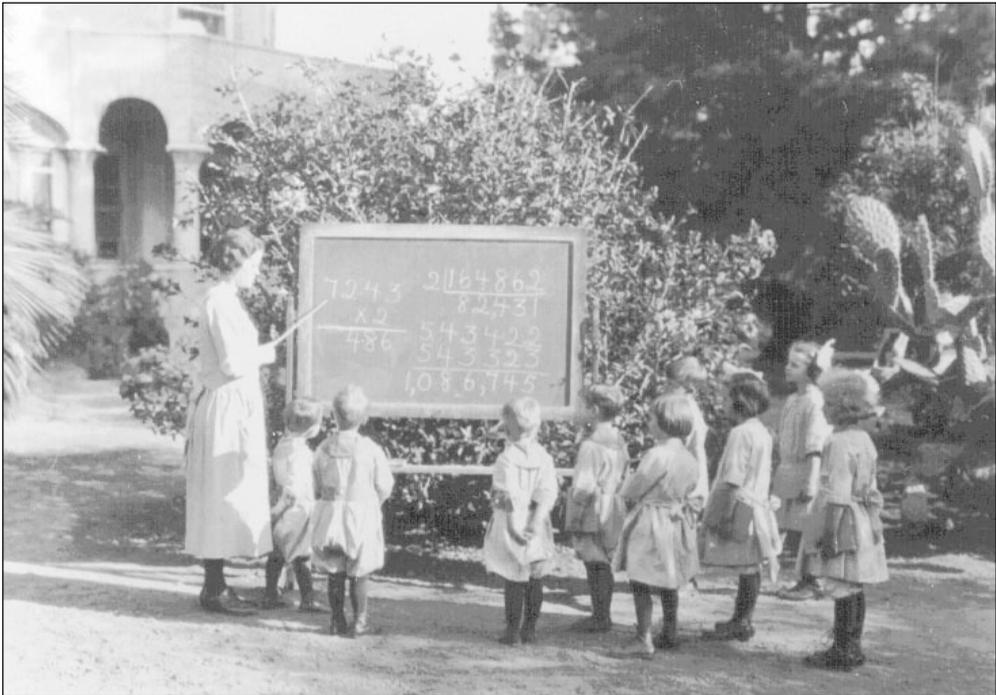


Theosophical History



A Quarterly Journal of Research

Volume VII, No. 2 April 1998

ISSN 0951-497X

THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY

A Quarterly Journal of Research

Founded by Leslie Price, 1985

Volume VII, No. 2

April 1998

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Theosophical History (ISSN 0951-497X) is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October by James A. Santucci (Department of Comparative Religion, California State University, P.O. Box 6868, Fullerton, CA 92834-6868 U.S.A.) The journal consists of eight issues *per* volume: one volume covering a period of two years. The journal's purpose is to publish contributions specifically related to the modern Theosophical Movement, from the time of Madame Helena Blavatsky and others who were responsible in establishing the original Theosophical Society (1875), to all groups that derive their teachings—directly or indirectly, knowingly or unknowingly—from her or her immediate

followers. In addition, the journal is also receptive to related movements (including pre-Blavatskyite Theosophy, Spiritualism, Rosicrucianism, and the philosophy of Emanuel Swedenborg to give but a few examples) that have had an influence on or displayed an affinity to modern Theosophy.

The subscription rate for residents in the U.S., Mexico, and Canada is \$21.00 (one year) or \$38.00 (two years). California residents, please add \$1.62 (7.75%) sales tax onto the \$21 rate or \$2.94 onto the \$38 rate. For residents outside North America, the subscription rate is \$25.00 (one year) or \$45.00 (two years). Air mail is \$35.00 (one year) or \$65.00 (two years). Single issues are \$6.00. Subscriptions may also be paid in British sterling. All inquiries should be sent to **James Santucci**, Department of Comparative Religion, California State University, P.O. Box 6868, Fullerton, CA 92834-6868 (U.S.A.). Periodicals postage paid at Fullerton, California 92631-9998. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Theosophical History (c/o James Santucci), Department of Comparative Religion, California State University, P.O. Box 6868, Fullerton, CA 92834-6868.

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There is no limitation on the length of manuscripts. In general, articles of 30 pages or less will be published in full; articles in excess of 30 pages may be published serially.

Brief communications, review articles, and book reviews are welcome. They should be submitted double-spaced.

All correspondence, manuscripts, and subscriptions should be sent to:

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Printed on acid-free paper

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On the Cover: Judith Tyberg and her class (*ca.* 1920s). [Reproduced with permission from The Theosophical Society (Pasadena).]

Editor's Comments

In This Issue

An interesting mixture of topics is presented in this issue. Two articles are presented: "The Child, Theosophy, and Victorian American Culture at Point Loma" by William M. Ashcraft and "A Tibetan Description of HPB" by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. The first article by Dr. Ashcraft proposes a new look at Point Loma, building upon the initial insights of Emmett Greenwalt's *California Utopia: Point Loma: 1897-1942*, and going beyond his concerns to present Point Loma as an excellent example of a community displaying cultural synthesis. This synthesis of "practical Theosophy" and American Victorian values is especially evident in the rearing and education of children. On the one hand, the Point Loma Theosophists conformed to prevalent views of child care, yet on the other hand there was the controversial and seemingly contradictory practice of separating the children at Point Loma from their biological parents. The purpose of this practice, in the view of the educationists at Point Loma, was to maximize the children's spiritual and character training by placing them in the more capable hands of the Point Loma staff. Still, this care and training was not impersonal but was purportedly accompanied with a love that was equally maternal and nurturing as that of the biological parents. The notion of family thus was expanded from the nuclear family to that of a "kinship network." The title of Mrs. Clinton's

book, *It Takes a Village*, clearly reflects this attitude.

The second article was originally delivered at the American Academy of Religion last November. Entitled "A Tibetan Description of HPB," Professor Donald S. Lopez provides information about the figure who wrote this only known portrait in Tibetan literature, Gendun Chopel (dGe 'dun Chos 'phel). Chopel was a traveler and translator who collaborated with George Roerich, the son of Nicholas Roerich, in the translation of *Debther sngon po*, a history of Tibetan Buddhism originally written in 1476. Chopel wrote his travel journals around 1940, a portion of which contained a survey of the religious climate in India. In this context, he mentioned both Theosophy and Madame Blavatsky. Dr. Lopez' translation and observations are contained within the article, both of which should be of great interest to Theosophists.

A word now of the authors' background. William M. Ashcraft teaches in the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri. He received his Ph.D. degree at the University of Virginia in 1992. His thesis is entitled "*The Dawn of the New Cycle*": *Point Loma Theosophists and American Culture, 1896-1929*. Professor Lopez is Professor of Buddhist and Tibetan Studies in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures at

the University of Michigan. He is the author of many books, among which are *Buddhist Hermeneutics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), and *Elaborations on Emptiness: Uses of the Heart Sutra* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

A new feature, "Associate Editor's Communications," allows the Associate Editors to contribute reviews, short articles, or observations pertinent to the subject area of the journal. It is fitting that Leslie Price—the founder of *Theosophical History*, former editor and current U.K. representative of *Theosophical History*—contributes two communications: "In Search of Simon Magus" and "A New Criticism of Richard Hodgson."

Another new entry is Michael Homer's cinema review of *Fairy Tale: A True Story*. Readers may recall Mr. Homer's "The Recoming of the Fairies" (co-authored by Massimo Introvigne), which appeared in the April 1996 issue. The article prompted two responses by Leslie Shepard and Jean Overton Fuller in the April 1997 issue. Now that the film has appeared, Mr. Homer comments on the story line and its correlation with the actual events.

Finally, a book review is included. The contributor, George Williams, is professor at Chico State. He is the author of *The Quest for Meaning of Svami Vivekananda* (Chico: New Horizons Press, 1974).

* * *

Leslie Price

Beginning immediately, Leslie Price will serve as U.K. representative for *Theosophical History*. Renewals, new subscriptions, orders of *Theosophical History Occasional Papers* and *Theosophical History Centre* publications may be placed through him. Mr. Price's address is:

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* * *

American Academy of Religion/Western Region

The annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion/Western Region will be held at Claremont School of Theology and Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, California on March 15-17, 1998. On Sunday, March 15 from 1:00-3:00 PM the following theme will be presented:

"Origins and Developments in the Formative Years of the Theosophical Society"

Speakers and titles include the following:

James Santucci: "The Original Purpose of the Theosophical Society"

Will Thackara, Theosophical University Press: "H. P. Blavatsky's First Theosophical Article: Overture, Proem, and the Original Program"

Jerry Hejka-Ekins, California State University, Stanislaus: "The Development of Theosophical Terms from H.P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett and Charles W. Leadbeater"

The session will be held at the School of Theology in Theology 103.

* * * * *

Associate Editor's Communications

In Search of Simon Magus

Readers of Madame Blavatsky's private esoteric instructions (edited in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, XII) soon find (or lose!) themselves in a detailed discussion of Simon Magus [SM], the opponent of the early Christian Apostles (*Acts* 8), whose appearance in scripture triggered an extensive literature. I suggest this material was assembled for her by her secretary G.R.S. Mead, whose first monograph later made it public.¹

The importance to Blavatsky and Mead of SM was his traditional position as the first heretic and founder of Gnosticism. Mead also felt that he had been libeled by Christian writers and could be much better understood in the light of Theosophy. It is of some interest that Alberto Ferreiro of Seattle Pacific University, Washington, has initiated a search to collect *in toto* references to SM in patristic and medieval sources, including any relevant modern scholarship, and iconographic resources.²

Ferreiro has identified seven major traditions:

- 1) SM as the first Gnostic and founder of that sect
- 2) SM/Simon Peter confrontation involving mad dogs

- 3) SM in Irish ecclesiastical folklore and in the Celtic-Irish/Anglo-Saxon tonsure debates
- 4) SM as founder of a pseudo-apostolic succession
- 5) SM as the father of filthy lucre/simony
- 6) the aerial flight of SM made possible by demonic assistance.

It appears to be accepted today that the first tradition is in error. Ferreiro cites Wayne Meeks as concluding: "The use of reports about Simon Magus as evidence for a pre-Christian gnosticism has been effectively refuted."³ Nevertheless, when Ferreiro publishes his promised monograph on the SM tradition, we should be well-placed to reassess Mead's claims and to appreciate the wide diffusion of what Ferreiro calls this quintessential bad guy in the eyes of the Church.

* * *

A New Criticism of Richard Hodgson

Many students of the Blavatsky case had long thought that Richard Hodgson was deficient as a researcher, but especially before the work of Vernon Harrison, it was hard to get

Notes

a hearing from the psychical research community, in Britain or America, where Hodgson was a revered pioneer and connected with Cambridge University.

However, the British SPR has now published a re-examination of one of the most famous reports by Hodgson that dealt with a supposed communicator through the Boston medium Mrs. Piper, known by the pseudonym George Pelham [GP]. This is often cited as supporting the validity of mediumship.

The author, James Munves⁴ of New York, first studied the British archives twenty years ago, when I heard of his doubts. Hodgson was of course obliged to respect the privacy of numerous persons in his 1897 report, so allowances must be made for this in assessing gaps or changes in his narrative. Nevertheless, Munves charges Hodgson with some serious faults. They include:

Hodgson reported himself present, even as taking notes, when he was absent.

These seance notes were often very incomplete.

Evidential precautions to separate the medium from normal sources of knowledge were lax.

