

COMMENTARIES

ON THE SEVEN STANZAS AND THEIR TERMS, ACCORDING TO THEIR NUMERATION, IN STANZAS AND ŚLOKAS

STANZA I

THE NIGHT OF THE UNIVERSE

1. THE ETERNAL PARENT (Space), WRAPPED IN HER EVER-INVISIBLE ROBES, HAD SLUMBERED ONCE AGAIN FOR SEVEN ETERNITIES (*a*).

The “Parent Space” is the eternal, ever present cause of all — the incomprehensible DEITY, whose “invisible robes” are the mystic root of all matter, and of the Universe. Space is the *one eternal thing* that we can most easily imagine, immovable in its abstraction and uninfluenced by either the presence or absence in it of an objective Universe. It is without dimension, in every sense, and self-existent. Spirit is the first differentiation from THAT, the causeless cause of both Spirit and Matter. It is, as taught in the esoteric catechism, neither limitless void, nor conditioned fullness, but both. It was and ever will be. (See Proem pp. 2 *et seq.*)

Thus, the “Robes” stand for the noumenon of undifferentiated Cosmic Matter. It is not matter as we know it, but the spiritual essence of matter, and is co-eternal and even one with Space in its abstract sense. Root-nature is also the source of the subtle invisible properties in visible matter. It is the Soul, so to say, of the ONE infinite Spirit. The Hindus call it Mūlaprakṛiti, and say that it is the primordial substance, which is the basis of the Upādhi or vehicle of every phenomenon, whether physical, mental or psychic. It is the source from which Ākāśa radiates.

(a) By the Seven “Eternities,” aeons or periods are meant. The word “Eternity,” as understood in Christian theology, has no meaning to the Asiatic ear, except in its application to the ONE existence; nor is the term sempiternity, the eternal only in futurity, anything better than a misnomer.¹ Such words do not and cannot exist in philosophical metaphysics, and were unknown till the advent of ecclesiastical Christianity.

The Seven Eternities meant are the seven periods, or a period answering in its duration to the seven periods, of a Manvantara, and extending throughout a Mahā-Kalpa or the “Great Age” — 100 years of Brahmā — making a total of 311,040,000,000,000 of years; each year of Brahmā being composed of 360 “days,” and of the same number of “nights” of Brahmā (reckoning by the Chandrayāna or lunar year); and a “Day of Brahmā” consisting of 4,320,000,000 of mortal years.

These “Eternities” belong to the most secret calculations, in which, in order to arrive at the true total, every figure must be 7^x (7 to the power of x); x varying according to the nature of the cycle in the subjective or real world; and every figure or number relating to, or representing all the different cycles from the greatest to the smallest — in the objective or unreal world — must necessarily be multiples of seven.

The key to this cannot be given, for herein lies the mystery of esoteric calculations, and for the purposes of ordinary calculation it has no sense. “The number seven,” says the Kabala, “is the great number of the Divine Mysteries”; number ten is that of all human knowledge (Pythagorean decade); 1,000 is the number ten to the third power, and therefore the number 7,000 is also symbolical.

In the Secret Doctrine the figure and number 4 are the male symbol only on the highest plane of abstraction; on the plane of matter the 3 is the masculine and the 4 the female: the upright and the horizontal in the fourth stage of symbolism, when the symbols became the glyphs of the generative powers on the physical plane.

¹ It is stated in Book II, ch. viii, of *Vishṇu-Purāṇa*: “By immortality is meant existence to the end of the Kalpa”; and Wilson, the translator, remarks in a footnote: “This, according to the *Vedas*, is all that is to be understood of the immortality [or eternity] of the gods; they perish at the end of universal dissolution [or Pralaya].” [Wilson, Vol. II, p. 269, footnote 2.] And Esoteric philosophy says: They “perish” not, but are *reabsorbed*.

STANZA I — *Continued*

2. TIME WAS NOT, FOR IT LAY ASLEEP IN THE INFINITE BOSOM OF DURATION (*a*).

TIME AND UNIVERSAL MIND

(*a*) Time is only an illusion produced by the succession of our states of consciousness as we travel through eternal duration, and it does not exist where no consciousness exists in which the illusion can be produced; but “lies asleep.” The present is only a mathematical line which divides that part of eternal duration which we call the future, from that part which we call the past.

Nothing on earth has real duration, for nothing remains without change — or the same — for the billionth part of a second; and the sensation we have of the actuality of the division of “time” known as the present, comes from the blurring of that momentary glimpse, or succession of glimpses, of things that our senses give us, as those things pass from the region of ideals which we call the future, to the region of memories that we name the past.

In the same way we experience a sensation of duration in the case of the instantaneous electric spark, by reason of the blurred and continuing impression on the retina. The real person or thing does not consist solely of what is seen at any particular moment, but is composed of the sum of all its various and changing conditions from its appearance in the material form to its disappearance from the earth.

It is these “sum-totals” that exist from eternity in the “future,” and pass by degrees through matter, to exist for eternity in the “past.” No one could say that a bar of metal dropped into the sea came into existence as it left the air, and ceased to exist as it entered the water, and that the bar itself consisted only of that cross section thereof which at any given moment coincided with the mathematical plane that separates, and, at the same time, joins, the atmosphere and the ocean.

Even so of persons and things, which, dropping out of the to-be into the has-been, out of the future into the past — present momentarily to our senses a cross section, as it were, of their total selves, as they pass through time and space (as matter) on their way from one eternity to another: and these two constitute that “duration” in which alone anything has true existence, were our senses but able to cognize it there.

STANZA I — Continued

3. . . . UNIVERSAL MIND WAS NOT, FOR THERE WERE NO AH-HI (celestial beings) TO CONTAIN (hence to manifest) IT (*a*).

