

The background is a solid blue color with a white line-art illustration. On the right side, a dragon is depicted in a dynamic, coiled pose, its head turned towards the left. The dragon has a long, flowing mane and whiskers. On the left side, a pine branch with several needles extends upwards. The overall style is graphic and minimalist.

Jung

Psychology and the East

Psychology and the East

"These writings of his are strongly alive; in most instances Jung does not present us with final solutions and last words about any of the great East-West problems, but rather with suggestions for a deeper kind of approach, thus opening up new planes of investigation."

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C. G.
Jung

Psychology and the East

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 1978
by Princeton University Press, Princeton

First published in the UK 1986
by Routledge and Kegan Paul

First published in Routledge Classics 2008
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

First issued in hardback 2015

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor and Francis Group, an informa business

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"The Dreamlike World of India" and "What India Can Teach Us"
extracted from Volume 10 of the Collected Works of C.G. Jung, *Civilization in Transition* © 1964, 1970 by Princeton University Press. "Psychological Commentary on *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*," "Yoga and the West," "Psychological Commentary on *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation*," "Foreword to Suzuki's *Introduction to Zen Buddhism*," "The Psychology of Eastern Meditation," "The Holy Men of India" and "Foreword to the *I Ching*" extracted from Volume 11, *Psychology and Religion: West and East* © 1958, 1969 Princeton University Press. "Commentary on 'The Secret of the Golden Flower'" extracted from Volume 13, *Alchemical Studies* © 1967 by Bollingen Foundation. "Foreword to Abegg, *Ostastien denkt anders*" and "On the Discourses of the Buddha" extracted from Volume 18, *The Symbolic Life: Miscellaneous Writings* © 1976 by Princeton University Press

Typeset in Joanna by RefineCatch Limited, Bungay, Suffolk

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN13: 978-1-138-83510-8 (hbk)
ISBN13: 978-0-415-43744-8 (pbk)

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EDITORIAL NOTE

This selection includes the writings in Part Two of *Psychology and Religion: West and East* (Volume 11 of the Collected Works) and papers on the philosophy and culture of the East from other volumes of the edition. The predominant subject is religion, but Jung's definition of religion was a wide one. Religion, he stated, is "a careful and scrupulous observation of what Rudolf Otto aptly termed the *numinosum*"—that which we regard with awe. From that standpoint, Jung was struck by the contrasting methods of observation employed by religious men of the East and by those of the predominantly Christian West.

Jung's concern with Eastern religion and philosophy was evident in his first theoretical work, *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (1912; revised 1952 as *Symbols of Transformation*), in which he employed symbolic material from the religious tradition of India and Iran as well as from Western sources. In *Psychological Types* (1921), the pages on the uniting symbol in Indian and Chinese philosophy are among the most fruitful of that rich and elaborate work. His first separate work in the genre was his

commentary on *The Secret of the Golden Flower* (1929), which is not only a Taoist text concerned with Chinese yoga, but is also an alchemical treatise. It opens the present selection, and Jung's other writings on the religion and thought of Asia follow, in chronological order. The chief of these were written as forewords or commentaries to traditional texts: his psychological commentaries on *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* and *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation*; his famous foreword to the *I Ching*; an evaluation of a translation of the Discourses of the Buddha; and an essay, "The Holy Men of India," written to introduce Heinrich Zimmer's collection of the teachings of Shri Ramana Maharshi. Twice, Jung lent his efforts to introduce works on Eastern thought by contemporaries: D. T. Suzuki's *Introduction to Zen Buddhism* (1939) and Lily Abegg's study of the mind of East Asia (1949). "Yoga and the West" was written in 1936, before Jung's visit to India, for a journal published in Calcutta; "The Psychology of Eastern Meditation" originated as a lecture to the Swiss Society of Friends of East Asian Culture during the Second World War (1943). Two articles in a more popular vein, written after the journey to India in 1936, touch on religion and philosophy as well as art and the social scene.

It may be a matter for surprise that the foreword to the *I Ching* was included in the volume *Psychology and Religion*; it is a document that would scarcely be termed religious, in the common usage of that word. If, however, Jung's definition cited above be kept in mind, and it be remembered that the earlier interpretations of what is now known as synchronicity were essentially religious in Jung's sense and that the *I Ching* was studied by the most illustrious of the Eastern sages, the intention of the Editors of the Collected Works will be apparent.

