

Swedenborg: A Modern Buddha?  
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Swedish Crystal Buddha

Swedish Glass Figurine of a seated Buddha from the Estate of William D. Ansley, Topeka, KS

When people interested in American Buddhism think about its literary and philosophical roots, the eighteenth-century Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) is not the first person who pops to mind. When I first began researching this topic, and asking around for information on Swedenborgian-Buddhist connections, I was told, “There aren’t any.” But there are. While Swedenborg himself was not directly involved in popularizing Buddhism to Europeans or Americans, his ideas influenced many aspects of European and American thought and culture, and some of the key people who did popularize Buddhism in the West during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Scholars have largely overlooked this influence, and this paper is an attempt to address that oversight. I will focus on three writers: Albert J. Edmonds, Herman Carl Vetterling, and D.T. Suzuki.

Emanuel Swedenborg

Because many people are unfamiliar with Swedenborg, and he is a complicated figure, I will spend a couple of minutes giving some background on this eighteenth-century scientist, mystic, and theologian. Then I will turn to the three men who are the focus of this paper. Swedenborg was the son of a pietist Lutheran bishop, and he studied mathematics, physics, chemistry, and engineering throughout Europe. For most of his career, he served as chief assessor for the Swedish Bureau of Mines. He published books and pamphlets in all the fields I just mentioned, as well as in anatomy, biology, astronomy, and mineralogy. At age 56, he began to have a series of visions in which he spoke to angels and other spirit-beings, visited heaven and hell, and received revelations about the hidden meanings of Christian scripture. For the rest of his life he devoted himself to theology, and his writings in this field were published in thirty hefty volumes. Swedenborg believed that his own writings constituted the Second Coming of Christ.

Among the most popular of his theological works, all written in Latin, were the *Arcana Coelestia*, a multi-volume exegesis of Genesis and Exodus; *Apocalypse Revealed*, a multi-volume exegesis of Revelation;<sup>1</sup> *Heaven and Hell*, which Swedenborg visited in his visions;

Conjugal Love, in which the lifelong bachelor discusses the spiritual meanings of gender, sexuality, and marriage and The True Christian Religion, a summary of his ideas composed at the end of his life.

Swedenborg's theological works were very controversial, as you might imagine. For the first seventeen years of his career as a theologian (1749-1766), his books were published anonymously, and all of his theology was published outside his native Sweden, in England, the Netherlands, or Germany. After the publication of Conjugal Love, the first to appear under

Swedenborg's own name, his exegetical method and challenges to Lutheran orthodoxy were the subject of a heresy trial. (He was eventually exonerated.) Within two or three decades after his death, all of his theological works had been translated from Latin into English, and by the 1790s the first Swedenborgian churches had formed in England. His ideas also attracted scathing criticism, the most influential of which was penned by Immanuel Kant, who, like other detractors, denounced Swedenborg as a madman.

Gradually, Swedenborg fell into obscurity, and today he receives relatively little attention from scholars of religion, particularly American religion. (He fares better among scholars of modern European literature and Western esotericism.) Although the denomination founded upon his teachings, the Church of the New Jerusalem, has always been small, Swedenborg's direct and indirect influences in American religious thought have been far-reaching. Traces of his ideas can be found in abolitionism, English Romanticism, Transcendentalism, Spiritualism, Shakerism, Mormonism, utopian socialism, homeopathy and other unorthodox medical theories, the

New Thought movement, modern European literature and Western esotericism.) Although the denomination founded upon his teachings, the Church of the New Jerusalem, has always been small, Swedenborg's direct and indirect influences in American religious thought have been far-reaching. Traces of his ideas can be found in abolitionism, English Romanticism, transcendentalism, Spiritualism, Shakerism, Mormonism, utopian socialism, homeopathy and other unorthodox medical theories, the New Thought movement,<sup>3</sup> art, and antebellum efforts to promote public education.<sup>4</sup>

Swedenborg viewed the cosmos as "a single dynamic entity created through successive emanations from a unitary life force."<sup>5</sup> This view of divine emanation is a feature of Neo-Platonic thought, the European Hermetic tradition, and both Jewish and Christian Kabbalah. Swedenborg almost certainly studied Kabbalah as a student in Sweden, and again in London during midlife.<sup>6</sup> According to Swedenborg's doctrine of divine influx, "all power to act flows into all of creation from God, constantly and unceasingly."<sup>7</sup>

