

## **“*Hic Rhodus, hic salta!*”: Where is “Rhodes” for Jung’s psychology?**

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### **1. Fatal discrepancy between West and East**

As is well known, in 1928 Jung painted a mandala of a golden castle that had *something Chinese* about it. At that time, he was wondering and asking himself, “Why is this so Chinese?” although there was *nothing outwardly Chinese* about it.

Moreover, “a strange coincidence” happened to him. Shortly afterward he “received a letter from Richard Wilhelm enclosing the manuscript of a Taoist-alchemical treatise entitled *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, with a request that I write a commentary on it” (*MDR*, p. 223)<sup>1</sup>.

However, it seems to me that this should not be called “a strange coincidence” because Jung first met Wilhelm in the early 1920’s, and in 1922 he was invited to Zurich to speak on the *I Ching* at the Psychology Club. Around 1920, Jung had already begun experimenting with the *I Ching* and resolved to make an all-out attack on the riddle of this book one summer in Bollingen. He evaluated Wilhelm’s translation of the *I-Ching* as “his most important work” (*ibid.*, p. 409). It happened to him just inevitably.

Wilhelm returned from China to Germany after 22 years of missionary work in 1920. Around then, Jung first met him at a conference. He described his impression of Wilhelm:

Wilhelm, when I met him, seemed completely Chinese, in outward manner as much as in his way of writing and speaking. The Oriental point of view and ancient Chinese culture had penetrated him through and through. (*ibid.*)

Wilhelm again went to China in 1922 and then returned to Germany in 1924. As Jung attended his lectures from time to time, he noticed Wilhelm’s change:

...he seemed to feel the pressure of the European spirit. Christian views and forms of thought moved steadily into the foreground. I went to hear some lectures of his and they turned out to be scarcely any different from conventional sermons. (ibid.)

If, as I assumed, the Christian attitude had originally given way to the influence of China, the reverse might well be taking place now: the European element might be gaining the upper hand over the Orient once again. If such a process takes place without a strong, conscious attempt to come to terms with it, the unconscious conflict can seriously affect the physical state of health. (ibid., p. 409-410)

Jung realized the danger threatening him. The following exchange of words between them is very impressive:

“My dear Wilhelm, please do not take this amiss, but I have the feeling that the West is taking possession of you again, and that you are becoming unfaithful to your mission of transmitting the East to the West.” He replied, “I think you are right—something here is overpowering me. But what can be done?” (ibid., p. 410)

Wilhelm passed away in March 1930, and a few weeks before this date Jung had a vision while in bed, “At my bed stood a Chinese in a dark blue gown, hands crossed in the sleeves. He bowed low before me, as if he wished to give me a message” (ibid.).

For him, “The vision was extraordinarily vivid. Not only did I see every wrinkle in the man’s face, but every thread in the fabric of his gown” (ibid.), which indicates that the message from the Chinese man was deeply etched and weaved into Jung’s mind, like “wrinkle” and “thread” in his vision.

We may say that, through his interaction with Wilhelm, Jung fully realized that it would be *fatal* both psychologically and physically for Westerners to unconsciously go back and forth between Western and Eastern culture; that is, extremely identify with Eastern culture and then rapidly readjust to Western culture. Wilhelm was swallowed

up, or torn up, by this fatal discrepancy between West and East. In Jung's expression, "Wilhelm's problem might also be regarded as a conflict between consciousness and the unconscious, which in his case took the form of a clash between West and East" (ibid.).

During such a period, in 1929, while realizing the danger threatening Wilhelm, Jung wrote his *Commentary on "The Secret of the Golden Flower"* (abbreviated as *Commentary* below), in which he repeatedly emphasized the danger and absurdity for Western men to simply accept and imitate "Oriental Wisdom" (CW 13, par. 2). In this context, "*Hic Rhodus hic salta*" was used to admonish the Western man for a tendency to "secretly evade his menacing duties" (ibid., par. 4).

