

Swedenborg: A Modern Buddha?

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WHEN PEOPLE INTERESTED in American Buddhism think about its literary and philosophical roots, the eighteenth-century Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg is not the first person who leaps to mind. During the early stages of research for this article, I queried various specialists about possible Swedenborgian-Buddhist connections, and all said, “There aren’t any.” As it turns out, however, there are. Swedenborg himself was not directly involved in popularizing Buddhism to Europeans or Americans, but his ideas influenced many aspects of European and American thought and culture, and he was an important influence for some of the key people who *did* popularize Buddhism in the West during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With few exceptions, scholars have overlooked this influence. This article is one attempt to address that oversight.

I will focus on four writers: Albert J. Edmonds, Herman Carl Vetterling, Warren Felt Evans, and D. T. Suzuki. Because many people are unfamiliar with Swedenborg, and he is a complicated figure, this essay will begin with some general background on the eighteenth-century scientist, mystic, and theologian, before turning to Edmonds, Vetterling, Evans, and Suzuki.

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG (1688–1772)

Swedenborg was the son of a pietist Lutheran bishop of Uppsala. He studied mathematics, physics, chemistry, and engineering throughout Europe and, for most of his career, served as chief assessor for the Swedish Bureau of Mines. He published books and pamphlets in the fields just mentioned, as well as in anatomy, biology, mineralogy, and astronomy. Some of his scientific and engineering works were remarkably prescient. Swedenborg’s *Principia*, a cosmological treatise

published in 1734, “anticipated the modern picture of the galaxy by painting the Milky Way as a vast collection of stars wheeling about a common center.”¹ He also identified the cerebral cortex as the locus of cognitive and volitional activity, and recognized that the right and left hemispheres of the brain function differently. He designed a fixed-wing aircraft, and a one-person submarine for attacking enemy ships underwater.²

At age fifty-six, Swedenborg 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 that field were published in thirty hefty volumes. Fully half of Swedenborg’s theological corpus is devoted to verse-by-verse exegeses of Genesis, Exodus, and Revelation. He 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; *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;³ and *The True Christian Religion*, a summary of his ideas composed at the end of his life. Swedenborg’s key doctrines include divine influx, correspondence, spiritual progression, free will, and social use. He saw the cosmos as “a single dynamic entity created through successive emanations from a unitary life force.”⁴ This view of divine emanation is a feature of Neoplatonic 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.⁵ According to Swedenborg’s doctrine of divine influx, “all power to act flows into all of creation from God, constantly and unceasingly.”⁶

Swedenborg saw the cosmos as organized hierarchically in an orderly, tripartite structure: the triune God; three realms of existence (celestial, spiritual, and natural); and three aspects of a person (soul, mind, and body). The spiritual and natural realms are related through a correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm. He believed that the purpose of human life is to progress toward union with God, through 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 self-centeredness. Essential to this process was “use,” or good works for the benefit of society.⁷

Swedenborg’s theological works were extremely controversial. For the first seventeen years of his career as a theologian (1749–1766), his books were published anonymously. 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, however, all of his theological works had been translated from Latin into English. 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, Swedenborgianism fell into obscurity, and today it receives relatively little attention from scholars of religion, particularly American religion.⁸ 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 nevertheless 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,⁹ art, and antebellum efforts to promote public education.¹⁰

Swedenborg also influenced four men who wrote about both Swedenborg and about Buddhism for audiences in the United States, Europe, and Asia. Warren Felt Evans and Herman Carl Vetterling were, for part of their careers, Swedenborgian ministers. Albert J. Edmunds and D. T. Suzuki were regarded as experts in Buddhism. All four were also interested in Theosophy, which was influenced by Swedenborg’s reported conversations with spirits, and which was for many years the major interpreter of Buddhism in the West. Each of these writers is considered below.

ALBERT J. EDMUNDS

Albert J. Edmunds (1857–1941) 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.¹¹ He lectured on Buddhism and wrote several books and articles exploring parallels he saw between Christian and Buddhist scriptures. He also produced an extensive bibliography of Buddhist literature then available in the libraries of Philadelphia.¹² In 1903, Edmunds accepted a position as the American representative to the International Buddhist Society.¹³ Edmunds repeatedly argued for historical connections between Buddhism and Christianity, and believed that “When this link is recognized, as it is now in the process of being, the two great religions of the world, which have hitherto been hostile, will approach each other with respect, and the last obstacle will be removed to the founding of a modern world-religion based upon the facts of science, physical, historical, and psychical.”¹⁴

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 lives 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.¹⁵ This research, he said, provided a rational, scientific basis for religious beliefs, and for rapprochement between different faiths.

Edmunds also claimed that Swedenborg had predicted Marc Aurel Stein’s 1907 discovery of the massive cache of Buddhist texts in the Mogao Caves near Dunhuang. In two books, Swedenborg claimed to have spoken with spirits from “Great Tartary,” a region that in his time was understood to encompass the whole of the eastern part of the Asian continent.¹⁶ 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. In *True Christian Religion*, Swedenborg described these spirit conversations as follows:

[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.¹⁷

Edmunds believed that Swedenborg had actually conflated two different spirit-conversations about separate bodies of sacred literature. “My thesis is...that Swedenborg had two visions which he mistook for one: viz., 1. A vision of a lost sacred literature which was the lineal ancestor of the Old Testament, and which was destined to be found in Babylonia; and 2. A vision of a far more epoch-making discovery of a lost sacred literature in Chinese Turkestan which was to connect Christianity and Buddhism and lay the foundation for the coming world-religion.”¹⁸

Edmunds argued that the first vision involved what he described as “Chaldean Creation and Deluge legends”—possibly a reference to the Epic of Gilgamesh, which recounts a flood similar to the one described in Genesis 6–9, and the *Enuma Elish*, a creation story. These ancient Mesopotamian mythological texts predate the biblical material.¹⁹ Swedenborg’s second vision involved the Buddhist and Nestorian Christian texts found in China at Dunhuang. Thus, Edmunds asserted, Swedenborg had accurately predicted later archaeological discoveries of both kinds of manuscripts, although the predecessor to “the Israelitish Word” actually differed from the “ancient Word” of Great Tartary. Edmunds also asserted that the Buddhist texts discovered at Dunhuang, in Sogdian and Tocharic languages, proved that Swedenborg’s Asian spirit-informants had been talking about esoteric Buddhism.

