



# Contact

The members' newsletter of the Brisbane Theosophical Society

2011 Issue 2 May - August



His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama - coming to Brisbane in June.

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See our website for additional material and for the latest version of the current programme list. If you would like to receive email advice of changes or news please send us your email address.

## **Brisbane Theosophical Society**

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Web: <http://www.theosophyqld.org.au>  
Email: [brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au](mailto:brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au)

**BOOKSHOP & LIBRARY:** (Closed on Public Holidays)  
Monday to Thursday 10:30 am to 2:30 pm  
Friday 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm & 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm

The programme of Lodge meetings is enclosed and is also placed on the Lodge website which will always be the most up-to-date source of information. Whenever there are changes to the programme an email circular is sent to all people who have given us their email address.

The Theosophical Society has no official statements of belief. It encourages members to seek the truth by various avenues, but always subject to respect for others. All views expressed in these pages are entirely those of the authors – not of the Society.

## ***PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS***

Greetings fellow Theosophists,

... and special greetings to those of our members still suffering from the effects of the floods. We hope you will be back to normal soon.

The program for May to August is included with this edition of "Contact". Members are invited to gather together on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> May at 6.30 for "White Lotus Day" to honour Helena Blavatsky and acknowledge the amazing contribution she has made towards the betterment of humanity. Perhaps though the best way to honour her is to strive in our daily lives towards an understanding of that 'radical unity' which she expounds in the "One Fundamental Law", as being the basis of Occult Science.

I would also like to draw your attention to the program for August. Our National President, Dara Tatray, will be giving a talk, "The Interaction of Psyche and Matter", on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August at 7.30pm. It would be lovely to see many members for her talk, when you will have the opportunity to meet with her afterwards.

The Library committee has been rearranging library shelves partly for a better "look" in the reception area, and also because we have to accommodate a large number of books which were recently donated from the estate of Edward Lyness. Edward had a long and abiding interest in science and the books which will be going into the "Edward Lyness Science Library" reflect the depth and specificity of his knowledge.

Any comments or suggestions are welcomed by your committee (listed below) who are here to serve you and the Society.

Fraternal regards,  
*Phillipa Rooke*

# 2011 Brisbane Lodge Committee

*President:* Phillipa Rooke  
*Vice-presidents:* Noel Bertelle, Denis Armstrong  
*Treasurer:* Patricia Ossenburg  
*Secretary:* Angela Read  
*Members:* Phoebe Williams, Marion Smith,  
Aldo Donadel, Robyn Rizzo.

## Sub-Committees

**Finance:** Patricia, Phillipa, Noel, Angela  
**Program:** Noel, Phoebe, Phillipa  
**Library:** Phillipa, Patricia, Robyn, Aldo  
**Besant Bookshop:** Phoebe, Patricia, Noel  
**Property/Equipment/Besant House:** Dennis, Marion, Phoebe  
**Publicity:** Noel, Phoebe, Phillipa  
**Futures Committee:** Noel, Marion, Aldo  
**'Contact' editor:** Geoffrey Harrod

### **Obituary: *Elsie Richter* (née Hess) 1919 - 2011**

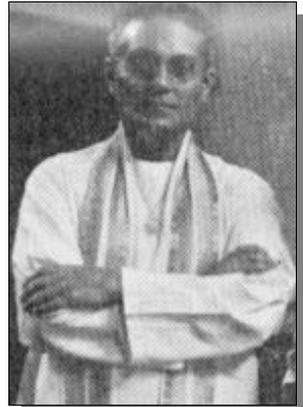
Many members of the Theosophical Society around Australia will have fond memories of Elsie Richter. She was active in Brisbane Lodge for many years and had been President. She was also very active in the Theosophical Order Of Service, especially during the many years that the TS had responsibility for running *The Hospice*, a home for elderly ladies in a large heritage-listed house at East Brisbane. She was also for a few years, the administrator of *The Manor*, a Theosophical community house on the shores of Sydney Harbour. She had also conducted *The Round Table*, a TS movement for young children. Elsie retired to Bribie Island and lived there for several years until recently, when her health deteriorated seriously. While at Bribie she attended TS meetings at the Caboolture Group. Her funeral service was held on 12 April at Albany Creek Crematorium, led by Bishop Alan Bradley of the Liberal Catholic Church.

You are the original Original; I am your faithful mirror.  
That tall cypress and its shadow, might as well be you and me.  
And if you are a rose, I am rose-shadow.  
All beauties have their followers, but roses have a way of fading,  
And I have a way of holding on too tight.  
I turn all thorn then, but you come back again,  
And make my thorniness fragrant and pink and petalled.  
So here is the cup of my heart and a toast.  
*To us! Every moment to us!*  
Why do I reach out anywhere else?  
Only your touch works out in the end.  
You are my candle, I am your bowl.

-- Rumi

# The Vision of the Spirit

By C Jinarajadasa (1875 - 1953)



The history of humanity is the history of ideas, and the stages through which men have risen from savage to civilized are distinguishable one from the other by the influence of certain great doctrines. Among these teachings which have moulded civilizations, the idea of Evolution stands out as heralding a new era in the world of thought. Considered at first as of mere academic interest, soon it was recognized as of practical value, today it is known as necessary in the understanding of every problem in every department of being.

