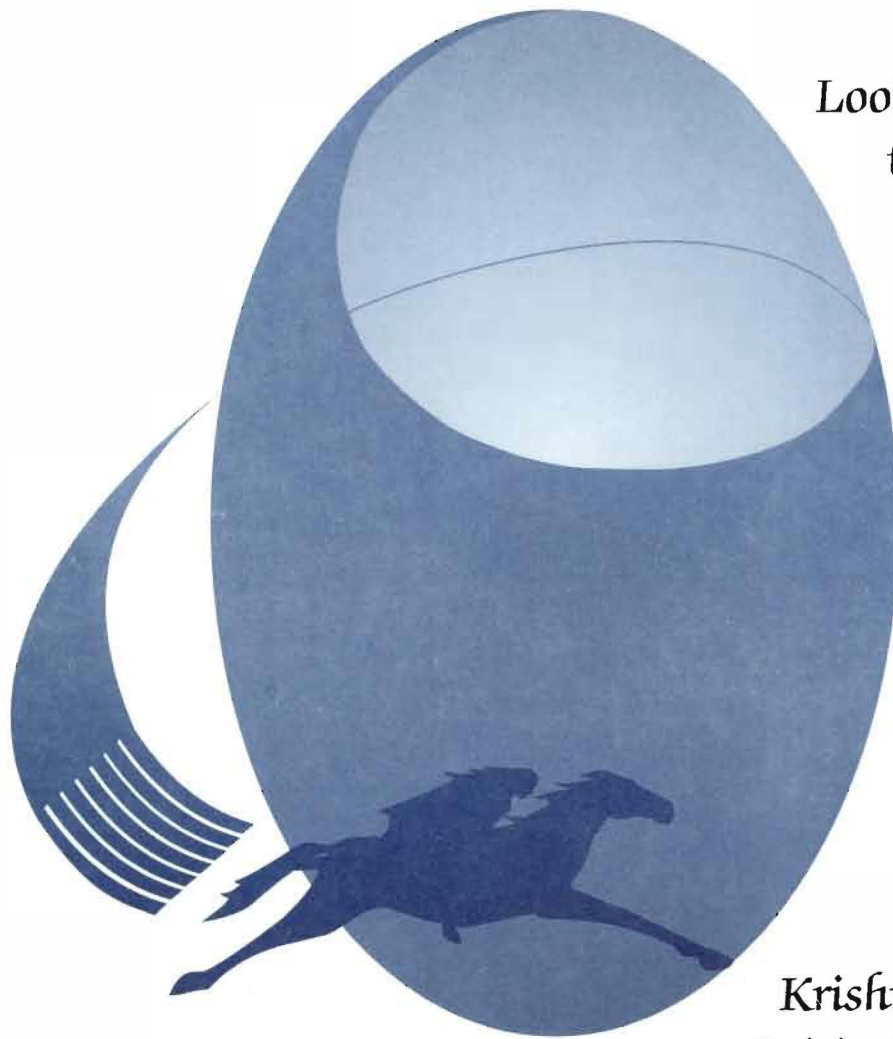


FOHAT

Volume V, Number 3

Fall 2001



*Looking for Ghosts at
the Eddy Farm*

*Dowsing
Up
Demons*

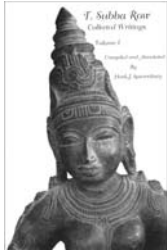
*Was India's
Wisdom Tradition
Undermined by
Śaṅkarācārya?*

*Krishnamurti and the
Initiations at Taormina*

A Vehicle for the Ancient Wisdom Tradition

This magazine is an invitation for followers of all traditions to enter into a dialogue whose goal is Truth and whose means is Universal Brotherhood.

Subba Row's Collected Writings



T. Subba Row: The Collected Writings - Volume 1, compiled by Henk Spierenburg is now available, with the second volume coming early in the new year. According to the Publisher's Note:

This first volume of the *T. Subba Row Collected Writings* covers such subjects as "The Twelve signs of the Zodiac", "The Philosophy of Spirit", "A Personal and Impersonal God" as well as inquiries into Buddhism, the sevenfold principles in man, and a detailed biographical overview. Within these pages the reader may find material for deeper spiritual and intellectual reflection and in harmony with

the root ideas of the Theosophical renaissance initiated by Blavatsky in 1875. Subba Row's genius lent high energy and insight in this impetus and these two volumes now add significantly to the wisdom treasure of the already published volumes of Blavatsky Reference Books also compiled by Henk Spierenburg.

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92166

African Avatars in Nexus

In the latest issue of *Nexus* magazine (Vol.8, No.5), Tom Dark describes two twentieth century African avatars. The stories of these two individuals make for a compelling read as the author recounts the greed of modern colonialism and the fight by the oppressed natives for self-determination. These two avatars, Simeon Toko and Simon Kimbangu, played a major role in the freeing of Angola and the Belgian Congo from their colonial masters. Some of the events surrounding these two could almost come out of the Hollywood movie *The Mummy*.

H.P.B. LIBRARY

Originally the private collection of Alice Cleather, a personal pupil of HPB, the library contains early theosophical and related philosophical literature, which may be borrowed by mail.

Also the library offers for sale books written by A. Cleather and some theosophical pamphlets.

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FOHAT

Volume V, No. 3
Fall 2001

A Quarterly Publication of Edmonton Theosophical Society

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Edmonton Theosophical
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The pages of **Fohat** are an open forum dedicated to the pursuit of Truth, and consequently the views and opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher unless otherwise specifically stated.

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Subscription Rates:

1 year (4 issues)

\$15.00 Cdn in Canada
\$15.00 US in U.S.A.
\$20.00 US international

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Associates receive: **ETS Newsletter**

Cover Design: Donna Pinkard

ISSN 1205-9676

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To be featured in coming issues:

SETTING A COURSE Through
Esoteric Time;

Chac-mool and **1000 Quetzalcoatl's**

Principle and Compromise

We live in an age where compromise is the means to solving the problems of competing interests. Both sides are asked to give a little in the hopes of arriving at a compromise that everyone can live with. It might be fair to ask why is compromise even considered as a tool for problem solving? In fact, what exactly is being compromised? Hopefully, it is not principles, those Truths made self-evident through our life experiences. In fact why not just turn to principles to give us a guide as to what the solution to a particular problem might be?

Dolorèse Brisson, in “Where are the Boundaries?”, takes a look at the growing field of dowsing. People from different backgrounds and for many different reasons are turning to dowsing for solutions to various types of problems. Dowsing is part of the much wider field of divination, which is basically an occult science. Generally, practitioners of occult sciences must serve long apprenticeships learning the Laws of Nature before practicing such arts. Now dowsing in its simplest form, searching for a place to dig a well, does not seem to be a dangerous or objectionable practice. However, are well intentioned dowsers trying to manipulate maleficent energies without a clear understanding of the Laws of Nature? In their ignorance are they doing more harm than good? Dowsers can sense and even manipulate to some extent these various energies. Yet, without knowledge of how these energies work, are they playing in the dark and will even the best of intentions help them in the end? A sound understanding of principles is important in any practice. When we forget principles and work instead according to desired ends (good intentions) we can cause even more pain than what we have alleviated.

David Reigle, in “The Original Śaṅkarācārya”, also demonstrates how things can go wrong when principles are not adhered to. In academia, arguments are relied upon to reach conclusions. Any argument relies upon assumptions to reach a conclusion. If these assumptions are true then the conclusion must be true. When the European Orientalists first looked at putting a date on the life of Śaṅkarācārya, they naturally approached the problem with certain biases that colored their assumptions. They tended to have religious backgrounds and wanted the “facts” to be a certain way and, not surprisingly, that is how their “facts” turned out to be. What is sad is that future academics followed these trailblazers blindly despite having every reason to question their assumptions and having straightforward and simpler methods for determining the facts. Future academics insisted on making the same mistakes as their predecessors, ignoring the obvious. The most obvious principle of

academic work would seem to be that you question the assumptions of your predecessors, verify them yourself, and from such a verified base continue the work. If you do not do this you can spend your entire life making brilliant arguments based on false assumptions. Should academics make a compromise with themselves to trust the assumptions of their predecessors? Is this the type of “compromise” that any of us should live with?

Rogelle Pelletier next takes us on a trip taking a look at “The Eddy Farm—Then and Now.” Although principles are not looked at in this article, the reason that we are interested in this look at history is that it was at the Eddy Farm where Blavatsky can be seen questioning the assumptions of the Spiritualists of her day. It was the questioning of these assumptions and the offering of a different set of assumptions that set the foundation of modern Theosophy. As we each verified these assumptions for ourselves through our own life experience, they became the principles by which we lived our lives.

Some Theosophists forgot these principles and deferred instead to the hearsay of the movement’s leaders. Rogelle Pelletier reminds us of this as she looks at Joseph Ross’ latest book on Krishnamurti in her article, “The Taormina Initiations.” We see how members of a Society taught to judge according to principles, were willing to compromise these principles and believe instead in the word of a few people, even when the word of these people often contradicted established Theosophical principles. That so many Theosophists were willing to compromise their principles indicates that they could not have done the work needed to verify these principles in the first place.

Finally, Robert Bruce MacDonald takes a quick look at “Archeology, Theosophy, and the Americas.” We can see how certain theories (Darwinism for example) can persist when certain facts are conveniently overlooked. This again is an unfortunate compromise that too many academics are willing to accept in order to protect their careers. It is a case where assumptions are allowed to continue even when there are facts that could easily undermine these assumptions. One wonders how many trees are wasted in the production of the miles of paper used by many academics in arguments based on false assumptions, simply because these academics were willing to make a small compromise. It should be remembered that compromises are always made at the expense of principles, because we have not taken the time to establish and understand the principles.



Letters to the Editor:

On Schueler's Blavatsky and Buddhism

Madame Blavatsky's book of Dzyan cannot really be compared with the Western translations of the Tibetan Buddhist Scriptures referred to by G.J. Schueler for a number of reasons given by H.P. Blavatsky herself in her Magnum opus *The Secret Doctrine*. Here are some of them.

Madame Blavatsky, when commenting on A.P. Sinnett's book *Esoteric Buddhism* states that this book contains some of the Dzyan hidden tenets but it is not Buddhism. She affirms this on the first page of her *Secret Doctrine*, Vol.I (xvii):

This is said with reference to the prevailing double mistake (a) of limiting Theosophy to Buddhism: and (b) of confounding the tenets of the religious philosophy preached by Gautama, the Buddha, with the doctrines broadly outlined in "Esoteric Buddhism." ANY THING MORE ERRONEOUS THAN THIS COULD BE HARDLY IMAGINED." (Capitals by *Pacific Rim Theosophist* Editors.)

H.P. Blavatsky then goes on to explain the title of Sinnett's book should have been *Esoteric Budhism*, i.e. Budhism with one "D" which means "Wisdom", thus "Esoteric Budhism" or "Esoteric Wisdom."

