa, 279–80
faithful, Lakṣmana and Rāma, with Sītā in forest, *190,* 191
three, in Jātaka tale, *258,* 259–61
Buddha. *See also* Buddhism *entries.*
Ānanda favorite disciple of, *330,* 331–33
as child, *250,* 251–52
colossal golden, within Manuha Temple, *302,* 303, 304
Mahākāśyapa, disciple of, *334,* 335–36
as savior, *306,* 307–309, *310,* 311–13
Buddha, historical (Śākyamuni)
(glossary definition) 57
death of, and Ānanda, 331–32
first bath and first steps of, *250,* 251, 252
relics of, in Great Stupa at Sāñcī, 55, 56
temptation of, by Māra, 303–04
Buddha-to-be (Maitreya)
under dragon-flower tree, *310,* 311
hand gestures of protection and generosity, *306,* 307
as truthful youth, *258,* 259–61
Buddhism. *See also* Enlightenment.
aniconic and iconic images in, 307–308
Dharma, teaching of Buddha as Wheel, of Law, 92
doctrine of impermanence in, 331–32
Eightfold Path of, 259–60
Hīnāyāna and Mahāyāna, differences between, 332
pantheon of *bodhisattvas* in Mahāyāna, 152
place of feminine in, recognized by Ānanda, 332, 333
six perfections in, 259
Buddhism in Burma
Brahmā offering lotuses, *18,* 19
Buddha-to-be as truthful youth, 259–61
colossal golden Buddha within Manuha Temple, *302,* 303–305
Buddhism in China
Avalokiteśvara, as guide of souls, *314,* 315
disciple Ānanda, *330,* 331–33
disciple Mahākāśyapa, *334,* 335–36.
first bath and first steps of Śākyamuni, *250,* 251–52
Maitreya under dragon-flower tree, *310,* 311, 312
Maitreya with hand gestures of protection and generosity, *306,* 307
Buddhism in India
expanded by emperor Aśoka, 91–92
goddess Tārā seated on lion throne, *150,* 151, 152
Great Stupa at Sāñcī, *54,* 55–56
lion capital at Sarnath, *90,* 91, 92
Buddhism in Japan
Buddhism and Shintō, *38,* 39–40, *198,* 199–200
Hachiman as Buddhist monk, *198,* 199–200
Kūkai as child, *254,* 255–57
Mount Fuji pilgrimage *maṇḍala,* *38,* 39–40
Shingon sect, 255–56
Bull
as creator, and Mithra as master of creation, 468
and horse, lion, and elephant, on lion capital at Sarnath, *90,* 91, 92
identified with moon in Mithraism, 467
Nandi, adoring Śiva-Pārvatī, *358,* 359
Nandi, resting behind Śiva and Pārvatī in cremation ground, *438,* 439
sacrifice, Mithra slaying bull, 467
white, Queen Triśalā dreaming of, *410,* 411
Burial. *See also* Cremation ground; Tomb
and death, snake related to, 263, 264
likened to earth's womb receiving the dead, 468
mound, Great Stupa at Sāñcī, *54,* 55
Burning bush, related to *menorah,* 476–77

Cakra
Kuṇḍalinī yoga and Sakti, 352
and sun wheel from Sūrya Temple, 4
Cakravartin, Māndhāta, *270,* 271–73
Calendar. *See also* Time.
Aztec, fifty-two-year cycles dating back to creation, 63
wreath of fruit placed on libation table as circle of the year, 479
Camuṇḍā, eater of corpses, aspect of Kālī, *162,* 163
Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, demons decapitated by Camuṇḍā, 163
Candelabrum, seven-branched *menorah, 474,* 475
Cane. *See* Staff
Cap. *See* Headdress
Cardinal points. *See* Four directions
Caretaker. *See* Guardian
Cartouche, of Sesostris I, *266,* 267
Castor and Pollux, sons of Leda, 215
Castration, of Ouranos by his son Kronos, 147
Cat and goddess. *See also* Lion and goddess
Freyja associated with cats, 159
Cathedral. *See also* Sacred space
Chartres, labyrinth, *66,* 67–68
Chartres, Royal Portal, *370,* 371–73
Cattle, as symbol of wealth, 88
Cautes and Cautopates, epiphanies of Mithra as solar deity, *466,* 467
Cave
birthplace of Zeus, 103
as cosmos, Mithraeum, *466,* 467
dragon's lair, Saint George killing dragon in, *318,* 319
as place of creation, *466,* 468
as womb and tomb, nativity and burial of Christ taking place in, 244–45
Cave chapel, sacred place of cow goddess Hathor, 88
Cave temple
Mithraeum, *466,* 467
Tun-huang, sculpture of Ānanda, *330*
Tun-huang, sculpture of Mahākāśyapa, *334*
Cemetery. *See* Cremation ground; Tomb
Censer, Avalokiteśvara holding, *314,* 315
Census, at time of birth of Christ, 243
Center. *See also Axis mundi;* Cosmos, center of.
of labyrinth, black circle representing house of Siuhu, *70,* 71
of labyrinth, flower at, Chartres cathedral, *66,* 67
of preaching hall, savior in, *298,* 299
of round table at Pentecost, light at, *390,* 391
of wheel of zodiac, Helios, *6,* 7
of wheel, lotus at, Sūrya Temple, *2,* 3
Ceremony. *See* Festival
Chain. *See also* Rope.
Oduduwa using to climb down from heaven to create earth, 279
Chair. *See also* Throne.
of Elijah at circumcision, 384
Chakra. See Cakra
Chakravartin. See Cakravartin
Change. *See* Transformation
Changing Woman, creating maize and humankind, 203–204
Chaos
creation from, and churning of milk ocean, 35–36
creation from, and golden egg, *10,* 11, 12
dragon representing, 132, 320, 324
on earth, as Ifa, god of divination, withdraws, 395
opposed by twin war gods, 188
and renewal at winter solstice, 188
as result of theft and incest by trickster Yurugu, 23, 363
water as, 452
wolves as, 128–29
Chaos and order. *See* Battle between opposite forces; Good and evil.
Chapel, cave, as sacred place of cow goddess Hathor, 87–88
Chariot
of sun god Helios, drawn by horses, *6,* 7, 8
of sun god Sūrya, drawn by Sūrya, 3
Chartres, cathedral of
labyrinth, *66,* 67
Royal Portal, *370,* 371–73

Chicken
agent in creation of earth, *278,* 279–80, 281
on peak of beaded crown, *278,* 279, 280
Chief. *See* King
Child
archetype of, 232, 256–57
archetype representing urge to self-realization, 252
Buddha, bath of, *250,* 251
Buddha, first steps of newborn, *250,* 251
Christ, bath of, *242,* 243
Christ, in lap of Virgin Mary, *290,* 291
Christ, nativity of, *242,* 243–44
Horus, dancing on lotus, *230,* 231
Kūkai as, *254,* 255, 256
Mithra, born from rock, *234,* 235–36
Mithra, born from rock within Mithraeum, *466,* 467
sacrifice, Abraham binding Isaac, *210,* 211, 212
of "woman robed with sun," rescued from dragon, standing next to God the Father, *134,* 135
Chimera
(glossary definition) 125
killed by Bellerophon on Pegasus, 123–24
Chinnamastā (She of the Cut Neck), standing on Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, *470,* 471, 472
Christ
baptism of, *454,* 455–56
coronating Virgin Mary, *286,* 287
crucifixion of, *414,* 415–17
disciples of, at empty tomb, and ascension of Christ, *458,* 459–61
dual nature of, human and divine, 295–96
dual nature of, human and divine, crucifixion representing, 416–17
in glory, depicted on central portal of Chartres cathedral, *370,* 371, 372
as good shepherd, *338,* 339–41
holding scroll referring to Apocalypse, *458,* 459, 460
as second Adam, redemption of humankind through crucifixion, 415–16
youthful, as son to God the Father, *458,* 459, 460
Christ, ascension of, *458,* 459–61
and descent of Holy Spirit, *58,* 59–60
on left portal of Chartres cathedral, *370,* 371, 372
modeled after hero worship (Greece) and deification of the dead (Rome), 60–61
Christ, resurrection of
and ascension of, *58,* 59–60, *458,* 459–61
and fall of man, 423–25
and symbolism of good shepherd, 339–41
Christ as child
adoration by Magi of, *242,* 243, 244
in lap of Virgin Mary, *290,* 291
nativity of, *242,* 243–45
in swaddling clothes, *242*
Christ as savior
as good shepherd, *338,* 339–41
his resurrection and ascension completing his mission on earth, *458,* 459
in tree of life, *294,* 295–97
Christ at Last Judgment. *See also* Judgment of the dead
enthroned, *434,* 435
as judge, *434,* 435
second coming of Christ connected with Last Judgment, 436
Christian images. *See also* Bible, New Testament illustrations; Bible, Old Testament illustrations.
ecstasy of Saint Teresa, *218,* 219–21
labyrinth, Chartres cathetral, *66,* 67–68
Royal Portal, Chartres cathedral, *370,* 371–73
Saint George on white horse, killing dragon, *318,* 319–21
Weighing of souls, *430,* 431–33
Christians, persecution of, "woman robed with sun" representing, 135–37
Christmas, ambiguous origin of holy day, 243
Christmas tree, related to *menorah,* 476
Chrusaor, gold-sworded warrior emerging from decapitated Medusa, 123
Church. *See also* Sacred space
depicted with towers and spires, and scenes of Ascension and Pentecost, *58,* 59
Ecclesia and dragon, apocalyptic vision of John the Evangelist, *134,* 135–37
as flock of sheep, with Christ as good shepherd, *338,* 339–41
as house of the Lord and symbolism of the "chosen people," 60
Virgin Mary as model for, 224, 287, 288
Churning, of milk ocean, *34,* 35–36
Circle. *See also Maṇḍala*
at center of round table, Virgin Mary and apostles, *390,* 391
center of two intertwined snakes forming, *350,* 351
central hollow surrounded by bowllike depressions of libation table, *478,* 479
divination tray in shape of, *394,* 395
of light, surrounding Kūkai as child, *254,* 255, 257
surrounding goddess Freyja as pendant, *158,* 159
surrounding human figure, *194,* 195
two-headed serpent Sisiutl forming, *138,* 139
Circle, cross in
cruciform halo of Christ, *286,* 287, *290,* 291, *294,* 295
diagram of Jain preaching hall, *298,* 299–300
labyrinth at Chartres as, *66,* 67, 68
rattles depicted as, Father Sky and Mother Earth holding in each hand, *202,* 203
sun wheel from Sūrya Temple, *2,* 3
Circle and square
dome-shaped stupa surmounted by square shrine, *54,* 55
squaring of zodiac circle by four seasons at each corner, *6,* 7
Circle dance, around Xocotl tree, *62,* 63, 65
Circles, concentric, of labyrinth, *66,* 67, *71*
Circulatio
as ascending and descending bird, 216
rotating sun wheel from Sūrya Temple as, 5
Circumambulation
expressing sacredness, 65
of Great Stupa at Sāñcī, 55, 56
of Khaṇḍarīya Mahādeva Temple, 44
of Manuha Temple, 303
of Xocotl tree, *62,* 63
City
guardian of, serpent-dragon Mushhush at Ishtar gate, *114,* 115
holy, of Jerusalem, 51–52
Clan crest, glossary definition, 97
Claws. *See also* Talons
jaguar, feet of goddess Coatlicue, *166,* 167
of Satan, offering fruit of tree of knowledge to Eve, *422,* 423
Clay, Amma creating earth from, 23
Clouds
archangel Gabriel surrounded by, *222,* 223
around Mount Fuji, *38,* 39
associated with elephant, 273
Avalokiteśvara descending on, *314,* 315
dark, above Susanna and elders, *342,* 343
dark, Indra sending storm over worshipers of Kṛṣṇa, *170,* 171
thunder, releasing water to bath of infant Buddha, *250,* 251
Clytemnestra
(glossary definition) 217
daughter of Leda and King Tyndareus, 215
Coagulatio
bird as spirit, descending to incarnate in matter, in case of Leda and the swan, 216
Medusa turning men into stone as, 124
Coals, used in exorcising Land Otter Man, 403
Coatlicue, "serpent skirt," earth goddess, *166,* 167
Cobra. *See also* Snake.
pair of cobras as protector on ankh mirror case, *378,* 379
Cock, atop pillar, associated with sun in many traditions, *278,* 281
Code of Hammurabi, and Jewish law, 344
Coins, square, raining from sky, generated by *cakravartin,* *270,* 271–72
Collar, menat, goddess holding over Horus child, *230,* 231–32
Colors. *See specific colors*
Column. *See* Pillar
Communion. *See* Eucharist
Compassion
bodhisattva of, Avalokiteśvara, 315
goddess of, Tārā, *150,* 151–52
Composite being. *See* Monster
Conception. *See* Birth; Pregnancy
Consciousness, language and, 348
Consciousness, birth of
expressed by Marduk killing Tiamat, 117
in connection with fall of man, 420–21, 425
Constantine I, glossary definition, 341
Contract. *See also* Covenant with God; Oath
Jewish marriage, *210,* 211–13
Copper, covering excrement of Bear Woman, 247–48
Corn. *See* Grain; Maize
Cornucopia. *See* Vase
Coronation. *See also* Crown.
of King Zimri-Lim, *206,* 207, 208
of Virgin Mary, *286,* 287–89
Corpses, eater of. *See* Devouring of the dead
Cosmic mountain, glossary definition, 49

Cosmos. *See also* Cosmos, center of; Mountain, cosmic; Protector of cosmic order; Snake, cosmic.
Christ holding orb, signifying universal dominion, *294*, 295–96
cosmic egg emerging from world ocean, *10*, 11
cosmic person, *14*, 15–17
created from Tiamat, primordial being, 115–16
created from Ymir, primordial being, 27
goddess Coatlicue as cosmic process, *166*, 167
head of female figure as earth and sky, *22*, 23–24
Helios, zodiac, and four seasons as, 6, 7
Khaṇḍarīya Mahādeva Temple as, 43–44
Cosmos, center of. *See also Axis mundi;* Center; Earth, center of.
Helios on quadriga within wheel of zodiac as, 6, 7
labyrinth at Chartres as, 66, 68
representing connection to archetypal world, 196
Tenochtitlán and thirteen heavens, 167
umbilical cord of twin war gods as, *186*, 187
Wheel of the Law as, 92
Couples. *See also* Embrace; Marriage.
Adam and Eve, *418*, 419–21
An and Ki, heaven and earth personified, 47
Apsu and Tiamat, in Babylonian creation myth, 115
Avalokiteśvara and Tārā, 151, 152
Father Sky and Mother Earth, *202*, 203–204, 205
Freyr and Gerdr, marriage between, 183
Hephaistos and Aphrodite as husband and wife, 147
loving, god and goddess embracing, *226*, 227
man and woman as devotees or two "forms" of trickster god Eṣu, *354*, 355–57
originating, Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā as, *470*, 471, 472
primordial, Nommo as androgynous serpentine twins, 363
Rāma and Sītā exiled in forest, *190*, 191
Śiva and Pārvatī in cremation ground, *438*, 439
Courtship. *See* Pursuit
Covenant with God. *See also* Contract; Oath
Abraham binding Isaac, *210*, 211, 212–13
bones of first human being sign of, 363–64
embodied in Torah, *282*, 283
Cow
Cows birthing, suckling, and being milked, protected by Kṛṣṇa, *170*, 171
feral, Hathor as, *86*, 87, 88
magic, created from milk ocean, *34*, 35
Cow goddess, Hathor suckling pharaoh, *86*, 87, 88
Cowrie shells, as sign of trade, wealth, and honor, 356
Crane head, attached to medicine shield, *194*, 195
Creation. *See also* Birth; Creation myths; Creation of humankind; Creation through sacrifice.
from chaos, and churning of milk ocean, *34*, 35–36
from chaos, cosmic egg and, *10*, 11–12
of cosmos, from body of Tiamat, primordial being, 115–16
of cosmos, from body of Ymir, primordial being, 27
and dissolution, united in image of decapitated Chinnamastā standing on originating couple, *470*, 471–73
frog associated with, 75–77
of mountain rising from water, cosmic egg laid on primeval hill by Thoth, 83
of mountain rising from water, Khaṇḍarīya Mahādeva Temple, 44
of mountain rising from water, Ur ziggurat, 47
from sea, lotus emerging from water, 231
by thought, of Brahmā, 19–20
by word, or by "tongue" of Ptah, 267
Creation myths
churning of milk ocean, 35–36
cosmic egg emerging from world ocean, 11, 12
cosmic egg laid by Thoth as ibis, 83
cosmos made from Tiamat, killed by Marduk, 115–16
cosmos made from Ymir, killed by Odin, Vili, and Vé, 27
creator and giant settling who is world creator by moving mountain, 119
earth created by Amma, defiled by Yurugu, restored by Nommo, 23, 363
embodied in one's own body, in Tantrism, 351–52
Father Sky and Mother Earth, 203–204
garden of Eden, *418*, 419, *422*, 423
lotus emerging from water, 231
Oduduwa creating earth with help of chain, clump of earth, and chicken, 279–80
Zuni protected by twin war gods, 187
Creation of humankind
by Changing Woman, 203
God creating Adam, 419
by Ọbatala, 279–80
through sacrifice of prisoners of war, 63
Creation through sacrifice
of bull to restore cosmos in Mithraic religion, 467–68
of prisoners of war to create humankind, 63
of Puruṣa, primordial man, 16
related to circular altar, 479–80
world created and sustained by sacrifice, described in the Vedas, 20
of Ymir, primordial being, 16
Creator
bull as, and Mithra as master of creation, 467–68
Changing Woman creating maize and humankind, 203
Creator god
Amma, 23–24, 363–64
Brahmā, in Buddhism, *18*, 19–20
Nzambi, 107–108
Ọbatala, creator of humankind, 279–80
Odin, Vili, and Vé creating cosmos from Ymir (primordial being), 27
Oduduwa, creator of earth, 279–80
Prajāpati, replaced by Brahmā, 20
Ptah embracing Sesostris I, *266*, 267
Thoth as ibis laying cosmic egg, 83
Cremation ground, Śiva and Pārvatī sitting in, *438*, 439
Crescent. *See* Moon, crescent
Crest figure
female bear, Tlingit Indian, *94*, 95
Land Otter Man, Tlingit Indian, *402*, 403–404
Cross. *See also* Circle, cross in.
crucifixion of Christ, *414*, 415–17
as meeting of opposites, 416
as redemption, placed over eleven circles as sin, in labyrinth at Chartres, *66*, 67–68
tree of life becoming, 459–60
Xocotl tree as, image of god at top, *62*, 63–64
Crossroads
as sacred place, 355, 356–57
symbol of trickster god Eṣu, 355, 356–57
Crouching. *See* Posture, squatting
Crow, glossary definition, 197
Crown. *See also* Headdress
beaded, Yoruba, *278*, 279
as emblem of royalty, 284–85
of glory, Christ placing on head of Virgin Mary, *286*, 287
as perfection and timelessness, 284–85
as preeminent authority, 280
signifying divine connection, 279, 284
as symbol of Self, 285
Torah, *282*, 283
Crucifixion. *See also* Cross.
as beginning of individuation, 416–17
of Christ, *414*, 415–16
Culture hero
continuing creation and helping humankind, 24–25
Nommo, *22*, 23–24
twin sons of Bear Woman, as hunters, 248
Twisted Face, *118*, 119–20
Cup, of Elijah at Passover Seder, *382*, 383, 384
Curtain
ceremonial, depicting Sisiutl, *138*, 139
of temple, Virgin Mary spinning, *222*, 223
of Torah ark, *30*, 31
Cymbals, played by goddess for child dancing on lotus, *230*, 231–32