Nevertheless it is a fact that the doctrine of evolution is a theory after all. No one has lived long enough to see sufficient links in the evolutionary chain to attest that the changes postulated as having taken place did so actually occur, and that the chain is not a fancy but a fact. Yet evolution is accepted by all as a dynamic idea, for like a magic wand it performs wonders in the world of thought. It marshals the heterogeneous organisms of nature into orderly groups, and from inanimate atom to protoplasm, from unicellular organism to multi-cellular, from invertebrate to vertebrate, from ape to man, one ascending scale of life is seen; –

And striving to be man, the worm  
Mounts through all the spires of form.

Yet none can say that evolution is an agreeable fact to contemplate, for there is a ruthlessness in Nature's methods which is appalling. Utterly cruel and wasteful she seems, creating and perfecting her creatures only to prey on each other, generating more than can live in the fierce struggle for existence. "Red in tooth and claw with ravin", she builds and un-builds and builds again, one-pointed only in this, that a type shall survive, reckless of the pleasure or pain to a single life. Men themselves, proud though they be in a fancied freedom of thought and action, are nothing but pawns in a game she plays. The more fully evolution is understood from such facts as scientists have so far gathered, the more justifiably can men say, with Omar, of their birth, life and death:

Into this Universe, and Why not knowing,  
Nor Whence, like Water - willy-nilly flowing,  
And out of it, like Wind along the Waste  
I know not Whither, willy-nilly blowing.

Of course this attitude does not represent that of the majority of men. Millions of men believe in a Creator, and that "God's in his heaven, All's right with the world!" But it is no exaggeration to say that their optimism continually receives rude shocks. No man or woman of sensibility can look about him and not agree with Tennyson's comparison of life to a play :-

Act first, this Earth, a stage to gloom'd with woe  
You all but sicken at the shifting scenes  
And yet be patient. Our Playwright may show  
In some fifth Act what this wild drama means.

Both the idea of Evolution and the idea of Divine Guidance, as each is at present conceived, fail to satisfy fully the needs of men for an inspiring view of life. The former indeed shows a splendid pageant of Nature, but it has no message to individual man, except to make the most of his brief day of life, and stoically resign himself to extinction when Nature shall have no further use for him. The latter speaks to men's hearts in alluring accents of a power that maketh for righteousness, but it sees God as existing only in the gaps of that pitiless cosmic order which science reveals. It is obvious, therefore, that any philosophy which postulates an inseparable relation, between God and evolution, between Nature and man, is worthy of examination, and this is the view of life which Theosophy propounds, in the light of one great idea.

This idea is that of the Evolution of Life. Just as modern science tells us of a ceaseless change of forms from protoplasm to man, so Theosophy asserts that there is, *pari passu*, a changing, growing life. This life does not originate in the forms, though we see it associated with them; and of it Theosophy says that first, it is indestructible, and second, that it evolves.

It is indestructible, in the sense that when an organism is destroyed, nevertheless all is not destroyed, for there remains a life which is still conscious. If a rose fades and its petals crumble and fall to dust, the life of that rose has not therefore ceased to be; that life persists in Nature, retaining in itself all the memories of all the experiences which it gained garbed as a rose. Then in due course of events, following laws which are comprehensible, that life animates another rose of another spring, bringing to its second embodiment the memories of its first. Whenever, therefore, there seems the death of a living thing, crystal or plant, animal or man, there always persists an indestructible life and consciousness, even though to all appearance the object is lifeless, and processes of decay have begun.

Further, this life is evolving, in exactly the same way that the scientist says that an organism evolves. The life is at first amorphous, and responds but little to the stimuli from without; it retains only feeble memories of its experiences which it gains through its successive embodiments. But it passes from stage to stage, through more and more complex organisms, till slowly it becomes more definite, more diverse in its functions. As the outer form evolves from protoplasm to man, so evolves too the life ensouling it. All Nature, visible and invisible, is the field of an evolution of life through successive series of evolving forms. The broad stages of this evolving life are from mineral to vegetable, from vegetable to animal, and from animal to man.

The doctrine of a life that evolves through evolving forms answers some of those questions which puzzle the biologist today. Many a fact hitherto considered outside the domain of science is seen as illustrative of new laws, and existing gaps are bridged over to make the doctrine of evolution more logical than ever.

It further shows Nature as not wasteful, and only seemingly cruel, for nothing is lost, since every experience in every form which was destroyed, in the process of natural selection, is treasured by the life today. The past lives in the present, to attest that Nature's purpose is not death crushing life, but life ever triumphant over death to make out of stocks and stones immortal men.

In each human being is seen this same principle of an imperishable evolving life. For man is an individual life and consciousness, an immortal soul capable of living apart from the body which we usually call "the man." In each soul, the process of evolution is at work. At his entrance on existence as a soul, he is feeble and chaotic in his consciousness, vague and indefinite in his understanding of the meaning of life, and capable only of a narrow range of thought and feeling. But he too evolves, from indefinite to definite, from simple to complex, from chaos to order.