Swedenborg saw the cosmos as organized hierarchically in an orderly tripartite structure: the triune God; three realms of existence — celestial, spiritual, and natural; three aspects of a person — soul, mind, and body. The spiritual and natural realms were related through a correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm. He believed that the purpose of human life was to progress toward union with God, though a process of study and self-discipline. He rejected the doctrine of Original Sin and asserted that humans were free to choose evil or good. Evil was self-love, turning away from God toward selfishness. Spiritual progress required gradual relinquishment of

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Having mentioned several key Swedenborgian doctrines — divine influx, correspondence, spiritual progression, free will, and social use — I will now turn to three men who wrote about both Swedenborg and about Buddhism for audiences in the United States, Europe, and Asia.

Albert J. Edmunds

Albert J. Edmunds (1857-1941), the first person I want to discuss today, was a Quaker and a vegetarian who explored Theosophy, Buddhism, psychic phenomena, and Swedenborgianism. He was born in England but spent much of his life in Philadelphia, where he worked as a librarian for the Historical Society. (He is said to haunt a room on the library’s third floor to this day.)<sup>9</sup> He lectured on Buddhism and wrote several books and articles exploring parallels he saw between Christian and Buddhist scriptures. In 1903, Edmunds accepted a position as the American representative to the International Buddhist Society.<sup>10</sup> Like many people at the time who were interested in hypnosis and clairvoyance, Edmunds believed that Swedenborg’s visionary encounters with spirits supplied proof that the soul lived on after physical death. In one article, he compared reports on clairvoyance published by the American Society for Psychical Research with Swedenborg’s writings and various Buddhist scriptures. He argued that the supernatural feats of Jesus, Buddha, and Swedenborg — such as casting out demons, recalling past lives, or communing with unseen spirits — were all confirmed by recent research on hypnotic trances and spirit mediums.<sup>11</sup> This research, he said, provided a rational, scientific basis for religious beliefs, and for rapprochement between different faiths. different faiths.

Edmunds also claimed that Swedenborg had predicted the early twentieth-century discovery of the massive cache of Buddhist texts at Dunhuang. In two books, Swedenborg said he had spoken with spirits from “Great Tartary,” a region that in his time was understood to encompass the entire East Asian continent.<sup>12</sup> These spirits, Swedenborg said, carefully preserved and guarded ancient scriptures and religious practices predating the Hebrew Bible. This so-called “Ancient Word” provided the basis for later Judaism and Christianity.<sup>13</sup> Edmunds argued that Swedenborg had actually conflated two separate visions: one concerning discoveries of ancient Hebrew texts, and one concerning future discoveries of Buddhist texts. Thus, the pre-Israelite “Ancient Word” to which Swedenborg’s vision referred was actually esoteric Buddhism. He proffered this argument in the journals of the Pali Text Society and the American Society for Psychical Research, and in a lecture to the Swedenborgian community in Philadelphia.<sup>14</sup>

It was not a completely original claim. In at least two books and two articles between 1877 and 1895, Helena P. Blavatsky, co-founder of the Theosophical Society, had said that Swedenborg’s revelation about Great Tartary referred to the esoteric Buddhist and Hindu teachings of

Ascended Masters in the Himalayas. Tartary referred to the esoteric Buddhist and Hindu teachings of Ascended Masters in the Himalayas.<sup>15</sup> In 1913, Edmunds said that Buddhist texts in Sogdian and Tocharic languages, discovered at Dunhuang, proved that Swedenborg's Asian spirit-informants had been talking about esoteric Buddhism.

