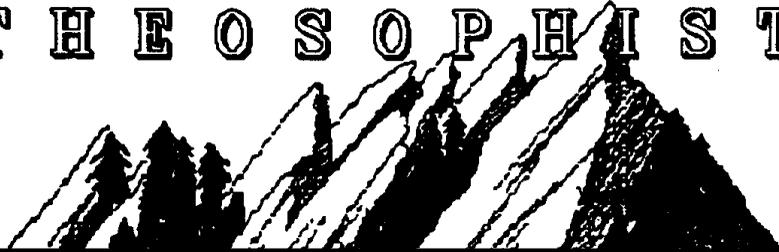


# THE HIGH COUNTRY THEOSOPHIST



Vol.7 No.2

Boulder, Colorado

February, 1992

## CONTENTS

Damodar, (part 1) A Theosophical Epic .....	1
Peg Hilliard: an Update .....	8
“Questions We All Ask,” Reprinted .....	11
Calendar .....	12

## DAMODAR, A THEOSOPHICAL EPIC

Damodar K. Malavankar was born in September 1857, the son of a wealthy Brahmin family in Ahmedabad, Gujerat, India. As befitted the status and caste of his family, Damodar received a first class education in Hindu religious precepts and in English.



In his autobiographical article “Castes of India,” Damodar relates how he arrived at the decision to renounce his caste and join the Theosophical Society to become, next to the founders, its most dedicated and zealous worker at Adyar in the 1880s.

It is a curious and probably significant fact that Damodar, like Blavatsky, Judge and Purucker, had near fatal illnesses during childhood from which their recovery was regarded as nearly miraculous:



“In his childhood, Damodar had a very critical illness, and the doctors despaired of his life. While the family was expecting him to die at any moment, the lad had a vision which made a deep impression on him. He saw, as if in a dream, a glorious personage who gave him a peculiar medicine and curiously, from that time, the boy began to recover. Some years later, while engaged in meditation, he saw the identical personage and recognized him as his saviour. Once more Damodar fell seriously ill and the same man appeared in his visions and saved his life. ...

It was a dramatic moment when Damodar first entered the Bombay headquarters and saw a picture of the man whom he had thrice seen in his visions and to whom he twice attributed the saving of his life.

He learned that this man was one of the Adepts who had made H.P. Blavatsky their “direct agent” to promulgate some of the teachings hitherto kept secret among the chosen few in the temples and ashramas of Tibet and India.

Damodar was soon to meet this Adept, Koot Hoomi, and become his disciple. This sealed his devotion to the new society and to Madame Blavatsky.” [Damodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement: p. 5, T.P.H. Adyar]

It is within the realm of reasonable speculation to consider the possibility that during one of these episodes, the Adept K.H., not only saved Damodar’s life using occult methods but, in addition, established an occult link with the Brotherhood, to be used later to facilitate communications.

Evidence that such a link existed between Damodar and the Brotherhood is contained in a letter written by H.P.B. to A.P. Sinnett in which she states that some material for The Secret Doctrine was written by Damodar “*under dictation.*”

[The Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett: CXIX, p. 248].

Damodar worked unstintingly and with loyal dedication at Adyar as secretary for the Society and editor of *The Theosophist* until his final departure in February 1885, to journey to the Ashram of his guru, the Master K.H., in Tibet.

In his memoirs, Old Diary Leaves, Col. Olcott writes:

“Damodar K. Mavalankar is one of the best known characters in the early Indian history of the Theosophical Society, and has been frequently mentioned in the course of these memoirs.

He left Adyar, while I was away in Burma, for the last time on 23rd February, 1885, for Calcutta, in the s.s. ‘Clan Gra-

ham’\* with the intention of going to Tibet via Darjeeling. This was thirty-six days before H.P.B.’s own final departure for Europe.”

[\* Clan Grant according to Damodar’s diary. ed. HCT].

“Four persons on this side of the Himalayas had voices in the matter, of whom three were H.P.B., T. Subba Row, and Maji, of Benares: the chief agent, of course, was H.P.B., Mr. Subba Row having merely some questions to be answered, and Maji some clairvoyant information to give.

