



Selected Essays

**Yoga Meditation Philosophy
Esoteric Mysticism**

Book III in the Series

Lindsay Traynor

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Yoga Meditation Philosophy Esoteric Mysticism

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Lindsay Traynor

The primary focus of this selection is the experience of Cosmic Consciousness.

"Seek the real instead of the apparent the base of All is One."

Collated and Edited by the Author

“... and the Truth shall Make You Free”

I wish to make clear from the outset that I do not wish or expect anyone to believe a word I say; the imperative of realising Truth is based on personal endeavour – Truth is *earned*.

I hope you all maintain your discriminating faculties and apply this principle to all – including theologians and other representatives of various religions, who would all expect that you believe them.

Regarding the status of Jesus as a man, which offends many ‘Christians’ who maintain their belief in the supernatural as proof of divinity. I would respond that I too believe in the divinity of Jesus and Buddha and You.

John 14:20 "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

Luke 17:21 "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

Matthew 24:25 "Behold, I have told you before. 26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not."

Pigs do not fly and neither do men though everyone is at liberty to try and verify fact.

Belief in great men/Sages such as Jesus and Buddha should not be based on fantasy or the supernatural as these men set examples for all to follow. So I offer the following interpretation of the account of Jesus ‘levitating’ or walking on water.

In philosophical and theological discourse turbulent waters are indicative of unruly emotions. The reader would note that Jesus ‘walked’ on turbulent stormy waters (not calm.) He admonished his

disciples for being fearful and then invited Peter to join him on the water. Please note that Peter was chosen intentionally, and what characteristics did Peter have? Impetuousness, short temper, cowardice, fear, violence etc., in short, Peter was a slave to his unruly emotions – this is why he began to ‘sink.’ The message of the great teacher here is obvious. We must rise above the ‘turbulent waters’ of our emotions in order to free ourselves from the slavery of negative behaviour patterns and to become immune to the attempts of others who would use emotional tactics of fear and other negative aspects of the emotions to enslave us, so common in advertising and the political propaganda of today.

Now, do you find the above interpretation useful and instructive, or would you prefer the Walt Disney version, *which would not require you to improve yourself?* The question is rhetorical as I am all too familiar with the current disposition of the enslaved, media nose-ringed, masses of today that expect to be provided for; improving oneself is almost beyond conception for these types.

Now to the case of Magdalene, which quite a few puritanical hypocrites would view with disdain.

I will say this to you prior to interpreting the casting out of ‘devils’ in order to make her ‘acceptable’ to Christ. Your views (whore) reveal much to the perceptive eye. Undoubtedly most of you are men; I empathise with your wives and children, I know you abuse them and you no doubt subscribe to the deplorable views (T.U.L.I.P) of Calvinism and the Evangelical political right. It would serve you well to remember Jesus stating, “you will have your reward.”

Luke 8:2 “..Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,”

Firstly, Jesus loved this woman above his other disciples – at least it appeared as such – why? In fact he loved all equally, but his behaviour with Magdalene was more intimate according to early Christian texts. Do you find this relationship unusual? He was a man and she a woman, a perfectly natural response, especially when we

consider the torment she would have suffered at the hands of the compulsive-obsessive, door-knob-wiping values of Judaism at the time, which relegated her to outcast status. Jesus accepted her before he cast out her 'devils.' He saw her pain and torment and her (our) need for Love, which he offered her unconditionally without regard for the priest class or the opinion of the next-door neighbours.

Now dear reader, what do you suppose those "devils," which Jesus "cast out" were? Perhaps they were the cohorts of Beelzebub, Choronzin or horned demons, maybe even goblins – then again, why not 'Snow White and the seven devils' – point taken I would hope.

He cast out perversity, vanity, avarice, sensuality, self-loathing, etc., and for this she was eternally grateful. She could not help but love the man who released her. She remained with him till the end. Compare this woman's faithfulness, dedication and loyalty with the marriage contract of today and ask yourself which relationship is greater.

Rather than deal with each issue separately, I will relay an anecdote that I hope will serve as a 'vaccination' against further tendencies to theological fantasy and illusion.

A few million years ago when I was young, I travelled the world in search of Truth. My quest was unrelenting and difficult; life-threatening situations were not uncommon, many claimed to 'know,' but proved to be frauds. When I had earned the right to discover that which I sought, I met a few extraordinary men. I am forever in debt to one for releasing me from the mental slavery imposed by my cultural background.

When I met this man he promptly asked what I sought, I responded as I had a thousand times before – Truth! Upon hearing my answer, he roared with laughter, I mean he was 'splitting his sides' laughing and so were a few others present at the time.

It was hard to take as it was all at my expense. Everyone could see my reaction and laughed even harder, the more I tried to compose myself and not react, the more ridiculous I must have appeared. Tears of laughter began streaming down some faces until I too began to laugh – it became so infectious I couldn't help myself, even though I was conscious that it was all at my expense. One of the company then pointed at me and said, "look this idiot is laughing at himself," which of course resulted in more laughter from all except me. I was offended, dejected and getting angry – this last display of emotion really hit the high point for those rascals.

The situation seemed cruel and uncalled for, so I decided to leave. "Well thank you for taking the time to see me," I said and made for the door. This gesture seemed to quieten things down a trifle.

As I was about to disappear through the doorway the old man said, "didn't you say you were searching for Truth?" He made the word sound like the most absurd word in the English language. Before I could respond, he gestured toward the verandah to where we both repaired, the others having taken their leave.

"So where are you from and how long have you been in India?" he asked. Thinking that I may yet discover something, I politely answered his question. "You have come a long way for nothing." "So it would seem," I said. "What is your religion?" I tried to explain that I had none but he insisted on a direct answer, so I said, "well, I was born into a Christian family and baptised according to that faith." "Ah! a Christian, a great Sage your Jesus Christ." He then asked me if I believed in Jesus, I replied in the affirmative but added that I also believed in Siva and Buddha. "Never mind Siva or Buddha, you are not a Hindu or Buddhist." "Are you sure you believe in Jesus?" he asked again. It was obvious he was baiting me but I replied, "yes!" He then pointed to a mountain in the distance and asked me to move it, [hook, line and sinker!] "Impossible," I said. "But you confirmed your belief, therefore, according to his teaching and your belief, you should be able to move that mountain" He then referred to a New Testament which I observed was well read and marked and read the

following passages:

Matthew 17:20 "...If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

John 14:12 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

And then demanded that I move that mountain or he would expose me as a liar and hypocrite. I didn't have any alternative but to concede. He consoled me by saying, "don't feel too badly about it, "all Christians, without exception, are hypocrites and liars." I took slight offence and replied that there have been many mystics who have known God in the faith. "But could they move mountains or fly or raise the dead?" he asked. "So there must be another interpretation that is more accurate than a literal reading, otherwise Jesus is a liar," he quipped without waiting for my response.

I do not wish to turn this paper into a novel so I will summarise by saying that my experience with this wise man freed me from the stupid, implausible and fantastic interpretations of Christian theologians and those who profess to have 'authority' from Jesus. I was also taught an ancient Hindu method of discriminative inquiry, which reveals the Truth in all things including all scriptures/texts.

The ancient scribes were acutely aware that corruption would occur, and as a precaution they buried the loftier aspects of the teaching in symbolism, allegory, metaphor and every other literary device available. In this way is Truth preserved in a text. An additional benefit (of the method) is that profound treatises open like a flower and reveal the beauty and genius of not only their creators but the Creator. When applied in the world of men, liars and hypocrites become transparent and are exposed to their lying 'bones.'

Notwithstanding the above, Scripture also speaks quite plainly for

numerous reasons, I offer the following to expose the nefarious manipulators of political Evangelicalism prevalent today.'

John 13:34 "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

John 15:9 "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love."

John 15:12 "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

This is stated plainly for the simple reason that Love conquers All; not fear, missiles, bombs or the inane drivel of morons and fanatics that literally interpret and contort religious texts to serve their own interests. Moreover, we all know it, but what prevents people from applying common sense? Fear of course, this emotion is played to death these days.

We should now all have the opportunity to 'walk on water' and rise above our fears and other negative emotions and set ourselves Free, though no doubt most enslaved, infantile people want everything provided for them; nevertheless, there is no escaping the reality we must All *earn* our freedom or forever remain enslaved to one force or another.

Peace to All

Organised Religion: from Failure to Liability

It's dreamboat time in pathological paradise. Yes, the topic is religion, a favourite of the mindless and enslaved regardless of race, nationality or culture.

