

Nor is a symbol used in connexion with Epeius, who, noted for his cunning in constructing the wooden horse at the siege of Troy, and whose cowardice afterwards became proverbial, is seen 'passing into the nature of a woman cunning in the arts'.

As to the jester Thersites, who puts on the form of a monkey, comment is unnecessary.

Accordingly, the expressions concerning the heroes' hatred of being born of woman seem to be purely metaphorical and employed to carry out logically the literary use of the animal-symbols, just as the passages are concerning 'animals tame and wild which changed into one another and into corresponding human natures—the good into the gentle and the evil into the savage, in all sorts of combinations', and of 'birds, on the other hand, like the swan and other musicians, wanting to be men'.

Even the ordinary soul, the first seen by Er to make choice—although neither an incarnate divinity like Orpheus or Agamemnon, nor a hero like Ajax—and though possessed of a mind obscured by animal propensities, is not assigned by Plato, as he would be by a believer in the exoteric rebirth doctrine, to birth in sub-human form. In his case, too, no animal-symbol is made use of:

'He who had the first choice came forward and in a moment chose the greatest tyranny; his mind having been darkened by folly and sensuality, he had not thought out the whole matter before he chose, and did not at first perceive that he was fated, among other evils, to devour his own children. . . . Now he was one of those who came from heaven, and in a former life had dwelt in a well-ordered State, but his virtue was a matter of habit only and he had no philosophy.'

And, as the *Bardo Thödol* teaches, in other language, in its insistence on the need of Right Knowledge to the devotee who follows the *Bodhic* Path, so Plato teaches:

'For if a man had always on his arrival in this world dedicated himself from the first to sound philosophy, and had been moderately fortunate in the number of the lot, he might, as the messenger reported, be happy here, and also his

journey to another life and return to this, instead of being rough and underground, would be smooth and heavenly.'¹

With the assistance of symbols and metaphors, Pindar, Empedocles, Pythagoras, and Socrates, like Plato and the Greek Mysteries, also taught the rebirth doctrine.

On a golden funereal tablet dug up near the site of Sybaris there is the following line of an inscription: 'And thus I escaped from the cycle, the painful, the misery-laden.'² This, like known Orphic teachings, is purely Buddhist and Hindu, and suggests that in ancient Greece the rebirth doctrine was widespread, at least among Greeks of culture who had been initiated into the Mysteries.

Symbolism similar to that used by Plato has been used by the recorders of the Buddhist Scriptures as well, as, for example, in the account of the Northern School of the birth of the Buddha Himself. This latter from the Tibetan *Vinaya Pitaka* or *Dulva* (the most trustworthy and probably oldest part of the *Bkai-hgyur*), III, folio 452^a of the copy in the East India Office, Calcutta, runs thus:

'Now the future Buddha was in the Tushita Heaven, and knowing that his time had come, he made the five preliminary examinations: first, of the proper family [in which to be born]; second, of the country; third, of the time; fourth, of the race; fifth, of the woman. And having decided that Mahāmāyā was the right mother, in the midnight watch he entered her womb under the appearance of an elephant. Then the queen had four dreams: first, she saw a six-tusked white elephant enter her womb; second, she moved in space above; third, she ascended a great rocky mountain; fourth, a great multitude bowed down to her.

'The soothsayers predicted that she would bring forth a son with the thirty-two signs of the great man. "If he stay at home, he will become a universal monarch; but if he shave his hair and beard, and, putting on an orange-coloured robe, leave his home for the homeless state and

¹ Cf. B. Jowett, *Dialogues of Plato* (Oxford, 1892), iii. 336-7: Republic, x. 614-20.

² *Inscr. gr. Sicil. et Ital.* 641; cf. Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet*, p. 109².

renounce the world, he will become a Tāthagata, Arhant, a perfectly enlightened Buddha.”

Again, the *Jātaka*,—of the Southern School,—a compilation of folk-lore, folk-belief, and popular mythology touching the Buddha and his many incarnations, which crystallized round about His personality in much the same way as the matter of the Arthurian Legend crystallized round about King Arthur, during the third century after His death¹—attributes to Him many previous births in sub-human form; and although the esotericist would concede that in remote aeons of evolution such incarnations could possibly have been really sub-human, he would give to such of them as may have occurred in this world-period a symbolical significance, whereas the orthodox Theravādīst interprets all of them literally.

In any case, a literal interpretation of the *Jātaka*—seeing that it is, according to the esotericist, essentially an exoteric treatise designed for the people²—appears to be more plausible than that of the *Dulva* account of the Buddha's birth. Furthermore, since there is a parallel account in the Pali Scriptures wherein the same animal symbol, namely, the six-tusked white elephant, is employed, we have here an example of the use of symbolism, definite in purpose, common to both Northern and Southern Buddhism, which even the exotericist could not but interpret symbolically.

Similarly, as the popular interpretation appears to have fundamentally shaped the *Jātaka*, so it may have also affected the compilation of the *Bardo Thödol*; for like all treatises which have had at least a germ-origin in very ancient times and then grown up by the ordinary process of amalgamating congenial material, the *Bardo Thödol*, as a Doctrine of Death and Rebirth, seems to have existed at first unrecorded, like almost all sacred books now recorded in Pali, Sanskrit, or Tibetan, and was a growth of unknown centuries. Then by the time it had fully developed and been set down in writing

¹ Theravādīsts, on the contrary, believe that the *Jātaka* dates from the Buddha's lifetime, and that its verses, but not its prose, are His very words.

