

Analytical psychology and Daoist inner alchemy: a response to C.G. Jung's 'Commentary on *The Secret of the Golden Flower*'

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Abstract: This paper provides a historical, religious-philosophical context for the study of the Daoist text known as *The Secret of the Golden Flower*. An updated study is conducted into the controversy over the source of the text including the editions translated by Richard Wilhelm and Thomas Cleary. The main teachings of the text and the basics of two major denominations of Daoism are introduced to ground later critiques of Jung's commentary. The psychodynamics of analytical psychology, especially those concerned with integration of unconscious contents and the realization of the self (individuation) are compared with the psycho-spiritual dynamics of integration in Eastern spirituality based on the Golden Flower text. The paper concludes that it was amiss for Jung to have equated the Western 'unconscious' with states of higher consciousness in Eastern meditation practices, although his claim that Eastern higher consciousness is characterized by a nebulous state of non-intentionality does raise questions about the appropriateness of calling Eastern meditative states 'consciousness'. A new concept is required to characterize the special qualities of this psychic state shared generally by Eastern spiritual traditions and a more meaningful comparison may be found in Jung's concept of the self.

Key words: backward flowing/reversing method (meditation), Buddhism, higher consciousness, original face, self, unconscious

The controversy on the source of the text

The *Secret of the Golden Flower* ('Golden Flower' hereafter) was published in China in 1775 (Kohn 2001). Its oral tradition is believed to date back to the Tang Dynasty in the 8th century when Lú Dongbing 吕洞宾 (Lú Tsu in the Commentary, meaning Master or Patriarch Lú), one of the eight Daoist immortals, lived. Lú Dongbing is attributed to be the originator of the teaching of the Golden Flower. The text, though varied with at least seven different editions (Esposito, 1998; Yuria, 2002) is fairly short.¹ Though basically the text

¹ The edition in *The Daoist Texts Beyond the Canon* runs to 15 pages. The longest edition available today has 20 chapters. It is contained in *The Complete Works of Patriarch Lú*.

is regarded as Daoist, there is a considerable amount of Buddhist teachings and some Confucian concepts woven in it. This is in line with Quanzhen (Complete Perfection) Daoism/Taoism, one of the two major denominations in Daoism. It is very likely that since the 11th or 12th century in the Song dynasty the Daoist text has been blended to some degree with Buddhist and Confucian ideas and vice versa. The mutual penetration created what is known as Neo-Daoism and Neo-Confucianism out of the originally indigenous Daoism and Confucianism. The latest edition of *Daozang* 道藏 (*The Daoist Canon*), also known as the *Zhengtong Daozang* 正统道藏 (*The Orthodox Daoist Canon*) was made in 1445 (Hu 1995; Kohn 2001) during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). It contains 1426 texts, each text being roughly the equivalent of a book in the Bible. *Golden Flower* was published in 1775 during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), it was clearly not canonized in *The Daoist Canon*. Certain editions of *Golden Flower*, however, were collected in *Daozang Xubian* 道藏续编 (*The Supplement to The Daoist Canon*) and *Daozang Jiyao* 道藏辑要 (*The Essentials of the Daoist Canon*) (Despeux & Kohn 2003; Yuria 2002; Hu 1995).² The text is also collected in *Zang Wai Dao Shu* 藏外道书 (*The Daoist Texts Beyond the Canon*) published in 1992, and is the biggest collection since *The Daoist Canon* of 1445. Despite its popularity in the West, the text does not seem to attract as much attention among Chinese scholars and practitioners in general, probably because it is a very late and ‘spurious’ piece.

Richard Wilhelm (1931/1962) mentioned right in the beginning of the introductory part of *The Secret of the Golden Flower: A Chinese Book of Life* how he obtained a copy of the text reprinted in Peking in the 1920s while he was in China as a German missionary. According to Wilhelm’s introduction, the publisher had changed the title of the reprint from *Taiyi Jinghua Zongzhi* (The Supreme Purport of the Golden Flower, popularly known as The Secret of the Golden Flower) into *Chang Sheng Shu* (The Art of Attaining Longevity). The editor Zhanran Huizhenzi 湛然慧真子 (Esposito 1998) was said to have found in Peking an incomplete copy dating from the 17th century, and he ‘filled it out later from a friend’s book’ (Wilhelm 1962, p. 5). Textual studies show that each Daoist lineage and tradition has left marks in the continuum of editing the text (Hu 1992; Hu 1995; Esposito 1998; Yuria 2002).³ The text Wilhelm used for his German translation has eight chapters. According to Despeux and Kohn (2003), the edition that Wilhelm and C. G. Jung used was from *The Supplement to the Daoist Canon* dating from 1834 (p. 203). Thomas Cleary (1991) used

² *The Supplement to the Daoist Canon* collected 50 new texts in its first edition in 1607. The latest edition was probably made in 1834. *The Essentials of the Daoist Canon*, as the titles suggests, originally had no new texts added. By the 1906 edition that collects 287 texts, however, about 110 new texts written between late Ming and early Qing dynasties were added to the selected texts considered to be the essentials of the *Orthodox Canon*.

³ Over time, Jingming (Pure Brightness) lineage, Tianxian (Celestial Immortality) and Longmen (Dragon Gate) lineages, among others, have left apparent marks and exerted strong influences. See Yuria 2002 for more details.

a different 13-chapter edition to translate directly into English. The last five chapters in Cleary's translation, which are missing from Wilhelm's edition, are each very short. According to Yuria (2002), there could be 20 chapters in 'the prototype version' that might appear redundant and less organized so that SHAO Zhilin for the first time reduced them to thirteen and put the removed contents under appendices to Lú zu's teachings in *Lúzu Quanshu* 吕祖全书 (*The Complete Works of Patriarch Lú*).

Thomas Cleary (1991) pointed out that

Although Jung credited *The Secret of the Golden Flower* with having clarified his own work on the unconscious, he maintained serious reservations about the practice taught in the book. What Jung did not know was that the text he was reading in fact was a garbled translation of a truncated version of a corrupted recension of the original work.