Substantial comment on Eastern religion and philosophy is also to be found in Jung's letters (edited in two volumes by Gerhard Adler, in collaboration with Aniela Jaffé) and in his privately published Seminars.

COMMENTARY ON *THE SECRET OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER*

[In late 1929, in Munich, Jung and the sinologist Richard Wilhelm published *Das Geheimnis der goldenen Blüte: Ein chinesisches Lebensbuch*, consisting of Wilhelm's translation of an ancient Chinese text, T'ai I Chin Hua Tsung Chih (*Secret of the Golden Flower*), with his notes and discussion of the text, and a "European commentary" by Jung. Earlier the same year, the two authors had published in the *Europäische Revue* (Berlin), V: 2/8 (Nov.), 530–42, a much abbreviated version entitled "Tschang Scheng Schu; Die Kunst das menschliche Leben zu verlängern" (i.e., "Ch'ang Sheng Shu; The Art of Prolonging Life"), an alternative title of the "Golden Flower."

[In 1931, Jung's and Wilhelm's joint work appeared in English as *The Secret of the Golden Flower: A Chinese Book of Life*, translated by Cary F. Baynes (London and New York), containing as an appendix Jung's memorial address for Wilhelm, who had died in 1930. (For "In Memory of Richard Wilhelm," see Vol. 15 of the *Collected Works*.)

[A second, revised edition of the German original was published in

1938 (Zurich), with a special foreword by Jung and his Wilhelm memorial address. Two more (essentially unaltered) editions followed, and in 1957 appeared a fifth, entirely reset edition (Zurich), which added a related text, the *Hui Ming Ching*, and a new foreword by Salome Wilhelm, the translator's widow.

[Mrs. Baynes prepared a revision of her translation, and this appeared in 1962 (New York and London), including Jung's foreword and the additional Wilhelm material. (Her revised translation of Jung's commentary alone had appeared in an anthology, *Psyche and Symbol*, edited by Violet S. de Laszlo, Anchor Books, New York, 1958.)

[The following translation of Jung's commentary and his foreword is based closely on Mrs. Baynes' version, from which some of the editorial notes have also been taken over. Four pictures of the stages of meditation, from the *Hui Ming Ching*, which accompanied the "Golden Flower" text, have been reproduced because of their pertinence to Jung's commentary; the examples of European mandalas have not been retained, since most of them were published, in a different context, in "Concerning Mandala Symbolism," Vol. 9, part i, of the *Collected Works*, and in the paperback *Mandala Symbolism*.

—EDITORS.]

FOREWORD TO THE SECOND GERMAN EDITION

My deceased friend, Richard Wilhelm, co-author of this book, sent me the text of *The Secret of the Golden Flower* at a time that was crucial for my own work. This was in 1928. I had been investigating the processes of the collective unconscious since the year 1913, and had obtained results that seemed to me questionable in more than one respect. They not only lay far beyond everything known to "academic" psychology, but they also overstepped the bounds of any medical, purely personal, psychology. They confronted me with an extensive phenomenology to which hitherto known categories and methods could no longer be applied. My results, based on fifteen years of effort, seemed

inconclusive, because no possibility of comparison offered itself. I knew of no realm of human experience with which I might have backed up my findings with some degree of assurance. The only analogies—and these, I must say, were far removed in time—I found scattered among the reports of the heresiologists. This connection did not in any way ease my task; on the contrary, it made it more difficult, because the Gnostic systems consist only in small part of immediate psychic experiences, the greater part being speculative and systematizing recensions. Since we possess only very few complete texts, and since most of what is known comes from the reports of Christian opponents, we have, to say the least, an inadequate knowledge of the history as well as the content of this strange and confused literature, which is so difficult to evaluate. Moreover, considering the fact that a period of not less than seventeen to eighteen hundred years separates us from that age, support from that quarter seemed to me extraordinarily risky. Again, the connections were for the most part of a subsidiary nature and left gaps at just the most important points, so that I found it impossible to make use of the Gnostic material.

