

Comment by Ferran Sanz Orriols on September 21, 2010 at 6:20am

I think that the "Stanzas of Dzyan" indeed come from the Mahatmas, but I also think that investigation with no prejudices is good. In Alice A. Bailey's books some of these Stanzas can also be found. (I think that Alice A. Bailey's work was the next step of Mahatma's teaching to the modern world.)

Best wishes to all investigators!!!

Comment by Alistair Coombs on September 21, 2010 at 9:52am

It's the oldest book in the world - and HPB wrote it.

Comment by Joe Fulton on September 21, 2010 at 1:17pm

Excellent!

I'm curious if the Stanzas were published anywhere without Comment ary?

Paul and I discussed sending plain vanilla copies of the Stanzas out to various religious scholars to see what texts the writings correspond to, if any.

The example that you just gave, Paul, is a good example of the type of thing that we're looking for.

Joe

Comment by Joe Fulton on September 21, 2010 at 3:18pm

What traditions do you think we should be pinging on this?

Comment by Joe Fulton on September 21, 2010 at 11:42pm

I have attached the Stanzas of Dzyan, without Comment ary, in a discussion [HERE](#).

The download is at the bottom of the box. There is no Comment available on the discussion. There is a link which leads back to this blog posting.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on September 22, 2010 at 7:39am

That sounds like a good plan, especially about avoiding the apologetics. In some ways I believe that we should be our own worst critics. Contrary to popular thought, this only strengthens the positions that we adopt, or at least be open about those that grate against general belief.

If anyone can think of a place to post the Stanzas, please do so. Let us know by posting here so that we have some record of who gets what

Comment by [Leila Becquer](#) on September 22, 2010 at 10:03am

Hi to all, some information about the hymn of Rig Veda, but perhaps you already know that.

The Rig Veda hymn is called The Hymn of Creation or more accurately Nasadiya Sukta, and its reference is Rigveda X.129. The translation presented by HPB is that of Colebrooke, I think Besant have added the translator in her edition, but he was the reference in XIX century. Panikkar's translation is very nice, I have the original somewhere and it is interesting for theosophists for its use of words like kama and manas (kama being the germ of mind) among other things. It was attributed to Prajapati Paramesthin (as Rishi who wrote it). There is much theological debate about that, HPB seems to follow Shankara's interpretation but his Comments and his use of logic and grammar are very much criticised by dvaita philosophers.

Comment by [M. Sufilight](#) on September 22, 2010 at 10:23am

Dear friends

A few views:

May I?

I will state that I have been shown the first page of the Dzyan Stanzas on the inner planes on an astral trip in 1980. I was astral-travelling somewhere in the area we today call northern India and Pakistan. - And in a very old rock-cut cave with a huge library I was by an initiate shown a plate with letters of various metals and a special covering of another metal and surface polishing. The plate was of marble of a special kind and some of the letters as well. The letters was written in an old version of Sanskrit or similar to it. Each letter had a different vibration because of its metal and its surface covering and polishing. So a letter similar to A could have a different meaning depending on its vibration and its metal and its covering, and also the coverings colour.

Reading that page was like reading thorough the use of both 3, 4, and 5 dimensional thought and likely even higher. And there were more plates and ther "artifacts", but I was not learning from them, because the first plate was the one I was offered to learn from. Other experiences happened there, but my moral make me keep it silent.

So to me, the Dzyan Stanzas are something quite real.

Just to let you know, so that you might understand that there is more to all this than an ordinary seeker might think. Those of you who know, can verify this in my aura.

M. Sufilight

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on September 22, 2010 at 11:33am

Thanks much, Leila. I've observed that Emil Schlagintweit's "Buddhism in Tibet" seems to be a pretty close model for HPB's flavor of Buddhism. Much of her Comment s are close to verbatim from "Buddhism in Tibet".

Morten, in your case, when you say "old version of Sanskrit" how would the lettering compare with more modern character sets? Can you give us some examples, and can you provide what words/phrases you remember in transliteration? This may help in tracing to extant works.

Comment by M. Sufilight on September 22, 2010 at 12:49pm

Dear Joe and friends

Interesting request. I have strange enough never researched this. One reason is that the language used is ancient and not in use any more - and I learned this, when I read the plate on my astral-travel. And I learned, that it was known that Sanskrit was a later version thereof and other languages in the area as well. And some of these later ones are not in use any more.

If you seek to make Tibetan and Sanskrit (Devanagari) somehow blend and use this as the language - and where the letters are separated and not connected like now; (each letter was separated by space on the plate) - and then let this blending follow the look in the direction of a mix of Avestan and Sinhala in the writing curves I think you will get near to the picture.

Sinhala is primary in the looks of the curves but not quite similar. (Look for instance here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Phrase_sanskrit.png and here <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/avestan.htm>). From the top of my head I believe that Avestan and Sanskrit are later forms of this language and Sanskrit more close to it than almost any other languages, - at least those I have seen and know of at the moment.

It is difficult to show precisely unless I make a drawing of it. And I only remember very few parts of the plates letters at the moment, this, even when I remember the content of the plates message. I can at the moment nearly only recall the vibrational content of the plate as a whole. This plate should be the first Stanzas and Proem as given by H. P. Blavatsky, but more advanced, and in fact it contains all the rest of the Stanzas in it - in the form of what I will call "germ keys". The first letter was or is something similar to Aum or A in Sanskrit, but not the same, because the dot and curve on the top is not there apart from the letter like in Aum, it was in fact more like an ellipse resting on the top of the letter itself, yet looking more like the A in the Sanskrit alphabet, and yet different. But I do not recall "letters" formed as the discs mentioned by HPB, yet same the teaching about them was there. - If I remember correctly the plate was with all the letters of this particular alphabet, and each letter was somehow made to represent the elements of the periodical system. But I am not quite sure about this, because there were many layers of interpretation in it. The letters, and this I know, was laid down as pieces in a puzzle on this strange marble or "marble"-like plate. And the plate told the story about the Cosmological teachings of our universe and of all life on all levels. (It is almost similar as looking at the following diagram - http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v12/y1890_053_p4...)

Was this helpful?

M. Sufilight

Comment by Jacques Mahnich on September 22, 2010 at 1:43pm

Dear friends,

For the sake of comparison, here is another text which has similarities with the first stance :

" It was the hour before the Gods awake.

Across the path of the divine Event

The huge foreboding mind of Night, alone

In her unlit temple of eternity,

Lay stretched immobile upon Silence' marge.

Almost one felt, opaque, impenetrable,

In the sombre symbol of her eyeless muse

The abysm of the unbodied Infinite;

A fathomless zero occupied the world.

A power of fallen boundless self awake

Between the first and the last Nothingness,

Recalling the tenebrous womb from which it came,

Turned from the insoluble mystery of birth

And the tardy process of mortality

And longed to reach its end in vacant Nought.

As in a dark beginning of all things,

*A mute featureless semblance of the Unknown
Repeating for ever the unseeing will,
Cradled the cosmic drowse of ignorant Force
Whose moved creative slumber kindles the suns
And carries our lives in its somnambulist whirl.
Athwart the vain enormous trance of Space,
Its formless stupor without mind or life,
A shadow spinning through a soulless Void,
Thrown back once more into unthinking dreams,
Earth wheeled abandoned in the hollow gulfs
Forgetful of her spirit and her fate.
The impassive skies were neutral, empty, still.
Then something in the inscrutable darkness stirred;
A nameless movement, an unthought Idea
Insistent, dissatisfied, without an aim,
Something that wished but knew not how to be,
Teased the Inconscient to wake Ignorance.
... (8 more pages for this canto)*

SAVITRI - Canto One - The Symbol Dawn - Sri Aurobindo

Comment by M K Ramadoss on September 22, 2010 at 3:30pm

Glad to see the Stanzas by themselves. For the first time in my life, I read thru them or rather quickly browsed thru them to get a bird's eye view. All the books tend to explain pieces and hence the overall picture is missed. I hope everyone who comes on board here or elsewhere takes time to browse thru them. It would throw some light on aspects that might attract each one.

Comment by [Odin](#) on September 23, 2010 at 7:43am

There's an interesting view expressed as "The Stanzas Of Dzyan" and "The Sifra di-Tseniutha." The link to the site Gangleri.nl:

<http://www.gangleri.nl/articles/48/the-stanzas-of-dzyan-and-the-sif...>

"There can be little doubt in my opinion that the famous stanzas of the mysterious Book Dzyan on which Mme. H.P. Blavatsky's magnum opus, The Secret Doctrine, is based owe something, both in title and content, to the pompous pages of the Zoharic writing called Sifra Di-Tseniutha. - Gershom Scholem (1897-1982)

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on September 23, 2010 at 1:38pm

Received from [David Riegle](#) on 9/23/2010:

"...As for anything I can offer in this endeavor, I have to say that my research in recent years has brought out more problems than solutions in the primary Theosophical writings. It turns out that so much of HPB's annotations to the Stanzas come from unreliable nineteenth century sources, rather than her Mahatma teachers as I once thought, that I no longer trust anything she wrote without trying to verify it. For many years I thought that this was just limited to her annotations, where she was left on her own to annotate the Stanzas as best as she could, but this occasionally even creeps into the Stanzas themselves.

For the annotations, this is easy enough to explain. Like any CEO (chief executive officer) of even moderate-sized companies, the Mahatmas are busy men. They tell their secretaries to write such and such, and the secretaries do the best they can to do so. The secretaries write, often in their own words, and sometimes doing their own research, in the name of their boss who asked them to do so, and told them the general lines on which the reply should be written.

For the Stanzas themselves, although this is rare as far as I have found, it is more problematic. Stanza 6, sloka 1, for example, speaks of Kuan-yin as the triple of Kuan-shih-yin. This is all logical according to HPB's explanations, and her section 15 in Part 2 of Book 1, "On Kuan-shih-yin and Kuan-yin," pp. 470-473. Yet I have been quite unable to find any Chinese source that distinguishes Kuan-yin as female and Kuan-shih-yin as male, as HPB does here in The Secret Doctrine. For the

Chinese, Kuan-yin is only a shortened form of Kuan-shih-yin, and both refer to the same deity. It does not matter that this deity was originally male, and then later was usually thought of and depicted as female in China. For the Chinese, the early male form as well as the later female form are both called Kuan-yin or Kuan-shih-yin indiscriminately.

*If we try to trace this in the Theosophical sources, we come to Mahatma letter #59. Here we read that to regard Kuan-shih-yin as female is a great mistake made by Samuel Beal in his book, *A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese*, p. 374. In that book, however, Beal is only reporting the facts as he found them in China. It is no fault of his if the deity known there as either Kuan-shih-yin or its shortened form Kuan-yin is regarded as female. This is not a mistake made by Beal. If the Chinese translation of the Stanza of Dzyan actually does distinguish Kuan-shih-yin and Kuan-yin, this is something that apparently would be new to any Chinese Buddhist. It is more likely that here HPB's explanations, based on the Mahatma letter, crept into the Stanza itself. The wrong use of Kuan-yin and Kuan-shih-yin throughout the primary Theosophical writings, distinguishing them as female and male, is a problem. No one familiar with Chinese Buddhism would accept this. To find these terms mis-used in the Stanzas of Dzyan themselves discredits Theosophy as a privileged source of information."*

Comment by Joe Fulton on September 23, 2010 at 1:40pm

David Riegler's website, [Eastern Tradition Research Institute](#)

This is an excellent research source for those who are interested.

Comment by M. Sufilight on September 23, 2010 at 1:58pm

Dear friends

A few words given by Blavatsky might be interesting to add to Riegler's views in the below dated 9/23/2010.

H. P. Blavatsky wrote:

** In some MSS. notes before us, written by Gelong (priest) Thango-pa Chhe-go-mo, it is said: "The few Roman Catholic missionaries who have visited our land (under protest) in the last century and have repaid our hospitality by turning our sacred*

literature into ridicule, have shown little discretion and still less knowledge. It is true that the Sacred Canon of the Tibetans, the Bkah-hgyur and Bstan-hgyur, comprises 1707 distinct works—1083 public and 624 secret volumes, the former being composed of 350 and the latter of 77 volumes folio. May we humbly invite the good missionaries, however, to tell us when they ever succeeded in getting a glimpse of the last-named secret folios? Had they even by chance seen them I can assure the Western Pandits that these manuscripts and folios could never be understood even by a born Tibetan without a key (a) to their peculiar characters, and (b) to their hidden meaning. In our system every description of locality is figurative, every name and word purposely veiled; and one has first to study the mode of deciphering and then to learn the equivalent secret terms and symbols for nearly every word of the religious language. The Egyptian enchorial or hieratic system is child's play to our sacerdotal puzzles.”

http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v14/mb_007.htm

The question is, whether anyone outside India and Tibet have had access to these secret folios, Reigle included?

M. Sufilight

Comment by Leila Becquer on September 23, 2010 at 2:07pm

As far I know, Reigle is a kalacakra initiate so he has acces to many private books.

Perhaps in the future could be possible make a research from the point of view of the practical excercises taught by HPB.

Comment by Joe Fulton on September 23, 2010 at 2:51pm

Great idea, Leila! Getting Reigle's cooperation is a good thing. I'm sure that he'll be quite helpful when appropriate.

Here is a link to the Tibetan canon referred to by Morten (M. Sufilight), from BuddhaNet

Comment by Leila Becquer on September 24, 2010 at 6:51am

I think that there is some divergence between the contents as given in the article Tibetan Teachings and by HPB in the Secret Doctrine and that one in buddha.net. Reigle discusses and give the contents of the rgyud (kiu te) division in his The Books of Kiu Te, p. 10 and following, Wizards Bookshelf, 1983.

In the qabalistic field, a friend of mine, ex-qabalist became dervish, has told me that the main HPB's source for qabalah was christian qabalah, as said in Gangleri article. But I think that is important to distinguish between systems for divulgation and original system in HPB and their respective languages. For instance, vedantic terms are used in Secret Doctrine but only as reference, vedanta seems to be presented as something kindred to guptavidya but not the same, so sanskrit is interesting because there are guptavidya in sanskrit works, but not necessarily sanskrit works are guptavidya. On the other hand, HPB uses qabalah because its public, nearly all cabalists conversant with Levi's works mainly, but she disagrees with many cabalistical tenets, in fact, her only cabalistic acknowledged was the book of numbers which she saw in hands of a persian sufi, and that book is not the biblical book of numbers, it is a chaldean one. So, here we have another secret book quoted by her.

Finally it is true that HPB poses many problems but at the same time, time gives her reason in many respects. At her time "esoteric buddhism" was a odd term, Müller et al. said that "Buddha kept nothing in hir closed fist" (canon pali) but today, one of the manners of refering to Tibetan Buddhism is esoteric sect, esoteric buddhism, etc. And it is a very common issue the existence of book printed privately that one cannot read if are not initiated (with at least the authorization to read or wang). At HPB's time (and even to day) that system seems to scholars as very arbitrary, but is the Tibetan system of transmitting teachings. Robert Turman write such amount about kalacakra not because he is scholar and researcher but because he is an initiate and is working with the Dalai Lama in the spreading of kalacakra ritual and initiation in the western world.

Excuse my english.

Comment by Leila Becquer on September 24, 2010 at 10:50am

It could help

<http://www.tibet-dps.org/index.htm>

Comment by Jacques Mahnich on September 24, 2010 at 12:10pm

The Bodhisattva's most widely used Chinese names are Kuan Yin, Kuan Shih Yin, and Kuan Tzû T'sai, of which the Cantonese variants are Kwoon Yam, Kwoon Sai Yam and Kwoon Chi Choi. In Viet-Nam her name is pronounced Quan Am. In Japan, she is generally known as Kwannon Bosatzu or Kwannon Sama. Her Mongolian name is Niduber Ujegci, and in Sri Lanka, she is called Natha-deva.

The earliest and most common Chinese term is the figurative for Kuan Shih Yin which is usually abbreviated to Kuan Yin. It was probably introduced in China late in the first century BC, and by about the 6th century, she was worshipped throughout the country. Representations before the Sung dynasty (960-1126) are distinctly masculine in appearance. But after that period, the bodhisattva was invariably worshipped as a feminine (though not female) deity. The transformation is merely symbolic for, to the Chinese, the feminine represents the yin. In other words, the embodiment of Compassion is regarded by them as feminine (eg motherly) in form.

Comment by David Reigle on September 26, 2010 at 8:51am

The origins of the Stanzas of Dzyan will indeed be hard to find. As far as I know, no one has ever yet succeeded in tracing a single line of them to any known text. Nonetheless, old texts are newly becoming available all the time. Old texts that are now available sometimes quote other old texts that are no longer available. There are many examples of this in the Sanskrit writings. It may be that some fortunate one among us will come across a line quoted in some old but newly available text that we recognize as a line from the Stanzas of Dzyan. This would be a major breakthrough. So let us always keep an eye out for this in our reading. I sincerely wish us all good luck in the hunt for this.

Comment by Joe Fulton on September 26, 2010 at 10:00am

I'm working with several people on the site to develop a list of questions to send out to a wide variety of people and groups to see what kind of feedback we can get on the Stanzas.

Comment by M. Sufilight on September 26, 2010 at 12:26pm

Dear friends

A few views:

I came to the conclusion that some members of the forum might be interested in the following articles given by H. P. Blavatsky.

THE SECRET BOOKS OF "LAM-RIM" AND DZYAN (by HPB posthumously)

http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v14/mb_007.htm (And about various ancient cylinders).

Now we have H. P. Blavatsky saying the following on Zend-sar....

TS Glossary, 1892, Posthumously:

"Zend-Avesta (Pahl.). The general name for the sacred books of the Parsis, fire or sun worshippers, as they are ignorantly called. So little is understood of the grand doctrines which are still found in the various fragments that compose all that is now left of that collection of religious works, that Zoroastrianism is called indifferently Fire-worship, Mazdaism, or Magism, Dualism, Sun-worship, and what not. The Avesta has two parts as now collected together, the first portion containing the Vendîdâd, the Vispêrad and the Yasna; and the second portion, called the Khorda Avesta (Small Avesta), being composed of short prayers

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called Gâh, Nyâyish, etc. Zend means "a commentary or explanation", and Avesta (from the old Persian âbashtâ, "the law". (See Darmsteter.) As the translator of the Vendîdâd remarks in a foot note (see int. xxx.): "what it is customary to call 'the Zend language', ought to be named 'the Avesta language', the Zend being no language at all and if the word be used as the designation of one, it can be rightly applied only to the Pahlavi". But then, the Pahlavi itself is only the language into

which certain original portions of the Avesta are translated. What name should be given to the old Avesta language, and particularly to the "special dialect, older than the general language of the Avesta" (Darmst.), in which the five Ghthas in the Yasna are written? To this day the Orientalists are mute upon the subject. Why should not the Zend be of the same family, if not identical with the Zen-sar, meaning also the speech explaining the abstract symbol, or the "mystery language," used by Initiates?"

<http://www.phx-ult-lodge.org/ATUVWXYZ.htm>

The Secret Doctrine by H. P. Blavatsky, vol. 1, p. 307-308:

"All the thoughts and emotions, all the learning and knowledge, revealed and acquired, of the early races, found their pictorial expression in allegory and parable. Why? Because >>the spoken word has a potency unknown to, unsuspected and disbelieved in, by the modern "sages." Because sound and rhythm are closely related to the four Elements of the Ancients; and because such or another vibration in the air is sure to awaken corresponding powers, union with which produces good or bad results, as the case may be. No student was ever allowed to recite historical, religious, or any real events in so many unmistakable words, lest the powers connected with the event should be once more attracted. Such events were narrated only during the Initiation, and every student had to record them in corresponding symbols, drawn out of his own mind and examined later by his master, before they were finally accepted. Thus was created in time the Chinese Alphabet, as, before that, the hieratic symbols were fixed upon in old Egypt." (Arrows used by M. Sufilight to emphasize italics).

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"The peculiarity of this language was that it could be contained in another, concealed and not to be perceived, save through the help of special instruction; letters and syllabic signs possessing at the same time the powers or meaning of numbers, of geometrical shapes, pictures, or ideographs and symbols, the designed scope of which would be determinatively helped out by parables in the shape of narratives or parts of narratives; while also it could be set forth separately, independently, and variously, by pictures, in stone work, or in earth construction."

http://www.phx-ult-lodge.org/SDVolume_I.htm

The Secret Doctrine by H. P. Blavatsky, vol. II, p. 431:

"As already explained, the whole of antiquity believed, with good reason, that humanity and its races are all intimately connected with the planets, and these with Zodiacal signs. The whole world's History is recorded in the latter. In the ancient temples of Egypt this was proved by the Dendera Zodiac; but except in an Arabic work, the property of a Sufi, the writer has never met with a correct copy of these marvellous records of the past, as also of the future, history of our globe. Yet the original records exist, most undeniably."

<http://www.phx-ult-lodge.org/SDVolume2.htm>

ZOROASTER IN "HISTORY" AND ZARATHUSHTRA IN THE SECRET RECORDS

"Time, Patience and especially sincere zeal, are the only requisites. Our Orientalists have never bethought themselves of the only sediment of genuine Zoroastrianism now left among the old records. Nay—till very lately they despised it and laughed to scorn its very name. Hardly half a century ago it was not yet translated, and up to this day is understood but by the

very, very few true Occultists We speak of the Chaldean KABALA, whose very name is unknown to hundreds of educated men. Notwithstanding every denial of the ignorant, we say and repeat that the key to the right understanding of the Avesta and its subdivisions lies concealed at the bottom of the rightly interpreted books of the Kabala, composed of the Zohar (Splendour) by Rabbi Shimon Ben Yohai; of Sepher Yetzirah or Book of the Creation† (attributed to the patriarch Abraham but written by a Chaldean priest); and of the Commentary of the Sephiroth—the latter being the creative Principles or powers identical with the Amshaspands. The whole of the Avesta is incorporated with the ethics and philosophy of Babylonia—hence must be sought for in the Chaldean Kabalistic lore, as the doctrines of Zoroaster spread through Zarathushtra the fifth Messenger (5,400 B.C.) from Bactria to Media and thence under the name of Magism (the Magavas or the "Mighty Ones") became at one time the universal religion of the whole Central Asia. It is now called "monotheistic" on the same principle that vulgarized Magianism became the monotheism of the later Israelites. If the attributes of Ahuramazda or Ormazd are said to strongly resemble those of the Jewish Jehovah (albeit far more practical), it is not because either of the two was the true Mystery Deity—the*
INCOMPREHENSIBLE ALL but simply because both are human ideals evolved from the

** The Hebrew word Kabbalah comes from the root "to receive." It is then the record of doctrines received by the Chaldean Magi, and the initiated Jews (Daniel was chief of the Magi) from Zarathushtra, whose teachings on account of their profound philosophy were meant but for the few, while the exoteric rites of Magianism dwindled down to popular vulgar magic, Judaism, and other degraded anthropomorphic and ritualistic systems.*

† Rather Evolution. The book is the demonstration of a System whereby the universe is mathematically viewed, showing from the systematic development of "creation" and from the harmony reigning in all its laws that it must have proceeded from One Cause EN-SOPH—the Endless NO-THING. That it never had a beginning nor will it ever have an end; from which dead letter rendering in Genesis—incomprehensible without the help of the Kabalistic [Manuscript cut off]

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same stock. As Ormazd springing from Primordial Light, which itself emanated from a Supreme incomprehensible essence called "Zeruane-Akerene," the Eternal or Boundless Time, comes but third in the deistic evolution; so Jehovah is shown in the Zohar as the third Sephiroth (moreover a feminine passive potency) denominated "Intelligence" (Binah) and represented by the divine name Jehovah and Àralim. Hence none of the two ever were the ONE "Supreme" God. With Jehovah it is EN-SOPH, the Boundless, the ONE from which emanates AUR—"Primordial Light" or the "Primordial Point" which, containing the all of the Sephiroth, emanates them one after the other, the totality representing the Archetypal man, Adam Kadmon. Jehovah then is but the tenth portion (seventh Kabalistically, for the first three are ONE) of Adam or the Intellectual world; whereas Ormuzd is at the head of the seven Amshaspands or their Spiritual totality—hence higher than Jehovah, yet — not the SUPREME.

Let us confess at once that, gross and material in our conceptions, we have anthropomorphized and, so to say, animalized every grand religious idea which has descended to us from the antiquity. Physically and intellectually we progress and grow in strength and wisdom, but lose daily in Spirituality. We may "wax in strength"—never in Spirit. It is but by studying the relics of old; by comparing, free from every sectarian bias and personal prejudice, the religious ideals of all nations, that we finally acquire the conviction that they are all streams from one and the

same source. Many and various are the lights and shadows which our dazzled eye can hardly follow on a sunlit valley. The fool will exclaim: "That shadow is mine—it is cast by my house! . . ." The sage will lift his eyes heavenward, and calmly remark: "it is but an effect and temporary!" [and] will rivet his attention to the One Cause—the Great "Spiritual Sun." "

.....

"It is therefore safe to come to the following conclusions: (1) That there were several (in all seven, say the Secret Records) Ahuru-asters, or spiritual teachers, of Ahuramazda, an office corrupted later into Guru-asters and Zuru-asters from "Zera-Ishtar," the title of the Chaldean or Magian priests; and (2) that the last of them was Zaratusht of the Desatir, the thirteenth of the prophets, and the seventh of that name. It was he who was the contemporary of Vistasp, the last of the Kaianian princes, and the compiler of Vendidad, the Commentaries upon which are lost, there remaining now but the dead letter. Some of the facts given in the Secret Records, though to the exact scholar merely traditional, are very interesting. They are to the effect that there exists a certain hollow rock, full of tablets, in a gigantic cave bearing the name of Zarathushtra, under his Magian appellation, and that the tablets may yet be rescued some day. This cave, with its rock and tablets and its many inscriptions on the walls, is situated at the summit of one of the peaks of the Tien-Shan mountains far beyond their junction with the Belor Tagh, somewhere along their Eastern course. One of the half-pictorial and half-written prophecies and teachings attributed to Zaratusht himself, relates to that deluge which has transformed an inland sea into the dreary desert called Shamo or Gobi Desert. The esoteric key to the mysterious creeds flippantly called, at one time, the Sabaeen or Planetary Religion, at another, the Solar or Fire Worship, "hangs in that cave,"

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says the legend. In it the great Prophet is represented with a golden star on his heart and as belonging to that race of Antediluvian giants mentioned in the sacred books of both the Chaldeans and the Jews. It matters little whether this hypothesis be accepted or rejected. Since the rejection of it would not make the other more trustworthy, it was as well to mention it. "

http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v3/y1882_010.htm (italics added.)

(Here is a map showing Tien-Shan:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tarimrivermap.png>)

M. Sufilight

Comment by Leila Becquer on September 26, 2010 at 12:48pm

There is a story that can be used as an example or parable, T. Krishnamacarya is regarded as the father of modern hathayoga, his disciple Pattabhi Jois teaches a system with no resemblance with others, he argued that he has learnt this system in a text that he and his master have studied called Yogakorunta. This text has never been produced, so its existence is put in doubt.

However, many years later, a tibetan rimpoche, Namkhai Norbu begins to teach a system of dynamic yoga with some similarities (even core similarities) and the root text translated by him is the oldest in the field of hathayoga (older than all indian texts) and with more postures than the indian texts, in coincidence with Jois' yoga. A curious thing is that in the oral lineage of this tibetan yoga is mentioned a book now not longer available and lost.

Besides that, we must not forget the gter ma tradition or buried books.

Comment by David Reigle on September 27, 2010 at 1:02pm

From what HPB says in "The Secret Books of 'Lam-rim' and Dzyan," we may deduce that the Book of Dzyan that we seek is the first book of commentaries on a small secret book of Kiu-te (BCW vol. 14, p. 422):

"The Book of Dzyan—from the Sanskrit word "Dhyâna" (mystic meditation)—is the first volume of the Commentaries upon the seven secret folios of Kiu-te, and a Glossary of the public works of the same name."

In the Introductory to the SD, she tells us what existing books are "derived from that one small parent volume," presumably the seven secret folios of Kiu-te (vol. 1, p. xliii):

"The "very old Book" is the original work from which the many volumes of Kiu-ti were compiled. Not only this latter and the Siphrah di-Tseniuthah but even the Sepher Yetzirah, the work attributed by the Hebrew Kabalists to their Patriarch Abraham (!), the book of Shu-King, China's primitive Bible, the sacred volumes of the Egyptian Thoth-Hermes, the Puranas in India, and the Chaldean Book of*

Numbers and the Pentateuch itself, are all derived from that one small parent volume."

*In these existing books, we find the most divergent cosmogonies. The most widely studied book of Kiu-te in Tibet among the Gelugpas is the Guhyasamaja Tantra. Although no English translation of this book has yet been published, we are fortunate that Giuseppe Tucci translated its first chapter. This gives what it has for cosmogony, although it is quite unlike any cosmogony we might expect. It is found in his book, *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala*, pp. 98-104. I am sending a scan of these pages to Joe, who will know how to post it here.*

By contrast, among these books that are derived from the original parent volume, the Puranas give more what we might expect as a cosmogony. Of the eighteen major Puranas, there is agreement among both Eastern and Western scholars that the Vayu Purana is the oldest. This is based on descriptions of an original Purana Samhita, from which all the existing Puranas were apparently expanded. The Vayu is the least expanded. It has been translated into English by G. V. Tagare. Its cosmogony spans chapters 3-6, with a number of digressions. Its core is chapter 4, verses 17-24, 43-51, 65-70. I am also sending a scan of its pages on cosmogony to Joe to post here.

I think you will all be surprised to see just how different these cosmogonies are, said to derive from the same source. It is the same source that the Stanzas of Dzyan are said to be a commentary on. The Stanzas of Dzyan give a much more systematic and detailed cosmogony than any existing book I have seen.

Comment by Joe Fulton on September 27, 2010 at 2:06pm

The files that David Reigle referred to, from the Vayu Purana and the Guhyasamaja Tantra are posted on the front page of the site.

Comment by Leila Becquer on September 27, 2010 at 6:17pm

There are some problematic points.

First, as Reigle has pointed out, the cosmogonies we can find are not the expected ones, I must read again Tucci's book, but if I can remember, that book, as its title indicates, elaborates the visualizations used in tantric ritual, painting, meditations,

etc. The structure of a mandala, the central deity, etc. This seems to indicate the statement by Mathieu Ricard (I have forgotten his bikshu name) referring to the importance of cosmology in terms of a guide for visualization an inner experience. In this respect I found HPB, philosophically speaking, more realistic, i.e., the mythological cosmogonies have "astrophysical" correlations (of course, astrophysics is a term not in use in her time). This, together with the systematic view pointed out by D. Reigle and the evolutionary and teleologic frame, makes of HPB interpretaion of eastern texts a sui generis thing. For that reason I find very difficult to find any echo in exoteric authorities (of course, we must try). An instance of this is the evolution in the cycle of reincarnations. Berzin has pointed the difference between theosophy and tibetan buddhism in this respect and I have read no geshe nor lupon nor any other authority speaking about a more profound or evolutive view about reincarnation. It seems to me a very profound problem regarding the tibetan buddhist ascent of theosophy.

Another problem in this respect is the Tsongkhapa's portrait depicted by HPB and the tantric Tsongkhapa (specially the mudra stuff in the practice of gtum mo).

Comment by Jacques Mahnich on September 28, 2010 at 12:06pm

The Guhyasamajatantra was presented in english by Alex Wayman (Volume XVII of Buddhist Traditions), together with the chief commentary in the Tibetan tradition called the Pradipoddyotana (Candrakirti).

Buddhist cosmography and anthropogenesis can also be found in the book One of The Treasury of Knowledge, a compilation of Jamgön Kongtrul. This volume, Myriad Worlds, described four major cosmological systems found in Tibetan tradition - those associated with Hinayana, Mahayana, Kalachakra and Dzog-Chen. None of them have real similarities with the DS.

Comment by David Reigle on September 28, 2010 at 5:46pm

I agree with Leila that it is hard to find any echoes of the cosmogony of the Stanzas of Dzyan in the exoteric or known sources. Yet it is only by comparing the known cosmogonies of the world with the cosmogony given in the Stanzas that we can get a proper perspective on the question of the Stanzas and their origins. The oldest Aryan or Indo-European cosmogony known is that given in the Rigveda "Hymn of

Creation," which faces the beginning of the Stanzas in the SD. Thanks to the earlier posting by K. Paul Johnson, we have all seen Raimundo Panikkar's 1977 translation of this hymn, in comparison with the 1859 translation of it quoted by HPB.

Boris de Zirkoff in his careful 1978 edition of the SD points out that this was quoted by HPB from Max Muller's 1859 book, A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature. Max Muller in introducing it writes there, "I subjoin a metrical translation of this hymn, which I owe to the kindness of a friend." So this is an anonymous translation, not by Max Muller. I do not know why Annie Besant or G.R.S. Mead attributed it to Colebrooke in their 1893 ed. of the SD. Colebrooke's translation of it, published in Asiatic Researches, vol. 8, 1805, was the first one ever made into English, but it is not the one in the SD.

This hymn is written in very archaic Sanskrit, which is not easy to understand or translate. I think it is useful to compare as many translations of it as possible. Leila noted that it is Rigveda 10.129. There are other translations of it, by Horace Hayman Wilson, Ralph T. H. Griffith, Arthur A. Macdonell, Jean Le Mee, etc. The first three mentioned somewhat follow the traditional commentary of Sayana, while Panikkar's departs more from it, and Le Mee's even more. This hymn's reference to the one breathing without breath is, I believe, of much significance in relation to the SD's "Great Breath." This element seems to have disappeared from the later Indian cosmogonies, as are found in the Puranas.

Then Jacques quoted for us the beginning of Sri Aurobindo's great poem, Savitri, for comparison with the Stanzas. Many of you know who the late Judith Tyberg was, a Point Loma Theosophist who has given us books on Sanskrit terms, etc. She later joined the Aurobindo Ashram. She told my wife and I that she believed that Aurobindo's Savitri went far beyond the SD and the Stanzas. I have always remembered this, as an opinion that I respect, even though I do not share it. I see Savitri as a beautiful poem that does not necessarily intend to give a precisely accurate account of cosmogony like the Stanzas purport to do.

The relation of the Stanzas of Dzyan to the Sifra di-Tsenuitha, famously postulated by Gershom Scholem, was elaborated in a link that Odin provided for us. I think it is helpful to compare the Stanzas with the Kabbalistic books such as this and the Sepher Yetzirah for their cosmogony. The fact that the Sifra di-Tsenuitha uses a very different model, that of creation as building the body of God, makes it hardly likely that the Stanzas copied it. Historical evidence indicates a growth toward anthropomorphism in religions, which would suggest that this Kabbalistic source is later.

We can now readily compare the cosmogony given in the Stanzas of Dzyan with the oldest known Aryan cosmogony, that found in the Rigveda, the standard Indian cosmogony, that found in the Puranas, the Kabbalistic cosmogony, that found in the Siphra di-Tsenuitha, a Buddhist cosmogony from one of the most important books of Kiu-te, the Guhyasamaja Tantra, and in the book referred to by Jacques, Myriad Worlds, four other Buddhist cosmogonies including that of another of the most important books of Kiu-te, the Kalachakra Tantra.

If we conclude that there is comparatively little resemblance between any known cosmogony and the cosmogony given in the Stanzas of Dzyan, then we are left with two choices. Either HPB made up the Stanzas of Dzyan, or she actually did translate them from a secret source that is considerably more extensive than any known source. The internal consistency and coherence of the cosmogony given in the Stanzas has led me to accept the second of these two choices. I find it plausible that secret sources do exist, hidden away in places like the cave in the Tien-Shan mountains referred to by HPB in her article that M. Sufilight posted excerpts from for us. In the mid-1990s some of the oldest Sanskrit manuscripts yet found were rescued from hidden caves in Afghanistan by locals fleeing from the Taliban, and eventually assembled in the Schoyen collection in Norway.

Comment by David Reigle on September 28, 2010 at 5:57pm

Jacques, Alex Wayman's book, The Yoga of the Guhyasamajatantra, includes only chapters 6 and 12 of the Guhyasamaja Tantra in translation.

Comment by Jacques Mahnich on September 29, 2010 at 1:36pm

That's correct, David. The part which may be of interest for a seeker in this volume is the 100 pages introducing the Guhyasamajatantra in its historical and exegetical contexts. The rest is mostly describing the Yoga of the Guhyasamajatantra.

Comment by Leila Becquer on September 29, 2010 at 7:18pm

What a great posts!

Only a clarification, perhaps I was not clear with my english: I think that would be difficult to find echo in the authorities, high rank lamas as geshe or lopon (doctors

with many years of study, much reading and memorizing) has never in my knowledge (but this is not the criterion because I am not a specialist) spoke about something alike to the main points of the Blavatsky's scheme, an instance is evolution, or evolutive reincarnation. Perhaps if in some text there was something similar a geshe must know that. The first and main attemp of something like that was the work of Alice Leighton Cleather with the Panchen Lama and his preface to The Voice.

By the way, perhaps the chinese cosmogony would resemble closer, chapter 42 of Dao Te Jing speaks about Dao giving origin to the one, the one to the two, the two to the three and the three to the ten thousand of things. And the daoist practice is very pantheist, all natural elements are related to forces and are "manipulated".

Referring to the form I will think something but without the original would be very difficult to find the proper pattern (rhyme, stress, long or short syllables,etc.).

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on September 29, 2010 at 8:17pm

Paul, that is a good question. It is difficult to get any clear sense of the literary form of the Stanzas, because we have them only in English translation. From this we cannot tell, for example, if the originals were written in meter or not, as are about seventy-five percent of the Sanskrit writings. Anything I can say on this question will be from the standpoint of the Sanskrit writings (and their Tibetan translations). I have limited my study to these, as the Stanzas have always appeared to me to be Eastern.

Among the Sanskrit writings, I would have to say that the Stanzas resemble the Upanishads most closely in literary form. The individual verses or slokas of the Stanzas vary greatly in length. This is like the Upanishads, which consist of prose paragraphs of quite uneven length. This is in contrast to virtually all of the later Sanskrit philosophical writings, which almost always take the form of metrical treatises. In these, each verse is of the same length. Fitting the philosophical ideas into metrical verses often makes them rather obscure. For this reason, these metrical treatises are almost invariably studied with the help of prose commentaries.

Of course, the prose paragraphs of the Upanishads, too, are often obscure. So they, too, are normally studied with the help of commentaries. HPB often refers to commentaries on the Stanzas. The Stanzas look to me more like these prose paragraphs of uneven length. The obscurity of such writings is more with the ideas than with words that must be made to fit the meter. The Upanishad commentaries are free to focus almost entirely on the ideas, unlike the commentaries on the philosophical treatises written in meter. These must spend a lot of time simply construing the words into coherent prose sentences, and doing such things as filling in grammatical data or supplying words that were left out due to the meter.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on September 29, 2010 at 8:32pm

Tibetan Community - Dharmasalanet.com

BuddhaNet - BuddhaNet Weblinks

I've sent e-mails to most of the groups in the BuddhaNet > Tibetan Buddhism links list down to the Quiet Mountain. There are literally hundreds of links here.

Any help is most appreciated.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on September 29, 2010 at 8:38pm

David, I'm wondering about something. The Stanzas were supposed to be written on palm leaves. Not being a trained philologist I'm not certain who would have used this as a medium and been able to preserve them up to the late 1880's and beyond. The materials might be one clue and it would eliminate those groups who did not use palm leaves.

Just a thought.

Joe

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on September 29, 2010 at 9:36pm

Joe, palm leaves were very much the norm as the writing material for all Sanskrit writings, whether Hindu, Jaina, or Buddhist, until several centuries ago, when paper came into common use. There are large numbers of old palm leaf

manuscripts still in existence. They are, of course, much less common than paper manuscripts, but there are still a lot of them. Virtually all the Sanskrit manuscripts that were brought to Tibet a thousand years ago to be translated into Tibetan are palm leaf manuscripts. Many of these are still preserved in Tibet, and some of these are now becoming available to the outside world, through a cooperative agreement reached between the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the China Tibetology Research Center.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on September 29, 2010 at 10:09pm

Just had an odd thought. What purpose would be served if the Stanzas were translated back into Sanskrit or Hindi? Surely something like that has been done for editions of the SD written for Indian, non-English speakers.

Comment by [Leila Becquer](#) on September 30, 2010 at 7:12am

It could be interesting to note that the traditional etymological meaning of Upanishad is secret doctrine because it is learnt at the feet of a guru orally in the forest, and in the age of retirement, not in youth. Indeed, the matters of the upanishad are the abstruse philosophical and yogic points as the nature of atman, etc.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on September 30, 2010 at 8:27am

Translating the Stanzas from HPB's English into Sanskrit or Hindi, or even Tibetan, would no doubt make their ideas available to a larger audience of non-English speakers. However, it would be extremely difficult to do this without unduly biasing the case. Whatever technical terms were chosen in such a translation would immediately lean the Stanzas into one or other known philosophical system. The Nicholas and Helena Roerich books, for example, speak of the coming Maitreya Buddha. The Alice Bailey books speak of the same coming Maitreya, but almost always refer to him as the Christ. This has led to a large audience for the Bailey books of people having a Christian background, and very few having a Buddhist background.

I would be very interested in seeing any existing Sanskrit or Hindi translations of the Stanzas. Even within Hinduism there would be many possible choices of translation terms to use, and these would bias the reader in one direction or another. I noticed a post by Ferran Sanz Orriols here on this website regarding the Great Invocation as a tool for service. The Great Invocation has been translated into many languages in an attempt to spread its use. I have looked at the Sanskrit, Hindi, and Tibetan translations of it. The Sanskrit and Hindi translations differ significantly in their translation of its important term, God. The Tibetan translation of it is so distant that I do not see how it would give even an approximate idea of this invocation to Tibetan Buddhists, who do not believe in God. The Christian missionaries faced the same problem in translating the Bible into Tibetan.

Interestingly, the translation of the Bible into Tibetan used dkon mchog for God. We see this same Tibetan word in the Stanzas, given phonetically by HPB in the SD, vol. 1, p. 23, as Konch-hog. This Tibetan word means "jewel," and refers to "the three jewels," namely, the Buddha, the Dharma, or his teachings, and the Sangha, or the Buddhist community. As anyone can see, this is a far cry from the Christian idea of God. In the Stanzas, it apparently refers to something in Stanza I, possibly the universal mind, although this word in Tibetan is kun gzhi rather than dkon mchog. In any case, we do not find "jewel(s)" in Stanza I. So how would one translate such a word? Translating these things would be a hard task.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 1, 2010 at 9:06pm

I've pinged MK Ramadoss and a Captain Anand Kumar regarding Hindi or Sanskrit translations of the SD/Stanzas of Dzyan. It'll be interesting to see what they come up with.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 1, 2010 at 9:06pm

It is also my experience, Leila, that we do not find echoes of the specific Theosophical scheme in the teachings of Tibetan lamas and geshees. Perhaps in all the queries that Joe has been sending out to various Tibetan Buddhist and other groups, something closely similar will turn up. And then again, perhaps not. That, too, will be very helpful to us to know. Thanks also for the Tao te ching cosmogony reference to chapter 42, which I had not noticed before.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 1, 2010 at 9:11pm

He or that? The last verse of the hymn of creation from the Rig-veda is found in Max Muller's 1859 book as follows:

*"He from whom all this great creation came,
Whether his will created or was mute,
The Most High seer that is in highest heaven,
He knows it, — or perchance e'en He knows not."*

It is found in The Secret Doctrine (original 1888 edition) as follows:

*"That, whence all this great creation came,
Whether Its will created or was mute,
The Most High Seer that is in highest heaven,
He knows it — or perchance even He knows not."*

Obviously, HPB changed "he" to "that," and "his" to "its," in conformity with the teachings of the SD. She apparently believed that this is what the Rig-veda actually taught. Max Muller, perhaps in conformity with his Christian background, saw in this Rig-veda verse reference to an overseer who is the source of creation, very much like God as conceived of in Christianity. Muller, in explaining this hymn, wrote (pp. 562-563):

"And now a new thought dawns in the mind of the Rishi, a thought for which we were not prepared, and which apparently contradicts the whole train of argument or meditation that preceded. Whereas hitherto the problem of existence was conceived as a mere evolution of one substance, postulated by human reasoning, the poet now speaks of an Adhyaksha, an overseer, a contemplator, who resides in the highest heavens. He, he says, knows it. And why? Because this creation came from him, whether he made it or not. The poet asserts the fact that this overseer is the source of creation, though he shrinks from determining the exact process, whether he created from himself, or from nothing, or from matter existing by itself."

So who is right? What does the Sanskrit text actually say? Do the origins of the Stanzas of Dzyan and the oldest known Aryan cosmogony coincide or not? I have been putting together some material on this, but I could not finish it today. I will try to get it posted tomorrow.

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 2, 2010 at 5:49am

A full translation of the Rig-Veda from sanscrit to french was published by Alexandre Langlois in 1834. This verse from last creation hymn read as "Celui qui est le premier auteur de cette création...", which can be translated as "that one".

Comment by [Leila Becquer](#) on October 2, 2010 at 8:38am

I think that the 'He' or 'It' is for the third person of the verb dhâ, to create, sustain, etc. But could be interpreted in both ways, in fact, theists see a 'he' for saguna brahman, brahman with qualities. Later I will read again the hymn, perhaps with the context it will be more clear.

Comment by [M K Ramadoss](#) on October 2, 2010 at 10:43am

Couple of years ago, when I ran into an International Linguistic Authority on dravidian languages (he is an author of several books on linguistics published by Oxford University Press), he told me he had not heard of Senzar. He is not familiar with theosophy and hence I was not surprised by his being unaware of Senzar.

Comment by [M K Ramadoss](#) on October 2, 2010 at 10:45am

I am not aware of any translation of SD in Hindi or any other Indian languages. May be some one else more familiar can confirm this.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 2, 2010 at 10:55am

I just got word of a translation of the Stanzas into Hindi a few minutes ago from Captain Anand Kumar over at the Theosophical Community. He is scanning a copy for us.

I'm wondering, aside from the work done by Reigle and Algeo what studies have been done on Senzar

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 2, 2010 at 9:14pm

It is great to have input from French language sources, Jacques. There seems to be full agreement among translators that "that one" (tad ekam) is the subject of the hymn as a whole, and this would be in full agreement with the teachings of the Secret Doctrine. It is also great to have input regarding the Sanskrit, Leila. It is no doubt true that the key to the "he or that" question hinges upon the implied, but not stated, subject of the verb dadhe, from dhaa, in verse 7. To be clear on the verse numbering, I am sure that everyone has seen that HPB quotes only verses 1-3 and 6-7 of this 7-verse hymn.

Muller and HPB disagree on how to understand the subject of the second verb in the first half of verse 7. Because it is a metrical verse, the subject of this verb is not clearly spelled out in the Sanskrit like it could be in prose. We must bring in a subject for it. For this we have three choices. The most natural choice would be to use the subject of the first verb in the first half of verse 7, "this creation" (iyam visrstir). Max Muller uses the subject of the last half of verse 7, "he" (so), the "most high seer" (adhyaksah). We could also carry down the subject of the whole hymn, from verse 2, "that one" (tad ekam). This is perhaps what HPB meant, although this is not certain. She needed to make as small a change as possible to the translation she quoted, in changing the personal to the impersonal. This was the easiest way to do this. I do not think that we can infer anything more precise from her change.

Well, it seems that as Vedic scholarship has progressed, the tide has turned fully in favor of HPB's impersonal interpretation, and away from Max Muller's personal or theistic interpretation. As some of you know, I have always believed that a Sanskrit/Tibetan text of the Stanzas of Dzyan would become available in my lifetime, so my wife and I have long been gathering materials from which to annotate it. Here are the results of tabulating the sixteen English translations of this hymn that we have gathered.

Max Muller's idea of an overseer, like the Christian God, who is the source of creation, is represented in many of the older translations: Horace Hayman Wilson (who died in 1860, but his translation of this part was published posthumously in 1888, "he"), the anonymous metrical translation published by Max Muller (1859, "he"), Ralph T. H. Griffith (1892, "he"), and Arthur A. Macdonell (1917, "he"). They are joined by one later translation, which follows the theistic interpretation of Dayananda Sarasvati, namely, the translation by Satya Prakash Sarasvati and Satyakam Vidyalanka (1987, "he").

HPB's idea of an impersonal "it" rather than a "he" is represented in all of the newer translations, with the one exception just noted, and even in some of the older translations: Henry Thomas Colebrooke (1805, "it"), John Muir (1863, 1870, "any one"), William Dwight Whitney (1882, partial translation, "it"), Ananda K. Coomaraswamy (1933, "one"), W. Norman Brown (1941, 1965, "it"), Abhinash Chandra Bose (1966, "it"), Jean Le Mee (1975, "it"), Walter H. Maurer (1975, "it"), Antonio de Nicolas (1976, "it"), Raimundo Panikkar (1977, "it"), Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty (1981, "it"), and Joel Brereton (1999, "it"). The majority of these translators take the subject as "this creation" (iyam visrstir), but the point is that it is impersonal, not "he." This is really overwhelming support for the impersonal interpretation. HPB was justified in making the change, and by quoting this hymn at the beginning of the Stanzas, implying that this old Aryan cosmogony agrees with that of the Stanzas of Dzyan.

Comment by [Leila Becquer](#) on October 3, 2010 at 6:01am

Hi David and all, good analysis. In my years as student of sanskrit we have translated that hymn in class and the impersonal interpretation prevailed.

So, as for impersonality relates, that thing has make think about daoism, because in daoism the Dao is impersonal and has some diagrams similar to the symbols presented by HPB in the Proem. Besides that, perhaps the family language of tibetan could be a clue because it pertains to the sinotibetan family.

Related to the upanishad connection it would be useful remember The Voice and its link with the Nadabindopanishat. In a thread in this community begun by Robert Searle we have talked about Sant Mat, sound stream, etc.

Matters with affinity with The Voice that as we know has its source in the same cycle of texts of the Stanzas.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 3, 2010 at 10:14am

There is now a copy of the Stanzas of Dzryan in Hindi posted to the front page of the site. See the Dzryan Ke Shloka.pdf.

Kind thanks to Captain Anand Kumar for taking the time to scan the books and post it. Your efforts are most appreciated.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 3, 2010 at 2:06pm

Many thanks, Joe, for obtaining and posting the Hindi translation of the Stanzas, and many thanks to Captain Anand Kumar for scanning this book for us. I am finding it very interesting to see how Pandya Baijnath (or Vaijnath) translates the technical terms of the Stanzas into Hindi in this 1954 book. Although I do not know Hindi, I know that its technical terms are usually Sanskrit words. So this much I can follow. I had gone through Stanza 1 of the Hindi translation and made comments on several of the technical terms in its nine verses, when the power went out for a moment, and my post disappeared. Suffice it to say, then, that this Hindi translation of the Stanzas is very useful to me, and I much appreciate having access to it.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 3, 2010 at 2:48pm

A new file has now been posted by Joe on the main page of this website, giving fourteen English translations of Rg-veda 10.129 in chronological order. Those who wish to study this hymn of creation will see that the understanding of it has gotten much more refined since the first English translation of 1805. In this file can be found Max Muller's 1859 comments on it, John Muir's 1870 comments on it that incorporate traditional Sanskrit commentaries, a study text of it from Arthur Macdonell's 1917 Vedic Reader for Students, Ananda Coomarswamy's insightful 1933 new approach to it, and Walter Maurer's careful 1975 translation of it, among others. Two good English translations of it were not included due to space limitations: Jean Le Mee's 1975 translation, which was published in picture book

form, and Joel Brereton's 1999 translation, which is spread out over a long article in the Journal of the American Oriental Society. Also not included are some important German translations. At the end of the file there are some pages from Vasudeva S. Agrawala's book on it, showing the adhyatma or inner, symbolic line of interpretation. The materials here in this file, all on a small but very important hymn of only seven verses, will give a good idea of what is in store for Book of Dzyan studies once we have a Sanskrit and/or Tibetan text to work from.

Comment by [Leila Becquer](#) on October 3, 2010 at 2:52pm

I just have read it, it is wonderful. I can help with a little of hindi. So I will print it to work on it in the following days, meanwhile, we wait David's technical terms analysis.

Comment by [Dan Caldwell](#) on October 3, 2010 at 4:30pm

David Reigle in his compilation has given us 14 English translations. I would like to mention another translation. It is given in the book YOGA AND BEYOND by Georg Feuerstein and Jeanine Miller. In Chapter 3 titled "The Hymn of Creation: A Philosophical Interpretation", pp. 64-85, Jeanine Miller translates and gives a brilliant commentary on this hymn. I believe she is giving her own translation (as far as I can tell). This book was reprinted later under a new title which is the first book listed on this webpage:

<http://blavatskyarchives.com/hinduism/hinduismbooks3.htm>

If David Reigle reads this, I ask him to comment on what Miller writes at the top of page 85 on the "masculine pronoun sa".

Daniel

<http://hpb.cc>

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 3, 2010 at 7:07pm

In the Hindi translation of Stanza I, verse 3, universal mind is translated directly or literally as universal mind, visva-vyapta manas. It is only in the translator's commentary that we find it glossed as mahat, the technical term also used for it by

HPB. This term, mahat, is a technical term associated with the Samkhya school in Hinduism. But the Samkhya worldview was so widely found in old India, that its terms seem to have practically become general Hindu Indian terms.

If, however, this book was going out to a Buddhist audience, the technical term alaya-vijnana would be used instead of mahat for the universal mind. The term alaya-vijnana is a technical term specific to the Yogacara school of Mahayana Buddhism. Hence, it would be unknown to almost all Hindus, and even to many Buddhists, of other schools. When HPB uses alaya in verse 9, then, she is using a term specific to a particular school of Buddhism. It does not seem to have been familiar to the Hindi translator, who glossed it there in verse 9 as prakriti or pradhana, following HPB's comments (SD 1.49-50). But in Buddhism, it does not mean prakriti or pradhana, so this is misleading.

In verse 5 of Stanza I, darkness is translated directly or literally as darkness, andhakara. The term used for darkness in Rig-veda 10.129 (verse 3) is the technical term tamas. Here, tamas is not just the darkness of a dark night, as is andhakara, but can be considered as the cosmic principle of darkness. This term, tamas, was later used as one of the three qualities or gunas taught in the Samkhya school of Hinduism. So far, the Hindi translator with his choice of generic terms rather than technical terms is keeping the translation neutral.

In verse 6, HPB's translation uses the technical term parinispanna. This is another technical term specific to the Yogacara school of Buddhism. In the Hindi translation, it is given as parinirvana. This seems to be good choice, that would be more comprehensible to a Hindi-speaking audience. In this verse and its Hindi commentary the term maha-svasa is used for the great breath. This term, maha-svasa, or even its synonym, maha-prana, is not found in the Vedic writings. So far, I have found these terms only in the Buddhist text, Manjusri-nama-samgiti, and in the Buddhist Kalachakra writings. In one specific Tibetan school, the Jonangpas, the Kalachakra teachings are primary, and they follow the Great Madhyamaka philosophy. The Great Madhyamaka philosophy is based on the Yogacara writings, understood in a Madhyamaka context.

In verse 7, being and non-being are given in the Hindi translation as sat and asat. These are the two terms that are found in the first verse of Rig-veda 10.129, given as aught and nought (naught) in the translation facing the Stanzas in the SD.

In verse 8, and in the Hindi commentary on verse 1, space is translated as avakasa. This is space in the sense of room, or empty space providing room for something.

Again, this is not a technical term, as the term akasa can be. While akasa is often space in the sense of the sky or atmosphere or the heavens, it is also frequently used as the fifth element, the all-pervading ether.

In verse 9, where we have four foreign terms in HPB's translation, the Hindi translator retained three of these. The term alaya, when used by itself, is not a technical term standing for the alaya-vijnana. It just means abode, as in Himalaya, the abode (alaya) of snow (hima). So the Hindi translator, when using it, had to put its meaning in parentheses. He gave the English "Over-Soul," and then for Hindi, prakriti or pradhana, following HPB's comments. As noted above, this is not how Buddhists understand the alaya-vijnana.

Similarly, the Buddhist term paramartha has been glossed by the Hindi translator as "Absolute Consciousness, avyakta cetana, sat, caitanya," again deducing this from HPB's comments, which are very scanty on this. Again, this is not at all how Buddhists understand paramartha. In Buddhism, paramartha is often used with satya, meaning ultimate truth, and even by itself normally refers to ultimate truth. This is one of the sections of the SD where there are many errors in HPB's commentary, here copied from Emil Schlagintweit's 1863 book, Buddhism in Tibet.

Overall, I find it very instructive to see what terms were chosen by the Hindi translator for the technical terms in the Stanzas.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 3, 2010 at 9:52pm

Thank you very much, Daniel, for the reference to Jeanine Miller's translation of Rig-veda 10.129, which I had forgotten about. This and a few others that I am digging out will have to be added to the tally.

Regarding her comment at the top of page 85 on the "masculine pronoun sa," this pronoun is found in the second half of verse 7, not in the first half. It there correlates with the relative pronoun yah forming a complete and independent clause, and refers to the adhyaksa, the overseer. This "One in the highest heaven" who "is not the Absolute" is what Jeanine is speaking of as the "he," distinguished from the neuter and impersonal tat, which is found in verses 2 and 3 as "that one" (tad ekam). Grammatically, the masculine pronoun sa does not go with the first half of the verse, although one could put it there, as Max Muller did. I do not know why she used "He" in her translation of the first half of verse 7, since she does not

refer to this phrase or idea in what she is saying here about the "One in the highest heaven" who "is not the Absolute."

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on October 3, 2010 at 10:16pm

Hi Everyone.

I am a new member to this site. And, I bring greetings of enlightenment to everyone here. I hope to learn from the great scholars assembled here.

I have a question for David Reigle and other Sanskrit Scholars here. Kindly help me in solving this.

There is a mention of ALAYA in the Secret Doctrine. The way I understand, it originates from the word LAYA. In Hindi, with which I am familiar, the word LAYA usually means rhythm in resonance. Mostly connected with musical notes or vibrations.

Now the derivatives of this word LAYA, and their common respective meanings would appear to be:

- 1. A-LAYA - Out of Resonance*
- 2. VI-LAYA - Dissolve Into, Dissolution*
- 3. PRA-LAYA - Complete Dissolution*

*I would really be grateful for clarification on the above by the Sanskrit scholars.
Thanks*

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 4, 2010 at 8:42am

Greetings to you, Capt. Anand Kumar. It is great to have your participation here, and I thank you again for your work in getting us the Hindi translation of the Stanzas of Dzyan. This is something that I will refer to again and again over the years, since its translations of technical terms are as much Sanskrit as Hindi. I did not know that it existed.

Regarding alaya, as a Yogacara Buddhist term the initial letter "a" is the long "a" rather than the short "a". So the "a" does not negate laya, as we might expect, and

as in your translation, "out of resonance." This has long been a question for Theosophists. In 1977 I heard Joy Mills explain alaya as "non-dissolution," taking the "a" as the negating short "a". I, too, had once thought that this must be what it meant. But by then I had seen Emil Schlagintweit's 1863 book, Buddhism in Tibet, which HPB took many sentences from here in this part of the SD. So after Joy's talk I showed her Schlagintweit's pages. These pages make it clear by their definitions that the word used by HPB is alaya with initial long "a". Here are a couple of quotations from Schlagintweit's book that show this: I will show the long "a", for which Schlagintweit uses a macron, by writing double "aa".

". . . supposing that a soul, AAlaya (Tib. Tsang, also Nyingpo), is the basis of every thing. This soul exists from time immemorial, and in every object, 'it reflects itself in every thing, like the moon in clear and tranquil water.'" (p. 39)

"The idea of the soul, AAlaya, is the chief dogma of the Yogaacharya system, which is so called because 'he who is strong in the Yoga (meditation) is able to introduce his soul by means of the Yoga into the true nature of existence.'" (p. 40)

When Schlagintweit wrote, nothing was known about this outside of the Tibetan regions. His information was necessarily very fragmentary, and often incorrect. Buddhists would probably not use the word soul to describe it. He did give this word aalaya correctly, however, as was later proved when actual Sanskrit texts of the Yogacara school of Buddhism were discovered and published. According its Chinese translation, aalaya means "storehouse." When followed by vijnana in the compound, aalaya-vijnaana, it means "storehouse consciousness." According to its Tibetan translation (given incorrectly by Schlagintweit), aalaya means "basis of all" or "universal foundation" (kun gzhi). The aalaya-vijnaana, or foundation consciousness, is considered to be the all-pervading basic consciousness behind all individual manifestations of consciousness, and it stores the karmic seeds (vaasanaa) which condition the life of each conscious individual. So it can be described as the universal mind, the phrase used by HPB in The Secret Doctrine.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 4, 2010 at 6:01pm

To everyone:

Are we in need of any specific book(s) or other literature for this project? Let me know so I can go dig for it.

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on October 5, 2010 at 7:07am

Thank you, David Reigle, for an extremely well researched reply on my question.

The thought that Aalaya, menaing abode (of the soul) had occured to me. Particularly with the hint of Himalaya. But, my mind wandered off to think in terms of "Laya" which connotates with rhythm, resonance and therefore vibrations. If we looked at the vibrations within the meanings of classical physics, then it would be more appropriate to call them waves. As most energies are wave forms in physical reality, it made sense to me. However such connection will chnage the meaning of the many of the scriptures - particularly when understood in context of latest advances in the quantum theory and its relationship with consciousness.

For example, Mantras are supposed to be capable of producing vibrations (waves) capable of doing many things. They don't happen anymore. Perhaps, the resonance these mantras were capable of achieving, is not possible anymore due to Doppler Shift, a phenomena which introduces a change in the frequency of waves with time and distance. Modern GPS receivers work on this principle as do many other devices. If we could calculate the Doppler shift of those frequencies it may be possible to modify the mantras to enable them to work.

I have strayed from the topic of this blog and my apologies to everyone for that.

So, David- your deep research into this topic has put all my doubts to rest. Thanks again.

Comment by [Alistair Coombs](#) on October 5, 2010 at 7:31am

It is a pity some of Jeanine Miller's translations of the Rgveda put out in her "The Vision of Cosmic Order in the Vedas" received such a negative review in the Indo-Iranian Journal (<http://www.springerlink.com/content/r1g32p4705654458/>) as I do have preference for her approach over that of several others, not only the former biased translations of the 19th century. There's also a new translation of the Rgveda currently in the making. I don't know the extent to which or if it even deals with The Stanzas of Dzyan at any length, but Miller's new book "Blazing Dragon of

Wisdom" is finally at the press and it is a study in HPB's Vedic and Upanishadic sources. I'm sure this will be very useful when it becomes available.

Comment by [Alistair Coombs](#) on October 5, 2010 at 8:03am

It was my understanding that Alaya originally meant 'field', meaning to where cows eat to the limits of. Thus in Yogacara, philosophical periphery, the scope of, etc.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 5, 2010 at 5:39pm

After Daniel called our attention to a translation of Rig-veda 10.129 by Jeanine Miller that I had missed, I have pulled out some more English translations of this hymn. These should be added to the previous tally. The score now stands at six in favor of "he", and sixteen in favor of "it", in the first half of verse 7 where HPB changed the rendering published by Max Muller. As noted before, the "it" in these translations almost always stands for "this creation" (iyam visrstir), which is the subject of the first line of verse 7. HPB's small alteration to the quote did not make this the subject, but it did change the personal pronouns here to impersonal pronouns. All agree that the subject of the hymn, given in verses 2 and 3, is the neuter "that one" (tad ekam). The question is whether or not this hymn refers in verse 7 to a creator like the Christian God who made this universe, and thus, for us, whether or not this hymn agrees with the Stanzas of Dzyan.

*The additional translations are: Monier Monier-Williams (1875, "it"), William Dwight Whitney (1882, "it"), Adolf Kaegi (1886, "it"), H. W. Wallis (1887, "it"), Franklin Edgerton (1965, "it"), and Jeanine Miller (1971, "He"). I had mentioned Whitney before, but I did not count him among the sixteen English translations previously referred to, because I had not noticed that he provided a complete translation. Also, there is a 1900 translation by Arthur Macdonell using "it", while his 1917 translation referred to earlier uses "he". Since we must assume that his later translation represents his final view, he remains among the six translators using "he". Franklin Edgerton's translation is found in his book described as "a summing-up after a lifetime of philological study and reflection," titled *The Beginnings of Indian Philosophy*. He is famous for his very literal line by line translation of the *Bhagavad-gita*, prepared primarily for his Sanskrit students. It was published by Harvard University Press with the Sanskrit text on facing pages. Then this press, not realizing the purpose of this translation, published it for the*

public in an English-only edition. His literal translations were not intended to be literary.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 5, 2010 at 7:33pm

Joe, regarding your query as to what other literature we might need, there is something we need, although it is not quite literature. It is something that may perhaps be found somewhere in some literature. It is the word fohat. No one has ever yet found this word outside of Theosophical writings. But since most of the Theosophical terms have been found elsewhere, perhaps this one can be, too. This is what stopped me after my 1997 Book of Dzyan Research Report on Technical Terms in Stanza II. The term fohat occurs in Stanza III, and I had nothing worthwhile to say on it.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 5, 2010 at 7:52pm

I will start digging :)

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 5, 2010 at 8:00pm

Alistair, I was glad to hear that Jeanine Miller's new book is at the press. Do you know who is publishing it? Yes, the 5-page review of her 1985 book in the Indo-Iranian Journal, by H. W. Bodewitz, is negative. But there is also a review of it in Philosophy East and West (vol. 38, no. 1, 1988, pp. 89-91), by Antonio T. de Nicolas, that is positive. You mentioned a new translation of the Rgveda in the making. Is this the one that Stanley Insler at Yale has long been preparing?

Regarding alaya, you must be thinking of the word gocara when you say that it "originally meant 'field', meaning to where cows eat to the limits of." This word is, literally, the "going" (cara) of a "cow" (go). It does mean the range of something, and is often used in Buddhist texts when talking about something that is only in the range of perception of the Aryas, but is not accessible to the consciousness of ordinary people.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 5, 2010 at 10:00pm

So, here's what I have so far:

The word "Fohat" does not appear to be a Tibetan word. However, there may be another word that serves the same purpose. It is the word Pho-ña. Pho-ña is defined as "a messenger, a deputy, an envoy". This definition is verified via the Chandra Das' Tibetan-English Dictionary (page 828).

The Stanzas of Dzyan, Stanza 5, Verse 2 establishes the likelihood of "Pho-Pa" being HPB's Fohat, via the definition above.

See: (link: [SD Part I, Stanza V, Verse 2](#))

2. They make of him the messenger of their will (a). The Dzyu becomes Fohat; the Swift Son of the Divine Sons, whose sons are the Lipika, runs circular errands. He is the steed, and the Thought is the rider (i.e., he is under the influence of their guiding thought). He passes like lightning through the fiery clouds (cosmic mists) (b); takes three, and five, and seven strides through the seven regions above and the seven below (the world to be). He lifts his voice, and calls the innumerable sparks (atoms) and joins them together (c).*

I found a couple Tibetan linguists online, one associated with Nitartha International, which has an excellent Tibetan-English translation service (see: http://www.nitartha.org/dictionary_search04.html). I did not find Fohat there. If Fohat is a Tibetan word, then it is either a region-specific, idiosyncratic or a slang term, but definitely not in general usage. I have pinged these linguists on the subject. We'll have to see if either of them pick up the discussion or furnish us some additional leads.

There is a possible Tibetan spelling of pho-hat (if the word exists) and it looks something like this:



This is the Tibetan word Pho-ña:



I would conclude, based on usage, that Pho-na is HPB's Fohat.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 5, 2010 at 10:12pm

Correction in the third paragraph. It should read "Pho-ña", not "Pho-pa".

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 5, 2010 at 10:22pm

Additionally, the Chandra Das dictionary defines Pho-ña as "also, a spiritual messenger or angel"

Comment by [Ferran Sanz Orriols](#) on October 6, 2010 at 3:08am

Congratulations to everyone for your good work!!! :)

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 6, 2010 at 9:08am [Delete Comment](#)

The idea of fohat as a messenger is certainly in Stanza 5, verse 2. But also in that verse is the idea that fohat is the steed, and thought is the rider. It so happens that this idea is a basic teaching of the Buddhist Tantras, i.e., the Books of Kiu-te. They teach that the winds or vital airs are the mounts of consciousness or thought. The word used in these texts for this mount is Sanskrit prana, Tibetan rlung, where the initial "r" is silent. So the word has no similarity to fohat, but the idea seems to be the same.

Fohat is spoken of in the SD as a cosmic principle. Do we find any teaching like this in known religions? I have so far not found in Eastern religions any direct parallel to the concept of fohat. But in the Vedas and Upanishads, prana is a cosmic principle. It forms a trinity with manas or mind and vaak or speech, all three described as cosmic principles. While the individual pranas as the mounts of consciousness are not spoken of as a cosmic principle in the Buddhist tantras, there is found in the Kalachakra Tantra the term maha-prana (and maha-svasa), the "great breath," and it is a cosmic principle. This usage in the Vedic writings and in the Kalachakra Tantra is the nearest conceptual parallel to fohat that I have found, but the word fohat does not match either prana or rlung.

HPB says more than once that fohat is a Turanian word or compound. Turanian was used by ethnologists and linguists in the 1800s for Mongolian and Uralic and Altaic and related people and languages of central Asia, and even Dravidian of southern India. Like Tibetan and Sanskrit, Mongolian does not have an "f" sound. The aspirate "ph" in Sanskrit and Tibetan is not pronounced as "f", like it can be in English. I have checked the Mongolian translation of the great dictionary or vocabulary called Mahavyutpatti, and found nothing even close to fohat. It will be hard to find a phonetically similar word in use that has the same range of meanings as fohat has in Theosophical writings. I think that this is what it will take to make a case that is convincing even to our critics.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 6, 2010 at 10:04am

The Theosophical glossary relates Fohat as equivalent to Daivaiprakriti, also called by T. Subba Row, "the Light of the Logos". So regarding the additional meanings, aside from the concept of a messenger, I'm thinking that we're left to a local usage. I'll keep digging.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 6, 2010 at 10:57am

Yes, fohat may very well be a local usage, kind of like we have here on the internet. So far I have learned three new four-letter words: blog, grok, and ping. But I am wondering if fohat, as an early transcription of some Eastern word, might be found in some English or French or German book published before 1882 that HPB had access to.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 6, 2010 at 11:27am

Good thought there. Fohat appears in the Mahatma Letters, I believe Letter #13.

Comment by [Alistair Coombs](#) on October 6, 2010 at 11:53am

Surely what is usually transcribed as Phowa, meaning the transference of thought and consciousness (in Bardo contexts at the moment of death) is possibly the most likely candidate for Fohat, despite the labial. The fact you may not want to read in a specifically cosmic attribute to its Vajrayana usage wouldn't have made much of a difference to HPB, given the theosophical application of general principles across the scale.

Comment by [Alistair Coombs](#) on October 6, 2010 at 12:21pm

Letter #13 seems to mark the term's first entry into theosophical literature (?). It isn't in "Esoteric Buddhism". It doesn't seem to appear in IU either, or it at least isn't indexed, whereas for example 'electric waves', electrical photography' and 'electricity' (which provides a list of different mythological personifications), are.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on October 6, 2010 at 1:22pm

David (Reigle): does this make sense to you:

From the Encyclopedic Theosophical Glossary (De Purucker) :

"Fohat (Tibetan-Mongolian) {from Mon pho, fo buddha, buddhi} Cosmic life or vitality; in theosophy, bipolar cosmic vital electricity, equivalent to the light of the Logos, daiviprakriti, eros, the fiery whirlwind, etc. As the bridge between spirit and matter, fohat is the collectivity of intelligent forces through which cosmic ideation impresses itself upon substance, thus forming the various worlds of manifestation. In the manifested universe, it "is that Occult, electric, vital power, which, under the Will of the Creative Logos, unites and brings together all forms, giving them the first impulse which becomes in time law. . . . Fohat becomes the propelling force, the active Power which causes the One to become Two and Three . . . then Fohat is

transformed into that force which brings together the elemental atoms and makes them aggregate and combine" (SD 1:109).

There are many fohats working on the cosmic, terrestrial, and human planes. In the human constitution it corresponds to the pranas. {}"

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 7, 2010 at 10:31am

Yes, fohat appears in Mahatma letter #13 on the Cosmological Notes, received in Jan. 1882, and a little earlier in the Cosmological Notes themselves. The term fohat was there introduced for the first time in the Theosophical writings, as follows:

"(1) What are the different kinds of knowledge? The real (Dgyu) and the unreal (Dgyu-mi). Dgyu becomes Fohat when in its activity -- active agent of will-electricity -- no other name."

From the phrase "no other name," it would appear that the author of the Cosmological Notes could not find a known equivalent for fohat, so had to introduce the original term itself.

From this basic definition, "active agent of will -- electricity," I understand it as something other than phowa, the transference of thought and consciousness, such as happens after death.

In the Encyclopedic Theosophical Glossary entry, it looks like Mon should have a period after it, as an abbreviation for Mongolian. But I don't think pho or fo means buddha in Mongolian. The Mongolian translation of buddha is burqan. In Tibetan, pho means male. The word fo, however, is the Chinese word for buddha.

Regarding the equivalent for fohat given by T. Subba Row in his lectures or notes on the Bhagavad-gita, daivi-prakriti, this as a two-word phrase can be found in Bhagavad-gita, chapter 9, verse 13. I do not know of anyone else, however, who explains it as used there in the meaning that Subba Row gives to it, "the light of the Logos," etc. This includes Sankaracharya in his commentary thereon.

Subba Row gives us the impression that daivi-prakriti is a Vedanta term that is found in use among Vedantins and in Vedanta treatises, presumably with the meaning he gives to it. But try to find this term in any book on Vedanta, ancient or modern. The term daivi-prakriti, as Subba Row used it, and therefore as it is used in Theosophical writings, is almost as elusive as fohat.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 8, 2010 at 9:02pm

In the Hindi translation of the Stanzas, the word fohat is glossed as daivi prakriti or adi-sakti (Stanza 3, verse 12). If anyone is familiar with the Hindu Tantras, it would be worthwhile to see if a conceptual parallel to Fohat can be found there in the idea of sakti (shakti). Can we find references in the Hindu Tantras to sakti or adi-sakti as a cosmic principle?

*On the term fohat itself, I think that there is still a possibility of it being found in some old European book that HPB could have used. I have pretty thoroughly checked the ones she used a lot, such as Emil Schlagintweit's 1863 *Buddhist in Tibet*, and Samuel Beal's 1871 *Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese*. But there are some others, like Isaac Jacob Schmidt's *Ssanang Sseten, Chungtai dschi, Geschichte der Ost-Mongolen und ihres Furstenhauses* (St. Petersburg, 1829), that I was only able to look at briefly.*

Comment by [M. Sufilight](#) on October 9, 2010 at 12:12am

Dear friends

Fohat appears in the Mahatma Letters - Letter 15 as well.

And this might explain it better.

Let us have the main quote:

" [Transcribed from a copy in Mr. Sinnett's handwriting. K.H.'s replies are in bold type. -- ED.]

From K.H. to A.O.H. Received July 10th, 1882.

(1) Does every mineral form, vegetable, plant, animal, always contain within it that entity which involves the potentiality of development into a planetary spirit? At this present day in this present earth is there such an essence or spirit or soul -- the name is immaterial in every mineral, etc.

(1) Invariably; only rather call it the germ of a future entity, which it has been for ages. Take the human foetus. From the moment of its first planting until it completes its seventh month of gestation it repeats in miniature the mineral, vegetable, and animal cycles it passed through in its previous encasements, and only during the last two, develops its future human entity. It is completed but

towards the child's seventh year. Yet it existed without any increase or decrease aeons on aeons before it worked its way onward, through and in the womb of mother nature as it works now in its earthly mother's bosom. Truly said a learned philosopher who trusts more to his intuitions than the dicta of modern science. "The stages of man's intra-uterine existence embody a condensed record of some of the missing pages in Earth's history." Thus you must look back at the animal, vegetable and mineral entities. You must take each entity at its starting point in the manvantaric course as the primordial cosmic atom already differentiated by the first flutter of the manvantaric life breath. For the potentiality which develops finally in a perfected planetary spirit lurks in, is in fact that primordial cosmic atom. Drawn by its "chemical affinity" (?) to coalesce with other like atoms the aggregate sum of such united atoms will in time become a man-bearing globe after the stages of the cloud, the spiral and sphere of fire-mist and of the condensation, consolidation, shrinkage and cooling of the planet have been successively passed through. But mind, not every globe becomes a "man bearer." I simply state the fact without dwelling further upon it in this connection. The great difficulty in grasping the idea in the above process lies in the liability to form more or less incomplete mental conceptions of the working of the oneelement, of its inevitable presence in every imponderable atom, and its subsequent ceaseless and almost illimitable multiplication of new centres of activity without affecting in the least its own original quantity. Let us take such an aggregation of atoms destined to form our globe and then follow, throwing a cursory look at the whole, the special work of such atoms. We will call the primordial atom A. This being not a circumscribed centre of activity but the initial point of a manvantaric whirl of evolution, gives birth to new centres which we may term B, C, D, etc., incomputably. Each of these capital points gives birth to minor centres, a, b, c, etc. And the latter in the course of evolution and involution in time develops into A's, B's, C's, etc., and so form the roots or are the developing causes of new genera, species, classes, etc., ad infinitum. Now neither the primordial A and its companion atoms, nor their derived a's, b's, c's, have lost one tittle of their original force or life-essence by the evolution of their derivatives. The force there, is not transformed into something else as I have already shown in my letter, but with each development of a new centre of activity from within itself multiplies ad infinitum without ever losing a particle of its nature in quantity or quality. Yet acquiring as it progresses something plus in its differentiation. This "force" so-called, shows itself truly indestructible but does not correlate and is not convertible in the sense accepted by the Fellows of the R.S., but rather may be said to grow and expand into "something else" while neither its own potentiality nor being are in the least affected by the

transformation. Nor can it well be called force since the latter is but the attribute of Yin Sin (Yin Sin or the one "Form of existence" also Adi-Buddhi or Dharmakaya the mystic, universally diffused essence) when manifesting in the phenomenal world of senses namely only your old acquaintance Fohat. See in this connexion Subba Row's article "Aryan Arhat Esoteric Doctrines" on the seven-fold principles in man; his review of your Fragments, pp. 94 and 95. The initiated Brahmin calls it (Yin Sin and Fohat) Brahman and Sakti when manifesting as that force. We will perhaps be nearer correct to call it infinite life and the source of all life visible and invisible, an essence inexhaustible ever present, in short Swabhavat. (S. in its universal application, Fohat when manifesting throughout our phenomenal world or rather the visible universe hence in its limitations). It is pravritti when active, nirvritti when passive. Call it the Sakti of Parabrahma, if you like, and say with the Adwaites (Subba Row is one) that Parabrahm plus Maya becomes Iswar the creative principle -- a power commonly called God which disappears and dies with the rest when pralaya comes. Or you may hold with the northern Buddhist philosophers and call it Adi-Buddhi the all-pervading supreme and absolute intelligence with its periodically manifesting Divinity -- "Avalokiteshvara" (a manwantaric intelligent nature crowned with humanity) -- the mystic name given by us to the hosts of the Dyan Chohans (N.B., the solar Dyan Chohans or the host of only our solar system) taken collectively, which host represents the mother source, the aggregate amount of all the intelligences that were are or ever will be whether on our string of man-bearing planets or on any part or portion of our solar system. And this will bring you by analogy to see that in its turn Adi-Buddhi (as its very name translated literally implies) is the aggregate intelligence of the universal intelligences including that of the Dyan Chohans even of the highest order. That is all I dare now to tell you on this special subject, as I fear I have already transcended the limit. Therefore whenever I speak of humanity without specifying it you must understand that I mean not humanity of our fourth round as we see it on this speck of mud in space but the whole host already evolved. "

<http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/mahatma/ml-15.htm>

M. Sufilight

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 9, 2010 at 6:07pm

Mahatma letter #15 does provide us with a fuller picture of what fohat is, and I would agree that this is a clearer explanation of it. The general idea given here of

fohat is that of a force or power, which can be called sakti, that is found in everything. It has unlimited potential to develop everything into higher and higher stages, without itself being affected thereby. Some of the ideas expressed here are very reminiscent of the tathagata-garbha teachings found in Mahayana Buddhism, but which were quite unknown outside of Mahayana Buddhist countries when this was written. I get the impression that the terms employed in this letter were simply the nearest that could be found in the then available books to express these ideas, regardless of whether these terms were right or not.

The key passage using these terms will show why I think that the term fohat could possibly be found in some European book. Here is the passage:

"Nor can it well be called force since the latter is but the attribute of Yin Sin (Yin Sin or the one "Form of existence" also Adi-Buddhi or Dharmakaya the mystic, universally diffused essence) when manifesting in the phenomenal world of senses namely only your old acquaintance Fohat. See in this connexion Subba Row's article "Aryan Arhat Esoteric Doctrines" on the seven-fold principles in man; his review of your Fragments, pp. 94 and 95. The initiated Brahmin calls it (Yin Sin and Fohat) Brahman and Sakti when manifesting as that force. We will perhaps be nearer correct to call it infinite life and the source of all life visible and invisible, an essence inexhaustible ever present, in short Swabhavat."

Now compare what Samuel Beal writes in his 1871 Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese, p. 373:

"So again, when the idea of a universally diffused essence (dharmakaya) was accepted as a dogmatic necessity, a further question arose as to the relation which this "supreme existence" bore to time, space, and number. And from this consideration appears to have proceeded the further invention of the several names Vairochana (the Omnipresent), Amitabha (for Amirta) the Eternal, and Adi-Buddha (yih-sin) the 'one form of existence.'"

We can easily see that several terms and phrases are the same: Yin sin or yih-sin, the "one form of existence," Adi-Buddhi or Adi-Buddha and Dharmakaya, the "universally diffused essence." Further, the term Swabhavat or Swabhava is found in another European book then available, Brian H. Hodgson's 1874 book, Essays on the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet. It turns out that what Hodgson there wrote about Swabhava and the Swabhavikas of Nepal was incorrect. Beal's statements, too, require correction.

Now compare a passage from Mahatma letter #59, written in July 1883, a year after letter #15 was written:

"In symbology the central point is Jivatma (the 7th principle), and hence Avalokitesvara, the Kwan-Shai-yin, the manifested "Voice" (or Logos), the germ point of manifested activity; -- hence -- in the phraseology of the Christian Kabalists "the Son of the Father and Mother," and agreeably to ours -- "the Self manifested in Self -- Yih-sin, the "one form of existence," the child of Dharmakaya (the universally diffused Essence), both male and female. Parabrahm or "Adi-Buddha" while acting through that germ point outwardly as an active force, reacts from the circumference inwardly as the Supreme but latent Potency."

We here see the very same ideas as were explained in Mahatma letter #15, and the same phrases from Beal used to explain it. The Theosophical teachings on this are consistent, and they are not found in Beal's book, nor in Hodgson's book. But the inaccurate terms along with their inaccurate definitions adopted from Beal continue to be used, and here another term is added from Beal, Kwan-Shai-yin.

What we have in fohat, then, is a term and idea that was given out in the Cosmological Notes in late 1881, used in Mahatma letter #13 in January 1882, used twice in HPB's notes to an article by T. Subba Row published in January 1882, further explained in Mahatma letter #15 in July 1882, etc., then found in the Stanzas of Dzyan published in the SD in 1888. The Theosophical teachings on fohat and its related ideas are consistent throughout, right up to and including the Stanzas. That is, fohat does the same thing in the Stanzas that came out in 1888 as the Cosmological Notes in 1881 said it did. But the technical terms used to explain it were often faulty. We cannot use yih-sin or adi-buddha or dharmakaya or svabhava or kwan-shai-yin to help identify fohat, because these terms were apparently borrowed from then existing writings, which were none too accurate. It is possible that the term fohat itself is was so borrowed; but if so, I have not yet found its source.

HPB tells us that much in the Mahatma letters was put into words by herself or other chelas. She explains this most clearly in a letter that was mostly published in The Path for March 1893, partially published by Jinarajadasa in the Introduction to The Early Teachings of the Masters in 1923, and fully published in The Eclectic Theosophist for March-April 1982. Here are a few statements from it:

"How many a time was I (no Mahatma) shocked and startled, burning with shame when shown notes written in Their (two) handwritings (a form of writing adopted

for the T.S. and used by chelas, only never without Their special permission or order to that effect) exhibiting mistakes in science, grammar and thoughts, expressed in such language that it perverted entirely the meaning originally intended, and sometimes expressions that in Tibetan Sanskrit or any other Asiatic language had quite a different sense, as in one instance I will give. . . . Now had I been commissioned to write or precipitate the letter, I would have translated the Master's thought by using the word It is very rarely that Mahatma K.H. dictated verbatim; and when He did there remained the few sublime passages found in Mr. Sinnett's letters from Him. The rest, He would say, write so and so, and the chela wrote, often without knowing one word of English, as I am now made to write Hebrew and Greek and Latin, etc. . . . Two or three times, perhaps more, letters were precipitated in my presence, by chelas who could not speak English, and who took ideas and expressions out of my head. The phenomena in truth and solemn reality were greater at those times than ever! Yet they often appeared the most suspicious, and I had to hold my tongue, to see suspicion creeping into the minds of those I loved best and respected, unable to justify myself or to say one word. . . . Well, this will do. I have told you the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so far as I am allowed to give it. Many are the things I have no right to explain, if I had to be hung for it."

*Since this important letter is not readily accessible, I have scanned it from its published sources and put it into a PDF file for us here. I have also included A. Trevor Barker's important article on this subject, and a statement from Charles Johnston's conversation with HPB on the same thing. Johnston mentioned trying to smudge what he took to be the pencil writing on one of these Mahatma letters, but could not do so because the writing was precipitated into the page, not written on the page. Probably most of you have seen the photographic enlargement of part of a Mahatma letter reproduced in Geoffrey Barboroka's 1973 book, *The Mahatmas and Their Letters* (facsimile no. 4, facing p. 113). He there writes: "The reproduction clearly shows the characteristic features termed precipitation, in which every letter is composed of diagonal lines, including the underlining placed below words. It has the appearance of being in blue pencilling or crayon, but no pencil could be used to form this type of lettering."*

This letter by HPB explains rather fully the mechanism by which something that she read in Beal could enter the Mahatma letters and be used to cloth the ideas explaining fohat. It has been a longstanding misapprehension to regard the Mahatma letters as being directly written by the Mahatmas, and to therefore expect them to be fully accurate. In the 1880s, no one knew that the books by

Samuel Beal and Brian Hodgson and Emil Schlagintweit and other writers of that time were full of mistakes. The scholars of that time relied on them as much as HPB did. This does complicate our work, but the sooner we dispense with incorrect terms brought in by chelas to explain the ideas of the Mahatmas, the better chance we have of figuring out what fohat actually is. There is a lot of terminological dross to clear away before we can get to the actual ideas of the Stanzas

Comment by **Capt. Anand Kumar** on October 9, 2010 at 10:08pm

Hi Everyone,

Please find below a small list of resources put together using google, where old manuscripts may be found in India. May I request everyone to kindly examine if one could have access or if some resource has already been searched before, it could be excluded.

Buddhist Studies WWW Virtual Library <http://www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-Buddhism.html>

Universities Library of India <http://sites.google.com/site/ilidir/university-libraries-of-india>

Delhi University Library System <http://crl.du.ac.in/>

National Archives of India <http://nationalarchives.nic.in/>

Government Oriental Manuscript Library <http://www.telupu.com/goml.html>

*Government Oriental Manuscripts of India
<http://directory.thefaceofsouthindia.com/government-oriental-manusc...>*

*Catalogue of Government Oriental Manuscripts
[http://www.archive.org/search.php?query=creator%3A%22Government%20... \(Tamil%20Nadu%2C%20India\)%22](http://www.archive.org/search.php?query=creator%3A%22Government%20...)*

Indian Council of Historical Research <http://www.ichrindia.org/library-recources.html>

Indian Council of Social Science Research <http://www.icsr.org/>

Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts http://www.ignca.nic.in/new_main.htm

Catalogue of Manuscripts Available with IGNCA
http://www.ignca.nic.in/mss_org1.htm

Nehru Memorial Museum & Library <http://www.nehrumemorial.com/index.php>

Goethe Institute, Delhi (Max Mueller)
<http://www.goethe.de/ins/in/ned/enindex.htm>

Information & Library Network Centre <http://www.inflibnet.ac.in/>

Khudabaksh Library (Some Rare Manuscripts) <http://kblibrary.bih.nic.in/>

National Mission for Manuscripts
<http://www.namami.org/manuscript%20Treasures.htm>

(This site has info about some really rare manuscripts)

Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune
<http://www.bori.ac.in/manuscripts.htm>

Thanks to everyone.

Comment by **Capt. Anand Kumar** on October 9, 2010 at 10:09pm

The listed posted is not exhasutive by any means and more are welcome.

Comment by **Capt. Anand Kumar** on October 9, 2010 at 10:42pm

Further to last post:

Sanskrit Universities In India

1. Andhra Pradesh

Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha

Tirupati – 517 507

0877-2287838

hksvc@yahoo.co.in

www.rsvidyapeetha.ac.in

2. Andhra Pradesh

Sri Venkateswara Vedic University

II Floor, Purandas Complex,

Prakasam Road,

Tirupati

0877-2222586

3. Bihar

Kameshwar Singh Darbhanga Sanskrit University,

Kameshwar Nagar

Darbhanga – 846 008

08272-25446

4. Delhi

Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan (Deemed University)

56-57, Institutional Area

Janakpuri

New Delhi – 110 058.

011-28524995 (O) -28524993 (O) -28523949 (O)

rsks@nda.vsnl.net.in

www.sanskrit.nic.in

5. Delhi

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha,

Katwaria Sarai

New Delhi – 110 016.

011-26851253, -26564003

vcslvsrsv@yahoo.com

www.slbsrsv.ac.in

6. Kerala

Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit

Sree Sankarapuram

P.B. No.14, Kalady

Dist. Ernakulam – 683 574.

0484-2463580

ssuvc@sanchar.net.in

www.ssus.ac.in

7. Maharashtra

Kavikulaguru Kalidas Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, Baghela Bhawan

Sitalwadi, Mouda Road

Ramtek – 441 106.

07114-255549

kksunag_ngp@sancharnet.in

www.sanskrituni.net

8. Orissa

Shri Jagannath Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya

Srivihar

Puri – 752 003

06752-251663

www.sjsv.nic.in

9. Rajasthan

Jagadguru Ramanandacharya Rajasthan Sanskrit University

Vill – Madau (Muhana),

PO Bhankrota

Jaipur - 302 026

0141 -5132001

www.jrsanskrituniversity.ac.in

10. Uttar Pradesh

Sampurnanand Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya

Varanasi – 221 002.

0542-2204213 -2204089

vsssvv_vns@satyam.net.in

www.ssvv.up.nic.in

11. Gujarat

Somnath Sanskrit University

Somnath Trust

BITCO Building

Prabas Patan, Somnath

Junagadh

Gujrat

02876-244532

vicechancellorsomnathsanskrit@yahoo.co.in

www.shreesomnathsanskrituniversity.org

12. Uttrakhand

Uttrakhand Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya Sanskrit Bhawan

Delhi Rashtriya Rajmarg,

Post - Jwalapur,

Haridwar - 249407

01334-250896

13. Madhya Pradesh

Mahrishi Panini Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya

Ujjain

M.P.

mohangupt@rediffmail.com

14. Karnataka

(Under Process) Karnataka Sanskrit University Chamrendra Sanskrit Mahapathshala

Bangalore

Comment by [M. Sufilight](#) on October 10, 2010 at 9:20am

Dear friends

My views are:

All the below can be taken as a hypothesis.

Blavatsky wrote:

"Q. Can you say what is the real meaning of the word Fohat?"

