

Blavatsky's Secret Books
Twenty Years' Research

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Preface

To recapitulate. The Secret Doctrine was the universally diffused religion of the ancient and prehistoric world. Proofs of its diffusion, authentic records of its history, a complete chain of documents, showing its character and presence in every land, together with the teaching of all its great adepts, exist to this day in the secret crypts of libraries belonging to the Occult Fraternity.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. xxxiv

This book was prepared in order to make available some materials relating to the search for Helena P. Blavatsky's "secret books." The "Book of Dzyan" is what she calls the secret source of the stanzas forming the basis of her published book, *The Secret Doctrine*; and the "Book of the Golden Precepts" is what she calls the secret source of her published book, *The Voice of the Silence*. Our research has focused on these two books.

The materials assembled in this book include previously published articles and papers. Many of these were necessarily addressed to a largely Theosophical audience. Yet it is not our intention to address any one special group. We ourselves are not members of any Theosophical organization. Our Eastern Tradition Research Institute is independent and unaffiliated. It utilizes research from scholars and institutions around the world to help trace Blavatsky's secret books.

We are convinced that an original language manuscript of one of Blavatsky's secret books, that is, one of their Sanskrit, Tibetan, or Chinese translations, will be discovered in our lifetime, demonstrating the existence of a once universal, but now hidden, Wisdom Tradition. Therefore we undertook the long search for Blavatsky's secret books more than twenty years ago, and have been involved in research on them ever since. We now make some of this research more widely available.

David and Nancy Reigle
May 8, 1999

INTRODUCTION:

Why Take Blavatsky Seriously?

Scholars have not heretofore taken Blavatsky seriously, because it is generally accepted that she was proven to be a fraud. There was therefore no reason or need to evaluate her writings. However, in 1986 the century-old report which was primarily responsible for branding her a fraud was itself put in serious doubt. This original report of Richard Hodgson, published by the Society for Psychical Research, London, in December 1885, has now been examined by Dr. Vernon Harrison. His study is also published by the Society for Psychical Research, in their *Journal* for April 1986, almost exactly one hundred years later. Dr. Harrison opens by referring to Hodgson's conclusion that Blavatsky was an "impostor," noting that it "has been quoted in book after book, encyclopaedia after encyclopaedia, without hint that it might be wrong." He continues:¹

For years Hodgson has been presented as an example of a perfect psychical researcher, and his report a model of what a report on psychical research should be. I shall show that, on the contrary, the Hodgson Report is a highly partisan document forfeiting all claim to scientific impartiality.

After showing this, he states in his conclusion:²

As detailed examination of this Report proceeds, one becomes more and more aware that, whereas Hodgson was prepared to use any evidence, however trivial or questionable, to implicate HPB, he ignored all evidence that could be used in her favour. His report is riddled with slanted statements, conjecture advanced as fact or probable fact, uncorroborated testimony of unnamed witnesses, selection of evidence and downright falsity.

It is this Report on which virtually all modern assessments of Blavatsky, other than those of her supporters, are ultimately based.

Besides the evidence against the century-old assessment of Blavatsky as a fraud that this new study provides, there exists some very weighty evidence for her integrity that I believe has been unduly neglected, even by her supporters. This is the testimony of Gnostic scholar George R. S. Mead, who was Blavatsky's private secretary for the last three years of her life. The neglect of this evidence by Blavatsky's supporters can perhaps be explained by the fact that Mead left the Theosophical Society "in utter disgust" in 1909, but this fact would for outside investigators give his testimony all the more weight. He wrote that when he came to work for her:³

She handed over to me the charge of all her keys, of her MSS., her writing desk and the nests of drawers in which she kept her most private papers; not only this, but she further, on the plea of being left in peace for her writing, absolutely refused to be bothered with her letters, and made me take over her voluminous correspondence, and that too without opening it first herself.

He goes on to say that,

it convinced me wholly and surely that whatever else H.P.B. may have been, she was not a cheat or trickster—she had nothing to hide; for a woman who, according to the main hypothesis of the S.P.R. Report, had confederates all over the world and lived the life of a scheming adventuress, would have been not only incredibly foolhardy, but positively mad to have let all her private correspondence pass into the hands of a third party, and that, too, without even previously opening it herself.

This, by the way, counters not only the Society for Psychical Research Report by Hodgson, but also the hypotheses of an elaborate scheme of deception put forward by K. Paul Johnson, which have now received some attention in academic circles.⁴

The above was written by Mead in 1904, while he was still a member of the Theosophical Society. But he repeated it practically verbatim in 1926, long after he had left the Theosophical Society in 1909:⁵

I joined the Society in 1884, immediately on coming down from Cambridge. In 1889 I gave up my profession of teaching, and went to work with Yelena Petrovna Blavatskaia (generally known as Mme. Blavatsky). For the last three years of her life I was her private secretary, and in the closest intimacy with her. . . . Whatever else Yelena Petrovna was . . . , H. P. Blavatsky was not, within my experience at any rate, the vulgar trickster and charlatan of hostile popular legend. . . . When I first went to her to work permanently, I was a young man of whom she practically knew nothing, . . . Nevertheless, with childlike confidence, and with one of those large and eccentric gestures of hers, she handed over to me at once the keys of her desk and bookcases and tossed over, unopened, her voluminous correspondence, bidding me answer it as best I might (and ‘be d—d’), as she wanted all her time for writing her articles and books. It was all very foolish and imprudent; but at any rate it was assuredly not the act of one who was popularly supposed to be carrying on an elaborate fraud with numerous confederates.

Yet by this time Mead had long since come to disagree with Blavatsky’s teachings, having founded his own “Quest Society” in 1909, so had nothing to gain by repeating this. He continues: “This does not mean to say that I approve otherwise of her and her ways by any means. I retain a great personal affection for her bohemian and racy personality; but much she wrote I know to be very inaccurate, to say the least of it; while her whole outlook on life was that of an ‘occultist’—a view I now hold most firmly to be fundamentally false.” Mead’s firsthand and disinterested testimony is weighty evidence for Blavatsky’s integrity, whatever one may think of her teachings.

The agnostic writer William Stewart Ross put it more strongly:⁶ “‘Impostor’ indeed! She was almost the only mortal I have ever met who was *not* an impostor.”

While we believe that any unbiassed investigation will confirm Blavatsky’s integrity, our concern is with the material she brought out in her writings, which must stand or fall on its own merits. We have said this much only to show that the neglect of her writings by scholars due to fraud charges is, after all,

unwarranted. My evaluation of the originality of the teachings from the secret "Book of Dzyan," the basis of her magnum opus, *The Secret Doctrine*, may be found in the article, "*The Secret Doctrine: Original Genesis and the Wisdom Tradition.*" Certain scholars of last century, such as F. Max Müller to whom we are indebted for the first Sanskrit edition of the *Rg-veda* and Sāyaṇa's commentary, held the opinion that the stanzas from Blavatsky's secret books were taken from known Sanskrit and Pali works.⁷ Yet from then until now, no one has been able to trace a single stanza from the "Book of Dzyan" in any known work, and some of us have been trying for many years to do just that.

Notes

1. Vernon Harrison, "J'Accuse: An Examination of the Hodgson Report of 1885," *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, London, vol. 53, no. 803, April 1986, pp. 286-310; quotation cited from p. 287. This article has recently been reprinted along with new material in: Vernon Harrison, *H. P. Blavatsky and the SPR: An Examination of the Hodgson Report of 1885*, Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1997.

2. Vernon Harrison, "J'Accuse," p. 309. Dr. Harrison in the opening of his 1997 book comments further on this earlier statement of his: "If this seem hyperbole, I reply that now that I have had the opportunity of re-reading the Hodgson Report in the light of the hard evidence that still remains to us (i.e., the Mahatma Letters preserved in the British Library), the Hodgson Report is even worse than I had thought."

3. G. R. S. Mead, "Concerning H.P.B. (Stray Thoughts on Theosophy)," *Adyar Pamphlets*, no. 111, Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1920, pp. 8-10; reprinted from *The Theosophical Review*, vol. XXXIV, April 1904, pp. 130-144.

4. These hypotheses of an elaborate scheme of deception on the part of Blavatsky are found in K. Paul Johnson's three books: *In Search of the Masters*, privately published, 1990; *The Masters Revealed*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994; *Initiates of Theosophical Masters*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995. For a carefully

researched and well-reasoned critique of these books, see: Daniel H. Caldwell, *K. Paul Johnson's House of Cards? A Critical Examination of Johnson's Thesis on the Theosophical Masters Morya and Koot Hoomi*, privately published, P.O. Box 1844, Tucson, Arizona 85702, November 1996 [this now available at: www.blavatskyarchives.com/johnson.htm, along with K. Paul Johnson's also well-reasoned response].

5. G. R. S. Mead, "The Quest'—Old and New: Retrospect and Prospect," *The Quest*, London, vol. XVII, no. 3, April, 1926, pp. 289-291. I am indebted to Jerry Hejka-Ekins for a copy of this article.

6. William Stewart Ross ("Saladin"), *Agnostic Journal and Eclectic Review*, May 16, 1891; reprinted as "How an Agnostic Saw Her," *Lucifer*, June 1891, pp. 311-16; cited in Sylvia Cranston, *HPB: The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky, Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement*, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1993, p. xvii.

7. See: G. R. S. Mead, "Concerning H.P.B. (Stray Thoughts on Theosophy)," *Adyar Pamphlets*, no. 111, pp. 14-16; this material is also cited in Sylvia Cranston, *HPB: The Extraordinary Life and Influence of Helena Blavatsky, Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement*, pp. 384-85.

“Quest for the Lost Language of the Initiates,” by David Reigle, was published in The American Theosophist, vol. 69, no. 1, Jan. 1981, pp. 11-16.

This article was written in 1979, after returning from India where my wife and I had spent three months. It was written in a somewhat lighter style than my later writings, since I had tried to make it read more like a travel account. Thus it originally had no notes. The reviewers for The American Theosophist, however, felt that some of my statements should be documented, such as, “This Vedic Sanskrit, though assumed by scholars to be more primitive because older, is yet richer in grammatical forms than classical Sanskrit” (p.10). So I then added 27 references and notes, and have now added 3 more (nos. 28-30) on Khshnoom, or Esoteric Zoroastrianism, since it is so little known. I did not, though, document my above quoted statement, since I felt that to do so would be too out of place for a non-technical article such as this. In any case, it is well known among linguists that finite verb forms such as aorists and perfects abound in Vedic writings, while they have been largely replaced by participles in classical Sanskrit.

There is a statement of personal experience regarding Sanskrit, however, that should now be modified: “People warned us that Sanskrit is a most difficult language. However, we discovered that to be false; Sanskrit has been put together quite scientifically, . . .” (p. 9). In our youthful enthusiasm we were quite taken by the scientific structure of Sanskrit, but this does not change the fact that it is a difficult language to learn. This is because of its great number of forms.

Finally, our Theosophical Research Center, mentioned on p. 11, was soon obliged to change its name, to avoid confusion with another Theosophical Research Center, working in the field of modern science. It has now become Eastern Tradition Research Institute.

Quest for the Lost Language of the Initiates

Reading H. P. Blavatsky's accounts of the vast secret libraries in the safekeeping of certain occult brotherhoods provoked my interest, to say the least. She tells about the underground libraries of the Jainas in Rajasthan; the 999 "lost" works of Lao-tzu; the 76,000 "lost" tracts of the Buddhist sacred canon; the voluminous esoteric sections of the Upanishads, detached by the Brahmans at the time of Buddha; the "gupta cave near Okhee Math" containing the unabridged Hindu sacred books of which we have only "bits of rejected copies of some passages;" the complete Oriental Kabala, of which the Western version is only a distorted echo; etc., etc.; besides the numerous secret volumes in cave-libraries under lamaseries in Tibet, such as the Books of Kiu-te.¹ If these books were anything like *The Secret Doctrine*, which is a translation of and commentary on one of them, I wanted to find them.

It was only theosophical literature that had given any purpose to my life to begin with. Previously, daily human affairs had left me so indifferent that at an early age I decided to retire from the world, seeking peace in the wilderness. As fate would have it, one of my last stops in civilization on my way out, namely a bookstore in Anchorage, Alaska, left me with a theosophical book in my hands. You all know the story from there; and I ended up with quite a pile of such books, which eventually led me back to the beaten path of "civilized" life. This being the case, it is understandable that when I found that there were whole libraries of books like *The Secret Doctrine*, I was ready to do whatever might be required to gain access to them. Madame Blavatsky had even indicated that if people did the necessary work, some of these writings may become available at the very time in which we are living now, possibly through archaeological "discoveries."

There are evidently thousands of these volumes in existence, the originals being written in *Senzar*, the secret sacred language of the Initiates. Since it would be of no use to see these books if you couldn't read them, it was obvious that I would need to do some language study. But I didn't know any Initiates, and it was very unlikely that a textbook of *Senzar* would be soon forthcoming. However, in the Proem to *The Secret Doctrine* I read an interesting statement about the contents of that book: "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."² This was what I needed to know; that there are at least three languages in which full translations of these *Senzar* works exist, so I had something to get started on. Besides, I wouldn't complain about having to read the *Senzar* in Chinese, Tibetan, or Sanskrit translation when these books become available; and learning any of those languages would be excellent preparation because they might provide a key for deciphering *Senzar*, like Greek and Egyptian Demotic did for deciphering Egyptian Hieroglyphics, thanks to the discovery of the Rosetta Stone.

My studies in *The Secret Doctrine* had informed me of some important considerations in choosing one of the three. It is there said that the grand panorama of the ever periodically recurring Law, reflected from the Universal Mind, can be rendered in no human language with any degree of adequacy except Sanskrit, which is that of the gods³ (*devas*; as is its alphabet, the *devanagari*). Now, there was a recommendation worth taking note of! Elsewhere, speaking of the sacred language of the Initiates, Madame Blavatsky says that it is called, according to locality, *Senzar*, *Brahma-Bhashya*, or *Deva-Bhashya*.⁴ The latter appellation, of course, means "language of the gods." Why is it that *both* Sanskrit and *Senzar* are called the "language of the gods?" The answer is found in the *Anthropogenesis* volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, where speaking of the development of speech, it states that the inflectional speech, the root of the Sanskrit, was the first language of the Fifth Race, now the mystery tongue of the Initiates.⁵ Language, like the other sciences, was

given to humanity by “Divine Instructors” ages ago; but has changed with time and degenerated from its original purity since then. So, while Sanskrit may not be Senzar, the original “language of the gods,” it is the direct outgrowth of it.

Knowing this, my wife and I undertook the study of Sanskrit. People warned us that Sanskrit is a most difficult language. However, we discovered that to be false; Sanskrit has been put together quite scientifically, incorporating much occultism in its very structure. For example, the basis of Sanskrit is the verb-roots, on which both the verbs *and* the nouns are built, according to regular processes. Therefore the verb-roots, representing action or motion, are the basis on which the whole language is formed; just as in occultism motion, or “Ceaseless Breath,” is the basis from which the whole universe takes shape. So in both the Sanskrit language and the universe vibration is the root of all forms!

The difficult part in trying to learn Sanskrit is just to get through the archaic textbooks on it that are available in English. Most of them were written a century ago, at a time when anyone who would be studying Sanskrit invariably had years of Latin or Greek study behind them. Consequently, in explaining a particular Sanskrit usage, these books often just refer you to a parallel construction in Latin, with no further explanation. And coupled with unfamiliar grammatical terminology, these textbooks required a considerable amount of deciphering themselves! But learning the language is not all there is to the science of grammar, as it was propounded in ancient India.

An article in *Five Years of Theosophy* had informed us that Panini, author of what has been called the most perfect grammar in the world, was a Rishi, or Initiate.⁶ Therefore his Sanskrit grammar, the *Ashtadhyayi*, consisting of just under 4,000 terse verses, was the one we wanted; and it was available in English translation.⁷ Western scholars had not found the arrangement of Panini’s grammar to be very usable, because the rules concerning a particular topic are found throughout, rather than gathered together in a single place. Besides which, it was very lengthy; so they devised their own Sanskrit grammars in a manner thought to be more suitable to the Western mind. This, of

course, did make the learning of the language easier, but Indian grammarians had long since come out with rearranged and shortened versions of Panini's grammar for that purpose.⁸ In the time of the Rishis, grammar, like other subjects, was a spiritual path; and the very arrangement of Panini's grammar which Western scholars had found so unworkable is one of its significant occult features. Madame Blavatsky had stated that you could tell Plato was an Initiate because in his writings he always reasoned from universals to particulars, the occult method, in contradistinction to his uninitiated pupil Aristotle, who reasoned from particulars to universals.⁹ Now Panini's whole grammar is so arranged that the most general rules are given first, gradually becoming more and more specific in their application until the end; a skillful embodiment of the occult method.

Panini's grammar, like many other old works such as the *Bhagavad Gita*, is written in what is called "classical Sanskrit." However, there is an even more ancient kind of Sanskrit known as "Vedic Sanskrit," in which the Vedas are written. This Vedic Sanskrit, though assumed by scholars to be more primitive because older, is yet richer in grammatical forms than classical Sanskrit. This supports the view that the further we trace Sanskrit back in time, the closer we get to the source, Senzar. An inquiry into its peculiarities was therefore definitely in order.

The most striking feature of Vedic Sanskrit is the accent, or *svara*, which is marked in the manuscripts in red ink. It is not a stress accent, but a musical accent indicating relative pitch. T. Subba Row, the learned Vedantin occultist, says, "the Vedas have a distinct dual meaning—one expressed by the literal sense of the words, the other indicated by the metre and the *svara* (intonation), which are, as it were, the life of the Vedas."¹⁰ This is shown by the fact that all the verses of the *Sama-Veda* (except 75 of them) are already found in the *Rig-Veda*. The words are the same, but the *svara*, and therefore the non-literal meaning, is completely different; the *Rig-Veda* being chanted on three pitches, while the *Sama-Veda* is sung on five or seven.

This ancient Vedic language is very closely related to the language called "Avesta," or "Zend," in which the old Zoroas-

trian scriptures, the *Zend-Avesta*, are written. Many of their words are almost identical. A very interesting feature, found in both the Vedic Sanskrit and the oldest form of the Avesta language, but having died out in their respective descendant languages, is the use of aorist verb forms. Aorist, from a Greek word meaning “not definable; without limits,” is a type of verb which denotes completion of an action only, without reference to time. The Ageless Wisdom teaches that time, as we know it with its past, present, and future, is an illusion. Time is said to be the sequence of the modifications of the mind, and is said to terminate upon the achievement of illumination, giving place to the “eternal now” (Patanjali *Yoga-Sutra* IV.33).¹¹ Certainly the aorist verb forms fit this latter state, indicating that at one time spiritual consciousness was more prevalent.

While reading in H.P. Blavatsky’s *Theosophical Glossary* one day, I came across the following:

What name should be given to the old Avesta language, and particularly to the “special dialect, older than the general language of the *Avesta*” (Darmesteter), in which the five Gathas 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?¹²

This was the clue we had been looking for!

When we went to India to obtain books and materials for the Theosophical Research Center here [now Eastern Tradition Research Institute], after a most fruitful stay at Adyar of course, we made it a point to go to Bombay, the center of Zoroastrianism today, and see what we could find of this. We first set about obtaining the five Gathas of the *Yasna* in the original Gathic dialect of the Avesta language, supposed to be Senzar, and also in English translation. As usual, the English translation was very inadequate from the occult point of view. We also obtained some Avesta grammars and readers for use in learning the language.

Since correct pronunciation is very important in an occult language, finding that was our next step. Upon inquiry, we were told that Parsees (Zoroastrians) who knew the old Avesta language could be found at the Cama Oriental Institute in Bombay. There, with great good fortune, we met a man who not only knew Avesta pronunciation, but also knew Esoteric Zoroastrianism.

In the course of going through the pronunciation of the Avesta alphabet for us, he came across the letter "dh." Here he stopped, explaining that this letter, according to Esoteric Zoroastrianism, is not of the same level of vibration as the others; and that he considered it to be a later interpolation, not originally found in the Avesta alphabet. Of course, he had no reason to believe that we were interested in anything esoteric, since he was just told that we had come to learn the pronunciation of Avesta, like any Western scholar might. Few Western scholars took esotericism seriously, and neither did most of his fellow Parsees; so he excused himself for the diversion and continued with the alphabet. But we assured him of our sincere interest in the esoteric viewpoint and asked him to tell us more.

It turns out that sometime in 1875-76 a Parsee named Behramshah Navroji Shroff had the opportunity of spending three and a half years with a secret Zoroastrian Brotherhood in what is now Iran.^[28] At this place in holy Mount Daemavand they had all 21 Nasks, the original Zoroastrian sacred books, complete; whereas the available *Zend-Avesta* contains only one of these Nasks, and parts of a couple others. After his return to India it was nearly thirty years before Mr. Shroff, with great reluctance, started talking about where he went, his experiences there, and what he had learned. Some books were then published on the basis of this occult knowledge, which is called "Khshnoom," or Esoteric Zoroastrianism. Of great interest to us was the information made available in this way on the sacred language.

The above-mentioned Nasks were originally recorded by Zarathushtra (Zoroaster) in a type of expression which produced color-thought-vibration pictures, a kind of "spiritual motion-picture show," when recited by purified souls.^[29] The

ability to register and understand it was not dependent on erudition, but on extreme holiness. These pictures were then rendered into a grammatical language, which we now call Avesta, which, besides being highly enigmatical and allegorical, is also based on the laws of vibration, color, sound, etc. As people became less spiritual, and therefore less able to understand this holy Avesta language, explanations called Zend, likewise based on the laws of vibration, color, etc., were added. Because the present Zoroastrian scriptures contain both the Avesta portions and the Zend explanations, they are called *Zend-Avesta*.

This information illustrates Madame Blavatsky's statement that Zend means the "rendering of esoteric into exoteric sentences; the veil used to conceal the correct meaning of the Zen-(d)-zar texts."¹³ It also explains why at one place she says the mystery-language is not phonetic, but purely pictorial and symbolical;¹⁴ and at another place tells about the alphabet of Senzar, phonetic of course, saying that every letter of it has a number, color, and distinct syllable, besides other potencies (as they do in other occult alphabets also).¹⁵ As usual with these seeming contradictions, both statements are true, since there is more than one way to express the mystery-language.

The mystery-language then, is not limited to just one form; and likewise, esoteric books are not limited to one meaning only. However, these various meanings are keyed into the texts, and only occult philosophy can unlock them. *The Secret Doctrine* is said to require seven keys for the complete understanding of it; so with the Vedas and other occult books also.¹⁶ There are six Vedangas, or auxiliary Vedic scriptures, exoterically available, which comprise six of these keys to the Vedas, could people but realize it (the seventh being always esoteric). One of these, the astrological-astronomical Vedanga, called *Jyotisha*, contains the following verse: "The Vedas are revealed for the sake of performing sacrifices; the sacrifices are determined according to the order of time; therefore, whoever knows this *Jyotisha*, giving the knowledge of time-cycles, knows the sacrifices."¹⁷ Esoteric Zoroastrianism provides us with a key to a key by giving the true meaning of the Avesta verb-root "yaz." Since we know that its

Vedic Sanskrit counterpart is the verb-root “yaj,” we apply the same meaning wherever that is found also. So now if you will please read the above-quoted verse, in each case substituting “attunements,” the correct meaning, for “sacrifices,” the currently accepted meaning, you should notice a significant difference.^[30] Using these keys, it becomes apparent that the *Vedanga Jyotisha*, and likewise the Vedas with which it deals, are not concerned with primitive sacrifices, but with attunement to the various energies of the Cosmos, for life in harmony with the universe.

These various energies of the Cosmos are symbolized in many ways. Speaking of Senzar, Madame Blavatsky says in the preface to *The Voice of the Silence* (which was translated from that language) that it can be written variously in alphabets or ideographs, but that the easiest way to read it is in universal signs and symbols, known to initiated mystics of *any* language.¹⁸ Symbols, either as words like “fire,” or as ideographs, seem to be fundamental to occultism; evidently because they are the “language” of *buddhi*, the *real* intuition. Perhaps it is for this reason that she recommends the forming of a “small society of intelligent earnest students of symbolism, especially the Zend and Sanskrit scholars.”¹⁹

In this connection I must mention something very interesting which I came across in a book containing information from Hilarion, called *Teachings of the Temple*. On page 227, speaking of the mystery-language, is the following:

In every instance, so far, that an attempt has been made to teach this language to the laity, and even before the first principles had been fully understood, those to whom the requisite knowledge had been entrusted have been compelled to stay their hand and wait for the replacing of some recreant from a seven fold group before they could continue; for such a seven fold group is an essential.²⁰

Maybe now that the Aquarian age of group consciousness has dawned there will be a better chance for success.

In any case, there was more to be done. Now that we had gotten some idea as to what Senzar actually is; had obtained

materials to study it from; and had seen what a key is and how it works; we turned our attention toward finding more esoteric books. The four Vedas and the three volumes of the *Zend-Avesta* made only seven volumes total of original material; the major portions of the systems they come from having long since disappeared. With the Jainas it was the same situation. Of their ancient sacred canon we now have only the Angas, once considered auxiliary scriptures to the fourteen Purvas, themselves entirely lost to us. According to one of the two main sects of Jainas, the Digambaras, even the Angas we have are not the original ones.

The southern Buddhist Pali canon, full of the most profound ethics, because not based on reward and punishment, is available; and we therefore obtained a set of it in 41 Pali volumes. Some northern Buddhists, however, say there was originally a Sanskrit canon containing all Buddha's teachings, including the esoteric tradition, now lost. But here is the interesting part: While these esoteric books were still available in Sanskrit, an Initiate named Thonmi Sambhota, after studying in India, developed the Tibetan alphabet and system of writing *for the very purpose of accurately translating Sanskrit and preserving the esoteric meanings intact*. Thonmi Sambhota, whose system of grammar we had studied while at Dharamsala, was the father of Tibetan grammar, the Panini of Tibet, and lived in the seventh century C.E. The following few centuries saw the careful translation of these Sanskrit books into the new Tibetan written language he had developed.

It is interesting to notice that at about the time this esoteric knowledge was being transferred to Tibet, it started going underground in India, finally disappearing during the reign of Akbar (the last half of the 16th century C.E.).²¹ While trying to trace the Sanskrit astrological works of Yavanacharya, known to us as Pythagoras,²² we found that they were evidently available to Varaha Mihira (the Ptolemy of Indian astrology-astronomy), who lived in the sixth century C.E., but not to his well-known commentator Bhattotpala, who lived in the tenth century C.E.²³ This seemed to us to indicate the gradual loss of esoteric works from India at around this time, coinciding exactly with the

period of time in which Sanskrit books were first being translated into Tibetan. A similar transference had taken place a few centuries before our era, culminating with the burning of the Alexandrian Library in 47 B.C.E.²⁴ This points to a continuity of the esoteric tradition at all times in some locality. The appearance of H. P. Blavatsky's works in English last century, from esoteric Tibetan sources, could have heralded another such shift. With the invasion of Tibet, and consequent dispersal of the religious tradition there, many Tibetan books became available to the West for the first time.

But our question was, were any of the *esoteric* books, preserved by the early translators, available to the public? The answer was supplied by the Chohan-Lama, the chief of the archive-registrars of the secret libraries of the Dalai and Tashi-hlumpo Lamas Rimpoche of Tibet, from an article called "Tibetan Teachings," written in the 1880s and reprinted in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol. VI. The Chohan, "than whom no one in Tibet is more deeply versed in the science of esoteric and exoteric Buddhism," informs us of the following:

In the first place, the Sacred Canon of the Tibetans, the Bkahl-hgyur and Bstan-hgyur, comprises 1,707 distinct works—1,083 public and 624 secret volumes—the former being composed of 350 and the latter of 77 folio volumes. . . . Every description of localities is figurative in our system; every name and word is purposely veiled; and a student, before he is given any further instruction, has to study the mode of deciphering, and then of comprehending and learning the equivalent secret term or synonym for nearly every word of our religious language. . . . Even in those volumes to which the masses have access, every sentence has a dual meaning, one intended for the unlearned, and the other for those who have received the key to the records. . . . There is a dual meaning, then, even in the canon thrown open to the people, and, quite recently, to Western scholars.

He goes on to say that many scriptures, so-called, containing "mythological and legendary matter more fit for nursery folklore than an exposition of the Wisdom Religion" are preserved

in the lamasery libraries; “but none of these are to be found in the canon.” The books in the canon “contain no fiction, but simply information for future generations, who may, by that time, have obtained the key to the right reading of them.”²⁵

We *are* a future generation, and with the indispensable help of *The Secret Doctrine*, had just been tracing that key back through Sanskrit and Avesta to Senzar and symbol-language. Now, following the esoteric trail the other direction, we find that even in the Tibetan canon thrown open to Western scholars there is a dual meaning, just waiting to be unlocked with it! But there was one more difficulty; where to get these books? It used to be that in Tibet monasteries paid several thousand oxen for a set. Now Tibet is closed up, and I didn’t know any rancher willing to turn in his herd for some funny looking books, anyway. However, after considerable inquiry, we found that this whole set is available on microfiche, thanks to the efforts of The Institute for Advanced Studies for World Religions.²⁶ This canon, first assembled and codified at Narthang Monastery located near Shigatse, the home of the Mahatmas, contains important books on many subjects. In the field of medicine alone there are twenty-two texts.²⁷ Now it just remains for students to unlock the inner meanings of these volumes for the benefit of posterity.

References and Notes

1. See: *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan*, pp. 75-77; *The Secret Doctrine* (original 1888 ed.), vol. I, pp. xxiv-xxx, 269-271; *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. VII, pp. 250-268.

2. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 23.

3. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 269.

4. *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. IV, p. 518.

5. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. II, p. 200.

6. See: *Five Years of Theosophy* (second revised ed., 1894), p. 258.

7. *The Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini*, edited and translated into English by Śriśa Chandra Vasu, 2 vols., Allahabad, 1891; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1962, 1977.

8. The *Siddhānta-kaumudī* of Bhaṭṭoḥji Dikṣita is a rearranged version of Pāṇini's grammar, and the *Laghu-kaumudī* of Varadarāja is an abridged version of *Siddhānta-kaumudī*.

9. See: *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 493; vol. II, pp. 153, 573.

10. *Five Years of Theosophy*, p. 98.

11. According to the paraphrase of *Yoga-Sutra* IV.33 given in *The Light of the Soul*, by Alice A. Bailey, p. 428: "Time, which is the sequence of the modifications of the mind, likewise terminates, giving place to the Eternal Now."

12. *The Theosophical Glossary*, p. 386.

13. *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. IV, pp. 517-518.

14. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. II, p. 574.

15. *The Secret Doctrine* (Adyar ed.), vol. 5, p. 505.

16. See: *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, by Alice A. Bailey, pp. 109-110, for a comprehensive listing of page references to the various keys in *The Secret Doctrine*.

17. *Vedanga Jyotisha* of *Yajur-Veda*, verse 3; of *Rig-Veda*, verse 36. "vedā hi yajñārtham abhipravṛttāḥ kālānupūrvyā vihitās ca yajñāḥ | tasmād idam kāla-vidhāna-śāstraṃ yo jyotiṣaṃ veda sa veda yajñān."

18. *The Voice of the Silence* (original 1889 ed.), pp. vii-ix.

19. *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. IV, p. 518.

20. *Teachings of the Temple*, The Temple of the People, Halcyon, California, 1925, 1948, p. 227.

21. See: *The Secret Doctrine* (orig. ed.), vol. I, p. xxiii.

22. See: *Five Years of Theosophy*, pp. 171, 193, 225.

23. See: "Varahamihira and Utpala: Their Works and Predecessors," by P. V. Kane, in *Journal of the Bombay Branch Royal Asiatic Society*, vols. 24-25, 1948-1949, wherein is quoted a section of Bhattotpala's (Utpala's) commentary on *Bṛihat Jataka* 7.9. From this it becomes apparent that the Yavanacharya whose works we are looking for is not the same person as Yavaneshvara, whom Bhattotpala quotes extensively, and who is often confused with the former nowadays.

24. See: *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. xxiii.

25. *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. VI, pp. 98-100.

26. The Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions

5001 Melville Memorial Library [new address, 1999:]

State University of New York [RD 13 Route 301]

Stony Brook, L.I., N.Y. 11794 [Carmel, NY 10512]

27. For a list of their titles and a translation of one of them into English (the only one translated so far), see: *Tibetan Medicine with Special Reference to Yoga Śataka*, by Vaidya Bhagwan Dash, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, India, 1976.

28. This information on the life of Behramshah Navroji Shroff is found in a pamphlet, *Glimpses from the Life Story of Baheramshah Navroji Shroff: A Revelationist of Zarathushtrian Mysticism*, [no author stated on cover], [Bombay:] Dini Avaz Committee, [1977].

29. This information on the color-thought-vibration language is found in *A Manual of "Khshnoom: The Zoroastrian Occult Knowledge*, by Phiroz Nasarvanji Tavarua, assisted by Burjor Ratanji Panthaki, Bombay: Parsee Vegetarian & Temperance Society, and Zoroastrian Radih Society, [1971].

30. I first came across the meaning of Avesta "yaz," Sanskrit "yaj," as "to become attuned with" in a booklet called *The Iranian Basis of—the Devanagari Sanskrit Alphabet, the Numerical Signs, and the Sacred Word "Aum" and Its Symbol*, by Behram D. Pithavala, Bombay: Behram D. Pithavala, [1974], p. 44, n. 10a. Although this booklet is not about Esoteric Zoroastrianism, its reference on p. 35 to "attune" (*yazamaide*), and its note 22 thereon (p. 45) to this "esoteric interpretation," showed that this meaning came from Esoteric Zoroastrianism. Since then I have obtained a copy of another book which confirmed this: *Essential Origins of Zoroastrianism: Some Glimpses of the Mazdayasni Zarathoshti Daen in its Original Native Light of Khshnoom*, by Framroze Sorabji Chiniwalla, Bombay: The Parsi Vegetarian and Temperance Society of Bombay, 1942. Phiroze Shapurji Masani in his introduction to this book refers to "'Yasna' or processes of attunement," pp. 1-2, and "Yasna (laws of attunement with higher yazatic forces)," pp. 10-11. Phiroze Masani was the first of two leading scholars of Khshnoom, or Esoteric Zoroastrianism. He wrote a book in English, *Zoroastrianism, Ancient and Modern*, which I have not seen. Framroze Chiniwalla was the second leading scholar of Khshnoom, appointed by Behramshah Shroff to propagate Khshnoom. Other than the book in English listed above, most of his writings are in Gujarati.

“The Books of Kiu-te Identified” was published in *The Canadian Theosophist*, vol. 62, no. 3, July/Aug. 1981, p. 63; and in *The Eclectic Theosophist*, no. 67, Jan./Feb. 1982, p. 4, with a note by the editors: “Though the following was received some months ago . . . limitation of space, regretfully has prevented publication until now.”

This article constitutes an announcement of the identification of the Books of Kiu-te. The first problem to be solved in tracing Blavatsky’s secret books was the identity of the Books of Kiu-te, since Blavatsky had linked the secret Book of Dzyan (the source of the stanzas translated in *The Secret Doctrine*) with the public Books of Kiu-te. We thus focused much effort on this question. My identification of the Books of Kiu-te occurred on May 21, 1981, a thrilling day for us. But unknown to us, a theosophical researcher working in the Netherlands had made this identification six years earlier. Henk J. Spierenburg did this in an article written in Dutch, “De Zeven Menselijke Beginselen in het Werk van H. P. Blavatsky en het Tibetaans Boeddhisme” (*The Seven Human Principles in H. P. Blavatsky’s Works and in Tibetan Buddhism*), published in 1975 in *Tibetaans Boeddhisme (Tibetan Buddhism)*, a publication of the Theosophical Society in the Netherlands, on p. 74.

Once these books were identified, the next step was clear: “We will give an analysis of these books of Kiu-te (rGyud-sde) as soon as we can obtain the set on microfilm” (p. 22). We did obtain a set, and I prepared the promised analysis that fall of 1981, published as: *The Books of Kiu-te, or the Tibetan Buddhist Tantras: A Preliminary Analysis*, San Diego: Wizards Bookshelf, 1983, *Secret Doctrine Reference Series* (reviewed in *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1985, pp. 113-114).

Again, as noted earlier on p. 6, the Theosophical Research Center was soon obliged to change its name, and has now become the Eastern Tradition Research Institute.

The Books of Kiu-te Identified

The Theosophical Research Center [now Eastern Tradition Research Institute] is pleased to announce that its efforts at tracing the Books of Kiu-te have been successful. As H. P. Blavatsky said, they are indeed found in the library of any Tibetan Gelugpa monastery, but previous attempts by Theosophists (including ourselves) to identify them by inquiring of learned Tibetans and Western scholars were foiled by the spelling of the term.

We were led to believe that they are part of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon (the Kanjur and Tanjur—Bkaḥ-ḥgyur and Bstan-ḥgyur—bKa'-gyur and bsTan'-gyur) since the story of a “great mountain 160,000 leagues high,” quoted from the Capuchin monk Della Penna’s account by the “Chohan Lama” in an article entitled “Tibetan Teachings” (*H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 6, pp. 94-112), is apparently from the bKa'-gyur, while Blavatsky implies that that story is from the Books of Kiu-te (*The Secret Doctrine*, Adyar edition, vol. 5, p. 389, footnote [reprinted in 1985 in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 14, p. 422]). In the same footnote she refers readers to “Markham’s *Tibet*, p. 309 et seq.,” for the story.

No Markham wrote a book entitled *Tibet*, but Clements Robert Markham edited a book called *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet, and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa*, published in London in 1876, with a second edition in 1879. In the second edition, p. 309 *et seq.* is an appendix entitled “Brief Account of the Kingdom of Tibet” by Horace Della Penna. On page 328 of that appendix is the story of the great mountain 160,000 leagues high from the bKa'-gyur, which he spells K'hagiur, and then on page 334 comes the information on the Books of Kiu-te.

Della Penna writes:

This Shakia Thupba restored the laws, which they say had then decayed, and which consist now, as said elsewhere, of 106 volumes, in which volumes the disciples of Shakia Thupba wrote all the contents of these books after the death of their master, just as they had heard it from his mouth. . . . These volumes divide themselves into two kinds of laws, one of which comprises 60 books, which are called the laws of Dote, and the other, which consists of 38 volumes, are called Khiute.

Shakia Thupba, or more correctly Śākya Thub-pa, is of course Gautama Buddha, and his laws are the bKa'-gyur. It is now easy to see that the two divisions, the Dote and Khiute, are the mDo-sde and the rGyud-sde respectively, or the Sūtra (*mDo*) and Tantra (*rGyud*) divisions (*sde*) of the Buddha's Word, the bKa'-gyur. Khiute is a fairly good representation of the pronunciation of rGyud-sde, and here we have the long-sought identification of these books. As to the numbers, not too much reliance can be placed on them; since besides the fact that 60 plus 38 does not equal 106 volumes, other discrepancies between them occur within Della Penna's account. (At another place he says there are 36 volumes of Khiute, etc.)

In the Narthang edition of the bKa'-gyur there are 22 volumes in the rGyud division. We will give an analysis of these books of Kiu-te (*rGyud-sde*) as soon as we can obtain the set on microfilm, which is available at cost, \$950.00. We have at present the microfilm set of the bsTan'-gyur, which are commentaries on these. It is this Tibetan Buddhist Canon, the bKa'-gyur and bsTan'-gyur, about which the Chohan Lama said, they "contain no fiction, but simply information for future generations, who may, by that time, have obtained the key to the right reading of them" (*H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 6, p. 100).

Kalachakra is "the most important work in the Gyut [rGyud] division of the Kanjur [bKa'-gyur], the division of mystic knowledge." (*The Secret Doctrine*, Adyar edition, vol. 5,

p. 375 [*H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 14, p. 402]). In other words Kalachakra is the most important of the available books of Kiu-te. For the first time ever in the West, the Dalai Lama of Tibet will give the Kalachakra Initiation in Madison, Wisconsin, July 16-21, 1981. This initiation is the traditional prerequisite for studying this text. For information write: Deer Park, Box 5366, Madison, WI 53705 [new address, 1999: 4548 Schneider Drive, Oregon, WI 53575].

“New Light on the Book of Dzyan,” a paper presented by David Reigle at the first Secret Doctrine Symposium, held in San Diego on July 21-22, 1984, was published in Symposium on H. P. Blavatsky’s Secret Doctrine: Proceedings, San Diego: Wizards Bookshelf, 1984, pp. 54-67.

