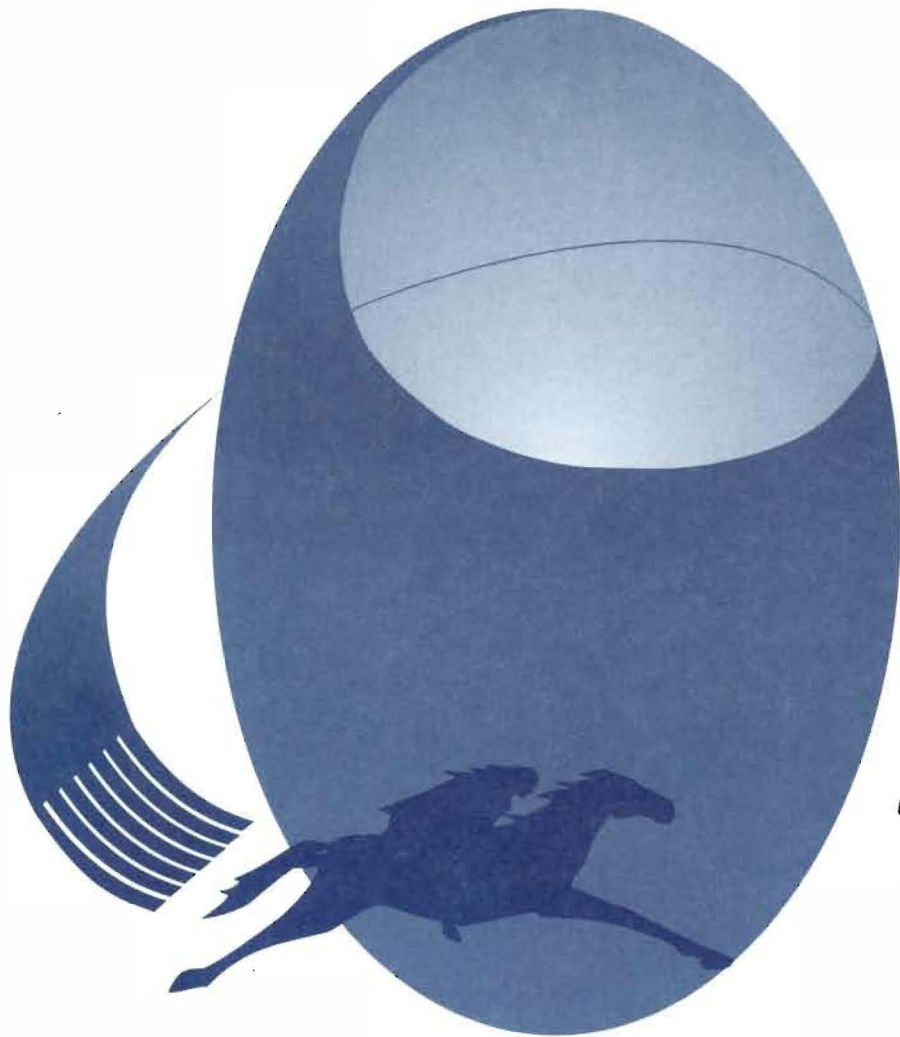


FOHAT

Volume I, Number 1

Spring 1997



*Conversation
with a
Tibetan Buddhist*

*The Great
Comet of 1997*

*David Reigle
examines A. Bailey's
Sources*

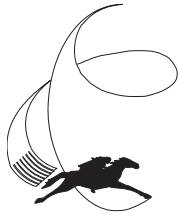
A Vehicle for the Ancient Wisdom Tradition

FOHAT'S MISSION

With humanity now at a crossroads with respect to its future evolution, the time is right for a magazine that will help to create the environment needed for every aspiring individual to realize his or her own inner potential. Words by themselves are lifeless shells if they do not find a home in an individual possessed of a good will bent towards manifesting Truth in self so as to eventually come to that state where Father and Son are one. Today, Man is bombarded by empty dogma from every corner. Words are twisted in order to serve the selfish desires of the few. Confusion and ignorance reign supreme. How do we lift ourselves from this state of darkness?

There has existed from the beginning of time a doctrine, sometimes referred to as the Ancient Wisdom Tradition, which points the individual towards the essential Wisdom or Truth embodied in the Cosmos and correspondingly in Man and in the smallest atom found in Nature. This essential nature shared by all things is the basis of the doctrine of Universal Brotherhood and the source of Man's compassion for all living things. It is our Unknowable Source and our Spiritual destiny. A wise compassion based on an understanding of this Ancient Wisdom Tradition will enable Mankind to perform with greater clarity its duties of compassion and lift Man and all those beings following in its wake towards a more enlightened future. How do we reconcile the many different traditions battling for Truth?

It is said that all of the Great Religions of the world find their source in the Ancient Wisdom Tradition. This tradition points the individual possessed of good will towards the Truth that lies at the centre of all of us. Consequently, if readers were to adopt the motto, "There is no Religion Higher than Truth" and also to proceed in a spirit of brotherly good will, each of us following his or her own tradition would come to a body of understanding that all could agree on. The environment for this pursuit is a desire for Truth and brotherly good will. Vigilance is the key to maintaining this environment. Anyone who questions the motives of another; anyone who tries to insinuate that another has an agenda other than the pursuit of Truth; anyone who by way of mere suspicions blackens the name of another, participates in the destruction of the environment of Truth. Vigilance is the key to a brotherly community pursuing Truth. Truth is the goal, brotherhood is the means, and vigilance is our duty. The synthesis of these three elements is Jñāna-Yoga which has been described as one of the safest and most effective of all the Yogas. This magazine is an invitation for followers of all traditions to enter into a dialogue whose goal is Truth and whose means is Universal Brotherhood.



FOHAT

Volume I, No. 1
Spring 1997

A Quarterly Publication of Edmonton Theosophical Society

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Edmonton Theosophical
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The pages of **Fohat** are an open forum dedicated to the pursuit of Truth, and consequently the views and opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher unless otherwise specifically stated.

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To be featured in coming issues:

A look at **cycles** and aberrant **weather phenomena**;

Vampires, a look at their ghoulish natures;

Also, a review article on a recent publication on
the life of **P.B. Randolph**;

AND MUCH MORE!

Namastae

I would like to welcome all readers to the first issue of *Fohat*. The idea of a periodical publication has long been in the minds of the members of Edmonton Theosophical Society and might have been realized sooner if not for the successful barriers put up by our enemies. These barriers have only made our resolve more fixed and helped refine our abilities and understandings. The offering that we make now is no doubt markedly better than what we may have offered at some point in the past and perhaps, therefore, its time is now!

We enjoin all of our readers to participate in the march towards the Truth that lies at the heart of each one of us. As we have pointed out in our Mission statement, this publication is dedicated to Jñāna-Yoga. As such, these pages will reflect a realization that the readership brings to the magazine different minds and different needs for growth. This magazine will consequently stick to the battleground of ideas and reject vehemently any material that tries to undermine an idea by calling attention to supposed weaknesses in its writer or in its writer's source. Every idea will be looked at on its own merit and only on its merit. Every argument, no matter how trivial seeming to some, may prove to be a missing piece in the understanding of others. Great buildings are begun with solid foundations.

This magazine, like any magazine, is a reflection of its readership. If you find that the material in this magazine does not adequately challenge your own understanding, then write something that penetrates deeper into the dark mire cloaking the white light of Truth; write something whose breadth challenges the vision of the most far-seeing among us. This is the duty that we possess towards our fellow travellers on the Path. There are always those coming behind who need our help, just as there are always those who are travelling ahead pointing out the way. This magazine is but a vehicle, and like any vehicle it requires fuel. In this case the readers who share their insights with the rest of us are the fuel that will propel this magazine along. Do not hesitate to write when you feel moved to do so. The act of writing helps to sharpen our own understanding and enables us to share that understanding with others. It is the hope of the editors of this magazine that there will be such a wealth of incoming mail that we will need ten magazines to embody it.