Hodgson accepted the false official version of G.P.'s death, which was incidentally not disputed by the "communicator."

It seem likely that we shall never know what really happened at the G.P. sittings with Mrs. Piper. But these new disclosures confirm that Hodgson's grasp of scientific method was poor, and emphasizes that his investigation of Madame Blavatsky must be treated with caution.

¹ G.R.S. Mead, *Simon Magus. An Essay* (London 1892). There is a recent but undated reproduction of the essay from Kessinger Publishing Col., Montana (U.S.A.). The centenary was marked by a conference in London, reported in J. Godwin, "The Mead Symposium," *Theosophical History* IV/2 (April 1992): 50.

² A. Ferreiro, "Simon Magus: The Patristic-Medieval Traditions and Historiography," *Apocrypha* 7: 147-65. This is an international journal of apocryphal literatures with a Belgian-French background.

³ Wayne A. Meeks, "Simon Magus in Recent Research," *Religious Studies Review* 3/3 (1977): 137-42. Meeks doubts that it is possible to establish the historical SM or his female companion Helena.

⁴ "Richard Hodgson, Mrs Piper and 'George Pelham': a Centennial Reassessment" *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 62/849 (October 1997): 138-54.

* * * * *

Communications

From Dmitri Spivak (St. Petersburg, Russia):

Thank you for continuing to supply me with fresh issues of your journal. Reading its articles invariably means going through a sequence of intellectual adventures. The latest one, containing a paper on Cerubina de Gabriak, has been particularly interesting.

The cult of Cerubina is definitely at full swing in this country. Having recently visited the town of Koktebel', I have witnessed traditional torch procession to the tomb of Voloshin, and listened to new versions of the old myth of poor Cerubina, and her/(his?) knights.

Dr.K.Groberg has written an excellent article. However, there is one particular aspect, having to do with 'theosophical history', which I tend to regard as misleading. Enumerating spiritual doctrines which were absolutely fundamental for Cerubina, Dr.Groberg names Symbolism, Roman Catholicism, and Anthroposophy (p.293). My point is that Freemasonry ought to head the list.

To take but a single example, one could cite the famous poem "Coat of Arms," where Cerubina wrote:

But what should I place in my shield?
Obscure Daturae or roses of the temple?
The copper seal of Tubal
Or the acacia of Hiram?

Masonic vocabulary is more than audible here for a contemporary Russian ear. This was

the case in the beginning of the century as well. Commenting on this verse, one of the protagonists of the Cerubina story, the notorious S. Makovskii wrote in his [*post factum*] memories entitled *Cerubina de Gabriak* that ". . . only a 'freemason' could have written it, no Catholic girl would ever conceive 'the acacia of Hiram'. Voloshin himself told me that he was a freemason belonging to the 'Great Orient' of Paris."

Other arguments seem to be more or less obvious. In their turn, they could have led the author to a more balanced evaluation of the role of Max Voloshin in the process of creating the poetic treasure signed under the name of *la bella Cerubina*.

Taking into account spiritual and even esoteric issues is indispensable when doing research in the twilight zone of the "Silver Age" in Russia.

* * *

A THEOSOPHICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Two insignificant events led to the concept of a comprehensive reference work for Theosophists. In 1987 the writer was asked to present a session on Theosophy and the Theosophical Society to the students for a degree in Comparative Religion at the Claremony College of Advanced Education in

Perth, Western Australia. The compilation of short biographies of International Presidents took an inordinate length of time as did much other material. Some time later I happened to read in the national newspaper a critique of a play about Giordano Bruno by Morris West in which Annie Besant was said to have claimed to be the reincarnation of Bruno and describing herself as 'The founder of the Theosophical Society'. I wrote to the newspaper correcting their error and received a reply to the effect that there was no reference work in their library on Theosophy or the Society against which they could check the accuracy of such material.

Not long after these events this writer happened on an item in *The Theosophist* on April 1942 in which a J.L. Davige proposed the compilation of a Theosophical Encyclopedia. Davige was at that time head of the Research Department at Adyar. He proposed that the work should cover religion, science, philosophy, art, occultism and biographies of Theosophists of special importance since 1875. Obviously the project was still-born, but reading this it struck me that were there such a reference work in existence, time wasting efforts to locate information needed for presentations, articles and the like would no longer occur and journalists would no longer have an excuse for publishing inaccurate information. Thus was born, nearly half a century after it was first suggested, the idea of a Theosophical Encyclopedia.

During the early years progress was painfully slow. Exchanges by airmail often took months, often ending in no tangible result. If it were not for the support of such persons as Professor John Algeo, Ms Grace Knoche, Ms

Jeanine Miller, Mr. Vic Hao Chin, and the Council of the T.S. in Australia then headed by Ms Joy Mills, it is possible that the project would have been abandoned.

Gradually the project took shape. Eighteen broad categories were decided on, including terms and concepts central to Theosophy, terms and concepts central to Buddhism and Hinduism, biographies, organisations within the T.S., organisations allied to the T.S., Theosophical and other significant texts, cultural subjects (art, literature etc.) related to the T.S. and so on. About 200 eminent contributors joined the team.

The advent of the Internet and e-mail brought about a dramatic speeding up of communication; exchanges that formerly took weeks or months now take only one or two days.

The encyclopedia will consist of two volumes containing about 1,300 articles. Of these over 1,000 have been, at this time, either written or allocated. It is expected that all the articles will have been contributed before the end of this year. Major articles or articles on highly specialised subjects are submitted to consultants for evaluation and all articles go through several stages of editing.

Philip Harris
General Editor
Perth, Australia

* * * * *

The Child, Theosophy, and Victorian American Culture at Point Loma

William M. Ashcraft

Beginning with the publication of Philippe Ariès' *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* in 1960, historians of childhood recognize that the conditions of childhood reflect the deepest values of a society. Adults concerned about the continuation of their worldviews in the future invest considerable resources, time and effort in childrearing and education. Childrearing, in particular, provides one of the best ways to view the cultural patterns of a society. As Bruce Bellingham noted, children "bring together public norms and private dispositions in a uniquely transparent way." The complex interactions among children and the adults around them reveal the fundamental assumptions that adults hold about the world.¹

In the study of marginal or alternative religions, often called New Religious Movements (NRMs), little scholarly work has been done on the roles of children. Yet attention to children and childrearing in such religious groups, especially those that existed in the past, can provide contemporary observers with a better understanding of the groups' purposes and relations to their host societies. The values of the adults in NRMs, past and present, must be transmitted to succeeding generations if those values are to affect the larger world. M. Guy Bishop, for

example, found among antebellum Mormons a twofold agenda in childrearing methods. On the one hand, these earliest Mormon believers wanted their children to grow into responsible adulthood as morally upright and hard working citizens. On the other, they believed that their children were destined for a celestial, not earthly, home, and instructed them to look continually to that otherworldly destination in all of their religious activities. Bishop's observations enable us to see that the antebellum Mormon movement was neither isolated from American society nor identical to the mainstream culture, but a mixture of both. Mormons assumed the validity of childrearing methods prevalent among the Anglo-American middle classes, yet adapted those methods for their own theological ends.²

This essay makes a similar claim for the Theosophists who established a community at Point Loma, California, between 1900 and 1942. Point Loma grew out of the organizational growth and changes of the American Theosophical movement under William Quan Judge (1851–1896), who led American Theosophists in claiming independence from the worldwide Theosophical Society in 1895. Following his death, Katherine Augusta Westcott Tingley (1847–1929) became the leader of the American society, and in 1898 their official title

became the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society (UB and TS). In 1900 she led them to Point Loma, and remained the leader of the community and the UB and TS until her death.³

At Point Loma, members of the community synthesized symbols from late Victorian American culture with Theosophical doctrine found in texts penned by Theosophical authors, primarily Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891) and Judge, as well as Tingley and numerous Point Loma writers, both identified and anonymous.⁴ Theosophy itself was a process of ongoing negotiation between spiritual insight and cultural meaning, but at Point Loma it was received as a unified and developed body of teaching born from the timeless wisdom of the Masters. Point Loma Theosophists fashioned a unique form of Theosophy centered around self-control and application of ideas to action, what one Point Loma writer called “a new type of character.” These emphases were evident in earlier writings by Theosophical leaders, but Point Loma Theosophists actually attempted to live out the demands and challenges of what they called a practical Theosophy. Their worldview echoed moral and spiritual themes predominant in Victorian discourse influencing the powerful middle classes of Europe, but most importantly for present purposes, American society near the end of the nineteenth century.⁵

The contours of this synthesis begin to emerge when we look closely at the social and cultural location of children in the Point Loma community. Children were present at the community’s inception, and the childrearing and schooling system that developed under

Tingley’s leadership consumed much of the community’s resources.⁶ Tingley, in fact, is the key figure in Point Loma’s drama. Penny Waterstone argued that, prior to the move to Point Loma, Tingley made the Theosophical Society more attractive to women, and encouraged the skills and leadership abilities of women more than Judge. Although various Theosophists began programs for children under Judge, especially the Theosophical Sunday Schools called Lotus Circles, child reform efforts experienced a dramatic upsurge after Tingley became the head of the organization, and this increase in care for children coincides with the increase in women’s numbers and influence in the organization. In other words, as women became more prominent in Theosophical circles, concerns of women, like the nurture of children, became more important in the long range goals of the movement.⁷

The “gospel of child saving” exploded between 1880 and World War I into a variety of activities designed to help delinquent and dependent children. These included the creation of juvenile courts, the widespread adoption of kindergartens in public school systems, passage of child labor legislation, fostering the playground movement, transforming child study into a scientific endeavor at the university level, and other efforts associated with progressive reform. Prior to this era, however, the child reform efforts that most directly influenced the pioneer generation of Point Loma Theosophists were the “placing out system” and various institutions within the city that schooled and protected urban children.⁸

Many reformers assumed that they best served urban children by placing them in rural settings,

usually on farms. Various denominations and reform organizations supported such efforts, but the leader in this particular means of assisting children was Charles Loring Brace (1826-1890), secretary of New York's Children's Aid Society, founded in 1853. Brace's agents, mostly middle-class women and Protestant clergy, moved thousands of urban children to farms in the Midwest beginning in 1854. Most of the children were boys. Marilyn Irvin Holt speculated that this was due to Brace's moral disgust with girls from the streets, who often turned to prostitution. Brace judged them unworthy of a healthy home in the country. Once situated on farms, the boys worked as laborers. Reformers assumed that the fresh air, exercise, and plain food of farm life would contribute far more to the boys' moral advance than urban existence, with its airless tenements, filthy streets, and crime.

Another child reform effort was the home for juvenile delinquents. The first was the New York House of Refuge, opened in 1825. In this institution young lawbreakers attended school, learned crafts, and worked for the general upkeep of the house. When officials decided that a child was ready, he or she was bound out as an apprentice to learn a trade. Similar houses began in other east coast cities. Brace became especially prominent in this area of child reform, as well. His Children's Aid Society operated a school, Sunday School, savings bank, five lodging houses, and twenty-one industrial schools. The term "orphan" became widespread, applying to children without visible means of support, whether their parents were alive or dead. Orphanages applied to homes where destitute children found refuge, and could stay for varying lengths of time.⁹

Prior to the opening of Point Loma in 1900, Theosophists owned two institutions related to the care of children. These resembled child reform efforts in larger society, but had distinctly Theosophical goals.