This paper links the Book of Dzyan with the lost Kālacakra Mūla Tantra. After the identification of the Books of Kiu-te, my analysis of them in The Books of Kiu-te, or the Tibetan Buddhist Tantras, had made it clear that among the more than 100 Tibetan Buddhist tantras, the Kālacakra Tantra would be of most importance for tracing Blavatsky’s secret books. I had begun gathering microfilms of Sanskrit manuscripts of the then unpublished great Kālacakra commentary, Vimalaprabhā, in 1980, from which I drew material for this 1984 paper, being there published for the first time. A Sanskrit edition of the Vimalaprabhā has since been published by the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, in 3 vols., 1986 (chapters 1 and 2), 1994 (chapters 3 and 4), 1994 (chapter 5).

The Vimalaprabhā quotes the lost Kālacakra Mūla Tantra, and my continuing research in this material led to my writing a pamphlet in 1985, “The Lost Kālacakra Mūla Tantra on the Kings of Śambhala,” published in Feb. 1986 (Talent, Oregon: Eastern School, Kālacakra Research Publications no. 1). This pamphlet establishes the true Sanskrit names of the kings of Śambhala from verses of the Kālacakra Mūla Tantra quoted in the Vimalaprabhā, incidentally providing evidence for some errors in the list of the kings of Śambhala preserved by Tibetan tradition. This continuing research also supplements a statement in the present paper. Some of the quotations from the lost Mūla Hevajra Tantra on which D. L. Snellgrove based his view, referred to on p. 25, are in fact from the lost Mūla Kālacakra Tantra (see details in note 3). Besides this addition to the paper, I have corrected one obvious error in my translation (here found on the bottom of p. 35).

New Light on the Book of Dzyan

Since the positive identification of the Books of Kiu-te as the Tibetan Buddhist Tantras (*rGyud-sde*) in 1981,¹ I have long suspected that the “Book of Dzyan” from which the stanzas in *The Secret Doctrine* were translated may be the lost *Mūla (Root) Kālachakra Tantra*. This for several reasons:

(1) The extant *Laghu (Abridged) Kālachakra Tantra* and its associated texts are always found placed first among the Books of Kiu-te (*rGyud-sde*) in any edition of the Buddha’s Word, the Kangyur. Likewise, H. P. Blavatsky states that the Book of Dzyan “is the first volume of the Commentaries [themselves secret] upon the seven secret folios of Kiu-te, and a Glossary of the public works of the same name.”² It must here be added that the lost *mūla* tantras are in fact explanatory and doctrinal, as noticed by D. L. Snellgrove based on quotations from the lost *Mūla Hevajra Tantra* (some of these quotations are actually from the lost *Mūla Kālachakra Tantra*) found in the *Hevajrapīṇḍārthaṭīkā*.³

(2) The *Kālachakra* teaching is considered the special domain of the Pañchen Lama and his monastery, Tashi-lhunpo, located adjacent to Shigatse, making that area the major center for *Kālachakra* studies in Tibet. The Mahātmās responsible for giving H. P. Blavatsky much of the material found in *The Secret Doctrine* are also known to have had their abodes in that locale.

(3) The *Kālachakra* doctrine is said by Indo-Tibetan tradition to have come directly from Shambhala, from which fact it is known as the “Teaching of Shambhala.” Shambhala is also said in Theosophical literature to be the source of the Ageless Wisdom Teaching, of which *The Secret Doctrine* is a direct portion.

(4) The genesis of the world-system and its inhabitants is the subject of the first section of the *Kālachakra Tantra*, the only section which may be openly discussed. Likewise, cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis form the subject matter of *The Secret*

Doctrine. Cosmological teachings do not have the same place in other Books of Kiu-te, such as the *Chakrasaṃvara Tantra*, the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, etc.

(5) The term “Dzyan,” as I have shown elsewhere,⁴ is a Tibetan phonetic rendering of the Sanskrit “jñāna,” meaning wisdom, the result of dhyāna, or meditation. “Jñāna” is also the title of the fifth and last section of the *Kālachakra Tantra*, its most esoteric portion.

The following year I noticed that the *Secret Doctrine* reference to “book of Dzyan (11),” on dvīpas,⁵ in fact does not refer to any stanza of that number found in *The Secret Doctrine*. It concerns the chain of globes of our planet, called dvīpas (exoterically islands or continents), and their placement within the planes of existence, indicated by the directions of the compass. Naturally I wondered whether it might refer to the *Kālachakra Tantra*. As the extant *Laghu Kālachakra Tantra* had been published in India in 1966 in the original Sanskrit along with its Tibetan and Mongolian translations,⁶ comparison of its verse 11 was easily possible. I here translate into English that verse from its first section:

vāyvantād vāyusimnaḥ sthiradharaṇitale dvīpaśailāḥ samudrāś
 catvāryardhaṃ dvilakṣaṃ śikhicalavalayaṃ yojanānāṃ dvilakṣam |
 madhye meror yadūrdhvaṃ bhramati dinaniśaṃ raśicakraṃ satāraṃ
 ṣaḍbhāge dvidvilakṣaṃ tribhuvanasakalaṃ kālayogāt prajātam ||

From the end of air to the border of air; on the solid surface of the Earth are dvīpas, mountains, and oceans; half of four, two-hundred-thousand; the fire and air ring is two-hundred-thousand leagues. In the middle is Meru, above which revolve day and night, and the zodiac, together with the stars. In six zones, two times two-hundred-thousand, the entire three worlds are born from the junction of time.

As can be seen, books such as this were never meant to be understood without a commentary, be it oral or written. So despite a correct translation of the words, we still do not know the meaning of the verse. However, the simple fact that it contains the term “dvīpas” is sufficient warrant for further investigation.

There exists a great Kālachakra commentary written by the second Kalkī King of Shambhala, Puṇḍarīka. It is so highly regarded in Tibet that it has the distinction of being the only commentary ever to be included in an edition of the Buddha's Word, the Kangyur.⁷ All such commentaries naturally belong in the expository portion of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon, the Tengyur. It is entitled *Vimalaprabhā*, "Stainless Light," and was originally written in Sanskrit, said to be the language of Shambhala.⁸ At present, eight manuscripts of this work in the original Sanskrit are known to exist.⁹ From microfilms of three of these,¹⁰ and comparison with the Tibetan translations,¹¹ the Sanskrit text on three verses is here edited for the first time, and translated into English, beginning with verse 11:

idāniṃ tiryagmānam ihocyate |

vāyvantād vāyusimnaś catvāri lakṣāṇi | vāyor vāyvantam pūrvād
aparavāyuvālyāntam yāvat | evaṃ dakṣiṇād uttarāntam yāvad iti |
sthiradharaṇitale dvīpaśailāḥ samudrā iti | tato
vāyumaṇḍalābhyantare vahnimaṇḍalam valayākāram | evam agni-
valayamādhye toyavalayaṃ toyavalayamādhye pṛthvīvalayaṃ | tad
eva sthiradharaṇitalam | tasmin śaddvīpāḥ ṣaṭśailāḥ ṣaṭsamudrāḥ |
saptamenodakavalayena sahitāḥ saptasamudrāḥ | saptamena
jambūdvīpena sahitāḥ saptadvīpāḥ | vajraparvatena sārḍham sapta-
parvatāḥ | vajraparvato vāḍavāgniḥ | kṣārasamudratoyavalayānte
adhasi tiryagvibhāgena sthitaḥ | pṛthvīmahājambūdvīpānte sarva-
dikṣu adhasi ca kṣārasamudro 'vasthitaḥ |

lavaṇasamudrāntāl lavaṇasamudrāntam ardham catur-
lakṣāṇām | catvāryardham dvilakṣam iti | meror madhyāt savyā-
vasavye kṣārasamudravālyāntam dvilakṣam | savyenaikalakṣam
avasavyenaikalakṣam | evaṃ pūrvāparam vāyavyāgneyam
nairṛtyaiśānam |

śikhicalavalayaṃ yojanānām dvilakṣam iti | tasmāt kṣārodaka-
valayāt savyāvasavye śikhivāyuvālyam dvilakṣam bhavati | savyenaika-
lakṣam avasavyenaikalakṣam | evaṃ sarvadikṣu |

madhye merur yadūrdhvaṃ bhramati dinaniśam rāśicakraṃ
satāram iti | madhye meruḥ | kiṃ bhūtaḥ saḥ | yasyordhve rāśi-
cakram dvādaśāram satāram anantatārārāśisahitaṃ satāram divā-
niśam bhramatīti | atra keyam vācoyuktiḥ | kim aparo 'pi merur asti

yenedam vākyam ity ucyate | atra mandaro 'pi merusaṃjñāyā
 gr̥hītaḥ | tena mandarapr̥thakkaṇāyeyaṃ vācoyuktir iti |
 ṣaḍbhāge dvidvilakṣam iti | ihoktakrameṇādhasy ūrdhve
 pūrve paścime dakṣiṇe uttare ṣaḍbhāge p̥rthvīvalayamadhyāt dvi-
 dvilakṣam iti |

tribhuvanasakalaṃ svargamartyapātālabhuvanaṃ | tribhuvana-
 sakalaṃ kālayogāt prajātaṃ | saṃvartotpattikālavaśāt saṃdhāraṇa-
 manthānasamsthānavāyukālasaṃyogāj jātam sattvānāṃ śubhāśubha-
 karmaphalopabhogārtham iti | |

“Now the horizontal measure here [of this world-system] is stated.

“*From the end of air (vāyu) to the border of air is four-hundred-thousand [leagues]; from one end of [the realm of] air to the other, from the East to the end of the air ring in the West, and likewise from the South to the end in the North.*

“*On the solid surface of the Earth (dharāṇī) are dvīpas, mountains, and oceans: From there, inside the air maṇḍala is the fire maṇḍala in the form of a ring. Likewise inside the fire ring is the water ring, and inside the water ring is the earth (p̥rthvī) ring. Now that is the solid surface of the Earth, and on that are six dvīpas, six mountains, and six oceans. Together with the water ring as seventh, there are seven oceans; together with Jambūdvīpa as seventh, there are seven dvīpas: together with the Vajra-mountain, there are seven mountains. The Vajra-mountain is the submarine fire.¹² It is located below the end of [i.e., underneath] the salt-ocean water ring in the horizontal division. The salt-ocean is located at the end of earth (p̥rthvī), Great Jambūdvīpa, in all directions [i.e., all around it] and below it.*

“From the end of the salt-ocean to the [other] end of the salt-ocean is half of four-hundred-thousand [leagues]. *Half of four, two-hundred-thousand: From the middle of Meru to the end of the salt-ocean ring to the South and North is two-hundred-thousand [leagues]; one-hundred-thousand to the South and one-hundred-thousand to the North. Likewise to the East and West, Northwest and Southeast, and Southwest and Northeast.*

“*The fire and air ring is two-hundred-thousand leagues (yojana-s): From that salt-ocean ring across the fire and air ring*

to the South and North is two-hundred-thousand [leagues]; one-hundred-thousand to the South and one-hundred-thousand to the North. Likewise in all directions.

“*In the middle is Meru, above which revolve day and night, and the zodiac, together with the stars:* In the middle is Meru. What is that [Meru]? It is that above which the zodiac, twelve-spoked, together with the stars, together with an endless multitude of stars, and day and night, together with the stars, revolve. What is the proper word here? Is there another Meru to which this speech [could refer]? That will be stated. Now, Mandara¹³ also is understood by the name Meru. Therefore for making distinction from Mandara, this [Meru] is the proper word.

“*In six zones, two times two-hundred-thousand:* here spoken in series [two by two], below and above, in the East and the West, in the South and the North; in six zones, from the middle of the earth ring two times two-hundred-thousand [leagues];

“*The entire three worlds* are the heaven (*svarga*) world, the world of mortals (*martya*), and the hell (*pātāla*) world. *The entire three worlds are born from the junction of time:* born through the power of time of destruction and origination, from the conjunction of time of the *saṃdhāraṇa-*, *manthāna-*, and *saṃsthāna-*winds,¹⁴ for the purpose of garnering the fruits of the good and bad actions of sentient beings.”

This cosmological picture of the horizontal measure needs to be supplemented by the statement of the vertical measure from the preceding verse. After noting that this verse 10 and so on, about to be commented on, are condensed from the (lost) *Mūla Kālachakra Tantra*, Puṇḍarīka carefully explains that all measure is relative, being dependent upon the different perceptions of different beings. So, he says, one must not think that the Buddha is a liar since the measures taught by him here differ from those taught by him in the Abhidharma literature. Different measures were taught by him in accordance with the perceptions and needs of different beings. Here then is verse 10 of the first section of the *Laghu Kālachakra Tantra*, picking up the *Vimalaprabhā* where the actual verse commentary begins:

vāyvantān merusīmno narakaphaṇipuram yojanānām dvilakṣam
meror lakṣam pramāṇam grahagaṇanilayāt pañcaviṃśatsahasram |
grīvā pañcāśadāsyam dhruvapadam acalam pañcaviṃśat tathaiva
tadbāhye śūnyam ekaṃ tribhuvanarahitam nirguṇam tattvahīnam ||

.....

iha vāyvantān merusīmnaḥ | pṛthvītoyatejomaṇḍalānām adho
vāyumaṇḍalam ākāśadhātāv avasthitam | tasmād vāyvantān merum
yāvat saptanarakāṇy aṣṭamam phaṇipuram iti |

narakaphaṇipuram yojanānām dvilakṣam bhavati | atra vāyu-
maṇḍalam pañcāśatsahasram bhavati | tasmin mahākharavāte
mahāndhakāre narakadvayam pañcaviṃśatpañcaviṃśatsahasra-
yojanavibhāgam adha ūrdhvam | tiryagmānena pṛthvīvalaya-
pramāṇam |

evam agnivalaye narakadvayam | agninarakam ekaṃ | tadupari
tīvradhūmanarakam |

tathodakavalaye narakadvayam | pañkāmbhaḥ pañkodaka-
saṃyuktaḥ | vālukāmbho vālukodakasam̐yuktaḥ | mahāśītam |

pṛthvīvalaye śarkarāmbho narakāḥ pañcaviṃśatsahasra-
yojanam | tadupari phaṇipuram pañcaviṃśatsahasrayojanam adha
ūrdhvam | tad eva mānam dvidhā | ardhe asurabhuvanam | ardhe
nāgalokabhuvanam iti |

evam śarīre pādatalāt kaṭim yāvat hastadvayam | tad eva hasta-
dvayam aṣṭavibhāgam kṛtvā ekaikabhāge yathākrameṇa narakaphaṇi-
purāṇi veditavyānīti |

meror lakṣam pramāṇam | tasmād bhūmaṇḍalān meror adha
ūrdhvamānam lakṣayojanam iti | śarīre hastam ekaṃ kaṭyāḥ
kaṇṭhādho yāvat | tatraiva grahagaṇam bhramati |

tasmād grahagaṇanilayāt pañcaviṃśatsahasram grīvā meroḥ |
śarīre ṣaḍaṅgulam |

tataḥ pañcāśadāsyam mukham meror grīvāyā lalāṭāntam yāvat |
śarīre dvādaśaṅgulam iti |

tasmād dhruvapadam acalam uṣṇīṣam pañcaviṃśatsahasram
iti | śarīre ṣaḍaṅgulamānam lalāṭāt śikhāsthānam yāvad iti |

tadbāhye śūnyam ekaṃ tribhuvanarahitam nirguṇam tattva-
hīnam tad iti | adho vātamaṇḍalordhvoṣṇīṣayor bāhye śūnyam ekam |
pratyekaparamāṇurūpaṃ dhātupañcakam ekaśūnyam iti | nākāśam
sarvavyāpakam ity ekaśūnyenāvagantavyam |

evam caturlakṣaṃ lokadhātor mānaṃ | śarīre caturhastam |
hasto 'pi caturviṃśatyāṅgulātmaka iti ||

From the end of air to the border of Meru, the hells and the City of Serpents are two-hundred-thousand leagues. The measure of Meru is one-hundred-thousand; from the abode of the host of planets the neck is twenty-five-thousand, the face is fifty, and the fixed place of the Polestar is twenty-five. Outside that is space alone, destitute of the three worlds, without qualities, and devoid of elements.

“From the end of air (*vāyu*) to the border of Meru: Below the earth, water, and fire maṇḍalas the air maṇḍala is situated in the realm of ākāśa. From the end of that air [maṇḍala] up to Meru are seven hells (*naraka-s*), and the eighth, the City of Serpents (*phani-pura*).

“The hells and the City of Serpents are two-hundred-thousand leagues (*yojana-s*) [from bottom to top]: Here, the air maṇḍala is fifty-thousand [leagues high]. In that is the pair of hells, Howling of the Great Wind (*mahākharavāta*), and Great Darkness (*mahāndhakāra*),¹⁵ each a twenty-five-thousand league division from bottom to top. Their horizontal measure [width] is the measure of the earth ring.

“Likewise in the fire ring is a pair of hells. One is the Fire (*agni*) hell, and above that is the Hot Smoke (*tivra-dhūma*) hell.

“So also in the water ring is a pair of hells, Muddy Water (*pañkāmbha*), of mud and water mixed, and Sandy Water (*vālukāmbha*) of sand and water mixed. They are very cold.

“In the earth ring is the Gravel Water (*śarkarāmbha*) hell, twenty-five-thousand leagues [high]. Above that is the City of Serpents, twenty-five-thousand leagues from bottom to top. Now that measure is twofold. Half is the demon (*asura*) world and half is the serpent (*nāga*) world.

“Similarly in the body, from the soles of the feet up to the waist is [the measure] two hands (*hastā-s*). Now having made eight divisions of those two hands, each division is to be known as in the series of the hells and the City of Serpents.

"*The measure of Meru is one-hundred-thousand*: From that earth maṇḍala the measure of Meru from bottom to top is one-hundred-thousand leagues. In the body it is one hand from the waist up to the bottom of the neck. It is there that the host of planets revolves.

"*From that abode of the host of planets the neck of Meru is twenty-five-thousand* [leagues upward]. In the body it is [the measure] six fingers (*aṅgula*-s).

"*From that the face is fifty* [-thousand leagues], the face of Meru from the neck up to the end of the forehead. In the body it is twelve fingers.

"*From that the fixed place of the Polestar (dhruva), the crown (uṣṇīṣa), is twenty-five-thousand* [leagues upward]. In the body the measure is six fingers from the forehead up to the site of the topknot.

"*Outside that is space (śūnya) alone* [or uncompounded], *destitute of the three worlds, without qualities, and devoid of elements*: [The word] *that* [will be explained]. Outside below the air maṇḍala and above the crown is space alone. The form of a single ultimate atom (*parama-aṅu*) is the fivefold world-system. *Space alone* [will be explained]. It is not the all-pervading ākāśa that should be understood by space alone.

"Thus four-hundred-thousand [leagues] is the measure of the world-system. In the body it is four hands. A hand consists of [the measure] twenty-four fingers."

In dealing with new material from a system about which little is known it is never safe to quote isolated verses, though at times it cannot be helped. Of the nine verses preceding the just-quoted verses 10 and 11, verses 1 to 3 set the stage and introduce the speakers, King Suchandra of Shambhala and the Buddha, and briefly mention the topics of the *Kālachakra Tantra* as a whole. Verse 4 outlines the subject matter of this first section, and verses 5 to 9 relate that material to the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, etc. Verse 4 then, will be of considerable use in providing needed perspective on verses 10 and 11. Here is that verse and its *Vimalaprabhā* commentary, again picking up where the actual verse commentary begins:

kālāc chūnyeṣu vāyujvalanajaladharā dvīpaśailāḥ samudrā
 ṛkṣāṇīndvarkatārāgrahagaṇa ṛṣayo devabhūtās ca nāgāḥ |
 tīryagyoniś caturdhā vividhamahitale mānuṣā nārakās ca
 saṃbhūtāḥ sūnyamadhye lavaṇam iva jale tv aṇḍajāś cāṇḍamadhye ||

.....

lokadhātūtpādo nirodho veditavyaḥ | saṃvarto vivartakālas
 ceti |

ataḥ saṃvartād utpādakālavaśāt sūnyeṣv iti | sūnyānīti | loka-
 vyavahāreṇa cakṣurādīnām indriyāṇām agocarāṇi paramāṇu-
 rūpeṇāvasthitāni | pṛthivyaptejovāyurasadravyāṇi pañcacatuḥtri-
 dvyekaguṇasvabhāvāni | ṣaṣṭho guṇo dharmadhātuḥ sarvatra
 vyāpakāḥ | iti sūnyāni |

teṣu sūnyeṣu paramāṇuṣūtpādakālavaśād vāyur iti | teṣu
 paramāṇuṣu madhye prathamam tāvad vāyuparamāṇavo
 'nyonyāśliṣṭā bhavanti | tasmāt saṃyogāl laghucañcalatāgamaṇam
 vāyur ity ucyate |

evam agniparamāṇava āśliṣṭāḥ santo vāyusaṃyuktā vidyud
 agnir ity ucyate |

evam toyaparamāṇava āśliṣṭāḥ santo vāyvagnisaṃyuktā vṛṣṭi
 jalam ity ucyate |

evam pṛthivīparamāṇava āśliṣṭā indracāpaṃ gagane darśayati
 dharā ity ucyate |

rasaparamāṇavaḥ sarvatra vyāpakāḥ | evaṃ pañcaśūnyeṣu
 vāyujvalanajaladharā bhavanti |

saṃdhāraṇamanthānasamsthānavātaprabhāvataḥ | dvīpaśailāḥ
 samudrāḥ | dvīpāni sapta | śailāḥ sapta | samudrāḥ sapta |

ṛkṣāṇīndvarkatārāgrahagaṇa ṛṣaya iti | ṛkṣāṇi saptāvīmṣatiḥ |
 tatsambandhāny anantāni | indvarkau maṇḍalākārau | tārāgraha-
 gaṇas tathaiva tārakākāro maṅgalādir iti | ṛṣayaḥ saptatārakāḥ |

devabhūtās ca nāgāḥ | devās cāturmahārājākāyikādayaḥ |
 bhūtā aparājītapretādayaḥ | nāgā anantādayaḥ |

tīryagyoniś caturdhā | aṇḍajā garuḍādayo vāyuyoniḥ |
 jarāyujā gajendrādayo 'gniyoniḥ | saṃsvedajāḥ kīṭapataṅgakṛmy-
 ādayo jalayoniḥ | upapādukā vṛkṣādayo bhūmīyonir iti | tathā
 mahopapādukā rasayonir iti |

vividhamahitale | mahīty āgamapāṭhaḥ | vividhā ca sā mahīti
 vividhamahī | saptadvīpasvabhāvā dvādaśakhaṇḍasvabhāvā |

tasyās talaṃ vividhamahitalaṃ | nāgabhuvaṇaṃ saptanaraka-
bhuvanaṃ |

tasmin vividhamahyāṃ maṇuṣyās tale narake nārakāḥ | cakāraḥ
samuccayārtha iti |

saṃbhūtāḥ śūnyamadhye lavaṇaṃ iva jale tv aṇḍajaś
cāṇḍamadhye iti | atra dṛṣṭāntaḥ | sthāvarāṇām utpattaye lavaṇaṃ |
jaṅgamānām utpattaye aṇḍaṃ | cakāraḥ samuccaye | yathā
ātapasaṃyogāl lavaṇodakaparamāṇavo lavaṇakaṭhinatvaṃ yānti |
tathā mervādayaḥ sthāvarā iti | yathā śukradravaparamāṇavo
'ṇḍamadhye mukhakāyādyavayavatvaṃ gatāḥ | tathā jaṅgamasattvā
veditavyāḥ |

asya lokadhātor vistareṇotpādaḥ pañcame paṭale vaktavyaḥ ||

From time, in spaces, air, fire, water, earth, dvīpas, mountains, oceans, constellations, the moon, the sun, the host of stars and planets, the Rishis, gods, elementals, serpents, animals, of four modes of birth, the manifold Earth and underworld, humans and hell-beings, are born in the middle of space, like salt in water and the egg-born in the middle of the egg.

“The origination and cessation of the world-system (*loka-dhātu*) and the time of its periodic destruction and creation is to be known.

“After its periodic destruction, [its re-creation] through the power of *time* of origination *in spaces* (*śūnya-s*) [will now be explained]. Spaces, in reference to the worlds, are established through the form of ultimate atoms (*parama aṇu-s*), beyond the range of the senses such as eyesight, etc. Earth, water, fire, air, and taste (*rasa*) are their substances, inherently possessing five, four, three, two, and one quality (*guṇa*) respectively.¹⁶ The sixth quality is the dharmadhātu, pervading everywhere. Thus spaces [are explained].

“Among these space ultimate atoms, [born] through the power of time of origination, those of *air* [will be explained]. Among these ultimate atoms, in the middle [of space], first are the air ultimate atoms, enveloped by each other. From that conjunction [of the air ultimate atoms with each other] comes facility of movement. Thus air is explained.

“In like manner the *fire* ultimate atoms are enveloped [by the air ultimate atoms], their conjunction with those of air producing lightning. Thus fire is explained.

“Likewise the *water* ultimate atoms are enveloped [by the air and fire ultimate atoms], their conjunction with those of air and fire producing rain. Thus water is explained.

“Likewise the *earth* ultimate atoms are enveloped [by the air, fire, and water ultimate atoms, their conjunction] causing the appearance of the rainbow in the sky. Thus earth is explained.

“The taste ultimate atoms pervade everywhere. Thus in five spaces are air, fire, water, and earth.

“Through the force of the *saṃdhāraṇa*-, *manthāna*-, and *saṃsthāna*- winds come *dvīpas*, *mountains*, and *oceans*. There are seven *dvīpas*, seven mountains, and seven oceans.

“*Constellations, the moon, the sun, the host of stars and planets, and the Rishis*: There are twenty-seven constellations [the *nakṣatras*, or moon mansions]. Their associates are infinite. The moon and the sun are spherical in shape. The host of stars and planets, likewise star-like in form, is Mars, etc. The Rishis are seven stars [the Great Bear, or Big Dipper].

“*Gods, elementals, and serpents*: The gods (*deva*-s) are the inhabitants of the heavens beginning with that of the guardian kings of the four quarters [the lowest heaven]. The elementals (*bhūta*-s) are *Aparājita* [“Invincible”], ghosts (*preta*-s), etc. The serpents (*nāga*-s) are *Ananta* [“Infinite,” another name of *Śeṣha*, king of the *nāgas*], etc.

“*Animals, of four modes of birth*:¹⁷ The egg-born, namely *Garuḍa* [the mythical king of birds], etc., are from the matrix of air. The womb-born, namely *Gajendra* [“Lord of Elephants”], etc., are from the matrix of fire. The sweat-born, namely worms, butterflies, ants, etc., are from the matrix of water. The self-produced (*uṣapāduka*) [i.e., parentless], namely trees, etc., are from the matrix of earth. Also, the great self-produced (*mahā-uṣapāduka*) are from the matrix of taste.

“*The manifold Earth (mahī) and [manifold] underworld (tala)*: Earth [here spelled *mahi*, due to meter, rather than the normal *mahī*] is the reading found in the text [the verse being

commented on of the *Kālacakra Tantra*]. That Earth is manifold. The manifold Earth [will be explained]. It consists of seven dvīpas and twelve divisions (*khaṇḍa-s*). Its underworld is the manifold Earth underworld, [consisting of] the serpent-world and the septenary hell-world.

“On that [underworld], on the manifold Earth [live] *humans*, and in the underworld, in hell (*naraka*) [live] *hell-beings*. The word *and* (*ca*) [in the line being commented on, *humans and hell-beings*] has the meaning of conjunction.¹⁸

“*Born in the middle of space, like salt in water and the egg-born in the middle of the egg*. Here given is an analogy; the arising of the unmoving [plants, minerals, etc.] being analogous to salt, and the arising of the moving [animals, humans, etc.] being analogous to the egg. The word *and* (*ca*) is conjunctive. As from contact with sunshine salt-water ultimate atoms become hard salt, so Meru, etc. [though being solid can arise in a non-solid, namely space]. Thus the unmoving [are to be known]. As fluid semen ultimate atoms in the middle of an egg become bodily parts such as the face, trunk, etc., so moving beings are to be known [so moving beings can arise in apparently lifeless space].

“The origination of this world-system will be explained in detail in the fifth section [the last section of the *Kālachakra Tantra*].”

I leave students to make their own comparisons of this material with *The Secret Doctrine*, work out their own correspondences, and draw their own inferences, both regarding the dvīpa question and also the other teachings of these verses. Among the latter which augment the teachings given in *The Secret Doctrine* are:

(1) The correspondence of the measures of the world-system to those of the body. These measures, it will be noticed, of air, fire, water, and earth, are in the ratio 4:3:2:1.

(2) That the form of a fivefold world-system is the form of an ultimate atom, and that a world-system is in fact a single ultimate atom in space. It follows that each tiny atom comprising our own world is itself a fivefold world-system, complete with evolutions of its own.

(3) The matrices from which arise the four modes of birth: the egg-born from air, the womb-born from fire, the sweat-born from water, the parentless from earth; and another one, the great parentless from taste (*ākāśa*).

There is yet one more point to be mentioned. *The Secret Doctrine*, with its technical teachings on cosmology and evolution, has often been criticized as being without practical value. In this connection it should be remembered that *The Secret Doctrine* is avowedly only a portion of the Ageless Wisdom Teachings, and that H. P. Blavatsky had planned further volumes. These were not published, apparently because humanity was not then altruistic or unselfish enough to be entrusted with them.

In the Kālachakra system, the cosmological data given in the first section is followed by detailed correspondences to the microcosm, a human being, in the second section. The next two sections contain practices, based directly on these correspondences, leading to liberation. The fifth and last section, entitled “Jñāna,” concerns the wisdom thus attained, and further applications of this teaching. However, there remains a question of the appropriateness of publishing this traditionally secret material in English translation.

Notes

1. See: *The Books of Kiu-te, or the Tibetan Buddhist Tantras: A Preliminary Analysis*, by David Reigle, Wizards Bookshelf, San Diego, 1983.

2. From the section entitled, “The Secret Books of ‘Lam-Rim’ and Dzyan,” to be published in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. XIV, compiled by Boris de Zirkoff, Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Ill. [published in 1985].

3. *The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study*, Part I, by D. L. Snellgrove, Oxford University Press, London, 1959, p. 17. Unknown to Snellgrove when he wrote this book, and unknown to myself when I wrote this paper, the *Hevajrapīṇḍārthaṭīkā* is one a group of three commentaries which comment on their respective tantras from the standpoint

of Kālachakra. This group is referred to as the “bodhisattva-piṭaka,” the “collection (of texts written) by bodhisattvas,” with bodhisattvas in this case referring to kings of Shambhala. These texts often quote the *Mūla Kālachakra Tantra*, calling it simply, the “mūla tantra.” This is so, even though the *Hevajrapinḍārthaṭīkā* is a commentary on the *Hevajra Tantra*, and also refers to and quotes the lost *Mūla Hevajra Tantra* in 500,000 verses.

4. *The Books of Kiu-te*, pp. 46-47.

5. *The Secret Doctrine*, by H. P. Blavatsky, 1888 ed., vol. II, p. 759. See in this connection p. 320 ff. of that volume, and also “Where Was Śākadvīpa in the Mythical World-View of India?” by William Fairfield Warren, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 40, part 5, Dec. 1920, pp. 356-358.

6. *Kālacakra-Tantra and Other Texts*, Part I, edited by Raghu Vira and Lokesh Chandra, International Academy of Indian Culture, New Delhi, 1966. No English translation has been published.

7. The Der-ge edition. It is also in the Der-ge Tengyur.

8. So says the Third Pañchen Lama bLo-bzañ dPal-ldan Ye-śes in his *Śam-bha-la'i Lam-yig*, fol. 44a, “de rnams skad sam kṛ ta'i skad du smra ba . . .”

9. These are found as follows:

(1) Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, #G.10766 (palm-leaf; old, written within 150 years of the introduction of Kālachakra to India from Shambhala; complete with 5th paṭala).

(2) Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, #G.4727 (palm-leaf; incomplete, through verse 31 of 1st paṭala only).

(3) Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions, Stony Brook, New York, #MBB I-24 (paper; lacks 5th paṭala).

(4) Institut des Hautes Études Indiennes, Collection Sylvain Lévi, Paris (see *Central Asiatic Journal*, vol. 13, 1969, p. 64, fn. 33).

(5) Oriental Institute, Baroda, #13218 (lacks 5th paṭala).

(6) Library of the Mahārāja of Nepal, #85 (palm-leaf; illustrated; see *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. 66, 1897, pp. 315-316).

(7) Bir Library, Nepal (incomplete; see *Taisho Daigaku Kenkyukiyo*, vol. 40, Jan. 1955, p. 66).

(8) owned by Prof. Jagannatha Upadhyaya, Benares Sanskrit University (lacks 5th paṭala; source: personal communication).

10. Numbers (1), (2), and (3), above.

11. I have utilized the annotated edition found in *The Collected Works of Bu-ston*, Part 1, Indian reprint; the Peking Tengyur edition, #2064, Japanese reprint; and the Derge Kangyur, Toh. #845, vol. 102, and Tengyur, Toh. #1347, vols. 11-12, editions, Indian reprint.

12. The submarine fire (*vāḍavā-agni*) is well-known in Indian mythology as the fire which consumes the worlds at the end of an age. It is represented in the form of a mare (*vaḍavā*), dwelling beneath the sea. See "The Submarine Mare in the Mythology of Śiva," by Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1971, no. 1, pp. 9-27, especially pp. 13-15.

13. Mandara is a great mountain once used by the devas and the asuras to churn the ocean of milk for the purpose of recovering the elixir of immortality (*amṛta*) and thirteen other precious things lost in the deluge. They used the great serpent Vāsuki as a rope and the tortoise avatāra of Vishnu as a pivot, with Mandara serving as a churning stick. See *Rāmāyaṇa*, I.45 (Gita Press ed.); *Mahābhārata*, critical ed. (Poona) I.16, Bombay ed. I.18; and for other information, "Mythological Aspects of Trees and Mountains in the Great Epic," by E. Washburn Hopkins, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 30, 1910, pp. 347-374.

14. Saṃdhāraṇa means "holding together," supporting (life), bearing (as in a womb); manthāna means churning, stirring, or rubbing (as in kindling fire by friction); saṃsthāna means "standing together," shaping, forming.

15. The names of the hells listed here, and again with minor variations in verse 15 of the *Laghu Kālachakra Tantra* (which see), do not correspond to those given in the standard Buddhist Abhidharma literature, such as the *Abhidharmakośa* (chap. 3). Neither do they correspond to those given in the Hindu Purāṇas (e.g., *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, book II, chaps. 5 & 6), *The Laws of Manu* (IV.88-90), the Vyāsa-bhāṣya on the *Yoga-sūtras* of Patañjali (III.26), etc. However, they find a close parallel in the Jaina world-view. Compare the standard Jaina compendium, *Tattvārthadhigamasūtra*, chap. 3, verse 1:

ratna-śarkarā-vālukā-paṅka-dhūma-tamo-mahātamaḥ-prabhā
bhūmayo ghanāmbuvātākāśapratīṣṭhāḥ saptādho 'dhaḥ |

"[The abodes of hell-beings] are the seven earths: jewel-, gravel-, sand-, mud-, smoke-, darkness-, and great darkness- lustre, one

below the other, situated in [the rings of] dense water (or humid air), and air [a ring of dense air and a ring of thin air, resting] in ākāśa.”

[bracketed material is from Pūjyapāda's *Sarvārthasiddhi* commentary] For an esoteric explanation of the hells and heavens of Eastern cosmology do not fail to see *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*, pp. 245-261.

16. Compare the standard Indian account as found for example in *Liṅga Purāṇa* I.70.43-47; *Mahābhārata*, critical ed. XII.195, Bombay ed. XII.202; *The Laws of Manu* I.20 & 76-78; etc., and summarized in the chart below:

<u>element</u>	<u>qualities</u>		
ākāśa	sound	(śabda)	
air	”	touch	(sparśa)
fire	”	”	color (rūpa)
water	”	”	” taste (rasa)
earth	”	”	” smell (gandha)

Later in this verse Bu-ston glosses taste (Skt. *rasa*, Tib. *ro*) as nam-mkha', the Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit ākāśa.

17. These four modes of birth also apply to humans. See Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* III.9, where examples of humans of all four modes of birth are given. The example for the fourth mode, the self-produced, is there given as the humanity of the first kalpa (manuṣyāś caturvidhāḥ . . . upapādukāḥ punaḥ prāthama-kalpikāḥ). These have been likened to inhabitants of the rūpa heavens.

18. This phrase has reference to one of the traditional four major functions of the Sanskrit conjunctive particle ca, found in the oft-memorized lexicon, *Amarakośa*, 3rd kāṇḍa, nānārtha varga, verse 241, as follows:

ca-anvācaya-samāhāra-itaretara-samuccaye |

The last of these, “samuccaya,” is the word in our text which I have translated “conjunction,” though of course all four indicate conjunction of different kinds. The commentators on the *Amarakośa*, as also Patañjali in his *Mahābhāṣya* on *Aṣṭādhyāyī* II.2.29, vārttika 15, explain that ca as samuccaya conjoins related things which are not stated,

but must be supplied by the reader, almost like our “etc.” Bu-ston in his annotation here, “ma-smos-ba’i klu’i-srid-pa,” supplies for us the unmentioned serpent world [and inhabitants] to be added to *humans and hell-beings*.

addenda to note 9:

Through the kindness of a friend now living in India, I have recently learned that the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project has microfilmed two Kālachakra commentary manuscripts (paper) from private collections. These microfilms are Reel no. D 46/7, and Reel no. E 618/5-619/1, obtainable from the Nepal National Archives, Kathmandu.

[new addenda, 1999: By the time I wrote “The Lost Kālacakra Mūla Tantra on the Kings of Śambhala” (1985) I had through the kindness of this friend, John Newman, obtained microfilms of these two, as well as three other *Vimalaprabhā* manuscripts, from the Nepal National Archives, which can be added to the list: Reel no. B 81/16; Reel no. A 48/1; and Reel no. A142/8. They are all described in note 11 of that publication, p. 11.]

“What Are the Book of Kiu-te?,” was presented by David Reigle at the Secret Doctrine Conference held in Culver City, California, on August 6-7, 1988. Due to circumstances beyond the control of the sponsors, the proceedings of this conference could not be published. This paper was later published in The High Country Theosophist, vol. 9, no. 2, Feb. 1994, pp. 2-9, in slightly abridged form. A complete German translation was published as “Die Bücher des Kiu-te und die Stanzen des Dzyan,” Adyar Spezial: Theosophie und Buddhismus, Satteldorf: Adyar Theosophische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1994, pp. 78-87.

The identification of the Books of Kiu-te as the Tibetan Buddhist tantras had been doubted by many Theosophists, because of H. P. Blavatsky’s well-known strong views that the tantras are works of black magic. Indeed, among the various Theosophical journals to whom the announcement of their identification had been sent in 1981 (given above, pp. 21-23), only two printed it. (Although Henk J. Spierenburg, as noted above on p. 20, had made this identification in 1975 in an article written in Dutch, it remained unknown to most Theosophists.) This paper points out two crucial differences between the Buddhist tantras and the Hindu tantras, the only ones known in Blavatsky’s time: the Buddhist tantras are based on the Bodhisattva ideal, and they are based on non-theism.

The link between the Book of Dzyan and the lost mūla Kālacakra Tantra, brought out in my earlier paper, “New Light on the Book of Dzyan,” is here continued. The four chapters of the extant Kālacakra Tantra that follow the cosmology chapter go on to outline the complete system, including its practice, or sādhana. Assuming the Kālacakra-Book of Dzyan link, this system of practice would be the very system of The Secret Doctrine, heretofore unavailable. Its importance for the world is further elaborated in my book, Kālacakra Sādhana and Social Responsibility, published in 1996 (referred to here in note 16).

What Are the Books of Kiu-te?

The books of Kiu-te, as most Theosophists know, are said to be the source from which the Stanzas of Dzyan in *The Secret Doctrine* were translated. We are told that besides the secret books of Kiu-te from which the Stanzas of Dzyan were translated, there exist public books of Kiu-te, found in the libraries of Tibetan monasteries.¹ Yet these public books of Kiu-te remained, for all practical purposes, secret until 1981, when they were finally identified. Though the books are “public,” in that they are found in the printed collection of Tibetan Buddhist scriptures, they continue to be regarded by Tibetan tradition as the Buddha’s secret teachings, and therefore as having restricted access. Even now only a tiny fraction of them has been translated into English.

The problem of the identification of the books of Kiu-te was largely due to the phonetic transcription of the name, “Kiu-te,” which when rendered in its unphonetic transliteration would be “rGyud-sde.” It is a Tibetan word, and like most Tibetan words, is not spelled like it sounds. Since there was no standard transliteration system for Tibetan in use during H. P. Blavatsky’s time, she had little choice but to adopt the phonetic spellings of the writers she quoted. Writing of the books of Kiu-te under the heading “The Secret Books of ‘Lam-Rim’ and Dzyan,” she quoted the monk Horace della Penna, who had travelled in Tibet in 1730.² His account is found as an appendix in Clements R. Markham’s *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa*. It describes among other things the Tibetan sacred books. They are called, in his spelling, “K’hagiur,” which in the currently used Library of Congress transliteration system would be “bKa’-’gyur,” and are divided into two kinds, his “Dote” and “Khiute,” now transliterated “mDo-sde” and “rGyud-sde.”³ These are the two great

divisions of the Tibetan Buddhist sacred writings, the sūtras and tantras.

