



Anno IVv e.n.

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Summer Solstice 1997 e.v.

Volume V Number 2

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*Ordo Templi Orientis*

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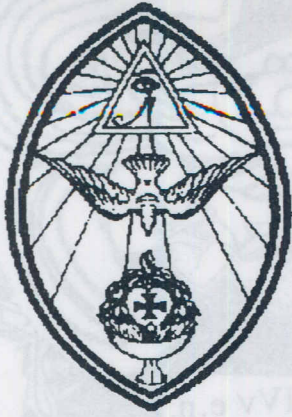
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Θελημα

# ORPHICUS

The Quarterly Journal of Sekhet-Bast-Ra Oasis

Ordo Templi Orientis



# Θελημα



## Sekhet-Bast-Ra Lodge Ordo Templi Orientis

*Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.*

Sekhet-Bast-Ra is a duly chartered initiating body of Ordo Templi Orientis, serving the Greater Oklahoma City Metropolitan area and all of Oklahoma. We celebrate Aleister Crowley's Gnostic Mass (Liber XV) at least twice a month in our temple, Sanctuary of the Duant (Starry Abode). Our sanctuary is installed with an ordained Priest, an ordained Priestess, and three ordained Deacons. We celebrate the Thelemic Holy Days, the Equinoxes, the Solstices and many other feasts and events.

This publication, *Ophiuchus*, is presented quarterly at the Equinoxes and Solstices and is the official organ of Sekhet-Bast-Ra Lodge. Individuals may obtain individual issues for \$3.00 or yearly subscriptions for \$10.00 (outside U.S. will require extra for postage). Make checks payable to "Cash". Comments and inquiries may be addressed to:

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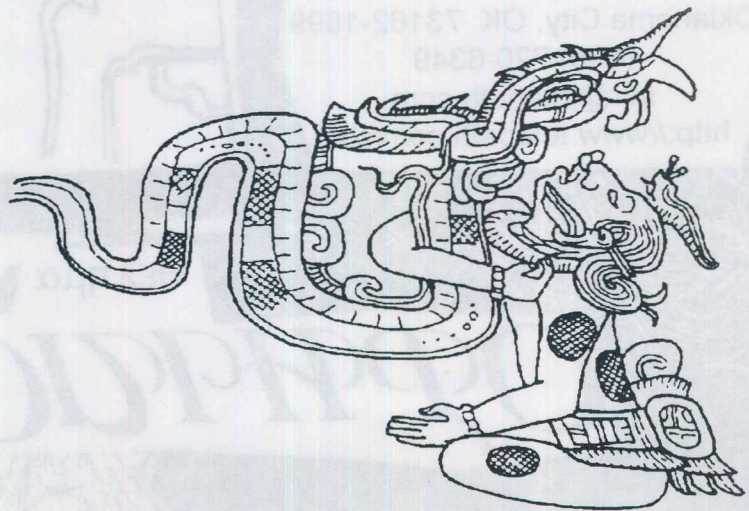
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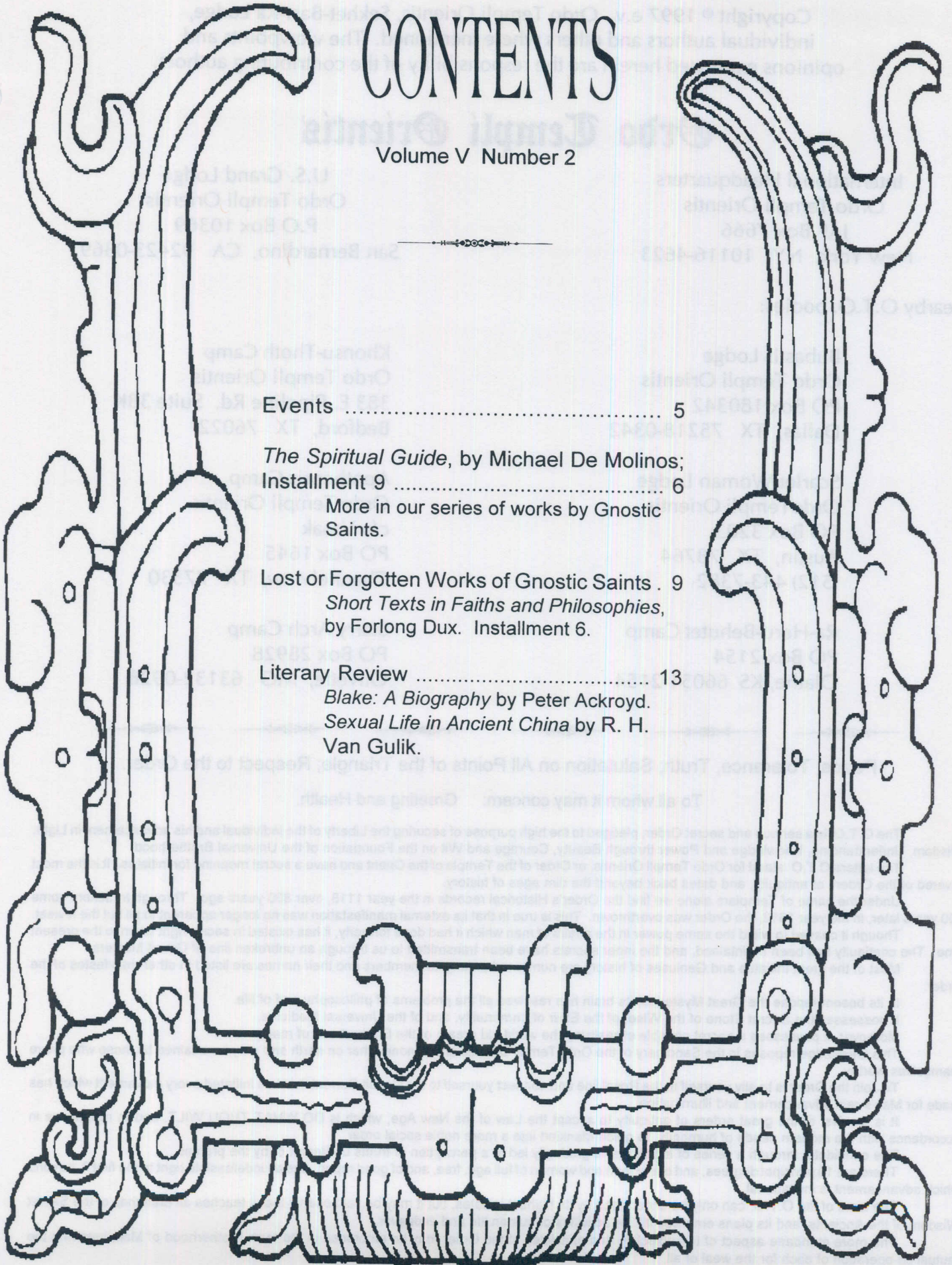
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Peace, Tolerance, Truth; Salutation on All Points of the Triangle; Respect to the Order.

