# THE HIGH COUNTRY THE OSOPHIST

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When asked how she came into possession of this unusual giftedness, she responded with the following poem:

### ....WORLDBEAT

As out of the rhythmic past As out of the jungle heat so too

I draw from things deep and beyond
Out of the fire and smoke
I reach out and fashion
with water, air, earth and fire
Something! Something!
That will symbolize the way I feel

**SOUL OF PASSION** 

How to convey the urgency of the message!

...The physical speaks of our differences while the spirit reveals WE ARE ONE...

Voices whisper

Masks...vibrate their message

While I...

I find myself...Singin' & Dancin'... to the universal rhythm...of mask makers 'round the world

[continued on page 4]



### DEAD SEA SCROLLS TO BE MADE PUBLIC

[From the Washington Post via the Boulder Sunday Camera.]

The Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1947 in caves in territory that at the time was in Jordan, have been since held by Israel's Antiquities Authority in Jerusalem. Photographic copies were made in 1980 and given to a number of institutions as a precaution against the originals being damaged or destroyed but on the condition that the copies were not to be released without permission of Antiquities Authority. That only a privileged few researchers have been granted access to the scrolls has caused much resentment and criticism among scholars not so favored.

The break in withheld access came when William Moffett, director of the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, announced plans to make the microfilm negatives available "to anyone who can show serious academic interest." Earlier this month, two scholars, frustrated by the [slow] pace of official publication, used a computer program to reconstruct parts of the scrolls from a concordance a detailed list of the text's most significant words along with those that appear before and after them, which had been prepared by the group that controls the originals.

Eugene Ulrich, professor of Hebrew scriptures at University of Notre Dame and general editor of the scrolls complained; "... Many of us have devoted much of our lives to staring at little scraps of ancient Hebrew. Would it be fair now for others to rush in and

publish the most interesting work, leaving us again with scraps?"

It is our editorial opinion that such unique archaeological treasures as the Dead Sea scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Library rightfully belong to all of humanity, and for a privileged group to deny other researchers access is pure selfishness and is a great wrong that hinders the search for Truth. We commend the action of director Moffett in defiance of threats of retaliatory action.

### An Alternative to the Swastika

In the Winter 1987 issue of the Theosophical Network, a letter from a reader expressed concern over the presence of a Swastika in the Theosophical emblem saying, in part; "For more than forty years now the swastika has represented something entirely evil to millions and millions of people. Several times since I have been involved with Theosophy, it [has] been asked of me if the Society is fascist or connected with Nazism in some way. In the East, the swastika still represents the religious symbolism and feeling it was intended to invoke. But the Jewish community is frankly paranoid about the swastika. What good does it do to have a symbol that offends and repulses millions? How many inquirers are turned away to other organizations every year?"

The issue of the swastika in the Theosophical emblem has also come up in the High Country Study Center with a member who shares the same emotional response and sentiments as the *Network* reader quoted above. Out of respect for her feelings we have refrained from using the traditional TS emblem in the HCT.

At that time we researched the origins of the swastika and how it came to be adopted as the symbol of the Nazism of Hitler's Third Reich and being thus degraded to thereafter strike terror, fear and loathing in the hearts of millions.

[See *High Country* Newsletter, Feb. '89]

Network editor, Rick Nurrie, in the above referenced issue, added the following information from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*;

"... The swastika as a symbol of prosperity and good fortune is widely distributed throughout the ancient and modern world. It is found on Ancient Mesopotamian coinage, Christian art and it occurred in South and Central America (among Mayas) and in North America (among the Navajos)...

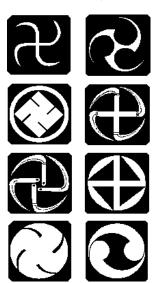
In India it is used by the Hindus, Jainas and Buddhists. A clear distinction is made between the righthand swastika which moves in a clockwise direction, and the lefthand swastika which moves in a counterclockwise direction. The righthand swastika is considered a solar symbol and imitates in the

rotation of its arms the course taken by the sun. The lefthand swastika more often stands for night, the terrifying goddess Kali and magical practices."

In the article, editor Nurrie included a panel of eight symbols as suggested alternatives to the swastika, which we reproduce here.