The above briefly recapitulates the identification of the books of Kiu-te as the Tibetan Buddhist tantras. Further details can be found in my book entitled, *The Books of Kiu-te or the Tibetan Buddhist Tantras: A Preliminary Analysis*.⁴ Since its publication in 1983, some doubt has been expressed as to this identification, largely because of H. P. Blavatsky's well-known views that the tantras are works of black magic. Horace della Penna, too, in the same section from which H. P. Blavatsky quoted when referring to the books of Kiu-te, describes them as "this infamous and filthy law of Khiute."⁵ There are, however, certain facts which when known may help clear up this difficulty.

There is a very great difference between the Buddhist tantras and the Hindu tantras, despite some outward resemblances, and it is only the Hindu tantras, may we recall, which were at all known to the outside world in H. P. Blavatsky's time. These differences are reflected in the fact that among large numbers of Hindus, the Vedic brahman community in particular, the Hindu tantras are not held in good repute, while among Tibetan Buddhists the Buddhist tantras are universally respected as the highest Buddhist teachings. While outsiders and skeptics may doubt that Gautama Buddha in fact taught the Buddhist tantras, as implicitly believed by all Tibetan Buddhists, there is no escaping the fact that the second Buddha, Tsong-kha-pa, founder of the Gelugpa or yellow-hat order, devoted fully half of his writings to tantra.

Perhaps the most important difference between the Hindu and Buddhist tantras is in the motivation for their study and practice. The clearly stated and daily reiterated purpose in the Tibetan tradition for undertaking Buddhist tantric practice is to free living beings from suffering. These practices are done to produce in oneself the capabilities of a Buddha for use in benefitting the world. This is called the Bodhisattva ideal, by which one sacrifices one's own earned liberation to stay behind and help other struggling beings. In the Hindu tantras there is no concern with benefitting anyone but the practitioner.

This point cannot be emphasized too strongly: Buddhist tantra is entirely based on the Bodhisattva ideal. The formal meditation practice associated with a specific tantra is called a *sādhana*. After the “refuge” formula, all Buddhist tantric *sādhanas* begin with the generation of *bodhicitta*. *Bodhicitta* is the earnest resolve to attain enlightenment quickly so as to be able to effectively help living beings. Few are selfless enough to sustain these altruistic practices taught in the tantras, and consequently they were kept secret to avoid misuse. But all knew of them, and the Buddhist tantras were revered throughout Tibet as the repositories of the most advanced methods known for achieving Bodhisattva-hood, for becoming a world server.

This very same ideal was clearly the motivation behind the Theosophical Society, as may be seen from the following definitive words of the Mahā-Chohan:

That *we*, the devoted followers of that spirit incarnate of absolute self sacrifice, of philanthropy, divine kindness, as of all the highest virtues attainable on this earth of sorrow, the man of men, Gautama Buddha, should ever allow the Theosophical Society to represent the *embodiment of selfishness*, the refuge of the few with no thought in them for the many, is a strange idea, my brothers.

Among the few glimpses obtained by Europeans of Tibet and its mystical hierarchy of “perfect lamas,” there is one which was correctly understood and described. “The incarnations of the Bodhisattva Padma-paṇi or Avalokiteśvara and of Tsong-kha-pa, that of Amitābha, relinquish at their death the attainment of Buddhahood—*i.e.* the summum bonum of bliss, and of individual *personal* felicity—that they might be born again and again for the benefit of mankind.”⁶ In other words, that they might be again and again subjected to misery, imprisonment in flesh and all the sorrows of life, provided that by such a self sacrifice repeated throughout long and dreary centuries they might become the means of securing salvation and bliss in the hereafter for a handful of men chosen among but one of the many races of mankind. And it is we, the humble disciples of these perfect lamas, who are expected to allow the T.S. to drop its noblest title, that of the Brotherhood of Humanity to become a

simple school of psychology? No, no, good brothers, you have been laboring under the mistake too long already.⁷

The Bodhisattva ideal is paramount, then, for the Buddhist tantras, as well as for Theosophy, while it is not found in the Hindu tantras.

Going along with the Bodhisattva ideal is another major difference between the Buddhist and Hindu tantras: non-theism. As is well-known, Buddhism is one of the few non-theistic world religions. Put simply, it does not believe in God or gods. Thus the many “deities” which populate Buddhist tantric literature have for the Buddhist practitioner little in common with the apparently similar deities of the Hindu tantras. Hinduism is at present fully theistic, and its gods are worshipped and propitiated to induce them to grant favors to the Hindu practitioner, etc.⁸

Buddhism shares with Jainism, the other non-theistic religion from India, the distinction of having the best record of any world religion on non-violence and non-aggression, making possible the basic human right of peaceful existence. A point to be noted is that the Bodhisattva ideal cannot function effectively in a theistic setting, because there one's savior is God, and consequently the human savior, or Bodhisattva, is left without a job. As shown by history, this is a fundamental difference with practical outworkings.

This non-theism, again, is distinctly also the Theosophical position, as seen in the following extracts from Mahātma letter 10:

Neither our philosophy nor ourselves believe in a God, least of all in one whose pronoun necessitates a capital H. . . . Our doctrine knows no compromises. It either affirms or denies, for it never teaches but that which it knows to be the truth. Therefore, we deny God both as philosophers and as Buddhists. We know there are planetary and other spiritual lives, and we know there is in our system no such thing as God, either personal or impersonal. . . . The God of the Theologians is simply an imaginary power Our chief aim is to deliver humanity of this nightmare, to teach man virtue for its own sake, and to walk in life

relying on himself instead of leaning on a theological crutch, that for countless ages was the direct cause of nearly all human misery.⁹

Non-theism, then, is the only practical setting for the Bodhisattva ideal, also the Theosophical ideal, and Buddhism provides this for its tantras, while Hinduism does not.

These facts may help place the question of the tantras in better perspective for Theosophists. In any case, it should be stressed that the identification of the books of Kiu-te as the Tibetan Buddhist tantras is not a mere theory or hypothesis, but is a verifiable fact for any who will take the trouble to ascertain it.

Given the fact that the books of Kiu-te are the Tibetan Buddhist tantras, the question remains as to specifically which of the many Buddhist tantras is the source of the Stanzas of Dzyan. This also brings in the question of the public and secret books of Kiu-te. Virtually all of the major Buddhist tantras found today are said to be abridgements of their original namesake counterparts. Thus the extant *Guhyasamāja Tantra* is said to be an abridgement of the lost mūla *Guhyasamāja Tantra* of 25,000 verses; the extant *Kālacakra Tantra* is said to be an abridgement of the lost mūla *Kālacakra Tantra* of 12,000 verses; etc., etc.¹⁰ So the extant abridged tantra will directly reflect the subject matter of the lost or “secret” original of any specific tantra. Among the extant tantras, the one whose subject matter includes cosmogony is the *Kālacakra Tantra*. Tantric sādhanas have two stages: the generation stage and the completion stage; and the generation stage of any sādhana entails the creation in thought of a symbolic world. Only the *Kālacakra Tantra*, however, includes an account of cosmogony, which may be applied externally, to the cosmos, or internally, in the sādhana. In this connection it is of real interest to read what later Theosophical literature said about the *Book of Dzyan*:

... it is rumored that the earlier part of it (consisting of the first six stanzas), has an origin altogether anterior to this world, and even that it is not a history, but a series of directions—rather a formula for creation than an account of it.¹¹

The *Kālacakra Tantra* also stands out among the other tantras because of its connection with the sacred land of Śambhala.¹² Tradition states that the king of Śambhala requested the Kālacakra teachings from Gautama Buddha, and then returned with them to Śambhala, where they became the state religion. It is from Śambhala that the abridged *Kālacakra Tantra* came to India and Tibet.

On the basis of this and other evidence detailed in my paper, "New Light on the Book of Dzyan," I suspect that the Stanzas of Dzyan were translated from the lost mūla *Kālacakra Tantra*.¹³ This, then, is a hypothesis, not an ascertainable fact at this time. Remembering, though, that the Books of Kiu-te are definitely the Buddhist tantras, and knowing that the only Buddhist tantra in which cosmogony plays a significant part is the *Kālacakra Tantra*, it is a very solid hypothesis.

If the Stanzas of Dzyan were in fact translated from the lost mūla *Kālacakra Tantra*, what would be the significance of this information? The extant *Kālacakra Tantra*, like its lost counterpart which is described in the *Vimalaprabhā* commentary, contains five sections covering three types of Kālacakra teaching, called "outer," "inner," and "other." The first section covering "outer" Kālacakra, the only one which may be openly discussed according to Tibetan tradition, is the one which includes cosmogony.¹⁴ The cosmogony which forms much of the subject matter of *The Secret Doctrine* is far more detailed than that found in the extant *Kālacakra Tantra*. So it is not unreasonable that *The Secret Doctrine's* account could be the full one from the lost unabridged *Kālacakra Tantra*. It would of course be from its first section, leaving untouched the remaining four sections covering "inner" and "other" Kālacakra. Perhaps some of this latter material would have been given in the planned further volumes of *The Secret Doctrine*, which were never published. In any case, we now have access to it in abridged form in the extant *Kālacakra Tantra* (though not yet in English¹⁵). Although it lacks a detailed rationale, the complete system is there in skeleton form, including its practice or sādhana which integrates outer, inner, and other Kālacakra. So what we have in the extant *Kālacakra Tantra* and sādhana is a comprehensive formula of

spiritual practice coming from Śambhala that would be the very system of *The Secret Doctrine*. It may well be the most powerful form of world service known on earth today.¹⁶

Before deciding to undertake this study and practice, it would be well to take stock of a few important facts. There is good reason why occult practices such as this are “only for the few.” No tantric sādhanā should be undertaken without receiving its initiation, which gives permission and protection. When persons receive a tantric initiation they are also making a commitment to perform at least its abbreviated practice every day for the rest of their lives. Sādhanas are difficult forms of meditation practice, requiring complex visualizations. Normally, years of study of the text involved go along with the sādhanā. Before undertaking a sādhanā, practitioners should have developed a level of concentration allowing them to keep their minds from wandering from the subject of meditation for the length of the meditation period (the fourth of the nine *citta-sthiti*-s). The results of this type of practice are not usually apparent to the practitioner, because it is subjective work. Even the specific aims of the practices are not as clear-cut as activism in the peace movement, environmental concerns, and other outer work. If it is hard to sustain commitment to these latter goals, how much more so for a tantric sādhanā full of strange and foreign “deities,” unintelligible mantras, and unknown symbolism? Among the various Buddhist tantric sādhanas, the Kālacakra sādhanā is the most complex and difficult, its preliminary practices alone being lengthier than many full sādhanas. For this reason, it is practiced by only a handful of the thousands of lamas who daily perform tantric sādhanas for the benefit of living beings. For those who are still interested, the Kālacakra initiation will be given near Los Angeles in July 1989 by the Dalai Lama.¹⁷

Notes

1. “The Secret Books of ‘Lam-Rim’ and Dzyan,” in *The Secret Doctrine*, 1897 ed., vol. 3, pp. 405 ff.; Adyar ed., vol. 5, pp. 389 ff.; in

H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 14, pp. 422 ff.; in *The Esoteric Writings of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky*, pp. 324 ff.

2. *Ibid.*

3. "Brief Account of the Kingdom of Tibet," by Fra Francesco Orazio della Penna di Billi, 1730, in *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet, and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa*, ed. by Clements R. Markham, London: Trübner and Co., 1876, second edition, 1879; reprinted New Delhi: Mañjuśrī Publishing House, 1971; pp. 328, 334. See also on the Tibetan Buddhist sacred writings, "Tibetan Teachings," in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 6, pp. 94 ff.; in *Tibetan Teachings: Articles by H. P. Blavatsky*, a booklet published by Theosophy Company, Los Angeles, no date.

4. Secret Doctrine Reference Series, San Diego: Wizards Bookshelf, 1983.

5. Markham, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

6. Attributed to "Rhys Davids" in the extant copy of the Mahā-Chohan's letter made by A. P. Sinnett, but actually found in Markham, *op. cit.*, p. xlvii.

7. "Mahā-Chohan's Letter," in *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, first series, ed. by C. Jinarājadāsa; in *Combined Chronology*, by Margaret Conger.

8. To avoid misunderstanding, my own position as a theological student is that ancient Vedic Hinduism was non-theistic. Theism was the single major problem overtaking Hinduism, which the Buddha attempted to address. If the Vedic literature is interpreted non-theistically, I see major parallels between its system of yajña, or sacrifice, and the Buddhist tantric sādhanas. In particular, I see a parallel between the agnicayana yajña and the Kālacakra sādhana, which I may have the opportunity to explore in the future.

9. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, ed. by A. T. Barker, all editions pp. 52-53. [chronological ed., published 1993, pp. 269-270]

10. *History of Buddhism (Chos-byung) by Bu-ston, II. Part, The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet*, trans. from Tibetan by E. Obermiller, Heidelberg: Harrassowitz, 1932, p. 170. See also the colophons of these works, where they often describe themselves as being extracted from larger works.

11. *Talks on the Path of Occultism, Vol. II: The Voice of the Silence*, by Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater, p. 5.

12. On Śambhala in general, and also its relation to Kālacakra, see: *Shambhala*, by Nicholas Roerich, 1930, first chapter, “Shambhala, the Resplendent;” *Heart of Asia*, by Nicholas Roerich, 1929, part II, “Shambhala;” *The Way to Shambhala*, by Edwin Bernbaum, 1980; *Kālacakra Research Publications*, No. 1, “The Lost Kālacakra Mūla Tantra on the Kings of Śambhala,” by David Reigle, 1986.

13. In *Symposium on H. P. Blavatsky’s Secret Doctrine: Proceedings*, San Diego: Wizards Bookshelf, 1984.

14. The first section also includes lengthy instructions on how to calculate astronomical cycles correctly for yogic purposes. These instructions claim to correct the errors into which the Hindu astronomical texts such as the *Sūrya-Siddhānta* have fallen over time. As might be expected, they are not easy to understand, and have been problematic for older commentators as well as modern readers.

15. In 1985 two books were published in English with the cover title *Kalac(h)akra Tantra*, one by Tenzin Gyatso, the Dalai Lama, and one by Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, neither of which is a translation of the *Kālacakra Tantra*. The former consists of commentaries on the Kālacakra initiation, and the latter, which is “restricted to those who have received the Kālacakra initiation,” consists of comments on Kālacakra practice. In the same year another book on Kālacakra was published, *The Wheel of Time: The Kalachakra in Context*, consisting of articles by Geshe Lhundub Sopa, Roger Jackson, and John Newman. Of the actual *Kālacakra Tantra*, approximately half of the first section has been translated along with its *Vimalaprabhā* commentary and the annotations of Bu-ston by John Newman in his unpublished thesis, “The Outer Wheel of Time,” 1987.

16. See also “Kālacakra Sādhana and Social Responsibility,” by David Reigle, unpublished. [Now published as a book, Santa Fe: Spirit of the Sun Publications, 1996.]

17. For details, contact Thubten Dhargye Ling, 2658 La Cienega Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90034, phone 213-838-1232.

“Tibetan and Sanskrit Manuscripts,” by David Reigle, was published in *The Eclectic Theosophist*, no. 117, May/June 1990, p. 4.

This brief article requires little comment. The many thousands of Tibetan blockprints and manuscripts are available on microfiche from: Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions, RD 13 route 301, Carmel, NY 10512. Information on the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project, which has microfilmed well over 100,000 manuscripts, is now available in English in, “German Research in Nepal,” by Albrecht Wezler, Acta Orientalia, 1995, pp. 169-172.

We can only exclaim, “so many manuscripts; so few researchers.”

Tibetan and Sanskrit Manuscripts

During the past couple decades, quietly and unnoticed, one of the most extraordinary transmissions of spiritual knowledge in the history of humanity has taken place. It is unprecedented in both its speed and its scope, involving modern technology and the financial resources of the U.S. government, among others. As a result, there are now about thirty U.S. university libraries which have entire rooms filled with Tibetan blockprints and manuscripts. Further, these texts can be obtained on microfiche, putting them within reach of nearly anyone. At the same time, thousands upon thousands of Sanskrit manuscripts have been microfilmed from public and private collections throughout Nepal, under the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project sponsored by the governments of Nepal and Germany. The Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions, based in the U.S., has independently microfilmed additional Sanskrit manuscripts in Nepal, and are the ones who put on microfiche and make available in that form the massive Tibetan text collection mentioned above.

How did it happen that U.S. libraries have become the repositories of the wisdom of Tibet? The U.S. government gave much financial aid to the government of India, more than the latter could pay back in U.S. dollars. So an arrangement was made whereby the U.S. would be repaid in books bought with Indian rupees from Indian publishers. This was the “Public Law 480” program, administered by the Library of Congress. The Tibetan refugees living in India, being an entrepreneuring bunch, seized the opportunity to reprint via offset lithography any and every Tibetan blockprint and manuscript that had gotten out of Tibet, an enormous quantity. With the government footing the bill, and willing to pay the price required to print

small runs of non-commercially viable material, the opportunity was not lost on the Tibetans. Although this P.L. 480 program includes books in all Indian languages from publishers all over India, the Tibetan situation was unique in that so many refugees had arrived in India with their prize possessions: sacred books, and virtually none of these had been heretofore published. They now fill shelf after shelf in selected U.S. university libraries, where they are sent off to storage, a burden to already overworked librarians, to await some future user.

With the Sanskrit manuscripts the story is similar: too few workers microfilming piles of manuscript leaves, some paper, some palm-leaf, frequently in disorder, with insufficient time to adequately catalogue them. Selecting only those manuscripts catalogued as Kālacakra, this writer and a friend have already identified among them complete independent works and parts of other works whose Sanskrit originals were presumed lost. Who knows what all has been microfilmed awaiting thorough identification?

Yes, Theosophists, there could be thirty copies of the Book of Dzyan in Tibetan sitting on U.S. library shelves for the past fifteen years and we would be none the wiser for it. Of course, this is not likely, but it *is* possible.

One of nine palm-leaf folios of the otherwise lost *Paramānṭhaserū*, by King Puṇḍarīka of Śambhala, found among other folios of a manuscript catalogued as *Kālacakraśāntara*, Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project, ms. no. 5-7235, reel no. B 30/31. For other fragments of this text, see “Sanskrit Manuscripts in China,” by F. Kielhorn, *The Academy*, vol. XLV, Jan-June 1894, pp. 498-499.

“Notes on Cosmological Notes,” by David Reigle, was not earlier published. It was distributed to about 30 individuals as an “unfinished draft,” dated July 31, 1993. Although still unfinished, in the sense that not all the terms in “Cosmological Notes” are yet identified, it is included here because of the importance of the “Cosmological Notes.”

“Cosmological Notes” refers to the first material to be given from the Book(s) of Kiu-te. This material includes a chart of the seven principles of Man and of the Universe, given in Tibetan, Sanskrit, and English. It also includes other Tibetan terms, given there for the first time, which are found later in the stanzas from the Book of Dzyan translated in The Secret Doctrine. It was received from Mahatma Morya, addressed to A. O. Hume, about October 1881 (date according to Daniel Caldwell; not Jan. 1882 as given in ML chron. ed.). Morya had then taken over correspondence to Hume and A. P. Sinnett on behalf of Mahatma Koot Hoomi (Kuthumi), who had gone into retreat.

Copies of this material had circulated among some of the early Theosophists. Francesca Arundale writes: “I have among my papers a copy of some early notes that were sent us, entitled Notes from the Book of Kiu Ti, a most metaphysical and philosophical discourse, strikingly different from the explanatory teaching of a later date” (My Guest—H. P. Blavatsky, 1932, p. 14). It was first published, in partial form, from two such copies, in The Early Teachings of the Masters, ed. C. Jinarajadasa, 1923. It is introduced by these words of A. P. Sinnett: “Notes from the Book of Kiu-te, the great repository of occult lore in the keeping of the Adepts in Tibet.” It was published in full as an appendix in The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett, 1925. This was included in the 1993 chronological edition of The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett, ed. Vicente Hao Chin, Jr. Also, follow-up questions on “Cosmological Notes” are found in Mahatma letter #13.

Seven years after original Tibetan terms from the Book(s) of Kiu-te were given in “Cosmological Notes,” original Tibetan terms from the Book of Dzyan (said to be one of the Books of Kiu-te) were given in The Secret Doctrine, particularly in a remarkable sample in vol. I, p. 23. Many of these terms are the same, so my “Notes on Cosmological Notes” also includes the sample Tibetan terms given from Book of Dzyan I.

Notes on Cosmological Notes

During the past few months [1993], Daniel Caldwell, Doss McDavid, and Ted Davy have independently asked me whether I had identified the terms in the “Cosmological Notes” appendix to *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*. (As there is little question of the Sanskrit terms, this pertains primarily to the Tibetan terms.) In fact, several years ago I had made notes on these terms, but could not finish it. Rather than wait several more years until I perhaps might be able to finish it, I promised to type up what I had and send it out, hoping that this might facilitate research, and under the premise that something is better than nothing. This is what I have, despite my hesitancy to put out unfinished research.

The system of the microcosmic and macrocosmic seven principles given in “Cosmological Notes” is clearly esoteric, and is not found as such in any known Sanskrit or Tibetan text. However, as shown in the researches of Pandit Madhusudan Ojha and Vasudeva S. Agrawala on Vedic symbolism, having the key of the esoteric meaning of such terms allows one to apply it wherever they occur in the canonical texts. The canonical texts of Buddhism, according to Blavatsky’s article, “Tibetan Teachings,” do contain “information for future generations, who may, by that time, have obtained the key to the right reading of them.” In Blavatsky’s day these texts were almost totally inaccessible. Today the Tibetan Buddhist canon can be obtained inexpensively on microfiche, a large number of its Sanskrit originals have been edited and published, and many of these texts have been translated into English. In the near future the Tibetan canon, which is now being input onto computers by Tibetan monks in India, will be available on database, allowing unprecedented search and find research. We are ourselves involved in getting a corresponding Sanskrit canon project underway, for

as is well known, the Tibetan canon consists of translations of original Sanskrit texts. (Massive quantities of these Sanskrit manuscripts were microfilmed in the 1970s and await editing.) Since the early Tibetan translators used a lexicon called the *Mahāvvyutpatti* (cited in the following notes) for standardized terminology, most Tibetan Buddhist terms have well-attested standard Sanskrit equivalents used throughout the canon. Thus the Tibetan Buddhist terms given in “Cosmological Notes” can be researched in either the original Sanskrit canonical texts or in their Tibetan translations.

It will be seen that the known Sanskrit equivalents of the Tibetan terms in this listing differ from the Sanskrit terms given by the Mahatmas. This is because the latter are Hindu Sanskrit terms rather than Buddhist Sanskrit terms, representing a different system. This allows research in the Hindu scriptures as well. But while the Hindu terms are all well known, several of the Buddhist terms remain unidentified. If there is any place in Tibetan literature that is likely to contain these terms it is the Jonangpa writings. The Jonangpas call their teachings the heart doctrine (*snying po'i don*). They claim to represent the Golden Age (*Kṛta Yuga*) teachings. They admit a *gzhan stong* beyond the range and reach of thought (the *rang stong* accepted by other Tibetan Buddhists is an emptiness which denies self-nature or *svabhāva* altogether). This *gzhan stong* teaching was received by their founder while practicing Kālacakra at Mt. Kailash, and Kālacakra has always been their primary tantric teaching, just as Maitreya's *Uttaratantra* has always been their primary non-tantric teaching. Other than my mention of them in *The Books of Kiu-te* (pp. 35, 47), I have so far refrained from calling attention to them in Theosophical publications because of historical complications. The Jonangpas were suppressed by the Gelugpas and their teachings have gone largely into other lineages. (The Kālacakra Initiation given by the late Kalu Rinpoche, a Kagyu Lama, includes the Jonangpa Kālacakra transmission.) Their suppression by the Gelugpas can be explained, I believe, on analogy with Subba Row's repudiation of *The Secret Doctrine*.

In any case, the first book on the major doctrine of this school, though as taught by the Kagyus, appeared in 1991: S. K.

Hookham's *The Buddha Within* (State University of New York Press). On p. 278 the key terms *gzhi* and *rgyu* (as found together in "Tho-ag in Zhi-gyu slept seven Khorlo."—S.D. I.23) appear in line 36. These words are not found together elsewhere to my knowledge, and are not found together in any dictionary. I have checked the late Tibetan text which Hookham translated from and found that they are there connected by 'am, "or." Nonetheless, indications such as this certainly show the need for further investigation of this school. As mentioned in *The Books of Kiu-te*, the Jonangpa writings, particularly those of Dolpopa which launched the school, were extremely hard to obtain in Tibet because of being banned. In 1991 Matthew Kapstein of Columbia University announced that he had located a set of Dolpopa's collected writings in far Eastern Tibet, obtained them for the Library of Congress, and was arranging to have them reprinted (*China Exchange News*, 19:3-4, 1991, pp. 15-19). This 7-volume set was reprinted in 10 parts in Delhi in 1992: *The 'Dzam-thang Edition of the Collected Works (Gsung-'bum) of Kun-mkhyen Dol-po-pa Shes-rab-rgyal-mtshan*. It will provide a fundamental source for researching yet unidentified Tibetan Theosophical terms.

To check the spellings of the Tibetan terms found in the following charts, I have utilized a print-out of the "Cosmological Notes" from the Mahatma papers now preserved in the British Museum. I am indebted to Jerry Hejka-Ekins for this print-out. The original was apparently in Morya's handwriting, which is very hard to read (see specimen reproduced in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*; also see his comments in letter #12). From this original addressed to Hume, now lost, Sinnett made a copy. Sinnett's handwriting is also very hard to read. In his writing, "n" is not distinguishable from "u," "m" is like "w," and "i" is often not dotted; so that the words "universal" and "mind" both start with an identical-looking series of five ridges. Given these facts, the likelihood of mis-transcription is high, and must be taken into account in regard to the yet unidentified terms. For the Tibetan terms in the following charts, "as given" means as given in Sinnett's copy found in the Mahatma papers. I have not put in the footnotes differences in capitalization or punctuation from the printed editions, but only differences in spelling.

On Transliteration

Note that c and ch of current transliteration systems represent the sounds ch and chh, which were written phonetically in the Mahatma papers. So the latter's Sem chan and Kon chhog, written as pronounced, are transliterated sems-can and dkon-mchog. As is well known, Tibetan has many silent letters, making it necessary to use the transliterated spellings, as opposed to the phonetic spellings, for correct word identification. For greater ease of comparison with the phonetic spellings used in the Mahatma papers, I have here used ng for ñ, ny for ñ̃, and zh for ź. The former accord with the Wylie and Library of Tibetan Works and Archives transliteration systems, while the latter accord with the Library of Congress transliteration system. So nga-bzhi and ña-bźi, and snyugs and sñugs, are the same words in different transliteration systems, and are all correct.

Abbreviations

cp.	compare
Eng.	English
Skt.	Sanskrit
Tib.	Tibetan

BL	<i>The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett</i>
BCW	<i>H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings</i>
ETM	<i>The Early Teachings of the Masters</i> , ed. C. Jinarajadasa
ML	<i>The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett</i>
SD	<i>The Secret Doctrine</i> , by H. P. Blavatsky

References

BTK	<i>Bauddha Tantra Kosha</i> , [Skt.-Skt.,] Part I, ed. Vrajavallabha Dwivedi and Thinlay Ram Shashni, Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1990. Part II published in 1997.
Chandra	<i>Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary</i> , by Lokesh Chandra, 12 vols., New Delhi: International Academy of

- Indian Culture, 1959-61; reprint Kyoto: Rinsen Book Company, 2 vols., 1971, etc.; supplementary volumes 1-7 published 1992-1994.
- Das *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*, with Sanskrit synonyms, by Sarat Chandra Das, Calcutta: 1902; reprint Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970, etc.
- Dhongthog *The New Light English-Tibetan Dictionary*, by T. G. Dhongthog, Dharmasala: Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, 1973.
- Edgerton *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, vol. II: Dictionary, by Franklin Edgerton, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953; reprint Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970, etc.
- GTD *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, [Tib.-Tib.-Chinese Dictionary,] by Chang I-sun/Zhang Yisun, et al., 3 vols., [Peking:] 1985; 2 vol. reprint 1993; called the "Great Tibetan Dictionary."
- Jäschke *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*, with special reference to the prevailing dialects, by H. A. Jäschke, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1881, etc.; reprint Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975.
- MVP-C *Sanskrit-Tibetan-English Vocabulary: Mahāvvyutpatti*, ed. Alexander Csoma de Körös, 3 vols., Calcutta: Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, vol. IV, nos. 1-3, 1910, 1916, 1944.
- MVP-S *Mahāvvyutpatti*, [Skt.-Tib.-Japanese,] ed. Ryōsauro Sakaki, Kyoto: 1916 [references are to sequentially numbered entries].
- Rigzin *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology*, by Tsepa Rigzin, Dharmasala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1986.
- Roerich *Tibetan-Russian-English Dictionary*, with Sanskrit parallels, by Y. N. Roerich, 10 vols., Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1983-87.
- Samdup *An English-Tibetan Dictionary*, by Dawasamdup Kazi, Calcutta: Calcutta University, 1919; reprint New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1973.

MAN

<u>Tibetan</u> (as given)	<u>Tibetan</u> (corrected)
1. A-Ku	ཀུ sku (body, Skt. <i>kāya</i>)
2. Zer (vital ray)	ཟེར zer (ray, Skt. <i>aṃśu</i>) [as in འོད་ཟེར 'od-zer, light-ray]
3. Chhu-lung (one of the three airs)	unidentified; cp. ཇུ chu (water) cp. རླུང rlung (air, Skt. <i>prāṇa</i>)
4. Nga Zhi (essence of action)	unidentified; cp. ལ་ nga (I) cp. གཞི gzhi (basis)
5. Ngë [printed: Ngi] (physical ego)	unidentified; cp. འོ་ nga'i (of me, mine)
6. Lana-Sem-nyed (spiritual soul)	བླ་ན་སེམས་ཉིད bla-na + sems-nyid (above, higher + mind, heart, soul, Skt. <i>uttara + citta[-tva]</i>)
7. Hlün dhüb (self existing)	ལྷོན་གྲུབ lhun-grub (self-existing, without effort, Skt. <i>anābhoga</i>)

Notes

1. Tib. *sku* normally translates Skt. *kāya* in the Buddhist texts, while for Skt. *rūpa* the Tib. is *gzugs*. Both mean body, although *rūpa* is more often translated as form. I do not know what the preceding “A” is for.

2. For the parallel to *prāṇa* in the Sanskrit column, see: “. . . and light too is the breath (*rlung*) [= *prāṇa*] on which it ‘rides’, for the breath also is made of five shining rays of light (*'od zer*).”—Giuseppe Tucci, *The Religions of Tibet*, p. 64. See also: “*rlung 'od-zer lnga-pa*—Energy-wind with fivefold rays;”—Rigzin 403b.

3. Chhu-lung (ཇུ་ལྷོན་ chu-klung) means river, but this is unlikely here. The printed “one of the 3 aims,” should be corrected to “one of the 3 airs,” according to Sinnett's manuscript. There is no standard listing

MAN

<u>Sanskrit</u> (corrected)	<u>English</u> (as given)
1. rūpa	body
2. prāṇa; jīvātma	life principle
3. liṅga-śarīra	astral body
4. kāma-rūpa	will form
5. liṅga-deha-bhūta	animal soul
6. ātman; māyāvi-rūpa	spiritual soul
7. mahātma	spirit

Notes (*continued from previous page*)

of three airs, which are usually listed as five, none of which resembles chhu. Air (*rlung*) is also one of the three basic humors of the body in Tibetan medicine. Chhu-lung is wrongly given as Chhin-Lung in ETM.

4. Nga zhi, spelled ཏ་བཞི་ nga-bzhi, means the number fifty-four.

5. Sinnett's manuscript has an umlaut over the vowel, which caused the mistaken transcription "Ngi" in both BL and ETM. Animal soul is given in "Tibetan Teachings" as jang-khog (*byang-khog*), BCW 6.107, 108.

6. I have not yet found these two words, bla-na and sems-nyid, compounded together in use; nor are they found together in GTD.

7. For this key term see the usages cited for *anābhoga* in Edgerton 22b (equivalence confirmed at MVP-S 411, and Chandra 2550-51).

UNIVERSE

<u>Tibetan</u> (as given)	<u>Tibetan</u> (corrected)
1. Sem chan (animated universe)	སེམས་ཅན་ sems-can (a sentient being, Skt. <i>sattva</i>)
SSa—earth as an element	ས་ sa (earth, Skt. <i>prthivī, bhūmī</i>)
2. Zhihna [later: Zhima] (vital soul)	unidentified; cp. བཞི་མ་ gzhi-ma (basis, Skt. <i>āśraya</i>)
3. Yor wa (illusion)	unidentified
4. Od (light, the shining <i>active</i> astral light)	འོད་ 'od (light, Skt. <i>prabhā, āloka</i>)
5. Nam kha (ether passive)	ནམ་མཁའ་ nam-mkha' (space, ether, Skt. <i>ākāśa</i>)
6. Kon chhog (uncreated principle)	དཀོན་མཆོག་ dkon-mchog (jewel, Skt. <i>ratna</i> [= the three jewels])
7. Nyug (duration in eternity or space)	སྐྱུག་མ་ snyugs (duration, continuity, time)

Notes

1. Sem chan was transcribed as Sien-chan in ETM. The Sien-chan at SD (1897) III.393 (= BCW 14.408) is likely to also be an error of transcription for Sem-chan, as it has the same meaning in both locations. The spelling SSa for sa follows German writers in using ß, or double s, for non-German words beginning with the sound “s” (e.g., Isaac Jacob Schmidt, *Ssanang Ssetsen, Chungtai dschi, Geschichte der Ost-Mongolen und ihres Fürstenhauses*, St. Petersburg, 1829).

2. In Sinnett's manuscript, old pp. 14, 19, new pp. 7, 10, corresponding to BL pp. 379, 380, the spelling Zhihna is twice crossed out and the spelling Zhima is written in. In the first location it is contrasted with Zhi-gyu (this term is also given at SD I.23).

UNIVERSE

<u>Sanskrit</u> (corrected)	<u>English</u> (as given)
1. brahma—universe prakṛti—matter iyam (Earth)	organised matter
2. puruṣa	vivifying, universal spirit
3. (māyā) ākāśa	astral or cosmic atmosphere
4. vāc (the kāmākāśa)	cosmic will
5. yajña (latent form in Brahma-puruṣa determined by activity of No. 4)	virāj (?) universal illusion
6. nārāyaṇa—spirit brooding over the waters and reflect- ing in itself the universe	universal mind
7. svayambhuva in and its (space)	latent spirit; Ensoph

Notes (*continued from previous page*)

3. Cp. ཡོར་པོ་ yor-po (shaking, trembling); མིག་ཡོར་ mig-yor (mirage); གཡོར་བ་ gyor-ba (to cover, to darken [Roerich 8.309b]).

6. Kon chhog refers to the three jewels: the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha. For the meaning given in the English column, cp. ཀུན་གཞི་ kun-gzhi (universal mind, Skt. *ālaya[-vijñāna]*).

7. The printed “Nyng” in both BL and ETM is due to the fact that the letters “n” and “u” are not distinguishable in Sinnett’s handwriting. In the Sanskrit column, the phrase “in and its (space)” is our reading of Sinnett’s manuscript, given only as “in—space” in BL.

Additional Terms from Cosmological Notes

BL p. 376:

Dgyu, Dgyu-mi/Dzyu, Dzyu-mi/dgiü ["Dzyu, Dzyu-mi" SD I.31, 107-108; "dgiü" ML #35, 2nd ed. p. 246, 3rd ed. p. 243], "the real and the unreal knowledge" [unidentified].

note: It is spelled "dgyu" rather than "dzyu" in Sinnett's manuscript, but the fact that all the other Tibetan words are spelled phonetically might favor "dzyu" over "dgyu." If "dgyu" is transcribed correctly, the "d" is unlikely to be a silent letter (as in *dgu*, pronounced *gu*, "nine"); rather it would show that the following "g" is not a hard "g," but is a soft "g," pronounced like "j" (as in some Tibetan dialects). The use of "d" before "j," e.g., *djāti* and *djñāna*, is found extensively in Ernest J. Eitel's *Hand-book of Chinese Buddhism, Being a Sanskrit-Chinese Dictionary*, 1870, and was repeated by Blavatsky, as in *The Theosophical Glossary*. Neither "dzyu" nor "dgyu" is a known word. To complicate it further, the suffix "mi" seems to negate the word. But in Tibetan, the negative syllables "mi" and "ma" must precede the word negated, not follow it. Only "min" and "med" negate a word as suffixes. Thus the suffix could be "min" instead of "mi." Blavatsky defines these words at SD I.108: "Dzyu is the one real (magical) knowledge, or Occult Wisdom; which, dealing with eternal truths and primal causes, becomes almost omnipotence when applied in the right direction. Its antithesis is Dzyu-mi, that which deals with illusions and false appearances only, . . ." For meaning cp. ལྷོ་མ་ sgyu-ma, "illusion," Skt. *māyā* (negative is ལྷོ་མ་མེད་པ་ sgyu-ma-med-pa, or ལྷོ་མེད་ sgyu-med); cp. རྩུ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ rdzu-'phrul, "magical power," Skt. *ṛddhi* (one of the five or six *abhijñā*, "supernormal knowledges or faculties"), its phonetic "dzu-trul" is found at BCW 6.107.

Fohat, "active agent of will—electricity" [unidentified].

Dang-ma, "purified soul" = རྩུ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ dwangs-ma.

note: "the spirit, the soul', a signification not found hitherto in any book, but acc. to a Lama's statement the word denotes the soul, when purified from every sin, and to be compared to a clear and limpid fluid, in which every heterogeneous matter has been precipitated." Jäschke 249b. I am indebted to Robert Hütwohl for this identification.

Chhag, “genesis” = ཆགས་ chags.

Thyan Kam/Dyan Kam [“Dyan Kam” BL 380], “the knowledge of bringing about (giving the impulse to Kosmic energy in the right direction)” [unidentified; see below, p. 70].

BL p. 377:

Chyang, “omniscience,” cp. བྱང་ཚུབ་ byang-chub (Skt. *bodhi*).

Bar-nang, “Kosmic atmosphere” = བར་སྒྲང་ bar-snang.

Kyen, “cause” = རྐྱེན་ rkyen.

BL p. 379:

Zhi gyu, “cosmic matter” [unidentified; see below, p. 69].

Thog, “space” [unidentified; see below, p. 68].

Nyng = Nyug, “duration” = སྟུགས་ snyugs [see above, p. 64].

Khor wa, “motion” = འཁོར་བ་ 'khor-ba (revolving, moving in a circle; the round of transmigration, Skt. *bhramaṇa*; *saṃsāra*).

Zhima, as positive in contrast with zhi-gyu, which is negative [see above, p. 64, for possible identification as གཞི་མ་ gzhi-ma].

BL p. 382:

Gyu-thog, “phenomenal or material universe (secret name)” [unidentified; see zhi-gyu and tho-ag below, pp. 69, 68].

Aja-sakti, Skt. *aja* “unborn,” *śakti* “power.”

Viswam, Skt. *viśvam* “all, the all, the world, the universe.”

Zigten-jas [should be Jigten-jas], “cosmogony,” from Jigten “living world,” and jas “to make” = འཛིན་གྱིན་བྱས་ 'jig-rten byas.

Chh-rab [should be chhag-rab], “genesis” = ཆགས་རབ་ chags-rab.

