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WHITE LOTUS DAY

"Ingratitude is not among our vices," wrote the Master K.H. in one of his early letters to Mr. A. P. Sinnett. With deep and abiding gratitude Theosophical students remember the life and labours of H. P. Blavatsky, the messenger of the Masters who brought the ancient wisdom to the western world. On the anniversary of her death, which occurred in London on May 8, 1891, students gather together in conformity with her last request, to read a passage or two from the *Bhagavad Gita* and *The Light of Asia*, and then to sit in silence for a time, thinking of her and her great work for humanity.

The evergrowing esteem in which her writings are held and the increasing appreciation of the import and influence of the teachings she brought, are indications of the truth of her statement that *The Secret Doctrine* would be better understood in this century than in the past one. Every new advance in scientific knowledge tends to confirm the basic concepts set out in that book; in the fields of religion, philosophy and ethics, the world is moving toward the deeper and more inclusive attitude which she expounded. The realization of the brotherhood of all men is as yet an unaccomplished ideal, but never before in the history of men have there

been so many avenues of human endeavour directed toward relieving distress. The world is becoming more sensitive to human suffering, and a major catastrophe in any land is a cause of concern in other lands and what aid can be given is given freely and spontaneously. The vital necessity for a practical application of brotherhood in international policies is apparent to all idealists and those who are not idealistically minded, are aware of a developing world conscience. Nations are still very jealous of their national 'rights', but a great deal of quiet work has been—and is being—done to create better relationships. The dream of a universal brotherhood without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour, may not come to fulfillment in this century, but it is nearer than it was when H. P. B. first wrote.

Madame Blavatsky did not claim to be the inventor of a new and unique message; rather, she said, in effect, this is the *ancient* wisdom, the heritage of the race, to which all men may have access, a universal teaching to be found in many lands and among many races. With a wealth of examples from the ancient sacred writings of the world, she proved her point. In the Introduction to *The Secret Doctrine* she quoted from Montaigne, "I have here made only a

nosegay of culled flowers, and have brought nothing of my own but the string that ties them."

The great teachers have never claimed uniqueness for their messages—all have referred back to more ancient doctrines of which they were acting as exponents. Whitman wrote,

"These are really the thoughts of all men in all ages and lands—they are not original with me;

If they are not yours as much as mine, they are nothing, or next to nothing;

If they are not the riddle, and the untying of the riddle, they are nothing;

If they are not just as close as they are distant, they are nothing.

This is the grass that grows wherever the land is, and the water is,

This is the common air that bathes the globe."

THREE GREAT IDEAS

BY WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

Among many ideas brought forward through the theosophical movement there are three which should never be lost sight of. Not speech, but thought, really rules the world; so, if these three ideas are good let them be rescued again and again from oblivion.

The first idea is that there is a great Cause—in the sense of an enterprise—called the Cause of Sublime Perfection and Human Brotherhood. This rests upon the essential unity of the whole human family, and is a possibility because sublimity in perfectness and actual realization of brotherhood on every plane of being are one and the same thing. All efforts by Rosicrucian, Mystic, Mason and Initiate are efforts toward the convocation in the hearts and minds of men of the Order of Sublime Perfection.

The second idea is, that man is a being who may be raised up to perfection, to the stature of the Godhead, because he himself is God incarnate. This noble doctrine was in the mind of Jesus, no

doubt, when he said that we must be perfect even as is the father in heaven. This is the idea of human perfectability. It will destroy the awful theory of inherent original sin which has held and ground down the western Christian nations for centuries.

The third idea is the illustration, the proof, the high result of the others. It is, that the Masters—those who have reached up to what perfection this period of evolution and this solar system will allow—are living, veritable facts, and not abstractions cold and distant. They are, as our old H.P.B. so often said, *living men*. And she said, too, that a shadow of woe would come to those who should say they were not living facts, who should assert that "the Masters descend not to this plane of ours." The Masters as living facts and high ideals will fill the soul with hope, will themselves help all who wish to raise the human race.

Let us not forget these three great ideas.

The Irish Theosophist, February, 1895.

THE WISDOM OF LAOTSE

BY IVERSON L. HARRIS

"He who knows the eternal law is liberal-minded. Being liberal-minded, he is just. Being just, he is kingly. Being kingly, he is akin to Heaven. Being akin to Heaven, he possesses Tao. Possessed of Tao, he endures for ever. Though his body perish, yet he suffers no harm." (1)

I. LAOTSE: WHO WAS HE, IN LEGEND AND IN FACT?

Very little is known about Laotse himself. (2) 'The Father of Chinese History,' Ssema Ch'ien (136-85 B.C.), writing some four centuries after the time when Laotse was believed to have lived and taught, tells us all that we know—or think we know—about this first of the great historic Sages of ancient China, 'who loved the Tao as a son cherishes and reveres his mother.' Ssema says: "The main purpose of Laotse's studies was to keep himself concealed and unknown." He seems to have succeeded so well that modern scholarship, both oriental and occidental, has pretty well destroyed the shaky foundations on which the popular stories about him rested. Nevertheless, so thoroughly have these tales become interwoven with the teachings of the great preserver, if not founder, of Taoism, that, like the allegories of the New Testament about Jesus, they cannot be ignored in any account, however brief, of Laotse and his message. His very name has been variously interpreted as

1. Old Boy, because he is said to have been born with a white beard (but we may rather suspect that the story was invented to explain the name); 2. Son of Lao, this being the surname of the virgin mother who conceived him at the sight of a falling star; or 3. Old Philosopher, because of the great age at which he wrote his immortal book, the Tao Te Ching." (1)

Legend has it that he was born in Ch'u-jen, a village in Southern Honan, in 604 B.C., under the name of Li Uhr; that he became librarian and keeper of the royal archives at Loyang—which today is Honanfu; that Confucius went to see him in 517 B.C. and was treated with not too much respect by the Old Philosopher, if we may believe—which we should not—the mischievous stories told several centuries later by the brilliant and witty Taoist teacher, Chwangtse or 'Butterfly Chwang' (350-290 B.C.), who strongly opposed the formalistic Confucianism expounded by his contemporary, Mang (Mencius). Laotse is said to have spoken too plainly about the decay of his native state and was forced to go, or voluntarily went, into exile towards the West astride an ox or a donkey. Upon his arrival at the Hankukuan Pass, the officer in charge of the frontier post, Yin-Hi, himself a devout follower of the Tao, asked Laotse if he would not linger long enough to write something to leave behind him by which his disciples might the better remember him and his teachings. Thereupon, the legend goes, Laotse tarried and wrote a book of some five thousand ideograms, consisting of eighty-one sonnets in two parts. This he left with Yin-Hi and disappeared in the West, no one knows whither bound.

Such is the popular story preserved by Ssema-Ch'ien. There were two other men whom many regarded as having been the real Laotse; one of them, Lao Lai, a contemporary of Confucius (550-

478 B.C.), who wrote fifteen treatises on the practises of the school of Tao; the other, a 'Grand Historiographer of Chow', Lao Tan by name, who lived some century and a quarter later.