Several years before the discoveries at Dunhuang, Edmunds had argued that the pre-Israelite “ancient Word” was the esoteric Buddhism of Tibet and Nepal. Tibet was indeed isolated, as Swedenborg’s informants had said—although by the Himalayas, rather than the Great Wall.²⁰ He also claimed that the text called “Enunciations,” which Swedenborg had mentioned, really referred to the *Udāna* (“Exclamations”), the third book of the *Khuddaka-nikāya* in the Pāli canon; that the “Wars of Jehovah” referred to the *Māra-saṃyutta* of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya*; and that Genesis corresponded to the creation story in the *Aggañña-sutta*, found at *Dīgha-nikāya* 27.²¹

Edmunds’ contortions of the literary and geographic evidence, and his claim that the ancient Word of Great Tartary meant Tibetan Buddhism, were not entirely original. In at least three books and two articles between 1877 and 1897, Helena P. Blavatsky asserted that Swedenborg’s revelation about Great Tartary referred to the esoteric Buddhist and Hindu teachings of Ascended Masters in the Himalayas, the purported source of Theosophical teachings.²²

HERMAN CARL VETTERLING

A man who took this argument even further was Herman Carl Vetterling (1849–1931), a.k.a. Philangi Dāsa. He was a Swedenborgian minister, a homeopathic doctor, a Theosophist, and the publisher of *The Buddhist Ray*, the first English-language journal of Buddhism. Although relatively little biographical information about him survives, recently published electronic databases, including Census data and immigration and passport records, have made some new details available.²³

Born in Sweden in 1849, Vetterling emigrated to the United States in 1871 and settled in Minnesota. He became a naturalized citizen in 1880. Ordained a Swedenborgian minister in 1877, he served congregations in Pittsburgh, Ohio, and Detroit until 1881, when a Detroit newspaper accused Vetterling of misconduct. Although members of his congregation and an investigation by another newspaper supported his assertion of innocence, he nevertheless left Detroit and the New Church ministry. In 1883 he graduated from a homeopathic medical school, Hahnemann Medical College of Chicago, and by 1886, he was practicing homeopathic medicine in Santa Cruz County, California. He married Margaret Pitcairn around 1890; she died in 1915. The couple sold their Santa Cruz property in 1894, and by the time of the 1900 Census, they lived in San Jose, California. Vetterling, a generous patron of local Humane Societies, died in 1931.

The Theosophist published sections of his “Studies of Swedenborg’s Philosophy” over seven issues ranging from October 1884 to December 1885.²⁴ In 1887, Vetterling produced a fictional work titled *Swedenborg the Buddhist*, the subtitle of which is *The Higher Swedenborgianism: Its Secrets and Thibetan Origin*.²⁵ It 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.²⁶ In 1893, a Japanese translation was published in Japan.

The protagonist and narrator 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.²⁷

The Buddhist Ray, which Vetterling published monthly from 1888 to 1895, had subscribers not only in the United States and Europe, but also in India, Japan, Ceylon, and Siam—including Crown Prince Chandradat Chudhadharn of Siam and Ven. Hikkaḍuvē Sumaṅgala, one of the most senior Buddhist monks in Ceylon.²⁸ Several Japanese Buddhist

journals, including *Kaigai Bukkyō jijō*, published articles from *The Buddhist Ray*, including Vetterling's articles on Buddhism and Swedenborg.²⁹ These journals also published Theosophical writings that Vetterling provided.

On the front page of every issue, the *Ray* 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 Pāli and Mahāyāna 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 Urygen, a.k.a. Padmasambhava, the legendary saint said to have brought tantric Buddhism to Tibet in the eighth century.³⁰

While that particular correspondence seems bizarre, if not hilarious, a few contemporary scholars have seen similarities between Swedenborgian thought and tantra. The idea that Swedenborg actually knew something about tantra, while far-fetched, is not beyond the realm of possibility. Marsha Keith Schuchard has argued that Swedenborg 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.³¹

Citing Swedenborg's *Journal of Dreams* and *Conjugal Love*, Jeffrey Kripal of Rice University, a specialist in Western interpretations of Hindu and Buddhist tantra, wrote that the seer understood divine influx to be

intimately connected to the sexual powers, whose numinous energies he attempted to sublimate into spiritual vision by meditating on the Hebrew letters as male and female bodies, by regulating his breath,

by arousing himself to erection without ejaculation through control of the male cremaster muscle, and by something he called “genital respiration.” Such techniques led to a kind of erotic trance in which love itself (*amor ipse*) imploded into a nondual realization of itself and suffused the entire body with a palpable bliss closely akin to the pleasures of sexual intercourse.³²

Because of strong anti-Semitism in Sweden, however, and because of popular interest in Asia generated by the Swedish East India Company, Schuchard suggested that Swedenborg gradually displaced Kabbalist theories and practices “from Israel to Asia, which was considered a more acceptable source of mysticism in contemporary Sweden.”³³

Anders Hallengren has proposed 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.³⁴ Although some Swedenborg specialists debate theories about Swedenborgian-tantric connections, the evidence is at least intriguing.

WARREN FELT EVANS

Another Swedenborgian who helped to popularize Buddhist ideas and practices, particularly as they were refracted through the esotericism of Theosophy, was Warren Felt Evans (1817–1889). A Methodist minister who left that denomination and was later ordained to the New Church clergy, Evans is best known as the first philosopher of New Thought. This religious-healing movement widely promoted Buddhist and Hindu meditation practices in the United States, a century before Asian missionaries began teaching Transcendental Meditation and *zazen* to Beats and hippies.³⁵ New Thought is a cousin of Christian Science, but more religiously eclectic and very decentralized. Its basic premise is that if one attunes oneself to God—or in Swedenborgian terms, opens oneself to divine influx—then happiness, health, and prosperity will naturally result.