Incidentally she provides in the first part of the *SD* some tenets of the Wisdom Religion that are quite contrary to the Buddhist Sutras as they are translated by Western experts in Pali, Sanskrit et al. As an example, she says that Theosophy "proves the necessity of an absolute Divine Principle in nature. It denies Deity no more than it does the Sun" (*Ibid*, xx). The scholars of Buddhist scriptures stress that Buddhism is a religion of atheism. (A well known rendition of a Sutra has Buddha refusing to tell a monk whether man has a soul or has not a soul.)

Madame Blavatsky then goes on to explore what the Stanzas of Dzyan really are:

Furthermore, the records we mean to place before the reader embrace the esoteric tenets of the whole world since the beginning of our humanity, and Buddhistic occultism occupies therein only its legitimate place, and no more. Indeed, the secret portions of the "Dan" or "Jan-na" ("Dhyana") of Gautama's metaphysics — grand as they appear to one unacquainted with the tenets of the Wisdom Religion of antiquity — are but a very small portion of the whole. (*Ibid*, xx)

HPB further maintains that she had available to her oral teachings. G.J. Schueler certainly would not be able to access this material. Madame Blavatsky explains:

Indeed, that which is given in these volumes is selected from *oral*, as much as from written teachings. (*Ibid*, xxxvii)

She then informs her readers what the stanzas of the Dzyan are:

The "very old Book" is the original work from which the many volumes of *Kiu-ti* were compiled. . . . Tradition says, that it was taken down in *Senzar*, the secret sacerdotal tongue, from the words of the Divine Beings, who dictated it to the sons of Light, in Central Asia, at the very beginning of the 5th (our) race; for there was a time when its language (the *Sen-zar*) was known to the Initiates of every nation. . . . (*Ibid*, xliii)

Gautama Buddha lived from approximately 620 BC to about 543 BC and Tzongkapa many hundreds of years later. These two teachers were thousands of years later than the very beginning of the 5th race when the Stanzas of Dzyan were taken down. And again, the two never left anything in writing: all their Sayings were usually taken down by priest disciples. Also, as HPB remarks, the main keys of their works are not available to scholars.

Some comments by G.J. Schueler certainly have no authority. He says: "In fact, her *Secret Doctrine* is primarily a lengthy commentary on the Book of Dzyan. This mysterious work was said to be of Tibetan origin." Madame Blavatsky certainly contradicts him when she mentions the very old book which was taken down in SENZAR at the very beginning of the 5th (our) race, which is at least a million years ago. See the *SD*, page xliii. She does not say it is of Tibetan origin, thousands of years later.

Another remark of his: "Blavatsky equates this to the Hindu god, Parabrahm." On page 6 of *The Secret Doctrine* Madame Blavatsky replies about Parabrahm: "Parabrahm is not 'God,' because It is not a God." She then goes on to explain the term "Parabrahm."

His interpretation of *The Secret Doctrine* in his "Reconciliation" is his own personal ideas of what she meant and it is certainly not what other scholars of *The Secret Doctrine* can accept. His playing on words and meanings just appear to be scholastic hair-splitting that obscures real meaning rather than elucidating profound metaphysical concepts.

Meanwhile, let us study *The Secret Doctrine* with renewed vigour.

Atma Vidya TS and
the Editors of *Pacific Rim Theosophist*

Where Are the Boundaries?

Dolorèse Brisson

Grasping a forked stick in his hand, a man strolls across a field. The stick or divining rod, by mysterious and seemingly irrational means, is forced downward indicating the presence of water, minerals or treasure. Either by working directly at the site or from a distance, he locates the whereabouts of material that would have otherwise been hidden to the senses. He calls himself a dowser (dowser #1). Clinging to a divining rod, a second man — a multipurpose dowser — ventures far beyond unearthing hidden treasure and water. He is very adventurous in nature and taps into the Universe unrestrictedly to obtain a wealth of information and secret knowledge. He heals people and rids them of evil spirits, finds missing persons and neutralizes adverse noxious energies. He also calls himself a dowser (dowser #2). Is dowser #1 operating within safer margins than dowser #2?

Divination is the prediction of future events or the discovery of secret matters by looking at signs or by using occult techniques. There are over 100 methods of divination known to man, such as lithomancy, geomancy, cleromancy and cartomancy. Dowsing is also considered to be a method of divination. Sometimes referred to as radionics or radiesthesia, it is as old as man. There is nothing to interpret, unlike other methods of divination such as augury which requires the study of the behaviour of birds prior to divining by this method. Also, unlike other forms of divination, dowsing has no symbols, omens, or analogies, nor are there obvious passive states such as trance. By projecting an intent of what is desired, a dowser receives confirmation through the body. By simple “yes” and “no” answers through the movement of a dowsing instrument, it is an automatic and unconscious process. The successes in accomplishing a set task outnumber the failures. Returning to our examples, both dowsers apply the same basic principles, knowledge and understanding of the dowsing system. The dowsing system assumes that knowledge is innate in all things. If you tune in by using a dowsing instrument this innate knowledge will be made manifest.

Dowser #2 asks a simple, clear and concise question on what is to be resolved; he is focussed, calm and detached. (Our focus is on dowser #2 unless otherwise indicated.) He must not be biased — he desires an answer and seeks only the truth. The motive must be pure and serve the highest purpose. The most favourable course of action will then be re-

vealed. Training and practice usually lead to a good dowsing skill; an untrained brain-mind can override true responses. The dowser can practice on himself or other people, places, events, plants or animals.

Dowsing systems and methods are numerous and can be used by anyone. Many different dowsing instruments other than the rod can be used, such as a pendulum (anything one can hang on a string or thread) or a bobber (a flexible rod, wire or branch). Acting as a visual aid to penetrate the veil between the senses — normal waking consciousness — and the unconscious, dowsing tools are used to measure energies, vibrations and electromagnetic fields. For example, when doing energy healing one can dowse the body of a patient before and after a treatment and measure the energy changes.

This method of analysing the unknown transcends time and space. Trying to explain the “how” and “why” of dowsing is a mind-boggling experience. How does one get sensory information from the unconscious to the conscious mind? What is this interaction between the mind of the dowser and the energy of the object of interest? No one can agree on one single explanation. Does an external force guide the instrument or does an internal force emanate from the dowser? Does his neuro-muscular system act like wires that connect the intuitive part of his brain-mind to the dowsing tool? How and why it works when it does remains unsolved. “Dowsers believe that they are endowed with a finely tuned faculty which reacts to the presence of certain objects, causing muscular contractions that affect the rod or pendulum . . .”¹ be it to known or unknown energies. In other words the subconscious of the dowser moves his instrument through involuntary muscle movements. Some claim it is the power of the higher self — an exercise of the intuitive faculties. Some postulate communication with angels or devas and the revealing of truth via external divine sources. Others affirm that it is nascent and rudimentary, the intelligence of the animal soul. Opinions in this regard depend on each individual’s experience and predicament, be it as a dowser or as a dowser’s subject. The majority believe it is the result of some sort of beneficent energy or force. There are numerous accounts of people in trouble and in need of assistance in one area or another who are helped successfully by the dowser. Some negative incidents, however, do arise and they should not be ignored. Hidden messages lie in these negative oc-

currences even if they are not common. The following is an example.

Recently a potential dowser (dowser #3) enrolled in a weekend dowsing seminar open to the general public to learn more about this fascinating technique. At the very onset, a dark, intense and disturbing force in the room was sensed. It did not seem to emanate from the instructors nor from the other dowsers in attendance. Some were affected to varying degrees while others did not perceive it at all. Upon questioning the instructors, who had many years of dowsing experience, and a few other dowsers in the room, it turned out that the all-consuming force had been overshadowing the last few seminars and no one had answers as to who, what, where, when, or why. They were also unable, through strenuous efforts, to get rid of the invasive presence. It felt so harmful and destructive that dowser #3 could not bear it and was forced to abandon the seminar midway through the second day. Recognizing the sincerity, honesty and good motive of the instructors and the other dowsers at the seminar, none of them would have wilfully or consciously called forth such hideousness. The instructors had the reputation of having done much good and having helped a lot of people. What then was it, and what had attracted it? What could have gone so terribly wrong? If motive is everything, then why and how would so altruistic a practice attract this type of energy?

Dowser #3 thought that overall the disclosure of occult philosophy and information presented at the seminar was accurate and true. Applying dowsing skills to certain areas of life seemed quite acceptable, but it would seem that some boundaries were crossed that should have been left to the domain of powerful and wise adepts who have full control over the forces of nature and full awareness of the forces at play. What becomes of the undesirable or dark forces when a dowser clears people, places, etc. of them? While running the appropriate program (that is, instructions with a plan of action to accomplish an end; encoding), the dowser asks that the suspected harmful entities or energies being disposed of be sent to the spirit medicine doctors, sent to the dark side of the Universe, or that they be transmuted or transformed into beneficent forces. But is this how Nature works? Not being adepts, the belief that any one of these three transplantations or transformations actually occur is a blind assumption on their part. Most dowsers are average people without the wisdom and knowledge required to render harmless such energies hence making the manipulation of Nature's dark forces dangerous. Not being under the guidance and protection of a spiritual Master, the dowser places himself at risk even though he has methods in place to protect himself. Always being

careful not to delve where he should not he will ask through the dowsing system for consent. A "yes" answer gives permission to proceed and a "no" answer means he should cease the program. The dowsing rule is to follow Universal Laws. That is a good thing but how well, as a humanity, do we actually know the Laws? Almost certainly, we don't have knowledge of more than a fraction of the Universal Laws. Herein lies the crux of the dangers involved with this area of dowsing. The dowser is not aware of the effects of manipulating these energies, which unknown to him, may cause him harm or impact others negatively. For example, with healing, impurities can be released into the surroundings which can be picked up by others. Disease cured in one person can be transplanted into another. In Paracelsus we read:

This is called the transplantation of diseases; and diseases may . . . be transferred upon other persons; and many practices of sorcery are based upon that fact. In this way diseases can be cured in one person and caused to appear in another. . . .²

That the mission is accomplished with seemingly positive results does not necessarily exonerate the dowser's ignorance of what is going on behind the scenes, regardless of how altruistic the intent. True healers are few and are pure and virtuous, many of whom are born under the protection and guidance of divine Beings to accomplish their life's work. As to the cause and nature of the undesirable presence at the seminar, one can only speculate. With certainty it was not the result of any benign interaction.

Are dowsing responses then the result of external or internal stimuli? Let us suppose that an external force is working through the instrument. The dowser could unknowingly be influenced or manipulated by negative forces or entities. H.P. Blavatsky (referring to so-called "gods" as "spiritus elementorum") has this to say:

Most decidedly . . . there are good as well as bad spirits, beneficent and malevolent "Gods" in all ages. The whole trouble was and still is, to know which is which. . . . "Ancient divination was always accomplished with the help of the spirits of the elements. . . ."³

If we are to believe the teachings of Ammianus Marcellinus, he maintained that divination was accomplished not through the help of divine Beings, but by creatures of the elemental kingdoms. He stated that,

"The spirit pervading all the elements, seeing that they are eternal bodies, is always and everywhere strong in the power of prescience [divination], and as the result of the knowledge which we acquire through varied studies

makes us also sharers in the gifts of divination; and the elemental powers, when propitiated by divers rites, supply mortals with words of prophecy, as if from the veins of inexhaustible founts.”⁴

These theories limit dowsing to the travails of nature-spirits or elementals. Although not everyone would agree with this, many spirits no doubt love to lead men into error.

