

[For details on the source of this material see *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Volume 14, Introduction, p. XXV by Boris DeZirkoff. This subject heading is referenced twice in the Secret Doctrine.]

Blavatsky Collected Writings, Volume 14, p. 369

THE MYSTERY OF BUDDHA

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THE DOCTRINE OF AVATARAS

A strange story—a legend rather—is persistently current among the disciples of some great Himalayan Gurus, and even among laymen, to the effect that Gautama, the Prince of Kapilavastu, has never left the terrestrial regions, though his body died and was burnt, and its relics are preserved to this day. There is an oral tradition among the Chinese Buddhists, and a written statement among the secret books of the Lamaists of Tibet, as well as a tradition among the Aryans, that Gautama BUDDHA had two doctrines: one for the masses and His lay disciples, the other for His “elect,” the Arhats. His policy and after Him that of His Arhats was, it appears, to refuse no one admission into the ranks of candidates for Arhatship, but never to divulge the final mysteries except to those who had proved themselves, during long years of probation, to be worthy of Initiation. These once accepted were consecrated and initiated without distinction of race, caste or wealth, as in the case of His western successor. It is the Arhats who have set forth and allowed this tradition to take root in the people’s mind, and it is the basis, also, of the later dogma of Lamaic reincarnation or the succession of human Buddhas.

^[1]_[SEP]The little that can be said here upon the subject may or may not help to guide the psychic student in the right direction. It being left to the option and responsibility of the writer to tell the facts as she *personally* understood them, the blame for possible misconceptions created must fall only upon her. She has been taught the doctrine, but it was left to her sole intuition—as it is now left to the sagacity of the reader—to group the mysterious and perplexing facts together. The incomplete statements herein given are fragments of what is contained in certain secret volumes, but it is not lawful to divulge the details.

The esoteric version of the mystery given in the secret volumes may be told very briefly. The Buddhists have always stoutly denied that their BUDDHA was, as alleged by the Brahmans, an Avatâra of Vishnu in the same sense as a man is an incarnation of his Karmic ancestor. They deny it partly, perhaps, because the esoteric meaning of the term “Mahâ-Vishnu” is

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not known to them in its full, impersonal, and general meaning. There is a mysterious

Principle in Nature called “Mahâ-Vishnu,” which is not the God of that name, but a principle which contains Bîja, the seed of Avatârism or, in other words, is the potency and cause of such divine incarnations. All the World-Saviors, the Bodhisattvas and the Avatâras, are the trees of salvation grown out from the one seed, the Bîja or “Mahâ-Vishnu.” Whether it be called Âdi-Buddha (Primeval Wisdom) or Mahâ-Vishnu, it is all the same. Understood esoterically, Vishnu is both Saguna and Nirguna (with and without attributes). In the first aspect, Vishnu is the object of exoteric worship and devotion; in the second, as Nirguna, he is the culmination of the totality of spiritual wisdom in the Universe-Nirvâna,* in short—and has as worshippers all philosophical minds. In this esoteric sense the Lord BUDDHA was an incarnation of Mahâ-Vishnu.

^[]_[SEP]This is from the philosophical and purely spiritual standpoint. From the plane of illusion, however, as one would say, or from the terrestrial standpoint, those initiated know that He was a direct incarnation of one of the primeval “Seven Sons of Light” who are to be found in every Theogony—the Dhyân-Chohans whose mission it is, from one eternity (aeôn) to the other, to watch over the spiritual welfare of the regions under their care. This has been already enunciated in *Esoteric Buddhism*.

^[]_[SEP]One of the greatest mysteries of speculative and philosophical Mysticism—and it is one of the mysteries now to be disclosed — is the *modus operandi* in the degrees of such hypostatic transferences. As a matter of course, divine as well as human incarnations must remain a closed book to the theologian as much as to the physiologist, unless the esoteric teachings be accepted and become the religion of the world. This teaching^[]_[SEP]

* A great deal of misconception is raised by a confusion of planes of being and misuse of expressions. For instance, certain spiritual states have been confounded with the Nirvâna of BUDDHA. The Nirvâna of BUDDHA is totally different from any other spiritual state of Samadhi or even the highest Theophania enjoyed by lesser Adepts. After physical death the kinds of spiritual states reached by Adepts differ greatly.

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may never be fully explained to an unprepared public; but one thing is certain and may be said now: that between the dogma of a newly-created soul for each new birth, and the physiological assumption of a temporary animal soul, there lies the vast region of Occult teaching* with its logical and reasonable demonstrations, the links of which may all be traced in logical and philosophical sequence in nature.

^[]_[SEP]This “Mystery” is found, for him who understands its right meaning, in the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, in the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, Chapter iv, 5-9. Says the Avatâra:

Many births of mine have passed, as also of yours, O Arjuna! All those I know, but you do not know yours, O harasser of your enemies.^[]_[SEP]

Although I am unborn, with exhaustless Âtman, and am the Lord of all that is; yet, taking up the domination of my nature I am born by the power of illusion.† ^[]_[SEP]

Whenever, O son of Bhârata, there is decline of Dharma [the right law] and the rise of Adharma [the

opposite of Dharma] there I manifest myself.

^[L]_[SEP]For the salvation of the good and the destruction of wickedness, for the establishment of the law, I am born in every yuga.

Whoever comprehends truly my divine birth and action, he, O Arjuna having abandoned the body does not receive rebirth; he comes to me.

Thus, all the Avatâras are one and the same: the Sons of their “Father,” in a direct descent and line, the “Father,” or^[L]_[SEP]

* This region is the one possible point of conciliation between the two diametrically opposed poles of religion and science, the one with its barren fields of dogmas on faith, the other overrunning with empty hypotheses, both overgrown with the weeds of error. They will never meet. The two are at feud, at an everlasting warfare with each other, but this does not prevent them from uniting against Esoteric Philosophy, which for two millenniums has had to fight against infallibility in both directions, or “mere vanity and pretence” as Antoninus defined it, and now finds the materialism of Modern Science arrayed against its truths.

^[L]_[SEP] Whence some of the Gnostic ideas? Cerinthus taught that the world and Jehovah having fallen off from virtue and primitive dignity, the Supreme permitted one of his glorious Aeôns, whose name was the “Anointed” (Christ) to incarnate in the man Jesus. Basilides denied the reality of the body of Jesus, and calling it an “illusion” held that it was Simon of Cyrene who suffered on the Cross in his stead. All such teachings are echoes of the Eastern Doctrines.

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one of the seven Flames becoming, for the time being, the Son, and these two being one—in Eternity. What is the Father? Is it the absolute Cause of all?—the fathomless Eternal? No; most decidedly. It is Kâranâtman, the “Causal Soul” which, in its general sense, is called by the Hindus Îśvara, the Lord, and by Christians, “God,” the One and Only. From the standpoint of unity it is so; but then the lowest of the Elementals could equally be viewed in such case as the “One and Only.” Each human being has, moreover, his own divine Spirit or personal God. That divine Entity or Flame from which Buddhi emanates stands in the same relation to man, though on a lower plane, as the Dhyâni-Buddha to his human Buddha. Hence monotheism and polytheism are not irreconcilable; they exist in Nature.

^[L]_[SEP] Truly, “for the salvation of the good and the destruction of wickedness,” the personalities known as Gautama, Samkara, Jesus and a few others were born each in his age, as declared—“I am born in every Yuga”—and they were all born through the same Power.

^[L]_[SEP] There is a great mystery in such incarnations and they are outside and beyond the cycle of general rebirths. Rebirths may be divided into three classes: the divine incarnations called Avataras; those of Adepts who give up Nirvâna for the sake of helping on humanity—the Nirmânakâyas; and the natural succession of rebirths for all—the common law. The Avatara is an appearance, one which may be termed a special illusion within the natural illusion that reigns on the planes under the sway of that power, Mâyâ; the Adept is reborn consciously, at his will and pleasure;* the units of the common herd

unconsciously follow the great law of dual evolution.

What is an Avatâra? for the term before being used ought to be well understood. It is a descent of the manifested Deity—

* A genuine initiated Adept will retain his Adeptship, though there may be for our world of illusion numberless incarnations of him. The propelling power that lies at the root of a series of such incarnations is not Karma, as ordinarily understood, but a still more inscrutable power. During the period of his lives the Adept does not lose his Adeptship, though he cannot rise in it to a higher degree.

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whether under the specific name of Siva, Vishnu, or Âdi-Buddha—into an illusive form of individuality, an appearance which to men on this illusive plane is objective, but it is not so in sober fact. That illusive form having neither past nor future, because it had neither previous incarnation nor will have subsequent rebirths, has naught to do with Karma, which has therefore no hold on it.

Gautama BUDDHA was born an Avatâra in one sense. But this, in view of unavoidable objections on dogmatic grounds, necessitates explanation. There is a great difference between an Avatâra and a Jîvanmukta: one, as already stated, is an illusive appearance, Karmaless, and having never before incarnated; and the other, the Jîvanmukta, is one who obtains Nirvâna by his individual merits. To this expression again an uncompromising, philosophical Vedântin would object. He might say that as the condition of the Avatâra and the Jîvanmukta are one and the same state, no amount of personal merit, in howsoever many incarnations, can lead its possessor to Nirvâna. Nirvâna, he would say, is actionless; how can, then, any action lead to it? It is neither a result nor a cause, but an ever-present, eternal Is, as Nâgasena defined it.* Hence it can have no relation to, or concern with, action, merit, or demerit, since these are subject to Karma. All this is very true, but still to our mind there is an important difference between the two. An Avatâra *is*; a Jîvanmukta *becomes* one. If the state of the two is identical, not so are the causes which lead to it. An Avatâra is a descent of a God into an illusive form; a Jîvanmukta, who may have passed through numberless incarnations and may have accumulated merit in them, certainly does not become a Nirvânî because of that merit, but only because of the Karma generated by it, which leads and guides him in the direction of the Guru who will initiate him into the mystery of Nirvâna and who alone can help him to reach this abode.

The Śâstras say that from our works alone we obtain Moksha, and if we take no pains there will be no gain and we shall be neither assisted nor benefited by Deity [the Mahâ-Guru].

* [See *Milinda's Questions*, tr. by I.B. Horner, Division VII, 5. London Luzac & Co., 1964. Cf. p. 416 & fn. of this text.]

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Therefore it is maintained that Gautama, though an Avâtara in one sense, is a true human

Jīvanmukta, owing his position to his personal merit, and thus more than an Avatâra. It was his personal merit that enabled him to achieve Nirvâna.

Of the voluntary and conscious incarnations of Adepts there are two types—those of Nirmânakâyas, and those undertaken by the probationary chelas who are on their trial.

The greatest, as the most puzzling mystery of the first type lies in the fact, that such rebirth in a human body of the personal Ego of some particular Adept—when it has been dwelling in the Mâyâvi or the Kâma-Rupa, and remaining in the Kâma-Loka— may happen even when his “Higher Principles” are in the state of Nirvâna.* Let it be understood that the above expressions are used for popular purposes, and therefore that what is written does not deal with this deep and mysterious question from the *highest* plane, that of absolute spirituality, nor again from the highest philosophical point of view, comprehensible but to the very few. **It must not be supposed that anything can go into Nirvâna which is not eternally there; but human intellect in conceiving the Absolute must put It as the highest term in an indefinite series.** If this be borne in mind a great deal of misconception will be avoided. The content of this spiritual evolution is the material on various planes with which the Nirvânî was in contact prior to his attainment of Nirvana. The plane on which this is true, being in the series of illusive planes, is undoubtedly not the highest. Those who search for that must go to the right source of study, the teachings of the *Upanishads*, and must go in the right spirit. Here we^[SEP]

^[SEP]* From the so-called Brahmâ-Loka—the seventh and higher world, beyond which all is arupa, formless, purely spiritual—to the lowest world and insect, or even to an object such as a leaf, there is perpetual revolution of the condition of existence, evolution and rebirth. Some human beings attain states or spheres from which there is only a return in a new Kalpa (a day of Brahmâ): there are other states or spheres from which there is only return after 100 years of Brahmâ (Mahâ-Kalpa, a period covering 311,040,000,000,000 years). Nirvâna, it is said, is a state from which there is no return. Yet it is maintained that there may be, as exceptional cases, reincarnation from that state; only such incarnations are illusion, like everything else on this plane, as will be shown.

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attempt only to indicate the direction in which the search is to be made, and in showing a few of the mysterious Occult possibilities we do not bring our readers actually to the goal. The ultimate truth can be communicated only from Guru to initiated pupil.

^[SEP]Having said so much, the statement still will and must appear incomprehensible, if not absurd, to many. Firstly, to all those who are unfamiliar with the doctrine of the manifold nature and various aspects of the human Monad; and secondly to those who view the septenary division of the human entity from a too materialistic standpoint. Yet the intuitional Occultist, who has studied thoroughly the mysteries of Nirvâna—who knows it to be identical with Parabrahman, and hence unchangeable, eternal and no Thing but the Absolute All—will seize the possibility of the fact. They know that while a Dharmakâya—a Nirvânî “without remains,” as our Orientalists have translated it, being absorbed into that Nothingness, which is the one real, because Absolute, Consciousness—

cannot be said to return to incarnation on Earth, the Nirvânî being no longer a he, a she, or even an it; the Nirmamakaya—or he who has obtained Nirvâna “with remains,” *i.e.*, who is clothed in a subtle body, which makes him impervious to all outward impressions and to every mental feeling, and in whom the notion of his Ego has not entirely ceased—can do so. Again, every Eastern Occultist is aware of the fact that there are two kinds of Nirmânakâyas—the natural, and the assumed; that the former is the name or epithet given to the condition of a high ascetic, or Initiate, who has reached a stage of bliss second only to Nirvâna; while the latter means the self-sacrifice of one who voluntarily gives up the absolute Nirvâna, in order to help humanity and be still doing it good, or, in other words, to save his fellow-creatures by guiding them. It may be objected that the Dharmakâya, being a Nirvânî or Jîvanmukta, can have no “remains” left behind him after death, for having attained that state from which no further incarnations are possible, there is no need for him of a subtle body, or of the individual Ego that reincarnates from one birth to another, and that therefore the latter disappears of logical necessity; to this it is answered: it is so for all exoteric purposes and as a general law. But the case with which we are dealing is an exceptional one, and its realization lies within the Occult

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powers of the high Initiate, who, before entering into the state of Nirvâna, can cause his “remains” (sometimes, though not very well, called his Mâyâvi-Rupa), to remain behind,* whether he is to become a Nirvânî, or to find himself in a lower state of bliss.

Next, there are cases—rare, yet more frequent than one would be disposed to expect—which are the voluntary and conscious reincarnations of Adepts on their trial. Every man has an Inner, a “Higher Self,” and also an Astral Body. But few are those who, outside the higher degrees of Adeptship, can guide the latter, or any of the principles that animate it, when once death has closed their short terrestrial life. Yet such guidance, or their transference from the dead to a living body, is not only possible, but is of frequent occurrence, according to Occult and Kabalistic teachings. The degrees of such power of course vary greatly. To mention but three: the lowest of these degrees would allow an Adept, who has been greatly trammelled during life in his study and in the use of his powers, to choose after death another body in which he could go on with his interrupted studies, though ordinarily he would lose in it every remembrance of his previous incarnation. The next degree permits him, in addition to this, to transfer the memory of his past life to his new body; while the highest has hardly any limits in the exercise of that wonderful faculty.

As an instance of an Adept who enjoyed the first mentioned power some mediaeval Kabalists cite a well-known personage of the fifteenth century—Cardinal de Cusa; Karma, due to his wonderful devotion to Esoteric study and the Kabalah, led the suffering Adept to seek intellectual recuperation and rest from

* This fact of the disappearance of the vehicle of Egotism in the fully developed Yogi, who is supposed to have reached Nirvâna on earth, years before his corporeal death, has led to the law in Manu,

sanctioned by millenniums of Brāhmanical authority, that such a Paramâtman should be held as absolutely blameless and free from sin or responsibility, do whatever he may (see last chapter of the *Laws of Manu*). Indeed, caste itself—that most despotic, uncompromising and autocratic tyrant in India—can be broken with impunity by the Yogi, who is above caste. This will give the key to our statements.^[1]_{SEP}

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ecclesiastical tyranny in the body of Copernicus. *Se non é vero é ben trovato* [If it is not true, it is cleverly invented]; and the perusal of the lives of the two men might easily lead a believer in such powers to a ready acceptance of the alleged fact. The reader having at his command the means to do so is asked to turn to the formidable folio in Latin of the fifteenth century, called *De Docta Ignorantia*, written by the Cardinal de Cusa, in which all the theories and hypotheses—all the ideas—of Copernicus are found as the keynotes to the discoveries of the great astronomer.* Who was this extraordinarily learned Cardinal? The son of a poor boatman, owing all his career, his Cardinal's hat, and the reverential awe rather than^[1]_{SEP}

* About fifty years before the birth of Copernicus, De Cusa wrote as follows: "Though the world may not be absolutely infinite, no one can represent it to himself as finite, since human reason is incapable of assigning to it any term. . . . For in the same way that our earth cannot be in the centre of the Universe, as thought, no more could the sphere of the fixed stars be in it. . . . Thus this world is like a vast machine, having its centre [Deity] everywhere, and its circumference nowhere [*machina mundi, quasi habens ubique centrum, et nullibi circumferentiam*]. . . . Hence, the earth not being in the centre, cannot therefore be motionless . . . and though it is far smaller than the sun, one must not conclude for all that, that she is worse [*vilior*—more vile] One cannot see whether its inhabitants are superior to those who dwell nearer to the sun, or in other stars, as sidereal space cannot be deprived of inhabitants. . . . The earth, very likely [*fortasse*] one of the smallest globes, is nevertheless the cradle of intelligent beings, most noble and perfect." One cannot fail to agree with the biographer of Cardinal de Cusa, who, having no suspicion of the Occult truth, and the reason of such erudition in a writer of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, simply marvels at such a miraculous foreknowledge, and attributes it to God, saying of him that he was a man incomparable in every kind of philosophy, by whom many a theological mystery inaccessible to the human mind (!), veiled and neglected for centuries (*velata et neglecta*) were once more brought to light. "Pascal might have read De Cusa's works; but whence could the Cardinal have borrowed his ideas?" asks Louis Moreri. Evidently from Hermes and the works of Pythagoras, even if the mystery of his incarnation and reincarnation be dismissed. [See De Cusa's, *Of Learned Ignorance*, tr. by Fr. Germain Heron, London, Routledge, 1954, Bk. II, ch. 11 & 12; *Nicolai De Cusa Opera Omnia*, Vol. I. Ediderunt: Ernestus Hoffman et Raymundus Klibansky, Lipsiae, In Aedibus Felicis Meiner, 1932, etc., cap. xi & xii, pp. 100-104 ff.]

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friendship of the Popes Eugenius IV, Nicholas V, and Pius II, to the extraordinary learning which seemed innate in him, since he had studied nowhere till comparatively late in life. De Cusa died in 1464; moreover, his best works were written before he was forced to enter orders—to escape persecution. Nor did the Adept escape it.

^[1]_{SEP} In the voluminous work of the Cardinal above-quoted is found a very suggestive sentence, the authorship of which has been variously attributed to Pascal, to Cusa himself, and to the *Zohar*, and which belongs by right to the Books of Hermes:

The world is an infinite sphere, whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.

This is changed by some into: “The centre being nowhere, and the circumference everywhere,” a rather heretical idea for a Cardinal, though perfectly orthodox from a Kabalistic standpoint.

The theory of rebirth must be set forth by Occultists, and then applied to special cases. The right comprehension of this psychic fact is based upon a correct view of that group of celestial Beings who are universally called the seven Primeval Gods or Angels—our Dhyâni-Chohans—the “Seven Primeval Rays” or Powers, adopted later on by the Christian Religion as the “Seven Angels of the Presence.” Arupa, formless, at the upper rung of the ladder of Being, materializing more and more as they descend in the scale of objectivity and form, ending in the grossest and most imperfect of the Hierarchy, man—it is the former purely spiritual group that is pointed out to us, in our Occult teaching, as the nursery and fountainhead of human beings. Therein germinates that consciousness which is the earliest manifestation from causal Consciousness—the Alpha and Omega of divine being and life forever. And as it proceeds downward through every phase of existence descending through man, through animal and plant, it ends its descent only in the mineral. It is represented by the double triangle—the most mysterious and the most suggestive of all mystic signs, for it is a double glyph, embracing spiritual and physical consciousness and life, the former triangle running upwards, and the lower downwards, both interlaced, and showing the various

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planes of the twice-seven modes of consciousness, the fourteen spheres of existence, the Lokas of the Brâhmans.

