

2010-2012 Book of Dzyan Studies



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the Book of Dzyan



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[Jacques Mahnich](#) on September 22, 2010 at 1:43pm

For the sake of comparison, here is another text which has similarities with the first stance :

" It was the hour before the Gods awake.
Across the path of the divine Event
The huge foreboding mind of Night, alone
In her unlit temple of eternity,
Lay stretched immobile upon Silence' marge.
Almost one felt, opaque, impenetrable,
In the sombre symbol of her eyeless muse
The abyss of the unbodied Infinite;
A fathomless zero occupied the world.
A power of fallen boundless self awake
Between the first and the last Nothingness,
Recalling the tenebrous womb from which it came,
Turned from the insoluble mystery of birth
And the tardy process of mortality
And longed to reach its end in vacant Nought.
As in a dark beginning of all things,
A mute featureless semblance of the Unknown
Repeating for ever the unseeing will,
Cradled the cosmic drowse of ignorant Force
Whose moved creative slumber kindles the suns
And carries our lives in its somnambulist whirl.
Athwart the vain enormous trance of Space,
Its formless stupor without mind or life,
A shadow spinning through a soulless Void,
Thrown back once more into unthinking dreams,
Earth wheeled abandoned in the hollow gulfs
Forgetful of her spirit and her fate.
The impassive skies were neutral, empty, still.
Then something in the inscrutable darkness stirred;
A nameless movement, an unthought Idea
Insistent, dissatisfied, without an aim,
Something that wished but knew not how to be,
Teased the Inconscient to wake Ignorance.
... (8 more pages for this canto)

SAVITRI - Canto One - The Symbol Dawn - Sri Aurobindo

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on September 24, 2010 at 12:10pm

The Bodhisattva's most widely used Chinese names are Kuan-Yin, Kuan Shih Yin, and Kuan Tzû T'sai, of which the Cantonese variants are Kwoon Yam, Kwoon Sai Yam and Kwoon Chi Choi. In Viet-Nam her name is pronounced Quan Am. In Japan, she is generally known as Kwannon Bosatzu or Kwannon Sama. Her Mongolian name is Niduber Ujegci, and in Sri Lanka, she is called Natha-deva.

The earliest and most common Chinese term is the figurative for Kuan Shih Yin which is usually abbreviated to Kuan-Yin. It was probably introduced in China late in the first century BC, and by about the 6th century, she was worshipped throughout the country. Representations before the Sung dynasty (960-1126) are distinctly masculine in appearance. But after that period, the bodhisattva was invariably worshipped as a feminine (though not female) deity. The transformation is merely symbolic for, to the Chinese, the feminine represents the yin. In other words, the embodiment of Compassion is regarded by them as feminine (eg motherly) in form.

[David Reigle](#) on September 26, 2010 at 8:51am

The origins of the Stanzas of Dzyan will indeed be hard to find. As far as I know, no one has ever yet succeeded in tracing a single line of them to any known text. Nonetheless, old texts are newly becoming available all the time. Old texts that are now available sometimes quote other old texts that are no longer available. There are many examples of this in the Sanskrit writings. It may be that some fortunate one among us will come across a line quoted in some old but newly available text that we recognize as a line from the Stanzas of Dzyan. This would be a major breakthrough. So let us always keep an eye out for this in our reading. I sincerely wish us all good luck in the hunt for this.

[David Reigle](#) on September 27, 2010 at 1:02pm

From what HPB says in "The Secret Books of 'Lam-rim' and Dzyan," we may deduce that the Book of Dzyan that we seek is the first book of commentaries on a small secret book of Kiu-te (BCW vol. 14, p. 422):

"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."

In the Introductory to the SD, she tells us what existing books are "derived from that one small parent volume," presumably the seven secret folios of Kiu-te (vol. 1, p. xliii):

"The “very old Book” is the original work from which the many volumes of Kiu-ti were compiled. Not only this latter and the Siphrah di-Tseniuthah but even the Sepher Yetzirah,* the work attributed by the Hebrew Kabalists to their Patriarch Abraham (!), the book of Shu-King, China’s primitive Bible, the sacred volumes of the Egyptian Thoth-Hermes, the Puranas in India, and the Chaldean Book of Numbers and the Pentateuch itself, are all derived from that one small parent volume."

In these existing books, we find the most divergent cosmogonies. The most widely studied book of Kiu-te in Tibet among the Gelugpas is the Guhyasamaja Tantra. Although no English translation of this book has yet been published, we are fortunate that Giuseppe Tucci translated its first chapter. This gives what it has for cosmogony, although it is quite unlike any cosmogony we might expect. It is found in his book, *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala*, pp. 98-104. I am sending a scan of these pages to Joe, who will know how to post it here.

By contrast, among these books that are derived from the original parent volume, the Puranas give more what we might expect as a cosmogony. Of the eighteen major Puranas, there is agreement among both Eastern and Western scholars that the Vayu Purana is the oldest. This is based on descriptions of an original Purana Samhita, from which all the existing Puranas were apparently expanded. The Vayu is the least expanded. It has been translated into English by G. V. Tagare. Its cosmogony spans chapters 3-6, with a number of digressions. Its core is chapter 4, verses 17-24, 43-51, 65-70. I am also sending a scan of its pages on cosmogony to Joe to post here.

I think you will all be surprised to see just how different these cosmogonies are, said to derive from the same source. It is the same source that the Stanzas of Dzryan are said to be a commentary on. The Stanzas of Dzryan give a much more systematic and detailed cosmogony than any existing book I have seen.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on September 28, 2010 at 12:06pm

The Guhyasamajatantra was presented in english by Alex Wayman (Volume XVII of Buddhist Traditions), together with the chief commentary in the Tibetan tradition called the Pradipoddyotana (Candrakirti).

Buddhist cosmography and anthropogenesis can also be found in the book One of The Treasury of Knowledge, a compilation of Jamgön Kongtrul. This volume, Myriad Worlds, described four major cosmological systems found in Tibetan tradition - those associated with Hinayana, Mahayana, Kalachakra and Dzog-Chen. None of them have real similarities with the DS.

[David Reigle](#) on September 28, 2010 at 5:46pm

I agree with Leila that it is hard to find any echoes of the cosmogony of the Stanzas of Dzryan in the exoteric or known sources. Yet it is only by comparing the known cosmogonies of the world with the cosmogony given in the Stanzas that we can get a proper perspective on the question of the Stanzas and their origins. The oldest Aryan or Indo-European cosmogony known is that given in the Rig-Vedas "Hymn of Creation," which faces the beginning of the Stanzas in the SD. Thanks to the earlier posting by K. Paul Johnson, we have all seen Raimundo Panikkar's 1977 translation of this hymn, in comparison with the 1859 translation of it quoted by HPB.

Boris de Zirkoff in his careful 1978 edition of the SD points out that this was quoted by HPB from Max Muller's 1859 book, A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature. Max Muller in introducing it writes there, "I subjoin a metrical translation of this hymn, which I owe to the kindness of a friend." So this is an anonymous translation, not by Max Muller. I do not know why Annie Besant or G.R.S. Mead attributed it to Colebrooke in their 1893 ed. of the SD. Colebrooke's translation of it, published in Asiatic Researches, vol. 8, 1805, was the first one ever made into English, but it is not the one in the SD.

This hymn is written in very archaic Sanskrit, which is not easy to understand or translate. I think it is useful to compare as many translations of it as possible. Leila noted that it is Rig-Vedas 10.129. There are other translations of it, by Horace Hayman Wilson, Ralph T. H. Griffith, Arthur A. Macdonell, Jean Le Mee, etc. The first three mentioned somewhat follow

the traditional commentary of Sayana, while Panikkar's departs more from it, and Le Mee's even more. This hymn's reference to the one breathing without breath is, I believe, of much significance in relation to the SD's "Great Breath." This element seems to have disappeared from the later Indian cosmogonies, as are found in the Puranas.

Then Jacques quoted for us the beginning of Sri Aurobindo's great poem, Savitri, for comparison with the Stanzas. Many of you know who the late Judith Tyberg was, a Point Loma Theosophist who has given us books on Sanskrit terms, etc. She later joined the Aurobindo Ashram. She told my wife and I that she believed that Aurobindo's Savitri went far beyond the SD and the Stanzas. I have always remembered this, as an opinion that I respect, even though I do not share it. I see Savitri as a beautiful poem that does not necessarily intend to give a precisely accurate account of cosmogony like the Stanzas purport to do.

The relation of the Stanzas of Dzryan to the Sifra di-Tsenuitha, famously postulated by Gershom Scholem, was elaborated in a link that Odin provided for us. I think it is helpful to compare the Stanzas with the Kabbalistic books such as this and the Sepher Yetzirah for their cosmogony. The fact that the Sifra di-Tsenuitha uses a very different model, that of creation as building the body of God, makes it hardly likely that the Stanzas copied it. Historical evidence indicates a growth toward anthropomorphism in religions, which would suggest that this Kabbalistic source is later.

We can now readily compare the cosmogony given in the Stanzas of Dzryan with the oldest known Aryan cosmogony, that found in the Rig-Vedas, the standard Indian cosmogony, that found in the Puranas, the Kabbalistic cosmogony, that found in the Siphra di-Tsenuitha, a Buddhist cosmogony from one of the most important books of Kiu-te, the Guhyasamaja Tantra, and in the book referred to by Jacques, Myriad Worlds, four other Buddhist cosmogonies including that of another of the most important books of Kiu-te, the Kalachakra.

If we conclude that there is comparatively little resemblance between any known cosmogony and the cosmogony given in the Stanzas of Dzryan, then we are left with two choices. Either HPB made up the Stanzas of Dzryan, or she actually did translate them from a secret source that is considerably more extensive than any known source. The internal consistency and coherence of the cosmogony given in the Stanzas has led me to accept the second of these two choices. I find it plausible that secret sources do exist, hidden away in places like the cave in the Tien-Shan mountains referred to by HPB in her article that M. Sufilight posted excerpts from for us. In the mid-1990s some of the oldest Sanskrit manuscripts yet found were rescued from hidden caves in Afghanistan by locals fleeing from the Taliban, and eventually assembled in the Schoyen collection in Norway.

[David Reigle](#) on September 28, 2010 at 5:57pm

Jacques, Alex Wayman's book, The Yoga of the Guhyasamajatantra, includes only chapters 6 and 12 of the Guhyasamaja Tantra in translation.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on September 29, 2010 at 1:36pm

That's correct, David. The part which may be of interest for a seeker in this volume is the 100 pages introducing the Guhyasamajatantra in its historical and exegetical contexts. The rest is

mostly describing the Yoga of the Guhyasamajatantra.

[David Reigle](#) on September 29, 2010 at 8:17pm

Paul, that is a good question. It is difficult to get any clear sense of the literary form of the Stanzas, because we have them only in English translation. From this we cannot tell, for example, if the originals were written in meter or not, as are about seventy-five percent of the Sanskrit writings. Anything I can say on this question will be from the standpoint of the Sanskrit writings (and their Tibetan translations). I have limited my study to these, as the Stanzas have always appeared to me to be Eastern.

Among the Sanskrit writings, I would have to say that the Stanzas resemble the Upanishads most closely in literary form. The individual verses or slokas of the Stanzas vary greatly in length. This is like the Upanishads, which consist of prose paragraphs of quite uneven length. This is in contrast to virtually all of the later Sanskrit philosophical writings, which almost always take the form of metrical treatises. In these, each verse is of the same length. Fitting the philosophical ideas into metrical verses often makes them rather obscure. For this reason, these metrical treatises are almost invariably studied with the help of prose commentaries.

Of course, the prose paragraphs of the Upanishads, too, are often obscure. So they, too, are normally studied with the help of commentaries. HPB often refers to commentaries on the Stanzas. The Stanzas look to me more like these prose paragraphs of uneven length. The obscurity of such writings is more with the ideas than with words that must be made to fit the meter. The Upanishad commentaries are free to focus almost entirely on the ideas, unlike the commentaries on the philosophical treatises written in meter. These must spend a lot of time simply construing the words into coherent prose sentences, and doing such things as filling in grammatical data or supplying words that were left out due to the meter.

[David Reigle](#) on September 29, 2010 at 9:36pm

Joe, palm leaves were very much the norm as the writing material for all Sanskrit writings, whether Hindu, Jaina, or Buddhist, until several centuries ago, when paper came into common use. There are large numbers of old palm leaf manuscripts still in existence. They are, of course, much less common than paper manuscripts, but there are still a lot of them. Virtually all the Sanskrit manuscripts that were brought to Tibet a thousand years ago to be translated into Tibetan are palm leaf manuscripts. Many of these are still preserved in Tibet, and some of these are now becoming available to the outside world, through a cooperative agreement reached between the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the China Tibetology Research Center.

[David Reigle](#) on September 30, 2010 at 8:27am

Translating the Stanzas from HPB's English into Sanskrit or Hindi, or even Tibetan, would no doubt make their ideas available to a larger audience of non-English speakers. However, it would be extremely difficult to do this without unduly biasing the case. Whatever technical terms were chosen in such a translation would immediately lean the Stanzas into one or other known philosophical system. The Nicholas and Helena Roerich books, for example, speak of the coming Maitreya Buddha. The Alice Bailey books speak of the same coming Maitreya,

but almost always refer to him as the Christ. This has led to a large audience for the Bailey books of people having a Christian background, and very few having a Buddhist background.

I would be very interested in seeing any existing Sanskrit or Hindi translations of the Stanzas. Even within Hinduism there would be many possible choices of translation terms to use, and these would bias the reader in one direction or another. I noticed a post by Ferran Sanz Orriols here on this website regarding the Great Invocation as a tool for service. The Great Invocation has been translated into many languages in an attempt to spread its use. I have looked at the Sanskrit, Hindi, and Tibetan translations of it. The Sanskrit and Hindi translations differ significantly in their translation of its important term, God. The Tibetan translation of it is so distant that I do not see how it would give even an approximate idea of this invocation to Tibetan Buddhists, who do not believe in God. The Christian missionaries faced the same problem in translating the Bible into Tibetan.

Interestingly, the translation of the Bible into Tibetan used *dkon mchog* for God. We see this same Tibetan word in the Stanzas, given phonetically by HPB in the SD, vol. 1, p. 23, as *Konch-hog*. This Tibetan word means "jewel," and refers to "the three jewels," namely, the Buddha, the Dharma, or his teachings, and the Sangha, or the Buddhist community. As anyone can see, this is a far cry from the Christian idea of God. In the Stanzas, it apparently refers to something in Stanza I, possibly the universal mind, although this word in Tibetan is *kun gzhi* rather than *dkon mchog*. In any case, we do not find "jewel(s)" in Stanza I. So how would one translate such a word? Translating these things would be a hard task.

[David Reigle](#) on October 1, 2010 at 9:06pm

It is also my experience, Leila, that we do not find echoes of the specific Theosophical scheme in the teachings of Tibetan lamas and geshe. Perhaps in all the queries that Joe has been sending out to various Tibetan Buddhist and other groups, something closely similar will turn up. And then again, perhaps not. That, too, will be very helpful to us to know. Thanks also for the Tao te ching cosmogony reference to chapter 42, which I had not noticed before.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 2, 2010 at 5:49am

A full translation of the Rig-Vedas from Sanskrit to French was published by Alexandre Langlois in 1834. This verse from last creation hymn read as "Celui qui est le premier auteur de cette création...", which can be translated as "that one".

[David Reigle](#) on October 2, 2010 at 9:14pm

It is great to have input from French language sources, Jacques. There seems to be full agreement among translators that "that one" (*tad ekam*) is the subject of the hymn as a whole, and this would be in full agreement with the teachings of the Secret Doctrine. It is also great to have input regarding the Sanskrit, Leila. It is no doubt true that the key to the "he or that" question hinges upon the implied, but not stated, subject of the verb *dadhe*, from *dhaa*, in verse 7. To be clear on the verse numbering, I am sure that everyone has seen that HPB quotes only verses 1-3 and 6-7 of this 7-verse hymn.

Muller and HPB disagree on how to understand the subject of the second verb in the first half

of verse 7. Because it is a metrical verse, the subject of this verb is not clearly spelled out in the Sanskrit like it could be in prose. We must bring in a subject for it. For this we have three choices. The most natural choice would be to use the subject of the first verb in the first half of verse 7, "this creation" (iyam visrstir). Max Muller uses the subject of the last half of verse 7, "he" (so), the "most high seer" (adhyaksah). We could also carry down the subject of the whole hymn, from verse 2, "that one" (tad ekam). This is perhaps what HPB meant, although this is not certain. She needed to make as small a change as possible to the translation she quoted, in changing the personal to the impersonal. This was the easiest way to do this. I do not think that we can infer anything more precise from her change.

Well, it seems that as Vedic scholarship has progressed, the tide has turned fully in favor of HPB's impersonal interpretation, and away from Max Muller's personal or theistic interpretation. As some of you know, I have always believed that a Sanskrit/Tibetan text of the Stanzas of Dzryan would become available in my lifetime, so my wife and I have long been gathering materials from which to annotate it. Here are the results of tabulating the sixteen English translations of this hymn that we have gathered.

Max Muller's idea of an overseer, like the Christian God, who is the source of creation, is represented in many of the older translations: Horace Hayman Wilson (who died in 1860, but his translation of this part was published posthumously in 1888, "he"), the anonymous metrical translation published by Max Muller (1859, "he"), Ralph T. H. Griffith (1892, "he"), and Arthur A. Macdonell (1917, "he"). They are joined by one later translation, which follows the theistic interpretation of Dayananda Sarasvati, namely, the translation by Satya Prakash Sarasvati and Satyakam Vidyalanka (1987, "he").

HPB's idea of an impersonal "it" rather than a "he" is represented in all of the newer translations, with the one exception just noted, and even in some of the older translations: Henry Thomas Colebrooke (1805, "it"), John Muir (1863, 1870, "any one"), William Dwight Whitney (1882, partial translation, "it"), Ananda K. Coomaraswamy (1933, "one"), W. Norman Brown (1941, 1965, "it"), Abhinash Chandra Bose (1966, "it"), Jean Le Mee (1975, "it"), Walter H. Maurer (1975, "it"), Antonio de Nicolas (1976, "it"), Raimundo Panikkar (1977, "it"), Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty (1981, "it"), and Joel Brereton (1999, "it"). The majority of these translators take the subject as "this creation" (iyam visrstir), but the point is that it is impersonal, not "he." This is really overwhelming support for the impersonal interpretation. HPB was justified in making the change, and by quoting this hymn at the beginning of the Stanzas, implying that this old Aryan cosmogony agrees with that of the Stanzas of Dzryan.

[David Reigle](#) on October 3, 2010 at 2:06pm

Many thanks, Joe, for obtaining and posting the Hindi translation of the Stanzas, and many thanks to Captain Anand Kumar for scanning this book for us. I am finding it very interesting to see how Pandya Baijnath (or Vajjnath) translates the technical terms of the Stanzas into Hindi in this 1954 book. Although I do not know Hindi, I know that its technical terms are usually Sanskrit words. So this much I can follow. I had gone through Stanza 1 of the Hindi translation and made comments on several of the technical terms in its nine verses, when the power went out for a moment, and my post disappeared. Suffice it to say, then, that this Hindi translation of the Stanzas is very useful to me, and I much appreciate having access to it.

David Reigle on October 3, 2010 at 2:48pm

A new file has now been posted by Joe on the main page of this website, giving fourteen English translations of Rig-Vedas 10.129 in chronological order. Those who wish to study this hymn of creation will see that the understanding of it has gotten much more refined since the first English translation of 1805. In this file can be found Max Muller's 1859 comments on it, John Muir's 1870 comments on it that incorporate traditional Sanskrit commentaries, a study text of it from Arthur Macdonell's 1917 Vedic Reader for Students, Ananda Coomarswamy's insightful 1933 new approach to it, and Walter Maurer's careful 1975 translation of it, among others. Two good English translations of it were not included due to space limitations: Jean Le Mee's 1975 translation, which was published in picture book form, and Joel Brereton's 1999 translation, which is spread out over a long article in the Journal of the American Oriental Society. Also not included are some important German translations. At the end of the file there are some pages from Vasudeva S. Agrawala's book on it, showing the adhyatma or inner, symbolic line of interpretation. The materials here in this file, all on a small but very important hymn of only seven verses, will give a good idea of what is in store for Book of Dzryan studies once we have a Sanskrit and/or Tibetan text to work from.

Dan Caldwell on October 3, 2010 at 4:30pm

David Reigle in his compilation has given us 14 English translations. I would like to mention another translation. It is given in the book YOGA AND BEYOND by Georg Feuerstein and Jeanine Miller. In Chapter 3 titled "The Hymn of Creation: A Philosophical Interpretation", pp. 64-85, Jeanine Miller translates and gives a brilliant commentary on this hymn. I believe she is giving her own translation (as far as I can tell). This book was reprinted later under a new title which is the first book listed on this webpage:

<http://blavatskyarchives.com/hinduism/hinduismbooks3.htm>

If David Reigle reads this, I ask him to comment on what Miller writes at the top of page 85 on the "masculine pronoun sa".

David Reigle on October 3, 2010 at 7:07pm

In the Hindi translation of Stanza I, verse 3, universal mind is translated directly or literally as universal mind, visva-vyapta manas. It is only in the translator's commentary that we find it glossed as mahat, the technical term also used for it by HPB. This term, mahat, is a technical term associated with the Samkhya school in Hinduism. But the Samkhya worldview was so widely found in old India, that its terms seem to have practically become general Hindu Indian terms.

If, however, this book was going out to a Buddhist audience, the technical term alaya-vijnana would be used instead of mahat for the universal mind. The term alaya-vijnana is a technical term specific to the Yogacara school of Mahayana Buddhism. Hence, it would be unknown to almost all Hindus, and even to many Buddhists, of other schools. When HPB uses alaya in verse 9, then, she is using a term specific to a particular school of Buddhism. It does not seem to have been familiar to the Hindi translator, who glossed it there in verse 9 as prakriti or pradhana, following HPB's comments (SD 1.49-50). But in Buddhism, it does not mean prakriti or pradhana, so this is misleading.

In verse 5 of Stanza I, darkness is translated directly or literally as darkness, andhakara. The term used for darkness in Rig-Vedas 10.129 (verse 3) is the technical term *tamas*. Here, *tamas* is not just the darkness of a dark night, as is *andhakara*, but can be considered as the cosmic principle of darkness. This term, *tamas*, was later used as one of the three qualities or *gunas* taught in the Samkhya school of Hinduism. So far, the Hindi translator with his choice of generic terms rather than technical terms is keeping the translation neutral.

In verse 6, HPB's translation uses the technical term *Parinispanna*. This is another technical term specific to the Yogacara school of Buddhism. In the Hindi translation, it is given as *parinirvana*. This seems to be good choice, that would be more comprehensible to a Hindi-speaking audience. In this verse and its Hindi commentary the term *maha-svasa* is used for the great breath. This term, *maha-svasa*, or even its synonym, *maha-prana*, is not found in the Vedic writings. So far, I have found these terms only in the Buddhist text, *Manjusri-nama-samgiti*, and in the Buddhist Kalachakra writings. In one specific Tibetan school, the Jonangpas, the Kalachakra teachings are primary, and they follow the Great Madhyamaka philosophy. The Great Madhyamaka philosophy is based on the Yogacara writings, understood in a Madhyamaka context.

In verse 7, being and non-being are given in the Hindi translation as *sat* and *asat*. These are the two terms that are found in the first verse of Rig-Vedas 10.129, given as *aught* and *nought* (*naught*) in the translation facing the Stanzas in the SD.

In verse 8, and in the Hindi commentary on verse 1, space is translated as *avAkasha*. This is space in the sense of room, or empty space providing room for something. Again, this is not a technical term, as the term *Akasha* can be. While *Akasha* is often space in the sense of the sky or atmosphere or the heavens, it is also frequently used as the fifth element, the all-pervading ether.

In verse 9, where we have four foreign terms in HPB's translation, the Hindi translator retained three of these. The term *alaya*, when used by itself, is not a technical term standing for the *alaya-vijnana*. It just means abode, as in Himalaya, the abode (*alaya*) of snow (*hima*). So the Hindi translator, when using it, had to put its meaning in parentheses. He gave the English "Over-Soul," and then for Hindi, *prakriti* or *pradhana*, following HPB's comments. As noted above, this is not how Buddhists understand the *alaya-vijnana*.

Similarly, the Buddhist term *paramartha* has been glossed by the Hindi translator as "Absolute Consciousness, *avyakta cetana*, *sat*, *caitanya*," again deducing this from HPB's comments, which are very scanty on this. Again, this is not at all how Buddhists understand *paramartha*. In Buddhism, *paramartha* is often used with *satya*, meaning ultimate truth, and even by itself normally refers to ultimate truth. This is one of the sections of the SD where there are many errors in HPB's commentary, here copied from Emil Schlagintweit's 1863 book, *Buddhism in Tibet*.

Overall, I find it very instructive to see what terms were chosen by the Hindi translator for the technical terms in the Stanzas.

David Reigle on October 3, 2010 at 9:52pm

Thank you very much, Daniel, for the reference to Jeanine Miller's translation of Rig-Vedas 10.129, which I had forgotten about. This and a few others that I am digging out will have to be added to the tally.

Regarding her comment at the top of page 85 on the "masculine pronoun sa," this pronoun is found in the second half of verse 7, not in the first half. It there correlates with the relative pronoun yah forming a complete and independent clause, and refers to the adhyaksa, the overseer. This "One in the highest heaven" who "is not the Absolute" is what Jeanine is speaking of as the "he," distinguished from the neuter and impersonal tat, which is found in verses 2 and 3 as "that one" (tad ekam). Grammatically, the masculine pronoun sa does not go with the first half of the verse, although one could put it there, as Max Muller did. I do not know why she used "He" in her translation of the first half of verse 7, since she does not refer to this phrase or idea in what she is saying here about the "One in the highest heaven" who "is not the Absolute."

[David Reigle](#) on October 4, 2010 at 8:42am

Greetings to you, Capt. Anand Kumar. It is great to have your participation here, and I thank you again for your work in getting us the Hindi translation of the Stanzas of Dzryan. This is something that I will refer to again and again over the years, since its translations of technical terms are as much Sanskrit as Hindi. I did not know that it existed.

Regarding alaya, as a Yogacara Buddhist term the initial letter "a" is the long "a" rather than the short "a". So the "a" does not negate laya, as we might expect, and as in your translation, "out of resonance." This has long been a question for Theosophists. In 1977 I heard Joy Mills explain alaya as "non-dissolution," taking the "a" as the negating short "a". I, too, had once thought that this must be what it meant. But by then I had seen Emil Schlagintweit's 1863 book, Buddhism in Tibet, which HPB took many sentences from here in this part of the SD. So after Joy's talk I showed her Schlagintweit's pages. These pages make it clear by their definitions that the word used by HPB is alaya with initial long "a". Here are a couple of quotations from Schlagintweit's book that show this: I will show the long "a", for which Schlagintweit uses a macron, by writing double "aa".

"... supposing that a soul, Alaya (Tib. Tsang, also Nyingpo), is the basis of every thing. This soul exists from time immemorial, and in every object, 'it reflects itself in every thing, like the moon in clear and tranquil water.'" (p. 39)

"The idea of the soul, Alaya, is the chief dogma of the Yogacharya system, which is so called because 'he who is strong in the Yoga (meditation) is able to introduce his soul by means of the Yoga into the true nature of existence.'" (p. 40)

When Schlagintweit wrote, nothing was known about this outside of the Tibetan regions. His information was necessarily very fragmentary, and often incorrect. Buddhists would probably not use the word soul to describe it. He did give this word alaya correctly, however, as was later proved when actual Sanskrit texts of the Yogacara school of Buddhism were discovered and published. According its Chinese translation, alaya means "storehouse." When followed by vijñāna in the compound, alaya-vijñāna, it means "storehouse consciousness." According

to its Tibetan translation (given incorrectly by Schlagintweit), alaya means "basis of all" or "universal foundation" (kun gzhi). The alaya-vijnana, or foundation consciousness, is considered to be the all-pervading basic consciousness behind all individual manifestations of consciousness, and it stores the karmic seeds (vasana) which condition the life of each conscious individual. So it can be described as the universal mind, the phrase used by HPB in The Secret Doctrine.

David Reigle on October 5, 2010 at 5:39pm

After Daniel called our attention to a translation of Rig-Vedas 10.129 by Jeanine Miller that I had missed, I have pulled out some more English translations of this hymn. These should be added to the previous tally. The score now stands at six in favor of "he", and sixteen in favor of "it", in the first half of verse 7 where HPB changed the rendering published by Max Muller. As noted before, the "it" in these translations almost always stands for "this creation" (iyam visrstir), which is the subject of the first line of verse 7. HPB's small alteration to the quote did not make this the subject, but it did change the personal pronouns here to impersonal pronouns. All agree that the subject of the hymn, given in verses 2 and 3, is the neuter "that one" (tad ekam). The question is whether or not this hymn refers in verse 7 to a creator like the Christian God who made this universe, and thus, for us, whether or not this hymn agrees with the Stanzas of Dzryan.

The additional translations are: Monier Monier-Williams (1875, "it"), William Dwight Whitney (1882, "it"), Adolf Kaegi (1886, "it"), H. W. Wallis (1887, "it"), Franklin Edgerton (1965, "it"), and Jeanine Miller (1971, "He"). I had mentioned Whitney before, but I did not count him among the sixteen English translations previously referred to, because I had not noticed that he provided a complete translation. Also, there is a 1900 translation by Arthur Macdonell using "it", while his 1917 translation referred to earlier uses "he". Since we must assume that his later translation represents his final view, he remains among the six translators using "he". Franklin Edgerton's translation is found in his book described as "a summing-up after a lifetime of philological study and reflection," titled The Beginnings of Indian Philosophy. He is famous for his very literal line by line translation of the Bhagavad-gita, prepared primarily for his Sanskrit students. It was published by Harvard University Press with the Sanskrit text on facing pages. Then this press, not realizing the purpose of this translation, published it for the public in an English-only edition. His literal translations were not intended to be literary.

David Reigle on October 5, 2010 at 7:33pm

Joe, regarding your query as to what other literature we might need, there is something we need, although it is not quite literature. It is something that may perhaps be found somewhere in some literature. It is the word fohat. No one has ever yet found this word outside of Theosophical writings. But since most of the Theosophical terms have been found elsewhere, perhaps this one can be, too. This is what stopped me after my 1997 Book of Dzryan Research Report on Technical Terms in Stanza II. The term fohat occurs in Stanza III, and I had nothing worthwhile to say on it.

David Reigle on October 5, 2010 at 8:00pm

Alistair, I was glad to hear that Jeanine Miller's new book is at the press. Do you know who is publishing it? Yes, the 5-page review of her 1985 book in the Indo-Iranian Journal, by H. W. Bodewitz, is negative. But there is also a review of it in Philosophy East and West (vol. 38, no. 1, 1988, pp. 89-91), by Antonio T. de Nicolas, that is positive. You mentioned a new translation of the Rig-Vedas in the making. Is this the one that Stanley Insler at Yale has long been preparing?

Regarding alaya, you must be thinking of the word gocara when you say that it "originally meant 'field', meaning to where cows eat to the limits of." This word is, literally, the "going" (cara) of a "cow" (go). It does mean the range of something, and is often used in Buddhist texts when talking about something that is only in the range of perception of the Aryas, but is not accessible to the consciousness of ordinary people.

David Reigle on October 6, 2010 at 9:08am

The idea of fohat as a messenger is certainly in Stanza 5, verse 2. But also in that verse is the idea that fohat is the steed, and thought is the rider. It so happens that this idea is a basic teaching of the Buddhist Tantras, i.e., the Books of Kiu-te. They teach that the winds or vital airs are the mounts of consciousness or thought. The word used in these texts for this mount is Sanskrit prana, Tibetan rlung, where the initial "r" is silent. So the word has no similarity to fohat, but the idea seems to be the same.

Fohat is spoken of in the SD as a cosmic principle. Do we find any teaching like this in known religions? I have so far not found in Eastern religions any direct parallel to the concept of fohat. But in the Vedas and Upanishads, prana is a cosmic principle. It forms a trinity with manas or mind and vaak or speech, all three described as cosmic principles. While the individual pranas as the mounts of consciousness are not spoken of as a cosmic principle in the Buddhist tantras, there is found in the Kalachakra the term maha-prana (and maha-svasa), the "great breath," and it is a cosmic principle. This usage in the Vedic writings and in the Kalachakra is the nearest conceptual parallel to fohat that I have found, but the word fohat does not match either prana or rlung.

HPB says more than once that fohat is a Turanian word or compound. Turanian was used by ethnologists and linguists in the 1800s for Mongolian and Uralic and Altaic and related people and languages of central Asia, and even Dravidian of southern India. Like Tibetan and Sanskrit, Mongolian does not have an "f" sound. The aspirate "ph" in Sanskrit and Tibetan is not pronounced as "f", like it can be in English. I have checked the Mongolian translation of the great dictionary or vocabulary called Mahavyutpatti, and found nothing even close to fohat. It will be hard to find a phonetically similar word in use that has the same range of meanings as fohat has in Theosophical writings. I think that this is what it will take to make a case that is convincing even to our critics.

David Reigle on October 6, 2010 at 10:57am

Yes, fohat may very well be a local usage, kind of like we have here on the internet. So far I have learned three new four-letter words: blog, grok, and ping. But I am wondering if fohat,

as an early transcription of some Eastern word, might be found in some English or French or German book published before 1882 that HPB had access to.

[David Reigle](#) on October 7, 2010 at 10:31am

Yes, fohat appears in Mahatma letter #13 on the Cosmological Notes, received in Jan. 1882, and a little earlier in the Cosmological Notes themselves. The term fohat was there introduced for the first time in the Theosophical writings, as follows:

"(1) What are the different kinds of knowledge? The real (Dgyu) and the unreal (Dgyu-mi). Dgyu becomes Fohat when in its activity -- active agent of will-electricity -- no other name."

From the phrase "no other name," it would appear that the author of the Cosmological Notes could not find a known equivalent for fohat, so had to introduce the original term itself.

From this basic definition, "active agent of will -- electricity," I understand it as something other than phowa, the transference of thought and consciousness, such as happens after death.

In the Encyclopedic Theosophical Glossary entry, it looks like Mon should have a period after it, as an abbreviation for Mongolian. But I don't think pho or fo means buddha in Mongolian. The Mongolian translation of buddha is burqan. In Tibetan, pho means male. The word fo, however, is the Chinese word for buddha.

Regarding the equivalent for fohat given by T. Subba Row in his lectures or notes on the Bhagavad-gita, daivi-prakriti, this as a two-word phrase can be found in Bhagavad-gita, chapter 9, verse 13. I do not know of anyone else, however, who explains it as used there in the meaning that Subba Row gives to it, "the light of the Logos," etc. This includes Sankaracharya in his commentary thereon.

Subba Row gives us the impression that daivi-prakriti is a Vedanta term that is found in use among Vedantins and in Vedanta treatises, presumably with the meaning he gives to it. But try to find this term in any book on Vedanta, ancient or modern. The term daivi-prakriti, as Subba Row used it, and therefore as it is used in Theosophical writings, is almost as elusive as fohat.

[David Reigle](#) on October 9, 2010 at 6:07pm

Mahatma letter #15 does provide us with a fuller picture of what fohat is, and I would agree that this is a clearer explanation of it. The general idea given here of fohat is that of a force or power, which can be called sakti, that is found in everything. It has unlimited potential to develop everything into higher and higher stages, without itself being affected thereby. Some of the ideas expressed here are very reminiscent of the tathagata-garbha teachings found in Mahayana Buddhism, but which were quite unknown outside of Mahayana Buddhist countries when this was written. I get the impression that the terms employed in this letter were simply the nearest that could be found in the then available books to express these ideas, regardless of whether these terms were right or not.

The key passage using these terms will show why I think that the term fohat could possibly be found in some European book. Here is the passage:

"Nor can it well be called force since the latter is but the attribute of Yin Sin (Yin Sin or the one "Form of existence" also Adi-Buddhi or Dharmakaya the mystic, universally diffused essence) when manifesting in the phenomenal world of senses namely only your old acquaintance Fohat. See in this connexion Subba Row's article "Aryan Arhat Esoteric Doctrines" on the seven-fold principles in man; his review of your Fragments, pp. 94 and 95. The initiated Brahmin calls it (Yin Sin and Fohat) Brahman and Sakti when manifesting as that force. We will perhaps be nearer correct to call it infinite life and the source of all life visible and invisible, an essence inexhaustible ever present, in short Swabhavat."

Now compare what Samuel Beal writes in his 1871 *Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese*, p. 373:

"So again, when the idea of a universally diffused essence (dharmakaya) was accepted as a dogmatic necessity, a further question arose as to the relation which this "supreme existence" bore to time, space, and number. And from this consideration appears to have proceeded the further invention of the several names Vairochana (the Omnipresent), Amitabha (for Amirta) the Eternal, and Adi-Buddha (yih-sin) the 'one form of existence.'"

We can easily see that several terms and phrases are the same: Yin sin or yih-sin, the "one form of existence," Adi-Buddhi or Adi-Buddha and Dharmakaya, the "universally diffused essence." Further, the term Swabhavat or Swabhava is found in another European book then available, Brian H. Hodgson's 1874 book, *Essays on the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet*. It turns out that what Hodgson there wrote about Swabhava and the Swabhavikas of Nepal was incorrect. Beal's statements, too, require correction.

Now compare a passage from Mahatma letter #59, written in July 1883, a year after letter #15 was written:

"In symbology the central point is Jivatma (the 7th principle), and hence Avalokitesvara, the Kwan-Shai-yin, the manifested "Voice" (or Logos), the germ point of manifested activity; -- hence -- in the phraseology of the Christian Kabalists "the Son of the Father and Mother," and agreeably to ours -- "the Self manifested in Self -- Yih-sin, the "one form of existence," the child of Dharmakaya (the universally diffused Essence), both male and female. Parabrahm or "Adi-Buddha" while acting through that germ point outwardly as an active force, reacts from the circumference inwardly as the Supreme but latent Potency."

We here see the very same ideas as were explained in Mahatma letter #15, and the same phrases from Beal used to explain it. The Theosophical teachings on this are consistent, and they are not found in Beal's book, nor in Hodgson's book. But the inaccurate terms along with their inaccurate definitions adopted from Beal continue to be used, and here another term is added from Beal, Kwan-Shai-yin.

What we have in fohat, then, is a term and idea that was given out in the *Cosmological Notes* in late 1881, used in Mahatma letter #13 in January 1882, used twice in HPB's notes to an article by T. Subba Row published in January 1882, further explained in Mahatma letter #15 in July 1882, etc., then found in the *Stanzas of Dzyan* published in the *SD* in 1888. The Theosophical teachings on fohat and its related ideas are consistent throughout, right up to

and including the Stanzas. That is, fohat does the same thing in the Stanzas that came out in 1888 as the Cosmological Notes in 1881 said it did. But the technical terms used to explain it were often faulty. We cannot use yih-sin or Adi-Buddha or dharmakaya or svabhava or kwan-shai-yin to help identify fohat, because these terms were apparently borrowed from then existing writings, which were none too accurate. It is possible that the term fohat itself is was so borrowed; but if so, I have not yet found its source.

HPB tells us that much in the Mahatma letters was put into words by herself or other chelas. She explains this most clearly in a letter that was mostly published in *The Path* for March 1893, partially published by Jinarajadasa in the Introduction to *The Early Teachings of the Masters* in 1923, and fully published in *The Eclectic Theosophist* for March-April 1982. Here are a few statements from it:

"How many a time was I (no Mahatma) shocked and startled, burning with shame when shown notes written in Their (two) handwritings (a form of writing adopted for the T.S. and used by chelas, only never without Their special permission or order to that effect) exhibiting mistakes in science, grammar and thoughts, expressed in such language that it perverted entirely the meaning originally intended, and sometimes expressions that in Tibetan Sanskrit or any other Asiatic language had quite a different sense, as in one instance I will give. . . . Now had I been commissioned to write or precipitate the letter, I would have translated the Master's thought by using the word It is very rarely that Mahatma K.H. dictated verbatim; and when He did there remained the few sublime passages found in Mr. Sinnett's letters from Him. The rest, He would say, write so and so, and the chela wrote, often without knowing one word of English, as I am now made to write Hebrew and Greek and Latin, etc. . . . Two or three times, perhaps more, letters were precipitated in my presence, by chelas who could not speak English, and who took ideas and expressions out of my head. The phenomena in truth and solemn reality were greater at those times than ever! Yet they often appeared the most suspicious, and I had to hold my tongue, to see suspicion creeping into the minds of those I loved best and respected, unable to justify myself or to say one word. . . . Well, this will do. I have told you the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so far as I am allowed to give it. Many are the things I have no right to explain, if I had to be hung for it."

Since this important letter is not readily accessible, I have scanned it from its published sources and put it into a PDF file for us here. I have also included A. Trevor Barker's important article on this subject, and a statement from Charles Johnston's conversation with HPB on the same thing. Johnston mentioned trying to smudge what he took to be the pencil writing on one of these Mahatma letters, but could not do so because the writing was precipitated into the page, not written on the page. Probably most of you have seen the photographic enlargement of part of a Mahatma letter reproduced in Geoffrey Barborka's 1973 book, *The Mahatmas and Their Letters* (facsimile no. 4, facing p. 113). He there writes: "The reproduction clearly shows the characteristic features termed precipitation, in which every letter is composed of diagonal lines, including the underlining placed below words. It has the appearance of being in blue pencilling or crayon, but no pencil could be used to form this type of lettering."

This letter by HPB explains rather fully the mechanism by which something that she read in Beal could enter the Mahatma letters and be used to cloth the ideas explaining fohat. It has been a longstanding misapprehension to regard the Mahatma letters as being directly written

by the Mahatmas, and to therefore expect them to be fully accurate. In the 1880s, no one knew that the books by Samuel Beal and Brian Hodgson and Emil Schlagintweit and other writers of that time were full of mistakes. The scholars of that time relied on them as much as HPB did. This does complicate our work, but the sooner we dispense with incorrect terms brought in by chelas to explain the ideas of the Mahatmas, the better chance we have of figuring out what fohat actually is. There is a lot of terminological dross to clear away before we can get to the actual ideas of the Stanzas.

David Reigle on October 10, 2010 at 8:53pm

Compilations of original source material on a topic, like M. Sufilight has provided for us here, are extremely helpful. Here we see, for example, that HPB used the Tibetan word pho nya, "messenger," that Joe had suggested earlier. I find the quotes from the Voice of the Silence, linking fohat with kundalini, to be intriguing.

David Reigle on October 10, 2010 at 9:01pm

Fohat has been glossed in Theosophical writings as daivi-prakriti, literally "divine nature," and described as "the light of the Logos." These both come from T. Subba Row's lectures on the Bhagavad-gita. He gives us the idea that if you are familiar with Vedanta, particularly Advaita Vedanta which he follows, you will know that daivi-prakriti refers to such an idea; that is, that this is a known teaching. The foremost writer on Advaita Vedanta is, of course, Shankaracharya. Shankaracharya in his commentary on Bhagavad-gita 9.13, where the two words daivi-prakriti occur, explains them as follows: "The divine (daivim) nature (prakritim) is that of the gods (devanam), characterized by control of the mind (shama), control of the senses (dama), compassion (daya), and faith (shraddha)." This is in contrast to the delusive nature (mohini prakriti) spoken of in the previous verse, pertaining to the rakshasas and asuras, or demonic beings. These are the two kinds of natures that different people have, and are further elaborated in chapter 16. Shankaracharya's commentary is brief and straightforward. There is no mention of anything like the idea of the light of the Logos. Nor do the several other commentators I have checked add anything more to this. So where did Subba Row get his idea of daivi-prakriti?

Unless some exoteric text can be found that explains daivi-prakriti the way Subba Row does, which I have so far not found, I must assume that he got this from an esoteric source. In fact, such a source came out under the most extraordinary circumstances, and was published about twenty-five years after Subba Row gave his Bhagavad-gita lectures. It is the Pranava-vada of Gargyayana. There, in volume 2, pp. 220, 234-236 of the summarized English translation by Bhagavan Das, is an explanation of daivi-prakriti similar to how Subba Row explains it. For those who want a web version, I learned that this hard-to-find book was scanned a few years ago and is available at www.makara.us/05ref/01books/pranavavada/pv_toc.htm.

The story of how the Pranava-vada came out is told in the preface to vol. 1, as "The Strange Story of a Hidden Book." In brief, this Sanskrit book was dictated to Parmeshri Das and Bhagavan Das starting in 1894 by a wandering blind pandit named Dhanaraja. This blind pandit had a phenomenal memory, and dictated portions of many other hitherto unknown Sanskrit books. This indicated, but did not prove, that many lost Sanskrit works still exist. Some years later, around 1915, the Suddha Dharma Mandala was founded to bring out

hitherto unknown teachings aimed at a primarily Indian audience. They then published two of the three volumes of the original Sanskrit of the Pranava-vada, from previously hidden manuscripts obtained from their teachers. This was the first time in the modern era that a secret book came out, in the original Sanskrit. So there is every reason to believe that a Sanskrit text of the Stanzas of Dzryan can also be brought out.

Jacques Mahnich on October 11, 2010 at 1:07pm

To David question : "Can we find references in the Hindu Tantras to sakti or adi-sakti as a cosmic principle?", there is an interesting book wrote in 1927 by Sir John Woodroffe, called Shakti and Shakta which definively described Shakti as a cosmic principle :

" Shakti in the highest causal sense is God as Mother, and in another sense it is the universe which issues from Her Womb. And what is there which is neither the one nor the other ? Therefore, the Yoginihridaya Tantra thus salutes Her who conceives, bears, produces and thereafter nourishes all worlds : " Obeisance be to Her who is pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss, as Power, who exists in the form of Time and Space and all that is therein, who is the radiant Illuminatrix in all beings."

To-day Western science speaks of Energy as the physical ultimate of all forms of Matter. So has it been for ages to the Shaktas, as the worshippers of Shakti are called. But they add that such energy is only a limited manifestation (as Mind and Matter) of the almighty infinite Supreme Power (Maha-Shaktyi) of Becoming in 'That' (Tat), which is unitary Being (Sat) itself."

In another chapter, John Woodroffe described Shakti in Taoism, refering to the Tao-te-king as the Treatise on Tao and Tei. Tao which Lao-Tse calls "The great" is in its Sanskrit equivalent Brahman, and Tei is Its power or activity or Shakti.

Then he described what looks like a Cosmogenesis story : ... at a particular moment (to speak in our language for It was then beyond time), Tao threw out from Itself Tei Its Power (Verito or Shakti) which operates in alternating modes called Yin and Yang.

David Reigle on October 11, 2010 at 9:03pm

Thank you, Jacques. The Pranava-vada, too, when speaking of daivi-prakriti, associates this with shakti, and both of these are feminine. Now we have to sort out HPB's statements making fohat a male power, and distinguishing it from a female principle.

Jacques Mahnich on October 12, 2010 at 9:07am

In 1892, E-J Coulomb (which is not related to the infamous Coulomb affair), a french theosophist who use to publish a lot of articles in the Lotus Bleu, wrote a book named The Secret of the Absolute, where he briefly elaborate on daivi-prakriti as follows (page 117) :

"These three letters (AUM) represent the Spirit, the Force, and Matter, or, otherwise the Essence, the Substance and the Existence which result from their intermingling. A is Atma, father of all beings and source of all creators ; Purusha, Ishwara, Narayana, Swayambhuva,

Brahma,...are aspects of this principle. M stand for Mulaprakriti, also called Aditi, Swabhavat, Chidakasha, Avyaktam, Prokriti, etc. source of all things and mother of all creatures. Finally, U or OU represent Oueaohou, tibetan and esoteric name of the Verb, which means the creative activity who, from emanation to emanation, become Fohat, daivi-prakriti, MahaShakti, etc... or the various aspects of the force. Hindus are right to consider Shakti as a synonym for Prakriti, because matter is nothing without the force which manifest in her.

David Reigle on October 12, 2010 at 3:15pm

What are the chances of us getting access to an original language text of the Stanzas of Dzryan? I think very high. T. Subba Row told us about daivi-prakriti, which he equated with fohat, in his lectures on the Bhagavad-gita. But what he said about daivi-prakriti, as the "light of the Logos," etc., cannot be found in the available commentaries of Shankaracharya and others. Then the Pranava-vada surfaced, and confirmed what Subba Row said about daivi-prakriti. In that hitherto unknown Sanskrit text, daivi-prakriti is of course not called the light of the Logos, since it does not use the word Logos. But it speaks of a trinity of manifestation, that would correspond to the idea of the Logos as manifestation, and names this trinity as pratyag-atma, daivi-prakriti, and mula-prakriti. (The printed Sanskrit text published by the Suddha Dharma Mandala actually uses devi-prakriti throughout, rather than daivi-prakriti, but for our purposes I will use daivi-prakriti.) It does indeed describe daivi-prakriti, several times, as the light (prAkasha) of pratyag-atma and mula-prakriti (Sanskrit edition, vol. 2, pp. 210-215).

This, to me, demonstrates that Subba Row in fact had access to esoteric teachings (even though he spoke as if they were the known teachings of Vedanta). The esoteric Pranava-vada did come out and confirmed what Subba Row taught. Similarly, the Stanzas of Dzryan were first brought out in English in The Secret Doctrine, and there is every reason to believe that their originals will also follow.

The significance of this for the world is great. No one but Theosophists, and an occasional lover of the Bhagavad-gita, reads Subba Row's lectures on the Bhagavad-Gita. So the light of the Logos reaches only a very few people on earth. The same is true of The Secret Doctrine. It is ignored by the world because, without an original text to show its authenticity, few will take it seriously. The discovery of a Sanskrit or Tibetan text of the Stanzas would bring this material to the attention of the world.

I would add a note on Senzar. Although the original Stanzas are said to be written in this language, their Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan translations are referred to. It is one of these that I expect to come out, since no one would be able to read the original Senzar. About what HPB calls Senzar, a chela of the Mahatmas wrote in 1883 (BCW 5.298): "The direct progenitor of the Vedic Sanskrit was the sacerdotal language (which has its distinct name but cannot be given)." Such a language is referred to in the Pranava-vada, where it is called Samsara-para, and also referred to as Sanskrit, apparently a very archaic Sanskrit. It is there described as the one language which covers the whole samsara, the universal language, the chief of all languages, the great speech, the consecrated language, the language of the gods, the fount and origin of all other languages, the primal universal language, etc. (English translation, vol. 2, pp. 68-73).

Some people have the idea that Senzar is entirely pictographic, and that HPB simply translated from pictures. That this is not the case is shown clearly in the newly published Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge that Daniel Caldwell discovered a number of years ago. For example, HPB translated verse 3 of Stanza 1 in the published SD as "Universal mind was not, for there were no Ah-hi to contain it." In the Transactions, she explains that this universal mind is absolute mind, so that it must always exist. Some of those present then suggested that she should not have written "universal mind was not" in the SD, since this sounds contradictory, but rather should have called it cosmic mind. In her replies during this discussion, she said:

"I cannot go and invent things; I am obliged to translate just as the stanzas give it in the book." (The Secret Doctrine Commentaries, pp. 30-31)

"How can I put that it was not? I am obliged to translate as it is, and then to give all the commentaries. I didn't invent them. If I were inventing it, I might put it otherwise." (p. 31)

"Those who have written this do not concern themselves with the manifested universe. . . . You had better send your protest to those who have written this thing, because I can't help it." (p. 31)

"You must remember the peculiar mode of expression used by the Easterners. They express it always allegorically, always figuratively. You cannot ask them to express in scientific language which says so much and means so little." (p. 32)

"I cannot put things out of my own head; I just translate as it is. There are many, many verses that come between, that I have left out altogether." (pp. 33-34)

"The first answers relate to the beginning of the whole objective universe, but after that, when you begin to speak about Father-Mother, then it relates to our objective universe and to the solar system only because our teaching does not busy itself at all with things outside. At least those things that I have selected. I could not go and select the whole thing. I have only taken that which relates to our solar system. I have just taken two or three just to show the general idea, and then skipped over whole stanzas and came to the point. I have said there are some 60 stanzas passed over. I would have had compliments from the Daily News if I had translated the whole of it." (p. 38)

HPB is describing an actual text that she translated from, written in verses. In the previous meeting, in reply to a question, she said: "I count it in such a way as to translate as best I can the real meaning of a very difficult and abstruse text, and then to give the interpretations that I was taught and have learned." (p. 12).

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 13, 2010 at 7:50am

H.P.B. gave us another clue on the meaning of Fohat, which can be found in an appendix to the book "Esoteric Writings of T.Subba Row", first published in 1895. On page 312, one can read : " Hence, the Arhat secret doctrine on cosmogony admits but of one absolute, indestructible, eternal, and uncreated UNCONSCIOUSNESS (so to translate), of an element (the word being used for want of a better term) absolutely independent of everything else in

the universe ; a something ever present or ubiquitous, a Presence which ever was, is and will be, whether there is a God, gods, or none ; whether there is a universe or no universe ; existing during the eternal cycles of Maha Yugas, during the Pralayas ; as during the periods of Manvantara : and this is SPACE, the field for the operation of the eternal Forces and natural Law, the basis (as Mr Subba Row rightly calls it) upon which take place the eternal intercorrelations of Akasha-Prakriti, guided by the unconscious regular pulsations of Shakti - the breath or power of a conscious deity, the theists would say - the eternal energy of an eternal, unconscious Law, say the Buddhists. Space then, or " Fan, Bar-nang " (Mahasunyata) or, as it is call by Lao-tze, the "Emptiness" is the nature of the Buddhist Absolute. (See Confucius' Praise of the Abyss). The word Jiva, then could never be applied by the Arhats to the Seventh Principle, since it is only through its correlation or contact with matter that Fohat (the Buddhist active energy) can develop active conscious life."

David Reigle on October 13, 2010 at 8:51pm

The interesting quote from E-J Coulomb, relating daivi-prakriti, etc., to the letters of AUM, is very much like what the Pranava-vada does throughout. I mention this in case anyone has tried to read in this book, and found it difficult. The whole book is, in a way, a commentary on the AUM, in terms of the maha-vakya, or great saying, from the Atharva-Vedas. This is: aham etat na, or "I, this, not." So it explains everything in terms of the "I" or self or atman, the "this" or non-self, and the "not," which is the necessary relationship of negation between the I and the this. Whatever is being spoken of in this book is very frequently related to the I, the this, and the not. That explains this book's otherwise strange and incomprehensible sentences using these terms, which are found interspersed throughout. The shakti is not one of these three, but is said to be immanent in all three of these.

David Reigle on October 13, 2010 at 9:02pm

I, too, think that the Kalachakra is a good choice for further research in relation to the Book of Dzryan. The statements quoted, including Pupul Jayakar's 1986 material, need some updating. There is no information that I know of in the writings of Gopinath Kaviraj that he ever had access to the Kalachakra. He is famous for his researches in Hindu Tantra. The Sanskrit manuscript of the Kalachakra that Jagannath Upadhyaya got copied was in the possession of Divya Vajra Vajracharya of Kathmandu, and it also included the Vimala-prabha commentary thereon. This manuscript was microfilmed by the Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions in the 1970s. I obtained microfiche of it in 1980, and used it for my early Kalachakra studies. Only long after that, when studying with Divya Vajra Vajracharya's son, Gautam Vajracharya, did I learn these details.

This manuscript formed the basis of Jagannath Upadhyaya's edition of the Vimala-prabha, which included the Kalachakra, and he also used five other manuscripts. He died in 1986, just after volume 1 was published, giving the first two of its five chapters. When I spoke with him, through a Hindi interpreter, he was seeking a manuscript of the Vimala-prabha that included the fifth chapter, which this one does not. Such a manuscript exists in the library of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta, and I had obtained a microfilm of it in 1982. But it is written in archaic Bengali script, and Jagannath Upadhyaya could not easily read it. After his death, it was deciphered by Janardan Shastri Pandeya. It was published as volume 3 of the Vimala-prabha in 1994, under the editorship of Vrajavallabh Dwivedi and S. S. Bahulkar. They were also the

editors for volume 2 in 1994, in continuation of Jagannath Upadhyaya's work. All three of these volumes were published by the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath.

Already in 1966 the Kalachakra itself had been published in New Delhi, edited by Raghu Vira and Lokesh Chandra. But it was not very comprehensible without a commentary. So efforts were made by Jagannath Upadhyaya and others, including Biswanath Banerjee, to obtain and edit and publish its great commentary, the Vimala-prabha. Banerjee had announced an edition of this, but it has not been published. His much improved edition of the Kalachakra, however, was published in 1985. In summary, all the primary Kalachakra texts have been available in the original Sanskrit in printed editions since 1994. I have read them all, and they do not contain the Stanzas of Dzryan, or references to them. They are nonetheless of much interest to some of us.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 14, 2010 at 10:58am

For the seekers : Pundarika commentary on Kalachakra (Vimala-prabha or Stainless Light) was recently (2004) published in english - Author is Khedrup Norsang Gyatso, translated by Gavin Kilty. It is the Volume 14 of the Library of Tibetan Classics - Wisdom Publications. It includes a compilation of the Root and Condensed Tantra. Only 700 pages...

[David Reigle](#) on October 14, 2010 at 10:35pm

Regarding rumors, there are many traditions in India of lost texts, and many of these say that the ones we have are not the real original ones. For example, the Digambara Jainas say that the entire Jaina canon that is now available, which is accepted by the Svetambara Jainas, is not authentic. They believe that the last of the real original texts of the Jaina canon were lost about two thousand years ago. Similarly for the Buddhists, the Tibetan author Bu-ston, who lived in the 1300s C.E., compiled the traditions that had reached him from India about the Buddhist scriptures. In his famous History of Buddhism, he has a small section on "lost parts of the canon," in which he describes the often gigantic Buddhist texts that are no longer extant. This book was translated into English by E. Obermiller.

HPB tells us that the Book of Dzryan is the first of fourteen volumes of commentaries on the seven secret folios of Kiu-te. Her description of what is apparently the latter small book, given already in Isis Unveiled and repeated in the Introductory to The Secret Doctrine (p. xlii), coupled with her new description of it given on p. 1 of the SD's Proem, has led to some confusion about what book she meant by the Book of Dzryan that she translated Stanzas from in the SD. But I think we can safely conclude that it is one of the fourteen volumes of secret commentaries on the Books of Kiu-te, i.e., on the Buddhist Tantras, and it is not the small pictorial book she described. Bu-ston in his above-mentioned History of Buddhism speaks of many lost original versions of the Buddhist Tantras, many of which are of very extensive. The original Kalachakra, for example, is supposed to consist of 12,000 verses. It never reached India, and is supposed to be found only in Shambhala. Similarly, other secret books are only found in the realm of the Nagas, etc.

So in the Stanzas of Dzryan we seek a text that, on analogy, has not been available publicly, at least in known history, but is only found in some hidden place. Therefore we are not likely to find it among the known books. How do such secret books come out? In the case of

Nagarjuna, legend says that he visited the realm of the Nagas and brought back the Prajna-paramita texts. In the case of the Kalachakra texts, an Indian yogi is supposed to have attempted to go to Shambhala to get it, but was instead met partway by a teacher from Shambhala who gave him the texts. HPB said that the fourteen volumes of secret commentaries on the Books of Kiu-te were kept secret and apart in the charge of the Panchen Lama at Shigatse (BCW 14.422). But the situation in Tibet has changed dramatically since then. All we know is that HPB did produce, from some source, cosmogonic material that is much more detailed than any cosmogony known anywhere else on earth. This indicates a real source; we just don't know where.

David Reigle on October 15, 2010 at 9:10pm

"An Unpublished Discourse of the Buddha," found in Blavatsky Collected Writings vol. 14, pp. 408-410, is supposed to come from "the second Book of Commentaries," presumably the second of the fourteen secret volumes that HPB referred to. It is indeed quite different from most of the known Buddhist books. It teaches a true "I" or "Self" beyond the world of mutability. As everyone knows, Buddhism is regarded by almost all of its adherents, as well as almost all who study it, as denying the "I" or "Self," the atman, as its most distinctive doctrine. But there are known Buddhist sutras that refer to and accept an atman. These are the Tathagata-garbha sutras, usually reckoned to be ten, although the lists do not always coincide. Among these, the one that speaks most openly of the atman is the Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Sutra. Dr. Tony Page has this whole large sutra available on his website, along with other related material. In Tibet, the Tathagata-garbha sutras were favorites of the Jonangpas.

Ken Small has pointed out to me earlier that the image given in this unpublished discourse, of an elephant seeing its reflection in a lake, is distinctive enough that it might provide us a clue in tracing these texts. Someone familiar with the large Tibetan Buddhist canon, or the large Chinese Buddhist canon, might recognize this image from some known sutra. Finding an exoterically known and available text having this image could be useful to us.

Jacques Mahnich on October 17, 2010 at 8:18am

An interesting finding (which may have already been discussed elsewhere), but quite puzzling.

David made a thorough investigation in his "Notes on Cosmological Notes", identifying most of the vocabulary found in the note to the stanzas (p.23 of S.D. 1). Translations of the terms was made by referring to new materials published during the last 40 years, since a lot of tibetan literature became available. I took a deep breath before plunging into the Annales du Musée Guimet, to discover a lot of tibetan studies made around the 1830-1850 period. Among them is the well-known author (which HPB cites), Emile de Schlagintweit which published, back in 1863, his book "Buddhism in Tibet". In this book (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/bit/index.htm>), one can find some of the very specific terms used by HPB like zodmanas zhiba, tenbrel chugnyi, yong-grub, ngovonyid, khorlo. Maybe the next step is to understand where E. de Schagintweit found those terms which are almost impossible to find in the current known (western) tibetan buddhism literature.

David Reigle on October 17, 2010 at 8:56pm

One of the reasons that Theosophy is not taken seriously by scholars, and therefore by most of the public, is that Theosophical writers often rely on material that is not up to date or in touch with current scholarship. For example, citing 22 English translations of Rig-Vedas 10.129 is nice, but it is not enough. Of these 22 translators, only three have produced complete translations of the Rig-Vedas. Two of these three translations, the early ones by Horace Wilson and Ralph Griffith, are regarded as having been superseded, while the third, the recent one by Satya Prakash Sarasvati and Satyakam Vidyalankar, is not in the running because it follows the monotheistic interpretation of Dayananda Sarasvati. The standard translation of the Rig-Vedas used by scholars today is Karl Geldner's German translation. It was completed before his death in 1929, but was not published until 1951. Despite its age, no later translation has yet superseded it. It also superseded the earlier German translations by Hermann Grassmann and Alfred Ludwig. We still await Stanley Insler's English translation, which will no doubt become the standard when it comes out. One other existing translation besides Geldner's, however, is equally respected, but has not superseded Geldner's because the author was not able to complete it before his death. It is the partial French translation by Louis Renou.

To be reasonably complete here, I have made an additional PDF of material on Rig-Vedas 10.129. It includes Geldner's standard German translation published in 1951 and reprinted in 2003 by Harvard University Press, as well as his first translation of this hymn, done jointly with Adolf Kaegi and published in 1875. Also included is Renou's French translation, from the third edition published in 1956, and his notes on this hymn published in 1967, a year after his death. In addition, there is a valuable English translation by the Dutch Vedic scholar, Jan Gonda. It was published as the English summary of an article by him in a Dutch academic journal in 1966. In 2007 the last volume of R. L. Kashyap's complete English translation of the Rig-Vedas was published, which follows the important psychological interpretation of Sri Aurobindo. This translation of this hymn is also included. Of the six English translations that were mentioned after the first PDF was made, I have included in this PDF those of Adolf Kaegi, Franklin Edgerton, and Jeanine Miller.

We will need to re-tally the results of the "he" or "it" question regarding verse 7 of this hymn, the verse that HPB altered. But first, I would request Jacques to let us know what Louis Renou gives for this verse in his French translation. It is great to have a native French speaker here, so that we can be sure of the correct English interpretation of this French translation. I wonder if we have a native German speaker here, who could check the two Geldner translations of this verse for us. Also, Geldner wrote on this hymn a small book of 34 pages titled, *Zur Kosmogonie des Rig-Vedas*, published in 1908. I see that it is available for download on Google books. It includes a complete German translation of Sayana's rather extensive commentary on Rig-Vedas 10.129, the only translation of this commentary yet to be published. Sayana lived in the 14th century C.E., so is far later than the time of the Vedas. But his commentary lets us know how the Vedas were understood in India at that time. No ancient commentary on the Vedas has come down to us.

I hope that, even for readers here who do not look at these various translations, this whole comparison will show that it is impossible to regard a single translation of a Sanskrit text such as this as being fully accurate or definitive. The best of scholars, ancient and modern, disagree on what many of the technical terms mean, to say nothing of the difficulties of adequately

expressing them in English. For example, HPB says in a footnote to "An Unpublished Discourse of Buddha," that the Vedic term Aditi refers to "space." This follows the interpretation of this term given by Max Muller, who we know that HPB read. But as both Arthur Macdonell in his book, *Vedic Mythology* (pp. 120-123), and Arthur Berriedale Keith in his book, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upanishads* (pp. 215-218), point out, Muller was pretty much alone in this interpretation of Aditi, while almost all other Vedic scholars interpreted Aditi differently.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 18, 2010 at 3:06pm

Rig-Vedas 10.129 verse 7, in the Louis Renou translation read as follows :

"This secondary creation, from where it came, if it was established or not , the one who watch over (this world) in the highest firmament is the only one to know - unless he does not know ?"

I will need more time to go through the commentaries to see if it brings more understanding.

What is more puzzling, is that another french version (A. Langlois) read completely different :
 "The one who is the first author of this creation, support it. And who else than he could do it ?
 The one who, from the top of the sky, is watching all this world, his the only one to know it.
 Who else would have this science ?"

[David Reigle](#) on October 18, 2010 at 8:57pm

Thank you very much, Jacques, for translating Renou's rendition of this verse for us. As we might have expected, he gives "it" rather than "he" for the phrase in question, "if it was established or not." Thank you also for translating A. Langlois' rendition of this verse for us. Langlois was the first person to translate the Rig-Vedas into a Western language. He did this at a time (1848-1851) when very little was known outside of India about the Vedas, or even about Sanskrit. So his translation and Renou's translation are at opposite ends of the spectrum, in terms of time, being separated by more than a century. We can expect that Langlois' early French translation would be as different from Renou's modern French translation, as Horace Hayman Wilson's early English translation is different from modern English translations.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 19, 2010 at 10:05am

Just to illustrate the difficult task in front of us, Sri Aurobindo wrote (*Secret of the Vedas*) :

" To translate the Vedas is to border upon an attempt at the impossible. For while a literal English rendering of the hymns of the ancient Illuminates would be a falsification of their sense and spirit, a version which aimed at bringing all the real thought to the surface would be an interpretation rather than a translation....

To enter into the very heart of the mystic doctrine, we must ourselves have trod the ancient paths and renewed the lost discipline, the forgotten experience. And which of us can hope to do that with any depth or living power ? Who in this Age of Iron shall have the strength to recover the light of the Forefathers or soar above the two enclosing firmaments of mind and body into their luminous empyrean of the infinite Truth ? The Rishis sought to conceal their

knowledge from the unfit, believing perhaps that the corruption of the best might lead to the worst and fearing to give the potent wine of the Soma to the child and the weakling."

[David Reigle](#) on October 19, 2010 at 9:10pm

To make a list of terms with their known or accepted translations should be a simple matter, but it is not. It seems that each translation found in use brings with it its own problems, and then clarifying these problems brings in further complications. There are found in The Secret Doctrine many such terms, which HPB uses in a particular meaning that was used by a particular author at a particular time, but which meaning is quite misleading if not altogether wrong.

If you pick up any of the many books on Tibetan Buddhism published in recent years, you will soon come across the translation "emptiness." This has become in the last few decades the most widely adopted translation of the technical term sunyata. But if you go back a few more decades, you might find a book in which this term was instead translated as "non-substantiality." If you go back a few more decades yet, to when this idea was first being introduced, you might find sunyata translated as "relativity." This is the translation of this term used by Th. Stcherbatsky in 1927 in the first English translation of substantial portions of Nagarjuna's great sourcework on the subject of sunyata (The Conception of Buddhist Nirvana, including chapters 1 and 25 of Nagarjuna's Mula-Madhyamaka-Karika).

Now go forward again in time to 1984, when Robert Thurman's translation of Tsong-khapa's book, The Essence of True Eloquence, was published. Tsong-khapa there expands on a short text he wrote, titled in Thurman's translation, "Eulogy of Buddha Shakyamuni for His Teaching of Relativity." So, is this Tsong-khapa's eulogy on emptiness, sunyata? No, "relativity" is here Thurman's translation of the technical term pratitya samutpada, a term that is more commonly translated as "dependent origination" or some such similar phrase. It refers to the twelve nidanas, the chain of causation, that was spoken of already in the early Theosophical writings.

If HPB would have written The Secret Doctrine in 1930, she most likely would have used the term "relativity" in it, adopted from Stcherbatsky. It would have referred to sunyata, what has now become widely known as "emptiness." If, however, HPB wrote in 1985, after reading Thurman's translation of Tsongkhapa's book, she also would likely have used the term "relativity." But now it would refer to pratitya samutpada, what has more generally been known as "dependent origination."

This is the kind of thing we are up against when we see in The Secret Doctrine such terms as Aditi, Svabhavat, Mula-Prakriti, etc., which were adopted by HPB from particular writers of her time, in the particular meaning used by that writer. Max Muller thought that the primary meaning of Aditi is the Infinite, like space, and this is the meaning that HPB adopted and used throughout her writings. Here is what Muller wrote about it in his 1869 book, Rig-Vedas-Sanhita, p. 230:

"Aditi, an ancient god or goddess, is in reality the earliest name invented to express the Infinite; not the Infinite as the result of a long process of abstract reasoning, but the visible Infinite, visible by the naked eye, the endless expanse beyond the earth, beyond the clouds,

beyond the sky. That was called A-diti, the un-bound, the unbounded; . . ."

Compare what HPB wrote in SD vol. 1, p. 99, commenting on "'Darkness,' the Boundless," in Stanza of Dzryan 4, verse 5:

"The exoteric version many be found in the oldest Sanskrit Scriptures. In the Rig Vedas, Aditi, 'The Boundless' or infinite Space, translated by Mr. Max Muller, 'the visible infinite, visible by the naked eye (! !); the endless expanse beyond the Earth, beyond the clouds, beyond the sky,' is the equivalent of 'Mother-Space' coeval with 'Darkness.'"

As space, Aditi can also be the mother of the gods, or at least of the Adityas, who derive their name from her. But other writers see in Aditi other ideas than infinite space, such as freedom from bondage, or imperishability, or eternity, or celestial light, or boundlessness, or the earth, or heaven and earth, etc. Sri Aurobindo gives it a psychological interpretation, saying that it means "the Supreme or infinite Consciousness" (Sri Aurobindo's Vedic Glossary, compiled by A. B. Purani). Space is no doubt one meaning, but it is not necessarily the primary meaning, as Max Muller took it, who HPB relied on.

Similarly, the idea of svabhava as a Buddhist teaching was derived by HPB from Brian Hodgson's 1874 book, Essays on the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet. This one, it turns out, was altogether wrong, as no school of Svabhavika Buddhists exists in Nepal. HPB uses the term Svabhavat in this same Stanza 4, verse 5, there explaining it as "the mystic Essence, the plastic root of physical Nature," adding that, "The name is of Buddhist use." This is what she understood from Brian Hodgson's book, as did everyone else at that time, including scholars, and up till fairly recently. But Hodgson was mistaken. So HPB is in company with scholars such as Sir Monier-Williams, Hendrik Kern, Louis de La Vallee Poussin, Arthur Berriedale Keith, Helmut von Glasenapp, Shasi Bhushan Dasgupta, Andre Bareau, John Snelling, and others, who also repeated this incorrect information. It was only corrected with David Gellner's 1989 article, "Hodgson's Blind Alley? On the So-Called Schools of Nepalese Buddhism."

Then, the idea of mula-prakriti as a Vedanta term was copied by HPB from T. Subba Row's articles in The Theosophist giving his dialogue with, or arguments against, the Almora Swami, and also later his Bhagavad-gita lectures. In this case, Subba Row was presenting esoteric teachings on this as if mula-prakriti was a standard part of the known teachings of Vedanta. HPB naturally repeated this as such in the SD. So her statements saying that the one substance-principle, for example, is the Mula-prakriti of the Vedantins and the Svabhavat of the Buddhists, are quite inaccurate, being based on incorrect usages that she adopted from the writers of her time.

She does not use mula-prakriti or Aditi in the Stanzas themselves, but Svabhavat is found in them seven times.

David Reigle

The term "Svâbhâvat," which occurs seven times in the Stanzas of Dzryan, presents a longstanding problem with its final "t". In the Sanskrit Buddhist texts where it is said to be found, it occurs as svabhâva, not svâbhâvat. It means the "inherent nature" of something. The

usual example given in these texts is that heat is the inherent nature (svabhâva) of fire. But that is not how it is used in Theosophical writings, nor in the writings of Brian Hodgson Hodgson.

The terms swabhâva and Svâbhâvikas were made known in English in Brian Hodgson's articles published in Asiatic Researches beginning in 1828, and later collected into a book, Essays on the Languages, Literature, and Religion of Nepal and Tibet, London, 1874. I have gone through this book, as well as the original journal articles, and found only swabhâva, not svâbhâvat. One possibility, then, is that the final "t" on svâbhâvat is just an error that somehow crept into the Theosophical writings, and that simply svabhâva was intended.

In the Sanskrit Buddhist texts themselves we regularly find svabhâva. Occasionally, svabhâva is used with the added suffix, "-tâ" ("t" followed by long "a"), forming svabhâvatâ. This suffix has a meaning similar to the English suffix, "-ness." A common example of this is sunya, "empty," and sunyatâ, "emptiness." So svabhâvatâ is a second possibility. When in 1997 I wrote the Book of Dzryan Research Report on Technical Terms in Stanza II, I left the question open of which word the Theosophical svâbhâvat might be. When in 1999 this article was reprinted in Blavatsky's Secret Books, I had to conclude that svabhâvatâ was "perhaps the more likely of the two terms to be the specific equivalent of Blavatsky's svâbhâvat." However, this is not the case.

Last year the mystery of the final "t" was solved by Daniel Caldwell, in an email sent to myself and a few others, dated Oct. 13, 2009. As has been discussed here, it illustrates that HPB, rightly or wrongly, and like everyone else, adopted terms as used by the writers of her time. Daniel found svabhavat in a book by Max Muller, that HPB had obviously drawn from. Here is what Max Muller wrote, who himself had obviously drawn this information from Brian Hodgson's writings:

"There is the school of the Svâbhâvikas, which still exists in Nepal. The Svâbhâvikas maintain that nothing exists but nature, or rather substance, and that this substance exists by itself (svabhâvât), without a Creator or a Ruler. It exists, however, under two forms: in the state of Pravritti, as active, or in the state of Nirvritti, as passive. Human beings, who, like everything else, exist svabhâvât, 'by themselves,' are supposed to be capable of arriving at Nirvritti, or passiveness, which is nearly synonymous with Nirvana." (Max Muller, Chips from a German Workshop, vol. I: Essays on the Science of Religion, London, 1867, p. 281; 2nd ed., 1868, p. 282. This quotation is from Chapter XI, "The Meaning of Nirvana," written in 1857.)

Compare what HPB wrote in Isis Unveiled, as quoted in The Secret Doctrine:

"The Svabhâvikas, or philosophers of the oldest school of Buddhism (which still exists in Nepaul), speculate only upon the active condition of this 'Essence,' which they call Svâbhâvat, and deem it foolish to theorise upon the abstract and 'unknowable' power in its passive condition." (Isis Unveiled, vol. 2, p. 264, as quoted in The Secret Doctrine, vol. 1, p. 3)

Compare also what HPB wrote in an article:

". . . of the Svâbhâvikas. 'Nothing exists in the Universe but Substance—or Nature,' say the

latter. 'This Substance exists by, and through itself (Svabhavat) having never been either created or had a Creator.'" (H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 13, p. 309)

This leaves no doubt that she was drawing from what Max Muller wrote in this book. Here is the problem. Muller had put svabhâva in the ablative case, svabhâvât, in order to show the meaning "by itself," more literally, "from or due to its inherent nature." Not knowing Sanskrit, HPB did not catch this, and simply quoted the word svabhâvât as what this "Essence" is called. This word, svabhâva, with the ablative case ending, svabhâvât, was then used seven times in the Stanzas of Dzian, obviously intending just svabhâva. That solves the longstanding mystery of the final "t" on svâbhâvat in the Stanzas and elsewhere in the Theosophical writings. The problem of its meaning is a question for another day.

Jacques Mahnich

Some search results on "svabhava" :

1) Meanings

"Since in Prasangika emptiness - the absence of inherent existence (svabhavasiddhi, rang bzhin gyis grub pa) - is the nature (svabhava, rang bzhin) of all phenomena, it should not be thought that svabhava is refuted in all its meanings. Svabhava meaning svabhavasiddhi or 'inherent existence' is refuted, but svabhava as 'final nature' or just 'character' (such as heat and burning as the character of fire) is not refuted. (Jeffrey Hopkins)

" The reality of mantra tone which each wind has, is not revealed to the 'child' (bala); its form, that is, its self-existence (svabhava) or identity (atmaka), is revealed to the yogin". (Tson-kha-pa's commentary on the Guhyasamaja Explanatory Tantra - Caturdevipariprccha).

" Children delight in forms; the middle-aged pass to aversion. Understanding the intrinsic nature (svabhava) of form, those with best intelligence are liberated (from it)". (Aryadeva's Cittavisuddhiprakarana, verse 20)

" The self-being (svabhava) is the independent, unconditioned being which does not depend on anything to come into existence (K. Ventaka Ramanan)

2) Spelling :

I took a look on french language books on buddhism (S. Levy, B. St Hilaire, Burnouf, Rahula, Battacharya, Tajima) to check spelling : svabhava is always captured without a final t. When I send a query to the National Library with "svabhavat" as search, only the SD show up as containing this word (out of 1,2 millions books scanned and searchable).

It seems to confirm David and Daniel explanation on this matter.

David Reigle on October 22, 2010 at 5:47pm

Martin, if I was writing in 1932, when G. de Purucker's Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy was published, I might also have concluded that svabhavat must be a present

participle. Besides the ablative, which makes no sense, this is the only way to explain this grammatical form ending in "t", svabhavat. In G. de Purucker's Occult Glossary, he adds that it is a neuter present participle, as noted in my paper on Technical Terms in Stanza II (www.easterntradition.org). But writing now when hundreds of Sanskrit Buddhist texts have become available, in which no such word has ever been found, I have to conclude otherwise. Over the last few decades, I have gathered copies of all known printed Sanskrit Buddhist texts. What I have found in these texts, besides svabhâva, is the form svabhâvatâ, and this was my best guess for HPB's term. But this, too, turned out to be incorrect, as the quote that Daniel found from Max Muller showed.

I know it is hard to accept that HPB, who translated these Stanzas, would have made this kind of mistake. But when you see many mistakes of the same kind, and consider the methods of writing used by chelas of the Mahatmas, what else can we conclude? You will recall that HPB used Svâbhâvat as a term known to Orientalists, not as an esoteric term found only in hidden texts such as the Stanzas of Dzryan. She says at SD 1.98 that "The name is of Buddhist use," adding in a footnote: "As for Svâbhâvat, the Orientalists explain the term as meaning the Universal plastic matter diffused through Space." What orientalists explain it so? Brian Houghton Hodgson, the one and only source on the Svâbhâvikas of Nepal, and everyone else who copied him right up until 1989 when David Gellner showed that there are no Svâbhâvikas of Nepal. HPB may have first gotten this information from Hodgson by way of Eugene Burnouf's book, Introduction a l'Histoire du bouddhisme indien (p. 118), which she quotes twice in Isis Unveiled in reference to Svâbhâvikas and Svabhâva (vol. 1, pp. 93, 250). Perhaps Jacques can tell us what is there in Burnouf's book.

Here follow some quotes from Hodgson himself, the source, showing how he explained the Svâbhâvikas and their teaching of svabhâva. It is this school that K.H. asked Hume to study the doctrines of (ML #22). Hume would have had to do this by way of Hodgson's book. Some more quotes from this book are found under the title, "Doctrines of the Nepalese Svabhavikas," at www.easterntradition.org.

"The Swâbhâvikas deny the existence of immateriality; they assert that matter is the sole substance, and they give it two modes, called Pravritti, and Nirvritti, or action and rest, concretion and abstraction. Matter itself, they say, is eternal, (however infinitesimally attenuated in Nirvritti); and so are the powers of matter which powers possess not only activity, but intelligence." (Essays on the Languages, Literature, and Religion of Nepal and Tibet, London, 1874, p. 23)

"The Prâjnikas agree with the Swâbhâvikas, in considering matter as the sole entity, in investing it with intelligence as well as activity, and in giving it two modes, or that of action and that of rest." (p. 25)

What Hodgson understood to be "matter" is "dharma," as may be seen from the following quotes. This term, dharma, used in this meaning (as opposed to its meaning of the "teachings" or the "law"), is now commonly translated as "phenomena." Hodgson wrote:

". . . Dharma is Diva natura, matter as the sole entity, invested with intrinsic activity and intelligence, the efficient and material cause of all." (p. 72)

"Dharma is material essence, the plastic cause, and underived, a co-equal biunity with Buddha; . . ." (p. 72)

Here we see the word that HPB used to describe this matter, "plastic." As for the idea of being "diffused," Hodgson wrote:

". . . the Swâbhâvikas . . . they too magnify the wisdom and power of nature so abundantly diffused throughout pravritti, . . . (p. 61)

This idea was paraphrased by Samuel Beal as the "universally diffused essence," where he gave what Hodgson had written earlier about the Swâbhâvikas. HPB used Beal's book extensively, and we see this phrase both in her writings and in the Mahatma letters. Beal wrote:

"Both these writers adopted the teaching of the Swâbhâvika school of Buddhism, which is that generally accepted in China. This school holds the eternity of Matter as a crude mass, infinitesimally attenuated under one form, and expanded under another form into the countless beautiful varieties of Nature." (A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese, London, 1871, p. 11)

"The whole of these systems he again includes within one universally diffused essence, . . ." (p. 11)

". . . the manifestation of a latent energy residing in the universally diffused essence." (pp. 11-12)

". . . where Dharma is the same as Prakriti, or Matter itself." (p. 12)

"The doctrine of a universally diffused and self-existing essence of which matter is only a form, seems to be unknown in the Southern schools. It would appear, therefore, that there has been no advance in the Southern philosophical code since the date of Nagasena, who was a strenuous opponent of the Swâbhâva theory." (p. 14)

Beal's Nagasena is, of course, Nagarjuna, whose teachings resulted in the Madhyamaka school of Buddhism. These are the teachings accepted throughout Tibet by all the various orders of Tibetan Buddhism. Here are two more quotes from Beal, the second of which brings in the term yih-sin, found in SD 1.23 as from Stanza I of the Book of Dzyan, and in Mahatma letters #15 and #59.

"This is the mysterious character of the universally diffused Nature (essence): . . ." (p. 29).

"So again, when the idea of a universally diffused essence (dharmakaya) was accepted as a dogmatic necessity, a further question arose as to the relation which this "supreme existence" bore to time, space, and number. And from this consideration appears to have proceeded the further invention of the several names Vairochana (the Omnipresent), Amitabha (for Amirta) the Eternal, and Adi-Buddha (yih-sin) the 'one form of existence.'" (p. 373).

This is quite enough to show that many terms and ideas were adopted in the Theosophical

writings from writings of the time. Svâbhâvat was one of these, adopted from Max Muller's re-statement of Hodgson's material. Regarding the possibility of svabhavat being a neuter present participle, I would add the following.

Even if the term svabhavat as a present participle existed, which I have never seen, there is another problem. Present participles are almost always used in Sanskrit as functional verbs. I do not recall ever seeing one used as a noun, and do not think this is possible. For example, look at the sentence, sitam pasyan ramo mudito 'bhavat, "Seeing Sita, Rama became happy." The present participle is pasyan, "seeing," which functions as the verb in this clause, and takes an object, "Sita." It does not function as a noun, which is how Svâbhâvat is used in the Stanzas. The intended word can only be the noun svabhâva.

[David Reigle](#) on October 22, 2010 at 8:07pm

Jacques, you had earlier pertinently brought up the question of the terms used by HPB as from the Stanzas that are also used by Emil Schlagintweit in his 1863 book, Buddhism in Tibet, such as zodmanas zhiba. In our recent discussion of svabhâva and svâbhâvat, I had mentioned the form svabhâvatâ. It so happens that I found these words together in a phrase from Asanga's commentary on the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, first published in Sanskrit in 1950. So it may be worthwhile to post this. They occur in the commentary on chapter 1, verse 15, as follows, in Sanskrit and Tibetan:

âdi-'sânta-svabhâvatayâ / gzod ma nas zhi ba'i ngo bo nyid kyi

The word svabhâvatâ is in the instrumental case, svabhâvatayâ. Jikido T. Akashiki translates this phrase as "because of their nature of absolute quiescence from the outset" (A Study on the Ratnagotravibhaga, Rome, 1966, p. 174). He includes in his translation the word atyanta, "absolute" which immediately precedes the other words in this Sanskrit phrase. So his translation of zodmanas zhiba (gzod ma nas zhi ba) is "quiescence from the outset."

[David Reigle](#) on October 22, 2010 at 9:17pm

Regarding Rig-Vedas 10.129, since we do not seem to have a native German speaker here, perhaps anyone who knows German could step in and tell us for sure how Karl Geldner translates the first half of verse 7. The verse is:

"Woraus diese Schopfung sich entwickelt hat, ob er sie gemacht hat oder nicht -- der der Aufseher dieser (Welt) im höchsten Himmel ist, der allein weiss es, es sei denn, dass auch er es nicht weiss."

Today I received the MLBD Newsletter for October, which included an obituary for Raimundo Panikkar. His translation of this hymn is found in his large book, The Vedic Experience, and was included in the first PDF of translations posted on this website. It happened that when Nancy and I were studying at the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1978, taking a class from Prof. Panikkar called "Om in the Upanisads," Jeanine Miller came to nearby Krotona to give a series on the Vedas, which we also attended. Through these chance circumstances, we became the intermediaries for Prof. Panikkar meeting Jeanine. Out of politeness, and also the fact that Jeanine did not have a car, we, too, were

invited to Prof. Panikkar's home. There, like flies on the wall, we listened to their conversation with great interest and much enjoyment. I know that personal anecdotes like this have no place in this discussion of the Stanzas, but seeing his obituary today brought up these strong memories.

I will try to justify myself in posting this anecdote by pointing out that the translations of Panikkar and Jeanine take an almost diametrically opposite approach to that of Karl Geldner. Geldner represents the epitome of the philological school, which by careful and thorough analysis of all the usages of particular terms throughout the Rig-Vedas, tries to accurately deduce their correct meaning. Panikkar and Jeanine are much more intuitive in their translations. There is, of course, much to be said for both approaches, and I believe that together they give us a more complete picture of these ancient and obscure hymns, so reminiscent of the Stanzas of Dzryan.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 23, 2010 at 8:48am

Burnouf' book contents (p.117-118) - quite interesting for our research.

