

with the raw energy of the water element. Perceptually, this wisdom energy is related to the eyes and seeing clearly.⁵

Chapter 17

Vajra: The Wisdom Energy of Water

The wisdom associated with the subtle energy of the element of water resides in the eastern quadrant of the mandala and is related to the deity *Vajrasattva* (Diamond-being), as we have seen in the *bardo* text quoted in the previous chapter. It is associated in some traditions with white light, and in others with the colour blue. When distorted, this energy manifests as some of the many forms of anger. When liberated from self-clinging, it manifests as the brilliant clarity of mirror-like wisdom. In general, it has to do with knowledge and visual perception.¹ In Tibetan tantra, this energy is symbolized by a diamond sceptre known as a vajra which is also the mythic thunderbolt weapon of Indra. The qualities of this energy are clear and pure as a faultless diamond, sharp, infinitely hard, and indestructible.²

This is the wisdom energy most closely related to intellect at its best, although it can also go far beyond conventional intellect by transcending concepts, perceiving phenomena as they exist without concepts, while also maintaining a kind of freedom to play with concepts.³ In this way, it is the energy of insight when one has a glimpse beyond one's own habitual way of seeing as well as beyond the conventions of the 'consensus reality' of a given culture.

Since one aspect of this wisdom energy is the kind of intelligence most closely related to intellect, it is therefore the wisdom energy most recognized, appreciated and cultivated in our schools and universities. This is the style of intelligence typified by lawyers and debaters who choose sides, refine their logic and then argue their points with precision and clarity. It is also the dispassionate and objective clear thinking of science and mathematics, for it is involved with seeing things clearly and then forming abstract theories as to the logical relationships between things. This energy tends to define things, distinguish differences, and delineate boundaries between dissimilar things in order to simplify and clarify the complex muddle of experience. Both in its constricted, neurotic manifestation and as a non-dual wisdom this energy seems to bring a sense of order out of chaos. It is the energy of critical thinking, systematic analysis, linear logic, rational discourse, and most methods which underlie our culture of science and technology.⁴

Imagine being in the mountains on a clear and extremely cold morning in the middle of winter. The air is crystal clear, the sky is a brilliant blue and the ground is covered in snow so white and glistening that it seems to be light itself. Everything is frozen in a different and intriguing way, icicles hang from the rocks and trees, everything is hard-edged and sharply in focus. There is no disorder or chaos here. Everything is in its place. The landscape is vast and open, yet filled with sharp contrasts, with no hidden corners as every detail is available to the eye's inspection. This picture evokes the qualities of experience said to be associated

The radiant light of clear insight does not distort what it sees but reflects it in all its accuracy and detail. When seeing the phenomenal world through the lenses of this elemental energy it is vivid and sharp with clean edges between things. The piercing intensity of this vividness can be irritating to the eyes of ego. But when there is no reference point of a self, this crystal, vivid quality is unobstructed and detailed knowledge of inherent structures and patterns becomes self-evident.

The water element associated with this quality of mind is clear and fluid. Water can flow over a flat surface, completely covering it, yet remain transparent. In the same way, mirror-like wisdom is all-pervasive, clearly reflecting in mind the vastness and detail of phenomena.

Water can also be turbulent and dangerous, like rapids in a roaring torrential river, or, like a tidal wave, can smash buildings of a coastal city and then rip out the leftover rubble in the undercurrents. This represents the destructive potential of anger, while the cloudy and frothy opaque quality of the turbulent water might be seen to symbolize the psychological defensiveness and justification that accompanies anger. Contrast this with a completely clear and deep pool, still as glass, that perfectly reflects whatever is in front of it. This represents the precision and unbiased purity of reflection that is mirror-like wisdom.

