Aspects of Buddhist Psychology

Tape 43: Archetypal Symbolism in the Biography of the Buddha

Mr Chairman and Friends:

Tonight we come to what may be described as a turning point. As you've already heard, this is the fourth lecture in our present course, and as we are to have eight meetings, including seven lectures, this means that really, tonight we are half way through the whole series. But when I say that we are come to a turning point, I don't mean just numerically, in the sense that today we come to the middle lecture in the whole series: we come this evening to a turning point in another sense also.

Let me first of all just recall our progress in this series so far. In the first lecture, we studied just a few aspects, just even a few corners of a very vast subject, and we tried to look into the Analytical Psychology of the Abhidharma, the Higher Doctrine or the Higher Teaching. In the course of the second lecture, we studied the Psychology of Spiritual Development. And last week, in the third lecture, we tried to go a little into the Depth Psychology of the Yogacara.

In the course of these three lectures, we saw, throughout, an increasing preoccupation with the spiritual life. Even though in a sense ostensibly we were concerned with psychology, with aspects of Buddhist psychology, we saw that for Buddhism, for the Buddhist tradition, psychology was not an autonomous subject: it was not cut off from the rest of Buddhism, as it were, not studied for its own sake, but that it was a sort of by-product of the quest for metaphysical self-knowledge, even the quest for Enlightenment.

At the same time, we couldn't help seeing, we couldn't help noticing that though in the course of these three lectures, from week to week we were increasingly preoccupied with the spiritual life, we couldn't help noticing that the approach to the subject on the part of the Abhidharma, on the part of the Yogacara and so on, was very definitely intellectual, very definitely, as it were, conceptual. Both the Abhidharma and the Yogacara aimed at the conscious mind, addressed themselves to the conscious mind. And inasmuch as they addressed themselves to the conscious mind, to the reason, to the intellect, they used the language of ideas, the language of concepts, the language of abstract thought.

But as we know, man is very much more than his conscious mind, very much more than the intellect, very much more than abstract thought. If we look below the surface, if we look below the rational, the conceptual surface, we find that underneath, there are vast, unplumbed depths. And these depths, vast and unplumbed, make up what we call the unconscious mind, or simply, the Unconscious.

And the total man, man in his entirety, man in his wholeness, in all his aspects, in all his developments, consists of both of these; not just the conscious mind, not just the rational surface - but both the conscious and the unconscious. Consciousness is as it were, just like a light froth, playing and sparkling on the surface. But the Unconscious is like the vast ocean depths, dark and unplumbed, lying far beneath.

And it is the Unconscious, the non-rational part of man, which is by far the larger part of his total nature. And the importance of this unconscious part is far greater than we generally care to recognise. So if we want to appeal to man, if we want to appeal to the whole man, man in his totality, in all his aspects, it isn't enough to appeal just to the conscious mind, the rational mind, the intelligence: that only touches the surface; that floats, as it were, upon the surface. We have to appeal also to something more; we have to speak another, an entirely different language than the language of ideas, of concepts, of abstract thought. So what is that language that we have to speak, in addition to the language of concepts, if we want to reach the total man?

That extra, that additional language is, we may say, the language of images. In a sense, the language of pictures, not the language of the abstract but the language of the concrete form, the image, or, as I've said, the picture. We have to speak, if we want to reach this non-rational part of the human psyche, we have to speak in images, we have to use the language of poetry, use the language of myth, the language of legend and so on. But this other, no less important language, is one which, we may say, many modern people have forgotten. Or if they haven't actually forgotten it, they know it not fully, not perfectly, not completely, they don't really speak it. They know it only in a few distorted and broken forms. They as it were, stammer and stutter in this language. They have no real, full, clear utterance in it.

But Buddhism, traditionally, very definitely, does also speak this language, this language of images, this language of poetry, of myth and legend and so on. And it speaks it no less powerfully than it speaks the language of concepts, of abstract thought. And it is to this language, this language of images, language of poetry, myth and legend spoken by Buddhism that we must now begin to listen, and this it is which constitutes our real turning point in this series.

The turning point is in fact the changeover from the conceptual, the abstract, mental approach to the non-conceptual, the approach in the form or in the terms of images and pictures. It is also a changeover, a transition, from the conscious mind to the unconscious mind. Last week, when we spoke about the Yogacara and its psychology, we were talking about the depths. But from today, from this week, we shall not be merely talking about the depths, but we shall be descending or beginning to descend actually into them.

Today we are going to encounter, as it were, in those depths, some of what I have called the Archetypal Symbols in the Biography of the Buddha. And I say 'encounter' advisedly. We are not just going to think about them; we're not just going to conceptualise about them, not just going to understand them intellectually with the conscious mind. What we have to do today is something more than that: we have, as it were, to be receptive. We have, as it were, to take in these images, these archetypal symbols; open ourselves to them, listen to them, and allow them to speak in their own way to us - especially to our unconscious depths - the greater part of ourselves, the unconscious mind. And in this way, we have, as I say, as I repeat, not just to think about them, not just to realise them mentally, but to experience them in the depths, to assimilate them, if we can, and even, eventually, to allow them to transform our whole lives.

But before we go into this, before we embark upon our encounter with these archetypal symbols, there is just one serious misunderstanding to be cleared up, and also one or two key terms to be defined.

