

THE NEGATION OF EGO IN TIBETAN BUDDHISM AND JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Martin Kalff
Zurich. Switzerland

In most spiritual traditions of the world we find, in one way or another, an emphasis on self-denial, a call to limit the importance attributed to the ego. It seems that what we might call the experience of the "transpersonal" is only possible for those who have experienced a breakdown or limitation of ego-centered values. In that way we could say that the negation of the ego is a gateway for the experience of the transpersonal.

*negation
of ego
as a
gateway*

Probably Buddhism among the various Eastern religious traditions has been the most outspoken in presenting a philosophy and experience of non-ego (Skt. *aniitman*) and voidness (Skt. *sunyata*). In its history we find a variety of interpretations of this important idea. One of the philosophically most elaborate presentations of this theme can be found in the texts of the Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism. It is a presentation that reflects an expansive knowledge of the Indian Mahayana texts. The Gelugpa school, which is one of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism, was founded by the great spiritual master and scholar Tsongkhapa (1357-1419). For the discussion of Buddhism we shall limit ourselves to the way the concept of non-ego is presented by this school.

For the other side of our discussion it is recognized that C. G. Jung was probably one of the first transpersonal psychologists. His work marks a clear shift away from an ego-centered psychology. I hope that a comparison between the ideas of Jung and those of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition will provide some new insights, from a transpersonal perspective, on the ego and non-ego.

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The examination of the negation of the ego in the Buddhist tradition will lead us into an examination of the concept of voidness. To say that a person or phenomenon is "void" means that it has no ego or self. Unlike the Hindu tradition, Our Buddhist sources do not make any distinction between ego and self.

My presentation of the main points of the concept of voidness in the Gelugpa tradition will be based mainly on original Tibetan source material. The examination of the negation of the ego in Jung's psychological work will lead into an analysis of the way in which the ego is negated according to lung, or, as he sometimes states it, "depotentiated" (Jung, 1975) by the reality of the self.

*exaggeration
is the
cause of
pain
and
suffering*

Neither of the two sides advocates complete egolessness, and neither the Buddhists nor lung have an understanding of the negation of the ego that implies the utter eradication or non-existence of the ego. Each in their own way, show that it is the exaggeration of the importance of the ego, a wrong view, and a misapprehension of its relative and dependent nature, that is the cause of pain and suffering.

The Tibetan teachers emphasize the importance of not discussing voidness outside the general ethical context of the Buddhist teachings. In accordance with this practice I shall first make a few remarks on the aim of Buddha-Dharma and then place the understanding of voidness or non-ego within this context. To provide the necessary contrast I shall also point out briefly how the Jungian perspective differs. Afterwards I shall proceed with a detailed discussion of the Tibetan Buddhist description of non-ego. This will be followed by a separate analysis of Jung's understanding of the same point. To conclude I will offer some reflections that bring into relief various converging and diverging tendencies.

DIFFERENCE OF AIM IN MAHAYANA BUDDHISM AND JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY

The aim in Mahayana Buddhism is full enlightenment. This is a state in which all suffering has been overcome by having overcome the so-called "obstructions by mental afflictions." Full enlightenment is also a state in which the so called obstructions to the "knowable" have been overcome, resulting in omniscience.

Commenting on enlightenment Nagarjuna (2nd or 3rd cent A.D.) states:

Its roots are the Bodhieitta which is stable like Mount Meru and compassion reaching to the limits of all the directions as well as knowledge that does not rely on duality (Nagarjuna, 1982, verse 2,74; Hopkins & Lati Rinpoche, 1975).

The non-dual knowledge or wisdom that realizes the void nature of persons and phenomena leads to freedom from the suffering of repeated rebirths. In order to be fully developed, wisdom has to be aided by the practice of morality and concentration. The goal that can be achieved by this method, liberation, however, is not the final aim for the followers of the Mahayana. Their final aim is Buddhahood, a state that is characterized by great compassion for the sentient beings and the acquisition of the actual powers to help them to become free from suffering. To achieve this stage, wisdom alone is not sufficient. It has to be combined with the development of a compassionate attitude towards suffering beings. This attitude is condensed in the so-called Bodhicitta (mind of enlightenment), the wish to reach enlightenment in order to help all the other beings to achieve the same goal.

*the
goal
of
great
compassion
and
enlightenment*

If the Buddhists aim at full enlightenment, by comparison Jung's view of what a person can hope to accomplish is more limited. Although he feels that an individuated person can do more for society than a person blocked by personal problems (Jung, 1966), he does not envision the goal to free all beings from suffering. In fact, he has stated on several occasions that it is not possible to completely rid oneself of one's own suffering (Jung, 1973). Nor does he believe that we could reach a state of perfection. Such a state would consist, according to the Jungian psychological framework, in an equal and fun differentiation of the so-called four functions. These functions, the means by which the ego relates to the external world, are thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition. Jung observes that it is usually only one of the four functions, the so-called superior function, that is well developed in a person. The psychological development envisioned by Jung should, among other results, bring about an increased capability to use also the less developed functions. But he does not believe that all functions could ever be developed by one person to the same degree. He says:

*the
limitations
of
psychological
development*

I do not believe that it is humanly possible to differentiate all four functions alike, otherwise we would be perfect like God and that surely will not happen. There will always be a flaw in the crystal (Jung, 1976).