No human society has been spared, religion induced murder, destruction, violence and insanity knock on every door, hut, tent and lean-to on the planet. But before proceeding I would in a sentence highlight the fact that ALL organised religions are Failed – irrefutable fact! Furthermore, religious leaders today are the most brazen liars and despicable hypocrites on the planet.

With the example of the homicidal, sociopathic, God Jehovah, who seems to delight in genocide (Jericho) and displays a weakness for gold and silver, religions teach Peace. However, religious leaders throughout history have interpreted Peace as War and Theft.

It becomes obvious that confronting religionists is confronting mental disease/psychopathology. I am not referring to faith-based options but to the clarity of their texts – Christians and Buddhists are obliged to love everyone and not to engage in any violent actions. Clearly no real Christians exist on the planet for they are the most vocal warmongers. At least the Jews maintain theological integrity when they engage in genocide, infanticide and ethnic cleansing – their disturbed God is a homicidal maniac.

Perhaps Christians should convert to Judaism or Islam in order to avoid the hell they fear so much – the text clearly indicates Jesus' attitude to hypocrites. Jesus is known to have frequented dens of iniquity and to have socialised with foul mouthed sinners and drunks; it seems Jesus favoured Integrity above posturing. He displayed nothing but contempt for the wealthy, mercantile classes – as did the Buddha.

Historically, all Christian churches/denominations pursued gold,

gems and all manner of monetary wealth at the expense of the common people – nothing has changed today.

The following essay is for the benefit of space cadets, dreamboats and other assorted mental deficients that imagine the East is somehow immune from theological corruption or other nasty human characteristics – human nature is the same regardless of culture, race or location.

We thank the Dalai Fraud for recently accepting honours from a national leader presently engaged in an ongoing holocaust in Iraq; it seems that 750,000 lost innocent lives and a nation reduced to anarchy can be ignored when self-interest or advantage is on offer.

The essay below is a short history of Tibetan theocracy and the sordid events that characterise all forms of elitist minority rule. The popes of Europe were not alone in their sordid escapades, nor should anyone think the East is somehow less corrupt than the West. The reprehensible sexual exploits of Indian paedophile -- Sai Baba -- and other 'gurus' concerned more with their penises than 'self-realisation' are not in short supply today – the linked PDF is a lucid account of a typical Indian guru; however, it should not be forgotten that these activities apply to all religions.

Friendly Feudalism: The Tibet Myth

(January 2007)

by Michael Parenti

I. For Lords and Lamas

Along with the blood drenched landscape of religious conflict there is the experience of inner peace and solace that every religion promises, none more so than Buddhism. Standing in marked

contrast to the intolerant savagery of other religions, Buddhism is neither fanatical nor dogmatic--so say its adherents. For many of them Buddhism is less a theology and more a meditative and investigative discipline intended to promote an inner harmony and enlightenment while directing us to a path of right living. Generally, the spiritual focus is not only on oneself but on the welfare of others. One tries to put aside egoistic pursuits and gain a deeper understanding of one's connection to all people and things. "Socially engaged Buddhism" tries to blend individual liberation with responsible social action in order to build an enlightened society.

A glance at history, however, reveals that not all the many and widely varying forms of Buddhism have been free of doctrinal fanaticism, nor free of the violent and exploitative pursuits so characteristic of other religions. In Sri Lanka there is a legendary and almost sacred recorded history about the triumphant battles waged by Buddhist kings of yore. During the twentieth century, Buddhists clashed violently with each other and with non-Buddhists in Thailand, Burma, Korea, Japan, India, and elsewhere. In Sri Lanka, armed battles between Buddhist Sinhalese and Hindu Tamils have taken many lives on both sides. In 1998 the U.S. State Department listed thirty of the world's most violent and dangerous extremist groups. Over half of them were religious, specifically Muslim, Jewish, and Buddhist. 1

In South Korea, in 1998, thousands of monks of the Chogye Buddhist order fought each other with fists, rocks, fire-bombs, and clubs, in pitched battles that went on for weeks. They were vying for control of the order, the largest in South Korea, with its annual budget of \$9.2 million, its millions of dollars worth of property, and the privilege of appointing 1,700 monks to various offices. The brawls damaged the main Buddhist sanctuaries and left dozens of monks injured, some seriously. The Korean public appeared to disdain both factions, feeling that no matter what side took control, "it would use worshippers' donations for luxurious houses and expensive cars." 2

As with any religion, squabbles between or within Buddhist sects are

often fueled by the material corruption and personal deficiencies of the leadership. For example, in Nagano, Japan, at Zenkoji, the prestigious complex of temples that has hosted Buddhist sects for more than 1,400 years, “a nasty battle” arose between Komatsu the chief priest and the Tacchu, a group of temples nominally under the chief priest's sway. The Tacchu monks accused Komatsu of selling writings and drawings under the temple's name for his own gain. They also were appalled by the frequency with which he was seen in the company of women. Komatsu in turn sought to isolate and punish monks who were critical of his leadership. The conflict lasted some five years and made it into the courts. 3

But what of Tibetan Buddhism? Is it not an exception to this sort of strife? And what of the society it helped to create? Many Buddhists maintain that, before the Chinese crackdown in 1959, old Tibet was a spiritually oriented kingdom free from the egotistical lifestyles, empty materialism, and corrupting vices that beset modern industrialized society. Western news media, travel books, novels, and Hollywood films have portrayed the Tibetan theocracy as a veritable Shangri-La. The Dalai Lama himself stated that “the pervasive influence of Buddhism” in Tibet, “amid the wide open spaces of an unspoiled environment resulted in a society dedicated to peace and harmony. We enjoyed freedom and contentment.” 4

A reading of Tibet's history suggests a somewhat different picture. “Religious conflict was commonplace in old Tibet,” writes one western Buddhist practitioner. “History belies the Shangri-La image of Tibetan lamas and their followers living together in mutual tolerance and nonviolent goodwill. Indeed, the situation was quite different. Old Tibet was much more like Europe during the religious wars of the Counterreformation.” 5 In the thirteenth century, Emperor Kublai Khan created the first Grand Lama, who was to preside over all the other lamas as might a pope over his bishops. Several centuries later, the Emperor of China sent an army into Tibet to support the Grand Lama, an ambitious 25-year-old man, who then gave himself the title of Dalai (Ocean) Lama, ruler of all Tibet. Here is a historical irony: the first Dalai Lama was installed by a Chinese

army.

His two previous lama “incarnations” were then retroactively recognized as his predecessors, thereby transforming the 1st Dalai Lama into the 3rd Dalai Lama. This 1st (or 3rd) Dalai Lama seized monasteries that did not belong to his sect, and is believed to have destroyed Buddhist writings that conflicted with his claim to divinity. The Dalai Lama who succeeded him pursued a sybaritic life, enjoying many mistresses, partying with friends, and acting in other ways deemed unfitting for an incarnate deity. For these transgressions he was murdered by his priests. Within 170 years, despite their recognized divine status, five Dalai Lamas were killed by their high priests or other courtiers. 6

For hundreds of years competing Tibetan Buddhist sects engaged in bitterly violent clashes and summary executions. In 1660, the 5th Dalai Lama was faced with a rebellion in Tsang province, the stronghold of the rival Kagyu sect with its high lama known as the karmapa. The 5th Dalai Lama called for harsh retribution against the rebels, directing the Mongol army to obliterate the male and female lines, and the offspring too “like eggs smashed against rocks.... In short, annihilate any traces of them, even their names.” 7

In 1792, many Kagyu monasteries were confiscated and their monks were forcibly converted to the Gelug sect (the Dalai Lama’s denomination). The Gelug school, known also as the “Yellow Hats,” showed little tolerance or willingness to mix their teachings with other Buddhist sects. In the words of one of their traditional prayers: “Praise to you, violent god of the Yellow Hat teachings/who reduces to particles of dust/ great beings, high officials and ordinary people/ who pollute and corrupt the Gelug doctrine.” 8 An eighteenth-century memoir of a Tibetan general depicts sectarian strife among Buddhists that is as brutal and bloody as any religious conflict might be. 9 This grim history remains largely unvisited by present-day followers of Tibetan Buddhism in the West.