I've said that Buddhism uses, that Buddhism speaks the language of images. If you like, to use a rather contradictory expression, the language of pictures, the language of poetry, the language of myth, the language of legend. Now this, I know, is new to some people, that Buddhism speaks this sort of language. Some people apparently are under the impression that Buddhism speaks only the language of concepts, only the language of reason, only the language of abstract thought. Some people are under the impression that Buddhism is a strictly rational system, even a sort of rationalism. When you mention the word Buddhism to them, you can at once see from their reaction that they think, "Well, now we're going to have something very dry and very abstract indeed." It's as though they almost heard the skeleton rattle as soon as you start talking about Buddhism. But that there should be such a misunderstanding is in a way quite natural, certainly so far as our understanding of Buddhism here in the west is concerned. Because after all, how do we come to learn about Buddhism, how do we come to know about it at all? The greater part of our knowledge, at least 90% if not 99% of it, is derived from books, is derived from magazines, is derived from lectures and so on. In other words, our approach automatically, without our always realising it or being aware of it, is conceptual; in terms of thoughts, in terms of ideas, in terms of mental understanding, mental realisation - not anything more than that. Because all these things, whether it's a book, or whether it's a lecture, or whether it's a magazine article, all these are aimed at the conscious mind - they appeal to the intelligence, to our power, our capacity, of abstract thought. So we tend to get the impression, without being aware of it, that Buddhism speaks only in this way, that it addresses only the reason, only the mind, only the rational intelligence, only our capacity to formulate concepts. And in this way we get a very one-sided impression

about Buddhism, that it's something very intellectual, something very conceptual, something very rational - and only this.

But if we go to the East, if we look at the Eastern Buddhist countries, there we shall see a very different picture indeed. There, certainly Buddhism isn't just a matter of rational understanding or mental realisation or conceptual formulation. There's much more to it there than that. In fact, we may even go so far as to say that in the East, in the Eastern Buddhist countries, they do tend to go somewhat to the other extreme. They rather tend to be influenced by the images and the pictures, as it were, all about them, and to be not very easily able to give a mental formulation or mental realisation of what it is that they actually believe, even though it moves them and influences them very much indeed.

I remember when I first went to live in Kalimpong, up in the Himalayas, I was very surprised at first to find that many of my Tibetan and Sikkhimese and Bhutanese Buddhist friends who were very ardent practising Buddhists, believe it or not, had never heard of the Buddha! You might think this extraordinary, but they had never heard of the Buddha! To them, if the Buddha's name was mentioned at all, it was a very unreal and distant historical figure. To them, these archetypal forms - Padmasambhava, or the *Dhyani* Buddhas, or Maitreya - these were real - but not the mentally realisable historical facts and figures and so on.

But what in fact we have to do, what he have to try to do at least, is to combine both these approaches - unite both the conceptual and the non-conceptual; appeal both to the rational mind, to the conscious mind, and also to the unconscious depths which lie beyond, which lie beneath. We need, in fact, in other words, a balanced spiritual life in which both the conscious and the unconscious minds play their part.

So far as Buddhism in the West is concerned, very definitely much more attention has been given in the past to the conceptual, analytical, intellectual approach. We now have to give much more time and much more attention - much more serious attention - to the other type of approach, that represented by the image, by poetry, by myth, by legend and so on. In other words, we have to let or begin to let, Buddhism sink into the unconscious mind, which is, after all, the greater part of ourselves.

Now for the key terms. What do we mean, for instance, by 'archetypal symbolism'? I am sure some of you who looked at the programme and saw the various titles of talks must have wondered in what sense this term was used.

What is an archetype? Broadly speaking, we may say, following the dictionary, that an archetype is the original pattern or model of a work, or model from which a thing is made or formed. This is what an archetype essentially is. But in Jung's psychology, and it was Jung who familiarised this term in the modern psychological context, the term is used in a much more specialised sense. I must say, I found it rather difficult to elucidate the precise sense in which Jung uses this word 'archetype'. I must say his usage of it is very fluid and very shifting indeed, and the meaning is not always clear, that is to say not conceptually clear, and Jung seems to tend to rely on examples, which he cites very profusely, examples of archetypes, to make clear what the meaning of the term actually is, and in doing this he no doubt proceeds deliberately. So perhaps it's better for us also to follow his example, and later on make the meaning of this term clear by citing examples.

But what about 'symbolism'? What do we mean by that? A symbol is generally defined as a visible sign of something invisible. Just a sign. But we may say a symbol is really, philosophically, religiously, more than that. A symbol, we may say, is something existing on a lower plane which is in correspondence with something existing on a higher plane.

Just to cite a very common example, in the various theistic traditions, the sun is a symbol of god, because the sun performs in the physical universe the same function that god, according to these systems, performs in the spiritual universe. The sun sheds light, sheds heat and so on. In the same way, god, according to these systems, sheds the light of knowledge, the warmth of love and so on, in the spiritual universe. So the sun is not just a sign of god; the sun is a symbol in the sense that the sun is, on a lower level, that which god is, on a higher level. So we can say that the sun is the god of the material world, and in the same way you can say that god is the sun of the spiritual world. You get the same reality as it were, existing on different levels and manifesting on those different levels in different ways. So you get a real symbol, and not just a sign. This is of course, the old Hermetic idea of "As above, so below". We'll have more to say about this in the lecture on the psycho-spiritual symbols of the *Tantra*.

Today we are concerned with the archetypal symbolism, therefore, in the biography of the Buddha.

Now the Buddha, as we all know, was the founder of Buddhism, so it's only natural that people should be interested, even very interested, in the story of his life. And various western scholars in modern times have tried to write a proper, full, detailed biography of the Buddha. There's quite a lot of traditional material available. There are quite a number of ancient biographies written in ancient India. There is for instance, the *Mahavastu*, which means the Great Relation. This is primarily or essentially a biography of the Buddha, even though it does also contain a very great deal of other matter, especially *Jatakas* and *Avadanas*. It's a very bulky work, it's in three volumes in the English translation, altogether about 1,500 pages. But it does contain some very ancient and very interesting information and material indeed. Then one also has another work, the *Lalitavistara* and, yet another, the *Abhiniskramana Sutra*. Both of these are *Mahayana* Sutras, and the first of them, that is to say the *Lalitavistara*, is a very highly poetic work indeed. Its devotional and literary appeal and value is very great indeed. You may be interested to know that *"The Light of Asia"*, Sir Edwin Arnold's famous poem, is based primarily on the *Lalitavistara*. Then we have in Pali (the previous works are all in Sanskrit) the *Nidanakatha* which is Buddhaghosa's own introduction, or commentary, rather, on the Jataka stories. And then again there is Asvaghosa's *Buddhacarita*, which means the Acts of the Buddha, which is a very beautiful epic poem in classical Sanskrit.
So we see from these brief citations that there is no shortage of material: if you want to write a life of the Buddha, there is plenty of material, plenty of sources available. So western scholars have explored, have examined, all these sources pretty thoroughly indeed.

