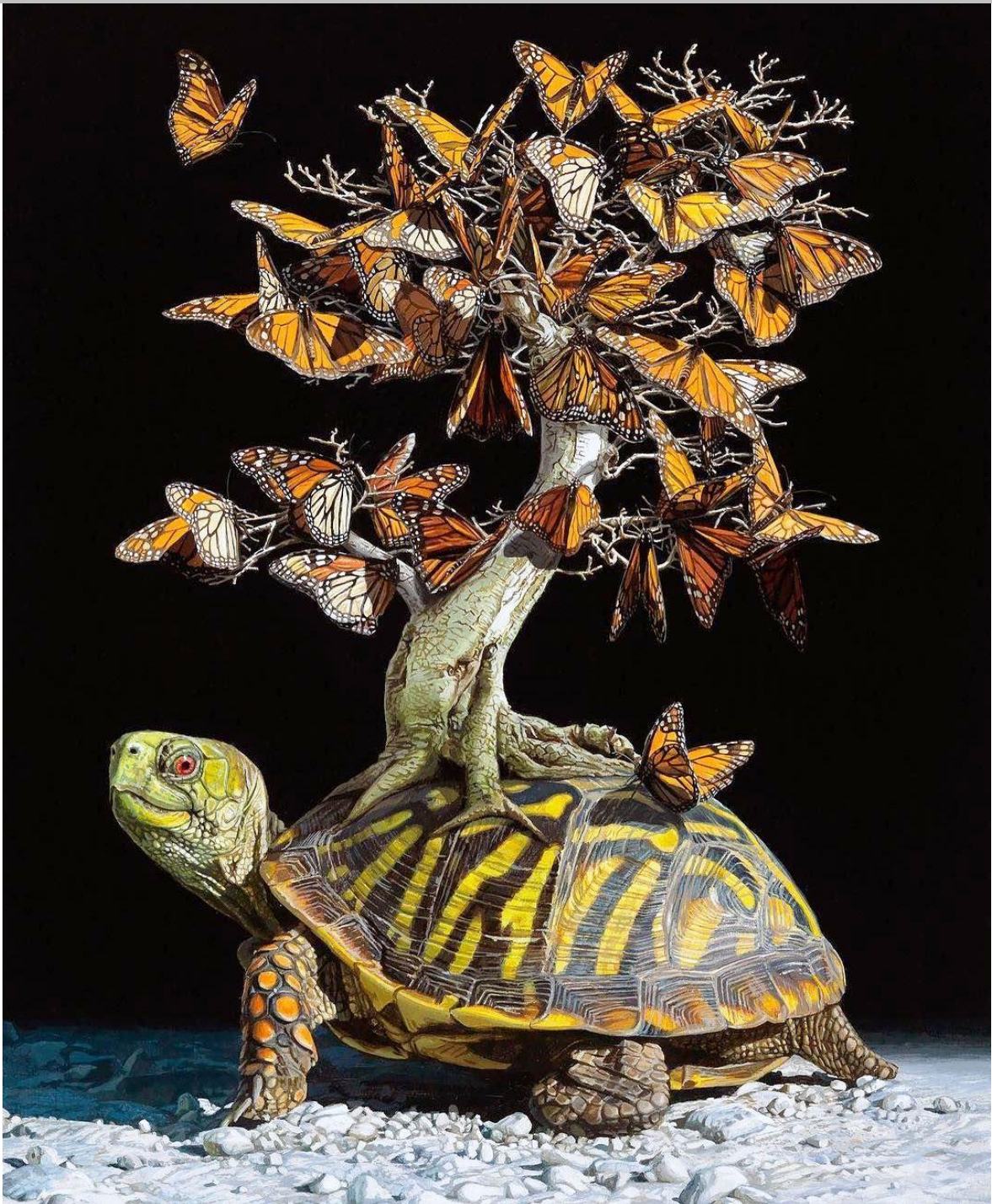


*In the Confucian Mind there is  
nothing greater than the divining  
straws and the tortoise*



## ***Abstract and train of thoughts<sup>1</sup>***

### **In determining good and bad luck, in the Confucian Mind there is nothing greater than the divining straws and the tortoise.**