" From the short exposition of this system I just made, it result that the theistic school from Nepal is connecting this double serie of divine Buddhas and Bôdhisattvas to a prime Buddha who play exactly the same role that Brahma, the absolute and impersonal being, for the Brâhmans. However, an observation from M. Hodgson leads us to believe that this system of ideal Buddhas may result in a materialistic interpretation (1) ; and this author stated it positively in another place , when he ascribe the belief in the existence of the Dhyâni Buddhas to the Svâbhâvikas or naturalists, true atheists, who says that all things, the Gods like the men, were born from Svabhâva or their proper (inner) nature (2). There is more ; this opinion is confirmed with an major passage from a buddhist author, quoted somewhere else by M. Hodgson, where the five Dhyanis Buddhas are equivalent to the five elements, the five sensitive qualities and the five senses, that is to say they are pure embodiements of the natural phenomenons of the sensible world.

(1) Notices, etc. in As.Res. t. XVI, p.441

(2) Hodgson, Europ. Specul. on Buddh. in Journ. Asiat. Soc. of Bengale, t. III, p.503

So, two important facts : 1) Svabhâva does not spell with a t at the end in Burnouf, and 2) it is Burnouf who is quoting Hodgson in reference with this term and meaning.

[David Reigle](#) on October 23, 2010 at 9:35am

Thank you very much, Martin, for catching this typing error that I made. Yes, it should be Aufseher, not Aufseber. Thanks also for saying that German "er" means "he." So Karl Geldner is among the minority in regarding this phrase as speaking of a "he" rather than an "it." This is confirmed in his footnote here, saying that the subject of this line, 7b, is adhyaksa in the following line, 7c. The adhyaksa is the Aufseher, or overseer. As noted by Walter Maurer and others, we must supply a subject for the verb dadhe in 7b, and this subject can either be iyam visrsti, "this creation," of the preceding line, 7a, or adhyaksa, the "overseer," of the following line, 7c. The verb dadhe is a perfect middle which can be used as a passive. If the subject is "this creation," we take dadhe as a passive, "was made." If the subject is the "overseer," we

take dadhe as a middle, he "made" it.

Perhaps how Geldner took it led to the comment by Louis Renou published in vol. 16 of his *Etudes Vediques et Panineennes* (where most of his Rig-Vedas translations were published), p. 169: "dadhe, sans doute passif 'si elle a ete instituee (par un Etre)'." I understand Renou to say here that dadhe is no doubt a passive. The translation he gives here in this 1967 book differs a little from what was published in his 1956 book: "si elle a fait l'objet ou non d'une institution." This is what Jacques translated for us as: "if it was established or not."

The German Vedic scholar who came after Geldner, Paul Thieme, apparently takes dadhe as a passive in his 1964 translation of this line: "ob sie getatigt worden ist (von einem Agens) oder ob nicht."

[David Reigle](#) on October 23, 2010 at 10:08am

Alistair, I have a fairly clear memory of a comment by C. W. Leadbeater that HPB did not know Sanskrit, and that she would ask any Indian who was there, what is the Sanskrit word for something she was writing about. But my memory is not clear enough to remember where Leadbeater said this! If so, this would partially explain the sometimes confusion of Sanskrit terms taken from different systems of Indian thought found in HPB's writings.

[David Reigle](#) on October 23, 2010 at 12:06pm

Jacques, the translation that you provided for us from Burnouf is of great help in our research here. Thanks much. In addition to the two main points you mentioned, we can see in his comment about the Svâbhâvikas being true atheists what HPB was responding to in *Isis Unveiled*, vol. 1, p. 93.

Also, among the helpful quotes that you posted earlier on svabhâva, there was one from the *Caturdevipariprccha*, and one from Aryadeva's *Cittavisuddhiprakarana*. Have these texts been translated somewhere? Or are they quoted in some other book?

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 24, 2010 at 12:35pm

To David question, references to the Tson-kha-pa's commentary (Bzhis zhus) to the Guyasamaja tantra Explanatory Tantra (*Caturdevipariprccha*) is quoted from Alex Wayman "Yoga of the Guhyasamajatabtra", p.71, and reference to the Aryadeva's *Cittavisuddhiprakarana* is also quoted from the same book on p.144, where verse 20 is given in sanskrit and translated in english. I have not yet found any translations to these two texts.

[David Reigle](#)

In the first section of the Wikipedia article on the Book of Dzhan a paragraph is quoted from The Secret Doctrine:

"This first instalment of the esoteric doctrines is based upon Stanzas, which are the records of a people unknown to ethnology; it is claimed that they are written in a tongue absent from the nomenclature of languages and dialects with which philology is acquainted; they are said to

emanate from a source (Occultism) repudiated by science; and, finally, they are offered through an agency, incessantly discredited before the world by all those who hate unwelcome truths, or have some special hobby of their own to defend. Therefore, the rejection of these teachings may be expected, and must be accepted beforehand. No one styling himself a "scholar," in whatever department of exact science, will be permitted to regard these teachings seriously."

The lines in The Secret Doctrine that immediately follow this are:

"They will be derided and rejected a priori in this century; but only in this one. For in the twentieth century of our era scholars will begin to recognize that the Secret Doctrine has neither been invented nor exaggerated, but, on the contrary, simply outlined; and finally, that its teachings antedate the Vedas." (SD 1.xxxvii)

These lines are especially relevant to us here. So far, this has not happened, and I do not think it can happen until we have an actual Sanskrit/Tibetan manuscript of the Stanzas. Then it will happen big time, and we need to be prepared for this.

The Wikipedia article also says:

"She cribbed at least part of her Stanzas of Dzhan from the Hymn of Creation in the old Sanskrit Rig-Vedas, as a comparison of the two compositions will readily show."

We have here seen a large number of translations of this hymn. To my mind, its comparatively brief seven verses would hardly have supplied HPB with the material for her much more extensive "Seven Stanzas translated from the Book of Dzhan," given in vol. 1 of The Secret Doctrine, consisting of 53 verses in the seven stanzas. It looks more likely to me that the Rig-Vedas's Hymn of Creation is a skeleton outline of the fuller material given in the Stanzas of Dzhan. So perhaps it is the Rig-Vedas that cribbed from the Book of Dzhan.

Jacques Mahnich

The Journal of ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY of Great Britain and Ireland, Volume 16, page 256 brings an article from Professor Wilson, Director of the R.A.S. - Lecture made on April 8, 1854, in which we found a spelling of swabhavat with a final "t" :

' No doubt, amongst the Buddhists, as amongst the Brahmans, differences of opinion occasionally prevailed, giving rise to various schools ; four of these were known to the Brahmanical controversial writers before the sixth century ; but, besides them, who are styled Sautrantika, Vaibhashika, Madhyamika, and Yogachara, there was an Aiswarya, or theistical school, with which the notions admitted into Nepal may have originated : the more ancient and genuine school, however, was that of the Swabhavikas, whose doctrine is thus summarily indicated in a Buddhist Pali book : " Whence come existing things ? from their own nature, - swabhavat. Where do they go to after life ? into other forms, through the same inherent tendency. How do they escape from that tendency ? where do they go finally ? into vacuity, - sunyata," such being the sum and substance of the wisdom of Buddha.

David Reigle

Paul, the report from Dayananda's Autobiography that HPB "speaks Sanskrit quite fluently" would make sense when her body was temporarily being used by an Adept who could speak Sanskrit. But if it was her own ability, and she and Dayananda could converse fluently in that language, it is difficult to understand how such a major misunderstanding between them as that on God or Isvara occurred, which led to the separation of their two groups. It appears that Dayananda did not know her position on this crucial issue until too late, due to the language barrier, since he did not speak English.

David Reigle

Excellent research, Jacques. This may well be where Max Muller copied *svabhâvât* from, since Horace Wilson's lecture giving this term preceded Max Muller's lecture giving this term by three years. Again, we clearly see that this word is put in the ablative case, *swabhâvât*, as Wilson's translation shows, "FROM their own nature." Thanks to your reference, I was able to check this article, and see that he gives the accents correctly for the ablative: *swabhâvât*. I regard HPB's misplacement of the accents, *svâbhâvat*, as a transposition error like her *Narjol* for *Naljol*. So it now looks like HPB copied Max Muller, who copied Horace Wilson, who copied Brian Hodgson.

But Wilson did not copy Hodgson entirely, who as we know did not have the ablative *swabhâvât*. So where did Wilson find this verse, which has the ablative? There is a verse similar to it in Hodgson, from the *Buddha-carita*, but it is not the same verse. This *Buddha-carita* verse, which Hodgson gave only in English, does have the ablative *svabhâvât* in Sanskrit. Wilson says that this is a Pali verse, but the terms *swabhâvât* and *sunyatâ* in it are Sanskrit, not Pali. The Pali forms of these words are *sabhâva*, without the *w* or *v*, and *sunnatâ*.

On a different matter, you had mentioned looking at old volumes of *Annales du Musee Guimet*. There is one volume, volume 5 dated 1883, that is entirely "Fragments Extraits du *Kandjour*," by Leon Feer, of almost 600 pages. I wonder if any of the elusive Theosophical terms such as *fohat*, etc., might be found in it.

David Reigle

Thank you very much, Paul, for posting this letter. Have there been any charges of forgery leveled against the Arya Samaj regarding letters such as this one? I would easily believe that this one was forged. There would be nothing unusual or unexpected about Dayanada giving her some teachings on the Vaisheshika and Nyaya schools of Indian philosophy. But the sentence in the next paragraph is hard to believe: "She has read *Kavyalankara*, some *Vyakarana*, *Valmiki Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, and speaks Sanskrit quite fluently." The *Kavyalankara* is a book on how to write ornate poetry in Sanskrit, something like the poetry of Shakespeare would be in English. *Vyakarana* is grammar. I recall from the small booklet of Dayananda's Autobiography that was reprinted from *The Theosophist* (which I cannot now find my copy of) that it took him three years to learn Panini's grammar. The *Valmiki Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are the two large epics of India, that would take quite a long time to read. Nothing in HPB's writings shows full familiarity with all these Sanskrit writings.

David Reigle

The excerpts you posted, Paul, from the letters of Dayanand Saraswati on the Theosophical Society, are very interesting. Yes, the tendency to ignore or dismiss evidence that makes people uncomfortable is unfortunate, and seems to be a universal human trait, found not only among Theosophists. Among Theosophists, I agree with you that the rather extreme response shown by some to the first volume of the HPB letters was very sad to see, and it is unbecoming of those who, as Theosophists, espouse brotherhood as their first object. I would certainly not wish to recommend viewing the Dayanand letters as forgeries. We simply have some conflicting evidence to resolve. I suppose, too, that this case is a little different than the norm among Theosophists, in that I am questioning evidence that is in favor of HPB's knowledge, rather than against her knowledge.

I did find the C. W. Leadbeater quotation that I mentioned earlier. It is in *Talks on the Path of Occultism*, vol. 1: *At the Feet of the Master*, which was co-authored with Annie Besant. It is found in the 1963 fifth edition on p. 366:

"In the beginning of the Theosophical movement none of us knew Sanskrit. Madame Blavatsky understood something of the religions of India, but she did not know Pali or Sanskrit. Her method was to describe as well as she could what she herself saw, and then say to any Indian friend who might be present, 'What do you call that in your system?' He often did not fully understand her meaning, but he gave her the nearest term he could. The next time she wanted a word she would ask another man, but she never paid any attention to the fact that the first man might be a Hindu and the second a Buddhist -- or that the various Hindus might belong to different schools of philosophy."

This evidence is much more in keeping with what we actually find in her writings. If she spoke Sanskrit quite fluently in 1880, she forgot it rather quickly. Since Dayanand's letters were apparently written in Hindi, one might also suspect problems in translation.

[David Reigle](#) on October 27, 2010 at 7:58am

In reply to the question raised by M. Sufilight in connection with the interesting material quoted from HPB, as far as I know, very little archaeological activity has been carried out in the Karakoram and Altyn-Tagh regions. There is a set of documentaries on the Silk Road that was produced for educational television in Japan and China, which take one through the Tarim basin and by these mountain ranges. They show that some of these areas have not been visited for several decades. For example, one ruined city that they went to had not been seen by outsiders since the expedition of Sir Aurel Stein at the beginning of the 1900s. A few years ago, this set of ten DVDs was available on eBay very inexpensively from a man in Hongkong. Each DVD has three episodes, so you get thirty TV programs. I think the cost then was only \$10 U.S. for the set, not including shipping. They are in Japanese or Chinese, but they also have an English soundtrack that can be accessed. If anyone buys these and needs instructions on how to get the English, just let me know.

At the beginning of the 1900s, when this whole area was more accessible in terms of the political situation, although much more difficult physically, several expeditions were made there. Sir Aurel Stein came across the now famous Tun-huang (Dunhuang) library, then in the custody of a single Chinese religious practitioner who had discovered it. Stein was able to

purchase many of the texts, and these include the oldest Tibetan texts known, and also some very old Chinese texts. Today, this material is receiving much attention through the International Dunhuang Project. A large number of fragmentary Sanskrit texts were discovered by German-Prussian expeditions to the Turfan area at around that same time. These finds have slowly been published in Germany in many volumes in the series, *Sanskrithandschriften aus den Turfanfunden*, and also in editions by Ernst Waldschmidt. Very recently, important new fragments from the Hoernle and Stein collections, housed in the British Library, are being published in *Buddhist Manuscripts from Central Asia: The British Library Sanskrit Fragments*, vol. 1 in 2006 and vol. 2 in 2009. This is a different project from the one being led by Richard Salomon, described in his 1999 book, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhara: The British Library Kharosthi Fragments*. I had earlier mentioned the recent major finds of very old Sanskrit texts from Afghanistan, now in the Schøyen collection in Norway, of which three volumes have so far been published in 2000, 2002, and 2006. I try to monitor these things as well as I can, but such volumes are very expensive, since they are not produced for the commercial market. These are not the kind of books that your local public library is likely to acquire.

What HPB says in this quote that M. Sufilight posted has proven to be very true in regard to the Vedas. I repeat the portion that I am referring to:

"An immense, incalculable number of MSS., and even printed works known to have existed, are now to be found no more. They have disappeared without leaving the slightest trace behind them. Were they works of no importance they might, in the natural course of time, have been left to perish, and their very names would have been obliterated from human memory. But it is not so; for, as now ascertained, most of them contained the true keys to works still extant, and entirely incomprehensible, for the greater portion of their readers, without those additional volumes of Commentaries and explanations."

No one knows for sure what Rig-Vedas 10.129 means, for example, because no ancient commentary has come down to us. We know that such works once existed, because Yaska refers to them in his *Nirukta*, itself a very ancient text attributed to 500-700 B.C.E. Yet the only commentaries on the Vedas that we have are less than a thousand years old. This is why Western scholars have largely disregarded their obviously late interpretations of the Vedas, and have instead evolved philological schools of interpretation, and also employed comparative studies of Indo-European mythology, etc., to interpret them. Indian scholars, too, most notably Dayanand Saraswati and Sri Aurobindo, have disregarded these late commentaries and have evolved schools of interpretation of their own. The original commentaries are lost. But perhaps one day before too long they will be found.

[David Reigle](#) on October 28, 2010 at 9:41pm

Among the unidentified terms from the Stanzas of Dzhan, I considered fohat to be the most important, because of the central role it plays in the cosmos. So I asked about it first. But there are several other unidentified terms. Most of these are found in the paragraph that HPB gives from "one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions" of part of Stanza I, on p. 23 of vol. 1 of *The Secret Doctrine*. These are as follows. I have not used capital letters, since neither Tibetan nor

Sanskrit has them.

1. tho-ag, also spelled tho-og and thog. Translated as "the eternal parent" in verse 1 of Stanza I; translated as "space" in the Cosmological Notes and elsewhere. Compare the Tibetan word thog-ma, meaning "first," the Sanskrit adi.

2. zhi-gyu. Translated as "ever invisible robes" in verse 1 of Stanza I; translated as "cosmic prenebular matter" in the Wurzburg manuscript; translated as "cosmic matter" in the Cosmological Notes. It is there contrasted with zhima, also unidentified. The first word of this compound is almost certainly the Tibetan word gzhi, meaning "ground" or "basis." The second word might be the Tibetan word rgyu, meaning "cause." But this compound has not yet been found in use.

Notice that the next word given there, khorlo, is translated as "eternities." This is a fitting meaning in this context. But this Tibetan word literally means "wheel." This alerts us to the fact that her translation may be giving us what these words refer to, rather than what they mean literally.

3. thyan-kam, also spelled dyan-kam. Defined as "the knowledge of bringing about (giving the impulse to Kosmic energy in the right direction)" in the Cosmological Notes; defined as "the power or knowledge of guiding the impulses of cosmic energy in the right direction" in The Secret Doctrine (vol. 1, p. 635).

4. chohan. Defined as "lord" or "master" or "chief" in the Theosophical Glossary.

5. tgenchang. (The meaning of this word is unknown.)

6. yinsin, also spelled yih-sin. Defined as the "one form of existence" or Adi-Buddha or dharmakaya or the universally diffused essence in Mahatma Letters #15 and #59. Since this is exactly how Samuel Beal defines it in his 1871 book, A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese, p. 373, we would assume that this is a Chinese word.

7. sun-chan. (The meaning of this word is unknown.)

Besides these words from this paragraph, there is also an unidentified word in Stanza 5, verse 2:

dzyu, also spelled dgyu. Defined as "the real knowledge" in the Cosmological Notes, as opposed to the unreal knowledge, dzyu-mi or dgyu-mi.

[David Reigle](#) on October 29, 2010 at 9:33pm

Today while preparing an inquiry on the term yih-sin or yinsin for the Kechara group, who as a result of Joe's contact offered to help with Chinese translations, the identification of this term seems to have emerged. This term is among those found in the paragraph that HPB gives from "one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions" of part of Stanza I, on p. 23 of vol. 1 of The Secret Doctrine:

"Thus, were one to translate into English, using only the substantives and technical terms as employed in one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions, Verse I would read as follows: — 'Tho-ag in Zhi-gyu slept seven Khorlo. Zodmanas zhiba. All Nyug bosom. Konch-hog not; Thyan-Kam not; Lha-Chohan not; Tenbrel Chugnyi not; Dharmakaya ceased; Tgenchang not become; Bar-nang and Ssa in Ngovonyidj; alone Tho-og Yinsin in night of Sun-chan and Yong-grub (Parinishpanna), &c., &c.,' which would sound like pure Abracadabra."

No meaning is there given for it. But it is also found in two of the Mahatma Letters. There it is described as follows:

"This 'force' so-called, shows itself truly indestructible but does not correlate and is not convertible in the sense accepted by the Fellows of the R.S., but rather may be said to grow and expand into 'something else' while neither its own potentiality nor being are in the least affected by the transformation. Nor can it well be called force since the latter is but the attribute of Yin Sin (Yin Sin or the one 'Form of existence' also Adi-Buddhi or Dharmakaya the mystic, universally diffused essence) when manifesting in the phenomenal world of senses namely only your old acquaintance Fohat." (Mahatma Letter #15)

"In symbology the central point is Jivatma (the 7th principle), and hence Avalokitesvara, the Kwan-Shai-yin, the manifested 'Voice' (or Logos), the germ point of manifested activity; -- hence -- in the phraseology of the Christian Kabalists 'the Son of the Father and Mother,' and agreeably to ours -- 'the Self manifested in Self' -- Yih-sin, the 'one form of existence,' the child of Dharmakaya (the universally diffused Essence), both male and female. Parabrahm or 'Adi-Buddha' while acting through that germ point outwardly as an active force, reacts from the circumference inwardly as the Supreme but latent Potency." (Mahatma Letter #59)

We may compare this with what Samuel Beal wrote earlier in his 1871 book, *A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese*, p. 373:

"So again, when the idea of a universally diffused essence (dharmakaya) was accepted as a dogmatic necessity, a further question arose as to the relation which this 'supreme existence' bore to time, space, and number. And from this consideration appears to have proceeded the further invention of the several names Vairochana (the Omnipresent), Amitabha (for Amirta) the Eternal, and Adi-Buddha (yih-sin) the 'one form of existence.'"

Here we can easily see the source of the definitions used in the Mahatma Letters. Since Beal spells it yih-sin, as does Mahatma Letter #59, we can assume that yin sin or yinsin found in Mahatma Letter #15 and in *The Secret Doctrine* are only typographical errors where the "h" was read as "n". So we seek the meaning of yih-sin.

Beal wrote before there was any standardization of transcription for Chinese, much like the Kiu-te situation from Tibetan. So it is hard to tell what word he meant. A number of years ago I asked an expert in Buddhist Chinese if there was any word like this in a meaning like Adi-Buddha or dharmakaya. He did not know of any. The idea of the "one form of existence" for Adi-Buddha, or of a "universally diffused essence" for dharmakaya, are early attempts to render the general idea of what these words might mean, made by a missionary before anyone really knew. The English, then, does not accurately reflect the Sanskrit, but the Sanskrit terms should have helped to identify the Chinese term. But they did not.

Beal uses the term yih-sin one other time in his Catena, when translating a chapter from the Lotus Sutra. The sentence it is found in is:

"You ought, therefore, with undivided heart (yih-sin), to adore and worship this Kwan-shai-yin Bodhisatwa. . . ."

When I saw this passage, years ago, I dismissed it as not being relevant to the other meanings he gave, the ones that are obviously the source of the meanings used in the Mahatma Letters. As it turns out, this passage was a significant help in tracing this term. The Chinese terms for Adi-Buddha and dharmakaya are nothing like yih-sin, so they did not help to trace it.

The term "undivided" suggests the idea of "single" or "one." A Chinese term for this is transcribed as "i" or "yi", similar to Beal's transcription "yih". Shortly after Beal's time, the Wade-Giles system of transcription came into use, and remained in wide use until recently. It gives this word as "i". Then the pinyin system superseded it, and has been officially adopted in China. Hence the change in spelling from Peking to Beijing, for example. The pinyin system gives this word as "yi".

The term "heart" suggests the Sanskrit term citta, normally translated today as "mind," but often translated in the early days as "heart." Now we are on to something. There is a major teaching in Chinese Buddhism, that will be familiar to most of you from Ch'an or Zen writings. It is the teaching of the "one mind." This is regarded as ultimate reality, and hence would be more or less synonymous with the other words for ultimate reality used by Beal for yin-sin, namely, Adi-Buddha and dharmakaya. The idea of the "one mind" is often traced back the classic text known as "The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana." It was greatly promoted by the Hua-yen school in China.

The word for this mind is written as "hsin" in the Wade-Giles system, or as "xin" in the pinyin system. So the "one mind" is i-hsin, or yixin, apparently Beal's yih-sin. To try to confirm this, I checked the Sanskrit for the passage he translated from the Lotus Sutra. The Sanskrit for the "one mind" would be eka-citta. Unfortunately, this phrase appears to be an addition made here by the Chinese translator, Kumarajiva, something he is known to have done to help his Chinese readers. It is not in the available Sanskrit text of the Lotus Sutra, whether that from the Nepalese manuscripts, the Gilgit manuscripts, or the Central Asian manuscript known as the Kashgar manuscript. I have checked all these editions.

But in Beal's index of proper names, he gives Yih-koh-sien for Ekasringa Rishi. This confirms that yih is his transcription of the Chinese word for the Sanskrit eka, "one," that is transcribed in the later systems as "i" or "yi". Similarly, he gives "sin-king" for the Heart Sutra (p. 383), which is transcribed in the later systems as hsin-ching or xinjing. This confirms that sin is his transcription of what is transcribed in the later systems as hsin or xin. This Chinese word can translate Sanskrit hrdaya, "heart," or citta, "mind." Thus, Beal's yih-sin is i-hsin in the Wade-Giles system, or yixin in the pinyin system. It means the "one mind," Sanskrit eka-citta.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 30, 2010 at 3:24am

Some preliminary results out of a search from 25 volumes of publications on buddhism

written in french language between 1820 and 1920 by 20 different authors :

chan

appears in a Mahayanasutralamkara translated from a nepalese manuscript by Sylvain Levi (published in 1911). It is found in the index "rgyum chan", nimitta in sanskrit
It also appears in another book written by Sylvain Levi "Népal Tome 1" p.335, published in 1905, where it read as "O-mei chan" where chan is translated as "mountain" - O-Mei chan being "the mountain where Samantabhadra is honored in China".

thog

can be found in a book published in 1920 by Abel Remusat "Recherche sur les langues Tartares (Mandchou, Mongol, Ouigur et Tibétain).
It is found on p.334 as "Phan-mi-thog-doug, Phan-mi-thog-pa, Mi-thog" and on p.366 as "Phan-thog-djed-yin" translated as "état, manière d'être" i.e. status, way of being.

sin

it can be found also in the by Abel Remusat book "Recherche sur les langues Tartares" on p.355 where it is translated as "le coeur en chinois" i.e. the heart in chinese.

more to come (need some more nights to work on it).

[David Reigle](#) on October 31, 2010 at 8:05am

Your efforts in checking for these words, Jacques, are much appreciated. I see that the word "sin," meaning the heart in Chinese, is the same word in the same transcription as in Beal's yih-sin. Abel Remusat, 1788-1832, lived and wrote even earlier than Samuel Beal, long before any standardized transcription system for Chinese existed.

The word "chan" in "rgyum chan," for Sanskrit nimitta, follows a different transliteration system for Tibetan than is now in use. Also, there seems to be a typographical error in where the two words break. The first word should be rgyu, and the second word mchan. This second word is now transliterated as mtshan. But I do not know of any Tibetan word like sun-tshan, any more than sun-chan. For the "chan" that means "mountain," this looks like a Chinese word. There is also the Tibetan possessive suffix "chan" (now usually transliterated as "can"), as in devachan (bde-ba-can), meaning "possessing happiness" (Sanskrit, sukhavati).

For the word "thog," the "phan-thog" and "phan-mi-thog" that you found are likely to be the word spelled "phan-thogs," meaning "benefit," and its opposite, "phan-mi-thogs." The main meaning of "thogs" by itself is "obstruct" and related ideas such as bind or attach. Thus, the name Asanga is thogs-med, "without attachment." The use of "thog" in the meaning "first" (thog-ma) is common enough. But I have never seen anything like tho-ag or tho-og.

[David Reigle](#) on November 1, 2010 at 9:59am

In regard to the question of the origin of the Stanzas of Dzryan, the evidence provided by the identification of the term yih-sin (i-hsin or yixin) can lead in two different directions. To put it colloquially, there is good news and bad news. First, the good news.

The term for and idea of the "one mind" goes back to a very specific book, that known in English as *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*. It is this book that introduced this term and idea to the world, as far as we know from the recorded history available to us. This book appeared in China in the mid-500s C.E., as the translation of a Sanskrit original from India. Its teaching of the "one mind" was widely adopted in Chinese Buddhism, and became very influential throughout East Asia. In the last hundred years, its Indian authorship has been called into question by Japanese and Western scholars. Today, there is almost no one left who believes that it is an authentic Indian text. Almost all scholars believe it to be a Chinese forgery. This, however, is not the bad news. Forged or not, no one can doubt the fact of the tremendous influence that its idea of the "one mind" has had in East Asia.

The bad news, for believing Theosophists anyway, is that the Mahatma Letters in their usage of this term show no indication of any knowledge of its actual meaning. They use it exactly and only as it was understood in Samuel Beal's 1871 book, *A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese*. Moreover, this Chinese term is supposed to be found in one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions of stanza 1 of the Book of Dzyan. This is very much like the term *svabhava* or *svabhavat*, and the supposed school of Nepalese *Svabhavikas*. This term, too, is used by HPB only as it was understood by Brian Houghton Hodgson and all who necessarily followed him, such as Max Muller. This term is used in this way in the Stanzas of Dzyan seven times. If there is any critic left out there, anyone who still cares about the Stanzas of Dzyan enough to try to show that they are forgeries, this is rather damning evidence.

[David Reigle](#) on November 3, 2010 at 10:39am

Seeing the Stanzas in the perspective of modern physics, Andrew, is no doubt very valuable. A Theosophical friend, Fred Ayers, who takes pity on me for my ignorance of modern science, sometimes tries to help me out in this regard. He just sent me a copy of the cover article from the latest issue of *Scientific American*, titled, "Dark Worlds." What it is about will best be said in Fred's words from his accompanying letter:

"It is about the theory of Dark Matter. The picture that provides the opening shows how galaxies and stars are not randomly distributed, rather how they appear to be scattered about on the surface of bubbles. The story of dark matter is the story of what is going on inside those bubbles. Think about a bunch of soap bubbles when they start to collapse. What is going on? The in-breathing? Think about what happens to two ink spots on the outside of a balloon when you blow it up -- they move apart from each other. The expanding universe is the out-breathing. Science is trying to understand what is going on underneath that imagery. . . . As I see it, the Stanzas of Dzyan are a very advanced discussion of the same topics using language appropriate to a time when quantum physics had not even been dreamed up, and when elementary electronics theory was a mere scribble in Maxwell's notebooks. I am certain the Ancients had knowledge far superior even to ours today."

Fred sending me this was prompted by our earlier discussion of manifestation as bubbles in "boundless homogenous Substance," the "ever invisible robes" of Stanza I, verse 1. HPB had called this "*mula-prakriti*," a term from India's ancient Samkhya (not Vedanta) teachings. Perhaps today we could call this "dark matter," or perhaps it is still beyond that. Here is what HPB wrote in her Esoteric Instruction no. 1 (Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 12, p. 523):

"COSMIC PROCESS(UPPER POLE)

(1) The mathematical Point, called the "Cosmic seed," the Monad of Leibnitz, which contains the whole Universe as the acorn the oak. This is the first bubble on the surface of boundless homogeneous Substance, or Space, the bubble of differentiation in its incipient stage. It is the beginning of the Orphic or Brahma's Egg. It corresponds in Astrology and Astronomy to the Sun." on November 2, 2010 at 8:50pm

David Reigle on November 2, 2010 at 8:50pm

On a Theosophical forum like this, I thought there might be some "defenders of the faith" who would attempt to counter the "rather damning evidence" about the inaccurate Theosophical usage of terms like yih-sin and svabhavat. Since I am a known believer in the authenticity of the Stanzas of Dzian, I might also be thought of as a defender of the faith. I do have an explanation for this usage that is satisfactory to me, but I thought I might get to hear what others think about it.

David Reigle on November 4, 2010 at 8:59pm

Ferran, my explanation of the inaccurate Theosophical usage of terms like yih-sin and svabhavat is actually K.H.'s explanation. This is found in Mahatma letter #65 (2nd ed. p. 364, 3rd ed. p. 358):

"When you write upon some subject you surround yourself with books of references etc.: when we write upon something the Western opinion about which is unknown to us, we surround ourselves with hundreds of paras: upon this particular topic from dozens of different works -- impressed upon the Akasha. What wonder then, that not only a chela entrusted with the work and innocent of any knowledge of the meaning of plagiarism, but even myself -- should use occasionally a whole sentence already existent, applying it only to another -- our own idea? I have told you of this before and it is no fault of mine if your friends and enemies will not remain satisfied with the explanation."

HPB was no doubt the chela entrusted with many of the Mahatma writings. She would not have known the terms svabhavat and yih-sin in their Sanskrit and Chinese contexts. But as defined by Brian Hodgson and Samuel Beal, respectively, these terms exactly matched the ideas she wished to express. So she adopted them to do so, without knowing that these writers had used them inaccurately. Here we are obliged to look at the ideas that she was attempting to express, "the 'Plastic Essence' that fills the Universe" (SD 1.61), and the "one form of existence," respectively, and to largely disregard the terms she used to express them, which were adopted from these writers. What makes this difficult, of course, is to know when a term that she used was borrowed from a writer who did not use it accurately. Back in her day, no one would have known this, and the best scholars of the day did the same thing.

The first translation of The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana, for example, was published in 1900. It was one of the first things published by Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, who went on to become one of the leading Buddhist scholars of the twentieth century. He translated the later Chinese version of this book that had been translated by Shikshananda. The standard Chinese version of this book that had been translated earlier by Paramartha was translated into English by Yoshito Hakeda, and published in 1967. This is considered to be the best translation

available. Today, we can study this brief and terse text with the help of the most widely used Chinese commentary, that by Fa-tsang (Wade-Giles transcription) or Fazang (pinyin transcription). This was translated into English by Dirck Vorenkamp, and published in 2004, titled, *An English Translation of Fa-Tsang's Commentary on the Awakening of Faith*.

Regarding HPB's knowledge of Sanskrit, or lack thereof, I found another reference where C. W. Leadbeater says the same thing. It is in his autobiography titled, *How Theosophy Came to Me*. I here quote it from the third edition, Adyar, 1967, p. 72:

"Arabic, however, seems to have been the only Oriental language with which she was acquainted; she did not know Sanskrit, and many of the difficulties of our Theosophical terminology arise from the fact that in those days she would describe what she saw or knew, and then ask any Indian who happened to be near what was the Sanskrit name for it. Very often the gentleman who provided her with the term had not clearly understood what she meant; and even when he did, we must remember that she asked adherents of different schools of philosophy, and that each answered according to the shade of meaning applied to the term in his teaching."

This state of affairs is evidenced not only in her writings, but also in her interaction with other chelas who knew Sanskrit. We do not hear, for example, of her speaking with T. Subba Row or Mohini Chatterjee in Sanskrit. On the contrary, she adopted Sanskrit terms from them, such as mula-prakriti from the Vedantin chela T. Subba Row. This is where she got the idea that mula-prakriti is a Vedanta term, when in fact it is a Samkhya term.

[David Reigle](#) on November 5, 2010 at 9:02pm

Swami Krishnananda's explanation of citta as memory was a surprise to me. In the series of things spoken of in the Chandogya Upanisad, citta is the subject of paragraph 7.5.1, and memory (smara) does not come until several paragraphs later, at 7.13.1. So I checked Sankaracharya's commentary on 7.5.1 to see if this was the source of Swami Krishnananda's explanation of citta as memory, but it was not. Then I checked the translation of the Chandogya Upanisad following the commentary of Madhvacharya (published in the Sacred Books of the Hindus Series) and found citta given there as "flickering memory." Taking memory as one aspect of citta, then, we can look at this in relation to the Stanzas of Dzryan.

Yogacara Buddhism, which HPB often speaks favorably of, teaches a set of eight consciousnesses. The highest of these is the alaya-vijnana, apparently what is referred to in Stanza I, verse 9, "But where was the Dangma when the Alaya of the universe was in Paramartha . . ." This is the foundation consciousness, or storehouse consciousness, because it is the foundation of all individual consciousnesses, and it is the storehouse of all the karmic seeds. It therefore does serve as various kinds of memory, including the collective memory of humanity, and the memory seeds that carry over from one individual's life to the next life. In the Abhidharma-samuccaya by Arya Asanga, a standard Yogacara text, these eight consciousnesses are defined. There, citta is defined as the alaya-vijnana. So we can, in a sense, speak of the "one memory," which would be the alaya-vijnana, which is citta. However, this citta must be distinguished from eka-citta, the "one mind."

The Awakening of Faith teaches that the one mind has two aspects. One is the unborn,

unchanging mind as it ultimately is, and one is the manifested, ever-changing mind of the phenomenal world. This latter is called the alaya-vijnana. So the mind that can be thought of as the one memory is an aspect of the one mind, not the one mind itself. The schools of Tibetan Buddhism other than the Gelugpa often speak of "mind itself" (cittam eva, Tibetan sems nyid). They call this the alaya, and distinguish it from the changing alaya-vijnana. Thus, we cannot be certain which Alaya is meant in Stanza I, line 9. But I have assumed that it refers to the mutable alaya-vijnana, since it had gone out of manifestation and was in paramartha, apparently here used like nirvana.

Jacques Mahnich on November 6, 2010 at 4:26am

In another translation of the Upanishads (Radhakrishnan - The Principal Upanishads - 1953), on p.492, commenting on Chapter 8 Section 1 Verse 3 of the Chandogya Upanishad, Radakrishnan propose an equivalent term for the buddhist word alaya-vijnana :

3. He should say, as far, verily, as this (world) space extends, so far extends the space within the heart. Within it, indeed, are contained both heaven and earth, both fire and air, both sun and moon, lightening and the stars. Whatever there is of him in this world and whatever is not, all that is contained within it.

Comment : "In Buddhist thought alaya-vijnana is the receptacle of all the latent possibilities of existence. **hrd-akasha** answers to the alaya-vijnana. When the concrete manifestation are overcome by decay and death, their types are not destroyed along with them. The desires out of which they arise are preserved in the **hrd-akasha**.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on November 6, 2010 at 10:31am

Fohat being very central to the Secret Doctrine, I have started an index of where this word appears in H.P.B works, starting from the S.D. It may be useful to identify tracks to follow to find roots in the world traditions (as far as we know).

The file will be soon uploaded to the site.
Here is a first list of Fohat related matters :

- o Fohat appears 13 times inside the Secret Doctrine stanzas and 84 times inside the commentaries of the stanzas

- o H.P.B. says the name Fohat is the name used by the Occultists (Proem p.16). Occultism , in the 19th century refers more to western than eastern occultism. Maybe it is more likely that we will find this term in the Occult world rather than in Eastern cultures.

According to the Secret Doctrine :

- o What Fohat is :

- o Divine Thought (Volume 1 p.63)
- o First light in creation (Volume 1 p.75)
- o First light of the primordial Elohim (Volume 1 p.75)

- o Electricity and Life (Volume 1 p.75)
- o Life infused into primordial matter (Volume 1 p.75)
- o Cosmic electricity
- o the Vahan or Messenger of the Will of the Primordial Seven (Volume 1 p.108)
- o a propelling force, an active power which causes the ONE to become TWO and THREE (Volume 1 p.109)
- o a force which brings together the elemental atoms and make them aggregate and combine (Volume 1 p.109)
- o a personified electrical vital power (Volume 1 p.111)
- o the transcendental binding Unity of all Cosmic Energies (Volume 1 p.111)
- o a living force created by Will (Volume 1 p.111)
- o in his secondary aspect, he is the Solar Energy, the electrical vital fluid and the preserving fourth principle (Volume 1 p.111)
- o shown allegorically as trying to bring the pure Spirit, the Ray inseparable from the ONE absolute, into union with the Soul, the two constituting in Man the MONAD, and in Nature the first link between the ever unconditioned and the manifested (Volume 1 p.119)
- o the “Son of the Son” (Volume 1 p.122)
- o the “Builder of the Builders” (Volume 1 p.139)
- o the emanation of those other Powers behind him whom the Christians call the “Messengers” of their God (Volume 1 p.139)
- o a differentiation of the primordial light (Daivi-prakriti) (Volume 1 p.216)
- o Cosmic Energy (Volume 1 p.328)
- o the energizing and guiding intelligence in the Universal Electric or Vital Fluid (Volume 1 p.493)
- o the “Light” of the daivi-prakriti (Volume 1 p.602)
- o the “Son of Ether” (Volume 2 p.400)
- o Dhyān-Chohanīc energy (Volume 2 p.649)

- o Its names in other traditions :

- o Ob, Od and Aour (Volume 1 p.75)
- o Eros in Greek mythology (Volume 1 p.109)
- o Brahma's Will in the Puranas (Volume 1 p.109)
- o Desire (pothos) in the Phoenician Cosmogony of Sanchoniathon (Volume 1 p.109)
- o Fohat is connected with Vishnu and Surya in India (Volume 1 p.111)
- o the “Pervader” and the Manufacturer in India (Volume 1 p.111)
- o Ares in Paracelsus (Volume 1 p.284)
- o in India, he is the scientific aspect of both Vishnu and Indra (Volume 1 p.673)
- o in Egypt, he is Tōum issued of Noot (Volume 1 p.673)
- o Apam-Napat in Vedic and Avestian name (Volume 2 p.400)

- o How Fohat is represented :

- o a serpent (Volume 1 p.75)
- o the hebrew letter Teth (Kabbala) (Volume 1 p.75)
- o the ninth letter of the alphabet (Volume 1 p.75)
- o the ninth door of the fifty portals or gateways that leads to the concealed mysteries (Volume 1 p.75)

o the Swastika represents the activity of Fohat (Volume 2 p.587)

o What does Fohat do :

- o he runs the Manu's (or Dhyan-Chohans') errands, and causes the ideal prototypes to expand from within without (Volume 1 P.63)
- o he hardens and scatters the seven brothers (Volume 1 P.76)
- o he gathers cluster of Cosmic matter, give it impulse, set it in motion, develop the required heat (Volume 1 p.84)
- o he hardens the atoms by infusing energy into them (Volume 1 p.85)
- o he scatters the atoms or primordial matter (Volume 1 p.85)
- o it is through him that the ideas of the Universal Mind are impressed upon matter (Volume 1 p.85)
- o sets in motion the Law of Cosmic Evolution by differentiating the One element in various centres of Energy (Volume 1 p.110)
- o he his forced to be born time after time whenever any of his son-brothers indulge in too close contact (Volume 1 p.145)
- o he guides the transfer of the principles from one planet to the other, from one star to another child-star. (Volume 1 p.147)
- o he produces the "Seven Laya Centres"(Volume 1 p.147)
- o he collect primordial dust in form of balls, he impel them to move in converging lines and to approach each other and aggregate (Volume 1 p.201)
- o he impels the inert Substance to activity, and guides its primary differentiations on all the seven planes of Cosmic Consciousness (Volume 1 p.328)
- o he sets in motion the primordial World-germs (Volume 1 p.672)
- o he turns with his two hands in contrary directions the "seeds" and the "curds", or Cosmic matter (Volume 1 p.673)
- o he crossed the Circle like two lines of flame (horizontally and vertically) (Volume 2 p.586)

David Reigle on November 6, 2010 at 2:47pm

First, I would ask for everyone's patience with me as I try to reply sequentially to posts, and therefore fall a day or two behind in the discussion. Govert, the material from Martin Brauen is important, and I appreciate your efforts in making it available online. Martin has made significant contributions in another field that is a primary interest of mine, Kalachakra, so I have long appreciated his writings. Here in this chapter that you provided a link for, he is one of the few Tibetologists who is willing to discuss the Theosophical teachings. His critique is mild in comparison with the harsh one of Agehananda Bharati (Leopold Fischer) published in the Tibet Society Bulletin in 1974, titled "Fictitious Tibet: The Origin and Persistence of Rampaism." We must be thankful to both of them.

In fact, it is Theosophists who should be digging out these errors in the Theosophical writings, and not wait for critics from the outside to find them. For example, Antonios Goyios in his article, "Tracing the Source of Tibetan Phrases Found in Mahatma Letters #54 and #92," found at www.blavatskyarchives.com, shows that the Tibetan phrase "kam mi ts'har" was incorrectly copied from a Tibetan phrasebook then available, and does not mean what it is said to mean in the Mahatma letter. This shows either that the Mahatma letter was faked by an

amateur who did not know Tibetan, or that it was badly bungled by a chela who did not know Tibetan. Take your pick.

The critiques by Tibetologist Brauen and by Anthropologist Bharati, however, share an approach that is not altogether justified. It is this, put in my words: Because the Theosophical teachings are said to come from Tibet, and from teachers living in Tibet, therefore they should accurately reflect Tibetan Buddhism. Now that we have access to authentic teachings of Tibetan Buddhism, we see that the Theosophical teachings do not accurately reflect them. Therefore, they are fraudulent.

But those who have studied the writings of HPB carefully will know that she never claimed Theosophy to be Tibetan Buddhism. On the contrary, she made a point to distance Theosophy from exoteric Tibetan Buddhism. The Theosophical teachings are supposed to pre-date Gautama Buddha. It is therefore not appropriate to compare them with those of Tibetan Buddhism, find them to disagree, and then to dismiss them as fraudulent.

A prime example of this is the idea of *svabhava* found in the Stanzas of Dzian. Everyone who has studied Tibetan Buddhism in recent decades will know that the denial of *svabhava*, often translated as "inherent existence," is one of its primary and distinguishing features. It takes hardly more than a glance at the Stanzas, then, to find them to be heretical from the standpoint of Tibetan Buddhism. But if we look at them from the standpoint of Hinduism, the teaching of *svabhava* found in them is fully orthodox. There is no problem with it. I do not know of any reason to assume that the Stanzas must agree with Buddhist teachings here any more than with Hindu teachings.

Moreover, we do not know for sure that the term *svabhava* is actually found in the Stanzas. It may have simply been the term used by HPB to translate the ideas of the Stanzas, based on her understanding of the meaning of *svabhava* that she picked up from writers of her time. We very much need to have an original language text of the Stanzas before we can draw any accurate or meaningful conclusions. It is my hope that the interest in the Stanzas and the energy created by our discussion will elicit them from their custodians.

There is yet another fact regarding *svabhava* that everyone, critics and supporters alike, should be aware of. Although the idea of *svabhava* is heretical in Tibetan Buddhism in general, there is one place that it still remains, and does so conspicuously. With thanks to my friends Ken Small and Rich Taylor for letting me know about this, the Dzogchen teachings of the Nyingma order of Tibetan Buddhism teach a ground or base (*gzhi*) that has three aspects: *ngo bo*, "essence," *rang bzhin*, "nature," and *thugs rje*, "energy." These have been translated variously, and I simply give what Namkhai Norbu uses. The second of these, *rang bzhin*, is the standard Tibetan translation of *svabhava*. In Dzogchen teachings, *rang bzhin* (*svabhava*) refers to the continuous arising of phenomenal existence from the ground or base. In other words, it is there used very much like in the Stanzas of Dzian (e.g., III.12, "Then Svabhavat sends Fohat to harden the atoms."). So there is one teaching within Tibetan Buddhism where the *svabhava* idea found in the Stanzas is not heretical.

[David Reigle](#) on November 6, 2010 at 9:02pm

Jacques, Radhakrishnan's equation of the *alaya-vijnana* with the *hrd-akasha* is useful to know.

I had not thought of this equation before, but rather had always thought more of an alaya-vijnana equation with the mahat that HPB refers to, which is the universal principle of intelligence taught in Samkhya. The hrd-akasha, the space within the heart, does not seem to have become a standard Vedanta teaching like the alaya-vijnana became in Buddhism. However, it might be more widely used in the Vedanta taught in the Yoga-Vasishtha.

Regarding mind, in the series of things taught in the Chandogya Upanisad, mind as manas comes first, then a little later comes mind as citta. The implication is that citta is higher than manas. This is also how the two terms for mind are used in the Yogacara texts. The citta that is there equated with the alaya-vijnana is higher than the manas, which is described as the klista-manas, the "defiled mind." But it is much more usual elsewhere that citta and manas are simply synonyms used for mind. Indeed, the great principle of mind in the Vedic writings is normally called manas. So here manas is equivalent to the "one mind," yih-sin, or eka-citta.

The teaching of the "one mind" (eka-cittam) reminds us of the teaching of "that one" (tad ekam) in Rig-Vedas 10.129. The oldest available explanation of "that one" in Rig-Vedas 10.129 is found in the Satapatha-Brahmana (10.5.3). There, verses from this hymn are quoted and partially explained. It is a striking fact that the Satapatha-Brahmana explains "that one" as manas, mind. You can see this explanation in the first PDF of Rig-Vedas 10.129 translations available on this website, 18 pages in, in John Muir's second translation (pp. 358-359) where he quotes the Satapatha-Brahmana. This explanation of "that one" as manas, mind, is not found in later Vedic commentaries, and long precedes the appearance of The Awakening of Faith in China in the mid-500s C.E.

[David Reigle](#) on November 7, 2010 at 2:05pm

Your compilation on fohat, Jacques, is really helpful, as Nicholas said. This is exactly the way that Vedic studies have proceeded since about the mid-1800s, and this method completely dominates Vedic studies right up to the present. This is the best known way to determine the meaning of a particular term. I have now read through your compilation on fohat several times. I have to admit that no clear idea of its meaning emerges for me yet. Since it plays a major role in the cosmogony of the SD, it should have a clear and recognizable parallel with some major player in some known cosmogony. Some aspects of it match some known terms and ideas, such as the Vedic prana, or the Tantric Buddhist prana/vayu, but other parts do not match. We really need to either find the source of the term fohat in some known book, or see what original term was used in a Sanskrit or Tibetan version of the Stanzas.

[David Reigle](#) on November 8, 2010 at 7:15pm

Nicholas, the good quote that you posted from Mahatma letter #22 very much goes along with Mahatma letter #10 and the Cosmological Notes, and I believe that it accurately reflects the cosmogonic teachings of the Stanzas. I do not want to be misleading in what I said about the parallel Dzogchen teachings. From what I have seen, the Dzogchen teachings actually refer to the continuous arising of phenomenal existence from the ground or base (gzhi) as something that is happening all the time in everyone's lives, not as a historical cosmogony like the Stanzas of Dzryan depict.

The writer who for Nyingmapas corresponds to what Tsongkhapa is for Gelugpas is

Longchenpa. Longchenpa is thus the single most authoritative Tibetan writer on Dzogchen. Among his many writings, some of the most highly regarded are his seven "Treasures." The first of these is the "Wish-fulfilling Treasury," a comparatively brief treatise in verses. On it, he wrote his own commentary explaining the verses. Its first chapter is called, "How Samsara Arises from the Ground." Its explanation of this is of course similar to how Jamgon Kongtrul explained it several centuries later in the book available in English (this section of it) as *Myriad Worlds*.

Longchenpa says that the desire-ridden phenomenal world arises from the ground or base as the result of deluded thought. Neither the phenomenal world nor deluded thought have any real existence. Once we are able to directly see this through the practices of Dzogchen, the phenomenal world no longer deludedly appears to us, but rather we perceive the primordial purity of the ground or base as it really is. So although Dzogchen uses the term rang bzhin (svabhava) as the aspect of the ground or base that refers to its continuous arising as phenomenal existence, and this is a general parallel to the usage of svabhava in the Stanzas, the overall cosmogony differs significantly. I have seen no indication that Dzogchen accepts a historical cosmogony, which would include historical events such as the separation of the sexes in the third root-race, for example.

[David Reigle](#) on November 8, 2010 at 10:03pm

I am still studying the excellent ten-page compilation on Fohat that Jacques prepared, available on the main page of this website. Jacques has done all the work of gathering this material for us, and all we have to do is read it. I hope that everyone who is interested in the Stanzas will do so.

For the moment, I just want to comment on one short sentence. It is from Stanza 5, verse 2: "Fohat is the steed and the thought is the rider." This idea is central to much of the Buddhist tantric teachings, if we substitute wind or air (vayu) or breath or life force (prana) for fohat. In particular, this teaching is found in the Guhyasamaja Tantra system, which is much studied by the Gelugpas. One can hear this idea from Tibetan lamas often enough, but very few of the original texts that it comes from have yet been translated.

Nagarjuna systematized the practices taught in the Guhyasamaja Tantra in his Pancakrama, "The Five Stages." The third verse of the first chapter gives us a nice, succinct statement of this idea. Here is this verse as translated by Alex Wayman in his book, *Yoga of the Guhyasamajatantra*, p. 198. The words in brackets are my additions.

"Being the life force [prana] of sentient beings, what is called 'wind' [vayu] performs all deeds; and as the vehicle of vijñāna [consciousness] [it] is five, besides is tenfold."

It is frequently said that the winds (vayu) or vital breaths (prana) are the mounts of consciousness or thoughts or wisdom.

[David Reigle](#)

Continuing with our investigation of fohat, here follow some more notes on its possible parallel with vayu, "wind," or prana, "vital breath." Besides vayu/prana being the mount

(vahana) of consciousness, like fohat is the steed and thought is the rider, vayu or wind is the usual instrument that brings about manifestation in Buddhist cosmogony. Cosmogony is not often spoken of in Buddhist texts, and when it is, the descriptions are brief and lacking in details. The Buddhist Abhidharma texts teach successive manifestations and disappearances of a cosmos or world-system. Its reappearance is said to be caused by the aggregate karma of living beings, which impels wind to bring about the manifestation of a cosmos.

The standard work on this is the Abhidharma-kosa and its commentary (chapter three), both written by Vasubandhu. It was first translated into French by Louis de La Vallee Poussin and published in 6 volumes, 1923-1931, and then from French into English by Leo M. Pruden and published in 4 volumes, 1988-1990. Here are two excerpts from it:

". . . the seed of a new universe is wind, a wind endowed with special powers which have their beginning in the actions of creatures." (vol. 2, p. 491)

"The collective force of the actions of beings produces the winds which create (nirma) the moon, the sun and the stars in heaven." (vol. 2, p. 460)

A somewhat fuller cosmogonic account is found in the Yogacara-bhumi by Maitreya (Chinese tradition) or Asanga (Tibetan tradition). This section was translated by Yuichi Kajiyama in his chapter, "Buddhist Cosmology as Presented in the Yogacarabhumi," in the 2000 book, *Wisdom, Compassion, and the Search for Understanding*, pp. 191-192. Here is an excerpt from it that is reminiscent of the Stanzas of Dzhan. For ease of comparison, I will quote a passage from the Stanzas before and after the excerpt from the Yogacara-bhumi.

"The Primordial Seven, the First Seven Breaths of the Dragon of Wisdom, produce in their turn from their Holy Circumgyrating Breaths the Fiery Whirlwind. They make of him the messenger of their will. The Dzyu becomes Fohat, the swift son of the Divine sons whose sons are the Lipika, runs circular errands." (Stanza 5, verses 1-2)

Yogacara-bhumi: "Thereafter a whirlwind as large as the Trisahasra-mahasahasra [world] arises here and becomes the support of the Trisahasra-mahasahasra [world] as well as of sentient beings having no palaces [i.e., gods of the two lowest worlds of desire and sentient beings on and under the earth]. It is of two kinds: the whirlwind stretching itself upwards and that stretching itself on the flank of the world, which prevent water [on the wind] from leaking out downwards and sideways. And then clouds containing gold appear above these [whirlwinds] by the influence of [sentient beings'] karma. Rains fall from the [clouds]. The water [of the rains] is sustained on the whirlwind. Then, wind blows and condenses and hardens the water. It is called the earth made of gold as it withstands upward and downward agitations of water."

"Then Svabhavat sends Fohat to harden the atoms." (Stanza 3, verse 12)

David Reigle

I do not know of any journals that are devoted specifically to Buddhist archaeology. News of

recently discovered texts would be expected to show up in the major orientalist journals. Some of these are: Journal of the American Oriental Society (U.S.A.), Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Great Britain), Journal asiatique (France), Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft (Germany), Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Sudasiens (Austria), Asiatische Studien/Etudes asiatiques (Switzerland), Indo-Iranian Journal (The Netherlands), Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies (Japan), Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London), Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, etc. Most of these are found in large academic libraries. The orientalist journals published in India are found only in very specialized collections in the West, so I have not listed any titles of these.

The Sanskrit originals of the two texts that I quoted in my last post, Abhidharma-kosa and Yogacara-bhumi, were discovered in Tibet by Rahula Sankrityayana on his trips there in search of Sanskrit manuscripts in the 1930s. These finds were then announced and described in The Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society (Patna, India). Since that time it has been known that many Sanskrit manuscripts were preserved in Tibet, but there has been no access to them due to the political situation. After the "Cultural Revolution" of the 1960s in which many monasteries in Tibet were destroyed by the Red Guards and others, no one knew if these manuscripts had also been destroyed. By the 1980s reports began to emerge that many of these had been saved and taken to Beijing. More recently, they were brought back to Tibet. Negotiations for access to them had been carried on for many years, by Prof. Ernst Steinkellner and others. In the last few years, this access started to happen on a limited basis. In 2009 the sixth text in the series, "Sanskrit Texts from the Tibetan Autonomous Region," was jointly published by the China Tibetology Publishing House and the Austrian Academy of Sciences Press.

In India and Nepal, Sanskrit Buddhist manuscripts are still being discovered or catalogued. Probably the best source for news of these is Dhih: Journal of the Rare Buddhist Texts Research Unit, which is part of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath. This journal is mostly in Hindi, but it includes English summaries of the articles. I do not know of any particular title to look for in the listings of Sanskrit manuscripts that are regularly published in Dhih. Almost all of these are Sanskrit texts that are known from their Tibetan translations found in the Kangyur and Tengyur. We do not have the actual name of the text that HPB generically called the Book of Dzryan, the "Book of Wisdom." Already in 1979, in reply to my inquiry, the Dalai Lama said that he would need the actual Tibetan title of the Book of Dzryan in order to have his people look for it.

But as indicated in the material quoted recently by M. Sufilight regarding "The Secret Books of 'Lam-rim' and Dzryan," etc., the Book of Dzryan would be among the secret volumes, not among the known volumes. All the manuscript finds of Sanskrit Buddhist texts so far that I know of have been of texts that were known from their Tibetan or Chinese translations. These, of course, have their own value, since if one cannot read these, there would be no chance of being able to read the secret commentaries thereon.

David Reigle

I assume that everyone is assiduously studying and meditating on the fohat compilation that Jacques prepared for us. So, wishing to keep that momentum going, I will add a few more

comments along the way toward fohat. After yih-sin was identified as a Chinese term meaning the "one mind" (eka-citta), and it was traced back to the sixth-century book, *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*, we saw that the idea of the one mind can be found several centuries earlier than this. The early Satapatha Brahmana explained "that one" (tad ekam) of Rig-Vedas 10.129 as "mind" (manas). This shows us that, even if a Buddhist term is used in the secret commentary from which the Stanzas of Dzryan were translated, their ideas will also be found in older formulations. Similarly, the "wind/breath" (vayu/prana) as a possible parallel to fohat should have antecedents in earlier Indian writings than the Buddhist tantras. In this expectation, we are not disappointed, for in the Vedic writings we find prana as part of a cosmic trinity along with manas and vak.

Generally speaking, there are two major schools of Vedic interpretation found today. The earlier and more traditional one is that following the fourteenth-century commentator Sayana, who interprets the Vedas in terms of sacrifices. In the 1800s, Western scholars saw that while this was a valid and useful line of interpretation, it could hardly be considered original or primary, coming as it does from commentaries that were written two thousand or more years after the time of the Vedas. They then developed what might generally be called the philological school of interpretation, having no other recourse than to base themselves on the words of the Vedic texts by comparing how the words were used in each occurrence there. A few smaller lines of interpretation emerged, due to dissatisfaction with either of these two main lines, most notably those of Dayanand Saraswati and Sri Aurobindo. Dayanand promoted a monotheistic interpretation in which all the names of the various Vedic gods referred only to the one God. Sri Aurobindo promoted a psychological interpretation in which the Vedic gods represent aspects of our psyche, such as the will. But there is yet another line of interpretation, a very old line that a few teachers have tried to revive.

Vasudeva S. Agrawala (1904-1972), a professor at Banaras Hindu University, was a student of the Raj Pandit of Jaipur, Madhusudan Ojha. They promoted the adhyatma or inner symbolic line of interpretation spoken of in the ancient Nirukta by Yaska. While Pandit Ojha wrote only in Sanskrit, Prof. Agrawala wrote in English. His magnum opus is titled, *The Thousand-Syllabled Speech, I. Vision in Long Darkness*. This is an interpretation of the highly enigmatic hymn, Rig-Vedas 1.164, following the adhyatma or symbolic interpretation. In his Preface to that book, he writes (p. vii): ". . . the whole world is constituted of a triadic pattern. There are many formulations of the threefold constituents The most important of them all for modern man is the statement in terms of Mind, Life and Matter, corresponding to Manas, Prana and Vak of Vedic terminology." This cosmic trinity is briefly spoken of, for example, in Brhadaranyaka Upanisad 1.5.3 ff., Mundaka Upanisad 2.2.2, Chandogya Upanisad 6.5.4, etc.

A typical example of the adhyatma or symbolic line of Vedic interpretation is found in Agrawala's book on p. 21: "Life, Mind and Matter (Manas, Prana, Vak) are the Three Brothers, and by counting the gross elements as five, they are the Seven Sons." I hardly need to bring in quotes from Jacques' compilation on fohat for comparison to such obviously similar symbolism. "He [Fohat] has seven sons who are his brothers" (SD 1.145). "In its Unity, primordial light is the seventh, or highest, principle, Daivi-prakriti, the light of the unmanifested Logos. But in its differentiation it becomes Fohat, or the 'Seven Sons'" (SD 1.216). ". . . often amounting to a public recognition of our 'Fohat and his seven Sons'" (SD 1.523).

Jacques Mahnich on November 11, 2010 at 8:06am

Studies on Fohat (cont'd) : The document will be updated to include what can be used from other H.P.B. sources :

- The Theosophical Glossary do not bring more light to the subject
- The Transactions from Blavatsky Lodge (T.B.L.) is adding more tracks :

p.87 tells us the word **Fohat** is of turanian origine : "The word is a Turanian compound and its meanings are various. In China **Pho**, or **Fo**, is the word for "animal soul," the vital **Nephesh** or the breath of life. Some say that it is derived from the Sanskrit "**Bhu**," meaning existence, or rather the essence of existence. Now Swayambhu means Brahma and Man at the same time. It means self-existence and self-existing, that which is everlasting, the eternal breath. If Sat is the potentiality of Being, **Pho** is the potency of Being. The meaning, however, entirely depends upon the position of the accent. Again, **Fohat** is related to **Mahat**. It is the reflection of the Universal Mind, the synthesis of the "Seven" and the intelligences of the seven creative Builders, or, as we call them, Cosmocratores."

What Fohat is (cont'd) :

- o the light of the three Logo (T.B.L p. 38)
- o the aggregate of all the spiritual creative ideations above, and of all the electro-dynamic and creative forces below, in Heaven and on Earth (T.B.L p. 38)
- o the synthesis of the Seven Creative Rays or Dhyan Chohans which proceed from the third Logos.(T.B.L p. 38)
- o the Sakti or force of the divine mind (T.B.L p. 86)
- o he is related to Mahat. It is the reflection of the Universal Mind, the synthesis of the "Seven" and the intelligences of the seven creative Builders, or, as we call them, Cosmocratores (T.B.L p. 87)
- o is called the "Thread of primeval Light," the "Ball of thread" of Ariadne, indeed, in this labyrinth of chaotic matter (T.B.L p. 116)
- o There is a remarkable illustration of Elihu Vedder to the Quatrains of Omar Khayyam, which suggests the idea of the Knots of Fohat. It is the ordinary Japanese representation of clouds, single lines running into knots both in drawings and carvings. It is Fohat the "knot-tier," and from one point of view it is the "world-stuff." (T.B.L p. 122)
- o he is spoken of as the synthetic motor power of all the imprisoned life-forces and the medium between the absolute and conditioned Force (T.B.L p. 134)
- o he is the agent of the law, its representative, the representative of the Manasa-putras, whose collectivity is—the eternal mind (T.B.L p. 135)

What Fohat do (cont'd) :

- o When the hour strikes for the Third Logos to appear, then from the latent potentiality there radiates a lower field of differentiated consciousness, which is Mahat, or the entire collectivity of those Dhyan-Chohans of sentient life of which Fohat is the representative on the objective plane and the Manasa-putras on the subjective (T.B.L p. 95)

David Reigle on November 11, 2010 at 10:08am

Martin, personally speaking, I very much welcome your valuable input on this from Western sources. It is all I can do to keep up with Eastern sources in trying to trace the Stanzas of Dzryan, but I know that there is much of value and relevance in other sources. Regarding your reference to Proclus, it so happens that last year I received from a friend in Greece, Antonios Goyios, a reference to a passage from Proclus that in translation actually uses the phrase "fiery whirlwind." This passage fits in so closely with what we have been discussing here about the one, about cosmogony or the manifestation of multiplicity, and with your comments on the centrality of the threefold divisions, that I will quote it. First, for comparison, here is Stanza 5.1:

"The Primordial Seven, the First Seven Breaths of the Dragon of Wisdom, produce in their turn from their Holy Circumgyrating Breaths the Fiery Whirlwind."

Here is the passage from Thomas Taylor's 1816 translation of the commentaries of Proclus on the Theology of Plato, vol. 1, p. 220 (original edition; p. 233 of the 1999 Prometheus Trust reprint):

"And here, indeed, the union is essential, but there essence has the form of the one. For the summit of being which is one is a thing of this kind. Deservedly, therefore, is intelligible multitude all-powerful, and intelligible animal all-perfect, as being at once the cause of all things, and this as far as to the last of things, Plato all but exclaiming, [in the words of the Chaldaean Oracle,] 'Thence a fiery whirlwind sweeping along, obscures the flower of fire, leaping at the same time into the cavities of the worlds.' For the divine unities proceeding gradually, generate the multitude of all mundane natures. This triad, therefore, is the fountain and cause of all things: and from it all the life, and all the progression of the Gods, and the genera superior to us, and of mortal animals subsist. For it produces totally and uniformly all things, and binds to itself the whole principles of the divisible rivers of vivification, and the production of forms."

(end of Book 3, chapter 27, in the original 1816 edition)

From just this, it is not clear to me whether the "fiery whirlwind" quoted by Plato from the Chaldean Oracle refers to something that appears during the process of manifestation, like fohat, or whether it refers to the fire of destruction at the end of time, spoken of in many accounts of the end of the world. I wonder if it occurs in other contexts where this would be clearer. Perhaps you know, Martin.

[David Reigle](#) on November 11, 2010 at 11:31am

Regarding your reference to Carl Gustav Jung and the collective unconscious, Martin, there is a recent book that studies this in relation to the alaya-vijnana, the "storehouse consciousness" or universal world-soul. This, of course, brings in Stanza 1, verse 9, where the alaya is referred to. The book is: Contexts and Dialogue: Yogacara Buddhism and Modern Psychology on the Subliminal Mind, by Tao Jiang (University of Hawai'i Press, 2006). I have not studied Jung (or Freud, who the author also brings in), but it appears to me that what Jiang says about the alaya-vijnana accurately reflects the original sources. Jiang points out the differences and similarities between Jung's collective unconscious or subliminal mind and the alaya-vijnana, concluding that they are only partially equivalent. The parallels that Jiang finds will no doubt

be helpful to modern people in understanding the ancient idea of the alaya(-vijnana) spoken of in the Stanzas.

[David Reigle](#) on November 12, 2010 at 10:32am

Many thanks to Jacques for adding four pages of references from the Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge to his compilation on fohat. If we are ever going to figure out what this word is, this compilation that Jacques prepared for us is a fundamental necessity. Among the new entries are some ideas that are not found in the entries from The Secret Doctrine. Here is one of them, as Jacques has already quoted in his forum post:

"T.B.L. p.87 - Q. Can you say what is the real meaning of the word Fohat?

"A. The word is a Turanian compound and its meanings are various. In China Pho, or Fo, is the word for "animal soul," the vital Nephesh or the breath of life. . . . "

HPB apparently used the word Turanian in the sense that Max Muller had then given to it. Today it is no longer used, and the languages that Muller thought belonged to it are mostly referred to as the Uralic and Altaic language families. Chinese was usually, but not always, considered distinct from Turanian, and it seems that Muller in his later writings was willing to include Chinese in Turanian.

HPB had first spoken of the Chinese pho or fo, the "animal soul," in a note on the seven principles of man now found in Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 4, pp. 242-243. She there, by the way, says that pho is "the root of the Tibetan word Pho-hat." Her information on the Chinese term pho is there taken from James Legge's translation of the Yi King, which had then (1882) just been published in the Sacred Books of the East series. After obtaining the 1899 edition of that book several years ago, I was able to find this word on p. 355 in a lengthy footnote, where we see that Legge called pho the animal soul. Once again, as with yih-sin, we have a problem in identifying the Chinese word that Legge here transcribed as pho.

However, on p. 18 of BCW vol. 4, HPB writes "Amita-pho* (pronounced Fo) or Amita-Buddha," and in a footnote says, "In Tibetan pho and pha—pronounced with a soft labial breath-like sound—means at the same time 'man, father.' So pha-yul is native land; pho-nya, angel, messenger of good news; pha-me, ancestors, etc." So here in Amita-pho or Amita-Buddha HPB gives pho or fo as the word for Buddha, which fo is in Chinese. This is different from pho as the Chinese word for the animal soul. She also brings in pho as a Tibetan word meaning man or father. With this conflicting information, it is hard to pursue any of these with confidence. HPB never claimed to be a linguist. She left these kinds of problems for us.

[David Reigle](#) on November 12, 2010 at 11:12am

Thanks, Nicholas, for the link to Westcott's translation of the Chaldean Oracles. It took me a while, but I did find the oracle in question. Westcott gives it on p. 28 as:

"24. And thence a Fiery Whirlwind drawing down the brilliance of the flashing flame, penetrating the abysses of the Universe; for from thence downwards do extend their wondrous rays."

(Proclus in Theologian Platonis, 171 and 172. T.)

Thomas Taylor had translated it as:

"Thence a fiery whirlwind sweeping along, obscures the flower of fire, leaping at the same time into the cavities of the worlds."

What was confusing to me about Taylor's translation is the word "obscures" in the phrase, "obscures the flower of fire." It is this that caused me to wonder if it was referring to manifestation or dissolution. But Westcott gives for this phrase, "drawing down the brilliance of the flashing flame." This, coupled with the final phrase that Taylor omitted, "for from thence downwards do extend their wondrous rays," allows me to conclude that manifestation is what is meant. I doubt if there was yet a critical edition of the Greek text available in Taylor's time. He may have translated from a faulty original. It would be useful to know what Greek word is behind "obscures" (Taylor) or "drawing down" (Westcott). It would be especially useful to know the Greek behind "fiery whirlwind."

[David Reigle](#) on November 12, 2010 at 2:21pm

Martin, I fully agree that we must study Phanes or Eros a lot more, as this could be a very important link in understanding fohat better. It very likely corresponds to kama, "desire," that is found in verse 4 of Rig-Vedas 10.129, one of the verses that HPB left out in her quotation of this hymn at the beginning of the Stanzas. Thanks also for the references and links pertaining to the question of fire and how it is used in Greek cosmogony. For now, I am ready to assume that the fiery whirlwind is indeed part of the process of manifestation rather than dissolution. I would be interested in knowing the Greek words for "fiery whirlwind."

[David Reigle](#) on November 13, 2010 at 1:08pm

Without the original language sources, we are always up against problems of translation. When HPB gives the "fiery whirlwind" in Stanza 5, verse 1, is this her poetic rendition, or do words meaning "fiery" and "whirlwind" actually occur in the original? Likewise, when Thomas Taylor and W. Wynn Westcott give the "fiery whirlwind" in their translations of a Chaldean Oracle, is this their poetic rendition, or do words meaning "fiery" and "whirlwind" actually occur in the original? I have now found this sentence as translated by G. R. S. Mead in his 1908 book, *The Chaldaean Oracles*, p. 61 (also found in the 2006 reprint of *Echoes from the Gnosis*, p. 325):

"Thence there leaps forth the Genesis of Matter manifoldly wrought in varied colours. Thence the Fire-flash down-streaming dims its [fair] Flower of Fire, as it leaps forth into the wombs of worlds. For thence all things begin downwards to shoot their admirable rays."

From this, it appears that "fiery whirlwind" is a poetic rendition of the Greek term, since Mead translates it as "fire-flash." This led to a little further checking, and I found that the Greek term used here is "prester." In the large Liddell-Scott Greek-English Lexicon prester is defined as a "hurricane or waterspout attended with lightning." There seem to be a number of different opinions on its exact meaning.

At this point in our investigation, the possibility of a direct parallel with the Stanzas no longer seems likely. The hope was that in the Chaldean Oracles a distinctive term from the Book of Dzian was preserved when its ideas spread around the world. The idea may well be there, but this is true of dozens if not hundreds of cosmogonies found around the world. Without something distinctive, like the unusual combination, "fiery whirlwind," we no longer have a parallel that provides us with evidence regarding the Stanzas. I have not yet found this combination of words in Sanskrit sources. HPB, too, may have used this phrase poetically in the Stanzas, adopting it from Thomas Taylor.

[David Reigle](#) on November 13, 2010 at 4:10pm

In the passage from Thrice Greatest Hermes that Martin posted for us, two occurrences of the term "matter" (hyle) caught my attention. From HPB's writings, I had understood this to be somewhat similar to mula-prakriti, a term she used to gloss "ever invisible robes" in verse 1 of Stanza 1. But when I asked a Platonist friend about it, he did not think that hyle was used in this way in the Greek writings. He thought that hyle referred to something that was manifested even if invisible, not to some hypothetical primordial matter. He thought that hyle is something that is produced during cosmogony, not something that the cosmos came out of or emerged from. This passage from Thrice Greatest Hermes perhaps explains the situation. It is there found in the section titled "The Orphic Tradition of the Genesis of the World-Egg." The two occurrences are:

"This is what Hesiod supposes by Chaos, what Orpheus calls an Egg—a thing generable, projected from the infinity of Matter (Hylē), and brought into being as follows:" (vol. 1, p. 389)

". . . the Ensouled Egg conceived from Infinite Matter, when it is set in motion from the perpetually flowing Matter below it, 1 exhibits changes of all kinds." (vol. 1, p. 391)

The idea of hyle as the infinite matter from which the world-egg arises, then, is reported to be the Orphic tradition. Hence, it would not necessarily be shared elsewhere in Greek philosophy. This passage provides us with a useful parallel with the Stanzas, in showing a specific agreement with the Orphic tradition preserved in Greek thought on the idea of primordial matter. Because the Orphic tradition is regarded as old within Greek thought, we can conclude that it still preserved early teachings that later fell out of use. Theosophists might say that it preserved the ancient teachings of the Book of Dzian on this point. For as we know, Theosophy teaches that the dark-skinned Orpheus came from India (BCW 5.306, etc.).

[David Reigle](#) on November 14, 2010 at 10:18am

Further on fohat, here is what HPB says in the newly published Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge, titled The Secret Doctrine Commentaries, p. 363:

"Mr. Atkinson: Is Fohat in the Chinese represented by two Chinese syllables?

Mme. Blavatsky: It is from those parts something I have been asking many times. Fo means brilliant.

Mr. Atkinson: I know the root and the character of the Chinese syllable 'Fo.' If you could get the Chinese characters, I could turn it up in the Chinese dictionary.

Mme. Blavatsky: And in the Japanese, too. I don't think it is a real word, because some of them call it Fohat.

Mr. Atkinson: It would be 'Ho' in Japanese. And it would represent the idea of 'Ho,' as 'Ho' was a [] part of the phoenix. If it is the same as the Chinese, I mean. It becomes 'Ho' in Japanese, and then becomes the 'Ho' of the phoenix, as part of the compound name of the phoenix.

Mme. Blavatsky: Fohat is also a relation to the cycles, because the intensity of this vital force changes with every cycle.

Mr. Atkinson: It is in the celestial cosmogony of China. It is in the celestial beginning and the cosmogenesis.

Mme. Blavatsky: I wish you would look somewhere where you could find it, because I have been looking for it in India.

Mr. Atkinson: If you will only give me the Chinese characters, I will find it at once.

Mme. Blavatsky: I have got it somewhere, but not in the Chinese."

From this, it seems that HPB did not know what word fohat was, any more than we do. It sounds like she asked about it many times, and never received an answer. She looked for it in India and did not find it. She doubted whether it is a real word. When she says that "some of them call it Fohat," she is presumably referring to her Mahatma teachers. Taking all this into consideration, it seems that the word fohat does come from her teachers or from secret sources such as the Stanzas of Dzyan. It does not seem to be a word like svabhavat or yinsin that can be found in sources publicly available in her time.

[David Reigle](#) on November 14, 2010 at 3:23pm

On the Eros/Phanes connection with fohat, here is a relevant paragraph from Jacques' compilation on fohat:

"S.D. Volume 1 Commentary (p.109)

(c) Fohat, being one of the most, if not the most important character in esoteric Cosmogony, should be minutely described. As in the oldest Grecian Cosmogony, differing widely from the later mythology, Eros is the third person in the primeval trinity: Chaos, Gaea, Eros: answering to the Kabalistic En-Soph (for Chaos is SPACE, [[chaino]], "void") the Boundless ALL, Shekinah and the Ancient of Days, or the Holy Ghost; so Fohat is one thing in the yet unmanifested Universe and another in the phenomenal and Cosmic World. In the latter, he is that Occult, electric, vital power, which, under the Will of the Creative Logos, unites and brings together all forms, giving them the first impulse which becomes in time law. But in the

unmanifested Universe, Fohat is no more this, than Eros is the later brilliant winged Cupid, or LOVE. Fohat has naught to do with Kosmos yet, since Kosmos is not born, and the gods still sleep in the bosom of "Father-Mother." He is an abstract philosophical idea. He produces nothing yet by himself; he is simply that potential creative power in virtue of whose action the NOUMENON of all future phenomena divides, so to speak, but to reunite in a mystic supersensuous act, and emit the creative ray. When the "Divine Son" breaks forth, then Fohat becomes the propelling force, the active Power which causes the ONE to become TWO and THREE -- on the Cosmic plane of manifestation. The triple One differentiates into the many, and then Fohat is transformed into that force which brings together the elemental atoms and makes them aggregate and combine. We find an echo of this primeval teaching in early Greek mythology. Erebus and Nux are born out of Chaos, and, under the action of Eros, give birth in their turn to Ether and Hemera, the light of the superior and the light of the inferior or terrestrial regions."

HPB here speaks of the trinity, Chaos, Gaea, and Eros. Elsewhere in the SD she speaks of the Orphic trinity, Phanes (or Eros), Chaos, and Chronos. From the materials that Martin provided, we can see that the first trinity is from Hesiod's Cosmogony, the oldest surviving Greek text on cosmogony, and that the second trinity is an Orphic trinity. From these materials, it is not clear to me if this would be considered THE Orphic trinity. In any case, the fact that Eros/Phanes plays various roles in these cosmogonies is no different than HPB describing many different roles played by fohat. In other words, it is very hard to determine exactly what or who fohat is.

The Vedic trinity is also a rather fluid, although it was held by ancient Indian writers (cited by Yaska in his Nirukta) to consist of Agni, the god of fire on earth, Indra or Vayu, the god of the air or atmosphere, and Surya/Aditya, the sun in the heavens. These correspond to the important trinity of manas, "mind," prana, "breath" or "life," and vak, "speech" or "matter," in reverse order. So Agni corresponds to vak, Indra/Vayu to prana, and Surya/Aditya to manas. I had previously presented evidence linking fohat to prana or vayu, the breath of life or air. However, in this trinity, fohat seems to correspond much more closely to Agni, the god of fire. So I must conclude that fohat is much more likely to be Agni than Vayu in the Vedic trinity. This is supported by the one Vedic reference that HPB gives in connection with fohat, where she says that it is Apam-napat.

"S.D. Volume 2 Commentary (p.400)

There, the gods rested, and Fohat (*) reigns ever since

(*) Bear in mind that the Vedic and Avestian name of Fohat is Apam-Napat. In the Avesta he stands between the fire-yazatas and the water-yazatas. The literal meaning is "Son of the Waters," but these "waters" are not the liquid we know, but Ether -- the fiery waters of space. Fohat is the "Son of Ether" in its highest aspect, Akasha, the Mother-Father of the primitive Seven, and of Sound or LOGOS. Fohat is the light of the latter. See Book I."

Apam-napat, "son of the waters," is a very ancient god, who we later no longer hear of. So our references to him are scanty. It is thought that he was simply absorbed into Agni, the god of fire, who is also called the son of the waters. There is no consensus on what Apam-napat

originally represented, although he is normally associated with fire. Some have suggested lightning. As may be seen, there are some similarities with the Greek prester, although Apam-napat is not associated with wind. There is no obvious connection between fohat as Apam-napat or Agni and fohat as Eros or Phanes.

[David Reigle](#) on November 15, 2010 at 1:05pm

The quotations on Orpheus that M. Sufilight posted for us are helpful, especially for those who may not have the time to look these up themselves. They give the Theosophical position that Greece received the wisdom teachings from India, as did all other countries of the fifth root-race civilizations, now referred to as those of the Indo-European language families. Part of this idea is that the original Book of Kiu-te formed the basis of the Hebrew, Egyptian, Chaldean, Indian, and other cosmogonies of the world (SD vol. 1. pp. xlii-xliii).

In both the second quotation (BCW, Vol. II, p. 95) and the last quotation (BCW, Vol. V, p. 304-307), the fact put forward that Orpheus brought teachings from India is attributed to Herodotus.

". . . the ancient Mysteries of Orpheus, who, according to Herodotus, brought them from India."

"Hence—Orpheus learnt 'letters' in the course of his initiation. He is identified with Indra; according to Herodotus he brought the art of writing from India;"

I have never found any such statement in the famous Histories written by Herodotus. On the contrary, Herodotus says that Greece got the mysteries from Egypt. Has anyone else found in the writings of Herodotus any statement supporting the Indian source?

[David Reigle](#) on November 15, 2010 at 5:01pm

The reference to hyle that Nicholas posted from the book, Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon, by Francis Peters, is the most detailed such entry I have seen. It makes clear that, like the Sanskrit word prakriti that is also translated as "matter," the Greek hyle does not refer to matter as science has defined it for the last hundred years. Both prakriti and hyle refer primarily to something that is invisible to the senses. Similarly, just as some Indian philosophical schools, but not others, accepted atomic matter, so some Greek philosophical schools, but not others, accepted atomic matter. Then, too, the atom was defined differently than in modern science. There seem to be close parallels between prakriti and hyle, and also between ousia and svabhava. Francis Peters uses "substance" for the Greek word ousia, which he also translates as "essence." Peters shows that there were different ideas among the Greeks of what matter is.

The definition that Martin posted from the book by Lucas Siorvanes giving Proclus' view of matter appears to follow Aristotle's definition. According to Peters, the idea of hyle as matter was started by Aristotle. However, another book that I have, Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion by W. L. Reese, lists a use of this term by Protagoras and by Plato, who both preceded Aristotle. According to both Peters and Reese, and as Martin said, Plotinus had a different view of matter. Being a monist, for him matter comes from "the one." This is also

accepted by most exponents of the monistic or non-dualistic Advaita Vedanta of India, despite T. Subba Row saying otherwise.

Their "one," called brahman or atman, is accepted by all Advaita Vedantins to be both the material cause and the instrumental cause, like clay and the potter. From this, Subba Row logically deduces that brahman must be matter as well as spirit. But most Advaita Vedantins regard brahman as pure consciousness, and show matter as coming from this. This is a point of contention between Advaita Vedanta and the early Theosophical teachings, and is what the debate between Subba Row and the Almora Swami was about. The Stanzas, with their "ever invisible robes," and their "darkness alone filled the boundless all," agree with Subba Row's interpretation on this question of what matter is. The Orphic tradition cited by G.R.S. Mead in *Thrice Greatest Hermes* also agrees with the Stanzas on this.

David Reigle on November 16, 2010 at 3:15pm

Regarding the question: Is Fohat also called protogonos, or first-born? A search of Jacques' compilation on fohat does not show the word first-born.

On what THE Orphic trinity is, this may not be a fair question. There seem to be different trinities described at different stages of manifestation, even if we limit the trinities we are seeking to cosmogony. In explaining the fundamental propositions of the Secret Doctrine, four items are listed at SD 1.16. By excluding the first, the Absolute, we have a basic trinity. But this trinity does not include fohat. It seems that we must go one step further to get a trinity with fohat. So the Orphic trinity of Aether - Chaos - Phanes might be once or twice removed. Another problem is how we understand Chaos. Is it primary and always existing, or is it a first manifestation? SD 1.336 fn. says:

"Orphic theogony is purely Oriental and Indian in its Spirit. The successive transformations it has undergone, have now separated it widely from the spirit of ancient Cosmogony, as may be seen by comparing it even with Hesiod's theogony. Yet the truly Aryan Hindu spirit breaks forth everywhere in both Hesiod's and the Orphic theogony. (See the remarkable work of James Darmesteter, *Cosmogonies Aryennes*, in his *Essais Orientaux*.) Thus the original Greek conception of Chaos is that of the Secret Wisdom Religion. In Hesiod, therefore, Chaos is infinite, boundless, endless and beginningless in duration, an abstraction at the same time as a visible presence. Space filled with darkness, which is primordial matter in its pre-cosmic state. For in its etymological sense, Chaos is Space, according to Aristotle, and Space is the ever Unseen and Unknowable Deity in our philosophy."

But SD 1.425 recognizes that in Hesiod's Cosmogony Chaos was produced or generated, and hence is not beginningless:

"Hesiod begins his theogony with: "Chaos of all things was the first produced,"† thus allowing the inference that its cause or producer must be passed over in reverential silence. Homer in his poems ascends no higher than Night, whom he represents Zeus as reverencing. † [[*Etoi men protista chaos genet; genetoi*]] being considered in antiquity as meaning "was generated" and not simply was. (See "Taylor's *Intro. to the Parmenides of Plato*," p. 260.)"

Chaos is similarly described in the Orphic cosmogony that Martin posted from G.R.S. Mead's

translation in Thrice Greatest Hermes:

"This is what Hesiod supposes by Chaos, what Orpheus calls an Egg—a thing generable, projected from the infinity of Matter (Hylē), and brought into being as follows:" (vol. 1, p. 389)

Here, then, it is "the infinity of Matter (Hylē)" that corresponds to "Space filled with darkness, which is primordial matter in its pre-cosmic state" of the Secret Wisdom Religion, not Chaos. Mead writes in his book, *Orpheus*, about "The Primordial Triad" (p. 63), which is described as a "thrice unknown darkness." Again, this is not Chaos, but precedes it.

I could not find anything on the question of whether Hesiod mutilated the cosmogony that originated from Orpheus. But in the same vein HPB quotes Max Muller regarding Hesiod, at SD 2.450:

"Thus Mr. Max Muller declares that: "Nowhere is the wide distance which separates the ancient poems of India from the most ancient literature of Greece more clearly felt, than when we compare the growing myths of the Vedas with the full grown and decayed myths on which the poetry of Homer is founded. The Vedas is the real Theogony of the Aryan races, while that of Hesiod is a distorted caricature of the original image." This is a sweeping assertion, and perhaps rather unjust in its general application. But why not try to account for it? Orientalists cannot do so, for they reject the chronology of the Secret Doctrine, and could hardly admit the fact that between the Rig-Vedic hymns and Hesiod's Theogony tens of thousands of years have elapsed. So they fail to see that the Greek myths are no longer the primitive symbolical language of the Initiates, the disciples of the gods-Hierophants, the divine ancient "sacrificers," and that disfigured by the distance, and encumbered by the exuberant growth of human profane fancy, they now stand like distorted images of stars in running waves. But if Hesiod's Cosmogony and Theogony are to be viewed as caricatures of the original images, how much more so the myths in the Hebrew Genesis in the sight of those, for whom they are no more divine revelation or the word of God, than Hesiod's Theogony is for Mr. Gladstone."

If tens of thousands of years elapsed between the Rig-Vedic hymns and Hesiod's Theogony, and if the teachings of the Secret Doctrine "antedate the Vedas" (SD 1.xxxvii), the origins of the Stanzas of Dzryan would be very far back indeed.

[David Reigle](#) on November 17, 2010 at 11:17pm

I took a little trip today. I visited a library that has the set of the Loeb Classical Library series of Greek texts. I checked the reference to Lucian that HPB cites here (found in vol. 5 of his works):

"Greece did not get her astrological instruction from Egypt or from Chaldaea, but direct from Orpheus, as Lucian tells us.† It was Orpheus, as he says, who imparted the Indian Sciences to nearly all the great monarchs of antiquity; and it was they, the ancient kings favored by the Planetary Gods, who recorded the principles of Astrology—as did Ptolemy, for instance. " (BCW. Vol. XIV, p. 350)

The first sentence of this quotation is correct, but Lucian says nothing about Indian Sciences.