Legend further states that when Confucius went up to Loyang to study ritual and to visit Laotse, on his departure from the interview he said: "I know how birds can fly, how fishes can swim, and how beasts can run. The runner, however, may be snared, the swimmer may be hooked, and the flyer may be shot with an arrow. But there is the Dragon: I cannot tell how he mounts on the wind through the clouds and rises into heaven. Today I have seen Laotse, and can only compare him with the Dragon." Kenneth Morris reminds us in his inspiring series of articles entitled *Golden Threads in the Tapestry of History*, that:

"... It is of course, simply a matter of symbolism. The clouds are all the doubts, fears, passions, and common thoughts of our minds; but the Dragon rises on the wind, soars through them and attains the celestial consciousness. In all prechristian ages and all lands there was one meaning attached to this sublime Dragon Symbol: it was the Dragon of Wisdom, the Master, the divine Seer, the Man made God." (3)

In his subsequent series of lectures on *The Crest-Wave of Evolution*, Morris thus summarizes the probable facts about Laotse:

"... It is almost certain. . . that Li Uhr the Old Philosopher left no writings. 'Who knows, does not tell,' said he; and Po Chu-i quotes this, and pertinently adds: 'What then of his own five thousand words and more?'—the *Tao Teh King*. That book was proved centuries ago, in China, not to have come, as it stands, even from Laotse's age; because there are characters in it that were invented long

afterwards. The wisest thing to believe is that it is made up mostly of his sayings, with accretions and losses perhaps, through the disquiet of the next two centuries, and the burning of the books, and everything. Because whatever vicissitudes may have befallen it, one does hear in its maxims the tones of a real voice: one man's voice, with a timbre in it that belongs to the Lords of Wisdom. And to me, despite Lao Lai and Tan the Grand Historiographer, it is the voice of an old man in the seclusion of the Royal Library: a happy little bald-headed straggly-bearded old man anxious to keep himself unknown and unapplauded; it is a voice attuned to quietness, and to mental reactions from the thunder of the armies, the drums and tramlings and fuss and insolence of his day. I thoroughly believe in the old man in the Royal Library, and riding away on oxback at last into the west,—where was Si Wang Mu's Faery Garden, and the Gobi Desert, with sundry oases therein whereof we have heard. I can hear that voice, with childlike wonder in it, and Adept-like seriousness, and childlike and Adept-like laughter not far behind, in such sayings as these: "Tao is like the emptiness of a vessel; and the use of it, we may say, must be free from all self-sufficiency. How deep and mysterious it is, as if it were the author of all things! We should make our sharpness blunt, and unravel the complications of things. . . How still and clear is Tao, a phantasm with the semblance of permanence! I do not know whose son it is. It might appear to have been before God.'" (4)

In the posthumous *Theosophical Glossary* by H. P. Blavatsky (London-1892, Page 320), we find the following:

"*Tao-teh-king (Chin.) Lit.*, 'The Book of the Perfectibility of Nature' writ-

ten by the great philosopher Lao-Tze. It is a kind of cosmogony which contains all the fundamental tenets of Esoteric Cosmogony. Thus he says that in the beginning there was naught but limitless and boundless Space. All that lives and is, was born in it, from the 'Principle which exists by Itself, developing Itself from Itself', *i.e.*, *Swabhavat*. As its name is unknown and its essence is unfathomable, philosophers have called it *Tao* (*Anima Mundi*), the uncreate, unborn and eternal energy of nature, manifesting periodically. Nature as well as man when it reaches purity will reach *rest*, and then all become one with *Tao*, which is the source of all bliss and felicity. As in the Hindu and Buddhist philosophies such purity and bliss and immortality can only be reached through the exercise of virtue and the perfect quietude of our worldly spirit; the human mind has to control and finally subdue and even crush the turbulent action of man's physical nature; and the sooner he reaches the required degree of moral purification, the happier he will feel. (See *Annales du Musee Guimet*, Vols. XI, and XII; *Etudes sur la Religion des Chinois*, by Dr. Groot.) As the famous Sinologist, Pauthier, remarked: 'Human Wisdom can never use language more holy and profound'."

The Old Philosopher's spiritual stature grows ever greater the more his message is studied.

II. THE TAO-TEH-KING: ITS MEANING AND ITS QUALITY

In his Foreword to a new English translation of the *Tao-Te-King* by a Chinese Scholar, Ch'u Ta-Kao, published in 1937, Dr. Lionel Giles, Keeper of the Oriental Manuscripts at the British Museum, made these illuminating comments:

"The wording of the original is extraordinarily vigorous and terse: never, surely, has so much thought been compressed into so small a space. Throughout the universe there are scattered a certain number of stars belonging to a class known as 'white dwarfs.' They are usually very small, yet the atoms of which they consist are crushed together so closely that their weight is enormous in relation to their size, and this entails the radiation of so much energy that the surface is kept at a temperature vastly hotter than that of the sun. The *Tao Te Ching* may fitly be called a 'white dwarf' of philosophical literature, so weighty is it, so compact, and so suggestive of a mind radiating thought at white heat." (5)

In the introduction to his own masterly translation of *The Sayings of Lao-Tzu* Dr. Giles records these interesting historical facts:

"Lao Tzu's work. . . was first officially recognized as a 'canon' or 'classic' under the Emperor Ching Ti (B.C. 156-140) of the Han Dynasty, after which the study of *Tao* survived many vicissitudes, being now under a cloud, and now again in high favour at Court. One Emperor was in the habit of holding forth on the doctrines of Lao Tzu before his assembled ministers, and would forthwith degrade any one who stretched, yawned, or spat during his discourse. Another published an edition of the *Tao Te Ching*, which is described in the preface as 'the root of all things, the teacher of kings, and the most precious jewel of the public.' The first Emperor of the later Chin dynasty asked if *Tao* was of any use in government. Chang Ch'ien-ming told him that 'with *Tao* a corpse could govern the Empire.' By successive edicts the *Tao Te Ching* was made obligatory at the examination for graduates of the

second degree, every one was required to possess a copy of the work, and it was cut on stone at both capitals. Later on, printed copies were distributed to all directors of education, and it was translated into the language of the Nu-chen Tartars. Finally, Kublai Khan ordered all Taoist books to be burnt, with the exception of the *Tao Te Ching*, thus showing a just appreciation of the gulf separating Lao Tzu from the later writers on Tao." (1)

With this historic and factual introduction to the *Tao-Teh-King*, let us turn now to the book itself and discuss its title from both the philological and philosophical standpoints, which, indeed, are inseparable. The word *Tao* has several meanings even in Chinese and has been variously translated by Sinologues as 'The Way', 'The Law', 'The Word', 'Logos', 'Reason', 'Nature', 'the all-pervading energy of nature', 'creative principle', etc. Some Vedantin scholars venture the surmise that the word *Tao* itself may be derived from the Vedic *Tat*—"That", connoting the boundless, limitless, unknowable, infinite, causeless cause, to which the human mind can attach no attributes whatsoever. In its different aspects, *Tao* is sometimes rendered by the Sanskrit words *Parabrahman*, 'beyond Brahman'—the 'Boundless'; *Bodhi*, Enlightenment, Wisdom; *Sat*, Reality, Truth. It has been compared to the *Ain Suph* of the Kabalists, the *Athyf* of the Egyptians, the *Urg-rund* of the German Mystics, etc. Analogies less accurate, because more limiting, have been found between *Tao*, which is purely impersonal and non-anthropomorphic, and the *Monas Monadum* of Pythagoras, the *Nous* of Plato, the Jewish Jehovah and Islamic Allah.

Laotse contemplates *Tao* as neither God nor Nature, but as the supreme essence of both, the unknowable source of all, in which there is no differentiation between Spirit and Substance. He

says, according to one translation, "A man looks upon God as his father and loves him in like measure. Shall we not then love that which is greater than God?"

In *The Sayings of Lao Tzu* we read: "The *Tao* which can be expressed in words is not the eternal *Tao*; the name which can be uttered is not its eternal name. Without a name, it is the Beginning of Heaven and Earth; with a name, it is the Mother of all things. Only one who is eternally free from earthly passions can apprehend its spiritual essence; he who is ever clogged by passions can see no more than its outer form. These two things, the spiritual and the material, though we call them by different names, in their origin are one and the same. This sameness is a mystery,—the mystery of mysteries. It is the gate of all spirituality." (1)

The poet sometimes catches glimpses of spiritual verities of a supernal character. Taoism has been called the philosophy of poetry—a *poetics* rather than a *metaphysics*. Assuredly in *Songs Before Sunrise* ('Hertha'), Swinburne linked himself with *Tao* when he sang:

"I am that which began;
Out of me the years roll,
Out of me God and Man,
I am equal and whole;

God changes and man, and the form of
them bodily;

I am the Soul."

By *Tao* was implied 'The Way, the Truth, and the Life', and much more.

"Laotse preached the purification of the individual, until all personality, all mortality, in him should be merged in the *Tao*, which we may explain at once, and have done with it, by calling it the Supreme Self and the Path thereto." (3)

Most scholars find it best to use the word *Tao* itself and do not attempt to translate it when Englishing the *Tao*—

Teh-King. Arthur Waley points out an interesting fact, to wit, that among a particular school of philosophers who ultimately came to be known as Taoists, *Tao* meant 'The way the universe works.' (6) So, too, many students of the Ancient Wisdom who are today known as Theosophists accept Dr. de Purucker's definition of Theosophy as 'a formulation in human language of the operations, structure, composition, origin, present state, and destiny of the Universe.'