The text that Wilhelm sent me helped me out of this difficulty. It contained exactly those items I had long sought for in vain among the Gnostics. Thus the text afforded me a welcome opportunity to publish, at least in provisional form, some of the essential results of my investigations.

At that time it seemed to me a matter of no importance that *The Secret of the Golden Flower* is not only a Taoist text concerned with Chinese yoga, but is also an alchemical treatise. A deeper study of the Latin treatises has taught me better and has shown me that the alchemical character of the text is of prime significance, though I shall not go into this point more closely here. I would only like to emphasize that it was the text of the *Golden Flower* that first put me on the right track. For in medieval alchemy we have the long-sought connecting link between Gnosis and the

processes of the collective unconscious that can be observed in modern man.¹

I would like to take this opportunity to draw attention to certain misunderstandings to which even well-informed readers of this book have succumbed. Not infrequently people thought that my purpose in publishing it was to put into the hands of the public a recipe for achieving happiness. In total misapprehension of all that I say in my commentary, these readers tried to imitate the "method" described in the Chinese text. Let us hope these representatives of spiritual profundity were few in number!

Another misunderstanding gave rise to the opinion that, in my commentary, I was to some extent describing my own therapeutic method, which, it was said, consisted in my instilling Eastern ideas into my patients for therapeutic purposes. I do not believe there is anything in my commentary that lends itself to that sort of superstition. In any case such an opinion is altogether erroneous, and is based on the widespread view that psychology was invented for a specific purpose and is not an empirical science. To this category belongs the superficial as well as unintelligent opinion that the idea of the collective unconscious is "metaphysical." On the contrary, it is an *empirical* concept to be put alongside the concept of instinct, as is obvious to anyone who will read with some attention.

C. G. J.

Küsnacht/Zurich, 1938

¹ The reader will find more about this in two essays published by me in the *Eranos Jahrbuch* 1936 and 1937. [This material is now contained in *Psychology and Alchemy*, Parts II and III.—EDITORS.]

1. DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY A EUROPEAN IN TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE EAST

A thorough Westerner in feeling, I cannot but be profoundly impressed by the strangeness of this Chinese text. It is true that some knowledge of Eastern religions and philosophies helps my intellect and my intuition to understand these things up to a point, just as I can understand the paradoxes of primitive beliefs in terms of “ethnology” or “comparative religion.” This is of course the Western way of hiding one’s heart under the cloak of so-called scientific understanding. We do it partly because the *misérable vanité des savants* fears and rejects with horror any sign of living sympathy, and partly because sympathetic understanding might transform contact with an alien spirit into an experience that has to be taken seriously. Our so-called scientific objectivity would have reserved this text for the philological acumen of sinologists, and would have guarded it jealously from any other interpretation. But Richard Wilhelm penetrated too deeply into the secret and mysterious vitality of Chinese wisdom to allow such a pearl of intuitive insight to disappear into the pigeon-holes of specialists. I am greatly honoured that his choice of a psychological commentator has fallen upon me.

This, however, involves the risk that this precious example of more-than-specialist insight will be swallowed by still another specialism. Nevertheless, anyone who belittles the merits of Western science is undermining the foundations of the Western mind. Science is not indeed a perfect instrument, but it is a superb and invaluable tool that works harm only when it is taken as an end in itself. Science must serve; it errs when it usurps the throne. It must be ready to serve all its branches, for each, because of its insufficiency, has need of support from the others. Science is the tool of the Western mind, and with it one can open more doors than with bare hands. It is part and parcel of our understanding, and it obscures our insight only when it claims

that the understanding it conveys is the only kind there is. The East teaches us another, broader, more profound, and higher understanding—understanding through life. We know this only by hearsay, as a shadowy sentiment expressing a vague religiosity, and we are fond of putting “Oriental wisdom” in quotation marks and banishing it to the dim region of faith and superstition. But that is wholly to misunderstand the realism of the East. Texts of this kind do not consist of the sentimental, overwrought mystical intuitions of pathological cranks and recluses, but are based on the practical insights of highly evolved Chinese minds, which we have not the slightest justification for undervaluing.