The name of the fourth party I shall not mention, but merely say that he is equally well known on both sides of the mountains, and makes frequent religious journeys between India and Tibet.

Damodar hoped to be allowed to go with him on his return to Lhasa, though his constitution, naturally delicate, had run down from overwork, consumptive tendencies had shown themselves, and he had had some haemorrhage.

The most disquieting rumors were circulated, soon after he left Darjeeling, to cross the mountains. In the first week of July it was reported to me from Chumboi, Sikkim, that his corpse, frozen stark and stiff, had been found in the snows, and his clothing at a little distance.

Despite the transparent improbability of his having thrown off his clothing in that climate merely to die, the tale was believed by many, chiefly by those who denied the existence of the White Lodge, and who wished to cast some opprobrium on us for allowing a young fanatic to sacrifice his life in so evidently vain a quest. Well, we bore it, as we did, and ever since have, similar malicious stories, with as much equanimity as we could summon.

But, at Darjeeling, through the courtesy of Babu Saratchandra Das, who interpreted for me, I had a long talk with the chief of the coolies who went with Damodar from Darjeeling through Sikkim, and who brought back his superfluous luggage and his pocket Diary.

From this latter important document, I am now tracing Damodar from Madras to the time when he sent back the coolies and passed under other protection than ours.

The value of his past work and the possibly important part he may be destined to play in the future of this movement of ours, makes me think that it is as well that I should include the chief parts of the Diary in this history.”

#### Damodar’s Diary

“*Feb. 23rd, 1885.* In the evening embarked on the ‘Clan Grant’ to go to Calcutta.

“*Feb. 24th.* Steamer sailed before 6 in the morning. Did not suffer from seasickness.

“*25th.* Made friends with the Doctor of the ship, who seems to be a very nice man, but to know or care little for philosophy, though he has the capacity if he would only develop it.

“*27th.* Reached Calcutta at about 4 p.m.; was met at the jetty by Norendro Babu and others, whom I told about my illness and of the necessity for a change.

[Of course, concealing the ultimate purpose of the journey. — Olcott.]

Here follow entries about his talks with friends, his visit to the local Branch, and his opinion about its activity, which was not too favorable.

Then come his notes on his leaving by rail for Berhampore, where we then had about the best Branch in India, under the leadership of Babu Nobin K. Bannerji, President; Babu Dinanath Ganguli, Vice-President; and Babu Satkauri Mukerji, Secretary — three as good colleagues as any man could ask for in any great public movement.

After spending three days with them, he moved on to Jamalpur, where we had (and still have) another Branch.

I note that once in Calcutta and once

in Berhampore he was recognised by persons who had seen him in their dreams, an experience that I have often had myself in different lands.

The Jamalpur brothers, he says, put to him much more interesting and intelligent questions than those propounded in Calcutta, showing that they had thought deeply about the great problems of life.

“*Mar. 8th.* Reached Benares and went to Maji’s *ashram*. Had long talks with her both morning and afternoon. She spoke about Subba Row, and told me things which he had only lately spoken to me in private. Also spoke about Bawaji and said things known only to Mme. B. and myself. Said various other startling things.

“*Mar. 9th.* Conversations with Maji continued. She spoke about the portraits of the Masters at the Headquarters and told me many surprising things. Four Benares Theosophists called in the evening. Maji’s talk was very interesting and instructive. In the afternoon, she told me about Subba Row’s Guru and about himself.

“*Mar. 10th.* Commenced to take internally, some medicines she prepared for me. Had private talks with her during the day. Mme. B., she says, will not die for a year or more yet. When she does, she will probably reincarnate in Subba Row’s family, and reappear in public after ten years.\*

“[\* As neither of these prophecies has

been fulfilled, we must discount all of Maji's revelations to Damodar. At one visit I myself paid her, she predicted that H.P.B. would die within two years of that time and at sea. Neither of these proved true. — Olcott.]

“*Mar. 11th.* Talks continued. In the afternoon attended a meeting of the Benares Branch. The Munsiff of Benares is President. The members are all new, but earnest and intellectual. Later, Maji showed me a portrait of her father which was precipitated after his death.