² Here, again, in opposition to this view, the Southern Buddhists maintain that the *Jātaka*, in its verses, is the most transcendental part of the *Sūtra Pitika*, and is designed for study by Bodhisattvas rather than for the common people.

no doubt it had lost something of its primitive purity. By its very nature and religious usage, the *Bardo Thödol* would have been very susceptible to the influence of the popular or exoteric view; and in our own opinion it did fall under it, in such manner as to attempt the impossible, namely, the harmonizing of the two interpretations. Nevertheless, its original esotericism is still discernible and predominant. Let us take, for example, the animal-thrones of the Five Dhyānī Buddhas as it describes them, in harmony with Northern Buddhist symbolology: the Lion-throne is associated with Vairochana, the Elephant-throne with Vajra-Sattva, the Horse-throne with Ratna-Sambhava, the Peacock-throne with Amitābha, the Harpy-throne with Amogha-Siddhi. And, in interpreting the symbols, we find them to be poetically descriptive of the peculiar attributes of each deity: the Lion symbolizes courage or might, and sovereign power; the Elephant, immutability; the Horse, sagacity and beauty of form; the Peacock, beauty and power of transmutation, because in popular belief it is credited with the power of eating poisons and transforming them into the beauty of its feathers; the Harpy, mightiness and conquest over all the elements. The deities, too, in the last analysis, are symbolical of particular *Bodhic* attributes of the *Dharma-Kāya* and of supramundane forces of Enlightenment emanating thence, upon which the devotee may depend for guidance along the Path to Buddhahood.

In attempting the esoteric interpretation of the animal symbols used in the *Sidpa Bardo*—and this interpretation finds its parallel in the esoteric interpretation obviously intended by the *Sidpa Bardo* episode in Plato, as in the *Dulva* account of the birth of the Buddha—we have sufficient Buddhist rebirth symbols whose esoteric interpretation is clearly known and generally accepted to guide us.

Dr. L. A. Waddell, a well-known authority on Lāmaism, in *Lāmaism in Sikkim*,¹ refers to the symbolism of the famous, but recently ruined, wall-painting of the *Sī-pa-ī-khor-lo* or 'Circle of Existence' in the Tashiding monastery, Sikkim, as follows: 'This picture is one of the purest Buddhist

¹ See *Gazetteer of Sikkim*, ed. by H. H. Risley, p. 266.

emblems that the *lāmas* have preserved for us. And by its means I have been able to restore the fragment of a cycle in the verandah of Ajaṅṭā Cave No. XVII, hitherto uninterpreted, and merely known as "the Zodiac". This picture portrays in symbolic and concrete form the three original sins and the recognized causes of rebirth (*Nidānas*), so as to ensure their being vividly perceived and avoided; while the evils of existence in its various forms and the tortures of the damned are intended to intimidate evil-doers.' In it, the three original sins are depicted as a pig, a cock, and a snake, and their esoteric significance is given by Dr. Waddell thus: 'The pig symbolizes the ignorance of stupidity; the cock, animal desire or lust; and the snake, anger.'¹ In the accompanying symbolic illustrations of the Twelve *Nidānas*, only the third is an animal symbol, the others being human and figurative symbols; and this is a monkey eating fruit, symbolizing entire knowledge (Tib. *nam-she*; Skt. *Vijñāna*) of good and evil fruits, through tasting every fruit or sensuous experience in the manner of a roving non-philosophically guided libertine, thus engendering consciousness.²

Accordingly, the animal forms and environments named in the Second Book of the *Bardo Thödol* (see pp. 178-9, 185) as possible forms and environments to be entered by the human consciousness-principle upon rebirth in this world may be interpreted as follows:

(1) The dog-form (like that of the cock in 'The Wheel of Life') symbolizes excessive sexuality or sensuality.³ It also symbolizes, in popular Tibetan lore, jealousy. And the dog-kennel environment symbolizes abiding in, or living in, a state of sensuality.

(2) The pig symbolizes (as in 'The Wheel of Life') the ignorance of stupidity dominated by lust; and selfishness

¹ See *Gazetteer of Sikkim*, ed. by H. H. Risley, p. 267.

² *Ibid.*, p. 268.

³ Compare the following passage from the *Yoga Vāshishṭha (Nirvāṇa Prekaraṇa, Sarga 28, verses 78-9)*: 'Those wise Pandits, learned in the Shāstras, should be considered Jackals if they relinquish not desire and anger.'

and uncleanness as well. The pigsty environment symbolizes worldly existence dominated by these characteristics.

(3) The ant symbolizes (as it does amongst the nations of the West) industry, and the lust for worldly possessions; and the ant-hill environment the dwelling under the corresponding conditions of life.

(4) The insect or grub symbolizes an earthly or grovelling disposition, and its hole the dwelling in an environment dominated by such disposition (see text, p. 179).

(5) The calf, kid, lamb, horse, and fowl forms mentioned (see text, pp. 178-9) symbolize, in like manner, corresponding characteristics common to those animals and to the highest of the animal beings, man, such as almost all civilized races have associated therewith, and popularly illustrated in animal mythology like that which Aesop made the basis of his *Fables*. In the *Old Testament* the visions of the prophet Ezekiel and in the *New Testament* the *Revelation* of John show how similar animal symbolism affected even the *Bible*. And, in our view, should the Buddhist and Hindu exotericists re-read their own Scriptures in the light of the Science of Symbols their opposition to Esotericism would probably be given up.

