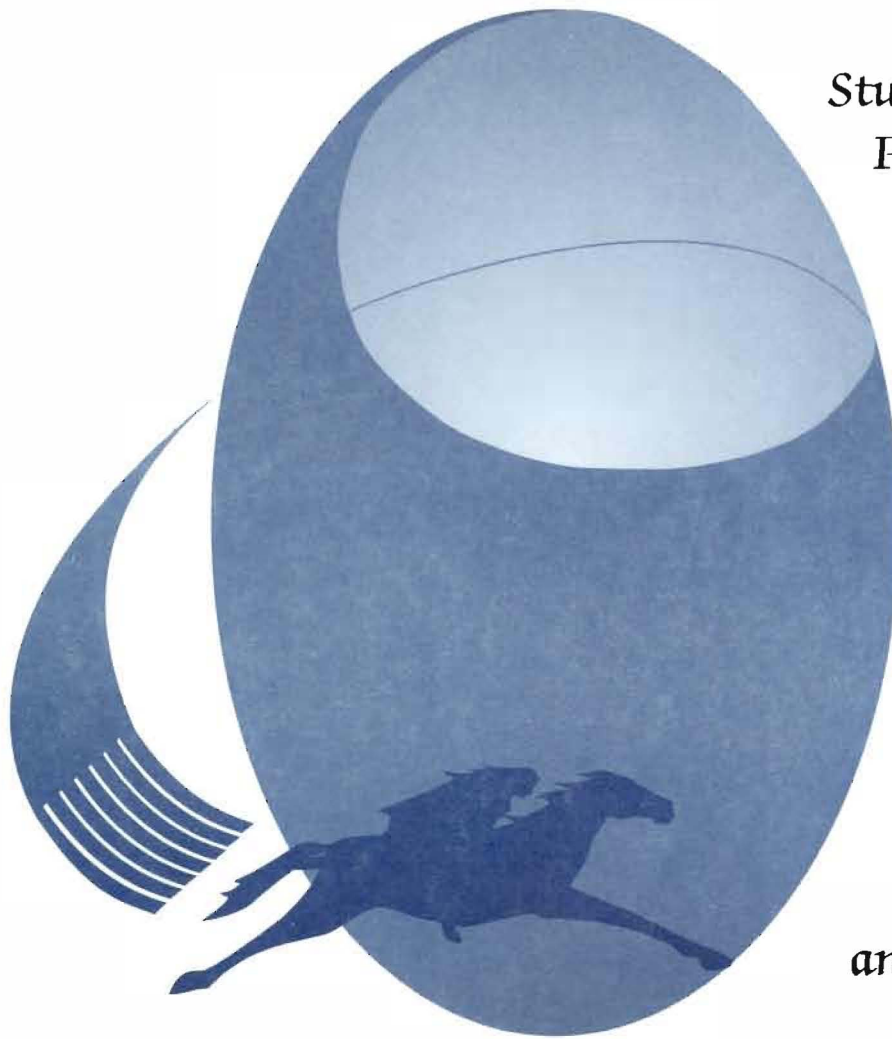


FOHAT

Volume V, Number 1

Spring 2001



*Studying Annie Besant's
Palm: An Historical
Perspective*

*The Path Between
Good and Evil*

*Emptiness and
Essence in the
Gelugpa World*

*Cosmic Karma
and Global Cataclysms*

A Vehicle for the Ancient Wisdom Tradition

The Blavatsky Archives

The Blavatsky Archives (<http://blavatskyarchives.com>) continues to publish rare source material on Madame Blavatsky and the Mahatmas. At the end of December 2000, there were more than 227 documents on the website with hundreds of other items being processed for publication in 2001.

Some of the more important recently published items are as follows:

- “Blavatsky and the Theosophists” by Vera P. Zhelihovsky. Newly translated from the Russian by G.T. [This article in Russian originally appeared in “Odesskiy Vestnik,” No.123, June 5, 1884, pp.1-3 and was reprinted in “Rebus,” No. 28, July 15, 1884, pp.263-265 and No. 29, July 22, 1884, pp.273-275.]
- “Madame H.P. Blavatsky As I Knew Her” by N. D. Khandalvala. Contains a number of H.P.B.’s letters. [Reprinted from “The Theosophist” (Adyar, Madras, India), June 1929, pp.213-222 and July 1929, pp.309-318.]
- “Helena Petrovna Blavatsky” by Vera Petrovna de Zhelihovsky (H.P.B.’s sister). A 44-page biographical sketch of H.P.B. [Reprinted from “Lucifer” (London), Nov. 15, 1894 - April 15, 1895.]
- “Henry Kiddle and the Mahatma; or, H.K. versus K.H.: An Important Chapter in the History of the Psychical Phenomena of the Nineteenth Century” by William Emmette Coleman. [An extremely rare, lengthy “hostile” article on Madame Blavatsky and the “Kiddle Incident” which was published in “The Carrier Dove,” a San Francisco spiritualistic magazine, in 1890 and 1891.]
- “Mrs. Holloway and the Mahatmas: Published and Unpublished Mahatma Letters to and about Mrs. Laura C. Holloway.” Collected and arranged by Daniel H. Caldwell. Contains more than a dozen “never before” published Mahatma Letters from the Masters K.H. and M. The letters were written in 1884.

The Blavatsky Archives also contains never before published articles and letters of H.P.B.

Also visit our “HPB Photo Gallery” at: <http://blavatskyarchives.com/hpbphotosc.htm>. The collection of Blavatsky material is an ongoing process. We invite submissions and documents from Blavatsky students and scholars.

Daniel H. Caldwell
info@blavatskyarchives.com
<http://blavatskyarchives.com>

Wizards Bookshelf

This small enterprise was started in 1972 to take advantage of the cyclic resurgence of eastern thought in the West, in the last quarter of the century. It was born of the conviction that references to the *Secret Doctrine* were included for a reason. As the SD states, it is a basic *outline* of Nature’s plan, full of hints and obscure suggestions, demanding dedicated study to unravel its treasures. There is not space enough to adequately treat of the subject in only 1,500 pages. Further, the subjects were largely unfamiliar to the western mind, and many works cited were seldom found even in large libraries. So, to help provide basic background, as one doesn’t study trigonometry without learning arithmetic first, the more often mentioned SD references were reprinted. This has had a number of ancillary benefits. The critics who claimed HPB had invented these titles, were silenced. Students began to gain some confidence with exposure, and were encouraged to press on. Sales through two distributors expanded throughout the English speaking world, largely selling via small metaphysical bookstores. As the *Secret Doctrine Reference Series*, they tended to act as an advertisement for the SD. Of course they provided helpful background in their own right for their subjects—and, as the SD will be as much as we can absorb (and deserve) for many long years, these titles will guarantee future generations access to works that might otherwise be lost.

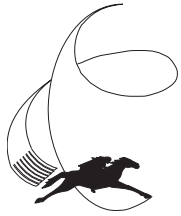
To date 45 titles have been issued, the most popular being *The Book of Enoch*, (40,000) and on the other extreme, *The Surya Siddhanta* (832). After 20 or more years, a number of them having largely satisfied the demand, have gone out of print, due to the economics of publishing and the changing scene. Still, 22 remain in print, and the Wiz List includes about 100 titles from other theosophical publishers, as a service to students. Many out of print Wiz titles are found on the used market at elevated prices, such as a recent listing of *Mythological Astronomy of the Ancients*, at \$320.00, *Gnostics and Their Remains*, at \$150.00, etc. Anyone who sells a Wiz title for less than they paid for it is throwing money away.

It has been satisfying to be a part of the cycle, and the owner has a feeling of extreme gratitude for those who have helped, both seen and *unseen*.

For more information, please contact:

Wizards Bookshelf
Box 6600
San Diego CA
92166

or call: (619) 258-0049



FOHAT

Volume V, No. 1
Spring 2001

A Quarterly Publication of Edmonton Theosophical Society

Editor

Robert Bruce MacDonald

Managing Editor

JoAnne MacDonald

Assistant Editors

Rogelle Pelletier
Doloresse Brisson

Publisher

Edmonton Theosophical
Society

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.

Any articles or correspondence may be sent to:

FOHAT
Box 4587
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T6E 5G4

E-mail: fohat@planet.eon.net
Fax: (780) 438-1717

Subscription Rates:

1 year (4 issues)
\$15.00 Cdn in Canada
\$15.00 US in U.S.A.
\$20.00 US international

Become an
Associate of Edmonton TS
and help support its efforts.

Additional \$10.00
Associates receive: **ETS Newsletter**

Cover Design: Donna Pinkard

ISSN 1205-9676

Contents

Editorial	4
Letters to the Editor	5
Annie Besant: Her Passions and Her Relationships - Part II <i>by Ernest Pelletier</i>	6
Getting Caught in the Polarized World of Good and Evil <i>by Robert Bruce MacDonald</i>	12
Celestial Violence and Human Karma <i>by Alexander Pogue</i>	14
The Gelugpa View of Svabhāva in Relation to Theosophy <i>by David Reigle</i>	17
<i>Cosmic Consciousness</i> Centenary <i>by T.G.D.</i>	20
Statement Regarding Dr. John Cooper's Compilation of the Collected Correspondence of Madame Blavatsky <i>by Dr. Gregory Tillett</i>	20
Book Review	23

JUSTICE

In 1890, *The Path* was heading into its fifth year of publication under William Q. Judge. One century and eleven years later, *Fohat* is following the lead of its earlier sister publication and heading into its fifth year. *Fohat* would like to remind readers of what Judge had to say about fifth years. We are interested also in the significance of the “eleven” in “[o]ne century and eleven years later.” We are interested in what Judge had to say because of the close alliance held by TS in Canada and later Edmonton Theosophical Society to Judge and the principles that he laid down here in North America. We are interested in the “eleven” because of injustices that have been allowed to live within the Society.

In an editorial titled “*The Path’s* Fifth Year,” Judge explains to the readership the significance of year five. The editorial in its entirety is as follows:

Our Magazine has turned the last corner of the square and now enters upon its fifth year. Whether it shall live ten or twenty years longer we know not, but as the future grows from the present and the past is ever being repeated in the future, so its four years of activity just ended are not dead, for they will reproduce their influences in the years that are to come until their force is increased by being swallowed up in those that are stronger.

In the third month of the first year of *The Path* its death within the year was predicted, but fate has ruled otherwise, and we have been accorded the opportunity of attempting to erect the four pillars of Sincerity, Devotion, Determination of Purpose, and Integrity. This year will decide what success has attended the attempt. For as five is the number of *Light*, it will reveal all, and by its power as *Justice* and *Nemesis* it will appropriately measure out the compensation, since its position in the centre between 1 and 9 makes of it the middle of the balance, for although the series of 9 is not completed, yet when 5 is reached the future is potentially present up to 9. We can rely then only on the Law and not upon the favor of any one; —this we do with cheerfulness.

The year just closed has been a pleasant one, revealing new earnest hearts and willing hands. Let us press forward with new energy in the work of the next four years, for when the second fifth is reached an important era for theosophists and the world will be at hand, when the

result of again being weighed in the balance of events will be more serious than it is now.

“Point out the ‘Way’—however dimly and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their Path in darkness.”