To all whom it may concern: Greeting and Health.

The O.T.O. is a serious and secret Order, pledged to the high purpose of securing the Liberty of the individual and his advancement in Light, Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge and Power through Beauty, Courage and Wit on the Foundation of the Universal Brotherhood.

The letters O.T.O. stand for Ordo Templi Orientis, or Order of the Temple of the Orient and have a secret meaning for initiates. It is the most revered of the Orders of antiquity, and dates back beyond the dim ages of history.

Under the name of Templars alone we find the Order's Historical records in the year 1118, over 800 years ago. Through treachery some 200 years later, in the year 1312, the Order was overthrown. This is true in that its external manifestation was no longer apparent to all but the fewest.

Though it ceased to wield the same power in the affairs of man which it had done formerly, it has existed in secret right down to the present time. The continuity has been maintained, and the inner secrets have been transmitted to us through an unbroken line of Grand Masters.

Most of the great Initiates and Geniuses of history are numbered among its members and their names are listed in other manifestos of the Order.

In its bosom repose the Great Mysteries, its brain has resolved all the problems of philosophy and of life.

It possesses the Secret Stone of the Wise, of the Elixir of Immortality, and of the Universal Medicine.

Moreover, it possesses a secret capable of realizing the world old dream of the Brotherhood of man.

This knowledge reposes in the Sanctuary of the Ordo Templi Orientis and in none other on earth and may be attained by those who prove themselves worthy.

To Join the Order is to ally yourself to the Royal line and connect yourself to the Occult Current that has initiated every movement which has made for Man's real advancement and illumination.

It is the first of the great orders of antiquity to accept the Law of the New Age, which is DO WHAT THOU WILT, and to reorganize in accordance with the modern needs of humanity, to guide Mankind into a more noble social order.

The candidate, through a series of initiations, is gradually led to a perception of truths undreamt of by the profane.

There are 10 principal degrees, and every man and woman of full age, free, and of good report, has an indefeasible right to the first 3, beyond which advancement is invitational.

The aims of the O.T.O. can only be understood by its highest initiates, but it may be said openly that it teaches all branches of the Secret Wisdom of the Ancients, and its plans embrace all the activities of human life and endeavor.

The more mundane aspect of the objective and principles of the Order may be embraced in the term Brotherhood of Man, involving the mutual co-operation of each for the weal of all.



The Lodge holds regularly scheduled events each Sunday plus a couple of other times per month.

### CLASSES & STUDY GROUPS:

We have been continuing the classes in Kabalah and the classes in Ritual Writing. However, both will be ending in the next few months and there will be new classes; possibly in subjects such as Yoga or other topics. Classes usually occur on the second and third Sunday of the month.

Library & Discussion Night occurs every fourth or fifth Sunday. This is a time to take advantage of the Lodge's library resources and have discussions on new and different topics. Or, help in upgrading and improving the Temple's equipment at this time.

### INITIATIONS:

Sekhet-Bast-Ra performed one Third Degree Initiation in May and three Minerval Initiations and two First Degrees in June.

In September or October Initiations into the Minerval Degree, First Degree, and Second Degree are scheduled. Call, write or email the Lodge for more information.

### ECCLESIA GNOSTICA CATHOLICA:

Regular performance of Aleister Crowley's Gnostic Mass occurs every first Sunday and third Thursday of the month.

All O.T.O. members and their guests are invited to gather at 7:00pm on these evenings to celebrate this very special ritual.

