

Jörg Rasche, January 2011

Who am I? – About India, Jung and me

“What we find in the life and teachings of SRI RAMANA is the purest of India; with its breath of world-liberated and liberating humanity, it is the chant of millenniums.” (C. G. Jung 1938)

„I had a chance, when I was in Madras, to see the Maharshi, but by that time I was so imbued with the overwhelming Indian atmosphere of irrelevant wisdom and with the obvious Maya of this world that I didn't care anymore if there had been twelve Maharshis on top of each other.” (C. G. Jung 1947)

The Maharshi died in 1950, Jung in 1961. Jung visited India in 1937/38.

I had the chance to spend three weeks in India in November this year 2010. I came across Tiruvannamalai, the place where Sri Ramana Maharshi lived who is regarded to have been one of the most authentic contemporary saints of Indian culture. It became a challenge to me. India was a deeply moving, enriching as well as a disturbing experience. This I want to share.

I was invited to an international conference about “Science and the Spiritual Heritage of India” in Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh in South India. I was going to give a Jungian dream workshop there, myself especially interested in parallels or differences between European and Indian approaches, symbols and experiences with dreams. In preparation of my trip I read again Jung's texts about his journey to India in 1937, “The dreaming world of India”, “What India can teach us” and “The wise man of India”. I had some doubts if Jung found in India what he was expecting. He was obviously overwhelmed by what he experienced there, he became ill, and at the end of his journey he was exhausted – hence the decision to not visit the Maharshi. When I began my trip to India I had no idea what the Maharshi was, but there was a kind of question in me.

I didn't know that this question would come very close to me. To tell the story I want to start with a review of my year 2010.

Steps going down

My 2010 It was a very rich year, and in the same time a year of farewell and resignation. It was a year of a threshold. I had my 60th birthday. I saw many countries: I was in sunny Italy for conferences, in Switzerland, in Canada, in Kazakhstan. In Paris I played piano on an international amateur competition. I had my 60th anniversary in June. But everything had a special touch of melancholy for me. The year before I fell down a staircase in my country house at the Baltic Sea; fortunately my leg was not broken but the shock went deep. I understood how fast our self confidence or self assertion can lose its fundamentals, and with it also what we call reality. I began to walk more consciously, first because of the pain and then to avoid any further fall. And I started to reflect that it might make more sense for me to go stairs down consciously than to crash down unwillingly.

In early summer my wife Beate and I went to Kazakhstan to see the Jungian Developing Group for whom I am the liaison person of IAAP (International Association for Analytical Psychology). It was a fine reencounter with those kind people, so open for Jungian psychology and interested in the cultural exchange. We spent a wonderful time in a jurta in the green meadows at the Tianshan mountain, the northern part of the Himalayas and at the boarder of the great steppe. When we came back to Europe I had to manage a farewell. My engagement for the Polish sandplay training ended after 5 or 6 years. Everybody got his or her paper, and the course is finished. I loved the work in Krakow and Warsaw, hoping that one day I will be invited again. I went down the steps with calmness. The resignation seemed to be easy: In the meantime I would play Chopin.

The next proof of my new wise attitude came in August on the International conference of IAAP in Montreal. Being vice president of this big organization I decided to run for the position of president elect, as I was expected to do by colleagues and friends. I was not so convinced myself and did it, more or less, for the sake of democracy in the organization. I was not elected, and my friend Tom Kelly will be the president of IAAP. I felt disappointed but also released and set free: I said to me that I got six years back from my life (3 years as president elect, and 3 as president). I also thought that in regard of my limited organizational capacities and my addiction to music and writing I had to give other contributions to the “world”. So I went down step by step from the Montreal stage very consciously. After the conference we (Beate and I) visited a friend an hour north of Montreal in the countryside. Horta van Hoya, an artist and sculptor, emigrated from Belgium to Canada, had built as the first on her new ground a chapel for meditation. The house and atelier came later. She also congratulated me for my new freedom.

My attitude then I had to renew when in Italy at the Cortona conference of ETH Zurich in September. It was the 25th anniversary of this innovative conference, a residential week in one of the finest places in Tuscany. Prof. Luigi Luisi (Zurich, now Rome) had created this unique project about “science and the wholeness of life”. After 24 years of my participation – this means nearly from the beginning- I had to step down to make place for younger spirits. Cortona was a kind of Eranos conference for me. The major difference to Jung’s former Eranos meetings might be that in Cortona there are also many students as participants. So the Cortona week is not only an Academy- like inner circle of senior people but also a school for young people who will carry the message to the future – the message and a fearless way of asking questions. I have met there many excellent thinkers, gifted students, wise men and women – and very good friends. But now this period of my life ended, too.

A new beginning

But there was also a beginning. In November the first “ Cortona – India” was to take place. “Science and the Spiritual Heritage of India” was the headline, the conference organized again by my friend Luigi Luisi, in Hyderabad (Andra Pradesh) and financed by ETH for about 80 students (from India and Switzerland) and 20 speakers and workshop – leaders. I run a Jungian dream seminar, together with Beate.