Judge ended his association with *The Path* in 1896 at his death. One hundred years later *Fohat* was conceived and its first issue printed March 21, 1997. This was five years almost to the day after Ernest Pelletier, the President of ETS, and Rogelle Pelletier received personally for safekeeping one of a limited number of known death masks made at Judge’s death. This particular mask’s previous home was that of one of the staunchest supporting branches of Judge and the original program: the New York Group. This bust had made its way from 144 Madison Avenue to ETS headquarters at 14004, also on an avenue in Edmonton. It is curious how 144 plays prominently in both addresses. ETS feels as if the torch that Ernest Hargrove and his co-workers kept burning for so many years has been passed into the safekeeping of Ernest Pelletier and his co-workers. That the bust found its way to Edmonton is due in large part to the efforts of ETS in republishing rare theosophical material including *The Path* and other William Q. Judge and related materials. ETS was able to do this due to another pro-Judge branch in Santa Cruz. The son of one of the Santa Cruz members found his way to Edmonton after hearing of the pro-Judge stand here in Canada and Canada’s adherence to the original program as set down by the founders. This man, Henry Earl Russell, son of Lizzie Arthur Russell, willed to Edmonton his life savings which became The Lizzie Arthur Russell Theosophical Memorial Trust. It is this bequest that allowed Edmonton to do the republishing work it did to help keep the memory of Judge alive along with his writings in their original format. This trust came into being in 1982, ten years before receipt of the bust and fifteen years before the founding of the magazine. Using the five year rule, the trust has borne much fruit through the efforts of ETS which seems to be the third point in a Judge and original program triangle that spans the United States and finds its third point in the Canadian north.

If the spirit of Judge is now with us, then the first order of business for our Magazine is to right the injustices of the past. The eleventh card in the Tarot Deck is that of “Justice.” We are reminded by Ernest

Pelletier of the injustices suffered by William Q. Judge in the second part of his historically important article, "Annie Besant: Her Passions and Her Relationships." Because the membership misunderstood its first object, they allowed one of its most gifted members to lead a split membership away from the original program as set down by the founding members. In the process, one of those founding members ended up dying of a broken heart. In the article "Getting Caught in the Polarized World of Good and Evil," Robert Bruce MacDonald tries to see what might be learned—through a look at good and evil—about the first object, after living with this century-old wound. This is extremely important at this time as we see in the threat posed to the work of Dr. John Cooper. Dr. Gregory Tillett relates in his "Statement Regarding Dr. John Cooper's Compilation of the Collected Correspondence of Madame Blavatsky" how forces are still at work interfering with the flow of information from this early period. Dr. John Cooper has been nothing but a friend to the Theosophical Society and I hope we all stand behind him like brothers and direct the leaders of the Society to do right by this man. If we are to put brotherhood before dogma and creed, then there can be nothing in those letters capable of hurting anyone or any part of the Society. If certain dogmas and creeds remain more important than the first object, then we have learned nothing.

Again using Judge's rule of five but this time taking one year to equal twenty-five, we can see that the first four periods of the Theosophical Society would in-

clude 1875-1975. The fifth period would then be 1975-2000. Blavatsky and the Masters always looked to getting the Society through until the year 2000. Does this possibly give us a clue why? If the last twenty-five years have been a recapitulation of the century before that, then the behaviour of the members becomes extremely significant starting this year. The Society is starting its next cycle of four. It is time to start applying the lessons that we have learned. Perhaps reconciling the injustices of the past would be a good way to start. *Fohat* has tried to air in its pages the festering wounds of the Society in hope that they would finally be addressed. The Editor has been criticized for being overly harsh with respect to an historian who claims Blavatsky, with the aid of others, created the Masters and deceived Theosophists and the world into believing in their existence. If members believe that the Society was founded on deception, then why do they continue to be members of such a Society? The most basic of occult laws indicate that the tree is in the seed and if the seed is deformed, so will the tree be deformed. Either you believe the Society to be rooted in deception or you do not, and if you do not then it is your duty to rebuff all attempts to smear the good name of the founders and by extension the Society. Do not believe for a moment that if we allow attacks on the founders to go unchecked that the Society will not be next. As Theosophists we are all of the One, we are all Brothers—let's start acting like Brothers and stand up for one another, no one else is going to do it.



Letters to the Editor:

Annie Besant

I have just received *Fohat* IV, 4 and read through [the] article on Annie Besant. . . . I had read in different places all that [is] included in it by way of references but it would have been a mammoth task to have collected it together and arranged it. . . . I look forward to the next part. The article should be printed separately because of all [that has been] brought together in one place. Ideal for reference by students interested in "Truth".

Geoffrey Farthing
England

Plate Tectonics

I would like to draw your attention to the article 'Sunken continents versus continental drift', which

I have just put on the internet (<http://our-world.compuserve.com/homepages/dp5/sunken.htm>). It is a somewhat simplified version (but containing additional references to theosophical literature) of my article 'Plate tectonics: a paradigm under threat', which has just been published in the *Journal of Scientific Exploration* (<http://our-world.compuserve.com/homepages/dp5/tecto.htm>). . . . [Y]ou might want to mention it, given the pro-plate-tectonic sentiments expressed by some of your contributors in previous issues. Either plate tectonics is flawed, or the geology of the *Secret Doctrine* is flawed.

David Pratt
The Netherlands

ANNIE BESANT

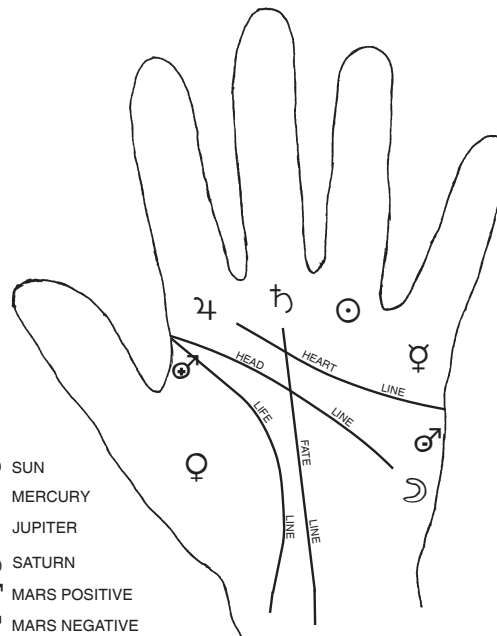
HER PASSIONS AND HER RELATIONSHIPS - PART II

Ernest Pelletier

As the hand is an extension of the mind, it is only logical that whatever motivated Annie Besant would be impressed in her hands.⁵⁴ Accordingly, one who is proficient in palm reading can, with a sufficient print of the hand if not the actual hand itself, determine with remarkable accuracy one's tendencies and even the motivational forces at that time. The hand changes as the mind changes but one's natural tendencies are generally imprinted on the hand at birth to the degree that reflects one's character carried over from prior incarnations.⁵⁵

From the shape of the hand, the fingers, the mounts, the lines in the palm and the intersecting lines, one properly trained can determine to a greater or lesser degree one's characteristics. Short of having the actual hands at the precise moment for a concise analytical view of the unfoldment of events, a hand frozen in time, that is, a good quality hand print taken at the time of critical issues in the life of that individual, is used for readings. A well-trained palmist can determine events happening or about to happen in one's life, even secrets being kept from loved ones.

Both Madame Blavatsky and William Q. Judge have been known to utilize the services of palmists. As recounted in his book, *Mysteries and Romances of the World's Greatest Occultists*, Cheiro wrote that it was near the end of March 1889 when Madame Blavatsky invited him to visit her on two occasions. She apparently requested Cheiro to read her palm and advise her "how much longer I must wait for my release",⁵⁶ adding "I want to have some of my own theories confirmed".⁵⁷ Following the reading Madame Blavatsky was quoted as saying "Thank you, Cheiro, you have told me exactly what I want to know. . . . Your warning will do me good, for I will now put my papers in order and prepare in earnest for the short time that lies before me."⁵⁸



- ☉ SUN
- ☿ MERCURY
- ♃ JUPITER
- ♄ SATURN
- ♂ MARS POSITIVE
- ♂ MARS NEGATIVE
- ♀ VENUS
- ☾ MOON

THE MAP OF THE HAND

DESCRIPTION OF THE FINGERS; four in number, each divided into three Phalanges: the first or nail one; the second; and the third connecting to the Hand Proper. The Thumb; composed of two phalanges only, as the lower portion of the thumb, attached to the wrist, is also one of the five metacarpal bones forming the Palm proper, and not a phalanx. (*The Study of Palmistry for Professional Purposes by Comte C. de Saint-Germain, A.B., LL. M.*)

Before Mme. Blavatsky's death she made arrangements for Cheiro to meet with a newcomer to the ranks of the Theosophical Society, Mrs. Annie Besant. In the book, *Palmistry The Language of The Hand* by Cheiro the Palmist, one of the prints included is that of Annie Besant's right hand. It is dated July 22nd, 1894. Unfortunately Cheiro did not provide a reading of Annie Besant's palm at the time the imprint was taken, although he did provide some remarks about her much later.

⁵⁴ Count Louis Hamon better known as "Cheiro" the noted palmist at the turn of the last century, stated: "As is the mind, so is the form' is the stand-point from which I defend a legitimate and scientific study of the hand." From: "The Mind and the Hand", *Metaphysical Magazine*, September 1895, p.177.

⁵⁵ Character is defined here as the spiritual qualities of the skandhas carried over from previous births which follow the Pilgrim or Spiritual Monad from incarnation to incarnation and which give that spiritual entity its attributes or tools to work with in this life.

⁵⁶ *Mysteries and Romances of the World's Greatest Occultists*, by Cheiro (Count Louis Hamon), London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1935) p.176.

⁵⁷ *Mysteries and Romances of the World's Greatest Occultists*, by Cheiro p.177.

⁵⁸ *Mysteries and Romances of the World's Greatest Occultists*, by Cheiro p.178.

Edmonton is home to Dr. Art Basu,⁵⁹ a professional astrologer and palmist. Dr. Basu's family has been proficient in these ancient arts for many generations, and he has also studied with a Master palmist in India. When I approached him for this task, he told me he did not want to know any details about the subject except the date of birth to determine her age at the time of the hand print.

Dr. Basu's first impression in examining the print was that the fingers were well-proportioned to the size of the palm. He noted that the thumb was smooth, long and uniform indicating a cerebral approach which is methodical and logical. Such a person works with the evidence/information presented, and places each piece neatly in its proper place. Such a person becomes convinced of their position through continuous evolution of thought as ideas are slowly grasped (rather than through sudden enlightenment or inspiration), and can become *extreme* after having come to their logically deduced conclusion. He added that having been convinced of her position by this process this person could muster accompanying strength and energy to work tirelessly for this new-found purpose in life "20 out of 24 hours in a day".

The middle finger (second, or finger of Saturn) depicts career or success as a result of effort. It appeared straight indicating learning, focus, concentration and dedication. All the other fingers lean toward the middle finger. This indicated to him that this person depended on logic and logic alone to form her beliefs. The leaning index finger (finger of Jupiter) depicts personality and indicates her tendency to rely on her logic and learning rather than her charisma to promote her beliefs. The ring (or Sun) finger denotes relations with others and it also leans toward the middle finger indicating that she did not depend on her looks or "feminine charms" but rather entirely on her conviction of the truth of her beliefs. The little finger (Mercury) signifies money and relationships and it, too, leans towards the middle finger indicating that these matters became subservient to her work as well. Dr. Basu summarized Besant's perception of herself with the statement: "I believe I have the truth. I don't need anything else".