The main reason for this sober view about human possibilities appears to be his caution to propose any postulates

psychology's
empirical
method

that are not empirically verifiable. He sees in the empirical method of psychology an important difference to Indian philosophy (and by implication also to Buddhism). This is expressed clearly in a passage from a letter he wrote to an Indian.

My conceptions are empirical and not at all speculative. **If** you understand them from a philosophical standpoint you go completely astray, since they are not rational but mere names of groups of irrational phenomena. The conceptions of Indian philosophy however are thoroughly philosophical and have the character of postulates and can therefore only be analogous to my terms but not identical with them at all. Take for instance, the concept of *nirdvandva*, Nobody has ever been entirely liberated from the opposites, because no living being could possibly attain such a state, as nobody escapes pain and pleasure as long as he functions physiologically (Jung, 1975).

The remark "otherwise we would be perfect like God", in the first quote points to another possible source for Jung's judgment of what man can hope to accomplish. It is very likely that his psychology is-and this is despite the fact that it has greatly contributed in helping to withdraw the projection of an external God into man himself-nevertheless influenced by the Christian paradigm that emphasizes the limits of man vis-a-vis the infinite qualities of God.

NON-EGO OR VOIDNESS

What is negated and what is to be affirmed in the Theory of Non-ego or Voidness

voidness
leads
to
liberation

We have already seen that our Buddhist authors maintain that wisdom which realizes voidness leads to liberation. Wisdom overcomes ignorance which manifests itself as "ego-grasping." It realizes that there is no ego or no self and thus removes the basis for ego-grasping.

The realization of non-ego or no-self does not imply however that there is no self or no ego at all. The realization of non-ego only leads to an understanding of the non-existence of the ego as it is wrongly conceived to exist by ignorance. Pointing to the self which exists, the Tibetan followers of the Prasangika school speak of a "mere I" or a "mere person" (dKon mchog, 1977; Tsong kha pa, c). In our texts not only the terms for "self" (Skt. *dtman*, Tib. *bdag*) but also "person" (Skt. *pudgala*, Tib. *gang zag*) are synonymous (Hopkins, 1983, p. 175; see Lamotte, 1976, p. 1995 for synonyms for *dtman* in the Indian tradition). The expression "mere"

points to the "I" in its quality when it is freed from the aspects wrongly attributed to it by ignorance.

I do not know of any definition given in the texts of "self" or "I." In dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang pc's textbook (18th cent. A.D.) on the tenets of the various philosophical schools, we find however different definitions of a person according to different philosophical schools. The Prasangikas, who according to the Tibetan Buddhists represent the highest viewpoint, give the following definition:

*different
definitions
of a
"person"*

A person is the mere "I" that is imputed on its basis of imputation, namely the four or five personality aggregates (dKon mchog, 1977; Sopa & Hopkins, 1976).

The so-called aggregates or heaps (Skt, *skandhas*) are five factors that constitute the basis for what is called "a person." They are divided into name and form, that is, mind and body respectively. While the body is equivalent to the form-aggregate, the mind has four components, namely, the aggregates of feeling, ideation, formation and consciousness (for an account of the five skandhas, see Dantienne, 1980). The definition given leaves the possibility open that only four aggregates can be a basis for a person. This is the case for persons existing in formless realms without a physical body.

In distinction to other schools, the Prasangikas define the person only as that which is imputed on the basis of the aggregates, but not as these aggregates themselves. In distinction to this viewpoint, the Vaibhasikas hold the mere collection of the mental and physical aggregates to be the person; some Sautrantikas hold the mental consciousness to be the person (dKon mchog, 1977; Sopa & Hopkins, 1976).

Having understood that the existence of a person or self is not completely rejected, we should direct our attention to the type of self that does not exist. The non-existence of this self has been compared by Nagarjuna to the non-existence of water apprehended in a mirage (Nagarjuna, 1982). From a distance one sees some water in a desert. Getting closer one discovers that there is no water. That water has never really existed and it is merely by the force of deception that one believed that there was any water. Then in conclusion we may see that in the theory of voidness there is not a negation of something that has existed before and ceases to exist by the force of the negation. The negation points to the absence of something that has never really existed.