Fohat is also a magazine that wishes to challenge the accepted dogmas of all philosophical systems dedicated to the moral perfection of humanity. Humanity is poised at a crossroads and its choices in the coming few years will be crucial in determining the path that future generations will be born onto. Our responsibility is great and our duties should therefore be clear. All of our energies should be channelled towards clarifying the choices so that the correct choice will be obvious. This can only be accomplished through the special insight that comes from hard work and good will. All are invited to make this magazine a part of you and to give a part of yourselves to it. With that we leave you with the following blessing echoing out of the past: "And now, friends and enemies, all—*Namastae!*"

*A
Conversation
With A
Tibetan
Buddhist -
Geshe Kaldan*

BY ROBERT BRUCE MACDONALD

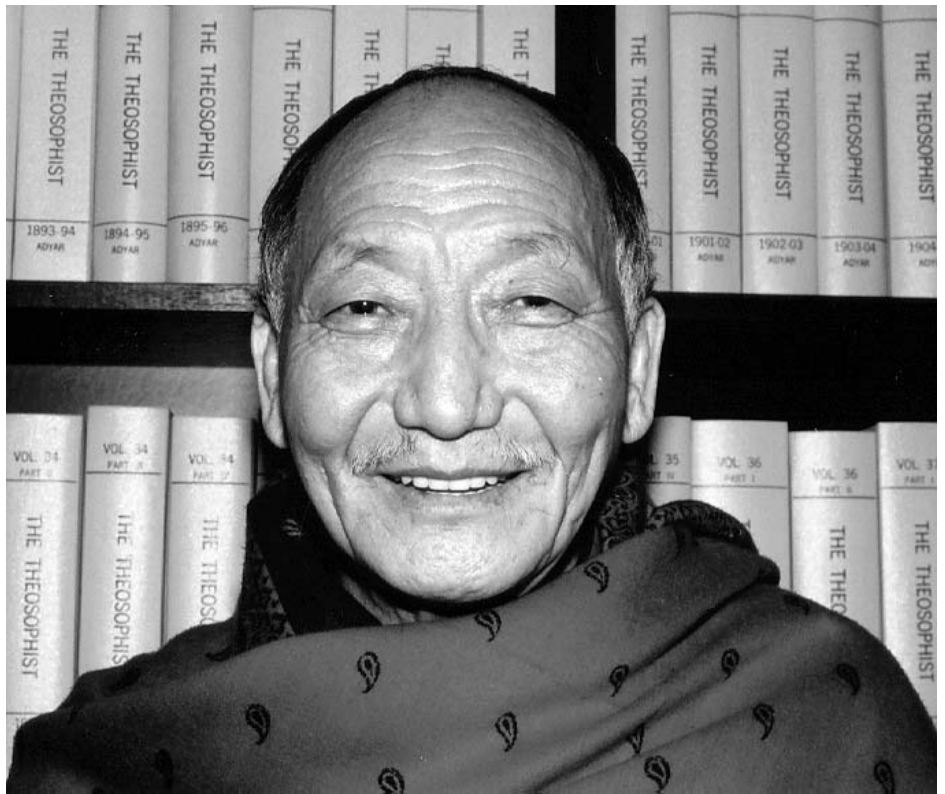


Photo Taken at Edmonton Theosophical Society Headquarters - 1997

On the evening of January 19th, my wife and I sat down with Geshe Ngawang Kaldan in order to better understand some aspects of Tibetan Buddhism. As Tibetan Buddhism seems to have captured the imaginations of many in the West, it was felt that this would be a good point to start the dialogue that *Fohat* hopes to conduct with the major religions of our time. The English of our gracious host was not perfect which made it difficult to explore some of the philosophical niceties involved in the concepts that we discussed, however, we hope that what follows is more or less the position as expressed by the Geshe. Either way, it is a beginning point from which we hope our Buddhist Brothers will feel free to amend and comment on further.

Geshe Kaldan has recently returned from a trip to Morocco where he has been involved in the upcoming Martin Scorsese film, **Kundun**. This controversial film details the true story of the Dalai Lama's escape from Tibet during the Chinese invasion. Geshe Kaldan, himself, escaped from Tibet in the 1959 uprising against the Chinese, an uprising that led to the deaths of thousands of Tibetans. Despite this, there is no hatred expressed by the Tibetans towards the Chinese, and certainly not by Geshe Kaldan, as the Tibetans do not perceive the Chinese as enemies. This trait of the Tibetan national psyche can be traced back to the nation's deeply held Buddhist tradition. This might be the most striking quality of the Tibetan people.

Geshe Kaldan started his formal education in a local village monastery of about 1500 monks when he was quite young. He was introduced to the monastery by his uncle, who was also a monk, and he found that monastery life was much more pleasant than the more rustic existence of the Tibetan farmer. After seven years at this local monastery he moved on to the Drepung Monastery near Lhasa, a university setting with over 10,000 monks. He was to spend seventeen to eighteen years at the Drepung Monastery studying the various disciplines involved in attaining the degree of Geshe.

Geshe Kaldan pointed to five areas of study involved in attaining this degree in Buddhism.

The first area of study is the *Prajñā-Pāramitā*. This study looks at the six Pāramitās, Dāna (charity), Śīla (virtuous precepts), Kṣhānti (patient forbearance), Vīrya (courageous vigor), Dhyāna (meditation), Prajñā (intuitive wisdom), and it lasts about six years. This study gives the monk an ethical foundation upon which to live his life and approach the studies to come.*

Geshe Kaldan followed his study of the Pāramitās with a two to three year study of the Mādhyamika† or Middle Path philosophy. He studied the Buddhist concepts of the void and the nature of Self, a study that he described as being very deep.

The third area of study for the Geshe was that of logical philosophy. He described the study of the Pramāṇa-vārtika where the relationship of senses and consciousness to knowledge was followed. The fourth area of study was the Vinaya-sutra where the monk learns his vows. There are two levels to this study, a beginning level and a more advanced level

where the monk must learn 253 vows. These vows are made by the monk to Buddha.

Finally, the monk studies the metaphysical philosophy of the Abhidharma-kosa. Cosmology and the evolution of consciousness are two of the grand topics that are looked at.

These five topics comprise the seventeen to eighteen years of study that Geshe Kaldan put in at the Drepung Monastery. At this point he was tested on what he had studied and there were four possible paths which he could follow. Following his test it was decided that he would take the first path which was that of an educator. This meant six more years of study, a study that was interrupted at the outset with the Chinese invasion of Tibet and his subsequent flight to India. At Dharamsala, India he completed his studies and obtained his degree in 1967.

After getting an understanding of the path that one follows to acquire the title of Geshe, we focused on the area of reincarnation where we believed we

might find some differences with what is taught in the Ancient Wisdom Tradition. As is usually the case in a discussion of reincarnation, karma came up and played a significant role. These two concepts are closely intertwined and the one cannot be properly spoken of without the other. The Geshe, in his limited English, spoke of positive and negative thoughts—which we took to mean thoughts of a spiritual and uplifting nature and thoughts of a material, worldly, or mundane nature—and how these thoughts played a role in the rebirth or reincarnation of the human soul. Through the process of not only dwelling on right thoughts, but also of performing right action, one can create for oneself a more noble future life. What happens to the person whose thoughts dwell in material things?

The Geshe describes a number of possible rebirths for the materialistically-fettered soul. This soul may come back as an animal‡, a ghost, or descend into the Buddhist version of

* H.P. Blavatsky writes that in the Mahayana, “[o]ne of its fundamental laws is, that ordinary morality is insufficient to deliver one from rebirth; one has to practice the six Paramitas or cardinal virtues . . .” (CW XI 348). In *The Voice of the Silence*, Blavatsky lists seven Pāramitās, adding Virāga, indifference to pain and pleasure, to the above list. She elsewhere alludes to sixteen or six and ten Pāramitās (CW XII 505 & 598). - *Editor*.

† It was Nāgārjuna who founded the Mādhyamika school and, as with the evolution of the exoteric side of any school, it has greatly degenerated since its development with the introduction of tantric elements (FSO 660). It always seems easier for the mind to grasp onto rituals and formulae for achieving ends rather than exploring with the mind a sublime philosophy. - *Editor*.

‡ The rebirth of a person in the body of an animal is not a position held by Theosophists. Theosophists believe all things, whether atom, man, or sun possess a soul. Although all souls express themselves differently, their essence is One. By analogy, as physical beings do not regress to less mature states, neither do souls regress to a state of consciousness less evolved. The physical is but a reflection of the soul within. In the normal course of events you would not expect to rise one morning and look into the mirror to see an oak tree staring back, neither would a conscious entity reflect an image (a body) that did not faithfully represent itself. The soul cannot reflect what it is not. - *Editor*.

hell. He explained that anything lower than an animal in the evolutionary scheme (plants, minerals, etc.) does not possess a soul and we assume logically then that they cannot therefore house the soul of a man undergoing rebirth.

To balance out these three lower domains of rebirth, there are three upper domains. These include man, demi-gods, and gods. For those people who learn the lessons of non-attachment and incorporate them into their life, these upper planes are their birthright. Those who turn their back on their fellow man and work strictly for self, turn their back on this birthright. The man who purifies himself in thought and act by understanding the doctrine of non-attachment can in time gain control over his rebirth and thereby reincarnate by choice.

