

COMMITTEE VI

Eastern Approaches to Knowledge and
Values: With an Emphasis on "Qi"

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THE HUMAN PSYCHE: PERSPECTIVE FROM THE EAST

by

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The Human Psyche: perspective from the East

The topic of this paper is the traditional Indian approach to the study of the human psyche. The term psychology is purposely avoided because it can cover many different aspects from the purely metaphysical to the narrowly experimental, and could lead to confusion. What the paper looks at are very general questions about the conception of the psyche from an Eastern perspective. The term psyche is taken simply to refer to those functions, activities, and organs which can be roughly distinguished from the purely physical ones. Some questions are more of a theoretical nature: how is the psyche different from the body, how does it relate to the totality of man, and to the surrounding universe, is it the seat of an ultimate essence? Other questions are more practical relating to psychic equilibrium, fulfilment, wholeness.

The expression "perspective from the East" needs clarification. The focus is on the Indian great tradition. This comprises many different systems of thought within the religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. In particular, there are divergent theories about psychic concepts such as *atman*, *jiva*, *manas*, *ahamkara*, about processes of intellection and volition, about psychic "wholeness" and methods of deliverance from transmigration. The argument is that notwithstanding these important differences of definition and theory, there are between religions and systems a number of common fundamental approaches to the study of the psyche. These are the general tendencies we are attempting to indicate. A further assumption, which will not be pursued in detail, is that these approaches have had a significant influence on East Asian thought, an influence that has spread from India mainly through the powerful

vehicle of Buddhism in its various forms.

The method by which the above questions will be tackled follows two different ways. First the question is asked how the basic approach to the study of the psyche originated in the Indian context. The early beginnings of a system of thought are of paramount importance for its development. What kind of questions were asked in those early days, what kind of methods were used in the early investigations? These questions and methods circumscribe the general profile of the quest and set directions which have a great impact on the development, particularly in a tradition that is continuous and evolutionary as the Indian tradition is *par excellence*.

The second part of the essay concentrates on three particular expressions of the nature of man and of his place in the universe. These are the schemes of evolution presented in the *Samkhya* system of Indian thought, the mystical physiology of the *chakras*, and the cosmic-psyche construct of the *mandala* or *yantra*. These have been chosen for two reasons. First of all, each of them compresses the concept of the psyche, of man-in-the-cosmos, into a very terse schematic presentation. These schemata have the great advantage that they are the outcome of long thought with the express aim of synthesis, of bringing everything together within a small formula, expressed in few words and even in figures. The second reason for the choice of those particular schemata is that they all have become part and parcel of the various Indian traditions and have been used for many centuries right across Indian culture. For those reasons they should offer excellent access to the study of the main thrust of the tradition as a whole.

Origins

It has to be recognized that the *Vedas* and the *Brahmanas* are the source of many ideas of the Indian tradition. However, the crucial times of more explicit concentration on the mystery of the psyche are the centuries of the *Upanishads* and of early Buddhism and Jainism. The minds of the prominent thinkers of those centuries shook themselves free from the constricting framework of ritualism in order to study the psyche with vigorous concentration and with new methods only vaguely adumbrated in the earlier texts. Those were the times when the foundations of Indian thinking were laid and some of the lasting approaches of investigation were defined. We concentrate here on major aspects of speculation about the nature of the human psyche.

A most important approach to the study of the psyche was the speculation in the *Upanishads* about different "states of consciousness". The main impetus to this study was the attempt to understand the change of consciousness that occurred when the philosopher-sage experienced, at the apex of his yogic concentration and meditation, the state of *samadhi*,¹ which was fundamentally different from what could be called normal "empiric consciousness", where the individual, body and mind, feels himself separate from the external world. They compared that unusual state to other states of consciousness and put them into some kind of order: waking consciousness, sleep with dreams, dreamless sleep, and *samadhi*.² The analysis and comparison of these actual states of consciousness and their relationships has an important characteristic: theorizing is closely related to experience and develops in constant symbiosis with experience. Another striking quality of this approach is that it does not proceed from the stark opposition of the ego with the outside world, but rather from a mutual

penetration of the two opposites. The "outside" world is still present in the dream albeit in a "subtle" form, and is even present in the dreamless sleep in the form of the forces of what modern depth psychology has called the "subconscious". The psyche, therefore, spanning in its range both the gross external world and the subtle internal world of imagination and of the subconscious, is a very complex entity that has various grades of subtlety parallel to the gradation of matter itself.