I make bold to translate *Tao-Teh-King* as 'Ancient Wisdom-Religion.' On what grounds? To begin with, no one who reads a good translation of this work can fail to see that Taoism was originally a stream of pure Theosophy, however much the so-called Taoism of subsequent centuries and of today has degenerated and become overlaid with superstition, ignorance and priestcraft. Twenty-five hundred years is ample time for the cor-

roding work of human folly. But striking evidence that Taoism was the Theosophy of ancient China is seen in the following facts summarized by Dr. Morris in his later series of lectures on *The Crest-Wave of Evolution*: (7)

"Before Laotse there had been a Teacher Quan, a statesman-philosopher of the seventh century, who had also taught the Tao. The immemorial Chinese idea had been that the Universe is made of the interplay of two forces, *Yang* and *Yin*, positive and negative;—or simply the Higher and the Lower natures. To the Yang, the Higher, belong the *Shen* or gods,—all conscious beneficent forces within and without man. . . From *Shen* and *Tao* we get the term *Shentao*, which you know better as *Shinto*,—the Way of the Gods; or as well, the Wisdom of the Gods; as good an equivalent of our term *Theosophy* as you should find. . .

(Continued on page 40)

ORPHEUS

BY EDITH FIELDING

What magic in the name of Orpheus? Orpheus, the East's great gift to the West, "the first initiated adept of whom history catches a glimpse in the mists of the pre-Christian Era;" the inexhaustable source from which the greatest minds of the Western world drew their inspiration, and whose life and teachings were the concern of all antiquity. Most of the ancient writers, such as Herodotus and Lucian, are agreed that Orpheus came from India, bringing with him philosophy, astrology, the art of writing, etc., and instituting "a mystic theology based on pure spirituality". He it was who first introduced the Mysteries into Greece, and his Hymns were later used as invocations in the Eleusin-

ian mysteries. The esoteric tradition identifies him with Arjuna, who having completed his disciplinary training under Krishna appeared in the Western world under the name of Orpheus.

The history of mankind is written in its trade routes, and Arjuna travelled much. In an article in *The Theosophist*, October, 1883, entitled "*Was Writing Known Before Panini?*"* is some very interesting information on this subject. According to the Mahabharata, the ancient Hindus had navigated the open

* Also reprinted in *Five Years of Theosophy* and in *H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings*, Vol. V.

seas even to the regions of the Arctic Ocean and had held communication with Europe. Orpheus is said to have been a Pelasgian, and the Pelasgians are said to have entered Greece from India and to have been Aryans. They were the builders of the most ancient structures in their adopted country, and these buildings are reported to be in the identical style of those attributed to the Pandavas in India, of whom Arjuna was the chief.

Lucian (125-190 A.D.) a Greek sophist, writing in a light vein but nevertheless significantly, shows Orpheus being sent into Greece by a character named 'Philosophy' by way of India, Ethiopia, Egypt and Babylon (*The Runaways*). Greece being essentially a maritime country had a particularly favourable position for the exchange of cultures from other lands, and it seems logical that Arjuna, under the name of Orpheus, could have commenced his mission there.

It is always difficult and unsatisfactory to try to pin down dates when dealing with ancient spiritual Teachers, and scholarship is very much inclined to dwarf these periods and bring them within reach of orthodox revelation. However, scientific confirmation of the immense age of the culture of Greece is not wanting. Sir Arthur Evans in his excavations in Greece in 1900 discovered ancient pottery and a system of pictographic writing which he placed as far back as 2500 B.C. This date is extraordinarily close to the beginning of the Kali Yuga which we are told, Krishna ushered in 5000 years ago, and suggests at least the possibility of the co-existence of Arjuna and Orpheus.

Orpheus, as precursor of the new age, would bring with him the religion and worship of his Aryan ancestors, and modify it to suit the needs of the newer world. He but follows in the footsteps

of all his predecessors, those Great Ones who out of pity for mankind come at their appointed times to give hope and encouragement to the struggling race. All such great teachers stem from the same source,—that Wondrous Being called the Initiator, the Silent Watcher, the Solitary Watcher, who has "sacrificed himself for the sake of humanity" and remains at his post until the last of the "lonely sore-footed pilgrims" have found their way. His name is changed with every nation. These Beings can never be judged by ordinary standards, nor, as Iamblichus suggests, can their teaching be promulgated by argument, but it can in time be assimilated through a "sameness in essence". Nor can their works give us the ABC of the mysteries and language of Occultism. We ourselves have to "wear away the hindrances" and eventually reach the heart of the universe and a true understanding. As Plato says, all knowledge is reminiscence and is a power of the soul, and the soul is of that 'sameness of essence' of which Iamblichus writes.

The Orphic Hymn to Memory echoes this thought:

"Come blessed power, thy mystic's
mem'ry wake
To holy rites, and Lethe's fetters
break."

And in this connection, Robert Graves has a most interesting note in his book *The White Goddess*. Speaking of the Orphics, he says they had the following words engraved on gold tablets and tied round the necks of their dead:

". . . not to forget to refuse to drink
of the cypress-shaded lethe however
thirsty. . . to accept water only from
the sacred pool of Persephone, and
thus become immortal Lords of the
dead and excused further Tearings to
Pieces, Destructions, Resurrections
and Rebirths."

Our modern world has sadly maligned

and misrepresented the ancient mysteries, frequently associating them with unspeakable orgies, but as G. R. S. Mead in his work on Orpheus so truly says: "It is contrary to the most elementary ideas of justice to ascribe thoughts and intentions to the ancient makers of these myths which only exist in the purient minds and ignorant misconceptions of posterity."

The teachings of Orpheus were of the most lofty and spiritual nature. As Arjuna, Orpheus must have been saturated with the Vedic Hymns and culture, and an echo of the precepts from *The Bhagavad Gita* runs through all the Orphic tradition.

The most intuitive of all translators of Greek literature that we have had was Thomas Taylor. His translations were not accepted by the academic critics, but in answer to them Alexander Wilder, the well-known Platonist who helped H. P. Blavatsky with the portions of *Isis Unveiled* relating to Plato, said: "Others may have known more Greek, but Thomas Taylor knew more Plato". It is said that before attempting any of his work of translation Thomas Taylor imposed upon himself the Pythagorean discipline. He lived 1758 to 1835, and it is a great pity his translations are so difficult to come by. His *Mystical Hymns of Orpheus* is a treasure, containing his own commentary and valuable notes. In his Commentary, he says that Orpheus promulgated the teachings mystically and symbolically; Pythagoras enigmatically; and Plato scientifically.

Symbol of the mysticism of Orpheus is his seven-stringed lyre. Seven, that magical number which relates to so many things: races, continents, principles in man, centres in the head, and powers of the soul, is a thread which runs through all the great mystery teachings. In the Hymns we find the laws of the universe and nature personi-

fied, from which the whole hierarchy of gods and goddesses seems to have been built up. The theology of the Hymns, which was later elaborated by Plato and Proclus, naturally has a strong Oriental tinge. The story of Orpheus losing Eurydice (his soul) in the kingdom of Pluto, is paralleled in the story of Arjuna seeking his six brothers (the six principles) in the infernal regions, he being the seventh principle, the perfect Initiate. (See *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. III, p. 142.) Bearing on the Oriental source of these teachings, G. F. Creuzer, a German philologist and archaeologist of the 18th century, maintained "that the mythology of Homer and Hesiod came from an Eastern source through the Pelasgians, and was the remains of an ancient revelation."

That Thomas Taylor firmly believed in the authenticity of the Orphic Hymns is evident from his Introduction, where he explains the Orphic theology and shows how Pythagoras, Plato and Proclus elaborated it. Referring to the prevalent idea that the Hymns were the work of one Onomacritus, Taylor, to back up his own conviction, quotes from J. M. Gesner, a German classical scholar of the 17th century: "It does not appear to me probable that Onomacritus would dare to invent all that he wrote, since Orpheus must necessarily at that time have been much celebrated, and a great variety of his verses must have been in circulation."

