

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky

Eye versus Heart Doctrine

A flood of light on the universal misconceptions of Orientalists

And a valuable aid to students of *The Voice of the Silence*

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE “DOCTRINE OF THE EYE” & THE “DOCTRINE OF THE HEART,” OF THE “HEART’S SEAL”) XIV pp. 443-53

PROF. ALBRECHT WEBER was right when he declared that the Northern Buddhists alone possess these [Buddhist] Scriptures complete.¹

For, while the Southern Buddhists have no idea of the existence of an Esoteric Doctrine — enshrined like a pearl within the shell of every religion — the Chinese and the Tibetans have preserved numerous records of the fact. Degenerate, fallen as is now the Doctrine publicly preached by Gautama, it is yet preserved in those monasteries in China that are placed beyond the reach of visitors. And though for over two millennia every new “reformer,” taking something out of the original, has replaced it by some speculation of his own, still truth lingers even now among the masses. But it is only in the Trans-Himālayan fastnesses — loosely called Tibet — in the most inaccessible spots of desert and mountain, that the Esoteric “Good Law” — the “Heart’s Seal” — lives to the present day in all its pristine purity.

Was Emanuel Swedenborg wrong when he remarked of the forgotten, long-lost Word:

Seek for it in China; peradventure you may find it in Great Tartary.²

He had obtained this information, he tells his readers, from certain “Spirits,” who told him that they performed their worship according to this (lost) ancient Word. On this it was remarked in *Isis Unveiled* that

Other students of occult Sciences have had more than the word of “certain spirits” to rely upon in this special case — they have seen the books

that contain the “Word.”³ Perchance the names of those “Spirits” who visited the great Swedish Theosophist were Eastern. The word of a man of such undeniable and

¹ [The *History of Indian Literature*, tr. by John Mann and Theodor Zachariae, London: Trübner & Co., 1882, p. 288.]

² [See *The Apocalypse Revealed*, tr. from the Latin by Rev. John Whitehead, Vol. I, ch. I, vs. 4, note 11; p. 38 in the Standard Ed. of the American Swedenborg Foundation, New York, 1947.]

recognized integrity, of one whose learning in Mathematics, Astronomy, the natural Sciences and Philosophy was far in advance of his age, cannot be trifled with or rejected as unceremoniously as if it were the statement of a modern Theosophist; further, he claimed to pass at will into that state when the Inner Self frees itself entirely from every physical sense, and lives and breathes in a world where every secret of Nature is an open book to the Soul-eye.⁴ Unfortunately two-thirds of his public writings are also allegorical in one sense; and, as they have been accepted literally, criticism has not spared the great Swedish Seer any more than other Seers.

Having taken a panoramic view of the hidden Sciences and Magic with their Adepts in Europe, Eastern Initiates must now be mentioned. If the presence of Esotericism in the Sacred Scriptures of the West only now begins to be suspected, after nearly two thousand years of blind faith in their *verbatim* wisdom, the same may well be granted as to the Sacred Books of the East. Therefore neither the Indian nor the Buddhist system can be understood without a key, nor can the study of comparative religion become a “Science” until the symbols of every Religion yield their final secrets. At the best such a study will remain a loss of time, a playing at hide-and-seek.

On the authority of a Japanese Encyclopaedia, Rémusat⁵ shows the Buddha, before His death, committing the secrets of His system to His disciple, Kāśyapa, to whom alone was entrusted the sacred keeping of the Esoteric interpretation. It is called in China *Ching-fa-yin-Tsang* (“the Mystery of the Eye of the Good Doctrine”). To any student of Buddhist Esotericism the term, “the Mystery of the ‘Eye,’” would show the absence of any Esotericism. Had the word “Heart” stood in its place, then it would have meant what it now only professes to convey. The “Eye Doctrine” means dogma and dead-letter form, church ritualism intended for those who are content with exoteric formulae. The “Heart Doctrine,” or the “Heart’s Seal” (the Sin Yin) is the only real one. This may be found corroborated by Hiuen Tsang. In his translation of *Mahā-Prajñā-Pāramitā* (*Ta-poh-je-King*), in one hundred and twenty volumes, it is stated that it was Buddha’s “favourite disciple Ananda,” who, after his great Master had gone into Nirvana, was commissioned by Kāśyapa to promulgate “the Eye of the Doctrine,” the “Heart” of the Law having been left with the Arhats alone.