He said that Orpheus lived in Thrace. He said that astrology was first delivered to men by the Aethiopians.

[David Reigle](#) on November 18, 2010 at 10:11pm

It will not be easy to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzryan while the origins of half of the book they were published in, *The Secret Doctrine*, remain untraced. I wonder if anyone today in 2010 would turn to books published in the 1800s for reliable information on nearly any subject. Generally speaking, half of what is in *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) necessarily comes from such books. The portions of *The Secret Doctrine* that quote the then current science are generally acknowledged to be outdated and superseded by later scientific findings. But the same is true in the fields of history, religion, languages, oriental studies, etc. Until this material is sifted out and recognized to be just as outdated and superseded as the material from the then current science, we will lack a solid foundation for our investigations. Moreover, the Theosophical teachings will continue to be disregarded by the intelligentsia, because much of what is cited in support of them is itself no longer supportable.

One of the teachings of Theosophy is the existence of a once universal Wisdom Religion. Leaving aside previous promulgations of this Wisdom Religion that are too remote to be traced, the current promulgation of it is said to have originated in central Asia and India, and from there to have spread to most of the rest of the world. The modern Western nations received it primarily by way of its spread from India to Greece, and slightly later to the early Latin-speaking countries. In order to support this teaching of Theosophy, the Greek historian Herodotus is cited as saying that their mysteries were brought from India (BCW 5.305 fn., 13.235, 14.270, 293), or that the art of writing was brought from India (BCW 5.306, 13.235), and the Greek satirist Lucian is cited as saying that the Indian sciences including astrology came from India (BCW 14.350). But these Greek writers do not in fact say these things. Their writings have long been available, although most Theosophists do not yet seem to be aware of the information found in them. This is apparently because they have usually regarded *The Secret Doctrine* like a sacred and infallible scripture, whose references do not need to be checked or verified.

These inaccurate Theosophical references may have been based on accepting that the Pelasgians are of Indian origin and spoke a Sanskritic language. If this is accepted, then when Herodotus says that the mysteries of the Cabeiri came from Samothrace and the Pelasgians, it would follow that these mysteries came from India. This latter, of course, is not a very accurate statement to make unless the assumption that the Pelasgians were Indians is spelled out, as it is in one place (BCW 5.301) but not in the others. Today, I am not aware of any Greek scholar who accepts that the Pelasgians are of Indian origin. The idea that Greece is indebted to Indian sources, and that the Pelasgians are of Indian origin and spoke Sanskrit, may be traced back to Edward Pococke's 1852 book, *India in Greece; or, Truth in Mythology, Containing the Sources of the Hellenic Race, the Colonisation of Egypt and Palestine, the Wars of the Grand Lama, and the Bud'histic Propaganda in Greece*. Pococke is approvingly referred to in BCW 5.306 where a few pages earlier the Pelasgians are said to be Aryans or Indians (p. 301), and where two of the inaccurate references to Herodotus, mentioned above, are made.

Pococke does not make the inaccurate statements about what Herodotus or Lucian said, but

rather bases his research on names found in Greek mythology that he traces back to Sanskrit. Pococke's book can be downloaded from Google Books. There was a second edition in 1856. The bibliographic information found in BCW 13.400, 14.563, and 15.431 confuses this author with an earlier Edward Pococke who lived in the 1600s. This 1852 or 1856 book was reprinted and revised in 2003 by Ravi Prakash Arya under the title, *Indian Origin of Greece and Ancient World: E. Pococke's Thesis Re-edited and Revised*, and published by International Vedic Vision in association with Indian Foundation for Vedic Science. These groups, too, like Theosophy, want to show that India was the source of much of Greek thought.

There can be no doubt that the Indian origin of the Greek mysteries is an accepted Theosophical teaching. What is in doubt is the evidence cited in support of this Theosophical teaching. The Greek writers cited do not actually say what they are claimed to say. Then, Pococke's 1852 book, *India in Greece*, which is the single major source of this idea, is outdated and has long been superseded. Theosophists will have to find better support for their teachings. The roughly half of *The Secret Doctrine* that gives supporting citations and material needs to be entirely re-written using up-to-date research and currently available sources. At the moment, there is no more evidence that Hesiod's cosmogony is a distant copy of the Stanzas of Dzryan than that the Stanzas of Dzryan are a modern concoction based on Hesiod's cosmogony.

[David Reigle](#) on November 19, 2010 at 10:13pm

The material in the quotation from Alexander Wilder comes from Pococke's book, *India in Greece*. This can be seen by searching this book for the names that Wilder mentions. See p. 265 for example, regarding Persephoneia and Parasu-pani, Zagreus and Chakra, and the Tartar headdress with horns worn by lamas. The problem with this is that Pococke wrote before reliable information was available, especially about Buddhism. His conclusions, based on insufficient evidence, are not tenable, however much we might like to believe them.

The first Sanskrit book ever translated directly from Sanskrit into English was Charles Wilkins' 1785 translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*. But it was not until 1882 that a reliable translation of this famous text was published, Telang's translation in the *Sacred Books of the East*. In 1786 Sir William Jones made his famous statement that marked the beginning of Sanskrit studies in the West, and the beginning of the science of comparative linguistics:

"The Sanscrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologist could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists; . . ."

Since then, Sanskrit studies, and comparative linguistics, have come a long way. But by 1852, the date of Pococke's book, things were still just beginning. His comparisons of Greek words with Sanskrit words were simply inadequate. Not enough accurate source material was available from which to draw reliable conclusions. Yes, from a Theosophical standpoint, his conclusions may have been right although his facts were wrong. But how is believing this any

different than believing anything else that must be taken on faith? That condemns the Theosophical teachings to the realm of blind belief. Surely, if they are true, there must somewhere be actual facts to support them.

David Reigle on November 20, 2010 at 12:52pm

The quotation from Prof. Alexander Wilder shows that even university professors of that time relied on and accepted the accuracy of the same sources as HPB did. Neither HPB nor Prof. Wilder nor anyone else then could have been expected to know that Pococke's linguistic parallels between Greek and Sanskrit would prove to be inadequate. Today, these parallels are no longer heard of in Greek studies. Evidence such as this, that is no longer evidence, no longer has a place in The Secret Doctrine and its supporting writings. Wilder's note had been quoted in BCW 14.451-452 fn.

The points you make, Martin, are well taken. Many teachings on transcendental topics are not subject to objective verification. I do not at all disagree with this. Even among the historical statements made, such as on Indian origins in Greece, some may go so far back in time that little objective evidence for them still remains. Nonetheless, even in the realm of ideas, objective evidence can sometimes be found to support them. I do not usually like to refer to my own writings, but I think a clear illustration of this can be found in my article, "God's Arrival in India" ([www.easterntertradition.org/gods arrival in india.pdf](http://www.easterntertradition.org/gods%20arrival%20in%20india.pdf)).

It is generally thought that the idea of and belief in God has always been with us. But the Mahatma K.H. said otherwise in his famous Mahatma letter #10, which opens with the statement, "Neither our philosophy nor ourselves believe in a God." He said that the idea of God is an acquired notion, not an innate notion. As I wrote in my article, "If this is true, and the notion of God was in fact never part of the Wisdom Tradition, but was acquired as these truths went forth from their home in ancient India, history should show this." History does provide considerable evidence, according to my investigation, that the idea of God was not taught in the philosophical schools of ancient India that later adopted it. So I wrote, "To show this, we will here attempt to trace God's arrival in India." Here, then, is a case where a Theosophical idea was found to be supported by objective evidence.

David Reigle on November 21, 2010 at 10:12pm

In the material on fohat from the Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge, that Jacques had added to his compilation, the most striking thing to me is the description of a sun as a knot of fohat. I wonder if the image of the sun as a knot of anything can be found somewhere in the mythology of the world. If so, it might provide a parallel that would be helpful in identifying fohat.

David Reigle on November 22, 2010 at 9:14pm

Many things to reply to. I will have to select only a few for now. Martin, you had mentioned some medical research regarding organs that supports the teachings of Theosophy. I did not reply to this earlier, simply because it is not my field. There was a lot of agreement here that The Secret Doctrine needs to be re-written. Those who have an interest in science can start on the one-third of the SD that compares the teachings of Theosophy with those of modern

science at any time. Perhaps a separate forum could be started for just this. For the one-third that pertains to my field, namely, the Stanzas of Dzian and their commentaries, we will have to await the availability of a Sanskrit and/or Tibetan text of them. Without this, not much can be said.

On the question of the reason for trying to identify fohat, this pertains closely to the stated purpose of this thread, namely, trying to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzian. Even if we know several partial equivalents of fohat found in various traditions, I do not think that we have anywhere a close enough fit to be convincing. For example, we have never seen the phrase, knots of daivi-prakriti, or knots of Eros. If we did find a description of a sun as a knot of some particular thing, that thing could provide a valuable clue in trying to trace this term, fohat, and hence also trying to trace the origin of the Stanzas.

The respected G. de Purucker was a teacher of Theosophists. He did not direct his teachings to non-Theosophists. So, for example, in his definition of daivi-prakriti he can say, "many mystics have referred to daivi-prakriti under the phrase 'the Light of the Logos.'" But this would not be possible when speaking to non-Theosophists, since they would be likely to ask such questions as: "Which mystics?" "Where can I find daivi-prakriti in a non-Theosophical source?" "What do you mean by the Light of the Logos?" "What do you mean by the Logos?"

In fact, we know of only one mystic who said this, T. Subba Row. We do not find daivi-prakriti used in the Theosophical meaning in any known Sanskrit book. The Light of the Logos is a phrase used, and adapted, by T. Subba Row. The usage of "Logos" in Theosophical writings seems also to be adopted from how Subba Row understood it. It is used quite differently in the old Greek writings of Plato, etc., where it means something like "reason." Philo of Alexandria adapted it in the direction of how Theosophists now use it, taking it as the creative force of God. Then, following this direction, the gospel-writer John took it as the "word," which is equated with Christ. John then spoke of His light (John 1.5), the light of the logos. I don't think that this original meaning given to it by John is how Theosophists understand it.

Similarly, after hearing that, "Fohat is a Tibetan as well as a Mongolian philosophical term," and that "The reason the Mongolians spoke of the cosmic vitality," non-Theosophists would be likely to ask where in the Tibetan and Mongolian writings it is spoken of. As far as anyone knows today, it is not found in these writings or in these languages. At this point, the questioner would likely just walk away and write off Theosophy as something not to be taken seriously. In similar circumstances on other topics, most of us would probably do the same. This is the reason for trying to trace these things to verifiable sources.

[David Reigle](#) on November 22, 2010 at 10:02pm

Govert, I will reply to your second question first: "2) Is it becoming more or less plausible that HPB might have been making things up and borrowed from various still unknown sources from the get go?" It seems that some people like William Emmett Coleman, who find many things in HPB's writings that were clearly taken from then available sources, conclude that everything in her writings was taken from such sources. Other people like many Theosophists, who find in HPB's writings things that they believe must have come from Masters, conclude that everything in her writings must have come from such sources. For

myself, I am unable to come to either of these two conclusions.

It is clear to me that a very large amount of material in The Secret Doctrine was taken from then available sources, which, moreover, were very often inaccurate. However, this material is almost always found in her commentaries, in her own annotations of the Stanzas or other occult principles that she was trying to explain. It is equally clear to me that the Stanzas of Dzian themselves were not taken from any then available source. On the contrary, there is nothing like them out there in any known cosmogony of the world, even in those that have been discovered or uncovered since her time.

This brings me to your first question: "1) Can you give a summary of findings so far regarding the origins of the Stanzas." Until someone can show me a known source for even a single Stanza, I must accept what HPB says is their origin, namely, that they come from the first of fourteen secret volumes of commentaries on seven brief folios that comprise the most unusual picture book in the world. This means that I am a believer, and if I was not a believer, I would hardly have spent my life in searching for the Book of Dzian. So much for the origins of the Stanzas. But you probably also intended your question to ask what traces of them can be found, if any. It is late now, and I will have to postpone that one for tomorrow.

[David Reigle](#) on November 23, 2010 at 8:31pm

Regarding my findings on what traces of the Stanzas of Dzian can be found, it will first be useful to briefly review the couple main things known about them from Theosophical sources:

1. The Stanzas of Dzian are said to come from a secret commentary on the Book(s) of Kiu-te (BCW 14.422). The Books of Kiu-te have been identified as rgyud-sde, the Tibetan Buddhist tantras. This associates the Stanzas of Dzian with the Tibetan Buddhist tantras.

Comment: HPB here says that the exoterically known Books of Kiu-te ought to be termed "The Popularised Version" of the Secret Doctrine, being full of myths and bluffs. Read the cosmogony given in the first chapter of the Guhyasamaja Tantra, one of the most important Books of Kiu-te, and you will probably agree. It is posted on the home page of this website.

2. Original words "from one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions" were given from Stanza 1 (SD 1.23), that are almost all distinctive Buddhist terms. Some of these terms are: Konch-hog (dkon-mchog, the three jewels: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha), Tenbrel Chugnyi (dependent origination), Dharmakaya, Parinishpanna (a Yogacara Buddhist term). This confirms that the form in which this commentary now exists is that of a Buddhist book, or a book using Buddhist terms.

Comment: HPB in several places describes the teachings of the Secret Doctrine as being pre-Vedic (e.g., SD 1.xxxvii). So it would not, at least originally, employ terms from the Vedic Hindu tradition. The Vedic promulgation would have re-formulated the ideas of the universal Wisdom Religion. The Stanzas, then, either represent a pre-Vedic Buddhism (IU 1.589, 2.123, 142, 169, 639; Echoes 1.453), or were later formulated using Buddhist terms.

These facts, along with the glowing words about Kalachakra found in Nicholas Roerich's book, Shambhala, led me to the Kalachakra. This is one of the most important Books of Kiu-

te. It has an exoterically known version, found in the Tibetan Buddhist canon, and is said to also have a lost fuller version, found only in Shambhala. Quotations from this lost fuller version are found in the great Kalachakra commentary titled Vimala-prabha, "Stainless Light." Even the exoterically known versions of the Books of Kiu-te were quite inaccessible until very recently. This is now changing. I think that readers will find the Kalachakra to be similar to, and just as symbolic as, the Guhyasamaja Tantra, whose chapter 1 we have seen. One will not find the Stanzas of Dzryan, or anything like them, in the now available Kalachakra texts. Nonetheless, the strongest evidence regarding the Stanzas that I have yet found comes from the Kalachakra texts.

In the Proem to The Secret Doctrine, its three fundamental propositions are given (SD 1.14 ff.). The first fundamental proposition is said to be symbolized under two aspects: absolute abstract space, and absolute abstract motion. These, as such, are very general ideas that could be found in any cosmogony. But the SD goes on to call absolute abstract motion "The Great Breath." This is a very distinctive term. Since this is one of the most central teachings of the Secret Doctrine, if this distinctive term used to describe it could be found somewhere, it would provide strong evidence that HPB did not make up the Secret Doctrine. HPB in the Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge says "There is a magnificent poem on Pralaya, written by a very ancient Rishi, who compares the motion of the Great Breath during Pralaya to the rhythmical motions of the Unconscious Ocean." (BCW 10.309). The use of the term Rishi here would lead one to think that this poem might be found among the hymns of the Vedas. But I was never able to find such a poem there, nor did Jeanine Miller know of one when I asked her.

In the early decades of the twentieth century a group of Vedic pandits in India set about gathering all known Vedic texts, and preparing an index to them. This was a massive undertaking, occupying many years of labor. In the end, about five hundred texts were gathered and each word in them was indexed. The resulting index was published in 16 volumes. It is called the Vedic Word-Concordance, by Vishva Bandhu, et al. If the great breath occurs anywhere in the Vedic writings, this index would show it. It is all in Sanskrit, so one must look up maha-prana, or possibly maha-svasa. But alas! the great breath as a distinctive term spoken of by HPB is not found in the Vedic writings. Although disappointing, this information has its own value, in ruling out these texts as its source.

So where else could the great breath possibly be found? In the Kalachakra texts, of course! It is there found, for example, in the Vimala-prabha commentary on chapter 2, where it describes the life of an ultimate substance that is the cause of the origination and cessation of living beings. This, as we know, is exactly how it is used in the fundamental propositions of the Secret Doctrine. It is also found in other Kalachakra texts, including the Sekoddesa-tika. This text quotes many verses from the lost fuller Kalachakra, called the Mula or root tantra. It occurs in these quoted verses, in a beautiful passage which I here translate. The Buddha is addressing King Suchandra of Shambhala, to whom he gave the Kalachakra teachings:

"The birthplace of the buddhas is [the complete enlightenment] in a single, unchanging moment. When the mind is established in the great breath and the [outer] breath-winds have stopped, when the divine senses have arisen and the group of fleshly senses has ceased, when the common sense objects have disappeared and the divine sense objects are seen, I see all, O king. There is nothing ever unseen by me."

[David Reigle](#) on November 24, 2010 at 9:44pm

quote:

M. Sufilight says:

I wonder...Are you able to document this view using the words "there is nothing like them out there" David?

See my comment in the above. You almost seem to call Blavatsky a charlatan here.

David Reigle replies:

When I said that none of the Stanzas of Dzryan have yet been found in any known book, and thus that there is nothing like them out there, the context of this was to show their authenticity. That is, it was to show that they were not borrowed from anywhere, like many other things found in The Secret Doctrine were. It would show that Blavatsky was not a charlatan.

quote:

David Reigle wrote:

"It is clear to me that a very large amount of material in The Secret Doctrine was taken from then available sources, which, moreover, were very often inaccurate."

M. Sufilight says:

I wonder...Are you able to document this view using the words "very often" David?

David Reigle replies:

Unfortunately, yes, I could write a whole book documenting this if I had the time to do so and thought it was worthwhile to do so. To give just one example, take the distinction made in the SD between Kuan-yin and Kuan-shih-yin. Try to find this distinction as HPB gives it, using Kuan-yin for the feminine form and Kuan-shih-yin for the masculine form, in any available book, or from anyone who knows Chinese, or from anyone who has lived in China.

[David Reigle](#) on November 25, 2010 at 7:49am

Thanks for this, Erica. We need all the Sanskrit scholarship we can get. G.R.S. Mead had written at the end of his 1896 book, Orpheus:

"My task is done and my small skiff launched. . . . In the construction of my skiff I have mainly combined the researches of Lobeck, who was a scholar and no mystic, with the writings of Taylor, who was half scholar, half mystic, and cemented all together with some information derived from H.P. Blavatsky, who was a mystic and no scholar."

Mead's scholarly efforts to bring the teachings of the Mysteries to a discriminating and intelligent readership were necessary then. How much more so are such efforts needed today, when even the Bible is being dissected by Christian theologians? Thinking people no longer want to just believe on faith; they want accurate and reliable information.

[David Reigle](#) on November 26, 2010 at 11:17pm

The debate about Kuan-yin among scholars has to do with how and why the male

Avalokitesvara transformed into a female deity in China; it does not have to do with the name. There are at present about four theories on the reasons for this transformation, with no consensus. This transformation is known to have occurred around the close of the first millennium C.E. This is known primarily through iconography, but also through texts. The standard work on Kuan-yin today is Chun-fang Yu's 2001 book, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*.

Chun-fang Yu is a longtime professor at Rutgers University, who grew up in China. In her preface she explains her fascination with Kuan-yin, and tells of an experience she had when she was eight years old (p. x). Her grandmother, from whom she had always heard tales of Kuan-yin, was a great devotee of Kuan-yin. When the family was about to board a ship, the grandmother suddenly stopped them. She had seen a vision of Kuan-yin waving them back. Despite protests from Chun-fang Yu's college-educated mother, her grandmother was adamant, and they did not board the ship. Later the ship struck mines and sunk. She and her younger brother of five and younger sister of two would almost certainly have drowned.

To everyone in China, Kuan-yin and Kuan-shih-yin are the same deity. It is not that Kuan-yin is the female form and Kuan-shih-yin is the male form. It has been this way since the very beginning, when the first Sanskrit Buddhist texts containing the name Avalokitesvara were translated into Chinese in the third century C.E. The names Kuan-yin and Kuan-shih-yin were used side by side, for the first several centuries in China, to refer to the male deity. Later, and right up to the present, these two names are still used side by side, now to refer to the female deity.

It is not Samuel Beal who made a mistake in saying this. He merely reported what he found in China. It is whatever chela wrote or put into words Mahatma letter #59 who made a mistake, probably HPB. This mistake, saying that Kuan-yin is the female deity and Kuan-shih-yin is the male deity, was repeated in section 15 of vol. 1 of *The Secret Doctrine*, "On Kuan-shih-yin and Kuan-yin," pp. 470-473. This mistake was also repeated in verse 1 of Stanza 6 in *The Secret Doctrine*. This mistake needs to be recognized, acknowledged, and corrected. The Theosophical teaching on the distinction between these two aspects goes for naught to anyone familiar with what these two names actually refer to. This also discredits the allegedly privileged knowledge of the Theosophical teachers. And all because of a chela's blunder in transmission, or unwarranted personal addition. At least, that is how I explain it, based on much evidence of other such blunders on the part of chelas and their transmissions.

[David Reigle](#) on November 27, 2010 at 10:49am

Yes, Nicholas, many of HPB's supposed blunders and mistakes require a deeper look into her intent or meaning. But when she has long been regarded by the world as a fraud, we must wonder: Who is willing to give her the benefit of the doubt and take this deeper look? Only Theosophists. For others, who are hung up on these blunders and mistakes of HPB, that is indeed their loss. Since these others constitute 99.9999 per cent of the population of the world, however, it is a very big loss. Perhaps it is worthwhile to correct this comparatively small error of usage, and just use the names Kuan-yin and Kuan-shih-yin like everyone else uses them.

[David Reigle](#) on November 28, 2010 at 1:20pm

Glad to have your input and perspective on this, Paul, and also the input in the same vein by Alistair, which I also appreciated. Since what Alistair said was on another blog (Re-writing the Secret Doctrine), I will quote it here:

"I would suggest that to the 'thinking public', the SD and the stanzas with it, is rather regarded as a very strange item of largely literary i.e. imaginative construction rather than an exposition upon some 'authentic' hitherto unknown eastern school. However, many would now see it as a primary expression of an esotericism that is multicultural and global, and standing quite happily on its own legs due to this."

Paul said about this:

"I think Alistair had it right in a previous comment that well-informed readers don't bring the kind of expectations to HPB that the whole fraud/vindication meme implies. They appreciate her writing for a variety of qualities that don't rest on either scholarly or spiritual authority."

This perspective, and perception, is no doubt widely true. It is valuable to recognize this, and in my own case, also to be reminded of this. But if we were to assume that HPB's Stanzas are like a beautiful poem that she composed, and are not a translation of an ancient text, where would that leave us in a blog that attempts to trace their origins? I am fully aware of the fact that many students of Theosophy do not share my conviction that a Sanskrit and/or Tibetan version of the Stanzas of Dzyan will be discovered. Nonetheless, myself having this conviction, I am obliged to act accordingly. This necessarily puts me in the world of Indological and Tibetological studies. In this world, the idea that HPB was a fraud certainly prevails. It is this assumption that prevents the Stanzas from being researched there. Perhaps tomorrow I will have time to post a couple of my experiences there in regard to this.

[David Reigle](#) on November 28, 2010 at 1:36pm

The question of Kuan-yin/Kuan-shih-yin does not have to do with what is esoteric and what is exoteric. It is a simple mistake in the use of names. The esoteric teachings are not being called into question. It is as if we distinguished England from Britain, and then said that the pagan or pre-Christian country is called England, and the Christian country is called Britain. No one doubts that this country was once pagan, and then became Christian. But it would not be correct to distinguish these by calling the one England and the other Britain. This is simply an exoterically known fact; esoteric knowledge is not involved here.

[David Reigle](#) on November 29, 2010 at 11:06pm

Yesterday I mentioned that I might post a couple of my experiences in the world of Indological and Tibetological studies regarding HPB and the Stanzas of Dzyan. There, the idea that HPB was a fraud prevails, and thus the Stanzas are not regarded as subjects of serious research. Since this is where most serious research occurs, this can pose a problem for people like us who are trying to trace the origins of the Stanzas. Here are the two experiences.

Many of you know of the 1927 Peking edition of The Voice of the Silence, which included four lines of Tibetan text composed by the Ninth Panchen Lama for this reprint. He was living

in China at that time, due to the political situation in Tibet. The reprint was undertaken by Basil Crump and Alice Cleather, whose papers went after her death to the HPB Library in Canada. This very rare book was reprinted by the HPB Library under Michael Freeman, and Nancy and I had obtained a copy of it on our visit to him in British Columbia. In 1978 we were taking a class on Chinese Buddhism from Prof. Robert Gimello, a kindly and broad-minded man. We showed him the Peking edition of the Voice with the Panchen Lama's Tibetan text and apparent endorsement. Prof. Gimello replied that scholars had proven Blavatsky to be a fraud. Therefore, he said, these Tibetan lines and the alleged endorsement were most likely to be fake. That is the first experience.

For the next one, we must fast forward about two decades. The late Prof. J. W. de Jong was at the same time one of the most admired and feared Indologists of our time. For decades he served as the editor of the Indo-Iranian Journal. In this capacity, he wrote hundreds of reviews of the books and translations published by other scholars. He always carefully compared their translations with the original Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese texts, and in very many cases he found that the published translations had serious flaws. So his reviews were often very critical. His critical review of at least one scholar's work apparently led to that scholar losing a position at a prestigious university. This is why he was feared. But he was more often admired for setting a high standard of accuracy in the scholarly community.

While inputting Sanskrit texts as part of my preparation for Book of Dzryan work, I came across two unusual verb-forms in Maitreya's Abhisamayalamkara, and was able to identify them. Since previous scholars such as Edward Conze in his translation of this text had not identified them, I briefly wrote up what they were. I sent this directly to J. W. de Jong for the Indo-Iranian Journal.* This involved a brief exchange of letters. At the close of this exchange, I seized the opportunity to ask him about the Book of Dzryan. I asked him to ignore the commentary in The Secret Doctrine, and just look at the Stanzas. He replied that he would try to get this book from the university library and have a look, but that, a priori, any alleged translation without the availability of the original text would be suspect. This is the bottom line, as we all know. It doesn't take one of the sharpest minds of our time to figure this out, but here we have it from one. No serious work can be done without an original.

These scholars have done more to make the Eastern texts available than anyone else on earth. Take a look at the file, "A Tale of Leaves: On Sanskrit Manuscripts in Tibet, their Past and their Future," by Ernst Steinkellner, that Joe has posted on the main page of this website. It is an extraordinary tale of how access to the palm-leaf Sanskrit manuscripts preserved in Tibet, after strenuous efforts over decades, is now beginning to happen.

* "The 'Virtually Unknown' Benedictive Middle in Classical Sanskrit: Two Occurrences in the Buddhist Abhisamayalankara," Indo-Iranian Journal, vol. 40, 1997, pp. 119-123 (<http://www.easterntradition.org/virtually%20unknown%20benedictive.pdf>).

David Reigle on November 30, 2010 at 10:08am

Tsongkhapa was one of the greatest scholars ever to appear in Tibet, if not THE greatest. Those who think that he was only a great mystic have never read his writings. He certainly followed what has just been referred to as the de Jong standard, or more accurately, he set this standard for Tibet. Look at his Golden Garland of Eloquence. In this massive book he

carefully examines all the commentaries on Maitreya's Abhisamayalamakara that were translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan. He points out where this Indian pandit got this thing wrong, and then where that Indian pandit got that thing wrong, or where this Tibetan translator got this thing wrong, etc., etc. He does not do this through appeal to mystic perception or anything esoteric; he does this through appeal to the logical meaning of the texts, to variant readings in them or alternate translations of them, and to the coherence of their teachings.

[David Reigle](#) on November 30, 2010 at 10:21pm

Erica, thanks for the information on the Hellenic word, Arxi or Ar-xi, meaning a kind of "rulers." I do not know whether this might relate linguistically to the Ah-hi of the Stanzas. There are certainly close connections between Greek and Sanskrit. Its meaning, "rulers," made me think of the old meaning of the Sanskrit word "isvara," the usual word for "God." This word has the meaning of ruler in the older Sanskrit texts.

Just to be clear about what I mean by an "original" language text of the Stanzas, I mean a Sanskrit or Tibetan version. The Senzar of course would not be useful to us. But there would exist Sanskrit and Tibetan and Chinese translations of the Senzar.

There are some Buddhist texts that speak of a self (atman), and have similarities with "An Unpublished Discourse of the Buddha." These are the Tathagata-garbha texts, and especially the Mahaparinirvana-sutra. Their teachings were systematized in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga. This text was lost for centuries in India, and was then re-discovered (found in a stupa) and transmitted to Tibet. The tathagata-garbha or buddha-nature teachings that it gives form the basis of most of the esoteric teachings in Tibet. Tomorrow I will try to post the fuller story of this text, which is closely related to the Stanzas.

[David Reigle](#) on December 1, 2010 at 1:08pm

"Thus, were one to translate into English, using only the substantives and technical terms as employed in one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions, Verse I would read as follows: — "Tho-ag in Zhi-gyu slept seven Khorlo. Zodmanas zhiba. All Nyug bosom. Konch-hog not; Thyan-Kam not; Lha-Chohan not; Tenbrel Chugnyi not; Dharmakaya ceased; Tgenchang not become; Bar-nang and Ssa in Ngovonyidj; alone Tho-og Yinsin in night of Sun-chan and Yong-grub (Parinishpanna), &c., &c.," which would sound like pure Abracadabra." (SD 1.23)

Of the terms in this extract, I said in my post here of Oct. 28 that seven were unidentified. Since then, yinsin has been identified as a Chinese word (yih-sin = i-hsin = yixin). So that leaves six words that may be Senzar, although they look like Tibetan. For example, zhi-gyu may well be the two Tibetan words spelled gzhi rgyu. These six terms are:

1. tho-ag,
2. zhi-gyu.
3. thyan-kam,
4. chohan.
5. tgenchang.
6. sun-chan.

Of the terms in this extract, twelve are certainly Tibetan:

1. khorlo ('khor lo)
2. zodmanas (gzod ma nas)
3. zhiba (zhi ba)
4. nyug (snyugs)
5. konch-hog (dkon mchog)
6. lha (lha)
7. tenbrel (rten 'brel)
8. chugnyi (bcu gnyis)
9. Bar-nang (bar snang)
10. ssa (sa)
11. ngovonyidj (ngo bo nyid)
12. yong-grub (yongs grub)

Of the terms in this extract, dharmakaya is Sanskrit, as is parinishpanna, which is correctly given as the Sanskrit original of its Tibetan translation yong-grub.

As can be seen, we are dealing with an original that is largely in Tibetan, including perhaps several Senzar terms. This could pretty much be read by anyone who knows Tibetan, once they had the meaning of the Senzar terms. We are not dealing with an old pictorial form of Senzar here. One can easily imagine the Tibetan chelas of the Mahatmas using the Tibetan translation, the Indian chelas using the Sanskrit translation, and the Chinese chelas using the Chinese translation. Having one of these translations for an original, anyone knowing that language would be quite able to use it.

[David Reigle](#) on December 1, 2010 at 9:05pm

Pablo wrote:

According to HPB "chohan" is a Tibetan term that means "Lord" or "Master".

Reply:

According to HPB "fohat" is also a Tibetan term. But she was not a linguist. Neither of these terms have been found in Tibetan.

Pablo continues:

What is the Tibetan translation of these words?

Reply:

No one knows. We would have to have the Tibetan spelling of this word to know what it means in Tibetan. Over the years I have seen a few guesses as to what Tibetan word this could be. I have suggested one myself, chos mkhan (Blavatsky's Secret Books, p. 70), which makes sense to me, and is based on a spelling found in the Mahatma Letters. The problem is that I have never seen such a word in use, nor has any Tibetan or Tibetan speaker that I have asked. So I must leave it as unidentified.

[David Reigle](#) on December 1, 2010 at 9:28pm

Erica wrote:

There is a dog breed known as Tho'ag Tash

Reply:

Since we know that dog is God spelled backwards, I think you must be right in linking the dog Tho'ag to the Tho-ag of the Stanzas.

[David Reigle](#) on December 2, 2010 at 8:06am

OK, so now we have:

"The eternal dog wrapped in her ever invisible robes had slumbered once again for seven eternities." (Stanza 1.1)

I knew that dogs sleep a lot when they get old, but this is a nap of epic proportions.

[David Reigle](#) on December 2, 2010 at 2:10pm

I hate to interrupt our canine fun, and I thank Erica and Nicholas for playing along with me in this, but we must not let this thread go completely to the dogs.

I had said that I would try to post the fuller story of Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, a text that apparently is closely related to the Stanzas of Dzhan. Earlier (Nov. 23) we had briefly reviewed the couple main things known about the Stanzas from Theosophical sources:

1. The Stanzas of Dzhan are said to come from a secret commentary on the Book(s) of Kiu-te (BCW 14.422), which are the Tibetan Buddhist tantras. These are the esoteric teachings of Tibet, requiring initiation.

2. Original words "from one of the Tibetan and Senzar versions" were given from Stanza 1 (SD 1.23), that are almost all distinctive Buddhist terms. These are given mostly in Tibetan.

There is yet a third main thing that is known about the Stanzas from Theosophical sources. It comes from a letter written by HPB to A. P. Sinnett in 1886 when she was writing The Secret Doctrine (The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett, p. 195):

"I have finished an enormous Introductory Chapter, or Preamble, Prologue, call it what you will; just to show the reader that the text as it goes, every Section beginning with a page of translation from the Book of Dzhan and the Secret Book of "Maytreya Buddha" Champai chhos Nga (in prose, not the five books in verse known, which are a blind) are no fiction."

In other words:

3. The Book of Dzhan is associated with or identified with the secret book of Maitreya. It is written in prose, as distinguished from the five known books of Maitreya, which are written in verse.

Of the five known books of Maitreya, the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga is thought to differ from the others in its doctrinal standpoint. It uses a mostly different set of technical terms than the others. It teaches an ultimate element, or dhatu, the one element. When this element is obscured or associated with defilement, it is called the tathagata-garbha or buddha-nature. This is something that everyone has or shares. Critics have likened this to the self or atman taught in Hindu Vedanta, but Buddhists insist that it is different. I can post more on these things later. In the meantime, more can be found at www.easterntradition.org/book of dzian research report 4-the doctrine of svabhava or svabhavata and the question of anatman and suntyata.pdf, where I have suggested (p. 23) that the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, or more specifically its secret original, is the book that HPB refers to here in her letter.

There is a widespread tradition in Tibetan Buddhism, especially among the masters of the Ri-me or non-sectarian movement that was started in Tibet around the time of HPB's work with the Theosophical Society, of using Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga as a bridge between the sutras or exoteric teachings and the tantras or the Books of Kiu-te. Why is it used for this? Because it teaches a buddha-nature or tathagata-garbha that is found in everyone, and this buddha-nature is in some sense identified with the ultimate radiant nature of mind. The practices taught in the tantras, speaking very generally, are intended to help one identify with this so-called "clear light mind" (prabhasvara-citta). We have earlier been discussing this here by way of the term yih-sin / i-hsin / yixin, meaning the "one mind" (eka-citta).

The Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, also called the Uttara-tantra, was lost for several centuries in India. We know that it was available there in the 400s C.E., because it was translated into Chinese in 511 C.E. Then it disappeared in India. Its rediscovery is recounted in the Tibetan historical work, The Blue Annals (translated by George Roerich, p. 347). The 11th century Indian siddha Maitripa once saw a light shining from a crack in a stupa, and checking into it, found this book inside, along with another of the five books of Maitreya (the Dharma-dharmata-vibhaga). Shortly thereafter, it was transmitted to Tibet, and translated into Tibetan. The Sanskrit original was once again lost for many centuries. It was discovered in the 1930s by Rahula Sankrityayana on one of his trips to Tibet in search of Sanskrit manuscripts. From photographs that he took of it, a Sanskrit edition was published in 1950. A listing of English translations can be found at: www.easterntradition.org/etri bib-maitreya.pdf. In using any of these, it must be recognized that they all translate differently the key technical terms such as dhatu.

The dhatu is the central teaching of the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga. This Sanskrit word was translated into Tibetan in two ways: khams and dbyings. The first one means "element"; the second one means "realm" or "sphere" or "expanse" or "space." So it means both the one element and space. We read in The Secret Doctrine:

"What is that which was, is, and will be, whether there is a Universe or not; whether there be gods or none?" asks the esoteric Senzar Catechism. And the answer made is — space." (SD 1.9)

From what I have found in researching the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts, I conclude that HPB's "space" is Sanskrit dhatu, Tibetan dbyings, and perhaps Senzar tho-ag.

David Reigle on December 3, 2010 at 6:55am

Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga is the only book I know of that takes as its primary teaching the dhatu, the one element. The teaching on the one element is a fundamental teaching in the early Theosophical sources, ranging from the Mahatma letters to The Secret Doctrine. Here are three paragraphs from them on this:

"However, you will have to bear in mind (a) that we recognize but one element in Nature (whether spiritual or physical) outside which there can be no Nature since it is Nature itself, and which as the Akasha pervades our solar system, every atom being part of itself, pervades throughout space and is space in fact, . . . (b) that consequently spirit and matter are one, being but a differentiation of states not essences, . . . (c) that our notions of "cosmic matter" are diametrically opposed to those of western science. Perchance if you remember all this we will succeed in imparting to you at least the elementary axioms of our esoteric philosophy more correctly than heretofore."
—The Mahatma Letters, letter #11, 3rd ed., p. 63.

"Yes, as described in my letter—there is but one element and it is impossible to comprehend our system before a correct conception of it is firmly fixed in one's mind. You must therefore pardon me if I dwell on the subject longer than really seems necessary. But unless this great primary fact is firmly grasped the rest will appear unintelligible. This element then is the—to speak metaphysically—one sub-stratum or permanent cause of all manifestations in the phenomenal universe."
—The Mahatma Letters, letter #15, 3rd ed., p. 89.

"If the student bears in mind that there is but One Universal Element, which is infinite, unborn, and undying, and that all the rest—as in the world of phenomena—are but so many various differentiated aspects and transformations (correlations, they are now called) of that One, from Cosmical down to microcosmical effects, from super-human down to human and subhuman beings, the totality, in short, of objective existence—then the first and chief difficulty will disappear and Occult Cosmology may be mastered."
—The Secret Doctrine, vol. I, p. 75.

[David Reigle](#) on December 3, 2010 at 12:30pm

References to such a teaching in other sources will be needed. This will be a major problem when the Stanzas come out. How do we show that they represent the once universal wisdom tradition when they necessarily use language specific to Buddhism, and even specific to particular schools within Buddhism? I was wondering just last night what the ancient Greek parallel would be. I do not recall any others among the Indians, and would be happy to know of them. Thanks.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on December 3, 2010 at 2:17pm

Some sources for the *dhatu*, or *gotra*, taken from Obermiller, Acta Orientalia, vol. IX, 1931 :

1) In the Vinaya and Abhidharma, the term *gotra* is to be found in the sense of a special

element which is regarded as the principal factor for the attainment of Arhatship, or otherwise, as that element which forms, so to say, the essential nature or character of a Saint (arya-pudgala). This is the conception of the Vaibhasika school.

2) The Sautrantikas standpoint is quite different. This school admits the existence of a special force governing the element of consciousness. It belongs to the so-called "pure forces" (viprayukta-samskara ; ldan-min-hdu-byed), and give origination to the pure transcendental wisdom (anasrava-jnana ; zag-med-ye-she) of the Saint at the time of final Enlightenment.

3) The Yogacara schools.

The Vijñānavādins (Aryasāṅga, Vasubandhu) maintain the theory of the store-consciousness (ālaya-vijñāna ; kun-gzi-rnam-par-ses-pa) containing, so to say, the seeds of all the elements constituting a personality.

The Logicians (Dignāga) do not admit the existence of the store-consciousness.

Those who maintain the theory of the store-consciousness define the "*gotra*" as a force which governs (li. stands above ; kun-gzihi-sten-du) this store-consciousness and which brings about the origination of pure transcendental knowledge.

The *gotra* is regarded by both the subdivisions of the Yogachara school as manifesting itself in 2 aspects, viz. the fundamental, existing in every living being from the outset, and that which undergoes the process of development (prakṛitistha and paripusta-gotra ; ran-bzin-gnas-rigs and rgyas-hgyur-gyi-rigs). It (the *gotra*) is held to be a pure force and an active (samskrīta ; hdus-byas) mutable element. This active character is very pregnantly expressed in the Gudharta (tib. Don-gsan, a commentary on the first chapter of the Mahāyāna-saṃgraha ; tg. MDO XVI) where it is said that the Absolute Reality (**Pariniṣpanna ; yons-grub**) manifests itself in 2 forms, viz. the active and the immutable (nitya ; rtag-pa). The first of these forms has again 2 varieties, - the pure Transcendental Wisdom of the Buddha and the seed, the germ of this Transcendental Wisdom. This seed is the *gotra*, the fundamental element and the original cause of Enlightenment.

In Haribhadra's Abhisamayālamkāra-loka it is stated that the *gotra* as existing in every individual is beginningless and an outflow of the Absolute. The Yogacharas have the same opinion, but they do not admit the *gotra* to be the Absolute itself, as Haribhadra does. Tson-kha-pa and Jam-yan-zad-pa rightly remark that if the *gotra* is taken to be an active element, it is quite impossible to regard it as identical with the Absolute, which is immutable. That the *gotra* is derived from the Absolute means according to the Yogacharas that it exists from the outset, forming an inherent property of the stream of elements (saṃtana) constituting a personality.

In the commentary of Tson-kha-pa we have numerous quotations which especially point to the eternal immutable nature of the fundamental element. The most pregnant of these is that of the Ratnakuta : - That in which there is absolutely nothing caused and conditioned is (the element) which is eternal and immutable. This element is that of the saintly lineage ; it has a resemblance with space, being unique and undifferentiated. It is the true essence (tathata ; de-bzin-nid) of all the elements, is uniform (eka-rasa ; ro-gcig-pa) and eternal (nitya ; rtag-pa).

David Reigle on December 4, 2010 at 5:31pm

It is useful to have quotations from Obermiller's introduction to his translation of Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga or Uttara-tantra, that was published in 1931. Thanks, Jacques, for posting these. Obermiller was the first person to translate this text into a Western language. Since he did this before the Sanskrit text was discovered, he translated it from the Tibetan translation. It was a remarkable achievement, working only from the Tibetan, and before much was known about its specific technical vocabulary. He undertook this translation with the help of Tibetan monks at a monastery in Transbaikalia where he studied it in the summer of 1929. In his acknowledgments, he says (pp. 110-111):

"My deepest thanks are likewise due to the Khambo (Mkhan -po) Lama Agvan (Nag-dban) Dorjeev who took such a keen interest in my Buddhist studies in Transbaikalia and has greatly furthered them, . . ."

According to a Mongolian teacher who Paul Brunton met in Cambodia, Lama Agvan Dorjeev and HPB were co-disciples of the same teacher (The Notebooks of Paul Brunton, vol. 10, p. 201).

In Obermiller's comments that Jacques quoted, Obermiller equates the dhatu, the "element," or "space," with the gotra. The term gotra has its own set of meanings. The careful study by D. Seyfort Rugg delineates three main meanings for gotra ("The Meanings of the Term Gotra and the Textual History of the Ratnagotravibhaga," Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, vol. 39, 1976, p. 354):

1. mine, matrix.
2. family, clan, lineage.
3. germ, seed.

We can see from Obermiller's comments that gotra has been understood in one or other of these three meanings by the various schools and sub-schools of Buddhism, and yet it has been applied differently by them. Their different usages show that this teaching was subject to various interpretations. This is aside from what the term itself means, which is the first thing that must be understood. In the four existing English translations of the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, we find gotra translated in different ways:

1. "source (of Buddhahood)," or "Germ of enlightenment," or "saintly lineage" -- E. Obermiller, 1931.
2. "Germ [of the Buddha]" -- Jikido TAKASHAKI, 1966.
3. "potential" -- Ken and Katia Holmes, 1979/1985.
4. "disposition" -- Rosemarie Fuchs, 2000.

While the gotra may be a kind of synonym for the dhatu, it is not a full synonym, but rather expresses an aspect of the dhatu. The dhatu is the central term and central idea of the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, and perhaps of the Senzar Catechism that HPB quoted twice (SD 1.9, 1.11). In the four existing English translations of the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, we find dhatu translated in four different ways:

1. "Germ (of Buddhahood)" -- E. Obermiller, 1931.
2. "Essence [of the Buddha]" -- Jikido TAKASHAKI, 1966.

3. "buddha-nature" -- Ken and Katia Holmes, 1979/1985.
4. "element" -- Rosemarie Fuchs, 2000.

As may be seen, Obermiller had translated dhatu as germ, while TAKashaki translated gotra as germ. This alone, to say nothing of the lack of agreement of the other translations, is enough to show why reliable research on these matters is impossible on the basis of English translations alone. Until we have agreement on English equivalents for these original Sanskrit terms, like the Tibetans achieved, we will have to use the Sanskrit terms. Otherwise, how will anyone know if we mean the dhatu or the gotra when we refer to the germ?

These are distinct terms, giving distinct ideas. The "Secret Science" is as much a science as any modern science, and the accurate use of technical terms is as necessary in it as it is in physics, for example. The dhatu refers to the "element," or "space," while the gotra refers to a "matrix," in the sense of a mine as the source of minerals, or to a "lineage," as in a family lineage, or to a "germ," in the sense of a seed.

Now, in light of the above information, let us review HPB's second quotation from the Occult Catechism (SD 1.11):

“What is it that ever is?” “Space, the eternal Anupadaka.”* “What is it that ever was?” “The Germ in the Root.” “What is it that is ever coming and going?” “The Great Breath.” “Then, there are three Eternals?” “No, the three are one. That which ever is is one, that which ever was is one, that which is ever being and becoming is also one: and this is Space.”

We are now able to form the hypothesis that HPB's translation "Space" is the dhatu, and her translation "Germ" is the gotra.

[David Reigle](#) on December 4, 2010 at 10:03pm

Quote:

"Thales and Anaximander had a single element, "water" & "air" respectively I think."

"Without getting into our old argument about the One Principle as theosophy puts it, I think Sankhya's Prakriti will do well enough. Brahman Itself is another elemental, basic option."

Reply:

These may do well enough for Theosophists who want to find unity, but I don't think these are close enough for the rest of the world, i.e., for those in the rest of the world who may have an interest in these things. The one "element" of Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga does not refer to a single element among the four great elements, earth, water, air, and fire. You mean Anaximenes rather than Anaximander.

The prakriti of Samkhya is considered by almost everyone to be one of a pair with purusa, forming an ultimate duality. The one element found in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, and the one element taught in Theosophy, is ultimately non-dual. Until the lost Samkhya sourcebook called the Sasti-tantra is found, or more old Samkhya commentaries such as the Yukti-dipika (discovered in the early 1900s and first published in 1938) are found, not much of a case can be made that Samkhya actually teaches an ultimate unity. Some evidence for this is now

available in the Yukti-dipika, and in references to the lost Sasti-tantra. But this evidence is overwhelmed by that fact that Sankaracharya in his definitive commentary on the Brahma-sutras (the one extant, anyway) refutes Samkhya as a dualism.

As for brahman itself, I don't think Vedantins are willing to call it an "element" (dhatu), even the "one element," when all the Advaita Vedanta teachers, and the known Advaita Vedanta books, again and again define brahman as pure consciousness.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on December 5, 2010 at 4:41am

Sources for the Ratnagotravibhaga Mahayanottaratantrasastra.

A french translation was published in 2001, by François Chenique, from the sanskrit and tibetain original texts. It used most of the previous works as David quoted them here. The translator is using also D. Seyfort Ruegg two main studies in french (the Tathagatagarbha and Gotra theory - 1969, and the translation of Bu.ston rin.chen.grub Tathagatagarbha Essay - 1973), and Shenpen Hookham works.

He was able to do this translation, thanks to current existing tradition holders in Dhagpo Kagyu Ling in Dordogne, where he received the teachings of the Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, the same Khenpo who also provided explanations in the Rosemarie Fuchs book (Buddha Nature).

An interesting feature of François' translation is that he gives the whole text in sanskrit and in tibetain, then his traduction.

In his introduction , he gives his understanding of the *Dhatu* :

" *Dhatu* (khams) is difficult to translate : it means element, sphere, space, but also Nature (of Buddha) or Essence (ultimate), and in the Shentong interpretation of the texte, it mirrors a Reality of Base also expressed by the words like gotra (lineage), tathagatagarbha (Buddha germ), tathata, paramartha-satya (ultimate Truth), dharmakaya (Absolute Body), buddhajnana (Buddha Wisdom), and prabhasvara-citta (Natural clarity of Mind)."

This confirms the difficulties David is alluding too in terms of interpretations of the words in a translation.

Another useful sources is the Buddhism Encyclopedic Dictionary published by Philippe Cornu (2001 & 2006) where one can find translation of buddhist words in 5 languages (sanskrit, tibetan, chinese, japanese and french, plus extensive quotations from the buddhists texts .

[David Reigle](#) on December 5, 2010 at 6:42pm

"David, what I meant to ask is what the Tibetan words for “Lord” or “Master” or related terms are."

Pablo, for "Lord" the Tibetan words given in Dawasamdub's English-Tibetan Dictionary are: gtso bo, rje bo, jo bo, dpon po.

For "Master" the Tibetan words given in Dawasamdub's English-Tibetan Dictionary are:

bdag po, gtso bo, slob dpon, dpon po.

As you know, Dawasamdub was the translator who worked with Evans-Wentz, so he was familiar with Theosophy. In fact, I have a pocket-sized notebook of Dawasamdub's that Evans-Wentz had, that then came into the possession of the late Alex Patterson of San Diego, who gave it to me when Ken Small introduced me to him. It is mostly random notes, including shopping lists, mostly in Tibetan. It does have a list of the seven Theosophical principles, and Dawasamdub's attempt to give Tibetan translations of them.

David Reigle on December 5, 2010 at 10:12pm

Glad to hear of the 2001 French translation of the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, by François Chenique, which gives the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts. We much need a new translation of this text in English. Obermiller's 1931 translation, good as it was, used terms like the "Absolute" and the "Essence," which have long since been considered to no longer be appropriate for Buddhism. Takashaki's 1966 translation is the only one in English that was made from the Sanskrit, so still remains the standard, but it, too, used such terms. The later two, by Ken and Katia Holmes in 1979, with a revised edition in 1985, and by Rosemarie Fuchs in 2000, were made only from the Tibetan. This is not adequate when the original Sanskrit is available.

David Reigle on December 6, 2010 at 10:08pm

We have already seen what I regard as good evidence that the fundamental Theosophical teaching on the idea of the one element or of space corresponds to the Sanskrit term dhatu as found in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga. The term space as used in the early Theosophical writings would not correspond to Akasha, the usual term for space, or even to sunyata, which had sometimes then been translated as space. If this is so, we have narrowed down our search for the origins of this basic idea of the Stanzas of Dzhan to a specific term found in a specific source, one whose author is specifically named by HPB in association with the Book of Dzhan. I would now like to present more evidence in support of this, much more evidence, that to my mind leaves no doubt about this identification.

First, it is necessary to be clear about why and in what way the one element and space are synonyms, as reflected in the two Tibetan translations of the Sanskrit term dhatu. When the term dhatu stands alone, as it usually does in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, it is normally translated into Tibetan as khams, "element." In this sense, dhatu has the idea of a basic element of something. For example, it can refer to the seven constituents of the body, namely, flesh, bone, fat, etc. When speaking of the basic element of the whole universe, however, we are speaking of something completely unknown and unknowable. This is because Buddhism does not accept an ultimate element in the sense of something that can transform into the universe. How can we describe such an element? We cannot give it any attributes. All we can do is describe it as the undefinable space in which the phenomenal universe appears. So in this context, dhatu comes to be thought of and translated into Tibetan as dbyings, meaning "realm" or "sphere" or "expanse" or "space" in this sense. In this sense it is usually found in the compound, dharma-dhatu. This refers to the basic element (dhatu, khams) of the universe as the basic space (dhatu, dbyings) in which all phenomena (dharma-s) appear. So in this way the one element is a synonym of space.

We have reviewed three paragraphs from the Mahatma Letters and from The Secret Doctrine

giving the fundamental Theosophical teaching of the one element. We have also looked at two paragraphs from the esoteric Senzar Catechism giving this same fundamental Theosophical teaching as space. As with the Tibetans, so in the Theosophical teachings, these two are the same. HPB made this clear in 1882, when she wrote:

"Hence, the Arahat secret doctrine on cosmogony admits but of one absolute, indestructible, eternal, and uncreated UNCONSCIOUSNESS (so to translate), of an element (the word being used for want of a better term) absolutely independent of everything else in the universe; a something ever present or ubiquitous, a Presence which ever was, is, and will be, whether there is a God, gods or none; whether there is a universe or no universe; existing during the eternal cycles of Maha Yugas, during the Pralayas as during the periods of Manvantara: and this is SPACE, . . ."

(H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 3, p. 423)

This same idea using the same term was given from the very beginning, when these Theosophical teachings first came out in 1881, in the Cosmological Notes in answer to A. O. Hume's question:

"What is the one eternal thing in the universe independent of every other thing? Space."
("Cosmological Notes," The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett, Appendix II, p. 376)

This same idea using the same term again appears in a quote from the esoteric Senzar Catechism that HPB brought out seven years later, in The Secret Doctrine, published in 1888:

"What is that which was, is, and will be, whether there is a Universe or not; whether there be gods or none?" asks the esoteric Senzar Catechism. And the answer made is -- SPACE."
(The Secret Doctrine, vol. 1, p. 9)

We notice in this quote from the Senzar Catechism the phrase, "whether there is a Universe or not; whether there be gods or none," a phrase also used in HPB's 1882 writing quoted above. This is closely reminiscent of a phrase used in a fundamental teaching on this same topic found throughout the Buddhist texts, not only in the tathagata-garbha sutras, and is repeated in them like a refrain from a catechism. Here is this formulaic teaching as found in the early Pali language collection called the Samyutta Nikaya, as translated in 2000 by Bhikkhu Bodhi:

"Whether there is an arising of Tathagatas or no arising of Tathagatas, that element still persists, the stableness of the Dhamma, the fixed course of the Dhamma, specific conditionality."

(The Connected Discourses of the Buddha, trans. Bhikkhu Bodhi, vol. 1, p. 551)

As expected, the word translated here as "element" is dhatu, which is the same in Pali and in Sanskrit. A tathagata is a buddha. Each buddha is said to have a buddha-field (buddha-ksetra). This is a world, or world-system. So in speaking of the arising of tathagatas, this also implies the arising of the worlds that are the fields of activity of the individual buddhas. It is very much like saying, "whether there is a world or not, whether there be buddhas or none." In conjunction with the idea of the element that always remains, with or without these, we have a striking parallel to the sentence quoted by HPB from the esoteric Senzar Catechism.

It is important to note that the translation of dhatu as "element" in this formulaic statement is something that translators have come to use only recently, in a general move toward closer literal accuracy. Earlier, dhatu was translated in such ways as "state of things, principle, natural condition" (Walpola Rahula), "nature of things," etc. Here is this same verse from the Samyutta Nikaya, as translated in 1922 by Mrs. Rhys Davids:

"Whether, brethren, there be an arising of Tathagatas, or whether there be no such arising, this nature of things just stands, this causal status, this causal orderliness, the relatedness of this to that."

(The Book of the Kindred Sayings, trans. Mrs. Rhys Davids, part 2, p. 21)

So in most earlier translations of Buddhist texts, and in some current translations, we will not find dhatu translated as "element." As said, there are many occurrences of this formulaic statement in various Buddhist texts. We are not talking about an isolated statement. It is a fundamental teaching of the Buddhist texts, just as its position in the esoteric Senzar Catechism would show it to be a fundamental teaching of the Wisdom-Religion that HPB called Theosophy. To let everyone see for themselves that this is not just an isolated statement in the Buddhist texts, and not have to just take my word for it, I will quote below some other occurrences of it. There are small variations in its wording, but the idea is always the same.

The quotation just given from the Pali Samyutta Nikaya collection is from the Paccaya-sutta of the Nidana-vagga within that collection (Pali Text Society edition, vol. 2, p. 25). The parallel Sanskrit text is the Pratitya-sutra of the Nidana-samyukta in the Samyukta Agama collection. This collection is lost in the original Sanskrit, but some portions of it were discovered by expeditions to the Turfan area of central Asia in the early 1900s, including this particular text. This material has not yet been translated into English, so I here quote the Sanskrit first.

utpadad va tathagatanam anutpadad va sthita eveyam dharmata dharmasthitaye dhatuh |
(Funfundzwanzig Sutras des Nidasamyukta, ed. Chandrabhal Tripathi, Berlin, 1962, p. 148)

In translating this, I will mostly follow Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation for the first part, which is almost the same in Pali and Sanskrit. My translation of the latter part will reflect the small differences between the Pali and the Sanskrit.

"Whether there is an arising of the Buddhas or no arising, there verily remains the dharmata-nature (dharmata), the element (dhatu) for the establishment of the dharmas."

Perhaps not everyone is clear on what "dharmas" refers to. These are what make up the world, according to Buddhism. Various classifications give 52 or 75 or 100 of them. In this sense, they are much like the more than 100 chemical elements, hydrogen, etc., that make up the world according to Western science. So some translators in the early 1900s translated them as the "elements of existence." But they are not physical elements. Rather, they are psychological states such as feeling, perception, volition, etc. In the 1970s the translation "phenomena" came into vogue for them. It was thought that Buddhism teaches only phenomena, without any underlying noumenon. Jeffrey Hopkins and his students used this translation for decades. Then, when Jeffrey began to translate Jonangpa texts, he saw that these do in fact admit a noumenon. He has now adopted "noumenon" for dharmata, which

was translated in the above quote as "dharma-nature," and has often been translated as "true nature." He has consequently changed his translation of "dharma" from "phenomena" to its more literal meaning, "attributes." Lately, a number of translators are simply retaining the word "dharma," leaving it untranslated.

This brings us to our next quotation. In this one, from the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras, the word dharma-dhatu is used in place of just dhatu. This refers to the dhatu as the source of the dharmas. Since the dharmas make up the phenomenal world, the dharma-dhatu is the source of the phenomenal world. As noted above, it is here that the meaning of dhatu comes to be seen more as space than as element. Some of the many translations used for dharma-dhatu are "ultimate realm," "ultimate expanse," "sphere of reality," "expanse of reality," "basic space of reality," "sphere of phenomena," "basic space of phenomena," "realm of Dharma," "Dharma element," "ultimate element of things," "element of attributes," etc. Picking two of these, would readers know that both "basic space of phenomena," and "element of attributes" translate the same word, dharma-dhatu? The first one illustrates the sense of dhatu in dharma-dhatu as space, while the second one illustrates the sense of dhatu as element. Here is the quotation of this formulaic statement using dharma-dhatu rather than just dhatu, from the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in 18,000 lines, and also in 25,000 lines, in the section called the questions asked by Maitreya.

utpadad va tathagatanam anutpadad va sthitaiveyam dharmanam dharmata dharma-sthitita
dharma-dhatu |

(ed. Edward Conze, in *Melanges D'Indianisme a la Memoire de Louis Renou*, p. 238)

Edward Conze translates it as follows:

". . . that dharmic nature of dharmas which is established whether Tathagatas are produced or not, the established order of dharmas, the realm of Dharma (dharma-dhatu) . . ."
(trans. Edward Conze, *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom*, p. 648)

You will notice that Conze translates dharma-dhatu as the "realm of Dharma," taking dhatu as "realm." Yet in other places in this text, such as on p. 352, Conze translates dhatu as "element" in other versions of this formula:

"Whether Tathagatas are produced or not produced, just this markless element is established."

Why the difference? Because of the different Tibetan translations. In the first instance, where we had dharma-dhatu, the Tibetan translation of dhatu is dbyings, "realm" or "space." In the second instance, the Tibetan translation of dhatu is khams, "element."

Long ago I had concluded that the one "element" taught in Theosophy must be the dhatu taught in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, the only book on the dhatu as such. But only quite recently did it dawn on me that dhatu must also be the term behind "space" as found in the early Theosophical teachings, by way of following its Tibetan translation dbyings rather than khams. What eventually led me to this, and to accept it over other terms for space, is the fact that in Tibetan Buddhist writings and teachings you almost never hear about the dhatu, but only about the dharma-dhatu. There is always talk about the "expanse" or "basic space of phenomena," almost never about the "element." The fundamental formulaic statement that we

have seen examples may use dhatu or dharma-dhatu (and sometimes neither, using only dharmata). This oft-repeated statement, as said, forms a striking parallel with the statement quoted by HPB from the esoteric Senzar Catechism:

“What is that which was, is, and will be, whether there is a Universe or not; whether there be gods or none?” asks the esoteric Senzar Catechism. And the answer made is -- SPACE.”

I hope that all this has shown beyond reasonable doubt that we may identify the "one element" and "space" of the early Theosophical teachings, including the esoteric Senzar Catechism, with the dhatu taught in a brief formulaic statement found throughout the Buddhist texts, and expounded at length in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga by Maitreya. As we recall, HPB had linked the secret book of Maitreya Buddha with the Book of Dzian.

"I have finished an enormous Introductory Chapter, or Preamble, Prologue, call it what you will; just to show the reader that the text as it goes, every Section beginning with a page of translation from the Book of Dzian and the Secret Book of "Maitreya Buddha" Champai chhos Nga (in prose, not the five books in verse known, which are a blind) are no fiction."

[David Reigle](#) on December 7, 2010 at 2:38pm

Regarding Dawasamdub's notebook, I had not looked at this for many years. It is actually mostly a diary from 1894 and 1895. I remembered seeing the numbered list of the Theosophical seven principles followed by a numbered Tibetan listing, and I remembered then concluding that it did not contribute anything significant to understanding them. Now I have looked at this again, and have thus refreshed my memory as to what is actually there. He does not actually attempt to give Tibetan translations of them. Rather, he gives a list of six skandhas (phung po) or aggregates, and across from them, their corresponding so-called "dhyani-buddhas." It looks like he was trying to correlate the Buddhist skandhas with the Theosophical principles. He gives the five standard skandhas, in the normal order, followed by a sixth, ye shes kyi phung po. This would be jnana-skandha. He does not give a seventh at all, and therefore gives no correspondence to atman.

[David Reigle](#) on December 8, 2010 at 2:10pm

No one has yet objected to the identification of the Theosophical one "element" and "space" with the dhatu taught in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, that was made in my very long post of Dec. 6 (maybe because no one has yet been able to finish reading it!). So I will proceed on the assumption that this is accepted. This, then, makes the further identification of the "germ" in a quote from the Senzar Catechism with the gotra taught in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga very probable. Here again is that quote from the Occult Catechism (SD 1.11):

“What is it that ever is?” “Space, the eternal Anupadaka.”* “What is it that ever was?” “The Germ in the Root.” “What is it that is ever coming and going?” “The Great Breath.” “Then, there are three Eternals?” “No, the three are one. That which ever is is one, that which ever was is one, that which is ever being and becoming is also one: and this is Space.”

Leaving aside the other meanings of gotra, discussed earlier, I will just use "germ." The germ is taught in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga as a kind of synonym of the dhatu, so this text and the

Occult Catechism quote agree on this. As was the case with dhatu for "space," this parallel with gotra is enough to give gotra precedence over other more usual words for "germ," such as garbha or bija. So I will assume the correctness of the identification of the gotra with what HPB translates as the "germ" here.

There is another place that HPB refers to the gotra. It is in a note in *The Voice of the Silence* (p. 87, note 1):

"Upadya is a spiritual preceptor, a Guru. The Northern Buddhists choose these generally among the "Narjol," saintly men, learned in gotrabhu-gnyana and gnyana-dassana-suddhi teachers of the Secret Wisdom."

This was one of the examples picked out by William Emmette Coleman to show that HPB's *Voice of the Silence* was a composite forgery made by someone ignorant of Northern Buddhism, rather than a translation of an actual book found in Tibet as she claimed it was. See on this, Paul's blog here, "Source(s) of *The Voice of the Silence*." In Coleman's article, "The Sources of Madame Blavatsky's Writings," published as Appendix C in the 1895 book, *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, he wrote on pp. 362-363:

"One example of the incongruity of the elements composing the conglomerate admixture of terms and ideas in the *Voice of the Silence* will be given. On p. 87, it is said that the Narjols of the Northern Buddhists are 'learned in Gotrabhu-gnyana and gnyana-dassana-suddhi'. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky copied these two terms from Hardy's *Eastern Monachism*, p. 281. The terms used in Northern Buddhism are usually Sanskrit, or from the Sanskrit; those in Southern Buddhism, Pali, or from the Pali. Hardy's work, devoted to Sinhalese Buddhism, is composed of translations from Sinhalese books, and its terms and phrases are largely Sinhalese corruptions of the Pali. Sinhalese terms are unknown in Northern Buddhism. The two terms in the *Voice of the Silence*, descriptive of the wisdom of the Narjols, are Sinhalese-Pali corruptions, and therefore unknown in Thibet."

His point is basically true, although the term gotra itself, and even the compound gotrabhu, are both Pali and Sanskrit, languages unknown to Coleman. HPB did bring these terms in from E. Spence Hardy's 1850 book, *Eastern Monachism*, which is based on Southern Buddhist sources. In the 1989 Delhi reprint these terms are found on p. 313, as follows:

"The wisdom necessary for the reception of the paths is called gotrabhu-gnyana. When the paths are entered the wisdom that is received by those who have made this attainment is called gnyana-dassana-sudhi."

But the term gotra itself, in its Tibetan translation, rigs, is well known in Northern Buddhist countries such as Tibet. Not only is it found in Maitreya's *Ratna-gotra-vibhaga*, where it is of basic importance, it is also found in many other Northern Buddhist texts. Jacques had quoted several paragraphs from Obermiller's 1931 publication, summarizing from Tibetan sources the usage of this term in the various Buddhist schools (pp. 96-108). One of Obermiller's two main sources was Tsongkhapa's *Golden Garland of Eloquence*, now available in a 2008 English translation by Gareth Sparham. Here Tsongkhapa explains the gotra at length in volume 1, pp. 367-376. No Northern Buddhist source on gotra was available in HPB's time.

Coleman made a plausible case that HPB inappropriately brought in Southern Buddhist material to annotate her purported translation of a text found in a Northern Buddhist country, thus suggesting that she did not know the difference between the two. We now know, however, that gotra is of basic importance in the Northern Buddhist Ratna-gotra-vibhaga and is apparently found as "germ" in the Occult Catechism paragraph that HPB translated. So a plausible case can also be made that HPB was quite aware of its meaning, and simply brought this term in from the only source for it that was then available.

Both cases are based on assumptions, and I do not think that either of them is inherently more plausible than the other. On first sight, Coleman's assumption seems to be more plausible, since it is true that the phrases quoted by HPB come from Southern Buddhist texts. His assumption, however, was that HPB claimed to have translated a Northern Buddhist text, while HPB actually claimed that she translated sections of a text, "some of which are pre-Buddhistic while others belong to a later date" (Preface to the Voice, p. ix). She would therefore be under no obligation to limit herself to Northern Buddhist sources. This weakens Coleman's case, as does the fact, unknown in Coleman's time, that the gotra idea in general is found in both Southern and Northern Buddhist sources. So there would be nothing incongruous in saying that Northern Buddhist teachers were learned in the gotra teachings. It is therefore at least plausible that HPB knew the gotra idea, wanted to bring it in here, and did so from the only source then available.

[David Reigle](#) on December 9, 2010 at 8:55pm

Pablo wrote:

"I wonder if there is any correlation between lhun-grub and Space (dhatu) or even with gotra in Tibetan Buddhism?"

Reply:

There indeed is. Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, being the major source on the dhatu and the gotra, would be the first place to look. The Tibetan word lhun-grub, Sanskrit anabhoga, meaning "without conscious effort," or "spontaneity," is found in its verses 1.5, 1.6, 1.25, 1.76, 4.1, 4.3, 4.54, 4.71, 4.72, and 5.4, in case anyone wants to look at these. It may not be easy to pick this word out from the translation, whichever published translation is used. They do not usually include glossaries.

HPB referred to the verse versions of the five books of Maitreya that we have as being blinds. It is not hard to see why. The first topic of the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga is the Buddha. So ostensibly, this book describes his wonderful qualities, and this is probably how devout Buddhists see it. But in the commentary on the very first verse, we read in TArashaki's translation, about the Buddha, "Verily, O Ananda, invisible is the Tathagata. He cannot be seen by eyes." This pretty well rules out the son of King Shuddhodana who lived 2600 years ago. Verse four gives the homage to this unusual Buddha, saying it is without beginning, middle, or end, etc. Verse five describes it as asamskrita, now usually translated either as uncompounded or unconditioned, but translated by Obermiller as immutable, which is copied by TArashaki. We are now obviously dealing with an ultimate principle, not a historical person. Verse five goes on to describe this as anabhoga, or lhun-grub, translated by Obermiller as "free from effort," and again copied by TArashaki as "free from efforts." Ken and Katia Holmes translate this term as "spontaneously present" (1979), or "spontaneous" (1985).

Rosemarie Fuchs uses "spontaneously present."

S. K. Hookham's 1991 book, *The Buddha Within: Tathagatagarbha Doctrine according to the Shentong Interpretation of the Ratnagotravibhaga*, includes a paraphrase of this text rather than a translation. She translates *lhun-grub* as "spontaneous," and explains this term on pp. 48-50. The unusual Buddha that this text speaks of is supposed to have inseparable ultimate qualities. Hookham writes: "If the inseparable Qualities are uncompounded and they do not exist in the ordinary sense, even for a moment, what is their manner of existing? It is called 'spontaneous' (*lhun gyis grub pa*)" (p. 48). She goes on to say, "In some ways, 'spontaneous' is a misleading translation since it normally has the connotation of action or process that occurs without external stimuli. . . . In this context, it means without origin in the special sense of being primordially Existent. Perhaps 'primordially existent' gives a better 'feel' to the meaning of the term, but there are other words in Tibetan that are more literally translated as primordially Existent, as there are also for 'Self-arisen.' . . . Thus, I have decided to use 'spontaneous' in order to distinguish 'lhun grub' from these other terms. It is sometimes translated as 'Self-existent' which is, perhaps, a rather free translation though capturing a certain feel of the term" (pp. 49-50). As we know, *Hlun dhub* (*lhun grub*) is given in the *Cosmological Notes* as "self existing."

I had mentioned that Maitreya's *Ratna-gotra-vibhaga* is the only text I know of that is on the *dhatu* as such, but that many teachings on the *dharma-dhatu* may be found in Tibet. As we approach Christmas, we are reminded of the three wise men from the East. You all know who *Tsongkhapa* is, the highly regarded founder of the Gelugpa or Yellow Hat order of Tibetan Buddhism. He is regarded by Tibetans as an incarnation of *Manjusri*, the deity that represents wisdom. This is a way of saying that he was a very wise man. There is a tradition among Tibetans that there were three incarnations of *Manjusri* in Tibet. The three Tibetan *Manjusris* are *Tsongkhapa*, *Sakya Pandita*, and *Longchenpa*. These are the three wise men of Tibet. Each of them left many writings, on many subjects. Among these writings there is one book just on the *dharma-dhatu*. It was written by *Longchenpa*, the greatest Tibetan teacher of the *Nyingma* order, and one of the three wise men of Tibet. This book was translated into English by Richard Barron, and published in 2001 under the title, *The Precious Treasury of the Basic Space of Phenomena*.

The "basic space of phenomena" is Richard Barron's translation of *dharma-dhatu*, Tibetan *chos dbyings*. That is, *dhatu* = *dbyings* = basic space. The word *lhun-grub* appears in each of the two opening verses of homage as an adjective, where it is translated as "spontaneously present." Then it appears in the first verse of the text proper as a noun, "spontaneous presence," along with *dbyings*, "basic space." Here is this verse, to which I have added Tibetan words in brackets:

"Within the expanse of spontaneous presence [*lhun grub*] is the ground [*gzhi*] for all that arises. Empty in essence, continuous by nature, it has never existed as anything whatsoever, yet arises as anything at all. Within the expanse of the three kayas, although *samsara* and *nirvana* arise naturally, they do not stray from basic space [*dbyings*] -- such is the blissful realm that is the true nature of phenomena."

I added *gzhi* for "ground," since this is very likely the *zhi* in *zhi-gyu* of Stanza 1 (SD 1.23). The two words *lhun-grub* and *dbyings* also appear together in the last verse of this chapter, of

which I quote the first half:

"In brief, within the ultimate womb of basic space [dbyings], spacious and spontaneously present [lhun grub], whatever arises as the dynamic energy of its display -- as samsara or nirvana -- in the very moment of simply arising has never known existence as samsara or nirvana."

This is a text written in verse, for ease of memorization. Longchenpa wrote his own prose commentary on it to explain the often terse verses. The commentary has also been translated by Richard Barron, and published in 2001 under the title, A Treasure Trove of Scriptural Transmission. If anyone wants to get these books, I would recommend ordering them directly from the publisher, Padma Publishing. The root text volume gives the Tibetan text and English translation on facing pages, which is very helpful. The commentary volume has just English.

Besides lhun-grub with dhatu or dbyings, you had also asked about lhun-grub with gotra, Tibetan rigs. These latter two words may be found together, for example, in the major work of the major Jonangpa writer, Dolpopa, titled Mountain Doctrine, as translated by Jeffrey Hopkins and published in 2006. Here is a quote from p. 401, in which I again add Tibetan words, from the 1976 Gangtok edition, folios 380-381, and also what they are in Sanskrit:

". . . the noumenal thoroughly established nature [yongs grub, parinishpanna] . . . is the entity of the ultimate truth [don dam bden pa, paramartha] -- the nature body or inherent body, natural clear light, natural innate pristine wisdom, natural purity, natural spontaneity [lhun-grub, anabhoga], naturally abiding lineage [rigs, gotra]."

David Reigle on December 10, 2010 at 10:00pm

Thank you very much for this link, Pablo. I did not know that TArashaki's carefully annotated translation was available online. Jacques, or anyone else who might know, I wonder if the Obermiller translation is also available online.

Jacques Mahnich on December 11, 2010 at 7:32pm

Obermiller translation does not appear to be available on line

A new study on the subject can be read at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/3480575/Buddha-Nature>

David Reigle on December 11, 2010 at 8:41pm

Further to the term lhun-grub, which is given in the Cosmological Notes as the seventh principle in man, its first occurrence in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga actually describes buddhahood, not the Buddha. Although the Buddha is the first of the seven subjects of this book, in the homage to him given in verse 4 it is buddhahood that is being described as without beginning, middle, or end. In verse 5 it is buddhahood that is described as asamskrita, "uncompounded," and lhun-grub, "spontaneously present," or "self existing." These adjectives that describe something ultimate are then defined in the following verses.

So verse 6 defines anabhoga or lhun-grub. It says that buddhahood is anabhoga or lhun-grub because of being the quiescent dharma-kaya. The word dharma-kaya is another very difficult term to define. Obermiller translates it as the Cosmical Body, and TAdashaki translates it as the Absolute Body. In the two translations that came later it is left untranslated. Some current translators use buddha body of reality, and other such translations. From this and other examples posted previously, the following fact may be seen:

It is not the case that anyone who knows Sanskrit will translate the same term or sentence or book the same way.

An important implication of this is that knowing the main technical terms used in Theosophy will be very helpful in expanding one's understanding of its teachings. If you see "free from effort" in one place, and "spontaneous" in another place, and if you know that they both translate lhun-grub or anabhoga, what is said about them in both places can be correlated with how this term is used in Theosophy. The nice thing about this is that it does not require full knowledge of the language; it only requires learning a comparatively few technical terms.

[David Reigle](#) on December 12, 2010 at 12:34pm

Thanks, Jacques, for letting us know that the Obermiller translation of the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga is not available online. Thanks also for the link to a new study on the subject. When I go there, I only get a picture with no text. Who is it by?

[David Reigle](#) on December 12, 2010 at 1:08pm

Going along with the fact that, "It is not the case that anyone who knows Sanskrit will translate the same term or sentence or book the same way," is another fact:

It is not the case that anyone who knows Sanskrit can translate any Sanskrit book.

Why not? Because of the technical terms. Just as any native speaker of English would not be able to translate a book on nuclear physics without special study of its terms and ideas, so with a Sanskrit book on the dhatu and related ideas. Terms such as this that are found in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga are used so differently than in other books, not only Hindu books but also other Buddhist books, that this book could not just be translated: it had to be figured out.

You can easily see this in the notes to TAdashaki's translation. He worked on this book for two and a half years in India with one of the few Indian Sanskrit pandits who was familiar with Buddhist texts and terminology, including Tibetan and Chinese, V. V. Gokhale. TAdashaki also received guidance in Sanskrit from another excellent Sanskrit pandit, R. D. Karmarkar, who gave us the most literally accurate translation of Gaudapada's Mandukya-karika yet published (he did this in response to Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya's also very accurate translation of this text, that had brought in meanings of its technical terms from Buddhist texts). So TAdashaki with this highly competent help from Sanskrit pandits was able to accurately construe the Sanskrit sentences. But for the meanings of the technical terms, he had to bring in help from the Tibetan and Chinese translations, as can be seen in his footnotes. We just have to here remember that English equivalents used then were still very tentative, and many that TAdashaki used are no longer acceptable today. We must be very grateful for

this English translation competently made from Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese sources.

The Tibetan translation in particular, because of its literal accuracy, functions as a word-by-word glossary of the text. It shows how the words were understood at the time it was translated from Sanskrit. This is necessary to consult because the Sanskrit text was lost for about a thousand years, so its ideas had long since ceased to be transmitted in India. The fact that its ideas had continued to be transmitted in Tibet meant that this text could be translated from its Tibetan translation with the help of Tibetan lamas who were familiar with its ideas. This is what led to the other translations so far published. Obermiller worked with Gelugpa lamas, while Ken and Katia Holmes, S. K. Hookham, and Rosemarie Fuchs worked with Kagyupa lamas. This brings out another problem. The ideas of this text were so unique, even within Buddhism, that they led to two major traditions of interpretation in Tibet.

Some of the ideas of the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga sound very much like the atman idea taught in Hinduism, an idea that is heretical to most Buddhists. In fact, this book openly speaks of the atman as a term describing the dharma-kaya in chapter 1, verses 35-37. Now, can such ideas as this be taken at face value, or must they be interpreted to fit in with other Buddhist ideas such as no atman? One tradition, the Shentong tradition, says that this text is of definitive meaning (nitārtha), that it should be taken at face value. The other tradition, the Rangtong tradition, in effect says that this text is to be interpreted (neyārtha), that its ideas must be made to conform with other Buddhist ideas. This means that its technical terms such as dhatu, when understood in one way may agree with the early Theosophical teachings, and when understood in the other way may disagree with the early Theosophical teachings. It all depends on how we understand these technical terms. One cannot simply ask the nearest Sanskrit pandit or Tibetan lama what they mean. You will get different answers.

Our task here, in attempting to trace the Stanzas of Dzyan, is to determine as accurately as we can the meaning of these technical terms in the various traditions. This is likely to lead us toward one tradition, and away from another tradition, always recognizing that the tradition of the Stanzas is supposed to be a secret one that would not exactly match any known tradition. Our safest bet in determining meanings of terms is to use the most literal meaning, and then let it be interpreted however it may. This is the proven policy used in the Tibetan translations of the Sanskrit texts, laid down by decree of the king of Tibet 1200 years ago. Thus, for dhatu the basic and most literal meaning is element, Tibetan khams, and its derivative or contextual meaning of realm or space, Tibetan dbyings, was also allowed. From these two basic translations, the various Tibetan schools could interpret it as they wished. But there was never any doubt about the original term, as there would be if the various interpretations were used as translations. It is remarkable that the early Theosophical writings spoke of the one element, a translation of dhatu in this context that modern scholarship has only recently come to see and use as the norm.

Jacques Mahnich on December 13, 2010 at 11:07pm

The text quoted in the link "<http://www.scribd.com/doc/3480575/Buddha-Nature>" is a transcription of a seminar given in 1985 in Vancouver on Uttaratantra (Commentaries and questions & answers sessions with the 13th Zasep Tulku Rinpoche during a retreat) based on Obermiller translation. It gives a familiarization with the basic concepts of the first four vajra topics thanks to a living master of the tradition. This document (193 pages) will be available

together with the documents related to the Stanzas on this site.

[David Reigle](#) on December 14, 2010 at 10:14pm

The first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine is given in the book of that name as an omnipresent, eternal, boundless, and immutable principle (SD 1.14). This is obviously equivalent to the "one element" taught earlier in the Mahatma letters, and to "space" as found in the esoteric Senzar Catechism. These latter two English terms have allowed us to trace this to the Sanskrit term dhatu as used specifically in the tathagata-garbha teachings of Buddhism, which are summarized in a single treatise, Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga. If we did not have this book, we would not have been able to trace this fundamental Theosophical teaching that stands behind the Stanzas of Dzryan, given in these terms. This identification then received rather dramatic support from the formulaic statement found throughout the Buddhist texts, about whether the Tathagatas arise or do not arise, the element (dhatu) remains.

The normal Sanskrit word for "element," as in earth, water, fire, air, and space, is maha-bhuta. This word is found in many books. Similarly, the normal Sanskrit word for "space" is Akasha, as just seen in the list of the five elements. This word, too, is very common. But neither maha-bhuta nor Akasha are behind "element" or "space" in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga or in the formulaic statement of the Buddhist texts, and nor are they likely to be behind the "one element" or "space" of the Mahatma letters and the esoteric Senzar Catechism. In tracing the Stanzas, then, the single major source of the technical terms behind its fundamental ideas is the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga. We would be well advised to follow this out and investigate this source carefully.

But even though we have been led to a specific Buddhist source for the terminology of the fundamental teachings behind the Stanzas, I think it is extremely important not to conclude that these specific ideas are found only in Buddhism. Immediately after giving the first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine, HPB says, "It is beyond the range and reach of thought -- in the words of the Mandukya, 'unthinkable and unspeakable.'" These words from the Mandukya Upanishad describe the atman or brahman or om (aum) taught in Hinduism. These same two words also describe the dhatu in the extensive Perfection of Wisdom texts in Buddhism. This naturally leads us to the equation of the first fundamental principle of the Secret Doctrine with the dhatu in Buddhist texts, and with the atman or brahman in Hindu texts. The disagreement between Buddhists and Hindus over the atman is a question for another time.

[David Reigle](#)

Thank you, Jacques, for telling us about the text at the link you gave, that it is a modern commentary on the Uttara-tantra, or Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, by a living master of the tradition. It seems that it was not possible to post it on this website, because of copyright restrictions. Nonetheless, we will soon have access to the Obermiller translation here. He, too, studied this text with living Tibetan masters of the tradition, at a Gelugpa monastery in Transbaikalia. For those who wish to just read this text, Obermiller's translation is easier reading than TArashaki's translation. Both are difficult, because the text itself is difficult. For those who wish to study this text, it is quite helpful to be able to compare two different translations, especially when one is made from the Tibetan translation and one is made from the original

Sanskrit.

David Reigle

You are kind and forgiving people. No one has yet taken me to task for what I said more than two days ago: "This naturally leads us to the equation of the first fundamental principle of the Secret Doctrine with the dhatu in Buddhist texts, and with the atman or brahman in Hindu texts." But out on the debate court, my adversary cannot believe his ears. Can it be possible that someone could make such a naive statement? Hardly able to contain his glee at his now certain victory, he yet keeps a straight face as he replies to me:

"You say that the unthinkable element* (acintya-dhatu) or inexpressible realm** (nirabhilapya-dhatu) taught in the Buddhist Perfection of Wisdom sutras is the same as the unthinkable and inexpressible self (atman) taught in the Hindu Mandukya Upanishad. But you must not have even read the Perfection of Wisdom sutras. For if you have, you surely could not have missed such statements in them as this one: 'Absolutely a self does not exist.'*** Explain this. Come on, answer! Are you asleep?"

He punctuates his last question with a loud clap of his hands. This is, speaking very generally, the way philosophical debate is carried on in Tibetan monasteries. A great book on this, with a great title, is: *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk*, by Georges B. J. Dreyfus, the first Westerner to complete the Tibetan Geshe degree.

Whether on the debate court of a Tibetan monastery, or on the metaphorical debate court of the whole world, any proposed answers to the great questions of life must be able to stand on their own. They cannot be based on unwarranted assumptions. They must be credible, and they must take into account what is known on the subject by most others. One cannot assert that the first fundamental principle of the Secret Doctrine is the dhatu of the Buddhist texts and the atman or brahman of the Hindu texts, without being fully aware of the millenniums-old debate on this, and without being fully prepared to support this assertion.

*The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom, trans. Edward Conze, pp. 249, 253, 277, 305.

**The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom, trans. Edward Conze, pp. 646-647.

***The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom, trans. Edward Conze, p. 191.

David Reigle on December 17, 2010 at 10:42pm

Very glad to hear from you again after a long pause, Leila. I quite agree that it is possible to compare things from the point of view of experience, and to thereby find probable correspondences, which would not seem possible from just the point of view of the different texts. The Buddhist ultimate, whether we refer to it as the dhatu (the element or space), or as emptiness, or as the dharmakaya, or as the dharmata, etc., seems worlds apart from the Hindu ultimate, brahman or atman. Certainly, Buddhist writers down through the ages have continuously refuted the Hindu atman.

But when, in the experience of the respective Buddhist and Hindu sages, their ultimate is described in the very same way, we must take a closer look. The ancient Hindu Mandukya Upanishad describes the atman (or brahman, or om) as inconceivable (acintya) and inexpressible (avyapadesya). HPB (SD 1.14) had quoted these two words from the early

translation of this Upanishad by Archibald Edward Gough, found in his 1882 book, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads and Ancient Indian Metaphysics*, p. 71, as "unthinkable and unspeakable." The dhatu is described in the Buddhist Perfection of Wisdom sutras in the same words, inconceivable (acintya), and also inexpressible (nirabhilapya). For the latter idea, the Buddhist text used the more common word, nirabhilapya, rather than the rare old word used in the Mandukya Upanishad, avyapadesya. But we know that the meaning is the same, since Sankaracharya in his commentary fills out the meaning of avyapadesya with sabdaih, "with words." So both the Hindu and Buddhist sages describe their ultimate as beyond thought and speech. Why, then, do the Buddhists refute the Hindu atman?

Whole books have been written on this age-old question. From the standpoint of the Theosophical teachings, I am willing to put forth an answer. I am willing to state the conclusion that I have come to as a premise, ahead of the extensive supporting evidence that led me to it. Some of this supporting evidence can be posted in coming weeks and months. But in the meantime, we can take the premise as a working hypothesis to be proved or disproved. Here it is.

