

Chapter 19

Padma: The Wisdom Energy of Fire

The bright red light of the purified element of fire that is said to shine from the heart centre of the primordial Buddha deity *Amitabha* in the bardo of *dharmata* is described as the wisdom of discriminating awareness. In its constricted form, this wisdom energy manifests as desire, passion, grasping, and the urge to possess. When liberated, this fiery emotion of passion transforms into compassion, which includes a precise, intuitive awareness of how to help others along in their own process of self-discovery.

The quality of experience or feeling tone of this subtle energy is symbolized by the elegant and voluptuous lotus flower, or *padma* in Sanskrit. The long stem of the lotus arises out of the filth and mud of swamps, opening into an immaculate and beautiful blossom. Therefore, it is often used in Indian traditions as a symbol of spiritual development and the path of transforming negative emotional energies into positive energies of compassion and wisdom.

The quality of this energy is also associated with the colour red. Red stands out from other colours. Red draws the attention of the eye and holds it. The wisdom energy of fire is also associated with the cardinal direction of the west, with springtime, with early evening and with the romantic and spectacular light of sunsets.

Imagine that you are on a gentle hillside on the Pacific West Coast in late May. You look out below across a crescent beach of beautiful golden sand to see the sun slowly slipping down between the sky and sea. You are surrounded by sweet-smelling wild flowers in an endless variety of colours—wild poppies, fireweed, Indian paintbrush, columbines, and many more. The sun becomes a luminous red ball on the horizon, while wispy clouds display shifting hues of violet, amber, turquoise and fiery orange. The water reflects this harmony of colours, while the sun bleeds into its depths a purple glow and draws a path of sparkling red along the surface. Waves dance in undulating folds and heave the shifting palette of colours to the shore, where they shatter into points of light and glittering seafoam. You drink in the experience and practically boil over with delight, yet you also feel a deep sadness that there is no one there to share the experience with you.

This wisdom energy of the fire element is the primary wisdom energy of poets and artists.¹ It is the flame that illuminates their refined perception and delicate craft. The essence of a work of art, if I may be so bold, is that it communicates deeply personal yet universal human experience. This communication depends on arranging the elements in the composition in such a way that the magic of their complex system of relationships comes together as a whole that shines forth, evoking the appropriate experience in others. Such composition is not accomplished through linear logic or intellectual reasoning. It is the intuitive art of

highly discriminating perception, practical skills, an eye for details, and a vast and playful imagination. It is a more concrete way of thinking that depends on perception more than concepts or ideas. A painter placing a colour beside another colour within the symphony of colours that make up a painting cannot be trapped by the concept of green or blue but must see the intensity of hue and shade in relationship to all the other colours. Likewise, the poet cannot be trapped by conventional language habits, but must transcend them with subtle perception of sound and meaning to weave a tapestry of music and metaphor.²

This intuitive wisdom with its subtle perceptual discriminations and simultaneous sense of a harmonious whole may be taught in the finest art, music and performing arts classes. However, this profound way of perceiving and thinking is generally ignored or regarded as an embellishment by most mainstream educational institutions. This is a tragedy, for every human being has the right to cultivate this wisdom potential within their awareness. Furthermore, there seems to be an idea embedded in our educational and academic culture that this type of thinking is only useful for artists and irrelevant to the rest of us. I believe that this is not true. Edward de Bono (1990) calls for a new way of thinking. Based on perception and principles of design, this more fluid thinking is responsive to relative circumstances. He believes it is superior to the rigid logic and critical thought which tends to dominate our existing thinking culture.

Very often, those who inhabit this style of being are an anomaly in the school system. Schools reward students who think in straight lines and students who organize their thoughts in a clear, rational and straightforward manner. This is no doubt good training, and sometimes appropriate. However, there are different ways of perceiving reality. If a child is tuned into finer perception of subtle discriminations which cannot be subjected to rational analysis but are processed in an emotional or feeling way, the typical school approach of right and wrong answers seems like a lie or a distortion of the truth. They begin to resent the fact that someone is telling them how they should regard their world. Meanwhile, the teacher becomes frustrated at the students' inability or unwillingness to accomplish what seem to be simple tasks. If a teacher does not give these students access to the means of expression that satisfy and compliment their style of perception, the gap in understanding between the teacher and these students grows wider, and the situation becomes worse as the students lose confidence in their own way of being, perceiving and expressing. Soon they begin to believe that they are stupid and lazy, just as they have been told.