People who perceive, reflect, abstract and react to life predominantly from this perspective generally tend to need to keep their distance from things in order to maintain a clear and precise perspective. Such people are most concerned, or perhaps preoccupied and even obsessed, with knowing and understanding things in an intellectual manner. They seem to derive a feeling of security from having an intellectual interpretation for everything, like a map to orient them within the chaos that is life. In order to construct this abstract interpretation, they need to maintain distance to have an objective viewpoint and to investigate all the angles and possible ramifications. They have a passion for orienting themselves within the larger picture. They must get to know the set-up first, and then they can function within it.

People who most frequently engage this energy of the water element love to look from high places onto broad vistas where they can perceive the lay of the land. They like maps, guidebooks and clear instructions that simplify complex procedures. They might also like to observe the behaviour patterns of animals from behind the glass or bars at a zoo, or through a microscope in the laboratory. For that matter, as psychologists they would enjoy watching human behaviour through a one-way mirror or on film so that there is no danger of becoming caught up in what is happening and thus losing their pristine objectivity.

When someone who is operating from this perspective

cannot step back to form an objective opinion on things, when they cannot formulate a clear and precise abstract conceptual understanding about what is happening, they tend to become irritated. When they feel that everything in their world is too close or intimately interconnected they become upset and confused by the apparent disorder and seemingly random bombardment of sensory stimuli and the vague, undefined impressions. If they experience this irritation for very long they may tend to feel claustrophobic and need to push their world away or defend themselves against what they perceive as the oppressive force of chaos. When the claustrophobia builds and there is no relief, they become defensive, angry and aggressive.

The fear of chaos and disorder can cause a person to defend those conceptual structures which they perceive as essential, even if these structures are no longer valid or helpful. Some people will defend with anger and violence a system of thought even when it has become harmful to themselves and to others.

The practice of drawing boundaries, setting up categories and formulating concepts is useful. Yet if we cling to these boundaries, categories and concepts when they are threatened by a changing world or, more significantly, by changes in the sophistication of our own ability to perceive, we become neurotic and defensive, aggressively attempting to fit an unyielding reality into our limited frames of reference. Individuals as well as nation states go to war to defend their physical boundaries, ethnic and cultural purity, or cherished religious dogmas.

This energy of anger maintains the same qualities of sharpness, clarity and precision inherent in mirror-like wisdom, as the two states of mind are manifestations of the same raw energy of the water element. Just as the water in the raging torrent is the same water as in the still, reflecting pond, so the mental energy of anger and clarity are the same. What is different is that in the case of anger, the energy of clarity has been commandeered by a little egotistical dictator who is afraid and defensive. This little dictator is the dualistic misapprehension which we call the self or ego. If we try to possess the natural clarity of mind, the energy becomes constricted and perverted.

We have all experienced how a sudden burst of anger often brings clarity to a situation. When we feel the energy of anger in our body there is a certain quality of one-pointedness. We feel as if the cobwebs have been cleared away and any of the distracting irritations that cluttered our mind are temporarily banished. We develop a quick wit, become sarcastic, and have an amazing memory for long lost details that give our argument credibility and which cut our opponent down to size by putting him or her on the defensive. The speed at which we can anticipate our opponent's strategy and weakness when angered truly amazes us. For when angry, our mind can be as sharp as a tack even if usually we feel dull and slow.

The above description we might call hot anger that moves

fast like the turbulence of boiling water and scalds its opponent. Another kind of anger is cold anger that freezes our opponent out. This is often the situation when people are 'not speaking to one another.' This is a slower moving and longer lasting variety of anger; frozen in judgement, it shuts down communication. With a distinctly unfriendly coldness or a cool, unsociable glare that intimidates outsiders and drives them away, this style of aggression sets up both a physical and emotional distance.

This distance is what the person consciously or unconsciously craves. For as we have seen, the person who prefers this mode of awareness does not want anything or anyone to get too close. Once the appropriate distance is again established, then this style of mind can apply intellect again and curiosity is aroused. This style of curiosity has its own subtle kind of aggression. If we cling to our conceptual framework, it begins to distort the clarity of our perception. We are not willing to see things that do not fit into our preconceived structures, and what we do see is distorted, wrapped in concepts, and pigeon-holed to fit in with preconceived ideas.⁶ An example of this approach is a tendency to rely on rigid guidelines of diagnosis that freeze one's perception so that subtle changes and individual idiosyncrasies are not apparent. The influence of the medical model and psychometric testing in education (Sodhi, 1974) is an example of this kind of thinking.