Daedalus, compared with architects of cathedrals and labyrinths, 68
Dagger, Mithra holding, as bull slayer, *234*, 235
Daimons. *See also* Demons; Monster *entries*
leonine, presenting offering to goddess, *142*, 143
Dance, circle, around Xocotl tree, *62*, 63, 65
dance mask, of Nimba, goddess of generation, *154*, 155–56
dancer
elephant god Gaṇeśa, *110*, 111
Horus child dancing on lotus, *230*, 231
Daniel
(glossary definition) 345
saving Susanna from accusation by elders, 343, 344
vision of, Ancient in Years and four beasts, *386*, 387–88
Daphne, pursued by Apollo, *446*, 447
Daphoene, "bloody one," worship of, 447–48
Daśaratha, king, father of Rāma, 191
David, and Isaiah holding scroll,

witnessing ascension of Christ, *58*, 59
Dead, land of the. *See* Underworld
Dead, the
feeding of, depicted as tree goddess suckling pharaoh, *274*, 275
Hathor goddess of, *86*, 87
precursor of Persephone as goddess of, *142*, 143
Ptah god of, 267
snake symbol of, 79
Death. *See also* Death and burial; Death and rebirth; Death gods; Life and death.
drought, and sterility brought about by trickster Yurugu, 363
and evil, frog associated with, 76–77
fall of man as mythic explanation of, 419, 423–24
and fertility, ship symbolism connected with, 184
by stoning, Susanna sentenced to, 343
as transformation, in connection with flying or ascent, 460
Death and burial, snake symbolism connected with, 264
Death and rebirth. *See also* Rebirth; Transformation.
baptism of Christ, 456
hibernation as, 97
in connection with fertility goddess Freyja, 159–60
in connection with sexuality, 443
related to sun and ankh, 379
relics as "seeds" in womb chamber of stupa, 55–56
ship symbolism connected with, *184*
Death gods
Anubis, *98*, 99–100
Camuṇḍā, *162*, 163–64
Śiva, *438*, 439
Zeus Meilichios as snake, *78*, 79
Decapitation. *See* Beheading
Deer tail, attached to medicine shield, *194*, 195
Deification
of Amenhotep Son of Hapu, *346*, 347–48
of Kūkai as Kōbō Daishi, *254*, 255, 256
Roman apotheosis and Greek hero worship, Christ's ascension modeled after, *58*, 59, 60, 61
Delight, Discontent, and Desire, daughters of Māra, 304
Demeter and Persephone
(glossary definition) 481
prefigured by goddess of animals, grain, and underworld, 143
Demons. *See also* Daimons; Monster *entries*
Ammit, devourer of the dead, and Weighing of the Heart, *426*, 427
defeated powers of evil below feet of Christ, at Last Judgment, *434*, 435
pulling down scale at Weighing of the Soul, *430*, 431
Descent. *See also* Ascent and descent
of Holy Spirit at Pentecost, *390*, 391
into underworld, journey through labyrinth as, 68
Desert. *See* Wasteland
Desire, Discontent, and Delight, daughters of Māra, 304
Destiny. *See* Fate
Destruction. *See also* Battle between opposite forces; Great mother, terrible; Healing and destruction; Images, destruction of
Śiva god of, 439
of the world, Ragnarǫk and binding of Fenriswolf, 128
Devānanda, brahman woman whose embryo was transplanted to become Mahāvīra, 411
Devī
(glossary definition) 164
Camuṇḍa aspect of, 163, 164
Devouring
of Metis by Zeus, 239
Rhea saving Zeus from Kronos, 103
Devouring of the dead
by Ammit, 427
by Camuṇḍā, 163
by Coatlicue, 168
Dew, as fertility, zodiac cycle illustrating prayers for, 284
Dhanvantari, physician god created from milk ocean, *34*, 35
Dharma
(glossary definition) 333
teaching of Buddha, as Wheel of Law, 91, 92
Digambara, glossary definition, 301
Diamond shape, bodies of Father Sky and Mother Earth, *202*, 203
Dilmun, garden paradise in ancient Sumer, 32
Dio Cocceianus, glossary definition, 341
Dioscuri
(glossary definition) 217
Castor and Pollux, sons of Leda, 215
Disciples
of Buddha, Ānanda, *330*, 331–33
of Buddha, Mahākāśyapa, *334*, 335–36
of Christ at empty tomb, and ascension, *458*, 459
Discontent, Delight, and Desire, daughters of Māra, 304
Discus
Viṣṇu holding, churning milk ocean, *34*
of Viṣṇu, wheel as, 4–5
Dismemberment. *See also* Beheading.
of god, bread-image scattered from Xocotl tree, 63, 64
Leucippus torn to pieces by nymphs, 447
noseless old man and Buddha-to-be as truthful youth, *258*, 259–61
Ouranos castrated by his son Kronos, 147
severed hands and hearts forming necklace of goddess Coatlicue, *166*, 167
of Ymir, primordial being, to create cosmos, 27
Disobedience, and fall of man, 419–21, 423–25
Divination
in connection with Odin, 179
ecstatic, practiced by Freyja, 159
medicine shield used as, 196
and synchronicity, 396–97
tray, diviner using sixteen palm nuts, 395–96
vessel, diviner using mouse and bones, *398*, 399–400
Diviner. *See also* Mediator; Priest; Prophet.
Nganga, artist and maker of prescriptions and charms, *174*, 175–76
using mouse and bones, 399–401
Djed pillar
(glossary definition) 101
signifying stability, on shrine supporting canine god Anubis, *98*, 99
Dog
as guardian or guide, 99–101
or jackal, Anubis as, resting on top of shrine, *98*, 99
lapping up blood from bull slain by Mithra, 467
symbolism of, in connection with death, 100–101
Dome of heaven, Great Stupa at Sāñcī as, *54*, 55
Dome of the Rock, *50*
Donkey
Elijah riding, Passover Seder, *382*, 383
ox and ass, looking at Christ in manger, *242*, 243
Door. *See also* Gates.
entrance of maze, Siuhu standing in, *70*, 71
entrance to paradise, depicted on curtain of Torah ark, *30*, 31
opened for Elijah at Passover Seder, *382*, 383
Royal Portal of Chartres cathedral as entrance to heavenly Jerusalem, *370*, 372
Sisiutl as guardian of, *138*, 139
as threshold between "inner" and "outer," 373
through vagina of bear, *94*, 95, 97
Dove, Holy Spirit as, descending at Pentecost, white sphere in mouth, *390*, 391, 392
Dragon slayers
Bahrām the Gor, *322*, 323
divine, Tištrya, Indra, and Thor, 324
Marduk in form of serpent-dragon Mushhush, *114*, 115
Saint George, *318*, 319
Dragon symbolism
chaos, 132, 320, 324
elements, forces, or principles in cosmic or precosmic world, 116
natural forces in cosmos, 252
nature and the emperor, 312
Dragon-flower tree, Buddha-to-be under, *310*, 311, 312
Dragons. *See also* Snake.
Bahrām the Gor killing dragon, *322*, 323
nine, releasing water from cloud over infant Buddha, *250*, 251
Oriental-looking dragon, four legs, black mane, and green beard, *322*, 323
pair of, encircling trees flanking Buddha-to-be, *310*, 311, 312
red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns threatening "woman robed with sun" and her newborn son, *134*, 135
serpent-dragon Mushhush, *114*, 115
symbolizing chaos, 132, 320, 324
winged, Saint George killing, *318*, 319
Dreams. *See also* Dreams, prophetic; Revelation; Vision.
of flying, in connection with death as transformation, 461
of Kūkai in which he conversed with the Buddhas, 256
oracles, in shrine of Ur ziggurat, 47
Viṣṇu, dreaming creation of world in his sleep, 11
Dreams, prophetic
of Gautama becoming Buddha, 303
mother of Buddha dreaming of white elephant entering her womb at conception, 251
Queen Triśalā dreaming of becoming pregnant, *410*, 411–12
by sleeping in fleece of sacrificed animal, 79

Drought, death, and sterility
brought about by trickster
Yurugu, 363
Drowning
caused by Land Otter Man, 403
dragon spewing forth water to
drown "woman robed with
sun," *134,* 135, 136
of Egyptians crossing Red Sea,
462, 463, 464
Drummer, and circle dance around
Xocotl tree, *62,* 63
Drunkenness
causing Ọbatala to forget his mission to create earth, 279–80
of Holofernes, decapitation by
Judith, *326,* 328
Duality. *See* Opposites
Duck, on side of beaded crown, *278,*
279
Dumuzi, King Zimri-Lim as, and
Ishtar, *206,* 207, 208
Dung
ball of scarab associated with
birth of sun, 380
Dura Europos, glossary definition,
465
Durgā
(glossary definition) 165
Kālī and Camuṇḍā as aspects of,
163–64
Dwarfs
in fairy tales, 28–29
four, supporting sky, *26,* 27
as guardians of wealth, 28
originating as maggots from rotting body of Ymir, 27
as smiths, creating treasures of
the gods, 27

Ea, glossary definition, 117
Eagle
associated with Torah, *282,* 283
feathers, attached to medicine
shield, *194,* 195
John the Evangelist as, *294,* 295
wings, given to "woman robed
with sun" to escape, *134,* 135,
136
Earlobes, elongated
as sign of buddhahood, *330,* 331
increasing ability to hear those
in need, 331
signifying aristocracy, *330,* 331
Ears, extra pair painted on forehead
of Land Otter Man, *402,* 403
Earth. *See also* Mother Earth; Sky
and earth.
created by Oduduwa, 279–80
gesture of touching, colossal Buddha, *302,* 303–304
opening up, saving "woman robed
with sun," 136
waist of cosmic person as, *14,*
15–16
Earth, center of. *See also* Axis mundi;
Center; Cosmos, center of.
Middle Place, home of Zuni
people, protected by twin war
gods, 187
sacred plants growing out of center of Mother Earth, *202,* 203
thirteenth heaven at highest point
of goddess Coatlicue, *166,* 167
Earth divinity
Asye, 399
Coatlicue, *166,* 167
in her underworld aspect, as precursor of Persephone, *142,* 143
Ki, united with An as heaven in
Ur ziggurat, 47
kinda, assuring order and prosperity, 107
Eater of corpses. *See* Devouring of
the dead
Ecclesia and dragon, apocalyptic
vision, *134,* 135–37
Ecstasy
ecstatic divination practiced by
Freja, 159
in connection with Odin, 180–81
of Saint Teresa, *218,* 219–21
Eden. *See* Garden of Eden
Education of children, Athena patron of, 239
Egg
golden, *10,* 11–12
stupa as *aṇḍa* ("egg"), 55, 56
Egg, cosmic
containing Re, laid by goose, 83
emerging from world ocean, *10,*
11
laid by Thoth as ibis, 83
Viṣṇu resting on snake inside, 11
Egyptian images
Amenhotep Son of Hapu, *346*
ankh mirror case, from tomb of
Tutankhamen, *378*
Anubis and Weighing of the
Heart, *426*
Anubis as jackal or dog, from
tomb of Tutankhamen, *98,* 99
divine child dancing on lotus,
230, 231–32
faience frog, *74,* 75
Hathor as nurturing and protecting cow goddess, *86,* 87–88
Ptah embracing Sesostris I, *266,*
267
Thoth as Ibis and Maat, *82,*
83–84
Thutmose III suckled by sycamore goddess, *274,* 275
Eight Bridges, episode in *Tales of Ise,*
367
Eight gods of Hermopolitan cosmogony living in underworld after
Golden Age, 75
Eight spokes of wheel, reflecting
eight petals of lotus, 5
Eightfold Path, story of
(glossary definition) 261
Buddha-to-be as truthful youth
illustrating, 259–60
Elder Brother. *See* Siuhu
Elders, spying on Susanna, *342,* 343
Elephant. *See also* Elephant, white;
Gaṇeśa.
Airāvata, created from milk ocean,
34, 35
associated with cloud and abundance, 273
bull, horse, and lion, on lion capital at Sarnath, *90,* 91, 92
representing wisdom and prudence, 111
symbol of royal power, 112
Elephant, white
Airāvata, Indra riding, *170,* 171
entering womb of mother of Buddha in dream at his conception, 251
Queen Triśalā dreaming of, *410,*
411
Eleven representing sin, 67
Eleven circles of labyrinth at
Chartres, *66,* 67
Eleven spirits
Nommo, standing on earth supporting sky, *22,* 23
Elijah
coming of, and Passover Seder,
382, 383–84
in vision of C. G. Jung, 384–85
Embalmment, canine god Anubis
presiding over, 99, 100
Embrace. *See also* Marriage *entries.*
of Apollo, Daphne flying from,
446, 447
loving couple, *226,* 227–28
ritual, Ptah and Sesostris I, *266,*
267–68
Emerging. *See also* Birth; Creation
cow goddess Hathor emerging
from reeds, cave, or mountain,
86, 87–88
Energy. *See also* Breath; Power; *Śakti*
ase, trickster god Eṣu possessor
of, 355–56
as breath in Tantrism, 352
gesture of energy release, right
hand upraised, *174,* 175
jīva, living entity within man,
animals, plants, and stones, 15
kinetic, activating the creative
process, *Śakti* as, 471
Kuṇḍalinī, 352–53
vital force, ankh conveying,
379–80
wene, chief as mediator of, 107–108
Enlightenment. *See also* Liberation;
Mokṣa; Nirvāṇa; Salvation.
(glossary definition) 41
ascent of Mount Fuji as progress
toward, 39
Buddha achieving, 303–304
in Buddhism, 20–21
in Buddhism compared to dissolution of projection, 316
and fire symbolism, 308–309
in Hīnāyāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism, 332
purity of lotus associated with,
in Buddhism, 260
tree of, Maitreya sitting under,
311–12
Enlil
(glossary definition) 117
born from Heaven (An) and Earth
(Ki), 47
Enthronement. *See* Throne
Entrance. *See* Door; Gates
Epiphany, glossary definition, 264
Erinyes (Furies)
(glossary definition) 81
and Eumenides (Gentle Ones), 79
Eros
(glossary definition) 449
flying above Apollo pursuing
Daphne, *446,* 447
and Psyche in connection with
vision of Saint Teresa, 220–21
Erotes
(glossary definition) 341
sign of resurrection of Christ,
338, 339
Eroticism, and asceticism, in connection with Śiva and Pārvatī, 439
Ẹsu
conveying sacrifices from human
beings to high god Ọlọrun,
355–56, 395
face of, depicted on divination
tray, *394,* 395
messenger of the gods, 355
shrine figures, covered with
cowrie shell necklaces, *354,*
355, 356
Yoruba trickster god, 355, 356
Eternal youth. *See also* Rejuvenation.
ambrosia from milk ocean bringing, 35
received by gods and souls of the
dead from fruits of tree, 275
Eternity, stone as, 236
Eucharist
apostles receiving Holy Spirit at
Pentecost as model of, *390,* 391
wafer as sphere in mouth of Holy
Spirit, *390,* 391
Eumenides (Gentle Ones), and
Erinyes (Furies), 79
Euryale, one of three Gorgons, 123
Eurydice, killed by snake while pursued by Aristaios, 103
Evangelists, four, surrounding Christ
in tree of life, *294,* 295–96
Eve
and Adam, at tree of knowledge,
418, 419–20

and snake, compared to "woman robed with sun," 136
and tree of knowledge, *422*, 423
Evil. *See also* Evil, warding off; Good and evil.
frog associated with, 76
Māra personification of, 303–304
Evil, warding off
iris for, 367
relief of Medusa for, *122*, 124–25
Sisiutl protecting entry doors of houses, 139
Excrement, of Bear Woman, covered with copper, 249–50
Exile
to forest in myth and fairy tale, 192–93
from kingdom, Rāma and Sītā, *190*, 191
return from Mesopotamian, and *menorah*, 475–77
Exodus, and crossing of Red Sea, *462*, 463–64
Exorcism, from possession by Land Otter Man, 403–404
Eyes
of glass, as spiritual vision of oath-taking figure, *174*, 175, 176
of Medusa turning victims into stone, 123–25
of Mithra, left eye open, right eye half closed, *234*
one-eyed god, Odin, *178*, 179
of Sisiutl turning victims into stone, 139
Eyes, bulging
of Camuṇḍā, *162*, 163
of man and woman connected with perception of trickster god Eṣu, *354*, 356
of Medusa, *122*, 123

Fabulous beast. *See* Monster *entries*
Face. *See also* Mask.
of king hidden by crown to protect people from his power, 279
of trickster god Eṣu, on divination board, *394*, 395
Twisted Face, *118*, 119–21
Face to face
Ptah embracing Sesostris I, *266*, 267–69
two-headed rattlesnake head of goddess Coatlicue facing herself, *166*, 167
two-headed serpent Sisiutl facing himself, *138*, 139
Falcon
as divine power, accompanying goddess, *142*, 143
goddess Freyja turning herself into, 159
Fall of man, *418*, *422*
and restoration of paradise, according to *Revelation*, 137
False Face Society, Twisted Face mask used in healing rituals, *118*, 119–20
Family
cakravartin, queen and son, *270*, 271–73
divine, Śiva and Pārvatī in cremation ground, *438*, 439–40
riding with Elijah on donkey, Passover Seder, *382*, 383
Fangs protruding, of Medusa, *122*, 123
Fate
in connection with birth of twins, 375–76
karman, in Jainism, 15
Tablets of Destiny, Babylonian creation myth, 115–16
Father Sky, and Mother Earth, Navajo sand painting, *202*, 203–205
Fathers and daughters
Māra, father of Discontent, Delight, and Desire, 304
Ouranos and Aphrodite, 147
Zeus and birth of Athena, *238*, 239–40
Zeus and Tyndareus, fathers of Helen and Clytemnestra, 215
Fathers and sons
Abraham and Isaac, *210*, 211, 212
God and Christ, and tree of life, *294*, 295–96
Ptah and Sesostris I, *266*, 267, 268
relationship between, 267, 268
youthful Christ represented as son of God the Father, 460
Zeus and Tyndareus, fathers of Castor and Pollux, 215
Fear, story of two-headed Sisiutl about facing, 139
Feather
on head of Maat, *82*, 83, 84, *426*, 427, 428–29
symbolizing flight, freedom, and movement between heaven and earth, 428–29
of truth, and Weighing of the Heart, *426*, 427, 428
Feathers
attached to nose and neck of twin war god, *186*, 187
hawk, on medicine shield, *194*, 195
Feet and hands of crucified Christ, pierced by nails, *414*, 415
Feminine, the, place of in Buddhism, recognized by Ānanda, 332–33
Fenrir (Fenriswolf)
(glossary definition) 29
Týr binding, with magical ropes, *126*, 127–28
Fenriswolf. *See* Fenrir
Fertility
ensured by offerings to goddess on circular altar, 479
frog associated with, 75, 76
increased by beneficent words entering into genitals of women, 23
Fertility and rebirth, 443–44
Freyja cult connected with ship burials, 159–60
Fertility figure
head of female figure as earth and sky connected by elevent spirits, *22*, 23
Nommo, androgynous, serpentine twin, *362*, 363–64, 365
nude female mourner, *442*, 443–44
Fertility god
Freyr, *182*, 183, 184
Zeus Meilichios as snake, *78*, 79, 80
Fertility goddess
Freyja, *158*, 159
Nimba, *154*, 155–56
Festival
Boy's Doll-Day Festival, and use of iris, 367
Sed, New Year festival, 267–68
spring, of Zeus Meilichios, 79
Fifty-two years (Aztec time cycle), 63
Finger, pointing, of Land Otter Man, *402*, 403
Firdawsi of Tus (*Shah-namah*), 323, 324, 325
Fire
baptism by, 455–56
burning bush related to *menorah*, 476–77
fiery river in vision of Daniel, *386*, 387, 388
in front of Śiva and Pārvatī in cremation ground, *438*, 439
and light, golden egg as, *10*, 11
pillar, in connection with *menorah*, 477
sacrificial, Rāma tending, *190*, 191, 192
sacrificial, war prisoner burned to Xiuhtecuhtli, 63, 65
smokeless, Queen Triśalā dreaming of, *410*, 411, 412
symbolism and enlightenment, 308–309
tongues of fire of Holy Spirit at Pentecost, 391
and wind, Holy Spirit as, at Pentecost, 59, 60, 391
Fire god, Xiuhtecuhtli, 63
Fisherman
Land Otter Man helpful in catching fish, 404
Thor catching Midgardssnake, *130*, 131–32
Five-toed chicken, and creation of earth, 279, 280, 281
Flattery, of noseless caretaker by brothers of Buddha-to-be, 259–60
Flood
Midgardssnake causing, at end of world, 132
Flower, six-petaled, at center of labyrinth at Chartres, 66, 67, 68
Flying. *See also* Ascension.
Bellerophon falling from Pegasus in attempt to fly to Olympus, 124
dream of, in connection with death as transformation, 461
Foam
Aphrodite as "foam-born," 451
generated by Ouranos's genitals cast into the sea giving birth to Aphrodite, 147
Folkvangr, dwelling place of Freyja, 159
Fool
innocent, Buddha-to-be as truthful youth, *258*, 260–61
trickster as, 356
Footsteps of Buddha, flowers growing in, *250*, 251
Forehead. *See* Head; Moon, crescent, on forehead
Forest
dweller, achieving purity and self-control by austerity, 192
Rāmā and Sītā exiled in, *190*, 191
as symbol of the unconscious, 192–93
Four. *See also* Arms, four-armed; Head, four-headed
Four beasts, vision of Daniel, *386*, 387–88
Four directions
and center, embodied in Coatlicue, 167
Dome of the Rock facing, *50*, 51
four dwarfs supporting sky, *26*, 27
four gates of Great Stupa at Sāñcī facing, *54*, 55
Jain preaching hall facing, *298*, 299, 300
Ur ziggurat facing, *46*, 47
Four evangelists, surrounding Christ in tree of life, *294*, 295, 296
Four functions, as spokes of wheel, 5
Four horses, Helios riding chariot at center of zodiac, 6, 7
Four lions of the Sarnath capital, *90*, 91
Four rivers of paradise, personified as women, supporting four evangelists, *294*, 295, 296
Four seasons, as Horae, Greek goddesses arriving with each change of seasons, 6, 7, 8
Fourteen years of exile, Rāma and Sītā in forest, *190*, 191