But what do we find is their method of procedure? We usually find that they go through all these texts, or translations of these texts, they sort them all out, they study them, they go through the various episodes, the various incidents, and we find that they divide them all into two great groups, or two heaps, as it were - all of them; on the one side they put whatever they consider to be a matter of historic fact - that the Buddha was born in a certain family, that he spoke a certain language, that he left home at a certain age - what they consider the

historic facts. And on the other hand, they put what they consider all the myths and all the legends. So they make this sort of division.

Now this is all right, so far as it goes. But they go a step further. They don't just make this division; they start, as it were, evaluating, start indulging in value judgements, and most of them say that only the historic facts, or what they consider the historic facts, are valuable and useful and relevant. And the myths and the legends, all the poetry of the accounts, they usually say, are just mere fiction - which means just untrue; just false; and therefore to be discarded as completely worthless. This is the usual procedure of most western scholars who attempt to write the biography of the Buddha. But this in my view is a very great mistake indeed.

We may say that there are two kinds of truth. There's first of all what we call scientific truth - the truth of concepts, the truth of reasoning - but in addition to this, and some would say even above this, there is what we may call poetic truth, or truth of the imagination, and this is the truth of images, truth of the intuition. And both are at least equally important. And the second, the latter kind of truth, the truth of the image, the truth of poetry, truth of the imagination, the intuition, this is manifested or revealed in what we call myths and legends, as well as in works of art, in symbolic ritual, and also quite importantly, in dreams.

So what we call the archetypal symbolism of the biography of the Buddha belongs to this second category. It isn't meant to be historic truth: it's meant to be poetic; it's meant to be, as it were, imaginative, even spiritual truth, not scientific factual information.

We may say that this sort of partial biography of the Buddha in terms of archetypal symbolism is not concerned with the external events of his career, but is meant to tell us or at least suggest to us something about his inner spiritual experiences. And therefore it sheds much light on the spiritual life itself for all of us.

Now this sort of feature, that is to say this archetypal symbolism, we often find in Buddhist biographies, not just in the life of the Buddha himself, but we find it in the life of, say, Nagarjuna, we find it in the life of Padmasambhava, we find it in the life of Milarepa. In all of these so-called biographies there are many incidents which are not based - and are not supposed to be based - on historic fact, but which have an archetypal symbolic significance which points to inner experiences and inner realisations.

Sometimes, of course, it's very difficult to distinguish the two categories; sometimes it's very difficult to make up your mind whether something belongs to the historical order or whether it corresponds to the symbolic, or the intuitive, or the imaginative order. And very often we find that the Buddhist tradition itself does not clearly distinguish between these two categories; it usually seems to take the myths and the legends just as literally as the historic facts. It's as though in early times man didn't possess, almost, the capacity or perhaps even the willingness to distinguish in this way. Everything was truth, everything was fact, of its own kind, in its own order.

Now there's no harm, we mat say, in sorting out these two categories: no harm in trying to make up our minds what constitutes the factual, historic content of the Buddha's biography and what represents its archetypal and symbolic content. But we must, we should, be careful not to undervalue or underrate the mythical and the legendary elements.

This evening I propose to give a few examples of archetypal symbolism from the biography of the Buddha, drawing on some of the texts which I have mentioned. I'm not going to do this in chronological order because with the exception of one particular sequence, the chronological order doesn't seem to be of any importance.

I'm going to start off with a comparatively simple example. This example is what is known in Buddhist tradition as the Twin Miracle, *Yamaka-pratiharya*, which was first performed, according to the Scriptures, at a place called Sravasti and subsequently performed by the Buddha on a number of other occasions. It's described in the *Mahavastu*, one of the biographies which I have mentioned, as being performed by the Buddha at Kapilavastu. So I'm going to read to you, first of all, the canonical account of this Twin Miracle.

The text says, and I'm reading from page 115 of the Third Volume, so it's a pretty bulky work:

> *"Then the Exalted One* (that is to say the Buddha)*, standing in the air, at the height of a palm tree, performed various and diverse miracles of double appearance. The lower part of his body would be in flames, while from the upper part, there streamed five hundred jets of cold water. While the upper part of his body was in flames, five hundred jets of cold water streamed from*

> *the lower part. Next, by his magic power, the Exalted One transformed himself into a bull with a quivering hump. The bull vanished in the east and appeared in the west. It vanished in the west and appeared in the east. It vanished in the north and appeared in the south. It vanished in the south and appeared in the north. And in this way the great miracle is to be described in detail. Several thousand kotis of beings, seeing this great miracle of magic, became glad, joyful and pleased and uttered thousands of 'Bravos' at witnessing the marvel."*

So this is text, this is the passage, the Twin Miracle.

Now I'm not going to say anything this evening about the Buddha's transformation of himself into a bull. The bull is a universal symbol in mythology and folklore, and it deserves a study of its own. I'm going to concentrate this evening on the twin Miracle proper.