Herman Carl Vetterling

A man who took this argument even further was Herman Carl Vetterling (1849-1931), a.k.a. Philangi Dàsa. He was a Swedenborgian minister, a homeopathic doctor, a Theosophist, a and publisher of *The Buddhist Ray*, the first English-language journal of Buddhism. In 1884 and 1885, he wrote seven articles on Swedenborg for *The Theosophist*.<sup>16</sup> In 1887, Vetterling produced a novel titled *Swedenborg the Buddhist*, the subtitle of which is *The Higher Swedenborgianism: Its Secrets and Thibetan Origin*.<sup>17</sup> This novel asserts that Swedenborg received instruction in esoteric Buddhism from spirits in Tibet, China, and Mongolia. The book was favorably mentioned in a number of American magazines, and even in a Burmese Buddhist journal.<sup>18</sup> The protagonist of the story, Philangi Dàsa, recounts a series of dreams. In the one that occupies most of the manuscript's 354 pages, he witnesses an extended theological discussion among Swedenborg, a Buddhist monk, a Brahmin, a Zoroastrian, an Aztec, a Confucian, an Icelander (who represents Norse mythology), and "a woman," who expounds Kabbalah, ancient Egyptian religion, Western Esotericism, and other traditions. This group, of which Swedenborg is clearly the star, considers a number of theological topics to demonstrate the purported Buddhist origin of Swedenborgian thought, and the common core of all religions. This presumed common core was a popular Theosophical theme — and as Dr. Payne will discuss later, it is also a key feature of Traditionalism that occupies most of the manuscript's 354 pages, he witnesses an extended theological discussion among Swedenborg, a Buddhist monk, a Brahmin, a Zoroastrian, an Aztec, a Confucian, an Icelander (who represents Norse mythology), and "a woman," who expounds Kabbalah, ancient Egyptian religion, Western Esotericism, and other traditions. This group, of which Swedenborg is clearly the star, considers a number of theological topics to demonstrate the purported Buddhist origin of Swedenborgian thought, and the common core of all religions. This presumed common core was a popular Theosophical theme — and as Dr. Payne will discuss later, it is also a key feature of Traditionalism.

*The Buddhist Ray*, which Vetterling published monthly from 1888 to 1895, had subscribers in not only in the United States and Europe, but also in India, Japan, Ceylon, and Siam — including the crown prince of Siam, and Ven. Sumangala, one of the most senior Buddhist monks in Ceylon.<sup>19</sup> On the front page of every issue, the magazine declared itself to be "Devoted to Buddhism in General and to the Buddhism in Swedenborg in Particular." For its first two years, all but one issue contained installments of a sequel to Vetterling's novel, titled "Swedenborg in the Lamasery." This text underscored Vetterling's belief that Swedenborgian ideas derived from Tibetan Buddhism, which Vetterling had read about in accounts of Jesuit missionaries to Lhasa, and in various Theosophical texts. Like Albert Edmunds, Vetterling was also familiar with a variety of Pali and Mahayana Buddhist texts translated by European Orientalists. underscored Vetterling's belief that Swedenborgian ideas derived from Tibetan Buddhism, which Vetterling had read about in accounts of Jesuit missionaries to Lhasa, and in various Theosophical texts. Like Albert Edmunds, Vetterling was also familiar with a variety of Pali and Mahayana Buddhist texts translated by European Orientalists.

While Swedenborg claimed to reveal the hidden meanings of Hebrew and Christian scriptures, Vetterling claimed to reveal the hidden meanings of Swedenborg. For example, he asserted that Swedenborg's references to Jesus were really covert references to Uryen, a.k.a.

Padmasambhava, the legendary saint said to have brought Tantric Buddhism to Tibet in the eighth century.<sup>20</sup> [I didn't want to use a standard image of Jesus as a white European, so this is a modern interpretation, and an equally idealized representation of Padmasambhava.] While that particular correspondence seems bizarre, if not hilarious, a few contemporary scholars have seen similarities between Swedenborgian thought and Buddhist Tantra. For example, Jeffrey Kripal, chair of Religious Studies at Rice University, noted parallels in a book published just this year.<sup>21</sup>

David Loy noted some in 1995.<sup>22</sup> Actually, the idea that Swedenborg knew something about Tantra may not be not as far-fetched as it sounds. Anders Hallengren has argued that Swedenborg learned about esoteric Buddhism from Swedish soldiers, who had been prisoners of war in the Siberian and Tartar areas of Russia and returned to Sweden in the 1720s. Among these were Swedenborg's cousin Peter Schöenström, an avid collector of manuscripts along the Silk Route, particularly Mongolian religious texts. Other sources included the explorer Philip Strahlenberg, whose travel journals Swedenborg mentions in his *Spiritual Diary*, and a Russian historian and geographer whom Swedenborg met in Stockholm.<sup>23</sup>

