

***Artisan Mastery Systems as Spiritual Disciplines for Diverse Cultures:
Meeting Local Religious Challenges in the 21st Century Era of Global Science and Technology***

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Prologue

Artisan Mastery Systems and philosophies of religion are coming together in this 21st Century Era of leading edge science, advanced global technologies and cultural diversity. Ongoing technological and economic revolutions leave many of the resource and mass manufacturing systems outmoded and ecologically unwise. Other ways are needed to relate on every level. We face a series of crises that require redefining and refining a host of approaches. We know now that the Universe is a *Cosmos* creating and recreating itself everywhere, all the time. What is the role of philosophy of religion in this Era of global challenges? The answer is twofold: *First*, we redefine the role and aim of philosophy of religion and its subject. *Second*, we redefine the role and function of work and craft appropriate for our conditions as local, global and cosmic actors. Thus, we redefine *artisan crafts as spiritual disciples* appropriate to contemporary challenges, and then explore how *Artisan Mastery Systems* can be appropriate *Spiritual Disciplines* for this Era.

Artisan Mastery Systems as Spiritual Disciplines

Ancient and modern Spiritual Practices, Eastern and Western, now can be seen as *Artisan Cosmology Systems*. As complete systems they can use *Artisan-Craft Models*. Their values, knowledge, techniques and skills can be coherent, integrated *Systems* of practices, sayings and lore. They then can be *Archetypal Guides* for practicing, passing-on and continuing *Whole Art Mastery* of ecologically wise practices (*Ecosophies*) for local and global Systems.

Artisan Mastery Systems we can revision today as Spiritual Disciplines are: Healer, gardener, builder, carpenter, blacksmith, potter, musician, poet-singer, hunter, scout-tracker, fisher, farmer, warrior, and wild journeyer. In the West, Jesus was a carpenter, healer and teacher, who became “a fisher of men”. Eastern traditions practice *Craft-Arts* as *Yogas* (India), *Taos* (China), or *Dos* (Japan). *Mastery Systems* have common typologies, archetypes, paradigms, patterns, and values we use here to explore how these Whole Arts can be Spiritual Disciplines for our Era. (See “Ways of Light” and “The Wild Way” on my website, for other examples of whole arts.)

Whole Arts Mastery

Whole Art Systems lead us to Mastery through direct and indirect teachings and practices. Done alone, with partners or in groups, they can engender deep experiences with on-going practice. Direct ones are called royal, regal, or raja (rike in Norsk) Ways, as *Spiritual-Arts-Disciplines*. As *Mastery Systems*, they go from low levels of awareness, to ones higher and more complete. Some well known ones are yoga Spiritual Disciplines and Buddha’s *Four Noble Truths* and their *Eightfold Path* to liberation by awakening Buddha Nature. (*Light’s Nine-fold Path* actualizes illumination as the *Christos*.)

Spiritual Mastery Systems, like *Zen and Aikido*, are *Whole Arts*. As spiritual systems they are Key, Royal, Paradigm, and Universal Ways of attuning with others in the creative energies of the Universe. Whole Arts cultivate *unified selves* in harmony with *Nature* and other communities. *Light Cosmologies* are *Ways of Life* integrated with Nature in daily life, work, and play. We have deeper life meanings by being grounded in shared connections to Ultimate Reality, and they help us to create community.

Spiritual Whole Art Disciplines as *Ways* or *Taos* are not abstract theories. They are nonviolent, systematic ways of life that fit into the 21st Century’s *Creative Cosmology Systems*. In creative ways of life, *we* are always learning and opening to new dimensions, transforming and transcending, participating in Cosmic Awareness at Creation Centers. For contemporary Cosmologies, creation centers of meaning are

everywhere in the Universe. *The Universe we now know is a Cosmos in process of creation. Creation is the Cosmic order!* In creation cosmologies all beings have meanings and purposes; so-called opposites are complements. *Black holes balance Light.* The Cosmos has neither beginning nor end. Creation goes on at every level, in all times, places, and spaces. There are infinite infinities!

Creation as Love

Royal Spiritual Practices bring us to the clear aware unity of *Cosmic Consciousness*. In the *West*, this illumination is shown by Hildegard, Teresa, De Vinci, William Blake, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman and multitudes more; in the *East*, by Lao Tzu, Confucius, Nagarjuna, Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, Dogen, Ueshiba and multitudes more. In the *Gnostic Gospels*, *Love* has nine names and forms, such as eros, agape and filial. *Ways of Light Nine-fold Systems* unify all loving energies to bring joy, harmony and luminous glow. The *Light Way* unifies creative powers in communion with communities, spiritual natures and home places: In Personal, Global and Cosmic Ways.

Appreciative Understanding as Key

Infants and children are tender seedlings needing nurture, affection, darkness, light and activity to flourish. Negative “Dark Shadow Sides” are created by not being aware of the *Divine and Dark Light Natures*. Injuries and traumas can result from accidents and misguided “education.” All person-beings can be well and whole.

Artisan Spiritual Paths are Ways of gratitude, respect, appreciation, beauty and blessing. They seek peace, nonviolence, social responsibility, justice, and ecological harmony. As *Whole Art Paths* to spiritual integration, balance and unity, they are accepting and symbiotic. We are born free of evil as sin. We each have unique gifts from Divine Creation. Artisan Spiritual Ways treat all persons and beings with respect, appreciation and kindness. We hope all are free, joyful, and loving. We act beautifully to share positive spiritual energy and to help others to find joy. We appreciate Life’s gifts and we share energetic glow. Earth’s many beings need ecologically sustainable, responsible, nonviolent practices to promote thriving species, communities and rich cultures. *Spiritual Arts* cultivate harmony with others in home places, and we recover our natural, playful, spontaneous *Wild Nature*.