Terms from Book of Dzyan I

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 1 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 I.23

Tho-ag/Tho-og/Thog [“Tho-ag” at SD I.23 first occurrence; “Tho-og” at SD I.23 second occurrence, SD (1897) III.393fn., 396fn. (= BCW 14.408fn., 411fn.); “Thog” BL 379, 382 (so in Sinnett’s manuscript)], “the eternal parent” SD I.35; “space” BL 379; [unidentified]; cp. མོག་མེ thog-ma, “first, origin, beginning, primordial, original,” Skt. *ādi* [add MVP-S 943 (*agra*) and 1281 (*ādi*) to the locations cited in Chandra 1047b, suppl. 843b]. A traditional definition of *ādi* taken from the *Sekoddeśa-ṭīkā* is found at BTK 13 under the entry *ādi-buddha*: “*ādi-śabdo* ’nādi-nidhanārthaḥ,” which can be translated, “the word *ādi* means without beginning or end.” Although the Tibetan translation of *ādi* is “dang-po” in the word *ādi-buddha*, it is “thog-ma” in the definition, “anādi-nidhana,” as also found in the *Mañjuśrī-nāma-saṃgīti*. For usage of “thog-ma,” *ādi*, see: *Mañjuśrī-nāma-saṃgīti* 6.5 and 8.24, or 46 and 100; Eng. trans., Alex Wayman, *Chanting the Names of Mañjuśrī*, Boston & London: Shambhala, 1985, pp. 75, 93; Eng. trans., Ronald M. Davidson, “The Litany of the Names of Mañjuśrī,” in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein*, ed. Michel Strickmann, Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1981, vol. 1, pp. 25 (53), 30 (57).

note: In a letter to me dated 4/11/81 Carl Hurwitz proposed *mtho’og*, consisting of two words meaning high and low, respectively. In *The Buddhism of H. P. Blavatsky*, San Diego: Point Loma Publications, 1991, p. 146 fn. 361, H. J. Spierenburg states that Tho-og is a compound of

these same two words, as if this is definite. Although possible, I do not find this convincing. To merely locate words in the dictionary whose sounds are right, and whose meanings may work, is insufficient, as shown by Geoffrey Barborka's unfortunate error regarding the books of Maitreya (*H. P. Blavatsky, Tibet and Tulku*, p. 186), which was copied in Boris de Zirkoff's Historical Introduction to the 1978-79 definitive edition of *The Secret Doctrine* (p. [69]). For H.P.B.'s "Champai chhos Nga," Barborka gave "*champai*, from *cham* signifies whole, unimpaired, *chhos*—doctrine; *ngang*—essentiality," and translated it as "the whole doctrine in its essentiality." As all Tibetan scholars know, the first and last words are actually "*byams-pa'i*," meaning "of Maitreya," and "*nga*," meaning "five," and the correct translation is "the five books of Maitreya." I have tried to have this error corrected in the SD, but so far without success. This is all the more reason why we need to be careful in our research from the beginning.

Zhi-gyu, "ever invisible robes" SD I.35; "cosmic prenebular matter" Würzburg ms., SD (1978-79) Index vol., p. 514; "cosmic matter" BL 379; [unidentified]; cp. གཟི་ gzhi, "that which gives origin to a thing, that from which it arises, ground, basis, foundation; root" (Das 1079b); Skt. *ādhāra*, *āśraya*, *mūla*, *vastu* (Chandra 2042ab). Second syllable defined at BL 379: "gyu (material) earth in this sense;" cp. རྗེ་ rgyu, "matter, substance, material" (Jäschke 110a, same at Das 315b); "cause, namely, the primary cause as distinguished from *rkyen* the secondary or co-operating cause" (Das 315b); in second meaning = Skt. *hetu*; in first meaning I have not found a Sanskrit equivalent at Chandra 529b-530b and suppl. 459. I have not yet found these two words, gzhi and rgyu, compounded together in use; nor are they found together in GTD. However, they are found juxtaposed with "or" between them (see above, p. 59); see: *The Buddha Within*, S. K. Hookham, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991, p. 278, "the base (*gzhi*) or 'basic cause' (*rgyu*, *hetu*);" see also: *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, Dudjom Rinpoche, Jikdrel Yeshe Dorje, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991, vol. 1, p. 117, "ground or causal basis."

Khorlo = འཁོར་ལོ་ 'khor-lo, "wheel," Skt. *cakra*.

Zodmanas zhiba = བཞོན་མ་ནས་ཞི་བ་ gzod-ma-nas zhi-ba, “tranquil from the beginning; quiescent from the outset;” Skt. *ādi-sānta*. For usage see: *The Doctrine of Prajñāpāramitā as Exposed in the Abhisamayālaṃkāra of Maitreya*, by E. Obermiller, *Acta Orientalia*, vol. XI, 1932, reprint Talent, Oregon: Canon Publications, 1984, p. 92; *Three Chapters from the Samādhirājasūtra*, by K. Regamey, Warszawa: 1938, reprint Talent, Oregon: Canon Publications, 1984, ch. 8, vs. 2, pp. 29, 64.

Nyug = སྐྱུག་སྐྱུག་ snyugs, “duration, continuity, time.”

Konch-hog = དཀོན་མཆོག་ dkon-mchog, “jewel,” Skt. *ratna*; used for the three jewels: Buddha, Dharma, Saṅgha; compare for meaning: ཀུན་གཞི་ kun-gzhi, “universal mind,” *ālaya[-vijñāna]*.

Thyan-Kam [variant “Dyan Kam” BL 380], “the knowledge of bringing about (giving the impulse to Kosmic energy in the right direction)” BL 376; “the power or knowledge of guiding the impulses of cosmic energy in the right direction” SD I.635; [unidentified].

Lha-Chohan = ལྷ་ lha, “god,” Skt. *deva*; chohan [unidentified].

This word is spelled “Cho-Khan” at ML # 9 (p. 38), allowing for the hypothetical ཚོས་མཁན་ chos mkhan, or ཚོས་ཀྱི་མཁན་པོ་ chos kyi mkhan po, “dharma abbot,” but this has not been found in use.

Tenbrel Chugnyi = རྟེན་འབྲེལ་བཅུ་གཉིས་ rten-'brel bcu-gnyis, “the twelvefold chain of causation,” Skt. *pratītya samutpāda*.

Dharmakaya = Skt. *dharmakāya*.

Tgenchang, [unidentified].

Barnang = བར་སྐྱང་ bar-snang, “the heavens, the atmosphere, air, space, mid-world;” Skt. *antarikṣa* or *antarīkṣa*.

Ssa = སྐ sa, “earth” (follows German writers using initial ß, or double s, in non-German words beginning with the sound “s”).

Ngovonyidj = ཇོ་བོ་ཉིད་ ngo-bo-nyid, “self-nature, own-nature, own-being, essence, substance,” Skt. *svabhāva*. For usage consult the locations cited at Chandra 612a.

[**Tho-og**] **Yinsin**, Yin Sin or Yin-sin is defined in ML #15 (2nd ed. p. 90; 3rd ed. p. 88) as:

the one “Form of existence,” also Adi-Buddhi or Dharmakaya, the mystic, universally diffused essence;

and in ML #59 it is spelled Yih-sin (2nd ed. p. 346) or Yi-hsin (3rd ed. p. 340) and defined as:

the “one form of existence,” . . . *Dharmakaya* (the universally diffused Essence), . . . Parabrahm or “Adi-Buddha. . . .”

Compare Samuel Beal, *A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese*, London: Trübner & Co., 1871, 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), Amitābha (for Amirta) the Eternal, and Adi-Buddha (yih-sin) the “one form of existence.”

Sun-chan, [unidentified].

Yong-grub = ཡོངས་གྲུབ་ yongs-grub, “perfected,” Skt. *pariniṣpanna*.

“Technical Terms in Book of Dzyan Stanza I,” by David Reigle, was published as Book of Dzyan Research Report, “Technical Terms in Stanza I,” Cotopaxi, Colorado: Eastern School Press, December 1995, a pamphlet of 8 pages. It is here slightly revised.

By this time it had become clear that the biggest remaining problem was the technical terms. The Wisdom Tradition of antiquity can as much be called a science as a religion. Like any science, it has its own technical terms. It can no more be understood without a knowledge of these terms than can nuclear physics be understood without a knowledge of its own technical terms.

The most efficient way to research these technical terms today is through text databases, where a large quantity of textual material can be searched electronically in minutes. The Asian Classics Input Project had begun the huge task of inputting the entire Tibetan Buddhist canon. In the early 1990s I discussed with them the possibility of including in this project the Sanskrit originals of the Tibetan Buddhist canon. This was undertaken, but fell by the wayside a few years later due to lack of funds.

In the meantime, we had here input a number of fundamental Sanskrit Buddhist texts, including: Abhisamayālaṅkāra, Abhidharma-kośa, Bodhicaryāvatāra, Kālacakra-tantra, Madhyānta-vibhāga, Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā, and Ratna-gotra-vibhāga. Sanskrit Buddhist texts are far from being fully understood, even on a surface level. They include many technical terms unknown to Hindu Sanskrit paṇḍits. Scholars utilizing the canonical Tibetan and Chinese translations have been working on this problem for over a century, and even today new research is published each year. While inputting the Abhisamayālaṅkāra I noticed some problematic verbs, and identified them as previously unknown forms. This resulted in my article, “The ‘Virtually Unknown’ Benedictive Middle in Classical Sanskrit: Two Occurrences in the Buddhist Abhisamayālaṅkāra,” published in the Indo-Iranian Journal, vol. 40, no. 2, April 1997, pp. 119-123.

Technical Terms in Book of Dzyan Stanza I

Serious students of *The Secret Doctrine*, and especially those who are Theosophical teachers and lecturers, will wish to know what light current research can throw on the technical terms found in the “Book of Dzyan.” During H. P. Blavatsky’s time only a handful of books on Buddhism and a couple translations of Buddhist scriptures existed in any European language, and these were none too reliable. Today there are many hundreds of such books and translations, and the work of scholars in the earlier part of this century has in recent decades been corrected with the help of learned Tibetans. In H. P. Blavatsky’s time there was little question of researching the original language Buddhist texts, as they were largely inaccessible. But since 1975 whole libraries of Sanskrit manuscripts and Tibetan blockprints have become available. It is this material that we have gathered for researching and one day annotating an original Sanskrit/Tibetan manuscript of the “Book of Dzyan,” and it is from this material that the following is drawn.

There are six technical terms in the English translation of the first Stanza of the “Book of Dzyan” given in *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky. As spelled in the first edition these are: Ah-hi, Paranishpanna, Dangma, Alaya, Paramartha, and Anupadaka. The first of these, Ah-hi, is from verse 3 of Stanza I: “Universal mind was not, for there were no Ah-hi to contain it.” Ah-hi is given in H. P. Blavatsky’s *Theosophical Glossary* as a Senzar word whose Sanskrit equivalent is Ahi, meaning “Serpents. Dhyān Chohans. ‘Wise Serpents’ or Dragons of Wisdom.” Since the other five technical terms from Stanza I are all Buddhist terms, I have not attempted to research the Sanskrit term *ahi* in Hindu texts, where it is commonly used in the meaning of snake or serpent. In Buddhist texts I have not found any special uses of it other than the standard meaning in compounds such as *ahi-*

tuṇḍika, “snake-charmer.” But we may apply a rule for “ferreting out the deep significance of the ancient Sanskrit nomenclature” given by T. Subba Row in his article, “The Twelve Signs of the Zodiac,” namely, to “find the synonyms of the word used which have other meanings.” A widely used synonym of *ahi* is *nāga*, as in the name Nāgārjuna, famous for having received the *Prajñā-pāramitā* or “Perfection of Wisdom” scriptures from the Nāgas, the Serpents of Wisdom. The word *nāga* has two primary meanings: serpent and elephant. The elephant has also been a symbol of wisdom, as depicted in Gaṇeśa, the elephant-headed Hindu god of wisdom, and as depicted in the dream of Queen Māyā, mother of the Buddha, where a white elephant entered her body just before she conceived. Most Buddhist Mahāyāna Sūtras open with a stock formula giving some fourteen epithets of the group of arhats to whom the Buddha is about to give the teaching. The seventh of these epithets (*śrāvaka-guṇas*) is *mahā-nāgas*, “great serpents” or “great elephants.” This may be seen in the various Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras, the Lotus Sūtra, the Vimalakīrti Sūtra, the *Sukhāvati-vyūha* or “Devachan” Sūtra, etc. Thus this symbol is widely used to portray the recipients or receptacles of wisdom, as it also is in the Stanza, “Universal mind was not, for there were no Ah-hi to contain it.”

The second technical term, “Paranishpanna,” has a minor spelling error. The prefix *para-* should be *pari-*; thus it should be *parinishpanna*, or using standard diacriticals, *pariniṣpanna*. This is possibly due to H. P. Blavatsky’s known habit of consulting Hindu colleagues to correct the spelling of Sanskrit terms and the fact that this term is little known in Hindu texts. While the term “paranishpanna” is not known at all, in either Hindu or Buddhist texts, the prefix *para-* is common, and so the word would have been considered theoretically possible. Note that it is spelled correctly at *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 23. Another spelling error like this in *The Secret Doctrine* is “Paranirvana,” which should be *parinirvana* (*parinirvāṇa*), as given correctly in *The Mahatma Letters*. *Pariniṣpanna* is found in verse 6 of Stanza I: “The seven sublime lords and the seven truths had ceased to be, and the Universe, the son of Necessity, was immersed in Paranishpanna, to be outbreathed by that which is and yet is

not. Naught was.” It is defined in the “Commentaries” portion of *The Secret Doctrine* (vol. I, p. 42) as “absolute perfection, Paranirvana [read: *parinirvāṇa*], which is Yong-Grüb [phonetic Tibetan, transliterated *yongs grub* or *yoṅs grub*].” This meaning, “absolute perfection,” is well enough attested in the Sanskrit Buddhist texts, but almost none of these were published when *The Secret Doctrine* was written. The only one I know of among those containing this term is F. Max Müller’s 1883 edition of the *Sukhāvātī-vyūha*. Similarly, the standard Sanskrit dictionaries, such as Monier-Williams’ and V. S. Apte’s, were all compiled before the publication of any significant number of Buddhist texts. So for these Buddhist technical terms one must consult Franklin Edgerton’s 1953 *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, and even this is far from complete, since few texts of Buddhist Tantra, the “Books of Kiu-te,” were then available. Edgerton gives for *pariniṣpanna* the literal meaning as a past passive participle, “completely perfected.” This agrees in sense with its use as a noun, “absolute perfection.” It has a related application as one of the characteristic technical terms of the Yogacharya (*Yogacaryā*), or Yogachara (*Yogācāra*), school of Buddhism. It is in this context that it is found on p. 48 of vol. I of *The Secret Doctrine*. *Pariniṣpanna* is, along with *paratantra*, the “dependent,” and *parikalpita*, the “illusory,” one of the three *svabhāvas*, “natures,” or *lakṣaṇas*, “characteristics,” taught by the Yogācāra school. This cardinal Yogācāra doctrine could not be studied authoritatively until the first publication of a primary Yogācāra sourcebook, which occurred in 1907. This was the *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra*, “Ornament to the Mahāyāna Sūtras.” Although the Sanskrit edition was followed in 1911 by a French translation, it was not until 1992 that an English translation came out, by Surekha Vijay Limaye. This English translation, however, cannot be recommended, as it exemplifies the types of errors which students of even competent Indian Sanskritists fall into if not familiar with the special terminology of Buddhist texts. The *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra* is one of five texts attributed by Tibetan tradition to Maitreya. The other primary Yogācāra texts are by Āryāsaṅga and his younger brother Vasubandhu. The latter’s brief *Vijñapti-mātratā-siddhi-triṃśikā* in only thirty

verses is the nearest thing to a Yogācāra catechism. Vasubandhu has also written a small treatise specifically on these three terms, the *Tri-svabhāva-nirdeśa*. The definitions found in these texts, however, have given rise to different opinions regarding their correct interpretation. Theosophical students when studying this material in English should know two things: (1) Translators and writers generally describe the Yogācāra teachings as “Mind-Only,” i.e., that the universe is nothing but mind, or consciousness. They are often unaware that there exists another and older tradition of interpretation, which holds that the Yogācāra teachings are not a description of the universe as such, but rather, as the name implies, are an analysis of the universe in terms of consciousness for use in meditation practice. Both these traditions come to us through China, where Yogācāra is still followed. The popular “Mind-Only” tradition comes from the late Indian commentator Dharmapāla through the Chinese translator Hsüan-tsang, while the other tradition comes from the older Indian commentator Sthiramati through the Chinese translator Paramārtha. (2) The majority of Tibetan exegetes also describe the Yogācāra teachings as “Mind-Only,” and then proceed to show that the Madhyamaka school gives the highest teachings and refutes the Yogācāra school. They, too, are often unaware that there exists another tradition of interpretation in Tibet, the “Great Madhyamaka,” which harmonizes the two schools. This tradition, brought out by the Jonangpa writer Dolpopa, teaches that the primary Yogācāra authors Maitreya, Asaṅga, and Vasubandhu, as well as the primary Madhyamaka author Nāgārjuna, were all of the “Golden Age Tradition,” and hence in agreement with each other. But the later Buddhist commentators who were not in on the “Golden Age Tradition” did not understand these authors correctly, and considered them as rivals. This teaching which shows how Madhyamaka and Yogācāra are not mutually contradictory is, in my opinion, essential for a correct understanding of the Stanzas of Dzyan.

The third term is a Tibetan word written phonetically, Dangma, which may be transliterated dwangs-ma or dwaṅs-ma, as correctly given by Boris de Zirkoff in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 6, p. 113. It occurs first in verse 8 of stanza I: “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.” Dangma is defined in a footnote on p. 46 of *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I: “Dangma means a purified soul, one who has become a Jivanmukta, the highest adept, or rather a Mahatma so-called.” Dangma is not a very common word in known Tibetan writings. The standard *Tibetan-English Dictionary* by Sarat Chandra Das gives only an obscure unrelated meaning of “juice,” etc. (p. 617); but the earlier 1881 *Tibetan-English Dictionary* by H. A. Jäschke says this (p. 249): “the spirit; the soul’, a signification not found hitherto in any book, but acc. to a Lama’s statement the word denotes a soul, when purified from every sin, and to be compared to a clear and limpid fluid, in which every heterogeneous matter has been precipitated.” The *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary* by Lokesh Chandra does not give it as a noun, but only as an adjective (meaning “clear”) in a compound with *blo* (p. 1089) from the *Bhadra-kalpika Sūtra*, Sanskrit *prasanna-buddhi*, so we cannot research it through its Sanskrit equivalent. The definitive new Tibetan-Tibetan Dictionary, the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, gives two basic meanings: *gtso-bo* and *gsal-ba*. The first, *gtso-bo*, is defined by Das in English as: self, soul; chief, lord, master. The second, *gsal-ba*, means: pure; clear. Though I do not think these sources shed any new light on the term Dangma, they do at least confirm the meaning given in *The Secret Doctrine*, “purified soul,” of a rather rare word.

The remaining three terms are all from verse 9 of Stanza I: “But where was the Dangma when the Alaya of the universe was in Paramartha and the great wheel was Anupadaka?” The word *ālaya*, like *pariniṣpanna*, is one of the characteristic technical terms of the Yogācāra school of Buddhism. And similarly, the standard Sanskrit dictionaries do not record its meaning as a Buddhist technical term, because the Yogācāra sourcebooks were not yet published when these dictionaries were compiled. This has led some to question whether the term in the Stanzas should be *alaya* or *ālaya*, the former being taken as *a-laya*, or “non-dissolution.” However, Blavatsky’s comments on pp. 48-49 of *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, as well as in the *Theosophical Glossary*,

“The name belongs to the Tibetan system of the contemplative *Mahāyāna* School,” leave no doubt that *ālaya* is meant. Blavatsky defines *ālaya* as “Soul as the basis of all,” “Anima Mundi,” the “Soul of the World,” the “Over-Soul” of Emerson, the “Universal Soul.” As can be seen from the Buddhist texts now available, *ālaya* is short for *ālaya-vijñāna*, which can be defined literally as the “storehouse consciousness.” This is the eighth and highest consciousness posited by the Yogācāra school, where it is indeed understood to be the universal consciousness, or “soul,” as the basis of all. A primary Buddhist sūtra on *ālaya-vijñāna* is the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, which has been translated into English in 1932 by D. T. Suzuki. The primary Yogācāra sourcebook on *ālaya-vijñāna* is Asaṅga’s *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha*. This has been translated into French by Étienne Lamotte in 1938-39, and into English by John P. Keenan in 1993 under the title, *Summary of the Great Vehicle*. In this translation all technical terms have been translated into English, but the original terms have not been retained in parentheses following their translation. Thus when reading about the container consciousness, one must know that it is the *ālaya-vijñāna*. In Sanskrit, *ālaya-vijñāna* has a full range of connotations; in English, container consciousness has none, and practically no meaning. To me, this type of translation takes a lucid and incisive text by one of the greatest spiritual teachers of all time, and reduces it to pabulum. A much superior type of translation is found in an important text on *ālaya-vijñāna* by Tsong-kha-pa, translated by Gareth Sparham in 1993 under the title, *Ocean of Eloquence: Tsong kha pa’s Commentary on the Yogācāra Doctrine of Mind*. A major two-volume study of *ālaya-vijñāna* by Lambert Schmithausen, one of the leading Yogācāra scholars today, was published in 1987 as *Ālaya-vijñāna: On the Origin and the Early Development of a Central Concept of Yogācāra Philosophy*. All these works may profitably be consulted by Theosophical students wishing to study further the *ālaya-vijñāna*, perhaps the most important and distinctive Yogācāra doctrine.

The fifth technical term is Paramārtha. Like *ālaya* is for the Yogācāra school, so *paramārtha* is for the Madhyamaka school, one of its most important and distinctive doctrines. And as stated in *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 48: “The two terms ‘Alaya’

and ‘Paramārtha’ have been the causes of dividing schools and splitting the truth into more different aspects than any other mystic terms.” *Paramārtha* is there defined (p. 47) as “Absolute Being and Consciousness which are Absolute Non-Being and Unconsciousness,” and in the *Theosophical Glossary* as “absolute existence.” The Madhyamaka school teaches two truths: the absolute truth, or *paramārtha-satya*, and the conventional truth, or *saṃvṛti-satya*. The reason for this is compassion. If the absolute truth is the ultimate emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of everything, if therefore nobody is ultimately real, what is the need for compassion? This is answered by the teaching of the conventional truth; and indeed the Tibetan Buddhists, who virtually all accept this teaching, are probably the most compassionate group of people on the planet. While Nāgārjuna is the primary Madhyamaka author, he has no work specifically on the two truths. But a later Indian Madhyamaka writer does, and this has been translated by David Malcolm Eckel in 1987 under the title, *Jñānagarbha’s Commentary on the Distinction Between the Two Truths*. A study drawing on Tibetan Gelugpa sources is Guy Newland’s 1992 *The Two Truths*. This doctrine is as important to Theosophists as to Buddhists, because it provides modern rational humanity with an intellectually satisfying reason for compassion.

The sixth and last term is Anupadaka. Just as the previous two terms have been the causes of disputes in Buddhism, so this term has been the cause of dispute in Theosophy. The facts about to be presented should theoretically put this dispute to rest, but only time will tell; time and the discovery of a Sanskrit manuscript of the “Book of Dzayan.” The story of this term is the story of error compounded on error. It all started around 1828 with the first access by westerners to Sanskrit Buddhist texts, thanks to the efforts of B. H. Hodgson in Nepal. Hodgson had made contact with one of the last Buddhist Sanskrit pandits in Nepal, and convinced him to provide abstracts as well as the original texts of Buddhism. He sent the texts to Paris, London, and Calcutta, and published articles based on the abstracts, which were later collected into a book, *Essays on the Languages, Literature, and Religion of Nepal and Tibet*. In one of his articles published in *Asiatic Researches*, vol. 16, 1828, on p. 440, appears

the term *anupapādaka*. Research carried on in these Sanskrit Buddhist texts by Franklin Edgerton, culminating in his 1953 *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, shows that no such term exists there, but only the two forms *anupapāduka* and *upapāduka*. So Hodgson's *anupapādaka* is apparently the result of either he misreading the abstracts of his pandit, or of a typesetter misreading Hodgson's handwriting. Then from here the incorrect *anupapādaka* was miscopied as *anupadaka* in Emil Schlagintweit's 1863 *Buddhism in Tibet*. This latter work was used extensively by H. P. Blavatsky, as it was the only book on Tibetan Buddhism then in existence. Many of her comments on verse 9 of Stanza I, and most of her spellings of Tibetan and Sanskrit Buddhist terms, are found in this book. May we here recall the "plagiarism" charges concerning Mahatma K.H., and his reply in *The Mahatma Letters* (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." In this way the doubly erroneous *anupadaka* entered *The Secret Doctrine*. But the story is not over yet. M. Monier-Williams also copied the incorrect *anupapādaka* from Hodgson for use in his *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 34, as may be seen from his definition which is taken straight from Hodgson, and the fact that no other sources for this term are given. Thus *anupapādaka* may now be found in an authoritative dictionary, though of course *anupadaka* (or *anupādaka*) is not. This, in conjunction with Blavatsky's listing in the *Theosophical Glossary*: "Anupādaka (Sk.). Anupapādaka, also Aupapāduka," has led some Theosophists to believe that *anupapādaka* is the correct form of *anupadaka* (or *anupādaka*). But as just shown, both these terms are the result of error. The last spelling given

in the *Theosophical Glossary*, however, is one of the two forms found throughout the Sanskrit Buddhist texts (see the many references in Edgerton), *aupapāduka* and *upapāduka*. These are used interchangeably, and have the same meaning as that given by H. P. Blavatsky, “parentless.” It is this spelling which should now be adopted by Theosophists wishing to use a form given by Blavatsky: *aupapāduka*; or better, they should adopt the more common *upapāduka* (for examples, see above, pp. 33, 35, 40).

Facsimile reproduction from The Secret Doctrine, 1st ed., vol. I, p. 27:

“Theosophy in Tibet: The Teachings of the Jonangpa School,” by David Reigle, was published as the second Book of Dzyan Research Report, Cotopaxi, Colorado: Eastern School Press, May 1996, a pamphlet of 12 pages. It is here slightly revised.

Despite my hesitation due to historical complications (see above, p. 58), the time had come to discuss in print the Jonangpa connection to Theosophy. The suppression of the Jonangpas by the Gelugpas has been explained by David Snellgrove as being due to political reasons (*Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1987, vol. 2, p. 490). There is also the statement by Blavatsky that the last of the secret books were hidden away in India during the reign of Akbar (SD I.xxiii), that is, 1556-1605 C.E. In Tibet, the Fifth Dalai Lama’s forced conversion of the Jonangpa monasteries and sealing of their printing blocks took place not long after that, 1650-1658. Perhaps the Jonangpa books had to be sealed away at that time. In any case, the result was that many of the Jonangpa teaching lineages passed into the Kagyu and Nyingma schools, who are today the primary exponents of these doctrines. Thus the first book on the characteristic Jonangpa doctrine of shentong, S. K. Hookham’s 1991 *The Buddha Within*, was written from the standpoint of the Kagyu understanding of shentong.

The original Jonangpa teachings of Dolpopa, however, are not the same as the Kagyu and Nyingma teachings. Indeed, Dolpopa strongly refutes a view that is generally accepted in both the Kagyu Mahāmudrā and the Nyingma Dzog-chen teachings: since mind in its true nature is already enlightened, we need only recognize the true nature of our own minds, and the natural purity of our thoughts and emotions, to become enlightened. See: Cyrus R. Stearns, *The Buddha from Dol po*, 1996 PhD thesis, forthcoming from State University of New York Press, section, “How Does Enlightenment Occur?” (See also in this regard: David Jackson, *Enlightenment by a Single Means*, Wien: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1994.) Stearns’ thesis includes a translation of one of Dolpopa’s most important works, *The Fourth Council*, to be the first Dolpopa work published in English. In 1995 Nancy and I had read this work with Dr. Lozang Jamspal, and were preparing our translation for publication when we learned of Stearns’ thesis.

Theosophy in Tibet: *The Teachings of the Jonangpa School*

Some seven centuries ago there arose in Tibet a school of teachings which has many parallels to Theosophy. This is the Jonangpa school. Like Theosophy which attempted to restore teachings from “the universally diffused religion of the ancient and prehistoric world,”¹ it attempted to restore teachings of the earlier Golden Age. Like Theosophy which teaches as its first fundamental proposition “an omnipresent, eternal, boundless, and immutable principle on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception,”² it teaches a principle which is permanent, stable, quiescent, and eternal, which is devoid of anything but itself, or “empty of other” (*gzhan stong*), and which therefore transcends even the most subtle conceptualization. And like Theosophy, it was persecuted by the orthodoxy.

A Secret Doctrine

The teachings of the Jonangpa school were originated by Yumo Mikyo Dorje (*yu mo mi bskyod rdo rje*), an eleventh-twelfth century yogi. He was a student of Somanātha, the Sanskrit paṇḍit and Kālacakra master from Kashmir who translated the great Kālacakra commentary *Vimala-prabhā* into Tibetan. Yumo is said to have received the Jonangpa teachings while practicing the Kālacakra six-limbed yoga in the Mt. Kailasa area of western Tibet. The Jonangpa teachings include primarily the Kālacakra transmission and the “empty of other” or shen-tong (*gzhan stong*) doctrine. Yumo expounded these as a “secret doctrine” (*lkog pa'i chos*).³ He did not, however, put these teachings into writing; so we do not have from him a work called *The Secret Doctrine*, like we do from H. P. Blavatsky. The task of putting them into writing was left to a successor, Dolpopa.

The Heart Doctrine

These teachings were passed down orally to Dolpopa (also written Dolbupa, 1292-1361) who set into writing the shen-tong or “empty of other” teachings in his most famous book, *The Mountain Dharma—The Ocean of Definitive Meaning* (*ri chos nges don rgya mtsho*). These teachings are referred to as the “heart doctrine” (*snying po'i don*), so Dolpopa describes his book as the “Lamp of the Heart Doctrine.”⁴

Regarding the heart doctrine, H. P. Blavatsky states:⁵

To any student of Buddhist Esotericism the term, “the Mystery of the Eye,” would show the absence of any Esotericism. Had the word “Heart” stood in its place, then it would have meant what it now only professes to convey. The “Eye Doctrine” means dogma and dead-letter form, church ritualism intended for those who are content with exoteric formulae. The “Heart Doctrine” or the “Heart’s Seal” (the Sin Yin), is the only real one.

Golden Age Tradition

Dolpopa wrote another famous book, *The Fourth Council* (*bka' bsdus bzhi pa*), which lays out the relationship between the four yugas and the decline of the doctrine. In the Golden Age (*krta yuga*) the teachings of the Buddhist sacred canon were understood correctly, but this understanding was gradually lost as the third age, the second age, and the dark age progressed. Thus many Buddhist writers of later ages who no longer had the true understanding wrote commentaries which do not explain the teachings correctly. It is Dolpopa’s purpose to restore the correct understanding as it was in the Golden Age. Hence he refers to the Jonangpa teachings as the “Golden Age Tradition” (*rdzogs ldan lugs*).⁶

In the Theosophical article entitled “Tibetan Teachings” H. P. Blavatsky’s Tibetan correspondent agrees that the Tibetan Buddhist canon has a dual meaning, and that many Buddhist commentators have not understood the true meaning:⁷

No doubt but that the Chinese and Tibetan Scriptures, so-called, the standard works of China and Japan, some written by our most learned scholars, many of whom—as uninitiated though sincere and pious men—commented upon what they never rightly understood, contain a mass of mythological and legendary matter more fit for nursery folk-lore than an exposition of the Wisdom Religion as preached by the world’s Saviour. But none of these are to be found in the canon; . . . [the canonical texts] contain no fiction, but simply information for future generations, who may, by that time, have obtained the key to the right reading of them.

Note: Dolpopa’s books were banned in the 17th century and became extremely rare. In the 1970s and 1980s a few of his books were located and reprinted. In 1990 Matthew Kapstein visited what had been far eastern Tibet, now western China, where some Jonangpa monasteries had survived, and obtained for the U.S. Library of Congress a complete set of Dolpopa’s Collected Works. These were reprinted in Delhi in 1992.

The Jonangpa Teachings: Kālacakra and Maitreya

The Jonangpa teachings are based primarily on Kālacakra and the works of Maitreya. I have elsewhere provided evidence linking the “Book of Dzyan” on which *The Secret Doctrine* is based and the lost mūla Kālacakra Tantra.⁸ An important passage from a letter of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett also links the Book of Dzyan and the work of Maitreya:⁹

I have finished an enormous Introductory Chapter, or *Preamble*, Prologue, call it what you will; just to show the reader that the text [of *The Secret Doctrine*] 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.

Blavatsky here refers to a secret book of Maitreya as opposed to the five books known. It is noteworthy that there came to Tibet

from India two schools of interpretation of the Maitreya works: a doctrinal or analytical school whose textual exegesis is still current, and a meditative or practice school thought to have disappeared several centuries ago. According to Leonard van der Kuijp, this school did not die out but rather became the basis of the Jonangpa teachings:¹⁰

As such, future research may show two things. Firstly, the forerunner of the so-called Jo-nang-pa position and the 'Great *madhyamaka*' was the meditative, practical school that grew up around these teachings of Maitreya[nātha]. In course of time, other texts which expressed similar sentiments, or which were interpreted as maintaining similar ideas, were added to the original corpus of texts on which this tradition based itself. In the second place, it may become possible to show that Dol-po-pa's efforts could be characterized as an attempt to redress the 'Meditative School' according to the normative methodology of the 'Analytical School'.

The specific book of Maitreya on which the fundamental Jonangpa doctrine of shen-tong or "empty of other" is based is the *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga*, also called the *Uttara-tantra*. This book contains a synthesis of the *tathāgata-garbha* or "Buddha-matrix" teaching. The *tathāgata-garbha* teaching of a universal matrix or Buddha-nature, which all people have, is so different from other Buddhist teachings that Buddhist writers disagreed on how to classify it. In Tibet, it was classified by some writers as a Madhyamaka teaching, and by others as a Yogācāra teaching, though it did not fit well in either category. An early Chinese writer, Fa-tsang (643-712), put it in its own separate category beyond the three accepted ones of Hīnayāna, Madhyamaka, and Yogācāra.¹¹ Analogously, H. P. Blavatsky speaks of a seventh school of Indian philosophy (*darśana*) beyond the six accepted ones, the esoteric school:¹²

This is the view of every one of the six great schools of Indian philosophy—the *six principles of that unit body of WISDOM of which the 'gnosis,' the hidden knowledge, is the seventh.*

The Seven Great Mysteries

The Theosophical Mahatma known under the initials K.H. speaks of seven great mysteries of Buddhist metaphysics:¹³

In connection with this, let me tell you before, that since you seem so interested with the subject you can do nothing better than to study the two doctrines—of Karma and Nirvana—as profoundly as you can. Unless you are thoroughly well acquainted with the two tenets—the double key to the metaphysics of Abhidharma—you will always find yourself at sea in trying to comprehend the rest. We have several sorts of Karma and Nirvana in their various applications—to the Universe, the world, Devas, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, men and animals—the second including its seven kingdoms. Karma and Nirvana are but two of the seven great MYSTERIES of Buddhist metaphysics; and but four of the seven are known to the best orientalists, and that very imperfectly.

Maitreya's *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga*, sourcebook of the *tathāgata-garbha* or "Buddha-matrix" teaching, opens by listing seven vajra-subjects. Vajra means diamond; and the analogy is given in the commentary by Asaṅga that like a diamond is hard to penetrate, so these subjects are hard to understand. Thus they may be called mysteries. Here is this opening verse:

1. Buddha, doctrine (*dharma*), community (*gaṇa* = *saṅgha*), element (*dhātu*), enlightenment (*bodhi* = *nirvāṇa*), virtuous qualities (*guṇa*), and lastly buddha-action (*karma*); these seven diamond-like subjects (*vajra-pada*), are in brief, the body of the whole text.

[notes: *Dhātu* is perhaps the key term in the *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga*. Its basic meaning is "Element" (Hookham), also "the Germ (of Buddhahood)" (Obermiller), "the Essence [of the Buddha]" (Takasaki), "buddha-nature" (Holmes). The seven *vajra-padas* each have a conventional (*saṃvṛti*) and an ultimate (*paramārtha*) aspect.¹⁴ *Dhātu* when obscured is called *tathāgata-garbha*; when unobscured it is called *dharma-kāya*.¹⁵]

This text gives these seven vajra-subjects from the standpoint of non-dual wisdom (*jñāna*). In other words, it gives them in a form which is not very accessible to the mind. Thus readers should not expect to find the seven great mysteries spelled out clearly for them in this text. For as H. P. Blavatsky says regarding one of the stanzas she translated from the “Book of Dzyan:”¹⁶

Its language is comprehensible only to him who is thoroughly versed in Eastern allegory and its purposely obscure phraseology.

However, some of these seven subjects, such as karma, are given in a form which is more accessible to the mind (i.e., from the standpoint of *prajñā*) in a work which forms part of the standard monastic curriculum, the *Abhidharma-kośa* by Vasubandhu.¹⁷

The One Element

The key term in Maitreya's *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga* is *dhātu*, or element. It is described in the following important verse:

80. It is not born, does not die, is not afflicted, and does not grow old, because it is permanent (*nitya/rtag-pa*), stable (*dhruva/brtan-pa*), quiescent (*śiva/zhi-ba*), and eternal (*śāśvata/g.yung-drung*).

—*Ratna-gotra-vibhāga* or *Uttara-tantra*, by Maitreya, verse 80

As noted earlier, this one thing, *dhātu* or element, may be called *tathāgata-garbha* or Buddha-nature when obscured, and *dharmakāya* or body of the law when unobscured.

The one element is also a key concept in the Theosophical teachings as found in the Mahatma letters:

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.¹⁸

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 sub-stratum or permanent cause of all manifestations in the phenomenal universe.¹⁹

We will say that it is, and will remain for ever demonstrated that since motion is all-pervading and absolute rest inconceivable, that under whatever form or *mask* motion may appear, whether as light, heat, magnetism, chemical affinity or electricity—all these must be but phases of One and the same universal omnipotent Force, a Proteus they bow to as the Great “Unknown” (See Herbert Spencer) and we, simply call the “One Life,” the “One Law” and the “One Element.”²⁰

These last three epithets, the “One Life,” the “One Law,” and the “One Element,” correspond well to the *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga*’s terms *tathāgata-garbha*, *dharma-kāya*, and *dhātu*, respectively.

Tsong-kha-pa’s Critique of the Jonangpa Teachings

The Jonangpa teaching of a permanent, stable, quiescent, and eternal *dhātu* or *tathāgata-garbha* or *dharma-kāya* which is “empty of other” (*gzhan stong*) and therefore ultimately beyond the range and reach of thought, was apparently criticized by Tsong-kha-pa, founder of the Gelugpa or “Yellow Hat” order. One of Tsong-kha-pa’s most famous books is the *Legs bshad snying po*, or “Essence of True Eloquence,” which he wrote after previously having his highest enlightenment experience, so it is thought to give his final insights.²¹ While it never mentions names, the object of much of its critique is identified by Gelugpa exegesis as Dolpopa and the Jonangpa teachings. Tsong-kha-pa, 1357-1419, lived just after Dolpopa, 1292-1361.

This critique is of much importance to Theosophists, since Dolpopa apparently teaches the first fundamental proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*, and Tsong-kha-pa apparently refutes it; yet Tsong-kha-pa is regarded by Theosophists as “the reformer of esoteric as well as of vulgar Lamaism,”²² and as “the founder of the *Gelukpa* (“yellow-cap”) Sect, and of the mystic Brotherhood connected with its chiefs,”²³ “the founder of the secret School near Shigatse, attached to the private retreat of the Teshu-Lama.”²⁴

In regard to this question, we may compare a Brahmin Theosophist's comments on a somewhat analogous situation with Gautama Buddha and Śāṅkarācārya, remembering that Theosophical sources place Buddha's death in 543 B.C.E. and Śāṅkarācārya's birth shortly after in 510 B.C.E.:²⁵

The movement of Lord Buddha must have produced an enormous confusion in this land as you may all imagine and the great philosopher who took upon himself the task of restoring order is Śāṅkarācārya. He preserved the essence of what Lord Buddha had said and spoke as was suitable to the people of the time. For example he substituted the Vedantic Parabrahman for the Buddhistic No-thing [emptiness, *sūnyatā*]. . . . The object of our great reformer was not to teach any esoteric science but to restore order in a country which could not bear up the boldness to catch the truth that Lord Buddha taught and consequently fell into confusion. He therefore did not take up things in any Puranic fashion to trace the operation of the cosmic law which has brought about this wonderful variation in manifestation from the one nonmanifestation. That the world is an illusion and Parabrahman is alone real is a good cover under which shelter could be taken under circumstances which require a revelation of esoteric truth for clearing up. . . . Note here my friends, how the great philosopher has evaded the business of giving out esoteric truths which alone serves as a unifying power at reconciling the apparent contradictions in ancient writings. The Teacher wanted only to impress upon the minds of the students that the universe is one in its essence and apparently many in its manifestation. That has had its own share of evil effect on the

minds of the students at least as they are found now. The vast majority of Vedantic students learn by their study only the quibble “Parabrahman truth, everything illusion.” I shall not now go into a declamatory flourish of language against our poor Vedantists but I shall say a few things for your benefit and guidance in the study of the *Bhagavad Gītā* from the standpoint of the ancient yājñikas. To these philosophers, Nature is not an illusion but the eternal ground of evolution, of an infinite one existence which permeating every point in the infinity of space or taking the place of the heart in all, tries to obtain a more and more vivid consciousness by its own ideal life processes. This heart of the universe, existing everywhere in it, is called by them the eternal yajñā-puruṣha or the puruṣha who underlies all cosmic manifestations.