This assertion may seem bold, perhaps, and is likely to cause a good deal of head-shaking. Nor is that surprising, considering how little people know about the material. Its strangeness is indeed so arresting that our puzzlement as to how and where the Chinese world of thought might be joined to ours is quite understandable. The usual mistake of Western man when faced with this problem of grasping the ideas of the East is like that of the student in *Faust*. Misled by the devil, he contemptuously turns his back on science and, carried away by Eastern occultism, takes over yoga practices word for word and becomes a pitiable imitator. (Theosophy is our best example of this.) Thus he abandons the one sure foundation of the Western mind and loses himself in a mist of words and ideas that could never have originated in European brains and can never be profitably grafted upon them.

An ancient adept has said: “If the wrong man uses the right means, the right means work in the wrong way.”² This Chinese saying, unfortunately only too true, stands in sharp contrast to our belief in the “right” method irrespective of the man who applies it. In reality, everything depends on the man and little or nothing on the method. The method is merely the path, the direction taken by a man; the way he acts is the true expression

² [The Secret of the Golden Flower (1962 edn.), p. 63.]

of his nature. If it ceases to be this, the method is nothing more than an affectation, something artificially pieced on, rootless and sapless, serving only the illegitimate goal of self-deception. It becomes a means of fooling oneself and of evading what may perhaps be the implacable law of one's being. This is far removed from the earthiness and self-reliance of Chinese thought. It is a denial of one's own nature, a self-betrayal to strange and unclean gods, a cowardly trick for the purpose of feigning mental superiority, everything in fact that is profoundly contrary to the spirit of the Chinese "method." For these insights spring from a way of life that is complete, genuine, and true to itself; from that ancient, cultural life of China which grew logically and organically from the deepest instincts, and which, for us, is forever inaccessible and impossible to imitate.

Western imitation is a tragic misunderstanding of the psychology of the East, every bit as sterile as the modern escapades to New Mexico, the blissful South Sea islands, and central Africa, where "the primitive life" is played at in deadly earnest while Western man secretly evades his menacing duties, his *Hic Rhodus hic salta*. It is not for us to imitate what is foreign to our organism or to play the missionary; our task is to build up our Western civilization, which sickens with a thousand ills. This has to be done on the spot, and by the European just as he is, with all his Western ordinariness, his marriage problems, his neuroses, his social and political delusions, and his whole philosophical disorientation.

We should do well to confess at once that, fundamentally, we do not understand the utter unworldliness of a text like this—that actually we do not want to understand it. Have we, perhaps, a dim suspicion that a mental attitude which can direct the glance inward to that extent is detached from the world only because these people have so completely fulfilled the instinctive demands of their natures that there is nothing to prevent them from glimpsing the invisible essence of things? Can it be that the

precondition for such a vision is liberation from the ambitions and passions that bind us to the visible world, and does not this liberation come from the sensible fulfilment of instinctive demands rather than from the premature and fear-ridden repression of them? Are our eyes opened to the spirit only when the laws of the earth are obeyed? Anyone who knows the history of Chinese culture and has carefully studied the *I Ching*, that book of wisdom which for thousands of years has permeated all Chinese thought, will not lightly wave these doubts aside. He will be aware that the views set forth in our text are nothing extraordinary to the Chinese, but are actually inescapable psychological conclusions.

For a long time the spirit, and the sufferings of the spirit, were positive values and the things most worth striving for in our peculiar Christian culture. Only in the course of the nineteenth century, when spirit began to degenerate into intellect, did a reaction set in against the unbearable dominance of intellectualism, and this led to the unpardonable mistake of confusing intellect with spirit and blaming the latter for the misdeeds of the former. The intellect does indeed do harm to the soul when it dares to possess itself of the heritage of the spirit. It is in no way fitted to do this, for spirit is something higher than intellect since it embraces the latter and includes the feelings as well. It is a guiding principle of life that strives towards superhuman, shining heights. Opposed to this *yang* principle is the dark, feminine, earthbound *yin*, whose emotionality and instinctuality reach back into the depths of time and down into the labyrinth of the physiological continuum. No doubt these are purely intuitive ideas, but one can hardly dispense with them if one is trying to understand the nature of the human psyche. The Chinese could not do without them because, as the history of Chinese philosophy shows, they never strayed so far from the central psychic facts as to lose themselves in a one-sided over-development and over-valuation of a single psychic function. They never failed to

acknowledge the paradoxicality and polarity of all life. The opposites always balanced one another—a sign of high culture. One-sidedness, though it lends momentum, is a mark of barbarism. The reaction that is now beginning in the West against the intellect in favour of feeling, or in favour of intuition, seems to me a sign of cultural advance, a widening of consciousness beyond the narrow confines of a tyrannical intellect.