## **2. Jung's intermediate position between West and East**

As Jung himself admitted, "I myself had the same problem as he (Wilhelm) and knew what it meant to be involved in this conflict" (MDR, p. 410, my bracketed). After he stopped working on the *Red Book*, confronting the world on how he could commit to and also establish a distance from cultural differences between his own European and other non-European traditions became really important and problematic, as he developed his comparative study of the individuation process.

I tend to think that Jung's attitude in *Commentary* was a bit *defensive*, as I will discuss below.

The first chapter of *Commentary* was entitled "Difficulties encountered by a European in trying to understand the East." These difficulties are absolutely true, but Jung repeatedly emphasizes even the danger and absurdity of Western imitation of Eastern traditions, as I pointed out above. For example;

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.) (CW 13, par. 3, my italics)

For him, “Western imitation is a tragic misunderstanding of the psychology of the East...”

He stated this as follows:

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. (ibid., par 5, my italics)

It seems to me that this indicates that Wilhelm’s crisis mentioned above was in his mind. Therefore, Jung could not help being defensive about the fatal discrepancy between West and East; that is, the mortal infection of the East, with the same problem that Wilhelm had<sup>23</sup>.

This kind of tendency cannot be seen in his *Forward to Suzuki’s “Introduction to Zen Buddhism”* (1939; abbreviated as *Forward* below), in which he simply emphasized the difficulty for Western men to understand Eastern culture and respected its peculiarity as totally separate from Western, or Christian, traditions, as will be discussed later.

Secondly, Jung wanted to establish a distance from Eastern thoughts by evaluating these thoughts with a very Western distinction between spirit and intellect. After reflecting on the history of Christian culture, he wrote as follows:

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. (CW 13, par. 7)

While keeping this distinction, or division, between spirit and intellect, he once evaluated the Chinese as not at all *barbarian* but of *high culture*, as follows:

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. (ibid.)

However, he could not help adding immediately after this, “I have no wish to depreciate the tremendous differentiation of the Western intellect; compared with it the Eastern intellect must be described as *childish*.” (ibid., par. 8, my italics), or “The East came to its knowledge of inner things in *childlike ignorance* of the external world” (ibid., par. 63, my italics).

Although he did not forget to mention in parentheses, “Naturally this has nothing to do with intelligence,” since he himself pointed out that *opposites always balanced one another* in Chinese philosophy, there was no meaningful distinction between spirit and intellect, or internal and external. In that sense, we may say that Jung attempted to objectify Eastern thinking by evaluating it in his very Western way; it was really subjective, and not at all objective.

I tend to think that this kind of attitude originated not only from his discriminatory tendency, but also from his defense, or barrier, toward being mortally infected or possessed by the East. Therefore, he had no choice but to keep his position intermediate between West and East, as a special Westerner, or honorary Easterner, providing a warning of something to ordinary Western people.

In this way, Jung located himself *in-between*, clinging in the air, not grounded somewhere real. Where was his Rhodes?

### **3. Different models of psychic structure in West and East**

*The Secret of the Golden Flower* translated by Wilhelm also included *Emyo-kyo* (慧命

經), which was related to the contemplation technique in Taoist tradition. Its last chapter was entitled “Empty Infinity,” on which Jung commented in the fifth chapter, “The detachment of consciousness from the object” (CW 13, par. 64ff.)

Since, in Buddhist terminology, *Emyo* means “*satori* (enlightenment),” this “Empty Infinity” describes the state of enlightenment, or freedom from desire and suffering, that is the ultimate state, in a poetic way, as follows:

Without beginning, without end,

Without past, without future.

A halo of light surrounds the world of the law.

We forget one another, quiet and pure, altogether powerful and empty.

The emptiness is irradiated by the light of the heart and of heaven.

The water of the sea is smooth and mirrors the on in its surface.

The clouds disappear in blue space; the mountains shine clear.

Consciousness reverts to contemplation; the moon disk rests alone.

Jung psychologically interpreted, “This description of fulfilment depicts a psychic state that can best be characterized as a detachment of consciousness from the world and a withdrawal to a point outside it, so to speak” (ibid., par. 65). Here, he emphasized the detachment, or separation, of consciousness from the world. He thus concluded that, in this state of mind, the “unconscious is not projected any more, and so the primordial *participation mystique* with things is abolished” (ibid.).