Let us now suppose that the Higher Self is actually working through the dowser. Intuitive knowledge transcends reason and surpasses the highest use of the senses. Intuition is related to the imponderable, and reason, the great doubter as some call it, belongs to the material world. When the brain is at rest and when reason has done its best and failed, then the soul is able to throw down the images of its ideas upon the clear unruffled surface of the mind. In this sense dowsing could simply amplify what we are already perceiving but not paying attention to or recognizing. According to Paracelsus:

The *rationale* on which divination, geomancy, the practice of the divining-rod, &c., is based, is that by means of such practices a knowledge in regard to certain things, such as already exists in the spirit of man, may come to the understanding of the intellect of his own personality. The inner man cannot, under all circumstances, communicate his knowledge to the external man, because the consciousness of the two is not identical; but the spirit may influence the nerve aura of the person and control the muscles of his body, and thus guide his hands.⁵

A dowser need not be imbued with a lot of knowledge. This lack is probably to his disadvantage. “The Dual Aspect of Wisdom” and “Psychic and Noëtic Action” are two articles written by H.P. Blavatsky. Pure noëtic action belongs to the higher Manas, and the terrestrial psychic element is common to both animal and man and is the lower self. This is the dual element in man. The articles make reference to Astral Light or the “Old Terrestrial Serpent”:

Blessed is he who has acquainted himself with the dual powers at work in the ASTRAL Light; thrice blessed he who has learned to discern the *Noetic* from the *Psychic* action of the “Double-Faced” God in him, and who knows the potency of his own Spirit — or “Soul Dynamics.”⁶

Along the same lines of thinking, Paracelsus’ views were adopted by Eliphas Levi when he wrote,

Divination and prediction by mere sagacity demand a profound knowledge of the laws of

Nature, a constant observation of phenomena and their correlation, the discernment of Spirits by the science of signs, the exact nature of analogies, and the calculation, be it integral or differential, of chances and probabilities.⁷

Given that dowsers do not have a profound knowledge of the occult, it can be safely assumed that they are working in the realm of the psychic and are at the mercy of elemental forces.

It is interesting to note that by and large the dowser believes he is generally unable to find the object of his search without a dowsing device. He also believes that for his talent to work he has first to focus his mind on the object of his search. Dowsers know of course that the implement cannot do the work itself. The rod by itself possesses no virtue but is the instrument to discover all that he wants to do or know. He must have the dowsing ability.

It is chiefly when in doubt that the average person makes an appeal to dowsing. Motives include fear, enemies, illness, desire for gain, happiness, etc. Some theorize that after the degeneracy of mankind when the real tokens of true divination were lost, humanity continued to seek counsel and information thereby accounting for the hundreds of methods of divination in practice today. Dowsing is one form that has been used by mankind through the ages. Moses is often depicted holding up a staff while preaching to his people. Did it also serve as a divining rod?

Whatever is really going on, dowsing is very popular and is being practiced today by thousands. How many are practicing blindly? What is the ideal dowsing situation? Dowsing probably has no negative consequences in areas such as one’s own personal health and the like, but in other areas boundaries need to be set. The question also arises whether or not certain areas of dowsing are bordering on psychism, channelling and mediumship, clairvoyance, magic or some other form of paranormal activity. Is dowser #2 infringing on any of these domains? Dowser #1’s divining rod is used as an instrument of natural magic and belongs to the domain of magnetism. Dowser #3 dowses once in a while when challenged with health issues or when making decisions on serious matters such as employment or the purchase of some expensive item or property, but by and large leaves the dowsing system alone.

Dowsing is a very interesting activity indeed and perhaps, once man has reconnected with or purified his own true nature, divination will once again find its natural place. Until dowser #2 becomes fully

... continued on page 69

The Original Śaṅkarācārya

David Reigle

The once universal Wisdom Tradition, whose existence was made known to the modern world by H. P. Blavatsky, had been preserved for long ages in the utmost secrecy. So when Blavatsky brought out a portion of it, she was faced with the problem of making these now unheard of teachings plausible. To address this, she attempted to establish the probability of the existence of such a tradition, and to support the correctness of its teachings, by reference to known authors. For this support she drew heavily on the teachings of Śaṅkarācārya. But it would seem that the Śaṅkarācārya referred to by Blavatsky and the Śaṅkarācārya whose writings have conditioned Indian thought for the last dozen centuries or so are not the same person.

Śaṅkarācārya, the preceptor (*ācārya*) Śaṅkara, is regarded by Blavatsky as a great teacher of the Wisdom Tradition, or the Esoteric Philosophy. In her primary work, *The Secret Doctrine*, he is referred to as “the greatest Initiate living in the historical ages,”¹ and as “the greatest of the Esoteric masters of India.”² The philosophy promulgated by him, the *advaita* or non-dual school of Vedānta, is there called the nearest exponent of the Esoteric Philosophy.³ This is because the Esoteric Philosophy, the Wisdom Tradition, is non-dual like Śaṅkarācārya’s *advaita* school,⁴ as opposed to the qualified non-dualism of Rāmānuja’s *viśiṣṭādvaita* school, or the dualism of Madhva’s *dvaita* school, of Vedānta. So we are led to believe that Śaṅkarācārya, as a great Initiate, was fully versed in the Wisdom Tradition; and that even his public teachings, the non-dual *advaita* school of Vedānta, provide the best available support for its teachings.

This assumption is further strengthened by the amount of attention given to the question of Śaṅkarācārya’s date in the important series of articles called, “Some Inquiries Suggested by Mr. Sinnett’s *Esoteric Buddhism*.”⁵ This series is believed to have been written (or caused to be written) by three Mahatmas, or adepts in the Wisdom Tradition.⁶ Its importance is that it purports to give replies based on the definite information held by the Mahatmas rather than on speculation. But despite this rare opportunity for direct knowledge, and as predicted by Blavatsky who thought this lengthy series was a colossal waste of the Mahatmas’ time,⁷ the answers given were not accepted then, nor are they now.

The then prevailing opinion, accepted by both Western scholars and their Indian counterparts, was that

Śaṅkarācārya lived in the eighth century C.E.⁸ An article in this series, after examining the various speculations of European orientalists on this question, gives the true date of Śaṅkarācārya’s birth from the secret records:

We may perhaps now venture to place before the public the exact date assigned to Sankaracharya by Tibetan and Indian Initiates. According to the historical information in their possession he was born in the year B.C. 510 (51 years and 2 months after the date of Buddha’s nirvana), . . .⁹

This was published in *The Theosophist* for 1883. The next article to appear in *The Theosophist* on Śaṅkarācārya’s date, a detailed three-part study by the Pandit of the Adyar Library published six years later, consciously ignored this information and concluded that “we may not be far from truth if we say that he lived somewhere about the 5th century A.C.”¹⁰ Other articles followed in *The Theosophist*, proposing other dates.¹¹

Meanwhile, discussion of Śaṅkarācārya’s date continued in earnest in the orientalist journals. From 1882 to 2000 more than thirty articles and books on this question appeared.¹² K. B. Pathak had in 1882 proposed the specific date of 788 C.E. for the birth of Śaṅkara, based on a chronogram in an obscure manuscript he found.¹³ Most of the writings that followed this also favored dates in the eighth century C.E., many arguing for 700 or 750 C.E. rather than 788 C.E. A few, however, proposed 509 B.C.E.,¹⁴ in remarkable agreement with the date put forward by the Tibetan and Indian Initiates. This date of 509 B.C.E., moreover, comes from the very sources that one would most expect to find Śaṅkarācārya’s date preserved in: the records of the *maṭhas* or monastic centers established by him.

Śaṅkarācārya is said to have founded *maṭhas* at the four cardinal points of India: the Jyotir *maṭha* near Badrinath in the North; the Govardhana *maṭha* at Puri (Jagannath) in the East; the Kālikā *maṭha* (Śārādā *pīṭha*) at Dwaraka in the West; and the Śṛṅgerī *maṭha* (again, Śārādā *pīṭha*) at Sringeri in the South. In addition to these four, he is said to have founded the Śārādā *maṭha* (Kāmakoti *pīṭha*) at Kanchi, also in the South. Each of these *maṭhas* has had a succession of pontiffs, who hold the title Śaṅkarācārya, from the time of the original or first (Ādi) Śaṅkarācārya. Their traditional lineage lists

(*guru-paramparā*) give the names and usually the dates of each successive pontiff of that particular *maṭha*. The list of the Kālikā *maṭha* in the West gives for the birth of Śaṅkara the date 2631 of the Yudhiṣṭhira era, corresponding to 509 B.C.E.¹⁵ The list of the Śāradā *maṭha* (at Kanchi) in the South gives the date 2593 of the Kali Yuga era, also corresponding to 509 B.C.E.¹⁶ It is significant that two different lineage lists from two widely separated *maṭhas*, having 77 and 68 successors respectively, both go back in an unbroken line to 509 B.C.E.

The list of the Govardhana *maṭha* in the East does not give dates, but has 144 successors, about twice as many as the above two *maṭhas* have.¹⁷ This is due to the circumstance that at this *maṭha* the successors are normally those who have gone through the householder stage of life before becoming renunciants (rather than doing so immediately after the student stage), so are older when they are chosen to become Śaṅkarācāryas.¹⁸ So this list, too, supports the date of 509 B.C.E. The list of the Jyotir *maṭha* in the North has not yet been recovered (except for some recent centuries), since it was lost when this *maṭha* ceased to function between 1776 and 1941 C.E.¹⁹ Even so, this *maṭha* in its current publications accepts the traditional date of 509 B.C.E. The list of the Śṛṅgerī *maṭha* in the South gives for the birth of Śaṅkara the date 3058 of the Kali Yuga era, corresponding to 44 B.C.E.²⁰ This list, however, having only 35 successors, gives an improbable reign of 785 years for the second successor.²¹ It does not seem to be regarded as reliable by this *maṭha*, since their current publications give instead of 44 B.C.E. for Śaṅkara's birth the commonly accepted later date of 788 C.E.²² Thus the Jyotir *maṭha*, whose lineage list is incomplete, accepts the traditional date of 509 B.C.E., while the Śṛṅgerī *maṭha*, whose lineage list is imperfect, accepts the later date of 788 C.E. The other three *maṭhas*, in accordance with the lineage lists preserved by them, all give the date of Śaṅkara's birth as 509 B.C.E.