The essential difference that exists between the two — the “Eye” and the “Heart,” or the outward form and the hidden meaning, the cold metaphysics and the Divine Wisdom — is clearly demonstrated in several volumes on “Chinese Buddhism,” written by sundry missionaries. Having lived for years in China, they still know no more than they have learned from pretentious schools calling themselves esoteric, yet freely supplying the open enemies of their faith with professedly ancient manuscripts and esoteric works! This ludicrous contradiction between profession and practice has never, as it seems, struck any of the western and reverend historians of other people’s secret tenets. Thus many esoteric schools are mentioned in *Chinese Buddhism*

³ *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 470

⁴ Unless one obtains exact information and the right method, one’s visions, however correct and true in Soul-life, will ever fail to get photographed in our human memory, and certain cells of the brain are sure to play havoc with our remembrances.

⁵ [See p. 249: *Foë-Kouë Ki ou Relation des Royaumes Bouddhiques . . .* by M. Abel Remusat. Paris, L’Imprimerie Royale, 1836.]

by the Rev. Joseph Edkins, who believes quite sincerely that he has made “a minute examination” of the secret tenets of Buddhists whose works “were until lately inaccessible in their original form.” It really will not be saying too much to state at once that the genuine Esoteric literature is “inaccessible” to this day, and that the respectable gentleman who was inspired to state that

. . . it does not appear that there was any secret doctrine which those who knew it would not divulge,

made a great mistake if he ever believed in what he says on page 161 of his work. Let him know at once that all those Yū-luh (“Records of the Sayings”) of celebrated teachers are simply blinds, as complete — if not more so — than those in the *Purānas* of the Brāhmanas. It is useless to enumerate an endless string of the finest Oriental scholars or to bring forward the researches of Rémusat, Burnouf, Koeppen, St. Hilaire, and St. Julian, who are credited with having exposed to view the ancient Hindu world, by revealing the sacred and secret books of Buddhism: the world that they reveal has never been veiled. The mistakes of all the Orientalists may be judged by the mistake of one of the most popular, if not the greatest among them all — Prof. Max Müller. It is made with reference to what he laughingly translates as the “god Who” (Ka).

. . . the authors of the Brāhmanas had so completely broken with the past, that, forgetful of the poetical character of the hymns, and the yearning of the poets after the Unknown God, they exalted the interrogative pronoun itself into a deity, and acknowledged a god Ka (or Who?) . . . wherever interrogative verses occur the author states that Ka is Prajāpati, or the Lord of Creatures . . . Nor did they stop here. Some of the hymns in which the interrogative pronoun occurred were called Kadvat, *i.e.*, having Kad or Quid. But soon a new adjective was formed, and not only the hymns, but the sacrifice also, offered to the god were called Kaya, or “Who”-ish. . . . At the time of Pānini this word had acquired such legitimacy as to call for a separate rule explaining its formation . . . The Commentator here explains Ka by Brahman.⁶

Had the commentator explained It even by Parabrahman he would have been still more in the right than he was by rendering It as “Brahman.” One fails to see why the secret and sacred Mystery-Name of the highest, sexless, formless Spirit, the Absolute — Whom no one would have dared to classify with the rest of the manifested Deities, or even to name during the primitive nomenclature of the symbolical Pantheon, should not be expressed by an interrogative pronoun. Is it those who belong to the most anthropomorphic Religion in the world who have a right to take ancient Philosophers to task for even an exaggerated religious awe and veneration?

But we are now concerned with Buddhism. Its Esotericism and oral instruction, which is written down and preserved in single copies by the highest chiefs in genuine Esoteric Schools, is shown by the author of San-kiau-yi-su. Contrasting Bodhidharma with Buddha, he exclaims:

⁶ [A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, pp. 433-34. London, Wms. & Norgate, 1859.]

. . . “Julai” (*Tāthagata*), taught great truths and the causes of things. He became the instructor of men and Devas. He saved multitudes, and spoke the contents of more than five hundred works. Hence arose the *Kiau-men*, or esoteric branch of the system, and it was believed to be the tradition of the *words* of Buddha. Bodhidharma brought from the Western heaven [Shamballa] the “seal of truth” (true seal), and opened the fountain of contemplation in the East. He pointed directly to Buddha’s heart and nature, swept away the parasitic and alien growth of book instruction, and thus established the *Tsung-men*, or esoteric branch of the system, containing the tradition of the heart of Buddha.⁷

A few remarks made by the author of *Chinese Buddhism* throw a flood of light on the universal misconceptions of Orientalists in general, and of the missionaries in the “lands of the Gentiles” in particular. They appeal very forcibly to the intuition of Theosophists — more particularly of those in India. The sentences to be noticed are italicized.

