

**An Hermeneutic  
Exploration  
of  
René Guénon's  
*'The Symbolism of the  
Cross'*  
Applied to Sacred  
Architecture.**

**Ray Stevens**

**A thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of  
Master of Architecture**

**August 2017**



An Hermeneutic Exploration of  
René Guénon's  
*Symbolism of the Cross*  
Applied to Sacred Architecture.

Ray Stevens

A thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Architecture



Faculty of Built Environment  
The University of New South Wales

February 2018

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES  
Thesis/Dissertation Sheet

Surname: Stevens  
First name: Raymond  
Other name/s: Stanley  
Abbreviation for degree: M. Arch  
School: School of the Built Environment  
Faculty: Australian School of Architecture & Design  
Title: An Hermeneutic Exploration of René Guénon's *Symbolism of the Cross*  
Applied to Sacred Architecture.

**Abstract**

This thesis examines how the architecture of the various sacred traditions, all manifest in their built expressions a universal symbolic content, while at the same time being absolutely unique in their own inherent particular spiritual dispensation. One major aspect of this symbolic content is the embedding of the three-dimensional cross in its various modes within their built arrangements.

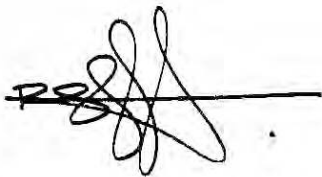
The correlation between the three dimensions of space and the metaphysical symbolism of the cross was the subject of a short but important work by the French traditional metaphysician René Guénon titled *Symbolism of the Cross (Le Symbolisme de la Croix)*. In describing the purpose of the work Guénon wrote that it was 'to explain a symbol that is common to almost all traditions, a fact that would seem to indicate its direct attachment to the great primordial tradition'. While several authors on sacred architecture acknowledge the importance of Guénon's work, it has generally been applied only in limited considerations and to particular traditions. However, there remains many levels to this work that require further general elaboration and exploration.

Guénon uses the symbolic potential of three-dimensional space as a coherent and indispensable means of developing traditional metaphysics. An hermeneutic exploration and study of Guénon's *Symbolism of the Cross*, allows insights into various aspects of all sacred architecture, even when the tradition is unfamiliar. Equally, exploring various themes related to spatial symbolism in sacred architecture can give insights into the interpretative reading of *Symbolism of the Cross*.

**Declaration relating to disposition of project thesis/dissertation**

I hereby grant to the University of New South Wales or its agents the right to archive and to make available my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in the University libraries in all forms of media, now or here after known, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. I retain all property rights, such as patent rights. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

I also authorise University Microfilms to use the 350 word abstract of my thesis in Dissertation Abstracts International.



*1. Stevens*

.....  
Signature

.....  
Witness

27th February 2018  
.....  
Date

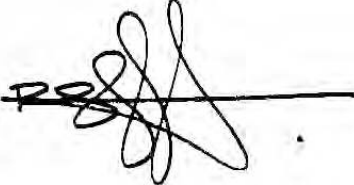
---

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**  
Date of completion of requirements



ORIGINALITY STATEMENT

'I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material which have been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at UNSW or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by others, with whom I have worked at UNSW or elsewhere, is explicitly acknowledged in the thesis. I also declare that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work, except to the extent that assistance from others in the project's design and conception or in style, presentation and linguistic expression is acknowledged.'

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a horizontal line with a complex, scribbled flourish above it.

Ray Stevens

27th February 2018

# Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>7</b>
Tradition & Sacred Architecture	7
René Guénon's Contribution to the Study of Traditional Symbolism	9
Academic Reception of René Guénon's Symbolism of the Cross	10
The Topic for Exploration - Methodology & Structure	12
On Quotations, Etymology & Transliteration	15
Acknowledgments	17
<b>CHAPTER 1:</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>BEING &amp; THE DIVINE QUALITIES</b>	<b>18</b>
Being & Traditional Ontology	18
Eternity & the Generation of Time	22
Omnipresence & the Generation of Space	25
The Point & the Instant as Inverted Images of Being	28
The Bindu - Seed Point of Creation	31
The Idea of the Centre	33
<b>CHAPTER 2:</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>BEING &amp; MANIFESTATION</b>	<b>35</b>
The Relationship of Being & Existence	35
A Metaphysical Model for the Creation of Existence	36
The Essence & Substance of Being	41
Forma & Materia	46
Symbolism - The Language of the Sacred	51
Form and individual modalities	56
<b>CHAPTER 3:</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>UNIVERSAL MAN</b>	<b>65</b>
The Relationship Between Being & Universal Man	65
The Body of Purusha	72
The Vāstu-Purusha Mandala	75
The Universal Man & the Centre of the Earth	78
The Explicit & Implicit Centres	81
The Supernal Heart	83
<b>CHAPTER 4:</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>THE CENTRE &amp; THE VERTICAL AXIS</b>	<b>86</b>
The Explicit Centre of the World	90
The Penetration of the Vertical Axis	100
The Myth of the 'Churning of the Sea of Milk'	104
The Three Guṇas	110
<b>CHAPTER 5:</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>THE SPATIAL &amp; TEMPORAL CROSS</b>	<b>114</b>
The Cross of Space	114
The Cross of Time	119
The Here & Now - The Notion of 'Presence'	123
Architecture as Creation of the Here & Now	125



<b>CHAPTER 6:</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>THE CROSS &amp; THE HORIZONTAL PLAN</b>	<b>127</b>
The Cross as the Union of Complements	127
The Experienced Horizontal Earth & Gravity	131
The Three Dimensional Cross	135
The Multiple Degrees of Existence	138
The Multiple Planes of Existence Expressed in Architecture	146
<b>CHAPTER 7:</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>THE CORPOREAL DOMAIN</b>	<b>153</b>
The Generation of Space as Movement	153
The Passage from Rectilinear to Polar Coordinates	156
Generation of Time - Beginnings & Endings	162
The Wheel & the Dharmachakra	163
The Principles of Cyclical Repetition & the Spiral	168
The Discontinuity of the Different States	173
The Spiral & Helix as Models for Continuity Between Different States	174
Circumambulation & Pradakshinā	180
<b>CHAPTER 8:</b>	<b>186</b>
<b>EXISTENTIAL SPACE &amp; THE CROSS</b>	<b>186</b>
The Body in Space - Division of Inside & Outside	186
Symbolic Inversion	189
The Body in Space - the Existential Division of Space	195
Handedness in architecture	200
The Phenomenological 'Experience' of the Body	203
<b>CHAPTER 9</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>THE RESOLUTION OF OPPOSITES &amp; THE WILL OF HEAVEN</b>	<b>205</b>
The Cycles of the Sun	205
The Solstitial & Equinoctial Cross	206
The Chi-Rho	212
Janua Coeli & Janua Inferni	215
Polar & Stellar Motion	217
The Lo Shu & Ho T'u Diagrams	219
The Swastika	226
The Ming T'ang & the 'Will of Heaven'	230
<b>CHAPTER 10:</b>	<b>234</b>
<b>FINAL REMARKS ON SPATIAL SYMBOLISM</b>	<b>234</b>
Embodiment of the Cross	234
The Point, the Gammadia & the Cross	252
The Architectural Plan as an Expression of 'The Way'	255
The Vertical Dimension as Expression of the Way	256
The Significance of the Pivotal Centre & the Altar	259
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>274</b>

# INTRODUCTION

## Tradition & Sacred Architecture

Sacred architecture is invariably an architecture of a particular tradition. So when speaking of sacred architecture it is impossible to do so without referring to its traditional foundation. This foundation in turn is based upon a tradition's theological and hierological underpinning. The relationship between what is sacred architecture and what constitutes the traditional teaching can be expressed by saying that the architecture manifests the traditional teachings in an embodied manner. However, it goes beyond just a presencing of the sacred; it 'makes present' in a much more comprehensive mode because the making present itself entails the creation of something that can be 'beheld' in its own right. To 'behold' a sacred building is to have the building presented in a manner that 'beholds' the Divine. In this way, sacred architecture allows one to know the Divine and to be present to a manifestation of the Divine in a place that is unique in space and time. To understand how sacred architecture makes the Divine present as a sacred manifestation, it is important to examine some of the traditional perspectives around space and its potential for symbolic expression of a sacred world perspective.

The notion of the 'traditional perspective' in this study will be used in the same context as defined and expounded principally by René Guénon, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Frithjof Schuon and Titus Burckhardt in the first half of the 20th Century. René Guénon defined tradition thus:

.....tradition simply means 'that which is transmitted' in some way or other. In addition, it is necessary to include in tradition, as secondary and derived elements that are nonetheless important for the purpose of forming a complete picture, the whole series of institutions of various kinds which find their principle in the traditional doctrine itself.<sup>1</sup>

The view of tradition and the sacred outlined above has been called the 'traditional perspective' by the main exponents. To these authors and their intellectual foundations must be mentioned in this connection the substantial work by later authors such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Whitall Perry<sup>2</sup>, Martin Lings, Marko Pallis and Huston Smith. This combined intellectual position has become known as the 'Traditionalist School' by some external writers and commentators although none of the main exponents of 'the school' would likely wish to have their position identified as

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines*, trans. Marco Pallis (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1993), 88. The entire chapter, 'What is Meant by Tradition', 87-92 is also fundamental to Guénon's view of tradition. <http://www.worldwisdom.com/public/viewpdf/default.aspx?article-title=What%20is%20Meant%20by%20Tradition%20-%20from%20Essential%20Guenon.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> In regard to Whitall Perry, considerable reference will be made to his monumental work, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, (Bedfont: Perennial Books, 1981). This compendium of traditional teaching is encyclopaedic in its breadth in embracing what is called by the Traditionalists the *Philosophia Perennis*. The publication makes available innumerable translated sacred writings and is arranged in chapters that make parallel study of similar areas in the different traditions. The original source of the quotes can be cross referenced in the work when not directly quoted in this project.



such. Their intellectual stance would be the same in regard to 'Traditionalism'.<sup>3</sup> To quote Charles Upton, who could be considered almost a third generation 'Traditionalist', 'this body of material presents a Traditionalism that is sufficiently unified in outlook and multidimensional in expression - and sufficiently traditional - to provide a stable intellectual standpoint'.<sup>4</sup> It has been generally accepted some 75 years or more from its beginnings that the traditionalist school of thinking is a legitimate intellectual platform around which further discussion, such as this project, can be formulated.

This perspective applies equally to an understanding of traditional architecture as one of the modes of this transmission. Traditional architecture is intimately concerned with traditional science, religious doctrines, teachings and above all 'knowledge'. In this context 'knowledge' can be defined as an individual's or tradition's conscious perception of an order to the world, it is the perception of the underlying causal relationship that binds the multiple parts together into a whole.<sup>5</sup> To this end it is sacred architecture, above all the other art forms and endeavours, which most clearly presents the hermeneutics of the *Scientia Sacra*, the 'sacred knowledge' of a particular spiritual tradition which gives meaning and structure to its world view.<sup>6</sup> The application of a tradition's knowledge in architecture is not limited to the technical practicality of building but rather is the application of a cohesive and integral world view which is revealed in the very form and conception of the traditional building. The term 'traditional building' in this context is applicable to most, if not all, building by traditional peoples and should not be considered exclusively the preserve of buildings with a religious or sacred function. In the traditional perspective, all buildings, all art and in fact all activities are related to a sacred perspective.<sup>7</sup> However, there is the question of degrees and it is in those buildings that are dedicated to the worship and remembrance of the Divine which one can find the greatest exposition of the *Scientia Sacra* and it is to those sacred buildings that most attention will be directed. Traditional sacred architecture becomes a built reflection of the revealed doctrines and teachings for their constructors. It is this revelation of the metaphysical architectural content of sacred buildings that forms the main theme of this dissertation.

---

<sup>3</sup> The 'Traditionalists' view, 'Traditionalism' or alternatively 'Perennialism' as it has also been referred to, has its critics and that has to be acknowledged. Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen has explored his particular view of the shortcomings of the traditionalist proposition in, *Why I Am Not a Traditionalist* (2002): <http://www.religioscope.com/pdf/esotrad/legenhausen.pdf>.

Also Mark Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World: Traditionalism and the Secret Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2009) covers similar critical ground to Legenhausen in more detail and with more references. Sedgwick's view should not however be considered as being consistent with the traditionalists but a view from the external aspects of traditionalism. Sedgwick confesses that 'I have explained on several occasions that I am not myself a Traditionalist, but rather a scholar who studies Traditionalism and the Traditionalists'. A personal autobiographical note at: <http://icsru.au.dk/projekter/individual/sedgwick/about/autobiographicalnote/>.

I too have some concerns about particular areas not covered by the Traditionalist perspective but on balance I am exceedingly grateful for the perspectives that have been opened by the various writings of the authors mentioned in understanding sacred architecture.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Upton writing in his essay *What is a 'Traditionalist'?* Included in his title, *Findings: In Metaphysic, Path and Lore*, (San Rafael: Sophia Perennis, 2009), 33.

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed discussion on what constitutes knowledge in the traditional context as used here, refer to Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred: The Gifford Lectures 1981* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981).

<sup>6</sup> *Scientia Sacra* is a term used frequently by Guénon and others of a similar view to designate the knowledge of the 'science of the real' for example in Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 130-160. The term *Philosophia Perennis* is also used in the same context. A fine collection of traditionalist essays on the *Philosophia Perennis* is contained in *The Sword of Gnosis: Metaphysics, Cosmology Tradition & Symbolism*, ed. Jacob Needleman (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1974).

<sup>7</sup> This is the view so comprehensively articulated by Ananda Coomaraswamy of the connection between tradition, art and architecture in his many books and published works. Refer to the Bibliography for referenced works.

## René Guénon's Contribution to the Study of Traditional Symbolism

It is René Guénon (also known as ‘Abd al-Wahid Yahyá and al-Hāmidī ash-Shādhilī) above all the mentioned authors who has most clearly articulated the position of symbolism at the heart of the *philosophia perennis* and he articulated the meaning of traditional symbolism prodigiously. Guénon called this position 'metaphysical' and his *Symbolism of the Cross*<sup>8</sup> is, unlike his other works, grounded almost entirely in spatial symbolism. Guénon wrote in the preface that his purpose in writing the work was 'to explain a symbol that is common to almost all traditions, a fact that would seem to indicate its direct attachment to the great primordial tradition'.<sup>9</sup> The work was written in Cairo in 1931, published originally in French (*Le Symbolisme de La Croix*) and translated into English in 1958.<sup>10</sup> It is dense in content and familiarity with his other works, primarily *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedānta*,<sup>11</sup> is assumed. The work depends neither on any one religious tradition or traditional interpretation of a religious dispensation; in this regard it is theologically ecumenical.<sup>12</sup> Rather, it depends on the universal symbolism of space and geometry, which finds roots in all traditions to a greater or lesser degree. This is the importance of Guénon's *The Symbolism of the Cross*: it presents an understanding of the symbolic potential of space that can be applied to sacred architecture in all traditions.

The interpretation of the *Symbolism of the Cross* demands of the reader a certain level of intellectual participation in penetrating its pages. Comprehension is not automatic, it involves a form of work in order to participate in his ideas. It is an active process in which a certain struggle is required. One way the work is progressed involves the intellectual projection of the symbol with its multiple meanings and applications. The symbol and its meaning exist side by side ontologically and the intellect is the means whereby they are 'thrown together'.<sup>13</sup> Before this is done a natural entropy needs to be overcome. But once this is done, the ends can be joined, the pieces linked back together, the chain of meaning (re)established. Once this mental entropy has been overcome, there is a small spark of insight with a small hermeneutic discovery made. In Paul Ricoeur's words, 'Thus it is in hermeneutics that the symbol's gift of meaning and the endeavour to understand by deciphering are knotted together'.<sup>14</sup> In some directions of contemporary thought this is called the

---

<sup>8</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, trans. Angus Macnab (London: Luzac, 1983). Also on line at: [https://archive.org/stream/reneguenon/1931%20-%20Symbolism%20of%20the%20Cross\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/reneguenon/1931%20-%20Symbolism%20of%20the%20Cross_djvu.txt) or <http://cnqzu.com/library/Philosophy/neoreaction/Rene%20Guenon/organized/accounted/Rene%20Guenon%20-%20Symbolism%20of%20the%20Cross.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, ix-x.

<sup>10</sup> Robin Waterfield, *René Guénon and the Future of the West: The Life and Writings of a 20th-Century Metaphysician* (London: Crucible, 1987), 58. The material facts of Guénon's life and his relationship to the traditionalist movement have been adequately covered by Sedgwick, Upton and Quinn. Waterfield gives a comprehensive bibliography of works by Guénon and works about Guénon. Of particular note is the short work by Frithjof Schuon, *René Guénon: Some Observations* (Hillsdale: Sophia Perennis, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedānta*, trans. Richard Nicholson (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1981).

<sup>12</sup> Ecumenical in the sense of the word having been derived from the Greek, *oikoumenikos* from *oikoumenē* 'the (inhabited) Earth' or 'of the whole known world'.

<sup>13</sup> The word 'symbol' being from the Greek *symbolon* 'mark or token', from *sún* meaning 'with' + *ballein*, 'to throw'. It is something thrown together or joined together, brought together. Supposedly in ancient Greece a guest would bid his host goodbye with a piece of broken pottery. On reuniting the friendship the pieces would be brought back together. So it is the joined piece(s) together which is significant and not the individual pieces. The pieces are the 'tokens' of the meaning in this regard.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. Emerson Buchanan (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 351. While Ricoeur is somewhat distant from the traditionalist viewpoint, the hermeneutic formulations of thinkers like Ricoeur offer a penetrating understanding on their own level albeit within the contemporary limitation of phenomenology.



'hermeneutic circle', although Guénon would most certainly not identify with the phenomenological hermeneutics of Heidegger and Gadamer.

This participation in the hermeneutic reading of the text and meaning in *Symbolism of the Cross* requires several readings if not many readings in which the meaning and the symbol's connections are 'heuristically discovered'. The discovery of meaning, the disclosure of the symbol and the revealed nature of relationships are all active processes of engagement. In the words of Herman De Dijn, 'This is why revelation through the symbol is experienced as some sort of gift or grace'.<sup>15</sup> The source of this 'gain' is not overly specific in the phenomenological and hermeneutic perspectives but it is very much so in the traditional perspective in that all intellectual knowledge is derived from the Intellect of Being and not the individual being. The traditional view of the intellect stands in clear distinction to that of common usage. In the traditional view being possesses a faculty of intuition that allows a view of the Pure Intellect of Being. This gain is not from discursive reason which is based in rationalisation but communication direct to the Knowledge of Being. In the words of Guénon, 'here there is all the difference which separates intellectual intuition from sense-intuition, the supra-rational from the infra-rational'.<sup>16</sup>

Penetrating the meaning of Guénon's *Symbolism of the Cross* can be aided if it is read in parallel with architectural applications. This grounds some of the multiple applications and may make the work more intelligible, particularly to those familiar with sacred architecture. Conversely, access to the symbolic content of sacred architecture can be gained by a hermeneutic exploration of the ideas and vistas contained within the *Symbolism of the Cross*.<sup>17</sup> This reciprocal 'reading' of the *Symbolism of the Cross* and 'reading' of spatial symbolism in sacred architecture are the two poles between which this project will develop.

## Academic Reception of René Guénon's *Symbolism of the Cross*

René Guénon's *Symbolism of the Cross* is not widely quoted in main stream architectural literature being limited largely to works by writers of the traditionalist perspective. Seyyed Hossein Nasr makes reference to it in *Islamic Art & Spirituality* in regard to the Islamic metaphysical significance of geometry applied to architecture<sup>18</sup> and also in *Knowledge and the Sacred* referencing the work as dealing with metaphysical symbolism of space and geometric pattern.<sup>19</sup> Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bakhtier in their influential work, *The Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture*<sup>20</sup> quote Guénon's *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*<sup>21</sup> on several occasions but the work incorporates many conceptual structures from *The Symbolism of the Cross* which is included in the bibliography. Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant's important

<sup>15</sup> 'The Scandal of Particularity: Meaning, Incarnation & Sacred Places in *Loci Sacri: Understanding Sacred Places*, ed. by T. Coomans et al. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2012).

<sup>16</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 134, fn3.

<sup>17</sup> A hermeneutic approach to sacred architecture can be found in, Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture: Experience, Interpretation, Comparison. Vol. 1: Monumental Occasions: Reflections on the Eventfulness of Religious Architecture; Vol. 2: Hermeneutical Calisthenics: A Morphology of Ritual-Architectural Priorities* (Cambridge: Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions, 2000) and Richard Coyne and Adrian Snodgrass, *Interpretation in Architecture* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> *Islamic Art and Spirituality*, (Ipswich: Golgonooza Press, 1987), 60, fn. 13.

<sup>19</sup> *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 124, fn.26.

<sup>20</sup> *The Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 21.

<sup>21</sup> *The Reign of Quantity and the Sign of the Times*, trans. Lord Northbourne (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1983).

work *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*<sup>22</sup> includes the *Symbolism of the Cross* with many other works by Guénon in the bibliography. J. C Copper's *An Illustrated Dictionary of Traditional Symbolism*, lists the work in the bibliography.<sup>23</sup> Keith Critchlow cites Guénon's, *Symbolism of the Cross* in his essay 'Space: Plenum or Abyss'<sup>24</sup> and is in the background of much of his other writing. The *Symbolism of the Cross* is listed as a reference in the Archive for the Research in Archetypal Symbolism (ARAS) under the entry for the 'Cross'.<sup>25</sup> Timothy Scott discusses aspects of *Symbolism of the Cross* in various essays and most particularly his essay, "Understanding 'Symbol'".<sup>26</sup> Graham Pont in his essay 'The Circle and the Cross: Genesis and Hermeneutic of the Traditional Cosmology', also cites the *Symbolism of the Cross*.<sup>27</sup> Gaspar Nicolau utilizes Guénon's metaphysics in his exploration of traditional symbolism in ancient board games in a very similar hermeneutic approach to this project.<sup>28</sup>

In his epic work *The Symbolism of the Stupa* Snodgrass states, 'The works of Guénon provide insights that are indispensable for an understanding of the symbolism of the centre and the following relies heavily on his analysis'.<sup>29</sup> I would say that this is somewhat of an understatement as much of the structure of Snodgrass's epic work is underpinned by a sagacious comprehension of Guénon's work, predominantly *Symbolism of the Cross*. The same could be said of Snodgrass's earlier project, *Architecture, Time & Eternity*.<sup>30</sup> Jean Hani's, *The Symbolism of the Christian Temple* includes *Symbolism of the Cross* along with other works by Guénon stating unequivocally, 'we cite here all the works of Guénon used here by us because, over and above specific subject matter, these articles often deal with very general doctrinal views, upon which we have relied in the very conception of our inquiry'.<sup>31</sup>

Professor Peter Kollar makes numerous references to *Symbolism of the Cross* in his Doctoral Thesis, *Symbolism in Christian Architecture of the First Millennium*. Some of the works cited above have been influenced, as is this project, by the lectures given by Peter Kollar at the University of NSW in 1970 to 1990 entitled 'A Theory of Architecture' and in his insightful lectures on 'Form'. The framework established by the ideas inspired by Guénon's ideas and *Symbolism of the Cross* in particular infused much of the content. A particularly important work that develops Guénon's ideas in the *Symbolism of the Cross* from the Islamic perspective is the important study by Samer Akkach, *Cosmology and Architecture in Premodern Islam*.<sup>32</sup> Paul-Alan Johnson takes a different approach from this reading of *Symbolism of the Cross* in *The Theory of Architecture*, quoting Guénon for his insights into the question of unity and tradition rather than symbolism and alongside (oddly), quotes from Derrida and Heidegger.<sup>33</sup> Such is the work of Guénon that each reader takes from it what they will.

<sup>22</sup> *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*, trans. John Buchanan-Brown (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 255-257.

<sup>23</sup> *An Illustrated Dictionary of Traditional Symbolism* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978).

<sup>24</sup> 'Space: Plenum or Abyss' in *Concepts of Space Ancient and Modern*, ed. Kapila Vatsyayan (Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts Abhinav Publications, 1991), 149-156. There are many other papers in this comprehensive work that include reference to Guénon's, *Symbolism of the Cross* directly or indirectly.

<sup>25</sup> <https://aras.org/documents/introduction-using-aras-symbolism-cross?page=35>

<sup>26</sup> *Sacred Web*, Vol. 6 Winter 2000. [http://www.sacredweb.com/online\\_articles/sw6\\_scott.html](http://www.sacredweb.com/online_articles/sw6_scott.html)

<sup>27</sup> 'The Circle and the Cross: Genesis and Hermeneutic of the Traditional Cosmology', *Prudentia* (1994), 289-303.

<sup>28</sup> Gaspar Pujol Nicolau, *Cosmological Symbolism in Ancient Board Games*, PhD Thesis, (Barcelona: Universitat Internacional de Catalunya, 2009). [http://www.tesisenred.net/bitstream/handle/10803/387431/Tesi\\_%20Gaspar\\_Pujol\\_Nicolau.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&titled](http://www.tesisenred.net/bitstream/handle/10803/387431/Tesi_%20Gaspar_Pujol_Nicolau.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&titled).

<sup>29</sup> *The Symbolism of the Stupa*. (New York: South East Asia Program, Cornell University, SEAP, 1985), 21.

<sup>30</sup> *Architecture, Time & Eternity* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture & Aditya Prakashan, 1990).

<sup>31</sup> *The Symbolism of the Christian Temple* (San Rafael: Sophia Perennis, 2007), 169. He is referring to the fact earlier access to Guénon's essays and articles was via several journals such as, *Philosophia Perennis*, *Éditions Traditionnelles* and *Le Voile d'Isis*.

<sup>32</sup> *Cosmology and Architecture in Premodern Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005).

<sup>33</sup> *The Theory of Architecture: Concepts Themes & Practices* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1994).

## The Topic for Exploration - Methodology & Structure

René Guénon's *Symbolism of the Cross*, is a difficult book to summarise and no meaningful attempt can be made here as it is not the intent of this project. From the title of the book, one would logically expect the *Symbolism of the Cross* to start with the geometric symbol and the meaning to expand in different directions, traditions and extant examples. However, this is not Guénon's approach; rather, metaphysical principles are the beginning and the cross is seen as the symbolic consequences of those principles. This is both Guénon's pedagogic style and the action of symbolism. A symbol finds its principle at a higher level, not at a lower level, so that is where the work starts. The chapters of *Symbolism of the Cross* begin with Being and the multiplicity of 'the states of Being'. Early in the work, the nature of Universal Man is expanded as the most perfect image of Being in the world. The nature of the corporeal world follows, unfolding from the principle of the space, that is, the Principial Point, which is elaborated upon in detail. The theme of the cross in different domains, such as geometry, are developed in numerous applications with space as a metaphor that is implicit within the domain of geometry. The work is an uncompromising exposition of traditional metaphysical principles in which the cross is the complete symbol.

The work itself comprises 30 relatively short chapters. The progression from one chapter to the next appears at times random and without a clear pathway. Guénon's constant footnotes lead the reader to other works and the translator Angus McNab has added additional footnotes. Three or more of Guénon's other works are commonly cited in a single paragraph. Ideas overlap and are repeated but on each re-approach a different trajectory is taken, illuminating another application of the various propositions. This is partly because symbolism itself is layered and multivalent. In some ways it does not matter at what level it is approached; the issue rather is the application of the same principles in different modes. To an extent, each chapter can stand alone but as a whole they expatiate a universal application of the symbolism of the two and three dimensional cross.

Guénon used a systematic and precise terminology; since it was considered important to retain his meaning in any discussion, his terminology was adhered to in this project. This is one of the key characteristics of Guénon's work, the exactitude of his words even when translated. Having said that, the words are often used in extended sentences that go on for nearly an entire paragraph. Often terms are not well defined when first introduced and gain meaning only several chapters on. Material is then 'folded' with multilayered footnotes in a similar way to the writings of Ananda Coomaraswamy. However, once the ideas are grasped, they are embedded in one's mind at a depth that only few writers can plumb. Such is the resonance of the works of Guénon that it could be termed initiatic.

The basis of this project is to accept Guénon's propositions in *Symbolism of the Cross* as legitimate traditional perspectives and to apply them in an explorative manner to illuminate and inform the understanding of spatial symbolism as it may be applied to sacred architecture. That is, to explore the hermeneutic potential of the work for what it may reveal outside of itself as applied to the interpretation of meaning of sacred architecture.

Unlike the chapter path of Guénon's work (see the comparison of the *Symbolism of the Cross* table of contents with the table of contents for this project in Table I.1), Guénon's material in this thesis is re-presented systematically to aid the comprehension of symbolism embedded in sacred architecture. This approach begins with the single Principle of Being, which is the focus of all traditional teachings, and will develop Guénon's themes of the sacred, geometric symbolism, space and time and from there to the more complex aspect of the Universal Man and levels of



manifestation from this central focus.<sup>34</sup> Themes and ideas will be outlined and then developed in subsequent chapters, expanding, elaborating and filling out the initial propositions in the same way that the *Symbolism of the Cross* layers concepts. Likewise, terms may not be comprehensively defined when first introduced, since to do so would see the flow of the structure turn to an encyclopaedic format. The consequences of the *Symbolism of Cross* and its symbolic use in sacred architecture can be fully understood only if seen in such a teleological manner. Most terms will be elaborated on and developed in subsequent sections of the study.<sup>35</sup>

**Table I.1 Comparison of Contents structure of Guénon's *Symbolism of the Cross* and this project.**

	Guénon's <i>Symbolism of the Cross</i>		' <i>Symbolism of the Cross</i> ' in Sacred <i>Architecture</i>
Chapter	Chapter Title	Chapter	Chapter Title
I	Multiplicity of the States of Being	1	Being & the Divine Qualities
II	Universal Man	3	Universal Man
III	Metaphysical Symbolism of the Cross	Various	Various
IV	The Directions of Space	5 6 8	The Cross & the Horizontal Plan The Spatial & Temporal Cross Existential Space & the Cross
V	Hindu Theory of the Three Gunas	4	The Centre & the Vertical Axis
VI	The Union of Complements	2 3	Being & Manifestation The Cross & the Horizontal Plan
VII	The Resolution of Opposites	9	The Resolution of Opposites & the Will of Heaven
VIII	War and Peace		Not applicable
IX	The Tree in the Midst	3 4	Universal Man The Centre & the Vertical Axis
X	The Swastika	9	The Resolution of Opposites & the Will of Heaven
XI	Geometrical Representation of the Degrees of Existence	4 5	The Centre & the Vertical Axis The Cross & the Horizontal Plane
XII	Geometrical Representation of the States of Being	4 5	The Centre & the Vertical Axis The Cross & the Horizontal Plane
XIII	Relationship of the Forging Representations	4 5	The Centre & the Vertical Axis The Cross & the Horizontal Plane

<sup>34</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross* does not begin in chapter I with a discussion of Being; rather Guénon begins with a discussion of the 'States of Being' assuming the reader is familiar with the concept of Being from previous works. In this project a preparatory ground needs first to be established.

<sup>35</sup> To date it would seem no editor has taken on the task of preparing a comprehensive glossary of terms used by René Guénon along the lines of the *Glossary of Terms Used by Frithjof Schuon* compiled and edited by Deon Valodia. <http://www.sophia-perennis.com/Glossary%20Schuon%20Revised.pdf>. Oddly Wikipedia has the beginnings of a glossary of some of the more common terms at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysical\\_terms\\_in\\_the\\_works\\_of\\_René\\_Guénon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysical_terms_in_the_works_of_René_Guénon).

	Guénon's <i>Symbolism of the Cross</i>		' <i>Symbolism of the Cross</i> ' in Sacred <i>Architecture</i>
XIV	The Symbolism of Weaving	2	Being & Manifestation
XV	Representation of the Continuity of the Different Modalities of the One and the Same State of Being	7	The Corporeal Domain
XVI	Relationship between the Point and Space	1 6 7	Being & the Divine Qualities The Spatial & Temporal Cross The Corporeal Domain
XVII	Ontology of the Burning Bush	1	Being & the Divine Qualities
XVIII	Passage from Rectilinear to Polar Co-Ordinates	7	The Corporeal Domain
XIX	Representation of the Continuity Between Different States of Being	7	The Corporeal Domain
XX	The Universal Spherical Vortex	7	The Corporeal Domain
XXI	Determination of the Elements in the Representation of Being	1	Being & the Divine Qualities
XXII	The Far-Eastern Symbol of the <i>Yin-Yang</i> ; Metaphysical Equivalence of Birth & Death	7 9	The Corporeal Domain The Resolution of Opposites & the Will of Heaven
XXIII	Meaning of the Vertical Axis: Influence of the Will of Heaven	7	The Corporeal Domain
XXIV	The Heavenly Ray and Its Reflection	4	The Centre & the Vertical Axis
XXV	The Tree and the Serpent	7	The Corporeal Domain
XXVI	Incommensurability Between the Total Being and Individuality	1	Being & the Divine Qualities
XXVII	Place of the Individual Human State in the Being as a Whole	3 5	Universal Man The Cross & the Horizontal Plane
XXVIII	The Great Triad	3 5	Universal Man The Cross & the Horizontal Plane
XXIX	Centre and Circumference	2	Being & Manifestation
XXX	Final Remarks on the Spatial Symbolism	10	Final Remarks on the Spatial Symbolism

As an exponent of the *philosophia perennis*, Guénon often quoted traditional and other sources to expound metaphysical meaning more deeply. It is intended to follow this approach here in a limited way and to include primary sources and writers of the traditional perspective, casting the net more widely than Guénon when appropriate. It is hoped this will add to the layering of meaning under exploration. Symbolism of the Cross can be identified as a summit on the horizon of Guénon's work on the symbolism of space and the single most important work to be applied directly to an understanding of sacred architecture. However, as well as looking at direct textual development in *Symbolism of the Cross*, I will refer to Guénon's extensive other works .

Why Guénon avoided diagrams in *Symbolism of the Cross* is not explained as he did have diagrams in a related later work, *The Great Triad*.<sup>36</sup> Possibly a perceived degree of limitation would be introduced by reduction to a visual summation. This project does use metaphysical models and many diagrams to bring Guénon's themes into focus. These diagrams are intended to give a working understanding at an early stage of the traditional notions of the Principle of Being, the Divine Qualities of Being, Essence and Substance, form and matter, manifestation and degrees of existence and, importantly, what constitutes a symbol in the traditional context. The use of diagrams will give a different approach to many of the ideas taken from *Symbolism of the Cross* and other works of Guénon that relate to architecture as the art of 'symbolic space'. If architecture is the 'mother of all the arts' then some investigation shall also be made using the other modes of art such as painting and sculpture on the basis of knowing something about the offspring will tell something about the 'mother'.<sup>37</sup> It is anticipated that these diagrams and models will synthesise Guénon's textual material and allow a more direct application to architectural and other examples. Diagrams and models are, by their very nature spatial and the associative leap to architectural application is not a distant one and they are more immediate and closer to architecture than text.

The most important aspect of my methodology is first-person heuristic participation. It is hoped that hermeneutic deliberations can be communicated to the reader and they can be shared as a way of approaching some aspects of sacred architecture not commonly articulated. The question of Guénon's propositions being heuristically verifiable is important. The final chapter will be an exploratory hermeneutic departure from *Symbolism of the Cross*, looking at encountered architectural symbols using Guénon's perspectives on spatial symbolism. It will also highlight issues that need further exploration and issues that in *Symbolism of the Cross* were left untreated altogether.

Useful as it is to explore the symbolic potential of space in sacred architecture, such exploration does not define the totality of what sacred architecture is, just as an understanding of symbolism in a sacred revealed text does not define or circumscribe the sacred meaning within that text. Similarly, a work of sacred architecture is so much more than its symbolic content. Symbolism does allow a certain intellectual participation in its reading but that is not the only approach to the sacred. Much greater is the devotional participation from within the particular tradition itself, for that is the ultimate purpose of sacred architecture, along with the act of offering and sacrifice.

## On Quotations, Etymology & Transliteration

As identified in the methodology, this project requires the hermeneutic research of text. In other words this project is substantially text based. In doing so from time to time certain quotes directly or paraphrased will be incorporated into my text. This is to align the study with Guénon's text, add to the argument and further support my own conclusions as well as supporting observations and propositions put forward by others. The transition from citation of quotation to paraphrasing to restating and to summarising the thoughts of others is not exact. However, I have tried to be rigorous in this regard. References are given with good intent. Reference style is based

---

<sup>36</sup> *The Great Triad*, trans. P Kingsley (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1981) contains 17 figures, some relatively basic. *The Great Triad* was the last work by Guénon published in his lifetime and also has direct relevance to sacred architecture particularly the Chinese tradition.

<sup>37</sup> The quote 'architecture is the mother of all arts' as been attributed partly to Frank Lloyd Wright when he said; 'The mother art is architecture.' but the expression is more an aphorism that finds its origin in Western medieval times. Victor Hugo wrote in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 'All other arts obeyed, and placed themselves under the discipline of architecture', (Book Fifth, Chapter II. This Will Kill That, 19).

on the *16th Edition of The Chicago Manual of Style*, which while resulting in longer text lines is more immediate in referencing quoted and related works than other styles. I have deliberately included a liberal use of footnotes to the main body of the text as does Guénon in all his works. This is to give further elaboration and added dimensions to the main text by building up layers of hermeneutic meaning.

I will at various points look at the etymology of various words. The intent here is to dig downward into the substratum of meaning of various key words. Firstly, this gives a depth to the meaning of the word but secondly and more importantly, gives an insight into the actual mechanism of thought that makes word forming possible. If the words are to be used it is best to explore what they mean in their entirety as a mode of hermeneutical exploration of meaning. However, etymology is not an exact discipline and tracing the origins of words depends on numerous subjective assumptions along the way. To this end I have relied on the idiosyncratic work of Eric Partridge, *A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* merged with the democratic *Online Etymological Dictionary*. References are generally not given as the works are easily available.

Foreign words, in particular technical terms related to architecture, present a challenge to any academic work that uses them. With such words is included names of deities, gods and technical terms used by the various traditions. The use of transliteration marks and characters in various formats has been the standard way for many years past to manage the translation of words from one language into another but is not entirely consistent across the traditions. Words, ideas, names of gods and technical terms needed in the past to be accurately translated and defined for academic and scholastic rigour. This academic way of going about translation finds less critical currency now as it seems most people in the West are familiar with such terms both conceptually and their pronunciation. In other words the 'transliteration imperative' has moved from one of definition and pronunciation to one of general usage.

To add to this less formal transliteration imperative is the use of the Internet. Word searches go straight to the lowest common denominator and that is the entry without diacritical marks. The Hindu classic work on architectural planning known as the *śilpa śāstra* in the Helvetica Neue font becomes when 'googled' the *shilpa shastra*. Even René Guénon becomes Rene Guenon. So it is in this context I ask for some 'transliteration latitude' when using foreign words and when jumping from one tradition to another. When referring to an author's work their transliteration takes precedent as a title. The same applies when quoting their text, the original author's transliteration is used. My follow on text then becomes an issue if the word is to be further discussed as to which transliterated version is used. In the end though I would say the problem of sometimes being inconsistent is not entirely mine but one of language.

Generally foreign words are presented in italics and geographic names and other proper nouns are not. Terms related to Divinity, God, Being and the Universal Domain will be capitalized and this logic will be more obvious when these issues are discussed in the early chapters. Directions of the compass, such as North and South are capitalised due to their importance as proper nouns to the text as will become apparent rather than generalised directions. Similarly, proper nouns like the Sun, Earth and Moon are capitalised.



## Acknowledgments

At this point it would be appropriate to confess the problem of how one 'untangles the threads learnt' in undertaking such a study as this. If there is truth that all knowledge is knowledge of Being, then no footnote reference need be inserted (other than to Being Itself). This is of course not the case. There are paths to which Being is known and those who constructed the paths need to be acknowledged along the way. After reading continually for one's entire life and studying areas of interest it is not always possible to clearly identify whose thoughts contribute to 'my thoughts'. If there is an advantage to 'text-driven' intellectualism, it is the fact that the sources are at least easier to identify. So acknowledgment needs to be given to all those authors listed in the bibliography regardless of whether it has been possible through omission, error or neglect to directly reference their contributions in the flow of text and thought.

In terms of authors, René Guénon is foremost in establishing a towering intellectual structure that provided a means to access the traditional worlds and Frithjof Schuon for shining the light into the world of individual being from the same perspective. Also Ananda Coomaraswamy and Titus Burckhardt for insights into what traditional art and architecture has always been and should always be and Keith Critchlow for showing how traditionalism can be renewed and applied in new contexts.

It is more difficult to separate the enormous contributions made by particular teachers over the years. Foremost would have to be the late Professor Peter Kollar who had such an important formative role in framing architectural thought at UNSW a generation (or two) ago and with whom this project found its first germination. It would not be an exaggeration to say the foundations of this project were directly inspired by Peter Kollar's Theory of Architecture course in the then Architecture Faculty at UNSW. Next would have to be Professor Adrian Snodgrass and Paul Walsh, also from UNSW, in the mid-1970s, and Professor Michael Tawa for his invaluable suggestion many years ago to investigate possible contributions from more contemporary writers.

For this project, a profound thank you is extended to my supervisor Professor Peter Kohane of UNSW for his valuable patience, guidance and assistance in completing the task and introducing me to the idea that shortening a dissertation is actual 'distillation', not word editing, to my co-supervisor John Gamble for his sincere, critical and timely suggestions and to my other co-supervisor Harry Stephens for his inspiring encouragement and guidance both at the very commencement of my university architectural studies back in the 1970s and at the pending completion of this dissertation.

Also to my dear wife Iraine, a heartfelt thank you for the tireless rereading and corrections of far too many drafts and general support.

Finally, a thank you to my professional editor Hazel Baker (English Express) for her rigour in providing copy-editing and proofreading services according to the IPEd guidelines for editing research theses final draft. Her comments and queries about the text were most gratefully received. Any remaining errors are of my own doing.

# CHAPTER 1:

## BEING & THE DIVINE QUALITIES

### Being & Traditional Ontology

The traditions have always sought to explicate existence from teleological and ontological perspectives; that is, they have explained the world in terms of principle causes. In the traditional view, the manifest world is conceived as merely an effect generated and sustained by causal principles. Nothing within manifest existence is excluded from this causal chain and the causal principles themselves are determined by other principles of a broader and more universal origin. Ultimately, this chain of cause and effect leads to the one universal principle from which all other principles and existence derive. According to this conception, all things find their place in a hierarchy of cause and effect and this leads to a view whereby all things are related to the One Principle. For the purpose of this study, this principle is called the Principle of Being or, more generally, Being.<sup>1</sup> The Principle of Being is called by various names in different traditions. However, it should not be inferred that Being is separate from existence but rather that Being, as a transcendent First Principle, has an identity which could be termed God, but equally has an identity which indwells in its creation as Being immanent within creation. Both the terms Transcendence and Immanence are Divine Qualities of Being.<sup>2</sup>

Being traditionally may be known by a multitude of other Divine Qualities.<sup>3</sup> The Divine Qualities suggest a type of individualization or limitation to Being, but each of these Qualities also contain something of Being's unlimited nature. They can be likened to different visual perspectives

---

<sup>1</sup> The word 'Being' is generally used by Guénon rather than the Principle of Being. In the context of what is presented here I have a strong preference for the term Principle of Being. It differentiates the use (or misuse) by exponents of the European philosophical schools and in particular the phenomenology perspectives such as those that may be quoted here such as Heidegger, Gadamer, et al.

Guénon develops the terminology of the word Being and being in much greater depth in *The Multiple States of Being*, trans. Joscelyn Godwin (New York: Larson Publications, 1984); *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedānta*, trans. Richard Nicholson (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1981) and *The Great Triad*, trans. P Kingsley (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1981). This initial discussion on the Principle of Being is not directly articulated in the early chapters of *Symbolism of the Cross* but flows from those other works. However, it is an essential introduction here for all that follows.

<sup>2</sup> For consistency with Guénon's terminology, expressions such as the Divine Qualities and the actual Qualities themselves such as Transcendence and Immanence will be capitalised as proper nouns being coexistent with Being.

<sup>3</sup> In Scholastic terms the Divine Qualities are termed the 'transcendentals'. See Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 21. Also 'Medieval Theories of Transcendentals' in, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, principal ed. Edward N. Zalta, (Stanford: The Metaphysics Research Lab Center for the Study of Language and Information of Stanford University, 2013). <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/transcendentals-medieval/>. In Islam the Qualities are the 'Names of God' being the 99 Names of *Allah*.

of the Face of God which in turn correspond to so many logical points of relativity. This to a certain degree explains why each Quality on the one hand is a legitimate view of Being, yet on the other hand is only a singular aspect of the Principle of Being. Each Quality has a relation to the other Qualities, just as the front view of a face is contained in the three-quarter view. The Divine Qualities or Essences are attributes of Being and are a 'hierophany' when understood by individual beings, 'so that anything by which the sacred shows itself is a hierophany'.<sup>4</sup> There is a linguistic implication to the Divine Qualities in that they formulate a character of Being and this character is on the one hand the character by which the Divine 'shows itself' but on the other hand is the character 'by which it is seen'. To use another traditional analogy, each Quality could be likened to a particular colour of pure white light. The Qualities do not exhaust the potential of Being by their limited description. Being, is in the Quality, but the Quality does not exhaust the fullness of Being. For example, Being is known by the Quality of Oneness, as the Hermetic phrase extols, 'All things have been derived from One'.<sup>5</sup> 'The One is all things and no one of them' states Plotinus.<sup>6</sup> Being is the origin of the number one; 'The One brought number into being, and number analysed the One, and the relation of number was produced by the object of numeration'.<sup>7</sup> One is the 'first and last', and the 'One without end'. Being as the quality of Oneness, generates from this Oneness all other things. The words of St. Thomas Aquinas could summarise the medieval Christian view but is also representative of many traditional views when he says, 'Therefore all beings other than God are not their own being, but are beings by participation ... (in) Being, who possesses being most perfectly'.<sup>8</sup>

While the Divine Qualities allow comprehension of aspects of Being, Being is however incomprehensible in its totality even though it 'possesses being most perfectly', as it is Being 'Unfathomable as the sea, wondrously ending only to begin again, informing all creation without being exhausted'.<sup>9</sup> The Divine Qualities are 'the signatures that, by nearly brushing against absoluteness and simplicity of the (B)eing that is solely its own existing, dispose it toward revelation and knowability'.<sup>10</sup> The Qualities of Being are numberless and everlasting and these expressions in themselves also amount to Qualities, they are the Divine Qualities of Infinity and Eternity. 'The Principle is an Infinity which nothing can augment or diminish'.<sup>11</sup> Being 'is from eternity to eternity, and to him nothing may be added',<sup>12</sup> and 'from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.....a thousand years in thy sight are as but yesterday'.<sup>13</sup>

The Qualities of Being and Being Itself constitute Universal Reality in that they are the only things that are uncreated. Manifestation<sup>14</sup> and manifest qualities are expressed in existent beings and have their source in the realm of the uncreated or the realm of the Universal Reality.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Paul Ricoeur, summarising Eliade's proposition in his essay, 'Manifestation and Proclamation', *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative & Imagination*, trans. David Pellauer and ed. by Mark I Wallace (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 49.

<sup>5</sup> Hermetic phrase from the *Hermetic Tablet* as given in Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, trans. William Stoddart (London: Stuart & Watkins, 1967).

<sup>6</sup> Plotinus, *Enneads*, trans. by Stephen MacKenna (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1969). v.ii.1. Also as quoted in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 780.

<sup>7</sup> Ibn al-'Arabi, *Fusus al-Hikâm*, in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 779. Thus the traditional idea of Number as the means of production of existence from Being.

<sup>8</sup> *Summa Theologica*. 1.44.1, in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 777.

<sup>9</sup> Chuang-tse, *Nan-Hua-Ch'en-Ching* Ch. XXII. as quoted in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 31.

<sup>10</sup> To use a contemporary quote from Giorgio Agamben, *The Signature of All Things*, 68. My capitalisation of (B)eing for consistency.

<sup>11</sup> Chuang-tse, Ch. XXII.

<sup>12</sup> Ecclesiasticus, XLII.21.

<sup>13</sup> Psalm, 90.2,4.

<sup>14</sup> The word manifestation is from the Latin *manifestus* from *manu* meaning 'hand' + *festus* meaning 'struck', thus 'struck by hand'. Manifestation then is being crafted or struck by 'the hand of God'. The relation to manufacture, *manu* + *facture* (facture) 'to make' is essential to the meaning of the traditional crafts.

<sup>15</sup> Guénon defines this term 'Universal' in *Man and His Becoming*, 33, 34. The term 'Universal' or 'Universal Realm' will be used throughout this study as defined by Guénon.

Manifestation is a conjunction of the two notions, firstly, as a noun and the subject of being and the presentation of existence. Secondly, the verb 'making manifest' discloses the nature of the process and the trace of the Principle of Being in its activity. Manifestation is a making individual, aspects of Being or Qualities of Being. The Principle of Being projects manifestation through its own Essence. Ibn 'Arabi writes of the Essences from the Sufi perspective, 'The essences of things are in themselves non-existent, deriving what existence they possess from God, who is the real substance of all that exists.<sup>16</sup> Ibn 'Arabi goes further in this direction saying all existence is created from the Essences (Divine Names). This is the only way that Being can create, for Being can create only from what it is. In other words it can only bring into relative being, what already is in Being for, 'God wanted to see his own Essence in one global object which having been blessed with existence summarised the Divine (Universal) Order so that he could manifest His majesty to Himself'.<sup>17</sup> Ibn al-'Arabi, continues explaining the manner in which manifestation becomes 'a mirror: in this he manifests to himself in the form which results from the place of the vision; this would not exist without the plane of reflection and the ray which is reflected therein'.<sup>18</sup>

The Divine Qualities are all contained in the principal Unity of Being, that is, they are in a state which is undifferentiated prior to individual being. A Divine Quality may however have an identifiable prolongation into manifestation which will be called a principle, and this principle will have a causative effect in its own right, establishing further causative effects and so on. The trace of the Divine Quality within manifestation could be said to produce a chain of causes and effects. Manifestation could be described as being completely saturated with such qualities, or, more correctly, manifestation is entirely constituted by such principal actions. Each Divine Quality becomes a manifest quality or principle when projected into the manifest world. For example, the Quality of Oneness is projected as the principle of unity, the Creator is projected as the principle of creation (Diagram 1.1).

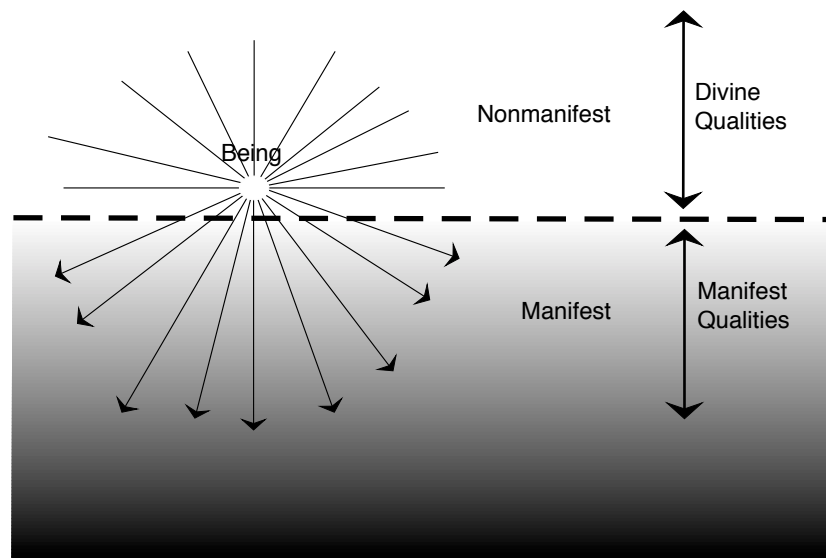


Diagram 1.1 The Divine Qualities of Being in the Non-manifest & Manifest Domains.

<sup>16</sup> *Fusus al-Hikâm*, trans. R A Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 153. Also quoted in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 782. My bracketed inclusion of 'Universal'.

<sup>17</sup> *Fusus al-Hikâm*, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, 153.

<sup>18</sup> *The Wisdom of the Prophets (Fusus al-Hikam)*, by Muhyi-D-Din Ibn 'Arabi, trans. from Arabic by Titus Burckhardt with commentary, trans. to english by Angela Culme-Seymour (Aldersworth: Beshara Press Publications, 1975), 8.



From the perspective of the human being, the Divine Quality of Omnipresence is projected as the definitive principle from which space is derived. From that same perspective, the Divine Quality of Eternity is projected as the definitive principle from which time is derived. Omnipresence and Eternity as Divine Qualities of Being are central to this study, as they are the principles from which space and time find their origin; as a result, a more detailed discussion of the way they are manifest and as they relate particularly to the domain of architecture will be essential.

A clear distinction must be made between the Qualities of Being and their subsequent prolongation into the manifest world. The Qualities of Omnipresence and Eternity are expressions of Pure Essence of Being within the Universal Realm<sup>19</sup> and as such also contain the Qualities of Absoluteness and Transcendence. Omnipresence and Eternity are complete and unconditional qualities; their prolongation partakes of this absoluteness but their prolongations also take on a degree of relativity within manifestations. The prolongation of the Quality of Omnipresence is the notion of indefinite expanse for Being to fill, dwell and inhabit. For Eternity, the prolongation of the Quality is the notion of aeviternity in which Being can unfold possibilities in a mode of succession.<sup>20</sup> The terms 'indefinite expanse' and 'aeviternity', are absolutes in relation to manifestation yet themselves are 'relative absolutes' when compared to Pure Being.<sup>21</sup> This apparent contradiction in the use of the word 'absolute' is unavoidable from the viewpoint of Guénon's metaphysics. This distinction between the Absolute Quality of Being and the relative absolute nature can simply be summarised as terms applied to the Non-manifest order or to the manifest order (Diagram 1.2).

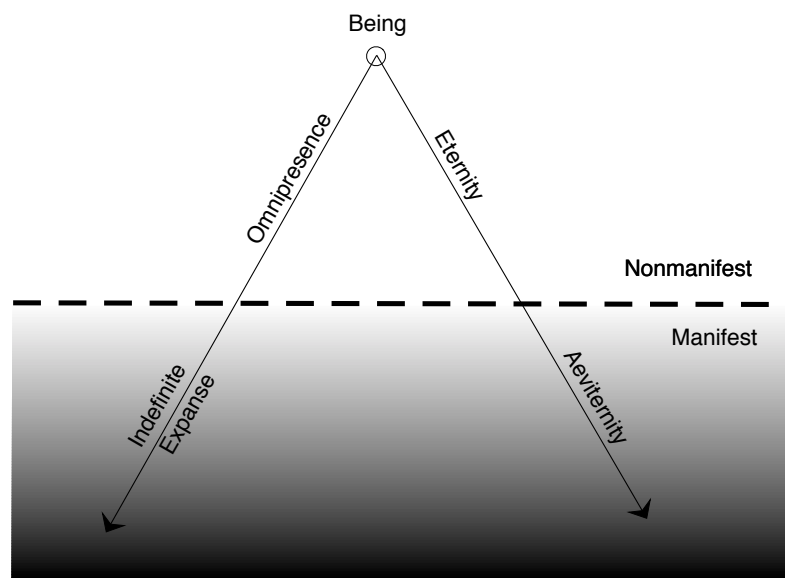


Diagram 1.2 The Qualities of Being - Omnipresence & Eternity.

<sup>19</sup> Essence and what will later be termed Substance, are used here with the same meaning as used by Guénon, *The Reign of Quantity and the Sign of the Times*, 19-24.

<sup>20</sup> The term 'aeviternity' (also sometimes *aevum*) has been used by St. Thomas Aquinas, Boethius and other Christian theologians and seems totally appropriate here to expand the notion of time beyond the merely temporal toward but not concurrent with the Eternal. Quinn discusses both Coomaraswamy's use of the term aeviternity in parallel with Guénon's in *The Only Tradition*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997) 122-125.

<sup>21</sup> The expression 'relative absolute' is a notion used also by Schuon in various essays and books including 'Islam and Consciousness of the Absolute', *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 15, Nos. 1 & 2 (Winter-Spring, 1982), [http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/Islam\\_and\\_Consciousness\\_of\\_the\\_Absolute-by\\_Frithjof\\_Schuon.aspx](http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/Islam_and_Consciousness_of_the_Absolute-by_Frithjof_Schuon.aspx). Schuon writes:-

'We have alluded more than once to the seemingly contradictory, but metaphysically useful and even indispensable, idea of the 'relatively absolute', which is absolute in relation to what it rules, while pertaining to relativity in relation to the 'Pure Absolute'.'

## Eternity & the Generation of Time

Eternity as a Divine Quality must contain a reciprocal nature which is individual, identifiable and hence knowable at least in a didactic sense as well as being Universal. The Divine Qualities can be defined and singularized and this process of singularisation and particularisation is something that the Occidental traditions have expounded in great depth. Classical philosophy is the consequence of such rationalisation. It is one of the compensations for contemporary humankind that this rationalist classical approach, this step-by-step logical linear argument, retains such validity even today. Hence it would be appropriate to start developing the notion of Eternity from one of the occident's greatest exponents, Plotinus, before expanding the notion of Eternity in other modes and traditions. In the words of Plotinus, Eternity coexists with Being or '...may we perhaps identify Eternity with Repose - There, as time has been identified with Movement - Here.'<sup>22</sup> By repose, Plotinus means that Eternity is the natural state of Being, the mode of its state of non-activity, prior to Creation. In the *Enneads* he devotes the entire seventh tractate to the question of time and Eternity. Eternity to Plotinus is defined as much as it can be as, 'That which neither has been nor will be, ... that is Eternity.'<sup>23</sup>

A distinction should be made between Eternity as 'Ever-Being'<sup>24</sup> and continuous, endless 'ever-time', because 'Eternity (the Quality, as distinguished from the property of everlastingness) is that substratum carrying that state in manifestation'.<sup>25</sup> Eternity is the Principle which allows the manifestation of 'everlastingness', or aeviternity. Everlastingness (or aeviternity) still possesses something of an absolute nature but is bound to temporal continuity. To clarify this point, Plotinus writes that "... the use of the word 'everlasting' and the reference to unbroken continuity must be taken as a mere convenience of exposition; the word is not strictly applicable to Eternity".<sup>26</sup>

It is useful and almost inevitable to contrive the term 'relative absolute' to draw the distinction between Eternity and aeviternity when discussing the Principle of Being in its state of Divine Repose and ensuing unending time. God as Being is literally without beginning and without end because to assume a beginning or end is to assume limitation. However, there is an aspect of Eternal Being that is often presented elliptically by referring to the Eternal Present, and this appears somewhat as a contradiction. The Eternal Present is a conjunction of ideas that tries to express the non-temporal or non-sequential mode of Being. We meet here a form of classical dualism; on the one hand Eternity is beyond forever, beyond everlasting, and on the other hand, it is the present, the immediate, and the singular now. The Transcendent/Immanent dichotomy is inescapable in occidental philosophy.<sup>27</sup> The Eternal/Present couplet contains this dynamic, this apparent paradoxical impossibility.<sup>28</sup> The Eternity of Being is in a mode which is simultaneously 'present', and this is where the contradiction lies because the idea of the present is a temporal limitation.

---

<sup>22</sup> *Enneads*, 7.2.

<sup>23</sup> *Enneads*, 7.3.

<sup>24</sup> *Enneads*, 7.4.

<sup>25</sup> *Enneads*, 7.5. Plotinus' brackets.

<sup>26</sup> *Enneads*, 7.6.

<sup>27</sup> But not in the traditions of the East.

<sup>28</sup> Post-structuralist philosophers such as Jacques Derrida and others take big issue with such a dualism pointing out that the history of Western philosophy, including classical philosophy, is underpinned by irresolvable dualism of this type but this inability to comprehend the principle other than through polarised dualism is no more than another dimension of traditional metaphysics. For some reason the East has never been stricken with such a legacy of paralysis when confronted with dualism in its infinite forms. In the East the apparent dualism is something that needs to be overcome and resolved even transcended. This very act of reconciliation of the dualistic view is one of the highest achievements of being in the East. To post-modernists it is a 'lie' and 'by means of metaphysics, the West has concealed from us its own unintelligibility, its own fictive character', as Robert Mugerauer notes in 'Derrida and Beyond', in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture*, ed. Kate Nesbitt (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 85.

Augustine of Hippo also known as St. Augustine, among others, used the notion of the Eternal Present to circumscribe this simultaneous presence of Eternity. St. Augustine writes that 'both the past and the future have their beginning and their end in the (E)ternal present ... in which there is neither past nor future (but) determines both past and future time'.<sup>29</sup>

A similar conjunction of terms is used by Boethius when he speaks of the Eternal Now as 'the totally simultaneous and perfect possession of unending life'.<sup>30</sup> Meister Eckhart also writes on the Eternal Now. 'The days spent millenniums since, are in eternity no further off than in this moment I am passing now; ... no more distant in eternity than this very instant I am in'.<sup>31</sup> The Eternal Now can also be expressed in a logocentric manner as the unqualified 'Thou art...' or equally as 'God merely is...' both contain the dimension of the unqualified and unconditioned. For Being is totally unconditioned and unqualified in both its modes as Eternity and its Eternal Now. The outstanding Platonist, Plutarch writes 'He, being One, has with only one "Now" completely filled "For ever"'.<sup>32</sup>

St. Anselm of Canterbury follows the scholastic thread when he says of Divine Being that 'You are'. The affirmation of the Divine Present should be separated from the continuity and contingency of time. St. Anselm also writes; 'You, are nevertheless not in place or time but all things are in You ... You already "are"'.<sup>33</sup> Still in the Western tradition, St. Augustine's logic argues for the *a priori* superiority of Eternity over time, "Your today is eternity ... Co-eternal with yourself. You made all time; you are before all time and the 'time', if such we may call it, when there was not time at all."<sup>34</sup> Thus with creation, everlasting time comes into being. Aeviternity is the continuous never-ending sequential unfolding of Eternity. With creation, the simultaneousness of possibilities contained in Being are ruptured and what results is an outpouring of a sequential unfolding of those possibilities. What was contained in Being in a state of pure 'Repose' gives way to endless becoming. The simultaneous unity of Being gives way to the temporal transience of manifestation. In this manner Eternity transforms itself into its opposite, time, yet remains unchanged. In other words, time, is the inverted image of Eternity. Again Plotinus writes that 'the Authentic Existent ... stirring to a ceaseless succession, to a next, to the discrimination of identity and the establishment of ever new difference, traversed a portion of the outgoing path and produced an image of Eternity, produced Time'.<sup>35</sup> Time to Plotinus is generated by Being's desire for succession of the Existent and this produced the Cosmos. To do this, it was necessary for the All-Soul to have, '... first laid aside its eternity and clothed itself with Time', this world of its fashioning it then gave over to be a servant of time, making it at every point a thing of Time, setting all its progressions within the bournes of Time'.<sup>36</sup>

Plotinus borrows heavily from Plato when he states that time is the 'moving image of eternity'. This definition of time has echoed down through history and is for the Occident perhaps the most precise and succinct definition of time. This definition of time is given by Plato in the

<sup>29</sup> *Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (New York: Penguin Books, 1984). XI.II. My capitalization of (E)ternity.

<sup>30</sup> Boethius, *Consolation*, V.VI as quoted and discussed in detail by J L Russell, 'Time In Christian Thought', in *The Voices of Time*, ed. J. T. Fraser (London: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 1968).

<sup>31</sup> As quoted in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 838.

<sup>32</sup> Plutarch, *De E apud Delphos*, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt (Cambridge: Harvard University Press and William Heinemann Ltd. 1936), 247. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0243%3Asection%3D20>.

<sup>33</sup> Anselm from *Proslogion*, 19-20, from *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works* ed. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 98-99. Also discussed by Tomkinson, J. L, in 'Divine Sempiternity and Atemporality' in *Religious Studies* 18, no. 2 (1982): 177-89. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20005832>.

<sup>34</sup> *Confessions*, XI.13. The formulation 'Your years are one day' finds an interesting parallel with the Hindu god *Brahmā*. A period of time called the *kalpa* is a day and the night of *Brahmā* and is the period within which the world is periodically created and destroyed.

<sup>35</sup> *Enneads*, 7.11.

<sup>36</sup> *Enneads*, 7.11.

*Timaeus* and is the foundation stone for the Western history of time. Plato states that 'the Living Being that is forever existent, he took thought to make this universe ... as it were, a moving likeness of eternity ... that to which we have given the name Time'.<sup>37</sup>

Thus Eternity in this Platonic model is the generative principle of time. This notion of time as a relative reflection of Eternity has several interpretations in the various traditions. On the one hand, time is other than Eternity, it is the sign of manifestation and flux, it is that tendency which is expressible as 'becoming' and leads in a certain sense away from Eternity and the Principle of Being. Becoming is the process of being from Being, it is the activity of bringing forth existence from the Existent. It is being as a verb rather than the nominative Being as a proper noun and as such, becoming is bound to the manifest world of relative beings. The notion of becoming infers time or rather infers a prior(ity), a state that if not before in time, is *a priori* (in cause). This becoming is afforded by time in its degenerative effect, leading to multiplicity and temporality, often interpreted as being negative in effect. On the other hand, time as the Platonic 'image of Eternity' has a semi-divine quality. Time becomes the mode in which Being unfolds its multiplicity and expresses its illimitability, allowing an expression of the plenitude of Being's activity as becoming. Time becomes an epiphany of Eternity. Both perspectives of time coexist side by side in the traditional perspectives.<sup>38</sup>

Time as the 'image of Eternity' is an image reflected within the conditioned world of existence. This gives a conception of the relationship between time and Eternity but says little about what constitutes time itself. Eternity was said to be the Divine Quality from which time was derived, which is the equivalent of saying Being is the cause of all manifested existence. In the case of manifestation, what is required is an intermediate principle between Being and existence and this intermediate principle is the principle of creation or the personified notion of Being as the Creator. Likewise, the intervening principle between the Eternity of Being and indefinite time can be called the 'instant'. The moving image of Eternity is the moving instant. The instant is the direct image of Eternity in manifestation; the movement or the passage of the instant results in sequence or duration, and the totality of such durations constitutes time itself. The instant, however, remains, like Eternity, removed from the limitations and conditions inherent in the continuity of temporal duration and contains the same quality of atemporality. Time is the locus of the moving instant.

The instant is also identical with the 'now' but it is a relative 'now' and should not be confused with what was called the Eternal Now. The now stands in relation to the Eternal Now in the same way that the indefinite stands in relation to the Infinite. The now is the instantaneous reflection of the Eternal Now upon a relative subjective plane of being. The notion of the 'present' encompasses the same idea.<sup>39</sup> Nicholas of Cusa at the close of the Mediaeval period writes about the Now as 'the Eternity in which thou does conceive, all temporal succession coincides in one and the same Eternal Now'.<sup>40</sup> Nicholas of Cusa also writes that, '...the present comprises all present times, and present times are a regular and orderly development of it, only the present is to be found in them. The present, therefore, in which all times are included is one: it is unity itself'.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Frances Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato, Translated with Running Commentary* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952), 37(c)-38(b).

<sup>38</sup> These two aspects of time are contained in the Hindu Sanskrit notions of time as *Kālā* and the goddess *Kālī*. Both relate to the meaning of 'the black one' and the force of time.

<sup>39</sup> There are subtle distinctions between the terms 'now' and 'instant' as they will be used in this project and these relate mainly to the internal or microcosmic experience as opposed to the external or macrocosmic perspectives. The 'now' and also the word 'present' refer more to an existential or individual viewpoint, essentially experiential whilst the instant is more generalised and objective and will be developed in detail in Chapter 5.

<sup>40</sup> *De visione Dei (On the Vision of God)*, Chapter 10. Discussed by Coomaraswamy, *Time and Eternity* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1988), 121-122. Also as quoted in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 839.

<sup>41</sup> *Of Learned Ignorance*, trans. Germain Heron (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2007) II.iii (76). Also quoted in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 840.

The now is thus the pre-generative origin of all sequential time, it is the principle which unfolds, first giving way to the past and that which is still retained, is the future. The now and the present exist in a state which could be said to be non-sequential, they simply 'are present' whereas past and future exist in a state of 'has been', or 'will be' and hence temporally sequential. The now is the link between past and future.

Eternity viewed from within time could be said to possess two poles or two intelligible aspects. These aspects are the Infinite notion of the Eternal Quality of Being and the notion of the Eternal Now, which relates to the Immanent Quality of Being. It is difficult to resist assigning quantity to these two intelligible complementary notions of Eternity; in fact, it is tempting to say that the two notions refer to the eternally long and the eternally short. However, this is incorrect because Eternity is not limited in any way to temporal quantity. Rather the two poles reflect the Qualities of Infinitude and Immanence. The relationship between the instant (which is the reflected image of the Eternal Now) and sequential continuous time also participates in this antinomic relationship. These antinomic qualities of Being are only existentially apparent, for Being is 'neither this nor that',<sup>42</sup> for it is 'Not that the One is two, but these two are One'.<sup>43</sup>

In the Islamic tradition, Eternity is similarly distinct from everlasting time, for 'Before it there is no "before" and after it there is no "after": the beginning of the centuries is the seal of its existence'.<sup>44</sup> From the Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him), it is said 'There is no morning or evening with the Lord'.<sup>45</sup> Time begins only when creation begins, without creation there could be no time. Prior to creation, there is only Eternity. The instant is truly 'Eternity in a moment' and in this sense, it constitutes the irruption of the Absolute into the contingent temporal domain. The Eternity of Being reflected in the instant, traces out duration, which is time. This 'duration is an expansion of the Divine Presence',<sup>46</sup> but the instant is the vehicle for this expansion.

## Omnipresence & the Generation of Space

Omnipresence as a Quality of Being is related to Infinity and could be called Being within the Infinite. Omnipresence also relates to Immanence; it is Being in a state which, at least from the viewpoint of the individual being, is always accessible and immediate. However, as Schuon writes, 'The two aspects meet and intermingle in their common Infinitude, thus in Divinity itself'.<sup>47</sup> The Divine Qualities of Omnipresence and Eternity are the two respective principles from which space and time derive. They are 'commutants' of the Nature of Being. The Omnipresent is that Quality of Being which could be called Being dwelling within all space. The Omnipresent is that Quality whose prolongation produces the condition of space and is that Quality which is Being considered within all that is simultaneously spatially contained. It is the Immanent Presence of Being, or the indwelling permeability of Being within its indefinite spatial manifestation. In the words of Hermes

---

<sup>42</sup> 'Anything we know that we are able to impart or that we can define, that is not God; for God is neither this nor that which we can abstract nor has he limitations.' (Meister Eckhart), and 'a motionless centre'...where from is seen naught but an infinity, which is neither this nor that, neither yea nor nay'. Chang-Tzu, in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 976 & 977.

<sup>43</sup> According to Hermes Trismegistus quoted in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 986.

<sup>44</sup> Ibn al Farid, Verse 29. *The Ode to Wine*, in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 839.

<sup>45</sup> *Hâdith* as quoted in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 839. The *darood* or *şalawât*, 'Peace be upon Him' shall, from here on (with some reluctance) be abbreviated to 'PBUH'.

<sup>46</sup> According to Jurjani as quoted in Louis Massignon, *Man & Time, Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, ed. by Joseph Campbell, trans. by Ralph Manheim (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1958), 112.

<sup>47</sup> Frithjof Schuon 'Concerning the Notion of Eternity', 6 (Revised online version); [http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/Concerning\\_the\\_Notion\\_of\\_Eternity-by\\_Frithjof\\_Schuon.aspx](http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/Concerning_the_Notion_of_Eternity-by_Frithjof_Schuon.aspx).



Trismegistus regarding God (Being) it is said 'I am in heaven and in earth, ..... I am present everywhere'.<sup>48</sup>

The Divine Presence is to be found within all of manifestation. 'Since God is the universal cause of all Being, in whatever region Being can be found there must be the Divine Presence'.<sup>49</sup> This Presence is not of a spatial nature; rather it is a state of Divine dwelling in its spatial creation. In the same way that the Eternal Now has no temporal limitation, so Divine Presence has no spatial limitation. What was said about Eternity can be said about Omnipresence. The Quality of Omnipresence exists prior to the Creation of existence as space, it is a mode of Being in itself. The Divine Presence is a mode in which Being merely 'is'. Thus God can say 'I Am Who I Am', (*Ehyeh asher ehyeh*),<sup>50</sup> the double utterance announcing I am Present in my Omnipresence. In this primordial state of Being, there is no space or time as such, only the potential for space and time within Being. With the rupture of Being that is Creation, what was contained as a simultaneous Presence of Being is folded outward or expanded to be a separation and differentiation. Being that was previously interiorized becomes Being exteriorized in and as space. Space allows the simultaneous, concurrence or the co-existence of the multiplicity of beings and things. Thus God could say after 'I Am That I Am'.<sup>51</sup>

The same antinomic polarisation could apply to the following consideration of Being in which the Omnipresent tends toward Infinity and Presence refers to the more direct Immanent Quality of Being. The Quality of Being referred to as Omnipresence in this study is not the ability to be in all space (although it includes this contingency) but rather the potential to create and fill all existence. The same is true of Presence. Presence is not limited to being in one place but Being unconditionally affirmed. The prolongations of Omnipresence and Presence give rise to space. The prolongation of Presence is reflected in the notion of the Principial Point, that is, the generating principle of all space.<sup>52</sup> The point is to space what the instant is to time. The point plays a principal role in the unfolding or development of spatial dimension. The point, through reproduction of itself, gives rise to displacement and the relation between two displaced points is extension.<sup>53</sup> Space could be defined here for this study as the potential for all possible extension just as time is the potential for all possible duration between instants.

Divine Presence gives rise to the Principial Point that is the seed or origin of all spatial development. In this way, Presence is expanded and developed, what was contained in Being in Unity of Existence is developed as 'co-existence' in space. This Principial Point is not a physical point because it has no dimensionality, no physical size. It is the pure intelligible point, comprehensible by the mind alone, but equally as Ruysbroeck says, it is 'beyond the mind and above our created being; in that Eternal Point where all lines begin and end...'.<sup>54</sup> The Principial Point, having no size yet being the origin of all space is everywhere in the same way that the Sun which is the source of light shines over everything yet remains distant. The Principial Point as the

<sup>48</sup> Hermes Trismegistus, quoted in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 842.

<sup>49</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles, (Of God and His Creatures): An Annotated Translation*, trans. Joseph Rickaby (London: Burns and Oates, 1905) III, lxviii. <http://www.basilica.ca/documents/2016/10/St.%20Thomas%20Aquinas-Summa%20Theologica.pdf>.

<sup>50</sup> 'God said to Moses, I Am Who I Am. Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "I am has sent me to you"'. Exodus, 3:14. Discussed by Guénon *Symbolism of the Cross*, in the Chapter 'Ontology of the Burning Bush', 80-82.

<sup>51</sup> Hebrew does not have a future tense so this expression could only be made in translation but that is exactly the point.

<sup>52</sup> This Principial Point is also the 'aqliyya or 'conceptual point' or 'that which has no parts' of the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* treated in the *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity On Arithmetic & Geometry: An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistles 1 & 2*, ed. Nader El-Bizri (Oxford: Oxford University Press in Association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2012), 106-107.

<sup>53</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 77-78

<sup>54</sup> From *The Superessential Life*, in Evelyn Underhill, *Ruysbroeck* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1915), 167. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/underhill/ruysbroeck.s8.html>.

reflection of the Presence of Being dwells within all existence and this includes within individual being, the Divine Presence is 'closer to him than the vein in his neck (jugular vein)'.<sup>55</sup> Eckhart describes that indwelling when he says that 'God is nearer to me than I am to my own self: my life depends on the nearness and presence of God'.<sup>56</sup> In the traditional perspective, space is the medium for the ubiquitous presentation of Being. Just as time was created for the sequential unfolding of continuous possibilities within Being, so was space created for the co-existent unfolding of Possibilities of Being. The infusion of created space with its principle the point, means that within the co-existent quality of space there dwells the direct reflection of locations of co-existent Presence.

René Guénon in *Symbolism of the Cross*, writes a great deal on the metaphysical understanding of space. In regard to the Principial Point, he writes:

The point, considered in itself, is in no wise subject to the spatial conditions: it is the point which realizes space and produces extension by its act, which in the temporal condition (but only therein), is translated by movement; but in order to realize space thus, it is bound by some one of its modalities to situate itself in space, which indeed is nothing without it, and which it will completely fill by the deployment of its own virtualities. Successively in the temporal condition, or simultaneously outside that condition... . Thus, space must be regarded as no more than a mere potentiality of being, which is nothing else than the total virtuality of the point conceived in its passive aspect, the locus or container of all manifestation of its activity, a container which has no existence except through the realization of its possible content.<sup>57</sup>

Guénon continues describing the generative principle of space as the Principial Point:

...which it can develop only by first duplicating itself, placing itself so to speak opposite to itself, and then multiplying (or better sub-multiplying) itself indefinitely, so that manifested space in its entirety proceeds from differentiation of the point, or to speak more exactly, from the point in so far as it differentiates itself. This differentiation however is real only from the viewpoint of spatial manifestation: it is illusory in respect to the point itself, which does not thereby cease to be in itself that which it was, and whose essential unity can in no way be affected thereby.<sup>58</sup>

This is pure Euclidian geometry, but treated as metaphysical principles and Guénon goes further when he states that the sum total of these spatial extensions constitutes the domain of space as a 'container'.<sup>59</sup> The Principial point is thus a unique principle without physical dimension and hence it does not belong to the order of individual existence. It does not individualise itself in any way except when it is situated in space and even then it is only one of its possible unlimited expressions. So then strictly speaking it is these singular expressions or one could say modalities, which are individualised and not the Principial Point.<sup>60</sup> In this way, all of the expressions or modalities of the point reflect individual developments of the Principial Point. The Principial Point, which after all is itself but a reflection of Divine Presence, is all space. In this fashion space is but a deployment of Divine Presence and an expansion of Being in a mode of spatial simultaneity. This

<sup>55</sup> *Qur'an*, L.16.

<sup>56</sup> Sermons, 'The Nearness of the Kingdom', in *Meister Eckhart*. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/eckhart/sermons.v.html>. Also in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 845.

<sup>57</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 77-78.

<sup>58</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 77-78.

<sup>59</sup> Schuon also uses the idea of space and time being like containers to discuss the nature of the corporeal domain. This follows the long established Peripatetic School in the West. The summation of spatial extended possibilities is not the only content of space however for this would be to say that space is merely the quantity of extension. Space is much more than merely quantity of extension. The same holds for the temporal domain.

<sup>60</sup> Paraphrasing Guénon, *Symbolism of the Cross*, 77-78.

expansion of space could be said to realise that other Divine Quality, Omnipresence, for whilst the Principial Point corresponds to the Divine Presence, its principial embodiment within all of spatial extension also reflects the Divine Omnipresence. Thus the spatial expanse contains in its own way antinomic qualities of both the Infinity and Immanence of Being.

## The Point & the Instant as Inverted Images of Being

According to Guénon, the Principial Point and the principial instant are not subjected to the limitations of the space and time, that is, the spatiotemporal domain. The spatiotemporal conditions are contained as a virtuality within them in a virtual form, that is, they have not revealed their full potential. The spatiotemporal domain remains concealed in the latent potential of the possible. In ontological terms, the effect remains dormant and still concealed within the principial cause, like a seed.

The differentiation of the point which leads to extension and the continuation of the instant which gives rise to duration are an opposition to themselves. While this opposition is real from a spatial and temporal manifestation point of view, it is illusory in respect to the Principial Point and principial instant, which continue to be themselves and whose essential unity cannot be affected. If the spatial manifestation disappears, all points in space would be re-absorbed back into the Principial Point since there would be no distance between them. Likewise, all temporal duration would be re-absorbed back into the instant since there would be no duration in which to continue the instant.<sup>61</sup>

In no way contradicting the above, it is possible to introduce the physically manifest point and the physically manifest instant since they are reflections of their principles in the spatiotemporal world. The physically manifest point is one that is located in space and time and has a measurable dimension, albeit small and in practical terms difficult to measure. This point is only a relative point and in context represents the Principial Point. Likewise, the physical instant is indeterminably short in practical terms. Where the Principial Point and instant are unique and dimensionless, the physically manifest point and instant are multiple, individual and subject to measurement. In this study, the manifest point is called the 'geometric point', and though minute, it is as physically present as say a prick from a compass needle or a dot from a sharp pencil. The geometric point is indefinite in number yet reflects in its multiplicity its original principle. The same applies to the temporal instant. The physical point and the temporal instant take on the conditions of the spatiotemporal domain and are reflections in those domains. Thus they express the qualities of Omnipresence and Eternity and can even be seen as conditioned representations of Being itself (Diagram 1.3).

---

<sup>61</sup> Also paraphrasing Guénon, *Symbolism of the Cross*, 77.

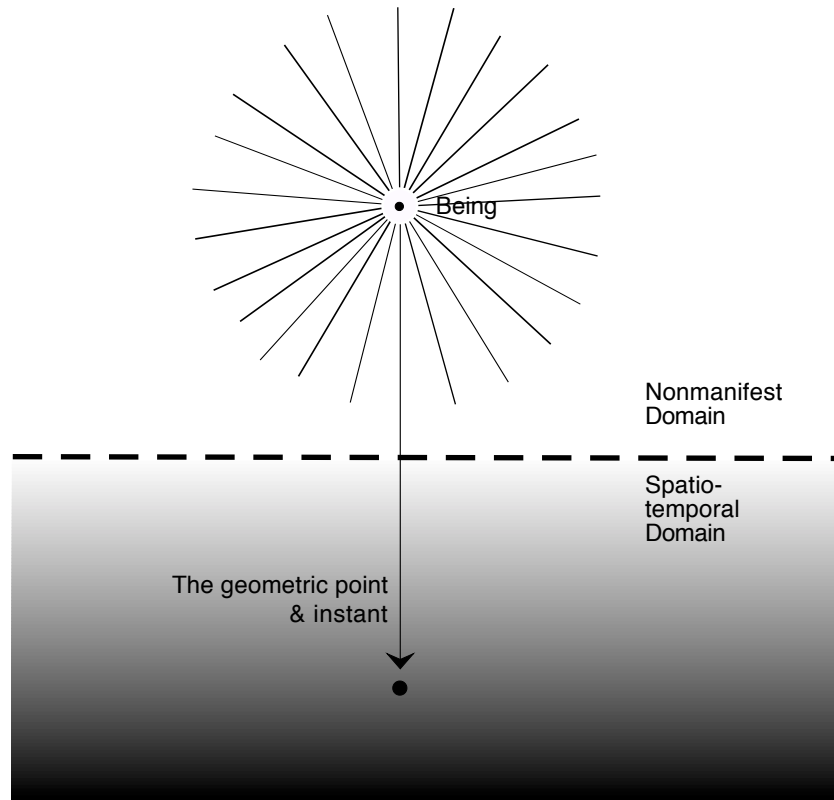


Diagram 1.3 The geometric point and instant as reflections of Being within the spatiotemporal domain.

The previous sentence holds one of the great metaphysical paradoxes, in the fact that Divine Qualities conjure notions related directly to quantity. How can the image of the great give rise to the minute? There appears to be a quantitative inversion at play. However, this paradox is illusory. To be accurate, quantity applies in the spatiotemporal domain; it cannot be applied directly to the non-manifest realm or to any domain other than the corporeal world.<sup>62</sup> Being is great in size and has existed for endless eons of time but is at the same time, equally minute and continually reborn, for Being is above any concept of extent or duration. Size and age are limitations and hence not applicable to Being. Nor are Eternity and Infinite Omnipresence subject to quantitative examination. The illusion of paradox lies in the principle being confused with its reflection. The question of quantitative inversion is reducible to the misapplication of quantity to domains which are not subject to such limitations. This topic is beautifully summarised in Porphyry's *Launching-Points to the Realm of the Mind*, an exquisite companion to the work of his master Plotinus, and on the subject 'The Incorporeal Has No Extension', he writes, 'That which really exists has neither great nor small. Greatness and smallness are attributes of corporeal mass..... Real existence is infinite

<sup>62</sup> Guénon does not define exactly the term 'corporeal' or 'corporeal state' specifically in *Symbolism of the Cross* even though it is used ubiquitously throughout the book as well as many other works. He does in *Man and His Becoming*, Chapter II. It can be defined as the individual state in which individual bodies are subject to the conditions of space and time. That is it is the state that contains both the individual bodies that are within the containers of space and time as well as the actual bodies themselves that possess mass, place and other characteristics of the measurable physical world. Measurable quantity is the hallmark of the corporeal world. Guénon's *The Reign of Quantity and the Sign of the Times* expands the meaning of quantity and its implications.

and incomprehensible for the world because, among other attributes it possesses that of having no extension'.<sup>63</sup>

There is, however, a more subtle aspect to this inverted symbolism which relates to an apparent inversion of quality. The inversion of quality can be seen in the way the quality of Omnipresence, which is the infinite outward presence, becomes when reflected in space, a point of contracted presence, unlimited in its inwardness. As with Eternity, that quality of Being which is unending time becomes the instant in the temporal domain, the unique, instantaneous flash, the once and the individual now. If the instant and the point as reflected within the spatiotemporal world are taken as symbols for qualities of Being, then there is an apparent inversion of qualitative attribution; the reflection becomes the antinomy of its principle. This is an inverted symbolism. This antinomic reflection is not limited to the point and the instant; other qualities are inverted in a similar way. The oneness of Being is reflected inversely in the unity of the multiplicity of individual beings, the autonomy of Being is reflected inversely in the interdependence of manifestation, and the immutability of Being is reflected inversely in the transience of existence.<sup>64</sup>

This inversion of the Quality in its reflection relates to a fundamental inversion of Being and becoming and between Pure Possibility and manifest possibility. During the process of generation, Being literally turns itself 'inside out', what was unlimited becomes limited, what was internalised becomes externalised, what was unknown becomes known. In Islam it is said, 'I was a hidden treasure; I wished to be known; therefore I created the world'.<sup>65</sup> However, what was to be created could not be the same as Being. 'Since there cannot be two Gods', says Thomas Traherne, 'God cannot make a God..... the greatest thing that He can make is His Image'.<sup>66</sup> Manifestation is therefore created as an image of Being. According to Ibn 'Arabi, the world is 'His mirror in which He contemplates His Names. Now these Names are not other than Himself, in such a way that the analogy of the relationship is an inversion'.<sup>67</sup> Existence then is created as an image and like the image in a mirror the image of Being is virtual and reversed. In Being, Infinity is essentially outward in its expansiveness and in the point it is reversed and inward in its 'contractedness'.

However, other Qualities are not inverted. For example, the quality or uniqueness of Being remains in the non-dimensional nature of the Principial Point. The physical point tends towards the realisation of non-dimensionality that is its principle, *mutatis mutandis* for the instant. This has obvious significance for architecture as an art situated in space and time. Further, it means that the quality of Infinite Omnipresence can find direct representation by the smallest yet most abstract means, the physical point and the instant. A simple geometric point (either physical or theoretical) in, say, the projected intersection of two axes is a valid and appropriate spatial symbol for Being. Similarly, the temporal instant as the contracted internalised Eternity can be located in the temporal domain and physically expressed by a simple marking of time, by a simple drum beat, the ring of a bell, the utterance of a single word or syllable or even within the conscious space of two breaths. Thus we have the principles of space and time, the point and the instant, which carry with them the image of Being in corporeal existence.

<sup>63</sup> Porphyry, *Launching-Points to the Realm of the Mind*, trans. Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie (Grand Rapids: Phanes Press, 1988), 37.

<sup>64</sup> For an expanded treatment of this concept of antinomic reflection of Qualities, refer to L. P. Kollar, *Form* (Sydney: Privately published by L. Peter Kollar, 1980).

<sup>65</sup> The Prophet Muhammad (*hadith qudsi*), Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 44.

<sup>66</sup> Thomas Traherne, *Centuries of Meditations*, ed. Bertram Dobell (New York: Cosima Classics 2007), The Third Century (61), 196.

<sup>67</sup> Burckhardt quoting Ibn 'Arabi, *Fusus al-Hikâm*, from the 'Book of Seth'. *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, trans. D. M. Matheson (Wellingborough: Thorsons Publishers, 1977), 102.



## The *Bindu* - Seed Point of Creation

The point finds metaphysical exposition in the Hindu tradition; it is referred to as the *bindu* or 'seed point' and is seen as more than a symbol; the *bindu* refers to an actual state of Being.<sup>68</sup> This amounts to saying that the *bindu* point is located actually within the unconditioned realm, it is the state of the repose of Being prior to creation. The *bindu* point as a virtual point cannot be considered as a physical point, but rather a mode of Being in a state of pure potentiality, as another Divine Quality of Being in its dormant readiness, like a seed awaiting germination. The analogy of the seed means the *bindu* point is the seed point from which all existence springs, the creative matrix of the Universe, the 'world seed' (*visva-bija*) and the point of origin and return of cosmological processes. The *bindu* functions symbolically in both the Universal and the individual domains in existence as a source of all life, and in the timeless sphere of Pure Being. It is the connection between the primordial state of undifferentiated being and manifestation. In its role as the Repose of Being, it is the *Mahabindu*, the supreme point of all creation. It is the first thing to appear on the surface of the void, the germinal state of the world before any material power is differentiated, a realm of infinite possibility contained in a point of unity<sup>69</sup> The *bindu* point is the limit between the manifest and the unmanifest, which is beyond physical perception.<sup>70</sup>

The *bindu* point as a seed 'generates' the Hindu temple. In an elaborate ritual, the rite of *Garbhadhana*, the act of 'seeding the temple' is performed to stabilise and fertilise the ground in readiness for the temple. The central cell of a Hindu temple is called the *Garbhagriha*. *Garbha* means germ as well as womb, and seeding is the symbolic placing of a receptacle containing the germinal *bindu* in the substantial fecundity of the womb/chamber or in the form of a symbolic geometric pattern known as a *yantra* incorporating a central *bindu* point.<sup>71</sup> The ritual is performed to the earth, the seed (*bija*) fertilizes the substance (*prakriti*) of the germ. Earth is here the *bhumi*, the ground of being and becoming. The seed of the temple is laid symbolically within her centre. Thus the seed as the *bindu* point of generation fertilizes the ground and impregnates the temple womb.<sup>72</sup> As a symbol of the creative act of the generation of the Hindu temple, the *bindu* participates at three different levels. In its highest aspect, it is beyond the manifest (*para*), it is the seed of the Supreme Principle. In its manifest (*apara*) aspect in the subtle world it is *nada*, the principial vibration and from *nada* the world is made. In its gross mode, the *bindu* is *bija*, the seed of everything, and the temple becomes the fertilised substance of the world. The ritual of the *garbhadhana* uses the subtle and gross aspects of the *bindu*. In its metaphysical application, the *bindu* is the very pinnacle of the temple roof, the point at the top of the finial (*stupika*) of the crowning *âmalaka*. This topmost limit to the temple symbolises the role the *bindu* plays as the limit between the manifest and the unmanifest (Image 1.1).<sup>73</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Khanna, Madhu, *Yantra: The Tantric Symbol Of Cosmic Unity* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1979), 31. Also Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), 128 and Coomaraswamy, 'Kha and other words denoting "Zero" in Connection with the Indian Metaphysics of Space' in *Coomaraswamy, Vol. 2: Selected Papers; Metaphysics*, ed. Roger Lipsey, Bollinger Series 89, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 220-230.

<sup>69</sup> Madhu Khanna, *Yantra*, 71.

<sup>70</sup> Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 128.

<sup>71</sup> Madhu Khanna, *Yantra*, 143-148.

<sup>72</sup> Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 127, 137.

<sup>73</sup> Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 179.



Image 1.1 *Parsvanatha Temple*, eastern group of Temples, Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh, India. The topmost finial is the termination to the temple and symbolises the role the *bindu* plays as the limit between the manifest and the unmanifest domains.

In a related way, the Hebrew *Qabalah* speaks of the 'Holy Palace' or the 'Inward Palace' which is none other than the Divine Name *Jehovah*. The name is assimilable to the Principial Point located at the centre of space and the origin of the six directions. The three letters of the Divine Name *Jehovah*, by their sextuple permutations in the six directions indicate the immanence of God in the world, that is, the word of God (Logos) in manifestation. The primordial point develops the word of God in both space and time; the utterances of God are at the very centre of the world. The utterances of God can be seen as emanations of Divine Power radiating out into the void of pure

virtuality, the *fiat lux* of Divine Being. The *Sepher Ietsirah* (*Sēpher Yeṣîrâh*) describes how the primordial point is developed in terms of the 'word' and 'the light' (*Ha'Or*) bursting forth from the mystery of the ether (*Axir*). The hidden point was made manifest in the letter *iod*.<sup>74</sup>

The letter *iod*, or *yod*, is the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet and, according to the Kabbalah, all the other letters of the alphabet derive from it. It is a *Tzimtzum* which symbolises the potential for manifestation of the world.<sup>75</sup> It also represents that incomprehensible primordial point which is the unmanifest One, it forms from itself three points which represent beginning, the middle and the end and these three points put together constitute the letter *iod* and represent Being. Thus *iod* is the One manifested or more exactly God making Himself the 'Centre of the World' by his Word.<sup>76</sup> Similarly within certain dimensions of Islam it is said 'Everything is enveloped in the Unity of Knowledge, symbolised by the point'.<sup>77</sup> This in a way relates to the doctrine that the *Holy Qur'an* is contained in the *Fatihah*, the opening chapter, which itself is contained in the *Bismillah* ('In the Name of God' as the opening words of the *Holy Qur'an*) which is contained in the letter *ba* (ب) which is finally contained in the diacritical point.<sup>78</sup> Thus the Islamic revelation could be said to be manifest through the point.

## The Idea of the Centre

The principle of the centre embodies all that was said about the point plus the notion of the centre of the domain that is the ground of its centredness. The centre is related to its domain in the same way that Being is related to its generated existence. The centre synthesises all other points within the domain; it is that point that embodies all possibility, the supra-mean point that embraces all other developments. In this regard, it is more than the notion of the point, for the centre embraces the reflection of Being in a spatial context and infers spatial development. The centre expresses the principle of order in a context. The Principial Point was explained as the principle from which space is generated through extension. That point then becomes in relation to that generated space the centre of space, the origin of all spatial extension. There is really no difference, therefore, between the Principial Point and the notion of the centre except that the notion of the centre relates the point to its entire context as 'the centre of' space.

The centre is an absolute requirement for any notion of sacred and qualitative space (and time). The centre is the most direct reflection of Being in a particular context and for this reason the notion of 'centeredness' is applicable to all manifest domains. Every domain then has a centre that acts as a reflection of Being within its particular limitations; further, these domains do not have to be limited to the corporeal domains of space and time. The idea of the centre becomes a symbol for non-spatial domains, so it is as possible to speak of the centre of a sacred temple as it is to speak of the central teaching of the religious doctrine that brought it about. When the idea of 'centre' is mentioned from now onward, this transcendental dimension will be brought to bear within the given context, whatever it may be (Diagram 1.4).

<sup>74</sup> Guénon, *Symbolism of the Cross*, 18.

<sup>75</sup> In this regard the Hebrew *Lurianic* notion of the *Tzimtzum*, that contracted, constricted and condensed point of potentiality is totally assimilable metaphysically to the *Bindu* point.

<sup>76</sup> Guénon, *Symbolism of the Cross*, 18.

<sup>77</sup> Shaikh Ahmad al 'Alawî as quoted in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 778.

<sup>78</sup> Guénon, *Symbolism of the Cross*, 18.

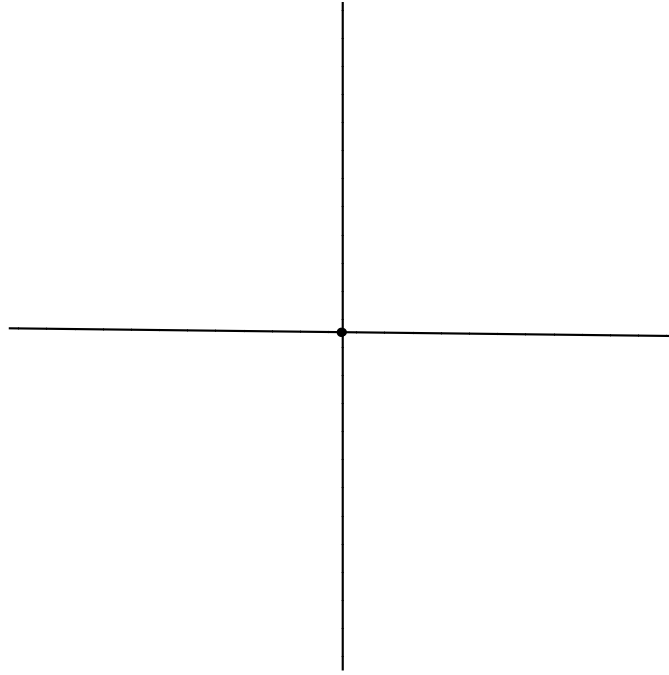


Diagram 1.4 The centre as a reflection of Being within its field.

The word 'centre' derives from the Latin *centrum*, the stationary point of a compass. *Centrum* in turn derives from the Greek *kentron*, meaning 'needle' from *kentein*, 'to prick'. All this alludes to the compass of the geometer and the initial point of origin of the circle. This recalls the many medieval images of God as the Master Geometrician who measures out existence by use of the compass (Image 2.3). God is at once the central pivot point and the manipulator of the compass. Jīlī, the *Sufi* mystic poet, writes in passionate intoxication about the Centre and the compass:

O centre of the compass! O inmost ground of the truth!  
 O pivot of necessity and contingency!  
 O eye of the entire circle of existence! O point of the Koran and the *Furqân!*  
 O perfect one, and perfecter of the most perfect, who have been beautified by the majesty of God  
 the Merciful!  
 Thou art the Pole (*Qutb*) of the most wondrous things. The sphere of perfection in its solitude turns  
 on thee.  
 Thou art transcendent; nay thou art immanent; nay, thine is all that is known and unknown,  
 everlasting and perishable.  
 Thine in reality is Being and not-being; nadir and zenith are they two garments.  
 Thou art both the light and its opposite; nay, but thou art only darkness to a gnostic that is  
 dazed.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Jīlī, from the work *Insānu 'l-kāmil*, (The Perfect Man) as quoted in Reynold A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, 86-87. Also in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 832.

# CHAPTER 2:

## BEING & MANIFESTATION

### The Relationship of Being & Existence

In the first chapter of *Symbolism of the Cross*, Guénon draws a distinction between Being and becoming or between Being and the multiple states of being. This view has two distinct vectors; one is related to cause and essence, which is the view of Being as the principle of existence (*esto*), and the other is related to effect, the existent (*ens*), which is the product and reflection of being in its multiplicity. One of the most fundamental representations of these complementary vectors is the vertical and horizontal directions. The vertical stands for the cause and the horizontal for the role of passive effect or existence (Diagram 2.1). Only Being is real and independent of any cause. However, the duality of polarisation is not irreconcilable; rather the existent is inseparable from Being, for Being is present at the very point of intersection and as such is the resolution of any dualistic opposition.<sup>1</sup>

Being is at once Transcendent and Immanent. It is beyond manifestation and yet is at the very heart of everything, including the human being. The sacred perspective, the language of which is the *Scientia Sacra*, can be expounded in ways that relate to both of these aspects. On the one hand, the sacred perspective sees Being as transcendent and beyond existence, the primary cause or godhead from which all else flows. On the other hand, it is within its creation, it is its creation. The sacred perspective maintains a balance between the absolute notion of Being and the relative notion of Being. The sacred viewpoint always implies that there is a sustained dependance of existence upon Being, that is, between Being in the absolute sense and its creation at the point of intersection.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 6-13.

<sup>2</sup> Refer also to Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, passim.

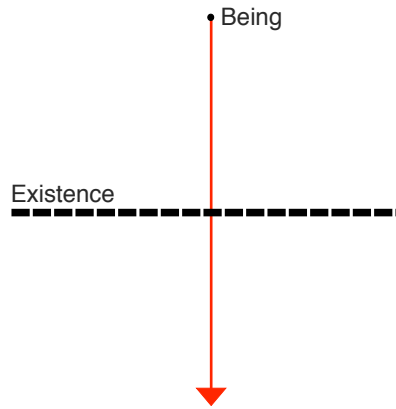


Diagram 2.1 The fundamental cross of the intersection of Being and existence.

A sacred view of the world sees all existence as a multiplicity separated from Being yet tied back to divine unity through the quality of immanence at the point of the intersection. This amounts to seeing the cause within the effect and the effect within cause, God within and God without. Being becomes interwoven with existence in a way that is immediate and immanent. From the sacred viewpoint, all things contain this divine component. This applies not only to nature but also to art, mathematics, science, dance, theatre and in fact all human activity. A traditional or sacred view sees the divine in all mankind's activities, in the fabric of the world. Thus all knowledge becomes relative to divine truth, all works become relative to the divine works and all science and cosmology become relative to the divine reality. Existence viewed from the sacred perspective takes on a semi-transparent quality in which the immediate horizontal domain gives way to the transcendent vertical. Existence in this sense presents as a series of semi-opaque veils that screen Divine Reality. The Divine veils itself by the existential categories of space, time, number and matter. However, at the same time, every veil also makes visible an aspect of the Light 'as a light cloud makes the Sun visible' according to an Islamic comparison (Image 2.1).<sup>3</sup> The veils are also the 'veils of darkness' and are rooted in the human condition.<sup>4</sup> The mundane view is limited to these veils, it is a horizontal view of existence without any capacity for penetration toward the vertical weave of the world fabric. It is a view which is restricted to the opaque and a view which does not conceive of possibilities beyond.

## A Metaphysical Model for the Creation of Existence

Traditional metaphysics endeavours to explain the process of creation of manifest existence from the pre-existent Principle of Being. This is the importance and relevance of the various traditional teachings around cosmology and creation which take these principles and apply them to the physical domain or cosmos. The word 'cosmos' is derived from Greek *kosmos* meaning 'order of harmony'. This chapter develops a conceptual model for the manifestation processes of Being into existence based on the metaphysical structures in *Symbolism of the Cross*. This model is not

<sup>3</sup> See Schuon, 'The Mystery of the Veil' in the title *Esotericism as a Principle and as Way*, trans. William Stoddart (Bloomington: Perennial Books, 1981). [http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/The\\_Mystery\\_of\\_the\\_Veil-by\\_Frithjof\\_Schuon.aspx](http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/The_Mystery_of_the_Veil-by_Frithjof_Schuon.aspx).

<sup>4</sup> Or to use the term so often used by Schuon, 'the human margin'.



intended to apply to all traditions but to be an intellectual construct that will develop in the following chapters in parallel with Guénon's metaphysical writings. It could be called a metaphysical model, such as is supported in many traditions and in universal geometric symbolism. However, creation remains ultimately one of the great mysteries.

It was by the Divine Exhortation that Being willed existence into being; 'He saith unto it: Be! and it is',<sup>5</sup> and 'His thought encompassed all the worlds at once... All were created in a single instant'.<sup>6</sup> This bringing forth of the Will of Being is a glorific exhortation and projection of Divine Power that can be likened to a divine outpouring of rays of creation. The sun forms the pre-eminent symbol in this respect for the principle of radiation, its rays the projection outward from the source of almost unlimited power into the darkness of space. The rays are not visible in the glaring light of the full sun, but at dusk and dawn, when the light intensity is veiled by clouds, trees and mist, they become visible as radiating crepuscular rays from the same centre. It is the *fiat lux* of the Old Testament<sup>7</sup> in which each ray is a projection of indefinite possibility in Being. Rumi says 'Dost not thou know that the light of the Sun is the reflection of the Sun beyond the veil'.<sup>8</sup> For 'The Sun ... is an image of the Maker who is above the heavens'.<sup>9</sup> Glory is the name given to that Quality that infuses the Divine Plenum. It expresses this power in the form of radiation. It is the effulgent radiation of Being projected or externalized (Image 2.1 and Diagram 2.2).



Image 2.1 Crepuscular light rays of the Sun made visible by fog and trees.

<sup>5</sup> *Holy Qur'an*, trans. Mohammed Pickthall (Hyderabad-Deccan: Government Central Press, 1938), 3:47 also, 2:117 & 40:68.

<sup>6</sup> *Zohar, Shemoth 20a*, as quoted in Leo Schaya, *Universal Aspects of the Kabbalah & Judaism*, (Bloomington: World Wisdom Books, 2014), 90.

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 1:3.

<sup>8</sup> As quoted in Coomaraswamy, 'A Figure of Speech, or a Figure of Thought?', *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Spring, 1972). [http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/A\\_Figure\\_of\\_Speech\\_or\\_a\\_Figure\\_of\\_Thought\\_Part\\_2-by\\_Ananda\\_Coomaraswamy.aspx](http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/A_Figure_of_Speech_or_a_Figure_of_Thought_Part_2-by_Ananda_Coomaraswamy.aspx)

<sup>9</sup> Hermes as quoted in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 318.

