

The Last Will and Testament of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky



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¹ Helena Petrovna Blavatsky is the founder and leading exponent of the modern Theosophical Movement launched in 1875, great intellectual radiance of our epoch, acclaimed philosopher and mystic, humanity's true lover and indefatigable servant.

Theosophy has greatly enhanced the apprehension and appreciation of the mysteries of the Universe, Nature, and Man: mysteries that were previously hinted at, but not disclosed, to the public at large. Two generations after Madame Blavatsky expounded the world's sciences, religions, and philosophies in *Isis Unveiled* (1877), integrated and amplified them in *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), and further elaborated upon them in close to a thousand articles spanning seventeen years, eclectic thinkers are still in the process of assimilating such an awesome outpouring of privileged knowledge.

We hope that our compilations from *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett*, our selections of commentaries by ancient and modern philosophers, our charts, drawings, learning aids, and study notes, may assist fellow travellers along the way. — ED. PHIL.

The Last Will and Testament of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891).

From Blavatsky *Collected Writings*, VI pp. 322-24. H.P. Blavatsky's Last Will and Testament.

[On April 17th, 1892, just before the expiration of one year since H.P. Blavatsky's passing — May 8th, 1891 — Colonel Henry S. Olcott issued from Adyar an Executive Order instituting "White Lotus Day," which was the name suggested by him for the anniversary of her passing.¹ In this Order, he mentioned Madame Blavatsky's Will, quoting from it a brief passage, and made certain specific recommendations with regard to the annual commemoration. This Will and Testament was written by Madame Blavatsky on January 31st, 1885, at Adyar. The original was removed to the High Court of Madras in the latter part of August 1892. The following text has been transcribed from a copy of the Will secured in 1938 from the Madras High Court Registrar, and furnished through the courtesy of The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Madras, India. — Boris de Zirkoff.]



This is the last Will and Testament of me, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky of Adyar, Madras, India. I desire my body to be burned in the Compound of The Theosophical Society's Headquarters at Adyar, Madras, and the ashes to be buried in the said Compound, and that none who are not Theosophists shall be present at the burning. I desire that yearly, on the anniversary of my death some of my friends should assemble at the Headquarters of The Theosophical Society and read a chapter of Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* and *Bhagavad Gita*. After payment of my just debts (if any), and funeral and testamentary expenses, I give devise and bequeath unto Colonel H. S. Olcott of Adyar, Madras, my books, for the use of the Literary Committee of The Theosophical Society, also my furniture for use at the Head Quarters of the said Society. Also my property in *Isis Unveiled* and the *Secret Doctrine* and *The Theosophist*, also one of the two pairs of Candlesticks given me by my aunt, also to Dāmodar, Babajee and Ananda, my three silver mugs. Also to Dr. Hartmann one of the pairs of Candlesticks given me by my aunt. Also to my nieces all my dresses and clothing (but not sheets or bedding), also to Louisa Mitchell the shawl now in the possession of Mr. Holloway. Note that the oval silver box is the property of Dāmodar, and as to the residue and remainder of my property, I give devise and bequeath the same unto Colonel Henry S. Olcott requesting him to [323] distribute any small articles of no great value which I may die possessed of, to such friends and acquaintances as are Theosophists, according to his own discretion. And I hereby appoint Colonel Henry S. Olcott and Dāmodar K. Māvalankar, or the Survivor of them, to be executors of this my Will as witness this 31st day of January 1885, Adyar, Madras, India.

H.P. BLAVATSKY . .

¹ [Full text on page 8 of this document. — ED. PHIL.]

HER LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT
SIGNED 31 JANUARY 1885

Signed and acknowledged by the said Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the Testator, as and for her last Will and Testament, in the presence of us being present at the same time, who at the testator's request and in her presence and in the presence of each other, have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses.

P. Sreenivasa Row

E.H. Morgan

T. Subba Row

C. Ramia



Madame Blavatsky's instructions to Countess Constance Wachtmeister concerning the removal of her body.

**Introduction and background by Boris de Zirkoff,
Compiler and Editor of "H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings."**

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (H.P. BLAVATSKY'S INSTRUCTIONS TO COUNTESS CONSTANCE WACHTMEISTER CONCERNING THE REMOVAL OF HER BODY) VII pp. 301-5.