^[SEP]The reader may now be able to obtain a clearer comprehension of the whole thing. He will also see what is meant by the “Watchers,” there being one placed as the Guardian or Regent over each of the seven divisions or regions of the earth, according to old traditions, as there is one to watch over and guide every one of the fourteen worlds or Lokas.* But it is not with any of these that we are at present concerned, but with the “Seven Breaths,” so-called, that furnish man with his immortal Monad in his cyclic pilgrimage.

^[SEP]The Commentary on the *Book of Dzyan* says:

^[SEP]*Descending on his region first as Lord of Glory, the Flame (or Breath), having called into conscious being the highest of the Emanations of that special region, ascends from it again to Its primeval seat, whence It watches over and guides Its countless Beams (Monads). It chooses as Its Avatâras only those who had the Seven Virtues in them† in their previous incarnation. As for the rest, It overshadows each with one of Its countless beams. . . . Yet even the “beam” is a part of the Lord of Lords.‡*

^[SEP]The septenary principle in man—who can be regarded as dual only as concerns psychic manifestation on this gross earthly plane—was known to all antiquity, and may be found in every ancient Scripture. The Egyptians knew and taught it, and their^[SEP]

* This is the secret meaning of the statements about the Hierarchy of Prajapâtis or Rishis. First seven are mentioned, then ten, then twenty-one, and so on. They are “Gods” and creators of men—many of them the “Lords of Beings”; they are the “Mind-born Sons” of Brahmâ, and then they become mortal heroes, and are often shown as of a very sinful character. The Occult meaning of the Biblical Patriarchs, their genealogy, and their descendants dividing among themselves the earth, is the same. Again, Jacob’s dream has the same significance.

† He “of the Seven Virtues” is one who, without the benefit of Initiation, becomes as pure as any Adept by the simple exertion of his own merit. Being so holy, his body at his next incarnation becomes the Avatâra of his “Watcher” or Guardian Angel, as the Christian would put it.

‡ The title of the highest Dhyâni-Chohans.

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division of principles is in every point a counterpart of the Âryan Secret Teaching. It is thus given in *Isis Unveiled*:

In the Egyptian notions, as in those of all other faiths founded on philosophy, man was not merely . . . a union of soul and body; he was a trinity when Spirit was added to it. Besides, that doctrine made him consist of kha—body; khaba—astral form, or shadow; ka—animal soul or lifeprinciple; ba—the higher soul; and akh—terrestrial intelligence. They had also a sixth principle, named sah—or mummy; but the functions of this one commenced only after the death of the body.*

The seventh principle being of course the highest, uncreated Spirit was generically called Osiris, therefore every deceased person became Osirified—or an Osiris—after death.

But in addition to reiterating the old, ever-present fact of reincarnation and Karma—not as taught by the Spiritists, but as by the most Ancient Science in the world—Occultists must teach cyclic and evolutionary reincarnation: that kind of rebirth, mysterious and still incomprehensible to many who are ignorant of the world’s history, which was cautiously mentioned in *Isis Unveiled*. A general rebirth for every individual with interlude of Kâma-Loka and Devachan, and a cyclic conscious reincarnation with a grand and divine object for the few. Those great characters who tower like giants in the history of mankind, like Siddârtha BUDDHA and Jesus in the realm of the spiritual, and Alexander the Macedonian and Napoleon the Great in the realm of physical conquests are but the reflected images of human types which had existed—not ten thousand years before, as cautiously put forward in *Isis Unveiled* (Vol. I, p. 35), but for millions of consecutive years from the beginning of the Manvantara. For—with the exception of real Avatâras, as above explained—they are the same unbroken Rays (Monads), each respectively of its own special Parent-Flame—called Devas, Dhyâni-Chohans, or Dhyâni-Buddhas, or again, Planetary Angels, etc.—shining in aeonic eternity as their prototypes. It is in their image that some men are born, and when some specific humanitarian object is in view, the latter are hypostatically animated by their divine prototypes.

* *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 367.

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reproduced again and again by the mysterious Powers that control and guide the destinies of our world.

[SEP]No more could be said at the time when *Isis Unveiled* was written; hence the statement was limited to the single remark that

There is no prominent character in all the annals of sacred or profane history whose prototype we cannot find in the half-fictitious and half-real traditions of bygone religions and mythologies. As the star, glimmering at an immeasurable distance above our heads, in the boundless immensity of the sky, reflects itself in the smooth waters of a lake, so does the imagery of men of the antediluvian ages reflect itself in the periods we can embrace in an historical retrospect.*

But now that so many publications have been brought out, stating much of the doctrine, and several of them giving many an erroneous view, this vague allusion may be amplified and explained. Not only does this statement apply to prominent characters in history in general, but also to men of genius, to every remarkable man of the age, who soars beyond the common herd with some abnormally developed special capacity in him, leading to the progress and good of mankind. Each is a reincarnation of an individuality that has gone before him with capacities in the same line, bringing thus as a dowry to his new form that strong and easily re-awakened capacity of quality which had been fully developed in him in his preceding birth. Very often they are ordinary mortals, the Egos of natural men in the course of their cyclic development. [SEP]But it is with “special cases” that we are now concerned. Let us suppose that a person during his cycle of incarnations is thus selected for special purposes—the vessel being sufficiently clean—by his personal God, the Fountainhead (on the plane of the manifested) of his Monad, who thus becomes his indweller. That God, his own prototype or “Father in Heaven,” is, in one sense, not only the image in which he, the spiritual man, is made, but in the case we are considering, it is that spiritual, individual Ego himself. This is a case of permanent, life-long Theophania. Let us bear in mind that this is neither Avatârism, as it is understood in Brâhmanical philosophy, nor is the man [SEP]

* *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 35.

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thus selected a Jîvanmukta or Nirvânî, but that it is a wholly exceptional case in the realm of Mysticism. The man may or may not have been an Adept in his previous lives; he is so far, and simply, an extremely pure and spiritual individual—or one who was all that in his preceding birth, if the vessel thus selected is that of a newly-born infant. In this case, after the physical translation of such a saint or Bodhisattva, his astral principles cannot be subjected to a natural dissolution like those of any common mortal. They remain in our sphere and within human attraction and reach; and thus it is that not only a Buddha, a Samkarâchârya, or a Jesus can be said to animate several persons at one and the same time, but even the principles of a high Adept may be animating the outward tabernacles of common mortals. [SEP]A certain Ray (principle) from Sanat-Kumâra spiritualized (animated) Pradyumna, the son of Krishna during the great Mahâbhârata period, while at the same time, he, Sanat-Kumâra, gave spiritual instruction to King Dhritarâshtra. Moreover, it is to be remembered that Sanat-Kumâra is “an eternal youth of sixteen,” dwelling in Jana-Loka,

his own sphere or spiritual state. ^[L]_{SEP} Even in ordinary mediumistic life, so-called, it is pretty well ascertained that while the body is acting—even though only mechanically—or resting in one place, its astral double may be appearing and acting independently in another, and very often distant place. This is quite a common occurrence in mystic life and history, and if this be so with ecstasies, Seers and Mystics of every description, why cannot the same thing happen on a higher and more spiritually developed plane of existence? Admit the possibility on the lower psychic plane, then why not on a higher plane? In the cases of higher Adeptship, when the body is entirely at the command of the Inner Man, when the Spiritual Ego is completely reunited with its seventh principle even during the lifetime of the personality, and the Astral Man or personal Ego has become so purified that he has gradually assimilated all the qualities and attributes of the middle nature (Buddhi and Manas in their terrestrial aspect) that personal Ego substitutes itself, so to say, for the spiritual Higher Self, and is thenceforth capable of living an independent life on earth; when corporeal death takes place, the following

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mysterious event often happens. As a Dharmakâya, a Nirvânî “without remains,” entirely free from terrestrial admixture, the Spiritual Ego cannot return to reincarnate on earth. But in such cases, it is affirmed, the personal Ego of even a Dharmakâya can remain in our sphere as a whole, and return to incarnation on earth if need be. For now it can no longer be subject, like the astral remains of any ordinary man, to gradual dissolution in the Kâma-Loka (the *limbus* or purgatory of the Roman Catholic, and the “Summer-land” of the Spiritualist); it cannot die a second death, as such disintegration is called by Proclus.* It has become too holy and pure, no longer by reflected but by its own natural light and spirituality, either to sleep in the unconscious slumber of a lower Nirvânîc state, or to be dissolved like any ordinary astral shell and disappear in its entirety. ^[L]_{SEP} But in that condition known as the Nirmânakâya [the Nirvânî “with remains,”] he can still help humanity. ^[L]_{SEP} “Let me suffer and bear the sins of all [be reincarnated unto new misery] but let the world be saved!” was said by Gautama BUDDHA: an exclamation the real meaning of which is little understood now by his followers. “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?” † asks the astral Jesus of Peter. “Till I come” means “till I am reincarnated again” in a physical body. Yet the Christ of the old crucified body could truly say: “I am with my Father and one with Him,” which did not prevent the astral from taking a form again nor John from tarrying indeed till his Master had come; nor hinder John from failing to recognize him when he did come, or from then opposing him. But in the Church that remark generated the absurd idea

^[L]_{SEP}* “After death, the soul continueth in the aerial (astral) body, till it is entirely purified from all angry, sensual passions; then doth it put off by a *second death* [when arising to Devachan] the aerial body as it did the earthly one. Wherefore the ancients say that there is a celestial body always joined with the soul, which is immortal, luminous and star-like.” It becomes natural then, that the “aerial body” of an Adept should have no such second dying, since it has been cleansed of all its natural impurity before its separation from the physical body. The high Initiate is a “Son of the Resurrection,” being “equal unto the

angels,” and cannot die any more (see *Luke* xx, 36).^{[L][SEP]}

† *St. John* xxi, 22.

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of the millennium or chiliasm, in its physical sense.^{[L][SEP]} Since then the “Man of Sorrows” has returned, perchance, more than once, unknown to, and undiscovered by, his blind followers. Since then also, this grand “Son of God” has been incessantly and most cruelly crucified daily and hourly by the Churches founded in his name. But the Apostles, only half-initiated, failed to tarry for their Master, and not recognizing him, spurned him every time he returned.*^{[L][SEP]}

^{[L][SEP]}* See the extract made in *The Theosophist*, [Nov. 1881, p. 38 & Dec., p. 25], from a glorious novel by Dostoievsky—a fragment entitled “The Grand Inquisitor.” It is a fiction; naturally, still a sublime fiction of Christ returning in Spain during the palmy days of the Inquisition, and being imprisoned and put to death by the Inquisitor, who fears lest Christ should ruin the work of Jesuit hands. [See also *B.C.W.* Vol. III, pp. 324-25 and *Mahatma Letters*, No. 27.]^{[L][SEP]}

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THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES

The “Mystery of Buddha” is that of several other Adepts—perhaps of many. The whole trouble is to understand correctly that other mystery: that of the real fact, so abstruse and transcendental at first sight, about the “Seven Principles” in man, the reflections in man of the seven powers in Nature, physically, and of the seven Hierarchies of Being, intellectually and spiritually. Whether a man—material, ethereal, and spiritual—is for the clearer comprehension of his (broadly-speaking) triple nature, divided into groups according to one or another system, the foundation and the apex of that division will be always the same. There being only three Upâdhis (bases) in man, any number of Kośas (sheaths) and their aspects may be built on these without destroying the harmony of the whole. Thus, while the Esoteric System accepts the septenary division, the Vedântic classification gives five Kośas, and the Târaka Râja Yoga simplifies them into four—the three Upâdhis synthesized by the highest principle, Âtman.^{[L][SEP]} That which has just been stated will, of course, suggest the question: “How can a spiritual (or semi-spiritual) personality lead a triple or even a dual life, shifting respective ‘Higher Selves’ ad libitum, and be still the one eternal Monad in the infinity of a Manvantara?” The answer to this is easy for the true Occultist, while for the uninitiated profane it must appear absurd. The “Seven Principles” are, of course, the manifestation of one indivisible Spirit, but only at the end of the Manvantara, and when they come to be re-united on the plane of the One Reality, does the unity appear; during the “Pilgrim’s” journey the reflections of that indivisible One Flame, the aspects of the one eternal Spirit, have each the power of action

on one of the manifested planes of existence—the gradual differentiations from the one unmanifested plane—on that plane namely to which it properly belongs. Our earth affording every Mâyâvic condition, it follows that the purified Egotistical Principle, the astral and personal Self of an Adept, though forming in reality one integral whole with its Highest Self (Âtman and Buddhi) may, nevertheless, for purposes of universal mercy and benevolence, so separate itself from its divine Monad as to lead on this plane of illusion and temporary being a distinct

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independent conscious life of its own, under a borrowed illusive shape, thus serving at one and the same time a double purpose: the exhaustion of its own individual Karma, and the saving of millions of human beings less favored than itself from the effects of mental blindness. If asked: “When the change described as the passage of a Buddha or a Jîvanmukta into Nirvâna takes place, where does the original consciousness which animated the body continue to reside—in the Nirvânî or in the subsequent reincarnations of the latter’s ‘remains’ (the Nirmânakâya)?” the answer is that imprisoned consciousness may be a “certain knowledge from observation and experience,” as Gibbon puts it, but disembodied consciousness is not an effect, but a cause. It is a part of the whole, or rather a Ray on the graduated scale of its manifested activity, of the one all-pervading, limitless Flame, the reflections of which alone can differentiate; and, as such, consciousness is ubiquitous, and can be neither localized nor centered on or in any particular subject, nor can it be limited. Its effects alone pertain to the region of matter, for thought is an energy that affects matter in various ways, but consciousness *per se*, as understood and explained by Occult philosophy, is the highest quality of the sentient spiritual principle in us, the Divine Soul (or Buddhi) and our Higher Ego, and does not belong to the plane of materiality. After the death of the physical man, if he be an Initiate, it becomes transformed from a human quality into the independent principle itself; the conscious Ego becoming Consciousness *per se* without any Ego, in the sense that the latter can no longer be limited or conditioned by the senses, or even by space or time. Therefore it is capable, without separating itself from or abandoning its possessor, Buddhi, of reflecting itself at the same time in its astral man that was, without being under any necessity for localizing itself. This is shown at a far lower stage in our dreams. For if consciousness can display activity during our visions, and while the body and its material brain are fast asleep—and if even during those visions it is all but ubiquitous—how much greater must be its power when entirely free from, and having no more connection with, our physical brain.

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THE MYSTERY OF BUDDHA

Now the mystery of Buddha lies in this: Gautama, an incarnation of pure Wisdom, had yet to learn in His human body and to be initiated into the world's secrets like any other mortal, until the day when He emerged from His secret recess in the Himâlayas and preached for the first time in the grove of Benares. The same with Jesus: from the age of twelve to thirty years, when He is found preaching the sermon on the Mount, nothing is positively said or known of Him. Gautama had sworn inviolable secrecy as to the Esoteric Doctrines imparted to Him. In His immense pity for the ignorance—and as its consequence the sufferings—of mankind, desirous though He was to keep inviolate His sacred vows, He failed to keep within the prescribed limits. While constructing His Exoteric Philosophy (the “Eye-Doctrine”) on the foundations of eternal Truth, He failed to conceal certain dogmas, and trespassing beyond the lawful lines, caused those dogmas to be misunderstood. In His anxiety to make away with the false Gods, He revealed in the “Seven Paths to Nirvâna” some of the mysteries of the Seven Lights of the Arupa (formless) World. A little of the truth is often worse than no truth at all.

Truth and fiction are like oil and water: they will never mix.

His new doctrine, which represented the outward dead body of the Esoteric Teaching without its vivifying Soul, had disastrous effects: it was never correctly understood, and the doctrine itself was rejected by the Southern Buddhists. Immense philanthropy, a boundless love and charity for all creatures, were at the bottom of His unintentional mistake; but Karma little heeds intentions, whether good or bad, if they remain fruitless. If the “Good Law,” as preached, resulted in the most sublime code of ethics and the unparalleled philosophy of things external in the visible Kosmos, it biassed and misguided immature minds into believing there was nothing more under the outward mantle of the system, and its dead-letter only was accepted. Moreover, the new teaching unsettled many great minds which had previously followed the orthodox Brâhmanical lead.

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Thus, fifty odd years after his death “the great Teacher”* having refused full Dharmakâya and Nirvâna, was pleased, for purposes of Karma and philanthropy, to be reborn. For Him death had been no death, but as expressed in the “Elixir of Life,”† He changed

A sudden plunge into darkness to a transition into a brighter light.

The shock of death was broken, and like many other Adepts, He threw off the mortal coil and left it to be burnt, and its ashes to serve as relics, and began interplanetary life, clothed in His subtle body. He was reborn as Samkara, the greatest Vedântic teacher of India, whose philosophy—based as it is entirely on the fundamental axioms of the eternal Revelation, the Sruti, or the primitive Wisdom-Religion, as Buddha from a different point of view had before based His—finds itself in the middle ground between the too exuberantly veiled metaphysics of the orthodox Brâhmins and those of Gautama, which, stripped in their exoteric garb of every soul-vivifying hope, transcendental aspiration and symbol, appear in their cold wisdom like crystalline icicles, the skeletons of the primeval

truths of Esoteric Philosophy.

Was Samkarâchârya Gautama the Buddha, then, under a new personal form? It may perhaps only puzzle the reader the more if he be told that there was the “astral” Gautama inside the outward Samkara, whose higher principle, or Âtman, was, nevertheless, his own divine prototype—the “Son of Light,” indeed—the heavenly, mind-born son of Aditi.^[SEP]

This fact is again based on that mysterious transference of the divine ex-personality merged in the impersonal Individuality — now in its full trinitarian form of the Monad as Atma-Buddhi-Manas—to a new body, whether visible or subjective. In the first case it is a Mânushya-Buddha; in the second it is a Nirmânakâya. The Buddha is in Nirvâna, it is said, though this once mortal vehicle—the subtle body—of Gautama is still^[SEP]

* When we say the “great Teacher,” we do not mean His Buddhic Ego, but that principle in Him which was the vehicle of His personal or terrestrial Ego.

† *Five Years of Theosophy*, p. 4.

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present among the Initiates; nor will it leave the realm of conscious Being so long as suffering mankind needs its divine help—not to the end of this Root-Race, at any rate. From time to time He, the “astral” Gautama, associates Himself, in some most mysterious—to us quite incomprehensible—manner, with Avatâras and great saints, and works through them. And several such are named.

Thus it is averred that Gautama Buddha was reincarnated in Samkarâchârya—that, as is said in *Esoteric Buddhism*:

Samkarâchârya simply *was* Buddha in all respects in a new body.*

While the expression in its mystic sense is true, the way of putting it may be misleading until explained. Samkara was a Buddha, most assuredly, but he never was a reincarnation of the Buddha, though Gautama’s “Astral” Ego—or rather his Bodhisattva—may have been associated in some mysterious way with Samkarâchârya. Yes, it was perhaps the Ego, Gautama, under a new and better adapted casket—that of a Brâhman of Southern India. But the Âtman, the Higher Self that overshadowed both, was distinct from the Higher Self of the translated Buddha, which was now in Its own sphere in Kosmos.

Śamkara was an Avatâra in the full sense of the term. According to Sâyanâchârya, the great commentator on the Vedas, he is to be held as an Avatâra, or direct incarnation of Siva—the Logos, the Seventh Principle in Nature—Himself. In the Secret Doctrine Srî Samkarâchârya is regarded as the abode—for the thirty-two years of his mortal life—of a Flame, the highest of the manifested Spiritual Beings, one of the Primordial Seven Rays.

