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**Symbolism,
the Sacred,
and the Arts**

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Sacred Architecture and Symbolism

SIGNIFICANTLY AFTER 1925, studies on architectonic symbolism multiplied and assumed a great import. It suffices to indicate the research of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy,¹ the monumental *Bambhuh* of Paul Mus,² the sumptuous publications of Giuseppe Tucci,³ the studies of Walter Andrae,⁴ and, finally, those of Stella Kramrisch,⁵ Carl Henze,⁶ and Hans Sedlmayr.⁷ A common trait characterizes these studies: methodology. Instead of looking for "explanations" following the principles of empirical science, that is to say in applying the reductive method, these authors endeavoured to present the symbolism of religious movements as it had been recorded by diverse traditional cultures, without prejudging eventual contradictions or apparent absurdities. For example, should a Hindu affirm that his house is in the "Center of the World," one accepts his belief as a living truth and, consequently, a spiritual reality; it is no longer submitted to a test of scientific reduction in order to deny it, by observing that if all Indian houses were proclaimed to be in "the Center of the World," there must exist an infinity of such centers, which is obviously absurd. On the contrary, in the face of such beliefs, western scholars inferred the only possible conclusion: namely, that the sacred space in which the "Center of the World" is inscribed has nothing to do with the profane space of geometry; it has another structure and responds to another experience.

The problem became more delicate when it no longer included any oral or written evidence specifying the meaning attached to the symbolism of a religious monument. In a number of cases, the original significance had been profoundly modified. It even happens that after

¹ "Sacred Architecture and Symbolism" was originally published as "Architectonic sacred symbolism" in *Minor Hindu*, edited by Coomaraswamy (London, 1925), pp. 111-156. That French essay was a revision of "L'architecture sacrée et symbolisme" in *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, edited by Giuseppe Tucci (Rome, Istituto italiano per il Medio Oriente e l'Estremo Oriente, 1927), pp. 1-82. It is translated from the French by Diane Apollonio (Lyon and Oxford, 1972).

historic catastrophes and cultural synopses, the original significance of a sacred monument has been completely lost. The exegesis founded solely upon the analyses of symbolic structures ran the risk of being suspect; one could always think that, not backed by the written and oral historical evidence, advanced interpretation only represented the personal point of view of the researcher, which would remain unverified as long as an autochthonic memory did not confirm it.

Happily, the discoveries of depth psychology were such as to reassure even the most skeptical inquirer. One could demonstrate that the function and import of a symbol were not exhausted on the plane of diurnal life and conscious activity. It makes no difference that one individual bears in mind that the image of a green tree can symbolize cosmic renewal, or that the staircase climbed in a dream signifies the passage from one mode of being to another, and announces a break in levels. One single important fact is that the presence of such images in dreams or in daydreams of an individual translate into psychic processes homologable to a "renewal" or to a "passage." In other words, the symbol delivers its message and fulfills its function when its significance escapes the *conscious* level.

These precisions furnished by depth psychology seem important to us.⁸ The ethnologist, the historian of religions, the specialist of religious symbolism often address their documents a little like the psychologist before the memories and dreams of his patient: the client was not nor is any longer conscious of the significance of lived images; it remains that they acted upon his being, that they determined his conduct. Likewise when it is a question of interpreting a religious symbolism witnessed in a primitive society, the historian of religions must not only take into consideration all that the autochthones can say about this symbol, he must also question the structure of the symbol and what it reveals by itself. If, as we will soon see, a tent or a hut are provided with an upper opening to allow the smoke to escape, if in addition their owners believe that the Polar Star marks a similar opening in the celestial tent, we are justified in concluding that the tent or the hut exists symbolically as the "Center of the World," even if their inhabitants are no longer conscious *today* of this symbolism. What is of primary significance is the demeanor of religious man, and his demeanor is better revealed by the symbols and myths which he cherishes than by the explanations which he can be led to provide.

These few preliminary remarks immediately introduce us to our subject. To understand the symbolism of temples and human dwellings, is, above all, to understand the religious value of space; in other words, to know the structure and function of sacred space. Such symbolisms,

such rituals, transform space in which is inscribed a temple or a palace simultaneously into an *imago mundi* and into a Center of the World.

At first view, it seems evident to us that a sanctuary represents the sacred zone *par excellence*. Let us specify however that it is not always the sanctuary which consecrates the space; many times, it is just the opposite; the sacrality of the place precedes the construction of the sanctuary. But in one case as in the other, we are concerned with a sacred space, that is to say a territory qualitatively different from the surrounding cosmic environment, a zone which is singled out and is detached within the profane space. Thus we find at the origin of all types of sanctuary space, from the most modest to the most sumptuous, the idea of sacred space encircled by an enormous, chaotic, little-known zone of profane space. Chaotic zone precisely because it is not organized; little-known zone as it knows neither its limits or its structure. Profane space is clearly opposite to sacred space because this latter has some precise limits, it is perfectly structured, it is as we say "centered," "concentrated."

How does any space transform itself into sacred space? Simply because a sacrality is manifested there. The answer may seem to us too elementary, almost infantile. It is in effect quite difficult to understand. Since a manifestation of the Sacred, a hierophany, bears for the consciousness of archaic peoples a rupture in the homogeneity of space. In more familiar terms, we would say that the manifestation of the Sacred in any space whatsoever implies for one who believes in the authenticity of this hierophany the presence of transcendent reality. It is useless to add that the terms "reality" and "transcendence" do not exist in the vocabularies of archaic peoples. But for our purpose, it is not the vocabulary which matters, it is the demeanor. However the comportment of man belonging to archaic societies is established upon the opposition of the Sacred and the Profane. The Sacred is that something altogether other to the Profane. Consequently, it does not belong to the profane world, it comes from somewhere else, it transcends this world. It is for this reason that the Sacred is the real *par excellence*. A manifestation of the Sacred is always a revelation of *being*.

Sacred Space

To summarize what we have just said, sacred space constitutes itself following a rupture of levels which make possible the communication with the trans-world, transcendent realities. Whence the enormous importance of sacred space in the life of all peoples: because it is in such a space that man is able to communicate with the other world, the world of divine beings or ancestors. Every consecrated space represents an

opening towards the beyond, towards the transcendent. It even seems that until a certain era, man could not live without such openings toward the transcendent, without a sure means of communication with the other world, inhabited by the gods. We will see that this "opening" has sometimes been signified in a concrete manner, for example, in the form of a hole, in the actual body of the sanctuary or dwelling.

We say a space can be consecrated by a hierophany, but man may also construct a sacred space by effecting certain rituals.⁹ We will not recall the innumerable examples where a divine apparition or a hierophany consecrates the place and imposes the construction of a sanctuary. Numerous times, there is no need of a theophany or a hierophany (properly called): any sign suffices to indicate the sacrality of a place; one pursues a wild beast and at the place where it is overpowered, a sanctuary is built; or, one frees a domestic animal, for example a bull, after several days, it is located and sacrificed on the spot. Afterwards an altar will be erected and a village will be built around the altar.