Whether or not a teacher is indoctrinated into the culture of diagnosis or not, if their tendency is to try to pin down exactly who a student is and how he or she learns, this will eventually blind them to subtle changes and idiosyncratic patterns of growth and learning. Any system of differentiating between personality types or cognitive styles such as the ones presented here can become reified and thus cause more harm than good. Even without using a specific system, teachers will often observe students through the lens of their own self-created sets of conceptual criteria.

Using a simplified structure or criteria to organize their perceptions of others, some teachers will notice and keep track of all the mistakes and imperfections of their students. They tend to be critical, judgmental, opinionated and quick to find fault with others. They can be impatient with bumbling and often cannot understand why others do not pay attention to all the pertinent details in the same way they do. It is easy for these clear-seeing-type teachers to become preoccupied with right and wrong.⁷ They tend to polarize situations, seeing either black or white. Because they see so clearly and organize what they see with such precise and ordered logic, their view is always very convincing. In fact, they are especially good at convincing themselves that they are right, and can be loathe to admit when their view is slightly off or distorted, narrow, or not the whole picture. Once they have sized up a situation, it becomes what they say it is, and other ways of expressing the same situation can be characterized by them as 'not well thought out,' 'soft-headed,' 'unclear.'

Judgemental people can have a very fertile imagination. They can imagine how perfect the world might be if everything were structured properly, with supreme order and good sense, the way they might do it if given the chance. They can imagine utopias, but whenever they look around themselves all they see is incompetence, bungling and chaos. They create a mental world that loses contact with reality. They can expect the world and other people to be like their mental image and when these are not they can become irritated, impatient and angry. Even if they are more disciplined and less impulsive there is a subtle aggression in the way they insist on seeing the world through the lens of their own conceptual framework, instead of seeing it the way it is, which constantly slips through the nets of concept and category.

The academic approach is frequently guilty of this same kind of subtle aggression. Just as a clever lawyer can bend the truth by selecting the facts and arranging them in a convincing manner, academic writers can be prejudiced by ideas and theories, local biases and dogmas. Then, either consciously or unconsciously, they sift through the facts to prove their point. In fact, any time we use words or concepts to describe reality we are guilty of this subtle aggression because words and concepts can never describe the fluid, constantly shifting quality of experience or the complex web of infinite causes that restructure reality from moment to moment. Words and concepts are nonetheless useful, and the subtle aggression is removed if we fully acknowledge their limitations and acknowledge the playful quality involved in making up descriptions of our world.

Teachers who tend to this style seek to master space through cool logic and clear thinking. They want space to be sharply defined. They want clear and firm boundaries, but then, somehow, they are tricked by their own need for boundaries. For when they realize that the boundaries have become solid and real, they feel hemmed in and claustrophobic. They feel that the barrier is oppressing them and entrapping them. Then they need more space; they need to step back and get a better perspective.

This kind of alternation of the need for space, on the one hand, and the need for structure and boundaries on the other can recycle over and over. This can manifest in a positive way, as when a person is willing to let go of old cherished structures and boundaries to explore new perspectives creatively, exploring ever more sophisticated and subtle structures and patterns. Conversely, it can recycle in a negative way if a person is not willing to part with ideas that are no longer appropriate or useful. In the latter case, the cycle can go on repeating itself over and over, creating an ever increasing sense of frustration, fear, claustrophobia and anger. Buddhist psychology refers to this state of mind as a hell realm where suffering breeds anger which breeds suffering and more anger, ad infinitum.