A. The word is a Turanian compound and its meanings are various. In China Pho, or Fo, is the word for "animal soul," the vital Nephesh or the breath of life. Some say that it is derived from the Sanskrit "Bhu," meaning existence, or rather the essence of existence. Now Svâyambhû means Brahmâ and Man at the same time. It means self-existence and self-existing, that which is everlasting, the eternal breath. If Sat

is the potentiality of Being, Pho is the potency of Being. The meaning, however, entirely depends upon the position of the accent. Again, Fohat is related to Mahat. It is the reflection of the Universal Mind, the synthesis of the "Seven" and the intelligences of the seven creative Builders, or, as we call them, Cosmocratores. Hence, as you will understand, life and electricity are one in our philosophy. They say life is electricity, and if so, then the One Life is the essence and root of all the electric and magnetic phenomena on this manifested plane. "

(BCW. Vol. X, p. 354)

http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v10/y1889_006.htm (italics and bold added)

Blavatsky said:

"Fohat is one thing in the yet unmanifested Universe and another in the phenomenal and Cosmic World."

(Secret Doctrine, Vol. I, p. 109)

So maybe we ought to be careful and avoid any literal interpretations about this word.

The Voice of Silence - 1889 ed. says:

"Let not thy "Heaven-born," merged in the sea of Maya, break from the Universal Parent (SOUL), but let the fiery power retire into the inmost chamber, the chamber of the Heart (23) and the abode of the World's Mother (24). "

.....

*"Before the "mystic Power" (31) * can make of thee a god, Lanoo, thou must have gained the faculty to slay thy lunar form at will. "*

"(31). Kundalini is called the "Serpentine" or the annular power on account on its spiral-like working or progress in the body of the ascetic developing the power in himself. It is an electric fiery occult or Fohatic power, the great pristine force, which underlies all organic and inorganic matter. "

.....

"(23). [(22) second] The inner chamber of the Heart, called in Sanskrit Brahma poori. The "fiery power" is Kundalini."

(The Voice of Silence - 1889 ed., p. 9 + 12)

"The Shangna robe (22), 'tis true, can purchase light eternal. The Shangna robe alone gives the Nirvâna of destruction; it stops rebirth, but, O Lanoo, it also kills — compassion."

(The Voice of Silence - 1889 ed., p. 32)

The Voice of Silence - 1889 ed. says:

"But stay, Disciple . . . Yet, one word. Canst thou destroy divine COMPASSION?"

Compassion is no attribute. It is the LAW of LAWS

— eternal Harmony, Alaya's SELF; a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting Right, and fitness of all things, the law of love eternal.

The more thou dost become at one with it, thy being melted in its BEING, the more thy Soul unites with that which IS, the more thou wilt become COMPASSION ABSOLUTE."(31).

(31). This "compassion" must not be regarded in the same light as "God, the divine love" of the Theists. Compassion stands here as an abstract, impersonal law whose nature, being absolute Harmony, is thrown into confusion by discord, suffering and sin.

(The Voice of Silence - 1889 ed., p. 70-71)

<http://www.phx-ult-lodge.org/Avoice%20of.htm>

Blavatsky wrote:

" In Tibetan pho and pha—pronounced with a soft labial breath-like sound—means at the same time "man, father." So pha-yul is native land; pho-nya, angel, messenger of good news; pha-me, ancestors, etc. "*

http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v4/y1882_022.htm

Blavatsky wrote:

"At death the Hwân (or spiritual soul) wanders away, ascending, and the Pho (the root of the Tibetan word Pho-hat), descends and is changed into a ghostly shade (the shell). Dr. Medhurst thinks that "the Kwei Shins" (See A Dissertation on the Theology of the Chinese, pp. 10-11) are "the expanding and contracting principles of human life"! The Kwei Shins are brought about by the dissolution of the human frame, and consist of the expanding and ascending Shin which rambles about in space, and of the contracted and shrivelled Kwei, which reverts to earth and nonentity. Therefore, the Kwei is the physical body; the Shin is the vital principle; the Kwei-Shin the linga-śarira, or the vital soul; Zing the fourth principle or Kama-Rupa, the essence of will; Pho (the animal soul); Khien the spiritual soul; and Hwân the pure spirit— the seven principles of our occult doctrine!"

http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v4/y1882_105.htm

Try searching "Pho" and "Pha" in the Bhuddist dictionary:

<http://www.diamondway-buddhism.org/default.asp?col=04&t=diction...>

Blavatsky 's - 1892 Theosophical Glossary:

"Fohat (Tib.). A term used to represent the active (male) potency of the Sakti (female reproductive power) in nature. The essence of cosmic electricity. An occult Tibetan term for Daiviprakriti primordial light: and in the universe of manifestation the ever-present electrical energy and ceaseless destructive and formative power. Esoterically, it is the same, Fohat being the universal propelling Vital Force, at once the propeller and the resultant."

"Daivi-prakriti (Sk.) Primordial, homogeneous light, called by some Indian Occultists "the Light of the Logos" (see Notes on the Bhagavat Gita, by T. Subba Row, B.A., L.L.B.); when differentiated this light becomes FOHAT."

<http://theosophicalglossary.net>

A few views and comments:

All the above his might help to clarify, that Fohat is a Sakti, in Sanskrit named Daiviprakriti especially when read non-litterally, and is directly related to Kundalini (and the word Kundalini are found in many texts in India, some spurious others more esoterical in nature), and is residing in the Innermost Chamber of the spiritual

Heart of each human. And it might also by this become more clear where the word are to be found in texts in China and in India. In the Upanishads it is sometimes named as the Light of Brahman. In Buddhism, in tibetan + chinese texts it is mentioned, when we take the above quotes into account. I do not have the names of the scriptures, but I sense (through inner-readings, not always reliable sad to say) that scriptures in Kham and eastern parts of China contain some info. But Yi King, or Book of Changes might contain some info, when one read some versions of it in the esoteric light. I tend to call Fohat the propelling force of divine electric compassion, (beyond various levels of thought), which activates and is life as such on all levels, from the Unmanifested Logos down to us humans and our manas and intellects. (See in this link the first to diagrams - the triangel and the planes of evolution: http://www.global-theosophy.net/HPB_ES_Model_en.php)

- - -

Where was the "Ravine in Tibet"? (Morya and KH somewhere beyond Ladakh and the Chohan at Badrinath?)

<http://www.blavatskyarchives.com/ravinetext.htm>

Another view: It is wellknown, that one can only meet the Masters if they agree upon it. It is not the other way around although some seekers have this strange view. The Masters, they have methods, which make them invisible to some and visible to others. But I will testify that to my knowledge, they do exist. They are very very real.

But, all the above are just my views.

M. Sufilight

Comment by [Ferran Sanz Orriols](#) on October 10, 2010 at 12:00pm

I agree totally with M. Sufilight's last commentary. "Masters" (brothers) are very very real. Everyone have a nice day!!!

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 10, 2010 at 8:53pm

Compilations of original source material on a topic, like M. Sufilight has provided for us here, are extremely helpful. Here we see, for example, that HPB used the Tibetan word pho nya, "messenger," that Joe had suggested earlier. I find the quotes from the Voice of the Silence, linking fohat with kundalini, to be intriguing.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 10, 2010 at 9:01pm

Fohat has been glossed in Theosophical writings as daivi-prakriti, literally "divine nature," and described as "the light of the Logos." These both come from T. Subba Row's lectures on the Bhagavad-gita. He gives us the idea that if you are familiar with Vedanta, particularly Advaita Vedanta which he follows, you will know that daivi-prakriti refers to such an idea; that is, that this is a known teaching. The foremost writer on Advaita Vedanta is, of course, Shankaracharya. Shankaracharya in his commentary on Bhagavad-gita 9.13, where the two words daivi prakriti occur, explains them as follows: "The divine (daivim) nature (prakritim) is that of the gods (devanam), characterized by control of the mind (shama), control of the senses (dama), compassion (daya), and faith (shraddha)." This is in contrast to the delusive nature (mohini prakriti) spoken of in the previous verse, pertaining to the rakshasas and asuras, or demonic beings. These are the two kinds of natures that different people have, and are further elaborated in chapter 16. Shankaracharya's commentary is brief and straightforward. There is no mention of anything like the idea of the light of the Logos. Nor do the several other commentators I have checked add anything more to this. So where did Subba Row get his idea of daivi prakriti?

Unless some exoteric text can be found that explains daivi prakriti the way Subba Row does, which I have so far not found, I must assume that he got this from an esoteric source. In fact, such a source came out under the most extraordinary circumstances, and was published about twenty-five years after Subba Row gave his Bhagavad-gita lectures. It is the Pranava-vada of Gargyayana. There, in volume 2, pp. 220, 234-236 of the summarized English translation by Bhagavan Das, is an explanation of daivi prakriti similar to how Subba Row explains it. For those who want a web version, I learned that this hard-to-find book was scanned a few years ago and is available at www.makara.us/05ref/01books/pranavavada/pv_toc.htm.

The story of how the Pranava-vada came out is told in the preface to vol. 1, as "The Strange Story of a Hidden Book." In brief, this Sanskrit book was dictated to Parmeshri Das and Bhagavan Das starting in 1894 by a wandering blind pandit

named Dhanaraja. This blind pandit had a phenomenal memory, and dictated portions of many other hitherto unknown Sanskrit books. This indicated, but did not prove, that many lost Sanskrit works still exist. Some years later, around 1915, the Suddha Dharma Mandala was founded to bring out hitherto unknown teachings aimed at a primarily Indian audience. They then published two of the three volumes of the original Sanskrit of the Pranava-vada, from previously hidden manuscripts obtained from their teachers. This was the first time in the modern era that a secret book came out, in the original Sanskrit. So there is every reason to believe that a Sanskrit text of the Stanzas of Dzyan can also be brought out.

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 11, 2010 at 1:07pm

To David question : "Can we find references in the Hindu Tantras to sakti or adi-sakti as a cosmic principle?", there is an interesting book wrote in 1927 by Sir John Woodroffe, called Shakti and Shakta which definively described Shakti as a cosmic principle :

" Shakti in the highest causal sense is God as Mother, and in another sense it is the universe which issues from Her Womb. And what is there which is neither the one nor the other ? Therefore, the Yoginihridaya Tantra thus salutes Her who conceives, bears, produces and thereafter nourishes all worlds : " Obeisance be to Her who is pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss, as Power, who exists in the form of Time and Space and all that is therein, who is the radiant Illuminatrix in all beings."

To-day Western science speaks of Energy as the physical ultimate of all forms of Matter. So has it been for ages to the Shaktas, as the worshippers of Shakti are called. But they add that such energy is only a limited manifestation (as Mind and Matter) of the almighty infinite Supreme Power (Maha-Shaktyi) of Becoming in 'That' (Tat), which is unitary Being (Sat) itself."

In another chapter, John Woodroffe described Shakti in Taoism, refering to the Tao-te-king as the Treatise on Tao and Tei. Tao which Lao-Tse calls "The great" is in its Sanskrit equivalent Brahman, and Tei is Its power or activity or Shakti.

Then he described what looks like a Cosmogogenesis story : ... at a particular moment (to speak in our language for It was then beyond time), Tao threw out from Itself

Tei Its Power (Verto or Shakti) which operates in alternating modes called Yin and Yang.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 11, 2010 at 9:03pm

Thank you, Jacques. The Pranava-vada, too, when speaking of daivi-prakriti, associates this with shakti, and both of these are feminine. Now we have to sort out HPB's statements making fohat a male power, and distinguishing it from a female principle.

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 12, 2010 at 9:07am

In 1892, E-J Coulomb (which is not related to the infamous Coulomb affair), a french theosophist who use to publish a lot of articles in the Lotus Bleu, wrote a book named The Secret of the Absolute, where he briefly elaborate on daivi-prakriti as follows (page 117) :

"These three letters (AUM) represent the Spirit, the Force, and Matter, or, otherwise the Essence, the Substance and the Existence which result from their intermingling. A is Atma, father of all beings and source of all creators ; Purusha, Ishwara, Narayana, Swayambhuva, Brahma,..are aspects of this principle. M stand for Mulaprakriti, also called Aditi, Swabhavat, Chidakasha, Avyaktam, Prokriti, etc. source of all things and mother of all creatures. Finally, U or OU represent Oueaohou, tibetan and esoteric name of the Verb, which means the creative activity who, from emanation to emanation, become Fohat, Daiviprakriti, MahaShakti,etc... or the various aspects of the force. Hindus are right to consider Shakti as a synonym for Prakriti, because matter is nothing without the force which manifest in her.

Comment by [M. Sufilight](#) on October 12, 2010 at 10:32am

Thank you, Jacques. I had not seen these words before. They can be related to The Secret Doctrine given by Blavatsky.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 12, 2010 at 3:15pm

What are the chances of us getting access to an original language text of the Stanzas of Dzyan? I think very high. T. Subba Row told us about daivi-prakriti, which he equated with fohat, in his lectures on the Bhagavad-gita. But what he said about daivi-prakriti, as the "light of the Logos," etc., cannot be found in the available commentaries of Shankaracharya and others. Then the Pranava-vada surfaced, and confirmed what Subba Row said about daivi-prakriti. In that hitherto unknown Sanskrit text, daivi-prakriti is of course not called the light of the Logos, since it does not use the word Logos. But it speaks of a trinity of manifestation, that would correspond to the idea of the Logos as manifestation, and names this trinity as pratyag-atma, daivi-prakriti, and mula-prakriti. (The printed Sanskrit text published by the Suddha Dharma Mandala actually uses devi-prakriti throughout, rather than daivi-prakriti, but for our purposes I will use daivi-prakriti.) It does indeed describe daivi-prakriti, several times, as the light (prakasa) of pratyag-atma and mula-prakriti (Sanskrit edition, vol. 2, pp. 210-215).

*This, to me, demonstrates that Subba Row in fact had access to esoteric teachings (even though he spoke as if they were the known teachings of Vedanta). The esoteric Pranava-vada did come out and confirmed what Subba Row taught. Similarly, the Stanzas of Dzyan were first brought out in English in *The Secret Doctrine*, and there is every reason to believe that their originals will also follow.*

*The significance of this for the world is great. No one but Theosophists, and an occasional lover of the Bhagavad-gita, reads Subba Row's lectures on the Bhagavad-Gita. So the light of the Logos reaches only a very few people on earth. The same is true of *The Secret Doctrine*. It is ignored by the world because, without an original text to show its authenticity, few will take it seriously. The discovery of a Sanskrit or Tibetan text of the Stanzas would bring this material to the attention of the world.*

I would add a note on Senzar. Although the original Stanzas are said to be written in this language, their Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan translations are referred to. It is one of these that I expect to come out, since no one would be able to read the original Senzar. About what HPB calls Senzar, a chela of the Mahatmas wrote in 1883 (BCW 5.298): "The direct progenitor of the Vedic Sanskrit was the sacerdotal language (which has its distinct name but cannot be given)." Such a language is referred to in the Pranava-vada, where it is called Samsara-para, and also referred to as Sanskrit, apparently a very archaic Sanskrit. It is there described as the one language which covers the whole samsara, the universal language, the chief of all

languages, the great speech, the consecrated language, the language of the gods, the fount and origin of all other languages, the primal universal language, etc. (English translation, vol. 2, pp. 68-73).

Some people have the idea that Senzar is entirely pictographic, and that HPB simply translated from pictures. That this is not the case is shown clearly in the newly published Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge that Daniel Caldwell discovered a number of years ago. For example, HPB translated verse 3 of Stanza 1 in the published SD as "Universal mind was not, for there were no Ah-hi to contain it." In the Transactions, she explains that this universal mind is absolute mind, so that it must always exist. Some of those present then suggested that she should not have written "universal mind was not" in the SD, since this sounds contradictory, but rather should have called it cosmic mind. In her replies during this discussion, she said:

"I cannot go and invent things; I am obliged to translate just as the stanzas give it in the book." (The Secret Doctrine Commentaries, pp. 30-31)

"How can I put that it was not? I am obliged to translate as it is, and then to give all the commentaries. I didn't invent them. If I were inventing it, I might put it otherwise." (p. 31)

"Those who have written this do not concern themselves with the manifested universe. . . . You had better send your protest to those who have written this thing, because I can't help it." (p. 31)

"You must remember the peculiar mode of expression used by the Easterners. They express it always allegorically, always figuratively. You cannot ask them to express in scientific language which says so much and means so little." (p. 32)

"I cannot put things out of my own head; I just translate as it is. There are many, many verses that come between, that I have left out altogether." (pp. 33-34)

"The first answers relate to the beginning of the whole objective universe, but after that, when you begin to speak about Father-Mother, then it relates to our objective universe and to the solar system only because our teaching does not busy itself at all with things outside. At least those things that I have selected. I could not go and select the whole thing. I have only taken that which relates to our solar system. I have just taken two or three just to show the general idea, and then skipped over

whole stanzas and came to the point. I have said there are some 60 stanzas passed over. I would have had compliments from the Daily News if I had translated the whole of it." (p. 38)

HPB is describing an actual text that she translated from, written in verses. In the previous meeting, in reply to a question, she said: "I count it in such a way as to translate as best I can the real meaning of a very difficult and abstruse text, and then to give the interpretations that I was taught and have learned." (p. 12).

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 12, 2010 at 7:20pm

Just got a note from Ken Small that may be of some use:

From Vol XIV of HPB's Collected Writings:

AN UNPUBLISHED DISCOURSE OF BUDDHA

(It is found in the second Book of Commentaries and is addressed to the Arhats.)

Said the All-Merciful: Blessed are ye, O Bhikshus, happy are ye who have understood the mystery of Being and Non-Being explained in Bas-pa [Dharma, Doctrine], and have given preference to the latter, for ye are verily my Arhats. . . . The elephant, who sees his form mirrored in the lake, looks at it, and then goes away, taking it for the real body of another elephant, is wiser than the man who beholds his face in the stream, and looking at it, says, "Here am I . . . I am I"—for the "I," his Self, is not in the world of the twelve Nidânas and mutability, but in that of Non-Being, the only world beyond the snares of Mâyâ. . . . That alone, which has neither cause nor author, which is self-existing, eternal, far beyond the reach of mutability, is the true "I" [Ego], the Self of the Universe. The Universe of Nam-Kha says: "I am the world of Sien-Chan"; the four illusions laugh and reply, "Verily so." But the truly wise man knows that neither man, nor the Universe that he passes through like a flitting shadow, is any more a real Universe than the dewdrop that reflects a spark of the morning sun is that sun. . . . There are three things, Bhikshus, that are everlastingly the same, upon which no vicissitude, no modification can ever act: these are the Law, Nirvâna, and Space,† and those three are One, since the first two are within the last, and that last one a Mâyâ, so long as man keeps within the whirlpool of sensuous existences. One need not have his mortal body die to avoid the clutches of concupiscence and other passions. The*

Arhat who observes the seven hidden precepts of Bas-pa may become Dang-ma and Lha. ‡ He may hear the "holy voice" of . . . [Kwan-yin],§ and find himself

* The Universe of Brahmâ (Sien-Chan; Nam-Kha) is Universal Illusion, or our phenomenal world.

† Âkâśa. It is next to impossible to render the mystic word "Tho-og" by any other term than "Space," and yet, unless coined on purpose, no new appellation can render it so well to the mind of the Occultist. The term "Aditi" is also translated "Space," and there is a world of meaning in it.

‡ Dang-ma, a purified soul, and Lha, a freed spirit within a living body; an Adept or Arhat. In the popular opinion in Tibet, a Lha is a disembodied spirit, something similar to the Burmese Nat—only higher.

§ Kwan-yin is a synonym, for in the original another term is used, but the meaning is identical. It is the divine voice of Self, or the "Spirit-voice" in man, and the same as Vâch...śvara (the "Voice-deity") of the Brâhmans. In China, the Buddhist ritualists have degraded its meaning by anthropomorphizing

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 13, 2010 at 7:50am

H.P.B. gave us another clue on the meaning of Fohat, which can be found in an appendix to the book "Esoteric Writings of T.Subba Row", first published in 1895. On page 312, one can read : " Hence, the Arhat secret doctrine on cosmogony admits but of one absolute, indestructible, eternal, and uncreated UNCONSCIOUSNESS (so to translate), of an element (the word being used for want of a better term) absolutely independent of everything else in the universe ; a something ever present or ubiquitous, a Presence which ever was, is and will be, whether there is a God, gods, or none ; whether there is a universe or no universe ; existing during the eternal cycles of Maha Yugas, during the Pralayas ; as during the periods of Manvantara : and this is SPACE, the field for the operation of the eternal Forces and natural Law, the basis (as Mr Subba Row rightly calls it) upon which take place the eternal intercorrelations of Akasha-Prakriti, guided by the unconscious regular pulsations of Shakti - the breath or power of a conscious deity, the theists would say - the eternal energy of an eternal, unconscious Law, say the Buddhists. Space then, or " Fan, Bar-nang " (Mahasunyata) or, as it is call by Lao-

tze, the "Emptiness" is the nature of the Buddhist Absolute. (See Confucius' Praise of the Abyss). The word Jiva, then could never be applied by the Arhats to the Seventh Principle, since it is only through its correlation or contact with matter that Fohat (the Buddhist active energy) can develop active conscious life."

Comment by [M. Sufilight](#) on October 13, 2010 at 11:07am

Dear friends

I came to think of the following:

"It should then perhaps come as no great surprise to read in Pupul Jayakar's biography of Krishnamurti, statements made at the turn of the century by two practicing tantrikas of the Kalachakra lineage whom Mrs. Besant consulted regularly in Benares:

Pandit Jagannath Upadyaya of Varanasi, who had found a copy of the original text of the Kala Chakra Tantra, and who was undertaking research into it, told Krishnaji that Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj maintained that the Theosophical Society drew much of its hidden teaching from this secret doctrine. He went on to say that Swami Vishudhanand and Gopinath Kaviraj, in the early years of the twentieth century, had spoken to Mrs. Besant of the imminent coming of the Maitreya Bodhisattva and his manifestation in a human body; according to the swami, the body chosen was that of Krishnamurti.²

Unfortunately, such statements about Krishnamurti have been widely interpreted as meaning either that he was a very great authority whom we all must follow to the letter, or that those who made such statements were mistaken. Hopefully, it has been shown here that there is a very clear and incontestable intimate relationship between the Kalachakra lineage, Nagarjuna and Zen, the Masters who began the theosophical movement, the teaching of the perennial philosophy, the Secret Doctrine, and Krishnamurti. However, this need not mean that Krishnamurti (or the Masters, for that matter) need be accepted a priori as a supreme authority in spiritual matters. "

<http://www.teosofia.com/book9.html>

A few questions and comments:

Are there any readers, who have additional comments to make about this?

Have any theosophist researched this? Anyone at Adyar? (I believe so on the last question.)

In find that this particular version of the Kalachakra was real - although maybe not the Blavatskyan version - and that it still can be found in Benares somewhere near the University or school.

But maybe my inner readings are of the mark, so take this view with a grain of salt.

M. Sufilight

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 13, 2010 at 8:51pm

The interesting quote from E-J Coulomb, relating daivi-prakriti, etc., to the letters of AUM, is very much like what the Pranava-vada does throughout. I mention this in case anyone has tried to read in this book, and found it difficult. The whole book is, in a way, a commentary on the AUM, in terms of the maha-vakya, or great saying, from the Atharva-veda. This is: aham etat na, or "I, this, not." So it explains everything in terms of the "I" or self or atman, the "this" or non-self, and the "not," which is the necessary relationship of negation between the I and the this. Whatever is being spoken of in this book is very frequently related to the I, the this, and the not. That explains this book's otherwise strange and incomprehensible sentences using these terms, which are found interspersed throughout. The shakti is not one of these three, but is said to be immanent in all three of these.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 13, 2010 at 9:02pm

I, too, think that the Kalachakra Tantra is a good choice for further research in relation to the Book of Dzyan. The statements quoted, including Pupul Jayakar's 1986 material, need some updating. There is no information that I know of in the writings of Gopinath Kaviraj that he ever had access to the Kalachakra Tantra. He is famous for his researches in Hindu Tantra. The Sanskrit manuscript of the Kalachakra Tantra that Jagannath Upadhyaya got copied was in the possession of Divya Vajra Vajracharya of Kathmandu, and it also included the Vimala-prabha commentary thereon. This manuscript was microfilmed by the Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions in the 1970s. I obtained microfiche of it in

1980, and used it for my early Kalachakra studies. Only long after that, when studying with Divya Vajra Vajracharya's son, Gautam Vajracharya, did I learn these details.

This manuscript formed the basis of Jagannath Upadhyaya's edition of the *Vimala-prabha*, which included the Kalachakra Tantra, and he also used five other manuscripts. He died in 1986, just after volume 1 was published, giving the first two of its five chapters. When I spoke with him, through a Hindi interpreter, he was seeking a manuscript of the *Vimala-prabha* that included the fifth chapter, which this one does not. Such a manuscript exists in the library of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta, and I had obtained a microfilm of it in 1982. But it is written in archaic Bengali script, and Jagannath Upadhyaya could not easily read it. After his death, it was deciphered by Janardan Shastri Pandeya. It was published as volume 3 of the *Vimala-prabha* in 1994, under the editorship of Vrajavallabh Dwivedi and S. S. Bahulkar. They were also the editors for volume 2 in 1994, in continuation of Jagannath Upadhyaya's work. All three of these volumes were published by the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath.

Already in 1966 the Kalachakra Tantra itself had been published in New Delhi, edited by Raghu Vira and Lokesh Chandra. But it was not very comprehensible without a commentary. So efforts were made by Jagannath Upadhyaya and others, including Biswanath Banerjee, to obtain and edit and publish its great commentary, the *Vimala-prabha*. Banerjee had announced an edition of this, but it has not been published. His much improved edition of the Kalachakra Tantra, however, was published in 1985. In summary, all the primary Kalachakra texts have been available in the original Sanskrit in printed editions since 1994. I have read them all, and they do not contain the Stanzas of Dzyan, or references to them. They are nonetheless of much interest to some of us.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 13, 2010 at 10:03pm

What have we heard regarding rumored texts that may fit the bill?

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 14, 2010 at 10:58am

For the seekers : Pundarika commentary on Kalachakra Tantra (Vimalaprabha or Stainless Light) was recently (2004) published in english - Author is Khedrup

Norsang Gyatso, translated by Gavin Kilty. It is the Volume 14 of the Library of Tibetan Classics - Wisdom Publications

It include a compilation of the Root and Condensed Tantra. Only 700 pages...

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 14, 2010 at 10:35pm

Regarding rumors, there are many traditions in India of lost texts, and many of these say that the ones we have are not the real original ones. For example, the Digambara Jainas say that the entire Jaina canon that is now available, which is accepted by the Svetambara Jainas, is not authentic. They believe that the last of the real original texts of the Jaina canon were lost about two thousand years ago. Similarly for the Buddhists, the Tibetan author Bu-ston, who lived in the 1300s C.E., compiled the traditions that had reached him from India about the Buddhist scriptures. In his famous History of Buddhism, he has a small section on "lost parts of the canon," in which he describes the often gigantic Buddhist texts that are no longer extant. This book was translated into English by E. Obermiller.

HPB tells us that the Book of Dzyan is the first of fourteen volumes of commentaries on the seven secret folios of Kiu-te. Her description of what is apparently the latter small book, given already in Isis Unveiled and repeated in the Introductory to The Secret Doctrine (p. xlii), coupled with her new description of it given on p. 1 of the SD's Proem, has led to some confusion about what book she meant by the Book of Dzyan that she translated Stanzas from in the SD. But I think we can safely conclude that it is one of the fourteen volumes of secret commentaries on the Books of Kiu-te, i.e., on the Buddhist Tantras, and it is not the small pictorial book she described. Bu-ston in his above-mentioned History of Buddhism speaks of many lost original versions of the Buddhist Tantras, many of which are of very extensive. The original Kalachakra Tantra, for example, is supposed to consist of 12,000 verses. It never reached India, and is supposed to be found only in Shambhala. Similarly, other secret books are only found in the realm of the Nagas, etc.

So in the Stanzas of Dzyan we seek a text that, on analogy, has not been available publicly, at least in known history, but is only found in some hidden place. Therefore we are not likely to find it among the known books. How do such secret books come out? In the case of Nagarjuna, legend says that he visited the realm of the Nagas and brought back the Prajna-paramita texts. In the case of the Kalachakra texts, an Indian yogi is supposed to have attempted to go to Shambhala

to get it, but was instead met partway by a teacher from Shambhala who gave him the texts. HPB said that the fourteen volumes of secret commentaries on the Books of Kiu-te were kept secret and apart in the charge of the Panchen Lama at Shigatse (BCW 14.422). But the situation in Tibet has changed dramatically since then. All we know is that HPB did produce, from some source, cosmogonic material that is much more detailed than any cosmogony known anywhere else on earth. This indicates a real source; we just don't know where.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 15, 2010 at 7:04am

Excellent, thanks for that run-down of rumored materials. That may be helpful in our searches in case a surprise pops up somewhere.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 15, 2010 at 9:10pm

"An Unpublished Discourse of the Buddha," found in Blavatsky Collected Writings vol. 14, pp. 408-410, is supposed to come from "the second Book of Commentaries," presumably the second of the fourteen secret volumes that HPB referred to. It is indeed quite different from most of the known Buddhist books. It teaches a true "I" or "Self" beyond the world of mutability. As everyone knows, Buddhism is regarded by almost all of its adherents, as well as almost all who study it, as denying the "I" or "Self," the atman, as its most distinctive doctrine. But there are known Buddhist sutras that refer to and accept an atman. These are the Tathagata-garbha sutras, usually reckoned to be ten, although the lists do not always coincide. Among these, the one that speaks most openly of the atman is the Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Sutra. Dr. Tony Page has this whole large sutra available on his website, along with other related material. In Tibet, the Tathagata-garbha sutras were favorites of the Jonangpas.

Ken Small has pointed out to me earlier that the image given in this unpublished discourse, of an elephant seeing its reflection in a lake, is distinctive enough that it might provide us a clue in tracing these texts. Someone familiar with the large Tibetan Buddhist canon, or the large Chinese Buddhist canon, might recognize this image from some known sutra. Finding an exoterically known and available text having this image could be useful to us.

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 17, 2010 at 8:18am

An interesting finding (which may have already been discussed elsewhere), but quite puzzling.

David made a thorough investigation in his "Notes on Cosmological Notes", identifying most of the vocabulary found in the note to the stanzas (p.23 of S.D. 1). Translations of the terms was made by referring to new materials published during the last 40 years, since a lot of tibetan literature became available. I took a deep breath before plunging into the Annales du Musée Guimet, to discover a lot of tibetan studies made around the 1830-1850 period. Among them is the well-known author (which HPB cites), Emile de Schlagintweit which published, back in 1863, his book "Buddhism in Tibet". In this book (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/bit/index.htm>), one can find some of the very specific terms used by HPB like zodmanas zhiba, tenbrel chougnyi, yong-grub, ngovonyid, khorlo.

Maybe the next step is to understand where E. de Schagintweit found those terms which are almost impossible to find in the current known (western) tibetan buddhism literature.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 17, 2010 at 9:45am

So, to recap the discussion so far:

We have secured the assistance of several academic institutions in India who have offered direct assistance in our effort. For the time being we cannot give out their names out of respect for their desire to remain anonymous. We will, however, release the names as soon as we can.

In addition, the Kechara Buddhist organization (www.kechara.com) has offered their services in the field of Chinese translations.

We are compiling a list of words used in the Stanzas of Dzyan that we are currently focusing on as a start. This does not exclude from consideration any other terms.

Perhaps David, Jacques, or one of the others may want to post the list.

In any case, we are still at a very early stage. There will be a lot more to come as things progress.

Stay tuned, and in whatever case, whether you are a regular, or if this is your first time visiting Theosophy.Net, if you have something to add to our search for the Stanzas, please let us know.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 17, 2010 at 8:56pm

One of the reasons that Theosophy is not taken seriously by scholars, and therefore by most of the public, is that Theosophical writers often rely on material that is not up to date or in touch with current scholarship. For example, citing 22 English translations of Rig-veda 10.129 is nice, but it is not enough. Of these 22 translators, only three have produced complete translations of the Rig-veda. Two of these three translations, the early ones by Horace Wilson and Ralph Griffith, are regarded as having been superseded, while the third, the recent one by Satya Prakash Sarasvati and Satyakam Vidyalkar, is not in the running because it follows the monotheistic interpretation of Dayananda Sarasvati. The standard translation of the Rig-veda used by scholars today is Karl Geldner's German translation. It was completed before his death in 1929, but was not published until 1951. Despite its age, no later translation has yet superseded it. It also superseded the earlier German translations by Hermann Grassmann and Alfred Ludwig. We still await Stanley Insler's English translation, which will no doubt become the standard when it comes out. One other existing translation besides Geldner's, however, is equally respected, but has not superseded Geldner's because the author was not able to complete it before his death. It is the partial French translation by Louis Renou.

To be reasonably complete here, I have made an additional PDF of material on Rig-veda 10.129. It includes Geldner's standard German translation published in 1951 and reprinted in 2003 by Harvard University Press, as well as his first translation of this hymn, done jointly with Adolf Kaegi and published in 1875. Also included is Renou's French translation, from the third edition published in 1956, and his notes on this hymn published in 1967, a year after his death. In addition, there is a valuable English translation by the Dutch Vedic scholar, Jan Gonda. It was published as the English summary of an article by him in a Dutch academic journal in 1966. In 2007 the last volume of R. L. Kashyap's complete English translation of the Rig-veda was published, which follows the important psychological interpretation of Sri Aurobindo. This translation of this hymn is also included. Of the six English translations that were mentioned after the first PDF was made, I

have included in this PDF those of Adolf Kaegi, Franklin Edgerton, and Jeanine Miller.

We will need to re-tally the results of the "he" or "it" question regarding verse 7 of this hymn, the verse that HPB altered. But first, I would request Jacques to let us know what Louis Renou gives for this verse in his French translation. It is great to have a native French speaker here, so that we can be sure of the correct English interpretation of this French translation. I wonder if we have a native German speaker here, who could check the two Geldner translations of this verse for us. Also, Geldner wrote on this hymn a small book of 34 pages titled, Zur Kosmogonie des Rigveda, published in 1908. I see that it is available for download on Google books. It includes a complete German translation of Sayana's rather extensive commentary on Rig-veda 10.129, the only translation of this commentary yet to be published. Sayana lived in the 14th century C.E., so is far later than the time of the Vedas. But his commentary lets us know how the Vedas were understood in India at that time. No ancient commentary on the Vedas has come down to us.

I hope that, even for readers here who do not look at these various translations, this whole comparison will show that it is impossible to regard a single translation of a Sanskrit text such as this as being fully accurate or definitive. The best of scholars, ancient and modern, disagree on what many of the technical terms mean, to say nothing of the difficulties of adequately expressing them in English. For example, HPB says in a footnote to "An Unpublished Discourse of Buddha," that the Vedic term Aditi refers to "space." This follows the interpretation of this term given by Max Muller, who we know that HPB read. But as both Arthur Macdonell in his book, Vedic Mythology (pp. 120-123), and Arthur Berriedale Keith in his book, The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads (pp. 215-218), point out, Muller was pretty much alone in this interpretation of Aditi, while almost all other Vedic scholars interpreted Aditi differently.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 17, 2010 at 9:09pm

Any native German speakers on this forum?

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 17, 2010 at 9:11pm

David, would it be helpful if we started a spreadsheet or a database with words and their known translations? What would be most helpful?

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 18, 2010 at 3:06pm

Rig-veda 10.129 verse 7, in the Louis Renou translation read as follows :

"This secondary creation, from where it came, if it was established or not , the one who watch over (this world) in the highest firmament is the only one to know - unless he does not know ?"

I will need more time to go through the commentaries to see if it brings more understanding.

What is more puzzling, is that another french version (A. Langlois) read completely different :

"The one who is the first author of this creation, support it. And who else than he could do it ? The one who, from the top of the sky, is watching all this world, his the only one to know it. Who else would have this science ?"

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 18, 2010 at 8:57pm

Thank you very much, Jacques, for translating Renou's rendition of this verse for us. As we might have expected, he gives "it" rather than "he" for the phrase in question, "if it was established or not." Thank you also for translating A. Langlois' rendition of this verse for us. Langlois was the first person to translate the Rig-veda into a Western language. He did this at a time (1848-1851) when very little was known outside of India about the Vedas, or even about Sanskrit. So his translation and Renou's translation are at opposite ends of the spectrum, in terms of time, being separated by more than a century. We can expect that Langlois' early French translation would be as different from Renou's modern French translation, as Horace Hayman Wilson's early English translation is different from modern English translations.

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 19, 2010 at 10:05am

Just to illustrate the difficult task in front of us, Sri Aurobindo wrote (Secret of the Veda) :

" To translate the Veda is to border upon an attempt at the impossible. For while a literal English rendering of the hymns of the ancient Illuminates would be a falsification of their sense and spirit, a version which aimed at bringing all the real thought to the surface would be an interpretation rather than a translation....

To enter into the very heart of the mystic doctrine, we must ourselves have trod the ancient paths and renewed the lost discipline, the forgotten experience. And which of us can hope to do that with any depth or living power ? Who in this Age of Iron shall have the strength to recover the light of the Forefathers or soar above the two enclosing firmaments of mind and body into their luminous empyrean of the infinite Truth ? The Rishis sought to conceal their knowledge from the unfit, believing perhaps that the corruption of the best might lead to the worst and fearing to give the potent wine of the Soma to the child and the weakling."

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 19, 2010 at 9:10pm

To make a list of terms with their known or accepted translations should be a simple matter, but it is not. It seems that each translation found in use brings with it its own problems, and then clarifying these problems brings in further complications. There are found in The Secret Doctrine many such terms, which HPB uses in a particular meaning that was used by a particular author at a particular time, but which meaning is quite misleading if not altogether wrong.

If you pick up any of the many books on Tibetan Buddhism published in recent years, you will soon come across the translation "emptiness." This has become in the last few decades the most widely adopted translation of the technical term sunyata. But if you go back a few more decades, you might find a book in which this term was instead translated as "non-substantiality." If you go back a few more decades yet, to when this idea was first being introduced, you might find sunyata translated as "relativity." This is the translation of this term used by Th. Stcherbatsky in 1927 in the first English translation of substantial portions of Nagarjuna's great sourcework on the subject of sunyata (The Conception of Buddhist Nirvana, including chapters 1 and 25 of Nagarjuna's Mula-Madhyamaka-Karika).

Now go forward again in time to 1984, when Robert Thurman's translation of Tsong-khapa's book, *The Essence of True Eloquence*, was published. Tsong-khapa there expands on a short text he wrote, titled in Thurman's translation, "Eulogy of Buddha Shakyamuni for His Teaching of Relativity." So, is this Tsong-khapa's eulogy on emptiness, sunyata? No, "relativity" is here Thurman's translation of the technical term *pratitya samutpada*, a term that is more commonly translated as "dependent origination" or some such similar phrase. It refers to the twelve *nidanas*, the chain of causation, that was spoken of already in the early Theosophical writings.

If HPB would have written *The Secret Doctrine* in 1930, she most likely would have used the term "relativity" in it, adopted from Stcherbatsky. It would have referred to sunyata, what has now become widely known as "emptiness." If, however, HPB wrote in 1985, after reading Thurman's translation of Tsongkhapa's book, she also would likely have used the term "relativity." But now it would refer to *pratitya samutpada*, what has more generally been known as "dependent origination."

This is the kind of thing we are up against when we see in *The Secret Doctrine* such terms as *Aditi*, *Svabhavat*, *Mula-Prakriti*, etc., which were adopted by HPB from particular writers of her time, in the particular meaning used by that writer. Max Muller thought that the primary meaning of *Aditi* is the Infinite, like space, and this is the meaning that HPB adopted and used throughout her writings. Here is what Muller wrote about it in his 1869 book, *Rig-Veda-Sanhita*, p. 230:

"*Aditi*, an ancient god or goddess, is in reality the earliest name invented to express the Infinite; not the Infinite as the result of a long process of abstract reasoning, but the visible Infinite, visible by the naked eye, the endless expanse beyond the earth, beyond the clouds, beyond the sky. That was called A-diti, the un-bound, the unbounded; . . ."

Compare what HPB wrote in *SD* vol. 1, p. 99, commenting on "'Darkness,' the Boundless," in *Stanza of Dzyan 4*, verse 5:

"The exoteric version may be found in the oldest Sanskrit Scriptures. In the *Rig Veda*, *Aditi*, "The Boundless" or infinite Space, translated by Mr. Max Muller, 'the visible infinite, visible by the naked eye (! !); the endless expanse beyond the Earth, beyond the clouds, beyond the sky,' is the equivalent of 'Mother-Space' coeval with 'Darkness.'"

As space, *Aditi* can also be the mother of the gods, or at least of the *Adityas*, who derive their name from her. But other writers see in *Aditi* other ideas than infinite

space, such as freedom from bondage, or imperishability, or eternity, or celestial light, or boundlessness, or the earth, or heaven and earth, etc. Sri Aurobindo gives it a psychological interpretation, saying that it means "the Supreme or infinite Consciousness" (Sri Aurobindo's Vedic Glossary, compiled by A. B. Purani). Space is no doubt one meaning, but it is not necessarily the primary meaning, as Max Muller took it, who HPB relied on.

Similarly, the idea of svabhava as a Buddhist teaching was derived by HPB from Brian Hodgson's 1874 book, Essays on the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet. This one, it turns out, was altogether wrong, as no school of Svabhavika Buddhists exists in Nepal. HPB uses the term Svabhavat in this same Stanza 4, verse 5, there explaining it as "the mystic Essence, the plastic root of physical Nature," adding that, "The name is of Buddhist use." This is what she understood from Brian Hodgson's book, as did everyone else at that time, including scholars, and up till fairly recently. But Hodgson was mistaken. So HPB is in company with scholars such as Sir Monier-Williams, Hendrik Kern, Louis de La Vallee Poussin, Arthur Berriedale Keith, Helmut von Glasenapp, Shasi Bhushan Dasgupta, Andre Bareau, John Snelling, and others, who also repeated this incorrect information. It was only corrected with David Gellner's 1989 article, "Hodgson's Blind Alley? On the So-Called Schools of Nepalese Buddhism."

Then, the idea of mula-prakriti as a Vedanta term was copied by HPB from T. Subba Row's articles in The Theosophist giving his dialogue with, or arguments against, the Almora Swami, and also later his Bhagavad-gita lectures. In this case, Subba Row was presenting esoteric teachings on this as if mula-prakriti was a standard part of the known teachings of Vedanta. HPB naturally repeated this as such in the SD. So her statements saying that the one substance-principle, for example, is the Mula-prakriti of the Vedantins and the Svabhavat of the Buddhists, are quite inaccurate, being based on incorrect usages that she adopted from the writers of her time.

She does not use mula-prakriti or Aditi in the Stanzas themselves, but Svabhavat is found in them seven times.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 19, 2010 at 9:25pm

Thanks, David for that excellent exposition. It does an excellent job of explaining the first of many challenges ahead. You certainly put this part of the task in context. The phrase 'list of terms' sounds deceptively easy until you figure that we

have to provide the proper framing before we go asking questions. It's something like being a good lawyer in that we have to have a fairly clear idea what answer we are expecting when we ask. At the very least we have to be able to ask an intelligent question in a way our correspondent understands clearly.

This is a major challenge to be sure, but we have the ability and the connections to pull this off.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 21, 2010 at 9:08pm

The term "Svâbhâvat," which occurs seven times in the Stanzas of Dzyan, presents a longstanding problem with its final "t". In the Sanskrit Buddhist texts where it is said to be found, it occurs as svabhâva, not svâbhâvat. It means the "inherent nature" of something. The usual example given in these texts is that heat is the inherent nature (svabhâva) of fire. But that is not how it is used in Theosophical writings, nor in the writings of Brian Houghton Hodgson.

The terms swabhâva and Swâbhâvikas were made known in English in Brian Hodgson's articles published in Asiatic Researches beginning in 1828, and later collected into a book, Essays on the Languages, Literature, and Religion of Nepal and Tibet, London, 1874. I have gone through this book, as well as the original journal articles, and found only swabhâva, not swâbhâvat. One possibility, then, is that the final "t" on svâbhâvat is just an error that somehow crept into the Theosophical writings, and that simply svabhâva was intended.

In the Sanskrit Buddhist texts themselves we regularly find svabhâva. Occasionally, svabhâva is used with the added suffix, "-tâ" ("t" followed by long "a"), forming svabhâvatâ. This suffix has a meaning similar to the English suffix, "-ness." A common example of this is sunya, "empty," and sunyatâ, "emptiness." So svabhâvatâ is a second possibility. When in 1997 I wrote the Book of Dzyan Research Report on Technical Terms in Stanza II, I left the question open of which word the Theosophical svâbhâvat might be. When in 1999 this article was reprinted in Blavatsky's Secret Books, I had to conclude that svabhâvatâ was "perhaps the more likely of the two terms to be the specific equivalent of Blavatsky's svâbhâvat." However, this is not the case.

Last year the mystery of the final "t" was solved by Daniel Caldwell, in an email sent to myself and a few others, dated Oct. 13, 2009. As has been discussed here, it illustrates that HPB, rightly or wrongly, and like everyone else, adopted terms as

used by the writers of her time. Daniel found svabhavat in a book by Max Muller, that HPB had obviously drawn from. Here is what Max Muller wrote, who himself had obviously drawn this information from Brian Hodgson's writings:

"There is the school of the Svâbhâvikas, which still exists in Nepal. The Svâbhâvikas maintain that nothing exists but nature, or rather substance, and that this substance exists by itself (svabhâvât), without a Creator or a Ruler. It exists, however, under two forms: in the state of Pravritti, as active, or in the state of Nirvritti, as passive. Human beings, who, like everything else, exist svabhâvât, 'by themselves,' are supposed to be capable of arriving at Nirvritti, or passiveness, which is nearly synonymous with Nirvana." (Max Muller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. I: *Essays on the Science of Religion*, London, 1867, p. 281; 2nd ed., 1868, p. 282. This quotation is from Chapter XI, "The Meaning of Nirvana," written in 1857.)

Compare what HPB wrote in *Isis Unveiled*, as quoted in *The Secret Doctrine*:

"The Svabhâvikas, or philosophers of the oldest school of Buddhism (which still exists in Nepaul), speculate only upon the active condition of this 'Essence,' which they call Svâbhâvat, and deem it foolish to theorise upon the abstract and 'unknowable' power in its passive condition." (*Isis Unveiled*, vol. 2, p. 264, as quoted in *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. 3)

Compare also what HPB wrote in an article:

". . . of the Svâbhâvikas. 'Nothing exists in the Universe but Substance—or Nature,' say the latter. 'This Substance exists by, and through itself (Svabhavat) having never been either created or had a Creator.'" (H. P. Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, vol. 13, p. 309)

This leaves no doubt that she was drawing from what Max Muller wrote in this book. Here is the problem. Muller had put svabhâva in the ablative case, svabhâvât, in order to show the meaning "by itself," more literally, "from or due to its inherent nature." Not knowing Sanskrit, HPB did not catch this, and simply quoted the word svabhâvât as what this "Essence" is called. This word, svabhâva, with the ablative case ending, svabhâvât, was then used seven times in the Stanzas of Dzyan, obviously intending just svabhâva. That solves the longstanding mystery of the final "t" on svâbhâvat in the Stanzas and elsewhere in the Theosophical writings. The problem of its meaning is a question for another day.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on October 21, 2010 at 11:54pm

David, according to De Purucker, Swabhavat (or svabhavat) is 'the present participle of the verb bhû' [and coupled with the prefix Sva, I suppose] (see my quote below in which this part is bolded). Is this correct, and how does this validate or invalidate your comment?

Why is the "t" in Svabhavat a mistake? You take it as ablative, but this quote suggests otherwise.

From chapter X, Fundamentals of the esoteric philosophy (G. de Purucker):

(beginning of quote; I have inserted â where appropriate for Swabhâva, since this text is copied from the PDF version I have online, but which misses the diacritic marks (and I did not correct Hebrew words, etc.- Martin Euser)

The general text of our study this evening is found in The Secret Doctrine, Volume I, page 83, stanza 3, verse 10:

10. father-mother spin a web whose upper end is fastened to spirit (Purusha), the light of the one darkness, and the lower one to matter (Prakriti)

its (the Spirit's) shadowy end; and this web is the universe spun out of the two substances made in one, which is swabhavat.

(a) In the Mandukya (Mundaka) Upanishad it is written, "As a spider throws out and retracts its web, as herbs spring up in the ground . so is the Universe derived from the undecaying one" (I, 1, 7). Brahma, as "the germ of unknown Darkness," is the material from which all evolves and develops "as the web from the spider, as foam from the water," etc. This is only graphic and true, if Brahma the "Creator" is, as a term, derived from the root brih, to increase or expand. Brahma "expands" and becomes the Universe woven out of his own substance. [96]

The same idea has been beautifully expressed by Goethe, who says:

Thus at the roaring loom of Time I ply,

And weave for God the garment thou see'st Him by.

In the course of our studies we have been advancing stage by stage, step by step, from general principles, and our course has been always towards that point of

emanation and evolution which finds itself at the dawn of manifestation, or the opening of Manvantara. We have touched upon many subjects but lightly, because the intricacy of the theme did not at the time permit us to go into and to follow side-avenues of thought, however attractive and important they might be; but these avenues we shall have to explore as time and opportunity bring once more before us, in the course of our study, the portals which we have passed and perhaps have merely glanced into.

As the Teacher has directed, we have brought to the attention of those who will read these studies certain fundamental natural principles, as fundamental and important in their respective bearings as the two foundation-stones of popular Theosophy today, called Reincarnation and Karma. One of these principles is the doctrine of Hierarchies, upon which much more could and should be said than has hitherto been said, and it will be said in due time.

Another such fundamental principle or doctrine — a true key opening the very heart of being, and, besides other things, reaching into the root-meaning of the so-called "origin of evil" and of the inner urge towards right and righteousness, which man calls his moral sense — is that which flows forth from the philosophical conceptions behind the word Swabhâva, meaning, generally, the essential characteristic of anything; the medieval scholastics spoke of this essentiality of things as their Quidditas, or Quiddity — the whatness of anything: that which is its heart, its essential nature, its characteristic essentiality. The word Swabhâva (a noun) itself is derived from the Sanskrit root Bhû, meaning "to become", or "to be", and the prefix of the word, the three preceding letters, sva, is also of course Sanskrit and means "self." The word thus translated means "self-becomingness", a technical term, a keyword, in which philosophical conceptions of immense and wide-reaching import inhere. We shall develop some of these more fully as we proceed with our studies.

In the quotation from the stanzas which we have read this evening, you will have noticed the word Swabhavat, from the same elements as is Swabhâva, from the same Sanskrit root. Swabhavat is the present participle of the verb bhû, meaning that which becomes itself, or develops from within outwardly its [97] essential self by emanation, evolution; in other words, that which by self-urge develops the potencies latent in its nature, in its self, in its Being of being. We have often spoken of the "Inmost of the Inmost", as implying that "inmost" link or root by which we (and all other things) flow forth from the very essence of the heart of things, which is our utter self, and we have spoken of it sometimes with the hand

placed upon the breast; but we must be exceedingly careful not to think that this Inmost of the Inmost is in the physical body. Let me explain just what I mean. The Qabbalists divide the planes of nature into which the ten Sephiroth became — queer English, this, but very accurately and correctly expressing the thought — into four during manifestation, and they were called the four 'Olam, a word having originally the meaning of "concealed" or "hid" or "secret", but also used for time, likewise used almost exactly in the sense of the Gnostic teaching of "Aions", (aeons) as spheres, Lokas in Sanskrit. The highest of the Qabbalistic 'Olam, or spheres, was 'Olam Atsiloth, meaning the "aeon" or "age" or the "Loka" of "condensation." The second was called 'Olam Hab-Beriah, meaning the aeon or age or Loka of "creation". The third in descent and increasing materiality was called 'Olam Ha-Yetsirah or Loka of Form. The fourth, last, most material and grossest, was called 'Olam Ha-'A siah, meaning the aeon or world of "action" or "causes". This last plane or sphere or world is the lowest of the four, and is sometimes called the world of Matter, or, again, of "shells", man (and other physical entities) sometimes being considered a shell in the sense of being the garment or the vehicle or "shell" or corpus of the indwelling spirit.

Now psychologically these four spheres were considered as being copied, or reflected, or as having a locus (place) in the human body;

and, in order to correspond with the four basic principles into which the Jewish Qabbalistic philosophers divided man, Neshamah (or spirit) was supposed to have its locus in the head, or rather hovering thereover; the second, Ruahh (or Soul), was supposed to have its locus or center in the breast or chest; the third, the lowest of the active principles, called Nefesh (or the animal-astral soul), was supposed to have its locus or center in the abdomen. The fourth vehicle was Guf, or the inclosing shell of the physical body. The Neshamah, the highest of all, from which the others emanated stage by stage — the Ruahh from the Neshamah, the Nefesh from the Ruahh, and the Guf from the Nefesh (the Guf actually is the Linga-sharira, esoterically, and secretes the human physical body) — should not be considered so much in the head as overshadowing as it were the head and body It may be likened to a solar ray, or to an electric ray, or again to the so-called "golden chain" of the great Greek poet Homer [98] and the far later Neo-Platonic philosophers, which connects zeus and all lower entities; or to the chain of beings in a Hierarchy linked by their hyparxis with the lowest plane of the next higher Hierarchy.

Now this "Inmost of the Inmost" is in that part of us which overshadows us, which is above us physically, rather than in us. And it really is our spiritual Monad. Therefore, before we can know what we mean by the Swabhâva, and the wonderful doctrine fundamentally emanating therefrom, we must understand what we mean by Monad and the sense in which the word Monad is used. Those who were students of H.P. Blavatsky while she was alive with us, and who have studied under our two other Teachers, W.Q. Judge, and the present one, Katherine Tingley, will realize the necessity of making our sense clear by choosing words which shall convey clearly and sensibly, and without possibility of misconception, the thoughts which lie behind the words. In European philosophy, monad, as a philosophical word, seems to have been first employed by the great Italian philosopher, the noted Giordano Bruno, in thought a Neo-Platonist, who derived his inspiration from the philosophy of Greece, now called Neo-Platonism; a more modern use of the word monad, in a spiritual-philosophical sense, was that of the Slavic-German philosopher, Leibnitz. Monadism formed the heart of all his teachings, and he said that the universe was composed, built up, of monads: that is to say, he conceived them to be spiritual centers having no extension, but having an inner and inherent energy of development, the respective hosts of monads being of various degrees and each one achieving its own development by an innate characteristic nature (or Swabhâva). The essential meaning of this, as it is at once seen, is characteristic Individuality, which is Self, pursuing its own unfoldment and growing by stages higher and higher through self-unfolding or self-becoming (or Swabhâva). Leibnitz taught that these monads were connected, spiritually, psychically, and physically, by a "law of harmony", as he expressed it, which is our Swabhavat - the Self-Existent, developing during manifestation into the Hosts of monads, or monadic centers. (end of quote)

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on October 21, 2010 at 11:58pm

(Sorry, bold text disappeared as bold. Edit feature still not working correctly.)

"In the quotation from the stanzas which we have read this evening, you will have noticed the word Swabhavat, from the same elements as is Swabhâva, from the same Sanskrit root. Swabhavat is the present participle of the verb bhû, meaning that which becomes itself, or develops from within outwardly its [97] essential self by emanation, evolution; in other words, that which by self-urge develops the potencies latent in its nature, in its self, in its Being of being."

Comment by Jacques Mahnich on October 22, 2010 at 3:07am

Some search results on "svabhava" :

1) Meanings

"Since in Prasangika emptiness - the absence of inherent existence (svabhavasiddhi, rang bzhin gyis grub pa) - is the nature (svabhava, rang bzhin) of all phenomena, it should not be thought that svabhava is refuted in all its meanings. Svabhava meaning svabhavasiddhi or 'inherent existence' is refuted, but svabhava as 'final nature' or just 'character' (such as heat and burning as the character of fire) is not refuted. (Jeffrey Hopkins)

" The reality of mantra tone which each wind has, is not revealed to the 'child' (bala); its form, that is, its self-existence (svabhava) or identity (atmaka), is revealed to the yogin". (Tson-kha-pa's commentary on the Guhyasamaja Explanatory Tantra - Caturdevipariprccha).

" Children delight in forms;the middle-aged pass to aversion. Understanding the intrinsic nature (svabhava) of form, those with best intelligence are liberated (from it)". (Aryadeva's Cittavisuddhiprakarana, verse 20)

" The self-being (svabhava) is the independant, unconditioned being which does not depend on anything to come into existence (K. Ventaka Ramanan)

2) Spelling :

I took a look on french language books on buddhism (S. Levy, B. St Hilaire, Burnouf, Rahula, Battacharya, Tajima) to check spelling : svabhava is always captured without a final t.

When I send a query to the National Library with "svabhavat" as search, only the SD show up as containing this word (out of 1,2 millions books scanned and searchable).

It seems to confirm David and Daniel explanation on this matter.

Comment by Martin Euser on October 22, 2010 at 3:36am

Jacques,

My point actually is about the question whether "Svabhavat is the present participle of the verb bhû", [meaning that which becomes itself, or develops from within outwardly its [97] essential self by emanation, evolution; in other words, that which by self-urge develops the potencies latent in its nature, in its self, in its Being of being.]".

The fact that the term does not appear in Sanskrit literature is not directly relevant to my question.

In any case, both terms seem to derive from the same root, according to De Purucker who was learned in Sanskrit and many other languages. The meaning is quite clear: self-becoming, developing one's potential according to one's inherent pattern of consciousness.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 22, 2010 at 5:47pm

Martin, if I was writing in 1932, when G. de Purucker's Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy was published, I might also have concluded that svabhavat must be a present participle. Besides the ablative, which makes no sense, this is the only way to explain this grammatical form ending in "t", svabhavat. In G. de Purucker's Occult Glossary, he adds that it is a neuter present participle, as noted in my paper on Technical Terms in Stanza II (www.easternterminology.org). But writing now when hundreds of Sanskrit Buddhist texts have become available, in which no such word has ever been found, I have to conclude otherwise. Over the last few decades, I have gathered copies of all known printed Sanskrit Buddhist texts. What I have found in these texts, besides svabhâva, is the form svabhâvatâ, and this was my best guess for HPB's term. But this, too, turned out to be incorrect, as the quote that Daniel found from Max Muller showed.

I know it is hard to accept that HPB, who translated these Stanzas, would have made this kind of mistake. But when you see many mistakes of the same kind, and consider the methods of writing used by chelas of the Mahatmas, what else can we conclude? You will recall that HPB used Svâbhâvat as a term known to Orientalists, not as an esoteric term found only in hidden texts such as the Stanzas of Dzyan. She says at SD 1.98 that "The name is of Buddhist use," adding in a footnote: "As for Svâbhâvat, the Orientalists explain the term as meaning the Universal plastic matter diffused through Space." What orientalists explain it so? Brian Houghton Hodgson, the one and only source on the Svâbhâvikas of Nepal, and everyone else who copied him right up until 1989 when David Gellner showed that there are no

Svâbhâvikas of Nepal. HPB may have first gotten this information from Hodgson by way of Eugene Burnouf's book, Introduction a l'Histoire du bouddhisme indien (p. 118), which she quotes twice in Isis Unveiled in reference to Svâbhâvikas and Svabhâva (vol. 1, pp. 93, 250). Perhaps Jacques can tell us what is there in Burnouf's book.

Here follow some quotes from Hodgson himself, the source, showing how he explained the Svâbhâvikas and their teaching of svabhâva. It is this school that K.H. asked Hume to study the doctrines of (ML #22). Hume would have had to do this by way of Hodgson's book. Some more quotes from this book are found under the title, "Doctrines of the Nepalese Svabhavikas," at www.easterntertradition.org.

"The Swâbhâvikas deny the existence of immateriality; they assert that matter is the sole substance, and they give it two modes, called Pravritti, and Nirvritti, or action and rest, concretion and abstraction. Matter itself, they say, is eternal, (however infinitesimally attenuated in Nirvritti); and so are the powers of matter which powers possess not only activity, but intelligence." (Essays on the Languages, Literature, and Religion of Nepal and Tibet, London, 1874, p. 23)

"The Prâjnikas agree with the Swâbhâvikas, in considering matter as the sole entity, in investing it with intelligence as well as activity, and in giving it two modes, or that of action and that of rest." (p. 25)

What Hodgson understood to be "matter" is "dharma," as may be seen from the following quotes. This term, dharma, used in this meaning (as opposed to its meaning of the "teachings" or the "law"), is now commonly translated as "phenomena." Hodgson wrote:

". . . Dharma is Diva natura, matter as the sole entity, invested with intrinsic activity and intelligence, the efficient and material cause of all." (p. 72)

"Dharma is material essence, the plastic cause, and underived, a co-equal biunity with Buddha; . . ." (p. 72)

Here we see the word that HPB used to describe this matter, "plastic." As for the idea of being "diffused," Hodgson wrote:

". . . the Swâbhâvikas . . . they too magnify the wisdom and power of nature so abundantly diffused throughout pravritti, . . ." (p. 61)

This idea was paraphrased by Samuel Beal as the "universally diffused essence," where he gave what Hodgson had written earlier about the Swâbhâvikas. HPB used Beal's book extensively, and we see this phrase both in her writings and in the Mahatma letters. Beal wrote:

"Both these writers adopted the teaching of the Swâbhâvika school of Buddhism, which is that generally accepted in China. This school holds the eternity of Matter as a crude mass, infinitesimally attenuated under one form, and expanded under another form into the countless beautiful varieties of Nature." (A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese, London, 1871, p. 11)

"The whole of these systems he again includes within one universally diffused essence, . . ." (p. 11)

". . . the manifestation of a latent energy residing in the universally diffused essence." (pp. 11-12)

". . . where Dharma is the same as Prakriti, or Matter itself." (p. 12)

"The doctrine of a universally diffused and self-existing essence of which matter is only a form, seems to be unknown in the Southern schools. It would appear, therefore, that there has been no advance in the Southern philosophical code since the date of Nagasena, who was a strenuous opponent of the Swâbhâva theory." (p. 14)

Beal's Nagasena is, of course, Nagarjuna, whose teachings resulted in the Madhyamaka school of Buddhism. These are the teachings accepted throughout Tibet by all the various orders of Tibetan Buddhism. Here are two more quotes from Beal, the second of which brings in the term yih-sin, found in SD 1.23 as from Stanza I of the Book of Dzyan, and in Mahatma letters #15 and #59.

"This is the mysterious character of the universally diffused Nature (essence): . . ." (p. 29).

"So again, when the idea of a universally diffused essence (dharmakaya) was accepted as a dogmatic necessity, a further question arose as to the relation which this "supreme existence" bore to time, space, and number. And from this consideration appears to have proceeded the further invention of the several names Vairochana (the Omnipresent), Amitabha (for Amirta) the Eternal, and Adi-Buddha (yih-sin) the 'one form of existence.'" (p. 373).

This is quite enough to show that many terms and ideas were adopted in the Theosophical writings from writings of the time. Svâbhâvat was one of these, adopted from Max Muller's re-statement of Hodgson's material. Regarding the possibility of svabhavat being a neuter present participle, I would add the following.

Even if the term svabhavat as a present participle existed, which I have never seen, there is another problem. Present participles are almost always used in Sanskrit as functional verbs. I do not recall ever seeing one used as a noun, and do not think this is possible. For example, look at the sentence, sitam pasyan ramo mudito 'bhavat, "Seeing Sita, Rama became happy." The present participle is pasyan, "seeing," which functions as the verb in this clause, and takes an object, "Sita." It does not function as a noun, which is how Svâbhâvat is used in the Stanzas. The intended word can only be the noun svabhâva.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 22, 2010 at 8:07pm

Jacques, you had earlier pertinently brought up the question of the terms used by HPB as from the Stanzas that are also used by Emil Schlagintweit in his 1863 book, Buddhism in Tibet, such as zodmanas zhiba. In our recent discussion of svabhâva and svâbhâvat, I had mentioned the form svabhâvatâ. It so happens that I found these words together in a phrase from Asanga's commentary on the Ratna-gotravibhaga, first published in Sanskrit in 1950. So it may be worthwhile to post this. They occur in the commentary on chapter 1, verse 15, as follows, in Sanskrit and Tibetan:

âdi-'sânta-svabhâvatayâ / gzod ma nas zhi ba'i ngo bo nyid kyî

The word svabhâvatâ is in the instrumental case, svabhâvatayâ. Jikido Takasaki translates this phrase as "because of their nature of absolute quiescence from the outset" (A Study on the Ratnagotravibhaga, Rome, 1966, p. 174). He includes in his translation the word atyanta, "absolute" which immediately precedes the other words in this Sanskrit phrase. So his translation of zodmanas zhiba (gzod ma nas zhi ba) is "quiescence from the outset."

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 22, 2010 at 9:17pm

Regarding Rig-veda 10.129, since we do not seem to have a native German speaker here, perhaps anyone who knows German could step in and tell us for sure how Karl Geldner translates the first half of verse 7. The verse is:

"Woraus diese Schopfung sich entwickelt hat, ob er sie gemacht hat oder nicht -- der der Aufseher dieser (Welt) im höchsten Himmel ist, der allein weiss es, es sei denn, dass auch er es nicht weiss."

*Today I received the MLBD Newsletter for October, which included an obituary for Raimundo Panikkar. His translation of this hymn is found in his large book, *The Vedic Experience*, and was included in the first PDF of translations posted on this website. It happened that when Nancy and I were studying at the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1978, taking a class from Prof. Panikkar called "Om in the Upanisads," Jeanine Miller came to nearby Krotana to give a series on the Vedas, which we also attended. Through these chance circumstances, we became the intermediaries for Prof. Panikkar meeting Jeanine. Out of politeness, and also the fact that Jeanine did not have a car, we, too, were invited to Prof. Panikkar's home. There, like flies on the wall, we listened to their conversation with great interest and much enjoyment. I know that personal anecdotes like this have no place in this discussion of the Stanzas, but seeing his obituary today brought up these strong memories.*

I will try to justify myself in posting this anecdote by pointing out that the translations of Panikkar and Jeanine take an almost diametrically opposite approach to that of Karl Geldner. Geldner represents the epitome of the philological school, which by careful and thorough analysis of all the usages of particular terms throughout the Rig-veda, tries to accurately deduce their correct meaning. Panikkar and Jeanine are much more intuitive in their translations. There is, of course, much to be said for both approaches, and I believe that together they give us a more complete picture of these ancient and obscure hymns, so reminiscent of the Stanzas of Dzyan.

Comment by [Alistair Coombs](#) on October 23, 2010 at 3:26am

Regarding Svabhava and HPB supposedly not knowing Sanskrit I was once surprised to hear in K Paul Johnson's "Initiates of Theosophical Masters" p138 a passing mention about her reported fluency in this language. After querying Paul about this, it was the case that Dayananda at times thought highly of her proficiency in it, which would therefore lead one to believe she would at least have possessed enough knowledge to identify the different declensions. However, her using Svabhava in the ablative in the stanzas (surely unknowingly) would indeed seem to be the best explanation for it.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on October 23, 2010 at 3:43am

It seems that Aufseber must be Aufseher (scanning error?):

Aufseher (der ~)

attendant (bijv.nw. / bijw.), guard (ww.), usher (the ~), sentry (the ~), warder (the ~), bodyguard (the ~), watchman (the ~), supervisor (the ~), superintendant (the ~), nurse (ww.), facilitator (the ~), caretaker (the ~), orderly (bijv.nw. / bijw.), animal foster (the ~), aide (the ~), curator (the ~), tutor (ww.), guardian (the ~), door-keeper (the ~), superintendent (the ~), supervisors (the ~), observers (the ~), foremen (the ~), inspectors (the ~), attendants (the ~), surveillants (the ~), gendarme (the ~), bobby (the ~), village policeman (the ~)

Also: overseer

German "er" means "he"

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 23, 2010 at 8:48am

Burnouf' book contents (p.117-118) - quite interesting for our research.

" From the short exposition of this system I just made, it result that the theistic school from Nepal is connecting this double serie of divine Buddhas and Bôdhisattvas to a prime Buddha who play exactly the same role that Brahma, the absolute and impersonal being, for the Brâhmans. However, an observation from M. Hodgson leads us to believe that this system of ideal Buddhas may result in a materialistic interpretation (1) ; and this author stated it positively in another

place , when he ascribe the belief in the existence of the Dhyâni Buddhas to the Svâbhâvikas or naturalists, true atheists, who says that all things, the Gods like the men, were born from Svabhâva or their proper (inner) nature (2). There is more ; this opinion is confirmed with an major passage from a buddhist author, quoted somewhere else by M. Hodgson, where the five Dhyanis Buddhas are equivalent to the five elements, the five sensitive qualities and the five senses, that is to say they are pure embodiements of the natural phenomenons of the sensible world.

(1) Notices, etc. in As.Res. t. XVI, p.441

(2) Hodgson, Europ. Specul. on Buddh. in Journ. Asiat. Soc. of Bengale, t. III, p.503

So, two important facts : 1) Svabhâva does not spell with a t at the end in Burnouf, and 2) it is Burnouf who is quoting Hodgson in reference with this term and meaning.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 23, 2010 at 9:35am

Thank you very much, Martin, for catching this typing error that I made. Yes, it should be Aufseher, not Aufseber. Thanks also for saying that German "er" means "he." So Karl Geldner is among the minority in regarding this phrase as speaking of a "he" rather than an "it." This is confirmed in his footnote here, saying that the subject of this line, 7b, is adhyaksa in the following line, 7c. The adhyaksa is the Aufseher, or overseer. As noted by Walter Maurer and others, we must supply a subject for the verb dadhe in 7b, and this subject can either be iyam visrsti, "this creation," of the preceding line, 7a, or adhyaksa, the "overseer," of the following line, 7c. The verb dadhe is a perfect middle which can be used as a passive. If the subject is "this creation," we take dadhe as a passive, "was made." If the subject is the "overseer," we take dadhe as a middle, he "made" it.

Perhaps how Geldner took it led to the comment by Louis Renou published in vol. 16 of his Etudes Vediques et Panineennes (where most of his Rig-veda translations were published), p. 169: "dadhe, sans doute passif 'si elle a ete instituee (par un Etre)'." I understand Renou to say here that dadhe is no doubt a passive. The translation he gives here in this 1967 book differs a little from what was published in his 1956 book: "si elle a fait l'objet ou non d'une institution." This is what Jacques translated for us as: "if it was established or not."

The German Vedic scholar who came after Geldner, Paul Thieme, apparently takes dadhe as a passive in his 1964 translation of this line: "ob sie getatigt worden ist (von einem Agens) oder ob nicht."

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 23, 2010 at 10:08am

Alistair, I have a fairly clear memory of a comment by C. W. Leadbeater that HPB did not know Sanskrit, and that she would ask any Indian who was there, what is the Sanskrit word for something she was writing about. But my memory is not clear enough to remember where Leadbeater said this! If so, this would partially explain the sometimes confusion of Sanskrit terms taken from different systems of Indian thought found in HPB's writings.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 23, 2010 at 12:06pm

Jacques, the translation that you provided for us from Burnouf is of great help in our research here. Thanks much. In addition to the two main points you mentioned, we can see in his comment about the Svâbhâvikas being true atheists what HPB was responding to in Isis Unveiled, vol. 1, p. 93.

Also, among the helpful quotes that you posted earlier on svabhâva, there was one from the Caturdevipariprccha, and one from Aryadeva's Cittavisuddhiprakarana. Have these texts been translated somewhere? Or are they quoted in some other book?

Comment by M. Sufilight on October 24, 2010 at 11:19am

A sidenote might be worth while...

The following on Wikipedia about Stanzas of Dzyan aught quite likely to be given a better formulation, if the truth should be given some credit....May each reader judge by themselves and act with their heart of compassion...

Book of Dzyan

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Dzyan

M. Sufilight

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on October 24, 2010 at 11:50am

Note: A link to this forum is now posted on the Stanzas of Dzyan site on Wikipedia under "Further Reading"

Comment by [M. Sufilight](#) on October 24, 2010 at 12:25pm

Dear friends

My views are:

H. P. Blavatsky wrote in the Secret Doctrine:

"Thus, while new discoveries are daily made of great arts and sciences having existed far back in the night of time, even the knowledge of writing is refused to some of the most ancient nations, and they are credited with barbarism instead of culture. Yet the traces of an immense civilization, even in Central Asia, are still to be found. This civilization is undeniably prehistoric. And how can there be civilization without a literature, in some form, without annals or chronicles? Common sense alone ought to supplement the broken links in the history of departed nations. The gigantic, unbroken wall of the mountains that hem in the whole table-land of Tibet, from the upper course of the river Khuan-Khé down to the Kara-Korum hills, witnessed a civilization during milleniums of years, and would have strange secrets to tell mankind. The Eastern and Central portions of those regions—the Nan-Schayn and the Altyne-taga—were once upon a time covered with cities that could well vie with Babylon. A whole geological period has swept over the land, since those cities breathed their last, as the mounds of shifting sand, and the sterile and now dead soil of the immense central plains of the basin of Tarim testify. The borderlands alone are superficially known to the traveller. Within those table-lands of sand there is water, and fresh oases are found blooming there, wherein no European foot has ever yet ventured, or trodden the now treacherous soil. Among these verdant oases there are some which are entirely inaccessible even to the native profane traveller. Hurricanes may "tear up the sands and sweep whole plains away," they are powerless to destroy that which is beyond their reach. Built deep in the bowels of the earth, the subterranean stores are secure; and as their entrances are concealed in such oases, there is little fear that anyone should discover them, even should several armies invade the sandy wastes"

.....

"Moreover in all the large and wealthy lamaseries, there are subterranean crypts and cave-libraries, cut in the rock, whenever the gonpa and the lhakhang are situated in the mountains. Beyond the Western Tsaydam, in the solitary passes of Kuen-lun † there are several such hiding-places. Along the ridge of Altyn-Toga, whose soil no European foot has ever trodden so far, there exists a certain hamlet, lost in a deep gorge. It is a small cluster of houses, a hamlet rather than a monastery, with a poor-looking temple in it, with one old lama, a hermit, living nearby to watch it. Pilgrims say that the subterranean galleries and halls under it contain a collection of books, the number of which, according to the accounts given, is too large to find room even in the British Museum. ‡

All this is very likely to provoke a smile of doubt. But then, before "

...

"† Karakorum mountains, Western Tibet.

‡ According to the same tradition the now desolate regions of the waterless land of Tarim—a true wilderness in the heart of Turkestan—were in the days of old covered with flourishing and wealthy cities. At present, hardly a few verdant oases relieve its dead solitude. One such, sprung on the sepulchre of a vast city swallowed by and buried under the sandy soil of the desert, belongs to no one, but is often visited by Mongolians and Buddhists. The same tradition speaks of immense subterranean abodes, of large corridors filled with tiles and cylinders. It may be an idle rumour, and it may be an actual fact."

...

*"the reader rejects the truthfulness of the reports, let him pause and reflect over the following well known facts. The collective researches of the Orientalists, and especially the labours of late years of the students of comparative Philology and the Science of Religions have led them to ascertain as follows: An immense, incalculable number of MSS., and even printed works known to have existed, are now to be found no more. They have disappeared without leaving the slightest trace behind them. Were they works of no importance they might, in the natural course of time, have been left to perish, and their very names would have been obliterated from human memory. But it is not so; for, as now ascertained, most of them contained the true keys to works still extant, and entirely incomprehensible, for the greater portion of their readers, without those additional volumes of Commentaries and explanations. Such are, for instance, the works of Lao-tse, the predecessor of Confucius.**

He is said to have written 930 books on Ethics and religions, and seventy on magic, one thousand in all. His great work, however, the heart of his doctrine, the "Tao-te-King," or the sacred scriptures of the Taosse, has in it, as Stanislas Julien shows, only "about 5,000 words" (Tao-te-King, p. xxvii.), hardly a dozen of pages, yet Professor Max Müller finds that "the text is unintelligible without commentaries, so that Mr. Julien had to consult more than sixty commentators for the purpose of his translation," the earliest going back as far as the year 163 B.C., not earlier, as we see. During the four centuries and a half that preceded this earliest of the commentators there was ample time to veil the true Lao-tse doctrine from all but his initiated priests. The Japanese, among whom are now to be found the most learned of the priests and followers of Lao-tse, simply laugh at the blunders and hypotheses of the European Chinese scholars; and tradition affirms that the commentaries to which our Western Sinologues have access are not the real occult records, but intentional veils, and that the true commentaries, as well as almost all the texts, have long since disappeared from the eyes of the profane."

...

" "If we turn to China, we find that the religion of Confucius is founded on the Five King and the Four Shu-books, in themselves of considerable extent and surrounded by voluminous Commentaries, without which even the most learned scholars would not venture to fathom the depth of their sacred canon." (Lectures on the "Science of Religion," p. 185. Max Müller.) But they have not fathomed it—and this is the complaint of the Confucianists, as a very learned member of that body, in Paris, complained in 1881, "*

(The Secret Doctrine, Vol. I, p. xxii, xxiv-xxv)

M. Sufilight asks:

The question, which arrives is what kind of archaeological activity have been carried out in that region of Karakoram and Altyn-Toga (Altyn-Tagh)? What about the Chinese?

Karakoram

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karakoram>

Altyn-Tagh

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altyn-Tagh>

It might be interesting to notice, that it seems that Blavatsky's book The Secret Doctrine was until the last few decades before year 2010 laughed at by Tibetan Scholars. But the truth is that her views about Tibetan teachings etc., through the decades after its publication, have been discovered to be more in accordance with the truth than the opposite in many instances. But, some of those scholars who have written books with content, which they later find are in opposition to Blavatsky's views in The Secret Doctrine with its Stanzas of Dzyan are for some reason's of their own often having a tendency to reject the content of her book without doing proper research and arriving at objective conclusions.

So I ask: Are there anyone with contacts to archaeological digging near Karakoram and Altyn-Tagh, especially the eastern part of it?

M. Sufilight

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 24, 2010 at 12:35pm

To David question, references to the Tson-kha-pa's commentary (Bzhis zhus) to the Guyasamaja Explanatory Tantra (Caturdevipariprccha) is quoted from Alex Wayman "Yoga of the Guhyasamajatabtra", p.71, and reference to the Aryadeva's Cittavisuddhiprakarana is also quoted from the same book on p.144, where verse 20 is given in sanskrit and translated in english.

I have not yet found any translations to these two texts.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 25, 2010 at 12:42pm

In the first section of the Wikipedia article on the Book of Dzyan a paragraph is quoted from The Secret Doctrine:

"This first instalment of the esoteric doctrines is based upon Stanzas, which are the records of a people unknown to ethnology; it is claimed that they are written in a tongue absent from the nomenclature of languages and dialects with which philology is acquainted; they are said to emanate from a source (Occultism) repudiated by science; and, finally, they are offered through an agency, incessantly discredited before the world by all those who hate unwelcome truths, or have some special hobby of their own to defend. Therefore, the rejection of these teachings may be expected, and must be accepted beforehand. No one styling himself a

"scholar," in whatever department of exact science, will be permitted to regard these teachings seriously."

The lines in The Secret Doctrine that immediately follow this are:

"They will be derided and rejected a priori in this century; but only in this one. For in the twentieth century of our era scholars will begin to recognize that the Secret Doctrine has neither been invented nor exaggerated, but, on the contrary, simply outlined; and finally, that its teachings antedate the Vedas." (SD 1.xxxvii)

These lines are especially relevant to us here. So far, this has not happened, and I do not think it can happen until we have an actual Sanskrit/Tibetan manuscript of the Stanzas. Then it will happen big time, and we need to be prepared for this.

The Wikipedia article also says:

"She cribbed at least part of her Stanzas of Dzyan from the Hymn of Creation in the old Sanskrit Rig-Veda, as a comparison of the two compositions will readily show."

We have here seen a large number of translations of this hymn. To my mind, its comparatively brief seven verses would hardly have supplied HPB with the material for her much more extensive "Seven Stanzas translated from the Book of Dzyan," given in vol. 1 of The Secret Doctrine, consisting of 53 verses in the seven stanzas. It looks more likely to me that the Rig-veda's Hymn of Creation is a skeleton outline of the fuller material given in the Stanzas of Dzyan. So perhaps it is the Rig-veda that cribbed from the Book of Dzyan

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 25, 2010 at 1:30pm

The Journal of ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY of Great Britain and Ireland, Volume 16, page 256 brings an article from Professor Wilson, Director of the R.A.S. - Lecture made on April 8, 1854, in which we found a spelling of swabhavat with a final "t" :

' No doubt, amongst the Buddhists, as amongst the Brahmans, differences of opinion occasionally prevailed, giving rise to various schools ; four of these were known to the Brahmanical controversial writers before the sixth century ; but, besides them, who are styled Sautrantika, Vaibhashika, Madhyamika, and Yogachara, there was an Aiswarya, or theistical school, with which the notions admitted into Nepal may have originated : the more ancient and genuine school, however, was that of the Swabhavikas, whose doctrine is thus summarily indicated

in a Buddhist Pali book : " Whence come existing things ? from their own nature, - swabhavat. Where do they go to after life ? into other forms, through the same inherent tendency. How do they escape from that tendency ? where do they go finally ? into vacuity, - sunyata," such being the sum and substance of the wisdom of Buddha.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 25, 2010 at 1:37pm

Paul, the report from Dayananda's Autobiography that HPB "speaks Sanskrit quite fluently" would make sense when her body was temporarily being used by an Adept who could speak Sanskrit. But if it was her own ability, and she and Dayananda could converse fluently in that language, it is difficult to understand how such a major misunderstanding between them as that on God or Isvara occurred, which led to the separation of their two groups. It appears that Dayananda did not know her position on this crucial issue until too late, due to the language barrier, since he did not speak English.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 25, 2010 at 9:37pm

Excellent research, Jacques. This may well be where Max Muller copied svabhâvât from, since Horace Wilson's lecture giving this term preceded Max Muller's lecture giving this term by three years. Again, we clearly see that this word is put in the ablative case, swabhâvât, as Wilson's translation shows, "FROM their own nature." Thanks to your reference, I was able to check this article, and see that he gives the accents correctly for the ablative: swabhâvât. I regard HPB's misplacement of the accents, svâbhâvat, as a transposition error like her Narjol for Naljor. So it now looks like HPB copied Max Muller, who copied Horace Wilson, who copied Brian Hodgson.

But Wilson did not copy Hodgson entirely, who as we know did not have the ablative swabhâvât. So where did Wilson find this verse, which has the ablative? There is a verse similar to it in Hodgson, from the Buddha-carita, but it is not the same verse. This Buddha-carita verse, which Hodgson gave only in English, does have the ablative svabhâvât in Sanskrit. Wilson says that this is a Pali verse, but the terms swabhâvât and sunyatâ in it are Sanskrit, not Pali. The Pali forms of these words are sabhâva, without the w or v, and sunnatâ.

On a different matter, you had mentioned looking at old volumes of Annales du Musee Guimet. There is one volume, volume 5 dated 1883, that is entirely

"Fragments Extraits du Kandjour," by Leon Feer, of almost 600 pages. I wonder if any of the elusive Theosophical terms such as fohat, etc., might be found in it.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 25, 2010 at 9:51pm

Thank you very much, Paul, for posting this letter. Have there been any charges of forgery leveled against the Arya Samaj regarding letters such as this one? I would easily believe that this one was forged. There would be nothing unusual or unexpected about Dayanada giving her some teachings on the Vaisheshika and Nyaya schools of Indian philosophy. But the sentence in the next paragraph is hard to believe: "She has read Kavyalankara, some Vyakarana, Valmiki Ramayana, Mahabarata, and speaks Sanskrit quite fluently." The Kavyalankara is a book on how to write ornate poetry in Sanskrit, something like the poetry of Shakespeare would be in English. Vyakarana is grammar. I recall from the small booklet of Dayananda's Autobiography that was reprinted from The Theosophist (which I cannot now find my copy of) that it took him three years to learn Panini's grammar. The Valmiki Ramayana and the Mahabharata are the two large epics of India, that would take quite a long time to read. Nothing in HPB's writings shows full familiarity with all these Sanskrit writings.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 26, 2010 at 10:59am

The excerpts you posted, Paul, from the letters of Dayanand Saraswati on the Theosophical Society, are very interesting. Yes, the tendency to ignore or dismiss evidence that makes people uncomfortable is unfortunate, and seems to be a universal human trait, found not only among Theosophists. Among Theosophists, I agree with you that the rather extreme response shown by some to the first volume of the HPB letters was very sad to see, and it is unbecoming of those who, as Theosophists, espouse brotherhood as their first object. I would certainly not wish to recommend viewing the Dayanand letters as forgeries. We simply have some conflicting evidence to resolve. I suppose, too, that this case is a little different than the norm among Theosophists, in that I am questioning evidence that is in favor of HPB's knowledge, rather than against her knowledge.

I did find the C. W. Leadbeater quotation that I mentioned earlier. It is in Talks on the Path of Occultism, vol. 1: At the Feet of the Master, which was co-authored with Annie Besant. It is found in the 1963 fifth edition on p. 366:

"In the beginning of the Theosophical movement none of us knew Sanskrit. Madame Blavatsky understood something of the religions of India, but she did not know Pali or Sanskrit. Her method was to describe as well as she could what she herself saw, and then say to any Indian friend who might be present, 'What do you call that in your system?' He often did not fully understand her meaning, but he gave her the nearest term he could. The next time she wanted a word she would ask another man, but she never paid any attention to the fact that the first man might be a Hindu and the second a Buddhist -- or that the various Hindus might belong to different schools of philosophy."

This evidence is much more in keeping with what we actually find in her writings. If she spoke Sanskrit quite fluently in 1880, she forgot it rather quickly. Since Dayanand's letters were apparently written in Hindi, one might also suspect problems in translation.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 27, 2010 at 7:58am

In reply to the question raised by M. Sufilight in connection with the interesting material quoted from HPB, as far as I know, very little archaeological activity has been carried out in the Karakoram and Altyn-Tagh regions. There is a set of documentaries on the Silk Road that was produced for educational television in Japan and China, which take one through the Tarim basin and by these mountain ranges. They show that some of these areas have not been visited for several decades. For example, one ruined city that they went to had not been seen by outsiders since the expedition of Sir Aurel Stein at the beginning of the 1900s. A few years ago, this set of ten DVDs was available on eBay very inexpensively from a man in Hongkong. Each DVD has three episodes, so you get thirty TV programs. I think the cost then was only \$10 U.S. for the set, not including shipping. They are in Japanese or Chinese, but they also have an English soundtrack that can be accessed. If anyone buys these and needs instructions on how to get the English, just let me know.

At the beginning of the 1900s, when this whole area was more accessible in terms of the political situation, although much more difficult physically, several expeditions were made there. Sir Aurel Stein came across the now famous Tun-huang (Dunhuang) library, then in the custody of a single Chinese religious practitioner who had discovered it. Stein was able to purchase many of the texts, and these include the oldest Tibetan texts known, and also some very old Chinese

texts. Today, this material is receiving much attention through the International Dunhuang Project. A large number of fragmentary Sanskrit texts were discovered by German-Prussian expeditions to the Turfan area at around that same time. These finds have slowly been published in Germany in many volumes in the series, *Sanskrithandschriften aus den Turfanfunden*, and also in editions by Ernst Waldschmidt. Very recently, important new fragments from the Hoernle and Stein collections, housed in the British Library, are being published in *Buddhist Manuscripts from Central Asia: The British Library Sanskrit Fragments*, vol. 1 in 2006 and vol. 2 in 2009. This is a different project from the one being led by Richard Salomon, described in his 1999 book, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhara: The British Library Kharosthi Fragments*. I had earlier mentioned the recent major finds of very old Sanskrit texts from Afghanistan, now in the Schoyen collection in Norway, of which three volumes have so far been published in 2000, 2002, and 2006. I try to monitor these things as well as I can, but such volumes are very expensive, since they are not produced for the commercial market. These are not the kind of books that your local public library is likely to acquire.

What HPB says in this quote that M. Sufilight posted has proven to be very true in regard to the Vedas. I repeat the portion that I am referring to:

"An immense, incalculable number of MSS., and even printed works known to have existed, are now to be found no more. They have disappeared without leaving the slightest trace behind them. Were they works of no importance they might, in the natural course of time, have been left to perish, and their very names would have been obliterated from human memory. But it is not so; for, as now ascertained, most of them contained the true keys to works still extant, and entirely incomprehensible, for the greater portion of their readers, without those additional volumes of Commentaries and explanations."

No one knows for sure what Rig-veda 10.129 means, for example, because no ancient commentary has come down to us. We know that such works once existed, because Yaska refers to them in his *Nirukta*, itself a very ancient text attributed to 500-700 B.C.E. Yet the only commentaries on the Vedas that we have are less than a thousand years old. This is why Western scholars have largely disregarded their obviously late interpretations of the Vedas, and have instead evolved philological schools of interpretation, and also employed comparative studies of Indo-European mythology, etc., to interpret them. Indian scholars, too, most notably Dayanand Saraswati and Sri Aurobindo, have disregarded these late commentaries and have

evolved schools of interpretation of their own. The original commentaries are lost. But perhaps one day before too long they will be found.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 28, 2010 at 9:41pm

Among the unidentified terms from the Stanzas of Dzyan, I considered fohat to be the most important, because of the central role it plays in the cosmos. So I asked about it first. But there are several other unidentified terms. Most of these are found in the paragraph that HPB gives from "one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions" of part of Stanza I, on p. 23 of vol. 1 of The Secret Doctrine. These are as follows. I have not used capital letters, since neither Tibetan nor Sanskrit has them.

1. tho-ag, also spelled tho-og and thog. Translated as "the eternal parent" in verse 1 of Stanza I; translated as "space" in the Cosmological Notes and elsewhere. Compare the Tibetan word thog-ma, meaning "first," the Sanskrit adi.

2. zhi-gyu. Translated as "ever invisible robes" in verse 1 of Stanza I; translated as "cosmic prenebular matter" in the Wurzburg manuscript; translated as "cosmic matter" in the Cosmological Notes. It is there contrasted with zhima, also unidentified. The first word of this compound is almost certainly the Tibetan word gzhi, meaning "ground" or "basis." The second word might be the Tibetan word rgyu, meaning "cause." But this compound has not yet been found in use.

Notice that the next word given there, khorlo, is translated as "eternities." This is a fitting meaning in this context. But this Tibetan word literally means "wheel." This alerts us to the fact that her translation may be giving us what these words refer to, rather than what they mean literally.

3. thyan-kam, also spelled dyan-kam. Defined as "the knowledge of bringing about (giving the impulse to Kosmic energy in the right direction)" in the Cosmological Notes; defined as "the power or knowledge of guiding the impulses of cosmic energy in the right direction" in The Secret Doctrine (vol. 1, p. 635).

4. chohan. Defined as "lord" or "master" or "chief" in the Theosophical Glossary.

5. tgenchang. (The meaning of this word is unknown.)

6. yinsin, also spelled yih-sin. Defined as the "one form of existence" or adi-buddha or dharmakaya or the universally diffused essence in Mahatma Letters #15 and #59. Since this is exactly how Samuel Beal defines it in his 1871 book, A Catena of

Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese, p. 373, we would assume that this is a Chinese word.

7. sun-chan. (The meaning of this word is unknown.)

Besides these words from this paragraph, there is also an unidentified word in Stanza 5, verse 2:

dzyu, also spelled dgyu. Defined as "the real knowledge" in the Cosmological Notes, as opposed to the unreal knowledge, dzyu-mi or dgyu-mi.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 29, 2010 at 9:33pm

Today while preparing an inquiry on the term yih-sin or yinsin for the Kechara group, who as a result of Joe's contact offered to help with Chinese translations, the identification of this term seems to have emerged. This term is among those found in the paragraph that HPB gives from "one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions" of part of Stanza I, on p. 23 of vol. 1 of The Secret Doctrine:

"Thus, were one to translate into English, using only the substantives and technical terms as employed in one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions, Verse I would read as follows: — 'Tho-ag in Zhi-gyu slept seven Khorlo. Zodmanas zhiba. All Nyug bosom. Konch-hog not; Thyan-Kam not; Lha-Chohan not; Tenbrel Chugnyi not; Dharmakaya ceased; Tgenchang not become; Barnang and Ssa in Ngovonyidj; alone Tho-og Yinsin in night of Sun-chan and Yong-grub (Parinishpanna), &c., &c.,' which would sound like pure Abracadabra."