First of all, the Buddha stands in the air. In some other versions, he is represented as walking up and down in the air, as though making a sort of promenade in the air. So what does this signify, the Buddha's walking up and down in the air, or standing up in the air? It signifies a change of plane. And this is highly significant indeed. It represents the fact that what happens or what is described as happening in this incident, the Twin Miracle, does not happen on the earth. The Buddha has transcended the earth plane. So since it does not happen on the earth, since it happens on another plane, as it were, a higher plane, the significance is not historical. We've gone beyond the historical plane; we're on a spiritual, on a metaphysical, plane of existence now. So the Twin Miracle is not a miracle in the ordinary sense, something magical or supernormal happening here on this earth. It's something archetypal, something spiritual, something symbolic; something happening on a higher plane of existence.

The presence of, in Buddhist art depicting any particular scene of a lotus flower for instance, has the same significance. If any Buddha figure or any such figure is seen or depicted sitting on a lotus flower, it represents that this is not on the historical plane, that this is on a trans-human plane, a transcendental plane, because the lotus symbolises severance of contact with the world; it symbolises the transcendental or the purely spiritual plane. And we find in fact in sculptures of the twin Miracle, since they are not able to represent the Buddha up in the air - that would take the Buddha right out of the picture, as it were, they represent him sitting on a lotus flower. A number of you have seen the slides which we took in India recently, and you will remember that in one of the Cave Temples, the temple at Kanheri, there is a sculpture visible of the Twin Miracle, and if you remember it, some of you may do so, you will recollect that in this particular sculpture the Buddha is represented sitting on a lotus flower, and this is a representation of this twin miracle.

So whether high up in the air or whether sitting on the lotus, it has the same significance; that we've gone beyond the historical plane: we're on the spiritual plane, and what happens now has a metaphysical significance and not a historical significance.

So having stood in the air, being on this higher plane, in this metaphysical dimension, as it were, what does the Buddha do? We are told that he emits fire and water simultaneously; fire and water. Fire from the upper half of the body and water from the lower and then vice versa - water from the upper, fire from the lower; and he goes on doing this. So what does this mean? What does this represent? If we are to take it literally, historically, well at best it's just a conjuring trick, nothing more. But the Buddha certainly didn't indulge in conjuring tricks. So what does it signify on this higher plane of existence where he now stands?

Fire and water are very ancient symbols indeed. They are universal. They are found all over the world, among all races, in all cultures, all religions, and fire always represents, for the sake of just a brief expression, spirit, or the spiritual. Water always represents matter - the material. Fire again, represents the heavenly, the positive, and the masculine principle. Water represents the earthy, the negative, and the feminine principle. The one, that is to say fire, represents the intellect. The other, water, represents the emotions. One, again, represents consciousness; the other represents the Unconscious.

In other words, fire and water between them represent, we may say, all the cosmic opposites. They stand for what are known in the Chinese tradition, as the Yang and the Yin. Some of you will be familiar with these terms from your consultation of the I Ching. So the fact that the Buddha emitted fire and water simultaneously, represents, we may say, the conjunction of these great pairs of opposites. And this conjunction of opposites on all levels, at the highest level of all, especially, is synonymous with what we call Enlightenment.

Enlightenment is a state of what the Tantras call *Yuganaddha*; or 'Two-in-Oneness'. And it is this Two-In-Oneness; this union or harmony or integration or coalescence, of opposites, which is represented by the Buddha's simultaneously emitting fire and water.

There's a very interesting parallel in the Western alchemical tradition as explored by Jung, for example, where the union of fire and water is said to be or to represent, or to be, the whole secret of alchemy (alchemy, of course, not in the sense of producing gold, but in the sense of a process of spiritual transmutation). And sometimes in alchemical texts, symbolically this union of fire and water, this union of opposites, is spoken of as the marriage of the red king and the white queen. So here, in this episode of the Twin Miracles, the general significance is the same. The episode or the incident, as it were, says to us that Enlightenment is not a one-sided affair: not a partial experience. Enlightenment is the union, the conjunction of opposites, of fire and water, as it were, at the highest possible level. This is Enlightenment - this union of opposites.

Let's turn now to another episode. In the first lecture we made reference to the *Theravada* tradition of the origin of the *Abhidharma*. And we saw that the Buddha, according to the *Theravada* tradition, preached the *Abhidharma* to his deceased mother in heaven, in the Heaven, especially, of the Thirty-three gods. She died, according to Buddhist tradition, seven days after the Buddha's birth, and was reborn in this higher heavenly world, and the Buddha went there, or ascended up to that world, and there preached to her what afterwards became known as the *Abhidharma*. So we're not concerned with that at the moment. What we are concerned with is the fact that according to the same tradition he thereafter descended from this heaven, from the Heaven of the Thirty-three gods, to the earth. And he descended by means of a magnificent staircase, and he descended attended by different gods and divinities, angels and so on. And in the Buddhist texts, this staircase is described in very very glowing terms indeed. It's described as being three-fold, made up of gold and silver and crystal. Just imagine it: just close your eyes and imagine this magnificent staircase stretching all the way from the Heaven of the Thirty-three gods, right down into the earth. A staircase made up on one side of gold, then silver and then again, according to the tradition, crystal. So you've got this wonderful staircase stretching from the heavens to the earth.

So this also is a universal symbol; the staircase or the ladder between heaven and earth. Sometimes it's not a staircase even, not a ladder, sometimes it's a cord, a silver cord or golden cord linking the two. You'll be familiar, I'm sure, with various parallels to this conception of this staircase, this stair, this ladder linking heaven and earth. For instance in the Bible, there is Jacob's Ladder: this has the same significance. And again on a more popular level, I'm sure you've all heard of the Indian Rope Trick, where the magician or the yogi throws a rope up into the air and it sticks up in the sky, and he goes climbing up it with his disciple, and cuts his disciple into pieces and the pieces come falling down and then he is re-constituted - well, this is all symbolic, all almost archetypal material. This rope of the rope trick has the same significance; it's something linking heaven and earth. And especially in shamanism we find this conception very strongly indeed, all over the Arctic regions.