For lines, concentric circles, and dots represent the most abstract and philosophical conceptions of primeval cosmogony. 4

No unprejudiced person can see any difference between a tortoise and a lamb, as candidates for sacredness: both are mere symbols, and no more. 5

Vishnu is represented in the Kurma-avatara as a tortoise sustaining a circular pillar, on which the semblance of himself (maya) sits with all his attributes. 6

The great Circle of Time, on the face of which fancy in India has represented the tortoise, has the Cross placed on it by nature in its division and localisation of stars, planets, and constellations. 6

Beginning with the Azoic time, corresponding to Ilus, in which Brahmā implants the creative germ, we pass through the Palæozoic and Mesozoic times, covered by the first and second avatic incarnations as fish and tortoise. 7

### **The avatic succession is a mere allegory for the dual spiritual and physical evolution of creatures and man.**

From the watery abyss, this dual transformation carries on the physical form through the shape of a fish, a tortoise, a boar, a man-lion, a dwarf human form, a physically perfect but spiritually undeveloped man, and, finally, the apex of physical and spiritual perfection — a god-like man on earth. 8

### **Having assumed the form of a tortoise, Prajapati began creating offspring.**

The myths and endless genealogies of the Prajapatis, the Rishis or Manus, and their wives and offspring, are a veiled record of the order of evolution in this round. 9

The sceptics of today are as incapable of rising to the sublimity of Vedantic and Buddhistic philosophy, as a tortoise to soar like the eagle. 10

“Light Divine” in the fancy of the Hylo-Idealist, who confines the whole universe to the phantasms of his grey matter. 10

---

<sup>1</sup> The tortoise (akūpāra, in Sanskrit) is the symbolical turtle on which the earth is said to rest (cf. *Theosophical Glossary*). The difference between tortoises and turtles is that the former dwell on dry land, while latter live in the water some or nearly all of the time. Frontispiece by Lisa Ericson.

THE DIVINING STRAWS AND THE TORTOISE  
ABSTRACT AND TRAIN OF THOUGHTS

Every sacred truth, which the ignorant are unable to comprehend under its true light, ought to be hidden within a triple casket concealing itself as the tortoise conceals his head within his shell. 11

The magical figures of Phurbu on a square tortoise have nothing to do with Tibetan Buddhism. 11

**Seek not the seeds of Wisdom in Maya's realm; but soar beyond illusions, search the eternal in the changeless Sat, mistrusting fancy's false suggestions.**

Chelas, in their trials of initiation, see in trances the vision of the Earth supported by an elephant on the top of a tortoise standing on nothing, in order to teach them to discern the true from the false. 12

O Lanoo, be of clean heart before thou startest on thy journey. Before thou takest thy first step, learn to discern the real from the false, the ever-fleeting from the everlasting. Learn above all to separate Head-learning from Soul-Wisdom, the "Eye" from the "Heart" doctrine. 12



## In determining good and bad luck, in the Confucian Mind there is nothing greater than the divining straws and the tortoise.

**For lines, concentric circles, and dots represent the most abstract and philosophical conceptions of primeval cosmogony.**

From *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. 440-42.

Anyone who has studied the numerical evolution in the primeval cosmogony of Pythagoras (a contemporary of Confucius) can never fail to find in his *Triad*, *Tetractys* and *Decad* emerging from the ONE and solitary Monad,<sup>1</sup> the same idea. Confucius is laughed at by his Christian biographer for “talking of divination,” before and after this passage, and is represented as saying:

The eight symbols determine good and ill fortune, and these lead to great deeds. There are no imitable images greater than heaven and earth. There are no changes greater than the four seasons [meaning North, South, East and West, *etc.*]. There are no suspended images brighter than the sun and moon. In preparing *things for use, there is none greater than the sage*. In determining good and ill-luck there is nothing greater than *the divining straws and the tortoise*.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, the “divining straws” and the “tortoise,” the “symbolic sets of lines,” and the great sage who looks at them as they become one and two, and two become four, and four become eight, and the other sets “three and six,” are laughed to scorn, only because his wise symbols are misunderstood.