And now **what is meant by a “Bodhisattva”?** Buddhists of the Mahâyâna mystic system teach that each BUDDHA manifests Himself (hypostatically or otherwise) simultaneously in three worlds of Being, namely, in the world of Kâma (concupiscence or desire—the sensuous universe or our earth) in the shape of a man; in the world of Rupa (form, yet

supersensuous) as a Bodhisattva; and in the highest Spiritual World

[SEP]* *Op. cit.*, p. 175, Fifth Edition, 1885.[SEP]

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(that of purely incorporeal existences) as a Dhyâni-Buddha. The latter prevails eternally in space and time, *i.e.*, from one Mahâ-Kalpa to the other—the synthetic culmination of the three being Âdi-Buddha,* [Dharmakaya - PW] the Wisdom-Principle, which is Absolute, and therefore out of space and time. Their interrelation is the following: The Dhyâni-Buddha, [Sambhogakaya - PW] when the world needs a human Buddha, “creates” through the power of Dhyâna (meditation, omnipotent devotion), a mind-born son—a Bodhisattva—whose mission it is after the physical death of his human, or Mânushya-Buddha, to continue his work on earth till the appearance of the subsequent Buddha. The Esoteric meaning of this teaching is clear. In the case of a simple mortal, the principles in him are only the more or less bright reflections of the seven cosmic, and the seven celestial Principles, the Hierarchy of supersensual Beings. In the case of a Buddha, they are **almost the principles *in esse* themselves**. The Bodhisattva replaces in him the Kârana Sarîra, the Ego principle, and the rest correspondingly; and it is in this way that Esoteric Philosophy explains the meaning of the sentence that “by virtue of Dhyâna [or abstract meditation] the Dhyâni-Buddha [the Buddha’s Spirit or Monad] creates a Bodhisattva,” or the astrally clothed Ego within the Mânushya-Buddha. Thus, while the Buddha merges back into Nirvâna whence it proceeded, the Bodhisattva remains behind to continue the Buddha’s work upon earth. It is then this Bodhisattva that may have afforded the lower principles in the apparitional body of Samkarâchârya, the Avatâra.[SEP]

Now to say that Buddha, after having reached Nirvâna, returned thence to reincarnate in a new body, would be uttering a heresy from the Brâhmanical, as well as from the Buddhistic standpoint. Even in the Mahâyâna exoteric School, in the[SEP]

[SEP]* It would be useless to raise objections from exoteric works to statements in this, which aims to expound, however superficially, the Esoteric Teachings alone. It is because they are misled by the exoteric doctrine that Bishop Bigandet and others aver that the notion of a supreme eternal Âdi-Buddha is to be found only in writings of comparatively recent date. What is given here is taken from the secret portions of *Dus-Kyi Khorlo (Kâla-Chakra*, in Sanskrit, or the “Wheel of Time,” or duration).[SEP]

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teaching as to the three “Buddhic” bodies,* it is said of the Dharmakâya—the **ideal formless** Being—that once it is taken, the Buddha in it abandons the world of sensuous perceptions for ever, and has not, nor can he have, any more connection with it. To say, as the Esoteric or Mystic School teaches, that though Buddha is in Nirvâna he has left behind him the Nirmânakâya (the Bodhisattva) to work after him, is quite orthodox and in accordance with both the Esoteric Mahâyâna and the Prasanga Mâdhyamika Schools, the latter an anti-esoteric and most rationalistic system. For in the Kâla-Chakra Commentary it is shown that there is: (1) Âdi-Buddha, eternal and conditionless; then (2) come

Sambhogakâya-Buddhas, or Dhyâni-Buddhas, [Watching Dhyani-Buddha – PW] existing from (aeonic) eternity and never disappearing—the Causal Buddhas so to say; and (3) the Mânushya-Bodhisattvas. The relation between them is determined by the definition given. Âdi-Buddha is Vajradhara, and the Dhyâni-Buddhas are Vajrasattva; yet though these two are different Beings on their respective planes, they are identical in fact, one acting through the other, as a Dhyâni through a human Buddha. One is “Endless Intelligence”; the other only “Supreme Intelligence.” [see Voice 28fn – PW] It is said of Phra Bodhisattva—who was subsequently on earth Buddha Gautama:

Having fulfilled all the conditions for the immediate attainment of perfect Buddhahood, the Holy One preferred, from unlimited charity [Dana – PW] towards living beings, once more to reincarnate for the benefit of man.

The Nirvâna of the Buddhists is only the threshold of Pari-nirvâna, according to the Esoteric Teaching: while with the Brâhmins, it is the summum bonum, that final state from which there is no more return—not till the next Mahâ-Kalpa, at all events. And even this last view will be opposed by some too

* The three bodies are (1) the Nirmânakâya (Tul-pa’i-Ku in Tibetan), in which the Bodhisattva after entering by the six Pâramitâs [generosity, virtue, patience, vigor, meditation & wisdom] the Path to Nirvâna, appears to men in order to teach them; (2) Sambhogakâya (Dzog-pa’i-Ku), the body of bliss impervious to all physical sensations, received by one who has fulfilled the three conditions of moral perfection; and (3) Dharmakâya (in Tibetan, Cho-Ku), the Nirvânic body. [Cf. *Voice of the Silence*, pp. 95-97; and Hui Neng’s *Platform Sutra*, ch. 6.]

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orthodox and dogmatic philosophers who will not accept the Esoteric Doctrine. With them Nirvâna is absolute nothingness, in which there is nothing and no one; only an unconditioned All. To understand the full characteristics of that Abstract Principle one must sense it intuitionally and comprehend fully the “one permanent condition in the Universe,” which the Hindûs define so truly as

. . . the state of perfect unconsciousness, bare Chidâkâsa (field of consciousness) in fact, however paradoxical it may seem to the profane reader. *^[]_[SEP]

Samkarâchârya was reputed to be an Avatâra, an assertion the writer implicitly believes in, but which other people are, of course, at liberty to reject. And as such he took the body of a southern Indian, newly-born Brâhman baby; that body, for reasons as important as they are mysterious to us, is said to have been animated by Gautama’s astral personal remains. This divine Non-Ego chose as its own Upâdhi (physical basis), the ethereal, human Ego of a great Sage in this world of forms, as the fittest vehicle for Spirit to descend into.^[]_[SEP]

Said Samkarâchârya:

Parabrahman is Kartâ [Purusha], as there is no other Adhishtâthâ,† and Parabrahman is Prakriti, there being no other substance.‡

Now what is true of the Macrocosmical is also true of the Microcosmical plane. It is therefore nearer the truth to say—when once we accept such a possibility—that the “astral” Gautama, or the Nirmânakâya, was the Upâdhi of Samkarâchârya’s spirit, rather than that the latter was a reincarnation of the former.^{[L][SEP]}

^{[L][SEP]}* *Five Years of Theosophy*, 1885 ed., “Personal and Impersonal God,” p. 202, by T. Subba Row.

† Adhishtâthâ, the active or working agent in Prakriti (or matter).

‡ *Vedânta-Sutras*, Ad. I, Pâda iv, Sloka 23. Commentary. The passage is given as follows in Thibaut’s translation (*Sacred Books of the East*, xxxiv), p. 286: “The Self is thus the operative cause, because there is no other ruling principle, and the material cause because there is no other substance from which the world could originate.” [substance principle – PW]

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When a Samkarâchârya has to be born, naturally every one of the principles in the manifested mortal man must be the purest and finest that exist on earth. Consequently those principles that were once attached to Gautama, who was the direct great predecessor of Samkara, were naturally attracted to him, the economy of Nature forbidding the re-evolution of similar principles from the crude state. But it must be remembered that the higher ethereal principles are not, like the lower, more material ones, visible sometimes to man (as astral bodies), and they have to be regarded in the light of separate or independent Powers or Gods, rather than as material objects. Hence the right way of representing the truth would be to say that the various principles, the Bodhisattva, of Gautama Buddha, which did not go to Nirvâna, reunited to form the middle principles of Samkarâchârya, the earthly Entity.*

^{[L][SEP]}It is absolutely necessary to study the doctrine of the Buddhas esoterically, and understand the subtle differences between the various planes of existence, to be able to comprehend correctly the above. Put more clearly, Gautama, the human Buddha, who had, exoterically, Amitâbha for his Bodhisattva and Avalokiteshvara for his Dhyâni-Buddha—the triad emanating directly from Âdi-Buddha—assimilated these by his “Dhyana” (meditation) and thus became a Buddha (“enlightened”). In another manner this is the case with all men; every one of us has his Bodhisattva—the middle principle.^{[L][SEP]}

* In *Five Years of Theosophy* (article: “Śâkyâ Muni’s Place in History,” p. 372, note) it is stated that one day when our Lord sat in the Sattapanni Cave (Saptaparna) he compared man to a Saptaparna (seven leaved) plant. “Mendicants,” he said, “there are seven Buddhas in every Buddha, and there are six Bhikshus and but one Buddha in each mendicant. What are the *seven*? The seven branches of complete knowledge. What are the *six*? The six organs of sense. What are the *five*? The five elements of illusive being. And the ONE which is also ten? [Tetraktis? – PW] He is a true Buddha who develops in him the ten forms of holiness and subjects them all to the one.” Which means that every principle in the Buddha was the highest that could be evolved on this earth; whereas in the case of other men who attain to Nirvâna this is not necessarily the case. Even as a mere human (Mânushya) Buddha, Gautama was a pattern for all men. But his Arhats were not necessarily so. [Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol. V, p. 247.]

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if we hold for a moment to the trinitarian division of the septenary group—and his Dhyâni-Buddha, or Chohan, the “Father of the Son.” Our connecting link with the higher Hierarchy of Celestial Beings lies here in a nutshell, only we are too sinful to assimilate them.

Six centuries after the translation of the human Buddha (Gautama), another Reformer, as noble and as loving, though less favored by opportunity, arose in another part of the world, among another and a less spiritual race. There is a great similarity between the subsequent opinions of the world about the two Saviors, the Eastern and the Western. While millions became converted to the doctrines of the two Masters, the enemies of both—sectarian opponents, the most dangerous of all—tore both to shreds by insinuating maliciously-distorted statements based on Occult truths, and therefore doubly dangerous. While of Buddha it is said by the Brâhmans that He was truly an Avatâra of Vishnu, but that He had come to tempt the Brâhmans from their faith, and was therefore the evil aspect of the God; of Jesus the Bardesian Gnostics and others asserted that He was Nebo, the false Messiah, the destroyer of the old orthodox religion. “He is the founder of a new sect of Nazars,” said other sectarians. In Hebrew the word “Naba” means “to speak by inspiration” (נבא, and נבו is Nebo, the God of wisdom). But Nebo is also Mercury, who is Budha in the Hindu monogram of planets. And this is shown by the fact that the Talmudists hold that Jesus was inspired by the Genius (or Regent) of Mercury confounded by Sir William Jones with Gautama Buddha. There are many other strange points of similarity between Gautama and Jesus, which cannot be noticed here.*

If both the Initiates, aware of the danger of furnishing the uncultured masses with the powers acquired by ultimate knowledge, left the innermost corner of the sanctuary in profound darkness, who, acquainted with human nature, can blame either of them for this? Yet although Gautama, actuated by prudence, left the Esoteric and most dangerous portions of the Secret Knowledge untold, and lived to the ripe old age of eighty—

* See *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, p. 132.

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the Esoteric Doctrine says one hundred—years, dying with the certainty of having taught its essential truths, and of having sown the seeds for the conversion of one-third of the world, He yet perhaps revealed more than was strictly good for posterity. But Jesus, who had promised His disciples the knowledge which confers upon man the power of producing “miracles” far greater than He had ever produced Himself, died, leaving but a few faithful disciples—men only half-way to knowledge. They had therefore to struggle with a world to which they could impart only what they but half-knew themselves, and—no more. In later ages the exoteric followers of both mangled the truths given out, often out of recognition. With regard to the adherents of the Western Master, the proof of this lies in the very fact that none of them can now produce the promised “miracles.” They have to choose: either it is they who have blundered, or it is their Master who must stand arraigned for an empty promise, an uncalled-for boast.* Why such a difference in the

destiny of the two? For the Occultist this enigma of the unequal favor of Karma or Providence is unriddled by the Secret Doctrine.

It is “not lawful” to speak of such things publicly, as St. Paul tells us. One more explanation only may be given in reference to this subject. It was said a few pages back that an Adept who thus sacrifices himself to live, giving up full Nirvâna, though he can never lose the knowledge acquired by him in previous existences, yet can never rise higher in such borrowed

* “Before one becomes a Buddha he must be a Bodhisattva; before evolving into a Bodhisattva he must be a Dhyâni-Buddha. . . . A Bodhisattva is the way and Path to his Father, and thence to the One Supreme Essence” (*Descent of Buddhas*, p. 17, from Âryâsanga). “I am the way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (*St. John*, xiv, 6). The “way” is not the goal. Nowhere throughout the *New Testament* is Jesus found calling himself God, or anything higher than “a son of God,” the son of a “Father” common to all, synthetically. Paul never said (*1 Tim.* iii, 16), “God was manifest in the flesh,” but “He who was manifested in the flesh” (Revised Edition). While the common herd among the Buddhists—the Burmese especially—regard Jesus as an incarnation of Devadatta, a relative who opposed the teachings of Buddha, the students of Esoteric Philosophy see in the Nazarene Sage a Bodhisattva with the spirit of Buddha Himself in Him.

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bodies. [astral of the Buddha? – PW] Why? Because he [Nirmanakaya – PW] becomes simply the vehicle of a “Son of Light” from a still higher sphere, Who being Arupa, has no personal astral body of His own fit for this world. Such “Sons of Light,” or Dhyâni-Buddhas, are the Dharmakâyas of preceding Manvantaras, who have closed their cycles of incarnations in the ordinary sense and who, being thus Karmaless, have long ago dropped their individual Rupas, and have become identified with the first Principle. Hence the necessity of a sacrificial Nirmânakâya, ready to suffer for the misdeeds or mistakes of the new body in its earth-pilgrimage, without any future reward on the plane of progression and rebirth, since there are no rebirths for him in the ordinary sense. The Higher Self, or Divine Monad, is not in such a case attached to the lower Ego [new body in its earth-pilgrimage? - PW]; its connection is only temporary, and in most cases it acts through decrees of Karma. This is a real, genuine sacrifice, the explanation of which pertains to the highest Initiation of *Jñâna* (Occult Knowledge). It is closely linked, by a direct evolution of Spirit and involution of Matter, with the primeval and great Sacrifice at the foundation of the manifested Worlds, the gradual smothering and death of the spiritual in the material. The seed “is not quickened, except it die.”* Hence in the Purusha Sukta of the *Rig-Veda*,† the mother fount and source of all subsequent religions, it is stated allegorically that “the thousand-headed Purusha” was slaughtered at the foundation of the World, that from his remains the Universe might arise. This is nothing more nor less than the foundation—the seed, truly—of the later many-formed symbol in various religions, including Christianity, of the sacrificial lamb. For it is a play upon the words. “Aja” (Purusha), “the unborn,” or eternal Spirit, means also “lamb,” in Sanskrit. Spirit disappears—dies, metaphorically—the more it gets involved in matter, and hence the sacrifice of the “unborn,” or the “lamb.”

Why the BUDDHA chose to make this sacrifice will be plain only to those who, to the minute knowledge of His earthly^[SEP]

* *1 Corinth.* xv, 36.^[SEP]

† *Op. cit.*, Mandala X, hymn 90, 1-5.^[SEP]

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life, add that of a thorough comprehension of the laws of Karma. Such occurrences [sacrifices - PW], however, belong to the most exceptional cases.

^[SEP]As tradition goes, the Brâhmins had committed a heavy sin by persecuting Gautama BUDDHA and His teachings instead of blending and reconciling them with the tenets of pure Vaidic Brâhmanism, as was done later by Samkarâchârya. Gautama had never gone against the *Vedas*, only against the exoteric growth of preconceived interpretations. The Sruti—divine oral revelation, the outcome of which was the *Veda*—is eternal. It reached the ear of Gautama Siddhârtha as it had those of the Rishis who had written it down. He accepted the revelation, while rejecting the later overgrowth of Brâhmanical thought and fancy, and built His doctrines on one and the same basis of imperishable truth. As in the case of His Western successor, Gautama, the “Merciful,” the “Pure,” and the “Just,” was the first found in the Eastern Hierarchy of historical Adepts, if not in the world-annals of divine mortals, who was moved by that generous feeling which locks the whole of mankind within one embrace, with no petty differences of race, birth, or caste. It was He who first enunciated that grand and noble principle, and He again who first put it into practice. For the sake of the poor and the reviled, the outcast and the hapless, invited by Him to the king’s festival table, He had excluded those who had hitherto sat alone in haughty seclusion and selfishness, believing that they would be defiled by the very shadow of the disinherited ones of the land—and these non-spiritual Brâhmins turned against Him for that preference. Since then such as these have never forgiven the prince-beggar, the son of a king, who, forgetting His rank and station, had flung widely open the doors of the forbidden sanctuary to the pariah and the man of low estate, thus giving precedence to personal merit over hereditary rank or fortune. The sin was theirs—the cause nevertheless Himself: hence the “Merciful and the Blessed One” could not go out entirely from this world of illusion and created causes without atoning for the sin of all—therefore of these Brahmins also. If “man afflicted by man” found safe refuge with the Tathâgata, “man afflicting man” had also his share in His self-sacrificing, all-embracing and forgiving love. It is stated that He desired to atone for the sin of His enemies. Then only was

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he willing to become a full Dharmakâya, a Jîvanmukta “without remains.”

^[SEP]The close of Samkarâchârya’s life brings us face to face with a fresh mystery. Samkarâchârya retires to a cave in the Himâlayas, permitting none of his disciples to follow him, and disappears therein forever from the sight of the profane. Is he dead?

Tradition and popular belief answer in the negative, and some of the local Gurus, if they do not emphatically corroborate, do not deny the rumor. The truth with its mysterious details as given in the Secret Doctrine is known but to them; it can be given out fully only to the direct followers of the great Dravidian Guru, and it is for them alone to reveal of it as much as they think fit. Still it is maintained that this Adept of Adepts lives to this day in his spiritual entity as a mysterious, unseen, yet overpowering presence among the Brotherhood of Sambhala, beyond, far beyond, the snowy-capped Himâlayas.*^{[L][SEP]}

^{[L][SEP]}* [For a traditional life story see *Sankara-Dig-Vijaya* by Madhava-Vidyaranya, tr. by Swami Tapasyananda, Madras, Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1978. — *Compiler.*]^{[L][SEP]}

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“REINCARNATIONS” OF BUDDHA

Every section in the chapter on “Dezhin Shegpa”* (Tathâgata) in the Commentaries represents one year of that great Philosopher’s life, in its dual aspect of public and private teacher, the two being contrasted and commented upon. It shows the Sage reaching Buddhahood through a long course of study, meditation, and Initiations, as any other Adept would have to do, not one rung of the ladder up to the arduous “Path of Perfection” being missed. The Bodhisattva became a Buddha and a Nirvânî through personal effort and merit, after having had to undergo all the hardships of every other neophyte—not by virtue of a divine birth, as thought by some. It was only the reaching of Nirvâna while still living in the body and on this earth that was due to His having been in previous births high on the “Path of Dzyan” (knowledge, wisdom). **Mental or intellectual gifts and abstract knowledge follow an Initiate in his new birth, but he has to acquire phenomenal powers anew, passing through all the successive stages.** He has to acquire Rinchen-na-dun (“the seven precious gifts”)[†] one after the other. During the period of meditation no worldly phenomena on the physical plane must be allowed to enter into his mind or cross his thoughts. Zhine-lhag thong (Sanskrit: Samatha-vipashyanâ, religious abstract meditation) will develop in him most wonderful faculties independently of himself. The four degrees of contemplation, or Sam-tan (Sanskrit: Dhyâna), once acquired, everything becomes easy. For, once^{[L][SEP]}

* Literally, “he who walks [or follows] in the way [or path] of his predecessors.”^{[L][SEP]}

[†] I.J. Schmidt, in *Ssanang-Ssetzen Chungtaidschi*, p. 471, and Schlagintweit, in *Buddhism in Tibet*, p. 53, accept these precious things *literally*, enumerating them as “the wheel, the precious stone, the royal consort, the best treasurer, the best horse, the elephant, the best leader.” After this one can little wonder if “besides a Dhyâni-Buddhi and a Dhyâni-Bodhisattva” each human Buddha is furnished with “a female companion, a Sakti”—when in truth “Sakti” is simply the Soul-power, the psychic energy of the God as of the Adept. The “royal consort,” the third of the “seven precious gifts,” very likely led the learned

Orientalist into this ludicrous error. [SEP]

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that man has entirely got rid of the idea of individuality, merging his Self in the Universal Self, becoming, so to say, the bar of steel to which the properties inherent in the loadstone (Âdi-Buddha, or Anima Mundi) are imparted, powers hitherto dormant in him are awakened, mysteries in invisible Nature are unveiled, and, becoming a Thong-lam-pa (a Seer), he becomes a Dhyâni-Buddha. Every Zung (Dhârânî, a mystic word or mantra) of the Lokottaradharma (the highest world of causes) will be known to him.

