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## INTRODUCTION

A work that stands out regarding the study of the Tibetan mandalas is Professor Guiseppe Tucci's *THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THE MANDALA*. But this study is not written from a Buddhist point of view. Rather, this paper is written with a depth psychology orientation. Carl Jung, a major protagonist in depth psychology, brought attention to the psychological value of drawing mandalas while Tucci's book is helpful to understand the general organization and practice of the mandala. Jung's seemed more interested in understanding the symbolical meaning of mandalas rather than their use in a spiritual practice. Due to the circular design and prominent center point of the typical mandala, Jung considered them to be spontaneous symbolic expressions of wholeness and of the Self Archetype. These designs are universal and found throughout the world. Tucci's description of how the mandala is employed in Tantric Buddhism is useful for beginning a mandala-based psychospiritual practice that dovetails with the process of Individuation. (see Plate 1) (Plate 5 shows the altar that carries small icons which I use to focus on various parts of the journey to the Center. Appendix B demonstrates, in part, my use of the artifacts.)

In some ways the practice is simple in that the mandala's structure keeps guiding the practitioner from the outer reaches to the center. This sweep of all-to-the-center mirrors Individuation's thrust to the metaphoric center, the Self, where all is bound in the center point, that is, where the Ultimate One reigns. While Tibetan Buddhists engage the mandala in a prescribed manner, the practice of the mandala belongs to no culture or religion. The human body itself fits a mandala design where the outer circle traced from the crown on the head (location of Seventh Chakra) to the coccyx at the base of the spine (First Chakra). In the body mandala the heart is located at the center point where not only the Higher Self but also the Soul is thought to reside.

In regards to the mandala's main idea Tucci wrote: "In such circumstances was devised the scheme which represents, in complex and symbolical fashion, this drama of disintegration and reintegration; that is to say the mandala in which the twofold process is expressed by means of symbols which, if they be wisely read by the initiate, will induce the liberating psychological experience.", (1) and, "So the mandala is no longer a cosmogram but a psychocosmogram, the scheme of disintegration from the One to the many and of reintegration from the many to the One, to that Absolute Consciousness, entire and luminous..." (2)

In regards to Tucci's core idea, Jung wrote: "Only gradually did I discover what the mandala really is: Formation, Transformation, Eternal Mind's eternal recreation. And that is the self, the wholeness of the personality, which if all goes well is harmonious, but which cannot tolerate self-deceptions....When I began drawing the mandalas, however, I saw that everything, all the paths I had been following, all the steps I had taken, were leading back to a single point—namely, to the mid-point. It became increasingly plain to me that the mandala is the center. It is the exponent of all paths. It is the path to the center, to individuation.... There is no linear evolution; there is only a circumambulation of the self. Uniform development exists, at most, only at the beginning; later, everything points toward the center. This insight gave me stability, and

gradually my inner peace returned. I knew that in finding the mandala as an expression of the self I had attained what was for me the ultimate.”, (3) and, “It seems to me beyond question that these Eastern symbols [mandalas] originated in dreams and vision, and were not invented by some Mahayana church father. On the contrary, they are among the oldest religious symbols of humanity and may even have existed in Paleolithic times. Moreover, they are distributed all over the world. It is not without importance for us to appreciate the high value set upon the mandala ....Unless everything deceives us, they signify nothing less than a psychic centre of the personality not to be identified with the ego. I have observed these processes and their products for close on thirty years on the basis of very extensive material drawn from my own experience. (4)

Jung concluded that the center, the dot (or point of center) was of great importance for it represented the symbol for Self. He noted that mandalas of the Tantric Buddhist tradition had at their centers high religious figures or the dorje, “symbol of all the divine forces together, whether creative or destructive.” One of the mandalas found in Tucci's book has a double dorje in the center. Where the two dorjes intersect, is found the Wheel of Joy (also known as Wheel of Fire) which, in turn, occupies the ‘very-very’ center. The dorje represents the thunderbolt that cuts through delusions. A double dorje, doubles the power of the thunderbolt. In Tantric Buddhism the double dorje represents the indestructibility of all the phenomenal essence. It is the “symbol of harmony, immutability and all knowingness.” The Wheel of Joy symbolizes the inseparability of all things. The practitioner arrives at the center after the delusions that abound the ego are cut.

The mandala projects the symbolic journey which the ego undertakes to uncover and merge with Self. In Tantric Buddhism, as perceived by Radmila Moacanin, the initiated are “given specific instructions on how to visualize the mandala, which portrays the peaceful and wrathful deities (the Heart Mandala contains no wrathful deity), the clashing forces of existence, the primordial impulse and passions, as well as the spark of divinity—allying in the depths of the psyche. By mentally entering the mandalas they explore the gross and subtle workings of their minds, their unconscious, and gradually approach their own innermost nuclear center where all opposites are united. The whole process is expressed by means of complex symbols, recapitulating the drama of psychic fragmentation, disintegration and reintegration: from duality, multiplicity, psychic fragmentation after the primeval unconscious oneness, to psychic reintegration, non-duality, pure consciousness.” (5)

The practice of mandala provides a thread to trace the Way of Individuation. The mandala calls out to find the center, even though it seemed impossible to do. The center, in its many manifestations, remains there as though ever attracting. The practice of the mandala sets behavioral expectations by which a person gets feedback regarding how s/he is progressing on the Way of Individuation. Whereas dream analysis, active imagination, sand play and other projective systems are of great value in processing Individuation, so too is the use of the mandala. At bottom, this study examines whether the mandala can be used as a centering practice to support the Individuation process.

## PART I

### GENERAL STRUCTURE (See Appendix A)

In Sanskrit the word “mandala” is defined as circle. It symbolizes the Whole; perhaps even more so, the Cosmic Whole. In Analytic Psychology, the circle (see Appendix D) in its archetypal form is taken to mean the Uroboros (a snake devouring its tail); the Great Round, symbol of origins and of the opposites contained it. (6) Uroboros, according to Jung, is the basic mandala of alchemy. In a mandala the circle is constant. Two other designs are central to the mandala’s structure: center point and the square.

The dot is a minimalist circle, it is the microcosm; it is the ‘All’ experienced as zero (nothingness). All of the vast circle is condensed into the dot. It is the center’s center, ‘all roads lead to the dot, the center from which the spider web spreads out. The center point is the end but also the beginning; it is the object, the end of the quest. The dot as bindu (male force) in the circle (female energy) symbolizes the joining of male and female forces.

The square brings substance or body to the circle. The dot in the square represents the quintessence; the fifth or the most perfect essence. Similar to the circle, the square symbolizes wholeness. The square is more earth bound (in the mandala it represents the sacred city (the temple), the circle is more spiritual (represents the heaven, the Cosmos). Together they join heaven and earth.

Tucci opines that, in general, the Tantric mandala has five main sections. From the dot outward these sections are: the holy of holies (which surrounds the dot), sacred city or temple (within which resides the holy of holies), five walls (which circumscribe the sacred city), four gates (which are entrances to the sacred city and demarks the secular city from the sacred city), and three circles (which as Cosmos encompasses all). The process from the dot to circles represents disintegration. The reverse sequence of imagery and meditation (from outer circles toward the dot), which is usually followed, represents reintegration. There are two other sections within the overall mandala. One area lies at the top and bottom of the mandala frame. At the bottom are the Five Buddha Bodies and at the top are the Five Buddha Minds. The other area lies between the circles and the gates which is called the secular city (and barely seen in the Heart Mandala).

### THE CIRCLES

The Heart Mandala, similar to other Tantric Buddhist mandalas consists of three major circles (bands). In Tucci’s book there is a mandala with a fourth band. This fourth is a darkened band that consists of eight graveyards symbolizing the delusions that must die. (The circle of graveyards is prominent in mandalas dedicated to the terrifying divinities.) The Heart Mandala does not have terrifying divinities, but has a black band between second and third circles. In a manner it too symbolizes a death-like process. There are a total of three black bands in the Heart Mandala. Psychologically they represent a “letting go” or “killing” process which follows the

psychological working through of shadow components such as adverse complexes and persona contradictions. (The “letting go” process is discussed in a separate section.)

Fiery Circle: Consciousness of Creation. The outer most circle Tucci calls the "Mountain of Fire," (or Fire Circle) a flaming barrier; a consciousness that must burn ignorance. It represents the occasion when creation broke into consciousness. Otherwise, the Universe that was formed and the life that came into Being would have remained unconscious. In becoming conscious of Creation, humanity became conscious of itself in relations to the Universe. When at the first circle the practitioner meditates upon Creation of the Universe as well as upon life that humans experience. Knowing of Creation is a unique human experience that opens the door to become conscious of life's meaning.

Diamond Circle: Meaning of Creation and of Life. The second circle Tucci calls a “girdle of diamond” or Diamond Circle. The diamond symbolizes supreme consciousness, Illumination. It is the Diamond Seat on which the Buddha sits. If the Fire Circle is about becoming conscious of Creation, the Diamond Circle is about Creation having meaning. When the practitioner arrives at the Diamond Circle the meditation is on the Meaning of Creation, Meaning of Homo Sapiens and Meaning of Individual Life. The Diamond Circle reminds the practitioner that existence is about meaning. Each visit to the Diamond Circle enables the practitioner to broaden and deepen meaning. It is hoped that one day humans will discover the meaning of traveling on a space-capsule millions and millions of miles annually.

Lotus Circle: Commitment to Know Meaning of Creation. The third circle Tucci calls a “girdle of lotus leaves” to signify spiritual rebirth. (It is the rebirth that follows the death experience which is reflected in the black ('letting go') band between the inner and middle circles, and its importance is discussed below) The Lotus Circle is the circle of commitment. When the practitioner arrives at the Lotus Circle the meditation is on commitment to find the meaning of Creation, not just the initial act of creation but also the meaning of the creation of homo sapiens and meaning of life itself. It is with this broader understanding of commitment that the practitioner begins the journey to the center. This commitment may also launch the ego on the Way of Individuation.

It is speculated that the ego, because it is estranged from the Higher Personal Self, feels inadequate to find the meaning of Creation and accomplish the task of individuation. But even if the ego-Self axis were re-established the ego might still feel inadequate mainly because there is another veiled element with whom it needs to relate, namely the Soul. The Soul's presence means that the psyche is thought to have two distinct components, the psychological ego-Self entity and the psychospiritual Soul. Until the ego can make these components more conscious it will flounder in its inadequacy. Taking up a mandala practice may assist the ego to overcome its incompetency.

## LETTING GO

In the Heart Mandala there are three narrow black bands or circles. The first is located between the Diamond Circle and Lotus Circle, it is associated with the Letting Go of the Fruits of Labor. The second black band is found between the final Wall and Sacred City; it corresponds to the letting go of certainty. The third black band is placed between the Sacred City and Holy of Holies; it projects the letting go of form. The black color symbolizes a death quality that is associated with each letting go process. Psychologically, arriving at the letting go act itself can come about only after exhaustive work with the personal and collective shadows as well as with psychological complexes. Such work brings about metaphorically a sort of death experience.