Light Way Trinity as Christian Whole Art

Ways of Light Spiritual Paths to *Christos Awareness* are inspired by Jesus, Christian, Jewish, and Gnostic Artisans. As *Spiritual Cosmologies*, they are routes to community and personal transformation; they empower us to deeply connect in Nature. We create harmony with others and resolve religious, ethnic and racial conflicts. These liberating, joyful engagement unify *Body* (hand), *Mind* (head), and *Spirit* (heart) with three *guiding principles*: 1. Live Lightly on Earth, Giving Light to others; 2. Live by Light of the Sun’s Wisdom; 3. Live by Light of Spiritual Insight. Each guide has three dimensions called a *Nine-fold Way*.

Whole Art Paths as Ways to Spiritual Transformation are conveyed through stories, practices, symbols and typologies using natural distinctions. Christian Wisdom Systems have three icons: Father (Creator), Son (Creation) and Holy Spirit, forming unified Trinities of Rituals, Ceremonies, and Practices. Each element has meaningful levels of practices, rituals, and ceremonies. One *Light Way Trinity* is body, mind, and spirit. Another, for powers and capacities, is *affective, cognitive, and spiritual*; each of these has unifying triads. We recognize these distinctions in daily life as *Hand, Head, and Heart*. Trios of practices can be demonstrated by formal rituals and other movements; they can be illustrated conceptually with three overlapping circles like Logic’s *Venn* diagrams.

Light Way Systems use the triad, trinity, threefold (Christian) pattern. *Trinity* members each have three quality-features. There are nine features, elements and practices in the *Whole System* as a *Nine-Fold Way*. These are like the nine dimensions of reality in *Old Norse World Tree Systems*, and like other systems of

Artisan Nature Spirituality, as in shamanic ceremonial journeying. In Shamanic Systems, reality has three iconic *Realms* Jesus and others visited: the *Lower, Middle, and Upper Worlds*. Each *Realm* has divisions and places, that vary with culture and place. In the Jewish Mystical *Kabala*, reality has ten dimensions. *Sufism* also has many similar rich practices.

We now know that Jesus of Galilee lived in a Jewish *Gnostic Artisan*, trading community. They knew about many cultures and other spiritual traditions, such as the *yogas* of India. Indian stories say He studied yoga arts there during some of his missing years. His home community was open to communication, in part because they were traders and travelers, who became open by experiencing different cultures, like the Vikings later.

This *Way of Light Path* is appropriate for *Third Millennium Christos Artisans*. It is in harmony with collective knowledge gained from comparative study of texts, traditions and practices. It is *attuned* to integrated, ecological, whole system sciences. It fits the “new story” *Cosmology* of Thomas Berry, the Creative Mythologies of Joseph Campbell, and the Eastern Spiritual Teachings as relayed by Joanna Macy. This is a Path suitable for *Christos Artisans* in an era of environmental, economic, social, and personal challenges, as described by Mathew Fox.

Light Way Trinity

- I. Hand-Body-Affective*: Live Lightly on *Earth*, Give Light to others to feel full connections;
- II. Head-Mind-Cognitive*: Live by Light of the Sun’s Wisdom and conceptual insights;
- III. Heart-Core-Spiritual*: Live by Light of Spiritual insights and sense of intuitive unity.

Nine-Fold System

- I. Hand-Body-Affective*: Live Lightly on Earth, giving Light to others (Blue-green Earth with aura as unity symbol) *Light’s First Star Value Focus: Appreciation*
 - 1. Few possessions, low consumption, healing-saving ways by giving positive energy to others
 - 2. Few desires, simple, joyful lifestyles with positive impacts, lighthearted and fun
 - 3. Light footprints, high life quality, ways of least force, liquid glowing light (like Taoist *wu wei*)
- II. Head-Mind-Cognitive*: Live by Sun’s Light wisdom (Sun also symbolizes inner light) *Light’s Second Star Value Focus: Understanding*
 - 4. Balance full light spectrum in Sunlight’s mysteries
 - 5. Sun’s white light in rainbows of diversity with mythic prism metaphors
 - 6. Daily solar budget for creative energy sustainability
- III. Heart-Core-Spiritual*: Live by Light of Spiritual Insight and intuitive sense (Symbol for personal aura-glow -rainbow) *Light’s Third Star Value Focus: Loving-Wisdom*
 - 7. Live by love and illumination, with beautiful actions free of energy depleting negative shadows
 - 8. Ecstatic, joyful, positive feelings, attuning with others and *Nature*, as playful, Light-filled beings
 - 9. Actualizing *Christos* for complete illumination in Divine Mystery Source (the visible arises from the non-visible)

Light Way Artisan Practices optimize unity with energetic glow. (Negative dark sides can arise from blocking Divine Energy Sources.) As *Archetype*, *Jesus* exemplifies *Loving Compassion* to unify energies as *Christos* (the *illuminated*). He and Mary Magdalene practiced Tantric-forms of yoga unifying Light as glowing-flowing awareness. “Two become one” is an esoteric meaning for marriage in Mystic Systems like alchemy. Harmonizing male *and* female energies within ourselves and others, we can activate tantric union alone, with other persons, or communally. There are many ways to activate this *Unity in Light*. Hindu traditions call fully unified awareness “*sat-chit-ananda*,” meaning perfect being, wisdom and bliss, a *glowing radiant awareness*. Sexuality has sacred, bonding, health benefits, and also enlightening spiritual effects, when a holy practice, alone, with partners, and communally in the *Artisan Spiritual Mastery Ways*.

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