Accordingly, the animal symbols in the *Sidpa Bardo*—despite evident corruptions of the text and of the esoteric rebirth doctrine denoted by these symbols—should rightly be taken to imply that, in accordance with its *karma*, a human principle of consciousness, unless winning Emancipation, will, under the normal *karmic* conditions of gradual progression which govern the majority of mankind, continue to be born in a human form in this creation-period, with the mental traits or characteristics symbolized by animals. Under exceptional or abnormal *karmic* conditions of retrogression, it may, on the other hand, during the course of ages, gradually lose its human nature and fall back into sub-human kingdoms.

As the translator explained, we need but look round us in the human world to find the bloodthirsty tiger-man, the murderer; the lustful swine-man; the deceitful fox-man; the thieving and imitating monkey-man; the grovelling worm-man; the industrious and oft-times miserly ant-man;

the ephemeral—sometimes professedly aesthetic—butterfly-man; the strong ox-man; or the fearless lion-man. Human life is far richer in possibilities for the workings out of evil *karma*—no matter how animal-like the *karma* may be—than any sub-human species could possibly be. The illiterate folk-beliefs so common in Buddhist and Hindu lands, that a human murderer must inevitably be reborn as a ferocious beast of prey, or a sensualist as a pig or dog, or a miser as an ant, are, therefore, like many other popular beliefs, evidently based upon false analogies—some of which have crept into Oriental Scriptures—and upon an unduly limited view of the innumerable conditions offered by human embodiment, from the saint to the criminal, from the King-Emperor to the slum-dweller, or from the man of culture to the lowest savage.

In accordance with our findings, that higher and rational teaching concerning rebirth, which in the *Bardo Thödol* is, perhaps, confused because of corruptions of text, may now be summarized. If, on the Plane of Uncertainty, the influence of innate or *karmic* propensities of desire for the grosser sensations of *sangsāric* existence, such as govern life in a human body, can be dominated through the exercise of the more powerful influence of Right Knowledge, that part of the consciousness-principle capable of realizing Buddhahood triumphs, and the deceased, instead of being obsessed with the frightful hallucinatory spectres of his lower or animal nature, passes the interval between human death and rebirth in one of the paradise realms instead of in the *Bardo*. If such a more enlightened one be very unusually developed spiritually, that is to say if he be a great *yogic* saint, he may gain even the highest of the paradises and be reborn among mankind under the guiding power of the 'Lords of *Karma*', who, though still *sangsāric* beings, are described by the *lāmas* as being immeasurably higher in evolution than man. When thus directed by the 'Guardians of the Great Law', the earth-returning one is said to reincarnate out of compassion, to assist human kind; he comes as a Teacher, as a Divine Missionary, as a *Nirmāṇa-Kāya*

incarnate. Normally, however, rebirth is of the lower or ordinary sort, unendowed—because of the lack of enlightenment of the one undergoing it—with consciousness of the process. Even as a child knowing not the higher mathematics cannot measure the velocity of light, so the animal-man cannot profit by the higher law governing the rebirth of the divine-man; and, drinking of the River of Forgetfulness, he enters the door of the womb and is reborn, direct from the desire-world called the *Bardo*. This lower rebirth, almost brutish in many instances, because controlled chiefly by animal propensities such as sub-human and human creatures have in common, differs, however, from that of brutes in virtue of the functional activity of the purely human element of the consciousness, which in all sub-human creatures is latent and not active; and for this element, even in the lowest of mankind, to become latent instead of active requires approximately as long a period of cyclic time as it does for the sub-human consciousness to evolve its latent human element into full human activity. The popular misunderstanding of this aspect of the higher or esoteric Doctrine of Rebirth thus appears to have assisted in no small measure to give rise to the obviously irrational belief, found almost everywhere throughout the Scriptures of both Buddhism and Hinduism, that the brute principle of consciousness in its entirety and the human principle of consciousness in its entirety are capable of alternately exchanging places with one another.

It was the late Dr. E. B. Tylor, father of the modern science of Anthropology, who after a very careful examination of the data pronounced the higher doctrine of rebirth to be the more reasonable:

'So it may seem that the original idea of transmigration was the straightforward and reasonable one of human souls being reborn in new human bodies. . . . The beast is the very incarnation of familiar qualities of man; and such names as lion, bear, fox, owl, parrot, viper, worm, when we apply them as epithets to men, condense into a word some leading feature of a human life.'¹

¹ E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (London, 1891), ii. 17.

That this is the true interpretation is confirmed—so far as Europe is concerned—by the teachings of the Druids, the learned Brahmin-like priests of Europe's scientific pre-Christian religion, held by the Celtic nations.¹

In *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries*, in the year 1911, I suggested that the rebirth doctrine, in its straightforward, Druidic form, accords, in its essentials, with the psychological science of the West—that the subconscious mind is the storehouse of all latent memories; that these memories are not limited to one lifetime; that these memory-records, being recoverable, prove the doctrine to be based upon demonstrable facts. Since the year 1911 the whole trend of Western psychological research in the realm of the subconscious and in psycho-analysis has tended to confirm that view.