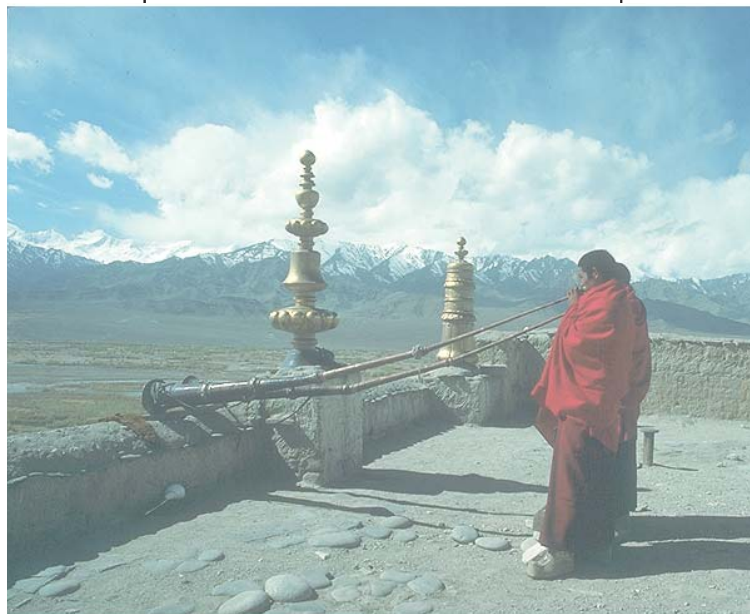
To illustrate the purity needed to reincarnate by choice and the process itself, the Geshe related a story of a high lama who was approaching death. After informing those closest to him of his imminent death, counselling them not to grieve, and dividing his possessions among them, he positioned himself to meditate one last time. As he was meditating he stopped breathing and for all outward appearances was dead. However, his body continued to remain in the meditative position and did so for the next seven days without any sign of decay in the

body. The Geshe explained that even the average person who stops breathing still retains his soul for at least three days, and the purer person may retain his soul for a week or longer. The soul, he said, withdraws to a region just behind the heart and exits the body after about three days through the head. As the lama sat there meditating on Śūnyatā (emptiness) over the seven days, lamas quietly came and went, reading from a special prayer book. On the seventh day red blood trickled from the lama's right nostril, and a white fluid from his left. This white fluid filled the room with an aroma sweeter and more powerful than if it had been filled with thousands of roses. As this happened the force left the body and it slumped sideways, this time being dead for certain. This high lama was identified a few years later as having reincarnated in a young boy.

Instead of being subject to the whims of rebirth by karma, this lama chose or recognized when to die and where he would be reborn. To a greater or lesser

degree his soul consciously reincarnated. As we learn to live for the benefit of humanity and release ourselves from worldly attachments, our consciousnesses become unclouded and better able to reflect our identity with the One Life of the Universe and the powers that this state bestows.

Finally, we asked Geshe Kaldan about the Panchen Lama. Here we may have gained the insight of a great warrior people who have learned from their history. He related that after the Chinese invaded Tibet and brutally quashed the Tibetan uprising, the Panchen Lama was thrown into prison. He remained there for four years and then the Chinese asked him if he wanted to be released. The Panchen Lama told his captors that it was up to them. The Chinese asked him if he would give a talk to the people of Tibet. He said "Sure, if you like," and asked his captors what they wanted him to talk about. The Chinese said not to worry about it, that they would write something out for him.



The Chinese then wrote a speech that was designed to undermine the authority of the Dalai Lama by implying that he had fled the country because he no longer cared about the Tibetan people; and it was also designed to undermine Buddhism by having the highest Lama left in Tibet publicly announce that the people had been brainwashed

into a belief about Buddhism for over two thousand years. The Panchen Lama stood before the people and announced what the Chinese had written and said that what they wrote was not true. The Chinese were furious and threw him back in jail, this time for nine years, during which time he was also tortured.

Again they asked him if he wanted to be released. As before, he got in front of the Tibetan people and exposed the lies of the Chinese and showed the Tibetans his tortured body. He told the people that the Chinese could imprison and torture him but they could not change his beliefs. He told them to hold fast to their beliefs and not to allow the Chinese to change those beliefs. Once again the angry Chinese took the Panchen Lama off to jail, this time in Beijing where he remained until the death of Mao, ten years later. He was then released and given some power and managed to have some of the Buddhist statues plundered from Tibetan Temples returned to Tibet. Geshe Kaldan said

that he died from the Chinese poisoning him in 1987.

Despite all of this, the Geshe bears no resentment toward the Chinese. This might be the real wisdom of the Tibetan people, a wisdom shared by all Tibetans learned or unlearned, that although you stand firm and fight against an invader, you do so without hatred, as hatred can only lead to attachment and future karma. We see various tribes of people in the world today who continue to hold onto their hatred long after any conflict has passed. We are continually reminded of bygone brutality. This only keeps the wounds open and prevents a healing that can only come out of an understanding based on good will between two enemies. One can imagine some future Chinese delegation coming to a free Tibet and asking a future Panchen Lama if the two nations might be friends. One can imagine the Lama smiling and saying "Sure, if you like."🐉

Abbreviations of Works Cited

CW H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings. (14 vols. + index) comp. Boris de Zirkoff, et al. Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1966-.

FSO de Purucker, Gottfried. Fountain-Source of Occultism. Ed. Grace Knoche. Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1974.



IX Panchen Lama 1883 - 1933

*All beings desire liberation from misery.
 Seek, therefore, for the causes of misery
 and expunge them.
 By entering on the Path liberation from
 misery is attained.
 Exhort, then, all beings to enter the Path.*

- Panchen Lobzang Tub-ten Chö-gyi Nyima.
 His Serene Holiness The Tashi Lama.



On the Alleged Tibetan Source of Alice Bailey's Writings

by David Reigle

A new magazine called *Fohat* is now launched to promote the search for truth. Meanwhile, my Book of Dzyan research proceeds in the search for *fohat*. The term *fohat* has so far not been located in Tibetan Buddhist texts where H. P. Blavatsky's statements about it lead us to believe it should be found. I must therefore postpone any statements about *fohat* for a future occasion. My research in the Tibetan Buddhist texts, however, has allowed me to make some observations regarding the alleged Tibetan source of Alice Bailey's writings which may be of interest to readers of a magazine described by its editor as, "dedicated to promoting a vigilant attitude among its readership through a love of Truth."

To get an accurate picture of what is being investigated, it must be evaluated in terms of overall wholes; that is, in terms of what characterizes it throughout, rather than in terms of isolated facts, as the latter may lead to false conclusions. Alice Bailey's writings include eighteen books said by her to have been received through mental telepathy from a

Tibetan teacher. What characterizes these writings from the first volume to the last is the teaching of service to humanity. This, of course, does agree with the Bodhisattva ideal of dedicating one's life to benefiting others rather than seeking one's own liberation, which characterizes Tibetan Buddhist writings from beginning to end. This teaching, however, also characterizes Theosophy. Thus it could have been taken by Bailey from Theosophy, or it could in fact have come from the alleged Tibetan author of the Bailey writings.

There is a peculiar stylistic feature which characterizes the Bailey writings, something one does not usually see in English language writings. This is the habitual presentation of teachings within an outline structure using general topics, then divided into sub-topics, then subdivided into sub-sub-topics, etc., etc.; e.g.: "We will as usual divide our subject into three heads."¹ This is a well-known characteristic feature of Tibetan writings. In fact, this feature is so characteristic of Tibetan writings that respected Buddhologist Prof. Ernst

Steinkellner of the University of Vienna used it as the criteria to determine whether certain books were written by Indians or by Tibetans. “Steinkellner observes that these two treatises display the analytical system used by Tibetans of all epochs to structure their texts, the “divisions” or “sections” (*sa bcaḍ*), a technique he has not been able to find in treatises of Indian origin; . . .”² Certainly this stylistic evidence is as compelling as is the handwriting analysis evidence given by Dr. Vernon Harrison in his 1986 article on the infamous “Hodgson Report” to show that the Mahatmas, and not Blavatsky, wrote the Mahatma Letters.³ Theosophists who are glad to accept the latter as evidence in support of the authenticity of the Mahatma authorship of the Mahatma letters must by the same standard accept the former as evidence in support of the authenticity of the Tibetan authorship of the Bailey writings.

One of the most defining teachings of the Bailey writings is that on the five initiations, given in her first book, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, 1922, used throughout her writings, and given its final elaboration in her last book, *The Rays and the Initiations**, 1960. Although some of this material was first published in *The Theosophist*, including a three-part article on initiation in 1921, partly under her

former name Alice Evans, this teaching really became known in the Theosophical movement through C. W. Leadbeater’s *The Masters and the Path*, 1925. While the idea of initiation is not new, these teachings on the initiations are not found in the earlier Theosophical writings of Blavatsky, but are considered by many to have originated with Bailey.