Thus, after His outward death, twenty years later, Tathâgata in His immense love and “pitiful mercy” for erring and ignorant humanity, refused Parinirvâna* in order that He might continue to help men. [SEP]

Says a Commentary:

Having reached the Path of Deliverance [Thar-lam] from transmigration, one cannot perform Tulpa† any longer, for to become a Parinirvânî is to close the circle of the Septenary Ku-Sum.‡ He has merged his borrowed Dorjesempa [Vajrasattva] into the Universal and become one with it.

Vajradhara, also Vajrasattva (Tibetan: Dorjechang and Dorjedzin, or Dorjesempa), is the regent or President of all the Dhyâni-Chohans or Dhyâni-Buddhas, the highest, the Supreme Buddha; personal, yet never manifested objectively; the [SEP]

*A Bodhisattva can reach Nirvâna and live, as Buddha did, and after death he can either refuse objective reincarnation or accept and use it at his convenience for the benefit of mankind whom he can instruct in various ways while he remains in the Devachanic regions within the attraction of our earth. But having once reached Parinirvâna or “Nirvâna without remains”—the highest Dharmakâya condition, in which state he remains entirely outside of every earthly condition—he will return no more until the commencement of a new Manvantara, since he has crossed beyond the cycle of births. [SEP]

† Tulpa is the voluntary incarnation of an Adept into a living body, whether of an adult, child or newborn babe. [Tulpa is the magical process; Tulku is the result; although they are often used interchangeably.]

‡ Ku-sum is the triple form [trikâya] of the Nirvâna state and its respective duration in the “cycle of Non-Being.” The number seven here refers to the seven Rounds of our septenary System. [Cf. p. 392 fn. on triple form.] [SEP]

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“Supreme Conqueror,” the “Lord of all Mysteries,” the “One without Beginning or End”—in short, the Logos of Buddhism. For, as Vajrasattva, He is simply the Tsovo (Chief) of the Dhyâni-Buddhas or Dhyâni-Chohans, and the Supreme Intelligence in the Second World; while as Vajradhara (Dorjechang), He is all that which was enumerated above. “These two are one, and yet two,” and over them is “Chang, the Supreme Unmanifested and Universal Wisdom that has no name.” As two in one, He (They) is the Power that subdued and conquered Evil from the beginning, allowing it to reign only over willing subjects on earth, and having no power over those who despise and hate it.

Esoterically the allegory is easily understood; exoterically Vajradhara (Vajrasattva) is the God to whom all the evil spirits swore that they would not impede the propagation of the Good Law (Buddhism), and before whom all the demons tremble. Therefore, we say this dual personage has the same role assigned to it in canonical and dogmatic Tibetan Buddhism as have Jehovah and the Archangel Mikael, the Metatron of the Jewish Kabalists. This is easily shown. Mikael is “the angel of the face of God,” or he who represents his Master. “My face shall go with thee” (in English, “presence”), before the Israelites, says God to Moses (*Exodus* xxxiii, 14). “The angel of my presence” (Hebrew: “of my face”) (*Isaiah* lxiii, 9), etc. The Roman Catholics identify Christ with Mikael, who is also his ferouer, or “face” mystically. This is precisely the position of Vajradhara, or Vajrasattva, in Northern Buddhism. For the latter, in His Higher Self as Vajradhara (Dorjechang), is *never* manifested, except to the seven Dhyâni-Chohans, the primeval Builders. Esoterically, it is the Spirit of the “Seven” collectively, their seventh principle, or Âtman. Exoterically, any amount of fables may be found in *Kâla-Chakra*, the most important work in the Gyut division of the *Kanjur*, the division of mystic knowledge.* **Dorjechang (wisdom) Vajradhara, is said to live in the second Arûpa World,** which connects him with Metatron, in the first world of pure

* [See *The Books of Kiu-te* by David Reigle. San Diego, Wizards Bookshelf, 1983. Cf. p. 422 & fn. of this text. — *Compiler.*]

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Spirits, the Briatic world of the Kabalists, who call this angel El-Shaddai, the Omnipotent and Mighty One. Metatron is in Greek ἄγγελος [*ph: angelos*] (Messenger), or the Great Teacher. Mikael fights Satan, the Dragon, and conquers him and his Angels. Vajrasattva, who is one with Vajrapâni, the Subduer of the Evil Spirits, conquers Râhu, the Great Dragon who is always trying to devour the sun and moon (eclipses). “War in Heaven” in the Christian legend is based upon the bad angels having discovered the secrets (magical wisdom) of the good ones (Enoch), and the mystery of the “Tree of Life.” Let anyone read simply the exoteric accounts in the Hindu and Buddhist Pantheons—the latter version being taken from the former—and he will find both resting on the same primeval, archaic allegory from the Secret Doctrine. In the exoteric texts (Hindu and Buddhist), the Gods churn the ocean to extract from it the Water of Life—Amrita—or the Elixir of Knowledge. In both the Dragon steals some of this, and is exiled from heaven by Vishnu, or Vajradhara, or the chief God, whatever may be his name. We find the same in the *Book of Enoch*, and it is poetized in St. John’s *Revelation*. And now the allegory, with all its fanciful ornamentations, has become a dogma!

As will be found mentioned later, the Tibetan Lamaseries contain many secret and semi-secret volumes, detailing the lives of great Sages. Many of the statements in them are purposely confused, and in others the reader becomes bewildered, unless a clue be given him, by the use of one name to cover many individuals who follow the same line of teaching. Thus there is a succession of “living Buddhas,” and the name Buddha is given to

teacher after teacher. Emil Schlagintweit writes:

Thus, to each human Buddha belongs a Dhyâni-Buddha, and a Dhyâni-Bodhisattva, and the unlimited number of the former also involves an equally unlimited number of the latter.*^[1]

* *Buddhism in Tibet*. . . . p. 52, [London, Susil Gupta, 1968.] This same generic use of a name is found among Hindus with that of Samkarâchârya, to take but one instance. All His successors bear his name, but are not reincarnations of Him. So with the “Buddhas.”^[1]

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It is stated that at the age of thirty-three, Śamkarâchârya, tired of his mortal body, “put it off” in the cave he had entered, and that the Bodhisattva, that served as his lower personality, was freed

With the burden of a sin upon him which he had not committed.

At the same time it is added:

At whatever age one puts off his outward body by free will, at that age will he be made to die a violent death against his will in his next rebirth.

Now, Karma could have no hold on “Mahâ Śamkara” (as Śamkara is called in the secret work), as he had, as Avatâra, no Ego of his own, but a Bodhisattva—a willing sacrificial victim. Neither had the latter any responsibility for the deed, whether sinful or otherwise. Therefore we do not see the point, since Karma cannot act unjustly. There is some terrible mystery involved in all this story, one that no uninitiated intellect can ever unravel. Still, there it is, suggesting the natural query, “Who, then, was punished by Karma?” and leaving it to be answered.^[1]

A few centuries later Buddha tried one more incarnation, it is said, in ****, and again, fifty years subsequent to the death of this Adept, in one whose name is given as Tiani-Tsang.* No details, no further information or explanation is given. It is simply stated that the last Buddha had to work out the remains of his Karma, which none of the Gods themselves can escape, forced as he was to bury still deeper certain mysteries half revealed by him—hence misinterpreted. The words used would stand when translated:

Born fifty-two years too early as Shramana Gautama, the son of King Zastang; then retiring fifty-seven years too soon as Maha Shankara, who got tired of his outward form. This willful act aroused and attracted King Karma, who killed the new form of * * *† at thirty-three,‡ the age of the^[1]

* King Suddhodana.^[1]

† There are several names marked simply by asterisks.^[1]

‡ Samkarâchârya died also at thirty-two years of age, or rather disappeared from the sight of his disciples, as the legend goes.^[1]

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body that was put off. [At whatever age one puts off his outward body by free will, at that age will he be made to die in his next incarnation *against his will*—Commentary.] He died in his next (body) at thirty-two and a little over, and again in his next at eighty—a Mâyâ, and at one hundred, in reality. The Bodhisattva chose Tiani-Tsang,* then again the Sugata became Tsong-kha-pa, who became thus Dezhin-

Shegpa [Tathâgata—”one who follows in the way and manner of his predecessors”]. The Blessed One could do good to his generation as * * * but none to posterity, and so as Tiani-Tsang he became incarnated only for the “remains” [of his precedent Karma, as we understand it]. The Seven Ways and the Four Truths were once more hidden out of sight. The Merciful One confined since then his attention and fatherly care to the heart of Bodyul, the nursery grounds of the seeds of truth. The blessed “remains” since then have overshadowed and rested in many a holy body of human Bodhisattvas.

No further information is given, least of all are there any details or explanations to be found in the secret volume. All is darkness and mystery in it, for it is evidently written but for those who are already instructed. Several flaming red asterisks are placed instead of names, and the few facts given are abruptly broken off. The key of the riddle is left to the intuition of the disciple, unless the “direct followers” of Gautama the Buddha—”those who are to be denied by His Church for the next cycle”—and of Śamkarâchârya, are pleased to add more.

The final section gives a kind of summary of the seventy sections—covering seventy-three years of Buddha’s life†—from which the last paragraph is summarized as follows:

Emerging from—, the most excellent seat of the three secrets [Sang-Sum], the Master of incomparable mercy, after having performed on all the anchorites the rite of—, and each of these having been cut

* Does “Tiani-Tsang” stand for Apollonius of Tyana? This is a simple surmise. Some things in the life of that Adept would seem to tally with the hypothesis—others to go against it.

^{[[L]]}_{SEP}† According to Esoteric teaching Buddha lived one hundred years in reality, though having reached Nirvâna in his eightieth year he was regarded as one dead to the world of the living. See article “Sâkyâ Muni’s Place in History” in *Five Years of Theosophy*, pp. 365-88. [See also *B.C.W.*, Vol. V, pp. 241-59.]

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off,* perceived through [the power of] Hlun-Chub† what was his next duty. The Most-Illustrious meditated and asked himself whether this would help [the future] generations. What they needed was the sight of Mâyâ in a body of illusion. Which? . . . The great conqueror of pains and sorrows arose and proceeded back to his birthplace. There Sugata was welcomed by the few, for they did not know Shramana Gautama. “Shâkyâ [the Mighty] is in Nirvâna. . . He has given the Science to the Shuddhas [Shudra,] “ said they of Damze Yul [the country of Brâhmans: India] . . . It was for that, born of pity, that the All-Glorious One had to retire to—, and then appear [karmically] as Mahâ Shankara; and out of pity as—, and again as—, and again as Tsong-kha-pa.... For, he who chooses in humiliation must go down, and he who *loves not* allows Karma to raise him.‡

This passage is confessedly obscure and written for the few. It is not lawful to say any more, for the time has not yet come when nations are prepared to hear the whole truth. The old religions are full of mysteries, and to demonstrate some of them would surely lead to an explosion of hatred, followed, perhaps, by bloodshed and worse. It will be sufficient to know that while

* It is a *secret* rite, pertaining to high Initiation, and has the same significance as the one to which Clement of Alexandria alludes when he speaks of “the token of recognition being in common with us, as by cutting off Christ” (*Strom.*, 13). Schlagintweit wonders what it may be. “The typical representation of a hermit.” he says, “is always that of a man with long, uncut hair and beard. . . . A rite very often selected, though I am unable to state for what reason, is that of Chod (‘to cut’ or ‘to destroy’) the meaning of which

is anxiously kept a profound secret by the Lamas.” (*Buddhism in Tibet*, p. 163.)

† Hlun-Chub is the divining spirit in man, the highest degree of seership.

‡ The secret meaning of this sentence is that Karma exercises its sway over the Adept as much as over any other man; “Gods” can escape it as little as simple mortals. The Adept who, having reached the Path and won His Dharmakâya—the Nirvâna from which there is no return until the new grand Kalpa—prefers to use His right of choosing a condition inferior to that which belongs to Him, but that will leave him free to return whenever he thinks it advisable and under whatever personality He may select, must be prepared to take all the chances of failure—possibly—and a lower condition than was His lot—for a certainty—as it is an occult law. Karma alone is absolute justice and infallible in its selections. He who uses his rights with it (Karma) must bear the consequences—if any. Thus Buddha’s first reincarnation was produced by Karma—and it led Him higher than ever; the two following were “out of pity” and * * *

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Gautama Buddha is merged in Nirvâna ever since his death, Gautama Śâkyamuni may have had to reincarnate—this dual inner personality being one of the greatest mysteries of Esoteric psychism.

“The seat of the three secrets” refers to a place inhabited by high Initiates and their disciples. The “secrets” are the three mystic powers known as Gopa, Yaśodhara, and Utpala Varnâ, that Csomo de Kôrös mistook for Buddha’s three wives, as other Orientalists have mistaken Śakti (Yoga power) personified by a female deity for His wife; or the Draupadî—also a spiritual power—for the wife in common of the five brothers Pândava.

AN UNPUBLISHED DISCOURSE OF BUDDHA

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

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

[Kwan-yin],§ and find himself^{[L][SEP]}

^{[L][SEP]}* The Universe of Brahmâ (Sien-Chan; Nam-Kha) is Universal Illusion, or our phenomenal world.

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

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

§ Kwan-yin is a synonym, for in the original another term is used, but the meaning is identical. It is the divine voice of Self, or the “Spirit-voice” in man, and the same as Vâch...śvara (the “Voice-deity”) of the Brâhmans. In China, the Buddhist ritualists have degraded its meaning by anthropomorphizing^{[L][SEP]} it into a Goddess of the same name, with one thousand hands and eyes, and they call it Kwan-shai-yin-Bodhisat. It is the Buddhist “däimon”-voice of Socrates.

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within the quiet precincts of his Sangharama* transferred into Amitâbha Buddha.† Becoming one with Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi,‡ he may pass through all the six worlds of Being (Rupaloka) and get into the first three worlds of Arupa.§ . . . He who listens to my secret law, preached to my select Arhats, will arrive with its help at the knowledge of Self, and thence at perfection.”

It is due to entirely erroneous conceptions of Eastern thought and to ignorance of the existence of an Esoteric key to the outward Buddhist phrases that Burnouf and other great scholars have inferred from such propositions—held also by the Vedântins—as “my body is not body” and “myself is no self of mine,” that Eastern psychology was all based upon non-permanency [of the I]. Cousin, for instance, lecturing upon the subject, brings the two following propositions to prove, on Burnouf’s authority, that, unlike Brâhmanism, Buddhism rejects the perpetuity of the thinking principle. These are:

1. Thought or spirit|| — for the faculty is not distinguished from the subject—appears only with sensation and does not survive it.^{[L][SEP]}

2. The Spirit cannot itself lay hold of itself, and in directing attention to itself it draws from it only the conviction of its powerlessness to see itself otherwise than as successive and transitory¶.

^{[L][SEP]}* Sangharama is the *sanctum sanctorum* of an ascetic, a cave or any place he chooses for his meditation.^{[L][SEP]}[AE?]

† Amitâbha Buddha is in this connection the “boundless light” by which things of the subjective world are perceived.

^{[L][SEP]}‡ Esoterically, “the unsurpassingly merciful and enlightened heart,” said of the “Perfect Ones,” the Jîvan-muktas, collectively.^{[L][SEP]}

§ These six worlds—seven with us—are the worlds of Nats or Spirits, with the Burmese Buddhists, and the seven higher worlds of the Vedântins.

^{[L][SEP]}¶ Two things entirely distinct from each other. The “faculty is not distinguished from the subject” only on this material plane, while thought generated by our physical brain, one that has never impressed itself at the same time on the spiritual counterpart, whether through the atrophy of the latter or the intrinsic weakness of that thought, can never survive our body; this much is sure.

^{[L][SEP]}¶ [Course of the History of Modern Philosophy by M. Victor Cousin, N.Y., D. Appleton & Co., 1854, Vol. I, p. 374 fn. in translation by O.W. Wight.]^{[L][SEP]}

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This all refers to Spirit embodied, not to the freed Spiritual Self on whom Mâyâ has no more hold. Spirit is no body; therefore have the Orientalists made of it “nobody” and nothing. Hence they proclaim Buddhists to be Nihilists, and Vedântins to be the followers of a creed in which the “Impersonal [God] turns out on examination to be a myth”; their goal is described as

The complete extinction of all spiritual, mental, and bodily powers by absorption into the Impersonal.*

* *Vedânta Sâra* . . . translated by Major G. A. Jacob in *A Manual of Hindu Pantheism*. [London, Trübner; Boston, Houghton, 1881.]^[SEP]

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NIRVÂNA-MOKSHA

The few sentences given in the text from one of Gautama Buddha’s secret teachings show how uncalled for is the epithet of “Materialist” when applied to One Whom two-thirds of those who are looked upon as great Adepts and Occultists in Asia recognize as their Master, whether under the name of Buddha or that of Samkarâchârya. The reader will remember the just-quoted words are what Buddha Sanggyas (or Pho) is alleged by the Tibetan Occultists to have taught: there are three eternal things in the Universe—the Law, Nirvâna, and Space. The Buddhists of the Southern Church claim, on the other hand, that Buddha held only two things as eternal—Âkâsa and Nirvâna. But Âkâsa being the same as Aditi,* and both being translated “Space,” there is no discrepancy so far, since Nirvâna as well as Moksha, is a state. Then in both cases the great Kapilavastu Sage unifies the two, as well as the three, into one eternal Element, and ends by saying that even “that One is a Mâyâ” to one who is not a Dang-ma, a perfectly purified Soul.

The whole question hangs upon materialistic misconceptions and ignorance of Occult Metaphysics. To the man of Science who regards Space as simply a mental representation, a conception of something existing *pro forma*, and having no real being outside our mind, Space *per se* is verily an illusion. He may fill the boundless interstellar space with an “imaginary” ether, nevertheless Space for him is an abstraction. Most of the Metaphysicians of Europe are so wide of the mark, from the purely Occult standpoint, of a correct comprehension of “Space,” as are the Materialists, though the erroneous conceptions of both of course differ widely.^[SEP] If, bearing in mind the philosophical views of the Ancients upon this question, we compare them with what is now termed exact physical Science, it will be found that the two disagree

^[L]_[SEP]* Aditi is, according to the *Rig-Veda*, “the Father and Mother of all the Gods;” and Âkâsa is held by Southern Buddhism as the Root of all, whence everything in the Universe came out, in obedience to a law of motion inherent in it; and this is the Tibetan “Space” (Tho-og).^[L]_[SEP]

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only in inferences and names, and that their postulates are the same when reduced to their most simple expression. From the beginning of the human Aeôns, from the very dawn of Occult Wisdom, the regions that the men of Science fill with ether have been explored by the Seers of every age. That which the world regards simply as cosmic Space, an abstract representation, the Hindu Rishi, the Chaldaean Magus, the Egyptian Hierophant held, each and all, as the one eternal Root of all, the playground of all the Forces in Nature. It is the fountainhead of all terrestrial life, and the abode of those (to us) invisible swarms of existences—of real beings, as of the shadows only thereof, conscious and unconscious, intelligent and senseless—that surround us on all sides, that interpenetrate the atoms of our Kosmos, and see us not, as we do not either see or sense them through our physical organisms. For the Occultist “Space” and “Universe” are synonyms. In Space there is not Matter, Force, nor Spirit, but all that and much more. It is the One Element, and that one the Anima Mundi—Space, Âkâsa, Astral Light—the Root of Life which, in its eternal, ceaseless motion, like the out- and in-breathing of one boundless ocean, evolves but to reabsorb all that lives and feels and thinks and has its being in it. As said of the Universe in *Isis Unveiled*, it is:

. . . the combination of a thousand elements, and yet the expression of a single Spirit—a chaos to the sense, a Cosmos to the reason.^[L]_[SEP]

Such were the views upon the subject of all the great ancient Philosophers, from Manu down to Pythagoras, from Plato to Paul.