There are also other traditional sources that confirm the date of 509 B.C.E. One would next expect to find the date of Śaṅkara in the various biographies of him preserved in India. But the available biographies, written in Sanskrit, have proved to be of little help on this, sometimes giving astrological aspects of his birth, yet strangely, not the year.²³ There are, however, a few inaccessible but more informative ones. Far and away the most important of these is the full *Bṛhat Śaṅkara-vijaya* written by Citsukhācārya.²⁴ Citsukhācārya was a life long companion of Śaṅkara who says he "never departed from Śaṅkara from the time he left his native place until he attained his marvellous Brahmībhāva,"²⁵ that is, died. In other words, "he was an eye-witness of the life and doings

of Śaṅkara from start to finish, and one of his direct disciples."²⁶ This biography gives full details of Śaṅkara's life, with dates. Although this rare text is not found in libraries, T. S. Narayana Sastry managed to obtain a manuscript of it, from which he brought out material in a book in 1916.²⁷ Sastry in another place quoted in full its section on Śaṅkara's birth, in the original Sanskrit, and translated this into English. It gives the date 2631 of the Yudhiṣṭhira era, corresponding to 509 B.C.E.²⁸ Sastry also managed to obtain copies of two other biographies not now found in libraries: the equally rare *Prācīna Śaṅkara-vijaya* by Ānandagiri, and a version of the *Vyāsācalīya Śaṅkara-vijaya* by Vyāsācala. Each of them gives, using different word-numbers, the date 2593 of the Kali Yuga era for his birth, again corresponding to 509 B.C.E.²⁹

There is also epigraphic evidence supporting the date of 509 B.C.E. for Śaṅkara's birth. This is a copper plate inscription addressed to Śaṅkara by King Sudhanvan of Dwaraka, dated 2663 of the Yudhiṣṭhira era, corresponding to 477 B.C.E., the year of Śaṅkara's death.³⁰ Since Śaṅkara died at the age of 32, this places his birth in 509 B.C.E.

This evidence seems quite convincing; yet it is disregarded by modern scholars, who consider it mere myth. For example, leading Indologist Hajime Nakamura in his influential book, *A History of Early Vedānta Philosophy*, devotes forty pages to the question of Śaṅkara's date.³¹ Before setting out his own theory that "he probably lived, roughly, 700-750 [C.E.]," Nakamura says he "will carefully go into the theories advanced hitherto on the dates of Śaṅkara," noting that "I think that what is cited below will have exhausted all the important theses."³² Yet he does not so much as mention the view that Śaṅkara was born 509 B.C.E. His section, "The Traditional Theory of the Śaṅkara School," deals with the 788 C.E. birth date, hardly the traditional theory.

Of course, scholars such as Nakamura are not fools, and there are good reasons for disregarding the date of 509 B.C.E. and for concluding that Śaṅkara must have lived in the eighth century C.E. For example, Śaṅkara's commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* 2.2.18-32 is a refutation of Buddhist doctrines developed in both the older Sarvāstivāda school and in the newer Vijñānavāda school. A fifty-year gap between the death of the Buddha and the birth of Śaṅkara is not nearly enough time for at least these latter doctrines to have developed. To allow for this, proponents of the 509 B.C.E. date have advocated pushing back the date of the Buddha to 1800 B.C.E.³³ But besides the fact that this conflicts with the time period of the Buddha as found in traditional Southern Buddhist sources and as determined in general by modern

scholars, and also the date of the Buddha as given by the Mahatmas, it still does not solve the problem. Śaṅkara in his commentary on these verses quotes material from the Buddhist writer Dignāga and refers to material from the Buddhist writer Dharmakīrti, who are dated in the fifth and sixth centuries C.E., respectively.³⁴ Thus Śaṅkara could not have lived before then.

There is an obvious solution to this dilemma, but to my knowledge none of the advocates of the 509 B.C.E. date have yet proposed it (nor has anyone else, for that matter). They take great pains to show that the 788 C.E. date actually refers to one Abhinava or “new” Śaṅkarācārya, not to the Ādi or “original” Śaṅkarācārya. This Abhinava Śaṅkarācārya was the 38th pontiff of the Śāradā maṭha at Kanchi, who achieved wide fame during his lifetime, and the details of his life have been confused with those of the first Śaṅkarācārya.³⁵ Thus are explained the two conflicting sets of parents, places of birth, and places of death, found in the varying biographies.³⁶ These advocates even admit, here agreeing with Western scholars, that of the more than four hundred works attributed to Śaṅkarācārya, many must actually have been written by later Śaṅkarācāryas of the various maṭhas. But no one, neither Indian nor Western, questions that the commentary (*bhāṣya*) we have on the *Brahma-sūtras* is by the original or Ādi Śaṅkarācārya.³⁷ This work is taken to define Ādi Śaṅkarācārya. This and the commentaries on the other two of the three pillars of Vedānta (*prasthāna-traya*), namely, on the Upaniṣads and on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, form his major works.

Already in 1888, when Blavatsky gave in *The Secret Doctrine* the esoteric tradition that the Upaniṣads had been greatly abridged at the time of the Buddha, she indicated that we do not have the original commentaries on them by Śaṅkarācārya:

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, the greatest Initiate living in the historical ages, wrote many a *Bhāṣya* on the *Upanishads*. But his original treatises, as there are reasons to suppose, have not yet fallen into the hands of the Philistines, for they are too jealously preserved in his *maṭhas* (monasteries).³⁸

Then in 1896-1897 some extraordinary articles appeared in *The Theosophist*, written with the collaboration of a blind pandit who could recite from memory a large number of lost Sanskrit texts. One of these articles stated that the now current commentary by Śaṅkarācārya on the *Bhagavad-gītā* is not the genuine one, but rather is by Nāgeśvara Bhaṭṭa. It then gives a quote from the genuine one.³⁹ In another of these articles the authors offered “to give to the world the genuine commentary, if not precluded by unfore-

seen and unavoidable events.”⁴⁰ The “unforeseen and unavoidable events” may have been an allusion to the authors’ concern over the lack of acceptance and even antagonism these articles met with among the orthodox readers of *The Theosophist*. Of course, the genuine commentary never came out. In any case, the above indicates that the extant commentaries on the Upaniṣads and on the *Bhagavad-gītā* attributed to Śaṅkarācārya may not be the original and genuine ones.

But it is Śaṅkarācārya’s commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras* that modern scholarship, both Eastern and Western, takes as the one unquestionable work of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya. It is used as the standard by which to judge the authenticity of all the other works attributed to him. This work presents us with a dilemma not only because it quotes and refutes Buddhist writers from the fifth and sixth centuries C.E., more than a millennium after Śaṅkara is supposed to have lived, but also in regard to the unique Theosophical teaching of the relationship between Śaṅkara and the Buddha. In brief, this esoteric teaching is that the Buddha’s astral remains, i.e., his intermediate principles, provided the middle principles for the *avatāra* Śaṅkara.⁴¹ Thus there was a close relationship between the two of them. It is therefore inexplicable to Theosophists when the Śaṅkara who wrote the extant *Brahma-sūtra* commentary has these choice words to say about the Buddha and his doctrine:

From whatever new points of view the Buddha [Buddhist] system is tested with reference to its probability, it gives way on all sides, like the walls of a well dug in sandy soil. It has, in fact, no foundation whatever to rest upon, and hence the attempts to use it as a guide in the practical concerns of life are mere folly.—Moreover, Buddha by propounding the three mutually contradictory systems, teaching respectively the reality of the external world [the Sarvāstivāda system], the reality of ideas only [the Vijñānavāda or Yogācāra system], and general nothingness [the Śūnyavāda or Madhyamaka system], has himself made it clear either that he was a man given to make incoherent assertions, or else that hatred of all beings induced him to propound absurd doctrines by accepting which they would become thoroughly confused.—So that—and this the Sūtra means to indicate—Buddha’s doctrine has to be entirely disregarded by all those who have a regard for their own happiness.⁴²

The obvious solution is that the *Brahma-sūtra* commentary, taken to be the one definite work of the original Śaṅkarācārya, and the standard by which the authenticity of all the others are judged, was in

fact written by a later Śaṅkarācārya. In this way only can be explained how this commentary can quote a fifth century C.E. writer, when Śaṅkarācārya is traditionally supposed to have lived in the fifth century B.C.E. The ramifications of this for the study of the Wisdom Tradition are far-reaching.

Modern Western scholars have subjected Śaṅkarācārya's writings to a type of literary criticism that had never been a part of traditional Indian scholarship. They have minutely surveyed the use of characteristic technical terms in the *Brahma-sūtra* commentary, and compared this usage of technical terms with that found in other writings attributed to him. In this way they have been able to determine that most of the commentaries on the Upaniṣads and the commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* were written by the same person who wrote the commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras*, but that virtually all the other writings attributed to Śaṅkarācārya, the many shorter works including the popular *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*, "Crest Jewel of Discrimination," were not.⁴³ For them, this means that only these commentaries are genuine works of the original Śaṅkarācārya. For us, in accordance with the data presented above, this means just the opposite.

The major writings of Śaṅkarācārya now extant, namely his commentaries on the *Brahma-sūtras*, Upaniṣads, and *Bhagavad-gītā*, cannot be relied upon to support the Wisdom Tradition, since they were not written by the original Śaṅkarācārya. These works include important doctrines that are contradictory to the teachings of the Wisdom Tradition, and also contradictory to those of some of his other writings; that is, ones that scholars consider spurious but that we must consider genuine. Thus, Pandit N. Bhashya Charya writes in *The Theosophist* for 1890:

The other works, such as Apārókshānubhūti, Ātmānātmavivēka, Vivēkachūḍāmaṇi and Ātmabōdha cannot be his works, for they are in many respects in contradiction with philosophical conclusions found in his [Brahma-] Sūtra, Upanishad, and Gītā Bhāshyas.⁴⁴

It is only some of his shorter works, such as the ones just listed, that can be relied upon to support the Wisdom Tradition, since it is only these that we can assume were actually written by the original Śaṅkarācārya.⁴⁵ The *Brahma-sūtra* commentary and the other long commentaries were not yet available in English when Blavatsky drew on Śaṅkarācārya's teachings for this support.⁴⁶ Only some of his shorter works were then available in English, such as the *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*, translated by Mohini Chatterji and serialized in *The Theosophist*, 1885-1887.⁴⁷ It is to some of these shorter works

that we must turn to find the original teachings of the original Śaṅkarācārya.

Śaṅkarācārya on God

Of course, the *Brahma-sūtra* commentary and the other long commentaries by the later Śaṅkarācārya would no doubt have been based largely on those of the original Śaṅkarācārya, but with some very important changes. The most important of these involves what is perhaps the greatest question in Indian religion in the last two millennia: the question of God.

The teaching of a single non-dual reality called Brahman, that includes within it the entire universe, has always been the hallmark of Advaita Vedānta. The universal self of all, called *ātman*, is identified with Brahman. This impersonal principle goes beyond any conception of a personal God, and is therefore described as the *param* or highest Brahman, Parabrahman.

But according to the researches of modern scholarship, the author of the extant *Brahma-sūtra* commentary makes no distinction between the impersonal Brahman and the personal God, Īśvara. He does not even distinguish Parabrahman from Īśvara. In fact, his theistic interpretation is so pronounced that this usage of Īśvara, the personal God, serves to distinguish his writings from those of other Advaita Vedānta writers, even his disciples.