### rites of Eleusis:

The Rite of Mars was performed on 29 March amidst the festivities of the Holiday Season. The Rite of Sol is scheduled for July and practices start soon.

The Sekhet-Bast-Ra Lodge's delegation to U.S. Grand Lodge's Nation Conference hope's to see many of you there. The U.S.

Grand Lodge National Conference will be hosted by Black Sun Lodge in Akron, Ohio. Don't forget to ask Frater Agavatal do do his impression of Crowley and the damn coolies.

The Spring Equinox ritual was created by Frater Agavatal, which involved an electromagnet. The ritual was an interesting experiment. An excellent feast followed with enjoyment of some fabulous wines.

This season's gatherings for the Three Nights of the Writing of *The Book of the Law* were stupendous. Every one had a most wonderful time. Each night the feasts were extraordinary. The first night was held at the Lodgemasters house and even the Thelemic fairy children joined in for the reading of the Book of the Law. For Hadit we had the barbeque from hell, which included enough meat and vegetable lasagna to feed a small army, The last night consisted of an original methodology for reading *Liber AL* and the feast which was no less than a ten course meal. Also several members brought some of the best Merlots and Zinfidels that we had ever tasted. The Lodgemasters would personally thank everyone for help make this year's feasts the most successful yet. We are all looking forward to next year's feast.

For the Memorial Day weekend, since no one could attend this year's Scarlet Woman Lodge's Retreat, we had a campout at Frater M.R.A.A.'s spacious country retreat, Hobbit Hallow. The Rites of Nuit, Hadit, and Ra-Hoor-Khuit were written by our ritual writer, Frater Agavatal. The Rite of Nuit was actually a very interesting game, which we will be releasing in the future. As per usual we feasted to the extreme, drank luscious wines, hot tubbed, danced around the fire circle, performed some great rituals and had a truly wonderful time!!!

Additionally, the artwork on the cover is from Frater M.R.A.A.'s latest offering to the Annual Oklahoma City Erotic Art Show. On the back cover you'll find the original piece altered only by a color to black and white conversion.

The Spiritual Guide  
which Disentangles the Soul;  
and Brings it by the Inward Way  
to the Getting of Perfect  
Contemplations and the Rich  
Treasure of Internal Peace.

by Michael De Molinos

In our search for the A.:A.: reading list we came across a wonderful find, a copy of The Spiritual Guide of Michael De Molinos. This copy was translated from the original 1699 document. It also included Molinos' reference notes and letters about the Quietist order. The work is very Christian, but don't let that stop you from investigating an interesting way to approach prayer and silence.



The Spiritual Guide which leads the Soul to  
the Fruition of Inwards Peace.

The Second Part.

On Spiritual Martyrdoms Whereby God  
Purges Souls; of Contemplations, Infused  
and Passive; of Perfect Resignation, Inward  
Humility, Divine Wisdom, True Annihilation,  
and Internal Peace.

Chapter 10.

**In which is shown and discovered what is  
the false humility, and what the true; with  
the effects of them.**

Thou must know that there are two sorts of humility --- one false and counterfeit, the other true. The false one is theirs who, like water, which must mount upward, receive an external fall, and artificial submission, to rise up again immediately. These avoid esteem and honour, that so they may be taken to be humble. They say of themselves that they are very evil that they may be thought good; and though they know their own misery, yet they are loth that other folks should know it. This is dissembled

humility, and feigned, and nothing but secret pride.

Theirs is the true humility who have gotten a perfect habit of it: these never think of it, but judge humbly of themselves; they do things with courage and patience; they live and die in God; they mind not themselves nor the creatures; they are constant and quiet in all things; they suffer molestation with joy, desiring more of it, that they may imitate their dear and despised Jesus; they covet to be reputed trifles and sport by the world; they are contented with what God allots them, and are convinced of their faults with a pleasing shame; they are not humbled by the counsel of reason, but by the affection of the will; there is no honour that they look after, nor injury to disturb them, no trouble to vex them, no prosperity to make them proud, because they are always immovable in their nothing and in themselves with absolute peace.

And that thou mayest be acquainted with interior and true humility, know that it doth not consist in external acts, in taking the lowest place, in going poor in clothes, in speaking submissively, in shutting the eyes, in affectionate sighings, nor in condemning thy ways, calling thyself miserable, to give others to understand that thou art humble. It consists only in the contempt of thyself and the desire to be despised, with a low and profound knowledge, without concerning thyself wheather thou art esteemed humble or not, though an angel should reveal such a thing to thee.

The torment of light, wherewith the Lord with His graces enlightens the soul, doth two things; it discovers the greatness of God, and, at the same time, the soul knows its own stench and misery, insomuch that no tongue is able to express the depth in which it is overwhelmed, being desirous that every one should know its humility; and it is so far from vain-glory and complacency, as it sees that grace of God to be the mere goodness of Him, and nothing but His mercy, which is pleased to take pity on it.

Thou shalt never be hurt by men or devil, but by thyself, thy own proper pride, and the violence of thy passions. Take heed of thyself, for thou, of thyself, art the greatest devil of all to thyself.