From 1869 to 1886, Evans produced five books dealing with the relationship between mental states and health.³⁶ He learned mental healing

from a self-educated New England inventor and healer named Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (1802–1866), whom Evans had met in 1863. Evans went on to teach and practice mental healing for more than twenty years in New Hampshire and the Boston area. As Beryl Satter observed, “Every major historian of New Thought and Christian Science agrees that Evans’ ideas profoundly shaped the New Thought Movement.”³⁷ He was the first to advocate the use of “affirmations”: positive statements about the results one wants (or expects) to achieve.

Over time, New Thought diverged in two directions. One is more church-oriented: the largest denominations today are the Church of Religious Science; Unity, which reaches millions through a variety of publications; Divine Science; the Foundation for Better Living; and the Japanese group Seichō-no-Ie. Particularly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, community-oriented New Thought groups tended to be overwhelmingly female, and they were frequently involved in social-justice and social-reform movements. During the 1920s and ’30s, New Thought also influenced a number of community-oriented black nationalist movements, such as Marcus Garvey’s United Negro Improvement Association, the Moorish Science Temple, and the Nation of Islam, as well as the interracial Peace Mission movement of Father Divine.

The other strand of New Thought is individualist and tends to be focused on personal success and prosperity. It spreads primarily through books, lectures, and workshops, and its chief spokespersons have been white male authors. The most famous is Norman Vincent Peale, whose book *The Power of Positive Thinking* spent three and a half years on the *New York Times* bestseller list, and in 1955 sold more copies than any book but the Bible. This strand of New Thought is also found in various forms of New Age religion and in the prosperity gospel of some television evangelists. Its premise is that we draw good or bad things to us according to how we think. One recent example is the book and movie titled *The Secret*, which describe the “Law of Attraction,” and have been promoted by talk-show celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey, Larry King, and Ellen DeGeneres. The book reached number one on the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestseller lists; currently more than 7.5 million copies are in print.³⁸

As part of his New Thought teaching, Warren Felt Evans strongly recommended two meditative practices that were also promoted by subsequent teachers in both strands of the movement: contempla-

tion of the breath and one-pointed concentration. Evans's discussions of these practices appeared in print seven years before Buddhist and Vedānta missionaries such as Anagārika Dharmapāla and Swami Vivekananda spoke at the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions and began teaching meditation to white Americans in its wake. "Right *thinking* and right *breathing* are the two things most essential to happiness and health," Evans wrote.³⁹ The rhythmic motion of inhaling and exhaling reflects the

forward and backward movement of the pendulum, the ebb and flow of the tides, the succession of day and night, the systolic and diastolic action of the heart.... When we breathe in harmony with this movement, we are well, and our individual life marches forward in exact step with the tranquil life of nature; when our respiration is discordant with it, our life-force is out of tune.⁴⁰

In addition,

A very essential qualification for the practice of the mental-cure system, is...the ability to fix our thought upon one thing and to banish all other things from the mind. This state of mental concentration was called in the Hindu metaphysics *Ekāgrāta*, that is, one-pointedness. The attainment of that power was considered as an indispensable condition of all philosophical speculation and religious development. In order to obtain this abstraction from external things, and concentration of thought, they repeated the holy syllable *Om*.... [T]he ability to concentrate the mind upon one thing, is a natural endowment, but can be cultivated by practice.⁴¹

A more relaxed form of meditation that Evans also recommended is called "entering the Silence." He wrote, "We must lay aside the toiling oar and float in the current of the infinite Life."⁴² Both of these practices were recommended by numerous subsequent New Thought teachers and authors.⁴³

In developing his philosophy of New Thought, Evans drew upon many sources, including Swedenborg and Theosophy. He read widely and eclectically, and his fourth book, *The Divine Law of Cure* (1881), indicates his interest in Buddhist and Hindu ideas. It includes passing reference to the Orientalist F. Max Müller and to James Freeman Clarke, a Unitarian minister who authored an early book of comparative religion and became an important Western interpreter of Asian religions. In this book Evans also articulated two themes that would become key features of New Thought: that all religious traditions were

valuable for their various efforts to heal maladies of the human soul, and that sectarian creeds and fixed liturgies were completely unnecessary to spiritual healing. His next book, *The Primitive Mind Cure* (1884), made numerous favorable references to Buddhism and Hindu Vedānta, and show that Evans had read two important Theosophical texts—H. P. Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and A. P. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism* (1883)—as well as *Oriental Christ* (1869) by Protap Chunder Mozoomdar (or Protap Chandra Majumdar), a leader of the Hindu reform movement Brahma Samaj and later a speaker at the World's Parliament of Religions.⁴⁴ Evans's sixth book, *Esoteric Christianity and Mental Therapeutics* (1886), draws repeatedly upon Hindu and Buddhist ideas. Carl T. Jackson characterizes it as reflecting "almost a conversion to the Theosophical viewpoint, or better yet, a 'Christian Theosophy,' since the Christian element remained quite central."⁴⁵ In fact, in 1887 *The Theosophist* published a favorable review of Evans's book.⁴⁶

In *Esoteric Christianity*, Evans cited the legendary biography of the Buddha as providing a clue to the root cause of disease:

It is said of Gautama, who did for the East what Jesus, six hundred years later, did more fully for the West, that he sought long and earnestly, and with extreme ascetic mortifications, which proved of no avail, for the *cause* of all human misery. At last the light from the supreme heavens broke in upon him, and his mind became entirely opened, "like the full-blown lotus-flower," and he saw by an intuitive flash of the supreme knowledge, that the secret of all the miseries of mankind was *ignorance*; and the sovereign remedy for it was to dispel ignorance and to become wise. If this is not the key that unlocks our dungeon, it shows where the lock is to be found.⁴⁷

Although he did not identify the source for his quotation, "like the full-blown lotus-flower" is the exact phrase that Henry Steel Olcott used to describe the Buddha's enlightenment in his *Buddhist Catechism*, first published in 1881.⁴⁸