. . . G. A. Jacob had observed [in 1893] that theistic terms in Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya* often appeared in passages where the logic of the system seemed to call for impersonalistic and monistic terms, and that Śaṅkara again and again ignored the distinction between *param brahma* and *īśvara*. . . .

. . . the theistic basis or background perceptible in Śaṅkara's monistic thought . . . indeed marks a feature which is of major relevance to an evaluation of the great thinker's personality and which distinguishes him from other philosophers of his school.⁴⁸

German Indologist Paul Hacker sums up his landmark study, "Distinctive Features of the Doctrine and Terminology of Śaṅkara," as follows:

Recapitulating our results so far, we can say that the words (*param*) *brahma* or *paramātman* are almost always interchangeable with *īśvara*; that *īśvara* can in most places be replaced by (*param*) *brahma* or *paramātman*; . . .

This use of language is characteristic of Ś[āṅkara]. Comparisons with his disciples

. . . continued on page 70

The Eddy Farm — Then and Now

Rogelle Pelletier

Spiritualism had its origins in North America in 1848 with the manifestations surrounding the Fox sisters and what became known as the Rochester [NY] knockings. Spiritualism also flourished in Europe and Russia from the 1850s onward.

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky arrived in New York in the summer of 1873. In her letter postmarked February 16th, 1875, to Hiram Corson, professor of English literature at Cornell University and a leading spiritualist at the time, Mme Blavatsky wrote:

I am here, in this country, sent by my Lodge, on behalf of Truth in modern spiritualism, and it is my most sacred duty to unveil what is and expose what is not.¹

In the August 1882 issue of *The Theosophist*, H.P. Blavatsky, in response to a correspondent's question regarding "the principal points in which the Theosophists and the Spiritualists differ" replied:

The difference is in our theories to account for the phenomena. We say they are *mainly*, though not *always*, due to the action of other influences than that of the disembodied conscious spirits of the dead. The Spiritualists affirm the contrary.²

On other occasions Mme Blavatsky attested that it was her task to educate the Spiritualists about the occult truth behind these phenomena and to warn of the dangers to individuals willingly exposing themselves to the manifestations. In a letter to her sister, Vera de Jelihowsky, in 1875, she explained:

[T]hese simulacra of men and women are made up wholly of the terrestrial passions, vices, and worldly thoughts, of the residuum of the personality that was; for these are only . . . dregs that could not follow the liberated soul and spirit, and are left for a second death in the terrestrial atmosphere. . . .³

Colonel Olcott's articles in the *New York Sun* are largely credited with stirring up interest in the phenomena surrounding the Eddy brothers at Chittenden, Vermont. Shortly thereafter the *New York Daily*

Graphic proposed that he return to the Eddy Farm and do a series of reports for its publication. Colonel Olcott maintained that he was a neutral observer and that his years of experience as a war veteran, lawyer and investigator allowed him to scrutinize these activities from a scientific perspective. He detailed his observations in twice-weekly reports to the *Daily Graphic* over a twelve-week stay at the Eddy Farm in late 1874. In his reports were included detailed accounts of manifestations and of his investigations, together with sketches by an artist who had accompanied him. He also published these accounts one year later in a book titled *People From The Other World*.

On October 14th, 1874, while Colonel Olcott was doing his investigative reports, Mme Blavatsky arrived at the Eddy farmhouse where she stayed for two weeks. In a letter to Dr. Franz Hartmann, she wrote:

I was sent to America on purpose and sent to the Eddys. . . . I proved to him [Olcott] that all the mediums could do through (so-called) spirits others could do at will without any spirits at all; that bells, thought reading, raps and physical phenomena, could be achieved by anyone who had the faculty of acting in his physical body through the organs of his astral body; and I had that faculty ever since I was four years old. . . .⁴

The following year, Mme Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, among others, established the Theosophical Society.

Brothers, William and Horatio Eddy were two of four children born to Zephaniah Eddy and Julia Ann Macombs (also spelled MacCombs in some of the literature). Mrs. Eddy descended from a long line of clairvoyants and her great-great-great-grandmother was actually tried and sentenced to death for witchcraft at Salem in 1692. (She apparently managed to escape and flee to Scotland.) The children inherited their mother's abilities and from the time they were

¹ HPB, *The Extraordinary Life & Influence of Helena Blavatsky* by Sylvia Cranston. G.P. Putnam & Sons; 1993. p.117.

² "Theosophy and Spiritualism" by H.P. Blavatsky. *The Theosophist*, Vol. 3, No.11, August 1882; p.272.

³ *Incidents In The Life of Madame Blavatsky* by A.P. Sinnett. George Redway, London; 1886; p.179.

⁴ "Letters of H.P.B. To Dr. Hartmann, 1885 to 1886." *The Path*, Vol.10, No.12, March 1896; p.369 [Eddy is misspelled "Eddie" in *The Path*.]

born, mysterious sounds and strange voices could be heard around their cradles. When they went to school there were so many disturbances in the vicinity of their desks that they were eventually forbidden to attend. Zephaniah, described by Colonel Olcott



The Eddy Farm as it appeared in the 1800s.

as “a narrow-minded man, strong in his prejudices, a bigoted religionist, and very little educated”, apparently attempted “to get the evil spirit out of them”⁵ by beating his little boys and girls to the point of leaving scars they bore to their graves. Zephaniah eventually realized that money could be made by displaying his children’s talents and he hired three of them out to a showman. They toured all the major cities in the United States over a period of fifteen years. As they went from city to city, in various tests to awaken them out of their trances (or prove they were faking them), they were subjected to all manner of cruelties and violence, which only further scarred them physically as well as mentally.

When Zephaniah died in 1862, his children inherited the farm. In the early 1870s, after their years of touring, they returned home. Interest in spiritualism remained high. William and Horatio decided to convert part of the second floor of the house into a theater and they held their first seance on January 1st, 1874. In his book, Colonel Olcott described their abilities:

The Eddys represent about every phase of mediumship and seership: — rappings; the disturbance of material objects from a state of rest; painting in oil and water-colors under influence; prophecy, the speaking of strange tongues; the healing gift; the discernment of spirits; levitation, or the floating of the body in free air; the phenomena of instrument-playing and the show of hands; the writing of messages on paper upborne in mid-air, by

pencils held by detached hands; psychometry, or the reading of character and view of distant persons upon touching sealed letters; clairvoyance; clairsaudience, or the hearing of spirit-voices; and, lastly, and most miraculous of all, the production of materialized phantom forms, that become visible, tangible, and often audible by all persons present.⁶

Apparently twenty to thirty materialized spirits appeared on any given evening, at five minute intervals.⁷ Seances were held every night of the week except Sunday.

Colonel Olcott did thorough investigations of the premises and, in particular, the room where the seances were held as well as the ‘spirit cabinet’ in which William would sit behind a curtain while the manifestations occurred. Olcott never found any indication of fraudulent means to produce these manifestations. He came to regard the Eddys as:

[S]laves of the invisible powers back of the “manifestations” who not only obsess them at their caprice by day while about household duties, and in the evening during the regular circles, but pursue them in the silent watches of the night, playing the pranks of the old-time *poltergeists*, and making it uncertain whether or not they will wake in bed or in the crotch of some tree on the summit of an adjacent mountain.⁸



The “Eddy Farm” in 2000

In October 2000 the writer, her husband, and a young couple accompanying them, had occasion to

⁵ *People From The Other World*, H.S. Olcott. Charles E. Tuttle Company, Rutland, Vermont, (1875) 1972; pp.24-25.

⁶ *People From The Other World*, H.S. Olcott. Charles E. Tuttle Company, Rutland, Vermont, (1875) 1972; pp.43-44.

⁷ As part of his investigation Colonel Olcott arranged to measure the height of materialized spirits, who cooperated by standing next to a yardstick painted on a wall. He also arranged for them to be weighed. The weight of one particular spirit varied by 30 pounds (11.8 kg) during one evening’s visitation.

⁸ *People From The Other World*, H.S. Olcott. Charles E. Tuttle Company, Rutland, Vermont, (1875) 1972; p.46.

go to Vermont and we took it upon ourselves to visit the Eddy Farm. A drizzly Sunday morning found us at the doorstep of the *High Life Ski Club*. We were greeted by Bill Farley, Treasurer (and unofficially, tour guide and jack-of-all-trades), and by Liz Holste, Membership Chair. They graciously answered our questions and gave us a tour of the premises. They explained that a group of ten skiers from New Jersey decided to pool their resources and purchase a home-away-from-home in Vermont where they often went to ski. In 1969 they found the Eddy Farm and put a down payment on it. They purchased it in 1972 for approximately \$32,000. Membership in *High Life Ski Club* grew and the mortgage was paid off in 1987. A nonprofit corporation owns and operates the property. It runs on a semi-communal basis and provides hotel-code approved sleeping spaces for its members. Membership varies from year to year and has been as high as 1200 members.

Without precise instructions on how to locate it, we would not have recognized the place from the now familiar sketch dating from the 1870s. Fire destroyed part of the L-shaped house. At some point in time thereafter the remaining section was turned 90 degrees. Whereas it had been facing east toward the road, it now faces south. It was rumored that spirits had picked the house up and moved it. There is proof, however, that it was raised and, using teams of horses, given a quarter turn. The house has served a variety of purposes since it was built circa 1844. Horatio and William died in 1922 and 1932 respectively. It is presumed that the farm was still in the Eddy family's hands at that time (we made no attempt to ascertain this). It served as a restaurant in the 1950s and then remained vacant from 1959 to 1969 at which time the *High Life Ski Club* became involved. There have been many renovations done over the years to bring the premises to legislated standards but there has also been some preservation work done to maintain some of the authenticity of the Eddy farmhouse.

Our eyes first caught sight of two framed photographs directly in front of us as we were led in through the front door. One is of the house as it appears now, the other is a sketch of the Eddy farmhouse as it appeared then, which was donated to *High Life Ski Club* by The Theosophical Society in America in 1988. To the left is the doorway to the dining room/kitchen, to the right is the entrance to the living room with the fireplace. To the immediate right of the photos is the staircase which leads to the second storey which we climbed, following in the steps (literally) of the many individuals who had ascended them to the seance theater. This area has now been divided up but it was pointed out that in one room, which now serves as a bedroom, a pentagram had been found painted on the floor, presum-

ably a later addition and not connected to the Eddys. In the landing area on this storey there is a flight of stairs leading to the attic. This space has now been converted to 'mattress-on-the-floor, bring-your-own-sleeping-bag' quarters. Olcott did investigations here to ascertain there were no riggings from above to the area directly below where the manifestations were taking place. Bill and Liz stated that no trap doors or other hidden compartments had been found during renovations.



The dark, square headstone (back/left) is Zephaniah's; the rounded-top headstone to the right of it is Julia's.