Marsha Keith Schuchard thinks Swedenborg also could have learned about Tantric Yoga from Moravian missionaries who traveled to India, China, Tibet, Tartary, and central Russia, and from Moravian converts in the Malabar region of India, who traveled to London and Holland. In London, Swedenborg and his Moravian associates studied Kabbalist forms of meditation, visualization, breath control, and sexual yoga that were similar to Tantric practices. His posthumously published diaries describe these in detail. However, because of strong anti-Semitism in Sweden, and because of popular interest in Asia generated by the Swedish East India Company, Schuchard says he displaced the Jewish teachings onto Asian sources.<sup>24</sup>

#### D.T. Suzuki

The last person I want to mention today is D.T. Suzuki (1870-1966), perhaps the single most important figure in shaping American views of Buddhism, and another admirer of Swedenborg. Albert Edmunds claimed credit for interesting D.T. Suzuki in Swedenborg, when the two met at Paul Carus' Illinois home in 1903.<sup>25</sup> By that time, however, Swedenborg had been known in Japan for more than a decade. In 1890, HIRAI Kinza (1859-1916), who later spoke at the Parliament of World's Religions, had published an article about Swedenborg and Zen in a Japanese magazine.<sup>26</sup> In 1893, the year of the Parliament, Vetterling's book *Swedenborg the Buddhist* was published in Japan. Two years after that, in the preface to the Japanese version of Paul Carus' *Gospel of Buddha*, Zen master SHAKU Soen wrote that Swedenborg was well known in Japan. Suzuki was Soen's student and translator, lived in Japan at the time, and translated Soen's Japanese preface into English. <sup>27</sup> Vetterling's *Buddhist Ray* also had a number of subscribers in Japan, and excerpts from that magazine, as well as excerpts from Theosophical sources, appeared regularly in Japanese magazines. But Edmunds does seem to have inspired

Suzuki to read the Swedish seer for himself appeared regularly in Japanese magazines. But Edmunds does seem to have inspired Suzuki to read the Swedish seer for himself.<sup>28</sup>

Suzuki translated four of Swedenborg's books from English into Japanese. In 1908, the Swedenborg Society of London invited Suzuki there to translate *Heaven and Hell*, which it published in 1910. That same year, Suzuki served as a vice president for the International Swedenborg Congress in London.<sup>29</sup> In 1914 and 1915, Suzuki translated *The New Jerusalem and Its Ine Love and Wisdom*, and *Divine Providence*. He also wrote an overview of Swedenborg's life and work — *Suedenborugu* — which in English translation is titled *Swedenborg, Buddha of the North*, an epithet taken from an 1833 novel by Balzac.<sup>30</sup> In 1924, Suzuki contributed an essay to *The Eastern Buddhist*, a journal he founded, exploring affinities between Swedenborgian theology and Shingon and Pure Land forms of Buddhism. It was titled "Swedenborg's View of Heaven and Other-Power."<sup>31</sup> These two essays clearly indicate that Suzuki was familiar with several other books and pamphlets by Swedenborg, both scientific and theological, and that he had seen additional, unpublished manuscripts. After 1924, Suzuki made scattered references to Swedenborg in various books and essays.<sup>32</sup>

In *Suedenborugu*, Suzuki presented Swedenborg as an exemplar: a man whose work combined both science and religion, who was both practical and mystical, who lived simply despite considerable wealth, and who "was childlike and innocent in all matters, with the air of a transcendent mystic who had escaped defilement."<sup>33</sup> His description of the Swede reminds one of the ancient masters idealized in Zen literature:

He is a likable old man, with an aura of renunciation flowing from his brow. Even though his physical body cannot be disentangled from the troubles of this defiled world, his mind's eye is always filled with the mysteries of heaven. As he walks through the mist, a wonderful joy seems to well up and play beneath his feet. If someone asks the old man about such things as the way of heaven, like a mountain stream that is never exhausted, he patiently and repeatedly expounds it.... Listeners are shocked, their minds probably bewildered. Nevertheless, he coolly regards these things as if they were daily fare.<sup>34</sup>