*existence
of a
person
not
completely
rejected*

In dKon mchog's textbook we find a variety of definitions of this self according to the different schools. The most basic notion of the "self" or "I" to be refuted is a self that is permanent, one and independent. Prof. Hopkins and Geshe Sopa (1976), who have published a translation of this text, point out that "one" means here a partless one, "permanent," undecaying, and "independent," independent from body and mind. All the schools, with the exception of the Prasangikas, regard such a self as the coarse non-self of a person. They distinguish it from a more subtle variety. The subtle selflessness of a person according to them is a person void of a self that is self-sufficient and substantially existent.

leang skya (1717-1786) gives us some further information about the manner this wrong conception of the self has to be perceived:

The manner of grasping a person to exist as a self-sufficient substance is as follows: It is the grasping of a self which is the basis for thinking "I" as self-sufficient. It appears to be in control over the aggregates, as if not depending on or being related to them. It is in that way that it seems to exert control over the aggregates(lCangskya, 1970).

to
have
"control
over"
the
aggregates

As far as we can see from this statement, it appears that the additional element of the self, to have control over the aggregates, is one of the main distinguishing features in comparison with the coarse non-self of a person. In some texts this control is compared to the relationship of a lord over his subjects.

For the Prasangikas, the referred to subtle non-self of a person is only a coarse understanding. As the subtle non-self of the person, they posit a person void of true existence. Like all followers of the Mahayana and unlike the followers of the Hinayana, they do not only posit a non-self of persons, but also a non-self of phenomena. The non-self of phenomena would be those phenomena void of true existence. We can see that as far as "true existence" is concerned, there is no difference with regard to the subtle non-self of persons. The difference is founded on the basis of what is said to be void, in the one case a person, in the other the impersonal phenomena.

We should perhaps point out that the personality aggregates, form, the parts of the body like the eye, as well as all external objects, are also the basis for the non-self of phenomena (Tsong kha pa, a). This is because, for the Prasangikas, the personality aggregates are not the person, but only the person that is imputed on them.

In the texts we find besides the expression "true existence" or "truly existing," the following expressions that are accepted as equivalents by Tsongkhapa and his followers: existing/established ultimately, existing in reality, existing by its own nature, existing by its own mark, self-existent or inherently existent, established independently (Tseng kha pa, a, p. 175.lf; Hopkins, 1983, Tib, text p. 70).

Each of these expressions brings out a different shade of the basically independent and absolute character of the object to be refuted in the theory of voidness. It is an innate tendency in all beings to attribute this character to themselves and the objects, both persons and things they perceive.

We have not yet mentioned one of the most important ways the Prasangikas use to describe the entity to be refuted. They define it as an entity that is thought to exist from its own side as independent of a cognition that imputes or posits it. We find a variety of formulations that refer to this, for example: "Established from its own side, on the basis of the object, without being posited by the mind of the subject." The correct view concerning the way things exist is thus frequently expressed as, "All phenomena are just imputed by cognition" (Tsang kha pa, a).

In general we can say that while the independent character of a self, person, or any other phenomenon is negated, their dependent character is affirmed. The fact that all phenomena arise in dependence, that they are devoid of independent existence, is referred to as "dependent origination."

*phenomena
arise
in
dependence*

Phenomena are dependent in three ways: Composite or impermanent phenomena depend on causes and conditions. Composite and non-composite phenomena like space depend on their parts (space depends on its four directions). Finally, all phenomena are imputed on the basis of imputation dependent on an imputing cognition (lCang skya, 1970).

Dependent origination thus excludes any notion of independent, isolated entities. It provides the vision of a reality consisting of mutually dependent entities, a dynamic interplay of a variety of elements, which cannot be isolated and be seen just by themselves. This level of existence is called the conventional or relative truth, while voidness, the negation of true or independent existence, is the ultimate truth (for a brief account of the two truths, see Sopa & Hopkins, 1976).

This viewpoint excludes the extreme of Nihilism, *i.e.*, to assume that nothing at all exists, no ego, no person, no phenomena. It also excludes the extreme of permanence, the notion of inherent or true existence. Thus, the so-called "middle way" is established (see Sopa & Hopkins, 1976).

The Refutation of the Self

*establishing
the
void nature
of persons
and
phenomena*

There are many reasons that are used to establish the void nature of persons and phenomena. As an illustration I shall discuss an argument that is used to establish the non-self of persons. It consists of a demonstration that a person that *is* inherently existing cannot be found, either as one with the personality aggregates or different from the aggregates. It is presented in the following way in Nagarjuna's *Madhyamakakarikas*:

If the self were the aggregates, it would become subject to birth and destruction; if it were different from the aggregates, it would lack the characteristics of the aggregates (Nagarjuna, 1977).

The structure of the argument *is* such that it shows unwanted consequences that follow from both positions: identity with *the* aggregates or difference from the aggregates. Since both consequences are unwanted, it must be concluded that a self that is either one with or different from the aggregates does not exist.

