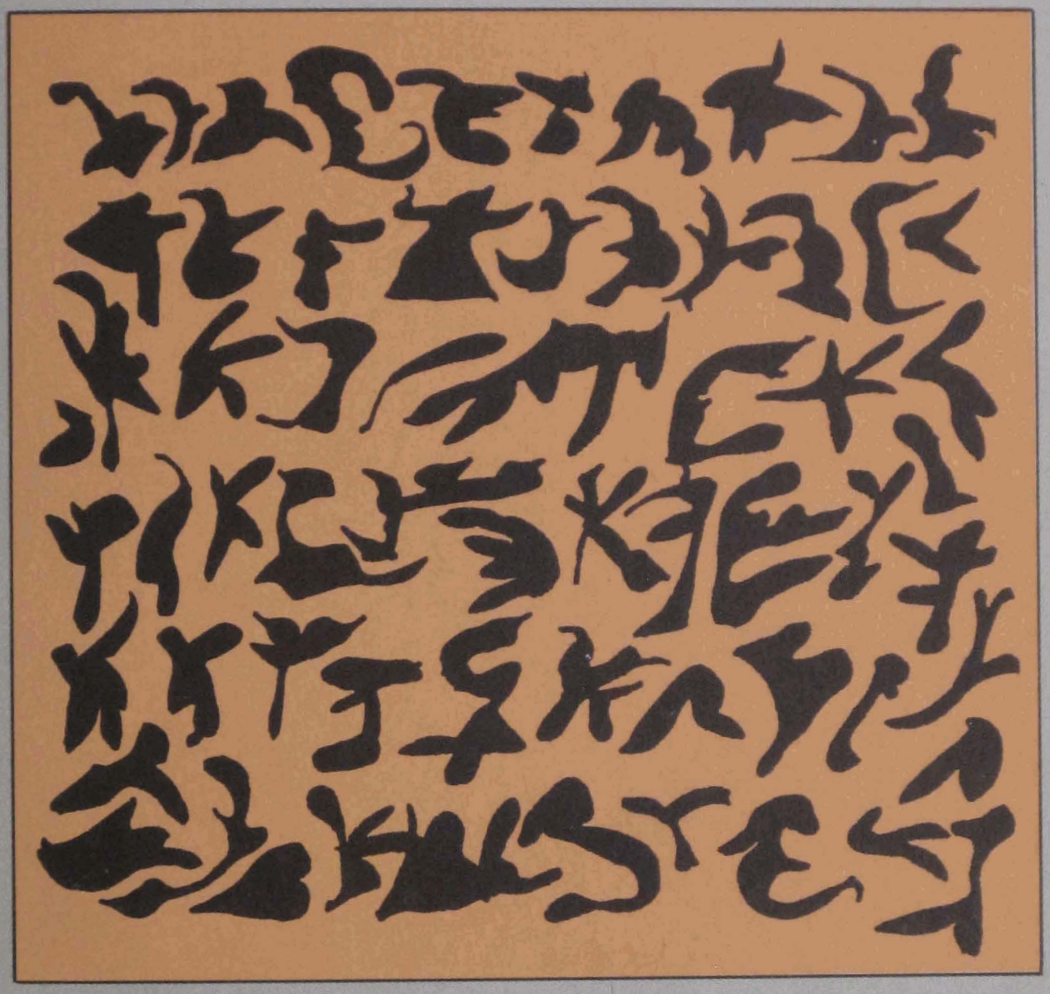
pilgrim of the clear light

The Biography of Dr. Walter Y. Evans-Wentz

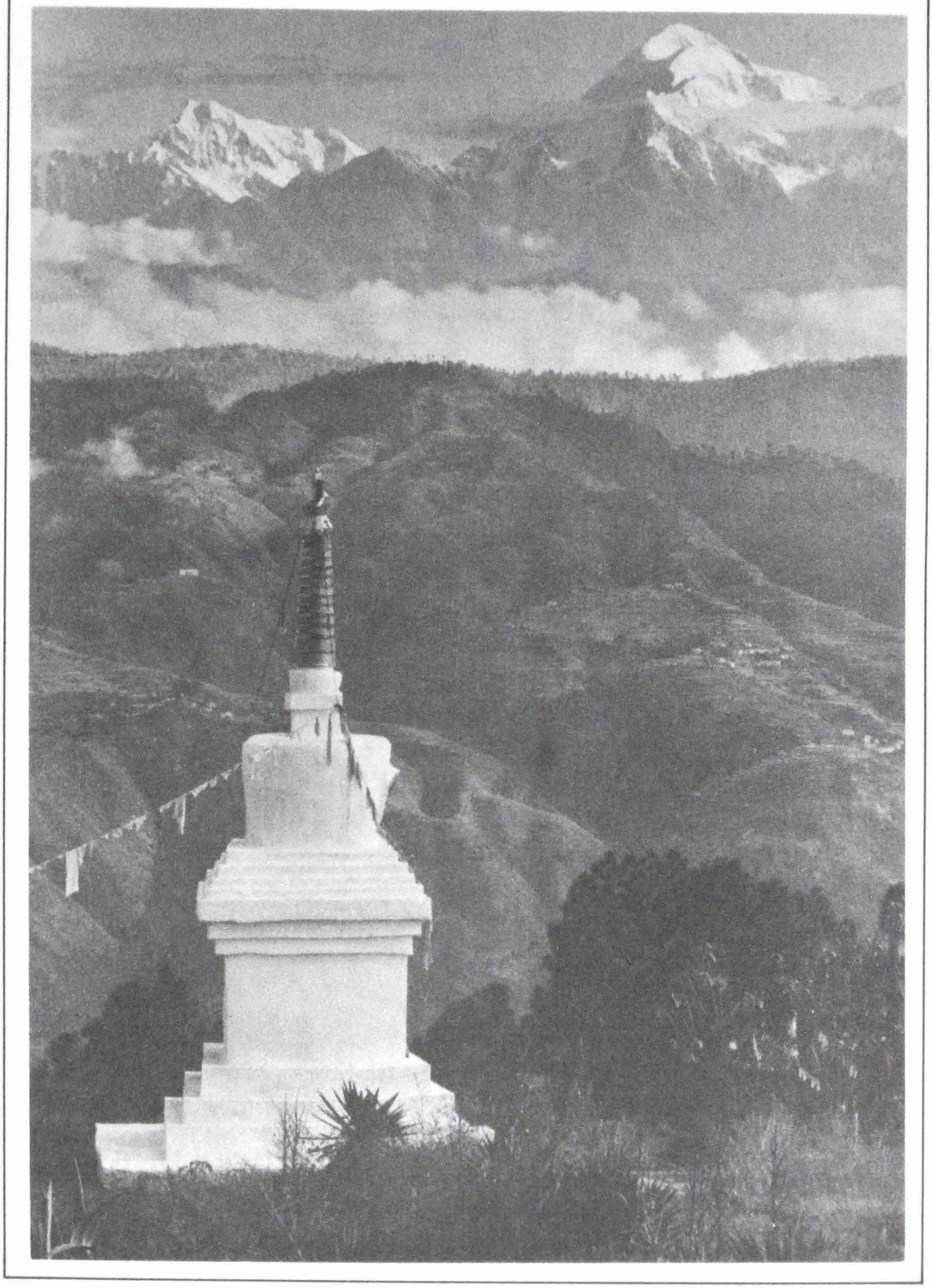


ken winkler

Foreword by
Lama Anagarika Govinda

Pilgrim of the Clear Light

Ken Wilber



Pilgrim of the Clear Light

KEN WINKLER

DAWNFIRE BOOKS
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

Art credits: cover design by Bernice Kagan, title page by George Weinberg-Harter. Back cover photo courtesy of Lou Blevens. Front page photo by Li Gotami Govinda; Evans-Wentz Stupa, India.

Excerpts of *Pilgrim of The Clear Light* were first published in the *San Diego Reader* and in the *Tibetan Review*.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 81-70183; ISBN 0-942058-00-3.

Published in Great Britain by Colin Smythe Limited, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire; ISBN 0-86140-126-3.

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
WITH LOVE
AND
GRATITUDE
TO
JOHN AND MARY THEOBALD

FOREWORD

It was in the beginning of the twenties of this century that the name of Dr. Walter Evans-Wentz came to my notice. I read a book review by a well-known Indologist, who was of the opinion that *The Tibetan Book of The Dead* was a translation from a fake manuscript that had been picked up in the Darjeeling Bazaar by an American tourist.

As I had at that time no means to verify the truth, I dismissed the matter from my mind. After all, there were so many books which disappeared as quickly as they appeared that one more or less would not make any difference. Little did I know that it was the book which would accompany me for the greater part of my life and would one day alter the course of my life and destiny. It has shown me never to rely on the judgement of others, even if they were regarded as authorities. After all, the learned writer of this review did not know that he was dealing with the translation of a genuine and rare copy of the *Bardo Thodol*, one of the most important *Termas* (or rediscovered secret writings) which was recognized by all schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

Indologists at that time had no knowledge about the vast extent and historical importance of Tibetan literature and looked down on everything that was connected with Tantric tradition, which they regarded as a decadent form of Hinduism that had crept into Buddhism. It didn't dawn on them that the first known documents of Tantrism as a philosophy and a way of life were enshrined in Buddhist literature, almost a thousand years before it was transferred into a branch of popular Hinduism. Scholars of early Sanskrit works found it below their dignity to translate books of a Tantric nature; like *Serpent Power* or *Garland of*

Letters, etc. To them Mantras were sheer gibberish and Tantrism a purely sexual cult. Sir John Woodruffe was the first Sanskrit scholar to break the taboo against these notions and to translate the main works of medieval Hindu-Tantras into English. But even he was of the opinion that the more or less unknown Buddhist scriptures of Tantric nature were derived from Hindu tradition.

Under this impression, Dr. Evans-Wentz asked Woodruffe to write an extensive introduction to *The Tibetan Book of The Dead* and he himself introduced into the translation of Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup a terminology that was mainly derived from Hinduism. Thus, the female counterparts of the Dhyani-Buddhas, who symbolized wisdom, were transformed into Shakties (or power-aspects) which reversed the whole Buddhist system. However, under the influence of scholars like Woodruffe and the beliefs of Theosophy, we can hardly blame Evans-Wentz for mistakes in a field that was practically unknown and which he tried to penetrate and make plausible to the west, where people had only a very foggy idea of Tibet and its religious beliefs.

The real mark of a scholar is not to persist in his errors but to be open to correction. In this sense Evans -Wentz proved to be a scholar of the highest integrity. To him there was no higher authority but the truth. He would never pass a statement, unless he was convinced of its correctness. Therefore, he was broadminded enough to entrust me with a revision of his translation of the *Bardo Thodol* as soon as he was confronted with the original text.

But I will not jump ahead of events.

I met Evans-Wentz a few months before the outbreak of World War II at the outskirts of Almora, a hill-station at the foot of the Himalayas. He lived in a tent that he had pitched in the garden of a house on the way to Kasar Devi, a well-known hill sanctuary about four miles from Almora. He was introduced to me as the author of a number of Buddhist books of Tibetan origin. I, naturally, was greatly interested and remembered the book review of *The Tibetan Book of The Dead* , though I was not yet able to give an opinion about it. But we often had talks about religious matters, and one day we went up to Kasar Devi Estate and discussed the possibility of founding an ashram (a place of religious retreat and meditation), either here or on Shayi Devi, an opposite hill. As Shayi Devi was too far from Almora or any other inhabited place, I recommended Kasar Devi as more suitable. Evans-Wentz agreed.

As I left Almora shortly afterwards, I had no idea of his further plans. Since he lived rather frugally and traveled in a very simple style, I never suspected that he was a man of considerable means. Due to similar

interests, we had become good friends, but as the political situation became more and more threatening, he was advised to return to America before the traveling by sea would become more hazardous or perhaps altogether impossible. So he left for California after having purchased the plot of land on Kasar Devi hill and with the intention to return as soon as possible. He had no idea that America would be involved in the war and that it would be years before the world would return to normal.

By the time the war was over, we had lost sight of each other. As I had no address, I did not even know where he was. But a strange thing happened. During my absence from Ghoom (near Darjeeling), where I lived with my foster mother in a little house, hidden in a bamboo grove and hardly visible from the road above, except by the presence of a prayer flag, a wandering Tibetan monk came by. Probably attracted by the prayer flag, he gave my foster mother a Tibetan book wrapped in a piece of cloth (as was customary in Tibet). Thinking that he came for alms, she offered some food to him and gave him money for the book. But the monk refused to accept any money and said, "Please keep it for your son." I do not know how he knew about my existence, but it may be that my mother mentioned that the book would be useful to me.

By the time I came home, the book had been forgotten and years later I found it among my possessions and unwrapping it, I found to my surprise that it was the Tibetan original of the *Bardo Thodol*. In the meantime I had been presented with the German translation of *The Tibetan Book of The Dead* according to the Evans-Wentz version. Remembering the controversial nature of the book review which I had read some years before, I was somewhat curious to compare it with the original. To my further surprise, I found that though the book followed the general tenor of the original blockprint, it differed in many important items.

So I wrote the publisher and offered to revise the next edition according to the Tibetan original, provided Dr. Evans-Wentz and the translator of the Swiss edition agreed. However, the publisher told me the translator had left Switzerland for New York and that the address of the author was not known. So I wrote to New York and received a favorable answer from the lady who had translated the book as well as Dr. Evans-Wentz's address. But before the publisher could bring out a new edition of *The Tibetan Book of The Dead*, I offered to write for him a book on Tibetan mysticism. He agreed to my proposal after seeing the first chapter and my critical notes in connection with Evans-Wentz's work. And so I was on my way to publishing a number of Buddhist books which

later were translated into many languages and established my career as a Buddhist writer.

But this was not the only consequence of the unexpected gift of the Tibetan original of the *Bardo Thodol.*

I immediately wrote to Dr. Evans-Wentz who was delighted and grateful for my offer to correct the German version of his book. But soon I found that it was not sufficient to merely correct the German edition, but also the English translation. In short, the whole book had to be revised according to the Tibetan original and in view of the advanced state of Tibetology. Moreover, it was found that the text used by Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup was a hand-written copy which apparently differed in some respect from the authorized Tibetan blockprint in my possession.

In view of this, I prepared an extensive list of corrections and sent it to Dr. Evans-Wentz who agreed with my opinion and asked me to revise also the Third Edition of the Oxford University Press. But to our disappointment they refused to make substantial changes and suggested that I should write a new introduction indicating the main changes. This, they felt, would be cheaper than typesetting the whole book again. In order to save some expense, the Oxford University Press preferred to publish a book in spite of numerous mistakes and misunderstandings instead of a thoroughly revised edition according to the standards of modern Tibetology.

This was all the more regrettable as the Swiss publisher, Rascher Publishing House, was dissolved due to the death of its owner, before the revised edition could get into print. Some of the publications were bought by another Swiss firm (Walter Verlag, Olten), but it took a number of years before they agreed to print the revised edition.

It would have been easier perhaps to make a new translation from the original, but I did not want to deprive Evans-Wentz, in whom I had found a real friend, of his authorship. Especially as he was the first in discovering this important scripture. Unfortunately, he did not live to see his main work completed. However, in gratitude for assisting him (like formerly Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup had done), he invited my wife, Li Gotami, and myself to take up residence at his estate at Kasar Devi, where in the meantime since our meeting there, he had built a solid bungalow. We lived there, after further improvements and by making the estate into an ashram (as was his intention), for almost 25 years. Evans-Wentz hoped to join us there but postponed it from year to year until he felt too old for traveling.

Thus, the gift of the pilgrim Lama, who had entrusted me with a copy

of the *Bardo Thodol*, had actually changed my whole life and helped me to realize the dream of Evans-Wentz to make his estate into a religious center (ashram) for the preservation of Tibetan Buddhism, to which he had dedicated his life.

In 1969 we were entrusted with the ashes of Evans-Wentz, which until then were kept in a mausoleum in San Diego, California, where he died. As it was his last wish that his ashes should find their permanent resting place at Kasar Devi Ashram, we built a Stupa in the form of a Tibetan Chorten. There, facing the Grand Himalayan Range, his ashes are preserved. The Stupa serves as a monument in gratitude and remembrance of his dedicated work in the field of Tibetan Buddhism.

SARVA-DANAM DHARMA-DANAM JINATI!

Lama Anagarika Govinda
1981

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A biography in many ways is a collective effort, for not only is it a composite from diary notations and letters, but also of recollections, interviews and thoughts from a great number of people. *Pilgrim of The Clear Light* has been no exception.

If any one person can be singled out for the encouragement given me to put this book together it has been Lama Anagarika Govinda. Through all my long months of research and traveling both he and his wife, Li Gotami, have been an unswerving source of support and inspiration. Though very busy themselves, they always had time for a letter or a talk and continually expressed an interest in the direction of my work.

Stanford University cannot be thanked enough for opening up their extensive collection of Evans-Wentz material to me. Through the efforts of Florian Shasky, Richard Phillips and Carol Rudisell of the Special Collections Department of the University library system and Professor William Clebsch of the Department of Religious Studies I was able to gather a great deal. It is with the permission of Stanford University, now the literary executors of the Evans-Wentz estate, that so much heretofore unpublished material has been utilized.

The Bodleian Library at Oxford University has been most kind. Senior Librarian David Barrett took my wife and I in on a cold and snowy December day and provided us with Reader's passes which allowed some very intense days of research. By the library's permission am I allowed to bring to light many early diary entries and letters and notes.

The Theosophical Society International (Pasadena, California) opened their library to my various quests and my thanks to their leader, Grace Knoche, and her librarians. I appreciate their permission to quote from various Society publications and from member's letters on file in their archives.

A special note is made here for the kindness and encouragement given me by

Lou Blevens. For hours I studied the collection of letters, diaries and photos bequeathed him by the late Dr. Evans-Wentz. I treasure the time we spent talking, his recollections were invaluable.

Thanks also to Lyle Stuart, Inc. for permission to quote from *Introduction to Yoga, Principles and Practices* by Sachindra Majumdar; to Ohio University Press to quote from *Cuchama and Sacred Mountains*; to Dell Publications to quote from *Light From The East* by William McNaughton; to Samuel Weiser, Inc. to use sections of Paul Brunton's *A Search in Secret India*; and to the Maha-Bodhi Society of India to quote from their publications.

Acknowledgement and thanks are also given to Colin Smythe, Ltd. of England for permission to quote from their edition of *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries*; from the Self-Realization Fellowship to quote from *The Autobiography of a Yogi* by Parmahansa Yogananda; to the representatives of Paddington Press for permission to quote from Luree Miller's *On Top of The World: Five Women Explorers in Tibet*; to Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. for permission to quote from *The Secret of The Golden Flower*, translated by Richard Wilhelm and from *A Passage to India*, by E.M. Forster; and to the David-Neel estate to quote from Alexandra David-Neel's book, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet.*

Oxford University Press has given permission to quote from the various Evans-Wentz books in his Tibetan Series; the Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, India, has permitted me to use quotes from *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, and from *The Spiritual Teaching of Ramana Maharshi.*

Princeton University Press has given permission to quote from the two introductions written by the late Dr. C.G. Jung to *The Tibetan Book of The Dead* (translated by R.F.C. Hull), and *The Tibetan Book of The Great Liberation.* They also gave permission to quote from *Letters*, Vol II, edited by Gerhard Adler and Aniela Jaffe (translated by R.F.C. Hull).

Without the kind help from a great number of people very little could have been accomplished. In India my deepest thanks go to His Holiness Chetsang Rimpoche, leader of the Dikung lineage of the Kagupa Buddhist order (and to his father, D.N. Tsarong of the United States); to the Venerable Guru Lama of Kasar Devi; to Mrs. Boshi Sen, Professor M.D. Pant and Lama David—all of Almora; to Tsering Wangyal of the *Tibetan Review* and to T.T. Samdup of Kalimpong.

Special note is given here to the assistance of Tore Hakausson of Sweden, Dr. D.A. Rees (Archivist of Jesus College, Oxford), and Professor Theodore Cortaggli of Costa Rica.

Here in the United States I would like to thank Peter Matthiessen, Professors Warren Audt and D.M. Brown, Elsie Allbright, Marion Lester, Emmett Small, Bill Fay, Alice Pschell, Julius Ancker, Sunyabhai, Dorji Lama, the late Dr. Judith Tyberg and the editors of the *San Diego Reader.* Without the help and support of my San Diego friends and relatives I would have been immobile, unedited and unsupported; warm thanks to George and Susan Weinberg-Harter, Bill Teague and Jeff and Ryan Martinez. I also owe so much to John and Mary

Theobald that mere thanks could never be enough; this book is dedicated to them, for without their initial prodding I never would have gotten started.

Lastly, my special appreciation for the love, support, and assistance given me by Lisa Taylor, without whom much of the field research could not have been done.

INTRODUCTION

Seldom is another's life as we would like it to be. Whether the person is a friend, lover or a relative there is always something with them we want to be better. Upon making a study of a person such feelings become even more pronounced. One can start out with the highest asperations, thinking only the best and the brightest of an individual then come to the realization that they too are as human as the rest of us. Dr. Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz has proved no different.

In my recording of his life I came to discover that no one really knew him. He was an insular man who lived solely within his own mind. He was a driven and compulsive individual who scorned personal and public excess and condemned artistic restrictions whenever he saw them. Yet, he never came to grips with his own shortcomings. His estate totaled close to a quarter million dollars, however, he lived the last 25 years of his life in a small, working class hotel and wore threadbare clothes.

Evans-Wentz was also a highly principled man, a meticulous scholar and a businessman who was well organized and shrewd. He was a pioneer in the field of Tibetan Buddhism and broke ground with his books; *The Tibetan Book of The Dead, The Tibetan Book of The Great Liberation, Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines, Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa*. His first published work, *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries*, remains a unique testament to a vanished culture. That he didn't end his life as the great good guru, as some wanted, was unfortunate, however, until the day he died he was continuously searching for ways to be useful to the world.

In retrospect it would be easy to point out his failings and personal

idiosyncracies. However, to do so would negate his more positive contributions as a scholar and an interpreter. In the course of my investigations of the man I found western scholars and students of the Vajrayana quick to condemn him while Asians in general and Tibetans in particular continue to honor him. This, to me, puts his work in the proper perspective.

That he has proven to be a contrary individual, full of conflicts and self-doubt, in no way detracts from his work as an early scholar of Tibetan Buddhism. That he was the first to bring us such sacred literature remains a fact. His life was quite a mixture and to me the most important aspect of his time here was not in what he was or in what he was not, but in what he gave us.

Ken Winkler

Berkeley, California
Fall, 1981

ONE

When many of his fellow countrymen were preparing for the indulgences of the "Roaring 20s," Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz was sitting quietly in a guest bungalow in Gangtok, Sikkim writing his autobiography. A compulsive traveler, he had been wandering around the Mid-East and India for several years. While this break in 1919–20 came to be of significance later, at the time it was merely another stop to collect, study and write.

Though he never came to call it chance his being there, it was indeed a casual whim of finding a translator that initially propelled him to this outpost of Buddhism on the edge of Tibet. As he rarely spent more than a few weeks at a stretch in any one place, his routine was highly compressed. His Gangtok days were mixed with intense scholarly study, morning meetings with his teacher (the Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup) and spare moments for his own reflections.

Prefacing his notes on himself with invocations to understanding, he mentioned in great detail how he had "striven to love all mankind of all nations and races and faiths."[1] Then he outlined his practices; how he had "dwelt in the solitude of the deserts, of the jungles, of the mountain tops . . . sought neither worldly goods nor worldly honor . . . relinquished those things which men struggle for most."[2]

Evans-Wentz considered his travels thus: "as the bee wanders from flower to flower seeking honey, so has he wandered from land to land seeking truth."[3]

Such flowery descriptions were easier to get away with a half-century ago when writers were more addicted to florid metaphors.

Odd as his statement that he would bring "a ray of light to those in darkness"[4] may sound today, it is safe to assume he meant it. Though his education spanned much of the century and included study at two great universities, Evans-Wentz retained a somber romanticism about himself that also included a heavy dose of the classics. Such attitudes were not of keeping with many young men of his generation. Before the First World War, the glories of Greece and Rome were major sources of inspiration to the students of Oxford and Stanford universities; with many the preoccupation lasted all their lives.

There is little left in modern-day Trenton, New Jersey to be recognized by a boy who was raised in a little red brick cottage standing on (so Evans-Wentz writes) "ground consecrated to freedom by the historical Battle of Trenton"[5] of the American Revolutionary War. Upon viewing the urban sprawl or the city itself today it seems improbable it was ever smaller and quieter. However, during his boyhood in the later years of the nineteenth century (he was born February 2, 1878) Trenton's population was not much more than 5,000.

His father, Christopher Wentz, was German, actually of "Gaulist stock," Evans-Wentz reported, from Weissengen on the "marches of Baden and Alsace." As a young man, the elder Wentz had come to the New World with his own father, never to return to Europe. Evans-Wentz stated, "although at heart a good man, my father's father had, like many of the American immigrants born and bred in Europe, brought with him an uncontrollable appetite for strong drink; it was due to that than anything else that he died while he was still not a very old man."[6]

Perhaps it was under the influence of childhood tales from his mother, Mary Evans Cook, that he was entranced by the imagery of the fairies, the memory of which might have led him to write later his first book, *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* (Colin Smythe Ltd., England). He traced her ancestry to Wales and England and "probably also part of Ireland in pre-historic days."[7] He later trekked over these lands, gathering folk tales for his book. Evans-Wentz declared often she greatly influenced him, though other than adopting her name as his own when he brought out this first book he was unspecific as to just what the influences were.

Mary Evans Cook was a Quaker and had earlier American roots than did her husband. Reportedly her family had come over sometime in the early seventeenth century. Though Evans-Wentz speculated that some

of his mother's ancestors may have been among the first immigrants to American, "whether their progenitor found standing room on the Mayflower I have never been told."[8]

Further descriptions of his mother were not forthcoming. Though undoubtedly of importance in his life, Mary Evans Cook seemed to disappear from his thoughts as well as his written records. Even his siblings, with the exception of one brother, Richard, were lightly mentioned in his diaries. Besides Richard, there was one other brother, James, and two sisters, Anna and Mattie. Two other children had died in infancy.

Though Evans-Wentz mentioned his family seemed filled with solid farmers and quiet, pious folk (on his mother's side), it was the black sheep which took the imagination (and the innocent avarice) of he and his brothers and sisters.A half-brother of his father was believed, in the late nineteenth century to be living in "some remote part of the world, probably Australia or the South Sea Islands," and since he was credited with having amassed a fortune and was unmarried,[9] Evans-Wentz wrote that they all wondered if he would leave it to them.

Further, it was speculated a fortune was waiting back in Germany from some scion of his father's family. Because it was never claimed, the family feared it would be confiscated by the state. His father put no faith in the rumor (indeed, he may even have invented it), though he wouldn't return to Baden to check it out lest he be impressed into the army (a curious tale that was never elaborated on). "So again," Evans-Wentz concluded, "a fabulous fortune was lost, as we children thought."[10]

And these weren't the only stories. His mother had a brother, a very religious man with a patriarchial beard, who fell to shop-keeping in a country village and married a servant girl. "He was said to be worth $20,000 and having had no issue was expected to leave the money to his brother and sister after his widow had the use of it during her lifetime."[11]

Again, they lost. When this uncle died, he left the bulk of his fortune outright to a certain "Baptist missionary society for the purpose of upsetting the religious beliefs of ignorant savages in Polynesia or Africa."[12] The widow received only a small amount for her lifetime and when she died the remainder went to the missionaries.

Walter Evans-Wentz was bequeathed only an antiquated and motionless watch which no watchmaker could ever repair.

The family didn't give up easily. One of his brothers-in-law persuaded him that this religious uncle had been mentally unfit to make such a will and had Walter put up $10 in a legal effort to break it. "My father," he reported, "was too shrewd to finance such an adventure, although noth-

ing would have suited him better in those days than to deprive the missionaries of the money. As he predicted, the suit was lost."[13]

The experience left the young Evans-Wentz with a distaste for modern-day Christians, especially the proselityzing kind, a feeling that did not mellow with age. (It was missionaries who, in later years, tried to have him kicked out of Ceylon for his "heretical" views on rebirth and his general published thoughts on various Christian practices, both historical and contemporary.)