The theology of Orpheus, says Taylor, celebrates the immense principle of things as something superior even to Being itself; as exempt from the whole of things, of which it is nevertheless ineffably the source. H. P. Blavatsky states that the teaching of Orpheus "is purely Indian, and with him the divine Essence is inseparable from whatever is in the infinite Universe." The Hymn to Jove illustrates this:

"Jove is the first and last, high thun-
 dering king,
 Middle and head, from Jove all being
 spring.
 In Jove the male and female forms
 combine,
 For Jove's a man and yet a maid
 divine. . .
 For in Jove's royal body all things lie,
 Fire, night and day, earth, water and
 the sky. . .
 Thus all things Jove within his breast
 conceal'd
 And into beauteous light from thence
 reveal'd."

Writing of this Hymn H.P.B. says:
 "This short hymn of laudation contains
 within itself the groundwork of every
 mythopoeic conception." Compare it
 with Chapter X of *The Bhagavad Gita*
 where Krishna says "I establish this
 whole universe with a single portion of
 myself and remain separate."

Taylor goes on to say: "*Time* is sym-
 bolically said to be the one principle of
 the Universe; but *ether* and *chaos* [mind
 and matter] are celebrated as the two
 principles posterior to this one. And
being, simply considered, is represented
 under the symbol of an *egg*." Here we
 have the idea of the Golden or Luminous
 Egg, Hiranyagarbha, of *The Secret Doc-
 trine*.

Jupiter is said to be "the father of
 those who genuinely preserve the proper
 forms of life". He is the "great ether",
 of which the Church in "her early errors
 of interpretation has made the abode of
 her Satanic legions" says *The Secret
 Doctrine*. "Orpheus represents him fab-
 ricating every celestial race, making the
 Sun and Moon and the other starry Gods
 . . . Homer too, following Orpheus,
 celebrates him as the common father of
 the Gods and men." The Hymn to
 Jupiter commences:

"O Father Jove, who shak'st with
 fiery light
 The world deep-sounding from thy
 lofty height.
 From thee proceeds th' ethereal light-
 ning's blaze,
 Flashing around intolerable rays."

As mentioned above, Taylor informs us
 that these Hymns were used as Invoca-
 tions in the celebration of the Eleusinian
 Mysteries, and he gives each with its
 particular fumigation. The system of
 Orpheus was "one of the purest morality
 and of severe asceticism" and the very
 highest standard was set for entrance
 into the Mystery Schools. These Schools
 were no new thing, Orpheus was only
 reviving the occult and religious systems
 which had lain dormant since the sink-
 ing of the last remnant of Atlantis. Dor-
 mant only in the West. India had never
 lost her touch with Reality.

H. P. Blavatsky in her writings con-
 firms the most unorthodox legends
 about Orpheus, and makes of him a vital
 reality, a source of spiritual light and
 fire, the rays from which have illumined
 the greatest minds. That scholarship
 generally has chosen to ignore this view
 may be due to the over-development of
 the intellectual faculty, from which the
 West has suffered so much, and which
 has blinded men to the jewels of truth
 which were veiled in mystical and sym-
 bolical language. But the intellect, like
 the body, can constitute a real bar to
 intuitive knowledge. Both have to be
 transcended. After a certain stage, the
 intellect becomes an impediment, ob-
 scuring the pure light of spiritual
 insight and preventing the realization
 of that 'sameness in essence'. As a
 Chaldean oracle puts it:

"Things divine cannot be obtained by
 those whose intellectual eye is directed
 to body; but those only can arrive at
 the possession of them who stript of
 their garments hasten to the summit."

NOTES AND COMMENTS

BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The response to my request for certain issues of *The Canadian Theosophist* in order to complete various volumes for binding purposes has been excellent and to all those who sent in copies I herewith tender my most hearty thanks for their kindly help and co-operation. But, here I go again, we are still short of copies of No. 8, October 1953 and earnestly hope that they will be forthcoming. Again thanks.

* * *

You will have read in "The General Executive" printed elsewhere in this issue about the resuscitation of the Winnipeg Lodge which has been dormant for many years and has now been re-organized with some twenty members. I would say here that sixteen were transferred from the Wayfarer's Lodge of the Canadian Federation, the others being new members of the Canadian Section. In sending me the demits for the former Federation members, Miss Morris, Secretary of the Federation, stated in her charming letter that while the Federation naturally regretted the loss from its ranks, she was happy to feel that this loss was the gain of the Canadian Section, and that all the members who had transferred continued to be members of the international Theosophical Society where all work together toward the same end. These same members, I may mention, I have already met and they are a delightful group of young people; my best thanks go to the Federation for being the means of augmenting our ranks with members who I feel sure will add lustre to our Section and to the Society generally.

* * *

It is with much regret I announce the passing of Mrs. Lena Smith on March 30. Mrs. Smith had been a member of

the Toronto Lodge since 1922, therefore a member of over thirty years' standing. During that time she was a devoted and faithful attendant at the lodge doings and meetings, until ill-health prevented further activities. At the Crematorium I conducted the beautiful Theosophical Committal Service for her well deserved rest. My deepest sympathy is extended to Mr. Smith and family in their bereavement.

It is with much pleasure I welcome the following members into the Society:— Mr. Ivan Deimel, Member at Large; W. R. Heyneman, Winnipeg Lodge; Mrs. Agnes Welsh, Winnipeg; Mrs. Kay Biel, Winnipeg Lodge; Mr. Ronald D. Gordon, Winnipeg Lodge; Mr. Fred F. Jurasek, Winnipeg Lodge; Mrs. Lottie Shepherd, Winnipeg Lodge; Mrs. Blanche Osborne, Winnipeg Lodge; Mrs. Winifred D. Neale, Toronto Lodge; Miss Madeleine Osborne, Winnipeg Lodge; Miss Raymonde Sendral, Montreal Lodge; Miss Margaret Sim, Montreal Lodge; Mrs. M. Boyer, Montreal Lodge; Miss Ebba Tolson, Montreal Lodge; Mrs. Helen D. Proutz, Winnipeg Lodge; Mr. John Fraser, Winnipeg Lodge; Mr. Albin T. Norman, Winnipeg Lodge; Mr. Leslie R. Turner, Winnipeg Lodge; Mr. Archie Lee, Winnipeg Lodge; Mr. R. B. Heyneman, Winnipeg Lodge; Mrs. Sally Birch, Winnipeg Lodge; Mrs. Petronella Heyneman, Winnipeg Lodge; Mr. Henry A. Gadd, Winnipeg Lodge; Mr. Percy M. Poulin, Toronto Lodge.

* * *

An unique opportunity presents itself at this time to offer the congratulations not only from myself but of the whole Canadian Section, to one who I presume is the oldest member of the Society in Canada. I refer to Mrs. Elizabeth Belcher, widow of Felix Belcher who was known to many as 'The Smiling Philosopher' and was so esteemed for many a decade. Mrs. Belcher cele-

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OFFICERS OF THE T. S. IN CANADA

GENERAL SECRETARY

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To whom all payments should be made, and all official communications addressed.

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Dudley W. Barr, 52 Isabella St., Toronto 5, Ont.

Letters intended for publication should be restricted to not more than five hundred words.

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brated her 96th birthday on the 28th of April. For 62 years she has been a member of the Society. That is a record she may well be proud of and we bask in the reflection of having such a distinguished person in our midst. Our felicitations and congratulations go out to her on this auspicious occasion and in this happy eventide of her life we hope that she will be spared to round the century mark.

* * *

Some time ago a letter came requesting a copy of a pamphlet "Reincarnation" by Dr. Crutcher. We regret this letter has been mislaid; would the writer be good enough to write again when we will be happy to forward him the pamphlet in question.

I have been informed that the Convention of the Theosophical Society in America will take place at Olcott, Wheaton, Ill, on July 9-13, and the Summer School July 15-20. In a letter from Mr. J. Perkins, the General Secretary, he extended to me and any delegates from Canada a most hearty and cordial welcome. Further to this I would add that any of our members who would like a most enjoyable and profitable experience, in beautiful surroundings, meeting enthusiastic members from many parts of the world, imbued with our way of life could not do better than spend a holiday in such a manner. I speak from experience from my several visits to these conventions, always having come away with a certain spiritual uplift that was both sustaining and beneficial. I will be glad to supply full information on details by request. Why not get together and form a party, charter a plane or a coach or what-have-you?