Suzuki even said Swedenborg had “realized his true nature.”<sup>35</sup> In the Eastern Buddhist, Suzuki drew several parallels between Swedenborgian and Buddhist teachings. For example, Swedenborg’s most famous doctrine is that phenomena in the material world correspond to phenomena in the spiritual world, and one who can “read” this world correctly can discern corresponding divine truths. Suzuki likened this correspondence to the Mahayana teaching of emptiness, in which the world of samsara, correctly perceived, is nirvana. He also compared it to the Shingon practice of mudras, in which one identifies with the qualities of various Buddhas by visualizing them and adopting their characteristic gestures. Suzuki compared Swedenborg’s notion of innocence with the Pure Land teaching that one must utterly relinquish self-power, and with the disdain for scholasticism found in some Zen rhetoric. [I am not sure Swedenborg would have agreed with the latter, given that he was an accomplished scholar and saw education as a path to God.] Suzuki identified Swedenborg’s teaching on free will with the Buddhist doctrine of karma: in other words, that we are responsible for the consequences of our choices for good or evil. However problematic Suzuki’s interpretations of Buddhism — and of Swedenborg — may be to contemporary scholars, for Westerners he was, and is, widely regarded as an expert, and extremely influential divine truths. Suzuki likened this correspondence to the Mahayana teaching of emptiness, in which the world of samsara, correctly perceived, is nirvana. He also compared it to the Shingon practice of mudras, in which one identifies with the qualities of various Buddhas by visualizing them and adopting their characteristic gestures. Suzuki compared Swedenborg’s notion of innocence with the Pure Land teaching that one must utterly relinquish self-power, and with the disdain for scholasticism found in some Zen rhetoric. [I am not sure Swedenborg would have agreed with the latter, given that he was an accomplished scholar and saw education as a path to God.] Suzuki identified Swedenborg’s teaching on free will with the Buddhist doctrine of karma: in other words, that we are responsible for the consequences of our choices for good or evil. However problematic Suzuki’s interpretations of Buddhism — and of Swedenborg — may be to contemporary scholars, for Westerners he was, and is, widely regarded as an expert, and extremely influential.

Because he was both an accomplished scientist and a religious visionary, Swedenborg appealed to people interested in esotericism and mysticism, and to those seeking to bridge religion and science. Likewise, Buddhism appealed to people seeking “scientific religion,” and to those seeking secret wisdom and contact with spirits. Both Swedenborgianism and Buddhism were very important resources for Theosophy. Although it was tainted by allegations of fraud, the Theosophical Society was for many decades was a major interpreter and promoter of Buddhism in the modern period, and also played important roles in the Buddhist revivals of Sri Lanka and Japan with wisdom and contact with spirits. Both Swedenborgianism and Buddhism were very important resources for Theosophy. Although it was tainted by allegations of fraud, the Theosophical Society was for many decades was a major interpreter and promoter of Buddhism in the modern period, and also played important roles in the Buddhist revivals of Sri Lanka and Japan.<sup>36</sup> All three traditions — Swedenborgianism, Buddhism, and Theosophy — clearly influenced Edmunds, Vetterling, and Suzuki.

Why does all this matter? I think there are two reasons. First, with a few exceptions, this is an aspect of modern Buddhist history that has gone relatively unnoticed by scholars, in either American religion or in Buddhist studies. Perhaps it is time for scholars in both fields to pay more attention to the ways that Swedenborg has influenced religion, culture, and intellectual

history in Europe, the United States, and Asia over the past two centuries. Perhaps the role of Western esotericism in the development of American Buddhist thought deserves more scrutiny, as well. Catherine Albanese's most recent book, recipient of an AAR award this year, makes clear that metaphysical religions merit far more study than they have received thus far.

Second, this largely unexplored history highlights the need for interdisciplinary research and a broad historical perspective. Historians of religion can only see certain relationships and influences if we cast a wide gaze across the boundaries of multiple countries, cultures, religious traditions, and academic disciplines. If we do that, we may find connections between things seem at first to be completely unrelated: Swedenborg and modern Buddhism, for example. This has been a modest effort to contribute to a broader view. Thank you for listening.

#### Endnotes

1 Fully half of Swedenborg's theological corpus is devoted to verse-by-verse exegeses of Genesis,

Exodus, and Revelation.

2 In short, the feminine corresponds to love and will, the male to wisdom and understanding. Both are

necessary to spiritual growth, and marriage is the best way to realize this ideal.

3 Robert H. Kirven, "Swedenborg's Contributions to the History of Ideas," in Emanuel Swedenborg: A

Continuing Vision (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, Inc., 1988).

