

# *Tibetan teachings on after-death states*



## Foreword by Boris de Zirkoff

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In an article entitled “Esoteric Axioms and Spiritual Speculations”<sup>1</sup> H.P. Blavatsky made some pertinent comments upon a review of Arthur Lillie’s book, *Buddha and Early Buddhism*, written by “M.A. (Oxon),” the pseudonym of Rev. Stainton Moses, the famous Spiritualist. H.P. Blavatsky took exception to certain statements of the reviewer contradicting the assertions made by Theosophists, and disagreed with views expressed with regard to the character and teachings of the Buddha, as allegedly permeated with what the reviewer called “uncompromising Spiritualism.” She wrote in part:

We will not try to personally argue out the vexed question with our friend . . . we will tell him what we have done. As soon as his able review reached us, we marked it throughout, and sent both the numbers of the magazine containing it, to be, in their turn, reviewed and corrected by two authorities . . . these two are:

- 1 H. Sumangala Unnanse, Buddhist High Priest of Adam’s Peak, Ceylon . . . the most learned expounder of Southern Buddhism; and
- 2 The Chohan-Lama of Rinch-cha-tze (Tibet) the Chief of the Archive-registrars of the secret Libraries of the Dalai and Ta-shü-hlumpo Lamas-Rimboche . . . the latter, moreover, is a “Pan-chhen,” or great teacher, one of the most learned theologians of Northern Buddhism and esoteric Lamaism . . .

The Chohan-Lama promised to write a reply in due course of time.

As is apparent from the very first paragraph of the present essay, the latter unquestionably contains the reply of the Chohan-Lama, or at least a portion of it. It is impossible to say why this reply was not published in *The Theosophist* at the time, even if it was not received until a number of months later. As appears from the Editorial Note appended at the end of this essay,

. . . this study of “Tibetan Teachings” is taken from a series of articles originally prepared for *The Theosophist*, but, for some reason or other, set aside, and never published,

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<sup>1</sup> *The Theosophist*, Vol. III, No. 4, January 1882, pp. 92-93

— until the two instalments appeared in *Lucifer* of 1894. The Editors of *Lucifer*, moreover, express the hope “to be able to continue the series for some months.”

No one seems to know what became of the material which formed the continuation of these two instalments of “Tibetan Teachings.” Their whereabouts have never yet been traced.

This essay is published in the present volume merely as a provisional place for it, seeing that no definite date can be ascribed to it, beyond its unquestionable connection with the article of H.P. Blavatsky spoken of above, and the fact that she speaks of it as being “a long-delayed promise fulfilled.” This might well indicate that the reply of the Chohan-Lama was not made available immediately after the request.



## A long-delayed promise by H.P. Blavatsky fulfilled

They who are on the summit of a mountain can see all men; in like manner they who are intelligent and free from sorrow are enabled to ascend above the paradise of the Gods; and when they there have seen the subjection of man to birth and death and the sorrows by which he is afflicted, they open the doors of the immortal.

— From the *Tched-du brjod-pai-tsoms* of the BKAH-HGYUR

**I**N THE JANUARY NUMBER of *The Theosophist* for 1882, we promised our readers the opinions of the Venerable Chohan-Lama — the chief of the Archiveregistrars of the libraries containing manuscripts on esoteric doctrines belonging to the Ta-loï and Ta-shüh-lumpo Lamas Rim-boche of Tibet — on certain conclusions arrived at by the author of *Buddha and Early Buddhism*. Owing to the brotherly kindness of a disciple of the learned Chohan, than whom no one in Tibet is more deeply versed in the science of esoteric and exoteric Buddhism, we are now able to give a few of the doctrines which have a direct bearing on these conclusions. It is our firm belief that the learned Chohan's letters, and the notes accompanying them, could not arrive at a more opportune time. Besides the many and various misconceptions of our doctrines, we have more than once been taken severely to task by some of the most intelligent Spiritualists for misleading them as to the real attitude and belief of Hindus and Buddhists as to "spirits of the departed." Indeed, according to some Spiritualists "the Buddhist belief is permeated by the distinctive and peculiar note of modern Spiritualism, the presence and guardianship of departed spirits," and the Theosophists have been guilty of misrepresenting this belief. They have had the hardihood, for instance, to maintain that this "belief in the intervention of departed human spirits" was anathema maranatha in the East, whereas it is "in effect, a permeating principle of Buddhism."

