

# *Origin and source of the Secret Doctrine*



## ***Abstract and train of thoughts***<sup>1</sup>

The Book of Dzyan is the first volume of *Commentaries* upon the seven secret folios of Kiu-te, and a Glossary of the public works of the same name. The thirty-five volumes of Kiu-te ought to be termed “the popularised version of the Secret Doctrine.” They are full of myths, blinks, and errors. On the other hand, the fourteen volumes of *Commentaries* — with their translations, annotations, and glossaries of Occult terms, worked out from one small archaic folio, the “Book of the Secret Wisdom of the World” — contain a digest of all the Occult Sciences. It is from the texts of all these works that the Secret Doctrine has been given in 1888.

The Books of Kiu-te are comparatively modern, having been edited within the last millennium, whereas the earliest volumes of the *Commentaries* are of untold antiquity. The *Commentaries* of the Secret Doctrine have little to do with these. They stand in relation to them as the Chaldæo-Jewish Kabbalah stands to the Mosaic Books. 3

No student, unless very advanced, would be benefited by the perusal of those exoteric volumes. They must be read with a key to their meaning, and that key can only be found in the *Commentaries*. Moreover, there are some comparatively modern works that are positively injurious, so far as a fair comprehension of even exoteric Buddhism is concerned. 5



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<sup>1</sup> Frontispiece by Kathleen Fenton.

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From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE SECRET BOOKS OF “LAM-RIM” AND DZYAN) XIV pp. 422-24.

The *Book of Dzyan* — from the Sanskrit word “Dhyāna” (mystic meditation) — is the first volume of the *Commentaries* upon the seven secret folios of *Kiu-te*, and a Glossary of the public works of the same name. Thirty-five volumes of *Kiu-te* for exoteric purposes and the use of the laymen may be found in the possession of the Tibetan Gelugpa Lamas, in the library of any monastery; and also fourteen books of *Commentaries* and Annotations on the same by the initiated Teachers.

Strictly speaking, those thirty-five books ought to be termed “The Popularised Version” of the Secret Doctrine, full of myths, blinks, and errors; the fourteen volumes of *Commentaries*, on the other hand — with their translations, annotations, and an ample glossary of Occult terms, worked out from one small archaic folio, the *Book of the Secret Wisdom of the World*<sup>1</sup> — contain a digest of all the Occult Sciences. These, it appears, are kept secret and apart, in the charge of the Teshu-Lama of Shigatse. The *Books of Kiu-te* are comparatively modern, having been edited within the last millennium, whereas, the earliest volumes of the *Commentaries* are of untold antiquity, some fragments of the original cylinders having been preserved.

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<sup>1</sup> It is from the texts of all these works that the Secret Doctrine has been given. The original matter would not make a small pamphlet, but the explanations and notes from the *Commentaries* and Glossaries might be worked into ten volumes as large as *Isis Unveiled*.



With the exception that they explain and correct some of the too fabulous, and to every appearance, grossly-exaggerated accounts in the *Books of Kiu-te*<sup>1</sup> — properly so-called — [423] the *Commentaries* have little to do with these. They stand in relation to them as the Chaldæo-Jewish *Kabbalah* stands to the Mosaic Books. In the work known as the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, in section: “The Supreme Ātman [Soul] 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 there came into existence a hidden knowledge called Ālaya Vijñāna.

“Who is in possession of the true knowledge?” is asked.

“The great Teachers of the Snowy Mountain,” is the response.

These “great Teachers” have been known to live in the “Snowy Range” of the Himālayas for countless ages. To deny in the face of millions of Hindus the existence of their great Gurus, living in the Āśramas scattered all over the Trans-or the Cis-Himālayan slopes, is to make oneself ridiculous in their eyes. When the Buddhist Saviour appeared in India, their Āśramas — for it is rarely that these great Men are found in Lamaseries, unless on a short visit — were on the spots they now occupy, and that even before the Brahmans themselves came from Central Asia to settle on the Indus. And before that more than one Āryan Dvija<sup>2</sup> of fame and historical renown had sat at their feet, learning that which culminated later on in one or another of the great philosophical schools. Most of these Himālayan Bhante [Brothers] were Āryan Brahmans and ascetics.