At a picnic in Bronx Park for children in June, 1897 Tingley proposed the establishment of a summer home for children and their mothers from the city for two weeks of fresh air and wholesome country life. Like Brace and other reformers, Tingley and her companions assumed that rural settings provided the best environment for maturing children. By the following month the Society purchased property in Pleasant Valley, New Jersey, and named the house thereon the Lotus Home. Tingley hoped to make this a permanent institution, opening its doors every summer to urban children. During the remainder of the year, she planned to use the home as a retreat for recovering alcoholics and morphine addicts, and arranged for Dr. Robert Gunn and his assistant to supervise the program.¹⁰

The home only operated for a single summer, under the direction of various Theosophists, including a Rev. W. Williams, who divided the children into brigades responsible for various duties around the house and grounds. Groups of children washed dishes, tended the lamps, made the beds, swept the floors, and drew drinking water. Usually the girls worked indoors, the boys outdoors. The only exceptions to this system were the "toddlers from three to seven years of age." Called the "Happy Sunbeams," their mission was "to be happy and to smile at one another and at all the world." Williams maintained discipline by making malcontents hold the ends of long sticks in silence. Each day began with a

general assembly in the parlor, led by Elizabeth Churchill Mayer (1856-1926), the General Superintendent of Children's Work and a leader among New York Theosophists. She assigned each child his or her task, appointed leaders for the working groups, told them a story, then ended each session with a moment of silence. While the older children worked, the younger attended a class in the parlor to learn about different countries of the world.¹¹

The childrearing arrangements at Point Loma reproduced many aspects of life at the Pleasant Valley Lotus Home. In both places adults expected children to behave in an orderly fashion, avoiding extreme expressions of emotion and channeling their energy into activities to benefit the whole community. Both communities used silence as a means of fostering self-control. In both the adult caregivers were figures of authority and love. And in both the younger children enjoyed a lifestyle that brought out the innocence, joy, and creativity that Theosophists as well as many child reformers of the era believed were innate in all children. At Pleasant Valley a child coined the motto that several generations of Point Loma children repeated daily, "Helping and Sharing is what Brotherhood Means."¹²

The Theosophists hoped for improved morality at Pleasant Valley. Cleanliness and good clothes erased the "crusted old mask of town environment" and "those children were transformed into little angels of sweetness and



Katherine Tingley
[Reproduced with permission from
The Theosophical Society (Pasadena).]

docility." These "angels" sadly bid Pleasant Valley farewell in a closing ceremony that included plays performed by the children depicting fairies and other mythical figures. Tingley crowned the occasion with a rousing speech that placed Pleasant Valley in the cyclical progress of time. She noted that one cycle closed, but another opened, and that the Lotus Home was "one of the most successful enterprises yet undertaken in the great Cause of Sublime Per-

fection.” One of the summer workers present announced to the gathered audience that “she felt as though she could move the universe.” This sense of awe and inspiration apparently affected the children, because they wanted to stay throughout the winter and after returning to New York attended regular meetings at the Do-Good Mission, an operation originally begun by Tingley before she became a Theosophist.¹³

Another institution sponsored by Tingley’s Theosophists that resembled child reform efforts of the time and had later Point Loma connections was a second Lotus Home. This one opened in Buffalo, New York on August 13, 1898 to care for orphans. Under the direction of Marie Theresa Younge Stevens (1860-1915), the home admitted eighteen infants and small children between August 28, 1898 and March 30, 1900. Tingley later moved them to Point Loma. At the time of this transfer, five of them were less than a year old, two were a year old, four were about a year and a half old, four were almost two years old, one was four and a half years old and one was five years old (one infant died in Buffalo). Fourteen of them were born out of wedlock. As noted earlier, the term “orphan” applied to any child in difficult circumstances, whether the parents were alive or dead. Their admission reflected the policy Tingley originally envisioned: “to reach the unfortunate mothers, those who had not been married,—in order that I might not only help the children but bring about a reformation of the mothers.” Records do not indicate the fate of the mothers, but the children became an important part of the Point Loma story.¹⁴

The Lotus Home in Buffalo fell under the direction of the International Brotherhood League (IBL), a social reform organization

composed of Theosophists led by Tingley. The IBL worked with destitute children, fallen women, prisoners, and those victimized by war or natural disasters. Buffalo Theosophists were active social reformers. They initiated a gardening system on donated land for families on the city’s charity lists to raise their own food. They also provided charity suppers for the poor. And they began the Wayfare, a home “for women of education and refinement who may meet with sudden and temporary misfortune, who are for the time being objects of charity.” Opened in 1895, by the following year this home served up to eighty women a month. Two years later the Wayfare was primarily a haven for elderly women who repeatedly failed to find permanent employment. But the unwed mothers who used the Wayfare’s services continued to worry benevolently-inclined Theosophists. In desperation, Stevens and another worker asked Tingley for advice about meeting this need more efficiently. Tingley’s response was a home for orphans, the children produced by unfortunate women.¹⁵

The children admitted to the home received new names, either from the superintendent or Theosophical lodges that donated beds and other supplies. Hope ran high that these children would prove to be useful workers for humanity in the future. Theosophists assumed that the right care at such an early age fostered morality and unselfishness in later life. One writer asked “What may we not expect in the future from such an undertaking—say in fifteen or twenty years? Surely we have taken the initiative, the grand step of rearing the future helpers of humanity; such

as have breathed the real atmosphere of love almost from their very birth.”¹⁶

Originally they intended the home as a permanent institution, but its purpose changed when Tingley opened Point Loma. In February, May, and October 1900 the Buffalo babies arrived at Point Loma with their adult caregivers. The Buffalo Lotus Home closed. But its legacy lived on. Several of the women who cared for the orphans provided years of service at Point Loma. Elisabeth Whitney (d. 1941), for example, lived at the Buffalo home during its first six weeks. Whitney was the New York superintendent of Lotus Groups, a Theosophical children’s program built upon the system of Lotus Circles from the Judge era. She and Mayer adopted new methods used later in other groups, and published the *Lotus Song Book* used for many years at Point Loma. Whitney moved to Point Loma in 1899. She served as a teacher and in later years headed the Propaganda Department, disseminating literature to the public. She also compiled a general history of the Theosophical movement, incomplete at the time of her death. Julia Yates also gained experience in the Buffalo home before moving to Point Loma. A school teacher from Jamestown, New York, Yates assisted caregivers in Buffalo during the summer of 1898. Later she taught in the Theosophical school in Roseville, near Point Loma on San Diego Bay. Women like Whitney and Yates, who served many years as caregivers and educators, were crucial to the development and implementation of Point Loma’s Theosophical approach to children.¹⁷

The Buffalo home’s legacy also survived among the orphans who came to Point Loma. One of them recalled participating in a naming

ceremony when she was six years old (*ca.* 1906). The orphans stood in a circle. Tingley and other leaders of the Point Loma community walked by each child. They warned the children never to utter their old names aloud. These adults altered the children’s names because they did not want the original families tracing the children later. Perhaps they also wanted to lay special claim to these children, who from infancy (in most cases) enjoyed the care of Theosophical workers and illustrated the kind of personality that resulted from lifelong instruction in self-control and altruism.¹⁸

This emphasis on child reform points to the primary function of Point Loma, at least at its foundation: to nurture a new humanity from infancy and childhood to adulthood. Tingley invited educated and talented Theosophists to move to Point Loma, because she wanted to open a special school that would train future generations. Point Loma Theosophists may have educated 600-700 pupils between 1900 and 1929, although the actual number could be higher. Most came from the United States, either as children of adult residents of Point Loma or boarding students sent to Point Loma by their parents or guardians. Cuban children also came to Point Loma, brought there after the Spanish-American War to uplift and civilize a new generation for that war-torn island. And some children arrived from Europe, predominantly Great Britain and Sweden, from Theosophical families whose parents believed in the Point Loma mission. The first five children arrived in 1900, a son and daughters of Theosophists. As time passed the children’s population grew, but after Tingley’s death in 1929 their numbers decreased. By 1942, when the community relo-



**Model pupils en route to
1913 Theosophical Peace Congress, Sweden**
[Reproduced with permission from The Theosophical Society (Pasadena).]

cated to Covina, California, only a few children remained.¹⁹

A Theosophical view of childhood gradually formed during the pre-Point Loma years of Tingley's leadership. Information found in various sources about the Pleasant Valley and Buffalo Lotus Homes only hint at the immense need for moral training of children. Yet the late 1890s witnessed a flowering conviction among American Theosophists under Tingley that they lived in the dawn of a new age. Based upon remarks made by Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* and elsewhere, Tingley's group believed that the turn of the century marked the beginning of a new cycle. The present "Black Age," or *Kali-yuga* from the Sanskrit, would not end immediately, but Blavatsky foresaw a unique turning in several overlapping cycles of human and cosmic develop-

ment that would occur around 1897 or 1898. Reincarnated souls entering life during this time had potentially powerful moral and spiritual abilities. Point Loma was to be the nursery for these souls, preparing them to take their places in larger society. After Point Loma's establishment, one writer depicted the City Beautiful as the ideal human community. Although the description has a dreamlike quality, the position of "the Children's Home" in this city's center underscored the importance of children for the early residents of Point Loma. And no less an authority than Ethel Lambert (1881–1962), the first teacher appointed by Tingley to care for Point Loma children, told an audience in the Isis Theater in downtown San Diego that "The work for little children is really, today, the heart and center of the Theosophical movement."²⁰

From this center children entered the world as "seeds of selflessness." The moral child of nineteenth-century middle-class Victorianism became the Theosophical servant for humanity. Tingley said that Point Loma children "are taught to regard themselves as integral and responsible parts of the nation to which they belong. They are taught to aspire to the position of national benefactors, teachers and helpers." Another Point Loma adult said that "the period is near indeed, in fact it has already been entered upon, when students from the World-Center, Loma-land, shall go forth as teachers and helpers of humanity. . . . Saving the legend of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, there is nothing in all history which parallels this." Another writer, in a published letter addressed to Point Loma's children, said that the "future ones are you, our young givers, and when you are grown-ups, other children

will reach out their helping hands and hopeful promises to you from a still farther future, and you will carry on the good work for Humanity."²¹

Point Loma Theosophists, as faithful students of Blavatsky, read her writings to understand not only cyclical reality but also the nature of children. Blavatsky taught that progress in this incarnation required self-control. In the Blavatskian psychology, each person enters this life with spiritual and moral wisdom from past lives stored in the spiritual Ego, that permanent, reincarnating soul that Tingley often referred to simply as the higher nature. The lower nature included those aspects of the self—like the passions and the physical body—that temporarily came together to form the individual in a given lifetime. The Theosophist's duty was to "control and conquer, through the Higher, the lower self." This duty was practiced through self-sacrifice, because "altruism is an integral part of self-development." But "self-sacrifice has to be performed with discrimination." Blavatsky warned her readers that altruistic action must be guided by karmic law. The sacrifice of one person is only beneficial if done for the sake of many. Blavatsky praised Father Damien, the Roman Catholic priest who lived with lepers on the Hawaiian island of Molokai until he died from the disease himself, as a model of self-sacrifice. Such actions revealed the conquest of the lower self.²²

Blavatsky said that children's spiritual Egos did not mature until the age of seven. Tingley also believed that this age marked a profound transition. At that point the Atma, the part of the human being that shares in the eternal and unmade Absolute, awakened to guide the

child. This awakening was necessary, because vices and defects from the child's previous incarnation "pursue and fasten on the yet plastic third and fourth principles [the astral body and animal passions] of the child, and—unless the EGO struggles and conquers—they will develop with tenfold intensity and lead the adult man to his destruction."²³

Convictions about the nature of the child among Point Loma Theosophists echoed themes in Blavatsky's writings on human nature and children, but also incorporated assumptions about the child in nineteenth-century American Victorian culture. These assumptions resulted from several generations' debate about the nature and nurture of children. By the early decades of the nineteenth century, the emerging middle class of the northeastern United States increasingly accepted an approach to childrearing that Philip Greven called the "moderate temperament." Advocates of this approach assumed that children were innately good, and parents should establish an environment that permitted the moral and spiritual faculties of the child to mature. This approach reflected a deliberate move away from notions of the child's depravity as articulated in the Calvinism of the day. Theological rejection of these and other tenets led ministers, authors, and other purveyors of culture to describe the human condition as one of moral separation but not alienation from God. They assumed that human beings contained divine qualities. Yet their descriptions of these qualities sounded very much like conventional morality. Given the proper environmental conditions, these qualities would blossom.²⁴

This new vision could be called idealist. It assumed that the child was innocent at

birth, subject to the influences of environment, and capable of being trained and directed. The end result of childrearing was a child who was both morally upright and saved from eternal damnation.