“When the dissolution [Pralaya] had arrived at its term, the great Being [Param-Âtma, or Para-Purusha], the Lord existing through himself, out of whom and through whom all things were, and are, and will be, . . . resolved to emanate from his own substance the various creatures.”*^[L]_[SEP] The mystic Dekad [of Pythagoras] (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10) is a way of expressing this idea. The One is God;† the Two, Matter, the Three.^[L]_[SEP]

* *Mânava-Dharma-Sâstra*, Bk. I, Slokas 6-8.^[L]_[SEP]

† The “God” of Pythagoras, the disciple of the Âryan Sages, is no personal God. Let it be remembered that he taught as a cardinal tenet that there exists a permanent Principle of Unity beneath all forms, changes, and other phenomena of the Universe.^[L]_[SEP]

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combining Monad and Duad, and partaking of the nature of both, is the phenomenal world; the Tetrad, or form of perfection, expresses the emptiness of all; and the Dekad, or sum of all, involves the entire Cosmos.*

Plato’s “God” is the “Universal Ideation,” and Paul [*Rom. xi, 36.*] saying “Out of him, and through him, and in him, all things are,” had surely a Principle—never a Jehovah—in his profound mind. The key to the Pythagorean dogmas is the key to every great

Philosophy. It is the general formula of unity in multiplicity, the One evolving the many and pervading the All. It is the archaic doctrine of Emanation in a few words. [SEP]Speusippus and Xenocrates held, like their great Master, Plato, that:

The *anima mundi*, or world-soul, was not the Deity, but a manifestation. Those philosophers never conceived of the One as an *animate nature*. The original One did not *exist*, as we understand the term. † Not till he (it) had united with the many— emanated existence (the Monad and Duad) —was a being produced. The τιμου (‘‘honoured’’), the something manifested, dwells in the centre as in the circumference, but it is only the reflection of the Deity—the World-Soul. ‡ In this doctrine we find the spirit of esoteric Buddhism. §

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And it is that of Esoteric Brâhmanism and of the Vedântin Advaitîs. The two modern philosophers, Schopenhauer and von Hartmann, teach the same ideas. The Occultists say that:

The psychic and ectenic forces, the ‘‘ideo-motor’’ and ‘‘electro-biological powers’’; ‘‘latent thought,’’ and even ‘‘unconscious cerebration’’ theories can be condensed in two words: the Kabalistic ASTRAL LIGHT. ||

Schopenhauer only synthesized all this by calling it Will, and contradicted the men of Science in their materialistic views, as von Hartmann did later on. The author of the *Philosophy of the Unconscious* calls their views ‘‘an instinctual prejudice.’’

Furthermore, he demonstrates that no experimenter can have anything [SEP]

* *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. I, p. xvi. [SEP]

† Plato, *Parmenides*, 141 E. [SEP]

‡ Cf. Stobaeus, *Eclogue*, I, 862. [SEP]

§ *Isis Unveiled*, I, xviii. [SEP]

|| *Op. cit.*, I, 58.

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to do with matter properly termed, but only with the forces into which he divides it. The visible effects of matter are but the effects of force. He concludes thereby that that which is now called matter is nothing but the aggregation of atomic forces, to express which the word matter is used; outside of that, for science matter is but a word void of sense.*

As much, it is to be feared, as those other terms with which we are now concerned, ‘‘Space,’’ ‘‘Nirvâna,’’ and so on.

The bold theories and opinions expressed in Schopenhauer’s works differ widely from those of the majority of our orthodox scientists. † ‘‘In reality,’’ remarks this daring speculator, ‘‘there is neither matter nor spirit. . . . The tendency to gravitation in a stone is as unexplainable as thought in human brain. If matter can—no one knows why—fall to the ground, then it can also—no one knows why—think. As soon, even in mechanics, as we trespass beyond the purely mathematical, as soon as we reach the inscrutable, adhesion, gravitation,. . . we are faced by phenomena which are to our senses as mysterious as the WILL and THOUGHT in man—we find ourselves facing the incomprehensible, for such is every force in nature. Where is then that matter which you all pretend to know so well; and from which—being so familiar with it—you draw all your conclusions and explanations, and attribute to it all things? . . . That, which can be fully realized by our reason and senses, is but the superficial; they can never reach the true inner substance of things. Such was the opinion of Kant. If you consider that there is in a human

head . . . some sort of a *spirit*, then you are obliged to concede the same to a stone. If your dead and utterly passive matter can manifest a tendency toward gravitation, or, like electricity, attract and repel, and send out sparks—then, as well as the brain, it can also think. In short, every particle of the so-called spirit, we can replace with an equivalent of matter, and every particle of matter replace with spirit. . . . Thus, it is not the Cartesian division of all things into matter and spirit that can ever be found philosophically exact; but only if we divide them into *will* and *manifestation*, which form of division has naught to do with the former, for it spiritualizes everything: all that, which is in the first instance real and objective—body and matter—it transforms into a representation, and every manifestation into will.”†

The *matter* of science may be for all objective purposes a

* *Op. cit.*, I, 59. [SEP]

† While they are to a great extent identical with those of Esoteric Buddhism, the Secret Doctrine of the East.

[SEP]‡ *Parerga and Paralipomena*, II, pp. 89, 90. Berlin, 1851. Cf. *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. I, p. 58. [SEP]

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“dead and utterly passive matter”; to the Occultist not an atom of it can be dead—“Life is ever present in it.” We send the reader who would know more about it to our article, “Transmigration of Life-Atoms.”* What we are now concerned with is the doctrine of Nirvâna.

A “system of atheism” it may be justly called, since it recognizes neither God nor Gods—least of all a Creator, as it entirely rejects creation. *The fecit ex nihilo is as incomprehensible to the Occult metaphysical Scientist as it is to the scientific Materialist.* It is at this point that all agreement stops between the two. But if such be the sin of the Buddhist and Brahman Occultist, then Pantheists and Atheists, and also theistical Jews—the Kabalists—must also plead “guilty” to it; yet no one would ever think of calling the Hebrews of the Kabalah “Atheists. “Except the Talmudistic and Christian exoteric systems, there never was a religious Philosophy, whether in the ancient or modern world, but rejected *a priori* the *ex nihilo* hypothesis, simply because Matter was always co-eternalized with Spirit.

[SEP] Nirvâna, as well as the Moksha of the Vedântins, is regarded by most of the Orientalists as a synonym of annihilation; yet no more glaring injustice could be done, and this capital error must be pointed out and disproved. On this most important tenet of the Brâhmo-Buddhistic system—the Alpha and Omega of “Being” or “Non-Being”—rests the whole edifice of Occult Metaphysics. Now the rectification of the great error concerning Nirvâna may be very easily accomplished with relation to the philosophically inclined, to those who,

In the glass of things temporal see the image of things spiritual.

On the other hand, to that reader who could never soar beyond the details of tangible material form, our explanation will appear meaningless. He may comprehend and even accept the logical inferences from the reasons given—the true spirit will ever escape his intuitions. The word “nihil” having been misconceived from the first, it is continually used

as a sledge-

* [B.C.W. Vol. V, pp. 109-17.]^[1]_[SEP]

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hammer in the matter of Esoteric Philosophy. Nevertheless it is the duty of the Occultist to try and explain it.

Nirvâna and Moksha, then, as said before, have their being in non-being, if such a paradox be permitted to illustrate the meaning the better. Nirvâna, as some illustrious Orientalists have attempted to prove, does mean the “blowing-out”* of all sentient existence. It is like the flame of a candle burnt out to its last atom, and then suddenly extinguished. Quite so. Nevertheless, as the old Arhat Nâgasena affirmed before the king who taunted him: “Nirvâna is”—and Nirvâna is eternal. But the Orientalists deny this, and say it is not so. In their opinion Nirvâna is not a re-absorption in the Universal Force, not eternal bliss and rest, but it means literally “the blowing-out, the extinction, complete annihilation, and not absorption.” The *Lankâvatâra* [section] quoted in support of their arguments by some Sanskritists, and which gives the different interpretations of Nirvâna by the Tîrthika-Brâhmins, is no authority to one who goes to primeval sources for information, namely, to the Buddha who taught the doctrine.† As well quote the Chârvâka Materialists in their support.

^[1]_[SEP]If we bring as an argument the sacred Jaina books, wherein the dying Gautama Buddha is thus addressed: “Arise into Nirvi [Nirvâna] from this decrepit body into which thou hast been sent. . . . **Ascend into thy former abode, O blessed Avatâra**”; and if we add that this seems to us the very opposite of nihilism, we may be told that so far it may only prove a contradiction, one more discrepancy in the Buddhist faith. If again we remind the reader that since Gautama is believed to appear^[1]_[SEP]

* Prof. Max Müller, in a letter to *The Times* (April, 1857), maintained most vehemently that Nirvâna meant *annihilation* in the fullest sense of the word. (*Chips from a German Workshop*, I, 287.) But in 1869, in a lecture before the General Meeting of the Association of German Philologists at Kiel, “he distinctly declares his belief that the Nihilism attributed to Buddha’s teaching forms no part of his doctrine, and that it is wholly wrong to suppose that Nirvâna means annihilation.” (Trübner’s *Amer. and Oriental Lit. Rec.*, Oct. 16th, 1869.)^[1]_[SEP]

† [For Buddha’s refutation of these views, see sections 18, 38 & 53 of D.T. Suzuki’s tr. of *The Lankâvatâra Sûtra*, London, Routledge, 1932 & rprs.—*Compiler.*]^[1]_[SEP]

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occasionally, re-descending from his “former abode” for the good of humanity and His faithful congregation, thus making it incontestable that Buddhism does not teach final annihilation, we shall be referred to authorities to whom such teaching is ascribed. And let us say at once: Men are no authority for us in questions of conscience, nor ought they to be for anyone else. If anyone holds to Buddha’s Philosophy, let him do and say as Buddha did and said; if a man calls himself a Christian, let him follow the commandments of

Christ—not the interpretations of His many dissenting priests and sects.

In *A Buddhist Catechism* the question is asked:

Are there any dogmas in Buddhism which we are required to accept on faith?^[L]_[SEP]

A. No. we are earnestly enjoined to accept nothing whatever on faith; whether it be written in books, handed down from our ancestors, or taught by the sages. Our Lord Buddha has said that we must not believe in a thing said merely because it is said; nor in traditions because they have been handed down from antiquity; nor rumors, as such; nor writings by sages, because sages wrote them; nor fancies that we may suspect to have been inspired in us by a deva (that is, in presumed spiritual inspiration); nor from inferences drawn from some haphazard assumption we may have made; nor because of what seems an analogical necessity; nor on the mere authority of our teachers or masters. But we are to believe when the writing, doctrine, or saying is corroborated by our own reason and consciousness. “For this,” says he, in concluding, “I taught you not to believe merely because you have heard, but when you believed of your consciousness, then to act accordingly and abundantly.”*

That Nirvâna, or rather, that state in which we are in Nirvâna, is quite the reverse of annihilation is suggested to us by our “reason and consciousness,” and that is sufficient for us personally. At the same time, this fact being inadequate and very ill-adapted for the general reader, something more efficient may be added.^[L]_[SEP]

Without resorting to sources unsympathetic to Occultism, the *Kabalah* furnishes us with the most luminous and clear proofs.^[L]_[SEP]

* See the *Kalama Sutta* of the *Anguttaranikâya*, as quoted in *A Buddhist Catechism*, by H. S. Olcott, President of the Theosophical Society, pp. 55, 56, Colombo, Ceylon, 1881. [Quest Miniature ed., pp. 62-63.]

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that the term “nihil” in the minds of the Ancient Philosophers had a meaning quite different from that it has now received at the hands of Materialists. It means certainly “nothing”—or “no-thing.” F. Kircher, in his work on the *Kabalah* and the Egyptian Mysteries* explains the term admirably. He tells his readers that in the *Zohar* the first of the Sefhîrôth† has a name the significance of which is “the *Infinite*,” but which was translated indifferently by the Kabalists as “Ens” and “Non-Ens” (“Being” and “Non-Being”); a *Being*, inasmuch as it is the *root* and source of all other beings; *Non-Being* because it [Ain-Soph—the Boundless and the Causeless, the Unconscious and the Passive Principle] resembles nought else in the Universe.^[L]_[SEP]

The author adds:

This is the reason why St. Denis did not hesitate to call it *nihil*.

“Nihil” therefore stands—even with some Christian theologians and thinkers, especially with the earlier ones who lived but a few removes from the profound Philosophy of the initiated Pagans—as a synonym for the impersonal, divine Principle, the Infinite All, which is no Being or thing—the Ain-Soph, the Parabrahman of the Vedânta. Now St. Denis was a pupil of St. Paul—an Initiate—and this fact makes everything clear.

The “Nihil” is *in esse* the Absolute Deity itself, the hidden Power or Omnipresence degraded by Monotheism into an anthropomorphic Being, with all the passions of a mortal on a grand scale. Union with That is not annihilation in the sense understood in Europe. ‡ In the East annihilation in Nirvâna^{[1][2]}

* *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, Vol. II, Pt. I, p. 291.^{[1][2]}

† Sephir, or Aditi (mystic Space). The Sephîrôth, be it understood, are identical with the Hindu Prajâpatis, the Dhyâni-Chohans of Esoteric Buddhism, the Zoroastrian Amshâspends, and finally with the Elôhîm—the “Seven Angels of the Presence” of the Roman Catholic Church.^{[1][2]}

‡ According to the Eastern idea, the All comes out from the One, and returns to it again. Absolute annihilation is simply unthinkable. Nor can eternal Matter be annihilated. Form may be annihilated; correlations may change. That is all. There can be no such thing as annihilation—in the European sense—in the Universe.^{[1][2]}

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refers but to matter: that of the visible as well as the invisible body, for the astral body, the personal double, is still matter, however sublimated. Buddha taught that the primitive Substance is eternal and unchangeable. Its vehicle is the pure, luminous ether, the boundless, infinite Space.

. . . not a void resulting from the absence of forms, but, on the contrary, the foundation of all forms . . . [This] denotes it to be the creation of *Mâyâ*, and all her works are as nothing before the *uncreated* being, SPIRIT, in whose profound and sacred repose all motion must cease for ever.”*

Motion here refers only to illusive objects, to their change as opposed to perpetuity, rest—perpetual motion being the Eternal Law, the ceaseless Breath of the Absolute.

The mastery of Buddhistic dogmas can be attained only according to the Platonic method: from universals to particulars. The key to it lies in the refined and mystical tenets of spiritual influx and divine life.^{[1][2]}

Saith Buddha:

Whoever is unacquainted with my Law, † and dies in that state, must return to the earth till he becomes a perfect Samana [ascetic]. To achieve this object, he must destroy within himself the trinity of Mâyâ. ‡ He must extinguish his passions, unite and identify himself with the Law ‘the teaching of the Secret Doctrine’, and comprehend the religion of annihilation. §

No, it is not in the dead-letter of Buddhistical literature that scholars may ever hope to find the true solution of its metaphysical subtleties. Alone in all antiquity the Pythagoreans understood them perfectly, and it is on the (to the average Orientalist and the Materialist) incomprehensible abstractions of Buddhism that Pythagoras grounded the principal tenets of his Philosophy.^{[1][2]}

* *Isis Unveiled*, I, 289.^{[1][2]}

† The Secret Law, the “Doctrine of the Heart,” so called in contrast to the “Doctrine of the Eye,” or exoteric Buddhism.^{[1][2]}

‡ “Illusion; matter in its triple manifestation in the earthly, and the astral or fontal Soul, or the body, and the Platonian dual Soul—the rational and the irrational one.”^{[1][2]}

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Thus *annihilation* means, with the Buddhistical philosophy, only a dispersion of matter, in whatever form or *semblance* of form it may be; for everything that bears a shape was created, and thus must sooner or later perish, *i.e.*, change that shape; therefore, as something temporary, though seeming to be permanent, it is but an illusion, *Mâyâ*; for, as eternity has neither beginning nor end, the more or less prolonged duration of some particular form passes, as it were, like an instantaneous flash of lightning. Before we have the time to realize that we have seen it, it is gone and passed away for ever; hence, even our astral bodies, pure ether, are but illusions of matter, so long as they retain their terrestrial outline. The latter changes, says the Buddhist, according to the merits or demerits of the person during his lifetime, and this is metempsychosis. When the spiritual *entity* breaks loose for ever from every particle of matter, then only it enters upon the eternal and unchangeable Nirvâna. He exists in Spirit, in *nothing*; as a form, a shape, a semblance, he is completely *annihilated*, and thus will die no more, for Spirit alone is no *Mâyâ*, but the only REALITY in an illusionary universe of ever-passing forms.

It is upon this Buddhist doctrine that the Pythagoreans grounded the principal tenets of their philosophy. “Can that Spirit, which gives life and motion, and partakes of the nature of light, be reduced to nonentity?” they ask. “Can that sensitive Spirit in brutes which exercises memory, one of the rational faculties, die, and become nothing?” And Whitelocke Bulstrode, in his able defence of Pythagoras, expounds this doctrine by adding: “If you say, they [the brutes] breathe their Spirits into the air, and there vanish, that is all that I contend for. The air, indeed, is the proper place to receive them, being according to Laertius, full of souls; and according to Epicurus, full of atoms. . . . the Principle of all things. For even this place wherein we walk and birds fly. . . is thus much of a spiritual nature, that it is invisible; therefore, may well be the receiver of forms, since the forms of all bodies are so; we can only hear and see its effects; the air itself is too fine, and above the capacity of the eye. What then is the aether that is in the region above. And what are the influences of forms that descend from thence?”* The *Spirits* of creatures, the Pythagoreans hold, who are emanations of the most sublimated portions of ether— emanations, *BREATHS*, but not forms. Ether is incorruptible,

^[1]_{SEP}* [*An Essay of Transmigration*, etc., pp. 29-30; 1692.]

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all philosophers agree in that; and what is incorruptible *is so far from being annihilated* when it gets rid of the *form*, that it lays a good claim to *IMMORTALITY*.

^[1]_{SEP}“But what is that which has no body, no *form*; which is imponderable, invisible and indivisible, that which exists, and yet *is not*?” ask the Buddhists. “It is Nirvâna,” is the answer. It is *NOTHING*, not a region, but rather a state.*^[1]_{SEP}

* *Isis Unveiled*, I, 290.^[1]_{SEP}

THE SECRET BOOKS OF “LAM-RIM” AND DZYAN

The *Book of Dzyan*—from the Sanskrit word “Dhyâna” (mystic meditation)—is the first volume of the Commentaries upon the seven secret folios of *Kiu-te*, and a Glossary of the public works of the same name. Thirty-five volumes of *Kiu-te* for exoteric purposes and the use of the laymen may be found in the possession of the Tibetan Gelugpa Lamas, in the library of any monastery; and also fourteen books of Commentaries and Annotations on the same by the initiated Teachers.^{[L][SEP]} Strictly speaking, those thirty-five books ought to be termed “The Popularised Version” of the Secret Doctrine, full of myths, blinks, and errors; the fourteen volumes of *Commentaries*, on the other hand—with their translations, annotations, and an ample glossary of Occult terms, worked out from one small archaic folio, the *Book of the Secret Wisdom of the World**—contain a digest of all the Occult Sciences. These, it appears, are kept secret and apart, in the charge of the Teshu-Lama of Shigatse. The *Books of Kiu-te* are comparatively modern, having been edited within the last millennium, whereas, the earliest volumes of the *Commentaries* are of untold antiquity, some fragments of the original cylinders having been preserved. With the exception that they explain and correct some of the too fabulous, and to every appearance, grossly-exaggerated accounts in the *Books of Kiu-te*† — properly so^{[L][SEP]}—

* It is from the texts of all these works that the Secret Doctrine has been given. The original matter would not make a small pamphlet, but the explanations and notes from the Commentaries and Glossaries might be worked into ten volumes as large as *Isis Unveiled*.^{[L][SEP]}

† The monk Horace Della Penna makes considerable fun in his *Memoirs* (see Clements Markham’s *Narratives . . . of Tibet*) of certain statements in the *Books of Kiu-te*. He brings to the notice of the Christian public “the great mountain 160,000 leagues high” (a Tibetan league consisting of five miles) in the Himâlayan Range. “According to their law,” he says, “in the west of this world, is an eternal world, . . . a paradise, and in it a Saint called Hopahme, which means ‘Saint of Splendour and Infinite Light.’ This Saint has many disciples who are all Chang-Chub,” which means, he adds in a footnote, “the Spirits of those who, on account of their perfection, do not care to become saints, and train and instruct the bodies of the reborn Lamas, . . . so that they may help the living.” Which means that the^{[L][SEP]} presumably “dead” Jang-Chhub (not “Chang-chub”) are simply living Bodhisattvas, some of those known as Bhante (“the Brothers”). As to the “mountain 160,000 leagues high,” the *Commentary* which gives the key to such statements explains that according to the code used by the writers, “to the west of the ‘Snowy Mountain’ 160 leagues [the cyphers being a blind] from a certain spot and by a direct road, is the Bhante Yul [the country or ‘Seat of the Brothers’], the residence of Mahâ-Chohan, . . .” etc. This is the real meaning. The “Hopahme” of Della Penna is—the Mahâ-Chohan, the Chief. [See *Lucifer*, Vol. XV, p. 14 & *B.C.W.* Vol. VI, pp. 100-01 for “Tibetan Teachings” article.]

called—the *Commentaries* have little to do with these. They stand in relation to them as the Chaldaeo-Jewish *Kabalah* stands to the Mosaic Books. In the work known as the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, in section: “The Supreme Âtman [Soul] as manifested in the character

of the Arhats and Pratyeka-Buddhas,” it is stated that:

Because from the beginning all sentient creatures have confused the truth and embraced the false, therefore there came into existence a hidden knowledge called Âlaya Vijñâna.