In his commentary on Nagarjuna's *Madhyamakakarikas*, Tsongkhapa (b) explains that the argument depends on the general principle that there is no third possibility between identity and difference. Thus, if both the consequences of assuming the self to be one or different with the aggregates can be shown to be absurd, the self is shown not to exist. Tsongkhapa is careful to make clear that the self involved is the self that is viewed to exist by its own nature. The question is, therefore, not whether the conventional self is one with or different from the aggregates. The self in question is that independent entity which is the object of the self-grasping attitude of ignorance.

Now I will examine the main aspects of the way Tsongkhapa expands on the absurd consequences stated by Nagarjuna. This will further help us to develop the right sense for what the texts mean by true existence, establishment by its own nature, *etc.* It will, furthermore, give us an impression of how the actual meditation on voidness is to be carried out,

because the meditator is supposed to review in his mind precisely those types of reasonings and absurd consequences that are explained by Tsongkhapa,

The logical absurdities involved in the assumption of an inherently existing self should induce a certainty in the mind of the meditator that such a self does not exist. Having brought his mind to that conviction, he would focus his mind in a non-analytical way on the mere non-existence of the inherently existing self. The combination of the two aspects, the analytical certainty concerning the non-existence of a truly existing self and the concentration on its absence is called the "space-like meditation" (Sopa & Hopkins, 1976; Pha bong kha pa, 1973).

*logical
absurdities
and
certainty
in the
mind*

The root text has stated that the consequence for identity would be that the self would be subject to birth and destruction. From Tsongkhapa's commentary we learn that this consequence follows because the personality aggregates are impermanent. What is one or identical with them should therefore also be impermanent. We can easily see that such a conclusion would contradict the permanent character of the self that is posited in the case of the coarse non-self of persons. Tsongkhapa does not explicitly refer to this obvious contradiction, presumably because he is not interested so much in the refutation of the coarse non-self which is quite obvious. He concentrates instead on those consequences that follow if one accepts a self that is impermanent, but still wants to emphasize its independent and self-existing character.

In the present argument he emphasizes, in particular, the fact that this inherently existing self has to be thought of as being established by its own characteristics. This means that the self in question has its own uncommon characteristics which make it different from anything that is different from itself. For an entity to be impermanent means in Buddhism that such entity is subject to momentary change, that it arises and decays every moment. If the self is said to be established by its own characteristics, this must also be true for every moment of that self, the self that exists now and that which just existed before.

Tsongkhapa naturally does not have to explain this in detail to his readers; he just states that each moment, with its qualities of arising and disintegrating, would have to be viewed as an entity that is separate or individual on account of its characteristic marks. He then states the absurd consequence that the Buddha could not have been able to say, as

it is testified to in the canonical texts, that he had been a particular king in another life. The reason is that the self of that life would have long ago passed away and the self in this life would be different from it by its own (uncommon) characteristics. Being different implies here obviously a radical difference, and for this reason the Buddha could not have identified his present self with the past self saying, "I was such and such a king" (see Hopkins, 1983, p. 184; Tsong kha pa, c, 322.1f).

For Tsongkhapa it was naturally more effective to point to a contradiction with a scriptural quote implying the Buddha's capacities to recall past lives. We can, however, easily infer that any type of memory would be rendered impossible by the principles stated. If the "I" I am right now is characterized by a radical individuality, it would not be possible to say that it is this "I" that was brushing its teeth in the morning. The person would disintegrate into a plurality of non-related personality complexes without any continuity.

a
contradiction
with a
basic
dogmatic
tenet

It is for the same reasons that Tsongkhapa states in his *Lam rim chen mo* that it *would* be impossible for a person to reap the result of his own karmic actions (Tsong kha pa, c; Wayman, 1978). The person who enjoys the results of the actions would be another from the one who did the action leading to that result. The reason is that the two would be completely individualized and different from each other on account of their uncommon characteristics. Here the Buddhist authors like to illustrate the absurdity by stating a contradiction with a basic dogmatic tenet; namely, that one will invariably reap the result of one's own actions, and that it is impossible to experience results for which the corresponding causal action has not been accumulated.

These consequences show that it is impossible to conceive of a self that exists by way of its own nature or as established by its own characteristic marks to be impermanent. Each moment of that self would have to be established by its own characteristics; it would be totally another from all the other moments of the self, and the unity of the person would fall apart.

Another consequence Tsongkhapa brings up that would follow from identifying the self with the aggregates, is the one of either many selves or just one aggregate. If the self which is a partless unity would be identical with the aggregates—which are many—the identity would also have to be an identity in numbers. If we keep the ego as one, the absurdity would follow that instead of five aggregates we just have

one. If we keep the aggregates as five, the absurdity would follow that we would be forced to accept five egos. In other words, the personality would become a partless unity or break apart into five separate split ego complexes.

