

Triune Constitution of Man

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This morning I have been thinking of certain aspects of the development in the period from August 7, 1936, to September 9, 1936, which have not been sufficiently covered either in *Pathways Through to Space*, or *The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object*, nor, finally, in any other tapes. These are considerations that bear upon the total constitution of the entity which we call “man.”

Now, in the literature making up Buddhistic *sutras*, Vedantic *shastras*, and the literature found in *The Secret Doctrine*, and cognate with it, there is a discussion, in various forms, of the constitution of the human entity. It is not my purpose here to try to fit the material out of my own immediate imperience¹ with any of these structures. In other words, what I am about to do is to give a statement that is true to the imperience itself, leaving the question of how it fits other orientations or other descriptions to a later consideration.

However, it was true that it had a certain similarity to one treatment of the constitution of the human entity known as that given by the *Taraka yoga*. One thing was very clear in the period in question, and also again during an experience of a very dark sort last November 1972, that there was a primary organization of the total entity into three parts, and this is characteristic of the *Taraka yoga*. There is a certain terminology used in the *Taraka yoga*, and in the discussion known as *Esoteric Buddhism*, that is highly sophisticated. The immediate experience that I am about to report did not give terms. What I shall attempt to do is to give the actual content of that experience, leaving the question of how it may correspond with other formulations for a later consideration. Thus there were no terms that came into my consciousness such as *Karanopadhi*, or *Buddhi*; or *Sukshmopadhi*, or the combination known as higher and lower mind and *Kama*; or, finally, the *Sthulopadhi*, known as *Prana*, *Linga Sharira*, and *Sthula Sharira*. How my immediate experience corresponds to this terminology is a speculative problem. What was in common was the division into *threeness*, and that was very clear both in 1936 and last year in November. And a certain differentiation in the character of these three parts was also very clear. I did report this in *Pathways*, and also in *The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object* as a division as follows, namely, at the base, or outermost, that which I called the “child”; secondly, in an intermediate position, that which I called the “intellectual man”; and finally, in the superior position, or the highest, the “real being.”²

¹ For the definition of ‘imperience’, see audio recordings “General Discourse on the Subject of My Philosophy,” part 10, and “On My Philosophy: Extemporaneous Statement.” In speaking of introceptual knowledge, Wolff says, “The third function therefore gives you imperience, not experience. It is akin to sense perception in the sense of being immediate, but is not sensuous.”

² Franklin Merrell-Wolff, *Pathways Through to Space* (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1944), 42.

Now, what was evident was a certain character marking each of these. Starting with the most inferior or outermost, there was this clear characterization: that it was not inherently and by itself ruled by judgment or moral decision. It was ruled by impulse. It felt cravings and repulsions, had by itself no sense of a moral obligation. In the discipline to which I submitted myself, even beginning in teen-age years, there was evidence of a certain conflict between this part of the entity and that part which I named the intellectual man—that there were the tendencies and valuations that belong to the intellectual man which came into conflict with the impulses of the child, or the outermost being. I imposed discipline in those days long before I knew anything about the subject of yoga. It was a decision to follow the valuations and interests of the intellectual man whenever they came in conflict with the impulses of the child.

The discipline imposed was relatively severe; in fact, by 1910 it proved to have been severe enough to cause a certain reaction that I recognized as a revolt, and I had the sense to ease up on the discipline, modify it. But ultimately, when there was a persistent tendency upon the part of the child to go against the tendencies of the intellectual man, I finally had a face to face confrontation in which I laid down the law, identifying myself, at that point, with the intellectual man, and said to this child—this which we may call the vital-physical being—“Obey me or die!” And I meant it. And I felt this child surrendering to me. Having surrendered, then, I relaxed discipline, opened up the door to lines of interest, permitted lines of interest that would fit its needs, so long as it would conform to the directions of the intellectual man. What we have here is a granting of indulgences to the child by the intellectual man, so selected as to not violate the fundamental valuations and codes of the intellectual man. They were definitely admitted indulgences; and among other things, one of those indulgences was the taking up of smoking tobacco—deliberately done as a means to satisfy the impulses of this inferior nature. In other words, a sort of reducing a very severe discipline to a point where it became tolerable for the lesser nature.