One of the most defining teachings of Tibetan Buddhism is the teaching of the path to Buddhahood in terms of five divisions. It is taught in the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, the single most widely studied book in Tibet. This book is said to have been received from the future Buddha, Maitreya, when Asaṅga after developing the Great Compassion was able to visit him where he resides in Tuṣita heaven. It was memorized by the monks of virtually all the monasteries; and most of the great Tibetan teachers wrote commentaries on it, including Bu-ston, Dol-po-pa, Tsong-kha-pa, etc., etc. Yet this book never reached China, the other and earlier recipient of Mahāyāna Buddhism from India. Thus for the last millennium it has been a teaching specific to Tibet. The five divisions of the path to Buddhahood taught in the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* are: the path of accumulation [of merit through service to others] (*sambhāra-mārga*), the path of application [to meditation practice] (*prayoga-mārga*), the

path of seeing [when for the first time one sees the truth directly] (*darśana-mārga*), the path of cultivation of [higher] meditation (*bhāvanā-mārga*), and the path of no-more training (*asaikṣa-mārga*).

These five paths are not called initiations, and there seems to be no obvious connection between the Buddhist paths and the Bailey initiations, other than the mere number five. While studying these, however, I noticed some unusual coincidences between them. For, example, the third initiation of the Bailey scheme is said to be the first major initiation: “As I have said, the first two initiations—those of the Birth and the Baptism—are not regarded by the Hierarchy as major initiations. They are in the nature of initiations of the threshold and are simply phases of, or preparatory to, the third initiation (as occult students call it), which is in reality the first major initiation.”⁴ Similarly, the third path of the Buddhist scheme is said to be the first major path: “Here begins the Path proper, the Path of the Saint.”⁵ “The last three [paths] represent ‘the Path of the Saint’ (*ārya-mārga*), whereas the first two are regarded as subservient degrees.”⁶ But this parallel is still too general to allow any valid conclusions. There is, however, a teaching which is quite specific to Bailey regarding the fourth initiation, being not found even in

* On the subject of rays, G. de Purucker in a possible Bailey reference writes: “I would that I could write at greater length upon this matter of the rays if only in order to point out the mistaken conclusions of the many astralistic and psychistic authors who have written such flapdoodle about them; but it would take a volume to untangle all the errors” (G. de Purucker, *Fountain-Source of Occultism*, 1974, p. 200). Different authors seem to agree on the general concepts of rays, but certainly not on specifics. - *Editor*.

Leadbeater, and is unique enough to have aroused controversy and even ridicule. This is the teaching that “at the fourth initiation the lower vehicles go, and the adept stands in his intuitional body, and creates from thence his body of manifestation.”⁷

In the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* (2.30) the five paths are correlated with the ten grounds (*bhūmi*), which had been taught in the earlier *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*. All but the first of these ten *bhūmis* are achieved on the fourth path. So it is on the fourth path that occurs what I here give in the words of Étienne Lamotte, perhaps the greatest translator of Buddhist texts in our time: “Now, from the eighth *bhūmi* onward, a bodhisattva abandons his flesh body (*māṃsakāya*) born from his father and mother, produced by his karmic actions, and subject to birth and death, in order to be clothed in a body born of the Absolute (*dharmadhātu-jakāya*).”⁸ With this parallel we have, to my mind, left the realm of coincidence.

It should be noted that access to the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* was opened up in the West only in 1929 with the publication of a Sanskrit-Tibetan edition by T. Stcherbatsky and E. Obermiller in the Bibliotheca Buddhica series from Leningrad. This was followed by Obermiller's English language study of it, “The Doctrine of

Prajñā-pāramitā as exposed in the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* of Maitreya,” published in *Acta Orientalia* in 1932. Since such journals are generally accessible only to scholars, we reprinted this text in 1984 hoping to make it more accessible to others. In any case, neither Bailey nor anyone else in the West had access to this material in 1922 when *Initiation, Human and Solar* was published. Bailey's information, as cited above, could not have been taken from earlier Theosophical writings, since it is not found there; nor could it have been taken from earlier Buddhist writings, since it is not found there either. The Buddhist writings available at that time, and even in Blavatsky's time, such as R. Spence Hardy's *Eastern Monachism*, or Emil Schlagintweit's *Buddhism in Tibet*, give only the fourfold Hīnayāna scheme of stream-enterer (*srota-āpanna*), once-returner (*sakṛd-āgāmin*), non-returner (*anāgāmin*), and *arhat*. Leadbeater must be given credit for checking these sources and attempting a correlation between these four and the initiations. However, this fourfold scheme does not agree with the fivefold Mahāyāna scheme taught in the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*. Although the fourfold scheme is in fact found in the Perfection of Wisdom texts which the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* is a commentary on, the latter text did not use this scheme. This

is because, according to Tibetan tradition, the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* gives the secret meaning (*sbas don*) of the Perfection of Wisdom texts.⁹ Its fivefold scheme giving the secret meaning, said to have been received from Maitreya, was not known outside of Tibet and Mongolia until the publication of the work of Stcherbatsky and Obermiller. This all points to Bailey's actual contact with a Tibetan teacher.

Perhaps the biggest objection raised by Theosophists against a Tibetan source of the Bailey writings is the latter's frequent use of “God.” Tibetans, like Buddhists everywhere, do not believe in God. For Theosophists, however, this is a sword which cuts both ways; for neither do they believe in *ātman*. In fact, it is not denial of God which for Buddhists defines their religion as Buddhist against all other religions, but denial of *ātman*.¹⁰ Yet *ātman* is taught throughout Blavatsky's writings whose source is supposed to be the Tibetan Mahatmas. Does this mean that Blavatsky's writings could not have had a Tibetan source?† If for Theosophists it does not, then they cannot say that Bailey's use of “God” precludes a Tibetan source for Bailey's writings.

Then there is the further question of whether not just a
 . . . continued on page 22

† Does the objection to “God” hinge on the unlikeliness that it has a Tibetan source? Perhaps more important to Theosophists is the connotation it has in the minds of the West as a source of Truth and power external to the individual. Theosophy has gone to great lengths in its writings to disassociate itself from such a concept. Perhaps it is felt that the inclusion of Bailey into mainstream Theosophy undermines this position.
 - Editor.

THE GREAT COMET OF 1997

As we launch the first issue of *Fohat* on March 21st, Comet Hale-Bopp will be at its minimum distance from Earth, at 1.32 AU (1 AU=150 million kilometers) on March 22nd. By April 1, 1997, it will be .92 AU from the Sun. A giant among comets, its nucleus is believed to be forty kilometres wide and it is probably the largest to visit the Earth's vicinity this century. Exactly one year ago, in 1996, Comet Hyakutake blazed through the skies. According to Carl Sagan and Ann Druyan "comets have left a good deal more than dust and gas in their wakes; they have trailed images, poetry, questions, and insights" (*Comet xi*).

Historically, comets were a telegram from the gods, harbingers of unwanted change, ill fortune, and evil. Being due for another bout of 'comet fever', Hale-Bopp is the supposed harbinger of disaster from a UFO invasion. INVADE-O brand anti-abduction cover blankets are being sold in America. The Comet of 1910 was going to poison the entire planet with cyanide gas. These lone wanderers, arriving from the vast depths of space, violate the elegant order of the heavens. William Shakespeare thought them to be "importing change of times and states" (*Henry VI*, 1.1).

Science states that comets are mainly composed of ice and cosmic dust, many believed to originate from a sphere which lies well beyond the orbit of the most distant planets. As a comet moves towards the Sun, ice begins to melt away from the nucleus and a tail of gas and dust develops, producing comas that stream for tens of thousands of kilometres across interplanetary space. Some comets are fresh from the outer solar system and loaded with volatile ices that have not yet been exposed to the Sun's

heat. Some very dusty comets "have been observed to pour tons of fine particles into interplanetary space every second. . . . It may be that the refractory, rocky stuff that has not gushed away to space with the ices is now dominant" (*Comet 137*). Hence science concludes:

Everything you see around you . . . has fallen from the sky—or, at least, the constituent atoms have. . . . [T]hese atoms were parts of small worlds busily manufacturing planets as they collided. . . . [A]ll the atoms in and around you . . . were in gas and microscopic grains floating in interstellar space. After the Earth was fully formed, more cosmic matter, chiefly from comets, glued itself to the Earth's surface (*Comet 308*).

Archaic Doctrines maintain that:

Born in the unfathomable depths of Space, out of the homogenous Element called the World-Soul, every nucleus of Cosmic matter, suddenly launched into being, begins life under the most hostile circumstances. Through a series of countless ages, it has to conquer for itself a place in the infinitudes. It circles round and round between denser and already fixed bodies, moving by jerks, and pulling towards some given point or centre that attracts it And what is there so impossible that a laya centre—a lump of cosmic protoplasm, homogeneous and latent, when suddenly animated or fired up—should rush from its bed in Space and whirl throughout the abysmal depths in order to strengthen its homogeneous organism by an accumulation and addition of differentiated elements (*SD I 203-204*)?