No meaning is there given for it. But it is also found in two of the Mahatma Letters. There it is described as follows:

"This 'force' so-called, shows itself truly indestructible but does not correlate and is not convertible in the sense accepted by the Fellows of the R.S., but rather may be said to grow and expand into 'something else' while neither its own potentiality nor being are in the least affected by the transformation. Nor can it well be called force since the latter is but the attribute of Yin Sin (Yin Sin or the one 'Form of existence' also Adi-Buddhi or Dharmakaya the mystic, universally diffused essence) when manifesting in the phenomenal world of senses namely only your old acquaintance Fohat." (Mahatma Letter #15)

"In symbology the central point is Jivatma (the 7th principle), and hence Avalokitesvara, the Kwan-Shai-yin, the manifested 'Voice' (or Logos), the germ point of manifested activity; -- hence -- in the phraseology of the Christian Kabalists 'the Son of the Father and Mother,' and agreeably to ours -- 'the Self manifested in Self' -- Yih-sin, the 'one form of existence,' the child of Dharmakaya (the universally diffused Essence), both male and female. Parabrahm or 'Adi-Buddha' while acting through that germ point outwardly as an active force, reacts from the circumference inwardly as the Supreme but latent Potency." (Mahatma Letter #59)

We may compare this with what Samuel Beal wrote earlier in his 1871 book, A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese, p. 373:

"So again, when the idea of a universally diffused essence (dharmakaya) was accepted as a dogmatic necessity, a further question arose as to the relation which this 'supreme existence' bore to time, space, and number. And from this consideration appears to have proceeded the further invention of the several names Vairochana (the Omnipresent), Amitabha (for Amirta) the Eternal, and Adi-Buddha (yih-sin) the 'one form of existence.'"

Here we can easily see the source of the definitions used in the Mahatma Letters. Since Beal spells it yih-sin, as does Mahatma Letter #59, we can assume that yin sin or yinsin found in Mahatma Letter #15 and in The Secret Doctrine are only typographical errors where the "h" was read as "n". So we seek the meaning of yih-sin.

Beal wrote before there was any standardization of transcription for Chinese, much like the Kiu-te situation from Tibetan. So it is hard to tell what word he meant. A number of years ago I asked an expert in Buddhist Chinese if there was any word like this in a meaning like adi-buddha or dharmakaya. He did not know of any. The idea of the "one form of existence" for adi-buddha, or of a "universally diffused essence" for dharmakaya, are early attempts to render the general idea of what these words might mean, made by a missionary before anyone really knew. The English, then, does not accurately reflect the Sanskrit, but the Sanskrit terms should have helped to identify the Chinese term. But they did not.

Beal uses the term yih-sin one other time in his Catena, when translating a chapter from the Lotus Sutra. The sentence it is found in is:

"You ought, therefore, with undivided heart (yih-sin), to adore and worship this Kwan-shai-yin Bodhisatwa. . . ."

When I saw this passage, years ago, I dismissed it as not being relevant to the other meanings he gave, the ones that are obviously the source of the meanings used in the Mahatma Letters. As it turns out, this passage was a significant help in tracing this term. The Chinese terms for adi-buddha and dharmakaya are nothing like yih-sin, so they did not help to trace it.

The term "undivided" suggests the idea of "single" or "one." A Chinese term for this is transcribed as "i" or "yi", similar to Beal's transcription "yih". Shortly after Beal's time, the Wade-Giles system of transcription came into use, and remained in wide use until recently. It gives this word as "i". Then the pinyin system superseded it, and has been officially adopted in China. Hence the change in spelling from Peking to Beijing, for example. The pinyin system gives this word as "yi".

The term "heart" suggests the Sanskrit term citta, normally translated today as "mind," but often translated in the early days as "heart." Now we are on to something. There is a major teaching in Chinese Buddhism, that will be familiar to most of you from Ch'an or Zen writings. It is the teaching of the "one mind." This is regarded as ultimate reality, and hence would be more or less synonymous with the other words for ultimate reality used by Beal for yin-sin, namely, adi-buddha and dharmakaya. The idea of the "one mind" is often traced back the classic text known as "The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana." It was greatly promoted by the Hua-yen school in China.

The word for this mind is written as "hsin" in the Wade-Giles system, or as "xin" in the pinyin system. So the "one mind" is i-hsin, or yixin, apparently Beal's yih-sin. To try to confirm this, I checked the Sanskrit for the passage he translated from the Lotus Sutra. The Sanskrit for the "one mind" would be eka-citta. Unfortunately, this phrase appears to be an addition made here by the Chinese translator, Kumarajiva, something he is known to have done to help his Chinese readers. It is not in the available Sanskrit text of the Lotus Sutra, whether that from the Nepalese manuscripts, the Gilgit manuscripts, or the Central Asian manuscript known as the Kashgar manuscript. I have checked all these editions.

But in Beal's index of proper names, he gives Yih-koh-sien for Ekasringa Rishi. This confirms that yih is his transcription of the Chinese word for the Sanskrit eka, "one," that is transcribed in the later systems as "i" or "yi". Similarly, he gives "sin-king" for the Heart Sutra (p. 383), which is transcribed in the later systems as hsin-ching or xinjing. This confirms that sin is his transcription of what is transcribed in the later systems as hsin or xin. This Chinese word can translate Sanskrit hrdaya,

"heart," or citta, "mind." Thus, Beal's yih-sin is i-hsin in the Wade-Giles system, or yixin in the pinyin system. It means the "one mind," Sanskrit eka-citta.

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 30, 2010 at 3:24am

Some preliminary results out of a search from 25 volumes of publications on buddhism written in french language between 1820 and 1920 by 20 different authors :

chan

appears in a Mahayanasutralamkara translated from a nepalese manuscript by Sylvain Levi (published in 1911). It is found in the index "rgyum chan", nimitta in sanskrit

It also appears in another book written by Sylvain Levi "Népal Tome 1" p.335, published in 1905, where it read as "O-mei chan" where chan is translated as "mountain" - O-Mei chan being "the mountain where Samantabhadra is honored in China".

thog

can be found in a book published in 1920 by Abel Remusat "Recherche sur les langues Tartares (Mandchou, Mongol, Ouigur et Tibétain).

It is found on p.334 as "Phan-mi-thog-doug, Phan-mi-thog-pa, Mi-thog" and on p.366 as "Phan-thog-djed-yin" translated as "état, manière d'être" i.e. status, way of being.

sin

it can be found also in the by Abel Remusat book "Recherche sur les langues Tartares" on p.355 where it is translated as "le coeur en chinois" i.e. the heart in chinese.

more to come (need some more nights to work on it).

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on October 31, 2010 at 8:05am

Your efforts in checking for these words, Jacques, are much appreciated. I see that the word "sin," meaning the heart in Chinese, is the same word in the same transcription as in Beal's yih-sin. Abel Remusat, 1788-1832, lived and wrote even earlier than Samuel Beal, long before any standardized transcription system for Chinese existed.

The word "chan" in "rgyum chan," for Sanskrit nimitta, follows a different transliteration system for Tibetan than is now in use. Also, there seems to be a typographical error in where the two words break. The first word should be rgyu, and the second word mchan. This second word is now transliterated as mtshan. But I do not know of any Tibetan word like sun-tshan, any more than sun-chan. For the "chan" that means "mountain," this looks like a Chinese word. There is also the Tibetan possessive suffix "chan" (now usually transliterated as "can"), as in devachan (bde-ba-can), meaning "possessing happiness" (Sanskrit, sukhavati).

For the word "thog," the "phan-thog" and "phan-mi-thog" that you found are likely to be the word spelled "phan-thogs," meaning "benefit," and its opposite, "phan-mi-thogs." The main meaning of "thogs" by itself is "obstruct" and related ideas such as bind or attach. Thus, the name Asanga is thogs-med, "without attachment." The use of "thog" in the meaning "first" (thog-ma) is common enough. But I have never seen anything like tho-ag or tho-og.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 1, 2010 at 9:59am

In regard to the question of the origin of the Stanzas of Dzyan, the evidence provided by the identification of the term yih-sin (i-hsin or yixin) can lead in two different directions. To put it colloquially, there is good news and bad news. First, the good news.

*The term for and idea of the "one mind" goes back to a very specific book, that known in English as *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*. It is this book that introduced this term and idea to the world, as far as we know from the recorded history available to us. This book appeared in China in the mid-500s C.E., as the translation of a Sanskrit original from India. Its teaching of the "one mind" was widely adopted in Chinese Buddhism, and became very influential throughout East Asia. In the last hundred years, its Indian authorship has been called into question by Japanese and Western scholars. Today, there is almost no one left who believes*

that it is an authentic Indian text. Almost all scholars believe it to be a Chinese forgery. This, however, is not the bad news. Forged or not, no one can doubt the fact of the tremendous influence that its idea of the "one mind" has had in East Asia.

The bad news, for believing Theosophists anyway, is that the Mahatma Letters in their usage of this term show no indication of any knowledge of its actual meaning. They use it exactly and only as it was understood in Samuel Beal's 1871 book, A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese. Moreover, this Chinese term is supposed to be found in one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions of stanza 1 of the Book of Dzyan. This is very much like the term svabhava or svabhavat, and the supposed school of Nepalese Svabhavikas. This term, too, is used by HPB only as it was understood by Brian Houghton Hodgson and all who necessarily followed him, such as Max Muller. This term is used in this way in the Stanzas of Dzyan seven times. If there is any critic left out there, anyone who still cares about the Stanzas of Dzyan enough to try to show that they are forgeries, this is rather damning evidence.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 2, 2010 at 8:50pm

On a Theosophical forum like this, I thought there might be some "defenders of the faith" who would attempt to counter the "rather damning evidence" about the inaccurate Theosophical usage of terms like yih-sin and svabhavat. Since I am a known believer in the authenticity of the Stanzas of Dzyan, I might also be thought of as a defender of the faith. I do have an explanation for this usage that is satisfactory to me, but I thought I might get to hear what others think about it.

Comment by [Andrew W. Smith](#) on November 3, 2010 at 7:12am

I have attempted in the past to try to interpret the Stanzas into the language of modern, up-to-date, physics, although this may not be considered a "source." HPB had knowledge, and abilities, that none, so far, have duplicated or matched. It may be that she had intuitions of state-of-the-art physics today, and then gave them out in the occult terminology of her day. The more I delve, as an admitted amateur, into modern physics, the more I am convinced that "The Secret Doctrine" is physics in toto, especially the Cosmogogenesis portion.

Comment by Ferran Sanz Orriols on November 3, 2010 at 7:46am

Hi, David!!!

Although I'm not writing I am following this thread with a lot of interest. Please write your explanation of the usage of "inaccurate" words one of these days. :)

Comment by David Reigle on November 3, 2010 at 10:39am

Seeing the Stanzas in the perspective of modern physics, Andrew, is no doubt very valuable. A Theosophical friend, Fred Ayers, who takes pity on me for my ignorance of modern science, sometimes tries to help me out in this regard. He just sent me a copy of the cover article from the latest issue of Scientific American, titled, "Dark Worlds." What it is about will best be said in Fred's words from his accompanying letter:

"It is about the theory of Dark Matter. The picture that provides the opening shows how galaxies and stars are not randomly distributed, rather how they appear to be scattered about on the surface of bubbles. The story of dark matter is the story of what is going on inside those bubbles. Think about a bunch of soap bubbles when they start to collapse. What is going on? The in-breathing? Think about what happens to two ink spots on the outside of a balloon when you blow it up -- they move apart from each other. The expanding universe is the out-breathing. Science is trying to understand what is going on underneath that imagery. . . . As I see it, the Stanzas of Dzyan are a very advanced discussion of the same topics using language appropriate to a time when quantum physics had not even been dreamed up, and when elementary electronics theory was a mere scribble in Maxwell's notebooks. I am certain the Ancients had knowledge far superior even to ours today."

Fred sending me this was prompted by our earlier discussion of manifestation as bubbles in "boundless homogenous Substance," the "ever invisible robes" of Stanza I, verse 1. HPB had called this "mula-prakriti," a term from India's ancient Samkhya (not Vedanta) teachings. Perhaps today we could call this "dark matter," or perhaps it is still beyond that. Here is what HPB wrote in her Esoteric Instruction no. 1 (Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 12, p. 523):

"COSMIC PROCESS(UPPER POLE)

(1) The mathematical Point, called the "Cosmic seed," the Monad of Leibnitz, which contains the whole Universe as the acorn the oak. This is the first bubble on the surface of boundless homogeneous Substance, or Space, the bubble of differentiation in its incipient stage. It is the beginning of the Orphic or Brahma's Egg. It corresponds in Astrology and Astronomy to the Sun."

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 4, 2010 at 8:59pm

Ferran, my explanation of the inaccurate Theosophical usage of terms like yih-sin and svabhavat is actually K.H.'s explanation. This is found in Mahatma letter #65 (2nd ed. p. 364, 3rd ed. p. 358):

"When you write upon some subject you surround yourself with books of references etc.: when we write upon something the Western opinion about which is unknown to us, we surround ourselves with hundreds of paras: upon this particular topic from dozens of different works -- impressed upon the Akasa. What wonder then, that not only a chela entrusted with the work and innocent of any knowledge of the meaning of plagiarism, but even myself -- should use occasionally a whole sentence already existent, applying it only to another -- our own idea? I have told you of this before and it is no fault of mine if your friends and enemies will not remain satisfied with the explanation."

HPB was no doubt the chela entrusted with many of the Mahatma writings. She would not have known the terms svabhavat and yih-sin in their Sanskrit and Chinese contexts. But as defined by Brian Hodgson and Samuel Beal, respectively, these terms exactly matched the ideas she wished to express. So she adopted them to do so, without knowing that these writers had used them inaccurately. Here we are obliged to look at the ideas that she was attempting to express, "the 'Plastic Essence' that fills the Universe" (SD 1.61), and the "one form of existence," respectively, and to largely disregard the terms she used to express them, which were adopted from these writers. What makes this difficult, of course, is to know when a term that she used was borrowed from a writer who did not use it accurately. Back in her day, no one would have known this, and the best scholars of the day did the same thing.

*The first translation of *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*, for example, was published in 1900. It was one of the first things published by Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, who went on to become one of the leading Buddhist scholars of the twentieth century. He translated the later Chinese version of this book that had been*

translated by Shikshananda. The standard Chinese version of this book that had been translated earlier by Paramartha was translated into English by Yoshito Hakeda, and published in 1967. This is considered to be the best translation available. Today, we can study this brief and terse text with the help of the most widely used Chinese commentary, that by Fa-tsang (Wade-Giles transcription) or Fazang (pinyin transcription). This was translated into English by Dirck Vorenkamp, and published in 2004, titled, An English Translation of Fa-Tsang's Commentary on the Awakening of Faith.

Regarding HPB's knowledge of Sanskrit, or lack thereof, I found another reference where C. W. Leadbeater says the same thing. It is in his autobiography titled, How Theosophy Came to Me. I here quote it from the third edition, Adyar, 1967, p. 72:

"Arabic, however, seems to have been the only Oriental language with which she was acquainted; she did not know Sanskrit, and many of the difficulties of our Theosophical terminology arise from the fact that in those days she would describe what she saw or knew, and then ask any Indian who happened to be near what was the Sanskrit name for it. Very often the gentleman who provided her with the term had not clearly understood what she meant; and even when he did, we must remember that she asked adherents of different schools of philosophy, and that each answered according to the shade of meaning applied to the term in his teaching."

This state of affairs is evidenced not only in her writings, but also in her interaction with other chelas who knew Sanskrit. We do not hear, for example, of her speaking with T. Subba Row or Mohini Chatterjee in Sanskrit. On the contrary, she adopted Sanskrit terms from them, such as mula-prakriti from the Vedantin chela T. Subba Row. This is where she got the idea that mula-prakriti is a Vedanta term, when in fact it is a Samkhya term.

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on November 4, 2010 at 9:40pm

Now that Yih-Sin is defined as "ekacitta" or "One Mind", may I suggest that Chhandogya Upanishad defines Citta or Chitta as Memory. Rather, as per commentary of Swami Krishnananda, "Beyond the Will is Chitta- the power of memory and retention".

Will it then be feasible be construe that Yih-Sin, or One Mind could be "One Memory". How would it affect the meaning of the stanza?

On the occasion of Deepavali (The Festival of Lights) today, I bring the greeting in the words of the Great Teacher Gautama Buddha, "Appa Deepo Bhavah" - Be Your Own Light to everyone.

Comment by [Ferran Sanz Orriols](#) on November 5, 2010 at 6:52am

Thank you very much, David!

I had already read K.H. explanation and I agree. Best wishes!!!

Comment by [Govert Schuller](#) on November 5, 2010 at 9:09am

Gentlemen,

This discussion has been quite fascinating. Especially David's contributions are of great importance.

Unfortunately at this moment I have no time to contribute anything that might be interesting, except that, for a while now, I obtained permission from the Swiss Tibetologist Martin Brauen to publish online a chapter from his book about Tibet in western imagination with some research done on HPB and Theosophy.

The book received very high praises from the Dalai Lama because the book, as a scientific and educational project, would help to "lessen the gap between reality and perception."

See: In Search of 'Shambha-la' and the Aryan Lamas: The Tibet images of ...

I'm not sure how much it would contribute to the discussion as it is written from a quite skeptical point of view. But it is a view that has to be presented too as a plausible explanation of the life and works of HPB.

After having added the illustrations I will release it for discussion in a separate blog.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 5, 2010 at 9:02pm

Swami Krishnananda's explanation of citta as memory was a surprise to me. In the series of things spoken of in the Chandogya Upanisad, citta is the subject of

paragraph 7.5.1, and memory (*smara*) does not come until several paragraphs later, at 7.13.1. So I checked Sankaracharya's commentary on 7.5.1 to see if this was the source of Swami Krishnananda's explanation of *citta* as memory, but it was not. Then I checked the translation of the Chandogya Upanisad following the commentary of Madhvacharya (published in the Sacred Books of the Hindus Series) and found *citta* given there as "flickering memory." Taking memory as one aspect of *citta*, then, we can look at this in relation to the Stanzas of Dzhan.

Yogacara Buddhism, which HPB often speaks favorably of, teaches a set of eight consciousnesses. The highest of these is the *alaya-vijnana*, apparently what is referred to in Stanza I, verse 9, "But where was the Dangma when the Alaya of the universe was in Paramartha . . ." This is the foundation consciousness, or storehouse consciousness, because it is the foundation of all individual consciousnesses, and it is the storehouse of all the karmic seeds. It therefore does serve as various kinds of memory, including the collective memory of humanity, and the memory seeds that carry over from one individual's life to the next life. In the *Abhidharma-samuccaya* by Arya Asanga, a standard Yogacara text, these eight consciousnesses are defined. There, *citta* is defined as the *alaya-vijnana*. So we can, in a sense, speak of the "one memory," which would be the *alaya-vijnana*, which is *citta*. However, this *citta* must be distinguished from *eka-citta*, the "one mind."

The Awakening of Faith teaches that the one mind has two aspects. One is the unborn, unchanging mind as it ultimately is, and one is the manifested, ever-changing mind of the phenomenal world. This latter is called the *alaya-vijnana*. So the mind that can be thought of as the one memory is an aspect of the one mind, not the one mind itself. The schools of Tibetan Buddhism other than the Gelugpa often speak of "mind itself" (*cittam eva*, Tibetan *sems nyid*). They call this the *alaya*, and distinguish it from the changing *alaya-vijnana*. Thus, we cannot be certain which *Alaya* is meant in Stanza I, line 9. But I have assumed that it refers to the mutable *alaya-vijnana*, since it had gone out of manifestation and was in *paramartha*, apparently here used like *nirvana*.

Comment by Jacques Mahnich on November 6, 2010 at 4:26am

In another translation of the Upanishads (Radhakrishnan - The Principal Upanishads - 1953), on p.492, commenting on Chapter 8 Section 1 Verse 3 of the

Chandogya Upanishad, Radakrishan propose an equivalent term for the buddhist word alaya-vijnana :

3. He should say, as far, verily, as this (world) space extends, so far extends the space within the heart. Within it, indeed, are contained both heaven and earth, both fire and air, both sun and moon, lightening and the stars. Whatever there is of him in this world and whatever is not, all that is contained within it.

Comment : "In Buddhist thought alaya-vijnana is the receptacle of all the latent possibilities of existence. hrd-akasha answers to the alaya-vijnana. When the concrete manifestation are overcome by decay and death, their types are not destroyed along with them. The desires out of which they arise are preserved in the hrd-akasha

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on November 6, 2010 at 10:31am

Fohat being very central to the Secret Doctrine, I have started an index of where this word appears in H.P.B works, starting from the S.D. It may be useful to identify tracks to follow to find roots in the world traditions (as far as we know).

The file will be soon uploaded to the site.

Here is a first list of Fohat related matters :

o Fohat appears 13 times inside the Secret Doctrine stanzas and 84 times inside the commentaries of the stanzas

o H.P.B. says the name Fohat is the name used by the Occultists (Proem p.16). Occultism , in the 19th century refers more to western than eastern occultism. Maybe it is more likely that we will find this term in the Occult world rather than in Eastern cultures.

According to the Secret Doctrine :

o What Fohat is :

o Divine Thought (Volume 1 p.63)

o First light in creation (Volume 1 p.75)

- o First light of the primordial Elohim (Volume 1 p.75)*
- o Electricity and Life (Volume 1 p.75)*
- o Life infused into primordial matter (Volume 1 p.75)*
- o Cosmic electricity*
- o the Vahan or Messenger of the Will of the Primordial Seven (Volume 1 p.108)*
- o a propelling force, an active power which causes the ONE to become TWO and THREE (Volume 1 p.109)*
- o a force which brings together the elemental atoms and make them aggregate and combine (Volume 1 p.109)*
- o a personified electrical vital power (Volume 1 p.111)*
- o the transcendental binding Unity of all Cosmic Energies (Volume 1 p.111)*
- o a living force created by Will (Volume 1 p.111)*
- o in his secondary aspect, he is the Solar Energy, the electrical vital fluid and the preserving fourth principle (Volume 1 p.111)*
- o shown allegorically as trying to bring the pure Spirit, the Ray inseparable from the ONE absolute, into union with the Soul, the two constituting in Man the MONAD, and in Nature the first link between the ever unconditioned and the manifested (Volume 1 p.119)*
- o the "Son of the Son" (Volume 1 p.122)*
- o the "Builder of the Builders" (Volume 1 p.139)*
- o the emanation of those other Powers behind him whom the Christians call the "Messengers" of their God (Volume 1 p.139)*
- o a differentiation of the primordial light (Daivi-prakriti) (Volume 1 p.216)*
- o Cosmic Energy (Volume 1 p.328)*
- o the energizing and guiding intelligence in the Universal Electric or Vital Fluid (Volume 1 p.493)*
- o the "Light" of the Daiviprakriti (Volume 1 p.602)*

- o the "Son of Ether" (Volume 2 p.400)*
- o Dhyan-Chohan energy (Volume 2 p.649)*
- o Its names in other traditions :*
- o Ob, Od and Aour (Volume 1 p.75)*
- o Eros in Greek mythology (Volume 1 p.109)*
- o Brahma's Will in the Puranas (Volume 1 p.109)*
- o Desire (pothos) in the Phoenician Cosmogony of Sanchoniathon (Volume 1 p.109)*
- o Fohat is connected with Vishnu and Surya in India (Volume 1 p.111)*
- o the "Pervader" and the Manufacturer in India (Volume 1 p.111)*
- o Ares in Paracelsus (Volume 1 p.284)*
- o in India, he is the scientific aspect of both Vishnu and Indra (Volume 1 p.673)*
- o in Egypt, he is Toum issued of Noot (Volume 1 p.673)*
- o Apam-Napat in Vedic and Avestian name (Volume 2 p.400)*
- o How Fohat is represented :*
- o a serpent (Volume 1 p.75)*
- o the hebrew letter Teth (Kabbala) (Volume 1 p.75)*
- o the ninth letter of the alphabet (Volume 1 p.75)*
- o the ninth door of the fifty portals or gateways that leads to the concealed mysteries (Volume 1 p.75)*
- o the Swastica represents the activity of Fohat (Volume 2 p.587)*
- o What does Fohat do :*
- o he runs the Manu's (or Dhyan-Chohans') errands, and causes the ideal prototypes to expand from within without (Volume 1 P.63)*
- o he hardens and scatters the seven brothers (Volume 1 P.76)*

o he gathers cluster of Cosmic matter, give it impulse, set it in motion, develop the required heat (Volume 1 p.84)

o he hardens the atoms by infusing energy into them (Volume 1 p.85)

o he scatters the atoms or primordial matter (Volume 1 p.85)

o it is through him that the ideas of the Universal Mind are impressed upon matter (Volume 1 p.85)

o sets in motion the Law of Cosmic Evolution by differentiating the One element in various centres of Energy (Volume 1 p.110)

o he his forced to be born time after time whenever any of his son-brothers indulge in too close contact (Volume 1 p.145)

o he guides the transfer of the principles from one planet to the other, from one star to another child-star. (Volume 1 p.147)

o he produces the "Seven Laya Centres"(Volume 1 p.147)

o he collect primordial dust in form of balls, he impel them to move in converging lines and to approach each other and aggregate (Volume 1 p.201)

o he impels the inert Substance to activity, and guides its primary differentiations on all the seven planes of Cosmic Consciousness (Volume 1 p.328)

o he sets in motion the primordial World-germs (Volume 1 p.672)

o he turns with his two hands in contrary directions the "seeds" and the "curds", or Cosmic matter (Volume 1 p.673)

o he crossed the Circle like two lines of flame (horizontally and vertically) (Volume 2 p.586)

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on November 6, 2010 at 10:51am

I am not a "believer" in this instance. My primary concern, as always is that the truth comes out, pleasant or not.

So, please, while we may want things to be a certain way, let's remain open minded enough to accept the evidence when it is clear and convincing. If something begs questions, please be courageous enough to ask. Remember, now that we have

started engaging the outside world on this issue, others will be watching our responses.

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on November 6, 2010 at 2:35pm

Well done Jacques; this sort of topical indexing is a great way to start studying theosophical texts.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 6, 2010 at 2:47pm

First, I would ask for everyone's patience with me as I try to reply sequentially to posts, and therefore fall a day or two behind in the discussion. Govert, the material from Martin Brauen is important, and I appreciate your efforts in making it available online. Martin has made significant contributions in another field that is a primary interest of mine, Kalachakra, so I have long appreciated his writings. Here in this chapter that you provided a link for, he is one of the few Tibetologists who is willing to discuss the Theosophical teachings. His critique is mild in comparison with the harsh one of Agehananda Bharati (Leopold Fischer) published in the Tibet Society Bulletin in 1974, titled "Fictitious Tibet: The Origin and Persistence of Rampaism." We must be thankful to both of them.

In fact, it is Theosophists who should be digging out these errors in the Theosophical writings, and not wait for critics from the outside to find them. For example, Antonios Goyios in his article, "Tracing the Source of Tibetan Phrases Found in Mahatma Letters #54 and #92," found at www.blavatskyarchives.com, shows that the Tibetan phrase "kam mi ts'har" was incorrectly copied from a Tibetan phrasebook then available, and does not mean what it is said to mean in the Mahatma letter. This shows either that the Mahatma letter was faked by an amateur who did not know Tibetan, or that it was badly bungled by a chela who did not know Tibetan. Take your pick.

The critiques by Tibetologist Brauen and by Anthropologist Bharati, however, share an approach that is not altogether justified. It is this, put in my words: Because the Theosophical teachings are said to come from Tibet, and from teachers living in Tibet, therefore they should accurately reflect Tibetan Buddhism. Now that we have access to authentic teachings of Tibetan Buddhism, we see that the Theosophical teachings do not accurately reflect them. Therefore, they are fraudulent.

But those who have studied the writings of HPB carefully will know that she never claimed Theosophy to be Tibetan Buddhism. On the contrary, she made a point to distance Theosophy from exoteric Tibetan Buddhism. The Theosophical teachings are supposed to pre-date Gautama Buddha. It is therefore not appropriate to compare them with those of Tibetan Buddhism, find them to disagree, and then to dismiss them as fraudulent.

A prime example of this is the idea of svabhava found in the Stanzas of Dzyan. Everyone who has studied Tibetan Buddhism in recent decades will know that the denial of svabhava, often translated as "inherent existence," is one of its primary and distinguishing features. It takes hardly more than a glance at the Stanzas, then, to find them to be heretical from the standpoint of Tibetan Buddhism. But if we look at them from the standpoint of Hinduism, the teaching of svabhava found in them is fully orthodox. There is no problem with it. I do not know of any reason to assume that the Stanzas must agree with Buddhist teachings here any more than with Hindu teachings.

Moreover, we do not know for sure that the term svabhava is actually found in the Stanzas. It may have simply been the term used by HPB to translate the ideas of the Stanzas, based on her understanding of the meaning of svabhava that she picked up from writers of her time. We very much need to have an original language text of the Stanzas before we can draw any accurate or meaningful conclusions. It is my hope that the interest in the Stanzas and the energy created by our discussion will elicit them from their custodians.

There is yet another fact regarding svabhava that everyone, critics and supporters alike, should be aware of. Although the idea of svabhava is heretical in Tibetan Buddhism in general, there is one place that it still remains, and does so conspicuously. With thanks to my friends Ken Small and Rich Taylor for letting me know about this, the Dzogchen teachings of the Nyingma order of Tibetan Buddhism teach a ground or base (gzhi) that has three aspects: ngo bo, "essence," rang bzhin, "nature," and thugs rje, "energy." These have been translated variously, and I simply give what Namkhai Norbu uses. The second of these, rang bzhin, is the standard Tibetan translation of svabhava. In Dzogchen teachings, rang bzhin (svabhava) refers to the continuous arising of phenomenal existence from the ground or base. In other words, it is there used very much like in the Stanzas of Dzyan (e.g., III.12, "Then Svabhavat sends Fohat to harden the atoms."). So there is one teaching within Tibetan Buddhism where the svabhava idea found in the Stanzas is not heretical.

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on November 6, 2010 at 3:25pm

David, this quote from ML letter 22 (or 90 chronological) sounds similar to the Dzogchen-Stanza remarks at the end of your post.

"It is the peculiar faculty of the involuntary power of the infinite mind which no one could ever think of calling God, to be eternally evolving subjective matter into objective atoms (you will please remember that the two adjectives are used but in a relative sense) or cosmic matter to be later on developed into form."

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on November 6, 2010 at 7:36pm

Thanks David, for the in-depth clarification on citta.

For reference, here is the link to Swami Krishnananda's Commentary:

http://www.swami-krishnananda.org/chhand/ch_3a.html#5

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 6, 2010 at 9:02pm

Jacques, Radhakrishnan's equation of the alaya-vijnana with the hrd-akasha is useful to know. I had not thought of this equation before, but rather had always thought more of an alaya-vijnana equation with the mahat that HPB refers to, which is the universal principle of intelligence taught in Samkhya. The hrd-akasha, the space within the heart, does not seem to have become a standard Vedanta teaching like the alaya-vijnana became in Buddhism. However, it might be more widely used in the Vedanta taught in the Yoga-Vasishtha.

Regarding mind, in the series of things taught in the Chandogya Upanisad, mind as manas comes first, then a little later comes mind as citta. The implication is that citta is higher than manas. This is also how the two terms for mind are used in the Yogacara texts. The citta that is there equated with the alaya-vijnana is higher than the manas, which is described as the klista-manas, the "defiled mind." But it is much more usual elsewhere that citta and manas are simply synonyms used for

mind. Indeed, the great principle of mind in the Vedic writings is normally called manas. So here manas is equivalent to the "one mind," yih-sin, or eka-citta.

The teaching of the "one mind" (eka-cittam) reminds us of the teaching of "that one" (tad ekam) in Rig-veda 10.129. The oldest available explanation of "that one" in Rig-veda 10.129 is found in the Satapatha-Brahmana (10.5.3). There, verses from this hymn are quoted and partially explained. It is a striking fact that the Satapatha-Brahmana explains "that one" as manas, mind. You can see this explanation in the first PDF of Rig-veda 10.129 translations available on this website, 18 pages in, in John Muir's second translation (pp. 358-359) where he quotes the Satapatha-Brahmana. This explanation of "that one" as manas, mind, is not found in later Vedic commentaries, and long precedes the appearance of The Awakening of Faith in China in the mid-500s C.E.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 7, 2010 at 2:05pm

Your compilation on fohat, Jacques, is really helpful, as Nicholas said. This is exactly the way that Vedic studies have proceeded since about the mid-1800s, and this method completely dominates Vedic studies right up to the present. This is the best known way to determine the meaning of a particular term. I have now read through your compilation on fohat several times. I have to admit that no clear idea of its meaning emerges for me yet. Since it plays a major role in the cosmogony of the SD, it should have a clear and recognizable parallel with some major player in some known cosmogony. Some aspects of it match some known terms and ideas, such as the Vedic prana, or the Tantric Buddhist prana/vayu, but other parts do not match. We really need to either find the source of the term fohat in some known book, or see what original term was used in a Sanskrit or Tibetan version of the Stanzas.

Comment by [M. Sufilight](#) on November 8, 2010 at 10:55am

Dear friends

My views are:

Blavatsky wrote in the Secret Doctrine:

"The stage described in Stanza II. is, to a western mind , so nearly identical with that mentioned in the first Stanza, that to express the idea of its difference would require a treatise in itself. Hence it must be left to the intuition and the higher faculties of the reader to grasp, as far as he can, the meaning of the allegorical phrases used. Indeed it must be remembered that all these Stanzas appeal to the inner faculties rather than to the ordinary comprehension of the physical brain."

(The Secret Doctrine, vol. I, p. 21)

Blavatsky wrote in the Secret Doctrine:

"Thus far have proceeded the rough outlines of the beliefs and tenets of the archaic, earliest Races contained in their hitherto secret Scriptural records. But our explanations are by no means complete, nor do they pretend to give out the full text, or to have been read by the help of more than three or four keys out of the sevenfold bunch of esoteric interpretation, and even this has only been partially accomplished. The work is too gigantic for any one person to undertake, far more to accomplish. Our main concern was simply to prepare the soil. This, we trust we have done. These two volumes only constitute the work of a pioneer who has forced his way into the well-nigh impenetrable jungle of the virgin forests of the Land of the Occult. A commencement has been made to fell and uproot the deadly upas trees of superstition, prejudice, and conceited ignorance"

(The Secret Doctrine, vol. II, p. 797)

THE SECRET BOOKS OF "LAM-RIM" AND DZYAN

"No student, unless very advanced, would be benefited by the perusal of those exoteric volumes. They must be read with a key to their meaning, and that key can only be found in the Commentaries. Moreover there are some comparatively modern works that are positively injurious so far as a fair comprehension of even exoteric Buddhism is concerned."*

...

" In some MSS. notes before us, written by Gelong (priest) Thango-pa Chhe-go-mo, it is said: "...It is true that the Sacred Canon of the Tibetans, the Bkah-hgyur and Bstan-hgyur, comprises 1707 distinct works—1083 public and 624 secret volumes, the former being composed of 350 and the latter of 77 volumes folio. May we humbly invite the good missionaries, however, to tell us when they ever succeeded in getting a glimpse of the last-named secret folios? Had they even by chance seen*

them I can assure the Western Pandits that these manuscripts and folios could never be understood even by a born Tibetan without a key (a) to their peculiar characters, and (b) to their hidden meaning. In our system every description of locality is figurative, every name and word purposely veiled; and one has first to study the mode of deciphering and then to learn the equivalent secret terms and symbols for nearly every word of the religious language. The Egyptian enchorial or hieratic system is child's play to our sacerdotal puzzles."

http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v14/mb_007.htm

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 8, 2010 at 7:15pm

Nicholas, the good quote that you posted from Mahatma letter #22 very much goes along with Mahatma letter #10 and the Cosmological Notes, and I believe that it accurately reflects the cosmogonic teachings of the Stanzas. I do not want to be misleading in what I said about the parallel Dzogchen teachings. From what I have seen, the Dzogchen teachings actually refer to the continuous arising of phenomenal existence from the ground or base (gzhi) as something that is happening all the time in everyone's lives, not as a historical cosmogony like the Stanzas of Dzyan depict.

*The writer who for Nyingmapas corresponds to what Tsongkhapa is for Gelugpas is Longchenpa. Longchenpa is thus the single most authoritative Tibetan writer on Dzogchen. Among his many writings, some of the most highly regarded are his seven "Treasures." The first of these is the "Wish-fulfilling Treasury," a comparatively brief treatise in verses. On it, he wrote his own commentary explaining the verses. Its first chapter is called, "How Samsara Arises from the Ground." Its explanation of this is of course similar to how Jamgon Kongtrul explained it several centuries later in the book available in English (this section of it) as *Myriad Worlds*.*

Longchenpa says that the desire-ridden phenomenal world arises from the ground or base as the result of deluded thought. Neither the phenomenal world nor deluded thought have any real existence. Once we are able to directly see this through the practices of Dzogchen, the phenomenal world no longer deludedly appears to us, but rather we perceive the primordial purity of the ground or base as it really is. So although Dzogchen uses the term rang bzhin (svabhava) as the aspect of the ground or base that refers to its continuous arising as phenomenal existence, and this is a general parallel to the usage of svabhava in the Stanzas,

the overall cosmogony differs significantly. I have seen no indication that Dzogchen accepts a historical cosmogony, which would include historical events such as the separation of the sexes in the third root-race, for example.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 8, 2010 at 10:03pm

I am still studying the excellent ten-page compilation on Fohat that Jacques prepared, available on the main page of this website. Jacques has done all the work of gathering this material for us, and all we have to do is read it. I hope that everyone who is interested in the Stanzas will do so.

For the moment, I just want to comment on one short sentence. It is from Stanza 5, verse 2: "Fohat is the steed and the thought is the rider." This idea is central to much of the Buddhist tantric teachings, if we substitute wind or air (vayu) or breath or life force (prana) for fohat. In particular, this teaching is found in the Guhyasamaja Tantra system, which is much studied by the Gelugpas. One can hear this idea from Tibetan lamas often enough, but very few of the original texts that it comes from have yet been translated.

Nagarjuna systematized the practices taught in the Guhyasamaja Tantra in his Pancakrama, "The Five Stages." The third verse of the first chapter gives us a nice, succinct statement of this idea. Here is this verse as translated by Alex Wayman in his book, Yoga of the Guhyasamajatantra, p. 198. The words in brackets are my additions.

"Being the life force [prana] of sentient beings, what is called 'wind' [vayu] performs all deeds; and as the vehicle of vijnana [consciousness] [it] is five, besides is tenfold."

It is frequently said that the winds (vayu) or vital breaths (prana) are the mounts of consciousness or thoughts or wisdom.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 9, 2010 at 10:08pm

Continuing with our investigation of fohat, here follow some more notes on its possible parallel with vayu, "wind," or prana, "vital breath." Besides vayu/prana being the mount (vahana) of consciousness, like fohat is the steed and thought is the rider, vayu or wind is the usual instrument that brings about manifestation in

Buddhist cosmogony. Cosmogony is not often spoken of in Buddhist texts, and when it is, the descriptions are brief and lacking in details. The Buddhist Abhidharma texts teach successive manifestations and disappearances of a cosmos or world-system. Its reappearance is said to be caused by the aggregate karma of living beings, which impels wind to bring about the manifestation of a cosmos.

The standard work on this is the Abhidharma-kosa and its commentary (chapter three), both written by Vasubandhu. It was first translated into French by Louis de La Vallee Poussin and published in 6 volumes, 1923-1931, and then from French into English by Leo M. Pruden and published in 4 volumes, 1988-1990. Here are two excerpts from it:

". . . the seed of a new universe is wind, a wind endowed with special powers which have their beginning in the actions of creatures." (vol. 2, p. 491)

"The collective force of the actions of beings produces the winds which create (nirma) the moon, the sun and the stars in heaven." (vol. 2, p. 460)

A somewhat fuller cosmogonic account is found in the Yogacara-bhumi by Maitreya (Chinese tradition) or Asanga (Tibetan tradition). This section was translated by Yuichi Kajiyama in his chapter, "Buddhist Cosmology as Presented in the Yogacarabhumi," in the 2000 book, Wisdom, Compassion, and the Search for Understanding, pp. 191-192. Here is an excerpt from it that is reminiscent of the Stanzas of Dzyan. For ease of comparison, I will quote a passage from the Stanzas before and after the excerpt from the Yogacara-bhumi.

"The Primordial Seven, the First Seven Breaths of the Dragon of Wisdom, produce in their turn from their Holy Circumgyrating Breaths the Fiery Whirlwind. They make of him the messenger of their will. The Dzyu becomes Fohat, the swift son of the Divine sons whose sons are the Lipika, runs circular errands." (Stanza 5, verses 1-2)

Yogacara-bhumi: "Thereafter a whirlwind as large as the Trisahasra-mahasahasra [world] arises here and becomes the support of the Trisahasra-mahasahasra [world] as well as of sentient beings having no palaces [i.e., gods of the two lowest worlds of desire and sentient beings on and under the earth]. It is of two kinds: the whirlwind stretching itself upwards and that stretching itself on the flank of the world, which prevent water [on the wind] from leaking out downwards and sideways. And then clouds containing gold appear above these [whirlwinds] by the influence of [sentient beings'] karma. Rains fall from the [clouds]. The water [of the rains] is sustained on the whirlwind. Then, wind blows and condenses and hardens

the water. It is called the earth made of gold as it withstands upward and downward agitations of water."

"Then Svabhavat sends Fohat to harden the atoms." (Stanza 3, verse 12)

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on November 9, 2010 at 10:37pm

What are the major journals of Buddhist Archeology? I'm wondering how useful it would be to keep an eye on these for recently discovered texts. If so, are there some scripture names we should be watching for?

If anyone has thought on this, please speak up.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 10, 2010 at 10:49am

I do not know of any journals that are devoted specifically to Buddhist archaeology. News of recently discovered texts would be expected to show up in the major orientalist journals. Some of these are: Journal of the American Oriental Society (U.S.A.), Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Great Britain), Journal asiatique (France), Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft (Germany), Wiener Zeitschrift for die Kunde Sudasiens (Austria), Asiatische Studien/Etudes asiatiques (Switzerland), Indo-Iranian Journal (The Netherlands), Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies (Japan), Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London), Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, etc. Most of these are found in large academic libraries. The orientalist journals published in India are found only in very specialized collections in the West, so I have not listed any titles of these.

The Sanskrit originals of the two texts that I quoted in my last post, Abhidharma-kosa and Yogacara-bhumi, were discovered in Tibet by Rahula Sankrtyayana on his trips there in search of Sanskrit manuscripts in the 1930s. These finds were then announced and described in The Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society (Patna, India). Since that time it has been known that many Sanskrit manuscripts were preserved in Tibet, but there has been no access to them due to the political situation. After the "Cultural Revolution" of the 1960s in which many monasteries in Tibet were destroyed by the Red Guards and others, no one knew if these manuscripts had also been destroyed. By the 1980s reports began to emerge that many of these had been saved and taken to Beijing. More recently, they were

brought back to Tibet. Negotiations for access to them had been carried on for many years, by Prof. Ernst Steinkellner and others. In the last few years, this access started to happen on a limited basis. In 2009 the sixth text in the series, "Sanskrit Texts from the Tibetan Autonomous Region," was jointly published by the China Tibetology Publishing House and the Austrian Academy of Sciences Press.

In India and Nepal, Sanskrit Buddhist manuscripts are still being discovered or catalogued. Probably the best source for news of these is Dhih: Journal of the Rare Buddhist Texts Research Unit, which is part of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath. This journal is mostly in Hindi, but it includes English summaries of the articles. I do not know of any particular title to look for in the listings of Sanskrit manuscripts that are regularly published in Dhih. Almost all of these are Sanskrit texts that are known from their Tibetan translations found in the Kangyur and Tengyur. We do not have the actual name of the text that HPB generically called the Book of Dzyan, the "Book of Wisdom." Already in 1979, in reply to my inquiry, the Dalai Lama said that he would need the actual Tibetan title of the Book of Dzyan in order to have his people look for it.

But as indicated in the material quoted recently by M. Sufilight regarding "The Secret Books of 'Lam-rim' and Dzyan," etc., the Book of Dzyan would be among the secret volumes, not among the known volumes. All the manuscript finds of Sanskrit Buddhist texts so far that I know of have been of texts that were known from their Tibetan or Chinese translations. These, of course, have their own value, since if one cannot read these, there would be no chance of being able to read the secret commentaries thereon.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on November 10, 2010 at 1:10pm

I sense an opportunity here. Perhaps, seeing that there are no clearinghouses for newly discovered Buddhist and other texts, perhaps we can take advantage of that void. It certainly would be a great help in gaining some credibility in academic circles and also in fulfilling our Objects.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 10, 2010 at 10:36pm

I assume that everyone is assiduously studying and meditating on the fohat compilation that Jacques prepared for us. So, wishing to keep that momentum going, I will add a few more comments along the way toward fohat. After yih-sin was identified as a Chinese term meaning the "one mind" (eka-citta), and it was

traced back to the sixth-century book, *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*, we saw that the idea of the one mind can be found several centuries earlier than this. The early *Satapatha Brahmana* explained "that one" (*tad ekam*) of *Rig-veda* 10.129 as "mind" (*manas*). This shows us that, even if a Buddhist term is used in the secret commentary from which the *Stanzas of Dzyan* were translated, their ideas will also be found in older formulations. Similarly, the "wind/breath" (*vayu/prana*) as a possible parallel to *fohat* should have antecedents in earlier Indian writings than the Buddhist *tantras*. In this expectation, we are not disappointed, for in the Vedic writings we find *prana* as part of a cosmic trinity along with *manas* and *vak*.

Generally speaking, there are two major schools of Vedic interpretation found today. The earlier and more traditional one is that following the fourteenth-century commentator *Sayana*, who interprets the *Vedas* in terms of sacrifices. In the 1800s, Western scholars saw that while this was a valid and useful line of interpretation, it could hardly be considered original or primary, coming as it does from commentaries that were written two thousand or more years after the time of the *Vedas*. They then developed what might generally be called the philological school of interpretation, having no other recourse than to base themselves on the words of the Vedic texts by comparing how the words were used in each occurrence there. A few smaller lines of interpretation emerged, due to dissatisfaction with either of these two main lines, most notably those of *Dayanand Saraswati* and *Sri Aurobindo*. *Dayanand* promoted a monotheistic interpretation in which all the names of the various Vedic gods referred only to the one God. *Sri Aurobindo* promoted a psychological interpretation in which the Vedic gods represent aspects of our psyche, such as the will. But there is yet another line of interpretation, a very old line that a few teachers have tried to revive.

Vasudeva S. Agrawala (1904-1972), a professor at *Banaras Hindu University*, was a student of the *Raj Pandit* of *Jaipur*, *Madhusudan Ojha*. They promoted the *adhyatma* or inner symbolic line of interpretation spoken of in the ancient *Nirukta* by *Yaska*. While *Pandit Ojha* wrote only in *Sanskrit*, *Prof. Agrawala* wrote in *English*. His magnum opus is titled, *The Thousand-Syllabled Speech, I. Vision in Long Darkness*. This is an interpretation of the highly enigmatic hymn, *Rig-veda* 1.164, following the *adhyatma* or symbolic interpretation. In his *Preface* to that book, he writes (p. vii): ". . . the whole world is constituted of a triadic pattern. There are many formulations of the threefold constituents The most important of them all for modern man is the statement in terms of Mind, Life and Matter, corresponding to *Manas*, *Prana* and *Vak* of Vedic terminology." This cosmic trinity

is briefly spoken of, for example, in Brhadaranyaka Upanisad 1.5.3 ff., Mundaka Upanisad 2.2.2, Chandogya Upanisad 6.5.4, etc.

A typical example of the adhyatma or symbolic line of Vedic interpretation is found in Agrawala's book on p. 21: "Life, Mind and Matter (Manas, Prana, Vak) are the Three Brothers, and by counting the gross elements as five, they are the Seven Sons." I hardly need to bring in quotes from Jacques' compilation on fohat for comparison to such obviously similar symbolism. "He [Fohat] has seven sons who are his brothers" (SD 1.145). "In its Unity, primordial light is the seventh, or highest, principle, Daivi-prakriti, the light of the unmanifested Logos. But in its differentiation it becomes Fohat, or the 'Seven Sons'" (SD 1.216). ". . . often amounting to a public recognition of our 'Fohat and his seven Sons'" (SD 1.523).

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 11, 2010 at 4:09am

" the whole world is constituted of a triadic pattern. There are many formulations of the threefold constituents The most important of them all for modern man is the statement in terms of Mind, Life and Matter, corresponding to Manas, Prana and Vak of Vedic terminology."

For students who like to compare traditions and teachings on the threefold - and I suggest that this is a valuable line of research- I give a list from memory:

Quan Judge (Echoes of the Orient), probably taking the idea from Anna Kingsford :

Will, Wisdom, Word

Life, Substance, Formulation

Etheric Force, Etheric Substance, Physical Substance

Proclus: he might be the champion of threefolds subdivided in other threefolds - see my website for his main works. And see also G.R.S. Mead's studies on Orphic theology, chap. 7.

On a side note: $3 \times 3 = 9$ is sometimes reduced to 7 by taking some (sub)levels/principles/categories as expressions of one principle.

Modern thinkers such as J.G. Bennett and Arthur Young (esp. some of his students) also work with trinities. Entire volumes have been written on this. Even Stafford

Beer recognizes some of this in his work on viable systems. Look at his 1-2-3 and 3-4-5 systems.

Theosophy has its own threefold divisions, as is well known.

Like I said, a rich field for research, comparison and, who knows, productive ideas.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 11, 2010 at 4:23am

And let's not forget the work of Remo Roth on Carl Gustav Jung:

"In Synchronicity Quest (German title: Die Gottsucher) Remo Roth establishes a correspondence between the central symbols of Christian (and of some Tantric and Sufic) mysticism and several of the central ideas of quantum and elementary particle physics by means of Jungian psychology. When applied to the central contents of cultural development, this method can be represented as follows:

At the beginning of a cultural era some central ideas -- the paradigm of that particular culture -- are constituted. This Zeitgeist consists of archetypal ideas that are believed in without demonstrable proof. As time passes, these ideas change. Psychologically seen, this process corresponds to the transformation of the divine image (the Self). But collective consciousness is unaware of this transformation. Certain individuals, the mystics of the culture concerned, are overwhelmed by visions, which are compensatory to the Zeitgeist, and are rooted in the collective unconscious.

By means of the so-called amplification method developed by C G Jung, Roth endeavours to decode these symbolically encoded visions of Paracelsus and Nicholas of Flüe. In this manner he determines the psychological content of these ideas which are compensatory to the Christian Zeitgeist."

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 11, 2010 at 6:55am

*And of course, talking about threeness: Jacob Boehme with his prolific work, *The Three Principles of the Divine Essence, and Threefold Life of Man*; and Charles S. Peirce with his philosophy of Oneness, Twoness, Threeness. Both men are mentioned favorably by William Quan Judge. The latter attempts to correlate Peirce's ideas with Alaya-Buddhi, and other principles, to give an example. See his *Echoes of the Orient*. Correlative study of this kind has hardly been done in*

Theosophical circles AFAIK. If anyone knows about such studies, please let me (and others) know!

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on November 11, 2010 at 8:06am

Studies on Fohat (cont'd) : The document will be updated to include what can be used from other H.P.B. sources :

- The Theosophical Glossary do not bring more light to the subject

- The Transactions from Blavatsky Lodge (T.B.L.) is adding more tracks :

p.87 tells us the word Fohat is of turanian origine : "The word is a Turanian compound and its meanings are various. In China Pho, or Fo, is the word for "animal soul," the vital Nephesh or the breath of life. Some say that it is derived from the Sanskrit "Bhu," meaning existence, or rather the essence of existence. Now Swayambhu means Brahma and Man at the same time. It means self-existence and self-existing, that which is everlasting, the eternal breath. If Sat is the potentiality of Being, Pho is the potency of Being. The meaning, however, entirely depends upon the position of the accent. Again, Fohat is related to Mahat. It is the reflection of the Universal Mind, the synthesis of the "Seven" and the intelligences of the seven creative Builders, or, as we call them, Cosmocratores."

What Fohat is (cont'd) :

o the light of the three Logo (T.B.L p. 38)

o the aggregate of all the spiritual creative ideations above, and of all the electro-dynamic and creative forces below, in Heaven and on Earth (T.B.L p. 38)

o the synthesis of the Seven Creative Rays or Dhyān Chohans which proceed from the third Logos.(T.B.L p. 38)

o the Sakti or force of the divine mind (T.B.L p. 86)

o he is related to Mahat. It is the reflection of the Universal Mind, the synthesis of the "Seven" and the intelligences of the seven creative Builders, or, as we call them, Cosmocratores (T.B.L p. 87)

o is called the "Thread of primeval Light," the "Ball of thread" of Ariadne, indeed, in this labyrinth of chaotic matter (T.B.L p. 116)

o There is a remarkable illustration of Elihu Vedder to the Quatrains of Omar Khayyam, which suggests the idea of the Knots of Fohat. It is the ordinary Japanese representation of clouds, single lines running into knots both in drawings and carvings. It is Fohat the "knot-tier," and from one point of view it is the "world-stuff." (T.B.L p. 122)

o he is spoken of as the synthetic motor power of all the imprisoned life-forces and the medium between the absolute and conditioned Force (T.B.L p. 134)

o he is the agent of the law, its representative, the representative of the Manasa-putras, whose collectivity is—the eternal mind (T.B.L p. 135)

What Fohat do (cont'd) :

o When the hour strikes for the Third Logos to appear, then from the latent potentiality there radiates a lower field of differentiated consciousness, which is Mahat, or the entire collectivity of those Dhyan-Chohans of sentient life of which Fohat is the representative on the objective plane and the Manasa-putras on the subjective (T.B.L p. 95)

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 11, 2010 at 10:08am

Martin, personally speaking, I very much welcome your valuable input on this from Western sources. It is all I can do to keep up with Eastern sources in trying to trace the Stanzas of Dzyan, but I know that there is much of value and relevance in other sources. Regarding your reference to Proclus, it so happens that last year I received from a friend in Greece, Antonios Goyios, a reference to a passage from Proclus that in translation actually uses the phrase "fiery whirlwind." This passage fits in so closely with what we have been discussing here about the one, about cosmogony or the manifestation of multiplicity, and with your comments on the centrality of the threefold divisions, that I will quote it. First, for comparison, here is Stanza 5.1:

"The Primordial Seven, the First Seven Breaths of the Dragon of Wisdom, produce in their turn from their Holy Circumgyrating Breaths the Fiery Whirlwind."

Here is the passage from Thomas Taylor's 1816 translation of the commentaries of Proclus on the Theology of Plato, vol. 1, p. 220 (original edition; p. 233 of the 1999 Prometheus Trust reprint):

"And here, indeed, the union is essential, but there essence has the form of the one. For the summit of being which is one is a thing of this kind. Deservedly, therefore, is intelligible multitude all-powerful, and intelligible animal all-perfect, as being at once the cause of all things, and this as far as to the last of things, Plato all but exclaiming, [in the words of the Chaldaean Oracle,] 'Thence a fiery whirlwind sweeping along, obscures the flower of fire, leaping at the same time into the cavities of the worlds.' For the divine unities proceeding gradually, generate the multitude of all mundane natures. This triad, therefore, is the fountain and cause of all things: and from it all the life, and all the progression of the Gods, and the genera superior to us, and of mortal animals subsist. For it produces totally and uniformly all things, and binds to itself the whole principles of the divisible rivers of vivification, and the production of forms."

(end of Book 3, chapter 27, in the original 1816 edition)

From just this, it is not clear to me whether the "fiery whirlwind" quoted by Plato from the Chaldean Oracle refers to something that appears during the process of manifestation, like fohat, or whether it refers to the fire of destruction at the end of time, spoken of in many accounts of the end of the world. I wonder if it occurs in other contexts where this would be clearer. Perhaps you know, Martin.

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on November 11, 2010 at 10:27am

*The Chaldean Oracles; an old translation and commentary by theosophist Westcott:
<http://www.sacred-texts.com/eso/coz/index.htm>*

There is a chart within, giving the Three Minds, that reminds one of the Three Logoi of SD

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 11, 2010 at 11:31am

Regarding your reference to Carl Gustav Jung and the collective unconscious, Martin, there is a recent book that studies this in relation to the alaya-vijnana, the "storehouse consciousness" or universal world-soul. This, of course, brings in Stanza 1, verse 9, where the alaya is referred to. The book is: Contexts and Dialogue: Yogacara Buddhism and Modern Psychology on the Subliminal Mind, by Tao Jiang (University of Hawai'i Press, 2006). I have not studied Jung (or Freud, who the author also brings in), but it appears to me that what Jiang says about the alaya-vijnana accurately reflects the original sources. Jiang points out the

differences and similarities between Jung's collective unconscious or subliminal mind and the alaya-vijnana, concluding that they are only partially equivalent. The parallels that Jiang finds will no doubt be helpful to modern people in understanding the ancient idea of the alaya(-vijnana) spoken of in the Stanzas.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 11, 2010 at 6:30pm

David, this requires a little digging into several texts. I have found several interesting fragments already.

1. <http://www.thedyinggod.com/Chaldean-Oracles>

Proclus: On the Cratylus of Plato

"The Mind of the Father riding on the subtle Guiders, which glitter with the tracings of inflexible and relentless Fire."

2. *The Greek World vision by Pan. Marinis is an attempt to connect Greek philosophy with quantummechanics. It contains some very interesting paragraphs which I might copy in another posting. You can find it on www.scribd.com*

3. *Proclus says some things about Fire in his comm. Timaeus 2.9.11-14 and 3.128.30-129.1*

As this is on my site also, one can find it by doing a Google site search on my page.

For Proclus, "Fire predominates (epikratei) everywhere and heaven is characterized by its power, and the Fire over-there is neither caustic,...nor destructive (phthartikon) of anything,...but it shines forth with life-producing heat, illuminating power and with purity and translucency; for the violent quality (sphodron) is different from the pure (katharon), as Socrates showed in the Philebus (52c1). So the Fire that is there is light."

I get the impression that, for the Greeks, there's a whole cosmogony connected with Fire.

This is certainly the case with Jacob Boehme, whose main works can also be found on my site.

meuser.awardspace.com

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 11, 2010 at 7:43pm

Also, we must study Phanes (Eros?) a lot more. Phanes is the manifestor, in Greek mythology and religion. This could be a very precious link in understanding Fohat better.

For example: which are the progeny of Phanes? What is their function? On a related note: are Fohat's "sons" (or daughters?) the shaktis spoken of by Subba Rao? Which role do these Powers play in cosmogony? Etc.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 12, 2010 at 10:32am

Many thanks to Jacques for adding four pages of references from the Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge to his compilation on fohat. If we are ever going to figure out what this word is, this compilation that Jacques prepared for us is a fundamental necessity. Among the new entries are some ideas that are not found in the entries from The Secret Doctrine. Here is one of them, as Jacques has already quoted in his forum post:

"T.B.L. p.87 - Q. Can you say what is the real meaning of the word Fohat?

"A. The word is a Turanian compound and its meanings are various. In China Pho, or Fo, is the word for "animal soul," the vital Nephesh or the breath of life. . . ."

HPB apparently used the word Turanian in the sense that Max Muller had then given to it. Today it is no longer used, and the languages that Muller thought belonged to it are mostly referred to as the Uralic and Altaic language families. Chinese was usually, but not always, considered distinct from Turanian, and it seems that Muller in his later writings was willing to include Chinese in Turanian.

HPB had first spoken of the Chinese pho or fo, the "animal soul," in a note on the seven principles of man now found in Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 4, pp. 242-243. She there, by the way, says that pho is "the root of the Tibetan word Pho-hat." Her information on the Chinese term pho is there taken from James Legge's translation of the Yi King, which had then (1882) just been published in the Sacred Books of the East series. After obtaining the 1899 edition of that book several years ago, I was able to find this word on p. 355 in a lengthy footnote, where we see that Legge called pho the animal soul. Once again, as with yih-sin, we have a problem in identifying the Chinese word that Legge here transcribed as pho.

However, on p. 18 of BCW vol. 4, HPB writes "Amita-pho* (pronounced Fo) or Amita-Buddha," and in a footnote says, "In Tibetan pho and pha—pronounced with a soft labial breath-like sound—means at the same time 'man, father.' So pha-yul is native land; pho-nya, angel, messenger of good news; pha-me, ancestors, etc." So here in Amita-pho or Amita-Buddha HPB gives pho or fo as the word for Buddha, which fo is in Chinese. This is different from pho as the Chinese word for the animal soul. She also brings in pho as a Tibetan word meaning man or father. With this conflicting information, it is hard to pursue any of these with confidence. HPB never claimed to be a linguist. She left these kinds of problems for us.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 12, 2010 at 11:12am

Thanks, Nicholas, for the link to Westcott's translation of the Chaldean Oracles. It took me a while, but I did find the oracle in question. Westcott gives it on p. 28 as:

"24. And thence a Fiery Whirlwind drawing down the brilliance of the flashing flame, penetrating the abysses of the Universe; for from thence downwards do extend their wondrous rays."

(Proclus in Theologian Platonis, 171 and 172. T.)

Thomas Taylor had translated it as:

"Thence a fiery whirlwind sweeping along, obscures the flower of fire, leaping at the same time into the cavities of the worlds."

What was confusing to me about Taylor's translation is the word "obscures" in the phrase, "obscures the flower of fire." It is this that caused me to wonder if it was referring to manifestation or dissolution. But Westcott gives for this phrase, "drawing down the brilliance of the flashing flame." This, coupled with the final phrase that Taylor omitted, "for from thence downwards do extend their wondrous rays," allows me to conclude that manifestation is what is meant. I doubt if there was yet a critical edition of the Greek text available in Taylor's time. He may have translated from a faulty original. It would be useful to know what Greek word is behind "obscures" (Taylor) or "drawing down" (Westcott). It would be especially useful to know the Greek behind "fiery whirlwind."

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 12, 2010 at 2:21pm

Martin, I fully agree that we must study Phanes or Eros a lot more, as this could be a very important link in understanding fohat better. It very likely corresponds to kama, "desire," that is found in verse 4 of Rig-veda 10.129, one of the verses that HPB left out in her quotation of this hymn at the beginning of the Stanzas. Thanks also for the references and links pertaining to the question of fire and how it is used in Greek cosmogony. For now, I am ready to assume that the fiery whirlwind is indeed part of the process of manifestation rather than dissolution. I would be interested in knowing the Greek words for "fiery whirlwind."

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on November 12, 2010 at 2:43pm

Perhaps Erica or George can help on this one.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 12, 2010 at 2:50pm

David, as to Phanes, I found a nice piece of text in the following treatise on "The Secret Fire"

It concerns the Aeon or the "birth of Phanes-Dionysos or Mithra from the World-Egg"

An excerpt:

"Now one of the most extraordinary and awe-inspiring of the sculptured symbolical figures that we find in the ruins of the Mithraea, is that which Mr. Mead has described as "the mysterious Aeon, transcending Gods and men. He is the Ever-living One, the Lord of Life and Light—the Autozoon, He that gives life to himself, and is the Source and Ender of all lives. He is Zervan Akarana, Boundless Time, and also Infinite Space, the Ingenerable and Ineffable, the Pantheos."

It must be remembered that this account of the statue is conjectural, and that, therefore, its signification may have been somewhat different; but before discussing any other possible meanings it may have had, it will be as well to describe the general form in which it is found.

The body, which is that of a lion-headed man (the head being thickly maned) is frequently engraved all over with the signs of the Zodiac, and bears a bolt or solar

emblem on its breast. The feet vary in form, being sometimes human and sometimes animal. From the shoulders spring two pairs of wings, the one pair pointing upwards, while the other pair hang down. A great serpent is coiled round the body, usually in seven coils, and the head of the serpent lies on, or overhangs the head of the image—in one case bending round into the mouth. In either hand is a key, and in the right hand there is also frequently a rod or sceptre.

This should be compared with the remarkable Orphic Cult-Image in the Royal Museum at Modena, which is said to represent the birth of the God Phanes-Dionysos from the World-Egg. This sculpture was later used as a Mithraic Symbol, where, of course, it is supposed to have represented the birth of Mithra.

Here the whole figure is human, and is surmounted by a globe. Only one pair of wings are portrayed, and the Zodiacal signs form an oval surround. The Serpent coils about the image, as in the previous case, and the bolt, or solar emblem is on the breast. The left hand holds a long staff, while the right is furnished with a torch. The feet are those of an ox, and are standing in fire, while the globe surmounting the head rests in a nest of fire.

Now while the sculptures may quite well have represented the Aeon or the birth of Phanes-Dionysos or Mithra from the World-Egg, it is quite conceivable that they were rather types of the Initiate, the awakened man, and in particular the lion head suggests this when we remember that one of the highest grades was the Leontica. Furthermore the Zodiacal symbols, and the emblem of the Sun on the breast suggests the deathless Solar Body, while the serpent may well be a representation of the Speirema or Serpent Coil, now fully aroused, the wings pointing out the spiritual and volatile nature. The keys, of course, would be those of knowledge, and in the other figure are symbolised by the torch. The staff, rod or sceptre, naturally enough, represents power.

This, again, is conjectural, but in any event the re-born man is the true Microcosm, the image of the Creator. On the other hand, the serpent suggests—especially when in conjunction with the Solar and Zodiacal symbols present in both examples—a number of considerations which we must now proceed to discuss."

This is just a beginning. I'll check G.R.S. Mead about Phanes in the Orphic Pantheon.

As to the fiery whirlwind, I hope that others (Erica?) can help. There might be Greek original versions online of the texts concerned.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 12, 2010 at 3:11pm

*Phanes, found in volume One of Thrice greatest Hermes from Mead, Chap. XI.
Concerning the Aeon doctrine*

Excerpt: (Note the vortex /whirl and funnel idea here, and the "bubble in water")

"Orpheus also likens Chaos to an Egg in which was the con-fusion of the primordial elements. 1

"This is what Hesiod supposes by Chaos, what Orpheus calls an Egg—a thing generable, projected from the infinity of Matter (Hylē), and brought into being as follows:

IV. "Both fourfold Matter 2 being ensouled and the whole Infinitude being as though it were a Depth (Βυθός), flowing perpetually and indistinguishably moving, and over and over again pouring forth countless imperfect mixtures, now of one kind and now of another, and thereby dissolving them again owing to its lack of order, and engulfing so that it could not be bound [together] to serve for the generation of a living creature—it happened that the infinite Sea itself, being driven round 3 by its own peculiar nature, flowed with a natural motion in an orderly fashion from out of itself into itself, as it were a vortex, 4 and blended its essences, and thus involuntarily the most developed part of all of them, 5 that which was most serviceable for the generation of a living creature, flowed, as it were in a funnel, down the middle of the universe, and was carried to the bottom

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by means of the vortex that swept up everything, and drew after it the surrounding Spirit, 1 and so gathering itself together as it were into the most productive [form of all], it constituted a discrete state [of things].

"For just as a bubble is made in water, so a sphere-like hollow form gathered itself together from all sides.

"Thereupon, itself being impregnated in itself, carried up 2 by the Divine Spirit that had taken it to itself as consort, it thrust forth its head (προέκυψεν 3) into the Light—this, the greatest thing perchance that's ever been conceived, as though it were out of the Infinite Deep's universe a work of art had been conceived and

brought to birth, an ensouled work [in form] like unto the circumference of eggs, [in speed] like to the swiftness of a wing. 4

V. "I would therefore have you think of Cronus (Κρόνος) as Time (Χρόνον 5), and of Rhea (Ῥέα) as the flowing (τὸ ρέον) of the Moist Essence; for the whole of Matter being moved in Time brought forth, as it were, an Egg, the whole surrounding sphere-like Heaven (Ὀυρανός), which in the beginning was full of the productive marrow, 6 so that it might be able to bring forth elements and colours of all kinds; and yet the

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manifold appearances which it was ever presenting, all came from One Essence and One Colour.

"For just as in the product of the peacock, although the colour of the egg seems to be one, it has nevertheless potentially in it the countless colours of the bird that is to be brought to perfection, so also the Ensouled Egg conceived from Infinite Matter, when it is set in motion from the perpetually flowing Matter below it, 1 exhibits changes of all kinds.

"For from within the circumference a certain male-female Living Creature is imaged out by the Foreknowledge of the Divine Spirit that indwells in it, whom 2 Orpheus doth call Manifestor (Φάνης—Phanēs), because when he is manifest (φανείς) the universe shines forth from him, through the lustre of Fire, most glorious of elements, perfected in the Moist [Element]."

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 12, 2010 at 3:36pm

Vortex = Chasma in Ancient Greek;

Related to the Crater, Cup or Mixing-Bowl or Centre or Receptacle or Pythagorean Oneness or Monad :

IN "ORPHEUS," MACROBIUS, AND PROCLUS

Orpheus is said to have called the Æther the Mighty Whirlpool. 1 This forms the Egg or Womb of Cosmos; it is a modification of Chaos or Rhea, the Eternally-flowing, the Mother of the Gods, the Great Container. Thus Proclus, in speaking of Chaos, says:

“The last Infinity, by which also Matter (ὕλη) is circumscribed, is the Container, the field and plane of ideas. About her is ‘neither limit, nor foundation, nor seat, but excessive Darkness.’” 2

Plato, as we have seen, in his psychogony, speaks openly of this Cup or Crater (Mixing Space, or Vortex) in two aspects; in it the Deity mixes the All-Soul of universal nature from the purest Cosmic Elements, and from it He also “ladles out” the souls of men, composed of a less pure mixture of these Elements.

Further, Macrobius tells us that Plato elsewhere indirectly refers to another aspect of this Cup.

“Plato speaks of this in the Phædo, and says that the soul is dragged back into body, hurried on by new intoxication, desiring to taste a fresh draught of the overflow of matter, 3 whereby it is weighed down and brought back [to earth]. The sidereal [astral] Crater of Father Liber [Dionysus, Bacchus] is a symbol of this mystery; and this is what the Ancients called the

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[paragraph continues] River of Lethe, the Orphics saying that Father Liber was Hylic Mind.” 1

We have here, therefore, a higher and lower Cup. Proclus, moreover, speaks of several of such Craters, when he writes:

“Plato in the Philebus hands on the tradition of the Volcanic Crater . . . and Orpheus is acquainted with the Cup of Dionysus, and ranges many such Cups round the Solar Table.” 2

Elsewhere, again, Proclus tells us that the Demiurge is said “to constitute the psychical essences in conjunction with the Crater”; this “Crater is the peculiar cause of souls, and is co-arranged with the Demiurgus and filled from Him, but fills souls”; thus it is called the Fountain of Souls. 3

If with these indications before us we might venture to generalize, we might say that, according to Orphic-Pythagorean, Platonic, and Hermetic ideas, the “matter” of every “plane” was thought of as proceeding from such a Crater or Cup, from within without, and the elements thereof as being refunded into such a Cup or Centre or Receptacle—that is, from a more subtle, simpler, and inner phase to a

more gross, complex, and outer phase, and vice versâ. In other words, the Crater is the "monadic" or "atomic" state of the matter of any given phase or state of existence.

THE VISION OF ARIDÆUS

With the above data before us, it will also be instructive to turn to the Vision of Aridæus (Thespesius)

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as related by Plutarch, 1 a vision that may be compared with profit with the Vision of Er as told by Plato. Thespesius is being conducted through Hades, or the Invisible World in contact with earth-life, by a kinsman who has "passed over," as Spiritists would say, and curiously enough he there comes across a Chasm and a Crater—for part of the story runs:

"After these explanations he was conducted by his kinsman at great speed across an immense space, as it seemed, nevertheless easily and directly as though supported by wings of light-rays; until having arrived at a Vast Vortex (χάσμα) extending downwards, he was abandoned by the power that supported him.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 12, 2010 at 3:42pm

Diagram of Orphic Theogony including Phanes.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 12, 2010 at 4:18pm

Section: PHANES, ERICAPÆUS AND METIS

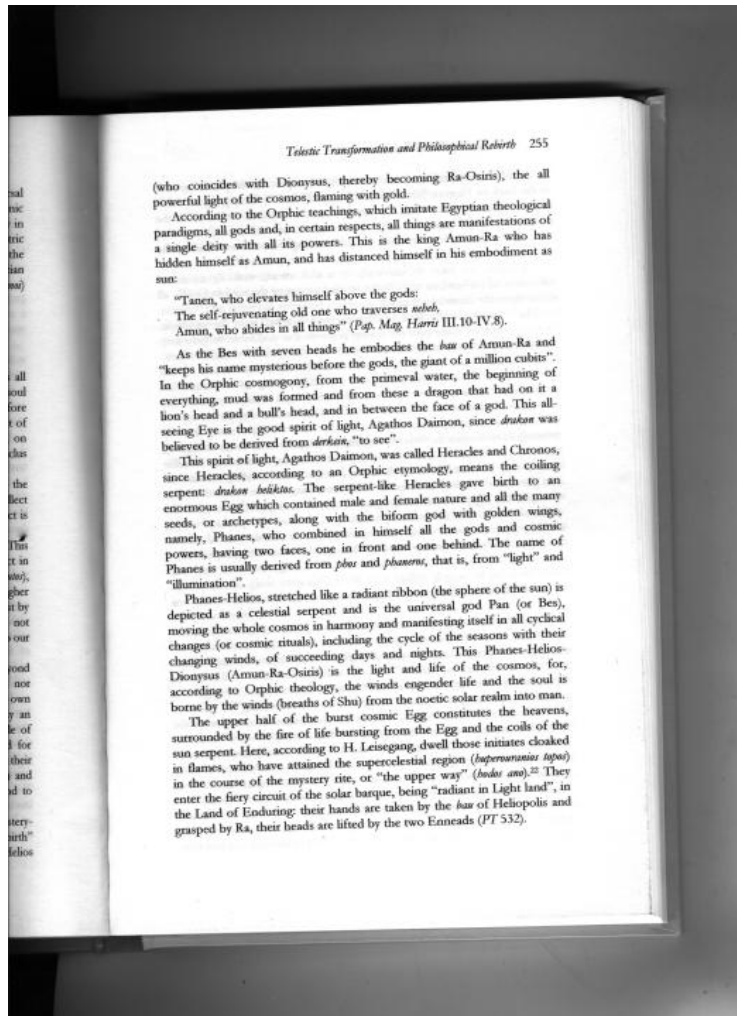
This whole picture of the Orphic/Platonic cosmogony resembles many facets of the role of Fohat and related ideas in the Stanzas, I would say.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 13, 2010 at 7:51am

*From Algis Uzdaviny's "philosophy as a rite of rebirth",
(from ancient Egypt to Neo-Platonism)*

(p. 254) " .. the divine Intellect, symbolized by Helios.."
 See scanned page 255 for rest of text.

There is a parallel between ancient Egyptian theology and later Hellenistic thought (of course, the Egyptian influences on later Greek thought has been immense. Think only of Alexandria as a melting pot of cultures). Phanes-Helios-Dionysus is equated by prof. Uzdavyns with Amun-Ra-Osiris as the light and life of the cosmos.



I hope that there will be some Theosophers who want to dig into this further, e.g. by researching the Secret Doctrine's chapters on symbolism. It would certainly strengthen the story told in the Stanzas. The more parallels, the better. Any volunteers?

Comment by [Andrew W. Smith](#) on November 13, 2010 at 8:56am

Can the book , Algis Uzdavinys "Philosophy as a Rite of Rebirth", be scanned into the system, or would that be a violation of copyright? Where can the book be found, and can I [we] know more about it?

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on November 13, 2010 at 10:05am

This book was published in 2008.

It can be purchased at Amazon.

As a note, Prof. Uzdavinys died this year. Here's some bio info at World Wisdom.

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on November 13, 2010 at 11:02am

The death of Algis Uzdavinys is a great loss. He upheld the minority view among scholars that ancient Greek philosophy was not speculative nor a pile of metaphysical theories. Philosophy was a spiritual path, with spiritual initiation and noble ethics.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 13, 2010 at 12:08pm

The book is a lot cheaper when you buy it from Prometheus Trust

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on November 13, 2010 at 12:35pm

Here is the USA distributor for Prometheus Trust

http://openingmind.net/cart/index.php?main_page=product_info&cP...

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 13, 2010 at 12:37pm

Nice picture of Phanes 'hatched from the world egg & circled by the zodiac, Greco-Roman bas relief C2nd A.D., Modena Museum'. Attributes of him explained elsewhere (see my previous links).

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 13, 2010 at 12:41pm

Eros-Phanes

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 13, 2010 at 1:08pm

*Without the original language sources, we are always up against problems of translation. When HPB gives the "fiery whirlwind" in Stanza 5, verse 1, is this her poetic rendition, or do words meaning "fiery" and "whirlwind" actually occur in the original? Likewise, when Thomas Taylor and W. Wynn Westcott give the "fiery whirlwind" in their translations of a Chaldean Oracle, is this their poetic rendition, or do words meaning "fiery" and "whirlwind" actually occur in the original? I have now found this sentence as translated by G. R. S. Mead in his 1908 book, *The Chaldaean Oracles*, p. 61 (also found in the 2006 reprint of *Echoes from the Gnosis*, p. 325):*

"Thence there leaps forth the Genesis of Matter manifoldly wrought in varied colours. Thence the Fire-flash down-streaming dims its [fair] Flower of Fire, as it leaps forth into the wombs of worlds. For thence all things begin downwards to shoot their admirable rays."

From this, it appears that "fiery whirlwind" is a poetic rendition of the Greek term, since Mead translates it as "fire-flash." This led to a little further checking, and I found that the Greek term used here is "prester." In the large Liddell-Scott Greek-English Lexicon prester is defined as a "hurricane or waterspout attended with lightning." There seem to be a number of different opinions on its exact meaning.

At this point in our investigation, the possibility of a direct parallel with the Stanzas no longer seems likely. The hope was that in the Chaldean Oracles a distinctive term from the Book of Dzyan was preserved when its ideas spread around the world. The idea may well be there, but this is true of dozens if not hundreds of cosmogonies found around the world. Without something distinctive, like the unusual combination, "fiery whirlwind," we no longer have a parallel that provides us with evidence regarding the Stanzas. I have not yet found this combination of words in Sanskrit sources. HPB, too, may have used this phrase poetically in the Stanzas, adopting it from Thomas Taylor.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 13, 2010 at 2:38pm

"At this point in our investigation, the possibility of a direct parallel with the Stanzas no longer seems likely. "

David, that is a pity, especially since you have spent so much time on the Stanzas, if I understand it correctly. The Stanzas will remain a source of inspiration to many, I hope.

There remain some striking similarities between the cosmogony of the Stanzas and other cosmogonies, like the Orphic/Platonic one. That could be a separate thing to research.

For me, it is all about ideas that help us understand life and cosmos a little better. That motivation never changes. I hope it is the same for others. .

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 13, 2010 at 4:10pm

In the passage from Thrice Greatest Hermes that Martin posted for us, two occurrences of the term "matter" (hyle) caught my attention. From HPB's writings, I had understood this to be somewhat similar to mula-prakriti, a term she used to gloss "ever invisible robes" in verse 1 of Stanza 1. But when I asked a Platonist friend about it, he did not think that hyle was used in this way in the Greek writings. He thought that hyle referred to something that was manifested even if invisible, not to some hypothetical primordial matter. He thought that hyle is something that is produced during cosmogony, not something that the cosmos came out of or emerged from. This passage from Thrice Greatest Hermes perhaps explains the situation. It is there found in the section titled "The Orphic Tradition of the Genesis of the World-Egg." The two occurrences are:

"This is what Hesiod supposes by Chaos, what Orpheus calls an Egg—a thing generable, projected from the infinity of Matter (Hylē), and brought into being as follows:" (vol. 1, p. 389)

". . . the Ensouled Egg conceived from Infinite Matter, when it is set in motion from the perpetually flowing Matter below it, 1 exhibits changes of all kinds." (vol. 1, p. 391)

The idea of hyle as the infinite matter from which the world-egg arises, then, is reported to be the Orphic tradition. Hence, it would not necessarily be shared elsewhere in Greek philosophy. This passage provides us with a useful parallel with the Stanzas, in showing a specific agreement with the Orphic tradition preserved in Greek thought on the idea of primordial matter. Because the Orphic tradition is regarded as old within Greek thought, we can conclude that it still preserved early teachings that later fell out of use. Theosophists might say that it preserved the ancient teachings of the Book of Dzyan on this point. For as we know, Theosophy teaches that the dark-skinned Orpheus came from India (BCW 5.306, etc.). .

Comment by [M. Sufilight](#) on November 14, 2010 at 3:37am

Dear friends

My views are:

A few words about Orpheus and Arjuna might be helpful as a sidenote.

H. P. Blavatsky wrote (perhaps edited by GRS. Mead):

"Orpheus (Gr.). Lit., the "tawny one". Mythology makes him the son of Æger and the muse Calliope. Esoteric tradition identifies him with Arjuna, the son of Indra and the disciple of Krishna. He went round the world teaching the nations wisdom and sciences, and establishing mysteries. The very story of his losing his Eurydice and finding her in the underworld or Hades, is another point of resemblance with the story of Arjuna, who goes to Pâtàla (Hades or hell, but in reality the Antipodes or America) and finds there and marries Ulupi, the daughter of the Nâga king. This is as suggestive as the fact that he was considered dark in complexion even by the Greeks, who were never very fair-skinned themselves."

(The Theosophical Glossary, 1892, by Blavatsky, posthumous)

<http://theosophicalglossary.net/>

(As I see it: The Notorious Z. Sitchin, who in fact is not really reliable, is perhaps not far from the mark, when he somewhere says that Arjuna was behind the building of some of the Pyramids in Egypt.)

H. P. Blavatsky wrote:

"The Alexandrian Theosophists were divided into neophytes, initiates, and masters, or hierophants; and their rules were copied from the ancient Mysteries of Orpheus, who, according to Herodotus, brought them from India. Ammonius obligated his disciples by oath not to divulge his higher doctrines, except to those who were proved thoroughly worthy and initiated, and who had learned to regard the gods, the angels, and the demons of other peoples, according to the esoteric hyponoia, or under-meaning."

(BCW. Vol. II, p. 95)

(And I find it interesting, that: The Bhagavad Gita was used - in its esoteric light - as a part of the basic teachings in Blavatsky's own Esoteric Section. And the Bhagavad Gita was based on the Upanishads.)

H. P. Blavatsky wrote:

"Greece did not get her astrological instruction from Egypt or from Chaldaea, but direct from Orpheus, as Lucian tells us.† It was Orpheus, as he says, who imparted the Indian Sciences to nearly all the great monarchs of antiquity; and it was they, the ancient kings favored by the Planetary Gods, who recorded the principles of Astrology—as did Ptolemy, for instance. "

(BCW. Vol. XIV, p. 350)

H. P. Blavatsky wrote:

"Attention has been asked above to the interesting fact that the God Orpheus, of "Thracia" (?), is called the "dark-skinned." Has it escaped notice that he is "supposed to be the Vedic Ribhu or Arbhu, an epithet both of Indra and the Sun"? And if he was "the inventor of letters," and is "placed anterior to both Homer and Hesiod," then what? That Indra taught writing to the Thracian Pelasgians under the guise of Orpheus,† but left his own spokesmen and vehicles, the Brahmans, illiterate until "the dawn of Christianity"? Or that the gentlemen of the West are better at intuitional chronology than conspicuous for impartial research? Orpheus was—in Greece—the son of Apollo or Helios—the sun-god, according to corrected mythology, and from him received the phorminx or lyre of seven strings, i.e., — according to occult phraseology—the seven-fold mystery of the Initiation. Now Indra is the ruler of the bright firmament, the disperser of clouds, "the restorer of the sun to the sky." He is identified with Arjuna in the Samhita and Satapatha-Brahmana (although Prof. Weber denies the existence of any such person as Arjuna, yet there was indeed one), and Arjuna was the Chief of the Pandavas: ‡ and*

though Pandu the white passes for his father, he is yet considered the son of Indra. As throughout India all ancient cyclopean structures are even now attributed to the Pandavas, so all similar structures at the West were anciently ascribed to the Pelasgians. Moreover, as shown well by Pococke—laughed at because too intuitional and too fair though, perchance, less philologically learned—the Pandavas were in Greece, where many traces of them can be shown. In the Mahabhârata, Arjuna is taught the occult philosophy by Krishna (personification of the Universal Divine Principle); and the less mythological view of Orpheus presents him to us as “a divine bard or priest in the service of Zagreus. . . founder of the Mysteries . . .” the inventor “of everything, in fact, that was supposed to have contributed to the civilisation and initiation into a more humane worship of the deity . . .” Are not these striking parallels? And is it not significant that in the cases of both Arjuna and Orpheus the sublimer aspects of religion should have been imparted along with the occult methods of attaining it by masters of the mysteries? Real Devanagari—non-phonetic characters—meant formerly the outward signals, so to say, the signs used in the intercommunication between gods and initiated mortals. Hence their great sacredness and the silence maintained throughout the Vedic and the Brahmanical periods about any object concerned with, or referring to, reading and writing. It was the language of the Gods. If our Western Critics can only understand what the Ancient Hindu writers meant by Bhutalipi, so often mentioned in their mystical writings, they will be in a position to ascertain the source from which the Hindus first derived their knowledge of writing.

A secret language, common to all schools of occult science once prevailed throughout the world. Hence—Orpheus learnt “letters” in the course of his initiation. He is identified with Indra; according to Herodotus he brought the art of writing from India; his swarthier complexion than that of the Thracians points to his Indo-Aryan nationality—supposing him to have been “a bard and priest” and not a god; the Pelasgians are said to have been born in Thracia; they are believed (at the West) to have first possessed the art of writing, and taught the Phoenicians; from the latter all modern alphabets derive. I submit, then, with all these coincidences and sequences, whether the balance of proof is on the side of the theory that the Aryans transmitted the art of writing to the people of the West; or on the opposite, and wholly unsupported, one that they, with their caste of scholarly Brahmans, their noble secret sacerdotal and “barbarous” popular vernacular—in the high antiquity, their redundant, high-class literature, their acquaintance with the most wonderful and recondite potentialities of the human spirit—were illiterate until generations upon generations before the era of Pânini the grammarian and last of Rishis. When the famous theorists of the Western

colleges can show us a river running from its mouth back to its spring sources in the mountain nullahs, then may we be asked to believe their theory of Aryan illiteracy. The history of human intellectual development shows that humanity always passes through the stage of ideography or pictography before attaining that of cursive writing. It therefore remains with the Western critics who oppose the antiquity of Aryan Scriptures to show us the pictographic proofs which support their position. As these are notoriously absent, it appears they would have us believe that our ancestors passed immediately from illiteracy to the Devanagari characters of Pânini's time."

(BCW. Vol. V, p. 304-307; footnotes omitted in this post.)

http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v5/y1883_146.htm

The above are of course just my views.

M. Sufilight .

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 14, 2010 at 6:01am

David, Lucas Siorvanes deals specifically with Proclus' view of Matter on p.183-184 of his book on Proclus (I'll abbreviate this as "P"). Since my Windows is broke, I can't post much scanned & OCRd excerpts from this at this time. For now, I can say that for P., Matter "is not a thing, it has no substantive essence. It is just a power". (a power to receive). " Matter is one and simple for all the universe. It complements the One cause of the universe, and has, to a degree, value. Matter is an incomplete power, a potential, a power to receive (the Aristotelian sense). Matter as indefinite and indeterminate is a mode of unlimitedness."

Plotinus has a different view of matter, maybe more of that later.

I believe that Proclus stayed true, as much as he could, to the Orphic roots of Platonism. .

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 14, 2010 at 10:18am

Further on fohat, here is what HPB says in the newly published Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge, titled The Secret Doctrine Commentaries, p. 363:

"Mr. Atkinson: Is Fohat in the Chinese represented by two Chinese syllables?"

Mme. Blavatsky: It is from those parts something I have been asking many times. Fo means brilliant.

Mr. Atkinson: I know the root and the character of the Chinese syllable 'Fo.' If you could get the Chinese characters, I could turn it up in the Chinese dictionary.

Mme. Blavatsky: And in the Japanese, too. I don't think it is a real word, because some of them call it Fohat.

Mr. Atkinson: It would be 'Ho' in Japanese. And it would represent the idea of 'Ho,' as 'Ho' was a [] part of the phoenix. If it is the same as the Chinese, I mean. It becomes 'Ho' in Japanese, and then becomes the 'Ho' of the phoenix, as part of the compound name of the phoenix.

Mme. Blavatsky: Fohat is also a relation to the cycles, because the intensity of this vital force changes with every cycle.

Mr. Atkinson: It is in the celestial cosmogony of China. It is in the celestial beginning and the cosmogenesis.

Mme. Blavatsky: I wish you would look somewhere where you could find it, because I have been looking for it in India.

Mr. Atkinson: If you will only give me the Chinese characters, I will find it at once.

Mme. Blavatsky: I have got it somewhere, but not in the Chinese."

From this, it seems that HPB did not know what word fohat was, any more than we do. It sounds like she asked about it many times, and never received an answer. She looked for it in India and did not find it. She doubted whether it is a real word. When she says that "some of them call it Fohat," she is presumably referring to her Mahatma teachers. Taking all this into consideration, it seems that the word fohat does come from her teachers or from secret sources such as the Stanzas of Dzyan. It does not seem to be a word like svabhavat or yinsin that can be found in sources publicly available in her time. .

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on November 14, 2010 at 11:18am

Google books allows one to read the entry on hyle in this lexicon- do not know if it is anywhere else online.

Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon by Peters .

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 14, 2010 at 3:23pm

On the Eros/Phanes connection with fohat, here is a relevant paragraph from Jacques' compilation on fohat:

"S.D. Volume 1 Commentary (p.109)

(c) Fohat, being one of the most, if not the most important character in esoteric Cosmogony, should be minutely described. As in the oldest Grecian Cosmogony, differing widely from the later mythology, Eros is the third person in the primeval trinity: Chaos, Gaea, Eros: answering to the Kabalistic En-Soph (for Chaos is SPACE, [[chaino]], "void") the Boundless ALL, Shekinah and the Ancient of Days, or the Holy Ghost; so Fohat is one thing in the yet unmanifested Universe and another in the phenomenal and Cosmic World. In the latter, he is that Occult, electric, vital power, which, under the Will of the Creative Logos, unites and brings together all forms, giving them the first impulse which becomes in time law. But in the unmanifested Universe, Fohat is no more this, than Eros is the later brilliant winged Cupid, or LOVE. Fohat has naught to do with Kosmos yet, since Kosmos is not born, and the gods still sleep in the bosom of "Father-Mother." He is an abstract philosophical idea. He produces nothing yet by himself; he is simply that potential creative power in virtue of whose action the NOUMENON of all future phenomena divides, so to speak, but to reunite in a mystic supersensuous act, and emit the creative ray. When the "Divine Son" breaks forth, then Fohat becomes the propelling force, the active Power which causes the ONE to become TWO and THREE -- on the Cosmic plane of manifestation. The triple One differentiates into the many, and then Fohat is transformed into that force which brings together the elemental atoms and makes them aggregate and combine. We find an echo of this primeval teaching in early Greek mythology. Erebus and Nux are born out of Chaos, and, under the action of Eros, give birth in their turn to Ether and Hemera, the light of the superior and the light of the inferior or terrestrial regions."

HPB here speaks of the trinity, Chaos, Gaea, and Eros. Elsewhere in the SD she speaks of the Orphic trinity, Phanes (or Eros), Chaos, and Chronos. From the materials that Martin provided, we can see that the first trinity is from Hesiod's *Cosmogony*, the oldest surviving Greek text on cosmogony, and that the second trinity is an Orphic trinity. From these materials, it is not clear to me if this would be considered THE Orphic trinity. In any case, the fact that Eros/Phanes plays various roles in these cosmogonies is no different than HPB describing many different roles played by fohat. In other words, it is very hard to determine exactly what or who fohat is.