While on the main floor, we had examined some of the photographs in the living room. It was noted that at one time a dam built in the vicinity of the farm caused the water to rise at the back of the property to the point that what had served as the barn in the early years had been converted to a boat house. The water has long since receded and this building is now being converted into a recreation hall.

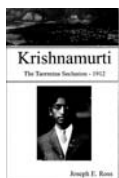
Upon being asked if anything out of the ordinary is occasionally reported by overnight guests, our tour guides told us how sometimes in the middle of the night, when someone goes down to the main floor, a lady with long hair has been seen working in the kitchen. The next morning when she is sought out, it is found that she is not among the registered guests. Another occasional phenomenon is the reported sighting of a ball of light floating across the house. While there, two of our party did in fact witness this (before being told of other such instances).

We bid our gracious hosts good-bye, thanked them for their extensive tour and for kindly allowing us to take a number of photographs, and we departed. The weather precluded any attempt to visit Honto's Cave, which is located in the nearby woods and is only accessible by hiking. In describing it Olcott wrote that "[t]he term cave is a misnomer in this instance . . . [as it is] formed by the leaning of one great fragment of rock against another". Seances were occasionally held there and Olcott reprinted a

. . . continued on page 69

The Taormina Initiations

Rogelle Pelletier



Krishnamurti: The Taormina Seclusion, 1912 by Joseph E. Ross, published by Joseph E. Ross/Book Doctor, PO Box 1442, Ojai, CA, 93024-1442, 2000, 257 pages. \$17.95 US + shipping direct.

In the opening paragraph of his Foreword, editor and compiler, Joseph E. Ross, wrote:

In the many biographies of J. Krishnamurti little attention is given to the time he spent during 1912 in seclusion in Taormina, a village in Sicily. In that four month period, March through June, Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater, then leaders of [the] theosophical movement, supervised the preparation of four young people for Initiation into the Brotherhood of the Inner Government of the World. . . . It was believed that Krishnamurti would be the vehicle of the coming of the World-Teacher, the Lord Maitreya. The other three young people would be closely associated with Krishnamurti when his ministry began.

The book is divided into five sections: INDIA: The Early Years; ENGLAND: The European Introduction; ITALY: The Taormina Seclusion; THE MINISTRY: Rise and Fall of the Coming; and THE NEW KRISHNAJI: A Retrospect. Endnotes and a "Further Reading" section complete the book. Nearly 100 pages are devoted to the Taormina period. The remainder of the book follows Krishnamurti's evolution to the treading of his own path and the complications which resulted within the Society around the contradictions which began to arise between Krishnamurti's statements and the expectations established by C.W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant regarding the relationship between the vehicle and the World-Teacher.

Krishnamurti: The Taormina Seclusion, 1912 provides much more detail about this time period than previously published books. While titles such as *Candles In The Sun* by Lady Emily Lutyens, and *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening* as well as *Krishnamurti: The Years of Fulfilment* by Mary Lutyens generally provide summaries of events at

Taormina, Mr. Ross presents circumstances as detailed in the words of George Arundale¹ in his letters to his aunt/foster mother, Francesca Arundale, to whom he wrote regularly during these four months. There are also letters by/to C.W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant, among others. Other items include articles and published addresses by C. Jinarajadasa and Krishnamurti as well as items from Esoteric Section (E.S.) publications and extracts from instructions received by C.W. Leadbeater regarding preparations for initiations. A lengthy address by Mrs. Besant to the E.S. members in London, which was originally published as a report, is also reprinted in full. Mr. Ross has very few comments between these items; he simply sets the scene and provides the source of the material which follows.

A basic definition of the word 'occult' is secret or mysterious, and there will always be those who claim to be attuned to this hidden side of things, whether projected or genuine. The majority of people, unable to experience this level of sight, are naturally intrigued with the reports of those who make such claims and are, in addition, at their mercy in regard to the information they supposedly collect. The members of Edmonton TS studied *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett* in detail for a number of years. A comparison of the Mahatmas' statements in these letters with their words in this instance is very revealing. It becomes apparent from the study of *The MLs* that the Mahatmas generally do not concern themselves with trivial everyday matters. Master Morya in Letter 29 wrote: "Life . . . when even indefinitely prolonged, is too short to burden our brains with flitting details — mere shadows." In addition, in Letter 78, K.H., referring to the "Phoenix" publishing venture to which the future of India was strongly tied, advised Sinnett: "The Chohan is not to be consulted every day on such 'worldly' matters. . . ."² On the other hand in the case of Krishnamurti, the Mahatmas, up to and including the Mahachohan, were supposedly concerned with such things as the fabric used for Krishnamurti's

¹ At the time, George Arundale was Principal of the Central Hindu College in Benares, India. He became a priest, and later a bishop in the Liberal Catholic Church, as well as a Co-Mason. He succeeded Annie Besant as President of The Theosophical Society - Adyar following her death in 1933.

² *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, compiled by A.T. Barker, facsimile edition, Theosophical University Press, (1923) 1975; p.218; p.378.

clothing (nothing but the finest), down to the fit of his shoes.³

During the initiation processes detailed in his letters George Arundale stated on a number of occasions that he had “little if any recollection” of the events. More than one year later in a letter dated October 31, 1913 to C.W. Leadbeater he wrote: “Do not forget that I bring back at present no remembrances of what takes place on other planes, and what the Master may say to me is hidden from my physical brain” (p.169). Referring to the occasion of his own First Initiation during the night of May 31/June 1, 1912, he wrote to his mother that he had included “the accompanying description made by Mrs. Besant with the help of Mr. Leadbeater”. He added “You will notice that for the second time I have had the honour of presentation to the Lord Gautama and of receiving a few words of gracious approval” (p.126). Also, while George held no memory of it, Krishnamurti had apparently remembered seeing Master Morya and Master K.H. with George on this occasion. A few days later Mrs. Besant sent a message to the Esoteric Section which included the following: “My dear young Brother George Arundale has passed the great Portal, and has become a member of the White Brotherhood. You will all rejoice with us” (p.129).

Scattered throughout the writings of HPB, as well *The MLs*, emphasis is placed upon the seriousness and difficulty of the chela’s path and attainment of the ultimate goal. During HPB’s lifetime it was noted that there was only one candidate who successfully passed the associated tests. It is with some scepticism therefore that one reads in Mrs. Besant’s address to E.S. members in June 1913, one year after the Taormina seclusion: “[W]e now have within the Society no less than seven members of the Brotherhood . . . we have a score of members who are in touch with Masters as Their chelas. . .” (p.161). In the Foreword (p.8) Mr. Ross points out that “Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater at this period had previously taken the Fourth (Arhat) Initiation.” On p.131, referring to some recent photos taken at Taormina, George wrote to his mother on June 12, 1912: “The group of the 6 of us — all Initiates — has . . . been taken.” The “initiates” included George Arundale, C. Jinarajadasa, J. Krishnamurti, Annie Besant, C.W. Leadbeater, and Nitya (Krishnamurti’s younger brother).⁴

Krishnamurti had experienced his First Initiation in January 1910 at Adyar. Mr. Ross provides this concept of initiation:

In theosophical parlance, initiation is a ceremony conducted on a superphysical plane, usually at night, while the candidate is asleep and is conscious in his subtle body. The candidate undergoes tests to determine his dedication and worthiness, and his sponsors testify as to his service to humanity. During the ceremony occult teachings are given and his powers are expanded. As the candidate progresses in wisdom, power and service, further initiations may be taken. (p.7)

However this is seemingly contradicted in ML Letter 49 where K.H. wrote to Sinnett: “The Occult Science is *not* one, in which secrets can be communicated of a sudden, by a written or even verbal communication”.⁵ It should also be noted that “powers”, or *siddhis*, are earned and not conferred.

Taormina, Sicily was the place of seclusion chosen for this preparation to make Krishnamurti the vehicle for the World-Teacher. Krishnamurti, along with Jinarajadasa, apparently received their Second Initiation on the full moon of April 30/May1, 1912 at Taormina. Included in notes, the originals of which are in George Arundale’s writing (there is no indication whose recollections these were), is the following account of the proceedings:

The Masters grouped Themselves in a semi-circle. . . . The two candidates [stood] between the two Masters who presented them, Master K.H. and D.K. . . . Behind them stood Sirius [Leadbeater] and Herakles [Besant], the appointed guardians of Alcyone [Krishnamurti] in the lower world. The Manu sat a little behind on the right hand of the Boddhisattva, and then shone out above the glorious figure of the Lord Gautama Buddha. . . . Near him was the Mahachohan . . . and between Them and a little above them flashed out later in answer to the solemn invocation of the Bodhisattva, the blazing star of the One Initiator, the mighty King of the Occult Hierarchy, the Lord of the World. (p.60)

Obviously, very detailed records were kept of these events. One is left to wonder, however, if the Masters

³ It is interesting to note that in “No Religion Higher Than Truth” which appeared in *The Canadian Theosophist*, March-April 1965, (reprinted from *The American Theosophist*, December 1964), Ernest Wood, writing on C.W. Leadbeater’s comments regarding publication of *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, stated: “But Mr. Leadbeater *never did* regard that Letter No.10 as reliable, and after the Letters were published, he quite often spoke of the book in my hearing as ‘that abominable book’.” (p.23)

⁴ Photo, unnumbered, following p.117.

⁵ *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, compiled by A.T. Barker, facsimile edition, Theosophical University Press, (1923) 1975; p.282.

and their superiors would in fact have such personal interest. In ML Letter 29 Morya writes:

I, am as I was; and, as I was and am, so am I likely always to be — the slave of my duty to the Lodge and mankind, not only taught, but desirous to subordinate every preference for individuals to a love for the human race.⁶

By 1921 it was becoming obvious that Krishnamurti was well on his way to stepping out on his own. In an address to the Indian members of the E.S. in Benares in December 1921 he spoke at length on “a lack of common sense among members . . .” (p.189) and how without this, one cannot understand what is meant by spirituality (p.196). He emphasized that one should not accept certain things as unquestionable truths simply “because an ‘initiate’ says so” (p.200). He also claimed there was “[t]oo much the spirit of subservience. We seem to think that by killing independence we can get devotion and get nearer the Master” (p.211).

By 1925 Krishnamurti’s relationship with The Theosophical Society was becoming tenuous at best and there was much confusion among the membership due to conflicting statements by the leaders of the Society and by Krishnamurti, who was supposedly the mouthpiece for the World-Teacher.