The basic emotional pattern in the hell realm is one of pushing away or freezing out experience because it is too

sharp and piercing. The response of a vulnerable ego is to turn the piercing wisdom energy of mirror-like wisdom into aggression. This confused relationship between ego and the piercing energy of wisdom may build up in an oscillation between the two or in a simultaneous fashion. When one experiences a brief gap in the self-conscious struggle of ego's panic to survive, the piercing precision of mirror-like wisdom creates a kind of shock wave that the reference point of self interprets as a threat, and it immediately prepares to defend itself. It is the brilliance and cutting quality of the clarity itself which cuts through ego's mirage of duality, yet when it is interpreted as aggression, ego feels a need to send out an equal amount of aggression as an attempt to push back the intensity of the world, including other people.

This struggle to secure a sense of territory heightens further the boundaries, which further feeds the feelings of being oppressed, as well as feelings of isolation. The aggression builds, tit-for-tat. Every time one puts out an aggressive response into the world it comes back with equal force. Hell realm is a world that has become completely claustrophobic, totally walled in, guarded and frozen up with aggression. Like an animal backed into a corner, lashing out at anything that moves, a being in the hell realm expects to be attacked simply because its back is against the wall of its own making. As the aggression builds and builds, the subject becomes more and more convinced that the problem is coming from outside. Violent attacks to destroy what is mistakenly perceived as this outside source of the problem just increase the feelings of claustrophobia and pressure. Finally, if one kills another to try to rid oneself of the mounting anger, it brings no relief but rather a kind of haunting field of aggression begins to surround one. The total environment is filled with aggression and one cannot tell where it will strike out next or who is killing whom.

The aggression of the hell realm causes perception to be distorted in very bizarre and extremely painful ways. There are numerous descriptions of hells in the classical Buddhist texts such as Gampopa's Jewel Ornament of Liberation. These hells are described in quite a literal fashion. The terrible tortures are symbolic portraits of how the dualistic perversion of the raw energy of the water element causes one to attack oneself. There are images of both burning hot hells and frozen hells, hells of repeated physical torture where the subjects are tortured to death only to be revived again by an icy wind and made ready for further torture. They all have the qualities of intense struggle and entrapment with no escape. What follows is a brief description from the above mentioned text by Gampopa:

Rab.tutsha.ba Tib.(Pratapana, sk. Intense Heating Hell) is so called, because beings there are tormented in a very special way. When they have been burnt with molten metal so that no skin is left and while fire flames from the nine openings of the body, they are pierced through with three-spiked weapons from

the anus and the soles of the feet to the head and shoulders. Some are boiled in a Burning stream of molten bronze, Others are impaled On red-hot thorny iron stakes.⁸

The florid state of psychosis can be seen as a type of hell realm in all its intense mental claustrophobia and suffering.⁹ In my experience of working with psychotic persons over the past twelve years, I have found that more often than not they are possessed of uncanny insight and precise intelligence. For example, I worked with one young man who could list all my faults, weaknesses, and subtle tendencies to manipulate him with a kind of razor-sharp awareness, picking up on things in me that neither I or my supervisor could have noted or expressed as clearly. Being possessed of such vivid, sharp and accurate insight can be very threatening. The accuracy of this kind of mind, the cool precision of mirror-like wisdom, can be like the scalpel of a surgeon. It can be experienced as too sharp and cutting, so that all too frequently it causes harm. It takes a lot of practice to learn to wield such sharp intelligence with compassion.

Because there is a self-conscious centre or ego, the duality sets up an echo, reverberation chamber, or hall of mirrors. In this way, the self regards the precise and sharp quality of mind as a threat, and then the neutral quality of the wisdom energy can become an overly critical and demeaning voice like that described in transactional analysis (Berne, 1964, 1974; Woollams & Brown, 1978) as the internalized 'critical parent.'