The speculation about "states of consciousness" was closely related to another major question of the era, the process of transmigration. In those times the idea that human life is not limited to one biography, but is part of a continuing chain of transmigration, became a fundamental assumption of all Indian thought. The exact origin of this dominating idea is still shrouded in mystery.³ However, this dominant belief needed to be explained in terms of the concept of the human psyche. There was a need to answer the question what exactly was transferred after death to the new body. The transfer from one body to the next was regulated by the law of *karma*. How, then was *karma* transferred, and what was its intrinsic nature? This led to speculations about the "three bodies": the gross body, the subtle body, the body of *karma*, and their relationship. The very name of these organs which each entail psychic functions, stresses again the important penetration of body and psyche. The answers to the above questions were intensely considered by Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist thinkers in various schools, producing a great variety of answers. But at the very basis of all these speculations there remained a fundamental acceptance of the mutual penetration of "psyche" and "matter".

Those theoretical questions were closely linked to more practical religious questions. There was a common assumption that the transmigratory state could be

transcended, and that this transcendence could be experienced, be it as *samadhi* for the Hindus, *nirvana* for the Buddhists, or *kaivalya* for the Jains. The important practical question was by what practises and processes this experience could be achieved. In each case the answer lay in the direction of a journey to the centre: from the periphery of the body through the web of the psyche one had to find one's way by asceticism, meditation, and concentration. This kind of procedure continuously reinforced the vital link between practice and theory.

The experience of the "ultimate" was by definition only temporary, as consciousness always slipped back from the centre to the periphery. The question, therefore, arose how that experience related to ordinary life, and what influence it had on everyday living. This practical question required the continuous consideration of the relationship between contemplation and normal life, and of the rhythmic movement of the psyche between those two spheres.

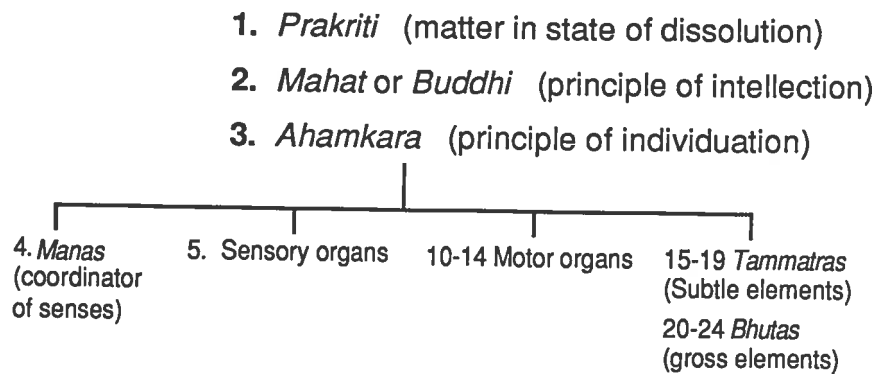
Early Indian thought was also characterised by a general conviction that at the innermost core of the human being there was an entity, or at least a realm of total transcendence: Hindus called it *atman* or *purusha*, Jains called it *jiva*, and Buddhists *nirvana*. All these conceptions held that the experience of the transcendent was discontinuous with all other human experience, including psychic experiences in their most subtle aspect. In other words, all activity normally considered as "psychic" such as feeling, emotion, perception, volition, reasoning, self-awareness, belong to the non-transcendent order. The result of that conception is that the Indian tradition never needed to seek the manifestation or the proof of the transcendent in any psychic activity. It was thus free to study all psychic phenomena and faculties as purely cosmic, as made of the same matter as the outside world. This assumption re-inforced the

Indian approach of putting body and psyche in the same continuum.

There is one more aspect of early Indian thought that had great consequences for the tradition. From the earliest speculations of the Upanishadic seers one finds references to a parallelism between man and cosmos. These can already be found in the *Rigveda* and in the *Brahmanas*, but they become more frequent and articulate in Upanishadic times. Besides the individual *atman*, there is also a cosmic *atman*; *brahman*, the absolute, is mostly cast in cosmic terms, but is equally the innermost essence of man; *prana*, the vital force of man, is also *Vayu*, the cosmic animator, the total world-soul. In fact, says the *Kaushitaki Upanishad*, "*Prana is brahman*".⁴ We will see how this idea of the fundamental parallelism of man and cosmos is forcefully expressed in the synoptic formulae of Indian thought to which we now turn.

The Samkhya Scheme of Evolution

The Samkhya system is one of the six classical *darshanas* (views) of Indian philosophy.⁵ It was one of the earliest systems and it developed categories (*tattvas*) that had an enormous and lasting influence on both Hindu and Buddhist thought. Its central doctrine is the arrangement of the twenty-four *tattvas* into a scheme of cosmic evolution, which had great impact on cosmological thought. The basic scheme is as follows.