In a discussion with Mrs. Besant in August 1927, George Arundale recorded her interpretations of the then-current situation. There was question as to whether or not Krishnamurti had “full union” with, rather than occupation by, the Lord Maitreya. Upon questioning her on the possibility that she had misinterpreted some things in this regard, she apparently went out of her body and remained absent for a while. She returned with the following explanation:

As I have never had the experience of being present near the Teacher when a new sub-race was founded and therefore could not know from my own memory how he was to return, my Master showed me — the previous coming and I described the future one in terms of the former. (p.229)


In April 1928 in a talk on the consciousness of Krishnamurti, Leadbeater described that Krishnamurti’s causal body was visible as a funnel, darker and denser at the bottom, while the higher part “is light beyond anything you can imagine” (p.237) and was the consciousness of the Lord Maitreya. In his May 8, 1928 letter to George Arundale, Leadbeater, referring to the difficulty reconciling Krishnamurti’s

response to the proclamation that Arundale’s wife had recently been declared the World-Mother (complementary to the World-Teacher), wrote:

[W]e have no criterion by which to judge how much of the higher plan should be known through the physical body, and consequently it would be foolish to allow ourselves be upset or greatly surprised by anything whatever that may happen. (p.247)

In his December 1921 address Krishnamurti stated: “I see certain things with a little more clearness than you, perhaps because I have climbed a little way up the mountain — a very little — perhaps because of that I see a little clearer” (p.201). In 1922 he started going through a painful “process” which, as documented in other books on Krishnamurti’s life, lasted several years and included debilitating headaches as well as excruciating pain in his neck and spine on a daily basis.

Krishnamurti was not in favour of rituals. He became disillusioned with the pomp and ceremony of the various organizations affiliated with The Theosophical Society and could not accept the Liberal Catholic Church or Co-Masonry. On August 2, 1929 at Ommen, The Netherlands, Krishnamurti formally dissolved the Order of the Star which had been established for the purposes of the World-Teacher and delivered his famous “Truth is a pathless land” lecture. In 1930 he resigned from The Theosophical Society.

Joseph E. Ross has presented another very interesting compilation of authentic documents which provide a chronicle of events as they unfolded. Further, the presentation includes very little of the compiler’s personal input. Mr. Ross indicates (p.249) that the status of Krishnamurti as the vehicle of the World-Teacher will be further documented in the forthcoming series, in follow-up to *Krotona of Old Hollywood, Vol.I, 1866-1913*. To be released in future are: *Krotona of Old Hollywood, Vol.II, 1914-1920*; *Krotona of Hollywood and Ojai, Vol.III, 1921-1931*; and *Krotona of Ojai, Vol.IV, 1932-1994*. While there have been objections in some quarters regarding the publication of these documents, it should be borne in mind that the sincerity of all involved at the time is best displayed through their own words. Equally obvious is the willingness on the part of the members to accept, without much questioning, the declarations of the leaders. It is a study in human nature and, when viewed objectively, a very interesting one at that. 

⁶ *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, compiled by A.T. Barker, facsimile edition, Theosophical University Press, (1923) 1975; p.225.

Maritza Forgach de Sordo, Countess of Gymes and Gach

March 23, 1933 - April 16, 2001



Blavatsky. She will be greatly missed by her family and many friends.

Maritza Forgach was born March 23rd, 1933 to an aristocratic family in Hungary. Her parents divorced and her mother remarried in the early 1940s. In 1950 the family migrated to Australia where Maritza attended the University of Sydney. In Australia in 1954 she married a Hungarian Count. Unfortunately in 1965 he died in a car accident leaving Maritza a widow with two young daughters. She travelled for a while and eventually settled in Mexico, first in Acapulco then Mexico City where she began to paint professionally. She was well-known in Diplomatic circles and was fluent in Hungarian, German, Spanish and English.

Maritza and Ramon met in the autumn of 1976 and became re-acquainted at one of her exhibitions held at a Museum in Mexico City in August 1978. They married on May 31st, 1980. They did a lot of travelling then moved to Sydney, Australia in 1981. Maritza was writing a book on yoga and meditation when they met and she had introduced Ramon to theosophical concepts. They joined the Theosophical Society in Sydney and within two years of returning to Mexico City in 1989 became involved with the Mexican Section of the TS. In 1992 they moved to Tepoztlan, Morelos and built their own home there in 1996. Together they regularly attended meetings in Mexico City (45 minutes north) and Cuernavaca (20 minutes away).

Over the years they had come to realize that there was a clear distinction between original theosophical

teachings and what came later. Maritza and Ramon were instrumental in establishing the independent *Fundacion Blavatsky: Fraternidad Teosófica* in 1995. It was officially notarized as a non-profit association in October 2000 in Cuernavaca. The *Fundacion* is dedicated to the promulgation of Original Theosophy through the translation and distribution of original writings, and the establishing of libraries for this purpose. Together, Maritza and Ramon have done an immense amount of work in translating these texts into Spanish. In 1993 they started the magazine, *Atma Vidya*, which has been published independently through the *Fundacion* since 1995.

Maritza was not well on Saturday, April 7th and following hospitalization the next day was diagnosed with a tumor in the right frontal lobe of her brain. It was benign but produced swelling of the meninges. As her case was not urgent surgery was scheduled for Saturday the 21st. Meanwhile she remained in hospital where Ramon visited her daily and they spent the time reading theosophical materials. Unfortunately, Maritza went into cardiac arrest on the morning of April 16th and died immediately. She appeared to one of her daughters in Australia in a vivid dream at that very moment. Ramon took her body to a funeral parlor in Cuernavaca where, three days later, she was cremated. Her eldest daughter came to Mexico to take half of Maritza's ashes to Australia.

Maritza had a very sunny disposition and a great sense of humor. Ramon described her as not knowing rancor or resentment and very seldom angry; she did not gossip, was generous to the poor, and in dealing with people was simple, direct and kind. He stated that she was very intelligent but psychic and intuitive rather than intellectual. In the words of one of Ramon's aunts, Maritza was "beautiful within and without". The effects of her good works will surely resound through theosophical circles of Mexico for many years to come.

R.P.

That only which we have within, can we see without. If we meet no Gods, it is because we harbor none. If there is a grandeur in you, you will find grandeur in porters and sweeps.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Archeology, Theosophy, and the Americas

Robert Bruce MacDonald

Journalist Elaine Dewar, in her recent release, *Bones: Discovering the First Americans*, chronicles the development of archeology in North America. The book is a fascinating read, more for the psychology of the modern scientific method and its eminent practitioners than for the credibility of the theories that they espouse. Many learned archeologists today still believe the Americas were peopled around 14,000 years ago. There are some, dating through new disciplines, who believe the Americas were settled up to 50,000 years ago and finally, there are the stories of the Native Americans themselves who believe that they have always been here. Theosophy has always put more credibility in myth and legend than in the speculations of scientists, and after reading *Bones*, it is not difficult to see why.

The Secret Doctrine hints that “the *Third Race* goes very far back into the Secondary Age” (SD II, 710). The *Fourth Race* is claimed to have been at its height from the early Eocene to the mid-Miocene. Ruta and Daitya, the last of the large Atlantean islands, sank 850,000 years ago during the later Pliocene according to *The Secret Doctrine* time line. Of the Americas we learn that there are parts older than Europe and it is written that:

The India of the pre-historic ages . . . was doubly connected with the two Americas. The lands of the ancestors of those whom Ammianus Marcellinus calls the ‘Brahmans of Upper India’ stretched from Kashmir far into the (now) deserts of Schamo. A pedestrian from the north might then have reached—hardly wetting his feet—the Alaskan peninsula, through Manchooria, across the *future* Gulf of Tartary, the Kurile and Aleutian islands; while another traveller, furnished with a canoe, and starting from the South, could have walked over from Siam, crossed the Polynesian Islands and trudged into any part of the continent of South America. (SD II, 327)


We know Arjuna married Ulûpi, the daughter of a Nâga (initiate), around 5000 years ago. This name is of Atlantean derivation and is probably to be found with the Mexicans of that time (SD, II, 214). Therefore, at the beginning of the Kali Yuga there was still some interaction between India and the Americas. In addition, we know the island continents of Daitya and Ruta sank beneath the oceans around a million years ago, and Blavatsky hints that at that time there is

evidence of civilization in the Americas (CW II, 310). We can assume that as parts of the Americas were rising from the oceans and the Atlantean continents continued to sink, there would have been migration by the Atlanteans to these new lands.

We are given another hint that man was in the Americas 50,000 years ago as Blavatsky cites a lecture by H. A. Allbutt where evidence for this claim is given (CW II, 335). In *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky refers to a newspaper article that describes the builders of mounds found in Missouri, Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana as giants (IUI, 304). In an article published on the internet, “Holocaust of Giants: The Great Smithsonian Cover-up”, the author cites numerous archival references to digs all over the Americas that located Giants near eight feet in height ([/greatserpentmound.org/articles/giants3.html](http://greatserpentmound.org/articles/giants3.html)). In a *Canadian Press* story by Wendy Cox, “The Peaceful giants of the Arctic one day just disappeared”, the story of the Dorset of the Canadian Arctic is given (Edmonton Journal, Aug 12, 2001). These giants apparently disappeared 1000 years ago. In a *Nexus Magazine* article, “And There Were Giants . . .”, John Mount reprints a picture of a giant first published in *Strand Magazine* in 1895 showing a mummified body over 12 feet tall. In that same article an Inca myth is referred to that, depending on the height of the Inca at the time, could place the giants they met with at 20 feet plus. As Blavatsky writes that “man’s size was reduced from 15 to 10 or 12 feet, ever since the third sub-race of the Aryan stock”, giants of over 20 feet can be placed as older than a million years. Finally, John Robert Colombo’s *Voices of Rama*, stories of the Native Americans of Canada, includes a story, “Why People Do Not Eat Each Other Nowadays”, that refers to giants. As the Atlanteans left their sinking continents for new lands, they took with them not only their giant stature, but their knowledge of pyramid architecture and astronomy.

The Secret Doctrine relates a story of the Central American pyramid of Cholula being built by a race of giants (SD II, 276fn). Blavatsky later relates that the descendants of the Atlanteans built the pyramids found all over the world (SD II, 352), and that beneath these pyramids dwelt the adepts (SD II, 351-52). Finally, Blavatsky cites a reference that the pyramids were consecrated to the regents of particular stars (SD II, 362). Mark Vidler, in *The Star Mirror*, picks up on this theme identifying not only pyramids but particular mountains all over the world with stars in

the sky. These identifications of star and pyramid indicate a profound knowledge of astronomy and architecture to the point where only now in the late twentieth century would we be able to duplicate some of these structures. *The Mayan Prophecies* by Gilbert and Cotterell again speak of the profound astronomical and mathematical knowledge of the Central Americans. In *The Mysteries of Chichén Itzá*, Adalberto Rivera A., explores the incredible architecture of *Chichén Itzá* and identifies this complex with initiates, India, and the Atlanteans.


Evidence of the age of the Native American peoples can be found in many places, but the self-styled experts of modern archeology will believe in only the one million year old skull. Sadly, because they “know”, according to their theories, such evidence to be impossible they will not even look for it. In addition, given that amateur archeologists were digging up evidence of giants only 150 years ago, it seems that the memories of a modern archeologist are very short — a strange quality for those interested in the study of the past. 

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. . . **Divination** continued from page 56

aware of all that is at play in all aspects of his dowsing, he might best attend to things he can control such as purifying his own nature which


develops the intuition and wisdom required to play this role, and be motivated by pure noëtic action. 