But it is particularly the symbolisms and rituals concerning the construction of a sacred space which interest us. We said that the sacred space is the place where communication is possible between this world and the other world, from the heights or from the depths, the world of the gods or the world of the dead. And then soon enough the image of the three cosmic zones is imposed, generally: Heaven, Earth, Underworld; the communication between these three zones implies a break in the levels. In other words, the sacred space of the temple makes possible the passage from one level to another; first and foremost, the passage from Earth to Heaven. Let us note that the communication between the cosmic planes also comprises a rupture of the ontological order: the passage from one mode of being to another, the passage from a profane state to a sacred state or from Life to Death. The symbolic concepts of communication and connection between the three cosmic stages is manifested in the names of certain Mesopotamian temples and royal cities, which are precisely called (like Nipur, Larsa, Babylonia), "the connection between Heaven and Earth." Babylonia was Bâb-ilâni, a "door of the gods," because it is from there that the gods descended to the Earth. On the other hand, the temple or the sacred city also made the liaison with subterranean regions. Babylonia was built on *bâb-apsû*, "the Door of *Apsû-apsû*," designating the Waters of Chaos before Creation. One encounters the same tradition among the Hebrews: the high rock of the Temple of Jerusalem penetrated deeply into the *tehom* (Hebrew equivalent of *apsû*).¹⁰

The point of intersection between the three cosmic zones, the temple or the sacred city constituted by consequence a "Center of the World," because it is through there that the axis of the Universe, the *Axis*

Mundi, passes. The rock upon which the Temple of Jerusalem was built was considered as being the *umbilicus terrae*. The Irish pilgrim, Nicholas of Thvera, who had visited Jerusalem in the twelfth-century, wrote of the Holy Sepulchre: "There is the Center of the World: there, on the day of the summer solstice, the sunlight fell perpendicular from the sky." A cosmological idea of indubitable archaism, and which survived into the late Middle Ages: on medieval maps, Jerusalem was always situated in the Center of the World. But this image was continually re-evaluated on the different levels of Christian experience. Abélard wrote that the "... soul of the world is found at the middle of the world: consequently, Jerusalem from whence comes Salvation is found at the Center of the World."¹¹

Such speculations of a theological and philosophical order prolonged these simpler and older beliefs. Adam having been buried at the very place where he had been created, that is to say in Jerusalem, was redeemed by the Saviour's blood on Golgotha.¹²

Universalis Columna

As one would expect the *Axis Mundi* was imagined many times in the form of a pillar which held up Heaven. When Alexander asked the Galatians what they feared the most in the world, they responded that they feared nothing except the collapse of Heaven (Arrian, *Anabasis*, I, IV, 7). Saints Patrick and Brigid have handed down to us other accounts relating to Celtic ideas of the pillar which held up the Earth.¹³ Similar beliefs were evidenced among the Germans: the *Chronicum Laurissense breve* written around 800 reports that Charlemagne on the occasion of one of his wars against the Saxons (772) had the temple in the town of Erisburg and the sacred woods of their renowned "Irmensul" demolished (*fanum et lucum eorum famosum Irmensul*). Rodolph of Fulda (c. 860) specifies that this famous column is the "... Column of the Universe holding up almost all things" (*universalis columna quasi sustinens omnia*).¹⁴

Moreover, this cosmological image is widespread. One finds it among the Romans (Horace, *Odes*, III, 3); in Vedic India (*Rig Veda*, I, 1051 X, 89, 4, etc.), where it is a question of the *skambha*, the cosmic pillar;¹⁵ but also among the inhabitants of the Canary Islands¹⁶ and in cultures as distant as the Kwakiutl (British Columbia) and the Nad'a of Flore (Indonesia). The Kwakiutl believe that a copper pole pierces through the three cosmic levels: the "Gate of the World on High" is located where the pole is embedded. The visible image of this cosmic image is the Milky Way in the Heavens. On Earth, it is incarnate in the sacred post of the cultic house called by the initiates "the post of cannibals": it is a cedar

trunk of 10 to 12 meters in length to which one addresses prayer before felling it," and of which more than one half sticks out through the roof of the cultic house (a roof which is cracked for this purpose; see below for the ritual importance and symbolism of the "cracked roof"). The pillar plays an important role in the ceremonies; it is that which confers a cosmic structure to the cultic house. In the ritual songs, the house is called "Our World" and the novices proclaim: "I am at the Corner of the World [. . .] I am near the Pillar of the World, etc."¹⁸

A similar assimilation of the Cosmic Pillar to the sacred pole and the cultic house of the Universe occurs among the Nad'a of Elam. The sacrificial pole is called "Pole of Heaven" and is reputed to hold up Heaven. Among the Nage, a people located to the east of Nad'a, it is clearly expressed: the pole impedes Heaven from falling onto the Earth.¹⁹

• The Cosmic Mountains

Other symbols reinforce this identification of the temple as "the Center of the World." There is above all the homologation of the temple and the royal city with the cosmic mountain. The Mesopotamian temples are called "Mount of the House," "Mount of the Tempets," "House of the Mount of All Lands," etc. But in several traditions, the Cosmos is shaped like a mountain whose peak touches Heaven; above, where the Heavens and the Earth are reunited, is the "Center of the World." This cosmic mountain may be identified with a real mountain, or it can be mythic, but it is always placed at the center of the world. This is the case of Mount Meru in the Indian cosmo-mythology; it is also the case of real mountains, like Gerizim in Palestine which was called the "navel of the Earth," or Golgotha for the Judeo-Christian traditions. Consequently, the sanctuaries are symbolically assimilated with the Cosmic Mountains. Examples abound: the Mesopotamian *ziggurat* is properly called a cosmic mountain, its levels symbolizing the seven heavenly planets. Likewise, the Temple of Barabdur, a true *imago mundi*, is built in the form of a mountain.²⁰

Following these traditions, the "Center" is not only the summit of the cosmic mountain, whose peak is the highest in the world, but also, we might say the "oldest" because it is the point whence creation began. It even happens that cosmological traditions express creation emanating from a "Center" in terms which could be said to be borrowed from embryology. "The Most Holy created the world like an embryo. Just as the embryo grows from the navel, likewise God began to create the world through the navel and from there it spread out in all directions." *Yona* (Pious . . .) the world had been created beginning with Zion.²¹

Rabbi ben Gurion said of the rock of Jerusalem that ". . . it was called the Foundation Stone of the Earth, which is to say the Earth's umbilicus, because it is from there that the entire Earth unfurled."²²

The creation of man, a replica of the cosmology, had taken place likewise in the Center of the World. Following the Mesopotamian tradition, man had been fashioned from "the navel of the Earth," there where one finds the "link between Heaven and Earth: Ahura Mazda created Gayomart, primordial man, at the Center of the World. The paradise where Adam was created from mud was at the center of the Cosmos, of course, Paradise was the "navel of the Earth," and following a Syriac tradition was established on the highest mountain of all. Apocalyptic Judaism and the *Mishnah* specify that Adam was made in Jerusalem, therefore at the Center of the World.²³

It is important to make apparent the coherent and perfectly articulated character of all these beliefs relating to the sacrality of the "Center." It is not a matter of isolated ideas, but of a set of ideas which make a "system." In citing as we have done examples having such or such an aspect of the "Center," one loses sight of the general structure of a symbol. But all these aspects are interdependent, and demand to be integrated to make the theoretical symbol on which they depend stand out. To limit ourselves to only one example, it would be easy to show how in the Iranian tradition, the land of Iran is simultaneously the "Center of the World" and the *imago mundi* because it is there that the cosmic mountain touches Heaven, there the first man was created, and there also at the very heart of this privileged territory and "in the middle of Time," the prophet Zarathustra was born. In effect, the Iranian tradition conceived of the Cosmos in the form of a six-spoked wheel with a large hole in the middle like a navel.²⁴ The Iranian country (*airanem vaejah*) is the Center and the heart of the world.²⁵ Following the Sassanid tradition, Shiz, the city where Zarathustra was born, finds itself in the Center of the Universe.²⁶ A Pahlavi text specifies that Zarathustra lived in the "middle of Time," that is to say 6,000 years after the creation of man and 6,000 years before the resurrection. Just as the heart is found in the middle of the body, "the land of Iran is more precious than all other countries because it is situated in the middle of the world."²⁷ It is for this that Shiz, the "Jerusalem" of the Iranians, was also regarded as the original site of royal power.²⁸ The throne of Khosrau II figured symbolically as just that: it represented the Universe.²⁹ The idea, moreover, was not uniquely Iranian, it belongs to the *Weltanschauung* of the ancient Near East: the royal cities were the image of the Cosmos, and the king, *cosmocrat*, was the *Axis Mundi*, the Pillar incarnate.³⁰

incarnate the four pillars which hold up Heaven.³⁵ Similar examples are encountered in North America.