(p. 3)

Like JING Haifeng (1999), who excuses Jung from being inaccurate, given that Jung was not a Sinologist, J.J. Clarke (2000) does not think sensitivity to textual criticism matters much to Jung because Jung's 'ultimate concern was with human suffering rather than with historical reconstruction' (p. 122). To Cleary (1991), however, the consequence was apparently more serious than that. Sensing 'enough flaws' in Wilhelm's translation, which is 'practically dysfunctional' but 'attributing it to cultural differences, Jung went further afield in transmogrifying the central concepts of the text' (p. 134). Furthermore, Jung is said to have 'apparently misunderstood descriptions of the exercise partly because of Wilhelm's mistranslation and his own lack of experience' (Cleary 1991, p. 149). Clarke admits that Jung's attempt to provide a conduit of psychological understandings between the East and West 'require more than moral effort' (p. 122). Clarke, however, does not follow up with Cleary as to where and in what capacity the Chinese version on which Wilhelm based his translation was problematic.

Interestingly enough, Cleary (1991) did not provide any specific information about the source of his Chinese version except that he mentioned he had it compared with 'a canonical version of the original Chinese text' (p. 134). While readers have reason to trust Cleary's 'Authoritative New Translation', they nonetheless also have reason to feel surprised that Cleary's lengthy notes and translator's afterword, as well as the introduction, said nothing tractable about his 'original Chinese text'. Moreover, readers can easily tell that throughout Cleary was writing in a highly informal style without resorting to scholarly documentation. Is this informal style meant to display Cleary's attempt to mimic the spirit-writing of the *Golden Flower*? One might ask.

Two major denominations of Daoism

Two major denominations known as Zhengyi Dao (The Way of Orthodox Unity) versus Quanzhen Dao (The Way of Complete Perfection) have been in existence since the 10th or 11th century. Orthodox Unity Daoism, which dated

as far back as the 1st century C.E. preceded Complete Perfection Daoism. The former allows its clergy to have a married life whereas the latter requires that its clergy practise celibacy. The former was traditionally more popular in the north and had its practice mainly in the form of divination, exorcism, ritual performance and the like whereas the latter surged primarily in the south challenging the Orthodox. The main characteristic of Complete Perfection Daoism is the practice of the inner or internal alchemy that utilizes the energy within a human individual rather than the use of chemical ingredients from outside, as is the practice of the Orthodox Unity Daoism.

In the tradition of Complete Perfection Daoism, to which Golden Flower belongs, there is a general consensus, at least from most of the sub-sects, that the practice of inner alchemy undergoes three major stages via meditation.

- Stage one is *lian jing huan qi* 炼精还气 (refining jing into qi). Jing is not just semen but refers to various kinds of fluid vital substance that is yin in quality, which contrasts with the yang quality of qi, an evaporating vital energy or life force. When jing keeps getting refined into qi that circulates within the body, it gives birth to an immortal embryo, a mysterious pearl or golden flower in the lower cinnabar field.
- Stage two is *lian qi huan shen* 炼气还神 (refining qi into spirit). The alchemical practice now aims to nourish the gestation of the immortal embryo or golden flower for ten months in the lower and middle cinnabar fields.
- Stage three is *lian shen huan Dao/Tao* 炼神还道 (returning the spirit to unity with the Dao or the Way) (Zhang 1994; Despeux & Kohn 2003; Flower 2005). Through continued deeper meditation, the yin body of fluid energy is increasingly transformed into a purely yang body in the form of pure and luminous spirit. It culminates in the spirit exiting the body through the crown of the head to merge with the vast cosmic energy, representing attainment of immortality and complete freedom. Such an inner alchemical process is generally applied to men. For women, they start the practice with ‘the reversal and transformation of menstrual blood’ and then undergo the same process as men do in general (Despeux & Kohn 2003; Miller 2003; Flower 2005; Clarke 2000).

It is probably necessary to say a few words at least about *neidan* (internal or inner alchemy) versus *waidan* (external or outer alchemy). Inner and outer alchemy are the two basic styles of alchemy in the Daoist tradition. Historically outer alchemy, associated with Orthodox Daoism, came into practice much earlier and matured around the first couple of centuries of the common era. Outer alchemy refers to the concoction of an elixir of immortality that takes place using a combination of physical ingredients in a cauldron. The process of the outer alchemy could be conducted as a Daoist ritual activity. In contrast with the outer alchemy, inner alchemy, identified with Complete Perfection Daoism, uses the energies of the human body as the ingredients for the alchemical reaction. This inner alchemy is believed to come to ‘prominence as part of

the Shangqing drive to interiorize Daoist practices' (Miller 2003, p. 109). 'Shangqing drive' is a movement in early Daoism, between approximately the third to the fifth centuries, and was relatively free of Buddhist influence as compared with its contemporary movement known as the Lingbao (Luminous Treasure) Movement. Inner alchemy definitely rose to a new apex when Complete Perfection Daoism was established by WANG Chongyan in the 10th century and carried further by his seven disciples known as the Seven Perfected in the tradition.

The creation of a *new and physically spiritual* body was the ultimate aim of the inner alchemy. It is formed after a long period of inward concentration. ZHANG Sanfeng is reputed to have written on such a body,

At this time a point of absolutely positive vitality crystallizes within the center. It is stored in the time when desires are cleared and emotions are stilled, yet it has appearance and form. When you get to this stage, the breath stays in the 'womb'. Incubation inside and out with unerring timing is called the ten months' work. It is the True Self formed when shen (the spirit) is purified and unified with qi and jing. . . The proper circulation of energies in the body feed and nourish it until, when fully developed, it is able to leave the body like the butterfly that leaves the chrysalis.
(Flower 2005, pp. 178-79).