* * *

I have received a letter from the Calgary Lodge which has caused me much sorrow and misgiving. In it I am informed of the serious illness of Mr. Lloyd Knechtel, for so long the president of that Lodge; he is in an oxygen tent and has been for five weeks. My prayers go out to him in his extremity. I am also informed that another old member, Mr. McLain, is also in hospital where he has undergone a serious operation. Finally, the Secretary reports that the Lodge is practically in abeyance. This report is distressing and the decline of Calgary Lodge should be an object lesson to all that we do not live for ourselves alone. The Light in Calgary is gradually fading, and so it will with all those who do not think of and arrange for the future. It is our duty to look ahead and keep the Light burning so that new members are brought in, new life kept surging in order that when we pass on there are

others to take our places. We must not allow the nuclei (lodges) to wither and decay on the branch of the great tree of knowledge, the Theosophical Society.

* * * *

But where there is shade there is light also. It being my intention to visit all the lodges with a view to getting into closer contact, I went to Hamilton on April 17, and after a preliminary talk with the Executive in the afternoon, attended the closed meeting for members only in the evening. There was a capacity audience when all the members, except two or three, attended. I explained the reason of the get-together; the importance of checking over the interior economy; working out local problems and how to further the activities of the lodge and then read the letter I had sent to all lodge presidents regarding new schemes and ideas for propagandizing Theosophy. After an interval for open discussion, which was most interesting and illuminating, in which it was very evident the majority were distinctly in favour of certain innovations and improvements and which were all duly noted, I impressed upon everybody the importance of doing his or her share, not only toward the upkeep of the lodge, attending meetings, etc., but by taking an interest in the activities of the lodge, and discharging their duties in whatever office they had been elected to with keenness and sincerity. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded me and after refreshments I left one of the most cheerful and enthusiastic meetings I have attended during my tenure of office.

* * * *

I have just returned from a flight to Winnipeg where I re-opened the dormant Lodge there. I will not dilate on what happened on the auspicious occasion as a full report is printed elsewhere in this issue. Sufficient for me to say here that the visit closed with

expressions of goodwill and happiness, convincing me that we have a live and happy lodge at the gateway to the West, full of hope and enthusiasm for the future.

E. L. T.

GENERAL EXECUTIVE

The General Executive met on Sunday, April 3, at 52 Isabella St., Toronto, with Miss Hindsley; Messrs. Dudley Barr; Charles M. Hale, George Kinman and the General Secretary in attendance. It was a more cheerful and hopeful gathering than for many a long year, encouraged as it was by the Financial Statement which showed a credit balance of \$2182.20. This resulted of course from the generous donation of an anonymous person, and caused a long and animated discussion as to ways and means of propagandizing Theosophy in accordance with the desire of the donor and our own. So many were the ideas that the General Secretary was requested to outline them in a letter and send a copy to each of the Lodge Presidents with a view to obtaining their opinions and incidentally their reactions as to how they would fit in with lodge activities and so on. Among the suggestions made was Radio Broadcasting, not only from Toronto Stations but from other centres as well; Tape Recording Lectures, Travelling Lecturers, Advertising and Pamphlets. The meeting was also cheered by the General Secretary's Report on the progress made toward the re-opening of the Winnipeg Lodge, which he stated now had twenty-one members, with Officers and a Lodge Room all ready for inauguration on April 22nd. The meeting approved of the suggestion that he go to Winnipeg for the occasion. The reports on the bi-monthly magazine, so far have been very good, and it was felt that with Theosophical news from near and far, coup-

led with Lodge Reports and other features it will be greatly enhanced. Col. Thomson also reported that to date there had been ten new subscribers, and thirty-two new members, a big increase on former years, and that if only those members now in arrears will pay their dues, he will be able to send to Adyar next July a very stimulating report on the year's activities. With the nomination of Mr. Bunting, President of the Hamilton Lodge as a member of the General executive there will be an election next month, the first since 1949. Arrangements were accordingly made, and ballots will be sent out in due course, and it is hoped that every member will exercise his franchise and make his selection, thus showing his interest in the work and the efforts of the Society at large. The next meeting was arranged for the 10th of July.

E. L. T.

THE GENERAL ELECTION

Lt.-Col. E. L. Thomson, D.S.O., has been nominated by all the Lodges who have sent in nominations, and as no other candidate was nominated for the office of General Secretary he is elected by acclamation to the position, to take over from July 1st next. Nominations for members of the General Executive are as follows:—

Dudley W. Barr
Charles E. Bunting
Charles M. Hale
Miss M. Hindsley
George I. Kinman
Peter Sinclair
Washington E. Wilks
Emory P. Wood.

There being eight nominations for seven vacancies an election is therefore necessary. The names will appear on the ballot in the above order, four members of Toronto Lodge and four of other Lodges. It should not be forgotten when

voting that the electorate is not electing members to represent their Lodge, but an Executive Council to represent the whole Dominion. Just as soon as members conveniently can, after receiving their ballots, they should mark them, numbering all the names up to eight, in the order of their choice, then place the ballot in the envelope provided, on which each member shall write his name and Lodge, so that his good standing may be checked without violating the secrecy of the ballot. The sealed envelope stamped with a 5-cent stamp (4-cent for Toronto) should be mailed immediately so that it may be checked in good time for the scrutiny of votes, which, it is hoped, Mr. A. S. Winchester, the P. R. Expert, will kindly consent to supervise. All the nominees except one are known to the members generally and need no introduction. The exception is Mr. Charles E. Bunting who has been a member of the Hamilton Lodge since 1946 and is now its President. If any member in good standing, has not received a ballot by May 15, he should at once report the omission to The General Secretary, 52 Isabella St., Toronto. To those in arrears, please send your dues immediately to your Lodge Treasurer and a ballot will be forthwith despatched.

E. L. T.

WINNIPEG LODGE

(Two reports were received on the reopening of Winnipeg Lodge, one from the General Secretary immediately after his return, and the other from Mrs. T. L. Bowers who was most active in the Lodge's reincarnation. The two reports contained duplicate material and they were therefore combined in one, using as a framework the report from Mrs. Bowers.)

Winnipeg Lodge was formally reopened by our esteemed General Secretary, Lt.-Col. E. L. Thomson, D.S.O., on the evening of April 22, 1955. At that

time, Colonel Thomson addressed the Lodge, and spoke of brotherhood and love and of the fellowship which Theosophists extend to all beings; he also gave practical advice on how each individual can best serve his Lodge. It was an excellent talk and the speaker was enthusiastically applauded.

Colonel Thomson presented diplomas to the new members of the Lodge and to mark the special occasion, he gave each member a copy of *Theosophy, an Attitude Toward Life*, by Dudley W. Barr, the editor of our magazine. Our Vice-President Mr. P. H. Stokes, read a paper on the history of the Lodge, and then Colonel Thomson brought the meeting to a close with a recital of the Gayatri.

On the evening of April 23, a gala celebration was held in the beautiful main dining room of the Fort Garry Hotel, where a long table, tastefully decorated, was laid for twenty-two guests. A large centrepiece of flowers was before the guest of honour and matching vases of jonquils and tulips were at each end of the table. Colonel Thomson said grace before the meal. A toast was drunk to the General Secretary and in responding, Colonel Thomson spoke briefly on the part that Winnipeg Lodge could play in the work of the Section and told us that he expected great things from us. His talk was an inspiration to our members to make every effort to promulgate the teachings of Theosophy as given out by H.P.B., the core of which is brotherhood. The meeting adjourned to the Palm Room where amid the beautiful surroundings, flash light pictures were taken.

The meeting then moved on to the Lodge headquarters at 98 Kingsway Avenue and again Colonel Thomson spoke, the talk being recorded on a tape machine. The address was deeply inspiring and the General Secretary received an ovation on its conclusion.

The Winnipeg Lodge members expressed to the General Secretary their appreciation of the privilege of joining the Canadian Section and pledged their loyalty to the great work in which we are all engaged.

