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Friedrich Nietzsche and Wisdom of the East

"Oh über diese Flamme meiner Habsucht! Oh, dass ich in hundert Wesen wiedergeboren würde!"

Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft: 249¹

Lebensphilosophie and Wisdom

Movement...Transformation...Images clustered to form Figures. A continual undoing of knots, of sealed systems, of circles traced and retraced, ever larger, ever smaller, retracing and expanding. An Experience that excludes nothing because the subject of the Experience is included...spontaneously; that is, *suae spontis esse*: to be one's own master, at one's own accord, a state of total *receptiveness*,² total abandon to one's circumstances.

To be *exposed* willingly...readily...cheerfully; fully exposed to the Experience of Life, the wayfarer is both subject and object of wisdom, overtly exposed to and disposed towards his circumstances, adapting wholly to them in view of being transformed by them. An active-passive *modus operandi* by which the wayfarer acts in order to overcome himself within his given circumstances. Neither mutilating them to justify his existence, nor inventing them to palliate his existence. Absorbed by them. And in turn, he absorbing them. Exposed thus means the opening of one's Self to Reality in view of the Accomplishing of the Self.

To act *hinc et nunc*, no longer a spectator imprisoning circumstances within positivistic schemas, systems or categories: The Act liberates. It refrains one's petty self from projecting, and opens the way towards an intense exchange between the flow of Reality and the Self; allows penetration to effect transformations. The Self thus remains in a continual state of Becoming, fully exposed to the world of newer horizons to attain and overcome because the Self (*Selbst*) vies in ceaseless struggle with the ego(*Ich*) for domination: "*Immer horcht das Selbst und sucht: es vergleicht, bezwingt, erobert, zerstört. Es herrscht und ist auch des Ich's Beherrscher.*" Nietzsche's acknowledging of the Self implies Being as the culprit to be overcome by the constantly becoming ego. Yet, Nietzsche never resolved the moment in which this ego would overcome the Self, and the consequences of that moment. Perhaps it was more the

1 "Oh, this flame of my covetousness! Oh, that I were reincarnated in a hundred individuals! "He who does not know this sigh by experience, does not know the passion of the seeker of knowledge either."

2 The French *disponibilité* is much more to our point here!

agonic joust between Self and the ego, between Being and Becoming that held his interest and nourished his thoughts more than an effacement of Being or its presumed denial...

Friedrich Nietzsche's 'style of life' supposes a method of ethics,³ of accomplished Acts in the Art of Becoming, a method of *Heiterkeit* 'the gaiety of the spirit, for Becoming is an Art. The Art of knowing how to wayfare, how to fashion a method of Self-Accomplishment, subject to hazards, to the unforeseen, to painful joys and joyful pains, a simultaneous construction and destruction whose ultimate Reality is Becoming what you are! This method should not be considered as a mere intellectual or philosophical enterprise; it is a method ontologically and existentially tread, by which thinking becomes a daily activity whose direct bearing on life obliges the explorer not only to seek out the truth of life, but to submit to it! To submit to the truth of life is to assume fully the method by which this truth penetrated and transmuted the wayfarer...

F. Nietzsche's joyous science, his Way to and of wisdom, claims no insight into ratiocination, nor does it guarantee the reader a ready-made system of philosophical or aesthetic self-indulgence. His method to "...live dangerously! Build your homes on the slopes of Vesuvius, set your sails for uncharted seas"⁴ posits a Way of solitude, meditation and Self-examination whose faring, although toilsome, demands a light-hearted free spirit who strives after a vision however cryptic, however intuitive! A *Gaya Scienza* indeed whose daily practice incites one to overcome false happiness, illusion and deception by accepting what is real under his present circumstances. It styles one's Self to the course of life's events, not like some floundering fish caught up in the swells caused by broken dams or sluices, but by letting oneself flow freely along the course. Freely that is, if fully conscious of both *his* course and the one to which he has abandoned himself. The wayfarer thus bears the course both within and without...at the same time, a burden that must be borne if the truth is not to be a dialectal or metaphysical retreat into the realms of abstract constructions deprived of daily, practical activity.

Nietzsche's method of faring towards the meaning of life relied on a practical, experimental perception of Reality: intuition and Self-implication guided his course. A course along which all contingencies were embraced and encompassed. For it is a Way that assumes, even overtly welcomes storms and swells as well as placid stillness.

Indian thought owes its perennial wisdom to the acceptance, comprehension and explanation of Reality's responsibility, one deciphered and read not as an illusion or idea which belongs to a world of noumena,⁵ but as the temporal, worldly Movement of constant tensions of opposing energies whose ceaseless flow prompts mutations: Krishna-Vâmana, Krishna-Varâha, Krishna-Kûrma, or Shiva-Rudra, Natarâja, Pashupati...Gautama Buddha, Avalokiteshvara, Maitreya, Guanyin. Figures ensnared in the flow of construction and destruction, of Becoming, whose primal motor and ultimate Reality is the divine Godhead...

3 "-Seinem Charakter 'Stil geben' -eine grosse und seltene Kunst ". *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*: 190. Dünndruck-Ausgabe dtv/ de Gruyter, Deutscher Taschenbuck Verlag, 1988.

4 "...gefährlich leben! Baut eure Städte an den Vesuv! Schickt eure Schiffe in unerforschte Meere! *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (283).

5 The meditative exercises of *tathatâ* obliges one to perceive things 'as they are', phenomena at the surface of being; for all that is deep rises to the surface when summoned...

A myriad of Figures issued from an endless Movement of Indian wisdom. The Self overcoming...becoming...accomplishing. The all too-human Self, in Nietzsche's case, which he aspires to set free from its gaol of conventional moral and conservative social constraint. And like the Indian or Oriental sages, F. Nietzsche, by way of such figures as Zarathustra, sought not to *prove*, logically or scientifically, the Way to Self, but *demonstrated* it to us his readers: He marked out the Way with his own steps, fully showing himself as the explorer explored, because exploring...

Nietzsche's demonstration of Self-overcoming, what we see as an intimate affinity with Oriental wisdom or science,⁶ does not lie in book learning. To compare Nietzsche's thinking, existence and writing with Eastern wisdom entails observing analogous, converging moments in the written expression of the material to which we shall refer. By expression we mean not only a 'style' but the means by which this 'style' emerged in its written form. Nietzsche, although somewhat sceptic, even derogatory about Indian ascetics, nevertheless, adhered to certain principals of Oriental existence. He was undoubtedly conscious of this; however, his adherence was eclectic because his Way was his own...

Now diverging now converging in their respective manners, Nietzsche's *Joyous Science* and Eastern wisdom guide the toiler on his Way towards the mastery of Self, of becoming what one is: "*Und dies Geheimnis redete das Leben selber zu mir: 'Siehe', sprach es, 'ich bin das, was sich immer selber überwinden muss' "*".⁷

Nietzsche's method, his sagacity, his *raison d'être*: Becoming. Continually, constantly until the Accomplishment of Being has been effected. Zarathustra? A Figure composed of three concepts: the Overman, the Will to Power, the Eternal Recurrence. Concepts churned into Images then fashioned into a Figure out of the flow of Experience, of Reality as it is suffered and enjoyed...

An existence which yields to the flow of Reality, consciously and intelligently, eschews, even scorns systems and prescribed grids, however effective, penetrating or enlightening, because their thought criteria fail to apprehend the Self as the very principal of Being and Existence. Eastern wisdom and Nietzsche's lie in the apprehension of Becoming as an inherent or organic quality of Being, by which all is transitory, fleeing, circulating until the Self's Accomplishment. A wisdom perceived and slowly illuminated within the majestic landscapes of Nature. Abandoning academism, Nietzsche sought Self-Accomplishment in Nature's 'azure solitude' "*der azurnen Einsamkeit*" where the mountains and the river-crossed forests of the Alps shaped his Being. Where, instead of forming specialists or professionals of philosophy, he learned to meditate and act on existing and being in a world that stimulated his senses, learned to acquire the *savoir-faire* of applying his senses to that world as a means of attaining his Self, of envisaging Being as so many Acts of Existence...of Becoming...Acts, indeed, that had been shaping the

6 We should bear in mind, nonetheless, that Hindu and Buddhist, although they do indeed seek to overcome or transcend phenomenal illusion (māya) -Nietzsche's appearance comprised of lies, falsehoods or fiction of Being-, through techniques such as *atta-jaya* 'self-conquest', *atta-samatha* 'action', *âtmashâva* 'nurturing of the spirit', all of which comprise the Indian 'science of Self' (âtmavidyâ), these planes to be attained, albeit ontologically pursued (and not psychologically!), suppose a metaphysical and theological science of Self, rejected by F. Nietzsche. His 'Self-conquest' implies the mastering of the Self and not the effacement of it (âtma) as a method of unwinding the webs of illusion or falsehood. The meaning of the word *science* in India covers philosophy, metaphysics and therapeutics. A sum commensurate to Nietzsche's *Gaya Scienza*. It is a science that does not sever theology from metaphysics, metaphysics from philosophy, philosophy from therapeutics, be it physical or mental...

7 Also *Sprach Zarathustra*, Von der Selbstüberwindung, ed. Philipp Reclam Jun., Stuttgart, 1987.

sages of the East for over four thousand years. Acts, whose initial steps begin with the union of the body and the Self...