Evans, like his teacher Quimby, believed that disease resulted from ignorance, or from erroneous thinking, and that wisdom about the true nature of reality was the cure. As a Christian, he read the story of Buddha's awakening from ignorance in his own religious terms. "The teaching of the Buddha is here identical with the principles of esoteric Christianity," Evans explained. Jesus taught that the root of suffering is sin, which is "an error of the understanding, which may lead to wickedness in the life."⁴⁹ That, in turn, leads to dis-ease of various kinds. Ev-

ans explained other Buddhist concepts in terms of Christian doctrine, as well:

The birth into the spiritual life is called *Moksha* and *Nirvana*, and is that of which Jesus speaks, as entering into the kingdom of the heavens, or the kingdom of God, a condition of spiritual development, or education, that is attainable on earth, and not to be taught, as is usually done, as belonging exclusively to a future state.... Even Nirvana is attainable on earth. The Buddha is represented as teaching that “those who are free from all worldly desires enter Nirvana.” (*Precepts of the Dhammapada*, v. 126.)⁵⁰

His reference to “spiritual development” as “education” probably reflects a Swedenborgian belief in spiritual progression through processes of self-discipline and scholarship.

Evans also attributed to Swedenborg teachings that sound remarkably like Buddhist doctrines about *dukkha*. In discussing pain, Evans wrote that we have three types of responses to our experiences: indifference to neutral sensations, desire for pleasurable sensations, and aversion to unpleasant sensations. Pain arises from desire and aversion. The examples Evans gives for desire are thirst and hunger. In Buddhist thought, positive, negative, and neutral responses to stimuli are called *vedanā*, “feeling,” which is one of the five *skandhas*.⁵¹ According to the second noble truth, the root cause of *dukkha* is *taṇhā* (Skt. *trṣṇā*), translated “thirst” or “craving.”

After his discussion of the roots of pain in craving and aversion, Evans wrote, “Swedenborg defines pain to be a feeling of repugnance arising from *interior falses*.”⁵² The prescription: “If we can bring ourselves to feel that pain is not an *evil*, but a good, and that all good is desirable and delightful, and remove from our minds repugnance to it, and replace it by a state of perfect patience and tranquil endurance, the pain will subside and finally cease.”⁵³ While Buddhist doctrine regards pleasant sensations as equally a source of dissatisfaction because we become attached to them, it does regard equanimity as one of the seven factors of enlightenment.⁵⁴ This passage does not provide any direct evidence that Evans’s discussion was informed by actual Buddhist sources, but the similarities are striking.

In the midst of a discussion about healing by the power of the Holy Spirit, he wrote:

In the earlier [than Christianity] and purer philosophy of Buddhism it was taught that the Akasa contained a permanent record of all that

was ever thought, felt, said, or done. These are all preserved in that universal principle as in “a book of life,” or living book. All our states of thought and emotion exist in it, and can never have existence outside of it.⁵⁵

Ākāśa, a term employed by Theosophists such as Blavatsky and Sinnett, refers in Hindu philosophy to “space,” a subtle element pervading the cosmos. In Buddhist thought, “space” is sometimes a simile for “emptiness” (*śūnyatā*).⁵⁶ Evans’s reference to the “book of life,” in which experiences are stored, is reminiscent of the *ālaya vijñāna*, or “storehouse consciousness,” which contains the “seeds” (*bījā*) of past experience and is the source of all present and future experience, according to Yogācāra philosophy.

It seems unlikely that Evans actually had direct access to Yogācāra or other Mahāyāna literature; most of the Buddhist texts translated into European languages during the latter nineteenth century were Pāli. Given his references to Blavatsky and Sinnett (and probably to Olcott), Evans’s sources were most likely Theosophical, as the society drew rather indiscriminately from both Mahāyāna and Theravāda doctrines.

However, several other sources available by the time Evans wrote *Esoteric Christianity* make more direct access to Buddhist literature at least conceivable. These possibilities are more speculative, given the documentary evidence, but seven volumes of *The Sacred Books to the East* had made a number of Buddhist texts available in English by 1886,⁵⁷ and Edwin Arnold’s *The Light of Asia*, published in 1879, was extremely popular at the time. Scholars such as Eugène Burnouf (1801–1852), F. Max Müller (1823–1900), and others had translated several Sanskrit Buddhist texts by 1886.⁵⁸ If Evans read French or German, he could have had access to such scholarly material. Some information about Chinese, Tibetan, and Japanese Buddhism was also available in English and other European languages. Evans was clearly well read and had studied at Middlebury College and Dartmouth University.⁵⁹ In addition, some information about tantric Buddhism was available during Evans’s time. Italian Jesuit missionaries had lived in Tibet and studied Buddhism there as early as the eighteenth century, and various other scholars had studied the tantric Buddhism present in Mongolia and among the Kalmyks in Russia during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The only Buddhist text Evans cites directly in *Esoteric Christianity* is the *Dhammapada*, so it is impossible to determine exactly how much he knew about Buddhist thought. Given Evans's references to Theosophical authors (whose writings were readily available in English) and his interests in Mesmerism, psychic phenomena, Swedenborgianism, Kabbalah, and other forms of esotericism, the Theosophical Society is his most likely source. Whatever his sources, "his works undoubtedly encouraged New Thought readers to a more serious interest in the Eastern message."⁶⁰

D. T. SUZUKI

Perhaps the single most important figure in shaping American views of Buddhism, and another admirer of Swedenborg, is D. T. Suzuki (1870–1966). Albert Edmunds claimed credit for interesting D. T. Suzuki in Swedenborg when the two met at Paul Carus's Illinois home in 1903.⁶¹ By that time, however, Swedenborg had been known in Japan for more than a decade. *The Buddhist Ray*, published from 1888 to 1895, had Japanese subscribers, and excerpts from that journal were reprinted in Japanese Buddhist magazines. In 1890, Hirai Kinza (1859–1916), who later spoke at the World's Parliament of Religions, published an article about Swedenborg and Zen in a Japanese magazine, according to Andrei Vashestov.⁶² In 1893, the year of the Parliament, Vetterling's book *Swedenborg the Buddhist* was published in Japan. Two years later, in the preface to the Japanese version of Paul Carus's *Gospel of Buddha*, Zen master Shaku Sōen wrote that Swedenborg was well known in Japan. Suzuki was Sōen's student and translator, lived in Japan at the time, and translated Sōen's Japanese preface into English.⁶³ Yoshinaga Shin'ichi has written that "Suzuki must have read the Japanese Translation of *Swedenborg the Buddhist* before he went to the U.S.A, which was in 1897."⁶⁴ Suzuki acknowledged, however, that Edmunds had first inspired him to read the Swedish seer directly.⁶⁵