Letting Go of Fruits of Labor. Given the many tasks that it undertakes to maximize the life force, it is not surprising for the ego to view itself as the psyche's work horse that gets things done. With this attitude it is easy to accept that the fruits of its labor belong to the ego. But in doing so, the ego remains with the Appetites if not the Ambitions Body. So long as it possesses the fruits of its labor it weighs itself even further. It thus becomes difficult to employ the Wisdom Body. In the long-term, it is the Wisdom Body that enables the ego to pursue its commitment to grasp, if not live, the meaning of creation. The word "egotistical" reflects the immature side of the ego; it connotes the lodging of the ego within the Appetites Body. As the ego seeks out the Wisdom Body, it comes to acknowledge that its so-called fruits are not personal; the ego is the venue through which other forces are at work. Without such a letting go, it is doubtful that the ego can truly make any substantive commitment to pursue the meaning of creation; to pursue individuation to its end.

This letting go is found in Hindu metaphysics. Bede Griffiths highlights Krishna's counsel to Arjuna not to seek the fruits of his actions; that Arjuna set the heart upon work and not upon rewards; that he work not for the reward and never stop working. Griffiths adds one should not seek the reward, "because seeking a reward means that you are putting your ego into your work. Work which starts from the ego –which is the false self, the persona, the mask – all such work will be impure and will bind you. When work which appears to be good and really is good – for instance the work of persons who care for the sick, or teach in a school or college – will be corrupted if the ego goes into the work." (8) It is critical in the process of individuation that the ego not place itself as the ends of individuation but that it remain the means. Possessing the reward of one's labor reinforces the view that the ego itself is paramount if not central. This does not refute the psychological contention that the ego itself has needs, one of which is sense of accomplishment. This sense of accomplishment, however, should not be based on the fruit of the labor but in the manner in which the labor was conducted.

Letting Go of Certainty. It is incumbent on the ego to gain certainty: certainty of identity, of place in community, of mastering a craft, of belief in God, of direction in life, and a host of other certainties that enable an individual to have self-confidence. The experience of life itself often causes individuals to question their certainty. Such questioning is often at the bottom of the mid-life crisis: Who am I? What am I doing? Where am I going? And the mid-life crisis is often the beginning point that launches a person on the Way of Individuation. The Heart Mandala directs the individual to let go of certainty before entering the Sacred City. The practitioner, if desirous, can assess where lies certainty. Does one readily argue a point; does one "listen" or want to listen to the other? It is important to enter the Sacred City with the openness of a

beginner's mind. With a beginner's mind the ego is not apt to judge or compare the new teachings. If free of certainty, the practitioner does not have to be disturbed by emotions of hurt pride, envy, jealousy. The ego is liberated to devote its energies to the new teaching.

In Hindu tradition entry into the Forest occurs when the first grandchild is born. This reflects a time when the individual no longer is caught up with the many demands of householder. Not surprisingly, the Sacred City, in terms of individuation, may not be reached until the practitioner arrives at life's winter season when one is able to let go of the demands of modern life.

### Letting Go of Form

In recent years I have come to understand how much of my life has been lived through form. Such should not be surprising in that we all fashion a persona which in many ways direct how we behave, that is, we behave publicly in the manner in which we shape the persona. We also live form when we activate a particular archetypal energy. We behaved in accordance with the characteristics of the archetype; likewise, we behave in accordance to the dictates of our complexes. To let go of form is a death experience for the ego unless persona has gradually shifted so that persona and being merge. Perhaps this is what letting go of form signifies: to live life with our authentic being; to reconstitute persona from our authenticity. Not letting go of form precludes entry into the Holy of Holies. Such entry is for those who have learned or are learning how to live from their being.

Only a strong mature ego who has done much work with the personal shadow can accomplish the letting go processes. The ego needs to be strong, for each letting go requires a death experience. Letting go of the fruits of labor brings a death for the fruits can be so joyous and deeply prized. Letting go of certainty is another death experience for the ego rejoices with what it knows and is generally reluctant to let go because living with uncertainty makes the ego highly vulnerable. So too is letting go of form a death experience for ego has much invested in form which has accompanied the ego through much of its life. It may be felt as the death of a very close friend. Each letting go process can be quite upsetting. The upset may be so great that individuation proceeds no further. When apprehending the black bands, the practitioner has occasion to evaluate to what degree the ego is or capable of actualizing the letting go process. If individuation has taken the practitioner to be in the process of a letting go experience, meditation on the particular band may steel the ego to proceed with the letting go.

### PRE-CONSCIOUSNESS: FIVE BUDDHA BODIES AND MINDS. (see Plate 4)

Prior to becoming conscious of Creation, the early human lived in what I call a 'pre-conscious' era which is located in the Heart Mandala in the area between the first circle and the mandala's external borders. This region, representing both sky and earth, contains an inherited Homo sapiens legacy. During evolution, Homo sapiens develop certain capacities of body and of mind. At the bottom of the Heart Mandala (below the circles) are found four human figures and a tiger. These I call the Five Buddha Bodies: mammal body, mortal body, body of appetites, body of ambitions and body of wisdom. The mammal body contains the patterns of an earlier

instinctually programmed existence. The mortal body contains the personal history which has a beginning and end. Whereas the mammal body has no specific pre-knowledge of death, humans do and the closing of personal history becomes a dominant human dynamic. The body of appetites flows for the self-preservation drive innate to life. But with humans the body of appetites can also be self-destructive. The body of ambitions is a seemingly unique human characteristic that enables the human life force to maximize itself. At the same time, ambitions can become obsessive and thwart the full maximization of the life force. The body of wisdom shares with other sentient beings a sense of time-space connection to a larger whole, the exception being that humans, through the wisdom body, can become conscious of the connection with the All.

At the top of the mandala (above the circles) are five Buddhas/monks meditating. These I call the Five Buddha Minds: inform mind, intuit mind, intent mind, insight mind and enlighten mind. The inform mind processes impulses, feelings (data) registered in the mind through the senses. Humans share this mind with other creatures. The inform mind links with the mammal body. The intuit mind brings forth knowing (more or less on their own) that are imbedded in the evolutionary legacy that humans inherit. The intuit mind links with the mortal body. The intent mind enables human to direct will. The mind, as it processes data, directs the will, spontaneously or through a thought process, to take what is considered appropriate action. The intent mind links with the appetites body. The insight mind enables humans to employ the brain's full potential. It allows for complex thought patterns and raising the level of consciousness. The insight mind is associated with the ambitions body. Finally, the enlighten mind enables the conscious grasp of the Soul, Cosmos and One. This mind is linked to the wisdom body.

At the center of the bottom of the Heart Mandala is a tree trunk that juts upward from the bottom border to the Fiery Circle. It represents the tree of life at that moment in evolution when creation became conscious. The practitioner, before progressing to the Circles, meditates on the Buddha Bodies and Minds. The meditation can be progressive: from mammal body to wisdom body; from inform mind to enlighten mind. Personally, I can get a sense of four of the Buddha Bodies, but only a slight glimpse of the Wisdom Body. I also can get a sense of four Buddha Minds, but the Enlighten Mind remains more speculation than personal experience.

## SECULAR CITY

Between the Circle of Commitment and Four Gates lies what I call the Secular City. In the mandala found in Tucci's book this region holds articles of daily life. The king's palace is located in the Secular City. In the Heart Mandala, this space is empty of artifacts and simply represents the Secular City, where the non-initiated practitioner lives prior to making a commitment to pursue the Meaning of Creation. It should also be added that the taking up of the four practices associated with the Four Gates indicates the degree of resolve that a practitioner puts behind his commitment.

## THE GATES

With a firm commitment to find the Meaning of Creation, the practitioner is ready to move from the Secular City to the Sacred City and press on until arriving at the Holy of Holies and the All, the Ultimate Truth, the 'Navaric' State. This journey which the ego embarks upon is set to unveil the One that is buried in the ego (an archetypal form of the Higher Self). This journey begins with taking up Basic Practices, that mostly focus on the external, while passing through the Four Gates (located on each side of the squared configuration).

Western Gate: Gate of Loving-Kindness. In my conceptualization, I begin with passage through the Western Gate, which I call the Gate of Loving-Kindness (Metta). Here begins the personal walk toward individuation. Passing through this Gate will hold me accountable regarding a practice of Loving Kindness. Each time I come to this Gate I assess to what degree I indeed practice loving-kindness in everyday life. This is what I meant earlier when I referred to behaviors that provide feedback for self-evaluation regarding progress in individuation. Clearly there is a tendency to believe, off hand, that one is doing well with loving-kindness. Self-deception may occur when one seemingly takes for granted "if I am meditating on loving-kindness then of course, I also must be practicing it." The task is to assess critically what degree one is practicing loving-kindness. In short, the practice of loving-kindness is an integral part of the Practice of Mandala.

The Western Gate, the Sun Set, the gloaming, is symbolized by the Great Mother (mostly projected in the iconic form of Mary, "Mother of God"). The Great Feminine takes us from the light of consciousness to the dark of the unconscious. She is the font of love, the source of wisdom and grace. The practitioner is encouraged to meditate on and visualize the Great Mother. To sense her great essence and creative power which, in turn, will enhance our practice of loving-kindness.

Southern Gate: Gate of Compassion. This Gate calls for the practice of Compassion (Karuna). Every time we come upon this Gate we can assess the degree to which we practice compassion. Again, every passage through this Gate gives the practitioner occasion to evaluate the extant practice of compassion. The Southern Gate, a turning upon ourselves in the darkness of the inner world, is symbolized by Tara, a Bodhisattva (a being who gains enlightenment but rejected going to Nirvana in order to assist others to achieve enlightenment. Her decision suggests a source of great compassion).

Northern Gate: the Gate of Nonattachment (Equanimity). This Gate generates the Practice of Nonattachment (Vairagya). Every passage through this Gate allows us opportunity to judge the level of our nonattachment practice. Nonattachment does not mean to have no desires, therefore no attachment. Rather, the thrust is to seek what is desired but not to be attached to any particular outcome. Nonattachment is the ability to live well with what comes to one. In this sense, nonattachment suggests equanimity. Clearly certain outcomes are distasteful. In such cases the individual continues to pursue the desire outcome but without recriminations. Whatever are the outcomes, they are lived with. Nonattachment/equanimity also means not to possess the fruits of

one's labors. One's labors are of the moment; the fruits of such labors are the products of the Greater All that works through the ego. The Northern Gate, the clear Light of Enlightenment, is symbolized by Gautama Buddha who lived a nonattached or equanimous existence after his enlightenment.