Body-Wise

Wisdom derives its basic puissance by the mastering of the body. F. Nietzsche despised the haters of the body! In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* he voices his belief in the sound body: "*Hört mir lieber, meine Brüder, auf die Stimme des gesunden Leibes: eine redlichere und reinere Stimme ist diess.*" And when he evokes the seeker whose conscious and knowledge have been awakened, he adds: "*Aber der Erwachte, der Wissende sagt: Leib bin ich ganz und gar, und Nichts ausserdem; und Seele ist nur ein Wort für ein Etwas am Leibe.*"

The sound, healthy body requires disciplined eating habits! Only a strict change in diet delivered F. Nietzsche's body from slow degeneration, decay and *décadence*! From a strained nervous system, blood clotting and a knotted, gas-bloated stomach. Food indeed became food for thought! In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche relates the inseparability between eating and sound climatic conditions. Much too long to reproduce on these pages, his reflections demonstrate that bad German eating habits hampered their thinking and forged a type of 'German spirit'. Habits he himself, alas had always been exposed to: soup before meals 'alla tedesca', over-boiled meat, fat-fried vegetables, beer and other strong alcoholic beverages. F. Nietzsche resolved to change this destructive diet in order to think healthily and thus clearly. Instead of alcohol he drank water, especially from the fountains at Nice, Torino and Sils. He began to experiment on the correct amounts of food to feed his stomach. No eating between meals and no coffee, for coffee makes one groggy. Tea is best in the morning, but neither too much nor too strong. (*Ecce Homo: Why am I so Clever* 1, 2, 3).

These radical changes of habit Nietzsche carried out very seriously. He may have been one of the first European thinkers to have equated the food that one feeds into the body to the thoughts that one couches on paper!

The Eastern sages have been practicing this equation for centuries. Vegetarianism is the principal criterion of wisdom: nothing lifeless must be fed into the man's living body. It will only generate lifeless thoughts. Fruits, fresh vegetables, certain cereals, all consumed in small amounts, and especially diced up finely for easy digestion. Easy digestion suggests quicker assimilation of the nourishment required to think. Water is the universal solvent, especially from waterfalls or brooks, for it this living water that will stream the brain's thoughts along in a babbling, spritely manner...

As to climate, Nietzsche's wanderings fashioned his thoughts into a theory of a corporal adaptation to climate: a healthy climate will regenerate the body, energize it: "*Der klimatische Einfluss auf den Stoffwechsel, seine Hemmung, seine Beschleunigung, geht so weit, dass ein Fehlgriff in Ort und Klima jemanden nicht nur seiner Aufgabe entfremden, sondern ihm dieselbe überhaupt vorenthalten kann: er bekommt sie nie zu Gesicht. Der animalische vigor ist nie gross genug bei ihm geworden, dass jene ins Geistigste überströmende Freiheit erreicht wird, wo jemand erkennt: das kann ich allein ...*"⁸ And again he condemns German climate, and correlatively the German spirit because of its sunless skies, humidity and mugginess, which causes a

⁸ *Ecce Homo*, Warum ich so klug bin, 2.

befogged spirit and a heaviness of heart that discourages heroic acts! F. Nietzsche came to understand that the refined spirit lived in climes such as Provence, Florence, Jerusalem and Athens where 'genius is conditioned by dry air and clear skies' - : "*das Genie ist bedingt durch trockne Luft, durch reinen Himmel,-*"⁹ Here the pace of metabolism quickens and thus races to and through the brain large amounts of energy. The Alpine climate, too, enhances and enriches thinking: the cold, crisp, dry air is perfectly suited to long walks which generate bodily, and thus mental energy. Mountain air, because the body is constantly exposed to its cleanliness and freshness, stimulates thinking. Similarly, with the sea air at Nice or Genova...This, in short, is F. Nietzsche's belief in *Physiologie*, his "der Trunkenheit der Genesung 'a drunkenness of health', a medicinal or thereupeatical practice of dietary detoxication and of corporal exercises. It was because Nietzsche was ill that he developed these physiological practices; it was his bodily sufferings that alerted him to the necessity of curing himself...his Self. And indeed this cure gave birth to the *Gay Science* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*!

The sages of China, be they Buddhists, Taoists or Confucians practiced and still practice either yoga, meditation (prayers) or Tai Chi as a means of precise and correct thinking, be it whilst painting landscapes, calligraphy or writing words of wisdom. A practice linked, of course, to the great Inspirer: Creation...Indians, too, have practiced yoga for centuries as well as other forms of bodily nourishment such as the Kerala Art of wrestling training, or the dances of Orissa and Tamil Nadu. Respiratory exercises all accompany these corporal Arts. Yoga, which signifies 'union', is that symbiose with the Creator Shiva, the greatest of all yoghies! It is this 'yoke' that the Yoghi seeks in his daily communion with Him. Communion which inspired the pages of the four *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*...

There can be no wisdom without any full corporal participation. It is not only a question of daily hygiene; these Arts permit the body to develop in order for the mind to expand ever outwards and inwards. They cleanse it of unhealthy forces, whilst strengthening it against exposure to unkindly elements.

The wayfarer must love his body, not defile or degenerate it! To take one's body into one's own hands, to be one's own doctor in the practice of preventive medicine, situates the seeker immdiately on the firm Way towards Self-Accomplishment. Body and Spirit are one reconciled force; the Body generates energy that the sages transformed into philosophy, poetry, metaphysics, theology, in short into wisdom. F. Nietzsche, although later in life, practiced similar physiological methods of rendering his thoughts lighter, crisper, bouncier...more gay..." *Ich nahm mich selbst in die Hand, ich machte mich selbst wieder gesund: die Bedingung dazu – jeder Physiologe wird das zugeben – ist, dass man im Grunde gesund ist.*"

Professor Nietzsche quit the university and gradually made his Way into the mountains. There his body began to live vigorously in accordance with Nature's robust rhythms. There he discovered that the body and mind are not to be separated...There he discovered 'Grand Health'...

The *Gay Science* is a hymn to the healthy body and to the body that serves wisdom and Zarathustra is the incarnation of that new-born Grand Health...'Ein Philosoph, der den Gang durch viele Gesundheitien gemacht hat und immer wieder macht, ist auch durch ebensoviele Philosophien hindurchgegangen:...' ¹⁰

9 Idem.

10 Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft, Vorrede, 3.

Mountains and Water

Mountains and waterways are not signs of Oriental wisdom; they are topographical and semantic Ways for the seekers of wisdom. Beauty accompanies the wayfarer on his ontological and existential Self-Accomplishing; natural beauty whose awesomeness gradually pierces and transcends those layers of opinion, biased conviction, prejudice and judgement. Exposed to such immensity, wildness and raw beauty, self-indulgence and pride no longer have any spite to vent; cynicism and arrogance no face to slap! In these solitary, robust climes one breathes naturally to the rhythms of Nature's course; one exercises his lungs and eyesight and gradually understands himself to be an organic part of an environment that is naturally his! To coalesce our human nature with Nature demands a sense of Unity that can only be achieved by piecing the fragments of Becoming together until the Whole is formed: and that reunited Whole is Being...

The Dao teaches us to shun habitude and indulgence. It teaches us the joys of breathing in rhythm with Nature, in eating with the turn of the seasons, in walking within the beauty of the Creation. For the disciplined Daoist there is absolutely no distinction between beauty and truth! The Dao combats innate ugliness and dogma, and along its Way, leads the wanderer into the higher spheres of Self-consciousness both mental and topographical. This ascent towards the summits of Self must be undertaken with cheer gait and gay stride. On the Dao, joy ambles abreast because it is joy that chases egoism and laziness. Joy emanates from neither emotion nor sentiment; it is a force that engenders creativity because continually nourished through contacts with the Reality of the world, whether this Reality be joyful or painful...The Dao does not cultivate extremities; extremities are formed through laziness of body and mind. The Dao stimulates and cultivates the creative force, dormant in man, a vital, joyful force which lightens the step, and thus the heart; awakens it to whatever nefarious affect may sollicit it, from without or within.

To climb a mountain in India or in China is an essential spiritual experience. Pristine because touched by the Divine, or by those who have been touched by the Divine, the height of a mountain *elevates* the ascending explorer towards the Centre, veritable pivotal point from which he gazes in awe at the infinite vastness of an ever stretching horizon. The snowy, woodsy heights of the immutable axes of Tai Shan or Mount Kunlun are the abode of the higher men of the Dao called the Eight Immortals; they who have transcended the cycle of life and death. There they sit, awaiting the ascent of other fearless climbers, guiding their way over fantastic obstacles, through the darkness of ignorance. Upon the peaks of Kailash God-Siva dances his dance of life and death, manifesting that image which the pilgrims who circumambulate His mountain seek to emulate. And on that same peak, in collective calmness, the Enlightened Buddha and the first emancipated Jain saints prayed and pray in enshrined peace...¹¹

The clean, fresh air of mountain life stimulated F. Nietzsche's thinking: alpine strolls instead of seminars, contemplation and meditation in lieu of debate or controversy. Ever since a student, he had always deemed Nature and her mighty landscapes an essential component of knowledge because essential to the examining Self. In the silent grandeur of Sils-Maria (Ober-Engadin) and Lake Orta's mountainous landscapes, he experimented his Elevation and Centre. A topographical immersion that

11 We may further add that according to legend it was upon Kailash that the founder of the ancient Bon religion of Tibet (Shamanism) settled after leaving the Heavens.

sharpened his wits and will, his spirit and self-penetration. Like the sages of the Orient, the man of renunciation soars beyond even the best of scholastics:

"Der Entsagende, -Was thut der Entsagende? Er strebt nach einer höheren Welt, er will weither und ferner und höher fliegen, als alle Menschen der Bejahung, -er wirft Vieles weg, was seinen Flug beschweren würde, und Manches darunter, was ihm nicht unwerth, nicht unliebsam ist: er opfert es seiner Begierde zur Höhne-."12

The sage Zarathustra dwells in the mountains and harks to their teachings high above the noisy crowd: "Als Zarathustra dreissig Jahre alt war, verliess er seine Heimat und den See seiner Heimat und ging in das Gebirge."13

However, weary of solitude, sensing that the weight of his wisdom could not be borne on his shoulders alone, he began his going-down, his *undergehen*:

"Dazu muss ich in die Tiefe steigen: wie du des Abends tust, wenn du hinter das Meer gehst und noch der Underwelt Licht bringst, du überreiches Gestirn!

