



WHITE LOTUS DAY

A COMMEMORATION AND CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE AND WORK
OF HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY, FOUNDER OF THE MODERN THEOSOPHICAL
MOVEMENT, WHO WAS BORN 12th AUGUST 1831 AND PASSED AWAY ON 8th MAY 1891



H.P.B., The Mahatmas and the Buddha

*126th Anniversary Meeting at the
United Lodge of Theosophists, 62 Queens Gardens, London, W2 3AH*

Sunday 7th May 2017 at 7pm

with three readings and two talks:

*To The Mountains of Knowledge
H.P.B., The Mahatmas and the Buddha*

PEACE TO ALL BEINGS

FIRST READING

*From "The Light of Asia" Preface (p. vii-ix)
a poetic rendition of the life and teachings of the Buddha by Sir Edwin Arnold*

In the following Poem I have sought, by the medium of an imaginary Buddhist votary, to depict the life and character and indicate the philosophy of that noble hero and reformer, Prince Gautama of India, the founder of Buddhism.

A generation ago little or nothing was known in Europe of this great faith of Asia, which had nevertheless existed during twenty-four centuries, and at this day surpasses, in the number of its followers and the area of its prevalence, any other form of creed. Four hundred and seventy millions of our race live and die in the tenets of Gautama; and the spiritual dominions of this ancient teacher extend, at the present time, from Nepaul and Ceylon over the whole Eastern Peninsula to China, Japan, Thibet, Central Asia, Siberia, and even Swedish Lapland. India itself might fairly be included in this magnificent empire of belief, for though the profession of Buddhism has for the most part passed away from the land of its birth, the mark of Gautama's sublime teaching is stamped ineffaceably upon modern Brahmanism, and the most characteristic habits and convictions of the Hindus are clearly due to the benign influence of Buddha's precepts.

More than a third of mankind, therefore, owe their moral and religious ideas to this illustrious prince, whose personality, though imperfectly revealed in the existing sources of information, cannot but appear the highest, gentlest, holiest, and most beneficent, with one exception, in the history of Thought. Discordant in frequent particulars, and sorely overlaid by corruptions, inventions, and misconceptions, the Buddhistical books yet agree in the one point of recording nothing — no single act or word—which mars the perfect purity and tenderness of this Indian teacher, who united the truest princely qualities with the intellect of a sage and the passionate devotion of a martyr.

Even M. Barthélemy St. Hilaire, totally misjudging, as he does, many points of Buddhism, is well cited by Professor Max Muller as saying of Prince Siddârtha, "His life was without blemish. His constant heroism was equalled by his conviction; and in answer to the accusation that he promoted false teachings, the personal example of his own life was irreproachable. He perfectly embodied all of the virtues he preached; his renunciation, his charity, his unassailable sweetness of temperament never failed him for an instant . . . during six years of retreat and meditation he silently prepared his doctrine; he propagated it for over half a century solely through the power of his word and gentle persuasion, and when he died in the arms of his disciples, it was with the serenity of a sage who had practised it the whole of his life, and was convinced he had found the Truth."

To Gautama has consequently been given this stupendous conquest of humanity; and — though he discountenanced ritual, and declared himself, even when on the threshold of Nirvana, to be only what all other men might become — the love and gratitude of Asia, disobeying his mandate, have given him fervent worship. Forests of flowers are daily laid upon his stainless shrines, and countless millions of lips daily repeat the formula, "I take refuge in Buddha!"

SECOND READING

From the Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 4, p. 30-33) William Q. Judge rendition

KRISHNA: "This exhaustless doctrine of Yoga I formerly taught unto Vivaswat; Vivaswat communicated it to Manu and Manu made it known unto Ikshwaku; and being thus transmitted from one unto another it was studied by the Rajarshees, until at length in the course of time the mighty art was lost, O harasser of thy foes! It is even the same exhaustless, secret, eternal doctrine I have this day communicated unto thee because thou art my devotee and my friend."

ARJUNA: "Seeing that thy birth is posterior to the life of Ikshwaku, how am I to understand that thou wert in the beginning the teacher of this doctrine?"

KRISHNA: "Both I and thou have passed through many births, O harasser of thy foes! Mine are known unto me, but thou knowest not of thine.