Eastern Gate: Gate of Principled Consciousness. This Eastern Gate activates the Practice of Principled Consciousness. The issue for humanity is not solely to be conscious but to have consciousness framed by truth and morality. We may accept that the Gods do not have to be ethical, but humans do, if we desire a governance that serves humanity. Ethics as well as morality are tainted by religious/cultural overtones. In the end each individual needs to claim an ethical basis on which life is based. Otherwise, consciousness is about knowing without any responsibility regarding what is done with the knowing. While there may be a universal law of the universe or a natural law for humans, there is no agreement on what may constitute universal or natural law. At the same time it would be somewhat inaccurate to claim that there are no general codes regarding human ethics. Every entry into this Gate gives opportunity to review how well goes the practice of principled or just consciousness. This Gate is symbolized by Jesus Christ who, as the "rising sun," brings greater light (consciousness) and calls upon humans to live morally. In saying this, I do not mean that following the ten commandments is the answer. However, it could be the answer for some people. There is the biblical story of the rich young man who followed the commandments but would not take on Christ's call to let go of riches and follow him. Following Christ requires experiencing something more than compliance with institutionally derived commandments, something beyond the institutionally defined content of sin. Each one of us is left to struggle to arrive at a code of justice, a principled consciousness, that we can claim as ours.

#### PASSAGE OUT OF THE SECULAR CITY AND CENTERING (see Appendix B)

Developing the practices associated with the four Gates cannot be overstressed and is the initial critical work for progressing into the Sacred City. But by themselves, they will not take us into the Sacred City. Something else is needed; this something else should be more concentrated. The search begins by seeking the Quintessential, the Fifth (the most essential), that is hidden in the center of the four. But for the Fifth to emerge, the Four need to reach an operational state. Their further development, however, is most likely to require assistance. It is here that the Fifth can lift the practices of Loving Kindness, Compassion, Non-Attachment and Principled Consciousness to a deeper level. Since the four practices focus mostly on the external, the Quintessential Fifth Practice might well focus on the internal. The Fifth is not the summation of the Four. Rather it joins the four into more effective practices. After much reflection I've come to accept that this Fifth is the practice of Centering, whether meditation/contemplation/mindfulness, chanting, prayer, gardening, martial arts, etc. The Fifth integrates the labor of the gates by making the Center the main focus.

A word need be said of self-reflection as a centering practice. Self-reflection, in general, has much to do with self-preoccupation. However, when linked to dream work it can be an extremely useful centering practice particularly when it directs the ego to focus on shadow features in the

unconscious. Bringing unconscious material into the conscious advances the Individuation process. The ketch is that self-reflection much too often is caught up with “day dreaming”, self-aggrandizement or self-belittling.

Centering suggests a deeper psychospiritual practice than the behavioral practices associated with the Gates. Centering is a practice that empowers the ego to enter the mandala’s Center (Sacred City and Holy of Holies). (It is recognized that some practitioners may have established a Centering practice before making the “Mandalian” Journey.) In short, if the four practices are initially done well, they will lead to the transcendent coming of a quintessential Centering Practice.

Centering is the source of the mantra “all-to-the-center.” In general, the ego occupies the psychological center-stage largely because the ego is not aware of the presence of something else. This something else might be Higher Self, Soul or even the Divine. Centering strengthens the ego so that it may engage the Higher Self from which it was bifurcated when humanity lost or traded instinctual programming for the emergence of consciousness. The ego’s contact with Self provides the opportunity to know who we are. Without focused Centering, the ego will continue to believe that its rightful place is life’s center-stage.

A Centering Practice sets up a special atmosphere of respect and silence. Without silence the practitioner might not hear the flow of the life force energy or hear what invocations may come from the Center of the Holy of Holies. Regarding a Meditation Centering Practice, Manjursi, the Bodhisattva, comes to mind. Manjursi holds a sword with which he cuts through ignorance. In the Japanese zendo, the senior monk paces the center aisle holding Manjursi’s symbolic sword. On occasion the guardian monk may strike a meditating monk on the back with the symbolic wooden sword to heighten Centering and further enlightenment. In a like manner, the five practices bring about the character and will to cut through ignorance and seek enlightenment.

In summary, the way through the Four Gates to the Sacred City and Holy of Holies encumbers the practitioner of the mandala to take on not only the four behavioral practices (Loving Kindness, Compassion, Nonattachment, Principled Consciousness) but also a Centering Practice that underscores silence. Without a committed attitude the use of the mandala becomes a mental exercise which has value in itself but falls short of what can be. The events associated with the Gautama Buddha and Jesus Christ indicate that they owned a Centering practice. These practices help mature and strengthen the ego. And the ego indeed needs to mature if it is to complete the Way of the Mandala, particularly working through the five impediments that the mandala’s walls represent.

## THE WALLS/IMPEDIMENTS

While passing through the Gates the practitioner encounters the Five Walls or Impediments that surround the sacred city. Each wall has a particular color assigned to it.

White Wall (Obstacle: Stupor). The ego on forging the basic personality and identity becomes resistant to change. A sort of stupor hangs over psyche and is the great impediment of the White Wall. This may be associated with our mammalian heritage. (Stupor is rooted in the Mammal Body personified by the tiger in the Heart Mandala). Because the animal is governed by a rather non-flexible instinctual programming, mammals do not experience change. On the contrary, humans, because they are not programmed by instinct, are free to change. And change is needed if ego is to correct the flaws and contradictions that exist in the psyche. Change is demanded if one is to traverse the entire mandala. Every time that the practitioner approaches this wall, there is opportunity to work through the resistance to change. The color of this wall is white to signify a colorless sameness that stupor represents.

Blue Wall (Obstacle: Existential Anxiety and Mortality). The wall evokes great anxiety; it brings us to nonbeing. Lord Shiva Lord of Destruction holding a trident terrifies us. (Mortality is rooted in the Mortal Body which is personified in the Heart Mandala by Lord Shiva holding the trident while sitting on the tiger.) It is claimed that the ego expends tremendous psychic energy in denying death. It is the impediment of anxiety that the Blue Wall incites; The ego, besides overcoming the existential anxiety caused by the ego's separation from Higher Self, also needs to overcome Shiva's dance of destruction and death. Practitioners may be self- deceived and proclaim that they experience no anxiety regarding mortality. However, it may well be that humans do not truly pass this impediment until they take up Albert Camus' thesis that suicide is the fundamental existential question. Camus would claim that it is only those who confront death directly and make a decision for life, who are free of the anxiety spun by death. My experience with confronting death came not from the question of suicide but from death faced in war. The nearness to death does have an impact regarding what should be taken or not taken seriously in life.

Besides the anxiety generated by mortality, the blue color associated with the second wall is meaningful in that it depicts another state of anxiety, namely, the existential anxiety that separation from the Cosmic One generates. Every encounter with this wall provides the practitioner opportunity to assess the level of anxiety which mortality or existential separation activates.

Orange Wall (Obstacle: Appetites notably Concupiscence). This wall is associated with the Appetites Body which stirs the ego to pursue sensuality in its many forms. This Wall symbolizes the battle which the senses wage to control the ego. The ego is caught in a narcissistic pull of desire. Concupiscence is the great impediment of the Orange Wall. Gluttony and Avarice are also present. This Wall suggests the epicurean philosophy to live well for tomorrow we die. In a diffused manner, the ego, if stuck at the Wall of Anxiety-Mortality, may seek to bypass this Wall by adopting a 'bonne vie' attitude. But in doing so the ego never goes beyond the level of Appetites which, in turn, stalls if not impedes, the way of individuation. The Wall's color is orange to depict the sensualism connected with the Body of Appetites. Every approach to this Wall provides the practitioner opportunity to evaluate to the struggle between the ego and desire (something similar to Freud's theory on the ego-id dynamics).

Red Wall (Obstacle: Ambitions (notably quest for Power)). This Wall is associated with the Body of Ambitions. The prominent impediment is the quest for power; greed also lurks here. Ambition is a characteristic which society reinforces. In this manner, the enticement of the Wall is subtle. Ambitions can lead a person to accomplish much that society hails. But high success is often considered an impediment to reach the sacred city, the holy of holies and inner sanctum of Soul. (A biblical saying relates to this phenomenon: it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to reach heaven.) The surprising feature is that there are some whose ambitions bring success but cast away such success to pursue the Soul. This paradox relates to another saying “You first have to be a Somebody (in society) to be a Nobody (the serene Enlightened One) in the Theosphere. The norm is that until we earn being a Somebody of merit, we keep striving to be the Somebody. Meanwhile we place lower priorities on other efforts to include individuation. Many, on becoming a Somebody, push for additional power and celebrity. The “perks” received with success are hard to relinquish, in fact, these “perks” tie us tighter to continuing success. The exception is to let go of the “riches” and follow the Teacher. (Put differently one has to be a nobody before becoming an authentic somebody). When arriving at this Wall the practitioner is to mediate on the presence of the power quest and goals of ambitions. The Wall’s color is red to reflect the fiery quest for power that stands behind ambition.

Yellow Wall (Obstacle: False Wisdom (notably Pretentiousness)). This Wall is associated with the Wisdom Body. Cynicism, self-deception, and arrogance are the impediments associated with False Wisdom. This Wall carries the psychological shadow of intellectuals and the religious. It is wisdom that is keen with concepts but not necessarily with experiencing them. It is more a wisdom based on talk rather than lived. False wisdom easily sticks to elites and the most educated but its presence remains nicely suppressed in the unconscious. A good number of intellectuals recognize the value of individuation and embark on something like individuation or the way of the mandala but the experiential aspect is often dropped while an intellectual process continues. Personally, I have recognized this Wall of False Wisdom: because I talk and write about it, then surely, I must live it. When the practitioner arrives at this Wall, the level of sincerity of the commitment should be reexamined alongside a review of how well one is doing with the four practices of Loving Kindness, Compassion, Non-Attachment and Principled Consciousness. The level of progress provides adequate feedback regarding whether our search for wisdom is authentic or false. The Wall’s color is yellow to signify the cynical aspects of false wisdom.

## SACRED CITY AND CONTENTMENTS

In the Heart Mandala, a black band (circle) separates the walls from the Sacred City. This black band represents the second letting go process, the Letting Go of Certainty. Passing through this black band takes the practitioner into the Sacred City. Letting go of Certainty that was gained in the Secular City enables the practitioner to be open to what can be learned in the Sacred City. Found in the Sacred City are four Buddha figures representing the Contentments which can be attained by pursuing the Way of the Mandala. The practitioner starts the stay in the Sacred City

with a beginner's mind. (7) With certainty gone and mind open, the practitioner commences the shift from an ego-based life of the Secular City to a Soul-based existence of the Holy of Holies.

The main work in the Sacred City is obtaining the contentment of senses, of view, of estate, and of way of living. The focus on contentments calls to mind that sacredness is not found in discipline and accomplishment but rather in the steady hum of life. Part of the work in the Sacred City is to deepen the practices associated with the Gates, especially deepening the Centering Practice.