Despite the amusing anecdotes he recorded about his family they remained a paradox to him. "My family and its traditions have far more psychological meaning to me now in mature life," he wrote in 1920 after several of his relatives had died, "than they had in youth; and yet always in practice parentage and ancestry have been regarded by me as of no fundamental importance in my life's history, but rather as having been a mere means of entry into life and as a stepping stone from things conventional to things unconventional, from the narrow selfish atmosphere of the family circle and the clan to the broad altruistic air of the one humanity."[14]

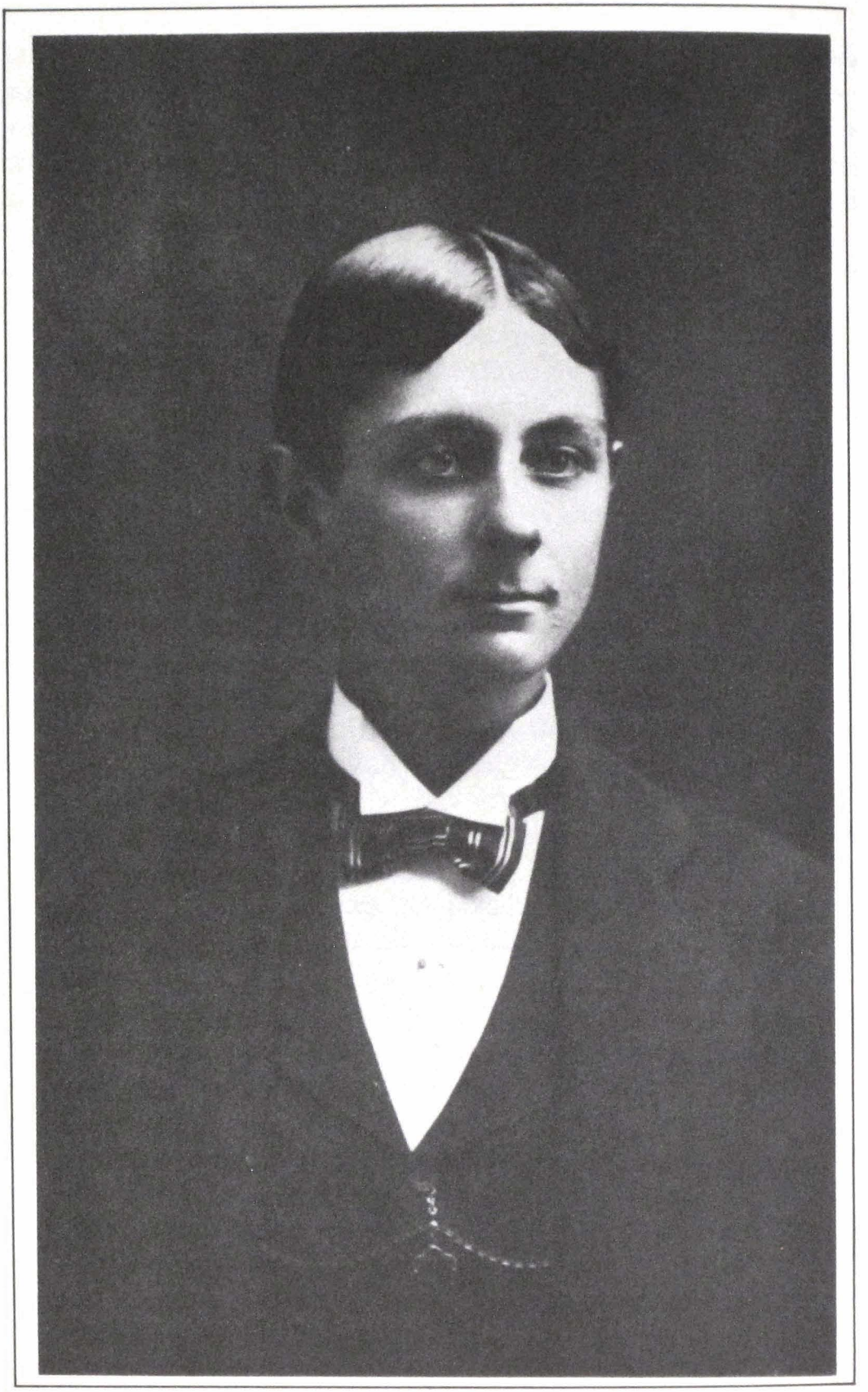
(His brother, Richard, might have felt similarly. At one point he took off for 11 years. It was only by chance their father discovered him, working at being a waiter in a hotel that the older man happened to be dining in.)

"Mankind are themselves imperfect," Evans-Wentz continued, seeking further to explain his attitude towards his family. (At the time of his stay in Sikkim, those members left alive had scattered and only tangentally remained in contact.) He felt the sociology of Plato in *The Republic* seemed the ideal to which "human society will yet turn . . . they are still in the making. How can it be thought that the present state of society, based on the family unit and marriage is the best? They may be the best for the world as it is . . . certainly they are not the best for the world of the future."[15]

A lifelong bachelor (there is no evidence to the contrary), he believed the marriage system was not the best means of continuing the race. In 1920 he wrote, "I denied it before I was old enough to experiment with it."[16] Of course, at this time he had spent several years traveling and studying alone and had just come from intense meetings with scores of Hindu and Buddhist holy men.

This then is the rebellious mood which he felt throughout his adult life. These were the foundations and ideals that kept him from any entangling alliances. They are sketchy and somewhat vague, but then he

himself was such. He was a defensive solitary who kept the world at a distance. Perhaps this attitude came, as he said, from his "never having been conventionalized by my environment. Perhaps there is lacking within me that religious and racial and national bond to bind me to the faith and race and nation into which I was born."[17]



Walter Evans-Wentz as a young man; photo courtesy of Stanford University.

TWO

It was at the age of 12 when Walter Evans-Wentz reported he first felt the "consciousness of existence" awaken within him. A precocious attitude for one so young, but he explained, "I have been haunted with the conviction that this is not the first time that I have been possessed of a human body."[1]

These were heady and almost heretical thoughts for a young man of that era, but it should be remembered that at the time of this writing he had spent several years studying, observing and wandering in the backroads of western civilization, both in actuality and in libraries. He was not unfamiliar with doctrines of rebirth. Well he knew of the suppression of the spiritual Gnostic traditions of early Christianity that had come out of the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 A.D. (though the suppression of them started earlier, he happily referred to this Council when addressing Christian hardliners). In Gangtok, Evans-Wentz felt free from restrictions and from conventional morality, "such as few of humankind in this age know, or, at least are able or willing to exercise."[2] Beyond this statement he never elaborated what this actually meant.

Earlier in his notes Evans-Wentz mentioned he had never been "conventionalized" by his environment. There is little data available to substanciate this and only speculation remains as to what influences he felt. His own notes on the matter were written when he grew to adulthood. However, he did mention his vast reading while a teenager of occult books and those of the Theosophical Society. He also had a deep interest in the Bible; a passion "for an answer to the mighty but as yet vague questions which nobody, not even my mother, was told of."[3]

His family were hardly stuffy on the matter. Once they had been members of the Baptist Church of Trenton, which Evans-Wentz reported had been "one of the most stylish and numerous congregrations in the city."[4] But, they had cut their connections with religious convention and had become Free Thinkers and then Spiritualists.

"The books which I found in our southern home (in Florida)," he wrote, "were the tangible evidence of my father's schism from orthodox Christianity." In these publications the younger man found "far more intellectual satisfaction to my own questioning than in the Bible."[5] The books were never identified. Knowing his later proclivities, however, they could well have been Spiritualist tracts and the tomes of the Theosophists. Both he and his father were deeply attracted to such groups and for Evans-Wentz this attraction lasted all his life. In his personal effects after his death were found great numbers of publications dealing with all manners of psychic and spiritual research and practices.

Still, as a young man he continued to read the Bible regularly in a "more or less mystical mood and often thought then that it would help me in some way which I could not define."[6] But he never adopted it for a guide in his spiritual wanderings. Evans-Wentz considered himself "possessed of far deeper religious experiences" than most, "even the negroes I used to study not only on the river shore, but also in the revival services in their wooden chapels."

Not that he singled out black people. "I was truly more religious,"he explained, "so I thought, than the white church folk whom I knew as they showed themselves to me."[7]

Though by current standards this barely smacks of the heresy it once did, Evans-Wentz came to consider himself beyond the pale of organized Christianity. He was appalled to think Irish Catholics believed (so he reported) that if a baby were unchristened it became a child of the Devil. "As I now realize with intense satisfaction, I myself not only was never christened at birth, but was never afterwards baptised. I grew up untouched, and, as I often think, unsullied spiritually by the Church, which has come to be called Christian more because of constitutional creeds attributed to Christian sources than because of the teachings of the one initiated as the Christos."[8]

"I grew up as free a pagan as any to whom St. Paul preached in Athens."[9]

He regarded himself then as a fanciful follower, not of Jesus Christ alone, but of Buddha, of the Prophet, of Krishna and of all the Great Teachers. "As I have held myself formally with no one country or race, so have I not allied myself formally with any of the world religions. I

have embraced all of them."[10] This was apparently true, for he rarely spent long at one practice or discipline, despite his singular attraction to Tibetan Buddhism.

But he did not easily let go of Christianity. Once having made a study of it, he retained all he had learned. His arguments against the Church and its shortcomings and excesses were underlined with facts gleaned from his prodigious memory. Christianity remained another paradox for him and until his death he continued to criticise its tenets and practices.

In a final explanation, Evans-Wentz concluded, "had I fallen under Church influence when I was 12 or even a year or so later, it is possible that I might have been converted and confirmed; but soon afterwards I was utterly beyond redemption from the point of view of orthodox Christianity; and I suppose that the Irish belief about unchristened babies has been realized in me."[11]

However, not all of his boyhood was spent in laborious study of religious matters. His dreams and fantasies had other outlets. He enjoyed James Fenimore Cooper and *Gulliver's Travels*. Evans-Wentz reported he had a respectable library, though mostly of adventure and travel stories. "All of my spare money was invested in them," he admitted.[12] At this juncture he had an anxious interest in darkest Africa, and when Stanley was searching for Dr. Livingstone he was constantly badgering the Trenton bookseller for updated news.

This period didn't last long, for at the age of 18 he was searching all available sources for philosophical works and nothing save "a book on occult philosophy" could attract him. "Any book purporting to deal with occultism or symbolism was sure," he said. "They were of fundamental influence."[13]

Then Madam Helen P. Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society captured his imagination. The Society had been founded by this charismatic controversial Russian woman in New York in 1875. Together with Colonel H.S. Olcott, an American lawyer and Civil War officer, she opened chapters around the world. Her lectures and study groups were well-attended. Initially, Theosophy had as its basic tenets the One Eternal Truth, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. It took the western world by storm and while limited in numbers, the Society had a great influence over spiritually-inclined persons. For an impressionable young man like Walter Evans-Wentz, tired and somewhat disgusted with the hypocrisy he saw in practiced Christianity, this seemed a good refuge.

Looking back on the vastness of Theosophical literature, it seems today highly improbable that a young person (Evans-Wentz was in his late

teens at the time) could be attracted to the arcane, vague and ponderous tomes that surrounded and followed the publication of Madam Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* and *Secret Doctrines*, let alone follow the main works. However, Evans-Wentz poured over them.

Madam Blavatsky had been reported by Theosophical sources to have received her "messages" through monastic training and through visions, supposedly from Tibetan sources. People in the late nineteenth century barely knew where Tibet was, let alone considered it a country. With the exception of a few singular souls, no one had ever been there. Landlocked, with closed doors and strange rituals and governed by a God-King, Tibet was a fascinating place and anything written about it was widely believed. This Tibetan connection added to the mystique of the Society, which, with its ancient lore and mysterious spiritual information, was captivating and which fulfilled a need no less than any spiritual group does at any time.

The Theosophical Society, on the other hand, has not had to suffer from a lack of detractors. Time after time the authenticity of Madam Blavatsky's works has been called into question. One of Evans-Wentz's staunchest supporters, the Lama Anagarika Govinda, felt the Society had been fooling people since before the turn of the century and thought the "messages" recorded by Madam Blavatsky did not come so much from Tibetan sources as they did from New York City libraries where a better job of research could be done than in the Himalayas.[14] Lama Govinda also mentioned that despite Evans-Wentz being a cautious scholar, and despite his academic training and skepticism, he managed to remain quite naive and tended to believe anything he read. While this view may or may not be true, the fact stands that Evans-Wentz kept faith with the Society and nurtured a protective attitude towards anyone he considered seriously on the spiritual path.[15]

Despite the controversies over and perhaps the obfuscation of Theosophical lore, such works helped initiate the young Evans-Wentz into his life-long pilgrimage of the spirit. At the age of 17—his self-proclaimed "period of philosophical awakening"—he was a recluse. His sisters were married, his brothers gone, and his parents were separated. Reportedly, he "lived the life of his own." During his later teens he happened to stay sometimes in Trenton with his mother whom he delicately said "could not endure the then-malarial climate of Florida," and sometimes in that state with his father, of whom he explained "could not endure the winters of the north."[16]

He neither sought after nor had many companions then, and the happiest days for him were when he could wander alone along the shores of

the Delaware River above Trenton. He had his own secret places, and dallied, throwing himself down in the midst of the quiet beauty. "I took no notice," he wrote, "of the calls to conventional meals in the house and I was allowed my own way."[17]

He liked summer best. "I would take off all my clothing and lie there naked as I was born with my eyes shut, sometimes thinking of nothing," he reported years later. "I always felt, as I still do, a very intimate relationship between my body and the sun as the source of life energy. Invariably, if I felt tired with study or if half-ill or in any way mentally disturbed, the magnetisms from the earth under me and the magnetisms from the sun above me filled my body with such freshness and vigor that I would return home calm and happy and well."[18]

In Florida he often went down to the St. John River and dreamed away days in the "shadow of some ancient Spanish Oak, thickly festooned with the sombre grey Spanish moss."

Always having an eye for the unexpected and the religious, he used to marvel at the periodical baptisms of the black people, which, he explained, "always took place in the shallows of a Sunday." Never could he understand "how the newly-converted ones could become so filled with religious frenzy as soon as they had been immersed. On one occasion, a young woman upon being baptised was so uncontrollable that in order to save her from drowning herself, it took four of the strongest men to get her on shore."

Once when the immersions were about to begin, after much singing of psalms, a big alligator stuck his head out of the water only a few feet from the preacher "apparently to see what all the commotion was about." With one voice everyone cried, "The Devil has come! The Devil has come!" In short order all of them, including the pastor, were on dry land. Evans-Wentz stated he never could make out why God had allowed the Devil to come in such a form, nor why God had ever made a Devil at all.[19]

It was along the Delaware River of his childhood, however, where he first had his "estatic-like vision" that foretold of his destiny to be a wanderer, a gypsy. He had been alone, as usual, in the midst of "wild daisies and buttercups in one of my secret retreats communing with nature. As I walked home slowly, I fell to singing a song of estatic rapture, composed as I sang it. There came flashing into my mind with such authority that I never thought of doubting it, a mind-picture of things past and to come. No details were definite, there was only the unrefutable conviction that I was a wanderer in the world from some far-off unfathomable and undescribably, yet real, realm; that all things I looked

upon were but illusionary shadows. And there came to me a vague knowledge of things to be. I knew from that night my life was to be that of a world pilgrim, wandering from country to country, over seas, across continents and mountains, through deserts to the end of the earth, seeking, seeking for I knew not what."[20]

He was developing into a romantic, solitary young man, inwardly directed, and was soon to become a scholar. It wasn't an easy choice for him, and he vascilated for some time, trying various pursuits before he entered Stanford University in California as a "special entrant" at the age of 24.

Throughout his teens he traveled extensively and not always just to Florida. There are several small diaries surviving attesting to a circuitious journey he made through New England and Canada. Other entries mention shorter jaunts to southern ports as well as a trip to Puerto Rico to check out business opportunities for his father. His travels appear to have been unremarkable, at least if one goes by the flat tone of his minute recordings of them. All details, both boring and interesting, were set down with a light sweeping hand in an impartialness that equated the prices of dinners with as much significance as his nominal anti-Christian observations.

These fading turn-of-the-century leather diaries are not forthcoming with specific personal information about him. Even the death of his mother in 1898, an event which normally gives rise to some sort of private comment, went unrecorded. It was only through a letter to his father from her a few days before her death and a notice clipped from a Trenton newspaper that the passing of Mary Evans Cook came to light.

What did come through in all his jottings and recordings was his early business acumen. His father was a real estate developer in Pablo Beach, Florida, and owned the Hotel Pablo there. After joining up with the older man in 1900, Evans-Wentz started dealing in quick sales, mortgages and land transfers. So well was he handling both their affairs, that his father went off traveling to California with his new wife, Lillian, (another event noted only by reference that she was in the family, not a word on her background).

However, Evans-Wentz was dissatisfied. He couldn't make up his mind on what he wanted to be. He was anxious, as he put it, "to make life a useful one for the world."[21] Though he was pleased to be doing so handsomely in the business world, he wasn't quite sure he should be doing it. Finally, following a fitful pattern of starts and stops, he moved to set up his rentals and property payments and took the train to spend

Christmas in San Diego, California, in 1901 with his father. It was to be more than just a family reunion, however, for Loma Land was there, only a short horse ride away from downtown.

Loma Land was the American headquarters for the Theosophical Society. Situated on the Point Loma peninsula above San Diego Bay, the Society had over three hundred acres of farmland, schools, cultural centers and homes. The natural beauty of such a setting, overlooking both the bay and the Pacific Ocean, coupled with the group's mode of common living and simple pursuits intrigued Evans-Wentz

This study center was the creation of Katherine Tingley, another of the charismatic, dynamic women the Theosophical Society seemed to attract, who in 1901 was the leader of the American section. Madam Tingley had assumed control of the Society after the death in 1896 of William Q. Judge. Judge, an Irish-born mystic, had revived the American section of the Society after the founders had moved their entourage to Adyar, Madras. After Madam Blavatsky died in India in 1891, Judge and Colonel Olcott, who was still directing affairs from Madras, had a falling out and the Americans separated themselves from Indian control.[22]

A woman of great energy, Madam Tingley succeeded in founding a flourishing center after she had moved the American branch to San Diego. She had constructed a large Grecian Temple overlooking the ocean and set about seeking support and accepting students for her programs, which lasted from four to seven years. Evans-Wentz enthusiastically reported these programs were to "develop the talents of the students as they appeared to exist."[23]

As he was relatively rootless at this time, he anguished over not having a place to retreat to. He was most anxious to be accepted into the Brotherhood and visited the grounds often. In fact, a small bungalow still stands where he lived for several weeks. Their community of "good works," as he called it, deeply appealed to him, as did their educational facilities, their publishing ventures, their farms, study groups, cultural activities—even the children who were called "lotus buds." However, once he became a member it worried him that the group were mostly wealthy people, and he felt they might become aristocratic and exclusive.

Despite his not being sure where he would end up, he did give himself some options; the Brotherhood, ranching in California, business in Pablo Beach or Stanford University. Already he had applied to and had been accepted by the University as a "special entrant," which meant he had to prove himself in preparatory work. (His only post-high school

study was at a business college in Florida.) Credit for his applying is due in part to Madam Tingley herself for encouraging him to follow up on his educational possibilities—he could always return to Point Loma. (A curious twist upon the "degrees" offered at Loma Land surfaced after World War II, when many of the adherents were set adrift to fend for themselves. After spending, in some cases, their entire lives at the center, they found their educational attainments, gained there at no mean price, were discredited.)[24] His father offered to help set him up and pointed out the Florida rentals could support him while he studied.

He decided. In April of 1902 he took the steamship S.S. Spokane (in Room 13, which he felt would allow him privacy) up the coast to San Francisco.

THREE

Stanford University in the early years of this century was an idyllic place. The spacious, Spanish Mission-style campus with its stone walls and red tile roofs was surrounded by wheat and barley fields stretching "knee-high," as Evans-Wentz put it, up to the rolling hills of the Pacific Coast range.[1] There were few roadways and the nearby town of Palo Alto was small and unobtrusive. At this time the University had the great stock farms of the Stanford family, where many champion racing horses had been bred. In fact, horses and carriages were the main means, besides walking, of getting around.

"Stanford made me."[2]

This is what Evans-Wentz told his secretary, Lou Blevens, almost half a century after he had graduated. No doubt it did set his vast accumulation of boyish reading, his wanderings and his spiritual curiousity in directions that eventually led him to India. He always had a warm place in his heart for Stanford. He remembered the University in his will, and asked that his various royalties, stocks, mineral rights and property holdings be used to found a chair in Oriental philosophy, religion and ethics.[3]

Photographs exist showing him to be a dapper, handsome young man, nicely groomed and, in one instance, in the company of several college women.[4] He was president and a founder of the Stanford Social Service Club and once served as class treasurer. He was elected to the English Club and served on the staff of *The Sequoia*, a student literary publication. At this stage of his life his business of renouncing the world had evidently taken a back seat. His diaries are laced with references of

taking the ferry to Berkeley for sporting events and dances and of dining with friends in Palo Alto. Though he kept to himself and wandered amid the oak groves, meditating, he did have many friends. His other worldliness did not prevent him from keeping abreast of Florida trends and he managed his property there well. Though by appearances he seemed without a problem, he felt that his road was not an easy one due to his "weakly constitution and a lack of practical training."[5]

His private worries aside, he kept himself busy and was always active. As mentioned previously, he deeply enjoyed being outside and knew how to ride horses. During his term breaks he was usually on the move. In the spring and summer of 1904 he took a steamer to San Diego, spending time on the beaches on the way down and taking "magnetic treatments" for his "nervous trouble" (his first reference to any sort of disorder).[6] That Christmas he stayed in a small Pacific Coast town called Pescadero. Always observing the local conditions of whatever city he visited, he described in detail the squalor of the Portugese "serfs" (local fishermen) who lived in boxes full of junk. It was during his trips that he began his California land purchases. In 1905 he started selling off all his Florida property and began investing in the back country of San Diego County. Around the time of his graduation from Stanford he chanced upon what was to become his spirit mountain, Cuchama, near the Mexican border.

A forbidding, rocky aerie (Lama Govinda has described it as "so desolate"),[7] it had long been a holy mountain to the local indians. It impressed Evans-Wentz enough that over the years he bought much of it, over three thousand acres, mostly vertical desert and sagebrush land. Much later, he claimed that though he might not be very psychic about people, he was so "about places."[8] One acquaintance remembers how he would come into the house sniffing, just to get the current psychic reading.[9]

He must have lived a charmed life as well, for a few months before he saw this spirit mountain, he survived the great earthquake of 1906. Though much of northern California suffered from this upheaval of the San Andreas Fault, it is still remembered as the Great San Francisco Earthquake, for much of that city was destroyed by it.

Encina Hall, his dormitory at Stanford, was left in ruins by the tremor. Evans-Wentz was in his rooms on April 4th, when at 5:13 AM the plaster fell and the furniture shook. "It seemed as though some great beast was beneath the building trying to raise it up," he recorded. As the shaking became more violent, he went to the window but decided not to jump the four floors down. As the room was coming apart, he

felt if he could reach the roof it would be the one safe place. "If Encina is to fall, I said, I will be on top and not under it."[10]

He climbed out along the rafters running above his window, dangled from the gutter, and tried to clamber onto the roof.

Friends burst into his room and found him hanging like a hooked trout. Not amused, they pulled him in. In later years they were to regale their families and friends with this incident,[11] but by Evans-Wentz himself no further word was spoken. After getting himself patched up and then surveying with dismay the wreck of the campus, he galvanized his Social Service Club into action. He was delegated to do guard duty both on the campus and in San Francisco.

Though his time spent in the great city, then incapacitated by blocked streets and fires, was brief, it did serve as a distinct object lesson to him. Gone were the opium dens and gin mills. Some four square miles of the city, 512 blocks in the center of town and 28,000 buildings, were destroyed; the damage was estimated at $500,000,000 and some 700 people were killed.[12] He felt the catastrophe had purified the people. "Measured by man's evolution," he wrote, "the disaster is a greater good than an evil."[13] (Evil was foremost in his thoughts; the previous year, he and other Stanford students had done the "work of the century." They had made a social survey of "fallen women" in Oakland, who, Evans-Wentz felt, really wanted to live honorably.)[14] His duties carried him to the Valencia Street Relief Station to pass out bread and milk. Eventually, however, a timely assistantship in English was offered, which brought him back to the recovering campus.[15]

Stanford went on; people graduated and went to work. This incessant process had a profound effect upon him and his references to the continual life change going on, that this represented, were repeated to his death.

Though academic work had found favor with him, Evans-Wentz had not been entirely pleased with his experiences as an undergraduate. Many of the professors had struck him as being "narrow-minded, so-called Christians," whom, he said, had denounced Theosophy. (He excluded two very significant visiting professors; William James, who wrote *The Varieties of Religious Experience; A Study in Human Nature* and the poet, William Butler Yeats. Both men became his spiritual mentors for a time.) Also, he reported the "sensual and boisterous life" of many idle students had discomfitted him.[16]

From his first Christmas at the University, Evans-Wentz felt his purpose was being made clear. His seriousness and singularity of purpose were becoming pronounced. His surviving examination and term papers

bear this out. His subjects (which weren't uncommon then) were serious treatises on religion, history, morality and ethics. Such concerns did not stop at graduation, but continued to preoccupy him throughout his life. Quite different they appear from the more flippant and breezy pop-psycho-intellectualism that abounds on many campuses today.

Despite his misgivings about Stanford, he admitted when the term ended in 1907 that the year had been a happy one.[17] Academia had interested him enough that he had applied to and had been accepted by Jesus College, Oxford University, for entry in the fall. In possession now of both a bachelor's and a master's degree and free for some months from scholarly responsibilities, he hurried to San Diego to spend time with the Brotherhood and with his family. He noted then he was the only "single one left."[18] Brother Jim had married; Richard in Seattle had remarried; Mattie was separating from her doctor husband; Anna was married in Trenton and his father and Lillian were still together. His renouncing of family ties did not prevent him, however, from enjoying his family's company when he chose, and when in San Diego he took many jaunts with his father in nearby Balboa Park. With Mattie he journeyed to the east coast when it was time to catch his ship for England. Detouring slightly, he stopped in Trenton to retrace scenes from his childhood and to visit his mother's grave.

In late September, he boarded the S.S. Menon bound for Liverpool to begin yet another round of academic endeavor.[19]

On board he met Warren Audt, now a retired history professor. They were drawn to one another because of similar destinations—Jesus College. Audt, however, recalled Evans-Wentz was quite distant from the other American scholars on board, mainly because he was older. Audt claimed he himself was fresh from small New England towns and that the older man, "dark brown from the California sun and in the habit of eating oranges—like apples—held the promise of more worldy knowledge."[20]

Further, he said that Evans-Wentz was going to Oxford because Sir John Rhys was a Professor of Celtic there. Sir John was a distinguished grammarian and a linguistic scholar. For over 40 years he had worked for social reform in England and had been knighted that year (1907) for his efforts.[21] The only hint that Evans-Wentz might have ever been interested in Celtic lore, or had even heard of Sir John comes from the introductory dedication to his first book, *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries*. In it he mentions his debt to William Butler Yeats, "who brought to me . . . in California the first message from fairyland."[22] Such a man of language was Yeats that he concievably could have put the seed of

further study under Sir John in young Evans-Wentz's mind while the poet was a visiting professor at Stanford. Of course, during his last year at Stanford, Evans-Wentz had developed an interest in the study of religious experiences both through Yeats and William James. Who encouraged him the most, whether these two or some other professor, remains speculative.

Little has changed over the years at Jesus College. The same stone walls line the street going to the main entrance; scholars still move through the courtyards carrying books. The entire university area appears quietly absorbed and a bastion of serious inquiry in a world which even then was rushing towards a disarming materialism.

Though Evans-Wentz didn't disappear in the medieval maze of the various colleges at Oxford, his time there as a student is remarkably unclear. Though Dr. R.R. Marett, his former professor, mentioned that Evans-Wentz set himself to "exploring the religious experiences of mankind in such various forms as may afford the most significant constrasts," just how isn't known.[23] Dr. Marett further reported that his American student proposed to consider the fairy faith and legend in Celtic countries in a thoroughly scientific manner "not at the educated man's valuation, but, so to speak at its own (folklore level)."[24] There was no mention of the classes taken, or of papers presented or even of books read. All in all Evans-Wentz seemed to float through his time at Oxford doing the research he wanted to, much like a "scholar-gypsy," which is what Dr. Marett called him, himself borrowing the title from a poem by Matthew Arnold. The name seems appropriate in light of the younger man's academic and research methods.

The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries is the product of many months of labor, both in the field and in the libraries. It is divided into four sections: The Living Fairy Faith; The Recorded Fairy Faith; The Cult of Gods, Spirits, Fairies and The Dead; and Modern Science and The Fairy Faith and Conclusions. By far the more absorbing section is the first one which includes direct stories from his field experiences. Long months tramping through all the Celtic lands—Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Cornwall, Brittany, Isle of Man—brought Evans-Wentz a raft of stories about the "good people," a peasant euphemism for pixies, fairies, goblins, historical beings, mythological figures and demons. Though he assures us there are distinct differences in all these catagories, fine lines do tend to blur.

His book abounds with descriptions of the huts and hamlets he visited, and of the farmers, pipers, priests and even the casual travelers met on the roads. He recorded everything he heard and accepted letters

from his contacts when they remembered more. At the Bodleian Library, Oxford, there remain packets of these letters from the country folk, each telling of their own experiences or of old stories about the "good people" and their world.[25]

Though many of the area's scholars and poets were collecting folk tales and songs at the time, there were controversies over allowing such information to be presented to young persons. Before 1911 there had been discussions in many British papers on the advisability of entirely suppressing all stories of fairies and keeping the minds of children solely occupied with practical and everyday occurances.[26]

Reprehensible as such an attitude appears today, this has actually happened in many Celtic areas. The culprit seems to be the English language. Dr. Kathleen Raine, poet and Blake and Yeats scholar, who wrote the introduction to the recent edition of *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries*, lamented the younger generation are now not Gaelic-speaking. She tells of the presence of the "hypnotic twaddle of the mass media"[27] (in English) supplanting the story telling and the singing from which Evans-Wentz received much of his information. She feels the young American scholar had borne witness to a culture vanishing even then, which made his work that much more precious. "His view is first hand," she states, "and has therefore a value not to be found in the works of academics who have never seen . . . an Irish fairy-fort or a Highland black-house."[28]

However, these direct observations cover only the first half of the book. Coming right after the accounts from his field contacts is a section dealing with examination of the beliefs as part of a "world-wide animism." In his conclusions he strikes at the widespread belief in "spiritual beings as being purely mythical."[29] This, he believed, would lead to no satisfactory solution. The origin of myth needed to be studied and explained and one of the "chief objects" of his study was to make "an attempt at such an explanation, especially of Celtic myth."[30]

In the second section of the book, The Recorded Fairy Faith, Evans-Wentz deals with the major myths of the Celtic people. He speaks of the people of The Goddess Dana or The Sidhe, the ancient mythology of Ireland. He details the pagan beliefs in various kings and fairies and mythical figures and makes not a few caustic remarks at the Church for destroying much of this belief system. Also discussed are the Arthurian myths and most importantly, for Evans-Wentz, the Celtic Doctrines of Rebirth.

Evans-Wentz never really forgave the Church for disavowing reincarnation. As mentioned earlier, he used to condemn fundamentalists by

using his vast store of Christian history and dogma. In this second section he outlines the Christian views on rebirth, the Celtic views on such, the altering through missionaries of this belief and a run-down with his field contacts on the then-current feelings among the Celtic people on rebirth. Though not as outspoken on such matters as he himself, his contacts told of the beliefs still existing, though mostly among the older people.