Our President, Mrs. Blanche Osborne and our Vice-President, Mr. Percy Stokes, deserve a sincere vote of thanks for the important work done by them in making this a most memorable occasion.

CORRESPONDENCE

Editor,
The Canadian Theosophist.

Dear Sir:—

The interesting article, *William Quan Judge*, in the March-April issue, contains a historical inaccuracy which I think, in the interests of truth and justice, should not go uncorrected.

It is stated that Madame Blavatsky, at a meeting in her rooms in New York, told Mr. Judge to ask Colonel Olcott to found a society and that Judge took the initiative by calling the meeting to order.

In the first place the gathering was not in H.P.B.'s residence (which was also Olcott's), but in the "spacious drawing rooms" of Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, the author of "many valuable and learned works on Occultism and Spiritualism." This statement is to be found on page 314 of the September, 1882, issue of *The Theosophist*.

In the second place, the founding of the Society was suggested by Colonel Olcott who sent a note proposing this over to H.P.B., Mr. Judge being the man who handed it on to her. On her nod of assent Olcott rose and outlined his ideas on the subject. Judge thereupon nominated Olcott chairman, who in turn nominated Judge as secretary, both *pro tem*.

A meeting to form the society was called later by Colonel Olcott, at which

he was elected president; H.P.B., corresponding secretary, and Judge, counsel to the Society.

This is the version given by Colonel Olcott in *Old Diary Leaves*, corroborated by a press report and by the official report of the first meeting signed by Olcott and Judge. It is also the version accepted by C. J. Ryan of the former Point Loma Society in his *H. P. Blavatsky and The Theosophical Movement* and by G. Baseden Butt in his biography, *Madame Blavatsky*.

"It should be noted," Mr. Butt comments, "that Colonel Olcott, and not Madame Blavatsky, was the originator of the Theosophical Society." And he goes on to say, "It was Olcott's courageous enthusiasm and tireless energy, fully as much as Madame Blavatsky's writings, that first established the Society on a prosperous footing." With this judgment I heartily concur.

Let us give honour and gratitude where they are due!

Cecil Williams.

THE WISDOM OF LAOTSE

(Continued from page 31)

It drives home the idea that the *Wisdom* is a practical *Way of Life*. *Shentao*, the Taoism of the Higher Nature, then, was the primeval religion of the Chinese; . . . "

As to 'The Way of the Gods' and 'The Wisdom of the Gods', or *Shentao* and *Theosophia*, Dr. Lionel Giles has this illuminating footnote:

"Lao Tzu, like Plato, recognizes very little distinction between Knowledge and Virtue, the rational and moral sides of man's nature. Virtue with him is simply the knowledge of Tao, just as with Plato it is the knowledge of 'the Good'."

The word *Tao* is frequently translated by the Chinese Buddhists as *Bodhi*—

Wisdom, Enlightenment. The word *Teh* is rendered by them as *Dharma*—Duty, Virtue, Law, Religion. The Sanskrit compound *Bodhidharma* is commonly translated into English as Wisdom-Religion. *Tao-Teh*, then, means Wisdom-Religion. *King* (or *Ching*) as we have seen, means Canon or Classic. A synonym for classic is ancient, as classic in English can be either a noun or an adjective, and in Chinese "there are no parts of speech: any word without change can do duty for any part of speech." Therefore *Tao-Teh-King* can be literally translated as 'Ancient Wisdom-Religion.'

It is true that the word *Teh* is usually rendered into English by the word *Virtue*; and this translation will often do well enough. But it is regarded by philologists as quite inadequate to render certain aspects of the word as used at times by Laotse. It is rather more akin to the original meaning of the Latin *Virtus* — manliness, or that quality which belongs by nature to a real man as an expression of his inherent spiritual *svabhava*. *Teh* includes the sense of virility, vitality—virtue in the sense that Jesus meant when he healed the woman who touched the hem of his garment and asked: "What is this that has gone out of me?" He was conscious that spiritual energy — *Teh* — had passed from him.

Arthur Waley analyzes the significance of the word minutely and calls attention to its similarity in meaning to the ideas included in the doctrine known in Sanskrit as *Karman*, or, as he expresses it, 'the stock of credit (or the deficit) that at any given moment man has at the bank of fortune.' He also adds:

". . . the early Chinese also regarded the planting of seeds as a *te*. The words 'to plant' (ancient Chinese, *dhyek*) and *te* (anciently *tek*) are cognate, and in the earliest script they

share a common character. Thus *te* is bound up with the idea of potentiality. Fields planted with corn represent potential riches; the appearance of a rainbow, potential disaster; the falling of 'sweet dew', potential peace and prosperity. Hence *te* means a latent power, a 'virtue' inherent in something." (6)

Walter Old points out that *Teh* is very closely equivalent to the Buddhistic term *Dharma*—Duty, Law, Religion—that which is proper and fitting to the nature of a being or a thing, i.e., *Tao* in objective manifestation. In his comments on Chapter XIII of the *Tao-Teh-King* he also shows that the lesson therein which Laotse gives, presumably for the benefit of the soldier on guard at the Kuan Yin (Hankukuan) Pass, is identical with the lesson which Krishna gives to the Kshatriya Prince, Arjuna, in *The Bhagavad-Gita*; i.e., that the *dharma*, duty, of a man—in this case of a soldier—is that which is just exactly the right, fitting, and natural thing for that man, as a soldier, to perform, 'without regard to the fruit of action.' That is *Teh*.

"Laotse's aim is not the activity, but the quiescence of mind, self, intellect: 'in the NO THING seeking the lonely Way.' You forgo everything—especially selfhood;—you give up everything; you enter upon the heritage of No Thing;—and you find yourself heir to the Universe, to wonder, to magic. You do with all your complicated egoity as the camel did with his cameltiness before he could enter the needle's eye; then—heigh presto!—it is the Elixir of Life you have drunk; it is freedom you have attained of the roaming-place of Dragons!—It amounts, truly, to the same thing as Aryan Theosophy; but where the latter travels through and illuminates immense realms of thought and metaphysic, Taoism slides gently into the Absolute; as who should laugh and

say, *You see how easy it is!* And you do not hear of the Path of Sorrow, as with the Aryans; *Tao* is a path of sly laughter and delight." (9)

What a jolt H. P. Blavatsky gave to the scholars and theologians of 1888 when she said in the preface to *The Secret Doctrine*, that the teachings contained therein "belong neither to the Hindu, the Zoroastrian, the Chaldean, nor the Egyptian religion, neither to Buddhism, Islam, Judaism nor Christianity exclusively. The Secret Doctrine is the essence of all these." In studying the Ancient Wisdom of China as contained in the *Tao-Teh-King*, one finds that here, too, H.P.B.'s statement is absolutely true.

III. TRANSLATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

A convincing proof of the deathless value of this great Chinese classic, one of the world's philosophical masterpieces, is in the numerous editions issued in China, the voluminous commentaries, and the surprising number of new translations that continue to appear.

In an informative article on *Taoism and Vedanta*, Swami Jagadiswarananda tells us that there are sixty-four editions of it in China; that it has been commented upon exhaustively by twenty Taoists, seven Buddhists, and thirty-four literati. (8). Besides the earlier translations into English by Chalmers, Legge, Alexander and Carus, new ones have been issued in this century with amazing persistence. In 1904 Walter G. Old, a pioneer Theosophist, published his translation which he called *The Book of the Simple Way*. It contains valuable comments and comparisons with the Aryan scriptures. The sixth edition of this translation was published by Rider & Co., London, in 1929. In 1905 appeared Dr. Lionel Giles' translation of *The Sayings of Lao-Tzu*, in 'The Wisdom of the East Series'. (John Murray, Lon-

don). In 1919 Brentano brought out Dwight Goddard's translation of *Laotzu's Tao* with an interpretive essay on *Wu Wei* by Henry Borel. In 1935 Goddard published a new translation in collaboration with Bhikshu Wai-Tao, with an 'Outline of Taoist Philosophy and Religion' by Dr. Kiang Kang-Hu. In 1927 appeared Tom MacInnes' very sympathetic and readable interpretation, *The Teaching of the Old Boy* (J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London and Toronto). In 1934, and again in 1936, George Allen & Unwin of London issued Arthur Waley's *The Way und Its Power: A Study of the Tao Te Ching and Its Place in Chinese Thought*, of which the lengthy introduction is a goldmine of information. In 1937 appeared another translation—this time by Ch'u Ta-kao, probably the first rendered into English by a Chinese scholar. In 1942 Random House, Inc., New York, published an anthology entitled *The Wisdom of China and India*, edited by Lin Yutang. This contained an original translation of the *Tao-Teh-King* by Dr. Lin himself, who lists twelve English translations, including, besides those enumerated above, renderings by E. H. Parker, M. E. Reynolds, Isabella Mears, Hu Tselin and John C. Wu. He recalls having seen nine translations in German "including the good one by Alexander Ular (Inselverlag)." In his introduction, Dr. Lin says: "If there is one book in the whole Oriental literature which one should read above all the others, it is, in my opinion, Laotse's *Book of Tao*." (Note: In his *Story of Civilization*, Dr. Will Durant goes still further and says: "Perhaps we shall burn every book but one behind us, and shall find a summary of wisdom in the *Tao-Te-Ching*.")