Ich muss, gleich dir, *untergehen*, wie die Menschen es nennen, zu denen ich hinab will."14

Alas, his long meditated images, translated first into picture words then into an iconic narration, reached deaf ears. Zarathustra remained profoundly alone: "Zu lange wohl lebte ich im Gebirge, zu viel horchte ich auf Bäche und Bäume: nun rede ich ihnen gleich den Ziegenhirten."15

And he compares the mountains to his soul: "Unbewegt ist meine Seele und hell wie das Gebirge am Vormittag."16

The language of Zarathustra gives rise to maxims and sayings drawn from the existence of his mountain dwelling. Simplicity and joy: "Wer auf den höchsten Bergen steigt, der lacht über alle Trauer-Spiele und Trauer-Ernste."17

Zarathustra stumbles across a young man yearning to rise high into mountain heights. He had climbed higher and higher, but as he rose, his loneliness became frosty:

"Bin ich oben, so finde ich mich immer allein. Niemand redet mit mir, der Frost der Einsamkeit macht mich zittern. Was will ich doch in der Höche?

Meine Verachtung und meine Sehnsucht wachsen miteinander; je höher ich steige, um so mehr verachte ich den, der steigt. Was will er doch in der Höhne?

12 *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, (27) loc. cit.

13 *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, Vorrede, loc. cit.

14 Idem, Vorrede.

15 Idem.

16 Idem.

17 Idem (Von Lesen und Schreiben).

Wie schäme ich mich meines Steigens und Stolperns! Wie spotte ich meines heftigen Schnaubens! Wie hasse ich den Fliegenden! Wie müde bin ich in der Höhe?"¹⁸

Indeed the ascent offers little commiseration to the climber, the heroism of his heart being the sole guide. This is no path for the weak-willed.

At long last, aching for spiritual nourishment, Zarathustra returns to the cave of his mountain retreat: "Hierauf ging Zarathustra wieder zurück in das Gebirge und in die Einsamkeit seiner Höhle und entzog sich den Menschen."¹⁹

Zarathustra now fully realizes *his* profound truth: his own nature is one with Nature's! A unique Force because reconciled and harmonized. It is upon this truth, terrible though it be, that he declares: "Und mit Bergen soll der Erkennende *bauen* lernen! Wenig ist es, dass der Geist Berge versetzt- wusstet ihr das schon?"²⁰

The enlightened man, the wiseman, elevated by the steepness of the mountain, builds his abode upon lofty spurs, far above spiritless rationalists. He builds 'with the mountains', neither ignoring nor sullyng them because their immutable, majestic nobleness becomes one with his: "Ich bin ein Wanderer und ein Bergsteiger, sagte er zu seinem Herzen, ich liebe die Ebenen nicht und es scheint, ich kann nicht lange stillsitzen."²¹

And there on the summit of Self, Zarathustra inscribes his destiny to Humanity: "Ich erkenne mein Los, sagte er endlich mit Trauer. Wohlan! Ich bin bereit. Eben begann meine letzte Einsamkeit.

Ach, diese schwarze traurige See unter mir! Ach, diese schwangere nächtliche Verdrossenheit! Ach, Schicksal und See! Zu euch muss ich nun *hinab* steigen!

Vor meinem höchsten Berge stehe ich und vor meiner längsten Wanderung: darum muss ich erst tiefer hinab, als ich jemals stieg."²²

and:

-tiefer hinab in den Schmerz, als ich jemals stieg, bis hinein in seine schwärzeste Flut! So will es mein Schicksal; Wohlan! Ich bin bereit."²³

Dominating the topmost peak, man dominates his Destiny.²⁴ The *fatum*, carved into rock, reminds us of those carefully cut or painted messages bestowed upon the Heavens by Daoist pilgrims on the peaks

18 Idem (Von Baum am Berge).

19 Idem (Das Kind mit dem Spiegel).

20 Idem (Von den berühmten Weisen).

21 Idem (Der Wanderer).

22 Idem.

23 Idem.

of Tai Shan or Kunlun, or those *sutras* engraved by Buddhist toilers into cliffs or boulders. These semantic markers represent the testimonial Acts of the climber's Self-Accomplishing. Zarathustra, too, once at the top, reveals his extraordinary truism: the summit and the abyss are one! "Gipfel und Abgrund -das ist jetzt in *eins* beschlossen!"²⁵ He evokes the heights of the mountains and the depths of the seas: "Woher kommen die höchsten Berge? So fragt ich einst. Da lernte ich, dass sie aus dem Meere kommen.

Dies Zeugnis ist in ihr Gestein geschrieben und in die Wände ihrer Gipfel. Aus dem Tiefsten muss das Höchste zu seiner Höhe kommen."²⁶

The summit and the abyss are indeed one because ontologically inseparable. There exists no real contradiction between what is high and what is low, similarly, between the beautiful and the ugly, since all Beings are in constant Movement and this constant Movement provokes transformations of Beings. One day we are this and the next we are that! No Being can really be seized ontically because of this unceasing cause of transmutations which, however, does not signify that Being does not exist; it does, but Being *is* because of the ever coming and going of our existences: Being, unlike existence, lies outside all Movement simply because Being is the motor of Movement! Furthermore, Movement that causes the Acts of Being abolishes the myth of eliminating contradictions for the sake of 'logical, sound reasoning' in thinking processes, and at the same token, refutes relativism since those thinking processes, borne by that Movement, can only be gauged by what Nietzsche called his *Perspektivismus*; that is, his points of view which open our visions to the vast vistas that surround us...

It is with this ever-flowing Movement of life that we must now examine the water element in our Nietzschean and Oriental ontic and existential landscape.

Water evokes best the Dao: an ever-flowing current that man cannot obstruct by a network of sluices or dams. In the *Virtue of the Dao* by Laozi, the Chinese sage attributes a genuine reconciled force to water: weakness and effacement/ strength and affirmation. Daoist wisdom harbours both passive and active forces, feminine forms enveloped and enveloping masculine ones. Valleys and mountains create a relief which stretches before us: the world of topographical Reality which puts into relief an ontic one. A world in which rivers, brooks and seas prefigure complex mental notions, coalesce with the deepest mental world of the Self, embolden us to visualize and concretize that which remains abstract, withdrawn and remote within us. The Images and Figures of Laozi's 81 poems of wisdom lay rooted in the Reality of the Way of which water, in all its cartographic forms, murmurs to us:

"To the Way flows the world
As streams and valleys to rivers and seas."²⁷

24 The Shah Naqshband, founder of the Suffi brotherhood Naqshabandi, said that before the *mürîd* (disciple) rejoices at the sight of the view atop the lofty peak he must first climb the mountain!

25 Idem.

26 Idem.

27 Daodejing: The Classic of the Virtue of the Dao, poem 32.

"The great Way inundates,"²⁸

"A great country is a lowland where all rivers flow
The lieu of all things
The feminine of the Universe."²⁹

"The majestic man is like water
Availing to all things water has to match
It lays deep, held in contempt by everyone
It is very close to the Way."³⁰

Water is not the Way; however, it accompanies the Way in the same way that the Way accompanies the wayfarer...

The ancient sages of India expressed the creation of the universe in images of the Primal Ocean as we read them in the *Rg Veda*:

"When you gods took your places there in the water with your hands joined together, a thick cloud of mist (particles of water) arose from you like the dust from dancers.

When you gods like magicians (sages) caused the worlds to swell (with milk), you drew forth the sun that was hidden in the ocean."³¹

Vishnu sleeps upon Ananta, the snake that floats upon the Primal Ocean. Vishnu represents the passive forces which evolve the world: He engenders Brahmā from His lotus-navel. Brahmā of the 'world of waters'³². The lotus, an island of colourful beauty and grace, floating suavely upon the Waters of Existence. Image of divinity, the throne of Buddha: His Nature (Bodhi) which remains pure. The Golden Lotus whose soft, ever-budding petals are borne upon the flow of femininity: fertility renewed...recurrent. The eternal recurrence: an access to life and the return to it. The purifying waters of the Gangā, Siva's wavy locks which He lets flow down from atop Kailash. Soma, the liquid divinity from whose font all must quench their thirst:

28 Idem, poem 34.

29 Idem, poem 61.

30 Idem, poem 8. All the himistiches and verses are vertical in the original. Translations done by the author.

31 *Rg Veda*, translation Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, Penguin Books, 1994. Creation 6,7. We have added the translator's notes in parentheses.

32 *Kausītaki Upanishad*, 1, 7.

"Relentlessly they (the streams of Soma) flow down into the filter of a thousand streams; let them have offspring in the third realm of the world. Four hidden springs pouring forth butter carry down from the sky the ambrosia that is the oblation."³³

Vedic and Buddhist wisdom demand the wayfarer to cross the waters in order to 'arrive': "Make your thoughts harmonious; stretch them on the loom; make them a ship whose oars will carry us across; make the weapons ready and set them in place; drive the sacrifice forward, my friends."³⁴

"Empty this boat; emptied, this will move easier for you. Cutting off attachment and enmity, thereby you will reach Nirvana.

Cut off the five, avoid the five, and develop the five in the future world. A monk who gets beyond the five attachments, is called One who has Crossed the Flood."³⁵

Indeed, in the *Dhammapada* the current designates the path of enlightenment. It must be followed because it represents our 'natural current': "Than the sole overlordship of the Earth, or going to the heavens, or supreme domination over the world, the fruits of moving along the 'Current' is superior."³⁶

"One who has a yearning arisen for that is indescribable, who is clear in his mind, whose mind is not bound down to the pleasures, is spoken of as 'Going Up the Current'. "³⁷

However swift it may flow, we follow the Current to 'arrive' on the 'other bank' of Self.³⁸ But like any strenuous voyage we must halt and take respite, thus preparing, slowly and steadily, the 'going-up' which should be accomplished in stages:

"Through being up on one's feet, through non-default, through self-control, and through discipline, an intelligent person must create an Island, which a flood will not submerge."³⁹

33 *Rg Veda* (Soma). Loc. cit.

34 Idem (the Sacrificial Priests).

35 *Dhammapada* (Monks), Dr. C. Kunhan Raja, The Theosophical Society, Madras 1984.

36 Idem (The World).

37 Idem, (The Pleasing).

38 And Nietzsche's '*dem andem Ufer*': "Ich liebe die grossen Verachtenden, weil sie die grossen Verechrenden wind und Pfeile der Sehnsucht nach dem andem Ufer". (*Also Sprach Zarathustra*: Vorrede 4).