The third section discusses the Cult of Gods, Spirits, Fairies and The Dead. An intricate portion, it seeks to connect contemporary practices and observations with their historical predecessors. As expected, he talked of the Church using these beliefs to incorporate Christianity into the local cultures. He observed that Christianity had "a relation more or less direct to paganism, and thus to ancient Celtic cults and sacrifice offered to the dead, to spirits, and to the Tuatha De Danann or Fairies."[31]

In the concluding section, Evans-Wentz used what he called the "scientific examination" to investigate the beliefs previously discussed. Through a collection of observations on psychic phenomena and the fairy faith of the Celtic people by such notables as William James and Sir William Crookes (a famous chemist and scientific experimenter), Evans-Wentz tried to build a case to prove that these beliefs "cannot be explained away by any known scientific laws." He did give the future its due and added that "some beliefs which a century ago were regarded as absurdities are now regarded as fundamentally scientific. In the same way, what in this generation is heretical alike to the Chrisitian theologian and to the man of science may in coming generations be accepted as orthodox."[32]

The reviews of the time were favorable. "The author concludes," so stated the *Montrose Standard* in November, 1911, "that the fairy faith is one aspect of a world-wide animism and that it should receive careful consideration from anthropologists and psychical researchers being not as popularly supposed, a mere fabric of groundless belief." The *Manchester Guardian* four months later, noted his "non-scoffing nature," and his stressing of the simple life. David Starr Jordan, then president of Stanford, sent his congratulations.[33]

Evans-Wentz continued on, writing small articles for learned journals and giving papers on the subject of the fairy faith. At the time of publication he had received his B.Sc. from Oxford and a Doctorate from the University of Rennes, Brittany (his attendance at the latter was noted only in his diaries when he received his degree). He was a man-about-campus at Jesus College, which was fast becoming a home for

him. More than once there are references in his notes to his giving dinners at the prestigious Randolph Hotel in town or of his addressing the Phi Beta Kappa society. The paradox from his earlier days, that of his philosophy of the simple life and his scorning of materialism, continued to run up against his practical worldly needs.

"You say that money doesn't amount to anything," his father wrote him in September, 1912, sending along $100 as requested, "but I see you need considerable all the time. The only way to get it is to work for it." The elder Wentz further stated that he believed his son's work would only benefit a few scientists, not "the race as a whole."[34]

If such fatherly advice soured the younger man, no mention was ever made. Evans-Wentz continued his sojourn on the island of Britain and in the city he considered the "capital of the world"—London. Though he marveled at the city's delights, he worried at the many weakly bodies of its citizens, especially the boys whom he often viewed swimming during his many trips to Hyde Park. "Twice prisoners," he reflected. Once in body and twice by being of the city itself.[35] He never considered himself such, for his $400 a month from his American rentals kept him quite comfortable.

In late 1913 a significant event took place that allowed him even more of a gentleman's existence as well as propelling him closer to the study of the Dharma. His father renegociated his son's leases and his monthly income rose to $1600, a princely sum in those days. He welcomed such freedom with nary a hint of how it could possibly violate his other precepts. Characteristically, he took off and went to Dublin to view the working class problems and to further study the Celtic cultural scene; conversations with the painter, poet and mystic AE (G.W. Russell) and tea with Yeats backstage.[36] On New Year's day, 1914, he landed in Brussels.

His stay in northern Europe was brief, he didn't like so much ice and snow.[37] So, he took a leisurely cruise down the Rhine and ended up in Monte Carlo. Obstensibly he went there for cultural reasons, but it was the Casino that fascinated him. Again and again he returned there to view the gaming; the thoughts of it even pursued him whilst meditating at the national theatre (itself housed in the Casino). Evans-Wentz was not amused at those who indulged at the tables. He noted the "class of idle, rich women with fingers flashing with precious stones, with enormous diamonds."[38]

"Oh, to live the Greek life (of purity)!"[39] he lamented to his diary, not carrying such thoughts into explanations, however.

He also scorned the sex life of the people along the French Riveria,

and deplored the young boys who preyed on British homosexuals. Displaying his usual abhorance of such public displays, he set out to study it as a scholar. Evans-Wentz hired some of the young men to detail to him the problems they faced. Page after page of his diaries graphically detailed how so many of these boys were lured into the profession, how they survived and how they worked blackmail and robbery.[40] He yearned for a more beautiful life for them and for himself. The further he traveled (to Genoa, Lugano, Milan), the more he worried over them and over the general lack of brotherhood he was encountering.[41]

"I am not in love with the modern world," he wrote, "but rather with the Greek world."[42]

Rome only brought out his anti-clerical attitudes. Commenting on the number of priests in the Holy City, he felt it was a "pity that so many young men should be in training to devote their lives to so imperfect a faith."[43] The crx of his concern over Roman Christianity was its "great boasts of its complete triumph over paganism," which he felt was glorified in "certain of the prayers attached to the church altars."[44]

Such feelings could be expected from a young man who had just spent several years studying the pagan beliefs in the huts and villages of Celtic Europe. However, Evans-Wentz had long since declared himself against the hypocrisy he saw in much of practised Christianity. He abhored the "dead formalism in most respects" of the religion he found in Rome and declared himself more interested in the rites taken over from paganism (the lighting of the Paschal fire on Saturday morning, the washing of the altar at St. Peter's).[45]

He felt the mysteries of paganism were made outcasts by the Church. But, he stated, "to condemn paganism is to condemn the mysteries, but the mysteries cannot be condemned through lack of evidence about them." Evans-Wentz quoted P.T. Barnum; "All men like to be humbugged."[46]

Perhaps what capped his stay in Rome, and from this we can see how deeply he disliked the infringement of conventional morality into his feelings of artistic beauty, was his viewing of the statue of Venus. It was then draped in a metal dress on orders from the Pope. "Some day," he wrote, "let us hope, when all the churches of Rome have become museums rather than places of ecclesiastical ritual observances called religion, the plaster fig leaves will be replaced and art and beauty will once more be free in Rome."[47]

All in all, his experiences in the Latin countries disturbed him greatly. Himself a puritan, he disliked the lack of public morals he observed there. Long a lover of artistic purity and the beauty of artistic endeavor,

he couldn't stand conventional restraints. A case could be made of him being something of a prig, indeed evidence of this is not lacking. Persons losing no opportunity to find fault sometimes themselves are more fascinated than repelled by the objects of their reactions. It is important to note these concerns, for they appear again and again throughout his life. Rather than mellowing with age, they intensified. Evans-Wentz never seemed to reach an accomodation with them.

Greece provided a calmer interlude for him. His pilgrimage to Delphi opened up more avenues for philosophical speculation and peace. "It is a rare priviledge," he admitted, "to visit the sites where the great souls of past times have lived and thought."[48]

Evans-Wentz scrambled over the steep, rocky hills nearby, viewing sunsets and further developing his themes on the value of the simple life. He grew to believe that the lack of purpose in cities only led idle men to criminal activity. Whereas peasants, he thought, had their minds more free for reflection and that after a day's work on the farm their "sleep is sound and sweet."[49]

Such comforting thoughts followed him throughout his life, despite examples to the contrary. The farm life and the peasant mentality were ideals for him, especially when coupled with the old Greek ways. Athens was not for him, it was "too modern."[50]

FOUR

Early in August, 1914, Evans-Wentz wrote in his diary, "Europe has relapsed into barbarism."[1]

While his idyll was not abruptly terminated by the outbreak of the Great War, it did cause some difficulties. The money freeze plagued him. Mail became sporadic. He was in Greece at the time and soldiers were everywhere. Villages were emptied of young men; the cities were crowded with uniforms and rumors flew along the streets. Either to escape the madness or just to continue his traveling, which was fast becoming compulsive, Walter Evans-Wentz boarded the S.S. Saidneh and sailed for Turkey.[2]

It was exciting. At dawn on the 28th of September he was anchored off Smyrna after passing through miles of mines. His ship was under orders from the British and French fleets which were then surrounding them. En masse they were moving up towards the Dardenelles through which the British had demanded free passage. The previous night had been clear with a full moon and Evans-Wentz had paced the decks, staring out over the fleet from which not one light shone.[3]

The fears and frettings from the various passengers intrigued him and the animation they transmitted was demonstrated in his writing; it was hurried and jumbled. At this time foreigners in the Ottoman Empire had special laws and courts and lived according to their own separate ways. But this had all changed and many people were being forced to leave. "The Greeks and the Turks have not learned to live as brothers," he observed, once ashore five days later.[4]

It is amazing that he was even allowed to venture inland, considering

the total mobilization that was going on. "Everywhere one goes there is the sign of war," he noted. "The streets are full of soldiers."[5] Evans-Wentz, however, was considering doing anthropological research, and with a young Maltese Britisher walked through the mud villages and farms with a view to starting such studies. Of course, the war altered these plans. Also, he described the great numbers of brigands prowling the rural areas. By the time he reached Constantinople on October 14th, he had decided there was no need to stay any longer.[6]

History decided it further. Two weeks later he was a passenger on a train taking the British and French embassies out of Turkey. It was only "by luck" he was on it at all, for the delays and the rejections at the main station had been rude and tense. "A sad parting," he said, "only silent hand lifting as the train was leaving."[7]

Within a few days he was on the S.S. Khendinal, a Mail Line ship, sleeping in the hold. None too soon had he left the area. The previous night two Allied fleet torpedo boats had come alongside and reported that the bombardment of the Dardenelles had begun. Russian troops were rumored to be streaming over the Turkish frontier.[8]

Then began a time for him he described as "taking life easy, waiting for the war to end."[9] He was in Egypt at this time and though he was not planning a long stay, it was to last 29 months. After such hard traveling, one might expect him not to be so rushed. However, he prepared a list for the remainder of the year (1915) that called for a new country to visit every few weeks and a return home through India, China and Japan by the next April.

Though this journey didn't come off, he was undeterred. Egypt had to be explored and in typical fashion he hit the decks running. Up and down the Nile he went, supposedly collecting fairy tales and folk lore from the fellahin. How many huts and villages did he move through? Who were his friends? What happened to all his notes? The only answer available is in a cryptic letter written 40 years later where he mentions an Arabic manuscript (though in English or untranslated he doesn't specify) being locked up in some room at Oxford, waiting to be published.[10] As usual, very little personal information is mentioned.

Primative methods of harvesting and living were much in evidence then along the land he described as a "gift of the Nile." He felt in Egypt that the "domestic animals and human beings live together more intimately than in many countries."[11] Evans-Wentz took photographs and studied the people. He went on the backroads and visited Coptic monasteries. There is a photo in the Stanford University Special Collections that shows him in the flowing robes of an Arab nomad, though whether

this was just a photo for home consumption or his usual dress we aren't told. For several months he just drifted along, visiting Luxor and Abydos, the home of the original cult of Osiris, the temple of the seven shrines and the temple of the "mysteries of antiquity."

Towards the end of 1915 he sauntered again into Alexandra which was then in the grip of a spy mania. The city was filled with Greeks and Italians, whom Evans-Wentz believed were in exile and shirking their military duties.[12] (Inclination, age and nationality kept him from joining in the conflagration himself, although he did make inquiries.) Even he was suspected of being a spy and he had to insist on an official investigation to prove otherwise.

Harking back to his previous preoccupation on the subject of morals, he took to task the Egyptian police, then under British command. Officers were being detailed to spy on the morals ("or immorals") of the populace. Though not one to approve of open license, Evans-Wentz scoffed at the idea of controlling private morals by "watching."[13]

His concern over these matters was merely passing, however, for he was busy collecting manuscripts as well as noting varying degress of acculturation. He felt that both the Copts and the Arabs held fast to the folk-beliefs of the ancient Egyptians rather than to the beliefs of the Arab conquerors. For either group, public pressure was more important than their own inclinations. "They will profess his father's religion rather than his own," he observed. However, he also noted a growing slackness of any religious practice.[14]

Though he knew T.E. Lawrence from their days together at Oxford (indeed, many young men of letters kept up school contacts), there is little or no record of what they did, where they visited or whether they even took tea together. None of Lawrence's biographers so much as mentions his name. But, in all seriousness, in his later years, Evans-Wentz told of his almost going off with Lawrence on his camels into the Great War.[15] The mind boggles at this claim, trying to imagine the slightly-built scholar with the amused expression on his face, beating it across the desert routing Turks.

It wasn't to be. A British show to the end, Evans-Wentz was left out of the fighting. Lawrence, a generous man to his friends, pulled a favor out of his hat and gave the idealistic American a beneficial shove towards India.

"Dear Wentz," he wrote (the letter-head reading 'General Staff, Intelligence Section, 12/10/16'), "there is no difficulty about getting to India. To be on the safe side we have wired to ask if they can allow you to wander about as you please."[16]

Lawrence had a brother, William, in New Delhi (later to return from a teaching career at St. Stephens College and be killed on the western front), who no doubt would have introduced the visitor around. At this time in the affairs of the English colonial world, which represented a healthy slice of the globe, such introductions gave one the much-desired access to the avenues of influence, or at least to the ruling order. Evans-Wentz, eccentric though he was, did not avoid such contacts though he didn't travel in those circles. In fact, often in his early years on the road he frequently met and dined with the American diplomatic community or with highly placed Oxford men.

However, it was close to a year before Evans-Wentz left for India. At the time of Lawrence's letter, he was wintering at a spot on the Egyptian coast called Camp de Caesar where for a grand total of less than a hundred dollars a month, he had a servant, a research assistant and a three-room cottage.[17] For over a year he had not turned to his diaries and he mentioned how his time had been spent high up on the local cliffs, writing and studying Egyptian mythology. By his reckoning some 60 percent of the planet was involved in the war and he felt well rid of it.[18] His plans to go to India returned more than once for consideration.

He resolved to devote the rest of his life "to practical and philosophical studies . . . I have wanted to build for myself a system of philosophy." Few persons he saw were seekers after truth. "I'm able to live in solitude . . . so may I go on free in body, in mind and in soul. This freedom is indeed the greatest of all blessings which come to man as man."[19] Both of his sisters had died as well as his mentor and friend Sir John Rhys, which may account for his introspection.

On this note, he boarded a ship in Port Said on the first of September, 1917, for a hot, three-week journey to Colombo, Ceylon.

FIVE

In those days one came to Asia by boat.

From far out at sea the heat waves shimmering over the land could be seen. Even before the tree lines came into view, a heavy stillness hung over the ocean. It appeared as though the air was exhausted. The small dhows, scattered listlessly along the roads, seemed to pay scant attention to the passing liners. The sun demands attention in these climes. All of life submits or else is destroyed through its intensity. It wasn't for nothing that departing Anglo-Indians tossed their sun *topees* (helmets) overboard in relief and ritual as they were returning Home.

Only in the late afternoon breezes off Colaba, or Colombo Harbor, or Madras do the lines become distinct, do the greens darken and the mildewed aspects of the coastal cities take on their regular characteristics. The beauty becomes apparent then, as well as the ugliness, the smells and the great press of humanity. There is life everywhere on shore. Nowhere can one look and not see someone doing something. And once landed, the contrasts of several centuries crowd in further, intermingling—interchanging—blending into so many sounds and sights and objects. A slight permeation touches the visitor, almost as though the culture, deliquescing, were being absorbed. Indecipherable at first, it represents a growing awareness of the continuum of the country that remains and becomes part of one long after one leaves.

Where did a scholar, an Oxford man with a doctorate and with a book published and almost three years in Egypt, start? On his first arrival—what did he do? Where did he go?

Among his personal effects, on an old manuscript cover, a Tibetan

aphorism is hand lettered: "Happy is he who wandereth free through all existences, as wandereth free the unbridled lion o'er all Himalayan ranges."[1] And wander he did.

In 1917 *The Times of Ceylon* praised Evans -Wentz's work at Badulla, where he was, as usual, gathering materials for a treatise—this time on the ancient customs, religions, and history of Ceylon. He was planning to present a collection of Pali manuscripts to Stanford University, which he eventually did.[2](They are now stored there in several cardboard boxes: palmleaf works on astrological discourses, commentaries on sermons and sutras, prose pieces and a Singhalese fortune-telling book.) At Badulla, a shrine in the southern mountains of the island-nation, there are great sacred caves full of bats. Then, as now, manuscripts both old and "newly ancient" could have been picked up at various prices.[3]

That he continued on to other tourist spots and pilgrimage centers by bus and train is evidenced by what he collected and kept through the years. Surviving among the dog-eared and worm-holed papers that he left are votive offerings from Adam's Peak, a mountain revered by all faiths. A foot-print shaped depression graces the summit. The Buddhists say it was left by Gautama Siddartha; the Hindus say by Shiva; Muslims feel it was left by Adam when he paused after his expulsion from Eden; and the Christians call it the mark of St. Thomas.

The offerings, made of tin (a pair of breasts, an elephant, a leg, a man figure), represent the supplicant's afflictions or concerns, and his hopes that the all-night pilgrimage to the summit will bring relief. (Wax replicas of such are for sale before the Basilica of Bom Jesus in Old Goa on the west coast of India and for the same reasons.)[4]

Come morning, the devotees watch the sunrise from the summit, as did Evans-Wentz, wrapped in a blanket. By turning to the west, one can see an atmospheric phenomenon; the shadow of Adam's Peak looming over the lower valley mists —"a dark pyramidical rainbow." It was here he noted his first *saddhu* (holy man), who, clad only in a loincloth, sat through the cold night.[5]

Only a few of his photographs from this period remain; wild jungle scenes, strange disheveled Ceylonese holy men and seascapes.[6] In the six months he spent here, he criss-crossed the island repeatedly, forever collecting, forever dispensing his collection. (Not only did Stanford benefit from his manuscript scrounging, but many of the small Ceylonnese museums as well.) Already Evans-Wentz had been introduced to holy personages, for the country abounds in saffron-clad monks and priests, and he was an incurable temple visitor. A few of these monks were Europeans, though whether he studied with or even talked to them is

another matter. Many of the details of his daily life are sketchy, though he doesn't stint on his more significant reflections.

While stopping at Anuradhapura, the site of the ancient kingdom of the same name, in north central Ceylon, he wrote, "it seems to me that the most solemn lesson which comes to us from contemplating the mighty ruins everywhere on the surface of the planet is that man should not lose himself in attachment to the things of the world even though they are outwardly the most glorious."[7]

Early in 1918 he went across the Gulf of Mannar into India.

India is laced with holy places; they festoon the lower sub-continent like dangling necklaces. To choose one and point to it as significant enough to visit first is impossible. Some are not obvious, perhaps a smear of ochre on a pile of stones, or a trident upended over a shivalingam next to an obscure stream. Sacredness is not solely demonstrated by the ornate here, but often by the simple and the small. It is the daily, almost insignificant gestures of faith wherein a people keep alive their beliefs. Nevertheless, there are places so charged with holiness and meaning to devotees that great numbers annually conduct pilgrimages to them. The attraction is such that even those not of the respective faith are drawn forward. The centers of Benares, Puri, Allahabad and Hardwar in the north stand out on the pilgrimage path and are matched by opposite numbers in the south.

However, despite his attractions to such places, Evans-Wentz appeared to have stepped up his trip through the south. Comments on the holy areas of Madurai and Tanjore were only casual. His major concerns and the object of his writings then were on the Adyar Theosophists, the Madras branch of the split between the two factions of the original Society.

At this time, Annie Besant, the Adyar leader of the Theosophical Society, was involved in the Indian political scene centering around Independence. One of the grand dames of the Society, Mrs. Besant had a background of atheism (she had once been married to an Anglican clergy man), had been a proponent of British Socialism, an early advocate of birth control and had come to Theosophy by 1891. Evans-Wentz had heard her speak while at Oxford. Although she represented an opposing faction of the Society, at odds with his Point Loma branch, he bore no grudge and wanted to interview her. Though still committed to the Society's ideals, he retained an open mind.

During his long wait to see her, Evans-Wentz was reluctantly privy to all the problems of and the in-fighting among the Adyar Theosophists. Independence, then a major issue among Indians, had become a Society

concern. This, together with the normal intrigues and squabblings of such a group, made for a lively ear-full. Always critical of spiritual shortcomings, he confided to his diary that he felt Mrs. Besant was in the political arenas due to the waning popularity of Theosophy in India.[8]

At this distance and time, some 60 years later, his recorded observations make her appear quaint. She informed him the chief influence of the Theosophical Society on Hinduism had been "to give back to the Hindus their self respect."[9] No doubt this was in reference to the Society's practice of adding classes on Hinduism and religion to their school curriculums (a practice the British didn't follow in their public schools). In fact, Colonel Olcott had avidly pressed for more respect for Buddhism in Ceylon, a position that didn't endear him to the authorities nor to the Christian missionaries.[10] Evans-Wentz reported that Mrs. Besant had declared to him that the Society had indeed checked the efforts of the latter group.[11]

"A new type, the sixth sub-race, is now developing in America," she went on, changing the subject. This matter of sub-races was a further development from the works of Madam Blavatsky, who had covered the subject extensively. "This new race will lead America and America must lead the world."[12]

He pressed for details on the alleged reincarnations of both Colonel Olcott and Madam Blavatsky then reportedly manifesting in India (both had passed away sometime before). It was a matter Evans-Wentz himself professed an inability to give judgment on. She would not discuss the matter.[13]

Though he may have omitted some of the more salient points of their talk, his report appears curious. Was he there as a peace-maker or just representing himself? Was Mrs. Besant being purposely cryptic (not an uncommon practice for those in spiritual movements)? To the uninitiated, such locutions and beliefs appear disturbing. At that time, however, the Adyar Theosophists were preparing Jiddu Krishnamurti to become the Messiah, the new World Teacher, so their outlook may well have been a bit oblique if not downright unfamiliar.[14] Religious groups, on the other hand, share a common failing— often taking themselves too seriously. This self-righteousness may account for the Society's waning popularity. Hindus and Buddhists alike do not feel the need for outsiders to tell them of the defects in their religious observations and may well have resented such, even while honoring the Society as another vehicle of the Way.

His interview with Mrs. Besant accomplished, Evans -Wentz headed north.

Early in 1919 he visited Amritsar and studied the Sikhs. Then he went to Simla, the lovely hill station in Kashmir, far north of the newly-developing capital city of New Delhi. Above Simla was a popular picnic spot called "Prospect Hill," once the site of H.P. Blavatsky's psychical experiences and therefore a Theosophical pilgrimage stop.

Afterwards, Evans-Wentz trekked the loop of hill stations, holy places and tucked-away towns that stretch along the foothills of the Himalayas. Depending on the weather, one either went over the back passes and old trading trails or else went down to the plains and laboriously, by foot, horse or bus, again journeyed back up into the valleys.

These incessant side trips brought him into contact with other back-of-beyond people, and their encounters with Evans-Wentz made lasting impressions on some of them. Laura Dewitt James, who wrote *The Word Went Forth*,[15] had met him in the Garwal town of Pauri in the early part of 1919. In her inscription in his copy, she recalled that day when both were visiting the same missionaries (his previous loathing of them perhaps temporarily suspended). Evidently he had been a source of inspiration to the young woman, who had recently come to India to teach. That day he had just dropped in for tea following a pilgrimage to Badrinath, a holy center to Vishnu further north near the Nepal border. Displaying on the floor some Tibetan tankas he had acquired, Evans-Wentz spoke to the gathering with great enthusiasm and then left.[16]

Before the Beatles "discovered" Rishikesh, the city was long a holy contemplative center and abounded with ashrams, temples and hostals to serve the faithful. It has survived quite well the acclaim of the multitudes of western seekers who have jetted in to see the local *sadhus*, tour the sites and leave. Years ago there were few Europeans who ventured into such areas and of those, fewer yet who were interested in spiritual matters.

Not far away, at a hamlet called Birbhadura, Evans-Wentz found another *sadhu*, Swami Satyananda, whom he photographed for one of his books. Though initially we are treated only to a glimpse of the man, he was to prove quite instrumental in the spiritual development of the American scholar. On a bluff above the Ganges, on ground "sanctified by centuries," the Swami had his small ashram. Day after day Evans-Wentz kept returning, taking notes and asking questions. Indian friends told him this holy man could control sleep, that he was a clairvoyant, and that he "husked the sheath covering the essential man."[17] But the road called again and Evans-Wentz went down-country to Benares.

Benares—Varanasi—Kashi, the most holy and venerated city of Hinduism. It has been estimated that perhaps one quarter of its population

has expressly journeyed there to die. As such, it has attracted the greatest collection of wandering mendicants and priests outside the huge *melas* (religious fairs). Nevertheless, Benares has housed several learned and pious beings that have served as guides to those on the Way.

"A city of philosophers," Evans-Wentz wrote, "a place of contrasts." At this time he was living in a monastery on the banks of the Ganges, busy with pen and camera. At any given hour murmuring priests can be heard, or cremations observed. The smells of ghee, incense, burning corpses and sandalwood predominate. There is a vast coming and going along the ghats. Observing all, noting everything—even a *sutee* (a widow throwing herself on her husband's funeral pyre)— he kept his eyes open for teachers.

Such a man was Swami Syamananda, a renunciate celebate who, Evans-Wentz described, "harmoniously combines power of spirituality with power of intellect and is representative of the karma yogin, who, although living in the world, has not followed the path of the householder."[18] (Traditional Hinduism dictates the four stages of a man's life; student, householder, contemplative, then a wandering mendicant.) A pious, strong-featured man (his photo adorns part of the front page of *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*), he had published an English language treatise, *Truth Revealed*, which had perhaps attracted the American to him.[19]

Though there was and remains much in Benares to repulse, one cannot help but feel and see the powerful emanations of faith that come from such a pilgrimage center. True, the air smells from cremations and the streets are dirty, but holy people are there. Some are withdrawn and never seen, others ash-smeared and matted, their distant demeanor piercing through the crowds like a sword. Many just keep traveling, further away, further north up the river or like Evans-Wentz, to the east, to the site of the Buddha's enlightenment.

Bodh Gaya is to the east of Benares, almost in a direct line from that city to the eastern seaport of Calcutta. It was not a pleasant place then, in fact Evans-Wentz considered it "unsanitary and full of foul smells."[20] Though the Bo tree was festooned with prayer flags and covered with oils, the temple "itself is in a hollow and unfortunately . . . in possession of Hindus and Buddhists are outcasts in the most holy seat of their religion."[21] Only one Buddhist monk was seen, a Tibetan. All in all, not an auspicious event, his visit. On the other hand, it could be seen as very auspicious.

With all his cross-wanderings, pilgrimages and journeys to various shrines and side trips to tourist attractions, it isn't surprising to think of

Evans-Wentz in Calcutta (given the transportation system of the day, he couldn't very well have avoided it). It had long been the hub of both mercantile and political power. And even though the central government abandoned it as the capital for the more spacious and planned environs of Delhi in 1911, Calcutta continued to throb with life. The heart of eastern India, the life's blood of the Bengali culture, the city has along its filthy lanes and odorous sewers a life so despondent and profound, so mean and so great that its natives do not consider themselves at home anywhere else.

It is a strange gateway to the edge of Tibet. That such a humid, grotesque and sweltering sprawl of a city should even be in the same province as the cool reaches of the Snowy Ranges is a geographical freak. Darjeeling, the one-time hill station retreat of maharajahs and generals, is in West Bengal, albeit in the northern-most edge. Even today it remains a popular vacation resort and a home for several ageing Anglo-Indian boarding schools and denominational institutions.

Cold winds sweep through the steep streets of Darjeeling. Europeans found it bracing and a tonic after sweating out their lives for the Empire down below. Those who could afford it sent their families and themselves up here during the hot seasons. Some never left. Occasionally, a wizened colonial can be seen in the various provisioners buying the preserves and teas of another era. Back lane houses and graveyards claimed many who couldn't face the return to the torridness of the plains or a cold-water flat that waited for the retired in the dismal greyness of the English winters.

It was here that Evans-Wentz met Sardar Bahadur Laden La, the elegant, reserved police officer who was honored by both the Tibetans and the British for his talents and his devotion to duty. As recorded in *The Tibetan Book of The Great Liberation*, his background was awesome.[22] His language abilities, his travels during the Tibetan campaign with Francis Younghusband, and his governmental and philanthropic Buddhist activities demonstrated a full, rich life. Such a being could only be a magnet to the spiritually-oriented American, fresh from an active pilgrimage on the plains, who even in Darjeeling could not keep out of the bazaars. He prowled there incessantly for arcane manuscripts.

That Laden La greatly assisted in the translations of the Tibetan series books is beyond question. That he introduced him around town and steered him to learned lamas and interested laymen was a fact. But the most important thing he did for Evans-Wentz was casual. He wrote a letter. It was an introduction to a certain headmaster at the Maharaja's

Bhutia Boy's School in Gangtok, Sikkim. The headmaster was reportedly a good translator, which is what Evans-Wentz was in need of.

In 1919, the headmaster, the Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup, had only three more years to live, but in that time he was to perform one of his greater acts in a life that had been filled with scholarship, accomplishment and controversy. His soon-to-be-realized disciple was going to assist him in bringing the Dharma to the west.

SIX

The Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup was a remarkable man.

Not seven years before he had acted as translator/ teacher to Alexandra David-Neel (*Magic and Mystery in Tibet*) at the behest of the Crown Prince of Sikkim, Sidkeong Tulka (himself an Oxford friend of Evans-Wentz). During this time he assisted the French scholar as well as made attempts to run the boy's school. By her accounts he was quite a despot.[1] Long cursed by the demon drink (so she states, but collaborated on by Lama Govinda)[2] and given over to total absorption in his readings, Dawa-Samdup quite often would wander off for days, forgetting his charges while he contemplated on metaphysical plains.

Only in an Asian setting could such behavior be accepted, let alone allowed to continue. Evidently his good intentions, his outstanding service and his spiritual bent were well-known and his translator's talent quite appreciated. That he may have failed in his teaching profession wasn't due to his lack of trying. The attempt was made and the laws of karma took over from there. Karma has a vastly different meaning to those who understand it than to those who use it as a platitude.

Well might it be wondered if the two men were really qualified to serve each other. Perhaps Dawa-Samdup's erraticism and his otherworldliness served as a balance with and a complement to the reserve and the erudition of the younger Evans-Wentz. His own humbleness and good humor no doubt attracted the impressionable American as well. It may well be quite wrong to hold Dawa-Samdup's contradictions and superstitions against him in light of his subsequent accomplishments.