What is this new interstellar and galactic stuff dragged in by comets and left behind in interplanetary space? Does it affect Earth, visibly and invisibly? It is estimated that hundreds of tons of meteoritic material from comets settle

on the Earth every year. If comets live far from the planets in the interstellar realms, it is reasonable to say they are made of interstellar stuff. Spectroscopy reveals emission bands of the C₂, CN, H₂, S, H₂O, CH₄, NH₃, CO₂ ions and so on. Infrared spectra reveal the principal constituents of rocks called silicates; atoms of chromium, nickel, and copper can also be detected. It is believed that in March 1996, Hyakutake brought in substantial amounts of radiation. In contrast to particles known to Earth, American pilots gather (from stratospheric altitudes) samples of cometary debris onto sticky plates, which are analysed by the 'Curator of Cosmic Dust.' The conclusion:

There is no known industrial or biological process that makes particles like this. Even if there were, there is no way for such particles to be transported to the stratosphere in such numbers. A range of physical and chemical tests . . . all point in the same direction: these particles have originated on another world. Since the principal source of fine particles in our region of space is the comets, it seems likely that we have before us the stuff of comets (*Comet 238*).

Were the supposed telegrams from the Gods and pretences surrounding comets all illogical and absurd? A hint of truth oftentimes lies buried beneath the surface of such ideas. In *Principia*, Isaac Newton mystically argues about cometary matter accumulating on Earth:

I suspect, moreover, that it is chiefly from the comets that spirit comes, which is indeed the smallest but the most subtle and useful part of our air, and so much

required to sustain the life of all things with us (*Comet 308*).

Carl Sagan and Ann Druyan comment on the above:

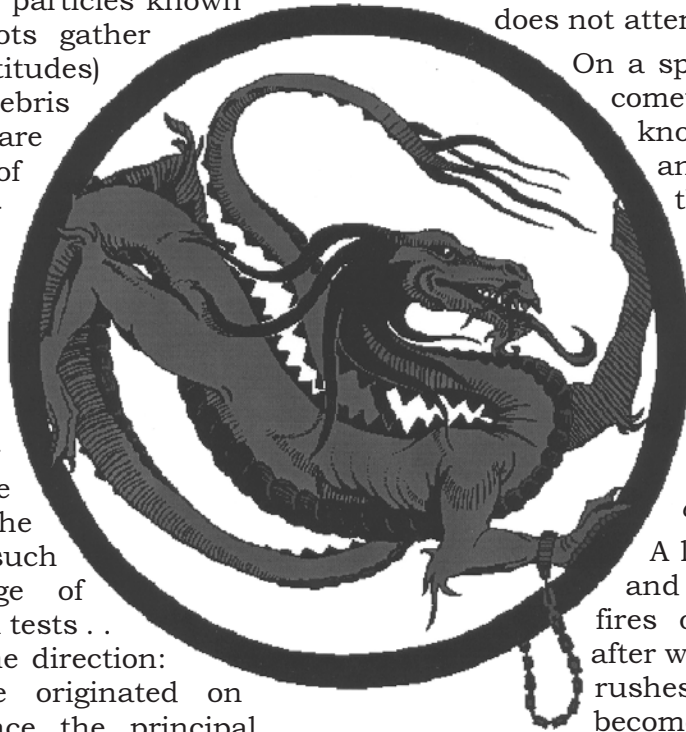
Comets supply, Newton seems to be saying, something essential for life on Earth. But calling it "spirit" suggests it is not composed of matter. Demonstrating its presence in comets would then seem a considerable undertaking, and Newton does not attempt it (*Comet 308*).

On a speculative note, perhaps comets are harbingers of new knowledge, new energies and wisdom, piercing through the 'ring-pass-not' of our solar system* (the ring-pass-not in this instance meaning the limit of consciousness of all entities within our system). Commenting on the 'Fiery Dragons', *The Secret Doctrine* states that:

A laya-centre is lighted and awakened into life by fires of another 'pilgrim,' after which the new 'centre' rushes into space and becomes a comet. It is only after losing its velocity, and hence its fiery tail, that the 'Fiery Dragon' settles down into quiet and steady life as a regular respectable citizen of the sidereal family (*SD I 203*).

They originate, as stated earlier, out of the homogenous Element called the World-Soul—key words insinuating purity, wisdom and vibrancy. In China, a 'Yellow Dragon' is a symbol of high esteem:

"His wisdom and virtue are unfathomable . . . he does not go in company and does not live in herds. . . . He wanders in the wilds beyond the heavens. He goes and comes, fulfilling



* A fax from Richard F. Motzer which appears on the Art Bell web site (<http://www.artbell.com>) states that in a possible 1992 sighting of the comet by the American government, "the object was changing shape and switching from a circle then a square and finally to a triangle . . ." Could this object, outside the solar system at the time, be sending a message that may be understood by students of the Ancient Wisdom Tradition? Could the dragon be bringing in new wisdom from beyond our solar ring-pass-not? - *Editor*.

the decree (Karma); at the proper seasons if there is perfection he comes forth, if not he remains (invisible).” . . . “The Dragon feeds in the pure water of Wisdom and sports in the clear waters of Life” (SD II 365).

Sometimes referred to as a Serpent, “it is indeed . . . [f]rom the spheres of the stars wherein dwell the gods of light that wisdom descends to the inferior spheres” (SD II 367). In a rendering of *The Path of the Comet - From a Palmyra Leaf Brought From Old Mexico*, a dignified fixed star, in her glittering robe, reigns gloriously in harmony and balance. Distressed upon the sudden appearance of a comet and discontented by his ruddy appearance, she speaks in the name of all the universe of stars. To the headlong, heedless, violent vagrant she asks why “thou comest with thy fire-creating terror, and destroying harmony?” The fiery comet replies:

My fiery locks are in themselves a sign of the Creator. I am the Great Disciple of the Sacred Sun. I am myself incessantly bathed in burning heat that I may give it to undeveloped worlds, which I sweep in my flight. . . . Leave me to work my destiny, even though it be one of incessantly fierce discord. Terrible perhaps it seems to thee . . . I continue my career. . . . I am the restless Immortal Wanderer who cuts the circles. Everlastingly alone I break their eternal Harmony, lest they stagnate even as they move (TR 526-527).

The lack of fresh new impetus inevitably leads to stagnation. Stanza V, Sloka 1 of *The Secret Doctrine* refers to the Dragon of Wisdom producing Holy Circumgyrating Breaths—the Fiery Whirlwinds (SD I 106). The Fiery Whirlwinds refer to Fohat, the Messenger of the Gods. Fohat collects primordial dust in the form of balls, impels them to aggregate, scatters them in Space and they become wanderers (Comets). One can speculate that cosmic dust and cometary debris (which we know as fact

reach Earth) are vehicles for vibrant new energies. To Newton, cometary stuff replaced the “vapors” lost on Earth—stuff like water and chemical nutrients—which were necessary for the continuing fecundity on Earth. Invisible to the eye of flesh and greater than the human mind, development from as low as the mineral kingdom up to the processes of human consciousness, might be propelled onward and forward through the underlying new energies released into the solar system via comets. There must be many methods by which this occurs; comets could be one of the means. Too tenuous for objective proof, it may have a subjective aspect, invisible, inner, and formless, not occurring in a spacial sense.

“ . . . perhaps comets are harbingers of new knowledge, new energies and wisdom, piercing through the 'ring-pass-not' of our solar system . . . ”

There are no firm rules relating to comets. Nigel Calder writes that “[c]ometology has been a fertile field for both superstitious and scientific imaginations because the objects are spectacular . . . while solid facts about them have been very scarce, owing to their remote, flimsy and transient nature” (TCIC 101). Whence lies the truth between science and superstition? Can great men like Nostradamus be discounted and his prophecies thrown out

as superstitions? According to Henry C. Roberts in his interpretation of one of Nostradamus’ prophecies, “[t]he coming of the comet shall occur in the period of reconstruction, and there will be vengeance for wrongs inflicted on humanity by selfish interests” (CPN 63). No dates are given. Religious overtones notwithstanding, the following best sums it up:

Believing that every object and every event in the universe is arranged and directed by an Omnipotent Contriver, we must admit that when the Almighty formed the wondrous plan of creation, “foreseeing the end from the beginning,” he arranged the periods and the velocities of comets in such a manner that, although occasionally crossing the planetary orbits, they should not pass these orbits at the time when the planets

continued on page 21

Musings From A Secret Doctrine Class

Stanza IV Sloka III: From the effulgency of light--the Ray of ever-darkness--sprung in space the re-awakened energies (Dhyān Chohans): the one from the egg, the six and the five; then the three, the one, the four, the one, the five--the twice seven, the sum total. And these are: the essences, the flames, the elements, the builders, the numbers, the Arupa (formless), the Rupa (with bodies), and the force or Divine Man--the sum total. And from the Divine Man emanated the forms, the sparks, the sacred animals, and the messengers of the Sacred Fathers (the Pitris) within the Holy Four.