What every Hindu, of whatever caste and education, thinks of the "intervention of departed spirits" is so well known throughout the length and breadth of India that it would be loss of time to repeat the oft-told tale. There are a few converts to modern Spiritualism, such as Babu Peary Chand Mitra, whose great personal purity of life would make such intercourse harmless for him, even were he not indifferent to physical phenomena, holding but to the purely spiritual, subjective side of such communion. But, if these be excepted, we boldly reassert what we have always maintained: that there is not a Hindu who does not loathe the very idea of the reappearance of a departed "spirit" whom he will ever regard as impure; and that with these exceptions no Hindu believes that, except in cases of suicide, or death by accident, any spirit but an evil one can return to earth. Therefore, leaving the Hindus out of the question, we will give the ideas of the Northern Buddhists on the subject, hoping to add those of the Southern Buddhists to them in good time. And, when we say "Buddhists," we do not include the innumerable heretical sects teeming throughout Japan and China who have lost every right to that appellation. With these we have nought

to do. We think but of the Buddhists of the Northern and Southern Churches — The Roman Catholics and the Protestants of Buddhism, so to say.

The subject which our learned Tibetan correspondent treats is based on a few direct questions offered by us with a humble request that they should be answered, and the following paragraph from *Buddha and Early Buddhism*:

I have dwelt somewhat at length on this supernaturalism, because it is of the highest importance to our theme. Buddhism was plainly an elaborate apparatus to nullify the action of evil spirits by the aid of good spirits operating at their highest potentiality through the instrumentality of the corpse or a portion of the corpse of the chief aiding spirit. The Buddhist temple, the Buddhist rites, the Buddhist liturgy, all seem based on this one idea that a whole or portions of a dead body was necessary. What were these assisting spirits? Every Buddhist, ancient or modern, would at once admit that a spirit that has not yet attained the Bodhi or spiritual awakening cannot be a good spirit. It can do no good thing; more than that, it must do evil things.

The answer of Northern Buddhism is that the good spirits are the Buddhas, the dead prophets. They come from certain “fields of the Buddhas” to commune with earth.

Our learned Tibetan friend writes:

Let me say at once that monks and laymen give the most ridiculously absurd digest of the Law of Faith, the popular beliefs of Tibet. The Capuchin Della Penna’s account of the brotherhood of the “Byang-tsiub” is simply absurd. Taking from the *Bkah-hgyur* and other books of the Tibetan laws some literal description, he then embellishes them with his own interpretation. Thus he speaks of the fabled worlds of “spirits,” where live the “Lha, who are like gods”; adding that the Tibetans imagine “these places to be in the air above a great mountain, about a hundred and sixty thousand leagues high and thirty-two thousand leagues in circuit; which is made up of four parts, being of crystal to the east, of the red ruby to the west, of gold to the north, and of the green precious stone — lapis lazuli — to the south. In these abodes of bliss they — the Lha — remain as long as they please, and then pass to the paradise of other worlds.”<sup>1</sup>

This description resembles far more — if my memory of the missionary-school-going period at Lahoula does not deceive me — the “new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven” in John’s vision — that city which measured “twelve thousand furlongs,” whose walls were of “jasper,” the buildings of “pure gold,” the foundations of the walls “garnished with all manner of precious stones” and “the twelve gates were twelve pearls” than the city of the Jang-Chhub either in the *Bkah-hgyur* or in the ideas of Tibetans. In the first place, the sacred canon of the Tibetans, the *Bkah-hgyur* and *Bstan-hgyur*, comprises one thousand seven hundred and seven distinct works — one thousand and eighty-three public and six hundred and twenty-four secret volumes

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<sup>1</sup> [This excerpt is a translation from pages 54-55 of an account by Fra Francesco Orazio della Penna di Billi, entitled: *Breve notizia del regno del Thibet*, 1730, republished in Paris, 1835, with notes by Klaproth, in the *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*. — Boris de Zirkoff.]

— the former being composed of three hundred and fifty and the latter of seventy-seven folio volumes.

Could they even by chance have seen them, I can assure the Theosophists that the contents of these volumes could never be understood by anyone who had not been given the key to their peculiar character, and to their hidden meaning.

Every description of localities is figurative in our system; every name and word is purposely veiled; and a student, before he is given any further instruction, has to study the mode of deciphering, and then of comprehending and learning the equivalent secret term or synonym for nearly every word of our religious language. The Egyptian enchorial<sup>1</sup> or hieratic system is child's play to the deciphering of our sacred puzzles. Even in those volumes to which the masses have access, every sentence has a dual meaning, one intended for the unlearned, and the other for those who have received the key to the records.

If the efforts of such well-meaning, studious and conscientious men as the authors of *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, and *Buddha and Early Buddhism*<sup>2</sup> — whose poetical hypotheses may be upset and contradicted, one by one, with the greatest ease — resulted in nought, verily then, the attempts of the predecessors and successors of the Abbés Huc, Gabet and others must prove a sorry failure; since the former have not and the latter have, an object to achieve in purposely disfiguring the unparalleled and glorious teachings of our blessed master, Śākya Thub-pa.