(*a*) Mind is a name given to the sum of the states of Consciousness grouped under Thought, Will, and Feeling. During deep sleep, ideation ceases on the physical plane, and memory is in abeyance; thus for the time-being “Mind is not,” because the organ, through which the Ego manifests ideation and memory on the material plane, has temporarily ceased to function.

A noumenon can become a phenomenon on any plane of existence only by manifesting on that plane through an appropriate basis or vehicle; and during the long night of rest called PrĀlaya, when all the existences are dissolved, the “UNIVERSAL MIND” remains as a permanent possibility of mental action, or as that abstract absolute thought, of which mind is the concrete relative manifestation.

The AH-HI (Dhyāni-Chohans) are the collective hosts of spiritual beings — the Angelic Hosts of Christianity, the Elōhīm and “Messengers” of the Jews — who are the vehicle for the manifestation of the divine or universal thought and will. They are the Intelligent Forces that give to and enact in Nature her “laws,” while themselves acting according to laws imposed upon them in a similar manner by still higher Powers; but they are not “the personifications” of the powers of Nature, as erroneously thought. This hierarchy of spiritual Beings, through which the Universal Mind comes into action, is like an army — a “Host,” truly — by means of which the fighting power of a nation manifests itself, and which is composed of army corps, divisions, brigades, regiments, and so forth, each with its separate individuality or life, and its limited freedom of action and limited responsibilities; each contained in a larger individuality, to which its own interests are subservient, and each containing lesser individualities in itself.

STANZA I — Continued

4. THE SEVEN WAYS TO BLISS (Moksha² or Nirvāṇa) WERE NOT (a). THE GREAT CAUSES OF MISERY (Nidāna³ and Māyā) WERE NOT, FOR THERE WAS NO ONE TO PRODUCE AND GET ENSNARED BY THEM (b).

THE CAUSES OF BEING

(a) There are seven “Paths” or “Ways” to the bliss of Nonexistence, which is absolute Being, Existence, and Consciousness. They were not, because the Universe was, so far, empty, and existed only in the Divine Thought. For it is

(b) The twelve Nidānas or causes of being. Each is the effect of its antecedent cause, and a cause, in its turn, to its successor; the sum total of the Nidānas being based on the four truths, a doctrine especially characteristic of the Hīnayāna System.⁴ They belong to the theory of the stream of catenated law which produces merit and demerit, and finally brings Karma into full sway.

It is based upon the great truth that reincarnation is to be dreaded, as existence in this world only entails upon man suffering, misery and pain; death itself being unable to deliver man from it, since death is merely the door through which he passes to another life on earth after a little rest on its threshold — Devachan. The Hīnayāna System, or School of the “Little Vehicle,” is of very ancient growth; while the Mahāyāna is of a later period, having originated after the death of Buddha.

Yet the tenets of the latter are as old as the hills that have contained such schools from time immemorial, and the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Schools (the latter, that of the “Great Vehicle”) both teach the same doctrine in reality. *Yāna*, or Vehicle (in Sanskrit, *Vāhana*) is a mystic expression, both “vehicles” inculcating that man may escape the sufferings of rebirths and even the false bliss of Devachan, by obtaining Wisdom and Knowledge, which alone can dispel the fruits of Illusion and Ignorance.

² Nippang in China; Neibbān in Burma; or Moksha in India.

³ The Twelve Nidānas (in Tibetan *Ten-brel chug-nyi*) the chief causes of existence, effects generated by a concatenation of causes produced (see Comment. II). [See (b) in commentary above and (a) commentary on śloka 7 below.]

⁴ See V. P. Vasil’ev (or Wassilief), *Der Buddhismus*, 1860, pp. 97 *et seq.*

Māyā or illusion is an element which enters into all finite things, for everything that exists has only a relative, not an absolute reality, since the appearance which the hidden noumenon assumes for any observer depends upon his power of cognition. To the untrained eye of the savage, a painting is at first an unmeaning confusion of streaks and daubs of color, while an educated eye sees instantly a face or a landscape. Nothing is permanent except the one hidden absolute existence which contains in itself the noumena of all realities. The existences belonging to every plane of being, up to the highest Dhyāni-Chohans, are, in degree, of the nature of shadows cast by a magic lantern on a colorless screen; but all things are relatively real, for the cognizer is also a reflection, and the things cognized are therefore as real to him as himself.

Whatever reality things possess must be looked for in them before or after they have passed like a flash through the material world; but we cannot cognize any such existence directly, so long as we have sense-instruments which bring only material existence into the field of our consciousness.

Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, our only realities. As we rise in the scale of development we perceive that during the stages through which we have passed we mistook shadows for realities, and the upward progress of the Ego is a series of progressive awakenings, each advance bringing with it the idea that now, at last, we have reached “reality”; but only when we shall have reached the absolute Consciousness, and blended our own with it, shall we be free from the delusions produced by Māyā.

STANZA I — *Continued*

5. DARKNESS ALONE FILLED THE BOUNDLESS ALL (*a*), FOR FATHER, MOTHER AND SON WERE ONCE MORE ONE, AND THE SON HAD NOT AWAKENED YET FOR THE NEW WHEEL⁵ AND HIS PILGRIMAGE THEREON (*b*).

WHAT IS DARKNESS IN PHILOSOPHY?

(*a*) “Darkness is Father-Mother: light their son,” says an old Eastern proverb. Light is inconceivable except as coming from some source which is the cause of it; and as, in the instance of primordial light, that source is unknown, though as strongly demanded by reason and logic, therefore it is called “Darkness” by us, from an intellectual point of view. As to borrowed or secondary light, whatever its source, it can be but of a temporary māyāvic character.