Dr. Basu explained that there are three major elements in the palm itself: lines, mounts and signs. He stated that it was difficult to read the mounts from a print and he could not, therefore, provide a thorough reading on these features of the hand, although he

could still give a good reading since the print had been well done.

He stated that she had an extremely long head line, indicating that she was learned, intellectual, "sharp", with a huge information load from voracious reading. He noted that it was an "islanded" (that is, a composite) line insinuating that there had been a lot of influences on this woman and that at the time this imprint had been taken, the head line appeared rather "messed up". Noting her date of birth, Dr. Basu stated that even at the age of 47 her personality was not "rooted" and she had been/was being pulled in different directions by strong personalities around her. She was contradictory in that she was learned and intelligent but also had the inherent weakness of allowing people to convince her of things. This resulted in her later getting hurt, as evidenced by the islands. Because of this, her previous conclusions were shattered when the next influential person appeared in her life and she was drawn into something else. Dr. Basu's evaluation not only fits the unidentified lady's appraisal from *Review of Reviews* mentioned earlier, but also provides us with insight to Besant's character.

Besant's heart line was also long, indicating an idealistic nature and therefore one more likely to be disappointed. Islands on her heart line indicate she had been very disappointed in her relationships in the past. She would also have been more attracted to philosophies of action versus theoretical and would have become active with helping people with popular issues of the times. Dr. Basu pointed out a change of direction in the heart line, a rather uncommon feature. The heart line was initially straight but then turned upward indicating she was initially open, welcoming, friendly and approachable but then her level of trust went down more and more, resulting in her keeping her true feelings to herself. Her many frustrations and disappointments earlier in life likely account for this. In one of Mrs. Besant's speeches at Chicago addressing the matter of social reform, she stated:

I who have spent so many years of life in dealing with these problems on the material plane, I who have given so much of time and of thought to the effort to bring some remedy to the social ills of man, I take it to be my duty . . . to bear witness founded upon knowledge that the employment of one hour in spiritual energy for the good of man works a hundred-fold more good than years of labor employed on the material plane.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Dr. Basu holds a Doctorate in Biology and worked in this field in Europe, USA and Canada. He remained a skeptic regarding the validity of palmistry and astrology until crucial experiences convinced him otherwise. Dr. Basu can be contacted by phone 780-448-1295 or through his web site at www.astrology-psyhic.com

⁶⁰ "Theosophy and Modern Social Problems" — *The Theosophical Congress: Report of Proceedings and Documents*, 1893, p.113.



Annie Besant palm print taken July 22, 1894. From *Palmistry The Language of the Hand*.

This is an interesting statement coming from a person who HPB had described as not spiritual in the least. It is also very revealing about her motives and desires in life.

Annie Besant was convinced that her purpose in life was to educate people and to sway them according to whatever she considered the correct course of moral conduct. This kind of philosophy is contrary to what the Masters taught and unacceptable especially for the Theosophical Society. Dogmatism, religious or personal, had never been part of the original theosophical teachings. H.S. Olcott made that point very clear to the participants who represented the Theosophical Society at the 1893 World Parliament of Religions.⁶¹ In addition, some years later she then demanded complete obedience from her followers, as evidenced in 1911 after Mrs. Besant

was elected President of the TS and appointed herself as Outer Head [OH]. Whereas the original Pledge stipulated allegiance to one's Higher Self, she re-wrote the pledge taken by members of the Esoteric Section to then read:

I pledge myself to support before the world the Theosophical Society, and in particular to obey, without cavil or delay, the orders of the Head of the Esoteric Section in all that concerns my relation with the Theosophical movement; to work with her, on the lines she shall lay down, in preparation for the coming of the World-Teacher, and to give what support I can to the Society in money and work.⁶²

When Annie Besant, at the age of forty-one, came in contact with the Theosophical Society she had finally found the podium she desperately needed to promote her beliefs. "Annie Besant wanted to become a famous occultist."⁶³ With the help of her new guru, Chakravarti, and later Charles Webster Leadbeater, she managed to fulfil her *desire to teach*. From 1893 to 1906 Chakravarti was the one who occultly manipulated Besant, although the table later turned.⁶⁴ Leadbeater then became the dominant man who would manipulate and control her for the rest of her life. Dr. Basu clearly identifies these two influences on the mount of Venus in her palm.

Mrs. Besant generally had a lot of lines in her palm, indicating that she was thrown in different directions because of events, that is, being *reactive* versus *proactive*. At the end of the session when the palm was identified, Dr. Basu stated that with these lines Besant had had a lot of obstacles to overcome and it is rather remarkable that she had achieved such fame in spite of this palm. Besant also had islands on her fate line, an indication that she achieved what she did without the benefit of "luck". Dr. Basu added that these islands involve surmounting major obstacles and that fame under these circumstances was practically impossible.

Dr. Basu indicated that it was possible, however, that Besant *perceived* that there were obstacles along the way. He stated that for 95% of the population such obstacles do in fact exist but that for the other 5% the obstacles are in fact simply a strong perception of such on their part. Cheiro mentions that "Mrs. Besant was a reformer and a 'fighter' in every sense

⁶¹ "... it is to be distinctly understood that nothing shall be said or done by any Delegate or Committee of the Society to identify it, as a body, with any special form of religion, creed, sect, or any religious or ethical teacher or leader; our first duty being to affirm and defend its perfect corporate neutrality in these matters." *Lucifer*, July 1893, p.517.

⁶² *The Link*, Privately Issued by the Outer Head of the School, August 1911, p.43.

⁶³ *The Passionate Pilgrim, A life of Annie Besant*, by Gertrude Marvin Williams, (New York: Coward McCann, 1931) p.238.

⁶⁴ In a letter to Mrs. Alice Cleather, dated February 6th, 1922, The Anagarika Dharmapala (of the Maha Bodhi Society, Calcutta) wrote: "[Annie Besant] gets whatever she wants and is in league with politicians. . . . A.B. was duped by Chakravarti and later on she found she could dupe Chakravarti".

of the term. She did not know what fear meant. She courted opposition and in many ways encouraged it.”⁶⁵ Besant believed that obstacles, possibly individuals, were standing in the way of achieving her goals, her passion, and she worked harder than most to achieve them. Dr. Basu believes there is an organic connection between palm and mind; that the mind is a powerful tool and the palm, being rooted in the individual’s “reality”, would have reflected Besant’s *perception* of her circumstances. This, along with Dr. Basu’s earlier statements, show that she was driven by a strong need to believe. After logically deducing and arriving at a conclusion, she was hooked and would go through almost any hardships to promote her current belief. As mentioned earlier, in her own words, Mrs. Besant was well aware that strong convictions delivered via speech could “sway thousands”. This appeared to be one of her uppermost passions, if not her primary goal. Can we merely dismiss this as a passing phase in her life or was this her life’s motto?

On February 18th, 1923, Mrs. Cleather was vacationing in Sydney, Australia. She was a member of HPB’s “Inner Group” and “E.S. Council”. She was interviewed by *Truth* on her history in the T.S. Mrs. Cleather mentioned that she was with Mme. Blavatsky when she first met Annie Besant. She also added that:

So long as Madame Blavatsky was alive, Mrs. Besant was all right because Madame Blavatsky’s was the master mind. However, when Madame Blavatsky died, Mrs. Besant’s ambitious spirit got the upper hand. It was always her ambition to be a world teacher.⁶⁶

Did Theosophists embrace different standards in evaluating Mrs. Besant’s ambitions compared to that of other theosophical leaders? If so, WHY?

There is a major triangle in the middle of the palm indicating a long-lasting interest in the occult. A triangle on the Mount of Saturn indicates an acquired aura of mysticism and mastery of the occult — a later development, most likely through Chakravarti’s efforts. By 1894 Mrs. Besant had apparently developed some psychic tendencies. Dr. Basu identified lines on the Mount of Venus (at the base of the thumb) and specified that two persons exerted a very strong influence over her and that considering the appearance of the triangle, it had to be occult influence. It is interesting to note that in 1891 HPB

specifically stated that Mrs. Besant was “not psychic nor spiritual in the least”. Dr. Basu added that it was impossible to say if the influence was positive or negative from the print and in any case both hands would have had to be examined to potentially determine this. (The left hand indicates divine potential; the right hand, what one makes of it.)

She had a strong line of liver indicating good health and a strong constitution at this point in life although there were signs of vitamin deficiency.

There was a lot of travel indicated in the area of the Moon on the palm. It was impossible to read the relationship lines or the lines relating to children as they are not visible on the print.

In summary, Dr. Basu stated that this person must have been very practical, focused, energetic, hard-working, strong-willed and had the courage of her conviction. Such individuals become the “logic” and “organizer” behind whatever movement they are involved in. They quickly gain the confidence of superiors and become their favorite spokesperson for the organization. Their efficiency and management skills make them the right hand of the Leader.⁶⁷ Unfortunately in this case, it was a philosophical/religious movement where ambition had no place. Also, she allowed others to influence her. She likely had a tendency to let people convince her, she then joined them and later felt betrayed — she believed too easily. Dr. Basu stated that, for example an artist is moved by inspiration; she, however, “did not possess” such inspiration. He did not see signs of spiritual development in her palm. Dr. Basu summarized, in short — “I want to believe and work to make it real; and it becomes the purpose in my life.”

Conclusion

After HPB’s *Secret Doctrine* was published in 1888 the acceptance of Theosophy grew rapidly — lodges were forming, speakers were needed, information on starting new lodges was required. Mr. Judge had been left by himself to activate The American Section. Going from town to town and lecturing night after night started to take its toll on him — he was suffering from Chagres disease.⁶⁸ He welcomed the opportunity from HPB to meet with Mrs. Besant and invited her to attend the American Section Annual Convention in 1891 and to give a few lectures

⁶⁵ *Mysteries and Romances of the World’s Greatest Occultists*, by “Cheiro” (Count Louis Hamon), London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1935) p.184.

⁶⁶ *The Theosophical Crisis in Australia, The Story of the Breakup of the Theosophical Society in Sydney from 1913 until 1923*. John Cooper’s 1986 thesis for Master of Arts in Religious Studies, p.321 from “Truth”, February 18th, 1923.

⁶⁷ This implies a strong supporting role, with guidance, rather than a leadership one.

⁶⁸ “. . . Chagres fever [is] a malignant type of malarial fever which often leaves a predisposition to tuberculosis in its trail. . . .” *Theosophical Quarterly*, July 1932, p.31.

in various towns and cities. Mme. Blavatsky's March 27th letter seemed quite clear to him. He was to observe Mrs. Besant, first hand, to see how well they could work together.

Mrs. Besant set sail from New York on May 6th to return to England. On May 8th, 1891, Mme. Blavatsky died. The next day Mr. Judge sent a telegram to Avenue Road, HPB's residence, to tell them "Do nothing till I come".⁶⁹ On May 21st, Mr. Judge arrived in London. A Consultative Emergency Council, consisting of the European Advisory Council and the British Section Council, was held in the Lecture Hall at Headquarters, London. Mr. Judge, as Vice-President of the T.S., was in the Chair. Col. Olcott was on his way from Australia. Suddenly the Theosophical Society and the Esoteric Section faced their greatest challenge: Who would carry on The Work? On May 27th, 1891, an E.S. Advisory Council meeting was called by W.Q. Judge and A. Besant.