The Vedic trinity is also a rather fluid, although it was held by ancient Indian writers (cited by Yaska in his *Nirukta*) to consist of Agni, the god of fire on earth, Indra or Vayu, the god of the air or atmosphere, and Surya/Aditya, the sun in the heavens. These correspond to the important trinity of manas, "mind," prana, "breath" or "life," and vak, "speech" or "matter," in reverse order. So Agni corresponds to vak, Indra/Vayu to prana, and Surya/Aditya to manas. I had previously presented evidence linking fohat to prana or vayu, the breath of life or air. However, in this trinity, fohat seems to correspond much more closely to Agni, the god of fire. So I must conclude that fohat is much more likely to be Agni than Vayu in the Vedic trinity. This is supported by the one Vedic reference that HPB gives in connection with fohat, where she says that it is Apam-napat.

"S.D. Volume 2 Commentary (p.400)

There, the gods rested, and Fohat () reigns ever since*

() Bear in mind that the Vedic and Avestian name of Fohat is Apam-Napat. In the Avesta he stands between the fire-yazatas and the water-yazatas. The literal meaning is "Son of the Waters," but these "waters" are not the liquid we know, but Ether -- the fiery waters of space. Fohat is the "Son of Ether" in its highest aspect, Akasa, the Mother-Father of the primitive Seven, and of Sound or LOGOS. Fohat is the light of the latter. See Book I."*

Apam-napat, "son of the waters," is a very ancient god, who we later no longer hear of. So our references to him are scanty. It is thought that he was simply absorbed into Agni, the god of fire, who is also called the son of the waters. There is no consensus on what Apam-napat originally represented, although he is normally associated with fire. Some have suggested lightning. As may be seen, there are some similarities with the Greek prester, although Apam-napat is not

associated with wind. There is no obvious connection between fohat as Apam-napat or Agni and fohat as Eros or Phanes. .

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 14, 2010 at 7:29pm

David, this is very complicated stuff. I digged a bit in Isis Unveiled, and on the internet, and found the following points that may be relevant:

<http://books.google.nl/books?id=FL2dhiMooj0C&pg=PA118&lpg=P...>

Eros only gives an creative impulse..does it cause the Golden Mundane Egg to split?

H.P.B. seems to suggest this in Isis unveiled.

See: Isis Unveiled, vol.ii, 267 seq. A few points:

The germ which fecundated the Mother principle [the waters - Nari] is called Nara, the divine Spirit or Holy Ghost. Nara is Father-Heaven (the spirit of God). So, we have first Nara, then Vach (active force) in the cosmic process.

p. 268: The secret Trimurti: Nara, Nari, Viraj

footnote: protogonos, Archetypal Adam Kadmon. (Ancient of Days or ten sephiroth , ten prajapatis)

(Here is Eros-Phanes again, as protogonos is a designation or epithet for it. We have advanced in the cosmogonic scheme now, it seems). Question: is Fohat also called protogonos, or first-born? Someone willing to check the SD?

p. 269: Shekinah is the Hindu Vach. (in the SD she differentiates between Shekinah and Holy Ghost [Nara] in the quote David gives). Vach is a more definite transformation of Aditi.

All those transformations and names are terribly confusing. A bit more systematic treatment would be appreciated.

Also, G.R.S. Mead (or was it Thomas Taylor?) says about Hesiod that he mutilated the cosmogony that originated from Orpheus. What the Orphic triad is, may be very difficult to establish.

I will have a look at the Proclus material again. This will take time.. .

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 14, 2010 at 8:14pm

From chapter 7 G.R.S. Mead on Orphic Theology:

Heading PHANES, ERICAPÆUS AND METIS

'For from within its periphery a male--female living Power [the absolute "Animal"] is ideated, by the foreknowledge of the divine [Father] Spirit [Æther], which is in it [the Egg], which Power Orpheus calls Phanes, for on its shining forth the whole universe shone forth by the light of Fire-- the most glorious of the elements --brought to perfection in the Moist [Principle-- Chaos]. '

So, Aether- Chaos - Phanes [Absolute "Animal"] seems to be the Orphic triad we're looking for. (In another chapter of his book, Mead connects this to the tetrad of which Phanes is the head).

(search results on my site)

and those on Phanes. .

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 15, 2010 at 5:17am

In addition, Phanes is also equated with AION, as indicated in the G.R.S. Mead writings and/or elsewhere. AION is related to Chronos (which later becomes Kronos, who devours its children - except Zeus, etc.- vide SD). This all makes sense. Phanes as Aion/Chronos is an event-generator. It (male-female) sets things in motion, gives an creative impulse, hence it starts a new cycle. Aion also has the connotation of a Cycle, as HPB writes somewhere (SD?).

Anyway, there are some philosophers who understand that events and relations are logically prior to time. Time may be an artifact, an experience of events.

Looking at Isis unveiled, we see that the creative triad (see diagrams) involves Kether-Chochmah-Binah. These seem to be the three Logoi. Binah seems to equate with Taurus (per HPB in IU), containing the seeds of Life. Logos Spermaticos, it

seems. Phanes is dual. Does it equate with Chochmah in Kabbalah? Note that Gemini is also dual. Deep food for thought. It all seems to correlate and add up. .

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 15, 2010 at 1:05pm

The quotations on Orpheus that M. Sufilight posted for us are helpful, especially for those who may not have the time to look these up themselves. They give the Theosophical position that Greece received the wisdom teachings from India, as did all other countries of the fifth root-race civilizations, now referred to as those of the Indo-European language families. Part of this idea is that the original Book of Kiu-te formed the basis of the Hebrew, Egyptian, Chaldean, Indian, and other cosmogonies of the world (SD vol. 1. pp. xlii-xliii).

In both the second quotation (BCW, Vol. II, p. 95) and the last quotation (BCW, Vol. V, p. 304-307), the fact put forward that Orpheus brought teachings from India is attributed to Herodotus.

". . . the ancient Mysteries of Orpheus, who, according to Herodotus, brought them from India."

"Hence—Orpheus learnt 'letters' in the course of his initiation. He is identified with Indra; according to Herodotus he brought the art of writing from India;"

I have never found any such statement in the famous Histories written by Herodotus. On the contrary, Herodotus says that Greece got the mysteries from Egypt. Has anyone else found in the writings of Herodotus any statement supporting the Indian source? .

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 15, 2010 at 1:48pm

No reference of Herodotus, but an opinion of Alexander Wilder:see footnote 24.

"But despite the assertion of Herodotus and others that the Bacchic Mysteries were in reality Egyptian, there exists strong probability that they came originally from India, and were Sivaic or Buddhistical. Coré-Persephoneia was but the goddess Parasu-pani or Bhavani, the patroness of the Thugs, called also Gorée; and Zagreus is from Chakra, a country extending from ocean to ocean. If this is a Turanian or Tartar Story, we can easily recognize the "Horns" as the crescent worn by lama-priests: and translating god-names as merely sacerdotal designations, assume the whole legend to be based on a tale of Lama Succession and transmigration. The

Titans would then be the Daityas of India, who were opposed to the faith of the northern tribes; and the title Dionysus but signify the god or chief-priest of Nysa, or Mount Meru. The whole story of Orpheus, the institutor or rather the reformer of the Bacchic rites, has a Hindu ring all through."

Comment by [M. Sufilight](#) on November 15, 2010 at 4:28pm

A few views

Issedones

"Herodotus, who allegedly got his information through both Greek and Scythian sources, describes them as living east of Scythia and north of the Massagetae, while the geographer Ptolemy (VI.16.7) appears to place the trading stations of Issedon Scythica and Issedon Serica in the Tarim Basin.[3] They may have been identical with the people described in Chinese sources as the Wusun [4]. J.D.P. Bolton places them further north-east, on the south-western slopes of the Altay mountains.[5]"

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Issedones>

Pelasgian

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pelasgian>

Scythia

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scythia>

Arimaspi

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arimaspians>

Maybe the below is the place....thought about by Blavatsky when mentioning Herodotus views about the origin of Orphic teachings...

Herodotus wrote in Book II, 50-52 (translated a bit with dead-letters I think):

"50. Moreover the naming 51 of almost all the gods has come to Hellas from Egypt: for that it has come from the Barbarians I find by inquiry is true, and I am of opinion that most probably it has come from Egypt, because, except in the case of Poseidon and the Dioscuroi (in accordance with that which I have said before), and

also of Hera and Hestia and Themis and the Charites and Nereïds, the Egyptians have had the names of all the other gods in their country for all time. What I say here is that which the Egyptians think themselves: but as for the gods whose names they profess that they do not know, these I think received their naming from the Pelasgians, except Poseidon; but about this god the Hellenes learnt from the Libyans, for no people except the Libyans have had the name of Poseidon from the first and have paid honour to this god always. Nor, it may be added, have the Egyptians any custom of worshipping heroes.

51. These observances then, and others besides these which I shall mention, the Hellenes have adopted from the Egyptians; but to make, as they do, the images of Hermes with the phallos they have learnt not from the Egyptians but from the Pelasgians, the custom having been received by the Athenians first of all the Hellenes and from these by the rest; for just at the time when the Athenians were beginning to rank among the Hellenes, the Pelasgians became dwellers with them in their land, and from this very cause it was that they began to be counted as Hellenes. Whosoever has been initiated in the mysteries of the Cabeiroi, which the Samothrakians perform having received them from the Pelasgians, that man knows the meaning of my speech; for these very Pelasgians who became dwellers with the Athenians used to dwell before that time in Samothrake, and from them the Samothrakians received their mysteries. So then the Athenians were the first of the Hellenes who made the images of Hermes with the phallos, having learnt from the Pelasgians; and the Pelasgians told a sacred story about it, which is set forth in the mysteries in Samothrake.

52. Now the Pelasgians formerly were wont to make all their sacrifices calling upon the gods in prayer, as I know from that which I heard at Dodona, but they gave no title or name to any of them, for they had not yet heard any, but they called them gods ({theous}) from some such notion as this, that they had set ({thentes}) in order all things and so had the distribution of everything. "

(Translated into English by G. C. Macaulay)

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2707/2707-h/book2.htm>

Herodotus wrote in Book IV, 13, 25-27, 57 (translated a bit with dead-letters I think):

"13. Aristeas however the son of Caÿstrobios, a man of Proconnesos, said in the verses which he composed, that he came to the land of the

Issedonians being possessed by Phoebus, and that beyond the Issedonians dwelt Arimaspians, a one-eyed race, and beyond these the gold-guarding griffins, and beyond them the Hyperboreans extending as far as the sea: and all these except the Hyperboreans, beginning with the Arimaspians, were continually making war on their neighbours, and the Issedonians were gradually driven out of their country by the Arimaspians and the Scythians by the Issedonians, and so the Kimmerians, who dwelt on the Southern Sea, being pressed by the Scythians left their land. Thus neither does he agree in regard to this land with the report of the Scythians."

.....

"25. So far as these, I say, the land is known; but concerning the region to the North of the bald-headed men no one can speak with certainty, for lofty and impassable mountains divide it off, and no one passes over them. However these bald-headed men say (though I do not believe it) that the mountains are inhabited by men with goats' feet; and that after one has passed beyond these, others are found who sleep through six months of the year. This I do not admit at all as true. However, the country to the East of the bald-headed men is known with certainty, being inhabited by the Issedonians, but that which lies beyond both the bald-headed men and the Issedonians towards the North Wind is unknown, except so far as we know it from the accounts given by these nations which have just been mentioned."

.....

"In other respects however this race also is said to live righteously, and their women have equal rights with the men. "

.....

"27. These then also are known; but as to the region beyond them, it is the Issedonians who report that there are there one-eyed men and gold-guarding griffins; and the Scythians report this having received it from them, and from the Scythians we, that is the rest of mankind, have got our belief; and we call them in Scythian language Arimaspians, for the Scythians call the number one arima and the eye spu."

.....

"57. What language however the Pelasgians used to speak I am not able with certainty to say. But if one must pronounce judging by those that still remain of the Pelasgians who dwelt in the city of Creston 60 above the Tyrsenians, and who were once neighbours of the race now called Dorian, dwelling then in the land which is now called Thessalotis, and also by those that remain of the Pelasgians who settled at Plakia and Skylake in the region of the Hellespont, who before that had been settlers with the Athenians, 61 and of the natives of the various other towns which are really Pelasgian, though they have lost the name, —if one must pronounce judging by these, the Pelasgians used to speak a Barbarian language. If therefore all the Pelasgian race was such as these, then the Attic race, being Pelasgian, at the same time when it changed and became Hellenic, unlearnt also its language. For the people of Creston do not speak the same language with any of those who dwell about them, nor yet do the people of Phakia, but they speak the same language one as the other: and by this it is proved that they still keep unchanged the form of language which they brought with them when they migrated to these places. "

(Translated into English by G. C. Macaulay)

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2707/2707-h/book4.htm>

And Herodotus live about 484 BC – c. 425 BC and thus after Buddha's had arrival and death.

Orpheus, the Katha Upanishad, and the Secret Way Beyond Death

(Certain similarities between Orpheus doctrine and the Katha Upanishad)

<http://www.frankmarrero.com/JFKUOrpheus/Orpheus-Secret.2.html>

H. P. Blavatsky wrote:

"And now we may turn to the Pelasgians. Notwithstanding Niebuhr's rebuke who, speaking of the historian in general, shows him as hating "the spurious philology, out of which the pretences to knowledge on the subject of such extinct people arise," the origin of the Pelasgians is speculated upon to have been either that of swarthy Asiatics (Pell-asici) or from some mariners—from the Greek Pelagos, the sea; or again to be sought for in the Biblical Peleg! The only divinity of their Pantheon known well to Western History is Orpheus, also the "swarthy," the "dark-skinned"; represented for the Pelasgians by Xoanon, their "Divine Image." Now if the Pelasgians were Asiatics, they must have been either Turanians or Semites, or—Aryans. That they could not be the former, and must have been the last-named, is shown on Herodotus' testimony, who declared them the forefathers of the Greeks—though they spoke, as he says, "a most barbarous language." Further, unerring philology shows that the vast number of roots common both to Greek and Latin, are easily explained by the assumption of a common Pelasgic linguistic and ethnical stock in both nationalities. But then how about the Sanskrit roots traced in the Greek and Latin languages? The same roots must have been present in the Pelasgian tongues? We who place the origin of the Pelasgi far beyond the Biblical ditch of historic chronology, have reasons to believe that the "barbarous language" mentioned by Herodotus was simply "the primitive and now extinct Aryan tongue" that preceded the Vedic Sanskrit. Who could they be, these Pelasgians? They are described generally on the meagre data in hand as a highly intellectual, receptive, active and simple people, chiefly occupied with agriculture; warlike when necessary, though preferring peace. We are told that they built canals, subterranean water-works, dams, and walls of astounding strength and most excellent construction. And their religion and worship originally consisted in a mystic service of those natural powers—the sun, wind, water, and air (our Soorya, Maruts, Varuna and Vayu), whose influence is visible in the growth of the fruits of the earth, moreover, some of their tribes were ruled by priests, while others stood under the patriarchal rule of the head of the clan or family. All this reminds one of the nomads, the Brahmanic Aryas of old under the sway of their Rishis, to whom were subject every distinct family or clan. While the Pelasgians were acquainted with the art of writing, and had thus "a vast element of culture in their possession

before the dawn of history," we are told (by the same philologists) that our ancestors knew of no writing until the dawn of Christianity!"

http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v5/y1883_146.htm

I did not find a direct reference given by Blavatsky on that Herosotus had mentioned that Orpheus came with the teachings from India. But there are certain indications given in the above. Maybe Blavatsky had access to other papers now available to many these days.

M. Sufilight .

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 15, 2010 at 5:01pm

The reference to hyle that Nicholas posted from the book, Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon, by Francis Peters, is the most detailed such entry I have seen. It makes clear that, like the Sanskrit word prakriti that is also translated as "matter," the Greek hyle does not refer to matter as science has defined it for the last hundred years. Both prakriti and hyle refer primarily to something that is invisible to the senses. Similarly, just as some Indian philosophical schools, but not others, accepted atomic matter, so some Greek philosophical schools, but not others, accepted atomic matter. Then, too, the atom was defined differently than in modern science. There seem to be close parallels between prakriti and hyle, and also between ousia and svabhava. Francis Peters uses "substance" for the Greek word ousia, which he also translates as "essence." Peters shows that there were different ideas among the Greeks of what matter is.

The definition that Martin posted from the book by Lucas Siorvanes giving Proclus' view of matter appears to follow Aristotle's definition. According to Peters, the idea of hyle as matter was started by Aristotle. However, another book that I have, Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion by W. L. Reese, lists a use of this term by Protagoras and by Plato, who both preceded Aristotle. According to both Peters and Reese, and as Martin said, Plotinus had a different view of matter. Being a monist, for him matter comes from "the one." This is also accepted by most exponents of the monistic or non-dualistic Advaita Vedanta of India, despite T. Subba Row saying otherwise.

Their "one," called brahman or atman, is accepted by all Advaita Vedantins to be both the material cause and the instrumental cause, like clay and the potter. From this,

Subba Row logically deduces that brahman must be matter as well as spirit. But most Advaita Vedantins regard brahman as pure consciousness, and show matter as coming from this. This is a point of contention between Advaita Vedanta and the early Theosophical teachings, and is what the debate between Subba Row and the Almora Swami was about. The Stanzas, with their "ever invisible robes," and their "darkness alone filled the boundless all," agree with Subba Row's interpretation on this question of what matter is. The Orphic tradition cited by G.R.S. Mead in Thrice Greatest Hermes also agrees with the Stanzas on this. .

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 16, 2010 at 3:15pm

Regarding the question: Is Fohat also called protogonos, or first-born? A search of Jacques' compilation on fohat does not show the word first-born.

On what THE Orphic trinity is, this may not be a fair question. There seem to be different trinities described at different stages of manifestation, even if we limit the trinities we are seeking to cosmogony. In explaining the fundamental propositions of the Secret Doctrine, four items are listed at SD 1.16. By excluding the first, the Absolute, we have a basic trinity. But this trinity does not include fohat. It seems that we must go one step further to get a trinity with fohat. So the Orphic trinity of Aether - Chaos - Phanes might be once or twice removed. Another problem is how we understand Chaos. Is it primary and always existing, or is it a first manifestation? SD 1.336 fn. says:

"Orphic theogony is purely Oriental and Indian in its Spirit. The successive transformations it has undergone, have now separated it widely from the spirit of ancient Cosmogony, as may be seen by comparing it even with Hesiod's theogony. Yet the truly Aryan Hindu spirit breaks forth everywhere in both Hesiod's and the Orphic theogony. (See the remarkable work of James Darmesteter, Cosmogonies Aryennes, in his Essais Orientaux.) Thus the original Greek conception of Chaos is that of the Secret Wisdom Religion. In Hesiod, therefore, Chaos is infinite, boundless, endless and beginningless in duration, an abstraction at the same time as a visible presence. Space filled with darkness, which is primordial matter in its pre-cosmic state. For in its etymological sense, Chaos is Space, according to Aristotle, and Space is the ever Unseen and Unknowable Deity in our philosophy."

But SD 1.425 recognizes that in Hesiod's Cosmogony Chaos was produced or generated, and hence is not beginningless:

"Hesiod begins his theogony with: "Chaos of all things was the first produced,"† thus allowing the inference that its cause or producer must be passed over in reverential silence. Homer in his poems ascends no higher than Night, whom he represents Zeus as reverencing.

† [[Etoi men protista chaos genet; geneto]] being considered in antiquity as meaning "was generated" and not simply was. (See "Taylor's Introd. to the Parmenides of Plato," p. 260.)"

Chaos is similarly described in the Orphic cosmogony that Martin posted from G.R.S. Mead's translation in Thrice Greatest Hermes:

"This is what Hesiod supposes by Chaos, what Orpheus calls an Egg—a thing generable, projected from the infinity of Matter (Hylē), and brought into being as follows:" (vol. 1, p. 389)

Here, then, it is "the infinity of Matter (Hylē)" that corresponds to "Space filled with darkness, which is primordial matter in its pre-cosmic state" of the Secret Wisdom Religion, not Chaos. Mead writes in his book, Orpheus, about "The Primordial Triad" (p. 63), which is described as a "thrice unknown darkness." Again, this is not Chaos, but precedes it.

I could not find anything on the question of whether Hesiod mutilated the cosmogony that originated from Orpheus. But in the same vein HPB quotes Max Muller regarding Hesiod, at SD 2.450:

"Thus Mr. Max Muller declares that: "Nowhere is the wide distance which separates the ancient poems of India from the most ancient literature of Greece more clearly felt, than when we compare the growing myths of the Veda with the full grown and decayed myths on which the poetry of Homer is founded. The Veda is the real Theogony of the Aryan races, while that of Hesiod is a distorted caricature of the original image." This is a sweeping assertion, and perhaps rather unjust in its general application. But why not try to account for it? Orientalists cannot do so, for they reject the chronology of the Secret Doctrine, and could hardly admit the fact that between the Rig-Vedic hymns and Hesiod's Theogony tens of thousands of years have elapsed. So they fail to see that the Greek myths are no longer the primitive symbolical language of the Initiates, the disciples of the gods-Hierophants, the divine ancient "sacrificers," and that disfigured by the distance, and encumbered by the exuberant growth of human profane fancy, they

now stand like distorted images of stars in running waves. But if Hesiod's Cosmogony and Theogony are to be viewed as caricatures of the original images, how much more so the myths in the Hebrew Genesis in the sight of those, for whom they are no more divine revelation or the word of God, than Hesiod's Theogony is for Mr. Gladstone."

If tens of thousands of years elapsed between the Rig-Vedic hymns and Hesiod's Theogony, and if the teachings of the Secret Doctrine "antedate the Vedas" (SD 1.xxxvii), the origins of the Stanzas of Dzyan would be very far back indeed. .

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 16, 2010 at 6:08pm

David, as to THE trinity, and especially the Absolute, I tend to take relativity and evolution into account (as De Purucker does) - so, infinite recursion would be the game (fractal/holographic) and Absolute but an abstract concept. It is just where one begins to focus or what one takes as a starting point in the fractal where "the first triad" begins. It is a relative thing. A view that differs from Plato and Proclus, I think. There are arguments against this, I know, and the matter may never be settled.

But taking the boundless as Space (infinite, the Zero), the bound as the One which imposes limits, which is the Third? Pure Being? Essence and Substance? Autoousia. It is so, according to Proclus. (pp. 161 seq. Siorvanes). And then he differentiates between the being in Intellect from pure, intelligible Being. But that's a whole metaphysics on its own. Rosan (philosophy of Proclus, p. 123 seq.) gives ten levels or grades "on which these two principles [definiteness and infinity] are found."

It is most valuable to contemplate these ten grades. I give the first one:

"1. The One itself has definiteness in the form of Definiteness-itself and infinity in Infinity-itself; the latter is mythologically referred to as Chaos, which was supposed by the Greeks to have been the origin of all things; and the former is called Ether (Aither), since this, according to the Orphic theology, was produced by Time together with Chaos. "

' "Infinity" here means infinite power, since there can be no infinite size; it is infinite only in regard to its effects which cannot comprehend it, but it is not infinite in itself.' and he refers in a fn to EI 86 and EI 93 of Proclus). 'In the material world, however, there may be infinite divisibility'.

As to protogonos ,or first-born, it would be worthwhile to scan the SD or IU or BCW for this term.

I do not have the complete BCW in possession. Is it online? .

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on November 16, 2010 at 8:10pm

BCW online; minus the bio-bibliographies, based on Vic Hao Chin's CD-Rom:

<http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/> .

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 17, 2010 at 3:02pm

Thanks, Nicholas. That makes research a bit easier. .

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 17, 2010 at 11:17pm

I took a little trip today. I visited a library that has the set of the Loeb Classical Library series of Greek texts. I checked the reference to Lucian that HPB cites here (found in vol. 5 of his works):

"Greece did not get her astrological instruction from Egypt or from Chaldea, but direct from Orpheus, as Lucian tells us.† It was Orpheus, as he says, who imparted the Indian Sciences to nearly all the great monarchs of antiquity; and it was they, the ancient kings favored by the Planetary Gods, who recorded the principles of Astrology—as did Ptolemy, for instance. "

(BCW. Vol. XIV, p. 350)

The first sentence of this quotation is correct, but Lucian says nothing about Indian Sciences. He said that Orpheus lived in Thrace. He said that astrology was first delivered to men by the Aethiopians. .

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 18, 2010 at 10:11pm

It will not be easy to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzyan while the origins of half of the book they were published in, The Secret Doctrine, remain untraced. I

wonder if anyone today in 2010 would turn to books published in the 1800s for reliable information on nearly any subject. Generally speaking, half of what is in *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) necessarily comes from such books. The portions of *The Secret Doctrine* that quote the then current science are generally acknowledged to be outdated and superseded by later scientific findings. But the same is true in the fields of history, religion, languages, oriental studies, etc. Until this material is sifted out and recognized to be just as outdated and superseded as the material from the then current science, we will lack a solid foundation for our investigations. Moreover, the Theosophical teachings will continue to be disregarded by the intelligentsia, because much of what is cited in support of them is itself no longer supportable.

One of the teachings of Theosophy is the existence of a once universal Wisdom Religion. Leaving aside previous promulgations of this Wisdom Religion that are too remote to be traced, the current promulgation of it is said to have originated in central Asia and India, and from there to have spread to most of the rest of the world. The modern Western nations received it primarily by way of its spread from India to Greece, and slightly later to the early Latin-speaking countries. In order to support this teaching of Theosophy, the Greek historian Herodotus is cited as saying that their mysteries were brought from India (BCW 5.305 fn., 13.235, 14.270, 293), or that the art of writing was brought from India (BCW 5.306, 13.235), and the Greek satirist Lucian is cited as saying that the Indian sciences including astrology came from India (BCW 14.350). But these Greek writers do not in fact say these things. Their writings have long been available, although most Theosophists do not yet seem to be aware of the information found in them. This is apparently because they have usually regarded *The Secret Doctrine* like a sacred and infallible scripture, whose references do not need to be checked or verified.

These inaccurate Theosophical references may have been based on accepting that the Pelasgians are of Indian origin and spoke a Sanskritic language. If this is accepted, then when Herodotus says that the mysteries of the Cabeiri came from Samothrace and the Pelasgians, it would follow that these mysteries came from India. This latter, of course, is not a very accurate statement to make unless the assumption that the Pelasgians were Indians is spelled out, as it is in one place (BCW 5.301) but not in the others. Today, I am not aware of any Greek scholar who accepts that the Pelasgians are of Indian origin. The idea that Greece is indebted to Indian sources, and that the Pelasgians are of Indian origin and spoke Sanskrit,

may be traced back to Edward Pococke's 1852 book, India in Greece; or, Truth in Mythology, Containing the Sources of the Hellenic Race, the Colonisation of Egypt and Palestine, the Wars of the Grand Lama, and the Bud'histic Propaganda in Greece. Pococke is approvingly referred to in BCW 5.306 where a few pages earlier the Pelasgians are said to be Aryans or Indians (p. 301), and where two of the inaccurate references to Herodotus, mentioned above, are made.

Pococke does not make the inaccurate statements about what Herodotus or Lucian said, but rather bases his research on names found in Greek mythology that he traces back to Sanskrit. Pococke's book can be downloaded from Google Books. There was a second edition in 1856. The bibliographic information found in BCW 13.400, 14.563, and 15.431 confuses this author with an earlier Edward Pococke who lived in the 1600s. This 1852 or 1856 book was reprinted and revised in 2003 by Ravi Prakash Arya under the title, Indian Origin of Greece and Ancient World: E. Pococke's Thesis Re-edited and Revised, and published by International Vedic Vision in association with Indian Foundation for Vedic Science. These groups, too, like Theosophy, want to show that India was the source of much of Greek thought.

There can be no doubt that the Indian origin of the Greek mysteries is an accepted Theosophical teaching. What is in doubt is the evidence cited in support of this Theosophical teaching. The Greek writers cited do not actually say what they are claimed to say. Then, Pococke's 1852 book, India in Greece, which is the single major source of this idea, is outdated and has long been superseded. Theosophists will have to find better support for their teachings. The roughly half of The Secret Doctrine that gives supporting citations and material needs to be entirely re-written using up-to-date research and currently available sources. At the moment, there is no more evidence that Hesiod's cosmogony is a distant copy of the Stanzas of Dzyan than that the Stanzas of Dzyan are a modern concoction based on Hesiod's cosmogony. .

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 19, 2010 at 4:51am

"But these Greek writers do not in fact say these things. Their writings have long been available, although most Theosophists do not yet seem to be aware of the information found in them. This is apparently because they have usually regarded The Secret Doctrine like a sacred and infallible scripture, whose references do not need to be checked or verified."

Yes, and that is the reason Theosophy is generally frowned upon and ignored by contemporary academia/academics. To give an example of another statement that is questionable: it is said in Blavatsky's writings that former races (up to and including the Atlanteans) had no sense of smell.

Apart from the fact that there is scant evidence of such a race, biologists have discovered that the structures concerned with smell, the rhinencephalon, are very old, phylogenetically speaking.

So, that casts much doubt on her statement about the sense of smell. The same goes for statements about the age of our planet. But that's another topic worthy of discussion.

The point is, of course, although some core ideas of theosophy may and will stand the test of time, other parts must be updated as science and society develops. .

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on November 19, 2010 at 7:22am

For exactly the reasons stated below, this movement is in need of a re-framing. Honestly, there are a number of folk out there capable of re-writing the Secret Doctrine, bringing it up to date, with accurate research and retain the core messages.

The field of consciousness is still as open, maybe even more so than it was in 1888. The challenges brought about by supernaturalism and materialism are still more urgent than they were 120 years ago, as we can see their possibilities in the daily news. Technology holds great promise, but as Bill Joy and others have written passionately, it could also mean the end of us.

I would love nothing more than to see a re-imagining of the SD, written by a group of individuals who are learned both in Eastern and Western traditions, as well as literate in the various fields of modern research. Combined with a touch of imagination and you could have something that is not only a bold restatement of the eternal, but also a really great read.

Comment by [Andrew W. Smith](#) on November 19, 2010 at 9:35am

I am not the one to now undertake the work of "revising" the SD. But, I would have welcomed the job early in my life. Granted, we have to cherry-pick a lot of the wisdom therefrom due to its age and the changes that have appeared since it was written. However, let me add that I would like also to see a combined Isis and SD collation. As the Christians say: "The Bible is the best interpreter of the Bible." This would, IMO, apply also to Isis and the SD if someone could take both books and conflate them into one whole. There is evidence that HPB wanted to make the SD an extension or commentary on Isis, but the SD turned out to be its own, separate work. Today, it seems, Isis is very much overlooked, and she had some really dynamic ideas in that book. We need another G.R.S. Mead or Bernard Keightly! Will someone like that be found today?

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on November 19, 2010 at 12:08pm

We definitely have the minds to do it. It's more of one having the fortitude to undertake the work.

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on November 19, 2010 at 5:32pm

HPB once wrote about somebody, that their facts were true but their conclusions were wrong. One could reverse that much of the time in HPB's case: Her conclusions were right, but her facts or sources often wrong.

Thomas Taylor, in one of his notes on Eleusinian & Bacchic Mysteries wrote that an Indian source for the Mysteries was probable.

"But despite the assertion of Herodotus and others that the Bacchic Mysteries were in reality Egyptian, there exists strong probability that they came originally from India, and were Sivaic or Buddhistical. Coré-Persephoneia was but the goddess Parasu-pani or Bhavani, the patroness of the Thugs, called also Gorée; and Zagreus is from Chakra, a country extending from ocean to ocean. If this is a Turanian or Tartar Story, we can easily recognize the "Horns" as the crescent worn by lama-priests: and translating god-names as merely sacerdotal designations, assume the whole legend to be based on a tale of Lama Succession and transmigration. The

Titans would then be the Daityas of India, who were opposed to the faith of the northern tribes; and the title Dionysus but signify the god or chief-priest of Nysa, or Mount Meru. The whole story of Orpheus, the institutor or rather the reformer of the Bacchic rites, has a Hindu ring all through."

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 19, 2010 at 5:40pm

Nicholas, that's the quote I gave just a few days ago. It seems to be from Alexander Wilder.

Where is the source of this Taylor quote?

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 19, 2010 at 6:08pm

*Problem solved: the footnote pertains to the introduction of A.W. (Wilder) of Thomas Taylor's book *Eleusinian & Bacchic Mysteries*. See my link from a few days ago.*

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on November 19, 2010 at 7:39pm

Oops - I thought it was Taylor's own footnote.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 19, 2010 at 10:13pm

*The material in the quotation from Alexander Wilder comes from Pococke's book, *India in Greece*. This can be seen by searching this book for the names that Wilder mentions. See p. 265 for example, regarding Persephoneia and Parasu-pani, Zagreus and Chakra, and the Tartar headdress with horns worn by lamas. The problem with this is that Pococke wrote before reliable information was available, especially about Buddhism. His conclusions, based on insufficient evidence, are not tenable, however much we might like to believe them.*

*The first Sanskrit book ever translated directly from Sanskrit into English was Charles Wilkins' 1785 translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*. But it was not until 1882 that a reliable translation of this famous text was published, Telang's translation in the *Sacred Books of the East*. In 1786 Sir William Jones made his famous statement*

that marked the beginning of Sanskrit studies in the West, and the beginning of the science of comparative linguistics:

"The Sanscrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists; . . ."

Since then, Sanskrit studies, and comparative linguistics, have come a long way. But by 1852, the date of Pococke's book, things were still just beginning. His comparisons of Greek words with Sanskrit words were simply inadequate. Not enough accurate source material was available from which to draw reliable conclusions. Yes, from a Theosophical standpoint, his conclusions may have been right although his facts were wrong. But how is believing this any different than believing anything else that must be taken on faith? That condemns the Theosophical teachings to the realm of blind belief. Surely, if they are true, there must somewhere be actual facts to support them.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 20, 2010 at 5:20am

"Yes, from a Theosophical standpoint, his conclusions may have been right although his facts were wrong. But how is believing this any different than believing anything else that must be taken on faith? That condemns the Theosophical teachings to the realm of blind belief. Surely, if they are true, there must somewhere be actual facts to support them. "

Some remarks:

1. Theosophy concerns itself with metaphysics, not unlike the Orphic theology.

Hence the domain of inquiry is largely on the "subjective" plane (notice the quotes around the word). Fact checking on this plane (or planes) requires the use of the faculty of Intellection (buddhi or genuine intuition). This faculty has hardly been developed in the current race.

2. There is a difference between blind belief and reasonable belief as HPB explains in the Key to Theosophy.

3. What is a fact? Neuropsychology has established that our perceptions are filtered through/colored by our belief systems. Post-modern philosophy belabors the contextual nature of "facts". It is not an easy thing at all, and not a thing to be naive about.

4. One fact referred to by HPB is her famous quote about the divisibility of the atom, foreshadowing mass-energy equivalence, I think.

5. TS founders, Masters, etc., have not given much testable models of phenomena. Scientists cannot very well use TS philosophy to predict, test, and verify things. Hence, the claim of Theosophy being "the synthesis of religion, philosophy and science", seems a bit pretentious to me (and probably the rest of the world). A true synthesis involves much, much more than the SD. Why this hasn't been acknowledged on a larger scale by the TS movement is not clear. Perhaps it has attracted too much believers and too little researchers?

6. Current academics do too little research on "anomalies" found in several domains, such as paleontology/geology such as mentioned and found by Klaus Dona, and some others. This includes the domain of ESP/parapsychology and many other facets of life. There are now fascinating stories (forensic/clinical evidence) of the character of a person being imprinted on the organs, such as heart, kidneys, lungs, being evidenced by organ transplants. Certainly susceptible to research, but this is avoided by the transplant agencies. It would disturb the already complicated matter of transplants if this became generally known. This evidence has been mentioned in a book about transplantation issues in my own country. Also, a well-known cardiologist, Pim van Lommel, has stumbled upon these stories after he wrote a book about near-death experiences. An article of his was published in the *Lancet*, many years ago.

He postulated the existence of an information field to explain some of his findings.

So, here we find some points of research that support a more holistic-spiritual view.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 20, 2010 at 12:52pm

The quotation from Prof. Alexander Wilder shows that even university professors of that time relied on and accepted the accuracy of the same sources as HPB did. Neither HPB nor Prof. Wilder nor anyone else then could have been expected to

know that Pococke's linguistic parallels between Greek and Sanskrit would prove to be inadequate. Today, these parallels are no longer heard of in Greek studies. Evidence such as this, that is no longer evidence, no longer has a place in The Secret Doctrine and its supporting writings. Wilder's note had been quoted in BCW 14.451-452 fn.

The points you make, Martin, are well taken. Many teachings on transcendental topics are not subject to objective verification. I do not at all disagree with this. Even among the historical statements made, such as on Indian origins in Greece, some may go so far back in time that little objective evidence for them still remains. Nonetheless, even in the realm of ideas, objective evidence can sometimes be found to support them. I do not usually like to refer to my own writings, but I think a clear illustration of this can be found in my article, "God's Arrival in India" ([www.easterntertradition.org/gods arrival in india.pdf](http://www.easterntertradition.org/gods%20arrival%20in%20india.pdf)).

It is generally thought that the idea of and belief in God has always been with us. But the Mahatma K.H. said otherwise in his famous Mahatma letter #10, which opens with the statement, "Neither our philosophy nor ourselves believe in a God." He said that the idea of God is an acquired notion, not an innate notion. As I wrote in my article, "If this is true, and the notion of God was in fact never part of the Wisdom Tradition, but was acquired as these truths went forth from their home in ancient India, history should show this." History does provide considerable evidence, according to my investigation, that the idea of God was not taught in the philosophical schools of ancient India that later adopted it. So I wrote, "To show this, we will here attempt to trace God's arrival in India." Here, then, is a case where a Theosophical idea was found to be supported by objective evidence.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 20, 2010 at 1:12pm

complete link:[God's arrival in India](#)

[Eastern Tradition Research Institute](#) (David Reigle's research)

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 20, 2010 at 5:40pm

"Here, then, is a case where a Theosophical idea was found to be supported by objective evidence. "

And my point 6. about "the character of a person being imprinted on the organs, such as heart, kidneys, lungs" is predicted by Theosophy and evidenced by experiences of people having undergone an organ transplant. Sure, we need still more evidence, but the case is promising, as they say. So, organs seem to have their own memory. That's a nice field of research for the brave investigator.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 20, 2010 at 5:58pm

"Here, then, is a case where a Theosophical idea was found to be supported by objective evidence."

My point 4. about the divisibility of matter and related issues being yet another case.

So, we have identified 3 cases already, including the case of the organs.

Not bad, perhaps we will find even more examples.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 21, 2010 at 10:12pm

In the material on fohat from the Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge, that Jacques had added to his compilation, the most striking thing to me is the description of a sun as a knot of fohat. I wonder if the image of the sun as a knot of anything can be found somewhere in the mythology of the world. If so, it might provide a parallel that would be helpful in identifying fohat.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 22, 2010 at 6:01am

A slight correction on point 6. mentioned in my previous posting: the best term to describe this kind of evidence probably would be: "anecdotal evidence". It concerns oral messages from persons concerned to others, be it a treating doctor, family, or specialists like Mr. Van Lommel. If these messages were to be properly registered and processed, it would amount to clinical evidence, I suppose. A thing scientists shy away from so far, as it seems, and afaik.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 22, 2010 at 6:09am

David, De Purucker made a similar description as to Fohat making "knots" or foci in the stream of consciousness of the human being. (micro?) but also macro, it seems. He links this to the idea of the Sutratman - or Thread-Self. I can locate this description of his, I think. It's probably in his "Fountain Source of Occultism".

"If so, it might provide a parallel that would be helpful in identifying fohat. "

Identifying with what or as what symbol/ God/ process?

Eros-Phanes seems to be the equivalent Idea.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 22, 2010 at 6:57am

From the occult glossary (G. de Purucker):

Daiviprakriti

(Sanskrit) A compound signifying "divine" or "original evolver," or "original source," of the universe or of any self-contained or hierarchical portion of such universe, such as a solar system. Briefly, therefore, daiviprakriti may be called "divine matter," matter here being used in its original sense of "divine mother-evolver" or "divine original substance."

Now, as original substance manifests itself in the kosmic spaces as primordial kosmic light -- light in occult esoteric theosophical philosophy being a form of original matter or substance -- many mystics have referred to daiviprakriti under the phrase "the Light of the Logos." Daiviprakriti is, in fact, the first veil or sheath or ethereal body surrounding the Logos, as pradhana or prakriti surrounds Purusha or Brahman in the Sankhya philosophy, and as, on a scale incomparably more vast, mulaprakriti surrounds parabrahman. As daiviprakriti, therefore, is elemental matter, or matter in its sixth and seventh stages counting from physical matter upwards or, what comes to the same thing, matter in its first and second stages of its evolution from above, we may accurately enough speak of those filmy ethereal wisps of light seen in the midnight skies as a physical manifestation of daiviprakriti, because when they are not actually resolvable nebulae, they are worlds, or rather systems of worlds, in the making.

When daiviprakriti has reached a certain state or condition of evolutionary manifestation, we may properly speak of it under the term fohat. Fohat, in H. P. Blavatsky's words, is

"The essence of cosmic electricity. An occult Tibetan term for Daivi-prakriti, primordial light: and in the universe of manifestation the ever-present electrical energy and ceaseless destructive and formative power. Esoterically, it is the same, Fohat being the universal propelling Vital Force, at once the propeller and the resultant." -- Theosophical Glossary, p. 121

All this is extremely well put, but it must be remembered that although fohat is the energizing power working in and upon manifested daiviprakriti, or primordial substance, as the rider rides the steed, it is the kosmic intelligence, or kosmic monad as Pythagoras would say, working through both daiviprakriti and its differentiated energy called fohat, which is the guiding and controlling principle, not only in the kosmos but in every one of the subordinate elements and beings of the hosts of multitudes of them infilling the kosmos. The heart or essence of the sun is daiviprakriti working as itself, and also in its manifestation called fohat, but through the daiviprakriti and the fohatic aspect of it runs the all-permeant and directive intelligence of the solar divinity. The student should never make the mistake, however, of divorcing this guiding solar intelligence from its veils or vehicles, one of the highest of which is daiviprakriti-fohat.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 22, 2010 at 7:00am

And ditto for Fohat:

Fohat

An extremely mystical term used in the occultism of Tibet for what in Sanskrit is called daiviprakriti, which means "divine nature" or "primordial nature," and which also can be called "primordial light." In one sense of the word fohat may be considered as almost identical with the old mystical Greek eros, but fohat as a technical term contains within itself a far wider range of ideas than does the Greek term.

Fohat may be considered as the essence of kosmic electricity, provided, however, that in this definition we endow the term electricity with the attribute of consciousness; or, to put it more accurately, provided that we understand that the

essence of electricity is indeed consciousness. It is ever-present and active from the primordial beginnings of a manvantara to its last end, nor does it then actually pass out of existence, but becomes quiescent or latent as it were, sleeping or dormant during the kosmic pralaya. In one sense of the word it may be called kosmic will, for the analogy with the conscious will in human beings is exceedingly close. It is the incessantly active, ever-moving, impelling or urging force in nature, from the beginning of the evolution of a universe or of a solar system to its end.

H. P. Blavatsky, quoting one of the ancient mystically occult works, says in substance: "Fohat is the steed and thought is the rider." If, however, we liken fohat to what the conscious will is in the human being, we must then think only of the lower or substantial parts -- the pranic activities -- of the human will, for behind the substantial parts stands always the directing and guiding consciousness. Fohat being incessantly active is therefore both formative and destructive, because it is through the ceaseless working of fohat that unending change continues -- the passing of one phase of manifested existence to another phase, whether this manifested existence be a solar system or a planetary chain or a globe or human being or, indeed, any entity.

Fohat is as active among the electrons of an atom and among the atoms themselves as it is among the suns. In one sense it may be called the vital force of the universe, corresponding from this viewpoint to the pranic activity on all the seven planes of the human constitution.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 22, 2010 at 7:09am

From the Fountain Source of Occultism [occult: that which is hidden to the outer senses];

the correspondence with the pranas in the human constitution:

FOHAT, THE DYNAMIC ENERGY OF COSMIC IDEATION

In The Secret Doctrine (I, 16) H.P.B. gives in masterly fashion the essential character of fohat:

It is the "bridge" by which the "Ideas" existing in the "Divine Thought" are impressed on Cosmic substance as the "laws of Nature." Fohat is thus the dynamic energy of Cosmic Ideation; or, regarded from the other side, it is the intelligent medium, the guiding power of all manifestation, the "Thought Divine" transmitted

and made manifest through the Dhyān Chohans, the Architects of the visible World. Thus from Spirit, or Cosmic Ideation, comes our consciousness; from Cosmic Substance the several vehicles in which that consciousness is individualised and attains to self -- or reflective -- consciousness; while Fohat, in its various manifestations, is the mysterious link between Mind and Matter, the animating principle electrifying every atom into life.

Fohat is a Tibetan as well as a Mongolian philosophical term, possessing the general meaning of cosmic life or vitality, ever guided by cosmic mind or intelligence. The verbal root foh is of Mongolian origin, and corresponds to the word buddha or even buddhi, or again to buddha-wisdom. Fohat performs its manifold wonders in weaving the web of universal being, because working through or directing it is the maha-buddhi. This cosmic vitality represents in the universe what the pranas are in our bodies.

The reason the Mongolians spoke of the cosmic vitality in connection with thoughts properly ascribable to the terms buddhi, bodhi, etc., is that they refused to see in the symmetrical and harmonic structure of the universe that purely imaginary play of blind and soulless forces on dead matter which has been the bane of Occidental scientific thinking. To these early Orientals the universe was an expression of cosmic wisdom.

As a matter of fact, fohat, being the cosmic life in the sense of the vital flow or ethereal-vital fluids in a universe, is divisible into seven or ten principles or elements, each one a vitality with its own swabhava, and their unity forming the generalized fohat of which H.P.B. wrote:

"Each world has its Fohat, who is omnipresent in his own sphere of action. But there are as many Fohats as there are worlds, each varying in power and degree of manifestations. The individual Fohats make one Universal, Collective Fohat -- the aspect-Entity of the one absolute Non-Entity, which is absolute Be-Ness, 'SAT.' "Millions and billions of worlds are produced at every Manvantara" -- it is said. Therefore there must be many Fohats, whom we consider as conscious and intelligent Forces. -- The Secret Doctrine, I, 143; see also I, 111-12

Primordial fohat, originating in the First Logos, is septenary or denary because the First Logos itself is seven- or tenfold. Hence fohat exists as a septenary or denary on every one of the planes of the universe. When the Second Logos unfolds itself from within the First Logos, fohat likewise follows each step of such emanation,

thus reproducing itself as the cosmic vitality in seven or ten forms in the Second Logos. In exactly similar way does fohat reproduce itself in the Third Logos.

Now fohat is in the cosmos what the seven or ten pranas are in man; and as man's constitution has its pranas on every layer of his auric egg, so are the pranas of the cosmos the different aspects of fohat on the different planes. Just as in man the pranas are the vehicles for thought, feeling, emotion, and instinct, so on the cosmic planes fohat acts as the vehicle of cosmic ideation. Fohat is the steed, cosmic thought is the rider.

*Fohat manifests in various forms, and electricity as we know it is one of its lowest manifestations. What vitality is in the human frame, electricity is in the framework of the material universe. They are manifestations of the same fundamental force. Mystically, cosmic electricity is the corporeal vitality of the entity in which we live and move and have our being. It is not a force by itself. There is no such thing in the universe as a force by itself, existing apart from other forces. It is a phase, a manifestation, of the fundamental of all things, which is consciousness. Gravitation actually is one of the manifestations of cosmic electricity and, equivalently, electricity is one of the manifestations of cosmic gravitation. Quoting again from *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 145):*

. . . Fohat, the constructive Force of Cosmic Electricity. . . has seven sons who are his brothers; . . . [these] represent and personify the seven forms of Cosmic magnetism called in practical Occultism the "Seven Radicals," whose co-operative and active progeny are, among other energies, Electricity, Magnetism, Sound, Light, Heat, Cohesion, etc.

Furthermore, just as vitality in a human body appears as cosmic-atomic electricity or the fohatic manifestation in the structure of every one of the atoms which compose our body, so the vitality of the grand entity in which we have our being is the cosmic electricity. Lightning is electricity or the cosmic vitality manifesting at a certain spot and under certain conditions. It re-establishes the local electrical equilibrium. Similarly, when a balance of vitality is maintained in the human body, this means health; and when the equilibrium is disturbed, this means disease.

When things are not in equilibrium, electrically speaking, we have the very hot or the very cold days, the stormy days or the abnormally calm days. There is a constant change of direction in the movements and operations of this cosmic electricity. Lightning is one short segment of a circulation of the cosmos, and is very closely involved with certain vital currents between the sun and the earth and

man and the earth, which pass through, and to and from, the earth and the meteoric veil which surrounds it. Magnetism is the alter ego of electricity, each a 'brother-son' of fohat. Fundamentally what we call gravitation, electricity and magnetism are all the same thing: three manifestations of fohat or the cosmic vitality as it appears in our physical section of the universe. This universe is not divided into grades separate from each other but is an organic whole, containing grades or stages passing into each other, from the invisible to the visible and passing still lower downwards into the invisible again. There are no radical divisions really except in a schematic sense.

Human beings have more to do with lightning than man has any conception of. If there were no animate entities on earth at all, electricity, manifesting in that particular way which we call lightning, would be an exceedingly rare phenomenon; but every point in space contains animate entities both visible and invisible to us.

In her Theosophical Glossary, H.P.B. has defined fohat as "the essence of cosmic electricity. An occult Tibetan term for Daiviprakriti, primordial light"; and in describing daiviprakriti, she gives it as "primordial, homogeneous light, . . . when differentiated this light becomes FOHAT."

There is a subtle distinction hinted at here. Daiviprakriti, meaning literally shining or divine prakriti or substance, is the original luminous force-substance, which Subba Row, an early theosophist and Brahmanical scholar, called the "light of the Logos"; fohat is the same light in a more developed state of manifestation. Thus, while in one sense the two are really the same, if we call ordinary electricity in its cosmic aspect daiviprakriti, then fohat, in this application, would be the more developed manifestations of cosmic electricity, such as lightning, the current that lights our houses, and the force of cohesion which holds the atoms together. Above everything else, daiviprakriti-fohat is active cosmic consciousness; daiviprakriti being the higher or spiritual or negative aspect, and fohat being the lower or active or positive aspect.

Each one of the three Logoi and its corresponding fohat is alive, is Life itself. Because the three Logoi are cosmic living beings, and because all the universe flows forth from them by a serial unfolding of hierarchies in their different emanations, the universe and all in it, including its physical body, is alive; so that from nebula and sun to electron and man, every entity in such universe is a living being, built of Life which is both substance and cosmic mind. Or, as H.P.B. graphically said: "The rays of the Logos vibrate in every atom."

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 22, 2010 at 7:37am

Nice picture of the sun as a "knot of Fohat"

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 22, 2010 at 8:18am

First result of knot research:

Isis knots

and: (see italic part)

FUNERARY BED WITH SIDES IN THE FORM OF MEHET

*WOOD, GESSOED AND PAINTED, GOLD LEAF, GLASS PASTE, SEMIPRECIOUS STONES
HEIGHT 116 CM; LENGTH 228 CM VALLEY OF THE KINGS, TUTANKHAMUN'S TOMB
(KV 62) DISCOVERED BY H. CARTER (1922) EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY, REIGN OF
TUTANKHAMUN (1333-1323 BC)*

The third bed has side pieces in the form of a young cow, representing Mehet-weret, 'The Great Flood', the goddess who was the first to emerge from Nun, the primordial ocean.

During the funeral ceremonies, the body was laid out on the three beds. In this way the deceased was brought into contact with the three deities and thus guaranteed the opportunity for rebirth each could offer. Ammut promised the eternal rebirth of the sun (swallowed at dusk by the night sky, which gave birth to it again the following dawn); Mehet the seasonal return of the Nile flood; and Mehet-weret the birth from the primordial ocean, thus combining the concepts expressed by the other two deities, given that the sun and the flood both originated with Nut.

The two heads of the cows representing Mehet-weret are surmounted by horns with solar discs at the centre. The eyes are those of the falcon-god Horus (wedjat eyes). The celestial aspect of this divinity is further emphasized by the black spots dotting the bodies, which can be seen in relation to the leopard skin frequently used as an image indicating the night sky.

The legs of the cows act as the legs of the bed itself and rest on a rectangular wooden framework that lends the piece great stability. The flat surface of the bed is composed of wood, gessoed and painted in imitation of woven vegetable fibres. A board, divided into three panels and covered with gold, is set between the elegant curving tails of the animals -- this was at the foot end of the bed. The two side panels of this board are decorated front and rear with two djed symbols in relief (symbols of stability) while the central panels carry two Isis knots (connected with life). The bed with effigies of Mehet recurs frequently in funerary iconography and is similar to the one over which Anubis bends during the mummification ceremony. The mane of the lioness is indicated by a short ruff which, like the whiskers, is incised in the gold. The nose and the streaks below the eyes are inlaid with blue glass, while the eyelids are in black glass. The eyes themselves are made from crystal, with the iris painted yellow. The black of the pupils comes from the background which was painted before the application of the crystal. (F.T.)

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Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on November 22, 2010 at 9:12am

The GdP remarks on "knots or foci in the stream of consciousness" are in chapter 28 mainly of his Esoteric Tradition.

Comment by [Govert Schuller](#) on November 22, 2010 at 10:26am

Dear David,

Thank you so much for sharing your research and thoughts here.

I have 2 questions:

1) Can you give a summary of findings so far regarding the origins of the Stanzas.

2) Is it becoming more or less plausible that HPB might have been making things up and borrowed from various still unknown sources from the get go?

For example, Marion Meade in her HPB biography "Madame Blavatsky" (p. 136) reports to have found in the archives of the Edgar Cayce Foundation an invoice for \$33.15 for a complete set of books by the spiritualist-philosopher Andrew Jackson Davis, which she apparently never paid. Meade thinks that many ideas in the SD have their origin in Davis' work.

Comment by [Pablo Sender](#) on November 22, 2010 at 11:28am

Hi All,

Very interesting and important research, thank you all for your work. As can be seen from the discussion, there are many obstacles on the way to make the Esoteric Philosophy accepted at a scholar level.

I think the first step towards an acceptance of Theosophy outside the Theosophical circles is to understand clearly how and why this literature was produced, and to separate the essential from the non-essential. Let me explain...

Most teachings given by enlightened spiritual teachers have two aspects: one that addresses a culture and time in particular, and one that is timeless. This is because the enlighten teacher wants to produce changes at the time he is alive, while also leaving "universal" teachings for changes to be produced in the future. Also, if the instructor does not teach things people of the time can relate to, the teachings would hardly be accepted, preserved, and passed on. Modern Theosophy is not outside this phenomenon.

Some of the Theosophical teachings given (and the ways they were given) had a temporary aim, and we should not cling to them once they have served their purpose. (In fact, this is something most religions have a hard time with, and keep defending commandments and customs that were useful only at a particular time and for certain people).

So, to bring the teachings to public attention we have to sort out what we claim to be valuable, to identify what is of the secondary or temporal value, and to be able to let this last aspect go.

As I see it, the question with the technical religious terms HPB used in her writings is not the central aspect of her work, but one of temporal meaning. I am not saying what has been discussed here is not important. On the contrary, it is only by identifying the "misuse" of terms in books like the Secret Doctrine that we can re-focus what we value as essential in HPB's work.

I have to stop here now, but I will develop this view further in a next entry.

Comment by [Pablo Sender](#) on November 22, 2010 at 12:40pm

Continuing from my previous post...

The Secret Doctrine was written by HPB with at least three aims in mind: 1) To show that there was a common "Ancient Wisdom" at the basis of different religious and philosophical traditions. 2) To compare, to some extent, how the Occult Science explained things that modern Science explained otherwise. 3) To teach some facts of the Esoteric Philosophy.

Let me share some thoughts about the first aim.

Something important to keep in mind is that what Blavatsky learned is the "Esoteric Philosophy" or "Occult Science". This, according to her, does not belong to any particular religion, and has a literature and a language of its own.

Now, as we said, HPB not only wanted to teach about the Esoteric Philosophy, but also to show the common "Ancient Wisdom" shared to some extent by different religious and philosophical traditions. She also wanted to influence people of her time to start thinking and researching along these lines. In my view, this is the main reason why she uses profusely terms from many different traditions, and not to support the Esoteric Philosophy (though sometimes she did, like when introducing the concept of the septenary nature of man and cosmos).

Was HPB's use of terms and ideas from other traditions correct? As we can see through the research done here, it was not, to an important extent. Now, does this fact question the validity of the Esoteric Philosophy? I do not think so. As one of the Mahatmas wrote, the Theosophist's task is to sow seeds, and let others reap

the fruit. HPB's main point when comparing traditions was: "There are fragments of an underlying Wisdom-Tradition in them all". She wanted to establish this thought in the public mind and engage scholars to work on this line. It seems obvious that HPB was not a scholar herself and she never claimed to be one. So she relied on books available at her time (which she consulted not only by physical means, but mainly by psychic means) and on her associates.

"But", one may say, "the Secret Doctrine is claimed to be the triple production of HPB and two Mahatmas. Didn't the 'all-knowing Mahatmas' know about these mistakes?" Even if we accept that the Mahatmas were helping HPB in writing the SD, it is not likely they would spend their "precious" time in this aspect of the SD. Besides, even if they knew the correct meaning of the terms, statements that were not shared by the scholars of the time (even if proven to be true in the future), would not have called their attention, as this actually happens today with many to-be-proven statements in the SD that cause skepticism.

Whatever the case may be, as it turns out, several decades after HPB's writings, the idea of a "perennial philosophy" was successfully established in at least a group of scholars. (Although it is difficult to say how much the TS had to do with this, it is a fact that, chronologically speaking, some scholars began to work on this field after the efforts of the early Theosophists in this direction. I think we can even say confidently that the TS became the first inter-faith movement in modern times).

From this point of view, it would be a mistake to portray the Secret Doctrine as a source of knowledge in comparative religion, or as a revelation written down by all-seeing Mahatmas, or even as a support of the Esoteric Philosophy by the use of well-known religious systems. If we claim this, we are creating an Achilles tendon in Modern Theosophy.

Unfortunately, it seems that the sources of the Esoteric Philosophy are not merely lost, they are withheld. And it also seems that even the heads of the main religions do not know them.

So, although anything is possible, it doesn't seem likely that the text for the Stanzas will be found among any exoteric literature. What could be possible is that, thanks to our efforts, the "custodians" of those texts may decide to let one or a few of them be "discovered", as David said.

Meanwhile, I think it is very valuable to make public among Theosophists that we cannot take the SD as a reliable source of knowledge in comparative religions, so that we do not offer ourselves as willing preys to the criticism of scholars.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 22, 2010 at 9:14pm

Many things to reply to. I will have to select only a few for now. Martin, you had mentioned some medical research regarding organs that supports the teachings of Theosophy. I did not reply to this earlier, simply because it is not my field. There was a lot of agreement here that The Secret Doctrine needs to be re-written. Those who have an interest in science can start on the one-third of the SD that compares the teachings of Theosophy with those of modern science at any time. Perhaps a separate forum could be started for just this. For the one-third that pertains to my field, namely, the Stanzas of Dzyan and their commentaries, we will have to await the availability of a Sanskrit and/or Tibetan text of them. Without this, not much can be said.

On the question of the reason for trying to identify fohat, this pertains closely to the stated purpose of this thread, namely, trying to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzyan. Even if we know several partial equivalents of fohat found in various traditions, I do not think that we have anywhere a close enough fit to be convincing. For example, we have never seen the phrase, knots of daivi-prakriti, or knots of Eros. If we did find a description of a sun as a knot of some particular thing, that thing could provide a valuable clue in trying to trace this term, fohat, and hence also trying to trace the origin of the Stanzas.

The respected G. de Purucker was a teacher of Theosophists. He did not direct his teachings to non-Theosophists. So, for example, in his definition of daivi-prakriti he can say, "many mystics have referred to daiviprakriti under the phrase 'the Light of the Logos.'" But this would not be possible when speaking to non-Theosophists, since they would be likely to ask such questions as: "Which mystics?" "Where can I find daiviprakriti in a non-Theosophical source?" "What do you mean by the Light of the Logos?" "What do you mean by the Logos?"

In fact, we know of only one mystic who said this, T. Subba Row. We do not find daiviprakriti used in the Theosophical meaning in any known Sanskrit book. The Light of the Logos is a phrase used, and adapted, by T. Subba Row. The usage of "Logos" in Theosophical writings seems also to be adopted from how Subba Row understood it. It is used quite differently in the old Greek writings of Plato, etc., where it means something like "reason." Philo of Alexandria adapted it in the direction of how Theosophists now use it, taking it as the creative force of God. Then, following this direction, the gospel-writer John took it as the "word," which is

equated with Christ. John then spoke of His light (John 1.5), the light of the logos. I don't think that this original meaning given to it by John is how Theosophists understand it.

Similarly, after hearing that, "Fohat is a Tibetan as well as a Mongolian philosophical term," and that "The reason the Mongolians spoke of the cosmic vitality," non-Theosophists would be likely to ask where in the Tibetan and Mongolian writings it is spoken of. As far as anyone knows today, it is not found in these writings or in these languages. At this point, the questioner would likely just walk away and write off Theosophy as something not to be taken seriously. In similar circumstances on other topics, most of us would probably do the same. This is the reason for trying to trace these things to verifiable sources.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 22, 2010 at 10:02pm

Govert, I will reply to your second question first: "2) Is it becoming more or less plausible that HPB might have been making things up and borrowed from various still unknown sources from the get go?" It seems that some people like William Emmett Coleman, who find many things in HPB's writings that were clearly taken from then available sources, conclude that everything in her writings was taken from such sources. Other people like many Theosophists, who find in HPB's writings things that they believe must have come from Masters, conclude that everything in her writings must have come from such sources. For myself, I am unable to come to either of these two conclusions.

It is clear to me that a very large amount of material in The Secret Doctrine was taken from then available sources, which, moreover, were very often inaccurate. However, this material is almost always found in her commentaries, in her own annotations of the Stanzas or other occult principles that she was trying to explain. It is equally clear to me that the Stanzas of Dzyan themselves were not taken from any then available source. On the contrary, there is nothing like them out there in any known cosmogony of the world, even in those that have been discovered or uncovered since her time.

This brings me to your first question: "1) Can you give a summary of findings so far regarding the origins of the Stanzas." Until someone can show me a known source for even a single Stanza, I must accept what HPB says is their origin, namely, that they come from the first of fourteen secret volumes of commentaries on seven brief folios that comprise the most unusual picture book in the world. This means that I

am a believer, and if I was not a believer, I would hardly have spent my life in searching for the Book of Dzyan. So much for the origins of the Stanzas. But you probably also intended your question to ask what traces of them can be found, if any. It is late now, and I will have to postpone that one for tomorrow.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on November 22, 2010 at 10:05pm

The idea of re-writing the Secret Doctrine has merit. However I agree with David that it is a different topic for a different discussion. Such an undertaking is not to be done lightly.

To perform such an endeavor there must be several things happen:

a) The writers must be qualified. It's not simply a matter of holding an advanced degree, but this also means that they must be up to the job, have the intellectual capacity, and the ability, as well as the means to conduct the requisite research.

b) They must be able to write capably on the latest in numerous fields.

c) Is willing to take the time needed. Blavatsky was working on the SD in the early 1880's and didn't complete it until 1888.

d) And, finally, is not willing to settle anything less than top quality.

This is a kind of work that has to attract the attention of the best minds of our culture and not just a small cadre of just a few. Anything less is not worth the effort.

If someone wants to continue the discussion, let's talk. I want to hear from you.

Joe

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on November 22, 2010 at 10:34pm

No need re-write the SD, yet. Just pick a phrase or teaching that is in the SD. If one knows and can provide good evidence that the phrase/teaching is wrong or dated or right then write up such as an article or short paper. Then submit it to others of similar competence in whatever area of science, philosophy or religion (peer review it). After that step send it to this site, where a section can be devoted to The Secret Doctrine Revisions.

If the papers submitted and pages of the SD referred to, begin to approach say 3/4 of a major section of the SD, that section can be published. Should the entire two volumes eventually meet that criteria, only then can we (or they) fuss about re-writing the entire book

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on November 23, 2010 at 1:12am

(Pablo Sender) "From this point of view, it would be a mistake to portray the Secret Doctrine as a source of knowledge in comparative religion, or as a revelation written down by all-seeing Mahatmas, or even as a support of the Esoteric Philosophy by the use of well-known religious systems. If we claim this, we are creating an Achilles tendon in Modern Theosophy."

Pablo: you make some good points here. As I see it, the main function of esoteric philosophy is to serve as a source of inspiration, a source of ideas. The concept of taking the SD as a "Bible" for esotericists is indeed a dangerous one. No book is infallible in its utterances. Once put into a specific form, esoteric ideas lose something of their power. They gain some, they lose some. That is inevitable in the scheme of things. Especially when pertaining to science, that ever changing body of knowledge. Every era needs its own form of wisdom-teaching, formulated by contemporary thinkers, to keep up with developments of the mind-set and to direct the latter a little..Esotericists, IMO, should do their own research and philosophizing. The ideas of old can serve as a guide and inspiration, but cannot replace one's own thinking.

Hence the idea of Theosopher.net as a forum for more or less inspired (re)searchers..

Comment by [Pablo Sender](#) on November 23, 2010 at 8:29am

Hi all,

I also feel we should re-write the SD, or rather, edit it and annotate it, for the following reasons:

- HPB was not very systematic in her writing, and she jumps from one subject to another.

- She all of a sudden talks about concepts that were never introduced by her before.
- She introduces a particular concept (for example, the Space as an aspect of the Absolute) in many different places, with no progression in the development of the concept.
- She uses references to many philosophies and religions that the regular reader does not know, and her main point is frequently lost. Besides, many of those "illustrative" references are not accurate today.
- She uses terms from many different languages and, again, not always in an accurate way.
- She refers to Scientists, Psychologists, Philosophers, etc., of her time, in ways that most of the times are not relevant any longer.

For these reasons, I have been considering for some time that we should rearrange the work, just as the Keightley did.

For example, if you read the Proem you will find the following development of major themes:

- 1- She begins talking about an archaic manuscript and describe its symbols
- 2- Then, suddenly, she is talking about universal Motion as one of the aspects of the One life
- 3- Then she jumps to talk about the process of "creation" arguing that the Absolute cannot create
- 4- And then she comes back to describe the symbols in the archaic manuscript, talking about different Root-races (concept that she never introduced).
- 5- Then she talks about Pantheism, Advaita, and refutes the claim that they are atheists. She again takes on the question that the Absolute cannot create.
- 6- Next, without noticing it, you are reading about Space as an aspect of the Absolute.
- 7- Then on to "everything but the Absolute is an illusion" and the evolution of the seven elements for the One, through different races and rounds (again, without introducing the concepts)

8- Then, she goes to the well known Three Fundamental Propositions, where she explains again, in a more systematic way, the Absolute, Motion and Space as its aspects, all manifestation is Maya, etc., etc

It is next to impossible to expect people that are not intellectually bent and very interested in the Secret Doctrine to be able to profit from its teachings.

In an attempt to put some order in this chaos when teaching about the SD, I re-organized the main concepts in a kind of study guide that Daniel Caldwell published in his website here <http://blavatskyarchives.com/senderstcoursesd.htm>

So, I have a project that we could start together, if you are interested, but now I have to leave. I'll write about that later.

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on November 23, 2010 at 8:40am

The SD, Topically Arranged is another way to handle it Pablo. I hope you & your group will make use of Gomes' new Transactions volume and other passages in the CW of HPB that are on SD topics.

Comment by [Pablo Sender](#) on November 23, 2010 at 9:04am

Hi Nicholas,

Yes, that is kind of what I attempted to do with my Study Course, though embracing relatively few subjects.

I do not have a "group" that is planning to do this. I am proposing that we form a group and start working on this together.

But we should start a new Blog, as it was suggested, so that we do not introduce a different subject in this one. Those interested in this project go to

<http://www.theosophy.net/profiles/blogs/rewriting-the-secret-doctrine>

Comment by [M. Sufilight](#) on November 23, 2010 at 10:17am

Dear friends

My views are:

Several views are being forwarded in this thread.

I will here seek to forward some of my views on them and provide a comment or two to these views - and thereby seek to be of service to the aim given by Blavatsky and others in her book the Secret Doctrine.

**** 1 ****

Rewrite The Secret Doctrine? A good idea?

M. Sufilight says:

First of all we ought to understand the Secret Doctrine never was written with DEAD-LETTER reading in mind. And Blavatsky clear said in the Secret Doctrine and elsewhere that she gave such readings small value. From this we also know that any non-esoteric scholarly analyzing of The Secret Doctrine most certainly will end up drawing either misleading or wrong conclusions, and that not seldom based on insufficient assumptions, examinations or even cultural biases and prejudices.

I tend to agree with Joe Fulton, that if one decides to rewrite or even edit the Secret Doctrine - one ought to do it with a clear understanding of its content. Else I would say, that one most likely will ruin the aim it has and simply produce a book operating on a lower level. I am saying that without a clear knowledge of at least 4 of the 7 Keys to the Mystery Language used and given by Blavatsky one will definitely end up mutilating the book, or just create a new book operating on a lower level. And instead of a real betterment one will end up writing a book suiting ones own more or less ignorant ends more than a book helping the advanced students. - We the seekers after wisdom know that sentences, symbols, words and letters have vibrations, and that their impact on the individual differs when they are forwarded a different periods of time. In fact we find that not only time, but also the place, people and circumstances play their role when a teaching are forwarded.

Those of you who aim at re-writing the Secret Doctrine without a day to day contact with the Masters may do so at any time. As i see it, you just ought to know, that the level of wisdom resulting from it most certainly will operate on a lower level - even when you yourself or your friends (not seldom those who agree with you) find your results to be a betterment. To some such a re-writing effort will help them understand the wisdom teachings, to others it will help them avoiding being

confronted with certain more or less undetected egoistical fragments they as a fact have in their auras. And in the last group we sometimes find that it is this egoistical fragment which from the beginning in fact triggered the idea to re-write the Secret Doctrine. Other options can be considered.

These are just my views. Other views can of course be forwarded.

**** 2 ****

Certain words used in the Secret Doctrine cannot be verified in texts available or know to present day (more or less ignorant) Scholars. Thereby some of them conclude that Blavatsky's book was formulated in an inadequate manner, simply because some of its claims cannot be documented by Scholary methods - in todays socalled "enlightened" and "civilized" physical world.

Blavatsky said: "... in our days, Scientists are more self-opinionated and bigoted than even the clergy." (SD. Vol. I, p. 509)

Blavatsky said:

"To make of Science an integral whole necessitates, indeed, the study of spiritual and psychic, as well as physical Nature. ... Without metaphysics, real science is inadmissible." (SD. Vol. I, p. 588)

Blavatsky said:

"... the rejection of these teachings may be expected, and must be accepted beforehand. No one styling himself a "scholar," in whatever department of exact science, will be permitted to regard these teachings seriously. They will be derided and rejected a priori in this century; but only in this one. For in the twentieth century of our era scholars will begin to recognize that the Secret Doctrine has neither been invented nor exaggerated, but, on the contrary, simply outlined"...
(SD. Vol. I, Introduction, p. xxxvii)

M. Sufilight says:

Let us remember that this book was primarily aimed at the advanced Seekers of Wisdom, and not the beginner Seekers - and that its main audience was not Scholars - not even some of the best known in Blavatsky's time. The Secret Doctrine was not primarily written to be read by the use of DEAD-LETTER reading. Those of you who refuse to understand this might not understand the content of the book at all. Some of the myths, words and symbols etc. used in the Secret Doctrine clearly

had another meaning in different time-periods - and the Secret Doctrine was written expecting the students to take this into account - when reading it, and aiming at understanding the meaning each myth, word or symbol etc. had in different time-periods. The Secret Doctrine aimed at provoking what we call the theosophical experience in the individual - and provoking the awakening of what Blavatsky call intuition (and not what many call Intuition today) - and the ability to read in the Akasha.

Therefore one cannot conclude that various words are not adequate and used wrongly, just because one do not understand how to read in the Akasha and lack understanding of words and their vibration in different periods of time - even taking future ones into account.

These are just my views. Other views can of course be forwarded.

**** 3 ****

Pablo wrote:

"- HPB was not very systematic in her writing, and she jumps from one subject to another."

.....

"- She uses terms from many different languages and, again, not always in an accurate way."

M. Sufilight says:

This does not imply that, this was not a deliberate action performed when writing such a book to the advanced Seekers after Wisdom. It should not be a surprise that real Wisdom is scares on this planet - and that it most often is not learned by what by intellectuals call systematic methods; such methods we tend to call something else.

Pablo wrote:

"- She refers to Scientists, Psychologists, Philosophers, etc., of her time, in ways that most of the times are not relevant any longer."

M. Sufilight says:

This is very true with regard to some parts of the Secret Doctrine. The places where this occurs could be interesting to dig up and forward - and then write a commentary on these parts - but of course without attempting to pretend that one knows 4 or more of the 7 keys to the Mystery Language, when one does not.

Pablo wrote:

"It is next to impossible to expect people that are not intellectually bent and very interested in the Secret Doctrine to be able to profit from its teachings."

M. Sufilight says:

But, that was not the aim of the book. The book was given to advanced Seekers after Wisdom not primarily beginners and intellectuals.

Martin Euser wrote:

"The concept of taking the SD as a "Bible" for esotericists is indeed a dangerous one. No book is infallible in its utterances."...etc. etc.

M. Sufilight says:

I agree entirely. Other readers ought to consider this post given by Martin.

David Reigle wrote:

"It is clear to me that a very large amount of material in The Secret Doctrine was taken from then available sources, which, moreover, were very often inaccurate."

M. Sufilight says:

I wonder...Are you able to document this view using the words "very often" David?

I have not seen anything so far that make me think that this view is true.

Blavatsky said that the Puranas, the Exoteric Kui-ti, the Avestas and Gathas and the Chaldean Kabala had their origin in the Dzyan Stanzas. The similarities between these teachings are striking - and clearly point to the same source of origin - a source having its origin in the East, near India. This at least have, as I see it, to be given some value.

David Reigle wrote:

"However, this material is almost always found in her commentaries, in her own annotations of the Stanzas or other occult principles that she was trying to explain. It is equally clear to me that the Stanzas of Dzyan themselves were not taken from any then available source. On the contrary, there is nothing like them out there in any known cosmogony of the world, even in those that have been discovered or uncovered since her time."

M. Sufilight says:

I wonder...Are you able to document this view using the words "there is nothing like them out there" David?

See my comment in the above. You almost seem to call Blavatsky a charlatan here.

I can only repeat, that I have during astral travels gotten information on that this teaching as given in Dzyan Stanzas existed in the past. (See also the two diagrams BCW, Vol. XII, p. 524, and Master KH's diagram - given in "The Inner Group Teachings" of H.P. Blavatsky, 2nd revised and enlarged edition, compiled and annotated by Henk J. Spierenburg -

<http://www.blavatskyarchives.com/images/est2.jpg> - These diagrams are to some quite helpful in understanding the Secret Doctrine and its content.)

All the above are just my views given so that they might benefit you all.

I do not claim to be infallible and I might err.

M. Sufilight

Comment by Pablo Sender on November 23, 2010 at 1:03pm

Dear M. Sufilight,

We should not discuss this topic here so that we do not deviate from the main subject of this Blog, that of the Origin of the Stanzas.

I created a new Blog, to discuss the re-writing the SD. You are invited to participate there. See my answer at:

<http://www.theosophy.net/profiles/blog/show?id=3055387%3ABlogPost%3...>

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 23, 2010 at 8:31pm

Regarding my findings on what traces of the Stanzas of Dzyan can be found, it will first be useful to briefly review the couple main things known about them from Theosophical sources:

1. The Stanzas of Dzyan are said to come from a secret commentary on the Book(s) of Kiu-te (BCW 14.422). The Books of Kiu-te have been identified as rgyud-sde, the Tibetan Buddhist tantras. This associates the Stanzas of Dzyan with the Tibetan Buddhist tantras.

Comment: HPB here says that the exoterically known Books of Kiu-te ought to be termed "The Popularised Version" of the Secret Doctrine, being full of myths and blinks. Read the cosmogony given in the first chapter of the Guhyasamaja Tantra, one of the most important Books of Kiu-te, and you will probably agree. It is posted on the home page of this website.

2. Original words "from one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions" were given from Stanza 1 (SD 1.23), that are almost all distinctive Buddhist terms. Some of these terms are: Konch-hog (dkon-mchog, the three jewels: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha), Tenbrel Chugnyi (dependent origination), Dharmakaya, Parinishpanna (a Yogacara Buddhist term). This confirms that the form in which this commentary now exists is that of a Buddhist book, or a book using Buddhist terms.

Comment: HPB in several places describes the teachings of the Secret Doctrine as being pre-Vedic (e.g., SD 1.xxxvii). So it would not, at least originally, employ terms from the Vedic Hindu tradition. The Vedic promulgation would have re-formulated the ideas of the universal Wisdom Religion. The Stanzas, then, either represent a pre-Vedic Buddhism (IU 1.589, 2.123, 142, 169, 639; Echoes 1.453), or were later formulated using Buddhist terms.

These facts, along with the glowing words about Kalachakra found in Nicholas Roerich's book, Shambhala, led me to the Kalachakra Tantra. This is one of the most important Books of Kiu-te. It has an exoterically known version, found in the Tibetan Buddhist canon, and is said to also have a lost fuller version, found only in Shambhala. Quotations from this lost fuller version are found in the great Kalachakra commentary titled Vimala-prabha, "Stainless Light." Even the exoterically known versions of the Books of Kiu-te were quite inaccessible until very recently. This is now changing. I think that readers will find the Kalachakra Tantra to be similar to, and just as symbolic as, the Guhyasamaja Tantra, whose chapter 1 we have seen. One will not find the Stanzas of Dzyan, or anything like them, in the

now available Kalachakra texts. Nonetheless, the strongest evidence regarding the Stanzas that I have yet found comes from the Kalachakra texts.

In the Proem to The Secret Doctrine, its three fundamental propositions are given (SD 1.14 ff.). The first fundamental proposition is said to be symbolized under two aspects: absolute abstract space, and absolute abstract motion. These, as such, are very general ideas that could be found in any cosmogony. But the SD goes on to call absolute abstract motion "The Great Breath." This is a very distinctive term. Since this is one of the most central teachings of the Secret Doctrine, if this distinctive term used to describe it could be found somewhere, it would provide strong evidence that HPB did not make up the Secret Doctrine. HPB in the Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge says "There is a magnificent poem on Pralaya, written by a very ancient Rishi, who compares the motion of the Great Breath during Pralaya to the rhythmical motions of the Unconscious Ocean." (BCW 10.309). The use of the term Rishi here would lead one to think that this poem might be found among the hymns of the Vedas. But I was never able to find such a poem there, nor did Jeanine Miller know of one when I asked her.

In the early decades of the twentieth century a group of Vedic pandits in India set about gathering all known Vedic texts, and preparing an index to them. This was a massive undertaking, occupying many years of labor. In the end, about five hundred texts were gathered and each word in them was indexed. The resulting index was published in 16 volumes. It is called the Vedic Word-Concordance, by Vishva Bandhu, et al. If the great breath occurs anywhere in the Vedic writings, this index would show it. It is all in Sanskrit, so one must look up maha-prana, or possibly maha-svasa. But alas! the great breath as a distinctive term spoken of by HPB is not found in the Vedic writings. Although disappointing, this information has its own value, in ruling out these texts as its source.

So where else could the great breath possibly be found? In the Kalachakra texts, of course! It is there found, for example, in the Vimala-prabha commentary on chapter 2, where it describes the life of an ultimate substance that is the cause of the origination and cessation of living beings. This, as we know, is exactly how it is used in the fundamental propositions of the Secret Doctrine. It is also found in other Kalachakra texts, including the Sekoddesa-tika. This text quotes many verses from the lost fuller Kalachakra Tantra, called the Mula or root tantra. It occurs in these quoted verses, in a beautiful passage which I here translate. The Buddha is addressing King Suchandra of Shambhala, to whom he gave the Kalachakra teachings:

"The birthplace of the buddhas is [the complete enlightenment] in a single, unchanging moment. When the mind is established in the great breath and the [outer] breath-winds have stopped, when the divine senses have arisen and the group of fleshly senses has ceased, when the common sense objects have disappeared and the divine sense objects are seen, I see all, O king. There is nothing ever unseen by me."

Comment by [M. Sufilight](#) on November 24, 2010 at 11:02am

Dear friends

My views are:

A few words about the Great Breath mentioned by Blavatsky in The Secret Doctrine could be helpful so to show, that this Great Breath was in fact mentioned in the Vedic texts and elsewhere. The Great Breath are strongly related to the sacred AUM, when we read the Secret Doctrine and other texts by Blavatsky - and avoid the dead-letter readings.

**** 1 ****

AUM in Wikipedia:

"The Māndukya Upanishad is entirely devoted to the explanation of the syllable. The syllable is taken to consist of three phonemes, a, u and m, variously symbolizing the Three Vedas or the Hindu Trimurti or the three stages of life (birth, life and death)."

.....

"According to Hindu philosophy (see Māndukya Upanishad), the letter A represents creation, when all existence issued forth from Brahma's golden nucleus; the letter U refers to Vishnu the God of the middle who preserves this world by balancing Brahma on a lotus above himself, and the letter M symbolizes the final part of the cycle of existence, when Vishnu falls asleep and Shiva has to breathe in so that all existing things have to disintegrate and are reduced to their essence to him. More broadly, Aum is said to be the primordial sound that was present at the creation of the universe. It is said to be the original sound that contains all other sounds, all words, all languages and all mantras."

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aum>

*** 2 ***

Mandukya Upanisad translated into English:

"1, This syllable AUM is verily all this. This is the explanation about AUM: The past, the present and the future are AUM, "

<http://www.hinduwebsite.com/mandukya.asp>

*** 3 ***

Blavatsky wrote:

Pranava (Sk.). A sacred word, equivalent to Aum.

(The Theosophical Glossary, 1892)

<http://theosophicalglossary.net/>

*** 4 ***

Upanishads in Wikipedia:

"The word atman's original meaning was probably "breath" and it now means the soul of a living creature, especially of a human being."

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upanishads>

*** 5 ***

H. P. Blavatsky wrote:

"As Cowell pertinently remarks, the Upanishads "breathe an entirely different spirit" (from other Brahmanical writings), "a freedom of thought unknown in any earlier work except in the Rig Veda hymns themselves." The second fact is explained by a tradition recorded in one of the MSS. on Buddha's life. It says that the Upanishads were originally attached to their Brahmanas after the beginning of a reform, which led to the exclusiveness of the present caste system among the Brahmins, a few centuries after the invasion of India by the "twice-born." They were complete in those days, and were used for the instruction of the chelas who were preparing for their initiation."

" "The Vedas have a distinct dual meaning—one expressed by the literal sense of the words, the other indicated by the metre and the swara—intonation—which are as the life of the Vedas. . . . Learned pundits and philologists of course deny that swara has anything to do with philosophy or ancient esoteric doctrines; but the mysterious connection between swara and light is one of its most profound secrets." (T. Subba Row, Five Years of Theosophy, p. 154.)"*

.....

"This lasted so long as the Vedas and the Brahmanas remained in the sole and exclusive keeping of the temple-Brahmins—while no one else had the right to study or even read them outside of the sacred caste. Then came Gautama, the Prince of Kapilavastu. After learning the whole of the Brahmanical wisdom in the Rahasya or the Upanishads, and finding that the teachings differed little, if at all, from those of the "Teachers of Life" inhabiting the snowy ranges of the Himalaya, the Disciple of the Brahmins, feeling indignant because the sacred wisdom was thus withheld from all but the Brahmins, determined to save the whole world by popularizing it. Then it was that the Brahmins, seeing that their sacred knowledge and Occult wisdom was falling into the hands of the "Mlechchhas," abridged the texts of the Upanishads, originally containing thrice the matter of the Vedas and the Brahmanas together, without altering, however, one word of the texts. They simply detached from the MSS. the most important portions containing the last word of the Mystery of Being. The key to the Brahmanical secret code remained henceforth with the initiates alone, and the Brahmins were thus in a position to publicly deny the correctness of Buddha's teaching by appealing to their Upanishads, silenced for ever on the chief questions. Such is the esoteric tradition beyond the Himalayas.*

Sri Sankaracharya, the greatest Initiate living in the historical ages, wrote many a Bhâshya on the Upanishads. But his original treatises, as there are reasons to suppose, have not yet fallen into the hands of the Philistines, for they are too jealously preserved in his maths (monasteries, mathams). And there are still weightier reasons to believe that the priceless Bhâshyas (Commentaries) on the esoteric doctrine of the Brahmins, by their greatest expounder, will remain for ages yet a dead letter to most of the Hindus, except the Smârtava Brahmins. This sect, founded by Sankaracharya, (which is still very powerful in Southern India) is now almost the only one to produce students who have preserved sufficient knowledge to comprehend the

** Also called "the Sons of Wisdom," and of the "Fire-Mist" and the "Brothers of the Sun" in the Chinese records. Si-dzang (Tibet) is mentioned in the MSS. of the sacred library of the province of Fo-Kien, as the great seat of Occult learning from time immemorial, ages before Buddha. The Emperor Yu, the "great" (2,207 years B.C.), a pious mystic and great adept, is said to have obtained his knowledge from the "great teachers of the Snowy Range" in Si-dzang.*

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dead letter of the Bhashyas. The reason of this is that they alone, I am informed, have occasionally real Initiates at their head in their mathams, as for instance, in the "Sringa-giri," in the Western Ghats of Mysore. On the other hand, there is no sect in that desperately exclusive caste of the Brahmins, more exclusive than is the Smârtava; and the reticence of its followers to say what they may know of the Occult sciences and the esoteric doctrine, is only equalled by their pride and learning.

(The Secret Doctrine, vol. 1, p. 270)

http://www.phx-ult-lodge.org/SDVolume_1.htm

*** 6 ***

H. P. Blavatsky wrote:

"As this work is written for the instruction of students of Occultism, and not for the benefit of philologists, we may well avoid such foreign terms wherever it is possible to do so. The untranslatable terms alone, incomprehensible unless explained in their meanings, are left, but all such terms are rendered in their Sanskrit form. Needless to remind the reader that these are, in almost every case, the late developments of the later language, and pertain to the Fifth Root-Race. Sanskrit, as now known, was not spoken by the Atlanteans, and most of the philosophical terms used in the systems of the India of the post-Mahabharatan period are not found in the Vedas, nor are they to be met with in the original Stanzas, but only their equivalents. The reader who is not a Theosophist, is once more invited to regard all that which follows as a fairy tale, if he likes; at best as one of the yet unproven speculations of dreamers; and, at the worst, as an additional hypothesis to the many Scientific hypotheses past, present and future, some exploded, others still lingering. It is not in any sense worse than are many of the so called Scientific theories; and it is in every case more philosophical and probable."

(The Secret Doctrine, vol. 1, p. 23)

http://www.phx-ult-lodge.org/SDVolume_1.htm

All the above are just my views.

M. Sufilight

Comment by [Pablo Sender](#) on November 24, 2010 at 12:54pm

I remember having read a chart with the sevenfold constitution of man both in English and Tibetan. This was in an early publication, but I don't remember where. David (or anybody else) do you know what I am talking about? It would be interesting to see how accurate these Tibetan terms are.

I also remember reading from A. Besant that she thought the Book of Dzyan was a kind of "universal textbook" for disciples. But she was surprised that disciples from Adepts of other branches of the Brotherhood (not the Tibetan one) knew nothing about it. So she realized that the Book of Dzyan is used only by the Tibetan Adepts.

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on November 24, 2010 at 1:03pm

Pablo, look in the Blavatsky letters to Sinnett volume, maybe the appendix where the Cosmological notes are. That may be what you are thinking of.

Comment by [Pablo Sender](#) on November 24, 2010 at 1:20pm

Yes, that's the place! In Appendix II. Thank you!

David, have you researched those terms to see if they are accurate?

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 24, 2010 at 9:44pm

quote:

M. Sufilight says:

I wonder...Are you able to document this view using the words "there is nothing like them out there" David?

See my comment in the above. You almost seem to call Blavatsky a charlatan here.

David Reigle replies:

When I said that none of the Stanzas of Dzyan have yet been found in any known book, and thus that there is nothing like them out there, the context of this was to show their authenticity. That is, it was to show that they were not borrowed from anywhere, like many other things found in The Secret Doctrine were. It would show that Blavatsky was not a charlatan.

quote:

David Reigle wrote:

"It is clear to me that a very large amount of material in The Secret Doctrine was taken from then available sources, which, moreover, were very often inaccurate."

M. Sufilight says:

I wonder...Are you able to document this view using the words "very often" David?

David Reigle replies:

Unfortunately, yes, I could write a whole book documenting this if I had the time to do so and thought it was worthwhile to do so. To give just one example, take the distinction made in the SD between Kuan-yin and Kuan-shih-yin. Try to find this distinction as HPB gives it, using Kuan-yin for the feminine form and Kuan-shih-yin for the masculine form, in any available book, or from anyone who knows Chinese, or from anyone who has lived in China.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 24, 2010 at 10:01pm

Pablo, yes I have discussed the terms from the Cosmological Notes in chapter 6 of mine and Nancy's 1999 book, Blavatsky's Secret Books: Twenty Years' Research.

Comment by [Erica Georgiades](#) on November 25, 2010 at 3:34am

An interesting online site of Digital Sanskrit Dictionaries:

1. *Monier Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary (Advanced Search)*

2. *Boehlingk + Schmidt Sanskrit-German Dictionary*

3. *Boehlingk & Roth Sanskrit-German Dictionary*

4. *Apte English-Sanskrit Dictionary*

5. *Sanskrit and Tamil Dictionaries*

6. *MW Inflected forms*

Also PDF versions:

1. *Monier Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary (pdf — img)*

2. *Apte English-Sanskrit Dictionary (pdf — img)*

3. *MacDonell Sanskrit-English Dictionary (img)*

4. *Wilson Sanskrit-English Dictionary (img) (by word)*

5. *Kleines Petersburger Wörterbuch (Boehlingk Sanskrit-German Dictionary)*

6. *Grosses Petersburger Wörterbuch (Boehlingk & Roth Sanskrit-German Dictionary)*

7. *Nachträge zum Sanskrit-Wörterbuch (Schmidt Sanskrit-German Dictionary)*

8. *Cappeller Sanskrit-English Dictionary (img)*

9. *Cappeller Sanskrit Wörterbuch (img)*

10. *Stchoupak Sanskrit-French Dictionary (img) (by word);*

11. *Kale Higher Sanskrit Grammar, 1894 (img)*

<http://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/index.html>

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 25, 2010 at 7:49am

Thanks for this, Erica. We need all the Sanskrit scholarship we can get. G.R.S. Mead had written at the end of his 1896 book, Orpheus:

"My task is done and my small skiff launched. . . . In the construction of my skiff I have mainly combined the researches of Lobeck, who was a scholar and no mystic, with the writings of Taylor, who was half scholar, half mystic, and cemented all together with some information derived from H.P. Blavatsky, who was a mystic and no scholar."

Mead's scholarly efforts to bring the teachings of the Mysteries to a discriminating and intelligent readership were necessary then. How much more so are such efforts needed today, when even the Bible is being dissected by Christian theologians? Thinking people no longer want to just believe on faith; they want accurate and reliable information.