“*Mar. 12th.* A morning talk with her, and one at noon, entirely private, in her *gupha*\*, when she discussed the plans in view and the persons concerned. She tells me startling facts and something about the future. She says that for about a fortnight I am not to go to ... [the personage with whom he wished to go to Tibet], but then it will be determined whether I shall proceed further.

[\* A cave such as Yogis excavate for themselves to live in. The one at Maji's was used by her father, a Yogi. (H.S. Olcott)].

“*Mar. 13th.* Left Benares at 11 a.m. Travelled all day and night. Reached Calcutta the next morning.’

“[He spent the next fortnight in Calcutta, and his Diary records the visits

exchanged and conversations held on different occasions.]

“*Mar. 30th.* Received a telegram through ... from ... that I might now come to Darjeeling and matters would be arranged.”

“[He left town on the 31st and got to Darjeeling on 1st April, where he was warmly welcomed by our members and became the guest of Babu Chhatra Dhar Ghose, F.T.S., one of our excellent colleagues. Three days later a representative of the personage who was leaving for Lhasa came to see him, and told him to keep himself in readiness, although the day of departure was not yet fixed. Damodar saw the agent several times, and all details were agreed upon. At last, on the 8th, the party arrived, and Damodar received his orders to start, which he did, as the following entry shows.]

“*Apr. 13th.* Left Darjeeling at 10.15 a.m., and reached Runjeet (about 11 miles) in the evening. Halted there.

“*Apr. 14th.* Left Runjeet about 7 a.m. Took rice [i.e., broke his fast] at Tasing, about one and a half miles from Tasing Bridge. Reached Vecha, about four miles beyond Kalingpong, in the evening at about 6 o'clock. Halted in a cow shed for the night.

“*Apr. 15th.* Left Vecha after morning coffee. Took *bhat* [rice] at Podaon,\*

where I met Babu Opendranath Mukhopadhyaya. Reached Renanga in the evening, where I sent ...'s coolie back with the pony.

“*Apr. 16th.* Took *bhat* instead of coffee next morning, and went on without stopping to Sanangthay, about a mile beyond Dichbring. Reached there before 5 p.m. Stopped in a Bhutia house.

“*Apr. 17th.* Left Sanangthay in the morning after taking *bhat*, and got to Bhashithang in the evening at about 5. It is about two miles from Ranevon, which is on top of a hill at whose foot is this village.

“*Apr. 18th.* Left Bhashithang in the morning, after *bhat*. Reached, about 4 p.m., the river Dichoo, at the place called Doomrah, about three miles from Longboo. After crossing the river there is an ascent for about five miles before reaching the capital of The Sikkim Raja. Stopped for night by the river.

“*Apr. 18th\**. Left the river in the early morning, after *bhat*, and reached Sikkim at noon. Stopped with the ... [the personage with whom his journey was to be made]. Saw him for an hour in the afternoon. Nothing in particular said. Am to have a talk tomorrow. Had another interview with him at night. He will tell me positively tomorrow about effecting my purpose. He leaves Sikkim the day after tomorrow.

[\* Date Apr. 18th as given, probably should be 19th. ed. HCT].

“*Apr. 20th.* Another talk with him.

“*Apr. 21st.* Saw him again today. I wanted to go on to Longboo, but he wants me to remain till tomorrow, when he will be a little more at leisure.

“*Apr. 22nd.* Left Sikkim in the morning at about 10 o'clock. Reached Kabi (about a half mile from Longboo) at 3 p.m. Halted there for the day. The ... said he had not yet fully known me, but that I am destined for some important work within the next month or two; that I must probably be a big Tibetan lama reincarnated in Tibet. The karma is great.

“*Apr. 23rd.* Took *bhat* in the morning, and proceeded on from Kabi alone, sending back my things with the coolies to Darjeeling.’

“Here the diary ends, and this is the last written trace of this devoted, high minded, enthusiastic young Brahmin, whose record since joining H.P.B. and myself is one of unbroken energy and unflinching zeal in the cause of humanity. A nobler heart never beat in a human breast, and his departure was one of the hardest blows we ever received.