Now, there is a certain correspondence with the forms of cognition that appear right here. We can identify the child, or the vital-physical entity, with the sensuous component in cognition. It is the bearer of the senses, and it is through the senses that this vital-physical has aroused in it cravings for certain sensuous values and repulsions with respect to other sensuous values. It would seem that this part operates very much as is true of the animal—that it is amoral, or perhaps even more strictly, infra-moral; that it is, by itself, quite irresponsible.

Now in contrast, I was then very conscious of the values which belong to what I've called the intellectual man, and as the door to development was held completely open in this direction while being closed in the direction of the vital-physical, the energetic component—that which Dr. Jung calls the *libido*—found its door to expression in the intellectual field. And it is my personal belief that this enhanced the intellectual development that followed afterward, led to a greater advance in it than otherwise would have been the case because the lesser doors were very largely closed.

There came a time when I faced a confrontation with an opposed principle, this that in the psychology of Dr. Jung is called Mephisto. I've twice, during sleep, had confrontation with this aspect. Now, I did not in either case interpret this confrontation as authentically external, but as a confrontation within myself. In the very first instance, I once fell asleep while thinking about driving an automobile up a very difficult road, one

that was very narrow, and winding, and essentially dangerous. I was thinking of this in a series of concepts, ideas, and fell asleep while doing so, and continued the process in something like a dream, where instead of being a series of ideas, it was a series of actions corresponding to those ideas. I seemed in the dream to be driving an automobile carefully up this road when there appeared, high up on the road, a car designed like a modern racing car with very clean, smooth lines designed to reduce friction of air, and driven by Mephisto himself. He drove with consummate skill at race track speeds down that road. He seemed to be in utterly complete command of every turn and every move. In his own person, not a hair was out of place. There was a complete intolerance of any inefficiency whatsoever. He was completely slick and able. Ultimately the two cars ran into each other and I woke up.

Some years later, again during sleep, there was a confrontation with this same Mephisto: polished, trimmed, neat, utterly efficient. The scene in this case seemed to be that of a theater. I was in my own proper person apparently identical with, or fused with, an entity higher than that of Mephisto, sitting in a theater box over an aisle. On the stage there was a bed, and in it lay a young woman supposedly in danger of exhaustion or even of annihilation. And then Mephisto came onto the stage and engaged in a most incredible dance. The movement was in perfect rhythm, steps beyond human possibility, even moving in the third dimension far beyond the capacities of a merely ordinary human being. And as the dance grew in intensity, the feminine entity rose out of the bed and began to dance with him. The dance became more and more furious, finally left the stage and came down the aisles of the theater—I do not know whether there was anyone else in that theater—and in passing down the aisles, moved under the box where this entity that seemed to be of a higher spiritual order sat, and I was in some sense fused with that consciousness but not identical with it. At a certain time, it seemed as though the dance which was something to take over and even assimilate of the feminine entity by Mephisto. When it reached a point where the struggle on the part of the feminine entity was reaching failure, the figure in the box, who may be called the Wise One—though I did not see him, I had the sense that he was bearded. I had the feeling of the inner state of consciousness of a great calmness and assurance. And then this entity intervened and threw at the Mephisto a rapid succession of the qualities of love and hate. The impression was that Mephisto could not be overcome either by love or hate alone, but that by the rapid alternation of the two, he could be. And in point of fact, he became flustered and angry, and then threw a force at the one sitting in the box which came, apparently, as a bunch of bullets, which the one in the box caught in his mouth and hurled back. And with that I woke up with a sense that the higher power had won in the conflict. I have since interpreted this as a confrontation with the *asuric* temptation. The edge of victory over the *asuric* factor was very narrow, only a little edge of skill superior to that of Mephisto. That remained as a rather exalting experience for several days afterwards throughout the waking period, and I think it is a significant step in the whole process of the development.

One who is familiar with the psychology of Dr. Carl G. Jung will recognize in these inner experiences certain of the archetypes which he has identified. Thus Mephisto represents the intellect; the young woman, the anima; and the sage sitting in the theater box as the wise old man, or that which is sometimes called the “Master.” The identification of Mephisto with the intellect may well need some qualification. It would seem to me that the intellect is Mephisto only when it tends to assert itself in

independence of the other constituents of the total nature of the entity; that when it is in a position of subordination to the higher aspects of the nature, and functions as an aid with respect to it, it is not Mephisto. But it does tie in with certain statements that we find in other literature that would lead, perhaps, to an identification with the meaning of Lucifer, the brightest star of the morning, which, according to the story, arose in rebellion against the root power governing the universe or the individual—the only power in the nature that could so revolt—and, because of such revolt, became a fallen being. At any rate, here we have something that belongs to the total experience of yoga. There always seems to be in the record that we have a confrontation with the dark side, such as the Satan that tried to tempt the Christ, or the Mara that tried to tempt the Buddha. And we may conclude that the *sadhaka*, as he travels along the path of yoga, will at some time or in some life have to deal with a confrontation of this sort, but not necessarily in the form of the *asuric* manifestation; it may be in some of the other forms.