At its worst, this style of perceiving and thinking is continually distracted and scattered. These are the children, boys and girls, who cannot focus their mind on the task at hand. They continuously look out of the window, poke the child next to them or sink into the trance of daydreams. When they do pay attention and excitedly answer a question, their train of thought also becomes distracted.

They will veer off into a disorganized description of what seem to be only vaguely related details. They may be passionate about expressing themselves, but their essays read more like the recounting of a dream than the appropriate fulfillment of their assignment.

They can also tend to be moody; excited and engaged one day, dull, despondent and depressed the next. They can cultivate a feeling of being cut off from their world. They can feel misunderstood and confused, trapped in a world that is alien to them. However, if you ask them to write a poem, paint a picture, or play a rôle to express their feelings and their insights, their energy soars and their attention is riveted to their project with an unparalleled power of concentration.

The ability to concentrate in this style can be as highly refined and intense as the concentration of a portrait painter or musician. However, it can just as easily degenerate into a kind of obsessive fixation. The neurotic energy of passion tends to cling to something with little awareness for other things that occur in the space around it. This is like the trance of a couple so in love that they are oblivious to their surroundings. This kind of narrow-minded fixation can occur in response to any kind of object, whether it is a material possession, like a car or a house, or an object of mind, such as a project or an idea. There is such complete fusion with the object of desire that there is no appropriate sense of boundaries or greater awareness. Reckless hedonism is also an aspect of this style. Living for pleasure and intensity, or living for the moment, this type can become preoccupied and blinded by what is right in front of them, having no awareness of future needs or the needs of others around them.

Often people who tend to operate from the perspective of the wisdom of the fire energy have highly developed intuition. They know things without knowing why they know them or how they know them. Their intuitive hunches and feelings about things are right on target. When they have become top salespeople, successful investors, artists, designers, therapists, actors and musicians no one cares if they can't go through the step-by-step analysis of how they came to their conclusions. But schools do not regard this kind of intuition as sufficient. Intuitive students are punished and made to feel stupid if they can't go through the accepted methods of problem-solving and analysis which they themselves see as pointless busy work. To them it makes no sense. They say, "Why should I bother to go back and fiddle with all those tedious arguments when I already have the answer I need and my mind is naturally and inescapably drawn ahead to newer and more exciting challenges?"

Among these challenges, the most enticing, and in some ways the most rewarding, is the challenge of social interaction and interpersonal relationships. The energy of the fire element, more than any of the others, has to do with people and relationships. The intrigue, the gossip, the intimacy, the highs of love, the lows of rejection, the dance

of flirtation, all are aspects of the living experience of this fire energy. It is the energy involved in sensuality and sexual attraction. There is a seductive quality to this energy, and it can be very excitable, teasing, playful and coquettish.³

Most educators realize that with hormones running wild in junior high and high school adolescents, school subjects will never win out in a competition with the primary importance of social life and the allure of sex. If we turn the problem upside down, however, we might ask: Why can't an intelligent and informed educational approach to social life, sexuality and relationships be included as an important learning experience in school, rather than seeing it merely as a major cause of distraction? Junior high and high school students, in my opinion, can easily grapple with social and psychological issues that are normally not taught until university or graduate school, if they are taught at all. If the way a teacher teaches and the specific curriculum used allows for lots of social interaction, discussion and debate, a good teacher can also model appropriate and gentle interactive skills, while teaching about interpersonal relationships and emotions.