We have used the figure in the upper right hand in our modified TS emblem, and have

reversed the white figure on a black field to a black figure on a white field and inserted the resultant into the circle formerly occupied by the swastika.



The significance of the swastika in the

TS emblem is of the whirling energy of *Fohat* in cosmic emanation, suggesting the arms of a spiral nebula. We think that the suggested

symbol we have adopted does this rather well. Readers' comments will be appreciated.



### Peg Hilliard

(Continued from Page 1)

Dick: Peg, you've been involved in creating aboriginal art for some time. What is the value of your artwork to your clientele?

Peg: One of the exciting things about it is a tension that comes across, subliminally, between the origin and ancient feeling of the artwork and the contemporary style I translate it into.

Ever since I can remember, I've felt and known that these indigenous cultures have had a tremendous amount of knowledge and wisdom that I felt very sad we were losing, day by day.

I remember turning to my mother, as we were walking down the sidewalk in Ypsilanti, Michigan one day, after I had just received my bachelor's degree in art and education and my teacher's certification; and I turned to her and said, "Isn't it odd that we should be paid so well, for doing something that we love so much yet what is it that we know, when there is so much that is being lost every day from the peoples that have been here since the world began, I guess. Since humans first appeared on the earth. There's so much there that we could learn from them.

Dick: Are you referring to wisdom that isn't in books?

Peg: Yes, some of it's in books some of it is passed down in oral tradition, much of it is coming through the arts; the integration of the art, the music, the storytelling, the movement, the dance all of those things that we study individually, they were doing in an integrated way every day. And it was, and is, a celebration of their spirituality. They don't feel there is any division between everyday life and their spiritual life it's all intertwined, it's all one, it's all the same thing

Dick: Whereas we may make a distinction, a dichotomy between them

Peg: Yes, people [in our culture] go to church, they set aside a certain part of their week to do that, but for aboriginals, although they do have very special ceremonies and rituals that they perform at certain times of the year in a certain given way; they know and they feel that spirit and spirituality inside of them all the time, every day and the lines that delineate just aren't there like they are for this culture.

And so I feel honored on the journey to have access to those feelings of spirituality that it's not any different, it's not separate, it feels that it's all one for me I don't have any arbitrary separation.

Dick: Do you see that the spirituality that these earlier peoples had is part and parcel of and directly related to the spirituality, perhaps, that we can experience?

Peg: Yeah, I think that there's a lot there that we can pull strength and wisdom from. In our contemporary world we are desperately trying to find meaning and purpose in our lives.

How many people go to work every day and feel so disconnected from what they're doing and having to go to work every single day doing something they don't feel any connection or relationship to or how is this serving the greater good?

It sounds idyllic, perhaps, to think that you could go to work and feel that fullness of life and yet that's what the indigenous people do, they are just living and being and feeling life every single moment. They are not cut off like some of us seem to be in our contemporary world.

Dick: So, you are making a point, I think, and I agree with you that many of us in our modern world with all of our technological advances live a

fragmented life because we're so specialized

Peg: Yes, and I think we're beginning to see that everything is interconnected the large populations are seeing that we cannot continue to have pollution, waste and garbage perpetuate our resources are limited. Our precious space is being dumped upon literally. We have to figure out ways to recycle and to use our resources wisely and to put aside our individual needs for the good of the collective whole. The aboriginal people understood this; they have lived in harmony with the environment

Dick: It was woven into their spirituality, wasn't it. They viewed themselves more as custodians rather than users, exploiters

Peg: Yes, and when they made some decision about what they were going to do today, they thought about, literally thought about, how will the seventh generation benefit from this. If we were thinking in those terms, I think that the path that we might choose would be greatly impacted and enhanced.

Dick: So, I'm hearing from you that your belief and experience is that we have much wisdom to gain by learning more about the indigenous aboriginal cultures of many continents, many lands not just of the American continent.