It is not a surprise to encounter analogous ideas in ancient Italy and among the ancient Germans: in sum, it is a matter of an archaic and widespread idea. To build a temple or a city is equivalent to reiterating the "construction" of the Universe; by departing from the center, the four horizons project into the four cardinal directions.³⁶ The Roman *mundus* was a circular hole in the ground, divided into four, it was simultaneously the image of the Cosmos and the exemplary model of a human dwelling. It has been suggested that the *Roma quadrata* can be reasonably understood not as having the form of a square but as being divided into four.³⁷ The *mundus* was evidently assimilated to the *omphalos*, to the navel of the Earth: the city was situated in the middle of the *orbis terrarum*.³⁸ We can show that the same ideas explain the structure of German villages.³⁹ In these extremely varied cultural contexts, we will always find the same cosmological schema and the same ritual scenario: installation in a territory is equivalent to the establishment of a world.

In India, we will encounter the same symbolism for the construction of a house. Before placing the first stone, the astrologer indicates the point in the foundation which is found above the serpent who supports the world. The master mason hews a post and embeds it in the ground exactly at the designated spot in order to fasten the serpent's head. A foundation stone is then laid down on top of the post. Thus, the corner-stone is located at the "Center of the World."⁴⁰ On the other hand, the act of laying the foundation repeats the cosmogonic act because driving the post into the serpent's head and "fastening" it is an imitation of the primordial gesture of Soma or of Indra, when the latter, as recorded in the *Rig Veda*, "... struck the Serpent in its den" (VI, 17, 19), when his lightning bolt "... cut off his head" (I, 52, 10). The serpent symbolizes chaos, the amorphous, the un-manifested. The decapitation is equivalent to an act of creation, the passage from the formless and the amorphous into the formed.

In this last example, note that it is no longer a matter of the construction of a temple or of a sacred city, but of the building of a simple dwelling. The two themes which preoccupy us, that is to say the repetition of the cosmogony and the symbolism of the Center, are not exclusive to sacred architecture: the same rituals and symbols are present when it is a matter of building a dwelling which to our modern eyes is "profane." But it is evident that we deceive ourselves; it is consecrated by its very architectonic structure exactly like a temple. This poses a considerable problem: does the symbolism of human habitation derive from

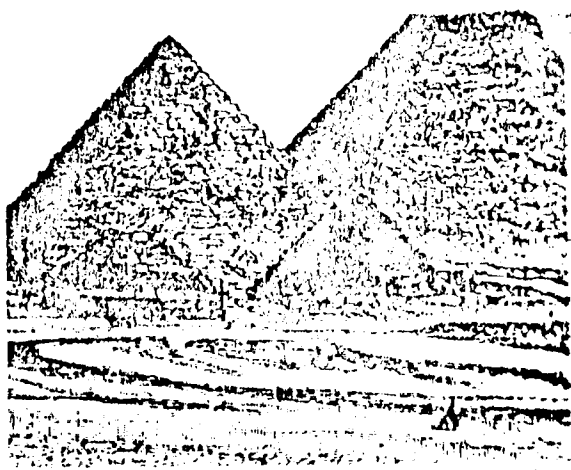
Architecture and Cosmogony

As noted earlier, the cosmogonic significance of the Center is that all creation, be it a cosmogony or an anthropogony, takes places or begins in a center. Moreover, the circumstances could not be otherwise, if one recalls that the Center is precisely the place where a rupture of the levels occurs, where the space becomes sacred, thus *real par excellence*. A creation implies a superabundance of reality, in other words, an eruption of the Sacred into the world. It follows that all construction or fabrication has the cosmogony as an exemplary model. The creation of the world became the archetype of each creative human activity, whatever its plane of reference. In Vedic India, a territory was legally taken into possession by the erection of a fire-altar dedicated to Agni. But such a construction was only a microscopic imitation of the Creation. In effect, following the *Galapalia Brahmana*, the water with which the clay is mixed represents the Primordial Waters, the clay that forms the base of the fire-altar is the Earth; the sidewalls represent the atmosphere, etc.⁴¹ In raising the altar, the cosmogony is repeated; in this fashion, the territory that one comes to occupy passes from the chaotic state into the organized state; it is "cosmoticized."

We can cite a great number of examples illustrating the idea of taking a territory into possession, of the installation of a village or of the construction of a cultic house representing the symbolic repetition of the cosmogony. The circle or the square built by emanating from a Center and extends towards the four cardinal points, the village is built around a crossing. In Bali, as well as in certain regions of Asia, when a new village is to be built a natural crossing where two roads cross perpendicularly is sought.⁴² The division of the village into four sections corresponds to the division of the Universe into four horizons. In the middle of the village, a plaza is often left empty: there a cultic house will be raised much later, the roof of which symbolically represents Heaven (in certain cases, Heaven is indicated by the crown of a tree or by the image of a mountain).⁴³ On the same perpendicular axis at the other extremity is the World of the Dead symbolized by certain animals (serpent, crocodile, etc.) or by the ideograms of Shadows.⁴⁴ The cosmic symbolism of the village is repeated in the structure of the sanctuary or of the cultic house. At Waropen in New Guinea, the "house of men" is in the middle of the village; its roof represents the heavenly canopy, the four walls correspond to the four directions of space. At Ceram, the sacred stone of the village symbolizes Heaven; and the four stone columns which hold it up

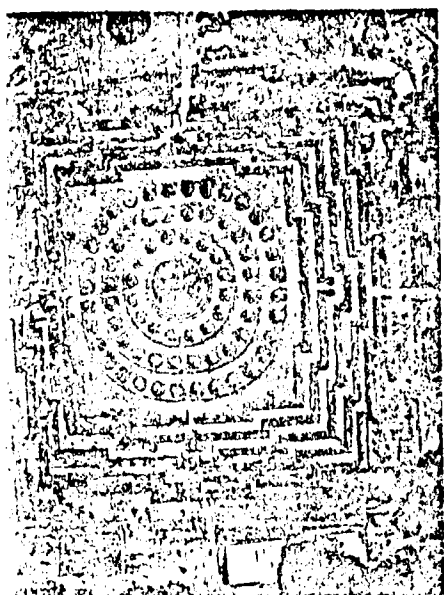


16. Holy City of Jerusalem, Mold for Eucharistic Bread, 7th-8th century



17. Great Pyramid

19. Machu Picchu



8. Temple of Barabudur, 6th century

the symbolism of the sanctuary or vice versa? We will endeavour to answer this question later.