I have no wish to depreciate the tremendous differentiation of the Western intellect; compared with it the Eastern intellect must be described as childish. (Naturally this has nothing to do with intelligence.) If we should succeed in elevating another, and possibly even a third psychic function to the dignified position accorded to the intellect, then the West might expect to surpass the East by a very great margin. Therefore it is sad indeed when the European departs from his own nature and imitates the East or “affects” it in any way. The possibilities open to him would be so much greater if he would remain true to himself and evolve out of his own nature all that the East has brought forth in the course of the millennia.

In general, and looked at from the incurably externalistic standpoint of the intellect, it would seem as if the things the East values so highly were not worth striving for. Certainly the intellect alone cannot comprehend the practical importance Eastern ideas might have for us, and that is why it can classify them as philosophical and ethnological curiosities and nothing more. The lack of comprehension goes so far that even learned sinologists have not understood the practical use of the *I Ching*, and consider the book to be no more than a collection of abstruse magic spells.

2. MODERN PSYCHOLOGY OFFERS A POSSIBILITY OF UNDERSTANDING

Observations made in my practical work have opened out to me a quite new and unexpected approach to Eastern wisdom. In saying this I should like to emphasize that I did not have any knowledge, however inadequate, of Chinese philosophy as a starting point. On the contrary, when I began my career as a psychiatrist and psychotherapist, I was completely ignorant of Chinese philosophy, and only later did my professional experience show me that in my technique I had been unconsciously following that secret way which for centuries had been the preoccupation of the best minds of the East. This could be taken for a subjective fancy—which was one reason for my previous reluctance to publish anything on the subject—but Richard Wilhelm, that great interpreter of the soul of China, enthusiastically confirmed the parallel and thus gave me the courage to write about a Chinese text that belongs entirely to the mysterious shadowland of the Eastern mind. At the same time—and this is the extraordinary thing—its content forms a living parallel to what takes place in the psychic development of my patients, none of whom is Chinese.

In order to make this strange fact more intelligible to the reader, it must be pointed out that just as the human body shows a common anatomy over and above all racial differences, so, too, the human psyche possesses a common substratum transcending all differences in culture and consciousness. I have called this substratum the collective unconscious. This unconscious psyche, common to all mankind, does not consist merely of contents capable of becoming conscious, but of latent predispositions towards identical reactions. The collective unconscious is simply the psychic expression of the identity of brain structure irrespective of all racial differences. This explains the analogy, sometimes even identity, between the various myth motifs and

symbols, and the possibility of human communication in general. The various lines of psychic development start from one common stock whose roots reach back into the most distant past. This also accounts for the psychological parallelisms with animals.

In purely psychological terms this means that mankind has common instincts of ideation and action. All conscious ideation and action have developed on the basis of these unconscious archetypal patterns and always remain dependent on them. This is especially the case when consciousness has not attained any high degree of clarity, when in all its functions it is more dependent on the instincts than on the conscious will, more governed by affect than by rational judgment. This ensures a primitive state of psychic health, but it immediately becomes lack of adaptation when circumstances arise that call for a higher moral effort. Instincts suffice only for a nature that remains more or less constant. An individual who is guided more by the unconscious than by conscious choice therefore tends towards marked psychic conservatism. This is the reason why the primitive does not change in the course of thousands of years, and also why he fears anything strange and unusual. It might easily lead to maladaptation, and thus to the greatest psychic dangers—to a kind of neurosis, in fact. A higher and wider consciousness resulting from the assimilation of the unfamiliar tends, on the other hand, towards autonomy, and rebels against the old gods who are nothing other than those mighty, primordial images that hitherto have held our consciousness in thrall.