Darkness, then, is the eternal matrix in which the sources of light appear and disappear. Nothing is added to darkness to make of it light, or to light to make it darkness, on this our plane. They are interchangeable, and scientifically light is but a mode of darkness and *vice versa*.

Yet both are phenomena of the same noumenon — which is absolute darkness to the scientific mind, and but a gray twilight to the perception of the average mystic, though to that of the spiritual eye of the Initiate it is absolute light.

How far we discern the light that shines in darkness depends upon our powers of vision. What is light to us is darkness to certain insects, and the eye of the clairvoyant sees illumination where the normal eye perceives only blackness. When the whole universe was plunged in sleep — had returned to its one primordial element — there was neither centre of luminosity, nor eye to perceive light, and darkness necessarily filled the boundless all.

⁵ That which is called “wheel” is the symbolical expression for a world or globe, which shows that the ancients were aware that our Earth was a revolving globe, not a motionless square as some Christian Fathers taught. The “Great Wheel” is the whole duration of our Cycle of being, or Mahā-Kalpa, *i.e.*, the whole revolution of our special chain of seven planets or Spheres from beginning to end; the “Small Wheels” meaning the Rounds, of which there are also Seven.

(b) The Father-Mother are the male and female principles in root-nature, the opposite poles that manifest in all things on every plane of Kosmos, or Spirit and Substance, in a less allegorical aspect, the resultant of which is the Universe, or the Son. They are “once more One” when in “The Night of Brahmā,” during PrĀlaya, all in the objective Universe has returned to its one primal and eternal cause, to reappear at the following Dawn — as it does periodically.

“Kāraṇa” — eternal cause — was alone. To put it more plainly: Kāraṇa is alone during the “Nights of Brahmā.” The previous objective Universe has dissolved into its one primal and eternal cause, and is, so to say, held in solution in space, to differentiate again and crystallize out anew at the following Manvantaric dawn, which is the commencement of a new “Day” or new activity of Brahmā — the symbol of the Universe.

In esoteric parlance, Brahmā is Father-Mother-Son, or Spirit, Soul and Body at once; each personage being symbolical of an attribute, and each attribute or quality being a graduated efflux of Divine Breath in its cyclic differentiation, involutory and evolutionary.

In the cosmico-physical sense, it is the Universe, the planetary chain and the earth; in the purely spiritual, the Unknown Deity, Planetary Spirit, and Man — the Son of the two, the creature of Spirit and Matter, and a manifestation of them in his periodical appearances on Earth during the “wheels,” or the Manvantaras.⁶

⁶ See Part II, Section VII, “*Days and Nights of Brahmā*.”

STANZA I — *Continued*

6. THE SEVEN SUBLIME LORDS AND THE SEVEN TRUTHS HAD CEASED TO BE (a), AND THE UNIVERSE, THE SON OF NECESSITY, WAS IMMERSSED IN PARINISHPANNA (b) (absolute perfection, Parinirvāṇa, which is Yong-Grüb), TO BE OUT-BREATHED BY THAT WHICH IS AND YET IS NOT. NAUGHT WAS (c).

(a) The seven sublime lords are the Seven Creative Spirits, the Dhyāni-Chohans, who correspond to the Hebrew Elōhīm. It is the same hierarchy of Archangels to which St. Michael, St. Gabriel, and others belong, in the Christian theogony. Only while St. Michael, for instance, is allowed in dogmatic Latin theology to watch over all the promontories and gulfs, in the Esoteric System, the Dhyānis watch successively over one of the Rounds and the great Root-Races of our planetary chain.

They are, moreover, said to send their Bodhisattvas, the human correspondents of the Dhyāni-Buddhas (of whom *vide infra*) during every Round and Race. Out of the Seven Truths and Revelations, or rather revealed secrets, four only have been handed to us, as we are still in the Fourth Round, and the world also has only had four Buddhas, so far. This is a very complicated question, and will receive more ample treatment later on.

So far “There are only Four Truths, and Four Vedas” — say the Hindus and Buddhists. For a similar reason Irenaeus insisted on the necessity of Four Gospels. But as every new Root-race at the head of a Round must have its revelation and revealers, the next Round will bring the Fifth, the following the Sixth, and so on.

(b) “*Parinishpanna*”⁷ is the absolute perfection to which all existences attain at the close of a great period of activity, or Mahā-Manvantara, and in which they rest during the succeeding period of repose. In Tibetan it is called Yong-Grüb.

Up to the day of the Yogāchāra school the true nature of Parinirvāṇa was taught publicly, but since then it has become entirely esoteric; hence so many contradictory interpretations of it.

It is only a true Idealist who can understand it. Everything has to be viewed as ideal, with the exception of Parinirvāṇa, by him who would comprehend that state, and acquire a knowledge of how Non-Ego, Voidness, and Darkness are Three in One and alone Self-existent and perfect.

It is absolute, however, only in a relative sense, for it must give room to still further absolute perfection, according to a higher standard of excellence in the following period of activity — just as a perfect flower must cease to be a perfect flower and die, in order to grow into a perfect fruit, — if a somewhat Irish mode of expression may be permitted.

MOTION, THE “GREAT BREATH”

The Secret Doctrine teaches the progressive development of everything, worlds as well as atoms; and this stupendous development has neither conceivable beginning nor imaginable end. Our “Universe” is only one of an infinite number of Universes, all of them “Sons of Necessity,” because links in the great Cosmic chain of Universes, each one standing in the relation of an effect as regards its predecessor, and being a cause as regards its successor.

