



Coming back



At the caves (4)

Many years had gone by.

I had returned to the West to live, to learn, and to teach there. Much experience had been gained: in dealing with myself, in dealing with both the positive elements and the blind spots of western society, and integrating meditation and the spiritual path with daily life.

Besides giving seminars at my retreat house and teaching in an ancient Christian monastery, I had also given a course at university and was counselling various individuals, using a self-developed form of spiritual psychotherapy. Having earned a doctor's degree, in addition to my M.A. in Christian theology, with a work on transpersonal psychology and the new paradigm, I had really tried to reach the outer limits of the cultural development of the West. I had even composed and performed an experimental piece of new classical music in Vienna with a small orchestra.

So then I tried to understand what I had seen and experienced and to draw some conclusions. What was the hot spot? Where was the crucial point of development? Where was the remedy for the one-sidedness of our western approach? Where was the key to the union of East and West?

I had worked with these questions for years already and the answer was slowly taking shape. I had been to Venice and Rome, to Jerusalem and to Istanbul. It was there, at the meeting point of Asia and Europe, the ancient centre of the Byzantine Christian empire that an inspiration was getting clearer and clearer.

Finally, I returned to my cave.



*The view*¹⁴

It actually was "my" cave, because during the years of retreat I had selected a good spot. I built a special kind of residence, a combination of cave and hut, out of stones, clay and mud. It had a wooden floor and glass windows, because I was tired of getting sick all the time and I found that a little bit of comfort wasn't an obstacle to my meditation. This place was known as "Hanisi pukpa". Hanisi is my name in the local pronunciation and pukpa means cave in Tibetan. Others simply called it the "five-star cave".

It had been damaged several times by earthquakes and heavy rains, but it had always been repaired through the

help of my teacher and the community of hermits on the holy mountain.

Anyway, I was staying there for a few days. Slowly the hustle and bustle of the world was leaving me. The outlines of life were becoming simpler and clearer, the impulses more fundamental. Everything unnecessary was peeling away, leaving only the essential.

One morning I was sitting outside; the sun was shining and some little birds were singing and jumping around to get some morsels of my breakfast. I was having butter tea and tsampa, roasted barley flour, the staple food of Tibetan hermits.



In a very natural way my mind became relaxed and I began to look back at my work in the West. It crystallized into an intuition. It was the intuition of how the union of opposites could be perceived like a mathematical formula, like a logical principle, or a geometrical picture. Then this intuition unfolded itself, growing to all sides and showing its tremendous usefulness and accuracy. It showed its inner potential to multiply and to create interrelations and its capacity to describe complex patterns of relationship in a very natural and profound way. Clear and precise concepts emerged, creating a network of reference points to bring the floating intuition down to earth. Step by step, the core of a new paradigm entered my mind. This inspiration remained with me during all the time of this retreat, and it accompanied me when I travelled to Delhi with a friend in his car.

When I came home again, I sat down and started to write, and to draw, and then to write and draw again, because it is not so easy to transfer an inspiration from the mind into a computer. For years I had to work and

to meditate, to meditate and to work, again and again. I had to shape, clarify, purify and condense the ideas to be able to present them clearly in a few pages.

I am not a great practitioner like Longchenpa. My master may be enlightened, but my meditation is still very weak, especially compared to the Tibetan hermits on the holy mountain. It is okay according to western standards, but nothing extraordinary.

Also I am not a great scientist like Einstein. I can clearly see the limitations and the weak points of this text. It is a pioneering work in very rough territory. It has neither the brilliance and sophistication of a scientific text nor the beauty and poetry of an inspired treatise on meditation. Many of the thoughts and concepts may prove to be insufficient or even incorrect in the future, as can happen with any first thrust into new territory. But in spite of all of these shortcomings, I feel certain that the basic approach, the leading intuition, is true.

This is why I want to share it with you.

(from the Chinese Book of Changes; I Ching)¹⁵

61. Inner Truth

Line 2

A calling crane in the shadow

Its child answers

I have a good drink; I want to share it with you.



This line talks about the instinctive influence of the innermost being on men of a similar attitude. The crane does not need to show itself on a high hill. Even if his call comes from a hidden place, the child hears its voice, recognises it and gives an answer. In this happy mood friends arrive who want to share a good glass of wine.