The aim of Cortona – India was / and is to bridge not only science and humanities but also different cultures and continents. It is a new beginning. Luigi wants to start a new level of questioning and searching for the real important issues, studies, decisions and attitudes for the future. The list of the speakers Luigi brought together reads as an impressive program – no less than a vision of bringing

together the wisdom of the Upanishads and the eldest traditions and rituals, the knowing about the ecological collapse, the newest scientific developments, the experience of hardcore scientists and spiritual practitioners, and the enthusiasm of the new generation of Students. I must say that I was very impressed by the young Indian folks, their skills and their ability to connect their traditions with the newest scientific projects. It was really transcending borders. In one of the discussion in the plenary an Indian student even sang a prayer in his language, as contribution to a panel with Prof. Michel Bitbol (Sorbonne), Prof. Sangeetha Menon (Advanced studies Bangalore), Brother David Steindl-Rast (Mt. Saviour Monastery, N.Y.), Prof. Clifford Saron (UCLA, mind and life institute), Prof. Josef Prabhu and Luigi Luisi. The panel was about human dignity and the question "Who am I?"

To name only some of the speakers: The former President of India, Abdul Kalam, a scientist by origin, gave an inspiring speech opening the conference. Bitbol presented a paper about "Schrödinger and the Upanishads" and what Schrödinger himself called his "Second Schrödinger Equation". Schrödinger, an eminent scientist in the early times of Quantum physics, said "Atman equals Brahman", this means: The individual soul and the principle of creation are the same. The biologist Pushpa Mittra Bhargava and Shakti Maira spoke about beauty in nature, art, science and the "relational world". The mathematician Chandra Kant Raju spoke about the Indian origin of basic mathematical techniques like the calculus. The economist Bernard Lietaer explained the need for a new green "Marshall Plan" for a sustainable world. Deeply impressed I was by meeting Mani Bhaumik (UCLA) who told me about his childhood in one of the poorest regions in India, his time as fourteen years old boy in the camp of Mahatma Gandhi near Tamluk in Bengal, his scientific work in Physics and Laser technology, and his insights in the divinity of the cosmos. He still felt blessed by what he learned from Gandhi. He gave me his book "Code Name God" which I recommend to everybody. But also this eminent man seemed to be still on his quest. I also met and became friend with Vithal Rajan from Hyderabad, a scientist and peace activist who gave me his latest book, a novel about "Holmes of the Raj", Sherlock Holmes adventures in India during the time of British occupation – a book full of funny moments and deep insights in the dynamic of colonialism and the fight for freedom and independence.

Indian dreams

The dream seminar was well received as well by Indian and European participants. The differences between Indian and European dreams were not as deep as I expected, but their supposed meaning was seen differently. In Indian tradition the text of dreams seems to be regarded as more "objective" than in Europe with its tendency to ask for a psychological meaning. One example was a recurrent dream from the childhood of an adult Indian man. He was a 6 years old boy then. The colors of the dream images looked as if washed out like in old photographs. There was the morning sun rising over the ocean, the sandy beach in front of the dreaming boy, but he couldn't go for a swim in the water, because there stood a great lion in between the dreamer and the sea. The lion was like a dark silhouette, looking to the right hand side. This dream repeated often in those years, but then it disappeared.

The associations of the dreamer led us the interpretation that it was symbols of the time when he in his 6th year discovered his "Ego". The rising sun showed the atmosphere of early beginning, the ending twilight, at the morning of his conscious life. There was something that hindered the boy to

go back in the waters of unconsciousness, the ocean of childish dreaming and non responsibility. The dangerous lion directing to the right side, standing like a silhouette against the sun, reminded the dreamer suddenly of an important figure in former generations of his family: Some of his grandfathers were, as now came into his mind, a Brahman and priest in a temple of Narasimha, the Man-Lion. The Man-Lion was an avatar of Lord Vishnu, half lion, half man, who killed his antagonist in the twilight, not night, not day, not indoors, not outdoors (namely at the threshold), neither on earth nor in the sky (namely lifting him from the ground). Narasimha in Hindu tradition is the god who appears at the threshold, a bit like the Sphinx in old Egypt. Here a connection to the paternal line of family tradition was found, to give the boy an orientation for his growing up and later life. The discovery of his Ego was, by this imagery, linked back to the basic question "Who am I".

By this dream of the Hyderabad workshop the symbol of threshold came up also for me. I remembered that my first Jungian paper, 1986, had been about the Sphinx: "Symbol at the Threshold – Origin and Development of the Sphinx Symbol". I was still a trainee then, at the beginning of my Jungian career. Now in 2010, in my 60ties, I am facing a threshold again. And I also may ask me: Who am I now?

Another dream led us into the field of cultural complexes. A young Indian scientist told us a recurrent dream of his childhood. The dream came back again recently when he started a postgraduate study in Zurich. In this dream he went to school in his Indian village, with his bicycle, proud and happy and full of energy. When he entered the school building he looked down to his feet. To his shock he saw that he had no shoes on, he was barefooted. With a flush of shame and fear he woke up.

Naked feet do have some connotations with exposing the body and shame. The meaning we found in that dream went deeper. The dreamer told us, that shoes were and still is an important obligatory part of school uniform, as introduced by the British in India. If some came without shoes into school he was beaten and punished. But the worst was the feeling of shame, of nearly being killed by that shame. One felt absolutely worthless for shame, and there was no help.

We then started to talk about shame and guilt, about humiliation and the different patterns in our cultures. The traditional Indian had no shoes. The schoolboys wore their shoes proudly as an expression of progress, and may be still today. Their parents had no shoes. The new habit alienated the children from tradition, and as we said also from the earth. The western education went together with a deep humiliation. This feeling came back when the successful student went to Europe for his postgraduate study!