It appears Mr. Judge found in Mrs. Besant a complementary worker for the TS, based on the results of what happened at the E.S. Council. They took their position at the front of the room where members had gathered. Mrs. Besant described what happened:

I took from William Q. Judge, on the afternoon of May 27th, 1891, certain papers selected from a number of letters in his possession. These I took one by one, read them, folded them up, tied them into a packet, and said I would read them myself to the Council, as they concerned Bro. Judge. I opened this packet myself in the Council meeting, in my place as chairman. I took up the papers one by one and read them (or parts of them) aloud, and on raising one of them saw a piece of paper lying between it and the next that was not there when I tied them together. After reading those remaining I took it up, and found it was a slip bearing some words written in red and signed with .'.s initials and seal. The words were: "W.Q. Judge's plan is right". (Signed) Annie Besant.⁷⁰

"Soon after that Council Meeting of May 27th, 1891, . . . Mrs. Besant sent to Mrs. Ver-Plank (now Mrs. Keightley), in New York, the slip of paper bearing in red the Council message, 'W.Q. Judge's plan is right,' and initialed by Master M." The letter included the above description of events which was "written out in full by Mrs. Besant, and signed." According to Archibald and Julia Keightley, and affirmed in written statements by others present, Mrs. Besant

claimed that no one could have had access to those papers other than herself.⁷¹

Mr. Judge must have been thinking about Mrs. Besant's position in the organization — she was Chief Secretary of the Inner Group of the Esoteric Section — and he must have remembered HPB's March 27th letter to him. However, knowing little of Mrs. Besant's abilities, he must have been concerned; after all, she was a relative newcomer to the Society. She was intelligent and appeared devoted, but had had little experience working with HPB. On the other hand, he had much more experience working with HPB and had written the *Book of Rules* for the Esoteric School of Theosophy (EST). He must have entertained the idea that he would try to work with Mrs. Besant as co-head of the EST. Judge may have expressed this idea or the Masters read his thoughts. Reading a chela's mind would have been acceptable. Agreeing with Judge's plan would account for the message found among Mrs. Besant's papers. From the standpoint of the Masters, they would have accepted Judge's idea — they would not have denied Mrs. Besant her opportunity to be tested.

Mrs. Besant had only joined the TS in May 1889, and all of a sudden she was thrust into great responsibilities. With Judge having returned to America there were few who could watch over her and give her the spiritual guidance and nurturing that HPB had provided. Olcott had virtually nothing to do with the EST and had returned to India.

It was in August 1893, during Mr. Chakravarti's visit, that members started noticing changes in Mrs. Besant. Dr. Archibald Keightley published his observations on his first-hand experiences with Annie Besant and Chakravarti. He wrote:

I was present at a psychic experience of hers. One evening, in my sitting-room at Avenue Road were present Mrs. Besant, Miss Cooper, Miss Stabler, Mrs. Keightley, Messrs. Mead, B. Keightley, Hargrove, James M. Pryse, Professor Chakravarti and myself. Mr. Chakravarti intoned a mantram, made sweeping magnetic passes in the air, then fell into a semi-trance, when a message on "Peace" was given through him apparently by audible telepathy. Mrs. Besant claimed to several, as I heard, and to Mrs. Keightley, Miss Stabler and myself together, that the voice was the Master's, and that she saw his presence. She was the only one who did so. She was not in a trance; and this was a psychic experience. I

⁶⁹ *Isis Very Much Unveiled, Being the Story of the Great Mahatma Hoax*, by Edmund Garrett. (London: Westminster Gazette Office, 1894, Second Edition), pp.27-28.

⁷⁰ *E.S.T. Circular*, by A. Keightley, pp.3-4.

⁷¹ *E.S.T. Circular*, by A. Keightley, pp.3-4.

did not believe in the phenomena as being ought but mediumistic. . . .”⁷²

It becomes apparent that Mrs. Besant’s mind was constantly shifting, influenced by intellectual men, drawn by passion for knowledge which she could impart and her desire to control events. She might have joined the TS with good intentions but her natural tendencies to dominate were strong. In addition, she was so weakened by outside influences that it further impaired her. If she had been guided for a much longer period of time under the tutelage of HPB⁷³ and/or WQJ, who was more diligent in his approach to the philosophy of Theosophy, she might not have generated so many drastic changes, in both the original philosophy and the writings of the Theosophical Society.

Annie Besant was a woman of great talent. Unfortunately, her passions and her relationships were the causes that quickly diverted the direction and purpose of the Theosophical Movement to suit what *she* believed in. The charges laid against WQJ caused division in the Movement from which it has never recovered. Her attacks on Mr. Judge caused him to die of a broken heart and damaged his reputation to the point where in some countries he is not recognized for his contribution as a Co-Founder of the Theosophical Society. The wounds were shrouded but the healing never occurred. What further contributed to the breakdown were Mrs. Besant’s new dispensations, the politics, new (supposedly non-affiliated) organizations, the ceremonies, the garbs she wore, misleading and controlling her membership, and expelling fellow members and Sections who did not comply to her views.

Mrs. Besant’s naïvete on Theosophical/occult matters, combined with her ability to convince the general membership, gained her enough support to do what she wanted, but her actions eventually split the Society into many parts.

One of Mme. Blavatsky’s dearest friends, the Anagarika Dharmapala, who joined the Theosophical Society in January 1884, described what happened to the Theosophical Movement. The Dharmapala traveled with Mr. Chakravarti from India to England, then to America where he participated in the World Parliament of Religions. He lived and traveled

throughout India and Ceylon. In 1888 the Theosophical Society started *The Buddhist*, a new journal at Colombo with C.W. Leadbeater as Editor and the Dharmapala as Manager. In letters he wrote: “Theosophy of C.W.L. and Besant is a travesty of the doctrine taught by H.P.B. . . . [Besant] is clever and managed to do what she willed.”⁷⁴ Also, he wrote the “T.S. has become a political organization and Mrs. Besant engaged in legal disputes spending thousands of rupees in defending immoral persons. . . . She is now absorbed in Indian politics. The T.S. has deteriorated much.”⁷⁵ Again he writes: “Mrs. A.B. I am afraid will eventually destroy the work of H.P.B. and the Masters. The T.S. will become under her management a Christian sect, and bishops, deacons etc. will rule the T.S. Brotherhood will disappear.”⁷⁶ Disgusted with what had happened the Dharmapala left the Theosophical Society in 1905.

Considering the evidence presented, how can we conclude that HPB was wrong? The *dark forces* were motivated from the beginning to destroy the Theosophical Society and its impetus to form a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood. Understanding the history of the Movement, one gathers that Mrs. Besant may have been a pawn, manipulated and in the end simply used to prevent the TS from establishing itself along the original program as outlined by HPB and the Masters. Mrs. Besant was a remarkable woman, especially for the times. Accepting HPB’s statement that Mrs. Besant was “not psychic nor spiritual in the least — all intellect”, explains how Mrs. Besant earned the admiration of a large following based on her intellect and personality. Unfortunately she lacked the wisdom and inner guidance to promulgate the original impulse for the Movement and to carry on the grander purpose for the TS.

Perhaps if the supporters of Adyar at the time had not been mesmerized by Mrs. Besant’s strong intellect, her charisma and her determination to achieve her aspirations; and if the later followers had taken the opportunity to impartially investigate this important period (1888-1896) of the Theosophical history, Universal Brotherhood would have had a better chance to flourish. Now the task, after all these years, to join as one is almost insurmountable but as the Masters assert, we should at least TRY. Perhaps, Phoenix-like, a renewed, dedicated group based on the original impetus is the answer. ☞

⁷² *The Path*, Vol. 10, June 1895, p.99.

⁷³ Letter (*A Voice from India*) from Mrs. Cleather to the editor of *Dawn*, November 1, 1922, p.27, concerning Mrs. Besant’s ‘authority’. She stated: “You all seem to cling to the idea that Annie Besant can be ‘saved.’ If you knew her as well as I do—or rather did—you could cherish no fallacious hopes. It is, I fear, too late—it always *was* ‘too late’ after H.P.B. left us.”

⁷⁴ Letter from The Anagarika Dharmapala, to Mrs. Alice Cleather, March 3, 1922.

⁷⁵ Letter from The Anagarika Dharmapala, to Mrs. Alice Cleather, Aug. 27, 1921.

⁷⁶ Letter of December 3rd, 1925, from Anagarika Dharmapala, *Buddhism in England*, Sep./Oct. 1933, p.83.

Getting Caught in the Polarized World of Good and Evil

Robert Bruce MacDonald

In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha when commenting on the Eightfold Path¹ has the following to say:

This is the path; there is no other path that leads to purity of insight. Follow this path, for this path bewilders the Evil One (Māra).²

This path that entails that one be mindfully conscious of the appropriateness in all that one does is powerful in that it protects the aspirant from falling into the world of duality. This path can only be walked by the aspirant of his own Free Will. In the frontispiece to the Peking edition of *The Voice of the Silence*, the Tashi Lama writes:

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.

After entering the Path and experiencing its benefits, one's duty becomes the exhorting of "all beings to enter the Path." This is extremely important. One is not asked to help end the suffering of the world in any other way than to exhort others to enter the path. What about feeding the poor, tending the sick, or ending social injustice? Are these not more practical and immediate ways of ending the evils of the world?

H.P.B. comments on good and evil in *The Secret Doctrine*. She writes:

When Parāsara, whose father was devoured by a Rākshasa, was preparing himself to destroy (magically) the whole race, his grandsire, Vasishta, says a few extremely suggestive words to him. He shows the irate Sage, on his own confession, that there is Evil and *Karma*, but no "evil spirits." "Let thy wrath be appeased," he

says. "The Rākshasas are not culpable; thy father's death *was the work of Karma*. Anger³ is the passion of fools; it becometh not a wise man. *By whom, it may be asked, is any one killed? Every man reaps the consequences of his own acts.* Anger, my son, is the destruction of all that man obtains . . . and prevents the attainment of emancipation. The sages shun wrath. Be not thou, my child, subject to its influence. Let not those *unoffending* spirits of darkness be consumed; let thy sacrifice cease. Mercy is the might of the righteous" (*Vishnu Purāna*, Book i., ch. i.). Thus, every such "sacrifice" or prayer to God for help is *no better than an act of black magic*. That which Pārasara prayed for, was the destruction of the Spirits of Darkness, for his personal revenge. He is called a *Pagan*, and the Christians have doomed him as such, to eternal hell. Yet, in what respect is the prayer of sovereigns and generals, who pray before every battle for the destruction of their enemy, any better? Such a prayer is in every case *black magic* of the worst kind, concealed like a demon "Mr. Hyde" under a sanctimonious "Dr. Jekyll." (*SD I*, pp.415-16)

People suffer because of their own karma and for no other reason. To blame it on elementals playing the roles given to them by Nature or on causes such as social injustice is just to miss the point that elementals feed off of our ignorance and can only be overcome by entering onto the Path; and social injustice is simply the collective ignorance of society made manifest and this, again, can only be overcome by entering onto the Path. More importantly, with respect to the nature of evil, Blavatsky is pointing to something more fundamental.