The commentaries state that the Three, the One, the Four, the one, the Five, (31415) or Pi, represent the numerical hierarchy of the Dhyān Chohans of the various orders, and of the inner and circumscribed world. The 31415 is both the number of the circle and the Svastika, and mathematically it represents the calculation of the ratio of the diameter to the circumference of a circle.

Blavatsky states that these beings are placed on the boundary of the Great Ring "Pass-Not" or the "rope of the Angels" that hedges off the phenomenal from the noumenal Kosmos (*SD I*, 90). The Lipika or Records of the higher order are the Entities that stand at this point between the upper and lower worlds, forming an impassable barrier between the personal Ego and the impersonal Self. They are closely related to the karma of a Universe and provide the plan for the formation of the worlds within it.

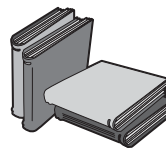
In keeping with the old axiom "As Above, So Below," it stands to reason then that by analogy, the Rings Pass-Not apply at all levels from the highest Universal Planes to the lowest of the manifested things. Everything has its own Ring Pass-Not. The Secret Doctrine states that even the highest Dhyān Chohans have not penetrated the mysteries beyond the visible Kosmos, this being therefore the consciousness achieved by them to that point, beyond which is as yet unknown. For the ordinary mortal their Ring Pass-Not is expanded in proportion to the state of their development, this being dictated by the karmic conditions and environment under which they are born, and by what karma they are weaving now. It is the destiny of humanity to expand its consciousness as cyclic evolution goes on.

In relation to evolution, Humanity, by its own efforts, must reach for the highest limits attainable within its Ring Pass-not, both at the personal and the collective levels. There are from time to time according to cyclic law, new thoughts or impulses released from beyond these Barriers. In these instances, the Ring Pass-Not is penetrated by those rare individuals who have been sanctioned, so to speak, by the Entities who guard the boundaries from both sides, within and without, to bring something from beyond, into the world. The Buddha and the Christ, for example, are such beings who introduced new thoughts into the world when the time was right to do so.

Even the Buddha, who, having attained such heights of spirituality as the sixth round of the third race, will be reincarnated on the next planet once the rest of that race has caught up to him. His Ring Pass-Not will be expanded even further as he progresses beyond his present state. Until the great "Day Be With Us," when all becomes one and all individualities recognise the unity of the One Life, will the Ring Pass-Not separating the personal Ego and the impersonal Self, be the barrier to cross.

L.A.

Book Reviews



Blavatsky, Freemasonry, & the Western Mystery Tradition. The 1996 Blavatsky Lecture by John Algeo. London: The Theosophical Society in England, 1996. 52 pp. Price: \$5.95 US.

Readers of Madame Blavatsky's writings are aware that she was no stranger to the mysteries of Freemasonry. Indeed, her detailed knowledge of the subject astounded many contemporary Masons who wondered how a woman could come by information they regarded not only as inviolably secret but also restricted to an exclusively male fraternity. Her attitude towards Freemasonry was typically forthright: while recognizing the spiritual truths it preserved, she was openly contemptuous of the hypocrisy associated with it, especially among its Western units.

Much has been written of Blavatsky's life, yet her Masonic interests and connections have generated surprisingly little research - at least any that has been published. The 1996 Blavatsky Lecture by John Algeo goes a long way to remedy this neglect.

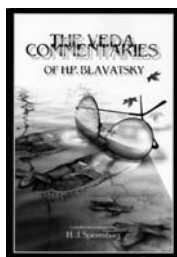
Algeo's study opens with an overview of the Western Mystery Tradition, and the position in it of Freemasonry. This is followed by a consideration of H.P.B.'s personal exposure to and understanding of Freemasonry, beginning with the lore she absorbed when still young from her great-grandfather's collection of esoteric writings. Her later close personal associations with various Masonic organizations are also

recounted. This section contains probably all that can be known of the subject based on extant documentation. Having regard, however, for H.P.B.'s invariable reticence when it came to esoteric matters she could not reveal, it is probable that her involvement went further, and much that is relevant will never be discovered.

The lecture continues by examining the shared "concepts, symbols, themes, ideas, modes of behaviour, attitudes and so on" (p.26) between Theosophy and Freemasonry. To this end, John Algeo skilfully employs the concept of a *meme*, which is defined in part as "... the cultural analog of a gene." The approach is effective, and permits the comparative consideration of such memes as "Ancient Cycles"; "The Architects and the Builders"; "Brotherhood"; "Hidden Adepts"; "Hierarchy"; "Solomon's Seal" and several others.

Well-researched, informative and most interestingly presented, *Blavatsky, Freemasonry & the Western Mystery Tradition* should prompt fresh interest in a hitherto little known side of Madame Blavatsky.

T.G.D.



The Veda Commentaries of H.P. Blavatsky, Compiled and Annotated by H.J. Spierenburg, San Diego, CA.: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 1996. xiv + 101 pages, ISBN 0-913004-98-7. Price: \$13.95 US.

The fifth book in Henk J. Spierenburg's series of 'Blavatsky Reference Books', *The Veda Commentaries of H.P. Blavatsky* follows in the style and manner of the previous four books by giving the established scholar a sometimes very different look at a subject matter of which he or she is familiar. To the theosophical reader it gives a concentrated look into one of the world's great traditions and how it corroborates and verifies the content and the existence of the Ancient Wisdom Tradition. The *Vedas* are the oldest known example of this tradition, one which modern scholars date at about 1300 BCE while Blavatsky points to what she sees as a more accurate dating at between 20,000 and 30,000 BCE.

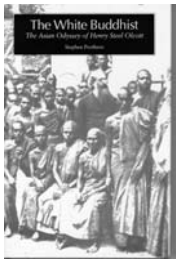
By looking at Blavatsky's commentaries, the origination of the dating followed by modern scholars can be found in the writings of the oriental scholars of her time. Scholars have not strayed too far from those original dates to this very day. This is one of the very good reasons that Spierenburg's compilations are so valuable. It brings together for Vedic scholars references from a sometimes unfamiliar literature so that they can see the source of their sometimes dogmatic lines of thought and are made aware of alternative paths which possess as good or better evidence.

The format of the book examines Blavatsky's comments about the history and nature of the *Vedas* and

the *Brāmanas*, and then looks at her comments on particular quotes taken from the various works in turn. This gives the interested reader some of the needed background to know what perspective Blavatsky is writing from and why she comments as she does on those passages. Naturally without some general understanding of the Ancient Wisdom Tradition, scholars will still find some of the commentary inaccessible, however, that is a deficiency brought to the book by the reader.

There will come a time when the scholarly community will take a deeper interest in the work of H.P. Blavatsky, and when that time comes *The Veda Commentaries*, in particular, and the 'Blavatsky Reference Books', in general, are going to prove a valuable resource to the academic community. Until that time, the Theosophical community will have another valuable tool to continue and deepen its own understanding of this tradition.

R.B.M.



The White Buddhist, The Asian Odyssey of Henry Steel Olcott by Stephen Prothero, Indiana University Press 1996 ISBN 0-253-33014-9, xiii plus 242 pages (38 pages notes, 14 bibliography, 8 index). Price: \$35.00 US.

Stephen Prothero's *The White Buddhist, The Asian Odyssey of Henry Steel Olcott* appears to be misnamed. It might be more appropriately titled:

A Thesis on Religious Reform in Asia. This book is, as warned by the author in the introduction, a critical work. It is more (by the author's own admission) a religious thesis or dissertation, that selectively uses and interprets Olcott's life and actions to support the author's theorem, than it is a biographical account.

The author's reference in the introduction to the comedic nature of the narrative, seems more attributable to the author's sardonic commentary and organization of data, than to the life situations of Olcott. Serious debate between theosophists and detractors are described as squabbles, and the author's use of language portrays Olcott as inherently inept and manipulative.

The author's stated attempt to paint an accurate portrait of Olcott (viii) may not be achievable given the limitations of the three stated purposes of this narrative. These purposes are:

- to present a sympathetic yet scholarly interpretation of Olcott's *adult life*^{*}, especially his

work on behalf of Buddhism and Hinduism in Asia;

- second, to use *that life*^{*} as *an opportunity*^{*} to interpret the broader nineteenth century American encounter with the religions of Asia;
- and third, to commend to scholars in religious studies the linguistic category of "creolization"[†] as a useful devise for analyzing situations of cultural contact.