Prakriti, stage 1, represents the totality of cosmic material in perfect equilibrium, before the start of the evolutionary process. In this state its three basic constituents, *sattva* (lightness), *rajas* (energy), and *tamas* (resistance) are totally balanced in absolute quietude. The disturbance of that equilibrium starts the process of evolution. The above scheme of evolution looks strange to anyone familiar with Western scientific evolution theories. In the Samkhya table the "gross elements" constitute the last phase of the evolutionary process whereas in "scientific evolutionism" they would be put at its beginnings, leading to gradually more complex entities and to the emergence of vegetation, animal life, and lastly man. In the Samkhya scheme the first two evolutes are of a "subtle" nature: *buddhi*, the universal possibility of intellection, or perhaps "mind-at-large", and *ahamkara*, the possibility or the principle of individuation. Samkhya explains that in the following way. The process in *prakriti* is started by the influence of *purusha* which, being pure transcendent spirit, disturbs the most "subtle" and refined constituent of *prakriti*, namely *sattva*. The dominant activation of *sattva* not surprisingly produces the most subtle of all evolutes, namely mind, or *buddhi*.

There is a more historical way by which one may try to understand the Samkhya scheme of cosmic evolution by asking the question how the Samkhya categories were discovered and on what basis they were originally ordered into a scheme. Larson

discusses this historical question at length, and his conclusions are convincing and illuminating. The enumeration and schematization of principles as shown "arose primarily in yogic meditation in which attempts were made to describe and isolate various states of consciousness". "The three *gunas* too were in early times often primarily "psychic qualities or conditions which determine rebirth".⁶ This origin of the Samkhya categories in a psychological quest of yogic meditation gives an additional dimension to the Samkhya evolutionary scheme.

Starting from *prakriti*, the table describes the emergence of consciousness from deep sleep: from total immersion in the subconscious arises general awareness (*buddhi*), which becomes individualized internally (*ahankara*), and then wakes up through the senses to the body and the outside world. We can also look at the schema starting from the gross elements: this opposite direction is nothing else but the withdrawal of consciousness from the outer periphery of the body and the senses into the imagination, and further into the inmost recesses of the psyche; this is in fact the journey described in the Yoga system. We can also present the former in a more static way: instead of interpreting the schema as the roadmap of the journey to the centre, it could be explained as a map of the human psyche itself with the subconscious at its very centre and the fingertips of the senses as its most outward organ.

Thus the simple scheme of evolution in Samkhya really fulfils several functions. It represents graphically a real cosmology of evolution: the way in which the cosmos moves from the sleep of dissolution into evolution, and then lapses back into its former state. But at the same time the same scheme is a roadmap for the yogic traveller who is in search of the very centre of his being a guide to his inner world, - and thus draws a map of the human psyche.

We have spoken so far about *prakriti* (material nature) only, and have not mentioned *purusha*. Classical Samkhya can be described as a radical dualism: it holds that the totality of being can be explained by two fundamental principles: *prakriti* (the totality of "nature", comprising all physical and psychic reality), and *purusha*. The latter is the complete opposite of *prakriti*: pure spirit, pure consciousness, pure light. As such *purusha* never is in real contact with *prakriti*, but rather attends as a "witness" the evolution of nature and the agitation of the psyche. In Samkhya *purusha* represents the sphere of the totally transcendent, of that which is beyond "human experience".

The Mystical Physiology of the Chakras

In the course of centuries Hatha-yogins, tantrists and alchemists built up a detailed physiological diagram of the human being.⁷ This physiology, however, was quite different from the anatomical one found in medical books, based on dissection of the body. The experimentations which formed the basis of this mystical physiology were of a totally different kind: they were perpetrated not on the "gross" body, but on the "subtle body", in other words on the psyche. Through concentration and mental control, meditation and contemplation the yogins of yore explored the whole realm of the psyche, from the sensuous to the subconscious, from the outermost sense of touch to the most hidden recesses of the "collective unconscious".

The basic building blocks of this mystical physiology are the *chakras* (wheels, centres) and the *nadis* (conduits like veins or nerves).⁸ The *nadis* form a complex network of innumerable conduits through which *prana*, the vital breath, the vital energy,

circulates. The most important of the *nadis* are the *ida*, the *pingala*, and the *sushumna*. The first two convey the vital breath, the latter is the conduit of the *kundalini*, Divine Energy. All three are entwined around the spinal column.

There are seven *chakras* which are located along the spine: the *muladhara chakra* at its base, and the *sahasrara chakra* at the top of the head. Their representation is cast in the language of symbolism.⁹ It is not possible here to describe each in detail. Each represents an ascending plane of the psycho-physical structure of man, an aspect of psychic power from the outermost to the innermost. They are visualized as geometrical figures, as wheels (*chakras*) or lotuses, spaced on the vertical axis of the subtle body. As such they also indicate the stages of the ascent of the yogin in his meditative practice.