Well-trained teachers should be able to spot social and psychological problems and work with them, or refer a student to counselling, before the problem greatly interferes with learning, or worse, drags the student down into depression, anger, and self-hatred. Beyond helping just those who are in trouble, why should teachers not serve as wise elders who pass on their experience of the joys and sorrows, trials and lessons of interpersonal relationships? If teachers were trained in a more contemplative fashion, they might have more insight into their own experience and respect it as a valuable asset in teaching. Considering this possibility, let us look further into the link between the neurotic confusion and compassionate wisdom of the fire energy.

Ancient love poems, as well as the lyrics of contemporary popular songs, are filled with images like burning love, flames of desire and the hot fires of passion. The emotional heat of this energy and the bodily sensations associated with sexual arousal have long been associated with fire. Fire consumes its fuel, taking its very existence from that which it consumes. This is like the emotional fire of grasping and possessiveness, the confused, self-centred and neurotic approach to the fire energy. Neurotic passion reaches out to grasp and cling to the object of its passion in a desperate attempt to confirm a sense of self. Let us look a little more deeply into the background and causes of this neurotic grasping.⁴

Believing in the illusion of an independently existing and separate self causes a continuously underlying anxiety, or vague feelings of loneliness and separation. This is similar to the sense of alienation referred to in existential philosophy and psychology. For most of us, this anxiety is intolerable, and we do our best to ignore it, disguise it, push it away, or run away from it. Often we disguise it or re-channel its energy into what we have seen Wilber (1980)

refer to as substitute gratifications. Neurotic passion is one of these. The anxiety and sense of separation is redirected by the false self into an intense yearning to merge or unite with whatever is seen as other or outside the self in attempt to recover the peaceful unity that seems to have been lost.⁵

For example, when we are driven by neurotic passion, we feel an intense yearning to merge with our lover in ecstatic sexual bliss. This may be achieved for an instant, but it soon passes, leaving ourselves and our lovers as separate human beings, again confronted with aloneness. We are never able to accomplish our goal of union in the way that we conceive of it. Thus, experience within the realm of this energy is characterized by the alternation of pleasure and pain, or yearning, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and further yearning in endlessly repeating cycles. This realm of existence is known in the Buddha dharma as the human realm. Of the six neurotic realms that relate to the five wisdom energies, it is said that beings in the human realm are the most open to learning and to embarking upon a path of discipline toward further development. This openness seems to have to do with a reflective awareness that erupts in the midst of an alternation between experiences of pleasure and experiences of pain, which engender a yearning to escape the overall pain of this cycle.

Living in the human realm, we are preoccupied with passion. We feel somehow always disconnected from the sources that we imagine will bring us happiness. Our minds are constantly scheming for a way to arrange the situation so that our experience will be pleasurable and perfect. I remember sitting beside a mountain trail in a lush green meadow speckled with wildflowers on a cool and fresh, yet sunny, bright spring day, when a woman came trotting up the trail with her partner and said to him, 'Some day we'll find the perfect spot.' For a minute, I had thought that I had found it, but like her, I found myself itching also to 'get on up the trail' to investigate what was around the bend or what the view was like on the other side of that next rise.

There is a lot of mental activity in the human realm. There is a sense of being driven by your thoughts and fantasies. There are thoughts, more thoughts, and counter thoughts as you vacillate and can't make up your mind. The refined ability to discriminate results in a style of fussiness and selectivity, like that of a person ordering in a restaurant who changes his or her order two or three times, and then explains to the waiter exactly what to tell the cook about how to prepare the meal and how he or she likes this dish with such-and-such on the side instead of what is usually served with it, because the flavours go together better, etc. This is also true in the area of intellectual pursuits of knowledge learning and education, wherein a person's mind is cluttered with all the various viewpoints and possibilities that he or she has drawn together and with the interrelationships between them, as well as the ideas about how to implement them. 'The epitome of the human realm,' says Chögyam Trungpa (1976), 'is to be stuck in a huge traffic jam of discursive thought. You are so busy thinking that you cannot learn anything at all' (p. 31).'