The appearance and disappearance of the Universe are pictured as an outbreathing and inbreathing of “the Great Breath,” which is eternal, and which, being Motion, is one of the three aspects of the Absolute — Abstract Space and Duration being the other two. When the “Great Breath” is projected, it is called the Divine Breath, and is regarded as the breathing of the Unknowable Deity — the One Existence — which breathes out a thought, as it were, which becomes the Kosmos.⁸ So also is it when the Divine Breath is inspired again, the Universe disappears into the bosom of “the Great Mother,” who then sleeps “wrapped in her invisible robes.”

⁷ *Parinishpanna*, *Parinishpanna* (Sanskrit) [from *para* or *pari* + *nispan style="font-variant: small-caps;">spanna* finished, completed from *nis* + the verbal root *pad* to come forth, ripen, accomplish] The state of having gone forwards beyond; philosophically, the absolute perfection to which all existences attain at the close of a great period of activity (*mahā-manvantara*). It is identical in meaning with *paranirvana*, and corresponds to the Tibetan *yond-grub*. *Parinirvāṇa* or *Paranirvāṇa*. That which is beyond *nirvana*; the period of cosmic rest (*mahā-pralaya* or Great Night of *Brahmā*.) From *Encyclopedic Theosophical Glossary*, G. de Purucker, Editor-in-Chief.

⁸ See *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, pp. 264-65.

(c) By “that which is and yet is not” is meant the Great Breath itself, which we can only speak of as absolute existence, but cannot picture to our imagination as any form of existence that we can distinguish from Nonexistence. The three periods — the Present, the Past, and the Future — are in the esoteric philosophy a compound time; for the three are a composite number only in relation to the phenomenal plane, but in the realm of noumena have no abstract validity. As said in the Scriptures: “The Past time is the Present time, as also the Future, which, though it has not come into existence, still is”; according to a precept in the Prasaṅga Mādhyamika teaching, whose dogmas have been known ever since it broke away from the purely esoteric schools.⁹

Our ideas, in short, on duration and time are all derived from our sensations according to the laws of association. Inextricably bound up with the relativity of human knowledge, they nevertheless can have no existence except in the experience of the individual ego, and perish when its evolutionary march dispels the Māyā of phenomenal existence.

What is Time, for instance, but the panoramic succession of our states of consciousness? In the words of a Master,

“I feel even irritated at having to use these three clumsy words — past, present and future! Miserable concepts of the objective phases of the Subjective Whole, they are about as ill-adapted for the purpose as an axe for fine carving.”¹⁰

One has to acquire *Paramārtha* lest one should become too easy a prey to *Samvṛiti* — is a philosophical axiom.¹¹

⁹ See *Maṇi-bkah-hbum*, the “Book of the 100,000 Precious Commandments.” [Dzungarian “Maṇi Kumbum,” the “Book of the 10,000 Precepts.”] Also consult V.P. Vasil’ev [or Wassilief], *Der Buddhismus*, 1860, pp. 327, 357 etc. [Zirkoff Note 12] *Maṇi-bkah-hbum*, or “the hundred thousand precious commandments,” is a glorification of Avalokita, attributed to King Srong-bstan-sgam-po (d. 650 A.D.). Cf. Emil Schlagintweit, *Buddhism in Thibet*, pp. 84 ff., and William W. Rockhill, *The Life of the Buddha*, etc., p. 212. There is a copy of the *Maṇi* in the Library of the French Institute (No. 58 of the Catl. Of Tibetan works).

¹⁰ [The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett, p 29]. [Chronological letter No. 15, Barker No. 8].

¹¹ In clearer words: “One has to acquire true Self-Consciousness, in order to understand *Samvṛiti*, or the ‘origin of delusion.’ ” *Paramārtha* is the synonym of the Sanskrit term *Svasamvedana*, or “the reflection which analyses itself.” There is a difference in the interpretation of the meaning of “*Paramārtha*” between the Yogācāras and the Mādhyamikas, neither of whom, however, explain the real and true esoteric sense of the expression. See further, śloka No. 9.

STANZA I — *Continued*

7. THE CAUSES OF EXISTENCE HAD BEEN DONE AWAY WITH (*a*); THE VISIBLE THAT WAS, AND THE INVISIBLE THAT IS, RESTED IN ETERNAL NON-BEING — THE ONE BEING (*b*).

(*a*) “The Causes of Existence” mean not only the physical causes known to science, but the metaphysical causes, the chief of which is the desire to exist, an outcome of Nīdāna and Māyā. This desire for a sentient life shows itself in everything, from an atom to a sun, and is a reflection of the Divine Thought propelled into objective existence, into a law that the Universe should exist.

According to esoteric teaching, the real cause of that supposed desire, and of all existence, remains forever hidden, and its first emanations are the most complete abstractions mind can conceive.

These abstractions must of necessity be postulated as the cause of the material Universe which presents itself to the senses and intellect; and they underlie the secondary and subordinate powers of Nature, which, anthropomorphized, have been worshipped as God and gods by the common herd of every age. It is impossible to conceive anything without a cause; the attempt to do so makes the mind a blank.

This is virtually the condition to which the mind must come at last when we try to trace back the chain of causes and effects, but both science and religion jump to this condition of blankness much more quickly than is necessary; for they ignore the metaphysical abstractions which are the only conceivable cause of physical concretions. These abstractions become more and more concrete as they approach our plane of existence, until finally they phenomenalize in the form of the material Universe, by a process of conversion of metaphysics into physics, analogous to that by which steam can be condensed into water, and the water frozen into ice.

BEING AND NON-BEING

(b) The idea of Eternal Non-Being, which is the One Being, will appear a paradox to anyone who does not remember that we limit our ideas of being to our present consciousness of existence; making it a specific, instead of a generic term.

