

UFOs and the Cosmic Koan

A koan is one of those unanswerable questions in Zen buddhism designed to spur the student into a completely new way of thinking.

by Betty Wood

Research on UFOs seems to be going through one of its periodic changes, although the subject itself has now become so confused and inconsistent in every respect that it is difficult to state with certainty when a “change” occurs. The only thing fairly certain is that every time research takes a definite step in one direction or another, “they” alter their general behaviour pattern and cause us all to engage in a complete rethink. If, for example, researchers establish that most UFO sightings occur on Wednesday mornings to people who have used Brand XYZ toothpaste, you can be sure that shortly afterwards all UFO sightings will switch to Saturday evenings and to people who have just put on clean socks!

There are three main schools of thought among UFO researchers at present: the Extra-terrestrial Visitors hypothesis, which is fast losing ground; the Jungian Collective Unconscious hypothesis that presents it mainly as a symptom of world unrest upheaving from the world psyche, which is still maintaining a steady course; and the hypothesis, which is fast gaining ground, that there is a whole new world beyond our present known world which can be penetrated through a sort of keyhole, or “crack in the Cosmic Egg”, or “the crack between the worlds”, the window into the Unknown etc. There are, of course, still the fringe theories such as the Hollow Earth idea, past and future time-travellers, etheric beings of some sort and so on.

Now there have always been a number of people who have put forward the idea that the UFO craft and their occupants, if any, are coming through from some other “dimension”. This is a rather vague term which cloaks a multitude of sins, as it is very easy to dismiss something inexplicable by airily suggesting that it comes from “some other dimension”. But the time is coming when it seems possible to be rather more specific. With the pace quickening over the last few years, a number of interesting theories and researches have been rising to the surface; many of these involve extremely relevant parallels between UFO activity and such objects as folklore, shamanism and various types of religious experience.

A writer who has provoked much thought in this direction is Carlos Casteneda, whose by now well known “Don Juan” books have sparked off quite a following and generally aroused much interest in new age thinkers as well as orthodox anthropologists, although not primarily in the subject of UFO research. For those not already acquainted with these works, Carlos Casteneda was a young anthropologist who, in the 1960s, was tricked by a Yaqui Indian sorcerer into becoming his apprentice. Many of the eerie adventures his mentor, Don Juan, involved him in were very similar to certain

types of UFO happenings. On frequent occasions Don Juan would conjure up strange manifestations which completely threw his palpitating pupil; these manifestations would often occur when they were out in the desert hunting for "power". Thunderous noises would echo around the area, usually just before an apparition known as an "ally" appeared. An "ally" would seem to be a form of energy, or natural force, which can take on any form it likes — plant, mineral, animal, or the appearance of a human being or even something totally alien. Now a number of UFO contactees have reported strange rumblings, apparently from the sky, before encountering UFOs or "spacemen". It could be that rumblings, like the well-attested whistling noise that often accompanies ghostly or psychic manifestations, presage a change of consciousness or "change of vibration", when some kind of door is opened into the unknown. This is presumably when the "crack in the cosmic egg" occurs, that is, when the cosmic egg - our known world, including our idea of the unknown as well, cracks for a moment and enables one to slip through.

This "crack" is the dawn / twilight time, the time when everything is neither one thing nor the other - betwixt heaven and hell, betwixt high and low water - very similar to all those stories where the hero is required to undertake some task which necessitates him being "neither on land nor on sea; neither in the house nor out of it", i.e. having one foot in the sea and one on land, one foot in the house and one outside etc. This then enables him to partake in some magical activity or overcome a mysterious barrier in order to gain a treasure. In fact, he slips through the "crack" into all that which is not known!

Now why does this presuppose that UFO-nauts come from this "Unknown" rather than from outer space? Firstly, from purely our level-physical, it seems fairly unlikely that physical beings like ourselves originate from other planets in our solar system; true, it would be quite possible to have bases on our moon, for example, and on most of the planets, although there seems little evidence that this is being done on a large scale. Also we really are a fairly insignificant planet, although undoubtedly a noisy and potentially destructive one, but the sheer variety of UFO craft and complexity of the occupants would entail a vast organisation all rather wastefully engaged on what appears to be passive research around and on a little planet on the periphery of the galaxy. Is it worth all that time and expertise? Mankind has never been notable for its modesty; we still think we are of great interest to outsiders, but are we?