The main teachings of Golden Flower

As we know from the previous discussion, there are several different editions of the text of Golden Flower. Wilhelm's (1962) version consists of 8 chapters. A brief summary is as follows:

(1) **Tian Xin 天心 (Heavenly Consciousness or Heavenly Heart):** The inner alchemical practice features *hui guang* 回光 (returning the light), by reversing one's attention known as the *nifa* 逆法 (backward-flowing movement), so that thoughts are gathered together at the Heavenly Heart, a place between the two eyes. Confucians, Buddhists and Daoists have different names for it. 'The Heavenly Heart is like the dwelling place, the light is the master. . . Therefore you only have to make the light circulate: that is the deepest and most wonderful secret. The light is easy to move but difficult to be stabilized. When the light is inwardly circulated long enough, it crystallizes and that is the natural *Dharmakaya* or spiritual body'.

(2) **Yuan sheng 元神 and Shi sheng 识神 (The Primal/Primordial Spirit and the Conscious Spirit):** This is a very Daoist pair of key concepts. The ontological *yuan sheng* (the primordial spirit) is beyond the polar differences. It is where Heaven and Earth derive their being. 'When there is a gestation in the womb, the primordial spirit dwells between the eyes, but the conscious spirit, dwells below in the heart'. The primordial spirit does not differentiate or move unless the person is dying while the conscious spirit features movement, cognition and differentiation. Consciousness depends for its origin on the *po* (anima). The anima changes in its form unceasingly and so does the transformations of

substance. *Hun* (animus) is where the spirit dwells in the Heavenly Heart. ‘It is the nature of light; it is the power of lightness and purity. It is... the same as the Origin’. The purport of inner alchemical practice is therefore ‘to distil the dark anima so that it transforms itself into light’.

(3) *Hui guan shou zhong* 回光守中 (Circulation of the Light and Protection of the Centre): Since we came into this world, our attention and consciousness have mostly been directed outward and often through the eyes that keep looking around. The teaching of The Golden Flower therefore totally depends on ‘the backward-flowing method’. Technically, the practice is a meditation that starts by looking ‘with both eyes at the end of the nose’. This provides a convenient means of initial focus. When worldly thoughts churn up in meditation, one should not continue concentration sitting rigidly. One must examine where the thought is, where it began, and where it fades out. The technique of concentration is thus alternated by that of discerning or contemplation. The concentration is *ding* 定 and the contemplation *hui* 慧. *Ding* and *hui* correspond to *zhi* 止 and *guan* 观 respectively, which in turn are the Chinese translations of Shamata and Vipassana in Pali. Alternating concentration and contemplation is the double method of practice. Moreover, concentration is said to be the returning and circulation of the light and contemplation is the light itself.⁴ ‘Concentration without contemplation is circulation without light. Contemplation without concentration is light without circulation. This needs to be remembered’.⁵

(4) *Hui Guang Tiao Xi* 回光调息 (Circulation of the Light and Making the Breathing Rhythmical). Chapter 4 details another meditation technique: regulating breath by deep listening. The heart/mind (*xin* in Chinese is for both) is directed toward listening to one’s breathing. One does not concentrate on hearing the tone—the exhaling and inhaling of the breath. Such breathing with a tone is ‘rough and superficial, and does not penetrate into what is fine. The mind must be made quiet and subtle. The more it lets go, the more subtle it becomes; the more subtle, the quieter. All at once it becomes so quiet that it stops. Then the true breathing 真息 is manifested and the substance of the mind is revealed’. The chapter also deals with drowsiness or oblivion and distraction that may come up in the meditation.

(5) *Hui Gaung Cha Miao* 回光差繆 (Mistakes during the Circulation of the Light): Four mistakes are mentioned with some remedies. (A) When entanglements emerge, set them aside and be independent. (B) Placing too much effort in following the procedures impedes circulation of the light. ‘The right behaviour lies in the middle way between being and non-being’ and in attaining ‘purposelessness through purpose’. (C) One must guard against falling victim to

⁴ We should notice that the dichotomy of cause and effect or cognition/epistemology and substance collapse here as in many other places.

⁵ Much of the teaching here finds expression in *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*, a seminal text of Chan Buddhism in China.

the ensnaring world, 'where the five kinds of dark demons disport themselves', where one sinks into the 'world of darkness' and enters the lifeless 'world of plants and stones'. (D) After a quiet state has begun, one might see all sorts of ties suddenly appear one after another. 'One wants to break through them and cannot; one follows them, and feels relieved by this. This means the master has become a servant. If a man tarries in this state long he enters the world of illusory desires'. The solution therefore is: be aware of them but do not follow them.

(6) **Hui Guang Zheng Yan 回光证验 (Confirmatory Experiences during the Circulation of the Light)**: Three kinds of confirmatory experiences are advised as tests. (A) When a meditator has entered into a trance, his spirit travels to the valley, hearing others, never oneself, talk 'as though at a distance of several hundred paces, each one quite clear. But the sounds are all like an echo in a valley'. (B) 'As soon as one is quiet, the light of the eyes begins to blaze up, so that everything before one becomes quite bright as if one were in a cloud. If one opens one's eyes and seeks the body, it is not to be found any more. . . Inside and outside, everything is equally light. That is a very auspicious sign'. (C) When one sits in meditation, the fleshly body becomes quiet 'shining like silk or jade. It seems difficult to remain sitting; one feels as if drawn upward. This is called: The spirit returns and pushes against Heaven. In time, one can experience it in such a way that one really floats upward'.⁶

(7) **Hui guang huo fa 回光活法 (The Living Manner of the Circulation of the Light)**: This chapter teaches how to continue the practice of circulating light while one is living out their daily life with an occupation. Sitting an hour or two early in the morning is best. Whatever interaction or task you are engaged in later in the day, just keep using this 'looking back' method into the source of mind, allowing images or thoughts to flow freely without sticking to any of them. If one practises this way for two or three months without interruption, 'all the realized ones from heaven will come to approve such behaviour'.