Have no mind to be esteemed, when God incarnate was called fool, drunkard, and said to have a devil. Oh, the folly of Christians! That we should be willing to enjoy happiness, without being willing to imitate Him on the cross, in reproaches, humility, poverty, and in other virtues!

The truly humbled man is at rest and ease in his heart; there he stands the trial of God and men, and the devil himself, above all reason and discretion, possessing himself in peace and quietness; looking for, with all humility the pure pleasure of God, as well in life as death. Things without do no more disquiet him than if they never were. The cross to him, and even death itself, are delights, though he make no such show outwardly. But oh, whom do we speak of? For few there are of these sort of humble men in the whole world.

Hope thou, and desire, and suffer, and die without anybody's knowing it; for herein consists the humble and perfect love. Oh, how much peace wilt thou find in thy soul if thou dost profoundly humble thyself, and even hug contempt~

Thou wilt never be perfectly humble, though thou knowest thy own misery, unless thou desirest all men should know it; then thou wilt avoid praises, embrace injuries, despise everything that makes a fair show, even to thine own self; and if any tribulation come upon thee, blame none for it, but judge that it comes from God's hand, as the giver of every good.

If thou woldst bear thy neighbour's faults, cast thine eye upon thine own; and if thou thinkest to thyself that thou hast made any progress in perfection by thyself, know that thou art not humble at all, nor hast yet made one step in the way of the spirit.

The degrees of humility are the qualities of a body in the grave—that is, to be in the lowest place, buried like one that's dead, to stink, and be corrupted to itself, to be dust, and nothing in one's own account. Finally, if thou wouldst be blessed, learn to despise thyself, and to be despised by others.

## Chapter 11.

### **Maxims, to know a simple, humble, and true heart.**

Encourage thyself to be humble, embracing tribulations as instruments of thy good: rejoice in contempt, and desire that God may be thy holy refuge, comfort, and protector.

None, let him be never so great in this world, can be greater than he that is in the eye and favour of God; and therefore the truly humble man despises whatever there is in the world, even to himself, and puts his only trusts and repose in God.

The truly humble man suffers quietly and patiently internal troubles; and he is the man that makes great way in a little time, like one that sails before the wind.

The truly humble man finds God in all things; so that whatever contempt, injury, or affronts come to him by means of the creatures, he receives it with great peace and quiet internal, as sent from the Divine hand, and loves greatly the instrument with which the Lord tries him.

He is not yet arrived at profound humility, that is taken with praise, though he does not desire it, nor seek it, but rather avoids it; because, to an humble heart, praises are bitter crosses, although it be wholly quiet and immovable.

He has no internal humility who doth not abhor himself, with a mortal, but withal a peaceable and quiet hatred; but he will never come to possess this treasure that has not a low and profound knowledge of his own vileness, rottenness, and misery.

He that is upon excuses and replies has not a simple and humble heart, especially if he does this with his superiors; because replies grow from a secret pride that reigns in the soul, and from thence proceeds the total ruin of it.

Perfidiousness supposes little submission, and this less humility; and both together they are the fuel of inquietness, discord, and disturbance.

The humble heart is not disquieted by imperfections, though these do grieve it to the soul; because they are against its loving Lord. Nor is he concerned that he cannot do great things; for he always stands in his own

nothingness and misery; nay, he wonders at himself that he can do anything of virtue, and presently thanks the Lord for it, with a true knowledge that it is God that doth all, and remains dissatisfied with what he does himself.

The truly humble man, though he sees all, yet he looks upon nothing to judge it, because he judges ill only of himself.

The truly humble man doth always find an excuse to defend him that mortifies him, at least in a sound intention. Who therefore would be angry with a man of good intention?

So much (nay more) doth false humility displease God, as true pride does: because that is hypocrisy besides.

The truly humble man, though everything falls out contrary to him, is neither disquieted nor afflicted by it; because he is prepared, and thinks he deserves no less. He is not disquieted under troublesome thoughts, wherewith the devil seeks to torment him, nor under temptation, tribulations, and desertions; but rather acknowledges his unworthiness, and is affected that the Lord chastises him by the devil's means, though he be a vile instrument: all he suffers seems nothing to him, and he never doth a thing that he thinks worth any great matter.

He that is arrived at perfect and inward humility, although he be disturbed at nothing, as one that abhors himself, because he knows his imperfections in everything, his ingratitude and his misery, yet he suffers a great cross in enduring himself. This is the sign to know true humility of heart by. But the happy soul, which is gotten to this holy hatred of itself, lives overwhelmed, drowned, and swallowed up which the Lord raises him, by communicating Divine wisdom to him, and filling him with light, peace, tranquillity, and love.

## Chapter 12.

### **Inward solitude is that which chiefly brings a man to the purchase of internal peace.**

Know, that although exterior solitude doth much assist for the obtaining internal peace, yet the Lord did not mean this, when He spake

by His prophet (Hos. ii 14)—*I will bring her into solitude, and speak privately to her*; but He meant the interior solitude, which jointly conduces to the obtaining the precious jewel of peace internal. Internal solitude consists in the forgetting of the creatures, in disengaging one's self from them, in a perfect nakedness of all the affections, desires, thoughts, and one's own will. This is the true solitude, where the soul reposes with a sweet and inward serenity in the arms of its chiefest good.