I was unaware when I wrote *The Fairy-Faith* that Huxley held—as he did—the theory of human reincarnation to offer the best explanation of even ordinary physiological and biological phenomena. And since the testimony of Huxley, as one of the greatest biologists, coincides with that, as above given, of the late Dr. Tylor, the foremost of modern anthropologists, and also confirms from the standpoint of our own Western Science the higher or esoteric interpretation of the Rebirth Doctrine as offered by the Occult Sciences of the East, we here record it as a fitting conclusion to this Section:

'Everyday experience familiarizes us with the facts which are grouped under the name of heredity. Every one of us bears upon him obvious marks of his parentage, perhaps of remoter relationships. More particularly, the sum of tendencies to act in a certain way, which we call "character", is often to be traced through a long series of progenitors and collaterals. So we may justly say that this "character"—this moral and intellectual essence of a man—does veritably pass over from one fleshly tabernacle to another, and does really transmigrate

¹ Cf. Caesar, *De B. G.* vi. 14. 5; 18. 1; Diodorus Siculus, v. 31. 4; Pomponius Mela, *De Situ Orbis*, iii, c. 2; Lucan, *Pharsalia*, i. 449-62; *Barddas* (Llandoverly, 1862), i. 177, 189-91; and W. Y. Evans-Wentz, *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries* (Oxford 1911), Chaps. VII, XII.

from generation to generation. In the new-born infant, the character of the stock lies latent, and the Ego is little more than a bundle of potentialities. But, very early, these become actualities; from childhood to age they manifest themselves in dullness or brightness,—weakness or strength, viciousness or uprightness; and with each feature modified by confluence with another character, if by nothing else, the character passes on to its incarnation in new bodies. The Indian philosophers called character, as thus defined, "*karma*". . . .

'In the theory of evolution, the tendency of a germ to develop according to a certain specific type, e.g. of the kidney-bean seed to grow into a plant having all the characters of *Phaseolus vulgaris*, is its "Karma". It is the "last inheritor and the last result" of all the conditions that have affected a line of ancestry which goes back for many millions of years, to the time when life first appeared on the earth. . . .

'As Prof. Rhys-Davids aptly says [in *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 114], the snowdrop "is a snowdrop and not an oak, and just that kind of snowdrop, because it is the outcome of the *Karma* of an endless series of past existences".'¹

XI. THE COSMOGRAPHY

Buddhist cosmography as understood by the *lāmas*, and continually referred to throughout our text, more especially in connexion with the Doctrine of Rebirth, is a very vast and complex subject; and to consider it here in any detail would involve the esoteric as well as the exoteric interpretation of an enormous mass of doctrines, more or less of Brahmanic origin, concerning the many states of sentient existence within the *Sangsāra*, or cosmos—some planetary as in this world, some

¹ T. H. Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics* (London, 1894), pp. 61-2, 95.

The late William James, the well-known American psychologist, independently arrived at substantially the same conclusion as Huxley; for, after explaining his 'own inability to accept either popular Christianity or scholastic theism', he says, 'I am ignorant of Buddhism and speak under correction, and merely in order the better to describe my general point of view; but, as I apprehend the Buddhist doctrine of *Karma*, I agree in principle with that'.—(*The Varieties of Religious Experiences*, pp. 521-2.)

in the many heavens and paradises, and others in the numerous states of purgation called hells. Generalizing, it may be said that when the Brahmanic and Buddhist teachings concerning cosmography are carefully examined from the standpoint of the initiated Oriental, and not from the too-oft prejudiced standpoint of the Christian philologist, it seems to suggest far-reaching knowledge, handed down from very ancient times, of astronomy, of the shape and motion of planetary bodies, and of the interpenetration of worlds and systems of worlds, some solid and visible (such as are alone known to Western Science) and some ethereal and invisible existing in what we may perhaps call a fourth dimension of space.

Esoterically explained, Mt. Meru (Tib. *Ri-rab*), the central mountain of Hindu and Buddhist cosmography, round which our cosmos is disposed in seven concentric circles of oceans separated by seven intervening concentric circles of golden mountains, is the universal hub, the support of all the worlds. We may possibly regard it, like the Central Sun of Western astronomy, as the gravitational centre of the known universe. Outside the seven circles of oceans and the intervening seven circles of golden mountains lies the circle of continents.

In illustration, an onion of fifteen layers may be taken to represent roughly the *lāmaic* conception of our universe. The core, to which the fifteen layers cohere, is Mt. Meru. Below, are the various hells; above, supported by Mt. Meru, are the heavens of the gods, the more sensuous, like the thirty-three heavens ruled by Indra, and those under the sway of Māra, being ranged in their own regular gradation beneath the less sensuous heavens of Brāhma. As apex over all, is the final heaven, called 'The Supreme' (Tib. '*Og-min*'). Being the last outpost of our universe, '*Og-min*', as the vestibule to *Nirvāna*, is the transitional state leading from the mundane to the supramundane; and thus there presides over it the divine influence of 'The Best of All' (Tib. *Kuntu-sang-po*: Skt. *Samanta-Bhadra*), the *lāmaic* personification of *Nirvāna*.

On a level with Indra's realm dwell, in their own heaven-

worlds, the eight Mother Goddesses (Tib. *Hlāmo*), all of whom appear in our text. They are the Mother Goddesses of the early Hindus, called in Sanskrit the *Mātrīs*.