The stronger and more independent our consciousness becomes, and with it the conscious will, the more the unconscious is thrust into the background, and the easier it is for the evolving consciousness to emancipate itself from the unconscious, archetypal pattern. Gaining in freedom, it bursts the bonds of mere instinctuality and finally reaches a condition of instinctual atrophy. This uprooted consciousness can no

longer appeal to the authority of the primordial images; it has Promethean freedom, but it also suffers from godless hybris. It soars above the earth and above mankind, but the danger of its sudden collapse is there, not of course in the case of every individual, but for the weaker members of the community, who then, again like Prometheus, are chained to the Caucasus of the unconscious. The wise Chinese would say in the words of the *I Ching*: When *yang* has reached its greatest strength, the dark power of *yin* is born within its depths, for night begins at midday when *yang* breaks up and begins to change into *yin*.

The doctor is in a position to see this cycle of changes translated literally into life. He sees, for instance, a successful businessman attaining all his desires regardless of death and the devil, and then, having retired at the height of his success, speedily falling into a neurosis, which turns him into a querulous old woman, fastens him to his bed, and finally destroys him. The picture is complete even to the change from masculine to feminine. An exact parallel to this is the story of Nebuchadnezzar in the Book of Daniel, and Caesarean madness in general. Similar cases of one-sided exaggeration of the conscious standpoint, and the resultant *yin*-reaction from the unconscious, form no small part of the psychiatrist's clientele in our time, which so over-values the conscious will as to believe that "where there's a will there's a way." Not that I wish to detract in the least from the high moral value of the will. Consciousness and the will may well continue to be considered the highest cultural achievements of humanity. But of what use is a morality that destroys the man? To bring the will and the capacity to achieve it into harmony seems to me to require more than morality. Morality *à tout prix* can be a sign of barbarism—more often wisdom is better. But perhaps I look at this with the eyes of a physician who has to mend the ills following in the wake of one-sided cultural achievements.

Be that as it may, the fact remains that a consciousness heightened by an inevitable one-sidedness gets so far out of touch with

the primordial images that a breakdown ensues. Long before the actual catastrophe, the signs of error announce themselves in atrophy of instinct, nervousness, disorientation, entanglement in impossible situations and problems. Medical investigation then discovers an unconscious that is in full revolt against the conscious values, and that therefore cannot possibly be assimilated to consciousness, while the reverse is altogether out of the question. We are confronted with an apparently irreconcilable conflict before which human reason stands helpless, with nothing to offer except sham solutions or dubious compromises. If these evasions are rejected, we are faced with the question as to what has become of the much needed unity of the personality, and with the necessity of seeking it. At this point begins the path travelled by the East since the beginning of things. Quite obviously, the Chinese were able to follow this path because they never succeeded in forcing the opposites in man's nature so far apart that all conscious connection between them was lost. The Chinese owe this all-inclusive consciousness to the fact that, as in the case of the primitive mentality, the yea and the nay have remained in their original proximity. Nonetheless, it was impossible not to feel the clash of opposites, so they sought a way of life in which they would be what the Indians call *nirvāṇa*, free of opposites.

Our text is concerned with this way, and the same problem comes up with my patients also. There could be no greater mistake than for a Westerner to take up the direct practice of Chinese yoga, for that would merely strengthen his will and consciousness against the unconscious and bring about the very effect to be avoided. The neurosis would then simply be intensified. It cannot be emphasized enough that we are not Orientals, and that we have an entirely different point of departure in these matters. It would also be a great mistake to suppose that this is the path every neurotic must travel, or that it is the solution at every stage of the neurotic problem. It is appropriate only in those cases

where consciousness has reached an abnormal degree of development and has diverged too far from the unconscious. This is the *sine qua non* of the process. Nothing would be more wrong than to open this way to neurotics who are ill on account of an excessive predominance of the unconscious. For the same reason, this way of development has scarcely any meaning before the middle of life (normally between the ages of thirty-five and forty), and if entered upon too soon can be decidedly injurious.