Oh, what infinite room is there in a soul that is arrived at this Divine solitude! Oh, what inward, what retired, what secret, what spacious, what vast distances are there within a happy soul that is once come to be truly solitary! There the Lord converses and communicates Himself inwardly with the soul: there He fills it with Himself, because it is empty; clothes it with light and with His love, because it is naked; lifts it up, because it is low; and unites it with Himself, and transforms it, because it is alone.

delightful solitude and cipher of eternal blessings! O mirror, in which the Eternal Father is always beheld! There is great reason to call thee solitude; for thou art so much alone that there is scarce a soul that looks after thee, that loves and knows thee. O Divine Lord! How is it that souls do not go from earth this glory? How come they lose so great a good, through the only love and desire of created things? Blessed soul, how happy wilt thou be, if thou dost but leave all for God! Seek Him only, breathe after none but Him; let Him only have thy sighs. Desire nothing, and then nothing can trouble thee; and if thou dost desire any good, how spiritual soever it be, let it be in such a manner that thou mayest not be disquieted if thou miss it.

If, with this liberty, thou wilt give thy soul to



God, taken off from the world, free and alone, thou wilt be the happiest creature upon earth, because the Most High has His secret habitation in this holy solitude. In this desert and paradise in enjoyed the conversation of God; and it is only in this internal retirement that that marvellous, powerful and Divine voice is heard.

If thou wouldst enter into this heaven of earth, forget every care and every thought: get out of thyself, that the love of God may live in thy soul.

Live as much as ever thou canst abstracted from the creatures, dedicate thyself wholly to thy Creator, and offer thyself in sacrifice with peace and quietness of spirit. Know that the more the soul disrobes itself, the more way it makes into this interior solitude, and becomes clothed with God; and the more lonesome and empty of itself the soul get to be, the more the Divine Spirit fills it.

There is not a more blessed life than a solitary one; because in this happy life God gives Himself all to the creature and the creature all to God, by an intimate and sweet union and love. Oh, how few are there that come to relish this true solitude!

To make the soul truly solitary, it ought to forget all the creatures, and even itself; otherwise it will never be able to make any near approach to God. Many men leave and forsake all things, but they do not leave their own liking, their own will, and themselves; and therefore these truly solitary ones are so few. Wherefore, if the soul does not get off from its own appetite and desire, from its own will, from spiritual gifts, and from repose even in the spirit itself, it neve can arrive at this high felicity of internal solitude.

Go on, blessed soul! Go on, without stop, towards this blessedness of internal solitude. See how God calls thee to enter into thy inward centre, where He will renew thee, change thee, fill thee, clothe thee, and show thee a new and heavenly kingdom, full of joy, peace, content, and serenity.



## Lost or Forgotten Works of Gnostic Saints

One of the many reasons why Sekhet-Bast-Ra started *Ophiuchus* was to circulate the material in our research of Saints; mainly the little known and privately printed material, which has become public domain. This was started with Burton's pamphlet on his pilgrimage as an Islamic pilgrim. We have the sixth installment of another rare, hard to find work: Forlong's Short Texts in Faiths and Philosophies.

In 1897, in Edinburgh, published for private circulation was Forlong's Short Texts in Faiths and Philosophies. The work is unlike any other work of Forlong's. It is in a poetic style and not the usual armchair scholarship which readers and students of Forlong are familiar with. He, in his introduction, explains that he tried to give the reader a taste of the art, thought, and ritual in these texts; and thus shows his more artistic nature. Frankly, we think that they are sublimely superb and hope that you will enjoy the texts as well.

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### *Short Texts in Faiths and Philosophies* or *Some Sentiment of the Good and Wise*

by

Forlong Dux  
a.k.a.

Major-General James George Roche Forlong

**HOMER THE IONIAN**

**9th to 7th Centuries B.C.**

Great Zeus is the omnipotent and supreme,  
His rod is the fiat of destiny.  
Yet laws and circumstances even control Him  
Who guides the decrees of fate.

All good as well as evil proceeds from Jove,  
Justice and mercies, blessings and curses. -  
Transient, mortal and finite to us here,  
But eternal, immortal and infinite hereafter.

There is not much religious matter  
bearing on our purpose to be got out of Homer,  
beyond this doctrine of God and a hereafter.

### THALES OF MILETUS

FL. 600 B.C. (640-546)

All things must have had a beginning,  
And primarily there must have been water  
and heat;

For without these, naught can germinate.  
So gods are said to move or develope on  
water,

Else would even their creative energy be  
vain.

It is meet to speak humbly of "The Great  
Unmade One,"

He who is necessarily the oldest of all  
existences.

He requireth us to execute justice, mercy and  
goodness,

Not to do unto our fellows what

We would blame them for doing to us.

### ANAXIMANDER

FL. 570 B.C. (610-532)

#### I

How can matter, a concrete, elemental  
substance,

Be the absolute or ultimate beginning of all  
things?

It is at the most an existence *per aliud*,  
And an eternal existence must exist *per se*.

The primary being must necessarily be a  
unity,

Though, being One, it may have the  
potentiality of All.