According to Jung, Lévy-Bruhl’s *participation mystique* was “the hallmark of the *primitive* mentality” and “the indefinitely large remnant of non-differentiation between subject and object, which is still so great among *primitives*...” (ibid., par. 66, my italics).

In this context, we may assume that Jung understood “*satori*” as attaining a shift from an undifferentiated state of consciousness in unity with the world to a finely differentiated state of consciousness detached or separated from the world. As well reflected in his words, “By understanding the unconscious we free ourselves from its domination. That is really also the purpose of the instructions in our text” (CW 13, par.

64), Jung attempted to comprehend the meaning of “*satori*” in the oppositional relation, or hierarchical structure, of consciousness and the unconscious.

However, it might be said that, in Buddhism, this direction, or schema, is totally different or opposite, as Hayao Kawai (1996) suggested:

Buddhism has...moved in the direction of negating the use of consciousness for discrimination between things. In an image, I might say “gradually lowering” the level of consciousness or gradually annihilating discrimination. When you lower it to an extreme degree—that is, when consciousness becomes emptied—the world manifested is that presented in the *Garland Sutra*...(p. 104)

This “gradually lowering” of the level of consciousness can be seen in Fig. 1 as the shift from Field B to Field A; that is, a continuously differentiated or divided state to an ultimate undifferentiated or united state. Field A is regarded as “non-phenomenal consciousness,” and Field B as “phenomenal consciousness.” In that sense, we may say that, in the *Garland Sutra*, there is no conception of “unconscious.” Toshihiko Izutsu (1992)

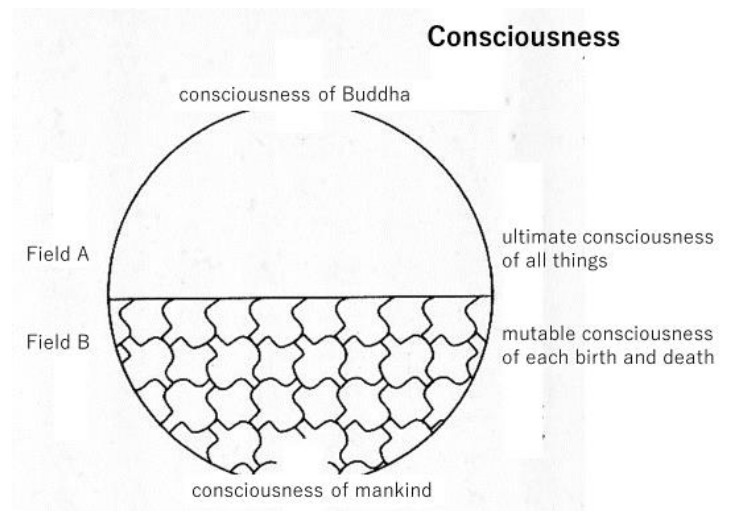


Fig. 1. Buddhist structure of the psyche (Izutsu, 1992)

described the *ultimate* state of mind as “emptiness consciousness” or “consciousness of emptiness”; that is to say, the “zero point of consciousness.”

In this structure, “consciousness of Buddha” is put at the top of the psyche and “consciousness of mankind” at the bottom, and there is an infinite distance between them. But at the same time, at this “zero point of consciousness” they are united with each other. Therefore, this model is not a *stratum* but really *uroboric*; that is, all-inclusive in “Consciousness,” as Kawai (1996) pointed out, “Jung has separated the ‘personal unconscious’ and the Collective Unconscious as strata deep in the mind. They

represent, if expressed in the Buddhist way, the gradual deepening of the level of consciousness” (p. 105).

As shown above, the schemas of comprehending the psyche in the West and East are quite different, both in structure and developing direction. Although Jung described “*satori*” as “Consciousness is no longer preoccupied with compulsive plans but dissolves in contemplative vision” (ibid., par. 65), it is not the “detachment of consciousness from the object”, but rather the participation of consciousness without any self (ego)-nature in the world. Moreover, I tend to think that “*satori*” implies not just a dissolution in “contemplative vision” but an entry, or breaking through, into the status of a contemplative mind without any discrimination between oneself and natural objects.