The human realm also has a romantic tendency toward nostalgia for the past, on the one hand or lofty ambitions and high ideals for the future on the other. There is a strong sense of one's individuality, having one's own ideology and unique ways of doing things. From this point of view, a person might demand to have things done his own idiosyncratic way. At their worst, people of this style tend to discriminate against others merely on the basis of taste and aesthetics.

Similar to the desire and grasping in the hungry ghost realm where there is no satisfaction but at times a feeling of revulsion, in the human realm there is a vacillation between passion and a dullness, flatness or indifference. In cycles of various duration the mind in the human realm is preoccupied with hope and fear. There is a kind of reaching to the stars, excitedly extending the imagination, and then, a sobering realization of the limits of reality, of suffering, and of anxiety. And each time one faces the facts again and wakes up to the ordinary limits of a situation, that seems to be the cue to escape again with further heights of reverie. I myself have experienced this kind of revving up of the engines of excitement with fantasies of some grandiose future possibility. I feed off it for a time, then finally realize that it is perhaps impossible, or just a meaningless dream that would not bring happiness, I fall to a flat and apathetic state, looking for some new excitement over the next horizon. This kind of vacillation between desire and indifference is characterized most strongly in the experience of someone suffering from what is known in psychiatric circles as 'bi-polar affective disorder,' or more commonly, as cycles of mania and depression.

Writing of his personal experiences in *Adventure into the Unconscious*, John Coustance, an English gentleman who experienced his first manic episode towards the end of the Second World War while working as an intelligence officer, describes his feelings and bodily sensations at the onset of a manic episode:

This began ... with the usual curious changes in sense-perception of the outer world. I can only describe it by saying that 'the lights go up' as if a kind of switch were turned on in my psycho-physical system. Everything seems different, somehow brighter and clearer. This is, of course the phenomenon technically known as 'photism'; it is quite easily recognizable and bitter experience has taught me that as soon as it occurs, I should take immediate steps to go to the hospital, since within a few days I shall be out of control. This time, however, I had no intention of going near the doctors.⁶

During this particular episode, Coustance had gone back to his beloved Berlin, where he had lived some twenty years before, with the intent of following through with his mania to its highest degree. With all of his senses enhanced and his mental speed increasing, he had visions and experiences that he labeled as synchronicity, by which 'he meant events

in which the contents of his thoughts were instantly manifested in reality' (Podvoll, 1990, p. 85). Finally, after having a profound vision, he journeyed home. Then after another brief trip to meet and spend some time with C. G. Jung, he descended from his manic episode into depression. Podvoll (1990) summarizes this phase of Coustance's experience:

The omniscient-like clarity of madness switched into a feeling of perpetual fog and darkness. All the illuminated sensations of mania were gone; in their place were dullness and disgust. Rather than being able to think quickly and have everything "click into place", depression was an inextricable jumble. He felt ignorant, indifferent and could not concentrate. The grandeur and power of mania were replaced by their very opposites; just as in mania he sought to save the world, in depression he felt ultimately responsible for all the evil and sin affecting mankind.... Without fail Coustance said he "learned more" from the experience with depression than he did from mania. Only in depression could he feel, to the bone, his utter aloneness in the universe. He said it was the most shocking insight of his life. The contrasting creations of the worlds of mania and depression revealed to him the utter unreality of everything in the mind, and how each world or private universe, or any world, insane or sane, is a hollow fabrication of the mind. This woke him up. Always, this realization was for him a turning point in coming out of depression and was the moment when recovery began. (pp. 92-93)

We have all experienced that strange, anti-climactic drop in passionate excitement, or a sense of emotional emptiness that can occur when we finally possess the object we have long desired. Once we possess what we have been obsessed with, we often neglect it. Then it is only the consuming fire of passion that matters. We can become addicted to the emotional intensity and must keep the fires of passion burning as an end in itself. Thus, we are driven to constantly seek out and burn more fuel. We desire a faster, more luxurious car, newer, finer, and more fashionable clothes, the perfect house, or most tragically, the perfect lover and the ideal relationship. We consume and consume like a raging forest fire, drawing the life energy out of whatever lies before us and leaving behind us a path of devastation. Our overflowing landfills and garbage dumps graphically illustrate this principle operating in our materialistic, consumer-driven economy.