[April 1st, 1887]

[In the early spring of 1887, H.P. Blavatsky, while at Ostende, became gravely ill. With her kidneys badly infected, she was unconscious for hours at a time. Countess C. Wachtmeister, who was living with Madame Blavatsky at the time, summoned Mrs. Marie Gebhard from Elberfeld and Doctor Ashton Ellis of the London Lodge. A consultation between the latter and Madame Blavatsky's attending Belgian physician revealed very little hope of recovery. It was decided that Madame Blavatsky would make her Will and that it would be signed in the presence of the two doctors, a lawyer, and the American consul. Before this plan could be carried out, and apparently during the night following upon this decision, Madame Blavatsky was restored to relative health by her Master who had come that night and healed her. She had been given a choice between dying and living to finish *The Secret Doctrine*. She was shown the difficulties and sufferings she would have to go through in England where she was supposed to go. She chose to remain at her post and continue her work. The next day, the Will was made and signed as planned. For a while, this Will must have been in the hands of Madame Blavatsky's lawyer at Ostende. After Madame Blavatsky's passing, May 8th, 1891, Countess C. Wachtmeister saw the lawyer and was told that at one time he had given the Will back to Madame Blavatsky. She must have destroyed it at the time, as it was never found among her papers. Another Will drawn up later took its place.¹

It is quite probable that it was at this time that Madame Blavatsky had someone write out on an ordinary piece of letter-paper her directives as to the removal of her body after death. This document is possibly in Countess C. Wachtmeister's handwriting and is drawn up in French. It is signed by Madame Blavatsky in pen and ink, with the addition of the three dots. The document was for a long time in the possession of Count Raoul-Axel Wachtmeister (1865–1947), the son of Count Carl Wachtmeister and Constance Georgina (de Bourbel) Wachtmeister. He gave it to his friend Axel Fredenholm, of Gothenburg, Sweden; the latter deposited it in the Archives of the Compiler of the present Series. The original French text of Madame Blavatsky's directives is as follows:]

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¹ See C. Wachtmeister, *Reminiscences*, pp. 71-75.

HER LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT
CONCERNING THE REMOVAL OF HER BODY
SIGNED 1 APRIL 1887

La soussigné Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, veuve de Monsieur Nicephor Blavatsky, particulier, résident actuellement à Ostende, mais domiciliée à Madras aux Indes, d'origine Russe naturalisée citoyenne des États Unies d'Amérique, née à Ekaterino-slav Sud de la Russie, le trente-et-un Juillet 1831 du mariage de feu le Colonel Pierre Hahn décédé à Stavropol au Caucase en 1874 et de feu Helene Andrevna Fadeew, décédée à Odessa le vingt-quatre Juin 1842, déclare par les présents qu'après son décès qu'elle veut que son corps soit transporté à Londres et autorise Madame la Comtesse (Wa) Constance Wachtmeister née de Bourbel à faire toutes les démarches nécessaires à cet effet. Ostende, le premier avril 1800 quatre vingt sept.¹

H.P. BLAVATSKY .'. .



¹ [We have kept unaltered certain inaccuracies of French. “Soussigné,” in the first line, should have two “e”s; “résident” should have an “a” in the last syllable; “Unies” should have no “e” in it; “feu” should have an “e” in the feminine form; and “décès” should be “décès.” — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

HER LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT
CONCERNING THE REMOVAL OF HER BODY
SIGNED 1 APRIL 1887

**Translation of the foregoing French text
and annotations, by Boris de Zirkoff.**

The undersigned, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, widow of Mr. Nikifor Blavatsky,¹ a civilian residing presently at Ostende, though domiciled at Madras, India, of Russian origin, naturalized in the United States of America, born at Ekaterinoslav, South Russia, the thirty-first of July, 1831 [old style], of the marriage of the late Colonel Peter Hahn,² deceased at Stavropol, Caucasus, in 1874, and of the late Helena Andreyevna Fadeyev,³ [305] deceased at Odessa, the twenty-fourth of June, 1842, declares by these presents that she wishes her body to be taken, after her death, to London, and authorizes Madame the Countess (Wa) Constance Wachtmeister, born de Bourbel, to make all the necessary arrangements to this effect. Ostende, the first of April, 1800 and eighty seven.

H.P. BLAVATSKY . .



¹ [Nikifor Vassilyevich Blavatsky, whom H.P. Blavatsky married in the summer of 1849. He was a descendant of an old Ukranian family originally named Blavatko. He was made Vice-Governor of the then newly constituted Province of Erivan' in the Caucasus. The date of his passing has not been definitely ascertained, but the most likely period is after 1877. See Vol. I, p. xxxvi.]

² [Peter Alexeyevich von Hahn was the son of Lieutenant-General Alexey Gustavovich Hahn von Rottenstern-Hahn and Elizabeth Maksimovna, née Countess Probsen. The General had been a famous figure in the Army of Fieldmarshal Suvorov, had crossed the Alps at a spot known as the Devil's Bridge, in the St. Gotthard Pass, and became Commander of the town of Zürich in Switzerland, during the period of occupation. According to existing evidence, he must have died before 1830. His father, Gustav, immigrated into Russia at the beginning of the 17th century, being directly related to the Count von Hahn in Mecklenburg, Germany. Peter Alexeyevich, H.P. Blavatsky's father, was born in 1798, and died at Stavropol', North Caucasus, sometime in the summer of 1873. He was buried there, according to Madame Blavatsky's own statement (see her letter to Alexander N. Aksakov, dated December 3rd, 1874, in Solovyov's *Modern Priestess of Isis*). He served for many years in Horse-Artillery; after retiring, with the rank of Colonel, he became Postmaster-General of the District of Grodno. There existed a very close tie between Madame Blavatsky and her father, and he kept her supplied with means during most of her world-wide travels.]