This kind of participation is not at all mystic, but rather has a high affinity for Eastern thoughts. Based on Jung’s understanding of “*participation mystique*” quoted above, we may also say that the Eastern consciousness moves, or develops, in the direction of being more *primitive*; “non-differentiation between subject and object” is not a remnant of the uncivilized past, but a sought and ideal state of mind.

In his *Foreword*, Jung, as a Westerner, repeatedly depicted “*satori*” in Zen Buddhism as mystic and even attempted to compare it to the Western tradition of “mysticism,” including Meister Eckhart. However, in the Preliminary of *Introduction to Zen Buddhism*, Daisetz Suzuki himself pointed out:

Mystification is far from being the object of Zen itself, but to those who have not touched the central fact of life Zen inevitably appears as mystifying. Penetrate through the conceptual superstructure and what is imagined to be a mystification will at once disappear, and at the same time there will be an enlightenment known as *satori*.

As in *Commentary*, Jung continued to comprehend what “*satori*” should be in the oppositional relation, or hierarchical structure, of consciousness and the unconscious, but I have the impression that he suddenly stopped this when he began to talk about psychotherapy.



There is nothing in our civilization to foster these strivings (for attaining “*satori*”), not even the Church, the custodian of religious values. Indeed, it is the function of the Church to oppose all original experience, because this can only be unorthodox. *The only movement inside our civilization which has, or should have, some understanding of these endeavours is psychotherapy.* It is therefore no accident that it is a psychotherapist who is writing this foreword. (CW 11, par. 903, my bracketed and italics)

My reason for this view is that, when talking about the goal of psychotherapy, Jung stated, “The goal is transformation— not one that is predetermined, but rather an indeterminable change, the only criterion of which is the *disappearance of egohood*” (ibid., par. 904, my italics); here, he gave up the egocentricity by which the hierarchical structure of consciousness and the unconscious was maintained.

Moreover, when confessing in the following way, he was really open to a quite different tradition from his own culture:

...a direct transplantation of Zen to our Western conditions is neither commendable nor even possible. All the same, the psychotherapist who is seriously concerned with the question of the aim of his therapy cannot remain unmoved when he sees the end towards which this Eastern method of psychic “healing”— i.e., “making whole”— is striving. (ibid., par. 905)

Despite the fact that our intellect has developed almost to perfection the capacity of the bird of prey to espy the tiniest mouse from the greatest height, yet the pull of the earth drags it down, and the *samskaras* entangle it in a world of confusing images the moment it no longer seeks for booty but turns one eye inwards to *find him who seeks*. Then the individual falls into the throes of a daemonic rebirth, beset with unknown terrors and dangers and menaced by deluding mirages in a labyrinth of error. (ibid.)

I think that this is a naïve but real description of the “individuation process,” although, after this quotation, in the last two paragraphs (par. 906-7) of *Foreword*, he once more abstractly described it by making use of the oppositional relation of consciousness with the unconscious<sup>4</sup>.

I can now answer the question, “Where is ‘Rhodes’ for Jung’s psychology?” It is neither merely West or East nor intermediate, but psychotherapy as “an encounter, a discussion between two psychic wholes, in which knowledge is used only as a tool” (ibid., par, 904).

#### **4. Utopias of Jung’s own and Jungians**

Jung as a psychologist gave up the standpoint of the ego, maintaining the oppositional relation of consciousness with the unconscious, or their hierarchical structure, when considering the structure of the psyche, while Jung as a psychotherapist emphasized the importance of annihilating the ego-hood for transformation in psychotherapy. As Kawai (1996) clearly depicted, “...Zen refuses to attend to the ‘middle zone’ of ego consciousness, reaching instead toward ‘emptiness consciousness.’ Jungian psychology, it seems to me, focuses on images for that middle zone, which Zen practitioners pass through, and interprets them in relation to the ego” (p. 106).