So the author [Edkins] and his colleagues will scoff no doubt at the *Stanzas* given in our text, for they represent *precisely the same idea*. The old archaic map of Cosmogony is full of *lines* in the Confucian style, of concentric circles and dots. Yet all these represent the most abstract and philosophical conceptions of the Cosmogony of our Universe. At all events it may answer, perhaps, better to the requirements and the scientific purposes of our age, than the cosmogonical essays of St. Augustine and the “Venerable Bede,”<sup>3</sup> though these were published over a millennium later than the Confucian.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Note to Students: Monad (*μοναδα*, in Greek) is the accusative case of *μονα*. However, as the term is here used in the nominative case (*μονα*), *i.e.*, the subject of the verb, it should be transliterated as monas (*pl.* monases), *i.e.*, the object of the verb, and not as monad (*pl.* monads). The same grammatical rule applies to duad, triad, tetrad, pentad, hexad, heptad, ogdoad, hebdomad, decad, *etc.* — ED. PHIL.]

<sup>2</sup> Rev. J. Edkins, *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 320. He [Confucius] may be laughed at by the Protestants; but the Roman Catholics have no right to mock him, without becoming guilty of blasphemy and sacrilege. For it is over 200 years since Confucius was canonized as a Saint in China by the Roman Catholics, who have thereby obtained many converts among the ignorant Confucianists.

<sup>3</sup> [English Benedictine monk at the monastery of St. Peter]

**No unprejudiced person can see any difference between a tortoise and a lamb, as candidates for sacredness: both are mere symbols, and no more.**

Confucius, one of the greatest sages of the ancient world, believed in ancient magic, and practised it himself “if we take for granted the statements of *Chia yü*,”<sup>1</sup> and “he praised it to the skies in *I Ching*,” we are told by his reverend critic. Nevertheless, even in his age, 600 B.C., Confucius and his school taught the sphericity of the Earth and even the heliocentric system; while, at about thrice 600 years after the Chinese philosopher, the Popes of Rome threatened and even burnt “heretics” for asserting the same. He is laughed at for speaking of the “Sacred Tortoise.” No unprejudiced person can see any great difference between a *tortoise* and a *lamb* as candidates for sacredness, as both are symbols and no more. The Ox, the Eagle,<sup>2</sup> the Lion, and occasionally the Dove, are “the sacred animals” of the Western Bible, the first three being found grouped round the Evangelists; and the fourth (the human face) is a Sārāph, *i.e.*, a fiery serpent, the Gnostic Agathodaimōn probably.<sup>3</sup> As explained, the “sacred animals” and the Flames or “Sparks” within the “Holy Four,” refer to the prototypes of all that is found in the Universe in the *Divine Thought*, in the ROOT, which is the perfect cube, or the foundation of the Kosmos collectively and individually. They have all an occult reference to primordial Cosmic forms and its first concretions, work, and evolution.

---

<sup>1</sup> [*K'ung-tzu chia yü* or “Discourses of the Confucian School”]

<sup>2</sup> The animals regarded as *sacred* in the Bible are not few: the goat for one, the *Azāzēl*, or God of Victory. As Aben Ezra says:

If thou art capable of comprehending the mystery of *Azāzēl*, thou wilt learn the mystery of His [God's] name, for it has similar associates in Scriptures. I will tell thee by allusion one portion of the mystery; when thou shalt have *thirty three years of age* thou wilt comprehend me.

So with the mystery of the *tortoise*. Rejoicing over the poetry of biblical metaphors, associating with the name of Jehovah, “incandescent stones,” “sacred animals,” *etc.*, and quoting from the *Sainte Bible de Vence* [paraphrased by Louis de Carrières, together with an abridged version of Calmet's commentaries, and a few dissertations from the Abbé de Vence, Vol. XIX, p. 318], a French pious writer says:

Indeed all of them are as much *Elōhīm* as their God; for, these Angels, *through a holy usurpation*, “assume the very divine name of Jehovah each time they represent him.” (de Mirville, *Pneumatologie*, Vol. II, p. 294)

No one ever doubted that *the NAME* must have been *assumed*, when under the guise of the Infinite. One Incognizable, the *Malaākhīm* (messengers) descended to eat and drink with men. But if the *Elōhīm* (and even lower Beings), *assuming* the god-name, were and are still worshipped, why should the same *Elōhīm* be called *devils*, when appearing under the names of other Gods?