The power of the radiation of light from a luminous body or simply light itself is one of the most primordial of all symbols. The luminous and illumination cannot be separated because light without a source of luminosity is impossible. The *fiat lux* of Genesis is a Divine Pronouncement and Exhortation of the Divine that was not only an outpouring of the command and breath but also that of simultaneous light. The exhortation of 'Let there be light' was instantaneous 'and there was light'.<sup>10</sup> Even the *fiat lux* had a source, that of the Divine Word. In modern science the 'nature of light' is the most immaterial of all physical entities but each ray/particle of light has an origin and propagates as a ray or radius from a point source. Its nature is like that of the electron at once material but also more like a pure energetic waveform. The fact that light is only partly explainable in physical terms as photons and has its other nature grounded in the purely subtle mathematics as a 'waveform', displays this threshold status of light as one of the preeminent symbols.<sup>11</sup> Light stands at the very 'boundary of materiality'.<sup>12</sup> For these reasons and more, light has a special place in the realm of natural symbols.

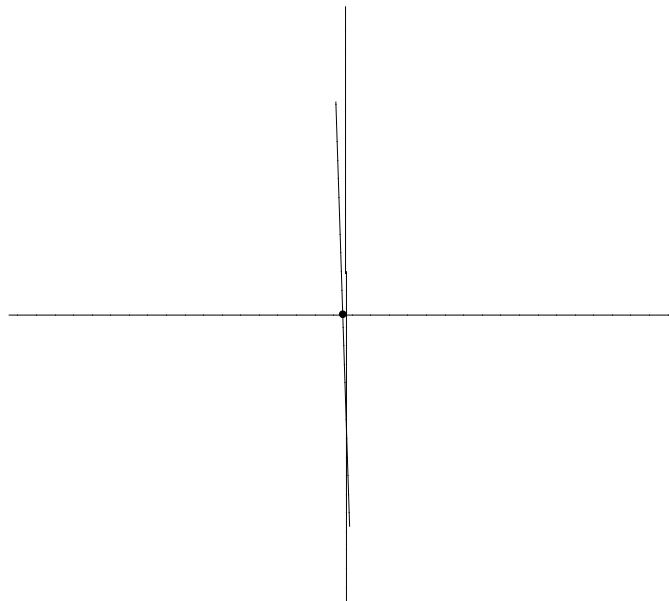


Diagram 2.2 The Radiation of Being.

It should not be inferred from this diagram that the radiation of the Divine Essence, or Divine Qualities, occurs in actual space. What the diagram seeks to represent is the quality of radiation in principial form, and each ray or spoke is the individualisation of a particular divine quality. Space is

<sup>10</sup> Genesis, 1:3.

<sup>11</sup> To the point that light in modern quantum physics has almost no physical reality, as explored by Arthur Zajonc, *Catching the Light*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 253-343. This supports the unknowable and Divine nature of light if it is taken as symbolism.

<sup>12</sup> Quote from the Lutheran theologian, Julius Hamberger as quoted by Smith in, *The Wisdom of Ancient Cosmology: Contemporary Science in the Light of Tradition* (Oakton: The Foundation for Traditional Studies, 2004), 100.

a mode of individualisation and an analogy can be drawn between the expansive radiation of Being and radiation in space from a central point. If such an analogy is allowed, then several consequences flow from this correspondence. First, what is the plenal matrix for Divine Radiation which allows individualisation of Being? In space, individualisation is afforded by an object's unique position (or its vectorial prolongation) in that space. In the divine realm, another mode must afford Being the possibility of multiple individual expressions. This mode could be termed 'Divine Space', given the ambiguity and conditions that must apply to such a construct. Second, if the construct of divine space is allowed, then this must be equivalent to Being, because by definition nothing can exist outside of Being. Divine space could be defined elliptically as the 'Space of Being', which is exactly what the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria (Philo Judaeus), means when he writes, '... He is Himself the space which holds Him; ... and naught encloses Him but Himself. ... the Deity, being contained by nothing is of necessity Itself, Its own place'.<sup>13</sup> The notion of 'place' here is the same as 'Divine Space', so it may be permissible to talk of 'Divine Place' and this would be the centre or seat of the Radiation. This introduces the *Talmudic* concept of God as place. The *Zohar* speaks of God in terms that are the same as space and place, because 'He is the space of Himself'.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, when the Manicheans tauntingly asked St. Augustine where God was before the heavens and earth existed, he replied, 'In Himself' (*in seipo*).<sup>15</sup>

The Qualities of Being and the process of creation are reflected within manifestation and it is entirely allowable and in fact appropriate to use these reflections to throw light on their principal causes.<sup>16</sup> For this reason alone, the use of solar symbolism is not only unavoidable, but also exactly suited, for there is a total covalence between the principle (that is Being) and the reflection (such as the Sun). This being the case, not only is there a relationship of principle between Being and the image of the Sun but also with respect to the qualities of both. The Radiance of Being is the principle of the radiance of the Sun; the illumination of the Universal Plenum by the Glory of Being is the principle from which the illumination of surrounding space by the Sun finds its exemplar.<sup>17</sup> The only difference being that the qualities when applied to the Sun, are applied in a limited way, and when applied to the principial domain, they are taken in an exemplary and universal way. All this is leading up to what will soon be treated as symbolism but at this point, it could be said that there is no essential difference between the Qualities of Being as described and their subsequent reflections except for the limitations imposed upon them from within the domain in which they are expressed. Thus Divine Radiation is reflected everywhere within manifestation and is seen in everything from the effects of emission of electromagnetic radiation from sub-atomic particles to the distribution of flower petals, each conforming to the principle of Radiation in its own way and in an architectural mode it could be the radiating light entering and illuminating a darkened sacred space (Image 2.2).

Radiation may assume that there is a plenum in which there is potential for expanse and this is an expression of the the Infinite plenum in which all expanse and filled space is made possible.

<sup>13</sup> From *De Somniis*, V 1.62-64, in *Philo* in twelve volumes, trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929). As discussed by Grant, *Much Ado About Nothing-Theories of Space From the Middle Ages to the Scientific Revolution* (Bloomington: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 113.

<sup>14</sup> Jammer, *Concepts of Space*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), 30. Jammer also makes the point that this correspondence in the *Kabbalistic* tradition is verified by the numerical equivalent of the name of God in *gematria* being equal to that of the word 'place'.

<sup>15</sup> As quoted by Grant, *Much Ado About Nothing*, 113-114 from the *City of God*. And St. Augustine continued to the effect '... contemplating the fate for people that ask such questions'.

<sup>16</sup> The only other way at least in Western dualistic formulations is by negation, that is by saying what the Principle of Being (God) 'is not'. This is the Christian Apophatic theology from Ancient Greek *apophēmī*, meaning 'to deny', also known as negative theology, *via negativa* or *via negationis* as opposed to cataphatic theology.

<sup>17</sup> The word 'ray' is derived from the Middle English, *ray* and from Old French *rai*, from the Latin *radius* meaning a spoke as in a wheel spoke or a 'light spoke' or staff.

The plenal expanse in a way is the complementary opposite of the Principle of Being's Radiation.<sup>18</sup> This plenum for potential expansion of Being is one of the possibilities contained in Being and is essential for the expanse of the Radiation. Plotinus explains in his paradoxical manner: 'It is precisely because there is nothing within the One that all things are from it'.<sup>19</sup> The relationship between the plenum potential and Being is not unlike the relationship between space and corporeal manifestation in that space plays the role of the container of corporeal existence. Likewise, it could be said that the Divine Plenum is the container of Being and is the place of God Himself. In this regard, a distinction needs to be made with the notion of a complete void which strictly speaking is not possible and remains an aspect of Non-Being.<sup>20</sup>



Image 2.2 Crepuscular light rays beaming through the old stained glass window of St. Denis Cathedral and lighting the interior, Paris, France.

<sup>18</sup> Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, 51.

<sup>19</sup> *The Enneads*, V.ii.1.

<sup>20</sup> Up until this point the notion of 'Non-Being' and the Unmanifest has not arisen. It is not essential for most of this study to go into the metaphysical significance of Being as opposed to Non-Being. Non-Being is treated by Guénon in *The Multiple States of Being* (Chapter 3) and certain definitions flow through to the *Symbolism of the Cross*. Being can be defined as the Principle of Manifestation or as containing all the possibilities of manifestation. No-Being is all other non-manifest possibilities and includes the notion of the Void.

## The Essence & Substance of Being

The conception of the Radiation of Being is made more comprehensible in traditional doctrine by being considered as the Radiation of the 'Essence of Being' amid the 'Substance of Being'.<sup>21</sup> The universal duality of Essence and Substance is to be found in various modes within the cosmological doctrines of many traditional teachings. They constitute the complementary but opposite principles from which manifestation, both individual and non-individual, are derived. An explanation of these two poles of creation is essential for much of which is to follow.

In terms of traditional ontology, it is proper to speak of the Essence of Being because Essence truly belongs to Being; it is its active identity. The Essential principle is the creative generating principle which determines manifestation. It is the active or causative principle, in application towards the Substantial Principle. Essence is derived from the Medieval Latin *essentia* and from the Latin meaning the 'intrinsic character' (of a something) and from *esse* meaning 'to be'. Essence is the totality of the Qualities of Being, it is the Quiddity of Being.<sup>22</sup> Essence is *Ousia* in Ancient Greek. The relationship of Essence to Being is inseparable. In the case of Being's Essence, it is all the Qualitative possibilities contained within Being that constitutes its Quiddity. In the act of becoming it is the individual being's essence which is presented, it is the essence that is made 'existent'. The Essential pole corresponds to the 'Pure Act' of the scholastics.<sup>23</sup> In the words of the Old Testament it is equivalent to the 'Spirit which moves over the waters' in Genesis.<sup>24</sup> Essence as the summation of all Qualities of Being is all that can be known about Being and thus is supreme knowledge. In the light of this knowledge, all things are in perfect simultaneity with Being, for in principle nothing has existence of its own and it is only within the sphere of the manifested that the relationships of the possibilities contained within Essence are transposed into individuality.<sup>25</sup> This is what John Smith the Platonist intends when he says, 'Indeed God hath copied out Himself in all created being, having no other pattern to frame any thing but by His own essence'.<sup>26</sup>

Essence in the Hindu tradition could be aligned to *Purusha*,<sup>27</sup> which represented as light (*ijotis*), is the source of all other manifest light. *Purusha* is Eternal and Omnipresent, and is the

<sup>21</sup> Guénon, *Man and His Becoming*, 45. Guénon discusses the principles of Essence and Substance in many works including *Symbolism of the Cross*:

'They therefore respectively correspond to what, in the Universal Order, are "essence" and "substance" (*Purusha* and *Prakriti* in the Hindu doctrine), or again Being in itself and its possibility, and for any mode of manifestation they depict the more or less particular expression of these two principles regarded as complements, active and passive in their mutual relationship.' *Symbolism of the Cross*, 94.

<sup>22</sup> Quiddity being derived from the Latin *quid* meaning, 'what is' (*quidditas*), quiddity is the 'whatness' of being.

<sup>23</sup> Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, 64. Act being from the Latin *actus*, meaning 'a doing' or *agere*, meaning 'to do'. It is that power from which activity flows, the power of bringing about and the power to present being or the power of the Presentation of Being.

<sup>24</sup> Genesis, 1:2.

<sup>25</sup> Guénon, *Man and His Becoming*, 45.

<sup>26</sup> *The Excellency & Nobleness of True Religion*, Chapter 1, from *Selected Discourses* by John Smith. Third edition (London: Rivingtons and Cochran, 1821), 409.

<sup>27</sup> However in discussing equivalence across traditions some care should be taken as L P Kollar notes in his important work, *Form*.

'A further reservation may be noted concerning the terminology. Our intention in relating the terms taken respectively from the Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Chinese and, of course, English, was not to imply their exact equivalence which would be impossible in any case, but to indicate their correspondence with due allowance for variation in their indefinite shades of meaning. Again, one should note that when it comes to historical authors in various traditions, some may have employed the terms indicated elastically in context, not having in mind the particular distinctions made ...' 32-33.

I concur totally with this comparative reservation.

principle of all manifestation including time.<sup>28</sup> In the Chinese tradition, Essence is known as *T'ien* (Heaven). In the Chinese classic the *I Ching*, *T'ien* is explained when it is said: 'Great indeed is the generating power of the Creative (Essence); all beings owe their beginning to it. This permeates all heaven'.<sup>29</sup> In the Commentaries of the *I Ching* on 'The Creative' hexagram, the active power of Heaven (Essence) is likened to the active power of rain; 'The clouds pass and the rain does its work; and all individual beings flow into their forms'.

Substance is the complementary opposite principle to Essence and is the passive supportive pole of existence as Pure Potentiality.<sup>30</sup> It is the Divine Plenum of infinite capacity to be filled.<sup>31</sup> It is the root substance from which the Essential pole takes its material existence. In scholastic terminology it is known as *materia prima* or primal matter of the 'Ancient Kind'.<sup>32</sup> It is the superior *hyle* of the Ancient Greeks. Substance as used here should not be confused with matter of contemporary usage. It is unlike scientific matter in that it is completely immaterial. Substance is rather the pure possibility for the actualising of material existence, it is pure potency in which nothing is yet actualised. It is the universal matrix from which all things are derived. It is Plato's *exmageion* and 'by nature it is there as a matrix for everything'.<sup>33</sup> In its fecund role, the Substantial principle is the female or generative principle and related to the Latin *mater* (mother). It is the 'Universal Receptacle' in the Platonic universe.<sup>34</sup> As *materia prima*, Universal Substance is devoid of any quality, it is incorruptible, inviolate and everlasting. It is the universal matter that affords the presentation of Being. Substance, like Essence, is a sub-set of Being and as such is Eternal. Pure *materia prima* is thus eternally with Being in the Unconditioned domain.

Substance as Pure Potency has no comprehensible quality, there remains nothing to comprehend in that there is no qualitative individualisation or differentiation. Substance is the root of 'otherness', for it is through it that all things become individualised, limited and multiple. Substance as Pure Potency, is also Pure Potential, it is the power to enable Being to bring forth things into existence. Potency, potential and power all have the same root *potentia* and *posse* meaning to 'be able'. In the metaphoric language of the Bible, it is the 'waters' over which the Spirit of God moved.<sup>35</sup> In the Hindu doctrine, Substance finds a congruent meaning with *Prakriti*, the root of all manifestation, the universal substantiation of existence. In the Chinese tradition, the *I Ching* calls it the Receptive (*K'un*) as opposed to Heaven (*T'ien*), the power which begets all things, and carries all existence: 'All beings owe their birth to it, because it receives the heavenly with devotion.... . The Receptive in its richness carries all things. ... through it all beings find individual attainment'.<sup>36</sup>

Divine Essence and Universal Substance can be likened to a polarisation of the Oneness of Being. This should not be interpreted as a dualistic theism, for this bifurcation in no way affects the Unity of Being. The bifurcation is only in relation to the production of existence. Essence of Being

<sup>28</sup> *Purusha* also finds a personification as the Universal Being or Archetypal Man. More will be discussed on this aspect of *Purusha* in Chapter 3.

<sup>29</sup> *I Ching or Book of Changes*, trans. by Richard Wilhelm, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967). Book 1, *Ch'ien*, (The Creative), 370.

<sup>30</sup> The word 'substance' for its part is derived via the Latin *substantia* as *sub* + *stare* which means 'to stand' or rather 'to stand under' and support and this is precisely its function, to stand under and be the support of all existence.

<sup>31</sup> The word 'plenum' derives from the Latin, *plénus* meaning 'full space' such as 'a space full of water' The plenum is not the water (or matter) but the potential for 'space to be filled'. In this regard it can be seen as opposite to void which is devoid of any potential.

<sup>32</sup> In the words of Plotinus, *The Enneads*, I. 8.(7).

<sup>33</sup> Plato, *Timaeus*, 50c, Cornford's translation. Also Plato, *Theaetetus*, 191c.

<sup>34</sup> Plato, *Timaeus*, 51a. Casey in his work, *The Fate of Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), gives a description of Substance and its analogous spatial relation to 'place'. Although it is a big leap for the reader to see, space supporting the being of a thing as analogous to Substance giving support to Essence without the background discussion given here.

<sup>35</sup> Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, 63.

<sup>36</sup> *I Ching*, Books 1 & III 2, *K'um*, The Receptive.



'polarises' from Substance of Being in order to reunite and form productive creation. Essence then actualises Substance in an indefinite number of domains producing the multiplicity that is creation. It is the union of *Yin* and *Yang*. This union is not however a bilateral joining because the Essential pole takes the active role in actualising the possibilities within the potency of Substance. Substance which gives support to the qualities of Radiant Being, can potentially lend itself to any individual manifestation whatsoever, because of its indeterminate nature. It is infinitely flexible in its resolution by Essence and can lend support to manifold essential determinations. Equally, Essence depends fully on Substance to bring about actualisation, for without Substance, there is no potentiality for support and no ground for realisation.

The polar principles of Essence and Substance also relate to the radiation of the qualities of being into the void mentioned earlier. In fact, the two perspectives are entirely equivalent. Radiation of Being is also conceivable as Radiation of Divine Essence, while Substance is conceivable as the limiting, determining measure which could be applied to the 'individualising extent' of Radiation. Substance can be graphically symbolised by degrees of concentric rings of potentiality around Being. If Radiation of the Essence of Being can be likened to the radiating solar rays of the sun, Substance can be likened to dark waters of an endless pool that still allow reflection of light. The receptivity of the water is unseen except for the occasional appearance of concentric rippling rings caused by a small disturbance to the surface (Image 2.3).



Image 2.3 The invisible receptivity of water made visible by a small disturbance.

Viewed in another way, Substance could be said to limit the potentially infinite expansion of radiating Essence or to actualise the expansion in the same way that Substance provides a surface for reflection (Diagrams 2.3 & 2.4).

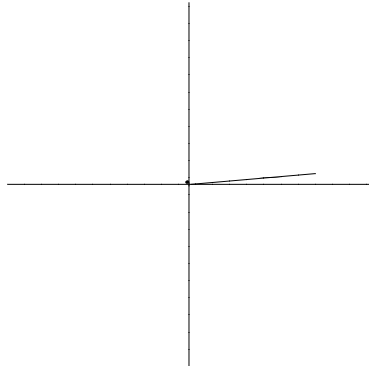


Diagram 2.3 (Left): Radiation of the Essence of Being.

Diagram 2.4 (Right): Radiation of the Substance of Being.

The notion of Radiation carries with it two complementary vectors, one which relates to the Essential Ray emanating from the Centre of Being, the other relating to the amplitude of its extension, which in turn relates to its reflection in Substance.<sup>37</sup> Represented graphically, the point as Being radiates Essential rays which are determined by the substantial amplitude. This actualises another point, which when taken collectively as the locus of all substantially actualised rays, gives rise to a series of indefinite points which constitute the circumference of a circle. Taken more generally, it also constitutes a sphere. The circumference then represents the locus of the actualisation of Substance by Essence. Thus the circumference can be used to represent manifestation in its entirety. The multiple radii of the circle represent Essential Radiation and the measured determination or amplitude of those radii is the Substantial figuration (Diagram 2.5). Without the notion of the concentric limitation of Substance, Essence could find nothing in which it could be reflected and the expansion would continue to Infinity.<sup>38</sup>

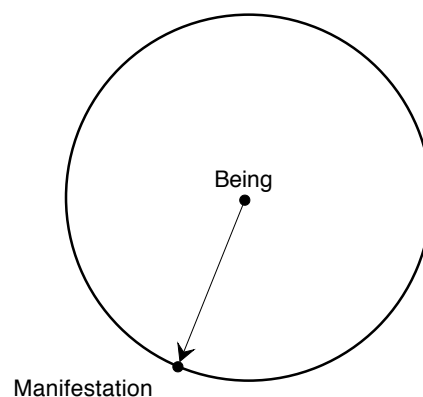


Diagram 2.5 Manifestation as the circumference of a circle.

<sup>37</sup> Guénon refers to these two vectors as 'amplitude' and 'exaltation' which allude to certain esoteric dimensions within Islam, *Symbolism of the Cross*, 10.

<sup>38</sup> The circumference and the model being discussed here finds multiple points of discussion in *Symbolism of the Cross*, 71-74, 86-88, passim. Guénon states however that the polarisation of Essence and Substance from Pure Being is from the point of view of the human being:

'it must be realized that metaphysically they exist only from our viewpoint as manifested beings, just as Being is not polarised and specified into 'essence' and 'substance' in itself, but only in relation to us, and in so far as we envisage it from the standpoint of universal manifestation, of which it is the principle and to which we belong.' *Symbolism of the Cross*, 101.

Substance thus provides a medium, a plenum of potentiality or a metaphoric surface into which Being reflects its own Essence.<sup>39</sup> What has been described above as a generalised case can now be expanded. The rays of Essence are infinite in number and Universal Substance likewise permeates all the fields of manifestation. This is equivalent to saying that there is an infinite number of concentric substantial potentialities represented by the concentric circles, each representing a different unrealised potential in turn being penetrated by an indefinite number of rays of radiating Essence. This will be referred to in this project as the 'concentric model of the generation of existence' (Diagram 2.6).

Manifestation can be generalised as all the indefinite points of actualisation that result from this simultaneous projection of Essence upon all the indefinite degrees of Substantial possibility. A particular domain of possibility represented by one of the circles of Substance does not inhibit Essence; rather, Essence actualises all the possibilities as it expands through the multiple domains of Substantial possibility. Although the ray of Essence passes through an infinite number of circles representing Substantial possibilities, this exhausts neither the Essential ray nor Substance in its totality. Existence then becomes the integral total of actualised points on all circumferences. The single circumference which previously symbolised manifest existence in general now becomes the circular disc (or solid sphere if considered in three dimensions).

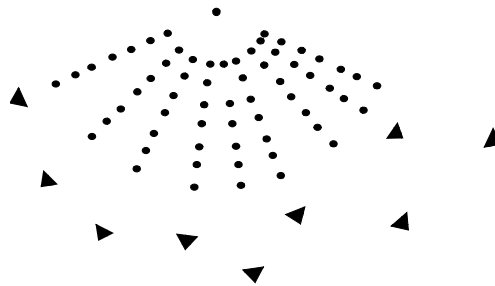


Diagram 2.6 Concentric model for the generation of manifestation.

Alternatively, a more individual union of Essence with Substance means that Essence combines with Substance in limited individual modes. Instead of Essence uniting totally with Substance (and thus unifying the polarity that originally separated them) and reconstituting Being, their union fragments or individualises the union of Essence and Substance. The concentric model can be represented in other ways. Yet another model can see Being dividing into the two poles of Essence and Substance and then partially reuniting to emphasise their complementary actualisation. This is referred to as the 'polar model of the generation of existence', as shown in Diagram 2.7.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Allusion is again being made here to the cosmic mirror which is none other than Universal Substance. In the *Fusus al-Hikâm*, Ibn 'Arabi writes :

"God created the entire world as something amorphous (Substance) but it is a rule in the Divine activity to prepare no 'place' without it receiving a Divine Spirit as is explained by the blowing of the Divine Spirit into Adam; the blowing is by the inexhaustible effusion of essence".

The symbol of divine effusion refers to the words of the Prophet 'God has created the world in darkness (Potentiality) and then 'He poured on it of His light'.' See Burckhardt', *Fusus al-Hikam*, 9 (including the footnotes).

<sup>40</sup> Kollar uses a similar model to this in *Form*, 28-35, but does so in a much more expanded way.

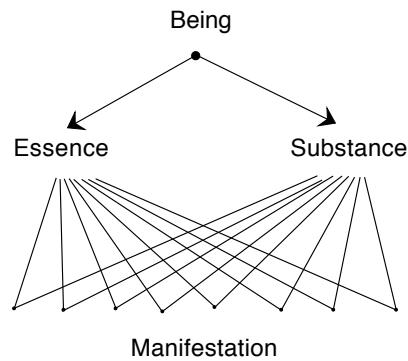


Diagram 2.7 Alternative polar model of the complementary polarities of Being combining for the generation of manifestation.

### *Forma & Materia*

In traditional metaphysics the more limited and individualised aspect of Essence is known as individual 'form'.<sup>41</sup> Form, or *forma* in the peripatetic sense of the word, is the synthesis of the qualities that constitute the individualised essence of a thing or being (as opposed to the totality of Being). Form partakes of Essence but does so in an individualised and conditioned way. Form signifies the intelligible reality of a thing, quite independent of that thing's material existence; it is the individualised and discontinuous aspect of Essence. So when each form unites with Substance, and providing that a similar differentiation has occurred in Substance, then a limited and individualised manifestation is brought about. This occurs in the domain of individualisation, distinct from the non-individualised principial realms of Essence and Substance. In effect, when form actualises Substance, Essence becomes relative and individualised; similarly, Divine Qualities become projected as qualities of individual manifestation. Form as *forma* (Latin), *morphe* or *eidōs* (Greek), or *nama* or *surah* (Sanskrit) represents in a limited way the active pole of Essence. The differentiated Substance in this relative mode is *materia secunda*. It is impossible to conceive of a partial Substance because Substance is unintelligible. Substance as *materia prima* is the totality of potentiality, the root of 'otherness'. *Materia secunda* is a partial or relative component of *materia prima* in the same way that form is a partial or relative reflection of Divine Essence. It could be said that the undifferentiated continuity of *materia prima* and *materia secunda* is the material substrate of the Principle of Being, whereas discontinuity is the hallmark of the creative act in which Being is manifest as individual beings.<sup>42</sup> *Materia* as *materia secunda* and *materia prima* (Latin), *hyle* (Greek) and *rupa* (Sanskrit) represent in a limited way the passive pole of Substance. From the point of view of complementary opposition between *forma* and *materia*, *forma* represents the reality of an object and *materia* for its part represents the passive support of that reality.

<sup>41</sup> The traditional doctrine of form has been expounded by numerous authors, in particular with reference to art and the process of artistic production. A comprehensive study of form is given in; Kollar, *Form*; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, Chapter 8; Coomaraswamy, *Traditional Art and Symbolism*; Titus Burckhardt, *Sacred Art East and West*. Schuon and Guénon in their various works also make continual reference to the doctrine of forms as does Huston Smith and Keith Critchlow. For an account of the doctrine of forms in the Hindu tradition, see James Mahood, 'Imaginal Yoga in India: A Four-Thousand Year Tradition', *Temenos*, Number 5.

<sup>42</sup> To paraphrase Smith, *The Quantum Enigma*, 107.

The traditional understanding of 'form' should not be confused with the shape or outward appearance of a thing. The fact that form is located in the causal domain, *a priori* to the spatial domain, means that form is not apprehended by the senses; it may be known only by the intellect. When embodied in *materia secunda* to produce the individual being, form may have physical representation which is tangible to the senses as the 'accidental nature'.<sup>43</sup> This is the classical Platonic doctrine of forms. As Plato writes in the *Timaeus*;

... it must be agreed that there exists, first, the unchanging form, uncreated and indestructible, admitting no modification and entering no combination, imperceptible to sight or the other senses, the object of thought: second, that which bears the same name as the form and resembles it, but is sensible, has come into existence, is in constant motion, comes into existence and vanishes from a particular place, and is apprehended by opinion with the aid of sensation.<sup>44</sup>

In the Platonic vision, the physical particulars are 'objects of sight' while 'the forms are the objects of 'intelligence'.<sup>45</sup> Form is synonymous with the Platonic 'ideas' or 'archetypes'. Form can be spoken of as the eternal or everlasting archetype, but this must be understood in a relative sense; relative to the contingent object, the form is eternal and uncreated. It could be said that they are contained in Essence in a synthesised unity, in a state of non-individualised presence. However, this is not the same as the formal domain and at this level form has already undergone a type of individualisation. The eternal 'realm of forms' is thus relative only to the embodied form or the contingent world. From the reaches of Western mystical tradition,<sup>46</sup> Hermes Trismegistus espoused that, '... the world of things that come to be and cease to be are mere semblances and copies of the forms which have real existence in the thought world (the world of archetypal ideas). There, forms which are eternal will never cease to be.'<sup>47</sup>

However, Hermes is speaking here of a relative 'aeviternity', not the Eternity of Being. It could be said that the realm of form participates in Eternity by the fact that 'form is a revelation of essence'<sup>48</sup> and through this connection with the Divine Essence becomes relatively eternal. It is possible however to speak of 'uncreated form' which is the same as the 'form of the formless' dwelling within Essence. This is the formless chaos of the Heavenly Waters, and Divine Qualities which is ontologically speaking above the realm of forms.

The form of a thing is its causal being, the means whereby it (be)-comes into individual being. Thus Eckhart can say, 'To be properly expressed, a thing must proceed from within, moved by its form: it must come, not in from without, but out from within'.<sup>49</sup> The outwardness is due to the nature of matter for it is matter which is the source of the world of things 'always becoming, without ever persisting'.<sup>50</sup> The Platonic 'doctrine of the archetypes' is particularly relevant to the arts of manufacture, for within the archetypal form lies the intellectual conception of the thing to be produced. It is the role of the traditional craftsman to look into the world of the archetypes and to

<sup>43</sup> Following the Aristotelian approach to essential and accidental natures.

<sup>44</sup> Plato, *Timaeus*, 52.

<sup>45</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, 507(b).

<sup>46</sup> It is with reluctance but also just sheer convenience that I have resorted to the term 'mystical tradition' as in my view it does not stand alone as a tradition but is a thread in many other traditions as an esoteric or gnostic dimension in all traditions. Schuon discusses this in his work *Gnosis, Divine Wisdom* (London: Perennial Books, 1978) but in many other titles as well.

<sup>47</sup> As quoted by Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 673.

<sup>48</sup> Eckhart as quoted by Coomaraswamy, *Transformation of Nature in Art* (New York; Dover, 1956), 72. The more complete quote is 'Now form is a revelation of (E)ssence. St. Dionysius says, "Form is matter's aught. Matter without form is naught". From The Tractates, 'St. John says, "I Saw the Word in God"'. Meister Eckhart, ed. Franz Pfeiffer, trans. C. De B. Evans (London: John M. Watkins, 1924) Vol. 1. Also <https://beyondcontradiction.org/2016/10/15/saint-john-says-i-saw-the-word-in-god/>.

<sup>49</sup> Eckhart as quoted by Coomaraswamy, *Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought*, (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1981), fn. 10, 72.

<sup>50</sup> Porphyry, *Launching-Points to the Realm of the Mind*, 2.4.10., 37.

actualize the form in its particular medium of the thing to be made. The manufacturing medium for revealing the form in this respect acts like *materia secunda* to 'actualize' the form. Raw material in this regard, be it stone, wood, clay, metal or whatever medium is used, should not be confused with *materia* for it still maintains and expresses its own qualities (or form) particular to itself. Rather the raw material in this respect participates in the process in a way that corresponds to *materia secunda*.<sup>51</sup> There is within all traditional artefacts this duality of form and content or, the container and that which is contained.

In architecture, the building materials, the wood, the stone, the bricks and mortar all correspond to *materia*. The mason dressing stone may see in it the *materia* which will participate in the work of creation and the extent that it can be imbued with the *forma* of the intention. The tools of trade thus become expressions or rather symbols of the divine instruments which fashion the cosmos out of the undifferentiated and amorphous *materia prima*. The craftsman, creating from the raw material by imbibing it with the *forma* held within the mind becomes an imitator of the Divine Architect who created all the world from *materia prima* by the actualisation of all the forms contained within the Intellect (Image 2.4). According to Meister Eckhart every maker works through form as 'form informs through existence'.<sup>52</sup> The arts follow the divine patterns of doing and in the words of St. Thomas Aquinas, 'Art is the imitation of nature in her manner of operation',<sup>53</sup> as art is the principle of manufacture. The methods of conceiving a building, the material support of the building fabric, the sculpture adorning the exterior and all stages of a sacred building's construction all relate to 'her manner of operation'. Conceived in such a way, the work of the artisan craftsman becomes a ritualised act emulating the divine act of creation.

---

<sup>51</sup> Burckhardt *Sacred Art in East and West*, trans. by Lord Northbourne (Bedfont: Perennial Books, 1976), 52, comments that the word *hyle* (an alternative to *materia secunda*) in Greek means literally wood.

<sup>52</sup> Sermon, IV.2 as translated in McGinn, *Meister Eckhart Teacher and Preacher*, ed. Bernard McGinn (New York: Paulist Press, 1986).

<sup>53</sup> *Summa Theologica*, 1.117. 1. This phrase is quoted by Coomaraswamy in several of his books notably *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art* and *The Transformation of Nature in Art*. Also the theme is covered extensively by Titus Burckhardt, *Sacred Art East and West* and *The Foundations of Christian Art*, ed. Michael Oren Fitzgerald (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2006).





Image 2.4 God the master architect measuring out order with a pair of compasses and scribing the circular form of the universe from the undefined amorphous *hyle* (*materia secunda*).

The aspect of form's 'eternal origin' is of great significance. Form belongs to the realm of the celestial archetypes and the significance lies in the supra-spatial and supra-temporal domain. There are several issues here that need a distinct clarification in regard to what has been said about Eternity and Being in relation to the formal domain. Being, as Essence (*esse*) is the mode of becoming and in the realm of individual things it is the role of form to act as the vehicle for being, to the extent that it could be said that a thing 'is' only by virtue of its form. Being is to manifestation what form is to individual things, so in this regard, the Eternity of Being is reflected in the relative eternity of forms. The distinction here is one between the Universal and the Individual and should

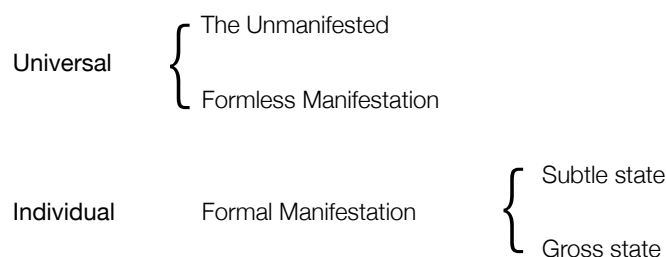
not be confused.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, Substance is the Universal Principle of 'that which is' and it is through the role of relative substance (*materia secunda*) that individual being exists concretely. St. Thomas Aquinas on this distinction writes:

Accordingly, in things composed of matter and form, neither the matter nor the form nor even being itself can be termed that which is. Yet form can be called 'that by which it is', inasmuch as it is Being; the whole substance itself, however is 'that which is'. And being itself is that by which the substance is called a being.<sup>55</sup>

While from a relative point of view one can speak of the eternal origin of the form of a being or thing, it should be stressed that it is only through its participation in Being that a form can be said to be Eternal. Form of itself is limited to the individual domain and as such is bound to manifestation, albeit at its very summit. It is also possible to say that at the very end of existence the entire world and its 'forms' will cease to exist

The form, which is the 'idea' or central reality of any traditionally conceived building, is hence 'aeviternal' in its origin and that origin lies beyond the physical fabric of a building. The individual building is merely an expression in a particular place and time of the aeviternal archetype. From the point of view of traditional mankind, that is, the intended participants in the building, the celestial origin of the building is often comprehensible in terms of the mythical origins of the 'archetypal' form. A crossing into revealed sacred mythology must be made in order to see the origin of many traditional building forms. Traditional buildings are often conceived as an image of the ancestral or revealed sacred types from the mytho-historic past. Traditional architecture often expresses this timeless origin as being conceived in realms beyond the mundane. A sacred building participates in its archetype and becomes a conduit for the expression of the celestial eternal in the mundane. Hence, without form there can be no true meaning.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> The individual state is that state where manifestation is presented as individual modes. This individual state contains all formal manifestation which in turn includes both the subtle and gross states. Guénon, *Man and His Becoming*, 33-34. Guénon also gives a very useful summary which is worth including here to define the hierarchy of his metaphysical terms:



<sup>55</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans. James F. Anderson, ed. Joseph Kenny, (New York: Hanover House, 1955-57). Book II. Ch. 54(6). <http://dhsprory.org/thomas/ContraGentiles.htm>. Also discussed by Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, 70-71.

<sup>56</sup> This is extensively discussed by Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 263-264. This could be taken into the contemporary realm to reflect on aspects of modern architecture.

## Symbolism - The Language of the Sacred

At this stage, a particular view of symbolism and its role in describing traditional metaphysics can be undertaken consistent with Guénon's *Symbolism of the Cross*.<sup>57</sup> Symbolism is the means whereby ideas of a transcendent nature can be communicated and incorporated in all the arts, especially architecture.<sup>58</sup> As previously discussed, the multiplicity of beings in a traditional view can be said to derive from the individualisation of the Divine Essence in the *materia* of primordial Substance. Essential forms can be likened to a projection outward into the infinite possibilities contained in the supportive potentiality of Substance. Following the previously discussed polar model, Being is polarised into Essence and Substance, with Essence represented by the vertical and Substance by the horizontal dimensions (Diagram 2.8).

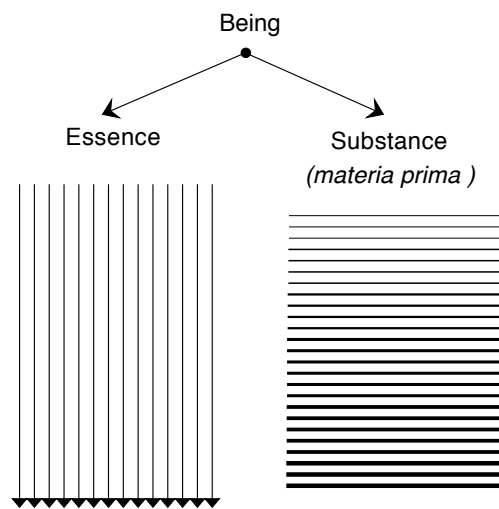


Diagram 2.8 The complementary polarities of Essence represented by multiple vertical lines and Substance represented by multiple horizontal lines.

Form is the multiple individualised modes of this projection of Essence and gives rise to innumerable reflections or actualisation. To use the most fundamental spatial analogy, the causal plane is above and the effects plane is below. Through this process of principial causes, form becomes actualised upon the indefinite domains. Each actualisation can in turn become a causal

<sup>57</sup> Surprisingly, despite being a 'metaphysical symbolist', Guénon wrote little on what symbols actually are and concentrated on all the different expressions of symbols. However, Guénon's essay, 'Symbols of Analogy' whilst short, encapsulates the essence of what is a symbol. Guénon states:

'What symbolism is based upon in the most general way, are the correspondences that exist between the different orders of reality.' *Symbols of Sacred Science*, trans. Henry D. Fohr and ed. Samuel D. Fohr (Hillsdale: Sophia Perennis, 2002), 307.

<sup>58</sup> The traditional language of symbolism and its function as discussed here can be found in the following works other than those by Guénon cited; Coomaraswamy, *Traditional Art and Symbolism*; Titus Burckhardt, *Sacred Art East and West*; Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, ed., *Art, Creativity and the Sacred* (New York: Crossroad Publishers, 1985); Frithjof Schuon, *Esotericism as Principle and as Way* trans. by William Stoddart (Bloomington: Perennial Books, 1981), Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*; J. C. Cooper, *An Illustrated Dictionary of Traditional Symbolism*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978) and *Symbolism: The Universal Language* (London: Aquarian Press, 1982); Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*, to list only a few.

principle for subsequent reflections within other domains and so on indefinitely. However, these reflected individual expressions of the union of form and *materia secunda* are all united, coming to a greater or lesser degree from a single formal principle which in its turn is derived from Being. This process has been called the *scala naturae* or the 'Great Chain of Being' in the medieval Christian context.<sup>59</sup> Alternatively to use a modern metaphor, manifestation is the result of a 'causal chain reaction'.<sup>60</sup> In this manner, the single essential form will have many manifested expressions with each reflection manifesting to a greater or lesser degree the formal principle from which it derived and with each reflection expressing in its own way the form within the limitations of its domain. The summation of these innumerable reflections constitutes a being or form in its totality. For this reason, the greater part of any single reflection must be sought above, in its causal principle, and not in its limited reflection. Symbolism can be described simply as the reverse process of manifestation, whereby causal principle is sought from intellectual contemplation of a manifested being or occurrence. By contemplating the effect, one becomes conscious of the reality from which it originated. The symbol is an aspect of the ontological reality of things and is a minor revelation of a higher order of things in a lower order of things. This is the exact significance of symbolism. To comprehend a symbol is to accept the hierarchic causal structure of the universe and its multiple states (Diagram 2.9).<sup>61</sup>

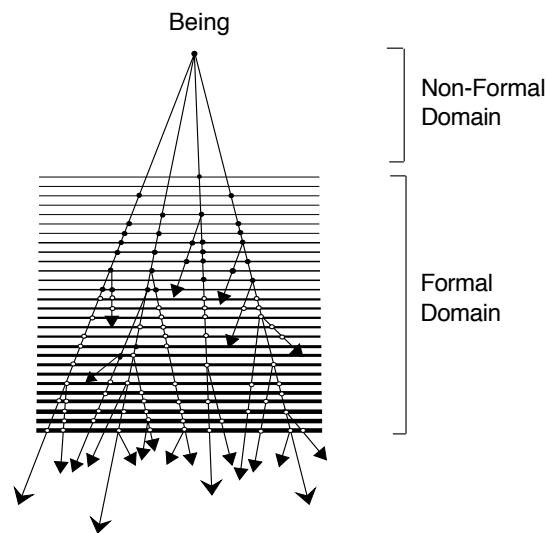


Diagram 2.9 The projection of forms within the formal domain.

The reciprocal relationship between the creative modes of manifestation is most succinctly formulated by Hermes Trismegistus (the thrice-great Hermes) in the first paragraph of the *Emerald Tablet*:

<sup>59</sup> It is also the name of an important book on the same principle by Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Harper & Row, New York, 1960).

<sup>60</sup> Every thing or occurrence can be the basis of a symbol. This applies to atomic particle physics as well as nature, the creation of matter and the annihilation of matter.

<sup>61</sup> Following Nasr, *Living Sufism* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1972), 76. What constitutes a 'state' will be developed soon in Chapter 4.

In truth certainly and without doubt, whatever is below is like that which is above, and that which is above is like that which is below, to accomplish the miracles of one thing.<sup>62</sup>

The common paraphrase for this is 'as above, so below'. However, only the total paragraph gives the reciprocal relationship between the symbol and the process of creation which has been discussed as the 'law of correspondences'. The generation of existence has been likened to a creative projection outward and the symbolic transposition of the symbol with its cause is like a projection returning to its causal domain. The word symbol itself is derived from *syn* and *ballein* (Greek), being a conjunction of 'together' + 'throw', to 'throw together' or 'project together'. Thus the act of symbolisation is a projection of the effect toward the cause. This returns multiplicity to unity. It is a throwing together by the intellectual mind of the effect and the principal cause. A symbol can be seen as a correspondence between effect and cause or, more correctly, effects and causes (Diagram 2.10).

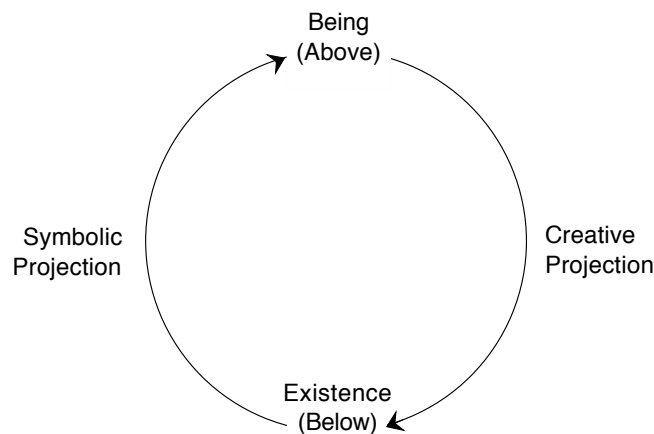


Diagram 2.10 The reciprocal relationship between the generation of beings and their symbolic intellectual projection.

A consequence of this correspondence is the plurality of relational occurrences in every symbol. These occurrences, multiple, hierarchical, superimposed and symbolic, are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they are perfectly concordant, because they express the application of the same principle to different orders, thus completing and corroborating one another. Stated in another way, the world of our physical senses is a mere reflection of a higher world and that world a reflection of an even higher world and so on.<sup>63</sup> Everything becomes a symbol and by the reiterated reflection of this 'law of correspondences', all things become connected into an interwoven matrix of cause and effect. This matrix recalls the myth (itself a symbol) of Indra's net in her palace. The net has a jewel at each of the crossings of its warp and weft and each jewel

<sup>62</sup> As quoted in Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, 196. It is also known as the *Tabula Smaragdina* or *Smaragdine Table*. Other aspects of this aphorism will be developed in further Chapters. And in the Christian tradition we see in the Lord's Prayer, 'On earth as it is in heaven'.

<sup>63</sup> Guénon, *Symbolism of the Cross*, xiii.

reflects every other jewel and is in turn reflected by them.<sup>64</sup> Each jewel is like a symbol and is related to all other jewels and symbols throughout the warp and the weft of the 'net' of all existence.

Every symbol can be thought of as possessing two aspects, the Essential pole and the Substantial pole. The Essential aspect is the content or the qualitative essence of the symbol. The Substantial aspect is the mode or means of expression of the Essential pole. It is the container or mode of expression, is exactly equivalent to *materia* and plays the part of the Substantial pole; it is the material support for the symbol. In the words of Al-Ghazâlî

The world is Two Worlds, spiritual and material, or, if you will, a World Sensual and a World Intelligent; or again, if you will, a World Supernal and a World Inferior. All these expressions are near each other, and the difference between them is merely one of viewpoint. If you regard the two worlds in themselves, you use the first expression; if in respect of the organ which apprehends them, the second; if in respect of their mutual relationship, the third. You may, perhaps, also term them the World of Dominance and Sense-perception, and, the World of the Unseen and the Realm Supernal.<sup>65</sup>

To use a previous example, the Sun has on one hand a content of quality, namely its radiant luminosity, its emanation of heat, its central position and its immutability in relation to the planets. On the other hand, it manifests quantity and materiality through its matter, density and spatial extent. It is the qualitative aspects of the Sun that have symbolic meaning as a direct image of the Divine, not its limitations.<sup>66</sup> To say that the Sun is the Principle of Being is false, in so far as it implies that Being is the Sun; however, it is equally false to state that the Sun is only an incandescent mass of hydrogen. That would both cut it from its Divine cause and deny that the effect is something other than the cause. So a symbol to a degree 'is' what it symbolises from the point of view of its participation in its causal principle. This is because they share the same formal content, because, in the words of Al-Ghazâlî:

...the spirit of the ideal form is captured by the mould of the symbol; the mutual relationship of the two: the inner nature of this correspondence between the world of the Sense (which supplies the clay for the moulds, the material of symbolism) and the world of the Realm Supernal from which the Ideas descend.<sup>67</sup>

In respect to the above, it can be seen why symbols cannot be invented or created but exist as particular expressions of individual manifestation. Symbolism is a universal language that transcends any individual tradition and it is not surprising that similar symbols are found in different traditions. Notwithstanding the universality of symbols, there is a category of 'revealed symbols' relevant to specific sacred revelations. While maintaining a certain universality, these symbols take

<sup>64</sup> The net hangs above Indra's heavenly abode on top of Mt Meru extending throughout in all directions. Indra's Net is discussed in a similar way in regard to symbolism in Snodgrass, *Architecture, Time & Eternity* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture & Aditya Prakashan, 1990), 52-53. The net relates to the 'fabric of the world' and the symbolism of weaving generally. See also Guénon, Ch. XIV, 'The Symbolism of Weaving', in *Symbolism of the Cross*, 65.

A similar analogy of interpenetration of the parts and the whole can be found in the early writing of Fa-tsang (643—712 C.E) of the *Huayan* or Flower Garland School of Buddhism known as the *Treatise on the Golden Lion*. Each part of the golden lion, the eyes, the ears, even down to a single hair can be seen to reflect the other parts and the whole lion.

<sup>65</sup> 'The Niche of Light', or *Mishkât Al-Anwar*, in *Four Sufi Classics*, trans. by William H. T. Gairdner (London: Octagon Press 1984). This work and in particular part II, 'The Science of Symbolism', is a classic exegesis on the Islamic view on symbolism. <http://sacred-texts.com/isl/mishkat/index.htm>.

<sup>66</sup> This illustration being borrowed from Schuon, 'Aesthetics and Symbolism in Art and Nature' in *Spiritual Perspectives and Human Facts*, trans. P. N. Townsend (Bedfont: Perennial Books, 1987), 27-51.

<sup>67</sup> *The Niche of Light*, 130.



on a particular efficacy within their tradition, become vehicles for the revelation in question and an integral part of the doctrines at both an exoteric and esoteric level.<sup>68</sup> For example if one considers the cross in Christianity, the *yin-yang* symbol of duality in Taoism, the *Torah* in Judaism and the *Qur'an* in Islam, symbolism can be seen as the basis and support of contemplation and a means of intellection. Symbolic intellection is the means whereby one participates in bringing together a symbol with its cause, and as all causes lead to the one cause, with Being.<sup>69</sup> Intellectual capacity allows among other things, the ability for intellectual synthesis. The word 'synthesis' is derived from *sunthesis* from *suntithenai* meaning to place together, to shape something new. Through the symbol, one can approach the Divine Truth in a new way. Hugh of St. Victor writes;

All visible things have their symbolic sense, that is they are given figuratively to denote and explain invisible things...they are signs (symbols) of invisible things and modes of those things which dwell in the perfect and incomprehensible nature of the Deity in a manner passing all understanding.<sup>70</sup>

The symbol in its highest sense approaches the incomprehensible nature of Being. In the words of the Sufi poet Ibn al-Farid, 'In symbols, there is a meaning that words cannot define'.<sup>71</sup> The Truth cannot be comprehended directly but relative truth is comprehensible through the symbol. St. Augustine writes, 'Wherever you turn, by certain traces which wisdom has imposed on her works, she speaks to you, and recalls you within, gliding back into interior things by the very forms of exterior things.'<sup>72</sup> A symbol is ultimately ineffable yet intelligible the very means of intellection. Coomaraswamy, writing on the intellectual process of interpreting symbolism, describes the process eloquently:

In order to bring the realm of the spiritual and the Divine within the range of human perception, humanity is driven to adopt the view in which it loses the immediate union with the Divine and the immediate vision of the spiritual. Then it tries to embody in a simple tangible or otherwise perceptible form to materialize what is intangible and imperceptible. It makes symbols, written characters and all images of earthly substance and sees in them and through them the spiritual and Divine which has no likeness and could not otherwise exist.<sup>73</sup>

Symbolism then is an application of the intellect to manifestation in order to know more about the knowable. As such, it must be limited by the very capacity which makes it possible, for human intellectual capacity is neither generalised nor constant. This inconsistency is implicit in the human condition and is the price paid for such knowledge. This limitation clothes symbolism in a veil that is lifted only by grace of the intellect. While symbols may be seen equally by all beings, the internal, intellectual ability 'to see', what various church fathers have referred to as a 'spiritual sense', is not granted equally to all observers. Seeing a symbol involves the physical senses but understanding the symbol requires spiritual seeing, or 'seeing from the heart', as various traditions have described it.<sup>74</sup> The mind needs to make an analogical leap in order to grasp the causal

<sup>68</sup> To an extent, all symbols are a revelation but what is being discussed here is a group of symbols that are of a more potent and poignant nature with respect to a particular revelation. This brings up the interesting notion that symbols themselves are affected by time and place, or rather more correctly, certain symbols are more symbolic (if one could excuse the obvious objection to such a phrase) for a particular place and a particular time.

<sup>69</sup> Schuon, *The Transcendent Unity of Religions* (New York: Harper Row Publishers, 1975), 48.

<sup>70</sup> As translated from *Treatise of the Coelestial Hierarchy* or *De Hierarch. Coelest.* in Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, *History of Aesthetics*, ed. J. Harrell, Cyril Barrett, & D. Petsch, (London: A&C Black, 2006), 200.

<sup>71</sup> Ibn al-Fari, in R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, 232.

<sup>72</sup> *De Libero Arbitrio*, II, 41. Perry, *Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 309.

<sup>73</sup> *Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought*, 252.

<sup>74</sup> The nature of the spiritual senses is expanded in great detail in Christianity by various essays in Gavriilyuk, Paul & Sarah Coakley ed. *The Spiritual Senses: Perceiving God in Western Christianity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

principle and this leap is also the distinction between the esoteric and the exoteric dimensions of a particular revelation. The symbol then 'half reveals and half conceals'.<sup>75</sup> The truth implied by a symbol is at once there and it is not there; it is veiled yet is unveiled but to the tradition's believers 'the door of research into the mysteries of His knowledge will be opened to you'.<sup>76</sup> Thus Plotinus said, 'Things here are signs (symbols); they show therefore to the wiser teachers how the supreme God is known ...make real the vision of the inaccessible'.<sup>77</sup> Symbols are the heuristic keys indispensable for opening the doors to knowledge of Being, which brings the meaning back to Guénon's definition of tradition quoted in the Introduction of this thesis that 'tradition simply means that which is transmitted'. The various religious traditions are the custodians of such keys.

## Form and individual modalities

Two distinct models have been developed so far in this dissertation. The first model concerned the generation of existence from the union of the projected illuminating rays of Principial Essence and the concentric measured degrees of Universal Substance. At an individual level, this model is also the action of *forma* upon *materia secunda*. The second model established the relationship between the Principial Essence and the concentric measured degrees of Universal Substance as a rectilinear polar reunion. It is proposed now to examine the two models in further detail and to show their interrelationship to the extent that they could be interpreted as one and the same (Diagrams 2.11(a) & 2.11 (b)). If the individual projected forms have a central vector, then the intersection can be geometrically interpreted as a radius intersecting with a circumference; if multiple forms and multiple states of existence are considered, then there will be multiple individual modalities represented by each intersection. If viewed as a simple cross of the intersection, then the radius could be considered as indefinite in length, the horizontal state of existence as indefinite radius, and the diagram is resolved as a rectilinear intersection. <sup>78</sup>

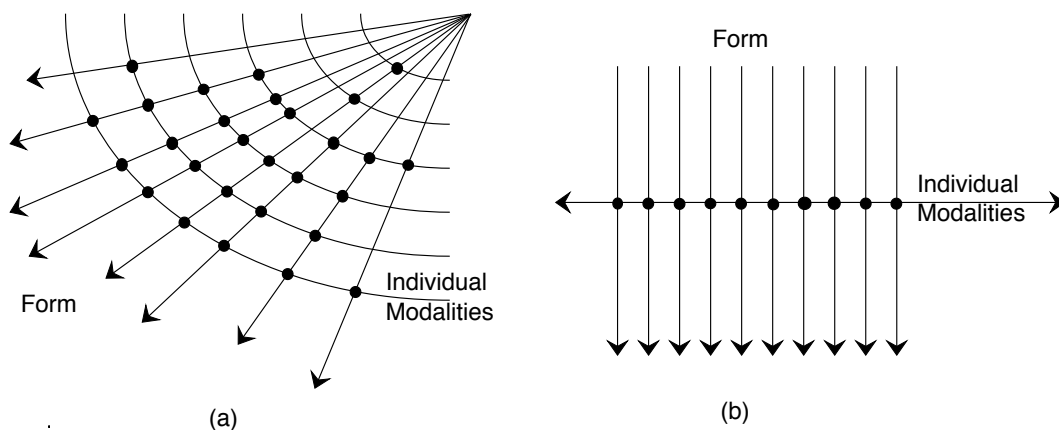


Diagram 2.11 (a) A singular form as radial projections and its individual circumferential modalities.  
(b) A singular form as the vertical axis (or radii) and the horizontal modalities.

<sup>75</sup> Schuon, *Transcendental Unity of Religions* where this idea is elaborated in depth.

<sup>76</sup> Al-Ghazâli, *The Mishkât or The Niche for Lights*, trans. and Intro. William Gairdner, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/isl/mishkat/msh17.htm>.

<sup>77</sup> *The Enneads*, VI.ix.11. By 'signs' Plotinus in this context means symbols.

<sup>78</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 74, 83-85, passim.

Each intersection can be regarded as having two criteria: the first is the radius, which is an expression of its form, and the second is its individual manifestation, which is an expression of its uniqueness. The sum total can then be expressed by a particular circumference. To clarify this notion, an individual circumference can be considered as a horizontal line and the single form as an indefinite series of intersecting vertical lines. The horizontal line expresses the integral extension of the generality, an indefinite development of possibilities or forms, subject to certain conditions of manifestation.<sup>79</sup> These conditions relate to every expression along that line, such that these individual expressions together constitute a 'state'. The state then is constituted from the sum of the individual expressions either as a segment of a circumference or as a horizontal line. If these individual expressions are called modes, then the horizontal line represents the indefinite possible modalities of a state. The state for its part is the sum of these modalities particular to the conditions of that state and such that its special conditions are constituted by the totality of the modalities. Each circumference thus contains a state that is an expression of its unique conditions and as there is an indefinite number of possible circumferences, there is an indefinite number of possible states. Thus there are multiple states in which the form is expressed, each state reflecting the form according to its unique conditions (Diagram 2.12).

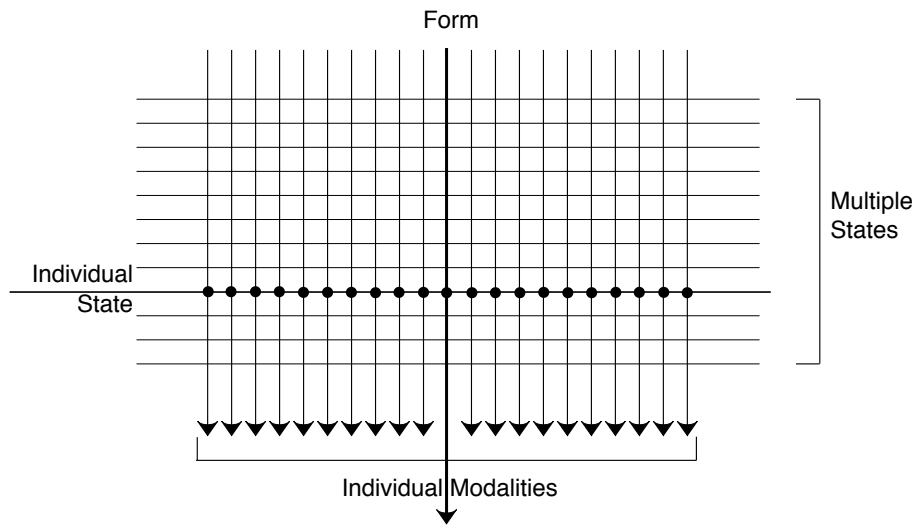


Diagram 2.12 Representation of a form with its individual modalities and individual states.

These notions have been explained diagrammatically in space. However, the states are not limited to any spatial or temporal determination in the corporeal state referred to in Chapter 1 and constitutes only one possible state. Multiple other states of existence are not bound by the special conditions of corporeal existence. The vertical dimension expresses multiple states as separate and individual, an individuality not by virtue of any spatial conditions but related to the special conditions pertaining to that state. The inclusion of certain conditions lead to the exclusion of other conditions, hence the separation. In Guénon's lexicon, a state, whose etymological origin is the Latin word, *status*, meaning 'a station', 'a position', 'rank, or 'a standing', is a particular aspect of a

<sup>79</sup> Guénon, *Symbolism of the Cross*, 10. The diagrammatic interpretations are my own. However, I concede without doubt that Guénon's ideas discussed here, are complex, elusive and open to subtle different interpretations.

being or Being. Since a state is a 'manner of standing' and a 'condition', the state of a Being is its contingent character. Guénon comments, 'Any Being, whether human or otherwise, can be clearly envisaged from a large number; it can be said, an indefinite number; of viewpoints'<sup>80</sup> and each represents a certain and particular state. Guénon comments in regard to the 'multiple states of being',

'This multiplicity of the states of the being, which is a fundamental metaphysical truth, holds good even when one confines oneself to considering the states of manifestation, ... and non-manifestation the combination of which constitutes Being in its totality.'<sup>81</sup>

The same reasoning pertains to the different modalities. Only within the spatial domain are the modalities related in extension and this is what constitutes extension itself. In the corporeal state, the special conditions dictate that the modalities of the Principial Point are expressible as simultaneous repetitions of a single point in a fashion which will soon be elaborated. With other states, the expression of modality is obviously not limited to those of spatial limitations.

To clarify this concept of states and modalities, which unquestionably is one of Guénon's most difficult propositions, the example of a single form could be considered. The form of eightfoldness (or of the number eight or octad) has multiple expressions in both non-corporeal and corporeal states. The domain of numerical symbolism is based upon such subtle non-corporeal modalities in different states.<sup>82</sup> The quantitative value of eight, for example, is only one mode of the Octad. Other non-quantitative and non-corporeal subtle modes include the octave as an expression of the subdivision of a single musical note. The concept of eight as mathematically formulated in platonic solids like the cube and octahedron which in turn manifests in the periodic table of elements is a mode of completeness and stability. There are the eight possible trigrams of the *I Ching*, all are similar expressions of the Octad in non-corporeal subtle states.<sup>83</sup> There is also an indefinite number of corporeal expressions of eightfoldness reflected in octagonal geometry and the octahedron, each a unique expression of the Octad (Diagram 2.13). The other non-corporeal modalities are not geometric figures but remain as expressions without necessary corporeal figuration and remain within their non-corporeal subtle states.

---

<sup>80</sup> Opening sentence to *Symbolism of the Cross*, Chapter I, 'Multiplicity of States of Being', 1.

<sup>81</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 3. However, the entire Chapter, 'The Multiplicity of the States of the Being' is relevant here, 1-5.

<sup>82</sup> By 'subtle state' is meant in Guénon's terms, an individual formal state other than that of the corporeal state, *Symbolism of the Cross*, 57 and fn.1, passim. The domain of 'principial number' or what have been termed Platonic numbers could also be considered as being within the subtle state.

<sup>83</sup> In the *I Ching* existence is seen as the combination of two tendencies or two principles, that of *yin* and *yang* and are related to the principles of Essence and Substance. Traditional Chinese teaching graphically depicts them as a straight line (*yang*), — and as a broken line (*yin*) — —. The two principles combine in eight possible permutations of three lines (ie 8 combinations as 2<sup>3</sup>) called *trigrams*. The classical arrangement of the 8 trigrams of the *pa kua* around a central symbol of the *yin/yang* symbolises a universal matrix which underpins a unified theory of all states and modalities in the Chinese tradition. A further doubling of the eightfoldness of the trigrams results in the 8x8=64 *hexagrams* (ie 64 combinations) of the *I Ching*.

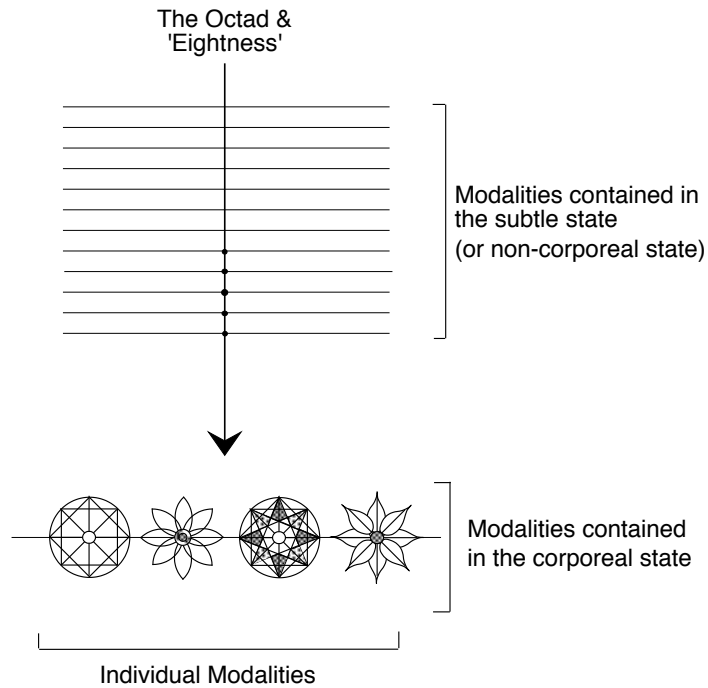


Diagram 2.13 Non-corporeal & corporeal modalities of the form of 'eightfoldness' or the Octad.

To consider another number, the number six as sixfoldness or Hexad can be seen in geometric configurations. Where the Octad finds particular embodiment in the subtle domain, the Hexad has a great affinity with the corporeal domain. The Hexad expresses the six directions of space (forward, backward, right, left, up and down). The Hexad has a particular affinity with two dimensional space and can be seen most clearly in arrangements that relate to the natural geometry of 'close packing' such as in a bee's honeycomb (Image 2.5).

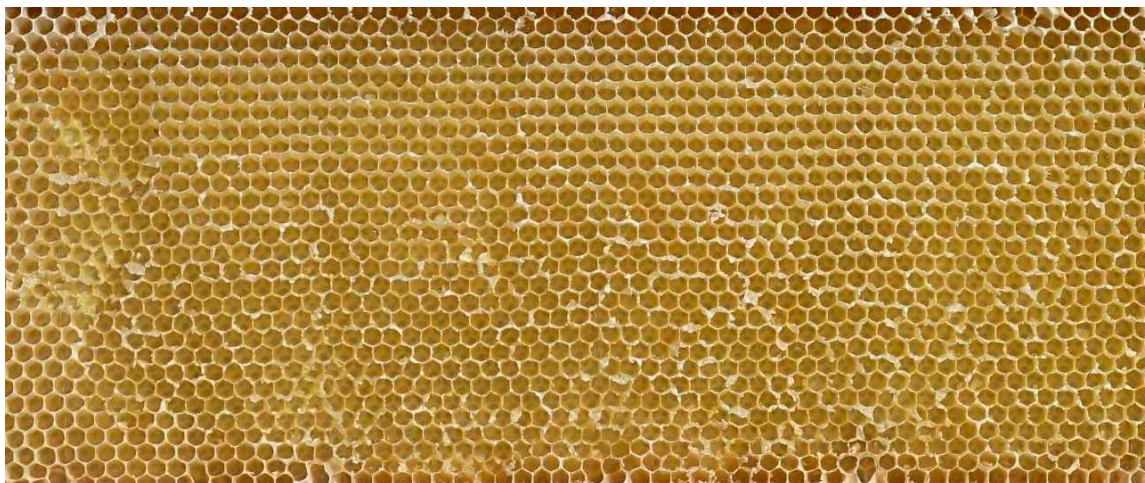


Image 2.5 The Hexad as a form expressed in the hexagonal planar geometry of 'close packing' of cells in a bee's honeycomb.

However, one of the most beautiful single expressions of the number six or Hexad in the corporeal domain that reflects the indefinite number of individual modalities possible is the crystalline structure of the snowflake. Each snowflake is an expression in the corporeal domain of a single modality of the growing crystalline potential of frozen water with threefold symmetry (Images 2.6).



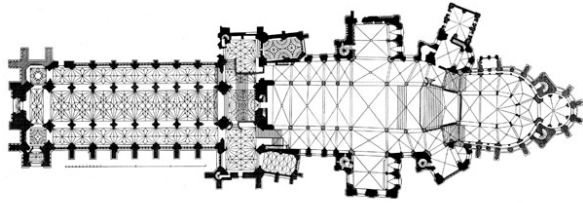
Images 2.6 The sixfoldness of crystalline snowflakes expresses the Hexad or principle of the number 6, which finds a particular affinity to planar space in the corporal domain. Each crystal is an individual modality within the corporal state of the form of a single snowflake.

To choose an example more directly related to architecture, the form of the Christian house of worship could be said to take several distinct forms. The house or the temple as the 'Body of Christ' expresses one such form.<sup>84</sup> The house as the 'New Jerusalem' expresses another, as does the 'body of the congregation' as the body of the temple. All these can be seen as so many generative forms determining the eventual configuration of the Christian temple and all contribute to understanding the form of the great Gothic cathedrals. The built configurations of churches and cathedrals respond to and reflect the extra corporeal form as individual corporeal modalities. In fact the 'state' can be further defined geographically as Europe and historically as the medieval period. The variations in plan correspond to the indefinite number of possible modalities from the originating form. Each temple expresses one modality in a particular place and time. The form contains the cosmic plan for the Christian temple.<sup>85</sup> An individual building as an individual modality reflects the 'eternal archetype', the individual cathedral or church participates in eternity through its formal cause. Each cathedral or church reflects the eternal archetype, participating in eternity through its formal cause. Each modality is related to the archetype and hence to every other modality, an expression of unity within diversity (Images 2.7 (a)-(h)). Similarly the form of the Buddhist *stupa* could be considered as numerous modalities of the one form which is that of the built expression of the Buddhist *Dharma* (Images 2.8 & 6.8(a)-(e)).

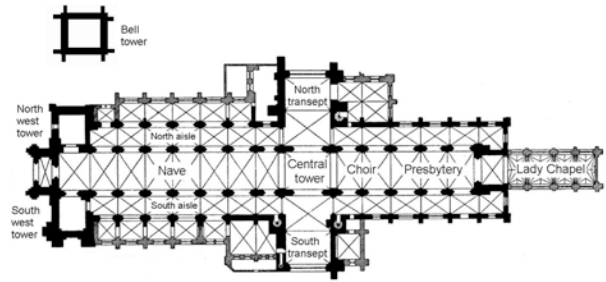
<sup>84</sup> '... He was talking about the temple of his body.' John 2.19-21.

<sup>85</sup> There is an interesting connection between the words 'temple', 'contemplate' and 'template'. All have as a generic root the idea of the temple as the *templum*. The act of contemplation can be considered an attempt to contact the 'template' of the idea and even more so in the idea of the temple. The 'template' of the intellectual temple could be considered as the Heavenly Jerusalem, conceived by contemplation.

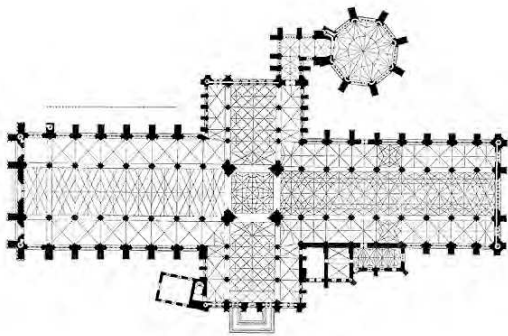




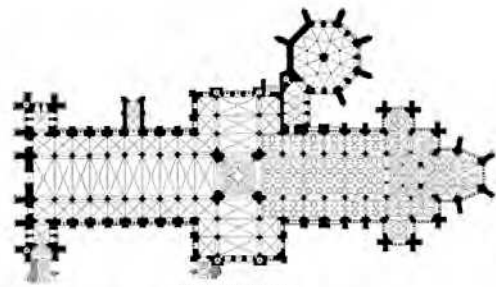
(a) Canterbury Cathedral



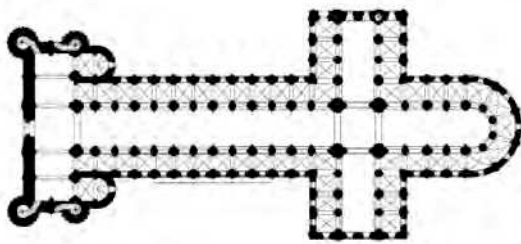
(b) Chichester Cathedral



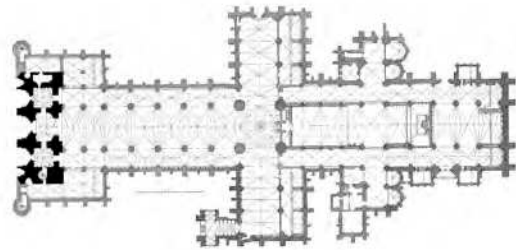
(c) York Minster



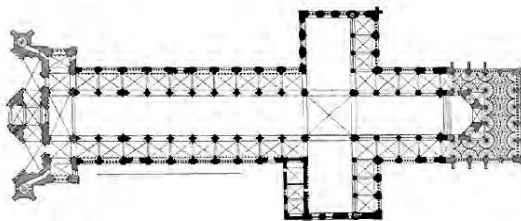
(d) Wells Cathedral



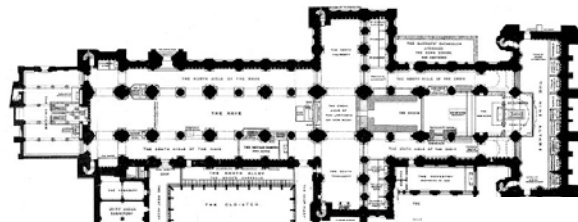
(e) Ely Cathedral



(f) Lincoln Cathedral



(b) Peterborough Cathedral



(h) Durham Cathedral

Images 2.7 The cruciform cathedral plan exemplifies a single form and multiple modalities of that form in one corporeal state. In this case the state is both geographic and temporal, namely, the English Gothic period.



Image 2.8 Multiple presentations of the traditional form of the *stupa* in the modality of the Burmese *zedi* at the complex of *Pa-Oh*, Kakku, Shan State, Burma.

Individual modalities of a form exist in a particular place and time. The existent form presents its existence as an entity, modality or 'thing' in the world and in a state. The degree to which that existence is present is proportional to clarity of its presentation. An individual modality could be said to be 'grounded' in this way and the extent to which it is stable in its grounding depends on its embodiment. In the terminology of St. Thomas Aquinas, noted earlier, a thing exists by virtue of 'that by which it is'.<sup>86</sup> The intrinsic form is unique but the resulting created works are multiple modalities in different states. The form and 'that by which it is' can be likened to the 'idea' behind a particular entity. In its expression in the realm of man made objects, the form could be likened to the subtle purpose or function to which the object is to be put. However, it goes beyond the merely practical 'function' of the entity. The form can satisfy the utilitarian function but it can equally embrace an aspirational dimension. A cup fulfils the functional requirement of a drinking receptacle to convey liquid to the mouth but a chalice would include a further aspirational element to elevate it above the utilitarian with added considerations of beauty, ceremony and ritual function.<sup>87</sup>

The above examples of the Christian Gothic church and the *stupa* are undoubtedly complex forms expressed in equally complex building configurations. A complex sacred structure is complex because the traditional doctrines are multifarious and multilayered. The architectural form of a building exists in the non-individual realm as the subtle 'idea' of the building. Its individual expression is regulated by the idea prior to its realization. The formal idea determines the arrangement of the parts and the hierarchy of the elements that form the unity of the expressed form. The form is also subject to the secondary contingencies of its standing in the corporeal sense and this takes into consideration materials, methods of execution and the like.

<sup>86</sup> As quoted earlier and also by Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 70-71.

<sup>87</sup> The manner in which form is included in architectural design is the subject of the work by L P Kollar, *On the Architectural Idea*.

A simpler example may more clearly illustrate the principle in which a form could be said to be realised.<sup>88</sup> The requirement for human habitation can take various forms and depends on many determining elements within the form of a 'dwelling' that regulates the outcome. The form of an early Romano-British dwelling built in the Southwest of England in say 40 CE, has a particular identifiable circular configuration. The form of the dwelling would be for an extended family or small clan. It would include the requirement for protection not only of its family members from the elements but also their animals. Entries need protection from the bitter winter winds but the sun needs to bring warmth and light into the house. As a community of dwellings it would require provisions for grouping and possible manufacturing and seasonal storage. The dwelling form would take on the secondary considerations of available materials; in this case stone for walls, thatch for roofing and timber for framing. In the modern terminology of the architectural profession this could be called the 'design brief' but need not be so technically expressed.

Chysauster Village in Cornwall is a particular example of the grouped arrangements of eight circular dwellings as expressions of the same formal idea for dwelling (Image 2.9). House 6(b) is perhaps the most intact version of the dwellings (Images 2.10(a) & (b)).

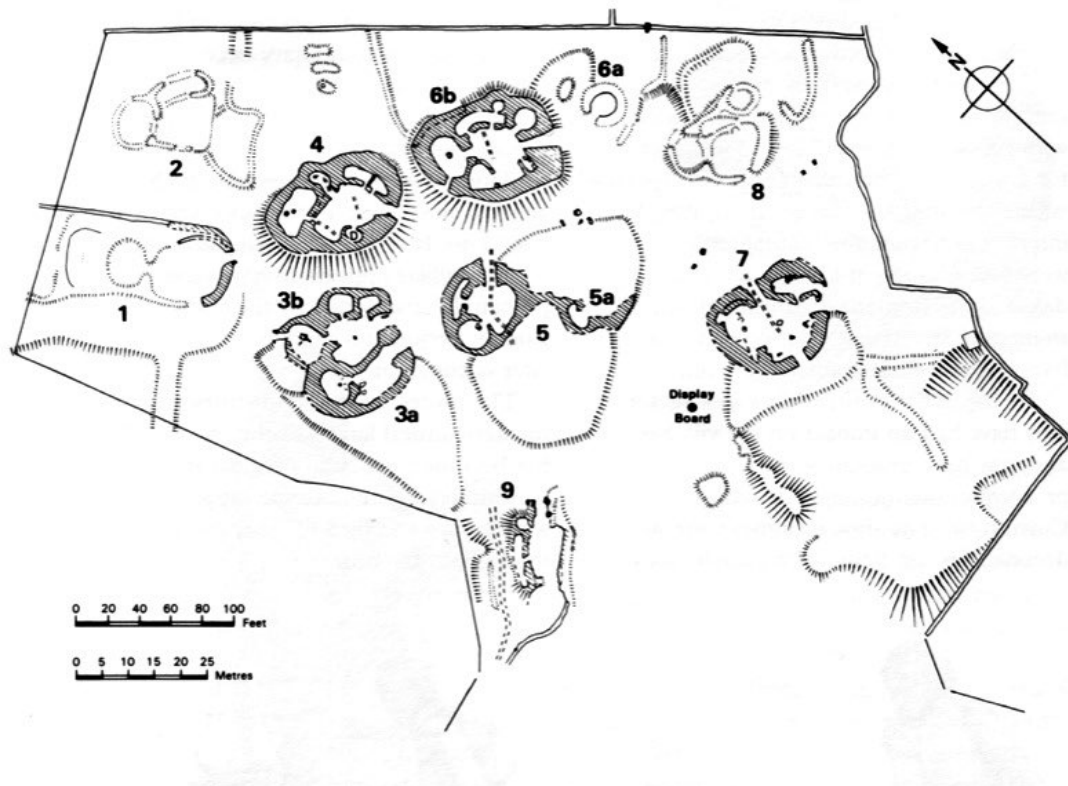
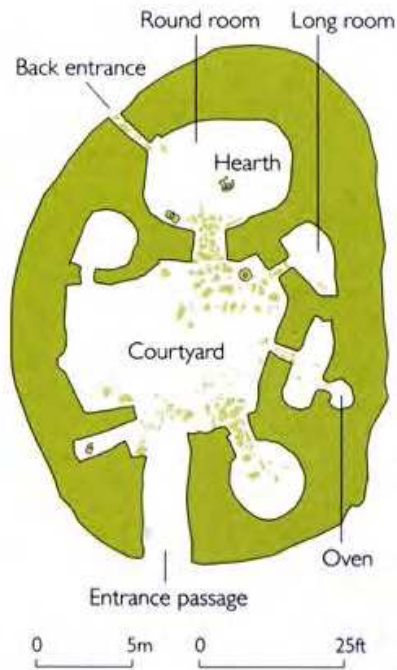


Image 2.9 Schematic plan of the early Romano-British Chysauster Village, Cornwall, UK.

<sup>88</sup> It is recognized that the viewing of architecture as the 'realizing of form', is not a common way of viewing architecture nor art generally for that matter. From this point on, the theme of 'realizing of form' shall be developed in its indefinite applications whether stated as such or more generally implied.



Images 2.10 (a) Top left: Schematic plan of house 6(b) at Chysauster Village, Cornwall, UK.

(b) Top right: View from above of a bronze model of the postulated recreation of house 6(b) at Chysauster Village, Cornwall, UK.

Without diverging into archeological considerations, the issue here is the architectural form of the dwelling is again expressed succinctly by St. Thomas Aquinas, saying 'that by which it is'; it is not the external appearance of the dwelling but what comes out from within. What is seen is the configuration of the form as built as the dwelling. The form is the idea, the archetype or pre-existent pattern of the dwelling that results in a built configuration that responds to and resonates with the originating form. Every part results from the hierarchy of the parts determined by the unity of the ideal form.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>89</sup> As this thesis is architectural in focus it is noteworthy to say this is the opposite to the often quoted formulation by the American architect Louis Sullivan, of 'form follows function'. A more correct expression in the traditional sense would be 'configuration follows the originating form'.



# CHAPTER 3:

## UNIVERSAL MAN

### The Relationship Between Being & Universal Man

The traditional concept of the human being is now introduced. There are two states or perspectives to which the human being's consciousness is directed; one view is directed outward toward the world which is generalised as the objective view and the other view which is directed inward toward being's own existence and which could be generalised as the subjective view. Both these perspectives take on a relativity in regard to the absolute existence of Being, which means that Being can be seen to operate both in an external or objective dimension and in an internal and subjective dimension. These two dimensions have also been termed respectively the view of the macrocosmic world and the view of the microcosmic world (Diagram 3.1).

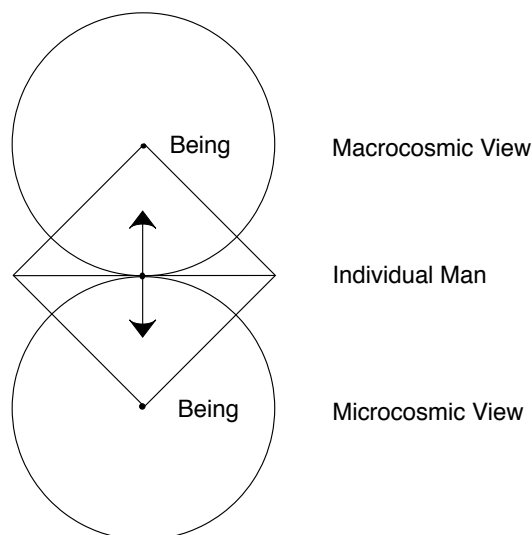


Diagram 3.1 The macrocosmic and microcosmic view of individual being.

These two perspectives are intimately related and can simply be called an external perspective an internal perspective of a state in which there is a total analogical relationship between one and the other state. The cause of this dichotomy lies ultimately within Being Itself. Being becomes existence by a type of externalization of Being's internal possibilities and this gives rise to a reciprocal relationship between the two aspects of the one Reality, that is between Being

and Becoming. This is what gives rise to the elliptical notions of Being described as both within and without manifestation. This dual nature of Divine Being is described by Ibn 'Arabi thus:

We also know that God has described himself as Exterior (*al-zâhir*) and as Interior (*al-bâtin*) and that he manifested the world at the same time as interior and exterior, so that we should know the 'interior' aspect (of God) by our own interior, and the exterior by our exterior.<sup>1</sup>

The traditional notion of the original form of the human being 'the image of God' is not that of an individual being but that of Universal Man a notion separate from Pure Being and its Qualities.<sup>2</sup> Universal Man or Primordial Man are the metaphysical terms used in various traditional teachings to designate the summation of all the multiple states of manifestation and could be said to constitute the entirety of manifest existence. It is from this point of view that existence is likened to the form of a supra-human deity, but it should be pointed out that this differs from Being. Guénon writes about Universal Man:

... what must essentially be considered here is a metaphysical transposition of the idea of individual man, which must be carried out in the extra-individual and supra-individual domain. In this sense, and if reference is made to what was said about the conception of 'Universal Man' will apply in the first place to the sum total of the states of manifestation; but it could be rendered still more universal, in the fullness of the true meaning of the word, if it is also extended to the states of non-manifestation, and hence to the complete and perfect realization of the total being - taking this in the higher sense indicated above and always with the reservation that the term 'being' itself can be used in a purely analogical sense only.<sup>3</sup>

This metaphysical transposition is the projection of the human perspective upward to determine the Principle of Being. This viewpoint of the individual being starts with individual being and reaches upward to meet the Divine. The form of Universal Man thus is completely human-based, it is Being's view of the totality of existence as if (s)he were a God, but always from the inside. This is the effect or the 'image' viewing its origin. Universal Man is rendered comprehensible in the Islamic sense as the *Insân Al-Kâmil*, which is at the same time Primordial Man or *Insân Al-Qadîm*.<sup>4</sup> He is the Cosmic Adam of Genesis. Ibn 'Arabi writes:

God first created the entire world as something amorphous and without grace comparable to a mirror not yet polished; but it is a rule in Divine activity to prepare no 'place' without it receiving a Divine Spirit as is explained in the *Holy Qur'an* by the blowing of the Divine Spirit into Adam; and this is none other than the actualization of the aptitude which such a form possesses.....

Thus, this Being (Adamic) was called Man (*insân*) and God's Representative. As for his Quality as a man it designates his synthesized nature (containing virtually all other natures created) and his aptitude to embrace the essential Truths....

<sup>1</sup> *Fusus al-Hikam*, 'The Word of Adam'. Burckhardt's translation, 16.

<sup>2</sup> The term Universal Man, Cosmic Man and other related terms, are direct translations from concepts within various traditions. No attempt is made here to use gender neutral terminology. The traditional role of 'man' as will become apparent soon, is entirely non-sexual in terms of gender. Universal Man is rendered as androgynous, and Adamantine to the extent that Universal Man is existent prior to sexual differentiation. Given the establishment of archetypal Man as intrinsically Universal and not of a limited masculine gender, it is consistent and logical in this study to use the term 'individual man', human being or being as a partial reflection of Universal Man. Again 'man' is used as an expression of mankind or human kind not masculine which is only one of several modalities. To use gender neutral terms would not be consistent with the traditional terminology and the essential similitude of individual man and Universal Man would be confused.

<sup>3</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> *Fusus al-Hikam*, 'The Word of Adam'. Burckhardt's translation, 16.



All that the Divine Form implies, that is to say the total of the names (or Universal Qualities) is manifested in this human constitution, which, by this means, distinguishes itself (from all other creatures) by the (symbolic) integration of all existence'.<sup>5</sup>

Ibn 'Arabi speaks of Adam as individual man and Universal Man, which requires further elucidation. Individual man is incomplete, expressing only some modalities of Universal Man. Universal Man is the principle of all manifestation while individual man represents in his own order, its resultant end-product.<sup>6</sup> Universal Man is thus the locus of all existence. For this reason many traditions agree in regarding man as a being formed by a synthesis of all the elements and all domains of nature. Individual man expresses most directly the totality of the Universal Man. It is because of this fact that the individual being is considered to play a central role in relation to manifestation, and this centrality is true from both the microcosmic viewpoint and the macrocosmic viewpoint. By virtue of this role, man is the most complete expression of the individual state. The human being reflects most closely all the possibilities which are contained within the Universal Domain and within Universal Man. The being under discussion here is not corporeal man alone, but includes the whole range of modalities and with the indefinite extension of which they are capable. Here lies the profoundest of the reasons on which the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm is based.<sup>7</sup> This allows a valid transposition of the notion of the human being rather than any other being into the realm of Universal Man.<sup>8</sup> Around this homology hinges the parallel between man as the microcosm and the world as the macrocosm as expressed in the Hermetic formulation 'whatever is below is like that which is above, and what is above is like that which is below'. This axiom expresses the total reciprocal analogy between the individual state (of which individual being is the centre) and the Universal State (of which it could be said Universal Man is the centre). The Sufi formulation 'Man is a little cosmos, and the cosmos is like a big man' expresses the analogy between individual man and Universal Man in perfect clarity.<sup>9</sup>

Individual man then expresses the centre of all individual manifestation to the degree that man reflects Universal Man and even Divine Being perfectly. Man in this role is truly the centre of the world, below that of Divine Being and the integration of the possibilities in being, not by any superiority over the rest of manifestation. In the Jewish tradition the temple becomes the embodiment of the microcosmic world and the world at large, as stated in the *Midrash Tanhuma*, 'The Temple corresponds to the whole world and to the creation of man who is a small world'.<sup>10</sup>

The Islamic form of Universal Man, *El-Insânul-Kâmil*, is analogous to the *Kabbalistic Adam Kadmon*. In some branches of *Kabbalistic* tradition, *Adam Kadmon* is the body upon which the lights of the *Sephirothic Tree* are projected. The teachings of the *Kabbalistic* tradition also separate the Adam of the Garden of Eden from the Cosmic *Adam Kadmon*, the Edenic Adam being the anthropological *Adam Kadmon*.<sup>11</sup> The *Sephirothic Tree* is the mythological schema for the Divine interaction which produces the world. The body of *Adam Kadmon* is the subtle body or 'vessel' for the containment of the *Sephirothic Lights* as a type of formal creational matrix. However, due to a cosmic mishap the vessel is ruptured which results in the world being manifest (Images 3.1 & 3.2).

<sup>5</sup> *Fusus al-Hikam*, The Word of Adam. Burckhardt's translation, 9-12

<sup>6</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 8.

<sup>7</sup> To paraphrase Guénon, *Symbolism of the Cross*, 8-9.

<sup>8</sup> Guénon, *Symbolism of the Cross*, Chapter II, Universal Man, 6-10. It is for this reason alone why the term Universal Man must be used. There is no such other alternate word in English to convey the summation of all projected possibilities consolidated in the one being.

<sup>9</sup> See Burckhardt's footnote, *Fusus al-Hikam*, 11.

<sup>10</sup> According to Patai, *Man and Temple, Man and Temple: In Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1967), 116. Also establishing the basis of the temple as a 'body' even prior to the advent of Christ and the Christian temple.

<sup>11</sup> Poncé, *Kabbalah*, 140.

A modern teacher of the *Kabbalistic* teaching, Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi writes of the cosmic *Adam Kadmon*:

Adam Kadmon is the Universe made after the likeness to God, the allegorical figure abstracted by Kabbalists into the Diagram called the Tree of Life. This metaphysical presentation is a comprehensive formulation of the universal principles and processes. Based upon the Divine aspects and the relationships, the tree describes the archetypal design upon which the Universe is modelled. The same template applies throughout the lesser worlds so that even the tiny species of mankind, indeed a single human being, is directly related to the original Adam by virtue of faithful replication.<sup>12</sup>

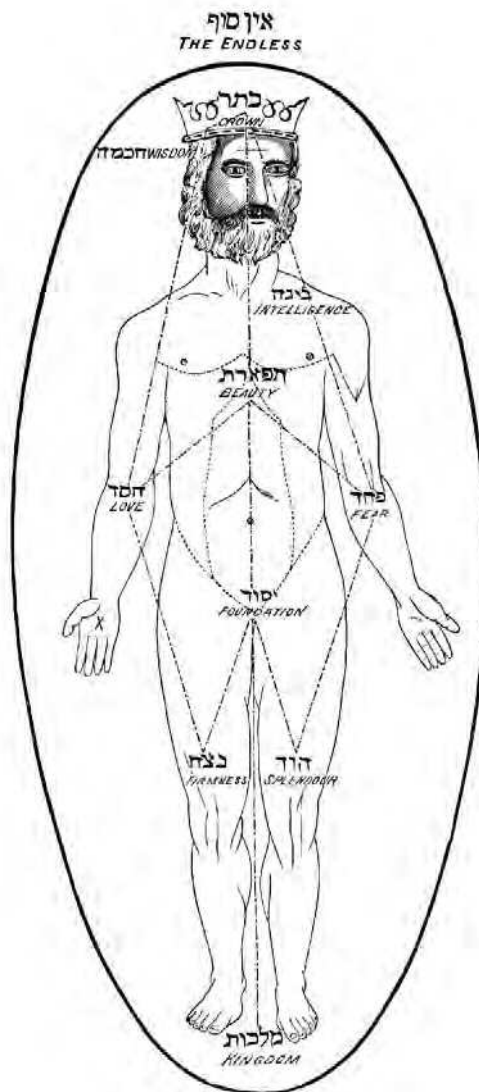


Image 3.1 *Adam Kadmon* with the depiction of the *Sephirothic lights* (viewed in reverse).

<sup>12</sup> Introduction to *Adam and the Kabbalistic Tree*, Refer also to other works by Halevi, *The Way of the Kabbalah* and *Kabbalah and Exodus*. Other useful references can be found in Charles Poncé, *Kabbalah*, and Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*.



Image 3.2

*Adam Kadmon as The Universal Man*  
(depiction by Hildegard von Bingen).

The Christian tradition does not contain an explicit doctrine of the Universal Man, at least, not using that exact terminology.<sup>13</sup> However, the relationship is elliptically alluded to as Jesus Christ being the Son of Man. Christ is identifiable with the Adamic state. The relationship of the Cosmic Christ as the pre-creational 'the Word' or 'the Logos' identifies Jesus<sup>14</sup> as the Universal Man or the Perfect Man.

There is another connection between Adam and Christ, which while not explicit in the Bible, finds doctrinal support. The earlier rabbinical views of the mountain and the association with the temple are continued in the New Testament in a more esoteric mode. Mount Calvary derives its name from the Latin *calvaria*, 'a bare skull', specifically the skull cap or cranium.<sup>15</sup> Similarly Golgotha is derived through Aramaic and Greek from the Hebrew *golgoleth*, 'a skull'. Both names are used for the place where Jesus Christ was crucified.<sup>16</sup> This designation is commonly given because of the apparent skull-like impressions in the small hill. Mount Calvary was also the place where Adam was created and where his skull was buried. Calvary, where the first Adam was created, is where Christ, the second Adam, died to save mankind, atoning for the Adamic Fall from Grace.<sup>17</sup> Christ was crucified upon the cross or sometimes related on a tree or stake. This then establishes a vertical connection between the two Adamic incarnations and between sin and

<sup>13</sup> Unless one considers certain esoteric dimensions and mystic individuals within Christianity which merge with the Kabbalistic and Alchemical traditions.

<sup>14</sup> 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. John 1:1-3.

<sup>15</sup> *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, on-line resource for entry of 'Mount Calvary' at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03191a.htm>

<sup>16</sup> 'and so they reached a place called Golgotha, that is, the place named after a skull', Matthew 27:33

<sup>17</sup> Harold Turner, *From Temple to Meeting Place: The Phenomenology and Theology of Places to Worship*, (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1979), 138. He also continues that 'When Christ replaced the temple, its functions as cosmic centre, expressed also in sacred tree and mountain, were subsumed in his action and person'.



redemption. The vertical axis thus combines the two Adamic individuals, sin and redemption, and the mountain and the cross (or tree) into a single homologous symbol.<sup>18</sup> Thus Cyril of Jerusalem could say, 'God stretched out his hands upon the cross in order to embrace the utmost limits of the Earth and this makes this hill of Golgotha the pivot of the world.'<sup>19</sup> Gregory of Nyssa also states that the cross is the seal which is impressed on heaven and on the depths of the Earth.<sup>20</sup> Guénon points out that the cross, in this case the *cruci-fixus*, is a cross of resolution of opposites, in that it resolves sin and redemption, past and future and mercy and rigour (Image 3.3).<sup>21</sup>



Image 3.3 The Crucifixion by Theophanes the Cretan. Christ crucified upon Golgotha above the cave containing the skull of Adam. The ensemble of symbols establishing the vertical axis upon Earth represents the resolution of opposites such as sin and redemption. This is repeated in the two flanking crucified figures of the good and the bad thief and the Sun being eclipsed by the Moon.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The traditional art of icon painting often embodies all of these symbols graphically in a single representation. For a detailed study of the symbolism involved refer to Richard Temple, *Icons and the Mythical Origins of Christianity*, (Shaftesbury: Element Books, 1990).

<sup>19</sup> According to the sermon preached on the very spot by St. Cyril. *Catechesis*, 13.28. In his catechetical lecture he also mentions that Christ 'having been nailed to the tree, and having died, sin might die with it' See also Rahner, *Greek Myths & Christian Mystery* (New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1971), 51. The Catechetical Lecture is available at: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310113.htm>.

<sup>20</sup> Rahner, *Greek Myths & Christian Mystery*, 52.

<sup>21</sup> Guénon, *Symbolism of the Cross*, 49 and more specifically in regard to the cross being associated with the 'tree in the midst'.

<sup>22</sup> Guénon, *Symbolism of the Cross*, 49.

This complex symbol could be broadened further by considering that Jesus replaces the temple on Mount Zion and as the 'new temple' could be a link between the three realms, a 'new centre' whereby communication is established throughout the cosmos, in the same way that the vertical axis is symbolised by the mountain or the column of smoke which followed the tabernacle in its wanderings. The crucifixion of Christ forms a transcendental axis like the sacred mountain.<sup>23</sup> In the New Testament teaching, Jesus was approached when he was sitting near Jacob's well by a Samaritan woman who said:

"Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.'"<sup>24</sup>

The implication was that the New Covenant would usher in a new metaphysical way in which prayers would be 'directed' towards neither a mountain nor a sacred location. Rather, the new vector would be directed to the Father, overriding the significance of Mt Gerizim for the Samaritans and even Jerusalem for the Jewish people.<sup>25</sup>

The traditional conception of Universal Man is a being that is the total and complete syntheses of the universal and individual domains personified as deity. This is far from the usual sense of anthropomorphism. Primordial man is the archetype of creation as he is its purpose and its entelechy.<sup>26</sup> That is why God addresses the Prophet of Islam, Mohammed (PBUH) as the incarnation of the Primordial Man with the words '*If thou wert not, I would not have created the world*'.<sup>27</sup> This perspective envisages the human reality in its divine and cosmic dimensions. It is not a question of seeing God and the world in our own image but of seeing the world and ourselves within one Divine creation, Universal Man. Universal Man is central to creation, its central focus. This centrality relates to all manifestation; individual man in this role is 'pontifical man' or the bridge (*pontifex*) between heaven and earth, the *anthropo*.<sup>28</sup> In the traditional view, man is located away from the centre, the position being filled by a king-priest with the divine mandate to rule. He is the vice-regent of God, the *Khalifatullah* on earth, to use the Islamic term, the caretaker of the worldly paradise.<sup>29</sup>

While the traditions differ in detail, emphasising different characteristics of the human state and the importance assigned to the human state, there is agreement that man is the most

<sup>23</sup> Christ replied to Nathaniel '*you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man*, (John 1, 51). This establishes a link between the experience of Jacob and Christ as the means of ascending the ladder into heaven. Further still, the stone upon which Jacob slept became according to Jewish legend, the foundation stone of the temple and hence Christ not only is assimilated to the ladder of Jacob but also to the Jewish temple, and in fact, replaces both. See Turner *From Temple to Meeting Place: The Phenomenology and Theology of Places to Worship*, 139.

<sup>24</sup> John 4:20-22.

<sup>25</sup> The Samaritans being a parallel development of the Abrahamic Religion that branched from the ancient Israelites prior to the Babylonian Exile. For the Samaritans Mt Gerizim is the same as Jerusalem to the Jewish branch. The question as to where prayers would be directed was a significant ethno-religious question of the time.

It is metaphysically curious why the *Ka'bah* later was returned as a geographic direction within the other great Abrahamic religion, Islam. That is unless the *Ka'bah* is taken symbolically.

<sup>26</sup> In the old Iranian religions, and Zoroastrianism the sacrifice of the Primordial Man *Gayomart* is associated with the creation of the world and its various orders and realms, different parts of His 'body' are associated with the different orders such as the animal, plant and mineral worlds. Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 165.

<sup>27</sup> A *Hâdith* quoted by Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, 166.

<sup>28</sup> Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred*. Refer to the Chapter 'Man Pontifical and Promethean'. Also Guénon, *The Lord of the World*, (Moorecote, Combe Springs Press, 1983) develops this discussion and more particularly the geographic location of the *Khalifatullah*.

<sup>29</sup> To which, 'fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that moves upon the earth', Genesis, 1.28.

complete reflection of possibilities in Being. Universal man has a double significance, first in relation to the world and second in relation to the individual. In relation to the world, Universal Man is the archetypal reality of the universe, the universe in principle and totality. He is also the means whereby individual beings descend from the Universal Domain. In relation to man, Universal Man is the perfect model for human life and the ultimate goal of being's spiritual integration with Being. By virtue of Universal Man, individual man can participate in the human being's full formal principle. Through this universal reality, man can follow the path of perfection of his formal origin that will bring him closer to or more perfectly reflecting the human being's eternal birthright (Diagram 3.2).

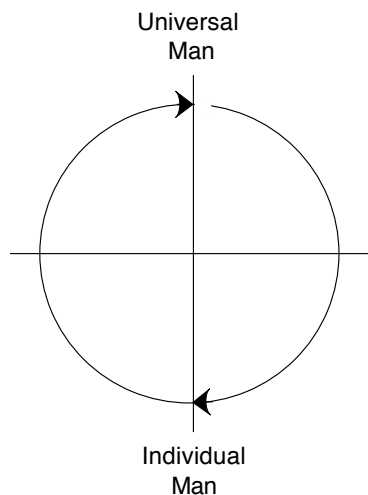


Diagram 3.2 Individual man as the inverse reflection of Universal Man.

## The Body of *Purusha*

In the Hindu tradition the doctrine of Universal Man is explicit and comprehensive. *Purusha* is the universal personification of Essence, the principle of all things.<sup>30</sup> In this form, *Purusha* is the creator of all existence and in his persona is the Cosmic or Supernal Man: 'Purusha above is this entire world both past and future'. *Purusha* creates existence through self sacrifice; part by part, the gods are born from him. From his mind is born the moon, from his eye the sun, from his mouth fire, from his breath the air and from his feet the earth. His being is given up to them and becomes spent as he enters manifestation.<sup>31</sup> In his sacrificed mode he is also called *Prajâpati*, Lord of progeny (*prajâ*) and the totality of existence and who continually spends himself in an ever renewed, ever proceeding sacrifice by which the universe is continually sustained.<sup>32</sup> In the *Śatapatha-Brâhmaṇa* it is written that:

<sup>30</sup> Guénon, in *Symbolism of the Cross*, treats *Purusha* mostly in association with *Prakriti* as analogous terms to Essence and Substance. A more detailed treatment of the deity as Universal Man is given in *An Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines*.

<sup>31</sup> The recited in the 'Hymn of the Cosmic Man', the *Purusha Suktam*. *Rig Veda*, X.90.5. There are many translations of this well recited hymn such as: <http://sacred-texts.com/hin/rigveda/rv10090.htm>.

<sup>32</sup> Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 67-82.



Prajâpati having created these worlds, was firmly established upon this earth. For him these parts were ripened into food; that he ate. He became pregnant, from the upper vital airs he created the gods, and from the lower vital airs the mortal creatures. In whatever he created thereafter, so he created; but indeed it was Prajâpati who created everything here, whatever exists.

Having created creatures he, having run the whole race, became relaxed; <sup>33</sup> and therefore even he who runs the whole race becomes indeed relaxed. From him being relaxed, the vital air went out from within. When it had gone out of him the Gods left him.

He said to Agni 'restore me' ..... 'So be it! so saying Agni restored him: therefore while being Prajâpati, they call him Agni.'<sup>34</sup>

So *Agni* is also *Prajâpati* and *Purusha*. 'That same Person (Purusha) became Prajâpati (Lord of Generation). And that Person which became Prajâpati is this very Agni.....'.<sup>35</sup> *Purusha* is not exhausted by this dismemberment (unlike *Prajâpati*) for his principal self is not divided, nor is he localised in ephemeral beings. It is only his manifested and apparent form that is sacrificed, while his eternal nature remains as it ever was, so that he is at the same time the victim, the sacrifice and the goal of the sacrifice. To paraphrase Burckhardt, on this rather complex issue, multiplicity is not in the nature of God but in the nature of the world. It is nonetheless prefigured principally by the distinctions between the various aspects or functions of the Divine (for example the Divine Qualities or the extremities of *Prajâpati* in a symbolic mode) and it is these aspects or functions that 'sacrifice' God in manifesting Him in His separate modes (Image 3.4).<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Literally, he fell asunder, to pieces and disjointed. Hence, when the Gods 'restored' him *Prajâpati* is 'put together' (*samskri*) and this putting together is further identified with the building of the *Vedic* fire altar.

<sup>34</sup> *Śatapatha-Brahmaṇa*, trans. Julius Eggeling, *Sacred Books of the East Series* Vol. XLI, XLII, XLIII, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978), V1.1.2.11-14.

<sup>35</sup> The paragraph continues '.....this very *Agni* (fire altar) who is now (to be) built.' S.B. V1.1.1.5. This identifies the altar with the sacrificial body of *Prajâpati*. The building is a re-building of the cosmic body of *Purusha* and the plan of the Hindu Temple is identified with the body of *Purusha*.

<sup>36</sup> *Sacred Art in East and West*, 20. Burckhardt adds a footnote which is of interest here in the light of what has been quoted from Ibn 'Arabi's *Fusus al-Hikâm*. He writes, 'The myth of the immolation of *Prajâpati* by the *Devas* is analogous to the Sufi doctrine according to which God manifested the multiple universe by his multiple Names, the diversity of the world being as it were 'necessitated' by the Names'. The analogy in question becomes still more striking when it is said that God manifested Himself in the world by virtue of His Names.