Templum-Tempus

For a moment, it remains for us to elucidate another important aspect of the symbolism of temples. If the sanctuary is built in the "Center of the World" and the ritual construction imitates the cosmogony, if consequently the sanctuary as the replica of the Cosmos becomes an *imago mundi*—we ought to expect to find in this structure also temporal symbolism. Since the Cosmos is a living organism, it then implies natural cyclic time, that is to say circular time which constitutes the year. In effect, we encounter this temporal symbolism in certain traditions. For example, look at what Flavius Josephus (*Ant. Jud.*, III, 7, 7) reports concerning the symbolism of the Temple of Jerusalem: the three parts of the sanctuary correspond to the three cosmic regions (the courtyard representing the "sea," that is to say the inferior regions; the Holy House figuring the Earth; and the Holy of Holies, Heaven); the twelve loaves of bread which are found on the table are the twelve months of the year; the seventy-branch candelabra represents the *decans* (that is to say the zodiac division of the seven planets into tens). In building the temple, not only was the world constructed but cosmic time was also constructed.

It is to Hermann Usener's credit to have been the first to explain the etymological relationship between *templum* and *tempus* in interpreting these two terms through the idea of "intersection" or "crossing."⁴¹ Some more recent research again specified this discovery: *templum* designates a spatial "turning" and *tempus* a "turning" in a spatial-temporal horizon.⁴²

The temporal symbolism of a sacred construction is also evidenced in ancient India. Following the fortunate formula of Paul Mus,⁴³ the Vedic Altar is understood to be time materialized. The *Çatapatha Brâhmana* (X, 5, 4, 10) clearly states: "... that Fire-altar also is the Year—the nights are its enclosing-stones, and there are three hundred and sixty of these, because there are three hundred and sixty nights in the year; and the days are its Yagushmati bricks, for there are three hundred and sixty of these, and three hundred and sixty days in the year." On the other hand, the Year is Prajâpati. Therefore, the construction of each new Vedic altar not only repeats the cosmogony and reanimates Prajâpati, but also builds the "Year," that is to say regenerates time by "creating" it anew.⁴⁴

Let us add that such cosmogonic-temporal conceptions do not constitute an exclusive adjunct of evolved civilizations: one encounters them

already in the archaic stages of culture. In order to give only one example: the sacred initiatory hut of certain Algonquin (Odjibwa, etc.) and Sioux (Dakota, Omaha, Winnebago, etc.) tribes also represent the Universe. Its roof represents the celestial canopy, the floor represents the Earth, the four walls the four directions of cosmic space. The ritual construction of the space is emphasized by a triple symbolism: the four doors, the four windows, and the four colors signifying the four cardinal points.⁴⁵ The construction of this sacred hut repeats the cosmogony because this small house represents the World.⁴⁶ But, the Dakotas affirm that "the Year is a circle around the World,"⁴⁷ that is to say around the initiatory hut. They understand the Year as a course across the four cardinal directions.⁴⁸ For the Lenapes, who also identify the sacred hut with the Cosmos, the Creator is reputed to live in the summit of the celestial cupola, his hand on the central pillar analogous to the *Axis Mundi*. During the celebration which is called the "Creation of the World," a dance takes place inside the hut, thus in the center of the Universe, and the dancers revolve around this central pillar.⁴⁹ We could cite other ceremonies comprising analogous symbolism; for example, that of the Karok, the Yurok and the Hupa tribes of California called the "Renewal of the World," and where the ritual repetition of the cosmogony implies immediately the symbolism of the Center of the World, the construction of space and the renewal of cosmic time.⁵⁰

The spatio-temporal symbolism is also illumined by the vocabulary. The Yakuts use the word "world" in the sense of "year"; they say "the world has died" which is to say "one year has elapsed." For the Yuki, the "year" is expressed by the words "Earth" or "World." Like the Yakuts, they say "the Earth has died" when the year has ended.⁵¹ Among the Cree also, the "world" designates "the year" and the Salteaux interchange the Earth and the year.⁵²

Symbolism and History

This mention of North American cases introduces us immediately to the problem that we had put aside earlier, that of the origin and history of all these cosmological-architectural symbolisms of the Centers of the World, of the sanctuaries and dwellings. The problem is extremely difficult; although we do not pretend to present it in all its complexity nor to resolve it. Just as the other elements of culture, mythology, social and economic structure, material civilization, the cosmological ideas and their applications in architectural symbolism have a history; they circulated from one culture to another and have been inevitably subjected to alterations, enrichments or impoverishments; in a word, they have been

diversely assimilated and reevaluated by the peoples which received them. For example, Karl Lehman showed the diffusion of celestial symbolism of sacred monuments in the West from Antiquity to the Middle Ages. In his erudite study, "The 'Dome of Heaven' in Asia," Alexander Coburn Soper extended the inquiry into Asia.⁵³ According to the latter, the symbolism of the celestial dome as it had been expressed by western architects is diffused into the first millennium of the Christian era into India and into all of Asia throughout the Pacific. Let us specify that Soper⁵⁴ was solely preoccupied with the diffusion of the architectural formulae and techniques elaborated and perfected in the West, and which according to him are too complex to have been discovered independently in various places in the world. But Soper does not discuss the elementary architectural forms which for example in China and India had preceded western influence. In supposing that one accepts Soper's thesis entirely, it is certain that recent influences of Western origin have consisted especially in a transmission of perfected architectonic recipes; we are not authorized to conclude that the symbolism of the celestial dome evidenced in the Asian religious monuments is the result of western ideas and techniques. It suffices to re-read Coomaraswamy's *The Symbolism of the Dome* to be convinced that such symbolism was amply elaborated in India well before the first millennium of our era.⁵⁵

This example is instructive: it indicates how an external contribution brought by history superimposes itself on a foundation of autochthonic beliefs and gives birth to new expressions. The most illustrious example is the temple of Barabudur. Paul Mus showed how this monument represents a summary of Indian thought even though in the final analysis his architectural formula goes back to a Mesopotamian cosmological schema. Even the Indian concept of seven or nine planetary heavens is most probably of Babylonian origin. But these facts specified, another problem arises: before the Mesopotamian influences probably manifested themselves, didn't India and Indonesia know the symbolism of the Center of the World and the cosmological schema of three levels? The response can only be affirmative. In effect, we recognize the symbolism of a cosmic mountain or of a central tree uniting the three cosmic zones, not only in ancient India and in Indonesia, but also among certain archaic populations where the Indo-Mesopotamian influences are difficult to comprehend; for example, among the Semang Pygmies of the Malay Peninsula.⁵⁶ We were able to show that the cosmic tripartition particular to the ancient Tibetan religion, Bon, long preceded Indian influences.⁵⁷ The triad and symbolic number three are moreover widely evidenced in ancient China and throughout Eurasia.⁵⁸ And as we will soon see, the

symbolism of the Center of the World plays an important role among the Australians.