Fox, trickster as, Yurugu, 23
Frankincense, gift of one of Three Magi, 244
Freyja
(glossary definition) 185
goddess of love and war, *158,* 159
pendant showing seated goddess surrounded by circle, *158*
Freyr
(glossary definition) 161
and Gerdr, marriage between, 183
god of fertility and prosperity, *182,* 184
ithyphallic, *182,* 183, 184
Frog
associated with birth and creation, death and rebirth, 75–77
emerging from mouth of shaman's mask, *406,* 407, 408
as lunar animal, 76, 408
representing instinctual life, 77
three-legged toad living in moon, 76
toad of wax or silver offered to Virgin Mary, 76
Fruit
Fall of the Fruits, tenth month of Aztec calendar, 63
of tree of knowledge, *418,* 419–20, *422,* 423
of tree of life, Christ as, *294,* 295, 296
Fuji, Mount, Pilgrimage *Maṇḍala* of, *38,* 39–40
Funeral. *See* Burial
Furies (Erinyes) and Gentle Ones (Eumenides), 79

Gabriel, archangel, and annunciation to Virgin Mary, *222,* 223, 224
Gaia, caring for infant Zeus, 103
Gaṇa-devatas, glossary definition, 113
Gaṇeśa
attributes of, broken tusk, goad, sweets, and rosary, *110,* 111
elephant god, *110,* 111, 112
elephant god, stringing skull necklace with Śiva and Pārvatī in cremation ground, *438,* 439
Ganymedes, glossary definition, 217
Garbha gṛha
(glossary definition) 44
chamber in central shrine of Khaṇḍarīya Mahādeva Temple, 43, 44
chamber, of stupa containing relics as "seeds," 55
Garden of Eden
(glossary definition) 33
creation of Adam and tree of knowledge, *418,* 419
depicted on curtain of Torah ark, *30,* 31
Eve and tree of knowledge, *422,* 423–24
Garden paradise, Dilmun (earliest known), *30,* 32
Garland, Queen Triśalā dreaming of, *410,* 411
Garments
brought by angels at baptism of Christ, *454,* 455
multicolored robe of Buddhist monk, *198,* 199
white robes indicating heavenly, 459
Gates. *See also* Door
Dome of the Rock facing four directions, *50,* 51
Great Stupa at Sāñcī facing four directions, *54,* 55–56
Jain preaching hall facing four directions, *298,* 299–300
of paradise, depicted on curtain of Torah ark, *30,* 31
as threshold between inner and outer, 56
Gautama. *See* Buddha, historical (Śākyamuni)
Gem. *See* Jewel
Genitals
of female mourner, referring to life after death, *442,* 443
of Ouranos, severed and cast into the sea, giving birth to Aphrodite, 147
George, Saint
legend and cult of, 319–21
on white horse, killing dragon, *318*
Gerdr, married to Freyr, 183
Gesture
chin resting in cupped hand of Eve, *422,* 423
demon pulling hair of human (soul) at Weighing of the Soul, *430,* 431
finger pointing, Land Otter Man, *402,* 403
of generosity, Buddha, *306,* 307
of generosity, Tārā, *150,* 151–52
grasping hand of another, Anubis and Hunifer, *426,* 427
grasping wrist of another, God and Adam, *418,* 419
hand at chest, palm forward, Virgin Mary, *290,* 291
hands clasped in lap, Freyja, *158,* 159
hands crossed in front of heart, Virgin Mary, *286,* 287
left hand clenched at chest, King Māndhāta, *270,* 271–72
of meditation, Jain savior, *298,* 299
pointing, angel to place of Nativity, *242,* 243
of prayer, Kūkai, *254,* 255
of prayer, Virgin Mary and apostles at Pentecost, *390,* 391
of protection, Buddha, *306,* 307
rainmaking, King Māndhāta, *270,* 271
right arm upraised, King Māndhāta, *270*
right hand upraised as gesture of energy release, left hand on hip of oath-taking figure, *174,* 175
of touching the earth, colossal Buddha, *302,* 303–4
wealth-making, King Māndhāta, *270,* 271–72
Gesture of adoration
arms outstretched, of pharaoh, *86,* 87
hands at chest, of worshipers before Zeus Meilichios as snake, *78*
hands at chest, palms forward, of saints, *286,* 287
Gesture of blessing
Ancient in Years, *386,* 387
angel at empty tomb of Christ, *458,* 459
archangel Gabriel at Annunciation, *222,* 223–24
Christ at Last Judgment, *434,* 435
Hand of God over Saint George, *318,* 319
Giant
power for good or for evil , 119–20
Twisted Face, transformed into healer and culture hero, *118*
Giant and god
Hymir and Thor fishing Midgardssnake, 131
marriage between Gerdr and Freyr, 183
moving mountain to decide who is world creator, 119–20
Gift
of gods to Gaṇeśa (goad, rosary, and rat), 112
of Three Magi (gold, frankincense, and myrrh), 244
Gislebertus, sculptor, of temptation of Eve, *422,* 424
Goad. *See* Staff
Goats as the unjust and sheep as the righteous at Last Judgment, 435
God
above Christ in tree of life, supported by Mother Earth, *294,* 295
creating Adam in garden of Eden, *418*
the Father, and son of "woman robed with sun," *134,* 135
obedience to, Abraham sacrificing Isaac, 211–12
the Father, and baptism of Christ, *390,* 391–92
Goddess. *See* Animal and divinity; Animal divinity; Bird goddess; Birth goddess; Cat and goddess; Cow goddess; Dead, Hathor goddess of the; Earth divinity; Fertility goddess; Goddess, attributes of; Great mother; King and deity; Lion and goddess; Mistress of animals; Moon goddess; Mother; Order, goddess of; Sky god/goddess; Snake god/goddess; Tree goddess; Underworld goddess; War goddess; Wisdom, god/goddess of; *names of individual goddesses*
Goddess, attributes of
aegis of Athena, 239–40
feather of Maat, *82,* 83, *426,* 427
necklace of Freyja, *158,* 159
rod and ring of Ishtar, *206,* 207
Gods. *See* Animal and divinity; Animal divinity; Battle between opposite forces; Creator god; Dead, Ptah god of the; Death gods; Deification; Earth divinity; Fertility god; Fire god; Giant and god; Gods, attributes of; Horse god; King and deity; Moon god; Mountain divinities; Order, god of; Orisa; Physician god; Religion, transformation of; River god; Sky god/goddess; Snake god/goddess; Storm god; Sun god; Thunder god; Wisdom god/goddess; *names of individual gods*
Gods, attributes of
ax of Týr, *126,* 127
bow, lyre, and laurel tree of Apollo, *446,* 447
broken tusk, goad, sweets, and rosary of Gaṇeśa, *110,* 111
discus of Viṣṇu, 4
discus, shell, lotus, and mace of Viṣṇu, *34,* 35
hammer of Thor, *130,* 131
lotus of Avalokiteśvara, *314,* 315
sword and ship of Freyr, 183, 184
thunderbolt of Zeus, *238,* 239
trident of Śiva, *358,* 359
wheel of sun god Sūrya, *2,* 3–4
Gold
gift of one of Three Magi, 244
symbol of perfection and immortality, 304
symbol of perfection and immortality, goal of alchemists, 28
tears of, Freyja weeping, 159
Golden age
eight gods of Hermopolitan cosmogony ruling during, 75

followed by increasingly darker ages in Buddhism, 307
in connection with paradise, 32
Golgotha, Mount, containing skull of Adam below crucified Christ, *414*, 415–16
Good and evil. *See also* Battle between opposite forces
contest between, as represented by "woman robed with sun" and dragon, *134*, 135–37
contest between, as represented by Susanna and elders, 343
knowledge of, and fall of man, 419–20, 423–24
Saint George killing dragon as symbol of, 319–20
victory of good over evil at Last Judgment, 435–36
Good luck charms (frog), *74*, 75–76
Good shepherd, Christ as, *338*, 339–40
Goose
companion to Aphrodite, *146*, 147–49
the Great Cackler, as creator, 83
Gopi, glossary definition, 173
Gorgons
Medusa holding winged horse Pegasus, *122*, 123
Sthenno, Euryale, and Medusa, as threefold appearance of moon, 124
Gospel, glossary definition, 297
Govardhana, Mount, Kṛṣṇa lifting, *170*, 171–72
Grain
goddess of, precursor of Demeter, 143
sprouting from blood of bull slain by Mithra, 467
Grapevine and sheep, symbolism of, *338*, 339–40
Graven image. *See* Images
Great Mother. *See also* Goddess *entries;* Mother.
cow goddess Hathor, *86*, 87–88
female mourner, *442*, 443
snake goddess and child, *262*, 263–64
terrible, Ammit, devourer of the dead, *426*, 427
terrible, Camuṇḍā, *162*, 163–64
terrible, Coatlicue, *166*, 167–78
Greek images
Aphrodite emerging from water, *450*, 451–53
Aphrodite riding a goose, *146*, 147–48
birth of Athena, *238*, 239–40
goddess presented with offerings by leonine demons, *142*, 143
Leda and swan, *214*, 215–16
Medusa holding winged horse Pegasus, *122*, 123
Minoan libation table, *478*, 479
pair of bees clasping honeycomb, *102*, 103
Zeus Meilichios as large snake with attendants, *78*, 79
Green. *See* Hair, green; Skin, colored green
Grief
disciples and three women mourning at tomb of Christ, *458*, 459
female mourner, *442*, 443
Griffin, on Torah crown, *282*, 283
Guardian. *See also* Protector; Shaman.
of city, serpent-dragon Mushhush, *114*, 115
dog as, 99–100
of entrance, Sisiutl, two-headed serpent, *138*, 139
of imperial family, Hachiman, 199
of lotus pond, seen as guardian of treasure, 259–60
snake as, 80
spirit, Moon as Above Person, *194*, 195
of tomb, Anubis, *98*, 99–100
of treasure, griffin as, 283
Guide
dog as, 99–100
Mithra, for those seeking immortality, 235
spirit, of shaman, 407–8
Star of Bethlehem and three angels guiding three Magi, *242*, 243–44
Guide of the dead
Anubis, *98*, 99
archangel Michael, *430*, 431–32
Avalokiteśvara, *314*, 315
jackal-headed Anubis, and Weighing of the Heart, *426*, 427–28
Odin, *178*, 179
Guilt, and fall of man, 423–25
Guṇas, glossary definition, 13

Hachiman
as Buddhist monk, *198*, 199–200
Shintō god of war, 199
worshiped as guardian of imperial family, 199
Hades, glossary definition, 125
Hag
Camuṇḍā, *162*, 163
Medusa, 123
Haggadah, Ryland, illustrating crossing of Red Sea, *462*, 463
Hair
as braided tower on top of Brahmā's head, *18*, 19
Buddha cutting off, as sign of asceticism, 19
demon pulling, of human (soul) at Weighing of the Soul, *430*, 431
green, as sign of vegetation of Nommo, water spirit, 363
Hair, matted
of Camuṇḍā as ascetic, *162*, 163
of Gaṇeśa as ascetic, *110*, 111
of Śiva as ascetic, *358*, 359
Halo. *See also* Light around body; Mandorla
cruciform, labyrinth at Chartres as, 66, 67–68
cruciform, of Christ, *286*, 287, *294*, 295
cruciform, of Christ child, *290*, 291
of elephant god Gaṇeśa, *110*, 111
of goddess Tārā, *150*, 151
of Hachiman as Buddhist monk, *198*, 199
of Saint George, *318*, 319
surrounding Kūkai as a boy, *254*, 255
within flaming mandorla, of Buddha, *306*, 307–8
Hammer of Thor, striking Midgardssnake, *130*, 131–32
Hammurabi, Code of, and Jewish law, 344
Hand. *See also* Gesture
of Týr devoured by Fenriswolf, 127–28
Hand of God
above Saint George, *318*, 319
reaching toward ascending Christ, *458*, 459
Hands
and feet, of crucified Christ, pierced by nails, *414*, 415
severed, and hearts forming necklace of goddess Coatlicue, *166*, 167
Hanging, Odin god of, *178*, 179
Hanukkah, and *menorah*, 476
Happiness, symbolized by corn pollen, 203
Harmika, shrine at summit of Great Stupa at Sāñcī, *54*, 55–56
Harmony. *See* Order
Harpocrates, identified with morning sun, 231–32
Hat. *See* Crown; Headdress
Hathor
(glossary definition) 277
as nurturing and protecting cow goddess, *86*, 87–88
Hawk feathers on medicine shield, *194*, 195
Head. *See also* Beheading; Mask; *specific parts of the head.*
birth from, Athena from Zeus, *238*, 239–40
birth from, Kālī from Ambika, 163–64
Chinnamastā holding her self-decapitated, *470*, 471–72
of cosmic person, two blossoms emerging from, *14*, 15
of elephant Airāvata, replacing that of Gaṇeśa, *110*, 111–12
eleven-headed female figure, *22*, 23
feather on, of Maat, *82*, 83–84, *426*, 427, 429
four-headed Brahmā, 19
four-headed leopard, one of four monsters in vision of Daniel, *386*, 387
of God, above Christ in tree of life, *294*, 295
of Maat, on scale for Weighing of the Heart, *426*, 427
object upon, sign of success, 279–80
as seat of soul, of oath-taking figure, 175
seven-headed dragon, vision of John the Evangelist, *134*, 135–36
shaved, of Buddhist monk, *198*, 199
shaved, of Buddhist monk Ānanda, *330*, 331
six-headed Skanda stringing skull necklace with Śiva and Pārvatī in cremation ground, *438*, 439
two-headed circular serpent, *138*, 139
two-headed goddess, with rattlesnake heads, *166*, 167
Headache of Zeus, giving birth to Athena, *238*, 239
Headdress. *See also* Crown.
conical, of snake goddess, *262*, 263
lightning arrow on top of head of one of twin war gods, *186*, 187
nemes with uraeus of pharaoh, *266*, 267
Phrygian cap, pointed cap of Mithra, *234*, 235–36
pillbox type, of oath-taking figure, *174*, 175
pointed cap of ithyphallic Freyr, *182*, 183
skullcap of Horus child, *230*, 231
skullcap of Ptah, 267
Healer. *See also* Shaman.
Dhanvantari, physician god, created from milk ocean, *34*, 35
Twisted Face, *118*, 119
Healing
and False Face Society, 119–20
medicine pouch of Father Sky, *202*, 203
medicine shield of Araposh, *194*, 195–96
and sand painting, 204
shamanic, in connection with bear, 96

Healing and destruction
blood of Medusa having power to heal and to kill, 125
related to dogs licking and biting, 100
Heart
or mind, origin of creation by Ptah, 267
necklace of hearts and hands, of goddess Coatlicue, *166,* 167
of prisoners of war, sacrificed to Xiuhtecuhtli, 63
of Saint Teresa being pierced by angel holding arrow, *218,* 219–20
weighing of, *426,* 427–28. *See also* Soul, weighing of
Heaven. *See also* Queen of heaven; Sky.
(glossary definition) 69
coronation of Virgin Mary taking place in, *286,* 287–89
dome of, Great Stupa at Sāñcī as, *54,* 55
upper torso of cosmic person as, *14,* 16
Maitreya in Tuṣita Heaven, sitting under dragon-flower tree, *316,* 317
personified by An, united with Ki as earth in Ur ziggurat, 47
realm of fixed stars where immortal souls exist, in Mithraic religion, 235
as vault, seven planets indicated by seven holes, in Mithraeum, *466,* 467
Heimdallr, glossary definition, 181
Helen
(glossary definition) 217
daughter of Zeus and Leda, 215
Helios, on quadriga at center of wheel of zodiac, 6, 7–8
Hell
lower part of cosmic person as, *14,* 15–16
vision of John the Evangelist, *134,* 135–36
Hemisphere, Great Stupa at Sāñcī as, *54,* 55
Hepatina. *See* Middle Place
Hephaistos
(glossary definition) 149
husband of Aphrodite, 147
as midwife to Zeus during birth of Athena, *238,* 239
Heqet, birth goddess, frog associated with, 75
Hera, glossary definition, 149
Hermes, glossary definition, 125
Hero. *See also* Amenhotep Son of Hapu; Ānanda; Bahrām the Gor; Bellerophon; Birth, of hero; Child; Chrusaor; Culture hero; Dragon slayers; Mahākāśyapa; Moses; Ordeal of hero/heroine; Perseus; Saint George.
divinization of, in mythologies, 192
good shepherd as, *338,* 339–41
Mithra as bull slayer, *466,* 467–68
Rāma exiled to forest, *190,* 191
son of "woman robed with sun" as Satan's adversary, 135
Heroine. *See* Judith; Ordeal of hero/heroine; Susanna and elders
Hibernation, as death and rebirth, 97
Hierarchy expressed by means of size
divine and human, Avalokiteśvara and woman, *314,* 315
King Māndhāta and family, *270,* 271–72
Zeus Meilichios as large serpent with attendants, *78,* 79
Hieros gamos. See Marriage, sacred
Hildisvíni, boar of Freyja, 159
Hīnāyāna, glossary definition, 333
Hindu religious images
Ardhanārīśvara, the lord whose half is woman, *358,* 359
Chinnamastā, "She of the cut neck," standing on Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, *470,* 471–72
cosmic egg emerging from world ocean, *10,* 11
Gaṇeśa standing on lotus pedestal, *110,* 111
goddess Camuṇḍā, *162,* 163
gods and demons churning milk ocean, *34,* 35
Khaṇḍarīya Mahādeva Temple, *42,* 43
Kṛṣṇa lifting Mount Govardhana, *170,* 171
loving couple embracing, *226,* 227
Māndhāta, *cakravartin, 270,* 271
Rāmā and Sītā in forest, *190,* 191
Śiva and family sitting in cremation ground, *438,* 439
sun wheel from Sūrya temple, *2,* 3
Holocaust, sacrifice of pigs to Zeus Meilichios, 79
Holofernes, beheaded by Judith, *326,* 327–28
Holy Spirit. *See also* Bird and woman.
descending at Pentecost, holding white sphere in mouth, *390,* 391
as inner encounter, 392
Honesty, of Buddha-to-be as truthful youth, *258,* 259–60
Honey
infants Dionysus and Zeus feeding on, 103–4
and milk, blood, and wine, as libation to goddess, 143
sacred food, 103
Honeycomb, pair of bees clasping, *102,* 103
Horae, Greek goddesses arriving with each change of season, *6,* 8
Horns
Father Sky and Mother Earth wearing horned masks, *202,* 203
horned serpent-dragon Mushhush, *114,* 115
ten-horned monster, one of four monsters in vision of Daniel, *386,* 387–88
Horse
four horses pulling chariot of Helios at center of zodiac, *6*
in connection with sun god, 3
and lion, elephant, and bull, on lion capital at Sarnath, *90,* 91–2
Medusa as mare entered by Poseidon as stallion, 123
one of seven jewels of King Māndhāta, *270,* 271–72
sacrifice, in connection with Freyr, 184
white, created from churning of milk ocean, *34,* 35
white, of Saint George, *318,* 319
winged, Pegasus born from Medusa, *122,* 123–24
Horse and rider
Bahrām the Gor killing dragon, *322,* 323
Saint George killing dragon, *318,* 319
Three Magi riding to Bethlehem, *242*
Horse god (Sūrya), wheel of his chariot, *2,* 3
Horus
(glossary definition) 89
as child, dancing on lotus, *230,* 231
Huginn (thought) and Muninn (memory), ravens of Odin, 179
Humankind. *See also* Creation of humankind.
as snake skirt of goddess Coatlicue, *166,* 167
Humpbacked One, as Twisted Face, 119
Hunger insatiable, of goddess Camuṇḍā, 163
Hunifer, and Weighing of the Heart, *426,* 427
Hunters
Bahrām the Gor killing dragon, *322,* 323
guardian of, Twisted Face, 120
Hunting
bear, and bear sacrifice, 248
creator god Nzambi connected with, 107
giant Twisted Face connected with, 120
Husband and wife. *See* Couples
Hymir
giant, and Thor catching Midgardssnake, 131–32