Among the features of this idealist perspective, one later had particular relevance for Point Loma: discipline. Increasingly, child experts and parents regarded corporal punishment as less effective than other forms of discipline. Because the child was understood as a relational being whose experiences depended upon interaction with others, isolation became a preferred method to compel children to reflect upon their own selfish desires and to choose selfless behavior.²⁵

The most outstanding spokesman for this approach was Amos Bronson Alcott (1799-1882), a noted Transcendentalist and educational reformer. Based upon observations of his own children, as well as those in his classroom, Alcott asserted that each child had the ability to develop into a virtuous adult. The divine spark was simply awaiting the proper motivation to come forth. But the lower or animal nature could potentially dominate a child's mind and will. Therefore, parents should guide the child by example and instruction to discover his or her internal divinity.²⁶

Advocates of this position read the works of several child experts in Europe, where Romanticism and an increasing tendency toward scientific examination of child life combined in a unique perspective on children as both innocent and malleable. Among these experts, the German thinker Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) most persuaded American child experts. His kindergarten movement would profoundly shape Ameri-

can education throughout the nineteenth century. Based upon the *Naturphilosophie* of Friedrich Schelling, Froebel believed that children possessed the divine forms that determined the structure of the world. Essentially good by nature, children required certain things from an environment in order to display the purely divine. Parents played crucial roles in the child's growth. Froebel believed that they should keep records of their observations of their children, and teach them to observe the world around them. But children also benefited from structured learning environments, called kindergartens, where trained instructors taught them to perceive the beauty and wisdom of the world.²⁷

Contrary to what Point Loma apologists claimed, their assumptions about children, and the means of raising them, were products of a modified Victorian culture created at the Point Loma site. This cultural process of passing along notions of children's divinity and malleability was totally ignored by an earlier historian of Point Loma, Emmett Greenwalt. He mentioned that Tingley and Froebel agreed that children were innately divine. But he asserted that Froebel downplayed the child's lower nature, whereas the lower nature was important in Tingley's thinking. However, disagreement on one aspect of the child's nature, or more accurately, about how much to emphasize one aspect of that nature, does not constitute an unbridgeable chasm between these two advocates of child nurture. Froebel contributed to the building of the idealistic consensus in American discussions of the child, and Tingley and other Point Loma Theosophists continued to refine that discourse through their own childrearing efforts.²⁸

Some evidence suggests that Froebel, among

other child theorists, influenced the outlook on children that eventually resulted in the Point Loma educational system. Elizabeth Hyatt, editor of a New York Theosophical magazine about childcare, *Child-Life*, noted in an 1896 editorial that Froebel thought each child had a hidden feeling that he or she contained an ego or real self. This theme would be repeated frequently in the Point Loma years, especially in stories written for children like *Luz Star-Eye's Dream-Journey to the Isles of the Southern Sea* and *Strange Little Girl: A Story for Children*. In that same issue of *Child-Life* the editor also acknowledged Tingley's support of the magazine. She and her husband, Dr. Thadeus P. Hyatt, began publication of the magazine and hoped that the Theosophical Society would assume that responsibility later. According to Dr. Hyatt, Tingley verbally promised to do so after her world tour of 1896-97. For whatever reason, the Society did not assume control of *Child-Life*, and the magazine ceased publication after a year. In 1897 a contributor to *The New Century*, the flagship periodical of Tingley's organization, openly acknowledged the benefits of Froebel's kindergarten system. Another contributor went further, placing Froebel's use of symbols within an ancient tradition dating back to the very foundations of civilization, thereby encompassing both Froebel and Theosophy in one grand sweep.²⁹

Many women at Point Loma were public school teachers, or mothers who began their children's educations at home. Marjorie Tyberg (1866-1959), for example, said that when she was involved in women's clubs, she studied Froebel's methods. But she believed that Tingley's system exceeded all others. Her asser-

tion need not be read as a rejection of prevalent childrearing and educational efforts. Instead, Tyberg's move from one theory to another, culminating in her wholehearted embrace of the Point Loma system, can be seen as a progression toward newer and more comprehensive methods.³⁰

The core of the new idealist vision regarding the child was the relationship between mothers and children. The woman's role as primary caregiver reached new heights in the advice literature of the era. Moral education became the mother's most important task. Upon her fell the responsibility of converting her children to Protestant faith and bringing their moral faculties to full flower. "There is no more important duty devolving upon the mother," said the influential advocate of child nurture, Catharine Beecher, "than the cultivation of habits of modesty and propriety in young children." Elsewhere, Beecher stated that parents must instill in children the "habits of submission, self-denial, and benevolence." Although she did not mention mothers specifically in this latter instance, her conviction that the mother was primary in the child's development leads to the assumption that these habits were also among the qualities that the mother was obligated to instill in her children.³¹

Point Loma Theosophists praised maternal love as all-encompassing and omnipotent. Reflecting prevalent cultural assumptions about motherhood, Tingley and other Point Loma adults believed that no force could break the love of mothers for children. Dr. Lydia Ross (1859-1958), a homeopathic physician who contributed regularly to Point Loma periodicals, called motherhood "a mystic rite. The mothers have the

key of creative power to change the whole world of conditions if they would assert themselves on lines of intuition." At the beginning of every meeting of the HPB Club, an organization for young women at Point Loma, members knelt around those holding famous books by Theosophical leaders and recited this litany: "As a child kneels in love to the Mother, so do we kneel as neophytes at the altar of Truth."³²

The most controversial aspect of the Point Loma educational environment was the separation of children as young as infancy from their natural parents. Although married couples lived together, usually in private bungalows on the Point Loma grounds, their children lived in groups segregated by age and sex. Reporters and other visitors consistently commented upon this practice, pointing out that it contradicted the conventions of maternal love and care that most middle-class Americans thought necessary for the moral development of the child.³³ The practice of raising infants together began in the first days of community life at Point Loma. Caregivers bottle-fed, diapered, and played with infants around the clock in a collective nursery. Early photographs provide graphic evidence of this arrangement. One depicts the interior of a circular group home with children two years and younger in white metal cribs. Day beds and bureaus with infant paraphernalia line the outer periphery of the dwelling. The center of the room contains small chairs and toys. In another photograph, several small children sit on the floor in a semicircle, each dressed in a white pullover garment, a rag doll lying neglected beside them as a woman stands nearby, leading them in an exercise requiring hand motions. She was probably one of the "god-

mothers” that a Point Loma writer cited as the principal caregivers for the infants.³⁴

Tingley and other Point Loma educators justified this practice by arguing that in ancient times, separation of children from parents was common for the sake of spiritual training. In order to understand nature’s deepest truths, initiates from an early age needed surroundings devoid of the responsibilities and attachments of the world, including the presence of their natu-

ral parents. One former pupil suggested that Tingley found precedent for this system in Plato’s *Republic*. The guardians of Plato’s ideal society did not observe monogamous marriage. They mated according to their qualities to produce the strongest and healthiest children. After birth, guardian mothers gave their infants to caregivers of both sexes who raised the children communally.³⁵

Point Loma Theosophists not only defended communal childrearing, they also



Toddlers in group home (early 1900s).
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The Theosophical Society (Pasadena).]

criticized natural parents. One writer said that “aspiring parents know too well that they have not themselves received the training that would enable them to direct the unfolding of their children’s characters.” Another argued that parents often asserted “ownership over the child” and unfairly regarded their children as inferior. A third advocate said that parents with defects will instill them in their children. Nervous mothers, for example, damaged their children by

allowing the latter to overeat and go undisciplined. Such children would eventually exhibit nervous temperaments of their own.³⁶

Point Loma Theosophists also justified the raising of children together by describing the Point Loma community as a home. Throughout the nineteenth century, the domestic ideals of home and hearth took on increasingly complex meanings. The proper nurture of children must begin there, said many child advocates. Protected from the harsher world of competitive work, children could learn self-control under the gentle but firm guidance of full-time mothers at home. At Point Loma, the main building was called the Homestead, evoking not only pioneer images of the Western frontier, but also warm images of familial intimacy. Drawing upon the ideals of the nurturing, protective home of nineteenth-century middle-class Americans, they claimed that “the school and the home are one and the same” at Point Loma. “The spirit of the home pervades the school. The spirit of the school pervades the home.” Point Loma parents said that separation did not disrupt their home life. They insisted that the home was “the center of life at Point Loma,” and that their children appreciated the home more by living in groups than in living with their natural mothers and fathers.³⁷

Point Loma Theosophists achieved a cognitive shift. Leaving behind notions of the family as a unit consisting of the parents and children, they rekindled a more traditional sense of family as kinship network. At Point Loma, however, the networks bound together those devoted to Theosophy as much as those related by blood or marriage. Adults and children perceived the community as one large family. The home envi-

ronment of Point Loma, claimed one writer, contrasted with the nuclear family ideal in “offering the incoming soul...a matrix of character.”³⁸

Point Loma Theosophists did not discard the maternal love of the Victorian home. Instead, various women served as surrogate mothers, especially those tending the infants. Most former pupils who do not recall the pain of separation from parents were either in groups supervised by their mothers or had female caregivers who provided emotional warmth and affection. Tyberg argued that children need not live with their mothers in order to benefit from maternal love. That love, “where it does abide, remains, regardless of physical presence, the most potent magnetic force in the fostering of the child.”³⁹

As noted earlier, both Blavatsky and Tingley assumed that the higher nature was characterized by self-control. Each newborn enters life with this ability. Point Loma caregivers and educators understood their task as one of bringing forth self-control through proper environment and discipline. Their childrearing program thus echoed the natural goodness theory of earlier child experts like Froebel and Alcott. A Point Loma writer recounted leaving her class of “tots” one day but warned them not to misbehave because someone watched them. When her class asked her the identity of the watcher, she challenged them to think of it as a riddle and try to solve it while she was gone. When she returned they told her that they had solved the riddle. The watchers were themselves. When several children whose parents did not live at Point Loma misbehaved, Tingley wrote the parents. She told them that their children’s teacher tried to help them “overcome their impulsive errors.” But they were spoiled, and