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.⁶⁶ In 1914 and 1915, Suzuki translated *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine*, *Divine 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 the 1833 novel *Louis Lambert*, by Honoré de Balzac.⁶⁷

In 1924, Suzuki contributed an essay to *The Eastern Buddhist*, the 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.”⁶⁸ 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.⁶⁹

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.”⁷⁰ 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.⁷¹

Suzuki even said Swedenborg had “realized his true nature.”⁷² 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 Mahāyāna teaching of emptiness, in which the world of samsara, correctly perceived, is nirvana. He also compared it to the Shingon practice of *mudrās*, 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.⁷³ 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 a major interpreter and promoter of Buddhism in the modern period, and it also played important roles in the Buddhist revivals of Sri Lanka and Japan.⁷⁴ All three traditions—Swedenborgianism, Buddhism, and Theosophy—clearly influenced Edmunds, Vetterling, Evans, and Suzuki.

CONCLUSION

Why does all this matter? There are at least three reasons. First, these connections suggest that scholars of American religions could pay much more attention to the ways that Western esotericism—in such forms as Swedenborgianism and Theosophy—have influenced religion, culture, and intellectual history in Europe and the United States over the past two centuries. Catherine Albanese's recent study of American metaphysical religions, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit*, which received an American Academy of Religion award in 2007, makes clear that metaphysical traditions in the United States merit far more study than they have received thus far. This very important book pays relatively little attention to Buddhism, however. Its discussion of what Albanese calls “metaphysical Asia” could benefit from additional input by scholars in various sub-fields of Buddhist studies.

Second, this study suggests that scholars of Buddhism might find fruitful avenues of research by exploring the roles that Western esotericism played in the development of both Asian and American Buddhist thought during the nineteenth century. With very few exceptions, this is an aspect of modern Buddhist history that has been largely overlooked. This may be due in part to the ways that Theosophy was dis-

credited by various frauds, scandals, and schisms. It may also have to do with the ways that the psychic phenomena central to Swedenborgianism, Theosophy, Spiritualism, and mental healing became medicalized in the early twentieth century.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many people who were interested in these metaphysical movements believed that accounts of clairvoyance provided scientific proof that the soul or consciousness functioned independently of the body, and that the spirits of the dead could communicate with the living.⁷⁵ Over time, however, the religious dimensions of psychic phenomena were supplanted by medical discourses, which explained these phenomena in more strictly neurological or psychological terms.

The Scottish physician James Braid coined the term “hypnosis” in 1842 to describe the trance-states he induced in his patients and to dissociate his method from the antics of spirit-mediums and traveling showmen, who were demonstrating clairvoyance to eager audiences throughout Europe and the United States.⁷⁶ Pierre Janet (1859–1947) studied hypnotic amnesia and formulated an early theory of dissociation and double consciousness as part of his widely publicized treatment for “hysteria.” William James (1842–1910) drew upon Janet’s ideas in his discussions of the subconscious mind, and Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) practiced hypnosis before developing his theory of subconscious repression and the “talking cure.”⁷⁷ Thus, the religious discourses of Swedenborgianism, Theosophy, Spiritualism, and New Thought were appropriated by the discourses of orthodox medicine and psychology.

Similarly, Theosophical interpretations of Buddhism have given way to psychological interpretations in Western Buddhism. Robert Sharf, among others, has described and critiqued the ways that Buddhist practices such as merit-making and devotionism have been obscured and minimized by modernist psychological interpretations, which focus instead on individual meditative experience.⁷⁸ These psychological interpretations are not necessarily bad, he has argued, but they can truncate one’s understanding of Buddhist tradition, particularly of its communal and cultural dimensions. Efforts to uncover the esotericism underlying modern interpretations of Buddhism may help us to see aspects of Buddhist history that these primarily psychological interpretations have thus far obscured. As Richard Payne points out elsewhere in this issue, such efforts also can shed light on political issues ranging far beyond the academic discipline of Buddhist studies,

such as the role of fascism in spreading the ideology of Perennialism—the notion that all religions share a common core.

Finally, explorations of these largely overlooked histories can highlight the need for interdisciplinary research and a broad historical perspective. Historians of religion can only see certain relationships and lines of influence if we cast a wide gaze across the boundaries of multiple countries, cultures, religious traditions, and academic disciplines. This brief study, for example, has drawn upon histories of metaphysical religion in Europe and the United States, histories of modern Buddhism in Asia and the United States, and histories of medicine and psychology. Such interdisciplinary approaches can reveal connections between things that may at first seem to be completely unrelated: Swedenborg and Buddhism, for example. This has been one modest effort to contribute to a broader view.

NOTES

1. Steve Koke, "The Search for a Religious Cosmology," in *Emanuel Swedenborg: A Continuing Vision* (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, Inc., 1988), 460. Swedenborg also developed what some have called a "nebular hypothesis" of planetary formation more than sixty years before Pierre Simon de Laplace published his generally accepted nebular hypothesis. Their theories differed significantly. Swedenborg believed that planets formed from a disk of matter extending outward from the sun, via the centrifugal force of the sun's rotation. Laplace, in a series of publications from 1796 to 1835, argued that stars and planets coalesce from clouds of matter into dense globes, via gravitation (*ibid.*).
2. Robert H. Kirven and Robin Larsen, "Emanuel Swedenborg: A Pictorial Biography," in *Emanuel Swedenborg: A Continuing Vision* (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, Inc., 1988); Stephen Larsen, "The Soul and the Abyss of Nature," in *Emanuel Swedenborg: A Continuing Vision* (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, Inc., 1988). The pictorial biography includes a reproduction of Swedenborg's aircraft design, and a three-dimensional model, on p. 18.
3. In short, Swedenborg argued that 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.
4. Richard Kenneth Silver, "The Spiritual Kingdom in America: The Influence of Emanuel Swedenborg on American Society and Culture: 1815–1860" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1983), 30.
5. According to Jewish Kabbalah, the divine manifests through ten emanations or Sephiroth. Johann Kemper (1697–1796) was a Jewish convert to Christianity who worked for the University of Uppsala 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 (chaps. 5–8). In an article published earlier, 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>.