It was a dark, rainy day when Evans-Wentz passed over the Sikkim border and little did he realize what was in store for him as he went down the undulating trails and over bridges. He mainly wanted to trek some and to see this Lama for translation work; he hoped "to be in Gangtok for a month."[3] He photographed and took copious notes, alternately following his two women porters then going ahead of them. The sparsely populated countryside impressed him, as did the beauty of the small waterfalls and the well-cultivated fields. He was entranced by the sacredness inherent with the trail-side chortens and distant temples.

The two chief buildings in Gangtok then were on opposite ends of the small town; one was the Palace, the other the Residency of the British Political Officer. As the latter was out, Evans-Wentz presented himself to the young king, brother of his lately-deceased comrade from Oxford. He lost no time in asking if he could have access to the monastery libraries. After a relatively short audience, he was told, "yes," access was permitted though no books could be taken. Also, approval was given to use the services of Dawa-Samdup. Upon being dismissed, Evans-Wentz went to see this headmaster and conferred three hours with him over the manuscript he had carried from Darjeeling.[4]

There came to be a succession of quiet mornings for study in the relative hush of the mountain capital. After walking over from the *dak* (postal or guest) bungalow, Evans-Wentz would sit with his Tibetan mentor and pour over the *termas* (Tibetan for "treasures" when denoting previously lost scriptural works) which the Lama had collected as well as those his new colleague had scrounged.

Though we aren't given a counterview by Evans-Wentz of Dawa-Samdup's headmastering, we are told that in the early hours of these mornings he spent time with his American "disciple"[5] (a title given by Evans-Wentz himself for which no independent verification exists; no mention was found in the late Lama's diaries or in his papers). They translated and copied endlessly, Evans-Wentz serving as Dawa-Samdup's living "English dictionary," as he affectionately called him.[6]

Quite different this was from the afternoons the Lama spent with the French scholar Alexandra David-Neel and the Crown Prince. There in the Chogyal's English garden they sat discussing nuances of Tibetan Buddhism. Often other learned lamas came and while Dawa-Samdup sat off to one side in deference, the arcane rituals and spiritual practices were discussed with this woman who had such a dedicated and singular purpose. It was the Lama himself who had appointed Yongden, then a boy of 15, to be her personal attendant (she later adopted him as her son). That Yongden had expressed a desire to see the distant Philip-

pines seemed as good a reason as any to give him a position with this strange woman.[7]

Sikkim is a fairyland with steep hills, cloudy mountains and rhododendron forests. It appears part of another dimension. Though peaceful, it isn't always tranquil. The forces of nature often contend fearsomely. Great storms have been known to lash out suddenly with seemingly personal malevolence, and more than one traveler has reported feeling singled out.[8] Then, and sometimes during the same day, quiet irridescent periods appear when the only sounds to break the stillness are the calls of birds. That such a process has been likened to the inner battles for spiritual growth isn't surprising. Evans-Wentz felt the atmosphere there was holy.[9]

It was still a functioning principality then. The clatter and turmoil of plains politics were a distant murmur, if not totally stilled. This quietness not only allowed Evans-Wentz to concentrate on his scholarship, but gave him time and space to develop his thoughts on the spirituality of places, or, as he put it, "the brooding presence of an ineffable greatness."[10] He believed that the purifying thoughts in a locale, over the course of millenniums, led to every part of the area being permeated with "the magic of the divine *sakti*."[11]

He attempted to incorporate into his life the teachings of the *Bardo Thodol*, The Tibetan Book of the Dead. At one point he admonished himself (and his readers) "not to fritter away in the worthless doings of this world, the supreme opportunity afforded by human birth, lest by our spiritual improvidence we depart from this life spiritually empty-handed."[12] Such self-admonitions occur time and again throughout his diaries and his works. Preachy though they may sound, they served as reminders to him to keep to the Way.

His traveling compulsions were as evident in Sikkim as they were elsewhere. His time with his teacher was interrupted with side trips, treks and visits to Darjeeling. Perhaps the trips were to collect more data, perhaps the ceremonies he viewed and the rites he observed in country monasteries were directly in connection with their work. In June and August he returned to Darjeeling for more manuscripts and to visit a dentist. He also toured the northern part of the kingdom.[13]

Then a quiet period set in and great note was made in his diaries that he lived the life of a devotee.[14] As usual, he didn't spell out what this meant. Years later, in 1980, T.T. Samdup, the late Lama's son, remembered what some of Evans-Wentz's practices were. The American, he recalled, had lived on a light diet of Quaker Oats, milk and fruits.[15]

That he may have participated in Buddhist rituals on a daily basis, or rose early for study or meditation remains speculative.

Already, however, it appeared he had made strides in ridding himself of what he reported in *The Tibetan Book of The Great Liberation* as the five hinderances: lustful desire, malice, sloth and idleness, pride, self-righteousness and doubt.[16] It wasn't reported just how he went about doing this and if such practices extended to Dawa-Samdup.

Of primary importance always to both of them was the translating. They knew they acted as pioneers and Evans-Wentz himself has noted that *The Tibetan Book of The Dead* would be subject to revision.[17] (As of 1981, other translations have appeared, including a revision of the Evans-Wentz version in German by Lama Govinda.)[18]

Evans-Wentz had little knowledge of Tibetan. Buddhism, yes; he was familiar with the doctrines, the sutras and the commentaries. But of the written language he freely admitted his ignorance.[19] After his death, it became fashionable for scholars of some schools to criticise him for this, considering his lack of proper credentials a major hinderance in his work.[20] Others have remarked on the "unnecessary" Biblical tone of the translations.[21] (The Biblical language of his series was employed as a matter of personal preference, and, also, because he felt the ordinary reader might be more familiar with its style.)[22]

In recent Tibetan Buddhist translations, however, acknowledgment of his pioneering efforts are given, most notably by Chogyam Rimpoche.[23] The Clear Light Series of Tibetan works by Shambala Publications Inc., of Boulder, Colorado, are dedicated to Evans-Wentz. Perhaps there is a matter of empathy to consider, or as E.M. Forster remarked in *A Passage to India*, the "truth of mood" may be just as important, if not more so, than the proper credentials thought to be necessary by certain scholars.[24]

Far from being an opportunist, Walter Evans-Wentz had a distinct understanding of what he wanted to do and was quite content to work with whom he considered to be a master. Lama Govinda has spoken of such charges against the late doctor as being trivial. He stressed the constructive attitude of the man, his humble approaches to Tibetan Buddhism, and his knowledge of his own limitations. At that time there were no resource books, and, said the Lama, "what he did was most remarkable as he was the first."[25]

And so the months passed, while Evans-Wentz and Dawa-Samdup worked on their translations. After the *Bardo Thodol* manuscript there were countless other notes and treatises to go through. (Out of them came the Milarepa biography and *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*.)

A prolific man in his own right, Dawa-Samdup just that year had published his English-Tibetan Dictionary, and his additions to Sir John Woodruff's work on Tantricism had also recently appeared.[26]

Sixty years ago, persons residing in out-of-the-way stations of the British Empire husbanded their entertainments, and as a result conversation was a great social means. In one of his few references to a social matter while there, Evans-Wentz told of his dinners with the British Political Officer, Major M.L. Campbell. Often learned lamas and stray travelers would come (notably the Cleathers of Darjeeling, a spiritually-oriented family), and their discussions would range over matters not necessarily spiritual.[27]

Once, special note was made of "Madam Blavatsky and her writings. In connection with the question of whether or not she had been as claimed, resident in Tibet, probably at Tashi-lhunpo, seat of the Tashi Lama, undetected by the British."[28] The outcome of this discussion wasn't recorded, but it would be interesting to know in light of the fact that David-Neel herself had slipped into Tibet undetected.[29]

After he and Dawa-Samdup had completed much of their work together, Evans-Wentz left to spend a day in Tibet while the Lama made plans to leave for his lecturer's appointment at the University of Calcutta. This was to be no mean post, for the University was a prestigious institution and the lectureship in Tibetan would allow him to spread the Dharma even further.

Though it may seem trivial to journey to Tibet for a single day, that is what Evans-Wentz did. It was the only time in his life that he ever touched Tibetan soil. Up among the frozen lakes and water courses at Natu La, a 14,000 foot pass east of Gangtok, above the dwarf rhododendrons and ground cover, where prayer flags demonstrated the only life, he spent a few short hours. That day, he reported he watched "a vast sea of fleecy whiteness boiling up from the world beneath."[30]

Two months later he was back in Birbhadura determined to compare his Tibetan teachings with actual practice. Living in a grass shack and wearing the dress of a *sadhu*, he attempted to gain "some actual insight into the actual practice of yoga sufficient to enable me to continue the practice afterwards."[31]

The peace there was like the peace in so much of rural India. It must be experienced before it can adequately be described and understood. At dawn, a great solitariness surrounds one. For a westerner accustomed to even the slightest city noises, it is a discovery of the world. It is more than just farmers singing to their bullocks and the jingling bells

on the draft animals. It is the quiet, all-pervasive experience of being among people to whom the earth remains a sustaining mother-force.

By his reports, the area had been unspoiled, pristine because the Europeans hadn't settled there. "An inviolable mile of *sadhus* are the chief inhabitants of these solitudes," he declared.[32] Rats, tame enough to take food from his hand, shared his quarters. Peacocks and parrots darted through the compound; crocodiles lived in the creek behind his hut. Elephants and spotted deer roamed the neighborhood.[33]

Again he took copious notes, but this time he practiced as well. Swami Satyananda had a program to neutralize the body through posture; for four hours and 40 minutes each day the student was to sit, unmoving. After a year of this practice, when the body was neutralized, then the practice of *Pranayama* (literally "death breathing") could be taken up. Only one meal a day was permitted and midnight to six AM was allowed for sleeping.[34]

Slowly, Evans-Wentz made progress. Twenty minutes slipped into thirty, then a hour, then two hours.[35] Ever busy with his camera, he had his own photo taken (and never published or shown) of himself and the Swami both in the correct posture and dressed in loincloths.[36] His presence, however, was a matter of some speculation among the locals and many found their way to the tiny ashram to see the "American *sadhu*."[37] A negative from this period was found in his personal effects showing him in the saffron robes of the renunciate.[38] Realizing the Indian propensity to give homage to those in such garments, Evans-Wentz must have had some curious meetings.

His meditations must have proven fruitful, for he bought property there with an eye to setting up a religious study group with the Swami.[39] This purchase was the first of the strange acquisitions he made throughout his life. Before his final departure from India, there were three known pieces of property, each in a holy area.[40] In the case of Puri, on the Bay of Bengal, it was over 1,000 acres, enough to have him registered after Independence as a *zamindar*, a landlord.[41] The Birbhadura land was kept in trust by Swami Satyananda when Evans-Wentz left to continue his wanderings. Eventually, he planned to have it joined with the Puri property as part of the study center. Upon his death, both pieces of land passed over to the Maha-Bodhi Society, an India-based Theravada Buddhist group, and their collective futures disappeared in a maze of unanswered letters and red tape.[42]

In June, he went further north, up towards the cave of Amar-Nath, the ice lingam sacred to Shiva, Lord of the World, wherein are the headwaters of the Ganges. Pilgrims have climbed the path there for centu-

ries, some crawling and some carried, but devotedly they have filed up the rocky paths.

"All holy places," Evans-Wentz wrote, "in varying degrees have been made holy by that same occult power of mind to enhance the psychic character of the atom of matter; they are the ripened fruit of spirituality, the proof of thought's all-conquering and all-tranforming supremacy. Thus in every center of holiness the seer beholds in manifestation the magic of the *sakti*, which, when it shall have invaded and possessed every locality, will literally have made of this material plane of existence a terrestrial paradise . . . indescribably, invisibly, immanent and transcendent beauty and peace sanctify every place of pilgrimage."[43] He included the cave at Amar-Nath, 13,000 feet above sea level where he too felt the "estatic joys attained by the pilgrim."[44]

This ideal was a far cry from that which centers such as Rishikesh were to become, where instead of the contemplative quiet, busloads of tourists and reporters "generally congregate and gather impressions and materials for their observations on 'secret India.' A few holy men are always on display in these places from dawn to dark for the benefit of such visitors," according to Sachindra Majumdar, a New York yoga teacher and author.[45]

Majumdar himself once lived at Uttarkashi, some distance downstream from Gangotri (the headwater glacier of the Ganges), but he described what a journey was for a pilgrim in those districts.

"Our road," Majumdar wrote, "sometimes overhung high precipices at the foot of which, a thousand feet or more below, the Ganges with its swirling waters breaking to foam and spray against the rocks and pebbles, looked like a strip of white ribbon. In spots the road skirting the cliffs was so narrow that two could not walk abreast. Sheep, mules and men had often slipped and hurtled down to death below. Five to ten miles apart there were wayside shops and sheds where pilgrims could stay overnight. Sometimes we slept on a bench on the open veranda of a shop. In between these rest houses were only wild stretches of forest where nobody lived."[46]

It is easy to understand the appeal such journeys had for the romantic side of Walter Evans-Wentz.

Perhaps the erratic trails he left through the Himalayan foothills can be explained more by the climatic conditions of the area rather than by divining the compulsions of his life; heavy monsoons during the summer months limit travel, as do the coldest months of winter. Though he appears to have glutted himself through the summer of 1920 with trips to Badrinath as well as to Kedarnath (some 400 meters higher than the

former and one of the twelve Jyotir-lingas of Lord Shiva),[47] there were few other times during the year when such areas were accesible. As it was, he ran into heat and rain.

A detailed report still exists that he made for the District Collector of those areas. As he stayed in *dak* bungalows, pilgrim shelters, temples and Public Works houses, his trip was of interest to the authorities who worried that pilgrims and travelers were being cheated, the roads were uncared for, and so forth. His notes were extremely exact, for he took the charge given seriously. The prices of everything at all stops were minutely detailed, the conditions of all trails traveled on were listed, and even the state of repair or disrepair of every government structure.[48] If nothing else, Evans-Wentz was thorough.

Not that he spent his time working only for the Collector. He was involved in ceremonies and discussions with pandits (learned scholars), many of whom, he charged, had money as their "chief God." Evans-Wentz lamented that many of the older, poorer pilgrims were too tired in mind and body to appreciate the beauty of the mountains and temples, which he actively photographed. As expected, he ran into holy men right and left, one of whom claimed to go into a trance for two months at a time without taking food or water.[49]

Come October, he again returned to Darjeeling. In perhaps his only reference to Dawa-Samdup in his diaries, he wrote that the Lama had been given the use of "Lhasa Villa" for the season by his university.[50] It was a sad time for the family, for one son had just died of consumption, an affliction that was to claim the Lama himself.

Despite his "tiring journey" there, Evans-Wentz was soon in the bazaars, haggling over and buying manuscripts. He told of purchasing one of 111 folios for only 60 rupees.[51] Though friends of his were there, plus his teacher and his family, we are not treated to any note of them. In fact, it is most curious that he mentioned the Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup more after the man died than when he was alive. The few letters that have survived that they exchanged show a surprisingly distant and formal tone.[52] Even in Dawa-Samdup's diaries there is no word to suggest otherwise.[53] There is nothing at all foreshadowing the later declarations that the Lama was the guru of Walter Evans-Wentz, nothing about the "teachings" the American was supposed to have received.

Their relationship was an anomaly that can only be inferred through the introductions to his books and from various hints alluded to and articles penned later in his life.

SEVEN

At the beginning of summer in Puri, the holy seacoast town in Orissa, the Great Car Festival takes place. During this event, the image of Jagannath —Lord of The World—is placed on a huge 50 foot high wooden chariot and pulled through the streets. Thousands gather here to worship and vie with one another in the crowded lanes to join in the sacred procession. It isn't unknown for devotees to hurl themselves beneath the wheels of the giant cart. At one time the British attempted to ban such ceremonies because of the deaths. Nevertheless, both persisted and pilgrims still gathered.

Walter Evans-Wentz came to Puri as well, though it was with the new year in 1921.

It isn't surprising he would go there. A short overnight hop from Calcutta by train and a short bus ride from the station—short by Indian standards. Thirty, forty—even a hundred miles is not long to travel to visit someone, let alone go for devotional reasons. After his mountain rambles this must have been a piece of cake for him, traveling on flat ground.

Puri does not stand alone in this part of eastern India in her sacredness. Konarak, town of the famous Sun Temple, is some 50 miles further up the coast. (Ever the speculative philologist, Evans-Wentz once suggested a connection between two ancient religious centers; Karnack in Egypt and Carnac in Brittany.[1] It doesn't take much imagination to include this Indian one.) The temple is dedicated to Surya, the Sun God, and is built in the image of his mythical chariot. It stands on 24 enormous carved wheels and is drawn by seven God-like horses.

The Cathedral city of Bhubaneswar is nearby. Once containing more than 7,000 temples during the golden days of the eighth through the thirteenth centuries, only a handful now remain. Its frescoes, in the Lingaraj Temple, attract thousands of visitors; there are also intricate carvings of animals, gods, people and flora.

However, it was in Puri that Evans-Wentz met the sage Sri Yukteswar Giri, the guru of Parmahansa Yogananda. In a quiet ashram on the Bay of Bengal, this saintly man dedicated his life to training his disciples to be concerned over the world's welfare. In fulfillment of a previous vision, he sent his most favored student, Yogananda, on a teaching journey to the western world, to bring the yoga of his order to a people he felt to be in need. The Self-Realization Fellowship, the fruit of this journey, flourishes still.

"Sri Yukteswar was of gentle mien and voice," Evans-Wentz wrote, "of pleasing presence, and worth the veneration that his followers spontaneously accorded him. Every person who knew him, whether of his own community or not, held him in the highest esteem. I vividly recall his tall, straight, ascetic figure; robed in the saffron-colored garb of one who has renounced worldly quests, as he stood at the entrance of the hermitage to give me welcome. His hair was long and somewhat curly and his face bearded. His body was muscularly firm, but slender and well-formed and his step energetic."[2]

Other teachers and holy men were there. Some he introduced in his book *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*.[3] Though they were Hindus and not Buddhists, they greatly assisted him by explaining various theological points. They discussed obscure scriptural references from his manuscripts and talked of the arcane practices passed on by word-of-mouth. The one who remains the most obscure of these men, the one who seemingly appeared for a single act in the late doctor's travels and then disappeared was a man named Sadhu Charan. He gave Evans-Wentz 25 acres in Puri for the school of yoga he'd wanted so badly to establish. Held in trust by the Sadhu's son, it was to join eventually with the school to be initiated by Swami Satyananda.[4]

Then off he went, further south.

Evans-Wentz journeyed to the Nilgiri Hills on the Mysore-Madras border and studied the Todas. An obscure tribal group, they were facing extinction as a separate entity even then. They were and remain a curious people, ones who have basically scorned the mainstream of modern India and have held fast to their own ways. For a scholar it was a rare chance to see a tribal people—rumored to be vaguely Jewish—still surrounded by their ancient customs.[5]

Late in March, 1921, he was on a small passenger steamer off the Malabar Coast. Days later, he landed in Trivandrum on the southern tip of India and proceeded up and down the coastal ranges, the Western Ghats. In a sweep of travel he took in the mountains, the jungles, the lowland inlets and the tropical farms. Forever manuscript hunting, he took time off again to donate his finds to the small local museums he ran across.[6] Perhaps he knew there would come a time in the not-too-distant future when such articles would be sold for conversation pieces instead of scholarly pursuits, when they would become objects to be hawked to tourists.

Not long afterwards he landed in Ceylon. Though he told the newspapers he was still collecting manuscripts for an occult book on the country, other concerns were taking center stage.[7] His father had died the previous February and in way of consoling himself, Evans-Wentz wrote that the man's "interest in psychical research had . . . created the conditions of spiritual freedom into which I came into my present incarnation." As neither parent had ever interfered in religious matters with him, he declared (again) he was "never touched by the Church."[8]

However, this time in Ceylon he greatly "touched" the Church.

"Did I tell you," he wrote Dawa-Samdup, "of the big fight I have been having here with the missionaries, chiefly the Roman Catholics? As a crisis, I challenged the chief one to public debate, but he was too afraid to accept. The refusal gives me, so public opinion says, the victory. Christians admit the same. The missionaries are cursing me . . . the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims . . . backed me. You would have had a fine time had you been here to look on and give a speech or two."[9]

What started as a lecture subject on rebirth bloomed into a heated religious controversy. At one point church officials and missionaries were pressuring the government into deporting him. With characteristic openness, he presented himself to the police. Laughing (so he said later), they told him there was nothing to be concerned over.[10] He returned to the lectern and the writing desk and continued the fight.

"I will put up with no nonsense from missionaries," he vowed.[11]

"The doctrine," he had written earlier on rebirth, "is thoroughly scientific and I believe that the scientists are now on the trail of proving it scientifically through psychoanalysis and the study of the sub-consciousness, the storehouse of all memory most of which is unknown to the normal consciousness of man. I think it will be done within the next 50 years."[12]

His grasp of Church history and his understanding of Christian rituals was extreme, as was his scholarly grounding and belief in rebirth.

Throughout 1921 and into the next year he bombarded the public with a series of articles in *The Buddhist Chronicle* on the subject and took the Christians further to task over their shortcomings.

"I am not of the compromising nature when it comes to battling with Orthodoxy of the miscalled 'Christian,' " he admitted.[13] One of his standard contentions was that reincarnation had been part of Church doctrine in the early years of its formation. He struck at their lack of contemporary unity, citing the numerous sub-sects abounding in India and in Ceylon as elsewhere and their inability to get along with each other. He lauded the Nestorians, early Christian missionaries who settled in Central Asia in the fourteenth century, whom he felt had less materialism and more faith than their twentieth century brethren.

Then after a year of writing and lecturing—often for a simpler lifestyle and educational system—he packed up and left.

"The fight is not yet finished," he promised . "I shall probably not keep quiet even in America, nor later in England."[14] Controversy followed him up the gangway on the eve of his departure. In his diary on May 21, 1922, he spoke of an editorial in the Catholic newspaper, *The Mirror*, which again called for his deportation. "I can confidently assure them they will find little more than my memory to deport; and I imagine that they will hardly be able to succeed with that any more than with my more solid parts."[15]

EIGHT

Evans-Wentz left another erratic trail.

Not one to be at a loss, even after the death of Dawa-Samdup in 1922 (an event he barely noted), he spent himself without stint on further traveling. The compulsions that governed his life led him in the next 19 years to a state of almost continuous movement. He was no casual tourist, he saw his traveling as part of his spiritual progression and viewed his life and work in the context of world service. In his Milarepa biography, he mentions how in the course of his own journeys in the Snowy Ranges he did not find one yogi who did not believe in similar interpretations of the Way.[1]

Thus sanctified, his journeys became the world pilgrimage of his youthful vision. A great triangular pattern developed for him; the Kumaon-Garwal area to Darjeeling to Ceylon. It became expanded over the years to a linear passage from north India to Jesus College to San Diego, California.

Though his excitement over the manuscripts must have dominated his thoughts, he barely mentioned them in his diaries. A thorough man, who wasted little time, there is no reason to doubt he used the hours spent on ships to refine and hone to perfection his notes. Even the most prefunctory reader cannot help but notice the abundance of footnotes, explanations and reference works that make his books more accessible.

"He loved footnotes," Lama Govinda recalled, adding with a smile that of all the assistance he gave the man, of all his textual editing, he didn't dare touch the late scholar's footnotes.[2]

Directly after leaving Colombo, his wanderings brought him to China.

Evans-Wentz planned to spend several weeks there, again collecting manuscripts. With this in mind, he found the other places on the voyage barely worth noting. Peking was the city he sought, for despite the political upheavals there, the civil strife and wars and migrations, it remained one of the jewels for the scholarly acquisitive.[3] He found the city relatively untouched by the western world, and for hours he prowled the bazaars and the back streets, seeking in the study of the old, the culture and the dignity and the spiritual feelings he felt were sadly lacking in modern times.

"The whole world," he observed, "seems much the same in this age, and I am really beginning to grow weary of the spirit of the age and human society in general."[4]

Again, another ship, this one touching briefly in Japan. Little was ever said about this country though he kept over the years the tourist brochures handed out by his travel agents.[5]

Then Vancouver, Canada and finally—Seattle, Washington. It was the first time in his own country since he'd left to study at Oxford in the years before the first world war. He noted the changes avidly, he felt the "orderliness combined with mechanical efficiency."[6] The Pacific Northwest cities intrigued him; they seemed honest and good natured. After so many years of railing against his America, it must have been a delightful shock, especially after Asia. The scholar who had sat in huts with sages was returning home as though a tourist.

But the object of his journey was not light-hearted. He headed for San Diego to settle up his father's estate, though why his brother, Richard, then living in Los Angeles, nor his step-mother, Lillian, could not do so remains a mystery. However, the father and his traveling son had such inter-connected business associations there possibly were no others who could handle the sales, transfers and paper shufflings as well as Walter could. According to his volumnous notes of this period, the years of spiritual endeavor had not damped his abilities to drive hard bargins. Within weeks, the land and the money was transferred and the family business set to rights.[7]

It wasn't all work. Katherine Tingley was still alive and in control out at Loma Land, and in early February of 1923 she had a series of meetings and dinners with him. To Evans-Wentz she remained always the "hard worker" for the good of the world and their discussions were lively and far-reaching.[8]

They talked about the Theosophical movement throughout the world, especially in the areas he had lived in. Evans-Wentz reported he'd brought up the visit he'd had with Annie Besant. What came from this

discussion wasn't recorded, but given the differences between the two women, it probably wasn't tepid. (Madam Tingley, upon assuming control of the Society from William Judge, had taken a world crusade for the Theosophists. Her reception from the India group—led by Colonel Olcott and Mrs. Besant— was not pleasant and since then the relations had remained distant and cold. It was left to Gottfried de Purucker, her successor at Point Loma, to mend fences.)[9]

Madam Tingley told him of her visions, the ones that caused her to found the chapter there overlooking San Diego Bay. Goldland she called it, and had identified it by locating two slips of Eucalyptus trees she had planted in a previous life.[10]

As he himself believed in reincarnation, this revelation was received as seriously as delivered. No reason ever surfaced for him to doubt her. However, he did receive a jolt when she took him into her private offices and displayed an alabaster box which she declared held the ashes of H.P. Blavatsky. Evans-Wentz was astonished. In his diary he confided he had no idea where she had picked them up or what she was going to do with them.[11]

At this time many of his friends in San Diego were Theosophists. When he wasn't lecturing at the chapter (many surviving members related how the children called him "New India" because he talked about it so),[12] he spent time in visiting. Will Fay, one of his Stanford classmates, had a large family and the children remember the formality of Evans-Wentz when he came to dinner. Formality, however, didn't stop his stories, which fascinated them. One especially that he told was of a holy man who kept himself in a coma for 20 years. Often they would all go on a picnic or to Warner's Hot Springs, a spa to the northeast of the city.[13]

The Fay children also thought he looked "weird" because of his round, blue eyes.[14] Marion Lester, a retired artist who once lived at Loma Land, disagreed and felt he was a quiet and pleasant man to meet, though small and somewhat thin. She was present at many of his lectures and tells of how he would encourage others to come back to India with him. Whether anyone took him up on it or not, she doesn't remember.[15]

As usual, he didn't spend long in California. By August he was in Trenton, visiting all the places of his boyhood and seeing his brother-in-law, Joe Hunt. All his friends, he said, were either dead or "swallowed up by busy America." Morbidly he felt they were relatively broken by life and longing to die.[16] This theme carried over into a newspaper interview in that city where he said he had come "to feel that much of the western way of living is a waste of time. The western world seems filled

with speculations of all kinds, real estate booms (his own hand in this disregarded for the moment), oil development, mechanical inventions . . . which lead to the obsession of money that possesses the occidental."[17]

He declared he wouldn't live in America and admitted privately his native town was "yet almost as foreign as a foreign land."[18] There was little to hold him there.

Sometime in 1924 Evans-Wentz returned to Oxford. (There had been a cryptically-referred-to trip to Kalimpong, near Darjeeling, to secure the Milarepa manuscript from Dawa-Samdup's family.)[19] Up until 1941, the University was his only stable address. Mail was sent to him, c/o Jesus College, Oxford. Professor Audt told of an arrangement his friend had with the college steward to store his papers and forward his letters.[20] In essence, it became his office and his home. It was there in the presence of his former teachers and colleagues he decided to adapt the Milarepa work for publication (Dawa-Samdup had been working on it since 1902). Though he worried, as usual, that errors "might have crept in," he thought it wiser to place the copy he had before the world. He faithfully followed Dawa-Samdup's translation.[21]

To a man who had spent several years in constant travel, often under trying conditions, the academic quietness of Oxford must have been a blessing. A medieval collection of buildings, it is quite possible for one to lose all sense of time and hurry in the back lanes and courtyards. The familiar dignity and intellectual endeavor may have served as a tonic and an encouragement to him, though it didn't prove to be a distraction.