Tingley asked the parents to abide by community policy in order to instill self-control in their children. Evidently the lessons in self-control bore fruit. One individual who spent part of his childhood at Point Loma discovered as a young man that he had to rely upon his self-control in a crisis. At the time, Kurt Reineman was a teacher in a Theosophical school in Pinar del Rio, Cuba. A young woman died in an accident, and a friend asked Reineman to visit her grieving, hysterical mother. Upon seeing her extreme emotional state, Reineman decided that "I must above all else first impose complete inner peace on myself. The only possible hope, it seemed to me, lay in my becoming a channel for a higher Power than mine and so bring calm to that tortured mind before irreparable damage were done to it." For two hours he held her hands while she cried. His controlled manner enabled him to remain calm, and finally the mother also calmed down. He left exhausted, yet satisfied that his unemotional demeanor helped her through a difficult time.⁴⁰

Self-control became important in disciplinary measures. The predominant means of disciplining recalcitrant children was isolation, "total curtailment of social exchange." The children's caregivers did not use corporal punishment because it encouraged the lower nature, eliciting fear in the child rather than higher values. Point Loma adults called those children who consistently misbehaved "disintegrators." One disintegrator recalled a teacher locking him in her office closet after trying all other measures to quell his lower nature. Another student claimed that teachers forced unruly children into large laundry bags, then pulled the drawstrings tight, leaving only an airhole at the top. The purpose of these

isolating measures was to compel children to reflect upon their selfish desires. Perhaps this persuaded certain children to live more altruistically. But sometimes these measures failed to provide the results that Point Loma adults desired. One student recalled being placed in a basement alone "until they thought I had learned my lesson." When asked if she realized she had erred, she said "later on, but not then."⁴¹

Isolation served a different function for boys who masturbated. This practice, called "self-abuse," a "pernicious habit," and "the secret habit" by Point Loma adults, reflected selfish indulgence of the worst kind. Blavatsky connected the practice of self-worship among the ancient Atlanteans of the Fourth Root-Race with phallicism, and the Point Loma Theosophists may have also associated sexual self-stimulation with the advance of the lower nature. Tingley told a young man at Point Loma that his habit of self-abuse resulted in his inability to concentrate. If he abandoned the habit, he would think more clearly and be a better worker. In several documented cases, Point Loma adults removed the boys who persisted in masturbation so that they would not influence other boys. The tone of these descriptions bordered on the conspiratorial. One disintegrator who masturbated tried to persuade younger boys to come with him to a grove of trees, away from the watchcare of suspicious adults. The implication was that he wanted to lead others down the same destructive path that he had taken.

The attention given to masturbation resulted in continual advice to cease the practice as well as the enforcement of wearing muslin straight-jackets called "health bands" at night. Point Loma Theosophists' fear of masturbation reflected fears in larger Victorian culture. Advice literature from

the nineteenth century commonly connected masturbation with retardation, insanity, indigestion, and melancholy. The Point Loma community was extremely sensitive about allegations of sexual misbehavior. Tingley wanted to distance Point Loma from any association with a prominent Theosophist, Charles Leadbeater, who gained public notoriety for his relations with boys and his encouragement of masturbation as a means of attaining spiritual enlightenment. Joseph H. Fussell, General Secretary of the UB and TS and Tingley's principal pamphleteer, wrote several tracts against Leadbeater and his Theosophical colleague, Annie Besant, and even instigated a police investigation of Leadbeater's activities in Australia in 1917.⁴²

The results of Point Loma's blend of Victorian child idealism and Theosophical teaching were children who exhibited varying degrees of accommodation to "the Point Loma type of character." Some were didactic and confident. One pupil published a scathing denunciation of young men who smoked cigarettes and drank alcohol, warning that their flirtation with these vices could lead to more serious transgressions. Another frowned upon snacks between meals and associated poor eating habits with moral corruption. A third warned that the lower nature hates discipline, but self-discipline was nature's law and must be cultivated.⁴³

Others exhibited initiative and independence. Point Loma education encouraged conformity to moral and intellectual standards. But individuals could break out of that conformity and still remain within the limits of acceptable behavior. Point Loma adolescents choreographed this delicate dance of autonomy and cooperation in an incident recounted by a

young Point Loma woman, Kate Hanson. She and several other young men and women from Point Loma, selected for their model behavior and attitudes, toured Europe with Tingley in 1913. One evening while in a Bremerhaven park, they walked in groups of two or three, talking and laughing, in a large circle. Hanson recalled that "For quite some time we walked around only one way, until we were nearly dizzy, until finally I decided I was tired of going that way, so turned around, and bumped into all the other groups, so they turned around too, and thought what a good idea it was."⁴⁴

Unfortunately, many children failed to meet the high standards of Point Loma. Those most frequently singled out were Cuban boys brought to the site for training. Their American teachers and caregivers did not perceive the cultural differences that separated them from their Cuban charges. They explained unacceptable behavior on the part of these children as moral weakness and defect, and eventually sent many of them back to Cuba. But some Cuban children excelled, and many American children had disciplinary problems. The key to understanding these recalcitrant children was the degree to which they willingly internalized the Point Loma moral code, exercising control of their emotional desires. When they failed to exhibit appropriate levels of restraint, whatever the situational factors involved, the adults around them relied upon moral explanations of character to understand those internal conflicts that flared into unacceptable behavior.⁴⁵

For those who accepted the Point Loma worldview, the benefits seemed deep and true. Several individuals interviewed by this writer

who spent some part of their childhoods at Point Loma manifested an amazing sensitivity to the world, as expressed in various artistic media, including language itself. One former pupil, for example, recalled seeing a sunset over the Pacific Ocean through the doors of the Temple building at Point Loma. She remembered that “it actually was so beautiful it hurt.” Her remark reflects the aesthetic sense of Victorians, who found deep meaning in natural phenomena like sunsets, and this appreciation was cultivated in numerous educational activities for children at Point Loma.⁴⁶

Point Loma’s most fruitful years coincided with the heyday of the Theosophical movement, from approximately 1890 until 1930. During that period, as Robert Ellwood noted, Theosophy “was relatively new, dynamic, and generally identified with the liberal, reformist, even utopian spirit of an important segment of society, those who wished to combine universalism in religion with social reform.” It attracted individuals like Tingley from high status backgrounds who were uneasy with the scientific and religious narratives of the day. They stood among those harbingers of a later “postmodern spirituality” that affirms relationality as essential to human identity (in contrast to the autonomous self of modern life), portrays the individual as organically connected to the world and to others, and asserts that “the world is present in deity and deity is present in the world.” Among these progressive seekers of newer and higher truths, the Point Loma Theosophists attempted to meld the best of their culture with the most thrilling and challenging set of teachings that they had ever encountered. That synthesis of cultural and Theosophical ideals comes into

sharper focus when we view their childrearing efforts. Children were encouraged to reflect upon their goals and motivations, control their impulses, and trust their caregivers as guides. The adults of the Theosophical community at Point Loma demanded of themselves this same moral and emotional control, understanding such a psychology to be at the heart of human nature as well as the new society that they hoped would eventually emerge with the maturation of their children and succeeding generations of Point Loma Theosophists.

Unfortunately, their efforts to impart their view of life to future generations did not produce the short term results that they anticipated. With the passage of time, what was seen as the threshold of a new world became an institutionalized routine that later generations did not find as radically liberating as had the first residents of Point Loma. Relatively few children from Point Loma remained active in Theosophical organizations. Although no one has attempted a systematic accounting of their activities after their Point Loma days, the available evidence suggests that some loved the life at Point Loma while others resented their upbringing, but virtually all Point Loma children entered larger society as productive adults, married and had children, and in some cases held Theosophical convictions. Many Theosophists would say that the final outcome of the Point Loma experiment has yet to be realized, since the children who grew up at Point Loma continue to transmit the lessons that they learned through the generations of their own families, and the cycle begun in 1897 or 1898 has many, many years of life remaining.⁴⁷

Notes

¹ Phillippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*. Translated by Robert Baldrick (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962; originally published 1960); Bruce Bellingham, "The History of Childhood Since the 'Invention of Childhood': Some Issues in the Eighties," *Journal of Family History* 13 (1988): 348.

² M. Guy Bishop, "Preparing to 'Take the Kingdom': Childrearing Directives in Early Mormonism," *Journal of the Early Republic* 7(Fall 1987): 282–85. For studies of Shaker children, see Judith Graham, "The New Lebanon Shaker Children's Order," *Winterthur Portfolio* 26 (Winter 1991) and Stephen Paterwic, "From Individual to Community: Becoming a Shaker at New Lebanon," *Communal Societies* 11 (1991). For a discussion of the effects of children on changes among contemporary NRMs, see Eileen Barker, "Plus ça change . . .," *Social Compass* 42/2 (1995): 168–71. See also Christopher G. Ellison and John P. Bartkowski, "'Babies Were Being Beaten': Exploring Child Abuse Allegations at Ranch Apocalypse" in *Armageddon in Waco: Critical Perspectives on the Branch Davidian Conflict*, ed. Stuart A. Wright (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Norman Gevitz, "Christian Science Healing and the Health Care of Children," *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 34 (Spring 1991); Susan Landa, "Children and Cults: A Practical Guide," *Journal of Family Law* 29 (1991); Thomas Simmons, *The Unseen Shore: Memories of a Christian Science Childhood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991) and Barbara Wilson, *Blue Windows: A Christian Science Childhood* (New York: Picador USA, 1997).

³ The story of American Theosophists under Judge and Tingley is told in Charles J. Ryan, *H. P. Blavatsky and the Theosophical Movement: A Brief Historical Sketch* (San Diego: Point Loma Publications, 1975); *The Theosophical Movement: 1875–1950* (Los Angeles: The Cunningham Press, 1951); *A Short History of the Theosophical Society*, comp. Josephine Ransom (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1938); and Bruce F. Campbell, *Ancient Wisdom Revived: A History of the Theosophical Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

⁴ In official documents and ceremonies of the Point Loma group, Judge was repeatedly honored as the leader of the

Theosophical movement appointed by the Masters to succeed Blavatsky. See Tingley, "Review and Outlook of the Theosophical Movement," in *The Mysteries of the Heart Doctrine* (Point Loma: The Theosophical Publishing Company, 1902), 153.

⁵ Student, "The Point Loma Type of Character," *The Century Path* 13 (June 19, 1910): 15. Several aspects of Point Loma's community life receive attention in William M. Ashcraft, "'The Dawn of the New Cycle': Point Loma Theosophists and American Culture, 1896–1929" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1995).

⁶ The school system was called Raja Yoga. It is discussed in Emmett A. Greenwalt, *California Utopia: Point Loma: 1897–1942*. Second and revised edition (San Diego: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 1978), 76–99 and in Ashcraft, chapter four. This essay focuses upon attitudes regarding children and childrearing rather than the formal instruction of children in the Raja Yoga system.

⁷ Penny Brown Waterstone, "Domesticating Universal Brotherhood: Feminine Values and the Construction of Utopia, Point Loma Homestead, 1897–1920" (Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 1995), chapter three.

⁸ Ben Lindsey coined the phrase "gospel of child saving" in 1906. See LeRoy Ashby, *Saving the Waifs: Reformers and Dependent Children, 1890–1917* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 4.

⁹ Marilyn Irvin Holt, *The Orphan Trains: Placing Out in America* (Lincoln and London: The University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 22–3, 29, 32, 48, 64–65; Joseph M. Hawes, *Children in Urban Society: Juvenile Delinquency in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 27, 47, 50, 96–98. See also Hawes, *The Children's Rights Movement: A History of Advocacy and Protection* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991). Hawes' work remains among the best on child reform before the end of the nineteenth century.