In *The Theosophist* for October, 1881, a correspondent correctly informs the reader that Gautama the Buddha, the wise, “insisted upon initiation being thrown open to all who were qualified.” This is true; such was the original design put for some time in practice by the great Sanggyas, and before he had become the All-Wise. But three or four centuries after his separation from this earthly coil, when Aśoka, the great supporter of our religion, had left the world, the Arhat initiates, owing to the secret but steady opposition of the Brāhmins to their system, had to drop out of the country one by one and seek safety beyond the Himālayas. Thus, though popular Buddhism did not spread in Tibet before the seventh century, the Buddhist initiates of the mysteries and esoteric system of the Āryan Twice-born, leaving their motherland, India, sought refuge with the pre-Buddhistic ascetics; those who had the Good Doctrine, even before the days of Śākya-Muni. These ascetics had dwelt beyond the Himālayan ranges from time immemorial. They are the direct successors of those Āryan sages who, instead of accompanying their Brāhman brothers in the pre-historical emigration from Lake Mānasarovara across the Snowy Range into the hot plains of the Seven Rivers, had preferred to remain in their inaccessible and unknown fastnesses. No wonder, indeed, if the Āryan esoteric doctrine and our Arhat doctrines are found to be almost identical. Truth, like the sun over our heads, is one; but it seems as if this eternal truism must be constantly reiterated to

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<sup>1</sup> [*lit.* indigenous, the vulgar form of ancient Egyptian hieratic writing.]

<sup>2</sup> [The first work mentioned is Samuel Beal's translation from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang's *Si-yu-ki*. London: Trübner & Co., 1885; the second work is by Arthur Lillie, London: Trübner & Co., 1881 — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

make the dark, as much as the white, people remember it. Only that truth may be kept pure and unpolluted by human exaggerations — its very votaries be-times seeking to adapt it, to pervert and disfigure its fair face to their own selfish ends — it has to be hidden far away from the eye of the profane. Since the days of the earliest universal mysteries up to the time of our great Śākya Tathāgata Buddha, who reduced and interpreted the system for the salvation of all, the divine Voice of the Self, known as Kwan-yin, was heard but in the sacred solitude of the preparatory mysteries.

Our world-honoured Tsong-kha-pa closing his fifth Dam-ngag reminds us that,

“ . . . every sacred truth, which the ignorant are unable to comprehend under its true light, ought to be hidden within a triple casket concealing itself as the tortoise conceals his head within his shell; ought to show her face but to those who are desirous of obtaining the condition of Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi,”

— the most merciful and enlightened heart.

There is a dual meaning, then, even in the canon thrown open to the people, and, quite recently, to Western scholars. I will now try to correct the errors — too intentional, I am sorry to say, in the case of the Jesuit writers. No doubt but that the Chinese and Tibetan Scriptures, so-called, the standard works of China and Japan, some written by our most learned scholars, many of whom — as uninitiated though sincere and pious men — commented upon what they never rightly understood, contain a mass of mythological and legendary matter more fit for nursery folk-lore than an exposition of the Wisdom Religion as preached by the world’s Saviour. But none of these are to be found in the canon; and, though preserved in most of the Lamasery libraries, they are read and implicitly believed in only by the credulous and pious whose simplicity forbids them ever stepping across the threshold of reality. To this class belong *The Buddhist Cosmos*, written by the Bonze Jin-ch’an, of Peking; *The Shing-Tao-ki*, or “The Records of the Enlightenment of Tathāgata,” by Wang-Puh, in the seventh century, *The Hi-shai Sūtra*, or “Book of Creation,” various volumes on heaven and hell, and so forth — poetic fictions grouped around a symbolism evolved as an after-thought.

But the records from which our scholastic author, the monk Della Penna quotes — or I should rather say, misquotes — contain no fiction, but simply information for future generations, who may, by that time, have obtained the key to the right reading of them. The “Lha” of whom Della Penna speaks but to deride the fable, they who “have attained the position of saints in this world,” were simply the initiated Arhats, the adepts of many and various grades, generally known under the name of Bhanté or Brothers. In the book known as the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, in the section on “the Supreme Ātman — Self — as manifested in the character of the Arhats and Pratyeka Buddhas,” it is stated that “Because from the beginning, all sentient creatures have confused the truth, and embraced the false; therefore has there come into existence a hidden knowledge called Alaya Vijñāna.” “Who is in the possession of the true hidden

knowledge?” “The great teachers of the Snowy Mountain,” is the response in *The Book of Law*. The Snowy Mountain is the “mountain a hundred and sixty thousand leagues high.” Let us see what this means. The last three ciphers being simply left out, we have a hundred and sixty leagues; a Tibetan league is nearly five miles; this gives us seven hundred and eighty miles from a certain holy spot, by a distinct road to the west. This becomes as clear as can be, even in Della Penna’s further description, to one who has but a glimpse of the truth. “According to their law,” says that monk, “in the west of this world, is an eternal world, a paradise, and in it a saint called Ho-pahme, which means Saint of Splendour and Infinite Light. This saint has many distinct pupils who are all called chang-chub,” which — he adds in a footnote — means “the spirits of those who, on account of their perfection, do not care to become saints, and train and instruct the bodies of the reborn Lamas, so that they may help the living.”<sup>1</sup>