The common [Chinese] word for the esoteric schools is *dan*, the Sanskrit *Dhyāna*. . . . Orthodox Buddhism has in China slowly but steadily become *heterodox*. The Buddhism of books and ancient traditions *has become the Buddhism of mystic contemplation*. . . . The history of ancient schools springing up long ago in the Buddhist communities of India, *can now be only very partially recovered*. Possibly some light may be thrown back by China upon the religious history of the country, from which Buddhism came.⁸ In no part of the story is aid to the recovery of this lost knowledge more likely to be found than in the accounts of the patriarchs, the line of whom was completed by Bodhidharma. In seeking the best explanation of the Chinese and Japanese narrative of the patriarchs, and the *seven Buddhas* terminating in Gautama, or Shākyamuni, it is important to know the Jain traditions as they were early in the sixth century of our era, when the Patriarch Bodhidharma removed to China. . . .

In tracing the rise of the various schools of esoteric Buddhism it must be kept in mind that a principle somewhat similar to the dogma of apostolical succession belongs to them all. They all profess *to derive their doctrines through a succession of teachers, each instructed personally by his predecessor, till the time of Bodhidharma, and so further up in the series to Shākyamuni himself and the earlier Buddhas*.⁹

It is complained further on, and is mentioned as a falling away from strict orthodox Buddhism, that *the Lamas of Tibet are received in Peking with the utmost respect by the Emperor*.

⁷ *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 158. The Rev. Joseph Edkins either ignores, or — which is more probable — is utterly ignorant of the real existence of such Schools, and judges by the Chinese travesties of these, calling such Esotericism “heterodox Buddhism.” And so it is, in one sense.

⁸ That country — India — has lost the records of such Schools and their teachings only so far as the general public, and especially the inappreciative Western Orientalists, are concerned. It has preserved them in full in some Mathams (refuges for mystic contemplation). But it may perhaps be better to seek them with, and from, their rightful owners, the so-called “mythical” Adepts, or Mahātmās.

⁹ *Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 155-59

The following passages, taken from different parts of the book, summarise Mr. Edkin's views:

Hermits are not uncommonly met with in the vicinity of large Buddhist temples . . . their hair being allowed to grow unshorn. . . . The doctrine of metempsychosis is rejected. . . Buddhism [is] one form of Pantheism on the ground that the doctrine of metempsychosis makes all nature instinct with life, and that that life is the Deity assuming different forms of personality, that Deity not being a self-conscious, free-acting First-cause, but an all-pervading spirit. The esoteric Buddhists of China, keeping rigidly to their one doctrine,¹⁰ say nothing of the metempsychosis, . . . or any other of the more material parts of the Buddhist system. . . . The Western paradise promised to the worshippers of Amida-Buddha is . . . inconsistent with the doctrine of Nirvana [?].¹¹ It promises immortality instead of annihilation. The great antiquity of this school is evident from the early date of the translation of the *Amida Sūtra*, which came from the hands of Kumārajīva, and of the *Wu-liang-sheu-king*, dating from the Han dynasty. Its extent of influence is seen in the attachment of the Tibetans and Mongols to the worship of this Buddha, and in the fact that the name of this fictitious personage [?] is more commonly heard in the daily conversation of the Chinese people than that of the historical Buddha Shākyamuni.¹²

We fear the learned writer is on a false track as to Nirvana and Amita-Buddha. However, here we have the evidence of a missionary to show that there are several schools of Esoteric Buddhism in the Celestial Empire. When the misuse of dogmatical orthodox Buddhist Scriptures had reached its climax, and the true spirit of the Buddha's Philosophy was nearly lost, several reformers appeared from India, who established an oral teaching. Such were Bodhidharma and Nāgārjuna, the authors of the most important works of the contemplative School in China during the first centuries of our era. It is known, moreover, as is said in *Chinese Buddhism*, that Bodhidharma became the chief founder of the Esoteric Schools, which were divided into five principal branches. The data given are correct enough, but every conclusion, without one single exception, is wrong. It was said in *Isis Unveiled* that

Buddha teaches the doctrine of a new birth as plainly as Jesus does. Desiring to break with the ancient Mysteries, to which it was impossible to admit the ignorant masses, the Hindu reformer, though generally silent upon more than one secret dogma, clearly states his thought in several passages. Thus, he says:

¹⁰ They certainly reject most emphatically the popular theory of the transmigration of human entities or Souls *into* animals, but not the evolution of men *from* animals — so far, at least, as their lower principles are concerned.