39 Idem (Non-Default).

In Vedic theology, Unity or the Divine, was wrought from the 'inconscient Ocean'. We, too, from this unconsciousness are born and borne into life! If we seek Self-Accomplishment, we must not be submerged by the flow, but keep steadily afloat, halting here and there to take deep breaths, and finally, after much meandering and island-hopping, will 'arrive'...⁴⁰

F. Nietzsche also set sail for unchartered seas! Did he not write to his doctor, Otto Eiser, that his way made him 'sea-sick', which he psychosomatically compared to a 'semi-paralysis'? Nietzsche abandons *terra ferma* and sails towards newer and higher horizons:

*"Dorthin- will ich: und ich traue
Mir fortan und meinem Griff.
Offen liegt das Meer, ins Blau
Treibt mein Genueser Schiff."⁴¹*

...an iconic narrative which makes us *see* his ontological mission: "Im Horizont des Unendlichen-Wir haben das Land verlassen und sind zu Schiff gegangen! Wir haben die Brücke hinter uns, -mehr noch, wir haben das Land hinter uns abgebrochen! Nun, Schifflein! 'sieh' dich vor! Neben dir liegt er Ocean, es ist wahr, er brüllt nicht immer, und mitunter liegt er da, wie Seide und Gold und Träumerei der Güte. Aber es kommen Stunden, wo du erkennen wirst, dass er unendlich ist und dass es nicht Furchtbareres giebt, als Unendlichkeit."⁴²

His method or Way of Self-Accomplishment, Nietzsche himself elucidates in section 381 of the *Gay Science*, again having recourse to very concrete images:

"Denn ich halte es mit tiefen Problemem, wie mit einem kalten Bade-schnell hinein, schnell hinaus. Dass man damit nicht in die Tiefe, nicht tief genug hinunter komme, ist der Aberglaube der Wasserscheuen, der Feinde des kalten Wassers; sie reden ohne Erfahrung. Oh! Die grosse Kälte macht geschwind!"⁴³

We should, however, read *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in order to gauge the vital importance of water in Nietzsche's philosophy of life, keeping in mind that although it be tropological, like all wisdom, it reveals his method of seeking envisaged truth. For example, Zarathustra atop the summit beholds a watery body and proclaims: "Es schläft jetzt alles noch, sprach er: auch das Meer schäft. Schlaftrunken

40 We use 'arrive' here in its etymological meaning: from the Old French 'à(r)rive' 'to the shore'!

41 *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (Nach neuen Meeren).

42 Idem.

43 Less topological but as therapeutical as Nietzsche's 'cold baths' (kalden Wassers) are the Himalayan Buddhist monks' purges, either under cascades or in icy torrents.

und fremd blickt sein Auge⁴⁴ nach mir."⁴⁵

Nietzsche informs us that Zarathustra left his home "and the lake of his home" "*und den See seiner Heimat*". Perhaps Zarathustra, brimming with knowledge and the need to transmit it, experienced the sensation to 'empty' his Self before replenishing it: "*Siehe! Dieser Becher will wieder leer werden, und Zarathustra will wieder Mensch werden.*"⁴⁶

We discover similar images in *Daodejing*: "The Way is like an empty bowl that no use fills".⁴⁷

The tropological use of waterways in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* demonstrates the forces of passivity and activity that Nietzsche conjured up in his construing of the Overman:

"Wahrlich, ein schmutziger Strom ist der Mensch. Man muss schon ein Meer sein, um einen schmutzigen Strom aufnehmen zu können, ohne unrein zu werden.

Seht, ich lehre euch den Übermenschen: der ist dies Meer, in ihm kann eure grosse Verachtung untergehn."⁴⁸

The broadness and profundity of the sea absorbs any defilement by the Act of Transformation. Similarly, the Overman absorbs all natures in the Act of Becoming, no matter how abject or narrow, the analogical point being the broadness and profundity of their natures.

Water conducts the wayfarer along his Way. And like the stages or phases of the *Dhammapada*, the combination of *terra ferma* (islands) and current provide brief havens for the Way-weary. F. Nietzsche, too, realized that the lengthy current required periodic stop-overs: "Einst sagte man Gott, wenn auf ferne Meere blickte; nun aber lehrte ich euch sagen: Übermensch."⁴⁹

Upon the Blissful Islands man overcomes his Self. Gazing out over the endless seas, a sense of power, of human achievement surges: Zarathustra becomes what he is: an Overman. And as a teacher of Self-overcoming did he not, in the section 'of Passing By', rebuke a fool who ranted on about the shame of city-life, crying out in disgust: "Warum gingst du nicht in den Wald? Oder pflügest die Erde? Ist das Meer nicht voll von grünen Eilanden?"⁵⁰

44 'Auge': its eye! In Oriental poetry, be it sacred or profane (but is there really any difference between the sacred and the profane in medieval oriental poetry?), the lake symbolizes the 'eye of a mountain'!

45 Der Wanderer.

46 Vorrede I.

47 Poem 4

48 Also Sprach Zarathustra, Vorrede 3.

49 Idem (Auf den glückseligen Inseln).

50 Idem (Vom Vorübergehen).

Zarathustra peers out over the primal principal: the Ocean of Existence. And yet, the Way-worn sage felt a keen desire to forsake those stage-islands and 'cross the sea': "die nahmen manchen mit sich, der von den glückseligen Inseln über das Meer wollte." To climb the mountain. When he had learnt from both Mountains and Waterways, learnt the secret of their bi-fold Force, reconciled and puissant, their indivisibility, he then exclaimed:

"Woher kommen die höchsten Berge? So fragte ich einst. Da lernte ich, dass sie aus dem Meere kommen."⁵¹

It is within this Mountain-Water symbiose that the wayfarer becomes world-wise; the truth springing forth like 'leaping fountains' that 'speak louder' with which Zarathustra likens to his own soul: "*Nacht is es: nun reden lauter alle springenden Brunnen. Und auch meine Seele ist ein springender Brunnen.*"⁵² Gay and exhilarating is this wisdom; this life 'a fountain of delight' "*ein Leben ist ein Born der Lust*" Zarathustra has heard and understood the voice from mighty ridges and swirling waters: "*Wahrlich, ein neues Gutes und Böses ist sie! Wahrlich, ein neues tiefes Rauschen und eines neuen Quelles Stimmer.*"⁵³

Nietzsche-Zarathustra exhorts in the Act of Being; an Act of immersion within a landscape whose over-awing relief fashioned the Overman through and by the Will to Power. An Act exhorted in these topographic analogies:

"Meine ungeduldige Liebe fließt über in Strömen, abwärts, nach Aufgang und Niedergang. Aus schweigsamem Gebirge und Gewittern des Schmerzes rauscht Seele in die Täler."⁵⁴

Nature and Zarathustra's nature converge and fuse in one joyful Instant: "Wohl ist ein See in mir, ein einsiedlerischer, selbstgenugsamer; aber mein Strom der Liebe reisst ihn mit sich hinab-zum Meere!"⁵⁵

An accomplished convergence of lake, stream and sea are all incarnated in Zarathustra. Diverse waterways drain into the sea...This is the Overman. A rugged Way indeed, but is not all birth laborious, all creation fragile? To the higher man Zarathustra gives counsel:

"Wollt ihr hoch hinaus, so braucht die eignen Beine! Lasst euch nicht empor *tragen*, setzt euch nicht auf fremde Rücken und Köpfe!"⁵⁶

水

51 Idem (Der Wanderer).

52 Idem (Das Nachtlied).

53 Idem (Von er schenkenden Tugend).

54 Idem (Das Kind mit dem Spiegel).

55 Idem.

Upon his mountain refuge, surrounded by his animal companions,⁵⁷ Zarathustra, at the height of gaiety and laughter, feasts the Dawn of day: "*glühend und stark*"...

Wisdom is won after long contemplation and meditation, projecting one's nature into that Nature to which we aspire, and in which we accomplish our Selves. The sage contemplates the daily transformations of Nature *with* his own, receiving and penetrating...yielding and conquering...simultaneously. He listens to the laughing Waters, to the rumbling echoes of the Mountains. He listens to his own voice trailing far below and above; again and again, blending within the myriad folds of the landscape. Chinese landscape painters (山水 *shān shuǐ*) of Daoist confession immersed themselves in the majestic beauty of what they momentarily seized and arrested so to envisage and paint it before presenting it to the world. Masculine and feminine forces vying not for domination but for reconciled harmony bestirred these presented landscapes. Amidst towering mountains, abundant in cascades, lakes and brooks man appears so petite. And yet tiny though he may appear, man is not crushed or overwhelmed by Nature. Constant contemplation and immersion urge him, by empathy or communion, to become what first engulfs and girds him, then kindles him to re-create or re-actualize, on paper or silk, the blackened Chaos⁵⁸ out of which he himself had been primevally shaped.⁵⁹

The Chinese poet-painter Wang Wei (701-761), of Buddhist faith, forged a poetry out of the Mountains and Rivers that he had crossed and forded, upon which he had meditated. The pastel-blue mountain skies and the rosy light of Dawns heartened him to paint these picture-words:

In the Mountains

"From the bushy little valley white rocks rise
Scattered in the cold air some red leaves.

Upon the mountain Way no rain did fall
But the blue of the sky floods my weeds."⁶⁰

And this wonderful iconic narration in which Wei's picture-words induce and disclose to us the errant life that paved his Way to poetic accomplishment, and thus Self-Accomplishment:

56 Idem (Vom höheren Menschen).

57 The Buddha, before His departure, summoned His animals to bid Him farewell: the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, cockerel, dog and pig in that order.

58 The Chinese conceive of Chaos as black, and for this reason black ink is used in calligraphy and painting. We should also think of the chaotic Inconscient Ocean of Vedic origin, out of which we must surge in order to wend our Way...