Religions have had a close relationship not only with violence but

with economic exploitation. Indeed, it is often the economic exploitation that necessitates the violence. Such was the case with the Tibetan theocracy. Until 1959, when the Dalai Lama last presided over Tibet, most of the arable land was still organized into manorial estates worked by serfs. These estates were owned by two social groups: the rich secular landlords and the rich theocratic lamas. Even a writer sympathetic to the old order allows that “a great deal of real estate belonged to the monasteries, and most of them amassed great riches.” Much of the wealth was accumulated “through active participation in trade, commerce, and money lending.” 10

Drepung monastery was one of the biggest landowners in the world, with its 185 manors, 25,000 serfs, 300 great pastures, and 16,000 herdsmen. The wealth of the monasteries rested in the hands of small numbers of high-ranking lamas. Most ordinary monks lived modestly and had no direct access to great wealth. The Dalai Lama himself “lived richly in the 1000-room, 14-story Potala Palace.” 11

Secular leaders also did well. A notable example was the commander-in-chief of the Tibetan army, a member of the Dalai Lama’s lay Cabinet, who owned 4,000 square kilometers of land and 3,500 serfs. 12 Old Tibet has been misrepresented by some Western admirers as “a nation that required no police force because its people voluntarily observed the laws of karma.” 13 In fact, it had a professional army, albeit a small one, that served mainly as a gendarmerie for the landlords to keep order, protect their property, and hunt down runaway serfs.

Young Tibetan boys were regularly taken from their peasant families and brought into the monasteries to be trained as monks. Once there, they were bonded for life. Tashi-Tsering, a monk, reports that it was common for peasant children to be sexually mistreated in the monasteries. He himself was a victim of repeated rape, beginning at age nine. 14 The monastic estates also conscripted children for lifelong servitude as domestics, dance performers, and soldiers.

In old Tibet there were small numbers of farmers who subsisted as a

kind of free peasantry, and perhaps an additional 10,000 people who composed the “middle-class” families of merchants, shopkeepers, and small traders. Thousands of others were beggars. There also were slaves, usually domestic servants, who owned nothing. Their offspring were born into slavery. 15 The majority of the rural population were serfs. Treated little better than slaves, the serfs went without schooling or medical care. They were under a lifetime bond to work the lord's land--or the monastery's land--without pay, to repair the lord's houses, transport his crops, and collect his firewood. They were also expected to provide carrying animals and transportation on demand. 16 Their masters told them what crops to grow and what animals to raise. They could not get married without the consent of their lord or lama. And they might easily be separated from their families should their owners lease them out to work in a distant location. 17

As in a free labor system and unlike slavery, the overlords had no responsibility for the serf's maintenance and no direct interest in his or her survival as an expensive piece of property. The serfs had to support themselves. Yet as in a slave system, they were bound to their masters, guaranteeing a fixed and permanent workforce that could neither organize nor strike nor freely depart as might laborers in a market context. The overlords had the best of both worlds.

One 22-year old woman, herself a runaway serf, reports: “Pretty serf girls were usually taken by the owner as house servants and used as he wished”; they “were just slaves without rights.” 18 Serfs needed permission to go anywhere. Landowners had legal authority to capture those who tried to flee. One 24-year old runaway welcomed the Chinese intervention as a “liberation.” He testified that under serfdom he was subjected to incessant toil, hunger, and cold. After his third failed escape, he was mercilessly beaten by the landlord's men until blood poured from his nose and mouth. They then poured alcohol and caustic soda on his wounds to increase the pain, he claimed. 19

The serfs were taxed upon getting married, taxed for the birth of

each child and for every death in the family. They were taxed for planting a tree in their yard and for keeping animals. They were taxed for religious festivals and for public dancing and drumming, for being sent to prison and upon being released. Those who could not find work were taxed for being unemployed, and if they traveled to another village in search of work, they paid a passage tax. When people could not pay, the monasteries lent them money at 20 to 50 percent interest. Some debts were handed down from father to son to grandson. Debtors who could not meet their obligations risked being cast into slavery.²⁰

The theocracy's religious teachings buttressed its class order. The poor and afflicted were taught that they had brought their troubles upon themselves because of their wicked ways in previous lives. Hence they had to accept the misery of their present existence as a karmic atonement and in anticipation that their lot would improve in their next lifetime. The rich and powerful treated their good fortune as a reward for, and tangible evidence of, virtue in past and present lives.

The Tibetan serfs were something more than superstitious victims, blind to their own oppression. As we have seen, some ran away; others openly resisted, sometimes suffering dire consequences. In feudal Tibet, torture and mutilation--including eye gouging, the pulling out of tongues, hamstringing, and amputation--were favored punishments inflicted upon thieves, and runaway or resistant serfs. Journeying through Tibet in the 1960s, Stuart and Roma Gelder interviewed a former serf, Tsereh Wang Tuei, who had stolen two sheep belonging to a monastery. For this he had both his eyes gouged out and his hand mutilated beyond use. He explains that he no longer is a Buddhist: "When a holy lama told them to blind me I thought there was no good in religion."²¹ Since it was against Buddhist teachings to take human life, some offenders were severely lashed and then "left to God" in the freezing night to die. "The parallels between Tibet and medieval Europe are striking," concludes Tom Grunfeld in his book on Tibet. ²²

In 1959, Anna Louise Strong visited an exhibition of torture equipment that had been used by the Tibetan overlords. There were handcuffs of all sizes, including small ones for children, and instruments for cutting off noses and ears, gouging out eyes, breaking off hands, and hamstringing legs. There were hot brands, whips, and special implements for disemboweling. The exhibition presented photographs and testimonies of victims who had been blinded or crippled or suffered amputations for thievery. There was the shepherd whose master owed him a reimbursement in yuan and wheat but refused to pay. So he took one of the master's cows; for this he had his hands severed. Another herdsman, who opposed having his wife taken from him by his lord, had his hands broken off. There were pictures of Communist activists with noses and upper lips cut off, and a woman who was raped and then had her nose sliced away.²³

Earlier visitors to Tibet commented on the theocratic despotism. In 1895, an Englishman, Dr. A. L. Waddell, wrote that the populace was under the "intolerable tyranny of monks" and the devil superstitions they had fashioned to terrorize the people. In 1904 Perceval Landon described the Dalai Lama's rule as "an engine of oppression." At about that time, another English traveler, Captain W.F.T. O'Connor, observed that "the great landowners and the priests... exercise each in their own dominion a despotic power from which there is no appeal," while the people are "oppressed by the most monstrous growth of monasticism and priest-craft." Tibetan rulers "invented degrading legends and stimulated a spirit of superstition" among the common people. In 1937, another visitor, Spencer Chapman, wrote, "The Lamaist monk does not spend his time in ministering to the people or educating them. . . . The beggar beside the road is nothing to the monk. Knowledge is the jealously guarded prerogative of the monasteries and is used to increase their influence and wealth."²⁴ As much as we might wish otherwise, feudal theocratic Tibet was a far cry from the romanticized Shangri La so enthusiastically nurtured by Buddhism's western proselytes.

II. Secularization vs. Spirituality

What happened to Tibet after the Chinese Communists moved into the country in 1951? The treaty of that year provided for ostensible self-governance under the Dalai Lama's rule but gave China military control and exclusive right to conduct foreign relations. The Chinese were also granted a direct role in internal administration "to promote social reforms." Among the earliest changes they wrought was to reduce usurious interest rates, and build a few hospitals and roads. At first, they moved slowly, relying mostly on persuasion in an attempt to effect reconstruction. No aristocratic or monastic property was confiscated, and feudal lords continued to reign over their hereditarily bound peasants. "Contrary to popular belief in the West," claims one observer, the Chinese "took care to show respect for Tibetan culture and religion."²⁵

Over the centuries the Tibetan lords and lamas had seen Chinese come and go, and had enjoyed good relations with Generalissimo Chiang Kaishek and his reactionary Kuomintang rule in China.²⁶ The approval of the Kuomintang government was needed to validate the choice of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama. When the current 14th Dalai Lama was first installed in Lhasa, it was with an armed escort of Chinese troops and an attending Chinese minister, in accordance with centuries-old tradition. What upset the Tibetan lords and lamas in the early 1950s was that these latest Chinese were Communists. It would be only a matter of time, they feared, before the Communists started imposing their collectivist egalitarian schemes upon Tibet.