As its first fundamental proposition, the Secret Doctrine posits an omnipresent, eternal, boundless, and immutable principle, which is beyond the range and reach of thought, or unthinkable and unspeakable (SD 1.14). Yet, we are told, it may be symbolized under two aspects: absolute abstract space, and absolute abstract motion, which latter represents unconditioned consciousness. My premise, put simply, is that the Buddhist ultimate describes the one aspect, absolute abstract space, while the Hindu ultimate describes the other aspect, absolute abstract motion. The Hindu brahman is defined as pure or absolute consciousness. This is what Buddhists could never accept. Yet, if we believe the Secret Doctrine, it is merely one of two ways to describe or symbolize the indescribable ultimate. It would only be looking at the same thing from a different angle.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on December 18, 2010 at 10:46am

We are now entering in a deep and challenging debate about the interpretation of atman in buddhist traditions. It can be never ending. Let's hope it will not drag us away from the original goal.

But it is a very interesting question.

In 1973, Kamaleswar BHATTACHARYA published a book dedicated to this very subject "L'Atman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien - Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient", where he intend to demonstrate that the Buddha never reject the upanisadic atman but negating what is falsely believed to be the atman.

He started from a sanskrit wall inscription in Cambodia - Bat Cum, kingdom of Rajendravarman : 944-968 A.D. which says : "Buddho bodhim vidadhyad vo yena nairatmyadarsanam viruddhasyapi sadhuktam sadhanam paramatmanah"

At the time of the first traduction of this inscription (G. Coedes - 1908), it was understood (paramatman) as contradictory to the nairatma doctrine, and it was understood as hinduism contamination in buddhism in Cambodia.

Later on, using Sylvain Levy translation of the Mahayana-Sutralamkara (1911) - Chapter IX, Stanza 23 :

"sunnyatayam visuddhayam nairatmyatmagralabhathah buddhah suddhatmalabhitvad gata atmamahatmatam"

which translated as : " In the all pure Emptiness, the Buddhas reached the top of the atman which consists in impersonality. Because they found so the pure atman, they reached the greatness of the atman".

later on, quoting a Commentary (not identified) to the Sutralamkara, he translated : " The fundamental Impersonality is the pure Be-ness, it is the atman, the Buddhas' svabhava". When it is totally pure, the Buddhas reached the fundamental Impersonality, which is the pure atman.

Then, Battacharya draw from a commentary to the Ratnagotravibhaga to better explained the idea. He referred also to some Upanishads to explain what is the upanishadic atman :

from Taittiriya Up. (II-7) the brahman-atman is called anatmya.

from Maitri Up. (II-4, VI-20,21,28) one can find the words niratman and niratmaka.

The main difficulty will be, as David warned us, about interpretations of these texts, according to who has tried to translate them in a western language. However, it looks (and Battacharya continued for 200 pages to demonstrate) that David idea about similarities or even communality between hindu and buddhist fundamental principles may be right.

[David Reigle](#) on December 18, 2010 at 9:17pm

Jacques, I was extremely happy to see your post on Kamaleswar Bhattacharya's 1973 book, "L'Atman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme ancien." Kamaleswar Bhattacharya is a top-notch Buddhist and Sanskrit scholar, and this is a unique book. There have been many attempts to show that the Buddha did not deny the atman taught in the Upanishads, but all of them could be dismissed for some reason or another -- until this one. This one had to be taken seriously. One could disagree with it, and most Buddhists and Buddhist scholars did disagree with it, but it could not be lightly dismissed. It was too competently done.

Anyone who is sympathetic to Theosophy and interested in this question should study very carefully what Jacques posted for us from this book. Throughout the twentieth century, until the last few decades when Tibetan lamas started teaching in the West, French-speaking scholars and translators have dominated Buddhist studies in the West. That is why I am so grateful to have Jacques participating here and bringing in material from French. Thank you.

Jacques, I share your concern about this topic dragging us away from the original goal, and I considered this before bringing it in here on Dec.14. But the fact is, that the material from the fundamental propositions of the Secret Doctrine, supported by the early teachings such as the Cosmological Notes, and the few quotations from the Occult Catechism, have given us our best leads toward tracing the system of thought behind the Stanzas of Dzyan. It is these, more than the terms or ideas found in the Stanzas themselves, that have led us to the tathagata-garbha teachings found in Buddhism, and summarized in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga.

But as it becomes clearer and clearer that the particular volume of commentaries that HPB translated the Stanzas of Dzyan from was in the form of a text using terms that are specific to

Buddhism, a major problem emerges. In *The Secret Doctrine*, HPB strenuously fought the idea that the Theosophical teachings were limited to Buddhism. If the Stanzas emerge in demonstrably Buddhist language, their ideas must be shown to also be found in non-Buddhist sources. Otherwise, the release of the Stanzas would be counter-productive. We don't need more sectarianism in the world.

So it will be quite important to make the identification that Buddhists so much wish to avoid: The Buddhist tathagata-garbha is the same as the Hindu atman, and the Tathagata-garbha sutras that openly say this are to be taken literally, not interpreted away. This will no doubt be the Theosophical position, as seen in "An Unpublished Discourse of Buddha" (BCW 14.408-410), and it will need to be supported by good evidence. It will need to be shown that nowhere in the early Buddhist texts does the Buddha ever directly and categorically deny the atman taught in the Upanishads, even though he had many opportunities to do so. What he denied, as shown in Kamaleswar Bhattacharya's fine book, is that there is an atman in any of the aggregates (skandhas) that make up a person; in other words, what is falsely believed to be the atman.

[David Reigle](#) on December 18, 2010 at 10:06pm

Martin, this has to be one of the strangest websites I have ever seen. It makes some of the more fundamentalist Theosophists, who are willing to engage in attacks on others, look good. There is a saying about such things: With friends like this, we don't need enemies. That is, these kind of friends do us more harm than actual enemies. I think that many of the points made on this website in support of the atman teachings in Buddhism are valid. But being submerged in an ocean of harsh criticism against almost all other Buddhists, only causes the atman idea to be that much more readily dismissed by others. This is a shame, because it appears that there are also valid and useful comparisons with Platonic and Neo-Platonic ideas here. These, too, are likely to go for naught as people turn away from this website because of its hostile attitude.

It may be that the anatta or no-self doctrine is a later perversion of Buddhism, although perhaps misinterpretation would be a better word to describe it than perversion. The great difficulty in making such a case is the almost unanimous denial of self found in almost all known forms of Buddhism for the last two thousand years. One would end up saying that virtually all the Buddhists of the world got it wrong, but we, being smarter than them, even though outside of the tradition, understood the Buddha better than they did. This is hardly credible. The best one can do at this point is to propose that a valid line of interpretation in support of the atman within Buddhism can be made. There may have been such an understanding within Buddhism at one time. If a mass of texts like the "Unpublished Discourse of Buddha" were to come out, then a good case could be made that this was the original form of Buddhism. But until then, the best case that can be made will not be convincing to the majority.

[David Reigle](#) on December 20, 2010 at 9:43pm

The verse that Kamaleswar Bhattacharya picked out from Maitreya's *Mahayana-sutralamkara* (or *Ornament to the Mahayana Sutras*), and that Jacques picked out from Kamaleswara's book, is certainly one of the clearest statements of the acceptance of the atman found in the whole range of Buddhist writings. Probably its full import was obscured by the translation of the Buddhist technical term, *nairatmya*, as "impersonality" (French, *impersonnalite*). Kamaleswar, in quoting the 1911 translation made by Sylvain Levi, retained this early translation term. The term *nairatmya* means the absence of self. It thus refers to the basic Buddhist doctrine of anatman, no-self. If a reader does not know this, the contrast with atman or self in this verse is lost, and its main point is missed.

Look again at this verse (9.23) that Jacques posted for us from Kamaleswar's book giving Levi's early translation, but inserting a different translation of the term *nairatmya*:

"In the all pure Emptiness, the Buddhas reached the top of the atman which consists in impersonality [absence of atman]. Because they found so the pure atman, they reached the greatness of the atman".

So this verse is not only bringing in the atman, it is specifically contrasting this with the Buddhist anatman or no-self teaching. Other translations of *nairatmya* in use today, such as identitylessness and egolessness, also require the reader to already know that they refer to the no-self teaching. One of the more common current translations of *nairatmya*, selflessness, does include the word "self." But the reader has to be "in the loop" of Buddhist translationese to know that this refers to absence of self rather than unselfishness or altruism, the normal meaning of selflessness and the only one found in English dictionaries. I have therefore adopted absence of self for *nairatmya*, which clearly shows the contrast with atman or self.

The commentary, by Vasubandhu, gets even better. Besides explaining more fully the contrasting atman and *nairatmya*, or self and absence of self, it brings in two more key terms that are of great interest to us. In the sentence from it that Jacques had quoted, it brings in the term *svabhava*:

"The fundamental Impersonality [absence of atman] is the pure Be-ness, it is the atman, the Buddhas' *svabhava*. When it is totally pure, the Buddhas reached the fundamental Impersonality [absence of atman], which is the pure atman."

This is telling us that the atman (or self) is defined as the *svabhava* (or inherent nature) of the Buddhas. In this specific sense, both atman and *svabhava* are accepted in this Buddhist text. Almost everywhere else in Buddhism, both Northern and Southern, the atman is not accepted, and in Northern Buddhism, *svabhava* is not accepted. For the Gelugpa order in particular, nothing whatsoever has any *svabhava*.

The other key term that the commentary brings in is the *dhatu*, the element, or realm, or basic space. Again, you would never know this from the early translation quoted in Kamaleswar's book, which uses the word "Plan" for this, the same in French and English. The commentary begins and ends with this word. It is qualified by the term "*anasrava*," which literally means "without outflows," in the sense of something that naturally flows out or naturally results from something else. But the idea is of something that is so pure, or undefiled, or uncontaminated, or uncorrupted, or unaffected, that it can never change or give rise to anything else. It cannot have any "outflow," something resulting from it. It is beyond the transformations of birth and death. This describes the *dhatu*. Let us use "untainted" for *anasrava*, and "basic space" for *dhatu*, following the Tibetan translation used here, *dbyangs*. Here is the full commentary on this verse, translated from the original Sanskrit as closely as English allows:

"In this [verse], the supreme self (*parama-atman*) of the buddhas in the untainted basic space (*dhatu*) is described. Why? Because it consists of the foremost absence of self (*nairatmya*). The foremost absence of self is pure thusness (*tathata*), and that (thusness) is the self (*atman*) of the buddhas, in the meaning of inherent nature (*svabhava*). When that

(thusness) is pure, the buddhas obtain the foremost absence of self, the pure self (atman). Therefore, due to obtaining the pure self, the buddhas attain the great selfhood of the self. Thus, with this intention, the supreme self of the buddhas in the untainted basic space is set forth."

The supreme atman of the buddhas that is spoken of, then, is placed in the untainted (anasrava) dhatu (basic space). I have adopted "basic space" to translate dhatu as dbyings, following Richard Barron, in order to distinguish this from the more common "space" as the translation of Akasha. Accepting that the Theosophical "one element" and "space" refer to the dhatu, we here have atman found in it, in perfect keeping with idea that the atman would be its aspect as absolute abstract motion, or unconditioned consciousness.

David Reigle on December 21, 2010 at 10:01pm

Leila, in reply to three things you brought up:

1. As far as I know, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy did not repudiate Theosophy, as did Rene Guenon. In that sense, they are quite different. Coomaraswamy contributed articles to The Theosophist magazine in the early 1900s. I regard his work on symbolism very highly, especially his Vedic studies.

2. The Mahaparinirvana-sutra that speaks of the atman is a quite different text than the Mahaparinibbana-sutta of the Pali Buddhist canon. The former is sometimes called the Mahayana Mahaparinirvana-sutra, in order to distinguish it. There is a Mahaparinirvana-sutra in Sanskrit that corresponds to the Mahaparinibbana-sutta in Pali. It is found among the Vinaya texts of the Sanskrit Buddhist canon. Neither of them speak of the atman or atta. The Mahayana one that does speak of the atman can be found on Dr. Tony Page's valuable website: <http://www.nirvanasutra.net>.

3. Regarding the Pali word sakkayaditthi, which is found in Mahatma letter #16 (2nd ed. p. 111; 3rd ed. p. 108). This in its Sanskrit form, sat-kaya-drsti, is explained in Vasubandhu's own commentary on his Abhidharma-kosa, chapter 5, verse 7. It is there used to explain atma-atmiya-graha, belief in a self and in things pertaining to a self. The three words that make up sat-kaya-drsti are explained as follows. The first word, sat, means "existing" in the sense of truly existing. The second word, kaya, means not only the "body," but all five aggregates or skandhas that make up the person or personality. This is ordinarily thought of as one's self (atman). The third word, drsti, means "view" in the sense of a false view. So sat-kaya-drsti means the false view of truly existing personality aggregates regarded as a self. That is, it refers to wrongly regarding the person as a truly existing self.

David Reigle on December 22, 2010 at 2:08pm

Leila, you are right. The Pali Mahaparinibbana-sutta is one of the sources of the important statement about atta-dipa, whether it be understood as be "a lamp unto yourself," or "having the Self as a lamp," or even be "an island unto yourself." The Pali word dipa has been taken in all the extant Pali commentaries as meaning "island," corresponding to Sanskrit dvipa rather than dipa. But parallel usages in other texts, pointed out by scholars,

have convinced many of them that it originally meant "lamp" in the early Pali canon, before it was misunderstood by the later commentators. Then the question is how to understand atta, "self." Good scholars like Walpola Rahula insist that atta is only used as a personal pronoun in the Pali canon, and never as the atman of the Upanishads. Other good scholars, such as Kamaleswar Bhattacharya, give much evidence to the contrary from the Pali canon. Perhaps I can post a little more on this later. I saw that the entire Pali canon is now available online at: www.tipitaka.org.

David Reigle on December 24, 2010 at 9:49pm

Here is a little story that relates to something found in one of the volumes of Lucifer, the Light-bringer, which were just posted here on this website thanks to the great efforts of Marc Demarest and Joe Fulton. It is not really a Christmas story, but parts of it may be entertaining, with even a little sparkle at the end. It pertains to a question that no one would usually think of, but that is exactly opposite the question of atman and anatman or self and no-self that we have been discussing here. On this, a little background may first be helpful.

The great Vedanta teaching found in Hinduism goes back to the Upanishads, which teach an absolute that they call brahman. This eternal brahman is identified with the atman, the self of all. The Buddhist teaching came along and denied the atman with its famous anatman or no-self teaching. Whether what is denied by this teaching is the eternal self or atman taught in the Upanishads, or whether it is the personal self or atman that is wrongly identified with the eternal atman, is a question that will long be debated. What is clear, however, is that because the absolute brahman is defined as pure consciousness, it could be equated with the atman, the self of all. In other words, the absolute taught in the Upanishads, and in the great Vedanta teaching of Hinduism that follows these texts, can be thought of as absolute consciousness.

When the absolute was given in the first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine, although ultimately being indescribable, it was said to be symbolized under two aspects: absolute abstract space, and absolute abstract motion, representing unconditioned consciousness (SD 1.14). No one will have any difficulty in identifying this latter aspect with the absolute consciousness taught in Hinduism, called brahman or atman. The hypothesis has been raised here that the Buddhist absolute, or better, ultimate, corresponds to the other aspect under which the ultimate may be symbolized, absolute abstract space. The Buddhist anatman or no-self doctrine, then, might be seen as registering their objection to describing the ultimate as absolute consciousness.

The other side of this question, however, has hardly been explored. If what is said in The Secret Doctrine is true, then its fundamental propositions would stand behind not only the Stanzas of Dzryan, but would also be

the original teaching from which both Hinduism and Buddhism emerged. Even if each of these two traditions focused on one aspect under which the Secret Doctrine symbolized its ultimate, traces of the other aspect should still be found in each tradition. This is why those who are sympathetic to the Theosophical teachings would like to find an atman or self teaching in Buddhism, corresponding to the aspect of absolute abstract motion, that is not readily apparent there. By the same token, such people would also like to find a teaching in Hinduism corresponding to the aspect of absolute abstract space, or the one element, that is not readily apparent there. The Secret Doctrine also calls this latter its "substance-principle," and refers to it with the Sanskrit term, mula-prakriti. With this background, our story of search and ultimate triumph, with the help of Lucifer, now begins.

What are the authentic writings of the original Shankaracharya, the founder and greatest writer of the Advaita Vedanta tradition of Hinduism? Of the hundreds of works attributed to him, many of them are admitted even by his followers to be spurious. Which ones were really written by the original Shankaracharya rather than a later Shankaracharya? These would tell us whether or not he accepted only pure consciousness, or whether he also admitted a basis for it, a substance-principle. Such a substance-principle has been called mula-prakriti in the Theosophical writings, adopting a Samkhya term for it. But as all Vedantins know, it is exactly this that Shankaracharya in his greatest work, his extensive commentary on the Brahma-sutras, has most pointedly refuted as an ultimate. It is, in this regard, although opposite, just like the atman teaching that is supposed to have been so pointedly refuted in Buddhism.

The answer to this question should be easy, and the case should be closed. Just take his greatest works, the commentaries on the Brahma-sutras, on the Bhagavad-gita, and on the Upanishads, and go by what they say. But the blind pandit Dhanaraj, who could recite from memory many lost Sanskrit texts, cast doubt on this. He spoke of, and dictated many verses from, the "real, original" commentaries of the "real, original" Shankaracharya. While everyone agrees that Shankaracharya's commentaries are his greatest writings, there is now a question of whether the ones we have were actually written by him, or by a later Shankaracharya. So what can we do? Until the alleged original commentaries are brought out, we can yet get some idea from his smaller writings.

It happens that, in the early 1900s, T. S. Narayana Sastri got access to the full, genuine biography of the original Shankaracharya, written by his close disciple and constant companion, Chitsukhacharya. From this, he published a book called, *The Age of Sankara*. In this book, about forty of Shankaracharya's smaller writings are described. This provides us with the needed criteria for determining which of the hundreds of smaller writings attributed to him are authentic. Among the forty or so authentic smaller writings, most are in verse; only a few are in prose. Of the few in prose, one title stood out as possibly containing the answer to the question of whether the

original Shankaracharya accepted a substance-principle as the basis for pure consciousness: the Maya-vivarana, an "Exposition of Maya." This is because maya is equated with prakriti in Advaita Vedanta, including mula-prakriti, or root-substance.

If Shankaracharya here taught that mula-prakriti existed even during pralaya or the dissolution of the universe, this would show agreement with the first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine. This would show Shankaracharya's acceptance of the aspect of absolute abstract space, or the one element, the substance-principle. If, on the other hand, he spoke of mula-prakriti as something that emerges from brahman after pralaya or dissolution, this would agree with current Advaita Vedanta. This would show his acceptance of the current teaching that says there can be no mula-prakriti or maya in the absolute brahman, which is understood as pure consciousness. This would disagree with the first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine. It is here that there was argument between Advaita Vedantins and the Theosophist Advaita Vedantin, T. Subba Row.

So this text being named among the authentic ones was a very promising lead. But this small text, the Maya-vivarana, needed to be found. It did not seem to be a text studied by modern Advaita Vedantins. After some search, I found that it had been published in the first issue of the Bulletin of the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, in 1948. This particular issue was missing at most of the few U.S. libraries that have this journal, but I eventually got it. Some friends in India were also interested in this small Sanskrit text, so I sent a copy to my friend Sudipta Munsu. He in turn gave a copy of it to his guru, Swami Prajnanananda. Not long after this, Sudipta told me that Swami Prajnanananda had identified this book in another text, the (Laghu) Vasudeva-manana. Swami Prajnanananda then kindly sent me a copy of a collection of Sanskrit texts, called the Vedanta-Sandarbhā, which included the Laghu Vasudeva-manana. From this, I could see that the Maya-vivarana actually made up the first five of its twelve chapters. Here is where Lucifer comes in to our story.

Two Theosophists from Kumbakonam had translated the Vasudeva-manana into English and published their translation serially in Lucifer. Even though this text is attributed to Vasudeva Yati, its first five chapters are actually by the original Shankaracharya, according to the information from Chitsukhacharya. In the very first chapter, Shankaracharya speaks of mula-prakriti, and he tells us exactly what we wanted to know. Here is the translation of this passage from Lucifer, vol. 10, March 1892, p. 51:

"Mulaprakriti is that which is a compound of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas Gunas (or attributes) like a three-stranded rope of white, red and black colours. This state of equilibrium of the three Gunas is called Pralaya (universal deluge or dissolution) or Maha-Sushupti (the great dreamless sleeping state). It is (in Pralaya), before the evolution of this universe, that many

myriads of Jivas (Egos) remain absorbed in Mulaprakriti with all their Karmic affinities, like particles of gold that stick to a ball of wax."

This last sentence deserves to be quoted in the original Sanskrit:

asyaam muula-prakrtaav ananta-koti-jiivaah sva-sva-karma-vaasanaabhih saha jatu-pinde
suvarena-rena iva srshteh puurvam liinaa vartante /

Literally translated, it is: "In this root substance (mula-prakriti) infinite millions of individual souls (jiva), each with its own karmic residues, are dissolved prior to manifestation, like gold dust in a ball

of lac resin." The image given here by Shankaracharya is very much like a sparkling Christmas ornament.

This passage tells us that, according to the original Shankaracharya, mula-prakriti does indeed exist even during pralaya or the dissolution of the universe. This shows agreement with the first fundamental

proposition of the Secret Doctrine in its aspect of absolute abstract space, or the one element, the substance-principle, here called mula-prakriti. I was thrilled! This was just like finding passages on atman in the Buddhist scriptures. These seemingly simple and innocent little statements, which everyone would normally just pass by, take on great significance in reference to the question of the existence of a once universal but now hidden wisdom tradition. Meaning little by themselves, in their aggregate they provide significant evidence for such a tradition that both Hinduism and Buddhism emerged from, whose fundamental propositions were given out by HPB in The Secret Doctrine. With rewards like this to be had, the joy of delving into these old writings will readily be apparent to all.

[David Reigle](#) on December 26, 2010 at 12:34pm

Glad to have your comments on these things, Leila. In regard to the verse of Rig-Vedas 10.129 that HPB had altered when quoting its early translation, you make a good point. If this verse is saying that a "he"

created the world, why would the middle voice of the verb be used? As you say, the middle voice is supposed to be used for some action that goes directly back to the subject, or is reflexive. We do not have this voice in English. So to make your point clear to readers here, I will add a brief explanation.

The middle voice would refer to something that is done "for oneself," which is what the grammatical term for it in Sanskrit means: atmane-pada. See here the familiar atman, "self." By contrast, the active voice would refer to something that is done "for another": parasmai-pada. An example given by M. R. Kale in his Higher Sanskrit Grammar is, if someone cooks something for oneself, use the middle voice ending on the verb "cooks" (pacate). If someone cooks something for others, use the active voice ending on the verb "cooks" (pacati). So if someone creates the world, because it is for others, the

active voice rather than the middle voice should be used.

It is true that some Sanskrit verb-roots only take the middle voice (atmane-pada) conjugational endings, while some only take the active voice (parasmai-pada) endings, and some take both (ubhaya-pada). This results in the fact that in classical Sanskrit the difference in the voice signification is mostly lost. But we are here dealing with the earlier Vedic Sanskrit, where the difference in their signification is still found in many cases. The verb-root that we are speaking of here, "dhaa" for the verb "dadhe," is one that can take both the active and middle endings. So there would be little reason for the writer of this Vedic hymn to use the middle voice, when the active voice would best express the act of doing something like creating the world.

In such a case, the verb "dadhe" used here, which in grammatical form can be either a middle or a passive, would be less likely to be a middle. As you say, taking this verb as a passive is simpler and seems better. The world "was made" or "was established" or came into being without the necessity of a Maker. This better fits the Vedic Sanskrit, and at the same time better agrees with the tenets of the Secret Doctrine.

[David Reigle](#) on December 26, 2010 at 9:59pm

Good point, Nicholas. This may be possible. We would have to find an example of it. In the Bhagavad-gita, where Krishna says, "I create/emanate all beings" (chapter 9, verses 7 and 8), the verb used, visrjaami, is active. But this does not count, because this root, srj, has to take active endings. In verse 10, where prakriti sends forth the moving and the unmoving, the verb used, suuyate, is middle. But this, too, does not count, because this root, suu, has to take middle endings. Not much help.

[David Reigle](#) on December 28, 2010 at 10:41pm

Here is a brief recap, leading on to the next thing.

The philosophy behind the Stanzas of Dzian posits an ultimate principle that has been called "space" and also called the "one element." This corresponds directly with the dhatu taught in Buddhism, in its two senses reflected in its two Tibetan translations, dbyings, "basic space," and khams, "element." This has led us to the exposition of the dhatu given in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, which explains the tathagata-garbha or buddha-nature sutras. One of these tathagata-garbha or buddha-nature sutras is the Mahayana version of the Maha-parinirvana-sutra. This sutra openly equates the tathagata-garbha or buddha-nature with the atman or self. This brings us to the central Vedanta teaching of Hinduism, which equates its ultimate brahman with the atman or self of all. At this point, both of the aspects of the ultimate principle described in the Proem to The Secret Doctrine are accounted for: absolute abstract space, and absolute abstract motion, or unconditioned

consciousness.

This is all very good from the standpoint of those who are sympathetic to Theosophical ideas. But the great majority of Buddhist teachers will say that to bring the atman teaching in to Buddhism, despite the few Buddhist texts that do so, is a serious misinterpretation of the Buddhist teachings. Are theosophers, then, obliged to conclude that known Buddhism only teaches one of the two postulated aspects of the ultimate principle taught in The Secret Doctrine? Does it leave out unconditioned consciousness? No.

There is a widespread teaching in Mahayana Buddhism of what we may call "mind itself" (Sanskrit *cittam eva*, Tibetan *sems nyid*), or the "one mind" (Sanskrit *eka-citta*, Chinese *yih-sin* or *i-hsin* or *yixin*). This may be found in the "Cosmological Notes" as the sixth principle in the chart of the seven principles in man. It is there given in Tibetan as *Lana Sem-Nyed*, or Sanskrit *Atman*, or English *Spiritual Soul*. The Tibetan would be spelled *bla-na sems-nyid*, the "highest mind itself." The teaching of "mind itself" and its synonyms can be found in any number of Tibetan Buddhist books available today. These many sources, then, considerably broaden the base of material in which one or other of the fundamental ideas of the Stanzas may be found.

[David Reigle](#) on December 29, 2010 at 9:54pm

The "mind itself" (*sems nyid*), often spoken of using this and other terms in the Nyingma and Kagyu orders, is usually referred to in the Gelug order and by the Dalai Lama as the "fundamental innate mind of clear light" (*gnyug ma lhan cig skyes pa'i 'od gsal*).

[David Reigle](#)

The teaching of "mind itself" (Skt. *cittam eva*, Tib. *sems nyid*), and its full synonyms such as what we often see translated as "clear light mind" (*prabhasvara-citta*), is a central teaching of Mahayana or Northern Buddhism. It is usually associated with the teaching of the *tathagata-garbha* or *buddha-nature*, which is a partial synonym, but the teaching of mind itself is more widespread. This term in phonetic Tibetan (*sem nyid*) was given out in the Theosophical "Cosmological Notes" at the end of 1881, long before anyone had heard of it in the Western world. It was there given as the sixth of seven principles in man, corresponding to the atman. Elsewhere in the Mahatma letters the atman was regarded as the seventh principle, in both man and the universe. By the time of The Secret Doctrine in 1888, this teaching was spoken of in the Proem as absolute abstract motion, representing unconditioned consciousness (vol. 1, p. 14). Below I will give enough quotations to show that "mind itself" is a central teaching in Mahayana Buddhism, and to illustrate how it is understood there.

The Mahayana Buddhist scriptures are found in two great divisions: *sutra* and *tantra*. The *sutra* division is what we might call standard Buddhism. The *tantra* division is esoteric Buddhism, teachings that were regarded as secret and requiring initiation. The texts of the *tantra* division are what HPB called the Books of Kiu-te, following a transcription of the Tibetan term *rgyud-sde* that was used in the late 1700s. The orders of Tibetan Buddhism

(Gelug, etc.) drew from both divisions in forming the teachings that make up their publicly known positions. Following the sutra division, the teaching of mind itself is summarized in Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, the same text that summarized the tathagata-garbha or buddha-nature teachings, and the same text whose basic teaching is the dhatu, the "element" (khams), or "basic space" (dbyings). The teaching of mind itself is usually given in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga as the "clear light nature of mind" (citta-prakrti-prabhasvara). The commonly seen English translation, "clear light," follows the Tibetan translation, 'od gsal. Translators working directly

from the original Sanskrit more often translate prabhasvara as "luminosity," "luminous," and similar terms. Thus: "luminous mind" and "luminous nature of mind." This term and this way of describing mind, as relating to light, is widely found in the tantra division of the Buddhist scriptures.

For those who may think that such things found in the Buddhist tantras, and even in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, are later additions to Buddhism, here is a quote on this from the early Pali Buddhist canon. It is found in the Anguttara-nikaya 1.6 (translated by Maurice Walshe, in The Long Discourses of the Buddha, p. 557, note 241):

"This mind (citta) is luminous, but is defiled by adventitious defilements."

This idea is explained more fully in one of the opening verses of homage in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga (chapter 1, verse 13). I here quote part of this verse, from TAKashaki's translation, inserting the Sanskrit term in brackets:

"I bow before those who, . . . because of their perception of the unreality of defilements through the brightness of the innate pure mind [citta-prakrti-prabhasvara] of all the world, perceive the Buddhahood penetrating everywhere; . . ."

The Ratna-gotra-vibhaga goes on to equate this pure mind, free of the defilements, with the dhatu or element itself (chapter 1, verse 49, trans. TAKashaki):

"Just as being of indiscriminative nature, space pervades everywhere, similarly all-pervading is the Essence [dhatu], the immaculate nature of the mind [citta-prakrti]."

We next turn to a famous Indian writer of the Madhyamaka or "Middle Way" school of Buddhism. The writings of Chandrakirti became central in the teachings giving the "view" accepted in Tibetan Buddhism, following the sutra division of the scriptures, in contradistinction to the tantra division. Chandrakirti's book, the Madhyamaka-avatara, meaning "Introduction to, or Entrance into, the Middle Way," became one of the primary textbooks studied in most of the Tibetan monasteries. In verses 79-97 of chapter 6 he explains "mind only" (citta-matra, sems tsam), but in verse 89 he uses "mind itself" according to the Tibetan translation, sems nyid. The Sanskrit original has only recently been discovered in Tibet, and has not yet been published. Here is verse 89, with my addition in double brackets (translated by C. W. Huntington, Jr., in The Emptiness of Emptiness, p. 167):

"Mind alone [[sems nyid, i.e., mind itself]] fabricates all the diversity of sentient and insentient worlds. [The buddha] declared that the entire universe is produced from volitional

action, but there can be no such action without mind."

Here we see in this standard non-tantric text that the mind is said to be the creator of the universe. This idea was greatly expounded in the tantras. Here follows an extraordinary verse on this quoted from the lost root Kalachakra, in which mind itself is also equated with the Adi-Buddha. It was quoted by Takpo Tashi Namgyal, a sixteenth-century Tibetan writer of the Kagyu order, in his book known as Moonlight of Mahamudra (translated by Lobsang Lhalungpa as Mahamudra: The Quintessence of Mind and Meditation, p. 181 in the 1986 first edition, or p. 183 in the 2006 revised edition):

"The innate mind [sems nyid, i.e., mind itself] of sentient beings is luminous clarity ['od gsal, prabhasvara];
From the beginning it is detached
From the absolute attributes of arising, ceasing, and settling.
Since beginningless time it has been the primordial supreme Buddha [parama-Adi-Buddha],
Because it has been unmodulated by cause and condition."

The mind itself (sems nyid) is also equated with the dhatu as basic space (dbyings) in The Precious Treasury of the Basic Space of Phenomena, by the primary Tibetan writer of the Nyingma order, Longchenpa (translated by Richard Barron, p. 5):

"Mind itself [sems nyid] is a vast expanse, the realm of unchanging space.
Its indeterminate display is the expanse of the magical expression of its responsiveness.
Everything is the adornment of basic space [dbyings, dhatu] and nothing else.
Outwardly and inwardly, things proliferating and resolving are the dynamic energy of awakened mind [bodhi-citta].
Because this is nothing whatsoever yet arises as anything at all,
it is a marvelous and magical expression, amazing and superb."

In the Gelug order, this idea is drawn primarily from the Guhyasamaja Tantra writings, where it is usually referred to as the "clear light mind" or "luminous mind" ('od gsal or prabhasvara citta). Tsongkhapa discusses this at length in his commentaries on these writings. The present Dalai Lama has written about this in a couple of places. In his 1997 book, The Gelug/Kagyu Tradition of Mahamudra, translated by Alexander Berzin, he says (p. 123):

"The latter [the clear light mind] is similar to Tsongkapa's explanation in Precious Sprout, Deciding the Difficult Points of [Chandrakirti's] 'An illuminating Lamp [for 'The Guhyasamaja Root Tantra']'. In the prologue section, commenting on a quotation from Nagarjuna's The Five Stages [of the Guhyasamaja Complete Stage], Tsongkapa has mentioned that the inanimate environment and the animate beings within it are all the play or emanation of subtlest consciousness and subtlest energy-wind -- in other words, simultaneously arising primordial clear light mind and the subtlest level of energy-wind upon which it rides."

No student of Theosophy could miss the connection between fohat ("Fohat is the steed and thought is the rider," Stanza 5.2) and the energy-wind upon which consciousness or the clear light mind rides. Further on, the Dalai Lama repeats this explanation and then continues (p. 253):

". . . In other words, when the subtlest energy-wind causes movement from the sphere of clear light, the coarser levels of mind that emerge, from the three most subtle, conceptual appearance-making minds onwards, produce the appearances of all phenomena of the environment . . .
". . . This is the Buddhist explanation for what is called the creator in other traditions."

Here we have, brought out to the English-speaking world by the Dalai Lama in 1997, a succinct statement of the Buddhist tantric cosmogony. The texts that this amazing statement is based on have not yet been published in English translation. The connection between this and the cosmogony of the Stanzas of Dzian brought out by HPB in 1888 will hopefully be clear to all.

The quotes given above should be enough to give a good idea of the "mind itself" (sems nyid) or "clear light mind" or "luminous mind" teaching in Mahayana Buddhism, and the fundamental role it plays in Buddhist tantric cosmogony. At the very least, these quotes on this teaching show, in comparison with the "Lana Sem-Nyed" given in the "Cosmological Notes," that HPB had access to Tibetan Buddhist teachings that were then unknown to the Western world. The now verifiable accuracy of this teaching that she then brought out speaks for the authenticity of the so far untraced Stanzas of Dzian that she also brought out. It points us in the direction that she always claimed was the source of the Stanzas and their cosmogony. They are likely to exist among the postulated but still inaccessible secret books of Kiu-te, the Tibetan Buddhist tantras.

Jacques Mahnich

On Buddhist Sources for the Tathagathagarbha concept.

David wrote " For those who may think that such things found in the Buddhist tantras, and even in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, are later additions to Buddhism, here is a quote on this from the early Pali Buddhist canon. It is found in the Anguttara-nikaya 1.6 (translated by Maurice Walshe, in The Long Discourses of the Buddha, p. 557, note 241) "

The third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (1284-1339), who was a Master on Kalachakra teachings, wrote a treatise on Buddha-Nature - "Dezhin shekpa'i nyingpo tenpa'i tenchö".

A book about it was published in 2006 from talks given by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche at the Sopa Chöling Retreat Center, Gamp Abbey in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, under the title « In Buddha Essence, A Commentary on Rangjung Dorje's Treatise »

Here are the main ideas, in regard with our quest, specially early Buddhist sources for the concept of the element (dhatu) :

Reference Sources :

- Tathagathagarbha Sutra
- Sutra of Queen Mala
- Mahayana Abhidharma Sutra (lost)

- Uttaratantra
- Lankavatara Sutra (principal tenets of the Mind Only tradition)

Main points :

The nature of the mind is the natural or ordinary mind (tha-mal gyi shes-pa), which is completely uncontrived and always has been. This ordinary mind is very close, always present, and empty by nature, but also has **luminosity (gsal-wa)**

Three quotations from Buddhist scriptures are presented :

1) from an unidentified (lost) original sutra, which Rangjung Dorje quoted from the **Mahayana-uttaratantra-shastra-vyakhya** (Tengyur 4025) attributed to Asanga :

*"Although beginningless, it has an end.
It is pure by nature and has the quality of permanence.
It is unseen, because it is obscured by a beginningless covering,
Like, for example, a golden statue that has been obscured.
That was taught by the Buddha."*

2) from the **Mahayana Abhidharma Sutra** :

*« The element of beginningless time
Is the location of all phenomena.
Due to its existence, there are all beings
And also the attainment of nirvana. »*

3) from the **Hevajra Tantra** :

*« All beings are buddhas
But are obscured by incidental stains.
When those have been removed,
There is buddhahood. »*

Rangjung Dorje is following the Shentong interpretation, as presented in **The Sutra Requested by Dharani Raj Ishvara** and in the **Uttaratantra**. These teachings were brought to Tibet under two lineages, from Vikramashila monastic university in India. One was through the Tibetan translator Loden Sherab (lineage of explanation) and the other one was through two other tibetan translators, Tsen Kawo Che and Zu Gaway Dorje (lineage of meditation), which is the one followed by Rangjung Dorje.

The element (dhatu)

The commentator here quote **Nagajurna** who, for the explanation of the third turning of the

wheel, wrote a collection of praises which includes **Praise to the Dharmadhatu** and **Praise to the True Nature**, and explains : « This element has no creator ; it is beginningless. It also is not part of the appearances that arise from oneself. Being not a thing or a substance, it is not part of worldly appearances, so its essence or nature is emptiness. However, it is not just voidness, because it is an emptiness that is inseparable from the dharmadhatu, so it has the nature of clarity. This element is called the dhatu because it possesses its own characteristics. It is different from all other things in that it possesses its own characteristics, and while being empty and not having any true reality, it also has the nature of luminosity. So **buddha nature has the characteristics of both emptiness and clarity** and also being inseparable from the dharmadhatu, and for this reason it is called the element.

[David Reigle](#) on January 2, 2011 at 9:59pm

Jacques, the material that you quoted on the "element" from the 2006 book, On Buddha Essence, gives us a good picture of this teaching. It shows how this teaching is understood in some of the Tibetan Buddhist orders. It also shows that translators are now using "element" for dhatu or kham or dbyings, like was used in the Mahatma letters in the early 1880s.

[David Reigle](#) on January 4, 2011 at 12:12pm

The Pranava-vada is a primary source on both daivi-prakriti and mula-prakriti, or light-substance and root-substance. It sometimes speaks of three prakritis or substances, adding to these two a universal and transcendent substance under the name maya. It describes the aspects of these as follows (vol. 2, p. 236, in the file posted on the "Aum and Pranava Vada" forum by Capt. Anand Kumar on Dec. 14, [daivi-prakriti - Pranava Vada.pdf](#),):

"In its transcendental aspect, Mula-prakrti is Anatma; in a limited samsara, it is Mula-prakrti; in a brahmada, Apra-prakrti. So, the universal and transcendent aspect is Maya; that shown in a samsara, Daivi-prakrti; that in a brahmada, Para-prakrti."

Earlier in this chapter, when it begins its description of mula-prakriti, it defines mula-prakriti as anatma, or non-self (Eng. p. 223, Skt. p. 197). Shortly thereafter, it gives quotations from now lost texts that also define mula-prakriti or root-substance as anatman or non-self (Eng. p. 224, Skt. p. 198). This is its primary definition. The central term used here for the substance side of things is mula-prakriti, and it is equated with anatman.

The astounding implication of this equation has no doubt just flashed into your minds, causing you all to say, "aha!" Yes, if these now lost texts were widespread in the days of the Buddha, as the Pranava-vada indicates, this throws an entirely new light on his famous teaching of anatman or no-self. When he taught that everything is anatman, he would not have been denying the atman or self, as Buddhists have taken it for two thousand years. Rather, he

would only have been affirming that everything is root-substance, or mula-prakriti. This, of course, fits in completely with the teachings of the Secret Doctrine, on absolute abstract space or the substance-principle, and absolute abstract motion or unconditioned consciousness.

Buddhism would then

only be affirming the one side of the coin, the anatman or non-self aka root-substance, while Hinduism was affirming the other side of the coin, atman or self. The Pranava-vada, like The Secret Doctrine, says again and again that these are one (e.g., p. 237 in the file posted).

[David Reigle](#) on January 6, 2011 at 9:32pm

The "Archaic Manuscript" that HPB describes with its symbols in SD, vol. 1, p. 1, is apparently the "seven secret folios of Kiu-te" or the "Book of the Secret Wisdom of the World" mentioned in Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 14, p. 422. By contrast, the Book of Dzryan that she translated stanzas from is apparently the first of fourteen volume of commentaries on these, as she there says. We may also deduce that she translated from written verses rather than pictures for several reasons, one of the clearest of which is her statement in the newly published Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge that in one place she skipped over some sixty stanzas (p. 38; see my post here of Oct. 12). She was apparently viewing this written manuscript clairvoyantly, as her translation of the stanzas took place over an extended period of time, with various people around her. No one of them ever said that they saw her with a manuscript.

[David Reigle](#) on January 6, 2011 at 10:08pm

We are here trying to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzryan. To do this, we must find ideas and terms in the Stanzas that are distinct enough to be traceable elsewhere. The distinctive term svabhavat, which as discussed here earlier must be corrected to svabhava, is found in the Stanzas seven times. Svabhava is a fundamental idea in Buddhism. In the Buddha's first promulgation, all the dharmas that make up the universe were defined by having svabhava, an "inherent nature" that makes them real. But in the Buddha's second promulgation, all dharmas were instead declared to lack or be empty of svabhava. (See the post on the Diamond Sutra in the "Online Sanskrit Texts Project" forum.) This is the Madhyamaka teaching, which was brought from India to Tibet, and was accepted throughout Tibetan Buddhism. This raises a problem in regard to svabhava as found in the Stanzas.

Since svabhava is denied in the Madhyamaka teaching, which is accepted throughout Tibetan Buddhism, the Stanzas with their svabhava do not fit in here. In Southern Buddhism following the first promulgation, where svabhava is accepted, this svabhava is the inherent nature of the momentary individual dharmas that make up the universe. This is not the kind of svabhava spoken of in the Stanzas. So they do not fit in here either. At this point, we do not have a match between the svabhava of the Stanzas and the svabhava taught in Buddhism. It cannot be traced there. Shall we then conclude, like so many others have, that the Stanzas of Dzryan are a work of fiction? That HPB had picked up the word svabhavat and used it in her Stanzas without really knowing what it referred to? We would be justified in so concluding. But wait.

HPB said that she was giving out hitherto secret teachings, so that what is taught in the Stanzas of Dzryan would not necessarily match what is taught in known Buddhism. If we

accept what she said, which we are obliged to do until proven false, it would be a fallacy to conclude that the Stanzas are fiction because their teachings do not match those of known Buddhism. She never said they did. Then are we stuck here in limbo, prevented from saying that HPB was wrong, but unable to prove that the Stanzas are right about svabhava? Or is there a way out? Let us see. While writing *The Secret Doctrine*, HPB had said in a letter to A. P. Sinnett (p. 195):

"I have finished an enormous Introductory Chapter, or Preamble, Prologue, call it what you will; just to show the reader that the text as it goes, every Section beginning with a page of translation from the Book of Dzian and the Secret Book of 'Maitreya Buddha' Champai chhos Nga (in prose, not the five books in verse known, which are a blind) are no fiction."

We are possibly afforded a glimpse into what she is saying here, about the known five books of Maitreya in verse being a blind, through the work of twentieth-century scholarship. The first of the five known verse books of Maitreya to be published is the *Mahayana-sutralamkara*. The French scholar Sylvain Levi had prepared a Sanskrit edition of it on the basis a manuscript from Nepal and published it in 1907, followed by a French translation in 1911. In the following several decades other scholars published Sanskrit editions of other works written by Maitreya, or written under his inspiration by Asanga. In the 1970s a group of American scholars headed by Robert Thurman jointly prepared an English translation of the *Mahayana-sutralamkara*, which was finally published in 2004 under the title, *The Universal Vehicle Discourse Literature*. In his Introduction (pp. xxii-xxiii, xxxv-xxxvi), Thurman clearly lays out the close parallels between the *Mahayana-sutralamkara* and another work attributed to Maitreya by Chinese tradition, the *Bodhisattva-bhumi*. The latter is written in prose; that's right, PROSE, just like the secret book of Maitreya that HPB referred to in connection with the Book of Dzian. The *Bodhisattva-bhumi* explains the terse verses of the *Mahayana-sutralamkara* so well that Thurman dubbed it the "meaning commentary." Not only does it explain what the verses mean, it often adds things that are not even hinted at in the verses. In other words, it gives us a glimpse at what HPB may have meant by saying that the verse works of Maitreya are a blind.

The *Bodhisattva-bhumi* is a section of the enormous book called the *Yogachara-bhumi*. Its authorship is attributed to Maitreya by Chinese tradition, or to his amanuensis Asanga by Tibetan tradition (see: <http://www.easterntradition.org/etri%20bib-maitreya.pdf>). According to the analysis of these books by mKhas-grub-rje, the famous disciple of Tsong-kha-pa, this whole enormous work is on practice, except for one short chapter on doctrine. This is the *Tattvartha* chapter, the chapter on "reality," of the *Bodhisattva-bhumi*. Since we know that the contents of the prose *Bodhisattva-bhumi* are paralleled by the verse *Mahayana-sutralamkara*, we would expect to find a correspondence to this chapter there. We do. It is chapter 6, the *Tattva* or "reality" chapter of the *Mahayana-sutralamkara*. It consists of only ten verses. By contrast, its corresponding chapter in the *Bodhisattva-bhumi* consists of twenty-one pages in Unrai Wogihara's 1930 Sanskrit edition, or fifteen pages in Nalinaksha Dutt's 1966 Sanskrit edition. From this it is easy to imagine how much more material is in the prose book than in the mere ten verses of the book in verse. It is easy to see how the latter might be called a blind. The verses make no mention of svabhava. But the inexpressible svabhavata of all dharmas is a central topic of the prose chapter in the *Bodhisattva-bhumi*.

The works of Maitreya and Asanga are part of the Buddha's third promulgation, or "turning of

the wheel of the Dharma." The second promulgation had overturned the svabhava teaching of the first promulgation, with the teaching that everything is empty of svabhava. The third promulgation purports to explain the seemingly stark contradiction between the Buddha's first two promulgations. How it does so was a matter of considerable difference of opinion. Leaving all of this aside, what concerns us here is the teaching of an inexpressible (nirabhilapya) svabhavata in the Tattvartha or "Reality" chapter of the prose Bodhisattva-bhumi. This does not seem to be taught elsewhere, even in other texts of the third promulgation. In brief, the inexpressible svabhava of all dharmas is said to be the object of the penetrating knowledge of only the buddhas and bodhisattvas. It is not accessible to even highly intelligent people and advanced practitioners. It is beyond the range and reach of speech. In other words, unlike in the second promulgation where svabhava is entirely denied, here an ultimate svabhava is taught, although being quite inexpressible. This inexpressible svabhava was taught by Maitreya or his pupil Asanga in this prose book. Perhaps the Stanzas with their svabhava are not works of fiction, after all, but in fact came from a secret book of Maitreya in prose, like HPB told Sinnett.

David Reigle on January 9, 2011 at 12:08pm

Capt. Anand wrote:

'But, Daivi-prakriti remains a mystery. Particularly its equivalence with Fohat of the stanzas. What would be the arguments against Daivi-prakriti symbolizing "Absolute Abstract Motion" of the SD? Motion indicates "succession" which as per Pranava Vada is TIME, which could be Fohat of the stanzas.'

I certainly agree that daivi-prakriti and its equivalent fohat remains a mystery, a big mystery. This is the most elusive aspect of the esoteric cosmogony taught in the Stanzas of Dzryan.

The arguments against daivi-prakriti or fohat symbolizing "absolute abstract motion" of the SD (1.14) would be that fohat is classified with the other of the two aspects under which the one ultimate principle is symbolized, "absolute abstract space." The first time that fohat appears in the Theosophical writings is in the Cosmological Notes (<http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/hpb-aps/bl-ap2.htm>). There, near the beginning, Mahatma Morya says:

"Everything in the occult universe, which embraces all the primal causes, is based upon two principles -- Kosmic energy (Fohat or breath of wisdom), and Kosmic ideation."

Here, fohat or kosmic energy is contrasted with kosmic ideation, just like absolute abstract space is contrasted with absolute abstract motion, representing unconditioned consciousness. So kosmic ideation would correspond with unconditioned consciousness, i.e., absolute abstract motion. That leaves us with fohat corresponding to absolute abstract space.

In support of the correspondence between fohat or daivi-prakriti and absolute abstract space indicated here, there are two pieces of good evidence. We know that absolute abstract space is also referred to as the substance-principle, and has been called mula-prakriti ("root-substance"). In other words, it is the substance or prakriti side of things, as opposed to the consciousness or ideation side of things. Hence, fohat as daivi-prakriti ("light substance"),

would correspond to absolute abstract space. The Pranava-vada, too, contrasts the prakritis, mula and daivi, with the atmans, parama ("highest") and pratyak ("inner"), which would represent consciousness.

Second, the phrase from Stanza 5.2, "Fohat is the steed and the thought is the rider," again indicates that fohat is contrasted with thought, which latter is the absolute abstract motion aspect of the one principle. This unusual and elsewhere unknown idea has been fully confirmed in the hitherto secret Buddhist tantric Guhyasamaja writings. As quoted earlier, the Dalai Lama referred to this as, "simultaneously arising primordial clear light mind and the subtlest level of energy-wind upon which it rides."

This evidence, I think, is reliable and even conclusive. But there are also a couple of things that confuse the issue. First, motion must of course be a part of every living thing, and in fact motion has been defined in the Cosmological Notes and in the Mahatma letters as "life" (ML #10). So fohat must also include motion. But in the model given in the Theosophical teachings, using two aspects, fohat does not seem to be placed on the motion side of the equation.

Also confusing is the fact that fohat is called the "breath of wisdom," so is allegorically referred to as "breath." But absolute abstract motion is called the "Great Breath," so is also allegorically referred to as "breath." This would seem to link fohat, as breath, with the Great Breath, or absolute abstract motion, described in the Book of Dzyan as "Intra-Cosmic Breath" (SD 1.258). I think, however, that breath is meant differently in these two allegorical usages. In the Occult Catechism quoted in SD 1.12, it is said that "Hot Breath is the Father" and "Cool Breath is the Mother." This shows that breath can allegorically represent either aspect. The conclusion still stands, then, that fohat or daivi-prakriti would be classified with absolute abstract space, the substance-principle, rather than with absolute abstract motion, or unconditioned consciousness.

Jacques Mahnich on January 10, 2011 at 3:51pm

2. The search for Fohat - The Egyptian Trail

from *S.D. Volume 1 Commentary* (p.673) :

“ in Egypt **Fohat** was known as Toum issued of Noot, (*) or Osiris in his character of a primordial god, creator of heaven and of beings (see chapter xvii., "Book of the Dead") . For Toum is spoken of as the Protean god who generates other gods and gives himself the form he likes; the "master of life" "giving their vigour to the gods" (chapter lxxix.) He is the overseer of the gods, and he "who creates spirits and gives them shape and life"; he is "the north wind and the spirit of the west;" and finally the "Setting Sun of Life," or the vital electric force that leaves the body at death, wherefore the defunct begs that Toum should give him the breath from his right nostril (positive electricity) that he might live in his second form. Both the hieroglyph, and the text of chapter lxii. in the "Book of the Dead," show the identity of Toum with **Fohat** (*) "Oh Toum, Toum! issued from the great (female) which is in the bosom of the waters" (the great Deep or Space) . . . "Thou, luminous through the two Lions" (the dual Force or power of the two solar eyes, or the electro-positive and the electro-negative forces. (See Book of the Dead, III., and Egyptian Pantheon, chapter ii.) “

-O-O-O-O-

Let's look at what we can find inside Egyptologist books on this matter.

First of all, identify this "Toum, issued of Noot". The closest character who would match the description made by HPB is the god **Tem**, or **Temu**, issued of **Nut** :

From the Book of the Dead, E.A. Wallis Budge, first published in 1899 :

“ **Temu**: a form of Râ, and the type of the night sun ; he was self-created, and was declared to be the creator of gods and men” (note from page7)

“ Hail, thou god **Tem**, who comest forth from the Great Deep, and who shinest with glory under the form of the double Lion-god, send out with mighty words unto those who are in thy presence...” (Chapt III, p.50)

“ (Nu saith :) ... I am the god **Tem** , and I am in the foremost part of Nu (i.e., the sky), and the power which protecteth me is that which is with all the gods for ever. I am he whose name is hidden, and whose habitation is holy for millions of years. I am he who dwelleth therein and I come forth along with the god **Tem**.” (Chapt VII, p.55)

“ Homage to thee, O thou who art Râ when thou risest, and **Tem** when thou settest [in] beauty. Thou risest and shinest on the back of thy mother [**Nut**], O thou who art crowned king of the gods ! ... O thou only One, who didst dwell in heaven before ever the earth and the mountains came into existence....thou hast produced whatsoever comethforth from the waters. (Chap XV, p. 65)

“ [I am the god **Tem**], who cometh forth out of Nu into the watery abyss”(Chapt. XXXVIII, p. 164)

“ I am the god **Tem**, the maker of heaven, the creator of things which are,who cometh forth from the earth, who maketh to come into being the seed which is sown, the lord of things which shall be, who give birth to the gods; [I am] the great god who made himself, the lord of life,who maketh to flourish the company of the gods. Homage to you, O ye lords of divine things (or of creation), ye pure beings whose abodes are hidden !” (Chapt. LXXXIX, p. 259)

-O-O-O-O-

Of course , this tradition is also a maze, specially for a non-specialist. But, at least, these excerpts give us some basic meanings which are somehow similar to some of the characteristics of Fohat, as described in the S.D. :

- **Tem** was self-created
- **Tem** was declared the creator of gods and men
- **Tem** comes from the Great Deep
- **Tem** dwelled in heaven before ever the earth came into existence
- **Tem** produced whatsoever come from the waters

To go further will require more analysis, and any egypt tradition specialist would be more than welcome on this task.

[David Reigle](#) on January 11, 2011 at 7:32pm

Following out the Egyptian trail in the search for fohat will no doubt be worthwhile. Thanks, Jacques, for doing and posting this research. I know almost nothing about the Egyptian material, so cannot add much. In fact, it took me a while to figure out who this Egyptian god is. Today, it seems, he is referred to as Atum. In the quote from the original 1888 edition of the SD, we can see that the name was spelled "Toum." In the 1978 edition of the SD prepared by Boris de Zirkoff, this was changed to "Tum." In his "General Index and Bibliography," a third volume of this edition, Boris explains under the entry, "Book of the Dead," pp. 417-418:

"On numerous occasions, especially in her Isis Unveiled, H.P.B. used portions of the translation by Samuel Birch, as published in Bunsen's Egypt's Place in Universal History,

Engl. transl., London, 1848-67, in 5 vols. In *The Secret Doctrine*, however, most of the passages have been taken from the French translation of P. Pierret, *Le Livre des Morts des Anciens Egyptiens*, Paris, 1882.

"Consult for additional Bibliographical information, her *Collected Writings*, Vol. X, pp. 413-15."

The latter reference gives much detailed bibliographic information on various editions of the Egyptian Book of the Dead.

As we see in the quotations posted from an 1899 translation by E. A. Wallis Budge, he used "Tem" or "Temu." Like Sanskrit and other languages, the transliteration of Egyptian was not standardized in HPB's time or in Budge's time. Now, it seems, Toum or Tum or Tem or Temu have all become Atum. This is what I find in the few research books on Egyptology that I have. (e.g., *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, by Richard H. Wilkinson, 2003).

Research in Egyptology has steadily progressed, and besides standardization of spellings, there was also considerable advancement in understanding Egyptain texts since Budge's time. There are a couple of more recent translations of the so-called Egyptian Book of the Dead:

The Book of the Dead, by Raymond Oliver Faulkner, 1972 (reprinted in 1985 as *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, with additions by Carol Andrews).

The Book of the Dead, or Going Forth by Day, by Thomas George Allen, 1974.

Thomas Allen specifically says in his preface that his translation was meant to replace the English translation by Budge currently in use (p. v). Although Allen's translation was published two years after Faulkner's translation, Allen had died in 1969. So these two more recent translations were done independently of each other. Faulkner died in 1982, and the 1985 reprint includes some additional spells added and translated by Carol Andrews. Faulkner also translated other major Egyptian texts, such as the Pyramid Texts and the Coffin Texts, but I do not have them.

Assuming that HPB's identification of fohat with this Egyptian god is correct, there is much material to go through regarding Atum. Faulkner's 1985 translation of *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* has on p. 184: "He brings you sweet air for your nose, life and dominion for your face, and fair is the north wind which goes forth from Atum to your nostrils, O Lord of the Sacred Land" (see also pp. 65, 66, 96, 145). This at least shows a connection with wind and breath, like fohat in the SD.

[David Reigle](#) on January 13, 2011 at 10:30pm

There is another source on fohat that should be brought in: the Alice Bailey books. There are a number of people on this site who have background in this material. For those who don't, it will be enough to say the following. The Bailey books purport to be a continuation of the efforts of the Brotherhood that first resulted in the foundation of the Theosophical Society in 1875 and the giving out of Theosophical teachings through H. P. Blavatsky. The Masters behind this initial effort were primarily Blavatsky's teacher, the Mahatma M. or Morya, his close associate the Mahatma K.H. or Koot Hoomi, and K.H.'s then disciple D.K. or Djwhal Khul. D.K. is thought to have become a Master himself around that time. In 1919, Alice Bailey began to receive teachings through what she described as mental telepathy, during which she was fully conscious. Shortly thereafter she began publishing this material, as coming from "the Tibetan," who she did not wish to identify any further or make any claims about. Decades later, it slipped through in an unedited text that "the Tibetan" was the Master

D.K. From then on, the Bailey writings have been considered by those who follow them as coming from the Master D.K. These books later described themselves as the second phase of the teachings coming from the Brotherhood or Occult Hierarchy, of which the first phase was Theosophy.

In 1925 the major text of these writings was published, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*. It is considered by Bailey students to give the psychological key to The Secret Doctrine. That is, to explain the teachings of The Secret Doctrine from the standpoint of consciousness. In its well over a thousand pages it includes material on fohat. It would be useful for one of the Bailey students here to make a compilation of the material on fohat from *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, like Jacques did from *The Secret Doctrine*. Fohat is there described as the fire of matter (pp. 65-66). There are only a couple of references in *The Secret Doctrine* that support this, but much support for this from the *Pranava-vada* and from the Buddhist tantras.

David Reigle on January 14, 2011 at 2:03pm

Thanks to the Bailey compilation on fohat that Stefalive provided us a link to, and the Blavatsky compilation on fohat that Jacques prepared for us, it is a very simple matter to post the paragraphs that I was thinking of. Here is the one from Alice Bailey's *Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, pp. 65-66:

"Certain facts are known in connection with the fire spirits (if so they may be termed). The fundamental fact that should here be emphasised is that AGNI, the Lord of Fire, rules over all the fire elementals and devas on the three planes of human evolution, the physical, the astral, and the mental, and rules over them not only on this planet, called the Earth, but on the three planes in all parts of the system. He is one of the seven Brothers (to use an expression familiar to students of the Secret Doctrine) Who each embody one of the seven principles, or Who are in Themselves the seven centres in the body of the cosmic Lord of Fire, called by H. P. B. "Fohat." He is that active fiery Intelligence, Who is the basis of the internal fires of the solar system. On each plane one of these Brothers holds sway, and the three elder Brothers (for always the three will be seen, and later the seven, who eventually merge into the primary three) rule on the first, third and the fifth planes, or on the plane of adi, of atma and of manas. It is urgent that we here remember that They are fire viewed in its third aspect, the fire of matter. In Their totality these seven Lords form the essence of the cosmic Lord, called in the occult books, Fohat."

This defines fohat as the "fire of matter," and stresses the urgency of remembering this. I had not gotten the impression that fohat was the fire of matter from my Secret Doctrine studies, so for me there was nothing there in the first place to remember. This was a new teaching to me. But in going back to *The Secret Doctrine*, a couple of paragraphs were seen to support it. The first one describes fohat as "states of matter" (SD, vol. 1, p. 143 fn.):

"Each world has its Fohat, who is omnipresent in his own sphere of action. But there are as many Fohats as there are worlds, each varying in power and degree of manifestations. The individual Fohats make one Universal, Collective Fohat -- the aspect-Entity of the one absolute Non-Entity, which is absolute Be-Ness, 'SAT.' "Millions and billions of worlds are produced at every Manvantara" -- it is said. Therefore there must be many Fohats, whom we consider as conscious and intelligent Forces. This, no doubt, to the disgust of scientific minds. Nevertheless the Occultists, who have good reasons for it, consider all the forces of Nature as veritable, though supersensuous, states of Matter; and as possible objects of perception to Beings endowed with the requisite senses."

The other quotation describes fohat as being generated by friction (SD vol. 1, p. 145). The fire of matter is called "fire by friction" in *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*. There will be no difficulty in identifying this with "electricity generated by friction" in this SD quote:

"Bear in mind that Fohat, the constructive Force of Cosmic Electricity, is said, metaphorically, to have sprung like Rudra from Brahma "from the brain of the Father and the bosom of the Mother," and then to have metamorphosed himself into a male and a female, i.e., polarity, into positive and negative electricity. He has seven sons who are his brothers; and Fohat is forced to be born time after time whenever any two of his son-brothers indulge in too close contact -- whether an embrace or a fight. To avoid this, he binds together and unites those of unlike nature and separates those of similar temperaments. This, of course, relates, as any one can see, to electricity generated by friction and to the law involving attraction between two objects of unlike, and

repulsion between those of like polarity."

This indicates to me the likelihood that A Treatise on Cosmic Fire brings out clearly the meaning of fohat that in The Secret Doctrine was only mentioned in passing, and so was not clear there. When this meaning is supported in other texts, the Pranava-vada and the Buddhist tantras, I think little doubt about its correctness can remain. This is good evidence that the source of A Treatise on Cosmic Fire was in fact the Master D.K., who would be in a position to know what fohat actually is. I have not even brought in the quotations from the Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge that Jacques compiled, where fohat is associated with the third Logos, again supporting this meaning.

[David Reigle](#) on January 14, 2011 at 10:23pm

If we accept the equivalence of fohat and daivi-prakriti, and I see no reason not to, then we have a major source available to us on this: the Pranava-vada, "The Science of the Sacred Word." This book provides us with an original language source for the term daivi-prakriti and for the idea that it represents, the idea of fohat. Because of its unique importance, it is quite necessary to be able to consult the Sanskrit original of the Pranava-vada. Two of three volumes of the Sanskrit text were published in 1915 and 1919 (the third was never published). These extremely rare volumes have been scanned and posted to this site. One can now see exactly how daivi-prakriti (or devi-prakriti, as printed in these volumes) is used in the original Sanskrit text.

Look at page 194 of volume 2 of the Sanskrit text for where the chapter starts that discusses devi-prakriti. This corresponds to Bhagavan Das' summarized English translation, volume 2, p. 220. Devi-prakriti or daiva-prakriti is mentioned on that page. The actual explanation of devi-prakriti is on pp. 210-215 of the Sanskrit volume, and on pp. 234-236 of the English volume. The Sanskrit here is written in comparatively simple sentences, although the topic is deep. Even those with only a little knowledge of Sanskrit can probably follow them with the help of Bhagavan Das' translation. Note also that about one hundred pages of the introduction to the Sanskrit Pranava-vada, volume one, are in English.

Also posted here is the Suddha Dharma Mandala edition of the Bhagavad-gita, both the original Sanskrit publication in the 1917 second edition, and the Sanskrit text plus English translation of 1939. This edition differs from the known Bhagavad-gita in that it has 745 verses rather than 700 verses, and is divided into 26 chapters rather than into 18 chapters. It is purported to be the original form of the Bhagavad-gita. The relevance of this for this blog on the Stanzas of Dzryan is that here we have an example of a hitherto unknown Sanskrit text that came out and was published. Evidence for its authenticity is the fact that some editions of the Mahabharata specify how many verses are in the Bhagavad-gita. These add up to 745, like in the edition brought out by the Suddha Dharma Mandala, not 700, like in the known edition. This text was prepared from three different manuscripts, in the possession of three different swamis. This shows that secret texts are out there and in circulation among certain people, quite unknown to the world.

[David Reigle](#) on January 15, 2011 at 2:17pm

The question of authorities is a big one. When we have information that is usually seen as being channeled, whether through Alice Bailey or through H. P. Blavatsky, what criteria do we have to either accept or reject it? On the question of fohat that is being discussed here, Blavatsky's statements are no more verifiable than Bailey's statements. In more than 120 years, no one has found such a term, nor have they found a single verse of the Stanzas of Dzryan. We are all free to believe in such things as fohat and the Stanzas, if they make sense to us, but our own personal beliefs do not much help our neighbors.

The idea behind this blog, as I understand it, is to try to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzryan. Can we trace them to any known source from which HPB may have "borrowed" them? Failing this, we are left with two

options. Either HPB made them up from her imagination, the explanation accepted by the great majority, or HPB actually translated them from a still hidden source as she claimed. Working from the latter hypothesis, the task would be to find terms or ideas in the Stanzas that are distinctive enough to be traced to known sources. One such term and idea is fohat.

Right now, the sole objective evidence we have on fohat is the teaching on daivi-prakriti. This term is found in known sources such as the Bhagavad-gita, and its idea is explained in the Pranava-vada. Although this book was previously unknown, we now have it in the original Sanskrit. Blavatsky's statements on fohat are unverified. Bailey's statements on fohat are unverified. The Pranava-vada's statements on daivi-prakriti or devi-prakriti are the nearest thing we now have to anything verifiable on this idea. It so happens that these strongly agree with Bailey's interpretation of fohat, an interpretation that is not clear in Blavatsky's writings.

Having struggled for many years to try to figure out what fohat is from HPB's far from clear statements, so that I could try to trace it in known sources, I took Bailey's explanation of it as a working hypothesis. When this was strongly supported in the Pranava-vada, and also in the Buddhist tantras with their teaching of consciousness riding upon winds, I accepted this explanation of fohat. Our sources of information on something like fohat are so few that I was and am thankful to have this additional source. Of course, for our purposes here, we must use this source very carefully. This is because it, like the Stanzas of Dzryan that we are trying to trace, is so far unverified.

Quoting our esoteric sources as proof by itself is not enough. As a wise man once said, "Ten people sitting around a table quoting each other doesn't make for good research." Then, this becomes even more unproductive when pitting one unverifiable authority against another unverifiable authority. The Bailey writings are as much or as little an authority as the Blavatsky writings, and vice versa. By themselves, the one cannot prove the other. When, however, other sources are brought in, the Bailey writings can serve as useful evidence. With the mutually supporting evidence provided by Blavatsky's writings, Bailey's writings, the Pranava-vada, and the Buddhist tantras, we have a far clearer picture of fohat than what we could get from Blavatsky's writings alone.

[David Reigle](#) on January 16, 2011 at 10:17pm

In response to the pertinent observations of Capt. Anand, it will take me a little time to gather some relevant materials. Thank you to Paul for calling attention to the false dilemma fallacy. It is certainly true that there are many possibilities in between the two options that I mentioned. Regarding the quotation given by Govert: "An Archaic Manuscript — a collection of palm leaves made impermeable to water, fire, and air, by some specific unknown process — is before the writer's eye." (SDI-1). I have always understood this to mean that HPB was viewing the manuscript clairvoyantly, not that it was lying on the table in front of her. A number of people observed her taking references from books clairvoyantly. Col. Olcott writes of this quite a bit in his Old Diary Leaves, and even had her correct one by re-consulting the book clairvoyantly, where he had detected an error. Moreover, I do not regard this pictorial manuscript as the one she translated the Stanzas of Dzryan from, based on other statements she made (BCW 14) and other evidence where she gives specific words found in it (SD 1.23).

[David Reigle](#) on January 18, 2011 at 10:44am

What makes fohat so hard to trace, besides the unknown word itself, is the fact that no such idea is found in the standard trinities of the world's cosmogonies. Fohat is not Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver, or Shiva, the destroyer. Fohat is not God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Ghost. Fohat is not the first logos, the second logos, or the third logos. Fohat is not *to hen*, the one, not *nous*, intelligence, and not *psyche*, the soul. Fohat is not *sat*, being, not *chit*, consciousness, and not *ananda*, bliss. Fohat is neither spirit, *purusha*, nor matter, *prakriti*, nor *mahat*, the great principle of intelligence that the interplay of spirit and matter produces, and that in turn produces the world. Fohat is different from all of these.

Fohat is described in The Secret Doctrine, too, after the primary principles are described (vol. 1, p. 16). The question was then raised in the Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge (Jacques' compilation, p. 8; or 1946 reprint of 1890-1891 ed., p. 33; or BCW vol. 10, p. 334):

"Q. Is Fohat one of the three, Father, Mother and Son?

"A. Fohat is a generic term and used in many senses. He is the light (daivi-prakriti) of all the three logoi -- the personified symbols of the three spiritual stages of Evolution. Fohat is the aggregate of all the spiritual creative ideations above, and of all the electro-dynamic and creative forces below, in Heaven and on Earth. There seems to be great confusion and misunderstanding concerning the First and Second Logos. The first is the already present yet still unmanifested potentiality in the bosom of Father-Mother; the Second is the abstract collectivity of creators called "Demiurgi" by the Greeks or the Builders of the Universe. The third logos is the ultimate differentiation of the Second and the individualization of Cosmic Forces, of which Fohat is the chief; for Fohat is the synthesis of the Seven Creative Rays or Dhyana Chohans which proceed from the third Logos."

Yes, I agree with HPB that "There seems to be great confusion and misunderstanding concerning the First and Second Logos," and that her far from clear way of writing contributed much to this. In my own case, it took me more than twenty-seven years to get what she was saying about these when she used them to explain the first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine (SD vol. 1, p. 16; see <http://www.easterntradition.org/first%20fundamental%20proposition%20...>). But even then (2001), the best I could figure out about fohat I wrote as follows (p. 12): "Like the unmanifested, the manifested also has two poles. The interaction of the two poles of manifested spirit and matter produces cosmic energy or vital force, called Fohat." This amounts to saying that the best I could figure out about fohat was nothing, since this is nothing more than what HPB said on p. 16 of vol. 1 of the SD. Fohat was as great a mystery to me as ever. All I knew is that fohat was not one of the three logoi, but that it could be called their light, daivi-prakriti.

But what role does fohat or daivi-prakriti play in cosmogony, that the three primary principles by themselves do not? Why do the other cosmogonies of the world seem to be content without it? How does it relate to the three primary principles, which seem to be complete in themselves? Is it a fourth principle? It so happens that the Pranava-vada addresses this question, the very same question that was also asked in the Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge. The Pranava-vada had described daivi-prakriti as shakti ("power" or "force"). In the summarized English translation by Bhagavan Das, vol. 1, p. 300, this is stated as follows:

"(The primal trinity has been repeatedly declared to consist of three factors, I, This, and Not. What is this Shakti, then; is it a fourth?) It would seem as if it was outside the three. Yet this is not so. It is only the Necessity of the three and so included in them and not anything apart from them. That which is necessary to anyone is included in that one, is part of his being."

The answer given in the Pranava-vada is the same as the answer given in the Transactions. Fohat or daivi-prakriti is not a fourth principle, but is an inherent part of the three primary principles. The Pranava-vada is the science of the pranava or sacred word, om. Before the sandhi or coalescence of letters, om consists of the three letters, "a, u, m." So the Pranava-vada explains these three letters as the three primary principles of the universe. Daivi-prakriti is not any of these three letters. It is represented by a fourth letter, "i", which is thought to reside inherently between the "a" and the "u". This illustrates that daivi-prakriti is not one of the three primary principles, but yet it is not a fourth principle outside of them. Rather, it resides as an inherent part of the three primary principles. This is what makes it so hard to trace in the known cosmogonies of the world. As an inherent part of the trinity, it may go unmentioned, if it is found in these cosmogonies at all.

David Reigle on January 21, 2011 at 10:27pm

Not only has no one in more than 120 years been able to trace any such word as fohat in the language it is supposed to be found in (Tibetan, Mongolian, Chinese, or some other language then described as "Turanian"), we have not yet been able to trace this idea in the Buddhist texts that it is supposed to be found in, and that employ these languages. HPB has given us no other word than fohat for this concept in the Buddhist writings. She has, however, given us some equivalents for fohat in other writings. Fohat is supposed to be Apam-Napat in the ancient Hindu Vedas and the ancient Zoroastrian Zend-Avesta. Fohat is supposed to be Atum in the ancient Egyptian writings. Fohat is supposed to be Eros in Hesiod's ancient Greek cosmogony, and from this we may deduce that fohat would be Phanes in the Orphic cosmogony. This listing of equivalents to fohat looks impressive, until you try to ascertain exactly who or what these slippery characters are in their respective cosmogonies.

Apam-napat, the "son of the waters," is a vague and little-used name that most Vedic scholars take as an epithet of Agni, the god of fire. There are not enough references to Apam-napat in the extant writings to determine what

he is any more precisely. Atum is defined in the glossary to Raymond O. Faulkner's translation of *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* as "primeval sun-god worshipped at Heliopolis; also the aged sun at its setting." Eros is described in Hesiod's *Theogony* as "most beautiful among the immortal gods, limb-weakener, who conquers the mind and sensible thought in the breasts of all gods and all men" (trans. Richard S. Caldwell, p. 34). Other than one more reference in the *Theogony*, where Eros is only mentioned in passing, that is all. What is common to Apam-Napat, Atum, and Eros? Nothing obvious. What distinguishes these from any other god or creative principle? Nothing obvious.

In order to trace fohat, we need more information. Taking fohat as equivalent to daivi-prakriti, more information is found in the *Pranava-vada*. Speaking for myself, I have found viewing the one principle under two aspects, as described in the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine*, to be of the greatest help. The *Pranava-vada* teaches a non-dual principle that we conceive of under two aspects, the same as *The Secret Doctrine* teaches. For these two aspects, the *Pranava-vada*'s atman (self, spirit) corresponds to *The Secret Doctrine*'s absolute abstract motion, while the *Pranava-vada*'s prakriti (matter, substance) corresponds to *The Secret Doctrine*'s absolute abstract space.

At this point in the comparison, we find that the *Pranava-vada* adds something. It adds a twofold or threefold or fourfold division of the atman aspect, and it adds a twofold or threefold division of the prakriti aspect. This is where it teaches mula-prakriti and daivi-prakriti. Hence it is clear that daivi-prakriti is part of the prakriti aspect, in contradistinction to the atman aspect. This is not clear in *The Secret Doctrine*. We do not find stated in the early Theosophical teachings where fohat fits in these two aspects, unless we extrapolate this from the references to fohat as connected with the third logos or Brahma aspect (given in the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*).

This is, however, stated clearly in Alice Bailey's *Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, when saying on pp. 65-66 that fohat is "fire viewed in its third aspect, the fire of matter," and elsewhere in that book (pp. 31, 213, 602-603, 611, 628). This supports the association of fohat with the third logos or Brahma aspect made by HPB in the *Transactions*. Together these references support the explanation of daivi-prakriti given in the *Pranava-vada* as the prakriti or substance aspect. They also confirm the equivalence of fohat with daivi-prakriti. The relevance of this for our research is that we now have a much clearer idea of what fohat is. We are now in a position to try and trace it in the Buddhist texts that it is supposed to be found in.

My post of Dec. 31 pertaining to "mind itself" spoke of mind's role in cosmogony, and quoted the Dalai Lama on the "clear light mind" in "the Buddhist explanation for what is called the creator in other traditions." As we know, *The Secret Doctrine* speaks of the interplay between the two primary aspects as producing cosmic ideation, mahat or intelligence, the universal world-soul (SD 1.16). Since mind or consciousness is produced in this way, and this in turn brings about the manifest universe, where is the need for something else such as fohat? This mind or cosmic ideation would obviously correspond to the "absolute abstract motion representing unconditioned consciousness" aspect in *The Secret Doctrine*, or the atman aspect in the *Pranava-vada*. If mind is the creator, we are still unable to trace fohat, which corresponds to the absolute abstract space or substance principle aspect in *The Secret Doctrine*, or the prakriti aspect in the *Pranava-vada*.

If we look carefully at the Buddhist texts, we see that it is not exactly mind that is said to be the creator. Rather, it is the "clear light nature" of mind, citta-prakriti-prabhasvara. Yes, you see the word prakriti here, which has been translated as "nature" in this phrase rather than "substance." It is the light or luminosity (prabhasvara) of mind that is the actual creator, not the mind itself. This light is the particular nature (prakriti) of mind (citta) that creates. The correspondence to daivi-prakriti, "light substance" is obvious. I believe that in prabhasvara, Tibetan 'od gsal, we have the direct correspondence to the idea of fohat. With the help of supporting references, we have been able to trace the idea of fohat, though not the term, in the Buddhist texts that it is supposed to be found in.

David Reigle

The Apam-napat connection with fohat is indeed helpful. HPB gives this at SD, vol. 2, p. 400 fn., and repeats it in the *Theosophical Glossary*. The name itself, "son of the waters," leaves no doubt about the connection with water. This deity also brings in the Agni (god of fire) connection. The exact aspect of Agni, however, is open to question.

The opening sentence of the paragraph that you quoted from the website, Capt. Anand, represents one view. Its statement that, "ApamNapat is the lightning form of Agni," is the opinion of some scholars, but not of others. It

is based on a reference in verse 9 of Rig-Vedas 2.35, describing him as "clothed in lightning." This hymn of 15 verses is the only hymn addressed to Apam-napat in the whole Rig-Vedas. Apam napat is only mentioned there about thirty times, according to A. A. Macdonell's 1897 book, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 69. This book, despite its age, remains an unsurpassed reference on Vedic mythology. It gives the most information in the shortest space, and does so with great objectivity. Regarding the various views held about Apam napat, Macdonell writes, p. 70:

"Oldenberg is of opinion that Apam napat was originally a water genius pure and simple, who became confused with the water-born Agni, a totally different being. His grounds are, that one of the two hymns in which he is celebrated (10, 30), is connected in the ritual with ceremonies exclusively concerned with water, while even in 2, 35 his aqueous nature predominates. Hillebrandt, on the other hand, followed by Hardy, thinks Apam napat is the moon, and Max Muller that he is the sun or lightning."

David Reigle

If the idea of fohat actually does have a direct correspondence in the Buddhist texts, as I have proposed, we need to know more about what it may correspond to there. The term *prabhasvara* means "luminosity," or any such similar English term pertaining to light. Christian Wedemeyer translates it as "brilliance." It is most often seen translated from its Tibetan translation, 'od gsal, as "clear light." When I quoted the present Dalai Lama on this (Dec. 31, 2010), I mentioned that the texts that his statement is based on have not yet been published in English translation. He was using Tsongkhapa's Tibetan commentaries on the Sanskrit *Guhyasamaja Tantra* writings of Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, and Chandrakirti. Before proceeding to these, I must clarify the English words "create" and "creator" and "creation."

When a Christian says that God created the world, he or she usually means that God created the world out of nothing. The idea of creating something out of nothing is not what the Indian texts on cosmogony refer to. They use words for creation such as *sarga*, coming from the verb-root *srj* (*srij*). The idea here is "emanate" or "emit," where something comes out of something else. For this reason, Western scholars and translators have long favored translations such as "emanation" or "emission" or "manifestation" over "creation." Nonetheless, "creation" is not inaccurate, if we think of it like a potter creating a pot from clay. The fact that this word has been colored by Christian conceptions does not necessarily mean that it should not be used. We simply must be aware of how it is meant. Further, when dealing with many Indian texts, in particular Buddhist texts, we must back away from any idea of a creator as a being such as God or a potter. Fire creates heat, but that does not mean that there is any conscious agent or agency involved in that creation.

In the text that the Dalai Lama was referring to, Tsongkhapa was commenting on Nagarjuna's book called *The Five Stages*, the *Pancakrama*. The original Sanskrit text was found and published in Europe as early as 1896, but there is still no complete translation of it into a Western language. In going through this text, it appears to me that the verse being referred to is chapter 3, verse 15. I would translate it as follows:

"The entire world is dependent [on a cause], for something independent can never arise. Its [the world's] cause is luminosity (*prabhasvara*); luminosity is the universal void (*sarva-sunya*)."

Verse works such as this are notoriously terse, and they need commentaries or explanations. Nagarjuna's spiritual son is Aryadeva. Aryadeva wrote a brief explanatory work on this section of Nagarjuna's *Pancakrama*. Aryadeva's short explanatory work, written in verse, is called the *Svadhithana-[krama]-prabheda*. Its Sanskrit original was also found, and was published in *Dhiih: A Review of Rare Buddhist Texts*, vol. 10, 1990, pp. 20-24. It was reprinted with emendations and the Tibetan translation in *Bauddhalaghugrantha Samgraha*, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1997, pp. 169-194. In this brief text, Aryadeva gives four verses that explain the creation and dissolution of the world, from and into *prabhasvara*, luminosity. These verses were then quoted in other Buddhist tantric texts, such as Naropa's *Sekoddesa-tika*, a *Kalachakra* work. They seem to give what was taken as the most representative statement of Buddhist tantric cosmogony. I here translate them:

18. From luminosity (*prabhasvara*) [arises] the great void (*maha-sunya*), and from that is the arising of means (*upaya*). From that, wisdom (*prajna*) is arisen. From that is the arising of air.

19. From air is the arising of fire, and from fire is the arising of water. From water, earth is born. This is the arising of living beings.

20. The earth element dissolves in water. Water dissolves in fire, and fire in the subtle element [air]. Air dissolves

in mind (citta).

21. Mind will dissolve in the mental derivatives (caitasika), and the mental derivatives in ignorance (avidya). This, too, will go to luminosity (prabhasvara). That is the cessation of the triple world.

The idea that the world arises from prabhasvara, luminosity, is not limited to the Buddhist tantric texts. It is also found in our old friend, the now familiar Ratna-gotra-vibhaga of Maitreya. In that book there is a somewhat cosmogonic section, chapter 1, verses 53-63. It is there said through comparisons that everything arises from and returns to citta-prakriti, the nature of mind (cittasya prakriti), and this nature of mind is prabhasvara, luminosity.

Here in these references we have something very specific, not general like the world originates from God, or from matter, or from mind. This something specific, prabhasvara or luminosity, closely corresponds to the idea of fohat and daivi-prakriti given in Theosophical sources. We cannot help but be struck by the fact that, once again, this is found in the very sources that HPB indicated as her sources: the Buddhist tantras or books of Kiu-te, and the book of Maitreya Buddha.

[David Reigle](#) on January 24, 2011 at 10:24pm

Thank you, Capt. Anand, for the reference in the Yoga-Vasishtha. This book is a very important source for us in this research. In verse 8 of the chapter you referred to, is found the word chit-prakasha, "light of mind." This is indeed very much the same as the luminosity or light (prabhasvara) that is the nature of mind (chitta) in the Buddhist texts referred to earlier here. According to the late B. L. Atreya, the leading Yoga-Vasishtha scholar of our time, the central teaching of this text is that everything is a manifestation of mind. In particular, as this reference and other chapters (e.g., chap. 12) of the Utpatti Prakarana show, everything is a manifestation of the light of mind. I would certainly think that this corresponds to fohat. We will need to bring in more material from this excellent source.

[David Reigle](#) on January 25, 2011 at 10:00pm

We all rely on translations in our studies. How reliable are these? The Yoga-Vasishtha was translated by Vihari-Lala Mitra in eleven physical volumes, 1891-1899. B. L. Atreya strongly criticized the accuracy of this translation in his now classic book, *The Philosophy of the Yoga-vasistha* (Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1936), which is based on his Benares Hindu University PhD thesis. But Vihara Lala Mitra is only one of many translators, right up to the present, who provide inaccurate or imprecise translations. These translations may sometimes be more accurately described as embellished paraphrases. Unfortunately, the poor reader of such translations does not know this.

We have briefly discussed the Vedic deity Apam-napat, "son (or grandson) of the waters," in relation to fohat, and in relation to its possible role in cosmogony. As seen, the evidence is so slender that we do not even know for sure who or what Apam-napat is, other than his connection to water, and his association with Agni, the god of fire. In the one hymn addressed to him in the Rig-Vedas, 2.35, there is a verse that is rather surprising. It says that Apam-napat gave birth (jajaana) to all (vis'vaani) bhuvanas (worlds, beings, etc.). Apam-napat is not normally thought of as a creator-god. But for all we know, in the many now lost Vedic writings Apam-napat may have been a creative force as much as prabhasvara or luminosity is in the Buddhist tantric writings. The one reference we now have to this, verse 2 of Rig-Vedas 2.35, is translated as follows in four published English translations. We begin with the most recent, since, at least in theory, the later should be able to improve upon the earlier.

2. The Eternal and Almighty God creates with its glory the whole universe and all the planets therein. He arranges and adjusts the co-relation between the waters and clouds. Looking to this delighting quality of virtues of God, we should always pray to Him in the choicest words. That God is near to our heart. (Acharya Dharma Deva Vidya Martanda, *The Rig-Vedas*, vol. 3, 1984, p. 522)

2. Let us sing well, in its appreciation this poem which has been well-fashioned out from the heart; who can say whether it would be appreciated! The hydrodynamic power, the noble Nature's force, has generated good many things existing by its supreme might. (Svami Satya Prakash Sarasvati and Satyakam Vidyalankar, *Rig-Vedas Samhita*, vol. 4, 1977, p. 1033)

2. To him let us address the song well-fashioned, forth from the heart. Shall he not understand it?
The friendly Son of Waters by the greatness of Godhead hath produced all things existing.
(Ralph T. H. Griffith, The Hymns of the Rig-Vedas, 1889, quoted from the 1973 one-volume edition, p. 153)

2. Let us address to him the prayer that is conceived in our hearts, and may he fully understand (its purport); for he, the lord, the grandson of the waters, has generated all beings by the greatness of his might.
(Horace Hayman Wilson, Rig-Vedas Sanhita, vol. 2, 1854, pp. 298-299)

Yes, these are all translations of the very same original Sanskrit verse. As anyone can see, you cannot trust half of what is in these English translations. If you wanted to use this verse to explain something in The Secret Doctrine, what would you do?

If we look at Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, we find the concluding verse of its somewhat cosmogonic section that I referred to earlier translated as follows. It is chapter 1, verse 63, in the Sanskrit edition translated by Jikido TAKashaki, and was numbered as verse 62 in E. Obermiller's translation from Tibetan.

"The Spiritual Essence which is pure and radiant
Is inalterable like space
And cannot be polluted by the occasional stains
Of Desire and the other (defiling forces)
Which arise from the wrong conception (of existence)."
(E. Obermiller, p. 188)

"The innate nature of the mind is brilliant
And, like space, has no transformation at all;
It bears, however, the impurity by stains of desires, etc.
Which are of accident and produced by wrong conception."
(Jikido TAKashaki, p. 237)

From reading either of these English translations, would anyone know that prabhasvara is here being talked about? Probably not. But it is. This technical term of central importance is here rendered by the seemingly innocuous terms "radiant" and "brilliant." This shows why one cannot rely solely on translations when doing research in these subjects. I must make it clear that I greatly respect these two highly competent translators. The fault does not lie with someone who has done the best he can. The difficulty is, above all, in the lack of standardized translation equivalents for the original Sanskrit terms. These often lack adequate English equivalents that translators can agree on. So the poor reader of English translations is stuck with guessing or settling for generalities, sometimes without even a hint that anything more than generalities is being talked about.