Indian realities

By this conference I thought to be well prepared for the encounter with Indian reality outside the Fife Stars resort where the conference took place. It was my first stay in this country and this continent. Finally the experience was and still is much stronger than I expected. Already the first excursions into the city of Hyderabad were shocking – to see so many people, so many poor people, beggars, all these many cows quietly standing or lying in the loudest traffic in the narrow streets, the many Tuc-Tucs (three-wheel-taxis), the woman in their beautiful saris, even the poorest ones, the school children with their white teeth and optimistic eyes. It was a tropical world of heat, dust, colorful Hindu temples and majestic Mosques. There in the traffic jam it happened that a beggar was

knocking at the window of our taxi with his arm, not having hands any more. How to give something to a beggar who has no hands?

Back home in our five-stars-resort I began to realize that India was going to become a challenge. You can't escape the heat nor the many people, the noise, the social contradictions nor the hot spicy Indian food. Also the lectures at the conference were very intensive and challenging. One moment I stood at a little well in the hotel gardens where some water was dropping from an antique statue into a basin. The view touched me and I felt how much I was longing for stillness and silence. The words came to me: I am European. And I felt an unexpected touch of homesickness.

An old friend and workshop leader of the conference, Hans Peter Siebler recommended us to see Tiruvannamalai. In that moment I was not aware that this was the place of the Maharshi, the Indian wise man whom Jung avoided to see. After the ending of the conference Beate and I went for a journey to see a bit of India. We flew to Chennai (the former Madras) and spent some days in Mahalipuram at the Gulf of Bengal. We visited the relicts of the ancient harbor, the famous temples from the 7th century a.d., and were impressed by the high waves of the ocean. We were told that 6 years ago the Christmas Tsunami had killed some people here, but also washed new monument out of the sand of the centuries. I also saw the huge Bas Relief of "Arjunas Penance", showing a saga from Mahabharata about the coming down of the heavenly water of Ganga, the sacred river Ganges, with the help of Lord Shiva. Arjuna's meditation and intense penance (others say it was Bhagiratha's) even overcame and forced the gods. It was very hot this day. In the evening the sky became black.

The returning monsoon and a strong cyclone the next day showed us a new side of India. Sometimes the water fell so dense from the dark sky that one could see nothing. It had rained much more than in other years, and this rain was absolutely unusual for the season. The palm trees were shaken by the storm. The meadows were fludded; the restaurant pavilion of our hotel became an island. When the rain stopped for a while the ways in the village were all wet and muddy, the sacred cows looked even more depressed than usual, and the people sat with their clothes on wet heaps of clay or stones.

The next day we went by car to Tiruvannamalai. We passed through the poorest villages I've ever seen. I tried to draw my attention away from the traffic: Our driver did as all the others, he drove where he wanted, left or right side, avoiding the deepest holes, overtaking whenever he could and on both sides, often escaping from frontal crashes with buses or painted trucks only in the last second, but never touching any of the animals, the cows, bulls, dogs or monkeys. Many of the huts consisted only in wet clay basements and rotten plaitings from palm branches, often the space between the huts was flooded. Nevertheless the woman wore everywhere their colorful saris with dignity. Once we passed a little house with some musicians playing drums in front of it. I asked our driver, who understood a bit of English, whether there was a wedding. He said no, somebody has died. I asked if the Hindu burn or bury their dead, and he answered: Burn. Then I asked: But if all the firewood is wet? His answer was: Tires. They take old tires to burn their people.

The place of the Maharshi

So we came to Tiruvannamalai, the holy site of Sri Ramana Maharshi. The village is situated in a plateau at the feet of a mountain called Arunachala. Here Lord Shiva is said to have appeared as a column of fire on top of the rock. Every year, this event is celebrated with a huge fire on the peak of Arunachala, in form of a candle made of thousands of liters of butter-oil. The fire can be seen for thirty kilometers. Many thousands of pilgrims from entire South India are joining this event every year. It happened just two weeks before our arrival.

Now Tiru (as they call it) was suffering from the heavy rain. The shit of the cows had transformed the ways into muddy and slippery runs. We had to find our ways to the hotel and to a restaurant we could trust. In the afternoon we went by Tuc-Tuc to the great temple in the centre. It is said to be one of the biggest Hindu temples in India. In contrast to the muddy village outside, the temple is like a city of itself, surrounded by high and thick walls and protected by high white towers decorated with thousands of figures of the Hindu Pantheon. We had to leave our shoes outside and walk bare footed in the mud. The vast places of the temple city were plastered with stone but stood under water. We waded through the wide spaces, climbed stairs to smaller temples with colored statues of Shiva, Vishnu, Ganesh and all the other gods or “energies”. In a hall there was also a big living elephant who for a coin blessed the people with his trunk. He wore the “Om” on his forehead. Many people came in waiting for the Puja (service) in the holiest. Monkeys played in the frame-work over the heads of the people and aggressively tried to take away the belongings of the pilgrims. We were the only non-Indians here among thousands of pilgrims, and everybody studied us with curiosity. We asked if we as non-Hindu will be allowed to enter the sacred center with the golden Shiva Lingam, and joint the queue. The long labyrinth corridor in the inner halls was really like a time travel back to antique times. A thousand people in the dark, many many candles, golden statues in the shimmery light, and painted Mandala on the floor everywhere. Groups of nearly naked young dark men, wearing only black fabric around their hips and having the Shiva emblem on their foreheads, seemed to have come from far away and to regard this sanctuary as their own. They were Shivaists, their behavior was a bit troubling but nothing happened. I heard that here is a quasi fascistic Hindu movement in India, pushed by a nationalist party and hostile to Moslems and Christians. What we saw in Tiru was just a phenomenon of a young men’s horde, dedicated to the male energy of Shiva. In the centre of the centre of this temple finally we saw the golden lingam of Shiva – expressing the phallic creativity of the Shiva- energy, and also its destructive aspect. It is a great mystery. There is no creation without destruction.