Man's evolution is by successive manifestations in bodies of flesh, passing at the death of one body to begin life once more in another new one. In this passage, he carries with him the memory of all experiences which he has gained in the past behind him. This aspect of the

evolution of life as it affects men is called Reincarnation.

As all processes of Nature are intelligible on the hypothesis of an evolution of organisms, so all that happens to men becomes comprehensible in the light of reincarnation. As evolution links all forms by species and genus, family and order, class and group, sub-kingdom and kingdom, into one unbreakable chain, so reincarnation binds all human experiences into one consistent philosophy of life. How reincarnation explains the mysteries around us and inspires us, we shall now see.

Imagine with me that existence is symbolized by a mountain, and that millions are climbing to its summit. Let many days be needed before a traveler comes to his goal. Then, as he climbs day after day, the perspective of things below him and above him will change; new sights will greet his eyes, new airs will breathe around him; his eyes will adjust themselves to new horizons, and step by step objects will change shape and proportion. At last, on reaching the summit, a vast panorama will extend before him, and he will see clearly every part of the road which he climbed, and why it dipped into this valley and circled that crag. Let this mountain typify existence, and let the climbers up its sides be men and women who are immortal souls.

Let us now think for a moment of travelers at the mountain's base, who are to climb to its summit. We know how limited must be their horizon, and how little they can see of the long path before them. Let such travelers typify the most backward of our humanity, the most savage and least intelligent men and women we can find today. According to reincarnation, these are child-souls, just entering into existence, in order to undergo evolution and to be made into perfect souls. To understand the process of evolution let us watch one of them stage by stage as he climbs the mountain.

The first thing which we shall note is that this child-soul manifests a duality. For he is soul and body; as a soul he is from God, but as a body he is from the brute.

The Lord let the house of a brute to the soul of man

And man said, "Am I your debtor?"

And the Lord – "Not yet: but make it as clean as you can,

And then I will let you a better."

The body which he occupies has ingrained in it a strong instinct of self-preservation stamped upon it by the fierce struggle for existence of its animal progenitors; he himself, as a soul coming from God, has intuitions as to right and wrong, but as yet hardly any will. The body demands for its preservation that he be self-assertive and selfish; lacking the will to direct his evolution, he acts as the body impels.

Hence at this earliest stage of the soul, his vision of life as he climbs is that of the separated self. "Mine, not yours" is his principle of action; greed rules him, and a thirst for sensation drives him on, and he little heeds that he is unjust and cruel to others as he lives through his nights and days of selfishness and self-assertion. He seems strong-willed, for he is able to crush the weaker before him. But in reality he has no will at all, for he is but the plaything of an animal heredity which he cannot control. He has no more freedom of will than the water-wheel which turns at the bidding of the descending stream. He is but the tool of a "will to live" which accomplishes a purpose not his own.

Millions of men and women around us are at this first stage. Their craftiness, hardly deserving the name of intellect, is that of Falstaff for whom "the world is mine oyster which I with sword will open." In their least animal phases, comfort is their aim in life: "They dressed, digested, talked, articulated words; other vitality showed they almost none." The universe around them is meaningless, and they are scarce capable of wonder: "Let but a Rising of the Sun, let but a creation of the world happen twice, and it ceases to be marvellous, to be noteworthy or noticeable". The centre of the circle of the cosmos is in themselves, and they neither know nor care if another truer centre is possible.

Yet when we recognize that each of these souls is immortal, and that his future is "the future of

a thing whose growth and splendour have no limit," we begin to understand why, at this early stage, selfishness plays such a prominent part in his life. For in stages to come, he must be capable of standing alone firm on the basis of a coherent individuality; now is the time for him to develop initiative and strength. He is quick to retaliate, but the germs of swift decision are grown thereby; he is domineering and cruel, but the seeds of intelligent enterprise result from the animal cunning which he displays. Every evil which he does must some time be paid back in laborious service to his victims; yet on the whole the evil which he does at this stage is less in quantity and in force, for all its seeming, than that done in later stages, where intelligence is keener and emotion more powerful. At a certain period in human evolution, selfishness has its place in the economy of things, for selfishness too is a force used to build the battlements of heaven.

These souls, whose youth alone is the cause of their selfishness, are in their essence divine. There is in them no evil of a positive kind ; their vices are but the result of the absence of virtues, and their evil "is null, is naught, is silence implying sound". Each is a "good man" who, deep down within him, has a knowledge of "the one true way" though in his attempts to tread it he seems to retrograde rather than to evolve. Like plants in a garden, they are all tended by Him from whom they come; He knows the perfect souls that He will make out of them by change and growth as the ages pass by.

Though still confused his service is unto Me,  
I soon shall lead him to a clearer morning.  
Sees not the gardener, even while he buds his tree,  
Both flower and fruit the future years adorning?

