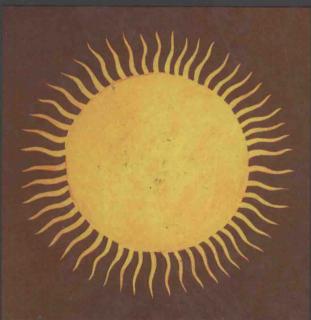
# BOOK OF SYMBOLS

REFLECTIONS ON ARCHETYPAL IMAGES

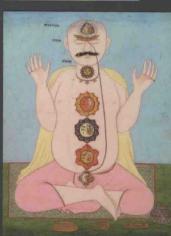
**TASCHEN** 











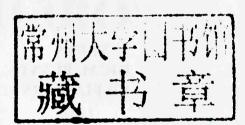
THE BOOK OF SYMBOLS is a reliable compendium of potentially transformative images and essays, an essential guide to symbolic images for therapists, artists, art historians, designers, and all explorers of the inner life.

— JAMES C. HARRIS, MD *Professor*, John Hopkins University





# BOOK OF SYNBOLS



Editor-in-Chief AMI RONNBERG

Editor KATHLEEN MARTIN

**TASCHEN** 

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COVER IMAGE Hand-shaped cutout of the American Woodland Indians, Middle Woodland period, 200 B.C.E.—400 C.E. (see also p. 383).

IMAGES ON BACKCOVER (top left to bottom right)
Bubble, 5th-century Japanese hanging scroll by an unknown artist (see also p. 53);
Sky (see also p. 56); Sun, tempera painting with gold, ca. 18th century, India (see also p. 23);
Dew, Greek vase depicting Eos, the goddess of dawn (see also p. 75);
Chakras, the ordering of subtle body energies within the seven major chakras.
Kangra painting, ca. 1820, Himachal Pradesh, India (see also p. 781);
Transformation, mask, wood, hair, twine and paint, Nuxalk Indian,
ca. 1865, British Columbia, Canada (see also p. 779).

IMAGE ON PAGE 2 Crescent, Le Seize Septembre, by René Magritte, oil on canvas, 1956, France (see also p. 31).

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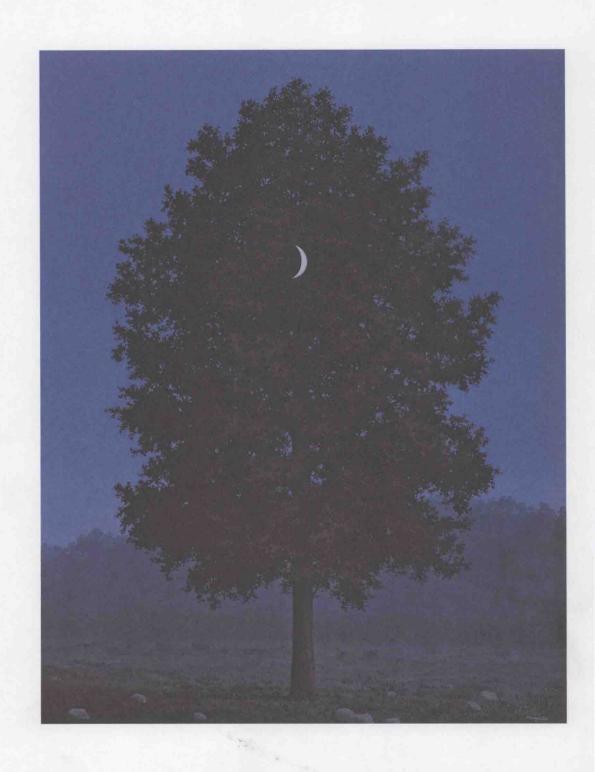
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# BOOK OF SYMBOLS



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### **Preface**

There couldn't be a better way to describe the significance and guiding principle of *The Book of Symbols: Reflections on Archetypal Images* than with these words by Meister Eckhart: "When the soul wants to experience something she throws out an image in front of her and then steps into it." It is an evocation of the image as a threshold leading to new dimensions of meaning. Symbolic images are more than data; they are vital seeds, living carriers of possibility. Eckhart's words also explain why a book of images matters in a world as chaotic and complex as our own.

C. G. Jung was once asked for advice from someone who had in mind to publish a lexicon of symbols. His response was not to do it, since each symbol would require an entire book. We found a way around this by focusing on a specific image. The image both limits and opens up: it is *this* particular image, it grounds the symbol in *this* experience, and yet, with the right image the archetypal reality is evoked. If we couldn't find the right image, we didn't include this particular symbol; when we did, it brought a sense of joyous recognition—like a door opening to some hidden delight. Paul Klee said it well: "Art doesn't reproduce the visible. It renders visible."