Comment by [M. Sufilight](#) on November 25, 2010 at 11:26am

Dear David and friends

My views are:

David wrote:

"Unfortunately, yes, I could write a whole book documenting this if I had the time to do so and thought it was worthwhile to do so. To give just one example, take the distinction made in the SD between Kuan-yin and Kuan-shih-yin. Try to find this distinction as HPB gives it, using Kuan-yin for the feminine form and Kuan-shih-yin for the masculine form, in any available book, or from anyone who knows Chinese, or from anyone who has lived in China. "

M. Sufilight says:

If you are right, it must be quite important, because the Masters claimed by themselves in Mahatma Letters to have corrected the book for mistakes before it was published. Do you not think so?

*I would say: Just because you have not found this distinction made in the SD between Kuan-yin and Kuan-shih-yin or not in our present day male-chauvanistic societies, you cannot honestly conclude that Blavatsky was inaccurate in her view about the two versions. (See for instance *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 72 - or in the below words from Wikipedia etc.) - What distinction are you talking about, the one on page 72 or the one on page p. 473 of SD Vol. I?*

Mahatma Letter 59 says:

"A great mistake is also made by Beale [Beal] who says: "this name (Avalokiteswara) in Chinese took the form of Kwan-Shai-yin, and the divinity worshipped under that name (was) generally regarded as a female." (374) Kwan-shai-yin -- or the universally manifested voice "is active -- male; and must not be confounded with Kwan-vin, or Buddhi the Spiritual Soul (the sixth Pr.) and the vehicle of its "Lord." It is Kwan-yin that is the female principle or the manifested passive, manifesting itself "to every creature in the universe, in order to deliver all men from the consequences of sin" -- as rendered by Beale, [Beal] this once quite correctly (383), while Kwan-shai-vin, the "Son identical with his Father" is the absolute activity, hence -- having no direct relation to objects of sense is -- Passivity."

<http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/mahatma/ml-59.htm>

Blavatsky wrote:

*" Kwan-Shai-Yin is identical with, and an equivalent of the Sanskrit Avalôkitêshwara, and as such he is an androgynous deity, like the Tetragrammaton and all the Logoi * of antiquity. It is only by some sects in China that he is anthropomorphized and represented with female attributes,† when, under his female aspect, he becomes Kwan-Yin, the goddess of mercy, called the "Divine Voice."‡ The latter is the patron deity of Thibet and of the island of Puto in China, where both deities have a number of monasteries.§ (See Part II. Kwan-Shai-Yin and Kwan-yin.)"*

.....

"To close, Kwan-Shi-Yin and Kwan-Yin are the two aspects (male and female) of the same principle in Kosmos, Nature and Man, of divine wisdom and intelligence. They are the "Christos-Sophia" of the mystic Gnostics—the Logos and its Sakti."

(The Secret Doctrine, Vol. I, p. 72 og 473)

Kwan-Shai-Yin and Kwan Yin in Wikipedia:

"Chen Dynasty empress whose Buddhist nun name was "Guanyin"

.....

"Guanyin's origin is debated among scholars. The root of this debate lies in the history of religion in China. China's indigenous religion is Taoism. It is possible that

Guanshi'ying originated as a Taoist deity, the Queen Mother of the West. With the introduction of Mahayana Buddhism to China in around the 4th to 5th centuries, Taoism and Buddhism became religious rivals in China. The Buddhist tactic was to change, and even supplant, indigenous Taoist deities in favor of Buddhist deities. Over the centuries, this trend has had the effect that it is now virtually impossible to determine Guanshi'ying's true origin. The official Buddhist view is that Guanyin originated with the male Avalokiteśvara, though Guanyin's origin may be more complex than this simple, linear derivation. While it is certain that the name "Guanshi'ying" is derived from the name "Avalokiteśvara", the image of the Chinese/Korean/Japanese/Vietnamese Bodhisattva (along with her femininity) may be at least partly derived from other sources."

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guanyin> - italics added)

So since the issue is debated among scholars and since the apparent present day Buddhist view are in accordance with Blavatsky's I do not yet find myself in disagreement with Blavatsky's views. But later we might find a more clear info, when reading in the Akasha and not only in physical scriptures without proper knowledge of the 7 keys of interpretation.

David Reigle wrote:

When I said that none of the Stanzas of Dzyan have yet been found in any known book, and thus that there is nothing like them out there, the context of this was to show their authenticity. That is, it was to show that they were not borrowed from anywhere, like many other things found in The Secret Doctrine were. It would show that Blavatsky was not a charlatan."

M. Sufilight says:

Allright. I recently said, that we can trace parts of the content presented in the Dzyan Stanzas (Kiu-ti) in the Puranas, the Avesta and Ghata, and in the Chaldean Cabala. I can see, that I (and perhaps other readers) might have misunderstood your words.

All the above are just my views.

M. Sufilight

Comment by [Pablo Sender](#) on November 25, 2010 at 11:34am

David, thank you for the reference. I didn't remember. I read your book quite a few years ago, while in Argentina, but I wasn't very aware at the time of this "problem". I will read it again.

Comment by [Pablo Sender](#) on November 25, 2010 at 11:39am

I found by chance this wiki Dharma Dictionary: A Tibetan-English Dictionary, Dharma Glossaries, and Resources. I do not know how useful it is.

http://rywiki.tsadra.org/index.php/Main_Page

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 26, 2010 at 11:17pm

*The debate about Kuan-yin among scholars has to do with how and why the male Avalokitesvara transformed into a female deity in China; it does not have to do with the name. There are at present about four theories on the reasons for this transformation, with no consensus. This transformation is known to have occurred around the close of the first millennium C.E. This is known primarily through iconography, but also through texts. The standard work on Kuan-yin today is Chun-fang Yu's 2001 book, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*.*

Chun-fang Yu is a longtime professor at Rutgers University, who grew up in China. In her preface she explains her fascination with Kuan-yin, and tells of an experience she had when she was eight years old (p. x). Her grandmother, from whom she had always heard tales of Kuan-yin, was a great devotee of Kuan-yin. When the family was about to board a ship, the grandmother suddenly stopped them. She had seen a vision of Kuan-yin waving them back. Despite protests from Chun-fang Yu's college-educated mother, her grandmother was adamant, and they did not board the ship. Later the ship struck mines and sunk. She and her younger brother of five and younger sister of two would almost certainly have drowned.

To everyone in China, Kuan-yin and Kuan-shih-yin are the same deity. It is not that Kuan-yin is the female form and Kuan-shih-yin is the male form. It has been this way since the very beginning, when the first Sanskrit Buddhist texts containing the name Avalokitesvara were translated into Chinese in the third century C.E. The names Kuan-yin and Kuan-shih-yin were used side by side, for the first several

centuries in China, to refer to the male deity. Later, and right up to the present, these two names are still used side by side, now to refer to the female deity.

*It is not Samuel Beal who made a mistake in saying this. He merely reported what he found in China. It is whatever chela wrote or put into words Mahatma letter #59 who made a mistake, probably HPB. This mistake, saying that Kuan-yin is the female deity and Kuan-shih-yin is the male deity, was repeated in section 15 of vol. 1 of *The Secret Doctrine*, "On Kuan-shih-yin and Kuan-yin," pp. 470-473. This mistake was also repeated in verse 1 of Stanza 6 in *The Secret Doctrine*. This mistake needs to be recognized, acknowledged, and corrected. The Theosophical teaching on the distinction between these two aspects goes for naught to anyone familiar with what these two names actually refer to. This also discredits the allegedly privileged knowledge of the Theosophical teachers. And all because of a chela's blunder in transmission, or unwarranted personal addition. At least, that is how I explain it, based on much evidence of other such blunders on the part of chelas and their transmissions.*

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 27, 2010 at 10:49am

Yes, Nicholas, many of HPB's supposed blunders and mistakes require a deeper look into her intent or meaning. But when she has long been regarded by the world as a fraud, we must wonder: Who is willing to give her the benefit of the doubt and take this deeper look? Only Theosophists. For others, who are hung up on these blunders and mistakes of HPB, that is indeed their loss. Since these others constitute 99.9999 per cent of the population of the world, however, it is a very big loss. Perhaps it is worthwhile to correct this comparatively small error of usage, and just use the names Kuan-yin and Kuan-shih-yin like everyone else uses them.

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on November 27, 2010 at 11:44am

I think David's post below belongs in Pablo's Re-write of SD blog.

Comment by [M. Sufilight](#) on November 28, 2010 at 3:35am

Dear David and friends

My views are:

I write the following to seek the truth about the difference and similarities of Kwan Shi Yin and Kwan Yin, and because I have learned that major parts of the Secret Doctrine given by H. P. Blavatsky contain a true picture of our past and of the universe we live in, right here and now. My view are in part based on inner readings (honestly not always reliable) and from the esoteric books etc. etc. Yet, it might have overlooked something or other, and therefore the questions in the below.

David Reigle wrote:

The debate about Kuan-yin among scholars has to do with how and why the male Avalokitesvara transformed into a female deity in China; it does not have to do with the name. There are at present about four theories on the reasons for this transformation, with no consensus.

M. Sufilight says:

But that does not, as I see it, imply, that your version is more accurate than Blavatsky's, which was forwarded to the advanced Seekers after Wisdom, based on the very ancient Dzyan Stanzas - the Esoteric Buddhistic teachings, and not on scholarly conclusions based on the texts they have in their hands nor on Exoteric Buddhism; - especially when none of them are listening to the past earlier and ancient esoteric teachings on the origin of the issue.

David Reigle wrote:

This transformation is known to have occurred around the close of the first millennium C.E. This is known primarily through iconography, but also through texts. The standard work on Kuan-yin today is Chun-fang Yu's 2001 book, Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara.

M. Sufilight says:

Known by whom, and based on what knowledge and on what kind of philosophy, if I may ask?

What about the earlier events before the Christian era with regard to the Kwan Shi Yin and Kwan Yin doctrines?

David Reigle wrote:

To everyone in China, Kuan-yin and Kuan-shih-yin are the same deity. It is not that Kuan-yin is the female form and Kuan-shih-yin is the male form. It has been this

way since the very beginning, when the first Sanskrit Buddhist texts containing the name Avalokitesvara were translated into Chinese in the third century C.E.

M. Sufilight says:

Yes today it is so in many parts of Communist China. As I understand Blavatsky, Kuan-Shi-Yin is to her the male aspect of Avalokitesvara, and Kuan-Yin is the female aspect of Avalokitesvara; ie. when they are not anthropomorphized as they were and still are in various parts of China. (See Secret Doctrine, Vol. I, p. 473) It all depends, as I see it, on what ones conclusions are based on. Are they based on scholarly views or on the readings of the Akasha about how the words were - mainly - interpreted and used in the texts of the first centuries of our era or especially earlier on?

I think, that we have to take into account, that a great number of texts from the beginning of our era have been lost or are not known to present day scholars and exotericists etc. Esoteric texts most often contain layers and keys of interpretation not known by superficial readers. Blavatsky's views was based on esoteric knowledge and readings of the Akasha. - Her book should be read in that esoteric light. Maybe Blavatsky was inaccurate because she did not strongly enough emphasised this?

- Have any of the old texts on Kuan-Yin and Kuan-Shi-Yin been read in the esoteric light, with the proper knowledge about the esoteric keys of the texts? - Let us remember that Blavatsky more than one time in the Secret Doctrine refer to the fact that many scholars will not understand the words given in the Dzyan Stanzas.

David Reigle wrote:

The names Kuan-yin and Kuan-shih-yin were used side by side, for the first several centuries in China, to refer to the male deity. Later, and right up to the present, these two names are still used side by side, now to refer to the female deity.

M. Sufilight says:

Again I will have to ask, whether this actually only is based on scholarly examination or on esoteric knowledge of the true picture of what occurred during the first centuries of our era and especially before that time with regard to the use of the terms Kuan-Yin and Kuan-Shi-Yin?

David Reigle wrote:

It is not Samuel Beal who made a mistake in saying this. He merely reported what he found in China. It is whatever chela wrote or put into words Mahatma letter #59 who made a mistake, probably HPB. This mistake, saying that Kuan-yin is the female deity and Kuan-shih-yin is the male deity, was repeated in section 15 of vol. 1 of The Secret Doctrine, "On Kuan-shih-yin and Kuan-yin," pp. 470-473. This mistake was also repeated in verse 1 of Stanza 6 in The Secret Doctrine. This mistake needs to be recognized, acknowledged, and corrected.

M. Sufilight says:

I prefer to say: Not "deity", but the male and female aspect of Avalokitesvara, a non-anthropomorphic principle.

What are your conclusion based on, that make this view a mistake? Is it based on esoteric knowledge or on exoteric knowledge?

David Reigle wrote:

The Theosophical teaching on the distinction between these two aspects goes for naught to anyone familiar with what these two names actually refer to. This also discredits the allegedly privileged knowledge of the Theosophical teachers. And all because of a chela's blunder in transmission, or unwarranted personal addition. At least, that is how I explain it, based on much evidence of other such blunders on the part of chelas and their transmissions.

M. Sufilight says:

It is perhaps more a question about what they actually referred to in the past, and not so much how people in general view them today. Is it not so, that if Blavatsky is right in saying that Kwan Shi Yin is the Logos and Kwan Yin is its Sakti, (the fohatic aspect), that a lot of confusion necessarily are bound to arise when ignorants read esoteric texts and symbols in the texts and watch ancient statues of the principles. That is how I see it.

Are there any ancient statues or symbols of them showing their differences, if any?

This could lead to a new perspective.

Since you refer to so very many blunders made by Blavatsky, our well-reputed Initiate and to say the least, seem to throw mud at Blavatsky and the Masters, i think it is fair to ask you, whether you, who claim to have more knowledge than

them, and, can provide a summary list with the many mistakes you apparently very often have in your head, and with documentation making your case more likely than we have seen so far with regard to the Kwan-Shi-Yin subject?

- - -

AvalokiteSvara in Wikipedia (Exoteric views)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avalokite%20Svara>

A fellow writes very interestingly the following on the Internet:

"Many followers of"... "externalist religions have often criticised that buddhists worship idols. This is a wrong and extreme view held by some people, if they were to believe what they preach, then the use of photographs should be banned! Images are not the Buddhas themselves but a representation of their superior qualities. This is similar to the use of symbols in languages to convey meanings. The symbols have no meaning till the meanings are assigned to the symbols. This also means that any misinterpretations on the meanings of the symbols used are also meaningless as the true meanings are not interpreted correctly. "

....The same could be said with regard to statues and symbols of Kwan Shi Yin and Kwan Yin, and their differences in the earlier centuries and today. Esoteric teachings are given to esotericists, and exotericists do not always understand them.

I am very interested in your views, especially because I have met the old lady, named Blavatsky.

All the above are just my views and questions.

I might be in error, that is why I ask.

M. Sufilight

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 28, 2010 at 1:20pm

Glad to have your input and perspective on this, Paul, and also the input in the same vein by Alistair, which I also appreciated. Since what Alistair said was on another blog (Re-writing the Secret Doctrine), I will quote it here:

"I would suggest that to the 'thinking public', the SD and the stanzas with it, is rather regarded as a very strange item of largely literary i.e. imaginative construction rather than an exposition upon some 'authentic' hitherto unknown eastern school. However, many would now see it as a primary expression of an esotericism that is multicultural and global, and standing quite happily on its own legs due to this."

Paul said about this:

"I think Alistair had it right in a previous comment that well-informed readers don't bring the kind of expectations to HPB that the whole fraud/vindication meme implies. They appreciate her writing for a variety of qualities that don't rest on either scholarly or spiritual authority."

This perspective, and perception, is no doubt widely true. It is valuable to recognize this, and in my own case, also to be reminded of this. But if we were to assume that HPB's Stanzas are like a beautiful poem that she composed, and are not a translation of an ancient text, where would that leave us in a blog that attempts to trace their origins? I am fully aware of the fact that many students of Theosophy do not share my conviction that a Sanskrit and/or Tibetan version of the Stanzas of Dzyan will be discovered. Nonetheless, myself having this conviction, I am obliged to act accordingly. This necessarily puts me in the world of Indological and Tibetological studies. In this world, the idea that HPB was a fraud certainly prevails. It is this assumption that prevents the Stanzas from being researched there. Perhaps tomorrow I will have time to post a couple of my experiences there in regard to this.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 28, 2010 at 1:36pm

Dear M. Sufilight,

The question of Kuan-yin/Kuan-shih-yin does not have to do with what is esoteric and what is exoteric. It is a simple mistake in the use of names. The esoteric teachings are not being called into question. It is as if we distinguished England from Britain, and then said that the pagan or pre-Christian country is called England, and the Christian country is called Britain. No one doubts that this country was once pagan, and then became Christian. But it would not be correct to distinguish these by calling the one England and the other Britain. This is simply an exoterically known fact; esoteric knowledge is not involved here.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 29, 2010 at 11:06pm

Yesterday I mentioned that I might post a couple of my experiences in the world of Indological and Tibetological studies regarding HPB and the Stanzas of Dzyan. There, the idea that HPB was a fraud prevails, and thus the Stanzas are not regarded as subjects of serious research. Since this is where most serious research occurs, this can pose a problem for people like us who are trying to trace the origins of the Stanzas. Here are the two experiences.

*Many of you know of the 1927 Peking edition of *The Voice of the Silence*, which included four lines of Tibetan text composed by the Ninth Panchen Lama for this reprint. He was living in China at that time, due to the political situation in Tibet. The reprint was undertaken by Basil Crump and Alice Cleather, whose papers went after her death to the HPB Library in Canada. This very rare book was reprinted by the HPB Library under Michael Freeman, and Nancy and I had obtained a copy of it on our visit to him in British Columbia. In 1978 we were taking a class on Chinese Buddhism from Prof. Robert Gimello, a kindly and broad-minded man. We showed him the Peking edition of the Voice with the Panchen Lama's Tibetan text and apparent endorsement. Prof. Gimello replied that scholars had proven Blavatsky to be a fraud. Therefore, he said, these Tibetan lines and the alleged endorsement were most likely to be fake. That is the first experience.*

*For the next one, we must fast forward about two decades. The late Prof. J. W. de Jong was at the same time one of the most admired and feared Indologists of our time. For decades he served as the editor of the *Indo-Iranian Journal*. In this capacity, he wrote hundreds of reviews of the books and translations published by other scholars. He always carefully compared their translations with the original Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese texts, and in very many cases he found that the published translations had serious flaws. So his reviews were often very critical. His critical review of at least one scholar's work apparently led to that scholar losing a position at a prestigious university. This is why he was feared. But he was more often admired for setting a high standard of accuracy in the scholarly community.*

*While inputting Sanskrit texts as part of my preparation for Book of Dzyan work, I came across two unusual verb-forms in Maitreya's *Abhisamayalamkara*, and was able to identify them. Since previous scholars such as Edward Conze in his translation of this text had not identified them, I briefly wrote up what they were. I sent this directly to J. W. de Jong for the *Indo-Iranian Journal*.* This involved a*

brief exchange of letters. At the close of this exchange, I seized the opportunity to ask him about the Book of Dzyan. I asked him to ignore the commentary in The Secret Doctrine, and just look at the Stanzas. He replied that he would try to get this book from the university library and have a look, but that, a priori, any alleged translation without the availability of the original text would be suspect. This is the bottom line, as we all know. It doesn't take one of the sharpest minds of our time to figure this out, but here we have it from one. No serious work can be done without an original.

These scholars have done more to make the Eastern texts available than anyone else on earth. Take a look at the file, "A Tale of Leaves: On Sanskrit Manuscripts in Tibet, their Past and their Future," by Ernst Steinkellner, that Joe has posted on the main page of this website. It is an extraordinary tale of how access to the palm-leaf Sanskrit manuscripts preserved in Tibet, after strenuous efforts over decades, is now beginning to happen.

** "The 'Virtually Unknown' Benedictive Middle in Classical Sanskrit: Two Occurrences in the Buddhist Abhisamayalankara," Indo-Iranian Journal, vol. 40, 1997, pp. 119-123*

(<http://www.easterntertradition.org/virtually%20unknown%20benedictive.pdf>).

Comment by Erica Georgiades on November 30, 2010 at 4:32am

The project - The Origins of the Stanzas of Dzyan - is really wonderful. I recognize my limitations on working on a project like this, due to my lack of knowledge on the involved languages: Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese. But I am sure as this project moves on you will be able to get some interesting results.

I will give my half cent though... :D

The word Ah-Hi reminds me of the Hellenic word αρχή, which means beginning. The word ἄρχοντες (rulers) is also derived from the word αρχή. If one tries to transliterate the word αρχή to English, would be something like Arxi or or Ar-Xi depends of the pronunciation it could possibly be transliterated as Ah-Hi.

H.P.B. defines the word Ah-Hi as a group or class of celestial or spiritual beings, so they could be considered also a kind of "rulers".

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on November 30, 2010 at 8:59am

If finding the "original text" is essential, then any translation in Tibetan, Sanskrit etc. will be pointless. The de Jong standard would reject all translations because they were such.

HPB wrote: "This first installment of the esoteric doctrines is based upon Stanzas, which are the records of a people unknown to ethnology; it is claimed that they are written in a tongue absent from the nomenclature of languages and dialects with which philology is acquainted..."

This being the case, even if the original text were found, no linguist could read it.

Comment by [Pablo Sender](#) on November 30, 2010 at 9:25am

Yes. The Esoteric philosophy, being esoteric, will always be suspected by scholars. HPB talks about things that are unknown to scholars in all fields (anthropology, physics, biology, linguistic, etc, etc) and says that the very sources of her knowledge are secret. This implies that these sources are never heard of, either by native religious practitioners or by scholars (even if some high religious heads are in contact with the Adepts and know about this, they would most probably keep the knowledge secret). So, how can we prove to others whether HPB is making things up or not?

Of course, hints could be found here and there, steps forward can be taken to trace some of HPB's claims but, in my view, unless the Adepts are willing to attract the attention of the world to Theosophy by releasing some original work, I do not think we can expect a wide acceptance of it in those circles.

Besides, there is another important difficulty. Since Theosophy claims to have revealed some esoteric knowledge and says that the current knowledge in religions is somewhat wrong, it will not find sympathetic ears in most religious figures. For example, Buddhists were very happy with Theosophy when they were being suppressed by Christianity, and Theosophy fought for them. But today, with Theosophy not serving them any purpose, their reaction is different. No Buddhist would accept that the Buddha really taught about the Self, as HPB claims in her essay "An Unpublished Discourse Of The Buddha". This would imply a radical change of the whole traditional Buddhist outlook. The same examples can be mentioned regarding other philosophies and religions.

So, while it is valuable to work at all levels (even at the scholar one) to make Theosophy understood, I think we should remain aware of reality and not have unreasonable hopes that will turn in frustration when they are not fulfilled.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 30, 2010 at 10:08am

Tsongkhapa was one of the greatest scholars ever to appear in Tibet, if not THE greatest. Those who think that he was only a great mystic have never read his writings. He certainly followed what has just been referred to as the de Jong standard, or more accurately, he set this standard for Tibet. Look at his Golden Garland of Eloquence. In this massive book he carefully examines all the commentaries on Maitreya's Abhisamayalamakara that were translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan. He points out where this Indian pandit got this thing wrong, and then where that Indian pandit got that thing wrong, or where this Tibetan translator got this thing wrong, etc., etc. He does not do this through appeal to mystic perception or anything esoteric; he does this through appeal to the logical meaning of the texts, to variant readings in them or alternate translations of them, and to the coherence of their teachings.

Comment by [Pablo Sender](#) on November 30, 2010 at 12:26pm

Below, HPB's explanation at the end of the Proem (Vol. 1, pp. 22-24) about the original language of the Stanzas and their translation:

"The Stanzas which form the thesis of every section are given throughout in their modern translated version, as it would be worse than useless to make the subject still more difficult by introducing the archaic phraseology of the original, with its puzzling style and words. Extracts are given from the Chinese Tibetan and Sanskrit translations of the original Senzar Commentaries and Glosses on the Book of Dzyan — these being now rendered for the first time into a European language. It is almost unnecessary to state that only portions of the seven Stanzas are here given. Were they published complete they would remain incomprehensible to all save the few higher occultists. Nor is there any need to assure the reader that, no more than most of the profane, does the writer, or rather the humble recorder, understand those forbidden passages. To facilitate the reading, and to avoid the too frequent

reference to foot-notes, it was thought best to blend together texts and glosses, using the Sanskrit and Tibetan proper names whenever those cannot be avoided, in preference to giving the originals. The more so as the said terms are all accepted synonyms, the former only being used between a Master and his chelas (or disciples).

Thus, were one to translate into English, using only the substantives and technical terms as employed in one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions, Verse I would read as follows: — “Tho-ag in Zhi-gyu slept seven Khorlo. Zodmanas zhiba. All Nyug bosom. Konch-hog not; Thyan-Kam not; Lha-Chohan not; Tenbrel Chugnyi not; Dharmakaya ceased; Tgenchang not become; Barnang and Ssa in Ngovonyidj; alone Tho-og Yinsin in night of Sun-chan and Yong-grub (Parinishpanna), &c., &c.,” which would sound like pure Abracadabra.

As this work is written for the instruction of students of Occultism, and not for the benefit of philologists, we may well avoid such foreign terms wherever it is possible to do so. The untranslatable terms alone, incomprehensible unless explained in their meanings, are left, but all such terms are rendered in their Sanskrit form. Needless to remind the reader that these are, in almost every case, the late developments of the later language, and pertain to the Fifth Root-Race. Sanskrit, as now known, was not spoken by the Atlanteans, and most of the philosophical terms used in the systems of the India of the post-Mahabharatan period are not found in the Vedas, nor are they to be met with in the original Stanzas, but only their equivalents. The reader who is not a Theosophist, is once more invited to regard all that which follows as a fairy tale, if he likes; at best as one of the yet unproven speculations of dreamers; and, at the worst, as an additional hypothesis to the many Scientific hypotheses past, present and future, some exploded, others still lingering. It is not in any sense worse than are many of the so called Scientific theories; and it is in every case more philosophical and probable.

In view of the abundant comments and explanations required, the references to the footnotes are given in the usual way, while the sentences to be commented upon are marked with figures. Additional matter will be found in the Chapters on Symbolism forming Part II., as well as in Part III., these being often more full of information than the text.”

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on November 30, 2010 at 10:21pm

Erica, thanks for the information on the Hellenic word, Arxi or Ar-xi, meaning a kind of "rulers." I do not know whether this might relate linguistically to the Ah-hi of the Stanzas. There are certainly close connections between Greek and Sanskrit. Its meaning, "rulers," made me think of the old meaning of the Sanskrit word "isvara," the usual word for "God." This word has the meaning of ruler in the older Sanskrit texts.

Just to be clear about what I mean by an "original" language text of the Stanzas, I mean a Sanskrit or Tibetan version. The Senzar of course would not be useful to us. But there would exist Sanskrit and Tibetan and Chinese translations of the Senzar.

There are some Buddhist texts that speak of a self (atman), and have similarities with "An Unpublished Discourse of the Buddha." These are the Tathagata-garbha texts, and especially the Mahaparinirvana-sutra. Their teachings were systematized in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga. This text was lost for centuries in India, and was then re-discovered (found in a stupa) and transmitted to Tibet. The tathagata-garbha or buddha-nature teachings that it gives form the basis of most of the esoteric teachings in Tibet. Tomorrow I will try to post the fuller story of this text, which is closely related to the Stanzas.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 1, 2010 at 1:08pm

"Thus, were one to translate into English, using only the substantives and technical terms as employed in one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions, Verse I would read as follows: — "Tho-ag in Zhi-gyu slept seven Khorlo. Zodmanas zhiba. All Nyug bosom. Konch-hog not; Thyan-Kam not; Lha-Chohan not; Tenbrel Chugnyi not; Dharmakaya ceased; Tgenchang not become; Barnang and Ssa in Ngovonyidj; alone Tho-og Yinsin in night of Sun-chan and Yong-grub (Parinishpanna), &c., &c.," which would sound like pure Abracadabra." (SD 1.23)

Of the terms in this extract, I said in my post here of Oct. 28 that seven were unidentified. Since then, yinsin has been identified as a Chinese word (yih-sin = i-hsin = yixin). So that leaves six words that may be Senzar, although they look like Tibetan. For example, zhi-gyu may well be the two Tibetan words spelled gzhi rgyu. These six terms are:

1. tho-ag,

2. zhi-gyu.
3. thyan-kam,
4. chohan.
5. tgenchang.
6. sun-chan.

Of the terms in this extract, twelve are certainly Tibetan:

1. khorlo ('khor lo)
2. zodmanas (gzod ma nas)
3. zhiba (zhi ba)
4. nyug (snyugs)
5. konch-hog (dkon mchog)
6. lha (lha)
7. tenbrel (rten 'brel)
8. chugnyi (bcu gnyis)
9. barnang (bar snang)
10. ssa (sa)
11. ngovonyidj (ngo bo nyid)
12. yong-grub (yongs grub)

Of the terms in this extract, dharmakaya is Sanskrit, as is parinishpanna, which is correctly given as the Sanskrit original of its Tibetan translation yong-grub.

As can be seen, we are dealing with an original that is largely in Tibetan, including perhaps several Senzar terms. This could pretty much be read by anyone who knows Tibetan, once they had the meaning of the Senzar terms. We are not dealing with an old pictorial form of Senzar here. One can easily imagine the Tibetan chelas of the Mahatmas using the Tibetan translation, the Indian chelas using the Sanskrit translation, and the Chinese chelas using the Chinese translation. Having one of

these translations for an original, anyone knowing that language would be quite able to use it.

Comment by **Pablo Sender** on December 1, 2010 at 3:15pm

According to HPB "chohan" is a Tibetan term that means "Lord" or "Master". What is the Tibetan translation of these words?

The word chohan could also be related to "chauhan" (a Kshatriya and Rajput clan in India) whose origin is said to be the following:

"According to the Rajput bards, Chauhan (Chowhan) is one of the four Agnikula or 'fire sprung' clans who were created by the Gods in the anali kund or 'fountain of fire' on Mount Abu to fight against the Asuras or demons."

See <http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/definitions/CHAUHAN?cx=pa...>

Comment by **Erica Georgiades** on December 1, 2010 at 4:07pm

David,

There is a dog breed known as Tho'ag Tash

Comment by **David Reigle** on December 1, 2010 at 9:05pm

Pablo wrote:

According to HPB "chohan" is a Tibetan term that means "Lord" or "Master".

Reply:

According to HPB "fohat" is also a Tibetan term. But she was not a linguist. Neither of these terms have been found in Tibetan.

Pablo continues:

What is the Tibetan translation of these words?

Reply:

No one knows. We would have to have the Tibetan spelling of this word to know what it means in Tibetan. Over the years I have seen a few guesses as to what Tibetan word this could be. I have suggested one myself, chos mkhan (Blavatsky's Secret Books, p. 70), which makes sense to me, and is based on a spelling found in the Mahatma Letters. The problem is that I have never seen such a word in use, nor has any Tibetan or Tibetan speaker that I have asked. So I must leave it as unidentified.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 1, 2010 at 9:28pm

Erica wrote:

There is a dog breed known as Tho'ag Tash

Reply:

Since we know that dog is God spelled backwards, I think you must be right in linking the dog Tho'ag to the Tho-ag of the Stanzas.

Comment by [Erica Georgiades](#) on December 2, 2010 at 2:33am

Seems to be the same word.... at least the same spelling...

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 2, 2010 at 8:06am

OK, so now we have:

"The eternal dog wrapped in her ever invisible robes had slumbered once again for seven eternities." (Stanza 1.1)

I knew that dogs sleep a lot when they get old, but this is a nap of epic proportions.

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on December 2, 2010 at 8:12am

"The eternal dog wrapped in her ever invisible robes had slumbered once again for seven eternities." (Stanza 1.1)

Life is a bitch.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 2, 2010 at 2:10pm

I hate to interrupt our canine fun, and I thank Erica and Nicholas for playing along with me in this, but we must not let this thread go completely to the dogs.

I had said that I would try to post the fuller story of Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, a text that apparently is closely related to the Stanzas of Dzyan. Earlier (Nov. 23) we had briefly reviewed the couple main things known about the Stanzas from Theosophical sources:

1. The Stanzas of Dzyan are said to come from a secret commentary on the Book(s) of Kiu-te (BCW 14.422), which are the Tibetan Buddhist tantras. These are the esoteric teachings of Tibet, requiring initiation.

2. Original words "from one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions" were given from Stanza 1 (SD 1.23), that are almost all distinctive Buddhist terms. These are given mostly in Tibetan.

There is yet a third main thing that is known about the Stanzas from Theosophical sources. It comes from a letter written by HPB to A. P. Sinnett in 1886 when she was writing The Secret Doctrine (The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett, p. 195):

"I have finished an enormous Introductory Chapter, or Preamble, Prologue, call it what you will; just to show the reader that the text as it goes, every Section beginning with a page of translation from the Book of Dzyan and the Secret Book of "Maytreya Buddha" Champai chhos Nga (in prose, not the five books in verse known, which are a blind) are no fiction."

In other words:

3. The Book of Dzyan is associated with or identified with the secret book of Maitreya. It is written in prose, as distinguished from the five known books of Maitreya, which are written in verse.

Of the five known books of Maitreya, the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga is thought to differ from the others in its doctrinal standpoint. It uses a mostly different set of technical terms than the others. It teaches an ultimate element, or dhatu, the one element. When this element is obscured or associated with defilement, it is called the tathagata-garbha or buddha-nature. This is something that everyone has or shares. Critics have likened this to the self or atman taught in Hindu Vedanta, but Buddhists insist that it is different. I can post more on these things later. In the meantime, more can be found at [www.easterntertradition.org/book of dzayan research report 4-the doctrine of svabhava or svabhavata and the question of anatman and suntiyata.pdf](http://www.easterntertradition.org/book%20of%20dzayan%20research%20report%204-the%20doctrine%20of%20svabhava%20or%20svabhavata%20and%20the%20question%20of%20anatman%20and%20suntiyata.pdf), where I have suggested (p. 23) that the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, or more specifically its secret original, is the book that HPB refers to here in her letter.

There is a widespread tradition in Tibetan Buddhism, especially among the masters of the Ri-me or non-sectarian movement that was started in Tibet around the time of HPB's work with the Theosophical Society, of using Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga as a bridge between the sutras or exoteric teachings and the tantras or the Books of Kiu-te. Why is it used for this? Because it teaches a buddha-nature or tathagata-garbha that is found in everyone, and this buddha-nature is in some sense identified with the ultimate radiant nature of mind. The practices taught in the tantras, speaking very generally, are intended to help one identify with this so-called "clear light mind" (prabhasvara-citta). We have earlier been discussing this here by way of the term yih-sin / i-hsin / yixin, meaning the "one mind" (eka-citta).

*The Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, also called the Uttara-tantra, was lost for several centuries in India. We know that it was available there in the 400s C.E., because it was translated into Chinese in 511 C.E. Then it disappeared in India. Its rediscovery is recounted in the Tibetan historical work, *The Blue Annals* (translated by George Roerich, p. 347). The 11th century Indian siddha Maitripa once saw a light shining from a crack in a stupa, and checking into it, found this book inside, along with another of the five books of Maitreya (the Dharma-dharmata-vibhaga). Shortly thereafter, it was transmitted to Tibet, and translated into Tibetan. The Sanskrit original was once again lost for many centuries. It was discovered in the 1930s by Rahula Sankrtyayana on one of his trips to Tibet in search of Sanskrit manuscripts. From photographs that he took of it, a Sanskrit edition was published in 1950. A listing of English translations can be found at: [www.easterntertradition.org/etri bib-maitreya.pdf](http://www.easterntertradition.org/etri%20bib-maitreya.pdf). In using any of these, it must be recognized that they all translate differently the key technical terms such as dhatu.*

The dhatu is the central teaching of the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga. This Sanskrit word was translated into Tibetan in two ways: khams and dbyings. The first one means "element"; the second one means "realm" or "sphere" or "expanse" or "space." So it means both the one element and space. We read in The Secret Doctrine:

"What is that which was, is, and will be, whether there is a Universe or not; whether there be gods or none?" asks the esoteric Senzar Catechism. And the answer made is — space." (SD 1.9)

From what I have found in researching the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts, I conclude that HPB's "space" is Sanskrit dhatu, Tibetan dbyings, and perhaps Senzar tho-ag.

Comment by [Erica Georgiades](#) on December 3, 2010 at 1:37am

I've contact a Tibetan friend, to see if I can find any help for this project.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 3, 2010 at 6:55am

Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga is the only book I know of that takes as its primary teaching the dhatu, the one element. The teaching on the one element is a fundamental teaching in the early Theosophical sources, ranging from the Mahatma letters to The Secret Doctrine. Here are three paragraphs from them on this:

"However, you will have to bear in mind (a) that we recognize but one element in Nature (whether spiritual or physical) outside which there can be no Nature since it is Nature itself, and which

as the Akasa pervades our solar system, every atom being part of itself, pervades throughout space and is space in fact, . . . (b) that consequently spirit and matter are one, being but a differentiation

of states not essences, . . . (c) that our notions of "cosmic matter" are diametrically opposed to those of western science. Perchance if you remember all this we will succeed in imparting to you at least the elementary axioms of our esoteric philosophy more correctly than heretofore."

—The Mahatma Letters, letter #11, 3rd ed., p. 63.

"Yes, as described in my letter—there is but one element and it is impossible to comprehend our system before a correct conception of it is firmly fixed in one's mind. You must therefore pardon me if I dwell on the subject longer than really seems necessary. But unless this great primary fact is firmly grasped the rest will appear unintelligible. This element then is the—to speak metaphysically—one substratum or permanent cause of all manifestations in the phenomenal universe."

—The Mahatma Letters, letter #15, 3rd ed., p. 89.

"If the student bears in mind that there is but One Universal Element, which is infinite, unborn, and undying, and that all the rest—as in the world of phenomena—are but so many various differentiated aspects and transformations (correlations, they are now called) of that One, from Cosmical down to microcosmical effects, from super-human down to human and subhuman

beings, the totality, in short, of objective existence—then the first and chief difficulty will disappear and Occult Cosmology may be mastered."

—The Secret Doctrine, vol. I, p. 75.

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on December 3, 2010 at 9:03am

I suppose when David says the one element as a "primary teaching" is rare, he means within Buddhism. The ancient Greeks & Indians had a single element teaching.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 3, 2010 at 12:30pm

References to such a teaching in other sources will be needed. This will be a major problem when the Stanzas come out. How do we show that they represent the once universal wisdom tradition when they necessarily use language specific to Buddhism, and even specific to particular schools within Buddhism? I was wondering just last night what the ancient Greek parallel would be. I do not recall any others among the Indians, and would be happy to know of them. Thanks.

Comment by Jacques Mahnich on December 3, 2010 at 2:17pm

Some sources for the dhatu, or gotra, taken from Obermiller, Acta Orientalia, vol. IX, 1931 :

1) In the Vinaya and Abhidharma, the term gotra is to be found in the sense of a special element which is regarded as the principal factor for the attainment of Arhatship, or otherwise, as that element which forms, so to say, the essential nature or character of a Saint (arya-pudgala). This is the conception of the Vaibhasika school.

2) The Sautrantikas standpoint is quite different. This school admits the existence of a special force governing the element of consciousness. It belongs to the so-called "pure forces" (viprayukta-samskara ; ldan-min-hdu-byed), and give origination to the pure transcendental wisdom (anasrava-jnana ; zag-med-ye-she) of the Saint at the time of final Enlightenment.

3) The Yogacara schools.

The Vijnanavadins (Aryasanga, Vasubandhu) maintain the theory of the store-consciousness (alaya-vijnana ; kun-gzi-rnam-par-ses-pa) containing, so to say, the seeds of all the elements constituting a personality.

The Logicians (Dignaga) do not admit the existence of the store-consciousness.

Those who maintain the theory of the store-consciousness define the "gotra" as a force which governs (li. stands above ; kun-gzihi-sten-du) this store-consciousness and which brings about the origination of pure transcendental knowledge.

The gotra is regarded by both the subdivisions of the Yogachara school as manifesting itself in 2 aspects, viz. the fundamental, existing in every living being from the outset, and that which undergoes the process of development (prakritistha and paripusta-gotra ; ran-bzin-gnas-rigs and rgyas-hgyur-gyi-rigs). It (the gotra) is held to be a pure force and an active (samskrita ; hdus-byas) mutable element. This active character is very pregnantly expressed in the Gudharta (tib. Don-gsan, a commentary on the first chapter of the Mahayana-samgraha ; tg. MDO XVI) where it is said that the Absolute Reality (paranishpanna ; yons-grub) manifests itself in 2 forms, viz. the active and the immutable (nitya ; rtag-pa). The first of these forms has again 2 varieties, - the pure Transcendental Wisdom of the Buddha and the seed, the germ of this Transcendental Wisdom. This seed is the gotra, the fundamental element and the original cause of Enlightenment.

In Haribhadra's Abhisamayalamkaraloka it is stated that the gotra as existing in every individual is beginningless and an outflow of the Absolute. The Yogacharas have the same opinion, but they do not admit the gotra to be the Absolute itself, as Haribhadra does. Tson-kha-pa and Jam-yan-zad-pa rightly remark that if the gotra is taken to be an active element, it is quite impossible to regard it as identical with the Absolute, which is immutable. That the gotra is derived from the Absolute means according to the Yogacharas that it exists from the outset, forming an inherent property of the stream of elements (samtana) constituting a personality.

In the commentary of Tson-kha-pa we have numerous quotations which especially point to the eternal immutable nature of the fundamental element. The most pregnant of these is that of the Ratnakuta : - That in which there is absolutely nothing caused and conditioned is (the element) which is eternal and immutable. This element is that of the saintly lineage ; it has a resemblance with space, being unique and undifferentiated. It is the true essence (tathata ; de-bzin-nid) of all the elements, is uniform (eka-rasa ; ro-gcig-pa) and eternal (nitya ; rtag-pa).

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on December 3, 2010 at 4:16pm

David,

Thales and Anaximander had a single element, "water" & "air" respectively I think.

Without getting into our old argument about the One Principle as theosophy puts it, I think Sankhya's Prakriti will do well enough. Brahman Itself is another elemental, basic option.

Comment by [Pablo Sender](#) on December 4, 2010 at 3:18pm

David, what I meant to ask is what the Tibetan words for "Lord" or "Master" or related terms are.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 4, 2010 at 5:31pm

It is useful to have quotations from Obermiller's introduction to his translation of Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga or Uttara-tantra, that was published in 1931. Thanks, Jacques, for posting these. Obermiller was the first person to translate this

text into a Western language. Since he did this before the Sanskrit text was discovered, he translated it from the Tibetan translation. It was a remarkable achievement, working only from the Tibetan, and before much was known about its specific technical vocabulary. He undertook this translation with the help of Tibetan monks at a monastery in Transbaikalia where he studied it in the summer of 1929. In his acknowledgments, he says (pp. 110-111):

"My deepest thanks are likewise due to the Khambo (Mkhan -po) Lama Agvan (Nag-dban) Dorjeev who took such a keen interest in my Buddhist studies in Transbaikalia and has greatly furthered them, . . ."

According to a Mongolian teacher who Paul Brunton met in Cambodia, Lama Agvan Dorjeev and HPB were co-disciples of the same teacher (*The Notebooks of Paul Brunton*, vol. 10, p. 201).

In Obermiller's comments that Jacques quoted, Obermiller equates the dhatu, the "element," or "space," with the gotra. The term gotra has its own set of meanings. The careful study by D. Seyfort Ruegg delineates three main meanings for gotra ("*The Meanings of the Term Gotra and the Textual History of the Ratnagotravibhaga*," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 39, 1976, p. 354):

1. mine, matrix.
2. family, clan, lineage.
3. germ, seed.

We can see from Obermiller's comments that gotra has been understood in one or other of these three meanings by the various schools and sub-schools of Buddhism, and yet it has been applied differently by them. Their different usages show that this teaching was subject to various interpretations. This is aside from what the term itself means, which is the first thing that must be understood. In the four existing English translations of the *Ratna-gotra-vibhaga*, we find gotra translated in different ways:

1. "source (of Buddhahood)," or "Germ of enlightenment," or "saintly lineage" -- E. Obermiller, 1931.
2. "Germ [of the Buddha]" -- Jikido Takasaki, 1966.

3. "potential" -- Ken and Katia Holmes, 1979/1985.

4. "disposition" -- Rosemarie Fuchs, 2000.

While the gotra may be a kind of synonym for the dhatu, it is not a full synonym, but rather expresses an aspect of the dhatu. The dhatu is the central term and central idea of the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, and perhaps of the Senzar Catechism that HPB quoted twice (SD 1.9, 1.11). In the four existing English translations of the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, we find dhatu translated in four different ways:

1. "Germ (of Buddhahood)" -- E. Obermiller, 1931.

2. "Essence [of the Buddha]" -- Jikido Takasaki, 1966.

3. "buddha-nature" -- Ken and Katia Holmes, 1979/1985.

4. "element" -- Rosemarie Fuchs, 2000.

As may be seen, Obermiller had translated dhatu as germ, while Takasaki translated gotra as germ. This alone, to say nothing of the lack of agreement of the other translations, is enough to show why reliable research on these matters is impossible on the basis of English translations alone. Until we have agreement on English equivalents for these original Sanskrit terms, like the Tibetans achieved, we will have to use the Sanskrit terms. Otherwise, how will anyone know if we mean the dhatu or the gotra when we refer to the germ?

These are distinct terms, giving distinct ideas. The "Secret Science" is as much a science as any modern science, and the accurate use of technical terms is as necessary in it as it is in physics, for example. The dhatu refers to the "element," or "space," while the gotra refers to a "matrix," in the sense of a mine as the source of minerals, or to a "lineage," as in a family lineage, or to a "germ," in the sense of a seed.

Now, in light of the above information, let us review HPB's second quotation from the Occult Catechism (SD 1.11):

"What is it that ever is?" "Space, the eternal Anupadaka."* "What is it that ever was?" "The Germ in the Root." "What is it that is ever coming and going?" "The Great Breath." "Then, there are three Eternals?" "No, the three are one. That which ever is is one, that which ever was is one, that which is ever being and becoming is also one: and this is Space."

We are now able to form the hypothesis that HPB's translation "Space" is the dhatu, and her translation "Germ" is the gotra.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 4, 2010 at 10:03pm

Quote:

"Thales and Anaximander had a single element, "water" & "air" respectively I think."

"Without getting into our old argument about the One Principle as theosophy puts it, I think Sankhya's Prakriti will do well enough. Brahman Itself is another elemental, basic option."

Reply:

These may do well enough for Theosophists who want to find unity, but I don't think these are close enough for the rest of the world, i.e., for those in the rest of the world who may have an interest in these things. The one "element" of Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga does not refer to a single element among the four great elements, earth, water, air, and fire. You mean Anaximenes rather than Anaximander.

The prakriti of Samkhya is considered by almost everyone to be one of a pair with purusa, forming an ultimate duality. The one element found in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, and the one element taught in Theosophy, is ultimately non-dual. Until the lost Samkhya sourcebook called the Sasti-tantra is found, or more old Samkhya commentaries such as the Yukti-dipika (discovered in the early 1900s and first published in 1938) are found, not much of a case can be made that Samkhya actually teaches an ultimate unity. Some evidence for this is now available in the Yukti-dipika, and in references to the lost Sasti-tantra. But this evidence is overwhelmed by that fact that Sankaracharya in his definitive commentary on the Brahma-sutras (the one extant, anyway) refutes Samkhya as a dualism.

As for brahman itself, I don't think Vedantins are willing to call it an "element" (dhatu), even the "one element," when all the Advaita Vedanta teachers, and the known Advaita Vedanta books, again and again define brahman as pure consciousness.

Comment by Jacques Mahnich on December 5, 2010 at 4:41am

Sources for the Ratnagotravibhaga Mahayanottaratantrasastra.

A french translation was published in 2001, by François Chenique, from the sanskrit and tibetain original texts. It used most of the previous works as David quoted them here. The translator is using also D. Seyfort Ruegg two main studies in french (the Tathagatagarbha and Gotra theory - 1969, and the translation of Bu.ston rin.chen.grub Tathagatagarbha Essay - 1973), and Shenpen Hookham works.

He was able to do this translation, thanks to current existing tradition holders in Dhagpo Kagyu Ling in Dordogne, where he received the teachings of the Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, the same Khenpo who also provided explanations in the Rosemarie Fuchs book (Buddha Nature).

An interesting feature of François' translation is that he gives the whole text in sanskrit and in tibetain, then his traduction.

In his introduction , he gives his understanding of the Dhatu :

" Dhatu (khams) is difficult to translate : it means element, sphere, space, but also Nature (of Buddha) or Essence (ultimate), and in the Shentong interpretation of the texte, it mirrors a Reality of Base also expressed by the words like gotra (lineage), tathagatagarbha (Buddha germ), tathata, paramartha-satya (ultimate Truth), dharmakaya (Absolute Body), buddhajnana (Buddha Wisdom), and prabhasvaracitta (Natural clarity of Mind)."

This confirms the difficulties David is alluding too in terms of interpretations of the words in a translation.

Another useful sources is the Buddhism Encyclopedic Dictionary published by Philippe Cornu (2001 & 2006) where one can find translation of buddhist words in 5 languages (sanskrit, tibetan, chinese, japanese and french, plus extensive quotations from the buddhists texts .

Comment by Nicholas Weeks on December 5, 2010 at 7:47am

Anaximenes is the correct one, as presenting "air" as the one substance. Aristotle saw this "air" as some metaphysical stuff that transformed itself into everything else. Rather like the Protean one elment, or so it looks to me.

Anaximander was a fortuitous mistake. His notions of the Boundless & the "germ" are even more attractive than Anaximenes' philosophy.

See - <http://www.iep.utm.edu/anaximan/#H2>

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 5, 2010 at 6:42pm

"David, what I meant to ask is what the Tibetan words for "Lord" or "Master" or related terms are."

Pablo, for "Lord" the Tibetan words given in Dawasamdud's English-Tibetan Dictionary are:

gtso bo, rje bo, jo bo, dpon po.

For "Master" the Tibetan words given in Dawasamdud's English-Tibetan Dictionary are:

bdag po, gtso bo, slob dpon, dpon po.

As you know, Dawasamdud was the translator who worked with Evans-Wentz, so he was familiar with Theosophy. In fact, I have a pocket-sized notebook of Dawasamdud's that Evans-Wentz had, that then came into the possession of the late Alex Patterson of San Diego, who gave it to me when Ken Small introduced me to him. It is mostly random notes, including shopping lists, mostly in Tibetan. It does have a list of the seven Theosophical principles, and Dawasamdud's attempt to give Tibetan translations of them.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 5, 2010 at 10:12pm

Glad to hear of the 2001 French translation of the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, by François Chenique, which gives the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts. We much need a new translation of this text in English. Obermiller's 1931 translation, good as it was, used terms like the "Absolute" and the "Essence," which have long since been considered to no longer be appropriate for Buddhism. Takasaki's 1966 translation is the only one in English that was made from the Sanskrit, so still remains the standard, but it, too, used such terms. The later two, by Ken and Katia Holmes in 1979, with a revised edition in 1985, and by Rosemarie Fuchs in 2000, were made only from the Tibetan. This is not adequate when the original Sanskrit is available.

Comment by [Pablo Sender](#) on December 6, 2010 at 10:35am

That is very interesting David! And how did Dawasamdub translate Atman? It would be interesting if it is dhatu, because the Masters (and sometimes HPB also) tended to describe Atman more as Space than a Self. See for example:

Spirit or LIFE is indivisible. And when we speak of the seventh principle it is neither quality nor quantity nor yet form that are meant, but rather the space occupied in that ocean of spirit. Mahatma M. (The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett, Chr. Ed. No. 44 (ML-13))

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 6, 2010 at 10:08pm

We have already seen what I regard as good evidence that the fundamental Theosophical teaching on the idea of the one element or of space corresponds to the Sanskrit term dhatu as found in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga. The term space as used in the early Theosophical writings would not correspond to akasa, the usual term for space, or even to sunyata, which had sometimes then been translated as space. If this is so, we have narrowed down our search for the origins of this basic idea of the Stanzas of Dzyan to a specific term found in a specific source, one whose author is specifically named by HPB in association with the Book of Dzyan. I would now like to present more evidence in support of this, much more evidence, that to my mind leaves no doubt about this identification.

First, it is necessary to be clear about why and in what way the one element and space are synonyms, as reflected in the two Tibetan translations of the Sanskrit term dhatu. When the term dhatu stands alone, as it usually does in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, it is normally translated into Tibetan as khams, "element." In this sense, dhatu has the idea of a basic element of something. For example, it can refer to the seven constituents of the body, namely, flesh, bone, fat, etc. When speaking of the basic element of the whole universe, however, we are speaking of something completely unknown and unknowable. This is because Buddhism does not accept an ultimate element in the sense of something that can transform into the universe. How can we describe such an element? We cannot give it any attributes. All we can do is describe it as the undefinable space in which the the

phenomenal universe appears. So in this context, dhatu comes to be thought of and translated into Tibetan as dbyings, meaning "realm" or "sphere" or "expanse" or "space" in this sense. In this sense it is usually found in the compound, dharmadhatu. This refers to the basic element (dhatu, khams) of the universe as the basic space (dhatu, dbyings) in which all phenomena (dharma-s) appear. So in this way the one element is a synonym of space.

We have reviewed three paragraphs from the Mahatma Letters and from The Secret Doctrine giving the fundamental Theosophical teaching of the one element. We have also looked at two paragraphs from the esoteric Senzar Catechism giving this same fundamental Theosophical teaching as space. As with the Tibetans, so in the Theosophical teachings, these two are the same. HPB made this clear in 1882, when she wrote:

"Hence, the Arahat secret doctrine on cosmogony admits but of one absolute, indestructible, eternal, and uncreated UNCONSCIOUSNESS (so to translate), of an element (the word being used for want of a better term) absolutely independent of everything else in the universe; a something ever present or ubiquitous, a Presence which ever was, is, and will be, whether there is a God, gods or none; whether there is a universe or no universe; existing during the eternal cycles of Maha Yugas, during the Pralayas as during the periods of Manvantara: and this is SPACE, . . ."

(H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 3, p. 423)

This same idea using the same term was given from the very beginning, when these Theosophical teachings first came out in 1881, in the Cosmological Notes in answer to A. O. Hume's question:

"What is the one eternal thing in the universe independent of every other thing? Space."

("Cosmological Notes," The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett, Appendix II, p. 376)

This same idea using the same term again appears in a quote from the esoteric Senzar Catechism that HPB brought out seven years later, in The Secret Doctrine, published in 1888:

"'What is that which was, is, and will be, whether there is a Universe or not; whether there be gods or none?' asks the esoteric Senzar Catechism. And the answer made is -- SPACE."

(The Secret Doctrine, vol. 1, p. 9)

We notice in this quote from the Senzar Catechism the phrase, "whether there is a Universe or not; whether there be gods or none," a phrase also used in HPB's 1882 writing quoted above. This is closely reminiscent of a phrase used in a fundamental teaching on this same topic found throughout the Buddhist texts, not only in the tathagata-garbha sutras, and is repeated in them like a refrain from a catechism. Here is this formulaic teaching as found in the early Pali language collection called the Samyutta Nikaya, as translated in 2000 by Bhikkhu Bodhi:

"Whether there is an arising of Tathagatas or no arising of Tathagatas, that element still persists, the stabledness of the Dhamma, the fixed course of the Dhamma, specific conditionality."

(The Connected Discourses of the Buddha, trans. Bhikkhu Bodhi, vol. 1, p. 551)

As expected, the word translated here as "element" is dhatu, which is the same in Pali and in Sanskrit. A tathagata is a buddha. Each buddha is said to have a buddha-field (buddha-ksetra). This is a world, or world-system. So in speaking of the arising of tathagatas, this also implies the arising of the worlds that are the fields of activity of the individual buddhas. It is very much like saying, "whether there is a world or not, whether there be buddhas or none." In conjunction with the idea of the element that always remains, with or without these, we have a striking parallel to the sentence quoted by HPB from the esoteric Senzar Catechism.

It is important to note that the translation of dhatu as "element" in this formulaic statement is something that translators have come to use only recently, in a general move toward closer literal accuracy. Earlier, dhatu was translated in such ways as "state of things, principle, natural condition" (Walpola Rahula), "nature of things," etc. Here is this same verse from the Samyutta Nikaya, as translated in 1922 by Mrs. Rhys Davids:

"Whether, brethren, there be an arising of Tathagatas, or whether there be no such arising, this nature of things just stands, this causal status, this causal orderliness, the relatedness of this to that."

(The Book of the Kindred Sayings, trans. Mrs. Rhys Davids, part 2, p. 21)

So in most earlier translations of Buddhist texts, and in some current translations, we will not find dhatu translated as "element." As said, there are many occurrences of this formulaic statement in various Buddhist texts. We are not talking about an

isolated statement. It is a fundamental teaching of the Buddhist texts, just as its position in the esoteric Senzar Catechism would show it to be a fundamental teaching of the Wisdom-Religion that HPB called Theosophy. To let everyone see for themselves that this is not just an isolated statement in the Buddhist texts, and not have to just take my word for it, I will quote below some other occurrences of it. There are small variations in its wording, but the idea is always the same.

The quotation just given from the Pali Samyutta Nikaya collection is from the Paccaya-sutta of the Nidana-vagga within that collection (Pali Text Society edition, vol. 2, p. 25). The parallel Sanskrit text is the Pratitya-sutra of the Nidana-samyukta in the Samyukta Agama collection. This collection is lost in the original Sanskrit, but some portions of it were discovered by expeditions to the Turfan area of central Asia in the early 1900s, including this particular text. This material has not yet been translated into English, so I here quote the Sanskrit first.

utpadad va tathagatanam anutpadad va sthita eveyam dharmata dharmasthitaye dhatuh |

(Funfundzwanzig Sutras des Nidanasamyukta, ed. Chandrabhal Tripathi, Berlin, 1962, p. 148)

In translating this, I will mostly follow Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation for the first part, which is almost the same in Pali and Sanskrit. My translation of the latter part will reflect the small differences between the Pali and the Sanskrit.

"Whether there is an arising of the Buddhas or no arising, there verily remains the dharmata-nature (dharmata), the element (dhatu) for the establishment of the dharmas."

Perhaps not everyone is clear on what "dharmas" refers to. These are what make up the world, according to Buddhism. Various classifications give 52 or 75 or 100 of them. In this sense, they are much like the more than 100 chemical elements, hydrogen, etc., that make up the world according to Western science. So some translators in the early 1900s translated them as the "elements of existence." But they are not physical elements. Rather, they are psychological states such as feeling, perception, volition, etc. In the 1970s the translation "phenomena" came into vogue for them. It was thought that Buddhism teaches only phenomena, without any underlying noumenon. Jeffrey Hopkins and his students used this translation for decades. Then, when Jeffrey began to translate Jonangpa texts, he saw that these do in fact admit a noumenon. He has now adopted "noumenon" for dharmata, which was translated in the above quote as "dharmata-nature," and has

often been translated as "true nature." He has consequently changed his translation of "dharmas" from "phenomena" to its more literal meaning, "attributes." Lately, a number of translators are simply retaining the word "dharmas," leaving it untranslated.

This brings us to our next quotation. In this one, from the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras, the word *dharma-dhatu* is used in place of just *dhatu*. This refers to the *dhatu* as the source of the dharmas. Since the dharmas make up the phenomenal world, the *dharma-dhatu* is the source of the phenomenal world. As noted above, it is here that the meaning of *dhatu* comes to be seen more as space than as element. Some of the many translations used for *dharma-dhatu* are "ultimate realm," "ultimate expanse," "sphere of reality," "expanse of reality," "basic space of reality," "sphere of phenomena," "basic space of phenomena," "realm of Dharma," "Dharma element," "ultimate element of things," "element of attributes," etc. Picking two of these, would readers know that both "basic space of phenomena," and "element of attributes" translate the same word, *dharma-dhatu*? The first one illustrates the sense of *dhatu* in *dharma-dhatu* as space, while the second one illustrates the sense of *dhatu* as element. Here is the quotation of this formulaic statement using *dharma-dhatu* rather than just *dhatu*, from the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in 18,000 lines, and also in 25,000 lines, in the section called the questions asked by Maitreya.

*utpadad va tathagatanam anutpadad va sthitaiveyam dharmanam dharmata
dharma-sthitita dharma-dhatur |*

(ed. Edward Conze, in *Melanges D'Indianisme a la Memoire de Louis Renou*, p. 238)

Edward Conze translates it as follows:

". . . that dharmic nature of dharmas which is established whether Tathagatas are produced or not, the established order of dharmas, the realm of Dharma (*dharma-dhatu*) . . ."

(trans. Edward Conze, *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom*, p. 648)

You will notice that Conze translates *dharma-dhatu* as the "realm of Dharma," taking *dhatu* as "realm." Yet in other places in this text, such as on p. 352, Conze translates *dhatu* as "element" in other versions of this formula:

"Whether Tathagatas are produced or not produced, just this markless element is established."

Why the difference? Because of the different Tibetan translations. In the first instance, where we had dharma-dhatu, the Tibetan translation of dhatu is dbyings, "realm" or "space." In the second instance, the Tibetan translation of dhatu is khams, "element."

Long ago I had concluded that the one "element" taught in Theosophy must be the dhatu taught in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, the only book on the dhatu as such. But only quite recently did it dawn on me that dhatu must also be the term behind "space" as found in the early Theosophical teachings, by way of following its Tibetan translation dbyings rather than khams. What eventually led me to this, and to accept it over other terms for space, is the fact that in Tibetan Buddhist writings and teachings you almost never hear about the dhatu, but only about the dharma-dhatu. There is always talk about the "expanse" or "basic space of phenomena," almost never about the "element." The fundamental formulaic statement that we have seen examples may use dhatu or dharma-dhatu (and sometimes neither, using only dharmata). This oft-repeated statement, as said, forms a striking parallel with the statement quoted by HPB from the esoteric Senzar Catechism:

"What is that which was, is, and will be, whether there is a Universe or not; whether there be gods or none?" asks the esoteric Senzar Catechism. And the answer made is -- SPACE."

I hope that all this has shown beyond reasonable doubt that we may identify the "one element" and "space" of the early Theosophical teachings, including the esoteric Senzar Catechism, with the dhatu taught in a brief formulaic statement found throughout the Buddhist texts, and expounded at length in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga by Maitreya. As we recall, HPB had linked the secret book of Maitreya Buddha with the Book of Dzyan.

"I have finished an enormous Introductory Chapter, or Preamble, Prologue, call it what you will; just to show the reader that the text as it goes, every Section beginning with a page of translation from the Book of Dzyan and the Secret Book of "Maytreya Buddha" Champai chhos Nga (in prose, not the five books in verse known, which are a blind) are no fiction." .

Comment by [Alistair Coombs](#) on December 7, 2010 at 9:56am

David wrote: "In fact, I have a pocket-sized notebook of Dawasamdub's that Evans-Wentz had, that then came into the possession of the late Alex Patterson of San Diego, who gave it to me when Ken Small introduced me to him. It is mostly random notes, including shopping lists, mostly in Tibetan. It does have a list of the seven Theosophical principles, and Dawasamdub's attempt to give Tibetan translations of them."

What a wonderful little treasure. Are you planning to reproduce this or make it available in any way? .

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 7, 2010 at 2:38pm

Regarding Dawasamdub's notebook, I had not looked at this for many years. It is actually mostly a diary from 1894 and 1895. I remembered seeing the numbered list of the Theosophical seven principles followed by a numbered Tibetan listing, and I remembered then concluding that it did not contribute anything significant to understanding them. Now I have looked at this again, and have thus refreshed my memory as to what is actually there. He does not actually attempt to give Tibetan translations of them. Rather, he gives a list of six skandhas (phung po) or aggregates, and across from them, their corresponding so-called "dhyani-buddhas." It looks like he was trying to correlate the Buddhist skandhas with the Theosophical principles. He gives the five standard skandhas, in the normal order, followed by a sixth, ye shes kyi phung po. This would be jnana-skandha. He does not give a seventh at all, and therefore gives no correspondence to atman. .

Comment by [Pablo Sender](#) on December 8, 2010 at 8:45am

Thanks David. Very interesting findings.

It would've been interesting also to see Dawasamdub's translation for Atman. In the Cosmological Notes the Master calls the 7th Principle "Mahatma" (Maha-Atman ?) and seems to be the same that HPB later called Atman (which, as she said, is not "in" human beings but "beyond", so to say). If this is the case, the Tibetan word the Master used for Atman would be lhun-grub, as you wrote in your book. Of course, the 7th principle could be described in several different ways according to the aspect described (as the absolute aspect of self, perfection,

duration, space, etc.). I wonder if there is any correlation between lhun-grub and Space (dhatu) or even with gotra in Tibetan Buddhism? .

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 8, 2010 at 2:10pm

No one has yet objected to the identification of the Theosophical one "element" and "space" with the dhatu taught in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, that was made in my very long post of Dec. 6 (maybe because no one has yet been able to finish reading it!). So I will proceed on the assumption that this is accepted. This, then, makes the further identification of the "germ" in a quote from the Senzar Catechism with the gotra taught in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga very probable. Here again is that quote from the Occult Catechism (SD 1.11):

"What is it that ever is?" "Space, the eternal Anupadaka." "What is it that ever was?" "The Germ in the Root." "What is it that is ever coming and going?" "The Great Breath." "Then, there are three Eternals?" "No, the three are one. That which ever is is one, that which ever was is one, that which is ever being and becoming is also one: and this is Space."*

Leaving aside the other meanings of gotra, discussed earlier, I will just use "germ." The germ is taught in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga as a kind of synonym of the dhatu, so this text and the Occult Catechism quote agree on this. As was the case with dhatu for "space," this parallel with gotra is enough to give gotra precedence over other more usual words for "germ," such as garbha or bija. So I will assume the correctness of the identification of the gotra with what HPB translates as the "germ" here.

There is another place that HPB refers to the gotra. It is in a note in The Voice of the Silence (p. 87, note 1):

"Upadya is a spiritual preceptor, a Guru. The Northern Buddhists choose these generally among the "Narjol," saintly men, learned in gotrabhu-gnyana and gnyana-dassana-suddhi teachers of the Secret Wisdom."

This was one of the examples picked out by William Emmette Coleman to show that HPB's Voice of the Silence was a composite forgery made by someone ignorant of Northern Buddhism, rather than a translation of an actual book found in Tibet as she claimed it was. See on this, Paul's blog here, "Source(s) of The Voice of the Silence." In Coleman's article, "The Sources of Madame Blavatsky's Writings,"

published as Appendix C in the 1895 book, A Modern Priestess of Isis, he wrote on pp. 362-363:

"One example of the incongruity of the elements composing the conglomerate admixture of terms and ideas in the Voice of the Silence will be given. On p. 87, it is said that the Narjols of the Northern Buddhists are 'learned in Gotrabhu-gnyana and gnyana-dassana-suddhi'. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky copied these two terms from Hardy's Eastern Monachism, p. 281. The terms used in Northern Buddhism are usually Sanskrit, or from the Sanskrit; those in Southern Buddhism, Pali, or from the Pali. Hardy's work, devoted to Sinhalese Buddhism, is composed of translations from Sinhalese books, and its terms and phrases are largely Sinhalese corruptions of the Pali. Sinhalese terms are unknown in Northern Buddhism. The two terms in the Voice of the Silence, descriptive of the wisdom of the Narjols, are Sinhalese-Pali corruptions, and therefore unknown in Thibet."

His point is basically true, although the term gotra itself, and even the compound gotrabhu, are both Pali and Sanskrit, languages unknown to Coleman. HPB did bring these terms in from E. Spence Hardy's 1850 book, Eastern Monachism, which is based on Southern Buddhist sources. In the 1989 Delhi reprint these terms are found on p. 313, as follows:

"The wisdom necessary for the reception of the paths is called gotrabhu-gnyana. When the paths are entered the wisdom that is received by those who have made this attainment is called gnyana-dassana-sudhi."

But the term gotra itself, in its Tibetan translation, rigs, is well known in Northern Buddhist countries such as Tibet. Not only is it found in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, where it is of basic importance, it is also found in many other Northern Buddhist texts. Jacques had quoted several paragraphs from Obermiller's 1931 publication, summarizing from Tibetan sources the usage of this term in the various Buddhist schools (pp. 96-108). One of Obermiller's two main sources was Tsongkhapa's Golden Garland of Eloquence, now available in a 2008 English translation by Gareth Sparham. Here Tsongkhapa explains the gotra at length in volume 1, pp. 367-376. No Northern Buddhist source on gotra was available in HPB's time.

Coleman made a plausible case that HPB inappropriately brought in Southern Buddhist material to annotate her purported translation of a text found in a Northern Buddhist country, thus suggesting that she did not know the difference between the two. We now know, however, that gotra is of basic importance in the

Northern Buddhist Ratna-gotra-vibhaga and is apparently found as "germ" in the Occult Catechism paragraph that HPB translated. So a plausible case can also be made that HPB was quite aware of its meaning, and simply brought this term in from the only source for it that was then available.

Both cases are based on assumptions, and I do not think that either of them is inherently more plausible than the other. On first sight, Coleman's assumption seems to be more plausible, since it is true that the phrases quoted by HPB come from Southern Buddhist texts. His assumption, however, was that HPB claimed to have translated a Northern Buddhist text, while HPB actually claimed that she translated sections of a text, "some of which are pre-Buddhistic while others belong to a later date" (Preface to the Voice, p. ix). She would therefore be under no obligation to limit herself to Northern Buddhist sources. This weakens Coleman's case, as does the fact, unknown in Coleman's time, that the gotra idea in general is found in both Southern and Northern Buddhist sources. So there would be nothing incongruous in saying that Northern Buddhist teachings were learned in the gotra teachings. It is therefore at least plausible that HPB knew the gotra idea, wanted to bring it in here, and did so from the only source then available. .

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 9, 2010 at 8:55pm

Pablo wrote:

"I wonder if there is any correlation between lhun-grub and Space (dhatu) or even with gotra in Tibetan Buddhism?"

Reply:

There indeed is. Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, being the major source on the dhatu and the gotra, would be the first place to look. The Tibetan word lhun-grub, Sanskrit anabhoga, meaning "without conscious effort," or "spontaneity," is found in its verses 1.5, 1.6, 1.25, 1.76, 4.1, 4.3, 4.54, 4.71, 4.72, and 5.4, in case anyone wants to look at these. It may not be easy to pick this word out from the translation, whichever published translation is used. They do not usually include glossaries.

HPB referred to the verse versions of the five books of Maitreya that we have as being blinds. It is not hard to see why. The first topic of the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga is the Buddha. So ostensibly, this book describes his wonderful qualities, and this is

probably how devout Buddhists see it. But in the commentary on the very first verse, we read in Takasaki's translation, about the Buddha, "Verily, O Ananda, invisible is the Tathagata. He cannot be seen by eyes." This pretty well rules out the son of King Shuddhodana who lived 2600 years ago. Verse four gives the homage to this unusual Buddha, saying it is without beginning, middle, or end, etc. Verse five describes it as asamskrita, now usually translated either as uncompounded or unconditioned, but translated by Obermiller as immutable, which is copied by Takasaki. We are now obviously dealing with an ultimate principle, not a historical person. Verse five goes on to describe this as anabhoga, or lhun-grub, translated by Obermiller as "free from effort," and again copied by Takasaki as "free from efforts." Ken and Katia Holmes translate this term as "spontaneously present" (1979), or "spontaneous" (1985). Rosemarie Fuchs uses "spontaneously present."

*S. K. Hookham's 1991 book, *The Buddha Within: Tathagatagarbha Doctrine according to the Shentong Interpretation of the Ratnagotravibhaga*, includes a paraphrase of this text rather than a translation. She translates lhun-grub as "spontaneous," and explains this term on pp. 48-50. The unusual Buddha that this text speaks of is supposed to have inseparable ultimate qualities. Hookham writes: "If the inseparable Qualities are uncompounded and they do not exist in the ordinary sense, even for a moment, what is their manner of existing? It is called 'spontaneous' (lhun gyis grub pa)" (p. 48). She goes on to say, "In some ways, 'spontaneous' is a misleading translation since it normally has the connotation of action or process that occurs without external stimuli. . . . In this context, it means without origin in the special sense of being primordially Existent. Perhaps 'primordially existent' gives a better 'feel' to the meaning of the term, but there are other words in Tibetan that are more literally translated as primordially Existent, as there are also for 'Self-arisen.' . . . Thus, I have decided to use 'spontaneous' in order to distinguish 'lhun grub' from these other terms. It is sometimes translated as 'Self-existent' which is, perhaps, a rather free translation though capturing a certain feel of the term" (pp. 49-50). As we know, Hlun dhub (lhun grub) is given in the *Cosmological Notes* as "self existing."*

I had mentioned that Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga is the only text I know of that is on the dhatu as such, but that many teachings on the dharma-dhatu may be found in Tibet. As we approach Christmas, we are reminded of the three wise men from the East. You all know who Tsongkhapa is, the highly regarded founder of the Gelugpa or Yellow Hat order of Tibetan Buddhism. He is regarded by Tibetans as an incarnation of Manjusri, the deity that represents wisdom. This is a way of saying that he was a very wise man. There is a tradition among Tibetans that there were

three incarnations of Manjusri in Tibet. The three Tibetan Manjusris are Tsongkhapa, Sakya Pandita, and Longchenpa. These are the three wise men of Tibet. Each of them left many writings, on many subjects. Among these writings there is one book just on the dharma-dhatu. It was written by Longchenpa, the greatest Tibetan teacher of the Nyingma order, and one of the three wise men of Tibet. This book was translated into English by Richard Barron, and published in 2001 under the title, *The Precious Treasury of the Basic Space of Phenomena*.

The "basic space of phenomena" is Richard Barron's translation of dharma-dhatu, Tibetan chos dbyings. That is, dhatu = dbyings = basic space. The word lhun-grub appears in each of the two opening verses of homage as an adjective, where it is translated as "spontaneously present." Then it appears in the first verse of the text proper as a noun, "spontaneous presence," along with dbyings, "basic space." Here is this verse, to which I have added Tibetan words in brackets:

"Within the expanse of spontaneous presence [lhun grub] is the ground [gzhi] for all that arises. Empty in essence, continuous by nature, it has never existed as anything whatsoever, yet arises as anything at all. Within the expanse of the three kayas, although samsara and nirvana arise naturally, they do not stray from basic space [dbyings] -- such is the blissful realm that is the true nature of phenomena."

I added gzhi for "ground," since this is very likely the zhi in zhi-gyu of Stanza 1 (SD 1.23). The two words lhun-grub and dbyings also appear together in the last verse of this chapter, of which I quote the first half:

"In brief, within the ultimate womb of basic space [dbyings], spacious and spontaneously present [lhun grub], whatever arises as the dynamic energy of its display -- as samsara or nirvana -- in the very moment of simply arising has never known existence as samsara or nirvana."

This is a text written in verse, for ease of memorization. Longchenpa wrote his own prose commentary on it to explain the often terse verses. The commentary has also been translated by Richard Barron, and published in 2001 under the title, *A Treasure Trove of Scriptural Transmission*. If anyone wants to get these books, I would recommend ordering them directly from the publisher, Padma Publishing. The root text volume gives the Tibetan text and English translation on facing pages, which is very helpful. The commentary volume has just English.

Besides lhun-grub with dhatu or dbyings, you had also asked about lhun-grub with gotra, Tibetan rigs. These latter two words may be found together, for example, in the major work of the major Jonangpa writer, Dolpopa, titled *Mountain Doctrine*,

as translated by Jeffrey Hopkins and published in 2006. Here is a quote from p. 401, in which I again add Tibetan words, from the 1976 Gangtok edition, folios 380-381, and also what they are in Sanskrit:

". . . the noumenal thoroughly established nature [yongs grub, parinishpanna] . . . is the entity of the ultimate truth [don dam bden pa, paramartha] -- the nature body or inherent body, natural clear light, natural innate pristine wisdom, natural purity, natural spontaneity [lhun-grub, anabhoga], naturally abiding lineage [rigs, gotra]."

Comment by [Pablo Sender](#) on December 10, 2010 at 12:49pm

Thanks David, very interesting. Just a quick note; for those who want to read the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, Takasaki's translation can be found online at:

http://lirs.ru/lib/uttara/A_Study_of_Ratnaqotravibhaga,Takasaki,196...

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 10, 2010 at 10:00pm

Thank you very much for this link, Pablo. I did not know that Takasaki's carefully annotated translation was available online. Jacques, or anyone else who might know, I wonder if the Obermiller translation is also available online.

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on December 11, 2010 at 7:32pm

Obermiller translation does not appear to be available on line

A new study on the subject can be read at

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/3480575/Buddha-Nature>

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 11, 2010 at 8:41pm

Further to the term lhun-grub, which is given in the Cosmological Notes as the seventh principle in man, its first occurrence in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga actually describes buddhahood, not the Buddha. Although the Buddha is the first of the seven subjects of this book, in the homage to him given in verse 4 it is

buddhahood that is being described as without beginning, middle, or end. In verse 5 it is buddhahood that is described as asamskrita, "uncompounded," and lhun-grub, "spontaneously present," or "self existing." These adjectives that describe something ultimate are then defined in the following verses.

So verse 6 defines anabhoga or lhun-grub. It says that buddhahood is anabhoga or lhun-grub because of being the quiescent dharma-kaya. The word dharma-kaya is another very difficult term to define. Obermiller translates it as the Cosmical Body, and Takasaki translates it as the Absolute Body. In the two translations that came later it is left untranslated. Some current translators use buddha body of reality, and other such translations. From this and other examples posted previously, the following fact may be seen:

It is not the case that anyone who knows Sanskrit will translate the same term or sentence or book the same way.

An important implication of this is that knowing the main technical terms used in Theosophy will be very helpful in expanding one's understanding of its teachings. If you see "free from effort" in one place, and "spontaneous" in another place, and if you know that they both translate lhun-grub or anabhoga, what is said about them in both places can be correlated with how this term is used in Theosophy. The nice thing about this is that it does not require full knowledge of the language; it only requires learning a comparatively few technical terms..

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 12, 2010 at 12:34pm

Thanks, Jacques, for letting us know that the Obermiller translation of the Ratnagotra-vibhaga is not available online. Thanks also for the link to a new study on the subject. When I go there, I only get a picture with no text. Who is it by?

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 12, 2010 at 1:08pm

Going along with the fact that, "It is not the case that anyone who knows Sanskrit will translate the same term or sentence or book the same way," is another fact:

It is not the case that anyone who knows Sanskrit can translate any Sanskrit book.

Why not? Because of the technical terms. Just as any native speaker of English would not be able to translate a book on nuclear physics without special study of

its terms and ideas, so with a Sanskrit book on the dhatu and related ideas. Terms such as this that are found in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga are used so differently than in other books, not only Hindu books but also other Buddhist books, that this book could not just be translated: it had to be figured out.

You can easily see this in the notes to Takasaki's translation. He worked on this book for two and a half years in India with one of the few Indian Sanskrit pandits who was familiar with Buddhist texts and terminology, including Tibetan and Chinese, V. V. Gokhale. Takasaki also received guidance in Sanskrit from another excellent Sanskrit pandit, R. D. Karmarkar, who gave us the most literally accurate translation of Gaudapada's Mandukya-karika yet published (he did this in response to Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya's also very accurate translation of this text, that had brought in meanings of its technical terms from Buddhist texts). So Takasaki with this highly competent help from Sanskrit pandits was able to accurately construe the Sanskrit sentences. But for the meanings of the technical terms, he had to bring in help from the Tibetan and Chinese translations, as can be seen in his footnotes. We just have to here remember that English equivalents used then were still very tentative, and many that Takasaki used are no longer acceptable today. We must be very grateful for this English translation competently made from Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese sources.

The Tibetan translation in particular, because of its literal accuracy, functions as a word-by-word glossary of the text. It shows how the words were understood at the time it was translated from Sanskrit. This is necessary to consult because the Sanskrit text was lost for about a thousand years, so its ideas had long since ceased to be transmitted in India. The fact that its ideas had continued to be transmitted in Tibet meant that this text could be translated from its Tibetan translation with the help of Tibetan lamas who were familiar with its ideas. This is what led to the other translations so far published. Obermiller worked with Gelugpa lamas, while Ken and Katia Holmes, S. K. Hookham, and Rosemarie Fuchs worked with Kagyupa lamas. This brings out another problem. The ideas of this text were so unique, even within Buddhism, that they led to two major traditions of interpretation in Tibet.

Some of the ideas of the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga sound very much like the atman idea taught in Hinduism, an idea that is heretical to most Buddhists. In fact, this book openly speaks of the atman as a term describing the dharma-kaya in chapter 1, verses 35-37. Now, can such ideas as this be taken at face value, or must they be interpreted to fit in with other Buddhist ideas such as no atman? One tradition, the

Shentong tradition, says that this text is of definitive meaning (nitartha), that it should be taken at face value. The other tradition, the Rangtong tradition, in effect says that this text is to be interpreted (neyartha), that its ideas must be made to conform with other Buddhist ideas. This means that its technical terms such as dhatu, when understood in one way may agree with the early Theosophical teachings, and when understood in the other way may disagree with the early Theosophical teachings. It all depends on how we understand these technical terms. One cannot simply ask the nearest Sanskrit pandit or Tibetan lama what they mean. You will get different answers.

Our task here, in attempting to trace the Stanzas of Dzyan, is to determine as accurately as we can the meaning of these technical terms in the various traditions. This is likely to lead us toward one tradition, and away from another tradition, always recognizing that the tradition of the Stanzas is supposed to be a secret one that would not exactly match any known tradition. Our safest bet in determining meanings of terms is to use the most literal meaning, and then let it be interpreted however it may. This is the proven policy used in the Tibetan translations of the Sanskrit texts, laid down by decree of the king of Tibet 1200 years ago. Thus, for dhatu the basic and most literal meaning is element, Tibetan khams, and its derivative or contextual meaning of realm or space, Tibetan dbyings, was also allowed. From these two basic translations, the various Tibetan schools could interpret it as they wished. But there was never any doubt about the original term, as there would be if the various interpretations were used as translations. It is remarkable that the early Theosophical writings spoke of the one element, a translation of dhatu in this context that modern scholarship has only recently come to see and use as the norm..

Comment by Jacques Mahnich on December 13, 2010 at 11:07pm

The text quoted in the link "<http://www.scribd.com/doc/3480575/Buddha-Nature>" is a transcription of a seminar given in 1985 in Vancouver on Uttarantra (Commentaries and questions & answers sessions with the 13th Zasep Tulku Rinpoche during a retreat) based on Obermiller translation. It gives a familiarization with the basic concepts of the first four vajra topics thanks to a living master of the tradition. This document (193 pages) will be available together with the documents related to the Stanzas on this site.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 14, 2010 at 10:14pm

The first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine is given in the book of that name as an omnipresent, eternal, boundless, and immutable principle (SD 1.14). This is obviously equivalent to the "one element" taught earlier in the Mahatma letters, and to "space" as found in the esoteric Senzar Catechism. These latter two English terms have allowed us to trace this to the Sanskrit term dhatu as used specifically in the tathagata-garbha teachings of Buddhism, which are summarized in a single treatise, Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga. If we did not have this book, we would not have been able to trace this fundamental Theosophical teaching that stands behind the Stanzas of Dzyan, given in these terms. This identification then received rather dramatic support from the formulaic statement found throughout the Buddhist texts, about whether the Tathagatas arise or do not arise, the element (dhatu) remains.

The normal Sanskrit word for "element," as in earth, water, fire, air, and space, is maha-bhuta. This word is found in many books. Similarly, the normal Sanskrit word for "space" is akasa, as just seen in the list of the five elements. This word, too, is very common. But neither maha-bhuta nor akasa are behind "element" or "space" in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga or in the formulaic statement of the Buddhist texts, and nor are they likely to be behind the "one element" or "space" of the Mahatma letters and the esoteric Senzar Catechism. In tracing the Stanzas, then, the single major source of the technical terms behind its fundamental ideas is the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga. We would be well advised to follow this out and investigate this source carefully.

But even though we have been led to a specific Buddhist source for the terminology of the fundamental teachings behind the Stanzas, I think it is extremely important not to conclude that these specific ideas are found only in Buddhism. Immediately after giving the first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine, HPB says, "It is beyond the range and reach of thought -- in the words of the Mandukya, 'unthinkable and unspeakable.'" These words from the Mandukya Upanishad describe the atman or brahman or om (aum) taught in Hinduism. These same two words also describe the dhatu in the extensive Perfection of Wisdom texts in Buddhism. This naturally leads us to the equation of the first fundamental principle of the Secret Doctrine with the dhatu in Buddhist texts, and with the atman or brahman in Hindu texts. The disagreement between Buddhists and Hindus over the atman is a question for another time..

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 15, 2010 at 10:09pm

Thank you, Jacques, for telling us about the text at the link you gave, that it is a modern commentary on the Uttara-tantra, or Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, by a living master of the tradition. It seems that it was not possible to post it on this website, because of copyright restrictions. Nonetheless, we will soon have access to the Obermiller translation here. He, too, studied this text with living Tibetan masters of the tradition, at a Gelugpa monastery in Transbaikalia. For those who wish to just read this text, Obermiller's translation is easier reading than Takasaki's translation. Both are difficult, because the text itself is difficult. For those who wish to study this text, it is quite helpful to be able to compare two different translations, especially when one is made from the Tibetan translation and one is made from the original Sanskrit.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 17, 2010 at 7:37am

You are kind and forgiving people. No one has yet taken me to task for what I said more than two days ago: "This naturally leads us to the equation of the first fundamental principle of the Secret Doctrine with the dhatu in Buddhist texts, and with the atman or brahman in Hindu texts." But out on the debate court, my adversary cannot believe his ears. Can it be possible that someone could make such a naive statement? Hardly able to contain his glee at his now certain victory, he yet keeps a straight face as he replies to me:

"You say that the unthinkable element (acintya-dhatu) or inexpressible realm** (nirabhilapya-dhatu) taught in the Buddhist Perfection of Wisdom sutras is the same as the unthinkable and inexpressible self (atman) taught in the Hindu Mandukya Upanishad. But you must not have even read the Perfection of Wisdom sutras. For if you have, you surely could not have missed such statements in them as this one: 'Absolutely a self does not exist.'*** Explain this. Come on, answer! Are you asleep?"*

*He punctuates his last question with a loud clap of his hands. This is, speaking very generally, the way philosophical debate is carried on in Tibetan monasteries. A great book on this, with a great title, is: *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk*, by Georges B. J. Dreyfus, the first Westerner to complete the Tibetan Geshe degree.*

Whether on the debate court of a Tibetan monastery, or on the metaphorical debate court of the whole world, any proposed answers to the great questions of life must be able to stand on their own. They cannot be based on unwarranted assumptions. They must be credible, and they must take into account what is known on the subject by most others. One cannot assert that the first fundamental principle of the Secret Doctrine is the dhatu of the Buddhist texts and the atman or brahman of the Hindu texts, without being fully aware of the millenniums-old debate on this, and without being fully prepared to support this assertion.

**The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom, trans. Edward Conze, pp. 249, 253, 277, 305.*

***The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom, trans. Edward Conze, pp. 646-647.*

****The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom, trans. Edward Conze, p. 191.*

Comment by [Leila Becquer](#) on December 17, 2010 at 10:04am

Hi David and all, I left for a while this phorum and now there are millenia of post (using your expression for debate on abhidharma) that I cannot read now.

So, I should not write yet, but as the turtle and Achilles I will never finish to read all the posts.

So briefly, from the point of view of experience, there are probabilities for comparing thing incomparable in texts. For instance, if we compare the Chan illumination (via hua tou, as an instance) with the experience and enquiry of Brahman in Shankara, there are many aspects in common, even the non-duality. Even if we use the hegelian dialectic this experiences-conceptualizations are more close even.

This is a draft, I have no time now to research deeply in Chan and Daozi now, but I am working a little in Shankara.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 17, 2010 at 10:42pm

Very glad to hear from you again after a long pause, Leila. I quite agree that it is possible to compare things from the point of view of experience, and to thereby find probable correspondences, which would not seem possible from just the point of view of the different texts. The Buddhist ultimate, whether we refer to it as the

dhatu (the element or space), or as emptiness, or as the dharmakaya, or as the dharmata, etc., seems worlds apart from the Hindu ultimate, brahman or atman. Certainly, Buddhist writers down through the ages have continuously refuted the Hindu atman.

*But when, in the experience of the respective Buddhist and Hindu sages, their ultimate is described in the very same way, we must take a closer look. The ancient Hindu Mandukya Upanishad describes the atman (or brahman, or om) as inconceivable (acintya) and inexpressible (avyapadesya). HPB (SD 1.14) had quoted these two words from the early translation of this Upanishad by Archibald Edward Gough, found in his 1882 book, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads and Ancient Indian Metaphysics*, p. 71, as "unthinkable and unspeakable." The dhatu is described in the Buddhist Perfection of Wisdom sutras in the same words, inconceivable (acintya), and also inexpressible (nirabhilapya). For the latter idea, the Buddhist text used the more common word, nirabhilapya, rather than the rare old word used in the Mandukya Upanishad, avyapadesya. But we know that the meaning is the same, since Sankaracharya in his commentary fills out the meaning of avyapadesya with sabdaih, "with words." So both the Hindu and Buddhist sages describe their ultimate as beyond thought and speech. Why, then, do the Buddhists refute the Hindu atman?*

Whole books have been written on this age-old question. From the standpoint of the Theosophical teachings, I am willing to put forth an answer. I am willing to state the conclusion that I have come to as a premise, ahead of the extensive supporting evidence that led me to it. Some of this supporting evidence can be posted in coming weeks and months. But in the meantime, we can take the premise as a working hypothesis to be proved or disproved. Here it is.

As its first fundamental proposition, the Secret Doctrine posits an omnipresent, eternal, boundless, and immutable principle, which is beyond the range and reach of thought, or unthinkable and unspeakable (SD 1.14). Yet, we are told, it may be symbolized under two aspects: absolute abstract space, and absolute abstract motion, which latter represents unconditioned consciousness. My premise, put simply, is that the Buddhist ultimate describes the one aspect, absolute abstract space, while the Hindu ultimate describes the other aspect, absolute abstract motion. The Hindu brahman is defined as pure or absolute consciousness. This is what Buddhists could never accept. Yet, if we believe the Secret Doctrine, it is merely one of two ways to describe or symbolize the indescribable ultimate. It would only be looking at the same thing from a different angle..

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on December 18, 2010 at 10:46am

We are now entering in a deep and challenging debate about the interpretation of atman in buddhist traditions. It can be never ending. Let's hope it will not drag us away from the original goal.

But it is a very interesting question.

In 1973, Kamaleswar BHATTACHARYA published a book dedicated to this very subject "L'Atman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien - Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient", where he intend to demonstrate that the Buddha never reject the upanisadic atman but negating what is falsely believed to be the atman.

He started from a sanskrit wall inscription in Cambodia - Bat Cum, kingdom of Rajendravarman : 944-968 A.D. which says : "Buddho bodhim vidadhyad vo yena nairatmyadarsanam viruddhasyapi sadhuktam sadhanam paramatmanah"

At the time of the first traduction of this inscription (G. Coedes - 1908), it was understood (paramatman) as contradictory to the nairatma doctrine, and it was understood as hinduism contamination in buddhism in Cambodia.

Later on, using Sylvain Levy translation of the Mahayana-Sutralamkara (1911) - Chapter IX, Stanza 23 :

*"suyatayam visuddhayam nairatmyatmagralabhathah buddhah
suddhatmalabhitvad gata atmamahatmatam"*

which translated as : " In the all pure Emptiness, the Buddhas reached the top of the atman which consists in impersonality. Because they found so the pure atman, they reached the greatness of the atman".

later on, quoting a Commentary (not identified) to the Sutralamkara, he translated : " The fundamental Impersonality is the pure Be-ness, it is the atman, the Buddhas' svabhava". When it is totally pure, the Buddhas reached the fundamental Impersonality, which is the pure atman.