Life after life, these souls come to birth, now as men and now as women; they live a life of selfishness, and they die, and hardly any change will be noticeable in the character ; but slowly there steals into their lives a dissatisfaction. The mind is too dull to grasp the relation of the individual to the whole, and the imagination is too feeble to realize that "man doth not live by bread alone". Hence it is that "the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to" are duly marshaled and employed to ruffle their self-centered contentment. Old age and death cast over them shadows which have no power to sadden a philosophic mind; disease and accident lie in wait for them to weight down their spirits and make them rebel against a fate they do not understand. Till their hearts shall enshrine a divine purpose, a Hound of Heaven pursues them, and "naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me."

Thus are they made ready to pass on to the next stage; the foundations of abilities have been laid, and the individual is firm on a basis built through selfishness. Now has come the time to begin the laborious work of "casting out of the self" and so there opens before the soul's gaze the vision of the next stage. According to the type of soul, this vision is either the Vision of the Mind or the Vision of the Emotions.

There are in life two main types of souls, the one in whom intelligence controls emotion, and the other in whom emotion sways the mind. One type is not more evolved than the other ; they are both stages to pass through in order to grow a higher faculty, that of Intuition. The vision of the third stage is the Vision of the Intuition, but to it souls come from the first stage either through intellect or through emotion.

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C Jinarajadasa was born in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) in 1875. He went to St John's College, Cambridge and studied languages. He travelled widely for the Theosophical Society, lecturing in many languages. He became president of the Theosophical Society Adyar In 1949 and founded the School of Wisdom. He was the president of Theosophical Society until his death on 18 June 1953.

# Events of note...

## *The Dalai Lama at the Theosophical Society, Wheaton, USA*

The Theosophical Society in America is are thrilled to announce that it will be hosting an event with His Holiness The 14th Dalai Lama at the **Wheaton (Chicago) HQ of the TS in America on 17 & 18 July 2011**. For registration and details see their website: <http://www.theosophical.org/index.php>

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## The Dalai Lama in Australia 2011

website: <http://www.dalailamainaustralia.org>

### *A Conversation With His Holiness The Dalai Lama*

#### **On Happiness on Life's Journey, Compassion and Overcoming Loss**

Friday 17th June - 1.30pm to 3.30pm  
Riverstage, Brisbane Botanic Gardens  
The \$50 seating area is **SOLD OUT**

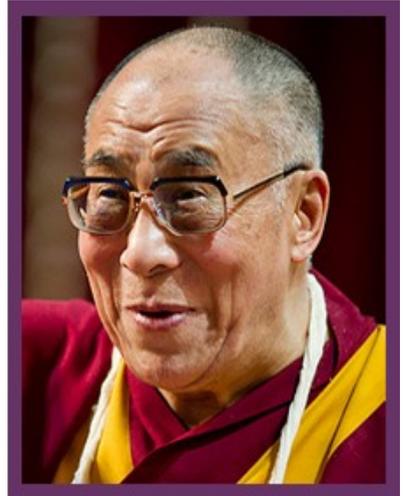
Several **overflow areas** are available with live streaming of the event within the **Brisbane Botanic Gardens** and some **QLD Regional Centres**. See the [dalailamainaustralia.org](http://dalailamainaustralia.org) website

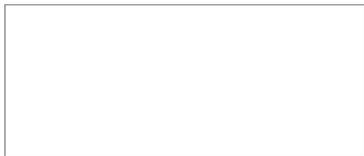
Nobel Laureate His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet, one of the world's most revered spiritual leaders, will make an historic visit to Brisbane and engage with the people from South East Queensland in this special Conversation for those impacted directly and indirectly by the Queensland floods. During this Public Conversation, the main public event for Queensland, His Holiness will speak about the human capacity to attain happiness despite circumstance and adversity.

Also see notes below about the Dalai Lama's '**Happiness & its causes**' conference at the Convention Centre South Brisbane, and his Intimate Forum '**Never Give Up**' for young people, at the Suncorp Piazza, Southbank. There is also an event at the **Chenrezig** Tibetan monastery, Sunshine Coast, but that is now sold out.

#### **Also, in Melbourne -**

*Public Teachings and Conversation* will be held over the June long weekend and include a full auxiliary program with guided meditations, panel discussions, Buddhist chanting, one on one Q& A sessions with monks and nuns, stalls, entertainment, a sand mandala created by the famous Gyuto Monks and a very real Tibetan atmosphere.





## Tools and techniques for a happier life

16 – 17 June 2011

**Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre**

The 6th Annual *Happiness & Its Causes* conference is a highly acclaimed and truly extraordinary event bringing together 40+ inspiring speakers and an audience of over 3,000 delegates for a thrilling exploration of human happiness.

At this amazing event you will meet Noble Peace Prize winner **His Holiness the Dalai Lama**, and leading humanitarian, French monk and author, **Matthieu Ricard** once described by research scientists as “the happiest man in the world”.

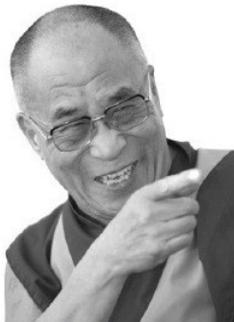
Joining the Dalai Lama in the *Science of Mind* Forum are pioneering emotions expert and inspiration behind the Emmy nominated television series, 'Lie to Me' **Dr Paul Ekman**, leading neuroscientist and empathy researcher **Professor Marco Iacoboni** and Australian of the Year 2010 and international advocate for mental health reform **Professor Pat McGorry**.