On the other hand, we encounter an analogous situation in central and northern Asia. We now know that the cosmological schema of southern origins had been diffused even into Arctic Siberia. The central and northern Asiatic conception of seven, nine or sixteen heavens derives from the Mesopotamian idea of seven planetary heavens.⁵⁹ But the symbolism of the Center of the World and the entire mythico-ritual complex of sacred space and the communication between Earth and Heaven preceded in central and northern Asia the Indo-Mesopotamian influences. These influences which were apparent in successive waves during several millennia, superimposed themselves on a more ancient and more elementary complex cultural autochthon. In effect in all central and northern Asia, we remark on the very structure of the human dwelling as the symbolism of the Tree or of the Pillar which unites the three cosmic zones. The house is an *imago mundi*. Heaven is conceived as an immense tent upheld by a central pillar; in other words, the tent's stake or the central post of a house are assimilated to the pillar of the world and are designated by the same name.⁶⁰ The central pillar is a characteristic element of a dwelling of primitive Arctic, North American and North Asian peoples. It has an important ritual role: it is at the foot of this pillar where sacrifices took place in honor of the supreme celestial Being and where prayers reserved for him were addressed.⁶¹ The same symbolism is conserved among the pastoral herders of central Asia but here as the conical roofed dwelling with a central pillar is replaced by the yurt, the mythico-ritual function of the pillar is devolved to the smoke-hole.⁶² One encounters moreover the sacred pillar erected in the middle of the dwelling among the Hamite and Hamitoide shepherd peoples.⁶³

This set of facts proves that the symbolism of the Center of the World is older than known cosmologies elaborated in the ancient Near East. The very expression "Center of the World" is literally retrieved and charged with similar symbolism in the ritual of the Kwakiutl⁶⁴ and in certain Zuni myths.⁶⁵ Finally in a recent study,⁶⁶ E. de Martino very clearly interpreted the mythico-ritual complex of the sacred pole (*kauwa-auwa*) among one Arunta tribe, the Achilpa. According to their traditions, the divine being Numbakula had "cosmocized" the territory of the future Achilpa in mythical time, created their ancestors and established their institutions. Numbakula fashioned the sacred pole from the trunk of an Indian rubber tree, and after anointing it with blood, climbed it and disappeared into Heaven. E. de Martino showed that the organization of territory is equivalent to a "cosmocization" starting with an irradiation out from the Center and that the *kauwa-auwa* pole represents a cosmic

axis, its ritual role confirms this interpretation perfectly. During their wanderings, the Achilpa always carry the sacred pole with them and choose the direction to follow by its slant. While continually moving about, the Achilpa are never allowed to be far from the "Center of the World"; they are always "centered" and in communication with the Heavens where Numbakula had disappeared. When the pole is broken, this is a catastrophe; in a way, it is the "end of the world," a regression into chaos. Spencer and Gillen record a myth in which the sacred pole being broken, the entire tribe became prey to anxiety, its members wandered for some time and finally they sat down on the ground and allowed themselves to die.⁶⁷

This last example admirably illustrates simultaneously the cosmological function of the Center and its soteriological role; since it is due to the ritual pole, the veritable *axis mundi* that the Achilpa feel they are able to communicate with the celestial domain. To organize a territory, to "cosmocize" it, is equivalent in the final instance to consecrating it. And so, at the root of all such complex symbolism of temples and sanctuaries is found the primary experience of sacred space, of a space where a rupture of levels occurs.

To Create One's Own Universe

We will return to the consequences which derive from these conclusions. For the moment, consider that to inhabit a territory, that is to say to take up one's abode, to build a home, always implies a vital decision which engages the existence of the entire community. To be "situated" in a landscape, to organize it, to inhabit it, are actions which presuppose an existential choice: *the choice of the "universe" that one is prepared to assume by "creating" it.* We saw above that every human establishment includes the fixing of a center and the projection of horizons, that is to say the "cosmocization" of a territory, its transformation into a "universe," a replica of the exemplary Universe, created and inhabited by the gods. Every human installation, whether it is a matter of taking possession of an entire country or of the building of a simple dwelling, thus repeats the cosmogony. We learn elsewhere that the cosmogonic myth is generally the model of all myths and rites relating to a "technique," a "work," a "creation."

But if it is always indispensable to symbolically repeat the cosmogony, to "cosmocize" the space where one has chosen to live, the cultural history of archaic humanity knows several ways of effecting this cosmocization. For our purpose, it is sufficient for us to distinguish two styles corresponding moreover to two cultural styles and to two historical

stages: (1) a "cosmocization" of a territory by the symbolism of the Center of the World, an operation which evidently imitates the cosmogony, but a cosmogony reduced to the simple projection of a Center to assure the communication with the above; and, (2) the "cosmocization" which implies a more dramatic repetition of the cosmogony. In effect, beginning with a certain type of culture, the cosmogonic myth explains creation by the execution of a primordial giant (Ymir, Purusha, P'an-ku); his organs give birth to different cosmic regions. According to other groups of myths, it is not only the Cosmos which is born following the immolation of the primordial Being, and of his own substance, it is also the alimentary plants, the human races or the different social classes. These types of myths are interesting to our subject because it is they which in the last instance justify the sacrifices of construction. In effect, we know that to endure, a "construction" (house, technical work and also spiritual work) must be animated; which is to say, to receive a life and a soul at the same moment. The "transfer" of the soul is only possible by means of a blood sacrifice. The history of religions, ethnology and folklore know innumerable forms of *Bauopfer* which is to say the blood or symbolic sacrifices for the benefit of a construction. We have studied elsewhere this mythico-ritual complex;⁶⁸ for our purpose, it suffices to say that it is interdependent with the cosmogonic myths which put into relief the immolation of the primordial Being. In the perspective of cultural history, the mythico-ritual complex of the *Bauopfer* forms an integrating part of the *Weltanschauung* of the paleo-cultivators (the *Urpflangen* in German ethnological terminology).

Let us remember the following fact: the installation in a territory just like the construction of a house incorporates a preliminary "cosmocization," this could be symbolic (fixing of the Center) or ritualistic (founding sacrifices as replicas of the primordial cosmogonic dismemberment). Whatever is the modality by which "inhabited chaos" becomes a "Cosmos," the sought-after end is the same: to consecrate the space, to homologize it to the space inhabited by the gods or to make it susceptible to communicate with this transcendent space. But each of these operations implies for the human being a very serious vital decision: *one cannot settle in the world without assuming the responsibility to create it*. And as man always endeavours to imitate the divine models, he is obliged in certain cultural horizons to repeat periodically an original tragedy (in the example which we just described the murder and dismemberment of a primordial Being). But even in leaving aside the blood sacrifices of a founding (of a village, sanctuary or house), it is always the choice and consecration of a space that engage the entire human being: to live in

one's own world, it is necessary to create it whatever the price that one must pay to bring about this creation and to make it endure.

House—Human Body

We said above that at the base of the symbolism of temples, we find the primary experience of sacred space. Several important consequences proceed from this fact. Consider first that the symbolism of temples as the "Center of the World" is an ulterior elaboration of the cosmological symbolism of human habitation. As we have just seen, every Arctic house, every tent and every yurt of northern Asia is conceived as situated in the Center of the World: the central pole or smoke-hole signifies the *axis mundi*. We could then say that archaic man endeavoured to live continuously in a consecrated space, in a Universe kept "open" by the communications between the cosmic levels. From a certain stage of culture, the human dwelling imitates the divine dwelling.

