

A. K. COOMARASWAMY

# Symbolism of Indian Architecture

Introduction

by

PRAMOD CHANDRA



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Coomaraswamy's dicta are more relevant to us today than these were in any preceding age; the post - Independence period has registered a rapid decline of cultural values and institutions and their lithic symbols, which were integral to our way of life, have almost been forgotten. He pleads for their meaning and efficacy :—

".....in considering only materials and stresses, of which an admirable knowledge may exist in theory, we are leaving out the builder. Does nothing depend upon him, upon his honesty, for example? Is it of no consequence whatever if he mixes too much sand with his mortar? as he will surely do, whatever the text-book says, if he is building only for profit, and not for use? Arguing not merely on principle, but also from personal contact with hereditary craftsmen in whom a tradition of workmanship has been transmitted through countless generations, we affirm that so long as faith remains, that the attribution of superhuman origins and symbolic significance to architecture and the participation of the architect in metaphysical rites in which a direct connection is made of macrocosmic with microcosmic proportions, confer upon the architect a human dignity and a responsibility far other than that of the 'Contractor', who at the best may calculate that 'Honesty is the best policy'. We say that further that it is not merely a question of ethics; but that the recognition of the possibility of an 'ARTISTIC SIN', as a thing distinct in kind from 'MORAL SIN'."

It is surprising that though he wrote this in the thirties, he was speaking for us in the eighties. We wish if today our builders, and for that matter any professional artisan or intellectual, could only distinguish between 'Moral Sin' and 'Artistic Sin'.

It was originally published in the Indian Historical Quarterly Calcutta, Vol. XIV (1938) pp.1-56 as 'SYMBOLISM OF THE DOME'. We have changed the title to 'SYMBOLISM OF INDIAN ARCHITECTURE' as, essentially, it deals with the vertically rising 'Skambha' ( Pillar ) and spherically spreading 'Stūpa', the two basic constituents of Indian Architecture. We have inserted a suitable title to each of its three parts; these parts were not entitled in the original article. We have also added Sanskrit equivalents in Devanagari script to make it more useful, An Introduction by Professor Pramod Chandra ( George P. Bickford Professor of Indian Art, Harvard University ) and a Bibliography of Coomaraswamy's works on Indian Architecture have also been given. We feel, reprint of a classic of such a great author as Coomaraswamy should not be a photocopy, produced shabbily through a mechanical process; it is a sincere effort to make it as far more useful to the modern reader as possible, to convey the author's thoughts in a fuller context and setting.

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Ar</b>	— Āraṇyaka ( e. g. Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka )
<b>Arch. Gloss</b>	— Architectural Glossary
<b>Av</b>	— Atharva - Veda
<b>Br</b>	— Brāhmaṇa ( e. g. Pañca-Viṃsa-Brāhmaṇa )
<b>Dh.Sū</b>	— Dharmā-Sūtra ( e. g. Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra )
<b>JAOS</b>	— Journal of the American Oriental Society Baltimore
<b>JISOA</b>	— Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art Calcutta
<b>JRAS</b>	— Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society London
<b>Kāty.Śr</b>	— Kātyāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra
<b>Ṛv</b>	— Ṛg-Veda
<b>ŚB</b>	— Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa
<b>Up</b>	— Upaniṣad ( e. g. Īsopaniṣad )

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Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877-1947), whose broad-ranging contributions are vital to the proper study of Indian art, is best known for the great work he did in reconstructing the history and meaning of Indian sculpture and painting. His splendid achievement in the field of Indian architecture, however, is not as well known. These remarkable studies were essentially inaugurated by a masterly study of Indian architectural terms (1928) where he used his linguistic skills and his intimate knowledge of traditional architecture to lay bare both the **pratyakṣa** and **parokṣa** meanings of important technical terms gathered from literature and architectural texts. Soon to follow were two superb studies (1930-31) in which he recreates the architecture of ancient Indian cities with their sacred shrines, palaces, city gates, and residential buildings, paying attention to details such as doors, windows and similar features, all this by combing literature and representations in relief sculpture, the architecture itself having for the most part vanished. In the process Coomaraswamy was able to establish the continuity of certain aspects of Indian architecture right down to relatively recent times and also the origin of the north Indian **śikhara** with its decorative **jāla** of interlaced pattern, a problem that had baffled earlier scholars.

Through these studies, and also those pursued in the course of the laborious preparation of the *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* (1927) Coomaraswamy was able to bring the material facts and minutiae under firm control, at least to the extent possible at the time he was writing. This done, he proceeded to explore the inner meaning of the form itself in an article of the greatest importance, the 'Symbolism of the Dome' (1938) which is reproduced here as 'SYMBOLISM OF INDIAN ARCHITECTURE' a title chosen by the publishers to give what they think is a more adequate idea of its contents. The origins of a structural form, Coomaraswamy speculates, can be studied either from a technical or a logical point of view, either as fulfilling a function or expressing a meaning, the function and significance coinciding in the form of a traditional architecture,

whether that of the Hindu temple, the Eskimo igloo or the wigwam of the great American Indian tribes that wandered over the vast prairie of the United States. He firmly rejected the view that symbolic meanings are *read into* the *facts* which *must* originally have had no meaning but only a physical efficiency as the reading of the modern mentality into that of the primitive artificer. Thus the Hindu temple was not only a monument providing shelter to the image and the worshippers, but was the cosmos itself, the house of God and also his body, reproducing in its parts the drama of disintegration and reintegration, recreation and dissolution which is the central theme of the Hindu myth and its ritual enactment in the sacrifice.

Coomaraswamy's work on Indian architecture, rooted as it was in historical method but attempting nevertheless to transcend its limitations, is a landmark for students. The publishers are to be thanked for making more easily available this great and inspiring study which though published almost fifty years ago is of as great significance to us today as when it first appeared.

Pramod Chandra

## PART - I

### Architectural Representation of the World Creation

The origin of any structural form can be considered either from an archaeological and technical or from a logical and aesthetic, or rather cognitive, point of view; in other words, either as fulfilling a function or as expressing a meaning. We hasten to add that these are logical, not real distinction; function and significance coincide in the form of the work; however, we may ignore the one or the other in making use of the work as a thing essential to the active life of the body or dispositive to the contemplative life of the spirit.

Inasmuch as we are here mainly concerned with significance, we need not emphasize the importance in architectural history of the problem presented by the superposition of a domed (or barrel-vaulted) roof upon a rectangular base, nor go into the question of how, where homogeneous materials such as mud or wattle were in use, this was originally very simply solved (and even more easily in the case of a tent of skins or woven material) by a gradual obliteration of the angles as the walls were built up; and how subsequently where stone or brick was employed, the same problem was solved in two ways structurally, either by spanning (trabeation, squinches) or by building forward from the angles (corbelling, pendentives). We propose to ask rather *why*, than *how* "the square chamber is *obliged* to forsake its plan and strain forward to meet the round dome in which it must terminate"<sup>1</sup>, and whether it is altogether accidentally, so to speak, that our domes "appear to have been *destined* to symbolise the passage from Unity to quadrature through the mediation of the triangle of the squinches";<sup>2</sup> and why in the north porch of the Erechtheion "immediately above the trident-mark (of Poseidon) an opening in the roof had been *purposely* left."<sup>3</sup> We might have expressed the problem otherwise by asking "Why should the walls of a tepee or sides of a pyramid contract towards a common point in which their independent existence ceases?"; or again, in the case of a dome supported by pillars, by asking, "Why should these pillars either actually (as in the case of certain bamboo constructions) or virtually (as is evident if we consider the

arch as a dome in cross-section) converge towards the common apex of their separated being, which apex is in fact their 'key'?"

In this matter of procedure from unity to quadrature there is something analogous to the work of the three **R̥bhus** in making four cups out of **Tvaṣṭr's** one. These **R̥bhus** compose a triad of "artists",<sup>4</sup> who are described as "Men of the interspace, or air" (**antariṅsasya narāḥ** अंतरिक्षस्य नराः), and are said to have quartered the Titan's cup (**çamaṣam, pātram** चमषं, पात्रं), as it were measuring out a field" (**ḷsetram iva vi mamuḥ** क्षेत्रं इव वि = ममुः, **Ṛv. I. 110.3-5**). The reference is undoubtedly to the primordial act of creation by which a "place" is prepared for those who are eager to emerge from the antenatal tomb, to escape the bonds of **Varuṇa**. Attention may be called to the expression **vi mamuḥ** ( वि = ममुः ) from **vi mā**. ( वि = मा ) to "measure out" or "lay out", and hence to "plan" or even "construct". The root with its prefix occurs notably in the word **vimāna** ( विमान ) which often coincides with **ratha** ( रथ chariot ) as the designation of what is at once the "palace" and the "vehicle" of the Gods ( i. e. the revolving universe ),<sup>5</sup> and which occurs in **Ṛv.** chiefly in connection with the creative determination of "space" ( **antariṅsa, rajas** अंतरिक्ष, रजस ), for example in V. 41. 3 where **somāpūṣaṇā** ( सोमापूषणा ), described as the poles of the Universe are besought to "urge your chariot hitherward, the seven-wheeled chariot that measures out the region" ( **rajaso vimānam..... ratham** रजसो विमानं ..... रथं ), that is to say, are asked to bring into being an inhabitable space. In countless texts we find **vi mā** employed in this way with respect to the delimitation of space, the laying out of "abodes of cosmic order" ( **ṛtasya dhāma** ऋतस्य धाम ), and the determination of the "measure of the sacrifice" ( **yajnasya mātram** यज्ञस्य मात्रम ) which is again an aspect of the act of creation. In V. 81.3 it is the Sun himself that "measures out the chthonic regions" ( **pārthivāni vi mame.....rajāṃsi deva savitā** पार्थिवानि वि ममे .. रजांसि देव सविता ), i. e. the "grounds" of the seven worlds; or otherwise expressed, it is **Varuṇa** who "employing the Sun as his rule, measures out the earth" **māne-neva...vi...मानेनेव...वि...** ( **mame pṛthivīm sūryeṇa** ममे पृथिवीम सूर्येण, V.85.5);<sup>6</sup> and we may say in the words of *Genesis* II.i. that "thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them".

Our citations above have been chosen in part to bring out the connection of the Sun with the act of creative delimitation by which the Three (or Seven, or Thrice Seven) Worlds are made actual. For we must assume from **Ṛv.** I.110.3 and 5 that the "Asura's cup" made fourfold by the **R̥bhus** is really the "platter" or disc (**pātra** पात्र = **maṇḍala** मण्डल ) of the Sun (or rather, *ante principium*, that of the United Sun and Moon, Heaven and Earth, coincident in the beginning as they are at the end of time); we remark not merely the appositional sequence

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"**Savitṛ** (the Sun) .... him-that-may-not-be-hidden . *this* only feeding vessel of the Titan (Father)" (**savitā...agohyam...çamaṣam asurasya bhakṣaṇam ekaṃ santam** सविता.....अगोह्यम.....चमषं असुरस्य भक्षणं एकं सन्तं, I. 110.3, with **pātram** पात्रं for **çamaṣam** चमषं, in verse 5)<sup>7</sup> and in **Av. X. 8. 9** "bowl wherein is set the glory omniform" ( **çamaṣa...yasmin yaśo nihitam viśvarūpam** चमषं यस्मि यशो निहितं विश्वरूपं ), but also the later designation of the sun-door as an "entrance covered over by the golden platter of truth" ( **hiraṇyamayeṇa pātreṇa satyasyapihitaṃ mukham** हिरण्यमयेण पात्रेण सत्यस्यपिहितं मुखं ),<sup>8</sup> **Īśa Up. 15.** cf. **Jaiminiya Up. Br. I. 3. 6** ).

It is then, by means of the Sun, often described as the Titan's "eye", that He surveys, experiences, and "feeds upon" the worlds of contingent being under the Sun, which are in the power of Death, and properly His food; by means of the Sun that these worlds are in the first place "measured out", or "created". It is just this that is implied in the work of the **Ṛbhus**, who make of the single solar "platter" four of the like sort, by which we can only understand four solar stations, representing the limits of the solar motion in the four directions (motion daily from East to West and back again, and annually from South to North and back again). It will then be a matter of obtaining "food from all four quarters" (**Pañca-vimśa Br. XV.3.25**); this may seem from a human point of view a great thing; but it can be easily seen that it is far more in accordance with the dignity of the divine unity to obtain all possible kinds of "nourishment" from a single source, a veritable cup of plenty, than to obtain these varied foods from widely extended sources: what **Tvaṣṭr** resents is in effect the partition of his central unity involved by an extension in the four directions. If all this is attributed in **Ṛv.** either to the Deity in person or alternatively to a subsequently deified triad of "artists", this can only be understood to mean that the latter are collectively the three dimensions of space, and in this sense "powers" whose operation is indispensable to the extension of any horizontal "field" in terms of the four quarters; it is in fact only by means of the three dimensions that an original "one" can be made "four", "like a field" ( **ḷsetraṃ iva** क्षेत्रं इव ), and it is in this sense that we proceed from unity to quadrature by means of a triangle.<sup>9</sup> The converse procedure is given in the well-known miracle of the Buddha's begging-bowl ( **patta** पत्त—**pātra**, पात्र **Jātaka I.80** ): that the Buddha receives four bowls from the Kings of the Four Quarters, and making of these four one bowl eats from it, implies an involution of space, and what is evidently and literally an atonement of what had been done by the **Ṛbhus**. For the Buddha now a unified being, the Grail is once more as it had been in the beginning and for **Tvaṣṭr**, single.

Thus considered, the "myth" of the **Ṛbhus** may be called a paraphrase of

a more usual formula according to which the Sun is described as seven-rayed;<sup>10</sup> of which seven, six represent the arms of the three-dimensional Cross of spiritual Light ( *trivṛd vajra* त्रिवृड वज्र ) by which the universe is at once created and supported.<sup>11</sup> Of the six rays, those which correspond to the Zenith and Nadir coincide with our Axis of the Universe ( *skambha, divo dharuṇa, etc.* स्कम्भ, दिवो धरुण ). Islamic *Qutb*, and Gnostic *stauros*, while those which correspond to North and South, East and West, determine the extension of any horizontal plane or "world" ( *loka* लोक, precisely as the *locus* of a specific ensemble of possibilities ), for example, that of each of the seven worlds considered as a given plane of being. The seventh ray alone passes through the Sun to the suprasolar Brahma worlds "where no sun shines" (all that is under the Sun being in the power of Death, and all beyond "immortal"); and is represented accordingly in any diagram by the point at which the arms of the three-dimensional cross intersect, or as Mahidhara expresses it, "the seventh ray is the solar orb itself". It is by this "best ray", the "one foot" of the Sun, that the "heart" of each and every separated essence is directly connected with the Sun; and it will prove to be significant in our interpretation of the summit of the dome that when the separated essence can be thought of as returned to the centre of its own being on whatever plane of being that this seventh ray will evidently coincide with the axis of the Universe. In the case of the Buddha's "First Meditation",<sup>12</sup> it is evidently just because he is for the time being completely reverted and thus analogically situated at the "navel of the earth" the nether pole of the Axis, that the Sun above him casts an unmoving shadow, while the shadows of other trees than the one under which he is seated change their place. We need hardly say that the position of the Axis of the Universe is a universal and not a local position; the "navel of the earth" is "within you", else it were impossible to "build up agni intellectually", as the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* expresses what is formulated in Christianity as the "bringing to birth of Christ in the soul". In the same way the centre of every habitation is analogically the centre, an hypostasized centre, of the world, and immediately underlies the similarly hypostasized centre of the sky at what is the other pole of the Axis at once of the edifice and of the universe it represents.

Every house is therefore the universe in a likeness, and provided with an analogous content; as M. Mus expresses it "The House and the World are two equivalent sums. The family living in it is the image of the countless crowd of creatures dwelling in the shelter of the cosmic house; of which the ceiling or roof is heaven, light, and sun". The work of the architect is really an "imitation of nature in her manner of operation"; the several houses reflect in their accidents the peculiarity of as many builders, but are essentially "so many hypostases of one and the same world and all together possess but one and the

same reality, that of this universal world".<sup>13</sup>

What we have said with respect to the house applies with equal force to many other constructions, of which we may cite the chariot as a notable example. No less precisely than the house, the chariot reproduces the constitution of the universe in luminous detail. The human vehicle is an exemplary likeness of the cosmic vehicle or body in which the course is run from darkness to light, from endless end to endless end of the universe, conceived at once in terms of space (and in this sense as stable) and in terms of time (as the year, and in this sense revolving).<sup>14</sup> The paired wheels of this cosmic vehicle or universal incarnation of the Spirit, its driver, are respectively Heaven and Earth, at once divided and united by the axle-tree, on which the revolution of the wheels takes place (Rv. X.89.4). This axle-tree is the same thing as our Axis of the Universe, and trunk of the Tree, and the informing principle of the whole construction. The division of the wheels which is the act of creation, brings into being a space within which the individually proceeding principles are borne on their way; while their reunion, realised by the charioteer when he returns from the circumference to the centre of his own being, is the rolling up of time and space, leaving only a single wheel in principle (Dante's *prima rota*), of which the hub is that solar gate "through the midst of which one escapes altogether" (*atimuçyate* अतिमुच्यते, *Jaiminīya Up. Br.* I.3.5) from the revolving cosmos into an uncontained empyrean. Nothing will be changed in principle if we take into account in the same way of the exemplary likeness of ships to the cosmic Ship of Life in which the Great Voyage is undertaken; the deck corresponding to the surface of the earth, the mast coinciding with the vertical axis of the house and axle-tree of the chariot, while the "crow's nest" corresponds to the seat of the all-seeing Sun above.