4 Richard Kenneth Silver, "The Spiritual Kingdom in America: The Influence of Emanuel Swedenborg

on American Society and Culture: 1815-1860" (Stanford University, 1983).

5 Silver, *ibid.*, 30.

6 According to Jewish Kabbalah, the divine manifests through ten emanations or Sephiroth. Johann

Kemper (1697-1796) was a Jewish convert to Christianity who lived in Uppsala and worked for the

University while Swedenborg was enrolled there; Kemper also tutored students in Hebrew. Some scholars have suggested that Swedenborg studied with Kemper, who wrote a detailed commentary on

the Zohar, a well-known Kabbalist text. Swedenborg's brother-in-law Eric Benzelius purchased a copy

of Kemper's Zohar commentary for the University. Marsha Keith Schuchard argues that Swedenborg's

father was interested in Kabbalah and had his son tutored in it as a boy; she describes in detail

Swedenborg's later Kabbalist studies. See Marsha Keith Schuchard, *Why Mrs Blake Cried: William*

*Blake and the Sexual Basis of Spiritual Vision* (London: Century, 2006), 59-121 (chapters 5-8). In earlier

work, Swedenborg scholar Jane Williams-Hogan expressed doubt that Swedenborg had worked directly

with Kemper, but noted a few references to Kabbalah in Swedenborg's notebooks. Jane Williams-

Hogan, "Swedenborg Studies 2002: On the Shoulders of Giants," *The New Philosophy Online, Journal*

of the Swedenborg Scientific Association, January-June 2002.

<http://www.thenewphilosophyonline.org/journal/article.php?page=1002&issue=106>, accessed September 30, 2007, 1:15 p.m.

7 Robin Larsen, et al., ed., *Emanuel Swedenborg: A Continuing Vision* (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1988), 514.

8 I am indebted to the Rev. Dr. James Lawrence, Dean of the Swedenborg House of Studies in Berkeley, CA, for his careful reading of the foregoing summary and his suggestions for improving its accuracy. Surveys of Swedenborg's basic ideas may be found at: Silver, *Spiritual Kingdom in America*, *ibid.*, 21-43; George F. Dole, "Key Concepts in the Theology of Emanuel Swedenborg," in *Emanuel Swedenborg a Continuing Vision*, ed. Robin et al. Larsen (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1988), George F. Dole and Robert H. Kirven, *A Scientist Explores Spirit: A Biography of Emanuel Swedenborg with Key Concepts of His Theology* (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1997).

9 George Eberhart, "Haunted Libraries in the U.S.: Pennsylvania-Texas," *Encyclopedia Britannica Blog*, <http://blogs.britannica.com/blog/main/2007/10/haunted-libraries-in-the-us-pennsylvania-texas/>, accessed October 22, 2007. 10 Thomas A. Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism, 1844-1912 : Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent*, *Religion in North America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 102, 99n52.

11 Albert J. Edmunds, "F. W. H. Meyers, Swedenborg, and Buddha," *Proceedings of the American Society for Psychical Research* 8 (1914).

12 Anders Hallengren, "The Secret of Great Tartary," *Arcana* 1, no. 1 (1994): 37.

13 Emanuel Swedenborg. "The Book of the Apocalypse Revealed, Uncovering the Secrets That Were Foretold There and Have Lain Hidden until Now." (Place Published: The Swedenborg Project, Swedenborg Digital Library, 2007), <http://www.smallcanonsearch.com/read.php?book=ar&section=11>.

Paragraph 11.3-4. Emanuel Swedenborg, *True Christian Religion: Containing the Whole Theology of the New Church Predicted by the Lord in Daniel 7:13-14 and Revelation 21:1-2* (Lutherville, MD: The Swedenborg Project, Swedenborg Digital Library, 2007; reprint, Digital version of 1946 edition by Swedenborg Foundation). Paragraph 279.3, 4. Both sites accessed October 25, 2007. From *Tru*