An unborn infant, could it think in our acceptance of that term, would necessarily limit its conception of being, in a similar manner, to the intra-uterine life which alone it knows; and were it to endeavor to express to its consciousness the idea of life after birth (death to it), it would, in the absence of data to go upon, and of faculties to comprehend such data, probably express that life as “Non-Being which is Real Being.”

In our case the One Being is the noumenon of all the noumena which we know must underlie phenomena, and give them whatever shadow of reality they possess, but which we have not the senses or the intellect to cognize at present.

The impalpable atoms of gold scattered through the substance of a ton of auriferous quartz may be imperceptible to the naked eye of the miner, yet he knows that they are not only present there but that they alone give his quartz any appreciable value; and this relation of the gold to the quartz may faintly shadow forth that of the noumenon to the phenomenon. But the miner knows what the gold will look like when extracted from the quartz, whereas the common mortal can form no conception of the reality of things separated from the Māyā which veils them, and in which they are hidden.

Alone the Initiate, rich with the lore acquired by numberless generations of his predecessors, directs the “Eye of Dangma” toward the essence of things in which no Māyā can have any influence.

It is here that the teachings of esoteric philosophy in relation to the Nidānas and the Four Truths become of the greatest importance; but they are secret.

STANZA I — Continued

8. ALONE, THE ONE FORM OF EXISTENCE (*a*) STRETCHED BOUNDLESS, INFINITE, CAUSELESS, IN DREAMLESS SLEEP (*b*); AND LIFE PULSATED UNCONSCIOUS IN UNIVERSAL SPACE, THROUGHOUT THAT ALL-PRESENCE WHICH IS SENSED BY THE “OPENED EYE” OF THE DANGMA.¹²

THE EYE OF DANGMA

(*a*) The tendency of modern thought is to recur to the archaic idea of a homogeneous basis for apparently widely different things — heterogeneity developed from homogeneity. Biologists are now searching for their homogeneous protoplasm and chemists for their protyle, while science is looking for the force of which electricity, magnetism, heat, and so forth, are the differentiations.

The Secret Doctrine carries this idea into the region of metaphysics and postulates a “One Form of Existence” as the basis and source of all things. But perhaps the phrase, the “One Form of Existence,” is not altogether correct. The Sanskrit word is Prabhavāpyaya, “the place, [or rather plane] whence is the origination and into which is the resolution of all things,” says a commentator.¹³

It is not the “Mother of the World,” as translated by Wilson; for Jagad-Yoni (as shown by Fitzedward Hall) is scarcely so much “the Mother of the World” or “the Womb of the World” as the “Material Cause of the World.”¹⁴ The Purāṇic Commentators explain it by Kāraṇa — “Cause” — but the Esoteric philosophy, by the *ideal spirit of that cause*.

¹² In India it is called “The Eye of Śiva,” but beyond the great range it is known as “Dangma’s opened eye” in esoteric phraseology. Dangma means a purified soul, one who has become a Jīvanmukta, the highest adept, or rather a Mahātma so-called. His “opened eye” is the inner spiritual eye of the seer, and the faculty which manifests through it is not clairvoyance as ordinarily understood, *i.e.*, the power of seeing at a distance, but rather the faculty of spiritual intuition, through which direct and certain knowledge is obtainable. This faculty is intimately connected with the “third eye,” which mythological tradition ascribes to certain races of men. Fuller explanations will be found in Volume II.

¹³ [Wilson, *op. cit.*, *Vishṇu-Purāṇa* Vol. I, p. 21, footnote by Fitzedward Hall.]

¹⁴ [*ibid.*]

It is, in its secondary stage, the Svabhāvat of the Buddhist philosopher, the eternal cause and effect, omnipresent yet abstract, the self-existent plastic Essence and the root of all things, viewed in the same dual light as the Vedāntin views his Parabrahman and Mūlaprakṛiti, the one under two aspects.

It seems indeed extraordinary to find great scholars speculating on the possibility of the Vedānta, and the Uttara-Mīmāṃsā especially, having been “evoked by the teachings of the Buddhists,” whereas, it is on the contrary Buddhism (of Gautama, the Buddha) that was “evoked” and entirely upreared on the tenets of the Secret Doctrine, of which a partial sketch is here attempted, and on which, also, the *Upanishads* are made to rest.¹⁵

The above, according to the teachings of Śri Śaṅkarāchārya,¹⁶ is undeniable.

¹⁵ And yet, one, *claiming authority*, namely, Sir Monier-Williams, Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, has just denied this fact. This is what he taught his audience, on June the 4th, 1888, in his annual address before the Victoria Institute of Great Britain:

“Originally, Buddhism set its face against all solitary asceticism . . . to attain sublime heights of knowledge. It *had no occult, no esoteric system* of doctrine . . . withheld from ordinary men” (!!)

And, again:

“. . . When Gautama Buddha began his career, the *later and lower* form of Yoga seems to have been little known.”

And then, contradicting himself, the learned lecturer forthwith informs his audience that

“We learn from *Lalita-Vistara* that various forms of bodily torture, self-maceration, and austerity were common in Gautama’s time.” (!!)

But the lecturer seems quite unaware that this kind of torture and self-maceration is precisely the *lower* form of Yoga, *Hatha-Yoga*, which was “little known” and yet so “*common*” in Gautama’s time.

[*Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 13, 15.]

¹⁶ It is even argued that all the Six Darśanas (Schools of philosophy) show traces of Buddha’s influence, being either taken from Buddhism or due to Greek teaching! (See Weber, Max Müller, *etc.*) We labor under the impression that Colebrooke, “the highest authority” in such matters, had long ago settled the question by showing, that “the Hindus were in this instance the teachers, not the learners.”