As above remarked, he had almost broken down his constitution by incessant

official work, and when leaving Adyar had begun to spit blood and show signs of a rapid decline.

Yet with undaunted courage, he undertook the hard journey across the Himalayas, indifferent to the biting cold, the drifted snow, the lack of shelter and food, intent upon reaching the Guru whom he had first seen in his youth when lying on a sick-bed, of whom he had lost sight for many years, but whom he had recovered soon after joining the Theosophical Society, as his spiritual faculties developed and he was able to seek him in the *sukshma sarira*.

What made him so devotedly attached and unswervingly loyal to H.P.B. was the discovery that this Guru was one of the Adepts behind our movement, the intimate associate of 'Upasika,' as he always subsequently called H.P.B.

From the chief coolie of the escort I got particulars about him of great interest.

After the pony was sent back to Darjeeling, Damodar tried to proceed on foot up the steep acclivities of the mountain track, but his strength soon gave out, and after that the coolies carried him by turns on their backs.

To conceal his connection with the Tibetan functionary who had promised his protection and aid, Damodar was ordered to go on ahead two days' marches and then

wait for the other to come up.

That the junction should be unwitnessed, the coolies were ordered back to Darjeeling.

Damodar would not keep any more clothes than the ascetic costume he was wearing, nor any of the rice, meal, pulse, or other dry provisions with which his friends had supplied him. The most he would do was to let the chief coolie bake him a dozen *chapaties*, or unleavened pancakes.

The last that was seen of him by the coolies was when, with face turned towards the Tibetan frontier, he trudged painfully on and disappeared behind a turning of the road.

On the way back the coolies passed the personage who was following after our dear lad; and the *jamadar* heard subsequently that the junction had been effected, and the caravan proceeded on towards the pass through the mountains.

It is quite possible that Damodar's rejected clothing may have been found in the snows, for it was agreed that he should receive Tibetan dress, and be supplied with food, shelter, transportation, and all necessities.

The finding of his corpse is another matter. That is certainly a lie. A Maya of

his body *may* have been left there to make it appear as if the pilgrim had succumbed; but that he reached his destination safely, and has ever since been under the protection of his Guru, I have reason to believe.

So far, however, as intercourse with him in the ordinary way is concerned, he might as well be dead, for he is inaccessible by post, telegraph, or messenger.

Though he has written thrice to two persons in India, he has passed out of our reach as effectually as though his body had been dropped into the sea in a shotted hammock, and I have refused the most urgent requests to disclose his place of abode or the possible time of his return.

That he will, I believe; and I should not be surprised if he came when H.P.B., reincarnated and, like himself, changed beyond all recognition, shall resume the world work she had to drop on 'White Lotus Day' in 1891.

It would be too unreasonable to imagine that the Lords of Karma would keep any one of the best workers of the Theosophical movement idling about on the other planes of existence, when the cry of the suffering world for light and guidance is rising to their celestial abodes. Their chief desire and paramount duty is to help our human race to climb the path to higher levels, where delusions, born of spiritual ignorance, wither away in the blaze of Wis-

dom like flowers bitten by a frost.”  
[Ibid. vol. III, pp. 270-79].

[To be Concluded next month].

Peg Hilliard: An update

HCT readers will remember the feature we did on the African Masks of Peg Hilliard [HCT Oct., Nov. '91].

We are very pleased to report that Peg's work has been accepted for entry in the American Crafts Enterprise arts show in Baltimore Md., February 19 through 23. This is "the largest, most respected show of its kind in the nation," attracting private collectors and buyers for store owners and galleries nationwide. Some 900 other artisans will have their work on display at the show.

In an article, "Going Tribal," the Washington Post observed that: "Multi-culturalism is no longer for just the 'eclectic collector.' Finally, the exotic, extraordinary and unusual enter the mainstream and are being sought after."