Then, Battacharya draw from a commentary to the Ratnagotravibhaga to better explained the idea. He referred also to some Upanishads to explain what is the upanishadic atman :

from Taittiriya Up. (II-7) the brahman-atman is called anatmya.

from Maitri Up. (II-4, VI-20,21,28) one can find the words niratman and niratmaka.

The main difficulty will be, as David warned us, about interpretations of these texts, according to who has tried to translate them in a western language. However, it looks (and Battacharya continued for 200 pages to demonstrate) that David idea about similarities or even communality between hindu and buddhist fundamental principles may be right.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on December 18, 2010 at 11:33am

In this connection, I would be interested in knowing David's opinion on the website [Attan.com](#)

which deals with early forms of Buddhism. It seems that the anatta doctrine is a later perversion of Buddhism?

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 18, 2010 at 9:17pm

Jacques, I was extremely happy to see your post on Kamaleswar Bhattacharya's 1973 book, "L'Atman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien." Kamaleswar Bhattacharya is a top-notch Buddhist and Sanskrit scholar, and this is a unique book. There have been many attempts to show that the Buddha did not deny the atman taught in the Upanishads, but all of them could be dismissed for some reason or another -- until this one. This one had to be taken seriously. One could disagree with it, and most Buddhists and Buddhist scholars did disagree with it, but it could not be lightly dismissed. It was too competently done.

Anyone who is sympathetic to Theosophy and interested in this question should study very carefully what Jacques posted for us from this book. Throughout the twentieth century, until the last few decades when Tibetan lamas started teaching in the West, French-speaking scholars and translators have dominated Buddhist studies in the West. That is why I am so grateful to have Jacques participating here and bringing in material from French. Thank you.

Jacques, I share your concern about this topic dragging us away from the original goal, and I considered this before bringing it in here on Dec.14. But the fact is, that the material from the fundamental propositions of the Secret Doctrine, supported by the early teachings such as the Cosmological Notes, and the few quotations

from the Occult Catechism, have given us our best leads toward tracing the system of thought behind the Stanzas of Dzyan. It is these, more than the terms or ideas found in the Stanzas themselves, that have led us to the tathagata-garbha teachings found in Buddhism, and summarized in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga.

But as it becomes clearer and clearer that the particular volume of commentaries that HPB translated the Stanzas of Dzyan from was in the form of a text using terms that are specific to Buddhism, a major problem emerges. In The Secret Doctrine, HPB strenuously fought the idea that the Theosophical teachings were limited to Buddhism. If the Stanzas emerge in demonstrably Buddhist language, their ideas must be shown to also be found in non-Buddhist sources. Otherwise, the release of the Stanzas would be counter-productive. We don't need more sectarianism in the world.

So it will be quite important to make the identification that Buddhists so much wish to avoid: The Buddhist tathagata-garbha is the same as the Hindu atman, and the Tathagata-garbha sutras that openly say this are to be taken literally, not interpreted away. This will no doubt be the Theosophical position, as seen in "An Unpublished Discourse of Buddha" (BCW 14.408-410), and it will need to be supported by good evidence. It will need to be shown that nowhere in the early Buddhist texts does the Buddha ever directly and categorically deny the atman taught in the Upanishads, even though he had many opportunities to do so. What he denied, as shown in Kamaleswar Bhattacharya's fine book, is that there is an atman in any of the aggregates (skandhas) that make up a person; in other words, what is falsely believed to be the atman..

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 18, 2010 at 10:06pm

Martin, this has to be one of the strangest websites I have ever seen. It makes some of the more fundamentalist Theosophists, who are willing to engage in attacks on others, look good. There is a saying about such things: With friends like this, we don't need enemies. That is, these kind of friends do us more harm than actual enemies. I think that many of the points made on this website in support of the atman teachings in Buddhism are valid. But being submerged in an ocean of harsh criticism against almost all other Buddhists, only causes the atman idea to be that much more readily dismissed by others. This is a shame, because it appears that there are also valid and useful comparisons with Platonic and Neo-Platonic

ideas here. These, too, are likely to go for naught as people turn away from this website because of its hostile attitude.

It may be that the anatta or no-self doctrine is a later perversion of Buddhism, although perhaps misinterpretation would be a better word to describe it than perversion. The great difficulty in making such a case is the almost unanimous denial of self found in almost all known forms of Buddhism for the last two thousand years. One would end up saying that virtually all the Buddhists of the world got it wrong, but we, being smarter than them, even though outside of the tradition, understood the Buddha better than they did. This is hardly credible. The best one can do at this point is to propose that a valid line of interpretation in support of the atman within Buddhism can be made. There may have been such an understanding within Buddhism at one time. If a mass of texts like the "Unpublished Discourse of Buddha" were to come out, then a good case could be made that this was the original form of Buddhism. But until then, the best case that can be made will not be convincing to the majority.

Comment by [Leila Becquer](#) on December 19, 2010 at 6:12am

Hi to all, a few quick remarks.

Is interesting the idea of complementarity if buddhism and hinduism as expressed by David, Damodar has said something like that in an answer to Kingsford-Maitland, but in relation to advaita.

Some passages of the mahaparanibbanasuttanta seems support the idea of an atma too, but not having the original I never researched that topic again.

Another point is that we have speaking about published books mainly but the tibetan buddhist practice is most concerned with unpublished (openly) books. I remember the criticism of Max Müller upon HPB saying that there is no esoteric buddhism, etc. But today we know that even for reading some books is needed initiation, and some books are only provided to people engaged en a particular sadhana. So, this is a way of research too.

Finally, the link provided for Martin, well, generally speaking disciples of Guenon are like him, fundamentalist and harsh, I have no read all the site I have allergy to Guenon (perhaps I should read Coomaraswamy, I don't know).

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on December 19, 2010 at 6:46am

"Finally, the link provided for Martin, well, generally speaking disciples of Guenon are like him, fundamentalist and harsh". This refers to the webmaster of Attan.com As to Guenon, Schuon, Coomaraswamy, etc., see: <http://www.religioperennis.org/> and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traditionalist_School

The Traditionalist School has a lot in common with Blavatskian Theosophy, but people like Guenon are very prone to portray the latter as a lot of gibberish. What these movements seem to have in common is the idea of a Primordial Wisdom (Divine Wisdom). They honor the Absolute, or something like that. It is all a bit fundamentalistic in tone.

Comment by [Leila Becquer](#) on December 19, 2010 at 5:39pm

Of course Traditionalism has a lot in common with Blavatskian Theosophy (Schuon seems nice), but, why they deny it?

Besides, there are some problems with the strong version of Traditionalism, the use of categories like initiation, counterinitiation, neo-x (sufism, vedanta, etc.), the denial of heresies, etc.

BTW, has somebody access to a good etymology of sakkayadithi?

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 20, 2010 at 9:43pm

The verse that Kamaleswar Bhattacharya picked out from Maitreya's Mahayana-sutralamkara (or Ornament to the Mahayana Sutras), and that Jacques picked out from Kamaleswara's book, is certainly one of the clearest statements of the acceptance of the atman found in the whole range of Buddhist writings. Probably its full import was obscured by the translation of the Buddhist technical term, nairatmya, as "impersonality" (French, impersonnalite). Kamaleswar, in quoting the 1911 translation made by Sylvain Levi, retained this early translation term. The term nairatmya means the absence of self. It thus refers to the basic Buddhist

doctrine of anatman, no-self. If a reader does not know this, the contrast with atman or self in this verse is lost, and its main point is missed.

Look again at this verse (9.23) that Jacques posted for us from Kamaleswar's book giving Levi's early translation, but inserting a different translation of the term nairatmya:

"In the all pure Emptiness, the Buddhas reached the top of the atman which consists in impersonality [absence of atman]. Because they found so the pure atman, they reached the greatness of the atman".

So this verse is not only bringing in the atman, it is specifically contrasting this with the Buddhist anatman or no-self teaching. Other translations of nairatmya in use today, such as identitylessness and egolessness, also require the reader to already know that they refer to the no-self teaching. One of the more common current translations of nairatmya, selflessness, does include the word "self." But the reader has to be "in the loop" of Buddhist translationese to know that this refers to absence of self rather than unselfishness or altruism, the normal meaning of selflessness and the only one found in English dictionaries. I have therefore adopted absence of self for nairatmya, which clearly shows the contrast with atman or self.

The commentary, by Vasubandhu, gets even better. Besides explaining more fully the contrasting atman and nairatmya, or self and absence of self, it brings in two more key terms that are of great interest to us. In the sentence from it that Jacques had quoted, it brings in the term svabhava:

"The fundamental Impersonality [absence of atman] is the pure Be-ness, it is the atman, the Buddhas' svabhava. When it is totally pure, the Buddhas reached the fundamental Impersonality [absence of atman], which is the pure atman."

This is telling us that the atman (or self) is defined as the svabhava (or inherent nature) of the Buddhas. In this specific sense, both atman and svabhava are accepted in this Buddhist text. Almost everywhere else in Buddhism, both Northern and Southern, the atman is not accepted, and in Northern Buddhism, svabhava is not accepted. For the Gelugpa order in particular, nothing whatsoever has any svabhava.

The other key term that the commentary brings in is the dhatu, the element, or realm, or basic space. Again, you would never know this from the early translation quoted in Kamaleswar's book, which uses the word "Plan" for this, the same in

French and English. The commentary begins and ends with this word. It is qualified by the term "anasrava," which literally means "without outflows," in the sense of something that naturally flows out or naturally results from something else. But the idea is of something that is so pure, or undefiled, or uncontaminated, or uncorrupted, or unaffected, that it can never change or give rise to anything else. It cannot have any "outflow," something resulting from it. It is beyond the transformations of birth and death. This describes the dhatu. Let us use "untainted" for anasrava, and "basic space" for dhatu, following the Tibetan translation used here, dbyings. Here is the full commentary on this verse, translated from the original Sanskrit as closely as English allows:

"In this [verse], the supreme self (parama-atman) of the buddhas in the untainted basic space (dhatu) is described. Why? Because it consists of the foremost absence of self (nairatmya). The foremost absence of self is pure thusness (tathata), and that (thusness) is the self (atman) of the buddhas, in the meaning of inherent nature (svabhava). When that (thusness) is pure, the buddhas obtain the foremost absence of self, the pure self (atman). Therefore, due to obtaining the pure self, the buddhas attain the great selfhood of the self. Thus, with this intention, the supreme self of the buddhas in the untainted basic space is set forth."

The supreme atman of the buddhas that is spoken of, then, is placed in the untainted (anasrava) dhatu (basic space). I have adopted "basic space" to translate dhatu as dbyings, following Richard Barron, in order to distinguish this from the more common "space" as the translation of akasa. Accepting that the Theosophical "one element" and "space" refer to the dhatu, we here have atman found in it, in perfect keeping with idea that the atman would be its aspect as absolute abstract motion, or unconditioned consciousness..

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 21, 2010 at 10:01pm

Leila, in reply to three things you brought up:

1. As far as I know, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy did not repudiate Theosophy, as did Rene Guenon. In that sense, they are quite different. Coomaraswamy contributed articles to The Theosophist magazine in the early 1900s. I regard his work on symbolism very highly, especially his Vedic studies.

2. *The Mahaparinirvana-sutra that speaks of the atman is a quite different text than the Mahaparibbana-sutta of the Pali Buddhist canon. The former is sometimes called the Mahayana Mahaparinirvana-sutra, in order to distinguish it. There is a Mahaparinirvana-sutra in Sanskrit that corresponds to the Mahaparinibbana-sutta in Pali. It is found among the Vinaya texts of the Sanskrit Buddhist canon. Neither of them speak of the atman or atta. The Mahayana one that does speak of the atman can be found on Dr. Tony Page's valuable website: <http://www.nirvanasutra.net>.*

3. *Regarding the Pali word sakkayaditthi, which is found in Mahatma letter #16 (2nd ed. p. 111; 3rd ed. p. 108). This in its Sanskrit form, sat-kaya-drsti, is explained in Vasubandhu's own commentary on his Abhidharma-kosa, chapter 5, verse 7. It is there used to explain atma-atmiya-graha, belief in a self and in things pertaining to a self. The three words that make up sat-kaya-drsti are explained as follows. The first word, sat, means "existing" in the sense of truly existing. The second word, kaya, means not only the "body," but all five aggregates or skandhas that make up the person or personality. This is ordinarily thought of as one's self (atman). The third word, drsti, means "view" in the sense of a false view. So sat-kaya-drsti means the false view of truly existing personality aggregates regarded as a self. That is, it refers to wrongly regarding the person as a truly existing self..*

Comment by [Leila Becquer](#) on December 22, 2010 at 10:55am

David, I was talking about the Mahaparinibbanasutta from the Digha Nikaya, in the pali canon . I have a translation from Raúl Ruy, El Libro de la Gran Extinción de Gotama el Buddha, Hachette, 1975. In part II, 26 (in Sister Vajira II, 34, 35) he translates as follows (his original is in castillian spanish):

"And whoever, O Ananda!, now or after my extinction, living having the Self (atta) as a lamp (atta-dipa viharatha), the Self as a refuge and no other refuge (...) will become the Immortal (t'amat'agge bhavissanti)..."

Well, this translator discusses in detail the controversial passages. The standard translation is "a lamp for yourselves", "refuge in yourselves", but from the link you provided and your research, it is clear that a buddhist standard interpretation is not the final word. So, this translation seems quite interesting, and the translator in discussing those passages cites Coomaraswami's Hinduism and Buddhism, p. 5, 6 and 77, note 187 commenting the atta as Self, and the III, 51, translating atta as Self there too. He cites an oral commentary by Miss Horner where she says that Rhys Davids' translation, following R. O. Franke, as "a lamp for yourselves" is not correct, being the correct translation: living with the Self as a lamp (or light). The same with amata, it is controversial, and in some translations it disappears. I haven't in this moment the tools for deciding between one or another interpretation, I am seeking the original text. But I think that even in the pali canon are several passages that are controversial with the standard doctrine. Because of this I asked about an etymology of sakayaditthi, knowing the assimilative characteristic of the dentals I have supposed that sak comes from sat, but I had thought that kaya was body, only, and not the five skandhas. Ditthi is view, not only wrong view (then sammaditthi). Well, this interpretation that you give don't close the door for the self, but for the self in or as the skandhas.

Regarding the Mahaparinibbana, perhaps you have more updated discussions, for many reasons I couldn't follow a career as indologist so I haven't the last discussions or papers.

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Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 22, 2010 at 2:08pm

Leila, you are right. The Pali Mahaparinibbana-sutta is one of the sources of the important statement about atta-dipa, whether it be understood as be "a lamp unto yourself," or "having the Self as a lamp," or

even be "an island unto yourself." The Pali word dipa has been taken in all the extant Pali commentaries as meaning "island," corresponding to Sanskrit dvipa rather than dipa. But parallel usages in other texts, pointed out by scholars, have convinced many of them that it originally meant "lamp" in the early Pali canon, before it was misunderstood by the later commentators. Then the question is how to understand atta, "self." Good scholars like Walpola Rahula insist that

atta is only used as a personal pronoun in the Pali canon, and never as the atman of the Upanishads. Other good scholars, such as Kamaleswar Bhattacharya, give much evidence to the contrary from the Pali canon. Perhaps I can post a little more on this later. I saw that the entire Pali canon is now available online at: www.tipitaka.org.

Comment by [Leila Becquer](#) on December 22, 2010 at 7:17pm

As far as the sources cited were mahayana and sanskrit I thought that would be nice to share pali sources, because pali buddhism is regarded (sometimes) as the most orthodox, but we can find in it controversial statements. Walpola Rahula was my very first reading about buddhism so I never questioned that atta is reflexive, but with your contributions we could see that there are discussions about that.

This is perhaps a esoteric-lingüistic trick because in arabic the word nafs means soul and is the reflexive, and some times is not clear how to understand it. The same case that the sanskrit atman (I am recalling the ishopanishat, for instance) and the pali atta.

Of course there are good scholars in each side, but the existence of different interpretations is the interesting fact.

Thanks for the link, at the same time I was writing the last post I was researching and I have found it (I have downloaded some software so I'll see later).

Comment by [Leila Becquer](#) on December 24, 2010 at 2:12pm

As I have lost a lot of comments, I am reading them little by little. So excuse me if I repeat something already said.

Coming back to the Rig Veda, I don't think that the middle voice option could be convenient.

As was explained by David:

"As noted by Walter Maurer and others, we must supply a subject for the verb dadhe in 7b, and this subject can either be iyam visrsti, "this creation," of the preceding line, 7a, or adhyaksa, the "overseer," of the following line, 7c. The verb dadhe is a perfect middle which can be used as a passive. If the subject is "this

creation," we take dadhe as a passive, "was made." If the subject is the "overseer," we take dadhe as a middle, he "made" it."

<http://www.theosophy.net/profiles/blogs/the-origins-of-the-stanzas-...>

But, generally speaking, middle voice is something that the subject is doing for his purpose, in proper benefit, so to say, not simply doing. So, if the Seer create he has to create the creating for him, an idea possible but with heavy metaphysical aftermath. But if we take as passive voice is more simple to translate, I think.

About HPB knowing arabic it is quite possible since she translates devachan as place of devas and even saying that chan is really khan, place (Besant repeat this in some books). That is correct in arabic but not in tibetan.

Respect to the word chohan I think that could be a mix between cho which actual spelling must be chös, pronounced something like choe and meaning Dharma, and Khan, but not the khan above said but the mongol title for Lord (as Gengis Khan, etc.) In a Mahatma Letter occurs this spelling: Cho-Khan, more precisly in letter (chron.) 18 (9), and to dharmakaya HPB spell as Cho-Ku. So, it could mean "Lord of the Dharma".

Happy Xmas to all.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 24, 2010 at 9:49pm

Here is a little story that relates to something found in one of the volumes of Lucifer, the Light-bringer, which were just posted here on this website thanks to the great efforts of Marc Demarest and Joe Fulton. It is not really a Christmas story, but parts of it may be entertaining, with even a little sparkle at the end. It pertains to a question that no one would usually think of, but that is exactly opposite the question of atman and anatman or self and no-self that we have been discussing here. On this, a little background may first be helpful.

The great Vedanta teaching found in Hinduism goes back to the Upanishads, which teach an absolute that they call brahman. This eternal brahman is identified with the atman, the self of all. The Buddhist teaching came along and denied the atman with its famous anatman or no-self teaching. Whether what is denied by this teaching is the eternal self or atman taught in the Upanishads, or whether it is the personal self or atman that is wrongly identified with the eternal atman, is a question that will long be debated. What is clear, however, is that because the

absolute brahman is defined as pure consciousness, it could be equated with the atman, the self of all. In other words, the absolute taught in the Upanishads, and in the great Vedanta teaching of Hinduism that follows these texts, can be thought of as absolute consciousness.

When the absolute was given in the first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine, although ultimately being indescribable, it was said to be symbolized under two aspects: absolute abstract space, and absolute abstract motion, representing unconditioned consciousness (SD 1.14). No one will have any difficulty in identifying this latter aspect with the absolute consciousness taught in Hinduism, called brahman or atman. The hypothesis has been raised here that the Buddhist absolute, or better, ultimate, corresponds to the other aspect under which the ultimate may be symbolized, absolute abstract space. The Buddhist anatman or no-self doctrine, then, might be seen as registering their objection to describing the ultimate as absolute consciousness.

The other side of this question, however, has hardly been explored. If what is said in The Secret Doctrine is true, then its fundamental propositions would stand behind not only the Stanzas of Dzyan, but would also be the original teaching from which both Hinduism and Buddhism emerged. Even if each of these two traditions focused on one aspect under which the Secret Doctrine symbolized its ultimate, traces of the other aspect should still be found in each tradition. This is why those who are sympathetic to the Theosophical teachings would like to find an atman or self teaching in Buddhism, corresponding to the aspect of absolute abstract motion, that is not readily apparent there. By the same token, such people would also like to find a teaching in Hinduism corresponding to the aspect of absolute abstract space, or the one element, that is not readily apparent there. The Secret Doctrine also calls this latter its "substance-principle," and refers to it with the Sanskrit term, mula-prakriti. With this background, our story of search and ultimate triumph, with the help of Lucifer, now begins.

What are the authentic writings of the original Shankaracharya, the founder and greatest writer of the Advaita Vedanta tradition of Hinduism? Of the hundreds of works attributed to him, many of them are admitted even by his followers to be spurious. Which ones were really written by the original Shankaracharya rather than a later Shankaracharya? These would tell us whether or not he accepted only pure consciousness, or whether he also admitted a basis for it, a substance-principle. Such a substance-principle has been called mula-prakriti in the Theosophical writings, adopting a Samkhya term for it. But as all Vedantins know,

it is exactly this that Shankaracharya in his greatest work, his extensive commentary on the Brahma-sutras, has most pointedly refuted as an ultimate. It is, in this regard, although opposite, just like the atman teaching that is supposed to have been so pointedly refuted in Buddhism.

The answer to this question should be easy, and the case should be closed. Just take his greatest works, the commentaries on the Brahma-sutras, on the Bhagavad-gita, and on the Upanishads, and go by what they say. But the blind pandit Dhanaraj, who could recite from memory many lost Sanskrit texts, cast doubt on this. He spoke of, and dictated many verses from, the "real, original" commentaries of the "real, original" Shankaracharya. While everyone agrees that Shankaracharya's commentaries are his greatest writings, there is now a question of whether the ones we have were actually written by him, or by a later Shankaracharya. So what can we do? Until the alleged original commentaries are brought out, we can yet get some idea from his smaller writings.

It happens that, in the early 1900s, T. S. Narayana Sastri got access to the full, genuine biography of the original Shankaracharya, written by his close disciple and constant companion, Chitsukhacharya. From this, he published a book called, The Age of Sankara. In this book, about forty of Shankaracharya's smaller writings are described. This provides us with the needed criteria for determining which of the hundreds of smaller writings attributed to him are authentic. Among the forty or so authentic smaller writings, most are in verse; only a few are in prose. Of the few in prose, one title stood out as possibly containing the answer to the question of whether the original Shankaracharya accepted a substance-principle as the basis for pure consciousness: the Maya-vivarana, an "Exposition of Maya." This is because maya is equated with prakriti in Advaita Vedanta, including mula-prakriti, or root-substance.

If Shankaracharya here taught that mula-prakriti existed even during pralaya or the dissolution of the universe, this would show agreement with the first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine. This would show Shankaracharya's acceptance of the aspect of absolute abstract space, or the one element, the substance-principle. If, on the other hand, he spoke of mula-prakriti as something that emerges from brahman after pralaya or dissolution, this would agree with current Advaita Vedanta. This would show his acceptance of the current teaching that says there can be no mula-prakriti or maya in the absolute brahman, which is understood as pure consciousness. This would disagree with the first fundamental

proposition of the Secret Doctrine. It is here that there was argument between Advaita Vedantins and the Theosophist Advaita Vedantin, T. Subba Row.

So this text being named among the authentic ones was a very promising lead. But this small text, the Maya-vivarana, needed to be found. It did not seem to be a text studied by modern Advaita Vedantins. After some search, I found that it had been published in the first issue of the Bulletin of the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, in 1948. This particular issue was missing at most of the few U.S. libraries that have this journal, but I eventually got it. Some friends in India were also interested in this small Sanskrit text, so I sent a copy to my friend Sudipta Muni. He in turn gave a copy of it to his guru, Swami Prajnanananda. Not long after this, Sudipta told me that Swami Prajnanananda had identified this book in another text, the (Laghu) Vasudeva-manana. Swami Prajnanananda then kindly sent me a copy of a collection of Sanskrit texts, called the Vedanta-Sandarbha, which included the Laghu Vasudeva-manana. From this, I could see that the Maya-vivarana actually made up the first five of its twelve chapters. Here is where Lucifer comes in to our story.

Two Theosophists from Kumbakonam had translated the Vasudeva-manana into English and published their translation serially in Lucifer. Even though this text is attributed to Vasudeva Yati, its first five chapters are actually by the original Shankaracharya, according to the information from Chitsukhacharya. In the very first chapter, Shankaracharya speaks of mula-prakriti, and he tells us exactly what we wanted to know. Here is the translation of this passage from Lucifer, vol. 10, March 1892, p. 51:

"Mulaprakriti is that which is a compound of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas Gunas (or attributes) like a three-stranded rope of white, red and black colours. This state of equilibrium of the three Gunas is called Pralaya (universal deluge or dissolution) or Maha-Sushupti (the great dreamless sleeping state). It is (in Pralaya), before the evolution of this universe, that many myriads of Jivas (Egos) remain absorbed in Mulaprakriti with all their Karmic affinities, like particles of gold that stick to a ball of wax."

This last sentence deserves to be quoted in the original Sanskrit:

*asyaam muula-prakrtaav ananta-koti-jiivaah sva-sva-karma-vaasanaabhih saha
jatu-pinde suvarna-renava iva srshteh puurvam liinaa vartante /*

Literally translated, it is: "In this root substance (mula-prakriti) infinite millions of individual souls (jiva), each with its own karmic residues, are dissolved prior to

manifestation, like gold dust in a ball of lac resin." The image given here by Shankaracharya is very much like a sparkling Christmas ornament.

This passage tells us that, according to the original Shankaracharya, mula-prakriti does indeed exist even during pralaya or the dissolution of the universe. This shows agreement with the first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine in its aspect of absolute abstract space, or the one element, the substance-principle, here called mula-prakriti. I was thrilled! This was just like finding passages on atman in the Buddhist scriptures. These seemingly simple and innocent little statements, which everyone would normally just pass by, take on great significance in reference to the question of the existence of a once universal but now hidden wisdom tradition. Meaning little by themselves, in their aggregate they provide significant evidence for such a tradition that both Hinduism and Buddhism emerged from, whose fundamental propositions were given out by HPB in The Secret Doctrine. With rewards like this to be had, the joy of delving into these old writings will readily be apparent to all..

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 26, 2010 at 12:34pm

Glad to have your comments on these things, Leila. In regard to the verse of Rig-veda 10.129 that HPB had altered when quoting its early translation, you make a good point. If this verse is saying that a "he" created the world, why would the middle voice of the verb be used? As you say, the middle voice is supposed to be used for some action that goes directly back to the subject, or is reflexive. We do not have this voice in English. So to make your point clear to readers here, I will add a brief explanation.

The middle voice would refer to something that is done "for oneself," which is what the grammatical term for it in Sanskrit means: atmane-pada. See here the familiar atman, "self." By contrast, the active voice would refer to something that is done "for another": parasmai-pada. An example given by M. R. Kale in his Higher Sanskrit Grammar is, if someone cooks something for oneself, use the middle voice ending on the verb "cooks" (pacate). If someone cooks something for others, use the active voice ending on the verb "cooks" (pacati). So if someone creates the world, because it is for others, the active voice rather than the middle voice should be used.

It is true that some Sanskrit verb-roots only take the middle voice (atmane-pada) conjugational endings, while some only take the active voice (parasmai-pada)

endings, and some take both (ubhaya-pada). This results in the fact that in classical Sanskrit the difference in the voice signification is mostly lost. But we are here dealing with the earlier Vedic Sanskrit, where the difference in their signification is still found in many cases. The verb-root that we are speaking of here, "dhaa" for the verb "dadhe," is one that can take both the active and middle endings. So there would be little reason for the writer of this Vedic hymn to use the middle voice, when the active voice would best express the act of doing something like creating the world.

In such a case, the verb "dadhe" used here, which in grammatical form can be either a middle or a passive, would be less likely to be a middle. As you say, taking this verb as a passive is simpler and seems better. The world "was made" or "was established" or came into being without the necessity of a Maker. This better fits the Vedic Sanskrit, and at the same time better agrees with the tenets of the Secret Doctrine..

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on December 26, 2010 at 1:47pm

Having no knowledge of Sanskrit I will butt in anyway.

If there is only Unity or The One, the middle voice may be used to make sure there is no separation between so-called "creator" & "creation."

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Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 26, 2010 at 9:59pm

Good point, Nicholas. This may be possible. We would have to find an example of it. In the Bhagavad-gita, where Krishna says, "I create/emanate all beings" (chapter 9, verses 7 and 8), the verb used, visrjami, is active. But this does not count, because this root, srj, has to take active endings. In verse 10, where prakriti sends forth the moving and the unmoving, the verb used, suuyate, is middle. But this, too, does not count, because this root, suu, has to take middle endings. Not much help..

Comment by [Leila Becquer](#) on December 27, 2010 at 7:03am

I had said that it has strong metaphysical aftermath (if middle voice is adopted).

In this sense I think rather than Unity, a kind of relation such as which is found in the Koran.

Middle voice indicates as David has pointed out, that creator creates with benefits for himself in view, something is done for profit. Not because it is the same thing. If we translate the Koran in sanskrit, then we can use several times to create in middle voice because Allah says that He creates creatures to worship Him.

In a similar way, a middle voice here could indicate something similar to that. But it seems less probable that a simple passive voice.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 28, 2010 at 10:41pm

Here is a brief recap, leading on to the next thing.

The philosophy behind the Stanzas of Dzyan posits an ultimate principle that has been called "space" and also called the "one element." This corresponds directly with the dhatu taught in Buddhism, in its two senses reflected in its two Tibetan translations, dbyings, "basic space," and khams, "element." This has led us to the exposition of the dhatu given in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, which explains the tathagata-garbha or buddha-nature sutras. One of these tathagata-garbha or buddha-nature sutras is the Mahayana version of the Maha-parinirvana-sutra. This sutra openly equates the tathagata-garbha or buddha-nature with the atman or self. This brings us to the central Vedanta teaching of Hinduism, which equates its ultimate brahman with the atman or self of all. At this point, both of the aspects of the ultimate principle described in the Proem to The Secret Doctrine are accounted for: absolute abstract space, and absolute abstract motion, or unconditioned consciousness.

This is all very good from the standpoint of those who are sympathetic to Theosophical ideas. But the great majority of Buddhist teachers will say that to bring the atman teaching in to Buddhism, despite the few Buddhist texts that do so, is a serious misinterpretation of the Buddhist teachings. Are theosophers, then, obliged to conclude that known Buddhism only teaches one of the two postulated aspects of the ultimate principle taught in The Secret Doctrine? Does it leave out unconditioned consciousness? No.

There is a widespread teaching in Mahayana Buddhism of what we may call "mind itself" (Sanskrit cittam eva, Tibetan sems nyid), or the "one mind" (Sanskrit eka-

citta, Chinese yih-sin or i-hsin or yixin). This may be found in the "Cosmological Notes" as the sixth principle in the chart of the seven principles in man. It is there given in Tibetan as Lana Sem-Nyed, or Sanskrit Atman, or English Spiritual Soul. The Tibetan would be spelled bla-na sems-nyid, the "highest mind itself." The teaching of "mind itself" and its synonyms can be found in any number of Tibetan Buddhist books available today. These many sources, then, considerably broaden the base of material in which one or other of the fundamental ideas of the Stanzas may be found..

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 29, 2010 at 9:54pm

The "mind itself" (sems nyid), often spoken of using this and other terms in the Nyingma and Kagyu orders, is usually referred to in the Gelug order and by the Dalai Lama as the "fundamental innate mind of clear light" (gnyug ma lhan cig skyes pa'i 'od gsal). .

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on December 31, 2010 at 12:18pm

The teaching of "mind itself" (Skt. cittam eva, Tib. sems nyid), and its full synonyms such as what we often see translated as "clear light mind" (prabhasvara-citta), is a central teaching of Mahayana or Northern Buddhism. It is usually associated with the teaching of the tathagata-garbha or buddha-nature, which is a partial synonym, but the teaching of mind itself is more widespread. This term in phonetic Tibetan (sem nyid) was given out in the Theosophical "Cosmological Notes" at the end of 1881, long before anyone had heard of it in the Western world. It was there given as the sixth of seven principles in man, corresponding to the atman. Elsewhere in the Mahatma letters the atman was regarded as the seventh principle, in both man and the universe. By the time of The Secret Doctrine in 1888, this teaching was spoken of in the Proem as absolute abstract motion, representing unconditioned consciousness (vol. 1, p. 14). Below I will give enough quotations to show that "mind itself" is a central teaching in Mahayana Buddhism, and to illustrate how it is understood there.

The Mahayana Buddhist scriptures are found in two great divisions: sutra and tantra. The sutra division is what we might call standard Buddhism. The tantra division is esoteric Buddhism, teachings that were regarded as secret and requiring initiation. The texts of the tantra division are what HPB called the Books of Kiu-te,

following a transcription of the Tibetan term *rgyud-sde* that was used in the late 1700s. The orders of Tibetan Buddhism (Gelug, etc.) drew from both divisions in forming the teachings that make up their publicly known positions. Following the *sutra* division, the teaching of mind itself is summarized in Maitreya's *Ratna-gotra-vibhaga*, the same text that summarized the *tathagata-garbha* or *buddha-nature* teachings, and the same text whose basic teaching is the *dhatu*, the "element" (*khams*), or "basic space" (*dbyings*). The teaching of mind itself is usually given in the *Ratna-gotra-vibhaga* as the "clear light nature of mind" (*citta-prakrti-prabhasvara*). The commonly seen English translation, "clear light," follows the Tibetan translation, 'od gsal. Translators working directly from the original Sanskrit more often translate *prabhasvara* as "luminosity," "luminous," and similar terms. Thus: "luminous mind" and "luminous nature of mind." This term and this way of describing mind, as relating to light, is widely found in the *tantra* division of the Buddhist scriptures.

For those who may think that such things found in the Buddhist tantras, and even in the *Ratna-gotra-vibhaga*, are later additions to Buddhism, here is a quote on this from the early Pali Buddhist canon. It is found in the *Anguttara-nikaya* 1.6 (translated by Maurice Walshe, in *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, p. 557, note 241):

"This mind (*citta*) is luminous, but is defiled by adventitious defilements."

This idea is explained more fully in one of the opening verses of homage in the *Ratna-gotra-vibhaga* (chapter 1, verse 13). I here quote part of this verse, from Takasaki's translation, inserting the Sanskrit term in brackets:

"I bow before those who, . . . because of their perception of the unreality of defilements through the brightness of the innate pure mind [*citta-prakrti-prabhasvara*] of all the world, perceive the Buddhahood penetrating everywhere; . . ."

The *Ratna-gotra-vibhaga* goes on to equate this pure mind, free of the defilements, with the *dhatu* or element itself (chapter 1, verse 49, trans. Takasaki):

"Just as being of indiscriminative nature, space pervades everywhere, similarly all-pervading is the Essence [*dhatu*], the immaculate nature of the mind [*citta-prakrti*]."

We next turn to a famous Indian writer of the Madhyamaka or "Middle Way" school of Buddhism. The writings of Chandrakirti became central in the teachings giving the "view" accepted in Tibetan Buddhism, following the

sutra division of the scriptures, in contradistinction to the tantra division. Chandrakirti's book, the Madhyamaka-avatara, meaning "Introduction to, or Entrance into, the Middle Way," became one of the primary textbooks studied in most of the Tibetan monasteries. In verses 79-97 of chapter 6 he explains "mind only" (citta-matra, sems tsam), but in verse 89 he uses "mind itself" according to the Tibetan translation, sems nyid. The Sanskrit original has only recently been discovered in Tibet, and has not yet been published. Here is verse 89, with my addition in double brackets (translated by C. W. Huntington, Jr., in The Emptiness of Emptiness, p. 167):

"Mind alone [[sems nyid, i.e., mind itself]] fabricates all the diversity of sentient and insentient worlds. [The buddha] declared that the entire universe is produced from volitional action, but there can be no such action without mind."

Here we see in this standard non-tantric text that the mind is said to be the creator of the universe. This idea was greatly expounded in the tantras. Here follows an extraordinary verse on this quoted from the lost root Kalachakra Tantra, in which mind itself is also equated with the adi-buddha. It was quoted by Takpo Tashi Namgyal, a sixteenth-century Tibetan writer of the Kagyu order, in his book known as Moonlight of Mahamudra

(translated by Lobsang Lhalungpa as Mahamudra: The Quintessence of Mind and Meditation, p. 181 in the 1986 first edition, or p. 183 in the 2006 revised edition):

"The innate mind [sems nyid, i.e., mind itself] of sentient beings is luminous clarity ['od gsal, prabhasvara];

From the beginning it is detached

From the absolute attributes of arising, ceasing, and settling.

Since beginningless time it has been the primordial supreme Buddha [parama-adi-buddha],

Because it has been unmodulated by cause and condition."

The mind itself (sems nyid) is also equated with the dhatu as basic space (dbyings) in The Precious Treasury of the Basic Space of Phenomena, by the primary Tibetan writer of the Nyingma order, Longchenpa (translated by Richard Barron, p. 5):

"Mind itself [sems nyid] is a vast expanse, the realm of unchanging space.

Its indeterminate display is the expanse of the magical expression of its responsiveness.

Everything is the adornment of basic space [dbyings, dhatu] and nothing else.

Outwardly and inwardly, things proliferating and resolving are the dynamic energy of awakened mind [bodhi-citta].

Because this is nothing whatsoever yet arises as anything at all,

it is a marvelous and magical expression, amazing and superb."

In the Gelug order, this idea is drawn primarily from the Guhyasamaja Tantra writings, where it is usually referred to as the "clear light mind" or "luminous mind" ('od gsal or prabhasvara citta). Tsongkhapa discusses this at length in his commentaries on these writings. The present Dalai Lama has written about this in a couple of places. In his 1997 book, The Gelug/Kagyü Tradition of Mahamudra, translated by Alexander Berzin, he says (p. 123):

"The latter [the clear light mind] is similar to Tsongkapa's explanation in Precious Sprout, Deciding the Difficult Points of [Chandrakirti's] 'An illuminating Lamp [for 'The Guhyasamaja Root Tantra']. In the prologue section, commenting on a quotation from Nagarjuna's The Five Stages [of the Guhyasamaja Complete Stage], Tsongkapa has mentioned that the inanimate environment and the animate beings within it are all the play or emanation of subtlest consciousness and subtlest energy-wind -- in other words, simultaneously arising primordial clear light mind and the subtlest level of energy-wind upon which it rides."

No student of Theosophy could miss the connection between fohat ("Fohat is the steed and thought is the rider," Stanza 5.2) and the energy-wind upon which consciousness or the clear light mind rides. Further on, the Dalai Lama repeats this explanation and then continues (p. 253):

". . . In other words, when the subtlest energy-wind causes movement from the sphere of clear light, the coarser levels of mind that emerge, from the three most

subtle, conceptual appearance-making minds onwards, produce the appearances of all phenomena of the environment . . .

". . . This is the Buddhist explanation for what is called the creator in other traditions."

Here we have, brought out to the English-speaking world by the Dalai Lama in 1997, a succinct statement of the Buddhist tantric cosmogony. The texts that this amazing statement is based on have not yet been published in English translation. The connection between this and the cosmogony of the Stanzas of Dzyan brought out by HPB in 1888 will hopefully be clear to all.

The quotes given above should be enough to give a good idea of the "mind itself" (sems nyid) or "clear light mind" or "luminous mind" teaching in Mahayana Buddhism, and the fundamental role it plays in Buddhist tantric cosmogony. At the very least, these quotes on this teaching show, in comparison with the "Lana Sem-Nyed" given in the "Cosmological Notes," that HPB had access to Tibetan Buddhist teachings that were then unknown to the Western world. The now verifiable accuracy of this teaching that she then brought out speaks for the authenticity of the so far untraced Stanzas of Dzyan that she also brought out. It points us in the direction that she always claimed was the source of the Stanzas and their cosmogony. They are likely to exist among the postulated but still inaccessible secret books of Kiu-te, the Tibetan Buddhist tantras..

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on January 1, 2011 at 9:45am

On Buddhist Sources for the Tathagathagarbha concept.

David wrote " For those who may think that such things found in the Buddhist tantras, and even in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, are later additions to Buddhism, here is a quote

on this from the early Pali Buddhist canon. It is found in the

Anguttara-nikaya 1.6 (translated by Maurice Walshe, in The Long

Discourses of the Buddha, p. 557, note 241) "

The third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (1284-1339), who was a Master on Kalachakra teachings, wrote a treatise on Buddha-Nature - "Dezhin shekpa'i nyingpo tenpa'i tenchö".

A book about it was published in 2006 from talks given by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche at the Sopa Chöling Retreat Center, Gamp Abbey in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, under the title « In Buddha Essence, A Commentary on Rangjung Dorje's Treatise »

Here are the main ideas, in regard with our quest, specially early Buddhist sources for the concept of the element (dhatu) :

Reference Sources :

- Tathagathagarbha Sutra*
- Sutra of Queen Mala*
- Mahayana Abhidharma Sutra (lost)*
- Uttarantra*
- Lankavatara Sutra (principal tenets of the Mind Only tradition)*

Main points :

The nature of the mind is the natural or ordinary mind (tha-mal gyi shes-pa), which is completely uncontrived and always has been. This ordinary mind is very close, always present, and empty by nature, but also has luminosity (gsal-wa)

Three quotations from Buddhist scriptures are presented :

1) from an unidentified (lost) original sutra, which Rangjung Dorje quoted from the Mahayana-uttarantra-shastra-vyakhya (Tengyur 4025) attributed to Asanga :

"Although beginningless, it has an end.

It is pure by nature and has the quality of permanence.

It is unseen, because it is obscured by a beginningless covering,

Like, for example, a golden statue that has been obscured.

That was taught by the Buddha."

2) from the Mahayana Abhidharma Sutra :

« The element of beginningless time

Is the location of all phenomena.

Due to its existence, there are all beings

And also the attainment of nirvana. »

3) from the Hevajra Tantra :

« All beings are buddhas

But are obscured by incidental stains.

When those have been removed,

There is buddhahood. »

Rangjung Dorje is following the Shentong interpretation, as presented in The Sutra Requested by Dharani Raj Ishvara and in the Uttaratantra. These teachings were brought to Tibet under two lineages, from Vikramashila monastic university in India. One was through the Tibetan translator Loden Sherab (lineage of explanation) and the other one was through two other tibetan translators, Tsen Kawo Che and Zu Gaway Dorje (lineage of meditation), which is the one followed by Rangjung Dorje.

The element (dhatu)

The commentator here quote Nagajurna who, for the explanation of the third turning of the wheel, wrote a collection of praises which includes Praise to the Dharmadhatu and Praise to the True Nature, and explains

: « This element has no creator ; it is beginningless.

It also is not part of the appearances that arise from oneself. Being

not a thing or a substance, it is not part of worldly appearances,

so its essence or nature is emptiness. However, it is not just voidness, because it is an emptiness that is inseparable from the dharmadhatu, so it has the nature of clarity. This element is called the dhatu because it possesses its own characteristics. It is different from all other things in that it possesses its own characteristics, and while being empty and not having any true reality, it also has the nature of luminosity. So buddha nature has the characteristics of both emptiness and clarity and also being inseparable from the dharmadhatu, and for this reason it is called the element.

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On another subject related to our quest, it would be useful and fruitful to ask specialists of HPB history to open a new thread to discuss (and hopefully conclude) about the proficiency of HPB regarding foreign (eastern) languages (above Russian, French and English of course). This would give us some clues about her understanding capabilities on Mongolian, Tibetan, Sanskrit, Prakrit,...

Bonne Année à tout le monde.

Jacques

Comment by [Leila Becquer](#) on January 1, 2011 at 5:36pm

Regarding James' last comment, it would be worth to remember that the earliest contact of HPB with buddhism was with the Kalmuk branch. In her letters she states something like that.

The kalmuk branch though mongolian, is closely related with the tibetan one.

Many recent discoveries of tibetan documents were made in russian lands (Siberia and borders with Mongolia).

In addition, in some place Olcott states that HPB knew mongolian language.

Lastly, in USA there are kalmuk communities, in case of need they can be contacted, I think that in New York they have a monastery.

Bonne année à toi aussi.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 2, 2011 at 9:59pm

*Jacques, the material that you quoted on the "element" from the 2006 book, *On Buddha Essence*, gives us a good picture of this teaching. It shows how this teaching is understood in some of the Tibetan Buddhist orders. It also shows that translators are now using "element" for dhatu or khams or dbyings, like was used in the Mahatma letters in the early 1880s.*

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 4, 2011 at 12:12pm

*The Pranava-vada is a primary source on both daivi-prakriti and mula-prakriti, or light-substance and root-substance. It sometimes speaks of three prakritis or substances, adding to these two a universal and transcendent substance under the name maya. It describes the aspects of these as follows (vol. 2, p. 236, in the file posted on the "Aum and Pranava Vada" forum by Capt. Anand Kumar on Dec. 14, *Daiviprakriti - Pranava Vada.pdf*,):*

"In its transcendental aspect, Mula-prakrti is Anatma; in a limited samsara, it is Mula-prakrti; in a brahmanda, Apra-prakrti. So, the universal and transcendent aspect is Maya; that shown in a samsara, Daivi-prakrti; that in a brahmanda, Para-prakrti."

Earlier in this chapter, when it begins its description of mula-prakriti, it defines mula-prakriti as anatma, or non-self (Eng. p. 223, Skt. p. 197). Shortly thereafter, it gives quotations from now lost texts that also define mula-prakriti or root-substance as anatman or non-self (Eng. p. 224, Skt. p. 198). This is its primary definition. The central term used here for the substance side of things is mula-prakriti, and it is equated with anatman.

The astounding implication of this equation has no doubt just flashed into your minds, causing you all to say, "aha!" Yes, if these now lost texts were widespread in the days of the Buddha, as the Pranava-vada indicates, this throws an entirely

new light on his famous teaching of anatman or no-self. When he taught that everything is anatman, he would not have been denying the atman or self, as Buddhists have taken it for two thousand years. Rather, he would only have been affirming that everything is root-substance, or mula-prakriti. This, of course, fits in completely with the teachings of the Secret Doctrine, on absolute abstract space or the substance-principle, and absolute abstract motion or unconditioned consciousness. Buddhism would then

only be affirming the one side of the coin, the anatman or non-self aka root-substance, while Hinduism was affirming the other side of the coin, atman or self. The Pranava-vada, like The Secret Doctrine, says again and again that these are one (e.g., p. 237 in the file posted).

Comment by [stefalive](#) on January 5, 2011 at 11:28pm

very interesting infos here...

thank's David and Jacques

Comment by [Govert Schuller](#) on January 6, 2011 at 12:15pm

One of the key forensic issues connected with the Stanzas is the "Archaic Manuscript" itself, which HPB claimed to have had "before the writer's eyes" and on which the Stanzas were depicted in symbolic form. (SD-I, p. 1)

My questions here are:

- 1) when and where would this have happened?*
- 2) Who was then part of her entourage?*
- 3) Is there any claim by others to have seen the manuscript?*

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 6, 2011 at 9:32pm

The "Archaic Manuscript" that HPB describes with its symbols in SD, vol. 1, p. 1, is apparently the "seven secret folios of Kiu-te" or the "Book of the Secret Wisdom of the World" mentioned in Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 14, p. 422. By contrast,

the Book of Dzyan that she translated stanzas from is apparently the first of fourteen volume of commentaries on these, as she there says. We may also deduce that she translated from written verses rather than pictures for several reasons, one of the clearest of which is her statement in the newly published Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge that in one place she skipped over some sixty stanzas (p. 38; see my post here of Oct. 12). She was apparently viewing this written manuscript clairvoyantly, as her translation of the stanzas took place over an extended period of time, with various people around her. No one of them ever said that they saw her with a manuscript.

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on January 6, 2011 at 10:05pm

Thanks David. Your explanation makes Mula-prakriti much easier to understand. It also affirms the esoterice vedantic view of "Veil over Parabrahman", as taught by T Subba Row.

But, Daivi-prakriti remains a mystery. Particluarly its equivalence with Fohat of the stanzas. What would be the arguments against Daivi-prakriti symbolizing "Absolute Abstract Motion" of the SD? Motion indicates "succession" which as per Pranava Vada is TIME, which could be Fohat of the stanzas.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 6, 2011 at 10:08pm

We are here trying to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzyan. To do this, we must find ideas and terms in the Stanzas that are distinct enough to be traceable elsewhere. The distinctive term svabhavat, which as discussed here earlier must be corrected to svabhava, is found in the Stanzas seven times. Svabhava is a fundamental idea in Buddhism. In the Buddha's first promulgation, all the dharmas that make up the universe were defined by having svabhava, an "inherent nature" that makes them real. But in the Buddha's second promulgation, all dharmas were instead declared to lack or be empty of svabhava. (See the post on the Diamond Sutra in the "Online Sanskrit Texts Project" forum.) This is the Madhyamaka teaching, which was brought from India to Tibet, and was accepted throughout Tibetan Buddhism. This raises a problem in regard to svabhava as found in the Stanzas.

Since svabhava is denied in the Madhyamaka teaching, which is accepted throughout Tibetan Buddhism, the Stanzas with their svabhava do not fit in here. In Southern Buddhism following the first promulgation, where svabhava is accepted, this svabhava is the inherent nature of the momentary individual dharmas that make up the universe. This is not the kind of svabhava spoken of in the Stanzas. So they do not fit in here either. At this point, we do not have a match between the svabhava of the Stanzas and the svabhava taught in Buddhism. It cannot be traced there. Shall we then conclude, like so many others have, that the Stanzas of Dzyan are a work of fiction? That HPB had picked up the word svabhavat and used it in her Stanzas without really knowing what it referred to? We would be justified in so concluding. But wait.

*HPB said that she was giving out hitherto secret teachings, so that what is taught in the Stanzas of Dzyan would not necessarily match what is taught in known Buddhism. If we accept what she said, which we are obliged to do until proven false, it would be a fallacy to conclude that the Stanzas are fiction because their teachings do not match those of known Buddhism. She never said they did. Then are we stuck here in limbo, prevented from saying that HPB was wrong, but unable to prove that the Stanzas are right about svabhava? Or is there a way out? Let us see. While writing *The Secret Doctrine*, HPB had said in a letter to A. P. Sinnett (p. 195):*

"I have finished an enormous Introductory Chapter, or Preamble, Prologue, call it what you will; just to show the reader that the text as it goes, every Section beginning with a page of translation from the Book of Dzyan and the Secret Book of 'Maytreya Buddha' Champai chhos Nga (in prose, not the five books in verse known, which are a blind) are no fiction."

*We are possibly afforded a glimpse into what she is saying here, about the known five books of Maitreya in verse being a blind, through the work of twentieth-century scholarship. The first of the five known verse books of Maitreya to be published is the Mahayana-sutralamkara. The French scholar Sylvain Levi had prepared a Sanskrit edition of it on the basis a manuscript from Nepal and published it in 1907, followed by a French translation in 1911. In the following several decades other scholars published Sanskrit editions of other works written by Maitreya, or written under his inspiration by Asanga. In the 1970s a group of American scholars headed by Robert Thurman jointly prepared an English translation of the Mahayana-sutralamkara, which was finally published in 2004 under the title, *The Universal Vehicle Discourse Literature*. In his Introduction (pp.*

xxii-xxiii, xxxv-xxxvi), Thurman clearly lays out the close parallels between the Mahayana-sutralamkara and another work attributed to Maitreya by Chinese tradition, the Bodhisattva-bhumi. The latter is written in prose; that's right, PROSE, just like the secret book of Maitreya that HPB referred to in connection with the Book of Dzyan. The Bodhisattva-bhumi explains the terse verses of the Mahayana-sutralamkara so well that Thurman dubbed it the "meaning commentary." Not only does it explain what the verses mean, it often adds things that are not even hinted at in the verses. In other words, it gives us a glimpse at what HPB may have meant by saying that the verse works of Maitreya are a blind.

The Bodhisattva-bhumi is a section of the enormous book called the Yogachara-bhumi. Its authorship is attributed to Maitreya by Chinese tradition, or to his amanuensis Asanga by Tibetan tradition (see: <http://www.easternterminology.org/etribib-maitreya.pdf>). According to the analysis of these books by mKhas-grub-rje, the famous disciple of Tsong-kha-pa, this whole enormous work is on practice, except for one short chapter on doctrine. This is the Tattvartha chapter, the chapter on "reality," of the Bodhisattva-bhumi. Since we know that the contents of the prose Bodhisattva-bhumi are paralleled by the verse Mahayana-sutralamkara, we would expect to find a correspondence to this chapter there. We do. It is chapter 6, the Tattva or "reality" chapter of the Mahayana-sutralamkara. It consists of only ten verses. By contrast, its corresponding chapter in the Bodhisattva-bhumi consists of twenty-one pages in Unrai Wogihara's 1930 Sanskrit edition, or fifteen pages in Nalinaksha Dutt's 1966 Sanskrit edition. From this it is easy to imagine how much more material is in the prose book than in the mere ten verses of the book in verse. It is easy to see how the latter might be called a blind. The verses make no mention of svabhava. But the inexpressible svabhavata of all dharmas is a central topic of the prose chapter in the Bodhisattva-bhumi.

The works of Maitreya and Asanga are part of the Buddha's third promulgation, or "turning of the wheel of the Dharma." The second promulgation had overturned the svabhava teaching of the first promulgation, with the teaching that everything is empty of svabhava. The third promulgation purports to explain the seemingly stark contradiction between the Buddha's first two promulgations. How it does so was a matter of considerable difference of opinion. Leaving all of this aside, what concerns us here is the teaching of an inexpressible (nirabhilapya) svabhavata in the Tattvartha or "Reality" chapter of the prose Bodhisattva-bhumi. This does not seem to be taught elsewhere, even in other texts of the third promulgation. In brief, the inexpressible svabhava of all dharmas is said to be the object of the

penetrating knowledge of only the buddhas and bodhisattvas. It is not accessible to even highly intelligent people and advanced practitioners. It is beyond the range and reach of speech. In other words, unlike in the second promulgation where svabhava is entirely denied, here an ultimate svabhava is taught, although being quite inexpressible. This inexpressible svabhava was taught by Maitreya or his pupil Asanga in this prose book. Perhaps the Stanzas with their svabhava are not works of fiction, after all, but in fact came from a secret book of Maitreya in prose, like HPB told Sinnett.

Comment by [Pablo Sender](#) on January 7, 2011 at 4:00pm

Hi All,

I've been busy, but nevertheless I'm following this thread. I wanted to share something I found in the book "The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep" by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. This Geshe belongs to the Bon Buddhist tradition (very close to the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism), and is a teacher of Dzogchen.

In his book, the author talks about kunzhi (Tib. kun gzhi) which is "the base of all existence, of matter as well as the minds of sentient beings..." and also as "the base or ground of being." Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche defines kunzhi in a way that resembles a lot the description of the Absolute found in the Secret Doctrine. He says:

"It is unlimited, absolute space; it is empty of entities, inherent existence, concepts, and boundaries. It is the empty space that seems to be external to us, the empty space that objects inhabit, and the empty space of the mind. Kunzhi has neither inside nor outside, cannot be said to exist (for it is nothing), nor not to exist (for it is reality itself). It is limitless, cannot be destroyed or created, was not born and does not die. Language used to describe it is necessarily paradoxical, since kunzhi is beyond dualism and concept." (p. 192)

He further says that kunzhi, in the Dzogchen view, is not synonymous to the alaya vijñana of Yogachara (which is usually translated as kunzhi in Tibetan). In Dzogchen, alaya vijñana is called kunzhi namshe (Tib: kun gzhi rnam shes): "The kunzhi namshe is the basic consciousness of the individual. It is the "repository" or "storehouse" in which the karmic traces are stored, from which future, conditioned experience arises."

HPB and the Mahatmas define Atman (the seventh principle) as a Ray of the Absolute. In their definition, they emphasize the fact that Atman is absolute, universal (not discrete), and is frequently related to space. See the following quotes as examples:

"Buddhi is the mould of the "garments" of Atma, because Atma is no body, or shape, or anything, and because Buddhi is its vehicle only figuratively." (Secret Doctrine 1, 245)

"Spirit or LIFE is indivisible. And when we speak of the seventh principle it is neither quality nor quantity nor yet form that are meant, but rather the space occupied in that ocean of spirit." (Mahatma Letters, No 44, question 5)

"Spirit (in the sense of the Absolute, and therefore, indivisible ALL), or Atma. As this can neither be located nor limited in philosophy, being simply that which is in Eternity, and which cannot be absent from even the tiniest geometrical or mathematical point of the universe of matter or substance, it ought not to be called, in truth, a "human" principle at all. Rather, and at best, it is in Metaphysics, that point in space which the human Monad and its vehicle man occupy for the period of every life. Now that point is as imaginary as man himself, and in reality is an illusion, a maya." (Key to Theosophy, Section 7, "On the Various 'Principles' in Man")

"This "Higher Self" is ATMA, and of course it is "non-materializable," as Mr. Sinnett says. Even more, it can never be "objective" under any circumstances, even to the highest spiritual perception. For Atman or the "Higher Self" is really Brahma, the ABSOLUTE, and indistinguishable from it." (Key to Theosophy, Section 9, "Definite Words for Definite Things")

So, to me it is fairly clear that there are in several schools of the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism concepts that resemble those of the Absolute and Atman as explained by HPB and the Mahatmas.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 9, 2011 at 12:08pm

Capt. Anand wrote:

'But, Daivi-prakriti remains a mystery. Particularly its equivalence with Fohat of the stanzas. What would be the arguments against Daivi-prakriti symbolizing "Absolute Abstract Motion" of the SD? Motion indicates "succession" which as per Pranava Vada is TIME, which could be Fohat of the stanzas.'

I certainly agree that daivi-prakriti and its equivalent fohat remains a mystery, a big mystery. This is the most elusive aspect of the esoteric cosmogony taught in the Stanzas of Dzyan.

The arguments against daivi-prakriti or fohat symbolizing "absolute abstract motion" of the SD (1.14) would be that fohat is classified with the other of the two aspects under which the one ultimate principle is symbolized, "absolute abstract space." The first time that fohat appears in the Theosophical writings is in the Cosmological Notes (<http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/hpb-aps/bl-ap2.htm>). There, near the beginning, Mahatma Morya says:

"Everything in the occult universe, which embraces all the primal causes, is based upon two principles -- Kosmic energy (Fohat or breath of wisdom), and Kosmic ideation."

Here, fohat or kosmic energy is contrasted with kosmic ideation, just like absolute abstract space is contrasted with absolute abstract motion, representing unconditioned consciousness. So kosmic ideation would correspond with unconditioned consciousness, i.e., absolute abstract motion. That leaves us with fohat corresponding to absolute abstract space.

In support of the correspondence between fohat or daivi-prakriti and absolute abstract space indicated here, there are two pieces of good evidence. We know that absolute abstract space is also referred to as the substance-principle, and has been called mula-prakriti ("root-substance"). In other words, it is the substance or prakriti side of things, as opposed to the consciousness or ideation side of things. Hence, fohat as daivi-prakriti ("light substance"), would correspond to absolute abstract space. The Pranava-vada, too, contrasts the prakritis, mula and daivi, with the atmans, parama ("highest") and pratyak ("inner"), which would represent consciousness.

Second, the phrase from Stanza 5.2, "Fohat is the steed and the thought is the rider," again indicates that fohat is contrasted with thought, which latter is the absolute abstract motion aspect of the one principle. This unusual and elsewhere unknown idea has been fully confirmed in the hitherto secret Buddhist tantric Guhyasamaja writings. As quoted earlier, the Dalai Lama referred to this as,

"simultaneously arising primordial clear light mind and the subtlest level of energy-wind upon which it rides."

This evidence, I think, is reliable and even conclusive. But there are also a couple of things that confuse the issue. First, motion must of course be a part of every living thing, and in fact motion has been defined in the Cosmological Notes and in the Mahatma letters as "life" (ML #10). So fohat must also include motion. But in the model given in the Theosophical teachings, using two aspects, fohat does not seem to be placed on the motion side of the equation.

Also confusing is the the fact that fohat is called the "breath of wisdom," so is allegorically referred to as "breath." But absolute abstract motion is called the "Great Breath," so is also allegorically referred to as "breath." This would seem to link fohat, as breath, with the Great Breath, or absolute abstract motion, described in the Book of Dzyan as "Intra-Cosmic Breath" (SD 1.258). I think, however, that breath is meant differently in these two allegorical usages. In the Occult Catechism quoted in SD 1.12, it is said that "Hot Breath is the Father" and "Cool Breath is the Mother." This shows that breath can allegorically represent either aspect. The conclusion still stands, then, that fohat or daivi-prakriti would be classified with absolute abstract space, the substance-principle, rather than with absolute abstract motion, or unconditioned consciousness.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 9, 2011 at 9:59pm

Thanks, Pablo, for posting the very interesting material on the kun gzhi or alaya from the Bon tradition, and relevant quotes on atman from the Theosophical writings. As you say, these concepts clearly resemble each other. Whether or not Buddhists and Bonpos would admit this is another question, since they are very sensitive about the word "atman." When this question comes up, they usually distinguish the Buddhist teachings by saying that their alaya, or tathagata-garbha, or whatever it might be termed, lacks an inherent nature (svabhava) or inherent existence. This is what, for them, distinguishes it from the atman taught in Hinduism. While we must respect this, as students of Theosophy we are also free to view it as a semantic issue rather than a real difference.

Comment by Jacques Mahnich on January 10, 2011 at 3:51pm

2. The search for Fohat - The Egyptian Trail

from S.D. Volume 1 Commentary (p.673) :

" in Egypt Fohat was known as Toum issued of Noot, () or Osiris in his character of a primordial god, creator of heaven and of beings (see chapter xvii., "Book of the Dead") . For Toum is spoken of as the Protean god who generates other gods and gives himself the form he likes; the "master of life" "giving their vigour to the gods" (chapter lxxix.) He is the overseer of the gods, and he "who creates spirits and gives them shape and life"; he is "the north wind and the spirit of the west;" and finally the "Setting Sun of Life," or the vital electric force that leaves the body at death, wherefore the defunct begs that Toum should give him the breath from his right nostril (positive electricity) that he might live in his second form. Both the hieroglyph, and the text of chapter lxii. in the "Book of the Dead," show the identity of Toum with Fohat*

() "Oh Toum, Toum! issued from the great (female) which is in the bosom of the waters" (the great Deep or Space) . . . "Thou, luminous through the two Lions" (the dual Force or power of the two solar eyes, or the electro-positive and the electro-negative forces. (See Book of the Dead, III., and Egyptian Pantheon, chapter ii.) "*

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Let's look at what we can find inside egyptologist books on this matter.

First of all, identify this "Toum, issued of Noot". The closest character who would match the description made by HPB is the god Tem, or Temu, issued of Nut :

From the Book of the Dead, E.A. Wallis Budge, first published in 1899 :

" Temu: a form of Râ, and the type of the night sun ; he was self-created, and was declared to be the creator of gods and men" (note from page 7)

" Hail, thou god Tem, who comest forth from the Great Deep, and who shinest with glory under the form of the double Lion-god, send out with mighty words unto those who are in thy presence,..." (Chapt III, p.50)

" (Nu saith :) ... I am the god Tem , and I am in the foremost part of Nu (i.e., the sky), and the power which protecteth me is that which is with all the gods for ever. I am he whose name is hidden, and whose habitation is holy for millions of years. I

am he who dwelleth therein and I come forth along with the god Tem.” (Chapt VII, p.55)

“ Homage to thee, O thou who art Râ when thou risest, and Tem when thou settest [in] beauty. Thou risest and shinest on the back of thy mother [Nut], O thou who art crowned king of the gods ! ... O thou only One, who didst dwell in heaven before ever the earth and the mountains came into existence....thou hast produced whatsoever comethforth from the waters. (Chap XV, p. 65)

“ [I am the god Tem], who cometh forth out of Nu into the watery abyss”(Chapt. XXXVIII, p. 164)

“ I am the god Tem, the maker of heaven, the creator of things which are,who cometh forth from the earth, who maketh to come into being the seed which is sown, the lord of things which shall be, who give birth to the gods; [I am] the great god who made himself, the lord of life,who maketh to flourish the company of the gods. Homage to you, O ye lords of divine things (or of creation), ye pure beings whose abodes are hidden !” (Chapt. LXXXIX, p. 259)

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Of course , this tradition is also a maze, specially for a non-specialist. But, at least, these excerpts give us some basic meanings which are somehow similar to some of the characteristics of Fohat, as described in the S.D. :

- *Tem was self-created*
- *Tem was declared the creator of gods and men*
- *Tem comes from the Great Deep*
- *Tem dwelled in heaven before ever the earth came into existence*
- *Tem produced whatsoever come from the waters*

To go further will require more analysis, and any Egypt tradition specialist would be more than welcome on this task.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 11, 2011 at 7:32pm

Following out the Egyptian trail in the search for fohat will no doubt be worthwhile. Thanks, Jacques, for doing and posting this research. I know almost nothing about the Egyptian material, so cannot add much. In fact, it took me a while to figure out who this Egyptian god is. Today, it seems, he is referred to as Atum. In the quote from the original 1888 edition of the SD, we can see that the name was spelled "Toum." In the 1978 edition of the SD prepared by Boris de Zirkoff, this was changed to "Tum." In his "General Index and Bibliography," a third volume of this edition, Boris explains under the entry, "Book of the Dead," pp. 417-418:

"On numerous occasions, especially in her Isis Unveiled, H.P.B. used portions of the translation by Samuel Birch, as published in Bunsen's Egypt's Place in Universal History, Engl. transl., London, 1848-67, in 5 vols. In The Secret Doctrine, however, most of the passages have been taken from the French translation of P. Pierret, Le Livre des Morts des Anciens Egyptiens, Paris, 1882.

"Consult for additional Bibliographical information, her Collected Writings, Vol. X, pp. 413-15."

The latter reference gives much detailed bibliographic information on various editions of the Egyptian Book of the Dead.

As we see in the quotations posted from an 1899 translation by E. A. Wallis Budge, he used "Tem" or "Temu." Like Sanskrit and other languages, the transliteration of Egyptian was not standardized in HPB's time or in Budge's time. Now, it seems, Toum or Tum or Tem or Temu have all become Atum. This is what I find in the few research books on Egyptology that I have. (e.g., The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt, by Richard H. Wilkinson, 2003).

Research in Egyptology has steadily progressed, and besides standardization of spellings, there was also considerable advancement in understanding Egyptian texts since Budge's time. There are a couple of more recent translations of the so-called Egyptian Book of the Dead:

The Book of the Dead, by Raymond Oliver Faulkner, 1972 (reprinted in 1985 as The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, with additions by Carol Andrews).

The Book of the Dead, or Going Forth by Day, by Thomas George Allen, 1974.

Thomas Allen specifically says in his preface that his translation was meant to replace the English translation by Budge currently in use (p. v). Although Allen's translation was published two years after Faulkner's translation, Allen had died in 1969. So these two more recent translations were done independently of each other. Faulkner died in 1982, and the 1985 reprint includes some additional spells added and translated by Carol Andrews. Faulkner also translated other major Egyptian texts, such as the Pyramid Texts and the Coffin Texts, but I do not have them.

Assuming that HPB's identification of fohat with this Egyptian god is correct, there is much material to go through regarding Atum. Faulkner's 1985 translation of The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead has on p. 184: "He brings you sweet air for your nose, life and dominion for your face, and fair is the north wind which goes forth from Atum to your nostrils, O Lord of the Sacred Land" (see also pp. 65, 66, 96, 145). This at least shows a connection with wind and breath, like fohat in the SD.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 13, 2011 at 10:30pm

There is another source on fohat that should be brought in: the Alice Bailey books. There are a number of people on this site who have background in this material. For those who don't, it will be enough to say the following. The Bailey books purport to be a continuation of the efforts of the Brotherhood that first resulted in the foundation of the Theosophical Society in 1875 and the giving out of Theosophical teachings through H. P. Blavatsky. The Masters behind this initial effort were primarily Blavatsky's teacher, the Mahatma M. or Morya, his close associate the Mahatma K.H. or Koot Hoomi, and K.H.'s then disciple D.K. or Djwhal Khul. D.K. is thought to have become a Master himself around that time. In 1919, Alice Bailey began to receive teachings through what she described as mental telepathy, during which she was fully conscious. Shortly thereafter she began publishing this material, as coming from "the Tibetan," who she did not wish to identify any further or make any claims about. Decades later, it slipped through in an unedited text that "the Tibetan" was the Master D.K. From then on, the Bailey writings have been considered by those who follow them as coming from the Master D.K. These books later described themselves as the second phase of the

teachings coming from the Brotherhood or Occult Hierarchy, of which the first phase was Theosophy.

In 1925 the major text of these writings was published, A Treatise on Cosmic Fire. It is considered by Bailey students to give the psychological key to The Secret Doctrine. That is, to explain the teachings of The Secret Doctrine from the standpoint of consciousness. In its well over a thousand pages it includes material on fohat. It would be useful for one of the Bailey students here to make a compilation of the material on fohat from A Treatise on Cosmic Fire, like Jacques did from The Secret Doctrine. Fohat is there described as the fire of matter (pp. 65-66). There are only a couple of references in The Secret Doctrine that support this, but much support for this from the Pranava-vada and from the Buddhist tantras.

Comment by [stefalive](#) on January 13, 2011 at 10:58pm

thanks DAvid for the initiative to make research from the alice bailey's books as well on fohat. I think there is already a compilation available on fohat on this site:

http://www.makara.us/05ref/02comps/Fohat_wordsearch.html

hope this help

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on January 14, 2011 at 5:42am

Welcome on board, Stéphane, and thank you for this link which will give valuable material to keep this study progressing..

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 14, 2011 at 2:03pm

Thanks to the Bailey compilation on fohat that Stefalive provided us a link to, and the Blavatsky compilation on fohat that Jacques prepared for us, it is a very simple matter to post the paragraphs that I was thinking of. Here is the one from Alice Bailey's Treatise on Cosmic Fire, pp. 65-66:

"Certain facts are known in connection with the fire spirits (if so they may be termed). The fundamental fact that should here be emphasised is that AGNI, the Lord of Fire, rules over all the fire elementals and devas on the three planes of

human evolution, the physical, the astral, and the mental, and rules over them not only on this planet, called the Earth, but on the three planes in all parts of the system. He is one of the seven Brothers (to use an expression familiar to students of the Secret Doctrine) Who each embody one of the seven principles, or Who are in Themselves the seven centres in the body of the cosmic Lord of Fire, called by H. P. B. "Fohat." He is that active fiery Intelligence, Who is the basis of the internal fires of the solar system. On each plane one of these Brothers holds sway, and the three elder Brothers (for always the three will be seen, and later the seven, who eventually merge into the primary three) rule on the first, third and the fifth planes, or on the plane of adi, of atma and of manas. It is urgent that we here remember that They are fire viewed in its third aspect, the fire of matter. In Their totality these seven Lords form the essence of the cosmic Lord, called in the occult books, Fohat."

This defines fohat as the "fire of matter," and stresses the urgency of remembering this. I had not gotten the impression that fohat was the fire of matter from my Secret Doctrine studies, so for me there was nothing there in the first place to remember. This was a new teaching to me. But in going back to The Secret Doctrine, a couple of paragraphs were seen to support it. The first one describes fohat as "states of matter" (SD, vol. 1, p. 143 fn.):

"Each world has its Fohat, who is omnipresent in his own sphere of action. But there are as many Fohats as there are worlds, each varying in power and degree of manifestations. The individual Fohats make one Universal, Collective Fohat -- the aspect-Entity of the one absolute Non-Entity, which is absolute Be-Ness, 'SAT.' "Millions and billions of worlds are produced at every Manvantara" -- it is said. Therefore there must be many Fohats, whom we consider as conscious and intelligent Forces. This, no doubt, to the disgust of scientific minds. Nevertheless the Occultists, who have good reasons for it, consider all the forces of Nature as veritable, though supersensuous, states of Matter; and as possible objects of perception to Beings endowed with the requisite senses."

The other quotation describes fohat as being generated by friction (SD vol. 1, p. 145). The fire of matter is called "fire by friction" in A Treatise on Cosmic Fire. There will be no difficulty in identifying this with "electricity generated by friction" in this SD quote:

"Bear in mind that Fohat, the constructive Force of Cosmic Electricity, is said, metaphorically, to have sprung like Rudra from Brahma "from the brain of the Father and the bosom of the Mother," and then to have metamorphosed himself into a male and a female, i.e., polarity, into positive and negative electricity. He has seven sons who are his brothers; and Fohat is forced to be born time after time whenever any two of his son-brothers indulge in too close contact -- whether an embrace or a fight. To avoid this, he binds together and unites those of unlike nature and separates those of similar temperaments. This, of course, relates, as any one can see, to electricity generated by friction and to the law involving attraction between two objects of unlike, and repulsion between those of like polarity."

This indicates to me the likelihood that A Treatise on Cosmic Fire brings out clearly the meaning of fohat that in The Secret Doctrine was only mentioned in passing, and so was not clear there. When this meaning is supported in other texts, the Pranava-vada and the Buddhist tantras, I think little doubt about its correctness can remain. This is good evidence that the source of A Treatise on Cosmic Fire was in fact the Master D.K., who would be in a position to know what fohat actually is. I have not even brought in the quotations from the Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge that Jacques compiled, where fohat is associated with the third Logos, again supporting this meaning.

Comment by [stefalive](#) on January 14, 2011 at 6:44pm

David says:

"This indicates to me the likelihood that A Treatise on Cosmic Fire brings out clearly the meaning of fohat that in The Secret Doctrine was only mentioned in passing, and so was not clear there. When this meaning is supported in other texts, the Pranava-vada and the Buddhist tantras, I think little doubt about its correctness can remain. This is good evidence that the source of A Treatise on Cosmic Fire was in fact the Master D.K., who would be in a position to know what fohat actually is."

I do concur also with that conclusion

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 14, 2011 at 10:23pm

If we accept the equivalence of fohat and daivi-prakriti, and I see no reason not to, then we have a major source available to us on this: the Pranava-vada, "The Science of the Sacred Word." This book provides us with an original language source for the term daivi-prakriti and for the idea that it represents, the idea of fohat. Because of its unique importance, it is quite necessary to be able to consult the Sanskrit original of the Pranava-vada. Two of three volumes of the Sanskrit text were published in 1915 and 1919 (the third was never published). These extremely rare volumes have been scanned and posted to this site. One can now see exactly how daivi-prakriti (or devi-prakriti, as printed in these volumes) is used in the original Sanskrit text.

Look at page 194 of volume 2 of the Sanskrit text for where the chapter starts that discusses devi-prakriti. This corresponds to Bhagavan Das' summarized English translation, volume 2, p. 220. Devi-prakriti or daiva-prakriti is mentioned on that page. The actual explanation of devi-prakriti is on pp. 210-215 of the Sanskrit volume, and on pp. 234-236 of the English volume. The Sanskrit here is written in comparatively simple sentences, although the topic is deep. Even those with only a little knowledge of Sanskrit can probably follow them with the help of Bhagavan Das' translation. Note also that about one hundred pages of the introduction to the Sanskrit Pranava-vada, volume one, are in English.

Also posted here is the Suddha Dharma Mandala edition of the Bhagavad-gita, both the original Sanskrit publication in the 1917 second edition, and the Sanskrit text plus English translation of 1939. This edition differs from the known Bhagavad-gita in that it has 745 verses rather than 700 verses, and is divided into 26 chapters rather than into 18 chapters. It is purported to be the original form of the Bhagavad-gita. The relevance of this for this blog on the Stanzas of Dzyan is that here we have an example of a hitherto unknown Sanskrit text that came out and was published. Evidence for its authenticity is the fact that some editions of the Mahabharata specify how many verses are in the Bhagavad-gita. These add up to 745, like in the edition brought out by the Suddha Dharma Mandala, not 700, like in the known edition. This text was prepared from three different manuscripts, in the possession of three different swamis. This shows that secret texts are out there and in circulation among certain people, quite unknown to the world.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on January 15, 2011 at 5:08am

For once I agree wholeheartedly with M. Sufilight. I have studied most books of A. Bailey when I was young. These books have a mystic ring about them, and pretend to give an exposition of esoteric topics, but are IMO of a pseudo-intellectual type.

I hope that the future development of this forum will be in another direction than this.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on January 15, 2011 at 7:19am

At the risk of being unpopular with 'traditional' theosophists on this forum, let's keep a civil discourse.

Let the logic of the arguments stand on their own, regardless of what you believe about the source. Keep in mind that many of the issues are the result of overenthusiastic followers who make claims that are not in the original writings, especially where it comes to authorities.

Comment by [Martin Euser](#) on January 15, 2011 at 1:12pm

Indeed, let's keep to logic and not resort to wild speculation.

I really don't care whether people study writers like Bailey or not, but the phrase "the good evidence that the source of A Treatise on Cosmic Fire was in fact the Master D.K. (etc.)" seems a bit too speculative to me.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 15, 2011 at 2:17pm

The question of authorities is a big one. When we have information that is usually seen as being channeled, whether through Alice Bailey or through H. P. Blavatsky, what criteria do we have to either accept or reject it? On the question of fohat that is being discussed here, Blavatsky's statements are no more verifiable than Bailey's statements. In more than 120 years, no one has found such a term, nor have they found a single verse of the Stanzas of Dzyan. We are all free to believe in such things as fohat and the Stanzas, if they make sense to us, but our own personal beliefs do not much help our neighbors.

The idea behind this blog, as I understand it, is to try to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzyan. Can we trace them to any known source from which HPB may have "borrowed" them? Failing this, we are left with two options. Either HPB made them up from her imagination, the explanation accepted by the great majority, or HPB actually translated them from a still hidden source as she claimed. Working from the latter hypothesis, the task would be to find terms or ideas in the Stanzas that are distinctive enough to be traced to known sources. One such term and idea is fohat.

Right now, the sole objective evidence we have on fohat is the teaching on daivi-prakriti. This term is found in known sources such as the Bhagavad-gita, and its idea is explained in the Pranava-vada. Although this book was previously unknown, we now have it in the original Sanskrit. Blavatsky's statements on fohat are unverified. Bailey's statements on fohat are unverified. The Pranava-vada's statements on daivi-prakriti or devi-prakriti are the nearest thing we now have to anything verifiable on this idea. It so happens that these strongly agree with Bailey's interpretation of fohat, an interpretation that is not clear in Blavatsky's writings.

Having struggled for many years to try to figure out what fohat is from HPB's far from clear statements, so that I could try to trace it in known sources, I took Bailey's explanation of it as a working hypothesis. When this was strongly supported in the Pranava-vada, and also in the Buddhist tantras with their teaching of consciousness riding upon winds, I accepted this explanation of fohat. Our sources of information on something like fohat are so few that I was and am thankful to have this additional source. Of course, for our purposes here, we must use this source very carefully. This is because it, like the Stanzas of Dzyan that we are trying to trace, is so far unverified.

Quoting our esoteric sources as proof by itself is not enough. As a wise man once said, "Ten people sitting around a table quoting each other doesn't make for good research." Then, this becomes even more unproductive when pitting one unverifiable authority against another unverifiable authority. The Bailey writings are as much or as little an authority as the Blavatsky writings, and vice versa. By themselves, the one cannot prove the other. When, however, other sources are brought in, the Bailey writings can serve as useful evidence. With the mutually supporting evidence provided by Blavatsky's writings, Bailey's writings, the

Pranava-vada, and the Buddhist tantras, we have a far clearer picture of fohat than what we could get from Blavatsky's writings alone.

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on January 15, 2011 at 10:18pm

Thanks to everyone participating in this discussion, which is amongst the most interesting and beneficial for people like me with no background in Philosophy. This is what Theosophy should be - imparting knowledge in a way, ordinary people can understand.

Coming to the present problem of FOHAT and Daivi-prakriti, the only reference about their equivalency is half a sentence by T Subba Row. It may be one scholar's view and not a final truth as Advaita Vedanta is full of references where previously held views are refuted. So, it may be appropriate to investigate both separately and see where the two converge. True, the problem regarding references to FOHAT remains and if HH Dalai Lama, can't help to sort it out then it is difficult to imagine who else in the Tibetan System can.

But in the meanwhile, we can look at Daivi-prakriti. David Reigle has held that, based on Pranava Vada, it is an aspect of Mula-prakriti, which is also held to be root-substance (matter). HPB and AB's reference to FOHAT as explained in the recent posts here indicate it to be either energy or sentience (Swabhava - exist by itself). Please refer to "harden the atoms" statement in the stanzas. It is difficult to reconcile the two different concepts, unless Daivi-prakriti is not the part of root-substance.

However, if we consider FOHAT to be Mula-Prakriti comprising of Daivi-prakriti, Para-prakriti and Apara-prakriti then a certain reconciliation appears feasible. Since I have no background in either Sanskrit or Philosophy it will leave it for the scholars to decide.

Also, could the words Devi-prakriti (of the (Bhagvad-Gita) and Daivi-prakriti of the Pranava Vada be referring to one entity? Devi-prakriti could perhaps be referring to Prakriti as Goddess (Devi) whereas Daivi-prakriti would be just one aspect of that Goddess.

The cosmogony in Yoga Vashistha (the complete version) may also throw some light on the above. The abridged version just gives a hint of the cosmogony. This work too, could be the primary source for some of the concepts.

Comment by [stefalive](#) on January 16, 2011 at 12:45am

"Quoting our esoteric sources as proof by itself is not enough," as david explain.

Let's rather consider Facts over theories, and Theories over Personalities...in our search for Truth.

This is requiring the ability to abstract ourselves from the emotional attachment or belonging we feel toward a specific system of thinking or author, in order to grasp the concepts we are trying to trace with objectivity in our 21th century.

Anything less than that would remain very subjective and irrecevable as evidence since based on a form of faith rather than factual proof. inclusivness and synthesis should guide us together toward more understanding, I hope

Comment by [stefalive](#) on January 16, 2011 at 8:16am

"Some combination of genuine source material and highly creative embellishment would seem characteristic of a great many authors in the occult milieu."

Indeed

Comment by [Leila Becquer](#) on January 16, 2011 at 8:35am

Regarding daiviprakriti-deviprakriti, it could be the same, there is no need to be different thing.

But, the use of daivi is perhaps older than devi, i'm not sure.

Comment by [Leila Becquer](#) on January 16, 2011 at 8:42am

I forgot it, it is interesting to note the emphasis given by HPB to the breath is not the pulmonary breath, so it has no relation with pranayama practices.

Reading the excerpts from the Dalai Lama given by David it is interesting to note the same implications.

Comment by [Govert Schuller](#) on January 16, 2011 at 10:30am

Dear Paul,

Thanks for pointing out the fallacy of two mutually exclusive extremes. It's more a spectrum of possibilities we are dealing with and we have to identify the different major elements of the complex named "The Stanzas of Dzyan as presented by HPB" and analyze them.

One element of this complex, and I brought this up before, is the claim by HPB that she had in her possession (and worked from) this very special manuscript. As she wrote:

"An Archaic Manuscript — a collection of palm leaves made impermeable to water, fire, and air, by some specific unknown process — is before the writer's eye." (SDI-1)

I find it very hard to believe that, if she really had that MS with all its miraculous properties somewhere in the mid 1880s, nobody else is on record having seen it, and that it did not end up in the possession of the TS and available for humanity to see. Pondering this I tend to think that the alleged extraordinary physical properties of the MS are embellishments of either a) the possibility that she indeed had something of a unique MS, but without the miraculous properties ascribed to it and identifiable by scholars once they could investigate it, or b) there was no MS and HPB mixed and matched memes from different sources all held together by a scaffold erected by her own imagination, or, to keep other options open, c) something in between.

So, it's not an either/or question, but a careful consideration of possibilities, and in the absence of proof, a matter of weighing circumstantial indications, following common sense, and, in the final analysis, personal belief.

Most Theosophists will give HPB the benefit of the doubt, but certainly not all. Because of an accumulation of reasons, to me the possibility is growing that she doesn't deserve that benefit anymore, but that's a different discussion.

Comment by [Leila Becquer](#) on January 16, 2011 at 1:22pm

Of course I do not agree with Schuller's denying of the benefit of doubt to HPB.

The problem with HPB is that she deliberately could have acted in some strange ways.

If I have not misunderstood it, in p. 412 of Collected Writing, vol. I, Olcott received orders to do an "indignation meeting". Leaving that aside, in Letters from Master of Wisdom, letter 19, KH says:

"One of the most valuable effects of Upasika's mission is that it drives men to self-study and destroys in them blind servility for persons."

This in the context of Olcott's revolt against her infallibility, etc. So, it is not strange that some dubious issues could be introduced purposely. It is like the malamatiya sufi way, doing some actions in order to make people think.

Well, right to the point now. Such a miraculous properties of a MS are not chemical, but alchemical. HPB did not state openly that she was alchemist, but there is a statement in one of her letter to Sinnett in which she says that she has a stone that burns sheets of paper leaving no ashes, and that it is an alchemical stone. So, we can ask, has somebody known that stone? Or saw it? Has anybody found it between her belongings?

In a letter to A. Besant (Inner Group Teachings) she said that in order that the occult working room actually works, she needs some personal things that were in India, so she asked for this package, again, is there a historical record about that package? Or about this kind of theosophical magick?

If there is already a historical research about that, it could help a little about the miraculous MS and similar issues.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 16, 2011 at 10:17pm

In response to the pertinent observations of Capt. Anand, it will take me a little time to gather some relevant materials. Thank you to Paul for calling attention to the false dilemma fallacy. It is certainly true that there are many possibilities in between the two options that I mentioned. Regarding the quotation given by Govert: "An Archaic Manuscript — a collection of palm leaves made impermeable to water, fire, and air, by some specific unknown process — is before the writer's

eye." (SDI-1). I have always understood this to mean that HPB was viewing the manuscript clairvoyantly, not that it was lying on the table in front of her. A number of people observed her taking references from books clairvoyantly. Col. Olcott writes of this quite a bit in his *Old Diary Leaves*, and even had her correct one by re-consulting the book clairvoyantly, where he had detected an error. Moreover, I do not regard this pictorial manuscript as the one she translated the *Stanzas of Dzyan* from, based on other statements she made (BCW 14) and other evidence where she gives specific words found in it (SD 1.23).

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 18, 2011 at 10:44am

What makes fohat so hard to trace, besides the unknown word itself, is the fact that no such idea is found in the standard trinities of the world's cosmogonies. Fohat is not Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver, or Shiva, the destroyer. Fohat is not God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Ghost. Fohat is not the first logos, the second logos, or the third logos. Fohat is not to hen, the one, not nous, intelligence, and not psyche, the soul. Fohat is not sat, being, not chit, consciousness, and not ananda, bliss. Fohat is neither spirit, purusha, nor matter, prakriti, nor mahat, the great principle of intelligence that the interplay of spirit and matter produces, and that in turn produces the world. Fohat is different from all of these.

*Fohat is described in *The Secret Doctrine*, too, after the primary principles are described (vol. 1, p. 16). The question was then raised in the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge* (Jacques' compilation, p. 8; or 1946 reprint of 1890-1891 ed., p. 33; or BCW vol. 10, p. 334):*

"Q. Is Fohat one of the three, Father, Mother and Son?

"A. Fohat is a generic term and used in many senses. He is the light (Daiviprakriti) of all the three logoi -- the personified symbols of the three spiritual stages of Evolution. Fohat is the aggregate of all the spiritual creative ideations above, and of all the electro-dynamic and creative forces below, in Heaven and on Earth. There seems to be great confusion and misunderstanding concerning the First and Second Logos. The first is the already present yet still unmanifested potentiality in the bosom of Father-Mother; the Second is the abstract collectivity of creators called "Demiurgi" by the Greeks or the Builders of the Universe. The third logos is the ultimate differentiation of the Second and the individualization of Cosmic Forces, of

which Fohat is the chief; for Fohat is the synthesis of the Seven Creative Rays or Dhyān Chohans which proceed from the third Logos."

Yes, I agree with HPB that "There seems to be great confusion and misunderstanding concerning the First and Second Logos," and that her far from clear way of writing contributed much to this. In my own case, it took me more than twenty-seven years to get what she was saying about these when she used them to explain the first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine (SD vol. 1, p. 16; see

<http://www.easterntertradition.org/first%20fundamental%20proposition%20...>). But even then (2001), the best I could figure out about fohat I wrote as follows (p. 12): "Like the unmanifested, the manifested also has two poles. The interaction of the two poles of manifested spirit and matter produces cosmic energy or vital force, called Fohat." This amounts to saying that the best I could figure out about fohat was nothing, since this is nothing more than what HPB said on p. 16 of vol. 1 of the SD. Fohat was as great a mystery to me as ever. All I knew is that fohat was not one of the three logoi, but that it could be called their light, daivi-prakriti.

But what role does fohat or daivi-prakriti play in cosmogony, that the three primary principles by themselves do not? Why do the other cosmogonies of the world seem to be content without it? How does it relate to the three primary principles, which seem to be complete in themselves? Is it a fourth principle? It so happens that the Pranava-vada addresses this question, the very same question that was also asked in the Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge. The Pranava-vada had described daivi-prakriti as shakti ("power" or "force"). In the summarized English translation by Bhagavan Das, vol. 1, p. 300, this is stated as follows:

"(The primal trinity has been repeatedly declared to consist of three factors, I, This, and Not. What is this Shakti, then; is it a fourth?) It would seem as if it was outside the three. Yet this is not so. It is only the Necessity of the three and so included in them and not anything apart from them. That which is necessary to anyone is included in that one, is part of his being."

The answer given in the Pranava-vada is the same as the answer given in the Transactions. Fohat or daivi-prakriti is not a fourth principle, but is an inherent part of the three primary principles. The Pranava-vada is the science of the pranava or sacred word, om. Before the sandhi or coalescence of letters, om consists of the three letters, "a, u, m." So the Pranava-vada explains these three letters as the three primary principles of the universe. Daivi-prakriti is not any of these three letters. It is represented by a fourth letter, "i", which is thought to reside inherently

between the "a" and the "u". This illustrates that daivi-prakriti is not one of the three primary principles, but yet it is not a fourth principle outside of them. Rather, it resides as an inherent part of the three primary principles. This is what makes it so hard to trace in the known cosmogonies of the world. As an inherent part of the trinity, it may go unmentioned, if it is found in these cosmogonies at all.

Comment by [Govert Schuller](#) on January 18, 2011 at 3:11pm

Dear David,

You stated:

"I have always understood this to mean that HPB was viewing the manuscript clairvoyantly, not that it was lying on the table in front of her. "

This cannot be ruled out, but, as she makes no claim whatsoever that she is seeing the MS clairvoyantly, and actually goes into detail about its physical properties, I do think she meant it quite literally that she had the MS physically in front of her. Whether that's true I now doubt.

your interpretation has of course the advantage to take out the tension from the 'cognitive dissonance' of HPB claiming to possess a wondrous MS and then nobody ever seeing it, nor any trace to be found of it.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 21, 2011 at 10:27pm

Not only has no one in more than 120 years been able to trace any such word as fohat in the language it is supposed to be found in (Tibetan, Mongolian, Chinese, or some other language then described as "Turanian"), we have not yet been able to trace this idea in the Buddhist texts that it is supposed to be found in, and that employ these languages. HPB has given us no other word than fohat for this concept in the Buddhist writings. She has, however, given us some equivalents for fohat in other writings. Fohat is supposed to be Apam-Napat in the ancient Hindu Vedas and the ancient Zoroastrian Zend-Avesta. Fohat is supposed to be Atum in the ancient Egyptian writings. Fohat is supposed to be Eros in Hesiod's ancient Greek cosmogony, and from this we may deduce that fohat would be Phanes in the Orphic cosmogony. This listing of equivalents to fohat looks impressive, until you

try to ascertain exactly who or what these slippery characters are in their respective cosmogonies.

Apam-napat, the "son of the waters," is a vague and little-used name that most Vedic scholars take as an epithet of Agni, the god of fire. There are not enough references to Apam-napat in the extant writings to determine what he is any more precisely. Atum is defined in the glossary to Raymond O. Faulkner's translation of *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* as "primeval sun-god worshipped at Heliopolis; also the aged sun at its setting." Eros is described in Hesiod's *Theogony* as "most beautiful among the immortal gods, limb-weakener, who conquers the mind and sensible thought in the breasts of all gods and all men" (trans. Richard S. Caldwell, p. 34). Other than one more reference in the *Theogony*, where Eros is only mentioned in passing, that is all. What is common to Apam-Napat, Atum, and Eros? Nothing obvious. What distinguishes these from any other god or creative principle? Nothing obvious.