(8) **Xiao Yao Jue 逍遥诀 (The Magic Spell for the Far Journey)**: Much of this chapter centres on expounding a verse of inner alchemy. Here symbolism in alchemy becomes the predominant genre of discourse. Daoist and Buddhist terms and concepts are frequently mingled to create a hybrid method of cultivation. A scheme of three progressive stages of practice is offered (more clearly narrated in Cleary's version, see verses 21–24). If the practitioner is still not clear, she is offered the path of the threefold Buddhist contemplation of emptiness, delusion and the centre or the middle way (Wilhelm 1962, pp. 59–60).

Cleary's (1991) version has 13 chapters. The last 5 chapters missing from Wilhelm's edition are:

⁶ This corresponds to one of the illustrations in the text where an image of a figurine exits ascending from the top of the meditator's crown. In the three-stage inner alchemy practice, it corresponds to the last stage, *lian sheng huan dao* (returning the spirit to the Dao).

- Chapter 9. 百日立基 Setting Up the Foundation in a Hundred Days (pp. 49–50);
 Chapter 10. 性光识光 The Light of Essence and the Light of Consciousness (pp. 51–54);
 Chapter 11. 坎离交媾 The Intercourse of Water and Fire (p. 55);
 Chapter 12. 周天 The Cycle (pp. 57–59);
 Chapter 13. 劝世歌 Song to Inspire the World (pp. 61–64).

It is noteworthy that following chapter 8, the last one in his translation, Wilhelm (1962) made a lengthy note of exegesis on chapter 8. The exegesis seems to be a compensation for much of the five missing chapters. This could be seen as a skilful means of providing a fuller picture of what the longer version might be like given Wilhelm's knowledge and acknowledgement that his Chinese text was a latter-day edition. Cleary (1991) asserts Wilhelm intentionally skipped the five chapters because Wilhelm 'considers them of "inferior quality"' (p. 117). Cleary, however, fails to specify where Wilhelm has made this proclamation. Cleary (1991) also speculates that the difficulty of 'relatively high concentration of Buddhist and Daoist technical terms discouraged Wilhelm from attempting to translate them' (p. 117).

The very end of Wilhelm's (1962) exegesis says that Golden Flower is concerned with the means of cultivating life and shows at first how to start by looking at the bridge of one's nose; here the method of reversing is shown; the methods of making firm and letting go are in another book, *the Hsu Ming Fang (Methods of Prolonging Life, also known as Hui Ming Ching)* (p. 64).⁷ I agree with Wilhelm (Cleary shared the same view) that the means of cultivating life especially through backward flowing method or the method of reversing is the major theme of the text.

The unconscious, consciousness and the self in analytical psychology

Breaking away from Freud's concept of the exclusively personal unconscious, Jung posits there are two layers of the unconscious: the personal and the collective (the impersonal or transpersonal). The personal unconscious includes lost and repressed memories, subliminal perceptions not strong enough to reach consciousness, and contents not yet ripe for or unable to become consciousness at all (Jung 1966; Jung 1968). The collective unconscious is common to all persons because it has inherited archetypes as its contents that are expressed in myths, religions, folklores across time and cultures. While the personal layer of unconscious ends at the earliest memories of infancy, the collective unconscious stretches all the way back to endless generations of ancestral life. Jung's elucidation of the collective unconscious as the 'repository of man's experience

⁷ The edition from *The Daoist Texts Beyond the Canon* provides a lot more detailed instructions on the technicality of the meditation including the nuanced meaning of gazing at the tip of the nose.

and at the same time the prior condition of this experience' (Jung 1966, para. 151) is reminiscent of the *alayavijnana*, the storehouse consciousness or substrate consciousness (Wallace 2007) intricately expounded in Yogacara Buddhism. In the substrate consciousness, memories known as 'seeds' of all physical, verbal and mental karmas since time immemorial have been registered, 'smoked' (stored), reactivated and retrieved. In his article 'Alayavijnana, Yuan Shen and the Collective Unconscious', GUO Jian (2006) articulated that the three concepts have very similar characteristics as the primordial source of human thoughts and consciousness although they 'differ in detailed qualities' (p. 91). Guo also held that the three concepts, though constructed widely apart in time were independently developed. Guo did not seem to be aware, however, that Jung's theory of archetypes constituting the contents of the collective unconscious was significantly influenced by the Hindu and Buddhist concept of karma essential to a 'deeper understanding of the nature of an archetype' (Jung 1966, para. 118, note 15).

Consciousness in the Western sense led by the intellect and rationality alone (Jung 1966), Jung admitted, has been considered 'the highest cultural achievement' (Jung 1968, para. 14). It is therefore also getting 'so far out of touch with the primordial images that a breakdown ensues' (para. 15). To prevent the breakdown that results from such one-sidedness, Jung prescribes Heraclitus' enantiodromia in *Two Essays* (Jung 1966) and the Dao in the Commentary (Jung 1968). Both denote a regulative functioning of the opposites integrated in one whole, an ideal state of existence Jung calls the self.

The self in Jungian psychology is the result or goal of individuation, a state of optimal development of a full or total personality of a human. The total personality amounts to 'the transformation of personality through the blending and fusion of the noble with the base components, of the differentiated with the inferior functions, of the conscious with the unconscious' (Jung 1966, para. 360). Speaking of the birth of the superior personality symbolized by the 'diamond body' in the Golden Flower, Jung has 'reasons for believing that this attitude sets in after middle life and is a natural preparation for death' (Jung 1968, para. 68). It is apparent that Jung was speaking from a perspective of developmental psychology (the morning of life and the afternoon of it) while 'diamond body' in Golden Flower is a pinnacle spiritual state, also known as the Self in Mahayana Buddhism that is realizable regardless of age. The Jungian self is also analogous to the Dao or Yuan Shen in Daoism (Golden Flower, ch.1). Nuanced discussion of relations among them will be integrated later in this paper.

How do the unconscious and the self in analytical psychology compare to Eastern higher consciousness?