I was reminded of Sabina Spielrein, Jung’s patient and the first Jungian psychoanalyst, who wrote about this in the 19-twenties: Destruction as the condition for Becoming. Later on, after her return to Russia, Sabina Spielrein lost her license and freedom to work by Stalin and was killed in 1942 by German Nazis who were inflated by the destructive side.

I had heavy dreams in the following night. I was thinking of Sabina, Jung, the sad history and the power of Archetypal images and energies. The next day we wanted to see the ashram of Ramana Maharshi – the wise man whom Jung avoided to visit.

C. G. Jung's visit in India 1937/38

Already in his early important study about unconscious processes „Symbols of Transformation“ (1912) Jung showed himself deeply influenced by Indian culture and philosophy. The concept of the “Self” as the centre of the individual as well as of the Wholeness of reality he developed from ancient Indian patterns of thinking. So he says with the words of a Chandogya-Upanishad:

“Man is my soul (atman) in my innermost heart, smaller than a little grain of rice or the kernel of a corn of a rice grain, or a grain of millet or the kernel of a millets grain or a grain of mustard seed or the kernel of mustards grain – it is my soul in my innermost heart, bigger than the earth, larger than the space of air, greater than heaven, larger than these worlds.”

As Jung wrote this paradox expression is a result of thousands of years of experiencing the reality and non-reality of human psyche, as well as of a special introverted Indian tradition of philosophy. Western traditions with the emphasis on the rationalistic individual are much more extraverted, and the people have much more problems in introspection. There is, as Jung was well aware of, also a pattern of unconsciously projecting ones shadow side onto people from other cultures. The old Indian culture and philosophy became a projection field for Europeans who tried to find there what they missed in Europe. This is the same still today.

It was in the 1930ies when Indian culture and philosophy became central issues in the psychoanalysis of C. G. Jung and his circle. 1933, in the year when the Nazis came to power in Germany, the Swiss C. G. Jung was invited to the first Eranos Congress in Ascona. On this conference the Indologists Heinrich Zimmer (Heidelberg) and Mrs. Rhy Davids (London) gave the main lectures, about the Indian Tantra Yoga and Pali texts about Jhana (Dhyana) traditions. Jung himself spoke about what he called the Individuation Process – how to become who you are and how to integrate the shadow in your own psyche. The central question was “Who am I?” In the following years he used to draw a lot of Mandala as healing expressions of his own unconscious process and the patterns of its imagination and integration. Mandala became means of creation and balancing his psyche. Nowadays, after the recent publication (2010) of the Red Book which was written and illustrated by Jung in the years 1913 to 1917, we know that Jung made his first Mandala already in those years.

In December 1937 Jung started for his first and only trip to India. He was invited by the British-Indian government to participate at the 25th anniversary of the University of Calcutta. On this occasion he got honorary doctorates from the Universities of Allahabad, Benares and Calcutta. His impressions he wrote down in two papers: “The dreaming world of India” and “What India can teach us” (Asia XXXIX/1,2, New York 1939). He also wrote an Introduction for H. Zimmer, called “The wise man of India”(Coll. W. 11) where he states: “Maybe I should have visited the Maharshi”. The question still remains why, Jung didn't go to Tiru when he was in Madras. From there (Madras is today called Chennai) it is about 200 km to Tiruvannamalai.

My ideas went in the following directions:

One can ask why Jung in those years shortly before the Second World War was again so interested in Indian thought and religious practice at all. I think there are two reasons: First is that Analytical Psychology in some of its basic patterns is in fact close to ancient Buddhist or even Upanishad

thinking. The other reason might be found in the Zeitgeist and the growing threat coming from Nazism and the German psychosis. In the years after the disaster of WW I in Europe (1914-1918) there was a great traumatic confusion in Germany, depression, longing for orientation, not only in Germany. Mythology of every kind was en vogue. Jung was aware of the dangers of an unprepared encounter with mythology and the dangers of inflation. Then came Hitler and the German psychosis. In his text "Wotan" 1936 Jung described some archetype of the collective unconscious as the dry waterbed of a river which can immediately get swollen with stormy waters after a rain, and destroy everything in its way. The next year Jung went to India.

Jung in those years was very much concerned about the future in Europe. The invitation to visit India came in the right moment. May be, it was a kind of flight from the ominous reality, two years before the outburst of WW II; or (in the same time) in India he was looking for lost traditions of living the archetype, for sustaining psychological structures and for a humanized mythology in the other culture. Then he was looking for "what India could tell us". Nevertheless I also can imagine that when in India Jung had to protect him from the deep impressions and influence of the ancient and so powerful Indian culture and the social contrasts. Jung was a thin-skinned introvert, and he was a European. I was thinking of my own experience with the dropping water in Hyderabad. At the end of his Indian trip he sometimes preferred to stay on the ship and to read his European alchemical texts. It may seem that Jung was avoiding or repressing something, which was too much – or too close? to him.

Why didn't Jung visit the Maharshi?