The issue was joined in 1956-57, when armed Tibetan bands ambushed convoys of the Chinese Peoples Liberation Army. The uprising received extensive assistance from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), including military training, support camps in Nepal, and numerous airlifts.²⁷ Meanwhile in the United States, the American Society for a Free Asia, a CIA-financed front, energetically publicized the cause of Tibetan resistance, with the Dalai Lama's eldest brother, Thubtan Norbu, playing an active role in that organization. The Dalai Lama's second-eldest brother, Gyalo

Thondup, established an intelligence operation with the CIA as early as 1951. He later upgraded it into a CIA-trained guerrilla unit whose recruits parachuted back into Tibet.²⁸

Many Tibetan commandos and agents whom the CIA dropped into the country were chiefs of aristocratic clans or the sons of chiefs. Ninety percent of them were never heard from again, according to a report from the CIA itself, meaning they were most likely captured and killed.²⁹ “Many lamas and lay members of the elite and much of the Tibetan army joined the uprising, but in the main the populace did not, assuring its failure,” writes Hugh Deane.³⁰ In their book on Tibet, Ginsburg and Mathos reach a similar conclusion: “As far as can be ascertained, the great bulk of the common people of Lhasa and of the adjoining countryside failed to join in the fighting against the Chinese both when it first began and as it progressed.”³¹ Eventually the resistance crumbled.

Whatever wrongs and new oppressions introduced by the Chinese after 1959, they did abolish slavery and the Tibetan serfdom system of unpaid labor. They eliminated the many crushing taxes, started work projects, and greatly reduced unemployment and beggary. They established secular schools, thereby breaking the educational monopoly of the monasteries. And they constructed running water and electrical systems in Lhasa.³²

Heinrich Harrer (later revealed to have been a sergeant in Hitler’s SS) wrote a bestseller about his experiences in Tibet that was made into a popular Hollywood movie. He reported that the Tibetans who resisted the Chinese “were predominantly nobles, semi-nobles and lamas; they were punished by being made to perform the lowliest tasks, such as laboring on roads and bridges. They were further humiliated by being made to clean up the city before the tourists arrived.” They also had to live in a camp originally reserved for beggars and vagrants--all of which Harrer treats as sure evidence of the dreadful nature of the Chinese occupation.³³

By 1961, Chinese occupation authorities expropriated the landed estates owned by lords and lamas. They distributed many thousands of acres to tenant farmers and landless peasants, reorganizing them into hundreds of communes.. Herds once owned by nobility were turned over to collectives of poor shepherds. Improvements were made in the breeding of livestock, and new varieties of vegetables and new strains of wheat and barley were introduced, along with irrigation improvements, all of which reportedly led to an increase in agrarian production.³⁴

Many peasants remained as religious as ever, giving alms to the clergy. But monks who had been conscripted as children into the religious orders were now free to renounce the monastic life, and thousands did, especially the younger ones. The remaining clergy lived on modest government stipends and extra income earned by officiating at prayer services, weddings, and funerals.³⁵

Both the Dalai Lama and his advisor and youngest brother, Tenzin Choegyal, claimed that “more than 1.2 million Tibetans are dead as a result of the Chinese occupation.”³⁶ The official 1953 census--six years before the Chinese crackdown--recorded the entire population residing in Tibet at 1,274,000.³⁷ Other census counts put the population within Tibet at about two million. If the Chinese killed 1.2 million in the early 1960s then almost all of Tibet, would have been depopulated, transformed into a killing field dotted with death camps and mass graves--of which we have no evidence. The thinly distributed Chinese force in Tibet could not have rounded up, hunted down, and exterminated that many people even if it had spent all its time doing nothing else.

Chinese authorities claim to have put an end to floggings, mutilations, and amputations as a form of criminal punishment. They themselves, however, have been charged with acts of brutality by exile Tibetans. The authorities do admit to “mistakes,” particularly during the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution when the persecution of religious beliefs reached a high tide in both China and Tibet. After the uprising in the late 1950s, thousands of Tibetans were

incarcerated. During the Great Leap Forward, forced collectivization and grain farming were imposed on the Tibetan peasantry, sometimes with disastrous effect on production. In the late 1970s, China began relaxing controls “and tried to undo some of the damage wrought during the previous two decades.”³⁸

In 1980, the Chinese government initiated reforms reportedly designed to grant Tibet a greater degree of self-rule and self-administration. Tibetans would now be allowed to cultivate private plots, sell their harvest surpluses, decide for themselves what crops to grow, and keep yaks and sheep. Communication with the outside world was again permitted, and frontier controls were eased to permit some Tibetans to visit exiled relatives in India and Nepal.³⁹ By the 1980s many of the principal lamas had begun to shuttle back and forth between China and the exile communities abroad, “restoring their monasteries in Tibet and helping to revitalize Buddhism there.”⁴⁰

As of 2007 Tibetan Buddhism was still practiced widely and tolerated by officialdom. Religious pilgrimages and other standard forms of worship were allowed but within limits. All monks and nuns had to sign a loyalty pledge that they would not use their religious position to foment secession or dissent. And displaying photos of the Dalai Lama was declared illegal.⁴¹

In the 1990s, the Han, the ethnic group comprising over 95 percent of China’s immense population, began moving in substantial numbers into Tibet. On the streets of Lhasa and Shigatse, signs of Han colonization are readily visible. Chinese run the factories and many of the shops and vending stalls. Tall office buildings and large shopping centers have been built with funds that might have been better spent on water treatment plants and housing. Chinese cadres in Tibet too often view their Tibetan neighbors as backward and lazy, in need of economic development and “patriotic education.” During the 1990s Tibetan government employees suspected of harboring nationalist sympathies were purged from office, and campaigns were once again launched to discredit the Dalai Lama. Individual Tibetans

reportedly were subjected to arrest, imprisonment, and forced labor for carrying out separatist activities and engaging in “political subversion.” Some were held in administrative detention without adequate food, water, and blankets, subjected to threats, beatings, and other mistreatment.⁴²

Tibetan history, culture, and certainly religion are slighted in schools. Teaching materials, though translated into Tibetan, focus mainly on Chinese history and culture. Chinese family planning regulations allow a three-child limit for Tibetan families. (There is only a one-child limit for Han families throughout China, and a two-child limit for rural Han families whose first child is a girl.) If a Tibetan couple goes over the three-child limit, the excess children can be denied subsidized daycare, health care, housing, and education. These penalties have been enforced irregularly and vary by district.⁴³ None of these child services, it should be noted, were available to Tibetans before the Chinese takeover.

For the rich lamas and secular lords, the Communist intervention was an unmitigated calamity. Most of them fled abroad, as did the Dalai Lama himself, who was assisted in his flight by the CIA. Some discovered to their horror that they would have to work for a living. Many, however, escaped that fate. Throughout the 1960s, the Tibetan exile community was secretly pocketing \$1.7 million a year from the CIA, according to documents released by the State Department in 1998. Once this fact was publicized, the Dalai Lama's organization itself issued a statement admitting that it had received millions of dollars from the CIA during the 1960s to send armed squads of exiles into Tibet to undermine the Maoist revolution. The Dalai Lama's annual payment from the CIA was \$186,000. Indian intelligence also financed both him and other Tibetan exiles. He has refused to say whether he or his brothers worked for the CIA. The agency has also declined to comment.⁴⁴

In 1995, the News & Observer of Raleigh, North Carolina, carried a frontpage color photograph of the Dalai Lama being embraced by the reactionary Republican senator Jesse Helms, under the headline

“Buddhist Captivates Hero of Religious Right.”⁴⁵ In April 1999, along with Margaret Thatcher, Pope John Paul II, and the first George Bush, the Dalai Lama called upon the British government to release Augusto Pinochet, the former fascist dictator of Chile and a longtime CIA client who was visiting England. The Dalai Lama urged that Pinochet not be forced to go to Spain where he was wanted to stand trial for crimes against humanity.