¹ The Eightfold Path includes right understanding, right thoughts, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

² *Dhammapada: Wisdom of the Buddha*, trans. Harischandra Kaviratna, Theosophical University Press, Pasadena, CA., p.109.

³ "Certain hindrances then begin to manifest themselves which, when properly understood by us, will give us good substantial reasons for the practicing of the several virtues enjoined in holy books and naturally included under the term of Universal Brotherhood.

One is that sometimes it is seen that this nebulous forming body [the inner man through which emancipation is obtained] is violently shaken, or pulled apart or burst into fragments. . . . *This is caused by anger*, and this is why the sages all dwell upon the need of calmness. When the student allows anger to arise, the influence of it is at once felt by the ethereal body, and manifests itself in an uncontrollable trembling which begins at the center and violently pulls apart the hitherto coherent particles. If allowed to go on it will disintegrate the whole mass, which will then re-assume its natural place in the body. The effect following this is, that a long time has to elapse before the ethereal body can be again created." (W.Q. Judge, *Echoes of the Orient*, Vol.I, pp.69-70.)

Elsewhere, Blavatsky gives us another insight into the nature of evil when she writes:

Yet I had written there plainly enough about . . . those who are co-workers with Nature for destruction. There are thoroughly wicked and depraved men, but yet as highly intellectual and acutely *spiritual* for evil, as those who are spiritual for good. “The (lower) Egos of these may escape the law of final destruction or annihilation for ages to come.” (CW XII, p.638)

Finally, Blavatsky summarizes this in *The Secret Doctrine* when she writes:


In human nature, evil denotes only the polarity of matter and Spirit, a struggle for life between the two manifested Principles in Space and Time, which principles are one *per se*, inasmuch they are rooted in the Absolute. In Kosmos, the equilibrium must be preserved. The operations of the two contraries produce harmony, like the centripetal and centrifugal forces, which are necessary to each other—mutually interdependent—“in order that both should live.” If one is arrested, the action of the other will become immediately self-destructive. (SD I, p.416)

With respect to human nature, it should first be noted that evil denotes “the polarity of matter and Spirit.” It is not an aspect or quality of matter or Spirit but rather the polarization that separates the two, making eternal substance both spirit and matter. Here the philosophical root of the concept of separateness can be seen. For Man, this can be reconciled by attaining Nirvana. This type of reconciliation for the Kosmos would entail the destruction of the Kosmos. Hence evil must exist in order for good to exist and both must continue in harmony. The old adage states *Demon est Deus Inversus*. Consequently those “co-workers with Nature for destruction” can find a home alongside the Rākshasas and other elemental beings in doing the work of destruction. Nature’s secrets are open to these evil-doers to some extent allowing them to avoid annihilation for many ages. These Sorcerers are not, then, the focus of the White Brotherhood but are rather the virus that is ready to move into an already weakened body. It is the focus of the White Brotherhood to purify and strengthen the body so that misery cannot gain a foothold. The Path is the medicine for the Body of Mankind.

It is easy to see the ‘*why*’ of the two horns of Satan — they symbolize the polarity and separateness upon which evil thrives. Once humanity accepts as real the distinction between socialism and capitalism, Christianity and Hinduism, dark-skinned and light-

skinned, etc., they have allowed separateness to enter into their philosophy thereby weakening the body so that Nature’s dark forces can do their karmic duty.

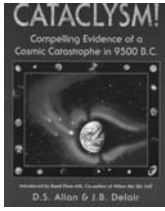
This also brings to light the danger of working with elemental forces. There are those who are involved in the New Age movement who acquire a little knowledge about elemental forces, are a little psychic, put the two together, and start removing disease from individuals by sending the disease “into the light” or “to the other side of the universe” or whatever the case may be. These individuals are interfering with the karma of the patient as well as the work of these elemental forces. It is not as though these elementals dissipate, they exist hanging around ready to do mischief to some unsuspecting individual who happens by, if not to the psychic practitioner. Disease exits the body through the will of the individual who brought the disease onto themselves in the first place. Any healer is just a guide who can give the patient the knowledge that they need to heal themselves and nothing more. This ignorant manipulation of elemental forces is nothing more than black magic. The seeds of disease are in the mind and the competent healer knows this and is able to give the patient the clues that are needed to stop feeding the disease from the source if the patient has not already done this in the meantime. Again to see the elemental as responsible for disease is to fall into the “heresy of separateness.”

Universal Brotherhood is a powerful antidote to disease. In order for Universal Brotherhood to exist, brotherhood must be more real than the ideas that separate us. This is why almost any failure can be tolerated within the Society as long as members do not turn against one another or against innocent individuals outside the Society. In one sense the Path is the understanding of the actions that must necessarily flow from one involved in a brotherhood. How does one speak, think, and act towards a fellow brother? How about a fellow brother who does not understand even the rudimentary concepts of brotherhood? How do I use charity to make him understand? How do I use sharpness of voice to make him understand? How do I recognize a case to be futile and put my efforts elsewhere? Every case is different and what it takes for one person may not be what is needed for the next. The whole life of one involved in Universal Brotherhood becomes a means of teaching. It has been over a hundred years since theosophists turned against one another, that is long enough to learn the lesson of evil. 

A free sample of *Fohat* will be sent to anyone you might suggest.
Subscriptions can be purchased according to the rates on the Contents page.

Celestial Violence and Human Karma

Alexander Pogue



Cataclysm, by D. S. Allan & J. B. Delair, published by Bear & Company, P.O. Box 2860, Santa Fe, NM 87504-2860; 1997 — \$20.00 [First published in 1995 as *When the Earth Nearly Died* by Gateway Books, of Bath, U.K.]

This book is sufficiently compelling that I no longer doubt the teaching of *The Secret Doctrine*¹ about the danger of reciting some past events other than symbolically for fear the recital would bring back past memories of which the hearer could not bear. In Emergency Medicine in general, and Trauma Medicine in particular, there are many events that leave long-lasting scars in the patient's "psyche." The recall of such events must be approached with great caution, and cured or effaced in a very gradual way.

In the events of the *Cataclysm*, the "patient" is mankind in *particular* and our Mother Earth in *general* — nay! the entire Solar system was perturbed by this sudden stroke of *ripened* karma. While individual "choosers" may be the makers of karma, they share a *common base among themselves*. Thus the *Nirmanakaya Path* is the "stranger" knocking at every door. This book will print indelibly into you the assertions in *The Key to Theosophy* about the three lines of karma².

Evidently we have come to the point of being able to bear our past. As you peruse this volume it will often

sound like something out of science fiction, but there will be another type of reaction going on at the same time: this is a dim picture of the truth about us, something not too many lives ago, something that actually happened; that whole forests could be flattened instantly, that the sky could and did *collapse!* that lakes were swept away and oceans became mountains of water, that air velocity became deadly killing everything in its path, entire countries left desolate. The magnitude of what occurred cannot be readily handled by our imagination, however as you proceed, the authors give ample evidence along every step of the path that this is no science fiction.

Oddly enough, or maybe it's not odd at all, the event coincides with the time given by the Egyptian priests to Solon as the date that Poseidonis was destroyed, or in the words of the "Foreword":

The evidence that we have managed to salvage about the Earth's lost past is shattered, torn and decayed. There remains only fragments: traces of physical evidence and occasional pieces of oral history. How can we piece together the secrets of our vanished heritage? An integrated approach, one that draws upon many sources and

¹ "The religious and esoteric history of every nation was embedded in symbols; it was never expressed in so many words. All the thoughts and emotions, all the learning and knowledge, revealed and acquired, of the early races, found their pictorial expression in allegory and parable. Why? Because *the spoken word has a potency unknown to, unsuspected and disbelieved in*, by the modern "sages." Because sound and rhythm are closely related to the four Elements of the Ancients; and because such or another vibration in the air is sure to awaken corresponding powers, union with which produces good or bad results, as the case may be. No student was ever allowed to recite historical, religious, or any real events in so many unmistakable words, lest the powers connected with the event should be once more attracted. Such events were narrated only during the Initiation, and every student had to record them in corresponding symbols, drawn out of his own mind and examined later by his master, before they were finally accepted." [The Secret Doctrine, Vol I, p.307]

² "Karma is the unerring law which adjusts effect to cause, on the physical, mental and spiritual planes of being. . . . [T]hough we do not know what Karma is *per se*, and in its essence, we *do* know *how* it works, and we can define and describe its mode of action with accuracy. We only do *not* know its ultimate *Cause*. . . . [The Key to Theosophy, p.201] On the next page, when the Enquirer remarks, "But, surely, all these evils which seem to fall upon the masses somewhat indiscriminately are not actual merited and INDIVIDUAL Karma?" the Theosophist replies: "No, they cannot be so strictly defined in their effects as to show that each individual environment, and the particular conditions of life in which each person finds himself, are nothing more than the retributive Karma which the individual generated in a previous life. We must not lose sight of the fact that every atom is subject to the general law governing the whole body to which it belongs, and here we come upon the wider track of the Karmic law. Do you not perceive that the aggregate of individual Karma becomes that of the nation to which those individuals belong, and further, that the sum total of National Karma is that of the World? The evils that you speak of are not peculiar to the individual or even to the Nation, they are more or less universal; and it is upon this broad line of Human interdependence that the law of Karma finds its legitimate and equitable issue." While the authors of *Cataclysm* are very compelling in gathering physical data, the interpretation of myth takes on a "handmaiden" role of buttressing the vast array of sensory data. Perhaps we will always be confronted with the "one hand clapping" phenomena until investigators take more seriously the idea of themselves as the tabernacle of a god — centers of Consciousness rather than Form. Even a Master of Wisdom might refuse to interpret the Phaeton event in terms of "consciousness" until we have more stamina to face not just our individual karma, but the collective karma that our system bears.

clues, is our best hope. Myth and science can converge to offer us the widest possible lens to study this enduring mystery. . . .

D. S. Allan and J. B. Delair have assembled a mountain of evidence pointing directly to a worldwide catastrophe around 9500 B.C. They draw upon a vast range of sciences and disciplines to weave their story. And it is a compelling account that begins beyond our solar system, about 13,000 years ago, with the explosion of the Vela Supernova.

A large fragment of this star, christened “Phaeton” by the classical Greeks, blasted across interstellar space and sped through the void. Then around 9500 B.C., it careened into our solar system like a drunken driver. Phaeton, composed of pure stellar-matter must have been very dense and atomic, (almost certainly sub-lunar in size) and different from a comet or asteroid, to wreak the kind of havoc that ensued. Neptune wandered across its path and Phaeton, pulled sunwards, wrenched one of Neptune’s moons from its orbit, sending it spinning through space like a celestial hubcap. This moon became the eccentric outer planet we know as Pluto.

Phaeton continued on its chaotic journey. Hurling past Uranus, its gravitational pull dislocated the moons of Uranus. As the deadly foreign invader drew near Saturn, one of the ringed planet’s moons, Chiron, was also forced out of orbit. Chiron bounced into a new path circling the Sun to become the solar system’s smallest planet. Jupiter and Mercury avoided the chaos because their orbits had carried them to the other side of the Sun and thus far from Phaeton’s destructive course. It was at this point on its reckless journey that Phaeton electromagnetically demolished a planet that existed between Jupiter and Mars.