<sup>3</sup> The choice is curious, and shows how paradoxical were the first Christians in their selections. For why should they have chosen these symbols of Egyptian paganism, when the eagle is never mentioned in the New Testament save once, when Jesus refers to it as a *carrion* eater? (*Matthew xxiv, 28*); and in the Old Testament it is called *unclean*; that the Lion is made a point of comparison with *Satan*, both roaring for men to devour; and the oxen are driven out of the Temple. On the other hand the Serpent, brought as an exemplar of wisdom to follow, is now regarded as the symbol of the Devil. The esoteric pearl of Christ's religion degraded into Christian theology, may indeed be said to have chosen a strange and unfitting *shell* to be born in and evolved from.

**Vishnu is represented in the Kurma-avatara as a tortoise sustaining a circular pillar, on which the semblance of himself (maya) sits with all his attributes.**

From *Isis Unveiled*, II, p. 300.

Besides, as we have remarked above, the representations of the archaic deities, on the walls of the temples, are of themselves quite suggestive enough. So, for instance, Vishnu is represented in the Kūrma-avatāra (his second avatāra) as a tortoise sustaining a circular pillar, on which the semblance of himself (Māyā, or the illusion) sits with all his attributes.<sup>1</sup>

---

**The great Circle of Time, on the face of which fancy in India has represented the tortoise, has the Cross placed on it by nature in its division and localisation of stars, planets, and constellations.**

From *The Secret Doctrine*, II, p. 549.

As to the mysterious constellation of the Seven Rishis in the great Bear, if Egypt made them sacred to “the oldest genitrix, Typhon” — India has connected all these symbols ages ago with time or *Yuga* revolutions, and the Saptarishis are intimately connected with our present age — the Dark *Kali-Yuga*.<sup>2</sup> The great Circle of Time, on the face of which fancy in India has represented the Tortoise (Kūrma, or one of the Avatāras of Vishnu), or Śiśumāra,<sup>3</sup> has the Cross placed on it by nature in its division and localisation of stars, planets and constellations. Thus in *Bhāgavata-Purāna* is said:

*At the extremity of the tail of that animal, whose head is directed toward the south and whose body is in the shape of a ring [circle], Dhruva [the ex-pole star] is placed; and along its tail are the Prajāpati, Agni, Indra, Dharma . . . across its loins the Seven Rishis.*<sup>4</sup>

This is then the first and earliest Cross and Circle, into the formation of which enters the Deity (symbolized by Vishnu), the Eternal Circle of Boundless Time, *Kāla*, on whose plane lie crossways all the gods, creatures, and creations born in Space and Time — who, as the philosophy has it, all die at the Mahāpralaya.

---

<sup>1</sup> [See Plate IX in Thomas Maurice, *The History of Hindostan*, 1820, Vol. I.]

<sup>2</sup> Described in the *Mission des Juifs*, by the Marquis Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, the hierophant and leader of a large party of French Kabbalists, as the Golden Age!

<sup>3</sup> Śiśumāra (*Sk.*). An imaginary rotating belt, upon which all the celestial bodies move. This host of stars and constellations is represented under the figure of *Śiśumāra*, a tortoise (some say a *porpoise!*), dragon, crocodile, and what not. But as it is a symbol of the Yoga-meditation of holy Vasudeva or Krishna, it must be a crocodile, or rather, a dolphin, since it is identical with the zodiacal Makara. Dhruva, the ancient pole-star, is placed at the tip of the tail of this sidereal monster, whose head points southward and whose body bends in a ring. Higher along the tail are the Prajāpati, Agni, etc., and at its root are placed Indra, Dharma, and the seven Rishis (the Great Bear), etc., etc. The meaning is of course mystical. (*Theosophical Glossary*)

<sup>4</sup> Skandha V, ch. xxiii. [Translated into English from E. Burnouf's French translation, and quoted by Fitzedward Hall, in *The Vishnu-Purāna* (Wilson), Vol. II, p. 307]

**Beginning with the Azoic time, corresponding to Ilus, in which Brahmā implants the creative germ, we pass through the Palæozoic and Mesozoic times, covered by the first and second avataric incarnations as fish and tortoise.**

From *Isis Unveiled*, II, pp. 274-75.