The next day we went to visit the ashram where the Maharshi lived. From his 16th year on the sage spent most of his time in caves on the Arunachala Mountain, and we also climbed the hill on the sacred path to one of his caves. We had to go barefoot because this was sacred ground. The Maharshi took this path when he went down to his ashram, where in later years he used to teach and to supervise the kitchen for his many followers, and up again for meditation. Our European feet were not accustomed to do this, the stones were uneven, slippery and peaked, and we learned on these 4 kilometers something about European feet and footwear. I tried to imagine C. G. Jung on this path. When we arrived at the cave a horde of monkeys was waiting for us, and some Indian women selling bananas. They were a team. Of course the monkeys got some bananas from us. In the cave we sat in front of the seat on the saint in the rocks.

Down again in the ashram we were surprised to find in the library a text about Jung and his missed visit when he was in India 1937 (Wasył Nimenko, in Mountain Path 3 and 4, 2010, a journal of the ashram). The article is entitled "Cold feet". The author, obviously a British psychiatrist and now very attached to the ideas of the Maharshi, argues that Jung may have avoided the encounter because he feared it could be too much for him and threaten his inner balance. Jung, being a thinker and intellectual, got cold feet. He writes: "Jung's understanding of the Self was only from an intellectual stance not from one of experiencing the *atman* 'the self' through existence-consciousness-bliss (Sat Chit Ananda)." He says Jung was writing about himself when in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* he made the observation that given the choice between going to heaven and talking about it, mostly people would prefer to talk about it.

The author quotes Jung from his letter to G. H. Mees from Sept. 1947, ten years after his trip to India with the sarcastic statement: "... I didn't care anymore if there were twelve Maharshis on top of each other". In a biographical note the author refers to Paul Brunton, the American writer ("A search in Secret India, 1934) who had visited Jung in Küßnacht in 1936 and spoke with him about India. "Brunton narcissistically claimed that he was particularly spiritually advanced" and he may well have had a strong influence in ensuring that Jung did not visit Sri Ramana. In the last years before Jung's trip, Brunton had fallen out with the ashram, as Nimenko points out, "due most likely to a serious disagreement with Swami Niranjanananda., the younger brother of Sri Ramana and administrator of the ashram".

I don't think that this explains everything. Jung went to India following an invitation of the British colonial government, and also because his friend Heinrich Zimmer warmly encouraged him to do so and to see the Maharshi. The life and teaching of the Maharshi was about the Self. This must have deeply interested Jung.

Jung's text *The Holy Men of India* was then written originally and used as a posthumous introduction to Zimmer's book *The Way to the Self*. Jung knew a lot about the Maharshi from Zimmer. In India, accompanied by Fowler McCormick, he saw a lot, travelling by train from Bombay via Allahabad to Calcutta, and visited many ancient sites and met many interesting people. Among them was the Guru of the Maharaja of Mysore, whom Paul Brunton had claimed to be his new guru, too. Jung got honorary doctor degrees from Indian Universities, and he had to speak on these occasions. It must have been an exhausting voyage, first by ship to Bombay, then by train and car through the subcontinent.

In Calcutta Jung, age 62, finally became ill and had to spend ten days in the military hospital. This was the crisis. Later on he reported the heavy and significant dreams he had in these days and nights. He saw the Holy Grail on the other side of the ocean, and felt a strong wish and desire to go back to Europe and to his own original concern and responsibility. On his way back the harbor of Madras then was the first station after Calcutta. Jung was in convalescence. The distance from Madras to Tiruvannamalai is about 200 km on bad country ways through the heat. I can easily imagine that Jung had seen enough to make the decision not to meet the Maharshi in Tiru. The travelers stopped only in Colombo for a short recreation, and then went back to Europe.

Meditation and Politics

The picture would not be full if the historical context was missing. What happened in India in the 1930ies around Jung's visit?

I am not an Indologist – I try to bring together what I found.

Jung in writing about his Indian experiences mentions another, older Indian sage, Ramakrishna (1836 – 1886) who had lived as a priest of Kali in Bengal. Ramakrishna is famous for his deep devotion to his goddess. He often lost consciousness when adoring the Great Mother and got into Samadhi. His teachings attracted many followers who also adored his mother as an incarnation of Durga.

Ramakrishna and Ramana Maharshi (one generation later) have in common that they both spontaneously fell into trance states of happiness. Ramakrishna had this experience for the first time when he was 7 years, seeing some day white birds flying against the dark sky. The feeling of „bliss“ as the Maharshi called it, came to him in the age of 16 when he had a near death experience realizing that only his body died but not his soul (atman, the Self). During decades of meditation in the caves of mount Arunachala he was longing for and experiencing again this blessing feeling, and down in the ashram teaching about the difference between ego and Self, about Self-Realization, the question „Who am I“ and the loss of ego-consciousness in the all embracing consciousness of Brahma. This one can say is really a Jungian topic.

There were other streams of spirituality alive in India which Jung doesn't mention. They were more connected to the political and social movements of those years. It was the time of India's fighting for independence. There was a more philosophical line with the great Rabindranath Tagore (Philosopher, Poet 1861-1941, Nobel price 1913), Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), and definitely political, Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948). All of them had visited or studied in Europe sometimes.

Aurobindo, born in Bengal, studied in London and after his religious conversion he practiced Yoga integrating other traditions. He was politically active for the sake of Indian independence. Finally after having been in prison and a trial where he was spoken free as the only of many others, he flew in 1910 to Pondicherry, a French enclave at the shores of South India to protect himself for British persecution. There he founded his ashram, supported by "the Mother" Mira Alfassa from Paris. Nevertheless during WW II he supported the British and the allies. Jung could easily have visited him in 1938 in Pondicherry which is just the next harbor south of Madras. But this was French territory, and Jung, as we have seen, was not in good constitution.