All that we have implied, here and elsewhere, with respect to the imitation of heavenly prototypes in human works of art, and the conception of the arts themselves as a body of transmitted knowledge of ultimately superhuman origin, can be applied equally to the case of the artificer himself just as also in Christian philosophy there is taken for granted an exemplary likeness of the human architect to the Architect of the World, and as indeed the consistency of the doctrine requires. If we consider such an architectural treatise as the *Mānasāra*, we find in the first place clear evidence of a direct dependence upon vedic sources, for example, in the statement that the master-architect (*sthapati* स्थपति) and also his three companions or assistants, the surveyor (*sūtra-grāhī* सूत्र-ग्राही), the builder and painter (*vardhakī* वर्द्धकी), and carpenter (*taṣaka* तक्षक) are required, by way of professional qualification, to be acquainted both with the Vedas and with their accessory sciences (*sthapatiḥ*.....

**vedaviç-çāstra-pāraḡaḥ** स्वयतिः वेदविच्छास्त्र = पारगः, *loc cit.* II.13 and f.), and in such verses as "It is through the Sun that the Earth becomes the support of all beings" (*ib.* III.7), evidently an echo of *Rv.* V. 85.5 cited above.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, "It has been said by the Lord himself that he is the All-fashioner (**Viśvakarmā** विश्वकर्मा)", *ib.* II. 2: and it is from his four "faces" that are descended the quartet of architects mentioned above, who are moreover called "all-fashioners" after him (*ib.* II.5). It may be added that evidently the "four architects" correspond to the four ritual priests of the sacrifice, the **sthapati** in particular to that one who is styled pre-eminently **the Brāhmaṇa** as distinguished from the others by his greater knowledge, without which their operation would be defective. In our *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art* (Broad Campden, Essex House Press, 1908) we have called attention to the sacerdotal and regal functions performed even by the modern **sthapati** in Ceylon. A similar analogy could be drawn between the "four architects" on the one hand, and the Sun or solar Indra with his particular associates, the **Ṛbhus**. And finally, the designation of the master-architect as **sthapati** immediately suggests **vi...atiṣṭhipaḥ** वि अतिष्ठिपः in *Rv.* I.56.5-6, where it is a matter of the architectural construction of the universe, with its axial "pillar of heaven" (**divo dharuṇam**, दिवो धरुणं cf. IX. 73.7 where Soma as the Tree of Life is **aharuṇaḥ mahaḥ divaḥ**, अहर्णः महः दिवः "the great stauros of the sky"), and rigid crossbeam (**tiro dharuṇam aḥyutam** तिरो धरुणं अच्युतं) : **sthapati** and **atiṣṭhipaḥ** being equally causative forms of **sthā** (स्था) in the sense "to set up". *Rv.* I.56 at the same time makes a direct connection between the construction of the universe and the smiting of the Serpent, **Ahi-Vṛtra** अहि = वृत्र, the significance of which will appear later. We may say that just as much as the sacrifice itself, (a synthesis of all the arts), every artistic operation, as such operation is envisaged by tradition, is an imitation of what was done by the Gods in the beginning.

The questions of the **Ṛbhus** and of the Cross of Light have been introduced into our discussion of the principles of sacred architecture (from the traditional point of view, there is nothing that can be defined as essentially or wholly secular) primarily in order to provide a background illustrative of the manner in which the problems of spatial extension and construction have been traditionally approached. Our method of approach is based upon the fact that the technical problem as such only presents itself when there has already been imagined a form to be realised in the material. Whether we have in view a spatial universe or a human construction, the idea of a space to be enclosed between a vault above and a plane below must be assumed in the mind of the architect logically prior to any actual becoming of the work to be done; which priority will be merely logical in the case of the Divine Architect, but must be also temporal in the case of the human builder who proceeds from potentiality

to act. And prior to this formal cause, with the same reservations, there must be assumed a final cause or purpose of the construction to be undertaken, the artist always working both *per artem et ex voluntate*. The same will hold good whether we take account of the house of the body, a constructed dwelling, or the universe as a whole, just as formally considered there is a correspondence between the human body,<sup>16</sup> human building, and whole world, so there is also a teleological correspondence: all these constructions have as their practical function to shelter individual principles on their way from one state of being to another to provide, in other words, a field of experience in which they can "become what they are". The concepts of creation (means) and of redemption (end) are complementary and inseparable: the Sun is not merely the architect of space, but also the liberator of all things thereinto (which would otherwise remain in an obscurity of mere potentiality), and finally of all things therefrom.

It can be said with respect to any of these houses to which we have referred that one enters into the provided environment at its lowest level (at birth) and departs from it at its highest level (at death); or in other words that ingress is horizontal, egress vertical (these are the two directions of motion on the wheel of life, respectively peripheral and centripetal). If this is not empirically evident in all respects,<sup>17</sup> this is nevertheless an accurate presentation of the traditional concept of the passage of any individual consciousness through any "space"; and this is a matter of importance, because it is precisely in the notion of a vertical egress that we shall find an explanation of the symbolism of our domes.

We are not then disposed to enquire whether or not, or whether to some extent, the form of a **stūpa** may or may not have been derived from that of a tumulus or domed hut (we agree in fact with M. Mus in rejecting such a theory of origins), but rather to seek for what may be called the common formal principle that finds expression equally in all of these and in other related constructions. We propose to consider the architectural form primarily as an imagined (**dhyātam** ध्यातं)<sup>18</sup> form, referring its "origin" rather to "Man" universally, in whom the artist and the patron are one essence, that to this or that man individually. It need hardly be said that the traditional theory of art, and the Indian tradition in particular, invariably assume an "intellectual operation" (*actus primus*) preceding the artist's manual operation. We have discussed this elsewhere in connection with the later sources,<sup>19</sup> but may remark that the principle is clearly expressed in Indian texts from the beginning by the constant employment of the roots **dhī** (धी) or **dhyai** (ध्याइ)<sup>20</sup> and **çit** (चित्) or **çint** (चिन्त) in connection with all kinds of constructive operation, such as the fashioning of an incantation or that of a chariot or altar. For example, in *Rv.* III. 2.1 the

priests are said to bring Agni anigh "by contemplation" (*dhiyā* धिया), "even as it is by contemplation that the tool gives form to the chariot": Av. X.1.8 where we find the image "even as by a *Ṛbhu* the parts of a chariot are put together, by means of a contemplation" (*dhiyā*): and *Śatapatha Br.* VI. 2.3.1 (and *passim*) where in connection with the building of the Fire Altar, whenever the builders are at a loss, not knowing how to build up the next course of structure, we find a sequence of words in which they are enjoined to "contemplate" (*çetayadhvam* चेतयध्वं) and are then described as "seeing" (*apaśyan* अपश्यन्) the required form. It is thus not by means of the empirical faculties, nor so to say experimentally, but intellectually that the formal cause is apprehended in an imitable form. We are considering the dome accordingly primarily as a work of the imagination, and only secondarily as a technical achievement.

Man has always, in a manner that we have tried to indicate above, correlated his own constructions with cosmic or supramundane prototypes. As Plotinus expresses it, "The crafts such as building and carpentry which give us matter in wrought forms may be said, in that they draw on pattern, to take their principles from *that* realm and from the thinking *there*" (*Enneads*, V. 9.11). For example, the Indian seven-storeyed palace (*prāsāda* प्रासाद) with its various floors or "earths" (*bhūmī* भूमि) has always been thought of as analogous to the universe of seven worlds; and one mounts to the top storey as if to the summit of contingent being (*bhavāgra* भवाग्र), just as the Sun ascends the sky and from his station in the zenith surveys the universe. It has been pointed out by Mus, in his magnificent monograph on Barabudur, from which we have quoted above, that the *stūpa*, particularly when monolithic, is essentially a domed form rather than a domed construction, and therefore, necessarily to be understood rather from a symbolic than from a practically functional point of view; it represents a universe in parvo, the abode of a person who has passed away, analogous to the universe itself considered as the body or abode of an active "Person". In the same way the Christian church, functionally adapted to the uses of liturgy, which are themselves entirely a matter of symbolic significance, derives its form from an authority higher than that of the individual builder who is its responsible architect; just as also in the case of the painted icons. "That area alone belongs to the painter; the ordering and the composition belong to the Fathers" (Second Council of Nicea). In the same way the Indian architect "should reject what has not been prescribed (*anukta* अनुक्त), and in every respect perform what has been prescribed" (*Mānasāra*); just as it is stated in connection with images that "the beautiful is not what pleases the fancy, but what is in agreement with the canon" (*Śukranītisāra*, IV. 4.75 and 106) the function of which canon is to provide the support for the contemplative act in which an imitable form is visualised (*ib.* 70.71).<sup>21</sup>

Before proceeding to a more detailed consideration of the ideology expressed in Indian domed constructions, and in what may be termed the archetypal form of any edifice, we must point out that what has been said by M. Mus for the *stūpa* and for the palace, "this Buddhist monument is comprehensible primarily with respect to its axis" and "we say of the *prāsāda* (प्रासाद), as of the *stūpa* (स्तूप), that it is to be understood with respect to its axis, and that all the rest is only accessory decoration",<sup>22</sup> is of universal application.<sup>23</sup> This is sufficiently evident in the case of a domed hut of which the roof is actually supported by a king-post, thought of not merely as connecting the apex of the roof with a tie-beam, but as extending from the apex to the ground. We wish to point out, however, that while huts of this type have certainly existed, and that similarly at least in some cases (e.g. at *Ghaṇṭaśālā*) the axis of the *stūpa* was actually and structurally represented within it, the importance of the axis in principle is no more necessarily represented by an actual pillar within the building than it would be possible to demonstrate the empirical existence of an Axis of the Universe, which axis is indeed always spoken of as a purely spiritual or pneumatic essence. On the other hand, we do find that the prolongations of the axis above the roof and below the ground are materially represented in actual construction; above, that is, by a finial, which may be relatively inconspicuous, but in many *stūpas* extends upwards in the form of a veritably "sky-scraping" mast (*yaṣṭi* यष्टि) or "Sacrificial-post" (*yūpa* यूप) far beyond the dome; and below the floor of the contained space by the peg of *khadira* wood driven into the ground and by which the head of the all-supporting Serpent is fixed.<sup>24</sup> In any traditional society, every operation is in the strictest sense of the word a rite, and typically a metaphysical rather than a religious (devotional) rite; and it is of the very nature of the rite that it is a mimesis of what was done "in the beginning". The erection of a house is in just this sense an imitation of the creation of the world; and it is in this connection that the transfixation of the head of the Serpent, alluded to above, and regarded as an indispensable operation, acquires an intelligible meaning. In modern practice "the astrologer shows what spot in the foundation is exactly above the head of the snake that supports the world. The mason fashions a little wooden peg from the wood of the *Khadira* tree, and with a cocconut drives the peg into the ground at this particular spot, in such a way as to peg the head of the snake securely down....if this snake should ever shake the world to pieces". A foundation stone (*padma-śilā* पद्मशिला), with a eight-petalled lotus carved upon it, is set in mortar above the peg. A Brahman priest assists at all these rites, reciting appropriate incantations (*mantras*),<sup>25</sup> As M. Mus very justly adds to this citation, "If one performs in this way what is apparently a sacrilege, it is with a view to avoiding such quakings of the earth as might be caused if the Serpent should move its head".<sup>26</sup> A very striking example of the rite is to be found in

the "Ballad of the Iron Pillar", at Delhi: "All above a polished shaft, all a piercing spike below. Where they marked the Nāga's head (Śeṣa's in a subsequent verse), deep the point was driven down....Soon a castle clothed with might round the iron pillar clomb; soon a city....."; but when at the instigation of an enemy of the royal "house", the bloody point is afterwards withdrawn.<sup>27</sup> "Sudden earthquakes shook the plain".<sup>28</sup>

The earth was originally insecure, "quaking like a lotus leaf; for the gale was tossing it hither and thither.....The Gods said, "Come, let us make steady this support" (Śatapatha Br. II. 1.1. 8-9).<sup>29</sup> The architect who drives down his peg into the head of the Serpent is doing what was done by the Gods in the beginning, what was done for example by *Soma* when he "fixed the miser" (paṇim astabhāyat पणिमस्तभायत्, Rv. VI. 44. 22), and "made fast the quaking Earth" (pṛthivīm vyathamānam-adṛmhat यः पृथिवीं व्यथमानमद्रहद् Rv. II....12.2), and by Indra when he "smote the Serpent in his lair" (ahim....śayathe jaghāna अहिं यन्दिन्दे अभ्योहसानं नि चिद् विरवायुः शयथे जघान, Rv. VI. 17 9); and what has been done, and is done, by every solar hero and Messiah when he transfixes the Dragon and treads him underfoot.

In conclusion of the present introduction a word may be said on the principle involved in the symbolic interpretation of artefacts. The modern critic is apt to maintain that symbolic meanings are "read into" the "facts" which "must" originally have had no meaning, but only a physical efficiency. Nor could any objection be made to this if it were a matter of such absurdities of "interpretation" as are involved in an explanation of Gothic arches as imitated from the interlacing branches of forest trees, or implied in the designation of certain well known classical ornaments as "acanthus" and "egg and dart" motifs. Far from such sentimental fancies, a correct symbolic exegesis must be founded on a real knowledge of the principles involved, and supported by cited texts, which are just as much facts as the monuments themselves. The modern critic is apt, however, to go further, and to argue that even the oldest citable texts are already "meanings read into" still older forms, which perhaps had originally no intellectual significance whatever, but only a physical function.

The truth is, however, that it is precisely in adopting *this* point of view that we are reading our own mentality into that of the primitive artificer. Our division of artefacts into "industrial" and "decorative", "applied" and "fine" art, would have been unintelligible to the primitive and normal man, who could no more have separated use from meaning than meaning from use; as M. Mus remarks, "The true fact, the only fact of which the builders were aware, was a combination of both";<sup>30</sup> in primitive and traditional art the whole man finds expression, and therefore there is always in the artefact "a polar balance of

physical and metaphysical", and it is only on their way down to us that the traditional forms "have been more and more emptied of content".<sup>31</sup> The primitive artefact can no more be fully explained by our economic determinism than it can be by our aestheticism; the man who did by thinking, and thought by doing, was not as we are solely concerned about physical safety and comfort, but far more self-sufficient; he was as profoundly interested in himself as we are now-a-days in our bodies.

Let us for a moment abandon the consideration of architecture for that of another craft, the smith's, and that of his ancestor, the maker of stone weapons.

Tangible symbols, no less than words, have their etymons; in this sense, a "derivation" of the sword, and similarly of the celt, from a "root" or archetype in lightning is universal and world-wide.

In **Śatapatha Br.** 1. 2.4 there is described the origin of the sacrificial sword, sacrificial post, chariot (of which the axle-tree is evidently the principle), and arrow from Indra's *vajra* (वज्र thunderbolt, lightning, adamant lance and stauros). "When Indra hurled the thunderbolt at **Vṛṣṇa**, that one thus hurled became fourfold. Thereof the wooden sword (**sphya** स्फ्य) represents a third or thereabouts, the sacrificial post about a third or thereabouts, and the chariot (sc. axle-tree) one third or thereabouts. That (fourth and shortest) piece moreover, with which he struck him was broken away, and flying off (**patitvā** पतित्वा)<sup>32</sup> became an arrow; whence the designation 'arrow' (**śara** शर) inasmuch as it was 'broken away' (**āsīryata** आसीर्यते). In this way the thunderbolt became fourfold. Priests make use of two of these in sacrifice, while men of royal blood make use of two in battle.....Now when he ( the priest ) brandishes the wooden sword, it is the thunderbolt ( *vajra* ) that he raises against the wicked, spiteful enemy, even as Indra in that day raised the thunderbolt against the Dragon (**Vṛṣṇa** वृष).....He takes it with the incantation "At the instigation of divine **Savitṛ** (सवित्र the Sun) I take thee with the arms of the **Aśvins**, with the hands of **Pūṣan** (the Sun)....with His hands therefore he takes it, not with his own; for it is the thunderbolt, and no man can hold that....He murmurs, and thereby makes it sharp, 'Thou art Indra's right arm', for Indra's right arm is no doubt the strongest, and therefore he says 'Thou art Indra's right arm'. 'The thousand-spiked, the hundred edged', he adds, for a thousand spikes and a hundred edges had that thunderbolt that Indra hurled at **Vṛṣṇa**; he thereby make the wooden sword to be



that thunderbolt. 'The keen-edged Gale (vāyu वायु) art thou',<sup>33</sup> he adds; for he who blows here is indeed the keenest edge; for he cuts across these worlds; he thereby makes it sharp. When he further says: 'The killer of the foe', let him, whether he wishes to exercise or not, say: 'The killer of so and so'.<sup>34</sup> When it has been sharpened, he must not touch either himself or the earth with it: 'Lest I should hurt, etc.' Later, he brandishes the sword thrice, driving away the Asuras from the Three Worlds, and a fourth to repel the Asuras from "what fourth world there may or may not be beyond these Three"; the first three strokes being made with chanted formulae, the fourth stroke silently. The third verse of the *Śatapatha Br.* text, cited above, affirms in effect *in hoc signo vinces*. The wooden sword is described as straight (*Kāty Śr.* I. 3.33.39), and the usual word for sword, *khadga* (खड्ग) is used in connection with it, and as it must accordingly have had a guard, it is clear that must have been cruciform. The European parallel is sufficiently obvious; sword and cross are virtually identified in Christian knightly usage; the sword, at least, can be used as a substitute for a wooden cross, and in the same way as a hallow or opotropaic weapon, in the banning of evil spirits.