People who manifest the distorted fire energy are always looking for something new and different to maintain the fever pitch of their excitement. What they fear is monotony, boredom, loneliness, and empty space. They are romantics who live life to the hilt. Exaggerating the agony and ecstasy of life, they see themselves as the hero in the drama of their own life. If they do not experience enough intensity in their own life, they are drawn to seek it out vicariously through their ever-widening and all important circle of friends,

through gossip, or through entertainment.

In general, we in North America are addicted to entertainment. The exaggerated and glitzy symbol of Hollywood perfectly represents the qualities of the distorted fire energy. The superficial glamour that is only skin-deep, an illusion of make-up, special lights, cameras, clever writers, actors, and special effects captivates our minds, holding our attention riveted to the screen.

We tend to need music wherever we go – in our homes, our cars, our offices, at restaurants, and grocery stores, and even when we walk, ride a bike, or exercise. We watch TV and videos; we go to movies, concerts and sporting events. This constant barrage of music and other entertainment wards off boredom, distracts us, and maintains a superficial level of emotional and mental discursiveness. Ultimately, it keeps us from feeling anxiety and that sense of alienation. If we can touch these feelings, uncomfortable as they may be, we can find the energy source of inner wisdom, and self-discovery. If we can accommodate our feelings of alienation and make friends with loneliness, we can connect with others in a genuine way that does not use them as entertainment to ward off these feelings or as fuel for our consuming passion.

Just as an appropriately contained fire gives heat and light, the liberated wisdom energy of the fire element has two components: the heat of compassion and the brightly illuminated perception of discriminating awareness wisdom. Transforming the fire of passion into the fire of compassion begins with maitri, learning to love oneself. On the contemplative journey we meet up with our own worst enemy, our beast within, and learn to love him, forgive him, nurture him, and work with him. Having done this with ourselves, we are ready to work at loving others.⁷

The fuel for our fire of compassion is empathy. In Buddhist contemplative psychotherapy, empathy is trained directly by exercising it in meditation practice. In this practice, empathy is referred to as exchange which means, among other things, exchanging oneself for another, taking on the suffering of another, suffering-with (the literal meaning of the Latin root word for compassion). Exchange is the natural ability to feel what others feel, whether positive or negative, to open to the whole experience of another without losing the wisdom of a broader perspective at the same time.

As we have seen, there is a natural exchange of elemental energies happening all the time between ourselves and our environment, between ourselves and our students, between ourselves and our families, our friends, our world. Normally we have endless psychological defense mechanisms to ward off the elemental energy (anxiety) that we experience in the intimacy of simply being with another person. Contemplative practice is a powerful way to discipline one's mind to open up space for another to enter. This balanced and yet burning state of mind is developed through a meditation practice known as sending and taking.⁸

As we have seen, when the energy of the fire element is distorted by the confusion of clinging to a false self, one wishes to merge with others, unaware of the underlying union that already exists. The true union is wrapped in paradox; it is union in diversity. Only through refining perceptual discrimination of the manifest diversity does an appreciation for the underlying unity become apparent. Only when we can settle with our aloneness and the unique characteristics of our individuality do we honestly sense our deeply underlying unity with others.⁹ Thus the two, compassion and discriminating awareness wisdom, are inseparable. By liberating the passionate intensity of the fire element within, one's perception is transformed, becoming brilliant and vivid like flickering fire-light. With this vivid perception, one begins to fall in love with every detail and every nuance of the phenomenal world, giving rise to further heat, further caring, further compassion.

In order to fully exchange with their students, teachers must first experience them completely as they are, without bias, and without desire to change them. Like an artist who sees and appreciates the subtle textures, light, and shadow in a landscape, a teacher must see the shifting moods and subtle idiosyncratic qualities of each student and appreciate them as they are. Through this discriminating awareness, a natural bond of mutual respect and appreciation develops that allows for a more intimate and satisfying level of communication.