The *Kundalini* is represented in the form of a snake, and described as a goddess and as essential "energy", *shakti*. The cosmology of Tantra is the basis of this representation. The original Absolute "at rest" is the identity of Shiva, the "male" aspect of pure absolute consciousness and of *Shakti*, the "female" aspect of pure cosmic power. The explicitation and opposition of the two gradually produces the evolution of the cosmos, parallel to that described in the Samkhya evolutionary scheme. The *kundalini* is the symbolic representation of *Shakti*, at the rest at the outmost physical boundaries of cosmic evolution. The serpent power lying dormant in the *muladhara chakra*, at the very opening of the *sushumna* channel is aroused by the yogin, mustering his *prana*, and by his meditative exercises it is made to rise through the *chakras* to the top. When the *kundalini* reaches the *Sahasrara chakra*, the reunion of Shiva and *Shakti* is realized.

What we have here is a graphic representation of the yogic processes by which

"liberation" is achieved in a pure state of transcendence. This graphic representation in its multiform symbolic detail thus marks out the psychic gradation of experiences and the road by which the yogin travels to the innermost core of his psyche. "Viewed in projection, the chakras constitute a *mandala* whose centre is marked by the brahmarandhra" (= *sahasrara chakra*).¹⁰ The scheme of mystical physiology is, therefore, a map of the psyche itself. But this map is built upon the raw materials of experience.

A most striking aspect of this "human mystical physiology" is that continuously its symbols draw attention to the parallelism of man and cosmos. The top *chakra* is the seat of Shiva, and the basis the seat of *Shakti*, the two ultimate principles of cosmic evolution. The spine is likened to Mount Meru, the axis of the universe. *Prana* is vital power, but also cosmic power.¹¹ The ascent of the yogin to the centre is an exact re-tracing backwards of the very process of cosmic manifestation. In other words the *chakra*-system draws man as a microcosmos in every part and detail parallel to the macrocosmos itself. Moreover, it is in itself a manual of instruction for the aspirant, not just the schematic representation of a theory.

The Construct of the Mandala

The *mandala* comes in thousands of different forms, from the Shri-yantra consisting only of squares and intersecting triangles, those depicting a lotus inscribed with sacred syllables, to the fabulous Tibetan *mandalas* crowded with palaces and divinities.¹² However, they all share a basic structure. On the outside there is a circle with four gates opening towards the four cardinal directions, and there is a centre

consisting of a simple dot, or a representation, which may be iconographic, mantric, or diagrammatic, of the sphere of transcendence or integration. Between the outer circle and the central nodus there are a number of concentric circles, or enclosures, each filled with iconic, geometrical or mantric symbols.

What, then is the meaning of these constructs? It is not the particular significance for a Hindu or Buddhist sect that is sought, but rather the general meaning of the *mandala* as such. Professor Tucci gave them a name that beautifully and succinctly describes them; he calls them "psycho-cosmogrammata".¹³ They are diagrams, condensed, skeletal, summary representations. Therefore they use a form of extreme short-hand of a cryptic and symbolic nature. One syllable, one shape, one deity may suggest a wide range of experience, or a substantial part of reality. A single dot may represent the absolute, a bare triangle may symbolise Shiva, one divine figure may stand for a whole Buddhist heaven, one syllable may refer to all the *Vedas*. On account of this feature, the understanding of each *mandala* requires the knowledge of a special language of symbols.

Secondly, the *mandalas* are, according to Tucci, "psycho-cosmogrammata". They present a circular, geometric projection of the very essence of the cosmos, indicating the patterns of its evolution and involution. In other words, they are a circular projection of the Samkhya scheme of evolution. As Tucci wrote, "A *mandala* is, indeed, the All reflected in the ego".¹⁴ Eliade explains the cosmic dimension of the *mandala* as follows:

Since the *mandala* is an *imago mundi*, its centre corresponds to the infinitesimal point perpendicularly traversed by the *axis mundi*; as he approaches its centre, the disciple approached the "centre of the world." In fact, as soon as he enters the *mandala*, he is in a sacred space... In a vision he sees all gods emerge and spring

from his heart; they fill cosmic space; then they are reabsorbed in him. In other words, he "realizes" the eternal process of the periodic creation and destruction of worlds; and this allows him to enter into the rhythms of the cosmic great time.¹⁵

But as well as being cosmo-grammata, the *mandalas* are also psycho-grammata. After having reviewed how the *mandala* was "a paradigm of cosmic involution and evolution", Tucci continued as follows:

Yet the man who used it no longer wanted only return to the centre of the universe. Dissatisfied with the experience of the psyche he longed for a state of concentration in order to find once more the unity of the secluded and undiverted consciousness, and to restore in himself the ideal principle of things. So the *mandala* is no longer a cosmogram but a psychocosmogram, the scheme of the disintegration of the One to the many and the reintegration from the many to the One, to that Absolute Consciousness, entire and luminous, which yoga causes to shine once more in the depths of our being.¹⁶

Thus, the centre of the universe is also the centre of the human psyche, and the *mandala* represents both.¹⁷ The gates of the mandala facing the four cardinal directions, are guarded because they are the boundary of the inner and the outer worlds, from where the latter could erupt with its chaos into the former. The centre is the point of reintegration, and between centre and periphery lies the chart of the interior pilgrimage, mapping the structure of the psyche. This chart may be presented in various forms: in the form of divinities, in the form of Buddhas, in the form of *mantras*, or of geometrical figures. But whatever form this map takes, whatever language or symbols it uses, somehow the scheme will be found to refer back to the psychic scheme of the early Samkhya system.¹⁸

From the above it should be clear that the purpose of the mandala is not theoretical but practical. The *mandala* is not an item in an atlas, it is a roadmap for the pilgrim. Through it the yogin interiorizes the cosmos, and in that process he reaches

the centre of the cosmos and of the self. Thus he re-integrates what was separate and dispersed, creates order out of the chaos of his psyche, and drinks at the fountain of psychic wholeness, harmony and equilibrium.

Conclusion

The short analysis of the beginnings of Indian speculation about the psyche, and the consideration of the Samkhya evolution scheme, the mystical physiology and the *mandala*, show some very basic and pervading trends in the Indian approach to the study of the psyche.

First of all, in every case it is clear that there is a constant close connection between theory and practice. From the early beginnings, the quest was not just a theoretical endeavour: it was a search for salvation and fulfilment. The Samkhya scheme which on the surface may appear as primarily theoretical, was certainly the result of a search for knowledge. But, "this was not knowing in the sense of the disinterested quest for philosophical truth. This, rather, was "knowing" what was useful and powerful for man's salvation or destiny".¹⁹ But it was not only the aim that was practical, the method of investigation was also: thinking always proceeded from and revolved around interior experience. This is eminently evident in the *chakra*-system and in the *mandala*, the primary aim of which is to be instruments of meditative practices, tools for the yogin, subtle tools distilled from the very experiences of previous practitioners.

The second cardinal characteristic of all the schemata is that they all stress constantly the parallelism of macrocosmos and microcosmos, of universe and psyche.

The psyche is not the "other", the opposite of the material universe, the inside versus the outside. The Samkhya scheme of cosmic evolution is also the scheme representing the ingredients of all psychic material phenomena. The mystical physiology of the *chakras* also represents the evolutionary process of Shiva/Shakti. The *mandala* is a cosmo-psychic diagram.

"Man is regarded, not as a separate and accidental product of evolution, but as an extension of divine consciousness expressing the fundamental unity of creation. His life, like the cosmos, is bound by a purpose; his biological rhythms are turned by planetary phenomena. Man's existence is ordained and regulated by the governing principle of nature. The external world, and the inner world of man, are formed of the same "stuff", and are related by an indivisible web of mutually conditioned affinities".²⁰

A third important general characteristic of the Indian theory of the nature of the psyche is its polyvalence. The various schemata considered here have become and remained part and parcel of innumerable schools within Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. These various schools often also possessed a strong metaphysic in which they opposed the theories of other schools. They were not averse from moving from the more empirical into the philosophical sphere and construct an ontological system. However, none of these systems aspired to be or became an overall dogmatic construct. The different schools reinterpreted in many different ways the Samkhya doctrine or the mystical physiology, and constructed their own *mandalas*. But the fundamental ideas remained a common source, the fundamental approach described above remained a shared heritage. This overarching similarity is connected with the fact that theory and practice must go together. Tucci puts it as follows: "In Buddhism the immense spiritual or intellectual variety of creatures has been recognized from the beginning, so that truth, in order to be operative and penetrate into men's hearts, must

be refracted in a thousand modes. An absolute, dogmatic inalterable truth would be useless."²¹

And finally, some reasons may be suggested why the above characteristics have exerted such profound influence. This brings us back to the beginning of this essay. Some early approaches at the time of the *Upanishads* and of early Buddhism gave a decisive direction to the enquiry about the psyche. The starting point of those sages' investigations was not the disturbed mind, but rather the balanced, integrated, fulfilled individual. Their aim was to understand that condition and to make it accessible. The crucial state of fulfilment described in the *Upanishads* was not of a singular, exclusive kind. Their "mystical" states were essentially multiform, swinging from mysticism of the pure spirit to all-inclusive nature mysticism, from the intense experience of "the One" to the penetrating experience of "the All". Hence the persistent parallelism between psychology and cosmology. Furthermore, neither the Buddha nor the Upanishadic sages were simply searching for an "escape" into *brahman* or *nirvana*. The practices by which they immersed themselves in the absolute were part of the creation of a person who could live life in this world from a true and fulfilling perspective, in harmony with all. The search for the psyche was always a search for the harmony of life itself.