Within Mt. Meru itself, upon which the Heavens rest, there are four realms, one above another. Of these, the three lower are inhabited by various orders of genii; and in the fourth, immediately beneath the Heavens, from which, like the fallen angels of Christian belief, they were expelled on account of their pride, dwell the 'Ungodly Spirits', the *Asuras* (Tib. *Lha-ma-yin*), or Titans, who, as rebels, live and die waging unending war with the gods above.

The innermost layer of the onion is the Ocean surrounding Mt. Meru. The next layer, outwardly expanding, is that of the Golden Mountains; the next beyond is another Ocean; and so on, a circle of Golden Mountains always coming after a circle of Ocean until the fifteenth layer containing the outermost Ocean, in which float the Continents and their satellites. The skin of the onion is a wall of iron enclosing the one universe.

Beyond one such universe there lies another, and so on to infinity.¹ Each universe, like a great cosmic egg, is enclosed within the iron-wall shell, which shuts in the light of the sun and moon and stars, the iron-wall shell being symbolical of the perpetual darkness separating one universe from another. All universes alike are under the domination of natural law, with which *karma* is commonly made synonymous; for, in the Buddhist view, there is no scientific necessity to affirm or to deny the existence of a supreme God-Creator, the *Karmic* Law furnishing a complete explanation of all phenomena and being of itself demonstrable.

Each universe, like our own, rests upon 'a warp and woof' of blue air (i. e. ether), symbolized by crossed *dorjes* (such as are depicted by the emblem on the cover of our book). Upon

¹ Could we take the *lāmaic* conception of a universe to be that of a world-system, and of a plurality of universes to be that of a plurality of world-systems forming a universe, we should then be able better to correlate the cosmography of Northern Buddhism (and of Brahmanism, from which it appears to have originated) with the cosmography of Western Science.

this rests 'the body of the waters' of the outer Ocean. Each Ocean symbolizes a stratum of air (or ether), and each of the intervening mountains a stratum of congealed air (or ether), that is to say, material substance; or, from a more occult view-point, the Oceans are the Subtle and the Mountains the Gross, the one alternating with the other as Opposites.

Like the Seven Days of the Mosaic version of Creation, the numerical dimensions which the *lāmas* assign to our universe are more often to be taken as suggestive or symbolical than literal. Mt. Meru, they say, towers 80,000 miles above the Central Enchanted Ocean and extends below the surface of the waters the same distance, the Central Ocean itself being also 80,000 miles deep and 80,000 miles wide. The succeeding girdle of Golden Mountains is just half that number of miles in height and width and depth, and the next Ocean, correspondingly, 40,000 miles deep and 40,000 miles wide. The consecutive circles of alternating pairs composed of Golden Mountains and an Enchanted Ocean gradually diminish as to width, depth, and height, being respectively 20,000, 10,000, 5,000, 2,500, 1,250, and 625 miles. This brings us to the Continents in the Outer Ocean of Space.

Of these Continents, the four chief ones—as described in the Second Book of our *Bardo Thödol*—are situated in the Four Directions. On either side of each of these Four Continents are smaller or satellite Continents, thus making the total number of Continents twelve, which, again, is a symbolical number, like the number seven of the cosmographical arrangement.

The Eastern Continent is called in Tibetan *Lü-pah* (*Lus-hpags*), or 'Vast Body' (Skt. *Virāt-deha*). Its symbolical shape is like that of a crescent moon; and, accordingly, the colour white is assigned to it, and crescentic faces are ascribed to its inhabitants, who are said to be tranquil-minded and virtuous. Its diameter is given as being 9,000 miles.

The Southern Continent is our Planet Earth, called *Jambuling* (Skt. *Jambudvīpa*), probably an onomatopoeic word—as the translator held—descriptive of the fruit of a jambu-tree falling into water, *ling* itself meaning 'place', or 'region'.

The name *Jambuling* would thus mean the region or continent wherein jambu-fruit fall into the water. Its symbolic shape is like that of the shoulder-blade of a sheep, that is sub-triangular, or rather pear-shaped, to which the faces of its inhabitants conform. Blue is the colour assigned to it. Riches and plenty abound in it, along with both good and evil. It is said to be the smallest of the Four Continents, being but 7,000 miles in diameter.

The Western Continent is called *Balongchöd* (*Ba-glang-spyöd*), literally meaning *cow + ox + action* (Skt. *Godhana*, or 'Wealth of Oxen'). In shape it is like the sun, and red of colour. Its inhabitants, whose faces are round like the sun, are believed to be very powerful and to be addicted to eating cattle, as the literal meaning of its name itself may suggest. Its diameter measures 8,000 miles.

The Northern Continent is *Daminyan*, or *Graminyan* (*Sgrami-snyan*), equivalent to the Sanskrit *Uttara Kuru*, meaning 'Northern Kuru [Race]'. It is of square shape and green colour. Its inhabitants have corresponding faces, square like those of horses. Trees supply all their sustenance and wants, and the *Kuru*, on dying, haunt the trees as tree-spirits. This is the largest of the Continents, being 10,000 miles in diameter.