As part of the total story, I should probably add a bit of a, more a personal confession, that the temptations that belong to the level of the vital-physical being, or the child, have never been an important factor in my yogic experience. These temptations may take any one of the forms of the five lusts, such as the lust for drink, the lust for food, the lust for sex, the lust for gambling, and the lust for blood—the lust that is satisfied or enjoys killing and sadistic actions generally. Actually these factors never became important in my own experience. There was a certain parallelism of attitude between that of the Sage and of Mephisto, of a certain rejection of these lower, more elemental temptations. In some respects Mephisto was more utterly intolerant of them as compared to the Sage who had a certain gentleness and understanding, so that while there was disapproval, it was not as harsh as that of Mephisto. But with these two elements working together as against these lower temptations, they didn't seem to have any chance whatsoever to become an important factor within my own yogic experience.

In the literature, both of modern psychology and of the literature governing the path which leads to yoga, there are records of these different types of temptations, one of which may be called the temptations of the pleasure motive, the other the temptation of the power motive. The temptations connected with the five lusts belong to the pleasure motive, which was never a sufficiently important factor in my own experience to be a matter of any real importance; but the temptation of the power motive was a very real factor. Mephisto, as I know him, in his functioning as an independent force, is oriented to power preeminently. He is austere. He's not in any sense indulgent in the pleasure motive sense. In fact, he despises some of the lower forms of the power motive, such as that of the soldier who seeks to impose himself by bloody means. The Mephisto, as I know him, is not one that has much of any tolerance for any bloody, violent method of trying to establish himself in a position of power. It is a power, rather, in enforcing a conceptual command over all things—a chess player rather than a bloody fighter. And as a part of my own personal confession, I've never felt sympathetic with the militant, bloody method of achieving power, including a distaste for the games that symbolize that sort of thing, through body contact. They all seem to me to be activities on a very low level, hardly one that may legitimately be called civilized. This is not simply the attitude of the Sage, but is an attitude in which the Mephisto shares that position. The temptation of power has been a factor in my life, not the temptation of pleasure.

In the yogic process as I know it, the principles of judgment, morality, and decision belong to the intermediate principle, or that which I have called the intellectual man. As I've said before, the child, or the vital-physical entity, was infra-moral, governed naturally, if left to itself, by impulses and instincts, cravings and repulsions, but without a sense of moral responsibility itself. When an element of choice and decision was involved, this was connected with the intellectual principle. There is offered in the literature the possible choice of choosing, for instance, Liberation for one's self alone, which is known as the path of the *Pratyeka* Buddha, and as an alternative, the Arya path, which follows the rules set up in the vow of *Kwan-Yin*, running this way:

Never will I seek nor receive private, individual salvation; never will I enter into final peace alone; but forever, and everywhere, will I strive for the redemption of all creatures throughout the world.

The decision to follow this latter path, which was reached in my own experience prior to the successful outcome of the yogic process, was what I would call very definitely a moral decision. It was a choice of one alternative with respect to another. The choice of alternatives does not seem to appear in the lower, or child nature, or that of the vital-physical being; that is simply grounded on impulses. But here, on the mental level, is the zone of choice. Here is the zone of morality: a choosing of one way as more worthy than another way; a choosing, for instance, of the five moral rules set down by the Buddha, rather than following a path of self-interest or self-enjoyment. The five rules which I'll remind you of in this form, namely, non-killing, non-lying, non-stealing, non-concupiscence, and non-intoxication. For entities like an animal, for instance, there is no possibility of being aware of any such choices. This is something which would seem to apply peculiarly to the human stage *qua* human in the evolution: the place of moral decision; the place where there is awareness of the pairs of opposites—an awareness that does not seem to exist for the inferior, or child, nature.