In therapy, healing and development occurs in the context of relationship. Good therapists know how to perceive their clients in a way that helps them to kindle their own fire, and fan the blaze to liberate their own energy for growth and healing.¹⁰ Because the therapist has learned how to transform the power of immature emotionality and passionate fixations into mature wisdom, it becomes possible to create an environment wherein the client can freely explore repressed emotions. The skilful therapist will engage the client in a playful relationship which liberates these seemingly negative energies, while at the same time revealing their positive attributes. For therapists, the number one priority, therefore, is to do their own emotional work, so as to have no hidden fears or deeply repressed elemental energies which might inhibit the process of exchange. Is there any reason why this should not also be the highest priority in the training of teachers?

Genuine and heartfelt communication is the hallmark of the wisdom energy of fire. True communication between teacher and student does not mean that there is always peace and harmony. On the contrary, differences of opinion, struggles, rebelliousness, and conflict are what put good communication to the test. The neurotic approach is to avoid conflict and ignore differences at whatever cost because there is a fear of losing contact. The result is a superficial relationship based on half-truths, lies and meaningless communication designed to maintain the veneer of friendliness.

If teachers do this, they deny their students the right to

discover themselves as independent, thinking individuals. Teachers skilled in honest communication will honour conflict and respect rebellion in their students and use this dramatic energy to draw out of each student their own wisdom and best qualities. Only if the teachers themselves are not afraid to play with the warmth and brilliance of the fire energy will the students feel invited to enter into the dance of communication that liberates the wisdom of their own blazing fire.

CHAPTER 19 NOTES

1—*The daily use of art, in the broadest sense including all forms of creative expression, as an integrated part of the curriculum for teaching all subjects (McCarthy, 1980), I believe, would be a natural outgrowth of a contemplative teacher training program. Artistic expression, to my mind, is the essence of education rather than some adjunct discipline. The psychology of art and art in education is a vast topic in itself. A classic for understanding the rôle of art in Jungian psychology is Neumann (1959) and a classic for art as education is Richards (1962). The works of Franck (1973, 1993) present the contemplative approach of Zen to seeing and drawing. 'Right brain' theories have inspired Edwards (1979) and Capacchione (1988) to develop methods to access our hidden talents as artists. And recently, a great many artists, therapists and authors have come out with both practical and theoretical books on art as a royal road to the unconscious, uncovering there a natural capacity for healing, growth and wholeness. Adamson (1984) presents a beautifully illustrated guide to art therapy. London (1989) tells us how to explore art as an instrument to awaken the powers of the original self underneath conditioning. Fincher (1991) extends the Jungian practice of drawing mandalas as a path toward wholeness. Steward and Kent (1992) and Diaz (1992) both present a series of projects and exercises designed to cut away preconceptions, fears, self-consciousness and the inner critic to help students manifest their own creative spirit and integrate artistic expression into everyday life. Drawing upon shamanistic healing traditions, McNiff (1992) explains how engaging in the process of making art, performance art as well as visual art, becomes what he calls 'medicine for the soul.' And Audette (1993) writes an artist's guide for overcoming blockages to the creative process. Sometimes I find that all I need to become like a child again is to pick up a crayon and draw.*

2—*The sanguine temperament (Harwood, 1958; Littauer, 1983), childlike in its wide-eyed innocence, emotional, demonstrative, enthusiastic, expressive, dramatic, charming and inspiring is similar in these qualities to the padma style and the human realm. Students feeling this fire energy are similar to McCarthy's (1980) 'type one: imaginative learners,' those with the 'Apollonian temperament' (Keirsey & Bates 1978) and Jung's 'Intuitive and Feeling types' (Jung, 1923; Kroeger & Thuesen, 1988). All of these value intuition and insight thinking, intimacy in relationships, authenticity and self-realization. McCarthy says they work*

for harmony, they need to be personally involved, they seek meaning, and tend to ask the question: 'why?' All of these various classifications identify a type whose primary sphere of involvement is the world of social relationships. They are people who tend to perceive broad patterns in an intuitive, instantaneous manner without extensive use of logic or reason. They know things without knowing how they know them and have little patience for analyzing things by breaking them down into isolated parts. Although they are highly sensitive to detail, it is always details within the context of the whole, and they are loathe to separate details from the Gestalt. Characterized by spontaneity and a creative flare, people with Apollonian and sanguine temperaments are not too keen on planning ahead because they live more in the present moment without so much reference to a linear extension of time (Keirsey & Bates, 1978).