“Who is in possession of the true knowledge?” is asked. “The great Teachers of the Snowy Mountain,” is the response. [SEP] These “great Teachers” have been known to live in the “Snowy Range” of the Himâlayas for countless ages. To deny in the face of millions of Hindus the existence of their great Gurus, living in the Âśramas scattered all over the Trans-or the Cis-Himâlayan slopes, is to make oneself ridiculous in their eyes. When the Buddhist Savior appeared in India, their Âśramas—for it is rarely that these great Men are found in Lamaseries, unless on a short visit—were on the spots they now occupy, and that even before the Brâhmans themselves came from Central Âsia to settle on the Indus. And before that more than one Âryan Dvija of fame and historical renown had sat at their feet, learning that which culminated later on in one or another of the great philosophical schools. Most of these Himâlayan Bhante were Âryan Brâhmans and ascetics. [SEP] No student, unless very advanced, would be benefited by the [SEP]

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perusal of those exoteric volumes.* They must be read with a key to their meaning, and that key can only be found in the *Commentaries*. Moreover there are some comparatively modern works that are positively injurious so far as a fair comprehension of even exoteric Buddhism is concerned. Such are the *Buddhist Cosmos*, by Bonze Jin-chan of Peking; the *Shing-Tao-ki* (or *The Records of the Enlightenment of Tathâgata*), by Wang-Puh—seventh century; *Hi-shai Sûtra* (or *Book of Creation*), and some others. [SEP]

* In some MSS. notes before us, written by Gelong (priest) Thango-pa Chhe-go-mo, it is said: “The few Roman Catholic missionaries who have visited our land (under protest) in the last century and have repaid our hospitality by turning our sacred literature into ridicule, have shown little discretion and still less knowledge. It is true that the Sacred Canon of the Tibetans, the *Bkah-hgyur* and *Bstan-hgyur*, comprises 1707 distinct works—1083 public and 624 secret volumes, the former being composed of 350 and the latter of 77 volumes folio. May we humbly invite the good missionaries, however, to tell us when they ever succeeded in getting a glimpse of the last-named secret folios? Had they even by chance seen them I can assure the Western Pandits that these manuscripts and folios could never be understood even by a born Tibetan without a key (a) to their peculiar characters, and (b) to their hidden meaning. **In our system every description of locality is figurative, every name and word purposely veiled; and one has first to study the mode of deciphering and then to learn the equivalent secret terms and symbols for nearly every word of the religious language.** The Egyptian enchorial or hieratic system is child’s play to our sacerdotal puzzles.” [SEP]

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AMITA BUDDHA, KWAN-SHAI-YIN, AND KWAN-YIN—WHAT THE

“BOOK OF DZYAN” AND THE LAMASERIES OF TSONG-KHA-PA SAY

As a supplement to the *Commentaries* there are many secret folios on the lives of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and among these there is one on Prince Gautama and another on His reincarnation in Tsong-Kha-pa. This great Tibetan Reformer of the fourteenth century, said to be a direct incarnation of Amita-Buddha, is the founder of the secret School near Shigatse, attached to the private retreat of the Teshu-Lama. It is with Him that began the regular system of Lamaic incarnations of Buddhas (Sang-gyas), or of Sâkyathub-pa (Sâkyamuni). Amida or Amita-Buddha is called by the author of *Chinese Buddhism*, a mythical being. He speaks of

Amida-Buddha (*Ami-to Fo*) a fabulous personage, worshipped assiduously—like Kwan-yin—by the Northern Buddhists, but unknown in Siam, Burma, and Ceylon.*

Very likely. Yet Amida-Buddha is not a “fabulous” personage, since (a) “Amida” is the Senzar form of “Âdi”; “Âdi-Buddhi” and “Âdi-Buddha,”† as already shown, existed ages ago as a Sanskrit term for “Primeval Soul” and “Wisdom”; and (b) the name was applied to Gautama Sâkyamuni, the last Buddha in India, from the seventh century, when Buddhism was introduced into Tibet. “Amitâbha” (in Chinese, “Wu-liang-sheu”) means literally “Boundless Age,” a synonym of “Ain-Soph,” the “Ancient of Days,” and is an epithet that connects Him directly with the Boundless Âdi-Buddhi (primeval and Universal Soul) of the Hindus, as well as with the Anima Mundi of all the ancient nations of Europe and the Boundless and Infinite of the Kabalists. If Amitâbha be a fiction of the Tibetans, or a new form of Wu-liang-sheu, “a fabulous personage,” as the author-compiler of *Chinese Buddhism* tells his

* *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 171, by Rev. J. Edkins.

† “Buddhi” is a Sanskrit term for “discrimination” or intellect (the sixth principle), and “Buddha” is “wise,” “wisdom,” and also the planet Mercury. [Budha].

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readers, then the “fable” must be a very ancient one. For on another page he says himself that the addition to the canon, of the books containing the

. . . legends of Kwan-yin and of the Western heaven with its Buddha, Amitâbha, was also previous to the Council of Cashmere, a little before the beginning of our era.*

and he places

the origin of the primitive Buddhist books which are common to the Northern and Southern Buddhists . . . before 246 B.C.

Since Tibetans accepted Buddhism only in the seventh century A.D., how comes it that they are charged with inventing Amita-Buddha? Besides which, in Tibet, Amitâbha is called Od-pag-med, which shows that it is not the name but the abstract idea that was first accepted of an unknown, invisible, and Impersonal Power—taken, moreover, from the Hindu “Âdi-Buddhi,” and not from the Chinese “Amitâbha.”† There is a great difference

between the popular Od—pag-med (Amitâbha) who sits enthroned in Devachan (Sukhâvatî), according to the *Mani Kah-'bum* Scriptures—the oldest *historical* work in Tibet, and the philosophical abstraction called Amita-Buddha, the name being passed now to the earthly Buddha, Gautama.^{[L][SEP]}

* This curious contradiction may be found in *Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 171, 273-74. The reverend author assures his readers that “to the philosophic Buddhists . . . Amitâbha Yoshi Fo, and the others are nothing but signs of ideas” (p. 236). Very true. But so should be all other deific names, such as Jehovah, Allah, etc., and if they are not simply “signs of ideas” this would only show that minds that receive them otherwise are not “philosophic”; it would not at all afford serious proof that there are personal, living Gods of these names in reality.^{[L][SEP]}

† The Chinese Amitâbha (Wu-liang-sheu) and the Tibetan Amitâbha (Od-pag-med) have now become personal Gods, ruling over and living in the celestial region of Sukhâvatî, or Tushita [see *Gloss. p.312 & 346*] (Tibetan: Devachan); while Âdi-Buddhi, of the philosophic Hindu, and Amita-Buddha of the philosophic Chinese and Tibetan, are names for universal, primeval ideas.

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TSONG-KHA-PA.—LOHANS IN CHINA

In an article, “Reincarnations in Tibet,” everything that could be said about Tsong-kha-pa was published.* It was stated that this reformer was not, as is alleged by Pârsî scholars, an incarnation of one of the celestial Dhyânîs, or the five heavenly Buddhas, said to have been created by Sâkyamuni after he had risen to Nirvâna, but that he was an incarnation of Amita-Buddha Himself. The records preserved in the Gon-pa, the chief Lamasery of Tashi-lhumpo, show that Sang-gyas left the regions of the “Western Paradise” to incarnate Himself in Tsong-kha-pa, in consequence of the great degradation into which His secret doctrines had fallen.

Whenever made too public, the Good Law of Cheu [magical powers] fell invariably into sorcery or “black magic.” The Dvijas, the Hoshang [Chinese monks] and the Lamas could alone be entrusted safely with the formulae.

Until the Tsong-kha-pa period there had been no Sang-gyas (Buddha) incarnations in Tibet.^{[L][SEP]} Tsong-kha-pa gave the signs whereby the presence of one of the twenty-five Bodhisattvas† or of the Celestial Buddhas (Dhyâni-Chohans) in a human body might be recognized, and He strictly forbade necromancy. This led to a split amongst the Lamas, and the malcontents allied themselves with the aboriginal Bôns against the reformed Lamaism. Even now they form a powerful sect, practising the most disgusting rites all over Sikkim, Bhutân, Nepal, and even on the borderlands of Tibet. It was worse then. With the permission of the Tda-shu or Teshu Lama,‡ some hundred Lohans (Arhats), to avert strife, went to^{[L][SEP]}

* See *The Theosophist*, Vol. III, March, 1882, pp. 146-48. [*B.C.W.*, Vol. IV, pp. 8-19.]

† The intimate relation of the twenty-five Buddhas (Bodhisattvas) with the twenty-five Tattvas (the Conditioned or Limited) of the Hindus is interesting.

‡ It is curious to note the great importance given by European Orientalists to the Dalai Lamas of Lhasa, and their utter ignorance as to the Tda-shu (or Teshu) Lamas, while it is the latter who began the hierarchical series of Buddha-incarnations, and are *de facto* the “popes” in Tibet: the Dalai Lamas are the creations of Nabang-lob-Sang, the Tda-shu Lama, who was Himself the sixth incarnation of Amita, through Tsong-kha-pa, though very few seem to be aware of that fact. [Actually the fifth Dalai Lama installed his Guru as the first Tashi lama about 1640. This is explained further in *B.C.W.*, Vol. IV, p. 12 fn. *Compiler*.]

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settle in China in the famous monastery near Tien-t'-ai, where they soon became subjects for legendary lore, and continue to be so to this day. They had been already preceded by other Lohans,

The world-famous disciples of Tathâgata, called the “sweet-voiced” on account of their ability to chant the Mantras with magical effect.*

The first ones came from Kashmir in the year 3,000 of Kali-Yuga (about a century before the Christian era),† while the last ones arrived at the end of the fourteenth century, 1,500 years later; and, finding no room for themselves at the lamasery of Yihigching, they built for their own use the largest monastery of all on the sacred island of Pu-to (Buddha, or Put, in Chinese), in the province of Chusan. There the Good Law, the

* The chanting of a Mantra is not a prayer, but rather a magical sentence in which the law of Occult causation connects itself with, and depends on, the will and acts of its singer. It is a succession of Sanskrit sounds, and when its string of words and sentences is pronounced according to the magical formulae in the *Atharva-Veda*, but understood by the few, some Mantras produce an instantaneous and very wonderful effect. In its esoteric sense it contains the Vâch (the “mystic speech”), which resides in the Mantra, or rather in its sounds, since it is according to the vibrations, one way or the other, of ether that the effect is produced. The “sweet singers” were called by that name because they were experts in Mantras. Hence the legend in China that the singing and melody of the Lohans are heard at dawn by the priests from their cells in the monastery of Fang-Kwang. (See Biography of Chi-Kai in Tien-tai-nan-tchi.) [Also see *Chih-I* by Leon Hurvitz, Bruxelles, Juillet, 1962.]

† The celebrated Lohan, Mâdhyantika, who converted the king and whole country of Kashmir to Buddhism, sent a body of Lohans to preach the Good Law. He was the sculptor who raised to Buddha the famous statue one hundred feet high, which Hiuen-Tsang saw at Dardu, to the north of the Punjab. As the same Chinese traveller mentions a temple ten Li from Peshawar—350 feet round and 850 feet high which was at his time (A.D. 650) already 850 years old, Koeppen thinks that so far back as 292 B.C. Buddhism was the prevalent religion in the Punjab.

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“Doctrine of the Heart,” flourished for several centuries. But when the island was desecrated by a mass of Western foreigners, the chief Lohans left for the mountains of— —. In the Pagoda of Pi-yün-si, near Peking, one can still see the “Hall of the Five-hundred Lohans.” There the statues of the first-comers are arranged below, while one solitary

Lohan is placed quite under the roof of the building, which seems to have been built in commemoration of their visit.^[L]_[SEP]

The works of the Orientalists are full of the direct landmarks of Arhats (Adepts), possessed of thaumaturgic powers, but these are spoken of—whenever the subject cannot be avoided—with unconcealed scorn. Whether innocently ignorant of, or purposely ignoring, the importance of the Occult element and symbology in the various Religions they undertake to explain, short work is generally made of such passages, and they are left untranslated. In simple justice, however, it should be allowed that much as all such miracles may have been exaggerated by popular reverence and fancy, they are neither less credible nor less attested in “heathen” annals than are those of the numerous Christian Saints in the church chronicles. Both have an equal right to a place in their respective histories.^[L]_[SEP] If, after the beginning of persecution against Buddhism, the Arhats were no more heard of in India, it was because, their vows prohibiting retaliation, they had to leave the country and seek solitude and security in China, Tibet, Japan, and elsewhere. The sacerdotal powers of the Brâhmans being at that time unlimited, the Simons and Apolloniuses of Buddhism had as much chance of recognition and appreciation by the Brâhmanical Irenaeuses and Tertullians as had their successors in the Judaeian and Roman worlds. It was a historical rehearsal of the dramas that were enacted centuries later in Christendom. As in the case of the so-called “Heresiarchs” of Christianity, it was not for rejecting the Vedas or the sacred Syllable that the Buddhist Arhats were persecuted, but for understanding too well the secret meaning of both. It was simply because their knowledge was regarded as dangerous and their presence in India unwelcome, that they had to emigrate.^[L]_[SEP] Nor were there a smaller number of Initiates among the Brâhmans themselves. Even today one meets most wonderfully-gifted Sâdhus and Yogins, obliged to keep themselves unnoticed

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and in the shadow, not only owing to the absolute secrecy imposed upon them at their Initiation but also for fear of the Anglo-Indian tribunals and courts of law, wherein judges are determined to regard as charlatanry, imposition, and fraud the exhibition of, or claim to, any abnormal powers, and one may judge of the past by the present. Centuries after our era the Initiates of the inner temples and the Mathams (monastic communities) chose a superior council, presided over by an all-powerful Brahm-Âtmâ, the Supreme Chief of all those Mahâtmas. This pontificate could be exercised only by a Brâhman who had reached a certain age, and he it was who was the sole guardian of the mystic formula, and he was the Hierophant who created great Adepts. He alone could explain the meaning of the sacred word, AUM, and of all the religious symbols and rites. And whosoever among those Initiates of the Supreme Degree revealed to a profane a single one of the truths, even the smallest of the secrets entrusted to him, had to die; and he who received the confidence was put to death.

But there existed, and still exists to this day, a Word far surpassing the mysterious

monosyllable, and which renders him who comes into possession of its key nearly the equal of Brahman. The Brahmâtâmâs alone possess this key, and we know that to this day there are two great Initiates in Southern India who possess it. It can be passed only at death, for it is the “Lost Word.” No torture, no human power, could force its disclosure by a Brâhman who knows it; and it is well guarded in Tibet.^{[1][2]}

Yet this secrecy and this profound mystery are indeed disheartening, since they alone—the Initiates of India and Tibet —could thoroughly dissipate the thick mists hanging over the history of Occultism, and force its claims to be recognized. The Delphic injunction, “*Know thyself*,” seems for the few in this age. But the fault ought not to be laid at the door of the Adepts, who have done all that could be done, and have gone as far as Their rules permitted, to open the eyes of the world. Only, while the European shrinks from public obloquy and the ridicule unsparingly thrown on Occultists, the Asiatic is being discouraged by his own Pandits. These profess to labor under the gloomy impression that no Bîja Vidyâ, no Arhatship (Adeptship), is possible during the Kali-Yuga (the “Black Age”)

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we are now passing through. Even the Buddhists are taught that the Lord Buddha is alleged to have prophesied that the power would die out in “one millennium after His death.” But this is an entire mistake. In the *Dîgha-Nikâya* the Buddha says:

Hear, Subhadra! The world will never be without Rahats, if the ascetics in my congregations well and truly keep my precepts.

A similar contradiction of the view brought forward by the Brâhmans is made by Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, and there is further the actual appearance of many Sâdhus and miracle-workers in the past, and even in the present age. The same holds good for China and Tibet. Among the commandments of Tsong-kha-pa there is one that enjoins the Rahats (Arhats) to make an attempt to enlighten the world, including the “white barbarians,” every century, at a certain specified period of the cycle. Up to the present day none of these attempts has been very successful. Failure has followed failure. Have we to explain the fact by the light of a certain prophecy? It is said that up to the time when Panchhen-rin-po-chhe (the Great Jewel of Wisdom)* condescends to be reborn in the land of the Pelings (Westerners), and appearing as the Spiritual Conqueror (Chom-den-da), destroys the errors and ignorance of the ages, it will be of little use to try to uproot the misconceptions of Peling-pa (Europe): her sons will listen to no one. Another prophecy declares that the Secret Doctrine shall remain in all its purity in Bod-yul (Tibet), only to the day that it is kept free from foreign invasion. The very visits of Western natives, however friendly, would be baneful to the Tibetan populations. This is the true key to Tibetan exclusiveness.†

* A title of the Tashi-lhunpo Lama.^{[1][2]}

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A FEW MORE MISCONCEPTIONS CORRECTED

Notwithstanding widespread misconceptions and errors—often most amusing to one who has a certain knowledge of the true doctrines—about Buddhism generally, and especially about Buddhism in Tibet, all the Orientalists agree that the Buddha's foremost aim was to lead human beings to salvation by teaching them to practice the greatest purity and virtue, and by detaching them from the service of this illusionary world, and the love of one's still more illusionary—because so evanescent and unreal—**body and physical self.** **And what is the good of a virtuous life, full of privations and suffering, if the only result of it is to be annihilation at the end?** If even the attainment of that supreme perfection which leads the Initiate to remember the whole series of his past lives, and to foresee that of the future ones, by the full development of that inner, divine eye in him, and to acquire the knowledge that unfolds the causes* of the ever-recurring cycles of existence, brings him finally to non-being, and nothing more—then the whole system is idiotic, and Epicureanism is far more philosophical than *such* Buddhism. **He who is unable to comprehend the subtle, and yet so potent, difference between existence in a material or physical state and a purely spiritual existence—Spirit or “Soul-life”—will never appreciate at their full value the grand teachings of the Buddha, even in their exoteric form.** Individual or personal existence is the cause of pains and sorrows; collective and impersonal life-eternal is full of divine bliss and joy for ever, with neither causes nor effects to darken its light. And the hope for such a life-eternal is the keynote of the whole of Buddhism. If we are told that impersonal existence is no existence at all, but amounts to annihilation, as was maintained by some French reincarnationists, then we would ask: What difference can it make in the spiritual perceptions of an Ego whether he enter Nirvâna loaded with the recollections only of his own personal lives—

* The twelve Nidânas, called in Tibetan Ten-brel Chug-nyi, which are based upon the “Four Truths.”

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tens of thousands according to the modern reincarnationists—or whether merged entirely in the Parabrahmic state, **it becomes one with the All, with the absolute knowledge and the absolute feeling of representing collective humanities?** Once that an Ego lives only ten distinct individual lives he must necessarily lose his one self, and become mixed up—merged, so to say—with these ten selves. It really seems that so long as this great mystery

remains a dead letter to the world of Western thinkers, and especially to the Orientalists, the less the latter undertake to explain it, the better for Truth.^[L]_[SEP]

Of all the existing religious Philosophies, Buddhism is the least understood. The Lassens, Webers, Wassilyev, the Burnoufs and Juliens, and even such “eye-witnesses” of Tibetan Buddhism as Csoma de Körös and the Schlagintweits, have hitherto only added perplexity to confusion. None of these has ever received his information from a genuine Gelugpa source: all have judged Buddhism from the bits of knowledge picked up at Tibetan frontier lamaseries, in countries thickly populated by Bhutanese and Lepchas, Böns, and red-capped Dugpas, along the line of the Himâlayas. Hundreds of volumes purchased from Buriats, Shamans, and Chinese Buddhists, have been read and translated, glossed and misinterpreted according to invariable custom. Esoteric Schools would cease to be worthy of their name were their literature and doctrines to become the property of even their profane co-religionists—still less of the Western public. This is simple common sense and logic. Nevertheless this is a fact which our Orientalists have ever refused to recognize: hence they have gone on, gravely discussing the relative merits and absurdities of idols, “soothsaying tables,” and “magical figures of Phurbu” on the “square tortoise.” None of these have anything to do with the real philosophical Buddhism of the Gelugpa, or even of the most educated among the Sakyapa and Kadampa sects. All such “plates” and sacrificial tables, Chinsreg magical circles, etc., were avowedly got from Sikkim, Bhutan, and Eastern Tibet, from Böns and Dugpas. Nevertheless, these are given as characteristics of Tibetan Buddhism! It would be as fair to judge the unread Philosophy of Bishop Berkeley after studying Christianity in the clown-worship of Neapolitan Lazzaroni, dancing a mystic jig before the idol of St. Pip, or carrying the

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ex-voto in wax of the phallus of SS. Cosmo and Domiano, at Tsernie.^[L]_[SEP]It is quite true that the primitive Srâvakas (listeners or hearers) and the Sramanas (the “thought-restrainers” and the “pure”) have degenerated, and that many Buddhist sects have fallen into mere dogmatism and ritualism. Like every other Esoteric, half-suppressed teaching, the words of the Buddha convey a double meaning, and every sect has gradually come to claim to be the only one knowing the correct meaning, and thus to assume supremacy over the rest.