¹¹ It is quite consistent, on the contrary, when explained in the light of the Esoteric Doctrine. The "Western paradise," or Western heaven, is no fiction located in transcendental space. It is a *bona-fide* locality in the mountains, or, to be more correct, one encircled in a desert within mountains. Hence it is assigned for the residence of those students of Esoteric Wisdom — disciples of Buddha — who have attained the rank of Lohans and Anāgāmins (Adepts). It is called "Western" simply from geographical considerations; and "the great iron mountain girdle" that surrounds the Avichi, and the seven Lokas that encircle the "Western paradise" are a very exact representation of well-known localities and things to the Eastern student of Occultism.

¹² *Op. cit.*, pp. 166-67, 171

“Some people are born again; evil-doers go to hell [Avichi]; righteous people go to heaven [Devachan]; those who are free from all worldly desires enter Nirvana.” (*Dhammapada*, 126)

Elsewhere Buddha states that it is better to believe in a future life, in which happiness or misery can be felt: for if the heart believes therein

“it will abandon sin and act virtuously; and even if there is no resurrection [rebirth], such a life will bring a good name, and the reward of men. But those who believe in extinction at death will not fail to commit any sin that they may choose because of their disbelief in a future.”¹³

How is immortality, then, “inconsistent with the doctrine of Nirvana”? The above are only a few of Buddha’s openly-expressed thoughts to his chosen Arhats; the great Saint said much more. As a comment upon the mistaken views held in our century by the Orientalists, “who vainly try to fathom Tathāgata’s thoughts,” and those of Brāhmins, “who repudiate the great Teacher to this day,” here are some original thoughts expressed in relation to the Buddha and the study of the Secret Sciences. They are from a work written in Chinese by a Tibetan, and published in the monastery of Tientai for circulation among the Buddhists

Who live in foreign lands, and are in danger of being spoiled by missionaries, as the author truly says, every convert being not only “spoiled” for his own creed, but being also a sorry acquisition for Christianity. A translation of a few passages, kindly made from that work for the present volumes is now given.

No profane ears having heard the mighty Chau-yan [secret and enlightening *precepts*] of Wu-Wei-chen-jen [Buddha *within* Buddha],¹⁴ of our beloved Lord and Bodhisattva, how can one tell what his thoughts really were? The holy Sang-gyas-Panchen¹⁵ never offered an insight into the *One Reality* to the unreformed [uninitiated] Bhikkus. Few are those even among the Tu-fon [Tibetans] who knew it; as for the Tsung-men¹⁶ Schools, they are going with every day more down hill. . . . Not even the Fa-hsiang-Tsung¹⁷ can give one the wisdom taught in real Naljor-chod-pa [Sanskrit:¹⁸ Yogacharyā]: . . . it is all “Eye” Doctrine, and no more. The loss of a restraining guidance is felt, since the Tch’ansi [teachers] of inward meditation [self-contemplation or Tchung-kwan] have become rare, and the Good Law is replaced by idol-worship [Siang-kyan]. It is of this [idol-or image-worship] that the Barbarians [Western people] have heard, and know nothing of Bas-pa-Dharma [the secret Dharma or doctrine]. Why has truth to hide like a tortoise within its shell? Because it is now found to have be-

¹³ *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, p. 566, quoting from Alabaster’s *The Wheel of the Law*, p. 42

¹⁴ The word is translated by the Orientalists as “true man without a position,” (?) which is very misleading. It simply means the true inner man, or Ego, “Buddha *within* Buddha” meaning that there was a Gautama *inwardly* as well as *outwardly*.

¹⁵ One of the titles of Gautama Buddha in Tibet.

¹⁶ The “Esoteric” Schools, or sects, of which there are many in China.

¹⁷ A school of contemplation founded by Hiuen-Tsang, the traveller, nearly extinct. Fa-hsiang-Tsung means “the School that unveils the inner nature of things.”

¹⁸ Esoteric, or hidden, teaching of Yoga (Chinese: Yogi-mi-kean).

come like the Lama's tonsure knife,¹⁹ a weapon too dangerous to use even for the Lanoo. Therefore no one can be entrusted with the knowledge [Secret Science] before his time. The Chagpa-Thog-med have become rare, and the best have retired to Tushita the Blessed.²⁰

Further on, a man seeking to master the mysteries of Esotericism before he had been declared by the initiated Tch'-an-si (teachers) to be ready to receive them, is likened to

One who would, without a lantern and on a dark night, proceed to a place full of scorpions, determined to feel on the ground for a needle his neighbour has dropped.