Peg: Yes, America has a tremendous amount to give servicewise and resourcewise. Our country has forged new territory into many new areas medically, politically and scientifically, and we shouldn't downplay that, we should be proud of those areas. However, I think there is a lot we can learn from other cultures and we all know and understand there is a hollowness that we can't put our finger on in this country. All around us, our systems seem to be crumbling and we don't quite understand why and we're sick at heart about it. But in all those areas we're seeing that we're taking

steps and we're taking a path that is leading to oblivion and why is that? It is my belief that it's from a lack of deep feeling and understanding about our spiritual role and purpose and selves.

We recently interviewed Peg to learn more of the personal side of her involvement as an interpreter of aboriginal art.

Peg: And my work my work, I feel is bringing that back into our consciousness and I want to create things that have meaning and purpose and create dialogue and speak to those values

Dick: You spoke of coming to this realization at the time when you graduated from your university studies in education and art. How was it that you became involved in making masks?

Peg: I think I've always had an interest in and have been drawn to what they call "primitive" art but I don't see it as primitive I see it as quite eloquent an eloquent statement about a culture's spirituality. The symbols even though I didn't understand what was behind them I was drawn to them and I didn't know why.

My work in college, even in high school, had that very earthy, powerful contemporary design. By contemporary, I mean, if you look at aboriginal art you will see that they are very powerful symbols; they are not highly representational, like those of our culture seem to be. They are simple yet elegant designs. They have a tremendous amount of impact graphically and emotionally.

Dick: So, they're very economical, sparing and efficient.

Peg: Yes, which is a hallmark of contemporary art. People like Picasso, Gaugin and Matisse, the masters in our century of contemporary art borrowed from the past and were highly

inspired by the traditional indigenous art of different cultures.

Dick: Yes, I'm aware that Gaugin did much of his work in the South Sea Islands

Peg: Yes, and when you read his writings and you start to understand what was inspiring him, it is exactly this, it was about their spirituality, it was about that connectedness to the greater spirit and the intuitive understanding that we are all connected by that.

Dick: There is still a question remaining in my mind; when I see your art work, it doesn't strike me as something that a white woman from Michigan in a middle class milieu would have predictably come up with. I'm still perplexed what is the creative process; how do these things come to you? When did it all begin?

Peg: Yes (Laughs) Well, I was actually born in Detroit, Michigan and there is a heavy AfroAmerican energy that pervades everything ...

Dick: Motown!

Peg: Motown!! (Laughs) And I grew up in junior high and high school, rockin' and rollin' and singin' and dancin' to those tunes and I really felt that, you know, Detroit was where it was happenin' -- this was the center of the universe. What could be better than this music, at this time, and this place in the U.S.A. And so that was a very, very wonderful time for me.

Dick: Just briefly, for the record, what were some of the musical groups that influenced you the most?

Peg: Oh, gosh; The Supremes were right up there

Dick: Diana Ross

Peg: Diana Ross, yeah the Four Tops Chuck Berry, Chuck Berry was an incredible influence. Little Richard I can't think of any that weren't. (Laughs) The whole stand. It was a very exciting time. *And* when rock and roll came in, and sort of took over the airwaves again, it has its roots in Motown that rockin' and rollin' and that rhythm, it speaks to our souls, it speaks to the rhythm of time and our common roots.

There are some theories out that all of us come from an African mother, way back in early history. I don't know if that's absolutely true but I do know that we share the common things our common ground is that our emotions are all connected and we're all the same that way.

We all care about our families, we all want to feel good about who we are, where we've come from, where we're going. We want to have respect and love between us and where we get thrown off is when that isn't there. That respect, that love, that compassion and that honoring of the spirit is in you and in me. When that gets pushed to the side and trampled upon then we end up with problems. I don't care what culture it is, I don't care what age you are, I don't care where you come from those things are our common bond; they have to be there for healthy living.

So, going back to where this comes from; rationally, I can tell you, that I was born in Detroit and I was influenced that way. But out of the rational---

Dick: There's more to it than that!

Peg: There's more to it and I don't know what to tell you. Because when I begin to work, I lay aside my ego, I lay aside Peg Hilliard, I lay aside all preconceived ideas, I'm not trying to make my art work come out a certain way. I just remain open. I may have some things I'm interested artistically

in; for example; texture, form, trying some new ideas out or experiments out on what I'd like to achieve emotionally but other than that I just let it happen. I don't try to impose anything on it and what comes out in that process is a dance between me and the clay and spirit. And it just evolves, I just let it come and be and do what it's going to do and it's very exciting that way it's a journey, creatively. I feel as though some people like to use the word 'channeling' I just like to remain open and whatever comes through, comes through.