Schism has crept in, and has fastened, like a hideous cancer, on the fair body of early Buddhism. Nâgârjuna's Mahâyâna ("Great Vehicle") School was opposed by the Hînayâna (or "Little Vehicle") System, and even the Yogacharyâ of Aryâsanga became disfigured by the yearly pilgrimage from India to the shores of Mansarovara, of hosts of vagabonds with matted locks who play at being Yogins and Fakirs, preferring this to work. An affected detestation of the world, and the tedious and useless practice of the counting of inhalations and exhalations as a means to produce absolute tranquillity of mind or meditation, have brought this school within the region of Hatha-Yoga, and have made it heir to the Brâhmanical Tîrthikas. And though its Srotâpatti, its Sakridâgâmin, Anâgâmin, and Arhats,* bear the same names in almost every school, yet the doctrines of each differ greatly, and none of these is likely to gain real Abhijñas (the supernatural abnormal five powers). One of the chief mistakes of the Orientalists when judging on "internal (?) evidence," as they express it, was that they assumed that the Pratyeka-Buddhas, the Bodhisattvas, and the "Perfect" Buddhas were a later development of Buddhism.

* The Srotâpatti is one who has attained the first Path of comprehension in the real and the unreal; the Sakridâgâmin is the candidate for one of the higher Initiations: "one who is to receive birth once more"; the Anâgâmin is he who has attained the "third Path," or literally, "he who will not be reborn again" unless he so wishes it, having the option of being reborn in any of the "worlds of the Gods," or of remaining in Devachan, or of choosing an earthly body with a philanthropic object. An Arhat is one who has reached the highest Path; he may merge into Nirvâna at will, while here on earth.

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For on these three chief degrees are based the seven and twelve degrees of the Hierarchy of Adeptship. The first are those who have attained the Bodhi (wisdom) of the Buddhas, but do not become Teachers. The human Bodhisattvas are candidates, so to say, for perfect Buddhahood (in Kalpas to come), and with the option of using their powers now if need be. "Perfect" Buddhas are simply "perfect" Initiates. All these are men, and not disembodied Beings, as is given out in the Hînayâna exoteric books. Their correct character may be found only in the secret volumes of Lugrub or Nâgârjuna, the founder of the Mahâyâna system, who is said to have been initiated by the Nâgas (fabulous "Serpents," the veiled name for an Initiate or Mahatma). The fabled report found in Chinese records that Nâgârjuna considered his doctrine to be in opposition to that of Gautama Buddha, until he discovered from the Nâgas that

it was precisely the doctrine that had been secretly taught by Sâkyamuni Himself, is an allegory, and is based upon the reconciliation between the old Brâhmanical secret Schools in the Himâlayas and Gautama's Esoteric teachings, both parties having at first objected to the rival schools of the other. The former, the parent of all others, had been established beyond the Himâlayas for ages before the appearance of Sâkyamuni. Gautama was a pupil of this; and it was with them, those Indian Sages, that He had learned the truths of the Sunyata, the emptiness and impermanence of every terrestrial, evanescent thing, and the mysteries of Prajña-Pâramitâ, or "knowledge across the River," which finally lands the "Perfect One" in the regions of the One Reality. But His Arhats were not Himself. Some of them were ambitious, and they modified certain teachings after the great councils, and it is on account of these "heretics" that the Mother-School at first refused to allow them to blend their schools, when persecution began driving away the Esoteric Brotherhood from India. But when finally most of them submitted to the guidance and control of the chief Âśramas, then the Yogacharyâ of Âryâsanga was merged into the oldest Lodge. For it is there from time immemorial that has lain concealed the final hope and light of the world, the salvation of mankind. Many are the names of that School and land, the name of the latter being now regarded by the Orientalists as the mythic name of a fabulous country. [S'ambhala, *Gloss.* p.287 (Shambala)] It is from this mysterious land

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nevertheless, that the Hindu expects his Kalki-Avatâra, the Buddhist his Maitreya, the Pârsî his Saoshyant [Sosiosh, *Gloss.* p.306] and the Jew his Messiah, and so would the Christian expect thence his Christ—if he only knew of it. [SEP] There, and there alone, reigns Parinishpanna (Yong-Grüb), the absolutely perfect comprehension of Being and Non-Being, the changeless true Existence in Spirit, even while the latter is seemingly still in the body, every inhabitant thereof being a Non-Ego because he has become the Perfect Ego. Their voidness is "self-existent and perfect"—if there were profane eyes to sense and perceive it—because it has become absolute; the unreal being transformed into conditionless Reality, and the realities of this, our world, having vanished in their own nature into thin (non-existing) air. The "Absolute Truth" (Don-dampa'i-den pa; Sanskrit: Paramârthasatya), having conquered "relative truth" (Kun zab chi-den pa; Sanskrit: Samvritisatya), the inhabitants

of the mysterious region [Shambala] are thus supposed to have reached the state called in mystic phraseology Svasamvedanâ (“self-analyzing reflection”) and Paramârtha, or that absolute consciousness of the personal merged into the impersonal Ego, which is above all, hence above illusion in every sense. Its “Perfect” Buddhas and Bodhisattvas may be on every nimble Buddhist tongue as celestial—therefore unreachable Beings, while these names may suggest and say nothing to the dull perceptions of the European profane. What matters it to Those who, being in this world, yet live outside and far beyond our illusive earth! Above Them there is but one class of Nirvânîs, namely, the Cho-ku (Dharmakâya), or the Nirvânîs “without remains”—the pure Arupa, the formless Breaths. *^Ṛ_{SEP}

* It is an erroneous idea which makes the Orientalists take literally the teaching of the Mahâyâna School about the three different kinds of bodies, namely, the Tul-pa’i-Ku [Nirmanakaya], the Long-chod-Dzog-pa’i-Ku [Sambhogakaya], and the Cho-Ku [Dharmakaya], as all pertaining to the Nirvânîc condition. There are two kinds of Nirvâna: the earthly, and that of the purely disembodied Spirits. These three “bodies” are the three envelopes—all more or less physical—which are at the disposal of the Adept who has entered and crossed the six Pâramitâs, or “Paths” of Buddha. Once He enters upon the seventh, He can return no more to earth. [See Csoma, Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1st series, Vol. VII (1838), p. 142ff; and Schott, Buddhismus, p. 9 who give it otherwise. Cited on p. 38 of Schlagintweit’s Buddhism in Tibet.]

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Thence emerge occasionally the Bodhisattvas in their Tulpa’i-Ku (or Nirmânakâya) body and, assuming an ordinary appearance, they teach men. There are conscious, as well as unconscious, incarnations.^Ṛ_{SEP} Most of the doctrines contained in the Yogacharyâ, or Mahâyâna systems are Esoteric, like the rest. One day the profane Hindu and Buddhist may begin to pick the Bible to pieces, taking it literally. Education is fast spreading in Asia, and already there have been made some attempts in this direction, so that the tables may then be cruelly turned on the Christians. Whatever conclusions the two may arrive at, they will never be half as absurd and unjust as some of the theories launched by Christians against their respective Philosophies. Thus, according to Spence Hardy, at death the Arhat enters Nirvâna:

That is, he ceases to exist.*

And, agreeably to Major Jacob, the Jîvanmukta,

Absorbed into Brahma, enters upon an unconscious and stonelike existence.

†

Samkarâchârya is shown as saying in his prolegomena to the Śvetâçvatara Upanishad:

Gnosis, once arisen, requires nothing farther for the realization of its result: it needs subsidia only that it may arise.

The Theosophist, it has been argued, as long as he lives, may do good and evil as he chooses, and incur no stain, such is the efficacy of gnosis. And it is further alleged that the doctrine of Nirvâna lends itself to immoral inferences, and that the Quietists of all ages have been taxed with immortality. † According to Wassilyev § and Csoma de Körös: †

* [See A Manual of Buddhism, p. 39 of an offset reprint of the 1853 ed. in: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Studies Series, Vol. LVI, Varanasi, 1967.]

† Vedânta-Sâra, translated by Major Jacob, p. 119.

‡ Ibid., p. 122.

§ Der Buddhismus, pp. 327, 357, et seq., quoted by Schlagintweit. (See pp. 41-45). Buddhism in Tibet, p. 41.

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The Prasanga school obtained its name from the peculiar mode which it adopted of deducing the absurdity and erroneousness of every esoteric opinion.

*

Correct interpretations of Buddhist Philosophy are crowned by that gloss on a thesis from the Prasanga School, that

Even an Arhat goes to hell in case he doubt anything, †

thus making of the most free-thinking religion in the world a blind-faith system. The “threat” refers simply to the well-known law that even an Initiate may fail, and thus have his object utterly ruined, if he doubt for one moment the efficacy of his psychic powers—the alphabet of Occultism, as every Kabalist well knows. † The Tibetan sect of the Ngo-vo-nyid-med par Mraba (“they who deny existence,” or “regard nature as Mâyâ”) ‡ can never be contrasted for one moment with some of the nihilistic or materialistic schools of India, such as the Chârvâka. They are pure Vedântins—if anything—in their

views. And if the Yoga-charyâs may be compared with, or called the Tibetan Viśiṣhādvaitîs, the Prasanga School is surely the Advaita Philosophy of the land. It was divided into two: one was originally founded by Bhāvaviveka, the Svântrika Mādhyamika School, and the other by Buddhapâlita; both have their exoteric and esoteric divisions. It is necessary to belong to the latter to know anything of the esoteric doctrines of that sect, the most metaphysical and philosophical of all. Chandrakirti (Dava Dagpa) wrote his commentaries on the Prasanga doctrines and taught publicly; and he expressly states that there are two ways of entering the “Path” to Nirvâna. Any virtuous man can reach by Naljor-ngonsum (“meditation by self-perception”), the intuitive comprehension of the four Truths, without either^[SEP]

* Ibid.^[SEP]† Buddhism in Tibet, p. 44.^[SEP]

‡ They maintain also the existence of One Absolute pure Nature, Parabrahman; the illusion of everything outside of it; the leading of the individual Soul—a Ray of the “Universal”—into the true nature of existence and things by Yoga alone.

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belonging to a monastic order or having been initiated. In this case it was considered as a heresy to maintain that the visions which may arise in consequence of such meditation, or Vijñâna (internal knowledge)*, are not susceptible of errors (Namtog or false visions), for they are. Âlaya alone having an absolute and eternal existence, can alone have absolute knowledge; and even the Initiate, in his Nirmânakâya† body may commit an occasional mistake in accepting the false for the true in his explorations of the “Causeless” World. The Dharmakâya Bodhisattva is alone infallible, when in real Samâdhi. Âlaya, or Nying-po, being the root and basis of all, invisible and incomprehensible to human eye and intellect, it can reflect only its reflection—not Itself. Thus that reflection will be mirrored like the moon in tranquil and clear water only in the passionless Dharmakâya intellect, and will be distorted by the flitting image of everything perceived in a mind that is itself liable to be disturbed. ^[SEP]In short, this doctrine is that of the Râja-Yoga in its practice of the two kinds of the Samâdhi state; one of the “Paths” leading to the sphere of bliss (Sukhâvatî or Devachan), where man enjoys perfect, unalloyed happiness, but is yet still connected with personal existence; and the other the Path that leads to entire emancipation from the worlds of illusion, self, and unreality. The first

one is open to all and is reached by merit simply; the second—a hundredfold more rapid—is reached through knowledge (Initiation). Thus the followers of the Prasanga School are nearer to Esoteric Buddhism than are the Yogacharyâs; for their views are those of the most secret Schools, and only the echo of these doctrines is heard in the [texts by] Jam-yang-shay-ba‡ and other works in public

* Ibid. p. 44.^[1]_[SEP]

† Nirmânakâya (also Nirvânakâya, vulg.) is the body or Self “with remains,” or the influence of terrestrial attributes, however spiritualized, clinging yet to that Self. An Initiate in Dharmakâya, or in Nirvâna “without remains,” is the Jîvanmukta, the Perfect Initiate, who separates his Higher Self entirely from his body during Samâdhi. ^[1]_[SEP]‡ [H.P.B. is possibly referring to his textbook Great Exposition of the Tenets; commented on and partially translated by Jeffrey Hopkins in his Meditation on Emptiness, London, Wisdom Pubs., 1983.-Compiler.]

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circulation and use. For instance, the unreality of two out of the three divisions of time is given in public works, namely (a) that there is neither past nor future, both of these divisions being correlative to the present; and (b) that the reality of things can never be sensed or perceived except by him who has obtained the Dharmakâya body; here again is a difficulty, since this body “without remains” carries the Initiate to full Parinirvâna, if we accept the exoteric explanation verbally, and can therefore neither sense nor perceive. But evidently our Orientalists do not feel the caveat in such incongruities, and they proceed to speculate without pausing to reflect over it. Literature on Mysticism being enormous, and Russia, owing to the free intercourse with the Buriats, Shamans, and Mongolians, having alone purchased whole libraries on Tibet, scholars ought to know better by this time. It suffices to read, however, what Csoma wrote on the origin of the Kâla Chakra System,* or Wassilyev on Buddhism, to make one give up every hope of seeing them go below the rind of the “forbidden fruit.” When Schlagintweit is found saying that Tibetan Mysticism is not Yoga— . . . [that] abstract devotion by which supernatural powers are acquired,† as Yoga is defined by Wilson, but that it is closely related to Siberian Shamanism, and is “almost identical with the Tântrika ritual”; and that the Tibetan Zung is the “Dhâranîs,” and the Gyut only the Tantras—pre-Christian Tantra being judged by the ritual of the modern

Tântrikas—one seems almost justified in suspecting our materialistic Orientalists of acting as the best friends and allies of the missionaries. Whatever is not known to our geographers seems to be a non-existent locality. Thus: ^[L]_[SEP] Mysticism . . . is reported to have originated in the fabulous country ^[L]_[SEP]

* The “Sacred” Books of Dus-Kyi Khorlo (“Time Circle”). See Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. II, 1833, pp. 57-59. These works were abandoned to the Sikkim Dugpas, from the time of Tsong-kha-pa's reform. ^[L]_[SEP]

† Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms (in an article on “Yoga” by H. W. Wilson) quoted in Buddhism in Tibet, p. 47 ^[L]_[SEP].

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Sambhala. Csoma, from careful investigations, places this [fabulous?] country beyond the Sir Deriáu [Yaxartes] between 45o and 50o north latitude. It was first known in India in the year 965 A.D.; and it was introduced . . . into Tibet from India, via Kashmir, in the year 1025 A.D.* “It” meaning the “Dus-kyi Khorlo,” or Tibetan Mysticism. A system as old as man, known in India and practised before Europe had become a continent, “Was first known,” we are told, only nine or ten centuries ago! The text of its books in its present form may have “originated” even later, for there are numerous such texts that have been tampered with by sects to suit the fancies of each. But who has read the original book on Dus-Kyi Khorlo, re-written by Tsong-kha-pa, with his Commentaries? Considering that this grand Reformer burnt every book on Sorcery on which he could lay his hands in 1387, and that he has left a whole library of his own works—not a tenth part of which has ever been made known—such statements as those above quoted are, to say the least, premature. The idea is also cherished—from a happy hypothesis, offered by Abbé Huc—that Tsong-kha-pa derived his wisdom and acquired his extraordinary powers from his intercourse with a stranger from the West, “remarkable for a long nose.” This stranger is believed by the good Abbé “to have been a European missionary”; hence the remarkable resemblance of the religious ritual in Tibet to the Roman Catholic service. The sanguine “Lama of Jehovah” does not say, however, who were the five foreigners who appeared in Tibet in the year 381 of our era, to disappear as suddenly and mysteriously as they came, after leaving with King Thothori-Nyan-tsan instructions how to use certain things in a casket that “had fallen from heaven” in his presence precisely fifty years

before, or in the year A. D. 331.†^[L]_[SEP]

* Buddhism in Tibet, pp. 47, 48.

† Buddhism in Tibet, pp. 63, 64. The objects found in the casket, as enumerated in the exoteric legend, are of course symbolical. They may be found mentioned in the Kanjur. They were said to be: (1) two hands joined; (2) a miniature Chorten (Stupa, or reliquary); (3) a talisman with “O` mani padme hum” inscribed on it; (4) a religious book, Zamatog (“A constructed vehicle”).

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There is generally a hopeless confusion about Eastern dates among European scholars, but nowhere is this so great as in the case of Tibetan Buddhism. Thus, while some, correctly enough, accept the seventh century as the date of the introduction of Buddhism, there are others—such as Lassen and Koeppung, for instance—who show on good authority, the one, the construction of a Buddhist monastery on the slopes of the Kailâsa Range so far back as the year 137 B. C.,* and the other, Buddhism established in and north of the Punjab, as early as the year 292 B. C. The difference though trifling—only just one thousand years—is nevertheless puzzling. But even this is easily explained on Esoteric grounds. Buddhism—the veiled Esotericism of Buddha—was established and took root in the seventh century of the Christian era; while true Esoteric Buddhism, or the kernel, the very spirit of Tathâgata's doctrines, was brought to the place of its birth, the cradle of humanity, by the chosen Arhats of Buddha, who were sent to find for it a secure refuge, as the Sage had perceived the dangers ever since he had entered upon Thonglam (“the Path of seeing,” or clairvoyance).†

Amidst populations deeply steeped in Sorcery the attempt proved a failure; and it was not until the School of the “Doctrine of the Heart” had merged with its predecessor, established ages earlier on the slope facing Western Tibet, that Buddhism was finally engrafted, with its two distinct Schools—the Esoteric and the exoteric divisions—in the land of the Bon-pa.^[L]_[SEP]

^[L]_[SEP]* Alterthumskunde, ii. 1072.

^[L]_[SEP]† [The third of five stages on the Path. See pp. 104-19 of The Opening of the Wisdom Eye, by Tenzin Gyatsho, the XIVth Dalai Lama. Wheaton Theosophical Publishing House, 1972.—Compiler.]

THE “DOCTRINE OF THE EYE” & THE “DOCTRINE OF THE HEART,” OR THE “HEART'S SEAL”

Prof. Albrecht Weber was right when he declared that the Northern Buddhists

Alone possess these [Buddhist] Scriptures complete.* For, while the Southern Buddhists have no idea of the existence of an Esoteric Doctrine—enshrined like a pearl within the shell of every religion—the Chinese and the Tibetans have preserved numerous records of the fact. Degenerate, fallen as is now the Doctrine publicly preached by Gautama, it is yet preserved in those monasteries in China that are placed beyond the reach of visitors. And though for over two millennia every new “reformer,” taking something out of the original, has replaced it by some speculation of his own, still truth lingers even now among the masses. But it is only in the Trans-Himalayan fastnesses—loosely called Tibet—in the most inaccessible spots of desert and mountain, that the Esoteric “Good Law”—the “Heart’s Seal”—lives to the present day in all its pristine purity. [SEP] Was Emanuel Swedenborg wrong when he remarked of the forgotten, long-lost Word:

Seek for it in China; peradventure you may find it in Great Tartary.†

He had obtained this information, he tells his readers, from certain “Spirits,” who told him that they performed their worship according to this (lost) ancient Word. On this it was remarked in *Isis Unveiled* that other students of occult Sciences have had more than the word of “certain spirits” to rely upon in this special case—they have seen the books that contain the “Word.”‡ Perchance the names of those [SEP]

* [The History of Indian Literature, trs. by John Mann and Theodor Zachariae, London: Trübner & Co., 1882, p. 288.]