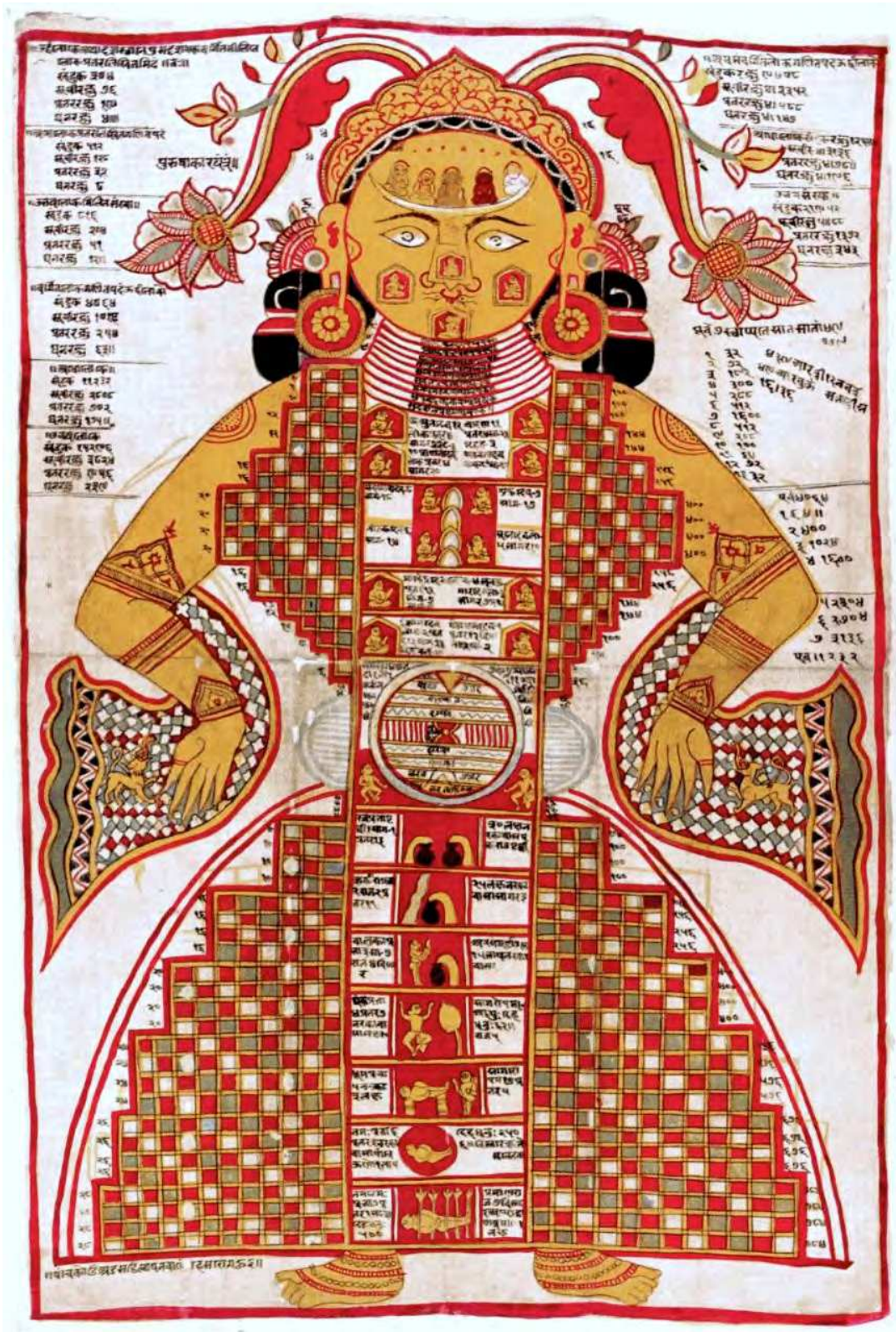


Image 3.4 Lord Purusha in the form of the Purushakara Yantra.<sup>37</sup> The Cosmic Man and figuration of the world.

<sup>37</sup> A yantra is the Sanskrit terminology for a mystical diagram that aids contemplation usually of a specific deity or metaphysical principle. In this case the figuration is that of Lord Purusha. The diagram is complex and an entire thesis could be written on the relationship of such diagrams with the form of the Hindu Temple but can be mentioned in passing here.



*Vāstu-Purusha* is *Purusha* confined within the *mandala* of the earthly domain and a related deity, *Kāla-Purusha* is *Purusha* in his cosmic temporal mode restrained within the signs and squares of the cosmic zodiac. With his head to the Northeast *Nakshatra-Purusha* is described as moving with his head around the Pole Star, *Dhruva* and facing toward *Mount Sumeru*<sup>42</sup> (Diagram 3.3 & Image 3.6, & 3.7). In Southern India there is a strong astrological tradition that identifies the *Adityas*, which are the twelve solar houses and the signs of the zodiac along the ecliptic plane, with aspects of the cosmic body of *Purusha*. While not specifically part of the architectural text known as the *Vāstu-shastra*, figurations are related via ritual practice, as has been detailed by Brenda Beck.<sup>43</sup> *Kāla-Purusha* lies within the twelve *Adityas* which are the solar houses and the signs of the zodiac along the ecliptic plane. The location of the twelve houses can be depicted in the outer squares of 4x4 matrix similar to a form of the *Vāstu mandala*. The twelve houses relate to a twelvefold division of the body laid out in the centre of the matrix. According to Beck, the Sun's movement around the celestial houses commences in Aries and continues through Libra at the halfway point and back to Pisces. This motion of the Sun is seen as descending from the skull down to the abdomen and finally the feet of *Purusha*.<sup>44</sup> When embedded within the Hindu temple, the *Vāstu-Purusha mandala* similarly assimilates the world to the temple and the temple to cosmic man.<sup>45</sup> The world is to the temple what the temple is to Universal Man and becomes an algorithm of similitude, expressible in the formulation:

World:Temple:Man  
or  
Universal-Man:Temple:Individual-man

The temple becomes a point of mediation, the common denominator of the macrocosm and the microcosm that allows the world and Cosmic Man to be equated.<sup>46</sup>

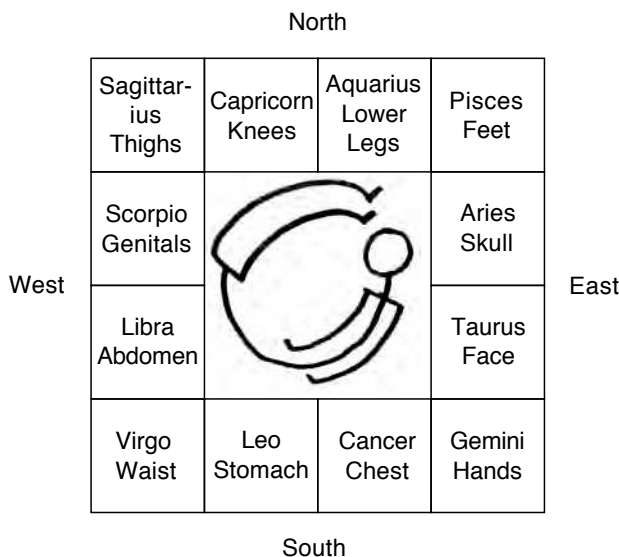


Diagram 3.3

Representation of *Kāla-Purusha* within the twelve *Adityas* or solar houses, the signs of the Zodiac are identified with parts of the body of *Purusha*.<sup>47</sup> The *Adityas* are similarly arranged around the *Vāstu-Purusha mandala*, as detailed in the various, Hindu treatises on architecture called the *Vāstu-shastra*.

<sup>42</sup> Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 72.

<sup>43</sup> Beck, 'The Symbolic Merger of Body Space and Cosmos in the Hindu Temple', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (NS), Vol. 10, No. 2 (1976), 213-243.

<sup>44</sup> Beck, 'The Symbolic Merger of Body, Space and Cosmos'.

<sup>45</sup> Patai, *Man and Temple*, 85.

<sup>46</sup> The application of the *Vāstu-Purusha mandala* to the plan of the Hindu temple can be only glimpsed in passing in this study but is substantive. Refer to those works already cited and also Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa*, 104-152.

<sup>47</sup> Diagram based on similar diagram in Beck, 'The Symbolic Merger of Body, Space and Cosmos'.





Image 3.6

*Kāla Purusha* or *Nakshatra Purusha* from an astrological manuscript, Rajasthan, 18th century.



Image 3.7

*Graha* and *Kāla-Purusha* from an astrologer's wall chart, Gujarat, made recently.

## The Universal Man & the Centre of the Earth

The traditional teachings of Universal Man embrace the metaphysical, cosmogonic, the revelatory and initiatic functions of the human state. Terrestrial man on the other hand is the individual externalisation, coagulation and dim reflection of the universal realms and by participating in the reflected states can potentially fulfil its possibilities. It is the function of tradition and religious revelation to guide individual man to the greatest realisation of the possibilities in Universal Man. In individual mode, the human being is incomplete and separated from the unity of the universal realm but through participation in the archetype, identification with the perfect 'form' is possible.

The manifestation of a perfected personage upon earth is an embodiment of the principles contained in Universal Man. This perfect corporeal individual is located at the centre of the world. This position is often, if not always, related to a spiritual revelation in which the corporeal individual becomes the 'centre' of that revelation. Jesus Christ, the historical or *Gautama Buddha* and Mohammed the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) constitute this central quality which puts them in a particular place and time as the centre of the revelation. They constitute a type of ordained centre of spirituality on earth. The saints, prophets and historical individuals associated with a particular revelation are secondary centres that reinforce the revelation embodied by the perfected individual and they become a centre in a more limited and relative state.

In a related way, the ideas of centrality and authority are a direct projection of the Divine Quality of Authority and Power, like the idea of the 'Lord of the World'. The Divine Qualities are projections in the human world of the supreme spiritual and the temporal ruler of the Earth. These principles are reflected in more limited domains as the notion of kingship in its various forms. This projection separates further in most applications into the domains of temporal and spiritual authority. Both are projections of the Primordial Man in a limited domain, typically according to Guénon, limited to a period, age or geographic location. The central function of such individuals in the world could be elaborated upon in great detail; however, it is their role as centres in space and time and manifested as architectural seats of authority that is important here.<sup>48</sup> The embodiment of the 'Lord of the World' expressing the 'Will of Heaven' through an individual is a cosmic event and has correspondences in all levels of manifestation. So while this gives a centre in terms of individual significance, it also manifests geographically because centrality is both internal and external and applicable to all domains within individual manifestation.<sup>49</sup>

In Diagram 2.1 and related diagrams, the corporeal state (along with the other multiple states) is represented by horizontal lines. If one considers a single state, the modalities can be represented as a circular plane, a square or any other shape, such as the surface of the Earth or a geographic area. The formal cause can be expressed as a single ray penetrating the state, and each modality relates to this causal axis. The point where this axis penetrates is the centre of the modalities of that state. This point acts as the centre of equilibrium and the perfect reflection of formal possibilities; in a way it contains the other modalities, which are merely extensions of its perfection. It is also the sum of the modalities of that particular state. This centre, called the

---

<sup>48</sup> Refer to Guénon, *Lord of the World*, and Coomaraswamy, *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in the Indian Theory of Government* for a full treatment of these subjects. Guénon refers to this mandate as the 'Will of Heaven', in *Symbolism of the Cross*, passim, 99-103.

<sup>49</sup> The 'Will of Heaven' becomes particularly important in the Chinese with the centrality of the state and its manifestation as the capital city and the *Ming Tang* as the emperor's palace which will be developed further in Chapter 9. Similarly in Cambodia and Java. This is largely the theme of Paul Wheatley, *The Pivot of the Four Quarters: The Origins and Character of the Ancient Chinese City* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971), Part Two, 225-482 which explores the same principle of kingship in numerous cultures and traditions.



'explicit centre' of its domain, becomes the conduit for the development of all formal possibilities (Diagram 3.4).

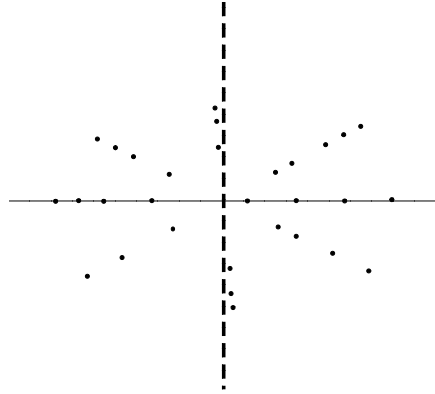


Diagram 3.4 The 'explicit centre' at the centre of state comprising the sum of the all of modalities particular to that state.

This model is like Plato's 'whorl' in which the disc of the whorl represents the world and the vertical axis is the 'spindle of necessity'.<sup>50</sup> The same model can be used to explain how multiple forms are projected outward and how in fact all existence results from the indefinite number of formal possibilities projected centrifugally into the multiple states. Each radius can be said to represent one of many possible forms in existence. The centre in Diagram 3.4 is thus another expression of the explicit centre, except in this instance it is the centre of equilibrium of all forms and in its unity a reflection of Being, the 'invariable middle' at the centre of manifest existence (Image 3.8).<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> The 'myth of Er' is recalled in the *Republic* (10.614) but the cosmic scheme finds other references in Plato's *Timaeus* and *Phaedo*. The significance of the 'spindle of necessity' goes way beyond the considerations touched on here and are connected to the axis of the spinning earth and the precession of the equinoxes. The consequences of the universal myth is elaborated in Santillana and Dechend, *Hamlet's Mill: An Essay Investigating the Origins of Human Knowledge and Its Transmission Through Myth* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1969).

<sup>51</sup> Refer to Guénon, *The Great Triad*, the 'invariable middle' is discussed extensively. Also *Symbolism of the Cross*, 34 & 113. More specifically it is the centre of 'world state'.



Image 3.8 *Neak Pean temple* sits on a circular base within a square pond which in turn is located in the centre of a island within an artificial lake (*baray*) and associated with a larger temple called *Preak Khan*, in the ancient central Khmer capital of Angkor, Cambodia. The ensemble is symbolic of the central vertical axis within the horizontal domain. The original name of the temple was *Rajyasri*, meaning the 'fortune of the kingdom'.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Michael Freeman & Claude Jacques, *Ancient Angkor* (Bangkok: Asia Books, 1999), 178-180.

## The Explicit & Implicit Centres

The first model introduced in Chapter 1 and developed in Diagram 3.4 relates to the notion of existence as the cosmic or world egg (in Sanskrit the *Brahmānda*).<sup>53</sup> These two models have the explicit centre as their common point of contact. The essential ray passes through the centre of a state and is projected from the centre of the sphere of existence. This ray of Essence constitutes a connection with Being projected through the state and coincident with that field of modalities. In this way it is the central point of contact between the Universal Domain and a particular state. The field through which the ray passes need not be considered as a circular figure but is any state corporeal or non-corporeal but can still be referred to as an 'explicit centre' (Diagram 3.5).

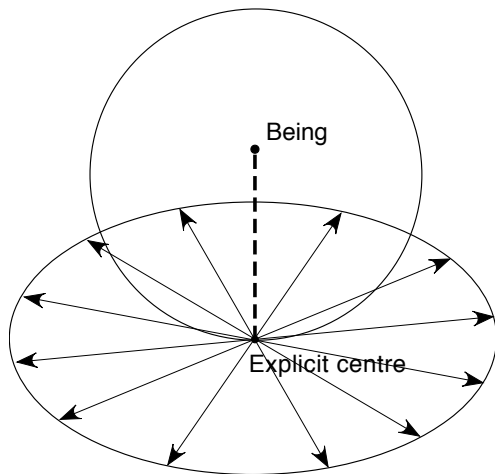


Diagram 3.5

The explicit centre as the central point of contact between the Universal Domain and a particular state of existence.

The two models are related in another way if the field is considered to be a section of the surface of an indefinite radius. This means that the two models are essentially descriptive of the same metaphorical relationships (Diagram 3.6). The capacity for such multileveled correspondences to be symbolised by spatial figuration partly explains the role of geometry as the pre-eminent language for traditional metaphysics.

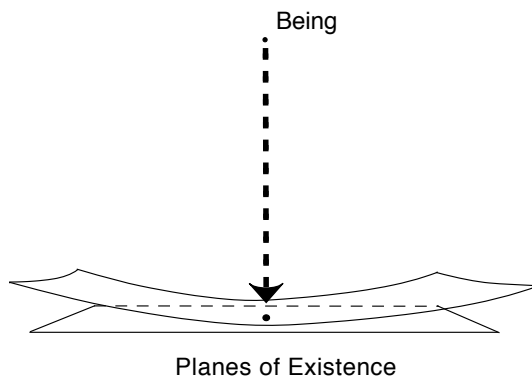


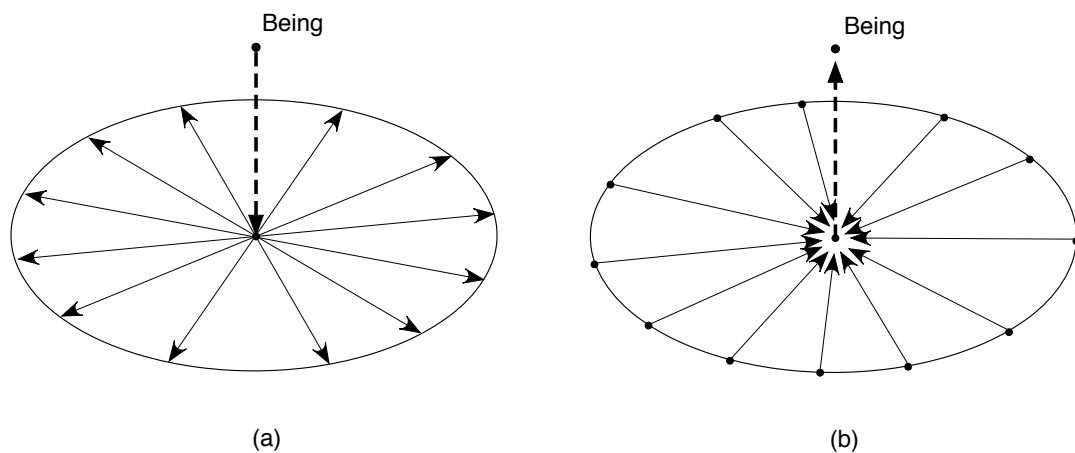
Diagram 3.6

The explicit centre in a plan of existence.

<sup>53</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 106,

The notion of the explicit centre is to identify this central point as the image of Being or of Universal Man as the *Pontifex*, the King-Priest or the vice-regent of God, the *Khalifatallah* in a particular domain. This centre acts as a channel in which unity unfolds into multiplicity. Since every state has an explicit centre which acts as a centroid to the field of the modalities, the explicit centre is identified with the outpouring or unfolding of Being. It is explicit through the external unfolding of the order of Being into existence through its modalities within each state in a centrifugal manner.

The inverse view of this process starts with multiplicity and approaches inward to achieve the centre and centripetal action leads to the centre as the reflection of Universal Man as well, but it does so from the point of view of multiplicity. To differentiate the two perspectives to what is essentially the same centre, the term 'implicit centre' shall be used to denote the centre which is internally derived by individual being or attained rather than externally projected from Being if such 'directionality' can be allowed. The explicit centre derives its origin amid the domain or state directly as a reflection of Being. It is the Great Centre or the hub of the universe as seen from the perspective of the world and individual man. It is also the point through which Being is the axle-rod or axletree connecting two centres and their wheels. All influences from above come through the central point of any and all states, and all states (not only the corporeal state) have such a centre (see Diagrams 3.7(a) & (b)).



Diagrams 3.7 (a) The 'explicit centre' as the centre projected from the reflection of Being.  
(b) The 'implicit centre' as the centre subjectively derived.

Guénon, does not use the terms 'explicit centre' and 'implicit centre' in *Symbolism of the Cross*. However, it is useful in discussing the two actions, one represents an action that is centrifugal and relates to macrocosmic considerations from Being and the other centripetal and relates to microcosmic considerations respectively. In the exact same way the words in the original Latin, 'centrifugal' deriving from *contrifugus* is from *centrum*, 'centre' + *fugus* meaning to flee and centripetal deriving from *centipetus*, 'centre' + *petre* meaning to 'seek'. The two notions are hence complementary pairs of opposite actions. The centre represents the resolution of opposites which is one of the main themes of *Symbolism of the Cross*.

## The Supernal Heart

Man embodies within the being's individuality all that is externally embodied in the world, and just as man was said to be central to individual manifestation so is there a function at the centre of man, in most traditional teachings, the divine spark of Divine Being. The divinity at the centre of every being is most often identifiable with the heart, 'the seat of the soul'. The centre is 'this *Atmâ* which dwells in the heart',<sup>54</sup> according to the Hindu tradition and 'He truly, indeed, is the Self (*Atmâ*) within the heart, very subtle, kindled like fire, assuming all forms. ...'<sup>55</sup> and 'That God, the All-worker, the Great Self (*Mahâtman*), Ever seated in the heart of creatures, is framed by the heart ...'.<sup>56</sup> This same heart which is the seat of *Atmâ* is also identifiable with the Sun as a symbol for the solar aspects of the Divinity, thus it is also related to *Purusha*, 'Now, that golden Person (*Purusha*) who is within the Sun, who looks down upon the Earth from his golden place, is ever He who dwells within the heart.....'<sup>57</sup> and also this 'heart is the same as *Prajâpati* (Lord of Creation). It is *Brahmâ*, It is all'.<sup>58</sup> Thus the heart is not the limited physical organ of the body, but the supra-physical heart of the being; in other words, the bodily heart is the symbol for the supernal heart. This does not mean that the corporeal heart is not without its own expression of centrality; on the contrary, the heart is to the body what the supernal heart is to the total being. The physical heart is central to the vitality of the corporeal body of individual being through its function of the circulation of life-sustaining blood. But the spiritual heart, like *Atmâ*, is not limited to corporeal dimension:

This *Atmâ*, which dwells in the heart, is smaller than a grain of rice, smaller than a grain of barley, smaller than a grain of mustard, smaller than a grain of millet, smaller than the germ which is in the grain of millet; this *Atmâ* which dwells in the heart, is also greater than the earth, greater than the atmosphere, greater than the sky, greater than all the worlds together. .... this is *Atmâ* within the heart.<sup>59</sup>

The supernal heart is thus both small and enormous; in its capacity for containment, it is the ultimate receptacle for the embodiment of the Self. Islamic teachings express similar ideas about the pre-eminent position of man's heart. Ibn 'Arabi writes:

The heart of the gnostic possesses such an amplitude that Abû Yazîd al-Bistâmî said of it; if the Divine Throne with all that surrounds it were to be found a hundred million times in a corner of the heart of the gnostic, he would not feel it; and Junayd said in the same sense; if the ephemeral and the eternal are joined, there remains no further trace of the former; now could the heart which contains the eternal feel the existence of the ephemeral?<sup>60</sup>

The heart is thus indefinite in its capacity for containment, or greater still, infinitely capable of containing Divinity, for if Being Itself is containable within the heart then the heart must have this capacity. 'Containment' is used here in an analogical sense; rendering this capacity as 'amplitude' embraces this capacity of residing in Being.<sup>61</sup> In this respect the heart can be associated with the

<sup>54</sup> *Chândogya Upanishad*, 3:14.1-4., as quoted in Guénon, *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedânta*, 41.

<sup>55</sup> *Maitri Upanishad*, VII,7.

<sup>56</sup> *Śvetâ'svatara Upanishad*, IV,17. as quoted in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 823.

<sup>57</sup> *Maitri Upanishad*, VI,1.

<sup>58</sup> *Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad*, V.3. as quoted in Perry *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 823.

<sup>59</sup> *Chândogya Upanishad*, III,XIV,3-4.

<sup>60</sup> *Fusus al-Hikâm*. 12: The Seal of the Wisdom of the Heart in the Word of Shu'ayb (Jethro)'. Titus Burckhardt's translation quoted in, *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, 109.

<sup>61</sup> The word 'amplitude'; being from the Latin *amplitudinem* meaning 'wide extent or width', from *amplus* meaning 'large, spacious'.

Principial Point and its dimensionless potential. 'Man's heart is the central point and heaven the circumference'.<sup>62</sup> The Persian Sufi mystic poet Shabista'î writes further:

In each atom a hundred suns are concealed.....  
The core in the centre of the heart is small,  
Yet the Lord of both worlds will enter there.<sup>63</sup>

The heart is the centre of the body, the body is the centre of the world and this expansion in amplitude is the expansion of that Principial Point. The Principial Point in fact is often symbolised by the smallest seed, the mustard seed, which according to the Apostle St. Matthew, is 'the smallest of all seeds, yet when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree.' The small mustard seed is 'like the Kingdom of Heaven',<sup>64</sup> it resides within the Principial Point. It is the heart of the being as the central point of manifestation of the '*Kingdom of Heaven*' within the individual being. The supernal heart is a subjective consideration of the central Principial Point, contained in the 'secret place' yet identifiable and identical with the heart of the universe through the correspondence of Universal Man. The *Chândogya Upanishad* explains:

Truly, this space inside the heart is as great as this world space; in it are resolved both, the heaven and the earth - both the fire and the wind, both the Sun and the Moon, the lightning and the stars and what are below here possess and does not possess, everything resolved therein.<sup>65</sup>

Only the heart of the pure can contain all manifestation in such a way. In the words of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) 'My earth and heaven contain me not, but the heart of My faithful servant containeth Me'.<sup>66</sup> This centre of man, this heart, is also what was called the 'implicit centre'. A movement toward the implicit centre is a movement toward the very essence in man's potential depth of being. This centre is implied rather than concrete in a mode and in this sense, the heart is hidden, buried or veiled. Unlike the explicit centre, the implicit centre need not be a definite point in the physical body; rather the body itself can be considered a sacred space. The same determination of sacred space applies to man, in that it is only Being that can legitimately act as the centre within sacred space in such a fashion. Traditional teaching states that an individual being simply prepares and purifies the heart in order that the sacred principle may dwell within, for the Divine 'goeth where it listeth'<sup>67</sup> and not according to man's whim. This ultimately is equivalent to the action of Divine Grace as it falls upon sacred space. Man likewise undergoes spiritual preparation and purification in the same way as the sanctification of external space. In both cases there are no exact formulations which give a predetermined result, man simply prepares, but the Sacred Principle Acts. So it is in this sense that the implicit centre is sought and prepared within orthodox religious practice and the 'Will of God' becomes actualized.

The supernal heart is the centre of the total being of Man but there corresponds other centres within different domains of the body which play a similar role as the heart in regard to the total being. There is thus the idea of the 'bodily centre' of man, which is commonly identified with the navel or the mid-point of the belly. The navel of the body is the visible point of centrality in terms of the corporeal body, it is the point of stability and, at least up until his birth into the world, is also

<sup>62</sup> From *The Secret Rose Garden* of Sa'd Ud Din Mahmud Shabistari, trans. Florence Lederer, (London: J. Murray, 1920). Also cited in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 825.

<sup>63</sup> Shabista'î, *The Secret Rose Garden*, 'The Mirror', 52-53.

<sup>64</sup> Matthew 13.31.

<sup>65</sup> *Chândogya Upanishad*, 8.1.3. From *Sixty Upanishads of the Veda*, Paul Deussen, 191.

<sup>66</sup> *Hâdith* attributed to the Prophet (PBUH), numerous sources. Refer to Timothy Scott, 'The Container and the Contained', *Vincit Omnia Veritas*, II, 2. On-line resource available at: <http://religioperennis.org/documents/Scott/container.pdf>.

<sup>67</sup> John 3:8.



the functional centre of attachment to the womb and nourishment via the umbilical chord. The navel is to the physical body what the heart is to the total being. The word umbilical and the word navel have the same origin, navel derives from the Latin *umbilicus*. The word *omphalos* also has a similar root from the Latin. Thus the notions of navel, omphalos and umbilical all have a similar meaning in regard to centredness and attachment to the central point of the corporeal world or individual body.

## CHAPTER 4:

# THE CENTRE & THE VERTICAL AXIS

The idea of centre and the supernal heart is also applicable to the view of the world as the macrocosm. It is an external view subject to two vantage points, at least in its graphic representation. First, there is the viewpoint of the manifest world looking out from the centre towards the universal; second, there is the perspective from the universal towards individual manifest existence as a centre. Each view includes the other but the question of virtuality and inversion is of great metaphysical and cosmological significance. The two cosmological perspectives have become known in the West as the geocentric cosmos and the theocentric cosmos. These perspectives are explored in this chapter for their relationship to the principal idea of the centre. As mentioned above, both systems are complementary but inverted in respect to each other, both represent a cosmological model that is centered and both conceive manifestation as an ordered arrangement of different entities.

The geocentric, or Ptolemaic, model (Diagram 4.1(a)) of the universe places earth and individual man at the centre of the cosmos around which the other spheres of existence are arranged. These other spheres include the planets and their orbits, the Moon and the Sun. Surrounding these spheres is the sphere of the fixed stars and beyond that the Empyrean and the sphere of the Universal Domain. The gradation of these celestial spheres reflects the ontological order of existence, according to which each degree of existence is preceded by a higher degree, such that the higher degree contains the lower degree, just as a cause contains an effect. The more distant the sphere, the purer, less conditioned and nearer to Divine Origin is that degree of existence. The universal or Empyrean domain that surrounds the starry heavens imparts movement to the whole system, is the 'prime mover' or *primum mobile* and the all-embracing Divine Intellect. This cosmological model, which is shared by many traditions, is the model that most closely approximates the observable universe from the standpoint of the human on Earth and is primarily determined by observing the movement of the celestial bodies. The more rapid the motion of a celestial body in relation to the unmoving and fixed stars, the more transitory the celestial sphere in which that body moves. Since the Moon moves most rapidly, it is closest to the Earth, followed by Mercury, Venus and the Sun, followed in turn by Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Beyond these relatively fast moving bodies is the backdrop of the fixed stars and beyond them again the sphere of the semi-eternal Zodiac.

The observed cosmos is only part of the totality represented in some traditional concepts of the geocentric schema. These additional dimensions were developed in the classical Greek tradition and further expanded in the Islamic tradition. They found fertile soil later in the alchemical, Christian and Kabbalistic traditions, broadening the concept of simple celestial bodies and orbits into a metaphysical schema whereby the ontology of existence is represented by further and further spherical shells. The observed universe becomes a symbol, or more exactly, the universe

proceeds from a design that is firstly in the mind of God and then secondly, is reflected in the physical universe: 'God made this (terrestrial) world in the image of the world above; thus all which is found above has its analogy below ..... and everything constitutes a unity.'<sup>1</sup> Each planet or planetary sphere becomes a symbol for a particular non-corporeal reality and each section of the Zodiac becomes a particular symbol for the divine qualities; hence the profound significance of the astrological and alchemical traditions.<sup>2</sup>

What is discussed here is the Ptolemaic, not the Copernican, cosmological view. The Copernican model is a hybrid of the Ptolemaic view in that it locates the solar sphere in the centre and the earthly centre in the fourth tier or orbit; other than this, the Copernican model is similar, graphically at least. The Sun as the centre is symbolic in its own right, the solar centre plays a unique role as the image of the Universal Domain and is an equally valid symbol as the image of Divinity. This model differs from the theocentric model (Diagram 4.1(b)) developed in Chapter 1 with the principle of Being at the centre and manifest existence projected towards the perimeter.

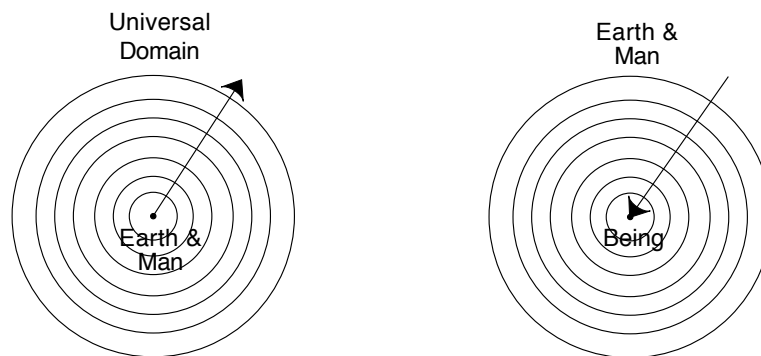


Diagram 4.1(a) (Left) Schematic diagram of the geocentric or homocentric view with the Earth and man at the centre.

Diagram 4.1(b) (Right) Schematic diagram of the theocentric model with Being placed at the centre of the universe. If the effulgent Sun is taken as a symbol for radiant being, then the heliocentric view becomes an inverted cosmological model.

A further dimension to the geocentric model of the cosmos locates individual terrestrial man at the fixed point of the centre. This is related to the totality of the movements of the stars and planets and symbolises again the role man plays in the cosmogonic schema as its focus. Man is at once the goal and the centre of the universe. The geocentric cosmos, is in total conformity with the reality as it presents itself to the human perception and according to Titus Burckhardt 'contains in itself all the logical coherence requisite to a body of knowledge for constituting an exact science'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Zohar II, 20a, Midrash ha-Ne'elam* also as quoted in Perry, *Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 306. The congruence with the the previously quoted phrase from the Emerald Tablet cannot go with comment.

<sup>2</sup> In this regard see the works of Titus Burckhardt intelligently reveals the great metaphysical significance of these often maligned traditional sciences. Works include *Alchemy, Mystical Astrology According to Ibn 'Arabi*, trans. Bulent Rauf (Aldsworth: Beshara Publishers, 1977) and the essay 'Cosmology & Modern Science' in *Mirror of the Intellect*, trans. William Stoddart (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 17-67, which compares the symbolic treatment of cosmology with the profane sciences of today.

This important relation of traditional science to metaphysics is taken up also by Wolfgang Smith in most of his writings principally, *Cosmology & Transcendence: Breaking Through the Barrier of Scientific Belief*, (San Rafael: Sophia Perennis, 2008) and *The Wisdom of Ancient Cosmology: Contemporary Science in the Light of Tradition*, (Oakton: The Foundation for Traditional Studies, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Burckhardt, *Mystical Astrology*, 10.



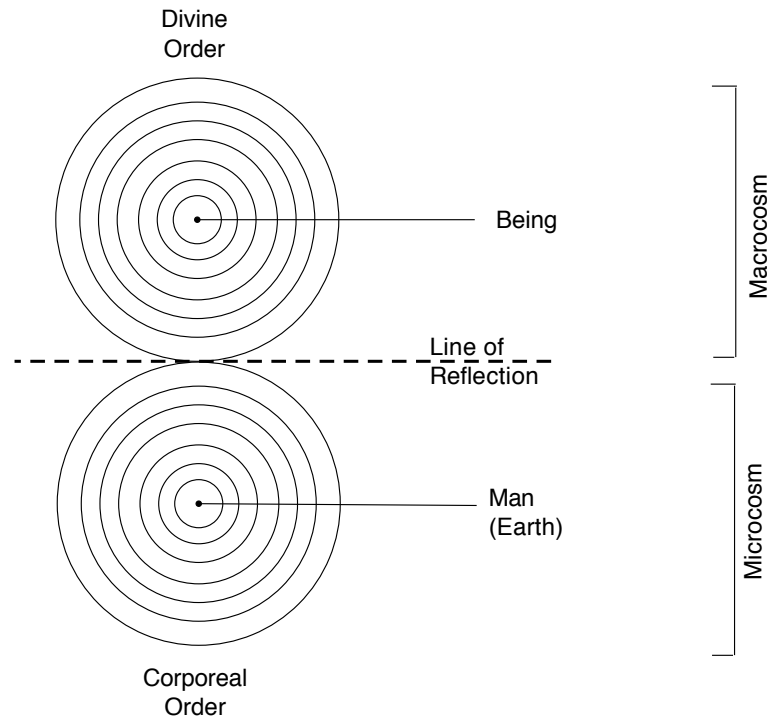


Diagram 4.2 The congruity between the microcosmic and geocentric model below and the macrocosmic and theocentric model above.

Again, we are dealing with inverted symbolism and the notions of internalised and externalised symbols for the Principle of Creation. Thus both schemes are congruent in content but antinomic in their points of view.<sup>5</sup> One model uses the point to symbolise Being, the other uses indefinite space to symbolize the same notion. The nature of the Principial Point is that it is all space and all points. Each physical point or geometric point is a single development of the virtuality of the Principial Point, likewise with the indefinite extension of space, it is totally legitimate to say that Being is represented both by the single point and also by the indefinite number of all points. Applied to the idea of centeredness or centrality, this means that with regard to Being, the location of the centre may be represented as a central point, but also that every point is It's centre. Thus it is possible to say that '*God's centre is everywhere, His circumference is nowhere*'.<sup>6</sup>

The various states in between the centre and the periphery of the two models represent the various modes or levels of existence which are developed between the two poles. Without pre-empting what is to be discussed in Chapter 5, it can be said that the domain in between the two poles contains a gradation of manifestation representing various levels in which different conditions pertaining to that particular level alone apply. This formulation of the cosmos, when applied strictly to the limited observed physical universe, displays the total unity of manifestation wherein the microcosmic order reflects in a total way the macrocosmic order, each being reflecting the multiple states of existence (Diagram 4.3).

<sup>5</sup> For this reason both models have existed side by side, at least in the Islamic tradition. Both models are compatible and sometimes are even combined into a synthetic model recognizing both points of view (see Burckhardt, *Mystical Astrology of Ib'n Arabi*, 12-13).

<sup>6</sup> This is more an aphorism than a quote. Various sources could be quoted but the 14th Century's, Thomas Bradwardine's third corollary is often cited. Refer to Edward Grant, *Much Ado About Nothing: Theories of Space & Vacuum from the Middle Ages to the Scientific Revolution*, 138. The more complete aphorism from Bradwardine is "*God is an infinite sphere whose centre is everywhere and circumference is nowhere*". Other attributed authors to this aphorism or similar include Alain of Lille, Nicholas of Cusa, Pascal, Hermes Trismegistus and Giordano Bruno.

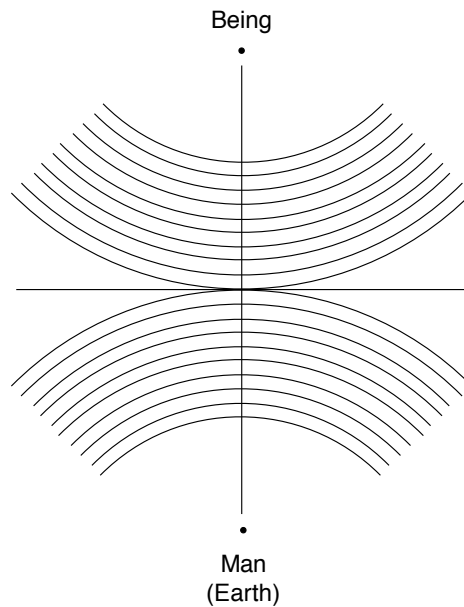


Diagram 4.3 Multiple states of manifestation relating to Being and to man.

## The Explicit Centre of the World

Every state has a unique modality which plays the role of the central modality for those particular conditions which determine the state; this also includes the corporeal states, the physical world. This means that every state must have a centre that is its most direct reflection of Being. The geographic world is no exception. All centres derive their efficacy from the Sacred Centre which are but a reflection of the Great Centre but in a more limited domain. In the corporeal world, this reflection of the Sacred Principle at a geographic location gives rise to the idea of the omphalos (or *umbilicus* or navel, as previously discussed) as the centre of the world. In English there is a relationship between 'navel' and 'nave', which brings forth the whole relationship between the wheel and the centre as the 'navel' of the wheel.<sup>7</sup> The significance of the navel or hub of the rotating Earth cannot be over-emphasised in its relationship to sacred architecture.

Any omphalos designates the centre of a geographic modality as a world domain. When 'world' is mentioned here, it need not apply to the whole Earth, but rather to a relative world, domain or state. For this reason there can be numerous omphaloi, all reflections in their own state. The material representations of the omphalos usually consist of a sacred stone, commonly called in French a *bétyle*. This word apparently is derived from the Hebrew *Beth-El* or 'House of God', the name given by Jacob to the place where *Yahweh* manifested Himself to Jacob in a dream. The Old Testament story relates that when Jacob reached a certain place he spent the night there as the Sun had set. Taking one of the stones he found there he made it his pillow and lay down. He had a dream and when he woke from his sleep he said, 'Truly *Yahweh* is in this place and I never knew it!' He was afraid and said 'How awe-inspiring is this place! This is nothing less than the House of God, this is a gate of Heaven!' Rising early in the morning Jacob took the stone he had used as his pillow and set it up as a monument, pouring oil over the top of it. 'He named the place *Bethel*, but

<sup>7</sup> Guénon on this point also mentions the connection of the word 'navel' with the Sanskrit word *nābhi* (Partridge gives '*nabbhis*') which has the same meaning and its connection with the Gaelic *nav* or *naf* in his work, *Lord of the World*, 50-51. *Nābhi* also has the meaning of a sovereign or lord paramount.



before that town was *Luz*.<sup>8</sup> The stone raised up by Jacob became a symbol marking that place as having Divine Presence. The omphalos is also related to the Hebrew *Even Shetiyyah*, the foundation stone, which was the first solid created and placed by God amid the primeval waters. The *Even Shetiyyah* is conjectured to be located in the floor of the Dome of the Rock, but spiritually it is the Holy of Holies of the Temple.<sup>9</sup>

Thus this stone represents the true 'divine habitation' or *mishkan*, the seat of the *shekinah*, although the designation was later transferred to the tabernacle. This whole idea is closely related to what could be called sacred space which is of a natural origin. In the traditional perspective there are certain spaces which are possessed by a sacred quality to a greater degree than other locations. Such places have a stronger presence of the Divine. This is logical in a way for the Divine is Omnipresent but there is nothing to say that nature is homogeneous in the manner in which the presence is reflected. Just as some manifestations can be taken as a symbol over others for Divine Reality, so can some geographic locations or elements in nature depict or recall to the intellect the varied Divine Qualities of Being. There are places from the beginning of time that have been respected as intrinsically more sacred than others, that affirm the divine to a greater extent than others.<sup>10</sup>

The origin of the *omphalos* as the centre of the Earth is always bound in myth as that is how it is known. In the Greek legend, for example, Zeus released a pair of eagles from Mount Olympus, they flew in opposite directions, met in the sky above Delphi and were impaled on each other's beaks. Falling to the ground, they defined in their reunion not only the *temenos* of Mount Olympus but also the centre of the earth below. The site became the centre of the Grecian world and the temple of Apollo at Delphi its centre. The original *omphalos* of Delphi was an oblate spheroid, or egg-shaped stone, upon which the two eagles rested and it was draped with the *agrenon*, an interlaced woollen net that was also worn by *bacchanals* and soothsayers. In a symbolic sense, the omphalos is also the central sacred mountain (Images 4.2, 4.3(a) & (b)).

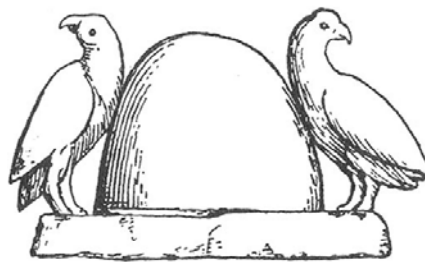


Image 4.2 Sketch of the original omphalos of Delphi with flanking eagles.

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 28:10-19. This action of raising the stone and the embodiment of the Divine within the stone has clear association with neolithic stone cults throughout Europe and could well be universal. To relate this back again to Luz, Guénon points out the close connection between stone and bread; *Beith-El* 'the House of God' subsequently becomes *Beith-lehem* 'the house of bread, the town where Christ was born.', *Lord of the World*, 52. Thus even history and geography can be read as symbol.

<sup>9</sup> Paraphrasing Patai, *Man and Temple*, 85.

<sup>10</sup> Alain Danielou has written on this subject:

'There are places where the visible and the invisible worlds are very close to each other. In a certain way, these points on the globe correspond to the *chakras*, or subtle centres of the human body. Anyone who is aware of the mystery of the world can perceive the unusual nature of these places where invisible presences are felt. They are a sort of door, through which it is a little easier to pass from one world to another', *Shiva and Dionysus* (New York: Inner Traditions International, 1984), 131.



Images 4.3 (a) (Above left): The existing omphalos of Delphi is actually a 4th-2nd century BC copy. The *agrenon* was carved upon the stone and was surmounted by the two golden eagles.

(b) (Above right): The omphalos from Gebel Barkal, Great Temple of Amun, Hall B, Nubia.

In Islam, the 'black stone' (*al-Hajar al-Aswad* in Arabic) is the cornerstone of the *Ka'bah* and is purported to have fallen from the sky in the days of Adam. In Islamic tradition it is told that the stone, possibly a black meteorite (or tektite), was used in the first Adamantine altar. The stone became lost after the Flood and was re-established by Abraham, who instructed his son Ishmael to enshrine the stone in a new temple. It was the Prophet (PBUH) himself who set the stone after it was raised on a carpet by leaders of the four tribes into the eastern corner of the *Ka'bah*. According to various *hâdith*, the Prophet stated, 'The Black Stone came down from Paradise'<sup>11</sup> and '*The Black Stone is the right hand of Allah Most High*'. The *al-Hajar al-Aswad*, with its arcane history is also a *baetylus* or sacred stone. The *Ka'bah*, as the shrine of the *al-Hajar al-Aswad*, is the greatest functional omphalos remaining on the earth (Images 4.4 & 4.5).

<sup>11</sup> *Hâdith*, cited by at-Tirmidhī.



Image 4.4 The Prophet (PBUH) and leaders of the four tribes lifting the 'black stone' or *al-Hajar al-Aswad*, into place on the eastern corner of the *Ka'bah*. This scene depicts the manner in which the Prophet raised the stone and resolved the issue of who of the four tribes would raise the stone. Each raised a corner of the carpet.



Image 4.5

The *al-Hajar al-Aswad*, the Black Stone, with its shroud built into the eastern corner of the *Ka'bah*.

The natural sacred places of a domain are like so many stations or shrines around the central omphalos for it is the omphalos which is the summation of all that is contained in any particular worldly domain. The omphalos as 'the centre of the world' is identifiable with the Principial Point and the abode of God, and as a consequence, it is from the *omphalos* that communication with the Divine is possible as was the case with the oracle at Delphi. The *omphalos* can take several

forms. The configuration of the conical stone takes the form of the sacred mountain, symbol of the pole or axis of the world. Other variations are ovoid which bring it into direct relationship with another important symbol the 'world egg'. Not all omphalos are represented in stone, they sometimes take the form of a pole or column and sometimes that of a *moundos tumulus*, again in the form of the sacred mountain. In China, for example a mound or hillock was often built as a

quadrangular pyramid. These were located in the centre of each kingdom or feudal state and made out of earth brought from the five regions or eight regions.<sup>12</sup>

The notion of the centre or navel of the earth is a complex topic because it appears that from the few traditional omphaloi that exist today, there are multiple world centres. The notion becomes even more complex when the many centres are seen in the context of a particular sacred myth and mytho-geography. While most traditions locate a centre for their conception of the created world, often the separation between what is considered sacred geography or mytho-geography and known land forms is difficult to reconcile. The traditional perspective sees all domains as subject to the principle of centrality, not the least of which is the earth. A territory without a centre would equate to chaos, outside of any sacred determination. An outline of three traditional world views and how they relate to sacred architecture explores this concept.

In the Judaic tradition, the Divine, the *Shekinah*, dwelt in the Tabernacle of Moses. The 'Holy Palace' of *Yahweh* was thus not a fixed location but moved with the nomadic tribes of Israel. The 'abode of the *Shekinah*', whilst being the spiritual centre, was not manifest in a geographic location but was in a built construct, the tabernacle that was the centre of Zion and the 'Land of Israel'. Only after Solomon built the first temple on Mount Zion itself was the tabernacle brought to rest.<sup>13</sup> Mount Zion is Jerusalem and Jerusalem is Zion, and a sacred geographic omphalos in the Judaeo-Christian traditions. The first written description of Jerusalem as the centre of the world is in the Book of Jubilees, one of the many Jewish pseudepigrapha, in which it is stated 'And he (Noah) knew that the Garden of Eden is the holy of holies and the Lord's dwelling place, and Mount Sinai the centre of the desert, and Mount Zion the centre of the navel of the earth: these three were created as holy places facing each other'.<sup>14</sup> Mount Zion is also the Temple Mount, or *Har haBáyit*, in Hebrew. It is the 'footstool' and a manifestation of the transferred *Shekinah*.<sup>15</sup> It is the site of King Solomon's Temple, 'where he built his sanctuary, a copy of high heaven, founding it firm as the earth forever'<sup>16</sup> and is the site of the so called second temple and which was later rebuilt as King Herod's Temple.

The Christian tradition continued the centrality of Jerusalem as the centre and navel of the Christian world and of specific Christian revelation for 'in my vision I saw Mount Zion, and standing on it the Lamb'.<sup>17</sup> However, the central manifestation of the centre changes from the site(s) of the temple to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre which is in the same location. From the time of Christ, the Old Testament holy city of Jerusalem becomes the physical representation of the Divine New Jerusalem and the 'New Jerusalem which comes down from my God in heaven'.<sup>18</sup> In Revelations, the apostle John reveals his vision of Jerusalem as the prototype of the City of God. In the Christian meaning of Jerusalem as the sacred centre we have Jerusalem as the sacred city, the sacred temple and in its non-temporal form as the archetypal citadel or palace of the 'Heavenly Jerusalem'. Mediaeval maps of the known world at that time depict Jerusalem at the centre of a geographically conceived cross (Images 4.6(a)-(d)).

<sup>12</sup> This will be further developed in chapter 9 in regard to the 3x3 or ninefold *Jingtianzhi* division of land. Guénon has written extensively on these symbols of the vertical axis in numerous works. *Symbols of Sacred Science* includes a good collection.

<sup>13</sup> Guénon, 'The Guardians of the Holy Land', *Symbols of Sacred Science*, 80.

<sup>14</sup> Phillip S. Alexander, 'Jerusalem as the 'Omphalos' of the World: On the History of Geographical Concept'. *Judaism: A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thought*, Vol. 46 Issue 2, (Spring 1997): 147-158.

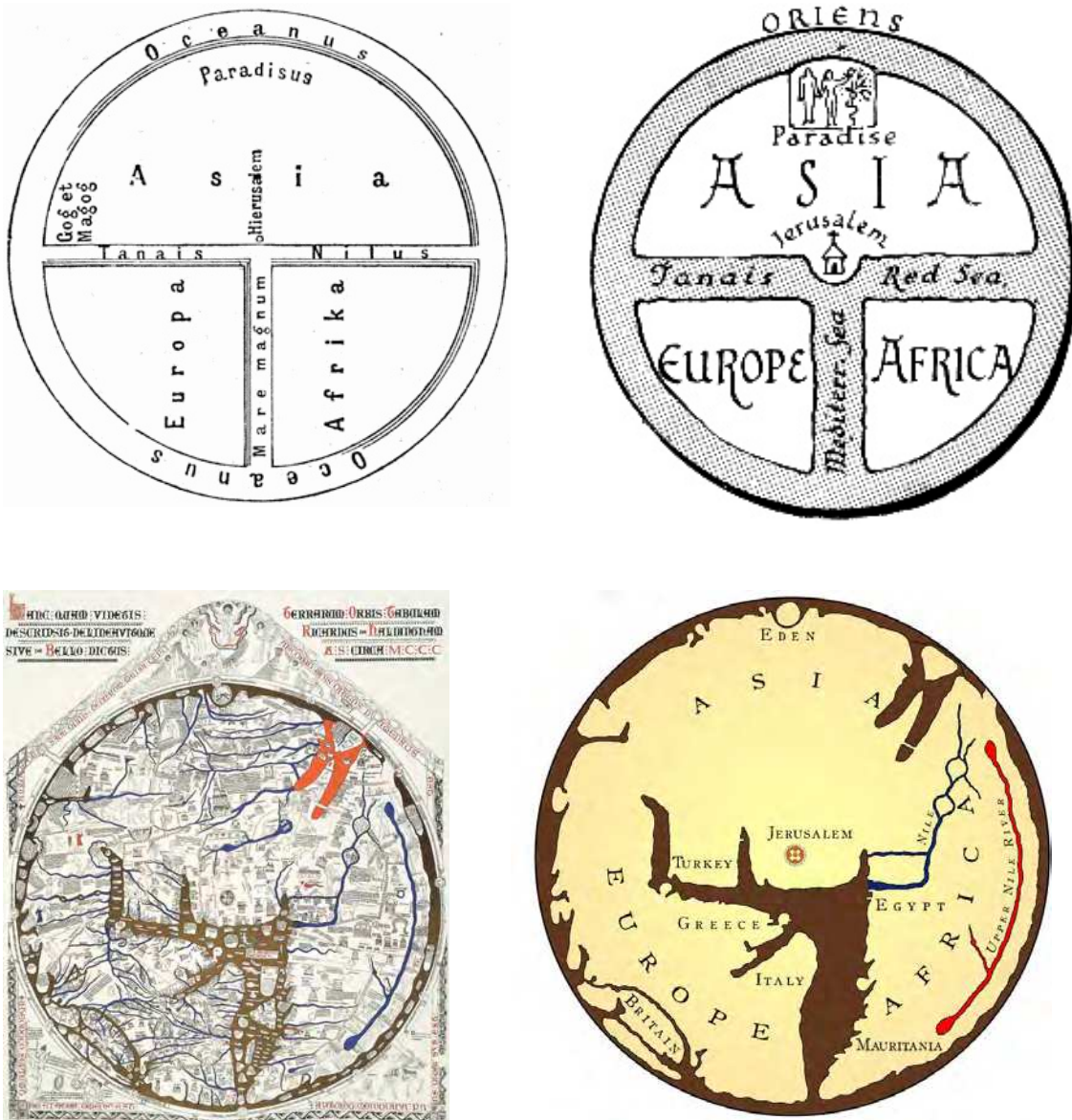
<sup>15</sup> The symbolism of the Judaic 'footstool' can only be highlighted in passing and is also a common theme in esoteric Islam for example as discussed by Akkash, *Cosmology and Architecture in Premodern Islam*, 131, 143. It is in the sense that is being discussed here as the point of contact of the Divine reposing within manifestation.

<sup>16</sup> Psalms 78:69.

<sup>17</sup> Revelation 14:1.

<sup>18</sup> Revelation 3:12.





Images 4.6 (a) Top left: A schematic medieval 'T-O' map based on the 7th century original now lost, by St. Isidore, Bishop of Seville. Jerusalem is located at the centre of the round world.  
 (b) Top right: Another T-O *mappa mundi* based on St. Isidore's original.  
 (c) Lower left: The Hereford *mappa mundi* of the medieval known world.  
 (d) Lower right: Diagrammatic representation of the Hereford *mappa mundi* ca. 1290 AD, still following the O-T topology but with much greater geographic detail.

The Vedic and Buddhist traditions also abound with symbolic geographic cosmologies. One view sees the earth as a flat disc at the centre of which is the sacred Mount Meru. Around Mount Meru (or Sumeru, literally *su + meru* meaning excellent or wonderful Meru) are located on the four cardinal points the four continents. These are the continents of *Bhâratavar'sa* in the southern quarter, *Uttarakurus* in the northern quarter, and the continents of eastern and western *Videha*. Sometimes all four continents are called the single land mass of *Jambudvîpa*. In Buddhist literature, *Jambudvîpa* means India. Surrounding the four continents is the ocean of salt, *Samudra*, and beyond that six other continents form rings around Meru and *Jambudvîpa*, increasing in size as

they move outward. These continents are divided from each other by ring-shaped oceans of sugar-cane juice, wine, clarified milk, whey and finally fresh water. These circles are then enclosed in a ring of mountains called *Lokāloka*, beyond which is the realm of darkness that extends to the uttermost bounds of the universe. The heavenly bodies have their orbits arranged parallel to the earth's disc.<sup>19</sup> There are numerous variations on the Buddhist model, but the consistency is greater than the differences and *Mt. Meru* invariably is located at the centre of the world (Image 4.7). Alternate configurations are given by the Vedic *Bhū-mandala* or *Bhūloka*.<sup>20</sup> The Buddhist *stupa* becomes an earthly symbols of the cosmological model of centrality (Images 6.2 & 6.8(a)-(e)).

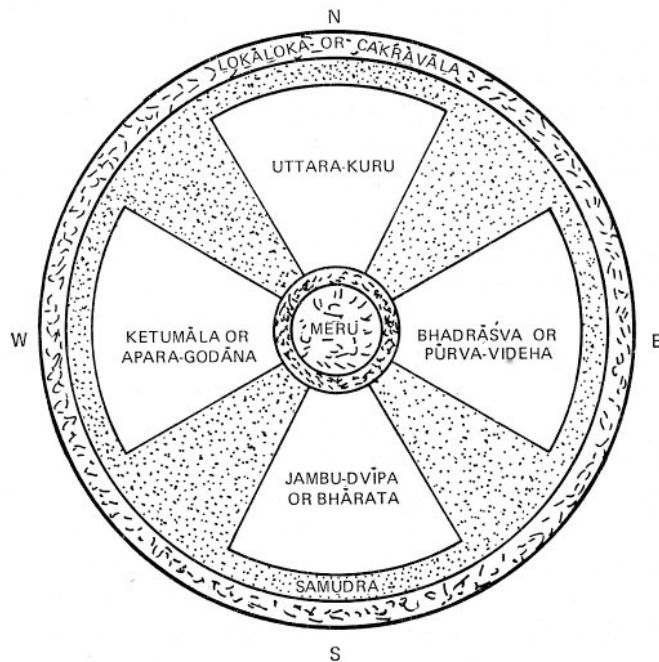


Image 4.7

The *Catur-dvīpā vasumatī*, cosmological diagram of the Brahmanic and Buddhist traditions. The continents may vary in name and detail but the centrality of *Mt Meru* (or *Sumeru*) invariably remains at the centre. The configuration is symbolised by the architectural *stupa*.

The centre of the world is the point from which the life sustaining outpourings of the Divine emanate and this is often symbolised by the descent of the holy waters from heaven. In the Hindu tradition, it is the sacred *Ganga* or Ganges that drops from heaven in just such a manner. The water falls upon the tangled locks of Lord *Shiva* as he sits on *Mount Kailāsa* in the northern Himalayas.<sup>21</sup> This dissipates the force of the torrent which would otherwise destroy the Earth with its tremendous power.<sup>22</sup> Absorbed by *Shiva*, the devastating power of *Ganga* is nullified and the river flows from *Shiva*'s head in the four directions from a central vertical axis (Images 4.8 & 4.9). Guénon has pointed out *Shiva*'s hair symbolises the warp of Heavenly influence in the fabric of the world flowing in four directions.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> This section is largely based the essay by R .F. Gombrich, 'Ancient Indian Cosmology'. In *Ancient Cosmologies*. ed. Carmen Blacker and Michael Loewe. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1975), 110-142.

<sup>20</sup> Richard L. Thompson, *Mysteries of the Sacred Universe - The Cosmology of the Bhāgavata Purāna*. (Alachua: Govardhan Hill Publishers, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> *Mount Kailāsa* is the earthly image of *Mount Meru*.

<sup>22</sup> Similarly 'a river flowed from Eden to water the garden and from there it divided into four branches' (Gen. 2.10). Eden fulfils the same function as the archetypal mountain centre in this regard. Eden 'which is in the East' (Gen. 2.8) has four rivers which flow out from it toward the four quarters of the world and this locates Eden at least symbolically if not geographically at the centre of the Judaeo-Christian world.

<sup>23</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 17.





Image 4.8 (Left): *Lord Shiva* bearing the descent of the Ganges River from *Mount Kailâsa*, (*Mount Meru*) and the centre of the world.

Image 4.9

*Lord Shiva* is carved into an actual cleft in a rock which sometimes flows with water depicting the descent of the waters of the heavenly *Ganga*, flowing from Mount Meru. Known also as *Arjuna's* Penance or alternatively the Penance of *Bhagiratha* (Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu, South India).



There are apparent contradictions in there being multiple terrestrial centres. All centres, irrespective of their degree are reflections within their own limited domain of the Divine Centre within its manifestation. Each centre exists as a relative centre partaking of this image of centrality and expressing within its own field the function of a pivotal locus. The Divine Centre remains totally unconditioned as the pivot of the universe whereas all the relative centres are to various degrees conditioned. Thus it is that each individual centre expresses the idea of centrality within its own contingent field, just as the Sun is endlessly reflected in bodies of water and yet still remains unique as the source. There can be innumerable, legitimate relative centres marked by omphaloi throughout the terrestrial domain. All manifestation is subject to these two aspects of centredness, on the one hand there is the unconditioned, immanent, and unique Divine Centre and on the other hand its relative and ubiquitous reflections. This means that the multiple relative centres are projected simultaneously within the world.

Thus there is no contradiction in saying that the centre of a particular temple is truly the centre of the universe for it does reflect that Divine Centre and for its part, is a totally adequate 'reflection'. Likewise, around that temple may be constructed the central heart of a city and that city may lie at the centre of a particular state or dominion and this state for its part may lie at the central location for a whole kingdom and so on. For example in the case of various Southern Indian temple towns, all these centres are subject to a relativity in various degrees and all centres are manifested simultaneously. It is through this idea of relativity and all that it entails, that the paradox of multiple centres should be comprehended for each centre is non-exclusive and incorporates all those below it, and yet, is included by all those that are above it (Images 4.10 & 4.11).





Image 4.10

(Top left): Aerial view of *Ranganatha Temple*, Srirangam, a large regional town in Tamil Nadu Southern India. The temple is the centre of a residential quarter.

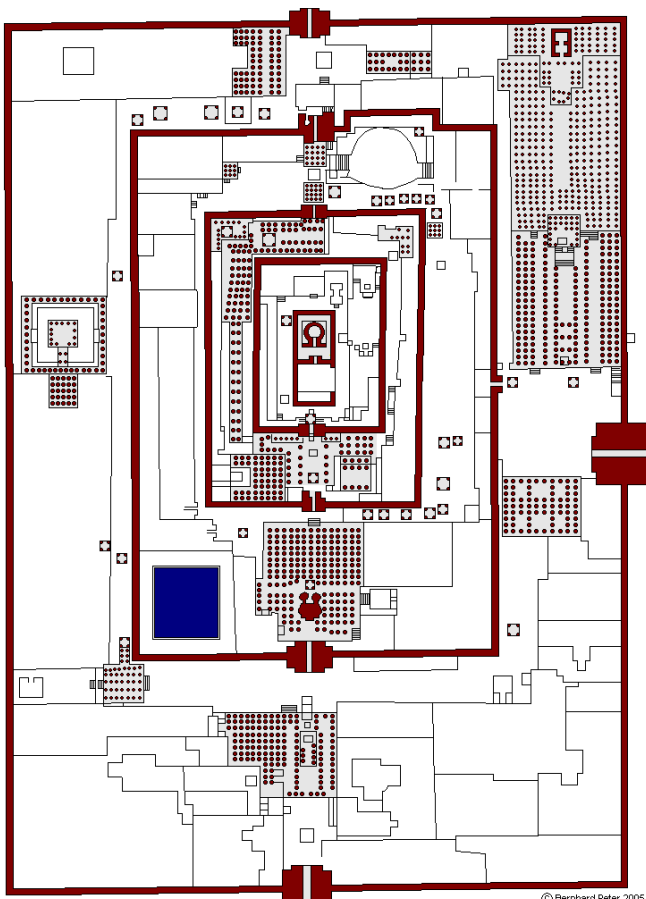


Image 4.11

(Bottom left): Plan of *Ranganatha Temple*, Srirangam. The temple contains a hierarchy of centres relative to the various shrines within the temple complex. At the centre of the complex is the *Ranganatha shrine*; at the centre of the shrine is the *garbhagriha*; at the centre of which is *Lord Vishnu*, as *Sri Ranganatha*, recumbent on the great form of the serpent god *Adisesha*, one of the foremost of Hindu Gods; at the centre but below *Sri Ranganatha* dwells the central seed of the temple as the ultimate centre the *bindu* point of creation.

At the heart and centre of the Hindu temple lies the central germ that is the *bindu* point of the temple's creation. The central chamber is the *garbhagriha* or womb chamber.<sup>24</sup> The *bindu* point lies in the central geometric centre of the temple but in physical mode it is also a 'seed' or *bīja* which lies within the reliquary casket or *garbha-vessel* or *garbhapātra* and is ritually built into the floor layers of the *garbhagriha*.<sup>25</sup> The reliquary box contains various compartments in the form of a *mandala*.<sup>26</sup> In the Buddhist *stupa*, it is the *yantragala* that lies at the centre of the structure.<sup>27</sup> In both cases the omphalos is to the world what the seed reliquary is to the temple structure, an explicit centre.

## The Penetration of the Vertical Axis

The vertical axis can be considered as penetrating the centre of each of the horizontal planes, that is, it passes through the point of equilibrium or 'centroid' of that plane and it is that point that harmonises all the modalities of a Being. The sum of these points is the 'Invariable Middle' (*Ching-yung* also *Chung-yung*)<sup>28</sup> and can be considered a reflection in each state of the individual being (or universal existence) of Being itself. This is a type of unity within the order of multiplicity and an expression of the 'Will of Heaven' or the 'Activity of Heaven'. This image, of what is essentially an undetermined principle in the determined realm, lies at the centre of each horizontal plane. The sum total of these central points constitutes the locus of the vertical axis. The vertical axis thus connects all the horizontal planes through these central points and strings them together like so many beads on a thread (Diagram 4.4).



Diagram 4.4

The vertical axis can be seen on the one hand as the essential ray but on the other hand as the locus of the central point of equilibrium of each successive plane.

<sup>24</sup> Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 126.

<sup>25</sup> Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 128.

<sup>26</sup> To be more precise it is in the form of the *vāstumandala*. Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 126.

<sup>27</sup> The *yantragala* is discussed by Quaritch Wales in *The Universe Around Them*, 63 and in his essay, *A Stone Casket from Satinpra*. Available on line at [http://www.siamese-heritage.org/jsspdf/1961/JSS\\_052\\_2f\\_QuaritchWales\\_StoneCasketFromSatinpra.pdf](http://www.siamese-heritage.org/jsspdf/1961/JSS_052_2f_QuaritchWales_StoneCasketFromSatinpra.pdf); Anna Aleksandra Ślącza, *Temple Consecration Rituals in Ancient India* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/4581/total%20document.pdf?sequence=17>, and Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa*, 129-131.

<sup>28</sup> Guénon, *Symbolism of the Cross*, 99. The *Ching-yung* will be discussed further in Chapter 9 in regard to the *Ming Tang*.

The above analogy of 'threaded' levels of existence leads to a whole collection of related symbols. Quoting traditional Hindu sources, Coomaraswamy writes:

By the Gale, indeed, O *Gautama*, as by a thread, are this and yonder worlds and all beings strung together; Even as the thread of a gem might be threaded through a gem even so is all this strung there upon (upon the Sun, *Vayu*, *Prana*, *Brahman*); all this is strung upon Me, like rows of gems upon a thread.<sup>29</sup>

The central points are a perforation of the axis of each disc.<sup>30</sup> This perforation is like a doorway through which the Divine can flow through and interpenetrate the levels of existence. Existence then becomes like a row of separate jewels suspended on a thread, the thread giving configuration and continuity to the individual gems. The penetrations provide the means whereby the continuity of the thread and unity are maintained. Thus the 'hole' within the middle of the plane becomes an essential topological symbol that overcomes the limitations of individual separation. The connection between the separate planes by necessity becomes a symbol. Again this displays the potency of symbolism drawn from the corporeal domain, namely that a limitation or a deficiency in one aspect of the symbolic representation can become a vehicle for another symbol and so on.

This notion of the interpenetration and interconnection of various levels by the vertical thread is symbolised in the construction of the *Vedic* fire altar (Images 6.9(a) & (b)). The altar, constructed in five layers has located at the centre of the first, third and fifth layers a brick with a central hole, called the 'three self-perforated bricks' (*Svayamātrṇṇā*). The first self-perforated brick represents the earth and the third brick represents the heavens, the second brick fulfils the function of that which separates heaven from earth, that is the atmosphere. Alternatively, the three can be seen as Earth, Air and Sky.<sup>31</sup> The bricks also represent seasonal bricks and hence the year as well as the Universal-Light bricks representing *Agni*, *Vayu*, and *Aditya*.<sup>32</sup> Together, the openings within these penetrated bricks form a vertical line through the centre of the altar, which is a cosmic passageway from one world into the other whether considered upwards or downwards. The three self-perforated bricks, of which the lowest is a hearth stone and the uppermost, the cosmic luffer form in effect, a symbolic vertical chimney. These bricks and the passageway which they form when superimposed one upon the other, is the way by which the *Devas* first strode up and down between these worlds, using the 'Universal Lights' of *Agni*, *Vayu* and *Aditya* as their stepping stones. They also form the passageway for the Sacrificer who after completing the altar will do the same.<sup>33</sup> The three Self-perforated bricks are like the nave of the wheel a 'representation of the three worlds....connected by a common thread which is that of the Breath, Sun-pillar and Axis of the Universe.'<sup>34</sup> This central way can also be called the 'Celestial Ray' or the 'Golden Thread' which

<sup>29</sup> *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, III.115.1-2 as quoted in *Svayamātrṇṇā: Janua Coeli. Coomaraswamy: Selected Paper Vol. 1 - Traditional Art and Symbolism*, 467.

<sup>30</sup> The word 'perforation' being from the Latin *perforat*, meaning to 'pierced through', from the verb *perforare*, from *per* 'through' + *forare* to 'pierce'.

<sup>31</sup> This description can be found in more detail in the essay previously cited by Coomaraswamy and from the *Satapatha-Brahmana* which gives detailed descriptions of the construction of the fire altar.

<sup>32</sup> *Satapatha-Brahmana*. IX, 5, 1, 58-61.

<sup>33</sup> *Satapatha-Brahmana* VII.4.2.16.

<sup>34</sup> *Svayamatrṇṇā: Janua Coeli*, 467.

sustains existence.<sup>35</sup> The human backbone is an obvious analogy, the symbolic significance of which is acknowledged in traditional teachings.

Guénon observes that in Islamic architecture the *alem* (finial), often of three superposed globes below a crescent at the summit of a minaret or *qubbah* (dome), represents the three worlds, *alam al-mulk*, *alam al-malakut* and *alam al-jarabut*. The crescent moon is the symbol of divine majesty (*al-Jalal*), which is 'extra-cosmic' and therefore beyond the gates of heaven (*Janua Coeli*) (Image 4.12).<sup>36</sup>



Image 4.12 Three *alem* surmount the *qubbah* (domes) and minaret of *Süleymaniye Mosque* of Istanbul.

Each aperture-point within its respective domain resounds with the influence of the vertical axis in the same way, to use a traditional metaphor, ripples emanate from a pebble dropped into still water (Diagram 4.5 & Image 4.13).

<sup>35</sup> Guénon comments that :

'.....the 'Celestial Ray' passes through all the states of the being and.....marks the central point of each of them by its trace on the corresponding horizontal plane, and the locus of all these points is the 'Invariable Middle'; but this action of the 'Celestial Ray' is effective only if by its reflection on one of these planes it produces a vibration which, by propagating and spreading throughout the whole being illuminates its cosmic or human chaos. We say cosmic or human, for this can apply to the 'macrocosm' as well as the 'microcosm'....wherein there is nothing but obscurity until the moment of this illumination which determines its harmonious organization in the passage from potency to act." *Symbolism of the Cross*, 105-106.

<sup>36</sup> 'Janua Coeli', *Symbols of Sacred Science*, 340. The *Janua Coeli* is the 'Eye of Heaven and 'Door of Heaven' and will be developed in detail in Chapter 9.



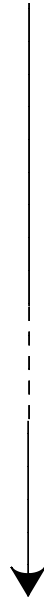


Diagram 4.5

Considered as multiple concentric circles rather than multiple planes, the vertical axis can also be seen as being the central point of the reverberation of the multiple planes of existence.

The ripples of the pond are the transformation of the water surface, the passage from potency to act. This is an analogy of the initial model of concentric rings of substantial potency. The horizontal surface of the water, symbolising universal substance, is flat and featureless, dormant and passive. It should be noted here that there are various traditional expressions for the waters of Universal Substance, including oceans, seas and lakes. In the most universal sense, the world is dissolved in the watery depths, all patterns and qualities annulled and undetermined.

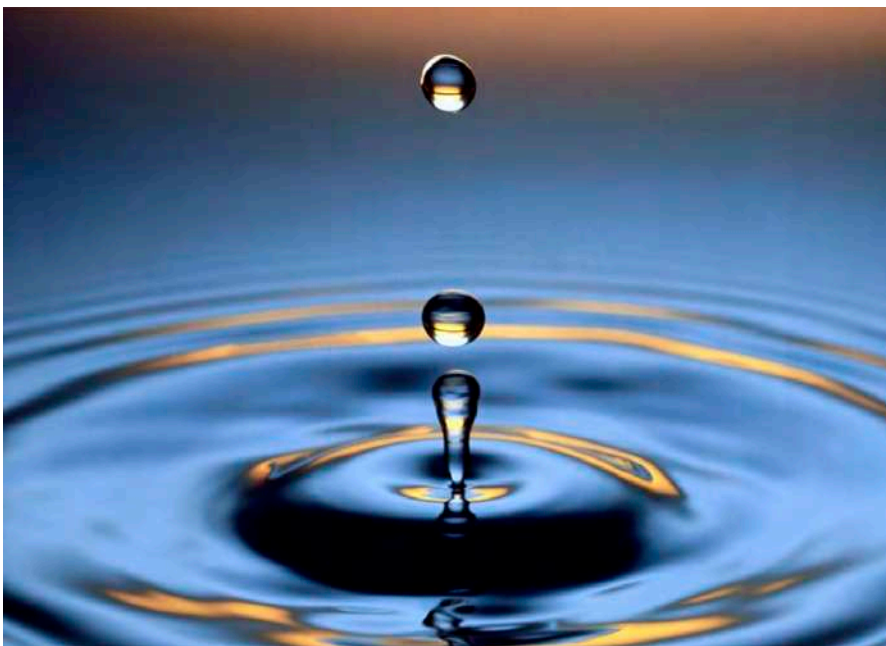


Image 4.13

The transformation from the potency of Substance (the stillness of the water) activated by the vertical action of a drop of water.

## The Myth of the 'Churning of the Sea of Milk'

The vertical axis of the world, the *axis-mundi*, lies at the other extreme of this principle. Where the waters continue outward indefinitely, the vertical axis is unique, central and interrupts the water. These two symbols come together in the Hindu myth of *Samudra manthan* (alternatively *Kshirsagar manthan*) the 'Churning of the Sea of Milk'. The myth is recalled in several Hindu classics<sup>37</sup>, albeit in various versions and with different emphases.<sup>38</sup> According to the myth, during the *Krita* or *Satya Yuga* (the cosmic era of perfection and truth), *Diti*, the supernatural personification of boundary or limit, gave birth to the powerful *Daitya*, a demon or Titan. *Aditi*, the supernatural personification of the boundless and unlimited, mother of the gods and the embodiment of infinity, gave birth to *Devarata* (delighting the gods and pious). *Diti* and *Aditi* desired to become immortal, and, after consulting, they decided to churn *Ksiroda* (the Ocean of Milk) in the hope of obtaining the elixir of immortality (*amṛta*) that lies at the bottom of the ocean. This task would be long and arduous and would require the assistance of all the *Devas* and *Asuras*.<sup>39</sup> They sought the help of the divine serpent *Vasuki* ('possessor of treasures' or the 'one who clothes all things') to act as the churning rope whilst the churning stick was to be the sacred *Mount Mandara* (*Mount Meru*). After some argument as to who would have the head or tail of the serpent, the *Devas* and *Asuras* began to cooperate in the work to be done.

After churning for a thousand years, *Vasuki* began to gnash at the rocks of the mountain with his teeth and to vomit up a vile venom from his thousand mouths, thus creating a scene resembling a holocaust (*pralaya*) portending the end of the earth at the end of the cosmic cycle. From this venom developed the poison (*halahala* or *kalakuta*) which spread throughout the world, threatening the existence of men and gods and even the demons themselves. Lord *Shiva*, who was watching the work, was implored by Lord *Vishnu* to intervene and save the world and the plight of the gods. He mercifully drank the dreadful poison as if it were eternal nectar (*amṛta*); so violent was the poison that it left a blue scar on his throat.<sup>40</sup>

As the *Asuras* and *Devas* resumed churning, the churning rod began to sink into the cosmic ocean. In response to their cries of anguish, *Vishnu* assumed the form (*avatara*) of the cosmic tortoise (*Kurma*) and entered the cosmic ocean, supporting Mount Meru on his back. Taking hold of the mountain with both hands, he churned the ocean while standing between the *Devas* and *Asuras*. After another thousand years of churning, numerous articles of great value emerged from the milky ocean. Finally, the elixir of immortality (*amṛta*)<sup>41</sup> floats to the surface. However, the truce between the *Devas* and *Asuras* that enabled the work to be accomplished was short-lived. Immediately they obtained the elixir, the eternal antagonists battled again for domination over the powers of life and death. In the chaos of the victorious event, *Râhu*, commander of the *Asuras*, succeeds in sipping the *amṛta*, the elixir of life. The Sun and the Moon, the only witnesses to the crime, denounced him to the gods and *Vishnu* instantly beheaded him. Nevertheless, the elixir had

<sup>37</sup> Notably the *Mahabharata*, the *Vishnu Purâna*, the *Matsya Purâna* and the *Bhâgarata Purâna*.

<sup>38</sup> This account of the myth is by Bruce Long, 'Life out of Death - A Structural Analysis of the Myth of the Churning of the Ocean of Milk', in *Hinduism New Essays in the History of Religions*, ed. Bardwell Smith (Leiden: Brill Archive, 1976), 171-207.

<sup>39</sup> The *Devas* are the gods of heaven or angels whilst the *Asuras* are the gods of the underworld or demons and Titans. The *Devas* and *Asuras* from early *Vedic* times are represented as being not only arch enemies engaged in an eternal conflict of cosmic proportions, but are two groups of beings related to each other on the most intimate terms. They represent the two cosmic opposing principles active within the world, they are expressions of a cosmic duality.

<sup>40</sup> *Halahala* or *kalakuta* as deadly poison and *amṛta* as eternal life giving elixir being another antinomic duality reflecting the duality of the *Asuras* and *Devas*.

<sup>41</sup> The term *amṛta* may be distantly related to the Greek *ambrosia*. Both words are used to designate that which liberates from the bonds of death or more significantly and in relation to the inner traditions, that which provides abundant life in the world of the living.

already had its potent effect and *Râhu*, or at least his severed head, and *Ketu*, his headless body, became immortal like the celestial gods. In revenge, *Râhu*'s head and his headless body (which transformed into a serpent, *Ketu*) became eternal enemies of the Sun and Moon, trying whenever possible to devour them, causing lunar and solar eclipses.

To distract the *Asuras* in the ensuing chaos, *Vishnu* employed his *maya* (the power of worldly illusion) to take the guise of a charming maiden *Mohini* (the beguiling or the deluding) and retrieved the nectar from the *Asuras*. *Indra* helped defeat the demonic *Asuras*, slaying countless *Daityas* clansman, becomes king of the gods and with the assistance of the *Rshis*, begins to rule with justness and felicity.

This myth contains many of symbolic elements that have been discussed up to this point. The sea or ocean of milk is the primordial waters of existence in which all manifestation is dissolved, and in a state of pure potency, is devoid of any materiality. The churning rod is the sacred mountain *Mandara*, which is an expression of the world axis or *axis-mundi*. These two symbols alone combine the complementary principles of the horizontal (the ocean of milk) with the vertical (the churning rod). These two principles, the vertical active and the horizontal passive, however, still need to be animated by the struggle between the *Devas* and the *Asuras*, the ever-changing interaction of the principal duality, the rotational movement that churns the milky sea.

The relationship between the *Devas* and *Asuras* is a complex one. They are in some respects opposed to each other but in other respects exactly equivalent. This dichotomy and similarity are present in their paternal origins; they have the same father, *Prajâpati*, but different mothers. Thus, the *Devas* and *Asuras* are eternal kinsmen, despite their ancient rivalry and eternal combat. As such, they represent primal reality as a united polarity or a polarised unity.<sup>42</sup> Coomaraswamy writes about this relationship 'although distinct and opposite in operation, (they) are in essence consubstantial, their distinction being a matter not of essence but of orientation, revolution or transformation'.<sup>43</sup> Though generally benevolent in their relationship with mankind, the *Devas*, given the right conditions, will act malevolently and demonically. Though generally fearsome and destructive, the *Asuras*, given the right conditions, will manifest as friendly and supportive of gods and man. Bruce Long adds, 'The *Devas* and *Asuras* thus manifest or coexist in a relationship that is not only oppositional and at the same time complementary but also, from the stand-point of the Godhead, consubstantial and interchangeable.'<sup>44</sup>

In this relationship between the *Devas* and the *Asuras*, we have something akin to the relationship between *forma* and *materia*. Although a polar opposition, they are complementary and each contains something of the other. *Forma* to a degree must contain something of *materia* in order to be as such and to stand away from Essence. *Materia secunda* must also contain something of a qualitative value to stand away from *materia prima*.<sup>45</sup> The *Devas* and *Asuras* are personifications of this exact relationship.

As for the turning force provided by the cosmic serpent coiled around the world axis, this symbol brings to mind the symbol of the *caduceus* in which two snakes (not one) are wound around a staff that symbolises the *axis-mundi*. The complementary principles of worldly duality are reflected in the powers of good and evil, fire and water, ascending and descending and the alchemical duality of the 'binding and loosening' principles active in matter. Two entwined snakes

<sup>42</sup> Coomaraswamy, 'Angel and Titan - An Essay in Vedic Ontology', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Dec., 1935), 373-419. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/594758>

<sup>43</sup> 'Angel and Titan'.

<sup>44</sup> Bruce Long, 'Life out of Death'.

<sup>45</sup> This relationship is also to be found in the classic Taoist symbol of the *yin-yang*. This symbol displays exactly the idea of the interpenetration of one pole within the other. The struggle between the *Devas* and the *Asuras* and the to and fro action upon the churning rod, epitomizes this continuous flux of change brought about by the two opposing yet complementary principles. The interaction is discussed by Guénon as the 'The Union of Complements' and the 'Resolution of Opposites' see *Symbolism of the Cross*. Chapter VI and VII.

represent the two forces that operate around the central axis of the world.<sup>46</sup> In the myth of the 'churning of the sea of milk', only one serpent is used but with two ends, the head and the tail. Here the serpent represents the indefinitude of universal existence pulled in opposite directions by the *Devas* and the *Asuras*, who correspond respectively to the states that are higher and lower than the human; we thus obtain either the beneficent or the maleficent aspect, according to whether the serpent is regarded from the side of the *Devas* or that of the *Asuras* (Images 4.14, 4.15, 4.16 & 4.17(a) & (b)).



Images 4.14 The myth of *Samudra manthan* or the 'Churning of the Sea of Milk' is ubiquitous in Hindu art and architecture. *Kurma Avatar* of *Vishnu*, holding up *Mount Mandara*, during *Samudra manthan*. The image of the cosmic tortoise *Kurma* the second incarnation of *Vishnu*, is visible below the waters.

<sup>46</sup> The story of the Staff of Moses is interesting in this regard. The staff transforms into a snake who subsequently kills the snakes of the Pharaonic priests. In this story, the two snakes are in fact interchangeable with the axis at least in a mytho-symbolic sense in deriving from Moses' and the sorcerer-priest's staff (Exodus 7.9-13).



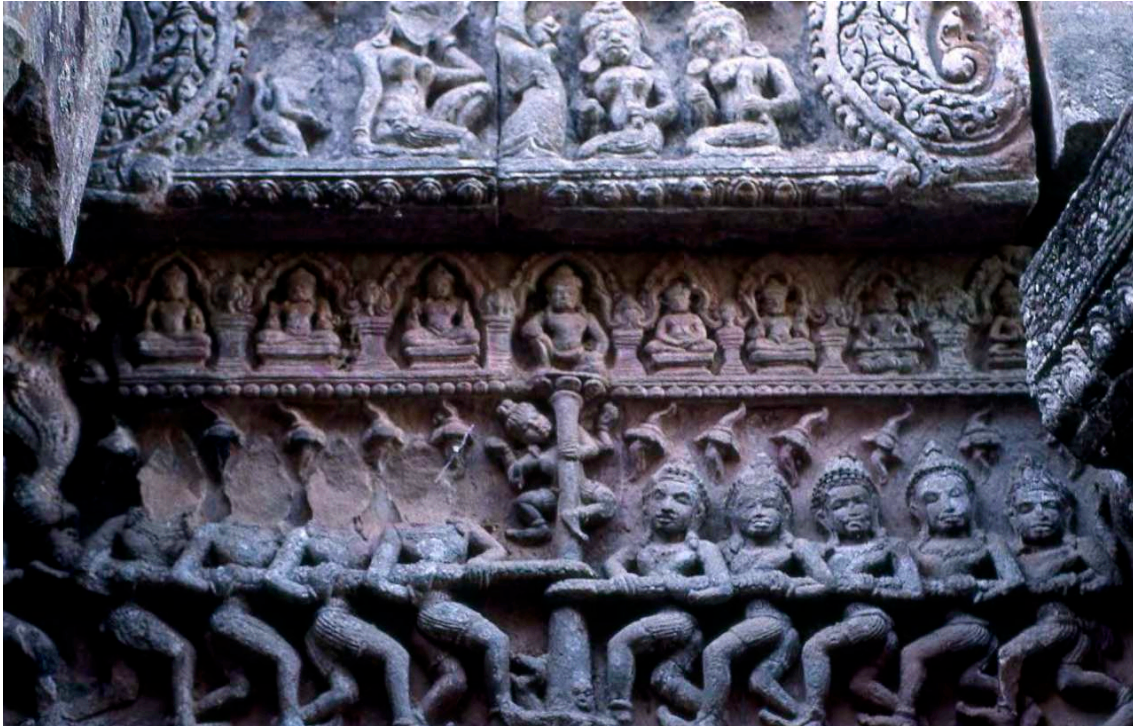


Image 4.15 The myth of *Samudra Manthan* displayed on door lintel frieze, the inner sanctuary, *Wat Ek Phnom*, Battambang, Cambodia.



Image 4.16 The southern gate portal and bridge balustrade at *Angkor Thom* Cambodia. The portal gate is in the process of being 'churned' by the *Devas* and the *Asuras* either side of the bridge balustrades.





Images 4.17 (a) (above top): Perhaps the greatest representation of the *Samudra Manthan* is depicted in the base relief of the eastern outer gallery of *Angkor Wat*, Cambodia.

(b) (above below): Detail of the above base relief *Angkor Wat*.

In Balinese temple architecture, the temple podium base is sometimes figured as *Kurma*, the tortoise. The entire temple, called *Meru*, rests on his back and his feet are the corners of the temple base. The whole assimilates the architecture of the temple *Meru*, the mountain *Meru* and the *axis mundi* into one entity (Images 4.18 & 4.19). The temple is the architectural figuration of the churning stick. Even when not explicitly configured in the temple base, the temple foundation rites call for a golden turtle or tortoise to be contained in the foundation casket.<sup>47</sup> This is prefigured in the piling up of the *Vedic* fire altar which calls for a live tortoise to be built into the pile or if one is not available a crab or clay model.<sup>48</sup> According to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* the tortoise is assimilable to *Prajāpati* himself.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Several examples are given by Ślaczka, *Temple Consecration Rituals in Ancient India*, plates 31 and 32.

<sup>48</sup> The role of the tortoise in the *Agnicayana Rite* described by Hukam Chand Patyal 'Tortoise in Mythology and Ritual', *East and West*, Vol. 45, No. 1/4 (December 1995), 97-107.

<sup>49</sup> Patyal, 'Tortoise in Mythology and Ritual', 100. Guénon discusses the symbolism of the tortoise in *The Great Triad*, 100-101, in which he states:

'the tortoise, (is) placed between the upper and lower halves of its shell just like Man between Heaven and Earth. Not only the position but even the shapes of the two halves of the shell have their significance: the upper half, which 'covers' the animal, also corresponds to Heaven because of its rounded shape, while the lower half which 'supports' the animal corresponds to Earth by virtue of its flatness. Viewed as a whole, the shell is therefore an image of the Universe,





Image 4.18 (above)

*Meru* as the Balinese temple rests upon the tortoise base of *Kurma*. *Pura Taman Saraswati Temple Ubud, Bali.*



Image 4.19 (left)

The head of *Kurma* on the temple base, of *Gunung Kawi Temple complex, Bali.*

## The Three *Guṇas*

In relation to the myth of the *Samudra Manthan*, several other Hindu principles relate to the spatial domain and describe the three operative principles just discussed. This is the theory of the three *guṇas*, the three constituent qualities of *Prakriti*, the Hindu term for *materia prima*. The *guṇas* are primordial attributes of matter, which may appear to be a contradiction to Principal Substance and *Prakriti* being devoid of any qualitative content, but this is because the *guṇas* are present in *Prakriti* in perfect equilibrium. The *guṇas* in their primordial state remain undifferentiated and all manifestation represents a rupture of this equilibrium.<sup>50</sup> The *guṇas* bind existence with the various domains. The term 'bind' is deliberate here, for the Sanskrit word relates to string and the literal meaning of *guṇa* is 'cord'.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, the terms *bandha* and *pâsha*, which mean 'bond', are applied to all the particular and limiting conditions of existence (*upâdhis*) that specifically define this or that state of manifestation. All these ideas are associated with the notion that the *guṇas* are 'tendencies' in manifest existence that bind and restrain all things together. This binding together of existence is a tension or network of active forces in dynamic equilibrium not unlike the the binding and restraining of *Purusha* with *Vâstu-Purusha mandala*. This is not too far removed from the alchemical *Solva et Coagula* (dissolve and coagulate), the binding and loosening of existence, and the connection between the 'weaving' of the world, the 'fabric' of existence and the spider's web. Textiles symbolise these ideas well, since weaving involves all the skills of tension and binding along with the obvious threads and cords of existence. Woven fabric thus symbolises the invisible threads and tensions of the spatial world.

The three *guṇas* are known as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva* means the pure Essence of Being (*Sat*) which is associated with the light of knowledge and symbolised by the luminosity of the heavenly spheres. In microcosmic or human terms, it is also the upward tendency that sees things in an ascending hierarchical distribution. *Rajas* provokes expansion in a given state, in other words, the development of possibilities at a certain level of existence. This development of possibilities may be that of Being itself, of an individual human being or any other being or thing. Spatially, *rajas* is the horizontal development of the individual or state (or states). Lastly, *tamas* leads towards obscurity and is assimilated to ignorance (*avidyâ*), the dark root of a being in its lower states. It is the downward tendency toward states that are hierarchically lower. In this arrangement, *rajas* takes a neutral or intermediate position between the higher states of *sattva* and the lower states of *tamas*, occupying an intermediate zone between the two. This is also the 'world of man', the *mânava-loka*, that is, the domain or degree of universal existence occupied by the human individual state.<sup>52</sup> In the microcosmic domain of the individual being, the three *guṇas* exist in the individual or world in varying degrees and are variously manifested. *Sattva* is expressed in the being's psychological domain as purity, tranquillity and calmness of mind; *rajas* is expressed as passion, egoism, restlessness and *tamas* as resistance to change.<sup>53</sup>

The *guṇas* as the qualities inherent in principal matter can also be conceived as principles of energy, that is, as the subtle form of the material universe. In this regard, *sattva* is the quality of intelligent radiance, *rajas* is the hieratic or dynamic activity, and *tamas* is that of inertia and stability<sup>54</sup> The connection with spatial differentiation and the three *guṇas* should be apparent. The

<sup>50</sup> Guénon, *Symbolism of the Cross*, Chapter V - Hindu Theory of the Three Gunas, 23-26.

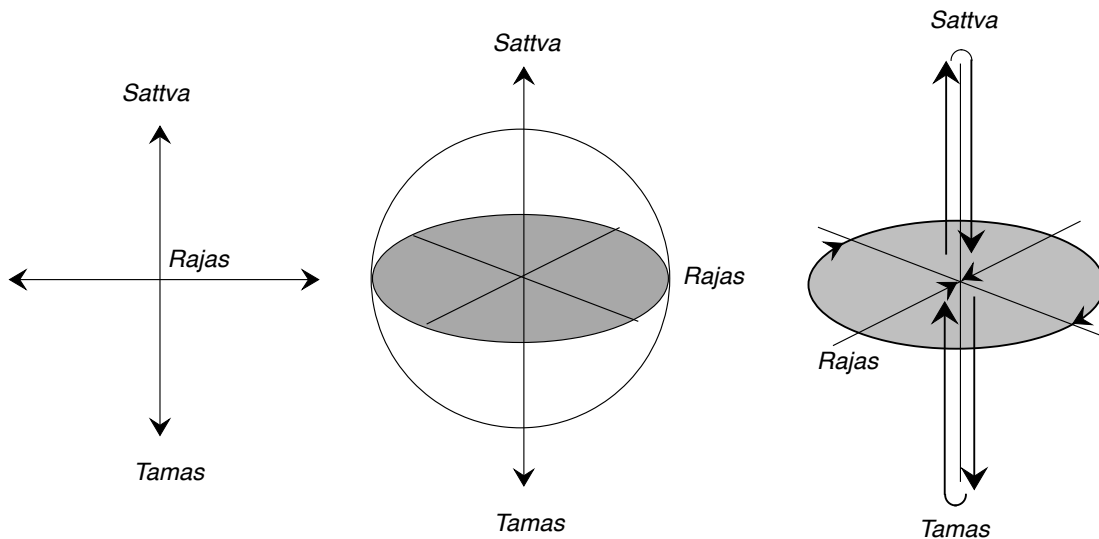
<sup>51</sup> Guénon writes that 'They are not states but general conditions to which beings are subject, by which they are bound, as it were, and in which they participate in indefinitely varying proportions, with the result that they are distributed hierarchically throughout the entire range of the 'three worlds' (*Tribhuvana*), that is, throughout all the degrees of Universal Existence', *Symbolism of the Cross*, 23.

<sup>52</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 24.

<sup>53</sup> Madhu Khanna, *Yantra*, 117.

<sup>54</sup> Madu Khanna, *Yantra*, 74-75.

*guṇas* as qualities or tendencies are necessarily implicit in corporeal existence and thus it is possible to give them spatial expression (Diagrams 4.6(a), 4.6(b) & 4.6(c)).



Diagrams 4.6 (a) left: The *guṇas* or tendencies represented by the two-dimensional cross.  
 (b) centre: The *guṇas* represented by the horizontal plane and the vertical axis.  
 (c) right: The *guṇas* represented by dynamic movement within the three-dimensional cross.

*Rajas* can be said to correspond to the horizontal line or, if the three-dimensional cross or the sphere is considered, to the horizontal plane and the great circle of the sphere in the horizontal dimension. *Tamas* corresponds to the lower part of a vertical line which passes through the centre of the horizontal plane or line while *sattva* corresponds to the upper part of the vertical line. Considered in a more dynamic mode, *rajas* is the activity which expands outward and is the development of those possibilities which brings about manifestation. *Tamas* is the downward tendency which sinks into the depths of obscurity and darkness of extreme density and inertia. *Sattva* is the opposite of this and is the activity which is the ascending toward the lightness of its polar extreme from *tamas*.<sup>55</sup> In a certain sense, *rajas* is the balance between the two polar opposites of *sattva* and *tamas*. *Rajas* thus contains the two polar extremes in its own dynamic character. This could be the case if the sphere model which we have been using is rotated. As soon as the dynamic energy of *rajas* rotates the sphere, the polar extremes ensue. Significantly, the vertical axis then generated passes through the centre of the sphere. This unmoving axis has no dynamic component, it is in effect static, for neither *sattva* nor *tamas* possess the dynamics of rotational or developmental motion that is *rajas* (Diagram 4.6(c)).

These three tendencies can be seen in action in the myth of the 'Churning of the Sea of Milk'. The struggle between the *Devas* and the *Asuras* is the opposition between *sattva* and *tamas*. The *Devas* or the gods personify the upward force or elements of heaven and the *Asuras* personify the tendency towards the obscure and the dark. The struggle gives rise to the rotational effect which is *rajas*, the activity that stirs all existence as the milky depths of the sea. This churning or generation gives rise to a further polarisation: out of the depths comes first the dark poison that

<sup>55</sup> The *guṇas* as 'material qualities' are also represented by symbolic colours. Not surprisingly, *tamas* is black, *sattva* is white whilst *rajas* is red. Black symbolises obscurity and depth, white is the colour of purity whilst red is the colour of the dynamic or creative principle. Madu Khanna, *Yantra*, 133. Other colours become combinations of the these basic tendencies.



threatens the world and then comes the elixir of life and light of the world.<sup>56</sup> Out of rotation, there arises the two polarised opposing tendencies. The *guṇas* have widespread significance generally throughout the Hindu tradition. These effects range from not only cosmological significance but also to aesthetic considerations. Coomaraswamy wrote:

The character of the individual or age may be predominantly static, energizing or inert, determining accordingly the qualities of latent power in action, or relaxation which we can distinguish in the different kinds of art, those viz. which we speak of with more or less precision as classical or reserved, romantic or exuberant and weak or sentimental. Style can thus be defined in terms of *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas*.<sup>57</sup>

The various architectural styles of India can be considered as a triune division reflecting the three *guṇas*. One of the outstanding South India *Vastu-shastras*, the *Kamīkagama*, formulates the theory of three styles, the *Nagara*, *Dravida* and *Vesaura*, which are seen under the aspects of the three *guṇas*.<sup>58</sup> Further, these styles reflect the theoretical geographic divisions of India into the North, the Deccan and the South. Although the systematic division of India into three according to the prevalence of the three *guṇas* (and the three styles were not to be interpreted literally), a ternary division does show a unity of essential form and completeness, not only with the three *guṇas* but also other ternaries as symbols of unity and totality that abound in the Hindu and Vedic traditions, such as the three world ages, the three principles of manifestation, the *trimurti* of the three gods and others.<sup>59</sup>

In a more obvious manner, the body of the temple can be considered as so many of the attributes identifiable in the *guṇas*. For example, the soaring or ascending tendency is expressed by the vertical superstructure of some temples and the total disposition of their architectural masses. Often painted white, the colour of the *sattvika* quality, they struggle heavenward towards their highest point in the centre above their mountainous superstructure or *Sikhara*.<sup>60</sup> *Tamas*, which is darkness, the descending tendency, is the quality that belongs to the underground or interior crypt of the temple. *Tamas* in its darkness is the causal body, the *kāraṇa rūpa*. As it was in the beginning when out of the darkness of the primordial beginning all things evolved, so also from the deep, central darkness of the *garbhagriha*, the origin of all the temples shines forth.<sup>61</sup> Above it the *prasada* rises, ascending in height according to the *sattva-guṇa*. Around it the temple expands and develops according to the potential of the *rajas-guṇa* expressed as so many multiple horizontal layered stratum (Images 6.10(a), (b) & (c)). The circumambulatory gallery around the *garbhagriha*, where the devotee carries out *pradakshina*, a ritual act of walking around the temple, is a ritualised activation of the *rajas-guṇa*.

<sup>56</sup> Another manifestation of the three principles occurs in the activation of the ceremonial fire-sticks used to ignite the fire as part of the *soma* sacrifice during the construction of the *Vedic* fire altar. The vertical stick *apṛṇḍi*, is held upright and set into a groove in the lower stick, *araṇī* and when twirled rapidly by the pulling to and fro of the encircling chord or *raju*, it generates heat and flame (*Agni*). The ritual is described by Dr. Heinrich von Stietencron in his online essay on the 'Soma Sacrifice' at: <http://www.payer.de/amarakosa5/amar213b.htm>.

<sup>57</sup> 'Art in Indian Life' in *Traditional Art and Symbolism*, 77.

<sup>58</sup> Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 291. Also Kapila Vatsyayan, *The Square and the Circle of the Indian Arts*. (New Delhi: Roli Books International, 1983), 87-94, goes further with exploring the various plans based on the square and the circle and how they reflect the interaction of the three *guṇas*.

<sup>59</sup> Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 292, 294.

<sup>60</sup> Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 123. Also as Kramrisch notes, 'The temple resembling a mountain shines white' states a temple inscription in Mandasor, fn.78.

<sup>61</sup> Guénon writes that in the beginning 'All was *tamas* (at the beginning of manifestation regarded as the emerging from the primordial non-differentiation of *Prakriti*): It (the Supreme *Brahmā*) commanded a change and *tamas* took the hue of *rajas* (intermediate between darkness and luminosity); and *rajas*, having received another command took on the nature of *sattva*.' *Symbolism of the Cross*, 24-25.

It can be seen from the polarised action of the *sattva-guṇa* and the *tamas-guṇa* the vertical axis is in fact subject to a dual polarisation. The vertical ray from the absolute perspective of Being is an expression of its outward illumination but from the relative point of view of the participant, that same ray transfixes the individual human domain and thus is subject to this self-same polarisation. The vertical axis has its origin in the depth of darkest manifestation in the *bindu* deposit below the *garbhagriha* and terminates above in the empyrean. Thus from the worldly point of view, the vertical axis has an upward and a downward polarisation. This is just another way of depicting the rupture of the balance between the *guṇas* at the principal level which gives rise to multiplicity (Image 4.20).

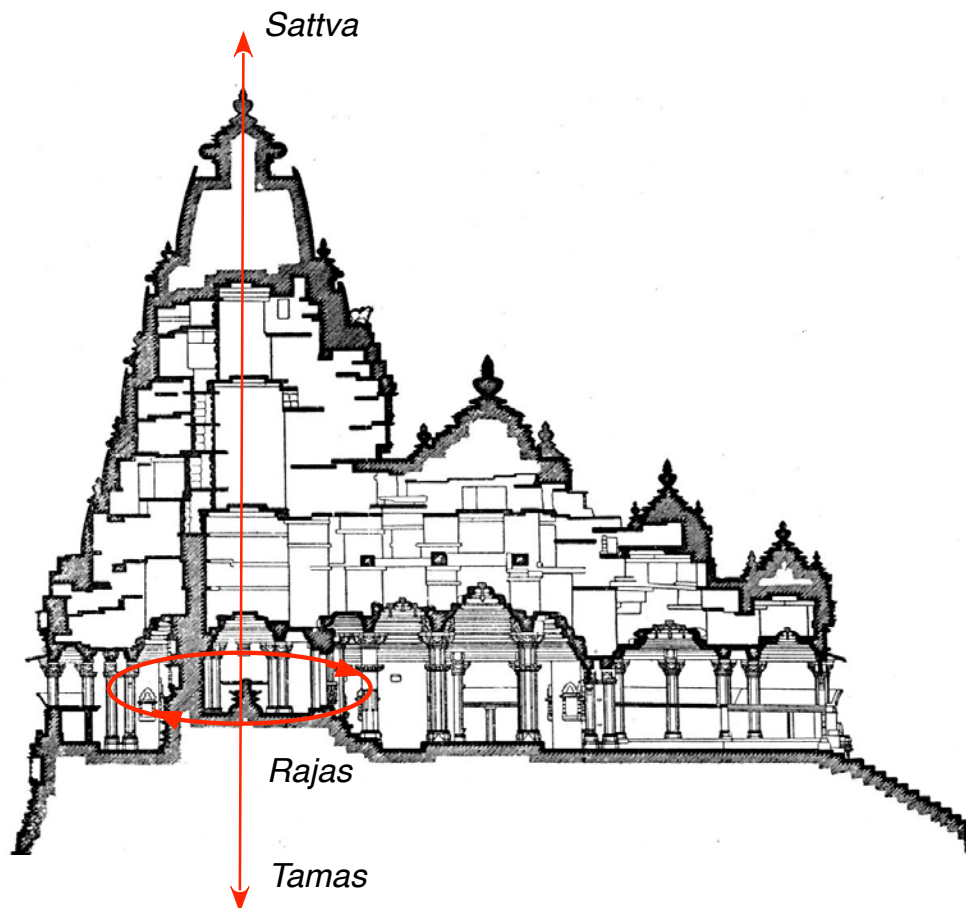


Image 4.20 Cross section through the Hindu *Kandariya Mahadeva* temple in Khajuraho showing the implicit disposition of the three *guṇas*.

# CHAPTER 5:

## THE SPATIAL & TEMPORAL CROSS

### The Cross of Space

A more detailed exploration of the corporeal domain as one of the multiple degrees of existence, will now be developed along with its architectural implications. The Principial Point contains the indefinite potential for multiplication of itself by movement. The development can be viewed as being via the geometric point into the line firstly, and then into the plane, and then into the solid as a threefold translation of the principal point into its unfolded effect. The Principial Point contains all these spatial possibilities. In the gross domain, these possibilities are limited to this threefold expansion into space. This spatial domain is the container that allows beings to manifest simultaneously in the spatiotemporal domain as its contents. It is literally the space within which possibilities of the gross domain are actualised. Plato set out this concept of space as a container, saying:

'Space which is everlasting, not admitting of destruction; providing a situation for all things that come into being.... and say that anything that is, must needs be in some place and occupy some room'.<sup>1</sup>

The geometric point lies within space as the centre of the three dimensional cross. If the cross is considered in its planar mode, each of the independent directions of space can be seen to be the intersection of three planes of extension. The origin of these lines is the centre of the spatial planes (Diagram 5.1). It is that point in space that is simultaneously in contact with the three planes, the six directions and the three dimensions. To comprehend the full significance of the central point, it is necessary to bear in mind everything that has been said about the symbolism of the cross and to see the centre of the cross as the image in the horizontal plane of the vertical descent of the Principial Point. In this way, the three directions of space are given the subjective but metaphysically distinguishable designations of horizontal plane and vertical axis. The centre of space thus lies not only in the three-dimensional cross but also at that point where the vertical *axis-mundi* transfixes the plane of terrestrial existence. The centre of space then becomes the centre of the world.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Timaeus*, 52a-b, Cornford's translation. Also as discussed by Casey, *Getting Back into Space*, 176.