The idea of a fifth planet at this location has been around since 1766 when J. D. Titius von Wittenberg noticed that the solar system seemed to comprise an almost perfect mathematical web, minus one of its strands. Titius von Wittenberg explained this anomaly by postulating that there was a “vacant orbit” between Mars and Jupiter where mathematical probabilities indicated that there should be a planet. In 1772 Johann Bode popularized this discovery and the notion came to be known as the “Titius-Bode Law of Planetary Distances.” As-

tronomers now had a mathematical tool with which to hunt for distant planets within our solar system because the new “law” predicted where to look. Telescopes from around the world focused on the “vacant orbit” between Jupiter and Mars and were rewarded in 1801 with the discovery of the asteroid belt. Was the asteroid belt the remnants of a lost planet? And if so, what was that planet like? Allan and Delair use the ancient Akkadian (Akkad was the northern half of Babylonia, Sumer the southern) name “Tiamat” for the missing planet of which the asteroid belt is a remnant. Three more planets still stood in Phaeton’s reckless path: Mars, Earth, and Venus.

As the stellar marauder, dragging the remnants of the shattered Tiamat and its moon, Kingu, with it, catapulted past Mars; the red planet’s rotation was slowed by their combined gravitational pull. Mars’ two rapidly spinning moons may well be fragments of Tiamat it acquired then. After leaving its mark on Mars, Phaeton was now on a collision course with Earth charging through the emptiness between Earth and the Moon. Phaeton’s pull stretched the Moon’s orbit and the Earth’s tilt was altered, condemning Earth to a world wide catastrophe. . . .

In Plato’s dialogue, a learned Egyptian priest tells Plato’s ancestor, Solon, the legend of Atlantis.³ He related that Atlantis had been destroyed in earthquakes and floods of extraordinary violence. This great catastrophe occurred 9000 years before his time. We know that Solon’s visit to Egypt took place sometime between 594 and 559 B.C. This places the destruction of Atlantis some time between 9559 B.C. and 9594 B.C. Allan and Delair reviewed hundreds of radiocarbon dates from around the world in an attempt to date the Phaeton catastrophe. They found that a great concentration of dates averaged 9577 B.C., exactly amidst the time frame allowed by Plato’s “story” of Atlantis! [pp.viii-ix]

This is a bird’s-eye view of the mass of worldwide evidence gathered from many disciplines throughout the world. Fortunately, our two authors are excellent writers as well as being careful scientists, so you will find the tale a gripping one. Perhaps the echoes of “truth” inside the human soul make books like this far more gripping than science fiction could hope to achieve — like whisperings from the ancient embed-

³ Poseidonis was the last remnant — approximately the size of Ireland — that was destroyed. On pages 313-314 of Vol. II, *The Secret Doctrine*, speaking of the Hindu tradition tells us that “Vaivasvata Manu is again shown as saving mankind (allegorically it is mankind, or a portion of it, the Fourth Race, which is saved); so also he saves the Fifth Race during the destruction of the last Atlanteans, the remnants that perished 850,000 years ago, after which there was no great submersion until the day of Plato’s Atlantis, or Poseidonis, known to the Egyptians only because it happened in such relatively recent times.”

ded trauma of a past event. Nevertheless, there is an underlying “materialism” in this book that the Mystic devoted to Unity would find quaint and out-of-date. Statements such as this mar the power of the treatise:

Catastrophes triggered by celestial violence occur independently of human activity. [p.ix]

Any philosophical student of karmic law could hardly accept such a statement. Interdependence is much too radical a phenomenon for one to do more than smile at such an assertion. However, outside this bit of mechanistic denial one can hardly recommend the volume too highly.

The evidence gathered further demolishes the once dominant glacial uniformitarian theory with a mass of evidence. The suddenness of animal life degradation and disappearance near the end of the Pleistocene period (approximately 11,500 years ago) is a stark mystery:

It is widely agreed that, towards the close of Pleistocene times, profound climatic deterioration occurred worldwide. Numerous life-forms previously dominant or very prolific either became extinct or greatly depleted numerically. This change affected the animal and vegetable kingdoms equally, marking in fact a Great Divide in the terrestrial biological record. From a uniformitarian standpoint, this was a truly extraordinary occurrence representing a real catastrophe.

So widespread is the evidence for these changes, and so apparently indiscriminate the annihilation of diverse animal groups, that the closing stages of the Pleistocene period might justifiably be styled an age of wholesale slaughter. In the words of Prof L. C. Eiseley, the phenomenon drives “. . . the biologist to despair as he surveys the extinction of so many species and genera in the closing Pleistocene.” Considering these exterminations further, he added:

We are not dealing with a single, isolated relict species but with a considerable variety of Pleistocene forms, all of which must be accorded, in the light of cultural evidence, an approximately similar time of extinction. [“Archaeological Observations on the Problems of Post-Glacial Extinction, *Amer Antiq*, vol viii. #3, see p.225.]

In Europe immense herds of diverse animals utterly vanished off the face of the Earth for no obvious biological reason. They were seemingly

virile, numerically strong faunal groups, well adapted to their natural environment, yet, geologically speaking, they disappeared with frightening abruptness. The same biological decimation was enacted simultaneously in Australasia, Asia and Africa. Of the latter G. E. Pilgrim noted:

. . . at approximately the same time we witness a similar extinction of the mammal faunas of Africa and Asia, though in their case this may not have been caused by glacial conditions. [“The Lowest limit of the Pleistocene in Europe and Asia,” *Geol Mag*, vol lxxxix, #1, p.28]


What conditions could these have been? Conditions acting as effectively outside the alleged limits of the hypothetical polar ice-sheets as within them, and on a hemispheric scale.

In the New World, for example, practically the whole Pleistocene mammalian fauna was wiped out or reduced to a pitiful vestige of its former greatness. Among the mammals so affected were:

. . . all the camels, all the horses, all the ground sloths, two genera of musk-oxen, peccaries, certain antelopes, a giant bison with a horn spread of six feet, a giant beaver-like animal, a stag-moose and several kinds of cats, some of which were of lion-size. [R. F. Flint, *Glacial & Quaternary Geology*; see p.523.]

Coincident with this dreadful slaughter upon the land was the deposition far inland of myriads of contemporary marine shells, and the stranding at great elevations of marine mammals such as whales, porpoises, walruses and seals. Elsewhere, vast forests were flattened and buried under equally vast accumulations of sand or mud or piled up in broken and twisted heaps. [pp.56-57]

As you can see, this was taken from only two pages! The evidence goes on and on showing how powerful the case actually is for both Phaeton’s fatal visit and Plato’s Atlantis when you take a multi-disciplinary view of the evidence.

One comes away from the “read” with a heightened sense of “radical Brotherhood” and singleness of purpose — that the phrase *Anima Mundi* or World Soul may enshroud all of us in a common dharma and purpose, divine in origin, mundane in its effects. 

The Gelugpa View of Svabhāva in Relation to Theosophy

David Reigle



The Nature of Things: Emptiness and Essence in the Geluk World, by William Magee, Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1999.

From the title, this book promises to address a question of great interest to students of Theosophy. The words “nature” and “essence” refer to *svabhāva*, a word that is used seven times in the Stanzas of Dzyan. The question is, then: Do the Gelugpas accept a *svabhāva* such as is found in the Stanzas of Dzyan, or is it denied by their teaching of emptiness?

Several months ago Daniel Caldwell kindly sent me a copy of this book, hot off the press. Since then I have picked it up again and again, but never knowing what to say about it. The author, William Magee, has taken up a topic of basic importance; he has identified the key texts that treat it; he has translated all those texts; and his work has been published and thus made available. For this we must all be grateful. The hesitation I felt is due to the circumstance that his translations seem to be largely unintelligible, primarily due to his choice of translation terminology. Such is the consensus I got from more than one well-educated native English speaker.

Nonetheless, Magee’s statements of Tsong-kha-pa’s position which he makes in Part One of the book are sufficient to show that the Gelugpas do not accept a *svabhāva* such as is found in the Stanzas of Dzyan. In particular, this may be seen in his chapter four, “Natures that Do Not Exist,” in its concluding three sections, “The Independent and Positive Nature,” “Dol-bo’s Synthesis” (referring to Dol-po-pa, founder of the Jonangpa school), and “Refuting the Independent and Positive Nature.”

In Part Two are found translated the basic texts dealing with *svabhāva*. These are, first and foremost, the *svabhāva* chapter of Nāgārjuna’s *magnum opus*, the *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā*. This chapter consists of a mere eleven verses. Then we have the commentary on it by Candrakīrti, the primary Indian teacher of the Prāsaṅgika school of Madhyamaka, which was adopted by the Gelugpas. This is followed by the sub-commentary on both these works by Tsong-kha-pa, founder of the Gelugpa order. Next comes the section of Tsong-kha-pa’s *Lam-rim-chen-mo* dealing with the same topic. Finally there is the

“Four Interwoven Annotations” on this section of Tsong-kha-pa’s text by four leading Gelugpa teachers.

The texts by Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti were written in Sanskrit, and later translated into Tibetan. Since both texts survive in the original Sanskrit, this translation was made from these originals. Candrakīrti’s commentary is entitled, *Prasanna-padā*, which title is here translated (perhaps rather euphemistically) as “Clear Words.” As stated above, to a number of well-educated native English speakers, these words are anything but clear in this translation. The translation reads like the work of a student done for a class exercise; that is, the syntax is often wrong. Indeed, we are told that it “was originally prepared at the University of Virginia in 1987 under the Sanskrit tutelage of Karen Lang” (p.141). Unfortunately, the tutelage of a university professor is not always enough to avoid serious translation mistakes.

There are at present four complete English translations of Nāgārjuna’s *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā*, done by Frederick Streng (1967), Kenneth Inada (1970), David Kalupahana (1986), and Jay Garfield (1995). There is also a partial translation (17 of 27 chapters) that includes Candrakīrti’s commentary, done by Mervyn Sprung (1979). All five of these translators are university professors. Yet we still do not have a reliable translation of Nāgārjuna’s fundamental text. As stated by Nāgārjuna specialist Chr. Lindtner, reviewing Kalupahana’s translation: “The previous attempts of Inada, Streng and Sprung to render Nāgārjuna’s MK into English were, to say the least, not successful and though I am only too happy to say that Prof. Kalupahana’s translations are seldom as bad as any of theirs, it is still bad—real bad” (*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 108, 1988, p.178).

Prof. Garfield’s translation, published by Oxford University Press in 1995, was supposed to have avoided the problems of his predecessors, since he drew on Tibetan Gelugpa scholars to provide the traditional understanding of this text. This is also what Magee did in the book under review. As valuable as this is, it cannot entirely make up for less than adequate language preparation on the part of the translator. I

will give one example for each of these two translators, though translation mistakes can be found on virtually every page.

Chapter 17 of Nāgārjuna's book is on karma, or action. After confusing the subject and its adjectives in verse 1, Garfield translates in verse 3 that the kind of action called intention "is mental desire." The text actually says that this kind of action "is held to be mental," as opposed to the physical and verbal kind that follows. The introduction of "desire" here is a serious translation mistake that could have been avoided by even an elementary knowledge of Sanskrit. Garfield, however, purposely translated from the Tibetan, where the word in question is "'dod." This word literally means "desire," but anyone familiar with this literature, even in Tibetan translation, knows that it is routinely used there at the end of a line to mean "is held to be." The Tibetan 'dod here translates the Sanskrit *smṛtaṃ*, "is remembered," and in other places translates the Sanskrit *iṣṭam*, "is desired," "is wished," that is, "is held to be." It is used to mean that such and such is held to be the case.