The subject's portrait can only be glimpsed through the veil created by the author's analysis and perspective of the religious atmosphere of that time.

Although this book is true to its stated purpose, it uses Olcott's "life" as an object at its expense.

Stephen Prothero bangs away repeatedly throughout the book at his concept of "creolization" coupled with his perception of "Protestantism" of all Olcott's ideals, and the reformative nature of all Olcott's endeavors; to the extent that Olcott's valid role as administrator and innovator of philosophical approaches are lost. Prothero credits Olcott not only with universal and progressive reforms, but at the

. . . *continued on page 21*

* emphasis mine; I note that Prothero refers to Olcott's life as if it were an object, not his work, his endeavor, journey, or progress.

† "Creolization" is a linguistic interpretive tool that Stephen Prothero has "borrowed." It is normally used to demonstrate a new form of language which is the blended transformation that sometimes results from blending cultures. In this case, Prothero takes the concept beyond linguistic or cultural applications to apply it to his perception of faith.

THEOSOPHICAL FRIENDS REMEMBERED

William W. Johnstone



It was with sadness that the death of William “Bill” Johnstone was noted in the December 1996 issue of *Theosophy in New Zealand*. He passed away on November 2, 1996 at the age of 62 years.

Rogelle and I met Bill at Tekels Park in England at the 1986 European School of Theosophy. He was

the first person we encountered upon our arrival there. During the following two weeks we spent a lot of free time together, discussing various theosophical issues and exchanging ideas. At that time Bill was Assistant General Secretary and he went on to serve a five year term as General Secretary of T.S. in New Zealand beginning a year or so later.

Bill spent most of his life involved with farming and he died at his son’s farm near Te Kuite following a few months’ illness. T.S. in New Zealand’s headquarters in Auckland is quite a distance from Otorohanga where he was living at the time of his

involvement with the national society. In a letter received in March 1989, Bill stated “. . . I spend about as much time in Auckland as at home — so [I] have become a sort of split personality.”

Bill sought unity in theosophical affairs and was quite distressed with regards to the ousting of T.S. in Canada from the international society at Adyar in January 1992; he was instrumental in arranging for numerous theosophical lecturers from around the world to visit New Zealand; he spoke fondly of Geoffrey Hodson whom he assisted with editing the book *Basic Theosophy*.

In Memoriam published in *Theosophy in New Zealand* (Dec. 1996) includes the following tribute: “Bill’s virtues and qualities were many. Hardworking and with bursts of great energy, Bill was tireless in promoting and forwarding the work of the Theosophical Society, which he saw as the master’s work. Working at the National level as he did for many years, his devotion and integrity were unquestioned. Although a strong leader, Bill was very humble about his own abilities.”

Farewell, Bill! Our condolences to Colleen and family.

Ernest Pelletier



Ellen Sue Politella (nee Duke)

February 12, 1924 - September 4, 1996



For some years Edmonton T.S. has directed much of its efforts toward establishing a research library centre for theosophical studies. It was while working on ETS Library’s collection of *Theosophical Quarterly* that we were directed to Sue whose husband, Dr. Joseph Politella, had been a theosophical

student of the New York group lineage, and who had compiled an Index for this collection. Sue came to Edmonton in May 1990. While here she presented a “Creativity Workshop” and together we spent a few days in the Alberta Rockies.

While Sue was never a member of a theosophical group, she was very supportive of her husband’s leanings and very protective of Joe’s library and theosophical items following his death in 1975. Sue had been seeking a suitable ‘home’ for the bust of Wm. Q. Judge which had been in Joe’s care. E.T.S. had been reprinting W.Q.J.’s materials (e.g., *The Path*, *Theosophical Forum*, *Theosophical Forum, New Series*, etc.) as part of its republishing program. It

was at that time that she asked us (Ernest and Rogelle Pelletier) if we would continue the lineage for the care of the W.Q.J. bust.

The obituary which appeared in the local paper in Orrville, Ohio where Sue lived, included the following summary: "After receiving her undergraduate degree in philosophy and religion from Kent State University and her master's degree from Oberlin, she continued her doctoral studies in history at Kent. She began teaching at the University of Akron - Wayne College when it opened in 1972, having begun her teaching career at Kent State. She retired as an associate professor of history emeritus in 1993." In addition, Sue did public lecturing, freelance writing, photojournalism, ghostwriting and editing. She also ran a regular humor column in the *Orrville Courier Crescent* for nearly a decade. Many

of these columns were included in her book, "*The Cat Strikes Back and Other Tales*" which was published in 1993.

Sue once stated that "When you fail to grow, you begin to die a little. We are all intended to grow in every direction. All of life is growth."¹ She exemplified this philosophy in her life. Sue was a very considerate individual who loved humor and who believed in spreading good cheer. In her book, *The Cat Strikes Back*, she states ". . . [t]here are other ways . . . to perpetuate yourself. You could write a book or have your name carved on a monument or have a hybrid rose named after you. You could even be so nice that everyone would remember you forever . . ."²

Ernest Pelletier

1. *Sue Politella Never Stopped Growing* by Jon Kinney, editorial director for Spectrum Publications. [Included in Memorial for Sue at The University of Akron - Wayne College on September 29, 1996.]
2. Sue Politella, *The Cat Strikes Back and Other Tales*. (Orville, OH: Sue Politella, 1993) 82.



Viewpoint Aquarius

In a notice dated January 1997, issued by the Editor, Jean Coulsting, it was announced that *Viewpoint Aquarius* was being discontinued.

Viewpoint Aquarius had been in continuous publication since early 1972. Rex Dutta originated the idea of the magazine, contributed the lead article and compiled and commented on the Flying Saucer Section. Following his death in August 1989 it had been decided to discontinue publication. This was reconsidered some months later and a modified publication resumed with the issue of Number 188, December 1989/January 1990. Number 192, August/September 1990 saw the magazine renamed *The Viewpoint Aquarius Study Centre*. Frank Coulsting produced the Yoga/Meditation/Healing Section of the magazine. Unfortunately, Frank passed away in July 1996 leaving Jean, who was responsible for the Theosophy Section, to carry on. With the absence of both Rex and Frank, Jean has decided to cease publication. The last number produced, in the 26th year of publication, was Number 227.

We regret the loss of this publication from the theosophical scene. The study of *The Key to Theosophy* and *The Secret Doctrine* were always stimulating, the Flying Saucer Section was always presented on a positive, thought-provoking note, and the Yoga/Meditation/Healing Section always provided soothing relief for our busy and stressful everyday lives.

Mention was often made within the publication of the assistance provided by individuals facetiously referred to as the 'tame slaves.' Apparently some of the younger 'tame slaves' are putting Theosophy on the Internet. The title of the site is *HPB Lodge*. The World Wide Web (Internet) address is: http://members.aol.com/HPB_Lodge/welcome.htm and the email address is: HPB_Lodge@aol.com

Thank you, Jean and company, for the years of dedication to a 'different' and enlightening publication. *Viewpoint Aquarius* will be sincerely missed.

Rogelle Pelletier

DOGMA

Dogma? Faith? These are the right and left pillars of every soul-crushing theology. Theosophists have no dogmas, exact no blind faith. Theosophists are ever ready to abandon every idea that is proved erroneous upon strictly logical deductions. . . . Dogmas are the toys that amuse and can satisfy but unreasoning children. They are the offspring of human speculation and prejudiced fancy. . . . Realizing as they do the boundlessness of the absolute truth, Theosophists repudiate all claims to infallibility. The most cherished preconceptions, the most "pious hope," the strongest "master passion," they sweep aside like dust from their path when their error is pointed out. Their highest hope is to approximate the truth; that they have succeeded . . . they think proved in their conviction that they know nothing in comparison with what is to be learned; in their sacrifice of every pet theory and prompting of emotionalism at the shrine of Fact; and in their absolute and unqualified repudiation of everything that smacks of "dogma."

- *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. I, 304.



JUST PUBLISHED

A Cumulative Index for *LUCIFER* (Vols. I - XX)

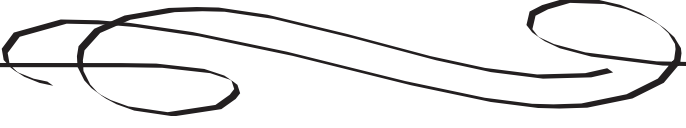
This periodical, founded by H.P. Blavatsky, was recognized as one of the best metaphysical magazines of its time. The Index was compiled by Ted G. Davy and was formatted to the dimensions of the original volumes. It also includes three appendices: Book Reviews by Authors and by Titles, Theosophical and Mystic Publications, and Theosophical Activities.