"Even though myself unborn, of changeless essence, and the lord of all existence, yet in presiding over nature - which is mine - I am born but through my own *maya*, the mystic power of self-ideation, the eternal thought in the eternal mind. I produce myself among creatures, O son of Bharata, whenever there is a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world; and thus I incarnate from age to age for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of righteousness. Whoever, O Arjuna, knoweth my divine birth and actions to be even so doth not upon quitting his mortal frame enter into another, for he entereth into me. Many who were free from craving, fear, and anger, filled with my spirit, and who depended upon me, having been purified by the ascetic fire of knowledge, have entered into my being. In whatever way men approach me, in that way do I assist them; but whatever the path taken by mankind, that path is mine, O son of Pritha. Those who wish for success to their works in this life sacrifice to the gods; and in this world success from their actions soon cometh to pass.

"Mankind was created by me of four castes distinct in their principles and in their duties according to the natural distribution of the actions and qualities. Know me, then, although changeless and not acting, to be the author of this. Actions affect me not, nor have I any expectations from the fruits of actions. He who comprehendeth me to be thus is not held by the bonds of action in rebirth. The ancients who longed for eternal salvation, having discovered this, still performed works. Wherefore perform thou works even as they were performed by the ancients in former times."

THIRD READING

*From "The Voice of the Silence" (p. 30-33, original 1889 edition)
translated by H. P. Blavatsky from the Book of the Golden Precepts*

Believe thou not that sitting in dark forests, in proud seclusion and apart from men; believe thou not that life on roots and plants, that thirst assuaged with snow from the great Range—believe thou not, O Devotee, that this will lead thee to the goal of final liberation.

Think not that breaking bone, that rending flesh and muscle, unites thee to thy "silent Self". Think not, that when the sins of thy gross form are conquered, O Victim of thy Shadows, thy duty is accomplished by nature and by man.

The blessed ones have scorned to do so. The Lion of the Law, the Lord of Mercy, perceiving the true cause of human woe, immediately forsook the sweet but selfish rest of quiet wilds. From Aranyaka He became the Teacher of mankind. After Julai had entered the Nirvâna, He preached on mount and plain, and held discourses in the cities, to Devas, men and gods.

Sow kindly acts and thou shalt reap their fruit. Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin.

Thus saith the Sage.

Shalt thou abstain from action? Not so shall gain thy soul her freedom. To reach Nirvâna one must reach Self-Knowledge, and Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child.

Have patience, Candidate, as one who fears no failure, courts no success. Fix thy Soul's gaze upon the star whose ray thou art, the flaming star that shines within the lightless depths of ever-being, the boundless fields of the Unknown.

Have perseverance as one who doth for evermore endure. Thy shadows live and vanish; that which in thee shall live forever, that which in thee *knows*, for it is knowledge, is not of fleeing life: it is the man that was, that is, and will be, for whom the hour shall never strike.

If thou would'st reap sweet peace and rest, Disciple, sow with the seeds of merit the fields of future harvests. Accept the woes of birth.

Step out from sunlight into shade, to make more room for others. The tears that water the parched soil of pain and sorrow, bring forth the blossoms and the fruits of Karmic retribution. Out of the furnace of man's life and its black smoke, winged flames arise, flames purified, that soaring onward, 'neath the Karmic eye, weave in the end the fabric glorified of the three vestures of the Path.

These vestures are: Nirmânakâya, Sambhoga-Kâya, and Dharmakâya, robe Sublime.

The *Shangna* robe, 'tis true, can purchase light eternal. The Shangna robe alone gives the Nirvana of destruction; it stops rebirth, but, O Lanoo, it also kills—compassion. No longer can the perfect Buddhas, who don the Dharmakâya glory, help man's salvation. Alas! shall SELVES be sacrificed to *Self*; mankind, unto the weal of Units?

Know, O beginner, this is the *Open* PATH, the way to selfish bliss, shunned by the Bôddhisattvas of the "Secret Heart," the Buddhas of Compassion.

To live to benefit mankind is the first step. To practice the six glorious virtues is the second. To don Nirmânakâya's humble robe is to forego eternal bliss for Self, to help on man's salvation. To reach Nirvana's bliss, but to renounce it, is the supreme, the final step—the highest on Renunciation's Path. Know, O Disciple, this is the *Secret* PATH, selected by the Buddhas of Perfection, who sacrificed The SELF to weaker Selves.