† [See *The Apocalypse Revealed*, trs. from Latin by Rev. John Whitehead, Vol. I, ch. I, verse 4, note 11; p. 38 in the Standard Ed. of the American Swedenborg Foundation, New York, 1947.] [SEP]‡ Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 470. [SEP]

“Spirits” who visited the great Swedish Theosophist were Eastern. The word

of a man of such undeniable and recognized integrity, of one whose learning in Mathematics, Astronomy, the natural Sciences and Philosophy was far in advance of his age, cannot be trifled with or rejected as unceremoniously as if it were the statement of a modern Theosophist; further, he claimed to pass at will into that state when the Inner Self frees itself entirely from every physical sense, and lives and breathes in a world where every secret of Nature is an open book to the Soul-eye.* Unfortunately two-thirds of his public writings are also allegorical in one sense; and, as they have been accepted literally, criticism has not spared the great Swedish Seer any more than other Seers. Having taken a panoramic view of the hidden Sciences and Magic with their Adepts in Europe, Eastern Initiates must now be mentioned. If the presence of Esotericism in the Sacred Scriptures of the West only now begins to be suspected, after nearly two thousand years of blind faith in their verbatim wisdom, the same may well be granted as to the Sacred Books of the East. Therefore neither the Indian nor the Buddhist system can be understood without a key, nor can the study of comparative religion become a “Science” until the symbols of every Religion yield their final secrets. At the best such a study will remain a loss of time, a playing at hide-and-seek. On the authority of a Japanese Encyclopaedia, Rémusat† shows the Buddha, before His death, committing the secrets of His system to His disciple, Kâsyapa, to whom alone was entrusted the sacred keeping of the Esoteric interpretation. It is called in China Ching-fa-yin-Tsang (“the Mystery of the Eye of the Good Doctrine”). To any student of Buddhist Esotericism the term, “the Mystery of the “Eye,” would show the absence of any Esotericism. Had the word “Heart” stood in its

* Unless one obtains exact information and the right method, one’s visions, however correct and true in Soul-life, will ever fail to get photographed in our human memory, and certain cells of the brain are sure to play havoc with our remembrances.

† [See p. 249: Foe-Koue Ki ou Relation des Royaumes Bouddhiques. . . by M. Abel Remusat. Paris, L’Imprimerie Royale, 1836.]

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place, then it would have meant what it now only professes to convey. The “Eye Doctrine” means dogma and dead-letter form, church ritualism intended for those who are content with exoteric formulae. The “Heart Doctrine,” or the “Heart’s Seal” (the Sin Yin) is the only real one. This may be found

corroborated by Hiuen Tsang. In his translation of Mahâ-Prajñâ-Pâramitâ (Ta-poh-je-King), in one hundred and twenty volumes, it is stated that it was Buddha's "favourite disciple Ananda," who, after his great Master had gone into Nirvâna, was commissioned by Kâsyapa to promulgate "the Eye of the Doctrine," the "Heart" of the Law having been left with the Arhats alone.^[L]_[SEP] The essential difference that exists between the two—the "Eye" and the "Heart," or the outward form and the hidden meaning, the cold metaphysics and the Divine Wisdom—is clearly demonstrated in several volumes on "Chinese Buddhism," written by sundry missionaries. Having lived for years in China, they still know no more than they have learned from pretentious schools calling themselves esoteric, yet freely supplying the open enemies of their faith with professedly ancient manuscripts and esoteric works! This ludicrous contradiction between profession and practice has never, as it seems, struck any of the western and reverend historians of other people's secret tenets. Thus many esoteric schools are mentioned in Chinese Buddhism by the Rev. Joseph Edkins, who believes quite sincerely that he has made "a minute examination" of the secret tenets of Buddhists whose works "were until lately inaccessible in their original form." **It really will not be saying too much to state at once that the genuine Esoteric literature is "inaccessible" to this day,** and that the respectable gentleman who was inspired to state that. . . it does not appear that there was any secret doctrine which those who knew it would not divulge, made a great mistake if he ever believed in what he says on page 161 of his work. Let him know at once that all those Yu-luh ("Records of the Sayings") of celebrated teachers are simply blinds, as complete—if not more so—than those in the Purânas of the Brâhmanas. It is useless to enumerate an endless string of the finest Oriental scholars or to bring forward the researches

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of Rémusat, Burnouf, Koeppen, St. Hilaire, and St. Julian, who are credited with having exposed to view the ancient Hindu world, by revealing the sacred and secret books of Buddhism: the world that they reveal has never been veiled. The mistakes of all the Orientalists may be judged by the mistake of one of the most popular, if not the greatest among them all—Prof. Max Müller. It is made with reference to what he laughingly translates as the "god Who" (Ka).

. . . the authors of the Brâhmanas had so completely broken with the past,

that, forgetful of the poetical character of the hymns, and the yearning of the poets after the Unknown God, they exalted the interrogative pronoun itself into a deity, and acknowledged a god Ka (or Who?) . . . wherever interrogative verses occur the author states that Ka is Prajâpati, or the Lord of Creatures . . . Nor did they stop here. Some of the hymns in which the interrogative pronoun occurred were called Kadvat, i. e., having Kad or Quid. But soon a new adjective was formed, and not only the hymns, but the sacrifice also, offered to the god were called Kaya, or “Who”-ish. . . . At the time of Pânini this word had acquired such legitimacy as to call for a separate rule explaining its formation . . . The Commentator here explains Ka by Brahman.*

Had the commentator explained It even by Parabrahman he would have been still more in the right than he was by rendering It as “Brahman.” One fails to see why the secret and sacred Mystery-Name of the highest, sexless, formless Spirit, the Absolute—Whom no one would have dared to classify with the rest of the manifested Deities, or even to name during the primitive nomenclature of the symbolical Pantheon, should not be expressed by an interrogative pronoun. Is it those who belong to the most anthropomorphic Religion in the world who have a right to take ancient Philosophers to task for even an exaggerated religious awe and veneration? [SEP] But we are now concerned with Buddhism. Its Esotericism and oral instruction, which is written down and preserved in single copies by the highest chiefs in genuine Esoteric Schools, is shown by the author of San-kiau-yi-su. Contrasting Bodhidharma with Buddha, he exclaims: [SEP]

[SEP]* [A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, pp. 433-34. London, Wms. & Norgate, 1859.] [SEP]

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. . . “Julai” (Tathâgata), taught great truths and the causes of things. He became the instructor of men and Devas. He saved multitudes, and spoke the contents of more than five hundred works. Hence arose the Kiau-men, or exoteric branch of the system, and it was believed to be the tradition of the words of Buddha. Bodhidharma brought from the Western heaven [Shamballa] the “seal of truth” (true seal), and opened the fountain of contemplation in the East. He pointed directly to Buddha's heart and nature, swept away the parasitic and alien growth of book instruction, and thus established the Tsung-

men, or esoteric branch of the system, containing the tradition of the heart of Buddha.*

A few remarks made by the author of Chinese Buddhism throw a flood of light on the universal misconceptions of Orientalists in general, and of the missionaries in the “lands of the Gentiles” in particular. They appeal very forcibly to the intuition of Theosophists—more particularly of those in India. The sentences to be noticed are italicized.

The common [Chinese] word for the esoteric schools is dan, the Sanskrit Dhyâna. . . . Orthodox Buddhism has in China slowly but steadily become heterodox. The Buddhism of books and ancient traditions has become the Buddhism of mystic contemplation. . . . The history of ancient schools springing up long ago in the Buddhist communities of India, can now be only very partially recovered. Possibly some light may be thrown back by China upon the religious history of the country, from which Buddhism came.† In no part of the story is aid to the recovery of this lost knowledge more likely to be found than in the accounts of the patriarchs, the line of whom was completed by Bodhidharma. In seeking the best explanation of the Chinese and Japanese narrative of the patriarchs, and the seven Buddhas terminating in Gautama, or Shâkyamuni, it is important to know the Jain traditions as they were early in the sixth century of our era, when the Patriarch Bodhidharma removed to China. . . .^[L]_[SEP]

* Chinese Buddhism, p. 158. The Rev. Joseph Edkins either ignores, or—which is more probable—is utterly ignorant of the real existence of such Schools, and judges by the Chinese travesties of these, calling such Esotericism “heterodox Buddhism.” And so it is, in one sense.

^[L]_[SEP]† That country—India—has lost the records of such Schools and their teachings only so far as the general public, and especially the inappreciative Western Orientalists, are concerned. It has preserved them in full in some Mathams (refuges for mystic contemplation). But it may perhaps be better to seek them with, and from, their rightful owners, the so-called “mythical” Adepts, or Mahâtmas.^[L]_[SEP]

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In tracing the rise of the various schools of esoteric Buddhism it must be kept in mind that a principle somewhat similar to the dogma of apostolical succession belongs to them all. They all profess to derive their doctrines through a succession of teachers, each instructed personally by his predecessor, till the time of Bodhidharma, and so further up in the series to Shakyamuni

himself and the earlier Buddhas. *

It is complained further on, and is mentioned as a falling away from strict orthodox Buddhism, that the Lamas of Tibet are received in Peking with the utmost respect by the Emperor. [L] [SEP] The following passages, taken from different parts of the book, summarise Mr. Edkin's views:

Hermits are not uncommonly met with in the vicinity of large Buddhist temples ... their hair being allowed to grow unshorn. . . . The doctrine of metempsychosis is rejected. . . Buddhism [is] one form of Pantheism on the ground that the doctrine of metempsychosis makes all nature instinct with life, and that that life is the Deity assuming different forms of personality, that Deity not being a self-conscious, free-acting First-cause, but an all-pervading spirit. The esoteric Buddhists of China, keeping rigidly to their one doctrine, † say nothing of the metempsychosis, . . . or any other of the more material parts of the Buddhist system. . . . The Western paradise promised to the worshippers of Amida-Buddha is . . . inconsistent with the doctrine of Nirvâna [?]. ‡ It promises immortality instead of annihilation. The great antiquity of this school is evident from the early date of the translation of the Amida Sūtra, which came from the hands of Kumârajîva, and of the Wu-liang-sheu-king, dating from [L] [SEP]

[L] [SEP] * Chinese Buddhism, pp. 155-159. [L] [SEP] † They certainly reject most emphatically the popular theory of the transmigration of human entities or Souls into animals, but not the evolution of men from animals—so far, at least, as their lower principles are concerned.

[L] [SEP] ‡ It is quite consistent, on the contrary, when explained in the light of the Esoteric Doctrine. The “Western paradise,” or Western heaven, is no fiction located in transcendental space. It is a bona-fide locality in the mountains, or, to be more correct, one encircled in a desert within mountains. Hence it is assigned for the residence of those students of Esoteric Wisdom—disciples of Buddha—who have attained the rank of Lohans and Anâgâmins (Adepts). It is called “Western” simply from geographical considerations; and “the great iron mountain girdle” that surrounds the Avichi, and the seven Lokas that encircle the “Western paradise” are a very exact representation of well-known localities and things to the Eastern student of Occultism. [L] [SEP]

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the Han dynasty. Its extent of influence is seen in the attachment of the Tibetans and Mongols to the worship of this Buddha, and in the fact that the name of this fictitious personage [?] is more commonly heard in the daily conversation of the Chinese people than that of the historical Buddha

Shâkyamuni.*

We fear the learned writer is on a false track as to Nirvâna and Amita-Buddha. However, here we have the evidence of a missionary to show that there are several schools of Esoteric Buddhism in the Celestial Empire. When the misuse of dogmatical orthodox Buddhist Scriptures had reached its climax, and the true spirit of the Buddha's Philosophy was nearly lost, several reformers appeared from India, who established an oral teaching. Such were Bodhidharma and Nâgârjuna, the authors of the most important works of the contemplative School in China during the first centuries of our era. It is known, moreover, as is said in Chinese Buddhism, that Bodhidharma became the chief founder of the Esoteric Schools, which were divided into five principal branches. The data given are correct enough, but every conclusion, without one single exception, is wrong. It was said in *Isis Unveiled* that—

Buddha teaches the doctrine of a new birth as plainly as Jesus does. Desiring to break with the ancient Mysteries, to which it was impossible to admit the ignorant masses, the Hindu reformer, though generally silent upon more than one secret dogma, clearly states his thought in several passages. Thus, he says: "Some people are born again; evil-doers go to hell [Avichi]; righteous people go to heaven [Devachan]; those who are free from all worldly desires enter Nirvâna" (*Dhammapada*, 126). Elsewhere Buddha states that it is better to believe in a future life, in which happiness or misery can be felt: for if the heart believes therein "it will abandon sin and act virtuously; and even if there is no resurrection [rebirth], such a life will bring a good name, and the reward of men. But those who believe in extinction at death will not fail to commit any sin that they may choose because of their disbelief in a future."†

How is immortality, then, "inconsistent with the doctrine of Nirvâna"? The above are only a few of Buddha's openly-expressed thoughts to his chosen Arhats; the great Saint said^[SEP]

* *Op. Cit.*, pp. 166-67; 171.^[SEP]† *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, p. 566, quoting from Alabaster's *The Wheel of the Law*, p. 42.^[SEP]

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much more. As a comment upon the mistaken views held in our century by the Orientalists, "who vainly try to fathom Tathâgata's thoughts," and those of

Brâhmans, “who repudiate the great Teacher to this day,” here are some original thoughts expressed in relation to the Buddha and the study of the Secret Sciences. They are from a work written in Chinese by a Tibetan, and published in the monastery of Tientai for circulation among the Buddhists who live in foreign lands, and are in danger of being spoiled by missionaries, as the author truly says, every convert being not only “spoiled” for his own creed, but being also a sorry acquisition for Christianity. A translation of a few passages, kindly made from that work for the present volumes is now given.

No profane ears having heard the mighty Chau-yan [secret and enlightening precepts] of Wu-Wei-chen-jen [Buddha within Buddha],* of our beloved Lord and Bodhisattva, how can one tell what his thoughts really were? The holy Sang-gyas-Panchen† never offered an insight into the One Reality to the unreformed [uninitiated] Bhikkus. Few are those even among the Tu-fon [Tibetans] who knew it; as for the Tsung-men‡ Schools, they are going with every day more down hill..Not even the Fa-hsiang-Tsung can give one the wisdom taught in real Naljor-chod-pa [Sanskrit:| Yogacharyâ]: . . . it is all “Eye” Doctrine, and no more. The loss of a restraining guidance is felt, since the Tch'-an-si [teachers] of inward meditation [self-contemplation or Tchung-kwan] have become rare, and the Good Law is replaced by idol-worship [Siang-kyan]. It is of this [idol-or image-worship] that the Barbarians [Western people] have heard, and know nothing of Bas-pa-Dharma [the secret Dharma or doctrine]. Why has truth to hide like a tortoise within its shell? Because^[SEP]

* The word is translated by the Orientalists as “true man without a position,” (?) which is very misleading. It simply means the true inner man, or Ego, “Buddha within Buddha” meaning that there was a Gautama inwardly as well as outwardly.^[SEP]

† One of the titles of Gautama Buddha in Tibet.^[SEP]

‡ The “Esoteric” Schools, or sects, of which there are many in China.^[SEP]§ A school of contemplation founded by Hiuen-Tsang, the traveller, nearly extinct. Fa-hsiang-Tsung means “the School that unveils the inner nature of things.”^[SEP]|| Esoteric, or hidden, teaching of Yoga (Chinese: Yogi-mi-kean).

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it is now found to have become like the Lama’s tonsure knife,* a weapon too dangerous to use even for the Lanoo. Therefore no one can be entrusted with the knowledge [Secret Science] before his time. The Chagpa-Thog-med have become rare, and the best have retired to Tushita the Blessed.†

Further on, a man seeking to master the mysteries of Esotericism before he had been declared by the initiated Tch'-an-si (teachers) to be ready to receive them, is likened to one who would, without a lantern and on a dark night, proceed to a place full of scorpions, determined to feel on the ground for a needle his neighbour has dropped.

Again:

He who would acquire the Sacred Knowledge should, before he goes any farther “trim his lamp of inner understanding,” and then “with the help of such good light” use his meritorious actions as a dust-cloth to remove every impurity from his mystic mirror,‡ so that he should be^[L]_{SEP}

* The “tonsure knife” is made of meteoric iron, and is used for the purpose of cutting off the “vow-lock,” or hair from the novice's head during his first ordination. It has a double-edged blade, is sharp as a razor, and lies concealed within a hollow handle of horn. By touching a spring the blade jerks out like a flash of lightning, and recedes back with the same rapidity. A great dexterity is required in using it without wounding the head of the young Gelong and Gelong-ma (candidates to become priests and nuns) during the preliminary rites, which are public.

† Chagpa-Thog-med is the Tibetan name of Âryâsanga, the founder of the Yogacharyâ or Naljorchodpa School. This Sage and Initiate is said to have been taught “Wisdom” by Maitreya Buddha Himself, the Buddha of the Sixth Race, at Tushita (a celestial region presided over by Him), and as having received from Him the five books of Champai-chos-nga. The Secret Doctrine teaches, however, that he came from Dejung, or Sambhala, called the “source of happiness” (“wisdom-acquired”) and declared by some Orientalists to be a “fabulous” place.

‡ It may not be, perhaps, amiss to remind the reader of the fact that the “mirror” was a part of the symbolism of the Thesmophoria, a portion of the Eleusinian Mysteries; and that it was used in the search for Atmu, the “Hidden One,” or “Self.” In his excellent paper on the above-named mysteries, Dr. Alexander Wilder of New York says: . . . “despite the assertion of Herodotus and others that the Bacchic Mysteries were Egyptian, there exists strong probability that they came originally from India, and were Saivite or Buddhistical. Coré-Persephoneia was but the

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enabled to see in its lustre the faithful reflection of Self. . . . First, this; then Tong-pa-nyi,* lastly; Sammâ Sambuddha.†

In Chinese Buddhism [pp. 163-64] a corroboration of these statements is to be found in the Aphorisms of Lin-tsi:

Within the body which admits sensations, acquires knowledge, thinks, and acts, there is the “true man without a position” Wu-wei-chen-jen. He makes himself clearly visible; not the thinnest separating film hides him. Why do you

not recognise him? . . . If the mind does not come to conscious existence, there is deliverance everywhere. . . . What is Buddha? Ans. A mind pure and at rest. What is the Law? Ans. A mind clear and enlightened. What is Tau? Ans. In every place absence of impediments and pure enlightenment. These three are one.‡

The reverend author of Chinese Buddhism makes merry over the symbolism of Buddhist discipline. Yet the self-inflicted “slaps on the cheek” and “blows under the ribs” find their pendants in the mortifications of the body and self-flagellation —”the discipline of the scourge”—of the Christian monks, from the first centuries of Christianity down to our own day. But then the said author is a Protestant, who substitutes for mortification and discipline—good living and comfort. The sentence in the Lin-tsi,^[SEP]—————^[SEP]

goddess Paraśu-pani or Bhavânî, the patroness of the Thugs, called also Gorée; and Zagreus is from Chakra, a country extending from ocean to ocean. If this is a Turanian or Tartar story, we can easily recognize the 'Horns' as the crescent worn by Lama-priests: and translating god-names as merely sacerdotal designations assume the whole legend [the fable of Dionysus-Zagreus] to be based on a tale of Lama-succession and transmigration. . . . The whole story of Orpheus ... has a Hindu ring all through.” [Quoted on p. xv fn. in *Eleusinian & Bacchic Mysteries* by Thomas Taylor. Wizards Bookshelf, Reprint, 1980.]

The tale of “Lama-succession and transmigration” did not originate with the Lamas, who date themselves only so far back as the seventh century, but with the Chaldeans and the Brâhmans, still earlier.

* The state of absolute freedom from any sin or desire.

† The state during which an Adept sees the long series of his past births, and lives through all his previous incarnations in this and the other worlds. (See the admirable description in *The Light of Asia*, Book VII, p. 166, 1884 ed.).

‡ [See *The Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Lin-chi . . .* tr. by R.F. Sasaki. Kyoto, Institute for Zen Studies, 1975.]^[SEP]

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The “true man, without a position,” Wu-wei-chen-jen, is wrapped in a prickly shell, like the chestnut. He cannot be approached. This is Buddha—the

Buddha within you, is laughed at. Truly an infant cannot understand the seven enigmas! *^[L]_[SEP]

* [Loc. cit.]^[L]_[SEP]