Secondly, even for those of us who have managed to overcome the mental barrier of accepting a faster-than-light travel hypothesis, again it is the illogicality and contradictory nature of most of the "communications" received by various contactees - both objectively and subjectively, that forces one to reject to a great extent that these communications are from beings of superior intelligence and powers of a type that has any relevance to our known "world", or Cosmic Egg. Many of the exchanges between Earthmen and "them" are, on the surface, puerile in the extreme and seemingly quite pointless. The number of bogeyman-type spacemen seen increases daily, some of them being described by intelligent and articulate witnesses as just "amorphous blobs". Surely advanced beings — spiritually or technologically would not come

across thousands of light-years, even by time travel, simply to babble inanities or frighten us into fits? And even if they are not beings such as we can envisage, in that case there would seem to be even less point in them coming, if they don't stay long enough to make any intelligible effort at communication.

Now this is not to say I throw out the ETV idea entirely; I do not. It still seems to me perfectly feasible that space travellers from some distant solar system may visit here or even have bases here on Earth or on our home planets. But I feel that any such travellers are not here in the vast numbers reported. Too much of the evidence is far more akin to happenings at home here, happenings which have been familiar for centuries to the less materialistic and more intuitive cultures such as the American Indian, Eskimo, Lapland and Siberian peoples and many Eastern cultures.

Any long-term student of the UFO phenomena can look back to the indiscriminating enthusiasm of the 1950s and see how some of the earlier contactees have changed their tune to some extent, as many of the assumptions and prophecies put forward have just not materialised. This is not to suggest that these contactees were lying far from it; they may well have been deliberately misled by their UFO friends. For example, the well known South African contactee, Mrs. Elizabeth Klarer, still maintains that the story of her contact with a benevolent "Venusian" space-brother is true, but she has changed his place of origin to Alpha Centauri! "Very convenient," the cynical may say, "since Venus as we know it seems pretty uninhabitable and we can't get to Alpha Centauri yet to see what it is like." Perhaps if George Adamski were still with us he would have to say that his "Venusians" slightly misled him as to their home planet. But, as Brad Steiger puts it in his *Gods of Aquarius*, "Venusian" or "Martian" may simply be symbolic of a certain type of entity, or mode of approach on a specific wavelength, i.e. Martian, Venusian, Saturnian etc., such an approach having to be expressed to us in terms we can understand.

However, this apparent policy of confusion and misrepresentation is very similar to stories of contacts with fairy beings, as well as the aforementioned "allies". A well-researched story from Australia tells of a young couple whose car was buzzed by a UFO and "invaded" by a voice which said "We can appear as anything you like — a duck, even, or a human being!" This is very much in line with the behaviour of "allies" as we read about them in the Don Juan books. Fairy beings, as well, have the ability to shape-shift and frequently take great delight in having fun at their victim's expense. Especially noteworthy is the fact that time as we know it seems eclipsed and, as with UFO happenings, the contactee often "comes to" and finds that he has lost several hours, days or even years, while undergoing what seemed like a fairly short term experience. Again, the notorious Men in Black and "allies" have many factors in common.

As to the UFOs themselves, these vary from fuzzy lights in the sky to apparently technically-designed craft with portholes, antennae and landing gear. They are frequently described as hovering, spinning or going through

“falling leaf” motions. In the Don Juan books, when one of the sorcerers is demonstrating his own powers for the purposes of awakening a response in the somewhat reluctant Carlos, he appears to levitate right up into the sky, eventually becoming so small that he looks like a spinning disc; then he descends with a falling-leaf motion. A rather similar phenomenon is described in the book *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Parimhansa Yogananda, where the author tells of a visit by a teacher (then deceased) which first appeared as a ball of light floating down from the sky; this gradually became nearer until a form could be perceived inside it. This happened on several occasions and generally, though not always, involved Teachers who had long since discarded their earthly bodies. There seem to be parallel instances in the Bible which now to me seem far more consistent with shamanistic practice than visitors from Outer Space! The story of Jacob wrestling with the angel, for example, is very akin to the shaman’s struggle with an “ally” who, once overcome, thereafter helps and protects his conqueror. Professor I.M. Lewis’s book *Ecstatic Religion* shows pictures, drawn by an Eskimo Iglulik shaman, that represent deities which “though terrifying and frightening in their natural state can be captured and tamed by shamans and thus transformed into benevolent ‘helping spirits’ or familiars”. Many of these pictures bear resemblance to beings described by people who have had bizarre UFO experiences.