Jung made it clear that Golden Flower gave him a first, much needed and long-awaited back-up for his explorative work of the collective unconscious. It 'put me on the right track' (Jung 1967, Foreword). The purpose of the commentary

on Golden Flower, Jung said, is ‘to attempt to build a bridge of psychological understanding between East and West’ (Jung 1968, para. 83).⁸ How does Jung connect the two? Let us break this inquiry down to a few key aspects:

- (1) Why does the unconscious need to be integrated?
- (2) How does the unconscious get integrated with consciousness in analytical psychology and the shi shen with the yuan shen in inner alchemy?
- (3) What is the significance and goals of undergoing such an integration to both traditions?
- (4) How are the Jungian collective unconscious and self compared with yuan shen or other Eastern supranormal consciousness? Let us address them one by one briefly.

(1) It is clear that Jung (Jung 1966) was preoccupied with the lopsidedness towards, or excessiveness of, emphasizing the value of consciousness over against the suppressed role the unconscious plays. An integration of the unconscious contents must be honoured, therefore, not only because such an act will expand the horizon of the conscious mind but also because people, both modern individuals and mankind as a collective, will pay the high price of psychological problems if they do not honour the unconscious. Such an integration creates the wholeness of one’s personality and psyche. It constitutes the realization of the self. Likewise, the shi shen in Daoist inner alchemy represents only the conscious functioning part of everyday life. To achieve harmony and liberation or immortality, one must work the highly discriminative conscious spirit (yin in nature) into harmony with the all-inclusive and non-discriminative primordial spirit (yang). It is the yin-and-yang union that makes the Dao.

(2) How do the unconscious materials get integrated into consciousness? This is a very crucial and technical question. Jung time and time again discusses this issue presenting four possible scenarios (Jung 1966, para. 253, 254). First, if the conscious is overwhelmed or overpowered by the breaking in of the contents emerging from the unconscious, paranoia or schizophrenia may manifest. Second, if the person ‘credulously accepts’ the emerging contents, then the person ‘may either become an eccentric with a taste for prophecy, or this person may revert to an infantile attitude and cut off from human society’ (para. 254). Third, if the conscious rejects the unconscious contents, then the

⁸ Jung’s commentary encompasses not only Golden Flower but also Hui Ming Jing/Ching (The Book of Life of Wisdom). This is because the version Wilhelm translated into German has both texts compiled together and Jung accordingly commented on both. Speaking of Jung using both texts to cross-interpret and cross-fertilize, Jing (1999) believes ‘there is not much problem regarding the compatibility of the two texts’ although the two belong to different lineages within the inner alchemy of Complete Perfection Daoism. It is worth noting, however, that while Golden Flower is essentially a Daoist text, Hui Ming Jing is a predominantly Buddhist text tradition in the Mahayana tradition.

regressive restoration of the persona will follow. Fourth, the ideal reaction is critical understanding through active imagination. Active imagination seems to be a variation of Eastern meditation practice (Clarke 2000) Jung invented for Westerners 'for raising unconscious contents to consciousness' (Jung 1970b, paras. 137, 875; Jung 1971, para. 722n; Jung 1970a, paras. 166–75; etc.).⁹ The goal is towards the realization of a balanced and total personality, the self.

Other than via active imagination, the unconscious is often integrated in analysis through dream interpretation, the use of myths, symbols and fantasies as well as discovering, observing and treating psychological problems or abnormal psychic states (Jung 1966; Zhu, submitted 2009).

In Golden Flower and inner alchemy, shi shen is integrated into yuan shen basically through meditation—the 'backward flowing method'. Meditation relaxes the constant guarding of the unconscious by the conscious so that the unconscious is able to surface to the conscious level. The surfaced contents are watched, acknowledged and drift away (let go) in a healthy or normal session of meditation (see chapters 3 and 4 of Golden Flower). Otherwise, the grasping of surfaced contents causes problems as chapter 5 of Golden Flower enumerates. In the same vein, unless the conscious mind is capable of handling it properly (the fourth scenario Jung presented), the process of integration of the unconscious into the conscious can be negative, painful and disruptive as Jung frequently warns his readers (Jung 1966, para. 243, 253, 254 among many others).

It is crucial to point out the two different mechanisms that allow the handling of otherwise hazardous surfacing of the unconscious contents. While the 'understanding and digesting' of the surfaced unconscious needs to be 'critical' or differentiating in active imagination and then analysis can take place afterwards in analytical psychology, in the meditation of Golden Flower and many Buddhist meditation practices, the unconscious contents are simply watched and acknowledged and let go moment by moment by the conscious mind. The watching is non-judgemental and Jung rightly calls it 'a consciousness detached from the world' or object (Jung 1968, para. 68). This is the distinctive feature of 'backward flowing' meditation to guard the unwanted situation where 'the unconscious simply rides roughshod over the conscious mind' that would incur a psychotic condition (Jung 1966, para. 253), the first of the four scenarios presented earlier. The meditation in Golden Flower discourages the practitioner from following random thoughts, criticism and emotions arising from the unconscious. If the practitioner does follow, he will fall from a master to the position of a servant (Golden Flower, chapter 5, error D).

One of the central theses from Golden Flower and indeed in Daoist internal alchemy is that the conscious spirit, yin by nature, needs to be worked on to transform or be integrated into the primordial spirit, yang by nature. The

⁹ There is likelihood but no explicit documentation linking active imagination to various Eastern meditative practices.

purport of such a practice is to distil the dark and discriminative conscious spirit (the po or anima) and to light up the primordial spirit (the hun or the animus). This completes the realization of harmony, immortality or returning to Dao. Interestingly, it is the other way round in Jung's framework of analytical psychology: the unconscious is supposed to be integrated into consciousness, though the process is never ending (Jung 1969) for the realization of selfhood. The route either takes is not going to be a point of discussion here. Suffice it to say here that one is a psychological project and the other a spiritual undertaking.