The various logical absurdities mentioned show that it is impossible to view the inherently existing self as identical with the aggregates. In a similar way Tsongkhapa proceeds to demonstrate the problems that follow from assuming that the self is different from the mental and physical aggregates. The self that is seen as different would have to be established as different by its own characteristic marks. The difference following from this would have to be such that the self would not be allowed to share the characteristic of the aggregates. The general characteristic of the aggregates is that they are a product or composite entity. According to Buddhist thinking, this implies that they are impermanent phenomena, phenomena that are characterized by arising and decay.

*impermanent
phenomena
arise
and
decay*

An example of a non-product would be space or Nirvana. Both are free of change; they are permanent. Moreover something that does not exist is not a product; a son of a barren woman or the horns of a rabbit for example do not exist. As non-existent entities they do not arise, they do not decay. In accordance with these observations Tsongkhapa concludes that if the self is different from the aggregates, it would have to be either permanent like Nirvana or non-existent like a flower in the sky. Such an entity he says would be unfit to be regarded as a basis for the conventional designation of a self or as an object to be apprehended as self (Tseng kha pa, c, 328.6f). The reason why such a notion of self cannot be posited is not explicitly stated by Tsongkhapa in this context. From another text by him we can see that it is the following: The self that we all experience on the everyday and empirical level is an "I" that is involved in a variety of activities; as such, it does not have the character of permanence, nor do we experience it as non-existing. To posit the "I" as permanent entity conflicts with the everyday experience of its activity. Thus Tsongkhapa states Buddhapaṇita's consequence that a self which is a non-product and which is permanent would be completely devoid of activity (Tsong kha pa, c, 229.If; Lindtner, 1981, p. 201).

Another consequence of assuming the difference of the self from the aggregates is the following. The five aggregates are qualified to have the following qualities: The form-aggregate is that which is fit to be form; the feeling-aggregate is able to

experience; the ideation-aggregate is able to distinguish marks; the formation-aggregate is qualified by the capacity to fashion; the consciousness-aggregate individually cognizes objects. If, therefore, a self that is different from the aggregates and devoid of the mentioned characteristics should exist, Tsongkhapa concludes it should be possible to apprehend it as such. It should be possible to perceive such a self in the same way as it is possible to see mind as different from body. Experience shows, however, that such a self is not apprehended. Thus, for Tsongkhapa, its impossibility is the necessary consequence.

"object
of inborn
ignorance"

Therefore, since the inherently existing self can neither be found as one with the aggregates nor different from them, it cannot exist. In this way one comes to realize that the object of inborn ignorance does not exist.

The situation of phenomena other than persons, such as the aggregates and things like pots, tables, *etc.* has to be understood in the same way. An inherently existing pot, for example, would have to be either one or different from its parts. The same absurd consequences stated previously would ensue.

EGO AND NON-EGO IN JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY

After our examination of the non-ego in the selection of the Buddhist texts we shall now turn our attention to Jung's understanding of the ego. Does Jung's conception of the ego reflect, in any way, aspects of the type of ego or self that is refuted by the Buddhists? Does Jung entertain the notion of an ego that is permanent, one, independent, self-sufficient or inherently existent? After trying to achieve some clarity concerning this point we shall try to see in what way the ego according to Jung is relativized by the experience of the self and unconscious.

In his work *Aion*, Jung (1968) gives *the* following definition of the ego:

We understand the ego as the complex factor to which all conscious contents are related. It forms, as it were, the center of the field of consciousness; and, in so far as this comprises the empirical personality, the ego is the subject of all the personal acts of consciousness. The relation of a psychic content to the ego forms the criterion of its consciousness, for no content can be conscious unless it is represented to a subject.

We can see from this definition that the ego is not an ultimate, partless one. Jung refers to it as a complex factor, that is, a composed entity. On the occasion of the Tavistock lectures he made it quite clear why he saw the ego as a complex factor. He stated:

The ego is a complex datum which is constituted first of all by a general awareness of your body, of your existence, and secondly by your memory data (Jung, 1976).

Jung refers here to at least two constituents of the ego: It is the sense of "I" we have with regard to our body and the sense of "I" we have with regard to our recollection. Describing the relationship of the ego to the psychic and physical aspect of the person he observes in *Aion*:

(the ego) rests on two seeming different bases: the somatic and the psychic.

Jung also clarifies that when he says the ego "rests" on the total field of consciousness, he does not mean that it consists of it. That would lead to the problem that the ego would become indistinguishable from the field of consciousness as a whole; it could not be conceived anymore as the latter's point of reference.

*ego
"rests"
on the
field of
consciousness*

The image of the ego that emerges is that it is constituted by the awareness of the somatic and psychic reality of one self. That accounts for its complexity. In that sense it is not a partless one. It is, moreover, not identical with the somatic and psychic constituents; it rests on them, or in other words it depends on them. This comes close to the Buddhist view which sees the "I" as depending on the aggregates, but not as being identical with them.