As an outgrowth of her multi-disciplinary work with story-teller Kay Negash and musician Bob Wiz in facilitating the presentation of the Zuni creation myth, "The Stones are alive" by Aurora public school children, Peg has recently submitted a proposal, in collaboration with ArtReach, to The R. D. Wallace (Readers'

Digest) trust fund of Artists International for a five month residency grant to study mask-making and associated folk arts in Bali.

In her proposal, Peg says:

“The Balinese have no word for “Art,” according to an informed friend of mine who recently returned from Bali. They don’t need one, because it is simply the way they live. Everyone is an artist, in all that they do. The mask-making, music, storytelling and dance are all intertwined with their secular as well as their spiritual life. There are no divisions.

Bali has all the elements I have been attempting to reconnect here in the U.S. I long to experience what that might feel like ... to not be on the fringes of society as an “artist,” but simply part of the greater whole ... to live among people whose most revered quality and spiritual quest is the “Spirit of Cooperation.”

My objectives for this residency would be first, to work directly with the master mask-makers of Bali. I want to learn their techniques for making natural, light-weight, wearable masks. I want to learn about the history, the roots and what the masks symbolically represent to the community.

Secondly, I want to experience the integration of the arts and the inter-generational benefits of communal artistic expres-

sion.

I would like to get as deeply immersed into the culture as possible. I want to live, work and play with the mask-makers, storytellers, musicians and dancers. I would be going to Bali primarily as a mask-maker.

However, there are many other things which will speak to me. For example; Shadow puppetry, which is another interesting mirror of mask-making, would require some investigation. Shadow puppeteers are very highly regarded because the art is so complex.

One person orchestrates all of the arts and parts to present a performance. This is a major form of entertainment as well as a passing on of the spiritual lessons of cooperation. The children love it.

I would want to travel the island and visit the villages.

Most importantly, I want to “be” with the people ... all ages ... to absorb how they “are” in the world. It will be fascinating to be exposed to this very different lifestyle and the social fabric of this cooperative community.

So, how would an experience such as Bali potentially impact my development as an artist? Well, the first words that immediately come to mind are dynamic, explosive and outrageous!!! I mean this lit-

erally! After viewing a video tape which documented one of the sacred dramas, I realized this experience would bring me into new dimensions as yet unimagined.

One of the main characters, **Rangda**, enters the drama with an explosion of fire and smoke. She represents the monster in all of us. In sacred drama, in full public view, the masked characters act out the hatred and violence that can tear apart the individual mind or social fabric of a community, and they are exorcising it. Evocative, colorful and flamboyant, the community is given permission to cleanse the inner demons.

As for my community work, this infusion of creative Balinese artforms will serve as catalyst. First, to integrate our own diverse cultural backgrounds in our community centers. Secondly, by giving us a vehicle to symbolically exorcise the **Rangda** within that prevents us from living in the “Spirit of Cooperation.”

Mostly, in the West, we tend to be quite literal in our approach to life. That quality helps us achieve great things, such as ... “going to the moon.”

However, there is another part to life ... the poetic, the symbolic, the place of abstraction ... “the other side of the moon.” The intuitive response has a deeply felt respect and understanding of the mysteriousness behind the cycles of nature, the spirit,

the interconnectedness of the grand web of life. Where there is no difference between the sacred and the secular, where choices are founded upon this wisdom. I believe I will find this in Bali and this is where I feel I have much to discover, artistically and personally.

I am after the ESSENCE, the best of Bali, this is what I wish to bring back to share with our community. The Balinese are vital, alive and rich in tradition. They have something very special to offer us ... their creativity.

Cooperative living also seems to be the lesson of the day for all of us ... worldwide. And now, with the Post Industrial and Cold War eras behind us we are required to redefine our value systems and reconnect with each other in new and healthy ways.

In Bali, the inter-generational sharing of the masked drama with music and dance provides the opportunity for all the people to join and celebrate their common ancestry and humanity. In this way, the ancient folk wisdom of thousands of years is directly transmitted through the creative power of the arts.”

“QUESTIONS WE ALL ASK”

Reprinted

As editor/publisher of The High Country Theosophist I have come to recognize the need for a comprehensive reference library of Theosophical publications if I am to run articles of serious merit in the HCT. Many titles of a historical nature are out-of-print and unobtainable for purchase.