This shows that these presumably dead “chang-chubs” are living Bodhisattwas or Bhanaté, known under various names among Tibetan people; among others, Lha, or “spirits,” as they are supposed to have an existence more in spirit than in flesh. At death they often renounce Nirvāna — the bliss of eternal rest, or oblivion of personality — to remain in their spiritualized astral selves for the good of their disciples and humanity in general.

To some Theosophists, at least, my meaning must be clear, though some are sure to rebel against the explanation. Yet we maintain that there is no possibility of an entirely pure “self” remaining in the terrestrial atmosphere after his liberation from the physical body, in his own personality, in which he moved upon earth. Only three exceptions are made to this rule:

The holy motive prompting a Bodhisattwa, a Śrāvaka, or Rahat to help to the same bliss those who remain behind him, the living; in which case he will stop to instruct them either from within or without; or, secondly, those who, however pure, harmless and comparatively free from sin during their lives, have been so engrossed with some particular idea in connection with one of the human māyās as to pass away amidst that all-absorbing thought; and, thirdly, persons in whom an intense and holy love, such as that of a mother for her orphaned children, creates or generates an indomitable will, fed by that boundless love, to tarry with and among the living in their inner selves.

The periods allotted for these exceptional cases vary. In the first case, owing to the knowledge acquired in his condition of Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi — the most holy and enlightened heart — the Bodhisattwa has no fixed limit. Accustomed to remain for hours and days in his astral form during life, he has power after death to create around him his own conditions, calculated to check the natural tendency of the other principles to rejoin their respective elements, and can descend or even remain on earth for centuries and millenniums. In the second case, the period will last until the all-powerful magnetic attraction of the subject of the thought — intensely concentrated at the moment of death — be-

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<sup>1</sup> [p. 85]



comes weakened and gradually fades out. In the third, the attraction is broken either by the death or the moral unworthiness of the loved ones. It cannot in either case last more than a lifetime.

In all other cases of apparitions or communications by whatever mode, the “spirit” will prove a wicked “bhūta” or “ro-lang” at best — the soulless shell of an “elementary.” The “Good Doctrine” is rejected on account of the unwarranted accusation that “adepts” only claim the privilege of immortality. No such claim was ever brought forward by any eastern adept or initiate. Very true, our Masters teach us “that immortality is conditional,” and that the chances of an adept who has become a proficient in the Alaya Vijñāna, the acme of wisdom, are tenfold greater than those of one who, being ignorant of the potentialities centred within his Self, allows them to remain dormant and undisturbed until it is too late to awake them in this life. But the adept knows no more on earth, nor are his powers greater here than will be the knowledge and powers of the average good man when the latter reaches his fifth and especially his sixth cycle or round. Our present mankind is still in the fourth of the seven great cyclic rounds. Humanity is a baby hardly out of its swaddling clothes, and the highest adept of the present age knows less than he will know as a child in the seventh round. And as mankind is an infant collectively, so is man in his present development individually. As it is hardly to be expected that a young child, however precocious, should remember his existence from the hour of his birth, day by day, with the various experiences of each, and the various clothes he was made to wear on each of them, so no “self,” unless that of an adept having reached Samma-Sambuddha — during which an illuminate sees the long series of his past lives throughout all his previous births in other worlds — was ever able to recall the distinct and various lives he passed through. But that time must come one day. Unless a man is an irretrievable sensualist, dooming himself thereby to utter annihilation after one of such sinful lives, that day will dawn when, having reached the state of absolute freedom from any sin or desire, he will see and recall to memory all his past lives as easily as a man of our age turns back and passes in review, one by one, every day of his existence.