So we have, therefore, this magnificent staircase between heaven and earth. So the staircase is that which unites the opposites; that is to say which unites, which links, which draws together, heaven and earth. We find also in the Buddhist texts that the archetypal significance of this episode of the Buddha's descent from the Heaven of the Thirty-three gods is enhanced by very colourful, very glowing description in terms of gold and silver and crystal and different coloured light and all sorts of panoplies of coloured sunshades and umbrellas and flowers falling and music sounding and all that sort of thing - this is all to enhance, by these indirect means, the archetypal significance and to make this strong appeal not to the conscious mind, but to the unconscious, to the depths.
There's another very important variant on this same sort of theme, that is the union or the linking of opposites, and this is what is generally known as the World Tree, or the Cosmic Tree.

The Buddha, according to the traditional account, gained Enlightenment at the foot of a *peepul* tree. Now it is significant that from a historical, factual point of view, we don't really know whether he sat under a tree or not. The oldest accounts don't mention it. We may assume that it's quite natural, it's very likely that he did because after all, he was in the jungle, we know that; and in India the weather is very hot; and he gained his Enlightenment in the month of May, which is the hottest time of the year in India; so it's more than likely that he was sitting under a tree, just for the sake of shade or shelter from the heat. But we don't know. The oldest accounts make no mention of the Buddha sitting under a tree.

Now, gradually, it seems that as the legendary and mythical element grew in the biographies, the Buddha came to be more and more associated at the time of his Enlightenment, with sitting at the foot of a tree. Now what is there strange, what is there peculiar, about a tree? A tree is rooted in the earth. Its roots go deep down into the earth. At the same time, its branches tower high into the sky. So like the ladder, like the stairway, like the rope, like the cord, the tree links heaven and earth. So it also is a symbol of the union, or harmony, of opposites.

And the World Tree in this sense, is found in most mythologies in the world. For instance we have the Norse *Igdrasil*, which is the world ash - roots right deep down, branches right up in the heavens, all the worlds, as it were, suspended on the branches. And we may even say, quite definitely, the Christian cross has the same sort

of significance. It's often as you know, represented as a tree. Only a little while ago, I was looking at a representation of this sort, a representation of the Crucifixion, and out of the sides of the cross, branches were growing, and the roots went right deep down into the soil. So one often gets this sort of identification of the cross on which Christ was crucified with a sort of world or cosmic tree. And the cross also, like the World Tree, links heaven and earth cosmically in the same way that Christ, according to the Christian tradition, unites the human and the divine natures psychologically.

Closely associated with the idea of a staircase, or a ladder or a tree, is the idea, or rather the image, of the central point. In all the traditional, in all the legendary accounts of the Buddha's Enlightenment, he is represented as gaining Enlightenment sitting on what is called the *Vajrasana*. The *Vajrasana* literally means the Diamond Seat. Sometimes it's translated as the Diamond Throne. And the diamond, the *vajra*, the *dorje*, in Buddhist tradition, always represents the transcendental element, the transcendental base, the metaphysical base, if you like. And according to tradition, this *Vajrasana*, the spot where the Buddha sat when he gained Enlightenment, was the centre of the universe.
One can compare this with the corresponding Christian tradition that the cross stood on the same point, the same spot as the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil from which Adam and Eve had taken the apple and eaten it. And both of these, that is to say both the cross and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, according to Christian legend and myth, stand on a spot or a point representing the exact centre of the world.

So what does all this mean? What does this Centrality in the world, in the cosmos, of the *Vajrasana*, the Diamond Seat or the Diamond Throne, mean? It means, it suggests, or it represents that Enlightenment consists in adopting a position of centrality, as we may call it. And this centrality which constitutes Enlightenment, this metaphysical or transcendental centrality, is the same thing, or amounts to the same thing, as the union of opposites about which we've already spoken.

Now we can go on in this way almost indefinitely. The scriptures, the traditional biographies and so on are full of material of this sort, which has not, unfortunately, so far been explored in this sort of way. In a forthcoming book, in my '*Three Jewels*', an introduction to the study of Buddhism, I have dealt slightly with this aspect of the Buddha biography, but only slightly, not in very great detail.

Now I want at this stage to take up a sequence of archetypal symbols. Not just isolated archetypal symbols but a whole series, a whole sequence. A series or sequence connected with the most important event in the Buddha's whole life, the Buddha's whole career, that is to say, His attainment of Enlightenment, whether under the Bodhi Tree or not. Now these symbols are represented by certain incidents, incidents usually regarded as historical or partly historical, but the actual significance of which is very much deeper.

The first of these incidents is what is traditionally known as the 'Victory over Mara', Mara being the Evil One, the 'Satan' of Buddhism. The Buddha, or the Bodhisattva - the Buddha-to-be, as he then was - was seated we are told at the foot of the tree (we are concerned, of course, with some of the later legendary accounts) had closed his eyes and was meditating when he was attacked by terrible demon hosts - all sorts of foul and unsightly and misshapen figures, led by Mara, the evil one, as I've said, the 'Satan' of Buddhism. And these hosts and their attack upon the Buddha-to-be are very vividly depicted indeed in Buddhist art as well as described in poetry. As I have said, they were, as it were, misshapen, partly human, partly animal, deformed very hideously, with hideous snarling and leering and angry and wrathful and ferocious expressions. Some of them lifting great clubs, others throwing stones, others discharging arrows, others with swords; all very menacing and very frightful indeed.