(3) In analytical psychology, the significance of such an integration lies in the creation of the 'transcendent function' out of the conflict of two incongruent and fundamental psychic factors—the conscious and the unconscious (Jung 1966; Jung 1969). It marks the completion of the process of individuation, the realization of the self. By individuation, Jung means

A process of psychological development that fulfils the individual qualities given. . . it is a process by which a man becomes the definite, unique being he in fact is. . . he does not become 'selfish' in the ordinary sense of the word, but is merely fulfilling the peculiarity of his nature. . . [it] is vastly different from egotism or individualism.

(Jung 1966, para. 267)

Integration also 'brings an enlargement, a heightening and enrichment of the personality' (Jung 1966) as long as the person's previous values are kept alongside. There seems to be a parallel in Daoism: the transcendent union of yin and yang, or the conscious spirit and the primordial spirit, which is the manifestation of Dao. Such a yin-yang union creates a foundation for maximizing the psychological functioning of a well integrated superior personality. The fact is, however, Daoist inner alchemy does not pay much attention, if any, to maximizing the psychological functioning of an ordinary secular life. It is primarily geared towards a soteriological end—liberation and immortality. The way to liberation in Golden Glower is a mixture of Daoism and Buddhism and probably owing to this reason, it does not address a psychophysiological dimension of *lian jin huan qi*—the first of three stages typical of the Daoist inner alchemy we mentioned earlier in the section on the basics of the Complete Reality Daoism.

Despite different goals of integration and transcendent union between analytical psychology and Daoist inner alchemy—the former directed to optimum psychological function and the latter geared towards a spiritual fulfilment with relatively much less concern on how to fully realize psychological functioning—personally, interpersonally and occupationally, Jung articulates that what seems to be transcendental and metaphysical in the East is after all experienceable, psychological and therefore knowable at least to some degree rather than totally unknowable (Jung 1968). Psychic impulses that can be experienced become the bridge connecting Jungian psychology and the teaching of the Golden Flower.

Jung's approach subjected him to the suspicion of psychologizing religious and spiritual practices (Jung 1968; Clarke 2000). He is also suspected of simply appropriating Daoist ideas 'for his own foreign purposes and thereby radically distorting them' (Clarke 2000, p. 127). Moreover, this points to the parallel accusation of Jung being a cultural colonialist. Given his time, however, Jung seems to have been as fair and honest as he could, at least at the conscious level. He concludes his commentary on *The Golden Flower* by saying, 'The European invasion of the East was an act of violence on a grand scale, and it has left us with the duty... of understanding the mind of the East' (Jung 1968, para. 84). On the other side of the aisle, interestingly enough, there are voices from modern and contemporary Chinese scholars who have been appreciating Jung's achievement in demystifying with psychological tools ancient religious practices and arcane teachings. These empathizers believe Jung's approach has provided a new avenue and methodology to rejuvenate the study of Daoism within the Chinese community (Chang 1975 a, b; Jing 1999; Zhang 1999; Shen 2004).

(4) How are the Jungian unconscious and self compared with the Eastern higher consciousness (Daoist primordial spirit and the Buddhist pure consciousness)?

In the conclusion part of the commentary Jung began with an explicit statement: The purpose of his commentary was to try to 'build a bridge of psychological understanding between the East and West'. Specifically he emphasized 'the agreement between the psychic states and symbolism of East and West' (Jung 1968, para. 83). The transcendent method and the ultimate purport of the ancient inner alchemists are 'melting out completely the slag of darkness in order to return to the purely creative. This is nothing more than a reduction of the po and a completion of the hun' (Wilhelm 1962, p. 26; Hu 1992, p. 330; Cleary 1991, p. 6). In other words, the reduction of the po and completion of the hun completes the integration of the conscious spirit into the primordial spirit. Such an integrated psychic state is possible only by seeing essence or the original face (*Golden Flower*, Ch. 2), a term that is quintessential in Chan Buddhism that refers to the original nature of the human mind. Such a state of mind is believed to be a higher, super or pure consciousness in that the six discriminatory consciousnesses (that of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and thinking mind) have all been equally suspended and transformed, according to Yogacara Buddhism that is more constructive and psychological than any other schools of Buddhism. The higher consciousness is believed to have a capacity of perceiving things as they are just like an unstained mirror reflecting things as they are. In the mandalas Jung attached at the end of the commentary, mandala 4 is conceived as a transparent window with a luminous flower in the centre. It seems to parallel the symbolism of the higher consciousness described in *Golden Flower* and Buddhist texts (We should bear in mind that much of Jung's commentary under study is on Hui Ming Ching, a related but separate text, which is undoubtedly more Buddhist than Daoist).

The unconscious, the primordial spirit and the original face and the like are all psychic states that are non-cognizant, non-discriminative, and irrational. Jung tried to develop a conduit of psychological understanding between the East and West on the unconscious (Jing 1999). Jung said his 15 years of hard exploration into the collective unconscious had found no confirming parallels until he read the Golden Flower Wilhelm had translated into German (Jung 1968, Foreword). Jung asserted that the super-conscious or universal consciousness in the East ‘corresponds to what we in the west call the “unconscious”’. The two are ‘logically identical’ (Jung 1969, paras. 506, 520). Jung refined this point by saying that although meditation in Eastern spiritual practices can intensify and enlarge the scope of consciousness, it would necessarily result in ‘the reduction of clarity of any part of the sustained global consciousness’. Jung says,

It is nevertheless true that a correct application of the methods described in the Pāli Canon or in the *Yoga-sutra* induces a remarkable extension of consciousness. But, with increasing extension, the contents of consciousness lose in clarity of detail. In the end, consciousness becomes all-embracing, but nebulous; an infinite number of things merge into an indefinite whole, a state in which the subject and object are almost completely identical. This is all very beautiful, but scarcely to be recommended anywhere north of the Tropic of Cancer.