Each satellite Continent resembles the Continent to which it is attached, and is one-half its size. The left Satellite of our world (*Jambuling*), called *Ngāyabling*, is, for example, the world of the *Rākṣhasas*, to which *Padma Sambhava*, the Great *Guru* of *Lāmaism*, is believed to have gone to teach the *Rākṣhasas* goodness and salvation, and to be there now as their king.¹

Underlying this *lāmaic* cosmology there is, as research will show, an elaborate symbolism. Take, for instance, the description of Mt. Meru as given by Dr. Waddell: 'Its eastern face is of silver, the south of jasper, the west of ruby, and the north of gold'²—which illustrates a use of ancient symbols very similar to that in the *Revelation* of John. The complete rational explanation of all the symbolism connected with

¹ Cf. *Gazetteer of Sikkim*, pp. 320-3.

² Cf. *ibid.*, p. 322.

Hindu and in turn Buddhist cosmography would be—even if it were possible for us—quite beyond the scope of an introduction. Suffice it to say that the possession of a key to such explanation is claimed by expert professors of the Occult Sciences in India and in Tibet—compared to which, in the realm of mind and matter, our Western Science is, so they maintain, but at the Threshold of the Temple of Understanding.

XII. THE FUNDAMENTAL TEACHINGS SUMMARIZED

Ere passing on to the final Sections of this Introduction, touching the Manuscript itself, we may now summarize the chief teachings upon which the whole of the *Bardo Thödol* is based, as follows:

1. That all possible conditions, or states, or realms of *sang-sāric* existence, heavens, hells, and worlds, are entirely dependent upon phenomena, or, in other words, are nought but phenomena;
2. That all phenomena are transitory, are illusionary, are unreal, and non-existent save in the *sang-sāric* mind perceiving them;
3. That in reality there are no such beings anywhere as gods, or demons, or spirits, or sentient creatures—all alike being phenomena dependent upon a cause;
4. That this cause is a yearning or thirsting after sensation, after the unstable *sang-sāric* existence;
5. That so long as this cause is not overcome by Enlightenment death follows birth and birth death, unceasingly—even as the wise Socrates believed;
6. That the after-death existence is but a continuation, under changed conditions, of the phenomena-born existence of the human world—both states alike being *karmic*;
7. That the nature of the existence intervening between death and rebirth in this or any other world is determined by antecedent actions;
8. That, psychologically speaking, it is a prolonged dream-like state, in what may be called the fourth dimension of space, filled with hallucinatory visions directly resultant from

the mental-content of the percipient, happy and heaven-like if the *karma* be good, miserable and hell-like if the *karma* be bad;

9. That, unless Enlightenment be won, rebirth in the human world, directly from the *Bardo*-world or from any other world or from any paradise or hell to which *karma* has led, is inevitable;

10. That Enlightenment results from realizing the unreality of the *sangsāra*, of existence;

11. That such realizing is possible in the human world, or at the important moment of death in the human world, or during the whole of the after-death or *Bardo*-state, or in certain of the non-human realms;

12. That training in *yoga*, i.e. in control of the thinking processes so as to be able to concentrate the mind in an effort to reach Right Knowledge, is essential;

13. That such training can best be had under a human *guru*, or teacher;

14. That the Greatest of *Gurus* known to mankind in this cycle of time is Gautama the Buddha;

15. That His Doctrine is not unique, but is the same Doctrine which has been proclaimed in the human world for the gaining of Salvation, for the Deliverance from the Circle of Rebirth and Death, for the Crossing of the Ocean of *Sangsāra*, for the Realization of *Nirvāṇa*, since immemorial time, by a long and illustrious Dynasty of Buddhas, who were Gautama's Predecessors;

16. That lesser spiritually enlightened beings, Bodhisattvas and *gurus*, in this world or in other worlds, though still not freed from the Net of Illusion, can, nevertheless, bestow divine grace and power upon the *śiṣhya* (i.e. the *chela*, or disciple) who is less advanced upon the Path than themselves;

17. That the Goal is and can only be Emancipation from the *Sangsāra*;

18. That such Emancipation comes from the Realization of *Nirvāṇa*;

19. That *Nirvāṇa* is non-*sang-sāric*, being beyond all paradises, heavens, hells, and worlds;

20. That it is the Ending of Sorrow ;

21. That it is Reality.

He who realized *Nirvāna*, the Buddha Gautama Himself, has spoken of it to His own disciples thus :

‘There is, disciples, a Realm devoid of earth and water, fire and air. It is not endless space, nor infinite thought, nor nothingness, neither ideas nor non-ideas. Not this world nor that is it. I call it neither a coming nor a departing, nor a standing still, nor death, nor birth ; it is without a basis, progress, or a stay ; it is the ending of sorrow.

‘For that which clingeth to another thing there is a fall ; but unto that which clingeth not no fall can come. Where no fall cometh, there is rest, and where rest is, there is no keen desire. Where keen desire is not, naught cometh or goeth ; and where naught cometh or goeth there is no death, no birth. Where there is neither death nor birth, there neither is this world nor that, nor in between—it is the ending of sorrow.