But what happened? According to tradition, according to the myth, according to the legend, and this is sometimes very beautifully depicted in Buddhist art, all the stones, all the arrows, all the flames, when they reached the edge of the Buddha's aura of light, they all turned into flowers and fell at his feet. Well, the significance of this is obvious; it doesn't need to be explained. It only needs to be felt. So the Buddha wasn't touched, he wasn't moved by these terrible attacks. His eyes remained closed, he remained in meditation with the same smile on his lips.

So what did Mara, the Evil One, do? He sent against the Buddha his three beautiful daughters. And their names were, we are told, Lust and Passion and Delight. We are told they danced in front of the Buddha exhibiting all their wiles, all their tricks, but the Buddha didn't even open his eyes; he didn't even look at them. So they retired, discomfited.

What does all this represent? All this represents, we may say, the forces of the unconscious in their crude, in their unsublimated form. The demons, all those terrible misshapen figures, represent anger, aversion, dislike

and so on, and the daughters of Mara, of course, represent the various aspects of craving and desire. And Mara himself, the Evil One, the 'Satan' of Buddhism, he of course represents primordial ignorance or unawareness, on account of which we take birth and rebirth again and again and again. Incidentally, the word Mara means literally, simply death. So this is the first symbolic incident, the Victory over Mara.

The second incident is known as the 'Calling of the Earth Goddess to Witness'. After he had been defeated, after his hosts had retired, discomfited, Mara tried another way, he tried another trick. He said to the Buddha, or the Buddha-to-be, "You are sitting on the Central Point of the Universe. You are sitting on the throne of the Buddhas of Old. You think that you're going to gain Enlightenment. But what is your right to sit there? What right have you, an ordinary person, just to sit on that Diamond Throne, where the previous Buddha sat?"

The Buddha said, "I have the right to sit on this place, on this Diamond Throne, like the previous Buddhas when they gained Enlightenment because in my past lives I have practised all the Perfections"; that is to say, the Perfection of Generosity - Giving; the Perfection of Morality, the Perfection of Patience, the Perfection of Energy, the Perfection of Meditation, the Perfection of Wisdom: "I have practised all these. I have reached a point in my spiritual evolution where I am ready now, where I am about to gain Enlightenment, therefore I am worthy to sit on this seat, on this throne."

So Mara wasn't satisfied. He said, "All right, so you say that you've practised all these Perfections, all these Paramitas, in your previous lives but who is your witness? Who saw you?" Mara takes on the guise, as it were, of a lawyer; he wants a witness, he wants proof, he wants evidence. So what did the Buddha do? The Buddha was seated on the Diamond Throne, his hands were resting in his lap in the position of meditation, so he just lifted one hand and he just tapped on the earth. So This is the famous *bhumisparsa mudra*, the earth-touching mudra, or earth-witness mudra, or position. And what happened then? When he tapped on the earth, up rose a figure: up rose the Earth Goddess. And she was bearing a vase in her hand and she bore witness. She said, "Yes, I have been here all the time. Men may come and men may go, but the Earth always remains. I have been here all the time. I have seen all his previous lives. I have seen hundreds and thousands of lives in which he practised the Perfections. So I bear witness that on account of his practice of these Perfections, he is worthy to sit in the seat of the Buddhas of Old."

So this scene also, the rising of the Earth Goddess and her bearing witness, is also often depicted in Buddhist art. Sometimes the Earth Goddess is shown a dark green in colour, sometimes a sort of beautiful golden brown, and she is always depicted half emerged from the earth. Very much like, in fact, I remember, the figure of Mother Erda, in Wagner's "The Ring". Erda, of course, means the Earth. And Erda and the Earth Goddess are the same as Hertha in Swinburne's famous poem of that name.

Now the significance of this apparition, the significance of the Earth Goddess, is a whole subject by itself. There's a whole literature on the Earth goddess. But essentially, basically, the Earth Goddess or Mother Earth, Erda, Hertha, represents the same forces as those represented by Mara's daughters - but Mara's daughters represent them in their crude, negative, unsublimated aspect. But the Earth Goddess, as she rises up, as she bears witness, represents them in their tamed, in their subdued, even their sublimated aspect, ready to help rather than to hinder. So this is the incident of the Buddha's Calling the Earth Goddess to Witness.

The third incident is known as 'Brahmas's Request'. I often make reference to this incident in the course of lectures, so there is no need for me to relate it in detail. But some of you may recollect that the Buddha, after what is called his Enlightenment, was inclined not to preach, was inclined to remain silent. He reflected, "This Truth, this Reality, which I have discovered, is so abstruse, so difficult to see, so sublime, so transcendental, that ordinary people, their eyes covered with dust of ignorance, of passion, are not going to see it. They are not going to appreciate it, so better not to preach, better to remain silent, better to remain under the Bodhi Tree, better to remain with eyes closed, not to go out into the world and preach."

But then, we are told, another great apparition arose. A great light shone forth. And in the midst of the light was an ancient figure, the figure of Brahma Sahampati. Brahma, the Great God, Lord of a Thousand Worlds, appeared before the Buddha with folded hands, and he said, "Please, preach. Preach the Truth. There are just a few with little dust on their eyes. They will hear, they will appreciate, they will follow." So the Buddha, we are told, opened his Divine Eye, He looked forth over the world, over the universe and he saw all beings just like lotuses in a pond, in various stages of development. And he said, "All right, for the sake, for the benefit, of those with just a little dust over their eyes, those who are like lotuses half way out at least, or even just a little way out, for their sake, for their benefit, I will preach the Dharma."

So this is the incident of Brahma's request. We shouldn't, of course, take it literally in the historical sense: the Buddha, after all, was Enlightened: he didn't need to be asked to preach: so Brahma's request, Brahma's

apparition, represents the manifestation within the Buddha's own mind of the forces of Compassion, which eventually compelled him, as it were, to make known the Truth he had discovered, to preach to mankind. So this is the third episode, the episode of Brahma's request.