Contentment of Senses. The journey to the Sacred City itself is a winding psychological journey. But it can also be a very rewarding experience as judged by how the senses bring contentment if not joy. Issues of sexuality undoubtedly surface. Cultural codes cause many sexual insecurities and guilt which prevent individuals from experiencing contentment from the body. Needless to say, it is up to individuals to claim their sexual code and practice. A practice of Loving-Kindness is thought to awaken the heart. Such awakening is reflected in the contentment of the senses; the feeling of "it's a blessing to be alive." And we experience that "alive" primarily through the senses. (For example, the orange tinged full moon that I saw last night, rippling through the clouds, was awesome.)

Contentment of View. On passing through the Gate of Compassion and struggling through the Five Walls, the practitioner has opportunity to judge the level of contentment that the View of Life brings. The practice of Compassion causes the ego to extend itself; it helps broaden and deepen the understanding of human life. Compassion helps the ego to set aside one-sided reasoning, partisan orientations and achieve a more global if not cosmic point of view. If observed that there is little contentment of view, the practitioner may wish to evaluate the practice of compassion; is it flowing from heart or from form? If the latter, the level of contentment may be a bit superficial.

Contentment of Desire and Personal Estate. It has been said that "life is suffering" mainly because of our desires and wants. The suffering comes not from desire, which is mostly good, but from the letdown that comes when our wants are not met as desired. The contentment with what comes our way flows from developing the Practice of Nonattachment that is linked with the Northern Gate. The goal is to instill a "love for what is," to be satisfied with what comes into our possession; to accept the results that come from carrying out our desires. In short, the issue is not the "wanting" but of being content with the extant estate which come our way.

Contentment of Way of Life. On passing through the Gate of Principled Consciousness and climbing through the Five Walls, the practitioner has occasion to experience the contentment which comes from work and everyday living. In the 1950s, "Organization Man," and the "Lonely Crowd" underscored a general dissatisfaction that was prevalent in United States society. The 1960s brought about many changes. Half century later, Consumerism, "endless" war and racial crisis has depleted much of the contentment that U.S. citizens enjoyed after the reforms of the 1960-70s. At the same time, making the pursuit of consciousness in context of justice, can lift the individual above society's foibles, and provide an innate contentment that one

is living life right. (Living life right or synchronistically, infers living the life we are destined to live.) Careers and marriage can impact on the contentment with the way of life. But contentment may not be present if life lacks morality, truth and justice.

While in the Sacred City, the ego is called upon not to take itself too seriously so that less energy is devoted to ego maintenance. Advancing the Basic Practices and overcoming the Five Impediments strengthens and matures the ego which may cause the ego to vacate the center stage. The continuing presence of the ego in life's center stage keeps the Higher Self hidden. (From a psychospiritual point of view it is the Soul that is hidden.)

## TOWARD THE HOLY OF HOLIES (see Plates 2/3)

Now in my late eighties I have doubts that I shall be able to experience, psychospiritually, access to the Holy of Holies. In regards to entry into the Holy of Holies, I sense a mixed feeling of not finding my way. Often, I had to acknowledge that my practice of individuation and mandala had been weak largely because it was performed with form rather than heart. Then I sensed little contentment of practice. Such assessment has helped me periodically to revitalize the overall practice.

Imagery of what a Soul-based existence might look like in everyday life provides some direction. Also, imagery of what it takes to remove ego from the center stage is helpful. Clearly lifting the contentments and practices associated with the Gates to an advanced level enhances the possibility of shifting to a Soul-Based life. In fact, this labor may be one of the main tasks to be fulfilled in the Holy of Holies. I try not to be too discouraged because I still have much work to do on the practices and contentments. Such feelings should not daunt us. It represents a high goal; it asks the ego to maximize itself. Once the shift begins toward a Soul-based life, the movement itself upgrades the level of effort.

It is one thing through imagery to enter the Mandala's Holy of Holies, it is another thing to experience the Holy of Holies. It is here that we can note differences between the Way of the Mandala and Way of Individuation. In the former, the practitioner uses the mandala for guiding behavior. In the latter, Individuation is working through psychologically unconscious materials such as complexes and archetypal patterns that affect our living life. The task of maximizing an individual's Life Force would greatly benefit were psychospiritual analysis and mandala work joined.

Another name for the Sacred City is 'Temple'. On entering the Temple, it would serve the ego to recognize that its true role is that of Temple guardian or keeper of the Holy of Holies (Tabernacle). In this capacity of Temple Keeper, the ego is more prone to vacate the Temple's center stage; to recognize that it is only the servant and not the Lord. (The Sacred City may also be found in nature, mountains, fields, lakes. Being in the Sacred City is to sense the abundance and interdependence of life as well as its naturalness and beauty. The Sacred City brings us to proximity with the transpersonal. In the Sacred City the healing energies of the life force are

more discernible. Were the ego to recognize its true role as servant, it might be able to tap this energy and use it to heal.

It is my impression that the movement from the Sacred City/Temple to the Holy of Holies occurs when ego begins to question its role in center stage. It takes a strong mature ego to reach the Sacred City and become the humble temple keeper. Once in the Sacred City, the ego may well get a glimpse of the hidden Soul and then become more likely to relinquish center stage.

## HOLY OF HOLIES

What was not addressed in the prior section was the transcendent process that absorbs the Four Contentments into one. But if we are able to identify this unknown contentment, it will take us to center. Before ending the ‘mandalian’ trek the Quintessential Fifth Contentment needs to be identified. For years I could not grasp what was before me. I never could fully hold the meaning of the Wheel of Joy (the inseparability of all things), or truly comprehend what is to be found at the end of the mandala odyssey. But recently the answer became clear: simply put, Joy itself was the Quintessential Contentment. Could it be so simple that the Wheel of Joy, in its name, holds the meaning? With such conjecture, movement towards the Holy of Holies becomes possible and no longer indicates an abstract idea. (All-to-the-Center, to the Wheel of Joy.)

To truly manifest the Contentment of Joy the practitioner’s practice need be sufficiently operational to traverse the third black line, namely, the “Letting- go of Form”. Unknowingly humans live much of life from form which has been taught since birth. As such, much of life is not lived authentically. Such Letting-Go takes the practitioner into the Holy of Holies where are found the Double-Dorje and Wheel of Joy. The Wheel of Joy is located where the Dorjes crisscross. (A caveat needs to be made: Joy is not easy to obtain when the body suffers pain and/or grief or when compassion covers great suffering.)

Crossing the “Letting-Go of Form” band represents the presence of a mature ego capable of relinquishing the psychological center stage. But even more paramount, entry takes the practitioner to the edge of the transpersonal. In the Sacred City the practitioner engaged the Four Contentments. In the Holy of Holies, the practitioner broadens the Quintessential Contentment of Joy by attending to the Double Dorje and Wheel of Joy (also known as the Wheel of Fire). Symbolically, the task before the practitioner is to get from the Double Dorje to the Wheel of Joy that is located in the mandala’s center point. To begin this final process, the ego must be committed to discard living by form, and begin to give way to a Soul-based life. The subsequent work at the Holy of Holies progressively has less to do with ego and more with Higher Self (or Soul). Indeed, there must be great joy to arrive at this level of development.

Double Dorje. The dorje located in the Holy of Holies symbolizes a thunderbolt or diamond cutting through delusions of form (and often is associated with masculine power.) A Double Dorje augments the force that cuts through false wisdom. The esoteric meaning of the Double Dorje is Invincibility, Great Emptiness and devoid of separate self. This emptiness occurs for the

ego when form is let-go, invincibility takes hold and the ‘Somebody’ ego gives way to the ‘Nobody’ Self; then the ego is prepared to set upon the Wheel of Joy. (I must make it clear at this time, that writing the preceding sentence was not based on my experiencing this Great Emptiness. I wrote in an intuitive manner; I wrote from inspiration.) The invincibility of the Double Dorje is found in how it cuts through false wisdom and ignorance while fostering the joy of truth, justice, wisdom and enlightenment.

Wheel of Joy. Once the practitioner apprehends the symbolism of the Double Dorje the focus turns on the Wheel of Joy. In Vajrayana or Tibetan Buddhism, the Wheel of Joy (‘gankyil’) is the symbol for total incorporation and enlightenment. It is associated with the Yin and Yang symbol of swirling energies balancing each other to achieve harmony. Other meanings include: Earth in circular motion, simulation of the sun to ward off winter and death, as well as great joy and, employs lightning and thunder to point out the residence of Gods. (The Wheel of Joy could be found on the Sikkim flag when it was an independent nation.) ( see Plate 3)

Total incorporation and achieving harmony suggest the dynamics of relationship. Such dynamics underscore the great earthly joy of love. (Mystics might speak of loving the Divine.) Clearly to love can be disheartening but even when relationships are disturbing human love remains the embodiment of joy. The task is for “total incorporation” not to impede “balance.” Such is possible when Truth and Wisdom proliferate and enlightenment abounds. (In regards to such imagery I have found it useful to view the human body as a mandala with the Heart (symbolic source of love), representing the centric Holy of Holies. (See Part II.)

Ode to Joy. Joy is a universal feeling available to all humans. Culture, however, may place emotive overtones on the expression of Joy. In the West, Joy has been linked (as a code word) with freedom. Psychologically, such a code is realistic for without Freedom, there can be no Joy. Frederick Schiller, a German playwright, wrote the poem “Ode to Joy” in 1785. Initially it had the title of “Ode to a Friend.” It is said that Schiller was dissatisfied with the poem. In 1824 Beethoven became interested in the poem (perhaps because of its alleged connection with freedom). After some revision of the poem, Beethoven used the words for the choral lyrics of the final part of his 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony which he called Ode to Joy. In more modern times Beethoven’s Ode to Joy has been used as a protest song. For example, protest against the Chilean military dictator and at Tiananmen Square. In 1972, it became the anthem of the European Union. It was played at the Berlin Wall the day after it fell under the title Ode to Freedom. Given wars and widespread political oppression, the expression of Joy has been hard to come by. But it is up to humanity to end war and oppression. It indeed will require strong mature egos to end war and overcome terrorism. A mandala practice helps to strengthen the ego so that it can experience an inkling of Joy in spite of dark shadows.

## MEANING OF CREATION AND WHAT NOW?

In the section that discusses the three circles, the inner or Lotus Circle pertains to a commitment by the practitioner to find the meaning of Creation (Fire or outer Circle). The practitioner also

commits to find the meaning of Life and of Homo sapiens. Well can we ask whether the Mandala Journey provides answers or insights. The author found no definitive answer regarding the meaning of Creation other than to say that Joy is involved, if not central, to the meaning of Creation. (See ending of Appendix C) One lead is that Creation had something to do with ending universal isolation and an outreach to share. In this scenario, Creation lets loose the Life Force which, in turn, makes possible the expression of Joy.