The nagging, critical voice even begins to anticipate your failures before they arrive, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy of gloom and doom. The more one fights back, trying to escape the terrible voice, the more it begins to feed on this same aggression that is trying to block it out. Podvoll (1990) comments and summarizes from the autobiographical writings of John Perceval, a Victorian English aristocratic son of a prime minister who went insane while trying to pursue an ecstatic religious conversion:

On entering the realm of Hell he experienced the full fury of his own projections. He could not tell if he was committing acts of destruction or creation. His speed of mind was tremendous and in a constant momentum of change between giving birth and dying. He was given to feelings of hatred and of being hated, and, while, fighting against the projections, he began to strike inward. Voices now ordered him to destroy himself. When the "crack" occurred he was at a peak point of being overwhelmed, alternately burning or being frozen in an environment of terror. (p. 36)

The relentless voice inside of one's head notices one's every imperfection and every minute mistake. This heightens the self-consciousness, which further heightens the reverberating sense of aggression, and the critical voice increases in its interior discursive volume and may now seem like a vicious nightmare. For example, the person I referred to above who had sharp insight was plagued by the voice of God, persecuting and condemning him sometimes for his every move and every thought. The worst part about this kind of hell is that it seems that there is no escape from the cruel voice inside your own mind. The only escape is through making friends with the voice itself, making friends with one's own aggression and with the fear of that aggression. Healing happens when all the parts within oneself are acknowledged, accepted and given a place within one's own *mandala* of being.¹⁰

In order to fully engage the energy of mirror-like wisdom and release the constricted, aggressive approach to the raw energy of the water element, there is a process of discovery or a journey of awareness that needs to unfold. By heightening one's awareness through contemplative practice one begins to perceive more subtle levels of suffering caused by the need to distance oneself from the world in order to give it distinct form, understand it and analyze it. By looking directly at the process of constructing a self, we experience the tendency to split off or divide our selves from our ongoing perceptions. Gradually, a softer, non-aggressive approach naturally develops and we become more willing to see things as they are. By making friends with the inherent energy of constantly giving birth to ourselves as separate from our perceptions, which is the elemental quality of water, we no longer need to identify with one side of the split versus the other. In this way, we become more sensitive to our environment, and any attempt to stand outside that environment and manipulate that environment becomes more and more obvious.

Eventually, a very fluid and spontaneous wisdom is cultivated as one realizes that all knowledge is relative and that clear perception of each passing situation is the best tool for understanding the present moment. Mirror-like wisdom sees clearly whatever is in front of it without bias, judgement, or the aggressive need to change it into something else. This wisdom energy then becomes the intelligence that manifests as a breakthrough in science or new and creative insights of any kind when a new level of clarity shatters through rigidified concepts in an iconoclastic break from personal habit or cultural tradition.

The religious symbolism of water as a cosmic birthplace of gods and living beings and the use of water to symbolize dissolution of form, and the sudden rebirth into a fresh and pristine awareness, evident in baptism and abhisheka, corresponds to this aspect of water as the birthplace of insight. By allowing the raw energy of the water element to flow within one's psychophysical experience without trying to possess it or manipulate it, there is a continuous rebirth into a fresh and vivid world. In this constant rebirth the rigid lenses of preconceptions are continually being washed

away from one's eyes. In Buddhist tantra, this constant awakening to experience in a fresh way is referred to as 'the dawn of Vajrasattva.'

There is also a quality of gentleness and softness to this wisdom energy, like someone who can hold a snowflake and examine it in every detail with such gentleness that it stays intact and never melts. In a similar way, this mirror-like wisdom allows one to see so clearly and understand so well the structure of things that one would never violate those delicate structures but regards them with respect and awe as sacred. This is reminiscent of some scientists who have spent their lives carefully observing and noting detail upon detail. This discipline of paying close attention to perception and making ever finer distinctions as one comes to know the phenomena being observed is a systematic way of uncovering the wisdom energy of the vajra family. In this way, through patience and careful attention to detail, the temporary obscuration of aggression is purified into wisdom.