The Indian perspective on the study of the psyche was dominated by the practical search for the harmony of man and nature, and the conviction that man and cosmos are essentially one and that the psychic wholeness of man necessarily involves his being attuned to the rhythms of cosmic life. That study, therefore, shied away from narrow rational dogmatism, and kept the practical aim firmly in mind: the discovery and the realization of total harmony.

J. T. F. JORDENS

NOTES

1. Cf. Mircea Eliade, *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom*, Bollingen Series LVI, Pantheon Books, New York, 1958, *passim*.
2. For and analysis of these texts cf. S.N. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, vol I, Cambridge U.P., 1951, chapter II.
3. For a recent discussion, cf. W.D. O'Flaherty, ed., *Karma and Rebirth in classical Indian traditions*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1976.
4. *Kanshitaki Upanishad*, 2.1 ; 2.2.
5. The most recent thorough study of this system and of this history : G.J. Larson, *Classical Samkhya, An Interpretation of its History and Meaning*, second rev.ed; Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1979.
6. Larson, pp. 132 and 129.
7. Cf. Reproduction A.
8. For specialized studies, cf. Arthur Avalon (Sir John Woodroffe), *The Serpent Power, being the Sat-chakra-pancaka and Padu-pancaka*, Ganesh and Co, Madras, 1958, and Ajit Mookerjee, *Kundalini, The Arousal of the Inner Energy*, Clarion Books, Delhi, 1982.
9. Madhu Khanna, *Yantra, The Tantric Symbol of Cosmic Unity*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1979, gives on pp. 42 and 120 very useful tables of correspondences which explain much of that symbolism.
10. Eliade, p.244.
11. Cf. J. Jordens, "Prana and Libido, Prajna and Consciousness", in H. Coward, ed., *Jung and Eastern Thought*, State University of New York Press, pp. 169-186.
12. Cf. examples in Reproductions B, C, and D.
13. G. Tucci, *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala, with special reference to the modern psychology of the subconscious*, tr. H. Brodrick, Rider and Co, London, 1961, p. VII.
14. *Ibid.*, p.49.
15. Eliade, p.225.
16. Tucci, p.25.

17. For the cosmological significance of the Shri Yantra, cf. Khanna, p.70.
18. Cf. Khanna's diagrams, pp. 74-75.
19. Larson, p.35.
20. Khanna, p.119.
21. Tucci, p.76.

Reproductions

- Rep. A: From Arthur Avalon, *The Serpent Power*, frontispiece.
- Rep. B: From Sir John Woodroffe, *Tantraraja Tantra, A Short Analysis*, Ganesh and Co., Madras, 1954, frontispiece.
- Rep. C: From M. Khanna, *Yantra*, frontispiece.
- Rep. D: From M. Khanna, *Yantra*, figure 8.