In Japan the sword is similarly "derived" from an archetypal lightning. The Japanese sword, Shinto, Royal, or Samurai, is in fact the descendant or hypostasis (*tsugi*, as this word occurs in the imperial title Hitsugi, "Scion of the Sun", Skr. *ādityabandhu* आदित्यबन्धु) of the sword of lightning found by Susa-no-Wo-no-Mikoto, whom we may call the "Shinto Indra", in the tail of the Dragon of the Clouds, whom he slays and dismembers, receiving in return the last of the daughter of the Earth, whose seven predecessors have been consumed by the Dragon.<sup>35</sup> The solar hero, in other words, possesses himself of the Dragon (Father's) *sting*, which "sword" he indeed returns to the Gods, but which in a likeness made by hands and empowered by appropriate rites becomes a veritable palladium, a talisman "fallen from the sky" (*divopatita* दिवो-पतित), whether as a cult-object in a Shinto shrine or "symbolising the soul of the Samurai, and as such the object of his worship". Dr. Holtom's "worship" is, however, scarcely the right word here. The sword of a Samurai is thought of both as himself or own soul (*tamashii*) or alter ego, and also as the embodiment of a guardian principle (*mamori*), and thus as a protector, spiritually as well as physically. The first conception, that of the sword as an extension of one's own essence bears a close likeness to the doctrine of the *Bṛhad Devatā* I.74, where the weapon of a Deva "is precisely his fiery-energy" (*tejas tv-evāyudham...yasya yat* तेजस् त्वेवायुधं...यस्य यत्), and IV. 143, where conversely the Deva "is its inspiration" (*tasyātmā bahudhā sah* तस्यैवमा तदुग्र सः better perhaps "is hypostasised in it"). The Templar's sword is in the same way a "power" and extension of his own being, and not a "mere tool";

but only an outsider (*pro-fanus*) would speak of the Crusader as "worshipping" his sword. Dr. Holtom is, of course, a "good anthropologist, and satisfied with naturalistic and sociological explanations of the weapon as a *palladium*, of celestial derivation; we, who see in traditional art an incarnation of ideas rather than the idealisation of facts, should prefer to speak of an *adequate symbolism* and an adaptation of superior principles to human necessities.

The same idea can be recognized in the fact that in the mysteries of the Idaeian Daktyls, Pythagoras was purified by a "thunderstone", which as Miss Harrison says was "in all probability nothing but a black stone celt, the simplest form of stone-age axe"; and in the fact that the designation of stone axes and arrowheads as "thunderbolts" and the attribution to them of a magical efficacy has been "almost world-wide". "We agree with Miss Harrison that this idea was not of popular origin; but not therefore that it must have been of late origin; for we see no force or sense in her view that "the wide-spread delusion that these celts were thunderbolts cannot have taken hold of men's minds till a time when their real use as ordinary axes was forgotten.....cannot therefore have been very primitive" (*Thesis*, pp. 89, 90). "Delusion.... cannot", —a *non sequitur* from any point of view, for if the Hindu and the Japanese can call a wooden or a metal sword a thunderbolt at a time when these weapons were in "real use", it is hard to see why primitive man, who was also in some sense a shamanist, should not have done the same. In the first place there can be little doubt that primitive man enspirited his weapons by appropriate incantations (as did the Hindu and the Japanese, and as the Christian Church even to this day consecrates a variety of objects made by hands, notably in the case of "transubstantiation"), and thereby endowed them with a more than human efficiency; and in the second place, if we assume from the world-wide and "superstitious" ("stand-overish") prevalence of the notion, and also on more general grounds, that he already called his weapons thunderbolts, though perfectly aware of their actual artificiality, can we possibly suppose that he meant this to be taken in any more literal (or any less real) sense that the Brahman who likewise calls his sword a *vajra*,—thunderbolt, lightning, or adamant?<sup>36</sup> Primitive man, as every schoolboy knows, recognized a will in all things,—"Iron of itself draws a man on"—, and has therefore been called an "animist". The term is only inappropriate because it was not an independent *anima* ("soul") that he saw in everything, but *mana*, (मन्) a spiritual rather than a psychic power, undifferentiated in itself, but in which all things participated according to their own nature. In other words, he explained the being-in-act or efficacy of any contingent thing by thinking of it as informed by an omnipresent, inexhaustible, informal and unparticularised Being and source of all power: which is precisely the Christian and Hindu doctrine.<sup>37</sup> We say, then, that primitive man

already spoke of his weapons as "thunderbolts", and more, that he knew what he meant when he called them such; that the same is true of the more sophisticated Hindu and Japanese, with only this difference, that he can prove by chapter and verse that he calls his weapon, thunderborn without being unaware of their artifactuality and practical use; that the Christian in the same way "worships idols made by hands" (as the iconoclast or anthropologist might say), while able to show that it is not as a fetish that he "worships" the icon; and finally that if there are to be found ignorant peasants who speak of celts as thunderbolts without knowing them for weapons, in this case only we have to do with a veritable superstition or "stand-over",—a superstition which it should have been the business of the anthropologist rather to elucidate than merely to record. All of these considerations apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the problem of architectural symbolism. How then can we propose to explain the genesis of the forms embodied in works of art only by an enumeration of the material facts and functions of the artefact? To take a case in point, it is certainly not by purely "practical" considerations that one can explain the position of the *harmikā* (हर्मिका) or "little dwelling", or *deva koṭuwā* (देव कोटुवा) or "citadel of the Gods" immediately above and outside the apex of the *stūpa*; whereas the *raison d'être* of this emplacement becomes immediately evident if we understand that "immediate above the apex of the dome" is as much as to say "beyond the Sun"; all that is mortal being contained within, and all that is immortal exceeding the structure.

But let us also consider the matter from a physically practical point of view. We have agreed that the symbols, on their way down to us, tend more and more to become merely decorative "art forms", a sort of upholstery, to which we cling either from habit or for "aesthetic" reasons; and that the corresponding rites, with which for example the work of construction is "blessed" at various stages, become mere superstitious. In this case we ask, what practical value was originally served by these now apparently useless institutions and survivals? In a purely material sense, what have we gained or lost by an implicit decision to "live by bread alone"? Was the actual stability of buildings in any way secured by the recognition of such meanings and the performance of such rites as we have described above? We mention bread, because all that we have to say will apply as much to agricultural as to architectural rites. Not to take up too much space, we shall only ask whether or not it is by chance that the neglect of agriculture as a sacred art, and denial of a spiritual significance to bread, have coincided with a decline in the quality of the product, so conspicuous that only a people altogether forgetful of the realities of life, and drugged by the phraseology of advertisers, could have failed to remark it.

For the answer to this question we refer the reader to M. Glezes, *Vie et Mort de L'occident Chretien*, Sablons, 1930, of which the latter part is devoted to "Le Mystere du Pain et du Vin". Here we shall only attempt to show that in spite of all our scientific knowledge (which is in reality not so much at the consumer's disposal as it is at the disposal of the consumer's exploiter, the commercial builder and real estate agent), there can be traced a significant parallel between the neglect of architecture as a sacred and symbolic art and an actual instability of buildings; that it is not without its consequences for the householder that the builder and mason can no longer conceive what it may have meant to be "initiated into the mystery of their craft", nor in what sense an architect could ever have played the part of priest and king. Let us grant that rites as such, envisaged that is simply as a mechanical going through with habitual and required motions, cannot be supposed to affect in any way the stability of a structure, and that the stability of an actual building depends essentially on the proper adjustment of materials and stresses, and not on what has been said or done in connection with the building. It remains that in considering only materials and stresses, of which an admirable knowledge may exist in theory, we are leaving out the builder. Does nothing depend upon him, upon his honesty, for example? Is it of no consequence whatever if he mixes too much sand with his mortar? as he will surely do, whatever the textbook says, if he is building only for profit, and not for use? Arguing not merely on principle, but also from personal contact with hereditary craftsmen in whom a tradition of workmanship has been transmitted through countless generations, we affirm that so long as faith remains, that the attribution of superhuman origins and symbolic significance to architecture, and the participation of the architect in metaphysical rites in which a direct connection is made of macrocosmic with microcosmic proportions, confer upon the architect a human dignity and a responsibility far other than that of the "contractor", who at the best may calculate that "honesty is the best policy".<sup>38</sup> We say that further that it is not merely a question of ethics; but that the recognition of the possibility of an "artistic sin", as a thing distinct in kind from "moral sin",<sup>39</sup> even in Europe (where occasional workmen are still to be found whose first concern is with the good of the work to be done) long delayed the appearance of what is now called "jerry-building". We are not here however, primarily concerned with these practical and technical considerations, but more with meanings, and with the artefact considered as a symbol and as a possible support of a contemplation dispositive to gnosis. We say that just as it is beyond the capacity of man to make anything whatever so purely spiritual and intellectual as to afford no sensuous satisfaction so it is beneath the dignity of man to make anything whatever with a view to an exclusively material good, and devoid of any higher reference. We who have consented to this subhuman

standard of living, cannot postulate in primitive man such limitations as our own. Even at the present day peoples survive, uncontaminated by civilisation, to whom it has never occurred that it might be either possible or desirable to live by bread alone, or in any manufacture to separate function from significance. It is not by any means only for political reasons that western civilisation is feared and hated by the Orient, but also because "it is impossible for one to obtain liberation who lives in a town covered with dust" (*Baudhāyana Dh. Sū*, II. 3.6. 33). We are not, then, "reading meanings into" primitive works of art when we discuss their formal principles and final causes, treating them as symbols and supports of contemplation rather than as objects of a purely material utility, but simply *reading their meaning*.<sup>40</sup> For to say "traditional art" is to say "the art of peoples who took for granted the superiority of the contemplative to the active life, and regarded the life of pleasure as we regard the life of animals, determined only by affective reactions". "A *person* knows what is and is not mundane, and is so endowed that by the mortal he pursues the immortal. But as for the *herd*, theirs is an acute discrimination merely according to hunger and thirst" (*Aitareya Br.* II. 3.2), cf. Boethius, *Contra Evtychen*, II, "There is no person of a horse or ox or any other of the animals which, dumb and unreasoning, live a life of sense alone, but we say there is a person of a man, or God".

## PART - III

### World Roof and its Eye

We shall take it for granted that the reader is familiar with our "Pāli kaṇṇikā (कण्णिका) = circular Roof-Plate", *JAOS.* 50, 1930, pp. 238-243. To what has been said there we wish to add in the first place that it can hardly be doubted that the kaṇṇikā or roof-plate of a domed structure, the meeting-place of its converging rafters, had almost certainly, as the term itself suggests, the form of a lotus, and that this lotus was in effect the Sun, "the one lotus of the zenith" (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.* VI. 3.6), to be correlated with the "lotus of the earth" and womb of Agni below: and secondly that the expression vijjhitvā (विज्जित्वा) (Skr. root *vyadh*), *Jātaka* I.201, implies a central perforation of the kaṇṇikā-maṇḍalam (कण्णिकामण्डलं) which was itself an image of the disc of the Sun (*sūrya-maṇḍalam*), and at the same time constituted what may have been called the "eye" of the dome, although for this we have no Indian literary evidence beyond the use of "eye" for "window" in the word *gāvākṣa* गवाक्ष (literally "bull's eye"), and the expression "eye of a lotus" (*puṣkarākṣa* पुष्कराक्ष) occurring in *Pāṇini* V. 4.76. We need hardly say that "Sun" and "Eye" are constantly assimilated notions in Vedic mythology, and that it is from the same point of view that the Buddha is frequently called the "Eye in the World" (*cakkhumaloke* चक्खुमालोके).<sup>41</sup>

A majority of existing domes are in fact provided with an apical aperture, called the "eye of the dome" : *Gwilt, Arch. Gloss.*, "eye" as "a general term signifying the centre of any part. The eye of a dome is the horizontal aperture in its summit. The eye of a volute<sup>42</sup> is the circle in its centre".

"On the Acropolis of Athens.....In the north porch of the Erechtheion are the marks of a trident. In examining the roof of this north porch it has been found that immediately above the trident-mark an opening in the roof had been purposely left: the architectural traces are clear".<sup>43</sup> The Roman Pantheon was lighted by an enormous eye, open to the sky, making the structure in fact

hypæthral. More often the eye of a dome is comparatively small, and opens into a "lantern" above the dome, which lantern admits light but excludes rain. In the case of the **stūpa** there is likewise an opening at the summit of the dome, the purpose of which is to serve as a place of insertion or socket for the mast overstands the dome, and which is therefore also an "eye".

In any case, and whether an opening or a socket, the aperture can be regarded as at the same time functional (source of illumination, mortice, etc.) and as symbolic (means of passage from the interior to the exterior of the dome). It may be further observed that the eye in a roof is also a louver or luffer permitting the escape of smoke from the central fire beneath it.<sup>44</sup> That the eye or luffer thus functions as a chimney (as well as a source of light) by no means reduces, but rather reinforces the macrocosmic symbolism, for it is both as an ascending flame and as a pillar of smoke by which Agni props up the sky, as in *Ṛv.* IV. 6. 2-3 where "Agni, even as it were a builder, hath lifted up on high his splendour, even as it were a builder his smoke, yea, holdeth up the sky (**stabhāyat upa dyām** स्तभायत् उर द्यौः).....a standard, as it were the pillar of sacrifice (**svaru** स्वरू=yūpa यूप), firmly planted and duly chrismed", cf. *Ṛv.* III. 5. 10, IV. 5.1, VI. 17.7.

It is certainly not without significance that **vijjhitvā**, "perforating" or "penetrating", is also employed in connection with the piercing of a mark or bull's eye by an arrow, e.g., in *Jātaka* V.129 f., where there is an account of the feats of archery performed by the Bodhisattva **Jotipāla** ("Keeper of Light"), a superlative marksman (**akkhaṇa-vedhin** अक्खण-वेदि) <sup>45</sup> whose shaft is "tipped with adamant" (**vajiraggam nārācam** वजिरगं नाराचं), <sup>46</sup> and who is furthermore, possessed of the power of aerial flight, to be subsequently discussed. One of the feats of the "Keeper of Light", whom we can only regard as a "solar hero" and like the Buddha a "kinsman of the Sun" (**ādiṣṣa-bandhu** आदीचच-बन्धु), is called "the threading of the circle" (**ṣakka-viddham** चक्क-विद्ध). In the execution of this feat, his arrow, to which a scarlet thread (**ratta-suttakam** रत्त-सुत्तकं) has been attached, penetrates in succession four marks placed at the four corners of the arena, returning through the first of these marks to his hand, thus describing a circle which proceeds from and ends in himself as its centre. Thus the Bodhisattva, standing within a fourcornered field (**ṣaturassa-pariṣṣed-abbhantare** चतुरस्स-परिष्सेदव्वभन्तरे) connects its corners (the four quarters, cf. *Śatapatha Br.* VI. 1.2. 29) to himself by means of a thread (**suttakam** सुत्तकं = **sūtram** सूत्र): and this unmistakably a "folklore" version of the **sūtrātman** (सूत्रात्मा) doctrine, according to which the Sun connects these worlds and all things to himself by means of a thread of spiritual light.<sup>47</sup>

We cannot, indeed, agree with M. Foucher that the wellknown bow-and-

arrow symbol met with on early Indian coins primarily represents a **stūpa**. On the other hand, as pointed out by M. Mus, "Does not the **stūpa**, considered as constructed wholly round about the axis of the universe, look strangely like a bow to which an arrow has been set?"<sup>48</sup> and we may add like other domed structures, if thought of in cross-section. Remembering the actual perforation (**vijjhitvā** विज्जित्वा) of our roof plate, and what has been said above about the "eye of a dome", we cannot but be struck by the fact that in this symbol of a bow and arrow suggesting the cross-section of a **stūpa** (or any like domed structure) the arrow actually penetrates the apex of the "dome"; in other words breaks through the summit of contingent being (**bhavāgra** ब्रह्मग्र), through the station of the Sun in the zenith into a beyond.

It is at this point that our symbolic archery becomes most significant. For, as will now be seen, that goal which lies beyond the Sun, and which is usually described as reached by a passing through the midst of the Sun, is also very strikingly described in **Muṇḍaka Up.** II. 2. 2-4 (which we cite in a slightly condensed form) as to be attained by means of a spiritual markmanship: "Resplendent-sun (**arcinam** अर्चिनं), imperishable Brahman, Breath of Life (**prāṇah** प्राणः), Truth **satyam** सत्यं), Immortal,.....That is the mark (**lakṣyam** लक्ष्यं) to be penetrated **veddhavyam** वेद्धव्यं).<sup>49</sup> Taking for bow the mighty weapon of the **Upaniṣad**, set thereunto an arrow pointed by reverent-service, and bending it by the thought of the nature of That, penetrate (**viddhi** विद्धि)<sup>50</sup> that mark, my friend. OM is the bow, the Spirit (**ātman** आत्मा) the arrow, Brahman the mark to be penetrated by one abstracted from sensuous-infatuation: as is the arrow, so should he become of that same nature" (**śaravat tanmayo bhavet** शरवत् तन्मयो भवेत्), i. e. of the nature of That, the mark to be attained. It is only as no man to whom soul-and-body are "himself" no man who still conceives "himself" to be so-and-so, but as one who recognizes in "himself" (**ātman** आत्मा) only the immanent spirit (**śarīratman** शरीर-आत्मा, **dehin** देहि), and moving in the Spirit (**atmany etya** आत्मन्येत्य) or as our text expresses it, making of himself a purely spiritual arrow, that any man can hit. That mark so as to be confused with It, as like in like: just as, in more familiar imagery, when rivers reach the sea, their individuality is undone, and one can only speak of "sea" (**Praśna Up.** VI. 5).