At this moment, there is online Sanskrit Language Study help available on this website. There are a number of online Sanskrit language learning courses available, but usually without online live help. What almost invariably stops students who set out to follow one of these courses, is that they soon come to something that they don't understand, and there is no one to ask about it. So they stop. All they needed was someone to explain it, like we have about four of volunteering here. An opportunity is now in front of us. It may not come again so easily.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on January 26, 2011 at 12:43pm

On Clear Light

From MOUNTAIN DOCTRINE, Tibet's Fundamental treatise on Other-Emptiness and the Buddha-Matrix, by Döl-bo-ba Shay-rap-gyel-tsen, translated by Jeffrey Hopkins, Snow Lion Publications – 2006

p. 11

« In order to show how the matrix-of-one-gone-thus yields buddhahood, Döl-bo-ba addresses the topics of its two divisions, called the two causal lineages. The first is the noumenal **clear light** itself, the natural lineage (*rang bzhin gnas rigs*).. »

p.49

« Though without the nature of all things, is the natural **clear light**, »

p.55

« The basic element that is the non-conceptual, **clear light** noumenon is the natural lineage. »

p.61

« Just that final buddha, the matrix-of-one-gone-thus, the ultimate **clear light**, element of attributes, self-arisen pristine wisdom, great bliss, and partless pervader of all is said to be the basis and source of all phenomena and also is said in reality to be the basis that is empty of all phenomena, the void basis, and the basis pure of all defilements. »

p.63

“ Also, the *Sutra on the Heavily Adorned* says :

The various grounds are the **basis-of-all**.

The virtuous matrix-of-one-gone-to-bliss is also that [**basis-of-all**]

p.521

“ Maitreya's *Sublime Continuum of the Great Vehicle* also says at length, “The **clear light** is not made,”

This gives us a combination of equation where :

the matrix-of-one-gone-thus = the **clear light** = the basic element = the ground-of-all.

David Reigle on January 27, 2011 at 4:57pm

Once again, Jacques, you have brought in quotations from a source that is of great importance for our research. Dolpopa, or Dol-bo-ba as Jeffrey Hopkins writes it phonetically, being the primary writer of the Jonang order of Tibetan Buddhism, is at the same time the primary Tibetan writer of the "Great Madhyamaka" tradition. This tradition seems to provide the closest doctrinal parallel to the doctrinal position of The Secret Doctrine. The Great Madhyamaka tradition is based primarily on the earlier Indian writings of Maitreya and Asanga, especially the Ratna-gotra-vibhanga (a book referred to by Jeffrey Hopkins as the Sublime Continuum). So Dolpopa's magnum opus, the Mountain Doctrine, should be a source that we make extensive use of.

The quotes from it on the clear light, or luminosity (Sanskrit prabhasvara, Tibetan 'od gsal) will require careful study. This is material that constituted advanced study in Tibet. We will need all the background that we can get, background that Dolpopa assumed in his readers. We will also need to clarify translation terms, which differ from translator to translator, so that we can correlate what is said here with what is said in other books. There is reference to the "natural lineage" in two of these quotes (from pp. 11 and 55). The word "lineage" here translates Tibetan "rigs," which in turn translates Sanskrit "gotra." We are familiar with idea of gotra because of the quotation from the Occult Catechism, where it is almost certainly the word behind the translation "Germ" in the phrase "The Germ in the Root" (SD vol. 1, p. 11):

"The Occult Catechism contains the following questions and answers:

"What is it that ever is?" "Space, the eternal Anupadaka." "What is it that ever was?" "The Germ in the Root." "What is it that is ever coming and going?" "The Great Breath." "Then, there are three Eternals?" "No, the three are one. That which ever is is one, that which ever was is one, that which is ever being and becoming is also one: and this is Space."

Besides the translations of gotra as "lineage," used by Jeffrey Hopkins and others, and "germ" apparently used by HPB and used by Jikido TAKashaki, there are also "source" used by E. Obermiller, "potential" used by Ken and Katia Holmes, "disposition" used by Rosemarie Fuchs, "spiritual gene" used by Robert Thurman, "innate spiritual predisposition" used by Gustav Roth, etc. As is clearly obvious, we will have to use "gotra" along with whatever English term might be used, in order to avoid hopeless confusion.

The quotes given by Jacques from Dolpopa's Mountain Doctrine speak of not just the "lineage" (gotra), but the "natural lineage." In these writings, two kinds of lineage or gotra are distinguished, and Dolpopa assumes that his readers know this. There is the natural (prakriti-stha) lineage (gotra), and there is the "developmental" (paripusta) lineage (gotra), to use Jeffrey Hopkins' translation terms. The natural or naturally present lineage is something that everyone has. Everyone has the germ or potential to become enlightened, to develop into a buddha. It is something that has always been there. By contrast, the developmental lineage or lineage that is developed, also called the "acquired" (samudanita) lineage (gotra), is something that is newly generated by cultivating it through effort.

So the clear light or luminosity (prabhasvara, 'od gsal) is equated by Dolpopa with the natural lineage (prakriti-stha gotra). This would be the "Germ" of the Occult Catechism, something "that ever was." We will have to discuss the other equivalences in the coming days.

David Reigle on January 29, 2011 at 1:36pm

The subject of the gotra (the germ or lineage), as it is found in Buddhist texts, has again come up in this discussion. This time I have scanned eleven scholarly articles pertaining to this subject into a file, in chronological order, and this file is being posted in the research documents for this blog. Most of this material cannot be found on the web. While the web is improving all the time, it is still not possible to do anything like serious research on a subject such as the gotra, using only materials available on the web. Materials such as those being posted here are still largely limited to major academic libraries, and even there one must know what they are and where they were published in order to find them.

For most people, it is not easy to become motivated to study difficult material for its own sake. So let me say that William Emmette Coleman cited the example of HPB's reference to gotra to prove that Blavatsky was an ignorant plagiarist. See Paul's discussion: <http://www.theosophy.net/forum/topics/sources-of-the-voice-of-the>. (See also my earlier post in this discussion: <http://www.theosophy.net/profiles/blog/show?id=3055387%3ABlogPost%3...>). She demonstrably did copy her sentence about the gotrabhu-jnana in The Voice of the Silence from E. Spence Hardy's book, Eastern Monachism, without reference. So this would qualify as plagiarism. But much worse is the accusation that the gotrabhu-jnana idea, being

lifted from a book on Southern Buddhism, did not at all fit in Northern Buddhism, thus proving her great ignorance of her subject matter. This shows, according to Coleman, that she did not know what she was talking about. She merely pieced together her writings from what was available, with nothing else behind them. She was, as the Hodgson report said, an impostor.

Now, when someone's teacher is publicly shown to be an ignorant fool, there will likely be some among her students who will be motivated to challenge this. Here posted, in these eleven scholarly articles on the gotra, are the materials to do so. Let it not be said that the Theosophists could not respond because they too, like their teacher, were too ignorant to do so.

Whatever one's motivation to study them, here follows a list of these articles, in chronological order:

Lamotte, Etienne. "Note VII: Gotra and Tathagatagotra." In *The Teaching of Vimalakirti (Vimalakirtinirdesa)*, English transl. by Sara Boin, pp. 303-307. London: Pali Text Society, 1976 (originally published in French as *L'Enseignement de Vimalakirti*, 1962).

Mano, Ryukai. "'Gotra' in Haribhadra's Theory." *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2, March 1967, pp. 972-964 (23-31).

Seyfort Ruegg, David. "Arya and Bhadanta Vimuktisena on the Gotra-theory of the Prajnaparamita." *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens*, vol. 12-13, 1968/1969, pp. 303-317.

Seyfort Ruegg, D. "Pali Gotta/Gotra and the Term Gotrabhu in Pali and Buddhist Sanskrit." In *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I. B. Horner*, ed. L. Cousins, et al., pp. 199-210. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1974.

Seyfort Ruegg, D. "The Meanings of the Term Gotra and the Textual History of the Ratnagotravibhaga." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 39, part 2, 1976, pp. 341-363.

Seyfort Ruegg, D. "The gotra, ekayana and tathagatagarbha theories of the Prajnaparamita according to Dharmamitra and Abhayakaragupta." In *Prajnaparamita and Related Systems: Studies in honor of Edward Conze*, ed. Lewis Lancaster, pp. 283-312. Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1. Berkeley: University of California, 1977.

Wijesekera, O. H. de A. "The Etymology of Pali Gotrabhu." In *Studies in Pali and Buddhism: A Memorial Volume in Honor of Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap*, ed. A. K. Narian, pp. 381-382. Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1979.

Seyfort Ruegg, D. "A Further Note on Pali Gotrabhu." *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, n.s., vol. 9, 1981, pp. 175-177.

Nanayakkara, S. K. "Gotra"; and "Gotra-bhu." Entries in *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, ed. W. G. Weeraratne, vol. 5, fasc. 3, 1992, pp. 378-381. [Colombo]: Government of Sri Lanka.

Takashaki, Jikido. "On Gotrabhu." Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens, vol. 36, 1992, pp. 251-259.

D'Amato, Mario. "Can All Beings Potentially Attain Awakening? Gotra-theory in the Mahayanasutralamkara." Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, vol. 26, no. 1, 2003, pp. 115-138.

David Reigle on January 30, 2011 at 3:03pm

E. Obermiller's 1931 English translation of Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, also called the Uttara-tantra, was posted last evening with the Research Documents for the Stanzas of Dzhan. I think that everyone here knows the relevance of this text to our search for the origins of the Stanzas of Dzhan. It is our primary source for specific ideas and terms found in the Stanzas and in the philosophy that stands behind the Stanzas, as deduced from quotations given by HPB from the Occult Catechism, and as deduced from the Cosmological Notes given by Mahatma Morya. The Ratna-gotra-vibhaga is not a book on cosmogony, so there is no parallel in this regard. The parallel is with its ideas of the dhatu or element, the gotra or germ or lineage, what is lhun-grub (anabhoga) or existing spontaneously, the tathagata-garbha or buddha-nature, and the philosophical schools of thought that these ideas engendered in Tibet. The fact that HPB spoke of the secret Book of Maitreya in connection with the Book of Dzhan reinforces this parallel. This parallel steers us in a particular direction in our search for the origins of the Stanzas.

For those who simply want to read this book, Obermiller's 1931 translation is a good choice. It is the first translation of this text ever made. Allowance must therefore be made for two things. First, English translation terminology was quite experimental at that point in time. It is still experimental even today, but less so now. Second, Obermiller necessarily had to follow his Gelugpa teachers in understanding this text in order to translate it for the first time. They followed a particular line of interpretation (sometimes called Rangtong), a line that is not followed in other orders of Tibetan Buddhism. To get the other main line of interpretation (sometimes called Shentong), one may consult S. Hookham's 1991 book titled, *The Buddha Within: Tathagatagarbha Doctrine according to the Shentong Interpretation of the Ratnagotravibhaga*.

For those who wish to use this material for Book of Dzhan research, it will be necessary to also consult Jikido Takashaki's 1966 translation of it titled, *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhaga (Uttaratantra), Being a Treatise on the Tathagatagarbha Theory of Mahayana Buddhism*. Pablo has earlier given us a link to an online version of this book: http://lirs.ru/lib/uttara/A_Study_of_Ratnagotravibhaga,Takashaki,196.... Obermiller had translated this text from its Tibetan translation, since the original Sanskrit had not yet been discovered then. Takashaki's is the first translation of this text made from the original Sanskrit, and is still the only one made from the original Sanskrit. For using Takashaki's translation, too, allowance must be made for the fact that English translation terminology was still quite experimental. As an example, Takashaki uses "Germ" for gotra, while Obermiller often uses "Germ" for dhatu. This is why we are obliged to refer to the Sanskrit terms when discussing these ideas.

Jacques Mahnich on February 2, 2011 at 3:15pm

Looking for lost words.

At the beginning of this study, we were searching for S.D. missing vocabulary.

David wrote about zhi-gyu : "The first word of this compound is almost certainly the Tibetan word gzhi, meaning "ground" or "basis". The second word might be the Tibetan word rgyu, meaning "cause". But this compound has not yet been found in use".

It may appears as an abbreviation or a sub-compound of "*kun-gzhi rgyu'i rgyud*", translated by Alexander Berzin as "*causal alaya continuum* or the causal everlasting continuum of the all-encompassing foundation", which may be not so far from Stanza I translation as "cosmic prenebular matter".

The context in which this phrase appears is as follow :

"Sakya calls clear-light mental activity the "*causal alaya continuum*" (*kun-gzhi rgyu'i rgyud*, the causal everlasting continuum of the all-encompassing foundation) and the "*ultimate alaya*" (*mthar-thug-gi kun-gzhi*, ultimate all-encompassing foundation). It is the ultimate foundation or source of both impure and pure appearances as defined above. Gelug does not apply the term *alaya* to clear-light mental activity."

More can be read at : <http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/advanced/tantra/level...>

David Reigle on February 2, 2011 at 10:37pm

Yes, Stefalive, I do regard Maitreya's Ratna-gotra-vibhaga as the best preparation, both in its terms and in its ideas, for accessing the Book of Dzyan. The Book of Dzyan has its own archaic terminology, which we must learn if we wish to access it. It would be wonderful to translate all of this into modern terms, but we must first master the archaic terms and their ideas before this will be possible.

David Reigle on February 3, 2011 at 12:39pm

Well, Jacques, this material that you cited brings in another big problem, equal to the problem of fohat. While fohat is harder to trace, the kun-gzhi or alaya is harder to sort out. The word alaya is found in verse 9 of Stanza 1, "when the alaya of the universe was in paramartha." The Sakya explanation of this term, taking it with rgyu'i rgyud, "causal continuum" (rgyu'i, "of the cause," rgyud, "continuum") is only one of about four or five ways to explain it found in Tibet, and as many in China. I do not think we can join the last syllable of kun-gzhi with the following word rgyu in this phrase in order to get the term gzhi-rgyu given by HPB from Stanza 1, "Tho-ag in Zhi-gyu slept seven Khorlo" (SD 1.23). But it does bring in closely related if not identical ideas, that are of central importance to the Stanzas of Dzyan.

The alaya (Tibetan, kun gzhi), which may or may not be used as distinct from the alaya-vijnana, is also explained in divergent ways in books on Yogachara Buddhism, where this term and idea are found. The alaya-vijnana was first translated from its Chinese translation, as "storehouse consciousness," and this still remains widely used today. Then, from its Tibetan

translation, it has been translated as basis-of-all consciousness, substratum consciousness, foundational consciousness, ground-of-all consciousness, universal ground consciousness, etc. Lambert Schmithausen in his 2-volume study of the alaya-vijnana uses fundamental consciousness. If we take away the word "consciousness" (vijnana) in all of these, we have translations of just the word "alaya" (kun gzhi). From studying only Yogachara sources, I did not realize that alaya could be taken as something quite distinct from the alaya-vijnana. It was not until studying Jonang sources that I saw this.

In the Jonang sourcebook that has now been translated under the title, *Mountain Doctrine*, the alaya by itself is taken as a synonym of ultimate reality (e.g., p. 64, line seven, where Jeffrey Hopkins translates its Tibetan kun gzhi as "basis-of-all"). As such, it is often used in the phrase, kun gzhi ye shes, translated by Jeffrey Hopkins as "pristine wisdom basis-of-all" (e.g., p. 61, bottom of first box, Tibetan given on p. 735, line 1). This would be in Sanskrit, alaya-jnana, where alaya is associated with pristine or primordial wisdom (jnana). In contrast to this, alaya-vijnana is where alaya is associated with transient consciousness (vijnana). It is the latter that is usually referred to when describing the Yogachara school of Buddhism as the "Mind-Only" school. This is refuted as being ultimate by the Madhyamaka school of Buddhism, since any changing consciousness cannot be ultimate. Hence, there is a sharp distinction made between the eternal alaya, and the changing alaya-vijnana.

So what is being referred to in verse 9 of Stanza 1? From HPB's explanations given on pp. 48-50 of *The Secret Doctrine*, we must assume that it is the alaya-vijnana, not the alaya as distinguished from this. Part of her material given here is taken from Emil Schlagintweit's 1863 book, *Buddhism in Tibet*, pp. 39-40, 44. Schlagintweit brings up the alaya here in his section on "Yogacharya" Buddhism. He here calls the alaya a "soul." HPB calls the alaya "the 'Soul of the World' or Anima Mundi, the 'Over-Soul' of Emerson," saying that "it changes periodically its nature," although it is "eternal and changeless in its inner essence on the planes which are unreachable by either men or Cosmic Gods" (p. 48). This is apparently what is referred to in the third fundamental proposition of the *Secret Doctrine*: "The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root" (p. 17).

It is this idea that the alaya or alaya-vijnana is eternal in its essence, while changing in its manifestation, that has caused so much confusion, and so many divergent explanations of it. In order to help trace the Stanzas, we will have to try to sort these out. The Sakya view, as mentioned above, is only one of four or five in Tibet, and as many in China. In the coming days we can get into these.

[David Reigle](#) on February 4, 2011 at 10:56pm

When HPB explains the term alaya that occurs in verse 9 of Stanza 1, she explains it in reference to Yogachara Buddhism (SD 1.48-49). So it must be the term as used there. In Yogachara Buddhism it is always aalaya, with initial long "a", as in the meaning "abode." In the compound, alaya-vijnana, it is the abode or storehouse or basis or substratum or foundation or ground of consciousness (vijnana).

My attention was called to the definitions of alaya found in glossaries available on the web. It seems that many of them define it as the negative "a" plus "laya," so meaning "non-

dissolution" (<http://www.experiencefestival.com/alaya>). These are apparently based on G. de Purucker's 1933 Occult Glossary, written at a time when not much was known about Yogachara Buddhism. Even now this definition is given in the 1996 online edition of this Occult Glossary, with a publisher's note (<http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/ocglos/og-a.htm>). I am thinking of posting here a group of articles on the alaya-vijnana that will make more information about it easily available.

The term sphuratta from the Spanda Karika that you mentioned, Capt. Anand, would indeed be a very likely candidate for the idea of fohat. Although I am not well-versed in Kashmir Shaivism, this word seems to have the same meaning as prabhasvara or "luminosity" or "clear light" in Buddhist texts. The connection with sphuratta should be pursued. Also, a term that seems to correspond to this is found in the Yoga-vasishtha. The term is kacana (kachana), apparently meaning "radiance" or "shining." It is not listed in the standard Sanskrit-English dictionaries by Monier-Williams and Vaman Shivaram Apte. But it is glossed in the Moksopaya-tika as sphurana, virtually the same word as sphuratta of the Spanda Karika.

David Reigle on February 5, 2011 at 10:08pm

One of the first reliable descriptions of the ālaya, which is often used in short for the ālaya-vijñāna, appeared in a 1904 article by D. T. Suzuki, "Philosophy of the Yogācāra," published in Le Museon, n.s., vol. 5, p. 377:

"The Āliya is a magazine, the efficiency of which depends on the habit-energy (hsi ch'i in Chinese) [Sanskrit, vāsanā] of all defiled dharmas, and in which all the seeds are systematically stowed away. In one respect this vijñāna of all seeds is the actual reason whereby the birth of all defiled dharmas becomes possible, but in another respect its own efficiency depends on the habit-energy which is discharged by multitudinous defiled dharmas since beginningless time. In other words, the Āliya is at once the cause and the effect of all possible phenomena in the universe."

David Reigle on February 6, 2011 at 7:29am

The latter portion of your post, Capt. Anand, got cut off. That also happened to a post of mine in the last few days, but I was able to go in with edit and restore the missing portion. Perhaps you can put what you were saying there in a new post .

Thanks for the helpful quote on the primordial light and the phenomena of light as taught in Kashmir Shaivism. As you know, I. K. Taimni thought very highly of the texts of this school, and published his own translations of some of them. Of course, Kashmir Shaivism refutes Buddhism, and Buddhism refutes Shaivism, like almost all of the traditions do that debated with each other. But we are free to take Kashmir Shaivism's teachings on sphuratta/sphurana and compare them with the Buddhist teachings on prabhasvara, and judge them to be identical if we so choose. I might mention that the similar term spharana is also taught in the Buddhist Kalachakra. Sofia Stril-Rever has an excellent article on this, "Vibrating in Splendor," which is her translation of this term. Her article is found in the 2009 book, As Long as Space Endures.

Regarding light, the Mahatma K.H. has defined this in the article, "What is Matter and What

is Force?" (http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v4/y1882_100.htm), as follows (p. 220):

"Light, then, like heat—of which it is the crown—is simply the ghost, the shadow of matter in motion, the boundless, eternal, infinite SPACE, MOTION and DURATION, the trinitarian essence of that which the Deists call God, and we—the One Element; Spirit-matter, or Matter-spirit, whose septenary properties we circumscribe under its triple abstract form in the equilateral triangle. If the mediaeval Theosophists and the modern Occultists, call the Spiritual Soul—the vahan [vehicle] of the seventh, the pure, immaterial spark—"a fire taken from the eternal ocean of light," they also call it in the esoteric language "a pulsation of the Eternal Motion"; and the latter cannot certainly exist outside of matter.

In the last phase given here, "a pulsation of the Eternal Motion," no one can fail to recognize spanda, "pulsation," of the Spanda-Karikas: The Divine Creative Pulsation, as this title is given in Jaideva Singh's translation. This book is available in the Stanzas of Dzyan Research Documents Section here, thanks to Capt. Anand Kumar.

David Reigle on February 8, 2011 at 8:53pm

In reply to your question, Capt. Anand, "Also, would you consider sphuratta/sphurana as the process of germinating (from a seed) as in current popular sanskrit/hindi," I do not know if this meaning is used in the texts of Kashmir Shaivism. The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary by Vaman Shivaram Apte numbers the different meanings of a word (unlike Monier-Williams), and tries to give them in the order of most common to least common. For sphurana, it gives six meanings, as follows.

1. Throbbing, quivering, trembling (in general).
2. Throbbing or quivering of certain parts of the body (indicating good or bad luck).
3. Breaking forth, arising, starting into view.
4. Gleaming, flashing, glittering, shining, twinkling.
5. Flashing on the mind, crossing the memory.
6. Expansion, manifestation.

The meaning that you refer to, the process of germinating (from a seed), appears to be meaning no. 3. In the Sabdakalpadrumah extract that you sent, sphurana is defined as "a little movement" (kincic-calanam), and several verses are quoted showing what is meaning no. 2 in Apte's dictionary. A similar definition is given in the Sabdakalpadrumah for spanda (prasphuranam, isat-kampanam), and another group of verses is quoted also showing what is meaning no. 2 in Apte's dictionary. The Sabdakalpadrumah was the first Sanskrit to Sanskrit dictionary to be compiled and arranged in alphabetical order. It was prepared in the mid-

1800s, before any of the texts of Kashmir Shaivism had been published. These came out in the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies, starting in the second decade of the 1900s. To know the meaning of technical terms such as this, the texts and commentaries of the system must be consulted. This meaning may or may not be found in dictionaries.

The word sphuratta is not found in Apte's dictionary. In Jaideva Singh's translation of the Spanda-Karikas, it is listed in the "Index of Important Sanskrit Words" as occurring on pp. 6 and 46. In the corresponding English it is translated on p. 10 as "quivering light," and on p. 48 as "flashing, throbbing consciousness." He gives definitions of both sphuratta and spanda in his "Glossary of Technical Terms" on p. 200. Jaideva Singh's translation includes the Spanda-nirnaya commentary by Ksemaraja. Mark S. G. Dyczkowski has translated the Spanda-Karikas with four more commentaries, in the 1992 book, The Stanzas on Vibration. He translates sphuratta as "radiance" (p. 15), or "pulsing radiance" (p. 19), explains it in detail on p. 37, and translates it as "radiant pulse" on p. 55.

[David Reigle](#) on February 9, 2011 at 10:18pm

In Mark S. G. Dyczkowski's 1992 book, The Stanzas on Vibration, after telling us that Ksemaraja takes sphuratta or radiance as a synonym of spanda or vibration (p. 15), he gives a little more information that somewhat distinguishes them (p. 19):

"According to Ksemaraja, the Stanzas on Vibration are so called because they teach that one's own true nature is Siva Himself, Who is the pulsing radiance (sphuratta) of consciousness which is the energy of its vibration (spanda-sakti)."

Then he brings in a clear distinction between the two from the Pratyabhijna school (p. 37):

"The Pratyabhijna theory of perception bridges the seeming gap between the concepts of Spanda as the movement of absolute consciousness and sphuratta as its luminosity."

This may relate to and help explain the subtle distinctions involving fohat in the Stanzas.

[David Reigle](#) on February 10, 2011 at 8:15pm

We are pursuing two of the biggest questions at the same time, in relation to tracing the Stanzas of Dzryan: 1. Exactly what is fohat? 2. In exactly what sense is ālaya used in the Stanzas? On the first one, Capt. Anand has raised some excellent points with the material from Kashmir Shaivism that he has brought in. More on that shortly in another post. Here I want to follow up with some more material on the ālaya question. This is not just a stray word that happens to be found in verse 9 of Stanza 1, but it also apparently represents the third fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine, judging from HPB using the same phrases when explaining both. The question of the exact sense in which ālaya (or ālaya-vijñāna) is used is not only a question for us, it has been a big question in Buddhist studies, too. To try to trace ālaya as used in the Stanzas to a specific school or specific texts, we will have to sort out how the various schools understood the difference between the ālaya and the ālaya-vijñāna, and also how the ālaya-vijñāna is to be understood.

The paragraph from the 1904 article on the "Philosophy of the Yogācāra" by D. T. Suzuki,

quoted here earlier (Feb. 5), concluded by saying:

"In other words, the Āliya is at once the cause and the effect of all possible phenomena in the universe."

This follows the teachings of the Hosso school of Suzuki's native Japan, which in turn follows the teachings of the Fa-hsiang school of China. The Hosso school remains in existence even today, while the Fa-hsiang school was swallowed up by the Chan and Hua-yen schools in China more than a thousand years ago. So the Hosso school is the last remaining school of specifically Yogācāra Buddhism in existence. It is numerically very small. Not until 2009 was a book published in English giving us the direct teachings of this still living school; that is, showing us how the ālaya-vijñāna is understood there today. It is titled, *Living Yogācāra: An Introduction to Consciousness-Only Buddhism*, by Tagawa Shun'ei, who is the abbot of this school's central Kofukuji temple. The Yogācāra teachings themselves, however, did not disappear elsewhere, but were incorporated in other Buddhist schools such as the Chan or Zen school.

The Yogācāra teachings originated in sutras taught by the Buddha such as the Samdhi-nirmocana-sutra. They were then systematized and expanded in the treatises of Maitreya, Asanga, and Vasubandhu. The great Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Hsuan-tsang (Xuanzang) came to India in the early 600s C.E. in search of these teachings, and brought them back to China. There they became the Fa-hsiang school, and were imported to Japan as the Hosso school. So what Suzuki reported in the sentence quoted above is the specific understanding of the ālaya, which is here short for the ālaya-vijñāna, in that school. This understanding goes with the idea that everything, "all possible phenomena in the universe," are consciousness only. Everything is made of consciousness. This is also called "mind-only," in the same meaning. This is how the Yogācāra teachings have traditionally been understood. Today, a number of scholars have proposed that this is a misunderstanding; that the Yogācāra sources were not putting forth an ontological teaching to explain what everything in the universe is, but rather were only putting forth an explanation of how we perceive things, how perception occurs.

No one can be satisfied by only hearing and accepting one side of this complex issue. So I have gathered the articles specifically on the ālaya-vijñāna that are scattered through often inaccessible academic journals and publications, and these are being posted here in the Stanzas of Dzryan Research Documents. This will make it easily possible for anyone to see for themselves the issues involved. We can see in a moment that the tiny amount of material available to HPB in the late nineteenth century, to annotate ālaya in the Stanzas, was only the tip of the iceberg, so to speak, and a somewhat soiled and therefore distorted tip at that. A listing of the articles posted will be given separately.

[David Reigle](#) on February 10, 2011 at 8:23pm

As mentioned earlier, French language scholarship dominated studies of Mahāyāna Buddhism for much of the twentieth century. Since we are fortunate to have here at least two native French speakers, I have put the French language articles together in one file. Louis de la Vallee Poussin and his pupil Etienne Lamotte, writing in French, were the acknowledged masters of Mahāyāna Buddhist scholarship in their time, and their work remains standard sources today. The three articles in this file are:

Masson-Oursel, Paul. "Tathāgatagarbha et Ālayavijñāna." *Journal Asiatique*, vol. 210, 1927, pp. 295-302.

La Vallee Poussin, L[ouis] de. "Note sur l'Ālayavijñāna." *Melanges chinois et bouddhiques*, vol. 3, 1934-1935, pp. 145-168.

Lamotte, Etienne. "L'Ālayavijñāna (Le Receptacle) dans le Mahāyānasamgraha (Chapitre II)." *Melanges chinois et bouddhiques*, vol. 3, 1934-1935, pp. 169-255.

Following this here in the next file, and coming later in time, are twelve English language articles on the ālaya-vijñāna. These are as follows, listed by date of publication:

Weinstein, Stanley. "The Ālaya-vijñāna in Early Yogacara Buddhism—A Comparison of Its Meaning in the Samdhinirmocana-sutra and the Vijñapti-mātratā-siddhi of Dharmapāla—," *Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan*, no. 3, 1958, pp. 46-58.

Weinstein, Stanley. "The Concept of Ālaya-vijñāna in Pre-T'ang Chinese Buddhism." In *Essays on the History of Buddhist Thought Presented to Professor Reimon Yuki*, pp. 33-50. Tokyo: Daizo Shuppan Co., 1964.

Rahula, Walpola. "Ālayavijñāna (Store-Consciousness): Original Conception found in Theravāda Pāli Canon." *Maha Bodhi*, vol. 72, no. 5, May 1964, pp. 130-132. (This was reprinted in his book, *Zen and the Taming of the Bull; Towards the Definition of Buddhist Thought*. London: Gordon Fraser, 1978, pp. 97-99.)

Sastri, N. A[iyaswami]. "Store-Consciousness (Alaya-Vijnana): A Grand Concept of the Yogacara Buddhists." *Bulletin of Tibetology*, vol. 9, no. 1, Feb. 1972, pp. 5-16.

McDermott, A. Charlene S. "Asanga's Defense of Ālayavijñāna; Of Catless Grins and Sundry Related Matters," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 2, no. 2, Aug. 1973, pp. 167-174.

Tokiwa, Gishin. "The Ālayavijñāna of the Sraddhotpada," *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, vol. 23, no. 1, Dec. 1974, pp. 480-475.

Osaki, Akiko. "What Is Meant by Destroying the Ālayavijñāna?," *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, vol. 26, no. 2, Mar. 1978, pp. 1069-1064.

Matilal, Bimal Krishna. "Ālayavijñāna, Transmigration and Absolution." *Journal of Oriental Research (Madras)*, vols. 40-41, 1970-1972 (published 1981), pp. 151-165.

Osaki, Akiko. "Jung's Collective Unconsciousness and the Ālayavijñāna," *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, vol. 35, no. 1, Dec. 1986, pp. 456-451.

TAKashaki, Jikido. "On upādāna (II); Ālayavijñāna and its Two Kinds of upādāna," in *Studies on Buddhism in Honour of Professor A.K. Warder*, ed. N.K. Wagle and F. Watanabe. Toronto:

University of Toronto, Centre for South Asian Studies, 1993; South Asian Studies Papers, no. 5, pp. 149-159.

Franco, Eli. "Ālayavijñāna and Klistamanas in the Pramānavārttika?," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*, vol. 38, 1994, pp. 367-378.

Jiang, Tao. "Storehouse Consciousness and the Unconscious: A Comparative Study of Xuan Zang and Freud on the Subliminal Mind," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 72, no. 1, Mar. 2004, pp. 119-139.

Because of their length, two articles have been put in a separate file. They are:

Jiang, Tao. "Ālayavijñāna and the Problematic of Continuity in the Cheng Weishi Lun," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 33, no. 3, June 2005, pp. 243-284.

Waldron, William S. "How Innovative Is the Ālayavijñāna?: The ālayavijñāna in the context of canonical and Abhidharma vijñāna theory," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 22, no. 3, Sep. 1994, pp. 199-258; vol. 23, no. 1, Mar. 1995, pp. 9-51.

Another article has been put in a separate file for ease of accessibility. It is the excellent and comprehensive entry on the ālaya-vijñāna by Seibun Fukaura in the *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*:

Fukaura, Seibun. "Ālaya-vijñāna." In *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, ed. G. P. Malalasekera, vol. 1, fasc. 3, pp. 382-388. [Colombo:] Government of Ceylon, 1964.

An important article written in German and published in 1951 has just been published in English translation. It compares the ālaya-vijñāna with the amala-vijñāna. The amala-vijñāna corresponds to the ālaya per se as taught in some of the Tibetan schools. This article thus addresses the problem of these two contrasting ideas. Both the German original and the 2010 English translation have been put in another file:

Frauwallner, Erich. "Amalavijnānam und Ālayavijnānam; Ein Beitrag zur Erkenntnislehre des Buddhismus." In *Beiträge zur indischen Philologie und Altertumskunde*, pp. 148-159. *Alt- und Neu-Indische Studien*, 7. Hamburg: Cram, De Gruyter & Co., 1951.

Articles on the ālaya-vijñāna pertaining to the Tibetan traditions will be posted later.

Besides the above-listed articles, there are a few books on the ālaya-vijñāna. These are:

Schmithausen, Lambert. *Ālaya-vijnāna: On the Origin and the Early Development of a Central Concept of Yogacara Philosophy*, 2 vols. *Studia Philologica Buddhica, Monograph Series*, IV. Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1987.

Sparham, Gareth, trans., with Shotaro Iida. *Ocean of Eloquence: Tsong kha pa's Commentary on the Yogacara Doctrine of Mind*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Waldron, William S. *The Buddhist Unconscious: The ālaya-vijñāna in the context of Indian Buddhist thought*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.

Jiang, Tao. *Contexts And Dialogue: Yogacara Buddhism and Modern Psychology on the Subliminal Mind*. Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy, Monograph no. 21. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.

[David Reigle](#) on February 11, 2011 at 10:36pm

You have raised some excellent points, Capt. Anand. In the absence of any text in which the word fohat is found, we are obliged to search for the idea. We have been considering fohat in relation to ideas of primordial light or radiance. In trying to trace fohat, we have considered T. Subba Row's "light of the logos" or daivi-prakriti, daivi-prakriti as described in the Pranava-vada, and prabhasvara or luminosity or clear light as found in the Buddhist tantras. We have briefly glanced at kachana or shining or radiance as found in the Yoga-vasishtha, and are just starting to look at sphuratta, sphurana, and other terms found in the texts of Kashmir Shaivism that Paul Eduardo Muller-Ortega puts together under the general term, primordial light (Capt. Anand Kumar's post of Feb. 5).

At this point, we must proceed carefully, for it seems that fohat is not necessarily this primordial light itself, but a differentiation of it. Here are two quotations from Jacques' compilation on fohat:

"In its Unity, primordial light is the seventh, or highest, principle, Daivi-prakriti, the light of the unmanifested Logos. But in its differentiation it becomes Fohat, or the 'Seven Sons.'" (SD 1.216)

"Daivi-prakriti (Sk.). Primordial, homogeneous light, called by some Indian Occultists 'the Light of the Logos' (see Notes on the Bhagavat Gita, by T. Subba Row, B.A., L.L.B.); when differentiated this light becomes FOHAT." (The Theosophical Glossary)

So as you say, there is the question of whether we can fit fohat into this. As we learn more about these various terms and ideas, we can see which one, if any, makes the best fit. In the meantime, the possible derivation, Sphuratta > Phuratta > Phu-at > FOHAT, is as good as any that have been suggested. All we would need is the missing link that makes the intervening connection between sphuratta and fohat.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on February 13, 2011 at 11:52am

1) David, thank you for all this material on Alaya-vijnana. We may need many more lives to dig into, but we will give a try...

2) **Fohat and Modern Science**

Capt. Anand said : " Since, I also believe that FOHAT is strongly linked to Laya (as different

from Aalaya) from Physics point of view, I am trying to pursue that line too".

This, together with one quote from a book I just read (there are no coincidences), from R.A Schwaller de Lubicz - "Le Miracle Egyptien - 1963 ; ISBN 978-2-0812-4551-8 - have ring a bell I had long thought about, which may be worth sharing :

R.A. says (p. 42) : "*La vraie source de vie est le vide matériel absolu, l'Energie pure* - The true source of life is the absolute material void, the pure Energy."

Current fundamental Physics Science paradigm about matter is based on Quantum void which, according to the today-established Standard Model, must contain an enormous level of non-manifested energy. From that "quantum foam", there is a permanent movement of creation and annihilation of matter and anti-matter, creating what is called the polarization of the void which was identified in the 1948 (Casimir effect) and can be measured scientifically.

Anti-matter was theorized in 1928 by PA. Dirac, and the first anti-particle (positive electron) was discovered in 1932.

When a particle collide with a anti-particle, they just vanished or transformed into pure energy.

The material universe is supposed to have been created (scientifically) through this matter-antimatter continuous movement, biased by what is called the symmetry breaking which , nobody knows why yet, resulted in a majority of matter particles remaining after the initial Big Bang.

Of course, this is awfully complex to analyse and understand in details, modern physics being now almost more 'esoteric' than some traditions. But it is not necessary for what

From there, we may remember one of the comments related to Fohat H.P.H. made in the S.D. :

S.D. Volume 1 Commentary (p.145)

(b) Bear in mind that Fohat, the constructive Force of Cosmic Electricity, is said, metaphorically, to have sprung like Rudra from Brahma "from the brain of the Father and the bosom of the Mother," and then to have metamorphosed himself into a male and a female, i.e., polarity, into positive and negative electricity. He has seven sons who are his brothers; and **Fohat is forced to be born time after time whenever any two of his son-brothers indulge in too close contact** -- whether an embrace or a fight.

Could it be similar to the matter anti-matter behavior which, when having a too close contact are vanishing (transforming) into pure energy ?

Now, back to R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz who wrote on p. 59 :

" *Rappelons qu'à Héliopolis est révélée la mystérieuse divine action de la scission de l'unité en NOUN (milieu assimilé à l'Océan Primordial) qui se coagule en première terre, emprisonnant le FEU invisible de TOUM.*" - Remember that in Heliopolis was revealed the mysterious divine action of breaking apart the unity of NOUN (primordial Ocean) which coagulate in the primary earth, confining the inv...

[David Reigle](#) on February 13, 2011 at 9:30pm

A quick note on laya as quoted by Capt. Anand from one of the shorter Upanishads. This sounds exactly like laya as used in Buddhist texts on meditation. It is there given in a contrasting pair with auddhatya, and this pair is regarded as the third of the five faults to guard against during meditation. Laya and auddhatya are often translated as laxity and excitement. Laya or laxity or slackness, and auddhatya or excitement or incitement of the senses, is when you cannot keep your focus on the meditative object, for opposite reasons. So it is a specialized use of the word laya in relation to meditation, and it does not here mean dissolution, as it does in cosmogonic texts such as the Puranas. But of course the idea is similar.

David Reigle on February 14, 2011 at 3:19pm

On daivi-prakriti versus devi-prakriti, devi is a noun, and daivi is an adjective. From a noun such as devi, the adjective is made by strengthening the first vowel, as we have here in daivi. The word devi is the feminine form of deva. Both come from the root div, meaning to shine. So the devas are the shining ones, usually called the gods. If devi is a shining one, a god, a divine being, daivi simply means divine, or more etymologically, shining or radiant.

David Reigle on February 14, 2011 at 3:27pm

Whenever a particular system of thought or worldview is being investigated, it is necessary to ascertain how it defines and uses its technical terms. The esoteric system behind the Book of Dzyan, which includes the technical term "fohat," is no exception. This system apparently uses the terms "matter" and "substance" quite differently than in other systems. The simplest statement that we have been given of the central tenet of this system is "matter in motion." But this "matter" must be clearly distinguished from matter as understood in modern science, where matter means only physical matter. Ultimately, this "matter" must even be clearly distinguished from matter (prakriti) as used in metaphysical systems such as Advaita Vedanta, where matter almost invariably refers to differentiated matter, matter in manifestation, at however subtle a level, and although quite invisible to the senses.

In the "Cosmological Notes" (<http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/hpb-aps/bl-ap2.htm>), where the esoteric system was first outlined, the simple statement of its basic tenet was first given, "matter in motion," and fohat was first introduced, being described as "Kosmic energy." Here are the relevant sentences:

"(4) Is there any difference between what produces primal causes and their ultimate effects? None. Everything in the occult universe, which embraces all the primal causes, is based upon two principles — Kosmic energy (Fohat or breath of wisdom), and Kosmic ideation. Thyan Kam (= the knowledge of bringing about) giving the impulse to Kosmic energy in the right direction.

In Fohat all that exists on earth as ultimates exists as primates.

(5) What is the one eternal thing in the universe independent of every other thing? Space.

(6) What things are co-existent with space?

(i) Duration.

(ii) Matter.

(iii) Motion, for this is the imperishable life (conscious or unconscious as the case may be) of

matter, even during the pralaya, or night of mind.

When Chyang or omniscience, and Chyang-mi-shi-khon — ignorance, both sleep, this latent unconscious life still maintains the matter it animates in sleepless unceasing motion.

(iv) The Akasha (Bar-nang) or Kosmic atmosphere, or Astral light, or celestial ether, which whether in its latent or active condition, surrounds and interpenetrates all matter in motion of which it is at once a result and the medium by which the Kosmic energy acts on its source.

(v) The Purush or 7th principle of the universe."

We see in no. iii that motion is described as "the imperishable life (conscious or unconscious as the case may be) of matter, even during pralaya, or night of mind," because even during pralaya, "this latent unconscious life still maintains the matter it animates in sleepless unceasing motion." This is obviously the same idea, given in 1881, as is found in verse 8 of Stanza 1, which would be given out seven years later in *The Secret Doctrine* (vol. 1, pp. 27, 46):

"8. Alone, the one form of existence stretched boundless, infinite, causeless, in dreamless sleep; and life pulsated unconscious in universal space, throughout that All-Presence which is sensed by the 'Opened Eye' of the Dangma."

We here see graphically depicted the simple idea of matter in motion, which holds true even during pralaya, the dissolution of the universe. This means that "matter" as defined in this system is an ultimate reality that is eternal and indestructible. It is quite different from the physical matter of modern science, and is even different from the differentiated or manifested subtle matter (prakriti) taught in metaphysical systems such as Advaita Vedanta. So K.H. can say in the famous Mahatma letter #10 that "we believe in matter alone," something that would not be said in Advaita Vedanta as exoterically known. The esoteric system of the Mahatmas does not accept "the idea of pure spirit as a Being or an Existence."

"In other words we believe in MATTER alone, in matter as visible nature and matter in its invisibility as the invisible omnipresent omnipotent Proteus with its unceasing motion which is its life, and which nature draws from herself since she is the great whole outside of which nothing can exist. . . .

The existence of matter then is a fact; the existence of motion is another fact, their self existence and eternity or indestructibility is a third fact. And the idea of pure spirit as a Being or an Existence—give it whatever name you will—is a chimera, a gigantic absurdity."

(The Mahatma Letters, letter #10, 3rd ed., pp. 53-56)

Why doesn't the esoteric system of the Mahatmas accept "the idea of pure spirit as a Being or an Existence"? Because of their central premise of "matter in motion." There can be no motion without something to move, and this something, for lack of a better term, was called "matter" or "substance."

"The conception of matter and spirit as entirely distinct, and both eternal could certainly never have entered my head, however little I may know of them, for it is one of the elementary and fundamental doctrines of Occultism that the two are one, and are distinct but in their respective manifestations, and only in the limited perceptions of the world of senses. . . . matter per se is indestructible, and as I maintain coeval with spirit—that spirit which we know and can conceive of. . . . Motion is eternal because spirit is eternal. But no modes of motion

can ever be conceived unless they be in connection with matter."
(The Mahatma Letters, letter #22, 3rd ed., pp. 138-139)

With this background, we have a better chance of understanding, and possibly tracing, fohat. For fohat, although being described as "energy," is also described as a substance, as this term is understood in this system, an intelligent substance, and thus is also described as an intelligence, an entity. In Book I, Part III, of The Secret Doctrine, section XIV is titled "FORCES — MODES OF MOTION OR INTELLIGENCES?" There we read (vol. 1, pp. 601-602):

"This is, then, the last word of physical science up to the present year, 1888. Mechanical laws will never be able to prove the homogeneity of primeval matter, except inferentially and as a desperate necessity, when there will remain no other issue — as in the case of Ether. Modern Science is secure only in its own domain and region; within the physical boundaries of our solar system, beyond which everything, every particle of matter, is different from the matter it knows: which matter exists in states of which Science can form no idea. That matter, which is truly homogeneous, is beyond human perceptions, if perception is tied down merely to the five senses. We feel its effects through those intelligence which are the results of its primeval differentiation, whom we name Dhyan-Chohans; called in the Hermetic works the "Seven Governors," those to whom Pymander, the "Thought Divine," refers as the Building Powers, and whom Asklepios calls the "Supernal Gods." That matter — the real primordial substance, the noumenon of all the "matter" we know of, — even some of the astronomers have been led to believe in, and to despair of the possibility of ever accounting for rotation, gravitation, and the origin of any mechanical physical laws — unless these Intelligences be admitted by Science. In the above-quoted work upon astronomy, by Wolf,* the author endorses fully the theory of Kant, and the latter, if not in its general aspect, at any rate in some of its features, reminds one strongly of certain esoteric teachings. Here we have the world's system reborn from its ashes, through a nebula; the emanation from the bodies, dead and dissolved in Space — resultant of the incandescence of the solar centre reanimated by the combustible matter of the planets. In this theory, generated and developed in the brain of a young man hardly twenty-five years of age, who had never left his native place, a small town of Northern Prussia (Konigsberg) one can hardly fail to recognise either an inspiring external power, or the reincarnation which the Occultists see in it. It fills a gap which Newton, with all his genius, failed to bridge. And surely it is our primeval matter, Akasha, that Kant had in view, when proposing to solve Newton's difficulty and his failure to explain, by the natural forces, the primitive impulse imparted to the planets, by the postulation of a universally pervading primordial substance. For, as he remarks in chapter viii., if it is once admitted that the perfect harmony of the stars and planets and the coincidence of their orbital planes prove the existence of a natural cause, which would thus be the primal cause, "that cause cannot really be the matter which fills to-day the heavenly spaces." It must be that which filled space — was space — originally, whose motion in differentiated matter was the origin of the actual movements of the sidereal bodies; and which, "in condensing itself in those very bodies, thus abandoned the space that is found void to-day." In other words, it is that same matter of which are now composed the planets, comets, and the Sun himself, which, having in the origin formed itself into those bodies, has preserved its inherent quality of motion; which quality, now centred in their nuclei, directs all motion. A very slight alteration of words is needed, and a few additions, to make of this our Esoteric Doctrine.

"The latter teaches that it is this original, primordial *prima materia*, divine and intelligent, the direct emanation of the Universal Mind — the *daivi-prakriti* (the divine light emanating from the Logos*) — which formed the nuclei of all the "self-moving" orbs in Kosmos. It is the informing, ever-present moving-power and life-principle, the vital soul of the suns, moons, planets, and even of our Earth. The former latent: the last one active — the invisible Ruler and guide of the gross body attached to, and connected with, its Soul, which is the spiritual emanation, after all, of these respective planetary Spirits."

* Which "Light" we call Fohat.

These very different definitions of terms will have to be kept carefully in mind in order to correlate fohat with something from a system that does not recognize an ultimate substance endowed with life or motion or intelligence. For the esoteric system regards such things as light and heat as nothing other than the results of matter in motion, living matter whose life is its motion. As HPB says in *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, pp. 514-515:

"The Occultists are taken to task for calling the Cause of light, heat, sound, cohesion, magnetism, etc., etc., a substance. (The "substance" of the Occultist, however, is to the most refined substance of the physicist, what radiant matter is to the leather of the Chemist's boots.) . . . In no way — as stated more than once before now — do the Occultists dispute the explanations of Science, as affording a solution of the immediate objective agencies at work. Science only errs in believing that, because it has detected in vibratory waves the proximate cause of these phenomena, it has, therefore, revealed all that lies beyond the threshold of Sense. It merely traces the sequence of phenomena on a plane of effects, illusory projections from the region that Occultism has long since penetrated. And the latter maintains that those etheric tremors, are not, as asserted by Science, set up by the vibrations of the molecules of known bodies — the matter of our terrestrial objective consciousness, — but that we must seek for the ultimate causes of light, heat, etc., etc., in MATTER existing in super-sensuous states — states, however, as fully objective to the spiritual eye of man, as a horse or a tree is to the ordinary mortal. Light and heat are the ghost or shadow of matter in motion."

HPB is here referring to what K.H. said in "What is Matter and What is Force?" (H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 4, p. 220, http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v4/y1882_100.htm):

"Light, then, like heat—of which it is the crown—is simply the ghost, the shadow of matter in motion, the boundless, eternal, infinite SPACE, MOTION and DURATION, the trinitarian essence of that which the Deists call God, and we—the One Element; Spirit-matter, or Matter-spirit, whose septenary properties we circumscribe under its triple abstract form in the equilateral triangle."

It is now easy to see how the simple phrase, "matter in motion," expresses the two aspects under which we conceive the first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine (SD 1.14), absolute abstract space, and absolute abstract motion.

David Reigle on February 17, 2011 at 11:31pm

I quite agree with you, Capt. Anand, that the motion referred to in the context of the Secret Doctrine and its first fundamental proposition actually means wave-motion and not linear or

circular or spiral motion, which would all be derivatives of wave-motion. This would be so since pulsation, or wave-motion, is referred to as occurring even during pralaya or the dissolution of the universe. Then, when manifestation occurs, fohat becomes active. The motion of fohat is described as circular or rotary, as in a whirlwind. This motion must necessarily derive from the never-ceasing wave-motion which is the life of eternal substance.

Regarding sentience, this English word is used in two senses, of having life, or of having consciousness (or both). The Secret Doctrine teaches that eternal and indestructible substance always has life, which is its motion, even during pralaya. But it does not then have consciousness, as we know it (e.g., Stanza 1.8: "life pulsed unconscious"). Consciousness is then only latent. Differentiated or manifested matter, too, always has life, as HPB stressed to Robert Bowen.

"The Second idea to hold fast to is that THERE IS NO DEAD MATTER. Every last atom is alive. It cannot be otherwise since every atom is itself fundamentally Absolute Being. Therefore there is no such thing as "spaces" of Ether, or Akasha, or call it what you like, in which angels and elementals disport themselves like trout in water. That's the common idea. The true idea shows every atom of substance no matter of what plane to be in itself a LIFE." ("The 'Secret Doctrine' and Its Study," notes of personal teachings given by H. P. Blavatsky to Robert Bowen, cited from An Invitation to The Secret Doctrine, p. 4.)

Fohat is apparently a type of subtle manifested matter or intelligent substance, that appears to us as energy. As quoted last time, the light that is called fohat is at the same time an original, primordial prima materia:

"The latter [our Esoteric Doctrine] teaches that it is this original, primordial prima materia, divine and intelligent, the direct emanation of the Universal Mind — the daivi-prakriti (the divine light emanating from the Logos*) — which formed the nuclei of all the "self-moving" orbs in Kosmos. It is the informing, ever-present moving-power and life-principle, the vital soul of the suns, moons, planets, and even of our Earth."

* Which "Light" we call Fohat.

(The Secret Doctrine, vol. 1, p. 602)

We do not usually think of electricity as matter, or energy as matter, or light as matter, or life-principle as matter, or vital soul as matter, or spark of life as matter, etc., but according to K.H. in the article, "What is Matter and What is Force?," they are so considered:

"How do they know that those very bodies now called "elementary atoms" are not in their turn compound bodies or molecules, which, when analysed with still greater minuteness, may show containing in themselves the real, primordial, elementary globules, the gross encasement of the still finer atom-spark—the spark of LIFE, the source of Electricity—MATTER still!"

(http://www.katinkahesselink.net/blavatsky/articles/v4/y1882_100.htm)

Of course, we will not find religions or philosophies teaching that their principle of light is a living substance any more than we will find science teaching that electricity is matter. This, by itself, need not stop us from identifying fohat among what they teach. How it is described

in the esoteric teachings apparently pertains to its teaching of "matter in motion" as the sole reality, from which motion or light can never be separated. More on this shortly.

[David Reigle](#) on February 18, 2011 at 10:08am

Continuing from last evening:

As Capt. Anand well said, the science of 2011 is not the science of 1888. The approximately one-third of The Secret Doctrine that contrasted its teachings with science is now almost entirely outdated. Even the science of fifty years ago is not the science of today, but is now outdated. The rapidly changing field of science makes comparisons with its theories very precarious. Will today's science, too, be outdated fifty years from now? Since modern science provides the worldview of the majority of people on earth today, comparisons with it are very necessary and quite useful, just as they were in 1888. We simply need to be aware of the tentative nature of its theories, and therefore of the uncertain value of either disagreement or agreement between these and the teachings of the Secret Doctrine. The Stanzas of Dzyan are supposed to expound a very ancient doctrine that has been tested and verified by countless generations of seers, who passed their lives in learning, not teaching. HPB writes in the "Summing Up" of The Secret Doctrine (vol. 1, pp. 272-273):

"(1.) The Secret Doctrine is the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages, and its cosmogony alone is the most stupendous and elaborate system: e.g., even in the exotericism of the Puranas. But such is the mysterious power of Occult symbolism, that the facts which have actually occupied countless generations of initiated seers and prophets to marshal, to set down and explain, in the bewildering series of evolutionary progress, are all recorded on a few pages of geometrical signs and glyphs. The flashing gaze of those seers has penetrated into the very kernel of matter, and recorded the soul of things there, where an ordinary profane, however learned, would have perceived but the external work of form. But modern science believes not in the "soul of things," and hence will reject the whole system of ancient cosmogony. It is useless to say that the system in question is no fancy of one or several isolated individuals. That it is the uninterrupted record covering thousands of generations of Seers whose respective experiences were made to test and to verify the traditions passed orally by one early race to another, of the teachings of higher and exalted beings, who watched over the childhood of Humanity. That for long ages, the "Wise Men" of the Fifth Race, of the stock saved and rescued from the last cataclysm and shifting of continents, had passed their lives in learning, not teaching. How did they do so? It is answered: by checking, testing, and verifying in every department of nature the traditions of old by the independent visions of great adepts; i.e., men who have developed and perfected their physical, mental, psychic, and spiritual organisations to the utmost possible degree. No vision of one adept was accepted till it was checked and confirmed by the visions - so obtained as to stand as independent evidence - of other adepts, and by centuries of experiences."

This hitherto secret doctrine is still mostly esoteric, since the published Stanzas of Dzyan represent only a very small piece of it. If this doctrine fully matched any known system, it would not be an esoteric system. This is what makes it difficult for us to trace it and some of its teachings. If we take its idea of "matter in motion," using for convenience this simple and simplistic phrase without qualification, we do not find this taught anywhere. Everywhere we must read the exoterically known teachings esoterically in order to get this teaching. For example, we must take the Vedantic absolute brahman as a conscious substance, and not just

as pure consciousness like it is normally defined, in order to get this esoteric teaching. Evidence that brahman was so taken in ancient India by early Vedanta teachers such as Bhartr-prapanca and Bhartr-hari is given in an appendix, "Brahman as Substance," pp. 41-50 (<http://www.easterntertradition.org/confusing%20esoteric%20with%20exote...>). Similarly, we must take the Buddhist nirvana as an ultimate substance, and not just as an ultimate state like it is normally understood, in order to get this esoteric teaching. Evidence that it was so taken in ancient India by the once dominant Sarvastivada Buddhists is given in an article, "The Sarvastivada Conception of Nirvana," especially pp. 339, 348 (to be posted in the Stanzas of Dzyan Research Documents shortly). The Sarvastivadins, as noted elsewhere (<http://www.easterntertradition.org/book%20of%20dzyan%20research%20repo...>, p. 6), could be the Buddhist school spoken of by K.H. in connection with the Svabhavikas.

To trace the hitherto secret doctrines of the Stanzas of Dzyan, doctrines that are said to have been tested and verified by countless generations of seers, we must search out these doctrines in now defunct early forms of the existing religions and philosophies. This is because what was once exoteric has now become esoteric. Taking our cues from what HPB and her teachers gave out, and finding these doctrines in ancient sources, provides us with good evidence that we are on the right track.

David Reigle on February 18, 2011 at 10:11pm

Just a very quick note for this evening to say that the first letter of Akasha is the long "a". So it intensifies the meaning of the root "kas" rather than negates it. HPB has some interesting things to say about Akasha.

David Reigle on February 19, 2011 at 10:22pm

In the recently published Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge, published as The Secret Doctrine Commentaries, there is much additional material on fohat. Perhaps someone who has both the book and the time to do so can prepare a compilation of material on fohat from this source. Part of it, of course, will overlap with what Jacques has already compiled from the Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge that were published earlier. Only the additional material would have to be added. On page 432 of this new book, HPB gives us "the real, long translation of the word, Fohat":

"Yes, but it means also the self-moving and that which forces to move; the brightness or the radiancy that moves and moves everything. This is the real, long translation of the word, Fohat:"

If "brightness" or "radiancy" is the real meaning of fohat, then we are on the right track in focusing on words meaning light or shining or luminosity. So the prabhasvara from the Buddhist texts, the sphuratta from the Kashmir Shaiva texts, and the kachana from the Yoga-Vasistha, as we have been discussing, would all be good candidates for matching this idea.

The wave-particle idea of science, and its idea of photons for light, do seem to address very much the same issues as we see with fohat, where it is both an energy and a substance. Very likely the correspondences would also work out for

light in the subtle realms in comparison with visible light. Visible light and fire seem to have provided the most often used examples for analogies to what seers have seen on the higher planes of existence.

[David Reigle](#) on February 20, 2011 at 10:45pm

Good idea, Jacques, to open a new discussion on Theosophy and science. As you say, we have inevitably been getting into areas that today are the domain of science. It will be useful to compare what modern science has now found with the teachings that are supposed to represent an ancient and long-established wisdom tradition.

In trying to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzyan here in this discussion, we have had to trace terms and ideas. This has often involved tracing the doctrines of the Secret Doctrine. Once these doctrines are ascertained as accurately as possible, they can be compared with the findings of modern science. This can be done in the new discussion by those who are familiar with the teachings of modern science. Here, we can continue with trying to trace the Stanzas by way of their doctrines.

A new article has been posted to the Stanzas of Dzyan Research Documents. It is, "The Sarvastivada Conception of Nirvana," by K. Dhammajoti, published in 2002. It shows very clearly that the old and once very widespread but now defunct Buddhist Sarvastivadins held that nirvana, ultimate reality, was a "distinct positive entity (dravyantara)" (p. 339). That is, it was held to be an ultimate substance (dravya). This means that nirvana, according to this school, has an inherent nature or self-nature, svabhava. This article concludes by quoting the Abhidharma-kosa-bhasya on this (p. 348):

"Its self-nature [svabhava] can only be personally realized by the arya."
aryair eva tat-svabhavaḥ pratyatma-vedyaḥ

The idea of an ultimate svabhava, as we know, is found in the Stanzas of Dzyan. But this is entirely refuted by most Tibetan Buddhists, especially by the Gelugpa order. This article underlines this point by saying (p. 336):

"Samghabhadra repeatedly accuses the Sautrantikas of siding with the followers of the 'sky-flower (Akasha-puspa)' doctrine -- apparently referring to the Sunyata-vada prevailing at the time -- in obstinately denying the svabhava of all dharma, including the asamskrta."

The Sunyata-vada, the doctrine of emptiness, is the Madhyamaka doctrine, which is followed in some form by virtually all Tibetan Buddhists. The early Sarvastivada teacher, Samghabhadra, is here saying that this doctrine is wrong to deny the svabhava of all dharmas, including even nirvana, the one dharma that all schools of Buddhism accept as being asamskrta, uncompounded or unconditioned. We see that this early form of Buddhism, the Sarvastivada, like the Stanzas of Dzyan, specifically

teaches that ultimate reality has a svabhava.

[David Reigle](#) on February 24, 2011 at 7:11pm

If ultimate reality is, as declared, beyond the range and reach of thought and speech, then it makes little real difference what we call it or how we describe it. One name or description is as adequate or inadequate as another. We can therefore completely agree with the paragraph that Capt. Anand quoted from B. L. Atreya's work on the Yoga-Vasishtha:

"With regard to the Absolute Reality, the author of the Yoga Vasishtha says that it is the same, 'that is called Sunya by Sunya-vadins, Brahman by Brahma-vids, Purusa by the Samkhya thinkers, Iswara by the followers of the Yoga school, Siva by the Saivas, Time by those who believe Time to be only reality, the Self by those who think Self to be so, Non-self by those who do not believe in the reality of the Self, Madhyama by the Madhyamikas and All by those who have the vision of equality all around' (V,87, 18-20)."

Any particular system would only be using analogies to the highest it knows, in order to describe the indescribable. Each of these analogies would be accepted as agreeing with the system of the Secret Doctrine. They would all be expressions of the Secret Doctrine. We cannot pick any one of these systems and say that THIS one, and not the other ones, is the system of the Secret Doctrine. We can trace tenets of the Secret Doctrine to each of them.

A clear and unmistakable tenet of the Secret Doctrine is the oneness of all, non-duality, the fundamental unity of all existence, radical unity:

"The radical unity of the ultimate essence of each constituent part of compounds in Nature—from Star to mineral Atom, from the highest Dhyani-Chohan to the smallest infusoria, in the fullest acceptance of the term, and whether applied to the spiritual, intellectual, or physical worlds—this is the one fundamental law in Occult Science." (The Secret Doctrine, vol. 1, p. 120)

"No matter what one may study in the S.D. let the mind hold fast, as the basis of its ideation, to the following ideas:

The FUNDAMENTAL UNITY OF ALL EXISTENCE. This unity is a thing altogether different from the common notion of unity—as when we say that a nation or an army is united; or that this planet is united to that by lines of magnetic force or the like. The teaching is not that. It is that existence is ONE THING, not any collection of things linked together. Fundamentally there is ONE BEING. This BEING has two aspects, positive and negative. The positive is Spirit, or CONSCIOUSNESS. The negative is SUBSTANCE, the subject of consciousness. This Being is the Absolute in its primary manifestation. Being absolute there is nothing outside it. It is ALL-BEING." ("The 'Secret Doctrine' and Its Study," notes of personal teachings given by H. P. Blavatsky to Robert Bowen, cited from An Invitation to The Secret Doctrine, pp. 3-4)

This idea of oneness or non-duality is most clearly put forth, among known systems,

by Advaita Vedanta in the East, and by Plotinus in the West. It is also found in Kashmir Shaivism, which is described as the Advaita or non-dual form of Shaivism. So "the one" is called Brahman in Advaita Vedanta, and is called Shiva in Advaita Shaivism. By definition, as being the sole non-dual reality, this Brahman and this Shiva must be completely identical, being only differing names for the same thing. Yet, adherents of these two systems do not always see it this way.

The same must also be true, by definition, of the consciousness and substance aspects under which we describe "the one" taught in the Secret Doctrine. There is no possibility of "the one" being absolute consciousness without being absolute substance, or of "the one" being absolute substance without being absolute consciousness. We are not speaking of attributes here, but only of aspects by which we try to describe the indescribable "one." If "the one" is really "the one," it is indivisible, and we cannot separate out one aspect of it and regard that aspect as absolute, while regarding the other aspect as somehow less than absolute. As HPB explained to Bowen, continuing immediately after what was quoted above:

"It is indivisible, else it would not be absolute. If a portion could be separated, that remaining could not be absolute, because there would at once arise the question of COMPARISON between it and the separated part. Comparison is incompatible with any idea of absoluteness. Therefore it is clear that this fundamental ONE EXISTENCE, or Absolute Being must be the REALITY in every form there is."

If we use the analogy of a coin to represent "the one," we can symbolize its two aspects as the heads and tails, or front and back, of that coin. Let us say that one side represents, to our minds, consciousness, while the other side represents, to our minds, substance. An entire system can be built around the absolute in its aspect of consciousness. In fact, such systems exist today. But in our analogy, this would only be one side of the coin, quite inseparable from the other side of the one coin.

Once we accept that the one ultimate reality can be symbolized under two aspects, to describe it as substance is no different than to describe it as consciousness. The fact that Brahman has been almost exclusively described as consciousness in Advaita Vedanta in the last 1500 years may be due to a partial loss of its full texts and teachings. Not only do the early Vedanta writers Bhartr-prapanca and Bhartr-hari describe Brahman as substance, as mentioned previously, but this is very clear in the Pranana-vada. The Pranava-vada, lost until about a century ago, quotes the full, original Brahma-sutra on this. See vol. 3, p. 87, of the English translation by Bhagavan Das:

"As the Brahma-Sutra says: The whole world is founded on substance [dravya] and established, maintained, kept going, by the continuous experience of substance (by conscious individuals)."

The whole of my research, looking for these things, indicates very strongly exactly what The Secret Doctrine says. There was a once universal, but now hidden, wisdom tradition. Its existence was made publicly known by the writings of H. P. Blavatsky. Small but important portions of it were given out by her, above all in The Secret

Doctrine. These include the three fundamental propositions of the Secret Doctrine. Also, as a sample of its original texts, Stanzas from the Book of Dzyan on cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis were given in English translation. We have not been able to trace these Stanzas to any known work, because they are not taken from any known work.

On the contrary, many of the known works were apparently derived from the teachings of this hidden wisdom tradition. For this reason, the tenets of the wisdom tradition that have been given out can be traced in the known works. Knowing that its first fundamental proposition can be symbolized as substance and consciousness, we can deduce that a known system teaching only absolute consciousness would be missing a piece of the picture. We can then trace that missing piece; for example, the teaching of Brahman as substance. This provides evidence that the wisdom tradition made known by HPB is real, and really was once universal. Such evidence is why I am convinced that the Stanzas of Dzyan are real, and will be released before too long.

David Reigle on February 26, 2011 at 9:53pm

On the question of time (sorry for the delay in replying to this), the Secret Doctrine seems to regard time as resulting from the sequence of thoughts. When conceptual thought ceases, so does time cease; but duration remains. This duration would be time as a cosmic principle, as depicted in the Atharva-Vedas's two hymns to time (19.53-54), posted here by Capt. Anand Kumar. Besides this pair of hymns, there does not seem to be much more on this in the Hindu tradition. Nothing seems to have there developed from this idea. But in the closely related Zoroastrian tradition, a doctrine of time as an ultimate principle did develop.

This teaching of time as the ultimate cosmic principle is called Zurvanism. Oxford professor Robert Zaehner took a particular interest in it, and tried to reconstruct this long dead system from the surviving texts. As we know, the sacred books of Zoroastrianism, called the Avesta, are closely similar to the Vedas, often sharing even the same terminology. The later Zoroastrian texts were written in Pahlavi, and it is mostly from these texts that Zaehner reconstructed this system. Zaehner wrote a series of articles on Zurvan and Zurvanism, published in the Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London). Then he prepared a large book on the subject, titled: *Zurvan: A Zoroastrian Dilemma*, published in 1955. This is the standard work on the subject today.

Duration as a cosmic principle in Theosophy can be seen, for example, in this quote from Mahatma K.H., which has been quoted here before (I take these from a compilation on the first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine, <http://www.easterntertradition.org/first%20fundamental%20proposition%20...>):

"Light, then, like heat—of which it is the crown—is simply the ghost, the shadow of matter in motion, the boundless, eternal, infinite SPACE, MOTION and DURATION, the trinitarian essence of that which the Deists call God, and we—the One Element; Spirit-matter, or Matter-spirit, whose septenary properties we circumscribe under its

triple abstract form in the equilateral triangle."

("What is Matter and What is Force?" H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 4, p. 220)

How duration relates to time, as these terms are used by HPB, is seen in verse 2 of Stanza 1 of the Book of Dzryan:

"2. Time was not, for it lay asleep in the infinite bosom of duration (a)."

Time, as opposed to duration, is described in The Secret Doctrine when commenting on this line as follows (vol. 1, p. 37):

"(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."

This idea of time is also taught in the Yoga-sutras by Patanjali. Near the very end of this text, when describing a yogi who has completely controlled the modifications (vrtti) of the mind (citta), and thereby achieved liberation, Patanjali speaks of the resulting cessation of time. Here is a paraphrase of verse 33 of chapter 4, from the paraphrased translation given in the book, Light of the Soul, by Alice Bailey:

"4.33. Time, which is the sequence of the modifications of the mind, likewise terminates, giving place to the Eternal Now."

All three of the religio-philosophic traditions of ancient India dealt with the question of time. In Jainism, and in the Vaishesika school of Hinduism, time was regarded as a substance (dravya). We must here remember that substance is defined quite differently in these systems than anything we usually think of as substance. Thus, for example, both of these systems also regard the soul or spirit (atman, jiva) as a substance. Other schools of Hinduism, and all the schools of Buddhism, did not regard time as a substance. The early Sarvastivada (or Vaibhasika) school of Buddhism, which we had occasion to refer to here recently, had a unique teaching of how an existing thing remained existent in the past, the present, and the future. There are two good sourcebooks on these various ideas about time. They are extensive collections of journal articles, compiled by Hari Shankar Prasad. One is titled, Essays on Time in Buddhism, and the other one is titled, Time in Indian Philosophy, covering the other traditions of India.

How the three periods of time are taken in the esoteric philosophy is explained by HPB as follows (SD 1.43):

"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."

She later sums this up in the words of an unknown sage (SD 2.446):

"Such is the course of Nature under the sway of Karmic Law: of the ever present and the ever-becoming Nature. For, in the words of a Sage, known only to a few Occultists: — 'The Present is the Child of the Past; the Future, the begotten of the Present. And yet, O present moment! Knowest thou not that thou hast no parent, nor canst thou have a child; that thou art ever begetting but thyself? Before thou hast even begun to say 'I am the progeny of the departed moment, the child of the past,' thou hast become that past itself. Before thou utterest the last syllable, behold! thou art no more the Present but verily that Future. Thus, are the Past, the Present, and the Future, the ever-living trinity in one — the Mahamaya of the Absolute IS."

[David Reigle](#) on March 2, 2011 at 10:17pm

We continue now with the ālaya or ālaya-vijñāna, the foundation or foundation consciousness, the latter apparently being what HPB refers to in the third fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine as the universal over-soul. Since the word ālaya is used seven times in The Voice of the Silence, we may assume that the word ālaya found in verse 9 of Stanza 1 actually occurs in the Sanskrit version of the Book of Dzryan. If the Theosophical first object of brotherhood is a fact in nature, and not just a noble ideal, it is the ālaya-vijñāna that makes it so.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on March 4, 2011 at 8:56am

As done for Fohat, a compilation of H.P.B writings where the Alaya is discussed is proposed to be uploaded on the Stances of Dzryan documents repository.

The study itself will require thorough analysis of the texts David has already uploaded.

[David Reigle](#) on March 4, 2011 at 10:11pm

We had discussed here the two aspects under which the first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine is symbolized, absolute abstract space and absolute abstract motion, also called undifferentiated substance and unconditioned consciousness. Since this first principle is one without a second, it makes no real difference which aspect we refer to it as. It is not so hard to imagine an ultimate unconditioned consciousness, and some known systems such as Vedanta teach this, but it is harder to imagine an ultimate undifferentiated substance. We are somewhat saddled with the necessity to use a word, "substance," that is hardly adequate. But what other option is there?

The same problem exists for the two well-known Indian systems that posit such

things as soul (jiva) or self (atman) as ultimate substances, or dravyas. These are the Jaina tradition and the Vaisheshika school of the Hindu tradition. Both of these are considered to be pluralistic systems, since they posit more than one ultimate substance. The Jaina tradition recognizes six ultimate dravyas, and the Vaisheshika system recognizes nine ultimate dravyas. In an excellent 1912 book that well explained the Vaisheshika system to English-speaking readers, the author addressed this very problem with the term "substance" (The Hindu Realism: Being an Introduction to the Metaphysics of the Nyaya-Vaisheshika System of Philosophy, by Jagadisha Chandra Chatterji, p. 19):

" . . . that which we call the Universe consists . . . of nine classes of ultimate factors, with their various properties and relations. In Vaisheshika they are called Dravyas. We may translate the term by Realities or Entities, but not by Substances, as has hitherto been done."

The reason he says this is that the latter five of these dravyas are Akasha (space, as an element like ether), kala (time), dik (space, as in the four directions), atman (self), and manas (mind). These are by no means what in normal usage would be called substances. Nonetheless, the great majority of translators up through today still use "substance" for dravya. They do this no doubt because substance is the basic meaning of the word dravya as seen in other contexts. So we are obliged to expand our idea of what substance is, to include the kinds of non-physical things listed above.

In Jainism, too, where six ultimate dravyas are taught, dravya continues to be translated as substance. These include jiva (soul), dharma (medium of motion), adharma (medium of rest), Akasha (space, as an element), pudgala (matter), and kala (time). About the dravyas as constituting all of reality, Jogendra Chandra Shikdar writes in his 1991 book, Theory of Reality in Jaina Philosophy (p. viii):

"In Jaina philosophy Reality has been conceived as a permanent, all-inclusive substance (Dravya) possessing infinite qualities and modes (gunas and paryayas). . . ."

So we are asked to expand our definition of substance, so that we can meaningfully compare and interact with texts and systems that posit an ultimate substance, whether this is called mula-prakriti, dravya, or vastu. When we see how dravya or substance is used in the Hindu Vaisheshika system and in Jainism, the idea of the absolute brahman being called a dravya in early Advaita Vedanta is no longer surprising. When translating such terms and speaking of these things, we have little choice but to use the English word "substance". It is a step up from using the English term "matter," a step that HPB herself took in her later writings. As she writes in The Secret Doctrine:

"The Occultists, who do not say -- if they would express themselves correctly -- that matter, but only the substance or essence of matter, is indestructible and eternal, (i.e., the Root of all, Mulaprakriti) . . ." (SD 1.147)

"In strict accuracy -- to avoid confusion and misconception -- the term "Matter" ought to be applied to the aggregate of objects of possible perception, and "Substance" to noumena; . . ." (SD 1.329)

Thus, the famous statement by K.H. in Mahatma letter #10 would now read: "We believe in substance alone," rather than, "We believe in matter alone." Here, in context, this of course means living substance, substance in motion. So again, the phrase we have discussed here, "matter in motion," would now read, "substance in motion." Even in the early Mahatma letters, substance was sometimes used instead of matter: "The One reality is Mulaprakriti (undifferentiated Substance) -- the 'Rootless root,' the . . . But we have to stop, lest there should remain little to tell for your own intuitions." (letter #59, 3rd ed., p. 341)

[David Reigle](#) on March 5, 2011 at 6:45am

We are pursuing a few lines of inquiry at the same time here, that of ālaya or ālaya-vijñāna, that of fohat, and that of the overall context provided by the fundamental propositions of the Secret Doctrine. The new compilation by Jacques titled "Studies on Alaya," posted to the Stanzas of Dzyan Research Documents, will be as helpful to us as was his compilation on fohat. In this compilation, he has included sources on ālaya that were available in HPB's time.

From what HPB says about ālaya, which we can now easily see in one place in this compilation, it is clear that it has two senses. One is as something eternal and ultimate, and one is as something ever changing and ephemeral. It is this tension that produced the historical disagreements over it from one school of Buddhism to another. These disagreements even led to the triumph of one school over another, and the disappearance of the latter.

In general, we can often distinguish the eternal and ultimate sense as being associated with ālaya per se, the foundation, and the ever changing and ephemeral sense as being associated with ālaya-vijñāna, or foundation consciousness. What complicates this is that these two senses are not always separable, and that just ālaya often means ālaya-vijñāna, and ālaya-vijñāna sometimes means just ālaya. For convenience of discussion, I will try to use the fairly literal "foundation" for ālaya, and "foundation consciousness" for ālaya-vijñāna. But we must keep in mind that HPB often seems to use "universal mind" for ālaya, and such terms as "universal over-soul" for what would be ālaya-vijñāna, when she distinguishes them at all.

The bottom line here according to Yogachara writers, is that without an ālaya-vijñāna or universal foundation consciousness, none of us could communicate with each other. The ālaya-vijñāna is also one of the most widely used explanations for how karma works. It is the repository of karmic seeds that yield future results, and may carry over from life to life. We reward or punish ourselves through the automatic action of the karmic seeds held in the ālaya-vijñāna. There is then no need of a God to watch over us and mete out reward and punishment for our good and bad deeds. The mechanism of karma is explained by way of the ālaya-vijñāna or universal foundation consciousness.

When studying this topic in comparison with the large amount of material that has become available since HPB's time, we may focus on the Encyclopaedia of Buddhism article on ālaya-vijñāna that is posted with the Stanzas of Dzyan Research Documents. The many other articles on ālaya-vijñāna posted there can be considered as further explanations of some aspects of the topic. The Encyclopaedia of Buddhism article, by Seibun Fukaura, is surprisingly comprehensive, far more so than would normally be expected in such a reference work. Once we sort out the material in this article, we will have a clear picture of the issues involved with this teaching. We will then only have to add some material from the more recently available Tibetan sources on it. At that point, we will have a good idea of where there are agreements and where there are disagreements regarding the ālaya and ālaya-vijñāna as taught in the Stanzas of Dzyan. So this will not only help us trace this teaching, it will also help us understand it and how it relates to our lives.

[David Reigle](#) on March 8, 2011 at 10:05pm

HPB speaks of the universal mind or universal oversoul in reference to alaya and to mahat. The term mahat, literally meaning "great," is specific to the Samkhya school of Hinduism, where it refers to the principle of intelligence in the universe, also called buddhi. So this would correspond to the ālaya-vijñāna, the universal foundation consciousness taught in Buddhism. As we have noted, the terms ālaya and ālaya-vijñāna are specific to the Yogachara school of Buddhism. Both of these schools are found in their respective traditions alongside their more widespread counterparts. That is, the Samkhya school in Hinduism was quite outdone by the Vedanta school in India for well over a millennium now; and the Yogachara school in Buddhism was quite outdone by the Madhyamaka school in Tibet throughout its more than a millennium there. This gives us a perspective on these teachings.

The schools that teach ultimate truth per se have dominated over the schools that also teach about the manifestation of universal mind. The Vedanta teaching on the ultimate brahman has proven to be far more appealing than the Samkhya teaching on mahat, which is both the individual and cosmic principle of intelligence. The Madhyamaka teaching on ultimate emptiness has proven to be far more appealing than the Yogachara teaching on the ālaya-vijñāna, which is both the individual and the universal foundation consciousness. Such, at least, has been true for the last millennium.

The Samkhya school is very old, being considered the first darshana or philosophical worldview, to be systematized and put forward. The idea of universal mind or universal oversoul in the Stanzas of Dzyan certainly has an ancient parallel here. The Yogachara texts in which the terms ālaya and ālaya-vijñāna are found seem to have come later. But the term ālaya is given by HPB in her translation of verse 9 of Stanza 1, so this is of particular interest to us to trace. It is first found in Mahayana Buddhist sutras, such as the Samdhi-nirmochana-sutra, that apparently did not show up in India until the early centuries of the first millennium C.E. It was then expounded at more length by the coming Buddha Maitreya in teachings given to Arya Asanga, which in turn were given to Asanga's younger brother Vasubandhu. The writings of

these three, Maitreya, Asanga, and Vasubandhu, form the core texts of the Yogachara school, and are our primary sources on the ālaya-vijñāna. So the ālaya-vijñāna teaching is tied in with the fate of the Yogachara school, a school which was well received in China. This teaching is traced for us in detail by Seibun Fukaura in his ālaya-vijñāna article in the Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, posted here with the Stanzas of Dzryan Research Documents.

[David Reigle](#) on March 9, 2011 at 11:27pm

The Mahāyāna-saṃgraha, or Summary of the Great Vehicle, written by Asaṅga, is usually considered to be the main Indian sourcebook on the ālaya-vijñāna. It begins by speaking of ten distinguishing features of the Mahāyāna or Great Vehicle taught by the Buddha. The first of these is the teaching on the support of the knowable (jñeya āśraya), and this is said to be the ālaya-vijñāna or foundation consciousness. The "knowable" (jñeya) means all existing things, everything that can be known. So the ālaya-vijñāna is described as the support or basis of all that exists in the manifested universe.

Here we have the most central definition of the ālaya-vijñāna. From this, we can easily see what verse 9 of Stanza of Dzryan 1 is referring to. The ālaya (-vijñāna) of the universe, its support, was in paramārtha or pariniṣpanna, a state of perfection or completion that takes it out of manifestation. Hence, its support gone, the universe, too, was out of manifestation. The great wheel of life and death, or birth and rebirth, had come to a halt, but only until the next cycle seven eternities later.

[David Reigle](#) on March 11, 2011 at 9:49pm

Following upon Asaṅga's Mahāyāna-saṃgraha, "Summary of the Great Vehicle," was a book by his younger brother, Vasubandhu, called the Vijñāpti-mātratā-siddhi Triṃśikā, "Thirty Verses Proving Ideation-Only." In teaching that everything is only ideation or consciousness, it naturally spoke of the ālaya-vijñāna or universal foundation consciousness. Asaṅga had described the ālaya-vijñāna as the support of the knowable (jñeya āśraya), giving this as the first of ten special features of the Mahāyāna or Great Vehicle taught by the Buddha. The second and third of these ten he gave as:

2. The defining characteristics of the knowable (jñeya-lakṣaṇa). These are the three natures (svabhāva): the imaginary nature (parikalpita-svabhāva), the dependent nature (paratantra-svabhāva), and the perfected nature (pariniṣpanna-svabhāva).

3. Entry into the defining characteristics of the knowable (jñeya-lakṣaṇa-praveśa). This is Ideation-Only (vijñāpti-mātratā).

This means that when speaking of everything that exists in the manifested universe, the "knowable" (jñeya), we understand that its support (āśraya) is the ālaya-vijñāna or universal foundation consciousness. If we want to determine just what everything knowable is, its defining characteristics, we do this by way of analyzing the knowable into its three natures. How do we do this? We are able to enter into an understanding

of the three natures of all that exists through the teaching of Ideation-Only, through understanding that everything is only ideation or consciousness. So this is the subject of Vasubandhu's book, "Thirty Verses Proving Ideation-Only."

Seibun Fukaura in his ālaya-vijñāna article in the Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, posted here, recounts that about 200 years after Vasubandhu wrote this brief treatise, it was explained in detail by Dharmapāla (p. 383, 2nd column). Shortly thereafter the great Chinese pilgrim Hsuan-tsang came to India and learned Dharmapāla's detailed explanation of Vasubandhu's brief treatise. After Hsuan-tsang returned to China, he taught this there, where it became the basis of the Yogācāra school in China, called the Fa-hsiang school. As Seibun Fukaura says, his own description of the ālaya-vijñāna given in his article is based on the treatise giving Dharmapāla's explanations.

In agreement with Asaṅga's definition of the ālaya-vijñāna as the support of the knowable, Seibun Fukaura reports (p. 383, 2nd column, bottom) that the Chinese Yogācāra or Fa-hsiang school teaches that: "The designation 'basic consciousness' is also given to the ālaya-vijñāna because all phenomena manifest themselves with this consciousness as the basis." This is the central fact about the ālaya-vijñāna that is of relevance for our present Book of Dzhan research.

As far as tracing this teaching, going back to Asaṅga and the beginnings of the Yogācāra school in India takes us only to about the fourth century C.E. The Stanzas of Dzhan are supposed to be much older than that. We do not know if the term ālaya is actually found in the Sanskrit version of the Stanzas, or whether it might be an ancient term found in now lost treatises. The idea of something like an ālaya-vijñāna, however, can be found in the much older Sāṃkhya system, as mahat, the great principle of intelligence in the universe.

[David Reigle](#) on March 14, 2011 at 9:49pm

As we slowly proceed, it is helpful to recap what we have so far seen on the topic of ālaya and ālaya-vijñāna, the foundation and the foundation consciousness.

D. T. Suzuki in 1904 gave us one of the first reliable descriptions of the ālaya, here used in short for the ālaya-vijñāna, concluding:

"In other words, the Ālīya is at once the cause and the effect of all possible phenomena in the universe."

Seibun Fukaura said the same thing in his 1964 Encyclopaedia of Buddhism article:

"The designation 'basic consciousness' is also given to the ālaya-vijñāna because all phenomena manifest themselves with this consciousness as the basis."

This central teaching comes from Asaṅga's first statement in his Mahāyāna-saṃgraha, or Summary of the Great Vehicle:

The support of the knowable (jñeya āśraya) is the first special feature of the

Mahayana, and this is the ālaya-vijñāna or foundation consciousness.

This is in agreement with what HPB says at the end of her entry in the Theosophical Glossary, "it is the basis or root of all things":

"Alaya (Sk.). The Universal Soul (See Secret Doctrine Vol. I. pp. 47 et seq.). The name belongs to the Tibetan system of the contemplative Mahâyâna School. Identical with Âkâsa in its mystic sense, and with Mulâprâkriti, in its essence, as it is the basis or root of all things."

We will not use "Universal Soul" for the ālaya, since HPB adopted this from Emil Schlagintweit's 1863 book, Buddhism in Tibet, at a time when almost nothing reliable about the ālaya(-vijñāna) was known. The vijñāna portion of the term is more accurately translated as "consciousness." No one uses "soul" any more for this Buddhist term.

Now that we have a basic definition of the ālaya(-vijñāna), and this is clear in our minds, we can proceed to the next step. It is the age-old difference of opinion regarding the pure ālaya and the impure ālaya-vijñāna. This question is well put for us in some opening sentences from Erich Frauwallner's article, "Amalavijñāna and ālayavijñāna," which is posted here with the Stanzas documents in the original German and in English translation.

Frauwallner's opening heading is: "The dispute as to whether the amalavijñāna or ālayavijñāna is the foundation of cognition and of the entire phenomenal world." The amala-vijñāna is one school's way of referring to what other schools called the pure ālaya. Frauwallner continues:

"At issue was the question of whether stainless cognition (amalavijñāna) or fundamental cognition (ālayavijñāna) is to be seen as the foundation of cognition and the entire phenomenal world."

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"In reality, this is one of the most fundamental and most difficult questions in the whole of Buddhist and of Indian epistemology."

[David Reigle](#) on March 16, 2011 at 8:05am

The great question is how multiplicity came about. Diversity and change are self-evident facts to all of us creatures of samsara. How does the one become many? This is an age-old problem for any teaching that posits an ultimate "one." Of the various forms of Vedanta that arose explaining the ultimate brahman, the Advaita or non-dual form of Vedanta explained the world of diversity as illusory, a maya. Change and multiplicity can only be our projections superimposed upon the one changeless or immutable non-dual reality. Other forms of Vedanta allowed a certain degree of change within the ultimate brahman. Some said that brahman could change or transform (parinama) into the universe.