Ibis, Thoth as, *82,* 83, *426,* 427
Ichor, flowing in veins of Greek gods, 103
Iḍā and *piṅgalā* (*nāḍīs*, or nerves), as snakes, in Kuṇḍalinī yoga, *350,* 351–52
Idfu, column of temple portraying divine child dancing on lotus, *230,* 231
Ifa, god of divination, 305
Images. *See also* Yantra.
aniconic and iconic, in Buddhism, 307–8
aniconic religions, of Vedas, wheel from Sūrya Temple, *2,* 3
destruction of, legs broken off snake goddess, 263
prohibition against within synagogue, 7, 212
Immortality. *See also* Eternal youth; Eternity; Life after death; Rejuvenation.
bones, symbol of, 399–400
frog associated with, 75–76
gods receiving from ambrosia, extracted from milk ocean, 35
gold as symbol of, 304
Mithra as guide to, 235
snake and moon embodying, 264
snake symbol of, by shedding its skin, 80
Impermanence, Buddhist doctrine of, 332
Inanna, glossary definition, 453
Incarnation
annunciation to Virgin Mary, 223–24
bird as spirit, descending to incarnate in matter, Leda and the swan, *214,* 215–16
birth of Mithra from rock, *234,* 235–37
of divinity on earth and coronation of Virgin Mary, *286,* 287–88
embodiment of divine reality, 295–96
Incense burner
at base of sculpture of Maitreya sitting under dragon-flower tree, *310,* 311
Incest
between Mother Earth and her son, trickster Yurugu, 23, 363
India. *See* Buddhism in India; Hindu religious images; Jainism; Tantrism

Individuation process
 and child archetype, 256–57
 crossing of Red Sea symbolizing, 464
 crucifixion as beginning of, 416
 and Kuṇḍalinī, 352–53
Indra
 (glossary definition) 21
 replaced by Kṛṣṇa in myth, 172
 sending storm over worshipers of Kṛṣṇa, *170*, 171
Inflation and power related to austerities of Śiva, 441
Initiation. *See also* Ordeal.
 baptism by water and by fire, 456
 bear as initiatory animal, 97
 journey through labyrinth as, 68
 seven grades of Mithraic religion and, 468
 Sisiutl as initiatory spirit, 139
 into society of priests, images of twin war gods for use in, 187–88
Inspiration, Odin master of, 179–80
Instinct. *See* Spirit and instinct
Intercessor. *See* Mediator
Intercourse. *See* Marriage, sexual union
Intermediary. *See* Mediator
Intoxication and inspiration, in connection with Odin, 179–80
Investiture. *See* Coronation
Invulnerability of warrior through blood of monster Sisiutl, 139
Iran. *See* Near East images
Irenaeus, Christology of, based on his theory of recapitulation, 416
Iris
 associated with month of May, 367
 flowers and zigzag bridge, *366*, 367
 leaf, symbolizing sword, as masculine element, and flower as feminine element, *366*, 367
 used in warding off evil spirits and illness, 367
Iron from meteorites, and iron from earth, 38
Isaac, binding of, by Abraham, *210*, 211–12
Isaiah and King David, each holding scroll, witnessing ascension of Christ, *58*, 59
Ishtar
 (glossary definition) 117
 Gate, guarded by serpent-dragon Mushhush, *114*, 115
 granting kingship to Zimri-Lim, *206*, 207
Isis
 (glossary definition) 232–33
 tree goddess suckling Thutmose III, *274*, 275
Islamic images
 Bahrām the Gor killing dragon, *322*, 323
 Dome of the Rock, *50*, 51–52
Israelites, armed, crossing Red Sea, *462*, 463–64

Jackal
 Anubis as, *98*, 99
 Anubis as, and Weighing of the Heart, *426*, 427
 in front of Śiva and Pārvatī in cremation ground, *438*, 439
Jacket, beaded, of twin figure, *374*, 375
Jaguar claws on feet of goddess Coatlicue, *166*, 167
Jainism
 (glossary definition) 273
 Queen Triśalā dreaming, *410*, 411
 savior at center of preaching hall, *298*, 299
 universe as cosmic person, *14*, 15–16
Japan
 Hachiman as Buddhist monk, *198*, 199
 irises and zigzag bridge, *366*, 367
 Kūkai as child, *254*, 255
 Mount Fuji pilgrimage *maṇḍala*, *38*, 39
Jātaka
 (glossary definition) 273
 story of Buddha-to-be as truthful youth, *258*, 259–60
Jerusalem
 (glossary definition) 69
 center of labyrinth as heavenly, 68
 and Dome of the Rock, *50*, 51–52
 Royal Portal of Chartres cathedral as entry to heavenly, *370*, 371–72
Jesus. *See* Christ
Jewel
 seven jewels of *cakravartin*, *270*, 271
 "three jewels hard to attain" in dream of Queen Triśalā, 412
 wish-fulfilling, 271
Jewish images. *See also* Bible, Old Testament illustrations.
 coming of Elijah, *382*, 383
 entrance to paradise depicted on Torah ark curtain, *30*, 31
 Helios, zodiac, and four seasons, *6*, 7–8
 marriage contract depicting binding of Isaac, *210*, 211–12
 Torah crown, *282*, 283–85
Jīva, living entity within humans, animals, plants, and stones, 15
John the Baptist
 baptizing Christ, *454*, 455
 and Virgin Mary, as intercessors, 416
 and Virgin Mary, at crucifixion of Christ, *414*, 415–16
John the Evangelist
 and Christ in tree of life, *294*, 295–96
Joints turned backward, caused by gaze of Sisiutl, 139
Jordan River, Christ baptized in, *454*, 455
Joseph, Saint, and Nativity, *242*, 243–44
Journey
 through labyrinth as descent into underworld, 68
 night, and ascension of Muḥammad, 52
 to otherworld, crossing bridge, 368–69
 of Three Magi, *242*, 243
Judaism. *See* Jewish images
Judge, Christ as, at Last Judgment, *434*
Judgment of the dead
 Christ as judge, *434*, 435–36
 as karmic rebirth, 436
 as ordeal, 436
 Weighing of the Heart, 427–28
 Weighing of the Soul, *431–32*
Judith beheading Holofernes, *326*, 327
Justice
 divine, and earthly unjustice, in connection with Last Judgment, 435–36
 and harmony, Apollo god of, 447–48
 Maat goddess of, *82*, 84
 scales of, and Weighing of the Soul, 436

Kachina, glossary definition, 189
Kālī
 (glossary definition) 165
 born from head of Ambika, 163–64
 decapitating demons Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, 163
Kalpa Sūtra illustrations
 preaching hall, *298*, 299
 Queen Triśalā dreaming, *410*, 411
Karman, in Jainism, 15
Karnak, pylon depicting Ptah embracing Sesostris I, *266*
Kernos. *See* Libation, table
Ketubbah. *See* Marriage, contract
Khaṇḍarīya Mahādeva Temple, *42*, 43–44
Khnum, glossary definition, 77
Ki and An (earth and heaven personified), and Ur ziggurat, 47
Kilt of Pharaoh, emblem of kingship, *86*, 87
Kinda, earth divinities assuring order and prosperity, 107–8
King. *See also* King and deity; Kingship; Kingship symbols.
 Bahrām the Gor, *322*, 323
 cakravartin as priest and universal king, *270*, 271
 Chief Arapoosh, medicine shield of, *194*, 195–96
 compared to savior, in connection with birth of Christ, 243, 245
 Māndhāta, *270*, 271
 ritual killing of, by Anubis, 99
 Three Magi, *242*, 243
 two levels of chief in Yombe society, 107
King and deity
 coronation of Zimri-Lim by Ishtar, *206*, 207
 pharaoh suckled by cow goddess Hathor, *86*, 87
 Sesostris I and Ptah, 267
 Thutmose III suckled by tree goddess, *274*, 275
Kingship. *See also* Crown; Torah, crown.
 granted by goddess Ishtar to Zimri-Lim, *206*, 207
 in connection with Virgin Mary and Christ child, 291
 renewed by Ptah, 267–68
Kingship symbols
 on divination tray, *394*, 395
 elephant, 111–12
 kilt of pharaoh, *86*, 87
 lion, 107–8
 staff with lion-man on top, *106*
 uraeus on nemes headdress and false beard, *266*, 267
Kingu
 invested with Tablets of Destiny, 115–16
Kīrttimukha
 (glossary definition) 153
 crowning halo of Tārā, *150*, 151
Kiss. *See also* Embrace
 loving couple, *226*, 227
Knowledge. *See* Good and evil, knowledge of; Tree of knowledge; Wisdom
Kūkai as child, *254*, 255–56
Konarak, wheel from Sun Temple, *2*
Kronos
 (glossary definition) 241
 castrating his father, Ouranos, 147
 wanting to devour his son, Zeus, 103
Kṛṣṇa
 (glossary definition) 173
 lifting Mount Govardhana, *170*, 171
 as protector of cosmic order, replacing Indra, 171–72
 and Rādhā, as originating couple, *470*, 471–72

Kuan-yin. *See* Avalokiteśvara
Kūkai as child, *254,* 255–57
Kuṇḍalinī and two intertwined snakes, 352
Kvasir, blood of, used for mead of poetry, 27–28, 180

Labret. *See* Lip plug
Labyrinth
circular, Chartres cathedral, *66,* 67–68
circular, surrounding Siuhu to protect his mountain home at center, *70,* 71
feminine principle and, 72
as journey to the center of the world, 67
as return to the womb and as descent into underworld, 68
Ladder
Fuji pilgrimage portrayed as, *38,* 39–40
of Ur ziggurat, uniting heaven and earth, *46,* 47
Lake. *See* Pond; Sea; Water
Lakṣmana and Rāma, with Sītā in forest, *190,* 191
Lakṣmī
(glossary definition) 301
Queen Triśalā dreaming of, 411
Lamb and wolves, Susanna and elders as, 344
Lamentation. *See* Grief; Mourner
Lamps
as eternal flame before veil of Tabernacle, *30,* 31
in paradise, as conscious experience of primordial unity, 33
seven-branched *menorah, 474,* 475
Lance, of Saint George killing dragon, *318,* 319
Land Otter, above each ear of shaman's mask, *406,* 407–8
Land Otter Man, *402,* 403–4
Land spirits, squatting atop shaman's mask, *406,* 407
Language. *See also* Runes; Speaking in tongues; Speech.
of animals, shaman understanding, 408
consciousness and, 348
Last Judgment. *See* Judgment of the dead
Last Supper. *See* Eucharist
Laurel
leaves, used in prophecy, 448
tree, Daphne turned into, pursued by Apollo, *446,* 447–48
Law
Code of Hammurabi and Jewish law, 344
god of, Apollo, 447–48
goddess of, Maat, *82,* 84
Moses and Ten Commandments in relation to apostles and Holy Spirit, 391
oath-taking figure used in judicial proceedings, 175–76
Lébé, human descendant of eighth Nommo (ancestral figures), 363–64
Leda, and Zeus in form of swan, *214,* 215–16
Leg, one-legged figure expressing nature of Nommo, *362,* 363
Leopard
skin, Śiva and family sitting on, *438,* 439
winged, with four heads, one of four monsters in vision of Daniel, *386,* 387
Leucippus, disguised as woman, torn to pieces by nymphs, 447
Libation. *See also* Sacrifice.
to bind contracts, 144
as nourishment for the dead, 144
presented to goddess by leonine daimons, *142,* 143
table, circular, central hollow surrounded by bowllike depressions, *478,* 479
Liberation. *See also* Enlightenment; *Mokṣa; Nirvaṇa;* Salvation.
path of, in Tantrism, 351–52
or release, in Jainism, 15–16
Life
ankh symbol of, 379
goddess of, Coatlicue as cosmic process, 167
Life after death. *See also* Judgment of the dead; Rebirth.
ankh placed in tomb ensuring, 379
in Judaism, 31
Life and death
cave as womb and tomb, nativity and burial of Christ taking place in, 244
decapitated Chinnamastā standing on Originating Couple, *470,* 471
embodied in Coatlicue, 167
stupa as tomb and temple, 55
tree of life growing out of tomb of Christ, 459
Light. *See also* Fire; Lamps; *Menorah;* Torch
bringer of, Mithra holding torch, *234,* 235–36
at center of round table, feeding Virgin Mary and apostles, *390*
ray of, Star of Bethlehem descending on manger of Christ, *242,* 243
rays of, bursting over Saint Teresa and angel *218*
symbolism and enlightenment, 307
Light around body
of Kūkai, *254,* 255
of Virgin Mary, at Nativity, *242,* 243
Lightning-arrow, on head of twin war gods, *186,* 187
Liṅga
(glossary definition) 44
primary epiphany of Śiva, 360
Śiva as, in Khaṇḍarīya Mahādeva Temple, 43
Lion
associated with kingship, 208
as Buddha, 92
daimons presenting offerings to goddess, *142,* 143
four lions standing above four wheels of Sarnath capital, *90,* 91–92
legs, of serpent-dragon Mushhush, *114,* 115
mask, surmounted by pillar next to Virgin Mary, *222*
pair of lions flanking Buddha Maitreya, *310,* 311
Queen Triśalā dreaming of, 411
winged, Mark the Evangelist as, *294,* 295
winged, one of four monsters of vision of Daniel, *386,* 387
Lion and goddess
Ishtar, *206,* 209
Tārā, *150*
Lion-man
on staff-top, *106,* 107–9
as union of spirit and nature, 108
Lip plug (labret)
of Bear Woman, *246,* 247
of shaman's mask, denoting woman, *406,* 407
Logos, personified as divine savior, 348
Loki
(glossary definition) 129
father of Hel, Midgardssnake, and Fenriswolf, 127
Lord's Supper. *See* Eucharist
Lotus. *See also* Lotus pedestal; Lotus symbol.
appearing in infant Buddha's footsteps, *250,* 251–52
attribute of Avalokiteśvara, *314,* 315
born from dark sea, bringing light, 231
of creation, Originating Couple lying on, *470,* 472
eight spokes of wheel from Sūrya temple reflecting eight petals of lotus, *2,* 3
as blessings on deceased woman, *314,* 315
growing from navel of Viṣṇu, supporting Brahmā, 11
Horus as child dancing on, *230,* 231
lake, Queen Triśalā dreaming of, 411
offered to Buddha by Brahmā, *18,* 19
pond, and Buddha-to-be as truthful youth, *258,* 259
posture, of Jain savior, *298,* 299
Śiva holding, *358,* 359
supporting scarab and sun disk, on ankh mirror case, *378,* 379
Tārā holding, *150,* 151
Viṣṇu holding, churning of milk ocean, *34*
Lotus pedestal
Avalokiteśvara standing on, *314,* 315
Brahmā seated on, *18,* 19
Buddha standing on, *306,* 307
Chinnamastā standing on, *470,* 471
Gaṇeśa standing on, *110,* 111
Hachiman seated on, *38,* 39
Kūkai, as child, seated on, *254,* 255
lotiform bell supporting lion capital at Sarnath, *90,* 91
Tārā resting foot on lotus stool, *150,* 151
Lotus symbol
Buddha and, 260
enlightenment and, 56, 260
life force, 379–80
transformation and, 200
Upper Egypt, 379
Love
goddess of, Aphrodite, 147, 451
of human for god (*bhakti*), and Kṛṣṇa, 171
loving couple embracing, *226,* 227
Love and war
Aphrodite and, 451–52
goddess of, Freyja, *158,* 159
goddess of, Ishtar, *206,* 208–9
Loyalty, of Sītā and Lakṣmana following Rama to exile, 191
Luck. *See* Good luck charms
Ludovisi Throne, Aphrodite emerging from sea, *450,* 452
Luke the Evangelist, and Christ on tree of life, *294,* 295
Lust, of elders spying on Susanna, 343
Lyre, Apollo playing, pursuing Daphne, *446,* 447

Maat, created by Ptah, 267
Maat
(glossary definition) 429
goddess of law, order, and justice, *82,* 83–84
head of, on scale for Weighing of the Heart, *426,* 427
squatting in front of Thoth as ibis, *82,* 83