59 We have especially in mind Zhang Daqian's landscape paintings of his native province of the Sichuan.

60 Yu Shou Zhen: *Tang Shi Shou San Bei* (300 Tang Poems), Beijing 1982. Our translation. Because of our uninspired computer programme we unfortunately cannot reproduce the original Chinese. The poetic 'weeds' signifies 'clothes'...

Autumal Dusk in the Mountain

Upon the empty mountain after fresh rainfall
The freshness of eveningtide bespeaks the advent of autumn.

The clear moon shines amongst the pines
The clear font flows upon the pebbles.

The murmuring bamboo rings the return of the washerman
The lotus dance after a fisherman's boat.

Springtime fragrances now have faded
But the noble ones shall always retain their scent."⁶¹

These poems **communicate** a method of the poet-seeker, arduous but cheery; **reveal** a communion between Nature and man's nature; **trace** his Way. F. Nietzsche's Experience within Nature, expressed either poetically or aphoristically, communicates a similar method, reveals a similar communal empathy, traces a similar Way because both their means and goals ran parallel...

Method and Way

The form in which thoughts are framed attests to how thoughts are experienced. Nietzsche's aphoristic, hymnic or rhymed prose-writing represents existential and ontic forms of thinking: an Act of life, now concise, now dithyrambic, now subtle, now bombastic, which required silences, rests, halts...'blank spaces'. Blank spaces that do not separate paragraphs, rubrics or chapters, but act as 'binding-spaces' to and for the Other with whom F. Nietzsche conversed. His dialogue-Other, now silent now loquacious, as he strolled and hiked along Alpine paths. Aphorism-blank space...aphorism-blank space: a robust, airy dialogue between Nietzsche and the Other, then us...his readers...

After each aphorism, pithy maxim or poem the blank space invites us to penetrate this ambulatory discussion; to penetrate and participate actively, beckoning us to accompany Nietzsche on his chilly, mountain Way towards Self-Accomplishment. This accompaniment or shared existence does not imply indulgence or sentimental sympathy. Nor calculated compromise. The Way to Accomplishment abhors all short-cuts. Methodically, the Movement of walking sets thoughts astir, prompts the binary rhythm of Empty-Full...Full-Empty. A respiratory exercise during which time disparate images are set to score by the Movement of gait and stride.

61 Idem.

The aphoristic form conveys the Movement of Existence which assumes that very form. A method of shared creation et mutual participation. We dialogue along with Nietzsche by 'filling in' the blank spaces, the 'emptiness' that drifts between the fullness of his aphorisms, by acting out our thoughts and imagination in cadence to the binary rhythm he has composed.

By 'acting out' we mean that our instinct grasps the *nature* of the dialogue, our intelligence measures the range and profundity of the binary composition and the ontological position it has posited. Our voice, which conjoins Nietzsche's, weaves a polyphonic thread -a *pedetentim*- which coheres all the movements into an ever-questioning, visible wisdom.

If we were only to browse through the *Dhammapada* we would entirely overlook the binary rhythm of the composition.⁶² Every aphorism or *sûtra* exacts a silence or a halt to which our instinct and intelligence are cohered. To skip through an aphoristic work of any inspiration would break the thread of the thinking that has weaved the whole fabric. Similarly, to 'speed read' would blur and efface the blank-spaces, heap up the *sûtras* or the aphorisms into a mass of noise or imageless words.

Sûtra means 'thought' in Sanskrit. A string of thoughts; a way of syntagmatically threading thought to thought whilst the listener or reader participates paradigmatically in the threading; his existence the woof of the poet-seer's warp. Laozi weaves the 1,189 hemistiches or versicles of his 81 poems on the same binary loom, achieving thus the Act of Communion between the wayfarer and the Way. The Act of 'repleting' what has been 'emptied' for us. From verse to verse and poem to poem the wayfarer sheds new light into the shades of willed discontinuity, and in doing so replenishes both his spirit and the spirit of the Way; becomes one with it...

To glean the spirit and sagacity of these writings, be they Nietzsche's or the Eastern sages', the wayfarer must fare with the poet-sage, must retrace and continue his steps, not in sheepish obedience, but in warrior intrepidity. For only a combative spirit will plunge into the emptiness and there link each thought to another, one by one, until the Way has been completely wended, the circle completely traced: again and again, each aphorism a singular, monadic presence circumscribed by the whole circle of thought. A permanent thought forming part of the total mainstream of the circular motion, moved by the wayfarer's breath, breathing new life into every blank space. Round and round: a constant circular interlacing rotation which demands of us that no aphorism, hymn, maxim or dithyramb be singled out or struck off the circle. The first responds to the second in the same way that the last responds to the first. The *Birth of Tragedy* responds to the *Untimely Meditations* as *Ecce Homo* responds to the *Gay Science* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which in turn responds to the *Birth of Tragedy*. Vedic hymns, Buddhist *sûtras*, Daoism, the Eternal Recurrence, all circumscribed within the ever-expanding and ever-contracting interlacing orbit of Existence. A method of Existence, of 'forming' one's Existence. A Way towards wisdom...

⁶² We are comparing forms of thinking, writing and existing, not the contents of the forms.

Images and Figures

Hegel believed that religions are image-built and philosophies notional-built. What about Daoism and Buddhism? What cannot be image-built in Chinese thought when Chinese *iconograms*⁶³ themselves iconically affect the vision of him who attempts to disclose or reveal his vision linguistically? The iconogram 'presents' the image of a thought. The *iconogram* for the word 'Dao' comprises a 'striding foot' to the left (the key: *bushpu*) of the head or principal *iconogram* 'dao' (or tao) 道. This iconic coalescence illumines the notion of an 'origin' that 'moves ahead' or 'walks forward'.

Indeed, the wayfarer thinks in reflected, interlaced images and expresses them in iconic narrative. Daoism believes that all images have been wrought from thoughts, these being Existence itself.⁶⁴ The figure of a dragon symbolizes the 'eternal becoming'; that Form which coils upon itself, coiling and uncoiling like billowy clouds scudding across the sky. The eternal Becoming in turn symbolizes the Great Migration which is the spirit of the Universe. The ancient seers knew all too well that the human mind (besides exceptions) could not seize and translate wisdom linguistically without iconic support, without figures. And contrary to what many may think, these images and figures were not mythological, created out of the poet's overstrung imagination: they were issued out of direct communion with the Divine, be He Creator or the Heavens. An iconic communion well-transfigured in the *Chinese Book of Transformations*, the *Yi Jing*.

The *Yi Jing* has been recognized as one of the earliest treasures of Eastern wisdom. But to penetrate this wisdom the seeker must learn to decipher the images that build the Figures of its wisdom.⁶⁵ The eight basic trigrams trace a series of figures consisting of three lines, full and/or broken. Each line embodies the image of a house in which there dwells eight fundamental images that prefigure, by way of the order of the Cosmos, future Events as inscribed in this cosmological order. The divination depends upon the pattern of the full and broken lines.⁶⁶ The eight fundamental images are: the Sky and the Earth. Thunder and Water. Mountains and Wind. Fire and Lakes. Each image possesses an attribute, and symbolically refers to a member of the family. For example, the name of the Mountain-image is 'immortality' (良 *gěng*) which signifies 'rest', and represents the youngest of a family (the third son). A Figure comprises a substance or a property, an image or topography, a family-name or genealogy. The Way to wisdom begins with the first eight trigrams and slowly reaches complex combinations of expanding constellations of Figures, emboldened by the seminal and multiplying images that shape them. This Way demands both cosmogonic and worldly sagacity. It demands of the seeker full

63 We use the term *iconograms* in place of ideograms or characters.

64 To translate primeval images into schismatic canon or narrow dialectics would thoroughly obstruct or confound communication. A banalization that would deprive them of the purity of that Form which reflects the truth of their revelation. Images expressed symbolically or tropologically permit the wayfarer to apprehend instinctively the meaning of these image-symbioses, then ruminate them as they are repeatedly read or heard. One must learn to think again in pictures as Ananda Coomaraswamy repeatedly stated!

65 These figures have not evolved out of ancient Chinese pictograms. See Richard Wilhelm and Etienne Perrot, *Yi Jing*, Librairie de Médecis, 1973.

66 The figures are formed by tossing or throwing down plant stems (*achillea millefolium*) or bronze coins, materials especially used for *Yi Jing* divination rites.

existential participation. If not, *Yi Jing* would at best satisfy intellectual curiosity, at worst, provoke hostility in those who confound and abuse tawdry thaumaturgy, witchcraft and wisdom... *Yin Jing*, when sincerely exercised, contains extraordinary knowledge of the Cosmos and Man's place on earth because the properly interpreted images and figures unveil not noumena but phenomena in whose continual transformations, when in contact with those who perceive and accompany them, forge a wisdom which responds to the vital needs of Him who seeks knowledge. Not the 'thing-in-itself' but the thing as it is unveiled or revealed to us. A Reality, thus, of images and figures read out of transforming phenomena. F. Nietzsche's existence, on which his *oeuvre* has been built, stands testimony to the Reality of this *Perspektivismus*...

Zarathustra is a symbiose of Oriental wisdom and F. Nietzsche's method or 'style of life'. Zarathustra's Way to wisdom posits phenomena as a reality to be read tropologically. A thinking pattern which *incarnates* abstract notions, *enlivens* them for the purpose of overcoming the obstacles of life, *illumines* the Way of Self-Accomplishment, practically. Zarathustra descends his mountain after ten years of solitude and contemplation. He spoke thus to the people:

"*Ich lehre euch den Übermenschen: Der Mensch ist etwas, das überwunden werden soll, was habt ihr getan, ihn zu überwinden?*"⁶⁷

Throughout Hindu, Buddhist and Daoist history the Figures of higher or sublime men pepper the pages of their writings. Brahmanic priests,⁶⁸ hermits, monks, pilgrims...the Eight Immortals.⁶⁹ It must be said, however, that the majority of these Figures of wisdom, according to Eastern lore, are divinely or religiously inspired and bound: Zarathustra openly purports neither Creator nor divine Creation. Yet, Zarathustra and the Eastern higher men followed similar Paths towards Self-Accomplishment; namely, asceticism, solitude in the mountains or forests, stern self-examination, and especially self-experimentation. They all shared the will of Self-overcoming by way of weighing the limits of man's physical and mental capacity or aptitude. This being said, the higher men of the Orient explore the arcane realms of Being guided by God, a Divinity or a Guide. Zarathustra's explorations and penetrations reject any theological pilot.