Dick: You're using the word 'coming through' and I get the image of a source of it somewhere, coming to you and through you, into the clay, into the art work.

Peg: Yes, and I just perceive of that as the Creative One, the spirit that I am connected to that all of us are, and every thing is connected to.

Dick: This leads us into the next question; Do you feel a connection, spiritually with African Masks? Can you tell us what it means to you and what the message is that you are trying to give through your masks?

Peg: Although it seems to be the African that I am most influenced by, when you look at the breadth of my work you will see that I am influenced by lots of different cultures.

Many times I will be at a show and people will come up to me and say; "Oh! Surely you've been studying the Mayans, Surely, you've been studying this tribe in the south seas, Surely you've been studying Egyptians" and I haven't (Laughs) I really haven't and I am simply staying open and letting whatever creative energy is coming through me to come through. It's all intuitive.

Now, I am beginning to study certain cultures because of my connection with wanting to pull more of that wisdom out of the oral history of

these cultures into my own life and being able to share that with others in the community.

Dick: This is a study, then, on a rational level learning more about it. Do you find this helps you in your art work?

Peg: Somewhat, yes. What it's helping me do now, is to expand my art work into a form that is more accessible for more people to enjoy and to appreciate and to understand now because I am reaching out into the community and we're working with traditions from the past that now I can pass on to them. We can play with it and work with it on lots of different levels artistically, musically and performancewise so I can get more people involved on deeper and deeper levels.

Dick: So, you're getting involved in art forms other than strictly with visual art.

Peg: Yes, when I work with the clay, I like to use stories that have been created and passed down through the generations through history to these cultures.

And now through my association with a story teller Kay Negash and Bob Wiz, a musician, we are integrating and doing intergenerational as well as interdisciplinary works of art.

So that means, not only now, am I creating masks that are to be used and appreciated as art pieces that a person would put in their home but now it's also becoming a three dimensional live art -- living art -- where the three of us, as professional artists, bring what we know and what we have to the community and we get the community involved.

So, now the community starts to, also, create masks, music and sometimes their own stories where we either take a traditional story or we elicit stories from them and try to tap into their creativity

and their wisdom and turn that into living, breathing art. Then we perform it for other people in the community. So, it's very exciting that way.

Dick: That sounds like a very exciting new direction.

Peg: Yes, it is. It's a natural outgrowth and it's also paralleling what I'm doing individually, as an artist. So one enhances the other. It moves back and forth. My individual art enhances the group effort and the group enhances mine. I mean that on two levels; first, because of my affiliation with Kay and Bob, I am now incorporating storytelling and music as inspiration into my art workshops with people and; secondly, when I'm leading an art workshop as an individual artist, I get nourishment from the group experience.

Sometimes, I'll be in a workshop where I'm figuring out a particular method to have the people that are involved create something that fulfills a certain need within the workshop for them.

For example; many of the older people I was working with had arthritis, and on some days they had a very tough time, just being able to cut into the clay and manipulate the tools.

And so, what I decided was, gosh! I want them to be working with the clay, but I don't want it to be painful, certainly.

So, I had them make beads and they were able to do that. Then we fired them and we used them on the masks that they had created in an earlier session and that added a whole new dimension for them with their masks, because when they put the beads on their masks and decorated them it created a whole new dimension because now they were 'rattlemasks' and the masks were talking and creating sound. So now we had talking masks. Well, I went back to my studio and absent mindedly I found myself creating

beads.

Now my masks are enhanced by this new dimension that I did to fulfill a certain need with this special population to help them still be creative in their work and yet not have it be painful. And the gift that I get back is that my work now carries this new dimension. And I can give that back again to the next group that I work with. And it's very, very exciting. So, we constantly are feeding each other.

I consider myself a resource person, I don't really consider myself a teacher, as such. I have a lot of experience I can share with them and then they're giving me their experience and their wonderful energy and specialness back and I, in turn, give it back again. It's really quite beautiful that way.