This form of intelligence also comes to bear within the subtle art of diplomacy and conflict resolution. The wise peacemaker sees clearly the causes of conflict, redefines or does away with rigid boundaries and fixed positions that entrench each party, and thus transforms the aggressive energy used to defend that position into a new way of understanding which is more inclusive. These skills of conflict resolution and wise diplomacy are always useful in the classroom.¹¹

If teachers in their training have the opportunity to exaggerate their styles in a living and breathing way, through space awareness and meditation practice, and reflect on their experience in the intimate sharing of group process, they can experience their own particular way of being critical, conceptual, judgmental, and aggressive. Normally, when such behaviours are more subtle, defensive mechanisms allow us to deny the extent to which our neurotic tendencies control our day-to-day communications with others. By using techniques that exaggerate these neurotic tendencies, a teacher in training might be able to cut through some of the denial and observe a deeper part of his or her psychological make-up. If teachers in training are able to look at what they see within themselves directly and then relax with the intensity of that emotional experience, further resources of mirror-like wisdom energy become available.

Many teachers are blessed with the talents of being able to structure information in a clear and orderly fashion. However, when they believe that their way is the only way, they can frustrate the development of similar strengths in their students. If they are not able to let go of their preconceptions, they are not willing to learn from their students how they might organize their own perceptions.

If a teacher judges a student, that student will feel judged and will often fulfill what ever positive or negative expectations that teacher has. If a teacher clings to concepts concerning specific students, labels them, and

pigeon-holes them into convenient categories, they will miss the freshness and spontaneity that forms the essence of how each individual child learns. On the other hand, if a teacher practices the art of mirror-like wisdom seeing each child freshly in each new moment with profound respect and gentleness, the inner resources of the child are free to develop without inhibition.

CHAPTER 17 NOTES

1—Ywahoo (1987), a contemporary Native American woman of the Etowah band of the Eastern Tsalagi (Cherokee), a teacher and holder of an ancestral wisdom lineage known to go back for twenty-seven generations, speaks of a similar archetypal spirit energy: 'From the East arises Ama Agheya, Water Woman, bearing the gift of knowing, the east wind inspiring the mind to see, "I am that I am"' (p. 133).

2—My descriptions of the elemental wisdoms that follow in this and the next four chapters are based on a variety of sources, beginning primarily with Trungpa (1973, 1976) as well as some unpublished transcripts of talks given by Trungpa. Also, several senior students of Trungpa taught this material at the Naropa Institute and at the maitri space awareness retreats. In particular I have relied upon my notes of talks given by Marvin Casper in 1981, 1982 and 1985, as well as some notes of talks given by Samten Nagarajan at a maitri retreat in 1984. Finally, the book *Rainbow of Liberated Energy* by Chogyam (1986) inspired me to trust in my own experience of the qualities and to write about them in my own way. This book also gave me the idea of using the elements as a way to bridge traditions of the East and West. Chogyam acknowledges his sources at the end of his book with a list of fifty or so Tibetan teachers and meditation masters with whom he studied during sojourns in India, Nepal and Tibet.

3—Arieti (1967), Flavell (1970), Bruner (1973) and Wilber (1980) all suggest that there are higher levels of cognition beyond our verbal conceptual way of thinking. Bergson (1949) understood that there is a 'pure perception' as part of his direct intuition, a perception that is cleansed of all limiting concepts and conventional thoughts. Husserl (1931) also describes a kind of immediate experiential awareness as transcending verbally structured consciousness. Wilber (1980) quotes from Aurobindo: 'By an utilization of the inner senses – that is to say, of the sense powers, in themselves, in their purely ... subtle activity... we are able to take cognition of sense experiences, of appearances and images of things other than those that belong to the organization of our material environment' (p. 60).