Tsong-kha-pa in his highest enlightenment experience would have achieved full insight into the operation of the twelvefold chain of causation, and would have seen the future effects of whatever teachings he might give. For the Buddhist enlightenment is, as described by H. P. Blavatsky:²⁶

. . . the attainment of that supreme perfection which leads the Initiate to remember the whole series of his past lives, and to foresee that of the future ones, by the full development of that inner, divine eye in him, and to acquire the knowledge that unfolds the causes (the twelve Nidānas called in Tibetan Ten-brel Chu-gnyi, which are based upon the “Four Truths”) of the ever-recurring cycles of existence. . .

Thus Tsong-kha-pa may well have chosen to give public teachings which his insight showed him would be most effective in meeting the spiritual needs of his future audiences, while at the same time keeping his esoteric teachings from public view. His public teachings did indeed radically transform Tibetan Buddhism, being aptly compared to the Copernican Revolution wherein Europeans discovered that the earth revolves around the sun rather than vice versa.²⁷ His view on esoteric teachings was reported by H. P. Blavatsky’s Tibetan correspondent:²⁸

Our world-honoured Tsong-kha-pa closing his fifth Dam-ngag reminds us that 'every sacred truth, which the ignorant are unable to comprehend under its true light, ought to be hidden within a triple casket concealing itself as the tortoise conceals his head within his shell; ought to show her face but to those who are desirous of obtaining the condition of Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi'—the most merciful and enlightened heart.

We have another somewhat analogous situation in our own time with Helena P. Blavatsky, 1831-1891, primary founder of the Theosophical Society, and Jiddu Krishnamurti, 1895-1986, who left the Theosophical Society in 1929 and spent the rest of his life teaching that people should not rely on authority. For Theosophists, he did not deny the Theosophical teachings, but only repudiated the role of the Theosophical Society and the beliefs accepted by Theosophists on authority as leading to truth. He taught that one cannot come to truth through any organization or belief.²⁹ For most followers of Krishnamurti's teachings today, however, he also refuted the Theosophical teachings, such as that of an omnipresent, eternal, boundless and immutable principle which transcends the power of human conception; just as for his own Gelugpas, Tsong-kha-pa refuted the Jonangpa teaching of a permanent, stable, quiescent and eternal *dhātu* or *tathāgata-garbha* or *dharma-kāya* which is devoid of anything but itself (*gzhan stong*) and so transcends even the most subtle conceptualization.³⁰

Notes

1. *The Secret Doctrine*, by H. P. Blavatsky, 1888; reprint, Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1978, vol. I, p. xxxiv.

2. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 14.

3. See: "The Jo nañ pas: A School of Buddhist Ontologists According to the *Grub mtha' śel gyi me loñ*," by D. S. Ruegg, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 83, 1963, p. 83.

4. See: *The Buddha Within: Tathagatagarbha Doctrine According to the Shentong Interpretation of the Ratnagotravibhaga*, by S. K. Hookham, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991, p. 142.

5. *The Secret Doctrine*, Adyar 6-vol. edition, vol. 5, p. 407; or, *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. XIV, Wheaton, Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House, 1985, pp. 444-445.

6. See: *The 'Dzam-thang Edition of the Collected Works of Kun-mkhyen Dol-po-pa Shes-rab Rgyal-mtshan: Introduction and Catalogue*, by Matthew Kapstein, Delhi: Shedrup Books, 1992, p. 51.

7. *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. VI, 1954; 2nd ed., Wheaton, Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House, 1975, p. 100.

8. See my: "New Light on the Book of Dzyan," in *Symposium on H. P. Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine . . . Proceedings*, San Diego: Wizards Bookshelf, 1984, pp. 54-67. [Reprinted herein, pp. 25-41 above.]

9. *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*, 1925; reprint, Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1973, p. 195.

10. *Contributions to the Development of Tibetan Buddhist Epistemology*, by Leonard W. J. van der Kuip, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1983, p. 44.

11. See: *The Awakening of Faith*, trans. Yoshito S. Hakeda, New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1967, p. 14: "In the introduction to his commentary to the *Awakening of Faith*, Fa-tsang made an attempt to classify all Indian Buddhism under the following four categories: (1) Hinayana; (2) Madhyamika; (3) Yogacara; and (4) *Tathāgata-garbha*."

12. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 278.

13. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, compiled by A. T. Barker, 1923; third and revised edition, Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1962, p. 107.

14. See: "The Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle to Salvation," by E. Obermiller, *Acta Orientalia*, vol. IX, 1931; reprinted as *Uttaratantra or Ratnagotravibhāga*, Talent, Oregon: Canon Publications, 1984; p. 111, fn. 3, drawing from rGyal-tshab's commentary.

15. See: Asaṅga's commentary (*vyākhyā*) on Maitreya's *Ratnagotra-vibhāga*, chapter 1, verse 24.

16. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 106.

17. English translation by Leo M. Pruden as *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣyam*, from the French translation by Louis de La Vallée Poussin, 4 vols., Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1988, 1988, 1989, 1990. Includes commentary (*bhāṣyam*). Karma is the subject of chapter 4.

18. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, 3rd ed., p. 63.

19. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, 3rd ed., p. 89.

20. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, 3rd ed., pp. 155-56. See also *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 75: "If the student bears in mind that

there is but One Universal Element, . . . then the first and chief difficulty will disappear and Occult Cosmology may be mastered.”

21. English trans. by Robert A. F. Thurman as *Tsong Khapa's Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence: Reason and Enlightenment in the Central Philosophy of Tibet*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984; re-issued by Princeton Univ. Pr. as *The Central Philosophy of Tibet: A Study and Translation of Jey Tsong Khapa's Essence of True Eloquence*.

22. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, 2nd and 3rd ed., p. 44; chron. ed. p. 62. See also chron. ed. p. 480, where the Mahā-Chohan, after specifically referring to Tsong-kha-pa by name, goes on to say, “we, the humble disciples of these perfect lamas, . . .”

23. *The Theosophical Glossary*, by H. P. Blavatsky, 1892; reprint, Los Angeles: The Theosophy Company, 1971, p. 305.

24. *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. XIV, p. 425. See also p. 427; and vol. IV, p. 11. Tsong-kha-pa is said to be a direct incarnation of Gautama Buddha, not just an incarnation of a Dhyani-Buddha.

25. For the dates, see: *Five Years of Theosophy*, [ed. George Robert Stow Mead,] 1885; 2nd rev. ed., London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1894, pp. 195, 236. The quotation is from *Thoughts on Bagavad [sic] Gita*, by A Brahmin F.T.S., 1893; reprinted as *Some Thoughts on the Gita*, Talent, Oregon: Eastern School Press, 1983, pp. 100-103.

26. *The Secret Doctrine*, Adyar 6-vol. edition, vol. 5, p. 397; or, *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. XIV, p. 432.

27. See: *Contributions to the Development of Tibetan Buddhist Epistemology*, by Leonard W. J. van der Kuijp, p. 45: “I do not think it an exaggeration to suggest that what Tsong-kha-pa succeeded in doing constituted nothing less than a ‘Copernican Revolution’ for Tibetan Buddhism, and the significance of his reinterpretation of Indian Buddhism cannot be stressed enough, particularly with respect to the later developments of Tibetan Buddhism.”

28. In: “Tibetan Teachings,” *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. VI, pp. 99-100.

29. See: *Krishnamurti: His Life and Death*, by Mary Lutyens, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990, p. 149: “Truth is a pathless Land. Man cannot come to it through any organisation, through any creed, through any dogma, priest or ritual, not through any philosophical knowledge or psychological technique.”

30. In a book published after this report was issued, the 14th Dalai Lama states and provides considerable evidence that Tsong-kha-pa may in fact have held that there are two different correct views of reality, one of which is equivalent to a particular “empty of other”

(*gzhan stong*) view. See: *The Gelug/Kagyü Tradition of Mahamudra*, by H.H. the Dalai Lama and Alexander Berzin, Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1997, pp. 123, 230-239.

Facsimile reproduction from The Secret Doctrine, 1st ed., vol. I, p. 14:

Facsimile reproduction from The Secret Doctrine, 1st ed., vol. I, p. 289:

“Technical Terms in Book of Dzyan Stanza II,” by David Reigle, was published as the third Book of Dzyan Research Report, “Technical Terms in Stanza II,” Cotopaxi, Colorado: Eastern School Press, January 1997, a pamphlet of 8 pages. It is here slightly revised.

This report brought out a major “problem” in the philosophy of The Secret Doctrine as it is there presented, concerning the doctrine of svabhāva. The immediate problem is with what was there cited from known philosophies in support of this doctrine, that actually did not support it. It is obvious to all that in a work of this magnitude errors are inevitable. This is compounded by the difficult circumstances under which Blavatsky had to write. She had, firstly, the pressures of her work with the worldwide Theosophical Society of which she was the principal founder; secondly, severe health problems which caused doctors to more than once despair of her life; and thirdly, the effects of the “Hodgson Report” that circulated around the world, unjustly branding her a fraud (see above, p. 1). Under these circumstances, it is a wonder that the errors in The Secret Doctrine are as few as they are.

The broader problem, historically speaking, is with the doctrine of svabhāva itself, and the place it holds in the philosophy of The Secret Doctrine. This issue remains largely untouched, either here or elsewhere. No thorough study of the doctrine of svabhāva in ancient Indian thought has yet appeared. Even a cursory overview of it from Buddhist texts in relation to The Secret Doctrine, as appears in my follow-up report to this one (see next chapter), required 28 pages rather than the normal 8-12 of these reports. The doctrine of svabhāva, or svabhāva-vāda, is referred to in all three religious traditions of ancient India: Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. Generally speaking, it seems to be regarded even in these old writings as an already old doctrine, one that has been superseded and is cited only to be refuted. The problem, then, is that if this doctrine was already known to these ancient traditions, and has long since been refuted by them, why does it appear in The Secret Doctrine? Since we do not have its original writings, what we know of it comes mostly from its critics, hardly reliable sources. What it really teaches, and whether or not it represents the philosophy of The Secret Doctrine, remain unanswered questions.

Technical Terms in Book of Dzyan Stanza II

There are seven technical terms in stanza II of the “Book of Dzyan” as translated in H. P. Blavatsky’s *The Secret Doctrine*: “ah-hi” (*ahi*) and “paranishpanna” (*pariniṣpanna*), which are also found in stanza I, so were discussed in a previous report; *manvantara* and *māyā*, which are commonly found in Hindu Sanskrit texts in the same meaning, so require no comment; “devamatri” (*deva-mātrī*) and “matripadma” (*mātrī-padma*), which though rare in Sanskrit texts, still pose no particular problem; and “svābhāvat,” a fundamental concept in *The Secret Doctrine* which poses fundamental problems. Among the doctrinal issues raised by the teachings of *The Secret Doctrine*, none poses greater problems for its philosophy than svābhāvat. While Theosophists who in the innocence of reading only their own books remain blissfully unaware that there are any problems here, for outside investigators, once they have gotten past the fraud charges and begun to investigate the actual doctrines, and leaving aside historical questions, it is the doctrine of svābhāvat which raises the most serious questions in the philosophy of *The Secret Doctrine*.

In the “Summing Up” section immediately following the seven stanzas from the “Book of Dzyan” given in volume I of *The Secret Doctrine*, Blavatsky recapitulates the system of the Secret Doctrine. There she says (p. 273):

The fundamental Law in that system, the central point from which all emerged, around and toward which all gravitates, and upon which is hung the philosophy of the rest, is the One homogeneous divine SUBSTANCE-PRINCIPLE, the one radical cause.

It is called “Substance-Principle,” for it becomes “substance” on the plane of the manifested Universe, an illusion, while it remains a “principle” in the beginningless

and endless abstract, visible and invisible SPACE. It is the omnipresent Reality: impersonal, because it contains all and everything. *Its impersonality is the fundamental conception of the System.* It is latent in every atom in the Universe, and is the Universe itself.

Near the beginning of the “Proem,” which precedes the seven stanzas given in volume I of *The Secret Doctrine*, Blavatsky quotes (p. 3) what she had written earlier in *Isis Unveiled*, to show what “will be explained, as far as it is possible, in the present work”:

The esoteric doctrine teaches, like Buddhism and Brahminism, and even the Kabala, that the one infinite and unknown Essence exists from all eternity, and in regular and harmonious successions is either passive or active. In the poetical phraseology of Manu these conditions are called the “Days” and the “Nights” of Brahmā. The latter is either “awake” or “asleep.” The Svabhāvikas, or philosophers of the oldest school of Buddhism (which still exists in Nepal), speculate only upon the active condition of this “Essence,” which they call Svābhāvat, and deem it foolish to theorise upon the abstract and “unknowable” power in its passive condition.

Earlier, the Mahatma K.H. in the first of a series of letters of instruction to A. O. Hume wrote (*The Mahatma Letters*, #11):

To comprehend my answers you will have first of all to view the eternal *Essence*, the Svabhāvat not as a compound element you call spirit-matter, but as the one element for which the English has no name. It is both passive and active, pure *Spirit Essence* in its absoluteness and repose, pure matter in its finite and conditioned state—even as an imponderable gas or that great unknown which science has pleased to call *Force*.

A few months later, after some rather exasperating exchanges which led the Mahatma K.H. to comment, “All this reminds one

of wrangling for seniorship,” he again advised A. O. Hume to study this fundamental concept (*The Mahatma Letters*, #22):

Study the laws and doctrines of the Nepaulese Swabhavikas, the principal Buddhist philosophical school in India, and you will find them the most learned as the most scientifically logical wranglers in the world. Their plastic, invisible, eternal, omnipresent and unconscious Swabhavat is Force or *Motion* ever generating its electricity which is life.

What sources could Hume have studied the laws and doctrines of the Nepalese Svābhāvikas from? The only sources on this, available either then or now, are the essays of Brian H. Hodgson published in *Asiatic Researches*, etc., starting in 1828, and later collected into a book entitled *Essays on the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepāl and Tibet*, London, 1874. Hodgson had been British Resident in Kathmandu, living there from 1821 through 1843. Since Nepal was otherwise closed to foreigners, Hodgson’s writings were for nearly a century the only source of information on Nepalese Buddhism. All the early Buddhist scholars, including Eugène Burnouf, Samuel Beal, Joseph Edkins, Hendrik Kern, etc., most of whom were quoted by Blavatsky and K.H., relied on these writings.

Upon studying Hodgson’s essays, however, we find in his description of the Nepalese Svābhāvika school of Buddhism only the term svabhāva, not svābhāvat or svabhāvat or svabhavat (the spellings sva- or swa- are merely alternate transliterations). And yes, svabhāva is there described in the same terms used by Blavatsky and K.H. to describe svābhāvat. So why the final “t”? Svabhāva is a noun (which can also be used adjectivally); svābhāvat and svabhāvat are grammatically unintelligible; while svabhavat, as stated by G. de Purucker (*Occult Glossary*, p. 167), would be a neuter present participle. As such, it would function as a verb meaning “self-being,” or “self-becoming.” We would then expect to find this in the actual Sanskrit Buddhist texts; but we don’t. We find only svabhāva, as reported by Hodgson, and occasionally svabhāvatā or svabhāvatva. The “-tā” and “-tva”

suffixes form abstract nouns, and can often be translated by the English suffix “-ness.” Thus from *sūnya*, “empty,” we get *sūnyatā*, “emptiness.” Svabhāvatā, then, could mean something like “self-be-ness.” In the case of words like svabhāva, however, which are frequently used adjectivally, these suffixes often serve only to fix their usage as a noun rather than an adjective, without any real change in meaning. Certainly, the exegetical tradition of Tibet treats them synonymously. It is possible, in terms of meaning, that svabhāvatā is what Blavatsky meant. A final long “ā”, however, cannot be dropped like a final short “a” frequently is in north Indian pronunciation (e.g., rāj yog for rāja yoga); and it is the spellings ending in “t” that are found throughout the early Theosophical writings. Blavatsky says in *The Secret Doctrine* (vol. I, p. 98) about svābhāvat: “The name is of Buddhist use . . .” and in a footnote, “As for Svābhāvat, the Orientalists explain the term as meaning the Universal plastic matter diffused through Space, . . .” I have checked the books on Buddhism referred to in Blavatsky’s writings and available in her day, but found no svābhāvat, etc., only svabhāva. Although the theoretical form svabhavat as a present participle is grammatically possible, we do not find it in either Hodgson’s essays, the only actual source on Nepalese Buddhism available last century in any European language, nor in the Sanskrit Buddhist texts where according to Blavatsky and K.H. it should be found. But with all this, our problems have only just begun.

Has nothing been published on the laws and doctrines of the Nepalese Svābhāvikas since Hodgson’s early nineteenth century essays? Although Nepal was closed to foreigners until 1951, a few Buddhist scholars managed to get in earlier, most notably Sylvain Lévi and Giuseppe Tucci. Sylvain Lévi went in 1898, writing after his return to France, *Le Népal*, 3 vols., Paris, 1905-1908. He did not find any such school of Buddhism as the Svābhāvikas in Nepal, nor could the other three schools of Buddhism described by Hodgson (Aiswarika, Yātnika, Kārmika) and soberly discussed by generations of Buddhist scholars be found. Not only were there no Svābhāvikas in Nepal, but the supposed Buddhist doctrine of svabhāva was also called into question, since Buddhists existing elsewhere did not hold such

a doctrine. Recently, more detailed research has been carried on among the Buddhists of Nepal, the Newaris. An article by David N. Gellner in the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 12, 1989, entitled, “Hodgson’s Blind Alley? On the So-Called Schools of Nepalese Buddhism,” shows that the names Svābhāvika, etc., were merely used by Hodgson’s Newari pundit informant as designations of what he felt were the diagnostic tenets of the main systems of ideas found in the Buddhist texts. These alleged schools of Nepalese Buddhism were questioned at the time Hodgson’s account of them was first published, so that he felt compelled to later (1836) publish extracts from the Buddhist texts in support of them. Among the extracts he then published in support of the Svābhāvika school are two quotations from the *Buddha-carita*, a biography of the Buddha written by Aśvaghōṣa. Gellner points out in the above-mentioned article that the quotations in question give not the doctrines of the Buddha, but rather non-Buddhist doctrines spoken to the young Buddha-to-be by the councillor of the king, his father, in an effort to get him to give up his asceticism and return to the palace. These doctrines, of course, he rejected. Other quotations in support of the Svābhāvika school come from the *Prajñā-pāramitā*, or Perfection of Wisdom texts. It is well known that these texts are said to have been received from the Nāgas by Nāgārjuna, and that he based his Madhyamaka system on them. It is equally well known that the basic tenet of his Madhyamaka system is emptiness, or the lack of svabhāva (*niḥsvabhāva*) in all things (*dharma*-s). The Madhyamaka school has a long history in India in the first millennium of the Common Era, from whence it was transferred first to China and then to Tibet. In Tibet it flourished; virtually all Tibetan Buddhists from then until now consider themselves to be Mādhyamikas, and thus as their basic tenet reject svabhāva (see, for example, Nāgārjuna’s *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā*, chap. 15, “Examination of Svabhāva”).

The Theosophical doctrine is quite unequivocal about this teaching. If no Svābhāvika school of Buddhism can be found, and if no doctrine of svabhāva is taught by any existing Buddhist school, could we perhaps find this teaching under a different

name in Buddhism? When Blavatsky quotes H. S. Olcott's *The Buddhist Catechism* in *The Secret Doctrine* (pp. 635-36), she inserts svābhāvat as a partial synonym of ākāśa: "Everything has come out of Akāśa (or Svābhāvat on our earth) in obedience to a law of motion inherent in it, . . ." Ākāśa is there said to be one of the two eternal things, along with nirvāṇa, taught in Buddhism. This is taught in the Pali *Milinda-pañha*, although it is not the teaching of the Theravāda school of Buddhism. That ākāśa is eternal is the teaching of some other schools. The old Indian Sarvāstivāda school of Buddhism teaches two kinds of nirvāṇa, so along with ākāśa holds three things to be eternal. It could possibly be considered "the principal Buddhist philosophical school in India" mentioned by the Mahatma K.H. in connection with the Nepalese Svābhāvikas; at least it may have been at one time. But of course there have been no Buddhist philosophical schools in India for nearly a thousand years, ever since the Muslim invasion destroyed Buddhism in India. The doctrines of the Sarvāstivāda school, "they who say (*vāda*) that all (*sarva*) exists (*asti*)," are studied in Tibet in the *Abhidharma-kośa*, a text which is memorized in most Tibetan monasteries. This text gives the Sarvāstivāda doctrines as taught by the Vaibhāṣikas of Kashmir. It is accompanied by Vasubandhu's auto-commentary which also gives counter-arguments by the Sautrāntika Buddhists. However, both the Vaibhāṣika Sarvāstivādins and their Sautrāntika opponents are considered as Hīnayāna or "lesser vehicle" schools. Their doctrines are systematically refuted in the Tibetan yig-chas, or monastic study manuals, by the Madhyamaka school. Thus Tibetan Buddhists do not hold these doctrines as ultimately true, since the eternal ākāśa is refuted along with everything else (see, for example, Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā*, chap. 5, "Examination of the Elements").

Is there anywhere else we can turn to for support of the svabhāva doctrine? Perhaps to Hinduism: to the venerable old Sāṃkhya system, considered to be the oldest school of Indian philosophy. In a quotation from the *Anugītā* found in *The Secret Doctrine* (vol. I, p. 571), Blavatsky equates svabhāva with prakṛti, the substance-principle of the Sāṃkhya system: "Gods, Men, Gandharvas, Pisāchas, Asuras, Rākshasas, all have been created

by Svabhāva (Prakṛiti, or plastic nature) . . . ” The term prakṛti is glossed as pradhāna in Gauḍapāda’s commentary on *Sāṃkhya-kārikā* verse 8. Earlier, in his commentary on verse 3, mūla-prakṛti was also glossed as pradhāna. Thus the three terms: prakṛti, pradhāna, and mūla-prakṛti are in some sense synonymous, and all are described as unmanifest (*avyakta*). But in the list of synonyms given in Gauḍapāda’s commentary on *Sāṃkhya-kārikā* verse 22, of these only prakṛti and pradhāna are found, along with *brahma*, *avyakta*, *bahudhātma* and *māyā*, suggesting that the term mūla-prakṛti was reserved to indicate the more abstract aspect. Blavatsky says in *The Secret Doctrine* (vol. 1, p. 61): “Svābhāvat, the ‘Plastic Essence’ that fills the Universe, is the root of all things. Svābhāvat is, so to say, the Buddhistic concrete aspect of the abstraction called in Hindu philosophy *Mula-prakṛiti*.” All this fits together, then, in supporting the idea that the Sāṃkhya prakṛti matches the svabhāva doctrine taught in *The Secret Doctrine*. But any gain from this match in supporting the teachings of *The Secret Doctrine* is soon lost. The Sāṃkhya school has been practically non-existent in India for centuries. Why is this? Because the Advaita Vedānta school, called in *The Secret Doctrine* the nearest exponent of the Esoteric philosophy (vol. I, p. 55), and its foremost teacher, Śaṅkarācārya, called in *The Secret Doctrine* “the greatest Initiate living in the historical ages” (vol. I, p. 271), refuted its substance-principle thoroughly and repeatedly (see, for example, Śaṅkarācārya’s commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* 1.1.5 ff., and especially his summation at 1.4.28). Thus the Sāṃkhya doctrines were studied in India only to be refuted by the dominant Vedānta school, much as the Sarvāstivāda doctrines were studied in Tibet only to be refuted by the dominant Madhyamaka school.

The term svābhāvat occurs in the Stanzas seven times. It is supposed to be a Buddhist term, occurring in Buddhist texts, and known to orientalists. Yet this term is not to be found in either Buddhist texts nor in the writings of orientalists, but only the term svabhāva. It is supposed to be the doctrine of the Nepalese Svābhāvikas. Yet no such school was found to exist. It is supposed to be taught by Buddhism and Brahmanism. Yet there is no known school of Buddhism now in existence which

teaches it; but on the contrary, for the Buddhists of Tibet where the Book of Dzyan is said to have been preserved, it is the very doctrine they most pointedly reject. As for Brahmanism, while this doctrine may well have been found in the old Sāṃkhya school, Śaṅkarācārya's Advaita Vedāntins have refuted it and the Sāṃkhya school practically out of existence in India. Clearly, Theosophists have in front of them some homework to do.

If Theosophists have for more than a century been taking in support of their doctrines terms and schools which actually do not support them, it is time to correct this. The doctrine of the one substance-principle is consistent throughout the early Theosophical writings, being particularly clearly laid out in the article, "What is Matter and What is Force?" (*Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 4). It is no longer appropriate to say that it is the mūla-prakṛti of the Vedāntin and the svābhāvat of the Buddhist (e.g., SD I.46; BCW 10.304; BCW 14.234; etc.), since mūla-prakṛti is a Sāṃkhya concept which is refuted by the Vedāntins, and the term svābhāvat does not exist, while svabhāva is refuted by Buddhists existing today. If a term such as svabhāva is indeed found in the Stanzas, support for this doctrine should in fact be found in the Sanskrit Buddhist texts; and this requires research.

While studying Sanskrit during the summer of 1995 with Gautam Vajracharya, a Newari Buddhist from Nepal, I asked him about the supposed Svābhāvika school. I had written ahead with this question, and then in person asked him about it on two different occasions so as to minimize the possibility of my misunderstanding him. He was of the definite opinion that such a school of interpretation actually did exist in Hodgson's time, but he was equally sure that it does not exist at present in Nepal. The situation in Nepal then and now is that very few Buddhist pundits exist. They are somewhat scattered, and may preserve traditions within their Vajracharya family not preserved in other Vajracharya families. So Gautam felt that Hodgson's pundit probably had preserved an authentic Svābhāvika tradition, but that it has now died out. Gautam, himself a Vajracharya, was familiar with the other Vajracharyas living today, so was sure that such a tradition no longer exists. Hodgson, however, had

provided four pages of quotations translated into English from Sanskrit Buddhist texts in support of this doctrine. The texts quoted from, including the lengthy *Prajñā-pāramitā* texts, together total thousands of pages. Due to this bulk, few of these quotations have yet been traced, other than from the *Buddhacarita*. Perhaps a valid Svābhāvika doctrine can yet be found in the Sanskrit Buddhist texts. But Theosophists will have to find it, because no one else is likely to be interested.

Facsimile reproduction from The Secret Doctrine, 1st ed., vol. I, p. 28:

“The Doctrine of Svabhāva or Svabhāvatā, and the Questions of Anātman and Śūnyatā,” by David Reigle, was published as the fourth Book of Dzian Research Report, Cotopaxi, Colorado: Eastern School Press, June 1997, a pamphlet of 28 pages. It is here slightly revised.

Following upon my rather unsettling previous report, this report attempts to trace a svabhāva doctrine as found in the Book of Dzian to known Buddhist texts. Regarding the term “svabhāvatā,” perhaps the more likely of the two terms to be the specific equivalent of Blavatsky’s svābhāvat, there are some important references that were not included in this report, found in the Bodhisattva-bhūmi, attributed to Asaṅga (Tibetan tradition), or to Maitreya (Chinese tradition). This text in its tattvārtha or “reality” chapter speaks of the inexpressible svabhāvatā (nature or essence) of all the elements of existence (nirabhilāpaya-svabhāvatā sarva-dharmāṅām). Being beyond the range of speech, this absolute (pāramārthika) svabhāva of all dharmas is accessible only to non-conceptual wisdom (nirvikalpa-jñāna) [N. Dutt ed. p. 30].

This report links the svabhāva doctrine as found in the Book of Dzian to the tathāgata-garbha doctrine, now becoming accepted as the third school of Mahāyāna Buddhism (see: J. W. de Jong, Indo-Iranian Journal vol. 18, 1976, p. 315). The tathāgata-garbha doctrine is summarized in Maitreya’s Ratna-gotra-vibhāga, and I here conclude that this book was an important source for Blavatsky and her teachers. Interestingly, in the fall after this was written, a curious fragment of Tibetan writing found in the envelope of Mahatma letter #92, dated Nov. 23, 1882, was identified as a line from the Ratna-gotra-vibhāga, chap. 1, verse 21. It is reproduced in The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett, 2nd ed. p. xlvi, 3rd ed. p. xliii, chron. ed. p. xxv. It reads as follows:

Tampö tön-tu dau-wa yin Kyab ni Sang-gye nyak chik yin

དམ་པའི་དོན་དུ་འགྲོ་བ་ཡིན་ཡོད།། ལྷུབས་ནི་སངས་རྒྱས་ཉག་གཅིག་ཅིག་ཡིན།།

The only refuge for him who aspires to true perfection is Buddha alone.

I have placed in brackets preferred readings, ཡི for ཡིན and ཅིག for གཅིག. According to Samdhong Rinpoche, who identified this line for me, it is used to study ultimate as opposed to conventional refuge.

The Doctrine of Svabhāva or Svabhāvatā and the Questions of Anātman and Śūnyatā

The doctrine of svabhāva or svabhāvatā, as was discussed in the previous *Book of Dzyan Research Report*, “Technical Terms in Stanza II,” is a fundamental doctrine of the “Book of Dzyan” as presented in *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky. To establish its validity outside the small circle of believing Theosophists, it must be traced in the Buddhist texts where it is said to be found. Until it can be traced in the Buddhist texts, the affirmation of its former existence by a Nepalese Buddhist Vajracharya carries no more weight to objective investigators than do statements about it by Theosophical Mahatmas. To trace it in the Buddhist texts we must necessarily do so in terms of the “dharma,” the word they use throughout for all the “elements of existence.” Here we will need to reconcile their universally-held doctrine that all dharmas are anātman, or “without self,” with the Theosophical teachings which regularly use the term ātman. Then we come to their teaching of śūnyatā, the “emptiness” of all dharmas. Only at this point are we back to svabhāva, for śūnyatā is defined as the niḥsvabhāva, the “lack of svabhāva,” of all dharmas.

It will already be obvious that for our research we must first find out if there is anything taught in Buddhism that is not a dharma, something beyond the “elements of existence.” The Buddhist authority Walpola Rahula, explaining dhamma, the Pāli equivalent of the Sanskrit dharma, tells us that there is not:¹

There is no term in Buddhist terminology wider than *dhamma*. It includes not only the conditioned things and states, but also the non-conditioned, the Absolute, Nirvāṇa. There is nothing in the universe or outside, good or bad, conditioned or non-conditioned, relative or absolute, which is not included in this term.

In an earlier *Book of Dzyan Research Report*, "Theosophy in Tibet: The Teachings of the Jonangpa School," the Buddhist teaching of the dhātu, the "element," described as permanent, stable, quiescent, and eternal, was likened to the Theosophical teaching of the "one element." What, then, is the relationship between the one element, the dhātu, and the many elements of existence, the dharmas? A verse from the now lost *Mahāyāna-abhidharma-sūtra*, quoted in several extant Buddhist texts, tells us that it is their basis or support (*samāśraya*):²

anādi-kāliko dhātuḥ sarva-dharma-samāśrayaḥ |
tasmīn sati gatiḥ sarvā nirvāṇādhiḡamo 'pi ca ||

From beginningless time the element is the basis of all the dharmas. Because it exists, all the destinies [of living beings] exist, and even the [possibility of the] attainment of nirvāṇa.

This seems to also provide us with a firm basis for tracing the Theosophical svabhāva or svabhāvatā doctrine in Buddhist sources. If the element is thought of as svabhāva, and svabhāva is indeed given as one of its meanings in Maitreya's *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga*,³ we would have it. So what happened to this teaching?

Early Buddhism was divided into many schools. Although they classified the dharmas differently, and even had different numbers of dharmas, generally speaking they held that each dharma was a real existent (*dravya*), had its own svabhāva, and was impermanent (*anitya*).⁴ Thus the svabhāva of a dharma is here its individual nature, which is non-eternal. An exception to this was the Sarvāstivāda school. The teachings of this once-dominant school have been preserved for us as taught by the Vaibhāṣikas of Kashmir in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharma-kośa*. This text, however, says little about their svabhāva teaching. But the same author wrote a commentary on this text criticizing many of its teachings from the standpoint of the Sautrāntika school. Strangely enough, it is here in a verse ridiculing this teaching that we find its clearest statement:⁵

svabhāvaḥ sarvadā cāsti bhāvo nityaś ca neṣyate |
na ca svabhāvād bhāvo 'nyo vyaktam īśvara-ceṣṭitam ||

Svabhāva always exists, but an existent thing is not held to be permanent; yet an existent thing is not different from svabhāva. Clearly, [and absurdly,] this is the doing of [some imaginary] God.

No Buddhist school has ever believed in God. The Sautrāntikas are saying that this position is so illogical that it would have to be the work of an all-powerful God who could transcend the laws of reason, and hence for Buddhists it is completely absurd. The Sarvāstivāda position seems to be that the svabhāva of a dharma is eternal, although an independently existing thing (*bhāva*) is not eternal. If this svabhāva is taken to be the one element, we would have an exact statement of the Theosophical position. There is the one element, only the one element, and nothing but the one element; and it is eternal. All apparently existing things are non-eternal as such. Yet, if there is nothing but the one element, all apparently existing things cannot be different from it. But the Sarvāstivāda position was not seen in this way. Rather it was seen like that of the other early Buddhist schools to refer to the svabhāva of the individual dharmas. For as stated in the early *Samaya-bhedoparacana-cakra* by Vasumitra, who was himself a Sarvāstivādin, “The svabhāva [of a dharma] does not combine with the svabhāva [of another dharma].”⁶ Vasumitra’s treatise is terse and admittedly not always easy to understand, but my bracketed material in the above quote certainly reflects how later schools understood the Sarvāstivāda position, namely that their eternal svabhāva is that of the individual dharmas.

Buddhist thought as studied in Tibet for the last millennium holds that the Sarvāstivādins or Vaibhāṣikas were refuted by the Sautrāntikas; the Sautrāntikas were refuted by the Yogācārins or Cittamātrins; the Yogācārins were refuted by the Svātantrika Mādhyamikas; and these were refuted by the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas. This latter is accepted as the highest teaching on earth by the majority of Tibetan Buddhists. In this manner the old Sarvāstivāda teaching of svabhāva as eternal, taken to refer to the individual dharmas, was superseded.

The teaching of the eternal element or dhātu as the basis of all the dharmas, allowing the possibility of seeing in it a single eternal svabhāva, was taken differently by different schools. The

Yogācārins understood the dhātu to refer to the *ālaya-vijñāna*, or substratum consciousness. The Mādhyamikas understood the dhātu to refer to the *tathāgata-garbha*, or Buddha-nature, taken to be the emptiness of the mind. Buddhist schools sought to avoid emphasizing this teaching in any way which could be seen as holding a unitary eternal svabhāva, apparently because of the similarity of this idea to the Hindu ātman doctrine.

The Question of Anātman

All known schools of Buddhism have always taught that all dharmas are anātman or “without self.” This means that ātman as the universal higher self taught in Hinduism and also taught in Theosophy is denied. This distinctive teaching of Buddhism defines for Buddhists their teachings as Buddhist. Thus most Buddhists regard Theosophy as derived from Hinduism, not from Tibetan Mahatmas who as Buddhists could not hold the ātman doctrine. Conversely some Theosophists as well as others have attempted to show that Buddhism does not really deny ātman. Since this doctrine is so central to Buddhist teachings, any Theosophist who wishes to trace a svabhāva or svabhāvātā doctrine in the Buddhist texts must first reconcile the anātman doctrine one way or the other with the Theosophical teachings. To do this we should consider the words of Walpola Rahula:⁷

What in general is suggested by Soul, Self, Ego, or to use the Sanskrit expression *Ātman*, is that in man there is a permanent, everlasting and absolute entity, which is the unchanging substance behind the changing phenomenal world. . . .

Buddhism stands unique in the history of human thought in denying the existence of such a Soul, Self, or *Ātman*. According to the teaching of the Buddha, the idea of self is an imaginary, false belief which has no corresponding reality. . . .

“The negation of an imperishable *Ātman* is the common characteristic of all dogmatic systems of the Lesser as well as the Great Vehicle, and, there is, therefore, no reason to assume that Buddhist tradition which is in complete agreement on this point has deviated from the Buddha’s original teaching.”

It is therefore curious that recently there should have been a vain attempt by a few scholars to smuggle the idea of self into the teaching of the Buddha, quite contrary to the spirit of Buddhism. These scholars respect, admire, and venerate the Buddha and his teaching. They look up to Buddhism. But they cannot imagine that the Buddha, whom they consider the most clear and profound thinker, could have denied the existence of an *Ātman* or Self which they need so much. They unconsciously seek the support of the Buddha for this need for eternal existence—of course not in a petty individual self with small s, but in the big Self with a capital S.

It is better to say frankly that one believes in an *Ātman* or Self. Or one may even say that the Buddha was totally wrong in denying the existence of an *Ātman*. But certainly it will not do for any one to try to introduce into Buddhism an idea which the Buddha never accepted, as far as we can see from the extant original texts.

The term *ātman* is used in Theosophy for the seventh or highest principle in man. In the “Cosmological Notes” from October 1881 a Mahatma gives in parallel columns the seven principles of man and of the universe in Tibetan, Sanskrit, and English.⁸ The term *ātman* is found in two forms in the Sanskrit column for the principles of man. The Tibetan terms given for these, however, are not translations of the Sanskrit terms, but rather represent a different system. In other words, the Tibetan system used here by the Mahatmas does not have *ātman* or its translation; only the Sanskrit system does, which consists of terms drawn from Hinduism. It is well known to readers of *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* that the Mahatmas expressed great difficulty in finding appropriate terms with which to teach their doctrines, and they often drew from wherever they could find similar ideas, including even the European philosophy of the time. Indeed, this practice could satisfactorily explain their references to the Svābhāvika school of Buddhism thought to exist in Nepal, which no one could later find, were it not for the fact that the term *svābhāvāt* is given seven times in the Stanzas from the “Book of Dzyan.” Since the Mahatmas had Hindu chelas, they would have already had intact a system of Hindu

terms. But it does not necessarily follow that the Mahatmas were themselves followers of the schools from which the terms were taken. E.g., “We are not Adwaitees [followers of the Hindu school of advaita or non-dual Vedānta], but our teaching respecting the one life is identical with that of the Adwaitee with regard to Parabrahm.”⁹ So also, from their use of parallel terms it does not necessarily follow that the Mahatmas accept all the implications of the term thus used, as we learn from an article published at about that same time.