Mace
  between two axes, on shoulders of Ishtar, *206*, 207
  Viṣṇu holding, and churning milk ocean, *34*, 35
Macrocosm and microcosm
  cosmic person and, *14*, 17
  sun and moon in cosmos and subtle body, 352
Madness
  caused by frog, 76
  caused by Land Otter Man, 403
Maggots, dwarfs originating as, from rotting body of Ymir, 27
Magi, glossary definition, 245
Mahābhārata
  (glossary definition) 113
  Gaṇeśa transcribing, 111
  illustration from, churning of milk ocean, *34*, 35–36
Mahākāśyapa, monk and disciple of Buddha, *334*, 335
Mahāmāyāvijayāvāhinī, war goddess, aspect of Tārā, *150*, 151
Mahāvairocana, glossary definition, 257
Mahāvidyā, Chinnamastā as one of ten manifestations of Śakti, *470*, 471
Mahāvīra
  conception of, Queen Triśalā dreaming of, 411
  founder of Jainism, 15
Mahāyāna, glossary definition, 261
Maitreya. *See* Buddha-to-be
Maize growing out of center of Mother Earth, *202*, 203
Mallia, glossary definition, 481
Maṇḍala. *See also* Circle; Labyrinth.
  (glossary definition) 5
  and analytical psychology, 300–1
  Jain preaching hall shaped as, *298*, 299
  maplike painting of Mount Fuji as, *38*, 39
  sun as, covering abdomen of pregnant "woman robed with sun," 135
  sun wheel from Sūrya temple as, *2*, 4
  waist of cosmic person as, representing earth, *14*, 16
Mandara, Mount, as churning stick in milk ocean, *34*, 35
Māndhāta (king), *270*, 271
Mandorla. *See also* Halo; Light around body.
  Ancient of Years within, framed by two rows of angels, *386*, 387
  Christ within, in tree of life, *294*, 295
  Christ within, lifted by four angels, *58*, 59
  flaming, Buddha within, *306*, 307
Manger, Christ child in, *242*, 243–4
Mankind. *See* Creation of humankind; Humankind
Mantra, glossary definition, 257
Manuha, Mon king, as temple builder, 303
Manuha Temple, interior showing colossal golden Buddha, *302*
Māra
  (glossary definition) 305
  tempting Buddha Śākyamuni, 303–4
Marduk
  killing Tiamat, fashioning universe from her body, 115
  as serpent-dragon, guardian on Ishtar gate, *114*, 115
Mare, Medusa as, *122*, 123
Mari, palace of Zimri-Lim, depicting coronation scene, *206*, 207
Mark the Evangelist and Christ, in tree of life, *294*, 295
Marriage. *See also* Couples; Embrace.
  contract, Jewish, *210*, 211
  of Heaven and Earth, as Father Sky and Mother Earth, *202*, 204
  place of union with god within temple, 43
Marriage, sacred
  ecstasy of Saint Teresa, *218*, 219
  enacted in shrine of Ur ziggurat, 47
  Freyr and Gerdr, 183
  Ishtar and King Zimri-Lim as Dumuzi, *206*, 208
  union of god and goddess, *226*, 227–28
Marriage, sexual union
  of couples on divination tray, *394*, 395
  Leda and Zeus as swan, *214*, 215
  of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, *470*, 471
  of loving couple, *226*, 227
  and Sabbath, 213
Marriage between human and animal
  he-bear and Skaoaga, 247–48
  man and female bear, 95
  Zeus as swan, and Leda, *214*, 215
Mask
  frog in mouth, used by shaman, *406*, 407
  of Nimba, goddess of generation and new life, *154*, 155
  as persona, 156–57
  Twisted Face, *118*
Matthew the Evangelist and Christ, in tree of life, *294*, 295
Mausoleum, empty tomb of Christ depicted as, *458*, 459
May, iris symbol of, 367
Maze. *See* Labyrinth
Mead. *See also* Ambrosia; Nectar; Wine.
  of poetry, Odin stealing from giants, 179–80
Meal
  Rāma and Sītā preparing in forest, *190*, 191
  Seder, and coming of Elijah, 384
  Seder, reliving Exodus, 463
Meal, sacrificial
  sharing of bull's flesh and blood in Mithraic religion, 468
  circular altar and, 479
  of dismembered bread-image of god, 64
  Eucharist, image of Pentecost recalling, 391
Meander as cosmic water decorating hem of Aphrodite's dress, *146*, 147
Mediator. *See also* Diviner; Messenger; Priest; Prophet.
  Amenhotep Son of Hapu as, 347
  cakravartin as, 272
  chief as, 108
  Holy Spirit as, 60
  Ifa as, 395
  medial woman as, in connection with Freyja as goddess of shamanism, 160
  Nommo as, 23, 364
  trickster as god Eṣu as, 355
  Virgin Mary and Saint John the Baptist as, 415
Meditation. *See also* Yantra.
  gesture of, *298*, 299
Medusa
  beheaded by Perseus, 123
  holding winged horse Pegasus, *122*, 123
Meilichios, chthonic deity, absorbed by Zeus, *78*, 79–80
Melissa
  feeding infant Zeus honey, 103
  meaning "bee," generic title for priestesses, 103
Memory, Muninn (memory) and Huginn (thought), ravens of Odin, 179
Memphite Theology, recounting myth of Ptah, creator god, 267
Menat collar, goddess holding over Horus child, *230*, 231
Menorah, seven-branched, flanked by two olive trees, vision of Zechariah, *474*, 475
Mercy. *See* Compassion
Meru, Mount, Khaṇḍarīya Mahādeva Temple as, 43
Mesopotamian images. *See also* Near East images.
  serpent-dragon Mushhush, *114*, 115
  snake goddess and child, *262*, 263
  Ur ziggurat, *46*, 47–48
Messenger. *See also* Mediator.
  archangel Gabriel, *222*, 223
  mouse as oracle, traveling above and below earth, 399
  Skirnir, wooing Gerdr for Freyr, 183
  of the gods, Eṣu, 355
Messiah. *See also* Christ as savior; Savior.
  (glossary definition) 297
  appearance of, and *menorah*, 475–76
Metallurgy, dwarfs as smiths, 27–28
Metamorphosis. *See* Transformation
Meteorites
  Black Stone of Mecca, 51–52
  in connection with goddess, 52
  iron obtained from, 28
  Mithra born from celestial rock, 235
Metis (mother of Athena), swallowed by Zeus, 239
Mi-lo. *See* Pu-tai/Mi-lo
Michael, archangel
  casting dragon (Satan) out of heaven, *134*, 135
  as guide of the dead, 431–32
  holding scale at Weighing of the Soul, *430*, 431
Microcosm and macrocosm, and cosmic person, 17
Middle Place (Hepatina), home of Zuni people, protected by twin war gods, 187
Middle world (that of humankind), as waist of cosmic person, *14*, 15–16
Midgardssnake, Thor catching, *130*, 131–32
Midwives
  bathing Christ child, *242*, 243
  bathing infant Buddha, *250*, 251
  Hephaistos as, assisting Zeus at birth of Athena, *238*, 239
Milk. *See also* Suckling
  and wine, honey, and blood, as libation to goddess, 143
Milk ocean
  ambrosia from, 35
  creation from, 35–36
  gods and demons churning, *34*, 35–36
  Queen Triśalā dreaming of, 411
Mīmir
  (glossary definition) 181
  giant, Odin sacrificing eye to, 179
Mind, or "heart," origin of creation by Ptah, 267
Mirror
  associated with sun, placed in tomb of Tutankhamen, 379–80
  Athena holding mirror shield for Perseus to decapitate Medusa, 123
  case in shape of ankh, *378*
  as mediating element between

Mirror (*continued*)
ego and archetype, 125
Pārvatī holding, reflecting Śiva, *358*, 359
Mistress of animals (Potnia), receiving offerings from leonine daimons, *142*, 143
Mithra
birth of, *234*, 235, 237
holding dagger and torch, emerging from rock, *234*, 235
slaying bull, within Mithraeum, *466*, 467
sun deity in Roman empire, *235*, 467
worship of, women excluded from, 468
Mithraeum, cave sanctuary, *466*, 467
Mokṣa. See also Enlightenment; Liberation; *Nirvāṇa*
(glossary definition) 17
achievement of, aided by iconography of Hindu temple, 227
attained by forest dweller as final stage of life, 192
devotees oriented by invisible shaft within temple in search for, 44
and identity of inner self with universal self, 20
Jain savior preaching, *298*, 299
Mon, glossary definition, 21
Monk, Buddhist. *See also* Ascetic.
Ananda, *330*, 331
Buddha Śākyamuni dressed as, *306*, 307
Hachiman as, *198*, 199
Mahākāśyapa, *334*, 335
Monkeys, offspring of Tārā and Avalokiteśvara, 151
Monster, animal-human composite
elephant-headed man, Gaṇeśa, *110*, 111
half man and half lion, Narasiṃha, *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, 108
human and snake, Nommo, *362*, 363
ibis-headed man, Thoth, *426*, 427
jackal-headed man, Anubis, *426*, 427
lion-headed man, *106*, 107
male lion with female breasts and long mane, 323
part human, part bear, two sons of Bear Woman, 248
rattlesnake-jaguar goddess in female form, *166*, 167
snake-headed woman, *262*, 263
winged Medusa, *122*, 123
Monster, animal composite
crocodile-lion-hippopotamus, Ammit, devourer of the dead, *426*, 427
demons with horns, claws, wings, serpentine tail, at Last Judgment, *434*, 435
four beasts of vision of Daniel, *386*, 387
leonine daimons with bee skin, *142*, 143
Mushhush as snake-dragon-lion-bird-scorpion, *114*, 115
Monster, monstrous animal
cosmic snake as churning cord in milk ocean, *34*, 35
giant wolf Fenrir (Fenriswolf), *126*, 127–28
sea monster with two heads, Sisiutl, *138*, 139
Midgardssnake, caught by Thor, *130*, 131–32
Monster, plant and human composite (tree with human arms and breast), *274*, 275
Moon. *See also* Sun and Moon
bull identified with, in Mithraism, 467
and cyclical patterns in nature, 195–96
frog as lunar animal, 76, 408
and snake, symbols of rebirth, 263
Moon, crescent
bill of ibis as, 83
below feet of "woman robed with sun," *134*, 135
on forehead of cosmic person, *14*, 15
on forehead of Śiva, *438*, 439
resting on shoulders of man, *294*, 295
Moon god
Above Person, *194*, 195
Nanna, living in Ur ziggurat, 47
Thoth as ibis, *82*, 83
Moon goddess
Coatlicue, *166*, 167
Gorgons as threefold appearance of moon, 123
Moses, and crossing of Red Sea, *462*, 463, 464
Mother. *See also* Goddess *entries;* Great Mother
and child, serpentine, *262*, 263–64
ideal, bear as, 96–97
Mother and son
cow goddess Hathor suckling pharaoh, *86*, 87–88
Isis as tree goddess suckling pharaoh, *274*, 275–76
Skaoaga, mortal woman and bear son, *246*, 247, 248
Virgin Mary and Christ, *286*, 287, *414*, 415
Virgin Mary and Christ child, *290*, 291
Mother Earth
and Father Sky, Navajo sand painting, *202*, 203–5
and her son Yurugu, incest between, 363
supporting Christ in tree of life, *294*, 295, 296
testifying to Buddha Śākyamuni's merit, 304
Mother Goose, related to Aphrodite riding goose, 149
Mount Fuji pilgrimage *maṇḍala*, *38*, 39–40
Mount Golgotha, containing skull of Adam below crucified Christ, *414*, 415
Mount Govardhana, Kṛṣṇa lifting, *170*, 171, 172
Mount Mandara, as churning stick in milk ocean, *34*, 35–36
Mount Meru
(glossary definition) 45
Khaṇḍarīya Mahādeva Temple as, *42*, 43
Mountain. *See also* Creation, of mountain rising from water.
as divine dwelling place, 48
moved by god and giant in contest, 119
as throne, three deities seated on three peaks of Mount Fuji, *38*, 40
Mountain, cosmic
existing before creation, Ur ziggurat as, *46*, 47, 49
goddess Coatlicue as, *166*, 167–68
Great Stupa at Sāñcī as, *54*, 55
Khaṇḍarīya Mahādeva Temple as, 42, 43
Mount Fuji, *38*, 39
Mount Govardhana, Kṛṣṇa lifting, *170*, 171
Mount Mandara as churning stick in milk ocean, *34*, 35
Mountain divinities
Shintō, seated on three peaks of Mount Fuji, *38*, 40
Siuhu within maze to conceal his home, *70*, 71
Mourner
disciples and three women mourning at tomb of Christ, *458*, 459
female, *442*, 443, 444
Mouse. *See also* Rat.
oracle, in divination vessel, 399–400
Mouse Woman, as protector, in legend of Bear Woman, 247
Mouth
of Father Sky and Mother Earth connected by yellow pollen line, *202*, 203
of Virgin Mary and apostles connected to center of table by rays, *390*
Mouth, open
female mourner, 442
of goddess Camuṇḍā, *162*, 163
of lion-man, *106*, 107
as power of speech of oath-taking figure, *174*, 175–76
of shaman's mask, Frog emerging from, *406*, 407
Mudrā. See Gesture
(glossary definition) 301
Muḥammad's ascent to heaven, Dome of the Rock as site of, 51, 52
Muninn (memory) and Huginn (thought), ravens of Odin, 179
Mushhush, serpent-dragon, *114*, 115, 117
Music, Apollo god of, 448
Musical instruments
Cymbal and sistrum, goddesses playing for Horus child dancing on lotus, *230*, 231
drum, and circle dance around Xocotl tree, *62*, 63
lyre, Apollo playing, pursuing Daphne, *446*, 447
panpipes in vine, and good shepherd, *338*, 339
Myrrh, gift of one of Three Magi, 244

Nāgas, compared to Chinese dragon, 251
Nails
hammered into torso of oath-taking figure, *174*, 175
piercing hands and feet of crucified Christ, *414*, 415
Nakedness. *See* Body, naked
Nandi (bull)
(glossary definition) 441
adoring Śiva-Pārvatī, *358*, 359
resting behind Śiva and Pārvatī in cremation ground, *438*, 439
Nanna, moon god, living in Ur ziggurat, 47, 48
Nanpaya Temple, pillar showing Brahmā offering lotuses, *18*, 19
Narasiṃha, half man and half lion, *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, 108–9
Native American images
Aztec, dance of Xocotlhuetzi, *62*, 63–65
Aztec, goddess Coatlicue, *166*, 167–68
Crow, Moon as Above Person, shield of Arapoosh, *194*, 195–96
Haida, Skaoga and her bear child, *246*, 247–48
Iroquois, Twisted Face mask, *118*, 119–20
Kwakiutl, two-headed serpent Sisiutl, *138*, 139

Navajo, Father Sky and Mother Earth, *202*, 203–5
Pima, labyrinth representing Siuhu's house, *70*, 71
Tlingit, bear screen, *94*, 95–97
Tlingit, frog emerging from mouth of shaman's mask, *406*, 407, 408
Tlingit, Land Otter Man, *402*, 403–4
Zuni, one of twin gods of war, *186*, 187–88
Nativity of Christ, *242*, 243–45
Navel
Brahmā born from, of Viṣṇu, 11
world, of twin war gods, 187
Near East images. *See also* Mesopotamian images.
Iran, wailing female mourner, *442*, 443–44
Syria, investiture of King Zimri-Lim, *206*, 207–9
Neb, basket, supporting scarab on ankh mirror case, *378*, 379
Neck. *See* Beheading; Head; Throat
Necklace
Brisingamen of Freyja, 159
of hands and hearts, of goddess Coatlicue, *166*, 167
man and woman covered with cowrie shell, as sign of honor, *354*, 355, 356
Necklace, skull
of Chinnamastā and attendants, *470*
skull garland of Camuṇḍā, 162, 163
skull garland of Śiva, *438*, 439
Necklace, snake
of Camuṇḍā, *162*, 163
of Chinnmastā and attendants, *470*
Necromancy, in connection with Odin, 181
Necropolis, Anubis as lord of, 99
Nectar. *See also* Ambrosia; Mead; Wine.
divine drink, related to honey, 103
Nemes headdress of Sesostris I, *266*, 267
Nemesis
(glossary definition) 217
as bird producing egg of Helen, to be hatched by Leda, 215
Netherworld. *See* Underworld
New Year
festivals, in connection with Ragnarǫk, 128
frog associated with, 75
Sed festival, 267–68
Nganga (diviner and maker of prescriptions and charms), 176
Night journey. *See* Underworld
Nimba, goddess of generation and new life, *154*, 155–56
Nimbus. *See* Halo
Nine days, Odin hanging in world tree, 179
Nine dragons, representing all natural forces in cosmos, *250*, 251, 252
Nine nights, Freyr waiting for Gerdr, 183
Ningal, consort of Nanna, moon god, living in Ur ziggurat, 47, 48
Nirvāṇa. *See also* Enlightenment; Liberation; *Mokṣa*.
(glossary definition) 333
in Hinduism and Buddhism, 21
stupa as symbol of, 55
and Western Paradise, 315
N'kondi, oath-taking figure, *174*, 175–77
Nommo
eleven figures standing on earth, supporting sky, *22*, 23–24
serpentine, androgynous twins, 23, *362*, 363
Noseless old man, and Buddha-to-be as truthful youth, *258*, 259, 260
Nude. *See* Body, naked
Nursing. *See* Suckling
Nuts. *See* Palm nuts
Nyame, sky god, 399
Nymph, Daphne pursued by Apollo, *446*, 447
Nzambi
creator god, 107
supreme god of Bakongo people, 176

Oak tree, sacred to Zeus, 64
Oath. *See also* Contract; Covenant with God
oath-taking figure, *174*, 175–76
sworn by gods in the underworld or by gods of the sky, 177
Ọbatala, creator of humankind, 279–80
Obedience
to God, Abraham binding Isaac, *210*, 211, 212, 213
Rāma as obedient son, *190*, 191
Obstacles, Gaṇeśa creator and remover of, *110*, 111, 112
Ocean. *See* Sea; Water
Oceanos, glossary definition, 125
Octagon, structure of Dome of the Rock, *50*, 51
Odin
(glossary definition) 129
god of wisdom, poetry, and ecstasy, *178*, 179–81
as guide of the dead, 179
hanged god, one-eyed, and tongue protruding, *178*, 179
with Vili, and Vé, creating cosmos from body of primordial being Ymir, 27
Oduduwa, creator god and original king of Yoruba people, 279–80
Offering. *See* Libation; Sacrifice
Ogata Kōrin, glossary definition, 369
Ogdoad, of Hermopolitan cosmogony living in underworld after the Golden Age, 75
Ogotemmeli (blind sage), 23
Oil lamp, seven-branched *menorah*, *474*, 475–77
Old man. *See also* Elders; Wise old man
Amenhotep Son of Hapu, *346*, 347
Mahākāśayapa (disciple of Buddha), *334*, 335–36
Old man and young man
Buddha and Ānanda, 331
Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda, 331, 333, 336
noseless caretaker and Buddha-to-be, *258*, 259–60
Old woman and young woman, maidservant and Judith, beheading Holofernes, *326*, 327–28
Olive tree, and *menorah*, vision of Zecharaiah, *474*, 475, 476–477
Ọlọrun (Yoruba), supreme being, 279–80
Opposites. *See also* Ascent and descent; Battle between opposite forces; Christ, dual nature of; Crossroads; Good and evil; Healing and destruction; Life and death; Sky and earth; Spirit and instinct.
angels and demons, saved and damned at Last Judgment, *434*, 435
angels and demons at the weighing of souls, *430*, 431
asceticism of Śiva and eroticism of Pārvatī, 440
bridge as link between, 369
cross as meeting of, 416
duality of sexes, loving couple representing, *226*, 227–28
heavens and waters united by lotus, 232
Śiva-Pārvatī containing, *358*, 359, 360
Oracles. *See* Divination
Orb, cosmic, Christ holding, *294*, 295
Ordeal
judgment of the dead as, 436
as divinatory practice serving judiciary function, 344
Ordeal of hero/heroine
exile of Rāma, *190*, 192
Judith beheading Holofernes, *326*, 327–28
ritual dance and climb of Xocotl tree, *62*, 65
Order. *See also* Protector of cosmic order.
assured by earth divinities (*kında*), 107
bones symbolizing, 401
embodied by king and created by Ptah, expressed in embrace, *266*, 267, 268
god of, Apollo, *446*, 448
god of, Ptah, *266*, 267
goddess of, Maat, *82*, 83–84
turning into chaos as Ifa, god of revelation, withdraws from earth, 395
of universe, reflected in human body, *14*, 15–17
Orenda, glossary definition, 121
Origen, glossary definition, 221
Originating couple, Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, *470*, 471, 472
Oriṣa
gods of Yoruba pantheon, 355
man and woman, as two forms of Eṣu, *354*, 355, 356
Osiris
(glossary definition) 101
identification of Anubis with, 99–100
Ostrich feather, on head of Maat, *82*, 83
Otherworld. *See* Underworld
Otter
fur, attached to medicine shield, *194*, 195
and Land Otter Man, *402*, 403, 404
Ouranos
(glossary definition) 149
Aphrodite born from his severed genitals cast into the sea, 147
Owl, Athena as night owl, 240
Ox
and ass, at nativity of Christ, *242*, 243
head, bait used by Thor in catching Midgardssnake, *130*, 131–32
winged, Luke the Evangelist as, *294*, 295