Zarathustra stands testimony to a transfiguration of the Will to Power. One that had been gradually developing or taking form in Nietzsche's own life and writings since his *Untimely Meditations: The Figure of an hypothesis, nonetheless, drawn after a myriad of Self-Accomplishing Acts:* "

67 Vorrede 3.

68 We believe Ramakrishna to be one of the higher men in the History of Ontology, having experienced three religions (Hinduism, Islam and Christianity). His Self-Accomplishment, inaccessible to the majority of men, remains a model of an onto-theological existence.

69 The Daoist aspires to immortality, and long life is a sign of immortality. As Zhuangzi notes; one must love life and live a long life. The perfection of one's life, synonymous of Self, means abiding by one's 'natural' propensity, and by Nature's 'natural' beauty. The higher men of Daoist faith pretended to concoct pills and elixirs to attain the state of immortality.

"Und dies Geheimnis redets das Leben selber zu mir: 'Siehe', sprach es, 'ich bin das, *was sich immer selber überwinden muss*'.

'Nur, wo Leben ist, das ist auch Wille: aber nicht Wille zum Leben, sondern- so lehre ich's dich- Wille zur Macht!'

Vieles ist dem Lebenden höher geschätzt als Leben selber: doch aus dem Schätzen selber heraus redet- der Wille sur Macht!"⁷⁰

Abundant over-flowing life transmits the Overman's essential message to mankind.

Abundant life means full of power for and of life. An unleashed power, yet mastered, bridled, sublimated. And once at that zenith of elevation, this Will is nourished and cultivated by the further need to overcome. The Will to Power, unlike a theological striving towards Godhood, or an ultimate metaphysical fusion with Being, hypothesizes endless circular states of elevation, infinite fusions with the Other; a sort of timeless circumambulating summit-striving 'within' one's Self and 'without' (the Voyage). Virtually accessible, but unrealistic, the Will to Power alternatively provides and drains the strength required for ceaseless overcoming. Plateau by plateau, summit by summit the wayfarer rises into regions where the thinning air forces him to lengthy halts. Where the 'end' of his toiling appears like a mirage: so close yet so far. And yet, Nietzsche's Will to Power elucidates a finality to attain for the higher men, although it may seem to us that this ever-turning wheel, of which we are now the hub now the spoke, spins without respite, and at times without reason! Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence is no theory of the Absurd. The Will to Power measures its potentiality by the quantity of strength stored and exerted by the wayfarer. An effort unburdened by a 'goal',⁷¹ the toiler circumambulates *pedetentim* in unrelentless Self-Accomplishing, in ceaseless Becoming until he becomes what he is; he unites in coalition with his Being, and thus ceases to wend, to strive, to toil...

Zarathustra incarnates the Eternal Recurrence. A Figure of a concentric, ever-rotating wheel whose form, and to a certain extent, function, can be compared with the Buddhist Wheel of Life, the *Cakra*. Zarathustra declares:

"'Siehe', sprache ich weiter, 'diesen Augenblick! Von diesem Torwege Augenblick läuft eine lange ewige Gasse *rückwärts*: hinter uns liegt eine Ewigkeit.

Muss nicht, was lauffen *kann* von allen Dingen, schon einmal diese Gasse gelaufen sien? Muss nicht, was geschehn *kann* von allen Dingen, schon einmal geschehn, getan, vorübergelaufen sien?

Und wenn alles schon dagewesen ist: was hältst du Zwerg von diesem Augenblick? Muss auch dieser Torweg nicht schon-dagewesen sein?

⁷⁰ Also Sprach Zarathustra (Von der Selbstüberwindung).

⁷¹ We distinguish between 'finality' and 'goal'. The sages of the East strove for both eternity and immortality, a lasting image of mortal MAN remains in the minds of mankind as ONE slipped into the realms of the Creator's kingdom or Heavens for ever...

Und sind nicht solchermassen fest alle Dinge verknötet, dass dieser Augenblick *alle* kommenden Dinge nach sich sieht? Also- -sich selber noch?

Denn, was laufen *kann* von allen Dingen: auch in dieser langen Gasse *hinaus-muss* es einmal noch laufen!-

Und diese langsame Spinne, die im Mondschein kriecht, und dieser Mondschein selber, und ich und du im Torweg, zusammen flüsternd, von ewigen Dingen flüsternd-müssen wir nicht alle schon dagewesen sein?

-und wiederkommen und in jener anderen Gasse laufen, hinaus, vor uns, in dieser langen schaurigen Gasse- müssen wir nicht ewig wiederkommen?-"72

This moment. This 'glance (blink) of the eye'⁷³ equates to every moment in History, eternally linked because eternally present: the Momentary Now of which the Past and Future are an inseparable part.⁷⁴

As such, Time is infinite, without beginning or end, progress or evolution. Time, like truth, runs no straight line. The dwarf says to Zarathustra: "Alle Wahrheit is krumm, die Zeit selber ist ein Kreis."⁷⁵

To which Zarathustra adds by drawing the figure of a wheel: 'Alles geht, alles kommt zurück; ewig rollt das Rad des Seins. Alles stirbt, alles blüht wieder auf, ewig läuft das Jahr des Seins.'

And still further down: "In jedem Nu beginnt das Sein; um jedes Hier rollt sich die Kugel Dort. Die Mitte ist überall. Krumm ist der Pfad der Ewigkeit."⁷⁶

Man's existence revolves and is conditioned by these ever-spinning revolutions. Oriental thought and Nietzsche's do not posit or affirm an eschatological concept of existence. The notion of an 'edge of time' does not figure in either Nietzsche's or Eastern wisdom.

The Buddhist *cakra* represents *dharma* -the law-, which at the Dawn of Buddhism symbolized the Buddha Himself. According to *dharma*, Time and the possibilities of existences are endless. Becoming is thus virtually limitless. An individual is susceptible of becoming someone or something else within the

72 *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (Vom Gesicht und Rätsel).

73 In Buddhist metaphysics, *nimeṣa* 'glance' and *nimiṣa* 'twinkling of an eye' (one of the names of God) respond with semantic and functional precision to Nietzsche's *Augenblick!*

74 Or the **Instant Moment** (*khaṇa* in Hindu metaphysics) when differentiating between time (period) and Time (eternity). Indeed, the Eternal Present is that 'glance of the eye', and in that glance the Past and Future converge, simultaneously. "'Du gelfällst mir, Glück! Husch! Augenblick!'" so wolltet ihr *alles* zurück!'" (*Also Sprach Zarathustra*) And further down: "'Noch einmal,' des Sinn ist 'In alle Ewigkeit!' singt, ihr höheren Menschen, Zarathustra Rundgesang!'" Idem (Das trunkne Lied 10 and 12). One will observe in many Buddhist temples in India or China the 'three Buddhas' seated on their respective thrones: to the left the Buddha of the Past, to the right He of the Future and in the centre the Buddha of the Present. This spatial representation of Time discloses the presence of **the** Buddha: He seated before us in the centre of the main hall, round whom all Movement and time converge and pivot: the *Instant Moment*, not a period of time but Eternity...

75 Idem (Vom Gesicht und Rätsel).

76 Idem (Der Genesende 2).

cycle of spins of the Wheel until his acts (karma), adjudged good, deliver him from the bonds of mortality, lift him outside the eternal spin where he then joins the moon-infused Buddha of the golden nimbus in *Nibbana*...

The Buddhist Wheel of Life depicts a world of phenomena. It regulates Buddhist society. For this reason *cakras* are painted on the outer walls of temples and not inside the halls where the Buddha sits peacefully, freed from the Wheel of Rebirths. For the inner temple is a lieu of peace...

In Sanskrit *samsarâ* signifies the infinite cycle or circle of rebirths, girated by the laws of cause and effect, all phenomena being transitory. Nietzsche's image of the Eternal Recurrence concurs nicely to the contours of the Indian *samsarâ*:

"Aber der Knoten von Ursachen kehrt wieder, in den ich verschlungen binder wird mich wieder mich wieder schaffen! -Ich selber gehöre zu den Ursachen der ewigen Wiederkunft.

Ich komme ewig wieder, mit dieser Sonne, mit dieser Erde, mit diesem Adler, mit dieser Schlange-*nicht* zu einem neuen Leben oder besseren Leben oder ähnlichen Leben:

-ich komme ewig wieder zu diesem gleichen und selbigen Leben, im Grössten und auch im Kleinsten, dass ich wieder aller Dinge ewige Wiederkunft lehre-".⁷⁷

Be that as it may, we should observe an important functional divergence: Nietzsche's image of a circle, although it does conceive of infinite Time, also envisions, notwithstanding, a fixed number of possibilites, or states of events. This would suppose that in any given moment an Act or an Event could occur exactly as it had previously occurred, again and again in unceasing occurrence. Nietzsche asks us to bear this eternal occurrence of the Same with cheer and joy; it is his *amor fati*:

"-ihr Ewigen, liebt sie ewig und allezeit: und auch zum Weh sprecht ihr: vergeh, aber komm zurück! Denn alle Lust will-Ewigkeit!"

And further down: "Lust will *aller* Dinge Ewigkeit, *will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!*"⁷⁸

No Buddhist, however intoxicated with joy, would exhalt over the idea of a never-ending rotation without a slight glimmer of *Nibbanal* escape! Buddhism grants the toiler this deliverance, however remote *Nibbana* may appear. But as we mentioned above, Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence understood neither Creator nor divine Creation; an ontological Figure that appears to absorb theological and

⁷⁷ Also Sprach Zarathustra (Der Genesende 3).