We may add a word or two in explanation of a previous passage, referring to Kwan-yin. This divine power was finally anthropomorphized by the Chinese Buddhist ritualists into a distinct double-sexed deity with a thousand hands and a thousand eyes, and called Kwan-shai-yin Bodhisattwa, the Voice-Deity, but in reality meaning the voice of the ever-present latent divine consciousness in man; the voice of his real Self, which can be fully evoked and heard only through great moral purity. Hence Kwan-yin is said to be the son of Amitābha Buddha, who generated that Saviour, the merciful Bodhisattwa, the “Voice” or the “Word” that is universally diffused, the “Sound” which is eternal. It has the same mystical meaning as the Vāch of the Brāhmins. While the Brāhmins maintain the eternity of the Vedas from the eternity of “sound,” the Buddhists claim by synthesis the eternity of Amitābha, since he was the first to prove the eternity of the Self-born, Kwan-yin. Kwan-yin is the Vāchīśvara or Voice-Deity of the Brāhmins. Both proceed from the same origin as the Logos of the neo-Platonic Greeks; the “manifested deity” and its “voice” being found in man’s Self, his conscience; Self being the unseen Father, and the “voice of Self” the Son;

each being the relative and the correlative of the other. Both Vāchīśvara and Kwan-yin had, and still have, a prominent part in the Initiation Rites and Mysteries in the Brāhmanical and Buddhist esoteric doctrines.

We may also point out that Bodhisattvas or Rahats need not be adepts; still less, Brāhmins, Buddhists, or even “Asiatics,” but simply holy and pure men of any nation or faith, bent all their lives on doing good to humanity.

#### DOCTRINES OF THE HOLY “LHA”

The forms under which any living being may be reborn, are six fold:

1. The highest class are the Lha, “spirits, highest beings, gods,” Sanskrit Deva; they rank next to the Buddhas, and inhabit the six celestial regions (Sanskrit Devalokas). Two of these regions belong to the earth; but the four others, which are considered as superior mansions, lie in the atmosphere, far beyond the earth.<sup>1</sup>

. . . As a consequence of premature decease, the “Bardo” is prolonged. This is the middle state between the death and the new re-birth, which does not follow immediately, but there exists an interval, which is shorter for the good than for the bad . . .<sup>2</sup>

— Emil Schlagintweit, *Buddhism in Tibet*

The notes that follow are compiled, or rather translated, as closely as the idiomatic differences would permit, from Tibetan letters and manuscripts, sent in answer to several questions regarding the western misconceptions of Northern Buddhism or Lamaism. The information comes from a Gelung of the Inner Temple — a disciple of Bas-pa Dharma, the Secret Doctrine.

Brothers residing in Gya-P-heling — British India — having respectfully called my master’s attention to certain incorrect and misleading statements about the Good Doctrine of our blessed Phag-pa Sang-gyas — most Holy Buddha — as alleged to be carried on in Bhod-Yul, the land of Tibet, I am commanded by the revered Ngag-pa to answer them. I will do so, as far as our rules will permit me to discuss so sacred a subject openly. I can do no more, since, till the day when our Pban-chhen-rin-po-chhe shall be reborn in the lands of the P-helings — foreigners — and, appearing as the great Chom-dan-da, the conqueror, shall destroy with his mighty hand the errors and ignorance of ages, it will be of little, if of any, use to try to uproot these misconceptions.

A prophecy of Tsong-ka-pa is current in Tibet to the effect that the true doctrine will be maintained in its purity only so long as Tibet is kept free from the incursions of western nations, whose crude ideas of fundamental truth would inevitably confuse and obscure the followers of the Good Law. But, when the western world is more ripe in the direction of philosophy, the incarnation of Pban-chhen-rin-po-chhe — the Great Jewel of Wisdom — one of the Teshu Lamas, will take place, and the splendour

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<sup>1</sup> [p. 91]

<sup>2</sup> [p. 109]

of truth will then illuminate the whole world. We have here the true key to Tibetan exclusiveness.

Our correspondent continues:

Out of the many erroneous views presented to the consideration of our master, I have his permission to treat the following: first, the error generally current among the Ro-lang-pa — spiritualists — that those who follow the Good Doctrine have intercourse with, and reverence for, Rolang — ghosts — or the apparitions of dead men; and, secondly, that the Bhanté — Brothers — or “Lha,” popularly so-called — are either disembodied spirits or gods.

The first error is found in *Buddha and Early Buddhism*, since this work has given rise to the incorrect notion that spiritualism was at the very root of Buddhism. The second error is found in the *Succinct Abstract of the Great Chaos of Tibetan Laws* by the Capuchin monk Della Penna and the accounts given by his companions, whose absurd calumnies of Tibetan religion and laws written during the past century have been lately reprinted in Mr. Markham’s *Tibet*.<sup>1</sup>

Writes our correspondent:

I will begin with the former error, neither the Southern nor Northern Buddhists, whether of Ceylon, Tibet, Japan or China, accept western ideas as to the capabilities and qualifications of the “naked souls.”

For we deprecate unqualifiedly and absolutely all ignorant intercourse with the Ro-lang. For what are they who return? What kind of creatures are they who can communicate at will objectively or by physical manifestations? They are impure, grossly sinful souls, “a-tsa-ras”; suicides; and such as have come to premature deaths by accident and must linger in the earth’s atmosphere until the full expiration of their natural term of life.