If we now examine the ten mythical avatāras of Vishnu, we find them recorded in the following progression:

- 1 Matsya-Avatāra: as a fish. It will also be his tenth and last avatāra, at the end of the Kali-yuga.
- 2 Kūrma-Avatāra: as a tortoise.
- 3 Vārāha: as a boar.
- 4 Nara-Sinha: as a *man-lion*; last animal stage.
- 5 Vāmana: as a dwarf; first step toward the human form.
- 6 Paraśu-Rāma: as a hero, but yet an imperfect man.
- 7 Rāma-Chandra: as the hero of Rāmāyana. Physically a perfect man; his next of kin, friend and ally Hanuman the monkey-god. *The monkey endowed with speech.*<sup>1</sup>
- 8 Krishna-Avatāra: the Son of the Virgin Devakī, one formed by God, or rather by the manifested Deity Vishnu, who is identical with Adam Kadmon.<sup>2</sup> Krishna is also called *Kāneya*, the Son of the Virgin.
- 9 Gautama-Buddha, Siddhārtha, or Śākyamuni. (The Buddhists reject this doctrine of their Buddha being an incarnation of Vishnu.)
- 10 This avatāra has not yet occurred. It is expected in the future, like the Christian Advent, the idea of which was undoubtedly copied from the Hindu. When Vishnu appears for the last time he will come as a "Saviour." According to the opinion of some Brahmans he will appear himself under the form of the horse *Kalki*.<sup>3</sup> Others maintain that he will be mounting it. This horse is the envelope of the spirit of evil, and Vishnu will mount it, invisible to all, till he has conquered it for the last time. The *Kalki-Avatāra*, or the last incarnation, divides Brahmanism into two sects. That of Vaishnava refuses to recognize the incarnations of their god Vishnu in animal forms literally. They claim that these must be understood as allegorical.

In this list of avatāras we see traced the gradual evolution and transformation of all species out of the ante-Silurian mud of Darwin and the *ilus* of Sanchoniathon and

---

<sup>1</sup> May it not be that Hanuman is the representative of that link of beings, half-man, half-monkeys, which, according to the theories of Messrs. Hovelacque and Schleicher, were arrested in their development, and fell, so to say, into a retrogressive evolution?

<sup>2</sup> The Primal or Ultimate Essence has *no name* in India. It is indicated sometimes as "That" and "This."

This [universe] was not originally anything. There was neither heaven, nor earth, nor atmosphere. That being non-existent (*asat*) resolved "Let me be." (Dr. John Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, V, p. 366, ed. 1863-71)

<sup>3</sup> [Consult "Kali-Yuga and the Kalki-Avatara," in our Buddhas and Initiates Series. — ED. PHIL.]

Berosus. Beginning with the Azoic time, corresponding to the *ilus*<sup>1</sup> in which Brahmā implants the creative germ, we pass through the Palæozoic and Mesozoic times, covered by the first and second incarnations as the fish and tortoise; and the Cænozoic, which is embraced by the incarnations in the animal and semi-human forms of the boar and man-lion; and we come to the fifth and crowning geological period, designated as the “era of mind, or age of man,” whose symbol in the Hindu mythology is the dwarf — the first attempt of nature at the creation of man. In this list we should follow the main idea, not judge the degree of knowledge of the ancient philosophers by the literal acceptance of the popular form in which it is presented to us in the grand epical poem of *Mahābhārata* and its chapter the *Bhagavad-Gītā*.<sup>2</sup>

---

## The avataric succession is a mere allegory for the dual spiritual and physical evolution of creatures and man.

**From the watery abyss, this dual transformation carries on the physical form through the shape of a fish, a tortoise, a boar, a man-lion, a dwarf human form, a physically perfect but spiritually undeveloped man, and, finally, the apex of physical and spiritual perfection — a god-like man on earth.**

From *Isis Unveiled*, II, p. 276.