‘There is, disciples, an Unbecome, Unborn, Unmade, Unformed ; if there were not this Unbecome, Unborn, Unmade, Unformed, there would be no way out for that which is become, born, made, and formed ; but since there is an Unbecome, Unborn, Unmade, Unformed, there is escape for that which is become, born, made, and formed.’¹

XIII. THE MANUSCRIPT

Our manuscript copy of the *Bardo Thödol* was procured by the editor early in the year 1919 from a young *lāma* of the Kargyütpa Sect of the Red Hat School attached to the Bhutia Basti Monastery, Darjeeling, who said that it had been handed down in his family for several generations. The manuscript is unlike any other seen by the translator or editor, in that it is illustrated by paintings in colour painted on the folios of the text. All other similarly illustrated Tibetan manuscripts seen by us have had the illustrations made on separate pieces of manuscript paper or else of cotton cloth, pasted to the folios. When procured, the

¹ *Udāna*, viii. 1, 4, 3 ; based on a translation from the original Pali by Mr. Francis J. Payne, London, England.

manuscript was in a very ragged and worn condition, now remedied by each folio being inserted in a protective frame of Tibetan paper of the same sort as that upon which the manuscript is written. Fortunately, all of the illuminated folios, though faded, were in a fair state of preservation. One of the ordinary folios, folio number III, was missing, but this has now been replaced by a faithful copy of the same passage found in a Block-Print version of the *Bardo Thödol* belonging to Dr. Johan Van Manen, Secretary of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, well known as a Tibetan scholar. Reference to this Block-Print version is made throughout our translation. In all essentials, and, generally, word for word, our manuscript and Dr. Van Manen's Block-Print were found to be identical. In some spellings of proper names of deities of Sanskrit origin there are variations in the two versions, and in both books a number of clerical errors. The manuscript is far older than the modern Block-Print and seems to have been copied from an earlier manuscript.

The manuscript itself is undated, but the translator judged it to be from 150 to 200 years old. It has seen very much service, having been read many times over the dead ; its ragged and worn condition is, therefore, no criterion—as it might seem to be—of its age. It is written in an excellent hand on the ordinary paper used for manuscripts among the Tibetans and Himalayan peoples, made from the pulped bark of the *Hdal* (pronounced *Dāā*), otherwise known as Daphne, a kind of laurel of which one species bears a purplish white blossom, another a yellowish white. It is usually by *lāmas* in a monastery that the paper is manufactured. On account of the bark of the *Hdal* being extremely tough, the Sikkimese used it as ropes.

The total number of folios composing the manuscript is 137, each measuring about 9½ by 3¼ inches. Excepting the first folio and the first half of the second, the space actually occupied by the text on each measures on an average 8¼ by 2¼ inches. Most of the folios contain five lines of matter, a few contain four lines. The title-page contains two lines

in a space 7 by 1 inches; the second page of the first folio along with the first page of the second folio, which give the Obeisances, consist of three lines, occupying a space $4\frac{1}{2}$ by $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches respectively, and these, like the title-page, are written in gold (now much faded) on a black background. The illustrations are on fourteen of the folios, each illustration being in the centre of the text, on one side of the folio (see Frontispiece), as follows:

On folio 18, Vairochana embraced by his *shakti*, the Mother of the Space of Heaven, seated upon a lion throne, the deities of the First Day;

On folio 20, Vajra-Sattva, embraced by his *shakti*, the Mother Māmakī, surrounded by their four accompanying deities of the Second Day;

On folio 23, Ratna-Sambhava, embraced by his *shakti*, the Mother Sangyay Chanma ('She of the Buddha Eye'), surrounded by their four accompanying deities of the Third Day;

On folio 26, Amitābha, embraced by his *shakti*, the Mother Gökarmo ('She of White Raiment'), surrounded by their four accompanying deities of the Fourth Day;

On folio 31, Amogha-Siddhi, embraced by his *shakti*, the Faithful Dōlma (or Skt. *Tārā*), surrounded by their four accompanying deities of the Fifth Day;

On folio 35, the united *maṇḍalas* of the deities that dawn on the Sixth Day;

On folio 44, the *maṇḍala* of the Ten Knowledge-Holding Deities of the Seventh Day;

On folio 55, the Buddha Heruka and *shakti* of the Eighth Day;

On folio 57, the Vajra Heruka and *shakti* of the Ninth Day;

On folio 58, the Ratna Heruka and *shakti* of the Tenth Day;

On folio 59, the Padma Heruka and *shakti* of the Eleventh Day;

On folio 61, the Karma Heruka and *shakti* of the Twelfth Day;

On folio 64, the Eight Kerima and the Eight Htamenma of the Thirteenth Day; and the Four Female Door-keepers of the Fourteenth Day;

On folio 67, the *maṇḍala* of the animal-headed deities of the Fourteenth Day.

Each deity is depicted in conformity with the description given in the text as to colour, position, posture, *mudrā*, and symbols.

All of the illustrations in the manuscript thus belong to the *Chönyid Bardo* of the First Book. In our translation, copious annotations contain the textual name of each deity and the Sanskrit equivalent when, as in most cases, there is one.

No attempt has been made to collate our manuscript with other manuscripts of the same text, none having been available. Such manuscripts are, no doubt, numerous in Tibet, and the production of a standard or uniform text would require years of careful labour—a task remaining for scholars of the future. The only comparison of texts attempted was with Dr. Van Manen's Block-Print, which is probably not more than about twenty to thirty years old. The translator said that, so far as he was aware, Block-Prints of the *Bardo Thödol* have appeared—at least in Sikkim and Darjeeling—rather recently, although probably known in Tibet itself much longer, block-type printing having been carried on for unknown centuries in China, and thence brought to Tibet, long before printing was done in Europe.¹