Pa-hsia, pair of dragons encircling trees flanking Maitreya, *310*, 312
Pact. *See* Contract; Covenant with God; Oath
Pair. *See* Couples; Twins
Palace, celestial, Queen Triśalā dreaming of, *410*, 411, 412
Palette
results of Weighing of the Heart recorded on by Thoth, *426*, 427

Palette (*continued*)
signifying office of scribe, on shoulder of Amenhotep Son of Hapu, *346*, 347
Pallas, father of Athena, 239
Palm nuts
containing knowledge of Ifa, given to his sons, 395
used in divination, 395–96, 397
P'an Ku, primordial man, and creation of cosmos, 16
Panpipes in vine, in connection with good shepherd, *338*, 339
Panther skin of ascetic
Camuṇḍā wearing, *162*, 163
Śiva wearing, *358*, 359
Papyrus reeds
cow goddess Hathor emerges from, *86*, 87, 88
symbol of Lower Egypt, 379
Papyrus roll, Amenhotep Son of Hapu holding as scribe, *346*, 347
Paradise. *See also* Garden of Eden.
Avalokiteśvara guiding soul to Western Paradise, *314*, 315
Dilmun, earliest known garden, 32
entrance to, depicted on Torah ark curtain, *30*, 31–33
in Judaism, 31–32
Maitreya in Tuṣita heaven under dragon-flower tree, *310*, 311
Parents (world), An and Ki, separated by Enlil, their son, 47
Parinirvāna, glossary definition, 57
Pārvatī
(glossary definition) 165
and Śiva, parents of Gaṇeśa, 111–12
and Śiva sitting in cremation ground, *438*, 439, 440, 441
Śiva-Pārvatī, "the lord whose half is woman," *358*, 359, 360–61
Passover
(glossary definition) 385
reliving of Exodus, 463
Seder, and coming of Elijah, 383, 384
Path
Eightfold, and Buddha-to-be as truthful youth, 259
to pilgrimage site, Mount Fuji, *38*, 39
twelve paths for twelve tribes of Israel crossing Red Sea, 463
Patriarch (Buddhist), Mahākāśyapa, *334*, 335
Paul of Tarsus, glossary definition, 417
Peace. *See also* Paradise.
and harvest, Freyr god of, *182*, 183
symbolized by corn pollen, 203–204
Pegasus
captured by Bellerophon, 123
Medusa holding, *122*, 123
as union of spirit and instinct, 124
Pen, elephant god Gaṇeśa using his broken tusk as, *110*, 111
Penance
cords of, hanging from Xocotl tree, *62*, 64
journey through labyrinth as, 67–68
of Śiva for killing a Brahman, 439–40
Pendant, portraying goddess Freyja, *158*, 159
Peneus, river god, father of Daphne, turning her into laurel tree, 447
Pentecost
Holy Spirit descending, Virgin Mary and apostles seated at round table, *390*, 391–92
apostles seated in semicircle above scene of Ascension, *58*, 59, 60
Perfection
crown as, 284
gold as, 304
six perfections in Buddhism, 259
Perjury, punished by oath-taking figure, 175, 176
Persecution of Christians, "woman robed with sun" representing, 136
Persephone and Demeter
(glossary definition) 145
prefigured by goddess of animals, grain, and underworld, 143
Perseus
(glossary definition) 321
beheading Medusa, 122
Persona, as mask, 157
Phallus
and Freyr, *182*, 183, 184
gods as phallic images, in connection with boundaries and crossroads, 356–57
as religious symbol, 184–85
Pharaoh
pharaoh suckled by cow goddess Hathor, *86*, 87–88
Sesostris and Ptah, *266*, 267
Thutmose III suckled by tree goddess, *274*, 275–76
Phrygian cap. *See* Headdress
Physician god (Dhanvantari), created from milk ocean, *34*, 35
Piercing
with arrow, heart of Saint Teresa, *218*, 219, 220
with nails, hands and feet of crucified Christ, *414*, 415
with nails, into torso of oath-taking figure, *174*, 175
Pig
goddess Freyja associated with, 159
Gullinbyrsti, boar of Freyr, 183
Hildisvíní, boar of Freyja, 159
Pilgrimage
ascent of Mount Fuji as progress toward enlightenment, *38*, 39
to Chartres cathedral, 371
to Jerusalem, labyrinth at Chartres seen as, 67–68
Pillar. *See also* Liṅga.
chicken atop, on peak of crown, *278*, 279
columns of Temple, depicted on curtain of Torah ark, *30*, 31
dance around Xocotl tree, *62*, 63, 64, 65
djed, signifying stability, on shrine supporting Anubis, *98*, 99
of fire, in connection with *menorah*, 477
lion capital at Sarnath, *90*, 91–92
of the church, columns of Chartres cathedral as, *370*, 372
Piṅgalā and *iḍā* (*nāḍīs*, or nerves), as snakes, in Kuṇḍalinī yoga, *350*, 352
Placenta, buried after birth, 375
Plant. *See also* Monster, plant and human composite; *specific plants.*
divine, Aphrodite holding flowering tendril, *146*, 147
Pleasure, Aphrodite as goddess of, *450*, 451
Plotinus, glossary definition, 221
Poetry, Odin god of, 180
Poison, held by Śiva in his throat, 35
Polarity. *See* Opposites
Pole. *See* Pillar
Pollen, corn, symbolizing peace, happiness, and prosperity, 203–204
yellow line uniting Father Sky and Mother Earth, *202*, 203–204
Pollux and Castor, sons of Leda, 215
Pond
ablution in, before ascent of Mount Fuji, *38*, 39
caretaker of lotus, and Buddha-to-be as truthful youth, *258*, 259–60
cross-shaped, in four corners of Jain preaching hall, *298*, 299
Queen Triśalā dreaming of lotus lake, *410*, 411
Portals. *See* Door; Gates
Poseidon, glossary definition, 125
Possession
caused by frog, 76
caused by Land Otter Man, 404–405
Posture
of devotion, of Kūkai, *254*, 255
kneeling, of lion-man, *106*, 107
one knee raised and one flattened, of Brahmā, *18*, 19
of pensive prince, of Maitreya, *310*, 311
prostrating, of Eve, related to snake, *422*, 423, 424
of purposeful movement, of oath-taking figure, *174*, 175
reclining, of Queen Triśalā dreaming, *410*, 411
reflective, of Maitreya, *310*, 311
of royal ease, of Tārā, *150*, 151
of serpentine fluidity, of Pārvatī, *358*, 359
standing, of Buddha, *306*, 307
striding, of pharaoh, *86*, 87
Posture, cross-legged
of Freyr, *182*, 183
of Jain Savior, *298*, 299
of scribe, *346*, 347
Posture, squatting
of Maat, *82*, 83
of row of human figures on shaman's mask, *406*, 407
of she-bear, *94*, 95
Posture, triply flexed
of Gaṇeśa, *110*, 111
of goddess embraced by god, *226*, 227–28
of Pārvatī, *358*, 359
Potlach, glossary definition, 405
Potnia Theron, mistress of animals, receiving offerings from leonine daimons, *142*, 143, 144
Power. *See also* Energy.
demonic or divine, related to austerities of Śiva, 440–41
seven jewels as, *270*, 271–72
superhuman, of Kṛṣṇa lifting Mount Govardhana, *170*, 171, 172
superhuman, of Thor catching Midgardssnake, *130*, 131–32
Prajāpati
(glossary definition) 13
creator god, fertilizing waters, which change into golden egg, 11
Prāṇa. *See* Breath
Prayer. *See also* Yantra.
Kūkai in, *254*, 255
Preaching hall, Jain, diagram of, *298*, 299–300
Pregnancy. *See also* Birth.
goddess Nimba protector of, *154*, 155
mortal woman and divine father, annunciation to Virgin Mary, *222*, 224
mother of Śākyamuni dreaming of white elephant entering her womb at conception, 251
pendant in the form of pregnant

seated figure, *158*, 159
Queen Triśalā dreaming of, *410*, 411–12
"woman robed with sun" about to give birth to savior, *134*, 135–36
Priest. *See also* Diviner; Mediator; Prophet.
babalawo, taught divination by Ifa, 395–96
cakravartin as king and priest, *270*, 272
King Zimri-Lim as king and priest, *206*, 207
Prisoner
hearts of, sacrificed to Xiuhtecuhtli, 63
Manuha, Mon king, imprisoned by the Burmese, 303
Projection
dissolution of, compared to Buddhist enlightenment, 316
withdrawal of, and symbolism of Holy Spirit at Pentecost, 393
Promise. *See* Contract; Covenant with God; Oath
Prophecy. *See also* Divination; Dreams, prophetic.
angel interpreting vision of Daniel, 387–88
in connection with Odin, 179
laurel leaves as stimulant to, 448
Prophet. *See also* Diviner; Mediator; Priest.
Elijah, *382*, 383–85
as medium, 384
Protector. *See also* Gesture, of protection; Guardian.
Christ as good shepherd, *338*, 339–40, 341
Hathor as nurturing and protecting cow goddess, *86*, 87, 88
oath-taking figure, *174*, 175
pair of cobras as, on ankh mirror case, *378*, 379
shield embodying spirit guardian of warrior, *194*, 195
of Tōdaji, Hachiman as, *198*, 199
Protector, monster as
lion-man, mouth open, tongue protruding, *106*, 107
Sisiutl protecting entry doors of houses, *138*, 139
relief of Medusa used to ward off evil, *122*, 123
Protector of cosmic order
Camuṇḍā, 162, 164
Kṛṣṇa, *170*, 171, 172
Marduk, *114*, 115–16
Mithra, *466*, 467
Thor, *130*, 132
Thoth, *82*, 84
twin war gods, *186*, 187, 188
Viṣṇu, *34*, 35
Psyche, in connection with ecstasy of Saint Teresa, 220–21
Psychopomp. *See* Guide of the dead
Ptah
as creator god, 267
embracing Sesostris I, *266*, 267, 268
as god of the dead, 267
Pu-tai/Mi-lo, merged with Maitreya, 308
Puer and Senex. *See* Old man and young man
Punishment, and fall of man, 423
Purification rites. *See also* Ablution.
after participation in war, sacrifice to Meilichios as, 79
performed by False Face Society, 120
Pursuit
of Daphne by Apollo, *446*, 447, 448, 449
of Eurydice by Aristaios, son of Apollo, 103
of Gerdr by Freyr, 183
Puruṣa (primordial man), cosmos created from, 16–17
Putti. *See* Angels
Pylon, glossary definition, 101
Pyramid, stepped, diagram of Jain preaching hall, *298*, 299

Quadriga. *See* Four horses
Quatrefoil pattern on hide of cow goddess Hathor, *86*, 87
Queen
coronation of Virgin Mary, *286*, 287
Triśalā, dreaming, *410*, 411–12
Queen of heaven
in Eastern and Western traditions, 288
Virgin Mary as, 288
"woman robed with sun" as, *134*, 136–37
Quest. *See* Vision quest

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa
(glossary definition) 473
as originating couple, *470*, 471, 472
Ragnarǫk
(glossary definition) 29
and binding of Fenriswolf, 128
final battle between Thor and Midgardssnake, 131, 132
four dwarfs supporting sky until end of world, 27
Rain
Indra sending over worshipers of Kṛṣṇa, *170*, 171
libation table encouraging rain to fall, 479
thundercloud releasing, to bath of infant Buddha, *250*, 251, 252
or wealth falling as square coins, generated by *cakravartin*, *270*, 271, 272
Rainbow
as bridge between heaven and earth, surrounding Father Sky and Mother Earth, *202*, 203, 205
bridge, and iris flower whose name means rainbow, 369
Rainmaker (*cakravartin*), *270*, 271, 272
Rāma
as dutiful son, *190*, 191
and Sītā, in forest, *190*, 191
Rāmāyaṇa, illustration of Rāma and Sītā in forest, *190*, 191
Rat. *See also* Mouse.
sacred animal of Gaṇeśa, *110*, 111, 112
Rattle
as cross in circle, Father Sky and Mother Earth holding in each hand, *202*, 203
goddess playing for child dancing on lotus, *230*, 231
Rattlesnake, as head and hands of goddess Coatlicue, *166*, 167–68
Ravens
feathers, attached to medicine shield, *194*, 195
of Odin, Huginn (thought) and Muninn (memory), 179
Rays of light. *See* Light
Ṛddhi and Siddhi (wives of Gaṇeśa), 112
Re
(glossary definition) 85
protected by Thoth, 83–84
Reason. *See* Apollo, god of justice and harmony
Rebirth. *See also* Death and rebirth; Life after death; *Mokṣa;* Rejuvenation; Resurrection.
ankh in tomb ensuring, *378*, 379–80
and ascending with Mithra to home of the Sun and immortality, 468
cosmic, new cycle after Ragnarǫk, 128
frog associated with, *74*, 75
indicated by sexuality of female mourner, *442*, 443
Maitreya awaiting under dragonflower tree, *310*, 311, 312
as regenerative power of earth and transcendental symbolism of sky, 461
snake symbol of, 264
in connection with Camuṇḍā, 163–64
of twins, decided by Ọlọrun, supreme being, 375
Red. *See* Skin, colored
Red Sea, crossing of, *462*, 463–64
Redeemer. *See* Savior
Redemption
cross in labyrinth as, *66*, 67
crucifixion of Christ as, *414*, 415
Regicide, ritually performed by Anubis, 98
Rejuvenation. *See also* Eternal youth; Rebirth; Resurrection of king by Ptah in Sed festival, *266*, 267–68
Relics
piece of tunic of Virgin Mary in Chartres cathedral, 371
of Śākyamuni Buddha in Great Stupa at Sāñcī, 56
Religion, transformation of
Apollo replacing Daphoene, 447–48
Kṛṣṇa replacing Indra, 172
Thor and Odin replacing Týr, 127
Religions, meetings between
nomadic, patriarchal culture and agricultural goddess worship, as marriage between Zeus and Metis, 240
Shintō and Buddhism, 39–40, 199
Reliquary, stupa as, *54*, 55–56
Resurrection. *See also* Christ, resurrection of; Death and rebirth; Rebirth; Rejuvenation.
good shepherd, grapevine, and erotes symbolizing, *338*, 339
of the body, in Christian belief, 460–61
of the body, in Judaism, 32
Revelation. *See also* Divination; Diviner; Dreams; Vision.
Christ as source of, in tree of life, *294*, 295
to Muḥammad after ascension from Dome of the Rock, 51, 52
Prophet Elijah as medium, "man of Yahveh," *382*, 384
of word of God in Torah, 283
Revelation, "woman robed with sun" and dragon in, *134*, 135–36
Rhea, saving Zeus from being swallowed by his father, Kronos, 103
Rice, fertility goddess Nimba showered with, by women at harvest festival, 156
Ring. *See also* Circle; Maṇḍala.
and rod, Ishtar holding, *206*, 207, 209
River god, Peneus, father of Daphne, 447
Rivers
four rivers of paradise, personified as sirens, *294*, 295
Jordan River, Christ baptized in, *454*, 455

Robe. *See* Garments
Rock. *See also* Stone.
sacred, at center of Dome of the Rock, 51–52
sacred, Mithra born from, *234,* 235–37
Rock demoness (Tārā), mating with monkey (Avalokiteśvara), 151
Rod and ring, Ishtar holding, *206,* 207, 209
Rope
"cords of penance," hanging from tree, 62, 64
magic, used by Týr to bind Fenriswolf, *126,* 127–28
Rosary
associated with goddess of love, 198
Gaṇeśa holding, *110,* 111, 112
Śiva holding, *358,* 359
Round table. *See* Table, round
Royalty. *See* Kingship
Rug, covering Torah ark, depicting entrance to paradise, *30,* 31
Ruler. *See* King
Runes, Odin learning by self-sacrifice, 179

Sacred marriage. *See* Marriage, sacred
Sacred space. *See also* Cathedral; Church; Stupa; Temples.
birthing house, column depicting Horus child, *230,* 231
cave chapel of cow goddess Hathor, 88
Dome of the Rock, *50,* 51–52
Jain preaching hall, *298,* 299–300
Mithraeum, cave sanctuary, *466,* 467
Ur ziggurat, 46, 47–49
Sacrifice. *See also* Creation through sacrifice; Libation; Sacrifice, human.
bull, Mithra slaying, *466,* 467–68, 469
Chinnamastā cutting off her head, *470,* 471, 472, 473
crucifixion of Christ as, *414,* 416
horse, in connection with Freyr, 184
Odin hanging himself and sacrificing eye to gain wisdom, *178,* 179
offering of lotuses by Brahmā to Buddha, *18,* 19
offering presented to goddess by leonine daimons, *142,* 143, 144
of Puruṣa (primordial man), cosmos created from, 16
ritual act replaced by ritual knowledge, 16
trickster god Esu conveying sacrifices to supreme being Ọlọrun, 355
Týr sacrificing hand to bind Fenriswolf, *126,* 127–28
Sacrifice, human
child, Isaac by Abraham, *210,* 211, 212
to goddess Coatlicue, 167
of prisoners of war to Xiuhtecuhtli, 63
Sacrificial fire
Rāma tending, *190,* 192
war prisoner burned to Xocotlhuetzi, 63
Sacrificial meal
circular altar and, *478,* 479
of dismembered bread image of god, 62, 63–64, 65
Eucharist, image of Pentecost recalling, *390,* 391
sharing of bull's flesh and blood in Mithraic religion, 468
Saint George on white horse, killing dragon, *318,* 319, 320–21
Saint Joseph and nativity of Christ, *242,* 243–44
Saint Teresa of Ávila, ecstasy of, *218,* 219, 220, 221
Saints witnessing coronation of Virgin Mary, *286,* 287
Śakti
(glossary definition) 45
and many forms of Khaṇḍarīya Mahādeva Temple, 43
of Avalokiteśvara, Tārā as, 151
Chinnamastā as manifestation of, 471
feminine principle that unfolds creation, 351
personified as Pārvatī, united with Śiva, 359
Śākyamuni. *See* Buddha, historical (Śākyamuni)
Salvation. *See also* Enlightenment; Liberation; *Mokṣa; Nirvāṇa;* Savior
crucifixion of Christ as path for, *414,* 416
Samavasaraṇa, Jain preaching hall, diagram of, *298,* 299–300
Sāñcī, Great Stupa at, *54,* 55, 56
Sanctuary. *See* Sacred space
Sand painting
of Father Sky and Mother Earth, *202,* 203–205
as healing, 204
Sarcophagus, with image of good shepherd, *338,* 339
Sarnath, lion capital, *90,* 91–92
Satan
(glossary definition) 425
as seven-headed dragon cast out of heaven by archangel Michael, *134,* 135–136
as snake, and fall of man, *418,* 419–420
and two of his angels, below feet of Christ at Last Judgment, *434,* 435, 436
Saura Hinduism, 4
Savior. *See also* Buddha, as savior; Christ as savior; Messiah; Salvation
child of "woman robed with sun" as, 136, 137
compared to king, in connection with birth of Christ, 245
goddess Tārā, *150,* 151
Jain, in preaching hall, *298,* 299, 300
Kūkai, *254,* 256
Mahāvīra, founder of Jainism, 15
Mithra, for those seeking immortality, 235
Scales
as divine justice, 433
used in Weighing of the Heart, *426,* 427, 428
used in the Weighing of Souls, *430,* 431, 432, 433
Scandinavian images
four dwarfs supporting sky, *26,* 27
Freyr, ithyphallic, *182,* 183, 184
goddess Freyja, *158,* 159, 160
Odin, one-eyed god, *178,* 179–180, 181
Thor catching Midgardssnake, *130,* 131–132
Týr binding Fenriswolf, *126,* 127–128
Scarab
associated with birth of sun, 380
on *neb* basket supporting sun disk, *378,* 379
Scarification of body of female mourner, indicating rebirth, *442,* 443
Scavenger, Anubis as jackal, 427
Scorpion
on body of goddess Camuṇḍā, *162,* 163, 164
stinger, as tail of serpent-dragon Mushhush, *114,* 115
Scribe
Amenhotep Son of Hapu, *346,* 347, 348
Gaṇeśa transcribing *Mahābhārata,* 111
of the gods, Thoth as, 83
Thoth, and Weighing of the Heart, *426,* 427, 428
Scroll. *See also* Book.
Christ holding, referring to Apocalypse, *458,* 460
King David and prophet Isaiah holding as prophetic writing, *58,* 59
Sea. *See also* Creation, from sea; Water.
churning of milk ocean, *34,* 35, 36
created from blood of Ymir, primordial being, 27
crossing the Red Sea, *462,* 463–64
four beasts emerging from, vision of Daniel, 387
Queen Triśalā dreaming of milk ocean, *410,* 411, 412
and sky, lotus connecting, 232
Sea monster, two-headed serpent Sisiutl, *138,* 139
Seasons. *See* Four seasons
Second Isaiah, glossary definition, 477
Secret society. *See* Society
Sed festival, Ptah embracing Sesostris I, 267–68
Seder
and coming of Elijah, 384
reliving Exodus, crossing of Red Sea, 463
Sedes Sapientiae, *290,* 291
(glossary definition) 373
Seduction of Buddha Śākyamuni by Māra's three daughters, 304
Seeds, relics as, within womb chamber of stupa, 55–56
Seer. *See* Diviner; Mediator, medial woman as
Seidr (ecstatic divination), taught by Freyja, 159
Self
ankh as, 380
Buddha-to-be as truthful youth and, 261
cosmic person as, 17
cow goddess Hathor suckling pharaoh as image of, 88
golden crown symbolizing, 285
identification with, dangers of in asceticism, 440–41
Kūkai as child symbolizing, 257
twins symbolizing, 377
universal, in Hinduism, and enlightenment in Buddhism, 20–21
Sengen Shrine, below Mount Fuji, *38,* 39
Sengenji (temple), below Mount Fuji, *38,* 39
Separation of world parents, An and Ki, by Enlil (their son), 47
Sephardim, glossary definition, 213
Septuagint, glossary definition, 345
Seraph, glossary definition, 221
Serpent. *See* Snake
Servant woman, and Judith beheading Holofernes, *326,* 327, 328
Śeṣa
(glossary definition) 13
snake of Hindu creation myth, 11
Sesostris I, embraced by Ptah, *266,* 267
Seti I, glossary definition, 277
Seven. *See* Head, seven-headed
Seven branches of *menorah,* *474,* 475, 476