(b) Dreamless sleep is one of the seven states of consciousness known in Oriental esotericism. In each of these states a different portion of the mind comes into action; or as a Vedāntin would express it, the individual is conscious in a different plane of his being. The term “dreamless sleep,” in this case is applied allegorically to the Universe to express a condition somewhat analogous to that state of consciousness in man, which, not being remembered in a waking state, seems a blank, just as the sleep of the mesmerized subject seems to him an unconscious blank when he returns to his normal condition, although he has been talking and acting as a conscious individual would.

STANZA I — *Continued*

9. BUT WHERE WAS THE DANGMA WHEN THE ĀLAYA OF THE UNIVERSE

(*Soul as the basis of all, Anima Mundi*)

WAS IN PARAMĀRTHA (a)

(*Absolute Being and Consciousness which are Absolute Non-Being and Unconsciousness*)

AND THE GREAT WHEEL WAS ANUPAPĀDAKA (b)?

ĀLAYA, THE UNIVERSAL SOUL

(a) Here we have before us the subject of centuries of scholastic disputations. The two terms “Ālaya” and “Paramārtha” have been the causes of dividing schools and splitting the truth into more different aspects than any other mystic terms.

Ālaya is literally the “Soul of the World” or Anima Mundi, the “Over-Soul” of Emerson, and according to esoteric teaching it changes periodically its nature.

Ālaya, though eternal and changeless in its inner essence on the planes which are unreachable by either men or Cosmic Gods (Dhyāni-Buddhas), alters during the active life-period with respect to the lower planes, ours included.

During that time not only the Dhyāni-Buddhas are one with Ālaya in Soul and Essence, but even the man strong in the Yoga (mystic meditation) “is able to merge his soul with it” (Āryāsaṅga, the *Bumapa* school).¹⁷

This is not Nirvāṇa, but a condition next to it. Hence the disagreement.

Thus, while the Yogāchāras (of the Mahāyāna school) say that Ālaya is the personification of the Voidness, and yet Ālaya (*Nying-po* and *Tsang* in Tibetan) is the basis of every visible and invisible thing, and that, though it is eternal and immutable in its essence, it reflects itself in every object of the Universe “like the moon in clear tranquil water,” other schools dispute the statement.

The same for Paramārtha: the Yogāchāras interpret the term as that which is also dependent upon other things (*paratantra*); and the Mādhyamikas say that Paramārtha is limited to Parinishpanna or absolute perfection; *i.e.*, in the exposition of these “two truths” (out of four), the former believe and maintain that (on this plane, at any rate) there exists only Saṃvṛtīsatya or relative truth; and the latter teach the existence of Paramārthasatya, the “absolute truth.”¹⁸

¹⁷ [Zirkoff Note 13] The mention of Āryāsaṅga would imply that the Yogāchāra School is meant here. However, some scholars seem to identify the *dbu-ma-pa* with the Mādhyama doctrine.

¹⁸ “Paramārthasatya” is self-consciousness in Sanskrit, Svasaṃvedanā, or the “self-analysing reflection” — from two words, *parama* (above everything) and *artha* (comprehension), *satya* meaning absolute true being, or *esse*. In Tibetan Paramārthasatya is *Dondampai-denpa*. The opposite of this absolute reality, or

“No Arhat, oh mendicants, can reach absolute knowledge before he becomes one with Parinirvāṇa. *Parikalpita* and *Paratantra* are his two great enemies.”¹⁹

Parikalpita (in Tibetan *Kun-tag*) is error, made by those unable to realize the emptiness and illusionary nature of all; who believe something to exist which does not — *e.g.*, the Non-Ego.

And *Paratantra* is that, whatever it is, which exists only through a dependent or causal connection, and which has to disappear as soon as the cause from which it proceeds is removed — *e.g.*, the light of a wick. Destroy or extinguish it, and light disappears.

Esoteric philosophy teaches that everything lives and is conscious, but not that all life and consciousness are similar to those of human or even animal beings.

Life we look upon as “the one form of existence,” manifesting in what is called matter; or, as in man, what, incorrectly separating them, we name Spirit, Soul and Matter.

Matter is the vehicle for the manifestation of soul on this plane of existence, and soul is the vehicle on a higher plane for the manifestation of spirit, and these three are a trinity synthesized by Life, which pervades them all.

The idea of universal life is one of those ancient conceptions which are returning to the human mind in this century, as a consequence of its liberation from anthropomorphic theology.

Science, it is true, contents itself with tracing or postulating the signs of universal life, and has not yet been bold enough even to whisper “Anima Mundi!”

The idea of “crystalline life,” now familiar to science, would have been scouted half a century ago.

Botanists are now searching for the nerves of plants; not that they suppose that plants can feel or think as animals do, but because they believe that some structure, bearing the same relation functionally to plant life that nerves bear to animal life, is necessary to explain vegetable growth and nutrition.²⁰

It hardly seems possible that science can disguise from itself much longer, by the mere use of terms such as “force” and “energy,” the fact that things that have life are living things, whether they be atoms or planets.

actuality, is *Samvṛitisatya* — the relative truth only — “*Samvṛiti*” meaning “false conception” and being the origin of illusion, *Māyā*; in Tibetan *Kundzobchi-denpa*, “illusion-creating appearance.”

¹⁹ *Aphorisms of the Bodhisattvas*.