*Christian Religion*: "[3] Of that ancient Word which existed in Asia before the Israelitish Word, I am permitted to state this new thing, namely, that it is still preserved there among the people who dwell in Great Tartary. In the spiritual world I have talked with spirits and angels from that country, who said that they have a Word, and have had it from ancient times; and that they conduct their Divine worship according to this Word, and that it consists solely of correspondences. They said, that in it also is the Book of Jasher, which is mentioned in Joshua (10:12, 13), and in 2 Samuel (1:17, 18); and that they have also among them the books called the Wars of Jehovah and Enunciations, which are mentioned by Moses (Num. 21:14, 15, and 27-30); and when I read to them the words that Moses had quoted therefrom, they searched to see if they were there, and found them; from which it was evident to me that the ancient Word is still among that people. While talking with them they said that they worshiped Jehovah, some as an invisible God, and some as visible. [4] They also told me that they do not permit foreigners to come among them, except the Chinese, with whom they cultivate peaceful relations, because the Chinese Emperor is from their country; also that the population is so great that they do not

believe that any region in the whole world is more populous, which is indeed credible from the wall so many miles in length which the Chinese formerly built as a protection against invasion from these people. I have further heard from the angels, that the first chapters of Genesis which treat of creation, of Adam and Eve, the garden of Eden, their sons and their posterity down to the flood, and of Noah and his sons, are also contained in that Word, and thus were transcribed from it by Moses. The angels and spirits from Great Tartary are seen in the southern quarter on its eastern side, and are separated from others by dwelling in a higher expanse, and by their not permitting anyone to come to them from the Christian world, or, if any ascend, by guarding them to prevent their return. Their possessing a different Word is the cause of this separation."

14 Albert J. Edmunds, "Has Swedenborg's 'Lost Word' Been Found?," *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 7, no. 5 (1913). This article also refers to his lecture before the New Church Society of Philadelphia, reported in "The Ancient Word," *New Church Messenger*

80:18 (May 1, 1901), 242-243; and to an article in the Journal of the Pali Text Society, London, 1903, p. 35. [I am in the process of obtaining copies of the latter source.]

15 Helena P. Blavatsky. "Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology." (Place Published: The Theosophy Co., 1981), [http://www.theosophy.org/Blavatsky/Isis%20Unveiled/isis\\_unveiled1.htm](http://www.theosophy.org/Blavatsky/Isis%20Unveiled/isis_unveiled1.htm), Helena P. Blavatsky. "A Modern Panarion: A Collection of Fugitive Fragments." (Place Published: The Theosophy Co., 1981), <http://www.theosophy.org/Blavatsky/Modern%20Panarion/Panarion.htm>, Helena P. Blavatsky, "A Collection of Notes and Appendices on an Article Entitled 'the Âryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets on the Sevenfold Principle in Man,' by T. Subba Row, B.A., B.L.," The Theosophist 3, no. 4 (January 1882), <http://www.theosophy.org/Blavatsky/Articles/NotesOnSomeAryan-ArhatEsotericTenets.htm-ArhatEsotericTenets.htm>, Helena P. Blavatsky, "Lamas and Druses," The Theosophist (June 1881), <http://www.theosophy.org/Blavatsky/Articles/LamasAndDruses.htm>. All sites accessed October 24, 2007.

16 Reproduced as appendices to Philangi Dàsa, Swedenborg, the Buddhist, or the Higher Swedenborgianism: Its Secrets and Tibetan Origin (Charleston, SC: The Swedenborg Association, 2003), 359-437.

17 Ibid.

18 The Buddhist Ray, 1:10; 1:11, 84.

19 The Buddhist Ray, 1:5, 44; 1:7, 52, 56; 1:8, 64; 2:4, 28.

20 Vetterling, H. C. "Swedenborg in the Lamasery," The Buddhist Ray 1:3 (March 1888), 22.

21 Jeffrey John Kripal, Esalen: America and the Religion of No Religion (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 139-41. See also D. Gopaul Chetty, "Was Swedenborg a Yogi?," in New Light Upon Indian Philosophy, or Swedenborg and Saiva Siddhanta (London: J.M. Dent, 1923), 125-46, Stephen Larsen, "Swedenborg and the Visionary Tradition," in Emanuel Swedenborg: A Continuing Vision, ed. Robin Larsen et al. (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1988), 192-206, David Loy, "The Dharma of Emanuel Swedenborg: A Buddhist Perspective," Buddhist-Christian Studies 16 (1996): 11- 35.

22 David Loy, "The Dharma of Emanuel Swedenborg: A Buddhist Perspective," in Swedenborg: Buddha of the North, ed. Mary Lou Bertucci (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 1996). Originally published in Arcana 2:1 (Fall 1995).