A lesser-known but important work of G. de Purucker is Questions We All Ask, First and Second Series, which we have located in library archives of the Pasadena T.S.

The unabridged volumes comprise, “A series of lectures delivered in The Temple of Peace, Point Loma, California” by G. de Purucker from June 16, 1929 through April 5th, 1931 and published by The Theosophical University Press at Point Loma. The First Series totals over 700 pages; the Second Series about 695 pages. For the serious student of theosophy, they cover a wide range of topics of interest without entering into the technical and abstruse details of occult teachings given to E.S. students of G. de P. in other works.

With permission from the Theosophical University Press in Pasadena, we are proceeding to Xerox the original QWAA unabridged pamphlets in order to offer a limited number of copies, bound in hard cover, to persons, libraries and organizations. This is offered as a non-profit service to the Theosophical community on a

one-time basis.

If you are interested, please reply by February 14th, 1992 and specify whether you want QWAA First Series, Second Series or both and how many copies of each.

A substantial pre-payment subscription will very likely be involved in order to get the work underway, once the total quantity ordered is known and a firm price quotation based on the quantities ordered is received. You may write Dick Slusser at the HCT return address given, or call 1-303-494-5482. Calendar

Friday February 7

Charlene La Harpe’s  
1226 S. Monaco. 757-7288 for directions.

Tuesday, February 18

Park Hill Public Library

Montview Blvd at Dexter St.

Al Skrobisch leads study of *Light on the Path*, Volume III of *Talks on the Path of Occultism*. The third and fourth rules will be covered. Meeting begins at 7:00 P.M.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** DATE & TIME OF MEETING IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. Check with Judy Modig at 477-4788 (eve.) for verification.

### Submission Guidelines

#### By floppy disk

3.5 or 5.25 inch (DOS format), WordPerfect or MS Word  
in ASCII format preferable.

#### By hard copy

Laser printer preferable,  
NLQ Dot matrix OK  
Good Quality Xerox OK

#### Unacceptable

Draft mode Dot matrix  
Faint printouts  
Strike-overs  
handwriting on printed sheet

Address all communications to:  
Richard Slusser  
140 S. 33rd St, Boulder, CO U.S.A.  
80303-3426  
Phone (303) 494-5482  
E-Mail: dslusser@dia.com

### Subscriptions

The HCT subscription year begins with the July issue and ends with the June issue of the following year.

Paid New Subscriptions received during the period July 1 - May 31 will be sent back issues, beginning with July, as indicated above. If received June 1 - 30, subscription will begin with July.

Rates: \$9.00/year U.S.A.  
\$11.00 Foreign (Surface)  
\$18.00 Foreign (Via Air)

Payment By check, money order or draft must be in U.S. currency (Dollars) payable to Richard Slusser.

**Checks payable to  
High Country Theosophist  
are NOT negotiable and will be returned**

Free yearly Subscriptions are available on written request if cost is a hardship.

## EDITORIAL

## OBJECTIVES

THE HIGH COUNTRY THEOSOPHIST is an *independent* Journal and has the following editorial objectives:

(1) To serve the greater Theosophical Movement as a forum for the free interchange of ideas and commentary in the pursuit of Truth and to facilitate various projects in furtherance of Theosophical principles.

(2) To present articles and essays consistent with source theosophy, otherwise known as the Ancient Wisdom as given by The Masters and H.P. Blavatsky, and other theosophical writers consistent with this tradition.

(3) To examine contemporary ethical, religious, metaphysical, scientific and philosophical issues from the viewpoint of the source theosophical teachings.

(4) To impartially examine significant events and issues in the history of the theosophical movement which have affected and shaped its present-day realities.

**THE HIGH COUNTRY THEOSOPHIST,  
ISSN 1060-4766 is published monthly  
for \$9.00 per year by Richard Slusser,  
140 S. 33rd St. Boulder, Co. 80303-3426  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:  
THE HIGH COUNTRY THEOSOPHIST  
140 S. 33rd St., Boulder, Co. 80303-3426  
Periodicals Postage Paid at Boulder, Co.**