Moreover, when discussing “*satori*” depicted as “Fulfilment” in his *Commentary*, Jung limited himself as a Kantian empiricist, “Every statement about the transcendental is to be avoided because it is only a laughable presumption on the part of a human mind unconscious of its limitations” (*CW* 13, par. 82), although what he confronted and involved in psychotherapy may be “the psychical,” which should purely be spiritual, historical, theological, and infinite, as Giegerich (2000) defined.

Based on these observations, we may assume that Jung attempted to keep himself intact as a psychologist, or scientist; that is, he refused to give up the ego-hood on his own side, not really getting down to earth on psychotherapy. He attempted to remain partially living in a *utopia* (*ou + topos; nowhere*).

As Farhad Dalal (1989) severely criticized, Jung’s psychology certainly includes

some Eurocentric aspects. So, aside from whether we can define Jung as a racist, we should respect Falal's critical attitude toward Jung and Jung's psychology as really significant for Jungians, as far as Jung himself insisted on the necessity of "critical psychology" under his strong belief that it is "the duty of the psychotherapist to exercise self-acknowledgement and to criticize his personal assumptions..." (CW 10, par. 350). As Winnicott (1992) refers to Freud and Jung, "We ourselves undergo analysis, and we must be able to analyse our masters too; they could not have analysis by the very nature of things" (p. 492). If we are immune from this task, there is no help for us to be blamed for living in a *utopia*.

In this manner, regarding the IAAP statement concerning Jung's writings and their impact on people of color and indigenous populations in analytical psychology, I feel that it is a bit strange that the IAAP apologizes, instead of Jung. I tend to think that this apology is inappropriate because we are from the very first not in such a position to apologize. Moreover, to be honest, as a non-European, I find something arrogant in the conduct of apologizing in such a way.

However, it is clear that there has been a lack of a critical attitude toward Jung's psychology, or Jung's thoughts, not Jung as a person, *from within*, as mentioned above. I tend to think that we must reflect on this deficit sincerely and psychologically, but we should not judge Jung still living under the influence of European colonialism with a standard established only afterward<sup>5</sup>; that is to say, *from without*. That is unpsychological.

Thus, I would like to support the second of the two statements that the IAAP has proposed to this point.

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<sup>1</sup> Jung inscribed the following comments under the painting, “1928. When I painted this image, which showed the golden well-fortified castle, Richard Wilhelm sent me from Frankfurt the Chinese, thousand-year-old text of the golden castle, the embryo of the immortal body.”

<sup>2</sup> In the second chapter, “Modern Psychology offers a possibility of understanding,” even, although evaluating the traditional Chinese way of controlling the opposites in man’s nature experienced by modern Europeans, “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,” he did not forget to warn, “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” (*CW* 13, par. 15).

<sup>3</sup> In “Richard Wilhelm: In Memoriam,” Jung said, “Unfortunately, the spiritual beggars of our time are too inclined to accept the alms of the East in bulk and to imitate its ways

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unthinkingly. This is a danger about which too many warnings cannot be uttered, and one which Wilhelm felt very clearly. The spirit of Europe is not helped merely by new sensations or a titillation of the nerves. What it has taken China thousands of years to build cannot be acquired by theft. If we want to possess it, we must earn the right to it by working on ourselves. Of what use to us is the wisdom of the Upanishads or the insight of Chinese yoga if we desert our own foundations as though they were errors outlived, and, like homeless pirates, settle with thievish intent on foreign shores?" (CW 15, par. 88)

<sup>4</sup> As Giegerich (1998) depicted, "The process of individuation is the process of the ego personality's going under into the Self, its losing its property (empirical reality) to the Self, which thereby acquires concrete 'existence' in this life. The Self has come down to earth from heaven, while the ego personality, having lost its ontological status, has been sublimated, distilled, into a mere 'spirit,' a logical principle" (note 257 on p. 268).

<sup>5</sup> The UNESCO issued the "Statement on race and racial prejudice" in 1967, and in the UN "International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)" was signed in 1966 and came into force in 1969.