#### II

The ultimate origin of matter and all things is

the Arche -

The Beginner, the *To Apeiron* or Infinite,  
A divine and everlasting, absolute unity -

mayhap

Spiritual and intelligent, and substance by

Which all is formed, and into which all  
dissolves.

#### III

The Apeiron is neither fire, air nor water,  
But a something common to both.

Out of chaos it organized all homogeneous  
particles -

Monads or atoms having affinities towards  
each other.

Thus did the earth and planets become  
spheres of concentric

Layers, ever increasing from encircling water  
and air,

Which produced the first aquatic and then  
land organisms.

#### IV

All the spheres are populated like to our  
earth,

And the central solar fire heats and lights all.

### LAO-TSZE, THE FOUNDER OF TAO-ISM

FL. 560 B.C. (604-515)

The following is a summary of the  
leading ethical teachings of this wise and highly  
devout sage, gleaned from his life-long  
discourses and authoritative Tao-Teh-King,  
and well authenticated writings of disciples, as  
set forth in Short Studies V. There was fully  
explained the sage's term Tao for his rather  
"incomprehensible" God; and we may therefore  
call the Lao-Tsze-King or

### BIBLE OF TAO-ISM

(The Second Turanian Scriptures)

#### I

Tao is primordial reason, law and  
intelligence;

Tao formed, controls and rules the world.

It is I, for it cannot be seen;

It is HI, and thou canst not hear it;  
It is WEI, therefore cannot be felt;  
It is Three in One and an inscrutable mystery.

II

Tao produced one, the one, two; and two;  
three;  
And from Three proceeded all beings.  
Many speak of Tao who know it not,  
Those who know it best, seldom speak of it.

III

"The reason which cannot be reasoned  
Is not the divine and eternal reason;  
The name which cannot be named  
Is not the eternal name."

IV

The virtuous man is like water on a thirsty  
land,  
Spreading blessings wherever he goeth;  
Ever doing good and content therewith,  
Seeking no reward, not even to please  
himself.

V

Strive with none, save to excel in human  
tenderness:  
By this is the strength of the strong and wise  
man seen.  
Compassion cometh from above, and the  
noblest masculine  
Nature is that which also preserves much of  
the feminine:  
By the conjunction of these the world is knit  
Together in the hold bonds of sympathy and  
friendship.

VI

Show affection and tenderness to all living  
creatures,  
Especially the helpless, widows and orphans.  
Actively rescue those who are in peril,  
Sympathize with the bereaved and afflicted,  
And rejoice when the good man prospereth.

VII

Be moderate and frugal that thou may'st be  
liberal,  
And in all circumstances, true, gentle and

humble.

It is the greatest rivers which run softly and at  
lowest levels,  
And on their banks, nations and peoples  
seek to  
Dwell, amid peace and plenty - heaven-given  
bounties.

VIII

Be compassionate to errors, and brave  
against wrongs:  
Return good for evil; truth for insincerity;  
Gentleness for wrath. Seek the good of the  
evil doer and  
Strive for reconciliation, but urge not thine  
own wrongs,  
Else will there ever remain a grudge behind.

IX

Impute not wickedness to any, especially to  
the unfortunate;  
Nay, think well of all, and reject not even the  
bad,  
For they must be brought back to *Tao* - the  
Divine Way.  
They are the materials on which the good  
man works.

X

Wickedness is mostly due to circumstances  
and ignorance:  
Remedy these and expose errors with kindly  
sympathy,  
And the greatest wanderer may be won to  
*Tao*.  
But example is more valuable than precept,  
Act a pure act of self-denial or submission  
Is worth thousands of free exercises of the  
will.

XI

Quiescence and a policy of inaction is often a  
high duty  
In government as well as social turmoil.  
By silence and doing nothing, we throw more  
responsibilities  
Upon the disturbers - their leaders and the  
sufferers.  
Though apparently passive, the gentle and  
soft can

Overcome the hard; so water - the softest of  
all things -  
By continual minute dropping, weareth away  
rocks,  
And by entering quietly into unseen or minute  
fissures,  
Mollifies the hardest and finally overthrows  
mountains.  
It thus reforms and renews the whole earth,  
And brings into existence fresh growths and  
modifications.

## XII

He who can perceive small things or mere  
influences  
Is clear-sighted; but let him gently use his  
powers.  
The attributes of Tao seem to us often babe-  
like,  
But a good government is one which is little  
seen or felt.  
Laws but distract and impoverish the people,  
who should  
Learn to guide and transform themselves.  
The Meddlesome is usually an intolerant  
government,  
Making the governed restless and  
disobedient;  
The consciously strong can afford to seem  
weak,  
And thus rule without any appearance of  
force.

## XIII

Learning and knowledge cause unrest alike  
to the State  
And individual, for learners are never content  
till the know all,  
And there is no greater calamity then  
discontent.  
The learned to not usually know Tao;  
It is revealed to babes - the simplest pious  
ones.  
Child-like, and in thine own closet seek after  
Tao;  
It is only revealed to the restful, spiritual  
heart,  
And whoso gaineth it, though he die,  
perisheth not.

## XIV

Neither seek nor fear death, but thy appetites  
and passions;  
The meshes of heaven's net are large, but  
none escape.