Jung, moreover, does not say anything that would indicate a permanent nature of the "I." He speaks only of a "high sense of continuity and identity with itself." This continuity is, however, in Jung's views only relative in view of the changes a personality can undergo.

The second major aspect of the "I" in the definition given above is that the ego is conceived of as the criterion of what can be called conscious or not. Only what is related or presented to it can be referred to as conscious. As far as I know there is no corresponding observation expressed in the Buddhist texts. This is probably so because Buddhism does not concern itself too much with a psychology of the conventional "I." Its existence is acknowledged, but its function not analyzed. It remains somewhat colorless. As

we saw, the Prasangikas refer to it as the " mere I. " The " I " was more interesting for them as the basis for an exaggerated sense of "1." Its conventional characteristics were however never explored in detail. This is an important difference to Jung's interest.

The third aspect of the ego brought out in Jung's definition is that it is the center of consciousness and-related to this- the subject of all conscious acts. The autonomy that the ego seems to enjoy is, according to Jung, only relative. It is the center of consciousness alone and not of the complete personality consisting of both conscious and unconscious aspects. In his words:

The personality as a total phenomenon does not coincide with the ego, that is with the conscious personality.

*unconscious
processes
not related
to the
ego*

As is well known, Jung came to postulate unconscious mental processes that are not related to the ego. These unconscious contents are of two kinds. One kind includes the contents of the personal unconscious, containing mainly repressed materials, forgotten materials, and subliminal perceptions which have never reached consciousness. The other kind includes the contents of the collective unconscious, contents that have never been in consciousness. They are produced by active, inherited patterns in the mind called archetypes. These can, according to Jung, not be apprehended as such; we only experience their manifestations in dreams, mythology, and religion.

It is the total personality that includes both the conscious and unconscious side that Jung calls self. The experience of the self is characterized by a numinous quality. It is the experience of a wholeness that points to the union of opposite tendencies, in particular of conscious and unconscious contents. As it expresses the totality of both the conscious and unconscious personality, the self can never be made fully conscious. Thus it remains a borderline concept that points beyond the known psychic processes. Its symbolic representations include the circular configurations that Jung called " mandalas " and in particular symbols that represent the union of opposites. An example of the latter would be the idea of the "divine child" that stems from the union of the royal sister-brother pair described in Alchemy or the idea of the Hermaphrodite, *etc.* (Jacobi, 1965).

In relationship to the self the ego is only subordinate and related to it as a part to the whole. Similarly, as the ego is the subject of consciousness, the self is the subject of the total personality.

The ego stands to the self as the moved to the mover, or as the object to the subject, because the determining factors which radiate out from the self surround the ego on all sides and are therefore supraordinate to it (Jung, 1958).

It is not only an abstract entity, but a center of energy which has a determining influence on the ego. This does not however negate the previously stated subject character of the ego. Immediately after describing the determining factor of the self he states,

The existence of ego-consciousness has meaning only if it is free and autonomous.

In terms of one's life it is mainly during the first part of life that the autonomy of the ego is developed. This ego-development results in such qualities as "consciousness, rationality, will-power, self-discipline, adaptation to the demands of external reality and individual responsibility (Ulanov, 1971). Related to this phase of ego-development is also the development of a "persona" and the so-called major function (Jacobi, 1965). It is in the second half of one's life that it becomes important to relate back to those unconscious elements that previously had to be neglected and repressed, that formed the "shadow" aspects of the personal unconscious. To become aware of the shadow is to open a door to the personal unconscious. In this sense the shadow can be said to symbolize the psychic function which mediates between the ego and the personal unconscious. The qualities of the shadow are invariably symbolized by people of the same sex we find irritating or hateful (Ulanov, 1971).

It becomes also increasingly important to deal with those aspects of the collective unconscious that have been projected outside in the form of the contrasexual anima/animus figures. Jung (1968) states:

*projected
contrasexual
figures*

The autonomy of the collective unconscious expresses itself in the figures of anima and animus. They personify those of its contents which, when withdrawn from projection, can be integrated into consciousness. To this extent, both figures represent functions which filter the contents of the collective unconscious through to the conscious mind.

Thus it is the contrasexual image that leads into that sphere that is the most removed from the ego-consciousness. This coincides with the fact that in Buddhism it is especially the female goddess that symbolizes the voidness. Thus, for example the goddess Prajnaparamita personifies the Praj-

naparamita literature which deals with the perfection of wisdom cognizing voidness (Mallmann, 1975). In Tantric Buddhism Dakinis are fierce goddesses who are called "sky-goers" in Tibetan. "Sky" signifies the voidness and "going" its realization (Kalff, 1979). The fact that the image of the woman rather than the man has been used to indicate the non-ego in this case must be understood on the basis that these ideas have been shaped primarily from the perspective of the male consciousness of the Buddhist monks.

ego-
development
and
ego-
relativization

The dangers in this process of ego-development and ego-rei-ativization through relating back to the unconscious and the reality of the self is the identification with either the values of only ego-consciousness or the images and forces of the unconscious. Emphasizing the need to avoid both extremes, Jung (1966) states the aim of the process of individuation:

The aim of individuation is nothing less than to divest the self of the false wrappings of the persona on the one hand, and the suggestive power of the primordial images on the other.