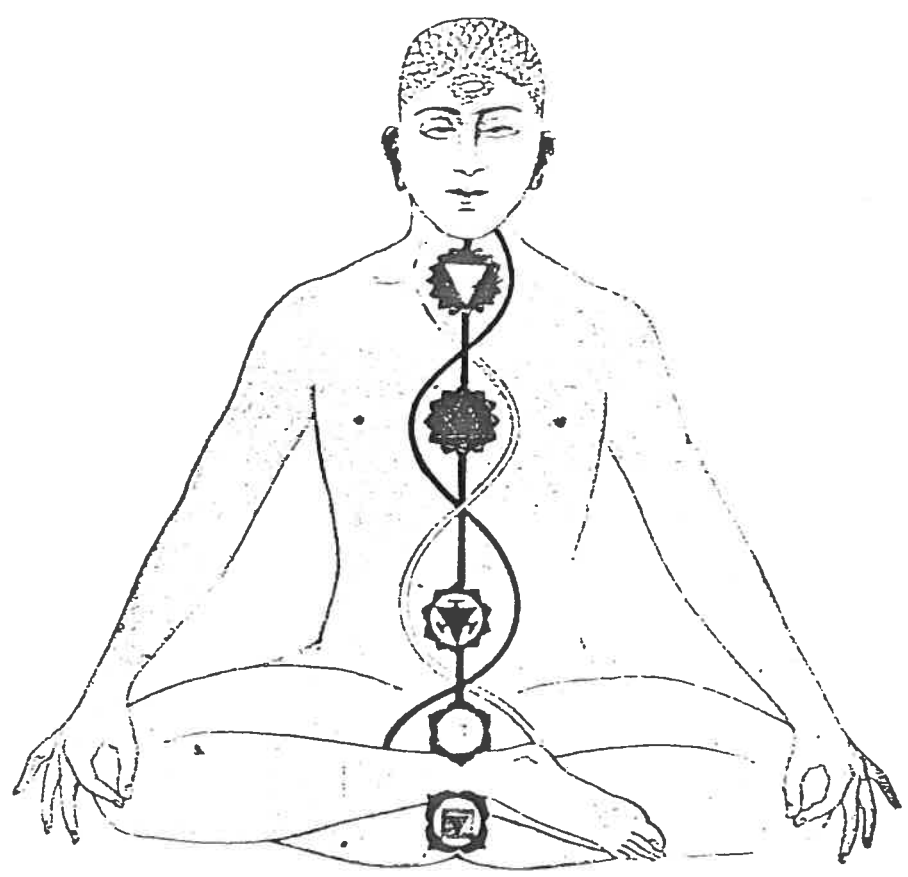


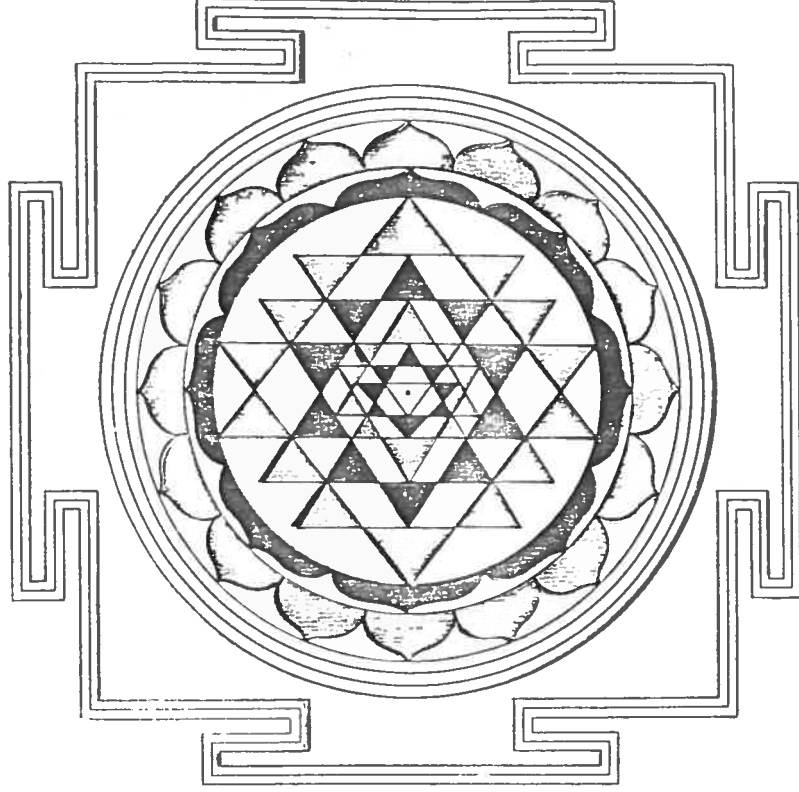
Plate I]

The Centres or Lotuses

[Frontispiece

REPRODUCTION A

22
विन्दुत्रिकोणवसुकोणदशरयुग्ममन्वश्रनागदलसंयुतषोडशारम् ।
वृत्तत्रयं च धरणीसदनत्रयं च श्रीचक्रमेतदुदितं परदेवतायाः ॥