⁷⁸ Idem (Das trunkne Lied: 10).

metaphysical concepts of Man, his world and even God.⁷⁹ The Eternal Recurrence illustrates one of Nietzsche's most profound thoughts, albeit it be philosophically or logically untenable. But transfigurations of mental concepts, whose complex abstraction, if not emboldened iconically or envisaged, would either be misunderstood or misrepresented.⁸⁰ Unlike philosophy, wisdom makes one think in images. A medium of attaining and transmitting truth, whatever cultural figure it projects. In both Oriental and Nietzsche's Ways to wisdom, images and figures supercede the unwavering logic and precarious syllogistics of philosophical systems whose obsessional quests for efficiency (and not necessarily truth!) demand more and more compromises, exclusions, indulgence...especially self-indulgence, that which the Eastern sages ignore and which Nietzsche loathed...

Poetry and Wisdom

Poetry creates an iconic narration whose visions infer a wisdom. For this reason all sacred writings are *Denkgesang* 'chanted thoughts', which chant a vision of the world, a *Weltanschauung*: hymns sung or chanted to the forms of life snatched from Chaos (Creation). Wisdom teeming with tropes and figures because the poet-sage, spontaneously and with natural liberty, attempted to depict that very moment of Creation taking form, seized from images that were communicated to him; images slowly transpiring into Being, the Being gradually Becoming again and again until it reunites with Being...at its designated hour...

In the sacred writings of the Orient, poetic prowess and wisdom are synonymous. The *Rg. Veda* comprises 1,028 hymns of a complicated puzzle of paradoxes, riddles, enigma and parables, versed in colourful tropes and figures to ease the toilsome task of rational comprehension, of memorization; to sweep away any illusion of facile interpretation. It paints the picture of the original principal, albeit no ink could ever engrave this image, and like a puzzle, the seeker must put the pieces in their proper place; namely, reconstruct its Primal Unity...

Alliteration, assonance and ritualistic formulaic expression are the sage-poets' hoary method of mnemotechnics. Daoist, Buddhist and Hindu poetry pose questions of an ontological and existential nature, whose responses, far from being 'buried' under a heap of bewitching images or confused incantations, appear on the surface as insolvable. Wisdom does not preach; it poses problems to be weighed. By medium of a droned rhythm, acting as a mnemotechnic device, word-pictures gradually form in the chanter's mind. Not heaps of images, helter-skelter, but bold and bright ones, analogically preparing the Way for communion with the Divine. Wisdom begins with a shared image, conjured and transmitted by intelligence and instinct, poetically borne.

⁷⁹ Nevertheless, when Zarathustra announces the death of God this does not deny His existence. Daoist Time comprehends the world through Creation alone. Beings are thus reversible, and as such, without remorse, decompose and die. All things grow and decline and finish only to begin anew. It is a Time and World of ceaseless transformations, or in the mouth of Nietzsche, Becomings...

⁸⁰ For this reason Buddhist followers began to represent the Buddha iconically, initially prohibited, lest His image be tarnished by those credulous of the Buddha's divinity, and whose unclean thoughts might have produced sullied representations of Him.

Wisdom has always been chanted and written in poetic form because existence cannot be apprehended by dialectics or paradigmatic argumentation alone. The contingencies of existence make no allowance for deterministic programming. To measure the rhythms of wisdom requires intuition, exposure, perspicacity and broad-mindedness: it especially requires Faith! Without Faith there cannot be communal rhythm, and without rhythm there can be neither wisdom nor poetry! F. Nietzsche makes mention of this Rhythm in the *Gay Science*:

"Es sollte vermöge des Rhythmus den Göttern ein menschliches Anliegen tiefer eingepägt werden, nachdem man bemerkt hatte, dass der Mensch einen Vers besser im Gedächtniss behält, als eine ungebundene Rede; ebenfalls meinte man durch das rhythmische Tiktak über grössere Fernen hin sich hörbar zu machen; das rhythmisirte Gebet schien den Göttern näher an's Ohr zu kommen."⁸¹

Words appear simple. But not their meaning. There may not be a 'reasonable' sense behind an image, but there certainly is a 'reason' for it. Parables oblige the listener or the reader to think and reason analogically because the sage-poets understood that direct communication with the Divine was reserved for those who had wended most of the Way. Again, wisdom demands of us to reason in images and to think analogically.

Language being an incusted metaphor, to rationalize it would drain its essentiality; namely, render not the invisible, theologically impossible, but tear the *veil of invisibility* that obstructs our vision of the world because the world appears all too intimate to us, all too familiar! This tearing of the *veil of invisibility* constitutes one of the greatest wisdoms man could ever possess; it draws the curtains on our own worldly blindness...

F. Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, for example, illustrates the abstract of the notional with the use of common, everyday idioms; ordinary down-to-earth images: the 'sage or genius' a Camel, the 'free-spirit' a Lion, the 'spirit of vengeance' a Tarantula. 'Low, mean, base' is framed by the figure of a Dwarf. The 'revaluation of all values' drawn as a Hammer. 'Im Fluss', Becoming, "...mit festen Füßen stand..." is Destiny...⁸²

In the *Daodejing* (poem 29) the 'world' is a *sacred vase*. 'Universal illumination' finds form in a *moon reflected in limpid waters*. 'Wandering freedom' is illustrated in *illuminated white clouds*. In other Chinese poetry the 'mortal world' is likened to *red dust*.

In the *Rg. Veda* the 'chariot driven forward' signifies *sacrifice*, a 'bird' *the sun*, 'butter' *the flow of life*, an 'abyss' *might*, 'the manes of a horse' *the rays of the sun*, a 'cow' *inspiration or wealth*, both material and spiritual.

81 Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft, 84.

82 Also Sprach Zarathustra (Von der Seligkeit wider Willen).

In the *Dhammapada* a 'castle' depicts *old age*, 'a royal chariot' *the world*, the 'moon as a path of stars', *intelligence*.⁸³

Scores of metaphors and similes which transform abstract thought into tangible images and figures meant to captivate, to move, to draw out so as to draw in. The style in which the *Gay Science*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the *Twilight of the Gods* or *Ecce Homo* were written, be it essay, poem, aphorism, maxim or epigram, defies any attempt to rationalize or systematize the pattern of thought-images. Bouncy and airy, mocking here, biting there, Nietzsche's method stems from a prolonged contact with his ever-exploring Self, striving to become what he is! The poetic verve of his works stands testimony to this dramatic communion. If Zarathustra puzzles us with witty riddles and irksome enigmas that is because the author did not deprive himself the pain and joy of painting these images for us to grasp and penetrate, so that we too could benefit and learn from them.⁸⁴ Now we are not insinuating that Nietzsche purposely wished to bewitch or enchant his readers with wily figures and crafty images. But he, digging deep to conjure up the images exploding out of artistic creation worthy of this vision, might have been bewitched by them! The poet-seers of the *Rg Veda* crowded strange, mysterious zoological and botonic figures into verse and hymn in order to 'translate' into a communicable language the divine knowledge that they had seen and comprehended. That surging moment which gives form to the formless should not be read as some poetic exercise! It is the human mind attempting to fathom the inky depths of the Other's Dawning, intellectually...

The rhythms that the poet-seer seizes in this vital moment of Dawning unconditionally demand the seizing and surfacing of our own life rhythms, however subterranean their rhythmic veins may run deep within us. These rhythms, when surfaced and cultivated, bear us closer to wisdom. Bear us closer to Poetry, however *unheimlich* or exalting! The ancient and modern poet-seers cultivated these image-filled rhythms. In the vast solitude of Shangdong, Sichuan and in the Alpine mountains, Dao wisdom and Zarathustra were wrought. Each verse, aphorism or hymn in harmony with the frosty forest air and

83 *Dhammapada*, XI, v. 5, XIII, v. 5, XV, v. 12.

84 In his book *My People and My Country*, (Beijing 2000), Lin Yu Tang mentioned in passing that Zhuangzi (-350-275) was the Nietzsche of the East. An interesting comment in itself because certain scholars and writers have readily compared Zhuangzi with Kant (Fung Yu Lan and Henri Michaux). Lin Yu Tang's comparison appears justified when we juxtapose their respective Ways of Self-Accomplishment of which overcoming effects a criterion to existence. Nietzsche's "Pain, too, is a joy...Have you ever said Yes to a single joy?...then you said Yes, too, to *all* woe. All things are entangled, ensnared, enamored." (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, book 4, 19 translation Walter Kaufmann) is commensurate to Zhuangzi's peace of soul whose quintessence reposes upon the indifferenciation between life and death, good and evil, happiness and unhappiness. For both thinkers, if oppositions are fundamentally necessary, their constant mutation and transformations interrupt or dissolve any fixed, intransient dichotomy. Especially commensurate is their style of writing: neither exposes his thinking discursively, but by way of illustration, be it allegorical, metaphorical or, in the case of Zhuangzi, mystico-religious. Masters of their languages, their poetic prose, richness of vocabulary, wit and irony make their books veritable works of art, fascinating to read but thorny to interpret, whose mainstream rhythm divulges a nomadic thought, intimate to their philosophy of life. Both thinkers, too, condemn the conscious limiting or narrowing of a word's meaning, simplified to strict, pragmatic needs, whose imprisonment reflects the prejudice, tyranny and ignorance of those who refuse to 'breathe life' into words. Who stigmatize their infinite polysemic forces. Zhuangzi's enunciation/silence binary rhythm of thinking (the Daoist's full/empty rhythm) and writing appears analogous to Nietzsche's enunciation/blank space rhythmic style of thinking and writing. Finally, both were robust walkers whose slow, ambulatory stride incited and fashioned latent thoughts into images and figures. See our study: *The Nomadic Thought: Friedrich Nietzsche and Zhuang Zi -Divergences and Convergences-* in *Nietzsche-Studien* N° 33 pp. 237-277 Berlin.

winds, the babbling of icy brooks. Oftentimes, we scent the fragrance of strong brew rising from these ruddy rhythms. We catch a peek at the gaiety of winebibbing. Indeed, intoxication has always been the royal road towards that point of Dawning, the seizing of it and the birth-pangs of its transmission. The Daoist poets made no metaphor of this: those denizens of Chinese mountains drank strong wine and made merry under the waxen moon as they composed their verses. Wine invigorates, fortifies, inspires, opening the spirit to ecstasy and perception, ridding it of worldly cleavages so that it may reunite with Chaos, returning thus to its primal source: Nature.