In that the Creator was not well versed in Creation, it set up evolution to bring about needed change. In Teilhard de Chardin's conceptualization, evolution has been pivotal in the human story. Evolution fashioned the geosphere which produced matter and various physical laws such as gravity. The evolution of the bio/psychosphere followed that of the geosphere. The biosphere introduced various brands of the Life Force. Meanwhile, the psychosphere led to the development of the Homo sapiens species and its particular kind of Joy. Teilhard predicts the noosphere as the next evolutionary development. The noosphere is based on the expansion of the human mind. Given evolution's very slow movement, the noosphere may take-up the role of overseer of further evolutionary developments, particularly those relating to humankind and the planet. From a Homo sapiens' point of view, the meaning of Creation is found in its evolutionary stages that have produced humans and provided more or less an orderly environment that enables Joy. The preceding point of view is not meant to imply that no other meaning exists.

The commitment of the Lotus Circle includes seeking the meaning of life itself and meaning of the human. This meaning is to be found in purpose. My search again takes me to the theories of Teilhard de Chardin. The purpose of life is to enhance Joy (love) by way of the noosphere amorizing the Universe. (I am prone to call it the Amornoosphere.) The meaning of the human is found in its role of helper to bring about the Universe's amorization. Said concisely, Creation is the font through which love (Joy) flows in the Cosmos to bring about its Amorization.

At the end of traversing the Way of the Mandala, the ego will have come to understand that its primary role is that of "servant" and that its energies are directed both to seek the Holy of Holies and Individuation. (See Closing Commentary) Such ego work, I may add, would advance the overall development of the Homo Sapiens species. It is hoped that many of the readers will arrive at the Holy of Holies and complete the development associated with the Mandala Trek (which has characteristics of a shamanic journey).

This trip has taken us to the center of being to find the Contentment if not the Spirit of Joy awaiting us. This ending suggests that our engagement with life should be lived in joy. It is a long excursion but worth it if it brings us Joy and strengthens the ego. But a question still lingers, Now What? Our arrival at the final symbol does not seem to be all, something other than Joy has been calling us from the Center. From the framework of depth psychology, the Higher Self has been calling the ego forward so that they can end their bifurcation. From the psychospiritual point of view it has been the Soul that has drawn the ego forward. From a religious context it is the Divine that has been leading us forward. Or could it be the nascent Noosphere and Amorization that is calling? It may be that they have been all calling but I have not yet found how to decipher their call. A mystery exists and a quest hazily discernable. All this implies that

the Contentment of Joy points to a more profound human experience which is still mostly concealed. In short, our Mandala Venture may be but a preparation for a deeper experience!

## PART II (see Plate 6)

### HUMAN BODY AS A MANDALA

Professor Tucci, in his *THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THE MANDALA* wrote: “so the external mandala is transferred to the internal mandala, namely to the body in which the same symbols as those of the former are placed in similar arrangement.” (p 108). If such is the case, the mandala’s thrust to the mid-point (all-to-the-center) would also be noted in the human body. Whereas the mandala highlights a concentric design, Tucci wraps the human body in a chakra anatomy which consists of points in the body that are sensitive to discharge of energies. This commentary explores a theoretical model for the interaction between the Chakra System and Life-Forces. It is thought that such interaction can advance individuation.

The focus is on the discharge of three Life Force Energies; two external, Creation/Evolutionary and Planetary-Specie and one internal, Personal-Gender life-force. Current energetic healing focuses mostly on the personal life-force energy. Few if any energetic practices work with the two above-mentioned external life-forces. For the ego there may be little difference in working with any energetic field. One difference is that the Creation/Evolutionary Life-Force energy continuously flows through the body. The Planetary-Specie while flowing outside the body ends up outside the body. With personal organic energy the flow is circular within the body. This division between external and personal life-forces means that the Creation/Evolutionary and Planetary-Specie have their own organic dynamics such as emitting distinct life-force energies.

In Sanskrit, Chakra means “spinning wheel.” In the East, Chakras are regarded as the collection centers or power stations of the body’s vital life-force energy. The Chakra System consists of the following main bodily areas. The First or Root Chakra is located at the base of the spine (coccyx). The second or Sacral Chakra, is located in area of sexual organs. The Third Chakra is located in the Navel area. The Fourth Chakra is found in the Heart area. The Fifth Chakra is placed on the throat. The Sixth Chakra is located in the brow (third eye). The Seventh Chakra, or Crown Chakra, is found in the fontanelle area.

To begin the analysis the question arises, what is the basis for the Mandala-Chakra interaction particularly the merger of the chakras with the three major circles in the Heart Mandala, namely Fire, Diamond and Lotus Circles. (It may be said in passing that a three-circle mandala is quite common in Tibetan mandala making.) In the theoretical construct, the Fire Circle links with Creation and radiates an external cosmic Life-Force. (The Creation-Evolutionary Life-Force could be taken to infer a divine-like entity or the Universal Energy Field (See Barbara Brennan) The Diamond Circle associates with meaning, not only the meaning of Creation but also the meaning of the species, and radiates a Planetary-Species’ Life Force. (In this regard, evolutionary speaking, the specie rather than the individual is the central evolutionary figure).

The Lotus Circle connects with commitment (particularly commitment to find the meaning of Creation and of the species) and radiates a Personal-Gender Life-Force. (Another aspect of the Personal Life Force is at the disposal of the individual ego and steers a life force to individuate. This Personal Life Force may well have been astronomically formed at the moment of birth.)

For the most part the two external and one internal Life Forces, similar to the human immune system, are driven by their own dynamics. (Every life form has its own life-force system.) It is held that the ego can tap these forces, particularly when dead-forces are about such as with disease or depression. This tapping seems to be the rationalization for engaging in prayer. Basically prayer, for example directed at saints, seeks to activate a particular archetype that is symbolized by the saint. In short, prayer sets the psychospiritual condition of the individual's organic life-force to activate the symbolized archetypal energy. Reiki type healing may tap both organic and external life-force energies by "opening" hands to be channels for life-force energies to flow and heal.

The following section examines the interaction between the three circles and the seven chakras to assess whether such merger can be used to tap the Creation/Evolutionary, Planetary-Species and Personal-Gender that are not found in the Personal-Gender energy fields. Since a theme of a mandala practice is "all-to-the center", the initial key is to locate a mid- center point. This is found in the Chakra System at the 4<sup>th</sup> or Heart Chakra. Vertically, there are three Chakras above and three below the Heart. In the Heart Mandala three circles rotate around the Mandala's mid-point (Wheel of Fire). The 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Chakras are located on the portions of the 3 circles above the midpoint while the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> chakras are found below the mid-point. Moving upward, the 5<sup>th</sup> Chakra lies on the Lotus Circle, the 6<sup>th</sup> on the Diamond Circle and the 7<sup>th</sup> Chakra is located on the Fire Circle. Conversely, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chakra is located on the Lotus Circle, the 2<sup>nd</sup> is positioned on the Diamond Circle and the 1<sup>st</sup> on the Fire Circle. This arrangement discloses new relationships among the Chakras. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Chakras share the Fire Circle, the 6<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> share the Diamond Circle, and the 5<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> occupy the Lotus Circle.

Since the Fire Circle symbolizes Creation it can be asked in what manner do the 7<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Chakras have to do with Creation. The Root Chakra lies on the coccyx which, in turn, marks the evolutionary appearance of the Homo sapiens specie. The Root Chakra is fed by Earth and holds the record of Earth's evolution. The Crown or 7<sup>th</sup> Chakra is fed by the Cosmos and marks the infusion of Cosmic energy introduced by Creation itself, and holds the record of the continuing cosmic evolution.

Since the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Chakras rotate on the Diamond Circle it can be asked in what manner do these two chakras relate to meaning. The positioning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chakra in the Sacral region suggests that it is the overseer of human biology particularly of human DNA. Succinctly put, the bio-meaning of Homo sapiens is found in its unique DNA that lies within the domain of the Sacral Chakra. Whereas the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chakra provides the bio-meaning of the human, the 6<sup>th</sup> Chakra, as center of the Collective Unconscious and overseer of the human archetype template, provides the psycho-meaning of the human.

Finally, since the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> chakras are positioned on the Lotus Circle, in what manner do they relate to commitment? In former times the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chakra was located in the navel area. In Sanskrit, it is called Manipura or Jewel of the Navel. More recently it has been placed in the Solar Plexus area perhaps to reflect society's turn towards the use of power. (Tucci places the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chakra at the navel.) It is held that the solar plexus placement of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chakra distorts the Chakra's role. By keeping the chakra's location at the navel, the theme of birthing looms distinctly. And if it has to do with birthing it has to do with the feminine commitment to birth. Clearly bio-birthing is outside masculine purview. Meanwhile the 5<sup>th</sup> or Throat Chakra which relates to communication, symbolizes the masculine vehicle for "birthing", that is, birthing through communicative efforts such as book writing. Whereas the feminine gender carries commitment to perpetuate the specie, the masculine gender carries commitment to birth the ideas and systems that advance Homo sapiens. In short, the Navel and Throat Chakras reflect a Personal-Gender life force to accompany the other two life forces, the cosmic and species life forces. (Given that birthing has been reduced in recent times, many women will not birth, and therefore it can be expected that women will increasingly produce communicative material that advances the human species.)

The Life Forces-Chakra interaction can be understood as a two-stroke process; one downward and the other upward. The downward stroke suggests spirit seeking matter (in a way symbolizing Creation's incarnation or materialization) and the upward stroke which symbolizes matter (flesh) seeking spirit ("decarnation"). The Creation/Evolutionary Life Force is the main source of the downward stroke. The Planet-Specie Life Force is the source of the upward stroke that presently advances, as a follow up to the Planet's geo/biosphere, a mindsphere (Noosphere) that is based in consciousness-spirit. But the norm is for little awareness of the interaction between the external life forces and chakras to occur largely because knowledge of Life Force fields and Chakra System remains rather undeveloped. Thus, little tapping of the external Life Creation/Evolutionary Life Force energies takes place. But since the thrust is constant, the chakras have a life-long opportunity to engage the Cosmic/Evolutionary Life Force. (The power of the Creation/Evolutionary Life Force is incomprehensible, as noted by the reality that humanity travels in space around 20 miles per second and 130 million miles a year, what power!)

The same situation somewhat exists with the upward stroke. The Planetary-Specie, and Personal-Gender Life Forces, that stir in the Earth, rise upward and sweep by the lower three chakras mostly untapped. It may be that the Planetary-Specie Life Force is agitating the upward and downward strokes in that the Specie itself is vulnerable to expiry. This can be seen in the current global debate on environment and climatology. If not vigilant the Homo sapiens experiment might end. Thus, it is incumbent on humanity to maximize the gathering of the Planetary-Specie Life Force to insure species continuation.