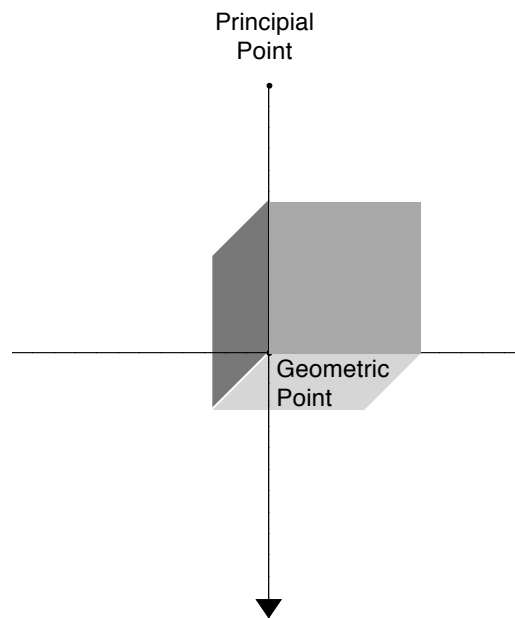


Diagram 5.1 The Principal Point and the geometric point at the centre of the three dimensional cross. The point in the horizontal plan is transfixed by the vertical axis.

The concept of the symbol of the cross of space can also be derived ontologically. Given the extension of space, there must be a point along the extension that can be called the spatial point, or 'point in space', that is a direct reflection of the causal Principal Point. This spatial point is by induction a geometric point and must show a direct relationship with the principle of space. This point in space is not unique quantitatively; however, qualitatively it is the reflection of the principle, the geometric point and the Principal Point. Thus the point in space as 'a particular point' becomes the representation of the geometric point and all that it stands for, which is exactly the significance of the *omphalos* and the explicit and implicit centre discussed earlier. The particular point in space becomes the direct reflection of the principle of space and hence the quality of Being known as the Infinite. This is the significance of the ritual defining of the centre as 'a particular point' and the basis of all sacred architecture. It is the designation of a ubiquitous common point in spatial extension as a unique and original point from which all other points gain a relationship. It is a translation of coordinates from a quantitatively indistinguishable point to a qualitatively unique origin.<sup>2</sup> It is the role of sacred architecture to mark this unique spot which lies directly below the principle of space and the vertical axis along which it descends (Diagram 5.2).

<sup>2</sup> This is to be understood as a translation in Cartesian coordinates from one point into the origin.

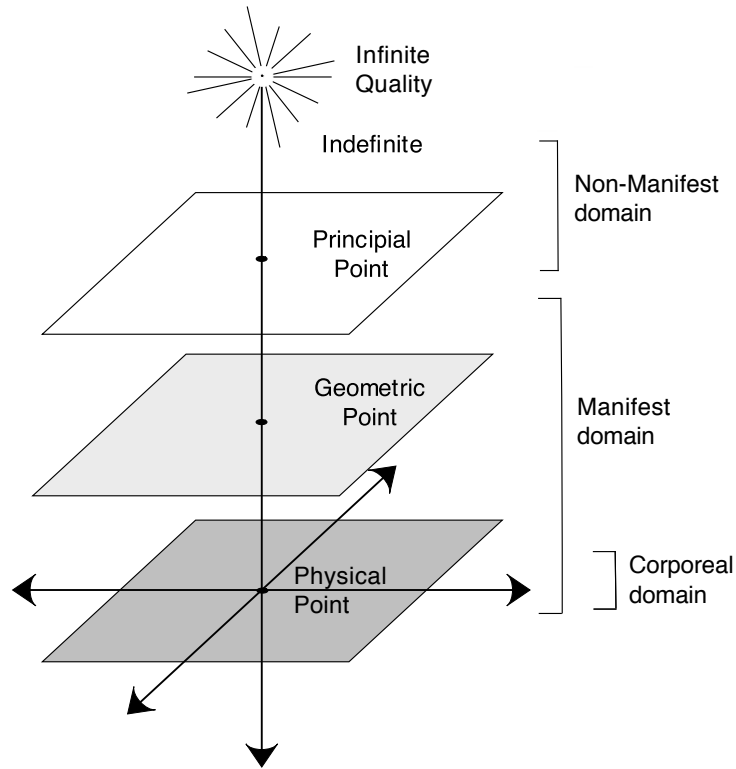


Diagram 5.2 The Principal Point and the generation of spatial extension.

The above Diagram 5.2 with its three domains<sup>3</sup> could be summarised or generalised into what will be called the 'Cross of Space' within the corporeal domain (Diagram 5.3).

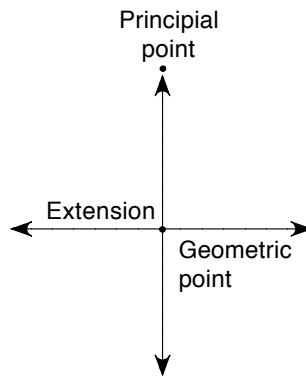


Diagram 5.3 The Cross of Space within the corporeal domain.

Metaphysically, all points along the extension of space are potentially the direct reflection below the Principal Point. Existentially, however, there can be only one point that can be defined as unique, for it must be recognised that the human being is tied to the corporeal domain and participates via the senses with all their grounded limitations. So, if the being is to define this

<sup>3</sup> The discussion as to what constitutes a domain will be developed further Chapter 6.

unique location in space and if the being is to experience this unique point with corporeal senses, then this particular point must be unique. This unique point, experienced by being as an existential, determined location, is defined for the purposes of this study as the 'here'. The 'here' is the microcosmic equivalent of the geometric point, the experience of the geometric point as a particular location in space at a point that is the centre of spatial extension. The 'here' is the origin of one's spatial domain; all space extends outward from this conceived origin in the three independent directions. The 'here' is unique in that it lies in the consciousness of the perceiving being; anywhere outside of the 'here' context is by exclusion 'over there', or simply 'there'. The 'here' places the being at the centre of an immediate contextual spatial co-ordination system. More will be said about this ordination system but the notion of the 'here' immediately means a participation in spatial extension. To participate in the 'here' is to seek that which is unique, for the 'here' is unique from the stand-point of the individual, while the 'there' is a ubiquitous beyond and multiplicity of spatially-perceived 'other' (Diagram 5.4).

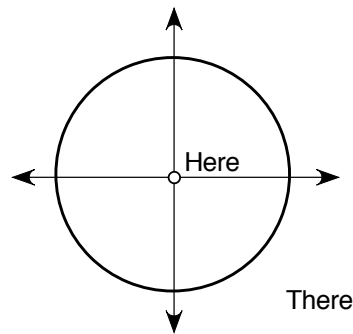


Diagram 5.4 The existential expression of the 'here' as the participation in the Principial Point within the cross of space.

As an existential participant in the reflection of the geometric point and Principial Point, the 'here' possesses some of its qualities. As the principle of all space, the Principial Point contains all points in the spatial container; in other words, it is unlimited by spatial extension. The Principial Point is thus not definable in spatial terms, which is in fact its effect. The here possesses to a degree the potential for being beyond space. Participation in the locating of the Principle Point as a here then is a participation not in a spatial experience but in its principle beyond spatial extension. Like the geometric point, the 'here' is not reducible to a particular point; it both includes and excludes space. For example, to be 'here' in one's body with the required attention, can become the 'here sitting on a chair, the chair is located in a room and includes the room; the room is here in a building; the building is here in the city, and so on. Thus the notion of 'here' can be expanded to include many spatial contexts indefinitely. The key to the idea of 'here' including different spatial contexts is simply participation, an awareness of what is included in the 'here'. If one has an awareness of the surrounding contexts, then it is legitimate to embrace them into the 'here'. The 'here' need not be localised to correspond to a particular point at the centre of a being's body; the multivalence of the 'here' is because of its causal association with the Principial Point, which is its principle applied to a subjective being. The 'here' involves proximity, which in turn involves degrees of relative proximity. The 'here' can expand outward to include as much as one can simultaneously be aware of. Conversely, if there is no conscious participation in the 'here', then as an existential

experience, it ceases to exist. As the Sufis say 'Whoever is in one place is everywhere; Whoever is everywhere is nowhere'.<sup>4</sup>

The notion of the 'here' gives spatial context priority or privilege on the part of a determining individual or collective individuals. It is an affirmation of two things; first, it is a statement that space exists and that a particular space has been granted privilege beyond another generalised space and, second, that space is identified with an individualised presence. It affirms that I am in this space, or space is given primacy in respect to proximity of location. The proximity is the 'hither', a place related to my location. But the 'here' also excludes, rejects or marginalises by induction the space or spaces that are 'not here', those places that are 'thither'.<sup>5</sup> The 'here' has no meaning without the presence of an 'I' or conscious being, specifically a human being. The 'here' thus becomes the interface between the corporeal domain and the individual within that corporeal domain. The 'here' is the locus of the individual point and the individual human being's conscious participation and acknowledgement of that fact. The 'here' involves conscious participation and attention in the spatial extension of the corporeal landscape; it is the point of contact between the corporeal world and the body of the being or between the macrocosmic and microcosmic domains at the spatio-temporal interface.

So, while including certain spatial possibilities, It is also possible to say that if my attention reaches or embraces only so far then anything beyond that is excluded as a 'there'. If my attention is limited to within a room, then the spatial possibilities contained 'outside' are excluded and definable as 'there'. To establish a 'here' in a particular location in space is another way of establishing order in undifferentiated objectified space; it is to turn virtual space into an individual lived space in which a being can identify and dwell. The consciousness that separates the 'here' from the 'there' is like the separation of sacred space from profane space, the individual's present consciousness of mind in participation of the experience of being, is called upon to ratify the here instead of the Divine Presence. The converse is also true, for without a sense of 'here', there is no sense of place and no experience of spatial extension. To participate in the 'here' is to participate in that unique principle of place and to touch upon the principle of space, that is, the Principial Point, rather than being situated and absorbed in it. <sup>6</sup> This is one of the highest functions of sacred architecture, to carve out of the 'nowhere' a place to experience the 'here'.

---

<sup>4</sup> Mawlana Sa'D Al Kashghari as quoted in Hasan Lutfi Shushud, *Masters of the Wisdom of Central Asia* (Ripon: Coombe Springs, 1983). Also 'What is here, is elsewhere, what is elsewhere is not here, is nowhere' according to the *Vishvasara Tantra*, according to Arthur Avalon (Sir John Woodroffe), *Shakti and Shakta* (London: Luzac & Co., 1918), Chapter 2. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/tantra/sas/sas02.htm>. Porphyry writes in a congruent manner 'Indeed, when one is present to oneself, he possesses the existence that is present everywhere; when one departs from himself, he also departs from it', *Launching Points to the Realm of the Mind*, 44.

<sup>5</sup> Thus to go from 'hither to thither' covers all spacial contingencies and includes those spaces that are near to me 'here' and far from me 'there'. There is a complex linguistic coupling in the terms 'here and (t)here', 'hither and (t)hither' even in the origin of 'the and that' all related to personal proximity.

<sup>6</sup> The treatment of the 'here' and the 'now' as related above does not find an exact inclusion in the *Symbolism of the Cross*. However, the identification of such ideas as the 'moment', the 'present moment' and the 'instantaneous moment' certainly are included. I believe it is important to elaborate on these matters as they flow from the heuristic consequence of the *Symbolism of the Cross*, applied to the realm of the human state. It is important also in terms of its application in sacred architecture.

## The Cross of Time

In the way that Eternity stands in relation to aeveternity, so does aeveternity stand in relation to temporal continuity. Aeveternity is reflected in the manifest domain as the principal instant. The expansion of the principal instant is via the moment expanding through the mode of duration. By expansion is meant the development of possibilities in a mode that is non-simultaneous and continuous. Expansion as a principle is none other than the externalisation of unity into multiplicity in an individualised sense. Instead of all temporal possibilities existing in a mode that is simultaneous in the instant, they become differentiated and expanded in the non-simultaneous and continuous mode. Temporality, that particular condition which we associate with time in the corporeal domain, is the persistence (from the Latin *persistere*, to stand fast in time) of being, the condition that affords being.

With the subtle Geometric Point in Diagram 5.2 the reflected image is intelligibly comprehended as the physical point. Similarly, the Principal Instant could be called the temporal moment. The unfolding of time is by the persistence of the moment, which is the equivalent of the physical point in space. The moment is the reflection of the principle of aeveternity in the temporal domain. It is the 'movement' of the instant, which results in a period of persistent duration. Plato in the *Timaeus* writes, 'We call time an eternal moving image of the eternity which remains for ever one'.<sup>7</sup> Duration itself, however, is not time, just as a simple extension is not space. Time is the totality of all possible persistence of the moment, the totality of all the possibilities contained in the principal instant and developed in those particular conditions defined as the corporeal domain (Diagram 5.5). 'Eternity is no more than the infinity of Time,' states Porphyry.<sup>8</sup> This is about as far as the similarity with the spatial domain can be developed. Space develops in three independent directions in the corporeal domain, but temporality is not subject to this multiple development, for the very nature of temporality is continuity and non-simultaneity. If time was subject to a development in multiple dimensions as space is, then a moment would be subject to different and multiple developments, thus destroying the condition of uniqueness and sequential development, which is the mode of temporality. Time is a development of possibilities in a mode that is non-sustainable, non-repeatable and, at the risk of sounding contradictory, it could be said that time is the development of possibilities in a mode that is non-temporal, temporality being the term given to the 'gaps' between all the sequential unique moments.<sup>9</sup> It is individual being in a movement of the moment, it is persistence in its occurrence.

---

<sup>7</sup> *Timaeus*, as previously quoted also discussed in detail by Tomkinson, 'Divine Sempiternity and Atemporality', 183.

<sup>8</sup> *Launching Points to the Realm of the Mind*, (5.3), 50.

<sup>9</sup> Again, space can be similarly considered as the 'gaps' or relationship between adjoining geometric points. The geometric point by itself contains no notion of space being 'non-dimensional', space only gains meaning as the relationship between two successive geometric points, just as time only gains meaning as the 'time between' two successive moments.



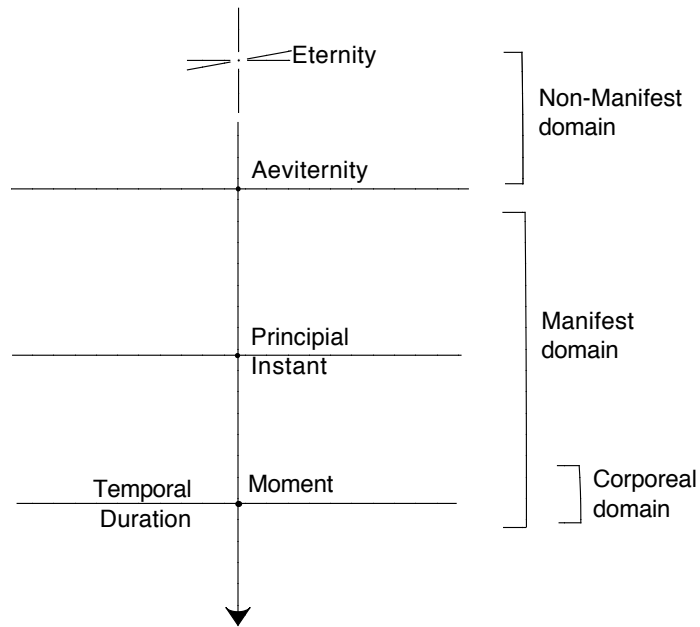


Diagram 5.5 The principal instant and the generation of temporal duration.

The moment unfolds the possibilities of the instant in a continuous but non-simultaneous mode. Each moment is continuous with every other moment, that is, it is continuous with the moment just past and the next future moment. To use the words of Plotinus, 'Time is the extension of movement in time'.<sup>10</sup> It is not time that is moving but the instant of time and this movement is the present moment as the 'passing of time' which is the change from past into the future. So in a similar way that the Principal Point and the generation of spatial extension could be summarised in the Cross of Space in Diagram 5.3, so can the generation of temporal duration be summarised in the 'Cross of Time' (Diagram 5.6).

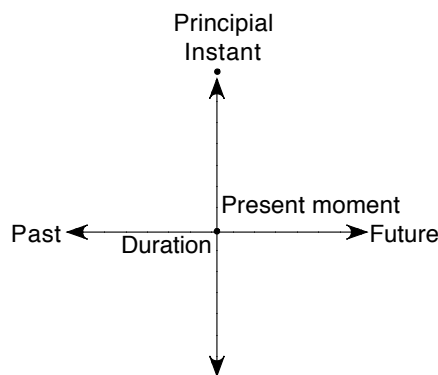


Diagram 5.6 The Cross of Time.

The existential or subjective apprehension of the present moment in the passage of time is conceived as the participation by a being in the moment as the 'now'. The now is the identification of the individual being in participation with the external or macrocosmic 'moment' of time. The

<sup>10</sup> *Enneads, III.7.8.*

'now' can be defined for the purposes of this project as the subjective, one could say apprehended moment and the participation in the universal moment. The now is the moment persisting within the microcosmic or individual domain. Just as the here involves a conscious participation by being located in a particular place, so the moment must be experienced and marked as a particular 'now point' in transitional time. This now is unique in that it occurs only once; other times being either past or present. The 'over there' of the non-locational 'there' becomes the other-time of 'past' or some other 'future' time. The now is neither non-historical nor non-prescient; it is immediate and is a time 'present-at-hand'. The 'now' is neither non-historical nor non-prescient; it is immediate and is a time 'present-at-hand'. The 'now' can be represented graphically at the intersection of horizontal duration with the vertical axis of principal aeviternity or Principial Time.<sup>11</sup> This prolongation of the Principial Instant into the corporeal domain is to time what the *axis-mundi* is to space. The moment is a reflection of the instant within its unfolding duration, and further, the 'now' is the participation of the consciousness of a being within this moment (Diagram 5.7).

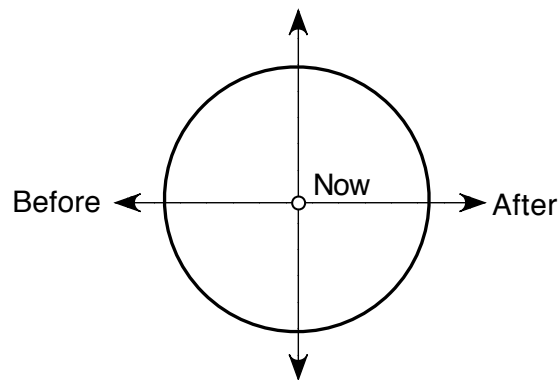


Diagram 5.7 The existential expression of the 'now' as the participation in the Principial Instant within the cross of time.

The symmetry between the subjective 'here' and the subjective 'now' is not complete. The congruent duality of subjective space is essentially antinomic. The relationship of the 'now' with the 'not now' is inevitably further polarised into a 'before' and an 'after'. The otherness of the 'now' is not congruent with the otherness of the 'here'. The 'now' intercedes in the corporeal domain in a manner that is unlike space due to its essential sequential and non-simultaneous mode. The subjective 'now' participates in the Principial Instant, which can also be called the 'Eternal Now' in which 'all temporal succession coincides in one and the same Eternal Now.'<sup>12</sup> The Eternal Now is according to Eckhart that eternal moment wherein 'the day to come a thousand years ahead or in as many years as you can count is no more distant in eternity than this very instant I am in'.<sup>13</sup> To participate in the 'now' is to be witness to the Eternal Now of Being Itself. The now as experienced is a moment 'where every where and every when is focused' comments Dante.<sup>14</sup> It is the point

<sup>11</sup> The idea of the 'vertical axis of time' or 'vertical time' has been used by some authors to describe the transcendental function of Principial Time. This, of course, is using a spatial terminology to describe a temporal phenomenon, a dimension of course which it intrinsically does not possess. A suitable transposition would be to say the 'eternal vertical axis' or the 'eternal axis of space'.

<sup>12</sup> Nicholas of Cusa as quoted by Coomaraswamy, *Time and Eternity*, 122.

<sup>13</sup> Eckhart as quoted in Perry, *Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 838.

<sup>14</sup> Dante, *Paradiso*, XXIX.12.

'where all times are present'.<sup>15</sup> According to Nicholas of Cusa, time as such does not exist, only the moment or 'now' contains any reality, any legitimacy. 'All time is comprised in the present or 'now'. ... it is Unity itself'.<sup>16</sup>

The 'now' or the 'present moment', like the 'here', possesses a unique quality. It is singularly situated in time, which is apparently unfolding both backward into the past and forward into the future. Events situated in the 'now' are real and actual. They are events that are virtual and in the process of actualisation passing over from the unreal future into the unreal past. Events in the future are present merely as possibilities, they await actualisation in the present. To subjectively witness the 'now' is to be present at the state of actualisation. This is akin to being present at creation and attaining a perspective of Eternity. The now is the 'window to Eternity'. What Being is to becoming, so is the now to temporal duration (Diagram 5.8).

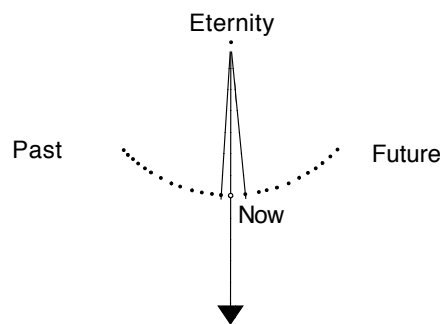


Diagram 5.8 The existential past, the now and the future as the sequential unfolding of Eternity.

The Hindu Tantric tradition is explicit in its concept of two forms of time, the transcendent Eternal Now and the empirical transient time. Transcendent time is the eternal time of the Divine Origin. The entire universe subsists in a potential state in this transcendent time, in this state of equipoise called *samanâ*.<sup>17</sup> This transcendent time cannot be destroyed (*akalya*) because in fact it is not created, it has absorbed within itself the entire sequence of events in the universe. Transcendent time is the source of all nature, this Eternity creates on the manifest plane a diversified sequence of events. This is the mode of ingress into the world of individualisation and it is by the initiation of empirical time, that is by sequential manifestation, that form is projected into individual existence. This results in the sequence of 'cause and effect' or the principal differentiation of antecedents and consequence. In this way, it causes differentiation in objects and events.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Dante *Paradiso*, XVII.17.

<sup>16</sup> *Of Learned Ignorance*, II, iii, and as quoted in Perry, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*, 840.

<sup>17</sup> A.K. Sinha, *Science and Tantra Yoga*, 227-233. Also Raimundo Panikkar, 'Time and History in the Tradition of India: Kala and Karma', in *Cultures and Time*, ed. Louis Gardet (Paris: The UNESCO Press, 1976), 63-88.

<sup>18</sup> Sinha, *Science and Tantra Yoga*, 227.

## The Here & Now - The Notion of 'Presence'

It is useful for the rest of this study, to introduce a corporeal term equivalent to these two couplets, the 'point/here' and the 'moment/now'. The corporeal domain embraces both space and time, so it would be useful to define, for the sake of future discussion, an inclusive corporeal equivalent to the combined spatial and temporal terms discussed so far. The geometric point and the moment in the objective corporeal sense can be defined as the 'corporeal point'. Although it understates the significance of the temporal component, the corporeal point is valid; a 'point in time' is a common expression and is entirely comprehensible in light of the term as used in the macrocosmic domain. The corporeal point is defined here as the principle of corporeal existence, being the synthesis of the temporal principal moment and geometric point. While for the purposes of this study it is appropriate to discuss the temporal domain as being separate from the spatial, when it comes to architecture, we are discussing it in the corporeal domain, which combines both.

The microcosmic/individual/subjective equivalent to the corporeal point will be defined as 'presence'.<sup>19</sup> Presence is an individual being's participation in both the 'here and the now', it is a being's conscious attention to that which is the centre of the place and the principal moment. Presence can be defined as the state of being present to the 'here and the now'. The word 'presence' itself comes from the Latin *praesentia*, a being before, and from *praesesse* with the roots *prae* before and *esse* to be, thus literally it means 'to be before' or 'to be part of'. The root *ess*, which relates to being<sup>20</sup> and to essence should be emphasized. For the purposes of this project, the notion of presence can be broadened and taken as the standing before the principal moment and the principal geometric point as the corporeal point with one's being or one's essence. It could be argued at this stage also that the notion of presence, rather than being an internalised notion, is more a subjective externalisation in that 'to be in front of' assumes a second party or second being. This is the second meaning for presence and includes the idea that 'presence' is being in the presence of something. In other words, it includes not only the state of 'being in front of', but also includes that second part, which is the locus of being before Being in the corporeal domain.

In earlier chapters, the term 'Divine Presence' was used without any elaboration; now it can be seen for what it is in somewhat more depth. Divine Presence is Being dwelling in the moment at the centre of a sacred space; it is Being in its most immediate and immanent form. Presence as a mode of Being lies at the polar opposite to Transcendence. Transcendence is that quality of Being that removes Being from the domain of human experience. Presence and Transcendence together form the two complementary extremes of the locus of Being relative to existence. Superficially, the two qualities appear contradictory, but that antinomy alludes to the breadth of the nature of Being. Divine Presence is a manifestation of Being that penetrates to the depths of the corporeal domain. However, it cannot be contained exclusively in a single domain for whenever one quality of Being is considered, the other should be inferred, just as a coin has two sides and a call of 'heads up' infers that tails are down. Whilst Divine Presence dwells in its own creation, its potency or mandate is provided by its Transcendence. Divine Presence dwells in the Eternal Now and at the heart of space.<sup>21</sup> It indwells within the Principal Point and lies always at the centre (Diagram 5.9).

<sup>19</sup> Again this is a slight departure for *Symbolism of the Cross*, but flows from its consequences. Support can be found in other works by Guénon such as in Collective Initiatic Work & Spiritual 'Presence' in *Initiation & Spiritual Realization*, trans. by Henry D. Fohr, ed. by Samuel D. Fohr (Ghent: Sophia Perennis, 2004), 117-121

<sup>20</sup> It is worth commenting here that 'essence' from the Medieval Latin is also derived from the root *esse*, 'to be', and is exactly that part which is its 'being'. Essence as a principle is commensurate with the Principal Being, the ultimate causal source of all being and becoming.

<sup>21</sup> 'Since God is the universal cause of all Being, in whatever region Being can be found, there must be the Divine Presence' states St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, III. Ixviii.

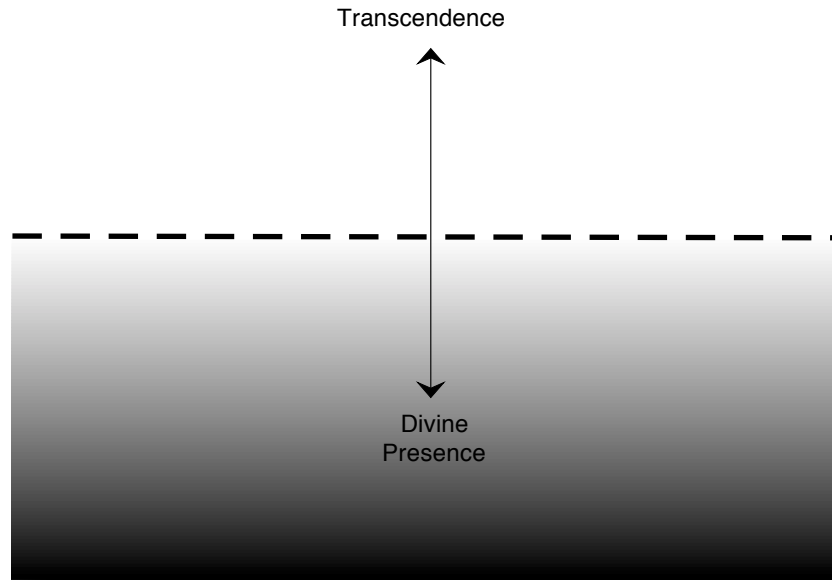


Diagram 5.9 The antinomic qualities of Being, Transcendence & Presence.

Divine Presence is a 'presentation' of Being to its creation, Being in the act of witnessing its own Being in the present moment and in a particular present place. Divine Presence must be perceived as a localised phenomenon because the moment (the 'now') and the point (the 'here') are unique. This does not mean that there is no universal dwelling of Being, for there is the complementary quality of Omnipresence but this is in the totality of creation and pertains to the quality of Transcendence rather than Immanence and Presence. In Islam, this proximity of the Divine Unity of Being is explained in numerous Sufi texts. 'I have never looked at a single thing without God being nearer to me than it.' exclaims Abu 'Ubaidah.<sup>22</sup> From the perspective of individual manifestation, Divine Presence is an exteriorisation of Being into the world and hence a localisation, while Divine Transcendence is an interiorisation, a retreat from the world and hence a universalisation of Being. The idea of localisation applies equally in the narrower sense to the corporeal domain, to any level of existence or to existence as a whole.

The full implication of individual presence can now be circumscribed. Not only does individual presence include participation in the 'here and now', it also includes the idea of being in the presence of something eternal, namely the Divine Presence. It is thus a correspondence between the individual 'here and now' with the principal point and moment at the centre of the three-dimensional cross. It is a face-to-face meeting of the human being's individual domain with the macrocosmic domain on common ground, Presence. The relationship of 'the being' and its 'being' as a form of presence is implicit in all corporeal existence.

<sup>22</sup> Abu Ubaidah, a companion of the Prophet (PBUH) from the *Book of Truthfulness*, (*Kitab al-Sidq*) by Abu Sa'id al Kharraz, trans. John Arberry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), 48. [https://archive.org/stream/bookoftruthfulne029338mbp/bookoftruthfulne029338mbp\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/bookoftruthfulne029338mbp/bookoftruthfulne029338mbp_djvu.txt).



## Architecture as Creation of the Here & Now

The central eternal point as the reflection of both the principal geometric point and the principal moment are integral symbols in the architecture of most sacred building. Indeed, such symbolism is one of the 'passive functions' of architecture. Additionally, it is one of the basic foundations of traditional architecture to symbolise both the world and the human being and to define and make cognate the various correspondences between Being, the cosmos and the various levels in each domain. Such symbolisation is made concrete and material in the architecture, and how this is achieved physically is the subject of Chapter 10.

Participation in the here and the now is one of the active functions of traditional sacred architecture. When combined with sacred ritual, participation becomes a potent means to realise the here and the now or to evoke presence in the participant. The process that make this possible is one of the central themes of this study, utilising Guénon's *Symbolism of the Cross* as a guide for hermeneutic exploration of sacred architecture. This function is the creation of an event in the here and the now made implicit by human states. This active role for sacred architecture is more difficult to categorise and illuminate than the built symbolic form, which stands on its own, for it is more subtle. While symbolism can be incorporated into a sacred building independent of the individual, the creation of the here and the now implicitly demands the participation of the individual in an architectural context. Without human participation in the sacred architectural configuration, there can be no creation of the here and the now. This fact is too often overlooked by those who write and speak about the 'passive functions' of symbolism in architecture. Many of the traditionalist authors quoted in this study emphasise the significance of symbolism in this passive manner, but it should not be overlooked that individual participation in these symbols is of equal if not greater significance. After all, sacred architecture is built not only in recognition of the Divine but also for worship by and possible transformation of the individual and the collective; this is the importance of the 'active' side of sacred architecture. The primary potential, *raison d'être*, of sacred architecture, is to evoke the participation of the individual in the here and the now. This is done by inviting the worshipper to witness the Eternal and Infinite qualities of Being, to be present to those qualities. Within the confines of a sacred building and with the aid of rituals, which make physical demands on the individual, the 'here' and the 'now' is momentarily lived.

Architecture is primarily an art of space and mass. Space is the basis of its symbolism, as presented by material objects in space; therefore configuration and geometry are of prime importance. When it comes to evoking a state of presence in being, the emphasis is primarily with the 'here', rather than the 'now'. Just as the two components of presence, the 'here' and the 'now', are obviously inseparable, so is the temporal component inseparable from the corporeal domain of architecture. Additionally, sacred architecture, which defines sacred space from profane chaos, calls upon various forms of symbolism and these are primarily of a spatial character. When a human being participates in sacred space, extension becomes existential and its spatial otherness or 'otherthereness' becomes 'subjectified', hence neutralised and absorbed into the 'here'. This is akin to making a 'place' in space. Place brings into being a unique space in which for the individual can dwell. It is actualised, but only in regard to being. Without the being, there is no place as such, for it is the being's apprehension of the particular uniqueness of a space that marks it as a place apart from all others. Place is the interaction of a being's presence with a geographic location. However, it is more than this. Place is a real thing that exists. Space is the medium of the

'capacity to extend' or 'extendance', an abstraction that exists without necessary reference to the being in it. Place on the other hand is imbued with a presence.<sup>23</sup>

It could be said that the presence generated is spatial presence or presence with a bias toward the 'here' rather than the 'now'. This is not so much a denial of time, however, but rather of duration. Time as eternal or mythological time is ever present in traditional architecture.<sup>24</sup> It cannot be eliminated from architecture in the corporeal world. Instead, time retreats and is present as Eternity. While the spatial delineation of sacred architecture therefore leads to an individual experience of the 'here', it is accompanied by the perspective of Eternity. Time becomes volatilised into Eternity, not the fleeting moment. The 'here' of sacred architecture does not so much deny the 'now' of presence but rather sublimates it into the principal state of Eternity. In establishing the 'here', the Aeviternal and Eternal are affirmed. This affirmation is comprehensible to being as participation in the 'now', for it is through the absorption of time in the 'now' that being can touch the Eternal. The 'now' becomes the window to Eternity.

---

<sup>23</sup> What is being discussed here is parallel with the phenomenology of space as espoused by Heidegger but in a more architectural context, not that Heidegger ignored the architectural implications, rather the contrary. This understanding of place is developed in the influential writings of Christian Norberg-Schulz. A condensed version of which can be found in the essay 'The Phenomenon of Place', in Nesbitt, *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture*, 417. Alberto Pérez-Gómez, Juhani Pallasmaa and others follow on from this perspective. Guénon's *Symbolism of the Cross* however gives another needed dimension to their ideas as I present it here.

<sup>24</sup> There are many ways in which this is done. Such aspects as the incorporation of sculpture and particularly figurative narrative and tableaux scenes all tend to reinforce a temporal dimension which is generally one of mythological time which is 'read'. Geometry, pattern and configuration have temporal equivalence in melodic scale as well as rhythm but these are generally not present within the architecture. This exclusion of time also tends to freeze out temporal duration. Such considerations and many more could lead to an interesting associated study.

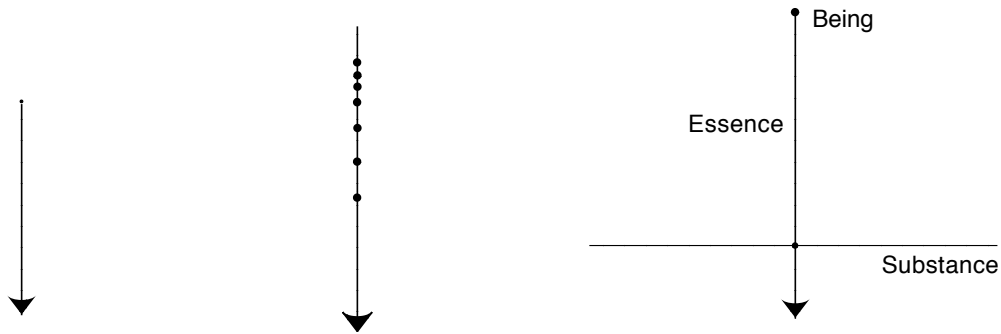
## CHAPTER 6:

# THE CROSS & THE HORIZONTAL PLAN

### The Cross as the Union of Complements

In the first model that was introduced (Diagrams 2.5 & 2.6), each concentric degree of Substance is an expression of the unique conditions in that particular measure of potentiality. Each circle of Substance represents particular possibilities or potentialities inherent to that degree. Instead of all possibilities being contained in the one circle, as in the second model (Diagram 2.7), they may instead be considered as individual modes of an indefinite number of measured distances from the centre. It is useful to use both models to describe manifestation, and traditional metaphysics in fact does this in various ways. The idea of the unity of manifestation is more coherent in the model depicting manifestation as a simple circumference, compared to the multiplicity presented most coherently by the idea of multiple degrees of Substance and the indefinite points of intersection between the indefinite number of radii and indefinite concentric circles of Substance. These ideas are now discussed further in terms of the combination of the two primary models. For reasons that will become apparent soon, it is both useful and appropriate to consider the aspect of Unity associated with Essence and the aspect of multiplicity with substance. This would require another model that combines the two. In other words, it is expedient to consider a single Essential radius which passes through multiple degrees of substantial possibilities. This hybrid model thus engenders the essential unity of manifestation with the individual multiplicity that ensues from it.

There is no difference in principle between existence as a unique circumference or as a field of multiple circumferences, because the Essential Principle penetrating the Substantial Principle remains the same. In this hybrid model, the unique ray of Essence intersects with and actualises multiple degrees of existence. The cosmos that is taken as our domain can be represented as a small segment of this complete model of manifestation in its entirety. This segment is complete in itself, containing all the possible degrees of manifestation and the actualising ray of the Essential Principle (Diagrams 6.1(a)-(c)).



Diagrams 6.1 (a) (Left): Radiation of the Essence of Being.  
 (b) (Centre): Partial segment of the model.  
 (c) (Right): Individual expression of model.

The two principles of production of existence, Essence and Substance, in the models discussed have a common mode of representation, that is, the Essential Principle, whose angle of incidence in relation to Substance, is always perpendicular. Essence is always depicted as 'transfixing' Substance at right angles, which has two primary points of significance.<sup>1</sup> First, the right angle is geometrically significant because it symbolises that there is no commensurability between Essence and Substance; both principles are independent and have no common relationship. Additionally, in geometric terms, there is no vector component in one line that can be equated to the other. Second, the perpendicular relationship expressed in its most complete mode leads to the graphic depiction of the cross and in this respect the cross can be taken as the intersection of the Essential Principle with the Substantial Principle of an indefinite radius (Diagram 6.1(c)). The horizontal arm of the cross is a reflection of Substance, the vertical arm that of Essence. Every point along the Essential Ray can be similarly considered, as can every point around any of the indefinite number of Substantial degrees. This geometric principle thus embodies a metaphysical principle of enormous potential. This analogy could be extended to every being in manifestation lying at the centre of its own unique cross (in limited modes). The single ray projecting outward can be seen to create immeasurable intersections or reflections upon the various degrees of Substantial Possibility. The locus of the intersection expresses a reflection of the same ray in the limitations of the particular degree of existence (Diagrams 6.2(a) & (b)).

<sup>1</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 94. It is curious why Guénon, leaves the development of this theme to the end. I have included the concept in the opening chapters as I think it is fundamental to grasp this concept at an early stage.



Diagrams 6.2 (a) (Left): The cross as the union of Essence & Substance.

(b) (Right): The multi-armed cross with multiple axial crossings.

The symbolism of the cross in its most general form reflects the intersection of the active principle of Essence with the principle of Substance, a principal union that is subject to indefinite individual reflections. The significance of the juxtaposition always remains the same; the cross always symbolises the intersection of two mutually exclusive, opposing or complementary tendencies. This applies to all forms of duality, not only the Essence-Substance duality. This must be the case, for every duality is but a reflection of the primordial duality of Essence and Substance. The models used in this dissertation up until now have largely been limited to planar or two-dimensional geometry. To develop certain ideas further, it will be useful to consider the circumference of the circle (or part circle) as the surface of a sphere. If this is done, then the horizontal arm of the cross, which was previously a tangential line, can be considered now as a tangential plane. This plane can be considered as nominally flat if the radius of the sphere is taken as indefinite. The radius symbolising the active ray of Principal Substance still remains a single radius. Thus the figure corresponding to the cross in two dimensions becomes a horizontal plane with a ray or radius normal to its surface in three dimensions (Diagram 6.3).

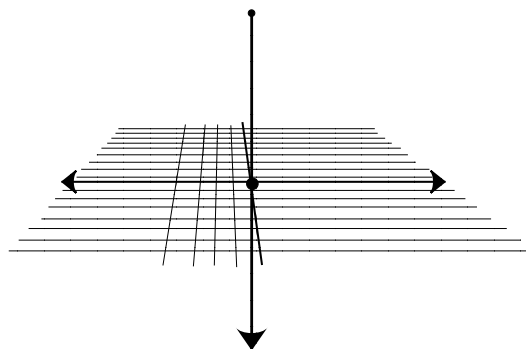


Diagram 6.3 The three-dimensional cross as the vertical ray intersecting the horizontal surface or plane.



The development of the radius and circumference model into three dimensions highlights a fundamental difference between the radius and the surface of the circumference. When compared with the circumferential surface, the radius suggests a difference in quality between the two. This difference when developed in two dimensions is not evident but when projected in the third dimension of space becomes an added dimension to the tangential perpendicular circumference and not to the radius which remains a singular line. In the language of symbolic geometry, the radius remains the unique principle of generation while the tangential or orthogonal plane contains an indefinite number of lines which are composed of an indefinite number of points.<sup>2</sup> Thus the plane that represents the Indefinite Possibilities of Substance is an appropriate symbol for manifest existence, for its planar surface has an indefinite number of possible lines for that state. This plane represents boundless possibilities and a sea of possible points, all of which are linked by the radius to the centre of the sphere. If the plane is considered as the surface of the sphere in an indefinite radius, then all the vertical radii issuing from its surface are at once all connected to the same centre and, for all intents, parallel at the same time. All this reinforces the idea that this radius, symbolic of Divine Essence, carries the notions of oneness and uniqueness compared to the surface, which projects the indefiniteness and multiplicity of Universal Substance.

Traditional metaphysical descriptions of the generation of existence invariably use symbolic language, one aspect of which is based on geometric principles or geometric order. The analogy based on the original geometric 'self-evident' is used to throw light on principles that are not in the domain of geometry.<sup>3</sup> The principles of geometry are reflected in the corporeal world. It is one of the simultaneous or 'binding' qualities of symbolism to project all orders together and unify them into a whole; however, this simultaneous symbolism can also obscure any hierarchical order of principles if not considered in their own domains. The order is Principial Order reflected in geometric order, which in turn is reflected in corporeal order (Diagram 6.4).

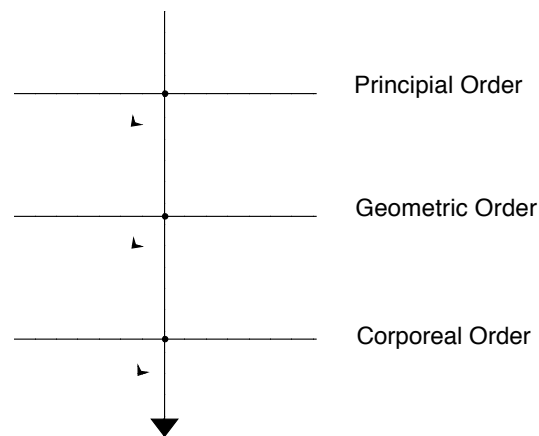


Diagram 6.4 The relationship of the principial order, geometric order and the corporeal order.

<sup>2</sup> What is being considered here is a type of 'geometric integration' that like mathematical integration is a function derived by combining infinitesimal data. Guénon articulates such notions in his *The Metaphysical Principles of the Infinitesimal Calculus*, trans. Michael Allen and H. Fohr, ed. Samuel Fohr (Hillsdale: Sophia Perennis, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> To use the Husserlian conjunction, 'self-evident'. It is a useful term. However, I would argue against this 'self-evident' as this assumes minimal intellectual struggle to see 'the evident'. Reading of symbolism is rarely easy and 'evident'. Euclidean geometry starts with the simple axioms. The fact that 'proving' the axioms present some of the most challenging mathematical problems belies Husserl's notion of the 'self-evident'.

There is a hierarchy of principles and causes and this notion which could be described as a 'dissolving' of the binding or unifying tendency of symbolism will allow the principle to stand out from its reflections if considered hierarchically. It is of limited use to consider spatial orientation and geometric symbolism as identical to the principal domain negating the hierarchical difference in order. Up until now the intention has been to avoid terms or language rooted in the corporeal ideas of space. However, this has not been possible because of the complexity and universally accepted bias towards using spatial and temporal language to describe principles in non-spatial domains. From this stage onward, it will be even more difficult, for the ideas being discussed have even less connection with the corporeal domain. This is emphasised because the very action of symbolic intellection transcends the ideas of hierarchy and multiple domains of existence. While it is possible to say, for example, that the vertical dimension is identical with the Ray of Essence linking all material things with Being, there still remains the very real differences between the domains that separate Being from the corporeal world. A full understanding of spatiotemporal analogy takes into consideration not only the common threads that identify and link all things but also those threads that separate and keep them apart.<sup>4</sup> So whilst from here on, the Essential ray can be called the vertical axis and the Substantial plane can be called the horizontal plane, it should always be remembered that the symbolic co-valance between the two domains operates only in terms of identity of principles and not in terms of identity of orders.

## The Experienced Horizontal Earth & Gravity

Guénon's important contribution in the *Symbolism of the Cross*, as outlined so far, is the syzygy of complementary but opposite principles of Essence and Substance; however, this duality can also be used to represent all unions of other complementary but opposite pairs. The two principles form a relationship that is truly polar, with one principle being the true antithesis of the other, one pole being mutually exclusive of the other pole. Such a duality is a fundamental principle of manifestation. The cross symbolises the union of these two complementary poles and not merely an opposition in which a principle is opposed to that of a privation of the principle, such as the contrast between white and black.<sup>5</sup> This spatial symbolism is of primary importance because it points to a subjective truth, for in man's spatial context, space is 'three dimensional' but has a two-dimensionality, the vertical axis and the horizontal plane, in the way we conceive it. To be sure, the plane is an expression of the third dimension but from subjective points of view and hence from an experiential perspective, space is primarily perceived as having both a vertical and a horizontal expanse. This perceived two-dimensionality of space, which actually has three independent directions, can be simply attributable to the phenomenological fact that mankind lives life on the surface of the earth, which is developed horizontally and continually struggles to oppose the pull of gravity, which acts as a force vertically (Diagram 6.5).

---

<sup>4</sup> This could be described as the weft of manifestation that separates as opposed to the warp which is the vertical dimension or thread that joins the fabric together. Discussed in Chapter 14, 'The Symbolism of Weaving', in *Symbolism of the Cross*, 65-70.

<sup>5</sup> A simple opposition between two opposing conditions such as black and white, forward and backward, past and future, all operate in the same mode, that is, they share the basis of their opposition, often associated with a quantification. This polarity, simply expressed as positive and negative, is different from the polarity of Essence and Substance. More is said about such complementary oppositions in Chapter 9.

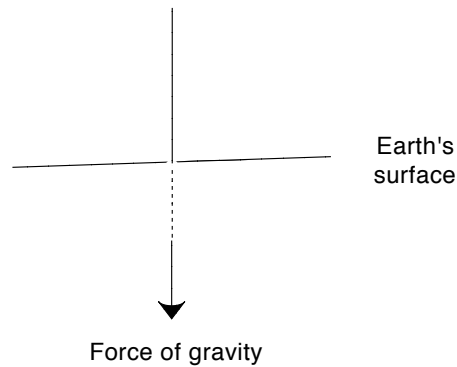


Diagram 6.5 In terms of man and the subjective experiential perception of terrestrial space, the effect of gravity upon the earth is fundamentally opposed by the being.

Architecture recognises this duality, as it must, for it is a spatial construct that reflects mankind's life. All traditional buildings, or rather all buildings, show this two-dimensionality of the horizontal expanse and vertical height. This two-dimensionality is none other than the architectural plan and elevation. It is impossible to conceive of a building that could have the same plan and elevation, and even if it was, it would be impossible to construct, for the plan does not oppose gravity, which the vertical elevation must. The plan of a building is the horizontal disposition of its parts; it develops from the life, movement and activity of human beings in the world. The human being's life is symbolically and physically horizontal, movement is predominantly in the horizontal plane; however, the human figure possesses verticality by way of its physical height and its upright posture, so we must build vertically to accommodate this physical dimension and life. This is where the struggle with the levelling effects of gravity begins. To overcome the downward effect of gravity, the human being must build from the ground upward in order to oppose it. All buildings must conform to this process and all buildings reflect this two-dimensionality. All buildings respond to the two dimensionality of the human life upon the earth with a horizontal repose and a vertical rise. The Egyptian obelisk, with its extreme reduction of materiality is the supreme manifestation of this principle of the vertical ray supported from the minimal impost upon the horizontal plane of the earth (Image 6.1).<sup>6</sup> The obelisk however remains pure abstract symbol without architectural utility but symbolically reflecting a single vertical 'ray'.

<sup>6</sup> As noted by Giedion, *The Eternal Present*, 444.



Image 6.1

The Egyptian obelisk is the purest expression of the solar ray and the vertical axis with a minimal horizontal plan. Obelisk of Queen Hatshepsut, Temple of Amun, Karnak. Anything less architectural becomes a single pillar, mast or like the Hindu *stumbha*.

This is not to say that the third dimension of space is undifferentiated. However, the horizontal plane, expressing substantial non-differentiation, requires differentiation to be imposed on it if further correspondences are to be used for symbolic intent. This horizontal plane reflects Substance's ability to be non-qualitative and undifferentiated, it remains uniform and spatially homogeneous. It is possible to represent the notion of the cross in the horizontal plane and thus to distinguish two complementary poles in its as yet undifferentiated dimensions. This is possible because in the horizontal plane there are two mutually exclusive axes or directions, neither with any intrinsic difference. For a cross in the horizontal plane

to reference a symbolic content, one arm or axis must be differentiated from the other. This is most often done by orientation, whereby one axis is dedicated to, or aligned with, a unique principle, thus differentiating it from the other. In this manner, the cross in the horizontal plane becomes a reflection of the vertical axis and the horizontal plane (or horizontal line in the case of the vertical cross).<sup>7</sup> It is like a laying down of the vertical axis as if on a hinge in the horizontal plane. The dedicated or 'oriented axis' becomes a relative vertical axis and the other independent axis becomes a relative horizontal axis. Thus, it is possible to impose upon the horizontal plane a cross in which one axis represents the virtual vertical axis by assigning a qualitative correspondence to the vertical axis (Diagram 6.6).

<sup>7</sup> And hence the act of orientation is one of the most significant of the architectural considerations in figuring the plan of a building. This is an entire topic in its own right and can not be included here.

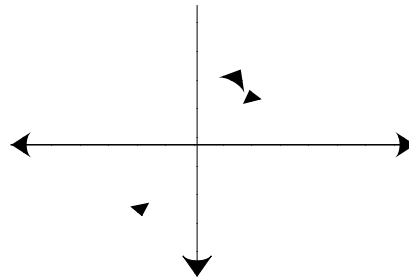
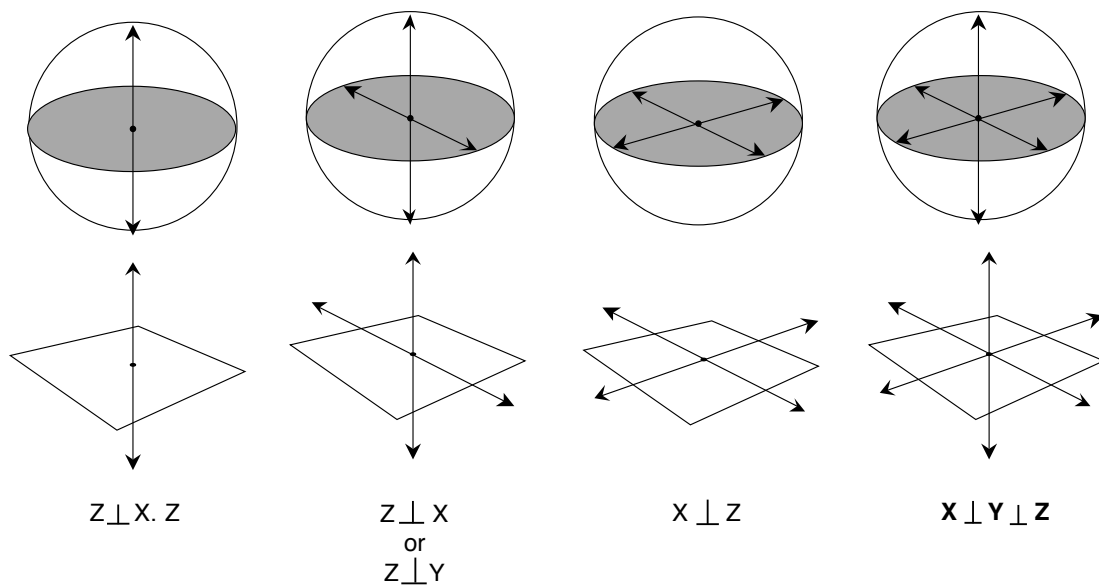


Diagram 6.6 The vertical axis of the three-dimensional cross can virtually be 'laid down' or transposed into the horizontal plane.

It is now possible to summarise the four different modes of the cross (Diagrams 6.7(a)-(d)).<sup>8</sup> The first representation (a) is where the vertical axis 'Z' is independent of the horizontal plane. This is the most fundamental representation and although it occupies the three independent directions of space, it recognises only two aspects of dimensionality. The second representation (b) is the vertical cross, which is developed as the two-dimensional equivalent of the first representation. It is developed as a section through the horizontal plane, effectively eliminating the third dimension. The third representation (c) is the rotation of the vertical axis of the second representation down into the horizontal plane, thus eliminating the vertical axis or the 'Z' direction. The final representation (d), not yet discussed, is the most complete figurative representation, for it embodies the previous three representations of the cross. This is the developed three-dimensional cross, where each axis is developed in the three independent directions of space. Because this symbol is of universal significance in architecture, a more detailed examination of its properties is essential.



Diagrams 6.7 (a) (Left): The vertical axis orthogonal to the horizontal plane.  
 (b) (Centre left): The vertical orientated two dimensional cross.  
 (c) (Centre right): The two dimensional cross in the horizontal plane.  
 (d) (Right): The three dimensional cross orientated to the three dimensions of space.

<sup>8</sup> This section is a summary from numerous parts of *Symbolism of the Cross*, but primarily Chapter XI.

## The Three Dimensional Cross

As the corporeal world is developed in three independent spatial dimensions, it is possible to transpose the various models previous discussed into one coherent metaphysical model. Further, it allows for the representation of three independent criteria of manifestation. The previous representations of the cross juxtaposes the two complementary poles of Essence and Substance or any of their indefinite reflections as secondary modifications, such as those of *forma* and *materia secunda*. This was essentially why those crosses required only two juxtaposed dimensions. With the introduction of the three-dimensional cross, it is possible to consider the three independent dimensions of space as symbolic of three independent principles. This explains why the three-dimensional cross is one of the most important symbols in architecture and why three dimensions are all that is required to plot symbolically the locus of all manifestation.<sup>9</sup> In order to present this symbolic correlation, the cross will first be discussed relative to the multiplicity of individual beings, which are the macrocosm, and then in relation to individual man, who is a microcosm. It should be recalled that the individual state is one that includes form among its determining conditions, so individual manifestation and formal manifestation are equivalent expressions.<sup>10</sup> This individual state has previously been used to describe the human individual state but it also includes any other state subject to formal or individual manifestation. In previous chapters, the individual state was said to be composed of so many 'degrees of existence', and by virtue of what has been said previously, each degree of existence can now be represented as a horizontal plane of indefinite extent. This horizontal plane can be said to contain the two indefinitudes to be considered.

First, there is the individual, which may be represented by the sum of the straight lines parallel to a dimension in the horizontal plane, which in turn could be represented as, say, the 'x' axis.<sup>11</sup> Second, there are those domains peculiar to the individuals different modalities, which are indefinitely expanded in the other independent direction in the plane. This could be considered as parallel to the 'y' axis. Thus each domain includes an indefinitude of parallel straight lines, all indefinite in length and each point on the plane will be determined by the intersection of these two straight lines, one from each class. Hence each domain will represent a particular modality of one of the individuals comprised in that degree. A frontal section taken parallel to the x axis will reveal the multiple modalities of a single individual. A longitudinal section parallel to the y axis will reveal the complement, that is, all the multiple individuals that comprise a certain modality (Diagram 6.8).<sup>12</sup>

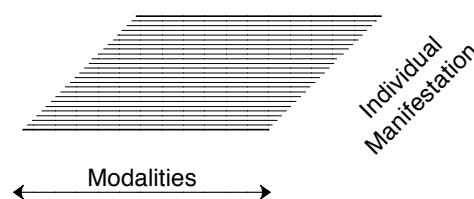


Diagram 6.8 One single degree of existence.

<sup>9</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, refer to Chapters XI-XV.

<sup>10</sup> Paraphrasing Guénon, *Symbolism of the Cross*, 58n.

<sup>11</sup> The normal conventions for three dimensional geometry are assumed for the x, y and z axis.

<sup>12</sup> The following series of diagrams are not given by Guénon in the *Symbolism of the Cross* and are my interpretation of the key ideas in the work.



Each degree of universal existence may be represented similarly in three-dimensional space by a horizontal plane. A frontal plane through the multiple degrees of existence will thus reveal the totality of an individual being. This plane comprises an indefinite multiplicity of states, which are represented by the horizontal lines on the face of the plane. On the other hand, the vertical lines in the plane are formed by the group's modalities, which correspond respectively to one another in all these states. Furthermore, in three-dimensional space there is an infinitude of such planes, representing the infinitude of the beings contained in the universe (Diagram 6.9). In this model, the three dimensions of space are used to correspond to the three parameters of Universal Existence, designated as the degrees of existence, individual beings and the modalities of those beings.

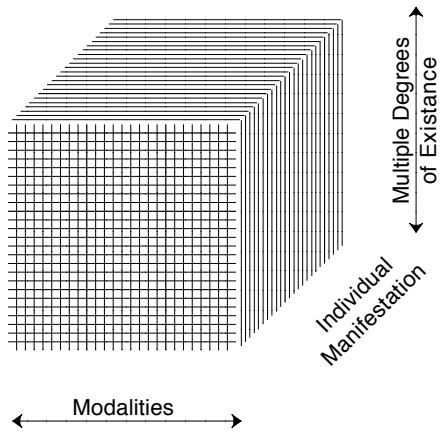


Diagram 6.9

Representation of the totality of Universal Existence as multiple degrees of existence.

A second three-dimensional model that considers only the development of a single being, rather than the development of the indefinite number of beings in Universal Existence, can now be developed. In the just discussed model, each modality of a being is represented by a point. For example, a human being has a modality that corresponds to the corporeal domain, it has a corporeal modality. Such a modality can also be developed in the course of manifestation, for example, the temporal modifications that will occur in the life of the individual as well as the acts that individual will perform in the course of his or her existence. All modalities are capable of such secondary temporal modifications relative to the individual being. A fourth parameter of modalities can now be taken into account for the indefinite modifications possible due to a temporal consideration relative to the individual being in its totality. A representation of this would require a four-dimensional space or alternatively one of the other parameters could be removed. If the multiplicity of individual beings is not considered, then a three-dimensional model of an individual being can be developed (Diagram 6.10).

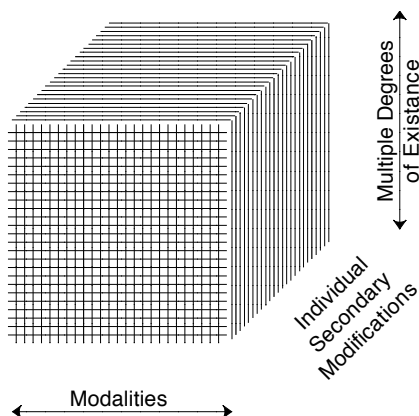


Diagram 6.10

Representation of individual existence.

It should be noted that in all three diagrams 6.8, 6.9 & 6.10, the vertical axis is represented by the multiple degrees of existence applicable both to universal and individual existence. Each horizontal plane in the first model represents a degree of universal existence and comprehends the development of a possibility relative to a universal modality, which could be called a macrocosm, that is, a world. On the other hand, each horizontal plane in the second model of an individual being comprehends the development of a particular being's possibilities, relative to the same modalities but in an individual manner. It is this second model (Diagram 6.10) that could be called a microcosm or world of the individual.<sup>13</sup> The distinction between the macrocosm and the microcosm then occurs simply because of the two viewpoints, namely of the universal or the individual. Both views are combined as part of Universal Possibility and both are contained in the various horizontal planes representing the multiple degrees of existence. This shows the analogy that exists between the microcosm and the macrocosm, every part of the universe being analogous to the other parts, and its own parts, because all are analogous to the total universe. The common meeting point is the individual. The first model develops the possibilities that end in the individual, while the second model develops the possibilities starting with the individual and ends with the indefinite multitude of co-existing modalities, 'just as the bodily organism itself is composed of an indefinite multitude of cells, each of which also has an existence of its own'.<sup>14</sup> While innumerable sages, philosophers, writers and thinkers have for thousands of years in all traditions observed the correspondence between the macrocosm and the microcosm, Guénon has described in *Symbolism of the Cross* why there is a metaphysical basis and is the only writer to have done so using a detailed and explicit metaphysical exposition based on the symbolic geometry of the three dimensional cross.

The models just presented are shown in a cubic configuration for simplicity; however, they are developments of the three dimensional cross in various modes that extend in indefinite directions. Each point on the horizontal plane has located in itself the three parameters or possible expansions. It is thus possible to talk about the three-dimensional cross in the context of either the macrocosm or the microcosm. Whenever the cross is embodied in architecture, both applications can be interpreted. All sacred architecture is subject to symbolism, which has the two-fold reference reflecting either the universal domain or the individual domain.

Beings in space hence possess these parameters of 'modality', 'individual being' and 'degree of existence'. In everyday space, the degree of existence is the corporeal domain so that every existence has individual being and its own modality. Every-'thing' in space possesses these two parameters. It is not intended that those parameters be conceived as the dimensions of space; rather, space conforms to a geometric configuration that affords those independent directions to be used as symbols for the parameters of existence and this fourth parameter of existence can be perceived only by our consciousness, in one mode or the other. The consequences of this limitation is a type of 'blindness' that allows only the universal generality or the individual existence to be perceived, but not both simultaneously.<sup>15</sup> When applied to the horizontal expanse as a symbol, this limitation means the symbol is also capable of only one mode at a time. In other words, the horizontal plane as a symbol can be conceived in the human state as a domain of universal existence but not at the same time as an individual existence. This individual modality in most cases refers to human individuality but need not be restricted to it.

The traditional articulation of metaphysical principles just outlined takes many different forms and emphasises various aspects of the two schemas. There is total concordance however in

---

<sup>13</sup> Guénon points out that 'it is most important to observe that when considered in isolation, the "macrocosm" itself like the "microcosm" is only one of the elements of the universe, just as each particular possibility is only one element of total Possibility', *Symbolism of the Cross*, 64.

<sup>14</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 64.

<sup>15</sup> Why this should be so is a complex question and the answer cannot be completely known. It is to a large extent a mystery of being.

seeing the three-dimensional cross as the two-dimensionality of the vertical axis and the horizontal plane and it is now proposed to study these two aspects in more depth, starting with the various modes of the horizontal plane and then the various modes of the vertical axis. Both can be studied from a universal or individual perspective.

## The Multiple Degrees of Existence

The creation of manifestation has been described as the coming together of the active Principle of Essence with Universal Substance. This was symbolised geometrically by the production of the circle from the point. An elaboration of this geometrical representation is to view Universal Substance as a multiple, or for that matter an indefinite number, of circumferential layers. Each layer or concentric circle represents a limited aspect of Universal Substance and a particular set of limitations particular to that state. The number of levels or circumferences is indefinite from some points of view, corresponding to how Universal Substance reflects Infinite Possibility. However, from selected, more generalised, points of view, this indefinite number of circumferences can be grouped into a finite number of states. Each state represents a degree or bundle of possibilities with related 'potentialities'<sup>16</sup> which are realised in manifestation.<sup>17</sup> While there are multiple degrees of existence, they are to a certain extent grouped into identifiable 'steps' of multiple states (Diagram 6.11).

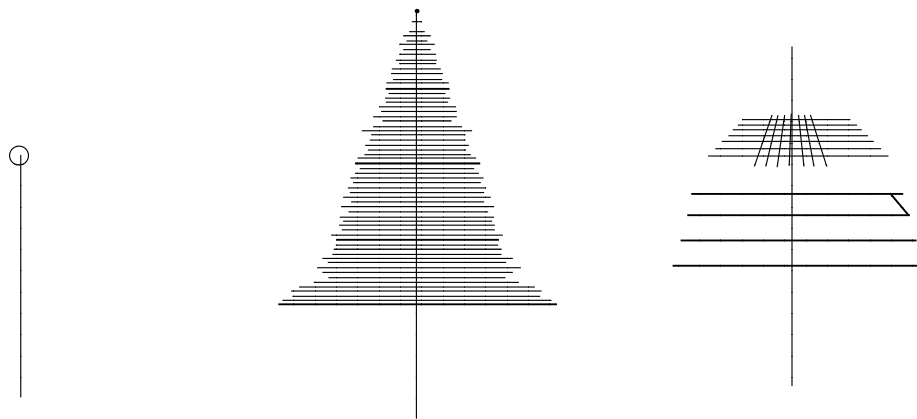


Diagram 6.11 While Substance represents an undifferentiated basis upon which Essence can act, from the point of view of manifestation certain possibilities can be grouped as it were into certain related 'steps' of 'potentialities'.

<sup>16</sup> It is not intended to give each level a qualitative content because Substance has no qualitative content. These layers are distinguishable only from the point of view of the manifestation they support. Putting it in a very inaccurate way, but still containing the intention, it could be said that only after manifestation is brought about are these layers identified as separate, prior to manifestation there is literally nothing to distinguish them apart.

<sup>17</sup> The word 'degree' is from Old French *degré* meaning 'a step' (of a stair), a 'pace' and from Late Latin *degradare*, from *de-* 'down' + *gradus* 'step'.

The models and schema used here are only spatial or geometric representations and in fact there is nothing intrinsically spatial about the different domains of Substance. It is difficult to describe this differentiation without resorting to spatial or mathematical metaphor.<sup>18</sup> Several spatial terms, such as 'states', 'degrees', 'levels', 'planes', 'realms', 'domains' and 'regions', have been introduced already. All use differentiated partitioned space to describe the potentialities of Substance. Even Plato in *Timaeus* struggled with this terminology:

There were, before the world came into existence, being, space, and becoming, three distinct realities. The nurse of becoming was characterized by the qualities of water and fire, of earth and air, and by others that go with them, and its visual appearance was therefore varied; but as there was no homogeneity or balance in the forces that filled it, no part of it was in equilibrium, but it swayed unevenly under the impact of their motion, and in turn communicated its motion to them. And its contents were in constant process of movement and separation, rather like the contents of a winnowing basket or similar implement for cleaning corn, in which the solid and heavy stuff is sifted out and settles on one side, the light and insubstantial on another: so the four basic constituents were shaken by the receptacle, which acted as a kind of shaking implement, and those most unlike each other were separated most widely, those most like each other pushed together most closely, with the result that they came to occupy different regions of space even before they were arranged into an ordered universe.<sup>19</sup>

Plato uses *regions of space* as an analogy for the separation of the different elements of Being. This places space at the origin with Being, but interestingly Plato uses the analogy of winnowing to explain how the ordering of existence comes about. This ordering is not so much spatial, although it is corporeal and uses mass and size instead of segregated spatial regions. Separation thus has the result 'that they came to occupy different regions of space', but at the principial level, not the spatial levels in the corporeal world. Confusion results partly from the translation of the Ancient Greek *khôra* as space. *Khôra* more correctly is aligned to Substance, used here as the universal 'material substratum' of manifestation.<sup>20</sup>

This separation results in the analogous notions of 'domains of existence' and Guénon's 'degrees of existence' when discussing the different potentialities that Substance supports in its role in manifestation.<sup>21</sup> A degree of existence contains all the modalities of an individual or individuals, depending on whether it is a degree of individual or universal manifestation. These modalities are the actualised and non-actualised possibilities in that particular degree of existence. It is the modalities of a being that distinguish the multiple degrees of existence from each other. The modalities are intrinsically what is being discussed here but it is the 'separation' of the modalities that brings on the spatial imperative for metaphor.

To return to the model of the concentric circles or shells, the number of individual levels representing manifestation depends upon the limitations inherent in a particular point of view. All levels contain possibilities that are similar. All levels are a limited representation of all modalities,

---

<sup>18</sup> The multiple states could for example be explained equally well using mathematical set theory. It is curious why Guénon does not make general use of set theory or at least its terminology as he studied mathematics in Paris. He does so constantly in *The Metaphysical Principles of the Infinitesimal Calculus*, such as:

'Number, space, and time, to which some people wish to apply the notion of this so-called infinite, are determined conditions, and as such can only be finite; they are but certain possibilities, or certain sets of possibilities, beside and outside of which there exist others, and this obviously implies their limitation'. (*The Metaphysical Principles*, 9)

<sup>19</sup> *Timaeus*, 52D-53A, from *Timaeus and Critias*, trans. Desmond Lee, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971). Cornford in his translation of the *Timaeus* gives a detailed running commentary on the 'winnowing basket' 197-203.

<sup>20</sup> The Post-Modernist preoccupation with the word *khôra* also complicates matters further.

<sup>21</sup> Degree thus is less intrinsically spatial than domain and more qualitative in distinction of the steps. This highlights the precision of Guénon's metaphysics.

represented by a single circle or a single horizontal plane. Each degree of existence that expresses manifestation in the limits of its possibilities can be considered a world or state. The world represented by the horizontal plane corresponds either to the indefinitude of possible modalities of one state of an individual being or to universal existence. The total of such vertically superimposed series of states or degrees is the total being or the totality of universal existence.<sup>22</sup>

The grouping of the multiple degrees of existence varies not only from one tradition to another but also in the traditional metaphysical doctrines themselves. Each system sees universal existence as being divisible into multiple degrees, as 'worlds' or levels. Although the number varies, perhaps the most elementary yet universal view sees existence divided into three worlds. This schema has already been discussed in principle in allusion to all manifestation, but it can now be considered in its wider implications as a schema for universal existence with 'stepped' levels of existence. One being may have a reflection on, or participate in, each of the multiple states or planes of existence. It will have a form firstly, because as an individual being, it will participate inevitably in the domain of formal manifestation. It is precisely the presence of form among the conditions of a particular mode of existence that characterises that mode as individual.<sup>23</sup> Located beyond the domain of individual manifestation, that is, beyond the formal domain, is the formless domain. The formless domain includes other domains of universal existence and Being itself, the Principle of Manifestation. Beyond Being is the Unmanifest, which is not subject in any way to this notion of degrees of existence but remains non-existent in every sense of the word (Diagram 6.12).

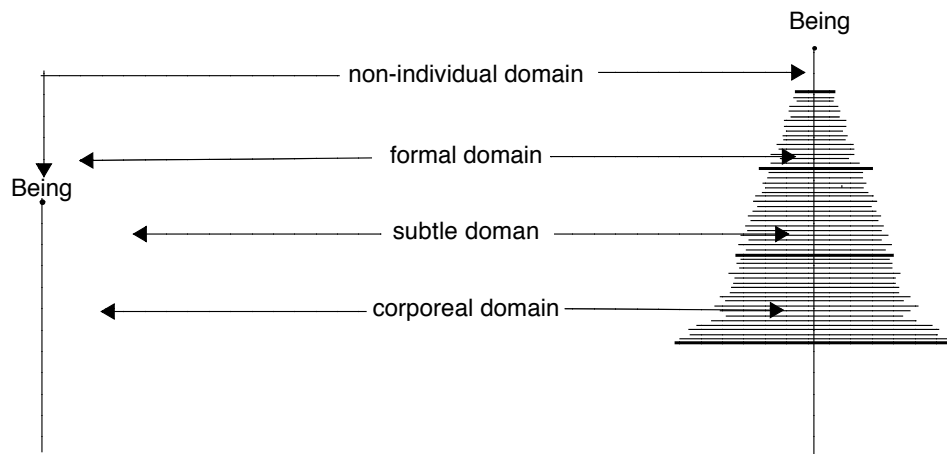


Diagram 6.12 One common traditional subdivision of the multiple degrees of existence is the division into four domains or if considering formal existence only, the three domains of formal, subtle and corporeal domains of existence.

The formal domain, discussed in detail in Chapter 2, is the domain of the archetypes or of pure ideas in the Platonic sense, and plays the principal role of individualisation of existence. In this way, the formal domain is to individual manifestation what Being is to existence. The subtle and corporeal domains include all the subsequent reflections of formal domain in the individual states. The corporeal domain is the gross material state and includes those states determined by the rigours of space and time. The set of beings in this domain possess physical 'bodies' positioned in the spatiotemporal world. As to the subtle state, it includes in the first place all the extra-corporeal

<sup>22</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 11.

<sup>23</sup> Guénon, *Man and His Becoming*, 60.

modalities of a being, that is, all the individual states beyond the corporeal. Earlier in this chapter the term 'geometric order' was used as an example but the definition of this subtle state can now be greatly expanded. In regard to the distinction between the 'subtle state' and the 'gross state', Guénon says:

'It is therefore evident that these two terms are not truly symmetrical and cannot even have any common measure, since one of them represents only a portion of one out of the indefinite multiplicity of states which constitute formal manifestation while the other includes all the remainder of this manifestation'.<sup>24</sup>

It is in precisely this manner that the manifested can be distinguished from the unmanifest, the formless from the formal, and the incorporeal is excluded from the corporeal by reference to a specific quality (in this case, time and space). Considering the multiple states of existence, each successive level can also be seen as a level of exclusion, determined by particular limitations. Each level becomes progressively more 'conditioned' as a sub-set of the one before it. Each level therefore, through a series of limitations, becomes progressively more relative and determined, extending from the unmanifest downward to gross corporeal manifestation, passing through the intermediary of formless, formal and then subtle manifestation. The lower the descent, the more rigorous and limited the conditioning. The imposition of these limits or conditions and the number of different conditions comprehended by the human mind ultimately determine the number of levels of existence. These arrangements incorporate two criteria for division. The first is the division between individual and non-individual existence, the second is the division between corporeal and non-corporeal individual existence. There is practically no limit to this process of exclusive division, for there are ultimately an indefinite number of degrees of existence to be grouped into stepped domains.

While most of the above applies to both macrocosmic and microcosmic perspectives, it may be worth looking at the microcosmic application to discuss some of the terminology associated with the multiple domains of individual man. Generally, the terminology differs from that of the macrocosm. The *materia* of the human being can generally be referred to as the 'soul'. The soul is the fundamental and unconditioned support of the being, the fundamental matrix of the being and only a part of the greater world that is *materia prima*. The soul, which is the foundation of man, is more or less equivalent to *materia secunda*. The soul is the original state of pure receptivity which lies at the base of being's nature and here much can be defined from terms in the alchemical tradition which has this subject as the heart of its teachings.<sup>25</sup> According to alchemical teaching, the soul in its original state of pure receptivity is fundamentally *materia prima*, the substance of the whole world.<sup>26</sup> Adamantine man is made from the 'dust of the ground'. The earth as *materia secunda* is the red clay into which the spirit or breath of God is blown. The name Adam<sup>27</sup> is derived from the masculine form of the word *ha-adamah*, meaning 'the ground'.<sup>28</sup> In this regard the etymology of *homo*- and *humus* have a similar association with the earth.

The *materia prima* of mankind, the soul, is the substance that supports man's multiple levels of manifestation. It is the substance of, firstly, the material or gross body and then of the subtle manifestations, including the ego-bound consciousness, the psychic-bound forms and beyond.

<sup>24</sup> *Man and His Becoming*, 34-35.

<sup>25</sup> The alchemical tradition is a tradition connected more to the *philosophia perennis* than to a particular revelation. It is essentially a primordial science of being and the universe. For this reason and the fact that the alchemical work is also incorporated within many other traditions, the nature of being can be discussed by using this precise metaphysical 'traditional science'.

<sup>26</sup> Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, 97.

<sup>27</sup> 'And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.' Genesis, 2:7.

<sup>28</sup> *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, on-line resource at: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01129a.htm>



The individual human being is of the same substance as the world, 'For dust you are and to dust you will return'. If the 'web' of the world were not fundamentally of the same nature as the soul, the analogy of microcosm and macrocosm would not hold. In this traditional science, it is also the substance of all thoughts and perception, underlying all human phenomenon.<sup>29</sup> If the 'web' of the world were not fundamentally of the same nature as the soul, the analogy of microcosm and macrocosm would not hold. In this traditional science, it is also the substance of all thoughts and perception, underlying all human phenomenon.<sup>30</sup> Because of the soul's power of actualisation, all forms of impurities can be brought to light along with the multiple levels of man's being. This 'clouds' the purity of the soul, it darkens the soul, which is likened to lead. Purification of the soul reveals the mirror-like quality of the soul which can reflect the light of the intellect untrammelled. Traditional names for the pure soul or *materia prima* are many, as to be expected for something that has no quality, and hence recourse to metaphor is needed. It is called 'sea' because it carries in itself all forms, as the sea carries the waves; it is called 'earth' because it nourishes all that lie upon her; it is the 'seed of things', the 'basic moistness' (*humiditas radicalis*); it is *hyle*.<sup>31</sup> The soul considered in a gender sense is invariably 'female'. It is also 'virgin' on account of its purity and receptivity.

In its purified state, the soul reflects the spirit in the same way that Universal Substance reflects its complementary pole, Essence. In a sense, Essence can be identified with Being or the One of Creation whilst Substance stands aside from Oneness as Otherness. This is an identification of Essence with Pure Being, rather than an equivalence of Being. Viewed from a certain perspective, Essence corresponds to all the qualities identifiable with Being. In the same way, spirit can be identifiable with Being, while the soul of the world, as the root of otherness, stands aside, as does Universal Substance. The relationship between spirit and soul is difficult to fully articulate and no attempt will be made to do so here. What is relevant here, however, is the interaction between the soul and the spirit which produces the multiple levels of being in man. It is not a gross simplification to say that the two poles function in a similar way to *forma* and *materia secunda*, which produce multiple reflections on the different planes of existence. It is this combination of spirit and soul that caused John of Ruysbroeck to write that in all men there is by nature a threefold unity and:

'The first and highest unity to be found in men is God, for all creatures depend on Divine Unity for their very being, life and existence... This unity is in us essentially by nature, whether we be good or bad. ... While this unity is in us, it is at the same time above us, as the foundation and support of our life.

A second union, or unity, is likewise present in us by nature. This is the unity of the higher faculties,...This second unity we possess in ourselves, quite above the realm of the senses. From it derive thought, reason, will and all the possibilities of spiritual activity. Here the soul bears the name of spirit.

The third unity which is in us by nature consists of the domain of the lower faculties, which have their seat in the heart, the basis and source of animal life. It is in the body, and especially the action of the heart that the soul possesses this unity, from which all activities of the body and the five senses proceed. Here it bears its own name of soul, for it is the 'form' of the body which it animates, the body which it makes to live and keeps alive.

<sup>29</sup> *Genesis*, 3.19.

<sup>30</sup> Burckhardt and others have pointed out that this idea of the soul as the source which underlies all human consciousness should not be confused with Jungian 'collective consciousness' of modern psychology. Burckhardt states this clearly in *Alchemy* from which most of this section on the correspondence between soul and *materia prima* is interpreted, *Alchemy*, 98.

<sup>31</sup> Paraphrasing Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, 71-72.

These three unities which are in man by nature constitute a single life and a single realm. In its lowest unity this life is sensory and animal; in the middle unity it is rational and spiritual; and in the highest unity it is contained in its own essence. This belongs to all men by nature'.<sup>32</sup>

This formula is not universal among all traditions but is included here at length as it represents a broad aspect of Western and Christian metaphysics. It is typical of many traditional schema to categorise the multiple levels of the human being into three states (or 'unity', to use Ruysbroeck's term). First, there is a complete spectrum of levels of man's being, starting from the embodiment of the Divine Unity, his higher faculties, his lower faculties and, finally, his sensorial and corporeal body. The use of spatial terminology is almost inevitable when discussing the multiple degrees of existence, since each degree must inevitably have a state relative to Pure Being. Each successively lower level in a being becomes more conditioned and limited, ending finally in the corporeal domain of the body and the senses. One of the simplest divisions is that expressed above by John of Ruysbroeck and it corresponds closely with what was said in the previous section about the divisions of macrocosmic existence into three domains or worlds (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Correspondences of the 'Unities' according to John of Ruysbroeck

Unity	Microcosm	Macrocosm
First Unity	- spirit	- universal domain
Second Unity	- intellect - will - rational faculties	- formal domain - subtle domain
Third Unity	- senses - body ( <i>anima</i> )	corporeal domain

The First Unity is a faculty corresponds to the Universal Realm and as such is supra-individual. At this level man is considered as Universal Man. The Second Unity corresponds to the non-corporeal individual states of the subtle and formal domains, which correspond with the non-corporeal individual states in man, that is, the mental faculties. These states belong to each individual and can be correctly called human states. The Third Unity corresponds to the corporeal domain and is the unity of the body and its bodily senses. It could be said that the Western Christian tradition expressed here by John of Ruysbroeck is perhaps the most simplistic of all the traditions. With some generalization, the above tripartite divisions have invariably been defined as the body, the soul and the spirit of man. The various possibilities or modes expressed within the three states of being's existence, constitute the being in its totality.

This triune division and grouping of being's possibilities can be further reduced to only two domains. At this point, it is worth pointing out a further generalization with regard to these states and this is to consider man in regard to a polarity or more correctly as a dichotomy of only two

<sup>32</sup> John of Ruysbroeck, *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage*, Chapter 2.

states. This is the most reductive and simplistic model for the representation of the human states into only two domains (Diagram 6.13).

Man can be considered as having two natures (for want of more suitable terminology). He can be considered first in the duality of a being's non-individual and individual states and second in non-corporeal and corporeal states. In either case, the threefold division of man is perceived in an apparent complementary duality. This does not mean that man is a being of duality as defined in Cartesian dualism but rather that the threefold manifestation is comprehensible and expressible in a twofold antinomic nature. The threefold division of body, soul and spirit is further sub-divisible into secondary states and each tradition treats these secondary subdivisions with varying significance and terminology, particularly when one considers the many technical sub-divisions in the Islamic (Sufi), Hindu and Buddhist traditions.

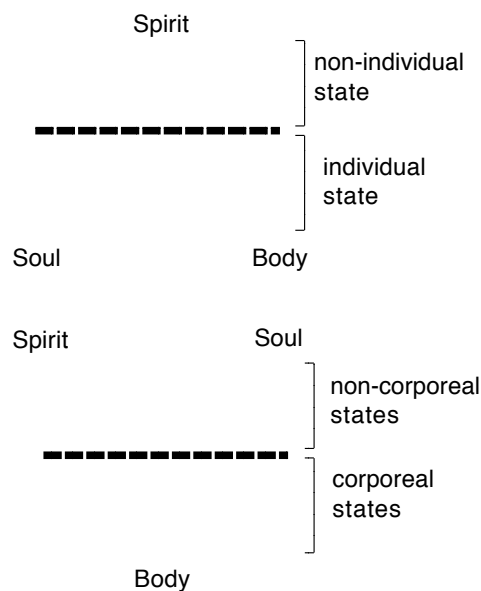


Diagram 6.13 The tripartite division of man's being into spirit, soul and body can be further reduced into two fundamental states, either the non-individual and individual duality or alternatively the non-corporeal and corporeal duality.

All the states can be conceived spatially as so many horizontal planes and in this respect other terms, such as levels of existence, strata and layers of existence, are applicable. This spatialisation emphasises the independence of each state, reinforcing the idea that each state contains conditions and limitations particular to it considered either on the macrocosmic domain or microcosmic domain. Every state is unique and all the modes of manifestation in that state reflect that uniqueness, expressed best by considering the separation of each state in terms of spatial non-continuity. The multiple states of existence can be represented symbolically by superimposed horizontal planes, giving a potent representation of existence. This symbolic model is not complete, however, for while it does emphasise the discontinuity and independence of each state, it does not emphasise adequately the dependence and continuity of the states of existence, which is also a metaphysical reality. Space essentially allows individuality. However, if the planes of existence are considered as aligned and superimposed, this begins to represent the continuity and dependence that unites the states.

The fact that multiple states are simultaneously present in the same space and place is conceivable only by collapsing them into the unity of one plane (Diagram 6.14). This is the limitation of spatial representation and the same limitations do not necessarily apply to the multiple degrees of existence. Unlike spatial representations, degrees are simultaneously continuous and discontinuous, unique and related, dependent and independent. It should be borne in mind when considering spatial symbols that the limitations of the spatial domain do not apply to what is being symbolised. This is a shortcoming of the spatial metaphor, for the separation of planes is possible in space; this does not mean that the various multiple levels of existence are subject to the same spatial discontinuity. Discontinuity, separation and segregation are spatial limitations but do not apply to non-corporeal domains.

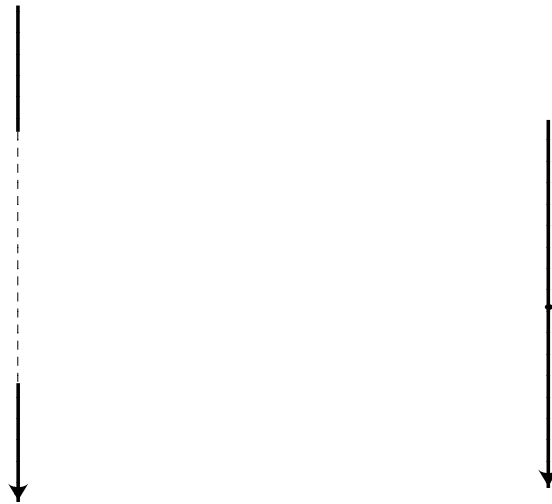


Diagram 6.14 Although shown as discontinuous separate planes, the multiple states of being are codependent. The single plane can be viewed as a collapsed or condensed representation of the multiple states.

In architectural symbolism, the principle of horizontality mentioned before can now be expanded to consider the multiple states of existence as so many horizontal planes spatially expressed. The expansion of multiple horizontal planes is achievable in various ways, by steps, multiple bases, changes in mass, and changes in texture, materials or colour, to mention some of the more obvious means. Perhaps the most coherent example of this cosmogonic arrangement is the Buddhist *stupa*. In Buddhist cosmology there is a hierarchy of planes of existence. Buddhist cosmology combines macrocosmic and microcosmic realms into a metaphysical psycho-cosmic scheme (like the system of the *chakras*). The details are complex, vary considerably from one Buddhist school to another and are beyond the scope of this study.<sup>33</sup> The following table however is of the fundamental three world view (*trai-lokya*) and is a simplified schema given by Snodgrass<sup>34</sup> (Table 6.2).

<sup>33</sup> There are a number of well researched publications documenting the meaning of the *stupa* and its symbolic embodiment. The most comprehensive is Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa*, also Govinda, *Psycho-cosmic Symbolism of the Buddhist Stupa* (Dharma Emeryville: Publishing, 1976) and Dallapiccola (ed), *The Stupa - It's Religious, Historical & Architectural Significance* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1980).

<sup>34</sup> *The Symbolism of the Stupa*, 329-333.

Table 6.2 Realms (*Loka*) generally according to the Buddhist tradition.

<i>Trai-lokya</i>	Realm	Number of sub-worlds
<i>Arūpa-loka</i>	Realm of Non-Form	Four heavens
<i>Rūpa-loka</i>	Realm of Forms	Eighteen heavens
<i>Kāma-loka</i>	Realm of Desire	Six heavens

## The Multiple Planes of Existence Expressed in Architecture

The *stupa* in its many different forms provides us with an extraordinarily rich and dense symbolic ensemble. The most impressive of the countless number of Buddhist *stupas* is *Candi Borobudur* in Central Java (Image 6.2). The overall mass of the *stupa* at *Borobudur* is a single element and represents *Mount Meru* (or *Sumeru*), the centre of the Buddhist cosmological universe. While there are many conjectural academic theories as to the multitude of symbolic detail, most scholars postulate the ensemble represents the multiple planes of existence of the Buddhist world with square terraces representing the Realm of Desire or the domain of *kāma-loka*, the circular terraces representing the Realm of Forms or the domain of *rūpa-loka*, and the crowning *stupa* representing the realm of non-form, *arūpa-loka* or alternatively the domain of *bhurloka* (earth), *bhūvarloka* (atmosphere) and *svarloka* (heaven)<sup>35</sup> (Images 6.3 - 6.7). In generalised terms all *stupa* and pagoda<sup>36</sup> reflect the triune division of base, body of the *stupa* and crowning *harmikā* with spire (Images 6.8(a)-(e)). However, the unity of the architectural presentation reflects the non-exclusive unity of the multiple states as a single world or cosmos as a single structure.

<sup>35</sup> Jacques Dumarçay, *Borobudur* trans. and ed. Michael Smithies (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 39, refer also Dr. R Soekmono, *Borobudur a Monument of Mankind*, (Paris: UNESCO Press, 1976), 17.

<sup>36</sup> No meaningful distinction should be drawn to differentiate between the Buddhist forms known as the *stupa* and the pagoda at least in terms of symbolism as they are identical. In external arrangement it may be reasonable to say the pagoda form entails layers of roof forms whereas the *stupa* maintains the tiers of a spire. For a detailed discussion refer to Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa*.



Image 6.2 Aerial view of the Buddhist *stupa*, *Candi Borobudur*, Central Java.

The ascent of *Borobudur* as described by Heinrich Zimmer is paraphrased here in relation to the passage from one state to another because of his eloquence in combining a phenomenological dimension to a traditional understanding of the edifice. In the devotional ascent of *Borobudur*'s upward-spiralling passageways, the neophyte can absorb more than the teachings of *Śākyamuni*. Here, Pure Emptiness, which human consciousness divides into the self and the world of forms returns to its true state. It ascends symbolically through the figure-filled world of visions and the senses, through the realm of form-free contemplation and up to *Nirvana*, which has no beginning. Emptiness casts aside successively the fetters of ignorance that conceal the true nature of Emptiness from Itself. The world of individual beings is left behind, as are the lower terraces. Emptiness becomes the extinguished *Buddha*, without name or form, the essence of all phenomenon. *Borobudur* is the architectural expression of a built *yantra* for the external, tangible surroundings, where the pilgrim finds his upward path from the *mandala*'s outer reaches, which are various forms of consciousness, the world, and then the self, towards its heart. The meaning of *Borobudur* is found in the way the *Buddha* is presented in stages progressing from the structure's lowest levels to its summit. In the narrative and descriptive friezes, on pedestals and in open niches, *Buddha* is shown interacting with human beings and the arranged world of nature. The *Buddha* images are visible to the pilgrim gazing up to them in contemplation but they appear to retreat from view just as one withdraws in meditation. On the next level, the central *stupa*, the domed structure at the peak, conceals the symbol entirely. The *Buddha* is absorbed into the *stupa* to symbolise the Buddhist universe outside of the world.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Zimmer, *Artistic Form & Yoga in the Sacred Images of India*, 121-122.





Image 6.3 Plan of *Candi Borobudur* in Central Java. There are four terraces with relief panels on the lower square platform surmounted by three circular terraces with a bell-shaped *stupa* at the very crown.

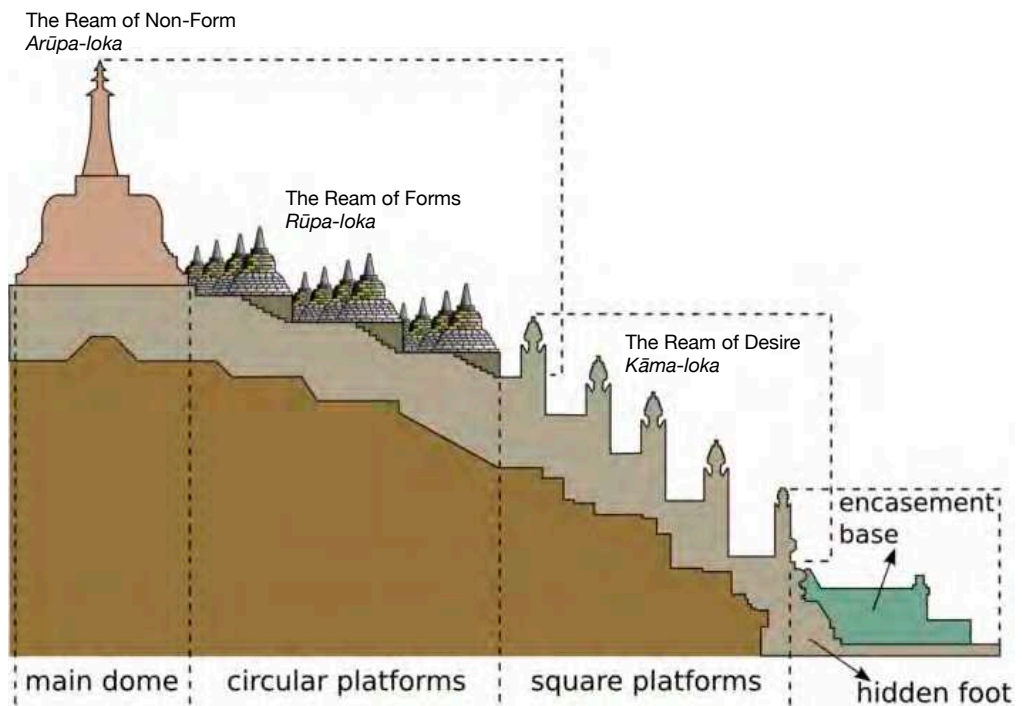


Image 6.4 Cross section through *Borobudur* showing the four square lower terraces, the three circular terraces and the central crowning *stupa*. The square terraces represent the Realm of Desire or the domain of *kāma-loka*, the circular terraces represent the Realm of Forms or the domain of *rūpa-loka*, and the crowning *stupa* representing the realm of non-form, *arūpa-loka*.



Image 6.5

*Borobudur* has four enclosed lower square bases or platform terraces representing the Realm of Desire or the domain of *kāma-loka*.



Image 6.6

*Borobudur* at its summit has three circular terraces or platforms that represent the Realm of Forms or the domain of *rūpa-loka*.



Image 6.7

At the final summit above the three terraces of Realm of Forms is the single largest crowning *stupa*, representing the Realm of Non-Form, *arūpa-loka*.





Images 6.8

All the above *stupas* reflect the general threefold division of base, body of *stupa* and crowning *harmikā* with spire.

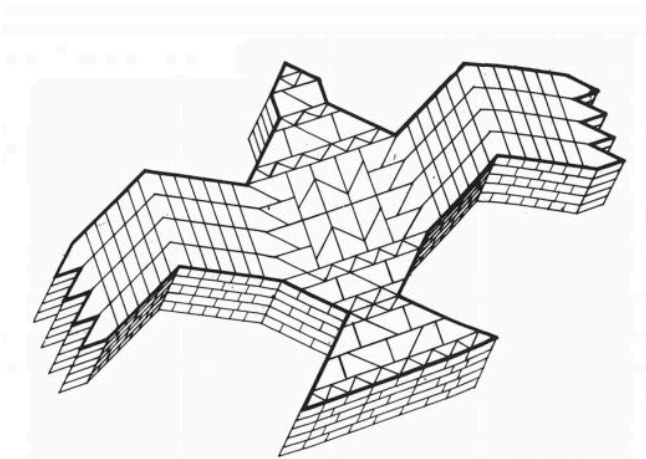
- (a) (Top left): The *Gyantse Kumbum*, Tibet.
- (b) (Top right): The spire and square *harmikā* of *Boudhanath Mahachaitya*, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- (c) (Middle left): *Shwedagon Paya* (pagoda), Yangon, Burma.
- (d) (Middle right): *Baisikou* twin pagoda, Yinchuan, China.
- (e) (Bottom left): *Thuparama Dagaba*, Sri Lanka.

This configuration of horizontal layers is also to be found in the Indian Hindu and Jain temples and its subsequent derivative forms throughout South East Asia.<sup>38</sup> The symbolism of layered courses derives from the ancient Vedic fire altar, which has a base of five layers representing the five elements, the five mental states and the five sheaths of the soul (Images 6.9(a) & (b)).<sup>39</sup> The layers contain the self-perforated bricks discussed in Chapter 4 in regard to the vertical axis, although the emphasis here is on the symbolism of the horizontal layers.

The Hindu temple displays with its multiple layers of stepped bases and moulded courses of its elevations, the indefinite number of layers of existence all expressed horizontally. The superimposition of these countless levels of manifestation go toward making the totality of existence and the temple itself. The dependence and vertical correspondence, not only between related iconography but also the geometric disposition of vertical edges and corners all contribute and reinforce the continuity of these horizontal layers one above the other. The overall effect is to produce a sacred building which not only symbolises the various levels of existence but actually is constituted by such layers. The unity which derives from such layering reflects the unity of manifestation. This unity transcends the individual multiplicity of the individual parts just as the Unity of existence is beyond the multiple levels of existence (Images 6.10(a), (b) & (c)).



Images 6.9 (a) (Top): *Agnicayana* (*ati-rātrā agnī-cayana*) or 'the building up of the fire altar' in Kerala, India. The ritual includes building up multiple layers (five in this case) of the falcon shaped Vedic fire altar.



(b) (Left): Isometric view of the layered Vedic fire altar of the ritual *Agnicayana*.

<sup>38</sup> For the purposes of this study the temple forms can be considered the same expressions.

<sup>39</sup> Kapila Vatsyayan, '*Vedic Altars In Vistāra - The Architecture of India*', Catalogue of the Exhibition, ed. by Carmen Kagal. The Festival of India, 1986. <https://architexturez.net/doc/az-cf-123666>.





Images 6.10 Multiple expressed horizontal layers all contributing to the unity of the expressed form of the Hindu temple.

(a) (Top left): Hindu temple, Khajuraho Group, India

(b) (Top right): Hindu temple, Khajuraho Group, India

(c) (Below): Detail of the multi-layered courses of *Shringara Chauri Temple*, Chittorgarh, India.

# CHAPTER 7:

## THE CORPOREAL DOMAIN

### The Generation of Space as Movement

The previous chapter began a discussion on the the principles of the corporeal domain. It now follows to look more closely at the generation of space and time from their principles the point and the instant. Beginning with space, the creation of space is brought about by the doubling of the geometric point which gives rise to a relationship of displacement and hence magnitude.<sup>1</sup> Guénon points out that from the very outset of this duplication there is direction implied by the doubling and this relationship is not that of just a linear dimension but an actual dimensional vector.<sup>2</sup> Space thus is not isotropic.<sup>3</sup> This doubling of the point continues as further reproductions of the point to create a line. From this initial line two models were developed which use two symbolic conventions, one symbol being in effect rotational movement, the other rectilinear expansion. This would infer there are two different symbolic models to be made intelligible, and this is exactly the case, for space can be conceived as being generated by either rectilinear or rotational translation.

Considering rectilinear movement first, the geometric point, the principle of spatial generation expressible by the integer '1', proceeds to divide and reproduce itself or alternatively, to move away from itself with a single vector motion (Diagram 7.1). This notion is the classic progression through translational motion to Euclidean space. In either case, this produces a line which in both cases is the relationship between the ensuing points expressible by the integer  $1+1=2$ . This line is from the initial point, the first dimension and symbolises the first creative act, that of division or polarisation of Being Itself. This creative act is one in which Being as the initial Principal Point relates to Itself and is of the first magnitude.<sup>4</sup>

This process is then repeated or amplified again. The line, being composed of the relationship between an indefinite number of points, is subject to the same multiplication. Each point on the line divides and reproduces itself producing an indefinite array of parallel lines, each line represents this second independent translation or second magnitude. Just as the first translation could be summarised as the movement of the geometric point, so could this next translation be summarised as the independent movement of the line. In either case, this produces the two dimensional plane expressible by the expression  $2 \times 2$  or  $2^2$ . This process is repeated again

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Magnitude(s)' or the three *maqādir* are discussed in the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity* 105.

<sup>2</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 80.

<sup>3</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 78.

<sup>4</sup> Guénon discusses this fundamental separation as the Old Testament statement by Yahweh, 'I am that I am', in the parable of 'The Burning Bush', in *Symbolism of the Cross*, Chapter XV11: Ontology of the Burning Bush, 80-82.



and results in the three dimensional, cubic or rectilinear solid; the three-dimensional or classic 'Cartesian space' expressible by the expression  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  or  $2^3$ .

The generation of space by rotation begins in the same manner by a bifurcation of the geometric point and a movement away from the centre point producing the line. This second method of movement maintains a dependence upon the initial geometric point yet allows a movement only at the other end. This semi-independent movement produces rotational movement. The initial line, subject to rotational movement, then produces the circumferential plane which is a plane surface in two dimensions. Applying the same criteria for motion again, that of maintaining a dependence upon the initial point, a further semi-independent rotation is brought about, resulting in the three dimensional spherical solid or polar space.

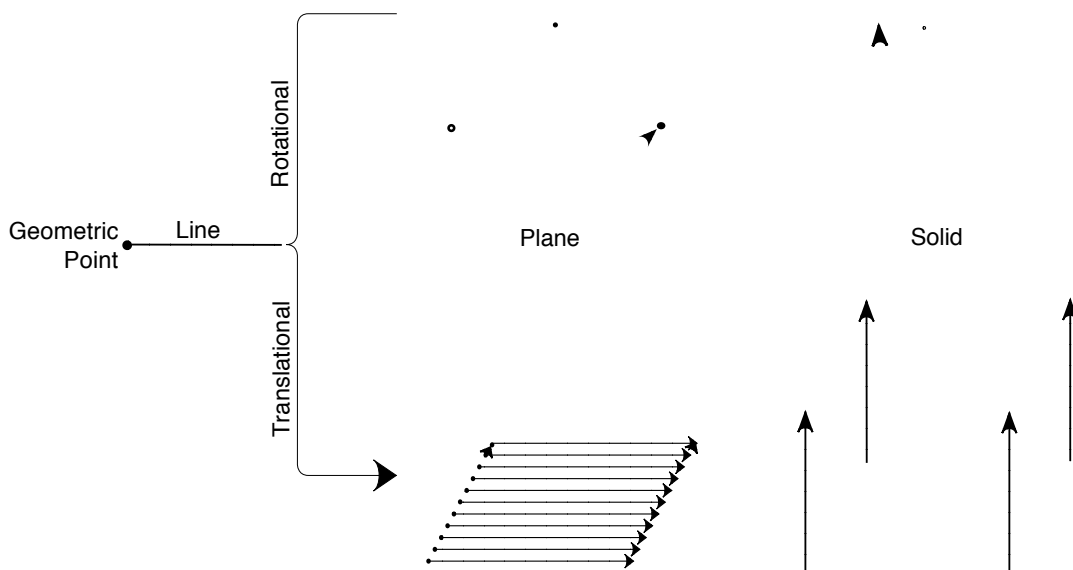


Diagram 7.1 After the movement of the point to produce the line there are two methods of movement for the line. The first is translational which sees the line move orthogonally and in an independent direction leading to the cubic form and rectilinear space. The second method is by rotation which sees the line move in a semi-independent mode around the original fixed point and leading to the sphere and polar space.

Thus it could be said that the rotational movement is a more generalised mode of movement while that of the orthogonal translational mode is a particularised mode taken at the extreme limit of the rotational radius (Diagram 7.2).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Following this logic it could be said that Cartesian space of three dimensions is a sub-set of polar space.

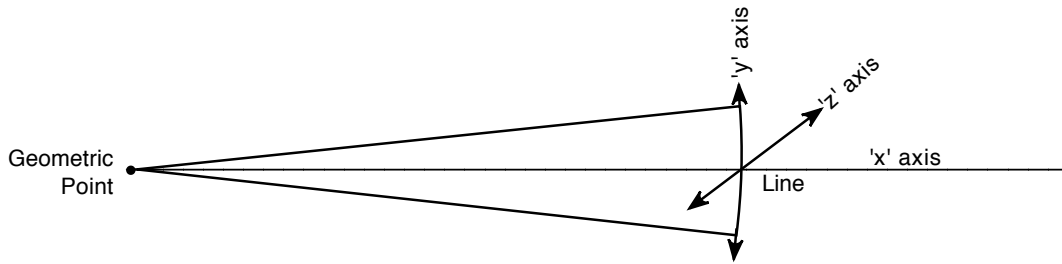


Diagram 7.2 Translational generation of space can be seen as the rotational generation at an indefinite radius.

Both methods of spatial translation constitute a means of determining a location within space and assigning quantitative magnitude between two or more points. From the standpoint of the human being, these qualities are useful to explain as a step-by-step process of unfolding of multiple dimensions; in the end, however, they should not be confused with the creation of space in absolute terms.<sup>6</sup> Polar space relates more coherently to space as viewed by a being in which the geometric point becomes the centre of the being and the 'polar' centre is the human being or even the eye of the being. Polar space is a central orientated space and is more qualitative, in that all directions have a 'quality' of relationship to the centre. Space becomes a relationship from that point, with the centre being the subjective self. Cartesian space as the antithesis of polar space is more related to objective 'centreless' space. Cartesian space is quantitative pure and simple and is the ultimate expression of measurable quantity in all three directions. Why space should be limited to three directions for our corporeal world is perhaps the wrong question to ask. Rather, it should be interpreted that the corporeal world is that space that can be defined by three independent modes of relationship of the point to itself.