## XV

He who lightly asserts, rarely keeps his word.  
Weigh well all the difficulties thou mayst  
encounter,  
Then shall no difficulties overcome thee.

## XVI

Not to know our own ignorance is a fatal  
disease,  
As also to fancy we know, when we know  
not;  
To fear not, when and what we ought to fear,  
It is to live in the fool's Paradise and to court  
evil.

## XVII

Revere the *Tao-Teh* and believe in all its  
teachings,  
Walking in all the ways it commands.  
In this regard not man nor any obstacles,  
Nor let thy zeal flag as thy days are  
prolonged.  
Study it when thou risest from thy bed,  
And when thou sittest down, ponder will its  
truths,  
Treasuring up all its maxims in thy heart.  
Be not ashamed to speak of it even on the  
house top;  
So shall happiness possess thy heart and  
household,  
And thy days and end be bright and peaceful.

## XVIII

Those neglecting Tao, vainly seek salvation  
in learning,  
Even in works of benevolence and  
righteousness.  
Their pursuits are vanity, falsely called  
wisdom,  
Which the world would be better and happier  
without.  
They pursue artful contrivances for luxury  
and gain,  
Which the Taoist eschews. It is better indeed

that  
The people remain in their pristine ignorance  
and innocence.

### XIX

Busy not thyself merely with the things of  
time;  
Even the goodness of doing good is not real  
goodness.  
Rule wisely thy spirit and judge not thy  
neighbors;  
Suffice for thee to know well thine own self;  
To be chaste, and not the contentious  
chastener of others.  
Let not purity in words and deeds satisfy  
thee,  
But be pure in mind and intentions:  
Then only attempt to guide or influence  
others.

### XX

What men or the world reverence, treat  
reverently.  
Good words gain popularity, and good deeds,  
friends.  
The wise accept peaceably many grievances,  
And he who is contented has conquered  
himself.

### XXI

Murmur not at the decrees of heaven,  
Nor neglect any of the duties of thy station.  
honor thy parents and all in authority over  
thee,  
And though thy pathway is beset by evil  
spirits  
Within thine own bosom and beyond thee,  
Yet walk fearlessly, remembering that good  
spirits  
Are also overseeing and watchfully protecting  
thee.

We may conclude with Lord  
Tennyson's words in his short poem of  
1885 upon this good sage's teachings:

--

"Let be thy wail and help thy fellow-men,  
And make thy gold thy vassal, not thy king,  
And fling free alms into the beggar's bowl,

And send the day into the darken'd heart;  
Nor list for guerdon in the voice of men,  
A dying echo from a falling wall;  
Nor care - for Hunger hath the Evil eye -  
To vex the noon with fiery gems, or fold  
Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous looms;  
Nor roll thy viands on a luscious tongue,  
Nor drown thyself with flies in honied wine;  
Nor thou be rageful, like a handled bee,  
And lose thy life by usage of thy sting;  
Nor harm an adder thro' the lust for harm,  
Nor make a snail's horn shrink for

wantonness;  
And more - think well! Do-well will follow  
thought,

And in the fatal sequence of this world  
An evil thought may soil thy children's blood;  
But curb the beast would cast thee in the  
mire,

And leave the hot swamp of voluptuousness  
A cloud between the Nameless and thyself,  
And lay thine uphill shoulder to the wheel,  
And climb the Mount of Blessing, whence, if  
thou

Look higher, then - perchance - thou mayest  
- beyond

A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,  
And past the range of Night and Shadow -  
see

The high-heaven dawn of more than mortal  
day

Strike on the Mount of Vision!

So, farewell."

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## Literary Review

"Because life is too short to read bad books."

*Blake: A Biography.*

Peter Ackroyd

Alfred A. Knopf.

New York, New York 1995.

ISBN: 679-40967-x.

\$24.95.

Ackroyd once again has managed to

produce an exquisite biography. I first read Ackroyd's biography on T.S. Elliot, which put Ackroyd on my must read author list (F.Y.I. - not to even mention the other fine works of fiction such as *The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde*, *Hawksmoor*, *The House of Doctor Dee*, etc.). Ackroyd must be commended as an author who literally gets into the head of the individual through use of historical environment. He displays Blake's life in his proper habitat. The atmosphere, the political climate, the mundane happenings, the landscape, the public views, and the day to day existence of Blake is explored in this book.

Ackroyd portrays Blake as a sensual visionary as a boy, which flourishes in a legendary artist of the pen, brush, and plate. The reader is taken by the hand and is given a view of how Blake became that artist and the life that he led. For example, the account of Blake's vision of Gabriel, which resulted with Blake never being accepted as a member of the Royal Academy: Blake had been reading an edition of Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*, which he had agreed to illustrate, and had come to a passage in which the poet asks 'who can paint an angel?' Blake closed the book, according to his own account, and spoke aloud.

Blake: Aye! Who can paint an angel?

Voice: Michael Angelo could.

He looked about the room but noticed nothing 'save a greater light than usual'.

Blake: And how do you know?

Voice: I know, for I sat to him; I am the arch-angel Gabriel.

Blake: Oho! You are, are you? I must have better assurance than that of a wandering voice; you may be an evil spirit - there are such in the land.

