

Buddhists in the sacred land, Tibet, and vice versa.

Bigots don't recognize values other than their own. And so another religion's sacred river is regarded as just muddy water, even though it may flow from the "sacred land." So too the human form or nature may seem "empty" (of spiritual value) to the unwise, although it is filled with the waters of immortality (Amrita) or Eternity. *Amrita* is literally "non-death" (from *a-*, as also in English *atonal*, *amoral*," plus the root \sqrt{mr} , "die," found also in English *mortal*). The fool thinks human nature is empty, merely the result of random mutation and natural selection. But it is filled with the "sweet waters" of immortality, "Amrita," which is also used as a term for the elixir of immortality, like that from the philosophers' stone of the Alchemists. That is, our humble human personality contains the Divine self or immortal individuality, which only the wise perceive.

Arhans or arhats (mentioned in verse 172) are enlightened beings. H.P.B. explains "boundless vision" in a gloss: Gloss 30. Boundless vision or psychic superhuman sight. An Arhan is credited with seeing and knowing all at a distance as well as on the spot.

Remember, however, that the word *wisdom* is related to the word *vision*, so "Sages of the boundless Vision" may also be thought of as those who have acquired the Wisdom. Their vision is not so much of outward things, as into themselves. Rare, indeed, are those sages who know themselves. The *udumbara* is a sacred fig tree in Hindu mythology, an ally of the gods in their struggle against the demons.

The midnight hour, when arhans are born, is the darkest time of the night. It is traditional for holy beings to be born at the darkest hour, as Christ's birthday was located at the winter solstice, the darkest time of the year. They are born in darkness because they renew the light of Wisdom. So also H.P.B. comments on "the sacred plant of nine and seven stalks": Gloss 31 . . . Shagna plant.

It is a plant from whose fibers is woven a cloth from which is made an initiation robe symbolic of Wisdom. This plant too blooms in darkness because it represents the coming of Light. Darkness, cold, the winter, midnight — all these are humble, yin qualities. But out of them comes the Light of Wisdom, which is also warmth, summer, and noontide — yang qualities. Darkness and light, yin and yang, and all other pairs of opposites are necessary in the world.