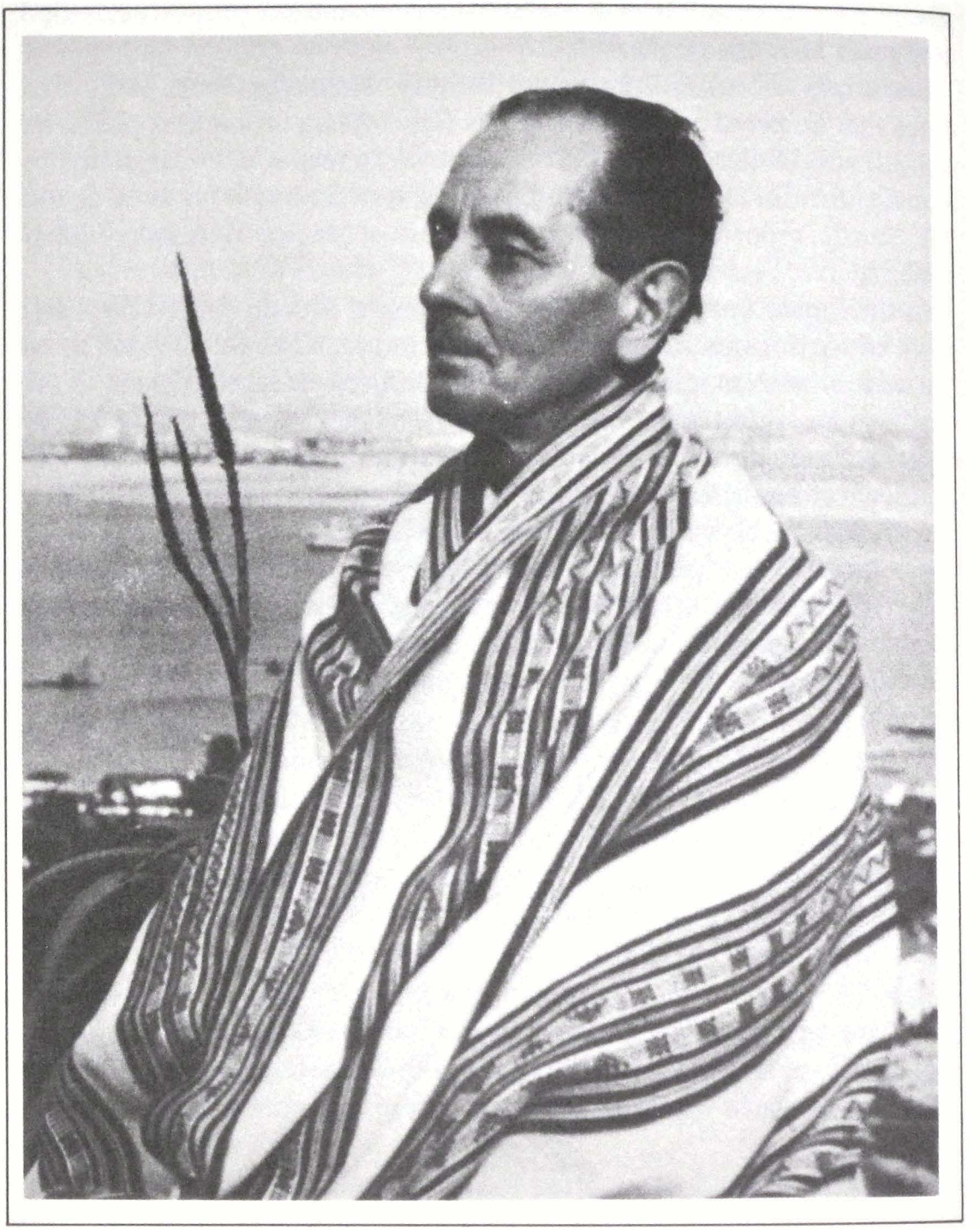
In the libraries and in his various lodgings, Evans -Wentz poured over his secondary works, checking and rechecking until the early hours of the morning. His footnotes are an indication of the depths he went to in attempting to make clear his presentations. Scholars were in abundance there, many of whom lucubrated with him over the twists and turns of the manuscripts.

Still, the translations were far from perfect. As Lama Govinda mentions in our introduction, there were flaws.[22] Evans-Wentz decided to go ahead and publish what he had at the time. The pressure to bring his manuscripts out must have been immense. Such a work as *The Tibetan Book of The Dead* was a treasure, but three such, including the Milarepa work and *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*, must have created a stir. Though the latter work came out some years after the first two, it still had to be seen to. Though one might expect a vast indexing and a cataloguing of his material, it did not happen. Many of his manuscripts and

private papers were left in a gardner's shack and not properly handled until years after his death.[23]

Essentially, Evans-Wentz was a solitary. However, there is no evidence that he acted as a hermit at this time. When around his peers, he enjoyed good fellowship and often went to dinners with undergraduates from California. He met with Dr. R.R. Marett and with his good friend E.T. Sturdy, reportedly one of the survivors of Madam Blavatsky's inner circle.[24]

As the central section of Oxford has changed little in the last 50 years, many of his former lodging houses still stand. One at 11 Wellington Square is a faceless, grey building, little different from the others in the small square within a ten minute walk from the Bodleian Library. The street is quiet, dotted with flower boxes and flaking window sills and appears very European. All of the houses have rooms to let and bicycles lean on walls everywhere. Another place he lived in is near the church where John Wesley preached, and though richer in appearance, hasn't the seclusion of the other. However, in the early twenties automobiles were not that evident and he may indeed only have had to contend with the tolling bells.[25]



Evans-Wentz at Loma Land overlooking San Diego Bay, circa 1920s; photo courtesy of Lou Blevens.

NINE

On August 12, 1927 *The Tibetan Book of The Dead* was published.

Though Walter Evans-Wentz has received over the years accolades and credit for the translation, from the first he disavowed any special significance as regards to his own contributions. "I have been really little more than a compiler and editor," he insisted in the preface, "to the deceased translator the chief credit for its production very naturally belongs."[1] However, his name became synonymous with the *Bardo Thodol*, as it is called, because for decades his version was the only one available. In truth, the actual "Liberation by Hearing on the After-Death Plane" section is quite short, and the late Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup is responsible for its correctness and its imperfections. Much of the book is filled with introductory material and commentaries, which are the work of Evans-Wentz, C.G. Jung and Lama Govinda. However, it is the editor's explanations, reference points and footnotes that has made more than one observer feel the book is not so "closed" to understanding by the layman reader.[2]

Basically, the *Bardo Thodol* was used as "a breviary, and read or recited on the occasion of death," Lama Govinda explained in his introduction to the third edition. "One should not forget that it was originally conceived to serve as a guide not only for the dying and the dead, but for the living as well."[3]

Evans-Wentz made great note of the Art of Dying both in his introductions and in his commentaries. He firmly believed the dying should "face death not only calmly and clear-mindedly, and heroically, but with an intellect rightly trained and right directed, mentally transcending, if

need be, bodily suffering and infirmities, as they would be able to had they practised efficiently during their active lifetime the Art of Living."[4]

He felt that medical science, which he considered "Earth-limited," had done a great disservice by not providing a word "of guidance to convey to the dying concerning the after-death state, but which, on the contrary, frequently augments rather than ameliorates, by its questionable practices, the unfounded fears and often extreme unwillingness to die of its death-bed patients, to whom it is likely to have administered stupefying drugs and injections."[5]

The book is divided into three sections: the *Chikhai Bardo* describes the psychic happenings at the moment of death; the second part, the *Chonyid Bardo*, deals with the dream state which supervenes immediately after death, and with what is called "karmic illusions;" and the *Sidpa Bardo* concerns the onset of the birth instinct and of prenatal events.[6]

The Tibetan Book of The Dead has a slightly fantastic quality to it. As it deals with a progressively different form of reality during the 49 days the "soul" of the dead person is reportedly in the *Bardo*, or in passage, it has a language not normally used or easily understood by western people. While the *Chikhai Bardo* speaks of events at the moment of death and discusses the "Clear Light of Pure Reality," a white-light phenomena noted even by Christians and therefore not an essentially foreign possibility, the *Chonyid Bardo* discusses a dream state in terms both horrifying and beyond the experiencial realm of most westerners.

Dr. C.G. Jung, who wrote a Psychological Commentary on the work, felt the *Chonyid* state was one of "illusions which result from the psychic residua of previous existences."[7] A transitional state, it represents a belief in or an acceptance of reincarnation which "neither our scientific knowledge nor our reason can keep in step with."[8] The section is replete with images Dr. Jung calls examples of a "disintegration of the wholeness of the *Bardo* body," or a "psychic disassociation."[9] The images are terrifying. Descriptions of the Lord of Death hacking and cutting the dead person, of drinking his blood and gnawing his bones are repulsive enough in the pictures they conjure up, let alone in the acceptance of such a psychical process.

The last and considered the lowest region of the *Bardo* is the *Sidpa* where the dead person falls prey to sexual fantasies, is attracted to copulating couples and is prepared for rebirth. It might be noted that at no time during the "soul's" passage is the person denied deliverance from the *Bardo* process. In fact, right up to and through the *Sidpa* process is

such an event likely. A person may refuse to be reborn, and can, as Dr. Jung contends, "not yield to his desire to follow the 'dim lights.' "[10] However, *Sidpa* psychology, he continues, consists in wanting to live and be born.

Thus, *The Tibetan Book of The Dead* assumes a belief in reincarnation, or at least an openness towards the possibility. From Dr. Jung through Lama Govinda and to the editor himself, the subject is treated openly and without prejudice. Evans-Wentz, in a concluding section, attempted to demonstrate a possible influence of eastern rebirth beliefs in pre-Christian thought and practice. His analogies are extreme but well-researched and require further study by any serious student. While his conclusions may not be accepted by many, his presentation, drawing from the best of western thinkers and writers of the time, remains quite credible. His editions have been in print for over 50 years and are still used as guides both for scholars and students.

Information is not available on just how long it took him to put this book together. Diaries and rememberances have not been forthcoming as to just what was written in Sikkim, or on ships, or in San Diego or Oxford. It appears that most of 1925 was spent in the Bodleian Library in compiling and revising, for on the first of the new year, 1926, he was on the move again. Europe, Crete, the Middle East passed the port side as he headed towards his beloved India. By the end of March he was in Puri.

It had been almost four years since he had been there and evidently distance and time had slightly colored his reactions. His main notes on the holy city concerned the poverty and the semi-starvation after some winter flooding. His entries appear scattered, disorganized and sparse in detail. By May he was in Sadhana Ashram in Patna, and a month later in Mussoorie, the British hill station above New Delhi. He returned to visit Swami Satyananda in July, but malaria (an affliction he had most of his adult life) drove him away in August. By year's end he was in Calcutta and with the new year out of the country.[11]

Not long before the publication of his first Tibetan series book, he arrived in Oxford. His presence seemed more of an afterthought, however, so little did he make of his stay there. Though brief, it did stretch over six months. He was keen on distributing it wherever he could and he stayed around long enough to receive comments and criticisms of the day (which he did not retain). Then, in characteristic form, he took off again.

In October of 1927 he visited his brother, James, in New Rochelle, New York (it was one of the few references he ever made about this

brother). It appears the former black sheep, the traveling Richard, preoccupied Walter's thoughts and while visiting James he wanted only to see the other in Los Angeles. Though his New York brother had three children and though their relationship was respectful, it wasn't strong enough to keep him there long.[12]

While his stay in America this time was close to a year, his comments barely filled a few pages. Of note was his concern in March of 1928 over his Utah Hotel property in San Diego. Alice Pshell, one of Will Fay's children, mentioned that it had been a whore house[13] (in 1981 it was a flop house)[14] and, indeed, Evans-Wentz noted that the landlady had been acquited for running a disorderly house.[15] In the parlance of the time this charge was open to interpretation, though it didn't set Evans-Wentz off on any tangents. On the contrary, he ignored it and spoke mostly of and warmly about his meetings with Katherine Tingley.[16]

Then in May he shot back across the country and sailed for Cornwall. Nothing was recorded until October when he announced plans to return to India. Right at the end of that month he had one of those cryptic meetings that laced his life. Forever he was running across people in the spiritual movements who were destined to be of significance later. This time it was Jiddu Krishnamurti.

Fifty years later, Krishnamurti had no recollection of ever having met Evans-Wentz.[17] However, considering the intensity of both their lives and of the upheavals following the former's break from the Theosophists, it isn't surprising. Not unexpectedly they discussed Theosophy, and Evans-Wentz had observed there were many men worthy of being called masters. The Head of The Order of The Star of The East replied that whether there were or not, the essential thing was one's own life itself. He distrusted all organized movements and thought each person should follow his own light faithfully.[18] (Which is exactly what Krishnamurti did the following year. He renounced all of his titles and the Society and spent the rest of his life lecturing and teaching.)

Around this time the second Tibetan series book came out, *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa*. This work, while a biography of a Tibetan saint, was described by its editor as setting forth "the art of mastering life and directing it to the all-transcendent goal of liberation from conditioned existence."[19] As usual, "conditioned existence" did not come off well in Evans-Wentz's eyes.

In his introduction, the editor championed the "simple living and high endeavor" of Milarepa's life and contrasted it favorably to the "industrialized way of life" we in the west live. He mentioned Ghandi's struggle to avoid industrialization in India. Such a practice, both men felt,

would destroy the arts and crafts in a simple and comparatively happy life in a village setting, which to Evans-Wentz meant "the most satisfactory and economically stable form of human society. And this naturally simple and materially efficient form of social organization, being contributory and conductive to the Higher Culture, is more in keeping with Milarepa's teaching than is industrialism."[20]

The teaching of this great saint can be summed up by his following observations:

> "All wordly pursuits have but the one unavoidable and inevitable end, which is sorrow; acquisitions end in dispersion; buildings in destruction, meetings in separation; births in death. Knowing this, one should, from the very first, renounce acquisition and heaping up and building and meeting."[21]

To that end Milarepa applied himself diligently to inner study, teaching and working with his teachers. The book is a collection of his thoughts, beliefs and progress from his own words and from those of his disciple, Rechung.

It appears that Evans-Wentz did not stay around long following publication, for in November of 1928 he was in Ceylon, then in Puri. There was a silence until February of the next year when he noted he had been staying in Rishikesh, which meant he was nearby with Swami Satyananda. Evidently plans for the yoga school were moving along, for he reported a furious traveling back and forth between Birbhadura and his property in Puri.[22] His last note during this trip was in the latter part of March when he spoke of handing over his eastern property to Vaidyaratant Pandit Maguni Brahma Misra, a teacher of Ayurveda at the Government Sanskrit College. He was a karma yogin, who worked in the world instead of renouncing it, and who had assisted Evans-Wentz as a scholar and a teacher on numerous occasions.[23]

Through 1929 the entries in his diaries are sparse, non-commital even, as he batted around Oxford, India and again in New York. Once he returned to Point Loma and San Diego, then by Christmas (1930) he was back in England. This time his presence was greatly expected in Oxford, and for once he did not resent demands being placed on his time. On January 14, 1931 he received his Doctorate in Science in Anthropology (on comparative religion).[24]

Within weeks, Evans-Wentz was hurrying back to San Diego. Brother Richard had written that his application to buy more land on his spirit mountain, Cuchama, had been approved by the U.S. Government. During his previous trips to California, he had applied for permission to

acquire more property there. Now he was free to take 160 acres for $2.50 each.[25]

His sojourns in India and his land acquisitions had continued to kindle in him plans for starting his own ashram. Though such had been partially realized through his Puri and Birbhadura properties, the urge for more never left him. He expressed a desire to open a yogic school on his estate in San Diego, but he felt he could not do it alone. He became despondent and unhappy despite the fact he was a serious published scholar with two books to his credit within the past three years.[26]

It was during this period that Parmahansa Yogananda touched his life once more. Though Evans-Wentz said he knew the young Indian while in Puri, he barely mentioned him in note or letter. In fact, the notice of this meeting came from a Self-Realization Fellowship tract rather than through his diaries. Either the younger man had already been sent west by Sri Yukteswar Giri when Evans-Wentz visited their ashram and the matter was forgotten, or else he just didn't bother to mention the event. Such a connection with his teacher did cause Yogananda to feel kindly towards the American scholar, indeed the introduction to his autobiography was written by the man.[27] However, little was ever noted about their meetings and interactions and it was only when Evans-Wentz neared the end of his life that their relationship was called upon.

A house still stands on Cuchama where Evans-Wentz spent time in meditation, though whether he did this often in the 1930s is unknown. Isolated on the west side of the mountain, far from the hustle and bustle of the cities, it served as a perfect retreat. As usual, he preferred the quiet by-roads, even though his time on them was brief.

"Although the work of the teachers must needs chiefly be with dwellers in towns and cities," he wrote, "they ever seek, as all mankind should, solitude for meditation and restoration of physical and psychical energies in the aura of high places. Mankind is fettered, bantering away their bodily strength and health and length of days for things that pass away. If our civilization is to endure it must break its urban fetters."[28]

However, rather than retreat to this quiet area for a long stretch, in mid-1932 he headed back to Oxford to work on the *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines* manuscript. This was, he thought, to be the concluding book of his Tibetan series and the last one on which he collaborated with Dawa-Samdup. It is a collection of some seven Tibetan yoga texts collected by the editors and embellished as usual with commentaries, explanations and footnotes by Evans-Wentz. Basically these texts describe in detail the postures, breathing, knowledge and understanding necessary to practive the specialized yogas; i.e. *tummo* (heat yoga), and

traveling through the air with the physical body. They are symbolic as well as practical in their descriptions and with the second edition, Professor Chen-Chi Chang, a China-born scholar of Tibetan Buddhism, has presented a Yogic Commentary.[29]

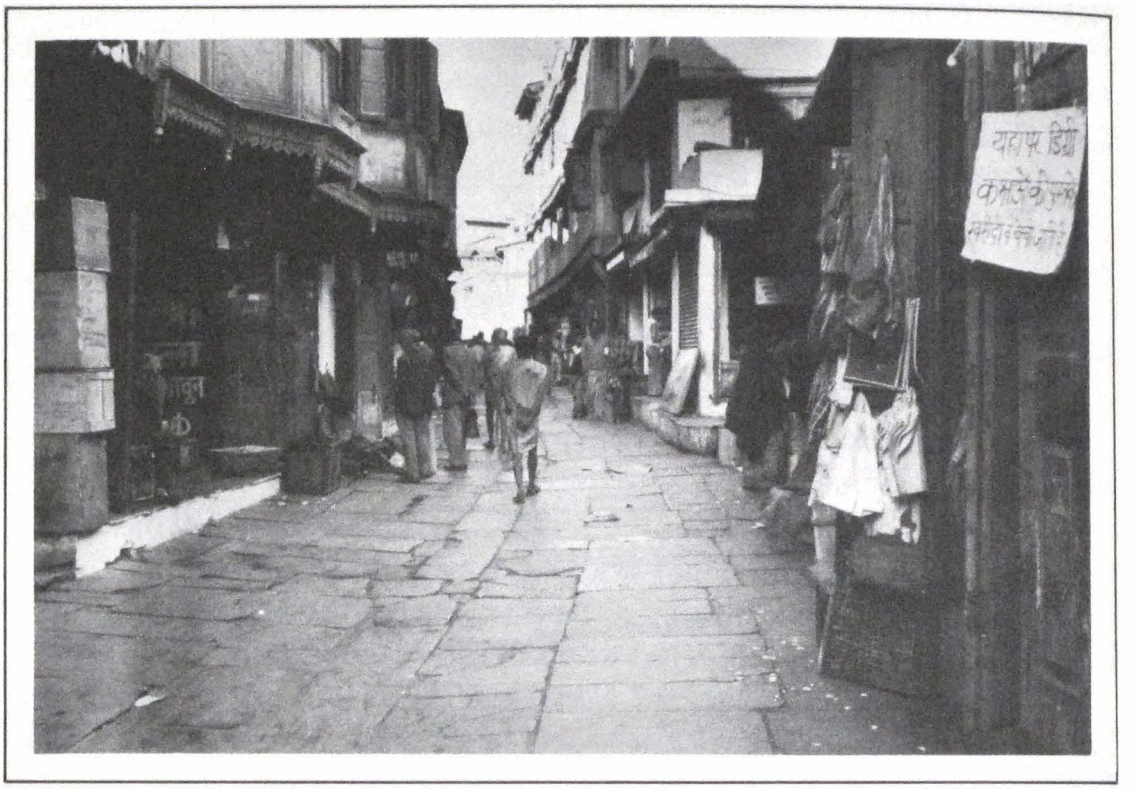
The next two years found Evans-Wentz either sequestered away at the Bodleian Library working on his notes or else shuttling back and forth between Europe and San Diego. Whether he spent his time on board various ships researching or practicing the Dharma isn't known. Considering the vast amount of work involved in his publications, it is difficult to imagine him carting around his research materials. In fact, such breaks as these journeys offered may have come after intense periods of writing.

On Midsummer day, 1934, he wrote the preface shortly after Dr. Marett had written the foreward. Perhaps the traveling had allowed him to correct the galley proofs, or perhaps, as suggested, he took the long sea voyages as a prescription for his "nervous problems," as was commonly done then by those who could not slow down any other way. However the process may be viewed in retrospect, he had finished a laborious work of editing and as expected he took little credit for himself.

Not content to rest while the book was being published, he left for India. Traveling, while a way of life for him, may also have been a way of contending with the conventional world. Evans-Wentz considered the world around him an illusion, and when he could, treated it accordingly. The paradox of such he captured in a poem written in July, 1920:

The Call

On the snow-white horizon
Over the Tibetan Mountains the stars gleam bright,
Twinkly their pure celestial light,
As I hear the call of the world to come.
From these silent heights I turn to go,
Back to the cloud-hid world below,
Back to the old samsaric life,
Back to the realm of selfish strife.
Yet not as of yore shall that world now be,
For my spirit hath heard of the Land of the Free
And stood on the shores of the infinite sea
Here in these sacred retreats nearer God,
Here where of old the Rishis have trod.[30]



Village supply stores on the upper lane in Almora, Uttar Pradesh; photo by Ken Winkler

TEN

By late 1934 he was back in Asia.

Not only was his arrival recorded in a short article in the *Times of Ceylon*,[1] but also on a tattered scrap of paper found in his personal effects. It is a pilgrimage proposal to the British authorities, dated November 15th. Not an average tourist request, but a proposal to journey to Mt. Kailas and Lake Manasarowar in western Tibet.[2]

Evans-Wentz had heard of the forbidding, weird beauty that surrounded this holy area. Twenty-two thousand feet high and long a pilgrimage goal for Buddhists and Hindus alike, Kailas was believed to be a primary source of energy, the center of the world. The geography supported this as four great rivers—Bramaputra, Indus, Sutlej and the Karnali—radiate out from it like spokes of a massive wheel.

But it was not to be. His plans were rejected and he was left to continue his pilgrimages in the lower altitudes. Such singular acceptance of authority is curious, but not surprising. Considering that just ten years before Alexandra David-Neel had outwitted three governments and snuck into Lhasa disguised as a poor Tibetan woman,[3] his hesitancy points out how two of the more prominent Tibet scholars of the time were cut from different cloth.

Lower altitudes do not mean lesser journeys. Though Arunchala, the "hill of light," where Sri Bhagwan Ramana Maharshi had his ashram, was in the south, it was far from a casual trip. Then, as now, it presented its own problems of access and location. Like many places in India, it is not as conveniently placed as one would like it to be. Though in com-

parism to the desolate tracks of the Asian highlands it rates a poor second, getting there isn't the easier just because the countryside is more developed.

Paul Brunton (a colleague and friend of Evans-Wentz) told in his book, *A Search in Secret India*,[4] that it was a two-train trip into the dusty, but maddeningly delightful backwaters of the Indian Rail System. Such trips appear superficially complacent, with only mile after mile of flat farm land to contend with. But the sun plays havoc on the sweltering bogies that barely appear to move fast enough to create a breeze.

"Past experiences," Brunton wrote, "have taught me full well that seemingly unimportant happenings sometimes play an unexpected part in composing the picture of one's life."[5] Instead of landslides and bandits, breakdowns in the middle of nowhere; rather than unassailable cliffs and storms, unexplained halts for hours without food or water.

After an uneventful night (though in India no night passes without its adventures) that ended with Brunton sitting quietly in a bare waiting room, he left in a bullock cart for the pale, hazy outlines of "a solitary hill."[6] Though these country limos move at slower rates, they eventually get where they're going. Evans -Wentz had to ply the same path, squinting at the evanescent contortions that mountains in this country have at dawn.

The township itself has a queerly-built temple. It is enormous, appearing a quarter-mile long. "A vast quadrangle surrounds the enormous interior," Brunton explained, "which looks like a labyrinth . . . four high enclosing walls have been scorched and colored by years of exposure to the fierce tropical sun . . . each wall is pierced by a single gateway, above which rises a queer superstructure consisting of a giant pagoda . . . like an ornate sculptured pyramid."[7]

Little there is in the western world to compare with this. Only in the more ornate Gothic or Orthodox cathedrals are there such a profusion of possibilities. Seldom, however, do they have the suggestions of infinity which these south Indian temples do. Dimensions are implied that cause a swimming of the senses—much as the heat does—such as to destroy concepts and render explanations worthless.

Six miles further on, at the base of Arunchala, is the ashram. Then it was only a few small buildings surrounded by a cactus and shrub fence. Outside was the jungle—ragged, shabby and during the hot season, dry and forlorn. Again there was the silence of rural India. Again, the quietness of the overwhelming immensity of the country. Though in the case of Dawa-Samdup we are given only the most prefunctory of com-

ments on their time together, of his stay with the Maharshi, Evans-Wentz tells us nothing. What is known of his time at Tiruvannamalai comes almost by accident.

For several weeks in early 1935 (or 1936, the exact time is uncertain) he resided there, circumnavigating the hill barefoot and alone.[8] Acting out the life of a disciple again, he was content to take a traveling break and study at the feet of whom many consider to have been the greatest Indian sage of this century. A skinny, passive-appearing man, Sri Bhagwan Ramana Maharshi did not fit standard western concepts of a holy person, which tend to favor heavily-bearded, taciturn robed figures. In fact, the sage almost looked European. It was his eyes, however, that prevented a catagorization. They had the depths of an infinity of oceans. Their stillness and tranquility intimated a compassion and a love that transcended any worldly labels.

Ramana Maharshi was born to a middle-class Brahmin family in the south in 1879, making him almost a contemporary of Evans-Wentz. At an early age he had read mystical and devotional literature and had been captivated by the legends of Mt. Arunchalla. Shiva was supposed to have risen from there in a legend of fire at the creation of the world. At 17 (like Evans-Wentz) he had a religious experience. From that time on his intense desire to know "Who am I?" reportedly brought him to a state of bliss. He then shaved his head, fled his village and went to live at Arunchalla. Known as the youngest renunciate there, the Maharshi remained at the mountain for the rest of his life. He slowly attracted disciples and had developed various yogic and meditational practices designed to bring them to their own realization.[9]

However, Evans-Wentz had to work for his information there. The ashram printed a book several years later containing the interviews the Master had with various scholars. Though the American had made great strides in understanding the spiritual universe, his recorded conversations with the Maharshi demonstrated there were concepts he still had to work with.

"Which time is the most suitable for meditation?" he asked.

"What is time?"

"Tell me what it is!"

"Time is only an idea. There is only the Reality. Whatever you think it is, it looks like that."

Further, Evans-Wentz asked, "what is illusion?"

"To whom is the illusion? Find it out. Then illusion will vanish."

"Do not one's actions affect the person in after-birth?"

"Are you born now? Why do you think of other births? The fact is that there is neither birth nor death. Let him who is born think of death and pallitives therefor."

"How does book-lore help in Self-Realisation?"

"Only so far as to make one spiritually minded."

"How far does intellect help?"

"Only so far as to make one sink the intellect in the ego, and the ego in the self."[10]

Though such repartee kept him there for some time, it did not allow for a complete severing of conventional ties. Despite his feelings about the world, he was quite aware of the growing menace that finally broke out into World War II. In August of 1935, the *Statesman*, an Indian newspaper, published a letter of his that condemned Italy's aggression in Ethiopia and the Pope's lack of intervention.[11]

But his heart was really in the north, in the Garwal and Kumaon areas of northern Uttar Pradesh province, and his stay in the south was not for long. Sometime in 1936 he met Alfred Sorenson, known to the Indians as Sunyabhai. A Norwegian by birth, Sunya had come to India at the casual behest of Rabindranath Tagore to "teach silence." Evans-Wentz ran across Sunya in Pensa, in Almora district, almost by chance and within months of this meeting Sunya himself was with the Maharshi. He recalled the holy man kept asking after the American scholar; nothing spiritual, but in a general conversational sense.[12]

Sunya was another of the growing number of Europeans who had come to India and had found their spiritual possibilities expanded. Social lepers to the established colonial order, they kept to themselves and collected in back areas, away from official restrictions and conventions. Almora, because of its isolation and its spiritual nature was one of these. It was relatively cheap to live in also.

Almora was (and remains to this day) a large village strung out along a ridge in the Himalayan foothills. Nothing much distinguished it from the surrounding hamlets save that a British Gurka regiment was stationed there. A two-tiered town, one main street served as the highway in and out and the upper lane acted as the main market. The upper area is paved with flagstones and is untouched by trucks or jeeps. Goats and donkeys wander along under the rotting lintels and hand-carved frescoes of the wooden dwellings. Smokey, dank tea shops and primative village supply stores dot the lane. On cold mornings with the electricity off and the highway silent there is little to distinguish it from any other medieval village.

"Crank's Ridge" was notorious even then. Isolated on a spur of mountain some three miles north of town, it housed a collection of religious iconoclasts and solitaries. It was covered with pine trees and monkeys. Because one could only get there by trails, the urban refugees felt they indeed had left the world. A former missionary bungalow graces what can pass as the summit and from its front door a magnificent spectacle of Nanda Devi and almost a hundred miles of the Himalayan chain can be seen. Other bungalows are scattered nearby on hummocks and surrounded by gardens and trees, separated by empty forest land from each other. As the area is a ridge and land at a premium, almost from the front doors of these dwellings and stretching down into the valleys below are terraced fields.

The quietness of the area is pronounced. In his last work, *Cuchama and Sacred Mountains*, Evans-Wentz tells of the high places where religious figures received their instructions and visions. He was entranced by the possibilities of this place. Sri Bhagwan Ramana Maharshi could only underscore what Almora came to mean to the American; "silence," he said, "is the most potent form of work."[13]

Kasar Devi was the estate he finally centered on. Some four miles from Almora at the end of "Crank's Ridge," it was remote yet serviced by the trail running past the other bungalows and into the villages further north. Panthers and leopards were known to prowl the neighborhood (it was only a few miles from where Jim Corbett was stalking big cats and writing his *Man Eaters of Kumaon*).[14] On one end of the property a small Shiva temple stood, also commanding a magnificent view. Evans-Wentz bought half the estate, but the process was agonizing for him.