¹⁰ "A Children's Picnic," *Theosophical News* 1 (June 28, 1897): 4; *Theosophical News* 1 (July 5, 1897): 3; "An Interview with Mrs. Tingley," *Theosophical News* 1 (July 26, 1897): 7. Gunn operated an addiction treatment program out of the Do-Good Mission, a relief and reform center that Tingley opened on the East Side of New York City before

converting to Theosophy. See “Lotus Home News,” *Theosophical News* 2 (September 13, 1897): 1.

¹¹ Photograph file, Archive, Theosophical Society Pasadena (hereafter ATSP); “Life at the Lotus Home,” *Theosophical News* 2 (August 2, 1897): 2-3; “Reminiscences of Lotus Home,” *Theosophical News* 2 (August 23, 1897): 6. In 1917, a worker at the Pleasant Valley home named Anna Stabler deposed that all was not idyllic there. She hinted that the children preferred her to Mayer, but her remarks at that point in the deposition are so vague that further reconstruction of the relations among staff during the summer of 1897 may prove difficult, if not impossible (see Anna Miller Stabler, Deposition, Estate of A.G. Spalding, Probate Court Case #6464, San Diego County, California, 20 April 1917).

¹² “Reminiscences of Lotus Home,” *Theosophical News* 2 (August 23, 1897): 6; “Brotherhood Work among Children in New York,” *Century Path* 14 (May 28, 1911): 17.

¹³ “A Great Work Begun,” *Theosophical News* 2 (July 12, 1897): 4; “Reminiscences of Lotus Home,” *Theosophical News* 2 (August 23, 1897): 5; “Lotus Home. Pleasant Valley, N.J.—Closing Exercises,” *New Century* 1 (September 30, 1897): 6.

¹⁴ Stevens recorded information on these orphans, affectionately called “the Buffalo babies,” in “Record of Lotus Home, Children, Buffalo, N.Y., 1898,” ATSP. Tingley’s statement of purpose appeared in “Tingley to Examining Physicians for Registrants, Local Board, Division One, City of San Diego, 25 September 1918,” ATSP.

¹⁵ *Universal Brotherhood Its Departments, Methods and Scope* (Point Loma: Universal Brotherhood Organization, 1899), 20; *Constitution International Brotherhood League (Unsectarian) Founded April 19, 1897 by Katherine A. Tingley* (New York: n.d.), Article II; “The Potato Planting Scheme and the Buffalo Theosophists,” *The Lamp* 2 (September 15, 1895): 26; *The Lamp* 3 (October 15, 1896): 42; *The First Annual Report of Lotus Home of the International Brotherhood League*, 13 August 1899, ATSP; Theresa Younge Stevens, “Report of Lotus Home of the International Brotherhood League (Unsectarian), Buffalo, N.Y., to April 1, 1899,” *New Century* 2 (May 27, 1899): 7.

¹⁶ *New Century* 2 (November 26, 1898): 7.

¹⁷ “New Cycle Chat,” *New Century* 3 (February 10, 1900): 5; “Children for the Lotus Home. A Special Car Filled with Little Folks Arrived Yesterday,” *San Diego Union* 28 May 1900; *New Century* 3 (October 13, 1900): 6. On Whitney, see “Historic Facts Lotus Group Work (New York H,D,Qrts.)” n.d., ATSP; Stevens, “Report of Lotus Home of the International Brotherhood League (Unsectarian), Buffalo, N.Y., to April 1, 1899,” *NC* 2 (May 27, 1899): 7; *The UB and TS Reception to Counties Committees of the California Promotion Committee given by Teachers and Pupils of the Raja Yoga Academy*, 17 December 1906, 15-16, ATSP; “In Memoriam,” *Theosophical Forum* 19 (July 1941): 77. On Yates, see *The First Annual Report of Lotus Home of the International Brotherhood League* 13 August 1899, ATSP; *The UB and TS Reception to Counties Committees of the California Promotion Committee given by Teachers and Pupils of the Raja Yoga Academy* 17 December 1906, 15-16, ATSP; and *Jamestown Directory. 1903-04*, 467.

¹⁸ William Savage, interview with author, San Diego, Calif., 12 September 1993 (Savage recalled the comments of his grandmother, Louise Savage).

¹⁹ See Ashcraft, chapter four and Greenwalt, chapter eight.

²⁰ Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy* (Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1988; originally published 1888), vol. 1: xlv, 225; vol. 2: 180, 301, 303, 445; Cives, “The City Beautiful,” *New Century* 4 (October 27, 1901), 12; “A Return to the Golden Age Through the Children,” *New Century* 5 (May 11, 1902): 6.

²¹ Tingley, *Life at Point Loma. Some Notes by Katherine Tingley, Leader and Official Head of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society* (Point Loma: Aryan Theosophical Press, 1908), 11, 18; Observer, “Some Observations,” *New Century* 5 (August 3, 1902): 10; One of Your Grown-Up Comrades, “A Letter of Thanks to the Raja Yoga Children of Point Loma,” *Century Path* 14 (January 22, 1911): 17.

²² Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* (Wheaton: The Theosophical Publishing House 1972), 238-39, 241.

²³ Blavatsky, “Footnotes to A Buddhist Prince’s View of the Universe and the Nature of Man,” *Lucifer* 3 (November

1888); reprinted in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, comp. Boris de Zirkoff (Wheaton: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1950-91), 10:176; Blavatsky, "Dialogue between the Two Editors On Astral Bodies, or Doppelgangers," *Lucifer* 3 (December 1888); reprinted in *Collected Writings* 10:218; Blavatsky, "Thoughts on Karma and Reincarnation," *Lucifer* 4 (April 1889); reprinted in *Collected Writings* 11:140; Blavatsky, *Studies in Occultism* (Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1984), 185. Tingley said "Give me a child until he is seven and not all the temptations of the world can move him afterwards, for he will have learned the divinity of his own soul." She also noted that until seven years of age a child "is at the mercy of either the good or the bad, the strong and the weak. It is at the mercy of its environment" (see Tingley, *Mysteries of the Heart Doctrine*, 91; Tingley, *The Voice of the Soul* (Point Loma: Woman's International Theosophical League, 1928), 211).

²⁴ Philip Greven, *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 151f.

²⁵ Bernard Wishy, *The Child and the Republic: The Dawn of American Child Nurture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), chapters four and five.

²⁶ Michael Steven Shapiro, *Child's Garden: The Kindergarten Movement from Froebel to Dewey* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), 11-14; Charles Strickland, "A Transcendentalist Father: The Child-Rearing Practices of Bronson Alcott," *Perspectives in American History* 3 (1969).

²⁷ Shapiro, chapter two; Irene M. Lilley, "Introduction," in *Friedrich Froebel: A Selection from his Writings*, ed. Lilley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 8-9, 79, 85, 148. See also Barbara Beatty, *Preschool Education in America: The Culture of Young Children from the Colonial Era to the Present* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), and Norman Brosterman, *Inventing Kindergarten* (NY: Harry Abrams, 1997).

²⁸ Greenwalt, 77.

²⁹ Dr. E. M. Hyatt, *Child-Life* 1 (December 1896): 20 [this magazine was the official periodical for the Lotus Circles,

according to "Editorial Notes," *The Lamp* 3 (15 December 1896): 73]; Ylva, *Luz Star-Eye's Dream-Journey to the Isles of the Southern Sea* (Point Loma: The Aryan Theosophical Press, 1912); V.M., *Strange Little Girl: A Story for Children* (Point Loma: The Aryan Theosophical Press, 1911); Dr. Thadeus P. Hyatt, "Deposition, Estate of A. G. Spalding, Probate Court Case #6464, San Diego County, California, 23 March, 1917"; Argus, "Education," *New Century* 1 (14 October 1897): 6; "From a Mother," *New Century* 1 (4 December 1897): 10.

³⁰ M., "Mrs. Tyberg," *New Century Path* 7 (14 February 1904): 7.

³¹ Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1975), 206; Jan Lewis, "Mother's Love: The Construction of an Emotion in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Social History and Issues in Human Consciousness: Some Interdisciplinary Connections*, eds. Andrew M. Barnes and Peter N. Stearns (New York: New York University Press, 1989), 211-17. The quotations from Beecher's writings are in *The Educated Woman in America: Selected Writings of Catharine Beecher, Margaret Fuller, and M. Carey Thomas*, ed. Barbara M. Cross (New York: Teachers College Press, 1965), 87, 92.

³² Dr. Lydia Ross, "Medical Psychology," *Theosophical Path* 10 (February 1916): 198; Judith Tyberg Diaries (16 July 1923-31 December 1924), East-West Cultural Center, Culver City, Calif.

³³ Ray Stannard Baker, "An Extraordinary Experiment in Brotherhood," *American Magazine* 63 (Jan. 1907): 230; Bertha Damaris Knobe, "The Point Loma Community," *Munsey's Magazine* 29 (June 1903): 360; Karl H. von Wiegand, "Mystics, Babies, and Bloom," *Sunset* 23 (August 1909): 118.

³⁴ Photograph file, ATSP; Observer, "Point Loma News," *New Century* 5 (December 8, 1901): 11.

³⁵ Dr. Charlotte Loring White, interview by Dr. Craig Carter, 19 January 1985, Oral History Program, San Diego Historical Society (hereafter SDHS), San Diego, Calif.; Plato, *Republic* V:459d-460d in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato including the Letters*, eds. Edith Hamilton and

Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961).

³⁶ Student, "Raja Yoga Education and the Home," *Century Path* 12 (June 27, 1909): 14; Amos J. Johnson, "The Children's Cry," *New Century* 2 (March 18, 1899): 3; Student, "The Nervous Child and its Mother," *Century Path* 13 (May 15, 1910): 14.

³⁷ Student, "Excessive Home Work in Schools," *New Century Path* 9 (November 12, 1905): 3; Gertrude Van Pelt, "The Raja Yoga College," *Searcblight* 3 (January 13, 1911): 59; Affidavit, 1909, ATSP.

³⁸ Grace Knoche, "Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow, from a Theosophical Standpoint," *Theosophical Path* 15 (September 1918): 245.

³⁹ Tyberg, "Raja Yoga and Mother Love," *Theosophical Path* (January 1912): 59.

⁴⁰ Tingley, *Theosophy and Higher Education* (Point Loma: The Aryan Theosophical Press, 1922), 6; Cousin Juliana, "A Raja Yoga Riddle," *Century Path* 7 (September 22, 1907): 11; Student files, ATSP; Kurt Reineman, "Sketches Along the Road to Understanding (Autobiographical)," 1956, ATSP.

⁴¹ Student, "A Threatened Setback in Education," *New Century* 11 (March 22, 1908): 14; Student files, ATSP; "The Savage Family at Point Loma: Source Material Provided by William A. (Bill) Savage," 1992; David Ponsonby, interview with author, Redondo Beach, Calif., 23 September 1993; Eugene B. Price, interview by Dr. Craig Carter, 18 August 1982, Oral History Program, SDHS, San Diego, Calif.; Louise H. Savage, interview by Dr. M. V. Standeven, 12 October 1980, Oral History Program, SDHS, San Diego, Calif.

⁴² Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* 2: 273; Student files, ATSP; Mabel Collins Donnelly, *The American Victorian Woman: The Myth and the Reality* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 41; Greenwalt, 65; Lesley A. Hall, "Forbidden by God, Despised by Men: Masturbation, Medical Warnings, Moral Panic, and Manhood in Great Britain, 1850-1950," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2 (January 1992): 368, 371; Gregory Tillett, *The Elder Brother: A Biography of Charles Webster leadbeater* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 197-99.