The flight of our spiritual arrow is a flight and an emergence from a total darkness underground and the chiaroscuro of space under the Sun into realms of spiritual light where no Sun shines, nor Moon, but only the light of the Spirit, which is Its own illumination.<sup>51</sup> Now, as we know from texts too many to be cited here at length, it is through the Sun, and only through the Sun, the Truth (**satyam** सत्यं), and by the way of the well at the World's End, that there runs

the road leading from this defined Order (**ṛta** अतः **kosmos**) to an undefined *Empyrean*. It is "through the hub of the wheel, the midst of the Sun, the cleft in heaven, that is all covered over by rays, that one is altogether liberated" (*Jai. Up. Br. I. 3. 5-6*). The Sun is the world-gate **loka-dvāra** लोकद्वार), which admits the Comprehensor into Paradise, but is a barrier (*nirodha* निरोध) to the ignorant" (**Ḍhā. Up. VIII. 6.6.** cf. *Jai. Up. Br. I. 5 and III. 14*). The question is asked accordingly "who is qualified (*arhati* अर्हति) to pass through the midst of the Sun? (*Jai. Up. Br. I. 6. 1*, cf. **Kaṭha Up. II. 21 kas tam.....devam Jñātum arhati** कस्-तं ..... देवं ज्ञातुं अर्हति).<sup>52</sup> The "arhati" immediately reminds us of those **arhats** (अर्हन्त) who ascend in the air, pass through the roof-plate (**kaṇṇikā-maṇḍalam** कणिका-मण्डल) and are "movers at will".

Before proceeding to consider these, however, we shall cite the account of the Comprehensor's passage of the Sun from **Maitrī Up. VI. 30**, the wording of which is closely paralleled in texts already cited and in the Buddhist texts to follow. Here, then, it is said that the "Marut" (मरुत् i. e. the King **Bṛhadratha**, the "Lord of the Mighty Chariot" and disciple of **Śākāyanya**, *ib. II. 1*) "having done what had to be done (**kṛtakṛtyaḥ** कृतकृत्यः i. e. as one "all in act") departed by the northern solar course, than which there is indeed no other path. That is the path to Brahman (whence as may be interjected from **Ḍhāndogya Up. IV. 15. 5-6**, "there is no return"); breaking through the Solar Gate, he made his way aloft" **saura-ṇ dvāram bhitvordhveṇa vinirgatā** सौरं द्वारं भित्त्वोर्ध्वेण विनिरगता). At this point the text makes a direct transition from the preceding narrative of what is apparently an outwardly manifested miracle to a formulation of this ascension in terms of the "vectors of the heart" (**hr̥dayasya nāḍyaḥ**, हृदयस्य नाड्यः **Ḍhāndogya Up. VIII. 6. 1, q.v.**), which "vectors" are the channels of the solar rays and breaths of life "within you". All but one of these vectors "are for procedure hither or thither"; only that one which passes vertically upward and emerges from the crown of the head "extends to immortality", i. e. the Brahma worlds beyond the Sun. At death, "the apex of the heart is illuminated (**hr̥dayasyayāgram pradyotate** हृदयस्ययाग्रं प्रद्योतते); by way of that illuminated point the spirit departs (**ātmā niṣkrāmati** आत्मा निष्क्रामति), either by way of the eye or head,<sup>53</sup> or other part of the body; and as it goes, the breath of life follows" (**Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up. IV. 4.2**). For "the rays of Him (the Sun) are endless. Who as its lamp indwells the heart.....Of which, one standeth upward, breaking through the solar orb (**bhitvā sūrya-maṇḍalam** भित्त्वा सूर्य-मण्डल) and over-passing (*atikramya*) into the Brahma-world, thereby men attain their final goal" (**Maitrī Up. VI. 30**). It is thus that one "wins beyond the Sun", **param ādityāj jayati**, परम् आदित्याज् जयति, **Ḍhāndogya Up. II. 10.5**.

We proceed to an analysis of the significance of the dome and roof-plate,

using as key the various accounts of the miraculous powers of the Buddhist *arhats*, "spiritual adepts", by which powers (*iddhi* इद्धि) they are able to rise in the air, and if within a roofed structure to emerge from it by "breaking through" the roof-plate, and subsequently moving at will in the beyond.

We shall first consider the case in which this power is exercised out of doors, and where there is therefore no reference to an artificial roof-plate; and it will be necessary to consider the nature of the miracle itself, which as we have already seen can also be thought of as an interior operation, before we make use of it in explaining the symbolism of the dome itself. In *Milinda-panha* 85, the power (*iddhi*) of travelling through the sky is explained as consisting in an intellectual virtue analogous to that sort of mental resolution by means of which, in ordinary jumping, "one's body seems to be light" when the moment for taking off arrives. In *Jātaka V. 125-7* we have the case of the Elder **Moggallāna**, an arhat, who by means of his miraculous power (**iddhi-balena** इद्धि-बलेन) is able to visit Heaven or Hell at will. This Elder, being in danger of death at the hands of certain evilly-disposed persons, "flew up and made off" (**uppatitvā pakkāmi** उपपत्तिवा पक्कामि). Upon a subsequent occasion, because of a former sin of which the trace remained in him, he "could not fly up in the air (**ākāse uppatitum nāsakkhi** आकासे उपपत्तितुं नासक्खि). Left for dead by his enemies, he nevertheless recovered consciousness, and "investing his body in the cloak of contemplation" (**jhāna-veṭṭhanena śarīraṃ veṭṭhetvā** ज्ञान वेत्थनेन शरीरं वेत्थेत्वा), he "flew off into the Buddha's presence" and obtained permission to end his life. At the close of the subsequent "Story of the Past" related by the Buddha we are told that the assembled Prophets (*isiyo* इत्थियो) also "flew up into the air and went to their own places".

We hardly need to go beyond these texts for an adequate indication of the true nature of the "power" (*iddhi*) of flying through the air. In the first place it may be observed that **uppatitvā** "flying" implies wings, as of a bird;<sup>54</sup> and that wings, in all traditions, are the characteristic of angels, as being intellectual substances independent of local motion; an intellectual substance, as such, being immediately present at the point to which its attention is directed. It is in this sense that the "Intellect is the swiftest of birds" (**manah javiṣṭam patayatsvantah** मनो जविष्ठं पतयत्स्वन्तः, *Rv. VI. 9.5*); that the sacrificer endowed by the singing priest with wings of sound by means of the Syllable (*OM*) is supported by these wings, and "sits without fear in the world of heavenly-light, and likewise goeth about" (**ācarati** आचरति, **Jaiminīya Up. Br. III. 14. 9-10**), i. e. as a "mover at will (**kāmācārin** कामाचारी), cf. **Pañcaviṃśa Br. XXV. 3.4** "for wherever a winged thing would go thereunto it comes"; and that "of such as ascend to the top of the Tree, those that are winged fly away, the wingless fall

down; it is the comprehensors that are winged, the ignorant wingless" (Pañcaviṃśa Br. XIV. I. 12-13).<sup>55</sup>

In the second place it will be observed that the power of motion at will presupposes a state of perfection, that of one who can be thought of as *arhat* (अर्हत), or in other terms *kṛtakṛtyah* (कृतकृत्यः), *sukṛtaḥ* (सुकृतः), *kṛtātma* (कृततमा): it is inhibited by even a trace of defect. And finally, the very striking expressions "flew up into the air" and "investing his body in the cloak of contemplation" imply at the same time an "ascension" and a "disappearance". The meanings of *veṭhetvā* (वेष्टेत्वा) = *veṣṭitvā* (वेष्टित्वा) include those of "wrapping up", "enveloping", and "veiling", and hence of "concealing", that which is enveloped, which in the present case is the body (*śarīram* शरीरं) or appearance (*rūpam* रूपं) of the person concerned.<sup>56</sup> The primary senses of *pakkāmi* (पक्कामि) = *prākramit* (प्राक्कमित्) are "went forth", "made his exit", or as in our rendering, "made off", or "disappeared" as in Cowell and Francis (*Jātaka*, V. 65).

What is really involved and implied by an "investiture of the body in the cloak of contemplation" is a disappearance into one's spiritual-essence, or "being in the spirit" (*ātmany antarhita*, *guhā nihita*, *ātmany etya* आत्मन्त्यन्तर्हित, गुहा निहित, आत्मन्त्येत्य);<sup>57</sup> just as in Manu I. 51, where the manifested Deity, having completed his creative operation, is described as having "vanished into his own spiritual-essence (*ātmany antar dadhe*, आत्मन्त्यन्तर्दधे being accordingly *ātmany hita*, आत्मन्त्यन्तर्हित *antarhita* अन्तर्हित, *guhā nihita* गुहा-निहित, *adrśya* अदृश्य),<sup>58</sup> super-enclosing time within time" (*bhūyah kālam kāleṇa pīḍayan* भूयः कालं कालेण पीडयन्)<sup>59</sup> that is to say in the language of Genesis II. 2 "rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made".

To have entered thus into one's own spiritual-essence *ātmany antarhito bhūtvā* आत्मन्त्यन्तर्हितो भूत्वा—, is to have realised that state of unification (*samādhi* समाधि) which is in fact the consummation of *dhyāna* (ध्यान) in Indian, as *excessus* or *raptus* is that of *contemplatio* in Christian *Yoga* (योग). Nor could we understand the supernatural power of ascension and motion at will otherwise than as a going out of oneself which is more truly an entering into one's very Self. One cannot think of the power as an independent skill or trick, but only as function of the ability to enter into *samādhi* at will and as manifestation of that perfect recollectedness which are in fact attributed to the *arhat* (अर्हत). To have thus returned to the centre of one's own being is to have reached that centre at which the spiritual axis of the universe intersects the plane on which the empirical consciousness had previously been extended; to have become if not in the fullest sense a *sādhu* (साधु), at any *sādhya* (साध्य), one whose consciousness of being, on whatever plane of being has been concentrated at the

"navel" of that "earth", and in that pillar (*skambha* स्कम्भ, *stauros*) of which the poles are chthonic Fire and Celestial Sun.

We have seen that the *Breath-of-Life* (*prāṇah* प्राणः), often identified with the Spirit, and with Brahman, but more strictly speaking the vital manifestation of the Spirit, the Gale of the Spirit insofar as this can be distinguished from the Spirit at rest, departs from the heart by its apex; and we know also that all the breaths-of-life (*prāṇah*), are as it were the subjects of the Breath (*Praśna Up.* III. 4), and diverge into their vectors at birth and are unified in the Breath, or Gale, when it departs, and hence it is that one says of the dying man that "He is becoming one" (*Upaniṣads*, *passim*). This supremacy of the Breath-of-Life lends itself to a striking architectural illustration, which we find first in the (*Aitareya Āraṇyaka*, III. 2, 1 (*Śāṅkhāyana Ar.* VIII) as follows: "The Breath-of-Life is a pillar (*prāṇo vaṃśa* प्राणे-वंश). And just as (in a house) all the other beams are met together (*samāhitaḥ* समाहितः) in the king-post (*śālā-vaṃśa* शाला-वंश, "hall-beam"),<sup>60</sup> so it is that in this Breath (the functions of) the eye, the ear, the intellect, the tongue, the senses and the whole self are unified" (*samāhitaḥ*). In order to grasp the connection of this simile with the later Buddhist variant it is needful to observe that to be *samāhita* is literally the same as to be "in *samādhi*".<sup>61</sup> In the Buddhist variant we have, *Milindapanha* 38 (II. 1. 3) : "Just as every one of the rafters of a building with a domed roof (*kūṭāgāra* कूटागार) go up its roof-plate (*kūṭāṅgamā honti* कूटाङ्गमा होन्ति), incline towards its roof-plate (*kūṭāninnā* कूटानिन्ना),<sup>62</sup> and are assembled at its roof-plate (*kūṭasamosarṇā* कूटासमोसरणा), and roof-plate is called the apex (*agga* अग्न= *agra* अग्र) of all, even so, your Majesty, every one of these skilful habits (*kusalā dhammā* कुसला धम्मा)<sup>63</sup> has the state of unification as its fore-front (*samādhi-pamukhā honti* समाधि-पमुख होन्ति), inclines towards the state of unification (*samādhi-ninnā* समाधि-निन्ना), leans towards the state of unification (*samādhi-poṇā* समाधि-पोणा) and bears upon the state of unification" (*samādhi-pabbhārā* समाधि-पव्वारार).<sup>64</sup> It will be seen that *samādhi* (समाधि) here replaces the previous *prāṇe*.....*samāhita* (प्राणे.....समाहित), affecting the emphasis, rather than the essence of the meaning.

We are now in a position to consider the texts in which a breaking through the roofplate of a house, and even a breaking down of the house itself is spoken of. In *Jātaka* III. 472 the *arhat* "flies up in the air, cleaving the roof-plate of the palace" (*ākāse uppattivā pāsādakaṇṇikam dvidhā katvā* आकासे उपपत्तिवा पासादकण्णिकं द्विधा कत्वा). In *Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā*, I. 63, and *arhat* "flying up by his 'power', breaks through the roof-plate of the peaked (or probably domed) house, and goes off in the air". *Ib.* III. 66, the *arhat Moggallāna* (cf. *Jātaka* IV. 228-9)" "breaking through the round of the roof-

plate, springs into the air" (*kaṅṅika-maṇḍalam bhinditvā ākāśan pakkhandi* कण्णिक-मण्डलं भिन्दित्वा आकाशं पक्खन्दि), is incidentally good evidence also for the circular form of the plate. Finally, *Jātaka* I. 76, we have the Buddha's song of triumph on the occasion of the Full Awakening (*mahāsambodhi महासम्बोधि*), in which he glories in the fact that the house of life, the tabernacle of the flesh has once and for all been broken down (*gahakūṭam visāṅkhitam* गहकूटं विसङ्खितं).<sup>65</sup>

If we have not by any means exhausted the subject of the symbolic values of Indian architecture, we may perhaps claim to have shown that during a period of millennia this architecture must be thought as having been not merely one of "material facts" but also an iconography: that the form of the house conceived in the artist's mind as the pattern of the work to be done, and in response to the needs of the householder (whether human or divine), actually served the double requirements of a man who can be spoken of as a whole man, to whom it had not yet occurred that it might be possible to live "by bricks and mortar only", and not also in the light of eternity, "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God", by which we mean in India precisely "what was heard" (*śruti* = *veda* श्रुति-वेद), together with the accessory sciences (*sāstra* शास्त्र), of which the basic principle is to imitate what was done by the Gods in the beginning, or in other words to imitate Nature, *Nathura Naturans*, *Creatrix, Deus*, in her manner of operation.<sup>66</sup> By touching on the subject of other things than buildings made by art, and that of other than Indian architecture, we have implied that the metaphysical tradition, or *philosophia perennis*, of which the specifically Indian form is Vedic, is the heritage and birthright of all mankind, and not merely of this or that chosen people; and hence that it can be said of all humane artistic operation that its ends have always been at the same time physical and spiritual good. This is merely to restate the Aristotelian and scholastic doctrine that the general end of art is the good of man, that the good is that for which a need is felt and to which we are attracted by its beauty (by which we recognize it, as though it said, "Here am I"), and that the whole or holy man has always been conscious at the same time of physical and spiritual needs; and therefore not in any capacity merely a doer or merely contemplative, but a doer by contemplation and a contemplative in act.

Finally we contend that nothing has been gained but very much lost, both spiritually and practically, by our modern ignorance of the meanings of superstitions, which are in fact "stand-overs" that are only meaningless to us because we have forgotten what they mean. If the thunder storm is no longer for us the marriage of Heaven and Earth, but only a discharge of electricity, all that we have really done is to substitute a physical for a metaphysical level of reference; the man is far more a man who can realise the perfect validity of both

explanations, each on its own level of reference. Of the man who could look up to the roof of his house, or temple, and say "there hangs the Supernal Sun", or down at his hearth and say "there is the Navel of the Earth", we maintain not only that his house and temple were the more serviceable to him and the more beautiful in fact, but in every sense much more such homes as the dignity of man demands than are our own "machines to live in".



1. E. Schroeder, in an article to appear in the *Survey of Persian Art*. In a consideration of the successive courses of the elevation, Mr. Schroeder also remarks that "the four zones suggest in their succession a series of metaphysical concepts whose progression has been the concern of contemplatives from Pythagoras to St. Thomas: first individuality or multiplicity, secondly conflict and pain, next unanimity, consent and peace, and finally unification, loss of individuality, beatitude".

2. J. H. Probst-Biraben, "Symbolisme des arts plastiques de l'Occident et du Proche-Orient", *Le Voile d'Isis* (now *Etudes Traditionnelles*) vol. 40, 1935, p. 16.

3. J. Harrison, *Themis*, p. 92.

4. **Ṛbhu** (ऋभु), from **rabh** (रभ्) (cf. *labh*), as in **ārabh** (आरभ्) to "undertake" "fashion" and **rambha** (रम्भ), a "prop", "post" "support". In **Ṛv. X, 125.8 ārambhamāṇā bhuvanāni viśvā** (आरम्भमाणा भुवनानि विश्वा), "fashioning all the worlds, the universe embodies the meaning also of setting up all the houses."

5. Hence it is that actual temples, as at **Koṇāraka**, may be provided with wheels and represented as drawn by horses; and it is from the same point of view that their movable images are carried in procession on chariots, drawn by men or horses, of which the most familiar example is that of the annual procession of the "Lord of the World" (**Jagannātha**) at Puri. That the universe is thought of as a house not only in a spatial but also in a temporal sense is seen in **Śatapatha Br. I, 66. 1. 19**. "He alone wins the Year who knows its doors, for what were he to do with a house who cannot find his way inside?"

6. Similarly *Maitri Up.*, VI, 6, "The eye of **Prajāpati's** crudest form, his cosmic body, is the Sun; for the Person's great dimensioned world (**mātrāḥ** मात्रः) depends upon the eye, since it is with the eye that he moves about amongst dimensioned things" (**mātrāḥ** मात्रः) literally "measured things", and hence the material world of measurable things, or whatever occupies space.