Li Bo (701-762), Chinese poet of the Tang Dynasty, affords us his best verses under the spirituous effects of wine. Here are a few verses from

Solitary Libation under the Moonlight

"Amongst the flowers, a bowl of wine
I drank all alone, friendless.
Raising my cup I invite the moonlight
Here, my shadow before me; we are three
The moon, alas, knows not how to drink."⁸⁵

In the poem *Wine Offering*, the wandering poet compares the waters of a river that disappear into the sea with the brevity of human existence. And such being the case, a man should not haggle over the price of a bowl of wine:

"Bring on the wine, the bowl should not stand idle!
Truely I sing a song for you.
I beg you, lend an ear, listen to me!
Bells, drums, divine dishes mean nothing to me!
I only long for a long drunkenness, never again to be sober."⁸⁶

In our last example, Li Bo engraves the epitaph of a talented distiller of wine:

"The old Li, in the realms of shadows,
Still distills his wine.
But there, Li Bo is not!
To whom shall he sell his wine?"⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Yu Shou Zhen: *Tang Shi San Bai* (300 Tang Poems), verses 1-5. Our translation.

⁸⁶ Idem, verses 12-16.

Li Bo is not, of course, the sole Chinese poet who drew poetic inspiration from the bountiful Grape. Daoist poetry, akin to Shamanist incantations, chanted or sung, derives much of its inspiration from winebibbing (from dreams and musings, too!).⁸⁸

A powerful ontic-artistic source indeed, the poets of the Dao, atop their mountain recluses, joyfully and drunkenly offered their verses as sacrifices to their ancestors and the Creation whence they were wrought, with perhaps just a nuance of melancholy⁸⁹ that always accompanies the wayfarer, solitary or in company, after having glimpsed the images of hieratic realms, and knowing well that their slightest glimpse demands a poetic verve that would entail consuming double the dose of spirits which was required to reach that point of Dawning⁹⁰.

As to F. Nietzsche, in spite of his Dionysus dithyrambs and his drunken songs and dances in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, medically speaking, his delicate stomach would have never borne those quantities of brew needed to inspire such inebriating elevation! Be that as it may, Nietzsche's Dionysus represents both that instinctive and lucid creative force which the sage must learn to control and fuse. Zarathustra attained this unique force: did F. Nietzsche?..

Wisdom or Folly?

Wisdom teaches us detachment and perspicacity. Teaches us *nobleness* without holding others in contempt; *power* without overpowering others; *joy* but not at the expense of others. The ancient and modern sages of the Orient taught and still teach us these fundamental values. F. Nietzsche, too. Henri Bergson, speaking of the wise, once said: "*Ils ne demandent rien et pourtant ils obtiennent. Ils n'ont pas besoin d'exhorter, ils n'ont qu'à exister, leur existence est un appel.*"⁹¹

Their existence a call? In Nietzsche's case perhaps a cry of desperation! His early insanity and death upstaged and cruelly cleaved his painstaking pursuit of the wisdom of wisdoms: *bono mortis!* Overcoming malady and isolation, detached as he was from wordly will-o'-the-wisps, the tragedy of Nietzsche's life (if it were at all a tragedy!) does not lie in his insanity, medically explained, but rather in the image of his Other, projected in the Figure of Zarathustra, round and glowing like the Dawning sun.

87 Idem. The poem *Epitaph to a Distiller* counts four verses.

88 The Persian sage-poets, too, indulged in the Grape Cup when communing with the Creator! Omar Khayyam is one fine example of inebriating communion; let us listen to some vintage quatrains: "Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,/ And wash my Body whence the Life has died,/ And in a Windingsheet of Vine-leaf wrapt,/ So bury me by some sweet Garden-side." (LXVII) And "And much as Wine has play'd the Infidel,/ And robb'd me of my Robe of Honour-well,/ I often wonder what the Vintners buy/ One half so precious as the Goods they sell."(LXXI) In *Omar Khayyam*, translated by Edward Fitzgerald, Walter Dunne Publisher, 1903.

89 In Nietzsche's 'Melancholy Song' in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* the languid, solemn tone of joyful, solitary silence, and the creamy waxen light of the moon rings eerily of Bo's nocturnal musings.

90 A Daoist legend certifies that Li Bo, under the influence of spirits, drowned in a river when trying to clutch his reflexion in the moonlit waters...

91 In *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion*, Paris 1939.

A Figure similar to himself, yet pathetically bound to his Self, desperately yearning to exist...in the eyes of his peers. This being said, to the 'real image' of Zarathustra he remained completely attached, completely bound as if the penetration of the Other had necessitated the effacement of the Self. Nietzsche knew that rigorous, daily practice of Self-overcoming constrains the individual to a life of self-exile or forced solitude, and would eventually consume his energy like the wax of the lit candle, he who in fact craved human companionship. Ontological and existential experimenting, consciously and conscientiously practised, ruthlessly pursued, paves dangerous Ways for the wayfarer: possible abandonment and schizophrenia. Does this then imply that Self-overcoming or Accomplishment is reserved for the mad, romantic type, or for the proud, doughty warrior who rebels against society? Or be he the chosen one born and bred within a inherited caste or class?

It is true that Nietzsche's wisdom, like Oriental wisdom, favours individuals. Favours individuals of a given community or nation, free spirits shaped by a culture of confirmed exploits and glorified heroism out of which their force and form have evolved and continue to evolve towards Self-Accomplishment. Nietzsche harbours no pity for the masses, abhors concentrated masses which lack all existential relief because manufactured by the press and opinion, socially bound to survival, instead of life; to oral impulses instead of reflected gestures; to egoism instead of egotism; to local, self-identity instead of a universal one: the striving Self towards becoming what one IS.

Now the crowding and concentrated masses may deem Nietzsche's (or Oriental) wisdom as valueless, impracticable, useless, condemned to a marginal use at best, at worst an exercise in onanism! To this accusation Maurice Maeterlinck responded wisely: "*C'est grâce à quelques hommes qui paraissent inutiles qu'il y aura toujours un certain nombre d'hommes incontestablement utiles.*"⁹²

It goes without saying that the indefatigable pursuit of wisdom entails strength of character, obliges constant Self-examination as a means of exploring the many possibilities of Being. Requires a daily commerce with Reality, and an aloof indifferenciation to It. Instills the desire to steer one's thoughts away from a manufactured cleavage of Events, and orientate it towards a comprehensive embodiment of Man's Being and Existence on Earth. To be Way-wise suggests neither uselessness nor vanity.

Neither does it promise opulence or happiness; security neither. In refusing to calculate or minimize, wisdom will scorn and condemn fanaticism, dogmatism, compromise (diplomatic or political), economic delirium. For it demands of the wayfarer a full existence both within and without his historical moment, placing him thus squarely at the crossroads of Being and Becoming, amongst oscillating and turbulent Movements that he has chosen to wend...

Fulfilling the tasks to come, Nietzsche's *"in unsichtbarer Thätigkeit"*, the striving Overmen appear to the majority of mankind as baseless parasites who refuse to cast their ballot or scream revolutionary songs; they are labelled insane, monomaniacs who plot in dark corners; cynical, contemptuous outcasts, dangerous to society. But it is precisely because the sage of the ancient and modern world has always been classed, categorized, labelled or indexed by those who despise unclassed, uncategorized,

92 In *La Sagesse et la Destinée*.

unlabelled and unindexed individuals⁹³ that he finds himself both within and without History. And thus essential to History! Because the sage has defiantly ignored all systems of thought and all ideals of the world, his wisdom continued, continues and will continue to be *absolutely* imperative to Humanity...

Absolutely imperative because wisdom, unlike philosophy, takes firm root in what Being *is* and not what it *knows*; Being as it is and not simply the thinking-Being. It may indeed be useless to think about Being, or to know about Being, but Being must be! And no matter how useless Being may appear, it continues to be, nevertheless, because Being and Becoming are ensared, thus inseparably bound...

Wisdom does not transcend Being; it is an organic part of it, a deployment of it. And for this very ontological reason, however vain, old-fashioned or useless wisdom seems to some, it remains the unique *essential* teaching to *all* Humanity. The immutable substance of man's subjective make-up, and thus, by transcendental derivation, his existence on earth. "*Werde was du bist*" forms part of one of those transcendentals. It tragically, cheerfully, even wistfully confronts the eternal Oneness of Being with the ever-Becoming multiplicity as that agonic Way towards the myriad possibilities of existing. Rugged Ways trodden by Hindus, Buddhists, Daoists, the *sophoi* of Greece, the Muslim Soufis, Jewish prophets and Christian mystics since the Dawning of the great religious cultures and their philosophical apparata behind which loomed the higher men who founded and forwarded them.

Nietzsche's writings teach us this wisdom, too...

*"-Wir gehören nicht zu Denen, die erst zwischen
Büchern, auf den Anstoss von Büchern zu
Gedanken kommen-unsre Gewohnheit ist, im
Freien zu denken, gehend, springend, steigend,
tanzend, am liebsten auf einsamen Bergen oder
dicht am Meere, da wo selbst die Wege nachdenklich
werden. Unsre ersten Werthfragen, in Bezug
auf Buch, Mensch und Musik, lauten: kann er gehen?
Mehr noch, kann er tanzen?"*

Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft (366).⁹⁴



⁹³ In other words the majority of our so-called political thinkers deeply ensconced in their think-tanks, the 'intellectuels engagés' or 'impegnati', hysterically covering every event in the world, and the mediocre lackey working on the political or streamline-media payroll...

⁹⁴ "We do not belong to those who only get their thoughts from books, or at the prompting of books, it is our custom to think in the open air, walking, leaping, climbing, or dancing on lonesome mountains by preference, or close to the sea, where even the paths become thoughtful. Our first question concerning the value of a book, a man, or a piece of music is: Can it walk? or still better: Can it dance?"