6. Robin Larsen et al., ed., *Emanuel Swedenborg: A Continuing Vision* (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1988), 514.
7. 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*, 21–43; George F. Dole, "Key Concepts in the Theology of Emanuel Swedenborg," in *Emanuel Swedenborg a Continuing Vision*, ed. Robin Larsen et al. (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).
8. Swedenborg does fare better among scholars of modern European literature and of Western esotericism.
9. Robert H. Kirven, "Swedenborg's Contributions to the History of Ideas," in *Emanuel Swedenborg: A Continuing Vision* (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, Inc., 1988).
10. Silver, "Spiritual Kingdom in America," *ibid.*
11. He is said to haunt a room on the library's third floor to this day. George Eberhart, "Haunted Libraries in the U.S.: Pennsylvania-Texas," *Encyclopedia Britannica Blog*, <http://www.britannica.com/blogs/2007/10/haunted-libraries-in-the-us-pennsylvania-texas/>.
12. Albert J. Edmunds, "A Buddhist Bibliography," *Journal of the Pali Text Society* (1902–1903): 1–60.
13. Thomas A. Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism, 1844–1912: Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 102, 99 n. 52.
14. Albert J. Edmunds, "Has Swedenborg's 'Lost Word' Been Found?" *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* 7, no. 5 (1913): 270–271.
15. Albert J. Edmunds, "F. W. H. Meyers, Swedenborg, and Buddha," *Proceedings of the American Society for Psychical Research* 8 (1914): 253–285.
16. Anders Hallengren, "The Secret of Great Tartary," *Arcana* 1, no. 1 (1994): 37.
17. 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; digital version of the 1946 edition by Swedenborg Foundation), ¶279.3, 4. See also Emanuel Swedenborg, "The Book of the Apocalypse Revealed, Uncovering the Secrets That Were Foretold There and Have Lain Hidden until Now" (Lutherville, MD: The Swedenborg Project, Swedenborg Digital Library, 2007),

<http://www.smallcanonsearch.com/read.php?book=ar§ion=11>, ¶11.3–4.

18. Edmunds, “Has Swedenborg’s ‘Lost Word’ Been Found?” 262. The Dunhuang manuscripts found in the Mogao Cave included so-called “Jesus Sutras,” Chinese-language texts of Nestorian Christian teachings, brought to China during the Tang dynasty by Alopen, a missionary bishop of the Assyrian Church of the East.

19. Archaeological expeditions during the nineteenth century had discovered manuscripts of both the Gilgamesh Epic and the Enuma Elish. Thus it is possible that Edmunds was referring to this material, although his description of it is vague. Thanks to Frank Yamada, PhD, of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, for providing this information.

20. Edmunds may have conflated Tibet and Mongolia.

21. Edmunds had proffered this argument in a lecture to the First New-Jerusalem Society of Philadelphia on April 19, 1901. His remarks were reported in an article titled “The Ancient Word,” *New Church Messenger* 80:18 (May 1, 1901): 242–243. The article notes that Edmunds’s “conclusions are of special interest, having been derived from researches entirely independent of Dasa.” This was probably a reference to the *nom de plume* of Vetterling, who had made similar arguments in a number of publications from 1887 to 1895. Edmunds also summarized this argument in a paragraph of his 1903 “Buddhist Bibliography,” 35. The bibliography includes Swedenborg’s *True Christian Religion*.

22. Helena P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology* (orig. pub., New York: The Theosophy Co., 1877), http://www.theosophy.org/Blavatsky/Isis%20Unveiled/isis_unveiled1.htm; Helena P. Blavatsky, *A Modern Panarion: A Collection of Fugitive Fragments* (orig. pub., New York: The Theosophy Co., 1895), <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>; Helena P. Blavatsky, “Lamas and Druses,” *The Theosophist* (June 1881), <http://www.theosophy.org/Blavatsky/Articles/LamasAndDruses.htm>. In *Isis Unveiled*, see, for example, vol. 1, chap. 15, p. 580; and vol. 2, chap. 9, p. 471. In *Occultism of the Secret Doctrine* (1897), see vol. 3, sect. 51, p. 424; available online at <http://books.google.com/books?id=QFTApMUCc0EC>.

23. Biographical sources on Vetterling include the online database “Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, 1500s–1900s” (Provo, UT: The Generations Network, 2006), for America, 1871, p. 107, and for Minnesota, 1871–1872, p. 133, accessed at <http://www.ancestry.com>; Vetterling’s application for a U.S. passport on September 2, 1922, accessed at <http://www.ancestry.com>; The United

States Census, 1900, San Jose, Santa Clara, California, Roll T625_147, p. 6A, Enumeration District 149, image 622, and Roll T623_110, page 10A, Enumeration District 60, accessed at <http://www.ancestry.com>; Andrei Vashestov's "Introduction" to Dàsa, *Swedenborg the Buddhist*; Vetterling's obituary, "San Jose Writer Called by Death: Dr. Herman C. Vetterling, 82, Physician, Philosopher Dies at Home," *San Jose Mercury Herald*, Sunday, September 6, 1931, p. 1, col. 1; and Paul Tutweiler and Marion Pokriots, "Philangi Dasa, the Buddhist of Santa Cruz: Herman Vetterling, the Philosopher of San Jose," online article posted September 14, 2007, at <http://researchforum.santacruzmah.org/view-toopic.php?t=289&highlight=vetterling>.

24. 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.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *The Buddhist Ray* 1, no. 10 (October 1888); 1, no. 11 (November 1888): 84.

27. As Richard Payne explains elsewhere in this issue, it is also a key feature of Traditionalism, which informs some other modern interpretations of Buddhism.