Although it is necessary to develop a flexible persona, a mask that one uses in presenting an image of oneself, be it as a minister, politician, mother, father, *etc.* to the outside world, it would be dangerous to identify with it. lung points out that *if*, for example, a man identifies with a masculine persona that he will become a victim of unconscious feminine qualities, they would manifest themselves in moods, fears, compulsive ideas, vices, *etc.* Such an identification would, in general, be a source for neurotic behavior (lung, 1966). Similarly the exclusive identification with any of the four functions-thinking, feeling, sensation or intuition-would lead to a negative reaction from the side of the repressed function that is opposite to the function with which one has identified. In the case of identifying with the thinking function, for example, it is the feeling function that will seek to express itself. Because it is not differentiated at all, it will manifest in a primitive or negative form such as phantasies or dreams of a mere instinctual character, in sentimentalisms, inadequate relationships, tactlessness, and other ways (Ulanov, 1971).

If these are the dangers of identification of the ego with specific attitudes of the conscious personality, lung also sees corresponding dangers in the case of identification with elements of the collective unconscious.

lung cites the example of a patient who suffered from paranoid dementia with megalomania. This person was in

telephonic communication with the mother of God and other great figures. In reality he was a locksmith apprentice who, at the age of nineteen, had become incurably insane. One of the ideas he had hit upon was that the world was his picture book. The proof for it was that he had simply to turn around and there was a new page to see. Jung (1966) notes that this way of looking at the world lies also at the very heart of Schopenhauer's brilliant vision of the world as will and idea. He sees the difference between the cited pathological case and Schopenhauer, as Schopenhauer's ability to transmute the primitive and natural vision into an abstract idea and language of universal validity. The sick man on the other hand is simply overpowered by the primary transpersonal visions and does not have enough ego strength to positively integrate them.

*the
ability
to
transmute*

An actual dissolution of the ego can take place if the ego is too weak to absorb the powers of the unconscious. This can result in a psychosis. Neumann (1963) sees this as the possible result of a faulty development of the ego-self axis. He remarks that the eruption of the illness is frequently introduced by an event which is understood by the patient as an actual "dissolution of the world." The world disintegrates into dead objects which appear to be completely isolated from each other. If the world is sometimes still partially filled with life, this expresses itself in a battle between opposing facts and forces. He points out that this experience is in contrast to the experience of the normal consciousness which perceives the world as a system of living entities which are in a dynamic relationship with each other. This description by Neumann very much resembles the Buddhist reflections on the inherently existing ego. The state of the sick person shows similar traits as those of the image of the person that arise as an absurd consequence from the assumption of a self-existing ego. I mean the image of the person who falls apart into a series of unrelated events that cannot be bridged anymore by memory. The unrelatedness of individual events that follows from accepting inherent existence is contrasted by the correct vision of reality as dependent arising. The true vision corresponds here to the perception of the undisturbed person.

The Jungian author, Frey-Rohn (1969), points to another possible trait of psychosis, namely the disintegration of the personality into a plurality of autonomous complexes or subpersonalities which take the place of the ego. This phenomenon parallels the logical absurdity of a variety of egos that Tsongkhapa posits to follow from the identity of a truly existing ego with personality constituents.

The extreme of identification with the forces of the unconscious may also lead to an inflation. Jung mentions for example the danger of the ego identifying with the self. This inflation results in an exalted opinion about oneself which is out of touch with reality (Jung, 1947).

*finding
a creative
balance*

Thus we see that a healthy person has to be able to find a creative balance between the values of ego-consciousness and the forces of the unconscious. The ego itself appears as a changing, relative entity. According to different phases in its development it has either to become emphasized more or less. Its relativity and flexibility is a precondition for a healthy development and meaning as found in the process of individuation.

CONCLUSIONS

Jung's view of the ego does not manifestly imply an ego that is one without parts, permanent, or independent of body and mind. We can moreover say that the notion of an inherently existing entity which opposes dependent origination could not be reconciled with the Jungian view of the ego as a dependent entity that is subject to development and change.

*divergences
regarding
the
independent
ego*

In the Buddhist tradition not only is an independent ego not manifestly affirmed (as in Jung), but it has gone beyond that point to formulate an explicit view of non-ego. We also saw that in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, on the one side phenomena are affirmed as merely imputed by cognition, and on the other side negated as existing from their own side. It would be difficult to find any definitive parallel to this concept in Jung's work. Moreover we find no correlate to the idea of non-self of phenomena.

