

Prologue

Of any millennium it can be said that it was the best of times and the worst of times. Probably the desire for war and conquest has been with us as long as men have inhabited the earth. What makes each millennium unique, therefore, is the people who are born during it and the accomplishments that are made. The nineteenth century abounded with wars and revolutions: mechanical revolutions, industrial revolutions, physical revolutions, moral revolutions, and spiritual revolutions. It seemed to be the time when people awoke and expanded.

The steam engine was invented, the telephone, the telegraph, electric lights, photography, and ironclad warships. Florence Nightingale revolutionized military medicine; Freud probed the unconscious; the First Church of Christ, Scientist, was organized to teach that illness, pain, and death are illusions. In 1893, in America, the first-ever Parliament of Religions was convened. Delegates came from throughout the world. The two from India were Vivekananda, who represented the Hindu faith, “the Mother of all Religions,” and Dharmapala, a Buddhist, who converted a number of Americans to Buddhism and founded the first Mahabodhi Society in America.

While serving in India, James Churchward discovered accounts of Earth’s first civilization, “Mu,” believed to have been located somewhere in the great volcanic earthquake belt that encircles the Pacific Basin. People who shared a conviction that death is not the end of the soul, and that mediums can facilitate communication with the Spirit World, organized themselves into the Spiritualist movement. They studied the laws of nature, received messages from beyond the grave, and observed phenomena on both the visible and invisible sides of life. The Society for Psychical Research was established to expand science and physics by investigating claims of unusual human powers.

An American Buddhist, Henry S. Olcott, and the courageous, fiery-spirited Russian, Helena P. Blavatsky, teamed up and formed the Theosophical Society to conduct scientific research into the unexplained aspects of nature. While traveling in Tibet, Blavatsky had learned of the *Stanzas*

of Dzyan. She believed them to be the essential teachings of a prehistoric, universal religion and the common ancestor of all the world's great religions. If all religions shared a common ancestor, then all religions were one—essentially teaching the same doctrines and inculcating the same ideals of conduct and life. External differences were necessary to attract dissimilar races and temperaments.

The research of the Theosophical Society demonstrated the character, presence, and diffusion of this universal religion in every land. H.P. Blavatsky disseminated these teachings through her books *Isis Unveiled* and two obscurely written volumes entitled *The Secret Doctrine*. The books were crammed with the most comprehensive overview of esoteric wisdom ever to appear in print. They exposed Westerners to the Eastern beliefs of reincarnation, karma, and a Hierarchy of Masters of Wisdom and Compassion, who lovingly guide the development of mankind on earth.

Because anyone could join Blavatsky's "Universal Fraternity and Brotherhood of Humanity" and still practice one's own religion, and because the teachings encouraged investigation into the infinite, Theosophy attracted vast numbers throughout the world. The books were hungrily digested by Nicholas and Helena Roerich and other seekers, researchers, and people who needed more than what formal religion had to offer — many of whom would have been repelled if faith alone had been required.

One basic belief was that nothing is supernatural, but rather that humans have inactive senses which, once stimulated, allow the perception of usually invisible realms.

Three basic points in Blavatsky's writings are that:

1. Man is an immortal soul who molds and masters his own destiny.
2. The evolution of the whole of humanity takes place with the help of a *Hierarchy of Light* that works from spiritual dimensions.
3. Membership in the *Hierarchy* is composed of people who have perfected themselves through many lifetimes — physically, mentally, and emotionally — and have dedicated themselves to working for the elevation of humanity while continuing their own evolution.

These people are called Masters, Mahatmas, Elder Brothers, or Arhats.

The teachings of this “Hierarchy” did not originate with Blavatsky, however, for down through the ages many secret societies and mystical teachings had spoken of them. Throughout time, these beings had many names, including the “Great White Brotherhood,” the “Occult Hierarchy,” the “Great White Lodge,” the “Enlightened Ones,” the “Holy Assembly,” and “The Invisible Church.” The word “white” referred to the Light that pours through from the Soul, symbolic of Good.

In early Egyptian tradition, these Elders were referred to as “the Immortals, full of Wisdom and Knowledge.” In Persia they were called “the Magi,” thought to be the Kings who brought gifts to the baby Jesus. In the Chaldean tradition they were “the Great Ones” who knew the science of the stars and gave astrology to humanity. In 604 B.C., the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu, author of *Tao te Ching*, spoke of them as “Ancient Masters.” Many Tibetan monks believed that the Brotherhood began in Mu (the civilization of Churchward’s discovery), moved to Tibet until the city of Lhasa grew up around their retreat, and then settled elsewhere, possibly northwestern Tibet.

By whatever name, all teachings agreed that, because the Masters had conquered death, fear, pain, suffering, and other human emotional and physical problems, they were no longer limited by the laws applicable to most humans. They were spiritually evolved enough to move about in their higher bodies or slow their vibrations into physical bodies. They had the wisdom necessary to know the Will of God, and what violated it. These Beings were said to hold “the Plan” for the future of humanity. Their guidance would eventually lead mankind into a glorious future where people would compassionately live in gratitude, taking responsibility for themselves, one another, Mother Earth, and all of God’s creation.

The ancient wisdom passes down the concept of the earth as a school, where the Elders or Masters choose to remain in total service rather than progressing on to other spiritual dimensions. Committing their lives to helping humanity evolve, they are the loving faculty who inspire, comfort, and teach, but never force their ways upon us or interfere with free will, for that would dishonor the principle of karma.

A widely held concept is that, intermittently, when civilization is ready, the Masters initiate new ideals and aspirations by sending powerful waves of thought and feeling into the mental currents of the subtler worlds. This accounts for the important innovations and expanded perceptions that occur simultaneously in different parts of the world.

The Hierarchy is credited with inspiring new goals, such as the intense desire for universal peace, the ideal of religious tolerance, the dream of a cooperative civilization, personal responsibility for the welfare of others, and so forth. These ideals are then picked up as inspiration through meditation by more highly attuned people who relay them throughout the flow of human consciousness. Helena and Nicholas Roerich were among those who received guidance from the spiritual Masters and shared this through writing and art.

Only three copies of the *Stanzas*, containing these teachings, were said to remain in existence. One copy was believed to have been hidden in India during the reign of Emperor Akbar the Great. This, and many other exciting treasures, lay buried throughout time, perhaps awaiting discovery by some enterprising artist, archaeologist and explorer and his courageous wife.