Poetry, like symbols, expresses that which cannot be said. When poets awake, it becomes night, said W. S. Merwin. We have tried to keep some of this nighttime perspective, by including poetry, as yet another reflection on symbols. Like the poet who carefully observes nature, in the guidelines we encouraged the writers to study the "luminous particular" of the physical object. Seeing in this way makes another world shine through. Since we were limited to a very brief text, we could only hope, at best, to catch a glimpse of the archetypal reality. At times, readers may disagree with a particular vision of a symbol. Even so, if this provokes alternative associations we feel that the entry has been successful. "A poem wants another poem," said T. S. Eliot, and we hope that our reflections will inspire readers to continue their own. During the years we were often asked why we would make another book about symbols when there are so many. Our answer was always that there isn't one that brings the perspective of the image. The ancient Egyptians had only one word for both writing and drawing. And it is a similar understanding of image and text working together that makes this a unique work on symbols. This is also why we decided not to edit the texts into a

uniform style but to let the many voices of the writers be heard. It is as if each symbol needs its own expression. At the same time the editor and Jungian analyst Kathleen Martin brought her profound knowledge of the workings of the psyche to this project.

We are deeply grateful to the many writers for the commitment to this project and for taking up the challenge to write about a symbol in a few hundred words. A small group of writers, in particular, gave abundantly of their time and talent. The fact that *The Book of Symbols* is the result of a group effort is made clear by naming the Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism as the "author." It is to this organization that the entire project owes its existence.

However, a project such as this has many parents. The idea for The Book of Symbols came from Sam Bercholz at Shambhala Publications, who had previously published two volumes of the ARAS publication project: An Encyclopedia of Archetypal Symbolism, and the second subtitled The Body. The roots of the archive itself reach back to a series of conferences, beginning in the 1930s and continuing throughout most of the twentieth century. They were arranged by Olga Froebe Kapteyn, took place in Ascona, Switzerland, and were named Eranos, from the Greek, meaning a "shared feast." Each year, scholars from East and West, and from diverse academic disciplines, were invited. C. G. Jung became a lifelong contributor and often presented his initial ideas for his later writings. It was the magic of a particular theme that tied the speakers together across cultures and disciplines. To one kind of magic was added another-the images that Frau Froebe collected and exhibited on the walls in the lecture hall and which gradually formed a remarkable archive. In time a copy of this archive was given to the Bollingen Foundation in New York, which gradually grew into the present ARAS under the passionate care of Jessie Fraser and is now housed at the C. G. Jung Center in New York. The materials were given an archetypal structure by Joseph L. Henderson, and branches were added in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Chicago. Recently, the 17,000 images and accompanying texts became available online at www. aras.org through the efforts of Thomas Singer and Carol Sellers Herbert. Finally, without the stewardship of Charles H. Taylor who served for many years, in turn as president, treasurer and editorial chairman, there would be no publication project. It is in gratitude to his selfless service that The Book of Symbols is dedicated to him.

Present and former members of the archive board and a number of ARAS associates have made essential annual contributions to our work. These include in particular Robin Jaqua and John Jaqua, whose passion for the archetypal images was a constant encouragement and inspiration throughout the years, Lucia Woods Lindley and Daniel Lindley, Charles H. Taylor, Nancy Furlotti, Ann Paras, Carol Sellers Herbert and Sarah Griffin Banker. In addition, Rose-Emily Rothenberg, Arlene TePaske Landau, Deborah A. Wesley, Anne Pickup, Philip T. Zabriskie and Beverley Zabriskie, Mary Ottoway and James Ottoway, Judith Harris and Tony Woolfson, Carol Shahin, the estate of Elizabeth Caspari, Melinda Haas, Maude Ann Taylor, Thomas Kirsch, Thomas Singer, Virginia Beane Rutter, Penny Etnier Dinsmore, Joyce King Heyraud, Peter Mudd, Joseph L. Henderson, Barbara Blatt, Maxson McDowell, Nancy Field, Chie Lee, George R. Elder, Mary Wells Barron, Sheila Zarrow, Stephanie Fariss, Thomas Elsner, Beverly Parent and Paul Levine have been generous in their support. The C. G. Jung Institutes in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco made grants that have been great encouragement. Faithful members of the Friends of ARAS in New York, too numerous to mention, have together made critically useful gifts.

During the many years of preparation the editorial committee has been meeting regularly and reviewing the texts, which often inspired passionate discussions. Past and present members include Sarah Griffin Banker, Diane Fremont, Melinda Haas, Robin Jaqua, Maxson McDowell, Laurel Morris, Ann Paras, Bruce Parent, Anne Pickup, Charles H. Taylor and Philip T. Zabriskie. Their wise counsel helped give form to this volume as it now exists. The editorial committee is part of the larger board, with representatives from each of the C. G. Jung Institutes in Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and the C. G. Jung Foundation in New York. Together they have helped steer this gargantuan project to a successful landing.