Sacred architecture can be described as polarised space, although this is rarely done. Instead of considering a building to have length, width and height, all elements can be seen as having proximity to the centre and projections relative to the centre or participating being. This could be a way of looking at Hindu architecture, where the temple is a fractal-like projection outward from the *bindu* at the centre. The aspects of axiality and directionality still apply in articulating space, but it is the aspect of centrality that is the essence of the *Vāstu-Purusha mandala* projecting outwards into the world of materiality. The temple becomes the multifarious radiation of points, lines and surfaces projected outward from the generatrix of the *bindu* point.

In an altogether different mode, a particular point outside of the sacred centre of a building can be seen to be taken as the template for spatial generation of Greek architecture and town planning according to Constantinos Doxiadis.<sup>7</sup> This places the observer at the centre of the polar coordinated space as the focus, even though the temples and buildings are unquestionably rectilinear. Doxiadis's proposition explains the apparent irregular alignments and orientations of the various groups of buildings such as the Acropolis. The relationships of the ensemble of buildings are established by an observational projective geometry from the point of an external observer (Image 7.1).

<sup>6</sup> It may be more accurate to say that it describes the generation of 'mathematical space' which could be considered as a type of 'subtle space' or as the spatial 'container' that has been used so far.

<sup>7</sup> Constantinos Doxiadis, *Architectural Space in Ancient Greece*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977). Discussed also by Graham Pont, 'Inauguration: Ritual Planning in Ancient Greece and Italy', in *Architecture and Mathematics from Antiquity to the Future*, Vol. 1: Antiquity to the 1500s, ed. Kim Williams and Michael J Ostwald (Dordrecht: Springer 210151), 63-175. I would add further research is required to substantiate this proposition but that is not the essential issue here. The unique contribution of Doxiadis' view is to conceptualize architectural configuration as a projection from a point outside of the building.

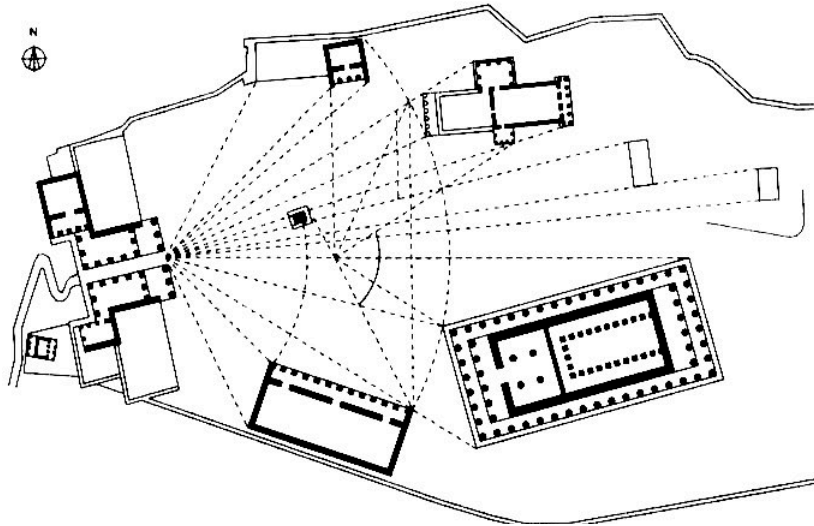


Image 7.1 The plan of the Acropolis, Athens after 450 BCE. The relationships between the various buildings according to Constantinos Doxiadis, are determined from a central location in front of the *Propylaea*. The spatial planning is thus gauged as a configured and polarised projective space from a point.

## The Passage from Rectilinear to Polar Coordinates

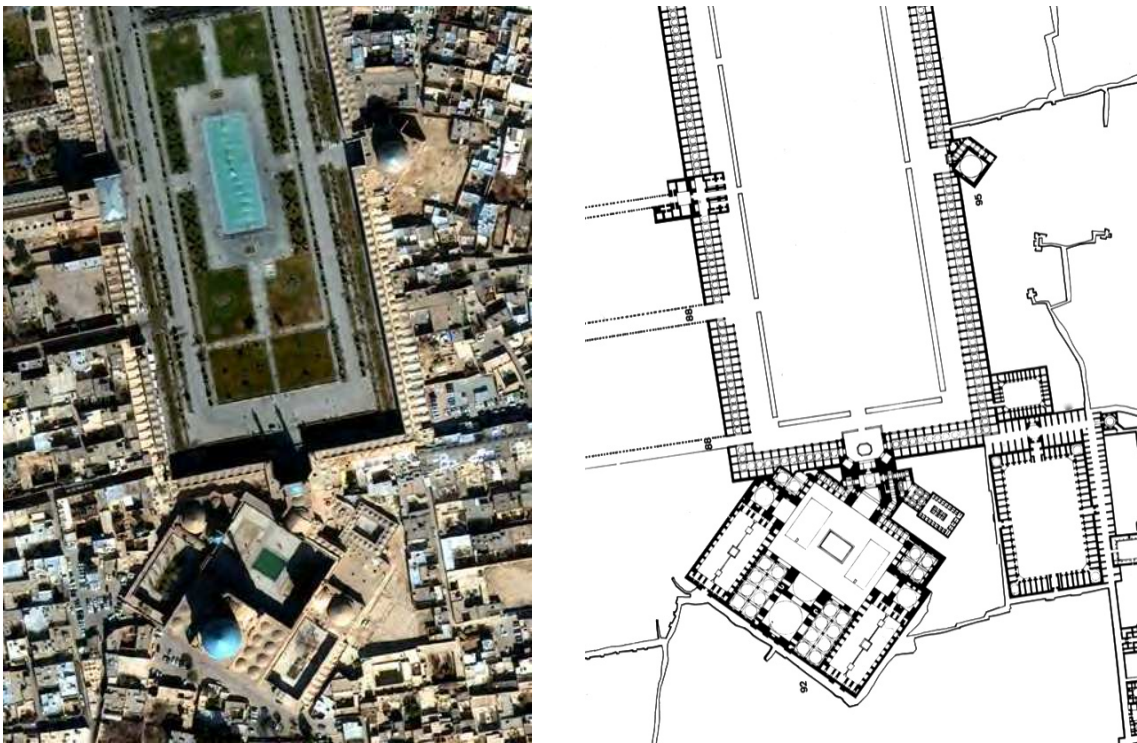
To look further how this relates to sacred architecture, we see in Islam that mosques are generally oriented towards the city of Mecca, the location of the sacred *Ka'bah* and the city in which much of the unfolding Islamic revelation took place. In the Islamic world perspective, all space within the confines of the mosque during the time of prayer converges upon the *qiblah*, that is, the vector toward Mecca. 'Whence so ever thou comest forth, turn thy face toward the sacred Mosque, and where so ever ye may be, turn your face toward it ....' states the *Qur'an*.<sup>8</sup> Alternatively, for the Muslim, prayers performed outside the mosque may be directed toward the East, the direction of the rising Sun. This establishes two modes of ritual orientation, recognising two different conditions that initially may seem paradoxical. Historically for the nomad, determining the geographic direction of Mecca was very difficult if not at times impossible; as a result the easterly direction became the determining direction. This also applies to the Moslem away from the confines of a city or town in which a mosque is located. They may be simply working in the fields or travelling at the time for ritual prayer.<sup>9</sup> For the sedentary dweller of the towns and cities, the mosque is oriented towards Mecca. Thus there exist two spatial perspectives of the vector of the for prayers (*qiblah*), one appropriate to the urban or built environment, the other appropriate to the natural environment. Both modes of the *qiblah* are interchangeable to a degree and are in some regards equivalent.

<sup>8</sup> *Qur'an* 2.150.

<sup>9</sup> There have always been approximations and this has occupied many Islamic minds including the likes of Al-Biruni his *Tahdid Nihayat al-amâkin li-tashîh masâfât al-masâkin* (*The Demarcation of the Coordinates of Cities*) being one such work among many.

The location of the mosque within the city or town often forms a type of spatial dislocation within the overall context of building and street alignments. It is not uncommon for the streets and buildings to be oriented towards the cardinal directions and the mosque in an opposing orientation. The problems of layout and spatial configuration are obvious. Any dislocation on a practical level is simply a problem to be resolved by the architect; however on the symbolic level, it is actually appropriate, for there is a discontinuity between profane space and sacred space and such a dislocation manifests the juxtaposition of the two spatial modes.

The Imam Mosque (*Masjid-e Jam 'e Abbasi*), Isfahan, is a magnificent example (Images 7.2(a) & (b)) of this manner of dislocation. The central square and the formal city precinct are oriented approximately towards the cardinal directions and hence the entry to the mosque conforms to the orthogonal directions of the square from the 'world', while the mosque itself realigns the believer toward Mecca. The resolution of the discontinuity in this famous mosque becomes cause for celebration rather than conflict in spatial orientation (Image 7.3).<sup>10</sup>



Images 7.2 (a) Left: Aerial view of the *Naqsh-e Jahan Square* at the centre of the ancient Iranian city of Isfahan.

(b) Right: Plan of the square with the *Masjid-e Jam 'e Abbasi* at the southern end. The juxtaposition of the two orientations are apparent in plan only and not so apparent when moving into the mosque from the civic precinct.

<sup>10</sup> This idea of the resolution of a conflict at the entry in terms of spatial orientation is symbolic of the resolution of the profane into the sacred. It could be said that this is precisely the meaning of the entry way or the door.



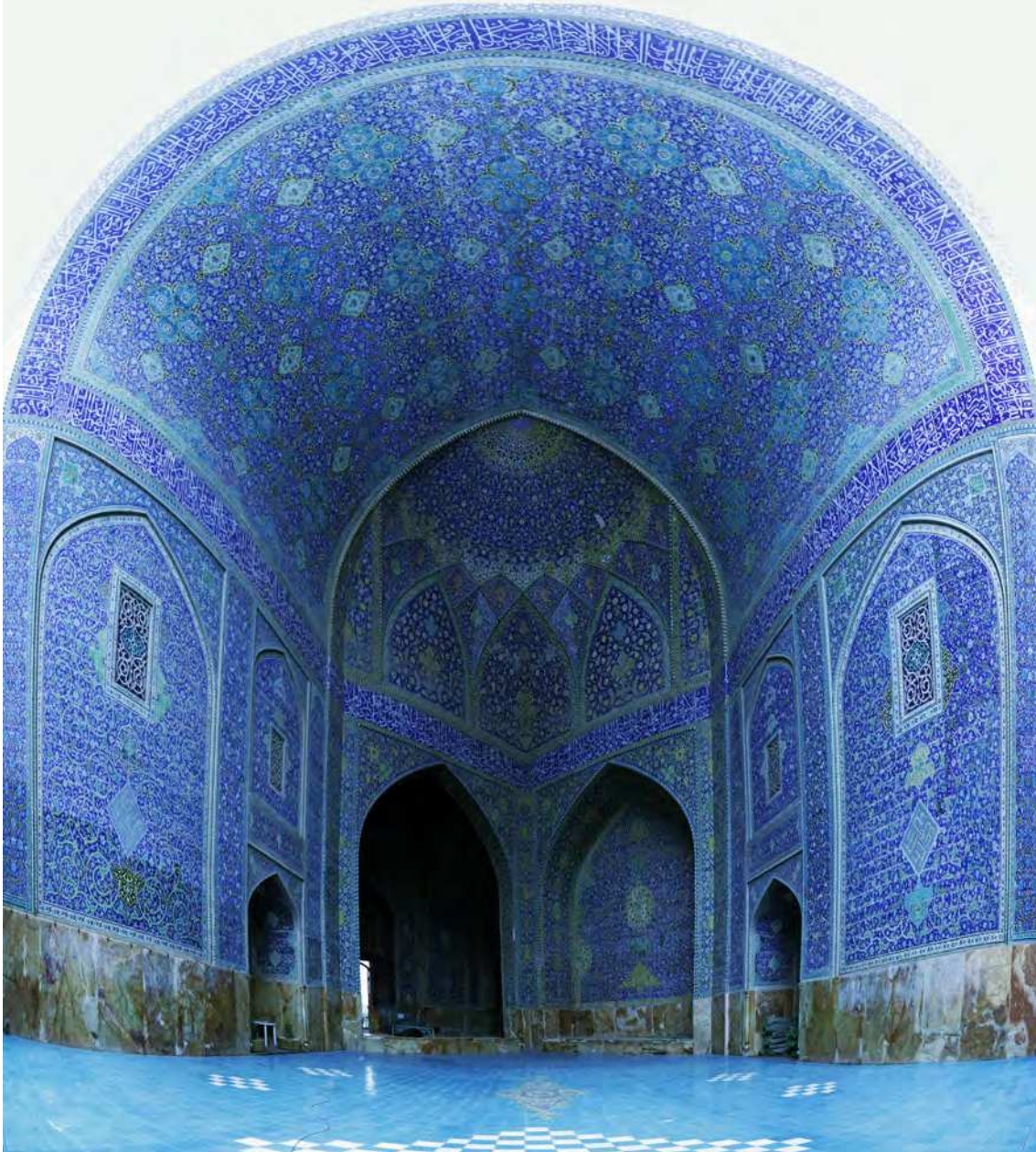


Image 7.3 View from within the *Masjid-e Jam 'e Abbasi* in Isfahan looking back at the entry *iwan*. The entry from *Naqsh-e Jahan Square* is through the shadowed left arch. While the approach axis is at about 45°, the reorientation toward the *qiblah* axis is not even apparent such is the majesty of the architecture.

Geometrically speaking, the establishment of an orientation towards a geographic centre infers polar co-ordination when an axis is established and taken at multiple sites.<sup>11</sup> The geographic centre, be it a sacred mountain, city or whatever, radiates lines or axes of spatial polarisation. The process of orientation becomes one of identification with one of these radii projected from the centre and its relative distance. In Bali, for example, this is clearly displayed, with temples being generally oriented in such a way as to face the central sacred mountain *Gunang Agung*, a central geographic feature that is also the symbolic centre of Bali (Diagram 7.3). *Gunang Agung* physically

<sup>11</sup> If it is a singular site then it is a singular case of orientation.

occupies the centre of the eastern portion of the island and this reinforces a secondary spatial symbolism, an orientation away from the sea towards the mountain. Within these two highly symbolic opposing yet complementary directions, all space is held in balance.<sup>12</sup> The majority of Balinese temples are polarised spatially between these two extremes. The mountain *Agung* is the seat of heavenly power in Balinese cosmology; it is sacred direction, *kaja* meaning toward the mountain while the *kelod* direction is toward the sea.<sup>13</sup> *Gunang Agung* is an active volcano and this again reinforces the symbolism of life giving and life taking power, it is 'the navel of the world' and its towering height of 3,140 metres makes it visible from most locations in eastern and central Bali, given the mountainous terrain of Bali and the centralized location of *Gunang Agung* (at least for the populous eastern end of Bali). This orientation is the *kaja* direction and is also related to the symbolic elevation of the highlands. The direction toward the low coastal lands and the sea is the *kelod* direction.

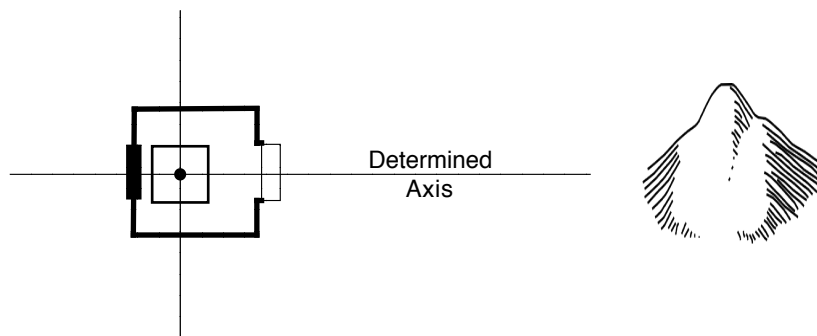


Diagram 7.3 In Bali spatial orientation is always made in reference to the sacred mountain *Gunang Agung*. This establishes the sacred *kaja* direction. A complementary opposite direction is established in relationship to the sea which is the *kelod* direction thus polarizing all geographic, architectural and subjective space.

The *kaja-kelod* spatial axis forms the basis of an orientation system that regulates a duality that also applies to that of the sacred/profane, the high/low, life/death, good/bad in Balinese life. All aspects of town and architectural planning are polarised by the relationship of *kaja-kelod* directions. Villages, for example, have the cemetery and the *Pura Dalem* dedicated to *Shiva* (or his wife *Durga*) located at the *kelod* direction of the village. The *Pura Puseh*, the temples dedicated to *Vishnu*, are located on the higher upward ground of the village. Similarly, the disposition of the individual parts of the temple (*Pura*) are polarised by the *kaja-kelod* spatial axis. Individual houses are also regulated by the transitional hierarchy determined by the antinomic *kaja-kelod* axis (Images 7.4 & 7.5).

<sup>12</sup> Davison & Granquist, *Balinese Temples*.

<sup>13</sup> For a detailed treatment of *kelod* and *kaja* see Eiseman, *Bali, Sekala & Niskala* (Berkeley: Periplus Editions, 1988), 2-10 and Hobart, Mark, 'The Path of the Soul: The Legitimacy of Nature in Balinese Conceptions of Space', in *Natural Symbols in South East Asia*, ed. G. B. Milner (London: SOAS, 1978), 5-28.





Image 7.4 (above)

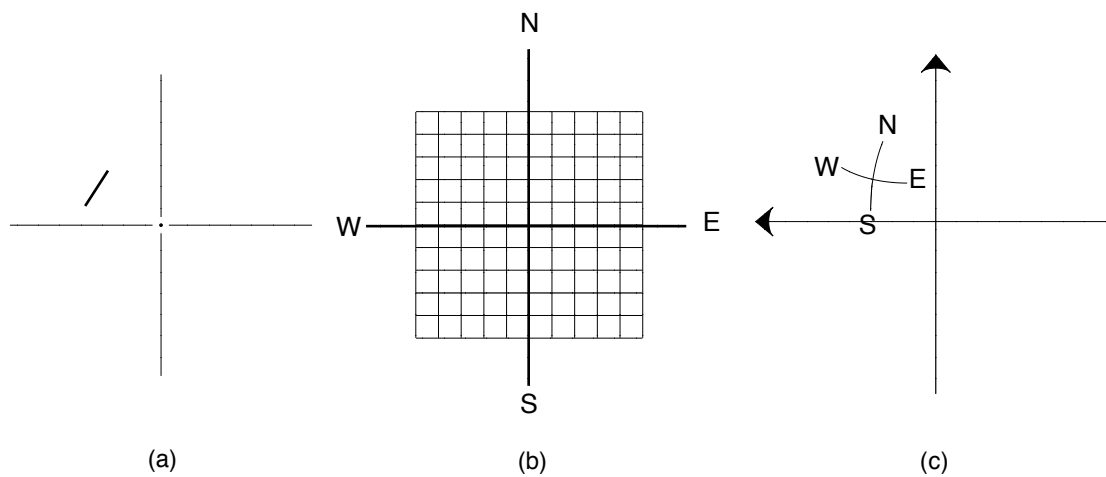
*Pura Besakih* is the most sacred temple in Bali and is located on the actual foothills of the central sacred mountain of Bali, *Gunang Agung*. The *kaja-kelod* axis is polarised space established from the orientation of the mountain to the sea.



Image 7.5 (left)

The *Pura Besakih* complex comprises many individual *pura* (temples). The site is steep and the polarised space of the *kaja-kelod* axis is ever present within the complex. Even within the complex, the individual *pura* conform to the elevation and directional hierarchy established by the overall relationship of proximity to *Gunung Agung* located behind the view of the camera.

The two systems of co-ordinated space, the polar and the rectilinear, and the two expressions of orientation are apparently different. Rectilinear coordination on Earth uses North, South, East and West relative to the North and South poles. The North and South axes converge and coincide with the poles as a form of centre. In other words, the North and South poles are not homogeneous directions in a truly rectilinear fashion. Only on a limited scale do they function as a rectilinear orthogonal system of directions. On the face of the Earth, orientation uses spherical geometry and not rectilinear geometry. The two models for spatial generation, the rotational and the translational, see the same convergence of one system with the other, thus expressing another dimension of the human state in the contemplation of space. Given this perspective, the holy city, the mountain and the omphalos become equivalent to the geographic pole (either North or South) in terms of convergence upon the centre and the focal point of radial orientation (Diagrams 7.4(a), (b) & (c)).



Diagrams 7.4 (a) Left: Polar coordination in which the omphalos as the centre forms the central reference point of convergent vectors.

(b) Centre: Theoretical rectilinear coordination or classic Cartesian coordination.

(c) Right: Geomagnetic coordination or the cartographical latitude and longitude is ultimately just another form of polar coordination.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This theme of the translation of polar and translational space is discussed by I. A. Ibragimov, 'Formation of Architecture of Christianity and Islam as an Expression of the Concept of the Coordinates System in Spiritually - Real Space', *Scientific Herald of the Voronezh State University of Architecture & Civil Engineering*, 2009, Vol. 2, Issue 2, 54-62.

## Generation of Time - Beginnings & Endings

All manifest phenomenon in the gross domain are characterised by two temporal events, a beginning and an ending. The nature of all cyclical phenomenon is that the beginning is related to the ending.<sup>2</sup> The ending transforms into a new beginning and the cycle begins anew. All celestial phenomenon is based upon such generalisations. The nature of the beginning and the ending are subtle; no exact limit can be placed upon their temporal determination. The most ideal representation of cyclical renewal and return is in the spatial representation of a circle, in which time unfolds as the continuous unending circumference, yet still attains a limited arrangement and finite size. This is the symbol of the Great Wheel of Time, an almost universal representation of the cyclical nature of time. Time unfolds like the turning of a wheel, a single phenomenon being a point on that wheel turning continuously within the perimeter of the wheel until it arrives back at the beginning.<sup>3</sup> In doing so ground has been covered and this introduces the idea of cycles of time (Diagrams 7.5). However a complete return can never be fully attained within the conditions of the spatio-temporal domain.<sup>4</sup>

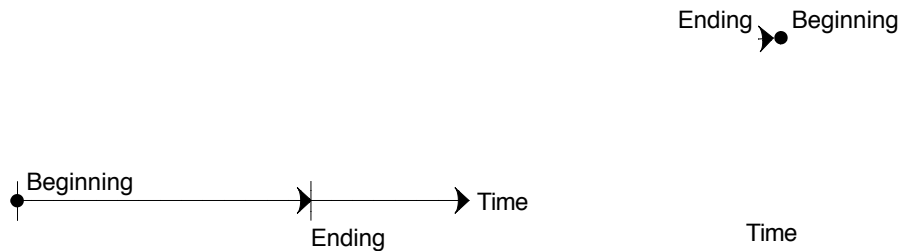


Diagram 7.5 (a) Left: Linear time.  
(b) Right: Circular time.

The significance of cycles in regard to temporal unfolding can be considered in two aspects. The first aspect could be considered as a manifestation unfolding in time is an unfolding of possibilities in time. The possibilities contained in a particular manifest being or phenomenon, be it the human being or other beings, takes place in the continuity of time. All possibilities of being are not disgorged into the corporeal domain at once but rather unfold and develop in an ordered process of transformation and change. This could be considered a generalised view of the unfolding of manifestation. The second aspect could be considered as the unfolding of possibilities of a single individual being or phenomenon or secondary modifications as was described in Chapter 6 (Diagram 6.10). An individual manifestation is a single unfolding of one formal possibility contained within its principal form. As such, it is a single presentation of an indefinite possibility contained within the form. The individual expression is a single reflection of the unity of its form, an expression that is determined by the temporal limitations of corporeal existence. The totality of this is the unity of the form, which abides at another level of the individual domain. For example, the totality, which, say, is a tree, is contained not within an individual stage of its growth from a seed to maturity, but rather within the totality of its complete unfolding. It would not be incorrect to say, however, that the totality lies in the potential of the individual seed.

<sup>2</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 130, passim.

<sup>3</sup> The symbolism of the wheel is discussed in *Symbolism of the Cross*, 32-39, 56 fn.1, 107, 128, 130.

<sup>4</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, Chapter XIX, 86-88.

Returning to the models presented in Chapter 6 (Diagrams 6.9 & 6.10), the various modalities could be considered as temporal in that all modalities of a Universal Being or individual are temporal manifestations of being over their lifetime.<sup>5</sup> The implications for beings or bodies in the corporeal world is that the temporal unfolding of a being's or body's modalities into the corporeal world have two contingent aspects that need to be noted. First, the being or body is not complete at any given period of time; second, all aspects of a being or body from the point of view of corporeal domain can never be completely known. Thus it is that the objective knowledge of the corporeal world will be entirely contingent on what is unfolded at any given time. The aspect of temporal presentation in the corporeal domain is such that to an extent, every entity is in the process of a continual 'becoming'. This is the reason, or one of the reasons, in the various traditions that the corporeal world is set apart from the non-corporeal domains.

The collective potential of the human being as a species is not outside of this becoming. In traditional teaching, this unfolds in a cyclic mode, as described by such systems as the Hindu *yugas* and the Greek Ages of Man. Likewise with individual beings, the unity that is individual being (or for that matter all mankind), is contained in the totality of the being's unfolding life, or collectively, all possible lives. The possibilities unfold in continuous time as 'life'. The stages of life are differentiated into several phases, such as birth, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, maturity and finally death, or further divisions. The ages of life have corresponding developmental phases that manifest in physiological, emotional terms and intellectual or mental developmental terms. The being does not simply grow in scale but necessarily develops as a progressive unfolding of potentialities.

## The Wheel & the *Dharmachakra*

The Great Wheel of Time also has some non-temporal associated symbolism. The notion of the explicit centre leads to the associated symbol of the 'wheel of existence' and the 'invariable centre'. The centre of the wheel also symbolises the Sun in the universe, the point around which all existence moves and turns in time. The Sun, like the axle, does not itself move but merely rotates; it is the 'pivot point of the universe' and the 'immovable centre', in Platonic terminology. The axle of the wheel is independent of and separate from the wheel itself, which symbolically points to the autonomy of the centre. The wheel hub or nave is that part of the wheel that clasps around the axle and is supported by it. This nave symbolises the realm of pure forms, which although separate from the central point of the wheel, nonetheless constitutes the centre of the wheel. Its movement is primarily rotational because of its proximity to the centre. The central function of the hub reflects the central function of form in relation to individual manifestation. The axle is to the hub what the hub is to the wheel which in turn symbolises the relationship of form to Being (Diagram 7.6). The spokes for their part project outward into the multiple states of existence. The felly or rim of the wheel represents the various states of existence, particularly the corporeal state as it touches the earth. The wheel is thus either an individual being or all beings separated from the axle and its existence is totally dependent on the axle for support and stability. The connection point, the hole in the centre of the hub, allows this connection between the movable and the immovable axle. This 'hole' in existence symbolically makes it possible for the cosmos to turn and for manifestation to

---

<sup>5</sup> Guénon writes that 'Naturally the ideas of succession and simultaneity must here be conceived from the purely logical viewpoint only, and not the chronological because time is merely a special condition, not indeed of the human state as a whole, but of certain modalities of it.' *Symbolism of the Cross*, 63, fn.1.

unfurl. 'The thirty spokes unite in the one nave; but it is on the empty space (for the axle), that the use of the wheel depends' states the *Tao te Ching*.<sup>6</sup>

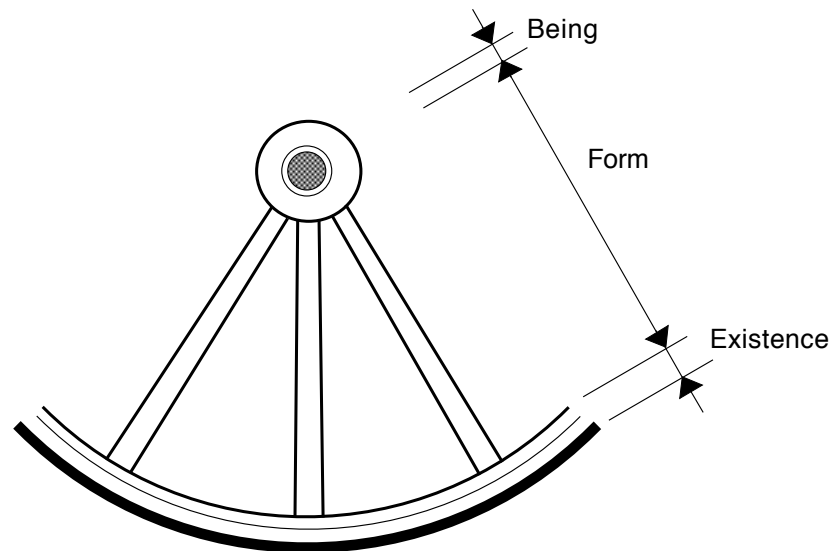


Diagram 7.6 The symbolic wheel of existence.

The indefinite modalities of all forms are related for 'just as all the spokes are held together in the hub and rim of a wheel of a chariot, so are all beings, all gods, all worlds, all organs and all these individual creatures are held together in this Self'.<sup>7</sup> The wheel in Hindu mythology is connected to the chariot which measures out the world of existence and is also the vehicle of the Gods who ride over the turning of existence. The chariot riding platform, the God charioteer and the beast all constitute in this symbolism the non-manifest or Universal domain.<sup>8</sup> The wheels of the chariot relate to the means of movement and to the Divine Purpose. The wheel of existence thus has a Divine 'usefulness' (Image 7.6). At the Sun Temple of Konark, Orissa, the entire temple itself becomes a figuration of the chariot of the Sun God, *Surya* (Image 7.7). The wheel of existence when considered not as a totality of existence but as individual existence, becomes the 'wheel of life' which is expounded in great depth in Tibetan Buddhism and relates to the *Dharmachakra* (Images 7.8 & 7.9(a) to (g)).

<sup>6</sup> *Tao te Ching*, stanza 11, trans. J. Legge, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol 39 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1891). <http://www.sacred-texts.com/tao/taote.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, II,4 15.

<sup>8</sup> See also Coomaraswamy, *Traditional Art and Symbolism* for a more detailed discussion in relation to the Hindu tradition. Also L. P. Kollar, *Form*, 22-24 for the symbolism of the wheel as discussed here. Copper, *Symbolism*, - *The Universal Language*, 21.





Image 7.6 Stone *Ratha* (chariot) *Vittala Temple* (16th c.) Vijayanagara (Hampi),, Karnataka, India.



Image 7.7 Twelve great wheels support the Sun Temple of Konark, Orissa as a figuration of the chariot of the Sun God *Surya*. The wheel has eight spokes.



The traditional symbol of the Great Wheel of Existence is related to the Great Wheel of Life, in which the wheel represents the unity of all human possibilities, while the individual phases of temporal unfolding are merely those sections of the rim that are in contact with the earth, that is, they are the possibilities that 'come to pass' by the wheel's turning. The turning wheel combines many symbolic considerations into the one symbolic formula of the inexorable and relentless movement of time, and with this movement, that preoccupation of humanity, 'fate'. Particularly in Buddhism and Hinduism, the wheel divided by the spokes depicts the cyclic periods of manifestation, while the circumference signified by the felly symbolises the limits of manifestation. This is further symbolised by the *chakras*, often symbolised by a wheeling lotus flower. Further associations are found in the 'Wheel of the Law', the *Dharma* as the *Dharmachakra* and the 'Round of Existence' of the *Bhavachakra*. The wheel is one of the most frequently encountered symbols in Buddhist iconography and one that can even stand as a symbol for the Buddha himself, as 'He who turns the Wheel of the Law'.<sup>9</sup>

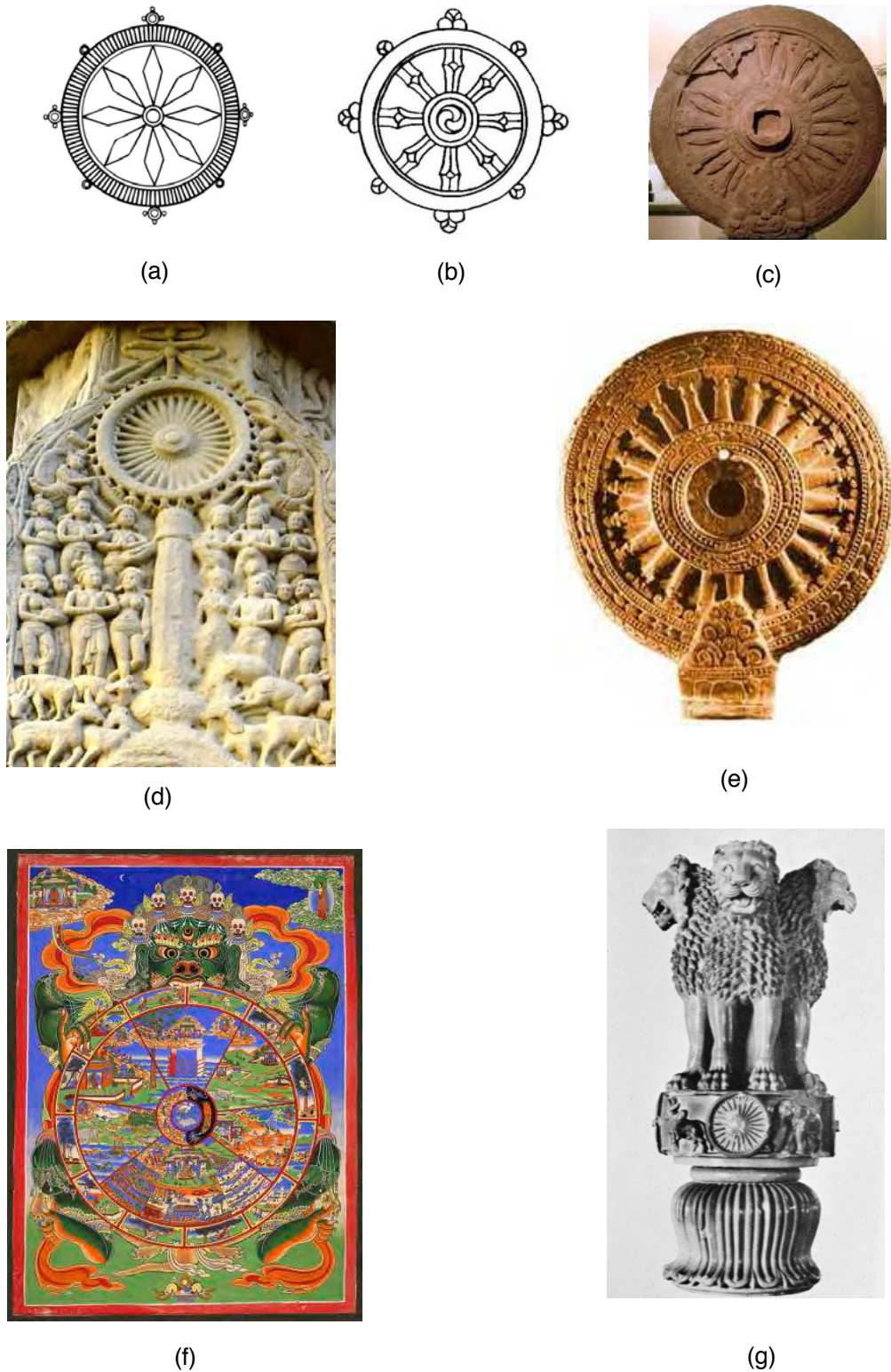
This is exactly the implication of the theory of the Hindu *Yugas*, for they relate primarily to the unfolding of human collective possibilities. They are, in this context, the cycles of humanity and are conditions of qualified time that have a direct bearing on the unfolding of individual and collective human possibilities. The ages determine those possibilities for mankind that are appropriate for 'the times'. This a kairological notion of time.



Image 7.8

A Hindu version of the *Dharmachakra* in the ruined inner sanctuary of the *Upper Shivalaya Temple*, Badami India.

<sup>9</sup> The wheel of becoming and the Buddhist wheel of the *Dharma*, are related but separate symbols. For a less generalised discussion than what is presented here, refer to Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa*. Coomaraswamy discusses the symbolism of the wheel and related symbols often, but notably in his essay, 'Kha and Other Words Denoting Zero in Connection with Indian Metaphysics of Space', in *Coomaraswamy, Vol. 2: Selected Papers; Metaphysics*. Also Beer, *The Handbook of Tibetan Buddhist Symbols* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2003).



Images 7.9 The cyclic wheel of becoming, as the *Dharma* wheel and the *Dharmachakra*:-

- (a) Graphic version of the *Dharmachakra*.
- (b) Graphic version of the *Dharmachakra*.
- (c) A stone *Dharmachakra* , Dvaravati period, c.8th century.
- (d) *Dharma* wheel from the pillar of the southern gate of the *Great Stupa* at Sanchi.
- (e) An Ashoka wheel or *Ashoka chakra*.
- (f) A Tibetan *Bhavachakra*.
- (g) An Ashoka column capital from Sarnath with *Dharmachakra* on the lion base.

## The Principles of Cyclical Repetition & the Spiral

Two different graphic representations have been introduced in regard to the unfolding of time (Diagram 7.5). First, there is the notion of time as unique, sequential and continuous, represented graphically by the straight line. A second representation of time in recognition of this qualitative condition is in the circle or rotating wheel. This symbol represents time as continuous yet repetitive. In this analogy, time unfolds continuously but appears to return to a stage analogous to one that existed previously. Time in this symbol is not like space, unfolding in a continuous non-recurrent mode. Rather, time is limited apparently to those moments within that particular cyclic loop or within the cyclic pitch of that particular round of time. That round of time may well be repeated indefinitely to the extent that it can be said that time, like space, is indefinitely continuous but recognises moments of a like nature that stand out as discrete segments of time. These two views and their respective symbols are contradictory to a degree. One affirms the uniqueness of time by virtue of its non-recurrence and that of Eternity. The other view affirms repetition, hence denies uniqueness and contains an element of temporal repetition that is rhythmic. This is partly due to the nature of the geometric symbols used to explain the continuity of circular time. The circle, while unlimited, infers repetition and the ontological limitation and closure of time. The circumference is limitless, yet the form of a circle is limited in its singularity and unity. So with time.

At this point, another, third, representation can be introduced which reconciles both the first and second views described above. This third view of time tries to affirm the uniqueness of time yet recognises the phenomenon of a rhythmic recurrence of the modalities of being. This third view sees time as being the continuous unfolding of possibilities of a totally unique nature. In a similar way to each point in space being seen as a unique expression of the spatial principle, unique in its qualitative location in space, so too is each moment of time a unique expression of the temporal principle unfolding in its 'position' in sequential time. There is a paradox here, in that every event or moment is absolutely unique in its expression of temporal becoming, yet this becoming is part of a cycle of events that recur, thus establishing a repetition of uniqueness, if one can allow the obvious contradiction. How can a circle be straight?<sup>10</sup> This is the exact paradoxical figure of the *ouroboros*, the snake consuming or holding its own tail.

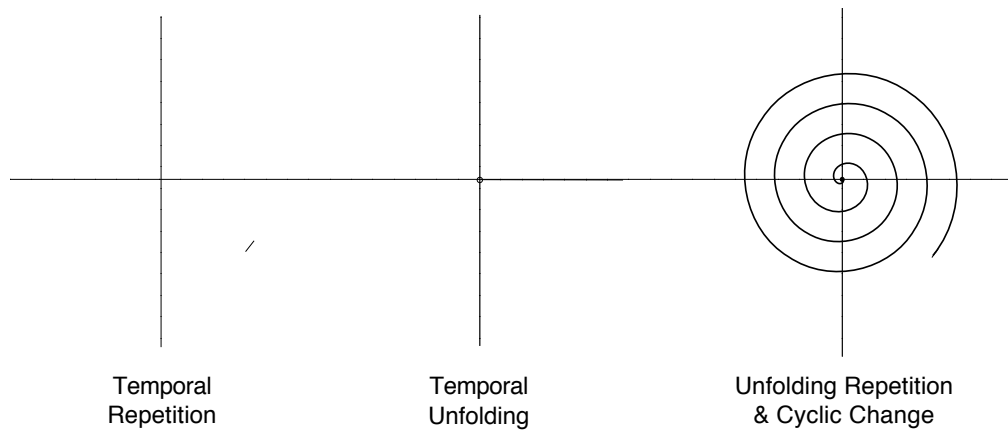
The two modes of this unfolding are synthesised in that great symbol, the spiral. The spiral is the locus of the reconciliation of the two complementary yet opposite aspects of time. Each loop of the spiral restates the cyclic repetition of the 'curvature' of time while recognising its uniqueness by shifting the unfolding to another convolution.<sup>11</sup> The two natures of time are resolved in a balanced configuration and this is why the spiral as a figuration of time is the symbol *par excellence* of time (Diagrams 7.7).

---

<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to compare these two aspects of time and its production with the two modes of space as previously described i.e. generation by either rotation or translation. Of course, using spatial diagrams to describe the continuity of temporal generation contributes to this congruency. However, there is a relationship here in the way space and time can be rendered in the two models.

<sup>11</sup> Govinda, in his essay, 'The Mystery of Time', in *Main Currents in Modern Thought*, 27 (Sept/Oct, 1970): 18-23, uses the expression 'curvature' of time. He writes,

"Curvature" in this connection means a movement which recoils upon itself (and which thus possesses both constancy and change, i.e., rhythm) or at least has the tendency to lead back to its origin or starting-point, according to its inherent law. In reality, however, it can never return to the same point in space, since this movement itself moves within the frame of a greater system of relationships. Such a movement combines the principle of change and non-reversibility with the constancy of an unchangeable law, which we may call its rhythm. One might say that this movement contains an element of eternity as well as an element of transiency, which later we feel as time.'

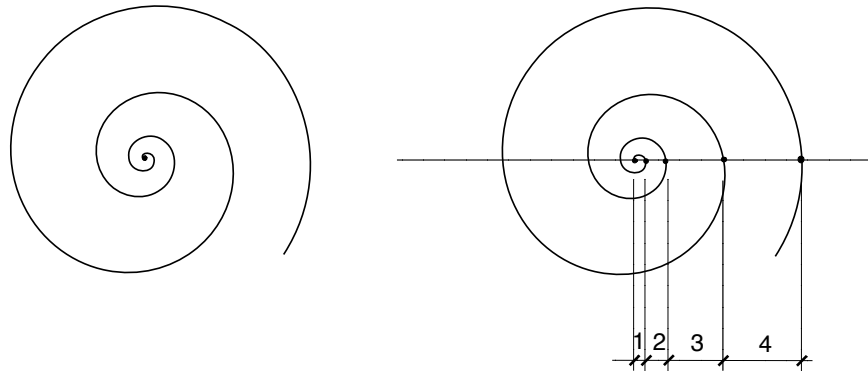


Diagrams 7.7 (a) Left: Time in its mode as temporal repetition.

(b) Centre: Time in its mode as non-repetitive unfolding and the temporal cross.

(c) Right: Time as the spiral of cyclic change.

The application of the spiral here is considered in regard to Universal Being's or individual being's continuity of temporal modalities. Again we encounter the multivalent symbolic potential of geometry. In the pitch of the spiral is reconciled the recurrent with the unique present in every instant. The spiral symbolises this process, best described as cyclic change. The circle, or the wheel of time, on the other hand symbolises all time in its undifferentiated mode, that is, without its qualitative unfolding; it is a spiral of zero pitch. It symbolises only the great round of time from beginning to end, from creation to complete dissolution (*Mahapralaya* in Sanskrit). The circle of time symbolises time from the point of view of Eternity, for the circle is closed and thus limited, relative to the Infinity of Being. The spiral does not contain this inherent restriction, for the spiral unfolds indefinitely and this is true of time from the standpoint of manifestation and the being's view of it. Time appears to have no beginning, only the past, and has no ending, only the future. Time from the relative viewpoint of manifestation is unlimited like the indefinite. The spiral is man's view of time, the circle is that of Eternity. A symbolic combination of these two views of time would see the spiral of the human contained in the Eternal Circle of Time (Diagram 7.8(a)).



Diagrams 7.8 (a) Left: The temporal spiral within the overall Eternal circle of time.

(b) Right: Cyclic unfolding of the Hindu *yugas* as an example of cycles.

In the Hindu tradition the doctrine of the 'ages' or *yugas* can be explained as a geometric series expanding like the uncoiling of the spiral. From the actual durations of each period of the *yuga*, the time period reduces in numerical proportions of 4:3:2:1. In this case, the direction of time is inward which conforms to the compression of time (Diagram 7.8(b)).<sup>12</sup> The periods of time in years are:

<i>krta yuga</i> (golden age) <sup>13</sup>	= 4800 x 360	= 1,728,000 years
<i>treta yuga</i> (silver age)	= 3600 x 360	= 1,296,000 years
<i>dvapara yuga</i> (bronze age)	= 2400 x 360	= 864,000 years
<i>kali yuga</i> (iron age)	= 1200 x 360	= 432,000 years

The great temple of *Angkor Wat* in Cambodia, supposedly embodies numerous cosmological correspondences.<sup>14</sup> When the traditional Cambodian measure the *hat*<sup>15</sup> is used, a wealth of numerical correspondences can be seen to be embedded into the setting out of the structure according to Stencel, et al. Of interest here is the relationship of the various pathways and distances along the main approach axis of *Angkor Wat*. The various distances measured along the axis relate to the durations of the *yugas*, thus equating distance and space with periods of time duration (Image 7.10 & Table 7.1).

<sup>12</sup> Guénon, discusses this 'compression of time' in response to the exhaustion of universal possibility in various works but principally in *The Reign of Quantity & the Signs of the Times*.

<sup>13</sup> The *yugas* are associated with numerous characteristics and correspondences including those of metals.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Stencel, Fred Gifford & Eleanor Moron, 'Astronomy and Cosmology at Angkor Wat', *Science*, 193, (1976) 281-287. Others have built upon this work including, Eleanor Mannikka, *Angkor Wat: Time, Space and Kingship* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000); Subhash Kak, *Space, Time, and Astronomy in Angkor Wat*, 2001. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.2.5568&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

<sup>15</sup> According to Stencel, Gifford & Moron, 'Astronomy and Cosmology at Angkor Wat', 284, one *hat* is equal to 0.43545 metres. This unit is similar to the Indian *Aratni* or *Hasta* which equals about 18 inches, the length of the forearm, ie about 0.436m but various sources differ in this. It is also slightly less than the standard Egyptian cubit of 6 palms and 24 fingers of 0.450m.



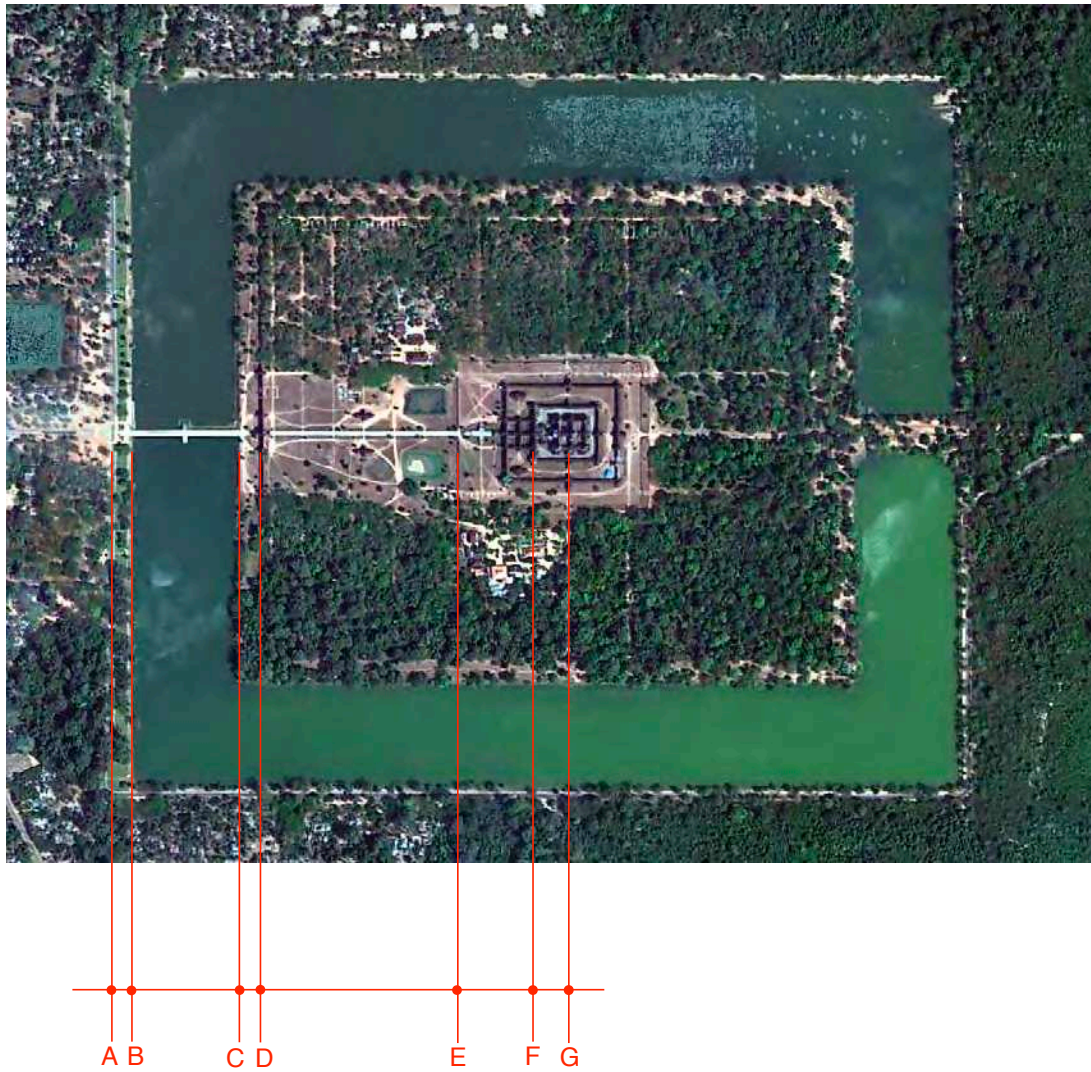


Image 7.10 The proportional relationships shown in Table 11.1 can be found along the main western approach to *Angkor Wat*.

Table 7.1 The embedded *Yugas* at *Angkor Wat* <sup>16</sup>

Measurement	Dimension ( <i>Hat</i> )	Period	Duration (Years)
Width of moat (B-C)	439.78	<i>Kali Yuga</i>	432,000
Distance from first step of western entrance gateway to balustrade wall at end of causeway (D-E)	867.03	<i>Dvapara Yuga</i>	864,000
Distance from first step of western entrance gateway to first step of central tower (D-G)	1,296.07	<i>Treta Yuga</i>	1,296,000
Distance from first step of bridge to geographic centre of temple complex (A-F)	1,734.41	<i>Krita Yuga</i>	1,728,000

<sup>16</sup> It is worth noting that Guénon makes the observation that one should not focus so much on the number of zeros at the end of cyclical numbers. For example the four *yugas* can be reduced to the numeric cyclical numbers, 432, 864, 1,296 and 1,728. This is in total accord with the numbers listed in the table. 'Doctrine of Cosmic Cycles', 6.

At *Angkor Wat*, the passage of time is numerically expressed by native units of measure corresponding to the Hindu *yugas* along the West-East axis. Astronomically, the passage of time is also measured along the same axis by various positions for lunar and solar observation. Finally, time is visually and symbolically expressed by the long, linear mode of the axis itself. The cosmos thus finds full integration with numerology and the architectural manifestation of the *Angkor Wat* temple complex.<sup>17</sup>

The system of the *yugas* is much more than a system of periods for the purposes of historical Hindu time reckoning. The *yugas* themselves relate to specific qualitative periods of time in which certain possibilities are opened up and certain others are closed. History in this sense becomes a history of 'the times' rather than time being seen as a container of events or as a blank scroll that is unrolled to reveal a period in which events are played out. The theory of cycles determines that events are revealed only to the extent to which they comply with 'the times'. This needless to say, implies a distinctive quality of time, both in terms of the possibilities that it can contain and in the manner with which it can change from one time to another. A complete exposition of the Hindu theory of the *yugas* is not appropriate here; however a few considerations of the qualitative nature of time are relevant to the overall picture of what time is.<sup>18</sup> Time as the unfolding of temporal possibility need not necessarily be considered as the same throughout that unfolding. In fact, it would seem even a logical pre-condition that temporal unfolding should be different qualitatively because of the very nature of the temporal condition in which all temporal possibilities are in their turn brought into being in a unique and sequential mode. One of these possibilities includes the possibility of different temporal quality, which is the standpoint on which the traditional temporal theory of cycles is based.<sup>19</sup> To present the view in a different perspective, it could be said that the Principle of Being unfolds everything 'in their own time' and 'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven'.<sup>20</sup> In this way, the *yugas* are like most other traditional systems of cycles, such as the four periods or four ages of Hesiod, the Ancient Greek 'Ages of Man' and, more specifically, the Four Ages recorded by the Roman poet, Ovid, that are the golden age, the silver age, the bronze age and finally the iron age.<sup>21</sup> The ages follow the successive degeneration of man, spiritually, intellectually and morally. The Golden Age is the rule of *Kronos*, the 'cutter' of the sky and castrator of *Uranus*. The ritual act is symbolised by the sickle and, in later mediaeval times, by the scythe. The subsequent ages after the Golden Age see mankind falling from a state of harmony and perfection to the state of toil and misery in which piety is diminished to the point of decadence..

---

<sup>17</sup> Stencel, Fred Gifford & Eleanor Moron, 'Astronomy and Cosmology at Angkor Wat'. Snodgrass in *Architecture Time and Eternity*, 213-224, combines this research as well as material from other sources and with his own insights

<sup>18</sup> René Guénon's, *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times* is essentially based upon such considerations. Architectural history and even architectural styles can even be seen as manifestations of a continuous 'quantification' of the world.

<sup>19</sup> René Guénon, 'Doctrine of Cosmic Cycles', 1.

<sup>20</sup> Ecclesiastes, 3.1.

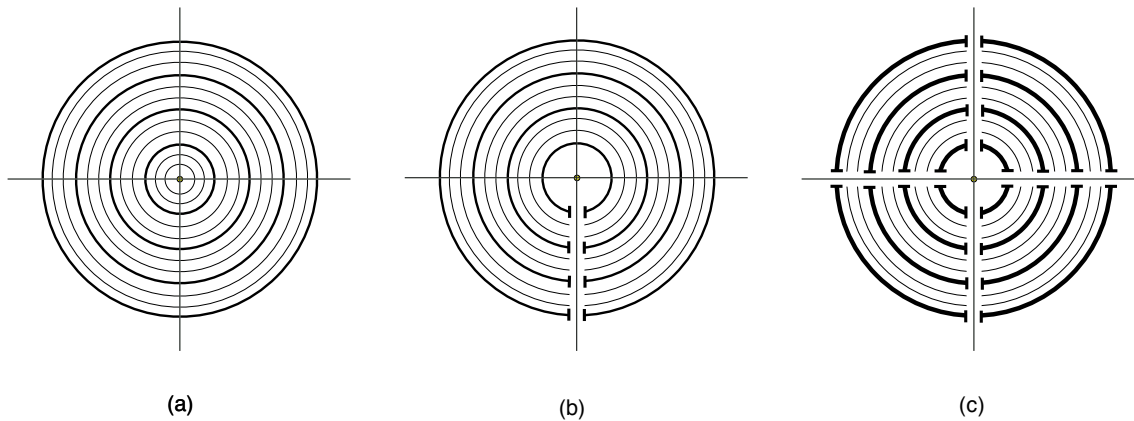
<sup>21</sup> René Guénon, in 'Doctrine of Cosmic Cycles', 5, compares the two quadripartite Ages. He also points out that the fourfold division of ages is another reflection of the fourfold division of time, like the seasons and the four weeks.

## The Discontinuity of the Different States

As was stated earlier, each level in manifestation is not sealed from other states; there remains an opening between one state of manifestation and the next. Further, there remains a subtle opening contiguous with all states and linking them all to the centre and Being. It has been said that this could be likened to the states 'interpenetrating' each other and now this metaphor can be seen to be similarly limited to the spatial domain. The spatial domain by its nature is discrete and cannot manifest separateness and continuousness together.

The explicit centre was described as the centre of each state and the point of contact or point of penetration of Being in each domain (Diagram 7.9(a)). The central vertical axis is also the vertical axis of the three-dimensional cross that transfixes the centre of the concentric domains. Consistent with what has been said previously, this vertical axis of the cross can be 'laid down' into the horizontal plane. In terms of metaphysical reality, there is nothing to preclude a symbol of the *axis mundi* that is not 'straight' or perpendicularly coherent and aligned, for, to put it in absolute terms, Being is not limited to straight lines. This is a subtle modification of the previous models. In one sense, all the openings align around the vertical *axis-mundi*, but this symbol of the axis should not be confused with the physical spatial vertical dimension. The *axis-mundi* is essentially trans-spatial, for it leads to worlds beyond the corporeal domain. This trans-spatial continuity need not be expressed by the straight vertical axis but by the 'virtual vertical axis' aligned with the openings of consecutive layers of multiple circumferences (Diagrams 7.9(b) & (c)). This schema has several distinct advantages in terms of symbolic potential. Each level of manifestation is, from a particular viewpoint, distinct and exclusive, subject to its own unique conditions and, in this context, the openings carry out a function best described as exclusive. With this new arrangement, we have the symbol of the labyrinth or maze. Each round of the labyrinth can be seen as a single level of manifestation separated from the other rounds, yet there remains a continuity, a pathway or thread that perforates all the levels into the one contiguous weaving path leading from the outer to the inner. Each previous level has an opening into the next domain and this opening may, by design, be difficult to find or it may also be aligned and linear.

The pathway to the centre of the labyrinth can be singular, in which case the path is unique but continuous, with all its various twists and contortions, or it may be unicursal with some pathways continuous and others blind endings. In either case, the labyrinth symbolises the passageway as difficult and arduous, through which only those with the necessary skills and initiation can penetrate to the centre. In the last context, the centre lies hidden and contains an impenetrable and inviolate mystery, further identifiable with the origin, the unformed and the primordial beginning, the *regressus ad uterum* of the Earth Mother.



Diagrams 7.9 Symbols of the multiple states of Being with the vertical axis in various forms.

(a) Left: The concentric model with of the vertical axis as the perpendicular centre axis projected out of the page.

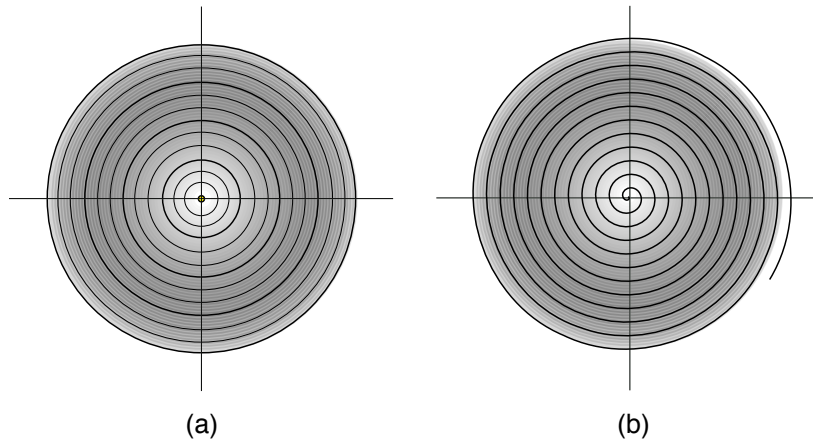
(b) Centre: The concentric multiple states of manifestation with the openings formed by the 'laying down' of the vertical axis like on a hinge, into the horizontal plane.

(c) Right: The centric levels of manifestation with multiple aligned portals.

## The Spiral & Helix as Models for Continuity Between Different States

The question that now arises is are there further developments of the models to see if the 'continuity' of states can be represented in some other way. Considering the first concentric two dimensional model, the individual states represented by the various circumferences are discrete and individual.<sup>22</sup> The continuity of the individual states is established if each circumference is dislocated to join the convolution of the next state, in which case, continuity is primary over separation. Considered in its entirety, the circular plane contains an indefinite number of states of the totality of being under consideration. If the multiple states are considered, the discrete nature of each state could be defined as the pitch of a spiral. Each pass of the circumference returns not to the same radial location but to an adjacent location. The pitch determines the number of multiple states under consideration (Diagrams 7.10(a) & (b)).

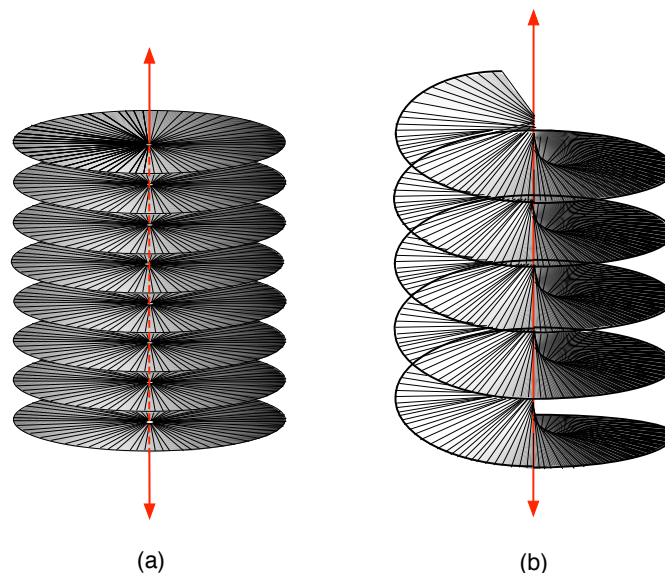
<sup>22</sup> This subject is discussed in *Symbolism of the Cross*, Chapter XIX, 86-88.



Diagrams 7.10 (a) Left: The multiple states of Being represented within the horizontal plane as a series of concentric circles. Each circumference represents a discrete and discontinuous state of Being.

(b) Right: The multiple states of Being represented within the horizontal plane by the individual rounds of the spiral. Each 'circumference' is separated by the pitch of the spiral representing the discrete yet continuous states of Being.

If considering a three-dimensional model, the multiple states expressed as planes of Being are represented as so many discs aligned with the vertical axis transfixing their respective centres. Considering the same requirement to present discrete states of existence with a requirement for continuity, the planes dislocate on each round and connect to the next adjoining plane to form a vertical helix (Diagrams 7.11 (a) & (b)).<sup>23</sup>



Diagrams 7.11 (a) Left: The multiple states of Being as multiple horizontal planes represented as a series of concentric discs. Each disc represents discrete and discontinuous states of Being.

(b) Right: The multiple states of Being represented by multiple horizontal discs but connected as a spiral helix. Each disc is separated by the pitch of the spiral helix representing the discrete yet continuous states of Being in three dimensions.

<sup>23</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, Chapter XX, 89-91.



The myth of Theseus and the Minotaur embodies the archetypal meaning of the spiral labyrinth in narrative form and is important if the symbol of the labyrinth and maze as a whole, and its deeper content in relation to the human state, is to be understood.<sup>24</sup> There are several aspects of this complex myth that relate to the labyrinth as an architectonic form. First, the centre of the labyrinth leads not to the Divine World but rather to the inverse of the principle of life, to the principle of death symbolised by the Minotaur. At the centre is the source of chaos and death in the dark underworld. While this domain of the labyrinth is the domain most distant from the world of light, it is still a centre, albeit an inversion of the centre of life and light. Theseus is thus following the golden thread down to the depths of purgation in the underworld, and the golden thread symbolises none other than the *axis-mundi*, the Golden Chord of Heaven, which links all existence and individual beings to Heaven. Theseus's return by way of the golden thread brings him back to the domain of light. The golden thread is the *sūtrātmā* or the 'thread-self' passing from life being to life Being, the spiritual thread that connects the spiritual essence of all past incarnations and all states of being (Image 7.11).



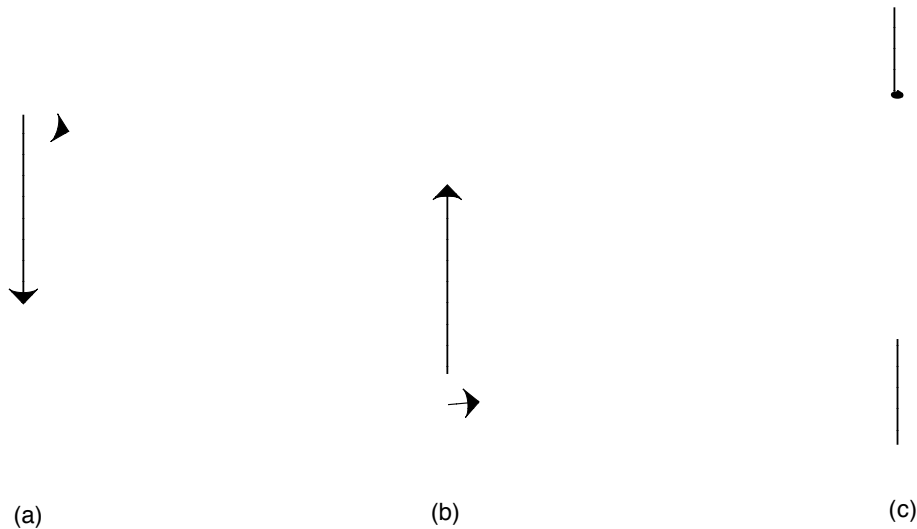
Image 7.11 Mosaic floor of ancient Roman villa with scenes from the battle of Theseus and Minotaur in the labyrinth, from the Tombs of Kings, Paphos, Cyprus.

If one could show the descent and return of Theseus schematically it could be a spiralling downwards to the depths and a return outwards, a going in and a return outwards. The labyrinth combines both the idea of the path towards the centre and a return back outward from that centre. Although the centre of the labyrinth is the goal, it is not the final end; the return journey must be accomplished.<sup>25</sup> The centre becomes a station through which the pilgrim must pass in order to defeat the source of death. The centre of the labyrinth marks a spiritual pole, a pole in the darkness and depths of the earth, and the inner depths of being. At the opposite pole lie light and knowledge. A schematic representation of the two poles could well be shown as two spiral paths, one descending the other ascending, both around the same vertical axis and the one the inverted image of the other (Diagrams 7.12(a) & (b)).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> The myth is well known and it is assumed the reader is familiar with the myth.

<sup>25</sup> In the myth of Theseus the story does continue with the return of Theseus to his homeland and the tragic death of the king Aegeus and all this is the corresponding return journey into the light.

<sup>26</sup> The two poles of the Minoan labyrinth are symbolised by the Minotaur on the one hand and Ariadne on the other. The Minotaur and Ariadne are an expression of complementary duality expressed as brother and sister. This antinomy underlies a deeper psychic as well as metaphysical symbolism and is another example of a hierogamic relationship and exchange. Like all traditional myths there are multiple layers.



Diagrams 7.12 The labyrinth can be seen as a progression in a number of cycles;

(a) Left: the labyrinth as a spiral involute descending to the depths of the earth.

(b) Centre: as an ascending spiral involute toward heaven.

(c) Right: as a combination of both descending ascending spirals.

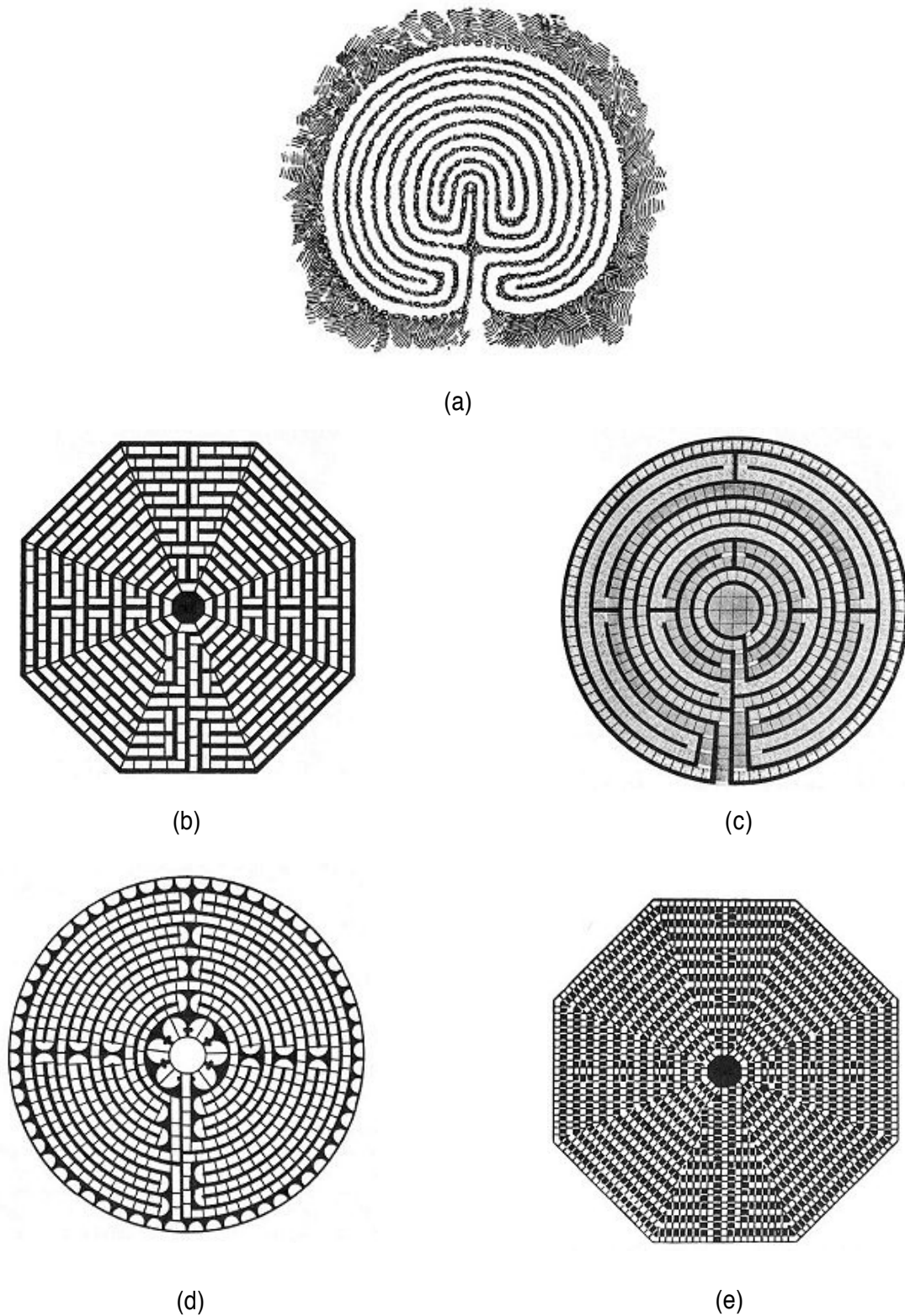
In their various forms, the maze and labyrinth are symbols of the multiple states and the continuity of Being, often allowing for active circumambulation. The majority of mazes and labyrinths are walked around. The labyrinth epitomises those complex symbols in which being and action are integral components. Being within the labyrinth and movements through the paths become an active participation enacting the ritual or trial of attaining the centre. The maze as an architectonic form predates its adoption as a Cretan symbol, and Bronze Age stone mazes and labyrinth petroglyphs are well documented. The classic form of early mazes is shown in such examples as the stone Labyrinth at Visby, Gotland, Sweden (Image 7.12(a) also 10.22 and Diagram 10.3) but can also be found as far afield as India and Sri Lanka.<sup>27</sup>

There are a number of labyrinths in Christian cathedrals and churches purported to be symbols of 'the way' and associated with Jesus Christ himself (Images 7.12(b)-(e)). Most traditional mazes, even circular mazes, have the two-dimensional cross implicit in the heart of their convolutions to determine their layout and geometry. In the Medieval Christian tradition, to tread such a maze was equivalent to undertaking a pilgrimage, as in the great maze of Chartres Cathedral. Various names have been given to this maze, including *Chemin de Jérusalem* or 'Road of Jerusalem'.<sup>28</sup> A plaque supposedly was installed at its centre inscribed with Theseus killing the Minotaur and Ariadne holding the thread that led to the goal (Images 7.12(d) & 7.13).<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> The website, <http://www.labyrinthos.net>, and the journal *Labyrinthos* published by the Labyrinths and Mazes Research Centre, have documented many such examples.

<sup>28</sup> Also, according to John James, the labyrinth is known as *Daedali*, referring to Daedalus, the architect of the Cretan labyrinth, *Chartres: The Masons Who Built a Legend*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 130. Other names include *Domus Daedali* or House of Daedalus.

<sup>29</sup> John James, 'The Mystery of the Great Labyrinth Chartres Cathedral' in *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 11, No. 2. (Spring, 1977).



Images 7.12 The labyrinth as a unicursal or single pathway maze.

- (a) Top: Stone Labyrinth at Visby, Gotland, Sweden.
- (b) Middle left: Labyrinth in Amiens Cathedral, France.
- (c) Middle right: Labyrinth in Bayeux Cathedral, France.
- (d) Bottom left: The labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral, France.
- (e) Bottom right: Labyrinth in Parish Church, St. Quentin, France.





Image 7.13 The labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral from the vault of the nave.

The propensity for medieval masons to constructing labyrinths in churches and cathedrals, specifically at the crossing of the nave and the transepts, alludes to a symbolism that is particular to an aspect of their construction at the time. Guénon and others have discussed the initiatic function of the labyrinth in the context of medieval masonic tradition.<sup>30</sup> The various folds, turns and apparent dead ends relate to the various trials encountered along the journey of masonic freemasonry. The labyrinth in this context is a symbol more associated with initiatic passage. In this regard, it is worth noting that the word 'maze' is derived from the Middle English *masen*, in turn from *mazen*, meaning 'to bewilder' and related to *āmasian* 'to perplex' or 'confound', from which we derive the word 'amazing'. The main point is that a spatial schema is used as a symbol for the spiritual (or initiatic) pathway to the centre and by 'walking the maze', being is reorientated (*metanoia*) and born again. Through this symbolism, the inherent qualities in space and time are used to represent all the levels of manifestation bound to the rigours of space and time. Space becomes the terrain to be crossed and the pathway of the labyrinth becomes 'the way' via the various stations along its unfolding; time becomes the unfolding of possibilities that allow the

progression along its serpentine folds. This is why in some labyrinths the way to the centre is complex but the exit from that centre is straight, such as the turf maze at Saffron Walden. Once the centre has been attained, the goal has been won; once the knowledge of the centre is known wisdom can follow (Ariadne) and the trip to the light becomes the 'journey North' (Image 7.14).

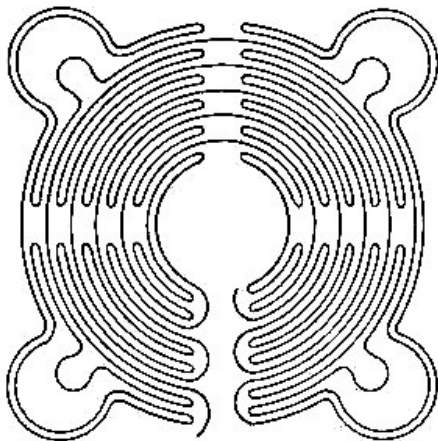


Image 7.14 Line drawing of the Saffron Walden turf maze.

<sup>30</sup> Guénon discussed this aspect in his essay, *The Cave and the Labyrinth* and more generally in *Frameworks and Labyrinths*. Both essays were originally published in french in *Études Traditionnelles* and are translated into English in *Symbols of Sacred Science*.

## Circumambulation & *Pradakshinā*

The continuity of the states of individual being are existentially enacted in some rituals. Movement during circumambulation involves the initiate or the participant moving physically around a centre. The participant encircles the centre prior to entering a sacred space. In some traditions this encircling is done three times or multiples of prescribed cycles. The encircling of a sacred centre enacts enclosure. The encircling motion, as a ritual form of circumambulation, is a spatial actualisation in the same way that drawing a circle from a centre marks out space.<sup>31</sup> In Hindu and Buddhist architecture, circumambulation is generally performed in a clockwise fashion, firstly outside the building or structure and then internally (that is, if there is an internal ambulatory around the central cell). The number of circuits varies but is typically 1, 3 or 108 repetitions.<sup>32</sup> This clockwise movement, *pradakshinā* or *parikrama*, means the sacred centre is always on the right hand side of the participant and imitates the movement of the Sun around the Earth.<sup>33</sup> In the larger Hindu temples, there is often a dedicated ambulatory pathway, the *pradakshināpatha*, which surrounds the womb chamber of the *garbhagraha* (For example Images 8.3 & 10.5(a) & (b)). In smaller temples, the path may be external or only notional, but the function remains the same. The temple is to be comprehended in its beholding (*darshana*) by circumambulation and to be approached and entered (*abhigamana*) through ritual movement.<sup>34</sup> This movement implicitly involves time, a temporal aspect that brings with it temporal progression. The *mandala* form of the temple or *stupa* is not evident from the aspect of the horizontal plane and a single point of perspective and remains, to the devotee, the internal form of the sacred structure, if it is apprehended at all. In other words, the *mandala* is more virtual than perceptual. The symbolic form, however, becomes actualised in the act of circumambulation in which the square plan is brought to a tangible external configuration by participatory walking. In the process of participation in the internal form of the *mandala*, the circumambulatory act sometimes allows the possibility of iconographic narrative in which related myths and stories unfold around the pathway. This iconographic unfolding occurs magnificently at the Buddhist *stupa*, *Candi Borobudur*. The passage around *Borobudur* proceeds clockwise with the pilgrim's shoulder turning to the right facing the body of the *stupa* and following the course of the Sun.<sup>35</sup> This passage is consistent with 'the light and life'. Circumambulation in India, because 'death' and the darkness of death, is performed in counterclockwise, since *prasavyā* is the opposite direction of *pradakshinā*.<sup>36</sup>

Circumambulation however should not be seen in a strictly linear temporal sequence; rather, in completing the path, the devotee completes a round of existence or walks the wheel around, like the Sun's passage through the annual cycle. The cycle in question here is the symbolic world of manifestation. The temple as an image of the cosmos is contained by circumambulating the centre, and the devotee by walking the course metaphorically encircles the universe, completing in the process a round of time. The edifice around which the devotee walks is seen in its various elevational aspects; it is not solid or fixed but is continuously unfolding. Thus the devotee sees the temple unfolding in time as it becomes known in space. The participation in the reading of the edifice is a 'knowing' and participation in the symbol. The aspects of space are 'walked out' in

<sup>31</sup> Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, discussed under the listings for 'Entry' and 'Circumambulation'.

<sup>32</sup> Khosla, *Architecture, & Symbolism in Tibetan Monasteries*, In the case of Hindu circumambulation, the number varies often depending on the deity. The number 108 being the often encountered cosmic number in Buddhism and Hinduism for example the 108 beads of the *japa mala*.

<sup>33</sup> Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa*, 33.

<sup>34</sup> Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 358.

<sup>35</sup> In the case of *Candi Borobudur*, being South of the equator the more 'natural' circuit would be anti-clockwise and strictly speaking the *stupa* of the northern hemisphere are circled in a clockwise direct it following the sun.

<sup>36</sup> Kempers, *Ageless Borobudur*, 150.



time. The successive four dominions of space are encountered over and over again as movement around the edifice is repeated. While visual symbols adorn the temple edifice, it is the movement around the temple that introduces a temporal dimension to the symbols that can be experienced kinaesthetically with the body, not only visually or by apprehending the symbolic content.

In some rituals, the circumambulation may be repeated along different levels of pathways; this repetition defines the world in its multiple levels of existence. Instead of the world being considered as one circumference, the world is divided into multiple levels or planes of existence. The layered structure of *Borobudur* is wonderfully symbolised, as discussed in Chapter 5. The edifice sits on a broad terraced base that represents the 'Realm of Desire' or *Kāmadhātu* (Image 7.15(a)). The *stupa* has four independent ambulatory pathways at the lower level of the square base which contain a myriad of relief panels relating to the life of the Buddha and other stories (Images 7.16(a) & (b)). Entry to each new level is by stairways at the centre of each side and after completing circumambulation of that level, the pilgrim ascends to the next level (Image 7.15(b)).

The unfolding of the mythic history of aspects of the life of the Buddha known as the *Lalitavistara*, is revealed by progression around the galleries of the first terrace at Borobudur.<sup>37</sup> Episodes from the collection of stories known as the *Jātakamālā* or 'Garland of Jatakas', telling the deeds of the Buddha in former lives, also unfold along the first and second terrace galleries.<sup>38</sup> On the second, third and part of the fourth terrace galleries, the stories of the *Sudhana*, wandering tirelessly to find the Supreme Knowledge of the Truth, unfold through reliefs taken from the *Mahayana Buddhist* scriptures, the *Gandavyuha*. Concluding the episodes of the *Gandavyuha* is the *Bhadrachari* manuscript, which is represented in the last part of the fourth terrace gallery (main wall). It contains the pledge of *Sudhana* to follow the example of the *Bodhisattva Samantabhadra*.<sup>39</sup> The devotee circulating around the first base and the four terraces of *Kāmadhātu* and *Rūpadhātu* passes a total of 432 Buddha niches, a number that corresponds to the great Hindu cycle of 4,320,000,000 years of the *Kalpa*.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> This aspect of *Borobudur* is documented by Yazir Marzuki, and Toeti Heraty, *Borobudur* (Jakarta: Djambatan Publishers, 1985) and Dumarçay, *Borobudur*.

<sup>38</sup> An online version of the *Jātakamālā* is available at <http://www.ancient-buddhist-texts.net/English-Texts/Garland-of-Birth-Stories/Garland-of-Birth-Stories.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> Marzuki & Heraty, *Borobudur*, 42-43.

<sup>40</sup> Marzuki & Heraty, *Borobudur*, 18.

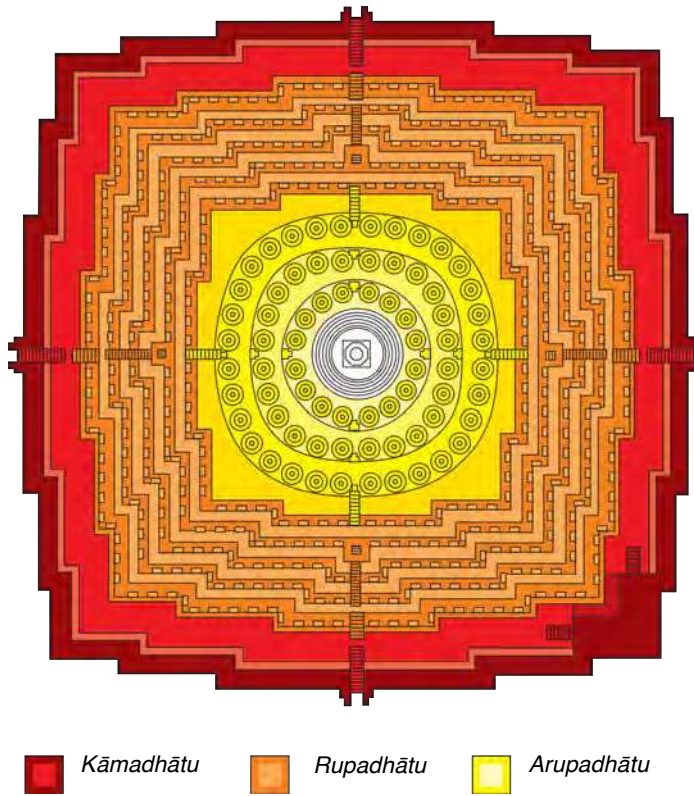


Image 7.15(a) Plan of *Candi Borobudur* with the three Buddhist metaphysical domains *Kāmadhātu*, *Rūpadhātu* and *Arūpadhātu*.

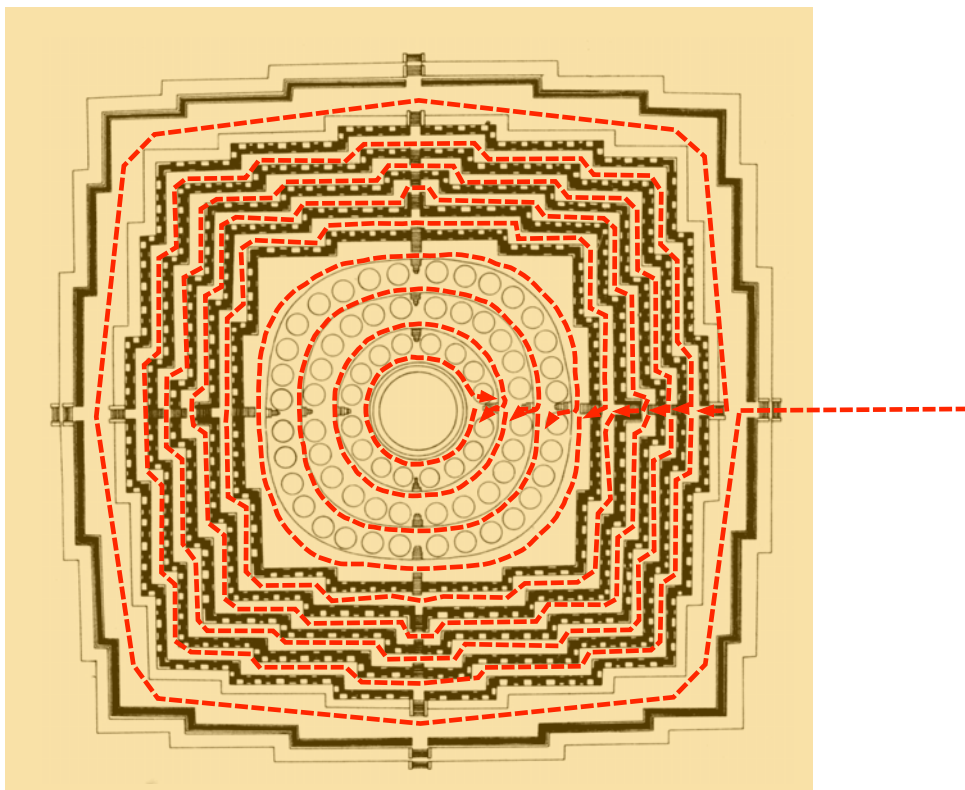


Image 7.15(b) Plan of *Candi Borobudur* with circumambulatory routes overlaid. *Borobudur* is generally approached from the eastern direction. The pilgrim ascends through the various states of existence in an upward clockwise spiral.





Image 7.16(a) One of the mid-level circumambulatory terraces at *Candi Borobudur* with carved friezes depicting the *Jātakamālā* on both sides of the walkway and partial glimpses of the outside view beyond.

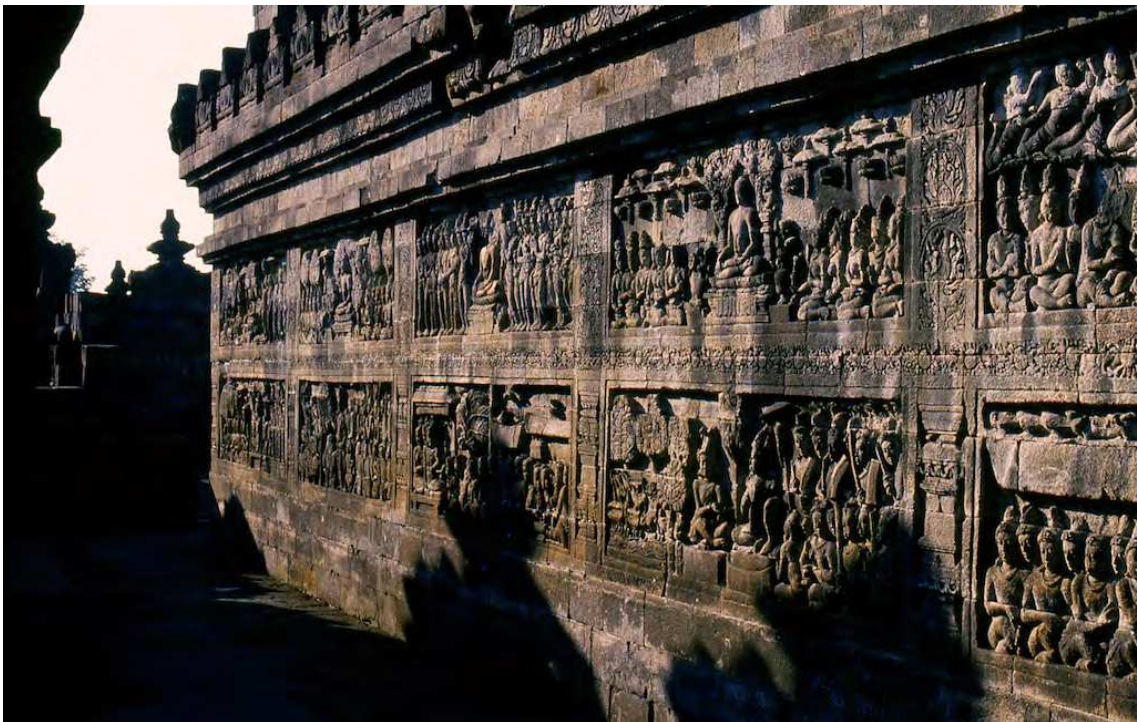


Image 7.16(b) One of the higher terrace circumambulatory terraces at *Candi Borobudur* with carved friezes on both sides of the walkway. The views become progressively more enclosed as the tiers progress.

At *Candi Borobudur*, the path of circumambulation, the *pradakshināpatha*, is labyrinth-like at the lower levels, quite unlike the linear approach to a Greek temple or Christian cathedral from the outer realm to the inner Holy of Holies. Further, the circumambulation path is repeated and nuanced with multiple changes in level and orientation. This is characteristic of the Buddhist mentality in conceiving time as being conditioned by return, recurrence and degrees of evolving and unfolding. It is not linear because the recurrence brings the devotee back to the same place but at another level or degree.<sup>41</sup> The participant leaves the external world of one level, withdraws for the ascent and emerges into the next. The break in continuity is afforded by the internalised attention required to ascend the difficult steps. The ascent becomes punctuated by a series of changes in the participant's attention. After walking round the pictorial galleries, the pilgrim withdraws and moves upward and round again. The movement becomes one of a series of expansions and contractions of inward and outward attention. The movement from one level to the next in this way is discontinuous; one could say that participation alternates between intellectual contemplation and physical translocation, even though the journey is a continuous one through several kilometres of galleries. One emerges into a succeeding level where one's attention is taken outward again to a new round of galleries.

After the four levels of the 'Sphere of Forms' or *Rūpadhātu* have been completed and the entire 'world' traversed, the devotee passes through the final monumental gateway called *torana* (Image 7.17) through the mouth of the last *kāla-makara*, emerging at the top of the *stupa* into the Realm of Formlessness or *Arūpadhātu*. From the restricting rectangular corridors of the lower galleries, the participant is released into the expanse of the open upper terraces with uninterrupted views toward the mountains in all directions. While the lower terraces are orientated in the four directions of the compass, the upper terraces of the *stupa* are circular and have no orientation; they 'face all directions and all times',<sup>42</sup> with a view that would rival that from *Mt Meru*. Looking inward, the three terraces are circular and unlike the four lower galleries that symbolise the multiple planes of the terrestrial worlds, these upper terraces symbolise the formless heavenly worlds. The *stupa* of *Candi Borobudur* is a complete model of the Buddhist cosmos where the devotees in their spiralling circumambulation ascend from the lowest domain to the heights of heaven.

The experience of the continuous transition from one level to the next is, in this context, non-existent because the attention is broken, displacement attained, and only then does the ambulation continue. The change in levels becomes like one of those circuitous paths of a maze, in which an intermediate end is reached only for the devotee to find a complete turn about; this is the exact function of the steps and portal, namely to sever one world and mark the beginning of the next. At each ascent, devotees pass through or rather are consumed by a *kīrttimukha* or 'Face of Glory' (Image 7.18).<sup>43</sup> There is in the pilgrim's progression around the progressed levels of Borobudur during *pradakshināpatha*, a sense of reincarnation of primal being according to the 'Ten stages of the *Bodhisattva*' on emergence into the top terrace.<sup>44</sup> But it is not the individual being which emerges, for the individual being is left at the lower contained levels of the terrestrial terraces. It is the 'liberated Self' who emerges from the levels 'left behind'.

<sup>41</sup> This idea of circular 'eternal return' is developed by Kempers, in *Ageless Borobudur*, 175-176.

<sup>42</sup> Nelson I Wu, *Chinese & Indian Architecture* (London: Studio Vista, 1968), 21.

<sup>43</sup> The Hindu *kīrttimukha* in this regard it related to the Taoist *T'ao t'ieh*.

<sup>44</sup> Holt, *Art in Indonesia*, 45.



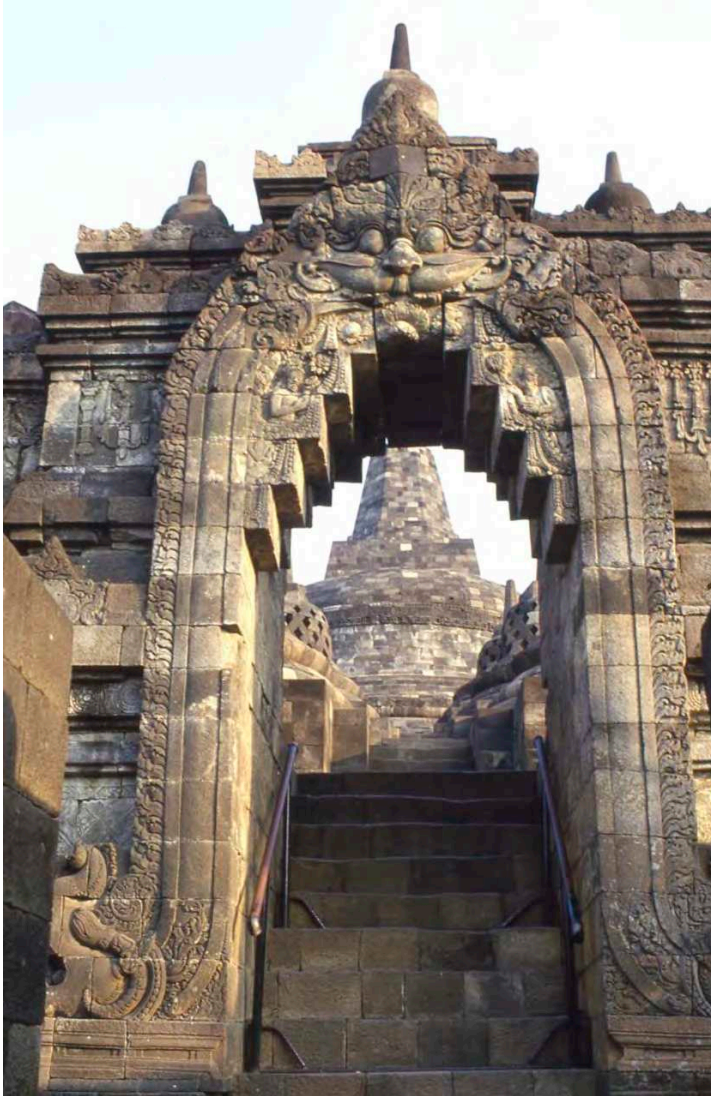


Image 7.17 (Left)

The transition from the various levels at *Candi Borobudur* is made during circumambulation, through various flights of steps and gateways or *torana* displaying the 'Face of Glory' or the *kirttimukha*. The final *torana* marks the transition from the levels of *Rūpadhātu* to the summit *Arūpadhātu*.

Image 7.18 (Below)

From the top circular terraces at *Borobudur* views are expansive and open compared to the closed terraces below. The participant experiences the silence and infinite space associated with the realm or sphere of *Arūpadhātu* and that of the *Dharmakāya*.





# CHAPTER 8:

## EXISTENTIAL SPACE & THE CROSS

### The Body in Space - Division of Inside & Outside

While Guénon's *Symbolism of the Cross* does not specifically develop the existential dimensions of space to be discussed in this chapter in detail, elements can be found in numerous other works. This chapter explores the application of *Symbolism of the Cross* to other realms that illuminate aspects of the individual's participation in sacred architecture. In the modern West, there has been a tendency to prioritise the mind and the external world and negate the bodily sense and internal world of the being. However, both the subjectivity of the being and the objectivity of being come from the same root, the physical presence of the body in the spatio-temporal world.<sup>1</sup> This is the ground from which perception proceeds. Geometry connects the structure of the body with our experience of space. It could be said that it forms the very means of our interpretation and even the very basis of much of the language of our common understanding of the world. The fundamental building blocks of perception are few in number but primordial in the sense that they come before the complexity of mental abstraction and verbal thinking. This has been called by Mark Johnstone, the 'image schemata',<sup>2</sup> and is the sense of the being's corporeal identity. It is sensorial to an extent but not entirely bound to the senses, as they integrate the individual's 'sense of being within the world' with physical sensorial input. The image schemata is the matrix uniting the microcosmic and macrocosmic views.<sup>3</sup>

Of primary relevance to this study is the fundamental application of something like the image schemata to the division of space into the microcosmic domain as the inside and the outside. This bifurcation is an expression of the Duad in the form of the complementary considerations of proximity and identity, which is the connection back to Guénon's *Symbolism of the Cross*. Just as the Duad was expressed in the relationship of Being to Being's apprehension of Itself and the relationship between the bifurcated principal points, so too is individual being's seeing of itself. The surface of the skin and the containment of the body within forms the first experiential division of the body in the world. The senses are the conduits that convey the relationship of the internal world to the external world across the threshold of the skin and other senses. It is a division into two complementary yet opposite terms: that which is internal expresses the 'inside', the 'included', the

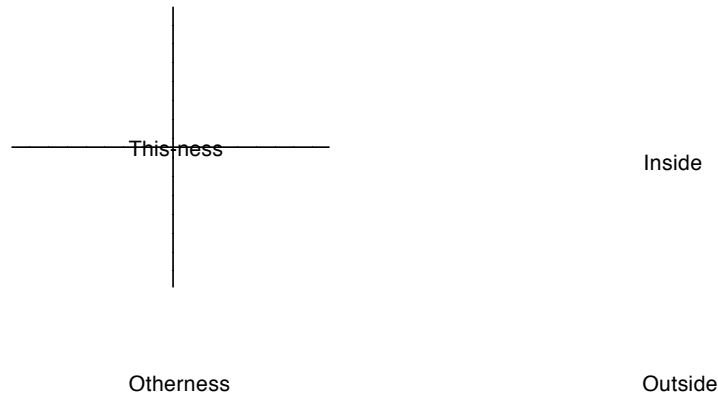
---

<sup>1</sup> For insights into this area refer to Snodgrass & Coyne, *Interpretation in Architecture*, 192-194, which is partly developed from the seductive ideas proposed by Mark Johnstone, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990) and others.

<sup>2</sup> *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason*. This is not to assume I follow entirely the consequences of Johnstone's insightful term as will become apparent.

<sup>3</sup> It is the view of the square uniting the two views in Diagram 3.1.

identity of 'I' and the 'contained'. That which is outside of the body expresses that which is 'outside, 'excluded', the identity of 'other' and the 'un-contained'. Bifurcation is essentially a separation that draws limits around one set of modal expressions and excludes another. The included set is defined in a positive definitive mode, a singular 'this-ness' or affirmative uniqueness rooted in the subjective individuality of the being, whereas the outside is the excluded set of undifferentiated and complementary 'otherness' (Diagrams 8.1). It represents a further subjectivity to the notions of the 'here' and the 'there'.



Diagrams 8.1 (a) Left: The Duad as separation into 'this-ness' and 'otherness'.  
(b) Right: The Duad as separation into inside and outside.

The separation of the body in the world gives rise to the complementary opposition of inside and outside or simply in-out. There are several considerations here. Firstly, there are the related spatial considerations of containment. That which is inside is contained, has a corporeal 'body', is defined and is limited. It is identifiable with the 'I' of being but is equally applicable to locating the 'I' in a container, such as 'I am in the room'. Secondly, and leading from this spatial identification of a 'here' in a contained and defined area, there is the concept of transitivity of containment. This is the notion that the experienced or perceived in-out relationship can be subject to further containment(s), of which 'I am in my room' or 'I am in my house' are examples. This could be expressible logically thus: if B is in A, then whatever is in B is also in A. The Russian folk doll or *Matryoshka*, nested dolls, display beautifully but nonetheless paradoxically the principle of interconnected and unfolding containment. Thirdly, the in-out orientation assumes or affirms a fixity of location. While the outside can be anywhere, the inside or even the notion of 'in' assumes a fixed location of the containment. Finally, there are the mental structures associated with being inside and with the boundary excluding the out(er) or out(side). The boundary affords a degree of 'sanctuary' from the outside and unknown forces of the outside. The inside is static, located, known and comprehensible; the outside is chaotic, unknown and incomprehensible. What is inside can be grasped, what is outside is 'out of reach'.

This relationship of protection is fundamental to the consideration of architecture, since enclosure is the primordial way of creating the 'inside', the separation of the outside and all the indefinite considerations in between. When associated with the cognitive states of the human being, these considerations lead to the notions of protective sanctuary and 'indwelling' and the built support for the individual being's wellbeing. The word 'protection' derives through Old French from the Latin stem, *protection*, meaning to 'cover in front'. The association with protective clothing or apparel is clear. The notion of protection stems from the physical covering or surrounding afforded by barriers that define the inside-outside relationship. Importantly, this association involves the spatial image schemata of being 'in front', affirming the visual prioritising of that which is

forward and what can be seen, as opposed to not seen. The relationship may begin as 'proximity', which then becomes sheathed by clothing, then more robust by enclosure and boundaries, leading even to social considerations and those of the state, and ultimately associations with Being as the great Protector. To be more correct ontologically, the Quality of 'Divine Protection' finds further resonance in the domain of the individual being in multiple reflections.

Like all dualities, inside and outside can become symbols of principal division. This means that the subjective reality of the relationship between the individual 'I' and the external world becomes a metaphor for the ideas of 'inside' and 'outside' and can also be used as a symbol for the fundamental dualities based upon the relationship between the body and the world. Thus, the relationship between the sacred and the profane, the centre and the peripheral, the ordered and the unordered, the defined and the undefined, the created and the uncreated and the eternal and the contingent, can all be brought to bear upon the duality of the 'I' and the world and the divisions of inside and the outside. It would be incorrect to say that the notion of the inside and outside are derived from the separation of the body from the world in which it resides.<sup>4</sup> Rather, the duality of the inside-outside relationship is an internalised manifestation of the Duad, which ultimately resides in the Principle of Being. It may well be true that the image schemata as developed by Johnson and others has direct linguistic implications but it is not, at least in the traditional or ontological sense, the origin of the duality.

From the subjective viewpoint and returning to the foundation of the individual body, the divisions of space into the inside and outside mirror a mode of our consciousness. The 'outside' is the outside world, the world beyond our body, a world that is taken inward by our senses and a world from which, from a certain viewpoint, we are separated by the epidermal boundary of our skin. The 'inside' is the internal world of our individual being, our body, taken in through our senses but as sensation, a world defined as 'self'. If the body is the objective being in space, the 'I' is the centre of the body. The 'I' is the 'self realised', recognised as standing alone and away from other beings. The significance of the body is central to the separation of the internal world from the external world, but this is also the individual's apprehension of that body in space. The body and its sensorial systems become the interface between the world and the the sense of the individual self. The body is the interface, but the senses are the organs that allow and stimulate the individual consciousness of the 'I'. The relationship between external stimuli, physical sensation, individual consciousness and the sense of self or 'I', is an important area for exploration in regard to the human states.<sup>5</sup>

Our consciousness can dwell on external and internal phenomenon, just as sensation can be experienced from the outside world and from the internal world of the body and its consciousness. Psychologically, this means that a being can direct attention and activity in either direction. Physically, it means that the human being lives in an ever-present reality of being either in bodily sensation or in the outside world or, on rare occasions, both. The being can, by action of consciousness, change attention and the focus of consciousness from being outside to inside through the senses. Individual human beings dwell in either domain, which is one of the extraordinary capacities of the human being. Even more so is the ability to participate in both realms simultaneously (Diagram 8.2).

---

<sup>4</sup> This is where I part company with Johnson and the linguistic and cognitive fields of study that do assert this.

<sup>5</sup> The role of the senses particularly in the Hindu tradition find a direct integration within traditional teaching and Vedic science. The role of the individual senses in comparison with Christian teaching and the so-called 'West' could not be starker.

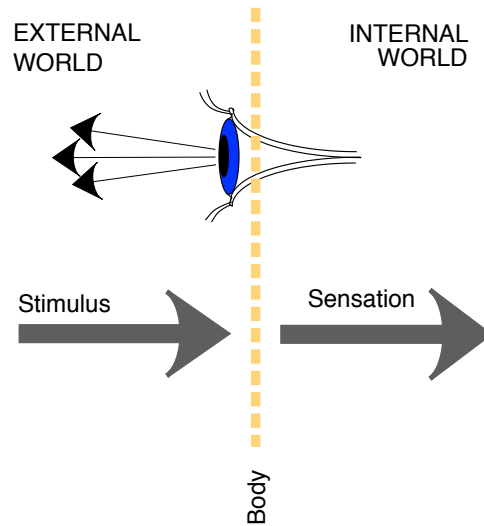


Diagram 8.2 The body as the interface between the internal world of sensation and the external world of stimulus.