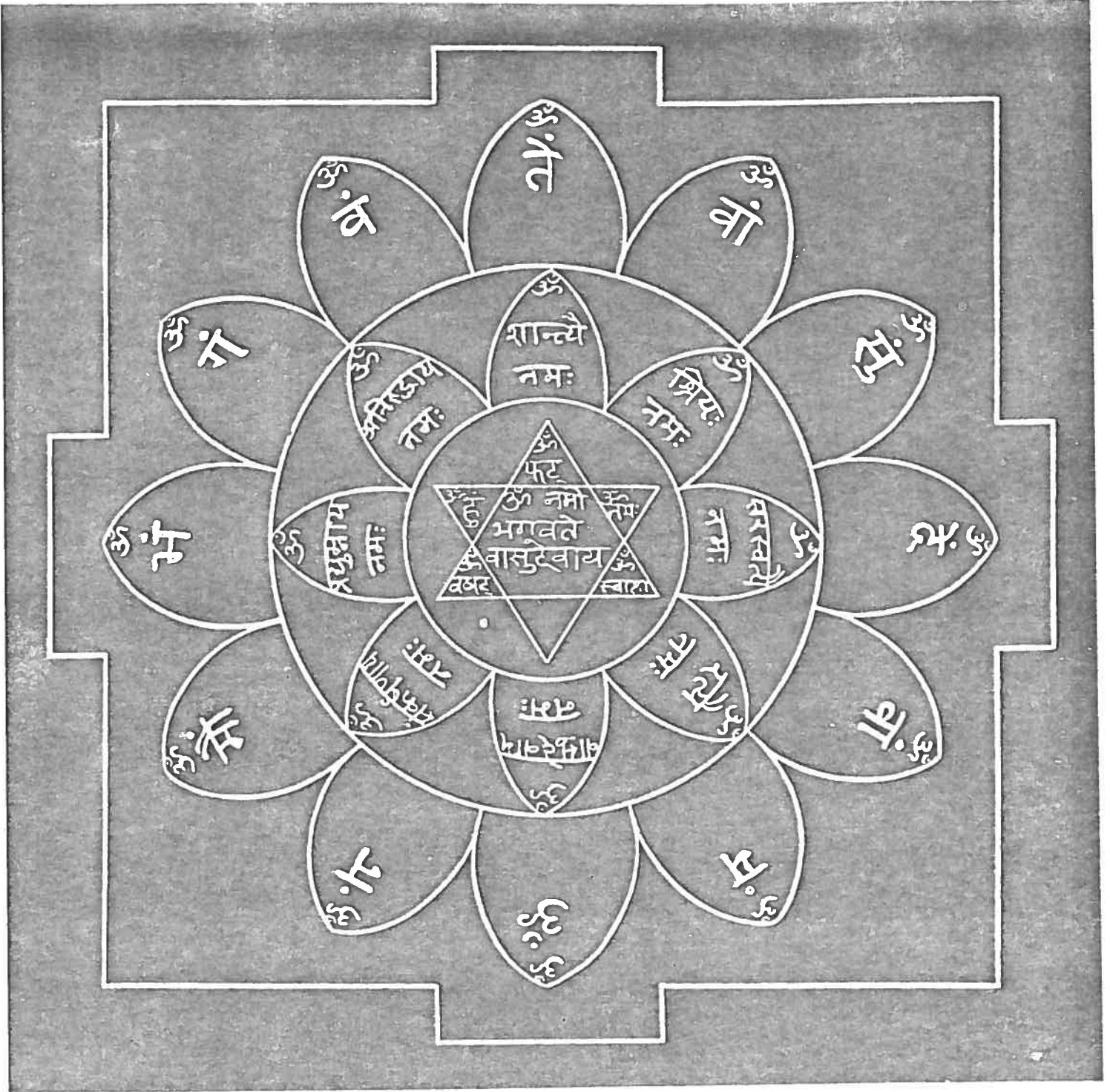
SRI YANTRA

DESCRIPTION FROM THE CENTRE OUTWARDS

1. Red Central Point—SARVĀNANDAMAYA.
2. White Central Triangle—SARVASIDDHIPRADHA.
3. Eight Red Triangles—SARVĀROGAHARA.
4. Ten Blue Triangles—SARVĀRAKṢĀKARA.
5. Ten Red Triangles—SARVĀNTHASĀDHAKA.
6. Fourteen Blue Triangles—SARVĀSĀUBHĀGYADĀYAKA.
7. Eight-petalled Red Lotus—SARVĀSĀMEṢOBANA.
8. Sixteen-petalled Blue Lotus—SARVĀSĀPARIPURAKA.
9. Yellow Surround—TRAILOKYAMOHAHA.

Frontispiece]

[See pp. 5—10



Yantra of Vishnu, the Preserver, the second god of the Hindu trinity, inscribed with sacred sound-symbols

REPRODUCTION C



8 Sūrya (Sun) Yantra with images of the deities of the nine planets. A yantra is a celestial circle of the gods. Every yantra's linear framework supports many clusters of deities, like sparks from the fiery nucleus of the central deity. The outermost periphery is protected by guardian deities who forbid negative force to enter the holy space. Seed mantras are often substituted for the images of these deities, or the appropriate deities may be visualized in the spaces of the yantra by the sādḥaka during meditation. *Sarvasiddhānta-tattvacūḍāmaṇī*, Punjab, c. 1839. Gouache on paper

REPRODUCTION D