Into the twenty-first century, via the National Endowment for Democracy and other conduits that are more respectable sounding than the CIA, the U.S. Congress continued to allocate an annual \$2 million to Tibetans in India, with additional millions for “democracy activities” within the Tibetan exile community. In addition to these funds, the Dalai Lama received money from financier George Soros.⁴⁶

Whatever the Dalai Lama’s associations with the CIA and various reactionaries, he did speak often of peace, love, and nonviolence. He himself really cannot be blamed for the abuses of Tibet’s ancien régime, having been but 25 years old when he fled into exile. In a 1994 interview, he went on record as favoring the building of schools and roads in his country. He said the corvée (forced unpaid serf labor) and certain taxes imposed on the peasants were “extremely bad.” And he disliked the way people were saddled with old debts sometimes passed down from generation to generation.⁴⁷ During the half century of living in the western world, he had embraced concepts such as human rights and religious freedom, ideas largely unknown in old Tibet. He even proposed democracy for Tibet, featuring a written constitution and a representative assembly.⁴⁸

In 1996, the Dalai Lama issued a statement that must have had an unsettling effect on the exile community. It read in part: “Marxism is founded on moral principles, while capitalism is concerned only with gain and profitability.” Marxism fosters “the equitable utilization of the means of production” and cares about “the fate of the working classes” and “the victims of . . . exploitation. For those reasons the system appeals to me, and . . . I think of myself as half-Marxist, half-

Buddhist.49

But he also sent a reassuring message to “those who live in abundance”: “It is a good thing to be rich... Those are the fruits for deserving actions, the proof that they have been generous in the past.” And to the poor he offers this admonition: “There is no good reason to become bitter and rebel against those who have property and fortune... It is better to develop a positive attitude.”⁵⁰

In 2005 the Dalai Lama signed a widely advertised statement along with ten other Nobel Laureates supporting the “inalienable and fundamental human right” of working people throughout the world to form labor unions to protect their interests, in accordance with the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In many countries “this fundamental right is poorly protected and in some it is explicitly banned or brutally suppressed,” the statement read. Burma, China, Colombia, Bosnia, and a few other countries were singled out as among the worst offenders. Even the United States “fails to adequately protect workers’ rights to form unions and bargain collectively. Millions of U.S. workers lack any legal protection to form unions....”⁵¹

The Dalai Lama also gave full support to removing the ingrained traditional obstacles that have kept Tibetan nuns from receiving an education. Upon arriving in exile, few nuns could read or write. In Tibet their activities had been devoted to daylong periods of prayer and chants. But in northern India they now began reading Buddhist philosophy and engaging in theological study and debate, activities that in old Tibet had been open only to monks.⁵²

In November 2005 the Dalai Lama spoke at Stanford University on “The Heart of Nonviolence,” but stopped short of a blanket condemnation of all violence. Violent actions that are committed in order to reduce future suffering are not to be condemned, he said, citing World War II as an example of a worthy effort to protect democracy. What of the four years of carnage and mass destruction in Iraq, a war condemned by most of the world—even by a

conservative pope--as a blatant violation of international law and a crime against humanity? The Dalai Lama was undecided: "The Iraq war—it's too early to say, right or wrong."⁵³ Earlier he had voiced support for the U.S. military intervention against Yugoslavia and, later on, the U.S. military intervention into Afghanistan.⁵⁴

III. Exit Feudal Theocracy

As the Shangri-La myth would have it, in old Tibet the people lived in contented and tranquil symbiosis with their monastic and secular lords. Rich lamas and poor monks, wealthy landlords and impoverished serfs were all bonded together, mutually sustained by the comforting balm of a deeply spiritual and pacific culture.

One is reminded of the idealized image of feudal Europe presented by latter-day conservative Catholics such as G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc. For them, medieval Christendom was a world of contented peasants living in the secure embrace of their Church, under the more or less benign protection of their lords.⁵⁵ Again we are invited to accept a particular culture in its idealized form divorced from its murky material history. This means accepting it as presented by its favored class, by those who profited most from it. The Shangri-La image of Tibet bears no more resemblance to historic actuality than does the pastoral image of medieval Europe.

Seen in all its grim realities, old Tibet confirms the view I expressed in an earlier book, namely that culture is anything but neutral. Culture can operate as a legitimating cover for a host of grave injustices, benefiting a privileged portion of society at great cost to the rest.⁵⁶ In theocratic feudal Tibet, ruling interests manipulated the traditional culture to fortify their own wealth and power. The theocracy equated rebellious thought and action with satanic influence. It propagated the general presumption of landlord superiority and peasant unworthiness. The rich were represented as deserving their good life, and the lowly poor as deserving their mean existence, all codified in teachings about the karmic residue of virtue and vice accumulated from past lives, presented as part of God's will.

Were the more affluent lamas just hypocrites who preached one thing and secretly believed another? More likely they were genuinely attached to those beliefs that brought such good results for them. That their theology so perfectly supported their material privileges only strengthened the sincerity with which it was embraced.

It might be said that we denizens of the modern secular world cannot grasp the equations of happiness and pain, contentment and custom, that characterize more traditionally spiritual societies. This is probably true, and it may explain why some of us idealize such societies. But still, a gouged eye is a gouged eye; a flogging is a flogging; and the grinding exploitation of serfs and slaves is a brutal class injustice whatever its cultural wrapping. There is a difference between a spiritual bond and human bondage, even when both exist side by side

Many ordinary Tibetans want the Dalai Lama back in their country, but it appears that relatively few want a return to the social order he represented. A 1999 story in the Washington Post notes that the Dalai Lama continues to be revered in Tibet, but

. . . few Tibetans would welcome a return of the corrupt aristocratic clans that fled with him in 1959 and that comprise the bulk of his advisers. Many Tibetan farmers, for example, have no interest in surrendering the land they gained during China's land reform to the clans. Tibet's former slaves say they, too, don't want their former masters to return to power. "I've already lived that life once before," said Wangchuk, a 67-year-old former slave who was wearing his best clothes for his yearly pilgrimage to Shigatse, one of the holiest sites of Tibetan Buddhism. He said he worshipped the Dalai Lama, but added, "I may not be free under Chinese communism, but I am better off than when I was a slave."⁵⁷

It should be noted that the Dalai Lama is not the only highly placed lama chosen in childhood as a reincarnation. One or another reincarnate lama or tulku--a spiritual teacher of special purity elected

to be reborn again and again--can be found presiding over most major monasteries. The tulku system is unique to Tibetan Buddhism. Scores of Tibetan lamas claim to be reincarnate tulkus.

The very first tulku was a Lama known as karmapa who appeared nearly three centuries before the first Dalai Lama. The karmapa is leader of a Tibetan Buddhist tradition known as the karma Kagyu. The rise of the Gelugpa sect headed by the Dalai Lama led to a politico-religious rivalry with the Kagyu that has lasted five hundred years and continues to play itself out within the Tibetan exile community today. That the Kagyu sect has grown famously, opening some six hundred new centers around the world in the last thirty-five years, has not helped the situation.

The search for a tulku, Erik Curren reminds us, has not always been conducted in that purely spiritual mode portrayed in certain Hollywood films. "Sometimes monastic officials wanted a child from a powerful local noble family to give the cloister more political clout. Other times they wanted a child from a lower-class family who would have little leverage to influence the child's upbringing." On other occasions "a local warlord, the Chinese emperor or even the Dalai Lama's government in Lhasa might [have tried] to impose its choice of tulku on a monastery for political reasons."⁵⁸

Such may have been the case in the selection of the 17th karmapa, whose monastery-in-exile is situated in Rumtek, in the Indian state of Sikkim. In 1993 the monks of the karma Kagyu tradition had a candidate of their own choice. The Dalai Lama, along with several dissenting karmapa Kagyu leaders (and with the support of the Chinese government!) backed a different boy. The Kagyu monks charged that the Dalai Lama had overstepped his authority in attempting to select a leader for their sect. "Neither his political role nor his position as a lama in his own Gelugpa tradition entitled him to choose the karmapa, who is a leader of a different tradition..."⁵⁹ As one of the Kagyu leaders insisted, "Dharma is about thinking for yourself. It is not about automatically following a teacher in all things, no matter how respected that teacher may be. More than anyone

else, Buddhists should respect other people's rights—their human rights and their religious freedom.”⁶⁰

What followed was a dozen years of conflict in the Tibetan exile community, punctuated by intermittent riots, intimidation, physical attacks, blacklisting, police harassment, litigation, official corruption, and the looting and undermining of the karmapa's monastery in Rumtek by supporters of the Gelugpa faction. All this has caused at least one western devotee to wonder if the years of exile were not hastening the moral corrosion of Tibetan Buddhism.⁶¹

What is clear is that not all Tibetan Buddhists accept the Dalai Lama as their theological and spiritual mentor. Though he is referred to as the “spiritual leader of Tibet,” many see this title as little more than a formality. It does not give him authority over the four religious schools of Tibet other than his own, “just as calling the U.S. president the ‘leader of the free world’ gives him no role in governing France or Germany.”⁶²

Not all Tibetan exiles are enamoured of the old Shangri-La theocracy. Kim Lewis, who studied healing methods with a Buddhist monk in Berkeley, California, had occasion to talk at length with more than a dozen Tibetan women who lived in the monk's building. When she asked how they felt about returning to their homeland, the sentiment was unanimously negative. At first, Lewis assumed that their reluctance had to do with the Chinese occupation, but they quickly informed her otherwise. They said they were extremely grateful “not to have to marry 4 or 5 men, be pregnant almost all the time,” or deal with sexually transmitted diseases contacted from a straying husband. The younger women “were delighted to be getting an education, wanted absolutely nothing to do with any religion, and wondered why Americans were so naïve [about Tibet].”⁶³

The women interviewed by Lewis recounted stories of their grandmothers' ordeals with monks who used them as “wisdom consorts.” By sleeping with the monks, the grandmothers were told, they gained “the means to enlightenment” -- after all, the Buddha

himself had to be with a woman to reach enlightenment.