It could be clarified here that the Duad as the root of duality creates all dualities, but these dualities are not necessarily interchangeable. No proposition should say that looking inside ourselves is necessarily looking toward the sacred and looking outward is looking toward the profane. The poles of any given duality exist at their own level only and should not be taken together. This is a complex issue and requires careful clarification. To suggest one example of an indefinite number, it could be said that the relationship between the sacred and the profane as an expression of the Duad is symbolic of the relationship between light and dark. This does not mean necessarily that light is sacred and darkness profane, for the sacred and profane exist in both the light and the dark. To interpret symbols in such a horizontal or exclusive manner strips the symbol of its vertical similitudes, which is the source of its symbolic content, both on a metaphysical level and as a heresy if taken into the realm of doctrine. Symbols by their very nature cannot be manipulated using such laws of simple polarity.

## Symbolic Inversion

Symbolic inversion is another way of describing this duality of perspective between the inward and the outward. The nature of symbolism is such that it is bound to human states and human consciousness allows the reflective inversion; more correctly, the nature of the human state is such that symbolic inversion can be applied both existentially and objectively. It is miraculous that all symbolism is equally applicable to both the macrocosmic and the microcosmic worlds of the human state. This potential of inverse symbolism is a complex transformation for some symbolic content, as discussed earlier. Nonetheless, this complexity is one of the reasons that symbolism is so potent in traditional understanding of such areas as consciousness and the individual self. To take an example, the Divine Infinity could be seen in two modes, Transcendent and Immanent. Within the body of the being, the Infinity is Immanent and yet hidden, like a 'seed in the heart'. This relationship is one of inversion.

Symbolic inversion is close to the traditional symbolism of the mirror. The optical physics that lead to an inverted image bind the reflected world, the mirror and the individual into a metaphor that could be considered almost indispensable to understanding symbolic inversion.<sup>6</sup> To understand symbolic inversion in such a way leads contemplative sages like Ibn 'Arabi to write:

God is the mirror in which thou seest thyself, as thou art His mirror in which He contemplates His Names: now these are nothing other than Himself, in such a way that the analogy of the relationship is the inverse.<sup>7</sup>

The nature of symbolic inversion is the consequence of active meditation on the corporeal domain when understood within the human being, although strictly speaking it also applies to the Divine Realm in the above analogy in which the Divine contemplates and also looks inward. The active comprehension of a symbolic transposition is made possible by an understanding of the connectedness of manifestation. The action of inversion, however, relates to the human being in its mode of comprehending the world as a separate viewpoint (Diagram 8.3).

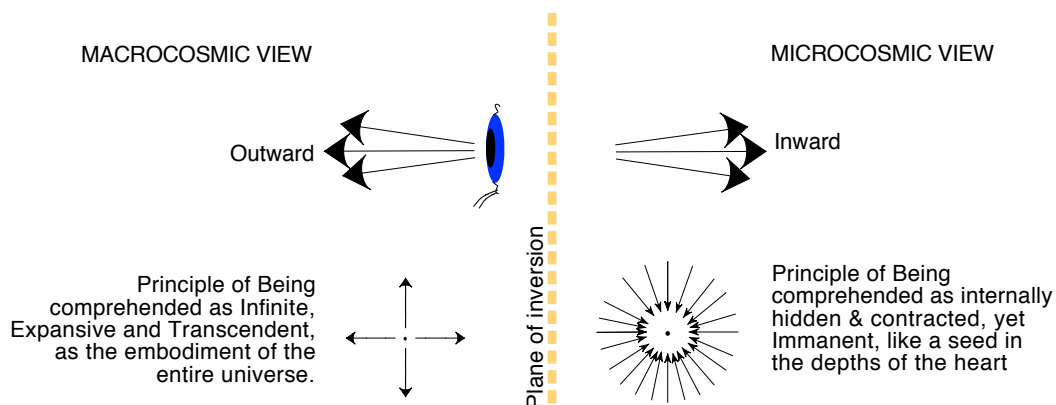


Diagram 8.3 The individual being as the interface of symbolic inversion.<sup>8</sup>

To illustrate this concept, the Hindu Temple conforms to an inverted image of symbol and manifestation, of the outer world and the inner centre of the heart. The small chamber at the centre of the temple, the *garbhagraha* or womb chamber, is the essence of the temple's existence, its formless being. The external meaning and disposition of the entire configuration of the superstructure is but an elaboration of the potentiality of the *garbhagraha*. The internal numinous seed of the temple is further expanded in the five directions of external space, as the architectonic iconostasis.<sup>9</sup> The 'inner lotus of the heart',<sup>10</sup> that interior interspace from which all space is derived,

<sup>6</sup> Ibn 'Arabi writes on the nature of reflection and the mirror, 'This phenomenon God has manifested as a symbol particularly appropriate to His essential revelation, so that he to whom He reveals Himself knows that he does not see Him; there exists no symbol more direct and more conforming to the contemplation and the revelation in question.' Burckhardt, *The Wisdom of the Prophets, Fusus al-Hikâm*, 24

<sup>7</sup> From the *Fusus al-Hikam*, chapter on Seth. This specific translation given in Burckhardt, *Mirror of the Intellect*, 122.

<sup>8</sup> This diagram is developed from the same idea discussed in Houston Smith, *Forgotten Truth: The Primordial Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 20-21.

<sup>9</sup> Kramrisch, 'Space in Indian Cosmogony and in Architecture' In *Concepts of Space Ancient and Modern*.

<sup>10</sup> 'And he who having entered the inner lotus of the heart, devours food, the same, having gone to, the sky as the fire of the sun, called Time, and being invisible, devours all beings as his food. What is that lotus and of what is it made? That lotus is the same as the ether; the four quarters, and the four intermediate points are its leaves', *Maitrāyaṇīya Upaniṣhad* Max Muller trans., *The Upanishads*, Part 2 Sacred Books of the East, (Delhi: Motilal Banasidass, 1884), 306.



becomes unfolded in all its manifold complexity and projected outward into the world of spatial and temporal being (Images 8.1, 8.2 & 8.3). The internal spiritual space, like physical space, allows a 'human perspective'.



Image 8.1 (above) The external appearance of the Hindu Temple is a manifestation of the 'seed' at the centre of the inner chamber. *Durga Temple, Aihole Southern India.*



Image 8.2 (left)

The doorway to the inner cell or *garbhagraha* of the Hindu temple is the boundary of the inner heart of the temple and the manifest world. Within the 'womb-chamber' lies the seed of the temple's origin. *Durga Temple, Aihole, Southern India.*

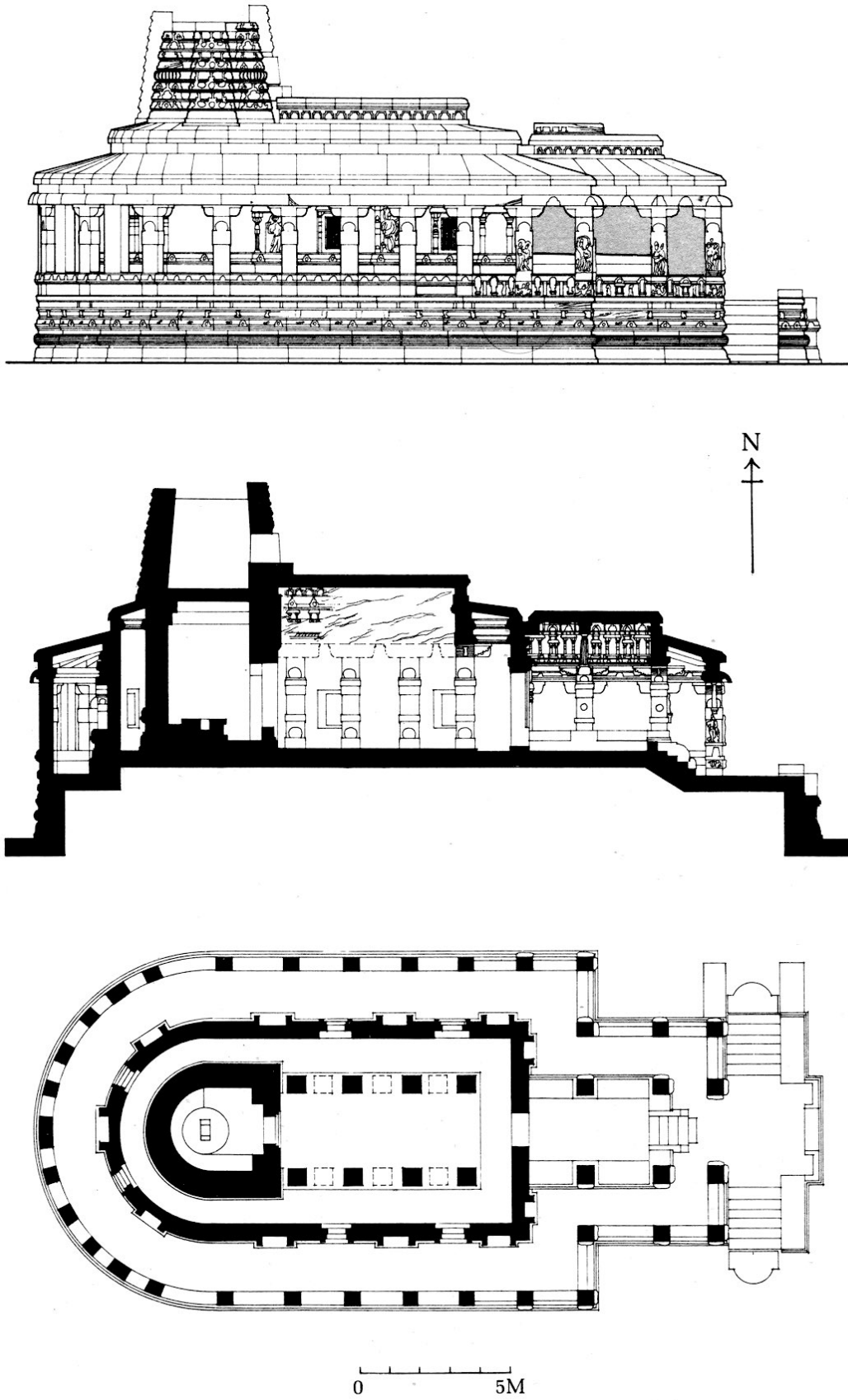


Image 8.3 Elevation, section and plan of *Durga Temple* at Aihole, Karnataka, India.

Architecture is a potent means of symbolising and actualising the relationship between the inside and the outside. It is the means whereby the inside can be defined and included and the outside or exterior world excluded as the other. In this sense, the building is not unlike the physical body of man. It is the container that allows the form of the sacred to be revealed and the centre to be manifest. The exterior of the temple is analogous to the external body, the interior analogous to the devotee's heart. The temple is thus a dual built symbol of the microcosmic and macrocosmic domains as contained worlds. It can symbolise both the world in which being lives and Universal Man as a world.<sup>11</sup> In this way, with the unification of the two symbols in the one building, the symbolic inversion just discussed becomes totally resolved. This theme is explicit in some sacred architecture traditions and implicit in others. The inner space of the soul is identified with the interior space of the corporeal domain and the space of the temple becomes the space of the interior of Universal Man and by analogy individual being. The idea of 'inside' and 'outside' when applied to all architecture, and sacred architecture in particular, takes on enormous complexity. The inside becomes symbolically laden with many principles that derive from the multiple levels or domains. In architecture, the definition between the inside and the outside is the most fundamental function of building, and at its simplest, architecture is the creation or delineation of what is inside and what is outside; everything else proceeds from there. (Diagram 8.4).

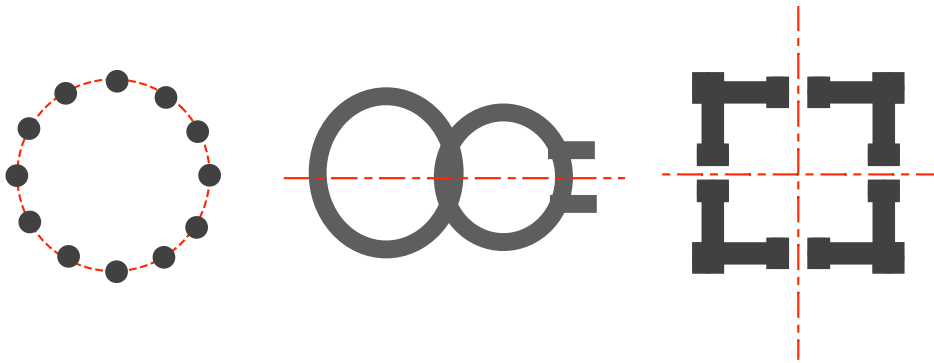
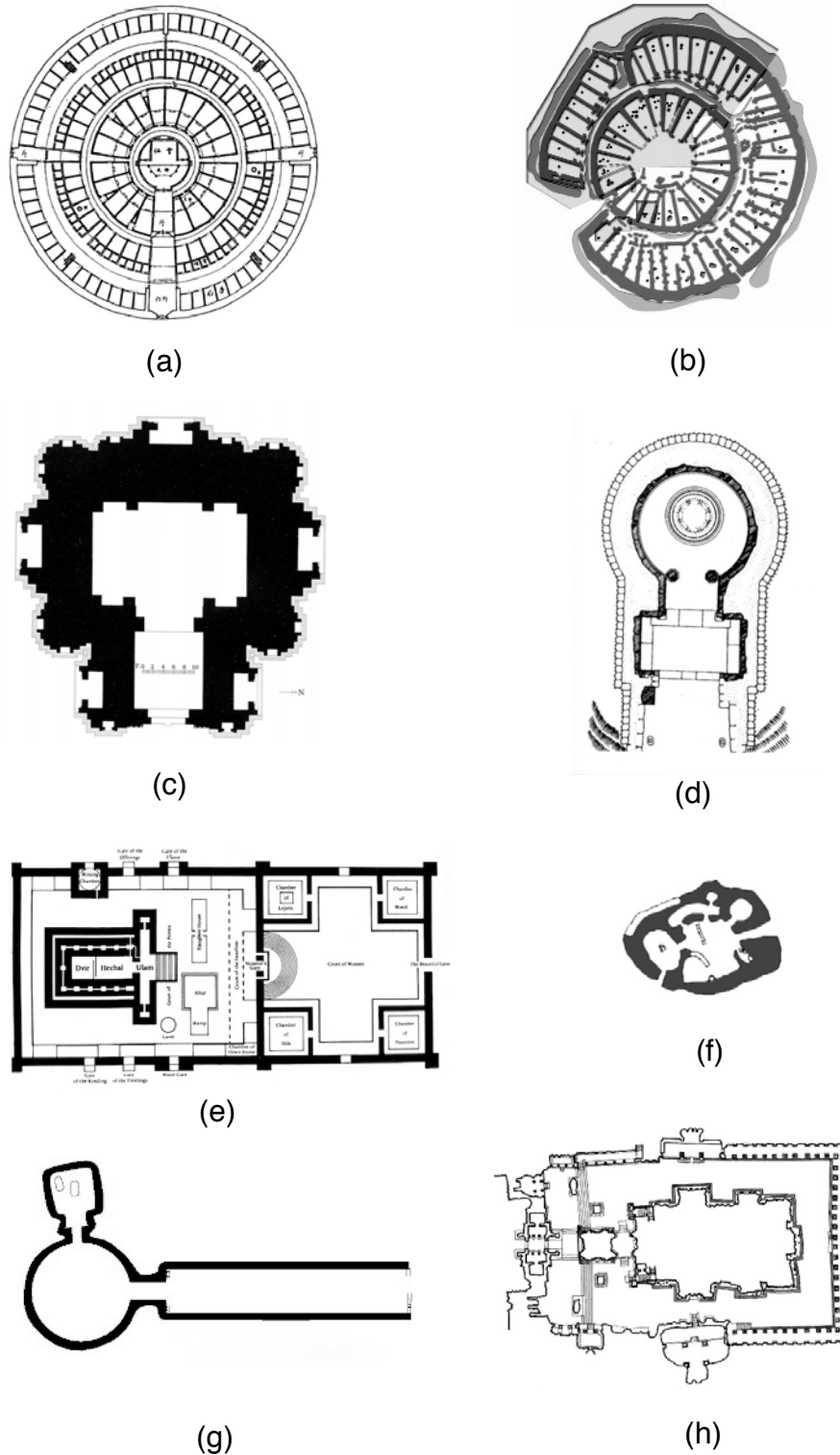


Diagram 8.4 Enclosure, the defining of the interior from the exterior.

To return to the existential divisions of space, once the fundamental distinction between inside and outside has been made, other qualities can be defined. The 'inside' and the 'outside' constitute the first existential subdivision of space whose principle lies beyond the spatiotemporal domain. At the microcosmic level, what is inside is subjectively knowable and determined by one's self; what is outside is objectively knowable and known or comprehended by one's self in a relative fashion. On the macrocosmic level, what is inside has been set apart from what is outside, and through this separation, an order has been established. The distinction is absolute and need not be in relation to my comprehension of it. Enclosure is the means by which architecture secures the boundary of the inside and the outside. The architectural element of the wall is the primary enclosure, the roof follows and then the floor reestablishes the grounding of the enclosure (Images 8.4(a)-(h)).

<sup>11</sup> This is not to say the temple is built in the shape of individual man. It is the Universal Man as *Prajāpati*, *Adam Kadmon* or Jesus Christ. The body of individual being nonetheless finds correspondence through symbolic reflection.



Images 8.4 Enclosure as the fundamental separation of the interior from the exterior.

- (a) Plan of Cheng qi lou village, Fujian Province, China.
- (b) Plan of Arkaim, a Russian Bronze Age fortified settlement.
- (c) Plan of *Teli-ka-mandir Temple*, Gwalior.
- (d) Plan of *Seokbulsa Grotto Shrine*, South Korea.
- (e) Conjectural plan of Herod's Temple Jerusalem.
- (f) Plan of house 6 at Chysauster Bronze Age settlement, Cornwall.
- (g) Plan of Treasury of Atreus or the Tomb of Agamemnon, Mycenae, Greece.
- (h) Plan of *Kailasa Temple*, Ellora, India.

## The Body in Space - the Existential Division of Space

The being 'in space' has a relationship 'with space' that starts with the definition of inside and outside. The individual in space also has proximity to other objects and that proximity is determined by the considerations of direction and measured distance just like the relationships between multiple points. So the notion of homogenous space, with no direction being more significant than any other is meaningless and 'contradictory to the nature of the mind that formed it'.<sup>12</sup> To put it simply, either space is all space with no differentiation and no more can be said about it or space is qualified by the mere fact that beings are located within it and by our experience of it and its potential to form spatial relationships.<sup>13</sup> Space therefore is not isotropic by nature, in that it has the potential for measurement in different 'directions' relative to being. Space in this regard must be distinguished entirely from a notion of 'void' or 'voidness' which is unqualified and unconditioned in any way. Void is the absence of space or space 'vacated' and strictly speaking is not part of Universal Existence.

'Dimensions' of space are possible when considered from a being's subjective microcosmic point of view. Given that individual being in the corporeal domain is a reflection of Universal Man, it can now be seen why the human body is a complete reflection of the three-dimensional cross. The axes of the three-dimensional cross correspond to the *bauplan*<sup>14</sup> of the human body. The physical body is a complete reflection of the three dimensional cross, and hence the body is a symbol of the spatiotemporal world. While the three-dimensional cross can be found explicitly in the tetrahedron, cube and octahedron,<sup>15</sup> it is the cube that most closely resembles the spatial differentiation of the bodily frame. The bodily frame is disposed along the three independent directions of space, filling space along those axes. When the being stands erect along the vertical axis, the spine aligns itself with the vertical ray. Subjectively, it gives the direction of 'up' and 'down'. Up is the direction above the head, the sky, the heavens, the Sun and the indefinite expanse that is the night sky. Up is the direction that in being's natural relaxed state cannot be seen without tilting the head back. That tilting creates a view towards the zenith. In terms of what could be called anthropo-symbolism, a being's bodily stature is an exact reflection of that being's possibilities. The eyes and the senses being faculties of the world, are oriented forward toward the corporeal world. Down is the direction that lies beneath the feet, not seen without tilting the head downward to obtain a view of the earth, the ground upon which the being walks and the nadir.<sup>16</sup>

The bodily axis aligns with gravity, a force that all beings respond to as a force to be overcome according to their kind. While balance is not considered one of the classical five senses that focus on the external world, it is included in a group of other perceptual skills that focus on the internal world, such as the perception of temperature (heat and cold), pain, the kinaesthetic sense or proprioception and acceleration. The physiological stimuli that trigger some of these internal senses may be related, but the important issue is that the sense of balance is a skill that involves bodily sensing and feedback via the nervous system to allow almost simultaneous bodily adjustments. The sense of balance does not of course oppose gravity, but establishes and

<sup>12</sup> To use the succinct logic of Critchlow in his essay '*Temenos*', in *Temenos*, Issue 1, (1990).

<sup>13</sup> Further paraphrasing Critchlow, '*Temenos*'. The same argument can and will be put in regard to time.

<sup>14</sup> Using the term so often used by Heidegger but in a more complete sense.

<sup>15</sup> The dodecahedron and icosahedron also contain the three dimensional cross but in less obvious and a more implicit mode.

<sup>16</sup> Both words, 'zenith' and 'nadir' have an origin in the Arabic language with zenith being an incorrect translation of *samt* (*ar-ra's*) meaning 'path (over the head)' and related to 'azimuth' *as-sumut* 'meaning the ways'. Hence zenith is not just that point above the head but also related to the motion of the heavenly bodies 'overhead'. The word 'nadir' is from *nazir as-samt*, literally 'opposite direction' from *nazir* meaning 'opposite' + *as-samut* meaning road or path. This terminology places being at the centre of the motion of the heavens above and the earth below.



maintains a state of equilibrium with gravity. There is no need to 'sense' gravity directly, as the eyes do with light, but a highly developed sense of balance entails focusing various senses on the effects of gravity on the body. The sense of balance is located in the middle ear but also entails complex bodily sensing from the extremities of the body, primarily the feet, combined with sight.<sup>17</sup>

James J. Gibson pointed out in his 'ecological approach to visual perception' that the horizon is an important visual plane for orientation and the fact that light always comes from above, not below, reinforces the other senses of balance.<sup>18</sup> The horizon is the visual limit of the horizontal plane. Both words having the same Ancient Greek origin of *horizōn (kuklos)* meaning 'limiting (circle)'. The horizon is the ultimate determination of a being's sense of being 'here' and is the locus of all places seen. The horizon defines what Edward Casey calls the 'near sphere' of our immediate world.<sup>19</sup> The horizon is also the boundary of the enclosing sky and the point where the sky touches the ground. The being is at the centre of this near sphere, at the place of the 'here'. As Derrida observed, without direct recognition of Gibson's contribution but following Husserl:

Horizon is given to a lived evidence, to a concrete knowledge which, Husserl says, is never "learned" which no empirical moment can then hand over, since it always presupposes the horizon.....a horizon is always virtually present in every experience: for it is at once the unity and the incompleteness for that experience - the anticipated unity in every incompleteness.<sup>20</sup>

The horizon is the limit of one's vision or the limits of 'the visible' and one could say metaphorically the horizon is the locus of the seen *qua*, the known limit of the physical world.

The visual aspect of a being's self is not just from the eyes, what is neglected in such a 'myopic view' is that the body is in the visual field all the time, the body is seen in a 'position in space' as well as experienced at the centre of an optical field that extends to the horizon. When considering consciousness, it is difficult to say that the seat of consciousness lies in the head, even if the centre of consciousness is considered to be the brain. The very notion of 'centre' as the origin of Cartesian coordinates is a misleading concept when applied to the human being for there is no one centre of the being. In other words, the experienced body is more a place than a point in space. At the heart of this place is the unique body, the only entity that is both object and subject.<sup>21</sup> The centre of the 'bodily place' is taken as the summation of the experienced body, but the centre prioritises the physical body and its kinaesthetic sense of movement and positioning in space.

If the centre of the experienced body as well as the actual centroid of the centre of gravity of the body is a point just above the navel, then in terms of human positional anatomy, a horizontal plane through this centre is called the transverse plane (Image 8.5). That part of the body above the plane is the cranial (head) portion and that part below is the *caudal* portion.<sup>22</sup> This placing of the centre of the transverse plane at the centre, or 'centroid', of the body needs to be seen in the

---

<sup>17</sup> Johnson, *The Body in the Mind*, has developed this *image schema* into diverse considerations of balance and equilibrium and then applied the same principles to art, the law and even the basis of mathematics. This is taking metaphor too far. I would rather contend that the consideration of notions such as balance are of a 'principle' whose origin is not that of the human state. Principles work from top down not from the bottom up. Equilibrium could be considered a Divine Quality as the 'Divine Equilibrium that maintains existence', following the line of thought of al-Ghazali, 'Extracts from the Commentary on the Divine Names by Imam Ghazali', in Burckhardt, *Mirror of the Intellect*, 201.

<sup>18</sup> James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 1986), 18. However the entire work needs to be assimilated as well and has great relevance to spatial coordination and the world.

<sup>19</sup> Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back into Place* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 61.

<sup>20</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, trans. John P. Leavey Jnr. (New York: Stoney Brook, 1978), 117. Horizon here being both actual and metaphorical.

<sup>21</sup> As is Being as noted earlier.

<sup>22</sup> Caudal is derived from modern Latin *caudalis*, from Latin *cauda* meaning at or near the 'tail'.

context of what could be called a 'bodily centre'. If the physical body only is considered then the body's centre of gravity lies slightly below the navel. One could argue that the 'self-centredness' of the being's consciousness lies in the head, the supposed centre of our thinking. More significantly, it is the centre of our visual perception and perhaps that could be the privileged 'centre of reference'. However, the human being is a total being and not in one particular location. The auditory sense of being, the consciousness of being and the sense of the disposition of the body's extremities and the skin all have different centres.

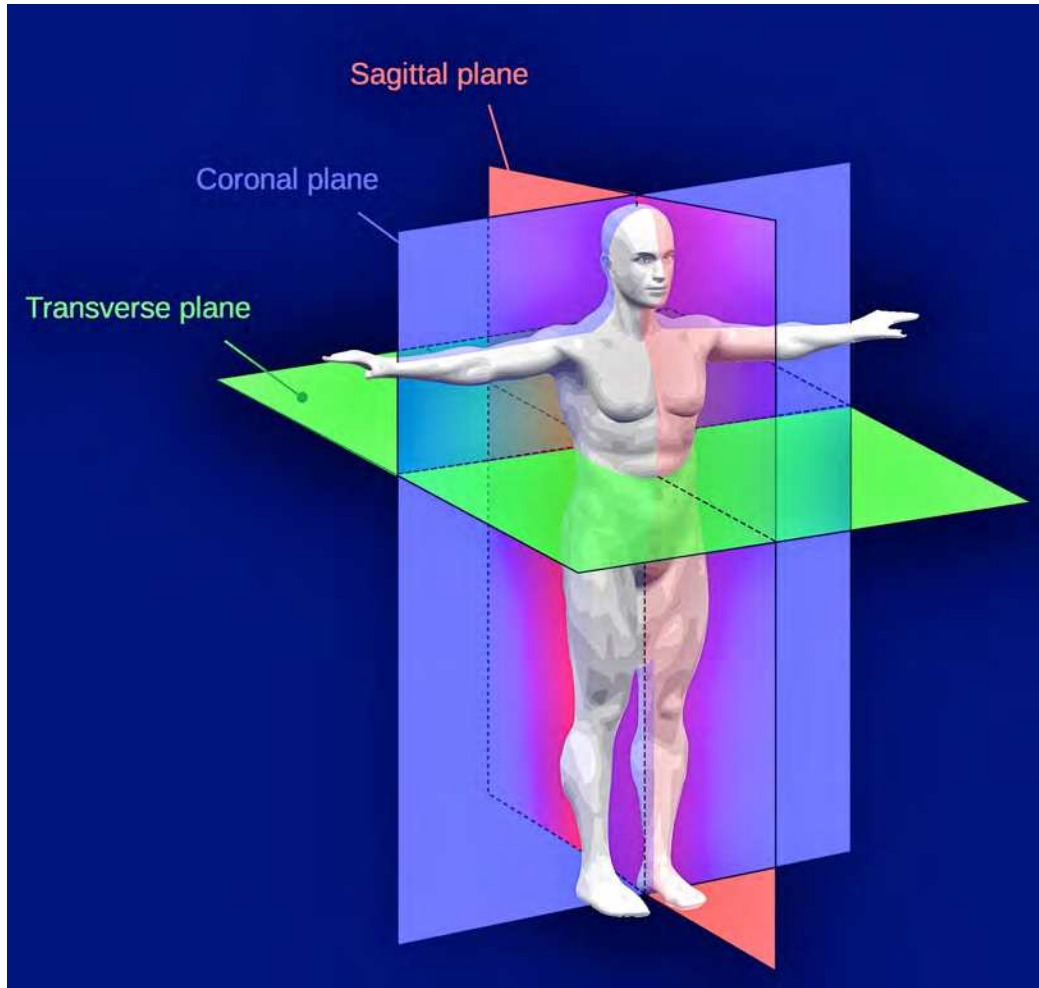


Image 8.5 The human being in the centre of the three-dimensional cross of space and the human being's anatomical reference planes.

Primarily by the sense of sight but not entirely, the being, further divides the transverse plane into forward and backward. The angle of the eyes' peripheral vision as the measure of orientation is divided into two domains. Being's line of sight extends to almost  $180^\circ$  in front; what is not visible is behind and what is visible is in front of the body. Conversely, the angle of vertical peripheral vision is slightly less than  $180^\circ$ . The body is thus disposed in a front and back manner and the plane of separation, termed the coronal plane, goes through the spinal axis. The coronal plane passes through the coronal suture, the joint in the skull that divides the frontal and parietal plates. The forward part of the plane is the anterior portion, the part behind the plane is the posterior portion. In terms of the being's image schemata of the body, the front of the body is the aspect of the body that is seen when addressing or facing another being. It is preferred forward of the coronal plane in terms of facing other beings.

Although we tend to disregard the nose as an intrusion into our binocular visual field, it is always there, aligning the sagittal plane like gun sights in our stereoscopic vision. The visual sensory organs, the eyes, are forward, as are the directional senses for taste, smell and hearing. When a person is looking forward with an attitude orthogonal to the plane of the shoulders, the line of the shoulders and arms gives rise to the right and left directions. This establishes the sagittal plane, which passes through the sagittal suture of the skull.<sup>23</sup> While the coronal and transverse planes lead to an axis which results in two asymmetrical portions of the body, the sagittal plane runs down the body's line of frontal symmetry. The vertical axis of a being is the singular or bilateral symmetrical axis. The right and left sides thus have apparent mirror image symmetry.

However, the body is not symmetrical in all regards; the dexterity of the important haptic appendages, the hands, for example, is not the same. Immanuel Kant in the European philosophical mould first introduced the bodily disposition of the undifferentiated directions into Cartesian space in order to coordinate the axis of space. Kant first wrote of the relationship between the body as the 'ultimate ground of the differentiation of regions in space'.<sup>24</sup> He argued that the body's role in the 'emplacement of things' in space starts with the 'right' and 'left', 'up' and 'down', and 'front' and 'back'. Left and right arise from the natural handedness of the human being's haptic ability. The hands, apart from having handedness in Kant's view, are also integral to the 'placement' of the being at the centre of the Cartesian spatial matrix, as the central origin point, and is 'the space occupied by this hand'.<sup>25</sup> Kant tried to find reason for 'complementary opposites' and 'incongruent counterparts' in the corporeal world but this is not their origin according to what was said earlier in regard to the Duad and complementary opposites.

The bifurcation of the vertical axis is by virtue of the disposition of the head and the feet. The bifurcation of the forward and backward direction is by the placement of the eyes and by natural locomotion. These pairs together describe the three dimensions of space, but in six directions or three complementary pairs of directions. It is through the subjective directionality of the body in space, bifurcated into paired sides and parts, that we can perceive sensible objects in regions of space that correspond to and reflect our bodily bifurcations. Space is not oriented by itself but requires our participation to become oriented, to become qualitative. Being in space transforms directionless quantitative space into qualitative space by virtue of a subjective transformation brought about by the presence of a being. The generality of space is oriented not by a purely mental association but by the *a priori* orientation that belongs to the body.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Disregarding the fact that the names correspond, it is to some degree extraordinary that bones of the skull intersect in the same way that the sagittal plane intersects with the coronal plane. The point of intersection is the *bregma*, literally the top of the head. This point is approximately the same as the vertical axis created by the two planes.

<sup>24</sup> The notions are discussed in the short but important essay, 'Concerning the Ultimate Ground of the Differentiation of Directions of Space', included in *Theoretical Philosophy 1755 - 1770*, ed. David Walford & Ralf Meerbote, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 361-372.

<sup>25</sup> Handedness is not limited to the human being but it seems all beings have handedness or natural 'enantiomorphism'. Crystals, molecular structures and compounds also express 'handedness. Even in the domain of physics we have handedness as expressed by Fleming's 'three finger rules' to explain force, magnetic flux and induction as well as 'Euler's Axis'. It seems a general handedness is part of the spatial domain.

The Nobel Prize winning quantum physicist Wolfgang Pauli after analysing quantum spin of the neutrino supposedly wrote to Jung with the often quoted words, 'It is now clear that God is a weaker left-hander after all'. Quoted and discussed by Arthur I Miller, *137: Jung, Pauli, and the Pursuit of a Scientific Obsession* (New York: W W Norton, 2009), 240 This dismisses Kant's notion of 'complementary opposites' based on the corporeal human state.

<sup>26</sup> To paraphrase Casey here. Casey deals extensively with Kant's contribution to establishing the body as the primary focus of spatial orientation and the notion of the body as 'place' in modern philosophy in his major work, *The Fate of Place*, Chapter 10, 'By Way of the Body'. My contribution here is to relate it back to Guénon's considerations of *Symbolism of the Cross* to give it a metaphysical grounding.

The reason dexterity is not symmetrical are complex<sup>27</sup> but the predominance of the right hand differentiates the two otherwise symmetrical halves of the sagittal plane. The prioritisation of the right hand side gives rise to the dexter region; the left hand is the sinister. In Christianity the 'right hand of God' is a position of exaltation in both the Old and New Testaments.<sup>28</sup> The supposed association of the right side with the good and by negation, the left side with the sinister side and the evil side, is by no means universal.<sup>29</sup> This again is an example of a duality of one level being used as symbol or metaphor of a duality upon another level. The association of the right hand side in the Christian West largely falls upon moral considerations and probably relates to the Latin *sinestra* for left hand. It is possible that the relationship of left to 'sin' and evil is associative,<sup>30</sup> though it is probably more primal than linguistic. To offer the right hand as a gesture displays a willingness to offer up the attacking proficiency of the right arm for the sake of 'disarmament'. However, cultural associations do differ, the notion of giving and receiving for example in China is as 'ambidextrous' as in the left hand is for giving and right hand is for receiving.<sup>31</sup>

Traditional symbolism takes advantage of subjective individual right and left handedness and then combines that with directional priority. For example, facing the East, the rising point of the Sun, gives directional priority to the South, if the right hand is given priority over the left (in the northern hemisphere). Facing a building that itself faces East may give a priority when taking a circumambulatory path around the structure if one is to follow the light of the sun's rays on the faces of the structure. There are various traditional perspectives that orientate the human existential, or microcosmic, quarters in the spatial domain. However, this is not essential and depends upon the point of orientation. For example, in the Jewish tradition, a being who imagines themselves facing East describes East, West, North and South by the expressions 'before', 'behind', 'left' and 'right', thus totally integrating being into a spatial perspective when facing the sunrise.<sup>32</sup> No such orientation is required for the upward dimension, the zenith, and the downward dimension, the nadir, and for this reason, these antinomies have universal symbolic significance. The existential divisions of the horizontal plane divided into the four quarters just mentioned conform exactly to the objective divisions of the spatiotemporal world and the physical body of man. Both the microcosmic and the macrocosmic conform to the universal principles of the natural quaternary divisions of space and a four-square world.

The human being is thus physically disposed in the six directions of space by the body's natural axis of symmetry. The divisions of space are not only visual (as determined by our sight) but also reflect more deeply our perception of space. Even with our eyes closed, we perceive orientation in terms of forward and backward, right and left, up and down, a perception that is apparent yet taken for granted. Being's sense of self and of the world correspond existentially to a metaphysical disposition; being's spinal vertical axis aligns with the metaphysical *axis-mundi* and

<sup>27</sup> According to Kant, the right hand side is preferred by power and skill while the left hand side by increased visual and auditory sense and the beating of the heart itself is sensed on the left side of the breast. *Concerning the Ultimate Ground of the Differentiation of Directions of Space*. Modern neurological science says otherwise and connects handedness to lateralization of the brain functions.

<sup>28</sup> 'The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand'. Acts, 2:34, and 'I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand', Psalms, 16:8 to name only two of many references.

Handedness thus has its origin in a Divine Quality of Being if one is to be prosaic.

<sup>29</sup> Chevalier & Gheerbrant, *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*, trans. John Buchanan-Brown (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 801.

<sup>30</sup> The Online Etymological Dictionary relates the Latin word '*sinestra*' to augury in the sense of 'unlucky', or 'unfavourable' (omens, especially bird flights, seen on the left hand side were regarded as portending misfortune), and thus *sinister* acquired a sense of 'harmful, unfavourable, adverse'. This was from Greek influence, reflecting the early practice of facing North when observing omens. In Roman auspices, the augurs faced South and the left was favourable. [http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed\\_in\\_frame=0&search=sinister](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=sinister).

<sup>31</sup> Chevalier & Gheerbrant, *Symbols*. But in Japan both hands are offered.

<sup>32</sup> Hastings, James ed. *The Encyclopedia of Religion & Ethics* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919). under the heading of 'Points of the Compass'. Part 19, 73.

being's natural perspective is that of the horizontal plane. Further, these spatial dimensions are not only corporeal but also existential both in the mind and the spirit. They form the basis of intellectual perception and ultimately memory. Around the 8th century CE, The *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* wrote:

Know that numerous geometers and scientists believe that dimensions, like length, width, and breadth, have an existence in themselves and constitution. They do not realize, therefore, that such existence is in the substance of the body or in the substance of the mind, and that these (dimensions) are for it like matter (*al-hayūlī*), or they are in it like in the form that has been derived by the thinking sensible entities.<sup>33</sup>

Being is at the centre of a universal three-dimensional cross and every being has his or her own frame of spatial co-ordination. Hence 'the world is reflected in the body and the body is projected onto the world', as Juhani Pallasmaa so succinctly described this spatial reciprocity.<sup>34</sup> The spatial dimensionality of the world becomes a metaphor for being in the world. A prayer transmitted by the Prophet (PBUH) implores firstly in the external world:

O God, set light in my heart and light in my tomb and light before me, and light behind me; and light on my right hand and light on my left; light above me and light below me...

and the in the interior world:

... light in my sight and light in my perception; light in my countenance and light in my flesh; light in my blood and light in my bones. Increase to me light and give me light, and appoint for me light and give me more light. Give me more light!<sup>35</sup>

The prayer implores the Divine Light be established not only in the six directions but also 'in my heart', the centre of microcosmic being as well as 'in my tomb' within the centre of the macrocosmic sacred domain, as the tomb of earthly death.

## Handedness in architecture

If a sacred building is to reflect Universal Man or even individual man, then the aspect of 'handedness' may be present. For example, the Old Testament description of Solomon's Temple has two bronze pillars placed before it. Solomon 'set up the pillars in the front of the temple, one to the right and the other to the left. The one to the right he named Jachin and the one to the left Boaz'.<sup>36</sup> The aspect of handedness affords an aspect of 'asymmetry' related to the configuration of other complementary opposites. While the pillars apparently appear to be the same in their

<sup>33</sup> *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* discussed in Epistle 2: Chapter 21. *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*, 143. Apart from its relevance here in terms of expressing traditional conceptions of space, the contrast with the barren Heideggerian phenomenology cannot be more stark.

On the other hand the reason for quoting from authors of a phenomenological bent is the accuracy of their corporeal observations uncluttered by metaphysical and traditional considerations. The usefulness of phenomenology can not be denied within certain limited considerations. It is intended to explore this dimension in a further project.

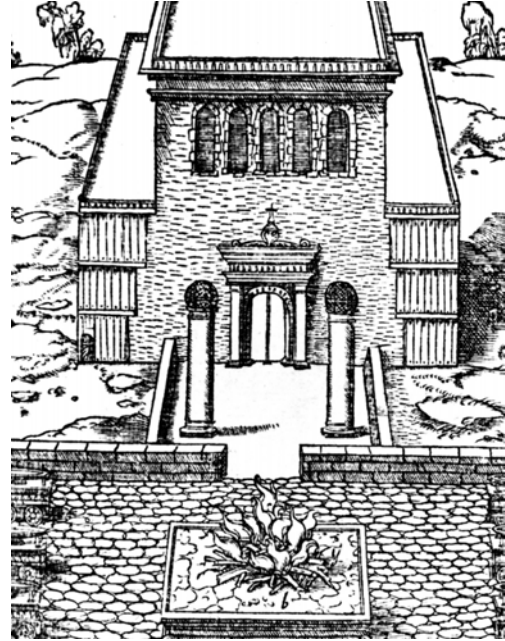
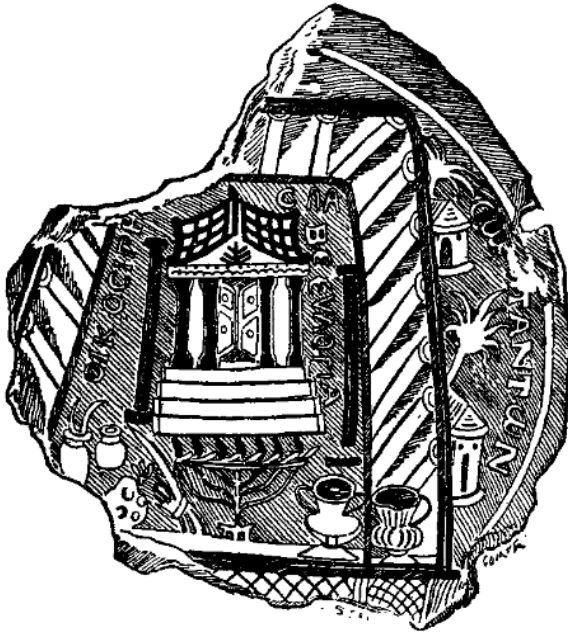
<sup>34</sup> Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eye of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 49.

<sup>35</sup> Schimmel, *Deciphering The Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 12. Also known as *Muhammad's Prayer* (PBUH), *The Prayer of Light or Night Prayer* (Sahih Muslim, *Hādith* 1671). An alternate translation can be found at: <http://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/Muslim-Prayers.cfm>.

<sup>36</sup> 11 Chronicles 3:17. Some translations give South as right and North as left.



architectural details, the fact they are given names individualises them and identifies them with other complementary opposite pairs, such as masculine and feminine, Sun and Moon, odd and even numbers, as well as the paired directions of North and South, East and West (Images 8.6(a) & (b)).



Images 8.6 (a) Left: Part of 3rd C. glass bowl showing the Temple of Jerusalem and Jachin & Boaz.

(b) Right: Woodblock print of Solomon's Temple by Francois Vatable (1573).

The Gothic inspiration for including the twin pillars of Jachin and Boaz has been suggested as the meaning and symbolism of the spires of the western facade of Chartres Cathedral and other cathedrals. The left spire of Chartres is called the sun spire and is crowned with a solar finial, the right spire is called the moon spire and is crowned with a crescent finial (Image 8.7). The main entry to the cathedral is through the central portals of the west façade (Portal Royale). The two spires flank the entry and the pilgrim enters between the bases of the two pillars. On the central tympanum is a carved panel depicting Christ (Image 10.19), who forms the central way between the two pillars, a composition that is similar, at least in a topological sense, to that of the crucified figures of Christ depicted with images of the Sun and Moon either side of the central axis of the vertical member of the cross (Image 3.3). The two pillars of Jachin and Boaz can be represented by two characters or two 'I' figures as II.<sup>37</sup> The two figures represent the parallel vertical lines of the pillars or columns and hence the duad. The pillars also express balance, equilibrium and stability and hence are also related to the east-west axis of the equinoxes (Diagrams 9.1 & 9.2).<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> The two pillars could also be symbolically linked to the two outside pillars of the Kabbalistic tree or alternatively the *Sephiroth*, the two outer pillars being Justice and Mercy (the centre pillar being the 'Middle'). The pillar of Justice is masculine and light and the pillar of Wisdom feminine and the dark. Charles Poncé, *Kabbalah: An Introduction & Illumination for The World Today* (San Francisco: Quest Books Re-prints, 1978), 142.

<sup>38</sup> The aspect of directional polarities will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

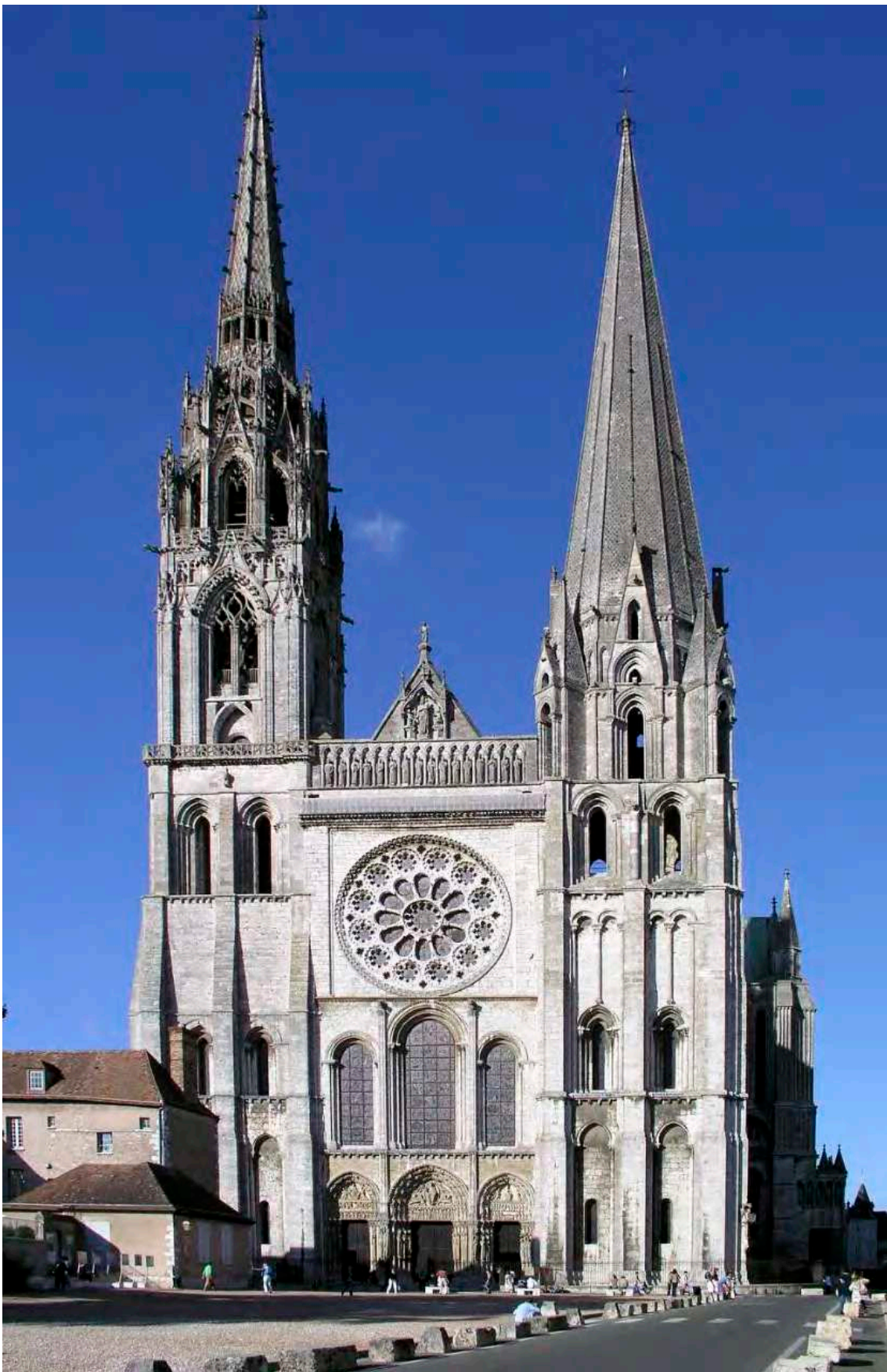


Image 8.7 The western facade of Chartres Cathedral. The righthand pillar as positioned from inside the temple, is *Jachin* and is masculine and of the Sun; the left hand pillar is *Boaz* and is feminine and of the Moon.

## The Phenomenological 'Experience' of the Body

The being's frame of reference corresponds to the actuality of space with its three independent axes. The experience of the world, that is, the existential perception of the world around the body, is the basis of interpretation of the world; this framework is static but also involves dynamic movement. To use Edmund Husserl's term, the being is placed at a stationary invariant, the *Nullpunkt* or null-point, which has the peculiar property of seeming not to move in relation to the body, wherever the body is in the surrounding world. 'Everything in the world can run before me,' writes Husserl 'but not my own body.' In other words, the body seems to stay put not only when things move around it but even when the body itself is moving. As Husserl paradoxically puts it, the body moves, without getting farther away or removed from itself.<sup>39</sup> This said, the bodily functions presuppose a 'kinaesthetic orientation and are overlaid with a 'kinaesthetic consciousness',<sup>40</sup> identical with the dimensions of the world.<sup>41</sup> Husserl states of this connection that it is because it is the way 'my flesh is constituted; through its carnal and self referencing being it is constituted as mobile, at one with the "I am stretching my arms out"....'.<sup>42</sup> The human being in this regard is truly a reflection of the physical world dwelling within the 'lived body'.<sup>43</sup> More than this, the being is 'present' in the cross at the very centre of space and place and this centre is itself like a seventh 'direction'. Thus the human being is dwelling in its 'flesh' with its consciousness and apperception of place in space. This kinaesthetic sense applies not only in a static sense, but also in a dynamic sense where movement is involved.

The implication of this dynamic kinaesthetic sense of being is that during motion the frame of reference remains in our 'body of flesh', while the world supposedly circles around it in motion. According to Husserl and other thinkers of the phenomenological perspective, our sense of being with right-left, forward-backward and up-down moves in relation to our body in movement is part of these their so called 'being-in-the-world' experience. This perspective is rather simplistic when applied to the architectural context, which finds virtually no treatment by the main exponents of the phenomenological school. Their bodily experience of 'being-in-the-natural-world' differs greatly from the very complex 'being-in-the-architectural-world'. The experience of walking around in defined architectural space is an experience of the two frames of reference coinciding together, quite unlike the non-orientated natural environments. If one takes for example the experience of walking around a building, the immediate relationship of walking and of the building is that the building is either on the right or the left hand side and is generally orientated with rectilinear sides. This remains a constant, even when walking parallel to the side of structure or not in parallel to the side of the structure. The next experience is that of proximity: am I closer to or more distant from

<sup>39</sup> Husserl, *Things and Space: Lectures 1907*, trans. by Richard Rojcewicz, (Dordrecht: Springer-Science and Business Media, 1997), 'Appendix X Subjective Self-Movement and Objective Corporeal Movement', 333-336. Also as quoted and discussed by Casey, *The Fate of Place*, 218.

<sup>40</sup> The ideas being discussed here approach very closely the idea of 'kinaesthetic consciousness' which has been developed by Husserl, Laban, Mickunas, Fink and others earlier last century. Kinaesthetic awareness seems in many ways to be revived with a linguistic focus by later authors such as Mark Johnston and George Lakoff rather than a more primal experiential body awareness.

<sup>41</sup> Algis Mickunas, 'The Primacy of Movement' *Main Currents in Modern Thought*, Vol. 31 No. 1 (Sept-Oct 1974): 8-12. The implications of this is to elevate the meaning of traditional movement in all cultures as dance. The god *Shiva* 'dancing the world into existence', can be seen to embody such significance.

<sup>42</sup> Husserl, 'The World of the Living Present and the Constitution of the Surrounding World That is Outside the Flesh', trans.. Bettina Bergo and revised by Leonard Lawlor, Included in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology*. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2002), 144.

<sup>43</sup> The 'lived body' being a term that is ubiquitous among writers on phenomenological path including Merleau-Ponty, Husserl and inferred by Heidegger and Gadamer, it is difficult to say who coined the word. Historically it would be Husserl but such important connection has always been 'known' but by other terms in history for example *Sthula sarira* of the *Jiva* in Hinduism. It represents more than a mere tautological duplet but a reminder of an aspect of our being often forgotten.

the building? The distance from the building is commonly controlled by architectural elements. For example, in Buddhist *stupas*, the overall structure can be taken in 'from a distance' by circumambulating the entire structure at the square or rectilinear podium or base level. Almost all sacred structures involve walking round the body of the buildings, either internally or externally and commonly both. Sacred architecture invites the participation of the 'lived body' in the 'architectural body'.

While such a phenomenological point of view is substantive, it does not acknowledge a transcendent dimension and remains rooted in the humanistic post-modern worldview.<sup>44</sup> Writers such as Henry Corbin take this viewpoint but then apply it to the traditional world view as a beginning not an end point, saying that the act of a being's sense of orientation 'is a primary phenomenon of our presence in the world. A human presence has the property of spatialising the world around it'.<sup>45</sup> But Corbin is not merely concerned with our material orientation to the four cardinal dimensions as an aspect of the being's body, but rather 'the way in which man inwardly experiences the 'vertical' dimension of his own presence'.<sup>46</sup> This relates to a common theme within Iranian Sufi literature according to Corbin for the 'Quest for the Orient'. This quest is not, it should be emphasised, for an orient that is located on our geographical maps and to the East. It is rather:

...the ascent out of cartographical dimensions, the discovery of the inner world which secretes its own light, which is the world of light; it is an innerness of light as opposed to the spatiality of the outer world which, by contrast, will appear as Darkness.<sup>47</sup>

This orient is 'the supersensory, mystical Orient, the place of the Origin and of the Return, object of the eternal quest ... the heavenly pole'.<sup>48</sup> Without such a dimension, the full potential of the participation of the being within the three dimensional cross is limited only to the phenomenological 'experience' of the body, severing it from its transcendent connection to full participation in the here and the now.

---

<sup>44</sup> There is an entire area for exploration here and it is intended to include this reconciliation of the traditional symbolism of space and the phenomenological experience of space in a future project.

<sup>45</sup> Henry Corbin, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, trans. Nancy Pearson (Boulder: Shambhala Publications, 1978), 1. This aspect of Corbin's view of was drawn to my attention in an essay by Richard Henry, 'Pattern, Cognition & Contemplation: Exploring the Geometric Art of Iran', *Journal of The Iran Society*, Vol. 2, No.6 (2007), 25. [http://www.iransociety.org/docs/journal\\_2007.pdf](http://www.iransociety.org/docs/journal_2007.pdf). Part of Henry's essay is paraphrased here as well as Corbin.

<sup>46</sup> Corbin, *The Man of Light*, 2.

<sup>47</sup> Corbin, *The Man of Light*, 5.

<sup>48</sup> Corbin, *The Man of Light*, 2. Orientation, the East and the heavenly pole in this regard will be discussed in much greater detail in Chapter 9.

## CHAPTER 9

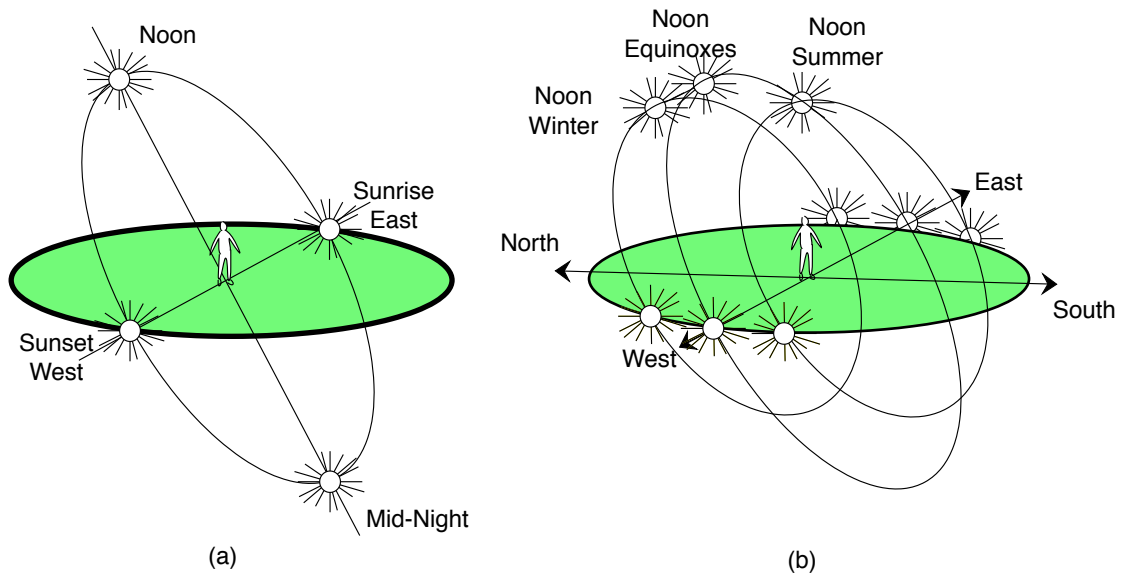
# THE RESOLUTION OF OPPOSITES & THE WILL OF HEAVEN

### The Cycles of the Sun

The resolution of complementary and opposite dualities is a major theme of *Symbolism of the Cross*. While the Sun as a symbol of Being has been discussed in detail, its motion is perhaps the clearest example of these dualities. What follows is an examination of the Sun's apparent movements and its symbolic characteristics, as well as other celestial motions, and how this resolution follows the traditional notion of the 'Will of Heaven'.

The first and most obvious motion of the Sun is its daily rising in the East and setting in the West (Diagram 9.1(a)). This motion has four nodes: sunrise, midday and sunset and the inferred but invisible node of midnight. These nodes form a spatial and temporal cross superimposed on the Sun's circular path. The second motion is annual, demonstrated by the Sun's rise to a maximum angular elevation at midday in Summer followed by a minimum angular elevation in Winter (Diagram 9.1(b)). This change in angular elevation occurs on a meridian that is due North in the Southern Hemisphere and due South in the Northern Hemisphere. This meridian is the first naturally determinable direction caused by the seasonal displacement of the Sun. The seasonal motion of the Sun for areas outside the tropics occurs between the zenith of the visible hemisphere of the sky and the North for the Southern Hemisphere and the zenith and the South for the Northern Hemisphere. For those areas within the tropics, the motion is entirely North and South of the zenith. The position of the Sun's rising and setting points on the horizon move correspondingly. These angles change according to the latitude of the place considered and constitute the azimuth of the Sun's annual movement in the horizontal plane.



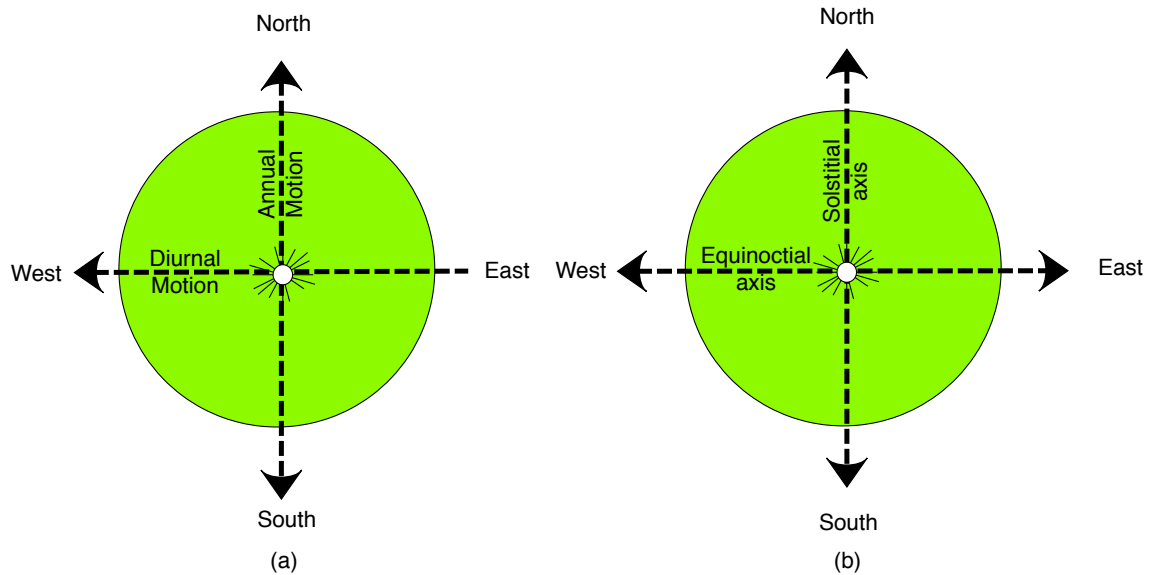


Diagrams 9.1 (a) Diurnal motion of the Sun as the cross in the plane of the Sun's apparent motion (shown for the Southern Hemisphere).

(b) Annual apparent motion of the Sun from mid-summer through to mid-winter also produces multiple crosses resulting from the four nodal points of the Sun's motion (shown for the Southern Hemisphere).

## The Solstitial & Equinoctial Cross

Just as the Sun's diurnal cycle is divided into temporal quarters, so too is the annual cycle. This division of the annual cycle is determined by the highest and lowest meridian crossings of the Sun, when the days at each extreme of the cycle are respectively the longest (mid-summer) and shortest (mid-winter) days of the year. Between these two extremes lie the median points when the days and nights last 12 hours each. Thus the four annual time divisions reflect the four diurnal time divisions (Diagram 9.2(a)). Midday reflects the summer solstice, midnight reflects the winter solstice and sunrise and sunset reflect the spring and autumn equinoxes. The diurnal and annual motions of the Sun are thus homologous with the division of space and time into quarters, which can be summarised graphically as the spatial cross. The East-West axis symbolises the equinoctial axis of the Sun, which is the result of its rising in the East and setting in the West, and this axis corresponds to the horizontal or passive arm of the cross. The North-South axis corresponds to the motion of the Sun as it travels between the extremes of the winter and summer solstices and corresponds to the active, vertical arm of the cross (Diagram 9.2(b)).



Diagrams 9.2 (a) Left: The two generalised motions of the Sun projected on the horizontal plane within the circle of the horizon and the axis forming a cross.

(b) Right: Alternatively the motion can be seen as the equinoctial axis and the solstitial axis of the Sun projected upon the horizontal circle which configures a cross corresponding to the points of the compass.

The cross of the equinoctial axis and solstitial axis configure a pair of what Guénon terms 'complementary opposites'.<sup>1</sup> This symbolic relation between the Sun's annual motion and the points of the compass can be expanded into a complex array of symbolism.<sup>2</sup> This is particularly significant in the Chinese and Indian traditions but finds application in other traditions as well.<sup>3</sup> In the Hindu tradition it is the motion of the sun that 'paces out' the quartering of space and time and is mythologised as the three steps of *Vishnu* who in order to achieve the prized unity with the sun, strode across the three worlds emulating the Sun on its daily journey. The important consideration relevant to this study however is that the Sun alone is responsible for the quaternary divisions of space and of time. It is the Sun that quarters first time and then by implication the undifferentiated directions of space, bringing structure to the corporeal domain.<sup>4</sup> The crossing of the equinoctial with the solstitial axis is an important configuration of the cross and is often incorporated into sacred architecture and will soon be developed.

The celestial vault or sphere which forms the backdrop of the sky from the perspective of the Earth has projected upon it what is known as the celestial equator. This band or belt is a celestial 'great circle' which is the projection of the equator onto the outer sphere of the sky. Although theoretically a geometric projection, this belt or band is real and the locus of the greatest stellar movements in the night sky. It lies at exactly 90° from the celestial pole, which is the projection of the North and South Poles on the celestial sphere. The significance of the celestial

<sup>1</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 33-34.

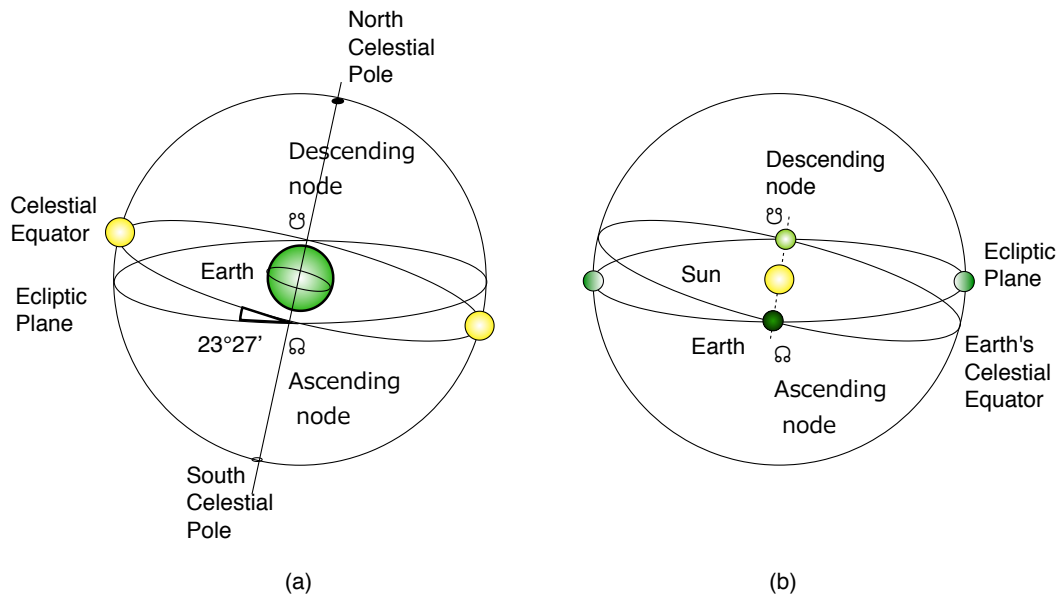
<sup>2</sup> In the *I Ching* it is stated:

'Thus men divide the uniform flow of time into the seasons, according to the succession of natural phenomenon, and mark off infinite space by the points of the compass. In this way nature in its overwhelming profusion of phenomenon is bounded and controlled.' *T'ai* (Peace) Hexagram No. 11, Wilhelm translation, 49.

<sup>3</sup> Refer to Snodgrass, *Architecture, Time and Eternity* for accounts of the significance in these traditions.

<sup>4</sup> *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 6.7.2.10 to 16. In regard to the Chinese tradition, this is developed in the next chapter.

equator is not evident during the day, when the brilliance of the Sun diminishes everything else, but at night its theoretical projection becomes apparent. However, the passage of the Sun across the sky coincides with the celestial equator only at the equinoxes.<sup>5</sup> From a geocentric view, the Sun's passage relative to the (unseen) starry vault is the ecliptic plane and inclines at  $23^{\circ} 27'$  (termed the 'obliquity of the ecliptic') to the equatorial plane. This is not apparent during the day but the Sun's position relative to the stars and the celestial sphere can be determined just before sunrise and just after sunset. From a heliocentric view, the ecliptic plane is the plane of the Earth's rotation around the Sun (Diagram 9.3(a) & (b)).



Diagrams 9.3 (a) Left: Geocentric view of the Earth's equator projected as the celestial equator intersecting with the ecliptic plane of the Earth's rotation around the Sun.<sup>6</sup>  
 (b) Right: Heliocentric view of the Earth's plane of rotation around the Sun intersecting with the projected ecliptic plane or the plane of the Earth's equator.

When these two planes, or 'great circles', are considered from either perspective, two points are significant; these are the points where the two great circles or planes intersect and they coincide at the equinoxes. Thus they are the points in space and time where and when the Sun's path lies on or crosses the celestial equator or congruently in the heliocentric perspective when the Earth's rotation plane crosses its orbital plane. Each point can be either ascending (♈) or descending (♏). The passage of the Sun through this point into the northern celestial hemisphere is the vernal equinox (around 23rd March in the Northern Hemisphere) and the autumnal equinox (around 22nd September in the Northern Hemisphere) when it crosses into the southern celestial hemisphere.<sup>7</sup> In terms of generalization and to avoid confusion with which hemisphere is the

<sup>5</sup> The passage of the Sun or ecliptic plan was called the *huangdao* 'Yellow Road' in China, the celestial equator was known as the 'Red Road'. Steele, 'A Comparison of Astronomical terms and Concepts in China and Mesopotamia' in the *Journal of Astronomical History and Heritage*, Vol. 16, No. 3, (2013), 250-260. [http://www.caeno.org/origins/papers/Steele\\_AstronomyTerminology.pdf](http://www.caeno.org/origins/papers/Steele_AstronomyTerminology.pdf). Also Kelley & Milone, *Exploring Ancient Skies*, 16-28.  
<sup>6</sup> The usefulness of the geocentric model can not be denied in such diagrams as it confirms to physical observation and is the basis of all astronomical ephemerata.  
<sup>7</sup> I apologise for switching from a Southern Hemisphere perspective in the drawings to a Northern Hemisphere perspective but this is inevitable. The terminology for the crossing of the equinoxes goes back into ancient history and is largely the astronomical history of the Northern Hemisphere.

viewing point, it is often referred to simply as the March equinox and the September equinox. The March (vernal) equinox is that point which is known as the 'First Point of Aries'<sup>8</sup> and is the point from which the celestial Right Ascension is measured. It is also the vernal equinox that is the point of reference from which all the zodiac divisions, and indeed the sky in general, are composed.

Within a certain perspective, the two equinoxes correspond to two states of equilibrium or balance in the celestial machinery and are an external projection of the equinoctial and solstitial cross. From this perspective, one could say that the two points of the equinoxes lie at the intersection of the two arms of the cross and represent the balance between the equatorial and the ecliptic circles. These circles are responsible for the diversity of the seasons and it is their difference or non-correspondence that causes variety in the seasons and hence the calendar. This is symbolically significant, for if the two great circles of the celestial equator and the solar ecliptic coincided, there would be complete uniformity. The divergence of the two circles ruptures the equilibrium, and this in turn engenders variable order throughout manifestation. Further, manifested existence is subject to an indefinite projection of complementary and opposite dualities because of this variable order.<sup>9</sup> Each day becomes a manifestation of the disequilibrium and is therefore unique in the annual cycle. The Earth's two cycles, its rotation on itself and its rotation round the Sun, diverge most at the solstice points. There is no equilibrium between the two cycles at these points; only opposition and contrast (Diagram 9.4).

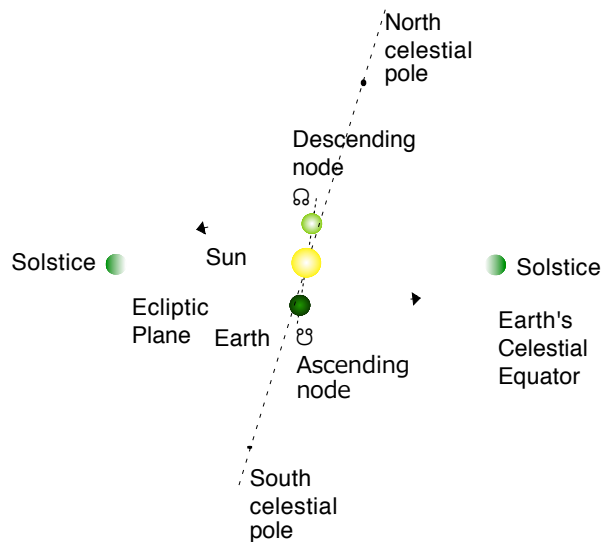
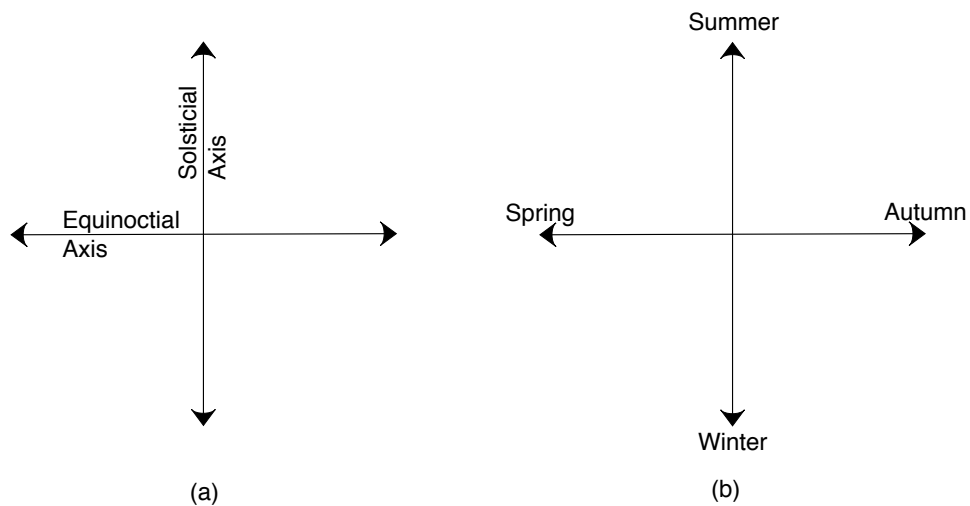


Diagram 9.4 The various stations of the Earth's orbital motions from the heliocentric view.

<sup>8</sup> This point used to coincide with the zodiacal constellation of Aries some 2,200 years ago but because of the precession of the equinoxes it now coincides with the constellation of Pisces. This transition is not without its symbolic consequence.

<sup>9</sup> See Burckhardt, *Mystical Astrology According to Ibn 'Arabi*, trans. by Bulent Rauf (Aldsworth: Beshara Publishers, 1977). Without trying to labour this point unduly, all of manifest existence is subject to this complementary and contrasting projection, all manifestation being as it were composed of limited projections of the Universal complementary Principle of Essence and Substance. Each pole is universally reflected within each individual manifestation.

Whilst so far the cross has been used as a spatial symbol to characterize the opposition and unification of complementary but opposite principles, it is now shown equally to be applicable in a temporal sense. In fact, it is in the temporal context that the distinction between the opposing and complementary natures of the cross can be fully appreciated. In a complementary mode, the cross combines the annual orbital cycle with the equinoctial cycle of the Earth such that they are not oppositional. One cycle is compared to or superimposed on the other, both cycles exist in their own right and both are distinct in nature in the same way that Essence is distinct from Substance. This combination produces a unity of complementary principles, the centre being the exact point of unison of these principles (Diagram 9.5(a)). In opposition mode, the cross combines two pairs of equal but opposite tendencies (Diagram 9.5(b)). The summer solstice is opposed to the winter solstice and the vernal equinox is opposed to the autumnal. Rather than being two axes, the cross can be viewed as two pairs of opposing but complementary arms. Rather than being the point of union between the two tendencies, the centre becomes the pivotal point of symmetry around which the opposing tendencies are arranged. The two pairs are arranged about the centre or polar opposites; one pole is complementary to but opposite to the other, and both poles form the extreme positions inherent in the complete axis. In this way, the winter and summer solstices and their association with the ascending and descending nodes and achieve balance along the solstitial axis. The same holds true for the equinoctial axis. The centre of the cross in this instance becomes the resolution of opposites and the point of reconciliation, of synthesis, of all contrary terms, for points of crossing are contrary only from viewpoints that see only extremes and separate identities.<sup>10</sup>



Diagrams 9.5 (a) The cross of the annual solar cycle in its complementary mode  
 (b) The cross of the annual seasonal cycle in its oppositional mode.

Any sacred building orientated to the points of the compass symbolically manifests the balance of the Sun's movements. The building plan laid out in the four directions of space on the ground becomes an architectural nomogram for the movements of the Earth and Sun. There is another aspect of solar symbolism related to the equinoxes. The equinoxes or nodes can symbolise 'gateways' or 'doors' in time that mark the transition of the Sun across from North to

<sup>10</sup> Guénon, *The Symbolism of the Cross*, Chapter 7, 'The Resolution of Opposites', 34.



South and as such are spatial symbols for celestial mechanics. The symbol of the 'gateway of the Sun', referring to the Sun's journey, can thus be taken spatially and or temporally.<sup>11</sup>

How all this can be incorporated into an architectural configuration can be seen in the distribution of iconographic images and sculpture in some Gothic cathedrals and is related to the principles of the static and dynamic modes of the Duad. The two principle axes of a cathedral can support complementary and oppositional symbolic couplets. For example, iconography, in the form of sculpture or stained glass windows, in opposing positions across the North-South axis, could depict the complementary polarisation of the Old and New Testaments. The East-West axis could symbolise the polarity of the birth of Christ as Saviour and the formation of the New Jerusalem (Diagram 9.6).

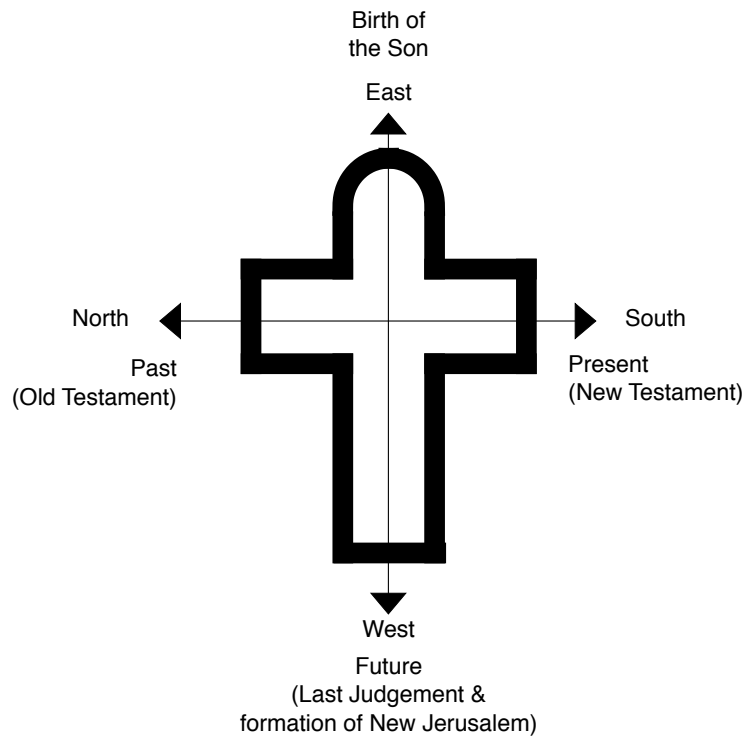
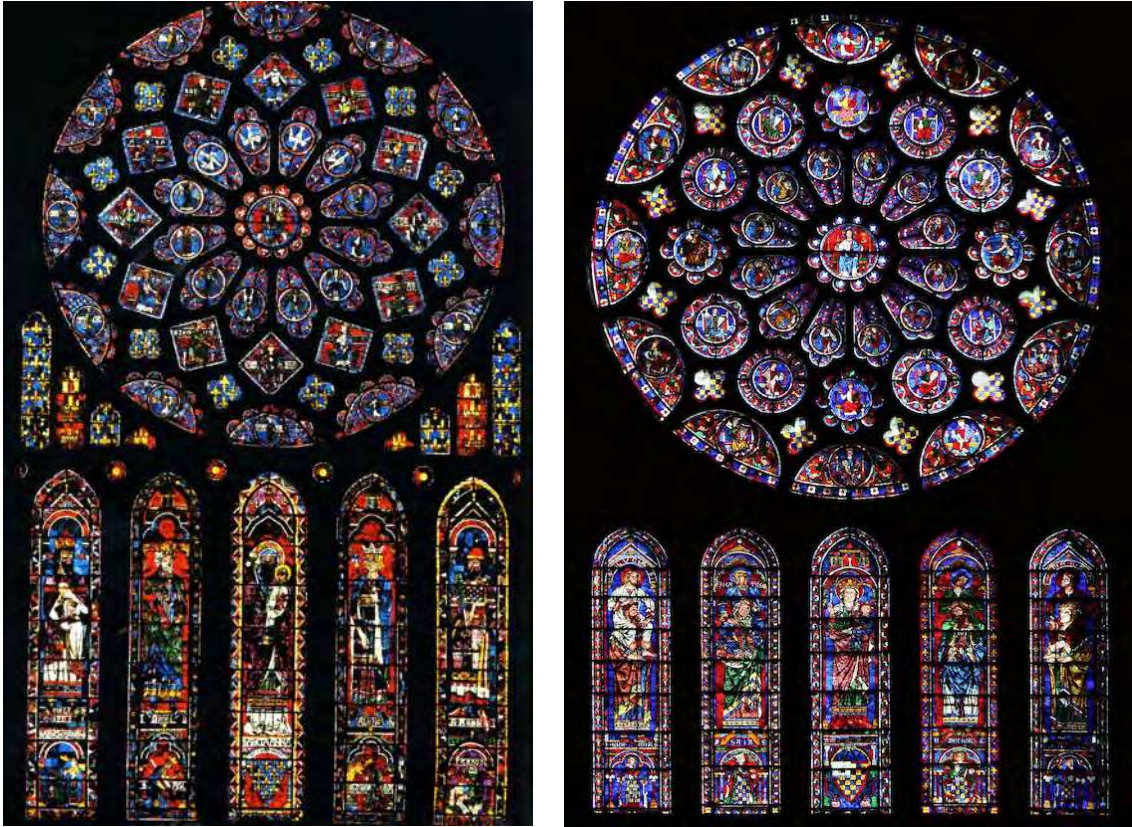


Diagram 9.6 Polarisation of aspects of doctrine of the Christian tradition within the configuration of the body of the church.

There is a variation of such a schema at Chartres Cathedral, where the northern Rose Window depicting the 24 kings, priests and prophets of the Old Testament faces the southern window depicting the 24 elders of the New Testament Apocalypse. Thus a temporal transformation occurs across the aisle, that is, in space (Images 9.1(a) & (b)). The East-West axis for its part conforms to the Immanent Principle within, of Christ's mission in the world under the stations of Christ the Child (Man), Christ resurrected and Christ in Judgement.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> It could be said that this corresponds to the meaning of the word 'cross' as a noun or as a static configuration in space or as a verb as a 'crossing' in an active mode of the cross in time.

<sup>12</sup> Painton Cowen, *Rose Windows*, 7.



Images 9.1 (a) Left: The northern Rose Window at Chartres Cathedral. The rose depicts the Glorification of the Virgin Mary, surrounded by angels, twelve kings of Judah (David, Solomon, Abijam, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Ahaz, Manasseh, Hezekiah, Jehoiakim, Jehoram, Asa, and Rehoboam) and the twelve minor prophets (Hosea, Amos, Jonah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Zechariah, Malachi, Haggai, Habakkuk, Micah, Obadiah and Joel).

(b) Right: The southern Rose Window of Chartres Cathedral depicting the twenty four elders of the New Testament Apocalypse.

## The Chi-Rho

Related to the use of the quadripartite division of the annual solar cycle and the symbolic 'cross of solar motion'<sup>13</sup> is one of the most complex and enigmatic ancient Christian symbols, the *Chi-Rho* (Image 9.2). The *Chi-Rho* is a combination of the ancient Greek letters *Chi* ( $\chi$ ) and *Rho* ( $\rho$ ) superimposed such that the ideogram becomes a monogram. While the monogram was associated with Early Christianity, being a form of *crux dissimulata*<sup>14</sup> and *Chrismon*,<sup>15</sup> the symbol was already well established in Ancient Greece as part of the Orphic-Pythagorean Mysteries and was associated with *Aeon Chronos* and later *Kronos*. It was also an abbreviation of the Greek

<sup>13</sup> A deliberate distinction should be made from what has been called the 'cross of time' in earlier chapters.

<sup>14</sup> The term the *crux dissimulata* is supposedly an attempt by early Christians to use the cross as a Christian symbol of faith but in a mode that was disguised or dissimilar (see for example Liungman *Symbols Encyclopedia of Western Signs and Ideograms* (Stockholm: HME Publishing, 2004), 247. The nature of symbolism is far more complex than is suggested by such a two dimensional view of symbolism and is not supported here.

<sup>15</sup> *Chrismon* comes from a Latin phrase, *Christi Monogramma*, or monogram of Christ and are a family of symbols that relate the different aspects of the Person, life and ministry of Christ.

*Chreston*, meaning ‘a good thing’, and used by scholars to mark important passages of text<sup>16</sup> The superficial connection with Christianity is twofold. First, *Ch* are the first letters of the Greek *Christós* (χριστός), later latinised as *Christus* and Christ. The figurative association with the crucifix or the cross of the crucifixion is obvious.<sup>17</sup> Second, the *Chi-Rho* has an historical association with the Emperor Constantine I (306-337 CE) conversion to Christianity after his vision of the symbol and which he then used as a *labarum* or military standard.

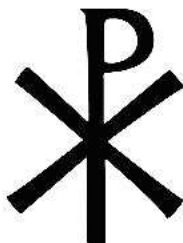


Image 9.2 The *Chi-Rho* monogram

The *Chi* or X component of the *Chi-Rho* in the more ancient examples depict a more flattened figure with the arms at a more obtuse angle than a right angle (Image 9.3(a)). There is an association of the more ancient and pre-Christian *Chi* or X to the ‘World Soul’ in Plato’s *Timaeus*.<sup>18</sup> Plato relates that:

This entire compound he divided lengthways into two parts, which he joined to one another at the centre like the letter X, and bent them into a circular form, connecting them with themselves and each other at the point opposite to their original meeting-point; and, comprehending them in a uniform revolution upon the same axis, he made the one the outer and the other the inner circle. Now the motion of the outer circle he called the motion of the same, and the motion of the inner circle the motion of the other or diverse. The motion of the same he carried round by the side to the right, and the motion of the diverse diagonally to the left. And he gave dominion to the motion of the same and like, ...<sup>19</sup>

The ‘circular form’ is most likely a metaphor for the great circles of the heavenly sky, the ecliptic circle and the celestial equator. The *Chi* is the point at which the celestial image of the supernal Sun crosses the celestial equator from one hemisphere to the other. The crossing paths coincide at the equinoxes. Thus Plato was seen by later church fathers as prefiguring the cosmic *Chi* or cross in the sky in a very Christian perspective, with St. Justin Martyr proclaiming that Plato ‘gives the second place to the Logos which is with God, who he said was placed crosswise in the universe’.<sup>20</sup> The *Chi-Rho* takes on a greater symbolic potency when combined within the circle. The symbolism of the turning wheel combined with the turning of the great heavenly circles places Christ as the Logos, the centre of the cosmos (Images 9.3).

<sup>16</sup> Cooper, *Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols*, 92.

<sup>17</sup> It is for this reason the use of Xmas to represent Christmas is not, at least symbolically, a sacrilege.

<sup>18</sup> The connection is mentioned in Snodgrass, *Architecture Time and Eternity*, 288-290.

<sup>19</sup> *Timaeus*, 36(c).

<sup>20</sup> St. Justin Martyr. *The First Apologia* I.60.1, included in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to A. D. 325*, edited by, Alexander Roberts.





- Images 9.3
- (a) (Top left): *Chi-Rho* combined with the *Anastasis*, a symbolic representation of the resurrection of Christ. Panel from a Roman lidless sarcophagus from the excavations of the Duchess of Chablais at Tor Marancia (350 CE).
  - (b) (Top right): *Chi-Rho* symbol, detail from an altar stone. Limestone, third quarter of the 4th century. From Khirbet Um el 'Amad, Algeria
  - (c) (Bottom left): Detail of *Chi-Rho*, from the Sarcophagus of St. Drausinus
  - (d) (Bottom right): Central panel of a Roman mosaic including the *Chi-Rho* found at Hinton, St. Mary, Dorset, UK.

## *Janua Coeli & Janua Inferni*

The two gateways previously discussed are known as *Janui Coeli* and *Janui Inferni* or the gates of *Janus*, the two-headed Roman god of openings, of beginnings and, more specifically, of passage and transitions.<sup>21</sup> The first month of the Roman calendar year, January, retain this association as the beginning or opening of the year. The *Janui Coeli* is also spoken of in a broader context as the opening in heaven which is limited not only to space and time but is the subtle gateway to the empyrean, the gateway of ascension into heaven. *Janus* is the God of the doorway<sup>22</sup>(*januae*) and archways (*jani*), symbolising the dual power of opening and closing.<sup>23</sup> The two faces of *Janus* were carved above archways and doorways of the city and his temples; they also symbolise the midwinter and midsummer 'openings' in the year. The temple of *Janus* itself was unique, a simple vaulted passageway that faced two ways and had two openings, a passageway from one world to another, from inside to outside, from war to peace. In this last context, it is not that far removed from the triumphal arch, exemplified by the *Janus Quadrifrons* arch, which however has four cardinal directions, rather than two arches (Image 9.4).<sup>24</sup>



Image 9.4 The so called Arch of *Janus Quadrifrons*, Foro Boario, Rome.

<sup>21</sup> Guénon does discuss *Janus* in *Symbolism of the Cross* but does not develop the *Janui*. However he does in other works, including his essay 'Janui Coeli' in *Symbols of the Sacred*, 340-344. Refer also to the in-depth essay by Coomaraswamy, 'Svayamatrnnna: Janui Coeli' in, *Vol. 1: Selected Papers; Traditional Art and Symbolism*. The symbolism would be even more potent if the month of January (after *Janus*) coincided with the month of the ascending node. However, this would be problematic as the vernal equinoxes moves in terms of the calendar due to precession of the equinoxes over time.

<sup>22</sup> A different God *Portunus* was carved above doors of a house. There is a relationship between the two. See Rykwert, *The Idea of Town* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1988) 137.

<sup>23</sup> This associates *Janus* with the Hindu God *Ganesha*.

<sup>24</sup> Rykwert, *The Idea of Town*, 137-142.



A different aspect of the duality is expressed by the terms *Janua Coeli* and *Janua Inferni*.<sup>25</sup> Both relate to *Janus* and the world temple. The summer solstice, which occurs in the zodiacal constellation of Cancer, is the inferior gate, the gateway for men and symbolises the dying potency of the Sun, symbolised by the *Janua Inferni*. The winter solstice is in the sign of Capricorn and is the doorway of the gods. The *Janua Coeli* it is door of the Sun and its increasing power, the doorway identified with the opening from this world into heaven. The two terms define the two extreme points of the Sun's passage around the ecliptic plane; they represent the opposing tendencies of advancing and retreating. The significance of the *Janua* is that they are the subtle doorways through which the cosmic ebb and flow of life proceeds in the wake of the Sun's movement. As the entry doors of the solar extremes, they represent on one hand the opening door through which the Sun radiates existence and on the other hand the closing door which sees the Sun recede. 'The Sun advances from the one gate, by the other he recedes,' states Isidore of Seville.<sup>26</sup> In other words the *Januae Coeli* and the *Janua Inferni* symbolize the regulating of the flux of existence, the inward and outward breath of creation (Diagram 9.7).<sup>27</sup>

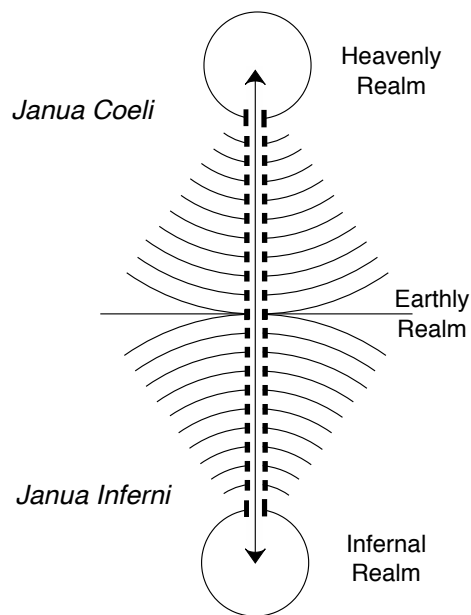


Diagram 9.7 The gates into the infernal and heavenly realms.

<sup>25</sup> The equivalent terms in the Hindu tradition as pointed out by Coomaraswamy are the *Deva-yana (janua coeli)* and *pitra-yana (janua inferni)*.

<sup>26</sup> *Etymologiae*, 13.1.7, trans. by Stephen Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach & Oliver Berghof (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>27</sup> The ideas of the *janua coeli* and the *janua inferni* have been absorbed into the Christian tradition intact. Burckhardt comments that 'the two faces of *Janus* become identified in Christianity with the two Saint Johns, while a third face, the invisible and eternal countenance of the God, showed itself in the person of Christ'. *Sacred Art East and West*. There is also the related theme of the two crossed keys of St. Peter, one of gold (solar) and the other of silver (lunar) and the two pillars of Boaz and Jachin.

## Polar & Stellar Motion

The motion of the sun was previously discussed and it now follows to look at the symbolic motion of the starry vault itself and its particular application in the Chinese tradition in a sacred configuration known as the *Ming T'ang*. Simple observation of the stars shows that they progress during the night in a westerly direction, similar to the sun. This rotation presupposes a centre, called the celestial pole (Diagram 9.8), around which the stars rotate. The celestial poles are the points in the sky where the extension of the Earth's axis would touch the outer limit of the starry sphere.<sup>28</sup> To a night-time observer, the motion of the various 'heavenly bodies' is every bit as significant as the daily diurnal motion of the Sun across the sky, perhaps even more so as the celestial pole is revealed by all those motions that do not rise or set on the horizon. These stars are the circumpolar stars and vary depending on the latitude of the observer or place (Image 9.5).

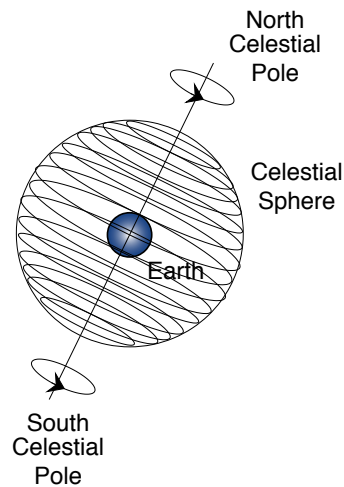


Diagram 9.8 The great wheel of the turning sky pivots around the northern or southern celestial pole, depending on the hemisphere from which it is viewed. Those stars that do not rise or set below the horizon are the circumpolar stars. These stars, star groups (asterisms) or constellations symbolically present as special class stars that are not subject to the annual motion of rising and setting.

<sup>28</sup> These poles or points of course have no reality (at least in the material sense). They exist purely as abstract geometric notions, that is they exist purely in the subtle domain. This is exactly their symbolic content as will become apparent.



Image 9.5 The great wheel of the turning sky pivots around the North or southern celestial pole depending on the hemisphere. Those stars that do not rise or set below the horizon are the circumpolar stars. These individual stars, star groups (asterisms) or constellations symbolically present as something other than the annual stars that are subject to the annual motion of rising and setting.

The celestial pole is the apparent pivot of the heavens, that is, the stars and other heavenly bodies appear to rotate about this point. This phenomenon is symbolically significant for traditional cultures that are familiar with the night sky. The celestial point is symbolically the hub or pivot of heaven and the fixed point of heaven. In the Chinese tradition in particular it has great significance. The pole star *Pei-Ch'en* has its image on earth as the royal palace, or the *Ming T'ang*, in China's imperial cities.<sup>29</sup> The celestial pole in the Southern Hemisphere at the present is not located sufficiently close to a star to be termed a 'pole star' for the current era.

The celestial pole is the apparent pivot of the heavens, that is, the stars and other heavenly bodies appear to rotate about this point. This phenomenon is symbolically significant for traditional cultures that are familiar with the night sky. The celestial point is symbolically the hub or pivot of heaven and the fixed point of heaven. In the Chinese tradition in particular it has great significance. The pole star *Pei-Ch'en* has its image on earth as the royal palace, or the *Ming T'ang*, in China's imperial cities.<sup>30</sup> This location is also the *axis-mundi* the *ti-chung*.<sup>31</sup> It is the 'ridgepole', or *ji*, of the world and is the *axis-mundi* and the pole itself, as well as the point that stabilises earth and heaven. The word 'pole' in English also has the dual meaning of being at once a vertical shaft and

<sup>29</sup> The cycle of the precession of the equinoxes varies and is slowing down. The cycle is about 25,772 years or about one degree every 71.6 years. The reason why this is significant is that the current pole star *Polaris* is for the current era only. In 300BC the closest star to the North celestial pole was *Thuban* or *Alpa Draco* in the constellation of *Draconis*. By the year 3000 CE the pole star will be *Alrai* or *Gamma Cephei*.

<sup>30</sup> Guénon in *Symbolism of the Cross*, 40 (including fn.3), notes 'The "Pivot of the Law" is what almost all traditions refer to as the "Pole". Also 'In the Far-Eastern tradition, the "Great Unity" (*Tai-i*) is represented as residing in the pole star which is called *Tien-ki*, that is, literally "roof of Heaven".'

<sup>31</sup> Wheatley, *The Pivot of the Four Quarters - The Origins and Character of the Ancient Chinese City*, 428.

a terminus or pivot, such as the North Pole or the Celestial Pole. This leads to a strong symbolic association between the vertical axis on one hand and the pole at the end of the axis on the other. It is the symbol of order and stability, the 'pillar to heaven', or *tianzhu*.<sup>32</sup> The pole star is to the heavens what the omphalos is to the earth. This location upon the earth is 'the place where earth and sky meet, where the four seasons merge, where wind and rain are gathered in, and where *yin* and *yang* are in harmony'<sup>33</sup> (Diagram 9.9). On the other hand, the Infinite and Ultimate are without a ridgepole, or *Wuji*, which is non-duality and Ultimate Nothingness, prior even to *Taiji*, the Supreme Ultimate (ridge) pole.<sup>34</sup> It is through this relationship that the 'Will of Heaven' unfolds upon the earth.

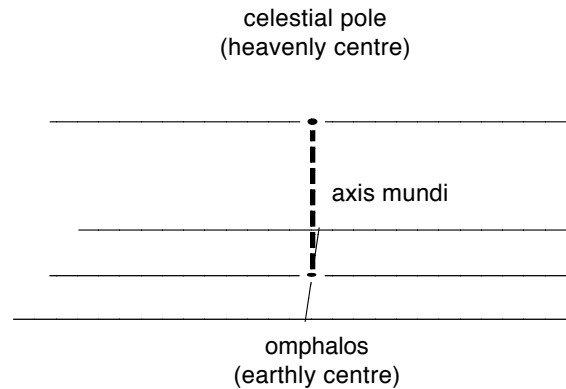


Diagram 9.9 The celestial pole as the image of the earthly pole or omphalos.

## The *Lo Shu* & *Ho T'u* Diagrams

To illustrate in the Chinese tradition how the 'Will of Heaven' manifests, it is necessary to discuss briefly the cosmological diagram known as the *Lo shu* which is also known as the Lo River Writing or the Nine Halls Diagram. The *Lo shu* is related to another diagram known as the *Ho T'u* or the Yellow River Map. It is through these two complementary diagrams that the action of the 'Will of Heaven' takes place. Both diagrams have mythical origins in ancient Chinese antiquity. The diagrams also constitute the basis of several schools of *feng-shui*. The relationship with *feng-shui* and architecture is another entire topic but the primary correspondence here is with the relationship and understanding of qualitative number as symbol. Qualitative number or what in the Western traditions are referred to as Platonic Numbers sees number as expressive of principal action and relationships. Earlier in Chapter 2 the example of the Octad was discussed in relation to form. This could be called an expression of 'formal number' and the Duad and Triad are similar expressions but taken at a more principal level.<sup>35</sup> In the Chinese tradition, the use of formal and principal numbers is expressed in the disposition of space and related relationships and movements and is comprehensively applied to architecture.

<sup>32</sup> Lan-ying Tseng, *Picturing Heaven in Early China Harvard East*, Asian Monographs: 336 (The Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 218.

<sup>33</sup> From the *Chou-Li*, as quoted in Wheatley 428.

<sup>34</sup> Guénon discusses the ridgepole in various works including his essay 'The Corner-Stone, *Symbols of Sacred Science*, 264-278. <http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/uploads/ArticlePDFs/355.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> For a more comprehensive examination of this topic refer also to my *Symbolism of Number in Architecture*. Thesis prepared for Bachelor of Architecture, University of NSW, 1980.

The *Lo Shu* diagram represents a number of metaphysical considerations.<sup>36</sup> First, the diagram is made up of a number of open white or unfilled circles and black or filled circles. The white circles representing heavenly or *yang* odd numbers, while the black circles represent the earthly or *yin* even numbers. At the centre of the diagram is the number 5 expressed as a cross of white circles and, bearing in mind the number series 1 to 9, the number 5 lies midway and is the natural middle or mean. Above and below the central 5 are the numbers 9 and 1, to the left and right are the numbers 3 and 7, all as white or unfilled circles. The heavenly odd numbers in their figuration form a cross. At each corner of the diagram are the even, *yin*, or earthly numbers, also forming a cross but on the diagonal (Image 9.6).

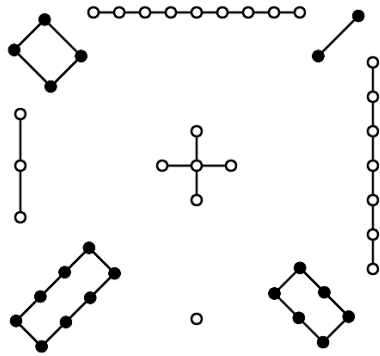


Image 9.6  
The *Lo Shu* or Lo River Writing diagram.

The cosmological diagram known as the *Ho T'u* or Yellow River Diagram (Image 9.7) is supposedly more ancient than the *Lo Shu* diagram. At its centre it also has the symbolic heavenly number 5. Arranged around the perimeter are two outer squares of numbers. The bottom pair are the couplet 6/1, the top the couplet 7/2, the couplet 8/3 is at the left and the couplet 9/4 is to the right. Each couplet contains an odd, *yang*, or heavenly number and an even, earthly or *yin* number. The sum of the couplets correspond to the numbers 7, 9, 11 and 13 respectively.

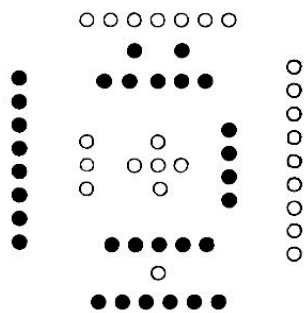


Image 9.7  
The *Ho T'u* or Yellow River diagram

The distribution of the numbers in the *Lo Shu* diagram can be arranged into a 3x3 square known as the *Lo Shu* magic square, with the number 5 at the centre (Diagram 9.10(a)). The sum of each row, each column and each diagonal is 15. The number 15 is the number of the supreme principle, the Great *Tao* or *T'ai Chi*, the summation or unity of Heaven and Earth. The *Lo shu* magic square thus becomes a figuration of the action of Heaven on Earth. There is a complementary magic square to the *Lo Shu* that reflects the action of Earth upon Heaven (Diagram 9.10(b)). It may seem contradictory that Earth can influence Heaven, but it should be understood as the Principial

<sup>36</sup> The *Lo Shu* diagram according to some sources, was associated with the legendary emperor Fu Hsi and his discovery of the markings on the back of a tortoise and in fact there are numerous traditional depictions of the *Lo Shu* associated with the tortoise. As noted earlier the tortoise is a symbol of heaven above the earth and is a symbol of mediation, and the natural location for Man.



nature of earth, not the physical earth. The diagrams thus show in numeric terms the reciprocity between Heaven and Earth.<sup>37</sup> This reciprocity sees the Heavenly number 5 within the Earthly *Lo Shu* mirrored as the Earthly 6 within the centre of its Heavenly counterpart.

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

7	2	9
8	6	4
3	10	5

Diagrams 9.10 (a) Left: The *Lo Shu* magic square derived from the *Lo Shu* or *Lo River Writing*. The summation of each column, row and diagonal equals 15 (or =3x5).

(b) Right: The heavenly or reciprocal counterpart to the *Lo Shu*. The summation of each column, row and diagonal equals 18 (or =3x6).

The *Lu Shu* has the outer couplets of the *Ho T'u*, namely, 6/1, 2/7, 8/3 and 4/9, arranged in its outer matrix<sup>38</sup> in pairs, thus relating the two diagrams graphically. The four couplets in the *Lu Shu* form a *swastika* configuration when joined through the central square of 5, i.e., 6/1/5/9/4 and 2/7/5/3/8 (Diagram 9.11(a)). The same configuration of couplets and the arms of the *swastika* are present in the reciprocal celestial *Ho T'u* matrix, i.e., 7/2/6/10/5 and 9/4/6/8/3 (Diagram 9.11(b)).

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

7	2	9
8	6	4
3	10	5

Diagrams 9.11 (a) Left: The *Lo Shu* magic square with the *Ho T'u* couplets indicated as boxed rectangles form the basis of a *swastika* arrangement when connected through the central square of 5.

(b) Right: Similarly the celestial counterpart to the *Lo Shu* magic square has the same *Ho T'u* couplets in the form of a *swastika* through the central square of 6.

<sup>37</sup> Snodgrass gives a detailed explanation to the reciprocal nature of the two numbers 5 and 6 but it is rather complex to cover here. Refer to *Architecture, Time and Eternity* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture & Aditya Prakashan, 1990), 352.

<sup>38</sup> In this sense the 'magic squares' are a true 'matrix'. The word 'matrix' is derived from the Late Latin *matrix* meaning 'womb' and is related to *mater* meaning 'mother' from the Greek *mētra* meaning 'womb'. The word matrix here is entirely appropriate with its productive associations more so than 'magic square'.