No right-minded person, whether Lama or Chhipa — non-Buddhist — will venture to defend the practice of necromancy, which, by a natural instinct has been condemned in all the great Dharmas — laws or religions — and intercourse with, and using the powers of these earth-bound souls is simply necromancy.

Now the beings included in the second and third classes — suicides and victims of accident — have not completed their natural term of life; and, as a consequence, though not of necessity mischievous, are earth-bound. The prematurely expelled soul is in an unnatural state; the original impulse under which the being was evolved and cast into the earth-life has not expended itself — the necessary cycle has not been completed, but must nevertheless be fulfilled.

Yet, though earth-bound, these unfortunate beings, victims whether voluntary or involuntary, are only suspended, as it were, in the earth’s magnetic attrac-

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<sup>1</sup> [The title of Della Penna’s work, as given here, does not seem to correspond to the Italian original, although there is very little doubt that it is the same work that is meant, as another quoted passage further on clearly shows. As to the second work referred to, it is most likely the one entitled, *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa*. Edited by Clements Robert Markham, London, 1876. 8vo. There seems to be no other work on Tibet written by Sir C.R. Markham (1830-1916), the famous geographer and traveller. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

tion. They are not, like the first class, attracted to the living from a savage thirst to feed on their vitality. Their only impulse — and a blind one, since they are generally in a dazed or stunned condition — is to get into the whirl of rebirth as soon as possible. Their state is what we call a false Bar-do — the period between two incarnations. According to the karma of the being — which is affected by his age and merits in the last birth — this interval will be longer or shorter.

Nothing but some overpoweringly intense attraction, such as a holy love for some dear one in great peril, can draw them with their consent to the living; but by the mesmeric power of a Ba-po, a necromancer — the word is used advisedly, since the necromantic spell is Dzu-trul, or what you term a mesmeric attraction — can force them into our presence. This evocation, however, is totally condemned by those who hold to the Good Doctrine; for the soul thus evoked is made to suffer exceedingly, even though it is not itself but only its image that has been torn or stripped from itself to become the apparition; owing to its premature separation by violence from the body, the “jang-khog” — animal soul — is yet heavily loaded with material particles — there has not been a natural disintegration of the coarser from the finer molecules — and the necromancer, in compelling this separation artificially, makes it, we might almost say, to suffer as one of us might if he were flayed alive.

Thus, to evoke the first class — the grossly sinful souls — is dangerous for the living; to compel the apparition of the second and third classes is cruel beyond expression to the dead.

In the case of one who died a natural death totally different conditions exist; the soul is almost, and in the case of great purity, entirely beyond the necromancer’s reach; hence beyond that of a circle of evokers, or spiritualists, who, unconsciously to themselves, practise a veritable necromancer’s Sang-ngag, or magnetic incantation. According to the karma of the previous birth the interval of latency — generally passed in a state of stupor — will last from a few minutes to an average of a few weeks, perhaps months. During that time the “jang-khog” — animal soul — prepares in solemn repose for its translation, whether into a higher sphere — if it has reached its seventh human local evolution — or for a higher rebirth, if it has not yet run the last local round.

At all events it has neither will nor power at that time to give any thought to the living. But after its period of latency is over, and the new self enters in full consciousness the blessed region of Devachan — when all earthly mists have been dispersed, and the scenes and relations of the past life come clearly before its spiritual sight — then it may, and does occasionally, when espying all it loved, and that loved it upon earth, draw up to it for communion and by the sole attraction of love, the spirits of the living, who, when returned to their normal condition, imagine that it has descended to them.

Therefore we differ radically from the western Rolang-pa — spiritualists — as to what they see or communicate with in their circles and through their unconscious necromancy. We say it is but the physical dregs, or spiritless remains of

the late being; that which has been exuded, cast off and left behind when its finer particles passed onward into the great Beyond.

In it linger some fragments of memory and intellect. It certainly was once a part of the being, and so possesses that modicum of interest; but it is not the being in reality and truth. Formed of matter, however etherealized, it must sooner or later be drawn away into vortices where the conditions for its atomic disintegration exist.

From the dead body the other principles ooze out together. A few hours later the second principle — that of life — is totally extinct, and separates from both the human and ethereal envelopes. The third — the vital double — finally dissipates when the last particles of the body disintegrate. There now remain the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh principles: the body of will; the human soul; the spiritual soul, and pure spirit, which is a facet of the Eternal. The last two, joined to, or separated from, the personal self, form the everlasting individuality and cannot perish. The remainder proceeds to the state of gestation — the astral self and whatever survived in it of the will, previous to the dissolution of the physical body.