23 Hallengren, "The Secret of Great Tartary."

24 Marsha Keith Schuchard, "Why Mrs. Blake Cried: Blake, Swedenborg, and the Sexual Basis of Spiritual Vision," Esoterica 2 (2000): 55-57. Accessed online at <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/printable/BlakePrintable.html>, on June 19, 2007. See also Schuchard, Why Mrs. Blake Cried (2006), *ibid.*, 102-09, 116-20, 152-54. She shows that

Swedenborg was involved in the Moravian congregation at London's Fetter Lane. Schuchard notes that Moravian missionaries gained a number of converts in Ceylon, another possible source of information about Buddhism. *ibid.*, 103.25 Tweed, *American Encounter* *ibid.*, 185-186n. 14, citing Albert J. Edmunds, *Diary* 10, 18 July, 1903.

26 Andrei Vashestov, "Introduction," in *Swedenborg the Buddhist* (Charleston, SC: The Swedenborg Association, 2003), xxii, xxxn27.27 D.T. Suzuki produced an English translation of the Japanese preface to Carus' book, published in Paul Carus, "A Japanese Translation of 'the Gospel of Buddha'," *The Open Court: A Quarterly Magazine Devoted to the Science of Religion* 9, no. Feb. 21 (1895).

28 Thomas A. Tweed, "American Occultism and Japanese Buddhism: Albert J. Edmunds, D.T. Suzuki, and Translocative History," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 32, no. 2 (2005): 258-59.

29 Andrew Bernstein, "Introduction," in *Swedenborg: Buddha of the North*, ed. Mary Lou Bertucci (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 1996), xviii.

30 Honoré de Balzac and John Davis Batchelder Collection (Library of Congress), *Histoire Intellectuelle De Louis Lambert* (Paris: Charles Gosselin, 1833). Available online in English translation at <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/1943>. Accessed October 25, 2007. The electronic version is cumbersome to navigate; I was able to find the reference by downloading the .txt file, opening it in Microsoft Word, and searching for "Buddha of the North." It appeared on page 51 of my Word document, in a letter from Louis Lambert to his uncle dated November 25, 1819: "Any man who plunges into these religious waters, of which the sources are not all known, will find proofs that Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus Christ, and Swedenborg had identical principles and aimed at identical ends. The last of them all, Swedenborg, will perhaps be the Buddha of the North." Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus Christ, and Swedenborg had identical principles and aimed at identical ends. The last of them all, Swedenborg, will perhaps be the Buddha of the North."

31 D.T. Suzuki, *Swedenborg: Buddha of the North*, ed. Mary Lou Bertucci, trans. Andrew Bernstein, *Swedenborg Studies* (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 1996).

32 David Loy refers to a list of ten citations he received from a Japanese source. He does not detail them. Loy, "The Dharma of Emanuel Swedenborg: A Buddhist Perspective," 122n5. I found one reference to Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondences in his first essay on Zen, D.T. Suzuki, "Zen as Chinese Interpretation of the Doctrine of Enlightenment," presented as a lecture in 1911, published in *Eastern Buddhist* 2:6 (1923), and published in book format in 1927. My copy is D.T. Suzuki, "Zen as Chinese Interpretation of the Doctrine of Enlightenment," in *Essays in Zen Buddhism (First Series)* (London: Rider & Co., 1961), 56n1. See also Judith Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 320n29.33 Suzuki, *Swedenborg: Buddha of the North*, *ibid.*, 44.

34 *ibid.*, 7.

35 *ibid.*, 22.

36 The following books touch on the Theosophical Society's role in American Buddhism and in modern Asian Buddhist revivals. Donald Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998), Stephen Prothero, *The White Buddhist: The Asian Odyssey of Henry Steel Olcott* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), Thomas A. Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism, 1844-1912: Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent, Religion in North America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992). Prothero's book is a biography of one of the Society's founders. YOSHINAGA Shin'ichi and AKAI Toshio have documented the widespread publication of Theosophical materials in Japan during the Meiji Era. YOSHINAGA Shin'ichi, "Japanese Buddhism and the Theosophical Movement, a General View"; AKAI Toshio, "The Theosophical Accounts in Japanese Buddhist Publications Issued in the Late Nineteenth Century: A Select Bibliography" COMPLETE CITATIONS TO COME.

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