A second consequence would be as follows: since the cosmocized territory and the human dwelling are immediately answers to the Cosmos and divine dwelling, the channel remains open for the ulterior homologizations between the Cosmos, the house (or the temple) and the human body. In effect, we find similar homologizations in all the high cultures of Asia, but they are already evidenced at the level of archaic cultures. Moreover, the Cosmos-house-human body homologization gave rise to philosophic speculations still present in India, and which continued in the West until the Renaissance.⁶⁹ We will not emphasize these multiple homologizations which precisely constitute one of the most characteristic notes of Indian thought. It is especially Jainism which presents the Cosmos in the form of a human being, but this cosmological anthropomorphy is a specific note in all of India.⁷⁰ Let us add at once that it is a question of an archaic idea: its roots plunge into the mythologies which explain the birth of the Cosmos from a primordial giant. Indian religious thought has abundantly used this traditional homologization of Cosmos-Human body, and we understand why the human body, like the Cosmos, is in the final instance an existential situation, a conditional system that one assumes. In the rituals implying a subtle physiology of the yogic structure, the spinal cord is assimilated to the cosmic pillar (*skambha*) or to Mount Meru, breaths are identified as the winds, the navel or the heart as the "Center of the World," etc.⁷¹ But the homologization is also made between the human body and the complex ritual of its entirety: the sacrificial site, the sacrificial tools and gestures are assimilated with the diverse organs and physiological functions. It is due to such a system of homologization that the organic activities, and in the

first place sexual experience, have been sanctified and, especially in the Tantric era, used as a means of deliverance.⁷² The human body, ritually homologized with the Cosmos or the Vedic altar (*imago mundi*), was assimilated further to a house. A hatha yoga text speaks of the body as "a house with one column and nine doors" (*Goraksa Çataka*, 14).

All this is the same as saying that in consciously placing oneself in the exemplary situation by which one is in some way predestined, man is "cosmocized"; in other words, he reproduces on a human scale the system of reciprocal conditions and the rhythm which characterizes and constitutes a "world," which in sum defines the entire Universe. The homologization also plays on the contrary sense: the temple or the house are in turn considered like a human body. The "eye" of the dome is a common term in several architectural traditions.⁷³ But it is necessary to emphasize one fact: each of these equivalent images—Cosmos, house, human body—present or are capable of receiving an "opening," making possible the passage into another world. The upper orifice of an Indian tower has among other names that of *brâhmarandhira*.⁷⁴ But we know that this term designates the "opening" which is located at the top of the skull and that it plays a capital role in the yogic-tantric techniques:⁷⁵ it is also through there that the soul escapes at the moment of death. Let us recall the custom of breaking the skull of the dead yogi in order to facilitate the soul's departure.⁷⁶

This Indian custom has its parallel in the abundantly widespread beliefs of Europe and Asia that the soul of the deceased leaves by the smoke-hole or through the roof, and notably through that part of the roof which is found above the "sacred angle"⁷⁷ (of the sanctified space which in certain types of Eurasian habitations corresponds to the central pillar and consequently plays the role of the "Center of the World"); in case of prolonged agony, several boards in the roof are removed or else it is smashed.⁷⁸ The significance of this custom is obvious: the soul will detach itself more easily from the body if the other image of the Human body-Cosmos, which is the house, is broken in its upper part.

It is remarkable that the Indian mystical vocabulary has conserved the homologization human body-house, and notably the assimilation of the skull to the roof or to the cupola. The fundamental mystical experience, that is to say the surpassing of the human condition is expressed by a double image: the breaking of the roof and the ascent into the sky. The Buddhist texts speak of Arhats who "... soar into the sky by breaking through the roof of the palace";⁷⁹ who "... soaring by their own will, break and pass through the roof of the house and disappear into the trees,"⁸⁰ the Arhat Moggallava, "... breaking the cupola, rushed into

the sky."⁸¹ These imaged formulae are susceptible to a double interpretation: on the plane of subtle physiology and mystical experience, it is a matter of an "ecstasy" and thus of the flight of the soul by the *brâhmarandhira*; on the metaphysical plane, it is a matter of the abolition of the conditioned world. But these two significations of the "flight" of the Arhats express the rupture of the ontological level and the passage from one mode of being to another, or, more exactly the passage from conditioned existence to an unconditioned mode of being, that is to say perfect freedom.

In the majority of archaic ideologies, the image of "flight" signifies access to a mode of a superhuman being (god, magician, "spirit"), in the final instance the freedom to move by will, thus an appropriation of the condition of the spirit.⁸² For Indian thought, the Arhat who "... breaks the roof of the house, and soars into the sky illustrates in an imaged manner that he has transcended the Cosmos and has acceded to a paradoxical, indeed unthinkable, mode of being, that is of absolute freedom (whatever name that one gives it: *nirvâna*, *assansrita*, *samâdhi*, *sahaja*, etc.). On the mythological level, the exemplary gesture of the transcendence of the world by a violent act of rupture is that of the Buddha proclaiming that he has "broken" the Cosmic Egg, "the shell of ignorance," and that he has obtained "the blessed, the universal dignity of Buddha."⁸³

These last examples have opportunely demonstrated to us the importance and perpetuity of archaic symbols relative to human habitation. By continually modifying their values, by enriching themselves with new significances, and by being integrated into more and more articulated systems of thought, these archaic symbols have nevertheless conserved a certain unity of structure. The ideas of the "Center of the World," of the *Axis Mundi*, of the communication between the cosmic levels, of the ontological rupture, etc., have been unequally experienced and diversely valued by different cultures; useful studies could be undertaken on these differences, and to extricate the relations which exist between certain cultural cycles—historic moments or "styles" of civilization—and the triumph of such and such a symbolic expression. But the variations of formulae and the differences of statistical order do not succeed in compromising the unity of structure of this entire class of symbols. Their perpetuity poses a problem that even the historian of religions is not expected to solve: we can ask ourselves, in effect, if such symbols do not express a fundamental existential experience, that notably of the specific situation of man in the Cosmos. At the base of all these symbols, we find the idea of the heterogeneity of space; attested to at all levels of culture, it responds to an original experience, the very experience of the Sacred.

Near the Profane space and in opposition to it, there is Sacred space where the rupture of levels and, consequently, the communication with the trans-human take place.

Along with the experience and notion of Sacred space, we encounter another fundamental idea: every legal and permanent situation implies insertion into a Cosmos, into a perfectly organized Universe, thus imitating the exemplary model, Creation. Inhabited territory, temple, house, human body, as we saw are Cosmoses. But each according to its own mode of being, all these Cosmoses keep an "opening," whichever meaning we attribute to it in the diverse cultures (the "eye" of the temple, the chimney, the smoke-hole, the *brāhmarandha*, etc.). In one way or another, the Cosmos that we inhabit—human body, house, territory, this world—communicates from above with another level which is transcendent to it. It is not the same to ascertain that the members of traditional societies experienced the need to inhabit an "open" Cosmos, the concrete character of the "openings" which we just disclosed in the diverse types of dwellings prove the universality and perpetuity of such a need for communication with the other world.

It happens that in an acosmic religion, like that of India after the Upanishads and Buddhism, the opening towards the superior plane no longer expresses the passage from the human condition to the super-human condition, but transcendence, the abolition of the Cosmos, freedom. The difference between the philosophic significance of the "broken egg" of the Buddha or of the roof cracked by the Arhats—and the symbolism of the passage from the Earth to Heaven along the *Axis Mundi* or by the smoke-hole—is enormous. It remains however that philosophy like Indian mysticism has chosen from preference among the images which could signify the ontological rupture and transcendence this primordial image of bursting the roof. This means that the surpassing of the human condition translates, in an imaged fashion, by the annihilation of the "house," that is to say the personal Cosmos in which we have chosen to live. Every "stable dwelling" where we have "settled" is equivalent to, on the philosophic plane, an existential situation that we have assumed. The image of bursting the roof signifies that we have abolished every "situation," that we have chosen not settling in the world but absolute freedom which, for Indian thought, implies the annihilation of every conditioned world.

NOTES

1. See especially Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935); idem, "Symbolism of the Dome,"

Indian Historical Quarterly XIV (1938), 1-56; and the studies republished in idem, *Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought* (London: Luzac and Company, 1946).