Dick: I see that what you're doing is fulfilling a need that been unexpressed or unfulfilled in our presentday technological culture. You're creating a contemporary folklore

Peg: Yes, and it seems to be happening all over the place there are so many storytellers now and the schools are clamoring for them there seems to be much more money available to support the arts in this manner.

What they're looking at is "how can we get the 'biggest bang for the buck'" and we are saying "here we are; artist, musician and storyteller is right here, available," and we want to go into the community and work with large groups of people to pass on what we have as individual artists and as a collective group to help get *those* stories out of our people. It's very, very exciting to watch that creative process happen within them.

Dick: So, you are working to preserve the wisdom right here in our culture today that would otherwise be lost were you not, with your group, to

draw it out, in just the same way as you were telling earlier of trying to preserve the wisdom of ancient aboriginal cultures some of that same kind of wisdom exists right here and now.

Peg: Right, we have a [funding] grant to go into a school right here in Boulder. We're going to do an ancient Zuni tale and we're going to have the teachers, staff, and children read and do some research on that culture and then do some art pieces, sound pieces and read stories about that culture.

When we get there we'll have the children learn about the particular story that we are bringing to the school, which is an ancient Zuni creation myth about how the Earth was born and how fetishes have become the sacred objects they are.

The name of the story is "The Stones are Alive." I don't think that the people who move through this process with us will ever look at stones in the same way again.

It's going to be really quite lovely, because in the myth, the Earth was inhabited by monsters and the people came up from the middle of the Earth and were being eaten by these monsters. The Children of the Sun were sent by Father Sun to help the people figure out a way to coexist with the monsters. The Children of the Sun shoot their arrows into the monsters and when they do, the monsters turn to stone. But they still have their beating hearts, their magic breath and they're there to help the people now.

So, the stones are still considered as very much alive but they're there to help us and protect us and to remind us how precious the Earth is.

I think this wisdom is coming just at the right time what a beautiful way to impart this wisdom to our children.

We have another grant to go into the

Headstart program and the Senior Center.

Everyone knows, with our culture being so mobile, families have been split apart grandchildren and grandparents, maybe, aren't in the same communities anymore and there's a tremendous void there that needs to be healed.

We see this project as a very exciting move towards having the youngest children and the elders in our community come together and to bond to reestablish that special relationship between the very young and the very old.

We see this as an exciting opportunity for the seniors to tell about the some of the special relationships they had with their grandparents and to talk about the special relationship they have with their grandchildren or with younger people in general.

Then, once we've gotten all these stories out in the open, we'll create our own story in our own contemporary play about those special relationships. Then the seniors, children, the professional artists and the staff will come together and present this play and share it with the community in four different places in Boulder and the outlying area.

This is intended to be the beginning of that creative interaction, to start to lay the seeds for people thinking about what we can do to get these special stories out and moving again amongst us in our culture and in our community and with each other.

Dick: Thank you very much.

Peg: Thank you.

### HIGH COUNTRY THEOSOPHIST UPGRADED

With this issue, a long awaited advance in the technology of desktop publishing is in evidence. We have purchased and installed a *Scanman* optical scanner and *Paintshow plus* software from *Logitech* which gives us the capability of adding graphics images to the HCT.

With the scanner we can scan and digitally encode artwork, photos and the like, then import the resulting files into the *Wordperfect* program and reproduce the images along with the text with the dot matrix printer for the HCT.

We are including graphics images in this issue; an example of Peg Hilliard's African Mask art [page 1], and a reproduction of the Theosophical emblem slightly modified [page 3].

Another great step forward, initiated, but not yet in evidence; We have applied for a second class mailing permit with the U.S. Postal Service.

Heretofore and currently we have been mailing the HCT first class, which, as we are painfully aware, was recently increased to 29 cents for one ounce and 23 cents additional for up to 1 1/2 ounces.

At its current size of eight pages (two sheets folded and stapled) the weight is just under 1 ounce. A third sheet which produces

12 pages increases the weight to about 1 1/4 ounces and first class postage to 52 cents which is clearly prohibitive.