Hence for any conscious action in this state are required the qualifications of an adept, or an intense, undying, ardent and holy love for someone whom the deceased leaves behind him on earth; as otherwise the astral ego either becomes a “bhūta” — “ro-lang” in Tibetan — or proceeds to its further transmigrations in higher spheres.

In the former case the Lha, or “man-spirit,” can sojourn among the living for an indefinite time, at his own pleasure; in the latter the so-called “spirit” will tarry and delay his final translation but for a short period; the body of desire being held compact, in proportion to the intensity of the love felt by the soul and its unwillingness to part with the loved ones.

At the first relaxation of the will it will disperse, and the spiritual self, temporarily losing its personality and all remembrance of it, ascends to higher regions. Such is the teaching. None can overshadow mortals but the elect, the “Accomplished,” the “Byang-tsiub,” or the “Bodhisattvas” alone — they who have penetrated the great secret of life and death — as they are able to prolong, at will, their stay on earth after “dying.” Rendered into the vulgar phraseology, such overshadowing is to “be born again and again” for the benefit of mankind.

If the spiritualists, instead of conferring the power of “controlling” and “guiding” living persons upon every wraith calling itself “John” or “Peter,” limited the faculty of moving and inspiring a few chosen pure men and women only to such Bodhisattvas or holy initiates — whether born as Buddhists or Christians, Brāhmins or Mussulmans on earth — and, in very exceptional cases, to holy and saintly characters, who have a motive, a truly beneficial mission to accomplish after their departure, then would they be nearer to the truth than they are now.

To ascribe the sacred privilege, as they do, to every “elementary” or “elemental” masquerading in borrowed plumes and putting in an appearance for no better reason than to say: “How d’ye do, Mr. Snooks?” and to drink tea and eat toast, is a sacrilege

and a sad sight to him who has any intuitional feeling about the awful sacredness of the mystery of physical translation, let alone the teachings of the adepts.

Further on Della Penna writes:

“These chang-chub — the disciples of the chief saint — have not yet become saints, but they possess in the highest degree five virtues . . . charity, both temporal and spiritual, perfect observance of law, great patience, great diligence in working to perfection, and the most sublime contemplation.”<sup>1</sup>

We would like to know how they could have all these qualities, especially the latter — trance — were they physically dead!

“These chang-chub have finished their course and are exempt from further transmigrations; passing from the body of one Lama to that of another; but the Lama [meaning the Dalai-Lama] is always endowed with the soul of the same chang-chub, although he may be in other bodies for the benefit of the living to teach them the Law, which is the object of their not wishing to become saints, because then they would not be able to instruct them. Being moved by compassion and pity they wish to remain chang-chub to instruct the living in the Law, so as to make them finish quickly the laborious course of their transmigrations. Moreover, if these chang-chub wish, they are at liberty to transmigrate into this or other worlds, and at the same time they transmigrate into other places with the same object.”

This rather confused description yields from its inner sense two facts; first, that the Buddhist Tibetans — we speak of the educated classes — do not believe in the return of the departed spirits, since, unless a soul becomes so purified upon earth as to create for itself a state of Bodhisattva-hood — the highest degree of perfection next to Buddha — even saints in the ordinary acceptance of the term would not be able to instruct or control the living after their death; and, secondly, that, rejecting as they do the theories of creation, God, soul — in its Christian and spiritualistic sense — and a future life for the personality of the deceased, they yet credit man with such a potentiality of will, that it depends on him to become a Bodhisattwa and acquire the power to regulate his future existences, whether in a physical or in a semi-material shape.

Lamaists believe in the indestructibility of matter, as an element. They reject the immortality, and even the survival of the *personal* self, teaching that the *individual* self alone — *i.e.*, the collective aggregation of the many personal selves that were represented by that One during the long series of various existences — may survive. The latter may even become eternal — the word eternity with them embracing but the period of a great cycle eternal in its integral individuality, but this may be done only by becoming a Dhyāni-Chohan, a “celestial Buddha,” or what a Christian Kabbalist might call a “planetary spirit” or one of the Elohim; a part of the “conscious whole,” composed of the aggregate intelligences in their universal collectivity, while Nirvāna is the “unconscious whole.” He who becomes a Tong-pa-nyi — he who has attained the state of absolute free-

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<sup>1</sup> [pp. 55-56]

dom from any desire of living personally, the highest condition of a saint — exists in non-existence and can benefit mortals no more. He is in “Nipang,” for he has reached the end of “Tharlam,” the path to deliverance, or salvation from transmigrations. He cannot perform Tulpa<sup>1</sup> — voluntary incarnation, whether temporary or life-long — in the body of a living human being; for he is a “Dangma,” an absolutely purified soul. Henceforth he is free from the danger of “Dal-jor,” human rebirth; for the seven forms of existence — only six are given out to the uninitiated — subject to transmigration have been safely crossed by him. “He gazes with indifference in every sphere of upward transmigration on the whole period of time which covers the shorter periods of personal existence,” says the Book of *Khiu-ti*.