4—Though it is awkward to make comparisons between different systems of learning styles or personality types, it may be useful to note that in some ways the vajra style has similarities to the melancholic temperament, to Jung's thinking types (intellectually directed), to McCarthy's (1980) type two analytic learners, and to what Keirseay and Bates

(1978) label as the Promethean spirit of science bent on the prediction, explanation and control of nature, finding order in the universe and analyzing patterns in search of repetition, and regularity that can be depended upon. From the emotional perspective all of these tendencies seem to have their origin in an impatience with chaos or disorder and a strong need for form and structure as a way to re-assert, re-confirm duality. The classic depression of the melancholic temperament could be this subtle aggression of wanting to bring order and perfection directed inwards to become a consistently self-critical manner. Jung (1960) tells us that numbers and mathematical structures arise from the archetype of order as it surfaces from the collective unconscious becoming conscious. The wisdom of the vajra style may also be compared with the archetype of the Magician (see Moore & Gillette, 1990, and Pearson, 1991) which involves knowing, mastery over technology, and in general the rôle of teacher, mentor and 'ritual elder' who initiates others into the mysteries of whatever complex discipline, be it medicine, engineering, electronics, computers, astrophysics, psychology, acupuncture, yoga or shamanistic ritual and magic. Pearson says that 'the highest level of magic is consciously using the knowledge that everything is connected to everything else; developing mastery of the art of changing physical realities by first changing mental, emotional, and spiritual ones' (p. 205). For the most part this kind of magic has been forgotten within our materialistic culture as we have given over much of our power and our possibilities of personal magic to the reigning magicians of our time: doctors of science and medicine, the high priests of the physical and biological realms which seems to me a bit like putting all of our faith for eternal salvation in the hands of a good mechanic.

5—Trungpa (1973) uses descriptions of landscapes to evoke the qualities of each of the five elemental wisdoms, as does Chogyam (1986). I have borrowed from both of these and elaborated upon them in my own style.

6—Bergson's term 'patterned immobility' (1949, 1960) depicts well this tendency we all have to freeze reality into manageable chunks, like little ice cubes, in order to construct a sense of meaning out of the ever-changing flow of 'the perpetual happening.' The notion of meaning, a favourite topic of the existentialist philosophers and psychologists (Tillich, 1952; May, 1969, 1977, 1981; Becker 1973; Binswanger, 1963; Laing, 1959, 1968) seems to have to do with intentionality and a self-actualized will, which implies a certain consciousness of the meaning-making process while it occurs and gives shape to each present moment. Liberated intellect seems to know in each instant that it creates the structures that set the limits to knowing and thus can choose them or refuse them, depending on what is most appropriate to the situation. From the ultimate view of pure perception, any tendency to make meaning is an abstraction or a past tense reflection divorced from the flowing river of the present moment.

7—In a variation on the use of water imagery, DeBono (1990) looks at the inadequacies of our dominant thinking culture.

He proclaims, in a manner reminiscent of the manifestos of Futurism, Dada, and Surrealism in Modern Art, what he calls the 'New Renaissance: from Rock Logic to Water Logic.' Based on an understanding of the brain as a self-organizing information system, his notion of water logic implies a kind of thinking that is highly dependent upon defined circumstances and conditions, the way water fits and flows with its terrain and unlike traditional 'rock logic,' which is circumstance independent. He says 'I am right – you are wrong' is a shorthand crystallization of the thinking habits that both formed the last Renaissance and were further developed by it. The search for truth – as distinct from dogma – was to be made through the exposure of falsity by means of argument, reason and logic. This reason, not dogma, was to decide what was right and what was wrong.... Central to this type of thinking is the underlying notion of 'truth.' By means of argument which manoeuvres matters into a contradictory position, something can be shown to be false. Even if something is not completely false, the garbage has to be chipped away by the skilled exercise of critical thinking in order to lay bare the contained truth.... In summary, our traditional thinking system is based on 'truth,' which is to be uncovered and checked by logic and argument (supplemented by statistics and other scientific methods). The result is a strong tendency towards negativity and attack. Negativity is seen to be a powerful way of uncovering the truth, resisting disturbing intrusions and giving a personal sense of satisfaction to the attacker.... We need to shift from (this kind of) cleverness to wisdom. Perception is the basis of wisdom.... We can always defend our existing thinking culture because, fundamentally, it is a particular belief system based on concepts of truth and logic. Every belief system sets up a framework of perception within which it cannot be attacked. The arrogance of logic means that if we have a logically impeccable argument then we must be right – 'I am right – you are wrong' (see pp. 3, 6, 7, 26, 27).