In the occult mysteries of postal regulations, which I won't go into here, a second class permit in the "Agricultural and Educational" category will reduce our mailing costs to the 16 to 17 cent range and most importantly free us from the 1 ounce constraint. Increasing the size of the HCT from 8 to 12 pages when we need the space for additional articles and graphics will affect the postage by only fractions of a cent per piece.

Second class mailing will also eliminate the tedious job of pasting on postage stamps. Also, to make more space available in the HCT we plan to mail in envelopes.

With the new space available, coupled with the graphics capability, we plan to redesign the front page masthead for a more attractive appearance and make use of the lower portion of the back page (now used for address) for a statement of editorial purpose and principles, the Theosophical emblem and editorship along with a recent sketch of the editor done by our good friend David Spurlin of the Pasadena T.S.

We hope to have all of these changes incorporated by the December '91 or January '92 issue.

# Tomaytos, Tomahtos and The REAL THING

I agree with John Algeo, in The Sept. '91 American Theosophist, that it matters little whether we pronounce "tomahto" or "tomayto."

What does matter is that we develop the discrimination to recognize the difference in the essence of flavor between the naturally grown product of our own garden and the cosmetically glamorous but uniformly tasteless product sold in the supermarkets.

While mixing metaphors, the crucial point here is that until we get a taste of the "real thing" we can have no basis for distinguishing the "fool's gold" of pyrite imitations from the genuine.

It has been truly said that the existence of imitations is sure proof that somewhere the genuine must exist. And as the leader of one of the Theosophical Societies recently observed to me; "If you wish to find the source of pure water in a river, unpolluted by turbid and muddy contributory side streams, one must be willing to journey to the clear springs of it's source headwaters."

In a like manner, if we are interested in developing the discriminative faculty of recognizing nuggets of Truth, we can do so only by tracing our spiritual teachings to their source. The turbid waters of "New Age" and NeoTheosophical revelations in our age will,

when followed to their source, be found to have originated in the teachings of the <u>Masters</u> of the Ancient Wisdom. Reliable sources for these teachings are *The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett* and the teachings of these same <u>Masters</u> as transmitted through their messenger, H.P. Blavatsky.

While there may be other sources as reliable, we can at least be sure of these and can therefore use them as a standard with which to evaluate the rest. As we study these "source teachings" and acquire a growing familiarity with them, we will develop the discriminative faculty to recognize spiritual truth when we see it. I don't deny, however, that other later writings may be valuable contributions to Truth, but we need to first become grounded in the reliable *source teachings*.

# THE LOTUS, a new magazine

Just received is *Lotus*, The Journal of Inner Peace, Mindfulness and Compassionate Living, published by Rick Nurrie, editor of the former *Theosophical Network*. Although we're sorry to see the TN cease publication, we're doubly impressed with the quality of issue #1. Included are 12 excellent articles, authored by The Dalai Lama, Shakti Gawain, Lee Jampolski, G. de P., Thich Nhat Hanh, Chief Seattle & others. Very highly recommended. Introductory subscription is \$19.97 (4 Issues) Address: Lotus 4032 S. Lamar Blvd., Austin, Tx, 787047900

## **Upcoming**

Wed. Nov. 20. Stefan Hoeller will talk on C.G. Jung & The Soul of Russia: Occult and mystical elements in the Russian psyche. 7 P.M. at the Wyer Auditorium, Denver Public Library, 1357 Broadway.

### Upcoming

Fri. Dec 13, Sat. Dec 14. Tim Boyd will talk Fri. evening and lead a Saturday workshop on "Living in a Spiritual Community. Time and place later.

### Calendar

Friday, October 11

Barbara Ginsberg's home: 6960794 for directions.

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Tuesday October 15

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 first 45 pages will be covered.

Meeting begins at 7:00 P.M.

We will continue our studies in *An Introduction to Esoteric Principles*: Chapter 5, Macrocosm Tattvas and Tanmatras. A repeat of the April program. PLEASE BRING THE HANDOUT *BIRTH OF THE EARTH CHAIN*. Additional copies will be available.

Take Colo. Blvd to Montview (2000 N.), 7 blocks E. to Dexter.

Meeting begins at 6:30 P.M.