*convergences
regarding
the
alleviation
of
suffering*

Nevertheless some interesting convergences should be noted. There exists a convergence in the fact that both the Mahayana Buddhists and Jung point out that suffering can be alleviated by a negation of the ego. The arising of this suffering is in Buddhism related to the so-called mental affliction (Skt, *klesa*) of attraction and aggression that are evoked by the concept of a self-existing entity. The external and inner objects are seen as something that have an absolute value. This evokes a corresponding response that is likewise either extreme aversion or extreme attraction. In Jungian psychology this is paralleled by the observation that unconscious contents that are projected on other people also evoke emotional responses of either aversion or attraction. The fact that projections occur is again based on a limited

self-understanding of the ego: which has not yet become aware of unconscious contents, and identifies itself only with specific limited conscious attitudes.

Both attempt, each in their own way, to develop the notion of a relative ego, and both move away from a concept that sees it as an isolated, independent entity. Both agree that the ego to be negated in the process of overcoming suffering does not mean no ego at all. They posit the ego in a way that emphasizes its dynamic quality that is opposed to a static conception.

*the
relative
ego*

Utter non-ego from the psychological point of view would be represented by a situation in which the ego is completely overpowered by the unconscious, a situation where external reality gets lost. The ego to be refuted is the ego with a tendency to identify itself with a given conscious value, as for example when one identifies oneself with a rigid persona. In Buddhism the view that there is no ego at all would be considered as nihilism. The clinging to an inherently existing ego is the opposite extreme of permanence. Both Jung and the Buddhists try to find a middle way that leads beyond the notion of a rigid, limited ego and a state of utter non-ego. We can assume that understanding of voidness would allow for an openness of the ego to the reality of the unconscious, similar to Jung's view of it. Thus it is not very surprising that Mahayana Buddhism, which made voidness to be one of its most important teachings, became a fertile ground for the inclusion of the feminine principle. In earlier Buddhism less emphasis had been put on the teachings of voidness, and we find no representations of the Buddha in a female aspect. As I have mentioned we find an increasing openness in Mahayana to accept female deities as manifestations of the Buddha. In particular in Tantric Buddhism, both wrathful and peaceful goddesses as well as female practitioners called Yoginis became very important. From a Jungian perspective this must be seen as a recovery of the anima figure that had not been present in the patriarchal form of earlier Buddhism. It would also mean that the door has been opened for the integration of the collective unconscious and imply a high degree of flexibility and openness for the ego.

*trying
to find
a middle way*

*inclusion
of the
feminine
principle*

If we look at the way the ego is negated by the Buddhists and by Jung we can observe the following. The Buddhists prefer a non-affirming negation of those aspects that are wrongly attributed to the mere "I." The voidness is, in the understanding of the Gelugpa authors, the mere absence of true existence, the absence of the object to be refuted in the theory of voidness.

*emphasis
on the
negation*

In general, the Buddhists have always been very reluctant to accept a positive symbol like the self. The reason appears to be that they saw in the Hindu notion of the self just those characteristics of an independent entity they wanted to deny. Thus the Buddhist approach puts more emphasis on the negation, without however denying the reality of dependent arising phenomena.

*the
experience
of the
self
presupposes
insight
into
voidness*

By contrast Jung's approach concentrates more on the positive aspect of the negation of the ego. There is to my knowledge no attempt in Jung's writings to talk about the empty space that would result from the mere negation of the rigid or neurotic aspects of the ego. Jung puts a positive symbol, namely the self, that emerges when the negative or wrong aspects of the ego have been given up. As a symbolic concept the self represents a union of opposites. It points primarily to a position beyond the exclusive opposition of conscious and unconscious. It does not, however, abolish the relative reality of the two sides of the polarity. As relative and not exclusive, the two sides can be seen as a dynamic whole, as a union of opposites. Such an idea of the union of the opposites excludes the notion of independent existence and emphasizes relativity and relationship. This looks like an application of the Buddhist idea of dependent origination to the issue of the relationship between opposing mental tendencies. The aspect of dependency, the exclusion of a rigid opposition points indirectly to the voidness. We could say that the actual experience of the self, which is based on a relativization of the ego, presupposes an intuitive insight into voidness. It looks like the positive aspect of a probably still partial intuition of voidness. We must also assume that the experience of the voidness itself remains unconscious inasmuch as the experience of the self does not directly involve an experience of the actual void or absence of the negated ego. Such an experience would be a state without concepts or appearances.

If we accept that the experience of the self, as Jung describes it, implies at least a partial intuitive understanding of voidness or non-ego in the Buddhist sense, it would also follow that the realization of voidness implies a state of mind free from neurotic suffering. Thus we might say that Jung's description of the relativity of the ego ultimately points towards liberation, whereas the Buddhist vision of liberation presupposes health and meaning, the goals envisioned by Jung.

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Requests for reprints to Martin Kalff, Hinterzunen 6, 8702 Zollikon, Switzerland.