2. Paul Mus, *Parabudur. Esquisse d'une histoire du bouddhisme fondée sur la critique archéologique des textes*, I-II (Hanoi: Impr. d'Extreme Orient, 1935).

3. Guiseppi Tucci, *Mc'ad rten e-tsa nel Tibet Indiano ed Occidentale. Contributo allo studio dell'arte religiosa tibetana e del suo significato*. (*Indo-Tibetum*, Vol. I, Rome, 1932); idem, *Il Simbolismo architettonico dei tempi di Tibet Occidentale* (*Indo-Tibetica*, Vols. III-IV, Rome, 1938).

4. W. Andrae, *Das Gotteshaus und die Urformen des Bauens im alten Orient* (Berlin: Hans Schoetz and Com., 1930); idem, *Die ionische Saule, Bauform oder Symbol?* (Berlin: Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1933).

5. Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, Volumes I-II (Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1946).

6. Carl Hentze, *Bronzezeit. Kultbauten, Religion im ältesten China der Chang-Zeit* (Antwerp: De Sikkel, 1951).

7. Hans Sedlmayr, "Architektur als abbildende Kunst," *Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Klasse, Sitzungsberichte*, 225/3, Vienna (1948); idem, *Die Entstehung der Kathedrale* (Zurich: De Sikkel, 1950).

8. Let us add that it is not a question of applying the methods of depth psychology to the study of the history of religions. We propose to examine elsewhere the relationship between (depth) psychology and the history of religions.

9. See Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (New York: World Publishing, 1970 [1958]), 367ff.

10. One finds several bibliographic indications in Mircea Eliade, *Myth of the Eternal Return or Cosmos and History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, Bollingen Series 46, 1971 [1959]), 15ff.; cf. also idem, *Images and Symbols* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), 52ff.

11. See the texts and bibliographic references in Lars Ivar Rindbom, *Graltempel und Paradies. Beziehungen zwischen Iran und Europa im Mittelalter* (Stockholm: Walthstrom and Widstrand, 1951), 255ff., 284ff.

12. Cf. Eliade, *Eternal Return*, 16-171; idem, *Patterns*, 375, 377-378.

13. *Irische Texte*, I, 25.

14. Jan de Vries, "La valeur religieuse du mot germanique *irnis*," *Cahiers du Sud* (1952), 18-27; idem, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, I (Leipzig: W. de Gruyter and Co., 1935), 186-187.

15. It is to be noted that *brahman* has been assimilated to *skambha*, just as *Ugrund* which holds up the world, both as *cosmic axis* and ontological foundation; cf. Mircea Eliade, *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, Bollingen Series 61, 1973 [1958]), 115. One example among a thousand others of the ulterior philosophic valuation of these very old cosmological schemata and images.

16. Cf. Dominik Wolfel, "Die Religionem dei vorindagermanischen Europa" in *Christus und die Religionem dei Erde*, Vol. I (1951), 163-537, esp. 433.

17. Cf. in ancient India, similar prayers addressed to the tree trunk which will be made into the sacrificial post (*yupa*); Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, Bollingen Series 76, 1974 [1951]), 403ff.
18. See the works of F. Boas, summarized and interpreted by Werner Müller, *Weltbild und Kult der Kwakiutl-Indianer* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1955), 17-20.
19. Cf. P. Aradt, "Die Megalithenkultur des Nad'a," *Anthropos* 27 (1932), 11-64, esp. 61-62. R. Heine-Geldern noted that the relationship between *menhir* and ritual pillar in Assam in western Burma and the Celebes Isles, cf. "Die Megalithen Südostasiens und ihre Bedeutung für die Klärung der Megalithenfrage in Europe und Polynesien," *Anthropos* 23 (1928), 276-315, esp. 283. See also Josef Roder, *Pfahl und Menhir*. Dominik Wolfen believes that, in the protohistoric Mediterranean, the wooden pillar is a megalithic Ersatz (p. 213).
20. See the references in Eliade, *Eternal Return*, 17ff.
21. Texts cited by A. J. Wensinck, *The Ideas of the Western Semites concerning the Navel of the Earth* (Amsterdam: J. Muller, 1916), 19, 16.
22. Cited by W. Roscher, "Neue Omphalosstudien," *Abh. d. König. Sachs. Gesell. Wiss. Phil.-klasse.*, Vol. 31.1 (1915), 16.
23. See the references indicated in Eliade, *Eternal Return*, 16-17.
24. Cf. *Bundahishn*, Ch. V, and the map reproduced by Ringbom, op. cit., 280, fig. 81. See also the illuminating commentary on Henry Corbin, "Terre céleste et Corps de résurrection d'après quelques traditions iraniennes," *Eranos-Jahrbuch* XXII (1954), 97-194, esp. 114ff.
25. *Videvat*, I, 3; Ringbom, op. cit., 292.
26. See the references grouped and interpreted by Ringbom, op. cit., 294ff. and passim.
27. *Saddar*, LXXXI, 4-5; Ringbom, op. cit., 327. Cf. Corbin, op. cit., 153ff.
28. Cf. Ringbom, op. cit., 295ff.; Corbin, op. cit., 123ff.
29. Ringbom, op. cit., 75ff.; H. P. L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World* (Oslo: H. A. Schehoug, 1953), 19ff.
30. *Ibid.*, 13 and passim.
31. *Çatapatha Brâhmana*, I, 9, 2, 299; VI, 5, 1ff.; cf. Eliade, *Eternal Return*, 78ff.
32. C. Tj. Bertling, *Vierzahl, Kreuz und Mandala in Asien* (Amsterdam: 's-Gravenhage, 1954), 11.
33. *Ibid.*, 8.
34. One also finds this complex iconography in China, India, Indonesia and New Guinea, cf. *ibid.*, 8.
35. See the references in Bertling, op. cit., 4-5.
36. Cf. the exegesis of this symbolic complex in Carl Hentze, *Bronzezeit, Religion im ältesten China der Shangzeit*, 198ff. and passim.
37. On the *mundus*, cf. Werner Müller, *Kreis und Kreuz. Untersuchungen zur sakralen Siedlung bei Italiken und Germanen* (Berlin: Widukind Verlag, 1938), 61ff.; on *Roma Quadrata*, *ibid.*, 60, following F. Altheim.
38. W. H. Roscher, according to Müller, *Kreis und Kreuz*, 63.
39. *Ibid.*, 65ff.

