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BRILLIANT SANITY

The emblem “Brilliant Sanity” proclaims the existence of an inherent wakefulness that can be pointed to, recognized, and encouraged through psychological work. This is not metaphysics or metapsychology, nor is it some idealized picture. It is genuine experience that is simple, direct and sane. It arises from clarifying the nature of mind processes. This kind of psychological work involves a progression through discipline, gentleness, and courage, in developing ourselves and in helping others to grow.

The wheel in the center of the emblem stands for the principle of discipline. For the psychotherapist, discipline means that one has the fearlessness to accurately study one’s own mind and environment. From that there develops gentleness in one’s own life. The bodhi leaf represents the possibility of extending that gentleness to others. The warmth that one expands to others is the necessary environment that allows one to appreciate and truly understand the state of mind of another. The arch represents the courage and daring to help others by any means and beyond our own personal and professional interests.

Psychopathology arises from a failure, for whatever reason, to engage in the personal journey needed to cultivate the wakefulness, precision, and tenderness that is already there. Instead, one falls back to solidification and aggrandizement of the psychological construct of belief in an ego. It is a fragile construction—a homunculus, imaginary companion, double, friend or enemy, object of internal dialogue, a reference point. We continually have hints that ego is a fabrication and that it needs constant maintenance. This gives rise to an anxiety about one’s own survival and we call that situation “pathological.” It is not pathological at all. It is a true and insistent reminder that we are doing something wrong by attempting to live in a personal mythology that is always falling apart. One then develops habitual patterns and defenses to deal with that anxie-

ty and to further secure the notion of ego. The psychological construction of ego is the primary delusion that we live with. It is the foundation of all neurosis and psychosis, the source of our alienation in accurately relating to the phenomenal world. It is a core issue in the problem of "narcissism."

This is of course, the central insight of the Buddhist experience and the major source of the inspiration for this Journal. From this, there has developed the possibility of working with oneself and others beyond ego. This Journal is a document of that kind of psychotherapy.

We recognize that this is not conventional psychological language, but that is not the main difficulty. The history of psychology reveals that any assertion as to the non-existence of ego has led to an enormous individual and cultural resistance, followed by ignoring and amnesia. The psychological observations and implications of the work of Charles Darwin about the origins of self-consciousness have never been pursued. The analysis of the subtle construction of ego in the work of William James has gathered few students. The early observations of Sigmund Freud as to the maintenance, justification, and rationalization of the "beloved ego" have been distorted and lost. The current work of Jacques Lacan in Paris, regarding the illusion of ego and our imprisonment by that conception, is usually dismissed as impenetrable. The reasons for the fierce resistance engendered by the threatening claims of the non-existence of ego are largely personal and political, but perhaps some of the resistance can be explained by the fact that no consistent psychotherapeutics has emerged from these claims. This Journal will attempt to demonstrate that therapeutic work without the crippling conception of ego is not only possible but is actually being done.

Studying the nature of mind in ourselves and others is the basic training ground for this approach to therapy. Because of that one can understand, clarify and work with disturbed states of mind in a direct and genuine way. At that point the skillful application of the experience of non-ego allows for the workability of many different therapeutic modalities and styles.

When one begins to awaken from the delusion of ego a further connection occurs—a connection with a conscious and unconscious striving for health as well as an urge to be helpful to others. Then one's life can be acknowledged as a meaningful personal journey of development.

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