According to Mrs. Boshi Sen (the former Gertrude Emerson, cofounder of *Asia* magazine and widow of the reknown Indian scientist), he couldn't make up his mind. First he would come to her and say definitely he had made up his mind. Then the next day, she said, he would be asking someone else. That he ever bought it at all came as a surprise to her.[15]

At this time Sunya was shuttling between Almora and the plains. Depending on the weather he would be one place or the other. He told of Evans-Wentz asking him if he would like to build on the property. Sunya was willing, but on which half? Evans-Wentz didn't know. After all the agonizing in the first place to get the property, he wasn't sure which half was his.[16] Land litigation in India is a favorite rural pastime. It is long, expensive, maddening and often without results. So, in com-

promise and to avoid being dragged into the local courts, Evans-Wentz bought the other half.

"It was more expensive, of course," Sunya chuckled, 44 years later.[17]

Evans-Wentz felt the area was going to become a spiritual focal point in later years, and with his hopes in establishing a religious center, he wanted to be part of it. Already among the spiritually-inclined who had migrated there was one destined to become a locally-hallowed fellow. He was an Englishman named Ronald Nixon, and he had established an ashram at Miratola some 16 miles further up the road. A former lecturer at Lucknow University, he had been befriended by the wife of the vice-chancellor, Mr. G.N. Chakravarti, and in turn she had become his guru. (Her husband had been high up in Theosophical circles.) Ill health caused her to leave the plains and she retired to the Kumaon Hills, her disciple in tow. He took the name of Sri Krishna Prem and helped construct their forest retreat, initially a rough collection of huts.[18] Seekers had been attracted there, among them Sunya and Evans-Wentz.[19]

Though Evans-Wentz knew a considerable number or people in Almora then, he kept to himself. His Tibetan series books had established him as a scholar of the Way, but they didn't make him any the more gregarious. With academics it has always been fashionable to keep one's distance from the subject being studied, thus creating an objectivity. The results often reflect this detatchment in a multitude of ways. Evans-Wentz, on the other hand, was a practicioner as well as an inquirier, which gave him a separateness from the average scholar. (Lama Govinda mentioned he believed the late doctor intuitively knew which manuscripts would be of lasting value. This was by way of comparing him with many western translator/scholars whom he felt were indiscriminately translating everything, searching through quantity for quality.)[20]

For the moment, he appeared to have suspended his studies and began settling down. Commissioning local artisians, he began to build the first single-room, thick stone dwelling on the estate. Daily he rode a horse over from the Clark Estate at Dinapani, a small crossroads hamlet back towards Almora, where he lived in a tent with only one servant. His living conditions were a subject for local conjecture, according to Lama Govinda, who at first thought he was just an extremely poor American.[21] Evans-Wentz quite often shopped for himself in the local bazaars, haggling over the prices of atta, dhal and potatoes. For a European in a colonial society to do such (despite the romantic attraction) was anathema, yet it didn't bother him. Such distinctions only got in the way.

His daily habits and practices basically remain a mystery, however. His meditations and yogic practices were only vaguely reported. Though he wrote for various journals, excepting for the Theosophical Society publications he wasn't consistent nor did he retain copies of them all. Many of his commentaries and introductions made to spiritual works are unavailable or out-of-print. Building in India is never an all-day affair. Often he shared the mid-day meal with his workers and if the occasion arose, went with them to local religious ceremonies or village fairs.[22] (T.T. Samdup reported that though he was pleasant enough with the boys at his father's school, Evans-Wentz was never much of a mixer.)[23] Hardly a chatterer, there is no reason to believe (or prove) he sat around and groused with the local expatriots who had (and still do have) a tendency to collect in wayside tea stalls or on the sunny compounds of their wealthier countrymen.

Even Sunya, who lived in a small hut at Kalimat, a neighboring estate, heard little from the man. Though Evans-Wentz "doted on Almora" and talked to the Norwegian at length about his plans for an ashram, that's about all he talked on.[24] (At least while he lived there.) Afterwards, when writing Sunya from America, he continiously asked for the local news—"Oh, the gossip!" Sunya remembered—and for exact details on local food prices.[25] His practiced distance from worldly cares while in San Diego evidently didn't include the small world of Almora.

Again, his stay in India wasn't long. Early in 1938 he was back in California. Because of missing diaries and destroyed letters, his movements are not easy to discern. It is known he gave his approval to the Ph.D. thesis of Theos Bernard (*Penthouse of The Gods, Hatha Yoga*).[26] From a small house on 8th Avenue in San Diego, Evans-Wentz sent a detailed commentary on this remarkable young man's work back to Columbia University. Though critical, he counselled acceptance.[27]

(Bernard had a curious and colorful history. According to Lama Govinda the young man had bribed his way into Tibet with a mind to research scriptural work. While there he supposedly made a grandiose gesture of promising to bring the Tibetan canons back to the west and translating them. The Tibetans paid him the compliment that he was acting as Padma Sambhava had when he brought Buddhism to Tibet. Bernard, so the story goes, thought this meant he was a reincarnation of the historical figure and so declared he had been accepted as such.)[28]

Evans-Wentz also kept a finger on his property doings in Almora. His lawyer wrote him that the holy man whom he had left in charge of the estate was losing his temper "over trifles."[29] People like this continued

to be his bane for he was absent from Kasar Devi more than he was there. It wasn't until the 1950s, when Lama Govinda moved in, that anyone was permanently in residence to provide consistent maintenance and security.

During that summer, Evans-Wentz returned to Oxford to attend the Tenth International Medical Congress for Psychotheraphy. It was during this time the only recorded meeting he had with Dr. Carl Jung, the great Swiss psychologist, took place. Jung had long been associated with those attempting to investigate Eastern thought, most notably with Carl Wilhelm (*I Ching, The Secret of The Golden Flower*).[30] A highly curious man, the psychologist had made the *Bardo Thodol* his "constant companion" for many years and admitted it had not only given him "many stimulating ideas and discoveries, but also many fundamental insights."[31]

It was through his study of Eastern spiritual thought described in part by Evans-Wentz and Wilhelm that he came to his mandala theories which profoundly altered and strengthened his perceptions.

Accustomed to the either-or mentality of the West, Jung was both fascinated by and attracted to the spirituality of the East both these authors were presenting. They were offering different interpretations of the world and over a period of time Jung came to realize the importance of their research, especially when he discovered the universality of their images and insights. Though he later admitted he had "misgivings as to the adoption of Eastern spirituality by the West," it was more a matter of degree and manner.[32]

The conversations over a two-day period between Evans-Wentz and Jung ranged far.[33] Jung admitted he had been unable, up until then, to solve the problem of reincarnation. He told Evans-Wentz of dreams of corpses he'd had, and how the corpses moved (in symbol, he felt, that they were his own past corpses). Another dream was of an ancient graveyard wherein was a tomb dated 1830. A corpse in the tomb moved his arm, another symbol for Jung of it being his own, or at least one of his immediate ancestors.

"May we not be our own ancestors reborn?" Evans -Wentz had asked. Jung gave the question considerable thought, the American scholar reported, but no affirmation.[34]

As war clouds were generally seen to be building over European skies, Dr. Jung talked of the Nazism stalking the continent. He said it was a reversion to a primative Germanic racial instinct and culture. The Reformation, he considered, was the first break with the inhibition of

Christianity. Nazism was the completion of the work of Martin Luther to carry Germanic races back to their true ancestral soul.[35]

Another person in the discussion interjected that any concept of reality must be either scientific or philosophic and that the Oriental was neither.

Evans-Wentz countered (and Jung concurred) that "reality transcends both science and philosophy as we know them, being neither this nor that, neither existence or non-existence."[36]

It was Jung's contention that the world was made up of psychological images, tangible and intangible, matter and spirit—all of such terms being merely labels. Illusionary thought, he declared, was our immediate reality. The Oriental approach to reality is indefinite or intangible, while the Occidental is definite, or tangible through the world of form and matter.[37] This was a continuation of the view Jung had propounded on some eight years previously during his memorial address on Richard Wilhelm. A balance was needed, he had suggested then, because a "greater mind bears the stamp of the feminine,"and, he admitted, the specialist, of which he himself was guilty of being, was more masculine.[38]

Fundamentally, Jung stressed, the Unconscious of the Occident is equivalent to the Super-Conscious of Cosmic-Conscious of the Orient—the difference being that the Occident strives to attain individual awareness and the Orient does not, at least in our sense of the word. The voidness, *sunyata*, being a state of unawareness to us, we must retain awareness to deal with it.[39]

Jung, however, was opposed to any wholesale importation of Eastern modes of behavior. This, he felt, would be as damaging as remaining utterly opposed to Oriental ways. Later, he wrote to Evans-Wentz and said, "you can expand your consciousness so that you even cover a field that had been unconscious to you before, but then it is your ego that is conscious of this new acquisition, and there is absolutely no reason to believe then that there is not a million times more unconscious material beyond that little bit of acquisition. Thus, agnosticism is my duty as a scientist, I don't compete with confessions of religious creeds. I never claimed to be a metaphysician and I do not sympathize with the preaching of more metaphysical convictions. We have too many of them already and too few that are really believed."[40]

Whatever his personal feelings about Dr. Jung, Evans-Wentz seemed to further harden his attitude towards western civilization during this period. Tore Hakausson, a Swedish pilgrim, met with the American and

told of his sarcasm towards the west. While "severely critical" of western ways, Evans-Wentz quoted Tibetan texts to Hakausson and talked about his proposed ashrams. They shared a simple meal during the discussions, and the Swede told of it being cooked rice with raisins and dried fruit.[41]

"He always had it before noon and did not take solids after that time," Hakausson recalled.[42]

Jung had promised to provide a commentary on *The Tibetan Book of The Great Liberation*, which Evans-Wentz already had in manuscript form (he had spent several weeks during 1935-36 in Ghoom Monastery, Darjeeling, and in Calcutta editing various sections). Jung's psychological commentary on *The Tibetan Book of The Dead* had already been published in 1935, but only in the German edition. Taking Book II of the Great Liberation manuscript, "The Yoga of Knowing the Mind, The Seeking of Reality," he set himself to work and by mid-1939 his commentary was completed. He sent it out to India, for Evans-Wentz was on the move again.

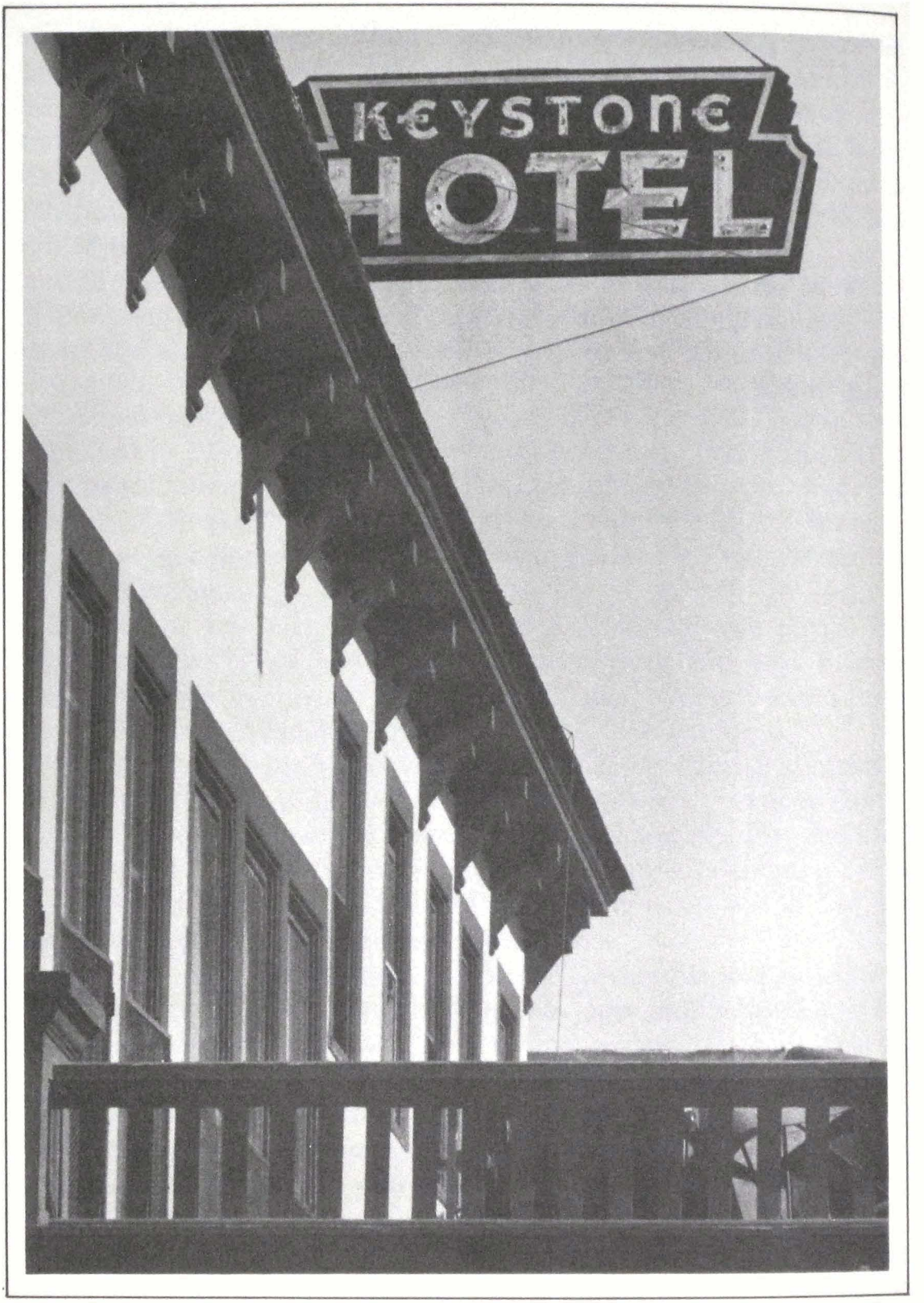
By May he was back in Almora after a detour through Egypt. The "fear and hysteria" of the war scare in that country, with local Europeans forming rifle companies to counter the Italian buildup on the Libyan border, had driven him out, making him feel "like a refugee."[43]

However, the larger world with its politics and conflicts had begun to crowd in on the inhabitants of his idyllic backwater. Events in Europe were affecting westerners in India in ways quite worldly. Invasion itself was a real fear as the Germans shifted across borders and also across North Africa. In January of 1941, Evans-Wentz wrote out his last will and testament. Things were looking quite grim.

Though he now owned the entire Kasar Devi estate and he wrote of "new work" commencing, the building was slow and the settling-in becoming tiresome. He had found the Almora country "far from ideal for winter climate." (It could become bitterly cold.) Evidently he had for the first time completed an entire season there. San Diego—and he often compared the two—was looking very good. Moreover, a local yogi had told him that within a year all Europe would be at war and it would last until 1945.[44]

Transportation was at a premium as many sought exit, fearing to be marooned in India for the duration. When informed by his travel agents that he might not have another chance to leave, Evans-Wentz had to make the decision. Though inclined to other-worldliness and often impatient with the political illusions around him, he was not indifferent to

the world's problems. Aware of current events, and scorning the silence of mankind towards the barbaric acts then transpiring, Evans-Wentz went home. Though he may have been a recluse, he was no hermit. He could denounce the world, but he couldn't renounce it. And to be tied down in one place without recourse to movement may have panicked him. (Ironically, a few months before he left, he had been offered 900 acres in Puri to add to his ashram.)[45] Because of war tension in the Pacific he took a ship to New York. June of 1941 found him in San Diego. Although he may have intended his sojourn there as just another stop-over until the war settled, it was to last. Never again was he to return to Asia.



The Keystone Hotel in San Diego, California; photo by Jim Coit.

ELEVEN

Either because he considered his stay only temporary or because of convenience, Evans-Wentz settled in the Keystone Hotel in downtown San Diego. A small, quaint turn-of-the-century building with a stone arcade that fronts a busy street, it was close to the main branch of the public library, and the post office, and not far from the only vegetarian restaurant. It was to be his home for the next 23 years.

For a man of peace it was a strange town for him to settle in. A major Navy base and a home for the U.S. Marines, San Diego had a distinct military atmosphere that survives to this day. It was soon to become a huge training and staging area for thousands of service people who went into the Pacific theatre of World War II. The area fairly hummed with the forces of violence.

Yet he settled in and continued his writing and research. It wasn't without difficulty, however. Within weeks after the bombing of Pearl Harbor the Theosophical Society moved from its Point Loma lands, where it had occupied the cliffs from which San Diego now nervously faced the Pacific. The government had declared a national emergency and the Brotherhood area was cleared.

Evans-Wentz was saddened. "Its psychic character," he wrote to Gottfried de Purucker, "shaped by right thinking during more than 40 years is due to its remarkable assets."[1] (The land never returned to that pristine time. Property disputes, economic realities and the waning fortunes of the Society itself contributed to the area being parceled out. Today it is a rich suburb and the main grounds have been turned into a college.)

It was a blow to Evans-Wentz in another manner as well. Ever plan-

ning for his ashram, and continually looking for support, he had approached the Society with an idea for joint activities and the sharing of students. Evidently it must have been a highly rarified plan, for Dr. de Purucker, struggling to manage on less, worried that "emphasis on individual training could readily degenerate into a spiritually selfish absorption of the student."[2]

Evans-Wentz agreed, saying there was a danger of students on his Almora property "becoming forgetful of suffering humanity." He planned to have them at periodic intervals work in the slums and villages on the plains.[3] Strangely, he never mentioned the fact that such a concern had once worried him about the Society itself before he joined it.

In any case, the plans remained just that—plans. Nothing ever came of them.

His real estate dealings, when measured against his literary output, seem insignificant, but he continually lamented their intrusion. In 1942 he wrote, "whenever I am in the U.S. I fall under the influence of the worldly business environment to the neglect of spiritual studies."[4] It was as though he had to pay for his retreats by mixing in the world; for him, mixing meant landlordism and land problems.

Not that he was totally self-absorbed. Right after Pearl Harbor he offered his ranch to the San Diego City Schools if evacuation became necessary.[5]

His worries over attachment, however, never left him (somewhat like his malaria which caused him periodically to avoid public activities), and often brought on depression. Turning to a palm reader who claimed to have over 100,000 readings to her credit, he was told he would return to India that year and would die there after a successful end to his endeavors.[6] Hardly a cause for celebration, but his spirits rose a bit despite the fact war was engulfing most of the world, especially around India.

He continued to write. *The Theosophical Forum* published his article on "The Science of Environment," in May of 1942. It told of his visits to the sacred places on the earth and how the psychic emanations made them so. He compared them to battlefields and how there can be places of positive evil as well, where hatred and worldly ambitions have mouldered. Both evil and good were "the seeds of ancient sowings . . . ever-awaiting a chance to grow."[7]

"We await," he continued, "the awakening of all the races, of all the nations, from the aeon-long sleep of Slothfulness and Ignorance. We await the era of right education where humanity will re-think and re-make their world, when all places on the planet Earth, all the hills and

mountains, all the rivers and lakes and seas, all the temples, all the cities, all the abodes will be holy, and divine at-one-ment will have been realized by man."[8]

Not content to wait, he actively wrote to his contacts, both old and new, throughout the world, stressing the need for more faith and generous behavior. Together with Aldous Huxley and Gerald Heard, both spiritual experimenters, he opposed the industrialization of India, contending her soul would be destroyed. Such views were shared by Mahatma Ghandi, then pushing for the revitalization of the villages. In fact, Evans-Wentz reported a dream he had at this time where Ghandi appeared and bowed to him as a friend and wished him well.[9]

He was restless. His letters to his friend E.T. Sturdy contained innumerable references to his need to get back to Oxford. The war was placing limitations on the use of paper and was hindering his research. All of his materials (manuscripts, reference works, original sources) were in England. Sturdy, writing on personalized bond stationary, apologized for its use, but noted he had laid in a good supply before hostilities commenced, foreseeing the coming shortages.[10]

Perhaps Evans-Wentz hadn't any research materials in California. Normally his habit was to send anything of value to Jesus College for safekeeping. Also, he had a propensity for giving away editions of his own works, which caused him again and again to return to the library to check them out. Though gracious, the librarians thought he was putting them on and showing off because he did it so often.[11]

On the other hand, he and his brother, Richard, used the war years to deal in land. Beginning with their property in hand, they managed to keep busy trading and buying. The process remained an anomoly for Evans-Wentz, for as much as he abhored such a profession, he managed to do quite well with it. And during this time, he slowly added to the ranch on Cuchama. He was on good terms with many of the ranchers in the back country and often chatted with them while staying at the mountain during his meditation visits.

Cuchama, "the exalted high place," was once used by the Diegueno Indians as a restorative pilgrimage center.[12] It is barren country there, which even at night projects an etherial starkness; massive white boulders dot the dark ridges, creating a forbidding ruggedness that accentuates the silences. Unlike Almora, it is unpopulated. Not that it accepts humanity easily, for the sun bakes the area dry. The brokenness of the ground looks as though the Devil plowed it up. It is not a land for casual pursuits.

"Some mountains," Lama Govinda wrote in introduction to *Cuchama*

and Sacred Mountains, are of such "outstanding character and position that they have become the spiritual foci of the ancient civilizations and religions of humanity."[13]

These high, often remote places, Evans-Wentz explained, where holy men gravitated, became "so attuned to their psychic radiations that to this day (they) still emit potent uplifting spiritual influences."[14]

"There are mountains which are just mountains and there are mountains with personality . . . vessels of cosmic power," Lama Govinda continued. "Mountains grow and decay, they breathe and pulsate with life . . . the worshipful or religious attitude is not impressed by scientific facts . . . nor by the ambition to 'conquer' the mountain. Few who hear the call keep alive through the ages the arcane knowledge of these terrestial sources of divine inspiration."[15]

Very definitely Evans-Wentz heard the call. In a compulsion seen previously only in his traveling, did he set out to accumulate every available acre on Cuchama. It was more than property to him, it was a shrine where the indians worshipped the sun—a euphemism for him for the affirmation of the spirit. He was so concerned for the area—a concern that echoed his continual pledge of world service—that he stated in his will, "I desire this holy mountain of the southwest United States be made a public property in honor of the redmen to whom it was a temple."[16]

The war slowly ground to an end, but to Evans-Wentz it did not seem to guarantee any promise of a better time. In early 1945 he felt that "the nations are not prepared for world-wide altruism." He felt that "oil concessions, monopoly of air routes and the same old commercialistic greed are more likely to shape the after-war world than the noble eightfold path (of the Buddha)." He was inclined to the "Hindu view that barbarism is innate to the occidental."[17]

Recalling his conversation years before with Annie Besant, he spoke of the new race to come. Small groups of monastically-inclined persons, Evans-Wentz reported, were forming in rural areas. It was his contention that monasticism would return if society were to fall apart, much as it had, he stated, when the Roman Empire was "falling to pieces."[18] (As if in fulfillment of this view, the newspapers in southern California after World War II noted the colonies of vegetarians who lived in the back country near Los Angeles and San Diego, who were militantly defensive in protecting their areas.)[19]

The previous almost seemed penned by Evans-Wentz in defense against the people whom he found himself surrounded by. On Labor Day in 1945 he noted the great number of drunks celebrating, purposely

smashing beer bottles on the street. "No other land has alcoholism made such ravages as here,"he wrote to Sturdy, cataloging the excesses of the time.[20] Granted the war was ending and restrictions were sliding, Evans-Wentz nevertheless scorned the lack of control and lack of compassion. He lamented about the general sexual intemperance and the slackening of morals nation-wide.[21]

"The fate of the west will be of its own making," he wrote in the introduction to *The Light from The East.*[22]

In *The Theosophical Forum* he noted that man had "lost faith in his ancestrial religion, in his social order, in his fellow man and in himself." Evans-Wentz worried that all codes had been "fettered to utilitarianism" and called on the world to pay attention to the "Clear-Seeing Ones" to regain the lost self-reliance.[23]

"Where oh where can I be most useful to the world and where does life's trail lead and where does it end?" he lamented to his diary.[24]

All in all he considered that India was more compatable and longed to return there. However, he didn't. Rail as he might against the excesses of the western world (and Catholicism in particular), he did not take any active steps towards traveling to the East. He was 66 years old at this point, and though he was active, mentally alert and healthy, he never again fully returned to the road. Times had changed indeed since he wrote to a friend a few short years before and declared he cared "little whether I live in one country or another or in the East or in the West. I have been a gypsy for 30 years and will continue the wanderings through life and through death."[25]

Despite his not traveling, he kept busy. Though the manuscript form of *The Tibetan Book of The Great Liberation* may have been presentable when shown to Dr. Jung, he seemed far from satisfied with it. Long were the hours spent in the public library correcting and rewriting. In between times, he continued his research into American Indian religious customs, especially those associated with Cuchama. He found the redmen believed the mountain was once an island that had survived a flooding. Tribes throughout southern California had similar beliefs, he claimed, and reported they too spoke of their people surviving by staying on Cuchama and on a few other mountain tops.[26]

The Diegueno Indians had a symbolic ground painting of four holy mountains in the area (four being a sacred number to them, he said). One of the points was for San Bernadino (Mt. San Gorgonio) in the northeast; in the northwest was Santa Catalina Island; while the southwest was represented by the Coronados Islands. The southeast was Cuchama. The two northern points were indicated by two small circles and

the southwest by a small circle within a larger one. Cuchama, though designated the same way as the Coronados, had a perpendicular line bisecting the circles, thus calling attention to the mountain.[27]

Though many of the days he spent on Cuchama were taken up in wandering, he did use much of his time there working on his house and garden. They were on the greener side of the mountain, the westward-facing slopes overlooking a river. Evans-Wentz felt there was *orenda* there, which he described as an Iroquois word meaning "holy chant" or "holy song."[28]

Cuchama, to him, was "a guardian spirit of the west." Its quietness served as a balm to his nostalgia for India.

Practical matters continued to claim his attention. Up until 1955 he quite actively went with surveyor Bill Fay, son of his old Stanford classmate, up and down the mountain measuring off the land he was continually purchasing.[29] Throughout his diaries there are references to the small plots he traded for, bidded on or else bought outright from his neighbors. And he did not forget to keep working on the buildings he owned downtown. Former tenants remember him as being a very fair but formal landlord. Julius Ancker, who once had a large store carrying the Pendleton line, recalled how his family had rented the same building on Fifth Avenue from Evans-Wentz for over 50 years. Even through the hard years the scholar told him that though the rent might go up, it would never go beyond $300 a month. It never did. Ancker also told of Evans-Wentz never appearing too concerned when he was behind in rent payments.[30]

Though Evans-Wentz never mentioned word one about his living conditions, his acquaintances felt the Keystone Hotel was "depressing." He insisted on keeping his room there ("small, cramped and laden with many books and papers,"one friend said)[31] even when he was spending weeks out on his ranch. Not that his relations with the hotel owner and guests were that warm. Former manager Cliff Lucas mentioned that while Evans-Wentz always said good morning and good evening as he went to and fro, that's about all he ever said to anyone there.[32] He had only transferred his home address to this hotel full of elderly and retired working men, not his allegiance. That was reserved for Jesus College.

TWELVE

Mid-1949 found him clearing a trail up Cuchama for Yogananda and Mother Gloria, a wealthy patroness of Zorastrianism, to come up. A Mexican professor from the Yucatan, another of the unnamed and unknown fellow-pilgrims that tangentially touched his life, assisted. They meditated a bit during their breaks and discussed the building of a shrine on the mountain. The idea seemed to take root directly from this time and repeated itself with variations over the next 15 years. One of his friends envisioned a glass dome containing an ever-burning flame; Evans-Wentz favored a meditation tower dedicated to world peace.[1]

At this point in his life, Evans-Wentz was more frequently coming into contact with greater numbers of spiritually-concerned people. Though always meeting them, he had never really been in a place long enough to be anything but superficially connected. Now that he was relatively stationary, they beat a continuous path to his door.

Mrs. Theos Bernard, whose husband had recently been murdered in India, visited. Joe Miller from San Francisco flew down to demonstrate his theory about the Clear Light using prisms. Rishi Grewal; Madam Gamm Walsha, the Tibetan art collector; Dwight Goddard; Indra Devi and Edmund Sokeley were other guests. Yogananda spent time on Cuchama and often invited the doctor to the Fellowship meetings and lectures. The list grew; the correspondence was volumnous. Evans-Wentz was never known to turn away a sincere request, whether in letter or in person.

The attention given him by the world troubled him. At heart a recluse (or an "Oriental" as he preferred to call himself), he felt pressed enough

just by day-to-day concerns. "More and more feel the need to return to Almora and leave my bones in India," he wrote.[2] Brother James passed away in Florida in 1951, and within a few months so did Yogananda. Evans-Wentz had no plans. He seemed unable to organize buying a ticket or getting a visa. While he did not admire the ideals of his native country (he worried America was going to live on a war economy indefinitely),[3] he felt the outlook was not favorable for his ashram plans. To leave he would have to sell his ranch and this Evans-Wentz did not want to do.

In the midst of this indecision came the proof sheets for *The Tibetan Book of The Great Liberation*. Traveling, lack of research materials, a world war and a paper shortage had almost acted in conspiracy to delay its publication. In the wake of the proof-reading came a re-establishment of contact with Carl Jung. It had been over 12 years since the two had corresponded. Jung, ever active and curious over Eastern thought and politics, heartily endorsed the Great Liberation book and felt it would be most welcome. As a new edition (the third) of *The Tibetan Book of The Dead* was being prepared by Evans-Wentz, Jung inquired if he would be interested in using the Psychological Commentary the learned psychologist had written to the German edition. Evans-Wentz was pleased to do so, and it has appeared in every edition since.[4]

The Tibetan Book of The Great Liberation is a curious publication. Though billed as the method of "realizing nirvana through knowing the mind," the section pertaining to such is miniscular, barely forty pages. Most of the book contains commentaries and explanations. There is a preceding section on the life of Padma-Sambhava, Tibet's Great Guru, who brought Buddhism to Tibet, and a short concluding section on the teachings of Guru Phadampa Sangay. Of major interest, however, is the commentary by Dr. Jung and Book II, the "Seeing of Reality" section previously mentioned.