An article by the Adwaitee Hindu chela T. Subba Row, “The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man,” came out in *The Theosophist*, January 1882, with notes by H. P. Blavatsky. These notes were written before the publication in 1883 of A. P. Sinnett’s highly influential Theosophical classic, *Esoteric Buddhism*, and therefore before Blavatsky felt obliged to counter the view that Theosophy is esoteric Buddhism so as to stress its universality (as she later did in *The Secret Doctrine*). Thus she here speaks unguardedly of the differences between the esoteric Buddhist or Arhat doctrine of the Tibetan Mahatmas and the esoteric Brahmanical or Aryan doctrine of the Hindu Initiates. By the time this article was reprinted three years later in *Five Years of Theosophy*, key sentences giving these differences were omitted; and in her subsequent writings we read only of the identity of the Hindu Vedāntic parabrahman and ātman with the Buddhist teachings and with Theosophy. Here are the relevant excerpts from her notes:¹⁰

So that, the Aryan and Tibetan or Arhat doctrines agree perfectly in substance, differing but in names given and the way of putting it, a distinction resulting from the fact that the Vedantin Brahmins believe in Parabrahman, a *deific* power, impersonal though it may be, while the Buddhists entirely reject it. [p. 406]

The Impersonal Parabrahman thus being made to merge or separate itself into a *personal* “*jīvātma*,” or the personal god of every human creature. This is, again, a difference necessitated by the Brahmanical belief in a God whether personal or impersonal, while the Buddhist Arahats, rejecting this idea entirely, recognize *no* deity apart from man. [p. 410]

We have already pointed out that, in our opinion, the whole difference between Buddhistic and Vedantic philosophies was that the former was a kind of *rationalistic* Vedantism, while the latter might be regarded as *transcendental* Buddhism. If the Aryan esotericism applies the term *jīvatma* to the seventh principle, the pure and *per se* unconscious spirit—it is because the Vedānta postulating three kinds of existence—(1) the *pāramārthika* (the true, the only real one), (2) the *vyāvahārika* (the practical), and (3) the *pratibhāsika* (the apparent or illusory life)—makes the first *life* or *jīva*, the only truly existent one. Brahma or the ONE SELF is its only representative in the universe, as it is the *universal life in toto* while the other two are but its “phenomenal appearances,” imagined and created by ignorance, and complete illusions suggested to us by our blind senses. The Buddhists, on the other hand, deny either subjective or objective reality even to that one Self-Existence. Buddha declares that there is neither Creator nor an ABSOLUTE Being. Buddhist rationalism was ever too alive to the insuperable difficulty of admitting one absolute consciousness, as in the words of Flint—‘wherever there is consciousness there is relation, and wherever there is relation there is dualism.’ The ONE LIFE is either “MUKTA” (absolute and unconditioned) and can have no relation to anything nor to any one; or it is “BADDHA” (bound and conditioned), and then it cannot be called the ABSOLUTE; the limitation, moreover, necessitating another deity as powerful as the first to account for all the evil in this world. Hence, the Arahāt 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; . . . [pp. 422-23]

The central doctrine of the upaniṣads, and therefore of Vedānta, is that there is nothing but brahman, or parabrahman, and further that brahman and ātman, the Self in all, are one. Buddhism, for whatever reason, did not teach an a-brahman or “no brahman” doctrine, but rather taught an an-ātman or “no self” doctrine. At the time of the Buddha there existed in India other Hindu schools, such as Sāṃkhya, who interpreted the

upaniṣads differently than the Vedāntins. The Sāṃkhya school understood brahman as referring to unconscious substance. This may be seen from the extensive polemics against them by Śāṅkarācārya in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, also called the *Vedānta-sūtra*, whose whole point is to prove that brahman is omniscient, and therefore not unconscious. Since they are the primary target of Śāṅkarācārya's polemics, we may assume that the Sāṃkhya school was once quite influential; and this is indeed borne out by the old epic literature of India. So there was in early India an influential Hindu school which held that brahman was unconscious substance (*acetana pradhāna* or *prakṛti*). But despite the teaching that brahman and ātman are one, the Sāṃkhya school understood ātman as referring to the conscious *puruṣa* or spirit, much like the Vedānta school's ātman as the conscious *jīvātman* in man. Thus, if the Buddha's point was to refute an absolute consciousness, he would have been obliged to refute ātman rather than brahman. As such, I would choose to reconcile the Theosophical teachings in favor of the anātman doctrine of the Buddhist teachings, despite Theosophy's use of the term ātman, which I would then take as a working but not entirely overlapping parallel.

If, on the other hand, the Buddha's point with the anātman doctrine was not to refute an absolute consciousness, but to refute an absolute substratum of any kind, the Buddhists have some very embarrassing sūtras of their own to reconcile. These are the Tathāgata-garbha or Buddha-nature sūtras,¹¹ said by the Jonangpas to be of definitive meaning, and said by the Gelugpas to require interpretation. For example, one of these, the *Mahā-parinirvāṇa-sūtra*, teaches that:¹²

The ātman is the Tathāgatagarbha. All beings possess a Buddha Nature: this is what the ātman is. This ātman, from the start, is always covered by innumerable passions (*kleśa*): this is why beings are unable to see it.

It is noteworthy that this very sūtra, extracts from which had been translated by Samuel Beal as far back as 1871, was quoted in *The Mahatma Letters* on this very question of ātman:¹³

Says Buddha, “you have to get rid entirely of all the subjects of impermanence composing the body that your body should become permanent. The permanent never merges with the impermanent although the two are one. But it is only when all outward appearances are gone that there is left that one principle of life which exists independently of all external phenomena. . . .”

The teachings of the Tathāgata-garbha sūtras are synthesized in a unique and fundamental text, the *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga*, which is considered in Tibetan tradition to be one of the five texts of Maitreya. This text refers to the four qualities which Buddhism had always taught as characterizing all dharmas or phenomena, namely, impermanence (*anitya*), suffering (*duḥkha*), no-self (*anātman*), and impurity (*aśubha*); but says that their opposites characterize the dharma-kāya or absolute, namely, permanence (*nitya*), happiness (*sukha*), self (*ātman*), and purity (*śubha*). The commentary then quotes in explanation of this a passage from the *Śrī-mālā-sūtra*, which I here translate in full.¹⁴

O Lord, people hold mistaken views about the five perishable personality aggregates which form the basis of clinging to existence. They have the idea of permanence about that which is impermanent, the idea of happiness about that which is suffering, the idea of self (*ātman*) about that which is without self (*anātman*), and the idea of purity about that which is impure. Even all the Śravakas and Pratyeka-Buddhas, O Lord, because of their knowledge of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), hold mistaken views about the dharma-kāya of the Tathāgata (Buddha), the sphere of omniscient wisdom, never before seen. The people, O Lord, who will be the Buddha’s true sons, having the idea of permanence, having the idea of self (*ātman*), having the idea of happiness, and having the idea of purity, those people, O Lord, will hold unmistakable views. They, O Lord, will see correctly. Why is that? The dharma-kāya of the Tathāgata, O Lord, is the perfection of permanence, the perfection of happiness, the perfection of self (*ātman*), and the perfection of purity. The people, O Lord, who see the dharma-kāya of the Tathāgata in this way, see correctly. Those who see correctly are the Buddha’s true sons.

Terms such as Tathāgata-garbha and dharma-kāya have multiple connotations, so I have left them untranslated above. As mentioned in an earlier *Book of Dzyan Research Report*, the Tathāgata-garbha, or Buddha-nature, and the dharma-kāya, or body of the law, are what the dhātu, or element, is called when obscured and when unobscured, respectively; and these three terms correspond well with the “One Life,” the “One Law,” and the “One Element,” of *The Mahatma Letters*. These three terms for the absolute are interpreted by the Gelugpas as referring to the absolute truth of the emptiness of all things, and not to any absolute substratum. But for the Jonangpas they come from texts of definitive meaning which require no interpretation, so do refer to an absolute substratum which is empty of everything but itself. The Tathāgata-garbha texts, like all Buddhist texts, still deny ātman in regard to phenomenal life, but accept ātman in regard to ultimate reality; that is, as applied to the Tathāgata-garbha and the dharma-kāya, or the obscured and unobscured dhātu, the element, which is described as eternal, but not as conscious. This certainly justifies the Mahatma's use of the term, even from a Buddhist standpoint.

The Question of Śūnyatā

Having reconciled the Buddhist anātman doctrine with Theosophical teachings, at least to my own satisfaction, we can now proceed to the śūnyatā, or “emptiness” question, which is closely linked with the svabhāva question. The doctrine of anātman is taught throughout Buddhism from beginning to now, and in all its branches. The doctrine of śūnyatā, however, comes from sūtras said to have disappeared from the realm of humans forty years after the time of the Buddha, and only brought back centuries later. These texts form the basis of Mahāyāna or northern Buddhism, but were not accepted by Hīnayāna or southern Buddhism. Primary among these are the *Prajñā-pāramitā* or Perfection of Wisdom sūtras, which were brought back by Nāgārjuna from the realm of the Nāgas, the “serpents” of wisdom, called by Blavatsky, “initiates.”¹⁵ Hīnayāna Buddhism in general teaches that all dharmas, though they are

impermanent or momentary, really exist, so each has its own svabhāva. The *Prajñā-pāramitā* texts teach that all dharmas do not really exist, that they are empty of any svabhāva of their own; thus adding to the early anātman doctrine regarding persons (*pudgala-nairātmya*) an anātman doctrine regarding dharmas (*dharma-nairātmya*).

The doctrine of śūnyatā, the central teaching of the *Prajñā-pāramitā* texts, is stated in terms of the śūnyatā, the “emptiness” or “voidness” of all dharmas; or more fully, that all dharmas are svabhāva-śūnya, “empty” (*śūnya*) of svabhāva. These texts never tire of repeating this teaching:¹⁶ No dharma has ever come into existence (*anutpāda*); they do not exist (*na samvidyate*); they are non-existent (*abhāva*); they are empty (*śūnya*); they are empty of svabhāva (*svabhāva-śūnya*); they are without svabhāva (*niḥsvabhāva*); their svabhāva is non-existent (*abhāva-svabhāva*). Again, I have left svabhāva untranslated. One may employ any number of possible translations: essence, own-being, inherent existence, self-existence, self-nature, essential nature, intrinsic nature, intrinsic reality. As may now be seen, most occurrences of the term svabhāva in these texts are found in conjunction with occurrences of the term śūnyatā, because the whole point of the doctrine of śūnyatā is to refute the doctrine of svabhāva.

The śūnyatā or emptiness teachings of the *Prajñā-pāramitā* sūtras were first formulated into a philosophy by Nāgārjuna. This is the Madhyamaka or “middle way” philosophy, so called because it seeks to avoid the two extremes of eternalism and nihilism. Its primary text is the *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā*, or “Root Verses on the Middle Way.” In this text Nāgārjuna underscores how critical it is to understand śūnyatā correctly:¹⁷

An incorrect view of emptiness destroys the slow-witted, like an incorrectly grasped snake, or an incorrectly cast spell.

Yet early on, varying schools of interpretation of Nāgārjuna’s treatise arose. Its verses or *kārikās* are concise and often hard to understand without a commentary. Nāgārjuna is thought to have written his own commentary on it, called the *Akutobhaya*, but his authorship of the extant text of that name found in the

Tibetan canon is rejected by Tibetan tradition.¹⁸ By the time of Tsong-kha-pa, more than a millennium after the original text was written, there existed many commentaries. After studying these, Tsong-kha-pa wondered what the correct interpretation was. Through mystical means, the Buddha of Wisdom Mañjuśrī told him that the interpretation by Chandrakīrti was in all ways reliable.¹⁹ In this way Tsong-kha-pa and the Gelugpas came to champion Chandrakīrti's school, the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka, which became dominant in Tibet.

The Prāsaṅgika or “consequence” school uses a type of statement called *prasaṅga*, somewhat reminiscent of Socratic dialogue, which points out unexpected and often unwelcome consequences in whatever anyone can postulate of a positive nature regarding what exists. It reduces these postulations to absurdity. Through this type of reasoning dharmas are analyzed and shown not to be findable, and as a consequence are proven to be empty. Not only are all dharmas empty, so too is emptiness empty. Śūnyatā itself does not exist any more than anything else. It is not the void in which things may exist. Śūnyatā is here absolute only in the sense of being the absolute truth of the emptiness of all things, including itself.

Would this, then, also be the Theosophical understanding of śūnyatā? The Theosophical teachings are said to represent an esoteric school of interpretation, so one should not expect them to agree with the exoterically known schools, such as “the Prasaṅga Mādhyamika teaching, whose dogmas have been known ever since it broke away from the purely esoteric schools.”²⁰ For as Blavatsky points out:²¹

Esoteric Schools would cease to be worthy of their name were their literature and doctrines to become the property of even their profane co-religionists—still less of the Western public. This is simple common sense and logic. Nevertheless this is a fact which our Orientalists have ever refused to recognize.

So now that Blavatsky did bring out to the Western public some of the esoteric teachings, under instruction from certain of the Tibetan Mahatmas who believed that the time had come for

this, where do we find the Theosophical understanding of śūnyatā? Returning to the passage quoted earlier from Blavatsky's notes on Subba Row's article, we continue reading:²²

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, the field for the operation of the eternal Forces and natural Law, the *basis* (as our correspondent rightly calls it) upon which take place the eternal intercorrelations of Akāśa-Prakriti, guided by the unconscious regular pulsations of *Śakti*—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* (*Mahā-Śūnyatā*) or, as it is called by Lao-tze, the “Emptiness” is the nature of the Buddhist Absolute.

The term “space” is Samuel Beal's rendering of śūnyatā in his 1871 translation of the most condensed *Prajñā-pāramitā* sūtra, the *Heart Sūtra*.²³ Blavatsky had quoted it earlier in another note to Subba Row's article:²⁴

Prakriti, Svabhavat or *Akāśa* is—SPACE as the Tibetans have it; Space filled with whatsoever substance or no substance at all; *i.e.*, with substance so imponderable as to be only metaphysically conceivable. . . . ‘That which we call form (*rupa*) is not different from that which we call space (*Śūnyatā*) . . . Space is not different from Form. . . .’ (Book of *Sin-king* or the *Heart Sutra*. . . .)

Beal was one of the first western translators of Buddhist texts. Influenced by Brian Hodgson's account of the four schools of Buddhism, Beal believed that Chinese Buddhism followed the Svābhāvika school, accepting a “universally diffused essence.”²⁵

So in Beal's understanding, *śūnyatā* or space was just another form of the absolute *svabhāva*. Several decades later the first comprehensive study in English of the Madhyamaka school based on a thorough study of Nāgārjuna's original Sanskrit text came out: T. R. V. Murti's *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, 1955. Although no longer based on a Svābhāvika idea, Murti still understood *śūnyatā* to be the Buddhist absolute. Therefore Madhyamaka was seen by him as a kind of absolutist philosophy. In recent decades, however, since the Tibetan displacement, a number of new works have come out based on collaboration with Tibetan Gelugpa lamas, which severely criticize the earlier absolutist interpretations of Madhyamaka.²⁶ They point out that Madhyamaka is by definition the middle way which avoids the extremes of eternalism and nihilism. Neither of these two forms of absolutism can be the correct interpretation. The Tibetans are heirs to an unbroken tradition of Madhyamaka spanning more than fifteen hundred years. Since this tradition has been thoroughly sifted by generations of scholars, they have every reason to believe that theirs is the correct interpretation of *śūnyatā*; and this *śūnyatā* is not something which itself exists in any absolute way such as space. Do we here have another case where Blavatsky quoted whatever she could find which seemed to support the esoteric teachings, but which later turns out not to support them after all? I don't think so.

In one of the most significant extracts drawn from secret commentaries and found in *The Secret Doctrine*, we find:²⁷

. . . As its substance is of a different kind from that known on earth, the inhabitants of the latter, seeing THROUGH IT, believe in their illusion and ignorance that it is empty space. There is not one finger's breadth (ANGULA) of void Space in the whole Boundless (Universe). . . .

This leaves no doubt that *śūnyatā* or space is indeed understood in the Arhat secret doctrine as the absolute, the one element, the eternal substance. But how can there be an absolute in the middle way taught by the Buddha?

Tracing Absolute Śūnyatā and Absolute Svabhāva

There is a tradition known as “Great Madhyamaka,” which was introduced in Tibet by Dolpopa and the Jonangpas several centuries ago. It fully agrees with the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka school that absolutist philosophies of eternalism and nihilism are extremes to be avoided. Like all Madhyamaka traditions, it accepts as authoritative the words of Nāgārjuna:²⁸

Emptiness (*śūnyatā*) is proclaimed by the Buddhas as the leaving behind of all philosophical views, but they have pronounced those who hold a philosophical view about emptiness (*śūnyatā*) to be incurable.

Any conception, however subtle, that dharmas either absolutely exist or absolutely do not exist, is considered incorrect; but the Great Mādhyamikas hold that there is something beyond what can be postulated by the mind. This inconceivable something, whatever it may be called, is described in the Tathāgata-garbha sūtras as absolute and eternal. If it did not exist, Buddhahood and all its qualities could not exist. Since it is beyond the range and reach of thought, it transcends any philosophical view. Just as the Prāsaṅgikas in denying the absolute existence of anything, including śūnyatā, are careful to point out that this does not imply nihilism, so the Great Mādhyamikas in affirming the absolute existence of Buddha qualities, as well as śūnyatā, are careful to point out that this does not imply eternalism.

There are many precedents for the teaching of absolute śūnyatā in the words of the Buddha. If there were not, no one would have taken it seriously, any more than any one would take seriously Blavatsky’s *The Secret Doctrine* without such precedents. Primary among these sources is a sūtra called the “Disclosure of the Knot or Secret Doctrine” (*Sandhi-nirmocana*), in which the Buddha says he has given three promulgations of the teachings, or turnings of the wheel of the dharma, and will now disclose the true intention or meaning of these apparently contradictory teachings. As summarized from this sūtra by Takasaki:²⁹

The ultimate doctrine of the Mahāyāna is no doubt taught in the *Prajñāpāramitā*, but its way of exposition is 'with an esoteric meaning,' or 'with a hidden intention.' For example the *Prajñāpāramitā* teaches the *niḥsvabhāvatā* [lack of svabhāva] in regard to the *sarvadharma* [all dharmas], but what is meant by this *niḥsvabhāvatā* is not so clear. The purpose of the *Sandhinirmocana* is to explain this meaning of *niḥsvabhāva* 'in a clear manner,' that is to say, to analyze and clarify the significance of the *sūnya-vāda* [doctrine of sūnyatā]. Just because of this standpoint, the Sūtra is called '*sandhi-nirmocana*,' i.e. the Disclosure of the Knot or Secret Doctrine.

In the first promulgation the Buddha taught that all dharmas really exist. Though they are impermanent, they all have their own svabhāva. This is the teaching of the sūtras accepted by southern or Hīnayāna Buddhism. In the second promulgation the Buddha taught that all dharmas are in reality non-existent. They are empty (*sūnya*) of svabhāva. This is the teaching of the sūtras accepted by northern or Mahāyāna Buddhism, especially of the *Prajñā-pāramitā* sūtras. In the third promulgation the Buddha clarified in what way dharmas exist and in what way dharmas do not exist. To do this he put forth the teaching of the three svabhāvas or natures.³⁰ The nature of dharmas as they are conceptualized to have their own svabhāva is their imagined or illusory nature (*parikalpita-svabhāva*); in this way they do not really exist. The nature of dharmas as they arise in dependence on causes and conditions is their dependent nature (*paratantra-svabhāva*); in this way they exist conventionally. The nature of dharmas as they are established in reality is their perfect nature (*pariniṣpanna-svabhāva*); in this way they truly exist.

This teaching of the three svabhāvas was elucidated in the treatises of Maitreya, Asaṅga, and Vasubandhu. Although these writers are often classified as being Citta-mātra, or "mind-only," and hence denigrated by Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas, Dolpopa considers them to be "Great Mādhyamikas." As such, they would be vitally interested in the understanding of sūnyatā. Indeed, it is clear from their writings that they were; and as we saw earlier, the terms sūnyatā and svabhāva are normally found together in

Buddhist texts. Vasubandhu quotes in his commentary at the beginning of Maitreya's *Madhyānta-vibhāga* a classic definition of śūnyatā, as something that exists, and not just the emptiness of everything including itself:³¹

Thus, "a place is empty (*śūnya*) of that which does not exist there;" [seeing] in this way, one sees in reality. Again, "what remains here, that, being here, exists;" [knowing] in this way, one knows in reality. In this way, the unmistakable definition of śūnyatā (emptiness) arises.

Later in the same chapter Maitreya and Vasubandhu discuss the sixteen kinds of śūnyatā. The last two of these are called *abhāva-śūnyatā*, the emptiness which is non-existence (*abhāva*), and *abhāva-svabhāva-śūnyatā*, the emptiness which is the svabhāva or ultimate essence of that non-existence. Vasubandhu explains that this kind of śūnyatā truly exists:³²

[The former is] the emptiness of persons and dharmas. [The latter is] the true existence (*sad-bhāva*) of that non-existence.

The source of this teaching in the words of the Buddha may be found in the Tathāgata-garbha sūtras of his third promulgation. One of these, the *Mahā-parinirvāṇa-sūtra*, puts it this way, as translated from Tibetan by S. K. Hookham:³³

Thus, these are respectively, the emptiness that is the non-existence (*abhāva-śūnyatā*) of the accidentally stained form etc., which is their each being empty of their own essence [*svabhāva*], and the Tathāgatagarbha Form etc., which are the Emptiness which is the essence of [that] non-existence (*abhāva-svabhāva-śūnyatā*), the Absolute Other Emptiness.

Note the use of the phrase "Absolute Other Emptiness" (*don dam gzan ston*) in this quotation to describe the sixteenth kind of śūnyatā, *abhāva-svabhāva-śūnyatā*. This is one of many quotations utilized by Dolpopa to establish the teaching of an absolute (*paramārtha*) śūnyatā.³⁴ This śūnyatā is empty of every-

thing other than itself, hence it is “empty of other” (*gʒan ston*), but it is not empty of itself. In contradistinction to this, the *śūnyatā* taught by the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka school is empty of everything, including itself. Theirs is a *svabhāva-śūnyatā*, or an emptiness of any ultimate *svabhāva* in anything. The Great Mādhyamikas, too, accept the teaching that all dharmas, or the manifest universe as we know it, are empty of any *svabhāva* of their own, so are ultimately non-existent. But beyond the range and reach of thought there is a truly existent absolute *śūnyatā* empty of anything other than itself, which is the truly existent absolute *svabhāva* of the non-existent manifest universe.

This mind-boggling teaching of the Great Mādhyamikas was quite shocking to the orthodoxy when brought out in Tibet by Dolpopa and the Jonangpas in the fourteenth century. The later Jonangpa writer Tāranātha tells us that at first some found this “empty of other” doctrine hard to understand, while others were delighted by it. But later when adherents of other schools heard it they experienced “heart seizure” (*sn̄in gas*) and “scrambled brains” (*klad pa 'gems pa*).³⁵ This led finally to the banning of Dolpopa’s works by the Gelugpas in the seventeenth century. As one appreciative recent writer comments:³⁶

Dol po pa’s work . . . has the glorious distinction of being one of the very few works in Tibet ever banned as heretical.

Dolpopa was in many ways to fourteenth-century Tibet what Blavatsky was to the nineteenth-century world. The London writer W. T. Stead spoke in a similar vein about Blavatsky’s work just after her death:³⁷

. . . it [the creed which Madame Blavatsky preached] has at least the advantage of being heretical. The truth always begins as heresy, in every heresy there may be the germ of a new revelation.

While the Gelugpas and the Sakyapas, two of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism, found the Great Madhyamaka teachings to be heretical, the Nyingmapas and the Kagyupas, the other two schools, in general accepted these teachings. In

fact, leading teachers from these two schools used the Great Madhyamaka teachings as a unifying doctrinal basis for their “non-sectarian” (*ris med*) movement. This was begun in Tibet in the latter part of the 1800s, the same time the Theosophical movement was being launched in the rest of the world.

Just as Blavatsky devoted the bulk of *The Secret Doctrine* to supportive quotations and parallels from the world’s religions and philosophies, so Dolpopa devoted the bulk of his writings to supportive quotations from the Buddhist scriptures. Today many scholars are finding that Dolpopa’s understanding of his sources makes better sense than that of his critics. One reason for this is that he takes them to mean what they say, rather than to require interpretation. It took the genius of Tsong-kha-pa to bring about the “Copernican revolution” of making the second promulgation or turning of the wheel of the dharma to be of final or definitive meaning and the third promulgation to be of provisional or interpretable meaning, and thereby reverse the teaching of the *Sandhi-nirmocana-sūtra*. Buddhist scholar Paul Williams writes:³⁸

In portraying the *tathāgatagarbha* theory found in the *sūtras* and *Ratnagotravibhāga* I have assumed that these texts mean what they say. In terms of the categories of Buddhist hermeneutics I have spoken as though the Tathāgatagarbha *sūtras* were to be taken literally or as definitive works, and their meaning is quite explicit. The *tathāgatagarbha* teaching, however, appears to be rather different from that of Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka, and were I a Tibetan scholar who took the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka emptiness doctrine as the highest teaching of the Buddha I would have to interpret the *tathāgatagarbha* teaching in order to dissolve any apparent disagreement.

Dolpopa is most known for the Shentong or “empty of other” teaching of an absolute *śūnyatā*, said by him to be based on the three Kālacakra commentaries from Śambhala,³⁹ and supported by him with quotations from the Tathāgata-garbha or Buddha-nature *sūtras* whose teachings are synthesized in Maitreya’s *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga* and its commentary. Despite this,

the majority of Dolpopa's writings are on the *Prajñā-pāramitā* texts. Thus he, like Tsong-kha-pa, put most of his attention on the primary texts of the second promulgation. In doing so he drew heavily on a lengthy commentary which gives, according to him, the Great Madhyamaka interpretation of these texts. It is a combined commentary on the 100,000 line, 25,000 line, and 18,000 line Perfection of Wisdom sūtras, called the *Śata-sāhasrikā-pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikāṣṭādaśa-sāhasrikā-prajñā-pāramitā-brhat-īkā*, attributed by some to Vasubandhu. Unfortunately, it has not yet been translated into a western language. The late Edward Conze, who was practically the sole translator of *Prajñā-pāramitā* texts throughout his lifetime, lamented that:⁴⁰

The most outstanding feature of contemporary *Prajñāpāramitā* studies is the disproportion between the few persons willing to work in this field and the colossal number of documents extant in Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan.

Dolpopa believed that śūnyatā is found in two different senses in the *Prajñā-pāramitā* texts, that must be distinguished through context and through knowledge of absolute śūnyatā, as may be found in the above-mentioned commentary. This text utilizes a three svabhāva type scheme in its explanations, as we have seen from the *Sandhi-nirmocana-sūtra*. Dolpopa refers frequently to the "Questions Asked by Maitreya" chapter of the 18,000 and 25,000 line *Prajñā-pāramitā* sūtras for the source of the three svabhāva teaching in the *Prajñā-pāramitā* texts.⁴¹ It is there given in related terms; e.g., *dharmatā-rūpa*, translated by Conze as "dharmic nature of form," is there given for *pariniṣpanna-svabhāva*, the "nature which is established in reality." Dolpopa considers this chapter to be the Buddha's auto-commentary, which should be used to interpret the *Prajñā-pāramitā* sūtras. This chapter, like elsewhere in these sūtras, also speaks of the inexpressible dhātu, saying that it is neither other than nor not other than the dharmas. While the teaching that all dharmas are empty of any svabhāva of their own is repeated tirelessly in the *Prajñā-pāramitā* sūtras, Dolpopa also finds in them the Great Madhyamaka doctrine of the truly existent absolute śūnyatā

empty of everything other than itself, but not empty of its own svabhāva, which is established in reality (*pariniṣpanna*).

All Madhyamaka traditions seek to avoid the two extremes of eternalism and nihilism, which are the two cardinal doctrinal errors: superimposition (*samāropa*) of real existence onto that which has no real existence; and refutation (*apavāda*) of real existence in regard to that which has real existence. According to Great Madhyamaka, the *Prajñā-pāramitā* sūtras and the texts on philosophical reasoning by Nāgārjuna address the error of superimposition of real existence onto that which has no real existence. They do this by teaching that all dharmas are empty of any svabhāva. This is the Prāsaṅgika teaching. But one must also address the error of refutation of real existence in regard to that which has real existence. This, say the Great Mādhyamikas, is done primarily in the Tathāgata-garbha sūtras of the third promulgation and their synthesis in the *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga* of Maitreya, and also in the hymns of Nāgārjuna. They do this by teaching the real though inconceivable existence of the dhātu or element, both when obscured as the Tathāgata-garbha, and when unobscured as the dharma-kāya. They teach that the dhātu is not empty of svabhāva, that its svabhāva is threefold, consisting of:⁴² the dharma-kāya, “body of the law;” *tathatā*, “suchness” or “true nature;” and *gotra*, “germ” or “lineage.” This is its truly existent absolute svabhāva established in reality.

Śūnyatā, as we saw above, is without doubt understood in the Arhat secret doctrine to be an inconceivable absolute like Shentong, the emptiness of everything but itself. So svabhāva is without doubt understood in the Arhat secret doctrine to be a truly existent absolute, as seen in a phrase consisting of the few “technical terms as employed in one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions” of the Book of Dzyan given in *The Secret Doctrine*:⁴³

Barnang and Ssa in Ngovonyidj.

This means: “space (*bar-srang*) and earth (*sa*) in svabhāva or svabhāvatā (*ngo-bo-nyid*).” The Tibetan word *ngo-bo-nyid* or *no-bo-ñid* is one of two standard translations of the Sanskrit svabhāva or svabhāvatā. Robert Thurman notes that:⁴⁴

Where it is used in the ontological sense, meaning “own-being” or “intrinsic reality,” the Tibetans prefer *ngo bo nyid*. Where it is used in the conventional sense, meaning simply “nature,” they prefer *rang bzhin*, although when it is used as “self-nature,” that is, stressing the *sva-* (*rang*) prefix, they equate it with *ngo bo nyid*.

This phrase occurs in stanza I describing the state of the cosmos in pralaya before its periodical manifestation. If space and earth are dissolved in svabhāva, it must be the svabhāva of something that truly exists, even when the universe doesn't.

Conclusion

The concept of svabhāva or svabhāvatā found throughout known Sanskrit writings is the concept of the “inherent nature” of something. This something may be a common everyday thing or it may be the absolute essence of the universe. In terms of doctrines, then, there must first be the doctrine of an existing essence before there can be the doctrine of its inherent nature or svabhāva. If a doctrinal system does not posit the existence of an essence, whether of individual things or of the universe as a whole, there can be no doctrine of svabhāva. Rather there would be the doctrine of niḥsvabhāva: that since nothing has an essence, nothing has an inherent nature; such as is taught in Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka Buddhism.

The concept of svabhāva or svabhāvatā found in the Book of Dzyan comes from the stanzas dealing with cosmogony, not from stanzas laying out its doctrinal system, which we lack. But from the writings of Blavatsky and her Mahatma teachers it is clear that the doctrinal system of the Book of Dzyan and *The Secret Doctrine* is based on the existence of the one element. This, then, is a unitary essence, with a unitary inherent nature or svabhāva, not a plurality of essences with a plurality of svabhāvas such as is taught in early Abhidharma Buddhism.

From what we have seen above, there can be little doubt that the svabhāva spoken of in the Book of Dzyan is the svabhāva of the dhātu, the one element. This teaching in Buddhism is focused in a single unique treatise, the *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga*. The

doctrinal standpoint of the *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga* as understood in the Great Madhyamaka tradition is of all known texts far and away the closest to that of *The Secret Doctrine*, just as the ethical standpoint of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* is of all known texts far and away the closest to that of *The Voice of the Silence*. These facts take us well beyond the realm of probability. Blavatsky indeed had esoteric northern Buddhist sources.

We are here speaking of the doctrinal system, not of the cosmogonic system, which the *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga* does not deal with. The doctrinal standpoint of the *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga* has been taken by most Buddhists down through the ages, other than the Great Mādhyamikas, to be quite different from the other four treatises of Maitreya. One of the reasons for this is that it uses a largely different set of technical terms. Its primary concern is the dhātu, the element, while that of its commentary is the Tathāgata-garbha, the obscured element as the Buddhature, or what we may call the one life.⁴⁵ Neither of these terms is the concern of the other four treatises of Maitreya. In fact, the authorship of the *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga* is not even attributed to Maitreya in the older Chinese tradition, though it has always been attributed to Maitreya in the Tibetan tradition. Blavatsky in a letter to A. P. Sinnett specifically links *The Secret Doctrine* she was then writing to a secret book of Maitreya:⁴⁶

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.

Given their doctrinal similarity, it is likely that the *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga*, or more specifically its secret original, is the book of Maitreya that Blavatsky refers to here. The known *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga*, though it may be a “blind,” still apparently represents the same doctrinal standpoint as that of *The Secret Doctrine*. The other four books of the “*Champai chhos Nga*” (*byams-pa'i chos lnga*), the five (*lnga*) religious books (*chos*, Sanskrit *dharma*) of

Maitreya (*byams-pa*, pronounced Champa or Jampa),⁴⁷ however, according to the Great Mādhyamikas also represent the same doctrinal standpoint as that of the *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga*. The *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga* forms the heart of the Great Madhyamaka tradition, which significantly was represented by Dolpopa to be the “Golden Age Tradition.” Although this tradition teaches an inconceivable absolute śūnyatā or Shentong (*gʒan ston*) which is not empty of svabhāva, its teachings are not presented in terms of svabhāva, so it is not a Svābhāvika tradition.

The only references I am aware of to a Svābhāvika school in Buddhist texts are those found in texts like the *Buddha-carita*, where they do not refer to a Buddhist school of this name, but rather to a non-Buddhist school.⁴⁸ The *Samaya-bhedoparacana-cakra* by Vasumitra, said to have been written only four centuries after the time of the Buddha, gives an account of the eighteen schools of early Buddhism, none of which is the Svābhāvika. Thus, leaving aside the now largely discredited account of the Svābhāvika school of Buddhism given by a Nepalese Buddhist pandit to Brian Hodgson, I am aware of no traditional sources for any Buddhist school either calling themselves Svābhāvikas or being called Svābhāvikas by other Buddhist schools.

The southern or Hīnayāna schools in general accepted a svabhāva in their impermanent but real dharmas. In this sense they could be called Svābhāvikas, but apparently they were not. Since this svabhāva is impermanent, it cannot be the eternal svabhāva referred to in Theosophical writings. We have noted above an exception to this in the Sarvāstivāda school, which taught an eternal svabhāva. But its doctrinal standpoint on this is not clearly known; and this svabhāva was apparently still the svabhāva of the individual dharmas rather than the svabhāva of the one dhātu. Thus it cannot be the unitary svabhāva referred to in Theosophical writings. Again, the Sarvāstivādins were not considered either by themselves or by others to be Svābhāvikas.

The northern or Māhāyana schools in general would be the opposite of Svābhāvikas, teaching that all dharmas are empty of svabhāva (*niḥsvabhāva*). Just as dharmas are ultimately non-existent, so their svabhāva is ultimately non-existent. As put by Chandrakīrti, svabhāva is not something (*akimcit*), it is

merely non-existence (*abhāva-mātra*).⁴⁹ The inherent nature or svabhāva of fire, for example, is here not its common everyday nature of burning, but rather is that its essence is non-existent. In other words, the inherent nature (*svabhāva*) of dharmas is that they have no inherent nature (*niḥsvabhāva*). This position is most fully developed in the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka school, the dominant school in Tibet, generally considered to be the culmination of the Mahāyāna schools.

The Yogācāra school of Mahāyāna is known for its teaching of the three svabhāvas, derived from the *Sandhi-nirmocana-sūtra*. These svabhāvas or natures, which are also called lakṣaṇas or defining characteristics, are applied to the dharmas: a dharma has an illusory nature, a dependent nature, and a perfect nature established in reality. However, these are balanced in the same texts with the teaching of the three niḥsvabhāvas, culminating with the absolute lack of svabhāva (*paramārtha-niḥsvabhāvātā*). So this certainly would not be considered a Svābhāvika position.

The Great Madhyamaka tradition accepts a truly existent though inconceivable absolute śūnyatā which is not empty of svabhāva. Since this tradition presents its teachings in terms of śūnyatā and not in terms of svabhāva, as noted above, they are not Svābhāvikas. Yet it is only here that we find a match with the doctrine of svabhāva or svabhāvātā found in Theosophy. The match is to their teaching of the dhātu, the element, which is described in terms of absolute śūnyatā or Shentong empty of anything other than itself, and whose svabhāva is also absolute and truly existent. This, however, is the very teaching most pointedly refuted by the Gelugpas, who in other regards are considered by Theosophists to be closest to Theosophy. But Theosophists and others often remain unaware that the Gelugpas refute this teaching, because as stated by Hookham:⁵⁰

Unfortunately for those who intuit a Shentong meaning somewhere behind the Buddha's words, it is possible to listen to Gelugpa teachings for a long time before realizing that it is precisely this intuition that is being denied. The definitions and the "difficult points" of the Gelugpa school are designed specifically to exclude a Shentong view; they take a long time to master.

Research in Buddhist texts is in its early stages in the West. The Great Madhyamaka tradition remained largely unknown here until quite recently, and only now are its texts starting to come out. Much remains to be done in preparation for the coming out of an original language text of the Book of Dzyan.

Notes

1. Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, 1959; second enlarged edition, New York: Grove Press, 1974, p. 58. Note that many current Buddhist writers translate “dharma” as “phenomena.”

2. All translations are by myself unless otherwise noted. This verse is here taken from Asaṅga’s commentary after 1.152 of the *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga*, where it explains the *tathāgata-garbha* or Buddha-nature, the dhātu or element when obscured. Hence, dhātu’s Tibetan translation is here *khams*, element. When this verse occurs in Yogācāra texts, as at the beginning of Asaṅga’s *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha*, and in Sthiramati’s commentary on verse 19 of Vasubandhu’s *Vijñapti-mātratā-siddhi-triṃśikā*, it explains the *ālaya-vijñāna* or substratum consciousness. Hence, dhātu’s Tibetan translation is there *dbyñs*, or realm. This verse is accepted not only by the Jonangpas and the Yogācārins, but also by the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas, the dominant school in Tibet. It is quoted approvingly by Jam-yang-shay-ba in his somewhat polemical Tibetan monastic study manual, with the comment: “The Prāsaṅgikas accept these passages literally.” See Jeffrey Hopkins’ partial translation of this study manual in *Meditation on Emptiness*, London: Wisdom Publications, 1983, where this occurs on p. 623.

3. *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga* 1.29 gives ten meanings for the dhātu, the first of which is svabhāva.

4. See: Étienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism from the Origins to the Śaka Era*, translated from the French by Sara Webb-Boin, Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut Orientaliste de l’Université Catholique de Louvain, 1988, p. 600.

5. This verse is found in Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya* on 5.27.

6. “Origin and Doctrines of Early Indian Buddhist Schools: A Translation of the Hsüan-chwang Version of Vasumitra’s Treatise,” trans. Jiryo Masuda, *Asia Major*, vol. 2, 1925, p. 48 (section 3, chapter 5, verse 29). See also *Abhidharma-kośa* 1.18 for a similar statement.

7. *What the Buddha Taught*, pp. 51-56.

8. In *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*, compiled by A. T. Barker, 1925; facsimile reprint, Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1973, pp. 376-386. [See above, pp. 57-71.]

9. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, comp. A. T. Barker, 2nd ed. 1926, p. 53; 3rd ed. 1962, p. 53; chronological ed. 1993, p. 271.

10. *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, ed. Boris de Zirkoff, vol. 3.

11. There are said to be ten Tathāgata-garbha sūtras: *Śrī-mālā-devī-siṃha-nāda-sūtra*; *Jñānālokālaṃkāra-sūtra*; *Sandhi-nirmocana-sūtra*; *Mahā-parinirvāṇa-sūtra*; *Avikalpa-praveśa-dhāraṇī*; *Dhāraṇīśvara-rāja-pariprcchā* (*Tathāgata-mahākaruṇā-nirdeśa-sūtra*); *Ārya-aṅguli-mālīya-sūtra*; *Mahā-bherī-hāraka-sūtra*; *Tathāgata-garbha-sūtra*; *Anūnatvāpūrṇatva-nirdeśa-parivarta*.

12. Étienne Lamotte, *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, Eng. trans. by Sara Boin, London: The Pali Text Society, 1976, Introduction, p. lxxvii.

13. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, 2nd ed. p. 455; 3rd ed. p. 448; chron. ed., p. 217. Compare: *A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese*, by Samuel Beal, London: Trübner & Co., 1871, p. 184.

14. *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga-vyākhyā* after 1.36; E. H. Johnston ed. pp. 30-31; Z. Nakamura ed. p. 59. A perfectly good translation of this exists by J. Takasaki from Sanskrit, pp. 209-210, and also by E. Obermiller from Tibetan, p. 166. I have retranslated it in order to bring out the technical terms, particularly ātman, which Takasaki and Obermiller translate as “unity” rather than “self.”

15. *The Secret Doctrine*, by H. P. Blavatsky, vol. I, p. 404; vol. II, pp. 211, 501.

16. These representative examples are drawn from the 25,000 and 18,000 line *Prajñā-pāramitā* sūtras. There is at present no complete Sanskrit edition of any of the three large *Prajñā-pāramitā* sūtras. But as pointed out by Edward Conze, their contents are essentially identical, with the 100,000 line version spelling out in full the extensive and repetitive lists of categories which are only abbreviated in the 18,000 and 25,000 line versions. So each of the three can be divided according to subject matter into eight progressively achieved “realizations” (*abhisamaya*), following Maitreya’s *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*. Using this, we can readily see what the available Sanskrit editions cover:

Ātasāhasrikā-prajñā-pāramitā, ed. Pratāpacandra Ghoṣa, vol. 1 (18 fascicles, 1676 pp.), vol. 2 (1 fasc., 71 pp., incomplete), Calcutta, 1902-1914, Bibliotheca Indica 153; includes 13 parivartas covering most of the 1st abhisamaya.

The Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā, ed. Nalinaksha Dutt,

London: Luzac & Co., 1934, Calcutta Oriental Series 28; covers the 1st abhisamaya.

Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā II • III, ed. Takayasu Kimura, Tokyo: Sankibo Busshorin Publishing Co., 1986; covers the 2nd and 3rd abhisamayās.

Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā IV, Takayasu Kimura, Tokyo: Sankibo Busshorin Publishing Co., 1990; covers the 4th abhisamaya.

The Gilgit Manuscript of the Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā, Chapters 55 to 70 corresponding to the 5th Abhisamaya, ed. & trans. Edward Conze, Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1962, Serie Orientale Roma 26.