Join the brightest minds in philosophy, psychology, science, religion and the arts to explore the age-old question – “how can we lead a happier, more meaningful life?”

**Since the first *Happiness & Its Causes* conference in 2006, over 8,000 people have been moved and inspired by what is now the world’s most important forum on human happiness.**

For the full conference program, details of the pre- and post-conference workshops or to reserve your place, simply visit [www.happinessanditscauses.com.au](http://www.happinessanditscauses.com.au) or call (02) 8719 5118.

**“No Matter What — Never Give Up”**



## Intimate Forum with His Holiness the **Dalai Lama**

A unique opportunity for young people, families, educational providers and others to connect with His Holiness on a personal level.

**T**oday, many young people are experiencing hardship and suffering. Depression, disability, challenging home lives and just ‘feeling different’ can make it difficult to picture a positive future.

Ask questions online and hear the Dalai Lama’s answers at the Forum.

**VENUE: Suncorp Piazza, South Bank Brisbane**

**DATE: 15 June 2011**

**TIME: 2pm - 3.30pm**

**MC: Meshel Laurie**

**TICKETS: \$22 (limited seats)**

**[www.karuna.org.au/youth-forum](http://www.karuna.org.au/youth-forum)**

**[e:youthforum@karuna.org.au](mailto:e:youthforum@karuna.org.au)**



His Holiness the Fourteenth  
**DALAI LAMA'S JOURNEY**  
Australian Visit 9-20 June 2011  
**A MAN OF COMPASSION & WISDOM**



**karuna**  
Kindness. Compassion. Courage.

# The Number Seven

by H P Blavatsky (1831-1891)

A deep significance was attached to numbers in hoary antiquity. There was not a people with anything like philosophy, but gave great prominence to numbers in their application to religious observances, the establishment of festival days, symbols, dogmas, and even the geographical distribution of empires. The mysterious numerical system of Pythagoras was nothing novel when it appeared far earlier than 600 years B.C. The occult meaning of figures and their combinations entered into the meditations of the sages of every people; and the day is not far off when, compelled by the eternal cyclic rotation of events, our now sceptical unbelieving West will have to admit that in that regular periodicity of ever recurring events there is something more than a mere blind chance. Already our Western savants begin to notice it. Of late, they have pricked up their ears and begun speculating upon cycles, numbers and all that which, but a few years ago, they had relegated to oblivion in the old closets of memory, never to be unlocked but for the purpose of grinning at the uncouth and idiotic superstitions of our unscientific fore-fathers.



As one of such novelties, the old, and matter-of-fact German journal *Die Gegenwart* has a serious and learned article upon "the significance of the number seven" introduced to the readers as a "Culture-historical Essay." After quoting from it a few extracts, we will have something to add to it perhaps. The author says:

The number seven was considered sacred not only by all the cultured nations of antiquity and the East, but was held in the greatest reverence even by the later nations of the West. The astronomical origin of this number is established beyond any doubt. Man, feeling himself time out of mind dependent upon the heavenly powers, ever and everywhere made earth subject to heaven. The largest and brightest of the luminaries thus became in his sight the most important and highest of powers; such were the planets which the whole antiquity numbered as seven. In course of time these were transformed into seven deities. The Egyptians had seven original and higher gods; the Phœnicians seven kabiris; the Persians, seven sacred horses of Mithra; the Parsees, seven angels opposed by seven demons, and seven celestial abodes paralleled by seven lower regions. To represent the more clearly this idea in its concrete form, the seven gods were often represented as one seven-headed deity. The whole heaven was subjected to the seven planets; hence, in nearly all the religious systems we find seven heavens.

The beliefs in the sapta loka of the Brahminical religion has remained faithful to the archaic philosophy; and--who knows--but the idea itself was originated in Aryavarta, this cradle of all philosophies and mother of all subsequent religions! If the Egyptian dogma of the metempsychosis or the transmigration of soul taught that there were seven states of purification and progressive perfection, it is also true that the Buddhists took from the Aryans of India, not from Egypt, their idea of seven stages of progressive development of the

disembodied soul, allegorized by the seven stories and umbrellas, gradually diminishing towards the top on their pagodas.

In the mysterious worship of Mithra there were "seven gates," seven altars, seven mysteries. The priests of many Oriental nations were sub-divided into seven degrees; seven steps led to the altars and in the temples burnt candles in seven-branched candlesticks. Several of the Masonic Lodges have, to this day, seven and fourteen steps.

The seven planetary spheres served as a model for state divisions and organizations. China was divided into seven provinces; ancient Persia into seven satrapies. According to the Arabian legend seven angels cool the sun with ice and snow, lest it should burn the earth to cinders; and seven thousand angels wind up and set the sun in motion every morning. The two oldest rivers of the East--the Ganges and the Nile--had each seven mouths. The East had in the antiquity seven principal rivers (the Nile, the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Oxus, the Yaksart, the Arax and the Indus); seven famous treasures; seven cities full of gold; seven marvels of the world, &c. Equally did the number seven play a prominent part in the architecture of temples and palaces. The famous pagoda of Churingham is surrounded by seven square walls, painted in seven different colours, and in the middle of each wall is a seven storied pyramid; just as in the antediluvian days the temple of Borsippa, now the Birs-Nimrud, had seven stages, symbolical of the seven concentric cycles of the seven spheres, each built of tiles and metals to correspond with the colour of the ruling planet of the sphere typified.