Evans-Wentz called Book II perhaps the most important of all his works. As he felt for most of his life that all was mind, this section amplified those views. Again and again it suggests to the reader "to look within thine own mind,"[5] and to note "there being really no duality, plurism is untrue."[6] Near the concluding section it stresses, "nothing save mind is conceivable."[7] To Evans-Wentz this seemed the quintessense of all his work. In fact, one of his later friends, Joe Miller, reads the entire Book II section with his wife each morning.[8]

Dr. Jung made some curious observations. In his commentary he noted the western fears of "dropping into a strange, unknown world,"[9] and felt by way of self-defense we had developed an "enthusiasm for

facts."[10] Though intrigued by what the text suggested, he counseled "that we have really learned something from the East when we understand that the psyche contains riches enough without having to be primed from outside."[11] He was against our importing wholesale outside ideologies for he considered them our "blight"[12] along with our propensity to imitate directly rather than by investigating on our own to find the correct path for ourselves. Critical of this imitation, he stressed the marked "differences between the tenor of a psychological dissertation and that of a sacred text,"[13] implying that overly-critical observations could nullify the work. As such, he saw his comments meaning to "amplify its symbolic languages, rather than denigrate it."

All in all, Jung's comments were a strong reading of the western attachments to self, the either-or mentality in approaching Eastern spiritual practices and the inherent dangers thereof. Strangely enough, *The Tibetan Book of The Great Liberation* has received scant attention while *The Tibetan Book of The Dead* has held the public's eye. An investigation of the two, especially of the psychological commentaries, provides interesting comparisms for any serious student.

The restlessness Evans-Wentz had felt his entire life continued to plague him. Though well over 70, he showed no signs of slowing down. He was attracted to Santa Barbara, a quiet seacoast town north of Los Angeles, where he felt he might be able to found his ashram. In the mountains above the city were areas he considered receptive to his plans. Relatively isolated, yet close to an urban center, these ridges and canyons had attracted great numbers of spiritually-inclined persons. For months he scouted the available properties, often with a University of California professor, D.M. Brown.

"I don't know how many times we drove over those hills and canyons looking for some isolated little ranch or establishment that he could buy and use to start a Buddhist center," Brown remembered. "I don't believe that he, himself, was very well off financially. He lived in very modest style, his clothes simple, even perhaps a bit threadbare at times."[14]

"On occasion he brought a woman with him of middle age who seemed to be a person of some means and who was very interested in the possibilities of an ashram. My guess is that she had offered to purchase some property for this purpose. (Others mentioned this woman wanted to make a Milarepa movie and at one point even suggested marriage to Evans-Wentz!)[15] We finally found a site which he and she liked very much but which I thought was totally impractical. It had a marvelous view of Santa Barbara and the coastline far below. I knew

every foot of that mountain country and I knew that there was no possibility of water on that barren outlook and that the dirt road to it would be utterly impassable during wet weather."[16]

As all the above wasn't done in isolation, other people caught word of the search. In fact, a foursome soon developed: Evans-Wentz, Elsie Allbright, Prynce Hopkins and Ananda Jennings. Their idea was to jointly establish a Buddhist study center and research ashram. There was to be a pooling of their large combined libraries. His dream of founding the ashram looked promising. However, that's all it remained—promising. There were difficulties, Miss Allbright remembered, the sole survivor of the group. "Evans-Wentz wanted a structure which would be earthquake proof, invulnerable to the elements, at reasonable price. His combination of conditions made it impossible to fulfill them."[17]

It was around this time, in the early fifties, that his path crossed again with Lama Govinda's. The Lama was quite a man in his own right, and like Evans-Wentz had early premonitions of other lives and other realities. In due course he had drifted through Europe to Capri and at last to Ceylon, where he had taken up the robes of a Theravada Buddhist monk. Though content to spend his days in the eternal spring of that island, Lama Govinda by chance went to a conference in Darjeeling. The sojourn there led to a profound altering of his perceptions and his life was changed. As with Evans-Wentz, the town had helped Tibetan Buddhism claim another.[18]

Long plagued by incompent and incompatable tenants and the problems of being a long distance landlord, Evans-Wentz opened his home at Kasar Devi to the Lama and his wife, Li Gotami. They had returned not long before from an extensive tour of western Tibet and were in need of a quiet retreat from the hustle-bustle of the lower sub-continent. It marked the beginning of an extremely productive time for the Lama and since then he has felt in the late scholar's debt.[19]

In 1954 Lama Govinda reviewed *The Tibetan Book of The Dead.* To him, Evans-Wentz's version proved "that the old method of collaboration between a number of scholars as was done by the *lotsawas* (translators of religious texts in ancient Tibet) has much to recommend itself and that good editing is as important as a philologically correct translation."[20]

He told of the "easily understandable introduction," and the footnotes and commentaries, which, "builds up the proper spiritual and historical background before launching the reader upon the deep sea of

original texts. And even there he guides him with copious annotations which accompany the main texts as a running commentary."[21]

Evans-Wentz continued to write. As always, his themes centered around the decline of spiritual progress and the threats of utilitarianism. "Mechanization and atomic power may ameliorate man's life on earth, but they cannot create culture or emancipate man, nor can the occident alone direct the future of human evolution," he declared.[22]

With the election of Dwight Eisenhower to the U.S. presidency in 1952, he began to feel more confidence in the country. He himself was becoming newsworthy as a result of a month-long exhibit of his Tibetan tankas in the Fine Arts Museum in San Diego's Balboa Park. This show attracted more of the world to his door, and brought forth the comment that "many visitors are helpful (at the ranch), others need help."[23] When the mail came there were sure to be requests for assistance and sometimes for teaching. One group in Brazil wanted him to be their guru. He loathed the idea, but rather than be curt with them, he merely disavowed any special status. "I have been little more than a transmitter of some of the lore of the Gurus," he wrote sympathetically. "Look to yourselves."[24]

As his study of the American Indian deepened, he started to be drawn towards Mexico. His researches had brought him into contact with many of the local indians, some of whom lived in the remote canyons and mountains of Baja California. Their beliefs in using dreams paralleled those of the Tibetans. He suggested that Indians believe only that which they realize through their own psychic experiences, mainly dreams.[25]

After the final proofs of the Great Liberation book were completed and after caretakers for his ranch had been settled in, he headed south of the border.

"The gypsy spirit is on me again."[26]

Unfortunately he didn't totally recapture the spirit of the road. His first venture south was a disaster. It rained and it rained and it continued to rain. His attempt to travel India-style with kit and servant did not go well. (Subsequent trips proved better and they vaguely began to resemble those of his younger days; quick trips, then back home, followed by longer trips.) His three-quarters of a century did not agree with the rigors and climate of the initial journey.[27]

Soon after this adventure, he wrote, "I am haunted by a realization of the illusion of all human endeavors. As Milarepa taught; buildings end in ruin, meetings in separation, accumulation in dispersion and life in death. Whether it is better to go on here in California where I am lost

in the midst of the busy multitude or to return to the Himalayas is now a question difficult to answer correctly."[28]

Lama Govinda told of his expecting Evans-Wentz to join him at Kasar Devi. Year after year there was the promised journey, and year after year it failed to materialize. Though the American scholar was full of plans and hopes for the for the "New Deal," as he saw the Lama's stay indicating, he remained at a distance. The Lama felt his friend was "too old" for the journey.[29] As access to Kasar Devi was only by trail, which-was tricky to maneuver at times, the physical effort just to reach there could be demanding.

Elsie Allbright felt that Evans-Wentz was sad and lonely and that "his interests were entirely intellectual." She also said he seemed to have little understanding of the needs of human beings (or as an old time Theosophist, Emmett Small, said, he was a "real bachelor,").[30] As an example, she noted that once Ananda Jennings, after spending a long day and evening out at the Cuchama ranch, was not offered shelter for the night and had to drive back 40 dark miles to San Diego.[31]

Long ago, Evans-Wentz mentioned that he felt Will Fay had done the right thing to have a family.[32] He certainly seemed to enjoy them during his visits. Professor Brown remembers that he asked after his children all the time and was concerned over their development.[33] Perhaps he was beginning to feel the lack of family himself now that most of his were gone. There remained only Richard, who was fading fast in a local nursing home.

"He lived a spartan life with few pleasures and few friends,"Miss Allbright observed. She related a story that once she had lunch with him at the local vegetarian restaurant and that the waitresses had kidded him about having a "girl friend." He appeared to quite enjoy the reference.[34]

Activity seemed to be a catharsis for him. If he was indecisive, if he was lonely and distraught, he covered it well. Perhaps by doing so many different things he blunted his true leanings. Perhaps, very few, if any, ever saw the side of him that was less than formally correct and distant. (The late Dr. Judith Tyberg, a former Theosophist from Loma Land and a Sanskrit scholar, reported their dinners and conversations were never awkward or strained, though they were always concerning their work—and she had known him most of her life.)[35] He wrote, he attended lectures, he visited with many of the area's spiritually interested. He continued, though with less and less enthusiasm, to search through the land offerings in Santa Barbara. However, expenses seemed to nag at his thoughts—he was continually worried over inflation and rising costs. In letter after letter to Lama Govinda, minute directions for or-

dering the estate were given, encouraging that an eye to low costs be kept. Material cares dominated his diaries.

His comments on the Chinese seizure of Tibet were mixed. On the one hand he felt Tibet was always some sort of Han dependency, however, he was also concerned over its destruction. "According to the Dalai Lama," he said in a letter to Lama Govinda, "Tibet appears to be lost ethnically. Who could have imagined book-burnings and destruction of monasteries in Tibet, almost as terrible as under the Huns, in this mid-twentieth century? Almora is not really far from Chinese outposts. How do you view the situation? Even if China is given the real estate it claims now, will it not have fresh land hunger periodically? All of Almora district was once part of Nepal, and it is not difficult to visualize its being sought after to be 'emancipated.' "[36]

The late 1950s came hard to Walter Evans-Wentz. Age seemed to have worn him down, a fact noted by his former secretary, Lou Blevens, who was close to him in his last years.[37] Though he continued to spend time in the local libraries and historical societies researching and recording, his interests appeared to waver. His concerns with his ranch remained high, although he was losing interest in visiting it. More and more he stayed away from Cuchama. Lama Govinda once observed that a person must see a mountain from all angles, for "to understand its form one must move around it."[38] Perhaps after all his circumnavigations of the place Evans-Wentz no longer felt the need of repetition.

"As the years pass," he recorded in his diary, "the futility of purely worldly affairs becomes more and more obvious, and one senses, as the Buddha did, that life is incessant change and the only security is in nirvana."[39]

Swami Satyananda passed away at this time. Evans-Wentz then made plans to sail to England only to later abort them. Letters flew between Sunya and he; bazaar prices were quoted, gossip was exchanged. Estate directions were mailed to Lama Govinda.

"Once again I see life's uncertainty," he wrote, his handwriting demonstrating a noticeable shakiness.[40] The nervous condition he'd always had was manifesting itself more and more, making his writing harder to read, and harder to practice. Land problems were blamed for his delays in returning to India. Although there were numerous dinners he was invited to, although he met with and corresponded with various worldwide religious figures, he remained overly-concerned with world affairs, bad tenants, and rising costs. His later diaries abound with nature diets and fasting programs. Entry after entry lists health cures and disease controls; he consulted a chiropractor and continued to eat sparingly at

the House of Nutrition restaurant. (Joe Miller told a story of Evans-Wentz's "sparingly" held diet. During a meal together, the scholar encouraged his guest to eat heartily while he only nibbled—one by one—garbanzo beans from a salad.)[41]

"The world uncertainty makes me uncertain as to plans," he wrote Lama Govinda.[42] And again, "my own plans are uncertain. My living is dependent upon a modest rental income. Formerly I had an elder brother, lately deceased, who, when I went abroad, looked after my interests and now it will not be very easy to make new arrangements. Unfortunately, money is necessary. So I hesitate, at this time, to go abroad unless for a short time or until assured of security in absencia."[43]

And still the visitors continued to pass through, still the plans were made for meditation retreats and a memorial tower on Cuchama. Miller himself called from San Francisco and sang his rendition of the Diamond Sutra over the phone, "a unique homage from a disciple," whom Evans-Wentz thought was the only person to understand the theories on the Clear Light of Reality.[44] Mexico beckoned again, this time as a possibility for rest and a chance to visit the spas there for his nervousness. He stayed six months, but no records remain on where he went or whom he saw. In fact, there is less information about the man towards the end of his life than there was in the earlier years. Age and inclination limited the diary entries to an extent, as did the nervous condition, but there just didn't seem to be much for him to say, or if there was he saw little reason to record it. Friends mentioned his curtness in discussions or when meeting them on the street.[45]

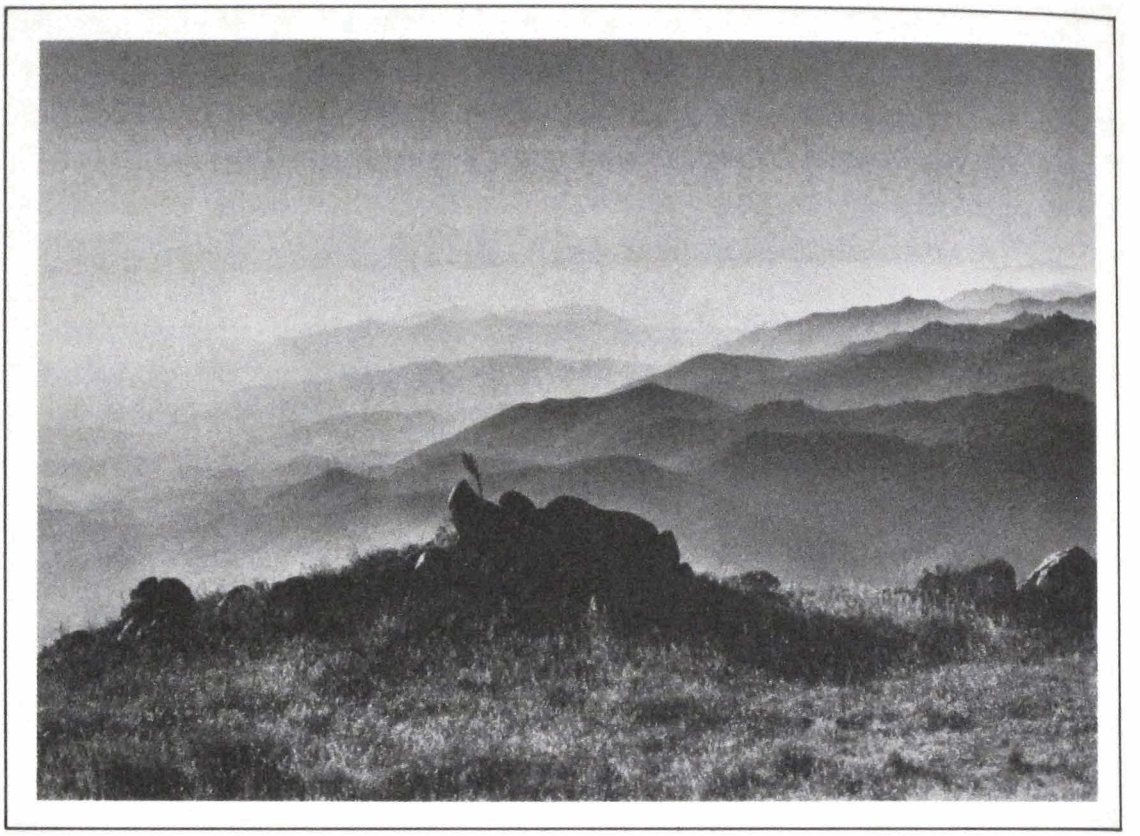
By the time he made his final notation in his diary (almost a year before his death) he had turned 86. "Since the last entry, I have been away from San Diego. The nervousness continues and makes writing difficult."[46]

Dr. Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz died in 1965 near the Self-Realization Fellowship in Encinitas, California. Parmahansa Yogananda had once offered him lodging in the ashram for as long as he felt the need. Sadly enough, it was only for a few months. His notes and diaries became so unreadable as his condition deteriorated, he had to give up writing and communicate only by dictation.[47] His last months were spent in a small bungalow which he shared with his secretary, Lou Blevens, near the main Fellowship grounds. Far from being a sad time for him, the man had many visitors to whom he spoke with cordially, helping whom he could. He busied himself as best he could in disposing of his letters and belongings. Occasionally, he would go off and sit in a chair to meditate, usually near a window overlooking some palm trees

outside. When he knew he was dying, Evans-Wentz "sniffed" out a local rest home and told Blevens to take him there.[48]

Then on July 17, 1965, he passed out of his then-current incarnation.

In the local funeral service, Lou Blevens read in the traditional liturgy from *The Tibetan Book of The Dead*. "Oh nobly born Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz, listen. Now thou are experiencing the Radiance of the Clear Light of Pure Reality . . . . "



The Second Peak on Cuchama; photo by Jim Coit.

POSTSCRIPT

One waits for the dawn. It's forty miles back down the highway to San Diego and only three to the Mexican border, closed and deserted at five in the morning. In this part of the country there are no distractions at an early hour; the radio is full of static, no businesses are open and it's too dark to walk. Anyway, one has to have enough light to find the trail for there are few of them on Cuchama.

It is silent there—it usually is, even in daylight. At night a deep, unbroken collection of star clusters hover overhead. A bright moon can create an ethereal starkness, a continuum of reflected glare from the broken country. The dry, barren aspect of this area prevails through the dark. Slices of raw earth from the fire trails appear as luminescent veins snaking over the ground.

At first glance Cuchama doesn't look like much. Made of Jurassic rock and formed about the middle of the Mesozoic era 135 million years ago, it stands alone on the boulder-strewn line of the international boundary. However, Indians (Dieguenos, Luisenos, and Cochomis) used it in secret initiation rites long before the white man arrived and the power here is still to be reckoned with. It comes on subtly at first, in the clarity of the air. To the city dweller so accustomed to the sick half-tones of what passes for the atmosphere, the cloudless, clean-smelling intensity is a bit overpowering. Dust and plants take on different perspectives. They belong here more than we; it is we who are the intruders, much as they are in our cities. There is little of the twentieth century to deal with at Cuchama; only a few ranchos are scattered at

her base and the border town of Tecate is some five miles away. There is nothing else around.

Cuchama lies surrounded by the foothills near the desert, by weirdly shaped defiles and mesas. With luck, one is far up the fire trail before the full blast of light hits them. The red-orange glow seems to creep along the mountain ribs like a slowly approaching tide, flooding and covering all the shadows with the morning heat. Everything here surrenders to the sun, which in turn has withered and wrinkled most of the works of man that lie scattered at Cuchama's base. The silence is pervasive; even the birds are quiet. It's as though the sun has beaten down all thought of sound or movement. One's smallness slowly becomes more significant the longer they are in the overwhleming presence of the mountain itself.

Cuchama and Sacred Mountains was Evans-Wentz's last work. Before his death, he and his friends tried to arouse interest in it, but without success. John Theobald, professor emeritus from San Diego State University, felt it may have been due to the late scholar's denunciations of the white man for what was done to the indians.[1] The entire third section of this book contains his commentaries on the superiority of the indian's spiritual life and the paucity of the European's, and the bloody history between the two. (The first two sections, on Cuchama and other sacred mountains of the world, serve almost as introductions to the third.) Even his own San Diego did not escape notice in his listings of cruel acts against the native Americans. One action he cited was that of a Lt. Ybarra in 1826 who sent to the San Diego Mission twenty sets of ears from a band of indians he slaughtered.[2]

The approach to Cuchama must be made with a reverential attitude, for its immensity dwarfs one's efforts to contain and comprehend. Gargantuan rocks, some three stories high, point towards the crest like giant fingers. Many appear shaped as animals—lizards, squirrels, roadrunners—and take the place of the real but absent residents. Though tracks abound in the road dust, seldom are any seen.

Evans-Wentz believed and reported that though lightning struck frequently around the mountain (some 3,887 feet high), it was not known to hit Cuchama itself. "It may be due to a protecting envelope of terrestrial magnetism or to a psychic force emanating from the sacred mountain," he declared.[3] This theme on the sanctity of places he had developed over the years; he felt holy areas had psychic protection. "In varying degrees," he wrote, "they have been made holy by that same occult power of mind to enhance the psychic character of the atom of

matter; they are the ripened fruit of spirituality, the proof of thought's all-conquering and all-transforming supremacy."[4]

Even a "thermal belt" is spoken of. While thermal normally refers to a warm or hot condition, in this case he refers to a psychic-climatic shield. Not far below the ridge line the fog/haze/smog stops, as though halted. While it may be explained away by wind conditions and temperature changes, Evans-Wentz thought otherwise. Whatever the reasons, this "fog line" allows a strange panorama of unlimited scope, with the closer peaks pushing through like tips of islands in a tide of low-lying clouds.[5]

Area indians, he reported, believed there was a lake within Cuchama which allowed the orderly "green" shubbery on the north and west sides to be watered.[6] (While "green" appears to be stretching descriptions of the nearly barren north and west sides, there are remarkable differences there from the opposite sides. While the southern and eastern slopes are covered with boulders and brush, the other two sides have an almost topiary, heather-like ground cover.)[7]

Evidently indians came here to invoke the great mysteries and the guardian deities of the mountain. For years Wentz wrote of the high places where religious figures received their instructions and their visions. On Cuchama, he reported, the initiates climbed up to sleep through the darkness after preparing themselves for three to four days by eating only the purest of foods and mentally cleansing themselves. For indians it was common to make their spiritual connection through dreams, he said. It was part of their psychic education. They are capable of psychically controlled and connected dreaming, much like Tibetan Buddhists.[8]

The late doctor wrote there came to these novices in "the vision of the shining beings, clothed in the radiance of the sun, to behold in the dazzling splendor the various lots in life from which men may choose." They were guided, he says, in their own innate tendencies inherited from past lives; each had "no difficulty or hesitation in making the right choice."[9]

Obviously, the social life of the indian was shaped by his psychic experiences and supported by the entire tribe. For what elder himself had not taken such a journey? Europeans, Evans-Wentz observed, are governed in their everyday life by external appearances. (As noted, his diaries were filled with his disgust of the moral decay and illusionary pursuits of his fellow men.) "The white man," he contends, "is habituated to ignore, if not deny, the reality of that inner guidance which the religious founders proclaimed as essential to the health of society . . .

but the redmen seeks truth spiritually, being more introspective." He felt the wise indians kept to their pueblos and reservations, thus avoiding becoming "psychically impotent."[10]

The trip up is some four miles and takes about two hours walking. The panorama is limited only by "the immense circle of the world's horizon," as Evans-Wentz so aptly put it.[11] The main peak is conical and capped with a small humming telephone relay station. A great ring of treeless, distorted mountains surrounds Cuchama. Basically, the mountain remains untouched and accessible only by fire trails which present an almost impossible variety on the approach, with several dead ends, private driveways and rutted cowpaths from the border crossing station. Though a long trail up, it does lace the mountain in a series of switchbacks, cutting through the rock fields and ravines in easy undulations.

Mexico is below, Tecate a stone's throw away. The smoke from her morning fires, the blue scabby haze from her shacks and huts creates a feeling of an abandoned central Asian city edging towards total destruction, a place peopled with refugees. Ribbons of road lead nowhere. Small farms stretch into canyons. The impression is that of being surrounded by an endless deserted country that man has only touched temporally. There is little real greenery visible on the mountain and that is merely a lawn at Indra Devi's home close to the mountain's base.

There is a second level to Cuchama, a slightly rounded mesa enveloped in a more pronounced silence. Tilting slightly north and east, with long streamers of grass, with bushes and boulders in a rough circle, this area is easily missed. No trails lead to it, in fact, it can be overlooked because it appears so insignificant. Perhaps it is so by design. No one is ever around—no animals, no birds—barely a whisper moves through the air. The winds come periodically, causing slight rattlings in the vegetation. Here is where the indian shamans came, here is where the visions were given.

"The redman believes only that which they realize through their own psychic experience, mainly in dreams and the disembodied state of astral-body projections," he reported. "The Bible and tradition and dogmatics are not essential to the inner wisdom."[12]

Today there is only silence on Cuchama. There is nothing to deflect one's attention in the rock circle. It becomes obvious the longer one remains there that the place had once been involved with great spiritual activity and power. Though the entire mountain had been used as a stronghold for the indians as they warred against each other before the white man came, the mesa was off-limits. No trees, no hogans—just a

natural alignment of rocks which at first glance serves no apparent purpose.

Long attuned to dealing with the supernatural, Evans-Wentz had discovered the great healing areas in his travels, specifically in the Celtic countries. William Butler Yeats himself had introduced him to some. Cryptically Evans-Wentz described in several places in his notes that he believed there were three such major healing centers in America. Though hesitant to speculate on the possibility, there were hints he believed Cuchama might have been the center affecting the entire southern California area.

Was this slightly-built man living in an obscure hotel and who often dressed in a suit without a tie—was he a shaman himself? Or was he just an advanced pilgrim without a need to worry over externals? A frugal man ("cheap" some of his former friends felt), sparse in habits and somewhat short with those not on the spiritual path, Evans-Wentz considered it his duty to protect such places as Cuchama. It time it became an obsession. However, he never thought of himself as the owner, only the caretaker.

Up on Cuchama itself all this speculation seems far away and from another time. The immensity of the horizon, along with the compelling nature of the silent circle of boulders on top demands from one more attention. There is a distinct magnetism there, a feeling of power and peace. The attraction this mountain had for the indians becomes evident the longer one stays there and more pronounced on subsequent visits. It is also apparent, however, that the white man is once again attempting to scatter and diffuse this energy, despite the mountain's relative isolation.

Though holy people may infuse a place with their sacred presence, it is also true their polar opposites can deplete an area. Drunk vandals regularly hurl their beer cans into the brush while spray-painting names in Spanish on the rocks. Trash on top is much in evidence despite a heavily-locked entry gate at the bottom. A group of San Diego businessmen headed by a former city councilman have plans for "developing" a new town just this side of the border crossing. At alarming intervals, signs pop up along the old Highway 80 (on the northern side of the mountain) announcing vertical acres on Cuchama at moderate prices.[13] Dr. Jung could have been referring to Cuchama's uncertain fate when, in his commentary on *The Tibetan Book of The Great Liberation*, he said, "I have serious doubts as to the blessings of Western Civilization."[14] Though Evans-Wentz considered the mountain a temple, he did take some very practical steps in protecting it. In his will he parcelled out his

acreage between the San Diego County Council of Boy Scouts (who have a "Camp Coochama" there), the San Diego YMCA and the State of California, the lion's share going to the state. One clause prohibited any sale, alienation, or commercialization of any part. The bequests were made on condition that the land be used as an experimental reforestation area, recreational spot and game refuge.[15] Thus it remains, protected and used by like-minded groups and relatively untrammeled. However, his dreams of starting a Buddhist ashram died with him and never came to light.

The fate of the Evans-Wentz property in India is another matter and remains for the most part shadowed by silence. As mentioned earlier, upon the late doctor's death, the Puri parcel—some several hundred acres—disappeared in a maze of unanswered letters.[16] Similarly, upon the passing of Swami Satyananda, the Birbhadura ashram was transferred to the Maha-Bodhi Society of India. It too suffered the same as the Puri estate. Not only did anyone in India not know anything, but they barely served notice of the transfer to any person in America concerned with the estate.[17]

However, silence doesn't necessarily mean lack of interest. Two weeks after Evans-Wentz died, a representative from the Maha-Bodhi Society turned up in Almora to investigate the property being passed over to their care. According to Mrs. Boshi Sen, this agent eventually was directed to her home. In a burst of enthusiasm the man told of grandiose plans to follow the will to the letter and erect a large study center there on Kasar Devi to commemorate the efforts of the late Dr. Evans-Wentz. Both she and her husband sat there amazed at such an out-pouring, scarcely believing it. At the end of his speech the man grandly announced he was going to visit the property himself for a "first hand" inspection. How did one reach the property? he asked (implying in his officious tone it couldn't have been very far and no doubt a car was available).

"On your two feet," Boshi Sen told him.

Very late in the evening, the man returned, much the worse for wear. Being a true Calcutta-wallah (the society is headquartered there) he was most unused to "longish" walks. They never heard from him or from the society again.[18]

At the time of Evans-Wentz's death, Lama Govinda and Li Gotami had been living at Kasar Devi peacefully for over 10 years. Being relatively isolated, they had few visitors or interruptions of the aforementioned kind. They continued to study and work, determined to establish

a Tibetan Buddhist center that would be reflective of the late doctor's wishes.

A few years after his death, both of them journeyed to San Diego and received his ashes. Upon returning to Kasar Devi they placed them in a magnificent white chorten (a photograph of which by Li Gotami graces this book) that overlooks the Trishul mountains and over 100 miles of the Himalayas. It is quiet there. On a given day the most one hears are wind-carried voices from the terraced fields far below, or breezes through the pine trees. Far from being a gentle place (it gets bitterly cold, wild animals prowl the neighborhood), it does inspire a tranquility and a serenity that is as pronounced today as when Evans-Wentz lived there in the mid-thirties.

But change too is coming to "Crank's Ridge." In late 1979 and early 1980 a road was being laboriously hewn from the rocky trail that had served the area for generations. To appreciate how serious the project was, the speed of the work had to be seen to be believed.[19] A road will effectively end much of the isolation and some of the tranquility. (Though with the price of petrol being so high, a resident Englishman in Almora told the author he didn't see who could afford to drive on it.) A road means more development and chances for further exploitation of the marginal forest there (already the trees are being bled dry for pitch, a low-income-producing practice, and are commonly illegally girdled)and more people, an all-too-common phenomena. How this in the end will totally effect the area and its inhabitants remains open to conjecture, but an alteration is inevitable.

However, further events in the summer of 1980 demonstrated that the process of development on "Crank's Ridge" was not going at a breakneck pace. Lama Govinda reported that during his trip there great stretches of this new road were washed away in the monsoon season directly following the road's completion. The conditions were so bad even jeeps couldn't navigate the chaos. Instead, *dhoolies* (litter chairs) were being offered travelers around the eroded parts at inflation prices.[20]

Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz remains an enigma. His Tibetan series books are considered classics in their field. They retain a consistent though limited popularity, despite the petty accusations hurled by certain contemporary scholars. The only serious challenge to their authenticity and scholarship during his lifetime came during World War II when a fellow Theosophist took him to task. The accusations weren't as substancial as much as they were circumstancial and personal (Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup was married and therefore not a Lama; he also wasn't

acquainted with Madam Blavatsky's writings, ect.). It was only a one-shot affair, but Evans-Wentz treated it to a 25 page rebuttal.[21]

Though his books rose or fell in popularity depending on the hold Tibetan Buddhism had on the reading public, it wasn't until 1980 that a few unrelated but complimentary events took place that promised a continuing pursuit of his last wishes.