- ¹ Hill, Douglas, “Dowsing,” *Man, Myth & Magic*, Vol.5, ed. Richard Cavendish. New York: BPC Publishing Ltd., 1970, p.684.
- ² Hartmann, Franz, *Life of Paracelsus*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd, pp.188-189.
- ³ Blavatsky, H.P., “The Idols and the Teraphim,” *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol.VII, comp. Boris de Zirkoff et al. Wheaton IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1987 (1959), pp.237-239.
- ⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus, *History*, Book XXI, Chap.i, 8, as quoted by H.P. Blavatsky in “The Idols and the Teraphim”, *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol.VII, p.234.
- ⁵ Hartmann, Franz, *Life of Paracelsus*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd, p.118fn.
- ⁶ Blavatsky, H.P., “Psychic and Noëtic Action,” *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol.XII, comp. Boris de Zirkoff et al. Wheaton IL: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1980, p.374.
- ⁷ Levi, Eliphas, *The Paradoxes of The Highest Science*. Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1922, p.101.

. . . **Eddy Farm** continued from page 63

published account of one held May 24th, 1874.⁹ Honto was the name of the spirit native woman who (among others) made her appearance there.

Approximately one-half mile from the house is the Eddy burial plot. We located the headstones of Zephaniah (who died July 13th, 1862 at the age of 57 years) and Julia (“Wife of Zephaniah Eddy. Entered the World of Spirits December 29th, 1872, 59 y’s, 9 mo’s, 24 d’s”) as well as a number of their relatives. The stones for William and Horatio were not found and, I believe, they are not buried in this cemetery. An article found in *Yankee* magazine stated that William died “at the tough old age of 99” in 1932. Horatio had died ten years earlier.¹⁰

In an article which ran in the *Rutland Herald* in October 1997, titled “Former Seance Center Now Skiers’ Favorite Haunt”, author Ed Barna, referring to the fact that the house might be haunted, wrote: “If [ski club members] were inclined to forget, the predictable stream of visitors from all over the globe would let them know. . . .” We were among that steady stream and were graciously received and provided with a guided tour. Having read the history of the early years of the theosophical movement and the involvement of the founders of the Society with regards to the phenomena which took place there — the Eddy Farm *then* — it was indeed interesting to visit its new incarnation — the Eddy Farm *now*. 

⁹ *People From The Other World*, H.S. Olcott. Charles E. Tuttle Company, Rutland, Vermont, (1875) 1972; pp.62-67.

¹⁰ “When The Spirit World Touched Chittenden” by Jay Stevens, *Yankee* magazine, January 1987; pp.76-83, 122-123.

... **Sankara** continued from page 60

are, however, helpful only insofar as they establish that the word *īśvara* is used very seldom by them, whereas it occurs very frequently in the SBh [Śaṅkara's *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*]. At the same time, the concept does not appear to have had much systematic development for them. But in later Vedānta (*Pañcadaśī*, *Vedāntasāra*) *īśvara* is no longer confused with Brahman. He has been given a clearly defined place in the system, namely, He is Brahman associated with *māyā*.

How is this strange confusion on Ś[āṅkara]'s part to be explained?⁴⁹

From our perspective, it is explained by the fact that this book was not written by the original Śaṅkarācārya, but by a later, theistic, Śaṅkarācārya. This allows us to understand why virtually all modern Advaita Vedāntins are theists, believers in God, when we know that this belief is not a part of the Wisdom Tradition; nor, apparently, was it part of the original teachings of the original Śaṅkarācārya. The Mahatma K.H. writes on this in a letter replying to A. O. Hume:

In the first [letter] you notify me of your intention of studying Advaita Philosophy with a "good old Swami". The man, no doubt, is very good; but from what I gather in your letter, if he teaches you anything you say to me, *i.e.*, anything save an impersonal, *non*-thinking and *non*-intelligent Principle they call Parabrahm, then he will not be teaching you the *true spirit* of that philosophy, not from its esoteric aspect, at any rate.⁵⁰

The Mahatma K.H. clearly states the position of the Wisdom Tradition on belief in God in his letters #10 and #22. In brief, this position is as follows:

Neither our philosophy nor ourselves believe in a God, least of all in one whose pronoun necessitates a capital H.⁵¹

K.H. continues, specifically differentiating Parabrahman from God, *īśvara*:

Parabrahm is not a God, but absolute immutable law, and Iswar is the effect of Avidya and Maya, ignorance based on the great delusion.⁵²

He says that Parabrahman is the one life taught by them:

We are not Adwaites, but our teaching respecting the one life is identical with that of the Adwaites with regard to Parabrahm.⁵³

He reiterates that the one life, or Parabrahman, is not God:

If people are willing to accept and to regard as God our ONE LIFE immutable and unconscious in its eternity they may do so and thus keep to one more gigantic misnomer.⁵⁴

He says it does matter whether or not we think of this principle as God:

You say it matters nothing whether these laws are the expression of the will of an intelligent conscious God, as you think, or constitute the inevitable attributes of an unintelligent, unconscious "God," as I hold. I say, it matters everything, . . .⁵⁵

A Hindu Adept affirms that Parabrahman is to be understood as an abstract principle rather than as God:

Moreover, I assert that the PARABRAHM of the Vedantins and the "Adi-Buddha" of the northern Buddhists are identical. Both are *Abstract Principles*, or—*non*-entities; . . .⁵⁶

How important is this question of God? In one Indian's view, the introduction of the concept of a supreme almighty God into India from the West and its thorough establishment there by Śaṅkarācārya, both in the eighth century C.E., brought about the ruin of India. He holds that India's effete-ness in the past twelve hundred years, when it was ruled first by the Muslims and then by the British, is due to this theism, which had been so effectively promulgated there by Śaṅkarācārya. Of course, this refers to who we would consider to be the later Śaṅkarācārya. This author, Phulgenda Sinha, explains how through historical research he arrived at this startling conclusion:

Considering the whole history of India from the most ancient to the contemporary period, I found a distinct dividing line in the literary and philosophical heritage of the country, making it appear as if there were two Indias—one which existed from ancient times to 800 A.D., and another which came after 800 A.D. . . .

India prior to 800 A.D. produced philosophers and writers who accepted Man as the supreme being. They talked about two main entities: *Purusha* (Man) and *Prakriti* (Nature). . . . Man can liberate himself from *dukha* [sorrow or unhappiness] and can attain *sukha* (happiness) by acquiring proper knowledge, mastering certain teachings, following certain practices, and by working according to the Samkhya-yoga theory of action.

India after 800 A.D. adopted quite a different outlook. The ideas proposed by writers and commentators were now mostly matters of belief and faith, colored by religion, mysticism, and caste. Not Man but God was held to be supreme. Man could do only what was predestined by God.⁵⁷

He continues further on, after saying that religious tolerance held sway in India until about the eighth century C.E.:

However, this condition changed when the Brahmans accepted monotheism and began interpreting the whole religious history of India, from Vedas to Upanishads, in a completely new way. The most interesting points in this interpretation were that the status of Brahmans as a caste and class was strengthened, all the gods and goddesses of Vedas were superseded by a single Almighty God, and religious persecution began with a sense of crushing the enemies. It happened with the coming of Shankaracharya.⁵⁸

He begins his section, "An Appraisal of Shankaracharya," with:

Shankaracharya was the first Indian to openly accept, propagate, and expound the concept of monotheism as a part of Hindu religion.⁵⁹

He concludes his appraisal with this verdict:

India entered into a dark age with the coming of Shankaracharya.⁶⁰

When reading at a distance Śaṅkarācārya's philosophical treatises on non-dualism, we are apt to remain unaware of the reality of just how theistically they are understood in India, and just how pervasive the God idea is there. In his 1983 study of the modern Śaṅkarācāryas and their followers, William Cenkner reports:

Worship is the most significant duty encouraged by the Śaṅkarācāryas; daily *pūjā* is their consistent advice. . . . The observer frequently notes the worship of personal gods even among ascetics of the Śaṅkara orders today; the practice, it is believed, was part of Ādi Śaṅkara's renovation of ascetical life.⁶¹

The popular eclectic worship is based upon the tradition that Ādi Śaṅkara revived and gave stability to the six alternate ways of worship, the *ṣaṇmata*-s [i.e., of the six Gods]. Ascetics from the Śaṅkara orders have consistently worshipped personal gods. Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Gītā* speaks of the six

attributes of God that correspond to the six Gods, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Śakti, Sūrya, Gaṇapati and Kumāra.⁶²


T. M. P. Mahadevan, well-known scholar and exponent of Advaita Vedānta, explains that this sixfold worship came about at the request of six of Śaṅkara's disciples.

Admitting the non-duality of the Absolute Spirit, they had their own preference in regard to the form of the Personal Godhead.⁶³

After stressing the importance of God in Advaita Vedānta, he says that this importance is because, according to Śaṅkara's commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* 2.3.41:

. . . it is by gaining knowledge that comes through God's grace that one gets released from bondage.⁶⁴

Thus, Śaṅkarācārya is understood in India to have widely propagated the worship of a personal God, since the grace of a personal God is required for liberation. The prevalence of this teaching largely coincided with the difficult period in Indian history of foreign domination. However one may choose to judge the effects of belief in God seen in India over the past twelve hundred years, this belief is certainly due in large part to the theistic interpretation of Vedānta by the later Śaṅkarācārya. It would seem that the pure Advaita teaching of the original Śaṅkarācārya has now become thoroughly overlaid with theism, as a result of the additions made to that teaching by the Śaṅkarācārya who wrote the extant commentaries on the three pillars of Vedānta. But this theism, according to the Wisdom Tradition, is not the teaching of Vedānta as expounded by the original Śaṅkarācārya.

The most fundamental teaching of Vedānta is that of the existence of Brahman, the one reality, and of the identity of *ātman*, the self of all, with Brahman. The original Śaṅkarācārya promulgated the Advaita, or non-dual, understanding of this ultimate principle, in direct accordance with the teachings of the Wisdom Tradition. This non-dual principle, the one life, is the most essential teaching of the hidden Wisdom Tradition. For bringing this teaching out, the world is indebted to the original Śaṅkarācārya.⁶⁵ Nowhere else in all the world's sacred writings was this taught in its fullness and its purity. The task now before the student of the Wisdom Tradition is to separate this original teaching of the original Śaṅkarācārya from its later accretions, which go under the same name. 

[For a copy of the notes please write to: Eastern Tradition Research Institute, 3185 Boyd Rd, Cotopaxi, CO 81223.]

Fohat is the Steed, Thought is the Rider

It is the "bridge" by which the "Ideas" existing in the "Divine Thought" are impressed on Cosmic substance as the "laws of Nature." Fohat is thus the dynamic energy of Cosmic Ideation; or, regarded from the other side, it is the intelligent medium, the guiding power of all manifestation. . . . Thus from Spirit, or Cosmic Ideation, comes our consciousness; from Cosmic Substance the several vehicles in which that consciousness is individualized and attains to self – or reflective – consciousness; while Fohat, in its various manifestations, is the mysterious link between Mind and Matter, the animating principle electrifying every atom into life. – Secret Doctrine I, 16



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