⁴³ A Raja Yoga Student, "What Theosophy Means to a Young Man," *Century Path* 13 (October 9, 1910): 8; I. L. H., Jr., "Theosophy in Practice: The Duality of Human Nature," *Theosophical Path* 12 (January 1917): 60-62; Reineman, "Discipline," *Theosophical Path* 28 (May 1925): 468-70.

⁴⁴ Kate Hanson, "A Student's Diary of INTERNATIONAL PEACE CONGRESS Sweden—1913," ATSP.

⁴⁵ "Report of the Investigation of the Raja Yoga School at Point Loma, California by Hon. Cesar Augustus Barranco Chancellor of the Cuban Legation," 1909, ATSP.

⁴⁶ Edith Tyberg, interview with author, Altadena, Calif., 19 September 1993.

⁴⁷ Robert Ellwood, "Theosophy," in *America's Alternative Religions*, ed. Timothy Miller (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 322; David Ray Griffin, "Introduction: Postmodern Spirituality and Society," in *Spirituality and Society: Postmodern Visions*, ed. David Ray Griffin (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 14-17.

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A Tibetan Description of HPB

Donald S. Lopez, Jr.

Despite the efforts over the past century to document HPB's seven years in Tibet and to find some Tibetan version of the *Stanzas of Dzyan* or *The Voice of the Silence*, no credible evidence has been produced. There is, however, at least one reference to HPB in a work by a Tibetan scholar. The reference is unfortunately rather late; it probably dates from around 1940. It is, however, remarkable in its own way. The description is by the noted Tibetan figure Gendun Chopel (dGe 'dun Chos 'phel).

He was born in Amdo, the northeast province of the Tibetan cultural domain (currently part of China's Qinghai Province), in 1903. His father was a scholar of the Nyingma sect, the "old translation school" which traced its heritage to the mythically potent visit of the Indian yogin Padmasambhava to Tibet at the end of the eighth century. Shortly after the death of his father when he was a child of seven, Gendun Chopel was himself identified as an incarnate lama of the Nyingma sect but did not receive the customary material benefit that usually accompanies such recognition; he seems never to have been formally invested because the treasury of the lama had been depleted in the period between incarnations. He was sent instead to the local Geluk monastery, an institution of some 500 monks, where he began instruction in

the standard curriculum in logic and epistemology. He quickly gained notoriety as an unusually skilled and unconventional debater, so much so in fact, some sources suggest, that he was asked to leave the monastery for critical remarks he made about the positions set forth in the monastery's textbooks; others report that he was expelled for making mechanical toys. He left Amdo in 1927 for Lhasa, the necessary destination for any Geluk monk who wished to pursue academic training at the highest level. He enrolled in Gomang College of Drepung monastery, one of the "three seats" of the Geluk sect in the vicinity of Lhasa and the largest Buddhist monastery in the world with some 12,000 monks. Here Gendun Chopel rarely participated in the regular activities of monastery life, such as attending lectures and prayers, and when he did attend lectures, he fell into constant arguments with his teacher, who eventually refused to address him by name, calling him only, "the madman." Gendun Chopel soon came to devote much of his time to making scroll paintings of various deities, using this as a means of earning a small income. He would, however, frequent the debating courtyard to confound his fellow students, sometimes disguised as one of the *ldap ldop*, the fraternity of illiterate monk-police.

He completed the curricula in logic and epistemology, the taxonomy of the Buddhist path, and Madhyamaka philosophy before abandoning his formal studies in 1934 to accompany the Indian scholar Rahul Sankrityayan (1893-1963) in his search for Sanskrit manuscripts in the monasteries of southern Tibet. Sankrityayan was by then a distinguished Sanskritist and an active figure in the Indian independence movement. Gendun Chopel ended up accompanying Sankrityayan to Nepal and then on to India, where he was to spend the next twelve years.

He was extremely active during this period, both in his scholarly and personal pursuits. He travelled extensively through India and Sri Lanka, studied Sanskrit, Pali, and English, gaining considerable facility in each. For example, he translated the *Dhammapada*, *Shakuntala*, and the *Bhagavadgita* into Tibetan. While in India he also was given access to several Dunhuang manuscripts on the Tibetan dynastic period as well as Tang historical records, which he used as the basis for his unfinished history of early Tibet, the *White Annals (Deb ther dkar po)*, a work important for its attempt to demythologize the history of the Yarlung dynasty in Tibet and to establish Tibet's role as a major military power in Central Asia during the sixth and seventh centuries. He visited and made studies of most of the important Buddhist archaeological sites in India, writing guidebooks for Bodh Gaya (the site of the Buddha's enlightenment) and Sarnath (the site of the Buddha's first sermon), claiming to locate at the latter the precise spot where the Buddha first spoke the dharma. He also acquired vices in India that led to the loss of his monastic vows, developing a reputation as a heavy smoker and drinker. He

also spent a good deal of time studying and experimenting with Sanskrit erotica, using his studies and his experiences as the basis for one of his most famous works, the *Treatise on Passion (‘Dod pa’i bstan bcos)*, a work which circulated widely in Lhasa society in manuscript form.¹

In 1940, he moved to Kalimpong in Sikkim where he lived at the home of the Russian Tibetologist George Roerich, the son of Nicholas Roerich (1874-1947) and Elena Ivanovna Roerich (1879-1955), a noted Theosophist and author of such works as *Leaves of Morya's Garden*.² Gendun Chopel collaborated with Roerich in the translation of a massive history of Tibetan Buddhism written in 1476, *The Blue Annals (Deb ther sngon po)*. His contribution seems to have been significant enough to have warranted co-authorship of the book, at least according to today's scholarly standards. Instead, Roerich states in the Introduction: "It has been a source of much satisfaction to me that I was able to discuss the entire translation with the Rev. dGe-'dun Chos-'phel, the well-known Tibetan scholar, and I gratefully acknowledge his very helpful guidance."³

He spent the last two years of his stay in South Asia in the Kalimpong-Darjeeling area of Sikkim where he became involved with the incipient Tibetan Progressive Party. Its founder advocated the same changes for Tibet that had occurred in China with the fall of the Qing, believing that the present form of government in Tibet was totally unsuited for the modern world. He sought the help of the Kuomintang in liberating Tibet from what he regarded as its tyrannical government and in the creation of an autonomous Tibetan republic, organized along

democratic lines but under the overall control of the Republic of China.

Gendun Chopel had himself become increasingly critical of the theocratic government of Tibet and of the corruption and political machinations of the Geluk monasteries. He believed that major reforms, if not revolution, were necessary in Tibet and proposed that monks be paid salaries rather than being allowed to own estates and that they be required to study and prohibited from engaging in commerce. Late in 1945, the founder of the party asked Gendun Chopel to return to Tibet, not by the usual route but east and north along the Anglo-Tibetan border. He was asked to disguise himself as a monk-beggar on pilgrimage and to make maps of the area. Gendun Chopel finally arrived in Lhasa after twelve years abroad in early 1946.

In Lhasa, the government of Tibet was soon aware of Gendun Chopel's presence in the city. Meanwhile, Gendun Chopel worked with one of his former classmates at Drepung on a Tibetan dictionary, which is still widely used. He also composed the most important but also most controversial Buddhist work to be produced in Tibet in the last century. The work, entitled *Nagarjuna's Intention Adorned* (*Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan*), seeks to present the true meaning of the Madhyamaka philosophy of the great second century Indian master Nagarjuna. Much of this presentation is effected through a vigorous polemic against the "orthodox" interpretation of Nagarjuna held by the dominant Geluk sect, the sect of the Dalai Lama.

In late July 1946, the government decided to place him under arrest, informing him only that charges had been brought against him for

distributing counterfeit currency. A search of his rooms yielded a black box containing notes and papers connected with a number of projects. His interrogation moved from polite inquiry to flogging, throughout which he maintained his innocence. He was incarcerated first in a jail where he was permitted to have whiskey and a diary, but was then transferred to the prison at the foot of the Potala. He was released in 1949, just a year before the Chinese invasion. By all accounts, he emerged from prison a broken man. Though supported by friends, he refused to wear anything but his prison rags. His writings had been confiscated and he showed no interest in reviving his many projects. He developed a severe cough and died of undetermined causes in October, 1951. He was probably 48.

The remarkable passage below appears in the seventeenth and final chapter of his travel journals, published in 1990 in the second volume of his three volume collected works.⁴ At this point in the text, he is surveying the religious climate in India during his time there. The section on HPB is preceded by a description of Ramakrishna and the Ramakrishna mission. Thus, he begins by referring to Theosophy as, "another new religion."

There are a number of points of interest about the passage, only a few of which can be pursued here. First, Gendun Chopel identifies the Mahatmas as Tibetans, and attempts to render their names into a feasible Tibetan form. Morya becomes "Mu ra" the name of a medicinal herb that sometimes appears in Tibetan personal names. Koot Hoomi is Gutume (*sKu thu med*), "the cloakless one." He does not seem to doubt that HPB met with these masters. He is rather unsure of their true nature. Was it like the

meeting of Lekyi Dorje (Las kyi rdo rje) with the bodhisattva Vajrapani (Guhyapati), or was it like the meeting of the translator Ga (rGa) with a demon? Both incidents are mentioned in the *Blue Annals* (the former on page 105, the latter on page 790), suggesting perhaps that this passage was written while he was living in the Roerich house. In general, Gendun Chopel does not dismiss the stories about HPB out of hand. Indeed, he seems disposed to believe them, although he makes clear that he has not witnessed anything himself.

Also of interest is the possible source of his information. He is said to have learned to read English well while in India and he suggests that what he has learned about HPB has come from reading “extensive stories.” Again, one would imagine that the Roerich home in Kalimpong is a likely source of whatever books he read. He also seems to have heard about her during his visits to Sri Lanka. Although impressed by their devotion to monastic discipline, Gendun Chopel was critical of the Sinhalese monks’ rejection of Mahayana and tantric Buddhism. Thus, he is impressed that HPB had gained their respect. He also mentions her influence on Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933), who toured India with HPB in 1884. Elsewhere in his journals, Gendun Chopel praises Dharmapala for his efforts to wrest control of Bodhgaya, the site of the Buddha’s enlightenment, from Hindus, and restore it to Buddhist hands. Gendun Chopel ends with a note of skepticism concerning how effective HPB’s appeals to science would be with a Tibetan audience. He then turns to a discussion of science.

Another new religion like that has appeared. Its founder is a Russian woman named Blavatsky. I think that she is some kind of incredible self-made yogini. In any case, she attained magical powers. When she was a child, she was blessed in a dream by two Tibetan lamas named Mura (Mu ra) and Gutume (sKu thu med). Then, occasionally she would see a kind of vision, until in the end she actually met with them, like one person talking to another. They instructed her in everything, matters both subtle and coarse. When I carefully read her extensive stories about them, sometimes it reminds me of when Guhyapati appeared to Lekyi Dorje (Las kyi rdo rje); sometimes I think it is like when a demon king appeared to the venerable translator Ga (rGa). I don’t know whether [the stories] can be judged unequivocally. She also continuously communicated with these two masters through letters. It is said that a great many people have actually seen their [the two masters’] letters fall in front of her out of empty space and that sometimes they are in Lanza and Tibetan script written on birch bark. However, I have not seen this myself. In any case, all of the foreigners believe this woman’s magic. Some wonder whether they are tricks, but I think it would be difficult for her to deceive all of the fully trained foreign magicians. Her distinguishing features are: under one of her breasts is a large scar and no one knows how she got it, and sometimes it will drip blood; she summons things she needs just by looking at them; she can light a lamp or blow it out with thought alone; by looking at another person’s body they freeze; what sounds like the tune of a silver bell constantly rings in empty space; when she needs to send letters, clothing, and so forth to another country, she burns them in a fire in front of her and by turning them into ashes, they arrive at the very place and can actually be received. Most of the things that she needs she takes out of trees, water, or air. Among all those things, it is said that her second

[?] mental powers, sending letters, and hearing answers are most amazing.