Mahatma Gandhi in 1937 when Jung came to India was one of the most famous men, a spiritual teacher and a politician in one person. Gandhi, a lawyer and fighter for freedom, was very successful with the spinning campaign: Everybody should spin his own textile instead of buying British fabric. He had already arranged the famous salt-campaign in 1930 symbolically to break the British salt monopoly. The colonial government put him in prison again and again, but he succeeded with nonviolent activities (Ahimsa), with fasting and the idea of humiliating himself so far that no enemy could humiliate him deeper. This is what Mani Bhaumik told me in Hyderabad. Unfortunately he could not prevent that his Party could not go together with the Moslem party, and the British government pushed the split of the Indian Independence Movement between Hindus and Moslems. This happened around 1937 when Jung was going to visit India. The last Vice King Mountbatten finally promoted the dividing of India and the foundation of Islamic Pakistan. In 1947 the British left behind a broken subcontinent, and the independence was overshadowed by waves of violence. Between 1 or 3 millions of people were killed, and ca. 10 Millions had to leave their homes. In Kashmir a civil war is still going on.

I can imagine that Jung, invited by the British government, tried to avoid / or had no chance to get in closer contact with the revolutionary movements in India. He must at least have felt the tensions. I find it remarkable that in the very same years there were so different streams and important teachers in India.

The wise men of India knew about each other. Gandhi is said to have send sometimes overworked friends of his Congress party to the Maharshi for that they would find peace there: "Go and stay at Ramanashram for a time". He was only once in Tiru, for a political speech in the thirties, but didn't visit the Maharshi who was sitting in the ashram hall. Gandhi's attendant, a leading Congress politician Rajagopalachari told the driver not to enter the ashram. Ramana later said he knew the reason: "Gandhi would like to come here but Rajagopalachari was worried about the consequences. Because he knows that Gandhi is an advanced soul, he fears the he might go into Samadhi here and forget all about politics. That is why he gestured to the driver to drive on." The Maharshi emphasized that everything is the Self and Brahman. If you want to change something this would be attempt of the "I want" or "I-thought". But "correcting oneself is correcting the whole world. The sun is simply bright. It does not correct anyone. Because it shines the whole world is full of light. Transforming yourself is a means of giving light to the whole world." (All these quotations are from the ashrams website.)

On the other side he remarked with reference to himself and Gandhi: "Our business is to keep quiet. If we enter into all these (political activities), people will naturally ask, and justifiably, 'Why is he interfering in all these instead of keeping quiet?' Similarly if Mahatma Gandhi keeps quiet leaving aside all his activities, they will ask, 'Why is he keeping quiet instead of engaging in all these activities?' He must do what he has come for. We must do what we have come for."

Arvind Sharma (2005) describes the different goals as follows: "Both Mahatma Gandhi and Ramana Maharshi emphasized the fact that one must change oneself in order to change the world. Thus changing the world, like charity begins at home (...) Gandhi (...) would have endorsed Albert Schweitzer's remark that 'example is not the main thing, it is the only thing' (...) This convergence however conceals the fact that while Mahatma Gandhi's basis of advocating self-reform was moral, that of Ramana Maharshi was metaphysical. Mahatma Gandhi released forces for bettering the world by setting an example through dedicated observance of truth and nonviolence. His reason for prioritizing reform of self over reform of the world was moral. Although Ramana Maharshi would probably agree on this point, his reason for advocating self-reform before setting out to reform the world was metaphysical. He believed that one was not in the world, the world was within oneself and so it is bound to change if one did. His position may be philosophically hard to digest but there is little doubt that he stood by it."(Sharma 2005, p. 81 f.)

I think that Gandhi had a strong metaphysical side, too, and believed he would influence and change the world directly by his strong fasting, his non-violent actions and penance – like the old sage Arjuna in Hindu tradition who could even master and overcome the gods. But Gandhi had also a European education, and was strongly influenced by the Christian ideas of Tolstoy. Tagore was, after having been enthusiastic about Gandhi, later on critical when Gandhi's Tolstoyanism became clear, and the former more western oriented Congress Party got such a strong political power by the support of Hindu peasants and people of the lower casts.

Aurobindo, also more European oriented, lived in exile, in French Pondicherry in South India, retired from politics, but during the war he supported the Allies. Compared with Gandhi and Aurobindo the Maharshi appears to be conservative if not reactionary. He was certainly not interested in politics

such as an agreement with the Moslem population. His place Tiruvannamalai is a true Hindu place – didn't I see there those militant Hindu youngsters?

May be that this is a projection. But can't it be that a movement, so deep and so widespread as the Independence movement of such a big people and culture gives birth and is worked through by many different streams? The best and most powerful traditions of a culture will be woken up. The introverted Meditation in Tiru has its place there as well as the intelligent integrative (!) Yoga of Aurobindo or the spiritual wisdom and clever political activity of a Mahatma Gandhi.