But were it not for the staff, this volume would have remained in the chaos where everything has its beginning. Throughout we worked as a group, defining the direction of this project and refining the organization. Each member, a working artist in her own right, brought unique skills to the process. Karen Arm, managing editor, reviewed the art history and created ingenious databases where texts and images could be tracked on the computer from beginning to completion. Anne Thulin, assistant editor, scanned and organized all the images. Her sense of structure made it possible to locate all the materials, including the 1,500 images that didn't make it into this volume. She became a part-time detective, trying to find the many owners across the globe in order to obtain permission to use the more than 700 images. Kako Ueda, assistant editor, shared this enormous task and also gathered reference materials from the vast resources in ARAS and the Kristine Mann Library, which helped to inform the texts. Allison Langerak, ARAS online editor, worked on the many finishing details. In addition, Eric Muzzy gave generously of his computer expertise. Ann Withers worked on poetry permissions, Leslie Bialler offered useful advice on poetry, Michael N. Flanagin and Deborah A. Wesley read the manuscript, Vera Manzi-Schacht checked names, Patricia Llosa, Ellen Krüger and Gina Speirs helped track down many images and without Nancy Furlotti this book would never have reached Taschen. I also want to thank Florian Kobler, the editor at Taschen, who is as wise as he is generous with his time and expertise. For a project that took more than 13 years to complete, there were numerous others who gave of their time and talents. We are deeply grateful to them all.

Ami Ronnberg

### Introduction

All of the original essays in this volume are accompanied by images that represent art from around the world and from every era since human beings first depicted, on rocks and cave walls and in simple tools and objects, psyche's imaginal forms. The same forms appear uniquely in an individual's dreams and fantasies. The intention was not to describe at any length the artistic features or contextual history of these images but rather to allow them to serve as points of departure for the essays that follow.

Together, image and text open up a symbol, telling something about what its intrinsic qualities evoke. A symbol mysteriously unites disparities. Thus, the reader will find that we have avoided pat definitions and equations since these tend to constrain a symbol. A still vital symbol remains partially unknown, compels our attention and unfolds in new meanings and manifestations over time. Physics, neurobiology and genetics, for example, have recently provided many new symbolic images. Consistent with the archive's appreciation for C. G. Jung's researches into the psyche, each essay suggests how a given symbol reflects intrapsychic landscapes and field phenomena in which structures and functions, shifting, mercurial energies and processes of transformation participate. Etymological roots, the play of opposites, paradox and shadow, the differentiated ways in which diverse cultures have engaged a symbolic image have all been employed as vectors of meaning.

Of course, symbolic energies get incarnated in all the stuff of life through our unconscious projections, which can obscure as well as illuminate. Our writers have taken pains to be true to the integrity of a symbol and of the empirical realities on which its qualities get "hooked." Such precision is important in discerning how a symbol might be understood, for symbols reveal

themselves in specificities. An elephant's habits of relationship, love of water, massive size, huge ears and strong and flexible trunk have specifically associated it with fertile rain clouds and thunder, the earth goddess Lakshmi, the removing of obstacles and the solidity and weight of interior ground. At the same time, the essays, like the symbolic energies they describe, flow into each other in ways that mirror psyche's unexpected convergences. You might read the entry on Breath, for example, and then be intuitively drawn to Wind and Bird. Our hope is that a wide range of readers will find *The Book of Symbols* absorbing, and that in turn it will stir their own reflections, insights and symbolic imaginings.

My thanks to Laurel Morris for suggesting my participation in this project. To the many independent writers from the fields of psychology, religion, art, literature and comparative myth, who authored the essays, my sincerest gratitude. Special thanks is due Kathie Carlson and John Mendelsohn for their help in the beginning stages of the book. An immense debt of gratitude is owed writers Michael N. Flanagin, Mary E. Martin, Priscilla Young Rodgers, Ami Ronnberg, Sherry Salmon and Deborah A. Wesley for their distinguished contribution to the book over a period of years. To the ARAS staff, Karen Arm, Anne Thulin and Kako Ueda at the archive, and Allison Langerak at ARAS online, my profound appreciation and admiration for the work you do. And to Ami Ronnberg my heartfelt gratitude for the privilege and pleasure of our collaboration.

Kathleen Martin

### About the Authors

Drawing upon Carl Gustav Jung's work on the archetype and the collective unconscious, the Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism (ARAS) is a pictorial and written archive of mythological, ritualistic, and symbolic images from all over the world and from all epochs of human experience.

The collection of 17,000 photographic images, accompanied by commentary on their cultural and historical context, probes the universality of archetypal themes and provides a testament to the deep and abiding connections of all life.

www.aras.org

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# **Bibliography**

References appear within the text in parenthesis and include the author's last name and page number/s. The complete list of bibliographic references is located at the end of the text.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHIC ABBREVIATIONS

Certain references that are frequently used throughout the book are cited within the text in abbreviated form. The abbreviations are listed here in alphabetical order:

(ARAS 2An.001) refers to records from the Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism (ARAS) in New York and San Francisco, which are also available at www.aras.org.

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# CREATION AND COSMOS