(Jung 1969, para. 520)

Some believe that in his overall view of Eastern practices Jung ‘has something very different in mind from whatever he meant in his rather disparaging references in this passage’ (Colman, personal correspondence, 12/22/2008). Jung is a paradoxical thinker (Clarke 2000; Gómez 1995). Indeed Jung’s comments on the Eastern mind in the commentary are nothing less than appreciatory. In Golden Flower alone Jung repeatedly talks about the narrowness, one-sidedness and arrogance associated with the term consciousness in the Western rational way (Jung 1968, paras. 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 54, 62, 63, 71, 84). He therefore exhorts his contemporary Western readers to look to the East, not for hasty imitation of practice but for a new orientation toward the meaning and experience of consciousness or higher consciousness. The implication is clear: the type of consciousness in the West is significantly different from the consciousness in the East.

In the Buddhist and inner alchemical meditations of which readers have a glimpse from the ‘backward flowing’ method I recapitulated earlier, an equilibrium or equanimity of consciousness is attained and sustained. This state of consciousness is claimed to be a higher, pure, super/supra or universal consciousness where the subject or knower and object or the known are identified in a symbolic circle or zero epitomized in the Ten Oxherding Pictures of Chan Buddhism. For people rooted in Western consciousness, however, it is unbelievable and unacceptable for an act or a state of consciousness to have no subject or object or no differentiation of the two. That is why, despite the fact that he was not philosophically aligned with Cartesian dualism, Jung contends that consciousness ‘needs a centre, an ego to which something is conscious. We

know of no other kind of consciousness, nor can we imagine a consciousness without an ego' (Jung 1969, para. 506)¹⁰.

The 'higher consciousness' Eastern traditions¹¹ claim is a non-dual reflexive psychic state as well as a totally uninhibited, boundless experience of oneness. Deep meditation states in Golden Flower can indeed be nebulous as Jung rightly points out. Welwood (1977) calls it a state of 'diffuse attention'. This can be food for thought on the subtle quality of the 'higher consciousness' claimed by Eastern spiritual practitioners. However, such a boundless psychic state, nebulous though it might be, can be highly alert, sensitive (both paralleling the symbolism in mandala 5), agile (mandala 7) and ready to respond (Wallace 2007; Jinghui 1990, 1992). Moreover, it is often believed to be bright, golden and radiating (Wallace 2007; Golden Flower and many Buddhist and Daoist texts) as contrasted with the darkness of the unconscious. Mandalas 1, 2, 3, 6, 10 can be seen as parallels symbolizing shining light and higher consciousness.

But let us not overlook Jung's thought-provoking challenge: When the 'higher consciousness' breaks boundaries shining through like mandala 2 radiating out from the centre and infinitely extends in time and space, is the diffuse or nebulous consciousness necessarily losing clarity on details? Is it deliberately forgoing any effort of intentionality? If the answers are most often yes, then they may disqualify such a meditative or psychic state as consciousness in the Western sense providing there is a consensus that consciousness needs to have intentionality of and clarity on objects. Such a psychic state certainly should not be categorized as the collective unconscious either because of its qualities (brightness, alertness, agility and so forth). I propose there be a term more appropriate than just higher consciousness to match the qualities of this unique psychic state.

The compatibility or agreement of the fundamental psychic state Jung wanted to emphasize between East and West is perhaps best expressed by the self in analytical psychology and the Dao, in both of which there is a harmonious co-existence and integrated functioning of yin and yang. The remaining question is whether the self is highly functional in ordinary life with a heightened sense of intentionality. Or is it also characterized by diffuse or nebulous attention as in the strictly speaking non-functional, non-active, purely spiritual and detached psychic state of the East? Without capitalizing 's' in the self and with all its described qualities (Jung 1966), it seems Jung distinguishes the self from the

¹⁰ Given the essay was written and rewritten in 1939, it is surprising that Jung was unaware of a non-dualistic state of mind, the core teaching of Buddhism regardless of its denominations and lineages.

¹¹ I am aware of running a risk using a very general term 'Eastern higher consciousness' to refer to the psychic states of Buddhism, Daoism and even Hinduism. Differences certainly exist not only among the traditions, but also within the denominations and lineages of a single tradition. Generic discussions on the topic are just corresponding to Jung's blueprint of dealing 'only with general aspects' without entering 'into technical details' (Jung 1968, para. 83).

Dao or Self in Mahayana Buddhism that is strictly speaking an ideal state of pure spirituality although it is often said to be transcendent and immanent simultaneously. Chapter 7 of *Golden Flower* does talk about how it is possible to keep circulating the light without giving up an ordinary occupation. The manifestation of that psychic state seems to be most compatible with the Jungian self functioning within the total personality. A realized practitioner living in such a psychic state as *Golden Flower* describes has to ‘react to things by reflexes only, without any admixtures of a thought of others or of oneself, that is, a circulation of the light arising out of circumstances’ (Ch. 7; Wilhelm 1962, p. 51). This raises the question of how the realized self embodies or unfolds in a Jungian ordinary life—a question I leave Jungian readers to consider.

Conclusion

Golden Flower is a late text of inner alchemy within the Complete Perfection denomination of Daoism. It blends considerable Buddhist teachings and some Confucian thoughts. Jung’s commentary on *Golden Flower* was based on an edition of the text that Cleary believed is truncated and corrupt. Cleary claimed to have used a canonical edition for his translation but did not provide necessary documentation of his source. In the commentary, Jung attempted to build a bridge of psychological understanding between the East and the West. Among others, Jung tried to establish parallels between individuation or the self and the Dao, and the unconscious and the higher consciousness. Jung’s argument that the meditative state in Eastern spiritual practice is nebulous is worth reflecting on, raising questions about the accuracy of calling non-intentional Eastern meditative states (higher) consciousness. None the less, it is amiss to say higher psychic states in Eastern spiritual practice are just another name for the unconscious in the Western sense. Eastern higher psychic states are subtle states of mind that are highly aware, alert, and ready to respond, and they are often claimed to be bright as contrasted with the dark unconscious, personal, and collective. A new name beyond (higher) consciousness and the unconscious is called for to describe this unique psychic state. A more meaningful East-West psychological comparison than prevails in Jung’s overall writings might be between the (Jungian) self and Eastern higher psychic states. Nevertheless, one is left to wonder how each of these embodies or unfolds in an ordinary life.