It may be remarked that although we began with the case of the dome on a square base, the spatial principles involved are the same in the case of a circular base, since any "field" is determined in two dimensions. Heaven and earth are generally thought of as wheels or circles (**çakra** चक्र); but in the **Śatapatha Br.** XIV. 3. 1. 17 the Sun is "four-cornered, for the quarters are his corners", *ib.* VI. 1. 2. 29 the earth is similarly "four-cornered, and that is why the bricks (of the altar) are likewise four-cornered."

The Axis of the Universe according to the texts as represented is usually cylindrical or four or eight-angled: early Indian pillars usually either cylindrical or eight-angled. We might also have discussed the symbolism of these pillars, and similarly that of the palace supported by a single pillar (**ekathambhaka-pāsāda** एकदम्भक पासाद), but will merely cite as parallel "Every column in those Achaemenid palaces was an emblem of the sun-god to which the king of kings might look up" (Roes, *Greek Geometric Art.* Oxford, 1933).

7. **Çamaṣam** (=pātram) **bhakṣaṇam** (चमयम्=पात्रं भक्षणम्), the solar "Grail" as an all-wish-fulfilling feeding vessel; regarded either as himself the "enjoyer" or as the Titan's (**Varuṇa's**) "means of enjoyment", just as we speak of the eye as "seeing" or as the "means of vision". The Titan Father's bowl, which is also his "eye" (*Rv.* I. 50. 5-7; X. 82.1; X. 88. 13; *Av.* X. 7. 33 etc.) provides whatever "food" may be desired, precisely inasmuch as it is the solar orb, paten, or platter which envisages and thus partakes of all things at once; in which sense it is that "The Sun with his five rays feeds upon the objects of sense-perception" (**viṣayān atti** विषयान् अस्ति, *Maitri Up.* VI. 31, cf. **pippalam...atti** पिप्पलं अस्ति, *Rv.* I. 164.20) i. e. "When as the Lord of Immortality he rises up by food" (**amṛta-tvasyeśāno yad annena atirohati** अमृत-त्वयेशानो यद् अन्नेन अतिरोहति, *Rv.* X. 90.2—"comes eating and drinking"); which rays are "the far seeing rays of **Varuṇa**", *Rv.* X. 41.9, "five" if we consider the four quarters and central orb, "seven" if we also consider the zenith and nadir, or more indefinitely "a hundred and one", of which the hundred and first is again the central orb. The bowl is not, as some have suggested, the Moon,—"The Person in the orb is the eater, the Moon his food.....The Moon is the food of the gods" (**ŚB.**

X. 5. 2. 18 and I. 6. 4. 5). "The Sun is the eater, the Moon his dues. When this pair unites, it is termed the eater, not the food" (**ŚB.** X. 6. 2. 3 and 4). It is of course as "world" or "universe", all that is "under the sun", that the Moon is his "meat". The very "life of **Varuṇa**, the Fisher King, the deity *ab intra*, otherwise inert and impotent, depends upon this Grail as the eternal means of his rejuvenation and procession. And this solar Grail is the prototype of every sacrificial paten. For the Grail motif in the Indian tradition, and the Buddha's bowl as a Grail, see my **Yakṣas**, Pt. II, pp. 37-42, 1931.

8. **Mukha** (मुख), "entrance", "gateway", as in **Jaiminīya Up. Br.** III. 33.8 "The comprehensor thereof, frequenting in the spirit both these classes of divinities (Gale, Fire, Moon, Sun as transcendent and as immanent), the Gate receives him" (**vidvān....etā ubhayīr devatā ātmany etya, mukha ādatte** विद्वान्....एता उभयीर्वैवता आदमयेत्या, मुख आदत्ते); *ib.* IV. 11.5. "I (Agni) am the Gate of the Gods" (**ahaṁ devānām mukham asmi** अहं देवानां मुखं अस्मि); *Aitareya Br.* III. 42 "Agni ascended, reaching the sky, he opened the door of the world of heaven" (**svargasya lokasya dvāram** स्वर्गस्य लोकस्य द्वारं). For **mukha** as the gateway of a city or fort see **Kauṣīlya Arthasāstra**, II, Ch. 21, and the plan in *Eastern Art*, II, 1930, Pl. CXXII, the "mouth" of the gateway is approached by a bridge of "concourse" (**saṅkrama** संक्रम) which spans the moat, so that whoever enters may be said to have reached the "farther shore". There is accordingly a solar symbolism of gateways and of bridges and bridge-builders (cf. "Pontiff").

9. This holds good also in the analogous case of the four-fold partition of the vajra (made by **Tvaṣṭr**, given to Indra, and with which he smites the Dragon, *Rv.* I. 85. 9, etc.), inasmuch as the four parts are to be wielded, or otherwise moved, **Śatapatha Br.** 1. 2. 4.

The coronate and royal Buddha types of the **Mahāyāna** iconography characteristically hold the begging bowl, and represent (1) the Buddha as **Çakravartin**, or King of the World, and (2) the **Sambhogakāya** or Body of Beatitude (Mus, "Le Buddha pare," *BEFEO.*, 1928, pp. 274, 277). Now we suggest that **sam** (सम्) in **sambhoga** (सम्भोग) has the value "completely" or "absolutely" rather than that of in company with": **sambhoga** is not (in these contexts) and eating "together with others", but an "all-eating" in a sense analogous to that of 'all-knowing', cf. **sam-bodhi**, **saṁ-vid**, **sam-skr.** (संवेदि, संविद्, संस्कृ-) etc. The bowl is more than the simple **patta** (पत्त) in which a wandering monk collects his food from here or there, it is a **puṇḍra patta** (पुण्ण पत्त), a "full bowl", furnished with all kinds of food; and

the story seems to assert unmistakably that His body who eats from it is no mere *kāya* (काय), but the **Sambhogakāya** (संभोगकाय) or Body of Omnifruition. M. Mus, approaching the problem from another angle, has reached the same conclusion, that the term *sambhoga* implies a perfect, universal, and effortless fruition; pointing out at the same time that **anābhoga** (अनाभोग), meaning "not relying upon any external source of nourishment", naturally coincides with *sambhoga* in one and the same subject, and implies a self-subsistence of which the Sun is an evident image (*Barabudur*, p. 659). My own interpretation of the atonement of the four bowls merely confirms these deductions.

10. From other points of view, of course, the Sun can be regarded as having one, four, five, eight, nine, or a "thousand" rays; eight, for example, with respect to the four quarters and four half-quarters on a given plane of being.

11. A fuller discussion of the Vedic "Cross of Light", of which the arms are the pathways of the Spirit, must be under-taken elsewhere. In the meantime, for the expression *trivṛḍ vajra* (त्रिवृद्ध-वज्र), see **Jaiminīya Br.** I. 247. "The procession of the three-fold spear perpetually coincides with that of these worlds" (*trivṛḍ vajro' harahar imān lokān anuvartata* त्रिवृद्ध-वज्रोदरहर-इमान्लोकान्-अनुवर्तते); for the "best ray" (**param bhās, jyēṣṭha raśmi** परम्-भास्, ज्येष्ठ रश्मि cf. **jyotiṣām jyotiṣ** ज्योतिषं-ज्योतिष, "light of lights") see **Śatapatha Br.** I. 9. 3. 10 with **Mahīdhara's** commentary, together with **Jaiminīya Up.** Br. I.30.4 **yat param atibhati... tam abhyatimuçyate** (यदरम् अतिभति तम् अभ्यतिमुच्यते); and for the **sūtrātman** (सूत्रात्मा) doctrine, **Rv.** I. 115. 1, **Av.** X. 8. 37-38, **Śatapatha Br.** VI. 7. 1. 17 and VIII. 7. 3. 10, where the Sun is said to 'string these worlds to Himself by the thread of the Gale of the Spirit' and to be the "point of attachment" (**āsañjanam** आसंजनम्) to which these worlds are bound by means of the six directions, cf. in **Av.** X. 7. 42 the concept of the universal warp of being as fastened by six pegs or rays of light (**tantram.....saṁmayūkham** तन्त्रं.....संमयूखं); and **Bhagavad-Gītā.** VII. 7. and X. 20. It may be added that similar ideas are clearly expressed in the apocryphal *Acts of John*, 98-99 and *Acts of Peter*, XXXVIII.

To avoid all possibility of confusion, it must be emphasized that the position of the Sun in the universe is in the Vedic tradition always at the centre, and not at the top of the universe, although always above and at the "Top of the Tree", when considered from any point within the universe. How this is will be readily understood if we consider the universe as

symbolised by the wheel, of which the centre is the Sun and the felly any ground of being. From any one position on the felly it will be seen that the Axis of the Universe, which pillars apart Heaven and Earth is a radius of the circle and a ray of the Sun occupying what is from our point of view the zenith, but from the solar point of view the nadir; while from an exactly opposite position on the felly, the same will hold good. The Axis of the Universe is represented then by what in the diagram is actually a diameter, made up of what is from any one point of view a nadir and a zenith, in other words, the axis passes geometrically through the Sun. It is in quite another than this geometric sense that the "seventh ray" passes through the Sun, viz. into an undimensioned beyond, which is not contained within the dimensioned circle of the universe. The prolongation of this seventh ray beyond the Sun is accordingly incapable of any geometric representation; from our point of view it ends in the Sun, and is the disc of the Sun, through which we cannot gaze, otherwise than in the spirit, and not by any means either physically or psychically. To this "ineffable" quality of the prolongation of the "Way" beyond the Sun correspond the **Upaniṣad** and Buddhist designations of the continuing **brahma-patha** (ब्रह्म-पथ) as "non-human" (**amānava** अमानव) and as "uncommunicable" or 'untaught' (**aśaikṣa** अशैक्ष), and the whole doctrine of "Silence" (see my "Vedic doctrine of Silence", *Etudes Traditionelles*, 42, 1937. The essential distinction of this seventh ray from the other spatial rays (which also corresponds to the distinction of transcendent from immanent and of infinite from finite) is clearly marked in symbolic representations, of which we give two illustrations, respectively Hindu and Christian.



The seven-rayed Sun (a) as represented on Indian punchmarked coins, after Allan, *Early Indian Coins* (British Museum, 1936), and (b) from the Nativity in the church of San Matorano in Sicily. In (b) the long shaft of the seventh ray extends downward from the Sun to the Bambins in the cradle.

12. **Jātaka** I. 58; cf. **Çhāndogya Up.**, III. 8.10, where for **Sādhyā** deities the Sun rises always in the zenith and sets in the nadir,—and can therefore, so far as they are concerned, cast only a fixed shadow.

13. Mus, P., "Barabudur: Esquisse d'une Histoire du Bouddhisme fondee sur la critique archeologique des textes" in course of publication in *BEFEO*, 1932 f. Passages quoted above are from Part V, pp. 125, 207, 208.

Cf. H. Kern, *Histoire de Bouddhisme dans l'Inde*, Paris, 1903, II, p. 154. "The true **Dhātugarbha** of the **Ādi-Buddha**, in other words the Creator, **Brahmā**, is the **Brahmāṇḍa**, the world-egg, container of all the elements (**dhātu**) and which is divided into two halves by the horizon. This is the real **Dhātugarbha** (receptacle of the elements); the constructions are only an imitation of it".

14. See the excellent discussion of the cosmic chariot and its micro-cosmic replicas, and the demonstration of the analogy of cosmic and human *processions* in Mus, *loc.cit.*, p. 229.

15. Cf. VIII. 26. 18 "He (Sun) hath measured out with history the boundaries of Heaven and Earth".

16. With its interior cell, the "lotus of the heart, in-dwelt by the Golden Person of the Sun" (**Maitrī Up.** VI. 2), "ever seated in the heart of creatures" (**Kaṭha Up.** VI. 17), the "all-containing city of Brahman" (**Chāndogya Up.** VIII. 1.6), "constance of Indra and **Indrāṅgī**" Heaven and Earth) (**Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.** IV. 2. 3. **Maitrī Up.** VII. II). We shall see later that it is from the apex of this house of the body or heart that the indwelling Spirit emerges when its connection (**saṃyoga संयोग**) with the individual-body-and-soul is severed.

For a corresponding analogy of the inward and outward "cells", see William of Thierry, *Epistle to the Brethren of Mont Dieu*, ch. 28 "Thou hast one cell without, another within. The outward cell is the house wherein thy soul and thy body dwell together: the inward is thy conscience (*conscientia*, "consciousness", "inward controller", **antaryāmin अन्तर्यामी**), which ought to be dwelt in by God (who is more inward than all thy inward parts) and by thy spirit" (sc. **antarātman अन्तरात्मा**): cited from Shewring's Version, London, 1930, p. 51.

17. Our allusion is in fact to the metaphysical identification of woman with the household fire (**gārhapatya गार्हपत्य**) and of the act of insemination with that of a ritual offering in this fire: for which see **Jaiminīya Br.** I. 17 (*JAOS.*, XIX. 115-116) and (**Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.** VI. 4. 1-3). Considered from this point of view all birth is from fire. Man's first birth is his liberation from an antenatal hell: he enters at birth into a purgatorial space; and

being laid in the sacrificial fire at death, is regenerated through the Sun; his earthly motions are horizontal, his spiritual ascent vertical, by way of the **stauros**, under whatever aspect this pillar may be represented.

18. Just as in connection with painting we find the instruction **tad dhyātam bhittau niveśayet** (तद् ध्यातं भित्तौ निवेशयेत्), "Put down on the wall what has been imagined" (**Abhilāṣitārthaçintāmaṇi**, I. 3. 158).

19. "The intellectual operation in Indian art", *Journ. Indian Soc. Or. Art*, III, pp. 1-12, 1935: "The technique and theory of Indian painting", *Technical Studies*, III, pp. 59-89, 1934. *The Transformation of Nature in Art*, Cambridge, 1935.

20. **Dhi** (धि) as noun is not so much merely "thought", but specifically *contemplatio, theoria, ars, prognosis*; and **dhira** (धीर) not merely "wise" but specifically "contemplative" and tantamount to **yogī** (योगी), especially in the sense in which the latter term is sometimes applied to artists.

21. Needless to say that the doctrines of the "freedom of the artist" and of artistic "self-expression" could only have arisen, in logical apposition to that of the "free examination" of the Scriptures, in such an anti-traditional environment as that which had been provided by the Protestant Reformation (*sic*), with its altogether unchristian evaluation of "personality".

22. Mus, *loc. cit.*, pp. 121, 360.

23. We say "universal" advisedly, and not merely with reference to each and every human construction. The universe itself can be understood only with reference to its axis. The creation is continually described as a "pillaring-apart (**viśkambhana विशकम्बन**) of Heaven and Earth; and that "Pillar" (**skambha स्कम्भ = stauros**) by which this is done is itself the exemplar of the universe. "It is pillared-apart by this Pillar that Heaven and Earth stand fast; the Pillar is all this enspirited (**ātmanvat आत्मनवत्**) world, whatever breathes or winks" (Av. X. 8. 2); "Therein the future and the past and all the worlds are stayed" (Av. X. 7. 22); "Therein inheres all this" (Av. X. 8. 6); "Trunk of the Tree wherein abide whatever Gods there be" (Av. X. 7. 38).

Two illustrations may be cited. The Deopara inscription of Vijayasena says that this king erected (**vyadhita व्यधित**, lit. "struck", in the sense in

which one "sticks up" a post) a temple of Pradyumna, which was the "Mount (Meru) whereupon the Sun at midday rests the Tree whose branches are the quarters of space, (*dik-śākhā-mūla kāṇḍam* दिक् शाखा-मूल काण्ड), and only sustaining pillar of the house of the Three Worlds" (*āfambastambham ekaṅ tribhuvana-bhavanasya* आलम्बस्तम्भ-एक-त्रिभुवन-भवनस्य) (*Ep. Ind.*, I. 310, 314, cited by Mus, *Loc. cit.*, pt. IV, p. 144=*BEFEO.*, 1932, p. 412).

In the *Volsunga Saga*, "King Volsung let build a noble hall in such a wise that a big oak-tree stood therein, and that the limbs of the tree blossomed fair out over the roof of the hall, while below stood the trunk within it, and the said trunk did men call Branstock" (i. e. Burning Bush); it is moreover from this trunk that Sigmand draws the sword Gram, with which Sigurd subsequently slays Fafnir, cf. the Indian myth of the origin of the sacrificial sword, quoted in another note.

It will be observed that in Volsung's hall the roof is penetrated by the stem of the World-Tree, the hall is virtually a hypaethral temple, like the Indian *bodhigara* बोधिघर), fully described in *Eastern Art*, II, 1930, pp. 225-235.

24. These penetrations of the roof and floor correspond to what in the case of the cosmic chariot are the insertions of the axle-tree in the hubs of the wheels. The serpent underground, an Endless Resinum (*ananta, śeṣa* अनन्त, शेष), is the non-proceeding God-head, Death, Overcome by the proceeding Energy with whom the Axis of the Universe, its exemplary support, is identified and Who "occupies" the whole universe in the same way that the stauros, as the first principle of space, is said to "occupy" the six extents, for example in *Av. X. 7. 35*, "The Pillar (*skambha* स्कम्भ) hath given their place to both Heaven and Earth and to the Space between them, hath given a place to the six extents (i. e. the three dimensions of space considered as proceeding from a common centre in opposite directions), and taken up its residence (*i viveśa* इ विवेश) in this whole universe", for all of which we have in practice the direct analogy of the builder's gnomon, set up in the beginning, and employed as the first principle of the whole layout (*Mānasāra*, ch. VI).

25. Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson, *The Rites of the Twice Born*, 1920, p. 354. Cf. extracts from the *Māyāmataya*, verses 56-60, in my *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*. 1908, p. 207. Mrs. Stevenson remarks that a fire altar is subsequently made "in the very centre of the principal room of the house (*ib.* p. 358). Such a "principal room" may be said to represent what was

once the whole house, in its prototypal form of a circular hut, with its central hearth. At least in the case of this prototype, it will be safe to assume that this central hearth has been constructed immediately above the transfixed head of the chthonic Serpent; and it will be remarked that the smoke of the fire will rise vertically upwards to the eye or luffer in the roof, from which it escapes. These relations correspond exactly with the doctrine that the household fire is *ab extra* and manifestly what the chthonic Serpent is *ab intra* and invisibly (*Aitareya Br.* III. 36) and with such texts as *Ṛv.* III. 55-7 where Agni is said to remain within his ground, even while he goes forth (*anv agram çarati kseti budhnaḥ* अन्वग्रम चरति क्षेति बुधन),—proceeds, that is, when he has been "awakened" by Indra's lance (*sasantam vajreṇa abodhyo'him* ससन्तं वज्रेण अबोधयोहिम *Ṛv.* I. 103. 7, which "awakening" is a "kindling", as in *Ṛv.* V. 14.1 "Awaken Agni, ye that kindle him" *agnim.....abodhya samidhanaḥ* अग्निं अबोधय समिधन्),—and with the identification of Agni with the "Head of Being" *Ṛv.* X. 88. 6 and *Attareya Br.* III, 43, see my "Angel and Titan", *JAOS.* 55, p. 413). Furthermore were it not that the smoke passes through the roof and into the beyond, the analogy would be defective, since in this case (i. e. if the smoke of the burnt offering were confined) Agni could not be thought of as the missal priest by whom the oblation is conveyed to the immortal deities whose abiding place is beyond the solar portal.

26. Mus, *loc. cit.*, p. 207.

It will not be overlooked that even in modern Western practice there still survives the laying of a foundation stone, accompanied by what are strictly speaking metaphysical rites; nor that such survivals are strictly speaking superstitious, or "stand-overs" of observances of which the meaning is no longer understood.

27. In connection with this "bloody point" and the cosmic instability that follows upon its withdrawal there could be developed an exposition of the phallic and fertilising properties of the Axis of the Universe, of which the Bleeding Lance of the Grail tradition, the Indian *Śiva-liṅgam*, and the planting-stick or ploughshare are other aspects. But this would be to wander too far away from the present architectural theme.

28. Waterfield and Grierson. *The Lay of Alha*, Oxford, 1923, pp. 276 f. The Brahman's question in the ballad, "How should mortal dare deal the *Nāga* king a mortal blow?" exactly corresponds to that of M. Mus, *loc. cit.*, "How is that each house could be made out to stand just above the head of the mythical Serpent, the supporter of the world?". The answer is, of

course that the very centre of the world, the 'navel of the earth' (**nābhiḥ pṛthivyāḥ** नाभिः पृथिव्याः), beneath which lies the all supporting serpent **Śeṣa**, Ananta (Ahir Budhnya, **Ahi-Vṛṭṛa**) is not a topographically situated place, but a place in principle, of which every established and duly consecrated "centre" can be regarded as an hypostasis. In this sense, and just as the *forma humanitatis* is present in every man, the form of the unique Serpent is an actual presence wherever a "centre" has been ritually determined. In the same way the transfixing peg is the nether point of Indra's *vajra*, wherewith the Serpent was transfixed in the beginning. It is an illustration of the customary precision of Blake's iconography that in his Prophecy of the Crucifixion, the nail that pierces the Saviour's feet pierces also the head of the Serpent.

For the general principle involved in the consecration of a holystead see **Satapatha Br.**, III. 1. 1. 4 "Verily this whole earth is the goddess (Earth); on whatsoever part thereof one may propose to offer sacrifice, when that part has been taken hold of by means of a sacred formula (**yajuṣā pariḡṛhya** यजुषा परिगृह्य), there let him perform the sacrificial rite" the rite, of course, involving the erection of an altar "at the centre of the earth". For the establishment of fires as a legal taking possession of a trace of land see **Pañcaviṃśa Br.** XXV, 10.4 and 13.2; here the site of the new altar is determined by casting a yoke-pin (**śamyā** शम्या) eastward and forward; where this peg falls, and as is evidently to be understood sticks into the ground so as to stand upright, marks the position of the new centre. There is reference, apparently, to how this was in the beginning, in **Rv.** X. 31. 10b where "When the First Sen (Agni) was born of Sire-and-Mother (Heaven and Earth, and/or two fire-sticks, of which the upper is like the yoke-pin made of **śamī** wood), the Cow (Earth) engulfed (**jagāra** जगार) the yoke-pin (**śamyām** शम्या) for which they had been seeking "seeking", probably, because it had been "flung". The expression **samāpasam**, "peg-thrown site", survives in **Samyutta Nikāya**, I. 76.

29. "He spread her out (cf. skr. **pṛthivī** पृथ्वी), and when He saw that she had come to rest on the waters, He fastened upon her the mountain" (ibn **Hishām**, quoted by Lyall, *JRAS*, 1930, p. 783).

30. Mus, *loc. cit.*, p. 361.

31. Andrae, W., *Die Lonische Saule*, 1933, Schlusswort. "He for whom this concept of the origin or ornament seems strange, should study for once the representations of the whole third and fourth millennia B. C.

in Egypt and **Mesopotamia**, contrasting them such 'ornaments' as are properly so called in our modern sense. It will be found that scarcely even a single example can be found there. Whatever may seem to be such, is a drastically indispensable technical form, or it is an expressive form, the picture of a spiritual truth": for "or" in the last sentence we could wish to substitute "and at the same time".

Similarly Herbert Spinden, in the *Brooklyn Museum Quarterly*, 1935, pp. 168 and 171: "Then came the Renaissance.... Man ceased to be a part of the universe, and came down to earth. So it would seem that there are only two categories of art, one a primitive or spiritual category, one a category of disillusioned realism based on material experiments.....(The primitive artists) wrought and fought for ideals which hardly come within the scope of immediate comprehension. Our first reaction is one of wonder, but our second should be an effort to understand. Nor should we accept a pleasurable effect upon our unintelligent nerve ends as an index of understanding".

32. **Pativā** (पतिव्वा) is also "fallen". The double entendre is, let us not say calculated, but inevitable. Inasmuch as the arrow is winged (**patatrin**, **patrin** पतत्रो, पत्रो) it is virtually a "bird" (**patatrin**), that is to say in terms of Vedic symbolism an intellectual substance (cf. **Rv.** VI, 9. 5), and by the same token of divine origin and heavenly descent. The embodiment of the "form" of an arrow in an actual artefact is precisely such a "descent" (**avatarāṇa** अवतरण), and a decadence from a higher to a lower level of reference or plane of being; conversely, the actual weapon can always be referred to its principle, and is thus at the same time a tool and a symbol. **Pativā** (पतिव्वा), finally, also implies subtraction, as of a part from a whole; and it is in this sense that our text provides us with a hermeneia of the word **sara** (शर), "arrow".

33. That is of course, and also in Christian phraseology, the "Gale of the Spirit": "The Gale that is thy-Self thunders through the firmament as it were an untamed beast taking its pleasure in the cultivated fields", **Rv** VII 87. 2.

34. **Rv.** VI. 75 15-16, "Be such great honour paid unto the arrow, celestial, of Parjanya's seed; fly forth, thou arrow, sharpened by incantation, from the bowstring, go reach our enemies, let there not any one of them be left". Similarly for the chariot, compared to and addressed directly as "Indra's thunderbolt, edged of the Gales, germ of **Mitṛa** and navel of

**Varuṇa**” (*indrasya vajro marutām aṅikam mitrasya garbho varuṇasya nābhiḥ* इन्द्रस्य वज्रो मरुतं अणिकं मित्रस्य गर्भो वरुणस्य नाभिः, *Ṛv.* VI. 47. 28). The whole complex of ideas expressed in our **Brāhmaṇa** text is thus already present in *Ṛv.*, where the warrior very clearly sees himself in the likeness of Indra at war with the powers of darkness, and his weapons in the likeness of Indra’s. The warrior *is* virtually Indra, his weapons virtually Indra’s

For the similar “deification”, or as we should express it, “transubstantiation” of other implements see also Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, p. 188. The modern craftsman’s annual “worship” of his tools is of the same sort.

35. Holtom, D. C., *Japanese Enthronement Ceremonies*, Tokyo, 1928 (ch. III, The Sword). It may be remarked that these ceremonies are essentially rites, and only accidentally, however appropriately, attended with an imposing pomp. The most solemn of all these “ceremonies” is that of the Great New Food Festival, of which Dr. Holtom says that “Herein are carried out the most extraordinary procedures to be found anywhere on earth today in connection with the enthronement of any monarch. In the dead of night, alone, except for the service of two female attendants, the Emperor, as the High Priest of the nation, performs solemn rites that carry us back to the very beginnings of Japanese history, rites which are so old that the very reasons for their performance have been forgotten. Concealed in this remarkable midnight service we can find the original Japanese enthronement ceremony” (*ib.* p. 59).

36. A mass of data on “thunder stones” has been brought together by P. Saintyves (*Pierres magiques: betyles hachesamulettes et pierres de foudre; traditions savantes et traditions populaires*, Paris), who however has not really understood his material; for as Rene Guenon remarks (in a review in *Etudes Traditionnelles* 42. p. 81). “In the matter of prehistoric weapons, it is not enough to say with the author that they have been called “thunderbolts” only because their real origin and use has been forgotten, for if that were all we should expect to find as well all sorts of other explanations whereas in fact, in every country without exception they are always “thunder-bolts” and never anything else; the symbolic reason is obvious, while the “rational explanation” is disturbingly puerile” !

37. It is not at all without ground that strzygowski remarks that the Eskimos “have a much more abstract conception of the human soul than the

Christians.....the thought of many so-called primitive peoples in far more spiritualised than that of many so called civilised peoples”, adding that “in any case it is clear that in matters of religion we shall have to drop the distinction between primitive and civilised peoples” (*Spuren indogermanischen Glaubens in der bildenden Kunst*, 1936, p. 344).

38. “The cost approach is the primary trouble with all housing in this country, private as well as public..... This has resulted not only in the tenements of the slums but also in the fantastic apartments of the well-to-do, sixteen stories or more in height, with a density per acre and a lack of natural light and ventilation which are shocking. It is literally true that the most important part of an architect’s work in our cities has been to produce maximum floor space with minimum expense.....Design for comfort, health and safety is always secondary” (L. W. Post, in the *Nation*. March 27, 1937). No “metaphysical” architecture has ever been as inefficient as this; we may say that a neglect of first principles inevitably leads to discomfort, and point out that the secularisation of the arts has resulted in the sort of art we have,—a sort of art that is either the plaything of an idle class or if not that, then a means of making money at the cost of human well-being, and for which in either case we have only to thank our own anti-traditional individualism.

39. Sin, defined as “a departure from the order to the end” may be either artistic or moral: “Firstly, by a departure from the particular end intended by the artist; and this sin will be proper to the art; for instance, if an artist produce a bad thing, while intending to produce something good; or produce something good, while intending to produce something bad. Secondly, by a departure from the general end of human life: and then he will be said to sin, if he intends to produce a bad work, and does so actually in order that another may be taken in thereby. But this sin is not proper to the artist as such, but as a man. Consequently, for the former sin the artist is blamed as an artist; while for the latter he is blamed as a man” (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theological*, I-II, 21, 2 ad 2). Indian text books, at least, require of the hereditary artist to be both a good artist and a good man.

40. That is, sees things, whether natural or artificial, not merely as individual and in this sense unintelligible essence but also as symbolic referents, that which is symbolised being the archetype and *raison d’être* of the thing itself, and in this sense its only final explanation.

41. **Rv.** passim; Av. III. 22.5; **Bṛhadāraṇ, Up.** I. 3 8, 14; III. 1.4; **Kaṭha Up.** V. II; **Sam Nikāya** I. 138; **Atthasālini.** 38; **S. Nipāta** I. 599; etc. *Oculus mundi* is the sun in Ovid, *Met.* 4 228, whence "eye of the world" = "sun" in English. Other meanings of English "eye" include "centre of revolution", "socket" (for insertion of another object), "place of exit or ingress", "fountain" (well-eye), brightest spot or centre". Arabic 'ain and Persian *chashm*, *chashma* are 'eye', 'sun, and "well-spring". 'ain also 'exemplar'. None of these meanings is without significance in the present connection.

42. The two eyes of the double volute correspond in fact to the Sun and Moon, which are the eyes of the sky, **Rv.** I. 70. 10. It is not inconceivable that in apsidal buildings having an apse and therefore also a roof-plate at each end, the two **kaṇṇikās** (कण्णिका) were thought of as respectively the Sun and Moon of the house.

43. Harrison, J., *Themis*, pp. 91-92. Miss Harrison adds "But what does Poseidon want with a hole in the roof?" and answers correctly enough that "before Poseidon took to the sea he was Erectheus the Smiter, the Earth-shaker". Poseidon is no more than Ouranos or **Varuṇa** in an essentially limited sense a sea-god. These are, like the God of Genesis, the God of the primordial Waters (both the upper and the nether) representative of "all possibility"; if he bears a trident, iconographically indistinguishable from **Śiva's trisūla** (त्रिशूल) and **Indra's vajra** (वज्र), and which is in fact a solar shaft, it is because he is not merely a "seagod" in the later and literary sense, but the protean deity of all that is, whether above or below. Vitruvius (1 2. 5) says that Fulgur, Coclum, Sol and Luna were worshipped hypaethral temples. Even the domes of such modern structures as St. Paul's may be called, with respect to their "eyes", vestigially hypaethral shrines of the Sky-god. In cathedrals, of which the vault is generally closed, the opening is replaced by a representation of an evidently solar type; as Byron and Rice express it "The central dome was *reft* by the stupendous frown of Christ pantocrator, the sovereign judge" (Birth of *Western Painting*, p. 81, italics mine).

44. "It was the abode of blacksmith....." e were ushered into the hall of dais, into the sanctum of the edific. The "riggin" was above our heads.....Chimney, of course, there was none. an opening in the centre of the roof immediately above the fire, allowed of the egress of the smoke and admitted light enough to see one's way in the apartment.....Around the fire were arranged soft seats of turf for the family" (Charlton, E., "Journal

of an expedition to Shetland in 1834", in *Saga-book of the Viking Society*, 1936, p. 62). This description of the main room of a house, still surviving in the nineteenth century, is applicable in every detail to what we understand to have been the typical form of a dwelling already in the Stone Age, and generally as the prototype of the house, itself mimetic of a macro-cosmic archetype.

45. The etymology of the word **akkhaṇa** (अक्खण) has been disputed: as PTS remarks "We should expect either an etym, bearing on the meaning 'hitting the centre of the target' (i. e. its 'eye') (cp E. bull's eye).....or an etym. like 'hitting without mishap' ". It is evident in fact that the connection of **akkhaṇa** is with **Skr akṣ** (अक्ष) to "reach" or "penetrate", the source of **aḥsa** (अक्ष) and **aḥsaṇa** (अक्ष), 'eye' and **ākhaṇa** (आखण), "but" or "target" and in fact "bull's eye". We digress to cite the latter word from **Jaiminīya Up. Br.** I. 60. 8 'The breath of life is this stone as a target' (sa eso' śmakhaṇam yat prāṇaḥ (स इसोऽश्माखणं यत्प्राणः), where it may be noted that **prāṇa** (प्राण) and **aśman** (अश्मन्) can both be taken as references to the Sun, cf. **Rv.** VII. 104. 19 **divo aśmānaṇa** (दिवो अश्मानं) which target the Asuras cannot affect.

**Aḥsa** is also "axis" and "axle-tree" (distinguished only by accent from **aḥsa**, "eye"), and Benfey was evidently near the mark when he suggested that **aḥsa** as axle-tree was so-called as forming the "eye" in the hub of the wheel which it penetrates. E. *eye* (G. *auge*) and E. *axis* and *auger* present some curious analogies with **Skr aḥsa** (अक्ष) and **aḥsi** (अक्षि). Auger is stated to represent O. E. **nafu-gār**, "that which perforates the nave of a wheel": had it been related to G. *auge*; would be "that which makes an 'eye' in anything". It may be added that **Skr. aḥsāgra** (अक्षग्र) is the "axle point", and the hub its "door", **aḥsa-dvāra** (अक्ष-द्वार).

**Akkhaṇa-vedhin** (अक्खण-वेदी) is then "one who pierces the 'eye' ", or "one whose arrow penetrates the bull's eye"; in the present context it would scarcely be too much to say "Pierces the centre of the disc of the Sun" or "hits the solar and macrocosmic Bull's eye", cf. **Muṇḍaka Up.** cited below, Probably the best short English equivalent for **akkhaṇa-vedhin** would be "infallible marksman".

We find the epithet again in **Jātaka** No. 181 (**Jātaka** II. 88 f) where it is applied to the Bodhisattva Asadisa ("Nonpareil"), who performs two feats. In the first, a king under whom the Bodhisattva has taken service, is seated at the foot of a mango-tree (**ambarukkhamaṇḍale** अम्बरुक्खमुले = आम्र-वृक्ष-मूले) on a great couch close beside a "ceremonial stone slab" (**maṅgal-**



**aśilā-paṭṭa** मंगलशिलापट्ट, probably an altar of **Kāmadeva**, cf. **Daśakumāra-carita**, Ch. V, as cited in my **Yakṣas**, II, p. 12); the king desires his archers to bring down a bunch of mangoes from the top of the tree (**rukkhagge=vrkṣāgre** रुक्खाग्रे=वृक्षाग्रं) Nonpareil undertakes to do so, but must first stand just where the king is sitting, which he is allowed to do (we see here a close analogy to the **Māra-dharṣaṇa** scene and to that of the First Meditation, with the implication that the king has been seated precisely at the navel of the earth, or at least a "centre" analogically identified with that centre); standing then at the foot of the tree, he shoots an arrow vertically upwards, which pierces the mango stalk but does not sever it; and following this a second arrow, which touches and overturns the first, and continues into the heaven of the Thirty Three, where it is retained; finally, the original arrow in its fall severs the mango-stalk, and Nonpareil catches the bunch of mangoes in one hand and the arrow in the other. In the second feat, the Bodhisattva's brother Brahmadatta ("Theodore"), king of Benares, is beleaguered by seven other kings. Nonpareil terrifies these and raise the siege by letting fly an arrow which strikes the "knop of the golden dish from which the seven kings are eating" (**sattannaṃ rājūnaṃ bhuñjantānaṃ kañṇanapāti-makule** सत्तन्नम् राजूनां भुञ्जन्तानां कण्ठनपाति मकुले, where **pāti=pātra** पाति=पात्र), i. e. the centre of this dish, which can hardly be regarded otherwise than as a likeness of the Sun which we have identified with the "Titan's feeding bowl", **ṇamaṣaṇ asurasya bhaṅgaṇaṃ**..... **pātraṃ** (चमषं असुरस्य भक्षणं.....पात्रं) in **Ṛv. I. 110. 3** and 5 cited above.