Nor do we see less clearly carried out in this succession of avatāras, the truly philosophical idea of a simultaneous spiritual and physical evolution of creatures and man. From a fish the progress of this dual transformation carries on the physical form through the shape of a tortoise, a boar, and a man-lion; and then, appearing in the dwarf of humanity, it shows *Paraśu-Rāma*, physically a perfect, spiritually an undeveloped entity, until it carries mankind personified by one god-like man, to the apex of physical and spiritual perfection — a god on earth. In Krishna and the other Saviours of the world, we see the philosophical idea of the progressive dual development understood and as clearly expressed in the *Zohar*. The “Heavenly man,” who is the Prōtogenos, Tikkūn, the first-born of God, or the universal Form and Idea, engenders Adam. Hence the latter is god-born in humanity, and endowed with the attributes of all the ten Sēphirōth. These are: Wisdom, Intelligence, Justice, Love, Beauty, Splendour, Firmness, *etc.* They make him the Foundation or basis, “*the mighty living one*,” לֵא הָי [El-Hay] and the crown of creation, thus placing him as the Alpha and Omega to reign over the “kingdom” — Malkuth. Says the *Zohar*:

Man is both the import and the highest degree of creation. As soon as man was created, everything was complete, including the upper and nether worlds, for everything is comprised in man. He unites in himself all forms.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> [Primordial mud or slime (Greek υλη), *i.e.*, primordial undifferentiated matter or chaos resting in laya, from which crept forth the mundane “snake-matter.” Cf. the Ilus of Berosus, the Æther of Science, the Protyle of Chemistry, *etc.* — ED. PHIL.]

<sup>2</sup> *Isis Unveiled*, II, pp. 274-75

<sup>3</sup> *Zohar*, III, p. 48a, Amsterdam ed.



## Having assumed the form of a tortoise, Prajapati began creating offspring.

**The myths and endless genealogies of the Prajapatis, the Rishis or Manus, and their wives and offspring, are a veiled record of the order of evolution in this round.<sup>1</sup>**

From *The Secret Doctrine*, II, p. 253.

What are all the myths and endless genealogies of the seven Prajāpatis, and their sons, the seven Rishis or Manus, and of their wives, sons and progeny, but a vast detailed account of the progressive development and evolution of animal creation, one species after the other? Were the highly philosophical and metaphysical Āryans — the authors of the most perfect philosophical systems of transcendental psychology, of Codes of Ethics, and such a grammar as Pānini's, of the Sāṅkhya and Vedānta systems, and a moral code (Buddhism), proclaimed by Max Müller the most perfect on earth — such fools, or children, as to lose their time in writing *fairytale*s; such tales as the *Purānas* now seem to be in the eyes of those who have not the remotest idea of their secret meaning? What is the *fable*, the genealogy and origin of Kāśyapa, with his twelve wives, by whom he had a numerous and diversified progeny of *nāgas* (serpents), reptiles, birds, and all kinds of living things, and who was thus the *father* of all kinds of animals, but a *veiled* record of the order of evolution in *this* round? So far, we do not see that any Orientalist ever had the remotest conception of the truths concealed under the allegories and personifications. The *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, says one, “gives a not very intelligible account of Kāśyapa's origin.

According to the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyana*, and the *Purānas*, he was the son of Marīchi, the son of Brahmā, and he was the father of Vivasvat, the father of Manu, the progenitor of mankind.

[According to the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*:] Having assumed the form of a tortoise, Prajāpati created offspring. That which he created he made (*akarot*); hence the word *kūrma* (tortoise). Kāśyapa means tortoise; hence men say:

“All creatures are descendants of Kāśyapa.”<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> [Impulses of Monadic Consciousness proceed spirally, in curves that never re-enter into themselves but ever ascend to higher planes, in a seven-fold pattern along a chain of seven man-bearing Globes (Planets or Spheres), re-visiting each one seven times.

A Planetary Round or Ring is a single circuit of the Divine Monad through Seven Globes. Each round evolves nascent material nature through the successive development of seven Occult Elements, Fire, Air, Water, Earth, so far, by repeating on a higher scale the evolutionary work of the preceding round. Planetary Rounds evolve the Divine Monad physically and psychically; Globe Rounds, spiritually. — ED. PHIL.]

<sup>2</sup> John Dowson, *Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion, Geography, History, and Literature*, 1879, s.v. Kāśyapa

**The sceptics of today are as incapable of rising to the sublimity of Vedantic and Buddhistic philosophy, as a tortoise to soar like the eagle.**

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (A HINDU PROFESSOR'S VIEWS ON INDIAN YOGA) III, pp. 104-5.