In order to trace fohat, we need more information. Taking fohat as equivalent to daivi-prakriti, more information is found in the *Pranava-vada*. Speaking for myself, I have found viewing the one principle under two aspects, as described in the *Proem of The Secret Doctrine*, to be of the greatest help. The *Pranava-vada* teaches a non-dual principle that we conceive of under two aspects, the same as *The Secret Doctrine* teaches. For these two aspects, the *Pranava-vada's* atman (self, spirit) corresponds to *The Secret Doctrine's* absolute abstract motion, while the *Pranava-vada's* prakriti (matter, substance) corresponds to *The Secret Doctrine's* absolute abstract space.

At this point in the comparison, we find that the *Pranava-vada* adds something. It adds a twofold or threefold or fourfold division of the atman aspect, and it adds a twofold or threefold division of the prakriti aspect. This is where it teaches mula-prakriti and daivi-prakriti. Hence it is clear that daivi-prakriti is part of the prakriti aspect, in contradistinction to the atman aspect. This is not clear in *The Secret Doctrine*. We do not find stated in the early Theosophical teachings where fohat fits in these two aspects, unless we extrapolate this from the references to fohat as connected with the third logos or Brahma aspect (given in the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*).

This is, however, stated clearly in Alice Bailey's *Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, when saying on pp. 65-66 that fohat is "fire viewed in its third aspect, the fire of matter," and elsewhere in that book (pp. 31, 213, 602-603, 611, 628). This supports the association of fohat with the third logos or Brahma aspect made by HPB in the

Transactions. Together these references support the explanation of daivi-prakriti given in the Pranava-vada as the prakriti or substance aspect. They also confirm the equivalence of fohat with daivi-prakriti. The relevance of this for our research is that we now have a much clearer idea of what fohat is. We are now in a position to try and trace it in the Buddhist texts that it is supposed to be found in.

My post of Dec. 31 pertaining to "mind itself" spoke of mind's role in cosmogony, and quoted the Dalai Lama on the "clear light mind" in "the Buddhist explanation for what is called the creator in other traditions."

(<http://www.theosophy.net/profiles/blog/show?id=3055387%3ABlogPost%3...>). As we know, The Secret Doctrine speaks of the interplay between the two primary aspects as producing cosmic ideation, mahat or intelligence, the universal world-soul (SD 1.16). Since mind or consciousness is produced in this way, and this in turn brings about the manifest universe, where is the need for something else such as fohat? This mind or cosmic ideation would obviously correspond to the "absolute abstract motion representing unconditioned consciousness" aspect in The Secret Doctrine, or the atman aspect in the Pranava-vada. If mind is the creator, we are still unable to trace fohat, which corresponds to the absolute abstract space or substance principle aspect in The Secret Doctrine, or the prakriti aspect in the Pranava-vada.

If we look carefully at the Buddhist texts, we see that it is not exactly mind that is said to be the creator. Rather, it is the "clear light nature" of mind, citta-prakriti-prabhasvara. Yes, you see the word prakriti here, which has been translated as "nature" in this phrase rather than "substance." It is the light or luminosity (prabhasvara) of mind that is the actual creator, not the mind itself. This light is the particular nature (prakriti) of mind (citta) that creates. The correspondence to daivi-prakriti, "light substance" is obvious. I believe that in prabhasvara, Tibetan 'od gsal, we have the direct correspondence to the idea of fohat. With the help of supporting references, we have been able to trace the idea of fohat, though not the term, in the Buddhist texts that it is supposed to be found in.

Comment by Capt. Anand Kumar on January 22, 2011 at 12:50am

Congratulations on the brilliant work David.

Identification of FOHAT with Apam-napat of Rig Veda clarifies many things. Following is one of the definitions of Apam-napat from the website:

<http://www.apamnapat.com/entities/ApamNapat.html>

ApamNapat is the lightning form of Agni, the son-of-waters. In Sanskrit, Apam means 'Of the Waters' and Napat means 'son-of'. Thus, Apam Napat is "Son-Of-Waters". He is invoked separately in [R.V.2.35] and incidentally elsewhere. Brilliant and youthful, he shines without fuel in the waters which surround and nourish him. Clothed in lightning, he is golden in form, appearance and color. Standing in the highest place, he always shines with undimmed splendor.

Steeds, swift as thought, carry the Son-of-Waters. In the last stanza of [R.V.2.35], he is addressed as Agni. In other places, Agni is addressed as Apam Napat. However, there are a few places, where there is a distinction made between them.

In Persian mythology, ApamNapat is exclusively a water god, unrelated to fire.

It would appear that water contains molecules of Hydrogen and Oxygen. While Oxygen is generally identified with fire (as no substance can burn without it), it is Hydrogen which is currently being experimented as the fuel of the future. The description of Apam-napat as son of waters appears spot on.

What is even more striking is the use of FOHAT to harden the atoms in the stanzas. The Big Bang theory postulates that the construction of universe followed only after the cooling process began which allowed the Hydrogen molecule to form, from which all other elements including carbon, formed. So, Apam-napat and FOHAT do appear to be synonymous.

I had always suspected Daivi-prakriti to be the strong nuclear force of Physics. Your discovery strengthens this belief. Mr. B K Sharma of Theosophical Society of Varanasi, who has done his research on relativity as well as Pranava Vada and Bhagwan Das seems to think so too, except that he thinks FOHAT or Daivi-prakriti includes gravitational force as well. Perhaps in the future we may be able to make that connection too.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 22, 2011 at 10:31pm

The Apam-napat connection with fohat is indeed helpful. HPB gives this at SD, vol. 2, p. 400 fn., and repeats it in the Theosophical Glossary. The name itself, "son of the waters," leaves no doubt about the connection with water. This deity also

brings in the Agni (god of fire) connection. The exact aspect of Agni, however, is open to question.

The opening sentence of the paragraph that you quoted from the website, Capt. Anand, represents one view. Its statement that, "ApamNapat is the lightning form of Agni," is the opinion of some scholars, but not of others. It is based on a reference in verse 9 of Rig-veda 2.35, describing him as "clothed in lightning." This hymn of 15 verses is the only hymn addressed to Apam-napat in the whole Rig-veda. Apam napat is only mentioned there about thirty times, according to A. A. Macdonell's 1897 book, Vedic Mythology, p. 69. This book, despite its age, remains an unsurpassed reference on Vedic mythology. It gives the most information in the shortest space, and does so with great objectivity. Regarding the various views held about Apam napat, Macdonell writes, p. 70:

"Oldenberg is of opinion that Apam napat was originally a water genius pure and simple, who became confused with the water-born Agni, a totally different being. His grounds are, that one of the two hymns in which he is celebrated (10, 30), is connected in the ritual with ceremonies exclusively concerned with water, while even in 2, 35 his aqueous nature predominates. Hillebrandt, on the other hand, followed by Hardy, thinks Apam napat is the moon, and Max Muller that he is the sun or lightning."

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 23, 2011 at 11:17am

If the idea of fohat actually does have a direct correspondence in the Buddhist texts, as I have proposed, we need to know more about what it may correspond to there. The term prabhasvara means "luminosity," or any such similar English term pertaining to light. Christian Wedemeyer translates it as "brilliance." It is most often seen translated from its Tibetan translation, 'od gsal, as "clear light." When I quoted the present Dalai Lama on this (Dec. 31, 2010), I mentioned that the texts that his statement is based on have not yet been published in English translation. He was using Tsongkhapa's Tibetan commentaries on the Sanskrit Guhyasamaja Tantra writings of Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, and Chandrakirti. Before proceeding to these, I must clarify the English words "create" and "creator" and "creation."

When a Christian says that God created the world, he or she usually means that God created the world out of nothing. The idea of creating something out of nothing is not what the Indian texts on cosmogony refer to. They use words for creation such as sarga, coming from the verb-root srj (srij). The idea here is

"emanate" or "emit," where something comes out of something else. For this reason, Western scholars and translators have long favored translations such as "emanation" or "emission" or "manifestation" over "creation." Nonetheless, "creation" is not inaccurate, if we think of it like a potter creating a pot from clay. The fact that this word has been colored by Christian conceptions does not necessarily mean that it should not be used. We simply must be aware of how it is meant. Further, when dealing with many Indian texts, particularly Buddhist texts, we must back away from any idea of a creator as a being such as God or a potter. Fire creates heat, but that does not mean that there is any conscious agent or agency involved in that creation.

*In the text that the Dalai Lama was referring to, Tsongkhapa was commenting on Nagarjuna's book called *The Five Stages, the Pancakrama*. The original Sanskrit text was found and published in Europe as early as 1896, but there is still no complete translation of it into a Western language. In going through this text, it appears to me that the verse being referred to is chapter 3, verse 15. I would translate it as follows:*

"The entire world is dependent [on a cause], for something independent can never arise. Its [the world's] cause is luminosity (prabhasvara); luminosity is the universal void (sarva-sunya)."

*Verse works such as this are notoriously terse, and they need commentaries or explanations. Nagarjuna's spiritual son is Aryadeva. Aryadeva wrote a brief explanatory work on this section of Nagarjuna's *Pancakrama*. Aryadeva's short explanatory work, written in verse, is called the *Svadhithana-[krama-]prabheda*. Its Sanskrit original was also found, and was published in *Dhiih: A Review of Rare Buddhist Texts*, vol. 10, 1990, pp. 20-24. It was reprinted with emendations and the Tibetan translation in *Bauddhalaghugrantha Samgraha*, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1997, pp. 169-194. In this brief text, Aryadeva gives four verses that explain the creation and dissolution of the world, from and into prabhasvara, luminosity. These verses were then quoted in other Buddhist tantric texts, such as Naropa's *Sekoddesa-tika*, a Kalachakra work. They seem to give what was taken as the most representative statement of Buddhist tantric cosmogony. I here translate them:*

18. From luminosity (prabhasvara) [arises] the great void (maha-sunya), and from that is the arising of means (upaya). From that, wisdom (prajna) is arisen. From that is the arising of air.

19. From air is the arising of fire, and from fire is the arising of water. From water, earth is born. This is the arising of living beings.

20. The earth element dissolves in water. Water dissolves in fire, and fire in the subtle element [air]. Air dissolves in mind (citta).

21. Mind will dissolve in the mental derivatives (caitasika), and the mental derivatives in ignorance (avidya). This, too, will go to luminosity (prabhasvara). That is the cessation of the triple world.

The idea that the world arises from prabhasvara, luminosity, is not limited to the Buddhist tantric texts. It is also found in our old friend, the now familiar Ratnagotra-vibhaga of Maitreya. In that book there is a somewhat cosmogonic section, chapter 1, verses 53-63. It is there said through comparisons that everything arises from and returns to citta-prakriti, the nature of mind (cittasya prakriti), and this nature of mind is prabhasvara, luminosity.

Here in these references we have something very specific, not general like the world originates from God, or from matter, or from mind. This something specific, prabhasvara or luminosity, closely corresponds to the idea of fohat and daivi-prakriti given in Theosophical sources. We cannot help but be struck by the fact that, once again, this is found in the very sources that HPB indicated as her sources: the Buddhist tantras or books of Kiu-te, and the book of Maitreya Buddha.

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on January 24, 2011 at 7:14am

Thanks David.

If we looked at "water" as the the matter filling the oceans as in the Stanzas 3, the meaning of Apam-napat changes from the common perception of water. Also significant in the website translation is the use of word "Shine", which I am told means Aether in greek, or perhaps Akasa of Sanskrit.

David would you kindly look at the original Sanskrit version of Yoga-Vasishtha, Utpatti Prakaran, Sarga 5, Shlokas 2 -24. In the Hindi translation that I have with me, it appears to be very close to describing FOHAT.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 24, 2011 at 10:24pm

Thank you, Capt. Anand, for the reference in the Yoga-Vasishtha. This book is a very important source for us in this research. In verse 8 of the chapter you referred to, is found the word chit-prakasha, "light of mind." This is indeed very much the same as the luminosity or light (prabhasvara) that is the nature of mind (chitta) in the Buddhist texts referred to earlier here. According to the late B. L. Atreya, the leading Yoga-Vasishtha scholar of our time, the central teaching of this text is that everything is a manifestation of mind. In particular, as this reference and other chapters (e.g., chap. 12) of the Utpatti Prakarana show, everything is a manifestation of the light of mind. I would certainly think that this corresponds to fohat. We will need to bring in more material from this excellent source.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 25, 2011 at 10:00pm

We all rely on translations in our studies. How reliable are these? The Yoga-Vasishtha was translated by Vihari-Lala Mitra in eleven physical volumes, 1891-1899. B. L. Atreya strongly criticized the accuracy of this translation in his now classic book, The Philosophy of the Yoga-vasistha (Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1936), which is based on his Benares Hindu University PhD thesis. But Vihara Lala Mitra is only one of many translators, right up to the present, who provide inaccurate or imprecise translations. These translations may sometimes be more accurately described as embellished paraphrases. Unfortunately, the poor reader of such translations does not know this.

We have briefly discussed the Vedic deity Apam-napat, "son (or grandson) of the waters," in relation to fohat, and in relation to its possible role in cosmogony. As seen, the evidence is so slender that we do not even know for sure who or what Apam-napat is, other than his connection to water, and his association with Agni, the god of fire. In the one hymn addressed to him in the Rig-veda, 2.35, there is a verse that is rather surprising. It says that Apam-napat gave birth (jajaana) to all (vis'vaani) bhuvanas (worlds, beings, etc.). Apam-napat is not normally thought of as a creator-god. But for all we know, in the many now lost Vedic writings Apam-napat may have been a creative force as much as prabhasvara or luminosity is in the Buddhist tantric writings. The one reference we now have to this, verse 2 of Rig-veda 2.35, is translated as follows in four published English translations. We begin with the most recent, since, at least in theory, the later should be able to improve upon the earlier.

2. *The Eternal and Almighty God creates with its glory the whole universe and all the planets therein. He arranges and adjusts the co-relation between the waters and clouds. Looking to this delighting quality of virtues of God, we should always pray to Him in the choicest words. That God is near to our heart.*

(Acharya Dharma Deva Vidya Martanda, The Rigveda, vol. 3, 1984, p. 522)

2. *Let us sing well, in its appreciation this poem which has been well-fashioned out from the heart; who can say whether it would be appreciated! The hydrodynamic power, the noble Nature's force, has generated good many things existing by its supreme might.*

(Svami Satya Prakash Sarasvati and Satyakam Vidyalkar, Rgveda Samhita, vol. 4, 1977, p. 1033)

2. *To him let us address the song well-fashioned, forth from the heart. Shall he not understand it?*

The friendly Son of Waters by the greatness of Godhead hath produced all things existing.

(Ralph T. H. Griffith, The Hymns of the Rgveda, 1889, quoted from the 1973 one-volume edition, p. 153)

2. *Let us address to him the prayer that is conceived in our hearts, and may he fully understand (its purport); for he, the lord, the grandson of the waters, has generated all beings by the greatness of his might.*

(Horace Hayman Wilson, Rig-Veda Sanhita, vol. 2, 1854, pp. 298-299)

Yes, these are all translations of the very same original Sanskrit verse. As anyone can see, you cannot trust half of what is in these English translations. If you wanted to use this verse to explain something in The Secret Doctrine, what would you do?

If we look at Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, we find the concluding verse of its somewhat cosmogonic section that I referred to earlier translated as follows. It is chapter 1, verse 63, in the Sanskrit edition translated by Jikido Takasaki, and was numbered as verse 62 in E. Obermiller's translation from Tibetan.

"The Spiritual Essence which is pure and radiant

Is inalterable like space

*And cannot be polluted by the occasional stains
Of Desire and the other (defiling forces)
Which arise from the wrong conception (of existence)."
(E. Obermiller, p. 188)*

*"The innate nature of the mind is brilliant
And, like space, has no transformation at all;
It bears, however, the impurity by stains of desires, etc.
Which are of accident and produced by wrong conception."
(Jikido Takasaki, p. 237)*

From reading either of these English translations, would anyone know that prabhasvara is here being talked about? Probably not. But it is. This technical term of central importance is here rendered by the seemingly innocuous terms "radiant" and "brilliant." This shows why one cannot rely solely on translations when doing research in these subjects. I must make it clear that I greatly respect these two highly competent translators. The fault does not lie with someone who has done the best he can. The difficulty is, above all, in the lack of standardized translation equivalents for the original Sanskrit terms. These often lack adequate English equivalents that translators can agree on. So the poor reader of English translations is stuck with guessing or settling for generalities, sometimes without even a hint that anything more than generalities is being talked about.

At this moment, there is online Sanskrit Language Study help available on this website. There are a number of online Sanskrit language learning courses available, but usually without online live help. What almost invariably stops students who set out to follow one of these courses, is that they soon come to something that they don't understand, and there is no one to ask about it. So they stop. All they needed was someone to explain it, like we have about four of volunteering here. An opportunity is now in front of us. It may not come again so easily.

Comment by Jacques Mahnich on January 26, 2011 at 12:43pm

On Clear Light

From MOUNTAIN DOCTRINE, Tibet's Fundamental treatise on Other-Emptiness and the Buddha-Matrix, by Döl-bo-ba Shay-rap-gyel-tsen, translated by Jeffrey Hopkins, Snow Lion Publications – 2006

p. 11

*« In order to show how the matrix-of-one-gone-thus yields buddhahood, Döl-bo-ba addresses the topics of its two divisions, called the two causal lineages. The first is the noumenal **clear light** itself, the natural lineage (rang bzhin gnas rigs).. »*

p.49

*« Though without the nature of all things, is the natural **clear light**, »*

p.55

*« The basic element that is the non-conceptual, **clear light** noumenon is the natural lineage. »*

p.61

*« Just that final buddha, the matrix-of-one-gone-thus, the ultimate **clear light**, element of attributes, self-arisen pristine wisdom, great bliss, and partless pervader of all is said to be the basis and source of all phenomena and also is said in reality to be the basis that is empty of all phenomena, the void basis, and the basis pure of all defilements. »*

p.63

“ Also, the Sutra on the Heavily Adorned says :

*The various grounds are the **basis-of-all**.*

*The virtuous matrix-of-one-gone-to-bliss is also that [**basis-of-all**]*”

p.521

*“ Maitreya's Sublime Continuum of the Great Vehicle also says at length, “The **clear light** is not made,”*

-o-o-o-o-

This gives us a combination of equation where :

*the matrix-of-one-gone-thus = the **clear light** = the basic element = the ground-of-all.*

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 27, 2011 at 4:57pm

Once again, Jacques, you have brought in quotations from a source that is of great importance for our research. Dolpopa, or Dol-bo-ba as Jeffrey Hopkins writes it phonetically, being the primary writer of the Jonang order of Tibetan Buddhism, is at the same time the primary Tibetan writer of the "Great Madhyamaka" tradition. This tradition seems to provide the closest doctrinal parallel to the doctrinal position of The Secret Doctrine. The Great Madhyamaka tradition is based primarily on the earlier Indian writings of Maitreya and Asanga, especially the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga (a book referred to by Jeffrey Hopkins as the Sublime Continuum). So Dolpopa's magnum opus, the Mountain Doctrine, should be a source that we make extensive use of.

The quotes from it on the clear light, or luminosity (Sanskrit prabhasvara, Tibetan 'od gsal) will require careful study. This is material that constituted advanced study in Tibet. We will need all the background that we can get, background that Dolpopa assumed in his readers. We will also need to clarify translation terms, which differ from translator to translator, so that we can correlate what is said here with what is said in other books. There is reference to the "natural lineage" in two of these quotes (from pp. 11 and 55). The word "lineage" here translates Tibetan "rigs," which in turn translates Sanskrit "gotra." We are familiar with idea of gotra because of the quotation from the Occult Catechism, where it is almost certainly the word behind the translation "Germ" in the phrase "The Germ in the Root" (SD vol. 1, p. 11):

"The Occult Catechism contains the following questions and answers:

"What is it that ever is?" "Space, the eternal Anupadaka." "What is it that ever was?" "The Germ in the Root." "What is it that is ever coming and going?" "The Great Breath." "Then, there are three Eternals?" "No, the three are one. That which ever is is one, that which ever was is one, that which is ever being and becoming is also one: and this is Space."

Besides the translations of gotra as "lineage," used by Jeffrey Hopkins and others, and "germ" apparently used by HPB and used by Jikido Takasaki, there are also "source" used by E. Obermiller, "potential" used by Ken and Katia Holmes, "disposition" used by Rosemarie Fuchs, "spiritual gene" used by Robert Thurman, "innate spiritual predisposition" used by Gustav Roth, etc. As is clearly obvious, we will have to use "gotra" along with whatever English term might be used, in order to avoid hopeless confusion.

The quotes given by Jacques from Dolpopa's Mountain Doctrine speak of not just the "lineage" (gotra), but the "natural lineage." In these writings, two kinds of lineage or gotra are distinguished, and Dolpopa assumes that his readers know this. There is the natural (prakriti-stha) lineage (gotra), and there is the "developmental" (paripusta) lineage (gotra), to use Jeffrey Hopkins' translation terms. The natural or naturally present lineage is something that everyone has. Everyone has the germ or potential to become enlightened, to develop into a buddha. It is something that has always been there. By contrast, the developmental lineage or lineage that is developed, also called the "acquired" (samudanita) lineage (gotra), is something that is newly generated by cultivating it through effort.

So the clear light or luminosity (prabhasvara, 'od gsal) is equated by Dolpopa with the natural lineage (prakriti-stha gotra). This would be the "Germ" of the Occult Catechism, something "that ever was." We will have to discuss the other equivalences in the coming days.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 29, 2011 at 1:36pm

The subject of the gotra (the germ or lineage), as it is found in Buddhist texts, has again come up in this discussion. This time I have scanned eleven scholarly articles pertaining to this subject into a file, in chronological order, and this file is being posted in the research documents for this blog. Most of this material cannot be found on the web. While the web is improving all the time, it is still not possible to do anything like serious research on a subject such as the gotra, using only materials available on the web. Materials such as those being posted here are still largely limited to major academic libraries, and even there one must know what they are and where they were published in order to find them.

For most people, it is not easy to become motivated to study difficult material for its own sake. So let me say that William Emmette Coleman cited the example of

HPB's reference to gotra to prove that Blavatsky was an ignorant plagiarist. See Paul's discussion: <http://www.theosophy.net/forum/topics/sources-of-the-voice-of-the>. (See also my earlier post in this discussion: <http://www.theosophy.net/profiles/blog/show?id=3055387%3ABlogPost%3...>). She demonstrably did copy her sentence about the gotrabhu-jnana in *The Voice of the Silence* from E. Spence Hardy's book, *Eastern Monachism*, without reference. So this would qualify as plagiarism. But much worse is the accusation that the gotrabhu-jnana idea, being lifted from a book on Southern Buddhism, did not at all fit in Northern Buddhism, thus proving her great ignorance of her subject matter. This shows, according to Coleman, that she did not know what she was talking about. She merely pieced together her writings from what was available, with nothing else behind them. She was, as the Hodgson report said, an impostor.

Now, when someone's teacher is publicly shown to be an ignorant fool, there will likely be some among her students who will be motivated to challenge this. Here posted, in these eleven scholarly articles on the gotra, are the materials to do so. Let it not be said that the Theosophists could not respond because they too, like their teacher, were too ignorant to do so.

Whatever one's motivation to study them, here follows a list of these articles, in chronological order:

Lamotte, Etienne. "Note VII: Gotra and Tathagatagotra." In *The Teaching of Vimalakirti (Vimalakirtinirdesa)*, English transl. by Sara Boin, pp. 303-307. London: Pali Text Society, 1976 (originally published in French as *L'Enseignement de Vimalakirti*, 1962).

Mano, Ryukai. "'Gotra' in Haribhadra's Theory." *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2, March 1967, pp. 972-964 (23-31).

Seyfort Ruegg, David. "Arya and Bhadanta Vimuktisena on the Gotra-theory of the Prajnaparamita." *Wiener Zeitschrift fur die Kunde Sud- und Ostasiens*, vol. 12-13, 1968/1969, pp. 303-317.

Seyfort Ruegg, D. "Pali Gotta/Gotra and the Term Gotrabhu in Pali and Buddhist Sanskrit." In *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I. B. Horner*, ed. L. Cousins, et al., pp. 199-210. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1974.

Seyfort Ruegg, D. "The Meanings of the Term Gotra and the Textual History of the Ratnagotravibhaga." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 39, part 2, 1976, pp. 341-363.

Seyfort Ruegg, D. "The gotra, ekayana and tathagatagarbha theories of the Prajnaparamita according to Dharmamitra and Abhayakaragupta." In *Prajnaparamita and Related Systems: Studies in honor of Edward Conze*, ed. Lewis Lancaster, pp. 283-312. *Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1*. Berkeley: University of California, 1977.

Wijesekera, O. H. de A. "The Etymology of Pali Gotrabhu." In *Studies in Pali and Buddhism: A Memorial Volume in Honor of Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap*, ed. A. K. Narian, pp. 381-382. Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1979.

Seyfort Ruegg, D. "A Further Note on Pali Gotrabhu." *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, n.s., vol. 9, 1981, pp. 175-177.

Nanayakkara, S. K. "Gotra"; and "Gotra-bhu." Entries in *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, ed. W. G. Weeraratne, vol. 5, fasc. 3, 1992, pp. 378-381. [Colombo]: Government of Sri Lanka.

Takasaki, Jikido. "On Gotrabhu." *Wiener Zeitschrift fur die Kunde Sudasiens*, vol. 36, 1992, pp. 251-259.

D'Amato, Mario. "Can All Beings Potentially Attain Awakening? Gotra-theory in the Mahayanasutralamkara." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2003, pp. 115-138.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on January 30, 2011 at 3:03pm

E. Obermiller's 1931 English translation of Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, also called the Uttara-tantra, was posted last evening with the Research Documents for the Stanzas of Dzyan. I think that everyone here knows the relevance of this text to our search for the origins of the Stanzas of Dzyan. It is our primary source for specific ideas and terms found in the Stanzas and in the philosophy that stands behind the Stanzas, as deduced from quotations given by HPB from the Occult Catechism, and as deduced from the Cosmological Notes given by Mahatma Morya. The Ratna-gotra-vibhaga is not a book on cosmogony, so there is no parallel in this regard. The parallel is with its ideas of the dhatu or element, the gotra or germ or lineage, what is lhun-grub (anabhoga) or existing spontaneously, the tathagatagarbha or buddha-nature, and the philosophical schools of thought that these ideas engendered in Tibet. The fact that HPB spoke of the secret Book of Maitreya in

connection with the Book of Dzyan reinforces this parallel. This parallel steers us in a particular direction in our search for the origins of the Stanzas.

*For those who simply want to read this book, Obermiller's 1931 translation is a good choice. It is the first translation of this text ever made. Allowance must therefore be made for two things. First, English translation terminology was quite experimental at that point in time. It is still experimental even today, but less so now. Second, Obermiller necessarily had to follow his Gelugpa teachers in understanding this text in order to translate it for the first time. They followed a particular line of interpretation (sometimes called Rangtong), a line that is not followed in other orders of Tibetan Buddhism. To get the other main line of interpretation (sometimes called Shentong), one may consult S. Hookham's 1991 book titled, *The Buddha Within: Tathagatagarbha Doctrine according to the Shentong Interpretation of the Ratnagotravibhaga.**

*For those who wish to use this material for Book of Dzyan research, it will be necessary to also consult Jikido Takasaki's 1966 translation of it titled, *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhaga (Uttaratantra), Being a Treatise on the Tathagatagarbha Theory of Mahayana Buddhism.* Pablo has earlier given us a link to an online version of this book:*

http://lirs.ru/lib/uttara/A_Study_of_Ratnagotravibhaga,Takasaki,196...

Obermiller had translated this text from its Tibetan translation, since the original Sanskrit had not yet been discovered then. Takasaki's is the first translation of this text made from the original Sanskrit, and is still the only one made from the original Sanskrit. For using Takasaki's translation, too, allowance must be made for the fact that English translation terminology was still quite experimental. As an example, Takasaki uses "Germ" for gotra, while Obermiller often uses "Germ" for dhatu. This is why we are obliged to refer to the Sanskrit terms when discussing these ideas.

Comment by [stefalive](#) on January 31, 2011 at 11:08pm

Very interesting info David, thank you

*I guess this is the reason why you included the study of this precious text in your *A Curriculum in the Wisdom Tradition**

<http://www.easterntertradition.org/curriculum%20in%20the%20wisdom%20tr...>

‘Fifth-year Sanskrit held conjointly with second-year Tibetan, reading in both languages the Ratnagotra- vibhāga by Maitreya along with its commentary by Asafga. This is the primary text on the tathāgatagarbha doctrine, teaching that everyone has inherent within them the buddha-nature. This doctrine is the closest known doctrine to that espoused by the Mahātmās, who teach it in the Theosophical and Bailey writings as the “One Life.”`...

I remembered also that Nan Huai-Chin had interest into this doctrine, apparently there exist chinese translation ,Takasaki considered the Chinese translation of a no longer extant Sanskrit text to be the oldest RGV manuscript in existence, though not necessarily truly representing the original Sanskrit.

Comment by Jacques Mahnich on February 2, 2011 at 3:15pm

Looking for lost words.

At the beginning of this study, we were searching for S.D. missing vocabulary. David wrote about zhi-gyu : "The first word of this compound is almost certainly the Tibetan word gzhi, meaning "ground" or "basis". The second word might be the Tibetan word rgyu, meaning "cause". But this compound has not yet been found in use".

It may appears as an abbreviation or a sub-compound of "kun-gzhi rgyu'i rgyud, translated by Alexander Berzin as "causal alaya continuum or the causal everlasting continuum of the all-encompassing foundation", which may be not so far from Stanza I translation as "cosmic prenebular matter".

The context in which this phrase appears is as follow :

“Sakya calls clear-light mental activity the "causal alaya continuum" (kun-gzhi rgyu'i rgyud, the causal everlasting continuum of the all-encompassing foundation) and the "ultimate alaya" (mthar-thug-gi kun-gzhi, ultimate all-encompassing foundation). It is the ultimate foundation or source of both impure and pure appearances as defined above. Gelug does not apply the term alaya to clear-light mental activity.”

More can be read at :

<http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/advanced/tantra/level...>

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 2, 2011 at 10:37pm

Yes, Stefalive, I do regard Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga as the best preparation, both in its terms and in its ideas, for accessing the Book of Dzhan. The Book of Dzhan has its own archaic terminology, which we must learn if we wish to access it. It would be wonderful to translate all of this into modern terms, but we must first master the archaic terms and their ideas before this will be possible.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 3, 2011 at 12:39pm

Well, Jacques, this material that you cited brings in another big problem, equal to the problem of fohat. While fohat is harder to trace, the kun-gzhi or alaya is harder to sort out. The word alaya is found in verse 9 of Stanza 1, "when the alaya of the universe was in paramartha." The Sakya explanation of this term, taking it with rgyu'i rgyud, "causal continuum" (rgyu'i, "of the cause," rgyud, "continuum") is only one of about four or five ways to explain it found in Tibet, and as many in China. I do not think we can join the last syllable of kun-gzhi with the following word rgyu in this phrase in order to get the term gzhi-rgyu given by HPB from Stanza 1, "Tho-ag in Zhi-gyu slept seven Khorlo" (SD 1.23). But it does bring in closely related if not identical ideas, that are of central importance to the Stanzas of Dzhan.

The alaya (Tibetan, kun gzhi), which may or may not be used as distinct from the alaya-vijnana, is also explained in divergent ways in books on Yogachara Buddhism, where this term and idea are found. The alaya-vijnana was first translated from its Chinese translation, as "storehouse consciousness," and this still remains widely used today. Then, from its Tibetan translation, it has been translated as basis-of-all consciousness, substratum consciousness, foundational consciousness, ground-of-all consciousness, universal ground consciousness, etc. Lambert Schmithausen in his 2-volume study of the alaya-vijnana uses fundamental consciousness. If we take away the word "consciousness" (vijnana) in all of these, we have translations of just the word "alaya" (kun gzhi). From studying only Yogachara sources, I did not realize that alaya could be taken as something quite distinct from the alaya-vijnana. It was not until studying Jonang sources that I saw this.

In the Jonang sourcebook that has now been translated under the title, Mountain Doctrine, the alaya by itself is taken as a synonym of ultimate reality (e.g., p. 64, line seven, where Jeffrey Hopkins translates its Tibetan kun gzhi as "basis-of-all"). As such, it is often used in the phrase, kun gzhi ye shes, translated by Jeffrey

Hopkins as "pristine wisdom basis-of-all" (e.g., p. 61, bottom of first box, Tibetan given on p. 735, line 1). This would be in Sanskrit, alaya-jnana, where alaya is associated with pristine or primordial wisdom (jnana). In contrast to this, alaya-vijnana is where alaya is associated with transient consciousness (vijnana). It is the latter that is usually referred to when describing the Yogachara school of Buddhism as the "Mind-Only" school. This is refuted as being ultimate by the Madhyamaka school of Buddhism, since any changing consciousness cannot be ultimate. Hence, there is a sharp distinction made between the eternal alaya, and the changing alaya-vijnana.

So what is being referred to in verse 9 of Stanza 1? From HPB's explanations given on pp. 48-50 of The Secret Doctrine, we must assume that it is the alaya-vijnana, not the alaya as distinguished from this. Part of her material given here is taken from Emil Schlagintweit's 1863 book, Buddhism in Tibet, pp. 39-40, 44.

Schlagintweit brings up the alaya here in his section on "Yogacharya" Buddhism. He here calls the alaya a "soul." HPB calls the alaya "the 'Soul of the World' or Anima Mundi, the 'Over-Soul' of Emerson," saying that "it changes periodically its nature," although it is "eternal and changeless in its inner essence on the planes which are unreachable by either men or Cosmic Gods" (p. 48). This is apparently what is referred to in the third fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine: "The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root" (p. 17).

It is this idea that the alaya or alaya-vijnana is eternal in its essence, while changing in its manifestation, that has caused so much confusion, and so many divergent explanations of it. In order to help trace the Stanzas, we will have to try to sort these out. The Sakya view, as mentioned above, is only one of four or five in Tibet, and as many in China. In the coming days we can get into these.

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on February 3, 2011 at 9:22pm

Thanks David for taking up the investigation of Alaya. To my earlier inquiry on this term, it was held that it means, "Aalaya", as in abode.

However, Jaideva Singh, in his much acclaimed work on Kashmir Shaivism's "Spanda-Karika" (available in Stanzas of Dzyan Research Documents Section here), on page 195, in the glossary section defines Laya as:

Laya: Interiorization of consciousness, Dissolution

Based on this definition A-laya should mean exteriorization of consciousness or creation. Exteriorization of consciousness would then perhaps represent the process of differentiation arising from the undifferentiated reality which is Laya, or in simple terms, the process of manifestation. Alaya Vignana or Alaya Gnana could then be the science of or knowledge of the process of manifestation.

Incidentally, the Spanda Karika also contains a very curious Sanskrit word, "Sphuratta". Is this the much searched FOHAT? However, to make that connection one may need to consider FOHAT as a process rather than an entity like Daivi-prakriti. A deeper investigation of various Saktis of Siva described in the book would most certainly help in developing a better understanding of FOHAT.

Thank You.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 4, 2011 at 10:56pm

When HPB explains the term alaya that occurs in verse 9 of Stanza 1, she explains it in reference to Yogachara Buddhism (SD 1.48-49). So it must be the term as used there. In Yogachara Buddhism it is always aalaya, with initial long "a", as in the meaning "abode." In the compound, alaya-vijnana, it is the abode or storehouse or basis or substratum or foundation or ground of consciousness (vijnana).

My attention was called to the definitions of alaya found in glossaries available on the web. It seems that many of them define it as the negative "a" plus "laya," so meaning "non-dissolution" (<http://www.experiencefestival.com/alaya>). These are apparently based on G. de Purucker's 1933 Occult Glossary, written at a time when not much was known about Yogachara Buddhism. Even now this definition is given in the 1996 online edition of this Occult Glossary, with a publisher's note (<http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/ocglos/og-a.htm>). I am thinking of posting here a group of articles on the alaya-vijnana that will make more information about it easily available.

The term sphuratta from the Spanda Karika that you mentioned, Capt. Anand, would indeed be a very likely candidate for the idea of fohat. Although I am not well-versed in Kashmir Shaivism, this word seems to have the same meaning as prabhasvara or "luminosity" or "clear light" in Buddhist texts. The connection with sphuratta should be pursued. Also, a term that seems to correspond to this is found

in the Yoga-vasishtha. The term is kacana (kachana), apparently meaning "radiance" or "shining." It is not listed in the standard Sanskrit-English dictionaries by Monier-Williams and Vaman Shivaram Apte. But it is glossed in the Moksopayatika as sphurana, virtually the same word as sphuratta of the Spanda Karika.

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on February 5, 2011 at 9:53pm

Thanks David

In pursuance of "Sphurana or Sphuratta", Paul Eduardo Muller-Ortega in his 1989 The Triadic Heart of Shiva", (published by state university of New York Press, ISBN 0-88706-787-5) writes:

"The primordial light is known by a great variety of terms in the nondual Kashmir Shaiva tradition: sphuratta, sphurana, abhasa, pratibha, ullasa. The variety of words for light employed by the Shaiva tradition may be thought to derive from the continuous attempt to describe the essentially indescribable contents of yogic experience which include great varieties of powerful and subtle phenomena of light."

Many believe Kashmir Shaivism to have influenced Budhist thought, although Shiv Sutras refute the basic tenets of Budhism. However, the difficulty arises from the assumption that FOHAT in the stanzas appears to be an

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 5, 2011 at 10:08pm

One of the first reliable descriptions of the ālaya, which is often used in short for the ālaya-vijñāna, appeared in a 1904 article by D. T. Suzuki, "Philosophy of the Yogācāra," published in Le Museon, n.s., vol. 5, p. 377:

"The Āliya is a magazine, the efficiency of which depends on the habit-energy (hsi ch'i in Chinese) [Sanskrit, vāsanā] of all defiled dharmas, and in which all the seeds are systematically stowed away. In one respect this vijñāna of all seeds is the actual reason whereby the birth of all defiled dharmas becomes possible, but in another respect its own efficiency depends on the habit-energy which is discharged by multitudinous defiled dharmas since beginningless time. In other words, the Āliya is at once the cause and the effect of all possible phenomena in the universe."

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 6, 2011 at 7:29am

The latter portion of your post, Capt. Anand, got cut off. That also happened to a post of mine in the last few days, but I was able to go in with edit and restore the missing portion. Perhaps you can put what you were saying there in a new post .

Thanks for the helpful quote on the primordial light and the phenomena of light as taught in Kashmir Shaivism. As you know, I. K. Taimni thought very highly of the texts of this school, and published his own translations of some of them. Of course, Kashmir Shaivism refutes Buddhism, and Buddhism refutes Shaivism, like almost all of the traditions do that debated with each other. But we are free to take Kashmir Shaivism's teachings on sphuratta/sphurana and compare them with the Buddhist teachings on prabhasvara, and judge them to be identical if we so choose. I might mention that the similar term sphaarana is also taught in the Buddhist Kalachakra Tantra. Sofia Stril-Rever has an excellent article on this, "Vibrating in Splendor," which is her translation of this term. Her article is found in the 2009 book, As Long as Space Endures.

Regarding light, the Mahatma K.H. has defined this in the article, "What is Matter and What is Force?"

(http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v4/y1882_100.htm), as follows (p. 220):

"Light, then, like heat—of which it is the crown—is simply the ghost, the shadow of matter in motion, the boundless, eternal, infinite SPACE, MOTION and DURATION, the trinitarian essence of that which the Deists call God, and we—the One Element; Spirit-matter, or Matter-spirit, whose septenary properties we circumscribe under its triple abstract form in the equilateral triangle. If the mediaeval Theosophists and the modern Occultists, call the Spiritual Soul—the vahan [vehicle] of the seventh, the pure, immaterial spark—"a fire taken from the eternal ocean of light," they also call it in the esoteric language "a pulsation of the Eternal Motion"; and the latter cannot certainly exist outside of matter.

In the last phase given here, "a pulsation of the Eternal Motion," no one can fail to recognize spanda, "pulsation," of the Spanda-Karikas: The Divine Creative Pulsation, as this title is given in Jaideva Singh's translation. This book is available in the Stanzas of Dzyan Research Documents Section here, thanks to Capt. Anand Kumar.

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on February 6, 2011 at 7:30pm

Thanks David. As usual, your explanation always brings clarity. Particularlry the point about our freedom to interpret the tecahings from different schools of thought.

My point in the last post that got cut-off was about description of FOHAT as an entity in the stanzas and sphuratta/sphurana being a process. How can one relate the two.

Also, would you consider sphuratta/sphurana as the process of germinating (from a seed) as in current popular sanskrit/hindi. I will mail seperately the extract from Shabdikalpadrumah on these two words as I cannot attach the files here.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 8, 2011 at 8:53pm

In reply to your question, Capt. Anand, "Also, would you consider sphuratta/sphurana as the process of germinating (from a seed) as in current popular sanskrit/hindi," I do not know if this meaning is used in the texts of Kashmir Shaivism. The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary by Vaman Shivaram Apte numbers the different meanings of a word (unlike Monier-Williams), and tries to give them in the order of most common to least common. For sphurana, it gives six meanings, as follows.

- 1. Throbbing, quivering, trembling (in general).*
- 2. Throbbing or quivering of certain parts of the body (indicating good or bad luck).*
- 3. Breaking forth, arising, starting into view.*
- 4. Gleaming, flashing, glittering, shining, twinkling.*
- 5. Flashing on the mind, crossing the memory.*
- 6. Expansion, manifestation.*

The meaning that you refer to, the process of germinating (from a seed), appears to be meaning no. 3. In the Sabdakalpadrumah extract that you sent, sphurana is defined as "a little movement" (kincic-calanam), and several verses are quoted showing what is meaning no. 2 in Apte's dictionary. A similar definition is given in the Sabdakalpadrumah for spanda (prasphuranam, isat-kampanam), and another

group of verses is quoted also showing what is meaning no. 2 in Apte's dictionary. The *Sabdakalpadrumah* was the first Sanskrit to Sanskrit dictionary to be compiled and arranged in alphabetical order. It was prepared in the mid-1800s, before any of the texts of Kashmir Shaivism had been published. These came out in the *Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies*, starting in the second decade of the 1900s. To know the meaning of technical terms such as this, the texts and commentaries of the system must be consulted. This meaning may or may not be found in dictionaries.

The word *sphuratta* is not found in Apte's dictionary. In Jaideva Singh's translation of the *Spanda-Karikas*, it is listed in the "Index of Important Sanskrit Words" as occurring on pp. 6 and 46. In the corresponding English it is translated on p. 10 as "quivering light," and on p. 48 as "flashing, throbbing consciousness." He gives definitions of both *sphuratta* and *spanda* in his "Glossary of Technical Terms" on p. 200. Jaideva Singh's translation includes the *Spanda-nirnaya* commentary by Ksemaraja. Mark S. G. Dyczkowski has translated the *Spanda-Karikas* with four more commentaries, in the 1992 book, *The Stanzas on Vibration*. He translates *sphuratta* as "radiance" (p. 15), or "pulsing radiance" (p. 19), explains it in detail on p. 37, and translates it as "radiant pulse" on p. 55.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 9, 2011 at 10:18pm

In Mark S. G. Dyczkowski's 1992 book, *The Stanzas on Vibration*, after telling us that Ksemaraja takes *sphuratta* or radiance as a synonym of *spanda* or vibration (p. 15), he gives a little more information that somewhat distinguishes them (p. 19):

"According to Ksemaraja, the *Stanzas on Vibration* are so called because they teach that one's own true nature is Siva Himself, Who is the pulsing radiance (*sphuratta*) of consciousness which is the energy of its vibration (*spanda-sakti*)."

Then he brings in a clear distinction between the two from the *Pratyabhijna* school (p. 37):

"The *Pratyabhijna* theory of perception bridges the seeming gap between the concepts of *Spanda* as the movement of absolute consciousness and *sphuratta* as its luminosity."

This may relate to and help explain the subtle distinctions involving *fohat* in the *Stanzas*.

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on February 10, 2011 at 1:44am

*One cannot express in words, the gratitude to you **David**, for taking so much initiative to look through and analyze the references as well as provide simple, understandable explanations. Your last two explanations of the difficult words have clarified so many doubts as well as established that there is indeed some linkages to the Buddhism and Shaivism as both having strong roots in Kashmir.*

Coming back to the definitions of sphuratta/sphurana that you have kindly provided, it appears to me that all six apply to FOHAT. In simple terms then it may describe the different processes that the entity FOHAT may be involved with, or what the ancient teachers would have called different aspects. Combining it with the previously established aspects of Mulaprakriti as the root substance, would it then be feasible to assume that FOHAT is the ray of sentience (awareness) described as light, luminosity, shine etc., which imparts motion or vibration to the Jada Mulaprakriti to bring Chetana and therefore initiate the process of creation. Light has traditionally been associated with knowledge (sentience, awareness) as is evident from the famous prayer, "Tamaso Ma Jyotirgamaya". That light is vibration and vibration is the seed of life is explained in Spanda Karika. Whether we can fit FOHAT into it, is the question.

*The other curious word that you have mentioned, is **Kincit**. Jaideva Singh in his commentary explains:*

*"Spandana means some sort of movement. If there is movement from the essential nature of the Divine towards another object, it is definite movement, not some sort, otherwise, movement itself would be nothing. Therefore, Spanda is only a throb, a heaving of spiritual rapture in the essential nature of the Divine which excludes all succession. This is the significance of the word **Kincit** in kincit calanam which is to be interp*

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on February 10, 2011 at 1:58am

Sorry, the last portion got cut off again. Here again:

"This is the significance of the word Kincit in kincit calanam which is to be interpreted as "movement as it were." (Spanda Karika - Introduction - Page XVI)

The "excludes all succession" removes the dimension of time from the movement or vibration. Even in Physics, Vibration or waves alone do not signify movement, as

the wave may travel but not the particle. It is perhaps for this reason that HPB had to separate "Absolute Abstract Space" and "Absolute Abstract Motion".

Therefore would it be erroneous to assume that the word FOHAT travelled from Sanskrit to Tibetan as Sphuratta > Phuratta > Phu-at > FOHAT? Should it be so, then the Tantra Lok of Ahhinav Gupta could be considered to be a primary source.

I am trying to get Mark Dyczkowski's book. Incidentally I am told that either he is currently teaching or previously taught at Varanasi. I will try to see if one can locate him and request him to assist us in this.

Thanks once again, David.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 10, 2011 at 8:15pm

We are pursuing two of the biggest questions at the same time, in relation to tracing the Stanzas of Dzyan: 1. Exactly what is fohat? 2. In exactly what sense is ālaya used in the Stanzas? On the first one, Capt. Anand has raised some excellent points with the material from Kashmir Shaivism that he has brought in. More on that shortly in another post. Here I want to follow up with some more material on the ālaya question. This is not just a stray word that happens to be found in verse 9 of Stanza 1, but it also apparently represents the third fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine, judging from HPB using the same phrases when explaining both. The question of the exact sense in which ālaya (or ālaya-vijñāna) is used is not only a question for us, it has been a big question in Buddhist studies, too. To try to trace ālaya as used in the Stanzas to a specific school or specific texts, we will have to sort out how the various schools understood the difference between the ālaya and the ālaya-vijñāna, and also how the ālaya-vijñāna is to be understood.

The paragraph from the 1904 article on the "Philosophy of the Yogācāra" by D. T. Suzuki, quoted here earlier (Feb. 5), concluded by saying:

"In other words, the Āliya is at once the cause and the effect of all possible phenomena in the universe."

This follows the teachings of the Hosso school of Suzuki's native Japan, which in turn follows the teachings of the Fa-hsiang school of China. The Hosso school remains in existence even today, while the Fa-hsiang school was swallowed up by the Chan and Hua-yen schools in China more than a thousand years ago. So the

Hosso school is the last remaining school of specifically Yogācāra Buddhism in existence. It is numerically very small. Not until 2009 was a book published in English giving us the direct teachings of this still living school; that is, showing us how the ālaya-vijñāna is understood there today. It is titled, Living Yogācāra: An Introduction to Consciousness-Only Buddhism, by Tagawa Shun'ei, who is the abbot of this school's central Kofukuji temple. The Yogācāra teachings themselves, however, did not disappear elsewhere, but were incorporated in other Buddhist schools such as the Chan or Zen school.

The Yogācāra teachings originated in sutras taught by the Buddha such as the Samdhi-nirmocana-sutra. They were then systematized and expanded in the treatises of Maitreya, Asanga, and Vasubandhu. The great Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Hsuan-tsang (Xuanzang) came to India in the early 600s C.E. in search of these teachings, and brought them back to China. There they became the Fa-hsiang school, and were imported to Japan as the Hosso school. So what Suzuki reported in the sentence quoted above is the specific understanding of the ālaya, which is here short for the ālaya-vijñāna, in that school. This understanding goes with the idea that everything, "all possible phenomena in the universe," are consciousness only. Everything is made of consciousness. This is also called "mind-only," in the same meaning. This is how the Yogācāra teachings have traditionally been understood. Today, a number of scholars have proposed that this is a misunderstanding; that the Yogācāra sources were not putting forth an ontological teaching to explain what everything in the universe is, but rather were only putting forth an explanation of how we perceive things, how perception occurs.

No one can be satisfied by only hearing and accepting one side of this complex issue. So I have gathered the articles specifically on the ālaya-vijñāna that are scattered through often inaccessible academic journals and publications, and these are being posted here in the Stanzas of Dzyan Research Documents. This will make it easily possible for anyone to see for themselves the issues involved. We can see in a moment that the tiny amount of material available to HPB in the late nineteenth century, to annotate ālaya in the Stanzas, was only the tip of the iceberg, so to speak, and a somewhat soiled and therefore distorted tip at that. A listing of the articles posted will be given separately.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 10, 2011 at 8:23pm

As mentioned earlier, French language scholarship dominated studies of Mahāyāna Buddhism for much of the twentieth century. Since we are fortunate to have here at least two native French speakers, I have put the French language articles together in one file. Louis de la Vallee Poussin and his pupil Etienne Lamotte, writing in French, were the acknowledged masters of Mahāyāna Buddhist scholarship in their time, and their work remains standard sources today. The three articles in this file are:

Masson-Oursel, Paul. "Tathāgatagarbha et Ālayavijñāna." Journal Asiatique, vol. 210, 1927, pp. 295-302.

La Vallee Poussin, L[ouis] de. "Note sur l'Ālayavijñāna." Melanges chinois et bouddhiques, vol. 3, 1934-1935, pp. 145-168.

Lamotte, Etienne. "L'Ālayavijñāna (Le Receptacle) dans le Mahāyānasamgraha (Chapitre II)." Melanges chinois et bouddhiques, vol. 3, 1934-1935, pp. 169-255.

Following this here in the next file, and coming later in time, are twelve English language articles on the ālaya-vijñāna. These are as follows, listed by date of publication:

Weinstein, Stanley. "The Ālaya-vijñāna in Early Yogacara Buddhism—A Comparison of Its Meaning in the Samdhinirmocana-sutra and the Vijñapti-mātratā-siddhi of Dharmapāla—," Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan, no. 3, 1958, pp. 46-58.

Weinstein, Stanley. "The Concept of Ālaya-vijñāna in Pre-T'ang Chinese Buddhism." In Essays on the History of Buddhist Thought Presented to Professor Reimon Yuki, pp. 33-50. Tokyo: Daizo Shuppan Co., 1964.

Rahula, Walpola. "Ālayavijñāna (Store-Consciousness): Original Conception found in Theravāda Pāli Canon." Maha Bodhi, vol. 72, no. 5, May 1964, pp. 130-132. (This was reprinted in his book, Zen and the Taming of the Bull; Towards the Definition of Buddhist Thought. London: Gordon Fraser, 1978, pp. 97-99.)

Sastri, N. A[iyaswami]. "Store-Consciousness (Alaya-Vijnana): A Grand Concept of the Yogacara Buddhists." Bulletin of Tibetology, vol. 9, no. 1, Feb. 1972, pp. 5-16.

McDermott, A. Charlene S. "Asanga's Defense of Ālayavijñāna; Of Catless Grins and Sundry Related Matters," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 2, no. 2, Aug. 1973, pp. 167-174.

Tokiwa, Gishin. "The Ālayavijñāna of the Sraddhotpada," *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, vol. 23, no. 1, Dec. 1974, pp. 480-475.

Osaki, Akiko. "What Is Meant by Destroying the Ālayavijñāna?," *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, vol. 26, no. 2, Mar. 1978, pp. 1069-1064.

Matilal, Bimal Krishna. "Ālayavijñāna, Transmigration and Absolution." *Journal of Oriental Research (Madras)*, vols. 40-41, 1970-1972 (published 1981), pp. 151-165.

Osaki, Akiko. "Jung's Collective Unconsciousness and the Ālayavijñāna," *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, vol. 35,

no. 1, Dec. 1986, pp. 456-451.

Takasaki, Jikido. "On upādāna (II); Ālayavijñāna and its Two Kinds of upādāna," in *Studies on Buddhism in Honour of Professor A.K. Warder*, ed. N.K. Wagle and F. Watanabe. Toronto: University of Toronto, Centre for South Asian Studies, 1993; *South Asian Studies Papers*, no. 5, pp. 149-159.

Franco, Eli. "Ālayavijñāna and Klistamanas in the Pramānavārttika?," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*, vol. 38, 1994, pp. 367-378.

Jiang, Tao. "Storehouse Consciousness and the Unconscious: A Comparative Study of Xuan Zang and Freud on the Subliminal Mind," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 72, no. 1, Mar. 2004, pp. 119-139.

Because of their length, two articles have been put in a separate file. They are:

Jiang, Tao. "Ālayavijñāna and the Problematic of Continuity in the Cheng Weishi Lun," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 33, no. 3, June 2005, pp. 243-284.

Waldron, William S. "How Innovative Is the Ālayavijñāna?: The ālayavijñāna in the context of canonical and Abhidharma vijñāna theory," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 22, no. 3, Sep. 1994, pp. 199-258; vol. 23, no. 1, Mar. 1995, pp. 9-51.

Another article has been put in a separate file for ease of accessibility. It is the excellent and comprehensive entry on the ālaya-vijñāna by Seibun Fukaura in the *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*:

Fukaura, Seibun. "Ālaya-vijñāna." In Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, ed. G. P. Malalasekera, vol. 1, fasc. 3, pp. 382-388. [Colombo:] Government of Ceylon, 1964.

An important article written in German and published in 1951 has just been published in English translation. It compares the ālaya-vijñāna with the amala-vijñāna. The amala-vijñāna corresponds to the ālaya per se as taught in some of the Tibetan schools. This article thus addresses the problem of these two contrasting ideas. Both the German original and the 2010 English translation have been put in another file:

Frauwallner, Erich. "Amalavijnānam und Ālayavijnānam; Ein Beitrag zur Erkenntnislehre des Buddhismus." In Beitrage zur indischen Philologie und Altertumskunde, pp. 148-159. Alt- und Neu-Indische Studien, 7. Hamburg: Cram, De Gruyter & Co., 1951.

Articles on the ālaya-vijñāna pertaining to the Tibetan traditions will be posted later.

Besides the above-listed articles, there are a few books on the ālaya-vijñāna. These are:

Schmithausen, Lambert. Ālaya-vijnāna: On the Origin and the Early Development of a Central Concept of Yogacara Philosophy, 2 vols. Studia Philologica Buddhica, Monograph Series, IV. Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1987.

Sparham, Gareth, trans., with Shotaro Iida. Ocean of Eloquence: Tsong kha pa's Commentary on the Yogacara Doctrine of Mind.

Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Waldron, William S. The Buddhist Unconscious: The ālaya-vijñāna in the context of Indian Buddhist thought. London and New York:

RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.

Jiang, Tao. Contexts And Dialogue: Yogacara Buddhism and Modern Psychology on the Subliminal Mind. Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy, Monograph no. 21. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 11, 2011 at 10:36pm

You have raised some excellent points, Capt. Anand. In the absence of any text in which the word fohat is found, we are obliged to search for the idea. We have been considering fohat in relation to ideas of primordial light or radiance. In trying to trace fohat, we have considered T. Subba Row's "light of the logos" or daivi-prakriti, daivi-prakriti as described in the Pranava-vada, and prabhasvara or luminosity or clear light as found in the Buddhist tantras. We have briefly glanced at kachana or shining or radiance as found in the Yoga-vasishtha, and are just starting to look at sphuratta, sphurana, and other terms found in the texts of Kashmir Shaivism that Paul Eduardo Muller-Ortega puts together under the general term, primordial light (Capt. Anand Kumar's post of Feb. 5).

At this point, we must proceed carefully, for it seems that fohat is not necessarily this primordial light itself, but a differentiation of it. Here are two quotations from Jacques' compilation on fohat:

"In its Unity, primordial light is the seventh, or highest, principle, Daivi-prakriti, the light of the unmanifested Logos. But in its differentiation it becomes Fohat, or the 'Seven Sons.'"

(SD 1.216)

"Daivi-prakriti (Sk.). Primordial, homogeneous light, called by some Indian Occultists 'the Light of the Logos' (see Notes on the Bhagavat Gita, by T. Subba Row, B.A., L.L.B.); when differentiated this light becomes FOHAT."

(The Theosophical Glossary)

So as you say, there is the question of whether we can fit fohat into this. As we learn more about these various terms and ideas, we can see which one, if any, makes the best fit. In the meantime, the possible derivation, Sphuratta > Phuratta > Phu-at > FOHAT, is as good as any that have been suggested. All we would need is the missing link that makes the intervening connection between sphuratta and fohat.

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on February 12, 2011 at 10:28pm

Thanks David.

True, a missing link needs to be found, and for precisely this reason, I thought of getting in touch with Mark Dzyckowski. Hopefully, in the coming week we will have some progress. Our friends at the TS Varanasi have recommended Ms. Betty Bowman, who is currently teaching Kashmir Shaivism at the Benaras Hindu University and I will try to get in touch with her too for help in this matter.

Jacques compilation is a great resource for people like us and one cannot thank him enough for that. Yes, FOHAT will come into being or become knowable only when differentiated. What I am more concerned presently is whether the referred light, luminosity, radiance, shine etc. refer to the light of knowledge, sentience. The theme being that it is the introduction of vibrations (mantra for some) into the root matter (Akasha) that results in birth (germination) of sentience or light (prakasha) leading to creation of universe beginning with formation of matter from nothing. The process being called FOHAT. But a lot of work needs to be done to develop this theme.

Another interesting thought has just come up in respect of Pranava Vada. While Bhagwan Das consistently spells Daivi-prakriti, in the SDM version the word is consistently mentioned as Devi-prakriti. Could there be a difference between the two.

Since, I also believe that FOHAT is strongly linked to Laya (as different from Aalaya) from Physics point of view, I am trying to pursue that line too. I previously saw that Laya in Kashmir Shaivism is perhaps understood as dissolution, but found another very curious definition in the Amrita Bindu Upanishad. Quoted below is the excerpt from page 43 of the publication Minor Upanishad Vol. 1, "Amrta Bindu & Kaivalaya Upanishad" translated into english by A Mahadev Shastri, 2nd Ed., published by V Ramaswamy Sastrulu & Sons, Madras,

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on February 12, 2011 at 10:38pm

Sorry, the last portion got cut off again. Here goes:

Quoted below is the excerpt from page 43 of the publication Minor Upanishad Vol. 1, "Amrta Bindu & Kaivalaya Upanishad" translated into english by A Mahadev Shastri, 2nd Ed., published by V Ramaswamy Sastrulu & Sons, Madras, 1921:

"In laya let him wake up the chitta ; when distracted, let him withdraw it again. 'Let him know it is (then) sakashdya (impassioned); when balanced, let him not disturb it." (Verse 44)."

On page 42, of this book Laya is defined a mental inactivity:

"Moreover, he should restrain manas from getting into laya or mental inactivity which is equivalent to the sushupti state, though it be a state which is marked by the absence of all trouble. Laya or mental inactivity is as much a source of evil as kama, and therefore it is that manas should be prevented from lapsing into that..."

Could the mental inactivity here be the same as in verse 1 of the stanzas of dzyan.

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on February 13, 2011 at 11:52am

1) David, thank you for all this material on Alaya-vijnana. We may need many more lives to dig into, but we will give a try...

2) Fohat and Modern Science

Capt. Anand said : " Since, I also believe that FOHAT is strongly linked to Laya (as different from Aalaya) from Physics point of view, I am trying to pursue that line too".

This, together with one quote from a book I just read (there are no coincidences), from R.A Schwaller de Lubicz - "Le Miracle Egyptien - 1963 ; ISBN 978-2-0812-4551-8 - have ring a bell I had long thought about, which may be worth sharing :

R.A. says (p. 42) : "La vraie source de vie est le vide matériel absolu, l'Energie pure - The true source of life is the absolute material void, the pure Energy."

Current fundamental Physics Science paradigm about matter is based on Quantum void which, according to the today-established Standard Model, must contain an enormous level of non-manifested energy. From that "quantum foam", there is a permanent movement of creation and annihilation of matter and anti-matter, creating what is called the polarization of the void which was identified in the 1948 (Casimir effect) and can be measured scientifically.

Anti-matter was theorized in 1928 by P.A. Dirac, and the first anti-particle (positive electron) was discovered in 1932.

When a particle collides with an anti-particle, they just vanish or transform into pure energy.

The material universe is supposed to have been created (scientifically) through this matter-antimatter continuous movement, biased by what is called the symmetry breaking which, nobody knows why yet, resulted in a majority of matter particles remaining after the initial Big Bang.

Of course, this is awfully complex to analyze and understand in details, modern physics being now almost more 'esoteric' than some traditions. But it is not necessary for what

Comment by Jacques Mahnich on February 13, 2011 at 11:54am

It is unbearable ! two-third of long posts get cut, and when written directly on the web site, no recovery... grrrrr...

I will have to redo it.

Comment by Jacques Mahnich on February 13, 2011 at 12:40pm

Fohat and Modern Science (cont'd)

"When a particle collides with an anti-particle, they just vanish or transform into pure energy."

From there, we may remember one of the comments related to Fohat H.P.H. made in the S.D. :

S.D. Volume 1 Commentary (p.145)

(b) Bear in mind that Fohat, the constructive Force of Cosmic Electricity, is said, metaphorically, to have sprung like Rudra from Brahma "from the brain of the Father and the bosom of the Mother," and then to have metamorphosed himself into a male and a female, i.e., polarity, into positive and negative electricity. He has seven sons who are his brothers; and Fohat is forced to be born time after time

whenever any two of his son-brothers indulge in too close contact -- whether an embrace or a fight.

Could it be similar to the matter anti-matter behavior which, when having a too close contact are vanishing (transforming) into pure energy ?

Now, back to R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz who wrote on p. 59 :

" Rappelons qu'à Héliopolis est révélée la mystérieuse divine action de la scission de l'unité en NOUN (milieu assimilé à l'Océan Primordial) qui se coagule en première terre, emprisonnant le FEU invisible de TOUM." - Remember that in Heliopolis was revealed the mysterious divine action of breaking apart the unity of NOUN (primordial Ocean) which coagulate in the primary earth, confining the inv

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on February 13, 2011 at 12:43pm

cut again...We may have to wait for a fix to this bug before being able to reconvene the discussion.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 13, 2011 at 8:54pm

Oh, Jacques, my heart goes out to you. It is very disheartening to lose most of a long post. Then to lose it a second time is even more unbearable.

We do not know when this posting problem might be fixed. For everyone who posts here, I would suggest a couple of options.

You can write your post elsewhere, such as in an email program like Outlook Express, where it can be saved. Then when you are finished writing it, you can select it and copy it and paste it in here. If only part of it posts, you still have the rest of it saved, which can be put in another post.

Another option, if you write it directly on the website here, is to select it and copy it before you press the "Add Comment" button. This works for me using the Firefox browser, where I have the "copy" command under the "edit" heading. I suppose it can also be done in other browsers such as Internet Explorer, etc. Again, if the post gets cut off, you still have it in memory, and can send the rest of it.

This is a very interesting discussion between Capt. Anand and Jacques on fohat and modern science, and I hope it can continue.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 13, 2011 at 9:30pm

A quick note on laya as quoted by Capt. Anand from one of the shorter Upanishads. This sounds exactly like laya as used in Buddhist texts on meditation. It is there given in a contrasting pair with auddhatya, and this pair is regarded as the third of the five faults to guard against during meditation. Laya and auddhatya are often translated as laxity and excitement. Laya or laxity or slackness, and auddhatya or excitement or incitement of the senses, is when you cannot keep your focus on the meditative object, for opposite reasons. So it is a specialized use of the word laya in relation to meditation, and it does not here mean dissolution, as it does in cosmogonic texts such as the Puranas. But of course the idea is similar.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 14, 2011 at 3:19pm

On daivi-prakriti versus devi-prakriti, devi is a noun, and daivi is an adjective. From a noun such as devi, the adjective is made by strengthening the first vowel, as we have here in daivi. The word devi is the feminine form of deva. Both come from the root div, meaning to shine. So the devas are the shining ones, usually called the gods. If devi is a shining one, a god, a divine being, daivi simply means divine, or more etymologically, shining or radiant.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 14, 2011 at 3:27pm

Whenever a particular system of thought or worldview is being investigated, it is necessary to ascertain how it defines and uses its technical terms. The esoteric system behind the Book of Dzyan, which includes the technical term "fohat," is no exception. This system apparently uses the terms "matter" and "substance" quite differently than in other systems. The simplest statement that we have been given of the central tenet of this system is "matter in motion." But this "matter" must be clearly distinguished from matter as understood in modern science, where matter means only physical matter. Ultimately, this "matter" must even be clearly distinguished from matter (prakriti) as used in metaphysical systems such as Advaita Vedanta, where matter almost invariably refers to differentiated matter,

matter in manifestation, at however subtle a level, and although quite invisible to the senses.

In the "Cosmological Notes" (<http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/hpb-aps/bl-ap2.htm>), where the esoteric system was first outlined, the simple statement of its basic tenet was first given, "matter in motion," and fohat was first introduced, being described as "Kosmic energy." Here are the relevant sentences:

"(4) Is there any difference between what produces primal causes and their ultimate effects?

None. Everything in the occult universe, which embraces all the primal causes, is based upon two principles — Kosmic energy (Fohat or breath of wisdom), and Kosmic ideation.

Thyan Kam (= the knowledge of bringing about) giving the impulse to Kosmic energy in the right direction.

In Fohat all that exists on earth as ultimates exists as primates.

(5) What is the one eternal thing in the universe independent of every other thing?

Space.

(6) What things are co-existent with space?

(i) Duration.

(ii) Matter.

(iii) Motion, for this is the imperishable life (conscious or unconscious as the case may be) of matter, even during the pralaya, or night of mind.

When Chyang or omniscience, and Chyang-mi-shi-khon — ignorance, both sleep, this latent unconscious life still maintains the matter it animates in sleepless unceasing motion.

(iv) The Akasa (Bar-nang) or Kosmic atmosphere, or Astral light, or celestial ether, which whether in its latent or active condition, surrounds and interpenetrates all matter in motion of which it is at once a result and the medium by which the Kosmic energy acts on its source.

(v) The Purush or 7th principle of the universe."

We see in no. iii that motion is described as "the imperishable life (conscious or unconscious as the case may be) of matter, even during pralaya, or night of mind," because even during pralaya, "this latent unconscious life still maintains the matter it animates in sleepless unceasing motion." This is obviously the same idea, given in 1881, as is found in verse 8 of Stanza 1, which would be given out seven years later in The Secret Doctrine (vol. 1, pp. 27, 46):

"8. Alone, the one form of existence stretched boundless, infinite, causeless, in dreamless sleep; and life pulsed unconscious in universal space, throughout that All-Presence which is sensed by the 'Opened Eye' of the Dangma."

We here see graphically depicted the simple idea of matter in motion, which holds true even during pralaya, the dissolution of the universe. This means that "matter" as defined in this system is an ultimate reality that is eternal and indestructible. It is quite different from the physical matter of modern science, and is even different from the differentiated or manifested subtle matter (prakriti) taught in metaphysical systems such as Advaita Vedanta. So K.H. can say in the famous Mahatma letter #10 that "we believe in matter alone," something that would not be said in Advaita Vedanta as exoterically known. The esoteric system of the Mahatmas does not accept "the idea of pure spirit as a Being or an Existence."

"In other words we believe in MATTER alone, in matter as visible nature and matter in its invisibility as the invisible omnipresent omnipotent Proteus with its unceasing motion which is its life, and which nature draws from herself since she is the great whole outside of which nothing can exist. . . .

The existence of matter then is a fact; the existence of motion is another fact, their self existence and eternity or indestructibility is a third fact. And the idea of pure spirit as a Being or an Existence—give it whatever name you will—is a chimera, a gigantic absurdity."

(The Mahatma Letters, letter #10, 3rd ed., pp. 53-56)

Why doesn't the esoteric system of the Mahatmas accept "the idea of pure spirit as a Being or an Existence"? Because of their central premise of "matter in motion." There can be no motion without something to move, and this something, for lack of a better term, was called "matter" or "substance."

"The conception of matter and spirit as entirely distinct, and both eternal could certainly never have entered my head, however little I may know of them, for it is one of the elementary and fundamental doctrines of Occultism that the two are one, and are distinct but in their respective manifestations, and only in the limited perceptions of the world of senses. . . . matter per se is indestructible, and as I maintain coeval with spirit—that spirit which we know and can conceive of. . . . Motion is eternal because spirit is eternal. But no modes of motion can ever be conceived unless they be in connection with matter."

(The Mahatma Letters, letter #22, 3rd ed., pp. 138-139)

With this background, we have a better chance of understanding, and possibly tracing, fohat. For fohat, although being described as "energy," is also described as a substance, as this term is understood in this system, an intelligent substance, and thus is also described as an intelligence, an entity. In Book I, Part III, of The Secret Doctrine, section XIV is titled "FORCES — MODES OF MOTION OR INTELLIGENCES?" There we read (vol. 1, pp. 601-602):

"This is, then, the last word of physical science up to the present year, 1888. Mechanical laws will never be able to prove the homogeneity of primeval matter, except inferentially and as a desperate necessity, when there will remain no other issue — as in the case of Ether. Modern Science is secure only in its own domain and region; within the physical boundaries of our solar system, beyond which everything, every particle of matter, is different from the matter it knows: which matter exists in states of which Science can form no idea. That matter, which is truly homogeneous, is beyond human perceptions, if perception is tied down merely to the five senses. We feel its effects through those intelligence which are the results of its primeval differentiation, whom we name Dhyān-Chohans; called in the Hermetic works the "Seven Governors," those to whom Pymander, the "Thought Divine," refers as the Building Powers, and whom Asklepios calls the "Supernal Gods." That matter — the real primordial substance, the noumenon of all the "matter" we know of, — even some of the astronomers have been led to believe in, and to despair of the possibility of ever accounting for rotation, gravitation, and the origin of any mechanical physical laws — unless these Intelligences be admitted by Science. In the above-quoted work upon astronomy, by Wolf, the author endorses fully the theory of Kant, and the latter, if not in its general aspect, at any rate in some of its features, reminds one strongly of certain esoteric teachings. Here we have the world's system reborn from its ashes, through a nebula; the emanation from the bodies, dead and dissolved in Space — resultant of the*

incandescence of the solar centre reanimated by the combustible matter of the planets. In this theory, generated and developed in the brain of a young man hardly twenty-five years of age, who had never left his native place, a small town of Northern Prussia (Konigsberg) one can hardly fail to recognise either an inspiring external power, or the reincarnation which the Occultists see in it. It fills a gap which Newton, with all his genius, failed to bridge. And surely it is our primeval matter, Akasa, that Kant had in view, when proposing to solve Newton's difficulty and his failure to explain, by the natural forces, the primitive impulse imparted to the planets, by the postulation of a universally pervading primordial substance. For, as he remarks in chapter viii., if it is once admitted that the perfect harmony of the stars and planets and the coincidence of their orbital planes prove the existence of a natural cause, which would thus be the primal cause, "that cause cannot really be the matter which fills to-day the heavenly spaces." It must be that which filled space — was space — originally, whose motion in differentiated matter was the origin of the actual movements of the sidereal bodies; and which, "in condensing itself in those very bodies, thus abandoned the space that is found void to-day." In other words, it is that same matter of which are now composed the planets, comets, and the Sun himself, which, having in the origin formed itself into those bodies, has preserved its inherent quality of motion; which quality, now centred in their nuclei, directs all motion. A very slight alteration of words is needed, and a few additions, to make of this our Esoteric Doctrine.

"The latter teaches that it is this original, primordial prima materia, divine and intelligent, the direct emanation of the Universal Mind — the Daiviprakriti (the divine light emanating from the Logos) — which formed the nuclei of all the "self-moving" orbs in Kosmos. It is the informing, ever-present moving-power and life-principle, the vital soul of the suns, moons, planets, and even of our Earth. The former latent: the last one active — the invisible Ruler and guide of the gross body attached to, and connected with, its Soul, which is the spiritual emanation, after all, of these respective planetary Spirits."*

** Which "Light" we call Fohat.*

*These very different definitions of terms will have to be kept carefully in mind in order to correlate fohat with something from a system that does not recognize an ultimate substance endowed with life or motion or intelligence. For the esoteric system regards such things as light and heat as nothing other than the results of matter in motion, living matter whose life is its motion. As HPB says in *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, pp. 514-515:*

"The Occultists are taken to task for calling the Cause of light, heat, sound, cohesion, magnetism, etc., etc., a substance. (The "substance" of the Occultist, however, is to the most refined substance of the physicist, what radiant matter is to the leather of the Chemist's boots.) . . . In no way — as stated more than once before now — do the Occultists dispute the explanations of Science, as affording a solution of the immediate objective agencies at work. Science only errs in believing that, because it has detected in vibratory waves the proximate cause of these phenomena, it has, therefore, revealed all that lies beyond the threshold of Sense. It merely traces the sequence of phenomena on a plane of effects, illusory projections from the region that Occultism has long since penetrated. And the latter maintains that those etheric tremors, are not, as asserted by Science, set up by the vibrations of the molecules of known bodies — the matter of our terrestrial objective consciousness, — but that we must seek for the ultimate causes of light, heat, etc., etc., in MATTER existing in super-sensuous states — states, however, as fully objective to the spiritual eye of man, as a horse or a tree is to the ordinary mortal. Light and heat are the ghost or shadow of matter in motion."

HPB is here referring to what K.H. said in "What is Matter and What is Force?" (H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 4, p. 220, http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v4/y1882_100.htm):

"Light, then, like heat—of which it is the crown—is simply the ghost, the shadow of matter in motion, the boundless, eternal, infinite SPACE, MOTION and DURATION, the trinitarian essence of that which the Deists call God, and we—the One Element; Spirit-matter, or Matter-spirit, whose septenary properties we circumscribe under its triple abstract form in the equilateral triangle."

It is now easy to see how the simple phrase, "matter in motion," expresses the two aspects under which we conceive the first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine (SD 1.14), absolute abstract space, and absolute abstract motion.

Comment by **Capt. Anand Kumar** on February 16, 2011 at 8:51pm

Thanks David.

Your insightful and extremely well researched explanation does provide foundation on which any credible explanation for the word FOHAT should be built. It also indicates that one needs to think beyond traditional scientific explanations to understand it, if it is possible to understand it all.

However, science of 2011 is not the science of 1888. My understanding being that the "Motion" being referred to in this context actually means wave-motion and not linear or circular or spiral motion, which would all be derivatives of wave-motion.

Since vibration is required for creation, indicated in verse 1 of the first stanza itself and all vibrations being wave-motions, FOHAT is a likely candidate for the entity and the process which would impart wave-motion to the particles of the root-matter. Root-matter by itself cannot create anything and it is only when the wave-motion is introduced that creation can begin. Energy itself being a product of this wave-motion.

What is difficult to figure out is whether this process (of imparting wave-motion to the root particle) has been called "Light, Luminosity, Shine, Apam-Napat" etc. As there may be some relation to the birth of sentience within the root-matter due to introduction of wave-motion. If one attempts to rework the central theme of Yoga-Vasishtha as "Sentience Creates Universe", this may make some sense.

Another difficulty is how to fit TIME into all this. Is TIME different from wave-motion or sentience? A number of scientists today indicate that TIME also has wave-form. So, if one reads "Absolute Abstract TIME", in place of "Absolute Abstract Motion" this can be developed further. Since, without time, no motion can be conceived of and like the root-matter TIME continues even after dissolution of the universe. How else one would know the duration of "Sleep" period? There are some very cryptic references to TIME in the cosmogo

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on February 16, 2011 at 8:52pm

Continued ...

How else one would know the duration of "Sleep" period? There are some very cryptic references to TIME in the cosmogony of Vishnu Purana.

One indication of this is the symbol of Swastika. It is remarkably close to depiction of wave-form (sine wave) in physics. Except that the representation of baseline is indicated by a straight line in Physics.. What if, the base-line is changing too. If I need to depict two waves (root-matter and TIME) both continually changing would I chose this symbol? My answer would be, yes. I may then enclose the two waves inside their Ring Pass-Not by drawing a circle around them.

Can a mere speculation lead to a theory?

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 17, 2011 at 11:31pm

I quite agree with you, Capt. Anand, that the motion referred to in the context of the Secret Doctrine and its first fundamental proposition actually means wave-motion and not linear or circular or spiral motion, which would all be derivatives of wave-motion. This would be so since pulsation, or wave-motion, is referred to as occurring even during pralaya or the dissolution of the universe. Then, when manifestation occurs, fohat becomes active. The motion of fohat is described as circular or rotary, as in a whirlwind. This motion must necessarily derive from the never-ceasing wave-motion which is the life of eternal substance.

Regarding sentience, this English word is used in two senses, of having life, or of having consciousness (or both). The Secret Doctrine teaches that eternal and indestructible substance always has life, which is its motion, even during pralaya. But it does not then have consciousness, as we know it (e.g., Stanza 1.8: "life pulsated unconscious"). Consciousness is then only latent. Differentiated or manifested matter, too, always has life, as HPB stressed to Robert Bowen.

"The Second idea to hold fast to is that THERE IS NO DEAD MATTER. Every last atom is alive. It cannot be otherwise since every atom is itself fundamentally Absolute Being. Therefore there is no such thing as "spaces" of Ether, or Akasha, or call it what you like, in which angels and elementals disport themselves like trout in water. That's the common idea. The true idea shows every atom of substance no matter of what plane to be in itself a LIFE."

("The 'Secret Doctrine' and Its Study," notes of personal teachings given by H. P. Blavatsky to Robert Bowen, cited from An Invitation to The Secret Doctrine, p. 4.)

Fohat is apparently a type of subtle manifested matter or intelligent substance, that appears to us as energy. As quoted last time, the light that is called fohat is at the same time an original, primordial prima materia:

"The latter [our Esoteric Doctrine] teaches that it is this original, primordial prima materia, divine and intelligent, the direct emanation of the Universal Mind — the Daiviprakriti (the divine light emanating from the Logos) — which formed the nuclei of all the "self-moving" orbs in Kosmos. It is the informing, ever-present*

moving-power and life-principle, the vital soul of the suns, moons, planets, and even of our Earth."

** Which "Light" we call Fohat.*

(The Secret Doctrine, vol. 1, p. 602)

We do not usually think of electricity as matter, or energy as matter, or light as matter, or life-principle as matter, or vital soul as matter, or spark of life as matter, etc., but according to K.H. in the article, "What is Matter and What is Force?," they are so considered:

"How do they know that those very bodies now called "elementary atoms" are not in their turn compound bodies or molecules, which, when analysed with still greater minuteness, may show containing in themselves the real, primordial, elementary globules, the gross encasement of the still finer atom-spark—the spark of LIFE, the source of Electricity—MATTER still!"

(http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v4/y1882_100.htm)

Of course, we will not find religions or philosophies teaching that their principle of light is a living substance any more than we will find science teaching that electricity is matter. This, by itself, need not stop us from identifying fohat among what they teach. How it is described in the esoteric teachings apparently pertains to its teaching of "matter in motion" as the sole reality, from which motion or light can never be separated. More on this shortly.

Comment by **Capt. Anand Kumar** on February 18, 2011 at 6:50am

Thanks **David**,

Mahatma Koot Humi was spot on when he tried to explain that at the minutest scale, the spark of life can be found. I was also not far off the mark when I mentioned that science of 2011 is not the science of 1888. The development of Quantum Theory and its Wave-Particle duality aspect does compel one to take the esoteric doctrines far more seriously than was possible a hundred years back.

Light is made of Photons. Electricity of course, is due to electrons. Even for Gravity, search is on to find Gravitons, which are theoretically established. Search is also on to find Tachyons – particles which can travel faster than light. And in January 2010,

in an abandoned iron ore mine in Minnesota, first hints of Dark Matter were observed.

Science indeed has to travel far, but it is progressing along nicely, it seems. The difficulty with Esoteric Doctrines and their interpretation, hardly needs to be mentioned.

So, if one looks at KH's "Spark of Life", or HPB's "Divine Light (Daiviprakriti)", would we be correct in understanding it as one of the forms of visible light, as we know it. I looked up Monier- Williams for the word Kasa and found:

kāś

kāś, cl. 1. Ā. kāśate, (perf. cakāśe, 3. pl. ośire,), to be visible, appear MBh. &c • to shine, be brilliant, have an agreeable appearance ib.: cl. 4. kāśyate, Dhātup. xxvi, 53: Intens. P. Ā. cākaśīti, cākaśyáte, to shine brightly ŚBr. ii KātyŚr • to see clearly, survey ŚBr. xi Pāṇ. 7-3, 87 Vārtt. 1 Pat

Now, if one takes the meaning to be visible, appear i.e. manifest, then A-kasa should mean what will not be visible or will not manifest. Pra-kasa, similarly will be a special kind of manifestation and not light, shine, luminosity etc. which are all relating to the visible photon based light. However, every time one reads the word Light or one of its syn

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on February 18, 2011 at 6:52am

Continued...

However, every time one reads the word Light or one of its synonyms in English, the picture in mind is that of Photon based Light. Perhaps the word Energy also is used freely because of this.

Therefore if motion (wave motion) existed before manifestation, what was done to the root-substance to make it appear and manifest. This is where I thought of sentience, in the sense of having both, intelligence as well as consciousness. I am using consciousness here to mean the process which provides connectivity with the Akasa, the un-manifest.

Can this process be FOHAT?

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 18, 2011 at 10:08am

Continuing from last evening:

As Capt. Anand well said, the science of 2011 is not the science of 1888. The approximately one-third of The Secret Doctrine that contrasted its teachings with science is now almost entirely outdated. Even the science of fifty years ago is not the science of today, but is now outdated. The rapidly changing field of science makes comparisons with its theories very precarious. Will today's science, too, be outdated fifty years from now? Since modern science provides the worldview of the majority of people on earth today, comparisons with it are very necessary and quite useful, just as they were in 1888. We simply need to be aware of the tentative nature of its theories, and therefore of the uncertain value of either disagreement or agreement between these and the teachings of the Secret Doctrine. The Stanzas of Dzyan are supposed to expound a very ancient doctrine that has been tested and verified by countless generations of seers, who passed their lives in learning, not teaching. HPB writes in the "Summing Up" of The Secret Doctrine (vol. 1, pp. 272-273):

"(1.) The Secret Doctrine is the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages, and its cosmogony alone is the most stupendous and elaborate system: e.g., even in the exotericism of the Puranas. But such is the mysterious power of Occult symbolism, that the facts which have actually occupied countless generations of initiated seers and prophets to marshal, to set down and explain, in the bewildering series of evolutionary progress, are all recorded on a few pages of geometrical signs and glyphs. The flashing gaze of those seers has penetrated into the very kernel of matter, and recorded the soul of things there, where an ordinary profane, however learned, would have perceived but the external work of form. But modern science believes not in the "soul of things," and hence will reject the whole system of ancient cosmogony. It is useless to say that the system in question is no fancy of one or several isolated individuals. That it is the uninterrupted record covering thousands of generations of Seers whose respective experiences were made to test and to verify the traditions passed orally by one early race to another, of the teachings of higher and exalted beings, who watched over the childhood of Humanity. That for long ages, the "Wise Men" of the Fifth Race, of the stock saved and rescued from the last cataclysm and shifting of continents, had passed their lives in learning, not teaching. How did they do so? It is answered: by checking, testing, and verifying in every department of nature the traditions of old by the

independent visions of great adepts; i.e., men who have developed and perfected their physical, mental, psychic, and spiritual organisations to the utmost possible degree. No vision of one adept was accepted till it was checked and confirmed by the visions - so obtained as to stand as independent evidence - of other adepts, and by centuries of experiences."

This hitherto secret doctrine is still mostly esoteric, since the published Stanzas of Dzyan represent only a very small piece of it. If this doctrine fully matched any known system, it would not be an esoteric system. This is what makes it difficult for us to trace it and some of its teachings. If we take its idea of "matter in motion," using for convenience this simple and simplistic phrase without qualification, we do not find this taught anywhere. Everywhere we must read the exoterically known teachings esoterically in order to get this teaching. For example, we must take the Vedantic absolute brahman as a conscious substance, and not just as pure consciousness like it is normally defined, in order to get this esoteric teaching. Evidence that brahman was so taken in ancient India by early Vedanta teachers such as Bhartr-prapanca and Bhartr-hari is given in an appendix, "Brahman as Substance," pp. 41-50

(<http://www.easterntertradition.org/confusing%20esoteric%20with%20exote...>).

Similarly, we must take the Buddhist nirvana as an ultimate substance, and not just as an ultimate state like it is normally understood, in order to get this esoteric teaching. Evidence that it was so taken in ancient India by the once dominant Sarvastivada Buddhists is given in an article, "The Sarvastivada Conception of Nirvana," especially pp. 339, 348 (to be posted in the Stanzas of Dzyan Research Documents shortly). The Sarvastivadins, as noted elsewhere

(<http://www.easterntertradition.org/book%20of%20dzyan%20research%20repo...>, p. 6), could be the Buddhist school spoken of by K.H. in connection with the Svabhavikas.

To trace the hitherto secret doctrines of the Stanzas of Dzyan, doctrines that are said to have been tested and verified by countless generations of seers, we must search out these doctrines in now defunct early forms of the existing religions and philosophies. This is because what was once exoteric has now become esoteric. Taking our cues from what HPB and her teachers gave out, and finding these doctrines in ancient sources, provides us with good evidence that we are on the right track.

As I post this, I see the latest post just in from Capt. Anand. I will reply to this shortly.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 18, 2011 at 10:11pm

Just a very quick note for this evening to say that the first letter of akasa is the long "a". So it intensifies the meaning of the root "kas" rather than negates it. HPB has some interesting things to say about akasa.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 19, 2011 at 10:22pm

In the recently published Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge, published as The Secret Doctrine Commentaries, there is much additional material on fohat. Perhaps someone who has both the book and the time to do so can prepare a compilation of material on fohat from this source. Part of it, of course, will overlap with what Jacques has already compiled from the Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge that were published earlier. Only the additional material would have to be added. On page 432 of this new book, HPB gives us "the real, long translation of the word, Fohat":

"Yes, but it means also the self-moving and that which forces to move; the brightness or the radiancy that moves and moves everything. This is the real, long translation of the word, Fohat:"

If "brightness" or "radiancy" is the real meaning of fohat, then we are on the right track in focusing on words meaning light or shining or luminosity. So the prabhasvara from the Buddhist texts, the sphuratta from the Kashmir Shaiva texts, and the kachana from the Yoga-Vasistha, as we have been discussing, would all be good candidates for matching this idea.

The wave-particle idea of science, and its idea of photons for light, do seem to address very much the same issues as we see with fohat, where it is both an energy and a substance. Very likely the correspondences would also work out for light in the subtle realms in comparison with visible light. Visible light and fire seem to have provided the most often used examples for analogies to what seers have seen on the higher planes of existence.

Comment by Jacques Mahnich on February 20, 2011 at 1:15pm

Theosophy and Science

This discussion has , inevitably, surfaced the relationships between Theosophy and Science, which is usually a key research topic in theosophy (ancient or modern) . Based on last 20 to 30 years of discoveries in Science, it is probably a gigantic task to dive into these subjects. We will have to be very disciplined and sharply focused on the basic concepts. In order to keep this discussion on traditions, I propose to open a new one, where we could concentrate our efforts on the key concepts we are studying, i.e. : Space, Matter and Time...and probably what Science calls Forces.

Comment by David Reigle on February 20, 2011 at 10:45pm

Good idea, Jacques, to open a new discussion on Theosophy and science. As you say, we have inevitably been getting into areas that today are the domain of science. It will be useful to compare what modern science has now found with the teachings that are supposed to represent an ancient and long-established wisdom tradition.

In trying to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzyan here in this discussion, we have had to trace terms and ideas. This has often involved tracing the doctrines of the Secret Doctrine. Once these doctrines are ascertained as accurately as possible, they can be compared with the findings of modern science. This can be done in the new discussion by those who are familiar with the teachings of modern science. Here, we can continue with trying to trace the Stanzas by way of their doctrines.

A new article has been posted to the Stanzas of Dzyan Research Documents. It is, "The Sarvastivada Conception of Nirvana," by K. Dhammajoti, published in 2002. It shows very clearly that the old and once very widespread but now defunct Buddhist Sarvastivadins held that nirvana, ultimate reality, was a "distinct positive entity (dravyantara)" (p. 339). That is, it was held to be an ultimate substance (dravya). This means that nirvana, according to this school, has an inherent nature or self-nature, svabhava. This article concludes by quoting the Abhidharma-kosa-bhasya on this (p. 348):

"Its self-nature [svabhava] can only be personally realized by the arya."

aryair eva tat-svabhavaḥ pratyatma-vedyaḥ

The idea of an ultimate svabhava, as we know, is found in the Stanzas of Dzyan. But this is entirely refuted by most Tibetan Buddhists, especially by the Gelugpa order. This article underlines this point by saying (p. 336):

"Samghabhadra repeatedly accuses the Sautrantikas of siding with the followers of the 'sky-flower (akasa-puspa)' doctrine -- apparently referring to the Sunyata-vada prevailing at the time -- in obstinately denying the svabhava of all dharma, including the asamskrta."

The Sunyata-vada, the doctrine of emptiness, is the Madhyamaka doctrine, which is followed in some form by virtually all Tibetan Buddhists. The early Sarvastivada teacher, Samghabhadra, is here saying that this doctrine is wrong to deny the svabhava of all dharmas, including even nirvana, the one dharma that all schools of Buddhism accept as being asamskrta, uncompounded or unconditioned. We see that this early form of Buddhism, the Sarvastivada, like the Stanzas of Dzyan, specifically teaches that ultimate reality has a svabhava.

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on February 22, 2011 at 10:50pm

Thanks David,

It took a while to configure the mind to even read the concept of Brahman as substance as all the while mind has been conditioned to believe that Brahman is Nirguna, without attributes.

Below is an excerpt from B L Atreya's "The Philosophy of Yoga-Vasishtha", pages 19-20, 1935 edition:

With regard to the Absolute Reality, the author of the Yoga Vasishtha says that it is the same, "that is called Sunya by Sunya-vadins, Brahman by Brahma-vids, Purusa by the Samkhya thinkers, Iswara by the followers of the Yoga school, Siva by the Saivas, Time by those who believe Time to be only reality, the Self by those who think Self to be so, Non-self by those who do not believe in the reality of the Self, Madhyama by the Madhyamikas and All by those who have the vision of equality all around (V,87, 18-20).

Here, Sunya, Brahman, Siva and Non-self will generally be accepted as Nirguna whereas Purusa, Iswara, Time and Madhyama will have attributes. Is that understanding correct as it is difficult to reconcile. Similarly, if Prakriti is the root-substance then is Brahman the root of root-substance?