40. Cf. the references in Eliade, *Eternal Return*, 19. The site for the fire-altar was determined by turning towards the East and throwing the javelin (*camyî*); where the pike entered the earth and remained upright was the "center" (*Pañcavimśa Brâhmana*, XXV, 10, 4 and 13, 2); cf. Coomaraswamy, "Symbolism of the Dome," 21, n. 28.
41. Hermann Usener, *Götternamen* (Bonn: F. Cohen, 1929 [1896]), 191ff.
42. Cf. Müller, *Kreis und Kreuz*, 39; see also 33ff.
43. *Mus. Barabudur*, I, 384.
44. On the construct of time, see *ibid.*, II, 733-789.
45. See the materials grouped and interpreted by Werner Müller, *Die blaue Hütte. Zum Sinnbild der Perle bei nordamerikanischen Indianern* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1954), 60ff.
46. Myths explain and justify this cosmic symbolism: the first initiation had had the entire Universe as its setting; cf. Müller, op. cit., 63.
47. *Ibid.*, 133.
48. *Ibid.*, 134. The spatial-temporal concept of the Universe as the House is formulated by the *Çatapatha Brâhmana* I, 6, 1, 19: "But he alone gains it who knows its doors; for what were he to do with a house who cannot find his way inside?"
49. *Ibid.*, 135.
50. Cf. A. L. Kroeherand, E. W. Gifford, *World Renewal, a Cult System of Native Northwest California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949).
51. A. L. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1925), 498, 177.
52. A. I. Hallowell in *American Anthropologist*, n.s., 39 (1937), 665. One will also recall that the Mexican pyramid had 364 steps or 366 niches.
53. "The Dome of Heaven," *The Art Bulletin* XXVII (1945), 1ff.
54. A. C. Soper, "The 'Dome of Heaven' in Asia," *The Art Bulletin* XXIX (1947), 225-248. On the problem of Mediterranean influences on the art of central Asia, see the extensive essay of Mario Bussagli, "L'influsso classico ed iranico sull'arte dell'Asia centrale," *Rivista dell'Istituto Nazionale d'Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte*, Nuova Series, II (1953), 175-262.
55. In any case, it is a matter of the cosmico-architectural symbolism evidenced already in the protohistory of eastern Europe, the Near East and the Caucasus; cf. Ferdinand Bork, *Die Geschichte des Weltbildes* (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1930); Richard Pittoni, "Zum Kulturgeschichtlichen Alter des Blockbaues," *Wiener Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* XXXVI (1930), 75ff.; and Leopold Schmidt, "Die Kittinge. Probleme der Burgenländischen Blockbauspicher," *Burgenländische Heimatblätter* X Heft 3 (1950), 97-116.
56. Eliade, *Shamanism*, 280ff.
57. Helmut Hoffmann, *Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Bon-Religion* (Wiesbaden: Kommission bei F. Steiner, 1950), 139.
58. E. Erkes, "Ein Märchenmotiv bei Lao-Tse," *Sinologica*, III (1952), 100-105.
59. One will find these materials and a discussion in Eliade, *Shamanism*, 326ff.
60. *Ibid.*, 235ff. See also G. Rank, *Die heilige Hinterecke im Hauskult der Völker*

Nordosteuropas und Nordasiens (Helsinki: FF Communications, Nr. 137, 1949), 91ff., 107ff.; Dominick Schröder, "Zur Religion der Tujen des Sininggebietes, Kukunor," *Anthropos* 48 (1953), 202-259, esp. 210ff.

61. W. Schmidt, "Der heilige Mittelpfahl des Hauses," *Anthropos* 35-36 (1940-1941), 966-969; P. M. Hermanns, "Uiguren und ihre neuentdeckten Nachkommen," *Anthropos* 35-36 (1940-1941), 90ff.; G. Rank, op. cit., 110ff. The pillar (*Axis Mundi*), or the tree deprived of branches (the Cosmic Tree) are conceived as a stairway leading to the sky: shamans climbed it in their celestial journeys; cf. Eliade, *Shamanism*, 125ff. and passim.

62. *Ibid.*, 238ff. See also Rank, op. cit., 222ff. It is by this opening that the shamans escape; cf. Eliade, *Shamanism*, 238.

63. Schmidt, "Der heilige Mittelpfahl," 967. On the subsequent mythico-religious valorizations of the central pillar, cf. Evel Gasparini, *I Riti popolari slavi* (Venice, 1952, Course at the Istituto Universitario di Ca' Foscari), 62ff.; idem, "La cultura lusaziana e i protoslavi," *Ricerche Slavistiche*, I (1952), 88.

64. Cf. Müller, *Weltbild und Kult*, 20.

65. Cf. Elsie C. Parsons, *Pueblo Indian Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 218ff.; myth translated and commented upon by R. Pettazzoni, *Miti e Legende*, III (Turin: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1953), 520ff., esp. 529.

66. E. de Martino, "Angoscia territoriale e riscatto culturale nel mito Achilpa delle origine," *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni*, XXIII (1951-1952), 51-66.

67. Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Arunta*, I (London: Macmillan and Company, 1927), 388; de Martino, op. cit., 59. On the traditions of the Choctaw Indians concerning the sacred pole and its role in their pilgrimages, cf. Pettazzoni, noted in de Martino's article, p. 60.

68. Cf. Mircea Eliade, "Manole et le monastère d'Arges," *Revue des Etudes Roumaines* 3-4 (1957), 7-28, republished in *Zalmoxis, The Vanishing God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 164-190.

69. We will return to this problem in a special study. See for the moment, Mircea Eliade, "Cosmical homology and yoga," *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art* (1937), 188-201; idem, *Yoga*, 204ff.

70. Cf. for example, H. von Glasenapp, *Der Jainismus* (Berlin: A. Hager, 1925), Plate #15; W. Kirfel, *Die Kosmographie der Indier* (Bonn and Leipzig: K. Schroeder, 1920).

71. See Eliade, *Yoga*, 104ff., 204ff., etc.

72. Cf. for example the *Bihadâranyaka-Upanishad* VI, 4, 3ff., and the parallel texts on erotic mysticism cited and commented upon in Eliade, *Yoga*, 254ff.

73. Cf. Coomaraswamy, "Symbolism of the Dome," 34ff.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 46, n. 53. This orifice, equivalent to the "eye" of the temple, corresponds to the "hole" (*Axis Mundi*) which marks, at least symbolically, the central pillar to the roof of the construction (Cosmos). In certain *stûpa* the prolongation of the axis from the roof and above the floor is indicated in a concrete manner; see *ibid.*, p. 1. Cf. also Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, "Svayamâtṛna: Janua Coeli," *Zalmoxis* II (1939, published 1941), 1-51.

75. Eliade, *Yoga*, 234ff., 243ff.

76. Cf. *ibid.*, 400. See also Coomaraswamy, "Symbolism of the Dome," 53, n. 60.

77. Rank, op. cit., 45ff.

78. *Ibid.*, 47. The opening allows the soul of the dead to leave and to return, during the period when it was not believed to have left the house definitively. At this point the archaic Chinese conception of the urn-house can be recalled; cf. Hentze, *Bronzezeit, Kultbauten, Religion*, 49ff. and passim. Certain funerary houses contain an opening in the roof allowing the soul of the dead person to enter and to leave; see the small earthenware model found in a Korean tomb pictured in Carl Hentze, "Contribution à l'étude de l'origine typologique des bronzes anciens de la Chine," *Sinologica* II (1953), 229-239, figures 2-3.

79. *Jâtaka*, III, 472.

80. *Dhammapada Atthakathâ*, I, 63; Coomaraswamy, "Symbolism of the Dome," 54.

81. *Dhammapada Atthakathâ*, III, 66; *Jâtaka*, IV, 228-229; Coomaraswamy, op. cit., 54. On the ascent of the Arhats, see Eliade, *Shamanism*, 408ff. and idem, *Yoga*, 170ff., 328ff. The apprentice Eskimo shaman, when he experienced *quama-neq* ("illumination" or "flash of lightning") for the first time, it is "... as if the house in which he is suddenly rises." Rasmussen as cited by Eliade, *Shamanism*, 61.

82. Cf. Mircea Eliade, "Symbolisme du Vol magique," *Numen* 3 (1956), 1-13.

83. *Suttanibhanga Pârîjika*, I, 1, 4, commented upon by Paul Mus, "La Notion du temps réversible dans la mythologie bouddhique," extracted from *Annuaire de l'école pratique des Hautes Études, Section des Sciences*, 1938-1939, Melun, 1939, 13; see also Mircea Eliade, "Le Temps et l'Éternité dans la pensée indienne," *Ennos-Jahrbuch* XX (1952), 219-252, esp. 238; idem, *Images and Symbols*.