These are all "remnants of paganism" we are told--traces "of the superstitions of old, which, like the owls and bats in a dark subterranean, flew away to return no more before the glorious light of Christianity"--a statement but too easy of refutation. If the author of the article in question has collected hundreds of instances to show that not only the Christians of old but even the modern Christians have preserved the number seven, and as sacredly as it ever was before, there might be found in reality thousands. To begin with the astronomical and religious calculation of old of the pagan Romans, who divided the week into seven days, and held the seventh day as the most sacred, the Sol or Sunday of Jupiter, and to which all the Christian nations especially the Protestants--make puja to this day. If, perchance, we are answered that it is not from the pagan Romans but from the monotheistic Jews that we have it, then why is not the Saturday or the real "Sabbath" kept instead of the Sunday, or Sol's day?

If in the "Rámáyana" seven yards are mentioned in the residences of the Indian kings; and seven gates generally led to the famous temples and cities of old, then why should the Frieslanders have in the tenth century of the Christian era strictly adhered to the number seven in dividing their provinces, and insisted upon paying seven "pfennigs" of contribution? The Holy Roman and Christian Empire has seven Kurfursts or Electors. The Hungarians emigrated under the leadership of seven dukes and founded seven towns, now called Semigradyá (now Transylvania). If pagan Rome was built on seven hills, Constantinople had seven names--Byzance, Antonia, New Rome, the town of Constantine, The Separator of the World's Parts, The Treasure of Islam, Stamboul--and was also called the city on the seven Hills, and the city of the seven Towers as an adjunct to others. With the Mussulmans "it was besieged seven times and taken after seven weeks by the seventh of the Osman Sultans." In the ideas of the Eastern peoples, the seven planetary spheres are represented by the seven rings worn by the women on seven parts of the body--the head, the neck, the hands, the feet, in the ears, in the nose, around the waist--and these seven rings or circles are presented to this time by the Eastern suitors to their brides; the beauty of the woman consisting in the Persian songs of seven charms.

The seven planets ever remaining at an equal distance from each other, and rotating in the same path, hence, the idea suggested by this motion, of the eternal harmony of the universe.

In this connection the number seven became especially sacred with them, and ever preserved its importance with the astrologers. The Pythagoreans considered the figure seven as the image and model of the divine order and harmony in nature. It was the number containing twice the sacred number three or the "triad," to which the "one" or the divine monad was added:  $3 + 1 + 3$ . As the harmony of nature sounds on the key-board of space, between the seven planets, so the harmony of audible sound takes place on a smaller plan within the musical scale of the ever-recurring seven tones. Hence, seven pipes in the syrinx of the god Pan (or Nature), their gradually diminishing proportion of shape representing the distance between the planets and between the latter and the earth--and, the seven-stringed lyre of Apollo. Consisting of a union between the number three (the symbol of the divine triad with all and every people, Christians as well as pagans) and of four (the symbol of the cosmic forces or elements), the number seven points out symbolically to the union of the Deity with the universe; this Pythagorean idea was applied by the Christians--(especially during the Middle Ages)--who largely used the number seven in the symbolism of their sacred architecture. So, for instance, the famous Cathedral of Cologne and the Dominican Church at Regensburg display this number in the smallest architectural details.

No less an importance has this mystical number in the world of intellect and philosophy. Greece had seven sages, the Christian Middle Ages seven free arts (grammar, rhetoric, dialectics, arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy). The Mahometan Sheikh-ul-Islam calls in for every important meeting seven "ulems." In the Middle Ages an oath had to be taken before seven witnesses, and the one, to whom it was administered, was sprinkled seven times with blood. The processions around the temples went seven times, and the devotees had to kneel seven times before uttering a vow. The Mahometan pilgrims turn round Kaaba seven times, at their arrival. The sacred vessels were made of gold and silver purified seven times. The localities of the old German tribunals were designated by seven trees, under which were placed seven "Schoffers" (judges) who required seven witnesses. The criminal was threatened with a seven-fold punishment and a seven-fold purification was required as a seven-fold reward was promised to the virtuous. Every one knows the great importance placed in the West on the seventh son of a seventh son. All the mythic personages are generally endowed with seven sons. In Germany, the king and now the emperor cannot refuse to stand as god-father to a seventh son, if he be even a beggar. In the East in making up for a quarrel or signing a treaty of peace, the rulers exchange either seven or forty-nine ( $7 \times 7$ ) presents.