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. . . **Olcott** continued from page 17

same time maintains Olcott's "life" position was limited by his Puritan roots. In conflict with his view of Olcott as progressive, and in conflict with the few glimpses into Olcott's personal "life", the analysis that he gives always appears directed to support (or remain consistent with) one religious theorist or another. This "interpretation of Olcott's life" as it relates to religious history, is just that, interpretive. However well correlated and scholarly, with copious reference to the works of religious theorists and historians, Prothero appears to have tried to support his theory of "Creolization" through his analysis of Olcott's work, and posits repeatedly that although Olcott's vocabulary was that of Eastern religion, (I would have called it philosophy), his grammar retained and reflected liberal Protestantism, with a theosophical accent.

I tend to agree with K. Paul Johnson's review in the Fall '96 *Gnosis* that the book is fully successful in its own terms, however readers in search of insight into Olcott's life must continue to wait for an actual

biography which may address Olcott's work in a more objective manner. The fact that this has never been attempted may have been exactly what Olcott wanted, as Stephen Prothero appears to have correctly surmised.

Joan Wiltse-Charters

Editor's Note - The reviewer of this article seems to highlight the inadequacies of the Western Scholastic tradition in her description of this book. The Western approach of analyzing things into their parts without reference to the whole seems apparent. This particular approach is reflective of a certain quality of mind, wherein an object, person, etc. is defined in terms of some minor quality that is but one aspect of a much more complex noumenal essence. Until scholars learn to incorporate a top-down approach and take into consideration the essential whole (as well as the parts), we will continue to limit ourselves in our ability to understand this Maya that we call the physical world.



. . . **Comet** continued from page 14

were in their immediate vicinity. And should such an event ever occur, we may rest assured that it is in perfect accordance with the plan and the will of Omnipotence, and that it is, on the

whole, subservient to the happiness and order of the intelligent universe, and the ends intended by the Divine government.

-Thomas Dick, 1850 (*Comet* 291).

A Student

(Coincidentally: within the Earth perihelion period of comet Hale-Bopp, Mars opposition day is on March 17th [Mars & Earth aligned on the same side of the sun]; spring equinox is March 22nd; a deep partial lunar eclipse occurs March 23rd [ie 92%], bringing in Easter [March 30th] which is always dated to be the 1st Sunday after the full moon following the vernal equinox; Mercury begins its best appearance of the year in the evening sky on March 29th. Antedating all of this, a total solar eclipse occurred over Mongolia and Siberia on March 9th. A busy month!)

Abbreviations of Works Cited

- Comet* Sagan, Carl, and Ann Druyan. *Comet*. New York: Random House, 1985.
- CPN* Roberts, Henry C. *The Complete Prophecies of Nostradamus*. Oyster Bay, NY: Nostradamus Co., 1982.
- Henry VI* Shakespeare, William. *King Henry the VI*.
- SD* Blavatsky, H.P. *The Secret Doctrine*. 2 vols. Los Angeles: The Theosophy Company, 1974.
- TCIC* Calder, Nigel. *The Comet is Coming*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1980.
- TR* M.F.W. "The Path of the Comet - From a Palmyra Leaf Brought From Old Mexico." *The Theosophical Review* Aug. 1906: 526-527.

. . . **Bailey** continued from page 11

Tibetan, but a Tibetan Mahatma, could be the source of teachings using “God.” Although the vast majority of theosophists are believers in a God, many of the more serious students accept as authoritative K.H.’s clear statements from Mahatma Letter 10: “Neither our philosophy nor ourselves believe in a God, least of all in one whose pronoun necessitates a capital H. . . . Therefore, we deny God both as philosophers and as Buddhists.”¹¹ Yet Rājani Kant Brahmachārin, a Hindu believer in God on pilgrimage in Tibet, tells us of his meeting with Mahatma K.H.: “As long as I was there with the said Lama, he never persuaded me to accept Buddhism or any other religion, but only said, ‘Hinduism is the best religion; you should believe in the Lord Mahādeva—he will do good to you.’”¹² If we accept this account as genuine, and Blavatsky certainly did, as she printed it in proof of the existence of the Mahatmas, whether it was K.H. or another Tibetan Mahatma, we have a Mahatma encouraging a believer’s belief in a God. Must we then conclude that these Mahatmas are at best inconsistent, or at worst invented by Blavatsky? Most of us, I believe, would prefer to take a more charitable view and allow that a Tibetan Mahatma could himself hold very distinct views denying the existence of God, and yet give teachings to specific individuals which allow and even encourage their already existing belief in God. For

research to be valid it cannot use two sets of standards. If we hold a charitable view toward our own teachings, to be consistent we must allow the possibility that a Tibetan Mahatma who does not believe in God, when addressing a population which does believe in God, might choose a presentation which allows and even encourages that belief.

The Bailey students, who are predominantly Christian or New Age, are less likely to undertake the study of a book which is Buddhist and at least 1,500 years old, even one by Maitreya. So I have written this article to Theosophists who in their search for truth may wish to study the actual book used in Tibet, the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*. The book is extremely concise and difficult, giving one technical term after another, all of which require extensive explanation. Thus Tsong-kha-pa’s commentary on its mere 273 verses covers 710 folios, or 1,420 pages. Because of its complexity, even with the flowering of Tibetan Buddhism in the West in the last couple decades, no new books on it have so far reached the public. Much new material on it, however, has become available in the academic community since the early 1930s; and I have utilized this in preparing a new Sanskrit-Tibetan edition of it, correcting the errors found in the 1929 edition, for the benefit of those who wish to study it in the original. 🌸

1. *Letters on Occult Meditation*, by Alice Bailey, 1922, p. 325.
2. From *Śālistamba Sūtra and Its Indian Commentaries*, by Jeffrey D. Schoening, Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien, 1995, vol. 1, p. 26, referring to: “Who is Byañ chub rdzu ’phrul? Tibetan and non-Tibetan Commentaries on the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* - A Survey of the Literature,” by Ernst Steinkellner, *Berliner Indologische Studien*, vol. 4/5 1989, p. 235.
3. “J’Accuse: An Examination of the Hodgson Report of 1885,” *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, vol. 53, 1986.
4. *The Rays and the Initiations*, by Alice Bailey, 1960, p. 663.
5. “The Doctrine of Prajñā pāramitā as exposed in the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* of Maitreya,” *Acta Orientalia*, vol. XI, 1932, reprint, Talent, Oregon: Canon Publications, 1984, p. 21.
6. *ibid.*, p. 15.
7. *Letters on Occult Meditation*, by Alice Bailey, 1922, p. 339. Note that this book, like *Initiation, Human and Solar*, was published in 1922; and both are said by Bailey to consist of material received by her (through mental telepathy) starting in the late Fall of 1919.
8. From preface by Lamotte to *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa: The Treatise on Action by Vasubandhu*, by Étienne Lamotte, English translation by Leo M. Pruden, Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1988, p. 10.
9. *Doctrine of Prajñā-pāramitā as exposed in the Abhisamayālaṅkāra of Maitreya*, p. 7.
10. See: *What the Buddha Taught*, by Walpola Rahula, chap. VI, “The Doctrine of No-Soul: Anatta.”
11. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, chronological edition, pp. 269-70.
12. “Interview with a Mahātmā,” first published in *The Theosophist*, Aug. 1884, then reprinted in *Five Years of Theosophy*, 1885.



The Watcher

Upon this world there walks a man
In a quiet, lonely walk,
Watching the human race perform
And listening to their senseless talk.

He knows their plans are futile
In the grand design of life,
And there simply is no reason
For all their quarrels and strife!

He sees the plans of people
As though they were a dream to see,
Their lives a tiny second
In time's eternity!!

And when that second passes
And their plans are left behind
The only thing that matters is
Just how they've trained their mind!!

He wishes he could tell them,
These slow and backward kin,
That where they "will be" all depends
On "what" they've already been!!!

But he must quietly walk this world
Feeling totally displaced,
A man lost both in time and space
From this world's future race!!!

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Fohat is the Steed, Thought is the Rider

It is the "bridge" by which the "Ideas" existing in the "Divine Thought" are impressed on Cosmic substance as the "laws of Nature." Fohat is thus the dynamic energy of Cosmic Ideation; or, regarded from the other side, it is the intelligent medium, the guiding power of all manifestation. . . . Thus from Spirit, or Cosmic Ideation, comes our consciousness; from Cosmic Substance the several vehicles in which that consciousness is individualized and attains to self – or reflective – consciousness; while Fohat, in its various manifestations, is the mysterious link between Mind and Matter, the animating principle electrifying every atom into life. – Secret Doctrine I, 16



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