The Gilgit Manuscript of the Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā, Chapters 70 to 82 corresponding to the 6th, 7th and 8th Abhisamayās, ed. & trans. Edward Conze, Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1974, Serie Orientale Roma 46.

The 25,000 line editions of Dutt and Kimura, covering the first through fourth abhisamayās, and the 18,000 line editions of Conze, covering the fifth through eighth abhisamayās, make up the complete subject matter of these texts. Thus it was not until 1990, with Kimura's edition completing the last of the eight abhisamayās to be edited, that we had access to a complete large *Prajñā-pāramitā sūtra* in printed form.

17. *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā* 24.11:

vināśayati durdṛṣṭā sūnyatā manda-medhasam |
sarpō yathā durgr̥hito vidyā vā duṣprasādhitā ||

18. *Meditation on Emptiness*, Jeffrey Hopkins, p. 360

19. *The Door of Liberation*, by Geshe Wangyal, New York: Maurice Girodias Associates, 1973, p. 66.

20. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 43.

21. *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 14, p. 433.

22. *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 3, p. 423.

23. Found in *A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese*, by Samuel Beal, London: Trübner & Co., 1871, pp. 282-284. It had been published earlier in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, n.s., vol. 1, 1865, pp. 25-28.

24. *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 3, pp. 405-406.

25. Beal, *Catena*, p. 11: "Both these writers adopted the teaching of the Swābhāvika 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 in another form into the countless beautiful varieties of Nature." Also, p. 14: "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 [i.e., Nāgārjuna], who was a strenuous opponent of the Svābhāva theory.”

26. See, for example: *Tsong Khapa's Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence: Reason and Enlightenment in the Central Philosophy of Tibet*, by Robert A. F. Thurman, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984; *The Emptiness of Emptiness: An Introduction to Early Indian Mādhyamika*, by C. W. Huntington, Jr., with Geshé Namgyal Wangchen, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989; *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, by Jay L. Garfield, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. However, Huntington in *The Emptiness of Emptiness* seems to have himself fallen into an absolutist interpretation, holding that Madhyamaka has no views of its own, which according to Gelugpa exegesis amounts to the extreme of nihilism. See Paul Williams' review article, "On the Interpretation of Madhyamaka Thought," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 19, 1991, pp. 191-218. For a refutation of the idea that Madhyamaka has no views of its own, besides Thurman's translation of *Tsong Khapa's Speech of Gold* (e.g., pp. 329-332), see the further explanations in José Ignacio Cabezón's *A Dose of Emptiness: An Annotated Translation of the sTong thun chen mo of mKhas grub dGe legs dpal bzang*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992, pp. 257 ff. (esp. p. 266).

27. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 289. See also vol. II, p. 239 fn.: "Creation"—out of pre-existent eternal substance, or matter, of course, which substance, according to our teachings, is boundless, ever-existing space."

28. *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā* 13.8:

sūnyatā sarva-dṛṣṭīnām proktā niḥsaraṇam jinaih |
yeṣāṃ tu sūnyatā-dṛṣṭis tān aśādhyān babhāṣire ||

29. *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga (Uttaratantra)*, by Jikido Takasaki, Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1966, Serie Orientale Roma 33, Introduction, p. 58

30. *Sandhi-nirmocana-sūtra*, chapters 6 and 7. For English translation see: *Wisdom of Buddha: The Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra*, translated by John Powers, Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1995.

31. *Madhyānta-vibhāga-bhāṣya*, 1.1 in G. Nagao ed.; or 1.2 in N. Tatia & A. Thakur ed., and in R. Pandeya ed.: evaṃ yad yatra nāsti tat tena sūnyam iti yathā-bhūtaṃ samanupaśyati yat punar atrāvaśiṣṭam bhavati tat sad ihāstīti yathā-bhūtaṃ praṇānātīty aviparītaṃ sūnyatā-lakṣaṇam udbhāvitam bhavati. This is also quoted, with minor variants, in

Asaṅga's *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga-vyākhyā* on 1.155; in Asaṅga's *Bodhisattva-bhūmi*, U. Wogihara ed. p. 47 (ll. 17-20), N. Dutt ed. p. 32 (ll. 12-14); and in Asaṅga's *Abhidharma-samuccaya*, P. Pradhan ed. p. 40 (ll. 10-11) [Pradhan's re-translation here does not match, but the Tibetan does].

In the phrase, *yad yatra nāsti, tat tena sūnyam*, the word *tena* is not taken as in the standard Sanskrit idiom, *tena sūnyam*, "empty of that," but rather as in the common Buddhist Sanskrit idiom, *yena/tena = yatra/tatra*, where it equals *tatra*, "there," correlating with *yatra*, "where." I spell this out because my translation is here more of a paraphrase, in order to follow English idiom for "empty." A literal translation would be, "what does not exist somewhere, that is empty (i.e., absent) there;" or, "where something does not exist, there that is empty (i.e., absent)."

32. *Madhyānta-vibhāga-bhāṣya*, 1.20 in Nagao ed.; or 1.21 in Pandeya ed.: *pudgala-dharmābhāvaś ca sūnyatā | tad-abhāvasya ca sad-bhāvaḥ*.

33. *The Buddha Within: Tathagatagarbha Doctrine According to the Shentong Interpretation of the Ratnagotravibhaga*, by S. K. Hookham, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991, p. 139.

34. On absolute (*paramārtha*) *sūnyatā*, see: *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga-vyākhyā* on 1.155: *na hi paramārtha-sūnyatā-jñāna-mukham antareṇa śakyate 'ikalpo dhātur adhigantum sāksātkartum*; "Not indeed without entering into the knowledge of absolute emptiness is it possible to directly realize the non-conceptual element (*dhātu*, Tib. *dbyiñs* here)."

35. "Dol-po-pa Shes-rab Rgyal-mtshan and the Genesis of the *Gzhan-stong* Position in Tibet," by Cyrus Stearns, *Asiatische Studien*, vol. 49, 1995, p. 836.

36. Gareth Sparham, "On the Proper Interpretation of Prajñā-Paramita," *Dreloma: Drepung Loseling Magazine*, no. XXXII-XXXIII, 1994-95, p. 20.

37. W. T. Stead, "Madame Blavatsky," *Review of Reviews*, June, 1891 (pp. 548-550); reprinted in *Adyar Library Bulletin*, vol. XIV, part 2, 8th May, 1950, p. 67.

38. Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, London and New York: Routledge, 1989, pp. 105-106.

39. These three commentaries are: Puṇḍarīka's *Vimala-prabhā-tīkā* on the *Kālacakra-tantra*; Vajrapāṇi's *Laghu-tantra-tīkā* on the *Cakra-saṃvara-tantra*; and Vajragarbha's *Hevajra-piṇḍārtha-tīkā* on the *Hevajra-tantra*. The latter two explain their respective tantras from the standpoint of *Kālacakra*.

40. Edward Conze, trans., *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1975, p. x.

41. Sanskrit text printed in "Maitreya's Questions' in the

Prajñāpāramitā,” by Edward Conze and Iida Shotaro, *Mélanges D’Indianisme a la Mémoire de Louis Renou*, Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1968, pp. 229-242; English translation in *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom*, trans. Edward Conze, pp. 644-652.

42. *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga* 1.144. See also note 3.

43. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. 23.

44. *Tsong Khapa’s Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence*, p. 193, fn. 11.

45. It should be noted, however, that Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas such as the Gelugpas rather interpret the Tathāgata-garbha as emptiness, specifically the emptiness of the mind. E. Obermiller more or less followed this interpretation in his 1931 pioneering translation of the *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga* or *Uttara-tantra*, since he followed Gelugpa commentaries, even though he considered that it taught monism. Similarly, David Ruegg in his 1969 monumental study of the Tathāgata-garbha, *La Théorie du Tathāgatagarbha et du Gotra*, also followed this interpretation. A review article by Lambert Schmithausen, “Zu D. Seyfort Ruegg’s buch ‘La théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra’,” in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens und Archiv für Indische Philosophie*, 1973, criticizes this interpretation. As summed up by Paul Williams: “Schmithausen has argued that reference to the *tathāgatagarbha* as emptiness must be understood in terms of the particular meaning of emptiness for this tradition—that emptiness is a particular aspect of the *tathāgatagarbha*, i.e., that the *tathāgatagarbha* is empty of defilements, not that it is identical with the [Prāsaṅgika] Madhyamaka emptiness. I agree.” (*Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, 1989, p. 281, note 11.)

46. *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*, p. 195.

47. The other four books are: *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra*; *Madhyānta-vibhāga*; *Dharma-dharmatā-vibhāga*; *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*. Note the unfortunate blunder of Geoffrey Barborika in translating *Champai chhos Nga* as “the whole doctrine in its essentiality,” copied in Boris de Zirkoff’s “Historical Introduction” to the definitive 1978 edition of *The Secret Doctrine*, p. [69], n. 130. I have more than once contacted the publishers concerning this, but it could not be corrected.

48. Aśvaghōṣa’s *Buddha-carita* 9.58-62. See also 18.29-41 for a refutation of the svabhāva doctrine. The svabhāva doctrine is also refuted as a non-Buddhist school in the *Tattva-saṃgraha*, by Śāntaraṅgita, verses 110-127.

49. *Prasanna-padā* commentary on *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā* 15.2.

50. *The Buddha Within*, p. 17.

“The Voice of the Silence: Bringing the Heart Doctrine to the West,” a paper presented by Nancy Reigle at The Works and Influence of H. P. Blavatsky Conference, held in Edmonton, Alberta, on July 3-5, 1998, was published in *The Works and Influence of H. P. Blavatsky: Conference Papers, Edmonton: Edmonton Theosophical Society, 1999, pp. 106-112.*

The Bodhicaryāvatāra is justly famous as the foremost exposition of the Bodhisattva path in Mahāyāna Buddhism, the teaching of self-sacrifice for the sake of others, called in Theosophy, the Heart Doctrine. Yet it is not the Bodhicaryāvatāra that first brought this noble teaching to the West, it is The Voice of the Silence. This paper compares the presentation of this teaching found in these two books, and historically outlines their respective transmissions of it to the West.

While other books on the Bodhisattva path exist in Buddhism, such as the Pāramitā-samāsa by Āryaśūra (famous for his Jātaka-mālā), and the Bodhisattva-piṭaka, said to have been spoken by the Buddha, these more matter-of-fact works have lacked the inspirational appeal of the Bodhicaryāvatāra. Similarly, the other two “classics of the path” found in Theosophy, At the Feet of the Master, and Light on the Path, are more instructional, lacking the poetic beauty of The Voice of the Silence. They do not teach the path of compassion.

The Voice of the Silence has been criticized as unauthentic because it includes Hindu ideas, such as the limbs of rāja-yoga, and is therefore not a reliable source to follow. One could as well criticize the Bodhicaryāvatāra for dwelling on the loathsomeness of the body, and for its attitude toward women. But such criticisms of these books miss the point, and are hardly fitting for such books. Despite whatever flaws some may choose to see in them, humanity does not possess any loftier expositions of the ideal of self-sacrifice for the sake of others.

The corrected edition of The Voice of the Silence prepared long ago by Boris de Zirkoff, editor of Blavatsky Collected Writings, remains still unpublished. Thus the reader must overlook errors, e.g., the transposition “narjol” for “naljor,” for the sake of the message. Similarly, the significant differences between the extant Sanskrit and Tibetan versions of the Bodhicaryāvatāra must be overlooked for the sake of the message.

The Voice of the Silence:
Bringing the Heart Doctrine to the West

Among the many works that Madame Blavatsky brought before the public, *The Voice of the Silence* was unique in its appeal to the heart and spirit of humanity. Throughout, it repeatedly demands the greatest compassion that one is capable of towards one's fellow man.

According to Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence* comes from "The Book of the Golden Precepts" which "forms part of the same series as that from which the 'Stanzas' of the *Book of Dzyan* were taken, on which the *Secret Doctrine* is based."¹ She says that The Book of the Golden Precepts "contains about ninety distinct little treatises," thirty-nine of which she had memorized.² Three of these she translated into English for us in *The Voice of the Silence*, which we know as the "Three Fragments." One can surmise that she studied these treatises under the tutelage of her Adept teachers during her stay in Little Tibet and Tibet proper which she makes reference to in her writings.³

Boris de Zirkoff, in preparing an edition of *The Voice of the Silence*, yet unpublished, wrote an informative Introductory titled "How *The Voice of the Silence* Was Written," which has been published in two places.⁴ Here he cites some interesting accounts given by several people who visited H.P.B. at some point during her writing of *The Voice*, much of which took place in Fontainebleau, France during July of 1889. Several visitors were asked by Blavatsky to read portions of *The Voice* while the manuscript was in progress, and they all had a similar reaction: they were deeply moved by the beauty and depth of compassion this work evoked.⁵ When asked by H.P.B. what he thought of it, G. R. S. Mead said, "it was the grandest thing in all our theological literature."⁶

In their Foreword to the Peking edition of *The Voice of the Silence*, Alice Cleather and Basil Crump convey the Panchen Lama's endorsement of this work as the "only true exposition in English of the Heart Doctrine of the Mahāyāna and its noble ideal of self-sacrifice for humanity."⁷

What is the Heart Doctrine spoken of by the Panchen Lama? In the *Voice of the Silence* H.P.B. distinguishes between the Head Doctrine and the Heart Doctrine in Fragment Two titled "The Two Paths" where she says:

Learn above all to separate Head-learning from Soul-Wisdom, the "Eye" from the "Heart" doctrine. . . . even ignorance is better than Head-learning with no Soul-wisdom to illuminate and guide it. . . .⁸

"Great Sifter" is the name of the "Heart Doctrine," O disciple. . . . True knowledge is the flour, false learning is the husk. . . .⁹

And again:

The Dharma of the "Eye" is the embodiment of the external, and the nonexisting. The Dharma of the "Heart" is the embodiment of Bodhi (True, divine Wisdom), the Permanent and Everlasting.¹⁰

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, the tradition of which the Panchen Lama is a major representative in Tibet,¹¹ the Heart Doctrine is extremely well-developed. Here we find it in the teaching of the Bodhisattva and the Bodhisattva Path; that is, the Bodhisattva—a spiritual being dedicated to alleviating the suffering of humanity; and the Bodhisattva Path—the course of action tread by a Bodhisattva to eliminate this suffering.

In fact, within the Mahāyāna tradition there is an entire lineage which emphasizes the culture and development of a Bodhisattva. This "compassion lineage" was inspired by the writings of Maitreya.¹² This is complemented by a corresponding "wisdom lineage" inspired by Mañjuśrī in which the philosophical writings of Nāgārjuna are prominent.¹³ These two lineages

of wisdom and compassion are not intended to be developed in isolation from one another, but instead function as complementary parts of a unified whole.

These two lineages have together produced entire treatises delineating 1) the course of action of a Bodhisattva, and 2) the stages of the Bodhisattva Path.¹⁴ Among these, the most popular and widely read is a Sanskrit work known as the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. Its title literally means “Entrance into the Conduct of the Bodhisattva,” or “A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life.”¹⁵ It was written by Śāntideva, a Buddhist monk who lived in India during the eighth century.¹⁶

So here in Mahāyāna Buddhism we find works that serve as guides for our own training in the same noble ethics and compassion that H.P.B. urged us to practice in *The Voice of the Silence*. As Blavatsky says,

Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself.¹⁷

Although there are differences in style and genre¹⁸ between *The Voice of the Silence* and the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, they are similar in that they each *serve the same function* in their promotion of altruism. For comparison, let us look at some passages from each.

The Voice: Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance. (p. 14)

Bodhicaryāvatāra: Wherever the heart’s desire of those who perform virtue goes, there its own merits honor it with an offering of its results. VII.42.

The Voice: Give light and comfort to the toiling pilgrim, and seek out him who knows still less than thou; who in his wretched desolation sits starving for the bread of Wisdom and the bread which feeds the shadow, without a Teacher, hope or consolation, and—let him hear the Law. (p. 37)

Bodhicaryāvatāra: May I be a protector for those who are without protectors, a guide for travelers, and a boat, a bridge, and a ship for those who wish to cross over. May I be a lamp for those who seek light, a bed for those who seek rest, and may I be a servant for all beings who desire a servant. III.17–18.

The Voice: And then, O thou pursuer of the truth, thy Mind-Soul will become as a mad elephant, that rages in the jungle. . . . Beware, lest in forgetting SELF, thy Soul lose o'er its trembling mind control, and forfeit thus the due fruition of its conquests. (p. 62)

Bodhicaryāvatāra: Untamed, mad elephants do not inflict as much harm in this world as does the unleashed elephant of the mind in the Avīcī hell and the like. But if the elephant of the mind is completely restrained by the rope of mindfulness, then all perils vanish and complete well-being is obtained. V.2–3.

The Voice: The fearless warrior, his precious life-blood oozing from his wide and gaping wounds, will still attack the foe . . . Act then, all ye who fail and suffer, act like him; and from the stronghold of your Soul, chase all your foes away—ambition, anger, hatred, e'en to the shadow of desire . . . (p. 63)

Bodhicaryāvatāra: Let my entrails ooze out and my head fall off, but by no means shall I bow down to my enemies, the mental afflictions (such as ambition, anger, and hatred). IV.44.

The Voice: Now bend thy head and listen well, O Bodhisattva—Compassion speaks and saith: “Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?” (p. 71)

Bodhicaryāvatāra: When fear and suffering are equally abhorrent to others and myself, then what is so special about me that I protect myself but not others? VIII.96.

Now we have seen some of the similarities and differences in presentation between these two works. Because *The Voice of the Silence* is filled with references to the self-sacrificing nature of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, as well as to the Pāramitās, its Mahāyāna Buddhist character was easily recognized.¹⁹

In *The Voice of the Silence*²⁰ H.P.B. takes the spiritual seeker through the Three Halls of the Probationary Path; the choice between the Two Paths—Open and Secret, the Secret being the path of the highest altruism of a Bodhisattva; and then on through the Seven Portals, which are the Pāramitās or Perfections of Mahāyāna Buddhism.²¹

The *Bodhicaryāvatāra* extols the virtues of Bodhicitta, which is the altruistic intention to become enlightened in order to benefit all sentient beings, encourages the spiritually-minded person to take up the path of unselfish service to others, and warns of the dangers in turning back once one has set out. Four of the Pāramitās are each represented by a chapter in this work: Kṣānti, Vīrya, Dhyāna, and Prajñā, by chapters 6–9, respectively. Throughout, the Pāramitās or Perfections are cited as virtues to be cultivated, in the same way as the Seven Portals of *The Voice* are the gateways of virtue leading to the path of highest altruism and compassion. As H.P.B. says:

To live to benefit mankind is the first step. To practice the six glorious virtues is the second.²²

The *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, representative of the Heart Doctrine, has enjoyed a long history of popularity dating back to the eighth century when it was composed. Soon after, it was translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan and continues to the present day in an unbroken tradition. Its popularity flourishes today as it is promoted by H. H. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama in public teachings,²³ and new translations of it are produced.

In comparison with its Mahāyāna Buddhist counterpart, *The Voice of the Silence* has a relatively short public history, beginning in 1889.²⁴ After it was published, Blavatsky said in a letter to her sister:

The Voice of the Silence, tiny book though it is, is simply becoming the Theosophists' bible.²⁵

By the 1960s the editor of the Buddhist magazine *The Middle Way* had commented that *The Voice of the Silence* was such an exquisite work, why hadn't the Buddhist community embraced it?²⁶

Unlike the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, a text whose Sanskrit original has a 1200-year unbroken tradition, we don't have an original language manuscript for *The Voice of the Silence*. It has come to us as a translation of a "secret" work, unknown to the public. It is no doubt true that if such an original of *The Voice* did exist, *The Voice of the Silence* would reach a much greater audience, just as the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* does.

Although the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* has this longstanding tradition, and *The Voice* doesn't, it was *The Voice of the Silence* that first brought the Heart Doctrine to the English-speaking Western public. We know that *The Voice of the Silence* was originally published in 1889. At about the same time, the original Sanskrit text of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* was also first published.²⁷ The first English translation of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* was published in 1909, though somewhat abridged.²⁸ Since 1970, when the first complete English translation of it was published, interest in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* has greatly increased in the West.²⁹

In contrast, *The Voice of the Silence* has not received widespread public interest. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that we have no original language manuscript for *The Voice*. Having one, *The Voice of the Silence* would gain the acceptance of scholars, and thereby the widespread attention of the public.

In the meantime, it is only those who have the eyes to see, the ears to hear, and the heart to respond that can truly appreciate *The Voice of the Silence* and its sublime message of compassion. And for that, we are deeply indebted to Madame Blavatsky who first brought us that treasure of the Heart Doctrine which we know as *The Voice of the Silence*.

Notes

1. *The Voice of the Silence*, by H. P. Blavatsky, London: The Theosophical Publishing Company, Ltd., 1889; New York: W. Q. Judge, 1889; Peking: The Chinese Buddhist Research Society, 1927, p. vi. The Peking edition is reprinted from the original, retaining the same pagination, with notes and comments by Alice Leighton Cleather and Basil Crump. All further references are to the Peking edition.

2. *Ibid.*, p. ix.

3. *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. VI, ed. Boris de Zirkoff, Wheaton, Ill.: Theosophical Publishing House, 1954; 2nd ed., 1975, p. 272: “. . . I have lived at different periods in Little Tibet as in Great Tibet, and that these combined periods form more than seven years. . . .”

4. Boris de Zirkoff's "Introductory: How *The Voice of the Silence* Was Written" was published in *The American Theosophist* 76:9 (Nov.-Dec. 1988), pp. 230-237, and as the Introduction to *The Voice of the Silence*, Wheaton, Ill.: Theosophical Publishing House, 1992, pp. 11a-33a. A copy of Boris de Zirkoff's manuscript edition of *The Voice of the Silence* with Introductory has been kindly provided by Dara Eklund. All further references to Boris' Introductory are from this manuscript edition.

5. Boris de Zirkoff, "Introductory: How *The Voice of the Silence* Was Written," pp. 6-9. Herbert Burrows and Annie Besant were among those who read portions of the manuscript of *The Voice of the Silence* while in progress. Of this work Annie Besant said: "It moves us, not by a statement of facts gathered from books, but by an appeal to the divinest instincts of our nature . . ." (p. 9)

6. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

7. Editorial Foreword, May 1927, to *The Voice of the Silence*, (unnumbered), Peking: The Chinese Buddhist Research Society, 1927.

8. *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 25.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

11. The two highest representatives of the Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy are the Panchen and Dalai Lamas. Buddhism flourished for a millennium in Tibet, until the Chinese takeover in 1959.

12. The writings attributed to Maitreya are said in the Tibetan tradition to be written down by Ārya Asaṅga. See: *The Door of Liberation*, by Geshe Wangyal, New York: Maurice Girodias Associates, Inc., 1973, pp. 26-27. For the story of Ārya Asaṅga, see pp. 52-54.

13. For the story of Nāgārjuna see: *The Door of Liberation*, pp. 44-46.

14. These include the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and the *Bodhisattva-bhūmi*. There are several English translations of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, many of which are listed below. (See notes 15, 23, 28, and 29.) There is no complete English translation of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*.

15. The latter is the title of a new translation: *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life (Bodhicaryāvatāra)*, by Śāntideva, translated from the Sanskrit and Tibetan by Vesna Wallace and B. Alan Wallace, Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 1997. The verses that follow are cited from this translation. The word "Bodhi" in "Bodhicaryāvatāra" is understood to mean "Bodhisattva," which is spelled out in full in the title of the Tibetan translation of this work.

16. There is an interesting story of how Śāntideva brought the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* before the world. Thinking he was lazy, his fellow monks at Nālandā challenged Śāntideva to recite a text from memory. Śāntideva asked if he should recite an existing work or a "new" one. The monks replied, "a new one," and Śāntideva then began reciting his own composition, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. Everyone was amazed. As he neared the end, he rose up into the sky. After disappearing, he continued to recite until the text was completed. (Adapted from *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India* as retold in: *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*, p. 12.)

17. *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 12.

18. In an interesting lecture given by Bhikshu Sangharakshita, he discusses the two broad divisions of Buddhist literature, *sūtra* and *śāstra*; *sūtra* being the words of the Buddha, and *śāstra* their explanatory treatises by others. Here, he likens *The Voice of the Silence* to the *sūtra* class of literature: "*The Voice of the Silence*, though it does not claim to be the utterance of a Buddha, is nevertheless akin to the *sūtra* rather than to the *śāstra* group of texts. Like the longer and more celebrated discourses, it seeks more to inspire than to instruct, appeals to the heart rather than to the head." (*Paradox and Poetry in "The Voice of the Silence"*, by Bhikshu Sangharakshita, Bangalore: The Indian

Institute of World Culture, 1958, p. 1.) In contrast, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, being written by Śāntideva and expounding the Path through reasoning, is a *sāstra*.

19. Boris de Zirkoff, “Introductory: How *The Voice of the Silence* Was Written,” pp. 15–16: “Much has been said and written about the nature of the teachings contained in the ‘Voice.’ Their general trend as well as many specific thoughts and ideals contained in this work have been the basis for identifying it with the vast realm of teachings and precepts known as Mahāyāna Buddhism, and this can hardly be denied or set aside.”

20. A. J. Hamerster has outlined the contents of *The Voice* in his Introduction to the 1939 edition of *The Voice of the Silence*, Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1939; reprint 1953.

21. The six Pāramitās and their cultivation are a major feature of the Mahāyāna tradition. They are: dāna, śīla, kṣānti, vīrya, dhyāna, and prajñā. In *The Voice of the Silence* an additional pāramitā has been added to the traditional list of six, that is, *virāga*—“indifference to pleasure and pain, illusion conquered, truth alone perceived.” (*The Voice*, p. 48.) Here, Virāga becomes the fourth Portal, making a total of seven.

22. *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 33.

23. “It is the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* which supplies the ideals and practice of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who so frequently cites as his highest inspiration *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 10.55:

As long as space abides and as long as the world abides, so long may I abide, destroying the sufferings of the world.”

—from the General Introduction by Paul Williams in: *The Bodhicaryāvatāra*, trans. Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. ix.

24. See: Boris de Zirkoff, “Introductory: How *The Voice of the Silence* Was Written,” p. 15.

25. As cited from *The Path*, December 1895, in: *HPB: The Extraordinary Life & Influence of Helena Blavatsky, Founder of the Modern Theosophical Movement*, by Sylvia Cranston, New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1993, p. 397.

26. From an entry titled “The Voice of the Silence,” in *The Middle Way*, vol. XL, no. 2, August 1965, p. 90: “For reasons we have

never understood Buddhists in England seem reluctant to accept this exquisite small work as part of the literature of Buddhism.”

27. By I. P. Minayeff in *Zapiski Vostochnogo Otdeleniya Ruskogo Imperatorskogo Archeologicheskogo Obschestva* (*Transactions of the Oriental Section of the Royal Russian Archaeological Society*), vol. 4, pp. 153-228. Volume 4 of this journal was published in 1890, although the individual issue containing the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* may have been published in 1889.

28. *The Path of Light*, trans. L. D. Barnett, London: John Murray, 1909. It was earlier translated into French: *Bodhicaryāvatāra: Introduction à la pratique des futurs Bouddhas, Poème de Çāntideva*, trans. Louis de La Vallée Poussin, Paris: Librairie Bloud et Cie., 1907; and later into German: *Der Eintritt in den Wandel in Erleuchtung (Bodhicaryāvatāra) von Śāntideva*, trans. Richard Schmidt, Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1923, *Dokumente der Religion*, vol. 5.

29. *Entering the Path of Enlightenment*, trans. Marion L. Matics, New York: Macmillan, 1970, from the Sanskrit. The first English translation from the Tibetan followed shortly in 1979: Acharya Śāntideva, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, trans. Stephen Batchelor, Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, 1979.

The above lines, “reproduced in facsimile as a frontispiece” to the 1927 Peking edition of *The Voice of the Silence*, “were written by H.H. the Tashi Lama [i.e., Pañchen Lama Chokyi Nyima] with his own hand specially for this reprint” (p. 113). A “free rendering” in English was there included (p. 113). We here provide a more accurate translation. Dr. Lozang Jampal, formerly of Tashi-lhunpo Monastery, prepared a literal translation at our request, which we have slightly edited at his request.

“Those who do not want unbearable suffering,
should eliminate its cause, the defilements.*
In order to achieve liberation, free from (the
defilements),
one should practice thoroughly the good path
leading to (liberation).”
Thus (the Buddha) declared the teaching of
(the four noble) truths.

**kleśas*, i.e., desire, hatred, delusion, etc.

“Report on a Search for the Book of the Golden Precepts in Kalimpong, March 1998,” by David Reigle, is forthcoming in Fohat, 1999 [published in vol. 3, no. 3, Fall 1999, pp. 61, 68].

“Book of the Golden Precepts” is the name given by Blavatsky for the secret book from which she translated her book, The Voice of the Silence. When in July 1998 I told those assembled at The Works and Influence of H. P. Blavatsky Conference about this search in Kalimpong the preceding March, Nicholas Weeks recommended that I write it up. After later receiving an inquiry about it from Andrew Barker, I finally did so in February 1999, before my memory of it faded too much. I am indebted to Christina Zubelli for providing the quotation from Anthony Elenjmittam’s book, Cosmic Ecumenism.

There are several issues that have been raised regarding The Voice of the Silence. Perhaps the most controversial is the issue of the Pratyeka-Buddha. Although I have briefly commented on this in a letter to Theosophical History (vol. 1, no. 8, Oct. 1986, pp. 238-239) in reply to Jean Overton Fuller’s review of the Voice (vol. 1, no. 1, Jan. 1985, pp. 14-15), I wonder if the real issue has yet been touched. In the Voice the term is certainly used as “a synonym of spiritual selfishness” (p. 86) rather than as a high office in the Hierarchy. But I have seen no one follow up on the important clue given in Mahatma letter #16 (2nd ed. p. 114; 3rd ed. p. 111), that esoterically the Pratyeka vehicle refers to the personality. Why, for example, does the Abhisamayālamkāra devote so much space to the path of development of a Pratyeka-Buddha, if no Mahāyāna Buddhist would ever wish to become one?

Then there is the issue of correcting the spellings of Sanskrit and Tibetan words found in the Voice. Our view on this may be seen in my review of the Quest Centenary Edition of the Voice, in The Eclectic Theosophist, n.s., vol. 21, no. 3, Fall 1992, pp. 21-22.

Finally, there is the issue of errors in the Voice. Regarding one of these, the mistranslation (p. 70) “I believe” (gsol-ba-’debs), copied from Emil Schlagintweit’s Buddhism in Tibet (p. 127), see my letter in The High Country Theosophist, vol. 12, no. 5, May 1997, pp. 13-14.

These issues will only be resolved when we find the original “Book of the Golden Precepts.”

*Report on a Search for the
Book of the Golden Precepts
in Kalimpong, March 1998*

A couple years ago, Ken Small gave me some intriguing information he had come across in his research on Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence*. A Catholic priest from India said that he, with the help of a Tibetan Lama, had compared the original (apparently Tibetan) of *The Voice of the Silence*, the "Book of the Golden Precepts," with Blavatsky's English translation, in the town of Kalimpong (north India) around 1950. The statement is found in his book, *Cosmic Ecumenism via Hindu-Buddhist Catholicism: An Autobiography of an Indian Dominican Monk*, by Anthony Elenjmittam (Alias Bhikshu Ishabodh Anand), Bombay: Aquinas Publications, [1983], p. 270:

In my return to Kalimpong I stayed in the Tibetan monastery, taking part in their choral office and learning various branches of Mahayana and Tantrism. It was in that monastery that I first read with Lama Ping the *Voice of Silence*, the Book of Golden Precepts, with the English translation by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. With the help of the Tibetan Lama I could compare the English translation made by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky with the original, taking notes from the interpretation given by the Lama.

He apparently thought well enough of Blavatsky's translation to then publish an edition of *The Voice of Silence* in Bombay, India.

Naturally, Ken and I were extremely interested in locating this original Tibetan text. So hoping Elenjmittam was still alive, Ken wrote to him asking about this text. Ken was pleasantly surprised to get a reply. But unfortunately, Elenjmittam said that it had happened too long ago, and that he did not remember

what text it was. That, then, was as far as this enquiry could be taken from Elenjimitam's end. And so it rested. In early 1998, however, I got the chance to go to India, so I determined to go to Kalimpong and investigate it from Lama Ping's end.

There are at present three Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in Kalimpong. I thought I might find out something at Domo Geshe Rinpoche's monastery, which is affiliated with the Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism, so I tried to go there first. However, I was instead mistakenly directed to a prominently located Tibetan monastery on a high hill overlooking much of Kalimpong. This, called "Zong Dog Palri Pho-brang Monastery," and affiliated with the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism, was built fairly recently. Since it was built long after 1950, it was unlikely to hold the information I was seeking. So after enjoying the panoramic view of the surroundings from this multi-storied building, I proceeded onward in my search.

My next try did bring me to the monastery I first tried to go to. It is called "Tharpa Choling Monastery," and according to a photograph I saw there it was founded in 1922. A city brochure says it was constructed in 1937, apparently referring to the currently existing structure. The large main building was being extensively renovated at the time I was there, so the library was then stored in a warehouse-type building. I was kindly allowed to see the library anyway, and noted that it has three old blockprint sets of the Kangyur, and one new reprint set of the Tengyur. I asked if anyone knew of Lama Ping, explaining what had happened around 1950, but no one had heard of him. The monastery currently has about thirty monks. The monks I asked kindly went and got a monk who had been there since before 1950, but he, too, had not heard of Lama Ping. So it seemed that I would find nothing of Lama Ping in Kalimpong. Though I had little hope left of finding anything, for the sake of completeness I went to the third monastery.

The oldest monastery in Kalimpong, called "Tongsa Gompa," is said to have been built around 1692. Also called "Bhutan Monastery," it was built by the Bhutanese, so followed the state religion of Bhutan, the Dugpa Kagyu. Dugpa, or Drukpa (*'brug-pa*), is a subschool of the Kagyu school of Tibetan

Buddhism. At the end of my visit I found out that this monastery recently became a Nyingma monastery rather than a Dugpa Kagyu monastery, but I have no details. When I arrived, the monks were assembled in the main hall, eating a meal I presumed, since I was let in. So I walked over and asked the younger Tibetan monk sitting next to the head Lama, apparently his translator, my question about Lama Ping. They were in fact in the middle of some activity, but he politely listened and then said my question could be brought up after their activity was over. I left the main building and spoke to a person on the compound, who invited me to the tea room. I was just about to leave the monastery, thinking I would not get an answer, when the translator came into the tea room looking for me.

The translator had with him an older monk who said he knew of Lama Ping. He said that Lama Ping was not the man's real name, but rather his real name was Lama Tinley (*'phrin las*). The older monk said that when he was a child he had seen Lama Tinley and another man, presumably Anthony Elenjimitsam, there at Bhutan Monastery in Kalimpong. Lama Tinley, I was given to understand, did not belong to this monastery, but was from Bhutan, and went back to Bhutan some time after meeting Elenjimitsam. I was told that Lama Tinley died thirteen years ago. My informant did not know about *The Voice of the Silence* or the "Book of the Golden Precepts," nor what Tibetan book this might be. I had learned earlier that the Bhutan Monastery in Kalimpong does not have a library. My informant assumed that the Tibetan book involved must have belonged to Lama Tinley, and must have been taken back with him to Bhutan when he returned there. I did not then have the opportunity to travel to Bhutan to try and pursue this further.

Whether or not this book was in fact the original Tibetan text of the "Book of the Golden Precepts," or was a different book on the Bodhisattva path having similar ideas, such as the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, thus remains unknown. Nonetheless, even these small findings merit being recorded, for the sake of future search. I unfortunately did not ask my informant's name, but he can be found at Bhutan Monastery in Kalimpong. My meeting with him took place there on March 5, 1998.

“The Secret Doctrine: Original Genesis and the Wisdom Tradition,” a paper presented by David Reigle at The Works and Influence of H. P. Blavatsky Conference, held in Edmonton, Alberta, on July 3-5, 1998, was published in The Works and Influence of H. P. Blavatsky: Conference Papers, Edmonton: Edmonton Theosophical Society, 1999, pp. 9-17.

This paper attempts to show that what Blavatsky gave us from the secret Book of Dzyan in The Secret Doctrine is “nothing less than the original, full and uncut version of genesis” from the Wisdom Tradition. Assuming that this is the case, what can ancient cosmogony offer to the modern world? There is a growing consensus that the answers provided by modern science, limited as they are to physical reality, leave the great problems of life unsolved. Does knowledge of the Big Bang tell us anything about the purpose of life? The Secret Doctrine teaches that the origin and evolution of the universe, and of humanity, are the result of super-physical causes, and that what we see in physical reality are only their effects. We can never arrive at the true causes by studying only the effects. The many problems left unsolved by the Darwinian teaching of the evolution of physical form are answered by The Secret Doctrine’s teaching of the evolution of spirit through form. It is in these true causes that the answers to the great problems of life must be sought.

The Secret Doctrine: Original Genesis and the Wisdom Tradition

The Secret Doctrine is recognized by all as H. P. Blavatsky's greatest and most influential work. At the same time, it is generally regarded as a most difficult book to read; so much so that only a small minority of Theosophists have ever read it. What makes it so great, and yet so difficult; and why did Blavatsky write such a book?

The Secret Doctrine was published in 1888, thirteen years after the founding of the Theosophical Society in 1875, and three years before Blavatsky's death in 1891. The world at that time, despite the unprecedented material progress of western civilization, was spiritually in trouble. Religion and science were at odds, because the former taught blind belief, while the latter rejected anything it could not prove physically. And neither could provide sufficient guidance to stop humans from killing their neighbors. The situation was summed up by the Maha-Chohan, considered the greatest of the Tibetan teachers behind the Theosophical movement, in these words: "Between degrading superstition and still more degrading brutal materialism the white dove of truth has hardly room where to rest her weary unwelcome foot."¹ It was in this setting that H. P. Blavatsky entered the scene.

Blavatsky's first task was to show that neither religion nor science had the truth. This she did in her first major work, *Isis Unveiled*, published in 1877. Here she showed how the original truths revealed by the great religious founders had over the centuries been one by one choked out by the weeds of theological dogma. The lifeless systems of beliefs which had now replaced the original truths could not provide the sustenance needed by humanity, who then turned to that dazzling newcomer, science.

But science, said Blavatsky, however impressive, could not provide what humanity needed either, because it was confined to physical reality only, with no concern for morality or virtue. It was quite oblivious to the higher realities which alone give dignity and purpose to human life.

Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled* not only showed that neither religion nor science had the truth, she also showed that somewhere it could yet be found. This caused much excitement. She brought out for the first time to the modern world the fact of the existence of an ancient and once universal but now hidden body of truths which she called the Wisdom Religion. She said that this once universal Wisdom Religion was the source from which all the world's religions sprang; but over time, as separatism and materialism progressed, each came to believe that its piece was the only truth. Traditions found all around the world speak of this as leaving the Golden Age and entering the Iron Age or Dark Age. Blavatsky marshalled an impressive mass of evidence from ancient writers across the globe, swelling the two large volumes of *Isis Unveiled*, to show the former existence of a Wisdom Tradition. The higher truths universally recognized by the ancients had disappeared from religion, and were beyond the ken of science; but humanity once had them. Such was the message of *Isis Unveiled*.

Isis Unveiled thus prepared the ground for the restoration of many truths from the Wisdom Tradition, that for long ages were lost to the world. Although some of these had already been brought out in *Isis Unveiled*, the bulk of them were yet to come. Further, *Isis Unveiled* was something of an experiment, and was not received as well as may have been expected. This was because, as stated by the Mahatma K.H., a book like this emanating from a woman, and also one who many believed to be a Spiritualist, "could never hope for a serious hearing."² Thus it fell to a respectable English newspaper editor, A. P. Sinnett, to attempt the first account of teachings from the Wisdom Tradition which would be taken seriously.

Sinnett was a polished writer, while Blavatsky barely knew English when she wrote *Isis Unveiled*, so that she regarded it as her most poorly written book.³ Sinnett had begun a correspon-

dence with Blavatsky's teachers, the Mahatmas K.H. and M., in 1880.⁴ His first book, *The Occult World*, published in 1881, showed the probability of the existence of human individuals who had perfected their spiritual development. These the Theosophists called Mahatmas. But it was his second book, *Esoteric Buddhism*, published in 1883, that contained the first systematic account of those truths from the Wisdom Tradition now allowed by these Mahatmas to come out. Based on the material in their letters, he constructed a coherent approximation of their system. These teachings, known to the modern world as Theosophy, provided such satisfying answers to the great problems of life that even critics were impressed. A critical newspaper article of the time had to call them "marvelous, even in this day of scientific research," going on to say: "*Esoteric Buddhism* itself is enough to set the intellectual world in commotion. It is the most philosophical method of explaining life, death and eternity yet made known, even whether we like it or not."⁵ Yet it set only a small part of the intellectual world in commotion, and that only for a time. Thus even this effort proved to be not enough. So, back to the drawing board, or in this case, the writing table. Now Blavatsky resuscitated a project begun already in 1879,⁶ which was to become her greatest work, *The Secret Doctrine*.