To attempt to cite all the things included in this mystical number would require a library. We will close by quoting but a few more from the region of the demoniacal. According to authorities in those matters--the Christian clergy of old--a contract with the devil had to contain seven paragraphs, was concluded for seven years and signed by the contractor seven times; all the magical drinks prepared with the help of the enemy of man consisted of seven herbs; that lottery ticket wins, which is drawn out by a seven-year old child. Legendary wars lasted seven years, seven months and seven days; and the combatant heroes number seven, seventy, seven hundred, seven thousand and seventy thousand. The princesses in the fairy tales remained seven years under a spell, and the boots of the famous cat--the Marquis de Carabas--were seven leagued. The ancients divided the human frame into seven parts; the head, the chest, the stomach, two hands and two feet; and man's life was divided into seven periods. A baby begins teething in the seventh month; a child begins to sit after fourteen months ( $2 \times 7$ ); begins to walk after twenty-one months ( $3 \times 7$ ); to speak after twenty-eight months ( $4 \times 7$ ); leaves off sucking after thirty-five months ( $5 \times 7$ ); at fourteen years ( $2 \times 7$ ) he begins to finally form himself; at twenty-one ( $3 \times 7$ ) he ceases growing. The average height of a man, before mankind degenerated, was seven feet; hence the old Western laws ordering the garden walls to be seven feet high. The education of the boys began with the Spartans and the old Persians at the age of seven. And in the Christian religions--with the Roman Catholics and

the Greeks--the child is not held responsible for any crime till he is seven, and it is the proper age for him to go to confession.

If the Hindus will think of their Manu and recall what the old Shastras contain, beyond doubt they will find the origin of all this symbolism. Nowhere did the number seven play so prominent a part as with the old Aryas in India. We have but to think of the seven sages--the Sapta Rishis; the Sapta Loka--the seven worlds; the Sapta Pura--the seven holy cities; the Sapta Dvipa--the seven holy islands; the Sapta Samudra--the seven holy seas; the Sapta Parvatta--the seven holy mountains; the Sapta Arania--the seven deserts; the Sapta Vriksha--the seven sacred trees; and so on, to see the probability of the hypothesis. The Aryas never borrowed anything, nor did the Brahmans, who were too proud and exclusive for that. Whence, then, the mystery and sacredness of the number seven?

*The Theosophist, June, 1880*

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## Dhyani-Buddha

From *Fundamentals of Esoteric Philosophy* by **Gottfried De Purucker**

The highest aspect, or the highest subentity of the Wondrous Being is called adi-buddha, adi meaning "primeval" (or the highest). This adi-buddha is in the dharmakaya state: a Sanskrit compound of two words meaning the "continuance-body," sometimes translated equally well -- or ill -- the "body of the law," both very inadequate expressions, for the difficulty in translating these extremely mystical terms is very great. A mere correct dictionary translation misses the esoteric meaning entirely; and just there is where Occidental scholars make such ludicrous errors at times. The first word comes from the root dhri, meaning "to support," "to sustain," "to carry," "to bear," hence "to continue"; also human laws are the agencies supposed to carry, support, sustain, civilization; the second element, kaya, means "body"; the noun thus formed may be rendered the "body of the law," but this phrase does not give the idea at all. It is that spiritual body or state of a high spiritual being in which the sense of soulship and egoity has vanished into a universal (hierarchical) sense, and remains only in the seed, i.e., latent -- if even so much. It is pure consciousness, pure bliss, pure intelligence, freed from all personalizing thought.

The second aspect or subentity is called the dhyani-buddha, "contemplation-buddha," a great descent from the former, so far as mere impersonal spirituality goes. This is carried by the sambhoga-kaya, two Sanskrit words meaning "enjoyment-body," or rather "participation-body," because the buddha in the sambhoga-kaya state still participates in, still retains, its consciousness as an individual, its egoship and its soul, though it is still too far above material or personal concerns to care about or to meddle with them; and therefore it would be powerless here on our material earth. As H. P. Blavatsky once said, a god from the spheres celestial, living solely in its own nature, and without a material body to manifest in material spheres, would be utterly powerless there.

The third, and lowest, yet in one sense the highest aspect or subentity (highest on account of the immense, willing, self-sacrifice involved in its incarnation in human flesh) is the manusha-buddha, meaning "human buddha," because born in a human body for compassionate work

among men. The manusha-buddha at will or need lives and works in the nirmanakaya, "form-body," about which a very wonderful doctrine exists, to be explained later.

The dhyani-buddhas are one of the ten classes of beings which came to our globe from the preceding planetary manvantara. We will recite them, as follows: three elemental kingdoms, the lowest; the mineral kingdom; the plant kingdom; the beast kingdom. I pause a moment in order to make a remark. Please do not say "animal" in this connection. We must have precision here. Animal means any being which has an anima, or "vital soul." Man is an animal in that sense, but he is not a beast, His vital-astral-physical body is a beast, and he works in and with a human soul through a vital or beast soul, enlightened by a spiritual soul. We hope to have time later to illustrate this point more fully this evening.