So once we say that the ālaya or ālaya-vijñāna, the foundation or foundation consciousness, is

the support or basis of all things, of the entire phenomenal world, we are faced with this question. Is the ālaya/ālaya-vijñāna something that can change, or is it immutable? Did the world arise from something changeless, which we can distinguish as pure ālaya? Or did the world arise from something that changes, which we can distinguish as the ālaya-vijñāna? The various schools of Buddhism answered this differently. Can we trace the teaching on the ālaya found in the Stanzas of Dzian and in The Voice of the Silence to any of these schools?

In the article posted here, "Amalavijñāna and ālayavijñāna," Erich Frauwallner attempts to trace these teachings to their source. He begins with the fact that one school posits a stainless consciousness or amala-vijñāna (like the pure ālaya) as the source of the world, and another school posits an ever-changing consciousness or ālaya-vijñāna as the source of the world. He concludes that the former originates from Maitreyanatha, and that the latter originates from his pupil Asanga. Maitreyanatha is the name used by scholars such as Frauwallner to mean a historical person who was Asanga's teacher, as opposed to the "mythical" future buddha Maitreya accepted by tradition as Asanga's teacher.

We have often referred to the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga here as a book by Maitreya, following the Tibetan ascription of its authorship. In China this book is not ascribed to Maitreya. There is one strand of evidence from Chinese sources ascribing it to Saramati. This authorship is accepted by Frauwallner and many other scholars. Frauwallner says the following. Saramati preceded Maitreyanatha, and Maitreyanatha accepted the teachings found in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga. These teachings posit an ultimate mind (citta) that is pure (suddha) and luminous (prabhasvara). This idea was adopted by Maitreyanatha and put forth in his book, Mahayana-sutralamkara, "Ornament to the Sutras of the Great Vehicle," especially in chapter 9.

It is this idea that appears as the stainless consciousness or amala-vijñāna taught in China by the Indian translator Paramartha, and is found in the early She-lun school that arose based on his teachings. This idea, under other names, was accepted by the Chinese Buddhist schools of Ch'an and Hua-yen, which eventually dominated Buddhism in China. They hold that the world arises from a pure ālaya, or the one mind, and they liken the appearance of the world in it to waves in the ocean.

In contrast to this, the Chinese pilgrim and translator Hsuan-tsang, following the teachings of Dharmapala that he learned while in India, taught that the changing world can only have arisen from a changing ālaya-vijñāna or foundation consciousness. Frauwallner believes that this was an innovation introduced into the teaching of Maitreyanatha by his pupil Asanga, in Asanga's book, the Mahayana-samgraha, "Summary of the Great Vehicle." So Frauwallner traces the teaching of a stainless consciousness (amala-vijñāna) or pure ālaya to Maitreyanatha, and he traces the teaching of a changing foundation consciousness (ālaya-vijñāna) to Asanga.

To do this, we must assume that Asanga misunderstood his teacher Maitreya(natha) to such an extent that he introduced the (mistaken)teaching of a changing ālaya-vijñāna or foundation consciousness. This is an assumption that requires more of a stretch than many are willing to make. If, for example, like Frauwallner we accept the strand of evidence from Chinese tradition that attributes the authorship of the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga to Saramati, and thereby reject the Tibetan tradition's attribution of this text to Maitreya, then why would we reject the widespread Chinese attribution of the authorship of the Yogacara-bhumi to Maitreya, and

thereby accept the Tibetan tradition's attribution of this text to Asanga? For the Yogacara-bhumi does speak of the ālaya-vijñāna, and does describe it as changing and as something that disappears upon enlightenment. I do not think we can regard the teaching of the changing ālaya-vijñāna as a mistaken innovation introduced into the teachings of Maitreya(natha) by Asanga. It seems to me unlikely that Asanga would have radically misunderstood his teacher. For our purposes, I think we will have to try to find a way to harmonize these two teachings or see where they come together, despite the historical fact that they did not do so in the various Buddhist schools.

David Reigle on March 18, 2011 at 8:01pm

The main sourcebook on the ālaya-vijñāna, as we know, is Asaṅga's Mahāyāna-saṃgraha, "Summary of the Great Vehicle." This book was translated into French by Etienne Lamotte and published in 1939. Although this was an early translation by Lamotte, preceded only by the Samdhinirmocana-sutra in 1935, it is still excellent. He was one of the greatest translators of our time. An English translation from Lamotte's French translation was made by Ani Migme, and an electronic version of this can be requested from her. Go to this website, which will give you her direct email address:

<http://www.gampoabbey.org/translations2/index.html>

After giving the ten special features of the Mahāyāna or Great Vehicle, of which the first is the support of the knowable, namely, the ālaya-vijñāna, Asaṅga gives some important explanations about it. The first four paragraphs of this are quoted below from Ani Migme's translation, pp. 32-34:

"1. First of all, (atra tāvat), at the very beginning (prathamata eva: cf. Prastāvanā, § 3), it was said that the store-consciousness (ālayavijñāna) is the support of the knowable (jñeyāśraya). The Bhagavat has spoken of the store-consciousness. Where did he speak of the store-consciousness? - In the Abhidharmasūtra (cf. Triṃśikā, p. 37; Siddhi, p. 169) Bhagavat spoke this verse:

anādikāliko dhātuḥ sarvadharmasamāśrayaḥ /
tasmin sati gatiḥsarvā nirvāṇādhiḡamo 'pi ca //

It is the beginningless element; it is the common support of all dharmas. Given this consciousness, there exists every destiny and entry into nirvāṇa. [133b16]

2. In the same sūtra (cf. Siddhi, p. 172), it is said: "The consciousness which, supplied with all the seeds (sarvabījaka), underlies (ālīyate) every dharma, is called root, fundamental, receptacle store-(ālaya). I have revealed it to the virtuous ones." Such is the āgama. [133b19]

3. Why is this consciousness called store-consciousness (all-basis consciousness)? - It is a store-consciousness because all defiled (sāṃkleśika) dharmas of those who are born (jātimat) are lodged within it (asminn ālīyante) as fruit (phalabhavana), and it itself is lodged in the dharmas as cause (hetubhāvena). Or again (athavā), it is a store-consciousness because beings (sattva) are lodged in it as if in their self (svātman). [133b24]

4. This consciousness is also called appropriating consciousness (ādānavijñāna). On this subject, an āgama, the Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra, V, 7, says:

ādānavijñāna gabhīrasūkṣmo ogho tathā vartati sarvabījo /
bālāna eṣo mayi na prakāśi ma haiva ātmā parikalpayeyuḥ //

Like a violent current, the profound and subtle store-consciousness proceeds with all its seeds. Fearing lest they would imagine it to be a self, I have not revealed it to fools. [133b28]"

David Reigle on March 22, 2011 at 7:49am

Now that there is full access here to the Samkhya-karika and its old commentaries by Gaudapada and others, including English translations, we interrupt the ālaya-vijñāna thread to post the following three quotations relevant to the origins of the Stanzas of Dzryan:

"This first instalment of the esoteric doctrines is based upon Stanzas, which are the records of a people unknown to ethnology; it is claimed that they are written in a tongue absent from the nomenclature of languages and dialects with which philology is acquainted; they are said to emanate from a source (Occultism) repudiated by science; and, finally, they are offered through an agency, incessantly discredited before the world by all those who hate unwelcome truths, or have some special hobby of their own to defend. Therefore, the rejection of these teachings may be expected, and must be accepted beforehand. No one styling himself a "scholar," in whatever department of exact science, will be permitted to regard these teachings seriously. They will be derided and rejected a priori in this century; but only in this one. For in the twentieth century of our era scholars will begin to recognize that the Secret Doctrine has neither been invented nor exaggerated, but, on the contrary, simply outlined; and finally, that its teachings antedate the Vedas."

(The Secret Doctrine, vol. 1, p. xxxvii.)

[Samkhya-karika, verse 70, or 69 in the Chinese translation:] "That excellent and beneficent knowledge has been communicated through compassion by the muni [Kapila], first to Asuri, who, in his turn, communicated it to Pancasikha."

[Suvāna-saptati commentary:] "'That excellent and beneficent knowledge.' That knowledge was established for the first time before the four Vedas had appeared. It is by that knowledge that the four Vedas and all the religious schools have been established; that is why one calls it excellent (agrya)."

(Suvāna-saptati-vyakhya, translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by Paramartha between 546 and 569 C.E., from Chinese into French by J. Takakusu, published in 1904, and from French into English by S. S. Suryanarayanan, published in 1932, p. 111.)

[Referring to the Yukti-dipika commentary on Samkhya-karika, verse 70:] "The Yukti-dipika boldly declares in this connection that the Sastra [Samkhya] was promulgated by Kapila at the beginning (of creation), hence it is not possible like [in] other systems of thought, to enumerate its lineage of teachers even in [a] hundred years."

(Pulinbihari Chakravarti, Origin and Development of the Samkhya System of Thought, 1951, p. 130. He had "discovered" the Yukti-dipika and prepared its first Sanskrit edition, published in 1938.)

David Reigle on March 27, 2011 at 4:09pm

Those who seek to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzryan will find the following parallels with Samkhya to be worthy of attention:

1. As we have seen in the last posting, HPB says that the teachings of the Secret Doctrine "antedate the Vedas," and the old Suvarna-saptati commentary says that the Samkhya teachings were "established for the first time before the four Vedas had appeared." This old commentary was translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by Paramartha in the mid-500s C.E. This statement has dropped out of the other commentaries on the Samkhya-karika that we now have.
2. HPB says that the Secret Doctrine was originally taught by the "Divine Instructors" (SD vol. 2, Stanza XII), highly advanced teachers who came in with this knowledge from previous cycles, at the beginning of our cycle. Gaudapada in his commentary on Samkhya-karika, verse 1, describes the first teacher of Samkhya, Kapila, as one of the seven (mind-born) sons of Brahma. Kapila is there said to have been born with virtue, knowledge, desirelessness, and power already present. He did not have to develop them; he came in with this knowledge.
3. HPB says that the teachings of the Secret Doctrine were given to our humanity at the beginning of the fifth root-race, which would have been about one million years ago (SD vol. 2, pp. 10, 435). The Yukti-dipika commentary on Samkhya-karika, verse 70, says that Samkhya "was promulgated by Kapila at the beginning (of creation), hence it is not possible like [in] other systems of thought, to enumerate its lineage of teachers even in [a] hundred years."
4. HPB says that the teachings of the Secret Doctrine form the basis of all the later religions and philosophies of the world: "the now Secret Wisdom was once the one fountain head, the ever-flowing perennial source, at which were fed all its streamlets -- the later religions of all nations -- from the first down to the last" (SD vol. 1, pp. xlv-xlv). The old Suvarna-saptati commentary says about Samkhya: "It is by that knowledge that the four Vedas and all the religious schools have been established."
5. HPB describes the teachings of the Secret Doctrine as being once universal: "The Secret Doctrine was the universally diffused religion of the ancient and prehistoric world" (SD vol. 1, p. xxxiv). As far as India goes, and leaving aside the Vedic period for which we have too little source material to draw upon, the Samkhya teachings do seem to have been once universal in that spiritual motherland of our planet. That is, Samkhya seems to have been the prevailing worldview in ancient India, judging from its being taken for granted in the great epic, the Mahabharata, and in the Puranas, the eighteen books pertaining to what is "ancient" (purana), giving traditions and history from the traditional standpoint. It is also noteworthy that when the Buddha sought out a spiritual teacher, circa 6th century B.C.E., he is depicted in the Buddha-carita as receiving Samkhya teachings from his teacher Arada Kalama.
6. The Theosophical teachings that HPB brought out are supposed to be only a small portion of a much larger body of teachings that are preserved in secret books. The Samkhya-karika says in its concluding verses that it summarizes in 70 verses what is found in the (now lost) Sasti-tantra (Shashti-tantra), "The Sixty Topics." According to the Suvarna-saptati

commentary on verse 70, the Sasti-tantra consists of 60,000 verses.

Regarding the lost Sasti-tantra, the ancient original Samkhya sourcebook, I will repeat here what I said on another forum. Its name has always been known, but it was seen as being mostly mythical, since nothing more than its name was known. In the first half of the twentieth century, the prevailing scholarly opinion came to see it as merely meaning "sixty topics," rather than a book of that title. Then in the mid-twentieth century a very old Jaina commentary was discovered and published, on the Dvadasara-naya-cakra, that quoted the Sasti-tantra by name. From this, Erich Frauwallner identified other quotations as being from the Sasti-tantra that were found in the Tibetan translation of Jinendrabuddhi's commentary on the Pramana-samuccaya. In 2005, the first chapter of Jinendrabuddhi's commentary that contained these quotations was published in the original Sanskrit, having been recovered from Tibet. So we now have actual quotations from this book, hitherto thought to be only mythical.

Those who want to know the core teachings of the Wisdom Tradition that have been handed down in the lost Sasti-tantra, and then summarized in seventy verses in the Samkhya-karika, may look at the Sanskrit Language Study forum. The first of these verses has now been posted there in Sanskrit and English, and the rest will slowly follow. You do not have to know a word of Sanskrit to follow the English there posted. Or, complete English translations have been posted to the Online Sanskrit Texts Project files.

[David Reigle](#) on March 28, 2011 at 6:41pm

Yes, it is time for a checkpoint.

"How much closer have we come to establishing an origins to the Stanzas of Dzryan within extant literature?"

If anything, I think that we have further established that the Stanzas of Dzryan are not to be found in the extant literature. Since no Stanza has yet been found in the known books, we must conclude that either HPB made them up, or that she actually translated them from a secret source. The best that we have been able to do is to provide circumstantial evidence in favor of the second of these two possibilities.

Regarding method, HPB in writing The Secret Doctrine very fully followed the time-honored Eastern method. She attempted to extensively support the newly brought out teachings with quotations and comparisons to all the known religions and philosophies of the world. The presupposition shared by all three major religious traditions of ancient India, namely, Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism, is that they begin with what we may call revelation. In Hinduism, this revelation is the Vedas, seen by ancient Seers or Rishis. In Jainism, this revelation is the teaching of the omniscient Jina, named Mahavira, and his predecessors, the twenty-three preceding Jinās or Tirthankaras. In Buddhism, this revelation is the teaching of the omniscient Buddha, named Gautama, and his predecessors, the previous Buddhas. Such revelation is regarded as coming from those whose insight far surpasses what normal mortals can reach, so it must be preserved and passed down without alteration. Innovation is actively discouraged. Thus, anything that appears to be new must be shown to not contradict the original revelation, and this is done by supporting it with references from the original revelation showing its agreement.

In the case of the Advaita Vedanta school of Hinduism, for example, its great teacher and founding father is Shankaracharya. In following the revelation of the Vedas, he came and emphasized the teachings of the end portion of the Vedic writings, namely, the Upanishads. Thus, we get the name Vedanta, the "end" (anta) of the Vedas. In so doing, he had to de-emphasize the teachings of the earlier portion of the Vedic writings, which, at least in his time, were understood as teaching rituals and sacrifices. We see him doing this in his debate with the Mimamsa school, which emphasized the former portion of the Vedic writings. Once this was done, and the teachings of the Upanishads were established as the Vedic writings that he followed and taught, he had to show that what he taught was the correct interpretation of the Upanishads. This was in contradistinction to the interpretation given by the other philosophical schools or darshanas. His writings consist of his voluminous commentaries on the Upanishads, on the Brahma-sutras, and on the Bhagavad-gita, and a number of smaller works. His extensive commentaries have always been regarded as his major works. These are filled with quotations from the Vedic writings supporting his interpretations. The teachings he gave were thus primarily scriptural. In fact, he regarded "scripture" as the one means of valid knowledge (pramana), and rejected logic or reasoning as a means to ultimate truth. Naturally, his teachings were based on his direct experience. But without extensive scriptural quotations from the accepted Vedic revelation, his teachings would not have been widely accepted.

HPB, then, followed the same time-honored Eastern method. In bringing out something that appeared to be new, she was obliged to try to show that she had not invented it. She did this by supplying a large number of quotations from and comparisons with all the known religions and philosophies of the world that were in agreement with what she brought out.

So digging out supporting references is what HPB did to make the Stanzas of Dzryan believable. Now, more than a hundred years later, there are a hundred times as many sources available to draw upon for this. In our search for the origins of the Stanzas of Dzryan here, we have brought out only a few highlights from these. If we have not yet traced their origins, we have at least helped to pave the way for their acceptance. To me, the evidence for their existence is convincing. Someone has them. Their release to the public, I suppose, is dependent on the demand for them, and on the reception they will get. As for the rest of the questions on where we are in our journey, I will try to give some reply to them before too long if no one else does. I would be glad to hear from others on these.

[David Reigle](#) on March 31, 2011 at 7:51pm

I have been thinking about the questions that Joe raised about the Stanzas of Dzryan.

a) What do we know for sure?

I am not sure that we know anything for sure about them. Probably what we are closest to being sure of is that they are not to be found among extant writings. If we take into account circumstantial evidence, however, we have some fairly high probabilities.

Across from the opening page of the Stanzas, five of Rig-Vedas 10.129's seven verses are quoted. If both the Stanzas and the Rig-Vedas hymn were shown to someone who had not seen them before, without telling that person where either of them came from, that person

would most likely conclude that the Rig-Vedas hymn borrowed from or was derived from the Stanzas. This is because the Stanzas are more detailed and comprehensive. Based on the likelihood that this simple experiment indicates, we can look at some probabilities.

Let us take, for the moment, the working hypothesis that the Stanzas of Dzian do in fact represent the cosmogony of a once universal but now hidden tradition, a primeval revelation from which the known traditions of the world are derived. The phrase in Stanza 1, verse 5, "Darkness alone filled the boundless all," would then have been the source for Rig-Vedas 10.129, verse 3, "Darkness there was, and all at first was veiled in gloom profound." This connects the Stanzas of Dzian to the Vedas.

Now let us move down to verse 9 of Stanza 1, where the word "alaya" is used. This, in this phrase, "the alaya of the universe," is a usage known only in Buddhist texts, specifically Yogachara texts. This connects the Stanzas of Dzian to specific Buddhist texts. These Buddhist texts, however, do not use either the term or the image of "darkness" in their cosmogony. This means that we cannot connect the Stanzas to either the Vedas exclusively, or to these specific Buddhist texts exclusively.

We are left with either the working hypothesis we began with, namely, that the known traditions of the world are in fact derived from the hidden tradition of the Stanzas, or that HPB invented these Stanzas and made a hodgepodge of the known traditions of the world. The origins of the Stanzas traced up to this point could be taken either way. But there is more.

Looking at the esoteric Senzar Catechism that is quoted in *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. 9:

"What is that which was, is, and will be, whether there is a Universe or not; whether there be gods or none?" asks the esoteric Senzar Catechism. And the answer made is -- space."

As we have seen in this blog, this is closely parallel to a phrase that is quoted dozens and dozens of times in dozens and dozens of old Buddhist texts: "Whether the Tathagatas arise or whether the Tathagatas do not arise, the dhatu (the "element," or "basic space") remains." This is not found in any known Buddhist catechism-type text. Moreover, the Buddhist texts that it is found in were not published in HPB's time. The probability here is that these old Buddhist texts adopted this formulaic or catechismic truth, far more than that HPB derived it from these texts.

Then, the Occult Catechism is quoted further in *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. 11:

"The Occult Catechism contains the following questions and answers:

"What is it that ever is?" "Space, the eternal Anupadaka." "What is it that ever was?" "The Germ in the Root." "What is it that is ever coming and going?" "The Great Breath." "Then, there are three Eternals?" "No, the three are one. That which ever is is one, that which ever was is one, that which is ever being and becoming is also one: and this is Space."

Here we also have reference to the "Great Breath," something that we do not hear of in the known texts. But in recent decades, as the long esoteric Kalachakra became available, we find the "great breath" (maha-prana) in it as a cosmic principle. This text was quite unknown to the

outside world in HPB's time. But it is one of the "Books of Kiu-te," the Buddhist tantras, whose secret versions are said by her to be the source of the Stanzas of Dzyan.

There is also here reference to the "germ." As we have seen, the gotra, the "germ," is taught in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, a text attributed to Maitreya in Tibetan tradition, alongside the dhatu, the "element" or "basic space." We recall HPB saying in her 1886 letter to A. P. Sinnett that:

"I have finished an enormous Introductory Chapter, or Preamble, Prologue, call it what you will; just to show the reader that the text as it goes, every Section beginning with a page of translation from the Book of Dzyan and the Secret Book of "Maytreya Buddha" Champai chhos Nga (in prose, not the five books in verse known, which are a blind) are no fiction."

The Ratna-gotra-vibhaga did not become available in the West until the twentieth century, with an English translation from Tibetan by E. Obermiller in 1931, and the Sanskrit text discovered in Tibet in the 1930s by Rahula Sankrtyayana, edited by E. H. Johnston and published in 1950. Again, the probability here is slim that HPB could have come up with her Occult Catechism statements based on the then quite unavailable Kalachakra and Ratna-gotra-vibhaga.

So the probability is high that the Stanzas were not concocted by HPB, even though we have not been able to trace a single Stanza to any known work. But we do not know this for sure. Not until we get an original language text of them. This is what we know that we don't have. I do not know how to get this. All I know is that I have to keep preparing as assiduously as I can for when the Book of Dzyan becomes available.

[David Reigle](#) on April 5, 2011 at 11:21am

We continue now with the ālaya or ālaya-vijñāna, the foundation or foundation consciousness. This is one of the few terms found in the Stanzas of Dzyan (as we have them in HPB's English translation) that are distinctive enough to be traced to a specific source. The specific source is Yogachara Buddhist texts. The teaching of a universal foundation consciousness was derived by the future Buddha Maitreya from sutras spoken by the historical Buddha Gautama, and then elaborated by Maitreya to his pupil Asanga, who in turn taught this to his younger brother Vasubandhu. We have seen in an 1886 letter by HPB to Sinnett, quoted here several times, that she links the Book of Dzyan to the "Secret Book of Maytreya Buddha." This private letter was written not long after she had begun writing The Secret Doctrine. When The Secret Doctrine was published a couple years later, her public statement in it was (vol. 1, p. xxii): "The Book of Dzyan (or "Dzan") is utterly unknown to our Philologists, or at any rate was never heard of by them under its present name." As far as I know, this earlier private letter is the only place where she gave a name that has been heard of, a specific author's name. So we must take the distinctive teachings that are specifically connected to Maitreya, such as the ālaya-vijñāna, very seriously in our search.

We have seen that when Asanga wrote his summary of the Buddhist Mahayana teachings (Mahayana-samgraha), he gave the ālaya-vijñāna or foundation consciousness first place in his tenfold systematization of the teachings of the Great Vehicle (Mahayana). He defined it as the "support of the knowable" (jñeyāśraya), the basis or foundation of everything in the

known or manifested universe. This book is Asanga's own summary of the Mahayana teachings, based heavily on what he received from Maitreya. The massive Yogachara-bhumi is a huge text attributed by Tibetan tradition to Asanga, but attributed by the older Chinese tradition to Maitreya. Even if Asanga wrote it down, both traditions are clear that he received its teachings from Maitreya. In the latter portion of this extensive book, the Viniscaya-samgrahani section, eight proofs are given for the existence of the ālaya-vijñāna. These eight classic proofs were then quoted in the commentary on Asanga's Abhidharma-samuccaya, where we have them in the original Sanskrit today. They were also quoted in their Tibetan translation by Tsongkhapa in one of his early books, the Ocean of Eloquence.

Below are given some rather extensive quotations, for those who want to follow this out a bit. But don't worry, there will not be a quiz on these eight proofs for the existence of the ālaya-vijñāna. The main thing is to know that Maitreya and Asanga taught the ālaya-vijñāna or foundation consciousness, and that they gave proofs for its existence, proofs that were accepted and repeated by Tsongkhapa. Please stay tuned for my next post on this, even if it takes me a few days (or several days), where a surprising fact and its implications regarding the source of the Stanzas of Dzryan and the Theosophical teachings will be brought in.

The eight proofs for the existence of the ālaya-vijñāna given by Maitreya and Asanga are not easy to understand. Understanding them depends on a fairly comprehensive knowledge of the Buddhist teachings. Here is a brief paraphrase of them by Damdul Namgyal from his article, "Alayavijnana as Expounded by Tzongkhapa," published in the book, Mind Only School and Buddhist Logic: A Collection of Seminar Papers, edited by Daboom Tulku (New Delhi: Tibet House, 1990), p. 39:

"According to this text, in the absence of a stable mind like the alayavijnana, migration from one lifetime to another would not be tenable. Likewise, in the absence of such a consciousness, other mental processes would also not be possible, such as the simultaneous emergence of two different consciousnesses, the greater clarity of a particular consciousness, the forming of imprints of wholesome and unwholesome mental states, the observation of activity, the presence of all-pervading bodily sensations, the mindless meditational absorptions, and last, the mental states experienced during the death process. Of these eight reasonings in support of the alayavijnana, the one concerning the impossibility of mental states leaving their imprints has been dealt with in great detail, with five additional reasons to support it. These five reasons constitute what is called the five lines of reasoning presented in the Mahayanasamgraha."

The text that Damdul Namgyal paraphrases these eight proofs from is Tsongkhapa's treatise on the alaya-vijnana, mentioned above, which is among his earlier works. It has been translated into English by Gareth Sparham, with Shotaro Iida, as Ocean of Eloquence: Tsongkhapa's Commentary on the Yogacara Doctrine of Mind (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993). The eight proofs are given on pp. 124-133. Here are pp. 123-124, where they are introduced. Tsongkhapa, like Maitreya and Asanga who he is following, establishes the existence of the ālaya-vijñāna through scripture and reasoning. He first does so through scripture, then follows this by reasoning, giving the eight proofs. The explanations of the eight proofs are not quoted here. The klista-manas, or "defiled mind," is the normal mind, the individual mind, in contradistinction to the universal mind or foundation consciousness, the ālaya-vijñāna. These two form the seventh and eighth consciousnesses taught in Yogachara,

where the six lower consciousnesses are those of the five senses (the eye, etc.), and the mind taken separately as a sense organ (whose object is dharmas or knowable things).

"If one asserts an alaya-vijnana and klista-manas different to the six consciousnesses how does one prove their existence?

"From believable scriptural authority (agama) and through reasoning (yukti) one should come to understand that there are a [klista-]manas and alaya-vijnana different from the six consciousnesses.'

"There are two ways to establish them: by scriptural authority and by reasoning. In regard to the scriptural authority for alaya-vijnana and klista-manas, first, the alaya-vijnana. The MahayanAbhidharma-sutra says:

"There is an element which has no beginning in time that is the basis of dharmas. By reason of its existence there are all places of rebirth and also the attainment of nirvana.'

"and [the MahayanAbhidharma-sutra] also says:

"All dharmas adhere to the consciousness with all seeds. I therefore explain the alaya-vijnana ('consciousness which is basis of all') to the excellent ones.'

"The Samdhi-nirmocana-sutra says:

"The adana-vijnana ('appropriating consciousness') is deep and subtle. It flows on with all seeds like a surging river. I do not, however, teach it to simpletons lest they suppose it to be a soul (atman).'

"And the Arya-lankavatara-sutra says:

"The mind (citta) is alaya-vijnana, the egotistical thought is manas, and the awarenesses of the objects [of the senses] are pravrtti-vijnanas ('entering differentiated cognitions').

"There are an infinite number of such Mahayana sutra references. . . .

"The passages in the Arya-ghana-vyuha-sutra and the [Arya]-lankavatara-sutra, etc., which mention eight consciousnesses also serve as proof.

"Second, in regard to reasoning (yukti), there is reasoning [which establishes the existence] of alaya-vijnana and of klista-manas. First:

"Although there are an infinite number of reasonings given in the Yogacara school's texts [to establish alaya-vijnana], I will explain eight which systematize them: the impossibility of a) taking [rebirth], b) a first [mind], c) clarity, d) seeds, e) action, f) physical experience, g) meditative absorption, and h) passing away.'

"In the Mahayana-samgraha five reasons are treated at length along with related matters. These are the impossibility of being afflicted (samklista) a) by afflictive emotion (klesa), b) by

action, and c) by birth; and the impossibility of d) ordinary and e) transcendental states of purity. In [Vasubandhu's] Panca-skandha-prakarana there are four reasons. In the latter part of the [Yogacara]-bhumi-vyakhya there are seventeen scriptural proofs and also proofs based on reasoning. In [Gunamati's] Pratitya-samutpadadi-vibhanga-nirdeśa-tika there are some of the Mahayana-samgraha's proofs. And the way it is established as set forth in the Abhidharma-samuccaya is this: The Viniscaya-samgrahani [of the Yogacara-bhumi] says:

"There would be the impossibility of a) taking, b) the first, c) clarity (spastatva), d) seeds, e) action, f) physical feeling, g) mindless meditative absorption (acitte samapatti), and h) passing away.'

"These are formulated in the Abhidharma-samuccaya-bhasya as eight reasons as follows:

"One should understand the existence of the alaya-vijnana in eight ways. If there were no alaya-vijnana, a) taking a body would be impossible, b) emergence of an initial [consciousness] would be impossible, c) emergence of clarity would be impossible, d) being a seed would be impossible, e) action would be impossible, f) physical experience would be impossible, g) mindless meditative absorption would be impossible, and h) consciousness that passes away would be impossible.'

"Since these include nearly all [of the different proofs set forth in the above texts] I shall discuss these eight. . . ."

Here follow Tsongkhapa's explanations of each of the eight proofs. Tsongkhapa quoted the eight proofs of the alaya-vijnana from the Abhidharma-samuccaya-bhasya, where they were in turn quoted from the Viniscaya-samgrahani portion of the Yogacara-bhumi by Maitreya (Chinese tradition) or Asanga (Tibetan tradition). These proofs were translated by Paul J. Griffiths in his 1986 book, *On Being Mindless: Buddhist Meditation and the Mind-Body Problem*, pp. 129-138. Following the eight proofs in the Viniscaya-samgrahani is an explanation of the arising and functioning of the alaya-vijnana, and the cessation of the alaya-vijnana. Both of these portions were translated by William S. Waldron in his 2003 book, *The Buddhist Unconscious: The alaya-vijnana in the Context of Indian Buddhist Thought*, pp. 178-189. I give all these references in case anyone wants to pursue this question, and is in a position to do so.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on April 5, 2011 at 12:51pm

David wrote : " The teaching of a universal foundation consciousness was derived by the future Buddha Maitreya from sutras spoken by the historical Buddha Gautama".

One of the original sutra could be the Maharatnakuta Sutra as some translations were made by the Buddhist Association of the United State, and published in 1983 under the title "A Treasury of Mahayana Sutras, Garma C.C. Chang, General Editor - Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.

Chapter 10, which is the translation of sutra n°39 is named The Elucidation of Consciousness, and the comment made by the translator indicates the link with alaya-vijnana :

" This sutra seems to be one of the forerunners or germinal sources of the Mind-Only philosophy of the Yogachara school. The reader will find that the consciousness discussed here is in many ways similar to the Yogachara idea of the 'store-consciousness', which stores or upholds memory, impression, and karmic power. Some Buddhists believe that without it, the doctrines of reincarnation, karma, supreme enlightenment of Buddhahood, and ultimately, the altruistic deeds of a Bodhisattva would not be possible".

David Reigle on April 8, 2011 at 3:34pm

The sutra that you referred us to, Jacques, was a good source, and one that I was unaware of. I have now had a chance to go through it, and Nancy has read it and reviewed it. Here are the statements relating to the idea of the ālaya-vijñāna that she picked out (quoted from A Treasury of Mahayana Sutras, Pennsylvania State University Press):

The Elucidation of Consciousness (Sutra)

"Wise Protector, the consciousness, in its self-nature [[svabhava]], pervades everywhere [in the body] but is not tainted by any part. Although it dwells in the six sense-organs, the six sense-objects, and the five aggregates which are defiled, it is not stained by any of them; it only functions through them.

". . . Consciousness is devoid of form and substance, but it upholds all in the dharmadhatu; . . . " (p. 226)

"This same great earth provides nutrients composed of all the four elements to nourish plants, but different seeds will produce different crops. In the same way, from the same consciousness that upholds the entire dharmadhatu come all the samsaric beings with bodies of different colors, such as white, black, yellow, and red; and with different dispositions, such as gentleness and irascibility.

"However, Wise Protector, consciousness has no hands, no feet, no members, and no language.

"The power of memory is very strong in the dharmadhatu, so when the consciousness leaves a sentient being's body at his death, it combines with the power of memory to become the seed of his next life. Apart from consciousness, there is no dharmadhatu, and vice versa." (p. 227)

There is a sutta in the Pali canon that is often quoted in regard to a consciousness that is beyond the elements. It is the Kevaddha Sutta in the first division of the Digha-nikaya. The passage in question comes at the end of this sutta. It is, as translated by Maurice Walshe in The Long Discourses of the Buddha (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1987, 1995), pp. 179-180:

"Where do earth, water, fire and air no footing find?
Where are long and short, small and great, fair and foul --
Where are 'name-and-form' wholly destroyed?

And the answer is:

Where consciousness is signless, boundless, all-luminous,
That's where earth, water, fire and air find no footing,
There both long and short, small and great, fair and foul --
There 'name-and-form' are wholly destroyed.
With the cessation of consciousness this is all destroyed."

David Reigle on April 14, 2011 at 10:33am

I did not mean to keep everyone in suspense for so long, when I asked in my post of April 5 that you please stay tuned for my next post on the ālaya-vijñāna. But a pressing task then arose that had to be attended to, and will take a couple more days still. The reason that I wanted readers to stay tuned is that I did not want to leave the wrong impression about Tsongkhapa. In the long quote posted, he is teaching the ālaya-vijñāna. But this is from an early work of his. He went on to completely reject the ālaya-vijñāna, not only its ultimate existence, but even its conventional existence. For he and the Gelugpa order he founded, the ālaya-vijñāna, the foundation

consciousness, does not exist.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on April 14, 2011 at 12:47pm

Still on Alaya, reading the STANZA I.9 "But where was the Dangma when the Alaya of the universe was in Paramartha and the great wheel was Anupadaka", H.P.B , in her commentary, refers to another tibetan name (p.52) (Sangbai Dag-Po) as the "Concealed Lord", "the one merged with the absolute" , which can have no parents since he is Self-existent, and one with the Universal Spirit (Svayambhu), the Svâbhâvat in the highest aspect.

Was this Sangbai Dag-Po identified in the tibetan buddhism pantheon ?

[David Reigle](#) on April 15, 2011 at 8:45pm

HPB brought in Sangbai Dag-po from Emil Schlagintweit's 1863 book, Buddhism in Tibet, p. 50. The actual Tibetan spelling is gsang ba'i bdag po. It is a translation of the Sanskrit guhyapati, as Schlagintweit correctly says; or more often, as reference works now available show, of Sanskrit Guhyadhipati. The meaning of these two is pretty much the same. The first word, Sanskrit guhya or Tibetan gsang ba, means "secret." The second word, Sanskrit pati or adhipati, Tibetan bdag po, means "lord." It can be taken as a karmadharaya compound, like Schlagintweit took it, "concealed lord," or it can be taken as a tatpuruṣa compound, "lord of secrets." In either case, it refers to vajradhara or Adi-Buddha.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on April 16, 2011 at 1:14pm

Thank you for the answer, David. The "Lord of Secrets" appears also as another name for Vajrasattva.

Now that most of the cosmological concepts have been identified and described from buddhist tradition, it is interesting to read another account of creation, written by a Tibetan Master from 19th century. Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé (1813-1899) wrote a root text called *The Encompassment of All Knowledge (Shes bya kun khyab)*, and his own commentary *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge (Shes bya mtha' yas pa'i rgya mtsho)*. The first volume named *Myriad Worlds* discusses Buddhist cosmography and the genesis of beings who inhabit the universe. He delineates four levels of cosmology : the Individual Way, the Universal Way, the Cosmology of the Kalachakra, and the Dzog-Chen one.

For the Dzog-Chen one, he draws from the Tsig-dön-dzö (Tshig don mdzog) of Longchenpa, and one can read another "creation hymn" in which we recognize the "ground-of-all", the "clear light of bliss", the energy (fohat) (p.209) :

" The original ground of the primordially pure (inner) sphere of reality [is called] the youthful vase-body.

When its seal breaks, the energy-wind of pristine wisdom is set in motion.

The movement of the energy-wind of wisdom causes intrinsic awareness to emerge from the ground of being.

This intrinsic awareness itself manifests as the eight gates of being's spontaneity.

At that time, the manifestation of the primordially pure dimension of reality appears above, like a cloudless sky.

The manifestation of the enjoyment dimension realms of clear light which pervades the expanse of space appears directly in front.

From the creativity of intrinsic awareness, the great manifestation of the ground appears below.

From the creativity of intrinsic awareness, the manifestation of the enjoyment dimension of awakening appears further below ; and [around it] the realms of the natural manifest dimension of awakening appear in the cardinal and intermediate directions.

Still further below, the countless realms that are personal perceptions of the six types of beings appear through the gate of cyclic life.

Everything arises naturally from the display of the eight gates of being's spontaneity and is therefore called the great simultaneous display of cyclic life and perfect peace.

When inner clarity manifests as outer clarity [the display of cyclic life and perfect peace], the unceasing space of [this display's] nature is innate clarity ; the manifestation of its character is the five lights, the primordial radiance ; and the manifestation of its energy is the natural quality of openness, like a cloudless sky."

Then, Kongtrul goes on explaining the eight gates of manifestation as explained in the *Tantra of Great Beauty and Auspiciousness*.

Jacques Mahnich on April 17, 2011 at 11:06am

The eight gates of manifestation are as explained in the *Tantra of Great Beauty and Auspiciousness*

(from the rNying ma rgyud 'bum - vol Tha, f. 336b7-337a1) :

" Unceasing space is [the gate through which the ground of being] manifest as energy.

Unceasing appearance is [the ground] manifesting as lights.

Unceasing enjoyment is [the ground] manifesting as pristine wisdom.

Unceasing nature is [the ground] manifesting as dimensions of awakening.

Unceasing view is [the ground] manifesting as non-duality.

Unceasing method is [the ground] manifesting as freedom from limitations.

The purity of pristine wisdom is the gate to perfection.

Unceasing energy is [the gate] to impure [cyclic life].

These [eight] are precious wish-fulfilling jewels."

[David Reigle](#) on April 17, 2011 at 11:34am

This is indeed a valuable creation account for us to consider. Thank you, Jacques, for taking the time to type it in and post it. As you indicate, the word "energy" used herein could mean fohat:

"When inner clarity manifests as outer clarity [the display of cyclic life and perfect peace], the unceasing space of [this display's] nature is innate clarity; the manifestation of its character is the five lights, the primordial radiance; and the manifestation of its energy is the natural quality of openness, like a cloudless sky."

The context shows that "energy" used here is one of the three aspects of the original ground or base (gzhi) taught in Dzogchen. So "energy" here is a translation of Tibetan thugs rje. As a technical term in Dzogchen, it is often translated as "energy," but elsewhere its normal meaning is "compassion."

The other two aspects of the original ground (gzhi, not quite the same as ground-of-all, kun gzhi, alaya) are, as translated here, nature (ngo bo) and character (rang bzhin). These latter two words are very close in meaning, so that other translators often translate rang bzhin as "nature" and ngo bo as "essence." That is, for one translator, "nature" is ngo bo, and for another translator, "nature" is rang bzhin. That is why we need the original terms. For there is an important difference between them in Dzogchen.

As explained by Namkhai Norbu (The Crystal and the Way of Light, pp. 97-98), ngo bo refers to the fundamental voidness or emptiness of the base or ground, while rang bzhin refers to the continuous arising of the base or ground. Then, thugs rje refers to how it manifests. Knowing this Dzogchen usage, we can look at this sentence with the Tibetan terms inserted:

When inner clarity manifests as outer clarity [the display of cyclic life and perfect peace], the unceasing space of [this display's] nature [[ngo bo]] is innate clarity; the manifestation of its character [[rang bzhin]] is the five lights, the primordial radiance; and the manifestation of its energy [[thugs rje]] is the natural quality of openness, like a cloudless sky."

The two terms, ngo bo and rang bzhin, do bring in the idea of svabhava. The two standard Tibetan translations of Sanskrit svabhava are rang bzhin and ngo bo nyid. We do not know exactly what is intended in the Dzogchen texts, because their Sanskrit originals have not yet been recovered.

[David Reigle](#) on April 23, 2011 at 3:28pm

Tsongkhapa rejected the ālaya-vijñāna as one of "eight difficult points," in which he put forward his

clarifications of the teachings of the Prasangika (Consequence) school of Madhyamaka (Middle Way), that had not been recognized earlier. In regard to the *ālaya-vijñāna*, this means that previous teachers of Prasangika Madhyamaka, the dominant teaching in Tibet since around Tsongkhapa's time, accepted the conventional existence of the *ālaya-vijñāna*. No Madhyamaka school ever took the *ālaya-vijñāna* as ultimately existing, and it is very questionable whether even the Yogachara schools took it as ultimately existing. But it had been accepted by Prasangika Madhyamaka teachers as being conventionally existent. Tsongkhapa said that the Prasangika Madhyamaka position actually denies even its conventional existence. That is, the *ālaya-vijñāna*, the foundation consciousness, does not exist at all. Other Prasangika Madhyamaka teachers in Tibet did not accept this, so that the conventional existence of the *ālaya-vijñāna* is still accepted in the non-Gelugpa schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

This has ramifications for those who seek the Stanzas of Dzryan. It also has ramifications for those who accept the third fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine. I do not need to spell these out.

For those who want to learn more about Tsongkhapa's rejection of the *ālaya-vijñāna*, there are a couple major sources now available in English. One is a lengthy book by Daniel Cozort, published in 1998 as, *Unique Tenets of the Middle Way Consequence School*. This is a study of Gelugpa commentaries on these "difficult points" or "unique tenets" of Tsongkhapa's. The actual source of these is notes taken down by Tsongkhapa's disciple, Gyaltsab. These notes were translated into English and fully annotated by David Seyfort Ruegg in his 2002 book, *Two Prolegomena to Madhyamaka Philosophy: Candrakīrti's Prasannapada Madhyamakavṛttiḥ on Madhyamakakārikā I.1 and Tson kha pa Blo bzang grags pa/rGyal tshab Dar ma rin chen's dKa' gnad/gnas brgyad kyi zin bris*.

David Reigle on April 27, 2011 at 6:07pm

Here is a paragraph from the book, *The Buddha from Dolpo*, by Cyrus Stearns (2010 edition, pp. 90-91), showing how the Jonangpa teacher Dölpopa understood the difference between the *ālaya* and the *ālayavijñāna*:

According to Dölpopa the process of enlightenment can be illuminated by some traditional examples. First, he accepts two types of "universal ground" (*ālaya*, *kun gzhi*). Of these, he considers the buddha nature, or sugata essence, to be the "universal-ground primordial awareness" (*kun gzhi ye shes*). While still veiled by the temporary obscurations of the afflictions and of knowledge, this is like the sky filled with clouds or a jewel covered with mud. In contrast, the "universal-ground consciousness" (*ālayavijñāna*, *kun gzhi rnam shes*) is the impurities or incidental stains that are to be removed, and the deeply imprinted habitual propensities associated with it. These are like the clouds in the sky or the mud covering the jewel. Second, the path is composed of the various techniques of practice that remove the impurities. This path can be likened to the wind that scatters the clouds or the stream of water that washes the mud from the jewel. Finally, the result is described as an attainment, but is really unified bliss and emptiness, a self-arisen primordial awareness that is eternally present, but now manifests or actualizes. This is like the appearance of the clear cloudless sky or the jewel separated from the mud. Dölpopa says the incidental stains must be understood as empty of self-nature and suitable to be removed through meditation practice, while the buddha nature itself is empty only of other extrinsic factors such as the incidental stains that veil its eternal and indestructible nature.

David Reigle on May 20, 2011 at 9:08pm

In order to try to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzryan that we have in *The Secret Doctrine*, on cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis, we must check all the known cosmogonies of India and Tibet. To this end, we have already looked at several (click on "Stanzas Documents"), including the cosmogony of the Vedas, represented by Rig-Vedas 10.129 (*Rgveda10.129hymnofcreationEng.transs..pdf*, *Rigveda10.129transs.2.pdf*), of the Puranas, represented by the old Vayu Purana (*VayuPurana1.36oncosmogonyEng.Tagare.pdf*), of the Buddhist tantras, represented by the Guhyasamaja Tantra (*GuhyasamajaTantrachap.1Eng.G.Tucci.pdf*), of Dzogchen, represented by the summary given in *Myriad Worlds* (posted here by Jacques on April 16 and April 17, 2011), and parts of some others, such as Shankaracharya's *Maya-vivarana* (<http://theosnet.ning.com/profiles/blog/show?>

[id=3055387%3ABlogPost%3...\).](#)

These have provided interesting and useful parallels, but nothing even close to the detail and comprehensiveness of the cosmogony given in the Stanzas of Dzryan.

There are still more Indian cosmogonies to look at. We have not yet looked at a cosmogony based on so-called "atoms" (paramanu), or mathematical points. In Hinduism, this is the province of the paired Nyaya-Vaisesika system. In neither of the textbooks of this pair, the Nyaya-sutras or the Vaisesika-sutras, do we find a cosmogony. The earliest text that gives a cosmogony in the Vaisesika system is the Padartha-dharma-samgraha by Prasastapada, also called the Prasastapada-bhasya. Although this text is called a bhasya or commentary, it is in fact a re-stated exposition of the Vaisesika-sutras rather than a direct commentary on them in the normal sense of the word. The fact that it contains a cosmogony, while the Vaisesika-sutras do not, makes its cosmogony something of an anomaly. We do not know where this cosmogony comes from. The Padartha-dharma-samgraha is the earliest extant source for it.

The author of this text, Prasastapada, is known to have written an actual commentary on the Vaisesika-sutras, based on extensive earlier commentaries on the Vaisesika-sutras. Both Prasastapada's commentary and the earlier ones are now lost. It was only in the late 1950s and early 1960s, with the recovery of brief commentaries on the Vaisesika-sutras, that even the actual readings of these sutras could be ascertained (see the information posted to the Online Sanskrit Texts Project, <http://theosnet.ning.com/forum/topics/online-sanskrit-texts-project...>). So it is possible that this cosmogony comes from one of these extensive earlier commentaries that are now lost. But there is a twist to this story.

We also know that Prasastapada is the earliest known Vaisesika writer to bring in the idea of God. Where did he bring this in from? One of the lost larger Vaisesika-sutra commentaries? Maybe and maybe not. According to the author of the old Yukti-dipika Samkhya commentary, discovered and first published in 1938, the idea of God was imported into the Vaisesika system from the Pasupatas, i.e., the Saivas. It was not originally part of the Vaisesika system. See "God's Arrival in India," p. 26 (<http://www.easterntradition.org/gods%20arrival%20in%20india.pdf>). So when Prasastapada brought in a cosmogony for the Vaisesika system, we do not know if he at the same time brought in God with it. We in fact do not know where this cosmogony came from. It does include God as the one who impels the atoms, and thus is the cause of the cosmogonic process.

Here follows Pasastapada's cosmogonic account, from his Padartha-dharma-samgraha, as translated by Ganganatha Jha. I have inserted a number of Sanskrit terms in brackets from comparison with the Sanskrit text. This is quite necessary in order to know exactly what is being talked about. If we had this in HPB's English translation of the Stanzas, we would not have such uncertainty about them.

"Of the Mahabhutas or the Ultimate Material Substances or States of Matter."

"We are now going to describe the process of the creation and destruction of the four ultimate Material Substances [mahabhuta, "great elements"].

"When a hundred years, by the measure of Brahma are at an end, there comes the time for the deliverance of the Brahma existing at that time; and then, for the sake of the resting at night, of all living beings wearied by their 'wanderings,' there arises in the mind of the Supreme Lord [mahesvara], the Ruler of all worlds, a desire to reabsorb (all creation); and simultaneously with this desire, there comes about a cessation of the operations of the unseen potential tendencies [adrsta] of all souls [atma] that are the causes of their bodies, sense-organs and gross-elements [mahabhuta]. Then out of the supreme Lord's desire [iccha] and from the conjunction of the souls [atma] and the material atoms [anu], there come about certain disruptions of the atoms constituting the Bodies and sense-organs. These disruptions destroy the combinations of those atoms; and this brings about the destruction of all things down to the atoms [anu].

"Then there comes about a successive destruction or reabsorption of the ultimate Material Substances [mahabhuta], Earth, Water, Fire and Air, one after the other.

"After this, the atoms [paramanu] remain by themselves in their isolated [pravibhakta] condition; and simultaneously with these there remain the souls [atma] permeated with the potencies [samskara] of their past virtues [dharma] and vices [adharma].

"Then again, for the sake of the experiences to be gained by living beings, there arising in the mind of the supreme Lord a desire for creation, there are produced, in the atoms [paramanu] of air, certain actions or motions, due to their conjunctions [samyoga] under the influence of the unseen potential tendencies [adrsta] that begin to operate in all souls. These motions bringing about the mutual contact [samyoga] of the air atoms, there appears, through the Diad [dvyanuka], Triad etc. finally the 'Great Air,' [mahan vayu] which exists vibrating in the sky.

"After this, in this Great Air, there appears, in the same order, out of the atoms [paramanu] of water, the Great Reservoir [nidhi] of water, which remains there surging.

"In this Reservoir of Water, there appears out of the Earth-atoms, the Great Earth which rests there in its solid form.

"Then, in the same Water-reservoir, there appears, in the same order, out of the Fire-atoms, the Great Mass of Fire; and not being suppressed by any thing else, it stands shining radiantly.

"The four gross elements having thus been brought into existence, there is produced, from the mere thought (mental picturing) [abhidhyana] of the Supreme Lord, the Great Egg, from out of the Fire-atoms mixed up with the atoms of Earth; and in this egg having produced all the worlds and the Four-faced Brahma, the Grand-father of all creatures; the Supreme Lord assigns to him the duty of producing the various creatures. Being thus engaged by the Supreme Lord, Brahma, endowed with extreme degrees of Knowledge, Dispassion and Power, having recognised the ripeness for fruition of the Karmic tendencies of the living beings, creates, out of his mind, his sons, the Prajapatis, as also the Manus and the several groups of the Gods, Rshis and Pitrs, -- and out of his mouth, arms, thighs and feet, the four castes, and the other living beings of all grades high and low, -- all these having their knowledge and experience ordained in accordance with their previous deeds; and then he connects them with Virtue, Knowledge, Dispassion and Powers, according to their respective impressional potencies [asaya]."

(Padarthadharmanasangraha of Prasastapada, translated by Ganganatha Jha, Benares, 1916, pp. 108-111)

David Reigle on May 28, 2011 at 7:49pm

There are a couple of unique things in this cosmogony that comes from a Vaishesika source. I hesitate to call it the Vaishesika cosmogony, because the Vaishesika system is not known for having a cosmogony. If one is looking for a cosmogony in Hindu sources, the Puranas would be the normal place to look. In fact, at least some of the Puranas do give a cosmogony that includes ultimate "atoms" (paramanu, or anu), or mathematical points. So these cosmogonies would be in this way related to the Vaishesika teachings, and to the cosmogony that comes from a Vaishesika source..

In this cosmogony given by Prasastapada in his Padartha-dharma-samgraha, we find the normal order of the dissolution of the elements. Earth dissolves, then water dissolves, then fire dissolves, then air dissolves. But the order of the manifestation of the elements differs. First comes air, as expected. But then comes water, not fire. After water comes earth. Then comes fire. This is quite unusual. Then from fire together with earth comes the great egg, the cosmic egg in which all the worlds and all their creatures appear.

Another unique thing in this cosmogony is that the ultimate atoms (paramanu) or mathematical points remain during pralaya or the dissolution of the universe. They are eternal. The Padartha-dharma-samgraha describes this as follows:

"After this, the atoms [paramanu] remain by themselves in their isolated [pravibhakta] condition; and simultaneously with these there remain the souls [atma] permeated with the potencies [samskara] of their past virtues [dharma] and vices [adharma]."

When it says that the atoms remain in their "isolated" condition, this means dissociated. That is, these "atoms" or points are no longer conjoined in pairs to produce dyads, nor are these dyads conjoined to produce triads. It is only the triads, we recall, that produce the actual manifested elements: earth, water, fire, and air. So the paramanus themselves remain during dissolution, and are never destroyed.

Those of you who are familiar with the Kalachakra teachings within Buddhism have heard this same idea there. The Dalai Lama speaks of it in his books comparing the Buddhist teachings with those of modern science, from the Mind-Life conferences. It has always been thought to be a teaching unique to Kalachakra. The Tibetans were not familiar with the Vaisheshika texts, nor is the cosmogony from these texts very well known even in India among Hindus. So no one, to my knowledge, has yet noted the similarity between the Kalachakra particles that remain during the dissolution of the universe, and the same Vaisheshika teaching on this. The similarity is extensive, and it seems to me inescapable that Kalachakra adopted the Vaisheshika teachings on this.

These are important ideas in relation to the cosmogony of the Stanzas of Dzhan. I would welcome any postings on this, quoting Kalachakra sources, or the Dalai Lama's comments, etc. These teachings are now widely available, and are again coming strongly before the public, as the Dalai Lama prepares to give the Kalachakra Initiation at the U.S. capital, Washington, D.C., in early July of this year.

Jacques Mahnich on May 30, 2011 at 2:21pm

A German author, F.O. SHRADER wrote a book in 1902 : "Über den Stand der indischen Philosophie zur Zeit Mahaviras und Buddhas", where he presented the current philosophical ideas in India during the Mahāvira and Buddha times.

He talked about the **Kāla-vāda**, Svabhava-vāda, Niyati-vāda, Yadrīccha-vāda, Atma-vāda, Isvara-vāda, and Ajnana-vāda.

The whole book is referring on Jāinas documents, specially the Nandī Sutra Commentary written by Malayagiri, and also the Sutrakritanga commentary by Śīlanka.

The kāla-vada seems to be a jaina source document.

David Reigle on June 1, 2011 at 9:00pm

I am trying to figure out a way to post pp. 48-51 from the book, Consciousness at the Crossroads, and pp. 85-90 of The Universe in a Single Atom. In these two books the Dalai Lama gives the Kalachakra teaching on "space particles" or "empty particles," saying that this is the Buddhist view of the origin of the universe. In fact, this is specific to Kalachakra, and is not found in other Buddhist texts. But this is found in the Vaisheshika text quoted here earlier. Later I will try to quote directly from the Kalachakra texts that give this.

On motion, the Secret Doctrine teaches that this is eternal. See the quotes given on pp. 15 ff. of this compilation:

<http://www.easterntradition.org/first%20fundamental%20proposition%20...>

David Reigle on June 2, 2011 at 5:21am

Thanks to Capt. Anand, here are pp. 48-51 from the book, Consciousness at the Crossroads. Here the Dalai Lama tells the scientists that Buddhism teaches the existence of beginningless "space particles." These form the material basis of the universe. But a non-material cause causes them to form into the visible universe. This non-material cause is the karma produced by conscious beings from the previous universe. That is, material "space particles" form the visible universe under the impulse of karma, karma that can only have been produced by a consciousness, or more exactly, consciousnesses in plural. Patricia Churchland describes the standard current scientific view that sees only matter, the material cause, slowing evolving into organisms that begin to have consciousness. That is, consciousness arises from matter, and therefore comes later. The Buddhist view given by the Dalai Lama from Kalachakra is essentially the old Vaisheshika view.

Cosmology and the Origins of Consciousness

The discussion here returns to the origins of consciousness. His Holiness explains the causal logic behind the Buddhist understanding of the origins of consciousness and the role of karma in the formation of the

universe. In relation to the Buddhist distinctions between sentient and nonsentient, material and non-material phenomena, Robert Livingston presents a scientific explanation of the biochemical distinctions between organic life and inorganic matter.

PATRICIA CHURCHLAND: One part of the picture that I didn't quite understand, or I guess that I disagree with, is the idea that there were originally two very different things that were created. There were material things and there were nonmaterial things.

DALAI LAMA: My understanding is that by and large Western cosmologists still adhere to some form of the Big Bang theory. The question from the Buddhist view is: What preceded the Big Bang?

ROBERT LIVINGSTON: There are a lot of scientists who think that the time has passed for support of the theory of the Big Bang, and that there was not necessarily a Big Bang.

PATRICIA CHURCHLAND: Even if that's true, then all we can say is that we don't know what came before the Big Bang, and it could have been a yet bigger Bang. But I think Western cosmologists would say that we don't have any evidence whatever that there was any nonmaterial stuff. We can see the development of life on our planet starting with amino acids, RNA, and very simple single-celled organisms that didn't have anything like awareness, and the development of multi-celled organisms, and finally organisms with nervous systems. By then you find organisms that can see and move and interact. So the conclusion seems to be that the ability to perceive and have awareness and to think, arises out of nervous systems rather than out of some force that preceded the development of nervous systems.

DALAI LAMA: The Buddhist view is that in the external world there are some elements that are material, and some that are nonmaterial. And the fundamental substance, the stuff from which the material universe arises is known as space particles. A portion of space is quantized to use a modern term; it is particulate, not continuous. Before the formation of the physical universe as we know it, there was only space, but it was quantized. And it was from the quanta, or particles, in space that the other elements arose. This accounts for the physical universe.

But what brought about that process? How did it happen? It is believed that there existed other conditions, or other influences, which were nonmaterial, and these were of the nature of awareness. The actions of sentient beings in the preceding universe somehow modify, or influence, the formation of the natural universe.

PATRICIA CHURCHLAND: But then I want to know why you think that. What is the evidence for that?

DALAI LAMA: There are some similarities between Western science and Buddhist philosophy in that neither is dealing with absolutes or one hundred percent conviction. In this way we are both faced with options, out on a philosophical limb.

The tradition that evolved in India dealt with many fundamental philosophical issues. We have to account for the existence of matter in the universe. Do we want to say it arises from a cause or no cause?

The first fundamental philosophical question is: How do we determine whether something exists or not? That is the initial question. The factor that determines the existence or nonexistence of something is verifying cognition, or awareness: the awareness that verifies. You have some experience; you saw something, so it exists. That's the final criteria.

Within the range of phenomena that fulfill the criteria of existence, there are two categories: things that undergo dynamic changes, and things that are permanent, or unchanging. The latter are not necessarily permanent in terms of being eternal, but permanent in terms of not changing. (In Buddhism, not everything that changes is physical.) For the phenomena that undergo change, there should be a reason or cause which makes the change possible. We can see that both the universe and human beings have this nature of changing. Therefore, they depend upon causes and conditions.

When we search for the causes, there are two types: substantial causes and cooperative causes. When you speak of one thing being the substantial cause of another, this means it actually transforms into that entity. For example, what exists inside a seed actually transforms into the sprout that arises from it. The seed would be the substantial cause of the sprout, whereas the fertilizer, moisture, and everything else would be cooperative causes. A farmer, for example, would be a cooperative cause for the arising of the wheat crop, but he didn't enter into the wheat crop as did the seed.

PATRICIA CHURCHLAND: This is a little like Aristotle, who spoke of proximal cause and efficient cause.

DALAI LAMA: So we can look at these phenomena that are subject to change and we can go back to their beginning, and ask: Did this arise in dependence on a cause, or in dependence on no cause? If we accept phenomena which demonstrate the nature of arising from cause, and then posit an initial stage where there is

no cause, that would be inconsistent and very difficult to accept. How can you say, suddenly, that everything happened without previous cause? There's a logical inconsistency in maintaining that something now shows the nature of being dependent upon cause, while at the same time claiming that initially it had no cause.

In the ancient philosophical treatises in India, there emerged two different philosophical systems, or schools of thought, on this question. One accepted that the original cause had to be something external, such as a God. From the Buddhist perspective, it is logically very uncomfortable to posit God as being the one cause of everything. The problem, then, becomes: What created God? It is the same question.

PATRICIA CHURCHLAND: Good. That was the question I was going to ask you concerning the first awareness.

DALAI LAMA: So when we ask, what is the substantial cause of the material universe way back in the early history of the universe, we trace it back to the space particles which transform into the elements of this manifest universe. And then we can ask whether those space particles have an ultimate beginning. The answer is no. They are beginningless. Where other philosophical systems maintain that the original cause was God, Buddha suggested the alternative that there aren't any ultimate causes. The world is beginningless. Then the question would be: Why is it beginningless? And the answer is, it is just nature. There is no reason. Matter is just matter.

Now we have a problem: What accounts for the evolution of the universe as we know it? What accounts for the loose particles in space forming into the universe that is apparent to us? Why did it go through orderly processes of change? Buddhists would say there is a condition which makes it possible, and we speak of that condition as the awareness of sentient beings.

For example, within the last five billion years, the age of our planet, microorganisms have come into existence roughly two billion years ago, and sentient beings, perhaps during the last billion years. (We call "sentient" all beings that experience the feelings of pain and pleasure.) Especially during the last one billion years then, we see an evolution into more complex organisms. Now we humans are experiencing this world. And there is a relationship between our environment and ourselves, in the sense that we experience pleasure and pain in relation to this environment.

From a Buddhist point of view, we ask: Why do we experience this universe in this relational way? The cause of our experiencing pain and pleasure in this present moment in this particular universe means that we must have contributed something, somewhere, sometime in the past to the evolution of this present situation. It is in this respect that the question of karma enters. In Buddhism, it is held that there were sentient beings in a previous universe who shared continua of consciousness with us in this universe and thereby provided a conscious connection from the previous universe to our own.

[David Reigle](#) on June 4, 2011 at 6:39am

That is a great way to put the question, Capt. Anand. As I understand it, these teachings say that there is only a relative "square one" at the beginning of each period of manifestation of a cosmos. But there is no beginning to the endless series of cosmoses. Therefore the space particles themselves are without beginning, as is the karma that compels them into periods of activity and of rest. Since karma, according to Buddhism, is only produced by an act that is done intentionally, it requires consciousness. While consciousness may manifest only during the periods of the manifestation of a cosmos, it, too, is without beginning. It must be there in potential even between cosmoses. So it is as beginningless as are the space particles.

Here is the quotation on the space particles from the Dalai Lama's book, *THE UNIVERSE IN A SINGLE ATOM*, from the chapter, "THE BIG BANG AND THE BUDDHIST BEGINNINGLESS UNIVERSE," pp. 85-90. This, along with the quotation from *CONSCIOUSNESS AT THE CROSSROADS* posted earlier, gives the Kalachakra teaching on space particles in simple language. We will next look at the passages from the Kalachakra texts themselves, and then compare these with the Vaisesika teachings. It would seem that the source of the Kalachakra teaching on ultimate atoms (or mathematical points) is the Vaisesika teaching. This teaching is also given in the Secret Doctrine.

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"According to Buddhist cosmology, the world is constructed of the five elements: the supportive element of space, and the four basic elements of earth, water, fire, and air. Space enables the existence and functioning of all the other elements. The Kalachakra system presents space not as a total nothingness, but as a medium

of "empty particles" or "space particles," which are thought of as extremely subtle "material" particles. This space element is the basis for the evolution and dissolution of the four elements, which are generated from it and absorbed back into it. The process of dissolution occurs in this order: earth, water, fire, and air. The process of generation occurs in this order: air, fire, water, and earth.

Asanga asserts that these basic elements, which he describes as the "four great elements," should not be understood in terms of materiality in the strict sense. He draws a distinction between the "four great elements," which are more like potentialities, and the [p. 86]

four elements that are the constituents of aggregated matter. Perhaps the four elements within a material object may be better understood as solidity (earth), liquidity (water), heat (fire), and kinetic energy (air). The four elements are generated from the subtle level to the gross, from the underlying cause of the empty particles, and they dissolve from the gross level to the subtle and back into the empty particles of space. Space, with its empty particles, is the basis for the whole process. The term particle is perhaps not appropriate when referring to these phenomena, since it implies already formed material realities. Unfortunately, there is little description in the texts to help define these space particles further.

Buddhist cosmology establishes the cycle of the universe in the following way: first there is a period of formation, next a period when the universe endures, then a period when it is destroyed, followed by a period of void before the formation of a new universe. During the fourth period, that of emptiness, the space particles subsist, and it is from these particles that all the matter within a new universe is formed. It is in these space particles that we find the fundamental cause of the entire physical world. If we wish to describe the formation of the universe and the physical bodies of beings, we need to analyze the way the different elements constituting that universe were able to take shape from these space particles.

It is on the basis of the specific potential of those particles that the structure of the universe and everything in it -- planets, stars, sentient beings, such as humans and animals -- have come about. If we go back to the ultimate cause of the material objects of the world, we arrive finally at the space particles. They precede the big bang (which is to say any new beginning) and are indeed the residue of the preceding universe that has disintegrated. I am told [p. 87]

that some cosmologists favor the idea that our universe arose as a fluctuation from what is termed the quantum vacuum. To me, this idea echoes the Kalachakra theory of space particles.

From the point of view of modern cosmology, understanding the origin of the universe during the first few seconds poses an almost insurmountable challenge. Part of the problem lies in the fact that the four known forces of nature -- gravitation and electromagnetism, and the weak and strong nuclear forces -- are not functioning at this point. They come into play later, when the density and temperature of the initial stage have significantly decreased so that the elementary particles of matter, such as hydrogen and helium, begin to form. The exact beginning of the big bang is what is called a "singularity." Here, all mathematical equations and laws of

physics break down. Quantities that are normally measurable, such as density and temperature, become undefined at such a moment.

Since scientific study of cosmological origin requires the application of mathematical equations and the assumption of the validity of the laws of physics, it would seem that, if these equations and laws break down, we must ask ourselves whether we can ever have a complete understanding of the initial few seconds of the big bang. My scientist friends have told me that some of the best minds are engaged in exploring the story of the first stages of the formation of our universe. I am told that some believe the solution to what currently appears as a set of insurmountable problems must lie in finding a grand unified theory, which will help integrate all the known laws of physics. Perhaps it can bring together the two paradigms of modern physics that seem to contradict each other -- relativity and quantum mechanics. I am told that the axiomatic assumptions of these two theories have so far proven impossible to reconcile. The theory of relativity suggests that the accurate calculation of the pre-

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 cise condition of the cosmos at any given time is possible if one has sufficient information. Quantum mechanics, by contrast, asserts that the world of microscopic particles can be understood only in probabilistic terms, because at a fundamental level the world consists of chunks or quanta of matter (hence the name quantum physics), which are subject to the uncertainty principle. Theories with exotic names like superstring theory or the M theory are being proposed as candidates for the grand unified theory.

There is a further challenge to the very enterprise of obtaining full knowledge of the original unfolding of our universe. At the fundamental level quantum mechanics tells us that it is impossible to predict accurately how a particle might behave in a given situation. One can, therefore, make predictions about the behavior of particles only on the basis of probability. If this is so, no matter how powerful one's mathematical formulas might be, since our knowledge of the initial conditions of a given phenomenon or an event will always be incomplete, we cannot fully understand how the rest of the story unfolds. At best, we can make approximate conjectures, but we can never arrive at a complete description even of a single atom, let alone the entire universe.

In the Buddhist world, there is an acknowledgment of the practical impossibility of gaining total knowledge of the origin of the universe. A Mahayana text entitled *The Flower Ornament Scripture* contains a lengthy discussion of infinite world systems and the limits of human knowledge. A section called "The Incalculable" provides a string of calculations of extremely high numbers, culminating in terms such as "the incalculable," "the measureless," "the boundless," and "the incomparable." The highest number is the "square untold," which is said to be the function of the "unspeakable" multiplied by itself! A friend told me that this number can be

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 written as 10 to the 59th power. The *Flower Ornament* goes on to apply these mind-boggling numbers to the universe systems; it suggests that if "untold" worlds are reduced to atoms and each atom contains "untold" worlds, still the numbers of world systems will not be exhausted. Similarly, in beautiful poetic verses, the text compares the intricate and profoundly interconnected reality of the world to an infinite

net of gems called "Indra's jeweled net." which reaches out to infinite space. At each knot on the net is a crystal gem, which is connected to all the other gems and reflects in itself all the others. On such a net, no jewel is in the center or at the edge. Each and every jewel is at the center in that it reflects all the other jewels on the net. At the same time, it is at the edge in that it is itself reflected in all the other jewels. Given the profound interconnectedness of everything in the universe, it is not possible to have total knowledge of even a single atom unless one is omniscient. To know even one atom fully would imply knowledge of its relations to all other phenomena in the infinite universe.

The Kalachakra texts claim that, prior to its formation, any particular universe remains in the state of emptiness, where all its material elements exist in the form of potentiality as "space particles." At a certain point, when the karmic propensities of the sentient beings who are likely to evolve in this particular universe ripen, the "air particles" begin to aggregate with each other, creating a cosmic wind. Next the "fire particles" aggregate in the same way, creating powerful "thermal" charges that travel through the air. Following this, the "water particles" aggregate to form torrential "rain" accompanied by lightning. Finally, the "earth particles" aggregate and, combined with the other elements, begin to assume the form of solidity. The fifth element, "space," is thought to pervade all other elements as an immanent force and therefore does not possess a
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distinct existence. Over a long temporal process, these five elements expand to form the physical universe as we come to know and experience it."

[David Reigle](#) on June 7, 2011 at 7:55am

This is really nice material that you have quoted for us from the Bhagavad-gita, Capt. Anand. It does seem that the Indian traditions are unanimous in teaching a beginningless universe, which periodically manifests. This is also what the Stanzas of Dzyan teach. So there is full agreement on this, indicating the Eastern origin of the Stanzas.

It is possible that the widespread acceptance of the Big Bang theory of the origination of the universe, even among the scientists who put it forth, is partly due to the influence of Western religious ideas. The Western world lives in a culture where the idea, "In the beginning . . ." is known to all. It is practically in our subconscious. So we are prone to think of an ultimate beginning.

The idea now being considered by some, that the Big Bang was just the origination of one particular cycle of manifestation, would fit in with the Eastern teaching. So there would be many Big Bangs. This is also more logical. Physics says that everything we see in the universe is subject to cause and effect. But an initial Big Bang is supposed to have occurred before anything, with nothing preceding it. We would then have something without a cause.

[David Reigle](#) on June 26, 2011 at 9:08pm

Well, it is time to wrap up my contribution to this discussion on the Origin of the Stanzas of Dzyan for a while. I have pretty much said all that I have to say. I must now attend to some pressing tasks at hand that require all of my time for a couple months. After that I must devote my little available time to much needed research, before I may have anything more to say. It has been a pleasure discussing these things here. Many thanks to everyone who has participated, and especially to Joe, who has made this possible.

[David Reigle](#) on September 21, 2011 at 9:09am

Thanks much, Capt. Anand, for continuing the Stanzas discussion with this material on fohat. Here are a few more quotes on fohat. Perhaps other readers will also contribute to this discussion.

STANZA VI.

1. By the power of the Mother of Mercy and Knowledge — Kwan-Yin — the “triple” of Kwan-shai-Yin, residing in Kwan-yin-Tien, Fohat, the Breath of their Progeny, the Son of the Sons, having called forth, from the lower abyss, the illusive form of Sien-Tchang and the Seven Elements:
2. The Swift and Radiant One produces the Seven Laya Centres, against which none will prevail to the great day “Be-with-Us,” and seats the Universe on these Eternal Foundations surrounding Tsien-Tchan with the Elementary Germs.
3. Of the Seven — first one manifested, six concealed, two manifested, five concealed; three manifested, four concealed; four produced, three hidden; four and one tsan revealed, two and one half concealed; six to be manifested, one laid aside. Lastly, seven small wheels revolving; one giving birth to the other.
4. He builds them in the likeness of older wheels, placing them on the Imperishable Centres. How does Fohat build them? he collects the fiery dust. He makes balls of fire, runs through them, and round them, infusing life thereinto, then sets them into motion; some one way, some the other way. They are cold, he makes them hot. They are dry, he makes them moist. They shine, he fans and cools them. Thus acts Fohat from one twilight to the other, during Seven Eternities.

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STANZA VII.

5. The spark hangs from the flame by the finest thread of Fohat.

[David Reigle](#) on September 22, 2011 at 8:46pm

No, Joe, I do not have any updates on the origins of the word "fohat." For each equivalent that has been suggested, some parts match and other parts don't match. It does remain a real mystery.

[David Reigle](#) on September 23, 2011 at 8:52pm

Since fohat has not yet been positively identified, all we know about it is what the Theosophical texts tell us. So anyone's interpretation is as good as anyone else's. All I can say is that the Stanzas 6 and 7 that I quoted from are on cosmogenesis rather than anthropogenesis. Therefore they probably do not pertain to the root races, but they would pertain to the globes, and even to the rounds. The laya centers could be chakras in the cosmos, or in worlds. The phrase, "The spark hangs from the flame by the finest thread of Fohat," does indeed sound like prana.

[David Reigle](#) on September 27, 2011 at 1:17pm

To be more exact, the verses 1-4 of Stanza 6 that I quoted on fohat pertain to cosmogenesis, and here is the dividing line says HPB in *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. 151:

"With these verses — the 4th Sloka of Stanza VI. — ends that portion of the Stanzas which relates to the Universal Cosmogony after the last Mahapralaya or Universal destruction, which, when it comes, sweeps out of Space every differentiated thing, Gods as atoms, like so many dry leaves. From this verse onwards, the Stanzas are concerned only with our Solar System in general, with the planetary chains therein, inferentially, and with the history of our globe (the 4th and its chain) especially. All the Stanzas and verses which follow in this Book I. refer only to the evolution of, and on, our Earth."

David Reigle on September 30, 2011 at 10:23am

It is a great loss to students of Theosophy that William Emmette Coleman's unpublished writings were lost in the fire following the great San Francisco earthquake. From the little that he did publish, we can see that his critique would have been of great value in sorting out what actually came from HPB and what came from others in her writings. A good sample of what was lost can be seen in Coleman's appendix to Walter Leaf's 1895 book, *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, pp. 353-366, titled "The Sources of Madame Blavatsky's Writings." This may now be found on Daniel Caldwell's website:

<http://www.blavatskyarchives.com/colemansources1895.htm>.

This briefly outlines Coleman's researches that show the extensive presence of material throughout HPB's writings that was taken from then available published books. In general, this material was not acknowledged in HPB's books, and thus appears to be written by HPB herself. For example, Coleman on pp. 359-361 describes the sources for almost everything in HPB's book, *The Theosophical Glossary*. Several decades later Boris de Zirkoff in effect repeated Coleman's research on this book, and found the same things. De Zirkoff published his findings in the Winter 1967-68 issue of his magazine, *Theosophia*, under the title, "Who Played that Trick on H.P.B.? The Puzzle of the Theosophical Glossary." This article was reprinted in the 1983 book, *The Dream that Never Dies: Boris de Zirkoff Speaks Out on Theosophy*, pp. 81-85. It has also been reproduced online by Daniel Caldwell at: <http://www.theosophy.com/theos-talk/199901/tt00104.html>.

It seems that Boris de Zirkoff undertook his investigation through his own sympathetic researches in preparing the *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, without conscious knowledge of what Coleman had done earlier. Coleman, by contrast, undertook his investigation specifically to debunk HPB and Theosophy. But the results of both investigations are basically the same, that this book consists largely of material taken from then available sources. If this is true for *The Theosophical Glossary*, it follows that what Coleman reports on *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Voice of the Silence*, etc., is essentially true, even though we may not follow him in his conclusions based on these verifiable facts. A large percentage of the material in HPB's writings is not actually by her, but comes from sources available in her time. Naturally, a large percentage of the material from these nineteenth century sources is erroneous. Thus, a large amount of the material in HPB's writings is erroneous. It is a great mistake for Theosophists to take all of what is in her writings as being fully accurate because of assuming that it came from her Mahatma teachers. This is where Coleman's research would have been of great help to students of Theosophy, in sorting out which is which.

Like William Emmette Coleman and Boris de Zirkoff, I, too, have over the years found much in HPB's writings that comes from sources available in her time, erroneous sources. Since this material was not acknowledged as coming from these sources, I previously took it as coming from HPB and her teachers. This started for me around 1978 when I picked up in a library Emil Schlagintweit's 1863 book, *Buddhism in Tibet*. I had not then heard of William Emmette Coleman, and knew nothing of his critique. I must say that it was quite a shock to me to find material that I took as authentic in *The Secret Doctrine*'s comments on the Stanzas of Dzian in Schlagintweit's book. This was an absolutely pioneering book in its time, and as such it is necessarily filled with erroneous information. Much of this erroneous information is found repeated, with source unacknowledged, in *The Secret Doctrine*.

What would have been especially valuable in Coleman's lost expose is the sources he may have given for the Stanzas of Dzian themselves. He believed that everything in these Stanzas was also plagiarized. But here I think his bias against Theosophy carried his conclusions too far. I have been able to trace much of what is in HPB's commentaries on these Stanzas to sources available in the nineteenth century, like Coleman did. But I have not been able to trace what is in the Stanzas themselves to these sources. The statement made by L. Sprague de Camp that "She cribbed at least part of her Stanzas of Dzian from the Hymn of Creation in the old Sanskrit Rig-Vedas, as a comparison of the two compositions will readily show," is based on the presumption of plagiarism. A comparison of the two does not readily show this. As we have seen here in this discussion, where many different translations of the Hymn of Creation from the Rig-Vedas were posted, this is a comparatively short hymn of only seven verses, while the Stanzas of Dzian are much more extensive. If a person who had never heard of either of these beforehand was shown both, I think that person would be more likely to conclude that the Rig-Vedas Hymn of Creation was based on the Stanzas of Dzian, than that the Stanzas of Dzian were cribbed from the Rig-Vedas Hymn of Creation.

David Reigle on October 3, 2011 at 5:31pm

I want to be clear that Coleman's critique is something that I think is very helpful for students of Theosophy in identifying large amounts of material in HPB's writings that are not actually hers, but that I find his conclusion about this to be entirely untenable. Because there is much foreign material that is unattributed or unacknowledged in her writings, his conclusion is that her writings are entirely plagiarized. This, I believe, is quite impossible.

He says that the two major sources of The Secret Doctrine are Winchell's World Life and Wilson's translation of The Vishnu Purana. Leaving aside the nineteenth century science in Winchell's World Life, a careful study of the Vishnu Purana will show that it does not contain anything even close to the scheme of The Secret Doctrine. If we add in all the other books utilized by HPB, including Schlagintweit's Buddhism in Tibet, we still cannot account for anything but a small portion of the scheme of The Secret Doctrine. If we use all the Sanskrit texts published since The Secret Doctrine's publication in 1888, which in the case of Buddhism means over 95 per cent of them, we still cannot account for the scheme of The Secret Doctrine. It does not come from known sources.

Coleman's critique is valuable for sorting out the parts of The Secret Doctrine that HPB annotated on her own from the available nineteenth century sources, and that she did not acknowledge as coming from them, so that they appear to be part of the actual scheme of The Secret Doctrine. But they are not, and they should be distinguished. Then the scheme itself of The Secret Doctrine can be more clearly ascertained and accurately studied.

[David Reigle](#) on October 8, 2011 at 9:08pm

The issue of plagiarism is frequently brought up in critiques of the authenticity of the Stanzas of Dzyan. If HPB demonstrably used large amounts of material from then available sources without acknowledgement, then it is plausible that she took the Stanzas, too, from then published sources. However, the Stanzas have not been found in published sources. But despite this fact, the issue of plagiarism still remains an important part of many critiques of the authenticity of the Stanzas of Dzyan. I have commented earlier that the whole idea of plagiarism, and especially its negative connotations, appears to be a modern Western phenomenon. It is not a part of the Eastern worldview, ancient or modern. On the contrary, innovation there has the same negative connotations as plagiarism has here. One is there expected to faithfully follow the great texts of one's predecessors without altering them or adding new innovations to them. It may be useful to provide an example of this.

If you buy the book titled, *Buddha Nature: The Mahayana Uttaratantra Shastra*, published in 2000 by Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca, New York, the title page tells you that you are also getting the commentary on it by Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye. Jamgon Kongtrul lived in Tibet at the end of the 1800s, where he was a major figure in the Ri-me or "non-sectarian" movement that took place there at the same time the Theosophical movement was taking place elsewhere in the world. The Introduction by Drupon Khenpo Acharya Lodro Namgyal tells you that "There are many commentaries on the Uttara Tantra Shastra written in India and Tibet," and that: "Especially outstanding is the commentary written by Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye." This is because "He was a saintly being prophesized by the Buddha in many sutras and tantras," and "His wisdom and achievement were such that he knew and assimilated every aspect of the philosophies and pith instructions of the eight practice lineages." The Foreword by Tenzin Dorjee tells you that "This book presents the commentary by Jamgon Kongtrul the Great, Lodro Thaye, on Arya Maitreya's Mahayana Uttara Tantra Shastra," and that "This commentary has been taught by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche to many Buddhist students around the world."

If you had previously bought the book titled, *The Buddha Within*, published in 1991 by State University of New York Press, Albany, you might have read on p. 173 that "for the greatest portion of his RGV commentary, Kongtrul follows almost word for word a commentary reputedly by the Jonangpa Dolpopa." Dolpopa lived in the 1300s. On the following page you would see that the fact that Kongtrul's commentary follows Dolpopa's commentary almost word for word was fully known to Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso, who has been teaching it widely around the world. You would also learn that Dolpopa's commentary, in turn, "is little more than a

synopsis of the RGVV," i.e., the Sanskrit commentary on the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga or Uttara-tantra written earlier in India. This is the norm, and no one in the East thinks anything of it. It is generally expected. The idea of plagiarism is quite foreign, even when a later respected writer, Jamgon Kongtrul, incorporates the earlier writer Dolpopa's commentary wholesale into his own. This commentary is still taught by teachers of the tradition as being by Jamgon Kongtrul.

David Reigle on October 16, 2011 at 8:37pm

So can ascertaining the scheme of The Secret Doctrine help us in our search for the origins of the Stanzas of Dzryan? I think it can. A scheme of teachings must be presented using particular terms, and these terms may be traced to particular systems, whether Vedantic, Buddhist, Platonic, Biblical, etc.

For ascertaining the scheme of The Secret Doctrine we must necessarily start with its three fundamental propositions, on which the whole system is said to be based. The first of these is an "omnipresent, eternal, boundless, and immutable principle" (SD vol. 1, p. 14). It is there described as "unthinkable and unspeakable," quoting the Mandukya Upanishad (as translated by Archibald Edward Gough in his 1882 book, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads and Ancient Indian Metaphysics*, p. 71). The Sanskrit words found in the Mandukya Upanishad are acintya and avyapadesya, there used to describe the "fourth," the all-encompassing or highest condition of the atman or brahman. The Mandukya Upanishad starts by saying that everything is the syllable om, that all this is brahman, and that this brahman is atman. Vedanta writers such as Shankaracharya sometimes added the adjective para(m), "highest," to brahma(n), the absolute, yielding the term "parabrahma(n)" for the absolute that is frequently used in Theosophical writings. Indeed, in describing the first fundamental proposition of The Secret Doctrine, HPB says (p. 16): "The Absolute; the Parabrahm of the Vedantins or the one Reality."

Because Vedantic terms such as this predominate in the explanations given in The Secret Doctrine, some writers have assumed that The Secret Doctrine is derived from Vedanta. To put this more directly, these writers hold that The Secret Doctrine cannot come from Tibetan sources using Buddhist terms and ideas, because Buddhism denies the atman and does not teach an absolute like the Vedantic brahman. Therefore, the Tibetan connection claimed by HPB is all "smoke and mirrors," deceptive devices used to deflect attention from the actual source of the teachings of The Secret Doctrine, namely, Vedanta; that is, known Vedanta. HPB, of course, says just the opposite; that Vedanta, like all known systems, is derived from the teachings of the Secret Doctrine or Wisdom Religion of antiquity. It is a fact that the major Sanskrit sourcebooks of Vedanta were available in published form in HPB's time. But did she use them as her source? Or did she use them only to explain the Stanzas of Dzryan, whose origin lies elsewhere?

By putting two and two together, we have earlier in this discussion seen that the term behind the first fundamental proposition of The Secret Doctrine, at least as it is stated in the esoteric Senzar or Occult Catechism that HPB drew upon and quoted, is dhatu, the one "element," which may also be translated from one of its two Tibetan translations, dbyings, as basic "space." To briefly recap, the first catechism quotation is (SD vol. 1, p. 9): "'What is that which was, is, and will be, whether there is a Universe or not; whether there be gods or none?' asks the esoteric Senzar Catechism. And the answer made is — space." HPB had said the same thing in an article published six years earlier (BCW vol. 3, p. 423): "Hence, the Arahat secret doctrine on cosmogony admits but of one absolute, indestructible, eternal, and uncreated UNCONSCIOUSNESS (so to translate), of an element (the word being used for want of a better term) absolutely independent of everything else in the universe; a something ever present or ubiquitous, a Presence which ever was, is, and will be, whether there is a God, gods or none; whether there is a universe or no universe; existing during the eternal cycles of Maha Yugas, during the Pralayas as during the periods of Manvantara: and this is SPACE, . . ."

Then in a lengthy post of Dec. 6, 2010, we saw several of the many quotations from Buddhist texts that repeat a similar formulaic statement, like a refrain from a catechism, saying that whether the Buddhas arise or whether they do not arise, there remains the dhatu, the "element," or basic "space" (e.g., *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom*, translated by Edward Conze, pp. 148, 310, 352, 466, 499, 522, 544, 595, 609, 617, 620, 630, 636, 648). This leaves no doubt in my mind that the term from the esoteric Senzar Catechism quoted by HPB is dhatu in its Sanskrit version, and dbyings (or khams) in its Tibetan version. Moreover, this term is very old, since it is found in Gatha Sanskrit. On this, see the latest posting in the Online Sanskrit Texts Project, where Rajendralala Mitra discusses the Gatha language in his 63-page English introduction to his 1877 edition of the *Lalita-vistara*. If not Senzar, Gatha Sanskrit would be an early link to it. An entire text on the Perfection of Wisdom (*Prajna-paramita*) written in the ancient Gatha Sanskrit has survived, the *Ratna-guna-samcaya-gatha*.

This text has been translated into English by Edward Conze, and is included in his translation of *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and Its Verse Summary*. The Ratna-guna-samcaya-gatha is the "Verse Summary" in this translation. The term dhatu is found in it at 10.9, 18.7, and 28.2. At 18.7, Conze translates: "the Dharma-element does not get exhausted nor does it increase."

It so happens that the adjective *acintya*, "unthinkable" or "inconceivable," as is found in the *Mandukya Upanishad* applied to brahman or atman, and quoted by HPB in reference to the first fundamental proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*, is in the *Perfection of Wisdom* texts applied to the dhatu. In Edward Conze's translation titled, *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom*, this phrase, the "unthinkable element," is found at least fourteen times (pp. 123, 179, 183, 185, 188, 193, 249, 253, 277, 305, 370, 374, 376, 377). Further, it so happens that the adjective *nirabhilapya*, "inexpressible," a much more common synonym of *avyapadesya* as is found in the *Mandukya Upanishad* and quoted by HPB from Gough's translation as "unspeakable," is also found in the *Perfection of Wisdom* texts applied to the dhatu. Here the Tibetan translation of dhatu is *dbyangs*, basic "space" or "realm," so Conze translates this phrase as the "inexpressible realm." It is found in his translation of the *Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom*, pp. 646-647. On p. 646, Conze translates: "the inexpressible realm exists by way of ultimate reality." This is in the chapter known as the "Questions of Maitreya."