Jung and Gandhi? To close the circle

Jung's fascination for the spiritual heritage of India is sometimes interpreted as showing his disinterest in the political realities of his time. I think that this is not true. Jung was certainly an introverted intuitive, and his idea was that the most important was to work through the problems inside men's own psyche. Already in his Red Book he even was working through WW I on this internal level ("subject interpretation"). Individual and collective psyche were regarded linked and complementary (Red Book 2009, S.240, Footnote 103). But Jung's behavior is much more complex. He acted clearly politically as president of the IPA (1910) and later on as president of the International Medical Society for Psychotherapy (1933). He tried to make arrangements with the German Nazi government and burnt his fingers. Incomprehensible uttering about "Jewish psychology" 1933/34 show that Jung was not conscious about the deadly political meaning of that racist thinking under Hitler. Also the political situation in the early thirties in Europe was confused. It was often said and criticized that Jung in the thirties did not make open political statements against the Dictatorship in Germany and the persecution of Jews, Sinti and Roma, Homosexuals, psychic ill and handicapped people. I think in 1933/34 it was beyond his imagination what the Germans would do. It is not very known that after the establishment of Franco's Fascism in Spain in 1936 there was censorship in Switzerland. Important officials were in open favor of Franco and Hitler. All western governments and interested groups hoped that Hitler would fight Stalin and protect Capitalism. Churchill then said that time will show whether Hitler will be one of the greatest Germans, or the contrary. When the war began everybody feared that the Germans would occupy Switzerland – another reason not to provoke Hitler. Jung's statements were safeguarded and thoughtless in the same time, as already in 1936 in *Wotan* when he showed himself as a Warner from outside. Many dangerous collective complexes (cultural complexes) were activated. A few years after Jung's trip to India Jung Churchill uttered that he didn't become prime minister of her Majesty to pass on India to „this half naked fakir“ Gandhi. Some months after his return from India Jung gave his famous Knickerbocker interview „Diagnosing the dictators“ (1938) where he compared Hitler with some of his patients who heard voices. Consecutively Jung came on the black list of the Nazi. From 1942 on Jung was involved in secret intelligence services of the Allies with Allan Dulles from the OSS (later CIA). After WW II Churchill visited Switzerland in 1946 and wanted to have a long conversation with Jung. He regarded Jung as an important adviser for the postwar psychological and political structure of the world. Unfortunately the documents about Jung's collaboration with Allan Douglas and the later CIA are not published. This cooperation started in 1942; the content is secret still today. Allan Douglas said after the war that „probably nobody ever will know how much C. G. Jung did for the Allies during the war.“ (Bair 2005, S.700)

Also this raises many questions. To come back to the Indian topic: Jung emphasizing the „European way“ and warning from adopting „eastern meditation“ is in principle complementary to what the Maharshi did. They both followed the paths of their own culture or of what they thought their cultural heritage was. The Maharshi practiced and spoke about “to realize oneself as the Self of the whole universe”. He must have been an impressive look. “The truth the sage has realized shines in him like the sun, in the light of which one may see things properly and thereby free oneself from worldly entanglements” (Aksharajna 2010, p. 32). Jung did meditation, too, but he always emphasized that he was an empiric scientist of the unconscious. His idea was “to eat the world” and to realize one's existence, to integrate one's dark sides, and not at all to give up the “I” for the Self. The Holy Grail is something different than meditation on the identity of Atman and Brahman. The Grail can be achieved only through compassion and asking the question of pity to the fisher king. In the Upanishads there is fate, our existence is an illusion, and following the Bhagavad Gita you have even to kill your brother if Lord Krishna explains you why.

Both are not political concepts.

I think that Jung did what he could. It is not fair to criticize Jung that he was no second Gandhi who was more successful in bringing both together. Nevertheless, the Maharshi, but also Mahatma Gandhi, the “great soul” and C. G. Jung have something in common. Jung is said never to have given a seminar about his favorite Active Imagination without telling the story of the rainmaker:

There was a drought in a village in China. They sent for a rainmaker from far away. When he arrived he found the village in a miserable state. The cattle were dying, the vegetation was dying, and the people were affected. The people crowded around him and were curious what he would do. He said: Give me a hut and leave me alone for a few days. So he went into his hut, and the people were wondering. One, two days passed. On the third day it started pouring rain and he came out. What did you do, they asked. He answered: I came into your area and find that it is chaotic. The rhythm of life is disturbed, so when I come into it I, too, am disturbed. The whole thing affects me and I am immediately out of order. So what can I do? I want a little hut to be by myself, to meditate, to set myself straight. And then, when I am able to get myself in order, everything around is set right. We are now in Tao, and since the rain was missing, now it rains. (After Zeller 1982, in Chodorow 1997 p.19 f.)

One of Gandhis famous sayings was: Be the change you want to see in the world. This is exactly what Jung wanted to emphasize.

Gandhi was successful in achieving India's independence in 1947. He was not successful in keeping the country together. He couldn't prevent the subcontinent from falling apart, and he had to witness the horrible massacres between Hindu and Muslim people. By his last fasting against the aggression between the two parties in Delhi he could stop the open civil war for a short while. He was killed by a Hindu fanatic for having agreed to the split between India and Pakistan. On his late photos he looks sad. He was against the modernization of India in terms of industrialization. Like Tolstoy he put his hope for the future of his country on the villages and the rural traditions. Nehru, his friend and the first president, then supported the development of a new middle class. India became what it is now, with all its contradictions. Gandhi's image remains as an idol, but his ideas have lost their enlightening power. Today as economists say (like Bernard Lietaer on Cortona-India, and the current

president of India, Mr. Singh) a new international Marshall plan is needed to feed the poor, to save the nature and to equalize the social structures.