³ [Helena Andreyevna de Fadeyev (1814–1842), H.P. Blavatsky's mother, was the daughter of Privy Councillor Andrey Mihaylovich de Fadeyev (1789–1867), Governor of the Province of Saratov, and later Director of the Department of State Lands in the Caucasus, and of Helena Pavlovna, née Princess Dolgorukova. The latter was a very remarkable person. She was a noted botanist, a woman of unusual scholarly attainments and of great culture, which was very rare for a woman of that period of Russian history. She was in correspondence with a number of scientists, among them Sir Roderick Murchison (1792–1871), British geologist and one of the Founders of the Royal Geographical Society, who went on an extensive geological expedition to Russia. She spoke five foreign languages and was an excellent painter. Her valuable herbarium was presented after her death to the University of St. Petersburg.]

Helena Andreyevna was the eldest daughter of the above-mentioned couple. Very early in life, she became a noted novelist, her first work being published when she was only 23. Her marriage was not a happy one, mainly due to incompatibility and the inability on her part to fit into the narrow groove of her husband's military life. In her novels, she pictured the wretched position of women, their lack of opportunities and education, and raised the problem of their ultimate emancipation. She was the first woman in Russia to do it by literary means. Her best works are *Utballa*, *Jelalu'd-Din*, *Theophany Abbiagio*, and *Lubonka*. She wrote under the pseudonym of Zinaida R * * * *. She died at the age of 28, and was hailed by the greatest Russian literary critic Byelinsky as a "Russian George Sand."

White Lotus Memorial Day.

Executive Order by the President of the Theosophical Society.

[We herewith append the full text of the Executive Order issued by Col. Henry S. Olcott, as it appeared in *Lucifer*, Vol. X, No. 57, May 1892, pp. 250-51:]

Theosophical Society,
President's Office,
Adyar, April 17th, 1892

IN HER LAST WILL, H.P. Blavatsky expressed a wish that yearly, on the anniversary of her death, some of her friends “should assemble at the Headquarters of The Theosophical Society and read a chapter of *The Light of Asia* and [extracts from] *Bhagavad Gītā*”; and since it is meet¹ that her surviving colleagues should keep green the memory of her services to humanity and her devoted love for our Society, the undersigned suggests that the anniversary be known among us as “White Lotus Day,” and makes the following Order and recommendation:

- 1 At Noon, on the 8th May, 1892, and on the same day in each succeeding year, there will be held a commemorative meeting at the Headquarters, at which extracts from the before-mentioned [324] works will be read, and brief addresses made by the Chairman of the meeting and others who may volunteer.
- 2 A dole of food will be given, in her name, to the poor fisher-men of Adyar and their families.
- 3 The T.S. flag will be half-masted from sunrise until sunset, and the Convention Hall decorated with white lotus flowers or lilies.
- 4 Members living outside Madras and intending to be present, can arrange for their food by applying to the Recording Secretary at least one week in advance.
- 5 The undersigned recommends to all Sections and Branches throughout the world to meet henceforth annually on the anniversary day, and, in some simple, unsectarian, yet dignified way, avoiding all slavish adulation and empty compliments, express the general feeling of loving regard for her who brought us the chart of the climbing Path which leads to the summits of KNOWLEDGE.

H.S. OLCOTT



¹ [appropriate and proper]

Suggested reading for students.



Tributes to Madame Blavatsky.

- BLAVATSKY INTERVIEWED BY CHARLES JOHNSTON
- BLAVATSKY MAKES IT IN BAGPIPE MUSIC
- BLAVATSKY ON BLAVATSKY
- BLAVATSKY REMEMBERED BY HENRY TRAVERS EDGE
- BLAVATSKY WILL INSTRUCT ME IN THE SEVEN SACRED TRANCES
- BLAVATSKY'S OBITUARY BY NY DAILY TRIBUNE
- BLAVATSKY'S OBITUARY BY WQ JUDGE
- CLEATHER ON BLAVATSKY (1922)
- CLEATHER ON THE GREAT BETRAYAL (1922)
- DE ZIRKOFF ON BLAVATSKY'S BACKGROUND AND EARLY LIFE
- DE ZIRKOFF PAYS HOMAGE TO BLAVATSKY
- THE ESOTERIC SHE BY WQ JUDGE
- THE GREAT NOETIC RADIANCE OF OUR EPOCH
- THE NEW YORK TIMES ON BLAVATSKY
- THE SEAL OF HP BLAVATSKY
- WACHTMEISTER ET AL. REMINISCE ON BLAVATSKY (1893)