Garfield dedicates his book to Samdhong Rinpoche, director of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath, and thanks two Gelugpa Geshes from the Institute, one for reading this text with him, and the other for a close criticism of it. He gives us the impression that his translation can be relied upon to faithfully represent the Tibetan understanding of this text. Seeing the type of error just shown, I found this hard to believe. While on a break from other work, I brought this particular passage to the attention of Samdhong Rinpoche. He agreed that no Tibetan Geshe would make this kind of error.

This is exactly the situation we have with Magee's book. We get the impression that this is a reliable presentation because of his following traditional Tibetan scholarship, and that we can therefore rely on his translations as accurately following this traditional understanding. But here, as with Garfield, this is not always the case.

When Candrakīrti sums up his explanation of *svabhāva*, he uses a key phrase translated by Magee as "aspects of things" (p.147). This phrase was also used by Candrakīrti twice earlier (p.143). The first usage gives us his context. Magee translates: "Because of following the error of ignorance, the world conceives aspects of things that do not have nature [*svabhāva*] as having nature." The phrase actually means "the whole class of existing things." Thus this sentence could be translated: "Because of following the error of ignorance, the world conceives the whole class of existing things that do not have nature as having nature." Candrakīrti is not saying that only

aspects of things are without *svabhāva*, he is saying that all things are without *svabhāva*. Clearly, this is a serious translation mistake.

The phrase in question is given by Magee in a list of technical terms (p.221) in Sanskrit, "*bhāvajātam*," and in Tibetan, "*ḍngos po'i rnam pa*." Magee's error here, like Garfield's above, is due to inadequate familiarity with the language. Sanskrit is perhaps the world's richest language in terms of vocabulary and grammar. In this regard, Tibetan is relatively poor. Thus a single Tibetan word must do duty for many different Sanskrit words in translation. Here, the Tibetan "*rnam pa*" does duty for the Sanskrit "*jāta*." The most common meaning of Tibetan *rnam pa* is indeed "aspect," as Magee has translated it, where it does duty for such Sanskrit words as "*ākāra*." A related meaning is "kind," which is also one of the meanings of Sanskrit *jāta*. In this meaning, *jāta* refers to genus or class. When put at the end of a compound, it means the whole class of something, as it does here. In brief, stock translations simply do not suffice.

Thus, because of serious errors such as the one just described, it is difficult to have confidence in any of the translations in this book for accurately representing the Gelugpa view of *svabhāva*. And this is quite independent of the question of the translation's intelligibility. Alas, I can only offer my condolences to the many good people who must rely solely on English translations of material such as this.

These good people need not, however, fall into blank despair over this situation. It is, after all, possible to translate this material accurately and intelligibly. Indeed, some of this same material was so translated in an apparently similar situation. William Ames published a paper entitled, "The Notion of *Svabhāva* in the Thought of Candrakīrti," in *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 10, 1982, pp.161-177. Like Magee's work, this appears to have first been written while Ames was a university student. The translations it includes are accurate and intelligible.

To return to the initial question which this book held promise to address, of great interest to students of Theosophy, we have already said that Magee's statements of Tsong-kha-pa's position are sufficient to show that the Gelugpas do not accept a *svabhāva* such as is found in the Stanzas of Dzyan. Rather, they hold that all things are empty of any *svabhāva*. But since what Blavatsky gave out was avowedly a secret doctrine, can we read anything between the lines in support of it?

Nāgārjuna defines *svabhāva* with two adjectives: (1) "not made," that is, "not created," or as Magee trans-

lates, “not fabricated,” and (2) “not dependent on another.” This latter has reference to the well-known Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination, the chain of causation; i.e., that all things depend for their coming into existence on other things, on preceding causes and conditions. Nāgārjuna later adds that *svabhāva*, now called *prakṛti*, is “without change,” or in other words is immutable. So far, so good. *Svabhāva*, as an aspect of the “omnipresent, eternal, boundless, and immutable principle,” postulated as the first fundamental proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*, matches these descriptions given by Nāgārjuna.

Nāgārjuna further says in regard to this question that there is ultimately neither being nor non-being. Again, Blavatsky says that the omnipresent, eternal, boundless, and immutable principle cannot be described as being, so she used for it the term “Be-ness.” Those hostile writers who have ridiculed Blavatsky for her “Be-ness” should be referred to this chapter of Nāgārjuna’s.

But here the way seems to diverge. For Nāgārjuna, this fact that there is neither being nor non-being is proof that one cannot speak of any existing thing as having *svabhāva*. Nor does he speak of any *svabhāva* as the origin of existing things. Neither in Candrakīrti’s explanation of Nāgārjuna’s brief words, nor in Tsong-kha-pa’s explanation of both, do we find anything even remotely pertaining to *svabhāva* as the “father-mother” or root of the universe, like it is described in the Stanzas of Dzyan.


One thing should be noted here. We do not have Nāgārjuna’s own commentary on his verses. The one attributed to him found in the Tengyur is said by the Gelugpas to be spurious. We therefore do not know for sure how he understood *svabhāva*. Candrakīrti, writing hundreds of years later, purposely employed a Prāsaṅgika line of interpretation to explain Nāgārjuna’s text. In this approach, reasoning is used to show that conceptions such as “*svabhāva* exists” are untenable. This approach was followed by the Gelugpas. According to another approach, followed by the “Great Madhyamakās” such as Dolpopa and the Jonangpas, Nāgārjuna held that there is something beyond what can be conceptualized. But as

discussed by Magee (pp.103-115), this is exactly what Tsong-kha-pa and the Gelugpas deny.

Candrakīrti, however, may have given us who wish to trace the Theosophical understanding of *svabhāva* a major clue, tucked innocuously among a string of definitions of *svabhāva*. Here is an excerpt from this string (Magee’s translation of it is on p.147): “What is this *svabhāva*? *Prakṛti*. And what is this *prakṛti*? That which is emptiness (*śūnyatā*). What is this emptiness? Lack of *svabhāva*.” The possible clue is that *svabhāva* or *prakṛti* is here also equated with emptiness.

Even though there is in Buddhism no explicit cosmogonical teaching regarding any of these terms, it is a fact that every day, thousands of Buddhists who perform tantric *sādhana* (meditation practice based on the Buddhist tantras, Blavatsky’s Books of Kiu-te) begin by dissolving the universe into emptiness, and then generate their meditational universe out of emptiness. Emptiness thus becomes, in this practice, the origin of the (at least imagined) universe. Though emptiness is certainly not conceived of here as an ultimate essence or substance like Blavatsky’s *svabhāva*, but rather as empty space, we are reminded of a statement from a secret commentary found in *The Secret Doctrine* that I have had occasion to quote elsewhere (*Blavatsky’s Secret Books*, p.120):

. . . 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). . . . (*The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, p.289)

The explicit equation of *svabhāva* and emptiness (*śūnyatā*) by Candrakīrti may provide an important clue to Theosophical researchers working with Buddhist texts, which otherwise seem to disprove rather than support Theosophical teachings. Books such as *The Nature of Things* can be used in this research, at least in their general conclusions, although no deductions can safely be made based on their translations. Nonetheless, we can be grateful to William Magee for accurately providing us with the general drift of Gelugpa thought on the question of *svabhāva*.

New CD Available

CD contains an index of approximately 108,000 articles from some 90 theosophical and related periodicals — consisting of journals, series and pamphlets. A copy may be obtained from:

The Campbell Theosophical Research Library
4th floor 484 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000 Australia
e-mail: campbell@austheos.org.au

Cosmic Consciousness Centenary

Cosmic Consciousness, by R.M. Bucke, was published in 1901. That it is still in print after a hundred years suggests a remarkable quality. It is a discourse on a certain rare type of mystical experience suggested by the title. The ideas put forth in this book have influenced modern thinking like few published before or since. For those interested in investigating “unexplained laws and latent powers” it has long been a valuable reference work.

The author, Richard Maurice Bucke, was a Canadian medical doctor. His specialization was mental health and in the western world he was a leading figure in this field. His compassionate views on how to treat mental patients were decades ahead of his time, and were based on his theory that forcible restraint, then a current practice, was ineffective as well as cruel. When he was appointed Superintendent of the Asylum for the Insane at London, Ontario, he was able to put his theory into practice and apply humane treatment to the poor wretches under his care.

As well as his innovative medical work, Bucke was one of the most active of the 19th century torch bearers for the American poet Walt Whitman. Indeed it was he who wrote the first biography of Whitman.

It was an extraordinary subjective experience in his mid-thirties that led Bucke to thinking about the different degrees of consciousness. Describing the experience in the third person, he wrote:

[H]e found himself wrapped around by a flame coloured cloud . . . he knew that the light was within himself. Directly afterwards came upon him a sense of exultation, of immense joyousness accompanied or immediately followed by an intellectual illumination quite impossible to describe. . . . He saw and knew that the Cosmos is not dead matter but a living Presence, that the soul of man is immortal. . . . He claims that he learned more within the few seconds during which the illumination lasted than in previous months or even years of study and that he learned much that no study could ever have taught.


He sought for an explanation of this enhancement of consciousness. He found that few similar experiences had ever been recorded, but managed to gather together three dozen accounts, a few historical, the rest contemporary. These “case histories” form a substantial portion of his book. He also examined the experience from a scientific viewpoint, limited as it is, and endeavoured to develop a theory to explain

it. The subject had previously been little studied, especially in the West, and by breaking new ground, the book opened many minds to the implications of humanity’s potential to achieve a higher level of consciousness.

The sub-title of *Cosmic Consciousness* is “A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind.” This was a subject that reflects Bucke’s professional thinking, influenced by the theory of evolution. Just as organic forms evolve, so does consciousness he postulated. He graded consciousness from the simple, as possessed by animals, to self-consciousness which marked human development; then he proposed a third and higher level, which is “a consciousness of the cosmos, that is, of the life and order of the universe.”

Bucke initially presented a scientific paper entitled “Cosmic Consciousness” to a group of his peers in 1894. He continued to work on this subject, adding considerable comment before publishing the book with the same title. Bucke borrowed “cosmic consciousness” from the 19th century poet/mystic Edward Carpenter who had used the term in a book published in 1892. However, H.P. Blavatsky had combined the same two words a few years earlier in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 280; 328). Was there a connection? At the risk of over simplification, it is suggested that whereas she had used the term in a macro sense, Carpenter/Bucke employed it in a micro context.

Few books in any category published in the 20th century achieved such lasting success as *Cosmic Consciousness*. Down through the years it has received praise from many quarters. The philosopher William James was prophetic when he wrote Bucke: “You have brought this kind of consciousness ‘home’ to the attention of students of human nature in a way so definite and unescapable that it will be impossible henceforward to overlook it, or ignore it, or pooh-pooh it entirely away.” A student of Theosophy, the Group of Seven artist Lawren Harris, wrote: “I know of no book by a Canadian written with such nobility of thought, illumined by so lofty a vision, nor one so rich in human kindness.”

Dr. Bucke died in 1902, little realizing the impact *Cosmic Consciousness* would have on generations yet unborn. 