The fourth and last episode is the Mucalinda episode. For seven weeks, we are told, the Buddha sat at the foot of the Bodhi Tree and other trees in its vicinity, and in the middle of the seventh week, there arose a great storm. He was Enlightened in the month of May, so seven weeks takes you into the middle of July, the beginning of the rainy season, and in the East in India, when it rains at the beginning of the rainy season, it really rains. In a matter of instants, the whole sky becomes black and rain descends in torrents, not in bucketfuls but in absolute reservoirs full. In this country we never see anything like it. Here we have our rain evenly distributed throughout the year, but there they get it all in a few weeks, so in great cauldrons full, as it were, it all comes pouring and streaming down.

So what did the Buddha do? He was out in the open, under a tree, with just a thin robe. He couldn't do very much about it. But, we are told, another figure arose. Out of the undergrowth, out of the shadows, there came Mucalinda, the Serpent King; a great snake, a great serpent. He came and he wrapped his coils round the Buddha and then he stood with his hood, spread over the head of the Buddha, like an umbrella, and in this way, he protected him, we are told, from the downpour. And this incident also is often depicted in Buddhist art. Sometimes it's depicted almost comically; you see a coil of the snake like a coil of rope and the Buddha's head just poking out and the hood like an umbrella over him. This is how they depict it. So what happened? The rain stopped, the storm clouds cleared up and the storm disappeared. And the Serpent King Mucalinda assumed a different form, a different shape. He assumed the form, we are told, of a beautiful youth about sixteen years of age, and he saluted the Buddha.

Now what does all this represent? We are not to take it literally: some scholars, I'm afraid, try to take it literally, try to force some sort of factual meaning from it and say, " Oh yes, it's well known in the East, snakes are sometimes quite friendly with Holy Men. And they come and sit near them and this is what must have happened." But I'm afraid this sort of explanation, this sort of interpretation we can't accept. This is pseudo-historical. We are on a different plane, a different level of meaning altogether.

So Mucalinda, the Serpent King, represents the forces of the Unconscious in their most positive and beneficent aspect. All over the world, as we have already seen, water, or the sea, or the ocean represents the Unconscious. And the Nagas, to use the Indian word, that is to say the serpents or the dragons, as it's sometimes translated, they represent the forces of the Unconscious. In Indian mythology and legend, Hindu, Buddhist and Jain, the Nagas live in the depths of the ocean. So the Nagas are these powerful, beneficent forces dwelling in the depths of the Unconscious mind, and Mucalinda is the King of the Nagas. So we can see now what Mucalinda represents, what he stands for.

The falling of the rain, the torrential downpour at the beginning of the rainy season at the end of the seven weeks, or in the course of the seven weeks, represents a sort of baptism, a sort of aspersion, and baptism, all over the world - sprinkling with water, pouring water on someone or something - represents the investment of that person, of that object, with all the forces, all the powers of the unconscious mind. As in Christianity, there is the baptism, we are told, with water and with fire. So it means that when you baptise with water, it represents, it symbolises something: a baptism with fire, a baptism with the spirit, an investment, as I have said, with all the forces of the Unconscious mind.

And the rain, we saw, fell at the end of the seventh week: seven: the number seven occurring. And Mucalinda, we are told, wraps himself, wraps his coils, seven times round the seated figure of the Buddha. So this is no coincidence, this repetition, as if to emphasise the figure seven. Mucalinda also represents what the Tantras call the *chandali*, the fiery path or the Fiery One, what Hindus call the *Kundalini*, the Coiled up One, or the Serpent Path, which represents all the powerful psychic energy surging up inside a person, especially at the time of meditation, through the median nerve. And the seven coils, or the winding seven times round the figure of the Buddha, represents the seven psychic centres up which that *Kundalini* passes, or through which it passes, in the course of its ascent. This is what this episode represents.

And Mucalinda's assumption of the form of a beautiful sixteen-year old youth represents the new personality which emerges, which is born as a result of this upward movement, this upward progression of the *chandali*, of the *Kundalini*, of the Serpent Path. And Mucalinda in that new form as a beautiful youth, salutes the Buddha. This represents the perfect submission of all those powers and forces of the Unconscious to the Enlightened mind.

So it's obvious from all this that these four incidents; the incident of the Victory over Mara, the incident of the

Calling the Earth Goddess to Witness, the incident, thirdly, of Brahma's Request and, lastly, the Mucalinda incident, all these incidents, all four of them, have a deep psychological and spiritual significance. They are not pseudo-history, not just a fairy tale; even fairy tales have a significance, as we know now. But they are all invested with a very powerful symbolic, archetypal meaning. And going a little further, we may say that the four main figures with which we have been concerned form a very definite set.

There's Mara, the Evil One, there's the Earth Goddess, Vessundara, there's Brahma, and there's Mucalinda, in that order. And the order in which they appear is rather interesting. And I'm going to draw what some people may feel a bold analogy, but I think it has great significance and suggestiveness.

It seems to me that these four figures - Mara, the evil one, the Earth Goddess, Brahma, Mucalinda - represent or at least correspond, to some extent, to the four principal archetypes according to Jung. And their appearance in this particular order, represents, it seems to me, a sort of integration of these contents into the conscious mind. In other words, the appearance of these four figures in that particular order represents what Jung calls the Individuation process.

Mara of course, corresponds to what Jung calls the Shadow, that darker side of ourselves of which we are ashamed, which we usually try to keep under. The Earth Goddess represents the Anima - the Buddha, of course, being a man, has an anima; in the case of a woman, it would be an animus. Brahma represents the archetype of the Wise Old Man; he is represented in Buddhist art with white hair and a beard - a sort of God the Father figure; and Mucalinda is of course the archetype of the Young Hero. So it does seem clear that these four principal figures in these four archetypally symbolical incidents in the Buddha's biography correspond to these four main archetypes of Jung's analytical psychology.