We had earlier referred to the well-known fact that Buddhism does not teach an absolute like the Vedantic brahman, and like the first fundamental proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*, to which the adjectives "unthinkable"/"inconceivable" and "unspeakable"/"inexpressible" might be applied. Yet there is in their texts the term dhatu, to which these adjectives are in fact applied. One school of Buddhism, the Jonang order of Tibet, focused on such passages in these texts, and postulated an ultimate that is empty of everything but itself (*gzhan stong*). The Jonangpa teacher who first taught this publicly, Dolpopa, regarded the chapter on the questions asked by Maitreya, of the *Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom*, as the Buddha's own auto-commentary. By this Dolpopa meant that the other teachings of the Buddha should be understood as interpreted by means of this chapter. That is, this chapter gave the definitive meaning of what the Buddha taught in his other teachings. So for Dolpopa, the Buddha taught an element or basic space that is inconceivable and inexpressible, like the first fundamental proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*; and this teaching should form the basis of one's understanding of all the Buddha's teachings, just like this teaching is said by HPB to form the basis of the whole system or entire scheme of *The Secret Doctrine*.

Thus, while the Vedantic inconceivable and inexpressible brahman would be considered in the *Secret Doctrine* to be a synonym of the dhatu, a search for the origins of the Stanzas of Dzhan is likely to be more fruitful in the particular systems that use the term dhatu for the ultimate.

David Reigle on October 17, 2011 at 8:52pm

Yes, indeed, Stefaliva, Kalachakra has an extremely important element to add. In fact, it provides what is probably the single most decisive parallel with the system of the *Secret Doctrine* yet found. The second quotation from the *Occult Catechism* given in *The Secret Doctrine*, after speaking of "Space," the dhatu, brings in "The Great Breath":

"The *Occult Catechism* contains the following questions and answers:
 "What is it that ever is?" "Space, the eternal Anupadaka." "What is it that ever was?" "The Germ in the Root." "What is it that is ever coming and going?" "The Great Breath." "Then, there are three Eternals?" "No, the three are one. That which ever is is one, that which ever was is one, that which is ever being and becoming is also one: and this is Space."

The "great breath" is a very distinctive term, much more specific than "space." Its Sanskrit would be *maha-prana*, and we would expect to find this somewhere in the vast Vedic literature. But we do not. As mentioned earlier, this term is not found in the comprehensive Vedic Word-Concordance prepared by Vishva Bandhu, et al. It is not in the Vedas. It is found in Kalachakra. In a Jonang text, the *gzhan stong chen mo*, written by a modern Jonangpa abbot, Ngag dbang blo gros grags pa, it is spoken of. A section of this text was translated by Michael Sheehy as a PhD thesis in 2007, from which I quote this paragraph. The Tibetan for *maha-prana* is *srog chen*, which Michael here translates "magnificent vital force," the same as the "great breath."

"Because the basic disposition (*gshis*) of abiding reality's (*gnas lugs*) original actual nature is ultimately self-

manifesting and spontaneous, it is the very identity of every aspect within the three realms. This is the essence of the lucid and magnificent vital force (srog chen) that is enduring (ther zug), everlasting (g.yung drung), all-pervasive (kun khyab), fearless ('jig med), and constant (rtag);²⁷⁰ what is forever without interruptions, free from partialities and devoid of proliferations—like space."

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 18, 2011 at 7:51am

Leon Feer, in his "Analyse of the Kanjour and the Tanjour - Annals of the Musée Guimet Volume 2" identified 2 textes refering to the Dharma-Dhatu, and the translation he made of the titles have some communality with what Alistair says below

- Kanjour Volume VII (JA) - N° 6 : **Ratna-Kotni** (folio 460-474) - *Rin-po-chehi-mthat* , translated as "Talks on the primeval root (dharma-dhatu)"

- Kanjour Volume II (KA) - N°7 : **Dharma-dhātu-prakriti-asambheda-nirdeṣa** - *Chos-kyi-dbyings-kyi-rang-bjin-dbyer-med-par-bstan-pa*, translated as "Demonstration of the indivisibility of the root of the first being"

[David Reigle](#) on October 18, 2011 at 9:55am

I think you are right, Alistair. There has never been a sense of spatial significance with the Sanskrit word dhatu as such. The idea of a "sphere" apparently came when it was compounded with dharma to make dharma-dhatu, and then as part of this compound was translated into Tibetan as dbyings. We often seen this compound translated as the "sphere of phenomena." The idea of a sphere of something seems to come mostly from the Tibetan word dbyings. In recognition of this, we see that Jeffrey Hopkins in his translation of Dolpopa's Mountain Doctrine has instead used for dharma-dhatu the "element of attributes." This follows the Sanskrit more literally. It also agrees with your conclusion.

The next paragraph of the Jonangpa abbot's treatise that I quoted on the "great breath" speaks of the dhatu. You will see that Michael Sheehy has here translated dhatu as "expanse."

"From within this expanse (*dhātu, dbyings*), the tangible and intangible are self-expressions of the actuality of phenomena (*dharmatā, chos nyid*), the excellent and sublime abiding reality that remains always unimpeded. This is the natural identity of the pure identity that is itself things just as they exist, the common ground (*gzhi gcig*) for the wisdom that goes beyond both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa."

For those who are trying to study this material, I should also note that Michael Sheehy's translation, "abiding reality" (gnas lugs), is "mode of subsistence" in Jeffrey Hopkins' translation of Dolpopa's Mountain Doctrine.

[David Reigle](#) on October 18, 2011 at 10:41am

The second sutra that you refer to, Jacques, the **Dharma-dhātu-prakriti-asambheda-nirdeṣa** - *Chos-kyi-dbyings-kyi-rang-bjin-dbyer-med-par-bstan-pa*, sounds intriguing. This title is translated by Jeffrey Hopkins in the bibliography of Dolpopa's Mountain Doctrine as: "Sutra Indicating the Indivisible Nature of the Element of Attributes." But it is not in his index, so I do not know if Dolpopa quotes it or not.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on October 18, 2011 at 1:51pm

The **Dharma-dhātu-prakriti-asambheda-nirdeṣa** is quoted by Jeffrey Hopkins - Dolpopa's Mountain Doctrine on page 392 (note 369) in regard with sameness between *self-emptiness* and *element of attributes*.

[David Reigle](#) on October 19, 2011 at 9:21am

Thanks, Jacques, for finding the reference to this sutra in Dolpopa's Mountain Doctrine. Glad to have this information. In the following paragraph, Dolpopa speaks of "thusness." This Tibetan word, de bzhin nyid, Sanskrit tathatā, has more often been translated as "suchness." In this book, however, Jeffrey Hopkins uses "suchness" to translate the Tibetan de kho na nyid, Sanskrit tattva. I do not know of anyone else who does this.

The usual translation of tattva in Buddhist texts is "reality." Just wanted to call attention to this, to help avoid confusion when studying this book.

I also wanted to clarify my statement made yesterday about the word dhātu, that there has never been a sense of spatial significance with the word dhātu as such. This refers to it as used in non-Buddhist texts, and thus as this word is defined in the Sanskrit-English dictionaries of Monier-Williams and V. S. Apte. In Buddhist texts, however, it is additionally used in terms like tri-dhātu, loka-dhātu, etc., where it does have the sense of a realm. This sense is recorded in Franklin Edgerton's Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary.

David Reigle on October 23, 2011 at 3:54pm

Thanks for this helpful reference on tattva, Frank, to Judith Tyberg's book. I have now looked up this reference. After giving "reality," Judith gives "that-ness," which is the literal translation of "tat-tva." The word "tat" is a demonstrative pronoun, "that." The suffix "tva" means "-ness" or "-hood," as in buddhatva, "buddhahood." She then brings in the doctrine of the seven tattvas. Here, and also in the teaching of the twenty-five tattvas of Samkhya, tattva is often translated as "principle," and would indeed usually refer to a reality that is limited to an object. For the absolute reality, my impression, too, is that "sat" would be the preferred term in Hinduism, or even just tat, "that."

In Buddhism, however, "sat" is not used, probably because the Buddhists wanted to avoid reference to "being," which "sat" literally means. The Buddhists see this as "being" in a contrasting pair with "non-being," and therefore as being limited to duality. The great Hindu writers, of course, make it clear that "sat" as they mean it is beyond duality. In any case, since sat is not used in Buddhism, Buddhist writers were free to apply the term tattva to their ultimate truth, and they did so. Jeffrey Hopkins explains that he used "suchness" for Tibetan de kho na nyid (Sanskrit tattva), and "thusness" for Tibetan de bzhin nyid (Sanskrit tathatā) because a Tibetan commentator took them as being equivalent (Emptiness in the Mind-Only School of Buddhism, p. 69, fn.b). However, doing this considerably confuses things for the English-language reader when most previous translators use "suchness" for tathatā and "reality" for tattva.

It may be added that tattva has also sometimes been translated as "truth." I prefer not to use this translation for tattva, in order to reserve it for the term satya, which directly means "truth." The phrase tattvatah, with the suffix tah, meaning "according to," is commonly used to mean "according to reality" or "according to truth." It may be applied to anything, just like saying in English, "in truth," the earth is round, or "in reality," the earth is round. But of course, this is not using tattva as a technical term. It is just to illustrate its meaning. As a technical term, tattva may be used for the ultimate truth or reality in Hinduism, too. We see the term eka-tattva, the "one reality," familiar to students of Theosophy, used in the Yoga-Vasistha, and also in the Vedānta-dīpikā. Its opening verse says:

"May the one reality (tattvam ekam) that the proclamations (lit. "drumbeats") of Vedānta sound forth, the radiance designated as daksināmūrti, be present before us."

Jacques Mahnich on October 24, 2011 at 10:23am

In an interesting [conference](#) given in August 2011 under the ITC umbrella, one of the presenter, talking about "Emanation and Fohat as the basis for Electrical Universe", track down the fohat word to the Tibetan-Mongolian verbal root *foh*, which could be translated as "Cosmic life or Cosmic vitality" - "Buddha-life or Buddha-vitality".

David Reigle on October 24, 2011 at 8:54pm

Unfortunately, neither Tibetan nor Mongolian has a verbal root foh, nor do either of those languages have the letter or sound "f". For that matter, Tibetan does not use verbal roots, like Sanskrit does. I do not know where those meanings would have come from.

David Reigle on October 25, 2011 at 8:49pm

Since the Chinese word "fo" means "buddha," this would seem to be a better guess than Tibetan and Mongolian.

However, no one seems to know of a Chinese word "hat" for the second syllable. So, unless such a word is found, we can no more say that fohat is of Chinese origin than we can say that it is of Tibetan or Mongolian origin.

David Reigle on October 27, 2011 at 12:40pm

We are fortunate to now have participating here a native German-speaking Theosophical researcher, Frank Reitemeyer. We earlier had some questions regarding the German translations of Rig-Vedas 10.129 that we could not answer. Perhaps we can now investigate a long-standing question regarding the source of a quotation in The Secret Doctrine. In vol. 1, on p. 6, we read:

"Fire and Flame destroy the body of an Arhat, their essence makes him immortal.' (Bodhi-mur, Book II)."

No one has ever traced this quotation. In Alex Wayman's Introduction to the 1978 book, *Calming the Mind and Discerning the Real*, we learn that the Bodhi-mur or Bodhi mor is the abbreviated title of the Mongolian translation of Tsong kha pa's *Lam rim chen mo* (p. 4): "The Mongolian translation of the *Lam rim chen mo*, with the abbreviated reference Bodhi Mor, is printed in two parts on this basis." So where did HPB get access to this quotation?

The Bodhi-mur or Bodhimor is mentioned several times in Emil Schlagintweit's 1863 book, *Buddhism in Tibet* (pp. 62, 63 fn., 68 fn., 75 fn., 77, 101 fn.), a book that HPB draws on for many of her comments regarding Tibetan Buddhism. This book is now available online, minus its glossary and its pictures. I do not have the URL for this, as I usually use the printed book. The quotation that we are looking for is not found in Schlagintweit's book. He refers to Isaac Jacob Schmidt's 1829 German translation of Ssanang Ssetsen's Mongolian book, *Geschichte der Ost-Mongolen*, published in St. Petersburg, adding (p. 63 fn.): "The annotations to Ssanang Ssetsen contain translations from the Bodhimor, and other Mongolian books."

This book of Schmidt's is apparently the source of all quotations from the Bodhimor quoted by later writers. Probably the quotation we are looking for is to be found in this book. We do not know if HPB got it directly from Schmidt's book, or whether it was quoted in an intermediary book, such as Wassiljew's *Der Buddhismus* (referred to at SD 1.43 fn.). Schmidt's 1828 book is now available online at Google Books: <http://books.google.com/books?id=C2oiAQAAAJ&printsec=frontcov...> I have looked in this book a little, but it will take a German-speaker to find this quotation.

David Reigle on October 31, 2011 at 12:47pm

In the PDF of *Geschichte der Ost-Mongolen* that I downloaded from Google Books, searches do not work. But as it is found on their site, searches work. A search there for the word Feuer (fire) turns up 16 pages. One of these also has the word Flamme (flame), p. 181. I would like to find the source of the SD quote, because there appears to be something wrong with it. We now have a full published English translation of the *Lam rim chen mo* in three volumes, titled *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*, and also an earlier English translation by Alex Wayman of just its latter part, titled *Calming the Mind and Discerning the Real*, in which this quotation is supposed to be found. But no such quotation is found in the published English translations. This, of course, allows HPB's detractors to conclude that she just made this up from her imagination.

Jacques Mahnich on October 31, 2011 at 1:33pm

There is also a complete french translation - *Le Grand Livre de la Progression vers l'Eveil* - 2 volumes, published in 1990...but not in digital version. In the introduction, one can read that Tsongkhapa wrote, together with the *Lam rim chen mo*, a shorter version called *Lam rim chung pa*, and also a very short version called *Lam rim bsdu don*.

HPB quoted a "Book of the Aphorisms of Tson-ka-pa" in the SD Vol I, page 635, when, talking about **Fohat**, she says : "For the blessed workers have received the *Thyan-kam*, in the eternity... *Thyan kam* is the power or knowledge of guiding the impulses of cosmic energy in the right direction".

So she may also be referring to a shorter version of the Lam rim chen mo when she quoted it.

Ingmar de Boer on October 31, 2011 at 2:23pm

Most probable candidate for tracing fohat would imho be the Chinese syllable **po** (pinyin transliteration) or **p'o** (Wade-Giles), of which HPB writes that it is "the root of the Tibetan word fohat". In CW X,354 she calls pho the "animal soul". In CW IV, 242-243 it is also identified with the animal soul, or kAma manas. She also mentions that it would be a "Turanian compound", which means that it would be Old Chinese, and consisting of (two) parts. See also Richard P. Taylor, *Blavatsky and Buddhism*, ..., 1999.

David Reigle on October 31, 2011 at 2:37pm

Jacques, Wassiljew's 1860 German book that apparently quotes Schmidt's 1829 German book was published in French translation in 1863 as: *Le Bouddhisme: ses dogmes, son histoire et sa littérature*, by Vasilij Pavlovič Vasil'ev. It may be more likely that HPB would quote from a French book than from a German book, because she knew the language better. Perhaps you have already checked this book for these quotes, including the one you mentioned from "Book of the Aphorisms of Tson-ka-pa," and also for the elusive fohat.

A note for all our English speakers regarding the shorter Lam rim works by Tsong kha pa: English translations of most of these are listed in <http://www.easterntradition.org/etribib-tsongkhapa.pdf>, pp. 7-11.

Ingmar de Boer on October 31, 2011 at 2:44pm

The article of Richard P. Taylor can be found [here](#). His conclusion on fohat being derived from the Tibetan spros pa is, I think, speculative.

He notes that HPB first mentions fohat in 1885 here: "Blavatsky's footnote to an article entitled "Zoroastrianism on the Septenary Constitution of Man," reprinted in *Five Years of Theosophy*, p. 152"

David Reigle on October 31, 2011 at 4:02pm

Thanks, Ingmar, for your contributions. What does the Chinese syllable po or p'o mean? There is in Samuel Beal's 1871 *Catena of Buddhist Scriptures* from the Chinese mention on p. 389 of the "pho-mun" or "manifestation section" of the Lotus Sutra. I do not know about the Chinese syllable that he wrote as "pho," but in Tibetan, like in Sanskrit, the "ph" is an aspirated "p"; it is not an "f" sound.

Yes, I agree that Richard Taylor's spros pa is speculative, and I think he also agrees. I do not think that he holds this any longer. We discussed this at some length years ago, after he wrote this. The first occurrence of fohat that has been found in the Theosophical writings is in the *Cosmological Notes*, written in the fall of 1881. Its first mention is:

(1) What are the different kinds of knowledge?

The real (Dgyu) and the unreal (Dgyu-mi). Dgyu becomes Fohat when in its activity — active agent of will-electricity — no other name.

Ingmar de Boer on October 31, 2011 at 5:09pm

The po we are talking about here is **pò** or po4 (4th tone). The character is found for example [here](#) and in other in common modern Chinese dictionaries. De meaning in my "A Chinese-English Dictionary (Rev. Ed.)" is 1. soul and 2. vigour; spirit. In my older pocket dictionary of Goodrich I find "animal soul", which is literally what HPB attributes to her **pho**.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on October 31, 2011 at 5:27pm

It would be like an aspirated "p", as in Tibetan, not an "f". It would be unclear why HPB writes an f in fohat.

I have not studied the work of Samuel Beal (yet), but some time ago I came across the term p'o in "The Secret of the Golden Flower" which is partly found [here](#) on Google Books. It is also called "animal soul" in the commentary of Carl Jung, page 116.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on October 31, 2011 at 6:49pm

I see it is also to be found in Soothill and Hodous' "A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms", on p. 430 under **húnpò**, which also generally means soul: "Animus and anima; the spiritual nature or mind, and the animal soul; the two are defined as mind and body or mental and physical, the invisible soul inhabiting the visible body, the former being celestial, the latter terrestrial."

[David Reigle](#) on October 31, 2011 at 7:28pm

Thanks, Ingmar, for all the helpful information. We of course have many other aspects of fohat to integrate into the meaning of any equivalent we might find, such as the "fiery whirlwind," etc. But on the hypothesis that we can do this with the Chinese po, what would be the second syllable, hat?

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on October 31, 2011 at 11:29pm

The many different aspects of fohat may all be related to HPB's description of fohat as "cosmic kAma". My notes of a few years ago do not tell me where she wrote that, but it should be easy to find. In SD I,108 and onwards she writes that fohat is comparable to eros, the will of the creative logos, the power of affinity and sympathy.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 1, 2011 at 12:21am

On the second syllable "hat" I have not found any sensible clue. HPB left us a great riddle in fohat, among many other riddles, the solution of which is often very rewarding, in the area of wisdom and insight.

[David Reigle](#) on November 1, 2011 at 9:15am

Ingmar, you referred to the Soothill and Hodous Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms, which gives Sanskrit equivalents when these are known. I am not able to consult this dictionary, because its entries are necessarily given in Chinese characters. In the entry you found for hunpo, does it give any Sanskrit equivalents? Although Chinese translations of Sanskrit terms were not standardized, like Tibetan ones were, it would still be helpful to get some idea of what Sanskrit term(s) might be equivalent to the Chinese po.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 1, 2011 at 9:51am

There is no Sanskrit equivalent given for **húnpò**, but the lemma for **hún** is

The mind, the soul, conscious mind, *vijñāna*; also

I don't think vijñāna brings us any further though? You can see for yourself at page 430 [here](#).

[David Reigle](#) on November 1, 2011 at 12:31pm

I did not know that the Soothill/Hodous Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms was available online. If the first syllable, hun, means "The mind, the soul, conscious mind, *vijñāna*," this narrows down the meaning of the second syllable, po, to the second portions of this definition of hunpo: "Animus and anima; the spiritual nature or mind, and the animal soul; the two are defined as mind and body or mental and physical, the invisible soul

inhabiting the visible body, the former being celestial, the latter terrestrial." That is, po would mean the anima, the animal soul, the body, the physical, the visible body, terrestrial. This meaning from Chinese Buddhist texts seems to be taking us farther from the meanings of fohat given by HPB and the Mahatmas. When HPB spoke of fohat as the animal soul, I understood this as being a manifestation of fohat, like physical electricity is, rather than as defining fohat. In any case, without a Chinese word "hat" to go with "po" in an applicable meaning, the word fohat still remains elusive.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 1, 2011 at 3:27pm

The principles of hun and po are apparently opposites in the philosophical model of man presented in the Golden Flower. (see below) HPB in CW IV 242-243 describes **hún** and **pò** (**Hwân** and **Pho**) as "soul, animus" and "animal soul, shell after death" respectively. This may correspond to the meaning of hún-pò in Soothill, i.e. animus (hún) and anima (pò).

The definition of fohat as "cosmic kAma" may be a common factor in all other "manifestations", like electricity, the fiery whirlwind, etc. Essence of fohat may be that it is the entity behind all manifestations of **force** in the universe.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 1, 2011 at 3:54pm

In [CW X.254](#) (Transactions...) we find:

Q. Can you say what is the real meaning of the word Fohat?

A. The word is a Turanian compound and its meanings are various. In China Pho, or Fo, is the word for "animal soul," the vital Nephesh or the breath of life. Some say that it is derived from the Sanskrit "Bhu," meaning existence, or rather the essence of existence. Now Svâyambhū means Brahmā and Man at the same time. It means self-existence and self-existing, that which is everlasting, the eternal breath. If Sat is the potentiality of Being, Pho is the potency of Being. The meaning, however, entirely depends upon the position of the accent. Again, Fohat is related to Mahat. It is the reflection of the Universal Mind, [...]

[David Reigle](#) on November 1, 2011 at 5:44pm

You are no doubt right, Ingmar, in identifying the first syllable of fohat as the Chinese "po" (pinyin) or "p'o" (Wade-Giles) meaning "animal soul," if we follow what HPB said in the two references you gave, BCW X.354 (= Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge, p. 70) and BCW IV.242-243:

"The word is a Turanian compound and its meanings are various. In China Pho, of Fo, is the word for 'animal soul,' the vital Nephesh or the breath of life."

". . . the Pho or animal soul. At death the Hwan (or spiritual soul) wanders away, ascending, and the Pho (the root of the Tibetan word Pho-hat), descends and is changed into a ghostly shade (the shell)."
[As noted in my Nov. 12, 2010 post, this is from James Legge's Yi King, p. 355 fn.]

But when making these statements, was HPB speaking from knowledge or only making an educated guess? Apparently the latter. The passage from the Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge reads rather differently in the recently published fuller version, The Secret Doctrine Commentaries, pp. 138-143. On p. 142 we read:

"Moreover, you have to learn the etymology of the word Fohat. There is where it becomes difficult to understand. It is a Turanian compound word. 'Pho' is the word. 'Pho' was once and is derived from the Sanskrit 'bhu,' meaning existence, or rather the essence of existence. Now, 'Swayambhū' is Brahmā and man at the same time. 'Swayambhū' means self-existence and self-existing; it means also Manvantara. It means many, many things according to the sense in which you take it, and one must know exactly whether the accent is on the 'm' or on the 'u', or where it is, for therein lies the difference. Take 'bhu.' It means earth, our earth. Take 'Swayambhū.' It means divine breath, self-existence, that which is everlasting, the eternal breath. To this day in China, Buddha is called 'Pho.'"

As we see, in this version there is no mention of pho in China as animal soul, but on the contrary, pho in China is here Buddha. We know that there is a Chinese word "fo" meaning Buddha. Similarly, in BCW IV.18 HPB writes of "Amita-pho (pronounced Fo) or Amita-Buddha," footnoting this to Tibetan "pho," so that she is again taking pho as Buddha. It now stands at two references for pho as animal soul, Chinese "po," and two references for pho as Buddha, Chinese "fo." In the end, HPB states that she does not know. She was specifically asked for the Chinese characters for the word fohat in the full version of the Transactions. There on p. 363, as quoted here earlier (Nov. 14, 2010), we read:

"Mr. Atkinson: Is Fohat in the Chinese represented by two Chinese syllables?

Mme. Blavatsky: It is from those parts something I have been asking many times. Fo means brilliant.

Mr. Atkinson: I know the root and the character of the Chinese syllable 'Fo.' If you could get the Chinese characters, I could turn it up in the Chinese dictionary.

Mme. Blavatsky: And in the Japanese, too. I don't think it is a real word, because some of them call it Fohat.

Mr. Atkinson: It would be 'Ho' in Japanese. And it would represent the idea of 'Ho,' as 'Ho' was a [] part of the phoenix. If it is the same as the Chinese, I mean. It becomes 'Ho' in Japanese, and then becomes the 'Ho' of the phoenix, as part of the compound name of the phoenix.

Mme. Blavatsky: Fohat is also a relation to the cycles, because the intensity of this vital force changes with every cycle.

Mr. Atkinson: It is in the celestial cosmogony of China. It is in the celestial beginning and the cosmogenesis.

Mme. Blavatsky: I wish you would look somewhere where you could find it, because I have been looking for it in India.

Mr. Atkinson: If you will only give me the Chinese characters, I will find it at once.

Mme. Blavatsky: I have got it somewhere, but not in the Chinese."

[David Reigle](#) on November 1, 2011 at 5:58pm

Regarding fohat as Tibetan "pho ba" or phowa, to make this case, we have to find actual Tibetan texts in which this word is used in a sense like fohat. In the texts of the six yogas of Naropa, I do not see it used like fohat is used in Theosophical writings. I have not seen this word used in Tibetan cosmogonic accounts.

[David Reigle](#) on November 1, 2011 at 9:09pm

On fohat and mahat, HPB discusses their relationship in the The Secret Doctrine Commentaries, pp. 426-427, saying that fohat is the collective radiation of the seven sons of mahat. The "hat" in the two words would not be the same, since mahat is Sanskrit, and fohat is not. Here is a rare case where tracing the word used, fohat, is proving harder than understanding the idea given, even though the idea is quite abstruse enough.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 2, 2011 at 3:37am

Thank you David: I had not read the passage from the Secret Doctrine Commentaries yet. It is certainly interesting!

There are many dead ends in HPB's etymological statements about fohat and fo. One example is the connection to **Potala**, or "Buddha-la". ([CW IV 11n](#)) Jäschke in his Tibetan-English dictionary (p. 325) states that the relation of Potala to Buddha "arises from an erroneous etymological hypothesis". He also mentions there, that this connection is found in the works of Abbé Huc. HPB cites Huc on more than one occasion. The po in Potala would according to Jäschke be related to Sanskrit pota "ship" and la, "harbour", and Buddha is of course derived

from the Sanskrit root "budh", to know. They are both unrelated to our earlier Chinese syllable **po**. Of course this does not mean that there is no meaningful relation possible between these words, but in this case it would not be an etymological one, contrary to what HPB suggests.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 2, 2011 at 7:35am

The Tibetan '[pho ba](#)', "transference of consciousness", was also one of my plausible candidates for fohat. I have not been able to trace it beyond current Tibetan dictionaries. As far as I can see it is not related to the Chinese po.

It refers to more or less secretive techniques to induce altered states of consciousness, especially associated with the rnying ma order. I have not seen the term '**pho ba**' referring to a philosophical principle on a cosmological scale, like fohat in the stanza's of Dzyan. Maybe this lead is worth more research though.

[David Reigle](#) on November 2, 2011 at 9:20am

Ingmar, you obviously know some Chinese, and I don't. I have two questions for you on this.

First, when Mr. Atkinson was asking HPB about the Chinese characters for fohat, he said that he knew the Chinese character "fo," and said that: "It is in the celestial cosmogony of China. It is in the celestial beginning and the cosmogenesis." Do you know of any "fo" in Chinese cosmogony?

Second, you were giving the pinyin and Wade-Giles transcription for words from the Soothill/Hodous Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms. You then gave a link to an online version of it. Are the pinyin and Wade-Giles transcriptions available somewhere in the online version, or do you just have to know them?

[David Reigle](#) on November 2, 2011 at 1:26pm

"Blavatsky said: "It is called in several Buddhist books Fohat."" T. Subba Row makes the same statement, but he obviously never saw any of the Tibetan books that it is supposed to be in. Probably HPB did not, either. Both of them simply repeated what they heard from their Mahatma teachers. While such a word could well be in secret Tibetan books that we do not have access to, it is quite unlikely that fohat is found in the known Tibetan books. However close we may get to a Tibetan (or Chinese) word for the first syllable, we still have to account for the second syllable, hat. No one has been able to do this, despite checking extensive Tibetan dictionaries, such as the comprehensive 3-volume Tibetan-Tibetan dictionary published in China in 1984. I wonder if fohat is simply a term adopted by the Mahatmas from some other language, and used by them in their discussion of this idea with their chelas.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 2, 2011 at 2:18pm

David, as to your first question: I have here in my notes a short list of Chinese syllables I have been looking into, ranging from fo, fu, fou, to po, pho, pa, pha etc. The only **fo** in my list is fo2, for Buddha or Buddhist, which is a phonetic rendering of the Sanskrit budh or bu. ([CW IV 18](#) and [V 288](#))

For all HPB's statements in the CW on the various syllables connected to fohat, I have more or less systematically been tracing their connections and history if possible. When I was trying to learn some Tibetan, I have familiarized myself with using Chinese dictionaries, etymological databases etc. I imagine there will be people online, or even on this forum, who have real knowledge in the area of **Chinese language and philosophy**, who could shed much more light on the subject, to which they are of course cordially invited!

As to Wade-Giles and pinyin: I have made a handy table [here](#).

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 3, 2011 at 3:18am

Thanks for your interesting contribution Anna. The **Po (no. 23)** and **Huan (no. 59)** entries in the I Ching are different Chinese characters than our earlier **húnpò** but that may not completely prove that they are unrelated.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 3, 2011 at 5:00am

In addition to my earlier remark on the connection between fohat and **fó**, "Buddha": Buddhism came to China in the 7th c. AD. The syllable fó would have been derived from Sanskrit in the Middle Chinese period, and would then not be "Turanian" i.e. Old Chinese. The syllable fó was derived from the MC word **bhiêtdha**, which is quite different from po, pho etc.

[David Reigle](#) on November 3, 2011 at 10:28am

Here in this blog discussion, we are trying to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzian. This necessarily means tracing them in known sources, which would be outside of the Theosophical writings. If a unique word found in the Stanzas, such as fohat, can be traced to known sources, this may help us in identifying the origins of the Stanzas.

The etymologies given by HPB for fohat would presumably provide our best leads as to where to look in outside sources. Some of these have led to actual words that can be found in Chinese and Tibetan sources. Others are examples of what modern scholars politely call "creative" etymologies. That is, linguistically speaking, they are impossible etymologies. They represent popular etymologies that are sometimes used by the people, like stories and myths, to make particular associations, and even these associations may or may not be valid.

With reference to the quote from "Reincarnations in Tibet": The Tibetan word "phag pa" (phags pa) is the standard translation of the Sanskrit word "ārya" used throughout the Tibetan Buddhist canonical writings. This is easily and quickly verifiable by anyone who checks the Sanskrit originals in comparison with the canonical Tibetan translations. The word "phag-yul" (phags [pa'i] yul) does indeed refer to the "holy land," since it literally translates the Sanskrit "ārya-deśa," the land of the āryas; i.e., India. For Tibetans, India is the holy land, because it is the source of the Buddhist teachings. These teachings fill the Tibetan Buddhist canon, the Kangyur and Tengyur, in the form of hundreds of volumes of scriptures that were translated from the sacred language of India, Sanskrit.

The word "phag," which in its full transliterated spelling is phags (to be distinguished from phag, meaning "pig"), does not, and cannot, come from the root "pha" or "pho," linguistically speaking. Tibetan is what was called in HPB's day an agglutinative language (SD 2.199). In these languages, words are either single morphemes, or are formed from morphemes placed together, but not merged with each other. So there is not, and cannot be, any root such as "pha" or "pho" that makes the word "phag."

Nor would the Tibetan words "pha" or "pho," meaning "father" and "male," be corruptions of the Chinese word "fo," meaning "Buddha." These are two different languages. There is no more evidence that Tibetan "pho" is based on Chinese "fo" than that English "pig" is based on Tibetan "phag." We will have to leave aside these "creative" etymologies in our search.

[David Reigle](#) on November 3, 2011 at 10:46am

Thank you, Ingmar, for the link to your helpful table of Chinese transliterations in the Wade-Giles and pinyin systems.

I do not know about the different periods of the Chinese language, but there is historical evidence that Buddhism came to China in the first century CE, and traditional accounts that it arrived two or three centuries earlier than that. There are a number of Sanskrit Buddhist texts that were translated into Chinese in the second century CE, including the famous Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 lines. I do not know if "fo" for Buddha was used in these early translations.

[David Reigle](#) on November 3, 2011 at 11:44am

The words that we can associate with the "fo" of "fohat" do not play a role in cosmogonic accounts, like fohat does in the Stanzas of Dzian. Another approach to this question can be taken. In cosmogonic accounts, such as in Tibetan Buddhism, what word holds a similar place or what idea performs a similar function? Earlier here I have suggested that the Sanskrit word prabhāsvara, "luminosity," Tibetan 'od gsal, "clear light," does, and I

translated a small but important group of four verses on this by Āryadeva (Jan. 23, 2011). This leads me to two suggestions.

First, there are now many books out on Tibetan Buddhism, far more than I can read. The term "clear light" should be watched for in any readings of these books that any of you may do. If anything relevant to the meaning of fohat is found, please post it here.

Second, the term prabhāsvara occurs in a famous passage of the Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 lines, in its first chapter. It is: *tac cittam acittam, prakṛtiś cittasya prabhāsvārā*, literally, "that mind is no-mind; the nature of mind is luminosity." This passage is quoted in the *Vimala-prabhā Kālacakra* commentary (Sanskrit edition, vol. 1, p. 23, lines 12-13), and also in the modern book by the present Dalai Lama titled *Dzogchen*, p. 126. It would be useful to find out what the Chinese translation of prabhāsvara is. Perhaps its early translation in the *Aṣṭa-sāhasrikā Prajñā-pāramitā* in the second century CE differs from its later translation, where it is found often in the *Ratna-gotra-vibhāga*.

[David Reigle](#) on November 4, 2011 at 8:39am

"Is **phag** coming from the one root—**Pha** or **Pho** being the corruption of **Fo** (or Buddha) as Blavatsky said or not?

Can we have a clarification of which one is the correct version and why?"

In agglutinative languages like Tibetan, words are not made from roots like they are in the languages of the Indo-European family. While making phag from pha makes perfect sense in an Indo-European language, it is not possible in Tibetan. There the morphemes stay the same, and two separate morphemes may be placed together to make additional words, but not merged together into one morpheme to make additional words.

For example, from the Tibetan morpheme "shes," meaning "to know," the word "shes rab" can be made, meaning "wisdom," or the word "shes pa" can be made, meaning "known." You see that "shes" remains unchanged, and separate syllables are added to it to make additional words. In Indo-European languages such as English and Sanskrit, this is done by merging or fusing elements together. Thus, as we see, we can get English "known" from "know." In Sanskrit, from the root *jña*, "to know" (Tib. *shes*) we can make *prajñā*, "wisdom" (Tib. *shes rab*), or *jñāta*, "known" (Tib. *shes pa*). But in Tibetan, we cannot make phag from pha.

[David Reigle](#) on November 5, 2011 at 6:30am

Thank you very much, Frank, for checking Schmidt's 1829 book for the Bodhimor quote. I really do appreciate this. Perhaps it is in one of Schmidt's other books that you kindly gave us links to. He seems to be the only one in the 1800s who quoted the Bodhimor.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 6, 2011 at 1:15pm

On the quote of De Purucker below. The Mongolian etymology of fohat is unfortunately also a dead end. Mongolian (Altai-Uralic) language is not related to Tibetan and Chinese (Sino-Tibetan), so words cannot be of Tibetan or Chinese as well as Mongolian origin. In the Mongolian alphabet, there is no letter f, and for that reason the "verbal root" ***foh** will not be found in any Mongolian dictionary. The Chinese fo (Buddha) is known to be derived from the Sanskrit root *bud*, which makes it Indo-European, and therefore not directly related to Altai-Uralic or Sino-Tibetan. Maybe we could look for relations beyond these language families, but just calling it Mongolian is certainly false.

[David Reigle](#) on November 6, 2011 at 2:33pm

For our purposes here in this search, the problem with any Theosophical definition of fohat that ascribes it to Tibetan, Mongolian, Chinese, or Turanian is that none of these Theosophical writers have ever seen it in any of those languages. They have merely repeated this from some source that they take as authoritative. There is little harm in doing this as long as their audience is only other Theosophists. But for the rest of the world, this word would have to actually exist in one of those languages, and be able to be found in texts written in that language.

Otherwise, it is in their eyes just one more of HPB's fantasies, like the Book of Dzian itself. Theosophical writers who say it is in one of those languages, where no one can find it, do not help the cause of Theosophy in the eyes of the world. So until fohat is found, we will have to regard it as unidentified. Theosophists are free to learn those languages and join in the search for it. There is a real need for this.

Jacques Mahnich on November 6, 2011 at 6:14pm

The Bodhimor was also quoted in a book written by J.J. Boehner and published in 1831. The title is : "La vie contemplative, ascétique et monastique chez les hindous et chez les peuples bouddhistes", and the quote (translated) is : "Around 800, a chinese lama, named Hoshang Mahadjana (named l'Ascian by Georgi), came from China to Tibet, and set up a sect, that Georgi called the sect of the contemplators and also Kiupa (Georgi). **The Bodhimör, a tibetan book**, ascribe to this lama the division of the lamas in two sects, the sTon-min, and the T'semin.

But nothing else of interest for our quest showed up in this book.

Ingmar de Boer on November 6, 2011 at 10:57pm

Chinese renderings of Sanskrit prabhāsvara / Tibetan 'od gsal

清静	qīng jìng	
光明	guāng míng	bright (future); promising
明	míng	clear; bright; to understand; next; ...
明净	míng jìng	bright and clean; luminous
清静相	qīng jìng xiàng	

list of individual characters

清	qīng (or qìng)	clear, pure, clean; peaceful
净	jìng	clean, pure; cleanse
光	guāng	light, brilliant, shine; only
明	míng	clear; bright; to understand; next; ...
相	xiàng	appearance, look; ...

Ingmar de Boer on November 6, 2011 at 11:15pm

Some simple tools for looking up Chinese words or characters can be found at <http://www.mandarintools.com>

Having identified the characters or words, we could use specialized dictionaries to identify/confirm the technical (philosophical, religious, etc.) terms.

[David Reigle](#) on November 7, 2011 at 11:51am

It is great to see that research is proceeding, in French, German, and Chinese sources, no less.

Thank you, Jacques, for posting the results of your search on the Bodhimor. It is interesting that J. J. Boehner quoted the Bodhimor in a French book from 1831. Even though it is not the quote we are seeking, it pushes our research ahead. I think it is very likely that HPB got her Bodhimor quote from a published source. All we have to do is find it.

Thank you, Ingmar, for tracing the Chinese translations of the Sanskrit term prabhasvara for us. The phonetic transcriptions you found make it clear that this is not the term "fohat" that we are seeking. It was certainly worth checking, from the standpoint of its meaning. Each term we rule out also advances our research.

Thank you, Frank, for the input from German sources. A very old form of Mongolian, no longer used, or of any other Asian language, would indeed be a possibility for the source of the word fohat. These almost put it in the realm of Senzar, and make it nearly impossible to trace in known texts. Nonetheless, we must continue our search until all known possibilities are ruled out.

Yes, our homework is cut out for us.

[David Reigle](#) on November 7, 2011 at 12:00pm

Yes, Anna, I will try to say why there is a need for Theosophists to learn Eastern languages to search for Theosophical terms such as fohat. The immediate reason is twofold. First, only a small percentage of the Eastern texts have been translated into English. Second, there is no standardization of translation terminology used in the translations we do have, so that we often do not know what is behind the English terms we read in them. I will illustrate this shortly. The broader reason, relevant to this discussion, is that tracing specific Theosophical terms to specific Eastern texts will help us in trying to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzhan.

Why do we want to do that? As students of Theosophy, we want to follow the path shown in The Voice of the Silence, of placing the welfare of others ahead of our own welfare. We believe that the Theosophical teachings have much to contribute to the welfare of our neighbors; teachings such as the ideal of brotherhood, the teaching of karma that fosters individual responsibility for our actions, the teaching of reincarnation that counters the fear of death, the teaching that the different religions and philosophies of the world have their roots in a once universal Wisdom Tradition, so that there is no need for religious conflict, etc. But these potentially beneficial Theosophical teachings reach only a tiny percentage of humanity. The primary reason for this, in my view, is that Blavatsky is regarded by most of the world as an imposter and a charlatan, and the Stanzas of Dzhan that form the basis of her major book, The Secret Doctrine, are regarded as figments of her imagination. Therefore, these teachings are not taken seriously by most of the world. This is why we are here trying to trace the Stanzas in known texts, and this is why there is a need for Theosophists to know Eastern languages.

Now, to the illustration. The "great breath" is taught as one of the two aspects under which we conceive the one inconceivable principle that is the first fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine. We search in vain for the "great breath" in the known Eastern scriptures. At last, we find this distinctive term in the Kalachakra texts, not yet translated into English. This term as used there goes back to the Manjusri-nama-samgiti. Among the Sanskrit editions of the Manjusri-nama-samgiti just posted here in the Online Sanskrit Texts Project, the 1981 edition gives an English translation. Its verse 29 is there translated as: "Aspirated, unoriginated, without uttering a sound, he is the foremost cause of all expression, shining forth within all speech." This is from a good translation by a competent scholar. Yet from it, we have no clue that this verse contains the term mahā-prāṇa, the "great breath," because this term is here translated as "aspirated."

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 7, 2011 at 2:19pm

I think maybe we could distinguish **two approaches** the problem of the "Origin of the Stanzas", the problem being "What are the Stanzas of Dzian? Where did they come from and where can they be found today?". Each of these will have its own pitfalls.

1. Finding technical terms in known sources

This could involve

- Listing the places where respective technical terms are used in the works of HPB
- Following HPB's references to sources of her time
- Finding out orthography and identifying terms in modern sources
- Studying sources where terms are found, searching for other unidentified terms

2. Finding the concepts behind the technical terms in various schools of thought

This could involve

- Following HPB's references and hints to various schools of thought
- Studying sources on these schools
- Identifying concepts characteristic to the schools
- Comparing tenet systems to the ancient wisdom as presented by HPB
- Identifying geographical and historical footprints of the schools
- Finding terms corresponding to these concepts in the languages within the footprints
- Studying sources and languages where terms are found, searching for other unidentified terms

[David Reigle](#) on November 8, 2011 at 1:35pm

The two approaches that you outlined, Ingmar, I think are well put: finding technical terms in known sources, and finding the concepts behind the technical terms in various schools of thought. Your outline could serve as the guidelines for the research in this project.

[David Reigle](#) on November 8, 2011 at 2:07pm

M. Sufilight wrote:

"Transliteration schemes was as far as I know it not very well developed in the 1880-ties. **Blavatsky said in her book the Secret Doctrine, that the word "Fohat" could be found in several Buddhistic writings. And that the word Fohat had several meanings. - So it must be easy to find this word. -** Do you not think so?"

It has not been easy for me to find this word. But perhaps it will be easy for someone else to find it. The Tibetan alphabet has only thirty letters, which can quickly be learned. Thousands of Tibetan books are now available online, through the Asian Classics Input Project, and the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center. Anyone is free to go through these, looking for fohat. Perhaps you will find it.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on November 8, 2011 at 2:13pm

David wrote : "*Wassiljew's 1860 German book that apparently quotes Schmidt's 1829 German book was published in French translation in 1863 as: Le Bouddhisme: ses dogmes, son histoire et sa littérature, by Vasilij Pavlovič Vasil'ev*"

I read through the 400+ pages of the french translation (search engines are not always reliable, depending the quality of the scanning), and nothing significant showed up, in regard with our quest. This book describe the history and the philosophy of the Buddhism development throughout the various schools and countries where it propagated.

Few quotes from the sutra/tantra are listed.

The Lam Rim is quoted one time, as a generic reference, and one of the SD word, "**Parinishpanna**" is described.

[David Reigle](#) on November 8, 2011 at 2:41pm

Wow, Jacques, that is a lot of work. I really appreciate you reading through this whole book. For many years I have wondered if there might be something in it relevant to the search for the Book of Dzhan. Thank you very much for doing this and letting us know the results.

[David Reigle](#) on November 8, 2011 at 3:03pm

Right now, we have come no nearer to finding fohat than the Russian "pohot" that Anna suggested. According to online sources, this Russian word means "lust," or "carnal desire." This is the same as what eros came to mean. But in Hesiod's Theogony, eros is a cosmic principle, and HPB equates it with fohat. As I mentioned a while back, Turanian was used by ethnologists and linguists in the 1800s for Mongolian and Uralic and Altaic and related people and languages of central Asia, and even Dravidian of southern India, following F. Max Muller.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 8, 2011 at 3:43pm

Jacques: is it spelled Parinishpanna or parinishpanna?

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on November 9, 2011 at 4:17am

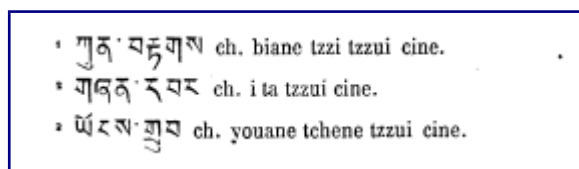
Good point Ingmar !

It is Parinichpanna (see below #3). According to Vassiliev :

#1 is Parakalpita

#2 is Paratantra

#3 is Parinichpanna



[David Reigle](#) on November 9, 2011 at 8:36am

Thank you, Olga, for clarifying the meaning and usage of the Russian word "pohot" for us. This is very helpful, especially as coming from a native of Ural. I have often seen that just relying on dictionaries, without seeing how a word is actually used in the language, leads to significant errors. Your knowledgeable statement that you cannot find any relevant connection of this word with fohat is convincing to me. I appreciate your input on this.

David Reigle on November 9, 2011 at 3:49pm

On pariniṣpanna, for those who want to see this in the original Sanskrit, the texts are now available here on the Theosophical Network. Under Sanskrit Documents go to Buddhist Documents, and then scroll down to mahayana_sutralamkara_1907.pdf. This is the first Yogācāra text to be published in the original Sanskrit, and the first time that terms like pariniṣpanna could be verified. Go to page 22, where you will see the beginning of chapter 6, marked by roman numeral VI. You will see a line of text from the commentary introducing the first verse, then the two lines of verse 1. In the middle of the second line of the commentary following this verse, you will see the word pariniṣpanna.

This word may also be seen in another Yogācāra text posted here, madhyanta_vibhaga_bhasyam_1967.pdf. In that text, go to page 3, where six lines from the top you will see pariniṣpanna as the third word in the first line of verse 6. This word is found again a few times on pp. 18-19, in the commentary on verse 3 of chapter 3.

David Reigle on November 9, 2011 at 9:57pm

You are probably right, Jeremy, that fohat is a sort of "in-house" term used by the initiates, and that is why we cannot find it in any known Eastern text. It is given as being in the Stanzas of Dzhan, and the quote you posted from Alice Bailey's book, The Rays and the Initiations, would indicate that it is also in the "Old Commentary." If it cannot be found in known sources, then we are left with trying to find the concept behind this technical term in various schools of thought, as Ingmar put it.

HPB equated fohat with śakti in her note on T. Subba Row's article in Five Years of Theosophy. The Sanskrit word śakti, in partial reply to M. Sufilight, is nus pa in Tibetan. T. Subba Row at the end of his article, "A Personal and an Impersonal God," associated cit-śakti with fohat. The term cit-śakti refers to the power or force or energy (śakti) of pure consciousness (cit). It is used, for example, in the Yoga-vasiṣṭha, book 4, chapter 42, on the descent of the jīvas into manifestation. This book, which T. Subba Row apparently used, is an important source that we should not neglect.

Let us assume, for the moment, that the parallel of cit-śakti to fohat is accurate. There is a clear parallel of cit-śakti to prabhāsvara, in its fuller form, citta-prakṛti-prabhāsvaratā, the natural luminosity of mind. The term cit is used in Vedānta for pure or ultimate consciousness is much like citta as used in the Buddhist texts for pure or ultimate mind when speaking of prabhāsvara. The Sanskrit word prabhāsvara, in further reply to M. Sufilight, is 'od gsal in Tibetan, literally "clear light." As we have seen, we do have a brief cosmogonic account using prabhāsvara that is found in Buddhist tantric texts, the "Books of Kiu-te."

David Reigle on November 10, 2011 at 2:10pm

The word śakti is not a cosmic force in Buddhism, so Tibetan words that translate Sanskrit words that come from the root śak, "to be able," are normally used to refer to mundane or everyday activities. The word phod pa is used in that sense.

English - Tibetan
light - 'od
life - srog
life force (prana) - srog
life itself - srog nyid
fire - me
flame - me
breath - dbugs
heat - drod
wind - rlung
energy (in the sense of vigor) - brtson 'grus

Jacques Mahnich

Back to Wassiljew's book written in 1860 and published in French translation in 1863 as: *Le Bouddhisme: ses dogmes, son histoire et sa littérature*, there are some close similarities with what HPB wrote as commentaries in her SD.

On Vol.1 p.48, she wrote : "No Arhat, oh mendicants, can reach absolute knowledge before he becomes one with Paranirvana. *Parikalpita* and *Paratantra* are his two great enemies." (Aphorisms of the Bodhisattvas).

(By the way this is another quote we may want to try to identify inside the buddhist canon.).

Then, she goes on, describing the sanskrit words she uses : "*Parikalpita* (in Tibetan *Kun-ttag*) 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 connexion, and which has to disappear as soon as the cause from which it proceeds is removed -E.G, the light of a wick.

Looking now to Vassiliev (p.293), he described Parakalpita, and Paratantra with the following : "Parakalpita is the presupposition or the error; this is the understanding of animated beings who do not understand everything is void according to the true nature of what does not exist...as for example, the non-ego. Paratantra is something dependent, which does not survive in itself.

Vassiliev is then using the sun beam as an illustration of Parikalpita as a mirage (instead of a wick light).

The fact that the 3 concepts of Parakalpita, Paratantra and Parinishpanna are described in Vassiliev's book, on the same page, together with the tibetan translation which is quoted by HPB (*Kun-ttag* for *Parakalpita*), and the similarities between the description may indicate she drew from him for her commentary.

Jacques Mahnich

On page 61 of Volume 1 of the SD, HPB quote the following text :

The Ekasloka-Shastra of Nagarjuna (the Lung-shu of China) called by the Chinese the Yih-shu-lu-kia-lun.

Do we know what that text is ? Can it be the Lokatitastava (Jig rten las 'das par bstod pa) ?

Ingmar de Boer

A translation of the **Ekaślokaśāstra** is found in chapter XIX of Edkins' "Chinese Buddhism". It is also spelled "Yih-shu-lu-kia-lun" there. As the title suggest, it consists of one śloka:

"My body (or substance) in its nature is not permanent;

Thus, then, my body is not a body.

My body in its nature not being a body,

I therefore say that it is empty and not permanent."

David Reigle on November 9, 2011 at 8:36am

Thank you, Olga, for clarifying the meaning and usage of the Russian word "pohot" for us. This is very helpful, especially as coming from a native of Ural. I have often seen that just relying on dictionaries, without seeing how a word is actually used in the language, leads to significant errors. Your knowledgeable statement that you cannot find any relevant connection of this word with fohat is convincing to me. I appreciate your input on this.

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 fire - me
 flame - me
 breath - dbugs
 heat - drod
 wind - rlung
 energy (in the sense of vigor) - brtson 'grus

David Reigle on November 11, 2011 at 9:54pm

This quote from the Aphorisms of the Bodhisattvas, like the quote from the Bodhimor, is another challenge for us to trace. While it could be from a secret book, it is surrounded by material from known books. Emil Schlagintweit in his 1863 book, *Buddhism in Tibet*, draws on Wassiljew's 1860 book, and HPB draws many things directly from Schlagintweit. His book, *Buddhism in Tibet* (available online) speaks of "Parikalpita (Tib. Kun tag), Paratantra (Tib. Zhan vang), and Parinishpanna (Tib. Yong grub)" on p. 34. He there goes on to say much the same as what Wassiljew said:

"Parikalpita is the supposition, or the error. Of this kind is the belief in absolute existence to which those beings adhere who are incapable of understanding that every thing is empty; of this kind is also whatever exists in idea only, without specific quality; or, in other words, whatever is attributed by our reflections and meditations to any object. There error can be two-fold; some believing a thing existing which does not, as e.g. the Non-ego; others assert the real existence of an object which only exists in the idea, as e.g. all outward things.

"Paratantra is whatever exists by a dependent or causal connexion; it form the basis of the error. . . ."

You can see the same words and phrases and ideas in the SD quote, and much more is drawn from Schlagintweit on these pages by HPB. For example, Schlagintweit p. 40: "This idea of the soul, Alaya, is the chief dogma of the Yogacharya system, which is so called because 'he who is strong in the Yoga (meditation) is able to introduce his soul by means of the Yoga into the true nature of existence.'" Compare SD 1.48 for the same sentence. Some of it he got wrong; e.g., that Alaya is Nyingpo and Tsang in Tibetan (Schlagintweit p. 39), and this error is copied by HPB (SD 1.48). In fact, alaya is kun gzhi in Tibetan. Other things Schlagintweit had right, and HPB misunderstood him and got them wrong; e.g., "Aryasanga, the Bumapa school" (SD 1.48; see Schlagintweit pp. 32, 40). Schlagintweit correctly said that the Bumapa (dbu ma pa) is the Madhyamika school, not the Yogacharya school of Aryasanga. What is in the SD is like saying, "Martin Luther, the Catholic church," or "Pope Pius, the Lutheran church." K.H. was not verifying these quotes. He was no doubt far too busy with his other responsibilities. HPB could not even get him to answer her question about what word fohat is. She was left to handle the annotations to the Stanzas as best she could from available sources. Half of what she says on Tibetan Buddhism is wrong, because the then available sources are wrong.

The quote from "Aphorisms of the Bodhisattvas" is not in Schlagintweit, and from Jacques' search, it is not in Wassiljew. It may be from a secret work. But it is found in the SD amidst many statements taken from then available sources, so we would expect it to also be findable in these sources.

Jacques Mahnich on November 12, 2011 at 11:53am

The HPB Secret Doctrine Commentaries - The unpublished 1889 instructions, by Michael Gomez, has been published recently (2010). It brings more light on our research on Fohat.

The word "Fohat" is quoted 130 times in this book, and many discussions/questions are relative to it. So it is worthwhile to review it.

The discussions are also bringing some clues which could help understand why we have so many difficulties to find a single trace of this word in any other known tradition : even HPB do not seems to know very well from where it came. On page 363, one can read :

" Mr. Atkinson: Is Fohat in the Chinese represented by two Chinese syllables?

Mme. Blavatsky: It is from those parts something **I have been asking many times**. Fo means brilliant.

Mr. Atkinson: I know the root and the character of the Chinese syllable "Fo." If you could get the Chinese characters, I could turn it up in the Chinese dictionary.

Mme. Blavatsky: And in the Japanese, too. **I don't think it is a real word**, because **some of them call it Fohat**.

Mr. Atkinson: It would be "Ho" in Japanese. And it would represent the idea of "Ho," as "Ho" was a part of the phoenix. If it is the same as the Chinese, I mean. It becomes "Ho" in Japanese, and then becomes the "Ho" of the phoenix, as part of the compound name of the phoenix.

Mme. Blavatsky: Fohat is also a relation to the cycles, because the intensity of this vital force changes with every cycle.

Mr. Atkinson: It is in the celestial cosmogony of China. It is in the celestial beginning and the cosmogenesis.

Mme. Blavatsky: **I wish you would look somewhere where you could find it, because I have been looking for it in India.**

Mr. Atkinson: If you will only give me the Chinese characters, I will find it at once.

Mme. Blavatsky: **I have got it somewhere, but not in the Chinese."**

The current summary document available on the Stanzas Documents has been updated to include the new input gathered from this publication. It is called "The Riddle of Fohat".

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 12, 2011 at 12:13pm

On the "Aphorisms of the Bodhisattvas": in the Voice of the Silence we have a similar reference on p. 70 of the original edition, to "*Thegpa chenpoido*, 'Mahâyâna Sutra', Invocations to the Buddhas of Confession", Part 1., iv."

[David Reigle](#) on November 12, 2011 at 9:32pm

Many thanks, Jacques, for your greatly expanded compilation on fohat. The much new material from the recently published Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge seems to me to about double our knowledge of fohat from esoteric sources. Everyone discussing this topic should read it. Your good work, Jacques, is much appreciated.

[David Reigle](#) on November 15, 2011 at 10:18am

Fohat has forsaken me. A great wind arose and knocked down power lines in my area. For two days and two nights this area was without the physical manifestation of fohat that we call electricity. Now that electricity has returned, I will resume from where I left off.

Regarding the Eka-śloka-śāstra by Nāgārjuna that HPB refers to in The Secret Doctrine (vol. 1, p. 61), as Ingmar said, an English translation of this is found in Rev. Joseph Edkins' 1880 book titled, Chinese Buddhism. This translation was prepared by Rev. Edkins in 1857, at a time when no one in the West had any accurate knowledge of Nāgārjuna or his teachings. Consequently, this translation is quite faulty. Everything that HPB says about this on p. 61 of the SD is taken directly from Edkins. Her statement about it meaning "the Substance giving substance to itself," "without action and with action," and "the nature which has no nature of its own," is quoted from Edkins' translation on p. 309, and repeated in his remarks on p. 317. The statement that the original word being explained is "subhāva," and about its etymology of "su" meaning "good," etc., is from p. 308 and footnote

in Edkins' book. This is all wrong. The original word is "svabhāva," and there is no connection with "su."

A much more accurate translation of the Eka-śloka-śāstra was prepared by H. R. Rangaswamy Iyengar with the help of Giuseppe Tucci, and published in 1927 in the The Half-Yearly Journal of the Mysore University. You will not find this on Google. It took me years to track it down, and then go to one of the two libraries in the U.S. that has it in order to photocopy it. This will be posted shortly here on Theosophy.net in a new section of English translations.

The Eka-śloka-śāstra is lost in the original Sanskrit, and is now found only in its early Chinese translation. It was not included in the Tibetan Buddhist canon, where a Tibetan translation of it would have been found in the Tengyur portion. However, a Tibetan translation of its one śloka or verse is found among the early texts discovered at Tun-huang, and this has been published in Louis de la Vallee Poussin's 1962 Catalogue of the Tibetan Manuscripts from Tun-huang in the India Office Library (p. 183). This will be included with the posting of Iyengar's 1927 translation here.

As is well known, the Tibetan translations are far more literally accurate than the Chinese translations. In case there was any question, this Tibetan translation from Tun-huang completely proves that there is no syllable "su" involved in the etymology of svabhāva from this text. It has "rang," the standard Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit syllable "sva," meaning "self" or "own," and by extension, "inherent." I will start a new post for Iyengar's translation of this verse, since this one will soon be cut off.

[David Reigle](#) on November 15, 2011 at 10:40am

Iyengar's translation of the one śloka or verse that is the core of this text is given at the very beginning of his article, although it is not marked as such. The rest of his article is a translation of the remainder of this text, giving Nāgārjuna's explanation of his one verse. Iyengar chose to use Sanskrit technical terms in his translation, as these are much more accurate than the range of English equivalents used for them. Here is his translation of the verse:

"The nature of bhāva (Bhāva-svabhāva) is non-permanent (anitya). Accordingly, bhāva is abhāva. The nature of svabhāva is (also) abhāva. It is therefore taught that there are only śūnyatā and anityatā."

The word bhāva means existence, and the word abhāva means non-existence. As a technical term in Buddhism, bhāva refers to something that exists, and is therefore now often translated as an "existent," using "existent" as a noun rather than as an adjective. The bhāvas, "existents," or "existing things," are things that have origination, and consequently abide for a time, and then perish. Thus they are impermanent, anitya. This idea, anitya or impermanence, is one of the three ideas or characteristics that Buddhists use to distinguish their teachings, along with duḥkha or suffering, and anātman or absence of self. To these three, which characterize all of Buddhism, Mahāyāna Buddhism added a fourth, śūnyatā or emptiness. It is this fourth one that Nāgārjuna is famous for teaching and explaining. Here in this verse, he is coordinating śūnyatā or emptiness with the earlier taught anitya or impermanence. To do this, he must bring in the idea of svabhāva.

The teaching of śūnyatā or emptiness, stated more fully, is that all existing things, all bhāvas, are empty of svabhāva. Svabhāva means something's "inherent nature." The example often used in Buddhist texts is that the svabhāva or inherent nature of fire is heat. This is the common everyday meaning of svabhāva. No one would say that fire is empty of heat, because heat always accompanies fire, and heat defines fire. Heat is the inherent nature or svabhāva of fire. But like all bhāvas or existing things, fire is something that arises, abides for a while, and then perishes. It does not exist on its own, but requires causes and conditions, such as fuel, spark, oxygen, etc. It therefore has no independent existence of its own. Any such impermanent thing that exists only in dependence on other things is ultimately non-existent. It is only conventionally existent, because its existence is temporary. This is how svabhāva has come to be used in Mahāyāna Buddhism, as something's "inherent existence," such that it would always exist. Nāgārjuna is here in this verse saying that no bhāva, no existing thing, has svabhāva, inherent existence.

The term svabhāva, that HPB is here explaining as it is found in the fifth śloka or verse of the second Stanza of Dzryan, will have to be understood as it is actually known today to be understood in Mahāyāna Buddhism, not as it was understood by early writers on Buddhism such as Rev. Joseph Edkins and Rev. Samuel Beal and Brian

Hodgson, who did not know. HPB, following Brian Hodgson and Samuel Beal, also here says that "Svābhāvat" is "the 'Plastic Essence' that fills the Universe, and is the root of all things," and that it is "Buddhistic." This is not how Buddhists understand svabhāva in their texts. It is a mistake of these early Western writers, who got it wrong. Even the word "Svābhāvat" used by HPB is an incorrect form mistakenly copied from Max Muller, who had the form right as an ablative. If "svabhāva" is found in the Stanzas, we will have to see this in terms of how Buddhists have understood it for the past two thousand years in their texts.

David Reigle on November 15, 2011 at 8:02pm

Continuing in sequence, Ingmar had noted that:

On the "Aphorisms of the Bodhisattvas": in the Voice of the Silence we have a similar reference on p. 70 of the original edition, to "Thegpa chenpoido, 'Mahâyâna Sutra', Invocations to the Buddhas of Confession", Part 1., iv."

This reference is taken from Emil Schlagintweit's 1863 book, Buddhism in Tibet, p. 125. I have written about this in a letter published in the High Country Theosophist, vol. 12, no. 5, May 1997, pp. 13-14. This journal is no longer being published, and the back numbers are not easily accessible. Rather than repeat this here in a post that would be cut off, I have simply uploaded a PDF of this letter to the Voice discussion being led by Jon Fergus. It not only gives the source of this reference, but it also points out a strange error in the text of the Voice of the Silence, copied from Schlagintweit.

David Reigle on November 15, 2011 at 9:43pm

The much new material from the SD Commentaries that Jacques has compiled for us gives a good picture of fohat. This material also gives me the clear impression that HPB knew exactly what fohat is, and only had difficulty in expressing it to her audience. Fohat and its place in the SD cosmogony seems very clear in her mind.

Ingmar de Boer on November 17, 2011 at 1:20am

Thank you David for reminding me/us about your clear letter in the High Country Theosophist. I must have read it, but forgot. Again we see here that HPB refers to Western books of her time, instead of original sources she may - or in this case may not - have had access to. Title of the "Thegpa chenpoido" from Schlagintweit's *Buddhism in Tibet*, p.123: **sdig pa thams chad bshags par gter chos**

Jacques Mahnich on November 17, 2011 at 3:40am

Thanks you Ingmar for this reference.

Another track HPB gave us for tibetan texts she could have had access to can be found [here](#)

It refers to a Kanjur text - *Tched-du brjod-pai tsoms*.

This article can be found also in Lucifer Vol. XV or in BCW Vol. VI p.94.

Interesting enough is that HPB, in this article, quoted openly some of the then-current "tibetologist" works available to her like Klaproth, Samuel Beal, Emil Schlagintweit, Georges Bogle. Which may confirm one of our hypothesis which is that HPB draws naturally (not as a plagiary) from existing works to try to explain complex and abstruse teachings.

She also quote another phrase from the "Book of Khui-ti" : 'He gazes with indifference in every sphere of upward transmigration on the whole period of time which covers the shorter periods of personal existence.'

In this article, she is using other 'tibetan or else' vocabulary which may be added to our word quest, like **Nipang**, **Tharlam** (the path to deliverance).

Finally, based on our recent discussions here, we may want to collect in one place (if it does not exist yet ! - maybe David has already done that) all the references to tibetan texts which can be found in HPB works, to provide with a type of documents database for reference.

[David Reigle](#) on November 17, 2011 at 9:59am

Very interesting, Frank, about the omitted phrase, "Sva, 'self'," in Boris de Zirkoff's edition of The Secret Doctrine. Boris does not here add a note referring to Joseph Edkins' book, Chinese Buddhism, but it is possible that he consulted it for making the change. Edkins also says nothing about "sva" or "self" here (p. 308 fn.), but only has "su" and "bhāva" and their meanings. The one time I met Boris, I asked him about a similar change in the SD. The SD, vol. 1, p. 661, had "the sixth degree of Libra" in a quotation from J. S. Bailly, while Boris had changed this to "the sixth degree of Aquarius." Boris added a note here, saying that the original French text being quoted has "Verseau" meaning "Aquarius," rather than "Libra," so he restored what was in the original.

In person, he replied to my question saying that since Aquarius was in the original, what else could he do but restore it. Of course, this is true. Quotations must be accurate. Ever since its publication in 1978, I have always used Boris de Zirkoff's edition of the SD, because he spent many, many years checking and verifying quotations such as this one. But now, the online edition is the original 1888 edition, and seems to be the only one available online. So the benefit of the corrections made by Boris is not available to online users. Here in this section where the Libra/Aquarius problem is found, for example, Boris has added quotation marks showing that whole pages of text are direct quotations from Bailly. In the 1888 edition this material, lacking the quotation marks, appears to be written by HPB.

For every place where Boris has made a change that perhaps should have been noted, such as the omitted phrase, "Sva, 'self'," on p. 61, or may even be incorrect, there are probably fifty or a hundred places where his changes bring in much needed corrections to incorrect quotations, wrong references, etc. He has taken The Secret Doctrine as published in 1888 as far as can be taken in making it reliable and accurate. The next step will be to deal with the content itself that is taken from the erroneous sources then available. The Stanzas of Dzryan will have to be annotated anew, from the much more accurate and extensive sources now available. The research taking place here in this discussion will contribute to this.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 17, 2011 at 12:32pm

The "Tched-du brjod-pai tsoms" from [CW VI, 95](#) would be the ched du brjod pa'i tshoms, which is the Udānavarga, Tohoku no. 326 in the Kanjur. The passage quoted is to be found in Udānavarga 4.4, and a corresponding passage is found in Dhammapada 2.8.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 17, 2011 at 1:52pm

In the CW, see [CW VI, 95](#) bottom page, Boris de Zirkoff has made a summary of the terms from "Tibetan Teachings". He found nipang, thar lam and most Tibetan and other terms, and also the Tched du.. as Udānavarga.

[David Reigle](#) on November 17, 2011 at 3:22pm

On the question raised about the difference between svabhāva and svabhavat, this had come up earlier here, and was discussed on October 21 and 22, 2010, and some following posts. I would refer newer participants here back to those posts. In brief, svabhavat as a present participle meaning "self-becoming," proposed by G. de Purucker, was as good of a guess as could be made then, before the Sanskrit Buddhist texts were available. But such a form has never been found, and in any case would not be able to function as a noun, which is how HPB used it. Her svābhāvat, thanks to the reference discovered by Daniel Caldwell, is now seen to have been copied from Max Muller's use of the word svabhāva as declined in the ablative case, svabhāvāt.

Mahāyāna Buddhists do accept the conventional existence of svabhāva. Thus, an apple seed will produce an apple tree, and not a banana tree. This is the common everyday "inherent nature" or svabhāva of an apple seed. But as a technical term, svabhāva has normally been defined in Indian texts, not only Buddhist but also Hindu

and Jaina, as something that cannot change. The common example of it or the sometimes used synonym prakriti, given by Patanjali in his great commentary on Panini's grammar and by many others, is of gold or clay. No matter what form these take, the gold or clay remains unchanged. Whether it is an earring or a coin, it is still gold. Gold is immutable or unchangeable in the sense of being gold, but quite mutable or changeable in the sense of being earrings, coins, etc. A classic definition formulating this, using the synonym prakriti, is given for Hindus by Gaudapada twice in his Mandukya-karika (3.21cd and 4.29cd), and virtually the same line is given for Buddhists by Nagarjuna in his Mula-madhyamaka-karika (15.8cd). It says that change on the part of prakriti can in no way happen. This defines it.

This means that something having svabhāva, which therefore could not change, must have always existed. It could not be something that is made or fabricated or constructed, and it could not be something that is dependent on anything else, on causes and conditions, for its existence. Nagarjuna uses these two defining ideas in his Mula-madhyamaka-karika 15.2cd, which William Ames translates as: "For svabhava is non-contingent and without dependence on another." Nothing in the known universe, say Mahayana Buddhists, meets these criteria. Therefore, nothing in the known universe has svabhāva, in the sense of the philosophical technical term. Heat is conventionally the svabhāva of fire. But ultimately fire has no svabhāva, because it is impermanent or changing, being dependent on conditions.

David Reigle on November 17, 2011 at 4:48pm

Jeremy called our attention to a helpful distinction:

"As for Svabhavat, the Orientalists explain the term as meaning the Universal plastic matter diffused through Space, with, perhaps, half an eye to the Ether of Science. But the Occultists identify it with "FATHER-MOTHER" on the mystic plane. (Vide supra.)' SD1 98."

"Here, a distinction is made by HPB between the understandings of the 'Orientalists' and the 'Occultists' re the "informing principle" and root of all."

The "Orientalists" mean Brian Houghton Hodgson from the early 1800s and everyone who followed him until a better knowledge of the meaning of svabhava was obtained (although he only used the term svabhava, not svabhavat). We cannot ignore or sweep under the rug the several statements made by HPB that also take svabhava(t) as the universal plastic matter diffused through space, as here on the very same page of the SD. Yet if we identify svabhava with the "Father-Mother" of the Stanzas, as she says here, it will help us in our search. Has anyone found the term "father-mother" in any Eastern text? This is worth pursuing.

David Reigle on November 17, 2011 at 9:06pm

"Finally, based on our recent discussions here, we may want to collect in one place (if it does not exist yet ! - maybe David has already done that) all the references to tibetan texts which can be found in HPB works, to provide with a type of documents database for reference."

This, I think, is a very good suggestion, Jacques. I have not already done this.

"ON THE OLDEST CHINESE TRANSLITERATIONS OF THE NAME OF BUDDHA."

This article was helpful to me, M. Sufilight. Thanks for the link. It shows the possibility of Kuchean or Tocharian words being transliterated as the basis for Chinese words such as "fo" or "Fou-t'u." I was unaware of this before.

"The "Tched-du brjod-pai tsoms" from CW VI, 95 would be the ched du brjod pa'i tshoms, which is the Udānavarga, Tohoku no. 326 in the Kanjur. The passage quoted is to be found in Udānavarga 4.4, and a corresponding passage is found in Dhammapada 2.8."

Great identification, Ingmar. Good that you traced the particular verse number that was quoted.

Ingmar de Boer on November 18, 2011 at 2:21am

A very interesting article *On the Oldest...* M. Sufilight! Earlier this week I had been looking at Chinese sources of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā and Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras, (so far) they are using the syllable fó (𑖀) in the words Buddha, Buddhist etc.

Ingmar de Boer on November 18, 2011 at 11:50am

Concerning the syllable "fo": an example of the Vajracchedikā (Diamond Sūtra), one the oldest Buddhist scriptures translated into Chinese. Both these two renderings (below) are the same translation by Kumārajīva, 2nd c. AD, which is the earliest known Chinese version.

1. [Diamond Sutra in CBETA](#), Taishō no. 235

The first two lines reproduced here, with **fó** (Buddha) in bold:

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

□□□□□□□□□□

[0748c20] □□□□□

[0748c20] 0000 0000000000000000000000000000

Translation of the first lines by Edward Conze (1958):

"Thus have I heard at one time. The Lord dwelt at Śrāvastī, in the Jeta Grove, in the Garden of Anāthapindada, together with a large gathering of monks, consisting of 1,250 monks, and with many Bodhisattvas, great beings."

2. Dunhuang manuscript of the Diamond Sutra, dated before 401 AD

The same character **fó** is [highlighted in green here](#). Note that the text is written from right to left.

David Reigle on November 22, 2011 at 10:17pm

Unless Ingmar finds something in the Chinese, the most likely conclusion is that fohat is indeed a word from a secret language that is entirely unknown to orientalists. The connection of fohat in meaning to agni seems to be well established. I. K. Taimni also says this in his 1969 book, *Man, God and the Universe*, in the chapter titled "Fohat (Agni), Prana and Kundalini." On p. 378, he writes:

"The name Fohat is taken from The Secret Doctrine because the nature of this creative force or agency is described in some detail under this name in her work, by H. P. Blavatsky. The word which comes nearest to Fohat in Sanskrit literature is Agni but this word has so many other connotations that it is better to use the word Fohat for the creative force of Brahma."

But this brings us no closer to tracing the word fohat itself. The Sanskrit word agni means fire, as does the Sanskrit word spelled vahni. There is no agnz in Sanskrit; it looks like just a mistake in the OCR process. The spelling vuhni represents the pronunciation of vahni. Is there any Chinese word for fire that is like fohat?

Ingmar de Boer on November 23, 2011 at 5:35am

On fohat: earlier I have made a diagram of the etymological relations between all of the leads HPB provides on fohat. After checking it and updating it with Jacques' list "2011-11-12 The Riddle of Fohat.doc" I will publish it here.

Ingmar de Boer on November 23, 2011 at 5:43am

A very interesting upload of the Ekaślokaśāstra in the area for English texts this weekend! The Tibetan version

from Dunhuang seems indeed "pre-standard Tibetan". I have been looking for images on the site of the International Dunhuang Project, but could not find any.

Maybe it would also be useful to have some more books of orientalist of HPB's time, like Schlagintweit, Wassilew, Edkins and Müller ("Chips" Vol. I) in the "Stanzas Documents" area? Many of these are available in PDF, copyrights expired.

David Reigle on November 23, 2011 at 1:53pm

Yes, Ingmar, the Dunhuang Tibetan of the Ekaślokaśāstra does seem to be "pre-standard Tibetan," before translation terms and also spellings were standardized. As you saw, the spellings "myi" and "myed" are what later became "mi" and "med." The pre-standardized translation terms make it harder to determine the Sanskrit behind this early Tibetan translation. Nonetheless, they give us a great advantage over the far less standardized Chinese translation. Here is what I get from it:

Tibetan:

rang gi ngo bo nyid myi rtag
de bzhin ngo bo ngo bo myed
rang bzhin ngo bo nyid myed pas
de phyir stong dang myi rtag gsungs

Tibetan with Sanskrit equivalents:

rang gi (sva) ngo bo nyid (svabhāva) myi rtag (anitya)
de bzhin (tathā) ngo bo (svabhāva) ngo bo myed (niḥsvabhāva)
rang bzhin (svabhāva) ngo bo nyid myed pas (niḥsvabhāva)
de phyir (tasmāt) stong (śūnya) dang (ca) myi rtag (anitya) gsungs (ukta)

English with Sanskrit equivalents:

"The inherent nature (svabhāva) of self (sva, ātman) is impermanent (anitya);
so (tathā) inherent nature (svabhāva) is absence of inherent nature (niḥsvabhāva).
Because inherent nature (svabhāva) is absence of inherent nature (niḥsvabhāva),
therefore (tasmāt) [all] is said (ukta) to be empty (śūnya) and impermanent (anitya).

In the first line, sva, "self" or "own" or "inherent," would imply ātman, "self," and would be used instead of ātman to make the correlation with the sva of svabhāva, "self-nature" or "inherent nature." Buddhists already accepted that ātman is impermanent. But they also accepted that the individual dharmas do have their own svabhāva. Now Nāgārjuna is relating the accepted teaching of impermanence to svabhāva, so that he can make his new point about absence of svabhāva (niḥsvabhāva). This is the new teaching of emptiness (śūnyatā), that all dharmas are empty of svabhāva.

In the second line, I take Tibetan ngo bo and ngo bo myed as abbreviated forms, necessary for the meter, that translate svabhāva and niḥsvabhāva. They could possibly translate Sanskrit bhāva and abhāva. It would then say: "so (tathā) existents (bhāva) are non-existent (abhāva)."

In the third line, we see together both of the two later standard translations of svabhāva: rang bzhin and ngo bo nyid.

In the fourth line, I have added the implied subject, "all." This would not be necessary if we took the adjectives stong, "empty," and myi rtag, "impermanent," as abbreviated forms, necessary for the meter, of the nouns stong pa nyid, śūnyatā, "emptiness," and myi rtag nyid, anityatā, "impermanence." It would then say: "therefore emptiness and impermanence are taught."

David Reigle on November 23, 2011 at 2:03pm

As you say, M. Sufilight, there are many Chinese dialects. So fohat could perhaps be found in one of them. But the problem would remain that we need to find this word used in texts in the same meaning that Theosophy gives it. It would have to be a central idea in a cosmogony or worldview. It could not just be an obscure word that plays no such role.

Ingmar de Boer on November 25, 2011 at 8:05am

- a. rang gi ngo bo nyid myi rtag
- b. de bzhin ngo bo ngo bo med
- c. rang bzhin ngo bo nyid myed pas
- d. de phyir stong dang myi rtag gsungs

Human nature is finite,

So human nature is [in fact] unnatural.

Because our existence is without human nature,

It is said [that human nature is] void as well as finite.

An essential property of this "human nature" would be that it is unique to us, or essential to our existence. Maybe we would call it individuality: the smallest part of me that is still me

The accepted teaching here, is apparently that human nature is finite (a). To be part of ultimate reality, paramārtha, human nature should have been infinite. Because it is not, man seems to exist without any contact with ultimate reality, therefore lacking human nature itself (c), which is identified with ultimate reality (b). That which is impermanent is called empty, śūnya, so consequently human nature must be essentially empty (d).

As theosophers we may see individuality (ātman) as a "drop of the ocean of infinity". But is it a finite drop? This constitutes a paradox or mystery, whatever you like to call it. It is finite and infinite, and it is essential that the concept of individuality represents both these aspects in one. The author of our Ekaślokaśāstra, Nāgārjuna, probably would not have agreed to this.

In *The Secret Doctrine* (SD) and the *Voice*, HPB uses the term ālaya to denote the "universal soul", a term and concept exclusive to the Yogācāra standpoint. It is even presented in the SD as a "first fundamental proposition". It seems that she makes a definite choice there in favour of the Yogācāra standpoint. In other places she refers to Mādhyamika teachings as she does here, to the **Ekaślokaśāstra**.

David Reigle on November 26, 2011 at 9:49am

The Chinese word Pu-to that Edkins referred to, M. Sufilight, is the name of an island, which is considered to be the special residence of Kwan-yin/Guan-yin. So it is a very sacred place in China. But it cannot be fohat.

I have not heard of the existence of "several Kalachakra scripts in the Kham region," and do not know what this would mean. The Kalachakra Tantra was written in Sanskrit. Any form of it in any Tibetan script, whether found in Kham or any other province of Tibet, would only be the Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit original. This is available in the Kangyur.

On HPB's apparent preference for Yogacara over Madhyamaka, Ingmar, we can now see this in a new light. In recent years the so-called "Great Madhyamaka" school has become known. In 2007, in Elizabeth M. Callahan's translation of a section of Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Taye's book, *The Treasury of Knowledge, Book Six, Part Three: Frameworks of Buddhist Philosophy, A Systematic Presentation of the Cause-Based Philosophical Vehicles* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications), we learned that Great Madhyamaka traces its origin to the books of Maitreya. So it is a Madhyamaka system based on Yogacara texts.

David Reigle on November 26, 2011 at 2:10pm

In order to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzryan, the purpose of this discussion, we have to read Eastern texts in the same way that anyone who knows the language(s) reads them. Reading them in an occult manner would

have to do with their interpretation, not with tracing their origins in known texts. These are two different lines of inquiry.

Thanks for the reference to the Kalachakra texts in Kham, etc. These are unlikely to be anything different than what we have. From what I have seen of the Kalachakra texts written in Tibet, even those that provide interpretation necessarily follow the Tibetan translations of the original Sanskrit texts. Neither the Tibetan writers nor myself read the Kalachakra texts in an occult manner. To do so would result in loss of credibility. No one is willing to depart from the words attributed to the Buddha or to the Kings of Shambhala. Subba Row and HPB give the impression that everyone in India and Tibet reads their scriptures in an occult manner. I have seen almost none of this among Indian and Tibetan writers.

In any case, to find hidden meanings in these texts that only Theosophists can see will not show the origins of the Stanzas to interested inquirers who are not committed Theosophists. So the occult reading will not help us in the inquiry being pursued here. We have to read texts as accurately and free from interpretation as possible if we want to be taken seriously in this inquiry.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 26, 2011 at 5:09pm

M. Sufilight: the method Subba Row describes in "Twelve Signs..." is associated with reading the "tantra śāstras of India" where "very often Samskrit words are made to convey a certain hidden meaning by means of certain well-known pre-arranged methods and a tacid convention, while their literal significance is something quite different from the implied meaning".

In esoteric literature there is usually a way of saying X while implicitly referring to Y, hence the term esoteric. In Indian literature we have sandhyābhāṣā, or shadow language, which is particularly developed within esoteric Buddhism. I think it is said somewhere that

Esoterism is characterized by six options: its language can be intentional or unintentional, its expression can be literal or figurative and its meaning can be provisional or definitive.

These "six options" are essential in *exegesis*, however we should already have a clear picture of what is said before being able to *trace the origins* of a text.

[David Reigle](#) on November 28, 2011 at 6:09am

The results of our attempt to trace fohat in known works have so far been to rule out various possibilities. This is the way much research proceeds, and is necessary and helpful. Nonetheless, it leaves us with two remaining possibilities, both equally valid: (1) fohat is an esoteric term found only in secret books; (2) fohat is an invented term found only in Blavatsky's imagination. While most of us here prefer the first possibility, lacking any direct evidence on this, we must ask if there is there any circumstantial evidence for it.

Yes, there is. We have much discussed here the dhatu, the "element," or basic "space," as being the term used in the esoteric Senzar Catechism. If one such thing can be shown to be beyond reasonable doubt, it makes others such as fohat likely. To me, the many quotations of the repeated phrase from the Buddhist scriptures saying "whether the tathagatas arise or whether the tathagatas do not arise, the dhatu remains," is convincing. But there is more. From its first occurrences in Mahatma letters in 1882, the element has been called not just the element, but the "one element." We recall that in the 1882 article "What is Matter and What is Force?," for example, the

Mahatma K.H. said about it (H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 4, p. 220):

"Light, then, like heat-of which it is the crown-is simply the ghost, the shadow of matter in motion, the boundless, eternal, infinite SPACE, MOTION and DURATION, the trinitarian essence of that which the Deists call God, and we--the One Element; Spirit-matter, or Matter-spirit, whose septenary properties we circumscribe under its triple abstract form in the equilateral triangle."

As we know, the dhatu is a central subject of Maitreya's book, the Ratnagotravibhaga. That book speaks frequently of the dhatu, but only in one place does it speak of the eka-dhatu, the "one element." This is in the commentary on chapter 1, verse 12. In TAKASHAKI's translation, this is on p. 170, where he translates eka-dhatu as "the one [real] essence." In Obermiller's translation, this is on p. 136, where he translates the eka-dhatu as "the unique Germ (of Buddhahood)," as follows:

"All these different forms of defilement peculiar to the worldlings, those of passions, deeds and repeated birth, manifest themselves in this world owing to the ignorance of the unique Germ (of Buddhahood) in its true character."

The Ratnagotravibhaga bases itself on several sutras, which later came to be known as the ten "tathagatagarbha sutras." Near the beginning, the commentary tells which of the book's seven subjects come from which sutra. The teaching on the dhatu is said to come from the Anunatvapurnatva-nirdesa-parivarta. This small sutra (or section of a sutra) was not translated into Tibetan, presumably having already disappeared in India by the time of the Tibetan translations about a thousand years ago. But it was available five or six centuries earlier, when it was translated into Chinese. The Chinese translation is thus the only version of this text now available, other than quotations from it in the Ratnagotravibhaga's Sanskrit commentary.

William Grosnick studied the Chinese translation of this sutra. He prepared a Research Report on it that was published in Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan, no. 22, 1977, pp. 30-36. It is titled, "The Understanding of 'Dhatu' in the Anunatvapurnatvanirdesa." This paper on this topic, of such extraordinary interest to us, gives us some very valuable information. It shows us that a central topic of the brief Anunatvapurnatva-nirdesa is the eka-dhatu, the "one element." Now, how likely is it that Blavatsky came up with the "one element" out of her imagination? This article is now posted with the Stanzas documents.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 28, 2011 at 1:14pm

On the upload of the manuscript of Sinnott's *Cosmological Notes*: the fifth human principle, "physical ego", in BL 378, is spelled Ngē in the manuscript instead of Ngi, as David remarked in his *Notes on Cosmological Notes*. This might be Tibetan **nged**, I, me, Sanskrit aham, a synonym for nga, which is also used for "ego", so found in the [Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Culture](#) from Rangjung Yeshe Publications. Cf. nga med, egolessness, not thinking of one's self-interest; nga 'dzin, ego-clinging, holding to a self; nga rgyal, [egocentric] pride, arrogance, conceit, egocentricity, egotism; etc.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on November 28, 2011 at 2:43pm

On the third human principle, Chhu-lung: in [Jim Valby's](#) dictionary, in the lemma [rlung](#), a **chu'i rlung**, [vibration](#)

[of cohesion, water wind](#), is mentioned, one of five bodily humours. In the lemma text "three body humours" (3 airs?) are mentioned. There is no list of the three humours there.

David Reigle on November 28, 2011 at 6:30pm

In reply to the following:

David wrote in the below: "In order to trace the origins of the Stanzas of Dzryan, the purpose of this discussion, we have to read Eastern texts in the same way that anyone who knows the language(s) reads them. Reading them in an occult manner would have to do with their interpretation, not with tracing their origins in known texts. These are two different lines of inquiry."

M. Sufilight says: Yes David...But is this really what this thread is about? I will question this...and ask the readers and contributors about their stance...What do you think?

I think that Joe would be the one to answer this, since he started this discussion.