Seven grades of initiation governed by seven planets, in Mithraic religion, 468
Seven jewels of *cakravartin*, *270*, 271–72, 273
Seven shells of golden egg, 11
Seven steps of infant Buddha, *250*, 251
Sexual union. *See* Marriage, sexual union
Sexuality
 Aphrodite goddess of, *146*, 147
 and rebirth after death, 159–60, 184, 443, 444
Shadows, sinners as, at Last Judgment, *434*, 435
Shah-namah, illustration of, Bahrām the Gor killing dragon, *322*, 323
Shakti. *See* Śakti
Shalako, glossary definition, 189
Shaman. *See also* Diviner; Healer; Mediator; Priest; Prophet.
 (glossary definition) 405
 bear connected with shamanic rites of healing, 96
 Freyja as goddess of shamanism, 160
 having extraordinary access to spiritual power, 407
 having special access to the unconscious, 409
 Land Otter Man as ally of, 404
 mask of, female spirit-patron, *406*, 407–408
Shame, and fall of man, 419, 420, 423, 425
Shape shifter. *See also* Transformation.
 Daphne turning into tree, *446*, 447, 448, 449
 Odin as snake and as eagle, 180
 shaman as, 407
 Zeus as swan, making love to Leda, *214*, 215, 216
Sheep
 Christ carrying, as good shepherd, *338*, 339, 340, 341
 as the righteous and goats as the unjust at Last Judgment, 435
Shell
 seven shells of golden egg in creation myth, 11
 Viṣṇu holding, churning milk ocean, *34*
Shells, cowrie
 necklaces of, covering man and woman, *354*, 355
 as sign of trade, wealth, and honor, 356
Shepherd, Christ as good, *338*, 339–41
Shield
 of Athena as mirror, used by Perseus to decapitate Medusa, 123, 125
 medicine, of Arapoosh, *194*, 195–96
Shingon Buddhism, founded by Kūkai, 255–56
Shintō
 (glossary definition) 41
 and Buddhism, combined in Mount Fuji pilgrimage *maṇḍala*, *38*, 39–40
 and Buddhism, Hachiman as Buddhist monk, *198*, 199
Ship
 death and fertility in connection with, 184
 magic (Skidbladnir), 184
Shootingway chant, sand painting of Father Sky and Mother Earth, created for, *202*, 203–205
Shotoku Taishi, glossary definition, 257
Shoulders of Ishtar, weapons emerging from, *206*, 207
Shrine
 harmika at summit of Great Stupa at Sāñcī, *54*, 55, 56–57
 Sengen, below Mount Fuji, *38*, 39
 shaped as temple pylon, Anubis as jackal or dog resting on, *98*, 99
Siddharta Gautama. *See* Buddha, historical (Śākyamuni)
Siddhi and Ṛddhi (wives of Gaṇeśa), 112
Sigurd, glossary definition, 29
Simbi (water divinities), polluting or imbuing water with healing powers, 107
Simo society (secret society of Baga), as keepers of sacred order, 155
Sin
 sinners as shadows at Last Judgment, *434*, 435
 symbolized by number eleven, 67
Sirens, four, as Platonic symbols of harmony personifying rivers of paradise, *294*, 295
Sisiutl, two-headed serpent, *138*, 139
Sisters
 Discontent, Delight, and Desire, tempting Buddha Śākyamuni, 304
 Gorgons: Sthenno, Euryale, and Medusa, 123
Sistrum, goddess playing for child dancing on lotus, *230*, 231, 232
Sītā and Rāma, in forest, *190*, 191
Śiva
 (glossary definition) 21
 the Blue-Throated One, holding poison in his throat, 35
 as *liṅga* within Khaṇḍarīya Mahādeva Temple, 43
 and Pārvatī sitting in cremation ground, *438*, 439, 440, 441
 and Pārvatī, parents of Gaṇeśa, 111
 Śiva-Pārvatī, "the lord whose half is woman," *358*, 359–61
Six. *See also* Head, six-headed.
 six perfections, in Buddhism, 259
 six petals of flower, at center of labyrinth at Chartres, *66*, 67, 68
Size. *See* Hierarchy expressed by means of size
Skanda
 and Gaṇeśa, brothers as rivals, 112
 stringing skull necklace with Śiva and Pārvatī in cremation ground, *438*, 439
Skaoaga, mortal woman, suckling bear child, *246*, 247, 248, 249
Skeleton in front of Śiva and Pārvatī in cremation ground, *438*, 439
Skidbladnir (magic ship of Freyr), 184
Skin
 human, goddess Coatlicue wearing around neck, *166*, 167
 of Pallas, aegis made of, 239
 snake shedding, symbol of immortality, 80
Skin, black
 of Moon as Above Person, *194*, 195
 of terrible mother Camuṇḍā, *162*, 163
 of Twisted Face (mask), *119*, 120
Skin, blue
 of attendants of goddess Chinnamastā, *470*, 471
 of Śiva, holding poison in his throat, 35
 of Kṛṣṇa, *170*
Skin, colored
 blackened, in emulation of Tezcatlipoca, 64
 blue and green, of twin war gods, *186*, 187
 green of Nommo, water spirit, 363
 green, of personified four rivers of paradise, *294*, 295
 red, of Land Otter Man, *402*, 403
 white, of Śiva as ascetic, covered with ashes, *438*, 439
Skirnir, messenger of Freyr, wooing Gerdr, 183
Skirt of snakes, worn by goddess Coatlicue, representing humankind, *166*, 167
Skull. *See also* Head.
 of Adam, below crucified Christ, *414*, 415
 belt buckle, of Coatlicue, *166*, 167
 Mount Golgatha, meaning "place of the skull," 415
 of primordial being Ymir made into sky, supported by four dwarfs, *26*, 27
 Śiva as Skull Bearer, 439–40
Skullcap. *See* Headdress
Skull necklace
 of Camuṇḍā, *162*, 163
 of Chinnamastā and attendants, *470*, 471
 Śiva stringing, *438*, 439
Sky. *See also* Heaven; Sky and earth; Sky god/goddess.
 made from skull of primordial being Ymir, supported by four dwarfs, *26*, 27
 and sea, lotus connecting, 232
 supported by eleven spirits, *22*, 23
 as tree overarching earth, 275
 and water, swan associated with, 215
Sky and earth
 as cup and disk forming head of female figure, *22*, 23
 Father Sky and Mother Earth, *202*, 203–205
 personified by An and Ki, Ur ziggurat as image of their reunion after separation, *46*, 47, 49
 upper and lower chambers of divination vessel as, 399, 400–401
Sky god/goddess. *See also* Queen of heaven.
 Father Sky, *202*, 203–205
 Hathor as cow, *86*, 87
 Nyame, 399
 Týr, holding ax, binding Fenriswolf, *126*, 127–28
Slavery, freedom from, crossing of Red Sea, 463
Sleep, drunken, of Holofernes beheaded by Judith, 328
Smith, Hephaistos, assisting Zeus at birth of Athena, *238*, 239
Smokeless fire, Queen Triśalā dreaming of, *410*, 411, 412
Snails on leather thongs of Coatlicue, representing thirteen heavens, *166*, 167
Snake. *See also* Dragons.
 belt, of Camuṇḍā, *162*, 163
 belt, of Chinnamastā and attendants, *470*, 471
 of blood, flowing from goddess Coatlicue, *166*, 167
 breath as serpentine energy, 359
 cobras, pair of, as protector on ankh mirror case, *378*, 379
 cosmic, Thor catching Midgardssnake, *130*, 131–32
 cosmic, Vāsuki used to churn milk ocean, *34*, 35
 dragons encircling trees flanking Maitreya, *310*, 311, 312
 and egg, Viṣṇu resting on Śeṣa within cosmic egg, 11
 and Eve, *418*, 419–20, 423, 424
 hair, of Medusa, *122*, 123

Snake (*continued*)
and moon, symbols of immortality and rebirth, 264
nāgas, in relation to Chinese dragon, 252
necklace, of Camuṇḍā, *162*, 163
necklace, of Chinnamastā and attendants, *470*, 471
posture of serpentine fluidity, *358*, 359
as power of transformation, 80–81
prostrating posture of Eve related to snake, *422*, 424
punishment of, to crawl on its belly, 423
rattlesnake as head and hands of goddess Coatlicue, *166*, 167–68
related to death and burial, 263, 264
shedding skin, symbol of immortality, 80
skirt, of goddess Coatlicue, representing humankind, *166*, 167
as soul of ancestors, 80
as souls of the dead, 264
as spirit, Kuṇḍalinī, 352
on staff, trident of Śiva, *358*, 359
and tree of knowledge, *418*, 419–20, 423
wisdom of, in garden of Eden, 419–20, 424, 425
Snake god/goddess
Athena as snake or as bird, 240
Coatlicue, *166*, 167–68
with snake child, *262*, 263–64
Zeus Meilichios, *79*, 80
Snakes, pair of
crowned with sun disk, on ankh mirror case, *378*, 379
on curtain of Torah ark, referring to garden of Eden, *30*, 31
intertwined, Tantric, *350*, 351–52
rattlesnake heads facing one another as head of Coatlicue, *166*, 167–68
two-headed Sisiutl facing himself, *138*, 139
Society
False Face, Twisted Face mask used in healing rituals, 119–20
Simo, of Baga, keepers of sacred order, 155
Sol, glossary definition, 469
Solstice
chaos and renewal at winter, 187–88
winter, and birth of Mithra, sun deity, 235–36
Soma. *See* Ambrosia
Son. *See also* Brothers; Fathers and sons; Mother and son.
obedient, Rāma, 191
Sophia, identified with Virgin Mary, 291–92
Soul
of ancestors, snake as, 80
bee as symbol of, 104
of deceased twin represented by carved figure, 375, 376
guided to Western Paradise by Avalokiteśvara, *314*, 315
head as seat of, 175
longing for the divine expressed in embrace of loving couple, *226*, 227
longing for the divine expressed in vision of Saint Teresa, *218*, 219
as naked body at Last Judgment, *430*, 431
weighing of, *430*, 431, 432
Sparrow, as companion of Aphrodite, 147–48
Speaking in tongues, by apostles at Pentecost, 59, 60
Spear, angel holding golden, in vision of Saint Teresa, *218*, 219
Speech. *See also* Language; Speaking in tongues; Word.
Nommo divinities of, *22*, 23, 24, *362*, 363
Sphere. *See* Orb
Spindle, Virgin Mary holding, *222*, 223, 224, 225
Spine as *axis mundi*, two snakes spiraling around, 352
Spinning. *See* Spindle, Weaving
Spirit. *See also* Earth divinity; Holy Spirit; Land spirits; Water divinities.
as bird or as snake, 352
Moon as Above Person, *194*, 195–96, 197
Spirit and instinct
Christ in tree of life as union of, *294*, 295, 296
Pegasus as union of, 124
and vision of Daniel, 388–89
Spittle
of gods creating Kvasir, 180
Lébé licking priest to convey spiritual sustenance, 364
Spring festival of Zeus Meilichios, 79
Squares. *See also* Circle and square.
shower of, representing rain or wealth, *270*, 271, 272
Squash, growing from center of Mother Earth, *202*
Squatting. *See* Posture, squatting
Staff
of Buddhist monk, *198*, 199, 200
of chief, as living *axis mundi*, 108
of chief, lion-man on top, *106*, 107, 108
of Christ as good shepherd, *338*, 339
goad of elephant god Gaṇeśa, *110*, 111
of Moses, used to part Red Sea, *462*, 463
as support and as weapon for defense, 108
trident of Śiva, encircled by snake, *358*, 359
Stairs
in four directions of Jain preaching hall, *298*, 299
of Ur ziggurat, uniting heaven and earth, *46*, 47
Star
of Bethlehem and Nativity, *242*, 243
"fallen," or meteorite as sacred rock, 235, 236
name of Tārā connected with, 151
stars, sun, and moon on body of Father Sky, *202*, 203
Stepped pyramid, form of Jain preaching hall, *298*, 299
Sthenno (one of three Gorgons), 122
Stick. *See* Staff
Stone. *See also* Jewel; Rock.
altar, circular, *478*, 479–80
black, of Mecca and Dome of the Rock, 51, 52
black, of Pessinus, epiphany of Cybele, 52, 236
gaze of Medusa turning victims into, 123, 124, 125
gaze of Sisiutl turning victims into, 139
symbol of endurance, suggesting eternity, 236
worship of stones in various cultures, 52–53
Storm. *See also* Thunder.
god, Tištrya, divine model for dragon slayer, 324
Indra sending, over worshipers of Kṛṣṇa, *170*, 171
as punishment by creator god Nzambi, 107
Storm god, Tištrya, divine model for dragon slayer, 324
Striding posture of pharaoh, *86*, 87
Strife. *See* Battle between opposite forces
Stupa
(glossary definition) 273
as *aṇḍa* ("egg") alluding to mystery of generation, 55–56
Great Stupa at Sāñcī, *54*, 55–56
as tomb and shrine, uniting symbolism of life and death, 56–57
Sublimatio as ascending bird, 216
Subtle body, solar *nāḍī* and lunar *nāḍī* of, as intertwined snakes, 352
Suckling
pharaoh suckled by cow goddess Hathor, *86*, 87–89
Skaoaga, mortal woman, suckling bear child, *246*, 247, 248, 249
snake goddess suckling snake child, *262*, 263–64
sycamore goddess suckling Thutmose III, *274*, 275, 276
Suffering
crucifixion of Christ paradigm of, 416
fall of man as mythical explanation of, 419, 420, 424
Sun
birth of, related to scarab, 380
Harpocrates as morning sun, 231–32
lion, wheel, and lotus as solar symbols, *90*, 92
Nativity of Sun Stick Festival, sun supported by stick, 108
wheel, of Sūrya temple, *2*, 3, 4, 5
"woman robed with," *134*, 135–37
Sun and moon
above crucified Christ, *414*, 415
created from churning milk ocean, 35
and grain, as generation of cosmos, *142*, 143
Mount Fuji flanked by, *38*, 39, 40
as pair of snakes spiraling around *axis mundi*, 351–52
personified, flanking Christ in tree of life, *294*, 295, 296
Queen Triśalā dreaming of, *410*, 411–12
and stars, on body of Father Sky, *202*, 203
wolves devouring, marking the beginning of Ragnarǫk, 128–29
Sun chariot
of sun god Helios, *6*, 7, 8
of sun god Sūrya, 3, 4
Sun father, glossary definition, 189
Sun god
Ashur, 4
Helios at center of wheel of zodiac, *6*, 7, 8
Mithra, 467
Shamash, 4
Sūrya, 3, 4, 5
Sun horse
and sun god, 3
white, created from churning of milk ocean, *34*, 35
Sūrya (sun god), wheel of his temple, *2*, 3, 4, 5
Susanna and elders, *342*, 343–44
Svetāmbara, glossary definition, 301
Swamp, frog emerging from primordial water, 75
Swan
associated with sky, water, spring, new life, and prosperity, 215
associated with sun and music, 449

as creation out of waters, 448
priests of Eleusis as descendants of, 448
sacred to Aphrodite, 148, 216
sacred to Apollo, *446*, 447, 448
as vehicle to otherworld, 448
Zeus as, making love to Leda, *214*, *215*, 216
Swastika
ground plan of stupa arranged as, 55, 56
Sweets, Gaṇeśa holding, *110*, 111
Sword
golden, of warrior Chrusaor, 123
Judith beheading Holofernes with, *326*, 327
sickle, Ishtar holding, *206*, 207
Sycamore goddess suckling Thutmose III, *274*, 275
Synagogue (Beth Alpha), floor mosaic of zodiac, *6*, 7
Synchronicity and divination, 396–97
Syncretism. *See* Religions, meetings between
Syria. *See* Near East images