I am also interested in finding more about Kalavada, but am unable to find any resource. A better understanding of Nature and Properties of TIME may lead to better understanding of FOHAT,

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on February 23, 2011 at 6:18am

KALA-VADA

Apart from the reference by B L Atreya, some reference to Kala-vada is found in the epic Mahabharata. But what comes very close to description of FOHAT of the stanzas is the Kala-Sukta of the Atharva Veda. Quoted below is the English Translation by Maurice Bloomfield:

XIX, 53. Prayer to Kâla (time), personified as a primordial power.

1. Time, the steed, runs with seven reins (rays), thousand-eyed, ageless, rich in seed. The seers, thinking holy thoughts, mount him, all the beings (worlds) are his wheels.

2. With seven wheels does this Time ride, seven naves has he, immortality is his axle. He carries hither all these beings (worlds). Time, the first god, now hastens onward.

3. A full jar has been placed upon Time; him, verily, we see existin

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on February 23, 2011 at 6:19am

continued...

3. A full jar has been placed upon Time; him, verily, we see existing in many forms. He carries away all these beings (worlds); they call him Time in the highest heaven.

4. He surely did bring hither all the beings (worlds), he surely did encompass all the beings (worlds). Being their father, he became their son; there is, verily, no other force, higher than he.

5. Time begot yonder heaven, Time also (begot) these earths. That which was, and that which shall be, urged forth by Time, spreads out.

6. Time created the earth, in Time the sun burns. In Time are all beings, in Time the eye looks abroad.

7. In Time mind is fixed, in Time breath (is fixed), in Time names (are fixed); when Time has arrived all these creatures rejoice.

8. In Time tapas (creative fervour) is fixed; in Time the highest (being is fixed); in Time brahma (spiritual exaltation) is fixed; Time is the lord of everything, he was the father of Pragâpati.

9. By him this (universe) was urged forth, by him it was begotten, and upon him this (universe) was founded. Time, truly, having become the brahma (spiritual exaltation), supports Parameshthin (the highest lord).

10. Time created the creatures (pragâh), and Time in the beginning (created) the lord of creatures (Prâgapati); the self-existing Kasyapa and the tapas (creative fervour) from Time were born.

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on February 23, 2011 at 6:21am

Continued...

XIX, 54. Prayer to Kâla (time), personified as a primordial power.

1. From Time the waters did arise, from Time the brahma (spiritual exaltation), the tapas (creative fervour), the regions (of space did arise). Through Time the sun rises, in Time he goes down again.

2. Through Time the wind blows, through Time (exists) the great earth; the great sky is fixed in Time. In Time the son (Pragâpati) begot of yore that which was, and that which shall be.

3. From Time the Riks arose, the Yagus was born from Time; Time put forth the sacrifice, the imperishable share of the gods.

4. Upon Time the Gandharvas and Apsarases are founded, upon Time the worlds (are founded), in Time this Angiras and Atharvan rule over the heavens.

5. Having conquered this world and the highest world, and the holy (pure) worlds (and) their holy divisions; having by means of the brahma (spiritual exaltation) conquered all the worlds, Time, the highest God, forsooth, hastens onward.

If one looked at Kala as Absolute Abstract TIME, then based on above could FOHAT be one of its manifestation?

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 24, 2011 at 7:11pm

If ultimate reality is, as declared, beyond the range and reach of thought and speech, then it makes little real difference what we call it or how we describe it. One name or description is as adequate or inadequate as another. We can therefore completely agree with the paragraph that Capt. Anand quoted from B. L. Atreya's work on the Yoga-Vasishtha:

"With regard to the Absolute Reality, the author of the Yoga Vasishtha says that it is the same, 'that is called Sunya by Sunya-vadins, Brahman by Brahma-vids, Purusa by the Samkhya thinkers, Iswara by the followers of the Yoga school, Siva by the Saivas, Time by those who believe Time to be only reality, the Self by those who think Self to be so, Non-self by those who do not believe in the reality of the Self, Madhyama by the Madhyamikas and All by those who have the vision of equality all around' (V,87, 18-20)."

Any particular system would only be using analogies to the highest it knows, in order to describe the indescribable. Each of these analogies would be accepted as agreeing with the system of the Secret Doctrine. They would all be expressions of the Secret Doctrine. We cannot pick any one of these systems and say that THIS one, and not the other ones, is the system of the Secret Doctrine. We can trace tenets of the Secret Doctrine to each of them.

A clear and unmistakable tenet of the Secret Doctrine is the oneness of all, non-duality, the fundamental unity of all existence, radical unity:

"The radical unity of the ultimate essence of each constituent part of compounds in Nature—from Star to mineral Atom, from the highest Dhyani-Chohan to the smallest infusoria, in the fullest acceptation of the term, and whether applied to the spiritual, intellectual, or physical worlds—this is the one fundamental law in Occult Science."

(The Secret Doctrine, vol. 1, p. 120)

"No matter what one may study in the S.D. let the mind hold fast, as the basis of its ideation, to the following ideas:

The FUNDAMENTAL UNITY OF ALL EXISTENCE. This unity is a thing altogether different from the common notion of unity—as when we say that a nation or an army is united; or that this planet is united to that by lines of magnetic force or the like. The teaching is not that. It is that existence is ONE THING, not any collection of things linked together. Fundamentally there is ONE BEING. This BEING has two aspects, positive and negative. The positive is Spirit, or CONSCIOUSNESS. The negative is SUBSTANCE, the subject of consciousness. This Being is the Absolute in its primary manifestation. Being absolute there is nothing outside it. It is ALL-BEING."

("The 'Secret Doctrine' and Its Study," notes of personal teachings given by H. P. Blavatsky to Robert Bowen, cited from An Invitation to The Secret Doctrine, pp. 3-4)

This idea of oneness or non-duality is most clearly put forth, among known systems, by Advaita Vedanta in the East, and by Plotinus in the West. It is also found in Kashmir Shaivism, which is described as the Advaita or non-dual form of Shaivism. So "the one" is called Brahman in Advaita Vedanta, and is called Shiva in Advaita Shaivism. By definition, as being the sole non-dual reality, this Brahman and this Shiva must be completely identical, being only differing names for the same thing. Yet, adherents of these two systems do not always see it this way.

The same must also be true, by definition, of the consciousness and substance aspects under which we describe "the one" taught in the Secret Doctrine. There is no possibility of "the one" being absolute consciousness without being absolute substance, or of "the one" being absolute substance without being absolute consciousness. We are not speaking of attributes here, but only of aspects by which we try to describe the indescribable "one." If "the one" is really "the one," it is indivisible, and we cannot separate out one aspect of it and regard that aspect as absolute, while regarding the other aspect as somehow less than absolute. As HPB explained to Bowen, continuing immediately after what was quoted above:

"It is indivisible, else it would not be absolute. If a portion could be separated, that remaining could not be absolute, because there would at once arise the question of COMPARISON between it and the separated part. Comparison is incompatible with any idea of absoluteness. Therefore it is clear that this fundamental ONE EXISTENCE, or Absolute Being must be the REALITY in every form there is."

If we use the analogy of a coin to represent "the one," we can symbolize its two aspects as the heads and tails, or front and back, of that coin. Let us say that one side represents, to our minds, consciousness, while the other side represents, to our

minds, substance. An entire system can be built around the absolute in its aspect of consciousness. In fact, such systems exist today. But in our analogy, this would only be one side of the coin, quite inseparable from the other side of the one coin.

Once we accept that the one ultimate reality can be symbolized under two aspects, to describe it as substance is no different than to describe it as consciousness. The fact that Brahman has been almost exclusively described as consciousness in Advaita Vedanta in the last 1500 years may be due to a partial loss of its full texts and teachings. Not only do the early Vedanta writers Bhartr-prapanca and Bhartr-hari describe Brahman as substance, as mentioned previously, but this is very clear in the Pranava-vada. The Pranava-vada, lost until about a century ago, quotes the full, original Brahma-sutra on this. See vol. 3, p. 87, of the English translation by Bhagavan Das:

"As the Brahma-Sutra says: The whole world is founded on substance [dravya] and established, maintained, kept going, by the continuous experience of substance (by conscious individuals)."

The whole of my research, looking for these things, indicates very strongly exactly what The Secret Doctrine says. There was a once universal, but now hidden, wisdom tradition. Its existence was made publicly known by the writings of H. P. Blavatsky. Small but important portions of it were given out by her, above all in The Secret Doctrine. These include the three fundamental propositions of the Secret Doctrine. Also, as a sample of its original texts, Stanzas from the Book of Dzyan on cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis were given in English translation. We have not been able to trace these Stanzas to any known work, because they are not taken from any known work.

On the contrary, many of the known works were apparently derived from the teachings of this hidden wisdom tradition. For this reason, the tenets of the wisdom tradition that have been given out can be traced in the known works. Knowing that its first fundamental proposition can be symbolized as substance and consciousness, we can deduce that a known system teaching only absolute consciousness would be missing a piece of the picture. We can then trace that missing piece; for example, the teaching of Brahman as substance. This provides evidence that the wisdom tradition made known by HPB is real, and really was once universal. Such evidence is why I am convinced that the Stanzas of Dzyan are real, and will be released before too long.

Comment by [Ferran Sanz Orriols](#) on February 25, 2011 at 8:06am

Dear David, I agree on every word you have written in your last post!!!

Blessings from the Heart for everyone!!!

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on February 26, 2011 at 8:02pm

Thanks David and Ferran.

The explanation below is the simplest and the best I came across so far. Although it took many readings to understand it. (Only until the next doubt arises). Yet, it provides the best farmework for interpreting the ancient tecahings, at least to people with little background in Philosophy.

The depth of my gratitude for receiving this teaching can scarcely be expressed in words, only felt.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on February 26, 2011 at 9:53pm

On the question of time (sorry for the delay in replying to this), the Secret Doctrine seems to regard time as resulting from the sequence of thoughts. When conceptual thought ceases, so does time cease; but duration remains. This duration would be time as a cosmic principle, as depicted in the Atharva-veda's two hymns to time (19.53-54), posted here by Capt. Anand Kumar. Besides this pair of hymns, there does not seem to be much more on this in the Hindu tradition. Nothing seems to have there developed from this idea. But in the closely related Zoroastrian tradition, a doctrine of time as an ultimate principle did develop.

This teaching of time as the ultimate cosmic principle is called Zurvanism. Oxford professor Robert Zaehner took a particular interest in it, and tried to reconstruct this long dead system from the surviving texts. As we know, the sacred books of Zoroastrianism, called the Avesta, are closely similar to the Vedas, often sharing even the same terminology. The later Zoroastrian texts were written in Pahlavi, and it is mostly from these texts that Zaehner reconstructed this system. Zaehner wrote a series of articles on Zurvan and Zurvanism, published in the Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London). Then he prepared a large book on the subject, titled: Zurvan: A Zoroastrian Dilemma, published in 1955. This is the standard work on the subject today.

Duration as a cosmic principle in Theosophy can be seen, for example, in this quote from Mahatma K.H., which has been quoted here before (I take these from a compilation on the first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine, <http://www.easterntertradition.org/first%20fundamental%20proposition%20...>):

"Light, then, like heat—of which it is the crown—is simply the ghost, the shadow of matter in motion, the boundless, eternal, infinite SPACE, MOTION and DURATION, the trinitarian essence of that which the Deists call God, and we—the One Element; Spirit-matter, or Matter-spirit, whose septenary properties we circumscribe under its triple abstract form in the equilateral triangle."

("What is Matter and What is Force?" H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 4, p. 220)

How duration relates to time, as these terms are used by HPB, is seen in verse 2 of Stanza 1 of the Book of Dzyan:

"2. Time was not, for it lay asleep in the infinite bosom of duration (a)."

Time, as opposed to duration, is described in The Secret Doctrine when commenting on this line as follows (vol. 1, p. 37):

"(a) Time is only an illusion produced by the succession of our states of consciousness as we travel through eternal duration, and it does not exist where no consciousness exists in which the illusion can be produced; but "lies asleep." The present is only a mathematical line which divides that part of eternal duration which we call the future, from that part which we call the past. Nothing on earth has real duration, for nothing remains without change — or the same — for the billionth part of a second; and the sensation we have of the actuality of the division of "time" known as the present, comes from the blurring of that momentary glimpse, or succession of glimpses, of things that our senses give us, as those things pass from the region of ideals which we call the future, to the region of memories that we name the past."

This idea of time is also taught in the Yoga-sutras by Patanjali. Near the very end of this text, when describing a yogi who has completely controlled the modifications (vrtti) of the mind (citta), and thereby achieved liberation, Patanjali speaks of the resulting cessation of time. Here is a paraphrase of verse 33 of chapter 4, from the paraphrased translation given in the book, Light of the Soul, by Alice Bailey:

"4.33. Time, which is the sequence of the modifications of the mind, likewise terminates, giving place to the Eternal Now."

*All three of the religio-philosophic traditions of ancient India dealt with the question of time. In Jainism, and in the Vaishesika school of Hinduism, time was regarded as a substance (dravya). We must here remember that substance is defined quite differently in these systems than anything we usually think of as substance. Thus, for example, both of these systems also regard the soul or spirit (atman, jiva) as a substance. Other schools of Hinduism, and all the schools of Buddhism, did not regard time as a substance. The early Sarvastivada (or Vaibhasika) school of Buddhism, which we had occasion to refer to here recently, had a unique teaching of how an existing thing remained existent in the past, the present, and the future. There are two good sourcebooks on these various ideas about time. They are extensive collections of journal articles, compiled by Hari Shankar Prasad. One is titled, *Essays on Time in Buddhism*, and the other one is titled, *Time in Indian Philosophy*, covering the other traditions of India.*

How the three periods of time are taken in the esoteric philosophy is explained by HPB as follows (SD 1.43):

"The three periods — the Present, the Past, and the Future — are in the esoteric philosophy a compound time; for the three are a composite number only in relation to the phenomenal plane, but in the realm of noumena have no abstract validity."

She later sums this up in the words of an unknown sage (SD 2.446):

"Such is the course of Nature under the sway of Karmic Law: of the ever present and the ever-becoming Nature. For, in the words of a Sage, known only to a few Occultists: — 'The Present is the Child of the Past; the Future, the begotten of the Present. And yet, O present moment! Knowest thou not that thou hast no parent, nor canst thou have a child; that thou art ever begetting but thyself? Before thou hast even begun to say 'I am the progeny of the departed moment, the child of the past,' thou hast become that past itself. Before thou utterest the last syllable, behold! thou art no more the Present but verily that Future. Thus, are the Past, the Present, and the Future, the ever-living trinity in one — the Mahamaya of the Absolute IS.'"

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on March 2, 2011 at 10:17pm

We continue now with the ālaya or ālaya-vijñāna, the foundation or foundation consciousness, the latter apparently being what HPB refers to in the third fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine as the universal over-soul. Since the word ālaya is used seven times in The Voice of the Silence, we may assume that the word ālaya found in verse 9 of Stanza 1 actually occurs in the Sanskrit version of the Book of Dzyan. If the Theosophical first object of brotherhood is a fact in nature, and not just a noble ideal, it is the ālaya-vijñāna that makes it so.

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on March 4, 2011 at 8:56am

As done for Fohat, a compilation of H.P.B writings where the Alaya is discussed is proposed to be uploaded on the Stances of Dzyan documents repository.

The study itself will require thorough analysis of the texts David has already uploaded.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on March 4, 2011 at 10:11pm

We had discussed here the two aspects under which the first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine is symbolized, absolute abstract space and absolute abstract motion, also called undifferentiated substance and unconditioned consciousness. Since this first principle is one without a second, it makes no real difference which aspect we refer to it as. It is not so hard to imagine an ultimate unconditioned consciousness, and some known systems such as Vedanta teach this, but it is harder to imagine an ultimate undifferentiated substance. We are somewhat saddled with the necessity to use a word, "substance," that is hardly adequate. But what other option is there?

The same problem exists for the two well-known Indian systems that posit such things as soul (jiva) or self (atman) as ultimate substances, or dravyas. These are the Jaina tradition and the Vaisheshika school of the Hindu tradition. Both of these are considered to be pluralistic systems, since they posit more than one ultimate substance. The Jaina tradition recognizes six ultimate dravyas, and the Vaisheshika system recognizes nine ultimate dravyas. In an excellent 1912 book that well explained the Vaisheshika system to English-speaking readers, the author addressed this very problem with the term "substance" (The Hindu Realism: Being

an Introduction to the Metaphysics of the Nyaya-Vaisheshika System of Philosophy, by Jagadisha Chandra Chatterji, p. 19):

". . . that which we call the Universe consists . . . of nine classes of ultimate factors, with their various properties and relations. In Vaisheshika they are called Dravyas. We may translate the term by Realities or Entities, but not by Substances, as has hitherto been done."

The reason he says this is that the latter five of these dravyas are akasa (space, as an element like ether), kala (time), dik (space, as in the four directions), atman (self), and manas (mind). These are by no means what in normal usage would be called substances. Nonetheless, the great majority of translators up through today still use "substance" for dravya. They do this no doubt because substance is the basic meaning of the word dravya as seen in other contexts. So we are obliged to expand our idea of what substance is, to include the kinds of non-physical things listed above.

*In Jainism, too, where six ultimate dravyas are taught, dravya continues to be translated as substance. These include jiva (soul), dharma (medium of motion), adharma (medium of rest), akasa (space, as an element), pudgala (matter), and kala (time). About the dravyas as constituting all of reality, Jogendra Chandra Shikdar writes in his 1991 book, *Theory of Reality in Jaina Philosophy* (p. viii):*

"In Jaina philosophy Reality has been conceived as a permanent, all-inclusive substance (Dravya) possessing infinite qualities and modes (gunas and paryayas). . ."

*So we are asked to expand our definition of substance, so that we can meaningfully compare and interact with texts and systems that posit an ultimate substance, whether this is called mula-prakriti, dravya, or vastu. When we see how dravya or substance is used in the Hindu Vaisheshika system and in Jainism, the idea of the absolute brahman being called a dravya in early Advaita Vedanta is no longer surprising. When translating such terms and speaking of these things, we have little choice but to use the English word "substance". It is a step up from using the English term "matter," a step that HPB herself took in her later writings. As she writes in *The Secret Doctrine*:*

"The Occultists, who do not say -- if they would express themselves correctly -- that matter, but only the substance or essence of matter, is indestructible and eternal, (i.e., the Root of all, Mulaprakriti) . . ." (SD 1.147)

"In strict accuracy -- to avoid confusion and misconception -- the term "Matter" ought to be applied to the aggregate of objects of possible perception, and "Substance" to noumena; . . ." (SD 1.329)

Thus, the famous statement by K.H. in Mahatma letter #10 would now read: "We believe in substance alone," rather than, "We believe in matter alone." Here, in context, this of course means living substance, substance in motion. So again, the phrase we have discussed here, "matter in motion," would now read, "substance in motion." Even in the early Mahatma letters, substance was sometimes used instead of matter: "The One reality is Mulaprakriti (undifferentiated Substance) -- the 'Rootless root,' the . . . But we have to stop, lest there should remain little to tell for your own intuitions." (letter #59, 3rd ed., p. 341).

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on March 5, 2011 at 6:45am

We are pursuing a few lines of inquiry at the same time here, that of ālaya or ālaya-vijñāna, that of fohat, and that of the overall context provided by the fundamental propositions of the Secret Doctrine. The new compilation by Jacques titled "Studies on Alaya," posted to the Stanzas of Dzyan Research Documents, will be as helpful to us as was his compilation on fohat. In this compilation, he has included sources on ālaya that were available in HPB's time.

From what HPB says about ālaya, which we can now easily see in one place in this compilation, it is clear that it has two senses. One is as something eternal and ultimate, and one is as something ever changing and ephemeral. It is this tension that produced the historical disagreements over it from one school of Buddhism to another. These disagreements even led to the triumph of one school over another, and the disappearance of the latter.

In general, we can often distinguish the eternal and ultimate sense as being associated with ālaya per se, the foundation, and the ever changing and ephemeral sense as being associated with ālaya-vijñāna, or foundation consciousness. What complicates this is that these two senses are not always separable, and that just ālaya often means ālaya-vijñāna, and ālaya-vijñāna sometimes means just ālaya. For convenience of discussion, I will try to use the fairly literal "foundation" for ālaya, and "foundation consciousness" for ālaya-vijñāna. But we must keep in mind that HPB often seems to use "universal mind" for ālaya, and such terms as "universal over-soul" for what would be ālaya-vijñāna, when she distinguishes them at all.

The bottom line here according to Yogachara writers, is that without an ālaya-vijñāna or universal foundation consciousness, none of us could communicate with each other. The ālaya-vijñāna is also one of the most widely used explanations for how karma works. It is the repository of karmic seeds that yield future results, and may carry over from life to life. We reward or punish ourselves through the automatic action of the karmic seeds held in the ālaya-vijñāna. There is then no need of a God to watch over us and mete out reward and punishment for our good and bad deeds. The mechanism of karma is explained by way of the ālaya-vijñāna or universal foundation consciousness.

When studying this topic in comparison with the large amount of material that has become available since HPB's time, we may focus on the Encyclopaedia of Buddhism article on ālaya-vijñāna that is posted with the Stanzas of Dzyan Research Documents. The many other articles on ālaya-vijñāna posted there can be considered as further explanations of some aspects of the topic. The Encyclopaedia of Buddhism article, by Seibun Fukaura, is surprisingly comprehensive, far more so than would normally be expected in such a reference work. Once we sort out the material in this article, we will have a clear picture of the issues involved with this teaching. We will then only have to add some material from the more recently available Tibetan sources on it. At that point, we will have a good idea of where there are agreements and where there are disagreements regarding the ālaya and ālaya-vijñāna as taught in the Stanzas of Dzyan. So this will not only help us trace this teaching, it will also help us understand it and how it relates to our lives.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on March 8, 2011 at 10:05pm

HPB speaks of the universal mind or universal oversoul in reference to alaya and to mahat. The term mahat, literally meaning "great," is specific to the Samkhya school of Hinduism, where it refers to the principle of intelligence in the universe, also called buddhi. So this would correspond to the ālaya-vijñāna, the universal foundation consciousness taught in Buddhism. As we have noted, the terms ālaya and ālaya-vijñāna are specific to the Yogachara school of Buddhism. Both of these schools are found in their respective traditions alongside their more widespread counterparts. That is, the Samkhya school in Hinduism was quite outdone by the Vedanta school in India for well over a millennium now; and the Yogachara school in Buddhism was quite outdone by the Madhyamaka school in Tibet throughout its more than a millennium there. This gives us a perspective on these teachings.

The schools that teach ultimate truth per se have dominated over the schools that also teach about the manifestation of universal mind. The Vedanta teaching on the ultimate brahman has proven to be far more appealing than the Samkhya teaching on mahat, which is both the individual and cosmic principle of intelligence. The Madhyamaka teaching on ultimate emptiness has proven to be far more appealing than the Yogachara teaching on the ālaya-vijñāna, which is both the individual and the universal foundation consciousness. Such, at least, has been true for the last millennium.

The Samkhya school is very old, being considered the first darshana or philosophical worldview, to be systematized and put forward. The idea of universal mind or universal oversoul in the Stanzas of Dzyan certainly has an ancient parallel here. The Yogachara texts in which the terms ālaya and ālaya-vijñāna are found seem to have come later. But the term ālaya is given by HPB in her translation of verse 9 of Stanza 1, so this is of particular interest to us to trace. It is first found in Mahayana Buddhist sutras, such as the Samdhi-nirmochana-sutra, that apparently did not show up in India until the early centuries of the first millennium C.E. It was then expounded at more length by the coming Buddha Maitreya in teachings given to Arya Asanga, which in turn were given to Asanga's younger brother Vasubandhu. The writings of these three, Maitreya, Asanga, and Vasubandhu, form the core texts of the Yogachara school, and are our primary sources on the ālaya-vijñāna. So the ālaya-vijñāna teaching is tied in with the fate of the Yogachara school, a school which was well received in China. This teaching is traced for us in detail by Seibun Fukaura in his ālaya-vijñāna article in the Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, posted here with the Stanzas of Dzyan Research Documents.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on March 9, 2011 at 11:27pm

The Mahāyāna-saṃgraha, or Summary of the Great Vehicle, written by Asaṅga, is usually considered to be the main Indian sourcebook on the ālaya-vijñāna. It begins by speaking of ten distinguishing features of the Mahāyāna or Great Vehicle taught by the Buddha. The first of these is the teaching on the support of the knowable (jñeya āśraya), and this is said to be the ālaya-vijñāna or foundation consciousness. The "knowable" (jñeya) means all existing things, everything that can be known. So the ālaya-vijñāna is described as the support or basis of all that exists in the manifested universe.

Here we have the most central definition of the ālaya-vijñāna. From this, we can easily see what verse 9 of Stanza of Dzyan 1 is referring to. The ālaya (-vijñāna) of the universe, its support, was in paramārtha or pariniṣpanna, a state of perfection or completion that takes it out of manifestation. Hence, its support gone, the universe, too, was out of manifestation. The great wheel of life and death, or birth and rebirth, had come to a halt, but only until the next cycle seven eternities later.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on March 11, 2011 at 9:49pm

Following upon Asaṅga's Mahāyāna-saṃgraha, "Summary of the Great Vehicle," was a book by his younger brother, Vasubandhu, called the Vijñāpti-mātratā-siddhi Triṃśikā, "Thirty Verses Proving Ideation-Only." In teaching that everything is only ideation or consciousness, it naturally spoke of the ālaya-vijñāna or universal foundation consciousness. Asaṅga had described the ālaya-vijñāna as the support of the knowable (jñeya āśraya), giving this as the first of ten special features of the Mahāyāna or Great Vehicle taught by the Buddha. The second and third of these ten he gave as:

2. The defining characteristics of the knowable (jñeya-lakṣaṇa). These are the three natures (svabhāva): the imaginary nature (parikalpita-svabhāva), the dependent nature (paratantra-svabhāva), and the perfected nature (pariniṣpanna-svabhāva).

3. Entry into the defining characteristics of the knowable (jñeya-lakṣaṇa-praveśa). This is Ideation-Only (vijñāpti-mātratā).

This means that when speaking of everything that exists in the manifested universe, the "knowable" (jñeya), we understand that its support (āśraya) is the ālaya-vijñāna or universal foundation consciousness. If we want to determine just what everything knowable is, its defining characteristics, we do this by way of analyzing the knowable into its three natures. How do we do this? We are able to enter into an understanding of the three natures of all that exists through the teaching of Ideation-Only, through understanding that everything is only ideation or consciousness. So this is the subject of Vasubandhu's book, "Thirty Verses Proving Ideation-Only."

Seibun Fukaura in his ālaya-vijñāna article in the Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, posted here, recounts that about 200 years after Vasubandhu wrote this brief treatise, it was explained in detail by Dharmapāla (p. 383, 2nd column). Shortly thereafter the great Chinese pilgrim Hsuan-tsang came to India and learned

Dharmapāla's detailed explanation of Vasubandhu's brief treatise. After Hsuan-tsang returned to China, he taught this there, where it became the basis of the Yogācāra school in China, called the Fa-hsiang school. As Seibun Fukaura says, his own description of the ālaya-vijñāna given in his article is based on the treatise giving Dharmapāla's explanations.

In agreement with Asaṅga's definition of the ālaya-vijñāna as the support of the knowable, Seibun Fukaura reports (p. 383, 2nd column, bottom) that the Chinese Yogācāra or Fa-hsiang school teaches that: "The designation 'basic consciousness' is also given to the ālaya-vijñāna because all phenomena manifest themselves with this consciousness as the basis." This is the central fact about the ālaya-vijñāna that is of relevance for our present Book of Dzian research.

As far as tracing this teaching, going back to Asaṅga and the beginnings of the Yogācāra school in India takes us only to about the fourth century C.E. The Stanzas of Dzian are supposed to be much older than that. We do not know if the term ālaya is actually found in the Sanskrit version of the Stanzas, or whether it might be an ancient term found in now lost treatises. The idea of something like an ālaya-vijñāna, however, can be found in the much older Sāṃkhya system, as mahat, the great principle of intelligence in the universe.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on March 14, 2011 at 9:49pm

As we slowly proceed, it is helpful to recap what we have so far seen on the topic of ālaya and ālaya-vijñāna, the foundation and the foundation consciousness.

D. T. Suzuki in 1904 gave us one of the first reliable descriptions of the ālaya, here used in short for the ālaya-vijñāna, concluding:

"In other words, the Ālīya is at once the cause and the effect of all possible phenomena in the universe."

Seibun Fukaura said the same thing in his 1964 Encyclopaedia of Buddhism article:

"The designation 'basic consciousness' is also given to the ālaya-vijñāna because all phenomena manifest themselves with this consciousness as the basis."

This central teaching comes from Asanga's first statement in his Mahāyāna-saṃgraha, or Summary of the Great Vehicle:

The support of the knowable (jñeya āśraya) is the first special feature of the Mahayana, and this is the ālaya-vijñāna or foundation consciousness.

This is in agreement with what HPB says at the end of her entry in the Theosophical Glossary, "it is the basis or root of all things":

"Alaya (Sk.). The Universal Soul (See Secret Doctrine Vol. I. pp. 47 et seq.). The name belongs to the Tibetan system of the contemplative Mahâyâna School. Identical with Âkâsa in its mystic sense, and with Mulâprâkriti, in its essence, as it is the basis or root of all things."

We will not use "Universal Soul" for the ālaya, since HPB adopted this from Emil Schlagintweit's 1863 book, Buddhism in Tibet, at a time when almost nothing reliable about the ālaya(-vijñāna) was known. The vijñāna portion of the term is more accurately translated as "consciousness." No one uses "soul" any more for this Buddhist term.

Now that we have a basic definition of the ālaya(-vijñāna), and this is clear in our minds, we can proceed to the next step. It is the age-old difference of opinion regarding the pure ālaya and the impure ālaya-vijñāna. This question is well put for us in some opening sentences from Erich Frauwallner's article, "Amalavijñāna and ālayavijñāna," which is posted here with the Stanzas documents in the original German and in English translation.

Frauwallner's opening heading is: "The dispute as to whether the amalavijñāna or ālayavijñāna is the foundation of cognition and of the entire phenomenal world." The amala-vijñāna is one school's way of referring to what other schools called the pure ālaya. Frauwallner continues:

"At issue was the question of whether stainless cognition (amalavijñāna) or fundamental cognition (ālayavijñāna) is to be seen as the foundation of cognition and the entire phenomenal world."

.....

"In reality, this is one of the most fundamental and most difficult questions in the whole of Buddhist and of Indian epistemology."

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on March 16, 2011 at 8:05am

The great question is how multiplicity came about. Diversity and change are self-evident facts to all of us creatures of samsara. How does the one become many? This is an age-old problem for any teaching that posits an ultimate "one." Of the various forms of Vedanta that arose explaining the ultimate brahman, the Advaita or non-dual form of Vedanta explained the world of diversity as illusory, a maya. Change and multiplicity can only be our projections superimposed upon the one changeless or immutable non-dual reality. Other forms of Vedanta allowed a certain degree of change within the ultimate brahman. Some said that brahman could change or transform (parinama) into the universe.

So once we say that the ālaya or ālaya-vijñāna, the foundation or foundation consciousness, is the support or basis of all things, of the entire phenomenal world, we are faced with this question. Is the ālaya/ālaya-vijñāna something that can change, or is it immutable? Did the world arise from something changeless, which we can distinguish as pure ālaya? Or did the world arise from something that changes, which we can distinguish as the ālaya-vijñāna? The various schools of Buddhism answered this differently. Can we trace the teaching on the ālaya found in the Stanzas of Dzyan and in The Voice of the Silence to any of these schools?

In the article posted here, "Amalavijñāna and ālayavijñāna," Erich Frauwallner attempts to trace these teachings to their source. He begins with the fact that one school posits a stainless consciousness or amala-vijñāna (like the pure ālaya) as the source of the world, and another school posits an ever-changing consciousness or ālaya-vijñāna as the source of the world. He concludes that the former originates from Maitreyanatha, and that the latter originates from his pupil Asanga. Maitreyanatha is the name used by scholars such as Frauwallner to mean a historical person who was Asanga's teacher, as opposed to the "mythical" future buddha Maitreya accepted by tradition as Asanga's teacher.

We have often referred to the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga here as a book by Maitreya, following the Tibetan ascription of its authorship. In China this book is not ascribed to Maitreya. There is one strand of evidence from Chinese sources ascribing it to Saramati. This authorship is accepted by Frauwallner and many other scholars. Frauwallner says the following. Saramati preceded Maitreyanatha, and Maitreyanatha accepted the teachings found in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga. These teachings posit an ultimate mind (citta) that is pure (suddha) and luminous (prabhasvara). This idea was adopted by Maitreyanatha and put forth in his book,

Mahayana-sutralamkara, "Ornament to the Sutras of the Great Vehicle," especially in chapter 9.

It is this idea that appears as the stainless consciousness or amala-vijñāna taught in China by the Indian translator Paramartha, and is found in the early She-lun school that arose based on his teachings. This idea, under other names, was accepted by the Chinese Buddhist schools of Ch'an and Hua-yen, which eventually dominated Buddhism in China. They hold that the world arises from a pure ālaya, or the one mind, and they liken the appearance of the world in it to waves in the ocean.

In contrast to this, the Chinese pilgrim and translator Hsuan-tsang, following the teachings of Dharmapala that he learned while in India, taught that the changing world can only have arisen from a changing ālaya-vijñāna or foundation consciousness. Frauwallner believes that this was an innovation introduced into the teaching of Maitreyanatha by his pupil Asanga, in Asanga's book, the Mahayana-samgraha, "Summary of the Great Vehicle." So Frauwallner traces the teaching of a stainless consciousness (amala-vijñāna) or pure ālaya to Maitreyanatha, and he traces the teaching of a changing foundation consciousness (ālaya-vijñāna) to Asanga.

To do this, we must assume that Asanga misunderstood his teacher Maitreya(natha) to such an extent that he introduced the (mistaken) teaching of a changing ālaya-vijñāna or foundation consciousness. This is an assumption that requires more of a stretch than many are willing to make. If, for example, like Frauwallner we accept the strand of evidence from Chinese tradition that attributes the authorship of the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga to Saramati, and thereby reject the Tibetan tradition's attribution of this text to Maitreya, then why would we reject the widespread Chinese attribution of the authorship of the Yogacara-bhumi to Maitreya, and thereby accept the Tibetan tradition's attribution of this text to Asanga? For the Yogacara-bhumi does speak of the ālaya-vijñāna, and does describe it as changing and as something that disappears upon enlightenment. I do not think we can regard the teaching of the changing ālaya-vijñāna as a mistaken innovation introduced into the teachings of Maitreya(natha) by Asanga. It seems to me unlikely that Asanga would have radically misunderstood his teacher. For our purposes, I think we will have to try to find a way to harmonize these two teachings or see where they come together, despite the historical fact that they did not do so in the various Buddhist schools.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on March 18, 2011 at 8:01pm [Delete Comment](#)

The main sourcebook on the ālaya-vijñāna, as we know, is Asaṅga's Mahāyāna-saṃgraha, "Summary of the Great Vehicle." This book was translated into French by Etienne Lamotte and published in 1939. Although this was an early translation by Lamotte, preceded only by the Samdhinirmocana-sutra in 1935, it is still excellent. He was one of the greatest translators of our time. An English translation from Lamotte's French translation was made by Ani Migme, and an electronic version of this can be requested from her. Go to this website, which will give you her direct email address:

<http://www.gampoabbey.org/translations2/index.html>

After giving the ten special features of the Mahāyāna or Great Vehicle, of which the first is the support of the knowable, namely, the ālaya-vijñāna, Asaṅga gives some important explanations about it. The first four paragraphs of this are quoted below from Ani Migme's translation, pp. 32-34:

"1. First of all, (atra tāvat), at the very beginning (prathamata eva: cf. Prastāvanā, § 3), it was said that the store-consciousness (ālayavijñāna) is the support of the knowable (jñeyāśraya). The Bhagavat has spoken of the store-consciousness. Where did he speak of the store-consciousness? - In the Abhidharmasūtra (cf. Triṃśikā, p. 37; Siddhi, p. 169) Bhagavat spoke this verse:

anādikāliko dhātuḥ sarvadharmasamāśrayaḥ /

tasmin sati gatiḥsarvā nirvāṇādhigamo 'pi ca //

It is the beginningless element; it is the common support of all dharmas. Given this consciousness, there exists every destiny and entry into nirvāṇa. [133b16]

2. In the same sūtra (cf. Siddhi, p. 172), it is said: "The consciousness which, supplied with all the seeds (sarvabījaka), underlies (ālīyate) every dharma, is called root, fundamental, receptacle store-(ālaya). I have revealed it to the virtuous ones." Such is the āgama. [133b19]

3. Why is this consciousness called store-consciousness (all-basis consciousness)? - It is a store-consciousness because all defiled (sāṃkleśika) dharmas of those who are born (jātimat) are lodged within it (asminn ālīyante) as fruit (phalabhavana), and it itself is lodged in the dharmas as cause (hetubhāvena). Or again (athavā), it

is a store-consciousness because beings (sattva) are lodged in it as if in their self (svātman). [133b24]

4. This consciousness is also called appropriating consciousness (ādānavijñāna). On this subject, an āgama, the Saṃdhanirmocanasūtra, V, 7, says:

ādānavijñāna gabhīrasūkṣmo ogho tathā vartati sarvabījo /

bālāna eṣo mayi na prakāśi ma haiva ātmā parikalpayeyuḥ //

Like a violent current, the profound and subtle store-consciousness proceeds with all its seeds. Fearing lest they would imagine it to be a self, I have not revealed it to fools. [133b28]"

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on March 22, 2011 at 7:49am

Now that there is full access here to the Samkhya-karika and its old commentaries by Gaudapada and others, including English translations, we interrupt the ālaya-vijñāna thread to post the following three quotations relevant to the origins of the Stanzas of Dzyan:

"This first instalment of the esoteric doctrines is based upon Stanzas, which are the records of a people unknown to ethnology; it is claimed that they are written in a tongue absent from the nomenclature of languages and dialects with which philology is acquainted; they are said to emanate from a source (Occultism) repudiated by science; and, finally, they are offered through an agency, incessantly discredited before the world by all those who hate unwelcome truths, or have some special hobby of their own to defend. Therefore, the rejection of these teachings may be expected, and must be accepted beforehand. No one styling himself a "scholar," in whatever department of exact science, will be permitted to regard these teachings seriously. They will be derided and rejected a priori in this century; but only in this one. For in the twentieth century of our era scholars will begin to recognize that the Secret Doctrine has neither been invented nor exaggerated, but, on the contrary, simply outlined; and finally, that its teachings antedate the Vedas."

(The Secret Doctrine, vol. 1, p. xxxvii.)

[Samkhya-karika, verse 70, or 69 in the Chinese translation:] "That excellent and beneficent knowledge has been communicated through compassion by the muni [Kapila], first to Asuri, who, in his turn, communicated it to Pancasikha."

[Svarna-saptati commentary:] "'That excellent and beneficent knowledge.' That knowledge was established for the first time before the four Vedas had appeared. It is by that knowledge that the four Vedas and all the religious schools have been established; that is why one calls it excellent (agrya)."

(Svarna-saptati-vyakhya, translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by Paramartha between 546 and 569 C.E., from Chinese into French by J. Takakusu, published in 1904, and from French into English by S. S. Suryanarayanan, published in 1932, p. 111.)

[Referring to the Yukti-dipika commentary on Samkhya-karika, verse 70:] "The Yukti-dipika boldly declares in this connection that the Sastra [Samkhya] was promulgated by Kapila at the beginning (of creation), hence it is not possible like [in] other systems of thought, to enumerate its lineage of teachers even in [a] hundred years."

(Pulinbihari Chakravarti, Origin and Development of the Samkhya System of Thought, 1951, p. 130. He had "discovered" the Yukti-dipika and prepared its first Sanskrit edition, published in 1938.)

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on March 27, 2011 at 4:09pm

Those who seek to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzyan will find the following parallels with Samkhya to be worthy of attention:

1. As we have seen in the last posting, HPB says that the teachings of the Secret Doctrine "antedate the Vedas," and the old Svarna-saptati commentary says that the Samkhya teachings were "established for the first time before the four Vedas had appeared." This old commentary was translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by Paramartha in the mid-500s C.E. This statement has dropped out of the other commentaries on the Samkhya-karika that we now have.

2. HPB says that the Secret Doctrine was originally taught by the "Divine Instructors" (SD vol. 2, Stanza XII), highly advanced teachers who came in with this knowledge from previous cycles, at the beginning of our cycle. Gaudapada in his commentary on Samkhya-karika, verse 1, describes the first teacher of Samkhya,

Kapila, as one of the seven (mind-born) sons of Brahma. Kapila is there said to have been born with virtue, knowledge, desirelessness, and power already present. He did not have to develop them; he came in with this knowledge.

3. HPB says that the teachings of the Secret Doctrine were given to our humanity at the beginning of the fifth root-race, which would have been about one million years ago (SD vol. 2, pp. 10, 435). The Yukti-dipika commentary on Samkhya-karika, verse 70, says that Samkhya "was promulgated by Kapila at the beginning (of creation), hence it is not possible like [in] other systems of thought, to enumerate its lineage of teachers even in [a] hundred years."

4. HPB says that the teachings of the Secret Doctrine form the basis of all the later religions and philosophies of the world: "the now Secret Wisdom was once the one fountain head, the ever-flowing perennial source, at which were fed all its streamlets -- the later religions of all nations -- from the first down to the last" (SD vol. 1, pp. xlv-xlv). The old Suvarna-saptati commentary says about Samkhya: "It is by that knowledge that the four Vedas and all the religious schools have been established."

5. HPB describes the teachings of the Secret Doctrine as being once universal: "The Secret Doctrine was the universally diffused religion of the ancient and prehistoric world" (SD vol. 1, p. xxxiv). As far as India goes, and leaving aside the Vedic period for which we have too little source material to draw upon, the Samkhya teachings do seem to have been once universal in that spiritual motherland of our planet. That is, Samkhya seems to have been the prevailing worldview in ancient India, judging from its being taken for granted in the great epic, the Mahabharata, and in the Puranas, the eighteen books pertaining to what is "ancient" (purana), giving traditions and history from the traditional standpoint. It is also noteworthy that when the Buddha sought out a spiritual teacher, circa 6th century B.C.E., he is depicted in the Buddha-carita as receiving Samkhya teachings from his teacher Arada Kalama.

6. The Theosophical teachings that HPB brought out are supposed to be only a small portion of a much larger body of teachings that are preserved in secret books. The Samkhya-karika says in its concluding verses that it summarizes in 70 verses what is found in the (now lost) Sasti-tantra (Shashti-tantra), "The Sixty Topics." According to the Suvarna-saptati commentary on verse 70, the Sasti-tantra consists of 60,000 verses.

Regarding the lost Sasti-tantra, the ancient original Samkhya sourcebook, I will repeat here what I said on another forum. Its name has always been known, but it was seen as being mostly mythical, since nothing more than its name was known. In the first half of the twentieth century, the prevailing scholarly opinion came to see it as merely meaning "sixty topics," rather than a book of that title. Then in the mid-twentieth century a very old Jaina commentary was discovered and published, on the Dvadasara-naya-cakra, that quoted the Sasti-tantra by name. From this, Erich Frauwallner identified other quotations as being from the Sasti-tantra that were found in the Tibetan translation of Jinendrabuddhi's commentary on the Pramana-samuccaya. In 2005, the first chapter of Jinendrabuddhi's commentary that contained these quotations was published in the original Sanskrit, having been recovered from Tibet. So we now have actual quotations from this book, hitherto thought to be only mythical.

Those who want to know the core teachings of the Wisdom Tradition that have been handed down in the lost Sasti-tantra, and then summarized in seventy verses in the Samkhya-karika, may look at the Sanskrit Language Study forum. The first of these verses has now been posted there in Sanskrit and English, and the rest will slowly follow. You do not have to know a word of Sanskrit to follow the English there posted. Or, complete English translations have been posted to the Online Sanskrit Texts Project files.

Comment by [Joe Fulton](#) on March 27, 2011 at 4:47pm

Time for a checkpoint.

How much closer have we come to establishing an origins to the Stanzas of Dzyan within extant literature?

In recent days the quest has become a bit more clouded in the sense of the disparity between Eastern (specifically Indian/Hindu) traditions and Western methodology. The epistemologies are divergent in many respects. Here in the West we insist on a written link, an 'objective' chain of evidence between the current usage and the origins of an idea. In Hindu culture the transmission of experience is primary. One must not only have the words but they must also correctly grasp the essence of the truth through direct transmission (see comment by Ananda Wood [via Capt. Kumar]).

This is the experience related to by HPB and others in their shorter tomes (Voice of the Silence and Light on the Path), so does this tradition of 'transmission' render the knowledge invalid in our culture? If so, then any comment made about the Stanzas or any attempt to obtain proof by Western methods may be doomed to failure as the lack of proof is a function of the cultural basis of the knowledge.

That being said, the tack that this discussion has chosen to follow is that of proof by Western means. In that light, and in the sense that our goal here is to find the true origins of the Stanzas, what we need to do at this point is to answer a few questions, as checkpoint on our journey.

These are:

- a) What do we know for sure?*
- b) What do we know that we don't know?*
- c) Of the things that we don't know, which items should be the highest priorities?*
- d) Of those things that we don't know, which of those items are we closest to proving and which are farthest from proof?*
- e) What resources do we need to get to those items prioritized in 'c', above?*

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on March 28, 2011 at 6:41pm

Yes, it is time for a checkpoint.

"How much closer have we come to establishing an origins to the Stanzas of Dzyan within extant literature?"

If anything, I think that we have further established that the Stanzas of Dzyan are not to be found in the extant literature. Since no Stanza has yet been found in the known books, we must conclude that either HPB made them up, or that she actually translated them from a secret source. The best that we have been able to do is to provide circumstantial evidence in favor of the second of these two possibilities.

Regarding method, HPB in writing The Secret Doctrine very fully followed the time-honored Eastern method. She attempted to extensively support the newly brought out teachings with quotations and comparisons to all the known religions and philosophies of the world. The presupposition shared by all three major religious

traditions of ancient India, namely, Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism, is that they begin with what we may call revelation. In Hinduism, this revelation is the Vedas, seen by ancient Seers or Rishis. In Jainism, this revelation is the teaching of the omniscient Jina, named Mahavira, and his predecessors, the twenty-three preceding Jinas or Tirthankaras. In Buddhism, this revelation is the teaching of the omniscient Buddha, named Gautama, and his predecessors, the previous Buddhas. Such revelation is regarded as coming from those whose insight far surpasses what normal mortals can reach, so it must be preserved and passed down without alteration. Innovation is actively discouraged. Thus, anything that appears to be new must be shown to not contradict the original revelation, and this is done by supporting it with references from the original revelation showing its agreement.

In the case of the Advaita Vedanta school of Hinduism, for example, its great teacher and founding father is Shankaracharya. In following the revelation of the Vedas, he came and emphasized the teachings of the end portion of the Vedic writings, namely, the Upanishads. Thus, we get the name Vedanta, the "end" (anta) of the Vedas. In so doing, he had to de-emphasize the teachings of the earlier portion of the Vedic writings, which, at least in his time, were understood as teaching rituals and sacrifices. We see him doing this in his debate with the Mimamsa school, which emphasized the former portion of the Vedic writings. Once this was done, and the teachings of the Upanishads were established as the Vedic writings that he followed and taught, he had to show that what he taught was the correct interpretation of the Upanishads. This was in contradistinction to the interpretation given by the other philosophical schools or darshanas. His writings consist of his voluminous commentaries on the Upanishads, on the Brahma-sutras, and on the Bhagavad-gita, and a number of smaller works. His extensive commentaries have always been regarded as his major works. These are filled with quotations from the Vedic writings supporting his interpretations. The teachings he gave were thus primarily scriptural. In fact, he regarded "scripture" as the one means of valid knowledge (pramana), and rejected logic or reasoning as a means to ultimate truth. Naturally, his teachings were based on his direct experience. But without extensive scriptural quotations from the accepted Vedic revelation, his teachings would not have been widely accepted.

HPB, then, followed the same time-honored Eastern method. In bringing out something that appeared to be new, she was obliged to try to show that she had not invented it. She did this by supplying a large number of quotations from and comparisons with all the known religions and philosophies of the world that were in agreement with what she brought out.

So digging out supporting references is what HPB did to make the Stanzas of Dzyan believable. Now, more than a hundred years later, there are a hundred times as many sources available to draw upon for this. In our search for the origins of the Stanzas of Dzyan here, we have brought out only a few highlights from these. If we have not yet traced their origins, we have at least helped to pave the way for their acceptance. To me, the evidence for their existence is convincing. Someone has them. Their release to the public, I suppose, is dependent on the demand for them, and on the reception they will get. As for the rest of the questions on where we are in our journey, I will try to give some reply to them before too long if no one else does. I would be glad to hear from others on these.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on March 31, 2011 at 7:51pm

I have been thinking about the questions that Joe raised about the Stanzas of Dzyan.

a) What do we know for sure?

I am not sure that we know anything for sure about them. Probably what we are closest to being sure of is that they are not to be found among extant writings. If we take into account circumstantial evidence, however, we have some fairly high probabilities.

Across from the opening page of the Stanzas, five of Rig-veda 10.129's seven verses are quoted. If both the Stanzas and the Rig-veda hymn were shown to someone who had not seen them before, without telling that person where either of them came from, that person would most likely conclude that the Rig-veda hymn borrowed from or was derived from the Stanzas. This is because the Stanzas are more detailed and comprehensive. Based on the likelihood that this simple experiment indicates, we can look at some probabilities.

Let us take, for the moment, the working hypothesis that the Stanzas of Dzyan do in fact represent the cosmogony of a once universal but now hidden tradition, a primeval revelation from which the known traditions of the world are derived. The phrase in Stanza 1, verse 5, "Darkness alone filled the boundless all," would then have been the source for Rig-veda 10.129, verse 3, "Darkness there was, and all at first was veiled in gloom profound." This connects the Stanzas of Dzyan to the Vedas.

Now let us move down to verse 9 of Stanza 1, where the word "alaya" is used. This, in this phrase, "the alaya of the universe," is a usage known only in Buddhist texts, specifically Yogachara texts. This connects the Stanzas of Dzyan to specific Buddhist texts. These Buddhist texts, however, do not use either the term or the image of "darkness" in their cosmogony. This means that we cannot connect the Stanzas to either the Vedas exclusively, or to these specific Buddhist texts exclusively.

We are left with either the working hypothesis we began with, namely, that the known traditions of the world are in fact derived from the hidden tradition of the Stanzas, or that HPB invented these Stanzas and made a hodgepodge of the known traditions of the world. The origins of the Stanzas traced up to this point could be taken either way. But there is more.

Looking at the esoteric Senzar Catechism that is quoted in *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. 9:

"What is that which was, is, and will be, whether there is a Universe or not; whether there be gods or none?' asks the esoteric Senzar Catechism. And the answer made is -- space."

As we have seen in this blog, this is closely parallel to a phrase that is quoted dozens and dozens of times in dozens and dozens of old Buddhist texts: "Whether the Tathagatas arise or whether the Tathagatas do not arise, the dhatu (the "element," or "basic space") remains." This is not found in any known Buddhist catechism-type text. Moreover, the Buddhist texts that it is found in were not published in HPB's time. The probability here is that these old Buddhist texts adopted this formulaic or catechismic truth, far more than that HPB derived it from these texts.

Then, the Occult Catechism is quoted further in *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. 11:

"The Occult Catechism contains the following questions and answers:

"What is it that ever is?" "Space, the eternal Anupadaka." "What is it that ever was?" "The Germ in the Root." "What is it that is ever coming and going?" "The Great Breath." "Then, there are three Eternals?" "No, the three are one. That which ever is is one, that which ever was is one, that which is ever being and becoming is also one: and this is Space."

Here we also have reference to the "Great Breath," something that we do not hear of in the known texts. But in recent decades, as the long esoteric Kalachakra Tantra became available, we find the "great breath" (maha-prana) in it as a cosmic principle. This text was quite unknown to the outside world in HPB's time. But it is one of the "Books of Kiu-te," the Buddhist tantras, whose secret versions are said by her to be the source of the Stanzas of Dzyan.

There is also here reference to the "germ." As we have seen, the gotra, the "germ," is taught in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, a text attributed to Maitreya in Tibetan tradition, alongside the dhatu, the "element" or "basic space." We recall HPB saying in her 1886 letter to A. P. Sinnett that:

"I have finished an enormous Introductory Chapter, or Preamble, Prologue, call it what you will; just to show the reader that the text as it goes, every Section beginning with a page of translation from the Book of Dzyan and the Secret Book of "Maytreya Buddha" Champai chhos Nga (in prose, not the five books in verse known, which are a blind) are no fiction."

The Ratna-gotra-vibhaga did not become available in the West until the twentieth century, with an English translation from Tibetan by E. Obermiller in 1931, and the Sanskrit text discovered in Tibet in the 1930s by Rahula Sankrtyayana, edited by E. H. Johnston and published in 1950. Again, the probability here is slim that HPB could have come up with her Occult Catechism statements based on the then quite unavailable Kalachakra Tantra and Ratna-gotra-vibhaga.

So the probability is high that the Stanzas were not concocted by HPB, even though we have not been able to trace a single Stanza to any known work. But we do not know this for sure. Not until we get an original language text of them. This is what we know that we don't have. I do not know how to get this. All I know is that I have to keep preparing as assiduously as I can for when the Book of Dzyan becomes available.

Comment by [Bob Holmstrom](#) on April 4, 2011 at 12:41am

Why is this .doc instead of .rtf or .otf?

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on April 5, 2011 at 11:15am

Bob, I don't know. Maybe someone who knows the difference between these can answer.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on April 5, 2011 at 11:21am

We continue now with the ālaya or ālaya-vijñāna, the foundation or foundation consciousness. This is one of the few terms found in the Stanzas of Dzyan (as we have them in HPB's English translation) that are distinctive enough to be traced to a specific source. The specific source is Yogachara Buddhist texts. The teaching of a universal foundation consciousness was derived by the future Buddha Maitreya from sutras spoken by the historical Buddha Gautama, and then elaborated by Maitreya to his pupil Asanga, who in turn taught this to his younger brother Vasubandhu. We have seen in an 1886 letter by HPB to Sinnett, quoted here several times, that she links the Book of Dzyan to the "Secret Book of Maytreya Buddha." This private letter was written not long after she had begun writing The Secret Doctrine. When The Secret Doctrine was published a couple years later, her public statement in it was (vol. 1, p. xxii): "The Book of Dzyan (or "Dzan") is utterly unknown to our Philologists, or at any rate was never heard of by them under its present name." As far as I know, this earlier private letter is the only place where she gave a name that has been heard of, a specific author's name. So we must take the distinctive teachings that are specifically connected to Maitreya, such as the ālaya-vijñāna, very seriously in our search.

We have seen that when Asanga wrote his summary of the Buddhist Mahayana teachings (Mahayana-samgraha), he gave the ālaya-vijñāna or foundation consciousness first place in his tenfold systematization of the teachings of the Great Vehicle (Mahayana). He defined it as the "support of the knowable" (jñeyāśraya), the basis or foundation of everything in the known or manifested universe. This book is Asanga's own summary of the Mahayana teachings, based heavily on what he received from Maitreya. The massive Yogachara-bhumi is a huge text attributed by Tibetan tradition to Asanga, but attributed by the older Chinese tradition to Maitreya. Even if Asanga wrote it down, both traditions are clear that he received its teachings from Maitreya. In the latter portion of this extensive book, the Viniscaya-samgrahani section, eight proofs are given for the existence of the ālaya-vijñāna. These eight classic proofs were then quoted in the commentary on Asanga's Abhidharma-samuccaya, where we have them in the

original Sanskrit today. They were also quoted in their Tibetan translation by Tsongkhapa in one of his early books, the Ocean of Eloquence.

Below are given some rather extensive quotations, for those who want to follow this out a bit. But don't worry, there will not be a quiz on these eight proofs for the existence of the ālaya-vijñāna. The main thing is to know that Maitreya and Asanga taught the ālaya-vijñāna or foundation consciousness, and that they gave proofs for its existence, proofs that were accepted and repeated by Tsongkhapa. Please stay tuned for my next post on this, even if it takes me a few days (or several days), where a surprising fact and its implications regarding the source of the Stanzas of Dzyan and the Theosophical teachings will be brought in.

The eight proofs for the existence of the ālaya-vijñāna given by Maitreya and Asanga are not easy to understand. Understanding them depends on a fairly comprehensive knowledge of the Buddhist teachings. Here is a brief paraphrase of them by Damdul Namgyal from his article, "Alayavijnana as Expounded by Tzongkhapa," published in the book, Mind Only School and Buddhist Logic: A Collection of Seminar Papers, edited by Doboomb Tulku (New Delhi: Tibet House, 1990), p. 39:

"According to this text, in the absence of a stable mind like the alayavijnana, migration from one lifetime to another would not be tenable. Likewise, in the absence of such a consciousness, other mental processes would also not be possible, such as the simultaneous emergence of two different consciousnesses, the greater clarity of a particular consciousness, the forming of imprints of wholesome and unwholesome mental states, the observation of activity, the presence of all-pervading bodily sensations, the mindless meditational absorptions, and last, the mental states experienced during the death process. Of these eight reasonings in support of the alayavijnana, the one concerning the impossibility of mental states leaving their imprints has been dealt with in great detail, with five additional reasons to support it. These five reasons constitute what is called the five lines of reasoning presented in the Mahayanasamgraha."

The text that Damdul Namgyal paraphrases these eight proofs from is Tsongkhapa's treatise on the alaya-vijnana, mentioned above, which is among his earlier works. It has been translated into English by Gareth Sparham, with Shotaro Iida, as Ocean of Eloquence: Tsong kha pa's Commentary on the Yogacara Doctrine of Mind (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993). The eight proofs are given on pp. 124-133. Here are pp. 123-124, where they are introduced. Tsongkhapa, like Maitreya and Asanga who he is following, establishes the

existence of the *ālaya-vijñāna* through scripture and reasoning. He first does so through scripture, then follows this by reasoning, giving the eight proofs. The explanations of the eight proofs are not quoted here. The *klista-manas*, or "defiled mind," is the normal mind, the individual mind, in contradistinction to the universal mind or foundation consciousness, the *ālaya-vijñāna*. These two form the seventh and eighth consciousnesses taught in *Yogachara*, where the six lower consciousnesses are those of the five senses (the eye, etc.), and the mind taken separately as a sense organ (whose object is *dharmas* or knowable things).

"If one asserts an *alaya-vijnana* and *klista-manas* different to the six consciousnesses how does one prove their existence?"

"From believable scriptural authority (*agama*) and through reasoning (*yukti*) one should come to understand that there are a [*klista-*] *manas* and *alaya-vijnana* different from the six consciousnesses.'

"There are two ways to establish them: by scriptural authority and by reasoning. In regard to the scriptural authority for *alaya-vijnana* and *klista-manas*, first, the *alaya-vijnana*. The *Mahayanabhidharma-sutra* says:

"There is an element which has no beginning in time that is the basis of *dharmas*. By reason of its existence there are all places of rebirth and also the attainment of *nirvana*.'

"and [the *Mahayanabhidharma-sutra*] also says:

"All *dharmas* adhere to the consciousness with all seeds. I therefore explain the *alaya-vijnana* ('consciousness which is basis of all') to the excellent ones.'

"The *Samdhi-nirmocana-sutra* says:

"The *adana-vijnana* ('appropriating consciousness') is deep and subtle. It flows on with all seeds like a surging river. I do not, however, teach it to simpletons lest they suppose it to be a soul (*atman*).'

"And the *Arya-lankavatara-sutra* says:

"The mind (*citta*) is *alaya-vijnana*, the egotistical thought is *manas*, and the awarenesses of the objects [of the senses] are *pravrtti-vijnanas* ('entering differentiated cognitions').'

"There are an infinite number of such Mahayana sutra references. . . .

"The passages in the Arya-ghana-vyuha-sutra and the [Arya]-lankavatara-sutra, etc., which mention eight consciousnesses also serve as proof.

"Second, in regard to reasoning (yukti), there is reasoning [which establishes the existence] of alaya-vijnana and of klista-manas. First:

"Although there are an infinite number of reasonings given in the Yogacara school's texts [to establish alaya-vijnana], I will explain eight which systematize them: the impossibility of a) taking [rebirth], b) a first [mind], c) clarity, d) seeds, e) action, f) physical experience, g) meditative absorption, and h) passing away.'

"In the Mahayana-samgraha five reasons are treated at length along with related matters. These are the impossibility of being afflicted (samklista) a) by afflictive emotion (klesa), b) by action, and c) by birth; and the impossibility of d) ordinary and e) transcendental states of purity. In [Vasubandhu's] Panca-skandha-prakarana there are four reasons. In the latter part of the [Yogacara]-bhumi-vyakhya there are seventeen scriptural proofs and also proofs based on reasoning. In [Gunamati's] Pratitya-samutpadadi-vibhanga-nirdesa-tika there are some of the Mahayana-samgraha's proofs. And the way it is established as set forth in the Abhidharma-samuccaya is this: The Viniscaya-samgrahani [of the Yogacara-bhumi] says:

"There would be the impossibility of a) taking, b) the first, c) clarity (spastatva), d) seeds, e) action, f) physical feeling, g) mindless meditative absorption (acitte samapatti), and h) passing away.'

"These are formulated in the Abhidharma-samuccaya-bhasya as eight reasons as follows:

"One should understand the existence of the alaya-vijnana in eight ways. If there were no alaya-vijnana, a) taking a body would be impossible, b) emergence of an initial [consciousness] would be impossible, c) emergence of clarity would be impossible, d) being a seed would be impossible, e) action would be impossible, f) physical experience would be impossible, g) mindless meditative absorption would be impossible, and h) consciousness that passes away would be impossible.'

"Since these include nearly all [of the different proofs set forth in the above texts] I shall discuss these eight. . . ."

Here follow Tsongkhapa's explanations of each of the eight proofs. Tsongkhapa quoted the eight proofs of the alaya-vijnana from the Abhidharma-samuccaya-

bhasya, where they were in turn quoted from the Viniscaya-samgrahani portion of the Yogacara-bhumi by Maitreya (Chinese tradition) or Asanga (Tibetan tradition). These proofs were translated by Paul J. Griffiths in his 1986 book, On Being Mindless: Buddhist Meditation and the Mind-Body Problem, pp. 129-138. Following the eight proofs in the Viniscaya-samgrahani is an explanation of the arising and functioning of the alaya-vijnana, and the cessation of the alaya-vijnana. Both of these portions were translated by William S. Waldron in his 2003 book, The Buddhist Unconscious: The alaya-vijnana in the Context of Indian Buddhist Thought, pp. 178-189. I give all these references in case anyone wants to pursue this question, and is in a position to do so.

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on April 5, 2011 at 12:51pm

David wrote : " The teaching of a universal foundation consciousness was derived by the future Buddha Maitreya from sutras spoken by the historical Buddha Gautama".

One of the original sutra could be the Maharatnakuta Sutra as some translations were made by the Buddhist Association of the United State, and published in 1983 under the title "A Treasury of Mahayana Sutras, Garma C.C. Chang, General Editor - Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.

Chapter 10, which is the translation of sutra n°39 is named The Elucidation of Consciousness, and the comment made by the translator indicates the link with alaya-vijnana :

" This sutra seems to be one of the forerunners or germinal sources of the Mind-Only philosophy of the Yagachara school. The reader will find that the consciousness discussed here is in many ways similar to the Yogachara idea of the 'store-consciousness', which stores or upholds memory, impression, and karmic power. Some Buddhists believe that without it, the doctrines of reincarnation, karma, supreme enlightenment of Buddhahood, and ultimately, the altruistic deeds of a Bodhisattva would not be possible".

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on April 8, 2011 at 3:34pm

The sutra that you referred us to, Jacques, was a good source, and one that I was unaware of. I have now had a chance to go through it, and Nancy has read it and

reviewed it. Here are the statements relating to the idea of the ālaya-vijñāna that she picked out (quoted from *A Treasury of Mahayana Sutras*, Pennsylvania State University Press):

The Elucidation of Consciousness (Sutra)

"Wise Protector, the consciousness, in its self-nature [[svabhava]], pervades everywhere [in the body] but is not tainted by any part. Although it dwells in the six sense-organs, the six sense-objects, and the five aggregates which are defiled, it is not stained by any of them; it only functions through them.

". . . Consciousness is devoid of form and substance, but it upholds all in the dharmadhatu; . . ." (p. 226)

"This same great earth provides nutrients composed of all the four elements to nourish plants, but different seeds will produce different crops. In the same way, from the same consciousness that upholds the entire dharmadhatu come all the samsaric beings with bodies of different colors, such as white, black, yellow, and red; and with different dispositions, such as gentleness and irascibility.

"However, Wise Protector, consciousness has no hands, no feet, no members, and no language.

"The power of memory is very strong in the dharmadhatu, so when the consciousness leaves a sentient being's body at his death, it combines with the power of memory to become the seed of his next life. Apart from consciousness, there is no dharmadhatu, and vice versa." (p. 227)

There is a sutta in the Pali canon that is often quoted in regard to a consciousness that is beyond the elements. It is the *Kevaddha Sutta* in the first division of the *Digha-nikaya*. The passage in question comes at the end of this sutta. It is, as translated by Maurice Walshe in *The Long Discourses of the Buddha* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1987, 1995), pp. 179-180:

"Where do earth, water, fire and air no footing find?

Where are long and short, small and great, fair and foul --

Where are 'name-and-form' wholly destroyed?

And the answer is:

Where consciousness is signless, boundless, all-luminous,

*That's where earth, water, fire and air find no footing,
There both long and short, small and great, fair and foul --
There 'name-and-form' are wholly destroyed.
With the cessation of consciousness this is all destroyed."*

Comment by [Truth Collins](#) on April 9, 2011 at 10:56am

*@ Paul, by searching google books, as you did, and ordering the results by date I found similar spellings but in reference to Egypt, as you mentioned.
<http://tinyurl.com/3srqj9z>*

Other similar spellings mentioned are: Sangar, Zinzar, Shinshar and Sejar. "Shankar was ... Probably the Egyptian Senzar or Sangar. Whether it be the same as Zinzar, Shinshar (II S. Homs), or Sejar (13 N.W. Homs), is not clear.

Though I wonder about the root or phonetic meaning in the sense of inherent meaning. On the face of it, it sounds like a compound combination of the English word "sense" and "tsar" or ruler. Hence, the "ruler of the senses" is a fitting definition since it is by our senses that we know the world. The ruler, of course, is our "Higher Self."

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on April 14, 2011 at 10:33am

I did not mean to keep everyone in suspense for so long, when I asked in my post of April 5 that you please stay tuned for my next post on the ālaya-vijñāna. But a pressing task then arose that had to be attended to, and will take a couple more days still. The reason that I wanted readers to stay tuned is that I did not want to leave the wrong impression about Tsongkhapa. In the long quote posted, he is teaching the ālaya-vijñāna. But this is from an early work of his. He went on to completely reject the ālaya-vijñāna, not only its ultimate existence, but even its conventional existence. For he and the Gelugpa order he founded, the ālaya-vijñāna, the foundation consciousness, does not exist.

Comment by Jacques Mahnich on April 14, 2011 at 12:47pm

Still on Alaya, reading the STANZA I.9 "But where was the Dangma when the Alaya of the universe was in Paramartha and the great wheel was Anupadaka", H.P.B , in her commentary, refers to another tibetan name (p.52) (Sangbai Dag-Po) as the "Concealed Lord", "the one merged with the absolute" , which can have no parents since he is Self-existent, and one with the Universal Spirit (Svayambhu), the Svâbhâvat in the highest aspect.

Was this Sangbai Dag-Po identified in the tibetan buddhism pantheon ?

Comment by David Reigle on April 15, 2011 at 8:45pm

HPB brought in Sangbai Dag-po from Emil Schlagintweit's 1863 book, Buddhism in Tibet, p. 50. The actual Tibetan spelling is gsang ba'i bdag po. It is a translation of the Sanskrit guhyapati, as Schlagintweit correctly says; or more often, as reference works now available show, of Sanskrit Guhyadhipati. The meaning of these two is pretty much the same. The first word, Sanskrit guhya or Tibetan gsang ba, means "secret." The second word, Sanskrit pati or adhipati, Tibetan bdag po, means "lord." It can be taken as a karmadharaya compound, like Schlagintweit took it, "concealed lord," or it can be taken as a tatpuruṣa compound, "lord of secrets." In either case, it refers to vajradhara or adi-buddha.

Comment by Jacques Mahnich on April 16, 2011 at 1:14pm

Thank you for the answer, David. The "Lord of Secrets" appears also as another name for Vajrasattva.

Now that most of the cosmological concepts have been identified and described from buddhist tradition, it is interesting to read another account of creation, written by a Tibetan Master from 19th century. Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé (1813-1899) wrote a root text called The Encompassment of All Knowledge (Shes bya kun khyab), and his own commentary The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge (Shes bya mtha' yas pa'i rgya mtsho). The first volume named Myriad Worlds discusses Buddhist cosmography and the genesis of beings who inhabit the universe. He delineates four levels of cosmology : the Individual Way, the Universal Way, the Cosmology of the Kalachakra, and the Dzog-Chen one.

For the Dzog-Chen one, he draws from the Tsig-dön-dzö (Tshig don mdzog) of Longchenpa, and one can read another "creation hymn" in which we recognize the "ground-of-all", the "clear light of bliss", the energy (fohat) (p.209) :

" The original ground of the primordially pure (inner) sphere of reality [is called] the youthful vase-body.

When its seal breaks, the energy-wind of pristine wisdom is set in motion.

The movement of the energy-wind of wisdom causes intrinsic awareness to emerge from the ground of being.

This intrinsic awareness itself manifests as the eight gates of being's spontaneity.

At that time, the manifestation of the primordially pure dimension of reality appears above, like a cloudless sky.

The manifestation of the enjoyment dimension realms of clear light which pervades the expanse of space appears directly in front.

From the creativity of intrinsic awareness, the great manifestation of the ground appears below.

From the creativity of intrinsic awareness, the manifestation of the enjoyment dimension of awakening appears further below ; and [around it] the realms of the natural manifest dimension of awakening appear in the cardinal and intermediate directions.

Still further below, the countless realms that are personal perceptions of the six types of beings appear through the gate of cyclic life.

Everything arises naturally from the display of the eight gates of being's spontaneity and is therefore called the great simultaneous display of cyclic life and perfect peace.

When inner clarity manifests as outer clarity [the display of cyclic life and perfect peace], the unceasing space of [this display's] nature is innate clarity ; the manifestation of its character is the five lights, the primordial radiance ; and the manifestation of its energy is the natural quality of openness, like a cloudless sky."

Then, Kongtrul goes on explaining the eight gates of manifestation as explained in the Tantra of Great Beauty and Auspiciousness.

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on April 17, 2011 at 11:06am

The eight gates of manifestation are as explained in the Tantra of Great Beauty and Auspiciousness

(from the rNying ma rgyud 'bum - vol Tha, f. 336b7-337a1) :

" Unceasing space is [the gate through which the ground of being] manifest as energy.

Unceasing appearance is [the ground] manifesting as lights.

Unceasing enjoyment is [the ground] manifesting as pristine wisdom.

Unceasing nature is [the ground] manifesting as dimensions of awakening.

Unceasing view is [the ground] manifesting as non-duality.

Unceasing method is [the ground] manifesting as freedom from limitations.

The purity of pristine wisdom is the gate to perfection.

Unceasing energy is [the gate] to impure [cyclic life].

These [eight] are precious wish-fulfilling jewels."

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on April 17, 2011 at 11:34am

This is indeed a valuable creation account for us to consider. Thank you, Jacques, for taking the time to type it in and post it. As you indicate, the word "energy" used herein could mean fohat:

"When inner clarity manifests as outer clarity [the display of cyclic life and perfect peace], the unceasing space of [this display's] nature is innate clarity; the manifestation of its character is the five lights, the primordial radiance; and the manifestation of its energy is the natural quality of openness, like a cloudless sky."

The context shows that "energy" used here is one of the three aspects of the original ground or base (gzhi) taught in Dzogchen. So "energy" here is a translation of Tibetan thugs rje. As a technical term in Dzogchen, it is often translated as "energy," but elsewhere its normal meaning is "compassion."

The other two aspects of the original ground (gzhi, not quite the same as ground-of-all, kun gzhi, alaya) are, as translated here, nature (ngo bo) and character (rang bzhin). These latter two words are very close in meaning, so that other translators often translate rang bzhin as "nature" and ngo bo as "essence." That is, for one translator, "nature" is ngo bo, and for another translator, "nature" is rang bzhin. That is why we need the original terms. For there is an important difference between them in Dzogchen.

As explained by Namkhai Norbu (The Crystal and the Way of Light, pp. 97-98), ngo bo refers to the fundamental voidness or emptiness of the base or ground, while rang bzhin refers to the continuous arising of the base or ground. Then, thugs rje refers to how it manifests. Knowing this Dzogchen usage, we can look at this sentence with the Tibetan terms inserted:

When inner clarity manifests as outer clarity [the display of cyclic life and perfect peace], the unceasing space of [this display's] nature [[ngo bo]] is innate clarity; the manifestation of its character [[rang bzhin]] is the five lights, the primordial radiance; and the manifestation of its energy [[thugs rje]] is the natural quality of openness, like a cloudless sky."

The two terms, ngo bo and rang bzhin, do bring in the idea of svabhava. The two standard Tibetan translations of Sanskrit svabhava are rang bzhin and ngo bo nyid. We do not know exactly what is intended in the Dzogchen texts, because their Sanskrit originals have not yet been recovered.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on April 23, 2011 at 3:28pm

Tsongkhapa rejected the ālaya-vijñāna as one of "eight difficult points," in which he put forward his clarifications of the teachings of the Prasāngika (Consequence) school of Madhyamaka (Middle Way), that had not been recognized earlier. In regard to the ālaya-vijñāna, this means that previous teachers of Prasāngika Madhyamaka, the dominant teaching in Tibet since around Tsongkhapa's time, accepted the conventional existence of the ālaya-vijñāna. No Madhyamaka school ever took the ālaya-vijñāna as ultimately existing, and it is very questionable whether even the Yogācāra schools took it as ultimately existing. But it had been accepted by Prasāngika Madhyamaka teachers as being conventionally existent. Tsongkhapa said that the Prasāngika Madhyamaka position actually denies even its conventional existence. That is, the ālaya-vijñāna, the foundation consciousness, does not exist at all. Other Prasāngika Madhyamaka teachers in Tibet did not

accept this, so that the conventional existence of the ālaya-vijñāna is still accepted in the non-Gelugpa schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

This has ramifications for those who seek the Stanzas of Dzyan. It also has ramifications for those who accept the third fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine. I do not need to spell these out.

*For those who want to learn more about Tsongkhapa's rejection of the ālaya-vijñāna, there are a couple major sources now available in English. One is a lengthy book by Daniel Cozort, published in 1998 as, *Unique Tenets of the Middle Way Consequence School*. This is a study of Gelugpa commentaries on these "difficult points" or "unique tenets" of Tsongkhapa's. The actual source of these is notes taken down by Tsongkhapa's disciple, Gyaltsab. These notes were translated into English and fully annotated by David Seyfort Ruegg in his 2002 book, *Two Prolegomena to Madhyamaka Philosophy: Candrakirti's Prasannapada Madhyamakavrttih on Madhyamakakarika I.1 and Tson kha pa Blo bzang grags pa/rGyal tshab Dar ma rin chen's dKa' gnad/gnas brgyad kyi zin bris*.*

Comment by [Nicholas Weeks](#) on April 23, 2011 at 6:07pm

If the repository consciousness (alayavijnana) is studied from its functions, it is apparent that it is the same as the Auric Egg (or envelope), that HPB mentioned in her ES teachings. Even the famous commentary on the Kalachakra Tantra makes use of this teaching of Buddha. HPB once said something like "every plane is illusory, but it seems real to the beings of that realm." Thousands of Buddhists over the generations have used the alaya-consciousness in their practices and gained bodhisattva wisdom therefrom.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on April 25, 2011 at 9:01pm

Many thanks, Nicholas, for these very helpful comments. A comparison with the Auric Egg as described by HPB in the ES papers should really be made. This is a very instructive parallel.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on April 27, 2011 at 6:07pm

Here is a paragraph from the book, [The Buddha from Dolpo](#), by Cyrus Stearns (2010 edition, pp. 90-91), showing how the Jonangpa teacher Dolpopa understood the difference between the ālaya and the ālayavijñāna:

According to Dölpopa the process of enlightenment can be illuminated by some traditional examples. First, he accepts two types of “universal ground” (ālaya, kun gzhi). Of these, he considers the buddha nature, or sugata essence, to be the “universal-ground primordial awareness” (kun gzhi ye shes). While still veiled by the temporary obscurations of the afflictions and of knowledge, this is like the sky filled with clouds or a jewel covered with mud. In contrast, the “universal-ground consciousness” (ālayavijñāna, kun gzhi rnam shes) is the impurities or incidental stains that are to be removed, and the deeply imprinted habitual propensities associated with it. These are like the clouds in the sky or the mud covering the jewel. Second, the path is composed of the various techniques of practice that remove the impurities. This path can be likened to the wind that scatters the clouds or the stream of water that washes the mud from the jewel. Finally, the result is described as an attainment, but is really unified bliss and emptiness, a self-arisen primordial awareness that is eternally present, but now manifests or actualizes. This is like the appearance of the clear cloudless sky or the jewel separated from the mud. Dölpopa says the incidental stains must be understood as empty of self-nature and suitable to be removed through meditation practice, while the buddha nature itself is empty only of other extrinsic factors such as the incidental stains that veil its eternal and indestructible nature.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on May 2, 2011 at 7:51pm

I hope to post more creation accounts from Sanskrit sources for comparison with the Stanzas in a couple of weeks. Until my return then, I will not have email/internet access. I will try to catch up with any replies at that time.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on May 20, 2011 at 9:08pm

In order to try to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzyan that we have in [The Secret Doctrine](#), on cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis, we must check all the known cosmogonies of India and Tibet. To this end, we have already looked at

several (click on "Stanzas Documents"), including the cosmogony of the Vedas, represented by Rg-veda 10.129 (Rgveda10.129hymnofcreationEng.transs..pdf, Rigveda10.129transs.2.pdf), of the Puranas, represented by the old Vayu Purana (VayuPurana1.36oncosmogonyEng.Tagare.pdf), of the Buddhist tantras, represented by the Guhyasamaja Tantra (GuhyasamajaTantrachap.1Eng.G.Tucci.pdf), of Dzogchen, represented by the summary given in Myriad Worlds (posted here by Jacques on April 16 and April 17, 2011), and parts of some others, such as Shankaracharya's Maya-vivarana (<http://theosnet.ning.com/profiles/blog/show?id=3055387%3ABlogPost%3...>).

These have provided interesting and useful parallels, but nothing even close to the detail and comprehensiveness of the cosmogony given in the Stanzas of Dzyan.

There are still more Indian cosmogonies to look at. We have not yet looked at a cosmogony based on so-called "atoms" (paramanu), or mathematical points. In Hinduism, this is the province of the paired Nyaya-Vaisesika system. In neither of the textbooks of this pair, the Nyaya-sutras or the Vaisesika-sutras, do we find a cosmogony. The earliest text that gives a cosmogony in the Vaisesika system is the Padartha-dharma-samgraha by Prasastapada, also called the Prasastapada-bhasya. Although this text is called a bhasya or commentary, it is in fact a re-stated exposition of the Vaisesika-sutras rather than a direct commentary on them in the normal sense of the word. The fact that it contains a cosmogony, while the Vaisesika-sutras do not, makes its cosmogony something of an anomaly. We do not know where this cosmogony comes from. The Padartha-dharma-samgraha is the earliest extant source for it.

The author of this text, Prasastapada, is known to have written an actual commentary on the Vaisesika-sutras, based on extensive earlier commentaries on the Vaisesika-sutras. Both Prasastapada's commentary and the earlier ones are now lost. It was only in the late 1950s and early 1960s, with the recovery of brief commentaries on the Vaisesika-sutras, that even the actual readings of these sutras could be ascertained (see the information posted to the Online Sanskrit Texts Project, <http://theosnet.ning.com/forum/topics/online-sanskrit-texts-project...>). So it is possible that this cosmogony comes from one of these extensive earlier commentaries that are now lost. But there is a twist to this story.

We also know that Prasastapada is the earliest known Vaisesika writer to bring in the idea of God. Where did he bring this in from? One of the lost larger Vaisesika-sutra commentaries? Maybe and maybe not. According to the author of the old Yukti-dipika Samkhya commentary, discovered and first published in 1938, the idea

of God was imported into the Vaisesika system from the Pasupatas, i.e., the Saivas. It was not originally part of the Vaisesika system. See "God's Arrival in India," p. 26 (<http://www.easterntertradition.org/gods%20arrival%20in%20india.pdf>). So when Prasastapada brought in a cosmogony for the Vaisesika system, we do not know if he at the same time brought in God with it. We in fact do not know where this cosmogony came from. It does include God as the one who impels the atoms, and thus is the cause of the cosmogonic process.

Here follows Pasastapada's cosmogonic account, from his Padartha-dharma-samgraha, as translated by Ganganatha Jha. I have inserted a number of Sanskrit terms in brackets from comparison with the Sanskrit text. This is quite necessary in order to know exactly what is being talked about. If we had this in HPB's English translation of the Stanzas, we would not have such uncertainty about them.

"Of the Mahabhutas or the Ultimate Material Substances or States of Matter."

"We are now going to describe the process of the creation and destruction of the four ultimate Material Substances [mahabhuta, "great elements"].

"When a hundred years, by the measure of Brahma are at an end, there comes the time for the deliverance of the Brahma existing at that time; and then, for the sake of the resting at night, of all living beings wearied by their 'wanderings,' there arises in the mind of the Supreme Lord [mahesvara], the Ruler of all worlds, a desire to reabsorb (all creation); and simultaneously with this desire, there comes about a cessation of the operations of the unseen potential tendencies [adrsta] of all souls [atma] that are the causes of their bodies, sense-organs and gross-elements [mahabhuta]. Then out of the supreme Lord's desire [iccha] and from the conjunction of the souls [atma] and the material atoms [anu], there come about certain disruptions of the atoms constituting the Bodies and sense-organs. These disruptions destroy the combinations of those atoms; and this brings about the destruction of all things down to the atoms [anu].

"Then there comes about a successive destruction or reabsorption of the ultimate Material Substances [mahabhuta], Earth, Water, Fire and Air, one after the other.

"After this, the atoms [paramanu] remain by themselves in their isolated [pravibhakta] condition; and simultaneously with these there remain the souls [atma] permeated with the potencies [samskara] of their past virtues [dharma] and vices [adharma].

"Then again, for the sake of the experiences to be gained by living beings, there arising in the mind of the supreme Lord a desire for creation, there are produced, in the atoms [paramanu] of air, certain actions or motions, due to their conjunctions [samyoga] under the influence of the unseen potential tendencies [adrsta] that begin to operate in all souls. These motions bringing about the mutual contact [samyoga] of the air atoms, there appears, through the Diad [dvyanuka], Triad etc. finally the 'Great Air,' [mahan vayu] which exists vibrating in the sky.

"After this, in this Great Air, there appears, in the same order, out of the atoms [paramanu] of water, the Great Reservoir [nidhi] of water, which remains there surging.

"In this Reservoir of Water, there appears out of the Earth-atoms, the Great Earth which rests there in its solid form.

"Then, in the same Water-reservoir, there appears, in the same order, out of the Fire-atoms, the Great Mass of Fire; and not being suppressed by any thing else, it stands shining radiantly.

"The four gross elements having thus been brought into existence, there is produced, from the mere thought (mental picturing) [abhidhyana] of the Supreme Lord, the Great Egg, from out of the Fire-atoms mixed up with the atoms of Earth; and in this egg having produced all the worlds and the Four-faced Brahma, the Grand-father of all creatures; the Supreme Lord assigns to him the duty of producing the various creatures. Being thus engaged by the Supreme Lord, Brahma, endowed with extreme degrees of Knowledge, Dispassion and Power, having recognised the ripeness for fruition of the Karmic tendencies of the living beings, creates, out of his mind, his sons, the Prajapatis, as also the Manus and the several groups of the Gods, Rshis and Pitrs, -- and out of his mouth, arms, thighs and feet, the four castes, and the other living beings of all grades high and low, -- all these having their knowledge and experience ordained in accordance with their previous deeds; and then he connects them with Virtue, Knowledge, Dispassion and Powers, according to their respective impressional potencies [asaya]."

(Padarthadharmasangraha of Prasastapada, translated by Ganganatha Jha, Benares, 1916, pp. 108-111)

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on May 28, 2011 at 7:49pm

There are a couple of unique things in this cosmogony that comes from a Vaisesika source. I hesitate to call it the Vaisesika cosmogony, because the Vaisesika system is not known for having a cosmogony. If one is looking for a cosmogony in Hindu sources, the Puranas would be the normal place to look. In fact, at least some of the Puranas do give a cosmogony that includes ultimate "atoms" (paramanu, or anu), or mathematical points. So these cosmogonies would be in this way related to the Vaisesika teachings, and to the cosmogony that comes from a Vaisesika source..

In this cosmogony given by Prasastapada in his Padartha-dharma-samgraha, we find the normal order of the dissolution of the elements. Earth dissolves, then water dissolves, then fire dissolves, then air dissolves. But the order of the manifestation of the elements differs. First comes air, as expected. But then comes water, not fire. After water comes earth. Then comes fire. This is quite unusual. Then from fire together with earth comes the great egg, the cosmic egg in which all the worlds and all their creatures appear.

Another unique thing in this cosmogony is that the ultimate atoms (paramanu) or mathematical points remain during pralaya or the dissolution of the universe. They are eternal. The Padartha-dharma-samgraha describes this as follows:

"After this, the atoms [paramanu] remain by themselves in their isolated [pravibhakta] condition; and simultaneously with these there remain the souls [atma] permeated with the potencies [samskara] of their past virtues [dharma] and vices [adharma]."

When it says that the atoms remain in their "isolated" condition, this means dissociated. That is, these "atoms" or points are no longer conjoined in pairs to produce dyads, nor are these dyads conjoined to produce triads. It is only the triads, we recall, that produce the actual manifested elements: earth, water, fire, and air. So the paramanus themselves remain during dissolution, and are never destroyed.

Those of you who are familiar with the Kalachakra teachings within Buddhism have heard this same idea there. The Dalai Lama speaks of it in his books comparing the Buddhist teachings with those of modern science, from the Mind-Life conferences. It has always been thought to be a teaching unique to Kalachakra. The Tibetans were not familiar with the Vaisesika texts, nor is the cosmogony from these texts very well known even in India among Hindus. So no one, to my knowledge, has yet

noted the similarity between the Kalachakra particles that remain during the dissolution of the universe, and the same Vaisesika teaching on this. The similarity is extensive, and it seems to me inescapable that Kalachakra adopted the Vaisesika teachings on this.

These are important ideas in relation to the cosmogony of the Stanzas of Dzyan. I would welcome any postings on this, quoting Kalachakra sources, or the Dalai Lama's comments, etc. These teachings are now widely available, and are again coming strongly before the public, as the Dalai Lama prepares to give the Kalachakra Initiation at the U.S. capital, Washington, D.C., in early July of this year.

Comment by [Capt. Anand Kumar](#) on May 28, 2011 at 8:24pm

Thank You David. You have traced the source of assertion in the First Fundamental Proposition that the atoms do not dissolve during Pralaya. Regarding their isolation, would it be correct to assume that no motion is imparted to them during the Nights of Brahma or those atoms are without motion? The different order of dissolution and manifestation described, is another very curious concept to be investigated.

Yoga Vasishtha as well as Mahabharata refer to a philosophical system called the Kala-Vada existing at some point in time in India. Perhaps Buddhist Kalachakra system is derived from certain works belonging to that system but are currently not available. My internet searches have resulted in a few referemces to the Kala-Vada but no actual works on this system. Perhpas it was a sub-system of another.

Can HH Dalai Lama's comparison of Kalachakra elements with modern science be uploaded here? Or are they copyrighted? For more on Vaisesika system I will try to get the opinion of Roopa Narayan.

Comment by [Jacques Mahnich](#) on May 30, 2011 at 2:21pm

A german author, F.O. SHRADER wrote a book in 1902 : "Über den Stand der indischen Philosophie zur zeit Mahaviras und Buddhas", where he presented the current philosophical ideas in India during the Mahâvira and Buddha times.

He talked about the Kâla-vâda, Svabhava-vâda, Niyati-vâda, Yadriccha-vâda, Atma-vâda, Isvara-vâda, and Ajnana,-vâda.

The whole book is referring on Jâinas documents, specially the Nandî Sutra Commentary written by Malayagiri, and also the Sutrakritanga commentary by Sîlanka.

The kâla-vada seems to be a jaina source document.

Comment by **Capt. Anand Kumar** on May 31, 2011 at 12:32am

Thanks Jacques. Since Kala-vada is quoted in Mahabharat, it may pre-date the Jaina Tradition which may have drawn from it. What this doctrine contained, can be glimpsed by the compilation of Shyamsundar Das, accessible at:

<http://www.veda.harekrsna.cz/encyclopedia/time.htm>

From examining the scriptures we can make few basic conclusions:

- 1) The identity of Krsna with time, or more properly that time is one of Krsna's energies.*
- 2) Krsna as the time factor causes the material creation.*
- 3) Time has very serious effects on the living beings.*
- 4) The spiritual world is free of time's destructive influence.*

1) Kala (time) is a special manifestation of Krsna's energy.

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Time I am, the great destroyer of the worlds, and I have come here to destroy all people..." (BG 11.32)

"My Lord, I consider Your Lordship to be eternal time, the supreme controller, without beginning and end, the all-pervasive one. In distributing Your mercy, You are equal to everyone. The dissensions between living beings are due to social intercourse." (SB 1.8.28)

"The time factor, who causes the transformation of the various material manifestations, is another feature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Anyone who does not know that time is the same Supreme Personality is afraid of the time factor." (SB 3.29.37)

"Lord Visnu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the enjoyer of all sacrifices, is the time factor and the master of all masters. He enters everyone's heart, He is the support of everyone, and He causes every being to be annihilated by another." (SB 3.29.38)

2) Kala, the time factor, causes material creation.

"The Supreme Living Being in His feature as the transcendental purusa incarnation, who is the Lord's plenary expansion, impregnates the material nature of three modes, and thus by the influence of eternal time the living entities appear." (SB 3.5.26)

"Thereafter, influenced by the interactions of eternal time, the supreme sum total of matter called the mahat-tattva became manifested, and in this mahat-tattva the unalloyed goodness, the Supreme Lord, sowed the seeds of universal manifestation out of His own body." (SB 3.5.27)

Time is described as Lord's glance (personified as Siva) on the material nature initiating the creation process. (BG 14.3-4, SB 3.5.26-27, Brahma-samhita 5.10) Siva's paraphernalia symbolize: moon - time measurement in months, three eyes - tri-kala-jna, snake around the neck - time measurement in years, necklace of skulls with snakes - changing of ages and begetting and annihilating of mankind.

"Maitreya said: Eternal time is the primeval source of the interactions of the three modes of material nature. It is unchangeable and limitless, and it works as the instrument of the Supreme Personality of Godhead for His pastimes in the material creation." (SB 3.10.11)

Point no. 2 of Kala(Time) causing material creation is now under scientific investigation at many levels. Atharva-Veda, Book XIX, verses 53 and 54 describe perhaps completely, the doctrine of time.

Comment by [David Reigle](#) on May 31, 2011 at 7:55am

Leaving time and everything else aside for the moment, here is a quick note to give the link to the Mind and Life Conferences website. In these conferences the Dalai Lama and eminent scientists discuss the teachings of Buddhism in relation to the findings of modern science. Several books have resulted from these conferences. I will quote some material from these books on the "space particles" that remain during the dissolution of the universe shortly. The link to their website is:

<http://www.mindandlife.org>