Now, there is a contrast, also, which we come to with respect to the real being which is a little difficult to present. The real being was unfolded most particularly in the final Realization known as the High Indifference. It was a state of consciousness in which there was no longer a choice between good and evil—not even a sense of awareness of the pairs of opposites. It was, rather, an exalted state in which there was no possibility of anything unrighteous or wrong: a state in which if one were to choose one course of action or another, in any case the action was equally right and righteous no matter what the choice might be. It was a state in which there was no sense of the reality of suffering—the condition which occupies so important a place in the Buddhistic philosophy, in the Buddhistic motivation to render aid for suffering creatures. It seemed to be a state of consciousness in which there never had been anything like a *fall*—a state of purity. There seemed to be various possibilities that one might choose but no particular reason why one should choose them and no relativity that would indicate that one choice was better than another. In this case, then, there was no sense of a moral force attaching to the vow of *Kwan-Yin*. There was no need for it because there was no suffering anywhere. There was no fallen condition. There was no need for any redemption. All of the lines of experience that involved the notion of suffering, of a fallen state, of a need of redemption, of a need for compassion, were totally irrelevant. They seemed to be part of a vast *maya*.

Now this, then, is a state which we would again say is non-moral, not for the reason of being inferior to the moral level, but, rather, above and superior to it because there is here no such thing as a possibly wrong way. All ways are right and righteous. Therefore, when one is in the midst of such a consciousness and turns back to the decision that's involved in the vow of *Kwan-Yin*, it seems simply irrelevant, as not having any particular force. Thus the plane of decision, the realm of decision as between different possibilities does not belong either on the level of the child, which is infra-moral, nor on the level of the divine or real being, which is supra-moral, but on the level of the intellectual man.

This brings up a number of problems, and, quite obviously, from a purely humanistic point of view, it is very desirable that the *sadhaka* should follow the vow of *Kwan-Yin* when he has reached the place in his development where it's possible for him to make that choice in an effective sense. But there is a still higher, non-fallen consciousness for which that vow is completely irrelevant, and that is something to be borne in mind. And it could well be, that one who had chosen to follow the vow of *Kwan-Yin* could emerge into this higher state, and without any fault, move in a level of a totally different consciousness where the relativity of good and evil, and all other relativities, no longer have force.

The place of decision, therefore, belongs to the intermediate being—decision as to whether he will follow the path to the utter delight of his own private Liberation, or shall work for that larger goal of the Liberation of all creatures who *seem* to be suffering, and who certainly believe in the reality of their suffering, however much it may appear that from a still higher point of view, all that is just a *maya*. At any rate, it is evident that the Buddha took this problem of going the path of compassion seriously, and I would recommend that as a very good example for the rest of us. But bear in mind, that is not the whole of the story. There are higher reaches which permit one to go that way, but attach no particular virtue to it, for it transcends the whole realm of the dualities.

It should be borne in mind that I am not here presenting a philosophic argument advocating a certain point of view, nor am I recommending a certain path for the use of all others, but simply making a report of a type of imperience with which I am familiar. There is no claim that everyone should go this way, and no claim that this is the view that inevitably everyone must experience. It is my contention that we need many reports of this kind, made as objectively as possible, in order to arrive at some conclusion based upon wide experience.

Now we may go into certain correlations. I have formulated a threefold system of organs, functions, or faculties of cognition, namely, sense perception, conceptual cognition, and the introceptual type of cognition which includes in its formulation the idea of "knowledge through identity," which is neither sensuous nor conceptualistic. We can make a certain correlation of this with the three aspects of the total human entity. It is obvious that sensation is the particular cognitive mark of the child, or the lesser being—this part of man which overlaps the consciousness of the animal. It is also quite obvious that the intellectual man is correlated with conceptual cognition—the whole domain of cognitive material that renders possible verbalization, or the use of meaningful symbols. And that, finally, the form of cognition which I have called introception, involving

knowledge through identity, is correlated with the real being—that part in man which overshadows, as it were, from a height.