Table, round
as altar, *478*, 479–80
Virgin Mary and Apostles seated at, Holy Spirit descending, *390*, 391
Tales of Ise, illustration from, Eight Bridges, *366*, 367–67
Talmud, glossary definition, 9
Talons. *See also* Claws.
of snake-dragon Mushhush, *114*, 115
Tantrism
(glossary definition) 165
and male and female polarity, 227
goddess Chinnamastā, *470*, 471–72
two intertwined snakes in, *350*, 351–52
Tao-an, founder of Chinese Buddhism, 308
Tārā
goddess of compassion, *150*, 151–52, 153
seated on lion throne, *150*, 151
Tears
in connection with grief and fertility, 444
goddess Tārā born from, of Avalokiteśvara, 151
of gold, Freyja weeping, 159
before image of Tārā making her image come alive, 152
Tellem, ancient group of people replaced by Dogon, 23
Temple, Jewish
destruction and restoration of, and *menorah*, 475, 476
two columns of, on curtain of Torah ark, *30*, 31
Temple of Solomon
(glossary definition) 329
Dome of the Rock site of, 51–52
Temples. *See also* Sacred space.
Khaṇḍarīya Mahādeva, *42*, 43–44
Manuha, interior showing colossal Buddha, *302*, 303
as mountain, Khaṇḍarīya Mahādeva, *42*, 43, 44
Nanpaya, pillar with Brahmā offering lotus to Buddha, *18*, 19
Sengenji, below Mount Fuji, *38*, 39
Sūrya, wheel of chariot, *2*, 3
Temptation
of Buddha Śākyamuni by Māra, 303–304
of Eve by Satan, *418*, 419–20, 421, *422*, 423
Tenochtitlán, city at center of earth, 167
Teresa, Saint (of Ávila), ecstasy of, *218*, 219–21
Testicles, birth of Aphrodite from, 451
Tezcatlipoca
(glossary definition) 65
"smoking mirror," 64
Theseus, glossary definition, 69
Thicket of papyrus reeds, cow goddess Hathor emerges from, *86*, 87, 88
Thief
Eve taking fruit of tree of knowledge, *418*, 419–20, *422*, 423
Odin stealing mead of poetry from giants, 180
trickster Yurugu stealing fertility and speech from earch, 363
Thirteen
dancers around Xocotl, sacred tree, *62*, 63
thirteenth heaven at highest point of goddess Coatlicue, 167
Thor
(glossary definition) 129
catching Midgardssnake, *130*, 131–32
protector of cosmic order, 132
Thoth
(glossary definition) 429
as ibis, and Maat, *82*, 83–84
ibis-headed, and Weighing of the Heart, *426*, 427
as moon god and as god of wisdom, *82*, 83
Thought. *See also* Word.
creation by, Brahmā, 20
Hugin (thought) and Muninn (memory), ravens of Odin, 179
Three. *See* Trefoil; Triangle
Three angels pointing to nativity of Christ, *242*, 243, 244
Three brothers in Jātaka tale, *258*, 259–61
Three gods
Mithra, Cautes, and Cautopates as "triple Mithra," *466*, 467
on three peaks of Mount Fuji, *38*, 40
Three jewels hard to attain, as pile of gems in dream of Queen Triśalā, *410*, 412
Three Magi riding toward Bethlehem, *242*, 243
Three sisters
Discontent, Delight, and Desire, tempting Buddha Śākyamuni, 304
Gorgons (Sthenno, Euryale, and Medusa), 123
Three women at empty tomb of Christ, *458*, 459
Threshold. *See* Door; Gates
Throat
Adam clutching, *418*, 419
blue, Śiva holding poison in, 35
Throne. *See also* Chair; Throne, feminine as.
Ancient in Years on, *386*, 387, 388
Christ on, at Last Judgment, *434*, 435
hieroglyphic for Isis, 276
lion, goddess Tārā on, *150*, 151, 152
mountain as, three divinities seated on three peaks of Mount Fuji, *38*, 40
of Wisdom, *290*, 291–92
Throne, feminine as
goddess Tārā enthroned, *150*, 151, 152
Potnia Theron, mistress of animals, enthroned, *142*
Virgin Mary and Christ Child enthroned, *290*, 291
Thunder. *See also* Storm.
thunderbolt, Zeus holding at birth of Athena, *238*, 239
thundercloud releasing water to bath of infant Buddha, *250*, 251
Thunder god
Indra, sending storm over worshipers of Kṛṣṇa, *170*, 171
lightning arrow on top of head of one of twin war gods, *186*, 187
Thutmose III suckled by sycamore goddess, *274*, 275
Tiamat and Apsu in Babylonian creation myth, 115–16, 117
Time. *See also* Calendar; Four seasons; Golden age
cyclical, in Buddhism, 308
cyclical, in connection with sun wheel from Sūrya temple, 4
fifty-two-year cycles of Aztec calendar, 63
Tīrthaṃkara, in Jain preaching hall, *298*, 299–300
Tištrya (storm god), divine model for hero and dragon slayer, 324
Tlingit, glossary definition, 97
Toad. *See* Frog
Tobacco, growing out of center of Mother Earth, 203
Tōdaiji, Hachiman protector of, 199
Tomb
cave as, 244–45
empty, of Christ, depicted as mausoleum, *458*, 459
guardian of, Anubis as jackal or dog, *98*, 99
stupa as tomb and shrine, 56–57
Tongue
biting one's, for blood to kill monster Sisiutl, 139
of fire, of Holy Spirit at Pentecost, 391
frog-shaped, of shaman's mask, *406*, 407, 408
or word, creation by, 267
Tongue, protruding
of Fenriswolf, *126*, 127
of lion-man, expressing aggressiveness, *106*, 107
of Medusa, *122*, 123
of Odin, and hanging, *178*, 179
Torah
(glossary definition) 33
ark, covered by curtain depicting entrance to paradise, *30*, 31
crown, *282*, 283–84
parchment adornment not permitted, only external decoration of, 283
personified, and dressing of, 283
Torch, Mithra holding, as begetter of light, *234*, 235
Tortoise, supporting cosmic mountain, *34*, 35
Transcendence
as ascent of Mount Fuji, 40
transcendent function compared to Maitreya as redeemer, 313
Transformation
Daphne turning into tree, *446*, 447, 448, 449
of giant into divine healer and culture hero, 120
of monster (Sisiutl) into protector, 139
of negative feminine, beheading of Medusa as, 124
as sacrifice, in connection with circular altar, 480–81
snake as power of, 80–81
through self-sacrifice, Chinnamastā, *470*, 471, 472

Travelers, Twisted Face as guardian of, 119
Tray
depicting Siuhu's house at center of labyrinth, *70*, 71
used in divination, *394*, 395
Tree
as cross, dance around, 280
as cross, Xocotl, image of god on, *62*, 63–64, 65
dragon-flower, Maitreya under, *310*, 311
of enlightenment, Maitreya under, *310*, 311
laurel, of Daphne and Apollo, 447–448
nourishing, *274*, 275, 276, 277
olive, and *menorah*, vision of Zechariah, *474*, 475, 476–477
pair of trees encircled by dragons flanking Maitreya, *310*, 311
sacred, dance around Xocotl, *62*, 63–64, 65
Śiva and Pārvatī sitting under, *438*, 439
signifying universe in endless generation, 276
as vehicle for communication with gods, 65
Tree goddess
Daphne turning into tree, *447*, 448, 449, 450
Isis as sycamore, suckling Thutmose III, *274*, 275–76
Tree of knowledge
and fall of man, *418*, 419–20, *422*, 423, 424
and tree of life as olive trees flanking *menorah* in vision of Zechariah, *474*, 476
Tree of life
Christ standing in, *294*, 295, 296
design on Torah curtain, *30*, 31
in garden of Eden, *418*, 419
growing out of tomb of Christ, *458*, 459–60, 461
Trefoil pattern on hide of cow goddess Hathor, *86*, 87
Triangle (inverted), symbol of the feminine, *470*, 471
pubic, of snake goddess, *262*, 263
Tribes. *See* Twelve tribes of Israel
Trickster
trickster god Eṣu, 355–57
Yurugu as fox, 23
Yurugu defiling creation, 363, 364, 365
Trident encircled by snake, Śiva holding, *358*, 359
Trinity, glossary definition, 69
Triśalā, Queen, dreaming, *410*, 411–12
Truth, Maat goddess of, and Weighing of the Heart, *426*, 427
Tun-huang cave chapel
sculpture of Ānanda, *330*, 331
sculpture of Mahākāśyapa, *334*, 335
Turtle (snapping), as rattle, used in healing, 120
Tuṣita Heaven, Maitreya under dragon-flower tree in, *310*, 311
Tusk (broken), of elephant god Gaṇeśa, *110*, 111
Tutankhamen
ankh mirror case from tomb of, *378*, 379
Anubis as jackal or dog resting on top of shrine, from tomb of, *98*, 99
Twelve apostles
(glossary definition) 69
and Virgin Mary, seated at round table, Holy Spirit descending, *390*, 391–92
Twelve tribes of Israel
as twelve paths of Red Sea, 463
as twelve signs of zodiac, 7, 283
Twins
bringing good fortune or causing harm, 375
Castor and Pollux, Helen and Clytemnestra, children of Leda, 215
gods of war, *186*, 187–88
Nommo, serpentine androgynes and culture heroes, *22*, 23–24, *362*, 363, 364, 365
as Self, 377
twin figure with beaded jacket, representing soul of deceased twin, *374*, 375–76
as opposing principles or as wholeness, 363
Twisted Face, giant transformed into healer and culture hero, *118*, 119, 120
Two. *See* Bees, pair of; Birds, pair of; Couples; Dragons, pair of; Head, two-headed; Lion, pair of lions; Snakes, pair of; Twins
Tyet
(glossary definition) 101
signifying protection, on shrine supporting canine god Anubis, *98*, 99
Tyndareus
(glossary definition) 217
king, husband of Leda, 215
Týr
(glossary definition) 133
holding ax, binding Fenriswolf, *126*, 127–28
sky god and god of battle, identified with Roman Mars, 127

Udder. *See* Suckling
Umbilical cord. *See also* Navel.
of one of twin war gods, as center of world, *186*, 187, 188
Underworld
Odin gaining runes from land of the dead, 179
western desert entrance to, 99
Underworld goddess
Camuṇḍā associated with, 164
precursor of Persephone, *142*, 143, 144
snake goddess associated with, 264
Underworld, journey to
crossing bridge, 369–70
labyrinth as descent into, 68
night, and ascension of Muḥammad, 52
Union. *See* Couples; Marriage
Universe. *See* Cosmos
Ur, glossary definition, 49
Ur Ziggurat, *46*, 47–49
Uraeus, on nemes headdress of Sesostris I, *266*, 267
Urine, used in exorcising Land Otter Man, 403
Uroboros (Midgardssnake), 132–33
Utopia. *See* Paradise

Vagina. *See also* Vulva.
of bear, as doorway, *94*, 95, 97
Valhǫll, glossary definition, 181
Valkyries, glossary definition, 181
Vanir (fertility god), cult of Freyr originating in, 183–84
Vase
full, Queen Triśalā dreaming of, *410*, 411, 412
overflowing with water, held by two goddesses, *206*, 207, 208
Vāsuki (snake), as cord in churning milk ocean, *34*, 35
Vé. *See* Odin, with Vili and Vé
Veil. *See* Curtain
Vessel. *See* Libation; Vase
Vili. *See* Odin, with Vili and Vé
Vine
pattern, on rim of colossal wheel of Sun Temple, *2*, 3
symbolizing Christ, surrounding Christ as good shepherd, *338*, 339, 340
Virgin birth and Virgin Mary, 244
Virgin goddess
Aphrodite, *146*, 147, *450*, 451
Daphne, pursued by Apollo, *446*, 447
Virgin Mary
Annunciation, Gabriel appearing to Virgin Mary, *222*, 223, 224
Annunciation as model for spiritual growth, 225
Chartres cathedral dedicated to, 68, 371
and Christ child, depicted on right portal of Chartres cathedral, *370*, 371, 372
and Christ child, enthroned, *290*, 291–92
coronation of, *286*, 287, 288, 289
and dogma of assumption, 289
flower at center of labyrinth associated with, *66*, 68
and John the Baptist, at crucifixion of Christ, *414*, 415, 416
and John the Baptist, as intercessors, 415, 416
as model for Christian church, 224, 287, 288
as queen, *286*, 287–88
seated at round table with apostles at Pentecost, *390*, 391, 392
and twelve apostles below ascension of Christ, *58*, 59–60
seated, holding spindle and portrayed as literate woman holding book, at Annunciation, *222*, 223, 224, 225
as temple maiden, 223–24
76
Vision. *See also* Dreams; Revelation.
of Daniel, Ancient in Years and four beasts, *386*, 387–89
of John the Evangelist, "woman robed with sun," and dragon, *134*, 135–37
of Kūkai, conversing with the Buddhas, 255, 256
of Saint Teresa, her heart pierced by golden spear of angel, *218*, 219, 220, 221
of Zechariah, of olive trees and *menorah*, *474*, 475–76, 477
Vision quest
(glossary definition) 409
of Arapoosh, 195–96
as model for inner journey, 196
Viṣṇu
(glossary definition) 13
and churning milk ocean, *34*, 35
resting on snake Śeṣa, dreaming creation of world in his sleep, 11
wheel as his discus, 4
Volcano (Mount Fuji), *38*, 39
Vǫluspá revealed to Odin through necromancy, 179
Vulgate, glossary definition, 345
Vulva. *See also* Triangle; Vagina.
of female mourner, *442*, 443

Wailing. *See* Weeping
Waist, representing earth of cosmic person, *15*, 16–17
War god
Ahayuta, one of twin war gods, *186*, 187–88
Hachiman, as Buddhist monk, *198*, 199

Týr, identified with Roman Mars, 127
War goddess. *See also* Love and war.
Athena born fully armed, *238*, 239, 240
Camuṇḍā, *162*, 164
Freyja, *158*, 159
Ishtar, *206*, 208, 209
Judith beheading Holofernes, connected with, 329
Mahāmāyāvijayāvāhinī, aspect of Tārā, 151
Warrior, blood of Sisiutl lending invulnerability to, 139
Wasteland, creation of Adam taking place in, 419
Watchman. *See* Guardian
Water. *See also* Ablution; Bath; Creation, of mountain rising from water; Creation, from sea; Drowning; Pond; Rivers; Sea.
Aphrodite emerging from, *450*, 451–52, 453
baptism by, 456
flowing from vessels of two goddesses, *206*, 207, 208
meander symbolizing, in old Europe, 148–49
parting of, Red Sea, *462*, 463, 464
primordial, frog emerging from, 75
purifying properties of, 452
symbol of chaos and unconscious, 452
symbol of unconscious, 456
and wind, creating cosmic egg, *10*, 11, 12
Odin drinking from well of wisdom, 179
Water divinities
Nommo, *362*, 363
simbi, polluting or imbuing water with healing powers, 107
Wealth
cattle symbol of, 88
raining from sky, generated by *cakravartin*, *270*, 271, 272
symbolized by corn pollen, 203–204
Weapons
ax, of Týr, *126*, 127
ax, of Hephaistos, *238*, 239
bow and arrow, of Bahrām the Gor killing dragon, *322*, 323
dagger, of Mithra as bull slayer, *234*, 235, 236
golden spear, of angel, piercing heart of Saint Teresa, *218*, 219, 220
golden sword, of Çhrusaor, 123
hammer, of Thor, *130*, 131
lance, of Saint George killing dragon, *318*, 319
mace, of Viṣṇu, *34*
maces, axes, sickle sword of Ishtar, *206*, 207
sword, of Judith beheading Holofernes, *326*, 327, 328
Weaving. *See also* Spindle.
Athena patron of, 239
Nommo divinities of, 24, *362*, 363
Weeping, and rebirth after death, 443, 444
Weighing
of Heart, *426*, 427, 428–29
of souls, archangel Michael and demon attending, *430*, 431, 432
Well of wisdom, Odin gaining wisdom from, 179
Wene (divine energy), 107–108
West, Hathor as Goddess of, *86*, 88
Western Paradise, Avalokiteśvara guiding souls to, *314*, 315
Wheel
four wheels on lion capital at Sarnath, *90*, 91, 92
of righteousness, *cakravartin* turner of, *270*, 271
symbol of sun god Sūrya, *2*, 3, 4
teaching of Buddha as Wheel of the Law, 91, 92
wheels of throne, of Ancient in Years, *386*, 387
of zodiac revolving around Helios at center, *6*, 7
White. *See also* Bull, white; Elephant, white; Horse, white; Skin, colored, white.
Wholeness
before separation of world parents, An and Ki, Ur ziggurat image of, *46*, 47, 49
Kūkai as child symbolizing, *254*, 256
masculine and feminine united in Śiva-Pārvatī, *358*, 359, 360–61
Nommo as twins and androgynes representing, *362*, 363, 364
unity of the Ultimate, in Tantrism, 352
Widow, Judith, beheading Holofernes, *326*, 327, 328
Wife and husband. *See* Couples
Wig of Amenhotep Son of Hapu, signifying upper classes, *346*, 347
Wind
and fire, Holy Spirit as, at Pentecost, 59, 60, 391
and water, creating cosmic egg, *10*, 11, 12
Wine and milk, honey, and blood, as libation to goddess, 143
Winged being. *See also* Angels; Birds.
dragon, Saint George killing, *318*, 319
griffin, on Torah crown, *282*, 283
lion, Mark the Evangelist as, *294*, 295
Medusa, holding winged horse Pegasus, *122*, 123
ox, Luke the Evangelist as, *294*, 295
wings symbolizing flight, freedom, and movement between heaven and earth, 429
"woman robed with sun" with eagle wings, *134*, 135, 136
Winter solstice
birth of Mithra, sun deity, 235
and world renewal, twin war gods, 187–88
Wisdom
of snake, in garden of Eden, 419–20, 424, 425
birds symbol of, 85
and compassion, in Buddhism, 3
elephant symbol of, 112
of God, personified by Christ child in lap of Virgin Mary, *290*, 291–92
Throne of, *290*, 291–92
Wisdom figure. *See also* Buddha; Christ
Ānanda, favorite disciple of Buddha, *330*, 331, 332
Kvasir, 180
Metis, and birth of Athena, 239, 240
Sophia, identified with Virgin Mary, 291–92
Wisdom god/goddess
Chinnamastā, *470*, 471
Gaṇeśa, *110*, 111, 112
Odin, through sacrificing eye and through hanging, *178*, 179, 180
Tārā, *150*, 151
Thoth, *82*, 83
Wise old man. *See also* Elders; Old man and young man
Amenhotep Son of Hapu, *346*, 347
Elijah, *382*, 383, 384, 385
God the Father as, *294*, 296
Mahākāśyapa, disciple of Buddha, *334*, 335, 336
Wish-fulfilling
gesture, of Tārā, *150*, 151
jewel, *270*, 271, 273
Witch, in connection with Freyja, 160
Wolf
devouring sun and moon, marking the beginning of Ragnarǫk, 128–29
Fenriswolf, Týr binding with magic ropes, *126*, 127–28
wolves and lamb, Susanna and elders as, 344
Woman
lip plug denoting, *406*, 407
"woman robed with sun" and dragon, vision of John, *134*, 135–37
Womb. *See also Garbha gṛha*
cave as, 244
of earth bringing forth life and receiving the dead, 468–69
golden, cosmic egg as, *10*, 11, 12
return to, by journey through labyrinth at Chartres, *66*, 68
womblike halo, surrounding Kūkai as child, *254*, 255
Word
beneficent, entering into genitals of women, increasing fertility, 23, 363
of god, Nommo bringing to womb of Mother Earth, 23, 363, 364
revealed by God in Torah, 283
revealed to scribe by a god, 348
or "tongue," creation by, 267
World axis. *See Axis mundi*
Writer. *See* Scribe

Xipe Totec, goddess Coatlicue and, 167
Xiuhtecuhtli (fire god), 63
Xocotl (ceremonial tree), dance around, *62*, 63–64, 65
Xocotlhuetzi, tenth month of Aztec calendar, 63
X-ray style, glossary definition, 97

Yantra
(glossary definition) 17
active imagination and, 300–301
cosmic person as universe, *14*, 15
goddess Chinnamastā, *470*, 471, 472
meditation diagram, of Jain preaching hall, *298*, 299
pair of intertwined snakes, *350*, 351
Yatsuhashi
eight bridges episode in *Tales of Ise*, 367
Year, circle of, as wreath of fruit placed on circular altar, 479
Ymir
sacrificed to create cosmos, 16
skull of, made into sky, supported by four dwarfs, *26*, 27
Yoni, glossary definition, 185
Yoruba people, ancient history of, 279
Young man and old man. *See* Old man and young man
Young woman and old woman. *See* Old woman and young woman
Youth, wisdom of, manifested in figure of Ānanda, *330*, 331, 332
Yurugu (Dogon trickster), 23, 363, 364

Zechariah, vision of olive trees and
    menorah, *474*, 475–76, 477
Zeus
    (glossary definition) 149
    birth of, 103
    feeding on milk and honey as
        infant, 103
    as swan, making love to Leda,
        214, 215, 216
Zeus Meilichios, as large snake with
    attendants, *78*, 79
Ziggurat, at Ur, *46*, 47–49
Zigzag movement
    bridge forming, *366*, 367
    path of pilgrims on Mount Fuji
        making, *38*, 39
Zimri-Lim, coronation by Ishtar,
    206, 207–209
Zodiac
    decorating Torah crown, *282*, 283
    images of, within Judaism, 7–8
    twelve signs of, as twelve tribes of
        Israel, 7, 283
    wheel, of, revolving around He-
        lios at center, *6*, 7
Zuni, glossary definition, 189

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