The Secret Doctrine is based on stanzas which Blavatsky translated from a secret "Book of Dzyan." These stanzas cover the genesis of the cosmos and the genesis of humanity. This is the core of the book. *The Secret Doctrine* also includes extensive material on symbolism, saying that this was the language universally used by the ancients, and that therefore all ancient writings must be understood in this light, and not taken literally. Finally, *The Secret Doctrine* includes much material on science, continuing to show, as she did earlier, that there exist occult forces in nature which remain unrecognized by science. Thus *The Secret Doctrine* does not treat, except incidentally, the general system which has come to be known as Theosophy, including karma, reincarnation, the seven principles of a human being, the seven planes of the cosmos, the after-death states, etc., as was outlined earlier in *Esoteric Buddhism*, and would be treated later in

Blavatsky's *The Key to Theosophy*. Why is this? Why the genesis subject matter and not the more familiar Theosophical teachings in the greatest Theosophical work?

The Secret Doctrine is referred to by Blavatsky as "this first instalment of the esoteric doctrines."⁷ For the first time we have material translated directly from an original source book of the Wisdom Tradition. *Isis Unveiled* had made known the existence of the Wisdom Tradition, but in comparison with her new book, had unveiled practically nothing of it. *Esoteric Buddhism* was based on the more or less fragmentary information received in letters from the Mahatmas, so it did not give the actual esoteric system as such.⁸ Here, for the first time, we have the real thing, at least the first instalment of it. Knowing this, we are now in a position to understand the reason for the genesis subject matter.

In explaining what is in *The Secret Doctrine*, Blavatsky says: "Nor could the vast catalogue of the Archaic Sciences be attempted in the present volumes, before we have disposed of such tremendous problems as Cosmic and Planetary Evolution, and the gradual development of the mysterious Humanities and races that preceded our 'Adamic' Humanity."⁹ This is only logical, taking first things first; but I believe that there is more to it than appears on the surface. Blavatsky's teachers were faced with the same problem the Dalai Lama now faces in bringing out hitherto secret material. A good example of this is the *Kālacakra Tantra*. The Tibetan Buddhist Tantras, or Books of Kiu-te, were traditionally kept secret. However, the first chapter of the *Kālacakra Tantra* is on cosmology, including cosmogony or genesis. Because of its subject matter, this is the only chapter which could be openly discussed. Thus books based on this chapter and its subject matter circulated openly in Tibet, while material from the remaining four chapters was restricted. This, I believe, is the true reason for the choice of genesis as the subject matter of the stanzas translated in *The Secret Doctrine*. It was the only choice possible for the first instalment of the esoteric doctrines to be brought out directly from hitherto secret original sources.

Nonetheless, it was a quite an excellent choice. The genesis teachings of *The Secret Doctrine*, covering the origin and

development of the cosmos, and the origin and development of humanity, are unparalleled by any other such teachings found anywhere. No system is more comprehensive and self-consistent than that of *The Secret Doctrine*. No, nothing else even comes close. The greatest genesis accounts of the world are feeble in comparison. As put by the Gnostic scholar, G. R. S. Mead, in 1904, “The Stanzas set forth a cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis which, in their sweep and detail, leave far behind any existing record of such things from the past.” He further says that, “I advisedly call these passages, enshrined in her works, marvellous literary creations, not from the point of view of an enthusiast who knows nothing of Oriental literature, or the great cosmogonical systems of the past, or the Theosophy of the World Faiths, but as the mature judgment of one who has been for some twenty years studying just such subjects.”¹⁰ I can echo these words precisely, and can now add to the list of such subjects studied, the many Sanskrit works which have become available in the nearly one hundred years since he wrote this.

What is considered to be the oldest genesis account found in the East is the brief so-called “Creation Hymn” of the *Rig Veda*.¹¹ Similar accounts are found in the Upanishads, based on the Vedas.¹² A more detailed account is found in the next most authoritative source, the *Laws of Manu*.¹³ Much more elaborate accounts are then found in the various Puranas,¹⁴ which have remained the basis of most cosmogonic ideas found in Hindu India until modern times. All of these were available in translation both during the time of Blavatsky and the time of Mead. But the important Buddhist cosmological sources had not yet been published, nor had the Jaina sources.

The authoritative Jaina compendium, *Tattvārthādhigama Sūtra*, whose third chapter is on cosmology, was first published in Sanskrit from 1903 to 1905, in German in 1906, and in English in 1920.¹⁵ Further details could be found in Kundakunda’s *Pañcāstikāyasāra*, or “The Building of the Cosmos,” published in Prakrit, Sanskrit, and English in 1920.¹⁶ The Buddhist sources proved to be more difficult, because the original Buddhist tradition in India had been lost. Recognizing the importance of Vasubandhu’s fundamental source work, the *Abhidharmakośa*,

the leading Buddhist scholars of Europe jointly agreed on a plan to translate it from its Chinese and Tibetan versions. This task was finally accomplished by the great Belgian scholar, Louis de La Vallée Poussin, who published a French translation in six volumes from 1923 to 1931.¹⁷ Its Sanskrit original was not discovered until Rahula Sankrityayana's trips to Tibet in search of Sanskrit manuscripts in the 1930s, and was then published in 1947, with its Sanskrit auto-commentary following in 1967.¹⁸ Much more recently, the Kālacakra texts have become available, providing an alternative cosmology to the traditional Buddhist cosmology described in chapter three of the *Abhidharmakośa*. I have edited in Sanskrit and translated into English some of this new material for a paper comparing it with the "Book of Dzyan," presented at the first *Secret Doctrine* Symposium in 1984.¹⁹

All this material is indeed interesting, but like the previous Hindu texts, none of these Jaina or Buddhist texts proved to contain anything close to the comprehensiveness of the cosmogonic account in *The Secret Doctrine*. For example, the *Abhidharmakośa* speaks of the four modes of birth, following the words of the Buddha, as the sweat-born, the egg-born, the womb-born, and the parentless, just as *The Secret Doctrine* does.²⁰ But the detailed accounts of the earlier humanities in which these modes of birth took place, found in *The Secret Doctrine*, are absent in the now existing teachings of Buddhism. Thus Vasubandhu in his auto-commentary, and Yaśomitra in his sub-commentary, had to scramble to find explanations for these strange ideas. Since the Buddha had spoken of them, they must be true, and now needed to be explained. So the commentators came up with examples from mythology, of stories of individual humans that could be considered to have been egg-born and sweat-born; e.g., Śaila and Upaśaila were born from the eggs of a crane, and Āmrapāli was born from the stem of a banana tree.²¹ For the parentless, however, they gave the example of the humanity of the first age, or kalpa, in agreement with *The Secret Doctrine*.²² Here a fragment of the Wisdom Tradition was apparently preserved.

Thus while the general outlines of genesis have been preserved in existing works, and even some details as in the case

of the Buddha's references to the four modes of birth, the commentaries which once existed and which alone can provide the true explanations, says Blavatsky, are no longer to be found: "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.*"²³

But these works are not lost, and the esoteric schools which Blavatsky's teachers are associated with claim to have them all.²⁴ It is from these works that Blavatsky restored to humanity nothing less than the original, full and uncut version of genesis. The point of all this was to let the world know that somewhere the true answers to the great problems of life exist. Because as stated by the Maha-Chohan, from the 1881 letter quoted earlier,²⁵

To be *true*, religion and philosophy must offer the solution of every problem. That the world is in such a bad condition morally is a conclusive evidence that none of its religions and philosophies, those of the *civilised* races less than any other, have ever possessed the *truth*. The right and logical explanations on the subject of the problems of the great dual principles—right and wrong, good and evil, liberty and despotism, pain and pleasure, egotism and altruism—are as impossible to them now as they were 1881 years ago. They are as far from the solution as they ever were but,—

To these there *must* be somewhere a consistent solution, and if our doctrines will show their competence to offer it, then the world will be the first one to confess *that must* be the true philosophy, the true religion, the true light, which gives *truth* and nothing but the *truth*.

Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* brought out to the world the original teachings on genesis from the Wisdom Tradition, offering a consistent solution to the great problems of cosmic and planetary evolution. Now the world could see for itself the competence of these doctrines to provide the truth. Yet the world has *not* confessed that this must be the truth. No, in more than a century, the world has not even given them a hearing.

This was not entirely unanticipated. Blavatsky wrote in the "Introductory" to *The Secret Doctrine* that, "Agreeably with the rules of critical scholarship, the Orientalist has to reject *a priori* whatever evidence he cannot fully verify for himself. . . . 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."²⁶ This has reference to "the most serious objection to the correctness and reliability of the whole work,"²⁷ namely, the fact that no one has seen the "Book of Dzyan" from which the Stanzas in *The Secret Doctrine* were translated. The proof which would be provided by an original manuscript of one of its Sanskrit, Tibetan, or Chinese versions²⁸ was not possible in 1888. This is made quite clear in the first sentence of the first Mahatma letter, written in 1880: "Precisely because the test of the London newspaper would close the mouths of the skeptics—it is unthinkable."²⁹ But Blavatsky goes on to say about the teachings of *The Secret Doctrine* in the "Introductory" just quoted, "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."³⁰

Thus I believe that the influence of Blavatsky's greatest work, *The Secret Doctrine*, though written more than a hundred years ago, has barely begun to be felt; and that only when an original manuscript of the "Book of Dzyan" is brought out, which may now be possible, will it take its proper place in the world. Then only will Blavatsky's efforts in laying the foundation for the re-establishment in the world of the truths of the

Wisdom Tradition be vindicated. Blavatsky would undoubtedly care little for any personal vindication, but for the vindication of the teachings of *The Secret Doctrine*, which she believed were of the utmost benefit to humanity, she would certainly care greatly.

Notes

1. *Combined Chronology*, by Margaret Conger, Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1973, p. 44; *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, compiled by A. T. Barker, arranged in chronological sequence by Vicente Hao Chin, Jr., Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines: Theosophical Publishing House, 1993, p. 478.

2. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, 2nd ed., London: Rider & Co., 1926, p. 50; 3rd ed., revised by Christmas Humphreys and Elsie Benjamin, Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1962, p. 50; chronological ed., 1993, p. 67.

3. See: "My Books," in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. XIII, Wheaton, Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House, 1982, pp. 191-202; especially pp. 191-92: "Of all the books I have put my name to, this particular one is, in literary arrangement, the worst and most confused."

4. This correspondence was published as *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, first edition in 1923, and subsequent editions as given in notes 1 and 2 above. The original letters are now held in the British Museum.

5. From: "Our Theosophists," *The Daily Examiner*, San Francisco, July 1, 1888, quoted in *The Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, by Michael Gomes, Wheaton, Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House, 1987, p. 150.

6. See: Boris de Zirkoff's "Historical Introduction: How 'The Secret Doctrine' Was Written," in the *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings* edition of *The Secret Doctrine*, Adyar, Madras, Theosophical Publishing House, 1978, pp. [1-2], where he quotes Col. H. S. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*, series II, p. 90, on this.

7. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. xxxvii.

8. Indeed, the Mahatma K.H., writing in 1884, refers to "the real

vital errors in *Esoteric Buddhism*," and goes on to say that, "The *Secret Doctrine* will explain many things, set to right more than one perplexed student." See: *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, 2nd ed., p. 357; 3rd ed., p. 351; chron. ed., p. 428. Two sections of *The Secret Doctrine* are in fact devoted to correcting these early Theosophical misconceptions. See: *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, pp. 152-191.

9. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. xlii.

10. "Concerning H.P.B. (Stray Thoughts on Theosophy)," by G. R. S. Mead, *Adyar Pamphlets*, no. 111, Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1920, p. 16; reprinted from *The Theosophical Review*, vol. XXXIV, April 1904, pp. 130-144.

11. *Rig Veda* 10.129. Most of this hymn in Max Müller's translation is given on p. 26 of vol. I of *The Secret Doctrine*, facing the opening of the seven stanzas on cosmic evolution translated from the Book of Dzyan. A few other hymns from the *Rig Veda* can also be considered cosmogonic, including the well-known "Hymn to the Cosmic Person," 10.90, and hymns 10.72, 10.81, 10.82, and 10.121.

12. See, for example, the *Aitareya Upanishad*, which begins: "The self, verily, was (all) this, one only, in the beginning." (S. Radhakrishnan translation.) Blavatsky had referred to this in an early draft of the three fundamental propositions of *The Secret Doctrine*, in a sentence not found in the published book, regarding the first proposition: "In the *Aitareya Upanishad* this Principle is referred to as the SELF, the only one—as just shown." See the facsimile reproduction of this page in Boris de Zirkoff's "Historical Introduction," cited in note 6 above, p. [36].

13. The *Laws of Manu*, a book of law, provides a genesis account in its first chapter. Compare *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 333, regarding this chapter: "But there is, directly following these verses, something more important for us, as it corroborates entirely our esoteric teachings. From verse 14 to 36, evolution is given in the order described in the Esoteric philosophy. This cannot be easily gainsaid."

14. Among the eighteen major purāṇas, the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* is often thought to be the most representative of the traditional fivefold subject matter of a purāṇa, including genesis. H. H. Wilson's translation of the *Vishṇu Purāṇa*, which also includes extensive annotations from the other purāṇas, was much quoted by Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*.

15. Sanskrit edition: *Tattvārthādhigama* by *Umāsvāti*, ed. Mody Keshavlal Premchand, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1903-1905, Bibliotheca Indica 159; German translation: “Eine Jaina-Dogmatik. Umāsvāti’s Tattvārthādhigama Sūtra,” trans. Hermann Jacobi, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morganländischen Gesellschaft*, vol. 60, 1906, pp. 287-325, 512-551; English translation: *Tattvarthadhigama Sutra (A Treatise on the Essential Principles of Jainism)*, trans. J. L. Jaini, Arrah: Central Jaina Publishing House, 1920, Bibliotheca Jainica, Sacred Books of the Jainas 2. Two more English translations have since been published in India, and now one in the West: *That Which Is—Tattvārtha Sūtra*, trans. Nathmal Tatia, San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994.

16. *The Building of the Cosmos, or Pañchāstikāyasāra (the Five Cosmic Constituents)*, ed. and trans. A. Chakravartinayanar, Arrah: Central Jaina Publishing House, 1920, Bibliotheca Jainica, Sacred Books of the Jainas 3.

17. *L’Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*, trans. Louis de la Vallée Poussin, 6 vols., Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1923-1931, Société Belge d’Études Orientales. Poussin’s French translation has now been translated into English by Leo M. Pruden as *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, 4 vols., Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1988-1990. Poussin had previously published separately its third chapter, on cosmology, in his *Bouddhisme: Études et Matériaux—Cosmologie*, 1919.

18. The *Abhidharmakośa* was first edited in Sanskrit by V. V. Gokhale, and published in *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, new series, vol. 22, 1946, pp. 73-102, with an emendation in vol. 23, 1947, p. 12. Its auto-commentary, or *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, was edited in Sanskrit by P. Pradhan, Patna: K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1967, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series 8, with a second revised edition in 1975.

19. “New Light on the Book of Dzyan,” by David Reigle, in *Symposium on H. P. Blavatsky’s Secret Doctrine: Proceedings*, San Diego: Wizards Bookshelf, 1984, pp. 54-67. [See above, pp. 25-41.] Since then a book surveying the Abhidharma and the Kālacakra cosmologies, and also the Mahāyāna cosmology of the *Flower Ornament Scripture (Avataṃsaka Sūtra)* and other sūtras, as well as the Dzog-chen cosmology, has been published: *Myriad Worlds: Buddhist Cosmology in Abhidharma, Kālacakra, and Dzog-chen*, by Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö

Tayé, Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1995. The Mahāyāna cosmology had earlier been described, drawing on the *Mahā-prajñāpāramitā Śāstra*, the *Lotus Sūtra (Saddharma-puṇḍarīka Sūtra)*, and the Pure Land or *Sukhāvātī-vyūha Sūtra*, in comparison with the Abhidharma cosmology, in *Buddhist Cosmology*, by Randy Kloetzli, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983. The Mahāyāna cosmology has again been described, from the *Flower Garland Sūtra (Avataṃsaka Sūtra)* and the *Sukhāvātī-vyūha Sūtra*, in comparison with the Abhidharma cosmology, in *Buddhist Cosmology*, by Akira Sadakata, Tokyo: Kōsei Publishing Co., 1997.

20. *Abhidharmakośa* and *bhāṣyam*, 3.8-9.

21. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* and *vyākhyā* on 3.9.

22. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* 3.9: “upapādukāḥ punaḥ prāthama-kalpikāḥ.”

23. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. xxv. Similarly, half of the contents of the Upanishads are said by Blavatsky to have been eliminated, so that, “They CONTAIN *the beginning and the end of all human knowledge, but they have now ceased to REVEAL it*, since the day of Buddha.”—*The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 270.

24. “The members of several esoteric schools—the seat of which is beyond the Himālayas, and whose ramifications may be found in China, Japan, India, Tibet, and even in Syria, besides South America—claim to have in their possession the *sum total* of sacred and philosophical works in MSS. and type: . . .” *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. xxiii.

25. *Combined Chronology*, p. 47; *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, chron. ed., p. 480.

26. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. xxxvii.

27. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. xxii.

28. Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese glosses on the Book of Dzyan are referred to in *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 23, and in a letter by Blavatsky, quoted in Boris de Zirkoff’s “Historical Introduction,” p. [29].

29. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, all eds., p. 1. This has reference to a test proposed by Sinnett, to produce one day’s edition of the London *Times* in Simla, India, on the same day it came out in London. London and Simla were at least a month apart by communication other than telegraph in 1880. This would prove that the

phenomena produced by Blavatsky were genuine, and therefore that her Mahatma teachers really did have secret knowledge. The letter goes on to explain why such a proof was unthinkable.

30. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. xxxvii.

“Searching for the Book of Dzyan,” was presented by David Reigle at the Third Secret Doctrine Symposium, held in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on May 21-24, 1998. The proceedings of this conference have not yet been published, but are forthcoming.

We end as we began, still searching for Blavatsky’s secret books, but hopefully a few steps closer to our goal. Blavatsky indicates that in our time proofs of the existence of a once universal Wisdom Tradition will become available. Since Blavatsky’s time a large number of Sanskrit manuscripts have been discovered, and whole libraries of hitherto inaccessible Tibetan books have become accessible.

Many students of the Ageless Wisdom seem to believe that what they study is completely different from what can be found in old exoteric religions. This is no doubt largely due to the modernized presentations of the Ageless Wisdom that proliferated in the twentieth century. We are more taken with the idea that nothing arises in a vacuum. Indeed, The Secret Doctrine teaches (I.xliv-xlv) that “the now Secret Wisdom was once the one fountainhead, 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.” The hitherto secret Sanskrit books brought out by the Śuddha Dharma Maṇḍala starting in 1915 did not teach a new or completely different system, but rather provided different interpretations of the known Sanskrit classics. But the opposition to such interpretations from the orthodoxy has so hindered their spread that practically no one today has ever even heard of these books.

The reception of the secret teachings brought out by Blavatsky can hardly have been any more encouraging to their custodians. Yet there is much we can do to prepare ourselves for receiving and understanding this secret material by studying known material, since the one depends on the other. We believe that this must be done, because in regard to a great many questions of the utmost importance to humanity, “the mist will never be cleared away until the treasures of certain hidden libraries in the possession of a group of Asiatic recluses shall be given out to the world” (H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 3, p. 485).

Searching for the Book of Dzyan

The Stanzas which form the basis of *The Secret Doctrine* are said by H. P. Blavatsky to have been translated from a mysterious “Book of Dzyan.” No one else, that is, no one in the outside world, has ever seen this book. Even the title, “Book of Dzyan,” is a generic name rather than a proper name, meaning nothing more than “Book of Wisdom,” although the highest wisdom, attainable only through meditation.¹ Blavatsky did, perhaps, leave us a clue with her intriguing statement that, “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.”² This leaves us with the possibility that its actual or proper name has been heard of, and therefore may be found, in the outside world. The significance of this is great. The majority of Sanskrit and Tibetan texts has become accessible only in the last hundred or so years, after Blavatsky published *The Secret Doctrine* in 1888. Everyone here in the West has heard of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947. But news of even larger textual discoveries in central and south Asia, such as that of the Gilgit Manuscripts in 1931, has not reached the Western press.

Here we must raise a question which has been voiced by several Theosophists. Given the fact that we already have the Stanzas of Dzyan in *The Secret Doctrine* from Blavatsky and her Initiate teachers, in English, why would anyone wish to spend years studying difficult languages like Sanskrit and Tibetan, and devote his or her life to searching for a manuscript of the Book of Dzyan in these languages? Before answering this question, we must know that the original Book of Dzyan is said by Blavatsky to have been written in a secret sacred language called by her Senezar.³ To have this original would, of course, do us little good, since no one would be able to read this language. However, she refers to “the Chinese, Tibetan and Sanskrit translations of the

original Senzar Commentaries and Glosses on the Book of Dzyan,” and then goes on to translate verse 1 of the Book of Dzyan “using only the substantives and technical terms as employed in one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions.”⁴ These Tibetan, Sanskrit, and Chinese translations *can* be read by non-initiates; and indeed, most of the terms she gives here are recognizable Tibetan technical terms.

We return, now, to the question of why anyone would wish to seek a Sanskrit, Tibetan, or Chinese translation of the Book of Dzyan when we already have an authoritative English translation in Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*. Aside from the fact clearly stated by Blavatsky that what we have in English is only portions of the Book of Dzyan, there is a weightier reason. Theosophists now number, according to a generous estimate, about 50,000 people. For these 50,000, who are convinced of the value of Blavatsky's work in making known to the world the existence of a once universal Wisdom Tradition, there would indeed be little need for an Eastern language manuscript of the Book of Dzyan. But the world now numbers well over 5,000,000,000 people. This means that for every one person who now directly benefits from the knowledge of the Wisdom Tradition brought out by Blavatsky, there are one hundred thousand persons who do not. This is not good enough.

The great problem of the cause of humanity's suffering and how to overcome it is the concern of an extraordinary letter by one of Blavatsky's teachers, the Mahatma K.H., where the origin of evil is traced:⁵

And now, after making due allowance for evils that are natural and cannot be avoided,—and so few are they that I challenge the whole host of Western metaphysicians to call them evils or to trace them directly to an independent cause—I will point out the greatest, the chief cause of nearly two thirds of the evils that pursue humanity ever since that cause became a power. It is religion under whatever form and in whatsoever nation. It is the sacerdotal caste, the priesthood and the churches; it is in those illusions that man looks upon as sacred, that he has to search out the source of that multitude of evils which is the great curse

of humanity and that almost overwhelms mankind. Ignorance created Gods and cunning took advantage of the opportunity.

Here, in agreement with the Four Noble Truths taught by the Buddha, the cause of suffering is traced to ignorance; and specifically to the ignorance which gave rise to religion. This is a rather shocking statement from one of the teachers behind the Theosophical movement, whose various members widely regard one of their objects as promoting the study of comparative religion. We might note here that this object was in its original versions worded as promoting the study of the Aryan or ancient Indian religions rather than comparative religion in general.⁶ This is no doubt because, according to the numerous statements of the early Theosophical writings, the Wisdom Tradition is preserved more directly and more completely in the ancient Indian religions. Yet these religions, too, have their share in the cause of two-thirds of humanity's suffering. We can only conclude that the true intention of the teachers behind the Theosophical movement was and is to promote the universal Wisdom Tradition, which will gradually supersede separative religion. For as the above quoted letter says regarding the "God of the Theologians:"⁷

Our chief aim is to deliver humanity of this nightmare, to teach man virtue for its own sake, and to walk in life relying on himself instead of leaning on a theological crutch, that for countless ages was the direct cause of nearly all human misery.

And again:⁸

Remember the sum of human misery will never be diminished unto that day when the better portion of humanity destroys in the name of Truth, morality, and universal charity, the altars of their false gods.

The teaching of the existence of a once universal Wisdom Tradition was first made known in modern times through the Theosophical movement launched by Blavatsky and her

teachers. This was apparently thought to have the potential to counter the “great curse” of separative religion, and thereby to deliver humanity from this “direct cause of nearly all human misery.” This “chief aim” of the custodians of the Wisdom Tradition is their reason for bringing out a portion of it through the Theosophical movement. Now the real question for any student of Theosophy who takes this seriously is: How can knowledge of the once universal Wisdom Tradition be effectively spread to the remaining 4,999,950,000 people of the world? And, what is now stopping it?

This brings us back to the Book of Dzyan. For many years, the teaching of the existence of a once universal Wisdom Tradition, whose partial re-statement in modern times was called by Blavatsky “Theosophy,” has been rejected by the world, primarily because no one could see the original Book of Dzyan to verify it. This was foreseen by Blavatsky, who wrote in 1888 in the “Introductory” to *The Secret Doctrine*:⁹

Agreeably with the rules of critical scholarship, the Orientalist has to reject *a priori* whatever evidence he cannot fully verify for himself. . . . 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.

But then she says:

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 clear implication of this statement is that in our time verifiable evidence will become available, in the form of a manuscript of the Book of Dzyan in a known language such as Sanskrit, Tibetan, or Chinese. And this will make possible the eventual widespread acceptance of the Wisdom Tradition in the world, and the consequent alleviation of human misery. In the words of Mahatma K.H. regarding an attempt in 1880 to restore the ancestral science and philosophies of India drawing upon long sealed ancient fountains for the immense gain of humanity, words which are if anything more appropriate now than they were then: "Is not this worth a slight sacrifice?"¹⁰

Most of us would agree that it is. So what can be done to help make this happen? I have often tried to put myself in the position of the custodians of these secret books and to imagine what conditions they would look for in order to release them. When Blavatsky first brought out Stanzas from the Book of Dzyan translated into English in *The Secret Doctrine*, she said, "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."¹¹ But now, more than a century later, it is exactly this "archaic phraseology of the original, with its puzzling style and words," that will have to be dealt with, because it is only this that will provide the verifiable evidence required.

Of course, the custodians could always send out such a book with some chela to explain its phraseology. But this will not solve the problem. Once an original language manuscript is released, it becomes public property, and therefore subject to scholarly examination and criticism. No scholar would have any compelling reason to accept the explanations given by the chela, but on the contrary would be obliged to seek explanations through reference to other known texts. This accepted

methodological principle was fully utilized by Blavatsky, who devoted the bulk of *The Secret Doctrine* to showing through reference to known sources the probability of the correctness of its teachings. Because as she said, "It would be worse than useless to publish in these pages even those portions of the esoteric teachings that have now escaped from confinement, unless the genuineness and authenticity—at any rate, the *probability*—of the existence of such teachings was first established."¹² This she did this by citing chapter and verse in support of them from an impressive array of known writers and classics of the past. And this is what will have to be done today, with the difference that today it is the archaic phraseology of the original that will have to be supported. This can only be done by citing parallel passages from the ancient classics of the East in their original languages.

So it would seem that the task before the worker in this field today is very much like the task faced by Blavatsky when she first brought these Stanzas out to the modern world. But unlike in Blavatsky's time, there are now available to us entire libraries of the ancient classics of the East. The worker in this field today, then, will not require the developed spiritual faculties utilized by Blavatsky in bringing out Stanzas from the Book of Dzyan, but instead will require knowing the relevant original languages and knowing the vast array of texts written in them which are now available.

Translations of the original Senzar commentaries on the Book of Dzyan are said to exist in three languages: Chinese, Tibetan, and Sanskrit. These are also the three classical or canonical languages of the northern Buddhist scriptures. These scriptures were written in Sanskrit, then translated into Chinese starting in the early centuries of the first millennium C.E., and again translated from Sanskrit but now into Tibetan starting in the latter centuries of the first millennium C.E. There is every reason to assume that the Senzar commentaries followed this same pattern, so that their Sanskrit versions will be the oldest and most original of the versions said to exist in languages accessible to us. The Chinese and Tibetan languages, moreover, are not capable of conveying the subtleties of the Sanskrit, as

may be seen by a comparative study of any of the many Buddhist scriptures now extant in all three of these languages. This is only to be expected, because of the unique nature of Sanskrit, the “refined” or “perfected” language of spiritual ideas. As put by Blavatsky regarding her attempt, the first ever, to render the ideas of the Book of Dzyan into a European language, “no human language, save the Sanskrit—which is that *of the Gods*—can do so with any degree of adequacy.”¹³

Learning Sanskrit, or for that matter learning Chinese or Tibetan, is not like learning another European language. In English or French or German we pretty much say the same things using different words. In Sanskrit, however, altogether different and new ideas are being expressed. We have in Sanskrit a language purposely developed and refined for expressing higher realities, as were apparently expressed earlier in Senzar. Similarly, when the Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures were translated into Chinese and Tibetan, these latter languages had to be specially adapted to express the new ideas. Special vocabulary was adopted and consistently used to render the Sanskrit technical terms. This is especially true of Tibetan, where standardized Sanskrit to Tibetan vocabularies were drawn up, and their use among translators was even required by decree of the king on penalty of death; so important was this considered.

Since the time of these translations much of the Sanskrit Buddhist canon became lost, while the entire canon as translated into Chinese and into Tibetan remained. For this reason scholars of northern Buddhism today must know not only Sanskrit, but also at least one of the two other classical canonical languages, Chinese or Tibetan. Of these, the Tibetan language translations are much more literal, so are more useful for establishing the original Sanskrit. In the Stanzas of Dzyan as translated by Blavatsky the vast majority of the technical terms are northern Buddhist, most of them Sanskrit, and some of them Tibetan. Taking for granted, then, the study of Sanskrit and Tibetan as preparation, what texts must one turn to in the search for the Book of Dzyan?

The Book of Dzyan is said to be “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.”¹⁴ This provides us with a major lead, as the Book of Dzyan is here linked to publicly known works, the Books of Kiu-te. But the public Books of Kiu-te turned out to be almost as elusive as the mysterious Book of Dzyan itself, remaining for long unidentified. Then in 1975 Theosophical researcher H. J. Spierenburg indentified them in an article written in Dutch.¹⁵ Unfortunately, this did not reach the English-reading world. So they were again identified in 1981, followed by the publication of an English language book on them in 1983.¹⁶

The books of Kiu-te are the Tibetan Buddhist tantras, a group of more than one hundred individual works collected into some twenty volumes. They are very highly regarded in Tibetan tradition, being considered the Buddha's highest teachings. As such, access to them was restricted, and their contents were little known to outsiders. By contrast, the Hindu tantras had become somewhat infamous, and were held in disrepute even by a majority of Hindus. The Hindu and Buddhist tantras have obvious similarities, but also fundamental differences. Primary among these are: (1) that the Buddhist tantras are non-theistic, that is, not based on belief in God or the gods; and (2) that they are thoroughly based on the bodhisattva ideal, that is, on working for the welfare of others rather than oneself.¹⁷

It seems obvious that to be able to read the secret Books of Kiu-te, one must be able to read the public Books of Kiu-te. But this latter is no small task. Even the so-called “public” volumes were in fact kept secret from all who had not received initiation into them, until quite recently, and with good reason. When I first read through the most esoteric part of the most esoteric of these known books, namely the “jñāna” or “dzyan” chapter of the *Kālacakra Tantra*, the first of the Books of Kiu-te, I was amazed and somewhat dismayed at how foreign a world I glimpsed therein, and how little of it I could understand. The book's primary concern seemed to be the mantric letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, their correlations with various families of deities, and the purification of these deities as the gross and subtle constituents of the outer and inner worlds. In other words, what would be characterized by most people today, even

sympathetic readers, as mystical mumbo-jumbo. I was strongly reminded of part of the Mahatma K.H.'s reply to A. P. Sinnett's requests for more esoteric knowledge:¹⁸

Then—knowledge can only be communicated gradually; and some of the highest secrets—if actually formulated even in your well prepared ear—might sound to you as insane gibberish, notwithstanding all the sincerity of your present assurance that “absolute trust defies misunderstanding.”

So how does one approach these books, which do indeed often read like “insane gibberish”? In some schools of Tibetan tradition a book attributed to the coming Buddha Maitreya is utilized as a bridge to the tantras or Books of Kiu-te, because it provides what is there considered to be their doctrinal or philosophical basis. This unique book is the *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga* or *Uttara-tantra*.¹⁹ In the same way, Blavatsky begins *The Secret Doctrine* by requesting all readers to study carefully three fundamental propositions, which she says form the necessary doctrinal or philosophical basis for understanding the Stanzas from the Book of Dzyan which follow. It so happens that the doctrinal or philosophical position of the book of Maitreya mentioned above is far and away the closest, among all known books, to that of the fundamental propositions of *The Secret Doctrine*.²⁰ To make things even more interesting, a “secret book” of Maitreya Buddha is linked with the Book of Dzyan in a somewhat enigmatic passage from a letter written by Blavatsky regarding *The Secret Doctrine* she was then writing:²¹

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.

Although it is not clear from this just what relationship exists between the Book of Dzyan and the secret book of Maitreya, it is

perhaps no coincidence that the doctrinal position of a known book of Maitreya matches the fundamental propositions of *The Secret Doctrine*, and that these teachings are used as necessary preliminaries for understanding, respectively, the public Books of Kiu-te or the Tibetan Buddhist tantras, and the first volume of the secret commentaries on Kiu-te or the Book of Dzyan.

The public Books of Kiu-te as well as the known books of Maitreya form part of the Tibetan Buddhist canon. Hitherto unknown information about this canon, both the public volumes and the corresponding secret volumes, was provided by a Chief Lama librarian of Tibet, and published by Blavatsky in an article entitled, "Tibetan Teachings:"²²

. . . the sacred canon of the Tibetans, the *Bkah-hgyur* and *Bstan-hgyur*, comprises one thousand seven hundred and seven distinct works—one thousand and eighty-three public and six hundred and twenty-four secret volumes—the former being composed of three hundred and fifty and the latter of seventy-seven folio volumes. . . .

Even in those volumes to which the masses have access, every sentence has a dual meaning, one intended for the unlearned, and the other for those who have received the key to the records. . . .

There is a dual meaning, then, even in the canon thrown open to the people, and, quite recently, to Western scholars. . . .

. . . the records from which our scholastic author, the monk Della Penna quotes—or I should rather say, misquotes—contain no fiction, but simply information for future generations, who may, by that time, have obtained the key to the right reading of them. . . .

In Blavatsky's time, and until recently, these Tibetan books were quite inaccessible. Now, with a couple thousand dollars you can buy your own set! Further, my efforts in collecting copies of all known Sanskrit Buddhist texts have shown that, contrary to the commonly held assumption that only about ten per cent of the Sanskrit canon still survives, in fact about fifty per cent of the original Sanskrit Buddhist canon has now been re-discovered.

The opportunities before us today are truly unprecedented. Whether or not one obtains the key to access information for future generations from these books, they are certainly our best source from which to cite the parallel passages required to support the Book of Dzyan. This is the work to be done in order to verify the existence of a once universal Wisdom Tradition, for the sake of alleviating human misery. When the preparatory work is done, the Book of Dzyan can appear; before this work is done, it cannot appear. This much is in our hands.

Notes

1. See: *The Books of Kiu-te or the Tibetan Buddhist Tantras*, by David Reigle, San Diego: Wizards Bookshelf, 1983, pp. 46-47.

2. *The Secret Doctrine*, by H. P. Blavatsky, 1st ed. 1888; many reprints since; I use the definitive edition of Boris de Zirkoff, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1978, pagination same as in the 1888 ed.; vol. I, p. xxii.

3. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. xliii.

4. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 23. [See above, pp. 68-71.]

5. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, compiled by A. T. Barker, 1st ed. 1923; 2nd ed. 1926, facsimile reprint, Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1975, pp. 57-58; 3rd rev. ed., Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1962, pp. 57-58; arranged in chronological sequence by Vicente Hao Chin, Jr., Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines: Theosophical Publishing House, 1993, p. 274.

6. For the wordings of the various early versions of the objects of the Theosophical Society, see: *A Short History of the Theosophical Society*, by Josephine Ransom, Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1938, pp. 545-553.

7. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, 2nd & 3rd eds., p. 53; chron. ed. p. 270.

8. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, 2nd & 3rd eds., p. 58; chron. ed. p. 275.

9. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. xxxvii.

10. "First Letter of K.H. to A. O. Hume," in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, chron. ed. p. 476.

11. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, pp. 22-23.

12. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, pp. xxxviii-xxxix.

13. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. 269.

14. "The Secret Books of 'Lam-Rim' and Dzyan," *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. XIV, p. 422. On the Kiu-te connection, see also: *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p. xliii. For accounts of the vast hidden libraries of lost and now secret books, see: *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, pp. xxiii ff.

15. See: *The Buddhism of H. P. Blavatsky*, by H. J. Spierenburg, San Diego: Point Loma Publications, 1991, p. 138.

16. See note 1.

17. Further details about these two primary differences between the Hindu and Buddhist tantras are given in "What Are the Books of Kiu-te," a paper by David Reigle presented at the *Secret Doctrine* Conference held in Culver City, California, August 1988. [See above, pp. 43-51.] An important explanation which I believe applies to the differences between the Hindu and Buddhist tantras is given by T. Subba Row: "... the knowledge of the occult powers of nature possessed by the inhabitants of the lost Atlantis was learnt by the ancient adepts of India and was appended by them to the esoteric doctrine taught by the residents of the sacred Island. The Tibetan adepts, however, have not accepted this addition to their esoteric doctrine. And, it is in this respect that one should expect to find a difference between the two doctrines." Blavatsky adds a note here saying, "To comprehend this passage fully, the reader must turn to Vol. I, pp. 589-594, of *Isis Unveiled*." See: "The Aryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man," by T. Subba Row, in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. III, pp. 402-403. For a view of how pervasively a specific Buddhist tantra is based on the bodhisattva ideal, see: *Kālacakra Sādhana and Social Responsibility*, by David Reigle, Santa Fe: Spirit of the Sun Publications, 1996.

18. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, 2nd ed. p. 283; 3rd ed. p. 279; chron. ed. p. 73.

19. The *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga*, or *Uttara-tantra*, was first translated from Tibetan by E. Obermiller, "The Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle to Salvation," *Acta Orientalia*, vol. IX, 1931, pp. 81-306; reprinted as: *Uttaratantra or Ratnagotravibhaga*, Talent, Oregon: Canon Publications, 1984. It was then translated from Sanskrit by Jikido

Takasaki, *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga (Uttaratantra), Being a Treatise on the Tathāgatagarbha Theory of Mahāyāna Buddhism*, Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1966, Serie Orientale Roma 33. It has also been paraphrased by S. K. Hookham in, *The Buddha Within: Tathāgatagarbha Doctrine According to the Shentong Interpretation of the Ratnagotravibhāga*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991.

20. See the fourth *Book of Dzyan Research Report*, “The Doctrine of Svabhāva or Svabhāvātā and the Questions of Anātman and Śūnyatā,” by David Reigle, Cotopaxi, Colorado: Eastern School Press, June 1997, especially p. 22. [See above, p. 129.]

21. *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett*, compiled by A. T. Barker, 1925; facsimile reprint, Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1973, p. 195. Many Theosophical students had thought that this passage referred to a never published and now lost “third volume” of *The Secret Doctrine*. However, recent research by Daniel Caldwell on the third volume spoken of by Blavatsky indicates that the vol. III published in 1897 is the real one intended by her, so that this passage most likely refers to the Stanzas of Dzyan we now have in the two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine* published in 1888. See: “The Myth of the ‘Missing’ Third Volume of *The Secret Doctrine*,” by Daniel H. Caldwell, *The American Theosophist*, Late Spring/Early Summer 1995, pp. 18-25.

22. *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. VI, pp. 98, 100. The books of the Tibetan Buddhist canon are here said to contain information in code, requiring various keys. What is likely to be one of these keys has recently been discovered by Doss McDavid; and surprisingly, not from Tibetan or Sanskrit, but from Greek. This key utilizes the numerical values of the Greek letters, but can be applied to words in Sanskrit. Yet from the standpoint of the secret doctrine, the connection between the Sanskrit and the Greek can be explained. Orpheus, the “inventor of letters” for the Greeks, is shown to have come from India (see: “Was Writing Known before Pāṇini?,” in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. V, pp. 304-307). Thus it is entirely possible that he brought with him the true numerical values of letters, whether Sanskrit or Greek; and that these true values were preserved among the Greeks, while they were superseded in India by another system of numerical values. See: “Gematria, Senzar, and the Book of Dzyan,” by Doss McDavid, *The Quest*, September 1998, pp. 4-12.