All this perhaps does not get us very much further in UFO research but it does seem, as far as one can ascertain with such an inconsistent subject, that something very significant is happening and using laws with which we are not familiar, at least in the Western hemisphere. If one can say anything definite it is that a state of confusion is prevailing, whether intentional or unintentional; it may be that, in the Zen Buddhist sense, we are being presented with a cosmic koan that will eventually break down our present way of thinking and seeing the world and that heralds a breakthrough into the Aquarian Age; the Age when mental abilities long dormant will arise, activating such experiences as we cannot envisage at present.

Meanwhile, what is happening to us now? Stranger and stranger UFO stories are flooding in, more and more weird entities are being reported in connection with them. Are “they” just playing with us, or are they trying to stir us into some sort of activity by using thought power, holograms, robots or koans? In many instances, contactees are set off in some new positive path in life; others suffer drastic physical effects that end in mental and physiological disorder. UFO craft often seem to presage one of our own technological breakthroughs and, like a carrot before a donkey’s nose, appear to be tempting us into making greater efforts to improve our technology, if nothing else. A continual game of “catch me if you can” is played with our aircraft; many of our science fiction films pick up useful hints from UFO sighting reports. These are based, although in vastly exaggerated form, on actual UFO sighting and contact reports.

The shamans warn of the dangers of death and disability when entangling with “allies” — and these also seem possibilities when entangling with UFOs and their crews! It may be that the “unknown” is composed of other

dimensional realms surrounding every physical planet, or it may be that even this concept is within our Cosmic Egg and therefore part of our known world. There may be realms completely excluded and outside of what we conceive of as the visible and invisible universe, but this is the stuff that can drive us mad if pondered on too heavily; a light touch is the safest way to tackle these weighty problems.

Many researchers are now commenting on the fact that, for example, the feminine principal has been very much brought forward in the last decade or two in the form of various Mother Goddess cults, revealing a desire to bring out into the world the principles of compassion, gentleness and love. This may be a reaction on our part after the aggression and blood lust of previous cultures with the male principle completely out of balance. Or maybe something or someone is suggesting to us that it would be a good idea to balance ourselves up. The number of visions of a Lady variously described as the Madonna, a “space woman” or goddess, depending on the witness’s beliefs — have increased over the past decade or so. Many of these “visions” have been accompanied by UFO-like phenomena.

I do not necessarily consider that such visions are anything to do with visitors from outer space; indeed, I find myself becoming very irritated by those people who ascribe every unusual happening to any one cause, be it UFOs, spirits of the departed, upset tummies, or whatever. But there seems to be a similarity, a link, between many apparently unrelated causes. St. Paul was blinded by a vision and in Brad Steiger’s book there is a story of a woman who was blinded by a UFO, *but* who has since developed outstanding psychic abilities. Could these experiences be one and the same in point of origin; or two different sources using the same laws? I do not necessarily think that the “angels” in the Bible were space visitors; but could they have been “Venusians” in another sense?

However, provided the light touch is there, this can be an exhilarating study if seen in a very wide context, because it is stirring up new thought and breaking down old patterns and prejudices and only the rigid and narrow-minded need fear it. It may well be that mankind in the twenty-first century will have a completely different way of perceiving the world that to us now would seem alien . . . or will it have returned to the intuitive-instinctive thought of early man? The most exciting possibility is that the entire past intellectual experience of logic and reason will be combined with intuition and feeling in the New Age Cosmic Human, who will embody a wide-ranging mental outlook, compassionate and tolerant, with an understanding and attunement with the cosmos around him; in the words of our Atlantean mantra — “a oneness with and acknowledgement of all life, visible and invisible”.