46. **Vajiraggam** (वज्रिरग्गं) applied to the weapon of a solar hero, is significant. For the arrow, in origin, is said to have been the broken tip of the primordial **vajra** with which Indra smote the Dragon; which part "having flown (**pativā**), is called an arrow (**śara** शर) because it was broken off" (**aśīryata** अशीर्यत, **Śatapatha Br. I. 2. 4. 1**). For further data on **vajra**, see my *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, pp. 43-46. We might say that **vajiraggam=vajrāgram** (वज्राग्रम्) implies as much "which was the point of the vajra" as "tipped with adamant."

47. As pointed out in a subsequent note on the "turn-cap" motif, the question of "truth" in folklore, fairy-tale, and myth, is not a simple matter of correlation with observed fact, but one of intelligibility. The "threading of a circle" as described above can only be called a "miracle" (and for present purposes we assume that "miraculous" and "impossible" are much the same); nevertheless we have seen that the narrative has a true meaning. It is no more necessary that a truth should be expressed in terms of fact,

than that an equation should resemble its locus. The symbolism must be consistent; it does not have to be historically factual.

Scripture is written in a hieratic language and a parabolic style, often requiring a learned commentary. The oral literature of the folk, which may be called the Bible of the unlearned, is by no means of popular origin, but designed to secure the transmission of the same doctrines by and amongst an unlearned folk. For such a purpose the ideas had necessarily to be imagined and expressed in readily imitable forms. The same, of course, applies to the visual art of the people, often misconceived of as an essentially "decorative" art, but which is really an essentially metaphysical and only accidentally decorative art. The necessity and final cause of folk art is not that it should be fully understood by every transmitter, but that it should remain intelligible, and it is precisely for this reason that its actual forms must have been such as would lend themselves to faithful and conservative transmission.

"Conservative transmission" can easily be misunderstood from our modern point of view, in which the emphasis on individuality has led to a confusion of *originality* with *novelty*. Spinden proposes a false alternative when he asks "Does man, at large, think or merely remember?" (*Culture, the diffusion controversy*, London, 1928, p. 43) "Transmission" may be either from one generation to another, or from one to another contemporary culture. We cannot draw a logical distinction between "transmission" and "memory": for even if we set ourselves to copy an object before us, it is only memory, visual or verbal, that enables us to bridge the temporal gap that separates the model from its repetition. If there can be no property in ideas, it is also true that nothing can be known or stated except in some way; and it is precisely in this "way" that the liberty of the individual subsists; apart from which there could be no such thing as a sequence of styles in a given cycle, nor any such thing as a distinction of styles in a national or geographical sense. It is of the essence of "tradition" that something is *kept alive*; and as long as this is the case, it is as erroneous to speak of a "mechanical" transmission from generation to generation as it is to suppose that the elements of culture can be mechanically borrowed from one people by another. It is only because our academic science acquaints us for the most part only with dead or dying traditions (often indeed traditions that have been deliberately killed by the representatives of a supposedly higher culture), and because of our own individualistic insistence upon *novelty* that we are so little conscious of the absolute *originality* of even the most conservative peasant art. No one who has ever lived and worked with the traditional artist, whether craftsman or story-teller, has ever failed to

recognize that in repeating what has been repeated for countless generations, the man is always completely himself, and giving out what proceeds from within, moved by its form, which giving out from within it precisely what we mean by the word originality. As Mr. Benson himself a "traditional artist" has recently admirably expressed it "If a work of art *originates* in a clear mental image, we call it an *original* work of art. It has a true mental *origin*. Original work has nothing to do with the novelty or newness of the subject or its treatment. The subject and the technique may be as old as the hills, but if they are created in an original mental image, the work will be original" (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Third Radio Series, sixth address, February 11, 1936, obtainable from the Museum).

There is something just a little too precious and condescending in the attitude of the modern intellectual who for his part is naive enough to believe that even the more technical language of scripture has none but literal and naturalistic meanings and at the same time proposes to protect the child at its mother's knee and the peasant by the fire-side from the possibility of a like belief in the literal significance of a transmitted legend, which indeed he may not have fully understood but which at least has been handed down to him reverently and will be handed on by him in the same spirit. We need hardly say that the amoral character of the fairy-tale, to which exception is similarly taken, is only a further evidence of its strictly metaphysical and purely intellectual content.

The *Jātakas*, of course, have been adapted to edifying uses; but it is impossible that the original shapers of the stories should not have understood their analogic significance, and improbable that none of those who heard or read them "had ears to hear."

A "Symbolische Schiessen nach den vier Himmelstichtungen" occurs in late Egyptian art, see H. Schafer, *Aegyptische und heutige Kunst*, 1928, p. 46, Abb. 54 after Prisse d' Avennes, *Mon. Eg.* pl. 33. No "thread" is represented, but it can scarcely be doubted that the arrows are shafts of light. There occur also in late Egyptian art admirable representations of the Sun-door both open and closed, see Schafer, *ib.* p. 101. Abb. 22-24.

48. Mus, *loc. cit.*, p. 118.

49. Cf. *Bhagavad Gītā* XI. 54. "I can verily be penetrated" (*śakyo hy ahaṇ viddhaḥ* शक्यो ह्य अहं विद्धः). If That (Spirit, *ātman* आत्मा, immanent as "body-dweller" and transcendent in itself discarnate) is also described as "ever impenetrable" (*nityam avedhyaḥ* नित्यं अवेद्यः, *ib.* II. 30), this means, of course, by whatever is not of its own nature; the Asuras for example

being themselves shattered on that Stone that is the Breath of Life, *Jaiminiya Up. Br.* I. 60. 8 as quoted in a previous note.

50. With the injunction *tal lakṣyaṃ viddhi* (तल लक्ष्यं विद्धि), 'Hit that mark' cf. the expressions *lakṣa-vedhīn*, *lakṣya-vedha*, *lakṣya-bheda* (लक्ष्य वेधी, लक्ष्य-वेध, लक्ष्य-भेद), and the previously cited *akkhaṇa-vedhīn*, all denoting one who hits the mark, the target, the "bull's eye". *Viddhi* (विद्धि) is the imperative both of *vyadh* (व्यध्) to "pierce" and of *vid* to "know" the "penetration" is here in fact a gnosis; in *Jaiminiya Up. Br.* IV. 18. 6 *tad eva brahma tvam viddhi* (तद् एव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि), "*viddhi*" is perhaps primarily "know" and secondarily *penetrate*. *Nirvedhya* (निर्वेद्य), from *vyadh*, may be noted in the *Divyāvadāna* as "intuition" or "intellectual penetration". We think, that in the same way Vedic *vedhas* is "penetrating" in this sense, and to be derived from *vyadh* rather than from *vid*; and hence primarily equivalent to *vedhīn*, "marksman" in the sense of *Muṇḍ Up.*, and secondarily "wise" or "gnostic". Consider for example *Ṛv.* X. 177. 7 (*Jaiminiya Up. Br.* III. 35. 1) *Paṭaṅgam.....hṛdā paśyanti manasā vipaścitah, marīṇām padam iṣṇanti vedhasaḥ* (पतंगं.....हृदा पश्यन्ति मनसा विपश्चितः, मरीचिनां पदं इच्छन्ति वेदसः). An interpretation in terms of archery is, if not indeed inevitable, at least quite possible. For *vipaścitah* is not simply "wise", but rather "vibrant" (cf. "Shaker"—Quaker), and *vip* may mean an arrow, as in *Ṛv.* X. 99. 6. "He smote the boar with bronze-tipped shaft" (*vipā varāham ayas-agrayā han* विपा वराहं अयस-अग्रयाहन्,—incidentally *ayasāgra* अयसाग्र does not invalidate the mythical origin of the arrow previously cited, inasmuch as the one foot of the Sun, which is also the Axis of the Universe and lance wherewith the Dragon was smitten is itself "a golden shaft at dawn and one of bronze (*ayas*) at dusk", *Ṛv.* V. 62, 8). *iṣṇanti* is from to "desire" or "seek" or "have as one's aim" (Grassmann, "Die ursprüngliche Bedeutung ist sich nach etwas in Bewegung setzen"), a root distinguished in conjugation but originally identical (Grassmann, "ursprünglich gleich") with *is* (इस्) to "propel" (Grassmann, "in schnelle Bewegung setzen"), whence *iṣu* (इष्), "arrow". We translate accordingly, that is, with specific reference to the imagery of *Muṇḍ Up.* II. 2, as follows: "Intellectually, within their heart, the vibrant (prophets) descry the winged (Sun= Spirit),—marksmen (*vedhasaḥ* वेदसः) whose aim pursues the pathway of his rays".

When in the *Mahāvratā* "They cause a skin to be pierced (*vyādha-* *yanti* व्याद्यन्ति) by a man of the princely caste", by the best available archer (*Aitareya Āraṇyaka*, V. 1.5, cf. Keith, *Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka*, pp. 80 ff.), which skin is the Sun himself in a likeness (*Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā*, XXXIV. 5),

this is evidently a symbolic penetration of the sense of the **Muṇḍaka** text, of which the very words **tad veddhavyam somya viddhi.....lakṣyam tad evaḥsaram somya viddhi** (तद् वेद्ध्यं सोम्य विद्धि.....लक्ष्यं तद् एवहसं सोम्य विद्धि) might suitably have been addressed to the archer in the ritual, as he stood before his solar target. According to Keith (**Aitareya Āraṇyaka**, p. 277, note 13 and *loc. cit.*). "The idea is clearly a rainspell". Something of this kind may indeed have been involved, not in the penetration of the Sun, but in the ritual "intercourse of creatures" (**bhūtānām ḥa maithunam** भूतानां च मैथुनं) the fall of rain being a consequence of the marriage of Heaven and Earth (**Pañcaviṃśa Br. VII. 10. 1-4, VIII. 2. 10**, and more especially **Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa I. 145**. "Yonder world thence gave rain to this world as a marriage gift"). But the modern scholar is far too ready to resort to naturalistic and rationalistic explanations even when as in the present case the most obvious metaphysical interpretations are available. The whole context has to do with the attainment of Heaven; and even the "intercourse of creatures" is not primarily a "magical" (fertility) rite, but an imitation of the conjunction of the Sun and Moon "at the end of the sky, at the Top of the Tree, where Heaven and Earth embrace" (**dyāvāpṛthivī saṃśliṣyathaḥ** द्यावापृथिवी संश्लिष्यथः) and whence "one is altogether liberated through the midst of the Sun" (**Jaiminīya Up. Brāhmaṇa, I. 3. 2 and I. 5.5** cf. my "Note on the **Aśvamedha**", *Archiv Orientalni*, VIII, p. 315).

When we assert the priority of the metaphysical significance of a rite, we are not denying that there may have been then as now **avidvāsaḥ** (अविद्वांसः) for whom the given rite had a merely magical character; we are deducing from the form of the rite itself that it could only have been thus correctly ordered by those who fully understood its ultimate significance, and that this metaphysical significance must have been understood in the same way by the **evamvit** (एववित्); just as a mathematical equation presupposes a mathematician, and also other mathematicians able to riddle it. That the modern scholar trained in a school of naturalistic interpretation is not a "mathematician" in this sense proves nothing; "For the Scriptures crave to be read in that spirit wherein they were made; and in the same spirit they are to be understood" (William of Thierry, *Golden Epistle*, X. 31).

51. None of this runs counter to the indefeasible principle that "the first beginning is the same as the last end." If the "long ascent" (**Aitareya Br. IV. 20-21**) is apparently a departure from the chthonic Serpent, a release from the bonds of **Varuṇa**, it is also a return to **Varuṇa**, to the Brahman, who is no less above than He is below the Serpent in His ground; which "ground" is that of nature below, and of essence above, which

nature and which essence are the same *in divinis*, and omnipresent; Ananta girdles these worlds. For the ophidian nature of the Godhead see my "Angel and Titan" and "Darker side of Dawn", to which may be added the explicit formulation of **Muṇḍaka Up. I. 2. 6** where the Brahman is described as a "blind (-worm) and deaf (-adder), without hands or feet" (**açakṣuḥ-ṣrotram tad apāny apādam** अक्षुः श्रोत्रं-तद्ग्यानिसादं), as is **Vṛtra** (वृत्र) in **Ṛv. I. 32. 7, Kunāru-Vṛtra** (कुनारु-वृत्र) in III. (**budhne-rajasaḥ** बुधने रजसः) in IV. 1. 11, and Ahi in **Śatapatha Br. I. 6. 3. 9**; cf, Av. X. 8. 21 **apād agre sam-abhavat** (अपादाग्रे सम्भवत्), etc. with this "Footless he first came into being" compare Shams-i-Tabriz, Diwan XXV in Nicholson's edition, "The last step to fare without feet". Ahi is understood to mean "Residue" (**Jaiminīya Br. III. 77**), and this is, of course, the evident meaning of "**śeṣa**" (शेष), as being "that which is left", **Śiṣyate** (शिष्यते). It is from this Endless Residuum (**ananta, śeṣa** अनन्त, शेष) that one escapes *at* birth, and as and into the same Endless Residuum that one escapes *from* birth. There is no need to cite texts to show in what way the **Brahman-Ātman** is Endless (**ananta**), but we shall quote two in which the **Brahman-Ātman** is defined as the Residuum from which one departs at birth, and as the Residuum as and into which one re-enters at last: **Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up. V. 1**; where the ancient Brahman is called a "plenum that is left behind (**avaśiṣyate** अवशिष्यते) as a plenum, no matter what has been deducted from it", and **Çhāndogya Up. VIII. 1. 4-5** where when the soul and body vehicle perishes, "what is left over (**atiśiṣyata** अतिशिष्यत) therefrom.....is the Spirit" (**ātman** आत्मा).

Let us remark at this point that the well-known symbol of the Serpent biting its own tail is evidently a representation of the Godhead, the Father, and of Eternity: as Jeremias has expressed it 'Das grossartige Symbol der Schlange, die sich in den eigenen Schwanz beisst, stellt den Aeon dar' (*Der Antichrist in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 1930, p. 4).

We speak advisedly of a re-entry "as and into" the Ophidian Godhead: the "return to God" can only be in likeness of nature. It can be only as a snake that one can be united to the "Snake without End", as a circle superimposed on a circle coincides with it. This does not, however, mean that the way from snakehood to snakehood which passes through the Sun, is meaningless for the snake that proceeds (**atisarpati** अतिसर्पति); on the contrary, it is by means of the sacrifice, the incantation, and by reduction of potentiality to act that the livid scaly snake-skin must be east, and a sunny skin revealed; it is as a streak of serpentine lightning that the Wayfarer returns to the source from which he came forth, for which source and now goal no other symbol than that of lightning is adequate. "The

Person seen in the Lightning—I am He, I indeed am He” (Çhândogya Up. IV. 13.1; cf. *Kena Up.* 29-30). It will not be overlooked that in Indian iconography, lightnings are commonly represented in the form of golden snakes.

The foregoing is based on the references cited and on materials collected for a discussion of the symbolism of lightning. In addition there can be cited some Buddhist texts in which the *arhat* (अर्हत्) is called a “serpent” in a laudatory sense. In *Majjhima Nikāya* I.32, for example, the *arhats* *Mogallāna* and *Sāriputta* are *Mahānāga*, a “pair of Great Snakes.” This is explained, *ib.* I. 144-5, where an anthill is excavated (anthills are in fact often the homes of snakes, and in Ṛv. are evidently symbols of the primordial mound or cave from which the Hidden Light is released), and when there is found a snake at the very base of the mound (which is called a “signification of the corruptible flesh”) there is found a *Nāga*, it is explained that this Serpent is a “signification of the Mendicant in whom the foul-issues have been eradicated”, i. e. of an *arhat*, cf. *Sutta Nipāta* 512, where “*Nāga*” (नग) is defined as “one who does not cling to anything and is released” *sabattha na sajjati vimutto* सबन्धनं सज्जति विमुत्तो). From the first of these two passages it is evident, of course, that the “*Nāga*” in question is a snake and not an elephant. To these instances may be added the case of the death of *Balarāma* related in the *Mausala Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata*, where *Balarāma*, being seated alone and lost in contemplation, leaves his body in the shape of a mighty Snake, a white *Nāga*, having a thousand hoods and of mountainous size, and in this form makes his way into the Sea.

The formulations outlined above may be said to offer an intelligible explanation not merely of many aspects of Indian iconography, but also certain aspects of that of Greek mythology, where Zeus is not only represented as a solar Bull, etc., but also in his chthonic aspect of Zeus Meilichios as a bearded Serpent, and where also the Hero, entombed and deified, is constantly depicted in the same manner.