The women also mentioned the “rampant” sex that the supposedly spiritual and abstemious monks practiced with each other in the Gelugpa sect. The women who were mothers spoke bitterly about the monastery’s confiscation of their young boys in Tibet. They claimed that when a boy cried for his mother, he would be told “Why do you cry for her, she gave you up--she's just a woman.”

The monks who were granted political asylum in California applied for public assistance. Lewis, herself a devotee for a time, assisted with the paperwork. She observes that they continue to receive government checks amounting to \$550 to \$700 per month along with Medicare. In addition, the monks reside rent free in nicely furnished apartments. “They pay no utilities, have free access to the Internet on computers provided for them, along with fax machines, free cell and home phones and cable TV.”

They also receive a monthly payment from their order, along with contributions and dues from their American followers. Some devotees eagerly carry out chores for the monks, including grocery shopping and cleaning their apartments and toilets. These same holy men, Lewis remarks, “have no problem criticizing Americans for their ‘obsession with material things.’”⁶⁴

To welcome the end of the old feudal theocracy in Tibet is not to applaud everything about Chinese rule in that country. This point is seldom understood by today’s Shangri-La believers in the West. The converse is also true: To denounce the Chinese occupation does not mean we have to romanticize the former feudal régime. Tibetans deserve to be perceived as actual people, not perfected spiritualists or innocent political symbols. “To idealize them,” notes Ma Jian, a dissident Chinese traveler to Tibet (now living in Britain), “is to deny them their humanity.”⁶⁵

One common complaint among Buddhist followers in the West is that Tibet’s religious culture is being undermined by the Chinese

occupation. To some extent this seems to be the case. Many of the monasteries are closed, and much of the theocracy seems to have passed into history. Whether Chinese rule has brought betterment or disaster is not the central issue here. The question is what kind of country was old Tibet. What I am disputing is the supposedly pristine spiritual nature of that pre-invasion culture. We can advocate religious freedom and independence for a new Tibet without having to embrace the mythology about old Tibet. Tibetan feudalism was cloaked in Buddhism, but the two are not to be equated. In reality, old Tibet was not a Paradise Lost. It was a retrograde repressive theocracy of extreme privilege and poverty, a long way from Shangri-La.

Finally, let it be said that if Tibet's future is to be positioned somewhere within China's emerging free-market paradise, then this does not bode well for the Tibetans. China boasts a dazzling 8 percent economic growth rate and is emerging as one of the world's greatest industrial powers. But with economic growth has come an ever deepening gulf between rich and poor. Most Chinese live close to the poverty level or well under it, while a small group of newly brooded capitalists profit hugely in collusion with shady officials. Regional bureaucrats milk the country dry, extorting graft from the populace and looting local treasuries. Land grabbing in cities and countryside by avaricious developers and corrupt officials at the expense of the populace are almost everyday occurrences. Tens of thousands of grassroots protests and disturbances have erupted across the country, usually to be met with unforgiving police force. Corruption is so prevalent, reaching into so many places, that even the normally complacent national leadership was forced to take notice and began moving against it in late 2006.

Workers in China who try to organize labor unions in the corporate dominated "business zones" risk losing their jobs or getting beaten and imprisoned. Millions of business zone workers toil twelve-hour days at subsistence wages. With the health care system now being privatized, free or affordable medical treatment is no longer available for millions. Men have tramped into the cities in search of work,

leaving an increasingly impoverished countryside populated by women, children, and the elderly. The suicide rate has increased dramatically, especially among women.⁶⁶

China's natural environment is sadly polluted. Most of its fabled rivers and many lakes are dead, producing massive fish die-offs from the billions of tons of industrial emissions and untreated human waste dumped into them. Toxic effluents, including pesticides and herbicides, seep into ground water or directly into irrigation canals. Cancer rates in villages situated along waterways have skyrocketed a thousand-fold. Hundreds of millions of urban residents breathe air rated as dangerously unhealthy, contaminated by industrial growth and the recent addition of millions of automobiles. An estimated 400,000 die prematurely every year from air pollution. Government environmental agencies have no enforcement power to stop polluters, and generally the government ignores or denies such problems, concentrating instead on industrial growth.⁶⁷

China's own scientific establishment reports that unless greenhouse gases are curbed, the nation will face massive crop failures along with catastrophic food and water shortages in the years ahead. In 2006-2007 severe drought was already afflicting southwest China.⁶⁸

If China is the great success story of speedy free market development, and is to be the model and inspiration for Tibet's future, then old feudal Tibet indeed may start looking a lot better than it actually was.

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<http://www.michaelparenti.org/Tibet.html>

Slaves of Love

(An approach to understanding Karma)

Western students have immense difficulty understanding the very Eastern concept of Karma. Too often Judaeo-Christian (Zoroastrian originally) principles of light-dark, God-Satan, good-bad and all the other polar and binary oppositions pollute or distort perception. Had Newton been a philosopher instead of a mathematician and physicist he would have made an even greater contribution to Western society. His understanding of the Laws of action/reaction are very close indeed.

Western students would serve themselves well to resist their cultural tendency to appreciate Karma (emotionally) as good or bad – it is a universal (not binary) Law of action seeking Harmony through reaction; or infinity's dance toward perfect balance (or pralaya) to which we/everything are inexorably headed.

We are the result of Karma – the cycle of emergence, divergence and absorption. Would we begrudge our own existence, or be fearful of the purpose of our lives? Difficult to explain, perhaps approaching the subject in the negative may make it easier to apprehend.

The greatest obstacle to understanding Karma is the erroneous belief in the concept of 'free will.' Has anyone ever analysed this most absurd proposition? If there really were such a thing as 'free will,' then we would not suffer the consequences of our actions. What a tragedy that would be – a meaningless existence in a meaningless universe. Let me state quite emphatically, this universe knows exactly where it is headed but the 'route' is not predetermined. Therefore, there is meaning in the *movement* of arriving (Karma). Any perversion (toward permanent disintegration) in the universal flux meets with a re-balancing or correction. Humans experience this directive principle as pleasure or pain, discomfort/disease *etc.* If there were such a thing as 'free will' we

would be devoid of these experiences.

I would also mention here that fatalism or the notion that "it is written" (predetermination) is also an absurd proposition because it attempts to negate (in the opposite way) taking responsibility for our actions; or that the universe follows a fixed course – which infers that Universal Creation is a dull clock. Following any fixed pattern is death indeed.

We are all acutely aware of the consequences of our actions – in thought, word and deed. So, if there is no 'free will' or predetermination then what?

We have freedom to choose and experience the consequences of those choices. And freedom 'to know,' or learn from experience. We can do anything within our personal capability but we cannot avoid the consequences of our actions. We can learn from our experiences or repeat them until we do – but learn we must.

Einstein was surely correct when he stated, "God does not play dice with the universe;" furthermore, Stephen Hawking is also correct when he stated that "Not only does God play dice with the universe, but sometimes he throws the dice where they can't be seen." Einstein and Hawking omitted to mention that dice are thrown onto a 'table' with clearly defined boundaries or Laws.

An analogy may help to 'weld' these explanations together. Few have attempted to elucidate the full implications of Karma – for obvious reasons – the knowledge of Karma is beyond linguist apprehension. Nonetheless, an attempt is preferable to none.

If we transpose the personal "freedom to choose" within a predetermined outcome, destination or final culmination onto a universal model, we could use the analogy of snowfall. We all know that snow is nothing more than flakes/crystals of ice with an interesting characteristic. The beautiful hexagonal (Mandalic) geometric pattern in snowflakes is unique; never repeated exactly

the same in any occurrence of snowfall. This unique Mandalic form represents our freedom to choose and adopt a unique approach or identity in the cosmic play. It is also the joy in which creation reveals because nothing knows in advance what form each 'ice crystal' will take. Pralaya, or absorption achieved through perfect equilibrium, is always the outcome of universal creation. But the form (or character) in the grand pattern is different with each new creative cycle – whereas the Karmic Laws of action/reaction determining the outcome or culmination, remain inviolate. Karma is the governing principle for maintaining Harmony in the creative process.