But, as “there is more courage to accept being than non-being, life than death,” there are those among the Bodhisattvas and the Lha — “and as rare as the flower of udambara are they to meet with” — who voluntarily relinquish the blessing of the attainment of perfect freedom, and remain in their personal selves, whether in forms visible or invisible to mortal sight — to teach and help their weaker brothers.

Some of them prolong their life on earth — though not to any supernatural limit; others become “Dhyāni-Chohans,” a class of the planetary spirits or “devas” who, becoming, so to say, the guardian angels of men, are the only class out of the seven-classed hierarchy of spirits in our system who preserve their personality. These holy Lha, instead of reaping the fruit of their deeds, sacrifice themselves in the invisible world as the lord Sang-Gyas — Buddha — did on this earth, and remain in Devachan — the world of bliss nearest to the earth.

H.P. BLAVATSKY



This study of “Tibetan Teachings” is taken from a series of articles originally prepared for *The Theosophist*, but, for some reason or other, set aside, and never published. We hope to be able to continue the series for some months. — Editors, *Lucifer*.

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<sup>1</sup> [Tibetan sPrul-pa]

## Tibetan terms by Boris de Zirkoff

Considerable difference exists between the pronunciation and the transliteration of Tibetan terms. There is often some uncertainty whenever H.P. Blavatsky uses such terms. To help the student, we give below the accepted English transliteration and the pronunciation of the terms used in “Tibetan Teachings,” in the order in which they occur. In some cases, Sanskrit equivalents have been added.

<b>Transliteration</b>	<b>Pronunciation</b>
<i>b</i> Lama	Lama
Rin-chen- <i>rtse</i>	Rinch-chatze
Ta-lai	Dalai (Mongolian for “ocean”)
<i>b</i> Kra- <i>śis</i> -lhun-po	Tashi-lhünpo
Rin-po-che	Rimpochhe
Ched-du- <i>brjod</i> -pai-tšoms	<i>Ched-du-jod-pai-tshom</i> (Sanskrit <i>Udānavarga</i> )
Byang-chub	Jangchhub (Sanskrit Bodhisattva)
<i>b</i> Ka-hgyur	Kanjur (Mongolian pron.)
Lha	Lha (Sanskrit deva)
<i>b</i> Stan-hgyur	Tanjur (Mongolian pron.)
Thub-pa	Thub-pa (Sanskrit muni)
Sangs- <i>rgyas</i>	Sang-gyā
Dam-ngang	Dam-ngang (“divine vow”)
Bhan-de or Bhan-dhe	Bhan-té (“reverend”)
<i>hod</i> - <i>dpag-med</i>	ö-pa-mé (Sanskrit Amitābha)
Ro-langs	Ro-lang (Sanskrit bhūta)
Bar-do	Bar-do
<i>dge</i> -slong	Gelung (Sanskrit bhikshu)
sbas-pa	Ba-pa
<i>r</i> Gya- <i>p’yi-gling</i>	Gya-phe-ling
<i>h</i> Phags-pa sangs- <i>rgyas</i>	Phag-pa Sangyā (“The Buddha par excellence”)
Bod-yul (or Bod-kyi-yul)	Pö-yü
Ngang-pa	Ngang-pa (“Buddha-like one”)
Pan-chen-rin-po-che	Pan-chhen-rim-po-chhe
<i>b</i> Chom- <i>ldan</i> -hdas	Chom-dän-dé (Sanskrit Bhagavan)
Teshu-lama	Tashi-lama (Mongolian pron.)



CONSTITUTION OF MAN SERIES  
TIBETAN TERMS BY BORIS DE ZIRKOFF

Ro-langs-pa	Ro-lang-pa
ha-tsa-ras	ha-tsa-ras (Anglicized plural)
Phyi-pa	[Chhipa, <i>i.e.</i> , non-buddhist]
Bon-po	Bö-po
<i>rdzu-hphrul</i>	Dzu-thü
Byang-khog	Jang-khog
<i>gsang-sngags</i>	Sang-ngag
<i>bde-ba-can</i>	Devachan
<i>sTong-pa-ñid</i>	Tongpanyi (Sanskrit <i>sūnyatā</i> )
Nipang	Chinese (equivalent of Nirvāna)
Thar-lam	Thar-lam
sprul-pa	Tulpa
<i>Dwangs-ma</i>	Dangma
Dal-hbyor	Daljor