Jung had no political project like Gandhi. He was a psychiatrist, devoted to his psychology and the quest for his myth, and the myth of mankind in his time. He was very concerned about destructive archetypal powers, of the atom bomb and the danger of a self made destruction of the world. He became frustrated about his loss of influence, felt him being scapegoated for Anti-Semitism, but developed an enormous creativity after his retreat from politics and the end of the WW II. He became more and more the old wise man in his Bollingen retreat, chopping firewood like Tolstoy and meditating like an Indian siddhu. Alchemy was his main interest, besides the working with his patients and his circle. He died at home, 50 years ago, aged 86. His warning for cultural inflation by unconnected archetypal powers in the collective unconscious is as actual as in the 30ies.

The more urgent a situation comes to us the stronger is the longing for help, for orientation, and the inclination for projections. Are we better than Jung? In Jung's case the facets of his personality respectively the spectrum of frequent projections is wide. It goes from him having had deep insights in archetypal dynamics of the psyche and wisdom to total political naivety, from altruism to opportunism, from supporting Zionism to Anti-Semitism and collaboration with the Germans or the British. It would be fine if Jung was an old wise man, simple and without a shadow. When he insisted in the need of connecting the "I" with the unconscious and of shadow integration he knew what he was talking about. He wanted to learn to see in the dark. In the global political darkness of his time orientation was obviously very difficult. He studied the darkness in his own unconscious to "regain his soul" (Red Book). I am not sure if he ever found the bright sun shining in him as the Maharshi did. He never gave his "I" up for the Self.

But what, then, about our situation today?

Steps down ?

From Tiru we went to Bangalore, capital of Karnataka, named now Bungaluru as before the British. We visited Kusum Dhar Brabhu, the Jungian analyst, and the Jungian Developing Group there. Again I gave a dream seminar, and like in Hyderabad I was impressed by the level of insight in psychodynamics and the archetypal images, based on Indian traditions and identities. I learned something about Shivaists and Vishnuists – followers of the two cosmic energies of transformation (Siva) and preserving (Vishnu). Both energies are essential. We also had an inspiring exchange between Hindu and Moslem people in the Developing Group. I felt as home in this atmosphere of mutual interest and understanding.

Bungaluru is a city in transformation. There you find top modern districts (cybertown) near to traditional market streets, bourgeois living neighborhoods, a lot of traffic, so many people, Hindu and Moslem in their traditional clothes, colourful Hindu temples with Nandis in front and solemn mosques, cows standing around, but also many poor districts, abandoned house gardens and slums.

This fascinating city is full of contrasts. Also the archaic India is still alive. In a newspaper I read about a mother who had sacrificed her tongue to goddess Kali for the sake of her son's marriage. Of course she died. It reminded me of Zimmer's text "The Indian World Mother" (Eranos 1938) about the blood

thirsty Kali. On the front page of this newspaper was the French president Sarkozy who just visited Bungaluru and got India to sign a contract for buying 4 French Nuclear Power Stations for South India. His demagogic argument: Such an important country like India should no longer stand aside. Obviously he was playing with an Indian inferiority complex. I was thinking of the dream with the barefooted student and the humiliation of the Indian culture.

Thanks to Sarkozy I was immediately back in the here and now. They were selling and building Nuclear reactors in Southern India!

Didn't I feel like a European when in Hyderabad watching the dropping water? But This My Europe was playing a bad game with India selling that dangerous technology. What about Chernobyl? Was the Bophal disaster 1984 forgotten, with it's more than half a million injured people? What shall the Indians do with the nuclear waste? Isn't it a one way without escape, is it? What about responsibility for the shadow sides of industrialization? How can old India survive? Wasn't the heavy rain in Mahalipuram, at the wrong time, an expression of global warming and alterations in global thermodynamics, was it? Wasn't there a flood catastrophe recently in Pakistan, and some years ago in Bangladesh, was it? I have seen the poor people in front of their wet huts on my way to Tiru. Nuclear industry is no answer, but a big business and a play with the most poisonous and toxically substances. Is the western loss of responsibility, the growing immorality never to stop? I felt that I was much concerned about India. This can't be the future we have to invent.

The question of fundamentalism came into my mind – wasn't it a reaction to humiliation? Kusum, in an impressive article about her city, writes about the rise of Hindu fundamentalism that it can be regarded as an "expression of the unvoiced longing of many modern Indians to reconnect with their religious roots. Under the spell of secularism – which is indeed an archetype- we lose the sense that religion is an instinct in the human being. And no instinct can be neglected for long without consequences. Unless we address this longing in depth we will swing between religious fundamentalism and secular rootlessness." (Dhar Prabhu 2010, p.368).

Everything came into my mind. Gandhi and Tolstoy, Churchill, the Maharshi under the trees, Jung in Bollingen, the optimistic school children, and my own age. It was, somehow, too much for me – and I am writing these lines, still, to bring my mind in order.

Also the students of Cortona-India came into my mind, with their open faces and their courage and spirit in asking questions. Questions are always better than answers. I was thinking of the new green Marshall-Plan, the need for a renewed morality in economy and politics, and the optimistic project of Luigi's Cortona-India to bring people of different cultures together. It was so good to have the chance to listen and to speak to the Indian people with mutual respect. It was also good not to forget the merits, but also to realize the many shadows of my European culture and especially the history of my own country, without being fixed in projections.

Finally I am thinking about my own future. What can I do? What shall I do? Who am I? How can self-realization (Maharshi) and politically acting are connected.

Who are You?

(January 15, 2011)

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