¹ These Block-Prints are usually composed of separate treatises belonging to the *Bardo Thödol* cycle. One of such Block-Prints—which was purchased in Gyantse, Tibet, during the year 1919, by Major W. L. Campbell, then the British Political Representative in Tibet, Bhutan, and Sikkim, and presented to the editor—contains seventeen treatises, whose Tibetan titles have been rendered, in slightly abbreviated form, by the translator, as follows:

1. 'The Clear Directions on The Divine *Bardo*, called "The Great Liberation by Hearing", from "The Profound Doctrine of the Divine Peaceful and [Wrathful] Self-Liberation"';

2. 'The Exposition of the Wrathful [or Active] Aspect of the *Bardo*';

3. 'The Good Wishes [or Prayers] Invoking the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas for Assistance';

4. 'The Root Verses of the *Bardo*';

5. 'The Prayer to Rescue [One] from the Narrow Places of the *Bardo*';

Each Buddhist Sect in Tibet, according to the opinion of the translator, probably has its own version of the *Bardo Thödol* more or less changed in some details, but not in essentials, from our version, the version used by the reformed Gelugpa, otherwise known as the Yellow-Hat School, being the most altered, with all references to Padma Sambhava, the Founder of the Ñingmapa, the Red-Hat School of Lāmaism, as well as the names of deities peculiar to the Red-Hats, expurgated.

Major W. L. Campbell, who was the British Political Representative in Sikkim during my residence there, wrote to me, from the Residency in Gangtok, under date of the twelfth of July, 1919, concerning the various versions of the *Bardo Thödol*, as follows: 'The Yellow Sect have six, the Red Sect seven, and the *Kar-gyut-pas* five.'

Our text being of the primitive or Red-Hat School and attributed to the Great *Guru* Padma Sambhava himself, who introduced Tantric Buddhism into Tibet, has been deemed by us to be substantially representative of the original version, which, on the basis of internal evidence derived from our

6. 'The Setting-Face-to-Face of the *Sidpa-Bardo*';

7. 'The Salvation by Attaching [whereby] the Body Aggregate is Self-Liberated'—a version of the *Tadhol* Doctrine—(see pp. 136¹, 152², 194 of our text);

8. 'The Prayer to Protect [One] from the Fears in the *Bardo*';

9. 'The Self-Liberating Diagnosis of the Symptoms of Death'—(cf. pp. 86, 89-97 of our text);

10. 'The Setting-Face-to-Face called "The Naked Vision", and the Self-Liberation [by that]';

11. 'The Special Teaching showing the Forms of Merit or Demerit, while in the *Sidpa Bardo*, called "The Self-Liberating in the *Sidpa-Bardo*"';

12. 'The Addenda [to the above, "The Special Teaching"]';

13. 'Prayer to the Line [of *Gurus*] of the Divine Self-Liberating Doctrine';

14. 'The Ransoming of the Dying';

15. 'Self-Liberation called "Absolution by Confession"';

16. 'The Best Wish-Granting *Tadhol*'—another form of the *Tadhol* Doctrine;

17. 'The Ritual called "The Self-Liberation from Habitual Propensities"'.
 Herein, the treatises numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 correspond—in slightly different versions—to the matter contained in our manuscript. The manuscript, moreover, contains much matter in the Appendix not contained in this Block-Print. The Block-Print itself is quite new, but the blocks from which it was printed may be quite old—how old, we have been unable to ascertain.

manuscript text, was probably, at least in essentials, pre-Buddhistic.

As elsewhere noted, our manuscript is arranged as one work in two parts or books, with thirteen folios of texts of *Bardo* prayers as an appendix at the end. The Block-Print is arranged as two distinct books and lacks the appendix of prayers. But at the end of the first book of the Block-Print there comes a very important account of the origin of the *Bardo Thödol*, which is not contained in our manuscript, and this is given in translation in the following Section.

XIV. THE ORIGIN OF THE *BARDO THÖDOL*

Thus, from the Block-Print, and also from other Tibetan sources, we learn that the *Bardo Thödol* text originated, or, what is perhaps more correct, was first committed to writing in the time of Padma Sambhava, in the eighth century A. D.; was subsequently hidden away, and then, when the time came for it to be given to the world, was brought to light by Rigzin Karma Ling-pa. The Block-Print account is as follows:

'This has been brought from the Hill of Gampodar (Tib. *Gampo-dar*), on the bank of the Serdan (Tib. *Gser-ldan*, meaning 'Possessing Gold' or 'Golden') River, by Rigzin Karma Ling-pa (Tib. *Rigs-hdzin Kar-ma Gling-pa*).'

Rigzin, as herein given, is a personal title, and *Karma Ling-pa* the name of a place in Tibet meaning 'Karma Land'. The translator has pointed out that *Rigs* is an erroneous spelling of *Rig*; for, if *Rigs* were correct, the name *Rigzin* would mean Class-Holder (*Rigs+hdzin*). That *Rig* is intended—thus making the name mean Knowledge-Holder (*Rig+hdzin*), a caste or class designation¹—was confirmed by a small section of a *Bardo Thödol* manuscript in the possession of the translator, in which Rigzin Karma Ling-pa is otherwise called *Tertön* (Tib. *Gler-bston*), or 'Taker-Out of Treasures'. The *Bardo Thödol* is, therefore, one of the Tibetan Lost

¹ *Rig-hdzin*, a translation into Tibetan of the Sanskrit term *Vidyā-Dhara*, used, as herein, of a learned person, such as a pandit, also denotes a class of supernatural beings like certain orders of fairies.