28. *The Buddhist Ray* 1, no. 5 (May 1888): 44; 1, no. 6 (June 1888): 48; 1, no. 7 (July 1888): 52, 56; 1, no. 8 (August 1888): 64; 2, no. 4 (April 1889): 28.

29. Yoshinaga Shin'ichi, "Japanese Buddhism and the Theosophical Movement, A General View," and Akai Toshio, "The Theosophical Accounts in Japanese Buddhist Publications Issued in the Late Nineteenth Century, A Select Bibliography," both in Yoshinaga Shin'ichi, ed., "Hirai Kinza and the Globalization of Buddhism of Meiji Era, a Cultural and Religio-Historical Study" (Maizuru, Japan: Japan Grants-In-Aid for Scientific Research #16520060, 2007). Thanks to Richard Jaffe, Ph.D., of Duke University, for providing copies of these articles.

30. H. C. Vetterling, "Swedenborg in the Lamasery," *The Buddhist Ray* 1, no. 3 (March 1888): 22.

31. 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>. See also Schuchard, *Why Mrs. Blake Cried* (2006), 102–109, 116–120, 152–154. 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). Devin Zuber asserts that "None of the world's leading scholars on Swedenborg have accepted Schuchard's contentions that he was a life-long closet Kabbalist, expert in sexual Yoga, or secret spy for the Swedish government." He does not cite any specific scholars on this point, however.

Devin Zuber, "The Buddha of the North: Swedenborg and Transpacific Zen," special issue, *Religion and the Arts* 14, nos. 1–2 (forthcoming): n. 6. Among the scholars who find possible Swedenborg-tantra connections more persuasive are Jeffrey John Kripal, *Esalen: America and the Religion of No Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 139–141; D. Gopaul Chetty, "Was Swedenborg a Yogi?" in *New Light Upon Indian Philosophy, or Swedenborg and Saiva Siddhanta* (London: J.M. Dent, 1923), 125–146; 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; and David Loy, "The Dharma of Emanuel Swedenborg: A Buddhist Perspective," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 16 (1996): 11–35.

32. Kripal, *Esalen: America and the Religion of No Religion*, 139–141. David Loy described a number of parallels he saw between Swedenborg's theology and various Mahāyāna doctrines, including Tibetan teachings about the *bardo* in "The Dharma of Emanuel Swedenborg: A Buddhist Perspective," in *Swedenborg: Buddha of the North*, ed. Mary Lou Bertucci (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 1996; orig. pub. in *Arcana* 2, no.1 [Fall 1995]).

33. Schuchard, "Why Mrs. Blake Cried: Blake, Swedenborg, and the Sexual Basis of Spiritual Vision," 55.

34. Hallengren, "The Secret of Great Tartary."

35. Swedenborg influenced several forms of unorthodox medicine popularized during the nineteenth century, including homeopathy. Richard Silver's "The Spiritual Kingdom in America" discusses in some detail Swedenborgian influences in unorthodox medicine. After leaving the New Church ministry, Vetterling became a homeopathic physician.

36. His first book, *The New Age and Its Messenger*, published in 1864, deals primarily with Swedenborg. Gail Thain Parker, *Mind Cure in New England: From the Civil War to World War I* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1973).

37. Beryl Satter, *Each Mind a Kingdom: American Women, Sexual Purity, and the New Thought Movement, 1875–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 79.

38. Carol Memmott, "'Secret' to Happiness," *USA Today*, February 14, 2007. See also <http://www.theseecret.tv/behind-the-secret-creative.html>.

39. W. F. Evans, *Esoteric Christianity and Mental Therapeutics* (Boston: H.H. Carter & Karrick, 1886), 95. Evans, *Esoteric Christianity*, 95.

40. Evans, *Esoteric Christianity*, 96–97.

41. *Ibid.*, 154.

42. *Ibid.*, 141.

43. The only scholarly discussion of meditation in New Thought I have found

currently in print to date is chap. 4 of Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005). My 2008 doctoral dissertation at Duke University, “Mind Cure, Meditation, and Medicine: Hidden Histories of Mental Healing in the United States,” deals with this topic in detail.

44. Carl T. Jackson, “The New Thought Movement and the Nineteenth Century Discovery of Oriental Philosophy,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 9, no. 3 (Winter 1975): 526. Theosophy draws heavily on Vedānta as well. See, for example, A. P. Sinnett, *Esoteric Buddhism* (orig. pub. 1893; London and Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, Ltd., 1972).

45. *Ibid.*

46. W. F. Evans, “Mental Therapeutics and Esoteric Christianity,” *The Theosophist* 9, no. 97 (October 1887): 62–63. The erroneous title of the book is in the original article.

47. Evans, *Esoteric Christianity*, 63.

48. Henry Steel Olcott, *The Buddhist Catechism*, 42nd ed. (Colombo, Sri Lanka: Publications Division, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, 1908), 12. A facsimile of this 1908 edition, published posthumously by Annie Besant, is available online from the Theosophical Society (URL below). Besant’s preface notes that although some minor changes had been made in the text, the numbering of questions and answers was unchanged. In the online document, the reference to the Buddha’s awakening, in which “his mind was entirely opened—like a full-blown lotus flower” appears on p. 12, answer 63. See <http://www.theosophical.org/resources/library/olcott-centenary/ts/buddhist-catechism.pdf>. In an 1886 edition of the *Catechism*, the same phrase appears in the answer to question 50. Henry S. Olcott, *A Buddhist Catechism* (Madras: the author, 1886), n.p. Thanks to Katie McMahan, reference librarian for the Newberry Library, for assistance in tracking down this information.

49. Evans, *Esoteric Christianity*, 68.

50. *Ibid.*, 158–159. Evans does not provide a complete citation for his *Dhammapada* quotation. A search of WorldCat revealed only one book with a similar title in print around the time Evans wrote *Esoteric Christianity*: James Gray, trans., *The Dhammapada, or Scriptural Texts: A Book of Buddhist Proverbs, Precepts, and Maxims* (Rangoon: Amer. Mission Press, 1881). The wording of Gray’s translation of v. 126 (p. 13) is slightly different, however: “those free from worldly desires attain *Nibbān*.” Again, thanks to Katie McMahan of the Newberry Library for help locating this information.