Again:

He who would acquire the Sacred Knowledge should, before he goes any farther "*trim his lamp* of inner understanding," and then "with the help of such good light" use his meritorious actions as a dust-cloth to remove every impurity from his mystic mirror,²¹ so that he should be enabled to see in its lustre the faithful reflection of Self. . . . First, this; then Tong-pa-nyi,²² lastly; Sammā Sambud-dha.²³

In *Chinese Buddhism* [pp. 163-64] a corroboration of these statements is to be found in the *Aphorisms of Lin-tsi*:

Within the body which admits sensations, acquires knowledge, thinks, and acts, there is the "true man without a position" Wu-wei-chen-jen. He makes himself clearly visible; not the thinnest separating film hides him. Why do you

¹⁹ The "tonsure knife" is made of *meteoric* iron, and is used for the purpose of cutting off the "vow-lock," or hair from the novice's head during his first ordination. It has a double-edged blade, is sharp as a razor, and lies concealed within a hollow handle of horn. By touching a spring the blade jerks out like a flash of lightning, and recedes back with the same rapidity. A great dexterity is required in using it without wounding the head of the young Gelong and Gelong-ma (candidates to become priests and nuns) during the preliminary rites, which are public.

²⁰ Chagpa-Thog-med is the Tibetan name of Āryāsanga, the founder of the Yogacharyā or Naljorchodpa School. This Sage and Initiate is said to have been taught "Wisdom" by Maitreya Buddha Himself, the Buddha of the Sixth Race, at Tushita (a celestial region presided over by Him), and as having received from Him the five books of *Champai-chos-nga*. The Secret Doctrine teaches, however, that he came from Dejung, or Sāmbhala, called the "source of happiness" ("wisdom-acquired") and declared by some Orientalists to be a "fabulous" place.

²¹ It may not be, perhaps, amiss to remind the reader of the fact that the "mirror" was a part of the symbolism of the Thesmophoria, a portion of the Eleusinian Mysteries; and that it was used in the search for Atmu, the "Hidden One," or "Self." In his excellent paper on the above-named mysteries, Dr. Alexander Wilder of New York says:

" . . . despite the assertion of Herodotus and others that the Bacchic Mysteries were Egyptian, there exists strong probability that they came originally from India, and were Śaivite or Buddhistical. Corē-Persephoneia was but the goddess Paraśu-pani or Bhavānī, the patroness of the Thugs, called also Gorēe; and Zagreus is from *Chakra*, a country extending from ocean to ocean. If this is a Turanian or Tartar story, we can easily recognize the 'Horns' as the crescent worn by Lama-priests: and translating god-names as merely sacerdotal designations assume the whole legend [the fable of Dionysus-Zagreus] to be based on a tale of Lama-succession and transmigration. . . . The whole story of Orpheus . . . has a Hindu ring all through." [Quoted on p. xv *fn.* in *Eleusinian & Bacchic Mysteries* by Thomas Taylor. Wizards Bookshelf, Reprint, 1980.]

The tale of "Lama-succession and transmigration" did not originate with the Lamas, who date themselves only so far back as the seventh century, but with the Chaldaeans and the Brāhmans, still earlier.

²² The state of absolute freedom from any sin or desire.

²³ The state during which an Adept sees the long series of his past births, and lives through all his previous incarnations in this and the other worlds. (See the admirable description in *The Light of Asia*, Bk. VII, p. 166, 1884 ed.).

not recognise him? . . . If the mind does not come to conscious existence, there is deliverance everywhere. . . . What is Buddha? *Ans.* A mind pure and at rest. What is the Law? *Ans.* A mind clear and enlightened. What is *Tau*? *Ans.* In every place absence of impediments and pure enlightenment. These three are one.²⁴

The reverend author of *Chinese Buddhism* makes merry over the symbolism of Buddhist discipline. Yet the self-inflicted “slaps on the cheek” and “blows under the ribs” find their pendants in the mortifications of the body and self-flagellation — “the discipline of the scourge” — of the Christian monks, from the first centuries of Christianity down to our own day. But then the said author is a Protestant, who substitutes for mortification and discipline — good living and comfort. The sentence in the Lin-tsi,

The “true man, without a position,” Wu-wei-chen-jen, is wrapped in a prickly shell, like the chestnut. He cannot be approached. This is Buddha — the Buddha within you,

is laughed at. Truly

An infant cannot understand the seven enigmas!^{25, 26}

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²⁴ [See *The Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Lin-chi* . . . tr. by R.F. Sasaki. Kyoto, Institute for Zen Studies, 1975.]

²⁵ [*Loc. cit.*]

²⁶ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE “DOCTRINE OF THE EYE” & THE “DOCTRINE OF THE HEART,” OF THE “HEART’S SEAL”) XIV pp. 443-53