8—Gampopa as translated by Guenther (1975), p. 58. According to Guenther, notions of life in the hell realms have stimulated Tibetan writers to greater and greater heights of gory detail. This obsession, perhaps similar to the contemporary North American fascination with gruesome and violent films or the gruesome portrayal in the paintings of the 15th-century Flemish Renaissance painter Hieronymus Bosch, can actually have a powerful teaching effect. Although such descriptions flourished in part to motivate monks and lay people toward virtue and diligent meditation practice to avoid the intense sufferings of hell realms and samsara, in general they also have another more hidden or less obvious function. Religious devotees often have a tendency to deny their aggression, and thus it hides away unacknowledged. By evoking the energy of aggression and the nightmarish visions of intense suffering and fear with grotesque imagery, the hidden side of a virtuous person's nature, or what Jung refers to as the shadow, can be rooted out exposed and acknowledged. Furthermore, the more one opens to this energy in oneself, the more one is also able to learn to accommodate it in one's psychophysical system and relax with the intensity of

it to transform it into wisdom. (See Kopp, 1988, for an excellent treatment of this issue from a clinical and literary perspective.)

9—The hell realm seems to have something in common with aspects of the melancholy temperament, especially in the tendency toward madness. The melancholy depression so commonly known throughout European culture since the Renaissance as a listless, intensely introverted and introspective, romantic and cosmic sadness has a hell realm quality which Kretschmer (1925) has associated with schizophrenia.

10—Maitri, making friends with oneself, the contemplative Buddhist approach to healing psychological suffering, is strikingly similar to the psychosynthesis teachings of Assagioli (1965) and Ferrucci (1982). The conceptualization of the intrapsychic integration process is the same. The only difference seems to be the differing ways of using and understanding the term 'self.' Ferrucci tells us that 'The ultimate aim in subpersonality work is to increase the sense of self or center by deepening our acquaintance with our own subpersonalities so that instead of disintegrating into a myriad of subselves at war with each other, we can again be one' (p. 53). Likewise, the ego state therapy and reparenting work of Transactional Analysis (Schiff, 1969), rededication work of Goulding (1982), and inner child approach of Whitfield (1987) and Bradshaw (1990) all work with the same principles of identifying split-off parts, accepting them and reintegrating them into a more inclusive whole. Jung's process of individuation (see Jung, 1972) also implies the integration of various different unconscious complexes into a smoothly integrated whole. Jungian-based writer Jacobi (1959) refers to 'splinter psyches' which appear to the ego complex as external because they have been shut out by the ego as incompatible and have an autonomous life in the unconscious. Whereas many approaches follow Freud in identifying the root of such complexes, or what Assagioli calls 'subpersonalities,' in an individual's own childhood Jung believed, in addition to this, that they are associated with universal archetypal themes which we all share as part of our collective unconscious.

11—For more on mediation and conflict resolution, a good place to start is with the art of negotiation (Fisher & Ury, 1991). Moore (1987) and Goldberg, Green and Sander (1992) cover practical strategies for mediation and dispute resolution. A lot has been written on conflict resolution in the classroom (see Bickmore, 1984; Drew, 1987; Fletcher, 1986; Isaac, 1991). Judson (1984) even has a section on cooperative games, For the Fun of It. Storey (1990) explores resolution of conflict between parents and schools. N.A.M.E., the National Association for Mediation in Education, of Amherst, Mass., has a bi-monthly newsletter called The Fourth R (425 Amity Street, Amherst, Mass. 01002), and Jossey-Bass of San Francisco publishes the journal Mediation Quarterly.