Viewed another way, the matrices are the same, only the centre hub of the two crosses differs. Nor are the hubs themselves absolute in the sense that they are inverted images of each other. A total matrix would take into account a superimposition of one matrix on the other. If this is done, the centres 5 and 6 total 11. The same earthly and heavenly totals are expressed by the corresponding numbers if the two diagrams are superimposed. Thus  $4+7=11$ ,  $9+2=11$  etc, each number in turn expressing a reciprocal antinomic relationship of the permutations of unity expressed by the number 11.<sup>39</sup> The two diagrams are thus superimposed *swastika mandalas*, the axis of which is the invariable middle (the 5 and the 6) of each matrix. In the context of what has been said previously about complementary opposites, such as the cross of the solstitial and equinoctial axes applied to the annual motion of the Sun, the totality of the two superimposed principles constitute the union of the two solar modes in question. The same applies to the two modes of the *Lo Shu*, the reciprocal activity of heaven on earth and earth on heaven that results in manifestation and can be held in balance only by reciprocal principles. Man, located between the two matrices, views the two from a position of centrality; while the earthly matrix is turning clockwise, the heavenly matrix (viewed from below) rotates anti-clockwise. The interaction of the two numeric matrix *mandalas* with their *swastikas* can also be seen as the rotation of one upon its reciprocal counterpart, producing an endless array of superimposed dynamic relationships. Symbolically, this interaction results in the unfolding of Universal Possibilities, including the temporal cycles as part of the 'Will of Heaven' over the Earth. In another mode, this is the fundamental significance of *Yin* and *Yang*, in which the totality is expressible only by the symbol of the unity of the two complementary principles, as in the interpenetrating diagram of the *taijitu*.<sup>40</sup>

The above considerations also need to be examined in relation to the ninefold division of agricultural land known as *Jingtianzhi* (or *jǐngtián zhìdù*) and the Middle Kingdom of China. This 3x3 matrix of division was not so much an actual plan of subdivision but a principal template applied to geography, cities, towns, palaces and houses alike. The template has the central controlling square with eight 'houses' or four quadrants and four intermediate quarters following the eight points of the compass. The points of space also correspond with the seasons in a fourfold division (Image 9.8).



Image 9.8

The Chinese character *jing* or *ching*, meaning 'well', is the central figure in the *Jingtianzhi* system of land division. It lies at the heart of the 'well field' or holy field.

The 3x3 or ninefold *Jingtianzhi* division of land was applied to cities in ancient China. The capital city or seat of the emperor had a walled area of 81 *li* squares or 9 x9 *li*. Other older cities for minor royalty had to be based on 5x5, 4x4 and 3x3 *li*.<sup>41</sup> The 'Holy Field' was also embodied in sacred ritual by the emperors to respect various agricultural rites. The emperor himself initiated the

<sup>39</sup> This is another example of 'hierogamic exchange' of qualitative numbers in the same way as the action of the *Asuras* and *Devas* in the *Samudra Manthan* (the 'Churning of the Sea of Milk'). It is an interaction of consanguine entities that are from a certain perspective, mirror opposites but unified through exchange. Guénon discusses the concept of 'hierogamic exchange' in *The Great Triad*, 59-60 and in regard to Marcel Granet's, *La Pensee Chinoise* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1968). [http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/granet\\_marcel/A12\\_la\\_pensee\\_chinoise/la\\_pensee\\_chinoise.pdf](http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/granet_marcel/A12_la_pensee_chinoise/la_pensee_chinoise.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> Guénon discusses the *Yin-Yang* symbol in Chapter XX11 of *Symbolism of the Cross*, 95-98 in regard particularly to the human state. The multiple interactions of the interaction of *yin* and *yang* is also the basis of the *I Ching*.

<sup>41</sup> Alfred Schinz, *The Magic Square: Cities in Ancient China* (Stuttgart/London: Edition Axel Menges, 1996). 66.

agricultural season by ritually ploughing the first furrow. The ritual field was a square of four *mu* and was divided into the 3x3 or nine sections, the number 4 corresponding to the *yin* principle and the number 9 to the *yang* principle. The ritual was thus carried out in the context of cosmological balance.<sup>42</sup>

The Holy Field matrix may be related to the curious ancient Chinese ritual object known as the *bi*, which have been manufactured in China from neolithic times, generally in jade (Image 9.9). Early examples from the Zhou dynasty are regulated by the 3x3 matrix and result in the centre hole being proportionally regulated by the overall radius of the *bi*. The outer circle of the *bi* symbolises heaven and the inner circle is regulated by the earth, albeit depicted as a circle but also as a square in many ancient Chinese coins. Thus, *yin* and *yang* are in balance and the centre is a manifestation of order and heaven's influence on the earth.<sup>43</sup>

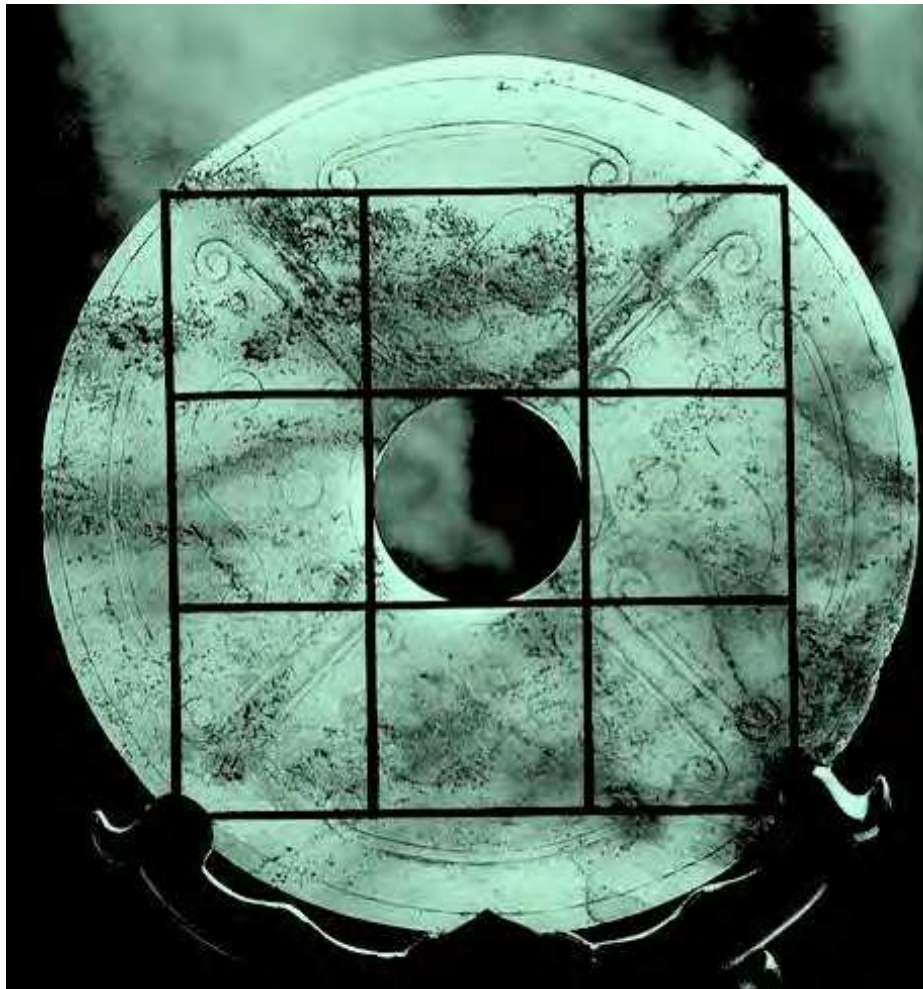


Image 9.9 A Chinese jade *bi* disc from the Zhou dynasty. The relationship of the inner circle to the outer circle appears to be regulated by the 3x3 matrix of the *Jingtianzhi* or 'Holy Field'.

<sup>42</sup> Alfred Schinz, *The Magic Square - Cities in Ancient China*, 71.

<sup>43</sup> Alfred Schinz, *The Magic Square - Cities in Ancient China*, 72.

The symbolic knowledge that led to the formulation of the *Jingtianzhi* can also be found in city and town planning (Images 9.10-9.13) layout of later palaces and many of the traditional architectural forms throughout Chinese history.<sup>44</sup>

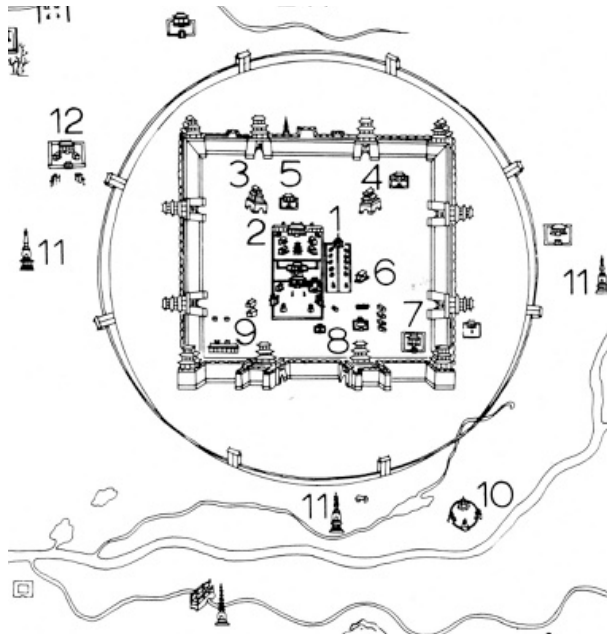


Image 9.10 (Left)

Idealized drawing of the imperial Manchu city of Mukden (Shenyang) based on the principles of the *Jingtianzhi*.<sup>45</sup>

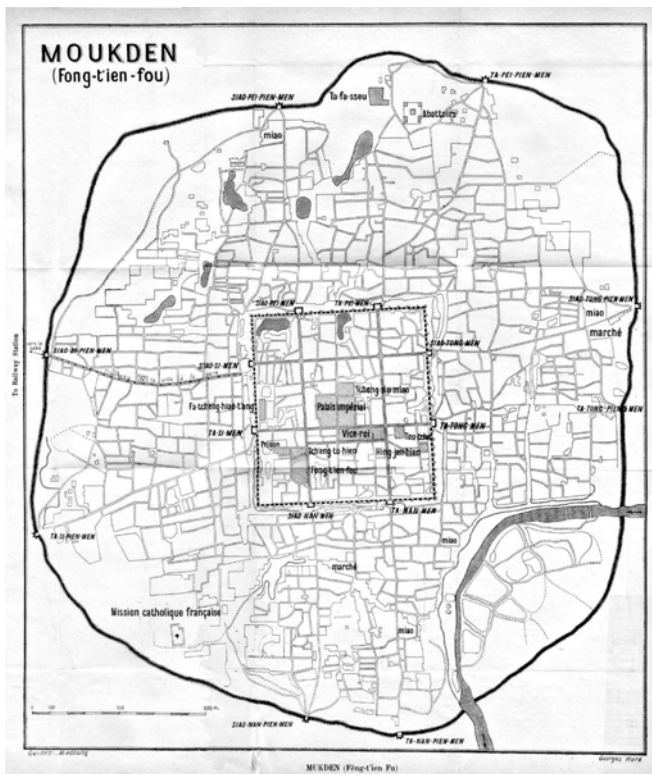


Image 9.11 (Left)

Map of the city of Mukden c. 1912.

<sup>44</sup> For a comprehensive examination of the topic refer to Alfred Schinz, *The Magic Square - Cities in Ancient China*. Also David W Pankenier, 'Cosmic Capitals and Numinous Precincts in Early China'. *Journal of Cosmology*, Vol 9, (2010): 2030-2040. <http://journalofcosmology.com/AncientAstronomy100.html>.

<sup>45</sup> The planning and history of Mukden is comprehensively covered by Alfred Schinz, *The Magic Square*, 347-351.



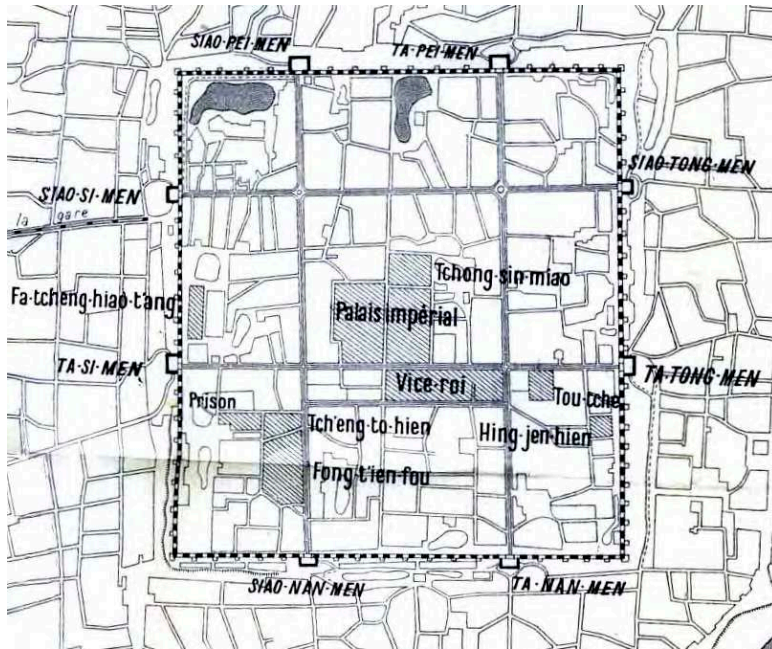


Image 9.12 (Left)

Detail from the map above showing the central imperial quarter of Mukden. The 3x3 or ninefold *Jingtianzhi* division of land area is marked by the main streets and city gates.

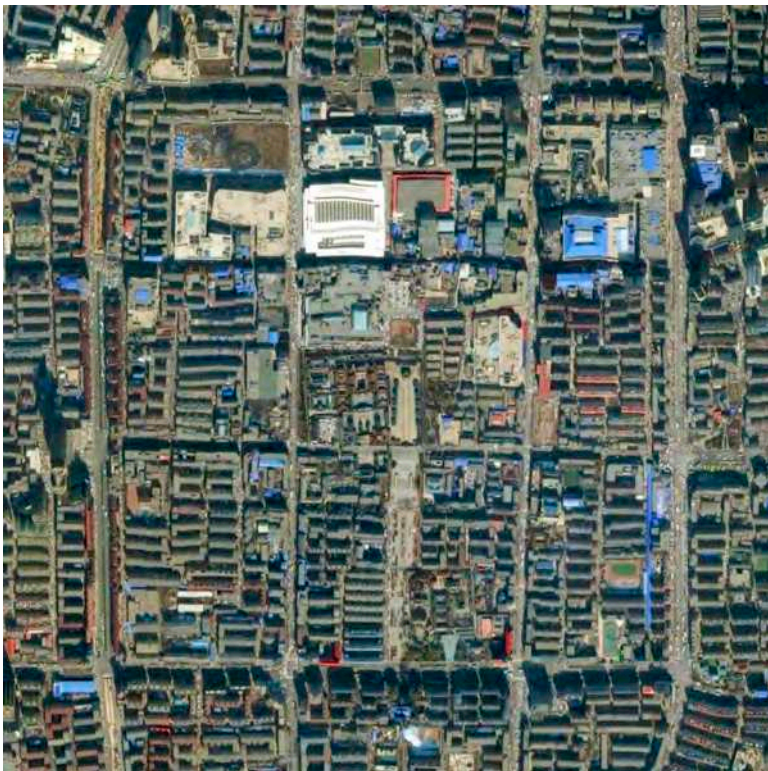


Image 9.13 (Left)

Aerial view of the the same area. The Mukden Palace or *Shèngjīng Gōngdiàn* lies at the centre of the 3x3 mandala.



## The Swastika

Guénon, devotes a chapter in *Symbolism of the Cross* to a discussion of the *swastika* but concludes that 'We cannot think of developing all the considerations to which the symbolism of the *swastika* can give rise'.<sup>46</sup> Such is the complexity of this symbol. Similarly here the discussion will have to be one limited primarily to the Chinese tradition in this Chapter.<sup>47</sup> However, similar metaphysical considerations could be applied to the Hindu and Buddhist traditions and in a limited context to Islam and even Christianity (Images 9.14, 9.15, 9.16 & 9.17).



Image 9.14

Multiple clockwise and anti-clockwise *swastika* in the tiled detail of the arched entry *Iwān*, *Kalon Mosque*, Bukhara, Uzbekistan.<sup>48</sup>



Image 9.15

Multiple clockwise and anti-clockwise *swastika* in a brickwork frieze on the Church of Christ Pantocrator, Nesebar, Bulgaria.

<sup>46</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 56.

<sup>47</sup> The *swastika* is discussed in regard to a particular Christian aspect in Chapter 10.

<sup>48</sup> According to Richard Henry, 'Pattern Cognition & Contemplation; Exploring the Geometric Art of Iran, *Journal of The Iran Society*, Vol. 2, No. 6, 24-36, the *swastika* in Iran is called the 'sunwheel' and is also an example of a *pili* 'a design in which the name of Ali is encrypted, rotated and reflected'.



Image 9.16

*Dharmachakra* with central *swastika* on top of a Buddhist *stupa*, *Dhamma-ya-za-ka Zedi*, Bagan, Burma. The opposite side of the front *swastika* rotates clockwise.



Image 9.17

*Swastika* motif on the stone base of a timber pillar, *Tash-Khovli Palace*, *Ichon Qala*, Khiva, Uzbekistan.

In Chinese astronomy, the realm of the circumpolar stars was called the Purple Forbidden Enclosure and is one of the *San Yuan* or Three Enclosures of the night sky.<sup>49</sup> It is the function of the *axis-mundi* to link the heavens with the earth, to link the centre of the heavenly vault, the pole star, with the centre of the earthly plane, the omphalos. From this perspective, the *axis-mundi*, like a giant axle, forms the pivot around which the heavens and earth revolve like two giant wheels. Important among the asterisms of this group are the seven stars of the Northern Ladle, or the *Pei-tou* constellation. The 'cup' end of the group always points toward the northern celestial pole and *Pei-Ch'en*. The group rotates like seasonal clock hands around the immovable centre of *Pei-Ch'en*.<sup>50</sup> The Great Chinese historian Ssu Ma Ch'ien (Sima Qian, 145-87 BCE) wrote of the *Pei-tou* (northern Ladle) constellation:

The Dipper is the Thearch's carriage. It revolves around the central point and majestically regulates the four realms. The distribution of Yin and Yang, the fixing of the Four Seasons, the coordination of the Five Phases, the progression of rotational measurements, and the determining of all celestial markers — all of these are linked to the Dipper.<sup>51</sup>

The configuration of the Northern Ladle set in the sky and considered as simultaneously superimposed over the four seasons, is the configuration of the *swastika* (Diagram 9.12) so the pole star is totally assimilable to the *swastika*. The *swastika* (when viewed toward the heavens is arranged in a counterclockwise configuration but as discussed in regard to the *Lo Shu* magic square with the *Ho T'u* couplets can also be seen as projected upon the earth in an inverse way. Together they establish the celestial axis. At the centre resides the Supernal Lord and Thearch, *Shang-di* driving his heavenly chariot in the constellation of *Pei-tou* (Image 9.18).<sup>52</sup>

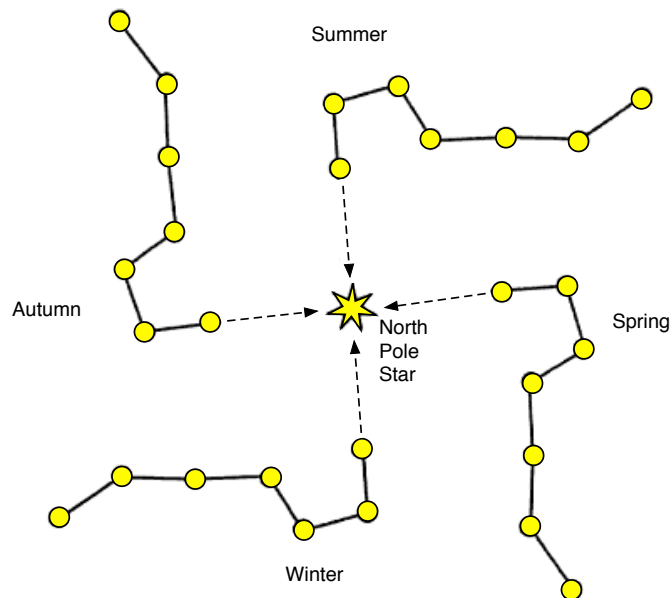


Diagram 9.12 The rotating asterism of the northern Ladle or *Pei-tou* taken at the four seasonal positions forms the configuration of the *swastika* rotating in the sky.

<sup>49</sup> The other enclosures being The Supreme Palace Enclosure (*Tai Wei Yuan*) and the Heavenly Market Enclosure (*Tian Shi Yuan*).

<sup>50</sup> The northern Ladle or *Pei-Ch'en* is discussed in Tseng, *Picturing Heaven in Early China*.

<sup>51</sup> Ssu Ma Ch'ien from the *Shih Chi*, Donald Harper, 'The Han Cosmic Board (Shih)'. *Society for the Study of Early China*, Volume 4, January 1979, ed. by Sarah Allan (1978): 1-10. [https://www.dartmouth.edu/~earlychina/docs/earlychinajournal/ec4\\_1\\_harper.pdf](https://www.dartmouth.edu/~earlychina/docs/earlychinajournal/ec4_1_harper.pdf).

<sup>52</sup> The *swastika* pattern in Iran is also known as the 'pole star pattern'. Henry, 'Pattern Cognition & Contemplation; Exploring the Geometric Art of Iran, *Journal of The Iran Society*, Vol. 2, No. 6, 27-28.





Image 9.18

Drawing based on the stone carving from the *Wu Liang Shrine*, Shandon (2nd c. CE) showing the Supernal Lord or Thearch, Shang-di, driving his heavenly chariot within the asterism of the northern Ladle or *Pei-tou*. (Note the representation is an inverted image of the asterism as seen from the earth which is entirely appropriate as the Thearch is outside the heavenly stellar vault).

It should be noted that the depiction of *Pei-tou* is inverted in Diagram 9.12 compared to that of Image 9.18. This is a common transposition with depictions of the night sky. Even today, the depiction of stars can be viewed either as inverted, which makes sense when looking at a star map in a horizontal plan, or in the direct relationship when holding the map up to the night sky, such as when using an orrery or planisphere.<sup>53</sup> This is a common question with representations of the heavens on earth: is it from the viewpoint of heaven or of earth? Apart from technical considerations, there is a profound symbolism at work here. Transparency, reflections and mirror image are attributes only of the world and not the celestial realm. The complex symbolism in regard to inversion and the mirror was discussed earlier. As was discussed with the inversion of the counterclockwise and clockwise *swastika*,<sup>54</sup> it is only the two aspects that present the entire symbol, as does the combination of the *Lo Shu* magic square with its complement, the *Ho T'u* (Diagram 9.13). The significance of the *Lo Shu* matrix with the *Ho T'u* can only be touched on here and the implications of its incorporation into the integrated vision of Chinese science and metaphysics is indeed profound.

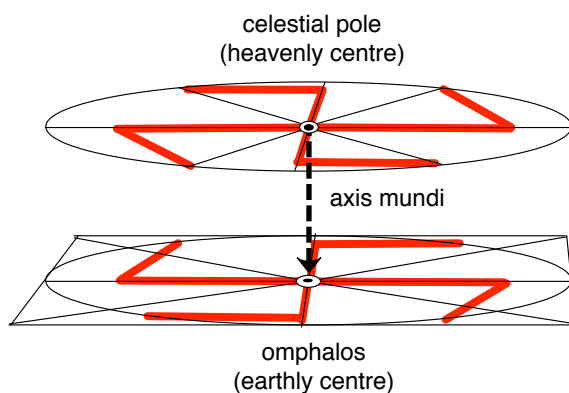


Diagram 9.13

The rotating clockwise *swastika* of heaven located over its reflected image of the counterclockwise form of the *sauwastika* of the earth, mirrors the symmetry of the heavenly form and its reciprocal counterpart.

<sup>53</sup> The same problem occurs, but is even more obviously, when celestial globes are encountered.

<sup>54</sup> The handedness of the *swastika* can be explained as its turning, an action that can be related to its dynamic nature as a horizontal cross on a pole with four flags attached. The clockwise turning is the flags or arms trailing behind the cross, such as in Image 9.16, or trailing fire, as in a spinning Catherine Wheel. Whone, *Church Monastery Cathedral: A Guide to the Symbolism of the Christian Tradition* (Tisbury: Compton Russell Element, 1977), 161. Technically the *swastika* is the counterclockwise rotating mode and the clockwise rotating mode is the *sauwastika*.

## The *Ming T'ang* & the 'Will of Heaven'

The Chinese cosmological and architectural schema known as the *Ming T'ang* embodied all the above considerations and more.<sup>55</sup> The form of the *Ming T'ang* was the embodiment of a spatio-temporal and cosmological template that derived from the interaction of principal number configured upon a cruciform plan.<sup>56</sup> As a subtle form rather than an architectural manifestation, the *Ming T'ang* exists as a formal idea as the abode of the Emperor. It is located at the 'Invariable Middle' or *Ching-Yung*.<sup>57</sup> As the earthly 'Hall of Light' it represented the palace in which the Emperor dwelt as representative of Man situated midway between Heaven and Earth. The *Ming T'ang* comprised either 9 or 5 rooms, depending on the source consulted. The 9-room plan corresponded to the *Lo shu* and the 5-room plan to the *Ho T'u* diagrams (Diagram 9.14).

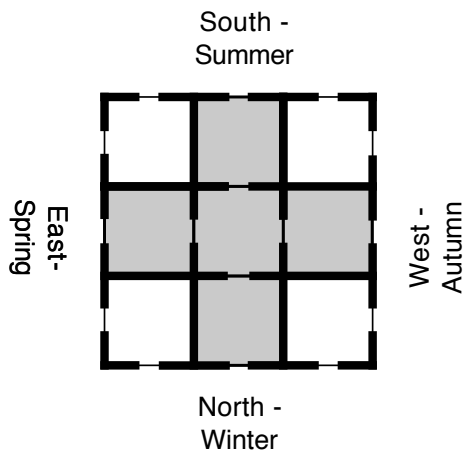


Diagram 9.14

The symbolic *Ming T'ang* or 'Hall of Light' configured with directions linked to the points of the compass and the seasons. The configuration can be considered either in its 5-room mode (shaded cross) related to the *Lo shu* or the 9 rooms related to the *Ho T'u*.

In other related versions of the *Ming T'ang* there are twelve 'rooms' or 'views'<sup>58</sup> facing the four cardinal directions. To be represented in corporeal space, a limited representation is needed to reconcile the cross of the *Ho T'u*, the *Lo shu* and the twelve rooms or openings of the *Ming T'ang*. One way is to consider three openings on each of the four sides of the 3x3 matrix of the *Lo shu* square as the 3x4=12 openings. Alternatively, each corner room is divided into two and with the four centre rooms giving the twelve rooms of the *Ming T'ang*. In another possible arrangement, the twelve rooms could be seen as rooms surrounding a central *Ho T'u*, the cross of the *Ho T'u* acting as hallways, not rooms (Diagram 9.15).<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> The *Ming T'ang* is not discussed directly in regard to the 'Invariable Middle' and the 'Will of Heaven' in *Symbolism of the Cross* but is considered in detail in *The Great Triad*, 110-116, along with the topics of the *Lo Shu* and its relation to the *swastika*.

<sup>56</sup> Refer to Snodgrass, *Architecture, Time and Eternity*, 343-384 for an examination of this subject along with the development of the considerations derived from the *I Ching*; Rene Guénon, *The Great Triad*, as noted above; Marcel Granet, *La Pensée Chinoise*; Howard J Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk - Ritual and Symbolism in the Legitimation of the T'ang Dynasty* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) and William Edward Soothill, *The Hall of Light: A Study of Early Chinese Kingship*, ed. Ladie Hosie G. F. Hudson (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 1951).

<sup>57</sup> It is also an expression of the Confucian, 'Doctrine of the Mean', (*zhōng yōng*), supposedly written by Confucius' grandson. James Legge translation: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/conf3.htm>.

<sup>58</sup> Granet, *La Pensée Chinoise*, (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1968), 108. Von Franz, states, 'The cosmic numerical models of the *Lo-shu* and the *Ho-T'u*..... clearly possess a temporal aspect which is maintained in their correlations with the order of trigrams in the *I-Ching*', in *Number and Time*, trans. Andrea Dykes (London: Rider & Co., 1974), 235. She bases much of her study on that of Granet (as have many others).

<sup>59</sup> Diagrams here are based on Granet's discussions of the numeric symbolism of the *Ming T'ang* in *La Pensée Chinoise*, 107-116, *passim*.



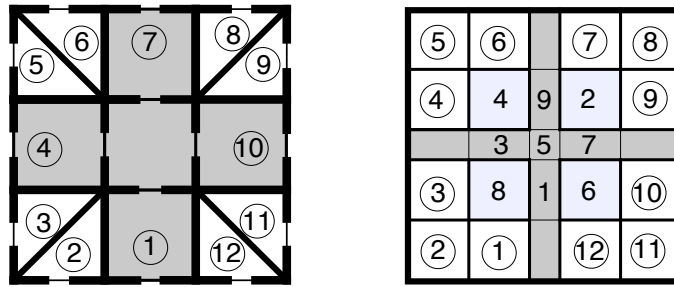


Diagram 9.15 (a) Left: The twelve 'views' or openings of the *Ming T'ang* arranged around the cross of the *Ho T'u* and in the matrix of the *Lo shu*.

(b) Right: The twelve rooms of the *Ming T'ang* around the central *Lo shu* and *Ho T'u*.

The Emperor dwelling within the *Ming T'ang* moved ritually around its rooms (houses), following the cycles of the Sun and seasons and emulating his ritual tours of the empire every five years.<sup>60</sup> Thus the Emperor's role was to be a 'regulator' of space, time and the universe, to be an intermediary between Heaven and Earth and all according to primordial numbers. The *Ming T'ang* was built during various periods of Chinese early history. However, there are no *Ming T'ang* palaces remaining, although there are archeological remains that correspond strongly to the geometric models discussed here. For the purposes of this research, however, its significance lies not in its historical execution but in its mathematical and symbolic formulation (Images 9.19, 9.20(a) & (b).

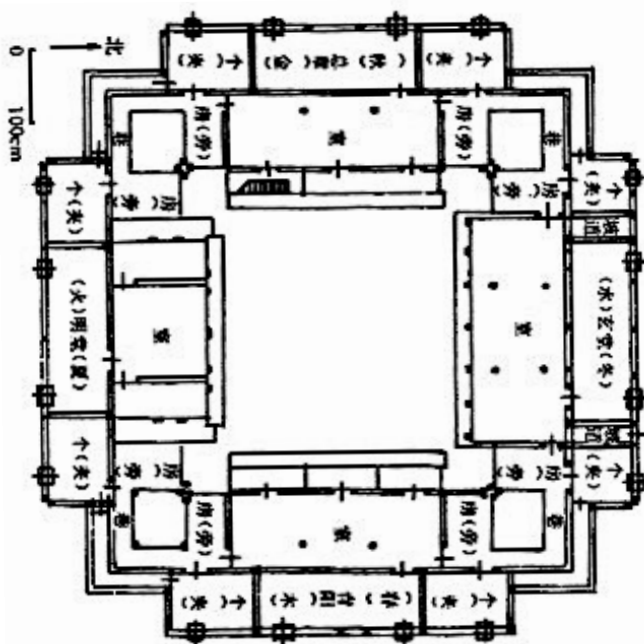
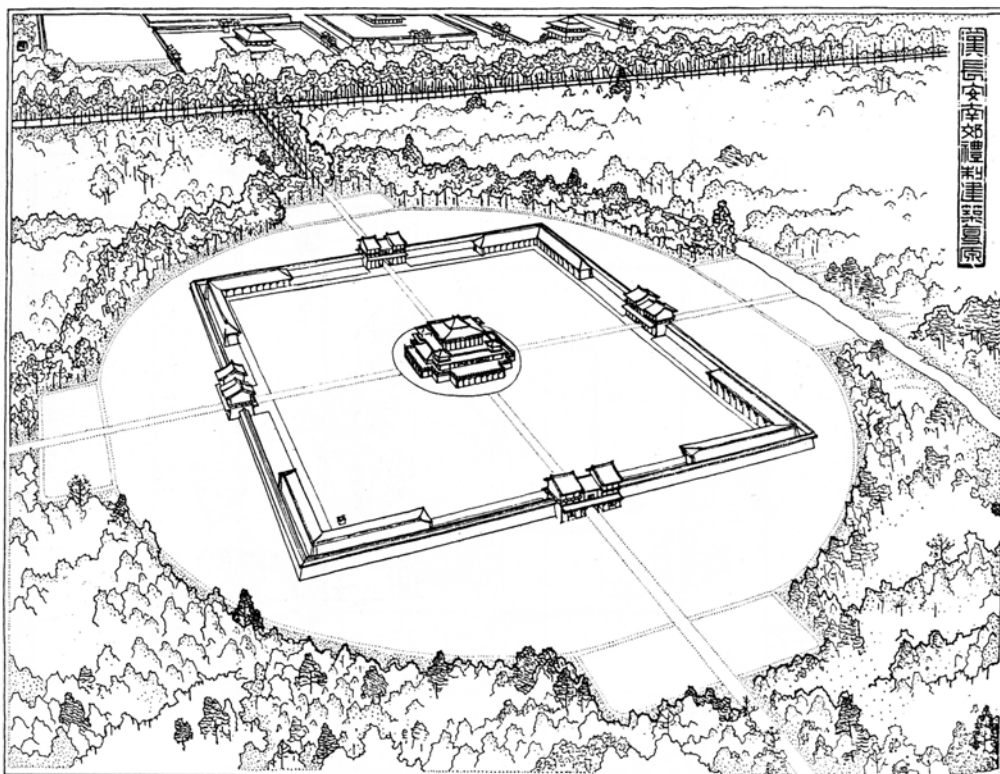
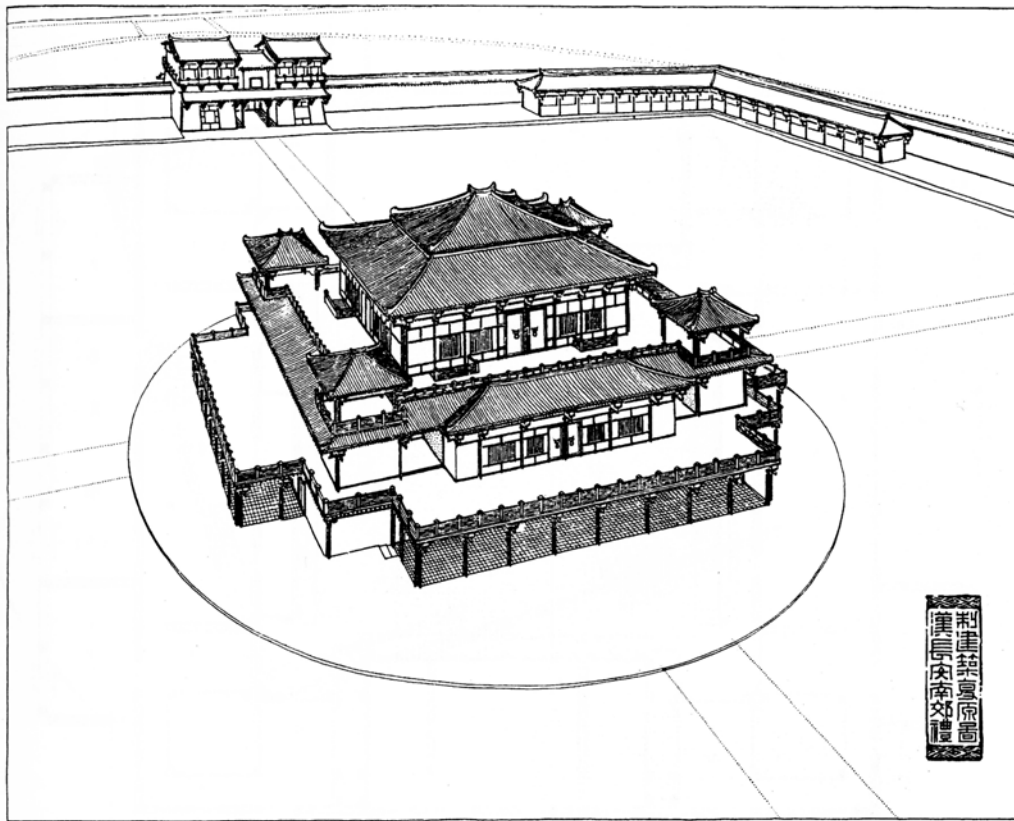


Image 9.19

Conjectural plan of *Ming T'ang* based on the 1956 archaeological excavations South of the Han capital of Chang'an.

<sup>60</sup> Granet, *La Pensee Chinoise*, 64.



Images 9.20(a) & (b) Conjectural perspectives of the 'Hall of Light' or *Ming Tang* of Chang'an.

As a cosmic prototype based on numeric symbolism, the *Ming T'ang* is related to Chinese tradition at all levels of science, mathematics, geography and the geopolitical foundation of the Kingdom. It was a symbolic schema and embodied a traditional early Chinese worldview. The *Ming T'ang* is essentially a cosmological symbol in a crystallised form, a *mandala*, pure and simple. As Guénon comments, 'The Ming T'ang was an image of the Universe not only in a spatial but also in a temporal sense, because in it the spatial symbolism of the cardinal points was directly associated with the temporal symbolism of the seasons and the annual cycle'.<sup>61</sup> Its entire form is based on the resolution of the complementary opposites of Heaven and Earth, Sun and Moon, Winter and Summer and Autumn and Spring in order to express the Will of Heaven.

---

<sup>61</sup> *The Great Triad*, 102. Also the quote from the *I Ching*, fn.4, 204.

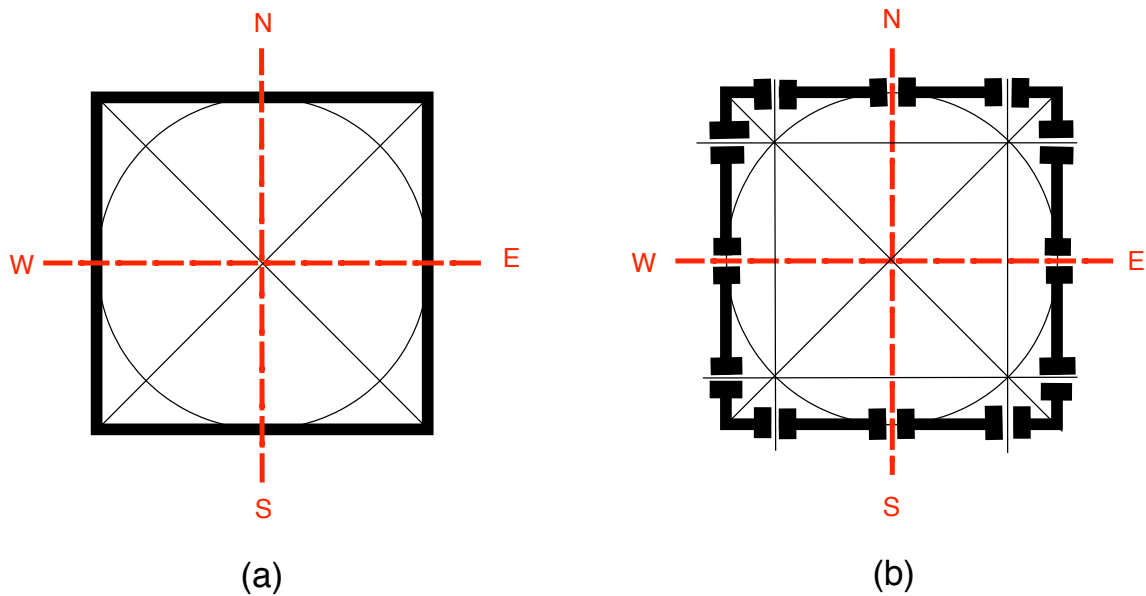
## CHAPTER 10:

# FINAL REMARKS ON SPATIAL SYMBOLISM

The final chapter of Guénon's *Symbolism of the Cross*, Chapter XXX, has the title 'Final Remarks on Spatial Symbolism' and it seems a congruous title for the final chapter of this study, which explores various applications of the symbolic potential of the cross not covered in previous chapters. In earlier chapters the interpretation of *Symbolism of the Cross* was aided by specific architectural examples and the inverse was the case, in that sacred architecture could be interrogated for its symbolic content with the parallel hermeneutic reading of *Symbolism of the Cross*. It is intended in this concluding chapter to outline some of the hermeneutic vistas possible from an exploration of *Symbolism of the Cross* as applied to sacred architecture that may not correspond directly to Guénon's text, which is general in nature. If the earlier chapters mapped certain symbolic ideas 'up close', this chapter takes a wider and explorative view of symbolic architectural implications. This exploration will necessarily step outside the immediate purview of Guénon's *Symbolism of the Cross* into more general considerations and conclude with a departure entirely from the domain of space and time but still within the domain of architectural possibilities and that of the human being.

### Embodiment of the Cross

A square or rectilinear architectural plan could be said to incorporate implicitly the horizontal cross. The axes of the cross have a perpendicular inversion as the sides of the plan and manifest both the number four and the quadrature of space. The cross is an implicit fourfold division of the square as the quadrature of the plane. The square is a mirrored inversion of the cross, the cross turned inside out (Diagram 10.1(a)). However, the cross needs to be made real and is only implied within the square lying dormant without material expression. The square or rectangle finds its most ready expression in the external wall, as the perimeter of a structure. However, the cross of space, which is only axially rather than tangible architectural fabric or enclosed space, requires some manifest configuration in which it can become embodied. The cross is achieved in the most pragmatic and material way by its location as the antithesis of the wall, that is, an opening or the doorway. The doorway, gateway, window and other forms of opening in a wall allow the axially of the cross to become manifest in the square or rectangularity of the plan, and to be expressed further in the elevation of the architecture (Diagram 10.1(b)).



Diagrams 10.1 (a) Left: The square as a schematic plan oriented toward the four points of the compass, conforming to the implicit measured solar domain and cross of space.  
 (b) Right: The four square plan with the cross made explicit through openings on the axes.

The four-square doorway configuration embodies the spatial and temporal cross in the building fabric. The resulting building configurations externalise the internal symbol of the cross (Images 10.1 & 10.2). The spatial axes are subtle, concealed in the architecture. To a participant on the horizontal plane, the cross is not evident, but its inclusion can be comprehended from above, a viewpoint from heaven. Hence the cross expressed in space is concealed from view as the internal form and becomes evident only at certain points that break through into this world, typically expressed by four axes, stairways, four-square directional guardians or deities, four-square doorways, gateways, portals and the like.





Image 10.1 The axially of the cross is implicit in the plan. The axially breaks through the bounding wall elements as entryways, doorways, windows and other openings. The main *Gopura* entry to the temple at *Banteay Srei*, near Siem Reap, Cambodia.

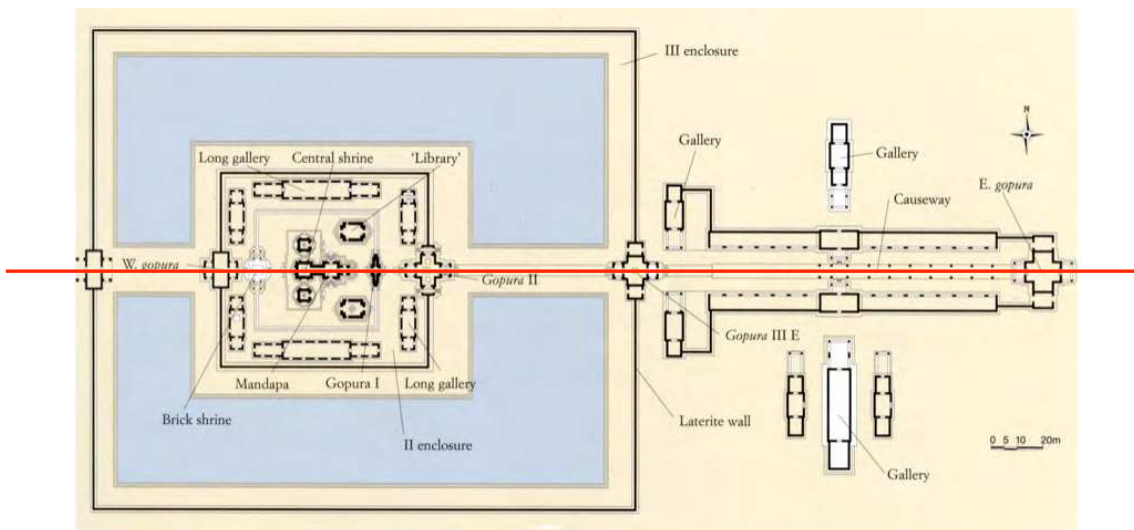


Image 10.2 The axially is established on approach to the main shrine of the temple at *Banteay Srei*. Image 10.1 above is taken in front of the main gopuram (III E). Multiple axial cross are developed along the main axis.

To illustrate how the spatial cross is made explicit, several examples from the millions that could be examined are discussed, in terms of both two and three dimensions. The monumental entry gateways known as *gopuram* of Southern Indian temples display this form of quadrature spectacularly. Unlike their northern counterparts, these large city temples are generally enclosed in surrounding walls. The temple is actually a complex of major and minor temples, bathing ghats, courtyards, support structures and schools and other institutions and the complex is often a layered expression of the embedded cross in the horizontal plan (Images 10.3 & 10.4).

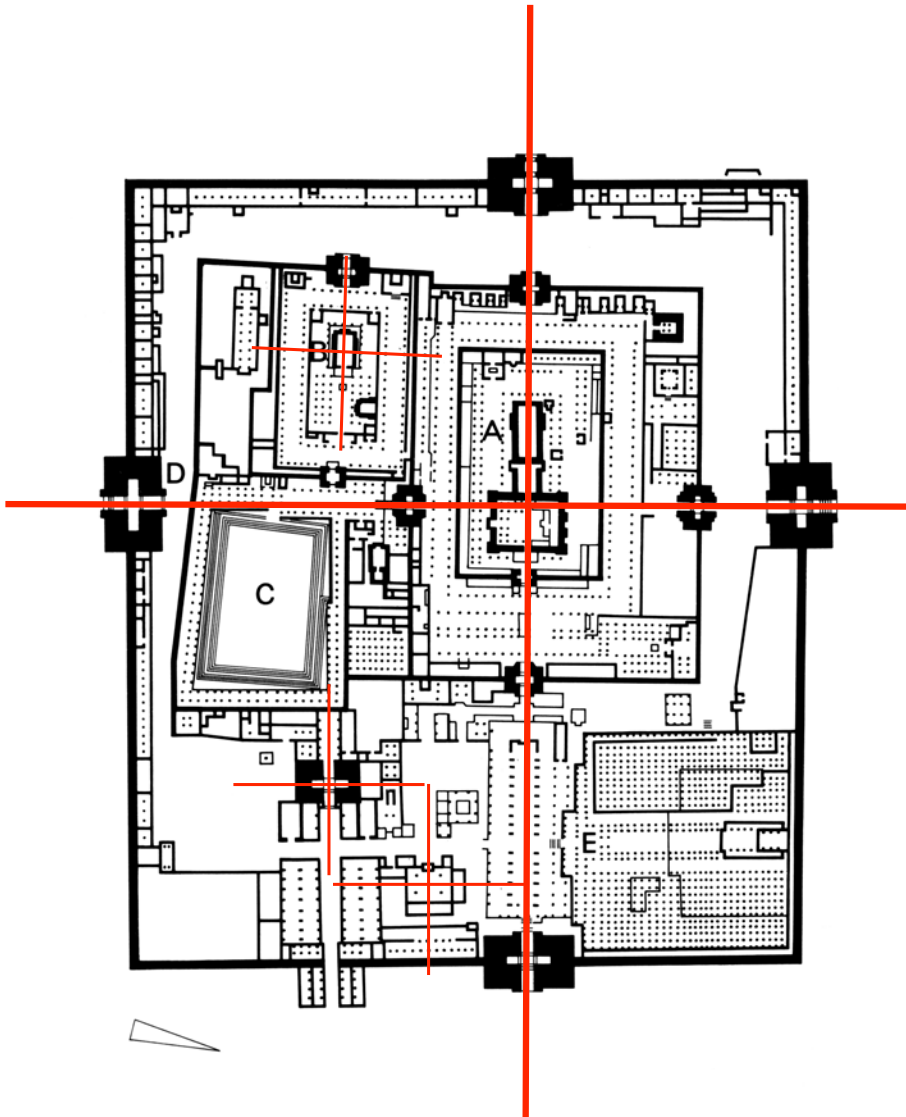


Image 10.3 Plan of *Meenakshi Amman* Temple, the city temple of Madurai, Southern India. The rectangular plan implies the cross, but the cross is made explicit by the location of the enormous temple gateways or *gopuram*. In plan, the cross finds multiple expressions in every part of the complex, sometimes into the thousands, since each element is an expression of the cross.



Image 10.4 The four main entry *gopurams* to *Meenakshi Amman Temple*, the city temple of Madurai, Southern India, establish an axuality from the first point of the entry. Other gateways establish the cross in the horizontal plane. Inside the axes of the cross multiply seemingly indefinitely.

While the North Indian Hindu temples are not generally surrounded by such massive walls and *gopuram*, the temple elements follow the same axial approach with a series of spaces that progress from the *torana* fronted entry porch of the *artha-mandapa*, then the *mandapa* followed by the central cell of the *garbhagriha*. This axis forms the main arm of the cross. Around the *garbhagriha* is usually the *pradakshināpatha*, which is the passage that allows circumambulation around the centre unless the temple is of modest size or is a sub-shrine. This passage generally has a window opening or lattice panels to allow air and light to enter on the adjoining three sides, such as at the *Lakṣmana Temple* Khajuraho (Image 10.4(a)). In larger temples, the plan configuration may included a balcony structure, like a smaller version of the *mandapa*. These openings form the basis of the secondary axis of the cross that pass through the central chamber of the *garbhagriha*. The vertical axis is expressed by the soaring height of the *śikhara* that sheaths the vertical axis with material form. The vertical axis then transfixes the *garbhagriha* and emerges through the top of the *āmalaka* that is the 'cog' shaped disk crowning the temple supporting the topmost finial or *kalaśa* (Images 6.10(a) & (b) and 10.5(a) & (b)).



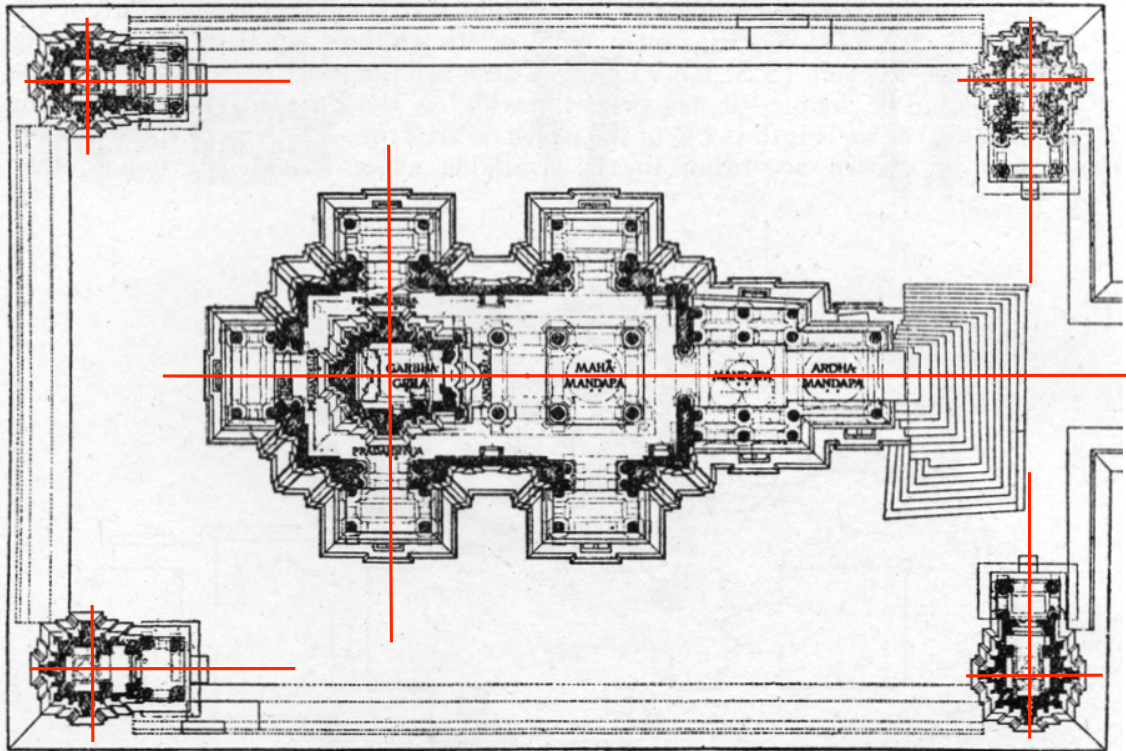


Image 10.5(a) Above:

Plan of *Lakshmana Temple* Khajuraho, India with the only several of the many embedded crosses. The *sikhara* that is the towered superstructure that rises above the *garbhagriha*, embodies the vertical axis to form the three-dimensional cross. Other crosses occur in the main temple and the secondary shrines.

Image 10.5(b) Left:

Part elevation of *Lakshmana Temple* Khajuraho, India. The approach along the longitudinal axis passes through the functional elements of the temple and the central *garbhagriha* out through the top *amalaka* and finial. A secondary axis is established by the axis formed by the side openings of the verandahs that light the *pradakshinapatha* (left verandah, the right verandah being connected to the *mandapa* hall). The *sikhara* tower sheathes the vertical axis component of the three-dimensional cross.

The spatial cross is often reinforced by its orientation with the cardinal points of the compass and the solar symbolism outlined previously, such as at *Pre Rup Temple*, Angkor, Cambodia. The axially established by the entry *gopura* is aligned with the pathways and steps that lead from one level to the next (Image 10.6). Steps between terraces, minor shrines, guardians, multiple podiums and balustrades all reinforce the dynamic of the embedded cross in three dimensions. In such arrangements, the cross is established on multiple levels of the complex (Image 10.7(a)). Projecting an axis onto an elevation may not result in a functional doorway or opening; instead, the doorway may be 'blind', filled in or simply marked as a closed doorway to maintain and reinforce the embedment of the cross (Image 10.7(b)).

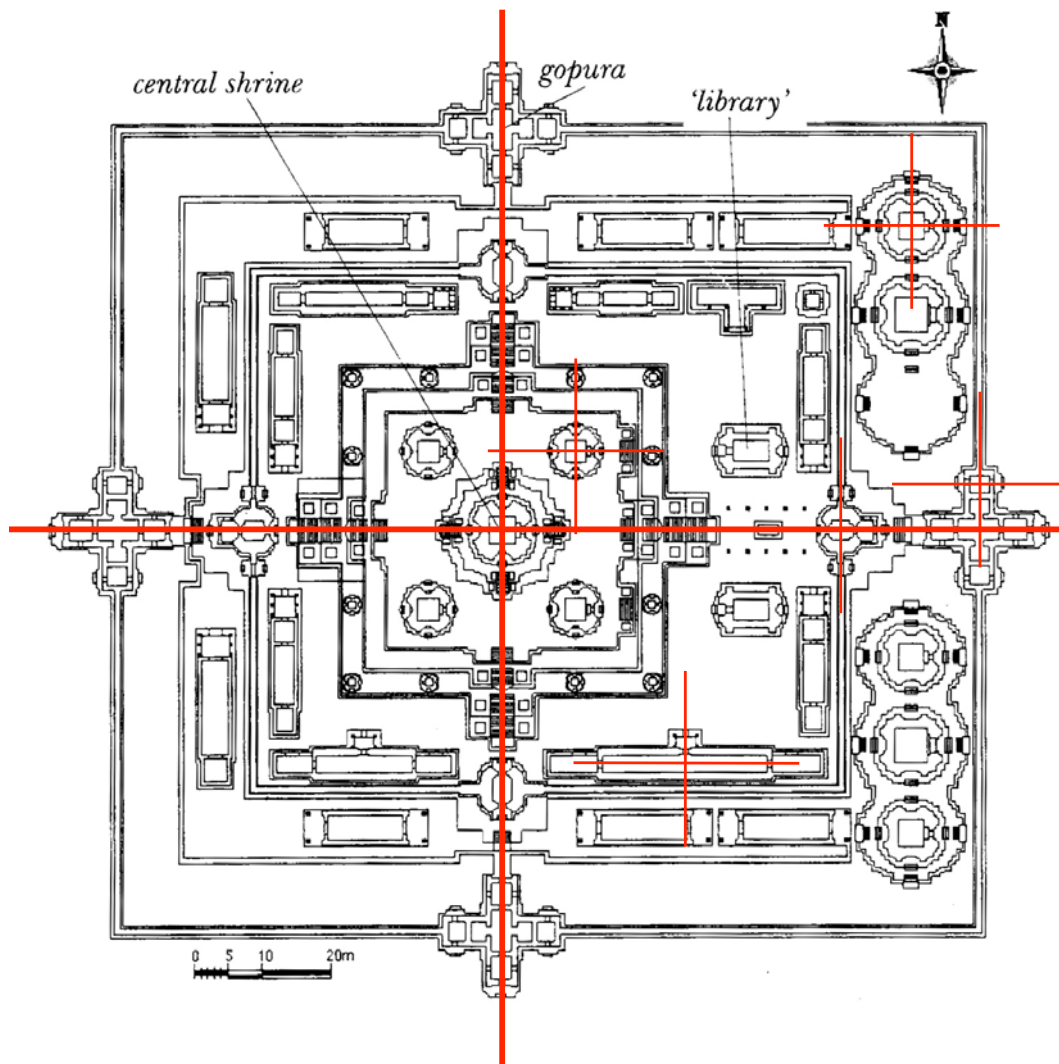


Image 10.6

*Pre-Rup Temple*, Angkor, Cambodia. The entry *gopura* establish the primary axis of the complex but the axes of the cross are reinforced with multiple steps that lead from the surrounding podium and multiple terraces. The central *prasad*<sup>1</sup> defines the vertical axis of the three-dimensional cross.

<sup>1</sup> The *prasad* is the equivalent of the Hindu *vimana* or *prāsāda* in Indian temple architecture.





Image 10.7(a)

Ascent to the final terrace of *Pre-Rup* with its central shrine or *prasat* at the intersection of the horizontal cross. With the added vertical ascent, the horizontal cross in plan is expressed as a three-dimensional cross.

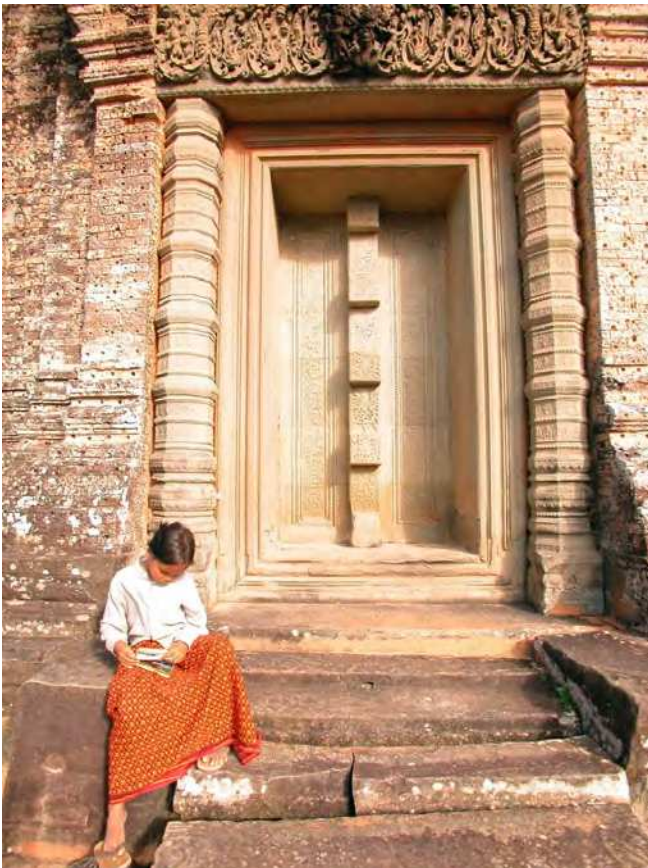


Image 10.7(b)

Blind or symbolic doorways on the northern, southern and western faces of the main and minor shrines at *Pre-Rup* temple at Angkor, Cambodia. Orientation and configuration are more important than functional doorways.

The Buddhist *stupa*, or at least the central circular upper body known as the *garbha* (or *anda*) of the *stupa*, expresses the vertical axis even though its circularity does not manifest the horizontal cross in plan. However, almost every *stupa* sits on a podium that usually incorporates a square base (*bhūmi* meaning ground) , such as the Shwezigon Paya in Pagan, Burma (Images 10.8(a) & (b)).

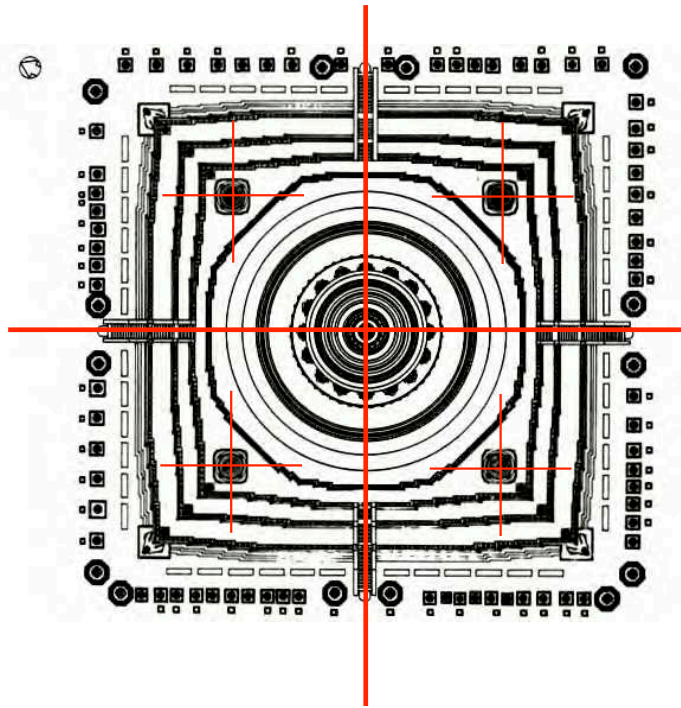


Image 10.8(a) Left:

*Shwezigon Paya*, Bagan, Burma, is the typical domed and conical superstructure of the Burmese Buddhist *stupa* known as a *zedi*. However, it is its podium base (*bhūmi*) that generates and makes manifest the horizontal domain of quadrature and allows the incorporation of the three dimensional cross.

Image 10.8(b) Below

*Shwezigon Paya*, Bagan, Burma. The superstructure of the dome and conical body of the *garbha* embody the vertical axis. The podium base (*bhūmi*) provides the articulation of the cross in the horizontal plane as it rests on the earth.





There are only several exceptions to the *stupa* with its square or octagonal base, like the early Buddhist *Great Stupa* of Sanchi which sits on a circular podium. However, the *stupa* at Sanchi is approached from tangential *torana* gateways in a clockwise direction, consistent with the clockwise circumambulation of the *stupa* around the *pradakshināpatha*. The gateways thus imprint the horizontal cross in the configuration of the *stupa*. Taken further, the gates with their tangential approaches can be the configuration of the *swastika*, combining the static with the dynamic function of the cross (Image 10.9).

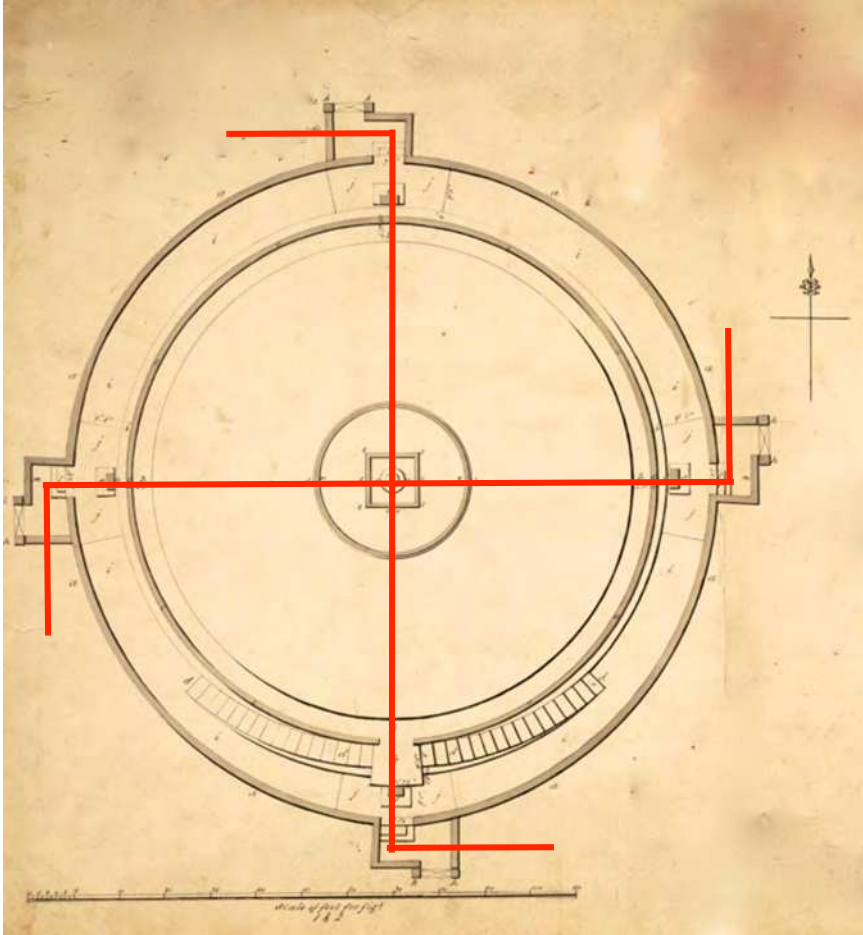


Image 10.9

The *Great Stupa* of Sanchi rests on a circular podium. However the quartered *torana* gateways provide the imprint of the cross in the horizontal plan. The superstructure with square crowning *harmikā* and finial mast with top *kalaśa* (vase or jewel) provide the vertical component, completing the three-dimensional cross. When the approaches to the *torana* gates are included as secondary axes, the arrangement is forms the *swastika*.

It was said that the cross lies dormant in the circularity of the *stupa*'s domed form, the *garbha*. The cross becomes manifest at the interface where heaven meets with the square earth or ground. This relationship is reversed in the traditional *kijiz uy*, or 'felt house' (commonly called a *yurt*) of the nomadic Kazakhs, in which the circular lattice wall supports a wooden compression ring structure called a *shangyrak*, which in turn supports a square lattice-like cross member at the peak of the *kijiz uy*.<sup>2</sup> The *shangyrak* allows the smoke to escape from the top of the dwelling and it is a 'sky-window' (Image 10.10). In this structure, 'Everyone present in the *yurt* looks at the sky through the cross'.<sup>3</sup> The entry to the *kijiz uy* generally faces East while the Mongolian *yurt* generally faces South.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Also called a *shanyrak* by Victor Buchli, *Urban Life in Post-Soviet Asia*, 52-53. Also the *shangyrak* is discussed at: [http://eurasia.travel/kazakhstan/traditions/the\\_yurt/](http://eurasia.travel/kazakhstan/traditions/the_yurt/). A graphic version of *shanyrak* is on the emblem of Kazakhstan and the national flag of Kyrgyzstan.

<sup>3</sup> As observed by Husain Mustafa, Interview, Almaty, June 2012 and as quoted by Yuriy Skurydin, *How Ethnic Kazakhs Read the Bible: Convictional Hermeneutics and Advocating the Diversity*, Masters Thesis Submitted to University of Wales, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> According to Rainier, 'An Illustrated History of Yurts'. <http://www.rainier.com/yurts/yurt-info/yurt-history/guest-post-illustrated-history-yurts/>.

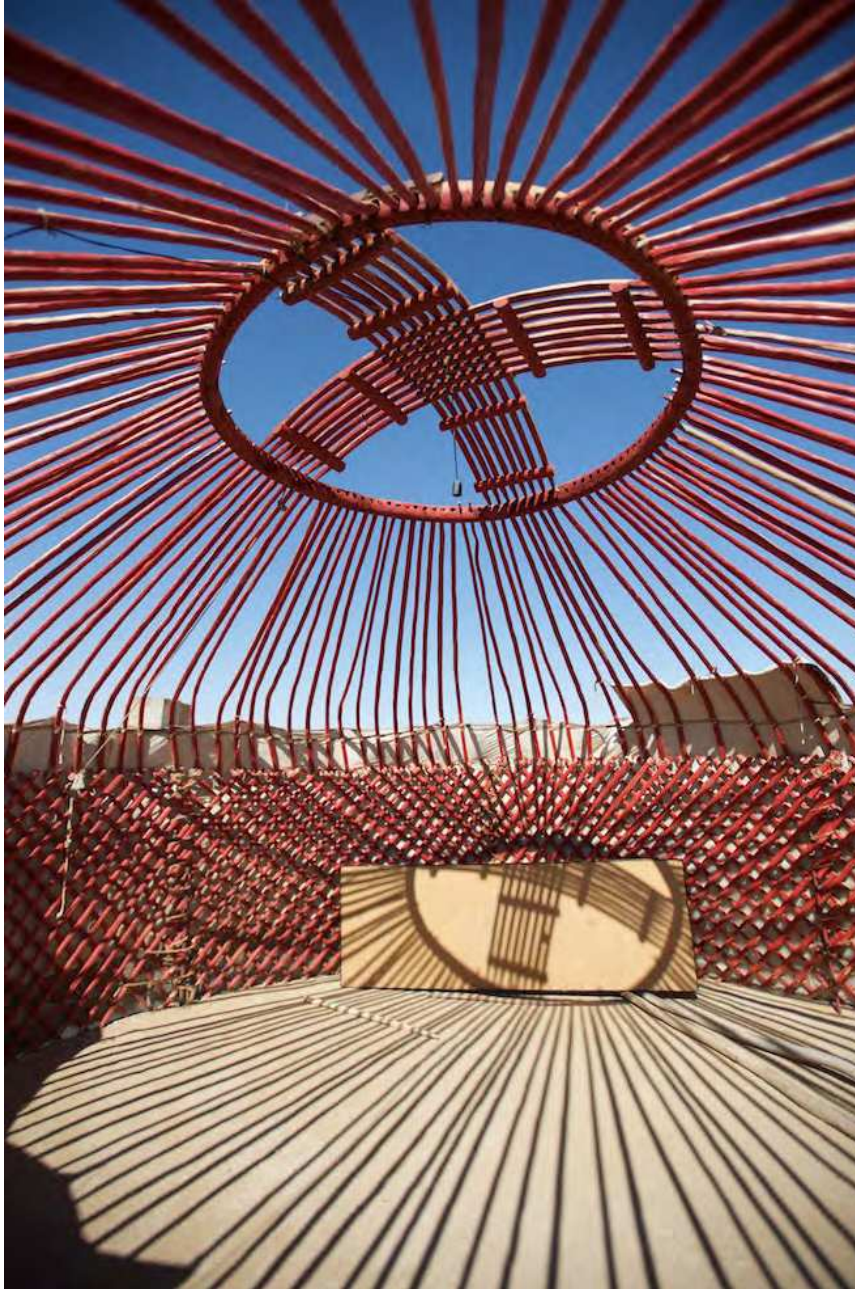


Image 10.10 The traditional framework of a typical *kiyiz uy* (*yurt*), of Karakalpakstan with hooped opening or *shangyrak* with central cross.

In Islam, the cubic form of the *Ka'bah* naturally sets up a reciprocal relationship with the three-dimensional cross, in that each face, the roof and the floor are disposed in the six directions of space. This may have been the inspiration for the enigmatic structure known as the *Samanids Mausoleum* or *Ismail Sāmāni Mausoleum*, Bukhara (Images 10.11 & 10.12). The cubic structure is the oldest surviving Islamic domed mausoleum extant and was built between 892 and 943 CE as the resting-place of Ismail Sāmāni, the founder of the Sāmānid dynasty. The structure has clear Buddhist associations, the most obvious being the four small domes on the corners repeating the configuration of the central dome giving five domes.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Elena Paskaleva, *The Architecture of the Four-Īwān Building Tradition as a Representation of Paradise and Dynastic Power Aspirations*, 153-157. Compare to the central terraces of *Shwezigon Paya*, image 10.7(a) for example.



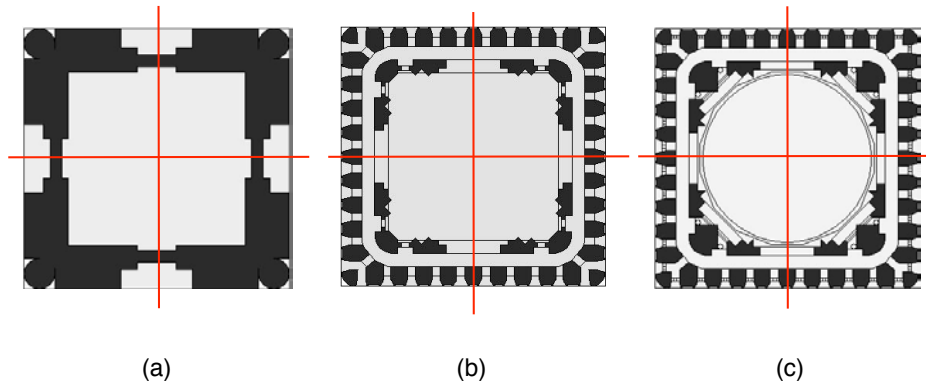


Image 10.11 *Samanids Mausoleum* or *Ismail Sāmāni Mausoleum*, Bukhara with the embedded three dimensional cross.

- (a) Left: Floor plan.
- (b) Centre: Centre: Plan at the level of the 40 arches.
- (c) Right: Reflected ceiling plan at level of the 40 arches.

The dome form is surmounted with a small copula that allows the vertical axis to emerge through the cosmic luffer, thereby establishing the vertical axis (Image 10.13).



Image 10.12 *Samanids Mausoleum* or alternatively named the *Ismail Sāmāni Mausoleum* Bukhara, Uzbekistan.





Image 10.13 The internal opening as a comic luffer in the dome surmounting the *Ismail Sāmāni Mausoleum* provides the opening for the vertical axis to complete the three-dimensional cross prefigured by the square plan.

However, the *Ismail Sāmāni Mausoleum* with its cubic solidity is not typical of the sacred structures for worship in the Islamic tradition. It is the typical open courtyard type configurations with their impressive 'four-*iwān*' found in many *masājid*, *madrassa*, *khanagha* and even the utilitarian *caravanserai* throughout the Islamic world that makes manifest the cross in the horizontal plane (Images 10.14 & 10.15).<sup>6</sup> Here the axis of the cross prefigures the spaces. The architectural element of the *iwān*, the open portal with arched or domed ceiling, is introduced as the focus of the axial configuration. The *iwān* are related to the *mihrāb* that faces the direction of the *Ka'bah* multiplied into the other axial directions. The central courtyard lies symbolically at the centre of the four rivers and the figuration of the 'garden of paradise', or *jannat al firdaws*.<sup>7</sup> The four opposing *iwān* are an external expression of the portal as *zāhir* 'the manifest' while the significance of the axis of the cross remains concealed as *batīn* or 'hidden form'.<sup>8</sup> The hidden or concealed nature of the cross is veiled by the architectural expression of the *iwān* in a similar way to the parable of the 'Miracle of the Cave of Thawr' whereby the physical phenomenon of a simple spider's web, two

<sup>6</sup> This architectural expression is universal and has been admirably documented by Elena Paskaleva in her doctoral thesis, *The Architecture of the Four-*iwān* Building Tradition as a Representation of Paradise and Dynastic Power Aspirations*, Doctoral Thesis, (Leiden: Leiden University Institute for Cultural Disciplines, Faculty of the Humanities, 2010). <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/15971>. However, I would disagree with her emphasis on the 'power aspiration' on the basis of what has been presented in this project.

<sup>7</sup> And the 'description of Paradise, which the righteous are promised, wherein are rivers of water unaltered, rivers of milk the taste of which never changes, rivers of wine delicious to those who drink, and rivers of purified honey, in which they will have from all (kinds of) fruits and forgiveness from their Lord'. *Holy Qur'an*, Surah 47:15. Similarly, but less paradisiac, 'And a river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and became four branches'. Genesis 2.10.

<sup>8</sup> The aspects *zāhir* 'and *batīn* is discussed in Ardalán & Bakhtier in, *The Sense of Unity*, 5 & 13. Also Akkach, *Cosmology & Architecture*, 29-31.

wild pigeons and small shrub concealed and 'veiled' the Prophet (PBUH) and his companion Abu Bakr.<sup>9</sup>

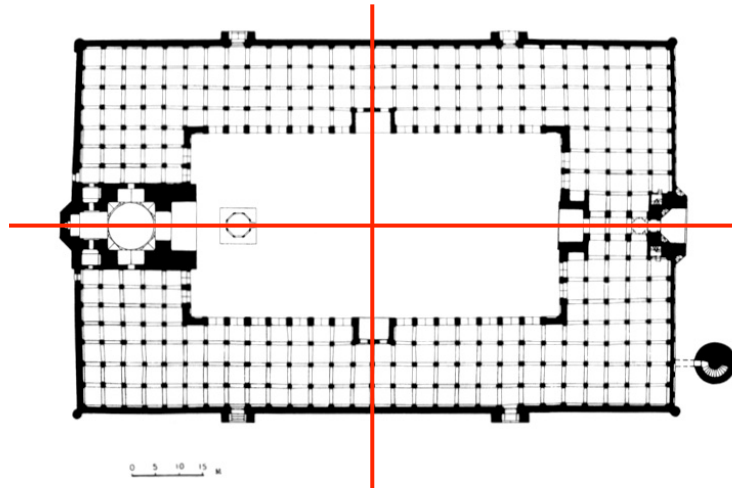


Image 10.14 Plan of *Pā-i Kalān Mosque*, Bukhara, Uzbekistan with the embedded concealed horizontal two dimensional cross externally manifest by the the four *iwān*.



Image 10.15 *Pā-i Kalān Mosque*, Bukhara. The opposing four *iwān* face each other across the open space of the courtyard establishing the horizontal cross which also sees the main axis aligned with the *qibla* orientated to the *Ka'bah* in Mecca.

<sup>9</sup> The miracle of the 'Cave of Thawr' relates where the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Abu Bakr hid from the Kuraish (Quraish) tribe for 3 days. The occurrence was a source of a miracle. Firstly, an acacia tree sprung up in front of the cave, then a dove flew over and made its nest in the tree and laid eggs and a spider spread its web over the cave's entrance to conceal Muhammad and Abu Bakr from their enemies. The spider's web gave the illusion that the cave was empty. By this concealment, Allah's messenger was saved to later spread the Islamic message. On a symbolic level, the story relates to how the events and things of the world conceal the spiritual dimension and reality that lies behind. The spider's web as a diaphanous veil was all that stood between those concealed within and those on the outside of the cave.



Islamic sacred architecture expresses the vertical axis in the dome externally by the finial (*alem*) (Images 4.12 & 10.16(a)) or small luffer or opening in the ceiling. Often this 'eye of the dome' is part of the vault construction with symbolism and practical construction coinciding (Image 10.16(b)).



Image 10.16(a) (Left): Conical roof and finial (*alem*) of the *Kaldirgach Bey Mausoleum*, Tashkent.  
 Image 10.16(b) (Right): Domed ceiling colonnade, *Pā-i Kalān Mosque*, Bukhara.

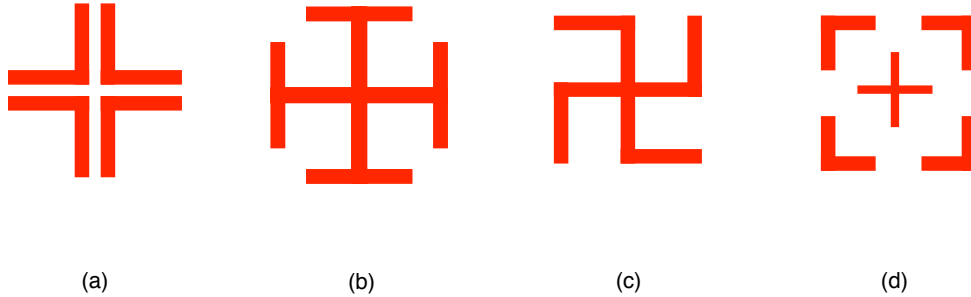
The concluding examination of the embedded cross would not be complete even in its condensed explication without including the Christian church or, more pertinently, the Gothic cathedral and its connection to the cross. A complete thesis could be written on the application of the principles of Guénon's *Symbolism of the Cross* to the Gothic cathedral alone.<sup>10</sup> Many aspects have been covered already but there is another correlation with the cross that synthetically brings those aspects together and that is the relationship of the general nature of the symbolic cross to that of the particular Christian manifestation of the meaning of the cross with the Greek letter, *gamma* or 'Γ'.<sup>11</sup> In the West the *swastika* was known in the mode of the *crux gammata* or alternatively the *gammadion cross*<sup>12</sup> as well as the *fylfot cross*. The Christian *gammadia* has multiple forms and is not a single geometric configuration. In these generalised forms the arms of the *gamma* 'Γ' become equal and could be called a 'tri-square' and as such multiple combined

<sup>10</sup> Jean Hani, *Symbolism of the Christian Temple*, makes reference to *Symbolism of the Cross* and also many of the works cited here by Guénon in his comprehensive study as does Kollar, *Symbolism in Christian Architecture of the First Millennium*.

<sup>11</sup> Guénon, 'Al-Arkān', *Symbols of Sacred Science*, 284-287. The Five Pillars of Islam (*arkān-al-Islām*) is related to the issues discussed here.

<sup>12</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, fn. 2, 54-55. Guénon, discuss that the symbols are related but not equivalent.

configurations become possible.<sup>13</sup> In the Christian context, the formation of the cross from various *gammadia* is highly significant. In this way the cross can be seen as the formation of four tri-squares with the centre being the vertex of the tri-squares.<sup>14</sup> In this configuration, the 'crossing point' is not the coincidence of the two axes but rather the coincidence of four figures at their corners (Diagram 10.2(a)). Other possible arrangements of the *gamma* letter 'Γ' give other related symbolic figures (Diagram 10.2(b), (c) & (d)).<sup>15</sup>



Diagrams 10.2 Four versions of *gammadia*.

- (a) Far left: Four Greek *gamma* or 'Γ' figures with equal arms arranged in the mode of an intersecting cross but emphasising the external nature of the cross as four quarters. The association with number '4' is striking.
- (b) Centre left: Eight 'Γ' figures combined in pairs to form the 'crutch cross' or 'Cross Potent'. It can also be seen as four combined *Tau* crosses ('T' shaped cross) or 'cross cramponnée' and is the basis for the 'Jerusalem Cross' or 'Crusader's Cross' when combined with four smaller crosses in each quarter.<sup>16</sup>
- (c) Centre right: The clockwise rotating *swastika*, also called the *Fylfot cross* in the West (meaning many footed cross). Technically the *swastika* is in the counterclockwise rotating mode and the clockwise rotating mode is the *sauwastika*.
- (d) Far right: *Gammadia*, given by Guénon. The four *gamma* 'Γ' figures, externalized to configure the four corners with the central internalized cross.<sup>17</sup>

The *gammadia* figure is sometimes depicted on early Christian robes or *himation*, such as in various mosaic panels in the Basilica Sant 'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna (Image 10.17). The figures depict Saints and Christ himself. Similar *gammadia* figures have been included in Jewish art such as the synagogue paintings of *Dura-Europos*, dated about the middle of the third century A.D., show most figures wearing the *himation* robes with the *gammadia* on the drapery. *Gammadia*

<sup>13</sup> The *gammadia* as symbolic pattern making utilizing the 'Γ' figure seems to me to be very similar to the Chinese patterns on the rear of Han Dynasty mirrors and many *mandalas*. The patterns have been called 'TLV' patterns and relate also to the game called *Liu-po*, which utilizes similar figures. Both are discussed by Schuyler Cammann, 'The "TLV" Pattern on Cosmic Mirrors of the Han Dynasty', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 68, No.4 (Oct.- Dec., 1948), 159-167. Comparing the two could lead to an important study.

<sup>14</sup> The image of the 'tri-square' is a well known masonic symbol combined with the open compass.

<sup>15</sup> Figures 10.2(a) and 10.2(d) are given by Guénon in 'Al-Arkān'. The other two figures (b) and (c) are included as permutations of the the same principle symbolism.

<sup>16</sup> William Wood Seymour, *The Cross in Tradition, History, and Art*, (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1898), 364. <https://ia802606.us.archive.org/13/items/crossintraditi00seym/crossintraditi00seym.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately Guénon does not give an actual example of where this version of the symbol can be found. A similar *gammadia* on a Roman Curtain is included in Nobuaki Kuniya, 'The Gammadia, the Swastika and the Divine Fluid: A Study on the Ancient Symbolism', *Orient*, Vol. 4 (1967): 17-36, Fig. 5. [https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/orient1960/4/0/4\\_0\\_17/\\_pdf](https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/orient1960/4/0/4_0_17/_pdf)



symbols are also shown on some ancient altar cloths.<sup>18</sup> The Greek letter, *gamma* or 'Γ' is the third letter of the Greek alphabet so the figure may be associative of the Trinity but this does not explain the use in Jewish applications.

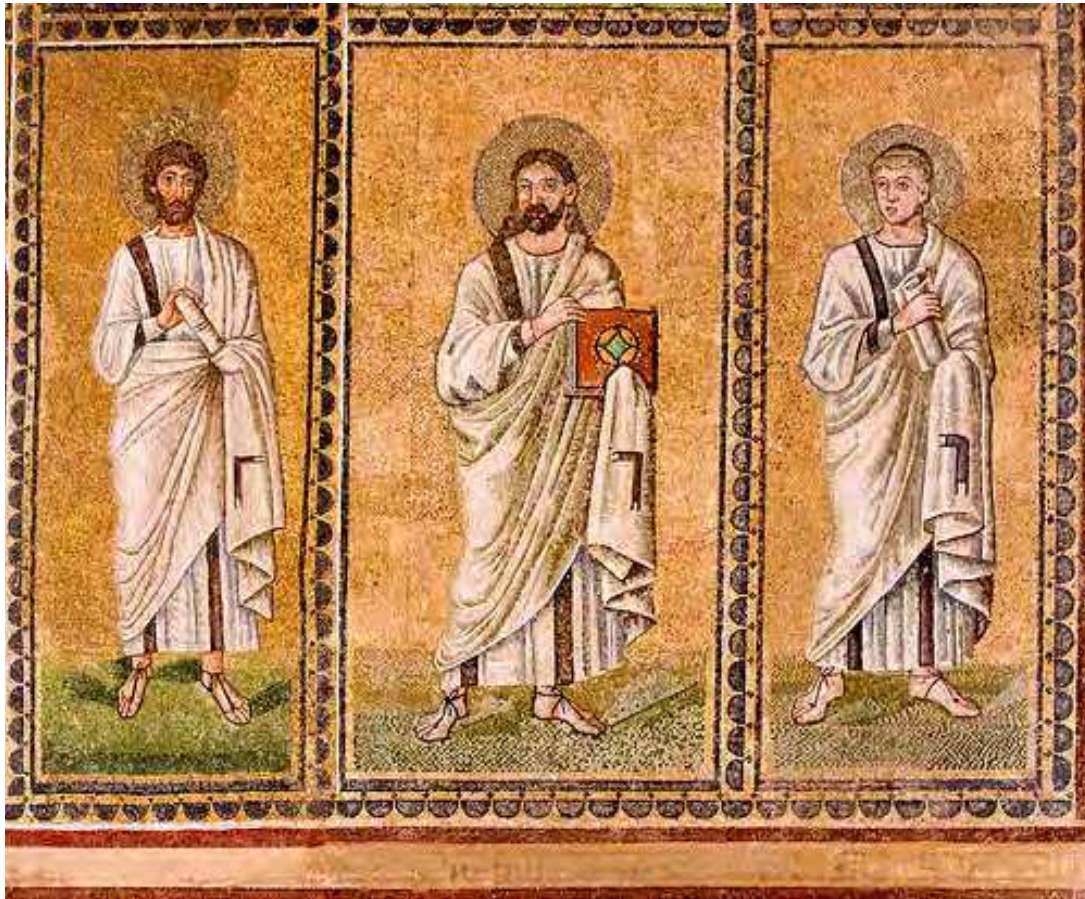


Image 10.17 Numerous mosaic figures displaying the *gammadia* are depicted in high level panels in the Basilica Sant 'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, Italy.

The *gammadia* figures above relate to the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and their relationship to the centrality of Christ at the heart of the cross. The four Evangelists are often symbolised by the 'four creatures', Matthew by the head of a man, Mark by the lion, Luke by that of a bull and John by the eagle. The image of Christ at the centre of the cross surrounded by the four creatures is a common image in Christian architecture (Images 10.18 & 10.19). In this particular interpretation of the cross, the quadrature of space becomes the externalised content of the cross, which is its more immediate expression.

Guénon relates the tri-square figure to that of the word *rukṇ*, which means 'angle' or 'corner' in Arabic. Turning the corners of the tri-square outward gives an alternative *gammadia*, a square (Diagram 10.2(d)). This becomes the four corners of an actual building with the implied cross at the centre, hence Image 10.18. This also relates back to the complex symbolism of the four cornerstones and to Christ as the 'headstone', 'fifth corner' or summit.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Multiple examples are given by Kuniva in *The Gammadiae, the Swastika*. Also many examples included in Goblet d'Alviella, *The Migration of Symbols*, (London: A. Constable and Co., 1894).

<sup>19</sup> Refer to Guénon, 'The Cornerstone' in *Symbols of Sacred Science*, 264-278. This is one of Guénon's most directly applicable architectural essays. It relates equally to the Five Pillars of Islam (*arkān-al-Islām*) as the Prophet (PBUH) as the 'fifth *rukṇ*'.



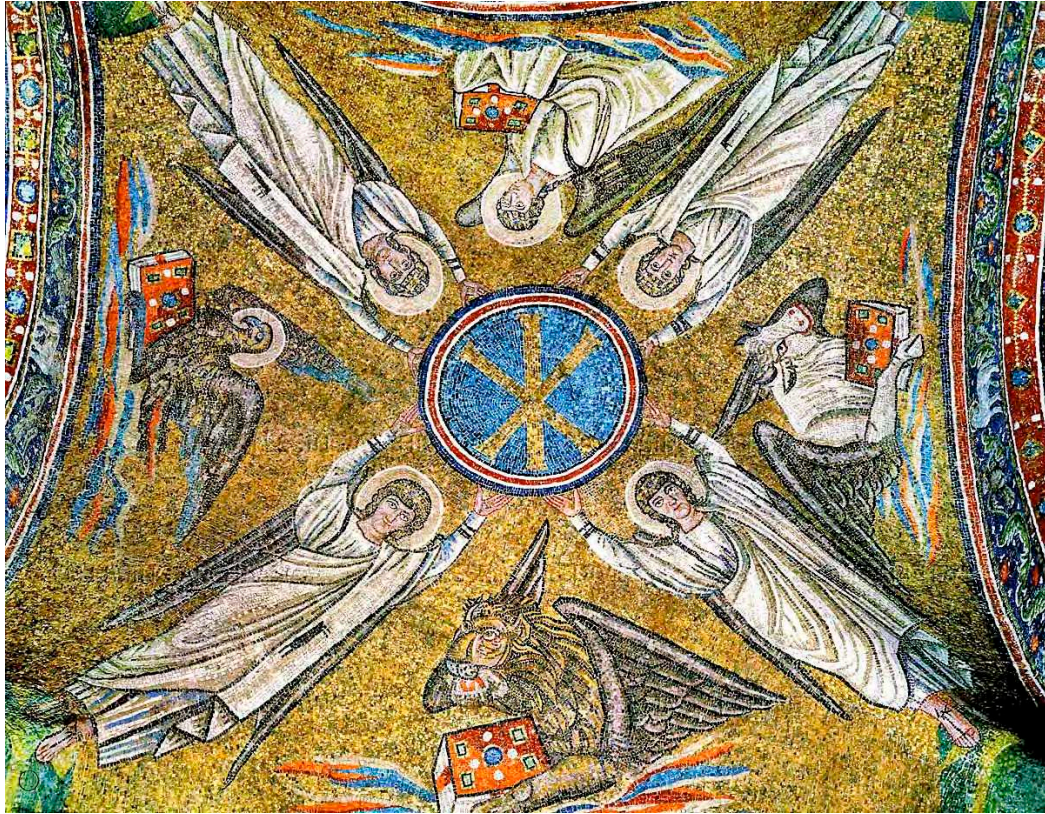


Image 10.18 The mosaic on the domed ceiling of Sant' Andrea - Archiepiscopal Chapel, Ravenna, Italy, depicting the four Evangelists with their feet pointing to the support pillars and their symbolic zoomorphic figurations supporting the central *Chi-Ro*, symbol of Christ at the centre of the vaulted dome.



Image 10.19 Central tympanum, with the four Evangelists as zoomorphic figures in the four quarters around the central figure of Christ in the *vesica piscis* on the West (Royal) Portal, Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France.



The interpretation of the cross in Christian Gothic architecture needs to be considered in the light of the four *gammadia* symbols, as much as in the significance of the intersection of the axes of the cross. The external quaternary of the building should be seen as the corporeal 'incarnation' of the internal cross, for the 'body' of the cathedral is the cross 'incarnate' (Image 10.20).

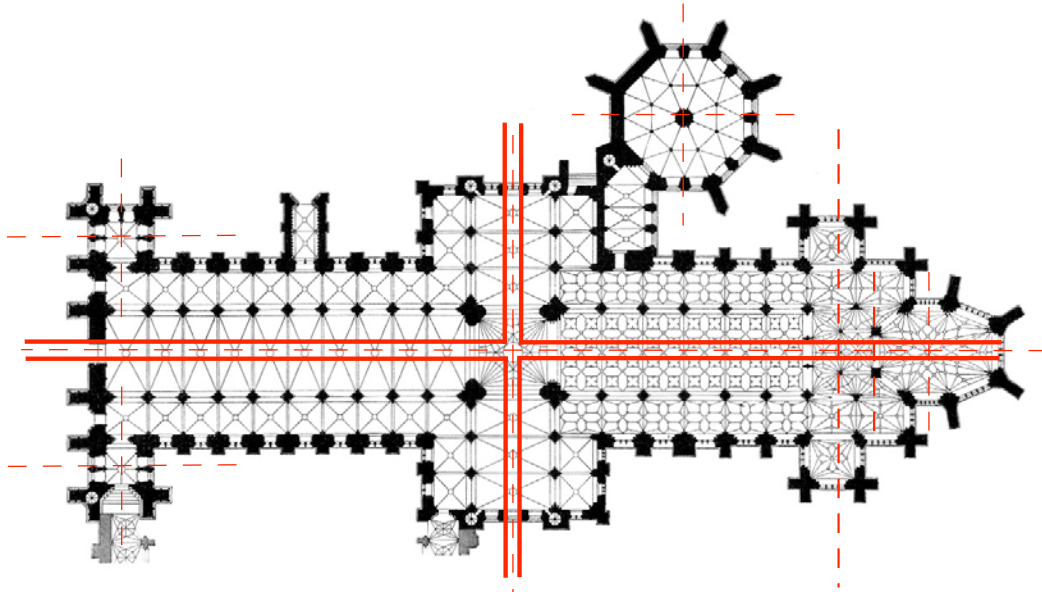


Image 10.20 Plan of Wells Cathedral, England. Every axial cross is also externally symbolised by the quaternary of space and the 'four corners' symbolise the body of the building. The built configuration of the cathedral is the 'cross incarnate'.

## The Point, the *Gammadia* & the Cross

Images of the cross have been found in early cave art made by Neanderthal beings between 30,000 and 39,000 years ago (Image 10.21).<sup>20</sup> Conceptually, the *swastika* is a more complex symbol but examples have been found that date from 10,000 BCE.<sup>21</sup> There has been little research to date on the particular Christian meaning of the *gammadia* and even less on its pre-Christian use. The cross and *swastika* are related by the *gammadia*, at least geometrically and topologically, although their symbolism differs. Further, as may be apparent in this final chapter, symbols have both universal and particular content, so while, say, the *swastika* can have a temporal association it can also have a solar association and the two meanings underlie a complex structure of traditional

<sup>20</sup> Joaquín Rodríguez-Vidal et al., 'A Rock Engraving Made by Neanderthals in Gibraltar'. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science of the United States of America*, Sept. 16, 2014. Vol. 110, No.37. <http://www.pnas.org/content/111/37/13301.full.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> Even though it was written in 1894, the work by Thomas Wilson, 'The swastika, the earliest known symbol and its migrations: With observations on the migration of certain industries in prehistoric times', *National Museum Annual Report*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1894), 763- 1030 remains the most comprehensive work on the history of the *swastika*, *gammadian* and *Fylfot*, <https://archive.org/details/theswastika00wilsuoft>. However, its interpretation as symbol does not approach that of Guénon's elucidation.

principles. Relating this back to Guénon's *Symbolism of the Cross* brings an integrated view of the metaphysical implications of the symbol. Guénon's words quoted in the introduction are worth recalling: he states that the cross 'is common to almost all traditions, a fact which would seem to indicate its direct attachment to the great Primordial Tradition'.<sup>22</sup> Without delving further into Guénon's extensive exploration on what constitutes the Primordial Tradition, it could be said that the use of the cross and related symbols extend back to the dawn of art and tradition itself.



Image 10.21 A cross figure etched in Gorham's Cave, in Gibraltar supposedly by Neanderthal man is older than 39 cal kyr BP (39,000 radiocarbon dated years before the present).

The cross, the *gammadia* and the point form the basic 'seed pattern' for the generation of the 'Cretan Maze', also known as the 'classic maze'. At the heart of the generation of the maze is the cross, surrounded by four *gammadia* and four points. The basic seed pattern comprises a square with a centralized cross (Diagram 10.3). Successive lines are scribed from alternating centres. The origins of this complex maze pattern are unknown but it can be found across

<sup>22</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, Preface, xi-x.

Scandinavia, Spain, Sardinia, Africa and India.<sup>23</sup> Some examples of this maze date from the early bronze age (Image 10.22). The fact that the geometry and setout is complex yet repeatable indicates a consistent transmission of knowledge. No conclusion is offered on how this knowledge was transmitted and would be entirely speculative and unsupported. However, the justification for inclusion of such material here in this closing chapter is to recall Guénon's words that 'tradition simply means 'that which is transmitted' in some way or other'.<sup>24</sup>

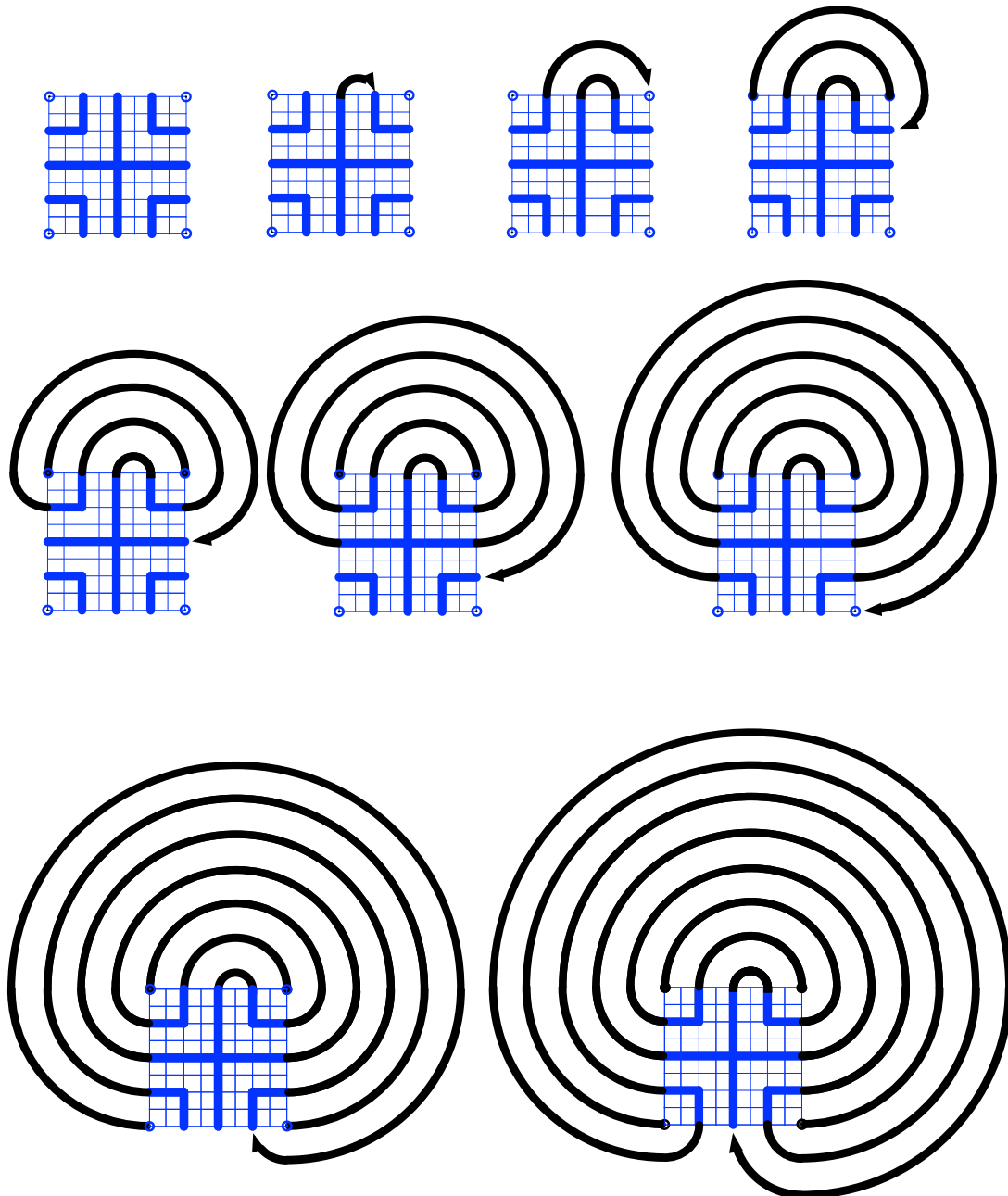


Diagram 10.3 Generation of the Classic Maze or Cretan Maze, based on the 'seed pattern' of a square cross, four *gammadia* and four points.

<sup>23</sup> Jeff Saward, *The First Labyrinths*, available at: <http://www.labyrinthos.net/First%20Labyrinths.pdf>. The article is part of a series of articles and papers published by *Caerdroia - the Journal of Mazes & Labyrinths*.

<sup>24</sup> *Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines*, 88.





Image 10.22 An early example of the Classic Maze or Cretan Maze known as *Labirinto do Outeiro do Cribo*, Pontevedra, Galicia, Spain. Possibly dating from as early as the Bronze Age (though rock carvings are notoriously difficult to date with certainty). Note the image has been reversed to correspond with that of Diagram 10.3.

## The Architectural Plan as an Expression of 'The Way'

Guénon in the final paragraph of *Symbolism of the Cross* concludes, 'This brings us to the end of the present study, and we must hold over for another occasion an examination of the metaphysical theory of the multiple states of the being considered independently of the geometrical symbolism'.<sup>25</sup> Guénon could say this with an intent to publish another dozen or more books and many essays; this is not an approach I can take here. Instead, the subject finally addressed here is more a leap from pure geometric symbolism to the subjective dimension of an individual's passage through the multiple states and how it relates to architecture.

The idea of spiritual movement toward the centre of the cross is symbolised by the physical movement toward the centre of a determined and sacred configuration. It is also contained in a more generalised way in all sacred architecture by the means of a progression from the outside toward the inside of the sacred *temenos*. This transition from the profane outside world through to the sacred centre in some traditions is called an approach toward the 'Holy of the Holies', manifests a transition in terms of degrees of sacredness (if such a term be allowed). This gradual progression through sanctified space is a transition from the domains that are furthest from the centre toward those that directly reflect the Principle of the Sacred at the centre. Thus the sacred building manifests something of the symbol of the labyrinth and the use of levels of transition in

<sup>25</sup> *Symbolism of the Cross*, 134.



terms of this graduation and progression through the architectural disposition of its various parts and final proximity to the centre. The degree to which this analogy holds depends on the scale and complexity of the architectural plan and tradition. The temple, the cathedral or the holy structure becomes a structure in which the passageway from the entry to the holy centre is defined and given definition. This passage rather than being circumferential as in circumambulation, becomes axial and this passage is a reflection of the Great Way toward the vertical *axis-mundi* of the world.