When she arrived in India, the foreigners did not like her and said she was a magician. They sent for the army, but as much as they searched, they could not expose her deception. In any case, among all the foreigners today, some follow her and some haughtily attack her, like the faith in the Buddha of the brahmin gNam gyi skar ma [I regret that I have been unable to identify this reference]. These are the main ideas of the new system of this woman.

The minds of Sinhalese monks are narrower than the eye of needle, but nowadays many of them praise her. Dharmapala, the restorer of Rspatana [Sarnath], is said to have initially become interested in the Buddha through her. It fascinates all the westerners because she explains her religion by stitching it together with the views of modern science. In particular, there were foreigners who in the past did not believe in the supernatural. Not only did she demonstrate magic to them but she applied scientific principles to such things as transforming matter through magical powers. That mode of explanation seemed to impress everyone. However, if it were explained to us [Tibetans] who are not familiar with the assertions of science, it would only confuse us

Notes

¹ This work has been translated by Jeffrey Hopkins with Dorje Yudon Yuthok as *Tibetan Arts of Love* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1992).

² The tremendous “psychic pressure” of Mme. Roerich’s presence in the room above is described by Sangharakshita in his memoir, *Facing Mount Kanchenjunga: An English*

Buddhist in the Eastern Himalayas (Glasgow: Windhorse Publications, 1991), 344-45.

³ George Roerich, *The Blue Annals* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1949), xxi.

⁴ dGe ’dun Chos ’phel, *rGyal khams rig pas bskor ba’i gtam rgyud gser gyi thang ma (smad cha)* in *dGe ’dun Chos ’phel gyi gsung rtsom* (n. p.: Bod ljong bod yig dbe mnying dbe skrun khang gis bskrun, 1990), vol. 2, 164-66.

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Book Reviews

America's Religions: An Educator's Guide to Beliefs and Practices. By Benjamin J. Hubbard, John T. Hatfield, and James A. Santucci. Englewood, Colorado: Teacher Ideas Press, 1997. Pp. xiii + 162 pp. Notes, index, and illustrations. \$25.00 pb.

A team of senior scholars have combined to write the best source available for the individual teacher on religion in America. Working closely with educators in the public schools, Hubbard, Hatfield and Santucci have developed a resource which is accurate, positive (presenting each religious or non-religious tradition or movement in its own integrity), consistent, concise and clear. This is a combination which is most difficult to achieve.

Each chapter deals with a religious (or in one instance, Atheism and Secular Humanism, a non-religious) tradition. The chapters are organized according to eight topics: origins, beliefs, sacred books/scriptures, practices, main subgroups, common misunderstandings and stereotypes, classroom concerns, and population data. Each chapter is signed by its author or authors, adequately footnoted and referenced for further reading. From the acknowledgments it is clear that each section was read and critiqued by representative scholars of each tradition. Sufficient classroom testing was done to make this an already proven resource.

The annotated bibliography contains books and videos but also a recent CD-ROM and references to Web sites, an innovation supplemented

by an email address for Prof. Hubbard for direct responses and communication with the authors.

The two appendices have differing purposes: one gives an example of a school district with a well thought-out policy on religious beliefs and customs while the second details the calendar year of religious holidays and events which might be observed by students from one or another religious community.

Despite—and at the same time because of—its excellent scholarship, this guide is both a handbook for quick reference on a specific religion or event and a highly readable book to be read with great pleasure. For either purpose, it is a must for every educator in the public schools. But this does not mean that denominational or private schools can ignore America's cardinal principle of toleration of religion or non-religion. Ignorance concerning religion among teachers and school administrators can result in unnecessary and unwarranted emotional injury to students and their parents, and in the public schools may also lead to action in the courts which almost always could have been avoided, according to the authors, through knowledge and enlightened actions.

America's Religions should become a required text for every teacher and school administrator in the United States. It is that important.

George Williams

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Movie Review

Fairy Tale: A True Story

The Cottingley Fairy photographs have had a lasting negative impact on Arthur Conan Doyle's reputation. (For a full discussion of the Cottingley Fairy incident see Michael W. Homer and Massimo Introvigne, "The Recoming of the Fairies," *Theosophical History* (April 1996) VI:2, 59-76). Those who wonder how the author of the Sherlock Holmes adventures could have embraced Spiritualism are even more perplexed by his belief in the veracity of the famous fairy photographs. The film, *Fairy Tale: A True Story*, places Conan Doyle's participation in this episode in a new perspective which is respectful of his beliefs but which also attempts to tell the story of those who did not believe in the photographs.

Fairy Tale: A True Story was released in North America on October 24, 1997. It tells the story of the Cottingley Fairy photographs incident chronicled by Arthur Conan Doyle and Edward L. Gardner. Both men are portrayed in the movie. While this version of the Cottingley Fairy photographs is a wonderful fairy tale, the movie *Fairy Tale* is not a "true story" (at least not totally true). Liberties are taken with the "true story" to dramatize the events surrounding the Cottingley Fairies. Ironically, the fictional events dramatized in the film illuminate the most intriguing themes of the real episode. The most obvious parts of the movie which are not true are its condensed chronology, the inclusion of

Harry Houdini as a principal participant in the events portrayed, and the reference to Joseph Wright who is not mentioned in any of the historical accounts but who—in the movie—died prior to the events chronicled in the movie and became a symbol for the death and devastation of the Great War.

According to promotional material for the movie (see <http://www.fairytalemovie.com/prodnotes.html>), the story took place in 1917. While it is true that the first two fairy photographs were taken in July and September, 1917 by Elsie Wright and her cousin Frances Griffiths, the next three photographs were not taken until three years later in August 1920. Other photographs were also attempted but discarded as partial failures. Arthur Conan Doyle first heard of the initial photographs in May 1920 and made arrangements for the taking of subsequent photographs (but neither he nor Edward Gardner were there when they were taken as depicted in the movie). Conan Doyle's first *Strand* article was published in December 1920 (which included the first two photographs) and a second article (not referenced in the movie) was published in March 1921 (which included the subsequent three photographs). The book, *The Coming of the Fairies*, was not published until 1922. In the film we experience these events as if they occurred one after the other in rapid sequence. Obviously, the compressed

chronology allows for a more convenient and engaging telling of a fairy tale in a way that adds drama to events which occurred over more than a five year period.

Fairy Tale opens with a magic show at the Hippodrome attended by Arthur Conan Doyle and his children. Following the program, Conan Doyle gushed that if he had not seen Houdini's escape with his own eyes he would not have believed it. Houdini replied: "Do you believe everything you see?" Then Houdini looked to Jean (Conan Doyle's young daughter) and said "Children expect nothing and so they see everything." With this dramatic opening, Houdini is introduced into the events surrounding the Cottingley Fairy photographs. The inclusion of Harry Houdini as a skeptic and foil for true believer, Arthur Conan Doyle, is an ingenious tool to introduce the paradigm between belief and knowledge. (Houdini and Conan Doyle have also been linked in other recent fiction: Bethancourt's *The Tomorrow Connection* (1984); Hjortsberg's *Nevermore* (1994); and, most recently, Satterthwaite's *Escapade* (1995)). As a magician, Houdini asks us to question what is real, or assumed to be true.

The underlying theme of the movie is whether two young girls had actually seen and photographed fairies living in a garden in Cottingley, Yorkshire or whether they were capable of creating and perpetuating a hoax. A more subtle and secondary theme suggested in the film is whether fairies exist. Arthur Conan Doyle, a materialist who shortly before the appearance of the Cottingley Fairies had converted to Spiritualism, was convinced that the girls were too innocent to perpetuate a hoax and that their innocence allowed them to see fairies when

others could not. Harry Houdini (who in real life probably did not consider the episode important or serious enough for him to even make comment even though Conan Doyle sent him a letter making specific reference to them) provides the perspective of a materialist in the movie. Houdini, the master of illusion, maintained that empirical evidence is not always sufficient to prove the existence of the supernatural. After all, Houdini was a medium before becoming a conjurer and realized that even empirical evidence can be produced by "tricks."

The movie does not suggest that the girls produced the hoax for malevolent purposes. On the contrary, part of the "fiction" which has been introduced into the movie, enables the movie makers to present a multilayered narrative which presents a complex story. On one level *Fairy Tale* is a simple children's fairy tale replete with real fairies, children with nets in the beck attempting to catch a glimpse of fairies, the performance of Peter Pan at the Duke of York Theatre in London and Houdini performing magic tricks at the Hippodrome. But the story is also for adults. Mrs. Wright is a bereaved mother. Although she did not initially believe that her daughter and niece had seen fairies, she soon finds comfort in the fairy photographs which "prove" the existence of "spirits of the air."

The movie suggests that Frances and Elsie created a false proof (utilizing cardboard cut-outs) for the existence of "real" fairies which they had seen (or at least they believed really existed) but which refused to be photographed. Both Houdini and a Yorkshire reporter discovered evidence which suggested that the fairy photographs were staged with props. (In the

movie the Wrights refuse to speak with the reporter—in real life they all (Mr. and Mrs. Wright as well as Elsie)—“answered my questions quite frankly.”) During one episode in the movie, Elsie asked Houdini if he would ever reveal how he performed one of his tricks. He said he would never do so. “No one wants to know,” he said. His response gave comfort to the girl who realized that the illusion she and her cousin had produced provided comfort to her bereaved mother and to others such as Arthur Conan Doyle and Edward Gardner. The “trick” utilized in making the photographs was no different than tricks used by magicians and illusionists which provided pleasure for their audiences. The girls (in the movie) instinctively knew that this story would not be believed unless supported by empirical data. The romantic notion of intuitive belief had become subservient to a more classical view that requires an analytical and rational explanation for the supernatural. Ironically, Houdini, the master of illusion, is the empiricist even though he asked his audiences to suspend reality to believe an illusion. But he also never claimed to be assisted by spirits: “It was a trick—but I hope a very good one.”

It is important that the photographers of the fairies were children. Little girls were perceived as less likely to lie or deceive. Their innocence allowed them to believe and perhaps to see what adults “know” do not exist while the movie advances the notion that “grownups don’t know how to believe.” In the movie, even Houdini refuses to challenge Elsie and Frances. The master illusionist is depicted as one who is very critical of mediums and, in particular, those who seek to profit from fraud.

At the end of the movie Houdini is asked by the press, in the presence of the girls, whether he believed in the photographs. He simply said that he had spent much of his life making the impossible true and wondered why he should be against this in others. Instead he said “I stand against fraud. . . . I see none of that here.” When Elsie’s mother had been asked the same question by Conan Doyle she responded by saying “Yes, with all my heart.”

Despite the liberties taken by the film makers with the “real history” of the Cottingley Fairy photographs, the film does illuminate an interesting episode in the career of Arthur Conan Doyle. The Cottingley Fairy episode has always been particularly distressing to those who fail to understand Conan Doyle’s fascination with spirits and the paranormal. The movie places his beliefs and his actions in advancing his beliefs in a very non-judgmental context which accepts the possibility that even if the photographs were ultimately shown to be fakes, that the existence of spirits and fairies is still subject to belief.

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