In 1944 the John Day Company, New York, published *The Way of Life according to Lao-Tzu*, an American version by Witter Bynner. Of this translation

Pearl Buck writes:

"Once in a couple of lifetimes someone makes a translation of a classic which makes us feel he really wants it to be understood. Fitzgerald did this when he translated the Rubaiyat. Witter Bynner has now done the same thing in his translation of Laotzu."

Comparisons are enlightening and each student will find features to prefer in all the translations, which differ widely among themselves. Personally, I discover profound wisdom and inspiration in all the versions I have studied. Yet I must say, not that I love others less, but that I love more, Dr. Lionel Giles' translation of *The Sayings of Lao-Tzu*. This may be because I am most familiar with this version and know numerous passages by heart. But I think it is also because Dr. Giles not only reveals the soul of the Old Philosopher to those of us who cannot read the Chinese text, but he is also a master of exquisite, epigrammatic English, which it is a joy to read. So, in the last section of this paper, I shall rely mainly, though not exclusively, on Dr. Giles' translation.

The following passage is adapted from *Essays Interpreting Taoism* by Henry Borel, translated by M. E. Reynolds:

"The Tao must be approached gently, with a motion as reposeful as that of the calm sea, which moves, not because it knows that it is wise or good to move: it moves according to its nature, unconscious of movement. Thus do land and seas, the world and men, proceed from Tao and return into it again; and when they have returned, they have themselves become Tao. Tao is the one, the source of all, the absolute reality, without beginning and without end. The One becomes Two; Two become Three; Three become Millions; and Millions return again into One."

IV. THE SUPREME SPIRIT AND THE WAY THERETO

It has often seemed to me that real occultism is a sort of transcendental common-sense; and I find the *Tao-Teh-King* full of that kind of genuine occultism.

"Laotse has a way of putting things in little old quiet paradoxes that seem to solve all the problems—to take you out of the dust and clatter of this world into the serenity of the Dragon-World where all problems are solved, or non-existent." (9)

Some examples of these 'quiet paradoxes':

"Therefore the Sage embraces unity, and is a model for all under Heaven. He is free from self-display, therefore he shines forth; from self-assertion, therefore he is distinguished; from self-glorification, therefore he has merit; from self-exaltation, therefore he rises superior to all. Inasmuch as he does not strive, there is no one in the world who can strive with him

...
"The best soldiers are not warlike; the best fighters do not lose their temper. The greatest conquerors are those who overcome their enemies without strife. The greatest directors of men are those who yield place to others. This is called the virtue of not striving, the capacity for directing mankind; this is being the compeer of Heaven. It was the highest goal of the ancients." (1)

Would that it could also become the highest goal today! What a different world we should then live in!

Again Laotse offered universal solvents for another vast array of the problems which beset mankind when he wrote:

"I have three precious things, which I hold fast and prize. The first is gentleness; the second is frugality;

the third is humility, which keeps me from putting myself before others. Be gentle, and you can be bold; be frugal, and you can be liberal; avoid putting yourself before others, and you can become a leader among men. "But in the present day men cast off gentleness, and are all for being bold; they spurn frugality, and retain only extravagance; they discard humility, and aim only at being first. Therefore they shall surely perish.

"Gentleness brings victory to him who attacks, and safety to him who defends. Those whom Heaven would save, it fences round with gentleness."

It will be recalled that some five hundred years later, Jesus is reported to have said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." It would appear that the true spiritual Sages and Seers have seen the same vision of Reality and given the same teaching to their disciples as to the means whereby they, too, might behold the Vision Sublime. Note the universal appeal of such passages as the following quoted from *The Sayings of Laotzu*:

"Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from Tao; but the law of Tao is its own Spontaneity

...
"The whole world will flock to him who holds the mighty form of Tao. They will come and receive no hurt, but find rest, peace, and tranquillity." (1)

Compare Christ's words: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

Continuing from the 'Old Philosopher', Laotse:

"It is the way of Heaven not to strive, and yet it knows how to overcome; not to speak, and yet it knows how to obtain a response; it calls not, and things come of themselves; it is slow to move, but excellent in its designs. . .

"He who acts in accordance with Tao, becomes one with Tao. He who treads the path of Virtue becomes one with Virtue. He who pursues a course of Vice becomes one with Vice. The man who is one with Tao, Tao is also glad to receive. The man who is one with Vice, Vice is also glad to receive. . .

"If Tao prevails on earth, horses will be used for purposes of agriculture. If Tao does not prevail, war-horses will be bred on the common. . .

"If we had sufficient knowledge to walk in the Great Way, what we should most fear would be boastful display. . . .

"The Great Way is very smooth, but the people love the by-paths." (1)

Compare the Biblical injunction: "Enter ye in by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many be they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it." Says Walter Old in commenting on Chapter LXVI of his own translation: "If the authenticity of this book were not beyond question, one would be justified in supposing it to be of Christian tradition, so literally does it convey, in many passages, the true teaching of the Gospels." Similarly, Dr. Giles says:

"There are two famous utterances in particular which secure to Lao Tzu the glory of having anticipated the lofty morality of the Sermon on the Mount. The cavillers who would rank the Golden Rule of Confucius below that of Christ will find it hard to get over the fact that Lao Tzu said, 'Requite injury with kindness,' and 'To the not-good I would be good in order to make them good.' It was a hundred and fifty years later that Plato reached the same conclusion in the first book of the *Republic*." (1)

Think of the mellow wisdom contained in Laotse's teaching of "Wu-Wei"—non-

assertion, inaction, quietism. No doubt it can and has been carried too far and degenerated into laziness and *laissez-faire*. But it is a most wholesome antidote for our Western youthful, impatient, driving, personal pushfulness with its perpetual political panaceas and systems of social reform which we imagine will change the whole world almost overnight, forgetting that human nature is not very different now from what it was when Laotse and Confucius and the Buddha and Pythagoras all taught in that golden sixth century, B.C. Wrote our Old Philosopher:

"Who is there that can make muddy water clear? But if allowed to remain still, it will gradually become clear of itself. Who is there that can secure a state of absolute repose? But let time go on, and the state of repose will gradually arise. . .

"Activity conquers cold, but stillness conquers heat. Purity and stillness are the correct principles for mankind.

"Without going out of doors one may know the whole world; without looking out of the window, one may see the Way of Heaven. The further one travels, the less one may know. Thus it is that without moving you shall know; without looking you shall see; without doing you shall achieve. . .

"Keep the mouth shut, close the gateways of sense, and as long as you live you will have no trouble. Open your lips and push your affairs, and you will not be safe to the end of your days. . . .

"Desire not to desire, and you will not value things difficult to obtain. Learn not to learn, and you will revert to a condition which mankind in general has lost." (1)

As a final lesson from Laotse, I beg of you to ponder well the following words, for they are pregnant with a wonderful philosophy of life which everyone of us

can put into daily practice. Said the Old Philosopher:

"The difficult things in this world must once have been easy; the great things in this world must once have been small. Set about difficult things while they are still easy; do great things while they are still small. The Sage never affects to do anything great, and therefore he is able to achieve his great results. The tree which needs two arms to span its girth sprang from the tiniest shoot. Yon tower, nine storeys high, rose from a little mound of earth. A journey of a thousand miles began with a single step." (1)

How simple! How universal! How true! The path to the Buddhas and the Christs, to yoga or union with the divine self or at-onement with the Father in Heaven, the *Tao-Teh-King*, must begin with a single step. The time to take that step is eternally *now*.