²⁰ [Zirkoff Note 14] One of the finest confirmations of this statement is the work entitled *The Secret Life of Plants*, by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird (Harper & Row, New York, 1973, xiv, 402 pp.). Recent scientific research confirms the facts formerly suspected that plants have emotions similar to ours, communicate with each other by the wavelengths of their fragrances and the color of their petals, and are connected with humans by means of some type of extrasensory perception.

But what is the belief of the inner esoteric Schools, the reader may ask?

What are the doctrines taught on this subject by the Esoteric “Buddhists”?

With them “Ālaya” has a double and even a triple meaning.

In the Yogāchāra system of the contemplative Mahāyāna school, Ālaya is both the Universal Soul (Anima Mundi) and the Self of a progressed adept.

“He who is strong in the Yoga can introduce at will his Ālaya by means of meditation into the true Nature of Existence.”

The “Ālaya has an absolute eternal existence,” says Āryāsaṅga — the rival of Nagarjuna.²¹

In one sense it is *Pradhāna*; which is explained in *Vishṇu-Purāṇa* as :

That which is the unevolved cause is emphatically called, by the most eminent sages, *Pradhāna*, original base, which is subtile *Prakṛiti*, viz., that which is eternal, and which at once is [or comprehends what is] and [what] is not, *or is mere process*.²²

²¹ Āryāsaṅga was a pre-Christian Adept and founder of a Buddhist esoteric school, though Csoma de Kőrös places him, for some reasons of his own, in the seventh century A.D. There was another Āryāsaṅga, who lived during the first centuries of our era and the Hungarian scholar most probably confuses the two.

[Zirkoff Note 15] There appears to be some confusion on this subject. It is obvious, however, that H.P.B. speaks of Asaṅga whose name means “free from worldly attachments” (known also as Āryāsaṅga), the founder of the Yogāchāra school of Mahāyāna Buddhism, known also as the Vijñānavada, the doctrine of Consciousness-Only. In this he collaborated with his younger brother Vasubandhu (ca. 420-500 A.D.). The sources of our knowledge about Asaṅga’s life are the records left by Paramārtha, a learned Buddhist monk from Ujjan sent to China by the Indian Court at the request of the Chinese Emperor Wu-ti (502-549) where he arrived in 546, staying there until his death. He wrote a *Life of Vasubandhu* (translated by J. Takakusu in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1905, pp. 33-53; repr. E. J. Brill, Leyden) from which it appears that Asaṅga was born of the Kauśika family in Purushapura (now Peshawar in present Pakistan).

Both from this work and from the writings of Hiuen Tsang (Yuan Chwang) we gather the information that ancient Ayodhyā (Oudh) was the chief scene of his activity. Both brothers were closely connected with the court of Ayodhyā and were contemporaries of King Bālāditya and his father Vikramāditya. If we identify the latter with Chandragupta II of the Gupta dynasty, Asaṅga’s date would be the first half of the 5th century A.D.; if with Skandagupta, it would be the second half. Tibetan traditions about him are recorded in Tāranātha’s *History of Buddhism* (German translation from Tibetan by A. Schiefner, St. Petersburg, 1869). Consult for detailed information and analysis of Asaṅga’s writings and teachings, *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by G. P. Malalasekera, 1966 ff.

²² [Wilson, *op. cit.*, *Vishṇu-Purāṇa* Vol. I, p. 20, note by Fitzedward Hall.]

“Prakṛiti,” however, is an incorrect word, and Ālaya would explain it better; for Prakṛiti is not the “incognizable Brahma.”²³

It is a mistake of those who know nothing of the Universality of the Occult doctrines from the very cradle of the human races, and especially so of those scholars who reject the very idea of a “primordial revelation,” to teach that the Anima Mundi, the One Life or “Universal Soul,” was made known only by Anaxagoras, or during his age. This philosopher brought the teaching forward simply to oppose the too materialistic conceptions on Cosmogony of Democritus, based on his exoteric theory of *blindly* driven atoms. Anaxagoras of Clazomenae was not its inventor but only its propagator, as also was Plato.

That which he called Mundane Intelligence, the nous (*νοῦς*), the principle that according to his views is absolutely separated and free from matter and acts on design,²⁴ was called Motion, the ONE LIFE, or *Jīvātman*, ages before the year 500 B.C. in India. Only the Āryan philosophers never endowed the principle, which with them is infinite, with the finite “attribute” of “thinking.”

This leads the reader naturally to the “Supreme Spirit” of Hegel and the German Transcendentalists as a contrast that it may be useful to point out. The schools of Schelling and Fichte have diverged widely from the primitive archaic conception of an ABSOLUTE principle, and have mirrored only an aspect of the basic idea of the Vedānta.

Even the “Absoluter Geist” shadowed forth by von Hartmann in his pessimistic philosophy of the Unconscious, while it is, perhaps, the closest approximation made by European speculation to the Hindu Advaitin Doctrines, similarly falls far short of the reality.

²³ “The indiscreet cause, which is uniform, and both cause and effect, and which those who are acquainted with first principles call Pradhāna and Prakṛiti, is the incognizable Brahma who was before all” (*Vāyu-Purāṇa*, as quoted in Wilson, Vol. I, p. 21); *i.e.*, Brahma does not put forth evolution itself or create, but only exhibits various aspects of itself, one of which is Prakṛiti, an aspect of Pradhāna.

²⁴ Finite Self-consciousness, I mean. For how can the *absolute* attain it otherwise than as simply an *aspect*, the highest of which known to us is human consciousness?

CAN THE FINITE CONCEIVE THE INFINITE?