The various states of manifestation which are to be overcome are symbolised in different ways. It is the art of architecture to present to the participant a built manifest form in which space is articulated and differentiated, a space or spaces which are capable of being interpreted and experienced in a manner which is both immediate and yet also symbolic. Such architectural elements as the progressive use of doorways and entries, the use of walls and screens to mark and separate different areas, the use of steps and changes in relative levels, the use of colour, smell, materiality and transparency, in fact the full vocabulary of architectural possibility, all come into play to articulate the progression of the way towards the centre (Diagram 10.4). Above all, however, it is the configuration of the cross within the building that gives symbolic structure to the whole..

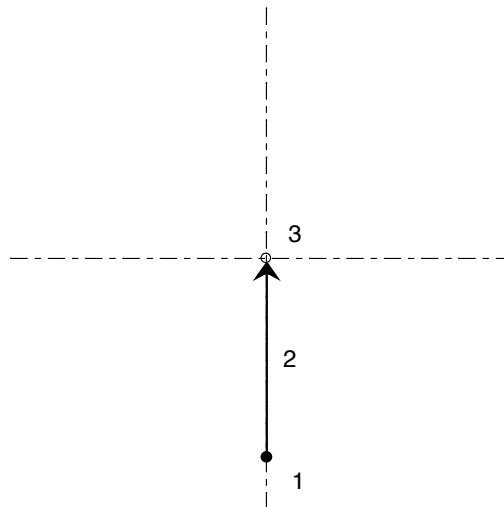


Diagram 10.4 All sacred architecture manifests a progression in a myriad of modes, the progression from the outside, through the sacred space towards the centre.

## The Vertical Dimension as Expression of the Way

Movement through the sacred building is a participation in the symbolic possibilities of space and the horizontal deployment of the architectural elements are the means by which this is attained. Ambulation is the means of movement through this predominantly horizontal world. The centre as the goal, and the pathway that leads to it, are identifiable with the *axis-mundi* and, from a certain point of view, are identifiable as a vertical ascent towards the Divine Domain. This axis to heaven may be reinforced by an actual ascent toward the inner sanctum; however, this is only a

metaphor for the spiritual approach to the House of God. The vertical axis in this regard is a more than adequate symbol, whether or not it is translated into the horizontal dimension of space.

Symbolic identity aside, there remains the consideration of bodily participation in the progression and this is something the traditional architect has always endeavoured to effect. A change in level, sometimes a dramatic change, demands of the participant something that the horizontal passage does not. Firstly and simply there is a change in the gait of the participant, a result of walking up steps or a ramp and a corresponding change in the body's sense of itself. This subtle change may or may not be experienced directly by all. It depends more or less on the attention one gives to the body while participating in the myriad other aspects of the progression. This change in the participant's sensation of movement may be exaggerated by the architecture so that it cannot be ignored. Steps are familiar and the change in the posture of steps normally encountered may feel 'everyday'. However, oversized steps and long ascending flights of steps can catch the body unawares, often literally bringing participants to their senses.<sup>26</sup> Maybe a tightening of the thigh muscles, or a short moment of breathlessness, a slight overbalancing on a worn or slippery step, all ensure the body participates in the sensation of an ascent. At *Borobudur*, discussed in detail at the end of Chapter 7, this effect is taken further because the step risers are abnormally high (approximately 300mm) and the treads narrow, while the handrails are a modern addition, so the ascent seems to be gauged for 'larger beings' (Image 7.17). For a moment, the participant may withdraw from the experience of the external surroundings and find an inner sensation, a reminder brought on by the body. The ascending steps may mean that for a moment there is a change from the outward to the inward.

The idea of using the vertical divisions of space to symbolize so many levels of existence has been already discussed in part in the earlier chapters. What remains is to show how these multiple levels are further developed now in the individual being. In the macrocosmic domain, this involves the symbolic conditions of each state. In other words, not only are the various multiple states symbolised, but it is possible to articulate and elaborate symbolically the differences between the various states. The first introduction to this area in the earlier chapters was to emphasise the multiple states; what is considered here is the being's participation and the being's individual transformation from one state to another as part of a spiritual ascent and symbolised by an architectural pathway. This is similar to the spiritual journey symbolised by the progression toward the centre; now it is considered in space. The vertical dimension becomes the vertical *axis-mundi* and the multiple states so many different states along the vertical axis. How this spatial symbolism applies to architecture is that the vertical component of the body of a sacred building becomes a vehicle for the symbolic representation of the world and the spiritual path can be symbolically figured now in cross section as it was symbolised in the plan. The elevation and the cross section of a sacred building can symbolise all those elements represented in the sacred 'plan'.

The vertical dimension however is fundamentally different to the horizontal dimension in that the horizontal is a dimension or a space in which the being may participate in relatively free movement. The human being moves predominantly in the horizontal domain and the vertical dimension remains a dimension latent within space but not necessarily one that can be easily traversed. Verticality of space is utilized in terms of change of the floor levels but the horizontal

---

<sup>26</sup> In Bali, some gateways are approached by ascending several steps leading to the threshold only to descend on the other side. The gateway becomes a monumental stile, demanding of the entrant expenditure of energy and a change in their progressing gait. Again the effect is similar, the body is brought to attention and the habitual postural mien undergoes a change and with this bodily change is associated the change in sanctity of the space. In a very small but not insignificant way, the body undergoes a change upon entering or passing over the threshold and this upon another level is indeed a transformation of being.

There is a vast area of the experiential side of sacred architecture that can be only mentioned here in passing. It is intended to explore this vista in a further study.

dimensions still predominate in the spatial and functional disposition of the architectural mass. Being, as was said before, is a creature who moves and occupies the horizontal plane of their world and the vertical dimension and the full potential of the verticality of space lies in its cognitive and symbolic possibilities.<sup>27</sup> It may not be such a gross simplification to say that horizontal space is functional and corporeal but vertical space remains contemplative, symbolic and aspirational (Image 10.23).



Image 10.23 Covered way and stairway ascent toward *Soon U Ponya Shin Paya*, Sagaing Hill, Mandalay, Burma.

<sup>27</sup> As was noted previously, this is because the verticality has to resist the opposing vertical force of gravity. This allows many metaphorical translations in regard to the effort or work required to overcome the horizontal forces in order to ascend.

## The Significance of the Pivotal Centre & the Altar

The physical re-orientation of the horizontal pathway of the sacred building into the vertical axis is one of the most significant and complex of all the various architectural themes related to the symbolism of the cross. The exact point of translation from the horizontal axis of passage into the subtle vertical axis of ascent coincides with the very heart of the sacred structure. This central point can be likened to a pivot or pivotal point and is the generatrix of the building's mass and disposition of its various architectural elements. This point can also be likened to a spatial hinge which affords a spatial translation from the horizontal plan into the vertical axis.<sup>28</sup> All the symbolism which has been described in the previous chapters comes to bear on this one pivotal point of translation, for the centre is the nexus between the horizontal worldly domain and the vertical empyrean. This point of translocation has varying significance in the architecture of the different traditions, although metaphysically they are all related (Diagram 10.5).

In the Jewish tradition, it is the altar that is the centre of the tabernacle and 'the altar shall be foursquare: and ... thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners'.<sup>29</sup> Great detail is given to the description, rites and construction of the Hebrew tabernacle and even more so to those within the later temples. In the Old Testament, the altar becomes the site of sacrifice. The Christian tradition in its clarity also embodies the notions of sacrifice except that the animal sacrifice is replaced by the commemoration of the sacrificial death of Christ upon the cross and the Last Supper. The whole architectural body of every church or cathedral complies to this eternal symbol by having the cross within its plan, either explicitly or implied. The cross symbolises the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the point where the arms of the cross meet is, symbolically at least, the only coherent location for the altar and the celebration of the Eucharist.<sup>30</sup> If the axis of the Church is orientated East then this East direction is equivalent to the vertical dimension laid out in the horizontal direction. The same applies to any other orientation of the main access.

---

<sup>28</sup> Isidore of Seville draws on the metaphor of the hinge when describing the cardinal points, cardinal deriving from *cardo* (*Cardea*), meaning hinge when he states; 'The cardines "hinges" are the end parts of the axis. They are named because the sky is turned on them, or because they are turned just like the heart, "cor"'. *The Etymologies*, III.38.

Even more illuminating is St. Isidore's etymology of the hinge; 'A hinge (*cardo*) is the place on which a door swings and is always moved. It is so called after the term *kardia* (heart), because as the heart (*cor*) governs and moves the whole person, so this pivot governs and moves a door. Whence the proverbial expression, for a matter to be "at a turning point" (*in cardine*)'. *The Etymologies*, XV.vii.7.

<sup>29</sup> Exodus 27:1-2)

<sup>30</sup> Article 289, *The General Instruction on the Roman Missal 2011* states, 'The altar on which the Sacrifice of the Cross is made present under sacramental signs is also the table of the Lord to which the People of God is called together to participate in the Mass, as well as the centre of the thanksgiving that is accomplished through the Eucharist'. Excerpt from the English translation of *The Roman Missal*, 2010, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. Available at: <http://www.liturgyooffice.org.uk/Resources/GIRM/Documents/GIRM.pdf>

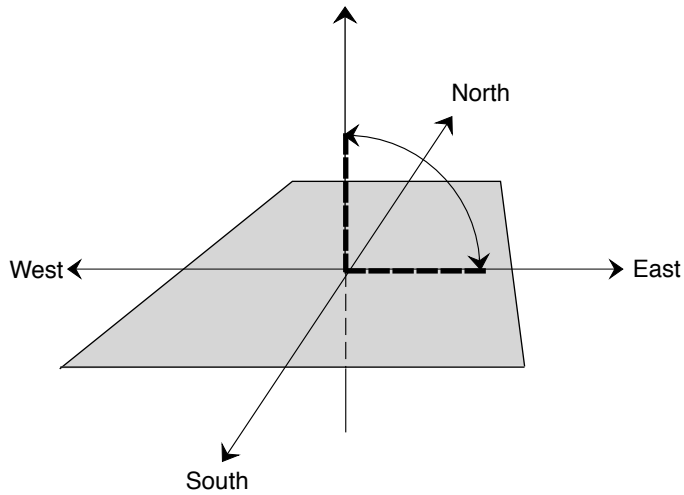


Diagram 10.5

Transformation of the axis from the West toward the East, translated into the vertical axis. The East becomes a 'virtual vertical axis'. The same applies even when the main axis is not associated with a particular direction and the axis is its own orientation in the building. The pivot point is likened to that of an axial 'hinge'.

In the same way that the substance of a sacrifice is transformed in an act of transubstantiation, so is the surface of the horizontal altar and the whole church transformed into the vertical dimension by an act of 'trans-spatiality', that is, partaking of the body of Christ (Images 10.24 & 10.25).



Image 10.24

The altar is the pivotal point where the main horizontal axis of the church is translocated to the vertical axis, as in the sanctuary of St. Mark's Church Darling Point, Australia. Architect, Edmund Blacket.





Image 10.25 The altar of *Temppeliahkion Kirk* (The Rock Church) by Timo & Tuomo Suomalainen (1969), Helsinki, Finland.

This principle of translocation of the main horizontal axis toward the vertical can generally be applied to many other traditions as well. The neophyte, once having made the ritual sacrifice in the proscribed form and within the worldly plane and having symbolically played out the rite upon or before the altar and having the offering accepted, attains a vertical connection with the presence of Being. This connects the being with the Divine Realm and union with the One. Thus the altar in a certain sense contains the same symbolism as the centre along with it the non-dimensionality of the Principial Point. In this regard the word 'altar' is derived from the Latin *altare* meaning 'altar for sacrifice to the high gods but also from *altus*, meaning simply, 'high'. The altar becomes the pivot for non-spatial passage through which the 'other' passes and is made high, from the spatio-temporal world toward the Domain of the Universal; it is the spatio-locus of transformation (Diagram 10.6).

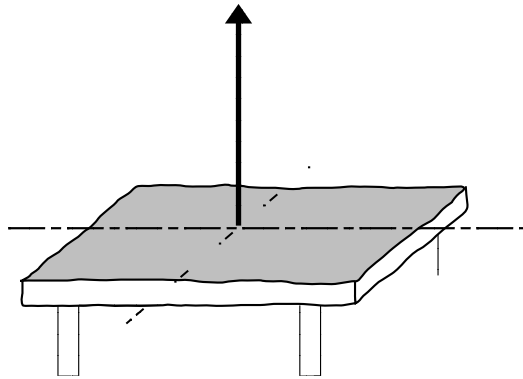


Diagram 10.6 The altar as the ritual centre of the three dimensional cross and pivot point for the translocation of the main horizontal axis toward the ascent along the vertical axis and Divine Union.

Once this pivotal threshold has been crossed, the ascent through the symbolic apex of the temple begins. The ascent path is expressed in the appropriate traditional architectural mode, which may be by way of the eye of the dome along the axis of the spire of the crossing of the nave. In the Hindu tradition, the ritual is more complex; the pivotal point is located at the *shiva līṅgaṃ* or other deity that is the focus of *darshan*, the 'beholding of a sacred image or a sacred place' in the temple.<sup>31</sup> The beholding is in the act of 'offering up' and involves an offering of surrender to the Deity of the temple and a surrender to the prescribed sacred rights and most often, after ritual prayer and during circumambulation (Image 10.26).<sup>32</sup> The journey in this case becomes one to the interior of the cave in the centre of the heart of the seeker. This is the point of generation of the three dimensional cross - the Principle of Being.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Using the words of Eck, *India: A Sacred Geography* (New York: Harmony Books, 2012), 443.

<sup>32</sup> In the Hindu doctrines, it is specifically covered in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. Refer to Wu, *Chinese & Indian Architecture*, 15-16 in regard to the ritual act of circumambulation.

<sup>33</sup> I am grateful to Alan Croker for contributing a final comment in regard to the Hindu tradition.



Image 10.26 Cave 23 Ellora, India, with its central *garbhagriha* and its *Shiva-lingam*. The phallic column is also the cosmic egg symbol of *Shiva* and aligned with Essence and *Purusha*.<sup>34</sup> The upper part of the base supporting the gutter for containing the libation of the *linga* is the *yonī* aligned with Substance and *Prakṛiti*. The middle part of the base symbolises *Vishnu*. The base support symbolises *Brahma*. The symbolic ensemble is overlooked by the carved relief figure of the *Trimurti*.

---

<sup>34</sup> Snodgrass, *Symbolism of the Stupa*, 167-170 & 211-212.



The form of the altar need not be in the body of the temple but may be an actual built external space itself such as the Circular Altar of the Temple of Heaven (*Tiāntán*), Beijing (Image 10.27). In all cases the altar is the site for ritual participation and offering (Image & 10.28).<sup>35</sup>



Image 10.27 (above left)

Entry gates to the external Circular Altar of the Temple of Heaven (*Tiāntán*) Beijing China.

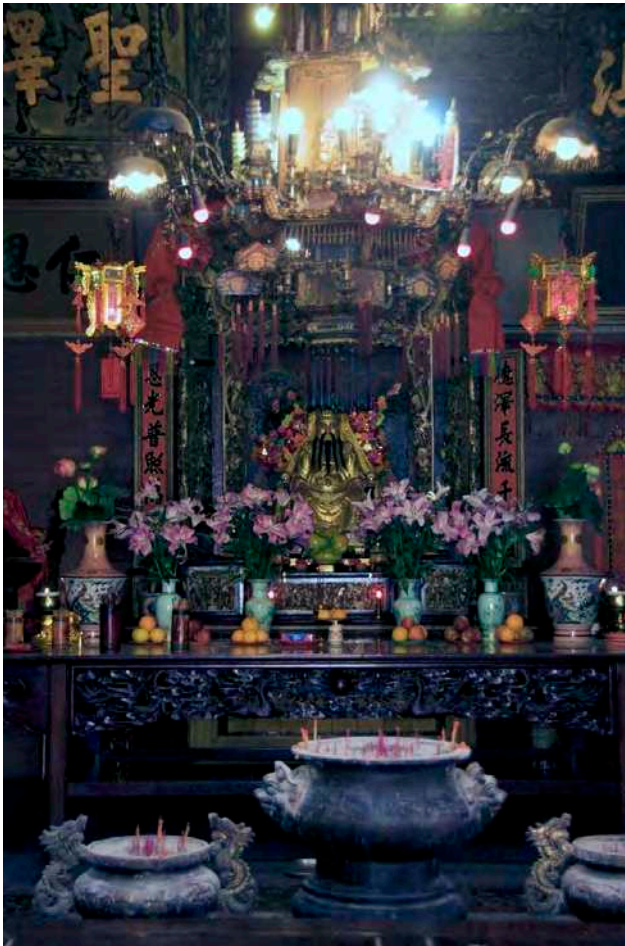


Image 10.28

*Yiu Ming* Chinese Temple, Alexandria, Australia.

<sup>35</sup> In the Chinese tradition the rites are well documented in the traditional texts as discussed by William Edward Soothill, *The Hall of Light: A Study of Early Chinese Kingship* among others as noted in Chapter 9 on the *Ming T'ang*.

In traditions that do not develop an explicit ritual of sacrifice, the cosmic altar as the means of salvation and sanctification remains the site of ritual payer and offering<sup>36</sup> such as in some aspects of Buddhism (Image 10.29).



Image 10.29 Altar in front of the the great Buddha, *Vairocana* or *Daibutsu*, *Tōdai-ji Temple*, Nara, Japan.

<sup>36</sup> In many respects there is little difference between what is offered as sacrifice and what is an offering and what is offered as prayer as God receives all equally.



In Islam, the ritual of offering physical objects becomes redundant and subsumed by ritual prayer. The pivotal point in Islam is translocated to the *Ka'bah*, which takes on the same meaning as the Principial Point and is in any case its original form.<sup>37</sup>

To view all these considerations in another way in terms of the microcosm and the macrocosm, the pivotal point is the centre to be attained and the centre which lies at the heart of the believer. It is the immanent point of the Divine Principle's action within the world. Both points coincide within the centre of the sacred building and the centre of the worshiping being. To occupy this point is to be at once united with the symbolic centre of the structure and to identify with the vertical axis toward the Creator, because at this centre individual being, building and the Divine Principle become united. The symbolic transformation of space and time into their principles of the point and the moment is accomplished in the process of being present to this union at the centre of the three-dimensional or cross. The union is participation in the human state, in the point and in the moment; this takes place not in the realm of the transient and limited world of space and time, and ultimately not even at the centre of the cross which is transcended, but in the Divine Presence beholding the Qualities, of the Omnipresent and the Eternal.

---

<sup>37</sup> Some writers have incorrectly called the *mihrāb* niche in a mosque an 'altar'. For example, Mahya Soltani, 'Philosophy and Wisdom in Islamic-Iranian Architecture, With Respect to External Veil in Architecture', *Current World Environment*, Vol. 10 (Special Issue 1), (2015), 260-267. This is not correct in the light of what has been said previously. The *mihrāb* indicates the *qiblah* orientation toward the *Ka'bah*. The *mihrāb* in that regard is not the focus of prayer but rather the *Ka'bah* as its hypostasis. Notwithstanding this aspect of Islamic doctrine, the *Ka'bah* as discussed has the *al-Hajar al-Aswad*, or the 'Black Stone' built into its eastern corner. This stone, according to Islamic lore, was part of an altar at which Adam prayed in Eden. In this sense prayers could be said to be orientated toward an altar but only when considered in this light.

# LIST OF IMAGES

- 1.1 *Parsvanatha Temple*, eastern group of Temples, Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh, India. Image by author.
- 2.1 Crepuscular light rays of the Sun made visible by fog and trees, Centennial Park, Sydney. Image by author.
- 2.2 Crepuscular light rays of the Sun through the old stained glass window of St. Denis cathedral and lighting the interior. Paris, France. Attributed to Konstantin Yolshin, <http://depositphotos.com/11440448/stock-photo-saint-denis-cathedral.html>.
- 2.3 Ripples in water made visible by a small disturbance. Multiple on-line usage. Original source unknown.
- 2.4 God as the Master Architect, Builder, Geometer and Craftsman. From the frontispiece of *D'une Bible Moralisée*, circa 1220-1230. Austrian National Library, Codex Vindobonensis 2554, f.1 verso, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:God\\_the\\_Geometer.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:God_the_Geometer.jpg).
- 2.5 The cells of hexagonal honeycomb taken from a farmed beehive. Image attributed to Jamain, [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f9/Frame\\_from\\_a\\_hive\\_J1.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f9/Frame_from_a_hive_J1.jpg).
- 2.6 Images of snowflakes. Source: SnowCrystals.com created by Kenneth G. Libbrecht, Californian Institute of Technology, [www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals/photos/photos.htm](http://www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals/photos/photos.htm).
- 2.7 Images of English Gothic Cathedrals from Georg Dehio and Gustav von Bezold, *Kirchliche Baukunst des Abendlandes*, Stuttgart, Verlag der Cotta'schen Buchhandlung 1887-1901.
- 2.8 Multiple presentations of the traditional form of the *stupa* in the modality of the Burmese *zedi* at *Pa-Oh*, Kakku, Shan State, Burma. Image by author.
- 3.1 *Adam Kadmon*, from *The Cabala*, by Bernhard Pick, (1913), but probably originally from Ginsburg, *The Kabbalah*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam\\_Kadmon#/media/File:Adamtree.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_Kadmon#/media/File:Adamtree.jpg).
- 3.2 Hildegard von Bingen: *Liber Divinorum Operum*. Copy of the 13th century manuscript. Biblioteca statale, Lucca (Italia), [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2e/Hildegard\\_von\\_Bingen\\_Liber\\_Divinorum\\_Operum.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2e/Hildegard_von_Bingen_Liber_Divinorum_Operum.jpg).
- 3.3 *The Crucifixion* by Theophanes the Cretan, Holy Monastery of Stavronikita, Mount Athos, [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9f/Crucifixion\\_by\\_Theophanes\\_the\\_Cretan.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9f/Crucifixion_by_Theophanes_the_Cretan.jpg)
- 3.4 *Lord Purusha* in the form of the *Purushakara Yantra*. The Cosmic Man and figuration of the world from Ajit Mookerjee, *Tantra Art its Philosophy & Physics*, plate 76.
- 3.5 *Purusha* within the square figure of the *vāstu-purusha mandala*. Reproduced from Volwahren, *Architecture of the World - India*, 44
- 3.6 *Kāla-purusha* and *Nakṣa-purusha* from an astrological manuscript, Rajasthan, 18th century, [http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00routesdata/1300\\_1399/jainart/jaintantric1/jaintantric1.html](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00routesdata/1300_1399/jainart/jaintantric1/jaintantric1.html).
- 3.7 *Graha* and *Kāla-purusha* from an astrologer's wall chart, Gujarat, 19th century. Swami Sivapriyananda, *Astrology and Religion in Indian Art* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1990), fig. 7.

- 3.8 *Neak Pean temple* associated with a larger temple called *Preaek Khan*, Angkor, Cambodia. Image by author.
- 4.1(a) British Museum Ms. Or.8349 from Edith Jachimowicz, 'Islamic Cosmology', essay in, *Ancient Cosmologies*, edited by Carmen Blacker & Michael Loewe.
- 4.1(b) The Ptolemaic universe from Andrew Borde, *The First Book of the Introduction of Knowledge*, <http://www.luminarium.org/encyclopedia/ptolemaic.gif>.
- 4.2 W.R. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, 79 [1892], [www.sacred-texts.com/earth/amm/amm07.htm](http://www.sacred-texts.com/earth/amm/amm07.htm).
- 4.3(a) The omphalos of Delphi, <http://www.utexas.edu/courses/larrymyth/images/2B-Delphi-Omphalos.jpg>.
- 4.3(b) The omphalos from Gebel Barkal, Great Temple of Amun, Hall B, Nubia. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Harvard University, Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition, 1921. Accession number: 21.3234, <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/shrine-144530>.
- 4.4 The Islamic prophet Muhammad (PBUH) solves a dispute over lifting the black stone into position at *al-Kaaba*. From the *Jami al-Tawarikh* or *The Compendium of Chronicles* or 'The Universal History'. This illustration is in a folio in the Oriental Manuscript Section of the Edinburgh University Library, Special Collections and Archives, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mohammed\\_kaaba\\_1315.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mohammed_kaaba_1315.jpg).
- 4.5 The black stone or *al-Hajar al-Aswad* recessed into a protective shroud, attributed to Amr Zakarya, <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/33545894>.
- 4.6(a) O-T *mappa mundi* from the 4th edition of Meyers Konversations-Lexikon, (1885-90), [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Radkarte\\_MKL1888.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Radkarte_MKL1888.png)
- 4.6(b) O-T *mappa mundi* based on St. Isidore's original from the *Etymologiarum sive Originum libri*, XX, <http://www.henry-davis.com/MAPS/EMwebpages/205mono.html>.
- 4.6(c) An enhanced version of the the Hereford *mappa mundi*, <http://www.henry-davis.com/MAPS/EMwebpages/226mono.html>.
- 4.6(d) Schematic resolution of the Hereford original *mappa mundi*, [http://atlantismaps.com/Ch3\\_images/img\\_12L.jpg](http://atlantismaps.com/Ch3_images/img_12L.jpg)
- 4.7 The *Catur-dvipā vasumatī* from R. F. Gombrich, 'Ancient Indian Cosmology' in, *Ancient Cosmologies*, edited by Carmen Blacker & Michael Loewe, 126.
- 4.8 Folio from a Hindi manuscript by the saint Narayan, circa 1740. Painting in watercolour, opaque watercolour, gold, and ink on paper, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gangadhara.jpg>.
- 4.9 Carved open air base-relief, known as *Arjuna's Penance* or alternatively the *Penance of Bhagiratha* at Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu, South India. Image by author.
- 4.10 Aerial view of *Ranganatha Temple*, Srirangam. Source Google Earth.
- 4.11 Plan of *Ranganatha Temple*, Srirangam. Drawing by Peter Bernhard, <http://www.bernhardpeter.de/Indien/seite239.htm>.
- 4.12 The *alem* surmount the *qubbah* (domes) and minaret of *Süleymaniye Mosque* of Istanbul. Image by Hayatikayhan, <http://depositphotos.com/13175500/stock-photo-blue-mosque-domes-minaret-and.html>.
- 4.13 Drop of water and ripples. Numerous images available as an online resource including, <http://de.flash-screen.com/free-wallpaper/wasser-tropfenabbildungen-der-3d/sch-ner-wasser-tropfen,1920x1200,46863.html>.
- 4.14 *Kurma Avatar* of *Vishnu*, holding up *Mount Mandara*, during *Samudra manthan* or the Churning of the Sea of Milk, C. 1870. Uttar Pradesh, India. Original at Victoria and Albert Museum, London, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Kurma\\_Avatar\\_of\\_Vishnu\\_ca\\_1870.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Kurma_Avatar_of_Vishnu_ca_1870.jpg).
- 4.15 Churning of the Sea of Milk door lintel frieze, the inner sanctuary, *Wat Ek Phnom*, Battambang, Cambodia. Image by author.
- 4.16 Southern gate balustrade leading to *Angkor Thom*, Siem Reap, Cambodia. Image by author.
- 4.17(a) Base relief *Angkor Wat*, East side of the outer gallery, Siem Reap, Cambodia. Integrated Conservation Resources, Inc. Online resource, [https://depositphotos.com/9050679/stock-photo-the-bas-relief-of-the.html#4.17\(b\)](https://depositphotos.com/9050679/stock-photo-the-bas-relief-of-the.html#4.17(b)).

- 4.17(b) Base relief *Angkor Wat*, East side of the outer gallery, Siem Reap, Cambodia. Integrated Conservation Resources, Inc. Online resource, <https://depositphotos.com/9050679/stock-photo-the-bas-relief-of-the.html>4.17(b).
- 4.18 *Meru* as the Balinese temple rests upon the tortoise base of *Kurma*, at *Pura Taman Saraswati Temple*, Ubud, Bali. Image by author.
- 4.19 Temple base, *Gunung Kawi Complex*, Bali. Image by author.
- 4.20 Cross section through the Hindu *Kandariya temple* in Khajuraho. Modified drawing by author from Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 212.
- 6.1 Obelisk of Queen Hatshepsut, Temple of Amun, Karnak. Image by author.
- 6.2 Aerial photograph of Borobudur, Attributed to Luca Tettoni. Numerous online resource including, <http://www.gettyimages.com.au/detail/photo/aerial-view-of-borobudur-temple-java-high-res-stock-photography/rh238-1166>.
- 6.3 The plan of *Borobudur* as a *mandala*, <http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/m/images/mandala.borobudur.lg.jpg>.
- 6.4 Part cross section drawing through Borobudur, [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bobobudur\\_Half\\_Cross\\_Section.png](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bobobudur_Half_Cross_Section.png). Additional graphic text by author.
- 6.5 Square terraces of *Borobudur*. Image by author.
- 6.6 Circular terraces of *Borobudur*. Image by author.
- 6.7 Circular terraces of *Borobudur*. Image by author.
- 6.8(a) *Gyantse Kumbum*, Tibet, <http://employees.oneonta.edu/kotzjc/tibetweb/IMAGES/Kumbum.jpg>.
- 6.8(b) *Bodhnath Mahachaitya*, Kathmandu, Nepal, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/fugunumbmouth/2121985505/>.
- 6.8(c) *Shwedagon Pagoda*, Yangon, Burma. Image by author.
- 6.8(d) *Baisikou twin stupa*, Yinchuan, China. Joe Cummings, *Buddhist Stupas in Asia - The Shape of Perfection*, 159. Photograph by Bill Wassman.
- 6.8(e) *Thuparama Dagaba*, Sri Lanka, [http://www.buddhistdoor.com/buddhistart/images/Sri\\_lanka/14.%20Thuparama.jpg](http://www.buddhistdoor.com/buddhistart/images/Sri_lanka/14.%20Thuparama.jpg).
- 6.9(a) *Agnicayana (ati-rātrā agni-cayana)* or 'the building up of the fire altar' in Kerala, India. Attributed to K. Sreejith, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ആഗ്നികായനം\\_ചിത്രം1%20E2%80%8C-നീർമ്മാണം.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ആഗ്നികായനം_ചിത്രം1%20E2%80%8C-നീർമ്മാണം.jpg).
- 6.9(b) Isometric view of the layered of the Vedic fire altar resulting from the ritual *Agnicayana*, from Kapila Vatsyayan, 'Vedic Altars In Vistāra: The Architecture of India', Catalogue of the Exhibition, edited by Carmen Kagal. The Festival of India, 1986, <https://architexturez.net/doc/az-cf-123666>.
- 6.10(a) Hindu temple, *Khajuraho Group*, India. Image by author.
- 6.10(b) Hindu temple, *Khajuraho Group*, India. Image by author.
- 6.10(c) *Shringara Chauri Temple*, Chittorgarh, India. Image by author.
- 7.1 The plan of the Acropolis, Athens after 450 BCE. Included in Pont, Graham. 'The Circle and the Cross: Genesis and Hermeneutic of the Traditional Cosmology', *Prudentia* (1994), 165. Drawings attributed to Michael Dawes based on Constantinos Doxiadis original drawings which can be seen at: [http://www.deconcrete.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Doxiadis\\_Architectural-Space-in-Ancient-Greece\\_Athens-Acropolis-I-II-III.jpg](http://www.deconcrete.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Doxiadis_Architectural-Space-in-Ancient-Greece_Athens-Acropolis-I-II-III.jpg).
- 7.2(a) Aerial view of the *Naqsh-e Jahan Square* (formally Shah Square) at the centre of the Isfahan. Courtesy of Google Earth.
- 7.2(b) Plan of the square with the *Masjid-e Jam 'e Abbasi* at the southern end from Ardalan & Bakhtiar, *The Sense Unity*, 98.
- 7.3 View from within the *Shah Mosque Masjid-e Jam 'e Abbasi*, Isfahan looking back at the entry *iwan*, [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/63/Imam\\_Mosque\\_3Daa.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/63/Imam_Mosque_3Daa.jpg).
- 7.4 *Pura Besakih* in Bali located on the foothills of the central sacred mountain of *Gunung Agung*. Image attributed to Uwe Aranas, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Besakih\\_Bali\\_Indonesia\\_Pura-Besakih-03.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Besakih_Bali_Indonesia_Pura-Besakih-03.jpg).
- 7.5 Pilgrims ascending the steps of *Pura Besakih*, Bali. Image by author.
- 7.6 Stone *Ratha*, *Vittala Temple*, Vijayanagara (Hampi), India. Image by author.

- 7.7 Sun Temple of Konark, Orissa India, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Konark\\_Sun\\_Temple\\_Wheel.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Konark_Sun_Temple_Wheel.jpg).
- 7.8 A Hindu version of the *Dharmachakra* in the inner sanctuary of the Upper *Shivalaya* Temple, Badami India. Image by author.
- 7.9(a) Graphic version of the *Dharmachakra*. From the Dover Pictorial Archive, <http://www.doverpictura.com/lookinside/0486996131#!/&sheet=10976>.
- 7.9(b) Graphic version of the *Dharmachakra*, <http://www.chinabuddhismencyclopedia.com/en/index.php?title=File:Dharmachakra-200.jpg>.
- 7.9(c) Stone *Dharmachakra*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Buddhism#/media/File:MonWheel.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Buddhism#/media/File:MonWheel.jpg).
- 7.9(d) *Dharma* wheel from the pillar of the southern gate of *Sanchi Stupa*, <http://personal.carthage.edu/~jlochtefeld/buddhism/sanchi/sgexterior.html>.
- 7.9(e) An Ashokan wheel or *Asoka chakra*, [http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/bud\\_wheel.htm](http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/bud_wheel.htm).
- 7.9(f) A Tibetan *Bhavachakra*, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/world/images/s109.jpg>.
- 7.9(g) An Ashokan column capital from Sarnath with *Dharmachakra* on the lion base, [http://www.lgpn.ox.ac.uk/image\\_archive/images/Af26.AsokaPillar\\_000.jpg](http://www.lgpn.ox.ac.uk/image_archive/images/Af26.AsokaPillar_000.jpg).
- 7.10 Authors graphics on image of *Angkor Wat*, courtesy of Google Earth. Diagram based on material in Robert Stencel, Fred Gifford & Eleanor Moron, 'Astronomy and Cosmology at Angkor Wat', *Science*, 193, (1976), 281-287.
- 7.11 Mosaic floor of ancient Roman villa with scenes from the battle of Theseus and Minotaur in labyrinth, Tombs of Kings, Paphos, Cyprus. Attributed to Kaetana, <http://depositphotos.com/search/theseus-and-the-minotaur.html?qview=109690634>.
- 7.12 Drawings of various turf and church labyrinths from W. H. Matthews, *Mazes and Labyrinths*, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/etc/ml/index.htm>.
- 7.13 The labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral from the vault of the nave. Original photographer unknown, <http://beautyofchristianity.blogspot.com.au/2015/06/catholic-church-2.html>.
- 7.14 Line drawing of the Saffron Walden turf maze from W. H. Matthews, *Mazes and Labyrinths*. Also available at: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/etc/ml/index.htm>.
- 7.15(a) Plan of *Candi Borobudur* with the three Buddhist metaphysical domains *Kāmadhātu*, *Rūpadhātu* and *Arūpadhātu*. Attributed to Gunawan Kartapranata, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bobobudur\\_Mandala.svg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bobobudur_Mandala.svg).
- 7.15(b) Plan of *Candi Borobudur* from Domarcay, *Borobudur*, 17 with graphics of circumambulatory routes overlaid by author.
- 7.16(a) One of the mid level circumambulatory terraces at *Candi Borobudur* with carved friezes both sides of the walkway. Image by author.
- 7.16(b) One of the higher circumambulatory terraces at *Candi Borobudur* with carved friezes both sides of the walkway. Image by author.
- 7.17 Final *torana* and steps ascending to the top circular terraces at *Candi Borobudur*. Image by author
- 7.18 Top circular terraces at *Candi Borobudur*. Image by author.
- 8.1 External view of the *Durga Temple*, Aihole, Southern India. Image by author.
- 8.2 Internal view of the doorway to the inner cell or *garbhagraha*, *Durga Temple*, Aihole, Southern India. Image by author.
- 8.3 Measured drawing of *Durga Temple*, Aihole Karnataka, India, from *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture, South India: Upper Dravidadesa*, fig. 29, 50.
- 8.4(a) Plan of Cheng qi lou village, Fujian Provence, China, <http://alvinfyp.wordpress.com/2009/10/08/承启楼-cheng-qi-lou/>
- 8.4(b) Plan of *Arkaim*, a Russian Bronze Age fortified settlement, [http://arkaim-home.narod.ru/en/arkaim01\\_1.htm](http://arkaim-home.narod.ru/en/arkaim01_1.htm)
- 8.4(c) Plan of *Teli-ka-mandir Temple*, Gwalior. *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture North India Period of Early Maturity*, 16.
- 8.4(d) Plan of *Seokbulsa* Grotto Shrine, South Korea. From Kim Bongryol, *The Spirit of Korean Architecture*, 59.
- 8.4(e) Conjectural plan of Herod's Temple Jerusalem. Drawing from Joan Comay, Included in Stanley Tigerman, *The Architecture of Exile*, 104.



- 8.4(f) Plan of house 6(a) at Chysauster Bronze Age settlement, Cornwall. Redrawn by author and Tammy Noah, from original, <http://www.archaeologyonline.org/Documents/Courtyard.pdf>.
- 8.4(g) Plan of Treasury of Atreus or the Tomb of Agamemnon, Mycenae, Greece, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/image?img=Perseus:image:1990.33.0223a>.
- 8.4(h) Plan of Kailasa Temple, Ellora India. From Andreas Volwahren, *Architecture of the World: India*, 61.
- 8.5 The human being and anatomical reference planes. Image modified from online resource, [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/e/e1/Human\\_anatomy\\_planes.svg/300px-Human\\_anatomy\\_planes.svg.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/e/e1/Human_anatomy_planes.svg/300px-Human_anatomy_planes.svg.png).
- 8.6(a) Drawing depicting part of 3rd Century glass bowl showing the Temple of Jerusalem and Jachin & Boaz. Online resource, <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b4/C%2BB-Temple-Fig4-3rdCentADGlassBowlShowingJerusalemTemple.PNG>.
- 8.6(b) Woodblock print of Solomon's Temple by Francois Vatable (1573) from *Biblia Sacra*. Part of image from Stanley Tigerman, *The Architecture of Exile*, 60.
- 8.7 Western facade of Chartres Cathedral, Chartres France. Online resource, [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/13/Westfassade\\_Chartres.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/13/Westfassade_Chartres.jpg)
- 9.1(a) The northern Rose Window at Chartres Cathedral, <http://profblanchardclass.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/gothic-art.html>.
- 9.1(b) The southern Rose Window at Chartres Cathedral, [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/0c/South\\_rose\\_window\\_of\\_Chartres\\_Cathedral01.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/0c/South_rose_window_of_Chartres_Cathedral01.jpg).
- 9.2 The monogram of the *Chi-Rho*.
- 9.3(a) Panel from a Roman lidless sarcophagus, 350 CE. From the excavations of the Duchess of Chablais at Tor Marancia, 1817-1821, [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/3/33/Anastasis\\_Pio\\_Christiano\\_Inv31525.jpg/768px-Anastasis\\_Pio\\_Christiano\\_Inv31525.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/3/33/Anastasis_Pio_Christiano_Inv31525.jpg/768px-Anastasis_Pio_Christiano_Inv31525.jpg).
- 9.3(b) *Chi-Rho* symbol, detail from an altar stone. Limestone, third quarter of the 4th century. From *Khirbet Um El'Amad*, Algeria, [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chi-rho\\_mensa\\_Louvre\\_Ma\\_3023.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chi-rho_mensa_Louvre_Ma_3023.jpg).
- 9.3(c) Detail of *Chi-Rho* from the Sarcophagus of St. Drausinus. Paris, Louvre Museum (6th century), [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/50/Sarcophage\\_de\\_Drausin\\_03\\_chrisme.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/50/Sarcophage_de_Drausin_03_chrisme.jpg).
- 9.3(d) Central panel of a Roman mosaic found at Hinton St. Mary, Dorset, UK, 4th C, [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hinton\\_St\\_Mary\\_.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hinton_St_Mary_.jpg).
- 9.4 Arch of *Janus Quadrifrons*, <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a4/RomaArcoGianoCostantino1.JPG>.
- 9.5 Northern hemisphere star trails taken as photographic time exposure, [http://burro.cwru.edu/Academics/Astr306/Coords/NMSkies\\_StarTrails2.jpg](http://burro.cwru.edu/Academics/Astr306/Coords/NMSkies_StarTrails2.jpg)
- 9.6 The *Lo shu* diagram, multiple on-line unattributed versions, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Lo\\_Shu\\_3x3\\_magic\\_square.svg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Lo_Shu_3x3_magic_square.svg)
- 9.7 The *Ho T'u* or Yellow River diagram, multiple on-line unattributed versions, <http://www.seshat.ch/home/china.htm>.
- 9.8 The ancient ideogram for *jing*, meaning well.
- 9.9 Jade Chinese *bi* from the Zhou dynasty. From Alfred Schinz, *The Magic Square - Cities in Ancient China*, 72.
- 9.10 Idealized diagram of the imperial Manchu city of Mukden (Shenyang) based on the *Ming T'ang*. From Alfred Schinz, *The Magic Square Cities of Ancient China*, 350.
- 9.11 Map of Mukden from *Madrolle's Guide Books: Northern China*, The Valley of the Blue River, Korea. Hachette & Company, 1912, [http://images.nationmaster.com/nm/motw/historical/moukden\\_1912.jpg](http://images.nationmaster.com/nm/motw/historical/moukden_1912.jpg).
- 9.12 Detail from *Madrolle's Guide Books: Northern China*
- 9.13 Aerial view of Mukden Palace or the *Shèngjīng Gōngdiàn*, Courtesy of Google Earth.
- 9.14 Tiled detail of the arched entry *Iwān*, *Kalon Mosque*, Bukhara, Uzbekistan. Image by author.
- 9.15 Multiple clockwise and anti-clockwise swastika in a brickwork frieze on the Church of Christ Pantocrator, Nesebar, Bulgaria, [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/11/Sunny\\_Beach\\_Nesebar\\_centre\\_2.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/11/Sunny_Beach_Nesebar_centre_2.jpg).

- 9.16 *Dharmachakra* with central *swastika* on top of a Buddhist *stumbha*, *Dhamma-ya-za-ka Zedi*, Bagan, Burma. Image by author.
- 9.17 *Swastika* motif to stone base of timber pillar, *Tash-Khovli Palace*, *Ichon Qala*, Khiva, Uzbekistan. Image by author.
- 9.18 Image based on stone rubbing of carving from the *Wu Liang Shrine* showing the Supernal Lord Shang-di driving his heavenly chariot. Image from David W. Pankenier, 'Cosmic Capitals and Numinous Precincts in Early China', <http://journalofcosmology.com/AncientAstronomy100.html>.
- 9.19 Conjectural plan of Wang Mang's *Ming T'ang* based on the 1956 archaeological excavations South of the Han capital of Chang'an. Included in D. W. Pankenier, 'Cosmic Capitals and Numinous Precincts in Early China'. *Journal of Cosmology*, 2010, Vol 9, 2030-2040, <http://journalofcosmology.com/AncientAstronomy100.html>.
- 9.20(a) Conjectural creation of the 'Bright Hall' or *Mingtang* of Chang'an by Wang Shiren, Illustration 1.30c in Lillian Lan-ying Tseng, *Picturing Heaven in Early China*, 63.
- 9.20(b) Conjectural creation of the 'Bright Hall' or *Mingtang* of Chang'an by Wang Shiren, Illustration 1.30c in Lillian Lan-ying Tseng, *Picturing Heaven in Early China*, 63.
- 10.1 An entry to *Banteay Srei*, near Siem Reap, Cambodia. Image by author.
- 10.2 Author's graphics over plan of *Banteay Srei* from Freeman and Jacques, *Ancient Angkor*, 207.
- 10.3 Author's graphics over plan of the city temple of Madurai, South Indian. Plan from Volwahren, *Architecture of the World Series: India*, 88.
- 10.4 Main entry *gopurams* at *Meenakshi Amman Temple*, Southern India. Image attributed to Jorge Royan, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:India\\_-\\_Madurai\\_temple\\_-\\_0781.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:India_-_Madurai_temple_-_0781.jpg).
- 10.5(a) Plan of *Lakṣmana Temple*, Khajuraho, India from Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 255. Additional graphics by author.
- 10.5(b) Part elevation of *Lakṣmana Temple*, Khajuraho, India. Image by author.
- 10.6 Author's graphics over plan *Pre Rup* temple Angkor, Cambodia. Plan by Vittorio Roveda, from, Roveda, *Khmer Mythology: Secrets of Angkor*, New York, Weatherhill, 1998, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/quadralectics/4308727333/sizes/o/in/photostream/>
- 10.7(a) Top terrace of *Pre-Rup Temple*, Angkor, Cambodia. Image by author.
- 10.7(b) Detail of blind doorway, top terrace of *Pre-Rup Temple*, Angkor, Cambodia. Image by author.
- 10.8(a) Plan of *Shwezigon Paya*, Bagan, Burma. Image modifications and additional graphics by author, [http://www.seasite.niu.edu/burmese/cooler/Chapter\\_3/Part2/Images/Ps04.JPG](http://www.seasite.niu.edu/burmese/cooler/Chapter_3/Part2/Images/Ps04.JPG).
- 10.8(b) *Shwezigon Paya*, Bagan, Burma. Image by author.
- 10.9 The *Great Stupa* of Sanchi. Pen, ink and wash drawing by Frederick Charles Maisey of the plan, elevation and section with notes, dated 1847-1854 in the British Library. Additional graphics by author, <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/other/largeimage68189.html>.
- 10.10 Traditional framework of a typical *kiziy uy (yurt)*, of Karakalpakistan with hooped opening or *shangyrak* with central cross. Image by author.
- 10.11 *Samanids Mausoleum* or alternatively the *Ismail Samani Mausoleum*, Bukhara Uzbekistan. Image modifications and additional graphics by author, <http://www.bernhardpeter.de/Usbekistan/usbekistan.htm>
- 10.12 *Samanids Mausoleum* or alternatively called the *Ismail Samani Mausoleum* Bukhara, Uzbekistan. Image by author.
- 10.13 Interior of the dome surmounting the *Ismail Samani Mausoleum*, Bukhara, Uzbekistan attributed to Robert Preston, <http://images.fineartamerica.com/images-medium-large-5/inside-the-ismail-samani-mausoleum-at-bukhara-in-uzbekistan-robert-preston.jpg>.
- 10.14 Plan of *Pā-i Kalān Mosque*, Bukhara, Uzbekistan. Plan from Pierre Chuvin & Gerard Degeorge, *Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva*, 117. Additional graphics by author.
- 10.15 Interior of the *Pā-i Kalān Mosque*, Bukhara. Image by author.
- 10.16(a) Conical roof and finial (*Alem*) of the *Kaldirgach Bey Mausoleum*, Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Image by author.
- 10.16(b) Domed ceiling colonnade, *Pā-i Kalān Mosque*, Bukhara, Uzbekistan. Image by author.

- 10.17 Mosaic figures displaying the *gammadia* in the Basilica Sant 'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna. Image attributed to Nick Thompson, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/pelegrino/with/4685045296/>.
- 10.18 The four Evangelists. Mosaic; 6th century CE. Archepiscopal Chapel Ravenna. Image by Erich Lessing, <http://www.lessing-photo.com/p3/300110/30011015.jpg>.
- 10.19 Central tympanum, with the four Evangelists as zoomorphic figures located in the four quarters around the central figure of Christ within the *vesica pisces* on the West (Royal) Portal, Chartres, Cathedral, Chartres, France. Image by Nick Thompson but enhanced by author, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/bellacella/2210166696/sizes/l/in/photostream/image/England/Wells/cathedral-complex/Cathedral/Plans/df426wells-b.jpg>
- 10.20 Plan of Wells Cathedral. Additional graphics by author, <http://www.medart.pitt.edu/image/England/Wells/cathedral-complex/Cathedral/Plans/df426wells-b.jpg>
- 10.21 Image included of carved cross in cave in Gorham's Cave in Gibraltar. Joaquín Rodríguez-Vidal et al., 'A Rock Engraving Made by Neanderthals in Gibraltar'. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science of the United States of America*, Sept. 16, 2014. Vol. 110, No.37. <http://www.pnas.org/content/111/37/13301.full.pdf>.
- 10.22 An early example of the 'classic maze' or the 'Cretan maze' known as *Labirinto do Outeiro do Cribo*, Pontevedra, Galicia, Spain. Attributed to Froaringus. Image cropped, colour manipulated and rotated by author, <http://www.pnas.org/content/111/37/13301.full.pdf>.
- 10.23 Covered way and stairway ascent toward *Soon U Ponya Shin Paya*, Sagaing Hill, Mandalay, Burma. Image by author.
- 10.24 St. Mark's Church Darling Point, Australia, architect, Edmund Blacket. Image by author.
- 10.25 The altar of *Temppeliahkion Kirk* (The Rock Church) by Timo & Tuomo Suomalainen (1969), Helsinki, Finland. Image by author.
- 10.26 Cave 23 Ellora, India. Central *garbhagriha* with its *Shiva-līṅgam*. Image by author.
- 10.27 Entry gates to the , Circular Altar, of the Temple of Heaven (*Tiāntán*) Beijing China. Image by author.
- 10.28 *Yiu Ming* Chinese Temple, Alexandria Sydney, Australia. Image by author.
- 10.29 Altar in front of the the great Buddha, *Vairocana* or *Daibutsu*, *Tōdai-ji Temple*, Nara, Japan. Image by author.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

This Bibliography contains all works cited but also some additional works consulted that have been formative in the overall research of this project.

Akkach, Samer. *Cosmology and Architecture in Premodern Islam*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005.

Alexander, Philip S. 'Jerusalem as the "Omphalos" of the World: On the History of Geographical Concept'. *Judaism: A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thought*, Vol. 46, Issue 2, (Spring 1997): 147-158.

Alexander, Samuel. *Space Time and Deity; The Gifford Lectures at Glasgow, 1916-1918*, in two volumes. New York: The Humanities Press, 1950.

Al-Ghazâlî, 'The Niche of Light'. In *Four Sufi Classics*. Translated by William H.T. Gairdner. London: Octagon Press 1984. Also,  
— . *Mishkât Al-Anwar (The Niche for Lights)*. Translation and introduction by William Henry Temple Gairdner. London: Monograph Vol. XIX by the Royal Asiatic Society, 1924. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/isl/mishkat/index.htm>.

Allain of Lillie. *De Planctu Naturae, or The Plaint of Nature*. Translated by James Sheridan. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1980.

*And When Churches Are Build - Preparation, Planning & Construction of Places of Worship*. Brisbane: Liturgy Brisbane for the National Liturgical Architecture & Art Board, 2014.

Anselm, St. of Canterbury. *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*. Edited by Brian Davies and G. R. Evans. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Apostolos-Cappadona, Diane, ed. *Art Creativity and the Sacred*. New York: Crossroad Publishers, 1985.

Archarya, Prasanna Kumar. *Indian Architecture According to the Mânasâra Silpa'sâstra*. Delhi: Indian Publishers, 1981.

Ardalan, Nader and Laleh Bakhtiar. *The Sense of Unity: the Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975.

Aristotle. *Categories*. Translated by E. M. Edgehill. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/categories.1.1.html>.

Aquinas, St. Thomas. *Summa Theologica*. Translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province. London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1913.  
— . *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Translated by James F. Anderson, edited by Joseph Kenny. New York: Hanover House, 1955-57. <http://dhspriority.org/thomas/ContraGentiles.htm>.

- Augustine, St.. *Confessions*. Translated by R. S. Pine-Coffin. New York: Penguin Books, 1984.
- . *Summa Contra Gentiles, (Of God and His Creatures): An Annotated Translation*. Translated by Joseph Rickaby. London: Burns and Oates, 1905. <http://www.basilica.org/pages/ebooks/St.%20Thomas%20Aquinas-The%20Summa%20Contra%20Gentiles.pdf>.
- Avalon, Arthur (Sir John Woodroffe). *Shakti and Shakta*, London: Luzac & Co., 1918. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/tantra/sas/sas02.htm>.
- Ayer, K. Bharatha ed. *Art & Thought, Issued in Honour of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*. London: Luzac, 1947.
- Baldwin Smith, E. *The Dome: A Study in the History of Ideas*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.
- Barasch, Moshe. *Theories of Art From Plato to Winckelmann*. Albany: New York University Press, 1985.
- Barrow, Isaac. 'Absolute Time'. In *The Concepts of Space and Time: Their Structure and Their Development*, edited by Milič Čapek, 203-206. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1976.
- Beck, Brenda. 'The Symbolic Merger of Body Space and Cosmos in the Hindu Temple', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (NS), Vol. 10, No. 2 (1976): 213-243.
- Beer, Robert. *The Handbook of Tibetan Buddhist Symbols*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2003.
- Behnke, Elizabeth A. 'Space-Time Concepts as World Dimensions'. *Main Currents in Modern Thought*, Vol. 31, No.1 (1974): 13-17.
- Bermudez, Julio, ed. *Transcending Architecture: Contemporary Views on Sacred Space*. Washington: The Catholic University Press, 2015.
- Bible, The. The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Blacker, Carmen and Michael Loewe, eds. *Ancient Cosmologies*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1975.
- Bodmer, Sylvia. 'Harmonics in Space'. *Main Currents in Modern Thought*, Vol. 31, Number 1 (Sept-Oct 1974): 27-31.
- Boehme, Jacob. *The Signature of All Things and Other Writings*. London: J. M. Dent, 1912. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/eso/sat/index.htm>.
- Bosch, F. D. K. *The Golden Germ: An Introduction to Indian Symbolism*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1994.
- Boyd, Andrew. *Chinese Architecture & Town Planning*. London: Alec Tiranti, 1962.
- Brandon, S. G. F. 'Time and the Destiny of Man'. In *The Voices of Time*, edited by J. T. Fraser, 140-157. London: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 1968.
- Brethren of Purity (*Ikhwan al-Safa*). *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity On Arithmetic & Geometry: An An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistles 1 & 2* (also known as the *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'*), edited by Nader El-Bizri. Oxford: Oxford University Press in Association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2012.
- Buchli, Victor, Catharine Alexander, & Caroline Humphrey, eds. *Urban Life in Post-Soviet Asia*. London: New York : University College London Press, 2007.



- Burckhardt, Titus. *Alchemy*. Translated by William Stoddart. London: Stuart & Watkins, 1967.
- . *An Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*. Translated by D. M. Matheson. Wellingborough: Thorsons Publishers, 1977.
- . *Art of Islam*. London: World of Islam Festival Publishing Company, 1976.
- . *Mirror of the Intellect: Essays on Traditional Science & Sacred Art*. Translated by William Stoddart. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987.
- . *Moorish Culture in Spain*. Translated by Alissa Jaffa. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972.
- . *Mystical Astrology According to Ibn 'Arabi*. Translated by Bulent Rauf. Aldsworth: Beshara Publishers, 1977.
- . *Sacred Art in East & West*. Translated by Lord Northbourne. Bedford: Perennial Books, 1976.
- . *The Foundations of Christian Art*. Edited by Michael Fitzgerald. Bloomington: World Wisdom Inc, 2006.
- . 'The Symbolism of Chess'. *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Spring 1969): 91-95. <http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/uploads/ArticlePDFs/93.pdf>.
- . 'The Void in Islamic Art'. *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 4 No. 2 (Spring 1970). [http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/The\\_Void\\_in\\_Islamic\\_Art-by\\_Titus\\_Burckhardt.aspx](http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/The_Void_in_Islamic_Art-by_Titus_Burckhardt.aspx).
- . *The Wisdom of the Prophets (Fusus al-Hikam)*, by Muhyi-D-Din Ibn 'Arabi. Translation from Arabic by Titus Burckhardt and Commentary. Translated by Angela Culme-Seymour. Aldersworth: Beshara Press Publications, 1975.
- Butterworth, Edric. A. S. *The Tree at the Navel of the Earth*. Berlin: Walter De Grata, 1970.
- Cammann, Schuyler. 'The "TLV" Pattern on Cosmic Mirrors of the Han Dynasty'. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 68, No.4 (Oct.- Dec., 1948), 159-167.
- Campbell, Joseph ed. *Man & Time, Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*. Translated by Ralph Manheim. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958. [https://yijingnotes.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/man\\_and\\_time\\_c.pdf](https://yijingnotes.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/man_and_time_c.pdf).
- . *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space*. New York: Harper Row Publishers, 1988.
- Čapek, Milič ed. *The Concepts of Space and Time: Their Structure and Their Development*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1976.
- Casey, Edward S. *Getting Back into Place*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- . *Representing Place: Landscape Painting & Maps*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.
- . *The Fate of Place*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Cassirer, Ernst. *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, Vol. 2. Translated by Ralph Manheim. New Haven: Yale University Press (1965).
- Chevalier, Jean and Alain Gheerbrant. *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*. Translated by John Buchanan-Brown. London: Penguin Books, 1996.
- Clement of Alexandria. *Stromata (or Stromatei)*. Translated by William Wilson. In *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 2, edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson and A. Cleveland Coxe. Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing, 1885. Also revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0210.htm>.
- Coomans, T., H. De Dijn, J. De Maeyer, R. Heynickx and B. Verschaffel, eds. *Loci Sacri: Understanding Sacred Places*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2012.
- Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. 'Angel and Titan - An Essay in Vedic Ontology'. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Dec., 1935), 373-419. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/594758>.
- . *Art & Swadeshi*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 2001.
- . *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1985.

- . *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art*. New York: Dover Publications, 1956.
- . *Coomaraswamy, Vol. 1: Selected Papers; Traditional Art and Symbolism*. Edited by Roger Lipsey, Bollinger Series 89. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- . *Coomaraswamy, Vol. 2: Selected Papers; Metaphysics*. Edited by Roger Lipsey, Bollinger Series 89. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- . *Essays in Early Indian Architecture*. Edited by Michael Meister. New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in association with Oxford University Press, 1992.
- . *Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1981.
- . *Fundamentals of Indian Art*. Jaipur: The Historical Research Documentation Programme, 1985.
- . *Hinduism and Buddhism*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1943.
- . *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1972.
- . *Introduction to Indian Art*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1966.
- . *Symbolism in Indian Architecture*. Jaipur: The Historical Research Documentation Programme, 1983.
- . *The Bugbear Of Literacy*. Bedford: Perennial Books, 1976.
- . *The Dance of Shiva*. New Delhi: Sagar Publications, 1976.
- . 'The Interpretation of Symbols'. *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 14 No. 1 & 2, (Winter-Spring, 1980). [http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/Symbols-by\\_Ananda\\_K\\_Coomaraswamy.aspx](http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/Symbols-by_Ananda_K_Coomaraswamy.aspx).
- . *The Transformation of Nature in Art*. New York: Dover Publications, 1956.
- . *Time and Eternity*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1988.

Coomaraswamy, Rama. 'On the Name of Jesus', *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Autumn, 1976). [http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/Public/articles/browse\\_g.aspx?ID=184](http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/Public/articles/browse_g.aspx?ID=184).

Conger, George Perrigo. *Theories of Macrocosmos & Microcosmos in the History of Philosophy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1922.

Cooper, J. C. *An Illustrated Dictionary of Traditional Symbolism*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1978.  
— . *Symbolism: The Universal Language*. London: Aquarian Press, 1982.

Corbin, Henry. *Cyclical Time & Ismaili Gnosis*. London: Kegan Paul International in Association with Islamic Publications, 1983.  
— . *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*. Translated by Nancy Pearson, Bollinger Series XCI:2. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.  
— . *Temple & Contemplation*. Translated Philip Sherrad. London: KPI in Association with Islamic Publications, 1986.  
— . *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*. Translated by Nancy Pearson. Boulder: Shambhala Publications, 1978.

Cornford, Francis M. *Plato's Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato, Translated with Running Commentary*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952.

Cowen, Painton. *Rose Windows*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1979.

Coyn, Richard. *Derrida for Architects*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.  
— . *Heidegger for Architects*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.

Critchlow, Keith, *Islamic Pattern, An Analytical and Cosmological Approach*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1976.  
— . 'Notes on the Geometry of Stonehenge with Comments on the Ming Tang'. In *Glastonbury & Britain: A Study in Patterns*. Edited by Mary Williams. London: R.I.L.K.O, 1969.  
— . *Order in Space*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1969.  
— . 'Space: Plenum or Abyss'. In *Concepts of Space Ancient and Modern*. Edited by Kapila Vatsyayan, 149-156. Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts Abhinav Publications, 1991.  
— . 'Temenos or Temple, Cosmic Rhythms and the Universality of Sacred Space'. *Temenos* Number 1.  
— . *The Hidden Geometry of Flowers*. Edinburgh: Floris Books, 2012.

- . *The Soul as Sphere & Androgyne*. Ipswich: Golgonooza Press, 1980.
- . *Time Stands Still, New Light on Megalithic Science*. London: Gordon Frazer, 1979.
- D'Alviella, Goblet. *The Migration of Symbols*. London: A. Constable and Co., 1894). <http://www.sacred-texts.com/sym/mosy/mosy00.htm>.
- Dallapiccola, Anna Libera ed. *The Stupa Its Religious, Historical and Architectural Significance*. Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1980.
- Dante, *Il Convivio, (The Banquet)*. Translated by Philip Henry Wickstool for the Internet Archive. <http://self.gutenberg.org/wplbn0002171605-convivio-by-alighieri-dante.aspx>
- Daniélou, Alain. *Shiva and Dionysus*. New York: Inner Traditions International, 1984.
- Davidson, Julian and Bruce Granquist. *Balinese Temples*. Hong Kong: Periplus Editions, 1999.
- Dehio, Georg and Gustav von Bezold. *Kirchliche Baukunst des Abendlandes*. Stuttgart: Verlag der Cotta'schen, Buchhandlung 1887.
- de Dijn, Herman. 'The Scandal of Particularity: Meaning, Incarnation & Sacred Places'. In *Loci Sacri: Understanding Sacred Places*. Edited by T. Coomans et al.. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2012, 39-47.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*. Translated by John P. Leavey Jr. New York: Stoney Brook, 1978.
- . *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated with additional notes by Alan Bass. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- . *On the Name, Three collected Essays*. Edited by Thomas Dutoit. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.
- Dionysius the Areopagite. *The Divine Names and Mystical Theology*. Translated by C. E. Rolt. London: S.P.C.K. Press, 1983.
- Dorjee, Pema. *Stūpa and Its Technology: A Tibeto-Buddhist Perspective*. Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in association with Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1996.
- Doxiadis, Constantinos. *Architectural Space in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977.
- Dumarçay, Jacques. *Borobudur*. Translated and edited by Michael Smithies. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Eck, Diana L. *Banaras: City of Light*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983.
- . *India: A Sacred Geography*. New York: Harmony Books, 2012.
- Eckhardt, Meister. *Meister Eckhart, Teacher & Preacher*. Edited by Bernard McGinn. New York: Paulist Press, 1986.
- . *Meister Eckhart*. Edited by Franz Pfeiffer. Translated by C. De B. Evans. London: John M. Watkins, 1924.
- Eco, Umberto. *The Aesthetics of Saint Thomas Aquinas*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Eiseman, Fred B. Jnr. *Bali: Sekala & Niskala, Vol. 1: Essays on Religion Ritual & Art*. Berkeley: Periplus Editions, 1988.
- . *Vol. 2: Essays on Society, Tradition & Craft*. Berkeley: Periplus Editions, 1988.
- El-Bizri, Nader. *The Phenomenological Quest: Between Avicenna and Heidegger*. New York: Global Publications, 2000.

—. *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity On Arithmetic & Geometry: An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistles 1 & 2*. Edited by Nader El-Bizri. Oxford: Oxford University Press in Association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2012.

El-Said, Issam. *Islamic Art & Architecture: The System of Geometric Design*. Edited by Tarek El-Bourni & Keith Critchlow. Reading: Garnet Publishing, 1993.

El-Said, Issam and Ayse Parmen. *Geometric Concepts in Islamic Art*. London: World of Islam Festival Publishing, 1976.

Eliade, Mircea. *Symbolism, the Sacred and the Arts*. Edited by Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, Crossroad Publishing 1988.

—. *Myth of the Eternal Return: Or Cosmos and History*, Bollinger Series XLVI. New York: Pantheon Books New York, 1959.

—. *The Sacred and the Profane*. San Diego: Harvest/HBJ, 1959.

Emands, Paul, John Hendrix and Jane Lomholt, eds. *The Cultural Role of Architecture - Contemporary and Historical Perspectives*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2012.

*Encyclopaedia Of Islam*, Volume VI. Edited by C. E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel, B. Lewis & CH. Pellat. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991. [http://library.ut.ac.ir/documents/381543/3581025/Brill\\_-\\_The\\_Encyclopaedia\\_of\\_Islam\\_Vol\\_6\\_Mahk-Mid\\_.pdf](http://library.ut.ac.ir/documents/381543/3581025/Brill_-_The_Encyclopaedia_of_Islam_Vol_6_Mahk-Mid_.pdf).

Fagg, Lawrence W. *Two Faces of Time*. London: Quest Books, 1985.

Fraser, J. T. ed. *The Voices of Time: A Cooperative Survey of Man's Views of Time as Expressed by the Sciences and the Humanities*. London: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 1968.

Freeman, Michael and Claude Jacques. *Ancient Angkor*. Thailand: Asia Books, 1999.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Philosophical Hermeneutics*. Translated and edited by David E. Linge, London: University of California Press, 1977.

—. *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*. Edited by Robert Bernasconi. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998.

—. *Truth and Method*. New York: The Seabury Press, 1975.

Gardet, Louis, ed. *Cultures and Time*. Paris: UNESCO Press, 1976.

Gavrilyuk, Paul & Sarah Coakley editors. *The Spiritual Senses: Perceiving God in Western Christianity*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Giedion, Sigfried. *The Eternal Present: A Contribution on Constancy and Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964.

Gibson, James, J. *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 1986.

Godwin, Joscelyn. *Atlantis and the Cycles of Time: Prophecies, Traditions, and Occult Revelations*. Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2010.

Gombrich, R. F. 'Ancient Indian Cosmology'. In *Ancient Cosmologies*. Edited by Carmen Blacker and Michael Loewe, 110-142. London: Allen & Unwin, 1975.

Govinda, Lama Anagarika. 'The Mystery of Time', *Main Currents in Modern Thought*, 27 (Sept/Oct, 1970), 18-23.

—. *The Psycho-cosmic Symbolism of the Buddhist Stupa*. Dharma Emeryville: Publishing, 1976.

Granet, Marcel. *La Pensee Chinoise*. Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1968. [http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/granet\\_marcel/A12\\_la\\_pensee\\_chinoise/la\\_pensee\\_chinoise.pdf](http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/granet_marcel/A12_la_pensee_chinoise/la_pensee_chinoise.pdf).

- Grant, Edward. *Much Ado About Nothing-Theories of Space From the Middle Ages to the Scientific Revolution*. Bloomington: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Guénon, René. *Initiation & Spiritual Realization*. Translated by Henry D. Fohr and edited by Samuel D. Fohr. Hillsdale: Sophia Perennis, 2004.
- . *Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines*. Translated by Marco Pallis. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1993.
- . *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedânta*. Translated by Richard Nicholson. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1981.
- . *Miscellanea*. Translated by Henry D. Fohr, C. Bethell, P. Moore and H. Schiff. Hillsdale: Sophia Perennis, 2004.
- . 'Some Remarks on the Doctrine of Cosmic Cycles'. In *Traditional Forms & Cosmic Cycles*, translated by Henry D. Fohr and edited by Samuel D. Fohr, 1-8. Hillsdale: Sophia Perennis, 2004.
- . *Symbols of Sacred Science*. Translated by Henry D. Fohr and edited by Samuel D. Fohr. Hillsdale: Sophia Perennis, 2002.
- . *Symbolism of the Cross*. Translated by Angus Macnab. London: Luzac, 1983.
- . 'The Corner Stone'. *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 14, Nos. 3 & 4 (Summer-Autumn, 1980). [www.studiesincomparativereligion.com](http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com).
- . *The Crisis of the Modern World*. Translated by Marco Pallis, Arthur Osborne and Richard Nicholson. Hillsdale: Sophia Perennis, 2004.
- . *The Great Triad*. Translated by P Kingsley. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1981.
- . *The Lord of the World*. Moorecot: Coombe Springs Press, 1983.
- . *The Metaphysical Principles of the Infinitesimal Calculus*. Translated by Michael Allen and Henry D. Fohr. Hillsdale: Sophia Perennis, 2004.
- . *The Multiple States of Being*. Translated by Joscelyn Godwin. New York: Larson Publications, 1984.
- . *The Reign of Quantity and the Sign of the Times*. Translated by Lord Northbourne. Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1983.
- . *The Spiritualist Fallacy*. Translated by Alvin More Jnr. and Rama Coomaraswamy. Hillsdale New: Sophia Perennis, 2001.
- . *Traditional Forms & Cosmic Cycles*. Translated by Henry D. Fohr and edited by Samuel D. Fohr. Hillsdale: Sophia Perennis, 2004.
- Hani, Jean. *The Symbolism of the Christian Temple*. San Rafael: Sophia Perennis, 2007.
- Harper, Donald. 'The Han Cosmic Board (Shih)'. *Society for the Study of Early China*, Volume 4, January 1979, edited by Sarah Allan: 1-10. [https://www.dartmouth.edu/~earlychina/docs/earlychinajournal/ec4\\_1\\_harper.pdf](https://www.dartmouth.edu/~earlychina/docs/earlychinajournal/ec4_1_harper.pdf).
- Hartner, Willy. 'The Pseudoplanetary Nodes of the Moon's Orbit in Hindu and Islamic Iconographies: A Contribution to the History of Ancient and Medieval Astrology'. *Ars Islamica*, Vol. 5, (1938): 112-154.
- Hastings, James (editor). *The Encyclopedia of Religion & Ethics*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Being & Time*. Translated by John Macquarie & Edward Robinson. London: Basil Blackwell, 1973.
- . *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Translation by Ralph Manheim. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.
- . *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Translated and introduction by Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper & Row, 1975.
- . *The Basic Problems Of Phenomenology*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1975. [http://religiousstudies.stanford.edu/WWW/Sheehan/pdf/heidegger\\_texts\\_online/1927%20BASIC%20PROBLEMS%20OF%20PHENOMENOLOGY%201-23.pdf](http://religiousstudies.stanford.edu/WWW/Sheehan/pdf/heidegger_texts_online/1927%20BASIC%20PROBLEMS%20OF%20PHENOMENOLOGY%201-23.pdf).



- Hendrix, John Shannon. *Architectural Forms and Philosophical Structures*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003.
- . *Architecture as Cosmology*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2011.
- . *Platonic Architectonics: Platonic Philosophies & the Visual Arts*. New York: Peter Lang, 2004.
- Henry, Richard. 'Pattern, Cognition & Contemplation: Exploring the Geometric Art of Iran'. *Journal of The Iran Society*, Vol. 2, No. 6 (2007): 24-36. [http://www.iransociety.org/docs/journal\\_2007.pdf](http://www.iransociety.org/docs/journal_2007.pdf).
- Hiscock, Nigel. *The Symbol at Your Door: Number & Geometry in Religious Architecture of the Greek & Latin Middle Ages*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007.
- . *The Wise Master Builder - Platonic Geometry in the Plans of Mediaeval Abbeys & Art around the Millennium*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000.
- Hobart, Mark. 'The Path of the Soul: The Legitimacy of Nature in Balinese Conceptions of Space'. In *Natural Symbols in South East Asia*, edited by G.B. Milner, 5-28. London: SOAS, 1978.
- Holl, Steven, Juhani Pallasmaa and Alberto Perez-Gomez, eds. *Questions of Perception - Phenomenology of Architecture*. San Francisco: William Stout Publishers, 2005.
- Holm, Jean and John Bowker, eds. *Sacred Place*, Themes in Religious Studies Series. London: Pinter, 1994.
- Husserl, Edmond. *Foundational Investigations of the Phenomenological Origin of the Spatiality of Nature: The Original Ark, the Earth, Does Not Move*. Translated by Fred Kerston and revised by Leonard Lawlor. In Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology*.
- . *Origin of Geometry*, translated by David Carr, In Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology*.
- . *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction, Commentary by Jacques Derrida*. Translated by John P. Leavey Jr. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989. [https://monoskop.org/images/1/1e/Derrida\\_Jacques\\_Edmund\\_Husserl\\_s\\_Origin\\_of\\_Geometry\\_An\\_Introduction\\_1989.pdf](https://monoskop.org/images/1/1e/Derrida_Jacques_Edmund_Husserl_s_Origin_of_Geometry_An_Introduction_1989.pdf).
- . *Things and Space: Lectures 1907*. Translated by Richard Rojcewicz. Dordrecht: Springer-Science and Business Media, 1997.
- . *The World of the Living Present and the Constitution of the Surrounding World That is the Outside Flesh*, translated by Bettina Bergo and revised by Leonard Lawlor. In Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology*.
- . *The World of the Living Present and the Constitution of the Surrounding World, External to the Organism*, translated by F. A. Elliston and Lenore Langsdorf. In F. A. Elliston and P. McCormick, editors, *Husserl - Shorter Works*. Notre Dame University Press, 1981.
- I Ching*. Translated by Richard Wilhelm. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967.
- Ibragimov, I. A. 'Formation of Architecture of Christianity and Islam as an Expression of the Concept of the Coordinates System in Spiritually - Real Space'. *Scientific Herald of the Voronezh State University of Architecture & Civil Engineering*, 2009, Vol. 2, Issue 2, 54-62.
- Isidore of Seville. *The Etymologies*. Translated by Stephen Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach and Oliver Berghof. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. <http://pot-pourri.fltr.ucl.ac.be/files/AClassftp/TEXTES/ISIDORUS/Etymologie/B1N8PWGetQy.pdf>.
- James, John. *Chartres: The Masons Who Built a Legend*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982.
- . 'The Mystery of the Great Labyrinth Chartres Cathedral'. *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Spring 1977). [http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/The\\_Mystery\\_of\\_the\\_Great\\_Labyrinth-Chartres\\_Cathedral-by\\_John\\_James.aspx](http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/The_Mystery_of_the_Great_Labyrinth-Chartres_Cathedral-by_John_James.aspx).
- Jammer, Max. *Concepts of Space*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954. [https://archive.org/stream/ConceptsOfSpace/Jammer-ConceptsOfSpace\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/ConceptsOfSpace/Jammer-ConceptsOfSpace_djvu.txt).
- Johnson, Mark. *The Body in the Mind*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.

- Johnston, Paul-Alan. *The Theory of Architecture: Concepts Themes & Practices*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1994.
- Jones, Lindsay. *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture: Experience, Interpretation, Comparison. Vol. 1: Monumental Occasions: Reflections on the Eventfulness of Religious Architecture; Vol. 2: Hermeneutical Calisthenics: A Morphology of Ritual-Architectural Priorities*. Cambridge: Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions, 2000.
- St. Justin Martyr. *The First Apologia*. In *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to A. D. 325*, editors Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. New York: Christian Literature Publishing, 1885. <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/coxe-ante-nicene-fathers-volume-1-the-apostolic-fathers-justin-martyr-irenaeus>.
- Kak, Subhash. *Space, Time, and Astronomy in Angkor Wat*, 2001. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.2.5568&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Kant, Immanuel. 'Concerning the Ultimate Ground of the Differentiation of the Directions in Space'. In *Theoretical Philosophy 1755 - 1770: The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*. Edited by David Walford & Ralf Meerbote, 361-372. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Kempers, A. J. Bernet. *Ageless Borobudur: Buddhist Mystery in Stone, Decay and Restoration, Mendut and Pawon, Folklife in Ancient Java*. Wassenaar: Servire, 1976.
- Kerney, Richard. 'Hermeneutics of The Possible God'. *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, Oct-Dec, (2004): 929-952. <https://richardmkerney.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/pl86265.pdf>.
- Khanna, Maphu. *Yantra: The Tantric Symbol of Cosmic Unity*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1979.
- Kilde, Jeane Halgren. *Sacred Power, Sacred Space: An Introduction to Christian Architecture & Worship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Kim, Bong-ryol. 'Natural Perspective Revealed in Traditional Korean Architecture'. *Koreana*, Autumn, Vol.13, No.3 (1999): 5-11. [http://koreana.kf.or.kr/view.asp?article\\_id=433](http://koreana.kf.or.kr/view.asp?article_id=433).  
— . *The Secret Spirit of Korean Architecture*. Translated by Lee Yongsuk. London: Saffron Books, Korea Library Series, 2005.
- King, David. 'The Orientation of Medieval Islamic Religious Architecture and Cities'. *Journal for the History of Astronomy*, (1995): 253-274. <http://adsabs.harvard.edu/full/1995JHA....26..253K>.
- Kollar, L. Peter. *Form*. Sydney: self published by the author, 1980.  
— . *On the Architectural Idea*, Sydney: self published by the author, 1983.  
— . *Symbolism in Christian Architecture of the First Millennium*, (Phd. Thesis), Sydney: University of New South Wales, 1975.
- Koran (Quran)*, The Holy. Translated by Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall. Hyderabad-Deccan: Government Central Press, 1938. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/isl/pick/>. Also other online translations have been used.
- Kramrisch, Stella. *Exploring India's Sacred Art: Selected Writings of Stella Kramrisch*. Edited by Barbara Stoler Miller. Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1994.  
— . 'Space in Indian Cosmology and in Architecture'. In *Concepts of Space Ancient and Modern*, edited by Kapila Vatsyayan, 101-104. Varanasi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Abhinav Publications.  
— . *The Hindu Temple*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980.  
— . *The Presence of 'Siva*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, Varanasi, 1988.

- Kuniya, Nobuaki. 'The Gammadiae, the Swastika and the Divine Fluid: A Study on the Ancient Symbolism'. *Orient*, Vol. 4 (1967): 17-36. [https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/orient1960/4/0/4\\_0\\_17/\\_pdf](https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/orient1960/4/0/4_0_17/_pdf)
- Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1980.
- Lao, Tsu. *Tao Te Ching*. Translated by J. Legge, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 39, edited by Max Müller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1891. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/tao/taote.htm>.
- Legenhausen, Hajj Muhammad. *Why I Am Not a Traditionalist*. <http://www.religioscope.com/pdf/esotrad/legenhausen.pdf>. 2002.
- Lethaby, W. G. *Architecture, Nature & Magic*. London: Gerald Duckworth, 1956.
- Levinas, Emmanuel, 'Time and the Other'. In *Time and the Other and Additional Essays*. Translated by Richard Cohen. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987.
- Lewis, Mark Edward. *The Construction of Space in Early China*. Albany: State University of New York University, 2006.
- Little, Stephen and Shawn Eichman. *Taoism and the Arts of China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Lings, Martin. *A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century. Shaik Ahmad at-'Alawî*. London: George & Allen Unwin, 1971.  
 —. *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1984.  
 —. *The Eleventh Hour*. Cambridge: Quinta Essentia, 1987.
- Liungman, Carl G. *Symbols Encyclopedia of Western Signs and Ideograms*. Stockholm: HME Publishing, 2004.
- Long, J. Bruce. 'Life Out of Death: A Structural Analysis of the Myth of the Churning of the Ocean of Milk'. In *Hinduism New Essays in the History of Religions*. Edited by Bardwell Smith, 171-207. Leiden: Brill Archive, 1976.
- Lou, Qingxi. *Traditional Architectural Culture of China*. Translated by Su Guang. China: China Travel & Tourism Press, 2008.
- Lovejoy, Arthur O. *The Great Chain of being: A Study of the History of an Idea*. Harper & Row, New York, 1960.
- Lung, David Ping-Lee. *Heaven, Earth & Man: Concepts & Processes of Chinese Architecture & City Planning*. Thesis for Master of Architecture, University of Oregon.
- Mahood, James. 'Imaginal Yoga in India a Four Thousand Year Tradition', *Temenos*, Number 5 (1984).
- Malik, S. C. 'Dimensionless Space and Eternal Silence'. In *Concepts of Space Ancient and Modern*, edited by Kapila Vatsyayan, 43-46. Varanasi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Abhinav Publications, 1991.
- Malville, H. McKim. 'Astrophysics, Cosmology and the Interior Space of Indian Myths and Temples'. In *Concepts of Space Ancient and Modern*, edited Kapila Vatsyayan, 123-144. Varanasi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Abhinav Publications, 1991.
- Mandal, Dr. Kumar Kishore. *A Comparative Study of the Concepts of Space and Time in Indian Thought*, Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1968, 43-46.

- Mannikka, Eleanor, *Angkor Wat: Time, Space, and Kingship*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000.
- Maor, Eli. *To Infinity and Beyond: A Cultural History of the Infinite*. Boston: Birkhauser, 1987.
- Marzuri, Yazir and Toeti Heraty. Borobodur. Jakarta: Djambatan Publishers, 1985.
- Massignon, Louis. 'Time in Islamic Thought'. In *Man & Time, Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, edited by Joseph Campbell, translated by Ralph Manheim, 108-114. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958. [https://yijingnotes.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/man\\_and\\_time\\_c.pdf](https://yijingnotes.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/man_and_time_c.pdf).
- Mayamata: An Indian treatise on housing, architecture, and iconography*. Translated by Bruno Dagens. New Delhi: Sitaram Bhartia Institute of Scientific Research, 1985.
- Meister, Michael W and M. A. Dhaky editors. *Encyclopedia of Indian Temple Architecture*, American Institute of Indian Studies. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- . 'The Hindu Temple: Axis of Access'. In *Concepts of Space Ancient and Modern*, edited by Kapila Vatsyayan, 269-280. Varanasi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Abhinav Publications, 1991.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. *Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology: Including Texts by Edmund Husserl*, edited by Leonard Lawlor and Bettina Bergo, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2002.
- . *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Colin Smith. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Michell, George. *Monuments of India*. London: Penguin Books, 1990.
- . *The Hindu Temple: An Introduction to its Meaning and Forms*. New York: Harper Row, 1977.
- . *The Temple Towns of Tamil Nadu*. Bombay: Marg Publications, 1993.
- Mickunas I. Algis. 'The Primacy of Movement'. *Main Currents in Modern Thought*, Vol. 31 No. 1 (Sept-Oct 1974): 8-12.
- Miller, Arthur I. *137: Jung, Pauli, and the Pursuit of a Scientific Obsession*. New York: W W Norton, 2009.
- Mookerjee, Ajit. *Tantric Art its Philosophy & Physics*. New Delhi: Ravi Kumar, 1983.
- . *The Tantric Way*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1977.
- Mugerauer, Robert. 'Derrida and Beyond'. In *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995*, edited by Kate Nesbitt, 182-197. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996.
- Mus, Paul. *Barabudur*. Translated by Alex W. Macdonald. New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in association with Stirling Publishers, 1998.
- Mustafa, Husain interview, Almaty, June 2012 as quoted by Yuriy Skurydin, *How Ethnic Kazakhs Read the Bible: Convictional Hermeneutics and Advocating the Diversity*, Masters Thesis Submitted to University of Wales, 2013.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1978.
- . *Knowledge and the Sacred: The Gifford Lectures 1981*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981.
- . *In Quest of the Sacred*. Edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Katherine O'Brien. Oakton: The Foundation for Traditional Studies, 1994.
- . *Islamic Art and Spirituality*. Ipswich: Golgonooza Press, 1987.
- . *Living Sufism*. London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1972.
- . *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of the Modern World*. London: Mandala Books, 1976.
- . *Religion & the Order of Nature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- . *Science and Civilization in Islam*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968.

—. 'The Principle of Unity and the Sacred Architecture of Islam', *Temenos*, No. 6, (1985). Also included in *Islamic Art and Spirituality*.

Needham, Joseph. *The Shorter Science and Civilisation in China: An abridgement of Joseph Needham's original text*. Edited by Colin Ronan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Needleman, Jacob ed. *The Sword of Gnosis: Metaphysics, Cosmology Tradition & Symbolism*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1974

Nicholas of Cusa (Nicholas Cusanus). *Of Learned Ignorance*. Translated by Fr. Germain Heron. Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2007.

Nicholson, Reynold A. *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*. London: Routledge Curzon, 2003. [https://archive.org/stream/studiesinislamyst00nichuoft/studiesinislamyst00nichuoft\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/studiesinislamyst00nichuoft/studiesinislamyst00nichuoft_djvu.txt).

Nicolau, Gaspar Pujol. *Cosmological Symbolism in Ancient Board Games*, PhD Thesis, (Barcelona: Universitat Internacional de Catalunya, 2009). [http://www.tesisenred.net/bitstream/handle/10803/387431/Tesi\\_%20Gaspar\\_Pujol\\_Nicolau.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://www.tesisenred.net/bitstream/handle/10803/387431/Tesi_%20Gaspar_Pujol_Nicolau.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y) titled

Nesbitt Kate ed. *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996.

Norberg-Schulz, Christian. *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. New York: Rizzoli, 1979.

Oliver, Paul ed. *Shelter Sign & Symbol*. London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1975.

Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine & its Relation to the Rational*. Translated by John W. Harvey. London: Humphrey Milford, Fourth Impression, Revised with Additions, 1926.

Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The Embodied Image*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2011.

—. *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2012.

—. *The Thinking Hand: Existential and Embodied Wisdom in Architecture*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2009.

Pankenier, David W. 'Cosmic Capitals and Numinous Precincts in Early China'. *Journal of Cosmology*, Vol 9, (2010): 2030-2040. <http://journalofcosmology.com/AncientAstronomy100.html>

Pannikar, Raimundo. 'Time and History in the Tradition of India: Kāla and Time'. In *Cultures and Time*, edited by Louis Gardet, 73-88. Paris: The UNESCO Press, 1976.

—. 'There is No Outer Space Without Inner Space'. In *Concepts of Space Ancient and Modern*, edited by Kapila Vatsyayan, 7-38. Varanasi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Abhinav Publications, 1991.

Paskaleva, Elena. *The Architecture of the Four-Īwān Building Tradition as a Representation of Paradise and Dynastic Power Aspirations*, Doctoral Thesis, Leiden University Institute for Cultural Disciplines (LUID), Faculty of the Humanities. <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/15971>.

—. Epigraphic restorations of 'Timurid Architectural Heritage'. *International Institute of Asian Studies, The Newsletter*, 64 (Summer 2013). Online resource at: [http://liportal.giz.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/oeffentlich/Usbekistan/10\\_ueberblick/IIAS\\_NL64\\_1011.pdf](http://liportal.giz.de/fileadmin/user_upload/oeffentlich/Usbekistan/10_ueberblick/IIAS_NL64_1011.pdf).

Partridge, Eric. *Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*. New York: Macmillan, Second addition, 1958.

Patai, Raphael. *Man and Temple: In Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual*. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1967.



- Patyal, Hukam Chand. 'Tortoise in Mythology and Ritual', in *East and West*, Vol. 45, No. 1/4 (December 1995), 97-107. [http://www.jstor.org/stable/29757207?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/29757207?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents).
- Pérez-Gómez, Alberto. 'Juan Bautista Villalpando's Divine Model in Architectural Theory', *Chora*, Vol. 3, McGill University (1999): 125-156.
- Perry, Whittal. N. *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom*. Bedford: Perennial Books 1981.
- Phil (of Alexandria). *De Somniis*, in *Philo* in twelve volumes, translated by F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929.
- Plato. *The Republic*. Translated by Desmond Lee, Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1974.
- . *The Republic*, included in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vols. 5 & 6. Translated by Paul Shorey. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 1969. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0168>.
- . *Timaeus*. Translated with running commentary by F C. Cornford. Cambridge: Hackey Publishing, 1997.
- . *The Statesman*. Translated by Benjamin Jowlett. Adelaide: University of Adelaide, 2014. <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/p/plato/p71st/statesman.html>.
- . *Timaeus & Critias*. Translated by Desmond Lee. London: Penguin Books, 1971.
- Plotinus. *The Enneads*. Translated by Stephen MacKenna. London: Faber & Faber, 1969.
- Plutarch, *De E apud Delphos (The E at Delphi)*. Translated by Frank Cole Babbitt. London: Harvard University Press, William Heinemann, 1936. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0243%3Asection%3D20>.
- Poncé, Charles. *Kabbalah: An Introduction & Illumination for The World Today*. San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books (Quest Books Re-prints), 1978.
- Pont, Graham. 'The Circle and the Cross: Genesis and Hermeneutic of the Traditional Cosmology', *Prudentia* (1994): 289-303.
- . 'Inauguration: Ritual Planning in Ancient Greece and Italy'. In *Architecture and Mathematics from Antiquity to the Future*, Volume 1, Antiquity to the 1500s, edited by Kim Williams and Michael J Ostwald, 163-175. Dordrecht: Springer 2015,.
- Porphyry. *Launching Points to the Realm of the Mind*. Translated by Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie. Grand Rapids: Phanes Press, 1988.
- Quaritch Walls, H. G. *The Universe Around Them: Cosmology and Cosmic Renewal in Indianized South East Asia*. London: Arthur Probsthain, 1977.
- . 'A Stone Casket from Satinpra', *Journal of the Siam Society*, 52, 2 (1964): 217-21.
- Quinn, William, W. Jr.. *The Only Tradition*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1997.
- Raglan, Lord. *The Temple and the House*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1964.
- Rammanna, Raja. 'Physical Space in the Context of All Knowledge'. In *Concepts of Space Ancient and Modern*, edited by Kapila Vatsyayan, 3-6. Varanasi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Abhinav Publications, 1991.
- Rahner Hugo S. J. *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*. New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1971.
- Rainier, (Company). *An Illustrated History of Yurts*. <http://www.rainier.com/yurts/yurt-info/yurt-history/guest-post-illustrated-history-yurts/>

- Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'*. Epistles of the Brethren of Purity On Arithmetic & Geometry. An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistles 1 & 2, edited by Nader El-Bizri. Oxford: Oxford University Press in Association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2012.
- Rao, S K Ramachandra. *Devālaya-vāstu*, Vol. 1. Bangalore: Kalapatharu Reseach Academy, 1997.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative & Imagination*. Translated by David Pellauer and edited by Mark I Wallace. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- . *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. Fort Worth: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976.
- . 'Temporal Distance & Death in History'. In *Gadamer's Century: Essays in Honor of Hans-Georg Gadamer*. Edited by J. E. Malpas, Ulrich Arnsward and Jens Kertscher. Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2002.
- . *The Symbolism of Evil*. Translated by Emerson Buchanan. Boston: Beacon Press, 1969.
- Roy, S. B. *Prehistoric Lunar Astronomy*. New Delhi: Institute of Chronology, Monograph No. 1, 1976.
- Roveda, Vittorio. *Khmer Mythology: Secrets of Angkor*, New York, Weatherhill, 1998.
- Rumi, Jalalu'ddin. *The Mathnawi*. Translated by Reynold Nicholson, Gibb Memorial Trust. <https://archive.org/details/RUMITheMathnawiVol3Vol4>.
- Russell, J. L. 'Time In Christian Thought'. In *The Voices of Time*. Edited by J. T. Fraser. London: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 1968.
- Rutschmann, La Verne A. *Altar & Sacrifice in the Old Testament Nomadic Period with Relation to Sacred Space and Sacred Time*. Doctor of Theology Thesis. Claremont: Southern California School of Theology, 1962.
- Ruysbroeck, Jan van. *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage*. Translated by C. A. Wynschenk Dom, editor Evelyn Underhill. London: J. M. Dent, 1916. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/asm/index.htm>.
- Rykwert, Joseph. *On Adam's House in Paradise*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1981.
- . *The Idea of a Town*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1988.
- Saifullah, M S M, Muhammad Ghoniem, 'Abd al-Rahman, Robert Squires and Mansur Ahmed. 'The Qibla Of Early Mosques: Jerusalem or Makkah?'. *Islamic Awareness*, 3rd Nov. 2001. [http://www.islamic-awareness.org/History/Islam/Dome\\_Of\\_The\\_Rock/qibla.html](http://www.islamic-awareness.org/History/Islam/Dome_Of_The_Rock/qibla.html).
- Sairam, Trimurti V. *Indian Temple: Forms and Foundations*. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1982.
- Saraswati, B.N., S.C. Malik and Madhu Khanna eds. *Art, the Integral Vision: A Volume of Essays in Felicitation of Kapila Vatsyayan*. New Delhi : D.K. Printworld, 1994.
- Śatāpatha Brāhmaṇa. Translated by Julius Eggeling, Sacred Books of the East Series, Vol. XLI, XLII, XLIII. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978.
- Santillana, Giorgio de and Hertha von Dechend. *Hamlet's Mill: An Essay Investigating the Origins of Human Knowledge and Its Transmission Through Myth*. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1969. [http://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/hamlets\\_mill/hamletmill.htm](http://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/hamlets_mill/hamletmill.htm).
- Savarkar, H. A. 'The Concept of the Vāstu-Puruṣa-Manḍala'. In *Vāstu: Astrology and Architecture*, edited by Gayatri Devi Vasudev, 37-44. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2005, 37-44.
- Schaya Leo. *Universal Aspects of the Kabbalah & Judaism*. Bloomington: World Wisdom Books, 2014.

- Schimmel, Annemarie. *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1994.
- . 'Inner and Outer Space in Islam'. In *Concepts of Space Ancient and Modern*, edited by Kapila Vatsyayan, 175-180. Varanasi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Abhinav Publications, 1991.
- Schinz, Alfred. *The Magic Square: Cities in Ancient China*. Stuttgart/London: Edition Axel Menges, 1996.
- Schuon, Frithjof. *Christianity/Islam: Essays on Esoteric Ecumenicism*. Indiana: World Wisdom Books, 1985.
- . 'Concerning the Notion of Eternity', *Studies in Comparative Religion* Vol. 14, No. 3 & 4, 1980.
- . 'Concerning the Notion of Eternity' revised text of 1994 available on line at: [http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/Concerning\\_the\\_Notion\\_of\\_Eternity-by\\_Frithjof\\_Schuon.aspx](http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/Concerning_the_Notion_of_Eternity-by_Frithjof_Schuon.aspx).
- . *Esotericism as a Principle and as Way*. Translated by William Stoddart. Bloomington: Perennial Books, 1981.
- . *From the Divine To the Human*. Bloomington: World Wisdom Books, 1982.
- . *Gnosis, Divine Wisdom*, London: Perennial Books, 1978.
- . *In the Face of the Absolute*. Bloomington: World Wisdom Books, 1994.
- . 'Islam and Consciousness of the Absolute'. In *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 15, Nos. 1 & 2 (Winter-Spring 1982). [http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/Islam\\_and\\_Consciousness\\_of\\_the\\_Absolute-by\\_Frithjof\\_Schuon.aspx](http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/public/articles/Islam_and_Consciousness_of_the_Absolute-by_Frithjof_Schuon.aspx).
- . *Islam and the Perennial Philosophy*. Translated by J. Peter Hobson. London: World of Islam Festival Publishing, 1976.
- . *Light on the Ancient Worlds*. London: Perennial Books, 1965.
- . *Logic & Transcendence*. London: Perennial Books, 1975.
- . *René Guénon: Some Observations*. Hillsdale: Sophia Perennis, 2004.
- . *Roots of the Human Condition*. Bloomington: World Wisdom Books, 1990.
- . *Spiritual Perspectives and Human Facts*. Translated by P. N. Townsend. Bedford: Perennial Books, 1987.
- . *The Essential Writings of Frithjof Schuon*. Edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Shaftesbury: Element Books, 1991.
- . *The Transcendent Unity of Religions*. New York: Harper Row Publishers, 1975.
- . *To Have a Center*. Bloomington: World Wisdom Books, 1988.
- Schwartz, Rudolf. *The Church Incarnate; The Sacred Function of Christian Architecture*. Translated by Cynthia Harris. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1958. <https://archive.org/details/churchincarnate010224mbp>.
- Scott, R. B.T. 'The Pillars of Jachin & Boaz', Appendix 1 to Stanley Tigerman, *The Architecture of Exile*, 159-161. New York: Rizzoli Publications, 1988.
- Scott, Timothy. 'The Container and the Contained', *Vincit Omnia Veritas*, II, 2. On-line resource available at: <http://religioperennis.org/documents/Scott/container.pdf>.
- . 'Understanding "Symbol"', *Sacred Web*, Vol. 6 (Winter 2000). [http://www.sacredweb.com/online\\_articles/sw6\\_scott.html](http://www.sacredweb.com/online_articles/sw6_scott.html).
- Seamon David and Robert Mugerauer eds. *Dwelling Place & Environment*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
- Sedgwick, Mark. *Against the Modern World: Traditionalism and the Secret Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Seymour, William Wood. *The Cross in Tradition, History, and Art*, New York: G. P. Putnam, 1898. <https://ia802606.us.archive.org/13/items/crossintraditi00seym/crossintraditi00seym.pdf>.
- Shabistari, Sa'd Ud Din Mahmud. *The Secret Rose Garden*. Translated by Florence Lederer. London: J. Murray, 1920. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/isl/srg/srg00.htm>.

- Sharr, Adam. *Heidegger for Architects*. London: Routledge, 2007.
- Shukla, D. N. *Vāstu-Śāstra Vol. 1. Hindu Science of Architecture, Vol. 2. Hindu Canons of Iconography & Painting*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1995.
- Shushud, Hasan Lutfi. *Masters of the Wisdom of Central Asia*. Ripon: Coombe Springs, 1983.
- Simson, Otto von. *The Gothic Cathedral: Origins of Gothic Architecture and the Medieval Concept of Order*, Bollinger Series 48. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Sinha, A.K. *Science & Tantric Yoga*. Kurukshetra: Vishal Publications,, 1981.
- Skurydin, Yuriy. *How Ethnic Kazakhs Read the Bible: Convictional Hermeneutics and Advocating the Diversity*, Masters Thesis Submitted to University of Wales, 2013. <http://search.proquest.com/openview/995ec615c947f937e5afb23272c5ca0a/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>.
- Slaczka, Anna Aleksandra. *Temple Consecration Rituals in Ancient India*. Leiden: Brill 2007. <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/4581/total%20document.pdf?sequence=17>
- Smith, Bardwell L, ed. *Hinduism New Essays in the History of Religions*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976.
- Smith, John. *The Excellency & Nobleness of True Religion, Selected Discourses*. Edited by Simon Patrick, Third edition. London: Rivingtons and Cochran, 1821. <http://tei.it.ox.ac.uk/tcp/Texts-HTML/free/A60/A60487.html>.
- Smith, Jonathan Z. *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Smith, Huston. *Forgotten Truth: The Primordial Tradition*. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.
- Smith, Wolfgang. *Cosmology & Transcendence: Breaking Through the Barrier of Scientistic Belief*. San Rafael: Sophia Perennis, 2008.
- . *Science & Myth: What We are Never Told*. San Rafael: Sophia Perennis, 2010.
- . *The Quantum Enigma: Finding the Hidden Key*. Hillsdale: Sophia Perennis, 2005.
- . *The Wisdom of Ancient Cosmology: Contemporary Science in the Light of Tradition*. Oakton: The Foundation for Traditional Studies, 2004.
- Snodgrass, Adrian. *Architecture, Time & Eternity*. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture & Aditya Prakashan, 1990.
- . *The Symbolism of the Stupa*. New York: South East Asia Program, Cornell University, SEAP, 1985.
- Snodgrass, Adrian and Richard Coyne. *Interpretation in Architecture*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Soekmono, Dr. R. *Borobudur a Monument of Mankind*, Paris: UNESCO Press, 1976.
- Soltani, Mahya. 'Philosophy and Wisdom in Islamic-Iranian Architecture, With Respect to External Veil in Architecture'. *Current World Environment*, Vol. 10 (Special Issue 1), (2015), 260-267.
- Soothill, William Edward. *The Hall of Light: A Study of Early Chinese Kingship*. Edited by Ladie Hosie G. F. Hudson. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 1951.
- Staal, Frits. *Agni, the Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2001.
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, principal ed. Edward N. Zalta. Stanford: The Metaphysics Research Lab Center for the Study of Language and Information Stanford University, 2013.

- Steele, J. M. A. 'Comparison of Astronomical terms and Concepts in China and Mesopotamia'. *Journal of Astronomical History and Heritage*, Vol. 16, No. 3, (2013): 250 - 260. [http://www.caeno.org/origins/papers/Steele\\_AstronomyTerminology.pdf](http://www.caeno.org/origins/papers/Steele_AstronomyTerminology.pdf).
- Stevens, Raymond. *Symbolism of Number in Architecture*. Thesis prepared for Bachelor of Architecture, University of NSW, 1980.
- Stietencron, Dr. Heinrich von. Online essay on the Soma Sacrifice at: <http://www.payer.de/amarakosa5/amara213b.htm>.
- Suzuki, D. T. *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970.
- Tao te Ching*. Translated by J. Legge, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol 39. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1891. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/tao/taote.htm>.
- Tatarkiewicz, Wladyslaw. *History of Aesthetics*. Edited by J. Harrell, Cyril Barrett, and D. Petsch, London: A&C Black, 2006.
- Temple, Richard. *Icons and the Mythical Origins of Christianity*. Shaftesbury: Element Books, 1990.
- Thompson, Richard L. *Mysteries of the Sacred Universe - The Cosmology of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Alachua: Govardhan Hill Publishers, 2000.
- Tigerman, Stanley. *The Architecture of Exile*. New York: Rizzoli Publications, 1988.
- Tomkinson, J. L. 'Divine Sempiternity and Atemporality'. *Religious Studies* 18, no. 2 (1982): 177-89. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20005832>.
- Traherne, Thomas. *Centuries of Meditations*. Edited by Bertram Dobell. New York: Cosima Classics (2007).
- Tseng, Lillian Lan-ying. *Picturing Heaven in Early China*. Harvard East Asian Monographs: 336, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011.
- Tucci, Giuseppe. *The Theory & Practice of the Mandala*. Translated by Alan H. Brodrick. London: Rider, 1961.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979.
- Turner, Harold. *From Temple to Meeting Place: The Phenomenology and Theology of Places to Worship*. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1979.
- Underhill, Evelyn. *Ruysbroeck*. London: G. Bell & Sons, 1915. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/underhill/ruysbroeck.s8.html>.
- Upanishads. Sixty Upanishads of the Veda*. Originally translated into German and compiled by Paul Deussen, translated by V. M. Bedekar & G. B. Palsule. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980.
- Upton, Charles. *Findings: In Metaphysics, Path & Lore*. San Rafael: Sophia Perennis, 2009.
- von Franz, Marie-Louise. *Number and Time*. Translated by Andrea Dykes. London: Rider & Co., 1974.
- . *Time, Rhythm and Repose*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1978.
- Vasudev, Gayatri Devi, ed. *Vāstu: Astrology and Architecture*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2005.
- Vatsyayan, Kapila, *The Square and the Circle of the Indian Arts*. New Delhi: Roli Books International, 1983.



- Vatsyayan, Kapila, ed. *Concepts of Space Ancient and Modern*. Varanasi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Abhinav Publications, 1991.
- . *Prakrit: The Integral Vision Vol. 3 - The Āgamic Tradition and the Arts*, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts.
- . *Prakrit: The Integral Vision Vol. 4 - The Nature of Matter*, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. New Delhi: Printworld, 1991.
- . 'Vedic Altars In Vistāra - The Architecture of India', Catalogue of the Exhibition. Edited by Carmen Kagal, The Festival of India, 1986. Available at: <https://architexturez.net/doc/az-cf-123666>.
- Verstockt, Mark. *The Genesis of Form: From Chaos to Geometry*. London: Muller, Blond & White, 1987.
- Volwahren, Andreas. *Architecture of the World Series: India*. Editor Henri Stierlin. Lausanne: Benedikt Taschen, 1969.
- Waterfield, Robin. *René Guénon and the Future of the West: The Life and Writings of a 20th-Century Metaphysician*. London: Crucible, 1987.
- Wechsler, Howard J. *Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual and Symbolism in the Legitimation of the T'ang Dynasty*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.
- Wheatley, Paul. *City as Symbol*. London: H. K. Lewis & Co., 1969.
- . *The Pivot of the Four Quarters: The Origins and Character of the Ancient Chinese City*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971.
- Whone, Herbert. *Church Monastery Cathedral: A Guide to the Symbolism of the Christian Tradition*. Tisbury: Compton Russell Element, 1977.
- Wilhelm, Richard. *I Ching: Book of Changes*. London: Arkana, 1983.
- Williams, and Michael J Ostwald eds. *Architecture and Mathematics from Antiquity to the Future*, Volume 1, Antiquity to the 1500s. Dordrecht: Springer, 2015.
- Wilson, Thomas. 'The swastika, the earliest known symbol and its migrations: With observations on the migration of certain industries in prehistoric times'. *United States, National Museum. Annual Report*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution (1894): 763-1030. <https://archive.org/details/theswastika00wilsuoft>.
- Wu, Nelson I. *Chinese & Indian Architecture*. London: Studio Vista, 1968.
- Xu, Yinong. *The Chinese City in Space and Time: The Development of Urban Form in Suzhou*. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 2000.
- Zajonc, Arthur. *Catching the Light*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Zalta, Edward N. ed. 'Medieval Theories of Transcendentals' in, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Stanford: The Metaphysics Research Lab Center for the Study of Language and Information. Stanford University, 2013. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/transcendentals-medieval/>
- Zhōng Yōng (Doctrine of the Mean)*. Translated by James Legge. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/conf3.htm>
- Zimmer, Heinrich. *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art & Civilization*, Bollinger Series VI. Princeton: University Press, 1974.