51. The other four *skandhas* are physical form (*rūpa*); perception (*saṃjñā*), the mind’s capacity to discern phenomena and their characteristics through the five physical senses and ideas or concepts; volitions or intentions (*saṃskāra*),

which shape patterns of behavior and character; and awareness (*vijñāna*), both conscious and subliminal. Damien Keown, *Oxford Dictionary of Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

52. Evans, *Esoteric Christianity*, 117.

53. *Ibid.*, 116–117.

54. For further discussion of these terms, see Keown, *Oxford Dictionary of Buddhism*. The seven factors of enlightenment and their scriptural sources may be found in Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 65.

55. Evans, *Esoteric Christianity*, 103–104.

56. Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, Sanskrit Terms Database, <http://buddhism-dict.net/ddb/indexes/term-sa.html>. See also Keown, *Oxford Dictionary of Buddhism*, 8.

57. Vols. 10, 11, and 13 (all published in 1881) include various Pāli suttas and *Vinaya* texts; vols. 17 (1882) and 20 (1885) contain additional *Vinaya* texts; vol. 19 (1883) contains Āsvaghoṣa's biography of the Buddha from a Chinese translation; and vol. 21 (1884) contains the *Lotus Sutra*. Later, vols. 35 (1890) and 36 (1894) made more Pāli texts available. Vol. 49 (1894) contained a collection of important Mahāyāna texts, including two Pure Land sutras, the *Diamond Sutra*, and two Perfection of Wisdom sutras.

58. J. W. de Jong, *A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America* (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Co., 1997), 27–47. For a chronological bibliography of translations of Buddhist texts and descriptions of Buddhist practices, Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna, see Roger-Pol Droit, *The Cult of Nothingness: The Philosophers and the Buddha*, trans. David Streight and Pamela Vohnson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 191–259.

59. C. Alan Anderson, *Healing Hypotheses: Horatio W. Dresser and the Philosophy of New Thought* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), 306; James F. Lawrence, "An Extraordinary Season in Prayer: Warren Felt Evans' Journey into 'Scientific' Swedenborgian Spiritual Practice," *Studia Swedenborgiana* 12, no. 3 (2002): 39 n. 21.

60. Jackson, "The New Thought Movement," 257–258.

61. Tweed, *American Encounter*, 185–186 n. 14, citing Albert J. Edmunds, *Diary* 10, 18 July, 1903.

62. Andrei Vashestov, introduction to *Swedenborg the Buddhist* (Charleston, SC: The Swedenborg Association, 2003), xxii, xxx n. 27. Vashestov identified the journal's title as *Kwatsuron* and said the article appears in its third issue. I have been unable to locate it.

63. D. T. Suzuki produced an English translation of the Japanese preface to

Carus's 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 (February 21, 1895).

64. Yoshinaga Shin'ichi, in a November 24, 1999 post to an electronic forum on Theosophical history, <http://www.theohistory.org/notes-queries-archive1.html>.

65. 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): 258–259.

66. Andrew Bernstein, introduction to *Swedenborg: Buddha of the North*, ed. Mary Lou Bertucci (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 1996), xviii.

67. In a letter from Lambert to his uncle dated November 25, 1819, the novel's protagonist wrote: "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." Honoré de Balzac and John Davis Batchelder Collection (Library of Congress), *Histoire Intellectuelle De Louis Lambert* (Paris: Charles Goselin, 1833). Available online in English translation at <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/1943>.

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

69. 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," 122 n. 5. 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, no. 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), 56 n. 1. See also Judith Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 320 n. 29.

70. Suzuki, *Swedenborg: Buddha of the North*, 44.

71. *Ibid.*, 7.

72. *Ibid.*, 22.

73. 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.

74. 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); and Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism*. 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," and Akai Toshio, "The Theosophical Accounts in Japanese Buddhist Publications Issued in the Late Nineteenth Century: A Select Bibliography."

75. George Bush (1769–1859), an American Swedenborgian minister and author of the book *Mesmer and Swedenborg*, put it thus: "*if Mesmerism is true, Swedenborg is true, and if Swedenborg is true, the spiritual world is laid open, and a new and sublime era has dawned upon the earth*" (italics in original). In this same volume, Bush included an appendix endorsing the Spiritualist philosopher Andrew Jackson Davis, who claimed direct inspiration from Swedenborg. George Bush, *Mesmer and Swedenborg; or, the Relation of the Developments of Mesmerism to the Doctrines and Disclosures of Swedenborg* (New York: John Allen, 1847), 161.

76. James Braid and Arthur Edward Waite, *Braid on Hypnotism: The Beginnings of Modern Hypnosis* (New York: Julian Press, 1960); Satter, *Each Mind a Kingdom*, 51.

77. Janet employed the theory of dissociation to explain the phenomenon commonly called multiple personality disorder, now called dissociative disorder. Ann Taves initially argued that psychological dissociation might help to explain religious phenomena such as Mind Cure, ecstatic states during revivals, and spirit mediums. Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, & Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999). She has since proposed that these phenomena may be better explained by research on hypnosis and suggestibility. Ann Taves, "Where (Fragmented) Selves Meet Cultures: Theorizing Spirit Possession," in *American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting* (San Antonio, TX: American Academy of Religion, 2004). For more information about the history of hypnosis, see Adam Crabtree, *Animal Magnetism, Early Hypnotism, and Psychical Research, 1766–1925: An Annotated Bibliography*, *Bibliographies in the History of Psychology and Psychiatry* (White Plains, NY: Kraus International Publications, 1988); Adam Crabtree, *From Mesmer to Freud: Magnetic Sleep and the Roots of Psychological Healing* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); Robert C. Fuller, *Mesmerism and the American Cure of Souls* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982); Alan Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

78. Robert H. Sharf, "Buddhist Modernism and the Rhetoric of Meditative Experience," *Numen* 42 (1995). See also Andrew Cooper, "Losing Our Religion: An Interview with Robert Sharf," *Tricycle* (Summer 2007).