According to Hegel, the “Unconscious” would never have undertaken the vast and laborious task of evolving the Universe, except in the hope of attaining clear Self-consciousness. In this connection it is to be borne in mind that in designating Spirit, which the European Pantheists use as equivalent to Parabrahman; as unconscious, they do not attach to that expression of “Spirit” — one employed in the absence of a better [term](#) to symbolize a profound mystery — the connotation it usually bears.²⁵

The “Absolute Consciousness,” they tell us, “behind” phenomena, which is only termed unconsciousness in the absence of any element of personality, transcends human conception. Man, unable to form one concept except in terms of empirical phenomena, is powerless from the very constitution of his being to raise the veil that shrouds the majesty of the Absolute.

Only the liberated Spirit is able to faintly realize the nature of the source whence it sprang and whither it must eventually return. . . . As the highest Dhyāni-Chohan, however, can but bow in ignorance before the awful mystery of Absolute Being; and since, even in that culmination of conscious existence — “the merging of the individual in the universal consciousness,” to use a phrase of Fichte’s — the Finite cannot conceive the Infinite, nor can it apply to it its own standard of mental experiences, how can it be said that the “Unconscious” and the Absolute can have even an instinctive impulse or hope of attaining clear self-consciousness?²⁶

A Vedāntin would never admit this Hegelian idea; and the Occultist would say that it applies perfectly to the awakened MAHAT, the Universal Mind already projected into the phenomenal world as the first aspect of the changeless ABSOLUTE, but never to the latter.

“Spirit and Matter, or Purusha and Prakṛiti are but the two primeval aspects of the One and Secondless,” we are taught.

The matter-moving Nous, the animating Soul, immanent in every atom, manifested in man, latent in the stone, has different degrees of power; and this pantheistic idea of a general Spirit-Soul pervading all Nature is the oldest of all the philosophical notions. Nor was the Archaeus a discovery of Paracelsus, nor of his pupil van Helmont; for it is again the same Archaeus or “Father-Ether” — the manifested basis and source of the innumerable phenomena of life — localized. The whole series of the numberless speculations of this kind are but variations on this theme, the keynote of which was struck in this primeval Revelation.²⁷

²⁵ [Taken from the Adyar Edition](#): In this connection it is to be borne in mind that in designating Spirit, a term which the European Pantheists use as equivalent to Parabrahman, as Unconscious, they do not attach to that expression the connotation that it usually bears. It is employed in the absence of a better term to symbolize a profound mystery.

²⁶ See A. Schwegler’s *Handbook of the History of Philosophy* in J.H. Stirling’s translation, 11th Ed., 1877, pp. 28 and 262 *et seq.*

²⁷ See [SD Volume I](#), Part II, Section III, “Primordial Substance and Divine Thought.”

(b) The term Anupapādaka, “parentless,” or without progenitors, is a mystical designation having several meanings in the philosophy. By this name celestial beings, the Dhyāni-Chohans or Dhyāni-Buddhas, are generally meant. But as these correspond mystically to the human Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, known as the “Mānushi- (or human) Buddhas,” the latter are also designated “Anupapādaka,” once that their whole personality is merged in their compound sixth and seventh principles — or Ātma-Buddhi, and that they have become the “diamond-souled” (Vajra-sattvas),²⁸ the full Mahātmās.

The “Concealed Lord” (Sangbai dag-po), “the one merged with the absolute,” can have no parents since he is Self-existent, and one with the Universal Spirit (Svayambhū),²⁹ the Svabhāvat in the highest aspect.

The mystery in the hierarchy of the Anupapādaka is great, its apex being the universal Spirit-Soul, and the lower rung the Mānushi-Buddha; and even every Soul-endowed man is an Anupapādaka in a latent state. Hence, when speaking of the Universe in its formless, eternal, or absolute condition, before it was fashioned by the “Builders” — the expression, “the Universe was Anupapādaka.”³⁰

²⁸ Vajra[dhara] — diamond-holder. [Vajrasattva], in Tibetan *Dorjeseempa, sempa* meaning the soul, its adamant quality referring to its indestructibility in the hereafter. The explanation with regard to the “Anupapādaka” given in the *Kāla-Chakra*, the first in the *rGyud* division of the *Kanjur*, is half esoteric. It has misled the Orientalists into erroneous speculations with respect to the Dhyāni-Buddhas and their earthly correspondences, the Mānushi-Buddhas. The real tenet is hinted at in a subsequent Volume, (see “The Mystery about Buddha”), and will be more fully explained in its proper place.

[Zirkoff Note 16] The “subsequent Volume” of *The Secret Doctrine*, as is well known, has never been discovered, if it ever existed at all. Among the Miscellaneous Papers from H.P.B.’s pen published in 1897 by the Theosophical Publishing Society (Benares and London) under the misleading title of “The Secret Doctrine, Volume III — Occultism,” there is a Section numbered XLIII and entitled “The Mystery of Buddha.” It is probable that this is the text, or portion of the text, which H.P.B. had in mind when referring to “The Mystery about Buddha.” It may have been set aside by her with a view to being included in a “subsequent Volume” of her *magnum opus*.

²⁹ To quote Hegel again, who with Schelling practically accepted the Pantheistic conception of periodical Avatāras (special incarnations of the World-Spirit in Man, as seen in the case of all the great religious reformers): “. . . the essence of man is spirit . . . only by stripping himself of his finiteness and surrendering himself to pure self-consciousness, does he attain the truth. Christ-man, as man in whom the unity of God and man [identity of the individual with the Universal consciousness as taught by the Vedāntins and some Advaitins] has appeared, has, in his death and his history generally, himself presented the eternal history of Spirit — a history which every man has to accomplish in himself, in order to exist as Spirit.” — *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, J. Sibree’s English translation, 1861, p. 340.

³⁰ See [SD Volume I](#), Part II, Section III, “Primordial Substance and Divine Thought.”