As I have said, the essential reason which prompted me to look for a new way was the fact that the fundamental problem of the patient seemed to me insoluble unless violence was done to one or the other side of his nature. I had always worked with the temperamental conviction that at bottom there are no insoluble problems, and experience justified me in so far as I have often seen patients simply outgrow a problem that had destroyed others. This "outgrowing," as I formerly called it, proved on further investigation to be a new level of consciousness. Some higher or wider interest appeared on the patient's horizon, and through this broadening of his outlook the insoluble problem lost its urgency. It was not solved logically in its own terms, but faded out when confronted with a new and stronger life urge. It was not repressed and made unconscious, but merely appeared in a different light, and so really did become different. What, on a lower level, had led to the wildest conflicts and to panicky outbursts of emotion, from the higher level of personality now looked like a storm in the valley seen from the mountain top. This does not mean that the storm is robbed of its reality, but instead of being in it one is above it. But since, in a psychic sense, we are both valley and mountain, it might seem a vain illusion to deem oneself beyond what is human. One certainly does feel the affect and is shaken and tormented by it, yet at the same time one is aware of a higher consciousness looking on which prevents one from becoming identical with the affect, a consciousness which regards the affect as an object, and can say, "I know that I

suffer.” What our text says of indolence, “Indolence of which a man is conscious, and indolence of which he is unconscious, are a thousand miles apart,”³ holds true in the highest degree of affect.

Now and then it happened in my practice that a patient grew beyond himself because of unknown potentialities, and this became an experience of prime importance to me. In the meantime, I had learned that all the greatest and most important problems of life are fundamentally insoluble. They must be so, for they express the necessary polarity inherent in every self-regulating system. They can never be solved, but only outgrown. I therefore asked myself whether this outgrowing, this possibility of further psychic development, was not the normal thing, and whether getting stuck in a conflict was pathological. Everyone must possess that higher level, at least in embryonic form, and must under favourable circumstances be able to develop this potentiality. When I examined the course of development in patients who quietly, and as if unconsciously, outgrew themselves, I saw that their fates had something in common. The new thing came to them from obscure possibilities either outside or inside themselves; they accepted it and grew with its help. It seemed to me typical that some took the new thing from outside themselves, others from inside; or rather, that it grew into some persons from without, and into others from within. But the new thing never came exclusively either from within or from without. If it came from outside, it became a profound inner experience; if it came from inside, it became an outer happening. In no case was it conjured into existence intentionally or by conscious willing, but rather seemed to be borne along on the stream of time.

We are so greatly tempted to turn everything into a purpose and a method that I deliberately express myself in very abstract terms in order to avoid prejudicing the reader in one way or the

³ [*The Golden Flower* (1962 edn.), p.42.]

other. The new thing must not be pigeon-holed under any heading, for then it becomes a recipe to be used mechanically, and it would again be a case of the "right means in the hands of the wrong man." I have been deeply impressed by the fact that the new thing prepared by fate seldom or never comes up to conscious expectations. And still more remarkable, though the new thing goes against deeply rooted instincts as we have known them, it is a strangely appropriate expression of the total personality, an expression which one could not imagine in a more complete form.

What did these people do in order to bring about the development that set them free? As far as I could see they did nothing (wu wei⁴) but let things happen. As Master Lü-tsu teaches in our text, the light circulates according to its own law if one does not give up one's ordinary occupation. The art of letting things happen, action through non-action, letting go of oneself as taught by Meister Eckhart, became for me the key that opens the door to the way. We must be able to let things happen in the psyche. For us, this is an art of which most people know nothing. Consciousness is forever interfering, helping, correcting, and negating, never leaving the psychic processes to grow in peace. It would be simple enough, if only simplicity were not the most difficult of all things. To begin with, the task consists solely in observing objectively how a fragment of fantasy develops. Nothing could be simpler, and yet right here the difficulties begin. Apparently one has no fantasy fragments—or yes, there's one, but it is too stupid! Dozens of good reasons are brought against it. One cannot concentrate on it—it is too boring—what would come of it anyway—it is "nothing but" this or that, and so on. The conscious mind raises innumerable objections, in fact it often seems bent on blotting out the spontaneous fantasy activity in spite of real insight and in spite of the firm determination

⁴ [The Taoist idea of action through non-action.—C.F.B.]