T. G. D.

Statement Regarding Dr. John Cooper's Compilation of the Collected Correspondence of Madame Blavatsky

Dr. Gregory Tillett

[Edmonton Theosophical Society had the good fortune of being able to host John Cooper in 1989. This good and gentle man made a lasting impression on its members. Although John was not a member of the Theosophical Society, he practiced more fully than most the virtues of universal brotherhood. We would encourage all theosophists to stand up for this man's good name and see that his work finds its rightful place in theosophical libraries around the world. - *Editor*]

Since the death of my esteemed colleague and friend, John Cooper, many people have contacted me and others regarding the future of the volume of Madame Blavatsky's correspondence which John had compiled and edited (and for which he was posthumously awarded his Ph.D.).

The first volume of the HPB correspondence was originally compiled with the intention that it would be published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, and John had entered into a contract with that publisher.

Following John's untimely death on May 12, 1998, his widow, Shirley, received a number of letters and telephone calls regarding the volume of the HPB correspondence, and John's library and archives. She found many of these communications intimidating and intrusive, and, in a least one case, received a letter which was rude and threatening. John's family therefore asked me to act as literary executor on behalf of his estate, and to undertake all correspondence and discussions regarding the proposed publication of the HPB correspondence, and John's library and archives.

Acting on behalf of John's family, on June 29, 1999 I wrote to Dr. John Algeo, of the Theosophical Society in America, in response to a number of letters from him to Mrs. Cooper. I advised Dr. Algeo that I was acting on behalf of the family, and that neither Mrs. Cooper nor John's children wished to be involved in future discussions regarding the proposed publication other than through me as their agent. I both faxed and mailed this letter to Dr. Algeo, and, when I had not received a reply by August 24, 1999, I again wrote to him, again faxing and mailing the letter.

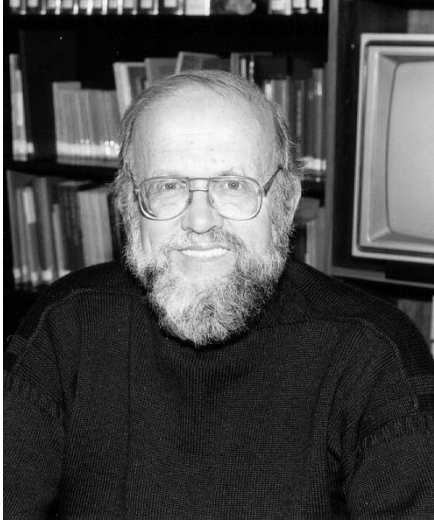
Dr. Algeo replied on August 24 (by fax), but appeared to believe that, with John's death, all rights in the material he had collected for the proposed volume had passed to the Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, and that John's family (as the beneficiaries of John's estate) had no rights in the matter. On the same day, Dr. Algeo wrote to Mrs. Cooper advising that he proposed to visit her in October, 1999. Dr.

Algeo also wrote to me again on August 30 advising that he intended to visit Mrs. Cooper "to get whatever material I can pertaining to the HPB letters."

Having consulted with John's family, I replied to Dr. Algeo (sending my letter by e-mail, fax and post) on September 3, 1999. I advised Dr. Algeo that John's family did not wish to be involved in any correspondence regarding the proposed volume, or in relation to John's vast collection of material on Theosophical history, and that they had asked me to deal with all such matters. The family had considered having their attorney write to Dr. Algeo to make a formal request that he desist from troubling Mrs. Cooper with further communications, but I advised them that this would surely not be necessary.

I advised Dr. Algeo that Mrs. Cooper did not wish him to visit her, and that the family would not release any material to him. I again advised Dr. Algeo that I was acting as the agent of the family, and that any further and future communications in the matter of the proposed volume and John's library and archives would therefore have to be with me. I advised Dr. Algeo that, since he was proposing to visit Australia, I would be happy to make myself available to meet with him in the hope that any difficulties in the publication of the HPB correspondence could be resolved.

On behalf of John's family, I had taken legal advice from an American attorney, and I advised Dr. Algeo that his advice (no less than the advice I had also received regarding the Australian legal position) was that John's rights in the proposed volume (and as referred to in John's contract with the Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton) had now passed to his beneficiaries (his "legal successors" in the words of the contract), and that decisions made by the Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, with regard to changes it apparently intended to make (including apparent proposals for deleting or amending correspondence) from the first volume, could not occur without the consent of John's family. I set out the family's position regarding matters to do with the copyright of the manuscript of the proposed volume



John Cooper

in some detail, and asked that any proposals for changes to the manuscript be forwarded to me as soon as possible.

I also indicated that the family would provide whatever assistance it could give to facilitate the publication of the first volume (which already exists in manuscript form), and of subsequent volumes (for which John had already collected a vast amount of material). I indicated that the family hoped that the correspondence could be published in the Collected Writings series. However, I advised Dr. Algeo that any such cooperation would require consultation with the family, and not arbitrary decisions by the Theosophical Publishing House of which the family was simply informed.

I also noted that Mrs. Cooper had received what can only be described as an offensive and aggressive letter from an eminent American Theosophist, who is a member of an “Editorial Board” apparently appointed by the Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, to take control of the publication of John’s manuscript of HPB correspondence (ignoring the provisions of the contract between John and the Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton).

I have still not received a reply to my letter (and fax and e-mail) of September 3, 1999.

Dr. Algeo was in Australia recently, and I wrote to him at the Australian headquarters of the Theosophical Society, and faxed a copy of that letter to the National President of the Society in Australia asking that she pass it on to Dr. Algeo. I sought a meeting with Dr. Algeo in an attempt to resolve the outstanding issues raised in my letter of September 3, 1999. I have received a letter from the National President (Ms. Beverley Champion) dated January 22, 2001, acknowledging receipt of the letters for Dr. Algeo, and stating that she gave the faxed copy of the letter to him. I have received no communication from Dr. Algeo.

Having read on Theos-World the suggestion that the first volume of the HPB correspondence was to be published by the Theosophical Publishing House, I wrote to the Theosophical Publishing House inform-

ing them that John’s family did not give, and specifically refused, permission for such publication until and unless the issues relating to its rights in the matter were resolved.

I subsequently received a letter from attorneys acting for the Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, and the Theosophical Society in America. This letter made a number of remarkable assertions. For example, it asserted that the Theosophical Publishing House and the Theosophical Society in America “currently hold the copyright on the H.P. Blavatsky Letters”, and that “Any obligations or duties of my client under the contract with Mr. Cooper would have terminated upon his death.” Just how copyright can be held on letters written or received over a hundred years ago remains unexplained, as does the question of how any rights in relation to letters found or obtained by John independently of the Theosophical Publishing House can now be claimed by them.

The letter further asserts that John acknowledged that all rights in relation to all letters were held by the Theosophical Publishing House. Although I have searched extensively, I have been unable to find in John’s files any such sweeping acknowledgment.

The letter notes that “It is not the intention of [the Theosophical Publishing House] to utilize any editorial notes or introductory essays of Mr. Cooper with respect to any published work of the H.P. Blavatsky Letters.” This, presumably, means that any volume of HPB correspondence published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton will not include any material written by John, any editorial comments compiled by John, or any letters obtained as a result of John’s independent research.

The letter concludes with a predictable legal threat of court action should any attempt be made to publish (other than with the Theosophical Publishing House) any material relating to the HPB correspondence.

I have referred the attorney’s letter to a US attorney (since copyright and contract law may well be different in the USA to Australia).

John’s family is eager for the HPB correspondence to be published, but it will not allow the Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, or Dr. Algeo, or anyone else, to simply take over the rights in the publication which the contract between John and the Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, specifically declares to lie with John or “his successors”. John spent many years and much effort and money in his collection of and research into the HPB correspondence, as is evidenced by the vast collection of material in his archives. His doctoral thesis (which was, essentially,

intended to be the basis for the first volume of the HPB correspondence) provides evidence of the extent of material he gathered independently of the Theosophical Society in America or the Theosophical Publishing House, and of his diligence in ensuring scholarly accuracy and impartiality in presenting the correspondence.


It is entirely probable that Dr. Algeo has no wish to deal with me. However, I am the agent of the estate of John Cooper in this matter, and it will therefore not be possible for the publication of the proposed volume to proceed unless the Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, is prepared to communicate with me, to recognize the rights of John's family in relation to the proposed volume, and to respond to their requests.

John had wanted a clause included in the contract that specifically assigned the right to determine "what is published in the letters" to him (or his successors)[clause 1(g)]. John deliberately had this clause included in the contract. He was (as he told me on several occasions, including on the night before his death, and as he told others) concerned that attempts might be made to inappropriately edit, "censor" or amend the text of the HPB correspondence. As I have written to Dr. Algeo, John's family is quite willing to consider editorial changes, but it

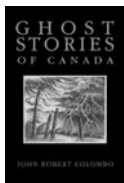
is not prepared to allow them until and unless any proposed changes are explained and justified to them, and approved by them.

Thus, unfortunately, the proposal to publish the first volume of the HPB correspondence remains stalled. Interest has been expressed by several other publishers in the possibility of taking on the project, and this option is currently being explored.

I must say that I have been totally appalled by the arrogant attitude of the Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, in this whole matter. The distress that has been caused to Mrs. Cooper is scandalous, and, coming from an organization that lays claim to principles of "Universal Brotherhood" even more so.

The first volume (at least) of the Blavatsky correspondence will — eventually — be published, in its entirety and without ideologically based censorship, whether by the Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, or by one of the other publishers who have already expressed interest in taking over the project. John was a close friend and collaborator of mine for more than twenty years, and I will do all within my power to ensure that his scholarly standards and professional integrity are not diminished after his death. 

BOOK REVIEW



John Robert Colombo, *Ghost Stories of Canada*. Drawings by Jillian Hume Gilliland. Toronto: A Hounslow Book (the Dundurn Press), 2000. 220 pp. Soft cover. Price \$18.99 Cdn.

As John Robert Colombo has amply demonstrated in several earlier books, hardly anywhere in Canada is not associated with mysteries of various kinds. This latest compilation is a welcome addition to his remarkable collections. Here are a hundred ghost stories, gathered from all Provinces and Territories, and dating from the earliest European settlements to the present. Some of the early ones have achieved a form of permanence in folklore; among the later stories are very interesting case examples.

Needless to say, psychic phenomena similar to those reported in this book are universal. There is therefore nothing special in their occurrence in Canada, but it is most useful that the reports be preserved in collections like this.

The contents of this book fall roughly into three familiar categories. The majority are of the conventional "ghost" phenomenon — sometimes manifested as an apparition, more often sensed as an unseen "presence". Then there are the inevitable

poltergeist incidents, which generations of researchers have failed to satisfactorily explain. In addition are instances of that not uncommon occurrence: the momentary visual appearance of a relative or close friend almost simultaneously with that person's death.

The latter is a phenomenon that is frequently reported to occur even when a considerable distance is involved between the deceased and the startled viewer. Those interested in following this up will find useful hints among H.P. Blavatsky's writings.

A sceptic will claim these stories are figments of the tellers' imaginations. Perhaps some are; perhaps others have been embellished with the telling — it really doesn't matter for casual readers of mysteries who enjoy a good read. But those interested in investigating the occult will find among the hundred cases presented here many evidently factual examples of how unseen forces manifest in the material world. Yes, even in Canada.

T. G. D.

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



FOHAT

Box 4587

Edmonton, Alberta

Canada, T6E 5G4



Recycled Paper