Voice: You shall have good assurance.

Can an evil spirit do this?

Blake 'looked whence the voice came, and was then aware of a shining shape, with bright wings, who diffused much light. "As I looked, the shape dilated more and more: he waved his hands; the roof of my study opened; he ascended into heaven; he stood in the sun, and beckoning to me, moved the universe. An

angel of evil could not have *done that* - it was the arch-angel Gabriel."

So in the study of his house in Lambeth, Blake saw an angel stand in the sun and move the universe. It is like the vision of some medieval saint or anchorite. The spiritual conversation was later reported by another artist, Thomas Phillips, but it is also the sort of conversation that effectively prevented him from moving upward in social or artistic world. In this period it seems that discreet enquiries were being made about Blake's suitability as a member of the Royal Academy, and the 'fixer' of these matters, Joseph Farington, had several conversations on the subject of Blake's competence as an artist. His illuminated books were owned by few collectors, and it is likely that Ozias Humphry showed Farington's diary for 19 February 1796 sets the scene: 'West, Cosway & Humphry spoke warmly in favour of the designs of Blake the Engraver, as works of extraordinary genius and imagination - Smirke differed in opinion, from what He had seen, and so do I.' A later conversation, also reported by Farington, was less polite: 'We supped together, and had laughable conversation. Blake's eccentric designs were mentioned. Stothard supported his claims to Genius, but allowed He had been misled to extravagance in his art, & He knew by whom.' He was referring here to the influence of Fuseli upon Blake. 'Hoppner ridiculed the absurdity of his designs, and said nothing could be more easy to produce such. --- They were like the conceits of a drunken fellow or a madman. "Represent a man sitting on the moon, and pissing the Sun out -- that would be a whim of as much merit." So there is talk of madness, and the image of the man pissing on the sun is an appropriate late eighteenth-century secular variant on Blake's vision of the angel Gabriel standing in it. . . .

The book is a wonderful blend of imagery and scholarly factual accounts of Blake. A must read for the lover of Blake, oh by the way did I mention that Peter Ackroyd's fiction and other biographies are also excellent works.

*Sexual Life in Ancient China.*

R.H. Van Gulik.

Originally by E.J. Brill, Press.

Leiden, Netherlands 1961.

Current by Barnes & Noble Books.

New York, New York 1996.

ISBN: 0-76070-307-8.

\$24.95

Barnes and Noble have rescued a fine work from the jaws of 'out of print' oblivion. Originally printed in 1961, *Sexual Life in Ancient China* is by an extraordinary researcher Van Gulik. In the book he describes the religion, customs, rituals, and culture; as well as the part it played in the development of sexual practices in ancient China.

He starts with the Feudal Kingdom (pre-dynastic China to the Chou dynasty; from 1500 to 222 B.C.e.v.). A general history lesson is given with information on general practices and customs of the people as well as the development of erotic poetry. The history is given to lead the reader to understand how the I Ching was developed. Subsequently how the I Ching effected the sexual and erotic practices of the day.

In the Growing Empire (the Ch'in, Han, and Liu-Ch'ao Kingdoms; from 221 to 589 A.D.e.v.). According to Gulik, China has vastly expanded its erotic repertoire to include handbooks on sexual positions, historical noted increase in homosexual activity, searches for the Elixir of Life, sexual medicines, registering of prostitutes, etc. Also, noted is that an explosion of sexual texts and sexual handbooks for women during this period including one of my personal favorites, *The Art of the Bedchamber*. Of course we can not forget the courtesan to become Empress, Lady Wu Chao who became Empress by killing her own child, blaming the Empress and another concubine, and having them condemned to prison where she later had them killed. Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and their effects on sexuality are explored in this section of the book as well.

In Mongol Rule and Ming Restoration sexuality becomes more conservative.

According to Gulik Confusionists have rules and a demerit system when dealing with day-to-day life as well as sexuality. Some of my personal favorites is that the man of the house allows his women to engage in frivolous talk is 1 demerit, however if he becomes excited by it then he has 10 demerits and having an erotic picture is also 10 demerits. It is 1000 demerits if you offend against your parents or ancestor, violate a chaste woman, produce erotic books, or cause the death of a human being (and I thought Oklahoma was bad). Most sexuality is continued to be repressed, however the sexual alchemy of the Taoists is still very popular, which focused on sexual intercourse without "emitting semen" and no lustful thoughts were allowed either. A number of new texts on the subject appeared as well as old texts with new variations and interpretations. However several new erotic books and texts did surface that encouraged a more decadent lifestyle, the Chueh-hou-ch'an (the Zen Enlightenment beyond Ordinary Enlightenment) suggested that frequent indulgence into debauched behavior could lead to enlightenment, but there was a moral at the end. Also during this time wonderful albums of erotic art were created and in time became increasingly intricate and beautiful. Gulik even gives a percentage as to the frequency of which sexual positions occurred in prints.

Finally, Gulik even has an appendix, which contains information about tantra from India and its influence in Chinese sexual mysticism. The book is an easy read and is a great book for a novice or someone who is looking for a general overview of ancient Chinese sexuality.



*Love is the law, love under will.*