A scholar convinced Stanford University to relinquish its 15-year hold on *Cuchama and Sacred Mountains* and publication through Ohio University Press in 1981 is a fact.

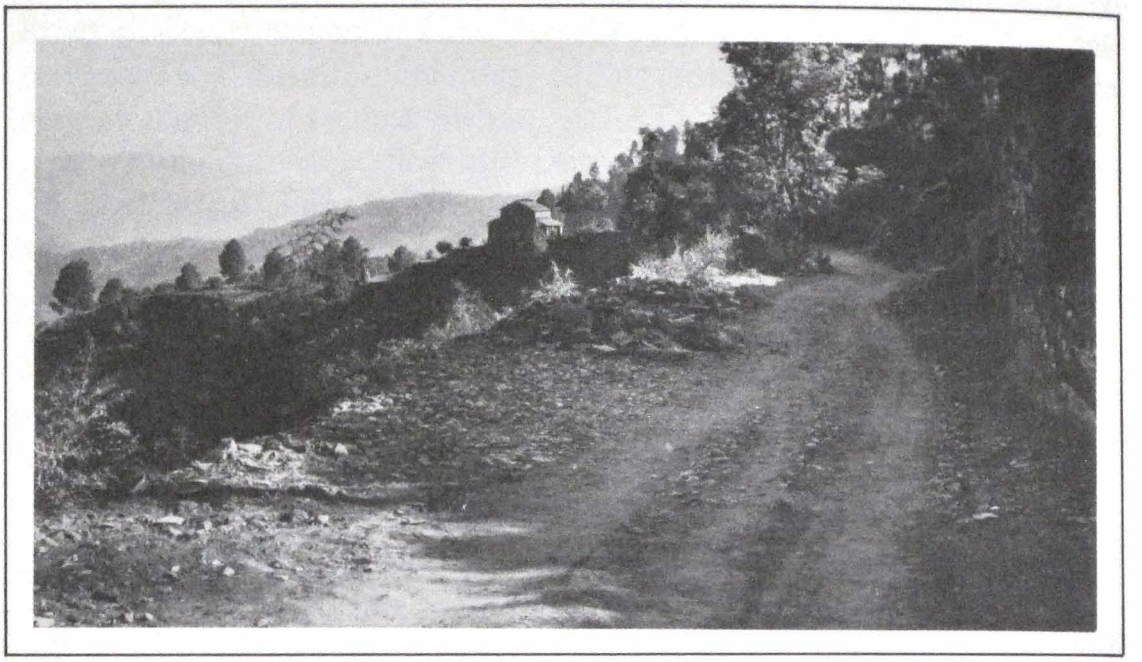
Also, the Evans-Wentz estate (property, stocks, bonds and cash valued approximately at $200,000 and only recently turned over to Stanford) was used to found an Evans-Wentz Professorship for the study of Oriental Philosophy, Religion and Ethics. Though requested directly through his will, it took these many years for the legal aspects of the estate to be cleared and allow the accumulated finances to be freed. A revolving lectureship had been sponsored in his name for years, but due to lack of finances it was of a limited nature.

When Lama Govinda returned to Almora in 1980, he was armed with a letter from Evans-Wentz giving the title of the Kasar Devi estate over to a Tibetan Buddhist group instead of to the Theravada-based Maha-Bodhi Society. After a costly and prolonged battle, much of it with legal red tape and official foot-dragging, he was successful.

For years a Tibetan study center had been slowly building on the estate, on a flat expanse of land below the stupa. Headed by the Guru Lama, a lean peaceful man with a wispy beard and a lively family, they represented a branch of the Dikungpas (from the Kargyudpas lineage) who are based in the far north of India, in Ladakh. Five years ago their leader walked off a Tibetan commune and escaped to India. Upon being reinstated by the Dalai Lama, he set out to revitalize his lineage. Acting as representative for the group, the Guru Lama accepted the transfer of title and held a large ceremony honoring the event as well as to show off the newly-completed roof on the main rough stone building (it had been roofless for years). Every death day of Walter Evans-Wentz they plan to honor him as their founder.

So, once again the affairs of the man find themselves involved in the constant changes of the life cycle. It is ironic that his estate and finances have been in a state of confusion for so long. However, it may be a matter of residual karma. Perhaps his involvement in the fields of real estate speculation and business had to be worked off. Similarly, public interest in Tibetan Buddhism and Theosophy and Celtic fairy lore have been subject to the whims of fashion. What at one time was popular

becomes less so. The more substantive aspects of his work remain, as do the more committed individuals it touched. In a time when the media dictates what the world thinks, feels and retains, it is heartening to see that continued interest in Evans-Wentz's work remains and slowly takes new root.



The road to Kasar Devi, early morning; photo by Ken Winkler.

NOTES

Because some of the source material is from unnumbered pages in diaries or notes or from scraps of paper every effort has been made to identify them by location if not by date. Also, much of this material is not indexed and is in the possession of private parties, so recognizable locations are only approximate.

ONE

1. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Some Notes for An Autobiography* (Lou Blevens Collection, 1920), p.1.
2. Ibid., p.1.
3. Ibid., p.2.
4. Ibid., p.3.
5. Ibid., p.5.
6. Ibid., pp.5–6.
7. Ibid., pp.6–7.
8. Ibid., p.7.
9. Ibid., p.7.
10. Ibid., p.8.
11. Ibid., p.8.
12. Ibid., p.8.
13. Ibid., p.9.
14. Ibid., p.11.
15. Ibid., pp.11–12.
16. Ibid., p.12.
17. Ibid., p.12.

TWO

1. *Some Notes for An Autobiography*, p.13.

2. Ibid., p.13.
3. Ibid., p.13.
4. Ibid., p.14.
5. Ibid., p.14.
6. Ibid., p.14.
7. Ibid., p.15.
8. Ibid., p.15.
9. Ibid., p.15.
10. Ibid., p.16.
11. Ibid., p.16.
12. Ibid., p.17.
13. Ibid., p.18.
14. Told to me by Lama Anagarika Govinda.
15. Told to me by Lou Blevens.
16. *Some Notes for An Autobiography*, p.19.
17. Ibid., p.20.
18. Ibid., p.22.
19. Ibid., pp.20–21.
20. Ibid., pp.22–23.
21. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Diary, September 1901–February 1902* (Stanford University Special Collections), unnumbered page.
22. *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropedia* (1981 edition), Vol. 18, pp.276–278.
23. *Diary, September 1901–February 1902*, unnumbered page.
24. Told to me by Dr. John Theobald and the late Dr. Judith Tyberg.

THREE

1. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Diary, January 1902–August 1903* (Stanford University Special Collections), May 1902 entry.
2. Told to me by Lou Blevens.
3. *Last Will and Testament of Walter Y. Wentz aka Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz* (recorded January 3, 1968), p.22.
4. Found unindexed in a box in the Evans-Wentz Collection, Stanford University Special Collections.
5. *Diary, January 1902–August 1903*, undated mid-1902 entry.
6. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Diary, December 21, 1903–August 18, 1906* (Lou Blevens Collection), Fall 1904 entry.
7. Told to me by Lama Anagarika Govinda.
8. Told to me by Dr. John and Mary Theobald.
9. Ibid.
10. *Diary, December 21, 1903–August 18, 1906*, April 18, 1906 entry.
11. Told to me by Alice Pshell, daughter of Will Fay.
12. *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropedia* (1981 edition), Vol. 16, p.219.
13. *Diary, December 21, 1903–August 18, 1906*, earthquake section entry.
14. Ibid., mid-1905 entry.
15. Ibid., earthquake section entry.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., undated later entry.
18. Ibid.

19. Told to me by Professor Warren Audt.
20. Ibid.
21. *Dictionary of National Biography, 1912–1921* (Oxford University Press, 1966 edition), pp.457–458.
22. Walter Evans-Wentz, *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* (Colin Smythe, Ltd., 1977), from the dedication page.
23. Walter Evans-Wentz, editor,*Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines* (Oxford University Press, 1967 edition), p.xxii.
24. Ibid., p.xxiii.
25. Discovered by the author in the Evans-Wentz Collection at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.
26. From a note and an undated article attached to a review of *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* in the *Manchester Guardian*, March 1, 1912 (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford).
27. *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries*, p.xviii.
28. Ibid., pp. xviii–xix.
29. Ibid., p.281.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., p.455.
32. Ibid., p.515.
33. Review articles and congratulation letters found in Box number one (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford).
34. Ibid., letter dated September 30, 1912.
35. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Diary, London July 29, 1913—Mentone March 19, 1914* (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford), fall 1913 entry.
36. Ibid., October 31, 1914 entry.
37. Ibid., New Year's entry, 1914.
38. Ibid., March 18, 1914 entry.
39. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Monaco Diary; May 17, 1913* (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford), mid-1914 entry.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Poetical Notes and Fancies; Genoa, March 20, 1914–Athens, September 16, 1914* (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford), April 1, 1914 entry.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid., June 10, 1914 entry.
48. Ibid., June 15, 1914 entry.
49. Ibid., April 26, 1914 entry.
50. Ibid., July 10, 1914 entry.

FOUR

1. *Poetical Notes and Fancies*, August 6, 1914 entry.
2. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Diary, The Dardanelles —Turkey; September 28, 1914* (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford), September 25, 1914 entry.

3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., September 1914 entry.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., October 14, 1914 entry.
7. Ibid., November 1, 1914 entry.
8. Ibid., November 4, 1914 entry.
9. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Pension de Framille; Luxor, Upper Egypt—April 6, 1915* (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford), May 9, 1915 entry.
10. From a letter to P.R. Newman from Evans-Wentz (Lou Blevens Collection), January 28, 1965.
11. *Pension de Framille; Luxor, Upper Egypt—April 6, 1915*, early undated entry.
12. Ibid., November 26, 1915 entry.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Told to me by Lou Blevens.
16. From a letter to Evans-Wentz from T.E. Lawrence (Evans-Wentz Collection, Stanford University Special Collections).
17. *Pension de Framille; Luxor, Upper Egypt—April 6, 1915*, February 2, 1917 entry.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.

FIVE

1. Found on an unmarked manuscript cover in the Evans-Wentz Collection, Stanford University Special Collections.
2. *Times of Ceylon* (Evans-Wentz Collection, Stanford University Special Collections), article dated December 18, 1917.
3. Told to me by Lama Anagarika Govinda.
4. Votive offerings (Evans-Wentz Collection, Stanford University Special Collections); Wax replicas discovered by the author during a journey to Old Goa.
5. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Colombo, Ceylon; September 23, 1917–September 1918* (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford), New Year's entry, 1918.
6. Discovered by the author in the Evans-Wentz Collection, Stanford University Special Collections.
7. *Colombo, Ceylon; September 23, 1917–September 1918*, early 1918 entry.
8. Ibid., early April 1918 entry.
9. Ibid., April 8, 1918 entry.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropedia* (1981 edition), Vol. I, pp.1023-1024; also from a discussion with Dr. John Theobald.
15. Laura Dewitt James, *The Word Went Forth* (Rosicrucian Order, 1943).
16. Ibid., from her inscription to his copy (Evans-Wentz Collection, Stanford University Special Collections).
17. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Simla, January 6, 1919 to Delhi, February 1, 1919* (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford), February 2, 1919 entry.
18. *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*, p.xviii.

19. Ibid.
20. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Benares—March 3, 1919 to Darjeeling—May, 1919* (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford), March 13, 1919 entry.
21. Ibid.
22. Walter Evans-Wentz, editor, *The Tibetan Book of The Great Liberation* (Oxford University Press, 1969), pp.86–89.

SIX

1. Alexandra David-Neel, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet* (Penguin Books Inc., 1965), pp.15–19.
2. Told to me by Lama Anagarika Govinda.
3. *Benares—March 3, 1919 to Darjeeling—May, 1919*, May 2, 1919 entry.
4. Ibid.
5. Walter Evans-Wentz, editor, *The Tibetan Book of The Dead* (Oxford University Press, 1960), p.xix.
6. Ibid., p.78.
7. Luree Miller, *On Top of The World; Five Women Explorers in Tibet* (Paddington Press, 1976), p.151.
8. John Blofeld, *The Wheel of Life* (Shambala, 1978), as suggested on pp.242–244.
9. Walter Evans-Wentz, *The Theosophical Forum*, "The Science of Environment," May 1942 edition, p.197.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. *The Tibetan Book of The Dead*, p.xi.
13. *Benares—March 3, 1919 to Darjeeling—May, 1919*, late May entry.
14. Ibid., March 24 and August 17, 1919 entries; see also *The Tibetan Book of The Dead*, p.79.
15. Told to me by T.T. Samdup.
16. *The Tibetan Book of The Great Liberation*, p.xxviii.
17. *The Tibetan Book of The Dead*, p.78.
18. As noted in bookstores and through an interview with Lama Anagarika Govinda.
19. *The Tibetan Book of The Dead*, p.78; also told to me by Lama Anagarika Govinda.
20. From personal correspondence between the author and David Snellgrove and Herbert Guenther.
21. Suggested by John Blofeld.
22. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, p.79.
23. Francesca Fremantle and Chogyam Trungpa, *The Tibetan Book of The Dead* (Shambala, 1975), see introduction. Note: subsequent references to pages from *The Tibetan Book of The Dead* are from the Evans-Wentz edition only.
24. E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1965), p.72.
25. Told to me by Lama Anagarika Govinda.
26. *The Tibetan Book of The Dead*, pp.80–81.
27. Walter Evans-Wentz, *The Canadian Theosophist*, "Right Views Versus Wrong Views," Vol.XXIII, No. 10, p.301.
28. Ibid.
29. Alexandra David-Neel, *My Journey to Lhasa* (London, 1927).
30. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Benares—January 30, 1920 to November 9, 1920* (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford), February 5, 1920 entry.

31 Ibid., March 1920 entry.

32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Found by the author in the Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
37. *Benares—January 30, 1920 to November 9, 1920*, March 10, 1920 entry.
38. Found by the author in the Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
39. *Benares—January 30, 1920 to November 9, 1920*, April 1920 entry.
40. Told to me by Lama Anagarika Govinda.
41. Told to me by Sunyabhai.
42. Told to me by officials from Stanford University; also from the lack of return correspondence to the author from the Maha-Bodhi Society of India.
43. *The Theosophical Forum*, May 1942 edition, p.197.
44. Ibid.
45. Sachindra Kumar Majumdar, *Introduction to Yoga, Principles and Practices* (University Books, 1965), p.117.
46. Ibid., p.123.
47. From "Himalayan Holidays," a Government of India tourist brochure, 1978.
48. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Notes on A Pilgrimage to Badrinath* (Lou Blevens Collection), general 1920 entries.
49. Ibid., June 22 and June 24, 1920 entries.
50. *Benares—January 30, 1920 to November 9, 1920*, November 19, 1920 entry.
51. Ibid.
52. From an exchange of letters between the Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup and Evans-Wentz (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford), C.1919.
53. Told to me by T.T. Samdup.

SEVEN

1. Walter Evans-Wentz, *The Theosophical Path*, "The Basque and The Celt," Vol.XXVII, August 1924, p.120.
2. Parmahansa Yogananda, *The Autobiography of a Yogi* (Self-Realization Fellowship, 1979), pp.vii–viii.
3. *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*, pp.xviii–xix.
4. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Bubaneswar, Orissa—January 4, 1921* (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford), March 6, 1921.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., March 26, 1921 entry.
7. *Times of Ceylon* (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford), article in the June 30, 1921 edition.
8. *Bubaneswar, Orissa—January 4, 1921*, July 14, 1921 entry.
9. Letter from Evans-Wentz to Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup (courtesy of T.T. Samdup), October 18, 1921.
10. Ibid.; also from a conversation with Lou Blevens.
11. Ibid.
12. *Ceylon Daily News* (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford), article on Evans-Wentz, May 14, 1921.

13. Evans-Wentz/Dawa-Samdup letter, October 18, 1921.
14. Ibid.
15. *Bubaneswar, Orissa—January 4, 1921*, undated entry.

EIGHT

1. Walter Evans-Wentz, editor, *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa* (Oxford University Press, 1976), p.18.
2. Told to me by Lama Anagarika Govinda.
3. Walter Evans-Wentz, *S.S. Kashmir—Off Formosa enroute to Shanghai* (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford), June 5, 1922 entry.
4. Ibid., June 26, 1922 entry.
5. Discovered by the author in the Evans-Wentz Collection, Stanford University Special Collections.
6. *S.S. Kashmir—Off Formosa enroute to Shanghai*, September 1922 entry.
7. Ibid., January 1923 entry.
8. Ibid., February 6, 1923 entry.
9. Told to me by Emmett Small, Point Loma Theosophist.
10. Ibid.
11. *S.S. Kashmir—Off Formosa enroute to Shanghai*, February 6, 1923 entry.
12. Told to me by Marion Lester, Point Loma Theosophist.
13. Told to me by Alice Pshell.
14. Ibid.
15. Told to me by Marion Lester.
16. *S.S. Kashmir—Off Formosa enroute to Shanghai*, August 23, 1923 entry.
17. *Trenton Sunday Times Advertiser*, article on Walter Evans-Wentz (Evans-Wentz Collection, Stanford University Special Collections), August 20, 1928 edition.
18. Ibid.
19. *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa*, p.25.
20. Told to me by Professor Warren Audt.
21. *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa*, p.25.
22. See Lama Govinda's introduction to this book.
23. Told to me by David Barrett, Senior Assistant Librarian, Department of Oriental Books, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
24. *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa*, p.xvi; and from conversations with San Diego Theosophists.
25. Noted by the author in a visit to Oxford.

NINE

1. *The Tibetan Book of The Dead*, p.xx.
2. Told to me by Lama Anagarika Govinda.
3. *The Tibetan Book of The Dead*, p.lix.
4. Ibid., pp.xiv–xv.
5. Ibid., p.xv.
6. Ibid., p.xxxvi.
7. Ibid., p.xliii.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., p.xlvii.
10. Ibid., p.xlv.

11. Walter Evans-Wentz, *September 22, 1923 (Cherbourg, France) to October 14, 1934 (Palma, Majorica—Spain)* (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford), from a number of entries.
12. Ibid., October 10, 1927 entry; also noted in a number of entries in several of his diaries and letters.
13. Told to me by Alice Pshell.
14. From personal observations.
15. *September 22, 1923 (Cherbourg, France) to October 14, 1934 (Palma, Majorica—Spain)*, March 4, 1928 entry.
16. Ibid.
17. From a letter to me from Krishnamurti.
18. *September 22, 1923 (Cherbourg, France) to October 14, 1934 (Palma, Majorica—Spain)*, October 31, 1928 entry.
19. *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa*, p.vii.
20. Ibid., p.xii.
21. Ibid., p.xiii.
22. *September 22, 1923 (Cherbourg, France) to October 14, 1934 (Palma, Majorica—Spain)*, as noted in several entries.
23. Ibid., March 24, 1929 entry; also see *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*, p.xvii.
24. Ibid., January 14, 1931 entry.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., as noted in several entries.
27. *Autobiography of a Yogi*, pp.vii–viii.
28. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Cuchama and Sacred Mountains* (Ohio University Press, 1981). pp.22–23. Note: all page citations from this source are from the manuscript held in the Stanford University Special Collections.
29. *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*, as noted in the second edition, 1958.
30. Found by Lisa Taylor in the Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

TEN

1. *Times of Ceylon*, article on the arrival of Evans-Wentz (Evans-Wentz Collection, Stanford University Special Collections), December 6, 1934 edition.
2. Found by the author in the Evans-Wentz Collection, Stanford University Special Collections.
3. As noted in her book, *My Journey to Lhasa*.
4. Paul Brunton, *A Search in Secret India* (E.P. Dutton, 1935; also published by Weiser, 1970).
5. Ibid., p.134.
6. Ibid., p.135.
7. Ibid., p.136.
8. *Cuchama and Sacred Mountains*, p.40.
9. *Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropedia* (1981 edition), Vol. III, pp.401–402.
10. *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi* (Tiruvannamalai, India, 1972), pp.9–22.
11. *Statesman*, letter to the editor from Evans-Wentz (Evans-Wentz Collection, Stanford University Special Collections), September 4, 1935 edition.
12. Told to me by Sunyabhai.
13. *The Spiritual Teaching of Ramana Maharshi* (Shambala, 1972), p.79.
14. Jim Corbett, *Man Eaters of Kumaon* (Oxford University Press, 1946).

15. Told to me by Mrs. Boshi Sen.
16. Told to me by Sunyabhai.
17. Ibid.
18. Told to me by Mary Theobald.
19. Told to me by Sunyabhai.
20. Told to me by Lama Anagarika Govinda.
21. Ibid.
22. Told to me by Sunyabhai and by Professor M.D. Pant of Almora.
23. From a letter to me from T.T. Samdup.
24. Told to me by Sunyabhai.
25. Ibid.
26. Theos Bernard, *Penthouse of The Gods* (London, 1939) and *Hatha Yoga* (Weiser, 1970).
27. Letter from Evans-Wentz to Professor Herb Schnader (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford), May 3, 1938.
28. Told to me by Lama Anagarika Govinda.
29. Letter from Mohan Chanda Joshi to Evans-Wentz (Evans-Wentz Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford), January 7, 1938.
30. Richard Wilhelm, editor and translator, *I Ching* (Princeton University Press, 1950) and *The Secret of The Golden Flower* (Harcourt Brace Javanovich, Inc., 1962).
31. *The Tibetan Book of The Dead*, p.xxxvi.
32. *The Tibetan Book of The Great Liberation*, p.xlii.
33. These conversations were recorded in a series of handwritten notes taken by Evans-Wentz during their meeting at the Tenth International Medical Congress of Psychotheraphy held in Oxford from July 29—August 2, 1938. The only known copy is in the possession of Lou Blevens.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. *The Secret of The Golden Flower*, p.139.
39. From the notes on their 1938 Oxford meeting.
40. C.G. Jung, edited by Gerhard Adler and Aniela Jaffe, translated by R.F.C. Hull, *Letters* (Bollingen Series XCV, Princeton University Press, 1973), Vol. II, pp.261–264, letter dated February 9, 1939.
41. From a letter to me from Tore Hakausson.
42. Ibid.
43. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Memo Book; December 31, 1938–May 8, 1950* (Lou Blevens Collection), April 1939 entry.
44. Ibid., November 4, 1939 entry.
45. Told to me by Mrs. Boshi Sen and by Sunyabhai; also noted in Walter Evans-Wentz, *Diary; Helwar-Les Bains, December 31, 1938 to May 8, 1950* (Lou Blevens Collection), mid-1939 entry.

ELEVEN

1. Letter from Evans-Wentz to Dr. Gottfried de Purucker (Evans-Wentz Collection, Theosophical Society International; Pasadena, California), January 19, 1942.

2. Letter from de Purucker to Evans-Wentz (Evans -Wentz Collection, Theosophical Society International; Pasadena, California), January 4, 1942.
3. Letter from Evans-Wentz to de Purucker (Evans -Wentz Collection, Theosophical Society International; Pasadena, California), January 8, 1942.
4. *Memo Book; December 31, 1938–May 8, 1950*, late 1942 entry.
5. Ibid., January 1, 1942 entry.
6. Ibid., April 18, 1942 entry.
7. *The Theosophical Forum*, May 1942, p.199.
8. Ibid., p.200.
9. *Memo Book; December 31, 1938–May 8, 1950*, late 1942 entry.
10. Letter from E.T. Study to Evans-Wentz (Evans-Wentz Collection, Stanford University Special Collections), early WWII correspondence, undated page.
11. Letter to me from Helen Moore, former City of San Diego librarian during the WWII years.
12. *Cuchama and Sacred Mountains*, p.3.
13. Ibid., p.xv.
14. Ibid., p.27.
15. Ibid., pp.xiv–xv.
16. *Last Will and Testament of Walter Y. Wentz aka Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz*, p.14.
17. Letter from Evans-Wentz to Charles Ryan (Evans-Wentz Collection, Theosophical Society International; Pasadena, California), March 4, 1945.
18. Ibid.
19. Noted by the author in the years following World War II.
20. Letter from Evans-Wentz to Sturdy (Evans-Wentz Collection, Stanford University Special Collections), August 20, 1945.
21. Ibid.
22. William McNaughton, *The Light From The East* (Dell Publications, 1978).
23. Walter Evans-Wentz, *The Theosophical Forum*, "Confidence and Peace and Security," November 1945, p.485.
24. *Diary; Helwar-Les Bains; December 31, 1938–May 8, 1950*, June 1, 1944 entry.
25. Evans-Wentz letter to de Purucker (Evans-Wentz Collection, Theosophical Society International; Pasadena, California), June 7, 1938.
26. *Cuchama and Sacred Mountains*, pp.6–7.
27. Ibid., p.7
28. Ibid., p.147.
29. Told to me by Bill Fay, son of Will Fay.
30. Told to me by Julius Ancker.
31. Told to me by Elsie Allbright.
32. Told to me by Cliff Lucas.

TWELVE

1. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Diary; July 9, 1949–August 5, 1956* (Lou Blevens Collection), July 4, 1949 entry.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., November 4, 1950 entry.
4. Letter from Jung to Evans-Wentz (Lou Blevens Collection), March 10, 1950.
5. *The Tibetan Book of The Great Liberation*, p.217.
6. Ibid., p.206.

7. Ibid., p.234.
8. Told to me by Joe Miller.
9. *The Tibetan Book of The Great Liberation*, p.xxxii.
10. Ibid., p.xxxiii.
11. Ibid., p.xxxviii.
12. Ibid., p.xlii.
13. Ibid., p.xlix.
14. From a letter to me from Professor D.M. Brown.
15. Told to me by Elsie Allbright.
16. From a letter to me from Professor D.M. Brown.
17. From a letter to me from Elsie Allbright.
18. Told to me by Lama Anagarika Govinda.
19. Ibid.
20. Lama Anagarika Govinda, *Maha-Bodhi Society Journal*, book review, August 1954 edition.
21. Ibid.
22. *The Light From The East*, from the introduction. Page references are not available as the book, while listed as being in print, is not on the market. The only known copy of this introduction is in the Evans-Wentz Collection, Stanford University Special Collections.
23. *Diary; July 9, 1949–August 5, 1956*, September 15, 1953 entry.
24. Letter from three Brazilian professors (names withheld) to Evans-Wentz (Evans-Wentz Collection, Stanford University Special Collections), April 15, 1959.
25. *Cuchama and Sacred Mountains*, p.18.
26. *Diary; July 9, 1949–August 5, 1956*, April 13, 1955 entry.
27. Ibid., July 26, 1955 entry.
28. Ibid.
29. Told to me by Lama Anagarika Govinda.
30. Told to me by Emmett Small.
31. Told to me by Elsie Allbright.
32. Told to me by Alice Pshell.
33. From a letter to me from Professor D.M. Brown.
34. Told to me by Elsie Allbright.
35. Told to me by the late Dr. Judith Tyberg.
36. From a letter to Lama Anagarika Govinda from Evans-Wentz (Personal Collection of Lama Govinda), September 17, 1959.
37. Told to me by Lou Blevens.
38. *Cuchama and Sacred Mountains*, p.v.
39. Walter Evans-Wentz, *Diary; September 9, 1956–June 21, 1964* (Lou Blevens Collection), March 1958 entry.
40. Ibid., March 1963 entry.
41. Told to me by Joe Miller.
42. From a letter to Lama Anagarika Govinda from Evans-Wentz (Personal Collection of Lama Govinda), January 12, 1962.
43. From a letter to Lama Anagarika Govinda from Evans-Wentz (Personal Collection of Lama Govinda), February 13, 1961.
44. *Diary; September 9, 1956–June 21, 1964*, April 5, 1963 entry; also told to me by Joe Miller.
45. Told to me by Dr. John Theobald.

46. *Diary; September 9, 1956–June 21, 1964*, June 21, 1964.
47. Told to me by Lou Blevens and Dr. John Theobald; also noted in the later entries in Evans-Wentz's diaries.
48. Told to me by Lou Blevens.

POSTSCRIPT

1. Told to me by Dr. John Theobald.
2. *Cuchama and Sacred Mountains*, p.82.
3. Ibid., p.10.
4. *The Theosophical Forum*, "The Science of Environment," p.197.
5. From personal observations.
6. *Cuchama and Sacred Mountains*, p.11.
7. From personal observations.
8. *Cuchama and Sacred Mountains*, pp.15 & 17.
9. Ibid., pp.13–14.
10. Ibid., pp.18–19.
11. Ibid., p.8.
12. Ibid., p.146.
13. From personal observations.
14. *The Tibetan Book of The Great Liberation*, p.xlii.
15. *Last Will and Testament of Walter Y. Wentz aka Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz*, p.14.
16. Told to me by officials from Stanford University.
17. Ibid.
18. Told to me by Mrs. Boshi Sen.
19. Observed by the author during a trip to the area.
20. Told to me by Lama Anagarika Govinda.
21. The reader is referred to the December 15, 1942 and the August 15, 1942 editions of *The Canadian Theosophist*.

INDEX

Published in Great Britain
by Colin Smythe, Ltd.

Dr. Walter Evans-Wentz and the Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup in Gangtok, Sikkim; circa 1920.

Dr. Walter Y. Evans-Wentz spent his life in the study of religion. He is well-known for his work in Tibetan Buddhism (The Tibetan Book of the Dead; Tibet's Great Yogi, Milarepa; Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines; The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation) and for his inquiries into Celtic lore (The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries). Little known, however, are his compulsive travels, his ascetic practices and his ashram collecting. Despite his worldly successes and his vast learning, Evans-Wentz remained distant and aloof and spent the last 25 years of his life in a small hotel room in San Diego, California, writing and studying the Dharma.

ISBN 0-942058-00-3