3—The discriminating awareness wisdom of the fire element seems to have its roots in sexuality and in the games and rituals of attracting a mate. In describing the 'Apollonean temperament' and those who share Jung's 'Intuitive' and 'Feeling' traits, Keirsey and Bates (1978, p. 63) quote from Ashe (1969, p. 13) who writes about this wisdom as manifested in her character Gillian: 'The major quality was something reactive, a chameleon quality that somehow enabled her to transform herself in the eyes of any man. She could become – and she had felt the process often enough to know its validity – pale of skin, full breasted, intellectual, sexy, aloof. She could be whatever the man happened to be looking for that moment. She could become any man's dream woman, and somehow accomplish it without relinquishing her own identity.... It was a process of becoming. It existed not in mechanical tricks but in an acute sensitivity; it took place not in her physical alterations but in the eye of the beholder.' D. H. Lawrence (1953) tells us that 'sex and beauty are inseparable, like life and consciousness. And the intelligence which goes with sex and beauty, and arises out of sex and beauty, is intuition' (from 'Sex versus Loveliness').

4—The Jungian archetype of the lover also has many similarities to the qualities that I am discussing in reference to the subtle element of fire. Moore and Gillette (1991) discuss this archetype in reference to male development and identify two poles of the lover shadow as the addicted lover and the impotent lover. Though we have identified addiction with the energy of the earth element, it is easy to see that it can also be the result of the passion in the fire element. Moore and Gillette speak of the Don Juan syndrome as identifying men who, fragmented within, search for wholeness unsuccessfully through an endless stream of female partners. The Impotent lover on the other shadow pole represses passion, becoming depressed and literally impotent. The mature lover, according to Moore and Gillette, is deeply sensual, compassionate, mystical, poetic, artistic and intuitive to the point of becoming psychic.

5—Moore and Gillette (1991) relate this psycho-spiritual problem with idolatry and put it this way: 'For the addict,

the world presents itself as tantalizing fragments of a lost whole. Caught in the foreground, he can't see the underlying background. Caught in the "myriad of forms" as the Hindus say, he can't find the Oneness that would bring him calm and stability.... The addicted lover unconsciously invests the finite fragments of his experience with the power of the unity, which he can never experience.'

6—Coustance (1952), quoted in Podvoll (1990), p. 78.

7—Pearson (1991) alludes to the story of 'The Beauty and the Beast' in reference to the Lover archetype's journey of self-acceptance. She says that to make friends with our beast, our 'shadow' 'means forgiving ourselves simply as a matter of habit.' Furthermore, bringing us one step closer to compassion, she says, 'It also means forgiving others, since what we are very often most critical of in them is a shadow projection from within ourselves' (p. 159). This emphasizes the fact that, since there is ultimately no real boundary between self and other, the contemplative way is both an inward and an outward journey simultaneously.

8—For a detailed description of this practice and others leading up to it see Kongtrul (1978) and Chodron (1994).

9—Pearson (1991), speaking in Jungian terms, says something similar in reference to the highest level of the lover archetype which involves 'radical self-acceptance giving birth to the Self and connecting the personal with the transpersonal, the individual with the collective.'

10—Paraphrasing Hillman (1972), who explains that a 'therapist's job is simply to love the client and be present, not needing a particular outcome,' Pearson (1991) tells us that 'While therapists cannot force themselves to feel love for a client, if they are present and empathic, love will descend, as Castillejo (1990) says, as "grace," and then that love can heal' (p. 159).