We are designed, not by accident, to be transceivers (receivers and transmitters) of universal Harmony (Love). Is it not preferable to learn from Karma and surrender to our innate nature and discover for ourselves the Bliss and Joy that is our heritage? Or would we delay by opting for the 'Prozac' or 'bottle' etc, in order to temporarily avoid the pain of our perversities?

Take 'stock' and learn – the earth's weather patterns have been disrupted by pollution and environmental vandalism; the fury of nature re-balancing weather patterns will cost more (in destruction) than the profits of the Corporations who directly and indirectly created the imbalance – learn.

Are we in any doubt that fear, hatred, selfishness etc., are creating all the social and personal conflict on the planet – learn?

There is a local planetary catastrophe looming in the very near future the destruction and magnitude of which the human race has never seen. The principal cause is a major 'psychic' disturbance in the universal flow of Harmony. Cosmic Harmony maintains itself. Thoughts, words and deeds are things/forces. The accumulated effect of hate, fear, violence, selfishness, disrespect and above all, lack of Love and understanding has created an appropriate reaction.

"We can learn from our experiences or repeat them until we do – but learn we must."

Endnote:

It would be remiss of me to complete this paper in the negative, so I offer a solution to understanding Karma and the purpose of Creation. If you would seek release/liberation/freedom – then surrender completely. Interesting paradox – isn't it?

We are One.

The Eastern Concept of Dharma and the Perversity of Western Uniformity

Dharma is a fundamental Eastern concept that separates it culturally and ideologically from the West – it doesn't translate into any Western language, however, we are able to render it in a round-about fashion and perhaps appreciate its Eastern meaning.

Roughly, and I use the term appropriately, dharma alludes to specificity, a particular direction/character/mode of being/'way' – you see the difficulty in attempting a translation, it is a very foreign concept to West cultural consciousness.

In complete contrast to the ceaseless, some would say manic, Western obsession to create a uniform formula by which we can explain everything and everyone, dharma 'glorifies,' by implication and inference, the 'Difference' – no two objects in this infinite universe are exactly the same or have the same dharma (character), though they may share a specific genus – by illustration consider that no two leaves on a tree are the same, no two grains of sand on Bondi beach are identical – the nature of this infinite universe is Difference, variety; every thing/object/entity therefore has its own specific dharma/character, 'form or way' (mode of being/direction/expression).

It is also important to consider dharma as a harmonious aspect/concept implying a specific yet harmonising influence with the overall flow of things – I am intentionally being liberal with the concept in order to offer as wide a range of allusions and descriptions as possible in the hope that it could lead to an intuitive understanding of this extremely important Eastern philosophical concept that continues to be widely misunderstood in the West.

Dharma suggests a specific course or direction that Harmonises with the universal symphony, though bad personal choices result in

discord and a forced re-balancing to the harmony of creation. Dharma infers concordance not discordance, nevertheless, it maintains a singular unique 'identity' or 'course' that blends, without losing its necessary, intrinsic specificity (identity) with the harmonious, universal sea of difference. I am attempting via the use of as many different signifiers to convey essential meaning and 'you know it ain't easy!' However, I hope a measure of success has been achieved and we are better able to understand and identify those social forces that wish to force us into moulds or formulated, uniform thought patterns/ideologies that create disharmony, discord and distress. Any centralist authority is anathema to the concept of Dharma and Life itself. We should not be blind to the perverse, marauding forces of discord and destruction which have plunged the entire world into chaos/discord today and the ideology behind these destructive forces.

Identify it as the aberrant, perverse and supremely destructive, discordant force that it is and endeavour to withdraw your active and/or passive support from it.

Western ideologies unfortunately have no social 'safety valve' or philosophical equivalent to dharma to balance their manic pursuit of the 'one size fits all' mentality; dharma not only suggests it is good to be different, but that it is absolutely imperative to be your own shining star in this amazing, expansive universe, there is plenty of room 'space' for everyone/thing. Do not be deceived into thinking otherwise.

Always be aware and beware of totalitarian forces that wish to extinguish your 'difference' the things that make You special, like no other. Glorify your difference in the huge harmonious pattern of infinite existence and reach true fulfilment/satisfaction thereby.

Whether the forces of a stifling education system, constrictive theocracy, or authoritarian government seek to confine you in narrow fictitious 'realities' (hells), never forget who and what you are and that it's Your glorious, difference (tone) in the harmonic symphony

that counts.

Pursue your course/character; it is specific to You alone, it is Your Dharma; you cannot hope to find peace or happiness pursuing the formulas of others.

Freedom is a universal, inalienable right and no political clown, government or 'authority' alive or dead (scriptures) has the right to deny you that Freedom under any circumstances whatsoever.

Peace.

The Singularity of Being

(or the quest for Consciousness)

Infinity is inclusive not exclusive – there are no ‘others’ in infinity, all becomes One. How are we (including mathematicians, physicists, astrophysicists, philosophers etc.,) to gain an understanding of a process if we separate ourselves from that process?

Infinity is an all-encompassing singularity; there are no two infinities – a perfect philosophical contradiction would exist otherwise. So how can there be a subject or object, observer or observed, a thinker and thought etc., without division of the continuity of One?

If continuous singularity (infinity) is the ultimate existential, living reality then the aforementioned dualisms exist outside that singular reality, as such they are relegated to transience and unreality, illusion or dream.

The title reflects the one most difficult and mysterious subject that has perplexed humankind through the ages. To attempt an exposition is all the more difficult as the subject is beyond linguistic (finite) expression. This will hopefully become apparent as we proceed. Nevertheless, it is hoped that an attempt to reveal the single most profound Truth will not be in vain. I would ask the reader to bear with me in the attempt – there is everything to gain and nothing to lose.

It is with awe and innocence that we embark on this work – we leave our presuppositions and accumulated ‘knowledge’ behind. Those who cannot temporarily accept this prerequisite need not proceed; we cannot hope to discover or even seek the living with dead means (preconceptions). To those who value their accumulated ‘knowledge’ I would say, I know your arrogance and fear and I leave you to wander the meaningless culture that created you.

This journey is not for the faint-hearted; it will require the fearless hero within us all. What we think is our identity is offered for sacrifice or hung on the 'tree' in order for that death to facilitate a re-emergence or rebirth of the entity that has the potential of Be-ing.

The infinite universe is Now – as always timeless, beginningless and endless – if it had a beginning or end (measurable) it would be created not self-creating, continuous. Never static or the same, universal existence is constantly renewing and expanding. Where there is no finality or end there is expanding kinesis. We are part of its Living expression.

We need to pause here and notice how the mind attempts to grapple with what is being described. Try as it might the mind is incapable of comprehending infinity. Why? The mind is only a finite, linear thought train comprised of signs and symbols (language) derived from culture. Is the mind capable of entertaining two thoughts simultaneously? No, only sequentially, hence its linear status. Infinity is expanding in every direction and dimension simultaneously. How is a limited linear apparatus able to apprehend a simultaneous multi-directional and multi-dimensional process? Put succinctly, it cannot. For those who cherish the mind as other than an aggregate of linear thoughts (which is understandable as it is the mind that houses (fake) identity), I propose a simple test. Eliminate the 'train' of thoughts (still the mind) for not less than ninety minutes and see what remains. I can guarantee that it will not be your identity or the world as you have known it.

Theological and philosophical discourse is saturated with qualitative and quantitative descriptions and assessments. Terms such as love, bliss, joy, misery, suffering, agony – to list the more common – are associated with modes of reality/experience and unreality. So we must inquire, does the singular infinite process have intrinsic quality? Is the universal creative process meaningless or a 'dance' of ecstasy and if so what is the impulse of Creation? If we do not answer in the affirmative to the first question and Love to the second, then we live in sad and painful delusion – misery in a word.

It will not suffice to read about love and bliss if we are devoid of these ways of being. Every particle of ourselves groans for reunion and the peace and joy that is our heritage/inheritance. Do not forget we are the Living expression of universal creation and that creation moves for Love's sake and no other. If we are not of that experience, universal Love, then we are tragically missing the greatest opportunity that can be offered. There is no point in deceiving ourselves or distracting ourselves with paltry substitutes; the truth of that loss constantly gnaws at us from the deepest recesses – from beyond even the molecular level of our cells. Yet there is hope always.