At the time of the imperiencing of the Realizations, this higher consciousness was very strongly present, but it has remained, also, present in the background in the years since. However, it functions, as it were, through a door which I have called the “butterfly valve,” inasmuch as it seemed to involve only a little movement in consciousness to open that door. The inpouring from this level may take the two following forms. Just, in general, it is as though there were a flow of a *somewhat* that had an impregnating or inseminating effect upon the intellectual mind. In this case, it was not an inflow of anything like ideation, but rather of an impact of energy that could become manifested on the intellectual level as ideation. But there is also another form of the functioning. Thus, if I find myself confronted by a problem, say of a philosophic sort, for which I cannot find adequate answers by ordinary resources, the problem may be thrown upward, as it were, into this higher realm, and then, almost invariably, if not completely invariably, in time an answer comes down in the form of ideation. A process is introduced into the mind that develops answers that carry a high order of convincingness. However, there is no way of determining how long it will take for such answers to appear. They may come in a relatively short time, or they may be long delayed, apparently even as much as years. And they may come at any moment, when one may be engaged in other activities, such as the driving the car. The impress on the mind in this case has a very characteristic form. If the ideation is just allowed to pass through the mind, it will be very quickly forgotten. It does not seem to leave a strong impress. It is like something that tends to fade out, and is very quickly forgotten. To offset this I have found that it is very desirable to rethink the material with the intellectual mind—rethink it again and again, thereby impressing it more deeply into the memory so that it can be written down, or formulated otherwise, at a time when such is convenient. This is a kind of thought that is not in any sense laborious. It has a quality of spontaneity, a particularly strong quality of assurance in it, and is generally very satisfactory in drawing together and uniting loose ends so that one’s conceptual understanding becomes vastly clarified.

I have stated earlier that there was a second period in which the threefold division stood out with extraordinary clarity. This was a period that was quite recent, namely, just last November 1972. But this was an imperience of a very different sort. It was, as it were, connected with the dark side of the hidden possibilities behind the veil. This was an occasion when to all outer seeming, I was under attack from an *asuric* power. While I do not know what a report from a different perspective would be, I shall make what I have here to say, true to the seeming of the occasion.

It was as though a hostile power actually sought to destroy me as a living entity. The state of consciousness induced is as difficult to describe as the higher states, and it is necessary to use figures to suggest it. It was a state having the quality of desolation, confusion, and despair, superimposed, just presented—not arising as the result of any unfortunate circumstance in the life or in the thought, but just imposed upon the consciousness. It was as though there lying below me was a vast cauldron, or pool, or whirlpool, having the character of desolation, confusion, and despair; and it seemed as though there was the threat of falling into this, and that it would mean destruction. How vast, I do not know; but, it was filled with threat. The only way that seemed to be available for dealing with this was to maintain a state of very careful balance, as though

one were walking on a tightrope over a seething pool of lava, and that if there were any leaning either way, there would be a fall into that lava. Actually, this condition was successfully crossed.

Now, here is an interesting consideration. I have known the states of consciousness in the past where the same principle of balance was necessary, a very subtle balance in the consciousness in order to realize certain states of consciousness of an exalted form. In that case, balance in order to experience, or rather imperience, these states of consciousness. Now in this latter instance, the same degree of balance was required in order to avoid an unspeakably horrible state of consciousness. Fortunately the transition through that state was successful. But then it was followed by a different type of impact. It seemed as though there was force bearing upon me—a force which I tended to call a will-force, an adverse will-force, that was working to cause psychic disintegration involving the disintegration of the mind and the loss of the capacity to recall the material stored in memory. I recognized the threat of this instantly as involving a potential breakdown of sanity, and I regarded this as much more serious than a threat to life itself since it would involve a question of credibility with respect to everything that I have produced. My answer to this was to impose will in a counter direction, will to hold together that which was under pressure towards disintegration, and it was a contest, apparently, of will against will for day after day involving a dread of any negative condition such as lying down, or falling asleep, or a dread of darkness. This persisted for several days, and ultimately began to weaken and become less forceful; and there was a time when I was advised certain aid was called into the picture, and there was a sudden release from this condition.

Now here the points to be noted especially are these: during all of this period, it was impossible to activate the butterfly valve. The lower being, the child, was struggling against a feeling of panic. The intellectual man was fighting this with active will—making decisions, not disturbed, not in a state of panic, too busy to worry about outcome—and apparently was successful. The important point here is that there was not the normal aid that comes from the inflow through the butterfly valve. That was cut off. But during all this period, again, the threefold structure was very clear. It is almost as though one had this structure before one's vision and could see it. It was simply obvious.

This, then, is a report of what may happen, and note that in this case there was no such thing as simply temptation. There was, as it appeared, to be a definite effort to destroy, or to render irrational.