Given the evolutionary threat facing the human specie the central issue is how to increase chakra exchange with the three Life Forces surrounding humanity, or even more so, utilize them to protect and heal. The answer may be found in the Fourth or Heart Chakra that projects a canvas of virtue and is encountered through the interplay of imagery and a psychospiritual practice, whether gardening or prayer-centering. It is taken that the Heart Chakra is the central feature of the human body and serves as the keeper of the human spiritual quest. Because humanity's level

of consciousness is still undeveloped, most egos have inadequate capacity to tap the life forces or understand the impact of the chakras. In this light, the Heart Chakra may be the best placed to tap the three life forces.

When the Human Body is imaged as Temple, and Heart as Tabernacle, the Heart projects the Divine (which in Catholic dogma, is the consecrated host or the Body of Christ). Said differently what is kept in the Tabernacle is the Divine's Love which replaces the Host, Body of Christ. In this sense, Love is God; to Love is to be God-like.

The "State of the Heart" indicates the degree to which the individual ego can interact with these life forces. The Heart or 4<sup>th</sup> Chakra does not rest on any of the three circles but would rest over the Mandala's Holy of Holies section. In this arrangement the Heart Chakra represents the Wheel of Joy/Fire (or Divine Center, Higher Self, Cosmic One), the very midpoint of the Mandala. Symbolically the three circles spin around the midpoint (Heart) so that the energies of the Three Life Forces will be tapped by the Chakras

The circles, as previously mentioned, are aligned vertically with the midpoint. The part of the 7<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Chakras, that are located in the upper areas of the circles, contain the Life Forces that are the source of the downward stroke, which in turn, strengthens the urge to incarnate. Below the midpoint the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Chakras, source of the Upward stroke, puts pressure on the ego to individuate on the way to "decarne" (dematerialize).

It may help to understand the upward and downward strokes by tracing the flow of the Life Force energies. To begin, visualize the Creation/Evolutionary Life Force flowing down from the celestial expanse to a point on the Mandala above the figure that I called the Enlightened Buddha Mind. The flow falls downwards on the right side of the Creation (Fire) Circle past Chakra 7 through Chakra 2. The flow then joins first with Chakra 1 (at the coccyx) and further down with the Evolutionary Tree of Human Life (also known as Primate Family Tree). It then continues downward until the flow exits the mandala itself and wanders off to the Universe. This energy is ever on flow and constantly passing through the body. (Outside the mandala the flow of the Creation/Evolutionary Life Force rushes on in the Cosmos to continue its creative and evolutionary work.)

Life has its ways of depleting individuals of their Life Force. Also, age exhausts the Life Force. These conditions call on the ego to revitalize the Life Force by tapping into any of the three Life Force flows. Because of the rudimentary understanding of Life Force reenergizing and mode of tapping, the practitioner will have to experiment on what produces successful tapping.

The upward stroke or the Planet-Specie Life Force is visualized a bit differently. Whereas the Creation/Evolutionary Life Force sweeps down from on top of Enlightened Buddha Mind (symbol for the vast Universe), the Planet-Specie energy flow begins where the Human Family Tree meets with the coccyx, Chakra 1. The flow then runs upward on the left side of the Diamond Circle passing Chakra 2. The upward flow ends where the Life Force Energy meets with Chakra 7 and the Enlightened Buddha Mind. Whereas the Creation/Evolutionary Life Force

centers on the evolution of the Cosmos, the Planet-Specie Life Force advances Homo sapiens' evolution, particularly the development of enlightened planetary truth which slowly finds its way to the Heart Chakra. In this context the upward stroke furthers the human Truth Quest and focuses mainly on the non-material such as consciousness and spirituality.

The third life force field, the Personal-Gender Life Force, has a smaller flow which circulates around the heart. It begins at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chakra to denote the individual's birth and gender. The flow moves upward (on the left side of the Lotus Circle) to the 5<sup>th</sup> Chakra and then downward to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chakra (on the right side of the Lotus Circle). It is within this space that the Personal-Gender Life Force develops the ego. Because the ego begins in a very fragile state the viability of the Personal-Gender Life Force need be frequently addressed and refortalized when necessary. In short, the upward and downward sweeps of Personal-Gender Life Force remain at the beacons call of the Heart.

Depending on the level of maturity, egos can tap the passing life forces through imagery, ritual, enacting and/or sound. The gathering of Life Force is essential to advance Individuation. For some, tapping might require nothing more than stretching out one's palms and be open to serve as energy channel. It is held that tapping the life forces is more likely to occur when the ego aspires to a heart-centered existence. (Psychologically, it is the ego that makes the journey to the Center which in Individuation would correspond to the ego's journey to the Higher Self.)

Although humans generally fail to call forth Life Force energies there is a growing interest to engage in energy therapy. In closing, the value of a mandala centering practice is the access which the practice offers in regards to tapping the Life-Forces, which, in turn, can lead to healing. (This brief discussion of chakras and life forces has omitted any commentary of the Kundalini (serpent) energy that lies in the Root Chakra and periodically sweeps upward with much force.)

## CLOSING COMMENTARY

### MANDALA PRACTICE AS AN ADJUNCT TO THE INDIVIDUATION PROCESS

The Individuation Process is a psychological system organic to Homo sapiens. It centers on the ego and its development. The ego is an entity that mutated out of the Self in order to organize the evolutionary emergence of consciousness. It evolved out of the Self (the whole I) to replace the ordering of life that was previously done by instinctual programming. The ego, in organizing consciousness and being the central agent in Individuation, aims to reunite with the Higher Self and reestablish a state of wholeness.

Individuation's first task is to fashion a persona (personality) that twenty years later projects, more or less, a self-sustainable identity. The ego vets much energy in formulating its structure and defending it. Because the ego directs such energy on the extant persona, it is prone to defend persona; at times, even at all costs. It is critical to note that the persona was fashioned when the

ego itself was just formed and quite immature. As a consequence, the persona is a vulnerable agent that carries many flaws and contradictions. Given this reality, the ego's major labor is to defend the persona, even its contradictions and flaws. In dealing with the persona, the ego is likely to believe that the former is the authentic "I." Here is where Individuation gets stuck, it must first mature and gain competency before it can take responsibility for its persona

development and defense. Initially parents and community assume responsibility for a newborn's persona development. Subsequently, in order to start taking responsibility, the ego need manifest competency to address the persona's flaws and contradictions. Failure to mature sufficiently, stalls Individuation and prevents the correction of the unconscious flaws and contradictions (that have become shadow elements). At this point, the ego may again find its-self stuck in not knowing how to bring unconscious material into consciousness.

There is no one way to pursue Individuation. The track that the modern ego makes in its general development is that of rational thought (or dialectic analysis). On the road to intellectual development the modern ego has set aside symbolic analysis and largely lost the use of intuition. But symbol analysis and intuition are foremost tools for bringing unconscious material into consciousness. Sigmund Freud deserves credit for using dream symbols to open the royal route to the personal unconscious while Carl Jung deserves credit for using dream symbols to make conscious material from the collective unconscious.

Individuation is a lifelong process (as is ego development) that does not require dictates. Rather the individual takes the onus to behave in accordance with "personal truths" gleamed from Individuation's labor (much of which is shared with the rest of humanity). The ultimate goal is change as seen in ego behavior where persona flaws are rectified and contradictions corrected. Some individuals seem more confident to pursue this process by following specific behaviors whether personal analysis, drawing, meditating, gardening or following given precepts associated with a religion or spiritual network.

The issue of how to proceed is critical. Whatever the format, it is essential that ego become mature and strong but not in an egoistic manner (strong and immature). It is here where a mandala practice comes in, namely, character-building, if that is the word, for a mature ego development. What we do is who we are. In the preceding pages many behaviors are highlighted that strengthen the ego which, in turn, enable the ego to pursue Individuation in a more forthright manner.

In the use of the mandala, a practitioner not only builds character that matures the ego, but also deepens the general "know" of Individuation. Were the mandala practitioner to set out to achieve the three "letting goes" (of fruits of labor, certainty and of form) she or he would truly be an "advanced" person to pursue Individuation. Practicing loving kindness, compassion, nonattachment and principled consciousness while overcoming the five impediments (stupor, existential anxiety, licentious, greed (self-centeredness) and false wisdom (pretentiousness) prepares the ego for addressing the complications that surface with the changes that arise with the deepening of the Individuation process. But it is not just ego strengthening that a mandala

practice brings forth, it also provides a window to spiritual development and to various forms of healing.

It often is the case where an individual absorbs much knowledge regarding Individuation but little progress is made. It is not uncommon in these cases that the ego is not adequately organized and resourceful to apply this knowledge to the Individuation process. A mandala practice may well provide such individuals the format to apply the insights into a fruitful Individuation.

There is hesitancy if not confusion regarding the “way of life.” Part of the struggle is to find meaning but even that is not enough, humans need resiliency if not faith that life can be lived satisfactorily. A major problem is the incertitude regarding humanity’s bifurcation of ego and Self. Such an inner split suggests that living life will be no simple ruse; humans will continue to experience incompleteness. The psychological task, individuation, is to join ego with Self (on the contrary, chimps have no ego-self split). Individuation itself is not new; it is an ongoing process. What modern depth psychology has accomplished is to bring the Individuation Process into consciousness and now that the Process is conscious there is expectation that increased participation will be the norm in the future. It is hoped that discussion of a mandala practice may entice some to take up the practice as an adjunct to Individuation.

#### TOWARD A SOUL-BASED LIFE:

After traversing the mandala, we arrive at its Center which symbolizes the Source of Life; some may call it the Creator, Unifying One or Higher Self. The dorje has done its work; it has cleaved delusions and taken us to the Center. The meaning of Creation is finally beginning to be apprehended. Beyond the Center we come to the Nothingness and Everything of Creation. But what is Creation? Sitting before the mandala the practitioner is left to personal beliefs or conjecture of what constitutes the meaning of Creation.

In the prior section the commitment found in the Lotus Circle puts the onus on the practitioner to find the meaning of Creation, to include the meaning of Life itself. I suggested that meaning was to be found in purpose that brought to mind Teilhard de Chardin’s theory of the noosphere. At the end, the mandala journey led to the conclusion that the purpose of Life was to live in Joy and that the meaning of the human is found in its role of helper in the amorization of the Universe. Such becomes likely the more humans evolve from an ego-based Life to a Soul-based Life.

The journey of the mandala spotlights the ego’s effort to vacate the psyche’s center stage (Holy of Holies) and unveil the Soul that has always existed there, but remained hidden by the ego’s untoward presence. The final steps of the mandala trek set the stage for the ego-based life to give way to a Soul-based life.

No matter how much is written about the Soul it still reflects a great mystery. The Soul is the hidden element of the psyche (the psychospiritual characteristic of life that co-exists within the biological aspect of life). In my frame of reference, the Soul is the psychospiritual inheritance

that all matter receives through Creation (Big Bang or what it may be called later after further discoveries in astrophysics).