At this stage we need to thoroughly test all the above statements and propositions. Firstly against what is known from various cultures, then against our lives/experience.

When the creative intelligence (infinity) is personified as God, Sage, Enlightened teacher etc., which personage usually instructs. And sometimes if the Sage has personal power, the formation of major religions usually occurs, which inevitably distorts the teachings/experience of that Sage/teacher. Nevertheless, enough textual evidence remains to test my assertions and claims, which you would soon discover are new, I am simply making accessible, I hope, an age-old tradition. So, we have the added benefit of not only testing the above propositions/claims but also testing the religions. If one unified singularity exists as the creative process of universal existence, enlightened religious texts should reveal that common experience regardless of culture or historical context, as the experience is thoroughly human.

The following quotes and distillations are principally taken from three world religions:

The foundation of Hinduism is a transcendent unity called Brahman.

The Upanishads extol the One and indivisible Brahman, the eternal

universal Self, who is present in all.

The ancient Hindu seers described Brahman as the One eternal principle, the unity of existence.

The following two verses are taken from the Bhagavad Gita:

“Those who are disciplined by yoga, See the self abiding in every being and see every being in the self.

He who sees Me [Krisna] everywhere, and sees all in Me Is not lost; he is not far from Me.”

“Buddhism has the characteristics of what would be expected in a formless religion for the future: it transcends a personal God, avoids dogmas and theology; it covers both the natural & spiritual, and it is based on a religious sense aspiring from the experience of all things, natural and spiritual, as a meaningful unity" Albert Einstein

Buddhist Enlightenment is the highest quality of human achievement – it is consciousness unfettered by mind. Nirvana is experienced as the unity of all.

“And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is One Lord:”

“That they all may be One; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be One in us:”

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in One;”

Scattered through religious texts are nuggets of profound wisdom. Three words express the summation of Christianity and Hinduism: "God is Love" and (Tat twam asi) "Thou art That". In Judaism we have: "I AM THAT I AM" and "Be still and know that I am God". The epitome of Buddhist teaching is the famous "Flower Sermon," which the Buddha 'transmitted' without speaking a word; it is said that he

smiled frequently while toying with a flower.

It is hoped the above quotes help to verify for the reader the singular and infinite aspect of Godhead, Void, Nirvana, Brahman, Siva, Christ etc., regardless of name it is all undivided singularity, Unity/Infinity.

During the course of this reading an echo of recognition may start to reverberate from deep within and catalyse the recollection/remembrance of who we really are – that aspect of us which is eternal pure flowing Consciousness. [It is never what you think.]

We have briefly mentioned the mind and its ceaseless train of thought. This thing (mind) of which the scientists and philosophers are so proud; this cultural fabrication that is the repository of vanity, avarice, bigotry, hate, violence, doubt, nationalism, the world/culture, etc., is that which separates us from Unity. A cursory analysis will reveal the mind as nothing more than static/noise and an instrument of self and general torture. Recall a previous statement "distracting ourselves with paltry substitutes," and analyse it in the present context. Why the need for escape through drug abuse, sexual promiscuity, gluttony, hypochondria and a multitude of other modes of abuse and escape – and what are we escaping from?

Is it perhaps that we find our condition unpleasant? If so, what is the source of this unpleasantness? At this stage we need to enlist the aid of that "fearless hero within All of us".

When the mind is targeted for exposure – in order to survive, it will do anything to shift the focus elsewhere. A few of its favourite tricks are denial, blame, avoidance, anxiety, justification, authoritarianism, delusion, fear etc., (a good exercise is to add to this list yourself). The hero, however, accepts the responsibility for circumstances and personal actions regardless of how painful and unpleasant.

I do not use the term "hero" lightly – most historical heroes are that by circumstance or chance, few by volition, and the majority of those,

as a result of bravado. I do not wish to underrate our historical heroes. I only wish to emphasise that confronting the most horrific, deceitful and powerful opponent by choice, with the view to endure to the end and overcome, is the most heroic act of all – especially when the opponent is our own mind and superimposed identity. Even now your mind is telling you that you cannot function without it. But be assured, it lies. As previously stated, there is nothing to lose if we persist, except our misery.

Due to popular misconceptions of the terms "mind" and "consciousness," an accurate analysis is required in order to proceed. If you recall the all-inclusive nature of infinity, it follows that we are also of that infinity – Consciousness is our infinite nature. In contrast, the mind is only an aggregate of finite thoughts. Each thought is distinct from another; whether they are conceptual, visual or abstract, each thought has a beginning and end. Simple logic tells us that the finite and infinite are mutually exclusive so the mind and consciousness are entirely different qualities – they are actually polar opposites. The much-lauded Western philosophical 'axiom' "I think therefore I am," becomes the infantile invocation of a child when compared with the inferential statements of the continuous infinite "I AM THAT I AM", "I AM THAT" and "before Abraham was, I AM".

Now that we have established a clear distinction between mind and Consciousness – one, by simple explanation and logic, the other by inference and contrast, we can attempt an intuitive approach to the infinite flow of Consciousness. Beforehand, I would hope that the reader now understands that language, which is composed of finite sets of symbols, is incapable of conveying the continuous. It is also hoped that the Buddha's enigmatic "Flower Sermon" is no longer a mystery and that even in the present it may yet be 'heard'.

At various stages during the course of our lives we experience short bursts of awe, joy, wonder, and for the fortunate few, glimpses of universal Love. During these experiences [if you would recollect] what occurs is a momentary cessation of the chatter of the mind as we are absorbed by the experience. It is interesting to note that

these experiences are interpreted as forms of release rather than acquisition. The process that inhibits our experience of joy and peace is the 'train' of finite thoughts superimposed on the free flow of infinite Consciousness. What also becomes readily apparent is that the cessation of the 'chatter' of mind results in the spontaneous experience of peace and joy and that these heightened states are not a result of external intervention – in other words, peace, joy, love etc., are innate.

As we are a microcosmic representation of the macrocosmic universe we can also deduce that universal Creation is a process of Love and that that process is indeed a 'dance' of ecstasy. The magnitude of the Bliss of Infinity is beyond apprehension and almost impossible to bear. Nevertheless, we share in this process to the maximum extent of our capacity if we so choose. It should also be remembered that the negative aspects of the human condition are the result of the finite mind and not the innate Loving, peaceful qualities.

Vigilance is required to curb the static of the mind. The mind has been formulated by culture since infancy and has become a habit – the most addictive of all habits; it actually pretends to the 'throne' of our being – but it is only that, a pretender. Never succumb to its most powerful ruse of fear. It will offer you the most frightening scenarios in order to survive. Be assured that the clarity of Consciousness is able to deal with all the vicissitudes of life to a degree infinitely greater than the mind. Not only be assured but also apply the principle of stilling the thought process and verify the results for yourself. If you persist, spontaneous awareness will displace the feeble calculating mind. Endure and overcome and achieve the promise of all the great religions, the Satchittananda (absolute Being, Knowledge and Bliss) of Hinduism, the supreme Freedom of Buddhist Nirvana and the Peace and Love of the Kingdom of Christ – which are all One and the same singularity of Being.

Would we now claim our birthright of limitless Love, Peace and Joy or defer to a clearly poisonous cultural superimposition?

We are One

About the Author

Lindsay Traynor is an Australian poet and mystic though he was born in Eastern Europe to parents raised in Canada and Australia respectively who were both in Eastern Europe after WWII.

He arrived in Australia before schooling age and has lost his mother tongue as a result, as both parents were fluent in English and the mother tongue was hardly heard. Nevertheless, it seems that an early cultural imprint remained as his country/culture of birth is well known for producing an abundance of poets of an unusual kind.

Lindsay is a prolific writer and has produced the equivalent in text of around 50-60 novels over the past sixteen years though mostly in the form of articles on varied topics and poetry, his favourite medium.

The current series has been gathered from his many articles relating to his studies in the East and of Eastern philosophy in general, particularly Yoga philosophy and practice -- *assistant editor*

Books by the author:

Infinite Consciousness
Love and Erotic Poetry
Sun Moon Star Poetry
Nature Poetry
The Poetry of Transformation and Revolution
The Poetry of Life and Growth
Selected Essays I
Selected Essays II
Selected Essays III
Selections Mystical Prose and Poetry I
Selections Mystical Prose and Poetry II
Selections Mystical Prose and Poetry III
Selections Mystical Prose and Poetry IV
Selections Mystical Prose and Poetry V
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