52. It is, of course, the Pathfinder, Agni, *arhat* in Ṛv. I. 127. 6, II 3.1 and X. 10, 2, who first “ascended, reaching the sky; opened the door of the world of heavenly-light (*svargasya lokaśya dvāram apavṛṇot* स्वर्गस्य लोकास्य द्वारं अपवृणोत्); and is the ruler of the heavenly-realm” (*Aitareya Br.* III. 42); it is “by qualification” *arhaṇā* अर्हणा that the Suns partake of immortality (Ṛv. X. 63.4). In the same way the Buddha (who is none other than *the* Man Agni) opened the doors of immortality for such as have ears (*apārūtā teṣam amatassa dvāra ye sotavanto* अपारुता तेषां अमत्तस्य द्वार ये सोतवन्तो

*Mv.* I. 7), and as M. Mus expresses it, “Having passed on for ever, the way remains open behind Him” (*loc. cit.* p. 277).

The Christian parallel is evident, since Christ also prepared the way, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God. The opening of the gate is discussed by St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.* III 49.5 ‘The shutting of the gate is the obstacle which hinders men from entering in.....on account of sin... Christ by His Passion merited for us the opening of the kingdom of heaven, and removed the obstacle, but by His Ascension, as it were, He brought us to the possession of the heavenly kingdom. And consequently it is said that by ascending He *opened the way before them.*’ And just as Agni, whether as Fire or Sun, is himself the door (*ahaṃ devānān mukha* अहं देवानां मुख, *Jaiminiya Up. Br.* IV. 11.5), so “I am the door: by Me if any man shall enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture” John, X, 9), i. e. shall be a “mover at will” (*kāmācārī* कामाचारी). In this connection Meister Eckhart comments (I. 275) “Now Christ says ‘No man cometh to the Father but through Me’, Though the soul’s abiding place is not in Him, yet she must, as He says, go through Him. This breaking through is the second death of the soul, and far more momentous than the first”. With the expression “breaking through” may be compared to both “breaking through the solar gate” (*sauraṃ dvāram bhitvā* सौरं द्वारं भित्त्वा, *Maitri Up.* VI. 30) and “breaking through the round of the roof-plate” (*kaṇṇika-maṇḍalam bhnditvā* कण्णिका मण्डलं भिन्दित्वा, *Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā* III. 66. to be cited again below).

To *hrdayasyāgra* (हृदयस्याग्र) “apex of the heart” corresponds the Islamic ‘ayn-i-qalb,’ “eye of the heart”; which apex or eye is the Sundoor within you’, Cf. Frithjof Schuon, “L’ocil du coeur” in *Le Voile d’ Isis*, vol. 38, 1933, citing *Mansūr al-Hallāj*, “I have seen my Lord with the eye of my heart (*bi-ayn-i-qalbī*); I said, Who art thou? He answered, Thyself; and *Jaiminiya Up. Brāhmaṇa*, III. 14. 5 where the Comprehensor, having reached the Sun, is similarly welcomed, “who thou art, that am I; who am I, that one art thou; proceed.”

53. It is generally understood that the spirit of the Comprehensor, having left the heart, departs through the suture called *brahmarandhra* (ब्रह्मरन्ध्र) in the dome of the skull, that suture, viz. which is still open at birth, but closed throughout life. *Brahmarandhra* is lacking in Acharya’s *Dictionary of Hindu Architecture*, but there is good evidence in the (quite modern) *Bṛhadīśvara Māhātmya*, ch. XV, that the opening in the top of a tower (the “eye” of the tower, as explained above) has been called by

this name. The story (which closely parallels that of **Sudhammā** related in **Jātaka** I. 200-1 and **Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā**, I. 269, see my "Palī **kaṇṇikā**....." p. 239) runs that a pious woman besought the builders of the great **gopura** (गोपुर) of the Tanjore temple (ca. 1000 A. D.) to make use of a stone provided by herself, "and accordingly it was used for closing the *brahmarandhra*" (Somasundaram, J. M., *The Great Temple at Tanjore*, Madras, 1935, pp. 40-41).

The *brahma-randhra* is precisely in medical language what is called the *foramen*. This *foramen* is the very word employed by Ovid (and no doubt as a technicality) to denote the hole intentionally left in the roof of the temple of Jupiter, immediately above "old Terminus, the boundary stone" to whom "it is not allowed to sacrifice save in the open air" (Harrison, J., *Themis*, p. 92, with a further reference to Vergil *ad Aen.* IV. 48 as commented by Servius): "Even today, lest he (Terminus) see aught above him but the stars, have temple roofs their little aperture" (**exiguum**...foramen, Ovid, *Fast.* II. 667).

Terminus, whose place in the Capitoline temple of Jupiter was in the central shrine, and evidently in the centre of this shrine, was represented by a column, which is not really the symbol of an independent deity, but the lower part of the column which stood for Jupiter Terminus, on a coin struck in honour of Terentius Varro (for which, and other data, see Daremberg, *Dic. des Antiquites grecques et romaines*, s. v. Terminus). Thus whereas *termini*, as boundary posts in the plural, are placed at the edges of a delimited area, *the Terminus* of all things occupies a central position, and is in fact a form of our cosmic axis, *skambha*, *stauros*. It may be added in the present connection that Skr. **siman** (सिम्न) (from *si*, to draw a straight line, cf. **sītā** (सोत्त), "furrow") is not only in the same way a boundary mark and in other contexts *the* utmost limit of all things, but also a synonym of *brahmarandhra*.

It will be observed that our *foramen*, identifiable with the solar doorway, is ideally situated at the summit of the cosmic *stauros*, and is quite literally an "eye". We can hardly doubt, accordingly, that no mere figure of speech, but a traditional symbolism is involved in the saying "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle (*foramen acus* in the Vulgate) than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Matthew, XIX. 24), where indeed "eye of *the* needle" might have been a better rendering. *Brahmarandhra* and *foramen*, it may be added, imply by their physiological reference that the temple has been thought of not merely as in the likeness of the cosmic *house* of God, but at the same time as an image of the cosmic

*body* of God (into which He enters and from which He departs by an opening above, the solar door, of which Eckhart speaks as "the gateway of His emanation, by which He invites us to return").

It may be further remarked that a comparison of the human head with the spherical cosmos occurs in Plato (Ti. 44 D ff.: for further references see Scott, *Hermetica*, Oxford, 1925, II, p. 249). Incidentally the saying that in man "there is nothing material above the head, and nothing immaterial below the feet" is far from unintelligible; the "Man" is cosmic; what is above his head is supra-cosmic and immaterial; what below his feet is a chthonic basis which is his "support" at the nether pole of being; the intervening space is occupied by the cosmic "body", in which there is a mixture of immaterial and material.

54. Or those of an arrow, cf. the discussion of **Muṇḍaka Up.** II. 2, above. The Sun, identified with the Spirit ( **Ṛv.** I. 115.1 etc. ) being typically winged (**Suparṇa**, **Paṅga**, **Garuḍa** सुपर्ण, पतंग, गरुड़, etc.) can be entered into as like unites with like only by a similarly winged principle; in the present context, by the arrow of the Spirit, soaring on wings of sound or light, coincident at this level of reference.

55. Similarly Shamas-i-Tabriz, **Dīwān** XXIX and XLIV in Nicholson's edition, "Fly, fly O bird, to thy native home, for thou hast escaped from the cage, and thy pinions are outspread.....Fly forth from this enclosure since thou art a bird of the spiritual world."

56. Cf. the use of **veṣṭ** (वेष्ट्) in **Manu** I. 49, where creatures are described as 'enveloped by darkness' (**tamasā** .....**veṣṭitāḥ** तमसा.....वेष्टिताः) and **Śvet. Up.** VI. 20 "Not until men shall be able to roll up space like a skin" (**çarmavat akāśam veṣṭayisyanti** चर्मवत् आकाशं वेष्टयिष्यन्ति)-impossible for man as such.

It may be added that **veṭhana**=**veṣṭana** (वेठन=वेष्टन) is very often employed to denote not merely a wrapping of any sort but more specifically a head-cover or turban. We might accordingly, and with reference to the familiar folklore motif of the cap of darkness (of which the possession signifies an *iddhi* इद्धि of the sort that we are now considering), have rendered **jhāna-veṭhanena śarīraṃ veṭhetvā pakkāmi** (ज्ञान वेठनेन शरीरं वेठेत्वा पक्कमि) by "concealing his person by means of the turn-cap of contemplation, disappeared."

This provides a further illustration of the fact, alluded to in a previous

note, that what is called the "marvellous" in folk and epic literature, and thought of as something "added to" a historical nucleus by the irregular fantasy of the people or that of some individual litterateur, is in reality the technical formulation of a metaphysical idea, an adequate and a precise symbolism by no means of popular origin, however well adapted to popular transmission. Whether or not we believe in the possible veridity of the miracles attributed to a given solar hero or Messiah, the fact remains that these marvels have always an exact and spiritually intelligible significance: they cannot be abstracted from the "legend" without completely de-naturing it; this will apply, for example, to all the "mythical" elements in the nativity of the Buddha, which moreover are repetitions of those connected with the nativities of Agni and Indra in **Ṛv.**

In the present connection we may point out further that the phraseology of our text throws some light on the nature of the power of shape-shifting and of imposing a disguise on others, which powers are so often attributed, for good or evil, to the heroes of folklore. If to disappear altogether is really to have perfected a contemplative act wherewith the person concerned in a spiritual sense escapes from himself so that he no longer knows "who" he is, but only that he "is", and analogically vanishes from the sight of others who may be present in the flesh, one may perhaps say of the lesser marvel of magical transformation involved in the imposition of an altered appearance upon oneself or others, that this is in a similar manner an investiture (**veṣṭana** वेष्टन) of the body in a form that has been similarly realised in contemplation (**dhyāna** ध्यान), and thereafter projected and wrapped about one's own or another's person so that only this disguise can be seen, and not the person within it.

Finally, it must not be supposed that the actual exhibition of marvels has any spiritual significance: on the contrary the exhibition of "powers" is traditionally deprecated; it is only that state of being of which the powers may be a symptom that can be called "spiritual". It is, moreover, taken for granted that any such powers can be more or less successfully imitated by the "black magician," in whom they prove a certain skill, but not enlightenment. There is this great difference in the "traditional" and "scientific" points of view, that in the former one would not be astonished, nor one's philosophy upset by the occurrence of an actual miracle, while in the latter, while the possibility is denied, yet if the event took place, the whole position would be undermined.

57. As in Rev. IV. 2 "I was in the Spirit", and I Cor., XIV. 2 "in the

spirit he speaketh mysteries". A great deal more than metaphor is intended in Col. II. 5 "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order".

In Rev XVII. 3 "He carried me away in the spirit" (*abstulit me in spiritu*). cf. in the **Samgāmāvacara Jātaka (Jātaka II. 92)** where the Buddha "taking Nanda (not yet an *arhat* having the power of aerial flight) by the hand, went off in the air" to visit the heaven of Indra, *abstulit* corresponds to a being *raptus*, which is the consummation of *contemplatio*. In these two cases the state of **samādhi** (समाधि) is rather induced than innate.

58. cf. **Mahāvagga I.21 antaradhāyi** (अन्तरधायि), "disappeared", and **Majjhima Nikāya I. 329 antaradhāyitum** (अन्तरधायितु) "to vanish", and **antarhito** (अन्तहितो), "vanished".

59. That is, compressing past and present into the now of eternity; just as in **Śvet. Up. VI. 20** it is a question of the "rolling up of space". Being thus returned into Himself, He is "The hard to behold, abider in secret, set in the cave (of the heart), the Ancient whose station is the abyss" (**Kaṭha Up. II. 12**). He can be known only by the contemplative, as the immanent Spirit, "abiding in the vacancy of innermost being" or "within you", **antarbhūtasya khe** (अन्तर्भूतस्य खे), **Maitrī Up. VII. 11**.

Expressed in the narrative terms of the myth, creation (in which He might have been seen at work) being a past event is concealed from us because we cannot pursue it at a greater speed than that of light, or in other words are "not in the spirit", which if we were, the whole operation would be presently apparent.

60. **Vamśa** (वंश) is literally "bamboo", and architecturally either a post or a cross-beam such as a wall-plate. We assume that the **śālā-vamśa** (शाला-वंश) is here a king-post (either supported by the beams, or even extending to the ground, and in either case coincident with the main axis of the house) rather than a ridge-pole, because it is only in such a post that all the other beams, i. e. rafters, can be said to meet *together*. And similarly in the **Milindapanha** passage below, we assume that **kūṭa** (कूट) is synonymous with **kaṇṇikā** (as we know that it can be) and means roof-plate rather than ridge-pole. If the meaning were "ridge-pole" in either or both cases, the force of the metaphor would not, indeed, be destroyed, but somewhat lessened.

In this connection it may be noted that in **Jātaka I. 146** a "great

blazing *kūṭa* of bronze, as big as a roof-plate" is used as a weapon by a *Yakṣa* (so *kaṇṇika-mattam mahantam ādittam ayakūṭam gahetvā* सो कणिक-मत्तं महन्तं आदित्तं अयकूटं गहेत्वा). This seems to throw some light on the obscure passages *Jaiminiya Br.* I. 49.2 where the sacrificial victim "is to be struck on the *kūṭa*" (*kūṭe hanyāt* कूटे हन्यात्), by which we should understand "on the crown of the head"; and *ib.* 9 where a Season, described as "having a *kūṭa* in his hand" (*kūṭa-hastah* कूट-हस्तः) "descends on a ray of light" (*rasminā pṛtyavetya* रश्मिना प्रत्यवेत्य), and since the Season descends from the Sun and is the messenger of the solar Judge, we suppose again that this means that he has in hand as his weapon a *discus*, analogous to the solar disc, which is the roof-plate of the universe. Cf. Oertel in *JAOS.* XIX. 111-112.

In the same way the discus (*çakra* चक्र) is the characteristic weapon (*āyudha* आयुध) of the solar *Viṣṇu*. Another use of the Sun in a likeness as a weapon can be cited in the *Mahāvratā*, where an Aryan and a *Śūdra* (शूद्र) struggle for a white round skin which represents the Sun and the former uses the skin to strike down the latter, *Kūṭahasta* (कूट हस्त) then is tantamount to "armed with the Sun".

Just as the sacrificial victim is to be struck "on the *kūṭa*", so also we find that the deceased yogi's cranium may be broken, in order to permit the ascension of the breath of life; and in this connection Eliade (*Yoga*, Paris and Bucuresti, 1936 p. 306) remarks that "Yoga has had an influence also upon architecture. The origin of certain temple types, together with their architectonic conception; must be explained by the funeral rites of ascetics". Eliade gives references, and adds that "the fracture of the skull (in the region of the *brahmarandhra* ब्रह्म रन्ध्र, the foramen of Monro) is a custom found in the funeral rites of many races. It is widespread too, in the Pacific, India, and Tibet". That it was also an American Indian practice is known from the discovery in Michigan and elsewhere of perforated skulls; the circular perforation of the foramen met with here can only have had a ritual significance, as it is distinct from ordinary trepanning in that the operation was performed post mortem. It would be perfectly natural to describe the perforation as an "eye" in the dome of the skull.

61. *Samādhi* (n.) (समाधि and *samāhita* (pp.) (समाहित) are from *sam-ā-dhā*, to "put together", "make to meet", "con-centrate", "resolve", and hence reduce to a common principle": *samādhi* is "composition" "con-sent", and in *yoga*, the "consummation of *dhyāna*, in which consummation or unification or at-one-ment, the distinction of knower and known is

transcended and knowledge alone remains.

62. As remarked in the previous note, we assume that *kūṭa* is here a synonym for *kaṇṇikā*. Had a ridge-pole been meant, one could hardly have spoken of every one of the rafters as "converging" to it. *Kūṭāgāra* may indeed also mean a "gabled house". But in the present context we have evidence that the house envisaged had really a domed rather than a ridged, or even a pointed roof. This is indicated by *ninnā*, which implies that the rafters (*gopānasiyo* गोपालसिमे) are curved, and the roof therefore rounded; cf. the expression *gopānasi-bhogga gopānasivanka* गोपालसि-भोग्ग गोपालसिवंक 'bent like a rafter', used of women and old people ("bent", i. e. curved, not bent double as implied by the  $\Lambda$  in PTS).

63. Defined in *Milindapanha* 33 etc. as *śīlam* (शीलं conduct), *saddhā* (सद्दा. श्रद्धा faith), *viriyam* (energy वीर्यं), *samādhi* (unification, or "one-pointedness of the attention"), with the *indriyā-balāni* (इन्द्रिया-बलानि sense-powers) and *paññā* (insight, or more strictly speaking, fore-knowledge). It will be seen that while the application in the *Brahmaṇa* is strictly metaphysical, that of the Buddhist text is rather more "edifying". The *Milinda-panha* passage is repeated elsewhere, see my "Early Indian architecture, III, Palaces" in *Eastern Art*, III, p. 193.

64. Cf. in the *Majjhima Nikāya*, I. 322-323, "Just as the roof-plate (*kūṭa*) of a domed-mansion (*kutāgarassa* कुटारस्स) is the peak (*aggam* अगम) that ties together (*saṃghā-tanikam* संघा-तनिकं) and holds together (*saṃgānikam*), just so the sheltering-roof of the Truth (*channam-dhammānam* चन्म-धम्मानं) (is the peak that ties together and holds together the six laudable states of consciousness)".

65. The house of life, the spatial world of experience, is above all a half-way house; a place of procedure from potentiality to act, but of no further use to one whose purposes have all been accomplished and is now altogether in it. We have already seen the same idea (that of the no further validity of space) expressed in another way by the miracle of the atonement of the four bowls. The cycle symbolised by the building and destruction of the house, or division and unification of the bowls, proceeds from unity to multiplicity, and returns from multiplicity to unity; in agreement with the Buddha's word, "I being one become many, and being many become one" (*Samyutta Nikāya*, II. 212).

66. For the Vedas as a "map of life", cf. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XI. 5.13.