When culture does not acknowledge the existence or practice of Soul, the Soul recedes into the background of the psyche; it becomes more an idea than a relationship. In this sense, the Soul is mostly hidden. (Such may not have been the case when Homo sapiens species was in its evolutionary infancy; then humans may have been more aware of the Soul's existence.) Because it is hidden, the ego mistakenly believes that it is the psyche's only psychospiritual component and thus assumes the psyche's center stage.

I sense rather than know that there is a Soul. I sense the Soul through the moods that I experience. Moods are a way that the Soul communicates when the ego lacks a more direct way to communicate, such as inner dialogue, visions or dreams. A Seeker Archetype helps questing the Soul as does listening deeply to an inner voice which urges the ego to find the missing element that leaves humans feeling incomplete. The Way of Individuation, similar to the Way of Mandala, become venues to reach out to the Soul. These Ways strengthen and mature the ego which, in turn, enables it to exit center stage, unveil the Soul and begin a shift from an ego-based existence to a Soul-based Life.

It is understandable why the Way of the Mandala cannot say much about Creation because the subject itself is too vast for an ego-based mind to comprehend. At the same time, a mandala practice can take the individual to the edge of the transpersonal to image the powerful forces of Creation and intricacies of the Universe. For a better understanding of Creation, we await the evolution of the noosphere and advanced mind that will lead to living a Soul-based existence.

In short, a practice of the mandala is particularly useful to explore what a Soul-based Life might be. For example, an ego-based Life is historical while a Soul-based Life would tend to be *0*ahistorical. Such an orientation allows for a more encompassing grasp of the larger plane of existence. I end with the understanding that humanity is tasked to go beyond an ego-based Life to live a Soul-based Life.

## ALL TO THE CENTER

In a mandala all roads lead to the Center unless they are blocked for example, by impairments or roads opened, but it is also the ego that blocks the roads with psychological impairments. The use of the mandala as a centering practice strengthens the ego's capacity to place less energy in blocking the roads and more energy to keep the roads open. A mystery exists that may never be clearly apprehended: that the goal of the ego is to liberate the Center from itself and its unsavory elements such as "money-is-king" or "power-is-all." In brief, All-to-the-Center is about liberating the ego from itself. The use of the mandala as a Centering Practice sets up the ego to clean out its repugnant elements in Center Stage.

In the preceding section I wrote "Because it [Soul/Self] is hidden, the ego mistakenly believes

that it is the psyche's only psychospiritual component and thus assumes the psyche's center stage." Meanwhile, the true Self remains unconscious, if not somnambulant, in the far reaches of the centerstage. Initially, the rearing entities (parents/schools) steer an individual's psychic rudder. In this context, the issue is "all to the ego" so that the ego can assume responsibility for its psychic endowment. It is during adolescence and identity formation that the "turning over" occurs. From now on no longer should it be "all to the ego" in that, at this time of development, it holds a score of distraught thought formations and inadequate behavioral patterns all of which need some level of correction. If there is any part of "all to the ego" left, it is to have the ego first, work through the immature thought development and debilitating behavioral patterns and second, disengage itself from the psychic centerstage. All-to-the-center is at its best when the ego works (as servant) to engage the Higher Self so that life may be lived at a more profound level. This becomes possible as the ego matures and advances Individuation particularly by making conscious as much of the unconscious shadow as possible.

Problems begin when the ego, on assuming full responsibility for the psyche, does not accept the level of psyche disturbance, that there is no major work to be done and therefore suppresses the need for change and growth. It begins to believe that it is the "true captain" of the psychic ship forever regardless of its level of maturity. Psychological resistance emerges and Individuation advances precariously and slowly until the ego is removed (if ever) from centerstage. Depending on the "state" of the ego, the ego will resist and stay vetted to its "state" or may opt to change when it is able to realize that itself is the "false" I (Self). The ego arrives at this psychological understanding after the hard labor of working through debilitating complexes. In the Heart Mandala, All-To-The-Center takes the practitioner to the Wheel of Joy. When such occurs and elements of the Higher Self or Soul begin to surface in the centerstage, the human has opportunity to experience unmitigated and sustainable JOY.

This study sought, in part, to evaluate whether the mandala can serve as a Centering Practice. Some readers may have found the recommended behaviors, such as loving kindness, reminiscent of the Buddhist Eightfold Path or of the Ten Commandments. All these behaviors serve to strengthen and mature the ego. What the Mandala Centering Practice offers is a visual design that outlines a process that directly takes the practitioner to the Center with the outcome of experiencing Joy. The Mandala Centering Practice would be enhanced were the practitioner to include the mandala-design projected on the human body (Part II of this study). Where the Wheel of Joy occupies the very Center of the Mandala, in the Body Mandala the human heart is the Center. The unique contribution of the Body Mandala is an imagery framework for gaining access to the Life Force which, in turn, can be used for self or other healing. If desiring more information please contact me.

## APPENDIX A: OUTLINE OF HEART MANDALA

### 1. STRUCTURE

#### -The Evolutionary Inheritance

Five Buddha Bodies:

Mammal, Mortal, Appetites, Ambition and Wisdom

Five Buddha Minds:

Inform, Intuit, Intend, Insight and Enlighten

#### -Cosmos (Theosphere)

Fire Circle (Existence Of Creation)

Diamond Circle (Meaning Of Creation)

1<sup>st</sup> Letting Go: attachment to fruit of labor

Lotus Circle (Commitment To Find Meaning of Creation)

#### -Passage Through Secular City

Entry Gates (Leading from Secular City to Sacred City):

Loving Kindness, Compassion, Nonattachment, Principled Consciousness;

Quintessential (The One in Five) Centering Practice\*

Walls (Impediments):

Stupor (White), Existential Anxiety (Blue), Concupiscence (Orange),

Power-Greed (Red), Pretentiousness (Yellow)

2<sup>nd</sup> Letting Go: of Certainty

#### -Entry into Sacred City (Altar)

Transcendence of Centering Practice

Four Contentments:

Of Senses, Of View, Of Estate, Of Way of Life

3<sup>rd</sup> Letting Go: Of Form

#### -Entry Holy of Holies (Tabernacle)

Double Dorje (Chalice)

(Invincible-Thunder: Wisdom-Knowledge; Truth Quest)

Wheel of Joy (Harmony; Inseparability)

Yin-Yang, Uroboros, OM: Chant of the Universe

Overall outcome: "Live in Joy"

### 2. MANDALA PROCESS: the Mandala Process may take on the following path.

Process begins when practitioner wants to understand the meaning of life, of creation, and is willing to Let Go of the fruits of labor in order to minimize egotistic behaviors.

Commits to the Behavioral Practices\*\* of Loving Kindness, Compassion, Nonattachment and Principled Consciousness plus a Centering Practice to strengthen character.

Contain if not gain mastery over five impediments: stupor, existential anxiety, concupiscence, greed/power, and pretentiousness (false wisdom).

Let Go of certainty to allow ego to take in new understandings.

Achieve Contentments of senses, view, estate and way of life.

Let Go of Form and be guided by one's authenticity.

And finally: Experience Life with and through the contentment of JOY (some may call it Serenity) which is the transcendence that occurs when the Four Contentments are combined.

While the Process need not take a life time, it may. As long as the ego has access to the Personal-Gender Life Force it is not essential that the other two life Forces be accessed.

Processing the Mandala greatly supports Individuation.

\*Quintessential comes from five as the Ultimate; it is the fifth that the four elements produce; the fifth is the unseen One in the Center (of the Four) that joins the Four. The square of four is ever ready to give way to the ultimate One (Transcendence). In the Heart Mandala, the Ultimate One is experienced as Joy (Wheel/Fire of Joy) flowing from the Heart

\*\*Different Practices and Impairments may be more appropriate for other practitioners.

## APPENDIX B. RITUAL AND CEREMONY

What is left to share is the way of mandala processing. By sharing my ritual, I do not wish to convey that my way is necessarily appropriate for anyone else. I share to provide one way out of many to activate the practice of mandala. But some sort of ritual is called for.

Besides the mandala itself I have other artifacts on the altar; the main ones are: a bell, vase, picture of earth from a satellite, card depicting the tree of human evolution, icons of Mary and Christ, and miniature statues of the bodhisattvas Tara and Manjursi and of Gautama Buddha. I usually light candles on the altar.

I begin the centering practice with the Creation's Story. I chant OM and strike the bell (to symbolize the Act of Creation, the Big Bang). I try to listen deeply to the bell's vibrations. I begin with Creation because the Creation and Evolution Stories are deeply entwined with the Human Story in some unknown manner.

I then turn to the vase that symbolizes Creation's Womb and then pick-up to the Story of Human Evolution first, by gazing on Planet Earth from space (a picture of which is on the altar) and second, by reviewing the Tree of Human Evolution (pictorial figure is also on the altar). While up to now I have navigated outside the mandala itself, the card carrying the Tree of Human Evolution touches the bottom of the mandala where there is an image of a standing tree trunk. I now have entered the Mandala itself. From here on centering involves the contents of the mandala beginning with the five Buddhi Bodies and five Buddhi Minds, moving through the three Circles, four Gates, five Walls, three Letting Go Bands, Double Dorje and finally, the Wheel of Joy. I close the mandala centering visit by again striking the bell and chanting OM.

Each practitioner will develop a personal way to enter the mandala in one manner or another. Some may go directly to the mandala without any introductory sequence. Once in the mandala a practitioner can proceed sequentially to consider all the contents that were discussed above (such as circles or gates). Centering can be selective by meditating on the meaning of one symbol found on the mandala itself or on the altar, for example, on the vase through which creation is "born". Time can be spent simply with no-mindedness or free association. Fifteen minutes or hours can be spent with the mandala. (A comfortable meditating chair late in the evening will invite a short sleep by the mandala.)

## APPENDIX C: PERSONAL NOTE

After my doctoral studies in 1961 I commenced a personal study of Eastern religions. It had a deep influence on me and sparked great interest in the psychology and practice of the mandala. Later during my training at the Carl Jung Institute in Zurich I came upon Jung's use of mandala in his own individuation process. After finishing my studies in Zurich, I went to Nepal in 1980 ostensibly to deepen my meditation practice and understanding of mandalas. I cannot say that such happened during the year I was in Nepal. Rather I was caught up in politics of Zone of Peace that the King advanced in his attempt to avoid being caught up in a trans-Himalayan Sino-Indo rivalry. On my last day in Nepal at the airport outside Kathmandu I bought a mandala painted on cloth with the last of my Nepalese currency (which wasn't much). The store had mostly Tibetan artifacts which let me to believe that a Tibetan immigrant had drawn the modest mandala on the cloth. Nothing in the mandala particularly struck me; simply put, it was what I bought with the money that I had. I could have bought something else, but I left the store with a mandala. I rolled up the Mandala, put it in my suitcase and left Nepal.