There's also a correspondence with the principal figures of Christian mythology. Mara equals Satan; the Earth Goddess equals the Virgin Mary; Brahma equals God and Mucalinda equals Christ. I don't think this is too far-fetched; I think if we study these things carefully, and go into them deeply, we shall see the correspondence, the analogy. and in Tantric Buddhism, there's a similar set. There's the Guardian - the Protector as he's sometimes called; the Dakini, the Guru and the Yidam. And we may return to this particular set in the course of a subsequent lecture.

Now, though I've drawn these comparisons, though I've described these analogies, there's a very great difference of principle between the Buddhist and the Christian approaches to or attitudes towards their respective archetypes, or the archetypes of their respective traditions.

In Buddhism, it's always clearly, even categorically, stated that all these things, all these phenomena, all these appearances, all these archetypal forms, are phenomena ultimately of one's own true mind, all projections from one's own unconscious, and all to be integrated.

But in Christianity, their archetypes; Christ, the Virgin Mary and so on, these are regarded as objectively existing beings. So within that sort of context, it isn't possible fully to resolve them.

You can't really resolve an archetype in the sense of incorporating it, as representing unconscious contents, into your conscious mind, your conscious attitude, or your new personality, your new self, unless you realise that it isn't, in the last analysis, something objectively existing, but something which you have projected from some depths, from some hidden source, within yourself. So therefore, with this limitation or on account of this limitation, in the Christian tradition normally, with the exception perhaps of a few heretical mystics, there's no full resolution of the archetypal figures.

But in Buddhism, on account of this more deeply metaphysical and spiritual background, such a resolution is possible: all the archetypes can be dissolved, resolved, or drawn back into one's own conscious mind, conscious attitudes, integrated there to enrich, and perfect and beautify it. In other words, the individuation process can be carried to its absolute conclusion: or Enlightenment, to use the traditional language, can be attained.

Now today, we've touched on only a very few of the archetypal symbols occurring in the biography of the Buddha. I would like to have mentioned many more: I would have liked, for instance, to have said something about the Buddha's begging bowl. There are many legends about the Buddha's begging bowl, some of them very interesting indeed. In fact, we may say without any exaggeration that the Buddha's begging bowl occupies in Buddhist legend, myth, history, a position analogous to that of the Holy Grail in Christianity, with very much the same sort of significance. But there is no time this evening to go into all this.

But before we close, I would like to give, as it were, a reminder, if not, so to speak, even, a warning.

These archetypes, about some of which I've just spoken, are not just of historic, not just of literary interest. Not something, as it were, foreign to us. They are all present, each and every one of them present, within us all. We can even put it another way: we can say that we are all present in them. We can say we share them: we've got them all in common. They share us: they have all of us in common, as it were.

And in the course of our spiritual life, in the course of our religious life, especially as we practise meditation, these archetypes, these forms, in various ways, tend to emerge into consciousness. Sometimes they come up, sometimes they show themselves, at least by way of a glimpse in dreams, in meditation, sometimes in sort of waking fantasies.

For instance, we all have to face, we all have to encounter, the Shadow. As I have said this is the dark, unpleasant side of ourselves, the side that we'd rather forget, the side which appears in dreams, for instance, as a black dog, an unpleasant black, snarling hound, snapping at our heels - we want to get rid of him but we can't - that's our shadow, or as a dark man, and so on. So we have to face the Shadow, we have to face, to come to terms with, even to assimilate, this darker side of ourselves, just as the Buddha faced and overcame Mara and his hosts. And here, just as in the case of Mara and his hosts. And here, just as in the case of Mara and his hosts, repression is no solution. The Shadow, or the contents represented by the Shadow, must be saturated, as it were, with awareness and resolve. Just as the Buddha didn't start emitting flames himself, to counteract the flames of Mara's hosts; didn't start throwing stones himself: when these things touched the halo of the Buddha, the aura of the Buddha, they were just turned into flowers; transformed, transmuted. So that's the sort of thing we have to do with our Shadow, the darker side of our own nature: just see it, look at it, recognise it, even accept it, and then transform and transmute it into what the Tantric tradition calls a guardian, a protector.

So we also, in the same way, have to call up the Earth Goddess, have to summons the Earth Goddess, not necessarily to bear witness, but at least we have to summons her up. Which means, in psychoanalytical language, we have to face, and free ourselves from, the Anima. In the case, of a man, that is to say, we have to bring up and integrate into our conscious attitudes, our own unconscious femininity, just as in the case of a woman, she has to face and bring up and integrate into her conscious attitudes, her own unconscious masculinity. And when this is done, then there will no longer be any question of projection of these unconscious, unrealised contents onto members of the opposite sex, and the problem, as it's sometimes called, of sex, will have been solved, and this is a very important aspect of spiritual life.

Next we have to learn, all of us, from the Wise Old Man, sometimes quite literally may have to sit at the feet of a teacher, or at least have some ideal image to which we owe allegiance, and then perhaps after many years we have, as it were, to incorporate all those elements and qualities which that figure represents into ourselves, our own attitude; that wisdom, that knowledge and so on.

And then lastly, each one of us has to give birth, within himself or herself, to the Young Hero, in other words create the nucleus of a new self, a new being, a new entity, as it were, or in traditional Buddhist language, give birth within ourselves, to the Buddha, or the Buddha-nature itself. So in this way, if we do this, if we face our own Shadow, call up our own Anima or Animus, learn from our own Wise Old Man, give birth within ourselves to our own Young Hero - in other words, give birth to ourselves - then we shall live out - then we shall recapitulate within ourselves in our own lives, at all levels, in all aspects, the archetypal symbols which appear in the Buddha's biography.