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<sup>1</sup> The monk Horace Della Penna makes considerable fun in his *Memoirs* (see Clements Robert Markham’s *Narratives of the mission of George Bogle to Tibet, and of the journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa*, 1876) of certain statements in the *Books of Kiu-te*. He brings to the notice of the Christian public “the great mountain 160,000 leagues high” (a Tibetan league consisting of five miles) in the Himālayan Range. He says:

“According to their law, in the west of this world, is an eternal world . . . a paradise, and in it a Saint called Hopahme, which means ‘Saint of Splendour and Infinite Light.’ This Saint has many disciples who are all Chang-Chub,”

which means, he adds in a footnote,

“ . . . 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.”

Which means that the presumably “dead” Jang-Chhub (not “Chang-chub”) are simply living Bodhisattvas, some of those known as Bhante (“the Brothers”). As to the “mountain 160,000 leagues high,” the *Commentary* which gives the key to such statements explains that according to the code used by the writers,

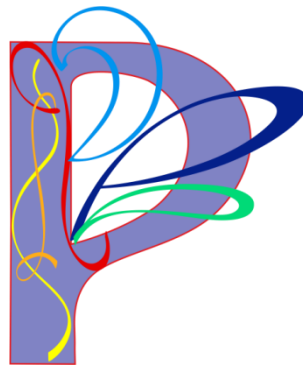
“ . . . to the west of the ‘Snowy Mountain’ 160 leagues [the cyphers being a blind] from a certain spot and by a direct road, is the Bhante Yul [the country or ‘Seat of the Brothers’], the residence of Mahā-Chohan . . . ” *etc.*

This is the real meaning. The “Hopahme” of Della Penna is — the Mahā-Chohan, the Chief. [See *Lucifer*, Vol. XV, p. 14, and *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol. VI pp. 100-1, for the “Tibetan Teachings” article.]

<sup>2</sup> [Initiated Brahman]

**No student, unless very advanced, would be benefited by the perusal of those exoteric volumes. They must be read with a key to their meaning, and that key can only be found in the *Commentaries*. Moreover, there are some comparatively modern works that are positively injurious, so far as a fair comprehension of even exoteric Buddhism is concerned.**

No student, unless very advanced, would be benefited by the [424] perusal of those exoteric volumes.<sup>1</sup> They must be read with a key to their meaning, and that key can only be found in the *Commentaries*. Moreover there are some comparatively modern works that are positively injurious so far as a fair comprehension of even exoteric Buddhism is concerned. Such are the *Buddhist Cosmos*, by Bonze Jin-chan of Peking; the *Shing-Tao-ki* (or *The Records of the Enlightenment of Tathāgata*), by Wang-Puh — seventh century; *Hi-shai Sūtra* (or *Book of Creation*), and some others.



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<sup>1</sup> In some MSS. notes before us, written by Gelong (priest) Thango-pa Chhe-go-mo, it is said:

“The few Roman Catholic missionaries who have visited our land (under protest) in the last century and have repaid our hospitality by turning our sacred literature into ridicule, have shown little discretion and still less knowledge. It is true that the Sacred Canon of the Tibetans, the *Bkah-hgyur* and *Bstan-hgyur*, comprises 1707 distinct works — 1083 public and 624 secret volumes, the former being composed of 350 and the latter of 77 volumes folio. May we humbly invite the good missionaries, however, to tell us when they ever succeeded in getting a glimpse of the last-named secret folios? Had they even by chance seen them I can assure the Western Pandits that these manuscripts and folios could never be understood even by a born Tibetan without a key:

(a) To their peculiar characters, and

(b) To their hidden meaning. In our system every description of locality is figurative, every name and word purposely veiled; and one has first to study the mode of deciphering and then to learn the equivalent secret terms and symbols for nearly every word of the religious language.

The Egyptian enchorial or hieratic system is child’s play to our sacerdotal puzzles.”