Then another kingdom after the beast kingdom: the manusha-kingdom or human kingdom. So far, then, we have three elemental kingdoms, 3; then the mineral, 4; plant, 5; beast, 6; human, 7. Then begin the dhyan-chohans of three classes. Man in his higher nature is an embryo dhyan-chohan, an embryo lord of meditation. It is his destiny, if he run the race successfully, to blossom forth at the end of the seventh round as a lord of meditation; if you like, as a spiritual planetary, or a planetary spirit, when this planetary manvantaric kalpa is ended, this Day of Brahma, which is the seven rounds in seven stages each. But there are three classes of dhyan-chohans, as said; these three classes in their turn are each divided into seven, as you know. Now of these three the lowest class being divided into seven, of these seven the fourth is that dhyan-chohan who is our "God in Heaven," for this fourth round. Its spiritual primary is the adi-buddha of the fourth round. It itself is a dhyani-buddha.

Let us try to make this clearer. On each planet or globe of the seven globes forming the planetary chain, as the life-wave touches it in a round -- and similarly through all the seven rounds -- there is evolved, or rather appears, a buddha, it might be better to say a maha-buddha: one at the commencement of a globe's awakening to life again, and another maha-buddha when the life-wave leaves the planet after completing its round there. Likewise, for each race during such a globe-round there appears another buddha who, so to say, is a ray from the maha-buddha of the planet, and is called the race-buddha; and he in his turn, at the middle of the race, or when the central point of the race is nearing, overshadows a chosen human vessel of purity and nobility, or spiritual grandeur, this last becoming the buddha preparing the spiritual way for the great race-buddha of the succeeding root-race, who appears shortly before the close of the preceding root-race. Such a one (as this last) was the Lord Sakyamuni, Gautama Buddha, who is now living on earth, as the Teachers tell us, a nirmanakaya. A nirmanakaya is the lowest of the three mystical vehicles, as we explained a little while ago. It exists in seven degrees or kinds, the lowest being the case where the entity, the spiritual entity, retains all his human principles except the physical body -- all. He is a man in every respect, except for the physical body, which he has discarded.

It is in this manner that this subject of the Wondrous Being, which seems so intricate, but which is actually so simple, is explained. It seems intricate on account of its subtlety, but it is very simple indeed. It is our brain-minds of matter which prevent us from seeing it easily and clearly. The ray running through all our individual being, from which we draw our spiritual life and spiritual sustenance, comes direct to us from this hierarchical Wondrous Being in whom we all are rooted. He to us, psychologically and spiritually, holds exactly the same place that the human ego, the man-ego, holds to the innumerable multitudes of elemental entities which compose his body -- atomic infinitesimals, before referred to, are not meant here.

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# T.O.S. news

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## **You are invited to join us in putting Theosophy into practice**

### **Thankyou**

The April working bee at the Springbrook Theosophical Retreat Centre was a great success, thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of those who attended from the Brisbane and Sunshine Coast Lodges. Despite a few sore muscles, everyone seemed to enjoy working together as well as the opportunities to get to know their fellow theosophists a little better. Thank you to all who helped to put a shine on our national TS Retreat Centre.

Many thanks to everyone who bought items at the TOS sale table in March. The money raised will be donated to the literacy home-school project conducted by the TOS in Pakistan.



Thank you also to those who generously donated to the TOS flood appeal. A cheque has been sent to a TS member who is struggling to recover from the effects of the January floods on his livelihood.

### **Join our planning meetings**

Planning meetings are held quarterly from 10.00 to 11:30 am in the T.S. rooms. All interested people are invited to attend.

Future meetings are on Saturdays 4 June, 3 September and 3 December 2011.

### **Activities coming up**

#### **Sale table**

Bring your gold coins along to the TS meeting on **Friday 3 June** to spend on goodies such as jam, pickles, biscuits and fresh produce. Money raised from this sale table will be donated to the Hamlin Fistula Relief program in Ethiopia. This project promotes safe birthing practices and provides free surgery for women who become incontinent as a result of birthing difficulties. Many of these women are hidden away and ostracised by their communities and a simple operation restores not only their health but also enables them to have a normal life within their society.

#### **Fundraising painting workshop**

A TOS craft workshop will be held in the Brisbane Theosophical Society rooms (355 Wickham Tce) on **Saturday 18 June 2011** from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm.

This is your opportunity to meet up with friends and create beautiful painted and printed T-shirts and other items.

**Cost: \$10.00**, includes materials used. Snacks, tea and coffee will be provided.

The money raised will contribute to funding a literacy home-school in Pakistan. **Every \$60 provides a young girl or boy with schooling for a year!**

To register, talk to Tina Fiedler at Brisbane TS or email her: [tinafiedler@bigpond.com](mailto:tinafiedler@bigpond.com)



#### **Movie brunch**

Look out for invitations to our movie brunch in August. Funds raised from this event will be used for our new project to support young homeless women.

## The Theosophical Society

A worldwide body whose primary object is to promote Universal Brotherhood. The Society imposes no belief upon its members, who are united by a common search for truth. Its constitution declares three objects:

1. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
2. To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.
3. To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in the human being.

The Theosophical Society has no official doctrine. All philosophies, religions and methods of spiritual practice are within its scope of interest but not endorsed. Material published in this journal therefore does not carry any endorsement or represent any official viewpoint of the organisation.

The Motto of the Society is ***There is no religion higher than Truth.***

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