I made home in Hawaii and hung up the mandala in my study, more as decoration than anything else. Ten years later I had occasion to visit Southern India and stayed at Bede Griffiths' ashram. I was so taken in by it all that I wanted to extend my stay until I recognized that this was what Bede Griffiths, the saintly Catholic monk, had created. I needed to create my own sacred place. On returning to Hawaii I established an altar with the mandala as its central piece. It was in 1991 (at the age of 59) that I began a personal relationship with the mandala that I purchased in Nepal. This mandala, that I call 'The Heart Mandala', is very similar in design to the mandala found in plate 1 of Tucci's book.

Clearly, I was keenly aware that I did not have much background in Tibetan Buddhist to engage the mandala as prescribed by Tucci or as a centering-practice. But then again, my intent was not to follow somebody else, otherwise I could have followed Bede Griffiths' way. For some reason I was owner of the Heart Mandala. For some time, my wish has been to apply a personal approach to the practice of the mandala.

The issue of a centering-practice needs a commentary. My own practice has its roots in Roman Catholicism. During my doctoral studies (1958-60) I attended daily the rite of Mass until I passed the qualifying exams. This practice was very useful in adjusting to the many insecurities that occur in pursuit of a doctoral degree. But once the examinations were passed and I became a "candidate" for the degree, I ended Mass attendance grateful of its value. Several years later I became interested in Zen meditation.

During my military tour in South Korea I visited Japanese monasteries on several occasions and received valued instruction regarding meditation. While in Vietnam I received additional instruction as was also the case when I spent a stay in a monastery in Northern Thailand. While at home I would carve out a niche to serve as my meditating space. My last penetrating experience regarding a Buddhist centering-practice occurred in Sri Lanka (1992). I had occasion to spend some time with a community leader. I told him of my interest to advance a meditative

practice. My host took me to a monastery to talk with the head monk. On the way to the office I noted people meditating. One Western male had the look, “am I doing everything right?” His look gave me the impression that he was caught-up with form. This short exchange removed any desire to meditate in a Sri Lankan monastery. For a month I meditated with my host at his residence.

During my studies at the Jung Institute (1977-80), I used dream analysis as my centering-practice. Every day I would spend time to record and interpret my dreams and weekly discuss them with my analyst. I would recommend a dream-based centering-practice for it provides the individual ego opportunity to become conscious of personal contradictions and flaws. While dream work is worthwhile at any time it no longer serves as my central centering-practice. Presently, in a haphazard manner, I use the mandala itself for my centering practice for the winter of my Winter. I believe that a centering practice should not be rigid but one personal and grounded on “contentment.” Let me stress that a centering-practice helps mature the ego so that it relinquishes occupying the psyche’s center stage and gives way for the soul to reveal itself.

Earlier I mentioned that my study of the mandala did not give a definitive meaning to Creation. At the same time the reader could well ask the author: Now that you are 88 and studied a lot what is your non-definitive meaning of Creation and why humans? The question needs to be answered! The meaning of Creation is like a question that needs to be answered but the answer is never found and yet the search goes on. It is a lot easier to answer why humans exist. Humans are around for what they uniquely provide. My studies indicate that humans uniquely provide consciousness and caring/altruism. No other species have these characteristics to the degree that humans have. Simply put, humans exist to provide both skills that can support the planet’s evolution which, according to Teilhard de Chardin, is the amorization of the planet. In this sense, the individual is not the critical evolutionary factor, the species is.

## APPENDIX D: PSYCHO-DYNAMICS OF THE CIRCLE

If I were told that I was located someplace on an enormous sheet of white paper, it would indeed be difficult to locate my position without any point of reference. The task would be much easier were a circle drawn. I could now say that I was located some place in relation to the circle. Such may be the Cosmos' Big Bang dilemma: the undifferentiated nature of the pre-creation void. In that the Void had no being no space, Creation became a solution: interaction became possible.

The circle, perhaps more so than any other geometric design, provides a benign feeling of space. The circle's wall permits a free slide along its curvature. This slide is a distinct feature in Homo sapiens evolutionary development. The newborn enters a circle of influences that fashion the newborn's persona development such as: parents, siblings, level of civilization, etc. In contemporary times the slide may continue throughout a life time as seen in individuals who expose themselves to other branches of civilization. But the norm is for the slide to trickle or even fully stop which may then turn the circle into a square fortress to resist persona change. Such may be depicted in the Heart Mandala where the square (within the three circles) holds the five walls which defend the persona's psychological status, and limit new psychological growth and understanding.

Jung in his self-experiments noted the contentment that comes in drawing a circle particularly a circle that reveals the mid-point. The mid-point provides the way out of the persona's limiting fortress and thus allows for further growth along the metaphoric circular wall. And it is the lowering of the ego's defense that permits expansion of Individuation. In Buddhist thought, reaching the Wheel of Fire/Wheel of Joy, the very-very mid-point of a composed mandala, suggests reaching a 'navaric' state of Being. In Jungian thought it would represent the joining of ego and Personal Self.

The circle's midpoint, the Dot, represents the quintessential, the Fifth or unseen One that surfaces when the defects associated with the Four are overcome. While the circle and square may dominate the scheme of space the goal is the Dot, the very mid-point, the quintessential character of both Individuation and use of the mandala. Jung was insightful to notice the innate satisfaction that accompanied drawing of a mandala's concentric design. In short, his observations underscored the dynamic nature of the circle: drawing the circle with midpoint projected the existential life-long task to fulfill and realize one's being.

## NOTES

1. Tucci, p. 22.
2. Tucci, p. 25.
3. Jung (1963) p. 197.
4. Jung (1970 pp. 96-99.
5. Moacanin p. 70.
6. Neumann (1955).
7. See Suzuki (1974).
8. Griffiths p. 93.
9. Tucci p. 108.
10. See Brennan (1987).

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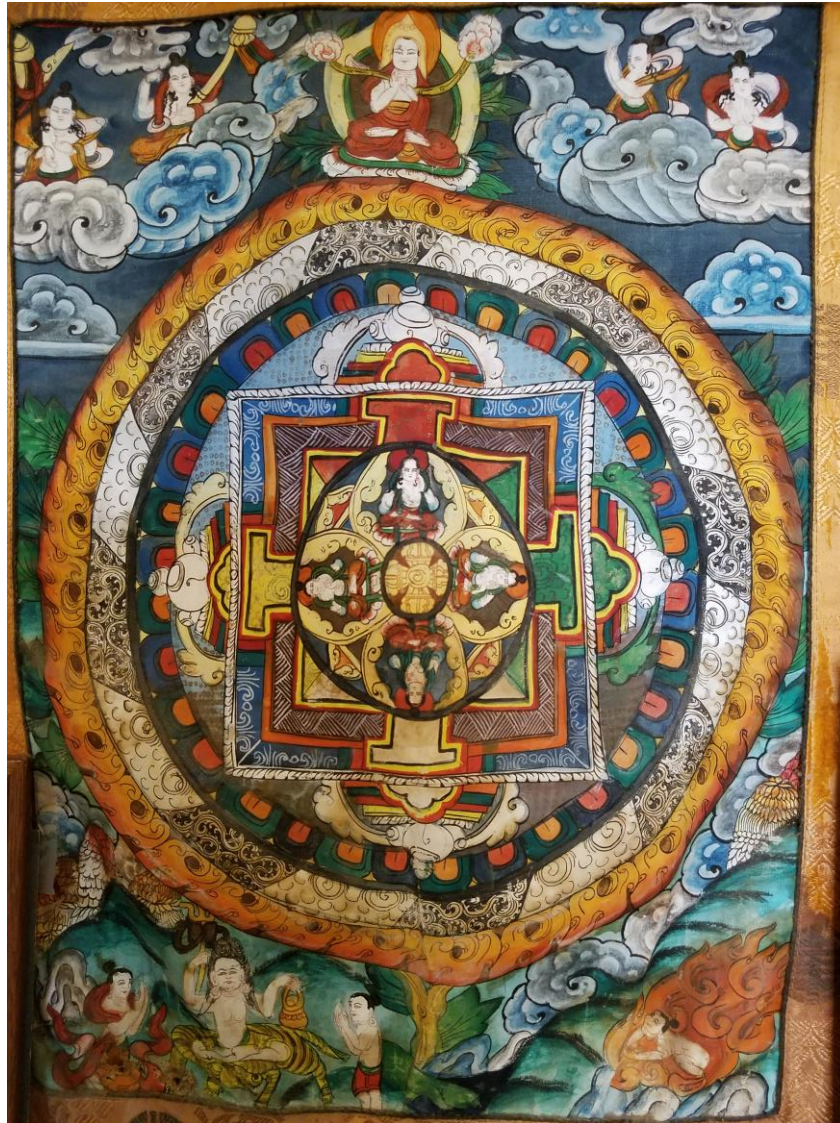


Plate 1. The Heart Mandala: centering practice utilized by the author



Plate 2. Holy of Holies



Plate 3. Wheel of Joy- Sikkim Flag

All-To-The-Center takes the practitioner to the Wheel of Joy  
 Wheel of Joy on the Sikkim Flag demonstrates a beautiful comparison



Plate 4. Buddha Bodies/Buddha Minds-

The Five Buddha Minds: inform mind, intuit mind, intent mind, insight mind and enlighten mind

The Five Buddha Bodies: mammal body, mortal body, body of appetites, body of ambitions and body of wisdom

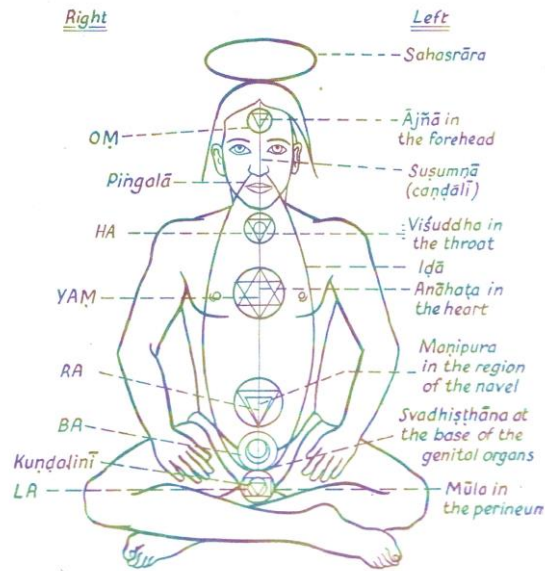


Plate 5. Chakra Body: the 7 chakra locations in the Human Body  
Life Forces and the Chakra system empower the “All-to-the-Center” Heart Chakra



Plate 6. Altar: Ritual artifacts to activate the practice of mandala.  
Symbols to deepen the Mandala Centering Practice