* * *

- (1) *The Sayings of Lao-Tzu*: Translated by Lionel Giles. The Wisdom of the East Series. London, John Murray—Albemarle Street, 1909.
- (2) Following Kenneth Morris and Lin Yutang I adopt the spelling *Laotse*, except in quotations from other writers, when I follow theirs. Likewise, Kenneth Morris—and Walter Old—employ *Tao-Teh-King*; others *Tao Te Ching*, etc. Here, too, I follow Morris except when quoting others.
- (3) *Golden Threads in the Tapestry of History*. 'The Golden Threads in Far Eastern History', Ch. I: 'In the Days of Laotse and Confucius.' *Theosophical Path*, Point Loma, Calif., Vol. IX. No. 5, November, 1915.
- (4) *The Crest-Wave of Evolution*, Ch. IX., 'The Dragon and the Blue Pearl'; *The Theosophical Path*, Vol. XVII, No. 6, December, 1919.

- (5) *Tao Te Ching: A New Translation* by Ch'u Ta-Kao. 1937. The Buddhist Lodge, London, 37 South Eaton Place, S.W. 1.
- (6) *The Way and Its Power*: London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- (7) Chapter XII, 'Tales from Taoist Teachers'; *The Theosophical Path*, Vol. XVIII, No. 3, March, 1920.
- (8) *Buddhism in England*, May-June, 1937. Reprinted from the 'Review of Philosophy and Religion.'
- (9) Kenneth Morris, *The Crest-Wave of Evolution*, *supra*, Chapter VIII. See also H.P.B.'s *Theosophical Glossary*, P. 320.

ANIMAL RIGHTS

Whenever I injure any kind of life I must be quite certain that it is necessary. I must never go beyond the unavoidable, not even in apparently insignificant things. The farmer who has mowed down a thousand flowers in his meadow in order to feed his cows must be careful on his way home not to strike the head off a single flower by the side of the road in idle amusement, for he thereby infringes the law of life without being under the pressure of necessity.

Those who experiment upon animals by surgery and drugs, or inoculate them with diseases in order to be able to help mankind by the results obtained, should never quiet their consciences with the conviction that their cruel action may in general have a worthy purpose. In every single instance they must consider whether it is really necessary to demand of an animal this sacrifice for men. And they must take anxious care that the pain be mitigated as far as possible. How many outrages are committed in scientific institutions through the failure to administer anesthetics to save time and trouble! And how many others

by subjecting animals to torture simply to demonstrate phenomena already generally known!

By the very fact that animals through these painful experiments have contributed so much of value to suffering mankind, a new and special bond of solidarity has been established between them and us. From this arises the obligation for each of us to do every possible good to all animals everywhere. Whenever I help an insect in its need I am only trying to discharge something of the ever growing debt of mankind to the animal world. Whenever an animal is somehow forced into the service of men, every one of us must be concerned for any suffering it bears on that account. No one of us may permit any preventable pain to be inflicted, even though the responsibility for that pain is not ours. No one may appease his conscience by thinking that he would be interfering in something that does not concern him. No one may shut his eyes, and think that the pain, which is therefore not visible to him, is non-existent. Let no one make the burden of his responsibility light. When so much mistreatment of animals continues, when the cries of thirsty beasts from our railway cars die out unheard, when so much brutality prevails in our slaughter houses, when animals meet a painful death in our kitchens from unskilled hands, when animals suffer incredibly from merciless men and are turned over to the cruel play of children, we all bear the guilt for it.

—*The Animal World of*
Albert Schweitzer.

* * * *

“Right thought is a good thing, but thought alone does not count for much unless it is translated into action.”

H. P. Blavatsky.

AMONG THE MAGAZINES

(In accordance with a suggestion received, items of interest from the many magazines of other Theosophical societies and groups in other lands will be noted from time to time.)

The Aryan Path recently celebrated its Silver Jubilee and we send our congratulations and best wishes. This magazine reaches many who are not members of a Theosophical society and in its twenty-five years of service it has contributed greatly to the promulgation of noble ideals. In its excellent articles on mysticism, art, philosophy, science and religion it has presented the best of Eastern and Western thought and has thus enabled its readers in both worlds to know and appreciate the approach of each.

* * * *

An exceptionally attractive issue has been received of *Tim Heu Thong Thien Hoc*, the official organ of the Vietnam Theosophical Society with headquarters at Saigon. This is an eighty-two page monthly of good format with cuts throughout and with a cover in colour. Our inability to read the contents is regretted, but we have no doubt that its Theosophical message will reach many readers.

* * * *

Theosophia, edited by Boris de Zirkoff and sponsored by an International Group of Theosophists, is a sixteen page quarterly. Each issue contains, among other items, a thoughtful editorial and one or two reprints of articles by H.P.B., Wm. Q. Judge or other earlier writers. We noted with interest that the Spring issue carried a cut of W.Q.J. and Mr. Judge's article “The Closing Cycle” which also appeared in the March-April issue of *The Canadian Theosophist*.

* * * *

Eirenicon, issued by the Peace Lodge of Hyde, Cheshire, England, is a maga-

zine of independent approach and always contains interesting material and worthwhile comments—its 'lighter vein' bits are a relief from Theosophical stodginess! Mr. T. H. Redfern, whose article on "An Alternative Policy for the T.S.", (C.T. May 1954) attracted wide interest, is one of the editors. The magazine encourages the bringing about of a clearer understanding of what has been called Neo-Theosophy and the original teachings of H.P.B. and the Masters.

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The Indian Section has the largest membership of all National Societies in the Theosophical Society. Its monthly journal is *The Theosophical Review* published at Banaras. The February 1955 issue summarizes the work of the 79th International Convention which was held last December and sets out a general plan of work for 1955 which was drawn up by the General Secretary, Mr. Rohita Mehta; on 'Lodge Vitalization' the General Secretary states, "The main handicap of our Lodges is that there is no trained personnel available to conduct the affairs"—a situation not confined to India.

* * * *

Balance (Australia) is running an interesting series of studies in the wisdom and divine magic of Egypt. "All science is magic and all magic is science. When the science of magic degenerates into religion, the deep dark night of superstition and ignorance sets in. When magic falls into the hands of the unprepared, then blood flows like water and drowns the people." From another article, "The Major Problem of our Time,"—"For too long teachers, particularly religious teachers, have told men what they should know and what they should believe. Instead they should have more faith in mankind and in its infinite capacity to know and to understand. . . no knowledge is absolute. . .

but is growing as rapidly as men explore."

* * * *

Congratulations to *New Outlook* on completing the cycle of the first seven years of its publication, and moving, stronger than ever, into the second seven. The January 1955 issue carried the text of Dr. Albert Schweitzer's Nobel Peace Prize Lecture: "The Problem of Peace." The February issue had as its lead article: "The Bhoodan Movement", an account of the remarkable voluntary land-redistribution movement led by Vinoba Bhave which, to date, has resulted in 3,600,000 acres of land being donated for use by landless peasants.

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The *Bulletin* of the Corresponding Fellows Lodge (England), which has reached its 113th issue, always contains interesting short articles and extracts from the letters of corresponding fellows in many parts of the world.

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Manas (Los Angeles) continues along its superb way. Some of the best thinking along theosophic lines goes into this magazine and its weekly visits are always anticipated with pleasure.

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The recent issue of *Theosophy in New Zealand*, all dressed up in a shiny new cover, is for the period October 1954-February 1955. It is quite Neo-Theosophic in its approach, but its "What's Happening?" section and the comparisons of Theosophy and modern science are interesting.

* * * *

The Theosophical Movement (Bombay) is another staunch upholder of the Secret Doctrine tradition. Each monthly issue contains articles from the writings of H.P.B. and W. Q. Judge as well as articles from writers of today. Its "In the Light of Theosophy" section is given over to comments on modern thoughts and happenings.

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