We are (spiritually speaking) passing once more through the Stone Age of thought. As our cave-dwelling ancestors were physically perfect, if not even gigantic, while at the same time intellectually undeveloped, so this our generation seems to evince but a very rudimentary spiritual grasp while apparently developed in intellect to the utmost extent possible. It is, indeed, a hard, materialistic age: a fragment of sparkling quartz is its appropriate symbol. And yet of what "age" and "generation" do we speak? Not of that of the masses, for they change but little from generation to generation: no, but of the educated class, the leaders of thought, the controllers or stimulators of the opinions of that great middle social group lying between the highly cultured and the brutishly ignorant. *They* are the sceptics of today who are as incapable of rising to the sublimity of Vedāntic or Buddhistic philosophy as a tortoise to soar like the eagle. This is the class which has derided the founders of the Theosophical Society as imbeciles, or tried to brand them as falsificators and impostors as they have also done with their greatest men of science. For six years now, we have been publicly asserting that Indian Yoga was and is a true science, endorsed and confirmed by thousands of experimental proofs; and that, though few in number, the true Indian Yogis may still be found when the right person seeks in the right way.<sup>1</sup>

---

**"Light Divine" in the fancy of the Hylo-Idealist, who confines the whole universe to the phantasms of his grey matter.**

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FOOTNOTES AND COMMENT ON "ULTIMATE PHILOSOPHY") IX, p. 140; [Appended to an article by Herbert L. Courtney on Hylo-Idealism.]

[O, light divine, thy reproduction is impossible . . . ] How are we to understand "light *divine*" in the thought of a Hylo-Idealist, who limits the whole universe to the phantasms of the grey matter of the brain — that matter and its productions being alike illusions? In our humble opinion this philosophy is twin sister to the cosmogony of the *orthodox* Brahmins, who teach that the world is supported by an elephant, which stands upon a tortoise, the tortoise wagging its tail<sup>2</sup> in absolute Void. We beg our friends, the Hylo-Idealists', pardon; but, so long as such evident contradictions are not more satisfactorily explained, we can hardly take them seriously, or give them henceforth *so much* space.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (A HINDU PROFESSOR'S VIEWS ON INDIAN YOGA) III, pp. 104-5

<sup>2</sup> [The notion of "the tortoise wagging its tail" never meant to convey the meaning literally, "but simply the absurd image as perceived by some imaginative padris." Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (A LESSON) X, p. 89; responding to a letter by H.P. Mukerji, published in *Lucifer*, Vol. II (12), August 1888, pp. 497-98.]

<sup>3</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (FOOTNOTES AND COMMENT ON "ULTIMATE PHILOSOPHY") IX, p. 140; appended to an article by Herbert L. Courtney on Hylo-Idealism.]

**Every sacred truth, which the ignorant are unable to comprehend under its true light, ought to be hidden within a triple casket concealing itself as the tortoise conceals his head within his shell.**

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TIBETAN TEACHINGS) VII, pp. 99-100; [from a letter of “the Venerable Chohan-Lama — the chief of the Archive-registrars of the libraries containing manuscripts on esoteric doctrines belonging to the Ta-loi and Ta-shühumpo Lamas Rim-boche of Tibet — on certain conclusions arrived at by the author of *Buddha and Early Buddhism*.”]

Our world-honoured Tsong-kha-pa closing his fifth Dam-ngag reminds us that:

. . . every sacred truth, which the ignorant are unable to comprehend under its true light, ought to be hidden within a triple casket concealing itself as the tortoise conceals his head within his shell; ought to show her face but to those who are desirous of obtaining the condition of Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi . . .

— the most merciful and enlightened heart.<sup>1</sup>

---

**The magical figures of Phurbu<sup>2</sup> on a square tortoise have nothing to do with Tibetan Buddhism.**

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (A FEW MORE MISCONCEPTIONS CORRECTED) XIV, p. 433.