TRANSLATIONS OF ABSTRACT

Cet article fournit un contexte philosophico-religieux à l’étude du texte taoïste connu sous le titre *Le Secret de la fleur d’or*. Il s’agit d’une analyse réactualisée de la controverse autour de l’origine du texte comprenant les éditions traduites par Richard Wilhelm et Thomas Cleary. Les enseignements majeurs du texte et les fondamentaux de deux courants majeurs du taoïsme sont introduits, afin de donner corps aux

dernières critiques du commentaire de Jung. La psycho-dynamique de la psychologie analytique, plus particulièrement la dynamique d'intégration des contenus inconscients et de réalisation du Soi (individuation), est comparée à la dynamique psycho-spirituelle de l'intégration propre à la spiritualité orientale, fondée sur le texte de la Fleur d'Or. L'article conclut à une méprise de Jung lorsqu'il assimile l'«inconscient» occidental aux états de conscience supérieure décrits dans les pratiques orientales de la méditation. Pourtant, son affirmation du caractère non intentionnel nébuleux des états de conscience supérieure des pratiques orientales, soulève des questions quant à la pertinence de l'appellation de «conscience» pour désigner ces états méditatifs. Un nouveau concept est nécessaire pour caractériser les qualités spécifiques de cet état psychique, propre aux traditions spirituelles orientales; une comparaison avec le concept jungien de Soi serait sans doute plus pertinente.

Der Text liefert einen historischen religiös-philosophischen Hintergrund zum Studium des daoistischen Textes der als 'Das Geheimnis der goldenen Blüte' bekannt ist. In die Debatte um die Quelle des Textes, einschließlich der von Richard Wilhelm und Thomas Cleary übersetzten Ausgaben, wird eine neuere Studie eingeführt. Die Hauptlehren des Textes sowie die Grundlagen zweier zentraler Kategorien des Daoismus werden vorgestellt um damit eine Grundlage zu schaffen für eine anschließende Kritiken des Kommentars von Jung. Die psychodynamischen Konzepte der Analytischen Psychologie, besonders jene die die Integration unbewusster Inhalte und die Selbstwerdung (Individuation) betreffen, werden auf der Basis des Textes von der goldenen Blüte mit den Vorstellungen von seelisch-spirituellen Dynamismen der Integration in der östlichen Spiritualität verglichen. Der Aufsatz kommt zu dem Schluß, daß es ein Fehler von Jung war, das westliche 'Unbewußte' mit Stadien höheren Bewußtseins in der östlichen Meditationspraxis gleichzusetzen, obgleich seine Behauptung, daß östliches höheres Bewußtsein durch nebulöse Zustände der Nicht-Intentionalität charakterisiert sei, Fragen aufwirft bezüglich der Angemessenheit östliche meditative Zustände mit 'Bewußtsein' zu identifizieren. Um die besonderen spirituellen Qualitäten jener seelischen Zustände zu beschreiben die generell östlichen spirituellen Traditionen eigen sind ist ein neues Konzept erforderlich. Gültigere Vergleiche können in Jungs Begriff des Selbst gefunden werden.

Questo lavoro fornisce un contesto storico e filosofico-religioso per lo studio del testo conosciuto come 'Il segreto del fiore d'oro'. Viene presentato uno studio aggiornato che riguarda la controversia sull'origine del testo che coinvolge le edizioni tradotte da Richard Wilhelm e Thomas Cleary. A sostegno delle critiche portate più avanti al commento di Jung vengono presentati gli insegnamenti e le basi più importanti dei due maggiori culti del Daoismo. Vengono poi messe a confronto le psicodinamiche della psicologia analitica, soprattutto quelle riguardanti l'integrazione dei contenuti dell'inconscio e la realizzazione del sé (individuation), con le dinamiche psico-spirituali di integrazione della spiritualità dell'Oriente basate sul testo del Fiore D'oro. La conclusione del lavoro è che Jung fece uno sbaglio nell'equiparare l'inconscio occidentale con gli stati di coscienza più elevata delle pratiche di meditazione orientale, anche se la sua affermazione che il più elevato stato di coscienza dell'Oriente è caratterizzato da

uno stato nebuloso di non-intenzionalità fa sorgere interrogativi sulla adeguatezza del chiamare gli stati meditativi orientali ‘coscienza’. Si ha bisogno di un nuovo concetto per caratterizzare le qualità speciali di questi stati psichici condivisi dalle tradizioni spirituali dell’oriente ed è nel concetto junghiano del Sé che si può trovare un confronto più significativo.

Este papel proporciona un contexto histórico, religioso-filosófico para el estudio del texto de Taoísta conocido como El Secreto de la Flor de Oro. Se realiza un estudio actualizado en la controversia sobre la fuente del texto incluyendo las ediciones traducidas por Richard Wilhelm y Thomas Cleary. Se introducen las enseñanzas principales del texto y los fundamentos de dos denominaciones importantes del Taoísmo para sustentar las críticas posteriores al comentario de Jung. La psicodinámica de la psicología analítica, especialmente éstas referidas a la integración del contenido inconsciente y la realización del sí mismo (individuación) se comparan con la dinámica psico-espiritual de la integración en la espiritualidad del Este basada en el texto de La Flor de Oro. El papel concluye que era inadecuado por parte de Jung comparar al Inconsciente Occidental con Estados Superiores de Conciencia de la Meditación Oriental, aun cuando explica que el estado elevado de conciencia Oriental está caracterizado por una condición nebulosa del no-intencionalidad plantea preguntas sobre la inapropiado de llamar conciencia a los Estados Meditativos Orientales. Se requiere Un nuevo concepto para caracterizar las cualidades especiales de este estado psíquico compartido generalmente por tradiciones espirituales del Este y se puede encontrar una comparación más significativa en el concepto de Jung del Sí Mismo.

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[Ms first received June 2008; final version May 2009]