David Reigle on November 28, 2011 at 6:45pm

I see that Ingmar has found the newly posted Cosmological Notes in Sinnett's handwritten manuscript. This is posted here thanks to Jerry Hejka-Ekins, who made this print-out for me from a microfilm of the Mahatma papers, and sent it to me some years ago. This is the nearest thing we have to the original text of what is one of the most important documents for the study of the original ideas and terms connected with the Stanzas of Dzryan. Here in the Cosmological Notes from the fall of 1881 we have the first mention of fohat, and the first statement of many of the terms and ideas found several years later in The Secret Doctrine. The original, in the possession of Hume, was probably in Morya's handwriting, and Sinnett copied it. Unfortunately, Sinnett's handwriting is atrocious, and so is Morya's judging from other specimens of it that we have. At least some of the errors that we have to deal with in tracing these terms stem from illegible handwriting.

David Reigle on November 30, 2011 at 9:57am

Regarding fohat, we are still seeking:

1. any reference to the term "father-mother" in Eastern texts (re: SD 1.98 fn.).
2. any reference to "knots" of something that could be fohat (re: Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge, and SD Commentaries).
3. any reference to daivi-prakriti in the Yoga-Vasistha (possibly T. Subba Row's source). Our Indian members can help with this, since there are apparently one or more good translations of the Yoga-Vasistha into Hindi. We do not have a reliable English translation of this large text.

David Reigle on November 30, 2011 at 11:13am

Regarding the six options or six alternatives (ṣaṭ-koṭi):

"its language can be intentional or unintentional, its expression can be literal or figurative and its meaning can be provisional or definitive."

These are found in the Jnana-vajra-samuccaya, one of the so-called expanatory tantras to the Guhyasamaja-tantra, and are explained in Candrakirti's Pradipoddyotana commentary on the Guhyasamaja-tantra. The Jnana-vajra-samuccaya has not yet been recovered in Sanskrit, and is available only in its Tibetan translation. The Pradipoddyotana has been published in Sanskrit as edited by Chintaharan Chakravarti in 1984 in the Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, no. 25 (Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute). However, as everyone who has used this edition knows, it is quite faulty, because it was not checked with the Tibetan translation during editing. A new critical edition is being published serially in Dhih: Journal of the Rare Buddhist Texts Research Unit. Chapters 1 and 2 were published in no. 48, 2009; chapters 3 to 6 in no. 49, 2010, and chapters 7 to 9 in no. 50, 2010, of seventeen total chapters. There is no English translation. These six alternatives are supposed to apply to

the Guhyasamaja-tantra, but I have not seen them applied to other tantras.

David Reigle on November 30, 2011 at 12:13pm

On nged, "I, me," for the fifth human principle in the Cosmological Notes (published as an appendix to The Letters of H. P. B. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett), this is probably the best hypothesis so far for the Tibetan word transcribed as Ngë (rather than the printed Ngi). The two difficulties we have with these words are that: (1) we cannot rely on their transcription; and (2) no scheme of the seven principles has so far been found in use in Tibetan writings to compare them with. Given these two facts, I think we must still regard this word as unidentified, until we can find it used in this way.

Ingmar de Boer on November 30, 2011 at 3:43pm

On the six alternatives: I quoted Vimalaprabhā I.4.1.

David Reigle on December 1, 2011 at 10:23am

Thank you, Ingmar, for your source reference on the six alternatives. I did not remember that they were mentioned in the Vimala-prabha. Upon checking, I see that they are given in a verse from the lost mula Kalacakra-tantra quoted in the Vimala-prabha (Sarnath edition, vol. 1, p. 35, lines 22-23, available on this website in the Sanskrit Buddhist documents section). This would certainly imply that they are meant to be applied to Buddhist tantric writings in general, and not only to the Guhyasamaja writings. Although I have only seen them systematically applied in Candrakīrti's Pradīpodyotana commentary on the Guhyasamaja-tantra, it makes sense that they could be and would be applicable to many texts.

Ingmar de Boer on December 1, 2011 at 10:45am

The Hevajratantra and its commentary Yogaratnamālā have a larger passage on the particular sandhyābhāṣa of this system, in 3.53-67. In the laṅghu Kālacakratantra the code language phenomenon is of course less prominent, but present.

David Reigle on December 2, 2011 at 5:41pm

On "knots of karma," these do not appear to refer to fohat as they are used in the few texts that use them. Nonetheless, karma as a technical term in the Hindu Vaiśeṣika system, where it has been translated as "motion," could possibly refer to something like fohat. A description of this from Umesha Mishra's 1936 book, Conception of Matter in Nyaya-Vaiśeṣika, pp. 196-223, was posted in Jon Fergus's Karma discussion on Nov. 27: http://api.ning.com/files/m*EUDNNFaXpi6Y1paOPJsmwahgTkHP*Bs9TDLIago...

This is not easy reading, but in this chapter Umesha Mishra has put this teaching about as clearly as can be done. The Sanskrit Vaiśeṣika texts are as complex as any technical manuals on science. Other descriptions of this can be found in English in Brajendranath Seal's 1915 book, The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus, pp. 129-152, and in Surendranath Dasgupta's posthumously published book, Natural Science of the Ancient Hindus, pp. 24-29.

Ingmar de Boer on December 3, 2011 at 3:18pm

1. Dgyu, ending

Another interesting detail in the manuscript of Sinnett's [Cosmological Notes](#) is the fact that the first time they are mentioned, **Dgyu** and **Dgyu Mi** both carry an umlaut (Dgyü). In ML 35, Dgyu is spelled as dgiü, also with umlaut. The u-umlaut sound in common Tibetan is only produced when a syllable ends in -ud or -us. This would narrow down the possibilities for the orthography of Dgyu.

Some of the umlauts in the text seem to have been added later, perhaps at the same time the annotations were interscribed, including the underlined title "Appendix II" on top of page 2. The annotations do not seem to be in the same handwriting as the original notes. Compare for example the capital A of the word Appendix with the capital A's in the manuscript text. In *The Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett* (BL) the *Notes* appear as Appendix II. It is therefore entirely possible that the annotations and also the umlauts are the handwriting of the transcriber/compiler of the book, A.T. Barker. This would be consistent with the spelling in the ML edited by Barker. The umlauts on Dgyü and Dgyü Mi however, are not reproduced in BL. In Jinarajadasa's edition (ETM) of the *Notes* the umlauts are absent as well.

2. Dgyu, front part

In Jinarajadasa's edition, a remark of Sinnett is added, telling that M. himself "wrote out" the table of correspondences between Man and Universe. This means that Sinnett has *copied* the table from the writing of M., instead of *interpreting* the words from hearing. Interestingly, in the table, Linga Sharira is called Ling Sharir in line 3, we also have Bhut, Purush, Brahm, dropping the final a's, as in the Sanskrit pronunciation typical of speakers of modern Hindi. Apparently M's concern was that the words were written as they were pronounced, as opposed to how they were written in the original language. The rendering of the Tibetan terms is therefore presumably also a phonetic transcription for an English target audience. The D in Dgyu could not have been a silent letter then. Also, English has two sounds associated with the letter g (besides /ŋ/ in "thing"), the plosive /g/ and the affricate /dʒ/. The dg-combination does not exist with a plosive /g/-sound in English, so our dgy-combination would probably be the affricate /dʒ/, the g-sound in "gin", or something close to it. This is consistent with HPB's spelling Dzyu, for example in SD I, 108. The /dʒ/, and phonemes very close to it, are listed in the following table.

possible phonemes for front part, written in Tibetan

1. palato-alveolar /dʒ/ = pya, bya, ...
2. alveolo-palatal /dʒ/ or /ⁿdʒ/ = mja, 'ja
3. alveolo-palatal /tʃ/ = ra
4. retroflex /dʒ/ or /ⁿdʒ/ = 'dra, 'gra, ...
5. palatal /ⁿj/ = 'gya
6. palatal /c/ with deep tone = brgya, bsgya, dgya, bgya, rgya, sgya, ...
7. palatal /ch/ with deep tone = gya

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on December 3, 2011 at 3:22pm

3. Dgyu, orthography

Combining the ideas on front part and ending, we could try finding some matching candidates for Dgyu, using a digital lexicon (Rangjung Yeshe). Elements we may look for are "real (magical) knowledge, dealing with eternal truths and primal causes" (SD I,108), and the negation Dgyu Mi, or min or med, "illusion and false appearances only" (SD I,108).

1. rgyus = knowledge, [...], intelligence, [...]

rgyus med = having no knowledge, familiarity, unknowingly

rgyus is also the instrumental case of rgyu, cause, meaning because.

rgyu = causal basis, causality, cause, primary cause, [...], ingredient / cause, causal basis, stuff, object, property, wealth, material [object], [...]

rgyus is also a verb form of the verb rgyu ba.

rgyu ba = 1) to go, walk, move, wander, range, [...], enter, [...] 2) moving energy, movement, the mobile [living]

2. brgyud = to transmit, conduct, send, channel through, stream through, [...], pass on, [...], connected, linked, to be chained together, [...], lineage, [...], cp. brgyud pa = lineage of transmission, transmission, lineage, to be transmitted, [...], progeny, offspring, heredity, origin, birth, generation, [...]

brgyud certainly has some of the elements, but seems too far removed from the Dzian from the SD. I have not found a brgyud med or brgyud min.

4. Dgyu = rgyus?

rgyus might be a realistic candidate for Dgyu, matching HPB's definition at first glance. The spelling Dgyü, with an umlaut, following A.T. Barker, would then be justified. Of course more possibilities might be explored.

David Reigle on December 3, 2011 at 9:37pm

What Ingmar has posted is exactly the type of inquiry that I hoped for regarding the Cosmological Notes. We need to systematically investigate the unidentified terms used in them, one by one. When Sinnett's manuscript of them was posted last week, I had hoped to provide an introduction to them. I now do so.

The Cosmological Notes mark a major turning point in the Theosophical material given out. They bring out, for the first time, terms such as fohat, ideas such as "space" for the ultimate, and others found several years later, when the bringing out of this teaching culminated in the publication of the Stanzas of Dzian in The Secret Doctrine. The Cosmological Notes were written by Morya (not by K.H.), and sent to A. O. Hume (not to A. P. Sinnett). The original in Morya's handwriting, once in the possession of Hume, has not become available, and is presumed lost. What is posted here is Sinnett's handwritten copy that he made from Morya's original in Hume's possession. This means that the original in Morya's hard to read handwriting was copied by Sinnett in his hard to read handwriting. The end result is that the spellings of words found in it cannot be fully relied on.

The Cosmological Notes were not included in the Mahatma Letters, either in the first (1923), second (1926), or third revised (1962) editions, but only added to the chronological edition (1993). They were published as an appendix in The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett (1925), and most of them were included in the earlier book prepared by Jinarajadasa, The Early Teachings of the Masters (1923). I have prepared some "Notes on Cosmological Notes," published in Blavatsky's Secret Books (1999). The Cosmological Notes were written in the fall of 1881, preceding the follow-up January 1882 Mahatma letter #13 on Cosmological Notes.

Sinnett, in an important introduction to them that was not included when they were published in the HPB Letters, had titled them, "Notes from the Book of Kiu-te." This is printed in The Early Teachings of the Masters. I will post it in a separate post.

David Reigle on December 3, 2011 at 9:44pm

A. P. Sinnett introduced the Cosmological Notes as follows (The Early Teachings of the Masters, 1923):

"Notes from the Book of Kiu-te, the great repository of occult lore in the keeping of the Adepts in Tibet. I believe there are thirty or forty volumes, a great deal shown only to Initiates. What follows is merely some elementary catechism in the very beginning. We began to get these notes through Madame Blavatsky when Mr. Hume and I first set to work together. But we soon got off on to other lines of rail.

"The very first thing I ever had in the way of philosophical teaching I sent you a copy of last year; it was a sketch of the chain of worlds which I suppose you have somewhere still. Then we got in a fragmentary way the

materials on which Hume wrote the first of the 'Occult Fragments'--that relating to the seven principles in man. It is necessary to have an absolute comprehension of that division at starting. It runs through all nature in various shapes and ways. I now copy out of my MS. book. A.P.S."

These Cosmological Notes circulated among the early students of Theosophy under the title, "Notes from the Book of Kiu-te." This may be seen from Francesca Arundale's comment made in her book titled, *My Guest--H. P. Blavatsky*, p. 14 (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1932):

"I have among my papers a copy of some early notes that were sent to us, entitled Notes from the Book of Kiu Ti, a most metaphysical and philosophical discourse, strikingly different from the explanatory teaching of a later date."

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on December 5, 2011 at 6:58am

In the [Cosmological Notes](#) manuscript there is also an annotation "manas", which is not reproduced in the book (BL), in the table of principles next to the fifth human principle, in English, "Animal Soul".

In Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism* (EB) (in my 1892 edition on pages 30-31) there is an explanation about the fifth human principle, which was called animal soul earlier, but is now called human soul, or manas, while the fourth principle is now called animal soul, or kama rupa. The table of human principles from BL changes significantly because of this.

	Tibetan (Notes)	Tibetan (Orthogr.)	Sanskrit (EB)	English (EB)
1	A-ku	sku	rupa	body
2	Zer	zer	prana or jiva	vitality
3	Chhu-lung	[?]	linga sharira	astral body
4	Nga Zhi	[?]	kama rupa	animal soul
5	Ngi	[?]	manas	human soul
6	Lana-Sem-Nyed	bla na sems nyid	buddhi	spiritual soul
7	Hlün Düb	lhun grub	atma	spirit

[David Reigle](#) on December 5, 2011 at 3:13pm

On rgyus for dgyu or dzyu, this does appear to best match HPB's definition at first glance among the possible words known to us. I have been checking some sources on this, to verify that it is not the standard translation of any Sanskrit term. This, I think, is a strike against it. We have every reason to believe that the Senzar texts were translated or transformed into classical Sanskrit texts, which were then translated into Chinese and also into Tibetan.

There is still the great problem of illegible handwriting. We do not know if we are looking for dgyu or dzyu or jyu or something else. The follow-up Mahatma letter #13 will be posted shortly, so that we can all see Morya's handwriting, which was then put into Sinnett's handwriting. I think you have to be highly clairvoyant to be able to read either of these. At least, I cannot make out many words in them.

As for the meaning, there IS a word used regularly in the Books of Kiu-te or the Tibetan Buddhist tantras to refer to the "real knowledge," but this word is jnana or Dzian, Tibetan ye shes. This is nothing like dgyu or dzyu. Further, I have never heard of any kind of knowledge that can become fohat, as in Stanza 5.2, "The Dzyu becomes Fohat."

David Reigle on December 5, 2011 at 3:49pm

A few comments on motion: The usual words for motion in Sanskrit are gati, gamana, calana, carana, etc. The word karma as a technical term in the Hindu Vaisesika school, where some have translated it as "motion," while others stay with its usual translation as "action," is different from karma in its normal sense. Most, if not all, references to karma in Theosophical sources use karma in its normal sense: the one law of action and reaction, or karmic recompense. Here it would not mean motion per se. The idea of karmic knots, karma-granthi, refers to karmic recompense coming together and typically forming a blockage on the path of progress. Again, this would not mean motion as such. The gandanta used in astrology is even farther from this in meaning. The term ganda does not in other contexts mean a knot. Its normal meaning is the cheek of the face. Even in gandanta a node is probably a better translation of it.

If we look to a system such as Vaisesika for a teaching of motion as a principle in nature, and find it as "karma," we would also have to look to other Indian systems, such as the Jaina system, where we find the principle of motion as "dharma." In many others systems, we do not find any idea of motion as a cosmic principle or a principle in nature. We just see it used in the everyday sense, such as saying that a cart is in motion. This type of motion is famously denied by Nagarjuna in the second chapter of his Mula-madhyamaka-karika. As for kyen, this is the Tibetan word rkyen, which translates the Sanskrit word pratyaya, "condition," when used in juxtaposition with hetu, Tibetan rgyu, "cause." Thus, hetu and pratyaya, or rgyu and rkyen, refer to causes and conditions. The causes are primary causes, and conditions are secondary causes. As M. says, kyen is a condition or "cause; itself a result of a previous or some primary cause."

In the Cosmological Notes, where the term "motion" that we are seeking to identify is found, it is once given as "khor wa." This is an identifiable Tibetan word, 'khor ba, the normal translation of the Sanskrit samsara, and also of words for motion such as bhramana. These have the sense of going in a circle or revolving. But it is clear that samsara, in its normal meaning of the cycle of birth and death and rebirth, can hardly be the motion that the Cosmological Notes speak of, that exists even during pralaya. It so happens that the Vaisesika technical term karma does refer to motion or action that exists even during pralaya, as we learn from the beginning of Umesha Mishra's chapter. In investigating this further, we are hindered by lack of primary sources in Sanskrit. The great early Vaisesika commentaries are lost. We have only some quotations from them. Even among the commentaries we have, important ones such as the Kiranavali, the Vyomavati, and the Candrananda-vritti, have not been translated into English. Regarding the Jaina system and its principle of motion called "dharma," there is no pralaya in this system.

David Reigle on December 5, 2011 at 8:00pm

This is a helpful observation, Ingmar, that the description of the seven human principles changed a little by the time of Sinnett's 1883 book, Esoteric Buddhism. That manas is meant here for the fifth principle is a real possibility. But I am not sure that Sinnett's added word there is really manas. It looks like it ends in "y" rather than "s." Can anyone make out what the added word is below this one?

David Reigle on December 5, 2011 at 9:52pm

At the time HPB wrote in the Introductory to the SD about the great underground libraries of the initiates that contained copies of all the lost works, the only Sanskrit commentary on the Vaisesika-sutras that was available was the Upaskara by Sankara-misra. No one even suspected that others might be found. Then, between 1957 and 1985, four hitherto unavailable recently discovered commentaries were published. These gave us a much more satisfactory text of the Vaisesika-sutras, with more satisfactory explanations. They are posted on this website, and were described in a March 31, 2011 post: <http://theosnet.ning.com/forum/topics/online-sanskrit-texts-project...> They are texts of intermediate age, and do not yet bring us to the early still lost commentaries by Atreya, Ravana, Bharadvaja, etc. But they take us a big step closer. Who can say when the early ones will be discovered?

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on December 7, 2011 at 3:34am

Frank: it seems to me, all of these are more or less explicable, except for 1. pranā and 2. the word below manas. As for the latter, I am not sure if you are right on this. The y in "mayava" below looks quite different. I think I have seen a sample of A.T. Barker's handwriting somewhere. Maybe this could be helpful, especially if the writing proves to be his.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on December 7, 2011 at 5:19am

On second thought: maybe "Mayava=rupa" (5th human principle) looks more like Sinnett's writing, with the guirlande-style M.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on December 7, 2011 at 5:37am

Maybe a handwriting expert would also enjoy a few hours of studying the [Mahatma letter 13 manuscript](#), as I did yesterday evening, or, alternatively, framing it as an abstract work of art...

[David Reigle](#) on December 7, 2011 at 3:17pm

Well, I much enjoyed our first comment on the manuscript of Mahatma letter 13: frame it as an abstract work of art. Anyone who looks at it will see just how appropriate this comment is. Humorous, but its truth will be seen when one tries to read it.

On the illegible second word added to the fifth human principle in the Cosmological Notes, it appears to start with "map." The third letter looks quite like how Sinnett makes his "p"s in the words across from it. The initial "m" might be something other than "m."

[David Reigle](#) on December 9, 2011 at 9:56pm

No one has yet commented on the article about the dhatu in the Anunatvapurnatvanirdesa, posted with the Stanzas documents about ten days ago, and discussed in my post of Nov. 28. As there indicated, I regard this as quite an important piece of information. The eka-dhatu, the "one element," is a central topic of the text stated to be the source of the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga's teaching on the dhatu. This text has been lost in India for nearly 1500 years, and never went to Tibet. Yet, the Mahatmas, or HPB, or whoever we want to regard as the author of their letters, teach the "one element." The question I ended with was more than just rhetorical. I really would like to know, "how likely is it that Blavatsky came up with the 'one element' out of her imagination?"

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on December 11, 2011 at 5:44am

Regarding David's earlier question seeking for "1. any reference to the term "father-mother" in Eastern texts (re: SD 1.98 fn.)." It seemed like an easy task finding a father-mother reference, but - of course - proved to be not so easy.

In the R̥g Vedas we find "father and mother" used in a cosmological sense in many places, heaven as father and earth as mother. An (arbitrary) example can be found in [RV I, 185, 11](#) ([tr. Griffith 1896](#)):

idaṃ **dyāvāpṛthivī** satyamastu **pitarmātaryadi**hopabruve vām |

bhūtaṃ devānāmavame avobhirvidyā... ||

"Be this my prayer fulfilled, **O Earth and Heaven**, wherewith, **Father and Mother**, I address you. Nearest of Gods be ye with your protection. May we find strengthening food in full abundance."

Historically the first sign of humans having a religious or symbolic perspective of the world is the idea of heaven

and earth as the spiritual and material. This idea seems to date back even to Palaeolithic times. In the study of shamanistic beliefs it is a basic assumption.

The concept of a primordial unity of father-mother cf. SD 1, 98 fn, is of course quite a step beyond this. We do find this in later Hinduism, I think particularly in Śaivism, in the unification of Śiva and Parvati. Often a parallel is drawn between Śaivism and Vajrayāna Buddhism, regarding the imagery of Ādibuddha and his consort unified in "yab yum", which is the Tibetan word for "father-mother".

Problem is that this term for father-mother is generally not used in the Tibetan scriptures. I checked some of the Buddhist tantric texts, starting with the Guhyasamājatantra, but have not been able to find it. The terms corresponding to father and mother in this same sense are upāya and prajñā there. It is apparently being used though, in explanatory literature, for example in Mkhas grub rje's *Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam*, translated by Lessing and Wayman, entitled *Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems*, on page 304-305:

de man chad nang gi he ru ka **yab yum** dang rang gi rtsa ba'i bla ma dbyer med du mos par byas nas | [..]

"Subsequent to that, he convinces himself that the personal Heruka in "**Father-Mother**" **union** and his own basic *guru* are indissoluble; then takes initiation from him, [..]"

This is necessarily a very short summary of what could be said on this vast subject.

Jacques Mahnich on December 11, 2011 at 12:02pm

Dharma-Dhatu (together with some of the vocabulary found in the SD) appears in B. Hodgson - Literature & Religion of the Buddhists (1841)

p.39 & 40 :

" The former of these (buddhas) are seven who are all characterised as " Manushi" or human ; the latter are five or six, and are contradistinguished as " **Anupapadaka**," without parents, and also as " **Dhyani**," or divine...

" The **Dhyani Buddhas**, with Adi Buddha, their chief, are usually and justly referred to the Theistic school. The epithet Dhyani, however, as applied to a class of Buddhas, is obviously capable of an atheistic interpretation. It is nevertheless certain, that, in whatever sense other schools may admit this term, or the class of Divinities which it characterises, the Aishwarikis (behond the bounds of Nepaul too) ascribe this **creative Dhyani** to a self-existent, infinite, and omniscient " Adi Buddha," one of whose attributes is the possession of five sorts of wisdom. Hence he is called " Panchajnyana Atmika ;" and it was by virtue of these five sorts of wisdom, that he, by five successive acts of Dhyani, created, from the beginning and for the duration of the present system of worlds, the " Pancha Buddha Dhyani." The names and graduation of these Jnyanas, Dhyans, and Buddhas are thus :

1. Suvisuddha **Dharma Dhatu**..."

It is equated with Vairochana Buddha

Also, in page 205, inside a foot note, the **Dharma Dhatu** is listed as one of the layer (the fourth) of a mandala. But it is not refering to the one-element.

More interesting is Samuel Beal in his Catena, who wrote (p. 12) :

"Jiu-Ch'au calls his book " The Buddhist Kosmos, with illustrations.""^ The expression "Fah-kai^^ is a well-known one to signify the limits or **elements of Dharma (dharma dhatu)**, where Dharma is the same as Prakriti, or Matter itself."

Dharma-dhatu prakriti appears also as title of one of the Prajna-paramita book (Volume II n° 7 - *Chos-kyi-dvyings-kyi-rang-bjin-dvyer-med-par-bstan-pa*) listed by Csoma de Körös in his Analysis of the Kanjur and

Tanjur, translated in french by Léon Feer (Annales du Musée Guimet - Tome II).

And finally, closer to what we are looking for, on page 247, Csoma describe the Ratna-Kotni sutra (Rin-po-chehi-mthah) as a discussion between Buddha and Manjusri-Kumara-Bhuta on **Dharma-Dhatu**, called the **first cause or prime root of all things**.

David Reigle on December 12, 2011 at 5:35pm

Thank you, Ingmar, for the very helpful material on the question of "father-mother." This is good research. It gives us a good sample of what is out there. In the Vedic verse that you quoted, the terms father and mother, pitar mātār, are in the vocative case, "O father, O mother." As you say, "The concept of a primordial unity of father-mother cf. SD 1, 98 fn, is of course quite a step beyond this." We would have to find the terms father and mother together in a compound, pitr-matr, with the final member declined in some case other than the dual, so that it would not mean "father and mother." Then, the compound itself would have to be used in something like a cosmogonic context.

Certainly the idea of the unification of Śiva and Parvati found in Śaivism, or of an Ādibuddha and his consort unified in "yab yum" in Vajrayāna Buddhism, bring us closer. I, too, have found that yab yum for "father-mother" is not really used in the Indian Sanskrit texts, but seems to be a Tibetan usage. There in the Tibetan texts, I have so far not found it used like in the SD. But since only a fraction of the tantric texts have so far become available, there is still the possibility that it will be found in them. We have to keep searching.

David Reigle on December 12, 2011 at 6:49pm

Thank you, Jacques, for continuing to search out the early sources for us. What you posted shows that the term dharma-dhātu was available in HPB's time. As you then say, "But it is not referring to the one-element."

The quote you gave in which Beal says "elements of Dharma (dharma dhatu), where Dharma is the same as Prakriti, or Matter itself," is based on Hodgson. Beal accepted Hodgson's incorrect understanding of the dharmas as being prakriti, or matter itself.

In the title of the Kanjur text, "Dharma-dhatu prakriti," prakriti is used in its normal sense of "nature" rather than as a Samkhya technical term meaning "matter." It is speaking of the indivisible nature of the dharma-dhātu. Csoma de Kőrös worked independently of Hodgson, so was not influenced by Hodgson in the quote you gave where Csoma says "Dharma-Dhatu, called the first cause or prime root of all things." Twenty-two of the forty-nine sutras included in the Ratna-kuta-sutra were published in English translation in 1983 as: A Treasury of Mahāyāna sūtras: Selections from the Mahāratnakūta sūtra. It would be worth checking these to see if they in fact anywhere call the dharma-dhātu the "first cause or prime root of all things," or whether this is just Csoma's interpretation. In general, I do not think Tibetans would be willing to call it this.

Returning to the eka-dhātu, the "one element," I do not know of any source on this term other than the single quotation in the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga, and then its source for it, the Anunatvapurnatvanirdesa. Even today this latter text is not published in English translation. That is why I think William Grosnick's article on the dhātu in the Anunatvapurnatvanirdesa, published in a hard-to-find publication, is so significant for us. Even in Dolpopa's Mountain Doctrine, which quotes the Ratna-gotra-vibhaga more than any other text, I do not recall seeing any mention of the "one element."

David Reigle on December 12, 2011 at 7:57pm

On anupadaka or anupapadaka, Frank, I agree that we must always consider the possibility of Sanskrit texts that we do not know today. In this particular case, however, the error could be traced, as described here on pp. 7-9: <http://www.easterntradition.org/book%20of%20dzian%20research%20repo...> Brian H. Hodgson was the first Westerner to gain access to the Sanskrit Buddhist texts, during his residency in Nepal where they were preserved. The incorrect anupapadaka appears in Hodgson's writings. From Hodgson it was copied in Monier-Williams' Sanskrit-English Dictionary, and from Hodgson it was earlier miscopied in Emil Schlagintweit's 1863 Buddhism in Tibet as anupadaka. From Schlagintweit, anupadaka was copied in The Secret Doctrine, along with other things. When Franklin Edgerton for his Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary went through the same Sanskrit

Buddhist texts that Hodgson had used, he found only aupapāduka and upapāduka. Thus, I feel certain that the anupadaka in the SD is an error.

Strangely, I did come across the otherwise unknown word anupādaka in the Pranava-vada (vol. 3, pp. 118-122, of the English), but in a different meaning than used in the SD. So I still think the SD's anupadaka is an error for aupapāduka or upapāduka, since the meaning is the same.

Also, Frank, on Wednesday Ingmar had posted to the "New Stanzas of Dzian Study Documents" this note and a link to the book: "Schmidt's 1835 Mongolisch-Deutsch-Russisches Wörterbuch was pointed out to me by the late Henk Spierenburg, in relation to the word chohan. I have not been checking this one out either." It would be good if you could check this for us sometime when you get a chance to. Perhaps you are already working on it. I know that these things take time.

Jacques Mahnich on December 13, 2011 at 4:59am

"A Treasury of Mahāyāna sūtras: Selections from the Mahāratnakūta sūtra. It would be worth checking these to see if they in fact anywhere call the dharma-dhātu the 'first cause or prime root of all things,' or whether this is just Csoma's interpretation"

Here are the first results of the check :

Chapter 12 - The Elucidation of Consciousness

p.226 : "Consciousness is devoid of form and substance, but it upholds all in the **dharmadhātu**."

p. 227 : "In the same way, from the same consciousness that upholds the entire **dharmadhātu** come all the samsaric beings with bodies of different colors, such as white, black, yellow, and red;...

The power of memory is very strong in the **dharmadhātu**,..."

From the Notes (p.237) : "This sutra seems to be one of the forerunners or germinal source of the Mind-Only philosophy of the Yogachara School. The reader will find that the consciousness discussed here is in many ways similar to the Yogachara idea of the 'store consciousness' (*alayavijnana*)."

From the Glossary (p.474) : "**Dharmadhātu** : Literally, 'the real of dharmas.' However, in Buddhist texts it has four meanings :

1. The nature or essence of dharmas (the same as tathata), which is the unifying, underlying reality regarded as the ground of all things, both noumenal and phenomenal.
2. Infinity; the all-embracing totality of the infinite universes as revealed before the Buddha's eyes.
3. In certain sutras, denotes one of the eighteen elements : the dharma-element; that is the mental objects (dharmas).
4. The infinite universe per se.

The reader should bear in mind that '**dharmadhātu**' may have any of the above four meanings.

From these sutra excerpts, dharmadhātu may be similar to alayavijnana. From the glossary (meaning 1 & 2), it is close to the one-element. We can safely say that it is not a Csoma' interpretation.

Ingmar de Boer on December 14, 2011 at 6:03am

Jeremy: on SD 1, 74, *In the beginning, before Mother became Father-Mother, the fiery Dragon moved in the infinitudes alone* (Book of Sarpardjni.) The Aitareya Brahmana calls the Earth Sarparajni, "the Serpent Queen," and "the Mother of all that moves. Book of Sarpardjni, i, 103.

Sarparājñī appears twice in Aitareya-Brahmana, in [AB, 5, 23, 1](#) and [AB, 5, 23, 2](#). The "Book of Sarpardjni" could be the verses of the Ṛg Vedas attributed to Sarparājñī, [RV X, 189](#) and Taittirīya Saṃhitā I, 5, 4 cf. Monier-Williams p. 1184, "sarparājñī". The reference to i, 103 would be unclear though

RV X, 189:

āyaṃ ghauḥ pṛśnirakramīdasadan mātaraṃ puraḥ |
pītaṃ ca prayan svaḥ ||
antaścarati rocanāsyā prāṇādapānāt |
vyakhyamahiṣo divam ||
trīṃśad dhāma vi rājati vāk patamghāya dhīyate |
prativastoraha dyubhiḥ ||

tr. of [Griffith](#):

1. THIS spotted Bull hath come, and sat before the Mother in the east,
Advancing to his Father heaven.
- 2 Expiring when he draws his breath, she moves along the lucid spheres:
The Bull shines out through all the sky.
- 3 Song is bestowed upon the Bird: it rules supreme through thirty realms
Throughout the days at break of morn.

[David Reigle](#) on December 14, 2011 at 8:27am

The dharma-dhātu question is important, and I will return to it shortly.

Thank you, Frank, for checking Schmidt's Mongolian-German-Russian dictionary for the term Chohan. I wonder what Henk Spierenburg meant.

A few quick notes on Sarpa-rajñi. The spelling Sarparajni is found in the SD, with an accent mark on the last "a". The spelling Sarpardjni is only a machine misreading of this, where the OCR program read the "a" with accent as "d". The reference to "i, 103" is to the 1893 third edition of the SD, taken from its 1895 index volume. HPB speaks more fully of Sarparajni in Collected Writings vol. 1. There is no known "Book of Sarparajni." As Ingmar suggested, it possibly refers to Rig-Vedas 10.189, the only Vedic hymn that is attributed to Sarparajni. But there is little in this short hymn. Nor does its use in the sacrifice, described in the Aitareya Brahmana, add a lot. Even there, HPB quotes Martin Haug's 1863 translation as saying "the Mother of all that moves" (SD 1.74). In fact, his translation says "the queen of all that moves (sarpat)" (pp. 358-359, 1922 reprint p. 244). The word rājñī means "queen" rather than "mother." Also, Arthur Berriedale Keith's 1920 translation gives this phrase as: "the queen of what creeps" (Rig-Vedas Brahmanas, p. 248). The verb sarpat, "creeps," goes with the noun sarpa, "serpent." For "all that moves," we normally find words coming from the Sanskrit roots "cal" and "car."

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on December 14, 2011 at 5:17pm

Regarding **chohan**, two Mongolian words are especially interesting 1. **ᠬᠠᠨ** (khan) and 2. **ᠬᠠᠭᠠᠨ** (xagan), both derived from an older Mongolian word "qayan". Both are titles of Mongolian rulers. In Turkish 2. is styled hakan.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on December 15, 2011 at 1:44am

Checked the passage on the bald Sarparājñī in [CW I, 226-227](#), the 1863 translation of AB by Martin Haug, and also Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. No trace of the "Book of Sarparajni" or the quotation on Father-Mother.

David Reigle

Thank you, John, for letting us know about the widespread use of the word "Chohan" as a surname in northern India and contiguous areas. This is useful to know in our search here. It so happens that Doss McDavid had come across this while searching a while back, and had let me know about it. We then concluded that it probably is not the word "Chohan" as used in the Mahatma letters, which appears to be a title.

David Reigle

Thank you, Jacques, for finding and posting the references to the dharma-dhātu in the sūtra from the Ratnakūṭa collection that was given the English title, "The Elucidation of Consciousness." This sūtra is quite unusual in Buddhism in what it says about consciousness. Nonetheless, its references to the dharma-dhātu are standard enough. Its Sanskrit title is Bhādrapāla-śreṣṭhi-paripṛcchā, "The Questions of the Merchant Leader Bhādrapāla." It so far remains lost in the original Sanskrit, and we have only its Chinese and Tibetan translations. For those who don't have the book, A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sūtras, the sūtras in it were translated from Chinese.

From these quotes, "all in the dharmadhatu," and "the entire dharmadhatu," we see that the dharma-dhātu stands for everything in the universe. As there said, it can be (and often is), translated as "the realm of dharmas," taking dhātu in its meaning of "realm" rather than "element." Regarding the first meaning of dharma-dhātu quoted from the glossary of this 1983 book of translations from Chinese: "The nature or essence of dharmas (the same as tathata), which is the unifying, underlying reality regarded as the ground of all things, both noumenal and phenomenal." This is close to what Csoma de Körös gave long ago, the "first cause or prime root of all things." But there are differences that most Tibetan Buddhists would not accept.

While most Tibetan Buddhists would be willing to call the dharma-dhātu the "ground of all things," they would not likely be willing to call it "the first cause." Even calling it "the prime root of all things" would be acceptable only to some. For the majority of Tibetan Buddhists, the dharma-dhātu is equivalent to emptiness, śūnyatā. Emptiness is indeed "the unifying, underlying reality regarded as the ground of all things" in one sense, in that everything shares the nature of being empty. This is their unifying and underlying reality. But emptiness, for most Tibetan Buddhists, is not a ground of all things like "the first cause," from which the universe can arise. Therefore, for them, it is not "the prime root of all things." For the minority of Tibetan Buddhists who accept the Shentong or "empty of other" teachings, accepting an emptiness that is empty of everything other than itself, the dharma-dhātu as "the prime root of all things" is more acceptable.

David Reigle

Very interesting further material on the name Chauhan/Chohan, John. This possible connection should certainly be considered. Regarding the conclusion I posted, that it probably is not the word "Chohan" as used in the Mahatma letters, I should have spoken only for myself. I am not sure if this conclusion is shared by Doss McDavid.

If we regard the word as being Tibetan, then the once occurring spelling Cho-khan gives us some possibilities, while the usual spelling Chohan offers little. As we have seen, the problems in transcribing the handwriting of the some of the Mahatma letters are great. It would be quite easy to read an "h" for a "k," or even a "kh."

The hypothesis that Cho-khan is the word "chos mkhan" seems likely to me. The word spelled "mkhan po" is what is used for the abbot of a monastery. So, as pronounced, "Khenpo" refers to an abbot, who may also more honorifically be called "Khen Rinpoche." The word chos (pronounced with silent "s"), as most of you know, means "dharma," and this is what is used for the Buddhist teachings. So a "Dharma abbot" would make sense for chos mkhan. Also, as you mentioned, the word mkhan as the second member of a two-part word means 'one who practices or is skilled in' something. Thus, rtsis means astrology and rtsis mkhan is an astrologer. So "one who is skilled in the Dharma" would also make sense for chos mkhan. The problem with both of these is that chos mkhan has not been found in use, and the Tibetans I asked about this had not heard of such a use.

Regarding jo bo, lord or master, this word as a title is often used to refer to the Indian teacher Atisha, who came to Tibet. I think that Rich Taylor had suggested the jo of jo bo for the cho of chohan. Although Tibetan is pronounced differently from one region to another, I have not heard of this jo being pronounced as cho.

David Reigle

Further on the dharma-dhātu. This compound term is found in many Buddhist texts, and has a range of meanings. It has been translated as "sphere of religion," "element of the Law," "sphere of phenomena," "element of attributes," "sphere of reality," "expanse of reality," "basic space of reality," "basic space of phenomena," "ultimate expanse," "ultimate realm," etc. The dharma-dhātu and the dhātu, the "element," are synonyms, as may be seen, for example, in Ratna-gotra-vibhāga 2.38-39. Nonetheless, they are not full synonyms. A turning wheel is still a wheel, but not all wheels are turning. The term dharma-dhātu is relatively common, while the term dhātu, used in this meaning, is relatively uncommon.

In the majority of the occurrences of the stock phrase found in Buddhist texts about whether the Tathāgatas arise or whether they do not arise, the term dhātu by itself is used. In a minority of occurrences, the term dharma-dhātu is used. Therefore in the parallel phrase from the esoteric Senzar Catechism, I think that just the term dhātu is used (translated as "Space"), and not dharma-dhātu. While the term dharma-dhātu was known in HPB's time, as shown in quotations provided by Jacques, the term dhātu (used in this meaning) may not have been known in HPB's time.

When we do find just the term dhātu in Buddhist texts, used in this meaning, it may be prefixed by certain adjectives. These are acintya, "inconceivable" or "unthinkable," nirabhilāpya, "inexpressible" or "unspeakable," alakṣaṇa, "without defining characteristics" or "unmarked" (Conze), anāsrava, "immaculate" or "uncontaminated" or "without outflows" (Conze), and perhaps a few more. To get an idea of how frequent these are, we may look at Edward Conze's translation of The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom. This is a composite translation of sections of the Prajñā-pāramitā Sūtra in 25,000 lines and in 18,000 lines, with occasional sections from that in 100,000 lines. The English translation occupies more than 600 pages.

The term dharma-dhātu, translated as "Dharma-element," occurs there more than 50 times. The term acintya-dhātu, translated as "unthinkable element," occurs there about 14 times (pp. 123, 179, 183, 185, 188, 193, 249, 253, 277, 305, 370, 374, 376, 377). The term nirabhilāpya-dhātu, translated as "inexpressible realm," occurs there about 11 times (pp. 646-647). The term alakṣaṇa-dhātu, translated as "unmarked element," occurs there about 1 time (p. 544), and in a similar phrase translated as "markless element" (p. 353). The term anāsrava-dhātu does not seem to occur in The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom, but it is found in Vasubandhu's commentary on Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra, chapter 9, verse 23, and in the Ratna-gotra-vibhāga, chapter 1, verse 85. This gives us a perspective on the term eka-dhātu, the "one element." It does not seem to occur in The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom, but it is found 1 time in Asaṅga's commentary on the Ratna-gotra-vibhāga (chapter 1, verse 12). As we know, the dhātu is a central topic of this unique text. For comparison, the term dhātu occurs there more than 170 times. The sole occurrence of eka-dhātu is therefore quite unusual. Tracing the dhātu teaching back to its stated source in the Anūnatvāpūrṇatva-nirdeśa-parivarta, lost in Sanskrit, never translated into Tibetan, extant only in Chinese translation, and not yet published in English translation, with the help of a little-known article by William Grosnick we found that the term eka-dhātu plays a large role in this small text. In the Theosophical writings, the "one element" is the usual form used. This, I believe, is significant. The use of the term dharma-dhātu is not uncommon in Buddhist texts. The use of the term dhātu in this meaning is uncommon. The use of the term eka-dhātu is extremely uncommon. Yet it is there, in the very source of the teaching on the dhātu.

Ingmar de Boer on December 24, 2011 at 4:26pm

Following up on the Father-Mother unity, I got sidetracked into the works of Samuel Beal, in particular his two translations regarding the travels of **Xuán Zàng**. (*The Life of Hiuen Tsiang* by Huì Lì and *Si-Yu-Ki: Records of the Buddhist Western World* by Xuán Zàng)

Xuán Zàng arrived, not long after the year 637 CE, in Ayodhya, where Asaṅga lived and worked, around 350 CE (Thurman, Anacker), and received the "Five Books" from Maitreya by inspiration. Each of the translations of Beal provides a short list of the works of Maitreya and of some of Asaṅga's own writings. Examining these, led me to engage in something I wanted to do for a long time, which is making list or table of all works attributed to Maitreya and Asaṅga in the Tibetan and Chinese Canons, and comparing authors, dates, titles, verse etc. [Here is a first version](#) of the table.

Ingmar de Boer on December 24, 2011 at 4:35pm

In *The Life of Hiuen Tsiang* we find on p. 85-88:

Asaṅga received from Maitreya

Yôga-śāstra

Alāṃkāra-Mahāyānaśāstra

Madhyānta-vibhāṅga-śāstra

Asaṅga wrote (himself):

Mahāyāna-samparigraha-śāstra

Prakaraṇāryavācchā-śāstra-kārikā

Abhidharma śāstra

Vidyāmātra-śāstra

Kośa-śāstra

and others, among which is the:

Yôgācāriya-bhūmi-śāstra

In *Si-Yu-Ki: Records of the Buddhist Western World*, we find on p.226:

Yôgācāriya Śāstra (Yü-kia-sse-ti-lun)

Mahāyāna Sūtrālaṅkāraṭīkā (Chwong-yan-ta-shing-hing-lun)

Madhyānta Vibhāṅga Śāstra (Chung-pin-fen-pi-lun)

all three attributed to Maitreya.

None of the two mentions the *five* books of Maitreya. Three of the five books are unmentioned, i.e. the Abhisamayālaṅkāra (AA), Dharmadharmatāvibhāṅga (DDV) and Ratnagotravibhāga (RGV), and the Yogācārabhūmi seems to be added. In the works of Bu Ston (1290-1364), around 700 years later, all five books are mentioned, together called the "five books of Maitreya".

Many questions can of course be asked here. I have summarized some of these in the colour code of a [second version of the table](#) (in Excel 2003 format) of works of Maitreya and Asaṅga. In green text are the works mentioned in the two lists of Beal. Marked green are works attributed to Maitreya in the Catalogues of Tibetan or

Chinese Canon. In red text are the works not mentioned in the two lists of Beal, however translated by Xuán Zàng.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on December 24, 2011 at 4:36pm

Revisiting Beal's translations, we can identify the books (derived mainly from the Chinese titles in the source texts and Beal's Chinese renderings) as (Tohoku and Taisho numbers):

Yôga-śâstra = Toh. 4035 (Yogācārabhūmi)

Alâmkâra-Mahâyânaśâstra = Toh. 4020 (MSA)

Madhyânta-vibhângga-śâstra = Toh. 4021 (MAV)

Mahâyâna-samparigraha-śâstra = Toh. 4048 (Mahâyānasaṃgraha)

Prakaraṇâryavâchâ-śâstra-kârikâ = Taisho 1602 or 1603 (Prakaranāryavācāśāstrakārikā)

Abhidharma śâstra = ?

Vidyâmâtra-śâstra = Taisho 1585 (Vijnaptimatrāṣiddhiśâstra)

Kosha-śâstra = Taisho 1560 (Abhidharmakośa)

Yôgâchariya-bhūmi-śâstra = Toh. 4035 (Yogācārabhūmi)

Yôgâchariya Śâstra (Yu-kia-sse-ti-lun) = Toh. 4035 (Yogācārabhūmi)

Mahâyâna Sûtrâlâṅkāraṭikâ (Chwong-yan-ta-shing-hing-lun) = Toh. 4020 (MSA)

Madhyânta Vibhângga Śâstra (Chung-pin-fen-pi-lun) = Toh. 4021 (MAV)

"Abhidharma śâstra" remains unidentified. Not all considerations can be given here, for the sake of brevity.

In some surveys another work of Maitreya appears, mentioned also by Hakuju Ui, the Yogavibhânggaśâstra, which is currently lost, and unmentioned by Bu Ston. I leave it at that for today.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on December 25, 2011 at 6:19am

Excellent work Ingmar, it may keep us busy for a while...!

About the Abhidharma sastra, there exists the Abhidharmasamuccaya of Asanga. The Mahapandita Rahula Samkrtanyana discovered 2/5 of this text, long thought as lost, in 1934, at the Tibetan monastery of Sa lu, near Si ga rtse. These fragments were published in 1947 in the Journal of the Bombay Branch, Royal Asiatic Society, and then published (entire text rebuilt using tibetan and chinese versions) in 1950 by Pralhad Pradhan.

A complete translation was published in french by Walpola Rahula in 1980 (Adrien Maisonneuve - Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient). It is quite a heavy text, aimed at giving explanations on most of the vocabulary of Mahayana Buddhism, i.e. the five skandas, the eighteen dhatu, the twelve ayatana,...explained based on sixty different point of views. Then, the four truths, the octuple path (which has only five categories here). Chapter two talks about Buddha teachings. Chapter three is about definitions on the various types of individuals, the mechanism of human understanding. Finally, chapter four deals with dialectics issues.

[David Reigle](#) on December 25, 2011 at 8:31pm

On the Abhidharma-samuccaya of Asanga, the two Sanskrit editions mentioned by Jacques are available on this site, with the Buddhist documents. V. V. Gokhale's 1947 edition of the recovered fragments was prepared from 17 non-sequential palm leaves of a manuscript originally having 44 or 45 leaves. Pradhan in his 1950 complete edition re-translated the missing portions back into Sanskrit from the Tibetan and Chinese translations. But he also had the tremendous help of access to the Abhidharma-samuccaya-bhasya manuscript that had been

discovered complete. This Sanskrit commentary was not published until 1976, edited by Nathmal Tatia. In the introduction to Hidenori Sakuma's 1996 Sanskrit Word-Index to the Abhidharmasamuccayaabhasyam he points out that the Abhidharma-samuccaya is like a catechism of the huge Yogacara-bhumi. The first five chapters of this massive text were published in 1957, edited by Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya, the same person who translated the Mandukya-karika (Agamasutra of Gaudapada) being discussed in the English Translations of Eastern Sacred Texts forum. This Yogacarabhumi edition is also posted on this website. Also the Bodhisattva-bhumi section of this large work is posted here, in two editions. The Sravaka-bhumi section is being re-edited in Japan, of which 2 volumes have been published. The Samahita Bhumi section, edited by Martin Delhey, was published in Austria in 2009. Other Sanskrit works of Maitreya and Asanga posted here are the Mahayana-sutralamkara, the Madhyanta-vibhaga, the Abhisamayalamkara, and of course, the Ratnagotra-vibhaga. There is much information in their English introductions (and French for the Mahayana-sutralamkara). Walpola Rahula's 1971 French translation of the Abhidharmasamuccaya has been translated into English by Sara Boin-Webb and published in 2001, a publication that I was involved in and added a few notes to. Comparative studies between the writings of Maitreya/Asanga and Gaudapada remain a desideratum. Christian Lindtner in the article that I have numbered 51 on the other forum, p. 277, located Gaudapada's verse 4.24 in a work by Asanga. In the helpful charts prepared by Ingmar, it is no. 31 of his second chart, the Xian yang sheng jiao lun.

Ingmar de Boer on December 26, 2011 at 5:40pm

In the Chinese Canon, the Abhidharmasamuccaya is spelled 阿毘達磨藏論 = Dà chéng ā pí dá mó jí lùn. Samuccaya is rendered 論, jí lùn. In ch. 3 of the source text of [The Life of Hiuen Tshang](#), the "Abhidharmaśāstra" is spelled 阿毘(論) = 阿毘(論) = Duì fǎ (lùn) = Abhidharma (śāstra) cf. Soothill p. 423. In the same fashion we might expect something like 阿毘達磨 = Duì fǎ jí lùn, for Abhidharmasamuccaya, distinguishing it from the Abhidharmakośa which is commonly rendered also as 阿毘達磨 = Duì fǎ lùn.

The Abhidharmasamuccaya and Mahāyānasamgraha seem to take a special place in the works of Asaṅga, both being summaries of the Yogacāra doctrine and not "original" works like for example is said of the *five books* inspired by Maitreya. Our interest in the *five books* in the context of the stanza's of Dzhan may be triggered in particular by the following most intriguing passage, which I am sure has been quoted here earlier, from HPB's letter no. LXXX to Sinnett dated March 3 1886, on her writing *The Secret Doctrine*:

I have finished an enormous Introductory Chapter, or Preamble, Prologue, call it what you will; just to show the reader that the text as it goes, every Section beginning with a page of translation from the Book of Dzhan and the Secret Book of "Maitreya Buddha" Champai chhos Nga (in prose, not the five books in verse known, which are a blind) are not fiction.

I have been studying some of the *five books* a few years ago when they were issued in Tibetan on the site of the [Asian Classics Input Project](#) (ACIP), as also the Yogācārabhūmi and Vasubandhu's Abhidharmakośa. I think David is also involved in ACIP somehow. I was not able to read many of it, but searched the texts for technical terms and then translated some of the passages found. Now some of these works are also freely available in Sanskrit (Unicode), for example from the site of the [Göttingen Register of Electronic Texts in Indian Languages](#) (GRETIL). Also critical editions and translations scanned and PDF-ed are available now. I have yet to make a more in depth study of the works associated with Asaṅga, who is certainly a key figure to essentialia of modern theosophy. The Abhidharmasamuccaya and Mahāyānasamgraha would probably be interesting starting points.

David Reigle on December 26, 2011 at 7:34pm

HPB's statement from her letter that pretty much equates the Book of Dzhan with the Secret Book of Maitreya Buddha is indeed the cause of our great interest in the books of Maitreya, and Asanga who he taught them to. Now a quick word about critical editions and translations.

In brief, there are no critical editions of these texts because we lack sufficient manuscripts from which to prepare critical editions. In most cases, only a single manuscript has been found. It is often damaged or incomplete, and the photographs of it are often poor. The best that can be done toward a critical edition is to compare it carefully with the Tibetan translation in its various canonical editions, and suggest corrections and emendations. This is an ongoing process. So it is necessary to use whatever editions have been published, supplemented by corrections found in later journal articles and translations. Searchable texts that have been input are wonderful for electronic searches, but they cannot be relied on for critical purposes. They must always be checked for typographical

errors made in the inputting process. This means having access to the editions that they were input from. More importantly, the editions being used to input from are by no means always the best editions. They are often merely the only edition that is in print and available to the inputters. If these editions were re-typeset in India, as is usually the case, new typographical errors will have been introduced. The readings of the original editions can only be determined by access to the often rare original editions. These are what are being posted here on this website.

On translations, many are unreliable and cannot be used for research. Check the comments in this 2007 Bibliographic listing: <http://www.easterntradition.org/etri%20bib-maitreya.pdf>. Look under Limaye's Mahayana-sutralamkara translation, Anacker's Madhyanta-vibhaga translation, Kloppenborg's translation of the Pratyeka-buddha-bhumi of the Yogacara-bhumi, and Willis's translation of the tattvartha chapter of the Bodhisattva-bhumi. Translations such as these cannot be relied on to give even a generally correct idea of what Maitreya or Asanga is saying, let alone to use it for critical research. It is important for all of us to be aware of these things.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on December 27, 2011 at 3:13am

It is good to be aware that the Asaṅga-Maitreya editions in the texts area are not real critical editions reconstructing an archetypal text, although some have critical notes, and compare various Tibetan editions. On input projects: some of these electronic publications are of course more scrupulously edited than others, going through subsequent corrective stages, and providing data on their sources. On the Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra edition of Limaye: it even has a kind of apology in the introduction saying it is her first translation ever, which, I must confess, did cheer me up a bit after trying to read the translation.

[David Reigle](#) on December 28, 2011 at 7:55pm

These questions asked by Joe, and the suggestion that goes with them, should be pursued. We do need to keep aware of new things coming out regarding Maitreya and Asanga, or new access to old things. Besides the sole manuscript of the Mahayanasutralamkara that the sole actual edition was based on (Levi 1907), other manuscripts of it have since been found. Progress in editing them is extremely slow. So far, new editions of chapters 1-3 and 9-10 have been published, and some important articles giving suggested emendations. Some of the manuscript collections around the world are now being digitized, and it may be that these manuscripts either are or will soon be available online. A couple of these manuscripts are preserved in Japan, where great progress has been made in digitizing manuscripts. As far as I know, the ways to find out about these things are announcements in academic journals, citations in academic publications, and online searches. This latter is something that anyone with good internet access could contribute to.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on December 29, 2011 at 1:19am

Collecting some relevant links certainly sounds like a useful idea. We could also think of, besides maintaining a collection of source texts, collecting some of the most relevant or interesting articles, watching carefully not to strive for completeness, that is not letting it become a burden in itself.

[David Reigle](#) on December 31, 2011 at 12:07pm

Although I do not know of an organized source of online publications, searches for specific Sanskrit titles are likely to turn up recent references to these texts in academic publications. Not many weeks ago when I was checking the internet to see if a translation of the Anunatvapurnatvanirdesa had yet been published, I came across a very important new translation of Maitreya's Dharmadharmatavibhanga. Two of four volumes of a comprehensive study of it have been published in 2007 and 2008, respectively, titled: A Study of the Dharmadharmatavibhanga, by Raymond E. Robertson (China Tibetology Publishing House). The link with information on it is: http://www.stbsa.org/en/publications/en_publication.aspx?p=1.4.toc. Note that the last word used in this title is the Prakritized "vibhanga" rather than the classical Sanskrit "vibhaga," which would prevent finding it in searches for the Dharmadharmatavibhanga.

This book immediately went to the top of my wish list. The two existing English translations are helpful, but not adequate for the type of research that we need to do. I contacted this Canada-based organization, The Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Studies Association in North America, for ordering information. They informed me that in the

U.S., it is easier to get it through Amazon, and that it is available through Amazon. With great good fortune, Christmas was around the corner, and Santa Claus was coming. Guess what he brought me! Yes, the two volumes are here, and from my first impression, I am not disappointed with them. As we have long known, the Sanskrit original was discovered by Rahula Sankrtyayana on his trips to Tibet in search of Sanskrit manuscripts in the 1930s. But it has remained inaccessible right up to the present. This study and translation was therefore based on the Tibetan translations, which were carefully collated.

What the Dharmadharmatavibhaga teaches is nicely summarized in a book review by J. W. de Jong of Klaus-Dieter Mathes' highly regarded 1996 German translation of it (Indo-Iranian Journal, vol. 42, no. 1, January 1999, p. 65):

"The text teaches the irreality of the dharmas which are the product of the abhutaparikalpa which Mathes renders 'falsches Vorstellen'. It is through the nirvikalpajnana (vorstellungsfreie Weisheit) that one arrives at the true nature of phenomena, which is free from the distinction between subject and object. The nirvikalpajnana is the basis for the asrayaparivrtti 'the transformation of the basis'."

The abhuta-parikalpa is the "imagination of what is unreal," as Richard Stanley translates it in his translation of the Madhyantavibhaga, chapter 1, verse 2 (unpublished PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1988). The nirvikalpajnana is the knowledge or wisdom (jnana) that is free from conceptual thought (nirvikalpa). The word nirvikalpa means the same as the word avikalpa. There is a text attributed to the Buddha that is titled either Nirvikalpa-pravesa-dharani or Avikalpa-pravesa-dharani. It is regarded as one of the ten tathagatagarbha sutras. Raymond Robertson found that it is the source of much in the Dharmadharmatavibhanga. So he included a translation of it in his first volume. These two texts, I believe, are closely related to teachings given in The Voice of the Silence.

Ingmar de Boer on December 31, 2011 at 6:48pm

An example of information about an upcoming publication is this [grant for the translation of the Guhyasamājantra](#) to Robert Thurman.

Academic journals are the main source of information about new publications and reviews. The [Indo-Iranian Journal](#) founded by the late prof. dr. J.W. de Jong (Leyden University), and published by [Brill](#) since 2008, is probably the most authoritative among the journals in the area. Many publishers have adverts or news messages, on paper and sometimes on their site or in mailing lists, about forthcoming publications. Bookshops also provide information about future items. In some cases it is possible even to buy a book long before it is published...

Loose ends 2011

1. Capt. Anand Kumar: I did not get round to checking the files you sent me, and listing the references to journal articles.

2. Jacques: now halfway the Abhidharmasamuccaya and certainly enjoying it. Its style makes me think of Wittgenstein's Tractatus.

3. All: I would like to wish everyone involved here a **very good 2012!**

Looking forward to the reincarnated format.

David Reigle on January 2, 2012 at 10:51am

Thank you, Frank, for explaining the German words used by Mathes, and for bringing up this important point. The version by Mathes, as you explain it, gives the meaning of abhuta-parikalpa more correctly. Nonetheless, this is also the meaning that is accepted by Richard Stanley, as may be seen in the second translation that he also uses for this term: "unreal imagination." This is a difficult Sanskrit term to express in English. Good scholars like Mathes and Stanley have to try to translate the Sanskrit fairly closely, without paraphrasing it. So Stanley first takes it as a tatpuruṣa or case relation compound, "imagination (parikalpa) of [what is] unreal (abhuta), and then he takes it as karmadharaya or adjective-noun compound, "unreal (abhuta) imagination (parikalpa). He uses the first translation when speaking more fully, and then often uses the second translation when speaking more briefly. I should have cited both of these, when I only cited the first one.

According to Buddhism, the phenomenal world as we know it is made of up the dharmas, often translated as phenomena. These two texts by Maitreya are saying that the dharmas are the product of abhuta-parikalpa, unreal imagination, or wrong imagining of the real. But, as you note, we are not conscious of this. We do not know that the dharmas are unreal imagination, and we are certainly not imagining them consciously. We take them to be reality. When we learn that the dharmas are unreal imagination, we can then, by stopping the dualistic thought that distinguishes between subject and object, come to directly perceive actual reality, the "true nature of dharmas" (dharmata). This results in the "transformation of the basis," the alaya-vijnana, and this, for that person, is the end of the "unreal imagination."

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on January 4, 2012 at 7:47pm

Reading some of the earlier messages of this blog, where on October 27, 2011 David wrote that according to Wayman, the Bodhimur (HPB) or Bodhi Mör (Wayman), would be a Mongolian translation of Tsong kha pa's Lam rim chen mo. (Calming the Mind..., p. 4) I decided to have a look in the machine readable Tibetan text of the [Lam rim](#) for the Tibetan words in HPB's quote "Fire and Flame destroy the body of an Arhat, their essence makes him immortal." ([SD I, 6](#)) It appeared that the quotation was quite certainly not to be found in the Lam rim.

In the same message David remarked that according to Schagintweit, there should be quotations from the Bodhimör in Schmidt's *Die Geschichte der Ost-Mongolen und Ihres Fürstenhaus*. On p. 316, the title Bodhimör is mentioned, as well as an alternative title "Nom gharchoi todorchoi tolli". The subsequent quotations in *Die Geschichte...* (in "remarks and clarifications" to the 2nd and 3rd part) show that the Bodhimör is a work about Tibetan history. I have not been able to find HPB's quotation here. In *A Jataka-Tale from the Tibetan* by H. Wenzel on p. 503 we find that the Bodhimör would indeed be the Mongolian translation of the *Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*, "The mirror illustrating the lineage of the kings" of Bsod nams rgyal mtshan, which title seems to correspond to the Mongolian title "Nom gharchoi todorchoi tolli".

This Tibetan work would be included in the Derge and Lhasa editions of the Tibetan Canon, and was translated into English at least twice. One of these translations is *Tibetan Buddhist Historiography: The Mirror of Illuminating the Royal Genealogies* of 1994, by Per K. Sørensen. Another is *The Clear Mirror: A Traditional Account of Tibet's Golden Age: Sakyapa Sonam Gyaltzen's Clear Mirror on Royal Genealogy*, 1996, by McComas Taylor and others. An edition of the Tibetan text is *Rgyal rabs gsal Ba'i me long (the clear mirror of Royal genealogies): Tibetan text in transliteration with An introduction in English* of 1966, by Bronislav I. Kuznetsov. I have not been able to check these in full.

There are also long quotations from "Nom gharchoi todorchoi tolli" in Schmidt's work *Forschungen im Gebiete der älteren religiösen, politischen und literarischen Bildungsgeschichte der Völker Mittel-Asiens, vorzüglich der Mongolen und Tibeter*, of 1824, the longest is on pp. 193-206. Schlagintweit reports this in his *Buddhism in Tibet*. I have not found our particular quote there. The title Bodhimör is not mentioned in these *Forschungen*. There is no mention of two or more volumes.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on January 5, 2012 at 9:38am

L. de Millouet published (in french) in 1906 (see *Annales du Musée Guimet* - Volume 12) an historical account of Tibet titled BOD-YOUL ou le Tibet. On p.188, talking about Tsong-Khapa, he said : "4 main canonical works have been ascribed to Tsong-Khapa : the **Bodhi-mour**, the Tarnim-mour, the Altanarike & the Lam-rim.

He is quoting this information from Sarat Chandra Das, *Life and Legend of Tsong-Kha-Pa* (Journal of the Ass. Soc. of Bengal, 1882, p.53).

Strange enough, the **Bodhi-mour** is quoted as a separate work from the **Lam-rim**.

The Gelugpa tradition holds three texts from Tsong Khapa on this thema :

- the lam rim chen mo (full version)

- the lam rim chung ba (short version)
- the lam rim bsdus don (summary)

and I read (don't remember where) that a secret one is supposed to exist, named *lam rim chen po*.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on January 5, 2012 at 10:38am

Yes, I have also found more references to Lam Rim, including a Tibetan title. Tarnim-mor is also mentioned by Schlagintweit.

[David Reigle](#) on January 5, 2012 at 9:05pm

Thanks, James, for the information about the Coptic phi tau. Fohat is a big mystery, and it is helpful to become aware of and check out all possibilities. I wonder if there is anything in the Coptic Gospels that would relate phi tau to some of the attributes of fohat, such as electricity, a whirlwind, the link between mind and matter, the steed on which thought rides, etc. These would be important clues.

Some years ago someone (I no longer remember who) told us that Alex Wayman had figured out what fohat was as a Tibetan term. It is a fact, told to Nancy and I by Karl Alston who was there, that Alex Wayman in his younger days had studied The Secret Doctrine closely, and used to debate it at the United Lodge of Theosophists in San Francisco. By the time I met Alex Wayman in 1980, he had long since left Theosophy behind him. He acknowledged to me that he had much studied The Secret Doctrine earlier, but now he saw it as anti-Christian. Although he did not say this, I read between the lines that he also meant anti-Jewish. Wayman had a Jewish background. Anyway, some years after this, when we heard from someone that Wayman had figured out what fohat was, I phoned him and politely asked him about it. He did not remember what it was, or even if he had identified it. This was not many years before he died. There was a time, earlier in his life, when he openly said that HPB had drawn much from the Guhyasamaja system, that she would have learned about through her Kalmuck contacts in Russia when she was young. So it is possible that fohat, or something like fohat, is some Guhyasamaja term. But who knows?

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on January 6, 2012 at 5:20am

Interesting background on Wayman indeed. I did not know (but suspected) that he was involved in theosophy. In *Calming the Mind*...he writes on the Bodhimör: "The Mongolian translation of the Lam rim chen mo, with the abbreviated reference of Bodhi Mör, is printed in two parts [...]" (p.4). Maybe this could be interpreted so, that the separate work Bodhimör is included in the Mongolian two volume edition of the Lam Rim. It could even be that Schmidt was misinformed about the Bodhimör.

Boris de Zirkoff in his edition of the Secret Doctrine remarks (p. 679) that Bodhimör "is a Mongolian translation of a Tibetan Sūtra. It is a manual of Tsong-Kha-pa's Lam-rim-chen-mo ('The Great Road to Perfection'). Mör means Path, and the full title of the work is Bodhi Mör-ün Jerge-yin ulagan Kötelbüri Gamug-yi Ayiladugci-dur Odqui Amur Mör Kemegdekü Orusiba. It was written by bLo-bzan Chhos-kyi rGyal-mts'an, a Tibetan." I have been trying to find a Tibetan title but did not succeed. It is not clear to me if De Zirkoff means the 4th Panchen lama by the name of blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on January 7, 2012 at 12:56pm

In the bibliography of *Calming the Mind*..., p. 497, there is a reference to a partial translation of the **Lam rim chen mo** under the title **Bodhi Mör**, of 1914, by G.Z. Zubikov.

Like pots, fire is found often in the *Lam rim* in all sorts of examples. In the edition of Cutler in vol. III on p. 272 (Wayman p. 333), we find a discussion on the "essence of fire", which comes closest to HPB's quote. Its opening question is:

"If fire and fuel both had essential or intrinsic nature, then they would have to be either of one nature or of different natures; so which is it?"

'di ltar me dang bud shing gnyis la rang gi ngo bos grub pa'i rang bzhin yod na

rang bzhin gcig dang tha dad gnyis las mi 'da' bas de gnyis gang yin | (ACIP s5392e.inc, @460b)

Compare HPB's quotation (SD I, 6) from the "Bodhi-Mur, II": "Can the flame be called the essence of Fire? This Essence is 'the life and light of the Universe, the visible fire and flame are destruction, death, and evil.' 'Fire and Flame destroy the body of an Arhat, their essence makes him immortal.'"

These passages both may have similar subject matter, but the similarity ends there. The statement made in HPB's quote would never be made in the *Lam rim chen mo*, because - the way I see it - its formulation does not fit into the ethical frame of mind of the *Lam rim*. On the other hand, the fact that the soul of the arhat would not be negatively affected when his body is destroyed, as I interpret this, is a very compact technical statement, written by a poetically gifted educator. I will leave it at that for now.

David Reigle on January 8, 2012 at 9:42am

All your efforts, Ingmar, toward finding HPB's quote from the Bodhi-mur/Bodhi Mor (SD 1.6) have taken us a big step forward. From what you found, the term Bodhi Mor can refer to one of the two Mongolian translations (the Kalmuck one) of the Tibetan rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long, "Clear Mirror on Royal Genealogy," as well as to the Lam-rim chen-mo by Tsong kha pa. It now looks likely that HPB was quoting from the former rather than the latter, since parts of the former were translated into German by Isaac Jacob Schmidt in the early 1800s. No translation of the Lam rim chen mo was available in HPB's time.

Our searches for this quote in the Lam rim chen mo have yielded a couple with related subject matter, but in your words, "the similarity ends there." Besides the one you posted, I had noticed one that quotes the Bhavana-krama, saying, as translated by the Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee, vol. 3, p. 345 (= Wayman, p. 406): "Thus, when the fire which is a precise understanding of reality arises from correct analytical discrimination, then -- as in the case of the fire from the friction of two sticks rubbed together -- the wood of conceptual thought is burned up." But again, this quote does not match the one given by HPB: "Fire and Flame destroy the body of an Arhat, their essence makes him immortal." Nor would we expect to find a match for this in the Lam rim chen mo, because, as you say, of the Lam rim chen mo's different philosophical stance. It denies any essence, and would hardly speak of an arhat being immortal.

Now we must try to find HPB's quote in the Bodhi Mor that is a Mongolian translation of the Tibetan rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long, preferably in Schmidt's old German translation, or in a book by a later writer who quoted Schmidt's translation. I have not found this quote in the two English translations of the rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long that were made directly from the Tibetan, by Sorensen and by Taylor and Yuthok. But it is not impossible that an English translation of a German translation of an inadequately understood Mongolian translation of a Tibetan translation could have been transformed into this.

A correction is needed. My post from Thursday evening saying that the Bodhi Mor is only the latter or second part of the Lam rim chen mo, rather than the whole Lam rim chen mo, is incorrect. I fell asleep at the keyboard on that post, bringing in a confusion my tired memory had made between Wayman's translation of the latter or second part of the Lam rim chen mo and HPB's quoting "Bodhi-mur, Book II." This post should be disregarded, and in fact should be deleted to avoid future confusion.

David Reigle on January 9, 2012 at 7:25pm

In pursuing the Bodhi Mor, it is very helpful to check the old sources that might reflect the knowledge available in or around HPB's time. For this we again appreciate your checking the older French sources, Jacques. I do not know why L. de Millouet would have listed the Bodhi-mour as a separate work from the Lam-rim. I went through the article by Sarat Chandra Das that you reported him quoting, and did not find the four names he used. He must have brought in the Bodhi-mour from somewhere else.

Regarding the note from Boris de Zirkoff saying that the Bodhimor "is a Mongolian translation of a Tibetan Sūtra. It is a manual of Tsong-Kha-pa's Lam-rim-chen-mo . . .": This apparently refers to a Mongolian translation of a Tibetan commentary on the Lam rim chen mo, and that is why Bodhi Mor is in the title. But the Bodhi Mor here would be the Lam rim chen mo itself, not the commentary on it or a manual of it. Nor is it a Tibetan Sutra. Sutras in Buddhism are the words attributed to the Buddha. They are found in the Kangyur, the collection of the Buddha's word, in Tibetan translations from the Sanskrit. Likewise the Tengyur portion of the Tibetan Canon is made up of Tibetan translations of Sanskrit texts written by Indian Buddhist teachers. The works of Tibetan writers are not found in the Tengyur.

Even though it now seems likely that HPB's quote is from the rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long Mongolian translation referred to as the Bodhi Mor rather than the Lam rim chen mo Mongolian translation called the Bodhi Mor, while on the topic, it may be worthwhile to say a word about the English translations of or from the Lam rim chen mo. The recent three-volume complete translation by the Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee is regarded as superior to Wayman's earlier translation of the latter portion of the Lam rim chen mo. This is because Wayman apparently sometimes had Tsongkhapa saying what his opponent said, and vice versa. This was brought out in a review article by Geshe Sopa published in the Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies. I can scan this and post it if wanted.

Tsongkhapa in his writings often adopted the polemical style of the Indian treatises, and it is not always easy to see who is raising an objection, and who is replying to it. Nonetheless, this serious issue aside, the newer translation is usually looser than Wayman's, meaning somewhat more paraphrased. For following the Tibetan words, Wayman's is closer. Look at the sentence that Ingmar quoted. Here is Wayman's translation of it that Ingmar gave the reference to (p. 333): "It is this way: -- If both the fire and fuel have a self-existence accomplished by own-nature they have not transcended a single self-existence or two distinct self-existences, and hence are one or other of those two." If you compare the Tibetan that Ingmar posted, and the other translation, you will see that Wayman's follows the Tibetan more closely, while the newer one is somewhat more paraphrased.

[Jacques Mahnich](#) on January 10, 2012 at 7:34am

David wrote : "Now we must try to find HPB's quote in the Bodhi Mor that is a Mongolian translation of the Tibetan rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long, preferably in Schmidt's old German translation, or in a book by a later writer who quoted Schmidt's translation"

Schmidt annouced in 1820 that he had found this "History of the Mongolian Princes", written in mongolian by Sanang Setsen. He announced it in a letter (french translation) in the "Journal Asiatique - Vol.1 - 1822. His translation was published in 1828, and I found 4 reviews articles made by Abel-Remusat in the "Journal des Savants" of 1831 (January thru April) describing the Schmidt book contents. It does not give us the complete content but the main ideas which are debated. It is clearly an historical account starting from the creation of the world and the elements. The word "Boedhimer" is quoted several times.

I will take some time to go thru these articles.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on January 10, 2012 at 10:44am

David: do you have access to the "annotated version" of the Lam rim chen mo? (Lam rim plus annotations from four different writers: if necessary I can give more info)

[David Reigle](#) on January 10, 2012 at 2:32pm

No, I do not have the annotated edition of the Lam rim chen mo. As you know, it was reprinted in New Delhi in 2 volumes in 1972. But this is long out of print.

[David Reigle](#) on January 12, 2012 at 9:45pm

As Jacques reported from the early French sources that he is kindly checking for us, the Bodhi Mor that may be the source of HPB's quote is a historical account starting from the creation of the world. So its cosmogony will also be of interest to us, to compare with the cosmogony of the Stanzas of Dzyan. In the two English translations that Ingmar referenced, made directly from the original Tibetan, the beginning of the cosmogony account is as follows:

Per K. Sorensen translation, pp. 44-45:
[Genesis of the Universe]

"Now, as to the first [theme], [ab initio] this exterior, [inanimate] receptacle of an universe (snod kyi 'jig rten gyi khams, bhajanalokadhātu) was endless empty arial space. The [cosmic] wind[s] moved from [all] ten directions, pushing hither and thither, whereby a so-called 'wind cross' (rlung rgya gram), an atmosphere (lit. 'wind disk'; rlung gi dkyil 'khor, vayumandala) [gradually] took shape, being of a pale blue hue, very dense, towering 1,600,000 miles (dpag tshad, yojana) in height and [virtually] immeasurable in circumference."

McComas Taylor and Lama Choedak Yuthok translation, p. 30:
[The creation of the Universe]

"In the beginning, there was boundless, empty sky, and from this arose the physical universe. Vapours from the ten directions began to stir, and mingling together, formed the Cross of Winds, a pale blue sphere of air, which is perfectly solid, 1,600,000 miles high and infinitely wide."

[David Reigle](#) on January 20, 2012 at 9:11am

Hannes has called my attention to two passages in the Theosophical Glossary that pertain to the Buddhist book, Jnana-prasthanasastra. He informed me that these references are found there under Sthavira and Abhayagiri. The Jnana-prasthanasastra is considered to be the primary text among the seven books on Abhidharma as taught by the Sarvastivadins. These seven books are quite different from the seven books on Abhidharma (or in Pali, Abhidhamma) as taught by the Theravadins, now preserved in the Pali Buddhist canon. The Sarvastivada Abhidharma was written in Sanskrit. Other than some Sanskrit fragments and one text in Tibetan translation, these seven books are now preserved only in Chinese translation in the Chinese Buddhist canon. The Theosophical Glossary speaks of the early Buddhist schools that used these Abhidharma texts as being "highly mystical." I have never heard Abhidharma described as mystical at all; but on the contrary, it is usually regarded as quite the opposite.

It is, of course, in the Abhidharma that we find Buddhist accounts of cosmogony. HPB's comments in the Theosophical Glossary agree with information given in more detail in "Some Inquiries Suggested by Mr. Sinnett's Esoteric Buddhism," found in the Blavatsky Collected Writings, vol. 5. A now secret school, of the "disciples of Katyayana," is spoken of, that was established "beyond the Himalayas" (ref. Abhayagiri, Theosophical Glossary). HPB implies that this is the school of her teachers. Katyayani-putra is regarded as the author of the Jnana-prasthanasastra. This same secret school now beyond the Himalayas is referred to in connection with the Arhat Kasyapa in BCW vol. 5, pp. 245-247. They are apparently the possessors of the "Book of Dzyan" that we are seeking. The cosmogony of the Stanzas, in comparison with the cosmogony found in the known Abhidharma texts, could indeed be called "mystical."

It would be worthwhile to sort out which of HPB's statements in these two Theosophical Glossary entries are copied from known works (e.g., Spence Hardy, Rhys Davids, Samuel Beal), and which are her own. Some of the "facts" about Buddhist schools and teachers that she there gives do not match later, more complete information that is now available. Thanks to the efforts of Ingmar and Joe, many of the texts used by her are posted here on this site. We need to correct the exoteric information, and separate out the esoteric information.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on January 20, 2012 at 7:41pm

Returning to Boris de Zirkoff's annotation in his edition of *The Secret Doctrine* (vol. III p. 679) on the **Bodhimör** being "a manual of Tsong-Kha-pa's Lam-rim-chen-mo": the 4th Panchen lama, according to the blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtsan dpal bzang po'i gsung 'bum nga pa'i [dkar chag](#), has written a work entitled *Byang chub lam gyi rim pa'i dmar khrid thams cad mkhyen par bgrod pa'i bde lam*, which is apparently one of the most important Lam rim works of the Dge lugs school. This title seems to correspond to De Zirkoff's Mongolian title *Bodhi Mör-ün Jerge-yin ulagan Kötelbüri Gamug-yi Ayiladugci-dur Odqui Amur Mör Kemegdekü Orusiba*.

ACIP has published a [digitised](#) version of this Tibetan text. The present Dalai Lama has written a book about it, including a full English translation, entitled *Path to Bliss: A Practical Guide to the Stages of Meditation*, published by Snow Lion in 1991.

[Ingmar de Boer](#) on January 21, 2012 at 12:36pm

Summarizing the three - more/less plausible - leads regarding the identification of HPB's **Bodhimur** as either:

1. The *Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*, following Schmidt,
2. A Mongolian translation of the *Lam rim chen mo*, following Wayman, or
3. The *Byang chub lam gyi rim pa'i dmar khrid thams cad mkhyen par bgrod pa'i bde lam*, following De Zirkoff.

Ad 1: I checked Schmidt's partial translation of the *Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*, in *Die Geschichte der Ost-Mongolen und Ihres Fürstenhauses*, and some other versions/partial translations. Schlagintweit has published a complete translation in *Die Könige von Tibet*, in 1866, in the *Abhandlungen der philosophisch-philologischen Classe der königlich bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Teil X, on the basis of a manuscript his brother Hermann acquired from a monastery in Leh. He does not identify the Bodhimör with the Rgyal rabs. (p. 810) He refers to the extracts of the Bodhimör in Schmidt's *Die Geschichte*. ... I will be checking this again in more detail.

Ad 2: I checked the "Four Interwoven Annotations" (*Lam rim mchan bzhi sbrags ma*) to the *Lam rim chen mo* in the translation by Elizabeth Napper in *Dependent-Arising and Emptiness*, which is based on the 1972 Delhi edition and a microfilm of a different edition found in the Berkeley university library.

Ad 3: I checked the Tibetan (ACIP) version and will check the 1991 translation, see my previous post.

David: thanks for your interesting discussion on the two *Lam Rim chen mo* translations. When I first read Wayman's translations from Tibetan I noticed that they were not exactly easily readable, but as you said, faithful to the original. The LRCM translation committee translation appears to be made with a broader insight into the area.

[David Reigle](#)

Thank you, Ingmar, for figuring out what text Boris de Zirkoff was referring to under the Mongolian title he gave. This is helpful. Also, it is good to know that there is an English translation of it. It would seem that Boris found a reference to a title starting with "Bodhi Mor," and then assumed that this was the text. The HPB quote does not seem to be found in it, nor would we expect to find such a statement in a *Lam rim* text.

Likewise, although the abbreviated reference "Bodhi Mor" can apparently refer to the *Lam rim chen mo*, we would not expect any such idea, of an essence that can be equated with the one true existence, to be found in it. Such an idea is repeatedly and forcefully refuted again and again in Gelugpa texts, especially by Tsongkhapa.

When you found what text Schmidt was referring to as the Bodhimor, the *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*, this made sense because these references would have been available to HPB. After that I found confirmations of this identification in the writings of Per Sorensen, Berthold Laufer, and others. It seems that Schmidt had translated some chapters of this text (4, 5, 8, and 18?). Sorensen indicates that Bodhi Mor is a popular although erroneous designation for the Kalmuck Mongolian translation of this Tibetan text, but not used for the other Mongolian translation of it. Like in the *Lam rim* texts, HPB's quote does not seem to be found in this text, at least in its English translations made directly from the original Tibetan. Who knows where she got it from?

For her Theosophical Glossary entries on Abhayagiri and Sthavirah, she drew most of her information from E. J. Eitel's 1870 Hand-book for the Student of Chinese Buddhism, pp. 1 and 133. This book is available free on Google Books. A comparison will show how much is Eitel's and how much is HPB's. Eitel's information will need to be corrected.

Jacques Mahnich

Here is a summary of Abel-Remusat review of J.Schmidt « Geschichte der Ost-Mongolen und ihres Fürstenhauses, verfasst von Ssanang Setsen Chungtaidschi der Ordus », which were published in the « Journal des Savants », January thru April 1831.

I have kept the original spelling of names.

- Schmidt book is based on the history of the Mongol princes, written by Sanang Setsen,
- Schmidt considered the author (Sanang Setsen) as an historian with a bias, being a buddhist devotee. His book is but a collection of buddhistic traditions, and a lot of things on Tibet and the Tibet's annals,
- The first chapter (8 pages) starts at the creation of the world until the death of Shakiamouni
- The second and third chapters deal with the history of Tibet over 1,300 years
- Abel-Remusat introduced the « **Bodhimer** » when, speaking about the succession of the tibetan king Srongdsan in 698, he says : « The serie of the successors of the tibetan king is reported somehow differently in the Sanang text, and in the additional quotes the translator (Schmidt) made by consulting another chronicle named « **Bodhimer** ». The « **Bodhimer** » and Father Horace (de la Penna) chronicles match together pretty well.
- Other quotes of the « **Bodhimer** » in Abel-Remusat review :
 - Describing the doctrinal fight between Kamalashila and the chinese master Ho-chang (during king Thisrong period), he says that the chinese master was defeated, and went back to China, and from China he sent back one of his boot as a souvenir for his supporters. This story is to be found in the **Bodhimer**.
 - About the genealogy of Tibet's kings, Schmidt called the **Bodhimer** as a source in one of his bottom page note to give the name of one prince at the time of Thisrong death (877).
 - One of the last event Sanang mentioned was the building the Toling temple in 1014, and the trip of Lodsâva Sain Erdeni with 21 other people to Hindoustan, from where they came back with many Pandits and the four Tantras of the secret Dharani. It is the last event told by Sanang and the **Bodhimer** does not add anything further.
- Abel-Remusat concluded his review with the following : « We already knew the style of this story from Pallas and Bergmann : obviously, M. Schmidt would have made a better job if he would have finished his story with the translation of the **Bodhimer** which Pallas has already brought to us some strange paragraphes.

At least, we can safely conclude that the Bodhimor cannot be the « History of the Mongol Princes » written by Sanang Setsen, following Schmidt and Abel-Remusat who refer to it as a different text.

Ingmar de Boer

The arguments against the "Wayman" and "De Zirkov" Bodhimörs are of course valid. Arguments in favour of these could be, 1. that HPB's quote was not yet found in the *Rgyal rabs*, and 2. that while not matching the technical viewpoint of the *Lam rim chen mo*, the quote does not really match a historical report either. We might expect the quote in a (different) philosophical work.

There are several different *Rgyal rabs* texts/versions in circulation, just as there are several Mongolian works with bodhi mör in their titles. A quick comparison of the Bodhimör text from Schmidt's *Forschungen* and Sørensen's *Rgyal rabs* translation shows us that it is indeed the same text: *Forschungen* p. 202 corresponds to Sørensen p. 111 (beginning of Ch. 5, and to Kuznetsov, p. 32. Kuznetsov (1966) tells us that the Kalmuck version is not always parallel to the Tibetan. (p. xviii) Kuznetsov and Sørensen (his "GLR A", p. 36) both have been using the same xylograph, no. 1931/173 from the Library of East Asian Faculty of the St. Petersburg University, of which Wassiljew, who collected the work and sent it from Peking to St. Petersburg, already remarked (around 1851) that it was a Tibetan version of Schmidt's *Bodhimör*.

A.I. Vostrikov seems to have been the first to have noticed the remarkable correspondence of the titles *Lam rim chen mo* and *Bodhimör*, which led him to the conclusion that Schmidt must have been mistaken in his attribution of the title *Bodhimör*. (*Tibetskaya Istoritseskaya Literatura*, Institut Narodow Azii, Moskwa, 1962 (posthumous), p. 190-191 n207)

If the quote is not found in Sørensen's translation the following options are open:

1. HPB used a source other than Schmidt's. (and other than "Wayman" and "De Zirkov")
2. The quote has somehow become unrecognizably garbled.
3. HPB misplaced the reference to "Bodhimur II".

David Reigle

It is true, Ingmar, that neither of the "Bodhi Mor"s has yet led us to HPB's quote. Unless she says she is quoting from a secret book, what she quotes can usually be found in books available in her day. The report by Jacques from Abel-Remusat shows that the Bodhi Mor had been quoted by Pallas prior to Schmidt. There are some bibliographic entries for Pallas in Schlagintweit's Buddhism in Tibet. There is still a very large amount of material that has not been scanned by Google. So her quote may yet be found. It could well be "unrecognizably garbled" from the original. It may also be true, as you say, the she misplaced the reference. Then this quote might be found in some other source than the Bodhi Mor.

David Reigle

Ken Small called my attention to an article in The Tibet Journal, titled, "Buddhist Cosmology as Described in the Historical Work of Sum-pa mKhan-po Entitled the 'Tree of Contemplation'," by R. E. Pubayev (vol. 6, no. 2, Summer 1981, pp. 53-63). This article refers to an 1841 book written in Russian by O. M. Kowalewski, titled, Buddiyskaya kosmologiya (Buddhist Cosmology). It is based on Mongolian sources. Pubayev says, "Kowalewski's great contribution was his critical review and evaluation of the views of Pallas, Bergman, Schmidt and Remusat on the problems of Buddhist cosmology which were in many respects erroneous and contradictory although widely diffused among orientalist of that period" (p. 53). We know that HPB's native language was Russian, that Schmidt quoted the Bodhi Mor, and also that Pallas quoted the Bodhi Mor before Schmidt did. So HPB could have accessed this material by way of Kowalewski's Russian book.

Jacques Mahnich

P.S.Pallas wrote the report of his journey across the various parts of Russia (1771-1776), and a french translation by G. de la Peyronie was published in 1788 and is available at Google Books [Here](#) . Out of these 810 pages, 30+ pages are dedicated to the description of the Kalmucks people, including their religion (lamaism). There is a brief description of a cosmogenesis similar to the ones quoted on January 12th's David post. On page 552, Pallas introduced the **BODIMER** : the kalmucks priests have a book called **BODIMER**, which deals thoroughly with the history of their gods. It is the most important of all, and at the same time, the biggest. I was told also of a book dealing with lamaism mythology, whose name is ERTJOUNZ-JOUN-TOALI.

Pallas finished his description of the Kalmuks people by saying : one would need many years and to master Tangout and Mongol language to learn all the details of this religion, and it is not worth the time and energy required...