Esoteric Schools would cease to be worthy of their name were their literature and doctrines to become the property of even their profane co-religionists — still less of the Western public. This is simple common sense and logic. Nevertheless this is a fact which our Orientalists have ever refused to recognize: hence they have gone on, gravely discussing the relative merits and absurdities of idols, “soothsaying tables,” and “magical figures of Phurbu” on the “square tortoise.” None of these have anything to do with the real philosophical Buddhism of the Gelugpa, or even of the most educated among the Sakyapa and Kadampa sects. All such “plates” and sacrificial tables, Chinsreg magical circles, *etc.*, were avowedly got from Sikkim, Bhutan, and Eastern Tibet, from Böns and Dugpas. Nevertheless, these are given as characteristics of Tibetan Buddhism!<sup>3</sup>



---

<sup>1</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (TIBETAN TEACHINGS) VII, pp. 99-100; [from a letter of “the Venerable Chohan-Lama — the chief of the Archive-registrars of the libraries containing manuscripts on esoteric doctrines belonging to the Ta-loi and Ta-shühumpo Lamas Rim-boche of Tibet — on certain conclusions arrived at by the author of *Buddha and Early Buddhism*.”]

<sup>2</sup> [Or phurba, a nail-like ritual implement, an “enchanted” dagger.]

<sup>3</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (A FEW MORE MISCONCEPTIONS CORRECTED) XIV, p. 433

**Seek not the seeds of Wisdom in Maya's realm; but soar beyond illusions, search the eternal in the changeless Sat,<sup>1</sup> mistrusting fancy's false suggestions.<sup>2</sup>**

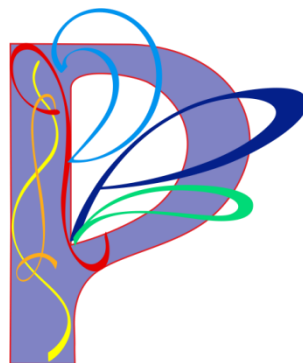
**Chelas, in their trials of initiation, see in trances the vision of the Earth supported by an elephant on the top of a tortoise standing on nothing, in order to teach them to discern the true from the false.**

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (ST. CYPRIAN OF ANTIOCH) XIV p. 165 & fn. [From the confession of a penitent sorcerer made in Antioch in the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century C.E., as quoted by Marquis de Mirville, *Pneumatologie: Des esprits et de leurs manifestations fluidiques*, 1854, Vol. VI, pp. 169 et seq. Cyprianus had studied in Chaldæa the true power of the air, saw the planets as dissimilar as the plants on earth, understood that stars that were like armies ranged in battle order, and learnt the Chaldean division of Æther into 365 parts.]

I [Cyprian of Antioch] learnt the analogy that exists between earthquakes and rains, between the *motion of the earth* and the motion of the seas; I saw the spirits of the *Giants* plunged in subterranean darkness and *seemingly* supporting the earth like a man carrying a burden on his shoulders.

Chelas in their trials of initiation, also see *in trances artificially generated for them*, the vision of the Earth supported by an elephant on the top of a tortoise standing on nothing — and this, to teach them to discern the true from the false.

**O Lanoo, be of clean heart before thou startest on thy journey. Before thou takest thy first step, learn to discern the real from the false, the ever-fleeting from the everlasting. Learn above all to separate Head-learning from Soul-Wisdom, the “Eye” from the “Heart” doctrine.<sup>3</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> [Note to Students on the difference between Sat and Asat, from *The Secret Doctrine*, II, pp. 449-50 & fn.:

*Asat* is not merely the negation of *Sat*, nor is it the “not yet existing”; for *Sat* is in itself neither the “existent,” nor “being.” *SAT* is the immutable, the ever-present, changeless and eternal root, from and through which all proceeds. But it is far more than the potential force in the seed, which propels onward the process of development, or what is now called evolution. It is the ever becoming, though the never manifesting.\* *Sat* is born from *Asat*, and *ASAT* is begotten by *Sat*: the perpetual motion in a circle, truly; yet a circle that can be squared only at the supreme Initiation, at the threshold of Parinirvāna.

\* The Hegelian doctrine, which identifies *Absolute Being* or “Be-ness” with “Non-Being,” and represents the Universe as an *eternal becoming*, is identical with the Vedanta philosophy.]

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *The Voice of the Silence*, frag. II vs. 114 p. 26

<sup>3</sup> *The Voice of the Silence*, frag. II vs. 111 p. 25