

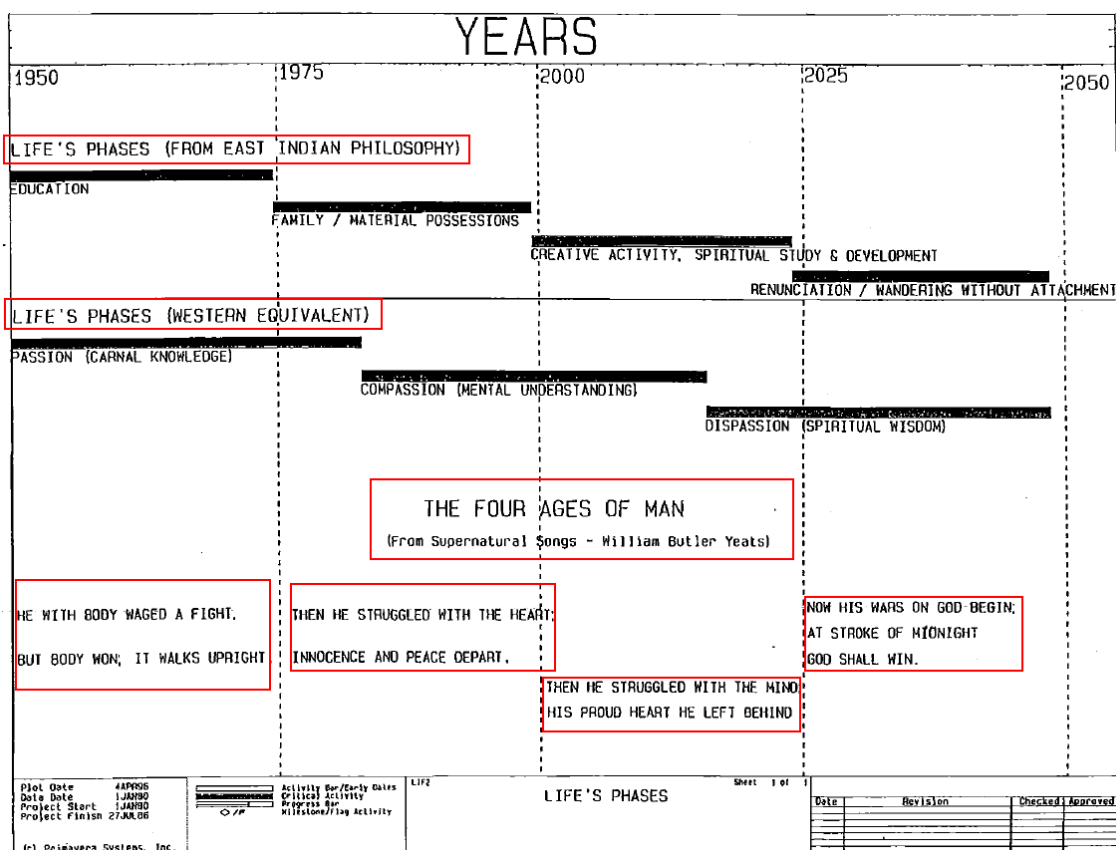


FROM THE DRAGON'S LAIR

#3

Life Phases and Death (Personal Philosophy and Psychology)

Writing narratives or sharing content requires a significant exposure of one's very personal thoughts, considerations, activities and consciousness. It is inevitable but can be somewhat uncomfortable. The third and fourth in this series of introductory narratives will suggest the extent of the content that has been developed over the last forty years. The content presents a picture of the evolution of one person's personal, philosophical, psychological and internal development. Consider the following chart (to be read from left to right, top to bottom):



To explain the background of the preceding chart it is simply necessary to say that the timeline is presented against my own anticipated (hoped for) life span (of 100 years, more or less). The life phases (as from East Indian or Hindu philosophy) are reasonably understandable: education, family and material possessions, creative activity / spiritual study and development and finally

renunciation and wandering without attachment. (As an aside, I added the “creative” wording when preparing this because at the time (still ?) I was not comfortable with the word spiritual.)

Aldous Huxley described these “four ages of man” as that of the schoolboy, that of the married man living in the world, that of the mature man who withdraws into the forest and tries to understand nature, things and his own essence and finally that of the aged man who detaches himself completely from desire and, though living bodily, dwells in the eternity which he perceives even in temporal things.

It may go without saying that the final phase is seldom attempted in the modern area, even within the deeper realms of the Hindu seekers. Nevertheless, I believe there is a truth in the concept of some form of renunciation that begins to take place as we age and move beyond our continuing accomplishments, achievements and accumulations. There is a subtlety in life that is inevitable and moves us all in a certain direction.

The second section proposes to identify a “Western Equivalent” of Passion (Carnal Knowledge), Compassion (Mental Understanding) and Dispassion (Spiritual Wisdom). It was spontaneously (and extraordinarily) suggested by my great friend Bobbi Spurr when I showed her the diagram. I believe it does capture a similar evolution of our mental and emotional development over the span of our lives in accordance with a more modern, western perspective.

The poem “The Four Ages of Man” by William Butler Yeats captures a similar progression as filtered through the consciousness’ struggles with the body, heart, mind and spirit. The significant connection among these three perspectives is that there is a certain commonality of intrinsic truth that is shared among them. Our best efforts to compare and study these and try to understand the perspective of the audience at the time that they were manifest would help to perfect the development of our own consciousness.

The question asking for consideration is whether the preceding narrative was necessary as an explanation of the chart, or might the chart have existed on its own, without elucidation. Time will hopefully provide the answer to that question. For me the preceding chart has been a guiding principle of patience and process for more than half of my life.

One other guiding principal has accompanied my journey for the last forty years:

Bertrand Russell at eighty-two speaking of the fear of death said:

"The best way to overcome it is...to make your interests gradually wider and more impersonal until bit by bit the walls of the ego recede and your life becomes increasingly merged in the universal life...

An individual human existence should be like a river, small at first, narrowly contained within its banks, and rushing past boulders and waterfalls. Gradually it grows wider, the banks recede, the waters flow more quietly and in the end without any visible break they become merged with the sea and painlessly lose their individual being."